

Introduction to the Business World

LESSON
#4

Study Guide



Business

Soft Skills

Career Enhancement

**A Business Soft Skills lesson
for your career enhancement**

“Business SoftSkills Career Enhancement Study Guide”

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Lesson #4 *“Introduction to the Business World”*

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College life and the business world are light years apart and sometimes the transition can be difficult. Most people do not know what to expect from their first job so this video will assist in this area. We interviewed college graduates who have been in business for a year or two and asked them to identify their toughest transition problems. We then give suggestions on how to solve these problems.

Video Lesson Timing															
VIDEO	Entire Lesson	Open	Intro	CHAPTERS									Exercise	Review & Quiz	Summary
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Intro to Business World	32:21:00		1:09	5:03	2:57	2:29	1:06	3:02	1:28	4:10	:56	4:27		3:30	2:08

Script

[“As Spoken” script - not edited for grammar]

OPENING

My name is Galen Guseman, and this soft skills lesson is titled: *Student Introduction to the Business World*. First, we are going to highlight some interviews with past graduates who are now in business. We will then talk about what to expect and how to perform in business. In order to prepare you for your entry into business we have also created two checklists for your use. After that we will have a review and quiz and end up with a summary.

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CHAPTER 1

College life and the business world are light years apart and sometimes the transition can be difficult. We interviewed college graduates who have been in business for a year or two and asked them to identify their toughest transition problems. Here is what they had to say. First up is David R. from California.

Photo of David R. (CA) and a voice in the audio.

“The toughest change I had going from college to business was working for eight hours everyday. I was used to setting my own schedule. At work you can’t slack off. If you add lunch, the commute and sleeping for eight hours, I only have four hours left over for myself.”

Galen: Time management is a problem for everybody, but I can see how it can impact the student turned business worker. The best way to get into the swing of a new schedule is to make it a habit. Make sure you get enough sleep. Get up at the same time each morning and go to bed at the same time every night. If you do this for two months it will become your normal schedule. Oh, by the way, you will quickly find out that there is NEVER enough time during the business day to get everything done.

Galen: Okay. Let’s hear from Amanda B. She is from Texas.

Photo of Amanda B. (TX)

“Solving problems in business is so different from what I am used to. When I was in college, I would read and do the problem and flip to the back of the book and check my answer. In business, you don’t always have hard deadlines so you may not even see the answer for weeks or even months. In some situations, you might never even find out what the answer is.”

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Galen: Welcome to the business world, Amanda! Yes, it is true that in business you may never see the results of your work. But it is important to always do your best because at some point in time you will start seeing results. It is important to put the emphasis on DOING the project and not just LOOKING for the answers. We will be talking more about problems and decision making in a few minutes.

Galen: And now from Arizona, here is Heather D.

Photo of Heather D. (AZ)

“I found it difficult to balance being a worker and being social at work. If you stay at your desk too much, you are considered anti-social. If you network too much with people that can help you with your job, it appears that you are just goofing off. I know it is important to be engaging with other people but I really have to work at balancing my time.”

Galen: This problem takes a little finesse. Socializing is important but you cannot sacrifice your job performance for it. You may see some people mingling with others a lot and they probably have poor reputations because of it. On the other hand, you do not want to appear anti-social by keeping too much to yourself.

As a new person on the job, it is very important that you meet as many people as you can. It is always easier to ask a friend for a favor, instead of a stranger. If you go into a meeting and there are people that you may have seen but were never introduced to, go up to them, introduce yourself, tell them your department and who you report to. If you are meeting a lot of people, it is a good idea to write down their names. You may keep passing someone in the hall that you just give a nod to. If you stop and introduce yourself, it will help you get a reputation of being professional. It is OK to stop by somebody’s office and chat, but just keep it brief. Just keep your socializing and work balanced, and you will do fine.

Galen: Andrew C., from Ohio, what do you have to say?

