

Employer Expectations in the workplace

Most employers and workplaces have a hidden set of rules.

Unless you know the 'rules' or can learn them, you might find it difficult to land the job of your dreams or may risk losing it.

In looking at these rules, it is important to understand the difference between work life and home life.

In work, the purpose is to undertake certain activities in return for income or gaining experience to progress in your career or take on another career.

Helpful Hints about the Hidden Rules of Work

1. **Look to your position description for a guide** on what is expected of you in terms of the activities you are required to perform
2. **Look around you for clues on how you are expected to behave.**
Find a mentor if you can, someone who is successful in the business, and use their behavior as a guide
3. **Look around you and notice how people dress** – there is a uniform even if there is no official uniform
4. **Look around at how people present themselves.** If you want to fit in, you need to take notice and do something not to stand out in a negative way
5. **Be on time or early** and take breaks as allowed – people will notice if you take extra time
6. **Stay work focused** – this means doing the work and even if it's quiet, asking for something else to do. It is important to stay off your phone or social media as the employer is not paying you to socialize
7. **Confine your conversations mostly to subjects around and about work** – leave the other stuff for when you are talking with your family and friends (some personal talk is essential so that people can get to know you, but remember you are at work and make your conversations professional and appropriate)
8. **Manners are important.** How you address people, talk with people and conduct yourself is very important to successfully getting work and keeping it. Not only is this good manners, but our workplace behavior is legislated to ensure there are no breaches of anti harassment and workplace bullying. Any conversations or behavior that makes someone feel uncomfortable can be construed as harassment or bullying
9. **Email etiquette** If you are working in an office environment, email is a big part of your communication with internal and external stakeholders. Keep these tips in mind when using professional email:
 - Keep your language professional avoiding slang and abbreviations. The same goes for greetings, people usually use 'hi' and 'hello' for the greeting, and 'Kind regards,' 'Regards,' 'Best,' 'Cheers,' for the sign off.

- Consider when to use 'reply all' and CC (include) people on emails. Usually, if someone is CC'd on an email, it means the sender wanted to keep them in the loop. So when you reply, you should 'reply all' to keep them in the conversation.
On the other hand, if there are many people included on the email list, and your response is only relevant to the sender, avoid overloading people's inboxes, and just reply to the sender.
- Always use plain fonts and colours- (black/ grey, size 10-12, Calibri, Cambria, Arial, Times New Roman etc) and depending on your industry you may want to avoid emoticons/ emojis.
- It's good practice to include an email signature so people know who you're representing. Copy your colleague's signatures and include the business/ organisation (and address if necessary), your position, email address and phone number.
- And don't forget to spell check!
- Make sure your email content is always professional. Nothing you say in email is private and can be tracked. You don't have to lose your personality and use robot speak, but take cue from others to understand what is acceptable.

10. Social media etiquette

Larger business/ organisations usually have a social media policy. There are common sense rules to follow when using social media in relation to your job.

Don't forget that everything you post is in the public domain. Be respectful to your workplace and your colleagues. As a general rule, don't post anything that you wouldn't be prepared for your boss to see! For example, avoid criticism of your boss, colleagues or the workplace, and never share private and confidential information.