



L I F E S K I L L S <sup>TM</sup>  
H A N D B O O K S

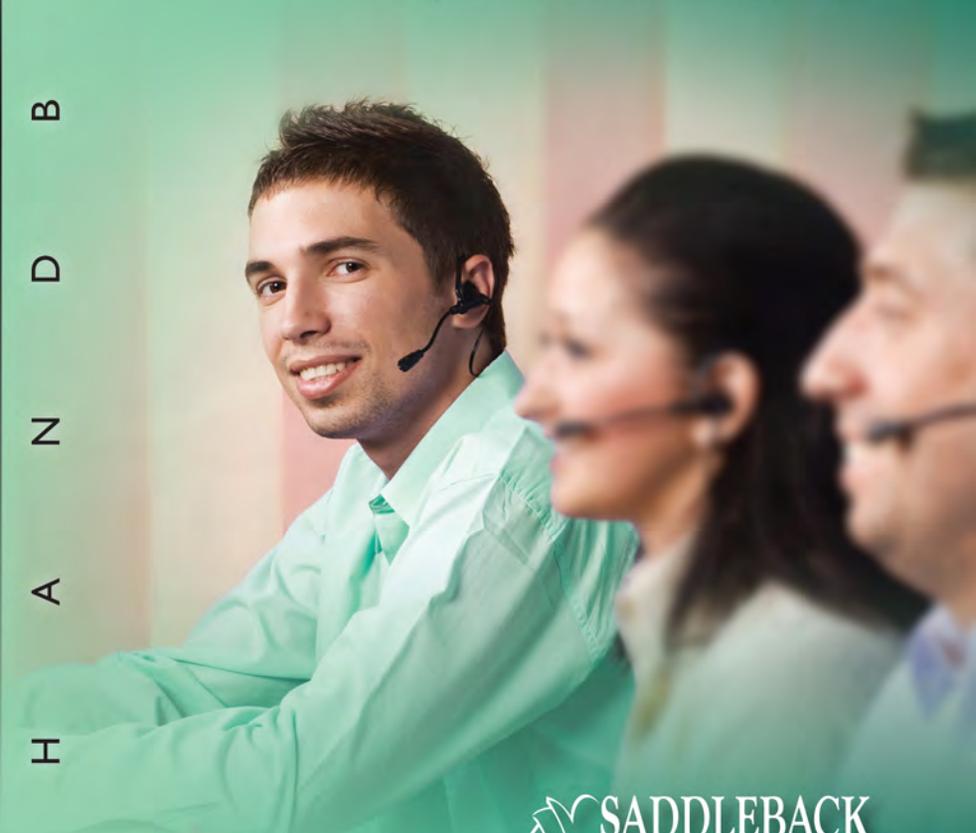
# Getting Ahead at Work

Off to a Good Start

Learning the Job

Succeeding on the Job

Workplace Problems and Solutions



21st CENTURY

 **SADDLEBACK**  
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING



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A blurred background image of four diverse business professionals (two women and two men) standing in an office environment. They are dressed in professional attire, and the scene is brightly lit with large windows in the background.

**SECTION 1**

# Off to a Good Start

Starting a new job can be both exciting and scary. You want to do good work, and you want to get along well with your co-workers. But you have lots of questions! You'll find answers to some of those questions in the employee handbook. And you'll figure out other things on your own if you follow some basic guidelines for starting a new job.



## The First Two Weeks

Katie couldn't believe how quickly the past two weeks had gone by! That's how long she'd been at her new job. She was working as an administrative assistant at an accounting firm. And all in all, things were going pretty well.

Looking back, Katie thought about her first day. She'd filled out a lot of forms to sign up for health insurance and other benefits. She'd also been given a copy of the employee handbook. Her supervisor had told her to read through it. It contained information about everything from paid vacation time to what employees were expected to wear.



During the first week, Katie had met all of the people in the office. She'd been a little nervous, but she didn't think her co-workers had noticed. She'd shaken hands confidently with each person. Since then, she'd worked with several





of them. Everyone had been great about training her and answering all her questions.

At the end of Katie's first week, two of her co-workers, Morgan and Lucy, had invited her to lunch. That had really made her feel welcome! But at the lunch, she'd learned much more about Lucy's personal life than she wanted to know. And since then, Lucy had been stopping by her desk to chat. All this made Katie uncomfortable. She wasn't sure what to do.



But today, at the end of her second week, Katie had no worries. She'd received her first paycheck! Katie looked forward to many more weeks at her new job.