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Photo of Andrew C. (OH)

“I always thought that management and the workers would have this strong communications system. But in reality, nobody knows anything and I really had to really work to find an accurate grapevine for information.

Galen: Yeah, we have heard that one a lot! Communication is very important in business, but it does not get as much attention as it should. Start by evaluating the ACCURACY of what people say, and after a while you can judge who has the good data and who spreads rumors. We will be talking about rumors in a few more chapters. You should always be interfacing with your boss for corporate level information. Hopefully, they will have the latest, accurate information. Communication is so important that we have dedicated two lessons to it.

CHAPTER 2

When you are in school, you are usually working as an individual, except for the occasional class project. In business you are working as a team. However, unlike college, you will be in a performance competition with your peers. Here is one way to look at it. Suppose your college instructor could only hand out one “A,” one “B” and the rest “Cs.” That is the way it is in business. Everyone does not get a raise, and everyone does not get promoted. In business, you are in competition with your peers, and you are eventually “ranked” or “rated” with them. The more important your contribution and the better your work quality, the higher you may be ranked. You make your own opportunities by working hard as a team member.

Now, we are going to present seven points that will help you with your transition into the business world.

The first point is to integrate into the corporation. The first step is to dress like the rest of the organization. If you dress “up” a little, even better. This tells people that you want to be part of the team, and management will not want to promote anyone who does not look like part of the organization. Next, observe and follow the corporate start

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times, breaks, lunches, and when people leave. It will be obvious to everyone if you come in late or leave early. It will appear that you are not a team player. The corporation makes the rules and it is up to you to follow those rules. Some may seem silly but you WORK for the corporation, and they call the shots. Watch the rest of the organization and see how they act and react to company activities to get an idea of how to work within the business guidelines.

The second point; learn how to make decisions. In college, you usually get all the data before you have to make a decision. In the business world, however, this is not the case. You typically never have all the data necessary, or the information or the data you have is tentative at best.

Experience will help you make better decisions, but in the meantime, watch how management solves problems or ask your supervisor. And remember, not all problems have only one solution.

CHAPTER 3

Take problems to your supervisor is the third point in this lesson. Whenever you have problems that you cannot solve, or you need additional information, make sure you take it to your boss. If you do nothing, it may balloon to the point that it becomes a major problem. When you talk to your boss, be sure to have some possible solutions. Don't just drop the problem in their lap. Remember, they hired YOU to solve these problems! Describe the problem factually, not emotionally, to your supervisor and present your solutions. Ask for advice or suggestions. It is important to use your experience in order to solve future problems. So listen carefully and watch what others do.

Most bosses are very busy and you may feel funny trying to get to talk to them about “low level” stuff. It is best to put together a list of questions before you try to meet with your supervisor. If the questions are fairly simple, you can send them an email with “Question” in the subject line. If you need to meet with them, offer to do it over a lunch or before or after work. Once again, you can request this via email or through their administrative assistant, if they have one. But have your list of questions handy in case your supervisor comes by between meetings. It is important that you get your questions answered in order to do your job properly, so don't give up.

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Distinguish rumor versus fact is the fourth point to remember. It is important to NEVER act on rumor alone. Business people will fill in the lack of communications with rumors. It is important that you always identify rumors as rumors when talking to your supervisors or others. Some people will start rumors just for the “shock” value. If a rumor affects you, it is important for you to find the facts as soon as possible. Always ask your boss about rumors and never, never act on them.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY #184

Let’s take time to look at a case study. Chris was a technical writer and was working on a manual for a new product to be released in just a couple of weeks. The manual was difficult and complex to write and Chris was putting a lot of time and effort on the project.

One day he was getting a drink of water and heard that the product was cancelled because it was too expensive to build. Chris went back to his cubicle and started cleaning his area and just taking it easy. About a week later, his supervisor wanted to know if the new product manual was finished. Chris said he had stopped working on it because the project was dropped. His supervisor immediately called the product manager who just laughed and said, “that was just a rumor.”

