

A M E R I C A N CAREERS®

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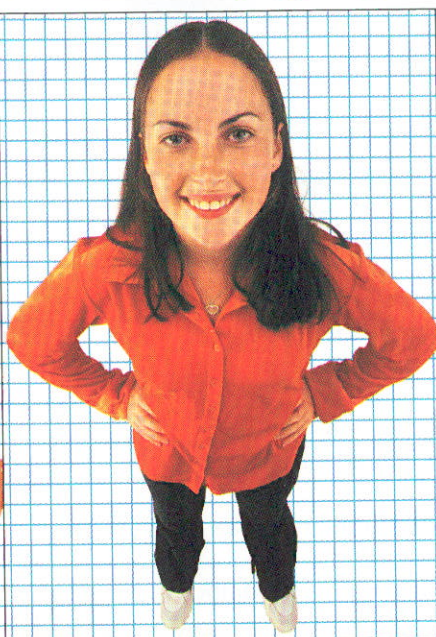
KELLY PERDEW'S FIVE RULES FOR STARTING A NEW JOB

It is always exciting, but also a little bit scary, when you are just starting a new gig. There are five rules I try to follow every time I start a new job or a new position. They are pretty straightforward and have served me (and other people I know) well over the years. I've also seen a lot of people not follow these rules, and many of them crashed and burned! Make sure you think about how these rules impact you in your new role, and I think you'll be fine!



1 Meet everyone you can

Set up lunch or dinner meetings with everyone in the organization that you can possibly meet. Get to know them, what they like, who they like, and what new or different things they'd like to see in the organization. Soak it all in. Learn about their families, friends and outside interests. You'll find a wealth of information in these informal discussions. This will also let everyone know about you and that you care about them and the organization. Whatever you do, don't disappear into your office and become a "ghost." Not only will you find out what's going on, you'll increase your credibility and exposure by meeting with all these people.



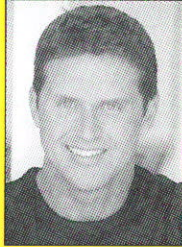
2 Learn the 'real' hierarchy

Every company has a formal organizational chart and it is important that you know it cold. However, organizational charts never tell the whole story and it is critical that you learn the "real" balance of power if you're going to succeed. Who can influence certain projects? Who has veto power even if they don't appear to be directly involved? Like it or not, politics are a part of business and the better you understand them, the more effectively you'll perform your job. Plus, it will definitely help you succeed in the organization by knowing who you really need to impress or avoid.



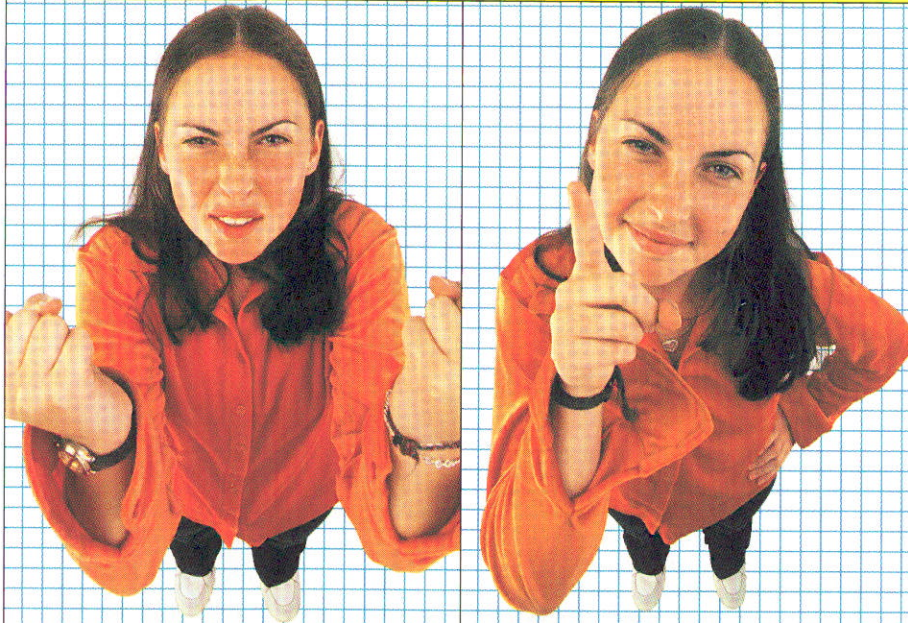
3 Don't bad-mouth anyone

You may feel tempted to "make friends" quickly with different people in the organization. One fast way to do that is to partake in the water cooler gossip. Don't! Everybody likes to talk about everyone else. Over time you will make friends, but you shouldn't do it that way. You need to get your bearings first. Avoid talking about any of your co-workers and distance yourself from those that do. One of the worst things you can do is to be perceived as a gossip. Remember that perception is reality, so even if you don't actually talk about anyone, if you're hanging out with people that do, you could still get labeled as a gossip.



ABOUT KELLY PERDEW

Donald Trump's reality TV show, *The Apprentice*, is known for the phrase, "You're fired!" Kelly Perdew, who wrote this piece exclusively for *American Careers*, was hired. The West Point graduate who served in the U.S. Army, has MBA and law degrees, co-founded MotorPride.com, was president of CoreObjects Software and has held top jobs in the business world.



4 Be firm, but not a bully

You have to be firm to start off and set the tone for your professionalism and to let others in the organization know that you have to be taken seriously. This doesn't mean act like a bully; rather, be reasonable but strong. In all likelihood, many people in the organization will have expertise or a certain way of doing things different from yours. Understand and incorporate those perspectives into your decisions and actions, but remain firm and stand by your position. You'd be surprised at how many people will test you to see what you're made of. If you waiver at the beginning, you'll never gain back their respect. It is so much easier to soften your attitude and requirements later than it is to become stricter or firmer after you've started off relaxed.

5 Take responsibility for a project.

Depending on your level in the organization, you'll have varying levels of responsibility. There are multiple projects that you might be working. But no matter what level you're at, you need to own something. Very soon after your arrival there are going to be certain projects or programs that you can take on as your own. Quickly figure out which ones make sense for you and grab onto them and protect them. Do not allow others to direct or control these projects. Oversee them and ensure their success. Your boss, co-workers and direct reports will respect you and you'll have something to point at that is really yours.

These five rules will definitely get you off on the right foot. They don't guarantee you success, but they will start you down a great path in your organization. Good luck!

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

New college graduates with good communication skills have an advantage over competitors in the job market, according to Job Outlook 2005, a survey published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The same wisdom can be applied to all graduates joining the workforce.

According to Marilyn Mackes, NACE executive director, if a candidate meets an employer's basic criteria, such as degree, experience or GPA, on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) it's important for a candidate to demonstrate:

- Communication skills (written and verbal) 4.7
- Honesty/integrity 4.7
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others) 4.5
- Strong work ethic 4.5
- Teamwork skills (works well with others) 4.5
- Analytical skills 4.4
- Motivation/initiative 4.4
- Flexibility/adaptability 4.3
- Computer skills 4.2
- Detail-oriented 4.1
- Leadership skills 4.0
- Organizational skills 4.0

Find more information about the survey at <http://www.nacweb.org/press/display.asp?year=2005&prid=207>.