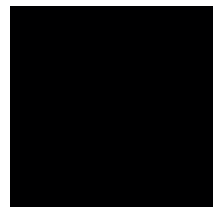Illustration by Danya Vassanth

How to navigate a new job and make an impact

Preparing for your first day

Your first day of work is important because it's an opportunity to meet colleagues and understand how the company works. And whilst it might be nerve-racking, there are some things you can do to ensure your first day goes well.

• Planning your commute can help you feel calmer about getting to work on time on your first day. Try calculating the most appropriate route to take, or even try practicing your journey.

• Planning your outfit means you have one less thing to think about on your first day. Make sure you follow any information you have about the dress code. If you don't have any specific guidance, it's a good idea to wear smart casual attire that is appropriate for your role.

• Pack your bag. If your role requires specific equipment, find out what the company provides for you. If you're required to come in on your first day, bring the basics such as a phone, charger, notebook, some pens and any necessary documentation.

• Ahead of your first day, you should receive onboarding information such as paperwork, employment contracts, company handbook and a training schedule. If you do not receive these before your first day, ask your manager or HR (Human Resources) contact .

• An elevator pitch is a short introduction of who you are, what you do and your previous experience. You'll need an elevator pitch to introduce yourself to various team members on your first week. Try to keep the tone of your pitch positive and aim to keep the pitch brief.

> 'Hi everyone, I'm Faridah, today is my first day at Nike and I'm joining as a PR Co-ordinator in the Comms team. I have a background in press and public relations for sportwear brands and I studied for my BA in public relations at London College of Fashion. I'm joining from Puma where I worked as the PR and Showroom Assistant for the UK headquarters. I'm very excited to be joining the Nike team and look forward to getting to know you all!'

Image: Ana Blumenkron

Image: Ana Escobar

What should I expect on my first week of work?

•   Be on time. On your first day, it's a good idea to leave home a bit earlier than normal to ensure that you arrive on time. You can then adjust your commute time as you become more comfortable in your new role.

•   Be yourself. The employer hired you because they felt that you were right for the job, so don't be afraid of showcasing your personality. Being authentic also helps other people to get to know you.

•   Try to relax. You may make minor mistakes or misunderstand new procedures, but this is normal. Trying to relax makes it easier for you to learn new things and adapt to your new work environment.

•   Adapting your body language to show that you're open and approachable will make a positive impression. When someone is speaking to you, you can also use body language to show that you're listening and taking an interest in what they're saying.

•   Asking lots of questions demonstrates your willingness to learn and helps you to adapt to your new role more quickly. Ask thoughtful questions at an appropriate time that prove you're paying attention, engaged and ready to do your job.

•   Try to introduce yourself to as many people as possible, even if you're only briefly greeting them. Ask questions to the people you meet, as this helps you to get to know them and feel more comfortable.

•   Do your best to remember names. If you forget someone's name, it's best to be honest and say: 'I'm sorry, I've been taking in a lot of new information over the last few days. Could you remind me of your name?'

•   If someone invites you to have lunch or coffee with them on your first week, it's sensible to accept the invitation.

•   During the first week it is important to turn your personal phone on silent and keep it in your bag or locker as a sign of professionalism. You will understand the company's policies on personal phones as you observe your colleagues and can ask your manager if necessary.

- Don't forget to smile on your first day! It seems obvious but you should be excited about this new adventure and you've worked hard to be here.

- Ending the first day in a positive way prepares you to start your second day in a positive frame of mind. Try to say 'goodbye' to your manager and colleagues when you leave and thank anyone involved in training or supporting you on your first day.

What should I aim to do on the first week if I'm working from home?

- If your first day is online and not at your workplace, there are still things to consider to ensure it goes well.

- Be on time. Even though you're not "going" anywhere, you should still test any log-ins beforehand. Try and log in 5 minutes early on your first day to get used to your new interface.

- Put away your phone. When you're remote working, you'll need to limit your distractions including keeping your phone out of reach.

- Take notes. Pay attention, take notes and observe of what's going on with your team.

- Make a good first impression. This can be tougher to do in a remote role but you can write introductory emails and follow up after meetings.

- Ask lots of questions with intention. Write down smart and necessary questions for specific people and find the best time to ask them, whether that is during a meeting or via email/chat.

- Be approachable and enthusiastic. Put your camera on and smile when you meet people, show an interest in what they do and make an effort to remember their names.

- Communicate professionally. Use a more formal style for written communications such as emails, at least at first. You can later gauge how casual the company chooses to be generally and adapt your approach according to who you're speaking to.

- Send invitations for virtual coffees. Be active in asking people outside of your team for quick virtual coffee meetings for informal introductions. If you can, get involved with social activities your new colleagues invite you to.

Image: Julia Jover Cano

How to find the best time to ask questions

By asking your manager and peers for new information, you'll likely feel more comfortable quicker. In your first week, try to find the right time to ask questions.

• Think about your intentions. Be specific about what you're asking to ensure you get the correct information.

• Try to find the information yourself. By taking initiative to try and seek out the answers to your questions through searching online or reading the company'sresources, you can save asking unnecessary questions to your co workers.

• Prioritise the information you need. For example, if you can't log-in to your work email account, that's something to get help with immediately.

• Write down your questions. If you have a lot of questions for one person or group, consider setting up a meeting. In the meeting invite, you can list out the questions you have so they have time to prepare.