Because of Chris, the product’s ship date was missed and the company lost a lot of money because they missed the ship date. He should have checked with his supervisor BEFORE he acted on the rumor.

CHAPTER 5

Point number five is learn to work with people and teams. You are now part of a team, and you can’t always work by yourself like you did in college. At some point in your work life, you will have to work with people you find difficult or just don’t like. It is important to create a “business persona” with these workers. You need to be polite and business-like. Remember, you don’t have to be friends with these people or ever see them outside of work. But you must work with them enough to get the job done and that is all. Never be tempted to spread rumors about them and never confront or taunt them. Just be “business like” when you are around them. It is important that you pull your own

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weight when working in groups. If you don't meet schedules or if you provide substandard work, it will affect the entire group dynamic. Getting “in-sync” with the group and meeting the goals and objectives will help build an effective team.

Good communications are essential for successful teamwork. In a good team, everyone is listened to and everyone is aware of the final decisions. Regular meetings are typically organized to review the progress of the project and to record the contribution of each member. Meetings like this also help boost the morale of the team, and they allow everyone to see their progress. A good team leader is one who encourages members to participate in discussions, voice their opinions, and collectively find a way to reach their goal.

Oh, one more thing. Don't expect to work on important projects right away. You'll have to learn how things are done, and prove yourself and your abilities, before you will get involved in some of the prime activities. When you first start work, you will probably be supporting others or doing some product “clean-up” work. But, don't worry. As time goes on, and you get the experience, you will have an opportunity to work on some very challenging projects.

Since you get so busy at work, it is a good idea for you to keep a simple “work journal” for yourself. Just note the things that you have done and the dates, and any outcomes that you observed. This will do a few things for you. First, you can see that you are getting things done despite the changes always occurring, and you can use your journal during your reviews.

At some point in time, you will be updating your resume and you can use your journal to remind yourself of the projects that were not in your job description or that you just forgot about doing.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY #185

Here is another case study. James was a new Product Manager at a fast growing technology company and had just started at the company a few days ago. He prided himself on meeting as many people as he could in the company in an attempt to come up to speed as soon as possible. It was late in the day when he went into the break room to get a cup of coffee and he noticed a distinguished looking gentleman having a

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soda by himself in the corner. James sat down after asking if he could join him. James introduced himself along with his title and the department in which he worked. The distinguished gentleman just introduced himself as “Don.” After they were chatting for a few minutes, James’s supervisor, Gary, joined them. He said, “James, I am glad you met Don.” James said, “Yes, and I was wondering what you do here Don?” Don said, “Well, I sort of run things around here!” Gary said, “Uh, James, this is Don Henderson. He is the founder and President of our company!” James was embarrassed but everybody else laughed about it when they realized that most people referred to the president as Mr. Henderson. The point is, always maintain your sense of humor when you end up with mistakes like this in this business. It’s the best way to handle it!

CHAPTER 7

Create a positive reputation is point six. As soon as you start working, you start building your reputation. You may not realize it but you are ALWAYS being watched. Not just by your boss; but by your peers, other managers, human resources, and even customers. Co-workers will talk about you, both good and bad. If you have a reputation for easily getting angry or always complaining, you will eventually be perceived as NOT being a team player.

Everybody will have a reputation whether they want one or not! Imagine yourself as always being “on stage” or “on camera.” And as long as you are at work, you are “ON.” When you leave a company, people will remember your reputation. When co-workers go to other companies they will still know what you did or didn’t do. When companies do reference checks they may talk to somebody not on your list, but that person knows your reputation at the company. So by now, you can understand how your reputation will follow you throughout your entire career. So make sure that it works FOR you.

One of the best ways to get a good reputation is to develop “good working habits.” A prime example of this is to make sure that you re-read all your emails, reports or other written communications before they are sent out. By doing this you can avoid some possibly embarrassing situations.

