

Success at Work

How to be outstanding in your job



Bellarmino University
Career Center
Division of Student Affairs

SUCCESS AT WORK

Table of Contents

Introduction

What you need to succeed at work

How internships can influence your future success at work

Working in a team environment

Value of diversity in the workplace

The Fine Art of Cube-tiquette – Article by Mary Lebeau

Dressing for the job

Proper etiquette when leaving a position

Sample letter of resignation

INTRODUCTION

Starting to work in an organization is a unique and critically important time for an intern or a new graduate. It requires you to have a special perspective and use special strategies to be successful. It also takes time to understand and earn the rights, responsibilities, and credibility of a full-fledged professional. There are different sets of rules to follow during this breaking-in stage. Because you are the “new kid on the block,” people will respond to you differently. The key to early success in the workplace is to come into the organization with enough savvy to have appropriate expectations and attitudes, know how to establish yourself, to learn the “way things are done”, and to earn credibility and respect.

Twelve Tips for First-Year Success on the Job:

- ❖ Adopt the right attitudes
- ❖ Adjust your expectations
- ❖ Master breaking-in skills
- ❖ Manage the impressions you make
- ❖ Build effective relationships
- ❖ Become a good follower
- ❖ Understand your organization’s culture
- ❖ Develop organizational savvy
- ❖ Understand your new-hire role
- ❖ Develop work savvy
- ❖ Master the tasks of your job
- ❖ Acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities you need

WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKPLACE

Learn the Culture of the Organization:

Every company and organization has its own set of rules and norms, which are often unspoken and informal, about how one is expected to behave in the organization. Be sure to become familiar with the company's personnel policies. Be aware of rules related to being absent without a proper reason, tardiness, the dress code, ethics violations, deadlines, alcohol or drug use on the job and other company policies. It is important to understand the unwritten "rules" of the organization as well. Pay attention to the "way things are done around here." Observe how successful employees make use of their time at work. Find out the basic mission and philosophy of the organization. Understand what people expect of you, particularly the accepted work ethic and social norms, the political climate and how people communicate and work together.

Be Achievement Oriented:

Accountability is one of the traits that employers value most in an employee. What it means, in the words of one executive, is that "you know what needs to be done, and can be counted on to do it right and on time, without constant reminders or supervision." Stay on top of the learning curve at your organization. You have to constantly maintain your intellectual currency. Set goals for yourself and review them with your supervisor. Your supervisor will be impressed if your goals stretch you and go beyond what is covered in your job description. How well you meet and achieve your goals is one of the methods by which you will be evaluated. Evaluations also measure how well you take on responsibility, whether you complete assignments in a timely and accurate fashion, your attendance record, your initiative, your ability to work as a team member, and your problem solving ability. Many performance evaluations use wording such as "meets" or "exceeds" to describe how you rate on the evaluation criteria. Your first goal should be to understand what the expectations of your organization and supervisor are and then exceed those expectations whenever possible.

Welcome Change:

You cannot do a job well without adapting to change, whether it takes the form of new technology or added job responsibility. One of the consequences of change is having to learn new skills to replace less effective work methods. But it also benefits you to continually expand and refine your abilities. Employers are more likely to retain employees who upgrade their skills over those who do not. Knowledge and the ability to apply it provide leverage in the workplace.

Manage Your Frustrations:

A major frustration of students and new graduates after being on the job a short time is that their expectations are not met. Frustration is the difference between expectations and reality. Many twenty-somethings believe work should be fun. When their daily assignments become routine, disillusionment sets in. The reality is that no job is 100% fun and that most routine activities related to a position have value to the organization. You have the right as an employee to be treated with respect and within your legal rights. If you have questions concerning these issues you should seek advice from an outside source. While keeping your expectations realistic, manage to maintain high standards for your work and your professional development.

Keep Your Personal Life in Order:

Things happen in our personal lives that are often out of our control. Employers are usually sensitive to situations where employees are dealing with difficult personal issues, such as illness or the loss of a loved one. But, if you find yourself in such a situation, deal with the issues in a professional manner. Report directly to your supervisor and give them the appropriate information immediately. Ask for their help in working out time from work and the possibility of making up time if necessary.

College is a **different** world

Everyone knows that college is a unique world, but you won't know how true this is until you start to work. At the heart of the problems most new grads, and their managers, experience during the transition period is the failure to recognize how much the educational culture has shaped their attitudes, expectations, behaviors, and overall view of the organization they have joined. Think about it. You've spent 17 years in education. How could a person not be shaped by that environment?

