

Now that you have a job, can you keep it?

Your first few weeks on the job are a settling-in period. It's a chance to learn the ropes and become familiar with the job. A key part of this time period is to become accepted by the other workers – to fit in, make friends, and feel part of the team. Here are some tips:

Be friendly: Don't be shy. When you meet someone new, offer your handshake, smile, and introduce yourself. Remember names. Ask questions to get the conversation moving. Be a listener.

Be flexible: As the new kid on the block, you'll probably get stuck with those tasks everyone else dislikes. Show that you're mature enough to handle it. It shows that you respect their seniority.

Show initiative: When you're finished with a task and you have some free time, don't stand around waiting for someone to tell you what to do. Ask someone if you can give them a hand with their work. It will show everyone that you're a team player.

Be dependable: Show that you can be counted on. Show up for work on time every day. Stay until quitting time. Finish your work on time. Volunteer to work late if needed.

Don't fake things: If you don't know how to do something, don't try to fake your way through it. You'll lose respect, which could be hard to rebuild. Instead, ask them to show you how they want it done.

Obey the rules: Learn the written as well as the unwritten rules and follow them. They may seem silly at first, but you don't want to step on any seniority or territorial toes. Make friends, not enemies.

Admit your mistakes: Everyone makes mistakes – especially when they're new on the job. Admit mistakes and correct them, if you can. It shows that you are honorable.

Hold your ideas: Don't try to change things right away. Keep your eyes and ears open, but your mouth closed, especially the first month.

Solve your own problems: Don't be a pest. Don't keep running for help every time you have a small problem. Try to figure things out yourself.

Find a role model: Watch the boss and try to figure out which workers he likes and relies upon the most. Model yourself after that person.

Surviving a Layoff, by Harry Dahlstrom, p. 48, published by Dahlstrom & Company, Inc.