Another good habit is never guess at information. Find out first before you state it publicly. If you are not sure, say so. It is better to know you are accurate than to guess wrong. Another good habit to develop is to always be on time or even a little bit early for meetings or appointments. You always look professional when you are ready and on time.

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Oh, by the way, let's discuss smart phones, texting and twittering for a moment. Contacting your friends and family anytime you wanted was terrific when you were in college. But now that you are in the business world, you have to control yourself a little more. You have time - during your breaks, at lunch, before and after work to make personal calls, text or twitters. Anyone who sees you on your cell phone during business hours knows it is personal and NOT business. So keep it down to a minimum and do it at acceptable times.

Network and learn is the seventh and final point. Once you have entered the workplace, it is essential that you find and join a professional association in your industry. Networking is priceless and you need it to keep up with the activity in your industry and to establish industry contacts for future jobs. If you don't know where to go, ask your new supervisor or peers what associations they belong to. Once you join, make sure that you attend meetings. Also, take advantage of any special training or certifications available at this association.

Trade journals are a great way to learn about your industry; get to know your competitors; and learn about salary ranges, positions, and products. And while we are talking about learning, we would like to remind you that every industry goes through changes in standards and technology. It will be up to you to keep current with these changes through reading, seminars and networking. Change is the keystone of industry and business, so be ready for it!

CHAPTER 8

CASE STUDY #186

It is time for a case study. John and Bill both got out of college and went to work for Acme, Inc. at the same time. John joined the local association for his industry. Bill decided not to. John even worked the booth over a weekend when his association had their local convention. After a few years, Acme Inc. had a major layoff and both John and Bill found themselves looking for jobs. John used his contacts from his association and was working again in just a couple of weeks. Bill, however, had a tougher time finding a job. It took him three months and he also had to take a cut in pay and extend his commute time. John's networking time paid off well for him and you can bet that he is still doing it.

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CHAPTER 9

When you look for your first job, you should consider whether to work for a large company or a small company. Each has their own advantages and disadvantages.

Small companies are good because you can wear many hats and learn a variety of things. A larger company, however, usually looks better on a resume. It also has better benefits, training, and more internal opportunities.

Don't worry about getting big dollars on your first job. You want to push for the experience. The good money will come but you need to know how an organization operates and get a few years of experience. If you stay with an organization for two to three years, you will be able to acquire a deeper knowledge of products, the industry, and business in general. If you are lucky enough to have interned at the same company you end up working for, it will be easy for you to fit in and come up to speed.

We have put together two checklists for you: one for your first day and one for your first week of employment. These lists are by no means complete because every industry and company is different, but it should give you an idea of what to be aware of.

The first checklist is for your first day on the job. You will meet with Human Resources who will have you filling out all sorts of forms like tax forms, insurance, corporate information, and so forth. They will probably distribute or show you how to access the employee manual. It is a good idea to read through this document as soon as possible. It will have a lot of details about how the corporation operates, the holidays, vacation policy and other useful information about the company. If not included, ask for an organizational chart. If HR does not have one, check with your supervisor.

HR will usually take your picture and issue you a badge. Be sure to get a building layout so you know where all the entrances, exits, bathrooms and break rooms, and acceptable parking areas are located. If there is more than one building in the complex, get the map and location to the other facilities. Most companies today have telephone systems that need manuals to operate. Get the manual and access to the phone and email directory and set up your voice mail and email. HR will probably have the IT department contact you in reference to your computer, password, and other related technical issues.

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HR will typically escort you to your new supervisor or work station. You will start meeting people on the first day and you probably won't be able to remember all their names. So, in the next few days, you may want to ask them their name again explaining that you have met so many people you can't remember all the names. This time either get their business card or write down their name, title, department and a brief physical description, if necessary. Everybody at the company will know your name because you are “new.”

