

THE OFFICE

A guide to the honeymoon period

Treat your new job as you would a new relationship, writes Gillian Nalletamby.

Starting a new job is like meeting your partner's parents for the first time. And if you are like a lot of us and married to your job, it's important to make a lasting impression. Here are tips to make your union a happily ever after.

So you have landed your dream job, or perhaps your "job for the moment", very similar to "Mr Right for the moment", if you have taken former minister for employment participation Mark Arbib's helpful advice and tried not to be too picky.

In your first week, dress in a conservative manner to make your colleagues fall in love with you at first sight. Think of the outfit you wore when you first met the parents. Just a hint of cleavage, minimal make-up, no short skirts and leave the hooker heels at home.

Similar to family dinner-time conversation, you need to think of some watercooler topics to break the ice with your colleagues that won't possibly offend or incite a riot. Standard dinner-time rules apply – no politics, economics or religion. Reality television is what cigarette smoking was in the 1980s in regards to workplace bonding. Think G-rated shows, not G-strings. Family shows such as *MasterChef* are more appropriate than *Girls of the Playboy Mansion*.

While every company appreciates initiative and open expression of ideas (in theory anyway), it's career suicide to rearrange the filing cabinet on your first day or start every sentence



with "At my company, we did it this way". As every woman knows, just like you would negotiate a relationship, you have to make it seem like it was their idea in the first place.

First impressions can be quickly formed at an office, unfair but true. You don't want to be known as the office bore but the other extreme, the party animal or the office lush, is a no-no. Like any family outing, you want to be on your best behaviour at after-work drinks. As funny as all your drunk girlfriends think your impression of Lady Gaga is, this is no time to test it out on a new audience.

Just as you would keep a lid on PDAs (public displays of affection, not geeky gadgets) at a family do, flirting outrageously with the photocopier technician or the

hunky courier boy is not encouraged, no matter how much they may look like David Beckham. You need to get a quick grip on the office culture and procedures, not grope your colleagues.

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Steal food and milk at your own peril. The office fridge harbours more than bacteria. Expressed milk comes quickly to mind. And while we're on the topic of stealing, the first week of work is not an opportunity to add to your vintage office stationery collection and if you need to make an urgent

international phone call, be smart about it and use your colleague's phone when they are at lunch.

Finally, exercise caution when using the "reply all" button in emails. Email etiquette, like good table manners, can never be undervalued.

Pace yourself. Just like a relationship, you have the rest of your career to show your quirks and let yourself go. Just get through the probation period or honeymoon period and then they will be forced to accept you, for better or most likely for worse.

Gillian Nalletamby is a freelance writer. Her website is 30isthewblack.com.

Is there an aspect of office life that makes you laugh, cry or drives you crazy? Submit 550-word articles for The Office to theoffice@fairfax.com.au.

SALARY SPOTLIGHT

TELEMARKETERS

Telemarketers phone existing and prospective customers to promote goods and services, obtain sales and arrange sales visits. Tasks may include: working from scripts and lists of contacts to promote goods and services by telephone; creating interest and seeking a sale or agreement to see sales representatives.

Job prospects are below average. In the five years to May 2010 employment decreased 38.3 per cent to 9931 (compared with growth of 10.9 per cent for all occupations).

Employment growth in the next five years is expected to decline (-2.3 per cent a year compared with 1.8 per cent for all occupations. Unemployment is high (about 9.3 per cent) compared with all occupations.

Median age is 28 years and 24.4 per cent are aged 45 years and over. Median full-time weekly earnings (before tax) are \$800 (compared with \$1000 for all occupations).

ANNABEL ROSS

Source: joboutlook.gov.au



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