Earnings Information		Current	M / 02
Normal Gross		4,389.30	
Deductions		0.00	
Retirement		0.00	
Over-time		0.00	
<b>EARNINGS TOTAL</b>		4,389.30	5,277.30
Non-Taxable Gross		351.14	418.18
Taxable Gross		3,971.12	4,859.12
Statutory & Other Deductions		Current	Year to Date
General Withholding		311.17	311.17
Additional Federal Withholding		0.00	*****
State Withholding		135.96	135.96
Additional State Withholding		0.00	*****
SDI		0.00	55.06
Medicare		62.67	75.55
Medicare Buyout		0.00	0.00
State Disability Insurance		0.00	0.00
RS		351.14	351.14
RS		0.00	0.00
Corporate Retirement		0.00	0.00
		67.04	0.00



## CHAPTER 1

# The Importance of First Impressions

When we meet someone for the first time, we get a quick idea of what he or she is like. The opinion we form is called a first **impression**. Usually, a first impression is formed within the first few minutes of meeting someone.

When you start a new job, your co-workers will judge you quickly. For that reason, it's important to think about the image you present. Do what you can to make sure the image you present is a good one.



### Impression

A general feeling or belief. The *impression* you make on someone is what he or she remembers most about you.



## Tips for Making a Good First Impression

- **Don't be late.** On your first day, arrive a few minutes early. You don't want to keep anyone waiting.
- **Look good.** Your appearance is the first thing people notice. Make sure you're well dressed and well groomed.
- **Smile!** Flashing a simple smile will help put everyone in a good mood.
- **Be polite.** Show that you're interested in what others have to say. And when you meet someone, use his or her name in the conversation. Doing so will help you remember names.
- **Be yourself.** Don't try to impress people by being overly friendly or acting like you know more than you do. Have confidence in who you are.

## Making a Good First Impression

1. **Wear clothing that's appropriate for the workplace.** If your clothes are too fancy or formal, it will seem like you're trying to attract attention. If your clothes are too casual or informal, it might seem that your work isn't important. And of course, it's never **appropriate** to wear clothes that are revealing—for instance, tight pants or a blouse with a low neckline. Choose basic, everyday clothes, such as a neat blouse or shirt and a nice pair of pants. If you're not sure what to wear, pay

### Appropriate

Proper or correct for the situation.



attention to what most of your co-workers wear. Also remember that in most cases, it's better to be dressed too formally than too casually.

### **Know the Dress Code**

Most companies have a *dress code*. It tells employees what kinds of clothes they're expected to wear.

In many workplaces, the dress code is what's called *business casual*. Business casual allows you to look professional but be comfortable. Don't take comfort too far, though. What you wear to a sporting event or when going out with friends isn't usually appropriate for the workplace. And it's never appropriate to wear clothing that's wrinkled, torn, or dirty. Keep in mind that your appearance on the job says a lot about your attitude toward your work.





## Tips for the Perfect Handshake

A person's handshake says a lot about his or her personality. So, be sure to shake hands with confidence:

- Extend and shake with your right hand.
- When you put out your hand, extend your fingers and point your thumb up.
- When you make contact with the other person's hand, close your fingers around it and lower your thumb.
- Your grip should be firm but not aggressive.
- Hold onto the other person's hand for about three seconds. Then pull your hand away naturally.
- During the whole handshake, smile at the other person and look him or her in the eye!

2. **When you meet others in the workplace, look them in the eye, smile, and shake hands.** Making eye contact suggests that you are confident and eager. Smiling suggests that you are friendly and pleased to meet someone. And shaking hands is an expected greeting in the workplace when meeting both men and women.





3. **Concentrate on learning your job throughout the day.** Put all your effort toward doing things correctly. But don't worry if you don't do everything right on the first day. It takes a while to learn any job. Show that you are trying hard and willing to learn. And don't be shy about asking questions or asking for help. Your efforts will be noticed.



### **Concentrate**

To think hard about something or pay close attention to something.

4. **Be on time.** Arrive at the workplace a few minutes early, so that you're ready to start on time. Go to lunch and take your breaks when you're supposed to. And then, don't take longer than you should or be late getting back. Both supervisors and co-workers notice these things! Also, bad habits are easy to form and hard to break.



5. **Don't expect or ask for special favors.** Don't expect your supervisor to give you extra time or special attention. Remember that you're one of a group of employees. Also, don't expect your co-workers to do your work or to



cover for you. For instance, never ask a co-worker to lie about your being late or leaving early.

6. **Do work that you're proud of.** When it comes to your work, never settle for “good enough.” Try hard to do a little bit better every day. Developing your work skills and abilities can be a real challenge. But over time, you’ll discover the rewards that can come from doing well in the workplace.