The next checklist will be for the first week. You will still be meeting people during the first week, and even longer. By the end of the first week you should have found out the locations of: the copiers, printers, and mailroom. You should be introduced to all of the other departments and know about any weekly or monthly meetings that are scheduled.

By the end of the first week you will probably be aware of where most of the reference materials can be found and any reports that you will be involved in generating. By now you should have, if required, your smart phone and/or notebook computer. You should also know where to get your stationery supplies.

For your convenience, these checklists are available in the documentation section of this lesson.

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Review and Quiz

Questions in **BOLD** answers underlined

Now, it's time to get a pen and paper out. We're going to see a review and then have a quiz. Occasionally you will see a slide with a missing word or multiple choice questions. You will have eight seconds to write the answer before it appears on the screen. Are you ready? OK, good luck. And, here we go into the Review and Quiz portion of this lesson.

Use time management

to organize your

work schedule

and activities

You may not always

see the results of

your work

It is important

to **DO** the project,

not just **LOOK** for answers

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Socializing at work
needs to be kept
to a minimum

Introduce yourself at
Company meetings

TRUE or FALSE

**Communication
is very important**

7 points
to know for
transition into business

Point #1
Integrate into
the corporation

The corporation
makes the rules;

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it is up to you to follow them

Point #2

Learn how to
make decisions

Point #3

Take problems to
you supervisor

**When talking to your
supervisor about problems,
you should:**

- **Provide possible solutions**
- **Explain who caused the problem**
- **Ask if someone else can do the project**

Point #4

Distinguish rumor verses fact

Ask your boss

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about rumors,
never act upon them

Point #5

Learn to work
with people
and teams

Good

Communications

**are essential for
successful teamwork**

Keep a simple
“work journal”
for yourself to see
the progress of
things getting done

Point #6

Create a positive

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reputation

**To get a
good reputation,
develop good
“working habits”**

Point #7

Network and learn

Join professional

Associations

in your industry

Small companies are
good because you can
learn a variety of things

Which is NOT a benefit to working at a large company?

- **Better benefits**
- **Looks good on a resume**

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- **You get longer lunch breaks**
- **More internal opportunities**

When you start your job, human resources will:

- Have you complete various forms
- Give you the employee manual
- Introduce you to your supervisor

SUMMARY

The transition from student to employee can be quite a shock. You will be going through a true life change and it takes time to get there. It is essential that you become accepted as a team member and become part of the corporate culture.

Follow the points in this video, along with our other soft skills lessons, and you will become a professional and competent employee. Take time to work at these soft skills while you are learning your trade and you will have a successful, lucrative, and challenging career.

I'm Galen Guseman, your virtual mentor. Good luck and welcome to the business world!

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Lesson #4 “Introduction to the Business World” Test

TRUE or FALSE

1. College work and the business world are very similar and the transition is relatively easyT or F

2. Getting your college class work assignments completed is good preparation for the time management skills needed for a steady jobT or F

3. Solving problems in business is the same as collegeT or F

4. Socializing at work and who you socialize with is more important than the work you do because that’s how you “get ahead” in businessT or F

5. The “grapevine” of internal communication is rarely the best place to get accurate information.....T or F

6. Integrating into the corporate culture where you work includes following the dress code, business hours, break times, and company activities.....T or F

7. Making decisions in the business world should only be done when you have ALL the information needed to make the correct choiceT or F

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8. If you have a work-related problem that you cannot solve, don't tell anyone ..T or F

9. In business, people fill in the lack of communication with rumorsT or F

10. If you are on a team with someone you don't get along with, it is best to ignore them and do the work yourselfT or F

11. Because you are college-trained you will get the really important projects at your company.....T or F

12. Keeping a business journal of the things you have done will help you see your own progress and results and it will be useful at review timeT or F

13. If you make a social mistake when meeting new people, try to maintain a business-like sense of humorT or F

14. Your reputation is limited to each company you work for and does not usually follow you to another company.....T or F

