

Creating a welcoming community. << Together. >>



## HEAD START >>

A checklist and tips for new Canadians starting a new job.

Congratulations! You will soon begin a new job in Canada. You're probably excited, a little nervous and wondering how working in Canada is different from other parts of the world. Most of all, you just want to fit in quickly and show that you can contribute positively.

This checklist will give you a good sense of how people already working in Canada prepare for new employment. Use this simple guide to help you recognize how your manager and co-workers function, socially and professionally, so you can fast become a part of the team.

### TIP >>

Every workplace is unique. Not every tip or checklist item may apply to your new employment.

As a result, it's important to **OBSERVE, LISTEN, GET INVOLVED** and **REFLECT**. This enables you to use your **BEST JUDGEMENT** once you have a clearer sense of how your new team operates.

### BEFORE MY FIRST DAY ON THE JOB >>

- >> Do I know how long it will take to travel to work and how I will get there (public transit, car pool)? If I am driving to work, do I know where I may park and whether there are parking costs to staff?
- >> Am I required to bring identification on my first day of work?
- >> Do I know whom I am reporting to when I arrive on my first day at work? Do I have this person's phone number?
- >> Do I know how the majority of my colleagues generally dress on the job? Do I require any specific clothing – such as safety shoes – for my role? Are specific pieces of clothing or jewelry not allowed on the job?
- >> Do I need to bring a lunch on my first day and if so, is there a lunch facility?
- >> Am I allowed to wear perfume or does my new workplace maintain a scent-free environment?
- >> Have I visited the company's website for key information, such as its vision or mission, which might give me a sense of the organization's culture?

Tip >> In Canada, weather and heavy traffic are not acceptable excuses for lateness. You are expected to adjust your schedule to arrive on-time, especially for your first day on the job.

Tip >> Increasingly, Canadian workplaces are adopting scent-free practices to accommodate staff who are sensitive to smell.

### MY FIRST DAY ON THE JOB >>

- >> Does my employer provide an orientation for new employees or an organization handbook so I may learn about company policies?
- >> Have I (or my supervisor) identified someone on the team who can serve as a mentor or buddy, who can tell me about team and organizational culture?
- >> Am I familiar with the Ontario Employment Standards Act and how it applies to me? [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pdf/es\\_guide.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pdf/es_guide.pdf)
- >> Have I gotten involved in any social opportunities with work colleagues, such as luncheons or celebrations?
- >> Do I know whether my manager has specific expectations of key achievements within my first few months on job?
- >> Do I know my manager's expectations regarding staff working hours and breaks?
- >> If I don't see my supervisor throughout the work day, do I know how my supervisor would like to be informed about updates on my work and achievements and how often?

Tip >> Observing and listening are key skills at the beginning of a new employment experience to quickly gain a sense of how organization functions. However, it's never too early to get involved in social functions at work or committees!

Tip >> Compared to other business cultures, North American styles of management tend to be focused on administration and strategy. As a result, managers tend to have less day-to-day contact with their teams. What's more, managers expect staff to work independently or collaboratively to solve day-to-day operational issues and update them on an "as-needed" basis. Early on, learn about your supervisor's personal management style.

### MY FIRST FEW MONTHS ON THE JOB >>

- >> Do I know the conditions of my probation and whether I will receive an evaluation at the completion of this period?
- >> Do I have a clearer sense of the hard (technical) and soft (interpersonal) skills required for my job?
- >> Have I identified or taken advantage of training opportunities, whether professional development or mentoring opportunities?
- >> Have I asked for feedback on my performance periodically from my manager and co-workers?
- >> Do I know when and how I will be evaluated – such as measurable outcomes expected, who's involved in the process, whether the evaluation is written or verbal?
- >> Am I prepared for my evaluation by keeping track of my performance against the manager's expectations and specific examples of key accomplishments?

Tip >> Early in your employment, ensure that you understand your role and expectations of your performance (concrete measures of how you will be evaluated). If you are aware of how your performance is measured, you will be better prepared for your evaluation.

Tip >> You may not receive feedback from a supervisor. Don't assume that a lack of feedback is a positive judgment about your performance. In other words, don't assume that "no news is good news."

Tip >> Do more than observe... Seek out staff who are successful in their roles and model their actions and behaviors. Get their advice on how to get more involved in the organization and navigate the workplace.

Tip >> During your evaluation, insist on specific details on your performance rather than ambiguous responses, such as "fine" or "well". Details will inform specific steps you can take to enhance your performance, no matter how positive the feedback.

### CONTINUED SUCCESS ON THE JOB >>

- >> Has my manager provided an evaluation or review of my work thus far and expanded his/her expectations of me?
- >> Do I have professional development goals and a plan? Have I discussed these with my manager?
- >> Do I feel more confident and assertive in my role?
- >> Have I begun to develop professional networks, both inside and outside the organization?
- >> Do I feel a sense of belonging within my team?
- >> Do I feel comfortable in social situations with work colleagues?
- >> Do I have a sense of how to manage conflicts among team members without having a manager involved to resolve?
- >> Do I feel challenged in my role?
- >> Do I feel that I can serve as a mentor or buddy to a new employee?
- >> Am I able to strike a balance between my personal / home life and my obligations at work?

#### OBSERVE, LISTEN, GET INVOLVED and REFLECT!

In Canadian workplaces, it is generally accepted that there are **social** and **professional** aspects to work. It's not enough to simply do the tasks of your job – interacting with colleagues well is a key part of getting the job done. Observing, listening, getting involved and reflecting are essential workplace skills – particularly at the beginning of any new employment experience – that give you the tools to use your best judgment when navigating the social and professional culture of your new workplace, as well as managing your career responsibly for years to come.

If you have additional questions about integrating into a new workplace:  
>> Contact your employment or settlement service provider  
>> Contact Peel Newcomer Strategy Group ([peelnewcomer.ca](http://peelnewcomer.ca))  
>> Visit the TRIEC Campus ([trieccampus.ca](http://trieccampus.ca))

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