And, here's something that might surprise you: the skills you learned to succeed in college and the behaviors that were rewarded are rarely the ones you'll need to succeed at work. Worse yet, the culture of education is often so different that if you continue to have the same expectations of your employer that you did of your college professors, you will be greatly disappointed and make costly career mistakes. By taking the time to learn the culture of work and what it means to be a professional, you'll avoid making a fool of yourself by taking classroom behavior into the workplace.

For example, your college education has taught you very well how to argue your position to convince a professor that you are right and he is wrong. Try that with your boss in a meeting and see how far you get! There is no syllabus to follow at work. At work you have to make A's because B grades won't cut it. There aren't

HOW INTERNSHIPS CAN INFLUENCE YOUR FUTURE SUCCESS AT WORK

Have you started your internship search yet? So you were planning on going back to the clothing store, or to the restaurant, or to the job you had in high school. The best advice we can give if you're planning on a professional career when you hit the real world is to think bigger. Think about your future and devote some serious time and energy to finding an internship that fits your future career plans. If you want to create television ads later in life, how about an internship at an advertising/public relations firm? If you're thinking about becoming a doctor, check out hospitals to see if you can help as a nursing assistant, a laboratory research assistant, or any department of the hospital.

Internships are the best way to get a taste of your life after college, see professionals working in the field, network, and gain some valuable and exciting experience to add to your resume. They are not just part-time jobs; they are an extension of the education you have been getting at the university. There are some who view internships like laboratory experiments. They are a closed environment that you get to enter to test yourself and see if a future career might work for you.

Many companies in Louisville have internship opportunities during the school year as well as the summer. You don't have to think locally when it comes to summer internships. Most large companies have summer intern training programs that can have dozens of other college students. These programs are usually highly competitive and have a rigorous application process. The best advice is to apply and treat the application like you would a college application. Smaller firms that have more work than they can handle may bring on one or two interns for summer help. They may not offer a structured schedule, which can leave some empty gaps of time with little to do, but these loosely organized internships can also be the places where you get to work in-depth on projects that are of considerable importance to the company.

As an intern don't expect the top boss to pull you into every senior meeting and pick your brain for advice. Your biggest job is to learn and observe. And your supervisors want you to learn; they are there to guide you, advise you. They understand that you do not know everything about commercial real estate for example, but they will be happy to teach you if you show interest. You will want to see and hear all the things the fancy brochures and the well-dressed recruiters don't mention. You will get a taste, not just of the work, but of the company culture and the lifestyle of someone in that profession. And you can see if your tastes and talents match what they are looking for.

Adapted from Simplicity Guide 2003

WORKING IN A TEAM ENVIRONMENT

It has become an accepted fact that there aren't many jobs in the workplace that teams can't do better than individuals. Yet in many cases, teams fail to produce the expected results. Rather than coaching them to success, managers often disband these failing teams and return to a strategy of having people work as individuals.

A closer look at the dynamics of teams reveals that there is a short list of important measures that are critical. A successful team is like a favorite recipe. If you use all the right ingredients, the result is delicious. Leave out just one ingredient and it's not quite as good. Leave out two or three and you have a culinary disaster. Take a look at the team "ingredients" below to measure your team's chances of success.

The right size - in general, smaller is better. The bigger a team is, the more likely it will have difficulty with communication and reaching consensus. Big teams that are successful have usually, on their own, broken up into smaller teams simply because they work better.

Of course, if a team is too small, the opportunities for real teamwork are diminished and this can be a disadvantage, too. The right size? About four to ten.

Volunteers or victims? People who choose to be on a team will generally function better than people who are forced to be on a team. This is common sense. We would all rather have a teammate who volunteered to be on the team because they believe in the "cause," rather than someone who was forced to be on the team and couldn't really care less about our success. You are always better off with a team of willing volunteers than a team of victims.

Every team needs to have a mission. The mission must be clear and unambiguous, and the whole team has to agree to it. If even one team member doesn't "buy in," then the team will be in trouble sooner or later. You should never assume that everyone on your team wants to accomplish what you want. Take the time to spell it all out in detail and work towards getting all team members to agree.

Having a mission is great. But in addition to that, team members must agree on how they intend to accomplish that mission. For example, if our automatic press team wants to average five minutes per screen for setups and 800 shirts per hour, we have to come to an agreement on how we're going to do that. Are we going to do our setups as a team? Are we going to take turns loading and unloading? Are we all going to show up to work every day and on time? We must have a plan and we must agree on the details of the plan in order to have a good chance of success.

