

Study Guide



Business

Soft Skills

Career Enhancement

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



**BUSINESS
SOFTSKILLS, INC.**

Level One / 2.0

“Business SoftSkills Career Enhancement Study Guide”

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“Introduction to Study Guide”

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Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships”

LESSON #8 “WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS”

The purpose of this lesson is to learn what employers expect from their employees. It will reveal the nine rules of Job Behavior that you *must* know. In addition, the lesson talks about being a team player, the importance of a good reputation, how to dress at work, and how to attend meetings.

Video Lesson Timing															
VIDEO	Entire Lesson	Open	Intro	CHAPTERS									Exercise	Review & Quiz	Summary
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Workplace Relationships	34:05:00		1:03	1:58	2:40	4:01	1:39	2:53	2:46	4:32	2:49	3:34		4:09	1:57

Script

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

OPENING

Hi! My name is Galen Guseman and this is Workplace Relationships Level one of the soft skills package. The purpose of this lesson is to learn what an employer expects from you. It is important to realize that once hired, you become part of the company that means you are being paid to do a job and the better you do it, the better your career will become. So let’s get right into “Workplace Relationships.”

For those of you who have never had a job, we want to review some basic ideas of employment. If you are already in the workforce, these ideas may seem to be common sense, but just bear with us! We have a lot of valuable information for you as well.

Lesson #8

“Workplace Relationships”

CHAPTER 1

Every company will invest a lot of time and money in their employees. This includes you! Even before you start on your first day they have taken the time to look for you, interview you, generate the paperwork for your position and prepared a area for you to work. And, that’s just the beginning. Besides your salary, there are other costs such as insurance, 401K programs, office supplies and furniture. You may have a company computer, cell phone or blackberry. Even your car takes up space in the parking lot. All of these add up to a SUBSTANTIAL investment by your employer.

So what type of job behavior will your employer expect of you? Your first important step is to make sure that you get to work on time. What does that mean? You must be at your work station, ready to begin work at your assigned time. Make sure that you always have reliable transportation. Some companies have “flex time.” This means that you can arrive at work between a set time frame in the morning, for example between eight o’clock and nine thirty. You are then expected to work for eight hours, less lunch time. Always work your full shift, If you don’t, it will be noticed, and your reputation will suffer. We will talk more about reputation in a few minutes.

Your employer will expect you to know how to manage your time. Don’t get side tracked with other problems or situations while doing your job. Keep focused on doing your primary job. When you have many tasks, have your supervisor prioritize them. Don’t be afraid to turn off your phone and put a “do not disturb” sign on your door or cubicle entrance when working on time sensitive projects. Just don’t do this all the time!

CHAPTER 2

If you are trying to estimate how much time a particular task will take, factor in the following points:

- Determine how much information you need from others and when you will get it
- Remember to allow for interruptions, problems and changing requirements.
- After the project is completed, compare it to your original estimate and determine what took longer to do and why. Write these variations down so you can factor it into future projects.
- Remember: It ALWAYS takes longer than you first estimated, but job estimating will become more accurate with experience.

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

Speaking of time, many companies require you to report to your supervisor as soon as you get to work. This lets management know that you are available and ready for work.

If you are going to be late, or are sick, or cannot come to work for any reason, it is important for you to contact your supervisor as soon as possible. Why? You have responsibilities at work and management needs to know this information so they can balance the workload and determine who can cover while you are out.

All companies allow you to take one morning break, a lunch break and an afternoon break. The exact amount of time and criteria may differ from company to company, so check with your organization to determine the policy. People will notice when you take more breaks than you should or longer than allowed, and it will give the impression that you are not interested in completing the work assignment.

It is a good idea to always take your breaks and spend your lunch time away from your workstation. This will help you pace yourself through the day and not feel burned out. It also allows you to be more efficient which will lead to fewer errors made because of fatigue.

