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**When You're the New Employee or Temporary**

**By Susan Dunn**

**When You're the New Employee or Temporary by Susan Dunn, MA, Personal Life & EQ**

**Coach**

It's amazing what people don't think to tell you when you're new to their place of business. Everyone should be required to work somewhere new for a "first day" about once a year to remember what it's like. Someone who's worked in the same office for months of years forgets, so you'll have to remind them.

Every new employee needs to know at the absolute minimum:

- Where to park
- Dress code, especially Friday's
- What the hours are - arrival, lunch and departure
- Do you go to lunch at a certain time, or work around others' lunch hours
- Is there a time clock? How does it work?
- Location of restrooms, break room, cafeteria
- Where is the first-aid kit
- If you're answering the phone, how do they prefer it be answered
- Where do messages go
- How does the coffee machine work? Are you expected to make it?
- Location of nearby restaurants if there's no on-site cafeteria
- How to work the necessary office machines - codes, etc.
- Where the supplies are kept and how to get them
- Names and positions of other employees you'll interact with
- Any information you need to know about your immediate supervisor - How does she like her phone messages? Do you communicate by email or in person? Is it a closed-door policy?
- If you're new, have you filled out all the paperwork? If you're a temp, who signs your timesheets and what's the process?
- Have others been informed about your name, position and length of hire if a temp

## When You're the New Employee or Temporary

Don't be ashamed to request all this information when you first arrive. It can seem awkward to inquire about the coffee and restrooms, but these are things you need to know.

How to handle this?

The best thing to do is be proactive. Arrive with a list of these items in your hand. You can probably think of other important things you need to know to add to it. When you're greeted and ushered to your desk, request that the person answer some questions which will allow you to do your work better. Then proceed through your list.

It's unfortunate that you'll have to deal with the fact that many people think their way of doing things is the only way of doing things, or the way that everyone does this. When you ask how to answer the phone, you may be given a look like "Don't you even know how to do that?" The fact is that there are

many professional and acceptable ways to answer a phone, and most businesses have their own personal preference. You can't know ahead of time, so don't be apologetic for asking.

In the best of circumstances, you'll be given a tour of the offices. Depending upon how good you are at orienting yourself, this can be helpful but also confusing. If it all seems like a maze for you, note landmarks as you pass by. For instance, the door that leads to the stairway where the restrooms are is just to the left of the woman with the red hair.

As you're given the tour, pay attention to who is friendly and might be helpful. You'll have lots of questions in the early hours and days, and it's good to know who might be a nice resource person for you. How can you tell? They look up and smile at you, stand up to shake your hand, or even offer to help. In well-run offices, employees are professionally friendly and helpful to one another and have enough EQ to remember what it's like to be the new kid on the block. They realize everyone works more productively when acclimated, informed, and assisted.

In fact your introductory tour is a good way to test the waters for the company culture. If people are cold, unfriendly, or seem annoyed by the interruption and are impatient with your questions, things are probably going to get worse, and it's a shame you didn't know this beforehand. If it does continue, you'll at least have the information that it was them, not you, that's the problem.

Such places generally have high turnover, low morale, burnout and absenteeism, which is why you might be there as a temp in the first place. More companies all the time are requiring overwhelming workloads of employees, and when the employees yell loud enough and long enough or start staying out sick or threatening to quit, they will begrudgingly hire a temp rather than create a badly-needed permanent full-time position. If you're a new permanent hire, you can also be walking into an office that's in pain and stressed out. These things were created by others and there when you arrived.

Observe office etiquette, be tactful and observant. It's bad form to comment on things you see that aren't well done (unless you were hired to change things), so for the time being, just grin and bear it. Maintain a positive and professional attitude yourself and put your best foot forward. Conservative, businesslike attire, a sincere desire to be helpful, and consistent accountability in your work are

important and will be appreciated.

Good luck!

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## **Don't Discount the Temporary Position Interview**

**By Carole Martin**

If you think, 'it's just an interview for a temp job --- no big deal,' that's where you're mistaken. Some wonderful opportunities, networking connections and careers have resulted from temporary positions.

Temporary assignments today run the gamut from receptionist to CEO and beyond. And since an agency is usually the first contact with the company, much of the marketing and negotiations have been done for you.

And if you believe 'but the interview is set up and all I have to do is show up,' you're wrong again. The mind set you bring to that interview will make a big difference as to whether or not you get the job.

Most employers like to conduct interviews for temporary positions, even though they are slated only for a few weeks or months of service. They are particularly concerned about people in positions of higher responsibility. The employer is interested in selecting quality people who can be trusted with company information, knowledge and secrets.

### Steps to Take to Prepare For Your Interview

--- Step #1 – Do Your Research.

Many companies have Web sites where you can access valuable background information to use in your interview.

By finding out information about the company, like annual revenue and the organization's mission, you will show an interest in what you will be contracted to do. Showing some enthusiasm about the position will demonstrate a positive attitude toward the assignment that you're seeking. You don't want to project the idea that you are there because you can't find a job anywhere else, or are waiting for just the right job --- even if that is the case.

--- Step #2 – Get a Job Description.

Prepare ahead of time.

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A worthwhile exercise is to take a piece of paper and fold it down the middle. On one side of the fold write, 'What they are looking for,' and on the other side, write, 'What I have to offer.' Look at the job description and compare the company's needs with your experience and qualities. How do you stack up? Where are your shortcomings? Can you show how you learn quickly or bring added value to the company from the start?

— Step #3 Prepare a Short Information Statement.

Be ready to answer the dreaded question, 'Tell me about yourself and your background.'

Your statement should include some information on the type of companies and industries you have worked for, your strengths, your transferable skills and some of your personal traits. Practice saying this statement until it is natural.

— Step #4 Be Prepared to Talk About Your Successes and Experiences.

The employer will want to find out about your past experience — successes and failures, your work ethic, your track record and, more than likely, the reason you have chosen to work as a temporary employee rather than a regular employee. Make sure you have an answer to the question, 'Why temporary employment?'

Even though you are not being considered for a regular position at this time, there is always the possibility that it just might work out well for both parties — and the first step to making that happen is by acing the interview.

Carole Martin is a celebrated author, trainer, and an interview coach. Her books, 'Interview Fitness Training Workbook' and 'Boost Your Interview IQ' (McGraw Hill) have sold thousands of copies world-wide. Receive Carole's FREE 9-week job interview e-course by visiting her web site at:

or

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Retail Management - Identifying Each Salesperson's Lowest KPI Can Boost Sales By 30%

What is Contract Programming? An Alternative to the Conformity of Everyday Employment

Build Bridges Not Walls – Employee Recognition

Employee Rewards Reap Results

Understanding Incontinence

Build Your Own Mail Order Empire

Create Your Own Scrapbook at minimum cost.

Newbie's Guide to Stop Spam

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