The team must have the necessary skills. Let's say, for example, that the automatic press team decided to put a man on the moon. In spite of our good intentions, we

would have no chance of success. We don't have the skills to put a man on the moon. While this is an exaggerated example, teams often fail simply because they don't have the skills to succeed. Our automatic press team will fail if we don't have teammates who can load shirts quickly and straight, or if we don't have teammates who are skilled in setting up screens.

Commitment means that excuses for failure are unacceptable. Commitment means that obstacles will be overcome, one way or another. Commitment means that we are willing to embrace change, no matter how uncomfortable it feels, in order to get to the goal. This is an important ingredient and one that is often missing.

Team responsibility – a successful team has to take responsibility for its successes and its failures. When things go poorly, some teams react by pointing fingers. It's all too easy to single out a teammate and blame her/him for what's gone wrong.

So if you are on a team and it is struggling, take the time to be certain that the members really have all of the eight important ingredients above. Like your best recipe, with all the right ingredients, the team will be great!

Characteristics of a Good Team

- High level of interdependence among members
- Leader has good people skills and is committed to team approach
- Each member is willing to contribute
- A relaxed climate for communication
- Members develop a mutual trust
- The group and individuals are prepared to take risks
- Group is clear about goals and establishes targets
- Member roles are defined
- Members know how to examine errors without personal attacks
- The group has capacity to create new ideas
- Each member knows he can influence the agenda

DIVERSITY CAN HELP YOU LAND THAT FIRST PROFESSIONAL JOB

If you are a college student seeking to be recruited into the professional workforce, one of the most important qualities employers will be searching for is your ability to be a “team player”. For most employers this means working effectively with their experienced workers who in most cases are older than student recruits. It also means working effectively with employees who may be of a different race, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic group than you.

Performing well in a diverse work setting has become a significant employment issue since 1987 when the Hudson Institute published their Workforce 2000 report which made many projections of change in the composition of the U.S. workforce up through the year 2000 and beyond. The most striking change prediction and one that many found hard to believe was the sharp decline in the proportion of white males that would be new entrants into the workforce. The report projected that the traditional supply of white males would go from 47% in 1985 to only 15% of the new entrants into the workforce by the year 2000. The reality of those predictions has come true in many organizations at various levels and in parts of the Country today.

Most reasonably progressive organizations have begun to address issues brought on by a more diverse workforce with various forms of diversity training. It is important to note that these organizations are not limited to either the Fortune 500 or private sector. Public organizations have begun to look at such issues as the effectiveness of their social, psychological and other public services. In many instances, psychological treatment approaches and theories were developed with only white male clients in mind. This dilemma caused many social organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of their services and even to recognize that they excluded some diverse potential clients and markets. Given the competitive and economic challenges in the fight for survival faced by public organizations this dilemma spotlighted new opportunities. Furthermore, the demand from excluded public sector markets and the need for quality service simply pointed out that failure to address this dilemma did not make sense. The importance of acquiring skills in valuing and managing diversity has revealed dilemmas of challenge, possibility and opportunity in most businesses and organizations.

Neither have historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) been exempted from diversity dilemmas and responsibility. Among the many virtues of HBCUs is to provide caring support and nurturing to black students who often report these ingredients missing from their experience at white colleges. The HBCUs now face the dilemma and challenge of convincing black students that they must learn to value and manage diversity. While black students seem ready for any challenge that will improve their chances for landing jobs and experiencing previously denied successful career opportunities; there is not an abundance of diversity courses available on the HBCUs campuses.

So the challenge for **all** college students is to understand not only the ethical reasons, but also the business reasons for valuing and managing diversity in preparation for

work. They must understand and believe that it can impact communications, teamwork, individual's creativity, leadership capability, trust, loyalty, and therefore overall organizational effectiveness. As the private and public sectors make gains in each of these areas through pressing their diversity initiatives, organizations can actually improve their productivity, quality and other results through these efforts. The big question becomes how to get the most from these advantages.

While the preceding questions have hung over U.S. organizations, many have begun to look to colleges and universities to provide them with students who are more culturally aware and capable of participating in and leading a diverse workforce. The "high flyer" white male who works well only with "guys" like his fraternity brother, will be a smaller proportion of the entrants into the workforce and may not be hotly recruited by the wise organization of the future. Yet, the white male who can work well with anyone will continue to be a premium value to an organization.