When you need to leave early for a doctor or dentist appointment, make sure you notify your supervisor as soon as possible. The same goes for your vacation or personal leave days. Management needs to know IN ADVANCE when you are going to be out for days and weeks at a time. Why? Because they must re-balance the workload to cover for your time out. Also, it is better to try to schedule these activities at the same time so it does not appear that you are taking excessive time off. That type of behavior is looked on as non-productive and it could affect your future job advancement or pay raises.

CHAPTER 3

Let's look at what the employer might expect from you as a team player.

There will be times when you are asked to work late or over the weekends. Some people always refuse to do this, but if possible, you should help out when you can. When you do, you will get a reputation of being a team player which is good to have during times of lay-offs and work force reductions.

Some companies will pay overtime, some will not. Instead of looking at the hours you put in, look for what you put INTO the hours. By staying productive during the day, you

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

can get a lot of work done. Your job performance is very important, especially at review time. This leads to the point of what to do if you have finished your work, what do you do next? Nothing? Get on the Internet? Go home early? Actually, none of these are acceptable. So what is?

When completing your work, the first thing to do is maintenance work such as filing, cleaning your work area, putting away supplies, returning business emails, and any other company related tasks that you were unable to do but should do. After doing all this, you should approach your supervisor and let them know you are available for additional tasks. This will do two things for you. First, it will let your boss know that you can handle more responsibilities. Second, it lets your supervisor know that you are proactive in wanting to help the organization with additional activities. This builds a good reputation.

Speaking of your reputation, let's discuss what this really means to you.

Some people don't believe that a reputation means much, because as soon as you move to another job, there are new people involved. True or False? That's false in the business world. You are ALWAYS being watched. Not just by your boss, but by your peers, other managers, Human Resources, 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.

After a while you will have a reputation whether you want one or not! Imagine yourself always being “on stage” or on “camera.” And as long as you are at work, you are! 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 someone not on your list, but that person knows your reputation at the company. By now you can understand how your reputation will follow you throughout your entire career. So make sure 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!

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

CHAPTER 4

Now let's talk about your work area. You may be in an office, cubicle or bullpen when you are working. There are a number of do's and don'ts for your work area. For example, do not put anything on your desk or walls that are of questionable nature. Family photos and related items are always acceptable as long as they don't take over your desk. Any company related materials are also accepted. Before you go home, you should clean up your area. People assume that if your area is clean and organized, you are also organized. It always helps your REPUTATION to have a clean and professional looking work area.

Make sure you don't talk too loud when you are on the phone. Other people working around you will be bothered by loud conversations. Always be polite and try to keep your area as quiet as possible. If your company allows you to listen to music during work hours, keep it low or use ear phones. Also, if you do use earphones, keep the volume low enough that you will hear your phone or if someone's trying to talk to you from outside your work area. Allow easy access to your area, do not have boxes or piles of papers in the way because that could become a fire or safety hazard.

Remember, your work area is a reflection of who you are! Always keep that in mind! Next, we are going to talk about what to wear at work.

CHAPTER 5

Dressing for the office doesn't mean that you have to leave your own style at home, but you **MUST** be able to fit into the corporate dress code. It is important to dress for a professional and competent image. You probably had a chance to see how the organization dressed when you came in for your interview.

Most companies today will have a dress code outlined in the employee manual, which is also a good place to look. Like it or not, your choice in fashion will speak volumes about your ability to do your job. The company's unwritten rule is that you have to “look” the position you are in (or want to be in).

Men should avoid pants that are too baggy or too tight. Wild hair styles should be left for the clubs and raves. As a general rule, distracting clothing, odd jewelry or numerous piercing are not appropriate for the office. Men should make sure that their clothes is

Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships”

clean and does not look like they should be at the beach. Flip flops and sandals should be avoided. Fingernails should be kept clean, short or moderate in length and out of your mouth.

Women should always have manicured nails, run-free hose, scuff-free shoes, and neat hair. Clothes should be properly tailored and loose enough to sit down in comfortably. Bare mid-drifts and bare shoulders should be avoided. Your outfits should not be too sexy or see-through. Keep away from micro miniskirts, spaghetti straps, sheer sundresses and strappy stilettos.

