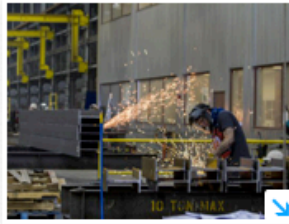


First days at new job are nerve-racking but critical



Peter Johnson, pjohnson@greatfallstribune.com 2:39 p.m. MDT June 23, 2015



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Meghan Gough admits she was anxious when she started work in mid-June as a graphic designer for the Wendt Agency.

"Even though I really wanted to work at Wendt, I realized I had a pretty steep learning curve to get acclimated because I didn't know a lot about

marketing and advertising," said Gough, 23, who received her associate degree in graphic design recently from Great Falls College Montana State University after earlier studying photography in New York City.

But Wendt CEO and President Brenda Peterson says Gough eagerly learned about advertising and marketing as well as the company's collaborative work culture.

"Meghan has an outgoing personality and asked a lot of questions, which helped her learn our way of doing things," Peterson said. "She is an efficient worker who has taken on several creative projects and done well."

Starting a new job is nerve-racking for most folks, but laying the ground work properly in the first 30 days can be critical to success, says Lisa Quast, a Seattle-based career coach who blogs about human resource issues.

Getting off to a good start is important whether the new job is with a creative, ideas company with more flexible rules such as Wendt — whose advertising campaigns might take several weeks to develop — or if it's with a metal fabricating company like ADF International — whose specialized steel products must be shaped, welded, inspected and rolled off the plant floor each day by teams of workers.

"There is an interesting balance between creativity and making deadlines at Wendt," Peterson said. "We give our 14 employees some flexibility in when and where they can work because we recognize the creative process doesn't only happen between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m."

Employees are given keys to the office if they want to work longer hours during nights and weekends and portable laptop computers if they occasionally want to get away to a coffee shop or home setting to focus their thinking, she said.

But employees discuss the projects they're working on and where they will work at a staff meeting each day at 8:30 a.m. to make sure some staff members are always available and that client deadlines are met, Peterson said.

As a new employee, Gough said she has stuck with regular, 8 to 5 hours in the office so far, but occasionally comes up with ideas for projects at home that she emails to her work computer.



The finished product is just as important at ADF International, but flexible work hours aren't possible on a factory production floor, company officials said.

"ADF International relies heavily on the attendance, punctuality and production of its employees to complete its projects on time in a cost efficient manner," recruiter Kelley Aline said. "We look for motivated and reliable employees who understand when one member of a production team is absent, someone else's workload just increased."

Employees who consistently fail to meet ADF attendance and punctuality policies within their first few months of employment are subject to strict but consistent disciplinary action, up to termination, she added.

Tips for new employees

Brenda Peterson, CEO, The Wendt Agency:

1. Research what the company and job will be like before you start work, by either going online to read descriptions or by talking with company employees.
2. When you start work, spend time talking to co-workers to understand each of their roles.
3. Ask a lot of questions about assignments to make sure you understand what's expected.
4. Learn and follow job expectations, including hours, where work and business attire.

Meghan Gough, new graphic designer, The Wendt Agency:

1. It's important for a new employee to be confident in abilities, but humble.
2. Be excited about learning.
3. Ask for help to make sure you're doing project properly so you can complete it successfully.

Kelley Aline, recruiter, ADF International:

1. Show up for work on time, ready to work, when scheduled.
2. Work with a purpose, minimizing distractions and staying on task to get the job done.
3. Quality matters, so check your work for quality, which reflects on both you and the company.
4. Safety first, by wearing safety gear and reporting mishaps.
5. Take good care of tools and respect co-workers.

