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# The New Stranger Danger: How to Put Your New Coworkers at Ease

Even at the most welcoming companies, having a new employee start can bring a lot of uncertainty. People may not necessarily show you the cold shoulder, but until they get to know you, they will be unsure of your work style, your communication preferences and generally what makes you tick. And as a result, they probably won't know how to best work with you until they're really comfortable around you.

This process often happens naturally as someone gradually gets to know you, but there are ways to speed it up so that you can start contributing in a meaningful way as soon as possible. Ready to hit the ground running at your new office? Try employing the following tips to build great working relationships quickly.

## 1. Make the first move

Taking the first step to getting to know your coworkers might seem like the last thing you want to do when you're already overwhelmed with a new job, but it truly is the best way to begin building a rapport.

"Approach others by first extending a handshake, while simultaneously calling him or her by their first name, stating your first and last name, while announcing that you just started working with the organization and that you are on their team," recommends Parker Geiger, CEO at personal branding firm CHUVA beyond.

Then, when it comes time to making small talk, "keep the subject about the other person... you might proceed by stating something like 'I know your title is Marketing Director, but what does that really mean?'" Geiger suggests.

Too shy to introduce yourself out of the blue? "Asking your manager for a proper introduction to the rest of the staff is a good method [for] meeting the people you will be working with," says Steve Pritchard, HR Consultant for Anglo Liners.

## 2. Prioritize relationship-building

You don't want to just go out of your way to get to know your coworkers on the [first day](#), though -- if you want to build lasting relationships, it's important to do a little something *every day*.

"Relationship-building should be your number one priority" when you first start a job, says Lori Scherwin, founder of career firm Strategize That. "Perception shapes reality and your first few days -- if not hours -- on a job can inform your success."

A good way to make that first impression is by "creating a barrier-free environment... Whether over coffee or in the hallway," adds Eric Riz, founder and CEO of resume verification platform Empty Cubicle. "Don't overload them with your thoughts on the company or a monologue that is unnecessary. Explaining your role in the organization and how you and this individual may be working together will help give your new coworker comfort in their new role and the organization overall."

If you want to go the extra mile, "having lunch with your coworkers [goes] a long way! This is where the best bonding happens" says career coach Jena Viviano. Beyond that, "ask to be involved in [social events](#), get on the appropriate distribution lists and try to hang out with each person separately."

## 3. Enter observation mode

Sometimes, when your coworkers are less than welcoming, it's due to a fear that you'll rock the boat too much and shake up existing processes or team dynamics. To avoid that, you'll want to spend a lot of your time observing how things work before you make any bold moves.

"This is the one step I have seen so many people skip! They take on the new job and start to make changes or make suggestions to change things before they even understand the 'why' behind the ways things are currently structured or done. This approach is one of the fastest ways to introduce conflict into a department," says Marla Harr, Business Professional Development Consultant at Business Etiquette International.

"Listen and learn more than you act and advise. Specifically, conduct a 'listening tour' in your first few weeks where you can observe and ask before you jump in and unintentionally cross any lines," Scherwin suggests. "Even if you were brought in to inspire change, you'll need buy-in. Gain trust and advocates first and use new insight to inform your plan."

#### **4. Remember: You don't have to be best friends**

If you don't feel things clicking on a personal level with your new coworkers, try not to worry too much.

"You don't have to be friends with others to work well with them; however, you do need to be friendly," Geiger says.

That means you keep commitments, make yourself available for meetings and calls, show up and deliver your projects on time, respond to emails in a timely manner and engage in friendly conversation from time to time, Harr says. In other words, be a good coworker -- and treat others how you would like to be treated.

"It comes down to honesty, integrity, trust, and follow-through/keeping commitments. That's how you build relationships and solid reputations," she adds.

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