Food-related bad breath can be managed by keeping a toothbrush at work for those after-lunch meetings or snacks. By the way, chronic bad breath may be a sign of a medical condition; consult your doctor if it appears to be persistent. Light, discreet perfumes and colognes are always acceptable but overpowering scents can detract everyone!

If your job requires wearing a uniform at work, make sure it is clean, pressed and fits properly. A lot of companies have casual work days. The dress code for this will be defined by management or included in your employee handbook. Remember, you are dressing for work, not for the beach, not for dating and not for going to a party.

It is up to you to fit in with the company for which you are working. They are paying you to do a job for them, they owe you nothing else. The better you fit in and the better you do your job, the better your reputation will be, making it easier to advance in your career.

CHAPTER 6

Let's talk about attending meetings. There are six things to remember about attending meetings. First, prepare for it before you go. Make sure you have a copy of the agenda or email that details the time, location, and subject matter. Bring along any information that you may need to refer to during the meeting. Make sure you have at least two pens (in case one dies!) and paper to take notes. Usually someone will prepare minutes for later distribution, but you need to take your own notes. You may hear something you did not know, or a name or other information and want to jot it down. Most meetings last for 45-60 minutes so you might want to take something to drink.

Next, make sure you get to the meeting a few minutes early. Meetings don't typically start on time but everyone knows who comes in late. You don't want to have that kind

Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships”

or reputation. If you have a situation where you have to leave at a certain time or have to take a call during the meeting, let the moderator/facilitator before the beginning of the meeting. And remember your cell phone or Blackberry should be set on vibrate whenever you go into a meeting.

Third, you want to only contribute information that you know is accurate! If you don't know, don't spread rumors! Only talk when you can add to the facts or are asked your opinion.

The fourth point is to pay attention. Try not to let your mind drift or you may miss important data or look like you are not interested. Remember, meetings are another place where you can earn a good or bad reputation.

The fifth point is, if you don't understand something ASK! The main reason for meeting is to exchange information so if you are confused, ask for an explanation! You always want to come out smarter than you went in!

The sixth and final point is to make sure that you complete all the action items that you were given in the meeting by the agreed time frame, or before the NEXT meeting. If there is some reason you cannot do it, contact the person who ran the meeting and let them know the status as soon as you can. Meetings are a necessary evil in the business world, so be prepared to attend a lot of them during your career!

CHAPTER 7

Now, I would like to reveal the nine rules of Job Behavior

Number one: Observe, listen, keep quiet and absorb.

We all know you have learned a lot in school and are anxious to share it with your co-workers. But you are the “new kid on the block” now and it is important that you observe what is going on in the organization. Listen to everything that you hear around you. Now is the time to be quiet and absorb all of the information that you can, through reading, listening, asking questions and taking notes on everything.

You will have a lot of time to prove your worth, but nobody likes a know-it-all, especially if you are new to the organization. So take your time and get to know how the organization handles different situations and operates. When you think you can contribute, write up your idea and give it to your supervisor. Let them evaluate it and see

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

if it is something that will work. But don't get upset if nothing happens. Some corporations are slow to make ANY changes!

Number two : Be aware of gossip & corporate culture

Anyone that talks about other people will eventually talk about you. Do not be known as a gossip or someone who is spreading incorrect information. Listen to the corporate grapevine but don't add to it. You do not want to get the reputation of someone who spreads rumors or gossip. If you do, no one will ever trust you with sensitive information.

Also, evaluate the corporate culture of the organization.

What is corporate culture? The corporate culture is best defined as the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. Look for answers to these questions:

- Who is in power?

Is it really the President, or is it the CFO? Some VP's and directors may be in power because they always are leading special teams or projects.

- Who is being looked up to?

Who has a reputation for being the “mover and shaker” in the company?

Who gets things done? On the other side, who is not taken seriously? Are they always wrong? Are they negative or constant complainers? If so, you want to stay away from them!

- How does the organization operate?