Colleges and universities can give students a decided advantage by helping them to be ready for the diverse workforce of the 21st century. Students perform well in job interviews and get off to quick, confident starts on new jobs when they have had some personal understanding and experience with people who are different than they are. This is true for all aged individuals whether their difference is age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, ability, organizational status or professional differences. Fortunately for employers, business schools and undergraduate schools have begun to seriously address these issues.

There are some specific things the enlightened ambitious student will want to do on their own or with help from their college or university. These things can make a difference in the effectiveness one experiences during their adult working life. Let's call these things "personal stretching tips." Think of yourself as a large rubber band. The fact is that the more elasticity you have the greater the number of functions you are able to perform as a rubber band. Compare this rubber band with one the same size, however, it is tight and has very little elasticity. When these human rubber bands are asked to stretch, they might fray emotionally – sometimes even snap. Individuals who lack exposure to diversity or who fear diversity are often this way. They are tight when they come in contact with differences or diversity.

Here are some of my personal stretching tips:

- ❖ The next time you are at a reception or an event, force yourself to spend time with people you may normally avoid (come on admit it most of us do this – although it may be unconsciously). This may mean talking with older people, older men, blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians, a person in a wheelchair, whomever. Have some topics and questions in mind to discuss. The chances are good they seldom talk with people like you and would find it interesting. Both of you might even learn something from each other.
- ❖ Ask yourself what groups of people do you think you are superior to (yes, I know you don't think that way and neither does anyone else - sure). The next time

you talk with someone from that group, keep good eye contact with them and listen intently to what they have to say as if it might change your life – and it may. Do the same thing with groups that you may feel are superior to you. (Examples of such groups might be people with graduate degrees, the faculty, certain majors, people from the suburbs, people from the city, athletes, non-athletes, the Greeks, the polo team, the poor, the wealthy, and so forth.)

- ❖ The next time you have a chance, place yourself in a situation where you are the only one there like yourself or only one of a few. Examine how you feel and what you can do to make yourself feel more comfortable. And repeat this exercise at least twice a year. Examine any insights you gain as well as any growth in comfort from one experience to the next.
- ❖ Occasionally skim the newspaper and magazine articles that talk about people and cultures that are different from you and your culture. Imagine what it would be like to work with them on a team or for you to work for them or have them work for you.
- ❖ When watching television, wear reality lenses and remember that most groups and their characteristics, even the ones that you belong to are often exaggerated.

By Norman M. Davis, Ph.D.

Key Points of Intercultural Communication

- When communications cause conflict, be aware that problems might have more to do with style or process than with content or motives.
- Learn to understand different communication styles—you could even benefit through expanding your repertoire.
- Communicating across cultures requires extra effort. Good communication requires commitment and concentration.
- Although culture affects differences in communication patterns, there are many exceptions within each group depending on class, age, education, experience, and personality.
- Remember that communication is a process and that the process varies among cultures. Look at what might be getting in the way of understanding. Constantly ask “What’s going on here?” and check your assumptions.
- Avoid jokes, words, or expressions that are hot buttons, such as those that are based on ethnicity, race, or gender.
- Use language that fosters trust and alliance.
- Respect differences; don’t judge people because of the way they speak.

Copyright © National Association of Colleges and Employers

THE FINE ART OF CUBE-TIQUETTE

This just in: roughly 40 million people in today's work force toil away time in cuberville. So, there's an excellent chance that your first job out of college will find you in a cubicle, too.

On a typical cubicle farm, there are a lot of little boxes next to other little boxes, with not a lot of room for privacy. And it is this very lack of privacy that makes "cubicle courtesy" so important in the workplace. After all, we can see, hear, and smell just about everything that goes on in the next cubicle...and our neighbors are seeing, hearing, and smelling us. With all that going on, how does anybody ever get their work done?

Well, you don't have to wait for "Miss Manners" to explain the "do's" and "don'ts" of open office etiquette. The rules are pretty basic, and most just involve common sense. So think first, then follow these "rules for proper cube-tiquette"—and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

The most basic rule of cubicle courtesy is to treat the cubicle as though it was an office with walls. "The cubicle walls should establish a "private area" for the employee," notes Amy Weibel, a cubicle dweller at Marina Maher Communications in New York City. "If you're approaching someone else's cubicle, respect that area. Knock gently on the side when trying to get someone's attention. This gives someone an opportunity to put up a hand or signal that they don't wish to be bothered. This is a critical courtesy for employees who work on deadline yet don't have a door to close to signal that they can't be disturbed."

