**Top Five Tips for a New Apprentice**

Starting working life as a 16 or 18-year-old apprentice in a huge company, fresh out of the world of homework, lessons and classroom banter can be quite a scary thought. All of a sudden you’re a rather tiny fish in a gimongous pond!

There’s no messing about with a school leaver scheme, Intermediate Apprenticeship or Higher Apprenticeship. Though you will have structured training and there will be plenty of people there to help you settle in, your first jump into the working world can be a shock to the system.

So how do you tackle the transition from school leaver to top apprentice? Here are five top tips to help you out!

**1) Get to know people in your department.**

Most school leaver programmes and apprenticeships will involve a mentor or ‘buddy’ to help you throughout the process. You may have come across this kind of system in school, sixth form or college already.

A mentor (you might have more than one!) is usually a more senior colleague working in the same department as you, whose job it is to meet up with you regularly and guide you through anything you might be finding difficult in the new role, whether that’s getting to grips with a certain task in the office, administrative issues, or those times when you feel a little out of your depth and need a chat (which is totally normal, by the way!).

Your mentor is a good start, but don’t be scared to branch out and make the effort to get to know others in the office too. Learning people’s names and what they do helps a lot in building bridges at work. And these bridges will begin to form your very own professional network!

**2) Organise your time**

The lovely thing about a school leaver scheme or apprenticeship is that your weekly schedule will be pretty much set up for you: There will be certain days when you are definitely working in the office. And then there will be at least one day a week when you are scheduled to attend college to study for a qualification. For example, if you’re on an accountancy apprenticeship, you might be taking an AAT, ACA or ACCA qualification.

All good stuff, but you’ll have to organise your extra study time accordingly. Juggling work and study is a slightly different ball game, so set aside time for when you’ll study early on. And if you’re struggling, then look no further than point number three…

**3) Ask for help when you need it**

A new apprentice straight out of school is definitely going to have questions. And that’s okay! Don’t ever feel daft about asking for help when you need it: your colleagues won’t expect you to know everything straight away, and you are there to learn all you can about the sector and the company in order to do your job. It’s even more important you clear up problems when they crop up, as you’ll have a certain degree of responsibility as an apprentice.

**4) Take note of how senior staff members work**

You can learn a heck of a lot just by observing associates, senior associates and partners in the company when you can. How do they speak with colleagues and clients? How do they organise their time?

You might not have to understand everything they talk about at this stage, but they are well worth a watch to pick up tips on good ways (even bad ways!) to work. Better still, if the time is right then be brave and ask them a few questions. Learn from the masters!

**5) Be enthusiastic about your tasks**

Enthusiasm for a job doesn’t go unnoticed, and when you’re starting out as a new apprentice it’s vital. A positive approach to anything you’re asked to do will help people to remember you. This could lead to you involvement with more exciting new projects later on, or perhaps you could get the chance to work with one of the company’s top clients.

Life as a new apprentice is a big challenge and there will be a lot to learn, but there will be lots of people along the way to make you feel welcome. It can be very satisfying to have responsibility in a big company so early and it’s a great starting point for your career, so get stuck in!