Are they always in a constant “fire fighting mode”? Do they make all decisions during meetings or are they following a strict business plan. Some organizations make quick changes and modifications almost everyday.

- And finally, what are the unwritten rules?

Every company has some unwritten rules. For example, you may be expected to give a donation to the presidents' favorite charity during the holidays. Or it is assumed that you will always attend company functions. It is best to always appear to be a team player by uncovering and following these unwritten rules.

Lesson #8

“Workplace Relationships”

Job behavior rule number three is: Be professional - Whatever your level of employment, you should always be courteous, mind your manners and never be rude. In addition, you should not use foul language or tell off color jokes or stories. People who maintain a professional demeanor never get visibly angry, never become loud or physical. They also keep their hands to themselves and never flirt with co-workers. You should always appear competent and strive to work well with others, if you do not get along with someone, stay away from them. You don't have to like people to work with them! Never make fun or jokes at someone else's expense.

Make sure that you always accept projects without complaining. When you do have a problem or complaint, make sure you ONLY discuss it with your supervisor or Human Resources. You never want the reputation of being a complainer at work and your reputation will be reflected in your day to day workplace demeanor.

CHAPTER 8

Rule number four: Know your individual responsibility Know what is expected of you and do it in a timely manner while maintaining quality work. Remember that you and only you are responsible for what you do. It is very important that you accept responsibility for ALL your actions.

You may provide your reasons but never make excuses or blame others for your actions. Another individual responsibility is to never hide your mistakes. Tell your boss as soon as you realize there is a problem, explain how it happened and have a plan to correct it. Your supervisor will look at you with a mature eye if you are honest and don't try to cover up your problem or blame others for it. You will make mistakes in your career, so admit them, correct them, learn from them and MOVE ON!

Rule number five is: Always have a positive attitude. You are going to have a lot of problems, disappointments and stress at work but you cannot let it get to you. As soon as you start getting negative or start vocally complaining, your co-workers and management will lose respect for you and you will not have the attributes of a winner. People will remember if you have a “can-do” attitude, or a reputation of giving up or “pressuring out.” If you are the person that is always complaining and arguing with management decisions, you may be at the top of the “lay-off” list. Nobody wants to be around anyone who is always disagreeable. And nobody wants to be around people who complain all of the time. So always show a positive attitude! You will be looked on as a winner!

Job Behavior rule number six: Ask for feedback and know how to accept criticism.

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Sometimes it is hard to know if you are doing what you're supposed to if you don't ask for feed back. Don't be afraid to ask if you are going in the right direction and meeting acceptable time objectives. Like starting a new exercising program, you may have to work a little harder in order to meet the time goals, but after a while it will be easier. In addition, learn how to accept and use criticism. It is difficult to be criticized, but if you look at it as learning how to do things better or quicker, it will HELP you with future milestones. You also will be viewed as someone who is always trying to improve themselves!

CHAPTER 9

Rule number seven: Expect change, surprises, as well as the unexpected.

That is corporate America! Lots of changes! You may have worked on a project for months, ONLY to learn that it has been cancelled. Just about the time you have learned how to work with a group, reorganization may take place and you will be working with a new group! But businesses must go through changes to grow and improve. The only thing you can do about change is to expect it, accept it, adapt and MOVE-ON!

Keep your sense of humor is rule number eight. No matter what happens (and a lot of weird things will happen) always keep your sense of humor. This is the best thing you can do to maintain your sanity in the wild and crazy business world. Studies have proven that a good sense of humor will help decrease your stress which in turn keeps you healthier. Having a good sense of humor will help you become a better employee.

The ninth and final rule is to maintain a high level of ethics. It was once said that “Honesty should never be an option.” You must always have open, honest communication with everyone. Ask questions and get the facts straight. You do not want to have misunderstandings with anyone in your organization. It is also important to surround yourself with people of character and integrity. When necessary, stand up for what you believe is right and moral.

