

Set the tone for your career from your first day

BY [NAZLEY OMAR](#) [October 6, 2015](#)



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One of the country's top business coaches gives advice on how to make a great impression on your first day at work

When we first meet someone our brains are trained to categorise that person in order for us to know what to expect from them and how to respond.

According to Executive Coach Penny Holburn, once we have formed impressions of someone, this turns into long-term perceptions and ultimately the reputation we give them.

“So how you look, what you say, and how you act when you first meet someone will determine the impression formed. First impressions are also difficult to change. Having formed an impression of someone we dislike, it’s difficult to change it unless we repeatedly see evidence that challenges the first impression,” she says.

What you say on your first day at work is of utmost importance. It’s essential to be polite and upbeat and steer clear of the following:

Don’t moan or be negative

And that is about everything, not just work-related issues. Don’t moan about crime, the in-laws or your new job. If the people you meet are moaning and complaining don’t join in with them. You can just nod your head to show you empathise with them.

Negativity just brings the whole team down and it makes managers wonder if you are good to have around. So, have a positive attitude.

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Never bad-mouth your previous employers. If you have baggage from your past work experiences then leave it behind or deal with it, but don't bring it into your new workplace.

"I need to leave early". Unless you have an extremely good reason or it is agreed beforehand, you should always work a full day. Leaving early will create an impression of someone who skimps on their responsibilities.

"I have to attend to personal stuff". On your first day, focus on work and let someone else go to the bank, book the tickets or make restaurant reservations. Give your job your full attention!

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"No, I am not going to do that". If you are asked to do a job that you think is below you, such as photocopying, do it with enthusiasm.

"I wasn't hired to do that". On your first day or first few days you may have to help out on all sorts of projects. Be willing and happy to help.

"I am so tired". You are expected to be alert and awake on your first day in a new job. So make sure you are not out partying until 4am the night before you start.

"I intend to be the CEO of this company". While it's important to have career aspirations, don't tell everyone your plans on your first day. As a new person, your colleagues will expect you to be focused on learning the ropes.

For more information about Penny Holburn, visit www.lifecoachingbusiness.co.za