15. Everyone at work will form an opinion about your work habitsT or F

16. A good working habit is to make sure any information you communicate is accurate.....T or F

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17. Using networking to get a job is very important but after you are employed it is no longer neededT or F
18. Large companies & small companies each have pros and cons, and you should consider which would be best for your first jobT or F
19. On the first day of your job you should make sure you have access to the employee manual, organization chart, and building layout.....T or F
20. Don't worry about remembering all the new people in your new companyT or F

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Answers

1. College work and the business world are very similar and the transition is relatively easy.

FALSE

2. Getting your college class work assignments completed is good preparation for the time management skills needed for a steady job.

FALSE

3. Solving problems in business is the same as college.

FALSE

4. Socializing at work and who you socialize with is more important than the work you do because that's how you “get ahead” in business.

FALSE

5. The “grapevine” of internal communication is rarely the best place to get accurate information.

TRUE

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6. Integrating into the corporate culture where you work includes following the dress code, business hours, break times, and company activities.

TRUE

7. Making decisions in the business world should only be done when you have ALL the information needed to make the correct choice.

FALSE

8. If you have a work-related problem that you cannot solve, don't tell anyone.

FALSE

9. In business, people fill in the lack of communication with rumors.

TRUE

10. If you are on a team with someone you don't get along with, it is best to ignore them and do the work yourself.

FALSE

11. Because you are college-trained you will get the really important projects at your company.

FALSE

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12. Keeping a business journal of the things you have done will help you see your own progress and results and it will be useful at review time.

TRUE

13. If you make a social mistake when meeting new people, try to maintain a business-like sense of humor.

TRUE

14. Your reputation is limited to each company you work for and does not usually follow you to another company.

FALSE

15. Everyone at work will form an opinion about your work habits.

TRUE

16. A good working habit is to make sure any information you communicate is accurate.

TRUE

17. Using networking to get a job is very important but after you are employed it is no longer needed.

FALSE

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18. Large companies & small companies each have pros and cons, and you should consider which would be best for your first job.

TRUE

19. On the first day of your job you should make sure you have access to the employee manual, organization chart, and building layout.

TRUE

20. Don't worry about remembering all the new people in your new company.

TRUE

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Support Materials

First Day Checklist

- Tax forms
- Insurance forms
- HR forms
- Company manual
- Badges
- Organizational chart
- Building layout and addresses
- Restroom location(s)
- Break room location(s)
- HR Location
- Entrances / exits
- Parking information
- Supervisor’s location
- Conference room(s)
- Phone system information
- Phone list / email list
- Meeting key people



First week on the job

- Copier locations
- Other corporate locations
- Other dept. locations
- Computer/printer setup
- Smart phone
- Laptop
- Meeting(s) schedule
- Reports
- Employee events
- Office setup
- Stationery supplies
- Meeting additional staff



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QUICK REFERENCE CARD

[See next page]

The Quick Reference Cards for this lesson are located on the next page. These cards provide the rules and key points of this lesson.

The Quick Reference pages can be printed on a heavy card stock then cut into individual cards for easy access. They can also be printed in the 8 ½ x 11 format and laminated or put into a notebook .

Use them whenever you need a quick referral to key points of this lesson.

Seven Points to help you transition to the business world

Intro to the Business World

Lesson 4

Level One

1. Integrate into the corporation
2. Learn to make decisions
3. Take problems to you supervisor
4. Distinguish rumor versus fact

Seven Points to help you transition to the business world

Intro to the Business World

Lesson 4

Level One

5. Learn to work with people and teams
6. Create a positive reputation
7. Continue to network and learn during your career

Your first job

Intro to the Business World

Lesson 4

Level One

1. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of working for small and large companies

Your first job

Intro to the Business World

Lesson 4

Level One

2. Use your first job to gain experience rather than big dollars
3. Use the (included) checklists for your first day and first week