

Getting along with your coworkers is essential to being happy and successful at work. Here are some guidelines:

**Work at fitting in.** It's essential that you try to fit in to the everyday work environment. Since you probably won't be working alone, you have to learn to get along in order to get things done.

A specific workplace reflects the personalities of the people working there and the nature of the work being done. You can't expect it to be just the way you would like it. You have to be willing to compromise.

If you're the new kid on the block, don't be quick to complain or to try and make changes. First try to fit in and be accepted.

When you've gained the respect of your coworkers, they'll be more willing to make the changes you want.

On the other hand, never accept a workplace environment that makes it difficult or impossible to do your job properly.

**Overcome prejudice.** Accept your coworkers for who they are as individuals and how they do their jobs.

Look beyond what race, gender, religion, or age they are. Look beyond what handicaps they have or how they live outside of work. Look at the person and you may find a friend and colleague you never expected.

Most organizations promote diversity, not only because it is right, but because it works. Different kinds of people look at problems differently and can offer different solutions.

If you only seek out coworkers who mirror you, you'll never get the benefit of a different point of view.

Also be open to coworkers with different work styles and temperments. Remember, the goal is to get things done. So find common ground and figure out how to work together.

Save your dislike for coworkers who are unproductive, unmotivated, and unwilling to do their jobs.



**Miguel has been hired by TV station WQZT to write the morning and noon news. He works with three other writers in a newsroom divided into four cubicles. Jerry, who's been there the longest, plays country music on his radio all day which Miguel can't stand. How should Miguel handle this situation?**

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**Taking turns buying lunch seems to be a tradition in the newsroom, but Miguel doesn't care for it. He'd rather bring his lunch since it's a lot cheaper. He's decided the best way to handle the situation is just to tell his three coworkers up front that he'll be bringing his lunch. Do you think this a good idea? Why?**

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**Learn the culture.** Think of it as the organization's personality - the sum of the formal and informal customs, policies, beliefs, and procedures of the organization.

Is it a casual and friendly workplace or strictly business like? Are doors left open or closed?

How are new ideas and change implemented and accepted?

How do coworkers communicate - in person or impersonally by memo and email?

Is constructive criticism encouraged or discouraged?

What is the pecking order (social hierarchy) within the organization?

Knowing the organization's culture will tell you how things really get done; what's acceptable and what's not; and who is really in charge, so you need to learn it inside and out.



**Learn the politics.** Politics is about people. It's the natural result of people interacting with each other to get what they want. And it exists in every workplace.

Whether the workplace politics is good or bad depends on the culture of the organization.

Hopefully, you'll find open and honest discussion about how things should be done and what should be accomplished.

But even if it's a backstabbing, cutthroat environment with every man for himself, you still have to deal with it. So really get to know your coworkers.

You need to know which coworkers get things done.

You need to know which coworkers are "deadwood" that you should avoid.

You need to know which coworkers can be trusted.

And you need to know which coworkers you can count on for help if you need it.

**When Edith graduated from college, she took a position as a bank loan officer. Her father told her, "If you avoid office politics and do your job, you'll be recognized and rewarded." Do you think that was good advice? Why?**

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**Edith and four other loan officers have their offices clustered together in the same area along with the loan department manager. Everyone keeps their doors open during the day except when dealing with customers, but Edith finds it difficult to work this way. She prefers her door closed and has been doing that since she started at the bank. Is this an acceptable thing for Edith to do? Why?**

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Playing practical jokes among coworkers seems to be a continuous part of the culture at your new workplace. However, you find it annoying and a waste of time. How should you deal with the situation?



1. Tell your supervisor each time a practical joke is played on you.

Yes    No    Why?

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2. Let your coworkers know you don't appreciate their practical jokes ..... Yes    No    Why?

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3. Lighten up and learn to get along with your coworkers..... Yes    No    Why?

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4. Don't participate, but accept the practical jokes that come your way ..... Yes    No    Why?

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5. File a grievance if a practical joke is played on you ..... Yes    No    Why?

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6. Tell your coworkers that practical jokes are childish and a waste of time ..... Yes    No    Why?

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7. Tell your supervisor your coworkers are wasting company time playing jokes.    Yes    No    Why?

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8. Play a practical joke that is so embarrassing everyone will want to stop ..... Yes    No    Why?

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You're new on the job and you've found your coworkers rather cold and unfriendly. How can you break the ice?



1. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible....Yes No Why?

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2. Be sure to join in social activities at work..... Yes No Why?

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3. Just wait for people to approach you ..... Yes No Why?

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4. Bring some inexpensive gifts to your coworkers to help break the ice..... Yes No Why?

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5. Invite your coworkers to lunch or dinner to help get acquainted..... Yes No Why?

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6. Forget them. Spend your free time with non-work friends..... Yes No Why?

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7. Be friendly toward anyone you meet or are working with..... Yes No Why?

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8. Do nothing. You shouldn't try to change the work environment..... Yes No Why?

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9. Tell everyone you're working with how unfriendly the environment is ..... Yes No Why?

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