When you are working with others, you may be asked to do something that does not feel ethical. It is important to restate the request in your own words to clarify the person's intent. Suggest an alternative or solution that is satisfactory to all parties. Turn a sticky SITUATION into a problem-solving opportunity. But if all else fails Remember: you can always say "No" when you feel it is not the right thing to do. Your reputation will ride on your ethical decisions.

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

These nine rules are essential in your new job. As part of a company you become a team player and it is going to be completely different from your school time. Your employer will expect you to work for your pay, not just sit around and drink coffee and visit with other employees. If you are not interested in this job, there are a lot of other people ready to show they can do it better than you can.

Your employer will expect you to get your job done, on time, within the budget and at an acceptable quality level. That is why you are there!

Your employer also wants employees who are responsible, organized, loyal, and are team players. They need you to be there and to consistently get your job done on time. They want winners and you want to be promoted, make more money, have bigger challenges and work in a friendly and healthy environment.

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Review and Quiz

Questions in **BOLD** answers underlined

Now it's time to present a SUMMARY REVIEW of all the key points that have been revealed in Workplace relationships level one.

What an employer

expects from you:

- Get to work on time
- Work for eight hours
- Manage your time

Factor these points when estimating a task:

- How much time you need from others
- Allow for - Interruptions
 - Problems
 - Changes

Report to your

supervisor when

you get to work

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Notify your supervisor when you have:

- Doctor or dentist appointments
- Vacation time
- Personal leave days

As a team player you might be expected to:

- Work late
- Work weekends

**Instead of looking at the hours you put in,
look what you put INTO the hours**

After completing your work, you should:

- File papers
- Clean your work area
- Return business emails
- Let supervisor know you completed the tasks

Lesson #8

“Workplace Relationships”

TRUE or FALSE

**A team player
has a reputation
for easily getting
angry or complaining**

To have a good reputation,
you need to develop good
working habits

Do not put anything
on your desk or walls
that is of a
questionable nature

- Be polite
- Do not talk too loud
- Keep your area clean

Dress in a professional
and competent image

Lesson #8

“Workplace Relationships”

Avoid distracting clothing,
jewelry, numerous piercing
and wild hair styles

Many companies will not have:

- **Dress code**
- **Uniforms**
- **Tattoo day**

Nine rules of Job Behavior

Rule #1

Observe, listen, keep quiet and absorb

Rule #2

Be aware of gossip and corporate culture

Which one is NOT corporate culture?

- **Attitudes**
- **Company size**
- **Experiences**
- **Beliefs**

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Rule #3

Be professional

Never make fun
or jokes at someone
else's expense

Only discuss
problems or
complaints with
your supervisor

Rule #4

Know your individual responsibility

TRUE or FALSE

**It is ok to hide your mistakes,
just don't tell anyone in the company**

Rule #5

Always have a positive attitude

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Rule #6

- Ask for feedback
- Know how to accept criticism

Rule #7

Expect change,
surprises and
the unexpected

Rule #8

Keep your
sense of humor

Rule #9

Maintain
a high level
of ethics

Turn a sticky situation

into a

PROBLEM-SOLVING

opportunity

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

SUMMARY

There you have it. If you feel that you have missed any of the information given in this lesson, just watch it again. It's essential that you know and practice these methods.

REMEMBER, these techniques have been **PROVEN** in the business world and they **WORK**. So **RISE** to the challenge, **FOLLOW** these rules, **LEARN** your soft skills and you too can be a **WINNER** in business and have a successful career.

Good Luck! And thanks for watching!

Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships”

Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships” Test

True or False

1. Getting to work on time means being close to the parking lot
at your start time.....T or F

2. It is important for you to have reliable transportationT or F

3. Flex time means that you can arrive at work between a set time frame in
the morning and then work your full shiftT or F

4. Your supervisor will expect you to be able to effectively manage your
Time.....T or F

5. It is okay to leave a “do not disturb” sign permanently on your door or
cubicle so that others never interrupt youT or F

6. Allow for interruptions when estimating the time and size of a taskT or F

7. After completing a project you should analyze it to improve future
estimatesT or F

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

- 8. Your supervisor does not need to know you are going to be late or out sick until you return to the office.....T or F

- 9. Spend your breaks and lunch periods at your desk so that you can impress your bossT or F

- 10. It is helpful if you can work late or over the weekends when requested but it doesn't affect your reputation if you say "no".....T or F

- 11. If you finish your assigned work you should complete any unfinished administrative tasksT or F

- 12. Your reputation will follow you throughout your career so it is important to work well with your co-workers and customersT or F

- 13. When doing a reference check, recruiters often try to talk to your colleagues from previous jobs who are not on your reference list.....T or F

- 14. Good working habits include making sure your emails, reports, and communications are error-freeT or F

- 15. You can decorate your office, cubicle, or work area with provocative materialsT or F

- 16. How you dress for work is up to you. It doesn't affect your reputationT or F

Lesson #8 “Workplace Relationships”

17. Listen to the corporate grapevine but don't add to itT or F

18. Being professional includes being courteous, mannerly, and never becoming loud or physicalT or F

19. Knowing your individual responsibility means understanding what is expected of you and doing it in a timely, accurate mannerT or F

20. In corporate America change happens rarely and slowly.....T or F

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

Answers

1. Getting to work on time means being close to the parking lot at your start time.

FALSE

2. It is important for you to have reliable transportation.

TRUE

3. Flex time means that you can arrive at work between a set time frame in the morning and then work your full shift.

TRUE

4. Your supervisor will expect you to be able to effectively manage your time.

TRUE

5. It is okay to leave a “do not disturb” sign permanently on your door or cubicle so that others never interrupt you.

FALSE

6. Allow for interruptions when estimating the time and size of a task.

TRUE

Lesson #8 *“Workplace Relationships”*

7. After completing a project you should analyze it to improve future estimates.

TRUE

8. Your supervisor does not need to know you are going to be late or out sick until you return to the office.

FALSE

9. Spend your breaks and lunch periods at your desk so that you can impress your boss.

FALSE

10. It is helpful if you can work late or over the weekends when requested but it doesn't affect your reputation if you say “no.”

FALSE

11. If you finish your assigned work you should complete any unfinished administrative tasks.

TRUE

12. Your reputation will follow you throughout your career so it is important to work well with your co-workers and customers.

TRUE

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

13. When doing a reference check, recruiters often try to talk to your colleagues from previous jobs who are not on your reference list.

TRUE

14. Good working habits include making sure your emails, reports, and communications are error-free.

TRUE

15. You can decorate your office, cubicle, or work area with provocative materials.

FALSE

16. How you dress for work is up to you. It doesn't affect your reputation.

FALSE

17. Listen to the corporate grapevine but don't add to it.

TRUE

18. Being professional includes being courteous, mannerly, and never becoming loud or physical.

TRUE

19. Knowing your individual responsibility means understanding what is expected of you and doing it in a timely, accurate manner.

TRUE

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

20. In corporate America change happens rarely and slowly.

FALSE

Lesson #8 ***“Workplace Relationships”***

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.

Employee basics

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

1. Get to work on time
2. Always work your full shift
3. Know how to manage your time
4. Develop accurate estimating skills for your tasks/assignments

Employee basics

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

5. Always let your supervisor know if you are going to be late or are sick
6. Take your company-allowed breaks away from your work area
7. Notify your supervisor, in advance, about appointments and vacations

Employee basics

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

8. Be a team player
9. Always work toward having a professional reputation
10. Keep your work area looking professional
11. Maintain a professional appearance
12. Fit in with your company

Nine rules of job behavior

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

1. Observe, listen, keep quiet, and absorb
2. Be aware of gossip and corporate culture
3. Be professional

Nine rules of job behavior

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

4. Know your individual responsibilities
5. Always have a positive attitude
6. Ask for feedback and know how to accept criticism

Nine rules of job behavior

Workplace Relationships

Lesson 8 Level One

7. Expect changes, surprises, and the unexpected
8. Keep your sense of humor
9. Maintain a high level of ethics