

## **Mastering the challenges to succeed as a young professional**

Like Kermit the Frog says, “It’s not easy being...” Well, you know the rest! Even Kermit faces challenges in being green, short, and in love with a pig. As a budding professional, you may be having challenges of your own.

One challenge young professionals face or will face sometime in their careers is working with the more experienced and accomplished professionals. Although it can be quite rewarding to learn from someone who has *been there done that* and acquire their knowledge, you may also find that their current routines or approaches may not always be the most effective.

It is where young meets mature and new meets old. It is your duty as a young professional to overcome these challenges and use them to your best advantage. Understand, but do not accept, that you may be perceived as lacking experience and passion...that you are lazy and don’t understand upper-level communications. Remember—your employer hired you for a reason, so break the stereotype through performance:

**Love** what you do and no less! Passion fuels even the most negative of situations and will take you further than any other force. Passion will drive your team to success.

Understand that **working overtime** is normal. Getting to work on-time is great, however, staying after 5:00 shows that you are committed and focused on the long term. Your colleagues will take notice, too.

**Don’t be a “know it all.”** You may have four to five years of knowledge ready to explode from your brain, but be careful showcasing your thoughts too early in the game. Just like you, your long-term colleagues are there for a reason, so don’t underestimate them. Always listen first then assess and develop your own approach.

**Read and comprehend everything** that comes your way. Then ask questions. There is no better way to master the discipline. Your colleagues will appreciate the attempt to answer your own question before interrupting them.

**Over-prepare** for everything, from meetings to e-mails to phone calls. It is the most important way to counteract your lack of experience.

**Dress for success.** What do your managers wear? Your clothes can impress or depress those around you. Be respectful and understand the difference between casual and business casual.

**Be resourceful and innovative.** You were hired as fresh eyes. Take advantage of this and respectfully propose new ideas and ways to improve. Try their ways first, and if it makes more sense to change, then do it.

**Identify the weak links.** You will encounter those who have done the same job, the same way for many years. They have feathered their nests and are not changing, no way, no how. Respectfully turn negative into positive and support why changing will benefit the organization in the long term.

**Be courageous and resilient.** Don't sweat the small stuff and certainly don't allow people to walk all over you. You may be new or young, but voicing your opinion can show your ability to manage a situation with dignity and professionalism.

**Get rid of the cell phone.** Texting and answering personal calls at your desk labels you as a typical Generation-Yer. Respect the foundation that has been laid in years past and avoid these communication temptations.

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