"Pretending there are walls" is a good rule of thumb for cubicle dwellers—when you're outside a neighbor's cubicle. When you're inside your own cubicle, however, you should be aware of the sad fact that those walls are only imaginary—and the actual panels that separate cubicles do not provide the privacy that office dwellers have. Here's a sense-by-sense breakdown of common cubicle complaints, and the common sense "cube-tiquette" solutions:

NOISE: Most complaints about cubicle neighbors center on "noise control". When co-workers sit closely together, it's hard to avoid all noise concerns, but it's important to be aware of the people on either side of you. Develop a "telephone voice" so that your conversations aren't being overheard. Do your best not to listen in to your neighbors' phone conversations – and if you do hear them, never repeat what you heard. "I had a co-worker who not only listened to my conversation, she'd yell over things for me to say," Lisa Crowley, an interviewer for a state agency, says. "It wasn't just unprofessional. It was rude—and it made for an unhappy work relationship." Personal cell phones should be kept off until break time, and never use a speaker phone—it's distracting to the entire office. The problems don't stop once the phone is hung up. Be conscious when using radios in your cubicle and, if it's permissible, wear headphones as an act of courtesy to your neighbors. If a family member or friend visits, keep chitchat

to a minimum, or take your visitor to the break room to talk. And remember – everyone in the vicinity can hear what you’re saying, so it’s smart to keep conversations about your personal life—or your negative opinion about your new supervisor—to yourself.

But talk isn’t the only noise that “cheapens” the office environment. It seems that some employees make “little sounds” that they aren’t aware of—but their neighbors are. “We used to have an employee who hummed or sang softly to himself all day,” recalls Crowley. “The rest of us would end up playing “Name that Tune” because we were so distracted. It definitely prevented work from getting done.” Other “little noise” offenses include gum-cracking, coffee-slurping, ice-chomping, pen-tapping and, most offensive of all, full-bellied belching. A cubicle is a public area, and those working inside should act as they would in any other public area. If you wouldn’t do it in a fine restaurant, don’t do it in your cubicle.

SMELLS: After the noise is controlled, it’s time to follow your nose (and be cognizant of your neighbors’ noses). “A major faux pas is applying or wearing too much perfume while in a cubicle environment,” says cubicle dweller Gina Friars. “Cheap cologne or aftershave tends to give those nearby headaches, and even worse, some people have perfume allergies and really suffer from the variety of scents in the air.” Keep your fragrance choices simple, and if a co-worker does suffer from allergies, stick to an after-shower powder. Just because you’re in your cubicle doesn’t mean you have the freedom to take off your shoes. This looks unprofessional and, even worse, the odor will travel beyond your space. Also remember that the hoagie with garlic and extra onions may smell delicious to you, but it could be turning the stomach of your co-worker. If you must eat pungent food, take it to the lunchroom.

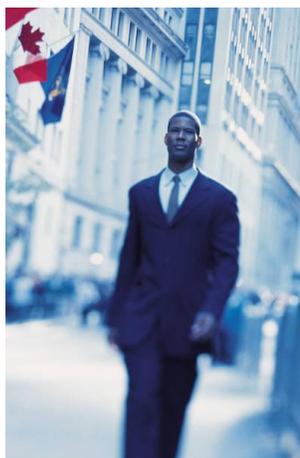
SIGHTS: Cubicle décor should comply with company standards. Remember that not everyone shares your sense of humor, so leave the “joke” posters at home, so you don’t inadvertently offend co-workers or clients. “Always remember that there is no lock on the door—in fact, by definition, there’s no door!” reporter Kate Rauhauser-Smith points out. That means the cubicle is not the place to store valuables. But that open-door policy doesn’t mean that everything is up for grabs. “My pet peeve is the way people take things from my cubicle without asking,” Friars says. “I have to hide my tape dispenser and stapler in a drawer.” Your neighbor’s cubicle should never be treated like a supply closet.

One last word about sight cube-tiquette—resist glancing into other people’s cubicles as you walk by, and don’t wander in without invitation. The cubicle is someone’s work area, and should be treated as such. Professionalism and courtesy are the keys to cubicle etiquette, so take time to know your neighbors and their individual preferences. “Knowing your co-workers’ personality types has a lot to do with maintaining a happy close working environment,” says Laura Menard, another cubicle occupant at Marina Maher Communications. “Everyone is different. Being open about the things you need or prefer in a work environment is the most acceptable way to survive those close quarters.”

