BEST PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE

To participate as a member of a workplace community it is important to establish a few habits and behaviors that will set you up for success in your future career and workplace environment. These best practices will help you understand what it takes to be a valuable and contributing member of the workplace community.

Respect a Schedule

The most important thing you can do as an employee is show up and be punctual. You may have heard the saying "Early is on time and on time is late." Always plan to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled time so that you can get settled in and ready to begin work at the start of your shift or day.

- **Attendance:** Showing up consistently and on-time is THE most important thing you need to do for any job. When you are scheduled, be there. It's that simple. To become a valued employee, you want to be known for your reliability and consistency. It's also likely that others are counting on you to show up and do your job because it contributes to the success of your company.

- **Notice of Absence or Lateness:** If you must miss a day of work or are going to be late, notify your supervisor by phone call or email as soon as you know. It is generally unacceptable to arrive late to work or not at all without giving notice.

- **Time Tracking:** Some workplaces may require you to track your time, either through a punch-clock or digitally. Pay attention to how you spend your time and be prepared to provide information about how long it takes you to complete tasks. Be mindful of time-wasters and how you might be able to get around them.

Take Pride in Appearance

How you dress for work will communicate a lot about how much you respect yourself, your employer, and your workplace. Your clothing should be clean and neat without wrinkles, logos, or offensive images or words. Be sure to shower regularly and maintain good personal hygiene. If you have questions about what kind of clothing is expected, refer to the employee handbook.

Avoid Personal Business During Work

When you are working, your full attention should be given to work without the distractions of your personal life. For most people, their phones can be a cause of many distractions - calls, email, text messages, social media, games and other apps, etc. You will want to set limits for yourself around using your phone or other personal devices while at work, or, consider going screen-free during work hours.

Additionally, it is important to leave your personal business at home. Your personal problems don't have a place at work and discussing them with your coworkers, especially if you don't know them very well, may cause conflict. If you are really struggling with a personal problem, you may be able to approach your manager or supervisor and discuss it with them (especially if it is interfering with your work)

Learn New Things

It is important in every job, particularly when you are just starting, to be open and willing to learn new things. Most careers and jobs evolve and change over time and learning, growing, and adapting are big parts of success. It is always worth it to spend extra time learning more about your job, a particular task or project, and about others and their roles in the company.

- **Learn From Your Mistakes:** You will make mistakes. That's just part of being a human. The most important thing about making a mistake is to own it and use it as a learning opportunity. Ask yourself these questions to help you use the moment as a learning experience: "What can I learn from this mistake so I don't repeat it? What could I have done differently to potentially avoid this mistake? What do I still need to learn to prevent this mistake from happening again?"

- **Ask Questions:** Never be afraid to ask questions! If something is unclear or confusing, it is always best to ask for clarification and make sure you understand before moving on. Staying curious and asking questions might also help you generate new ideas and solve problems.

Respect Others

Maintaining a professional attitude and being respectful is crucial when working with others. To keep a professional attitude at the forefront, avoid complaining about work, gossiping, speaking negatively about your supervisor, and disrespecting the work schedule or assignments. Even if you dislike your job, keeping a professional attitude shows everyone around you that you take your work seriously. When it comes to how you treat others, always choose kindness. You may not always agree with your coworkers, but you still have to treat them with respect.

Be a Problem Solver

An important part of being a valuable employee and coworker is to be a good problem solver. If you always wait for the answer to be given to you or expect that someone else will take the lead and solve a problem you may be overlooked for additional responsibilities and be sending the wrong message to your employer. Taking initiative to find answers, generate new ideas, and take the lead in solving problems (when appropriate) shows others that you are competent and able to take on challenges.