

## NEW INTERNSHIP DOS AND DON'TS

The first impressions you make do count on a new job, so it's important that they're positive. Here is some advice from Peggy Schmidt, author of *Making It On Your First Job: When You're Young, Inexperienced and Ambitious* (Avon Books).

**DON'T** be shy about introducing yourself to everyone in your department or firm (also, the firm's customers and suppliers). Having people call you by name makes you feel like you belong and also speeds your "absorption" into the company. Co-workers will feel you've been there longer and will treat you that way.

**DO** take notes on your basic responsibilities and general office procedures and people's names. This saves you from having to ask again and again how to do your duties.

**DO** keep busy. Even if you have no specific assignment yet, resist the urge to pull out a magazine or to just sit and chat. Instead, leaf through catalogs, familiarize yourself with forms or where things go, straighten samples and catalogs, even dust shelves. This shows your boss (supervisor) and others that you're making an attempt to learn as much about the firm as you can and to be as productive as possible.

**DO** come into the office early and stay late. Even if you don't have anything specific to do, you will look willing and able to work. In addition, you may pick up informal information about the inner workings of the company.

**DON'T** let your work area get messy. Your boss and co-workers don't know you yet and will make assumptions based on your behavior and habits. Messiness implies disorganization and hints that you might find the work overwhelming.

**DON'T** form fast friendships until you get the lay of the land. It won't help your reputation to be allied with the office gossip or a lazy worker. Play it safe--be friendly to everyone, but don't pair off.

**DO** be enthusiastic.

### What are some good tips for a successful internship?

The intern who best represents him/herself, the Department of Consumer and Design Sciences, and Auburn University:

- Works the assigned number of clock hours.
- Is on time in regard to arrival at work, scheduled appointments and meetings, and completion of assigned tasks.
- Shows a high level of initiative and industriousness.
- Is dependable and "follows through" with all responsibilities.
- Dresses appropriately.
- Manages time wisely.

- Adapts readily to routines and changes in the work setting.
- Appears self-confident.
- Is willing to work around obstacles and eliminate the habit of "excuses".
- Demonstrates the ability to think independently, use good judgment, and make wise decisions.
- Is open to trying new methods, and learning new concepts.
- Understands the philosophy of the company for which he/she is interning, and tries to reflect that philosophy in a positive way.
- Is honest at all times.
- Exhibits a positive attitude toward his/her job and the people with whom he/she works.
- Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness in regard to personal and professional growth.
- Shows emotional maturity
- Maintains high quality interpersonal relationships with customers and staff.
- Realizes that he/she is a representative of the company/business for which he/she is interning.
- Is able to communicate clearly both in written and verbal forms.
- Does not procrastinate on things such as writing thank you notes to people who helped in anyway regarding the internship or related endeavors.
- Takes the Internship commitment seriously and does his/her part in fulfilling the terms of the commitment.
- Realizes that he/she is still an AU student, with the work setting serving as the classroom.
- Accepts constructive criticism with a positive "frame of mind", realizing it often provides an opportunity for personal and professional growth.
- Realizes that he/she may be able to create a pleasant work environment just by possessing a positive mental attitude. (In other words, one person – you - can often have a major influence on the attitudes of others.)