DRESSING FOR THE JOB

Deciding what to wear is one of many important decisions you will make each day at work. Why is what you wear so important? It's the first impression that people will have when they interact with you face to face and it's the image they'll keep in their minds when they have a subsequent contact with you on the phone or through e-mail. When you dress in clothes that mean business, you have a better chance of being thought of as serious-minded. Here are 10 tips that can help you dress for the part.

- ❖ Wear shoes that are well maintained. It tells people that you pay attention to details.
- ❖ Schedule haircuts at a regular interval and be sure that your hair is clean and groomed on a daily basis.
- ❖ Press your clothing. Look in the mirror before you leave home to check for creases and wrinkles.
- ❖ Keep a business jacket at the office for emergency meetings.
- ❖ Women, keep an extra pair of hose at work in case of an emergency.
- ❖ For men: make sure that your suit is tailored well. It is better to have fewer suits of high quality than to have a poorly fitted suit.
- ❖ For men: wear socks that cover your calves.
- ❖ For women: don't wear more than 13 accessories.
- ❖ For women: business casual doesn't give you license to wear a very short skirt or extremely tight clothing.
- ❖ Your business casual wardrobe should consist of the same type of clothes described in your company's casual dress code policy. If your company doesn't have a documented casual dress code policy, emulate the dress of the person whose position you want.
- ❖ Dress for the position you want, not the position you have.



WHAT DOES BUSINESS CASUAL REALLY MEAN?

Many organizations have specifically defined the meaning of business casual dress in their environment. However for a middle of the road business casual climate, the following suggestions will be useful:

Women:

If your company's idea of casual isn't quite jeans and sweaters, pantsuits are the answer. Not only are they trendy, but they can be dressed up or down. Choose a dark neutral shade like black, navy, brown, or gray, and opt for pants with a bootleg cut. Pair them with a light sweater, and you'll be ready to go from your desk to a client meeting without a second thought.

The most current style to own for work is a classic sheath, which is fitted to flatter the body's curves without being too tight. Pair it up with a cardigan or a blazer in the same fabric or color.

Stock up on different tops to give your wardrobe a bit of versatility. Cotton shirts and sweater sets both work well with khakis and dress pants. Keep accessories to a minimum.

Men:

A sport coat instantly creates a pulled together look, especially in a business casual environment. A navy blazer works well with khakis and dark colored wool pants.

Khakis, Dockers, corduroys, wool flannel, and linen style slacks are appropriate for casual day as well as traditional dress slacks. Watch out for wrinkles and iron if necessary.

Casual button-down oxford shirts are a great alternative to dress shirts. Go with basic colors and pin stripes. Many companies have logo golf shirts. Save the athletic shoes and hiking boots for the weekend. Oxfords and loafers are a better choice.



PROPER ETIQUETTE WHEN LEAVING A JOB

First impressions may be important, but your last few weeks in a position are what really shape employers' and co-workers' opinions of you. When you decide to leave your job, for whatever reason, remember to handle the situation tactfully. Here are some points to consider when getting ready to leave a job.

Write a resignation letter. Just telling your boss you are quitting is insufficient. You need to put it in writing and hand-deliver it to your supervisor. The letter should be brief but cordial, stating when your last day of work will be and possibly what your plans are. Adding a statement such as, "I appreciate the opportunities I have had while employed here," will help bolster your image. Finish what you have started. Excited as you may be about your upcoming change, try to remain focused on your present job. One mistake people often make once they decide to leave a position is that they leave work unfinished or don't leave information concerning the status of their projects. Leave your work area in the condition in which you would like to find it if you were new to the job.

Leave on good terms with other employees. You want to be remembered as a decent employee. Make every possible effort to leave with positive feelings towards fellow employees. Use your exit interview wisely. When asked to comment on your job, avoid making personal attacks on supervisors or other employees; instead, offer constructive criticism. An easy evaluation pattern to follow is "good-bad-good." Begin by telling your interviewer what you liked about the job. Then discuss any problems briefly. End with a positive statement about the position and possibly your co-workers.

Remember that your current employer will often become an important reference for future employment and the more professionally you have handled your work and your exit, the better reference you will create.

SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER

Keep your resignation letter short, simple, and positive—something like this:

"I want to thank you for all you have done for me here at (Company). It's been a pleasure working with you, and representing the company as your (job title).

I have accepted an offer with another firm and have decided to tender my resignation. My last date of employment will be (approximately 2 weeks' notice). This decision has nothing to do with the exceptional opportunity you have provided me here. You and the company have been more than fair with me, and I genuinely appreciate all your support.

I wish (Company) continued success, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your team. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of further assistance in helping with a smooth transition."