

FIRST JOB TIPS

Whether your first position is in an office or on site, here are three core areas that you should focus on to maximise what you offer and how you grow in your career.

1

CO-OPERATE

*With your **team*** - Accept challenging tasks enthusiastically. A willingness to step out of your comfort zone will commend you to your team.

*With your **supervisor*** – Always be willing to do more than what is asked of you. Show that you really are “hard-working and willing to learn” like you (probably) said in your interview. If you do not have an assigned mentor, a co-operative attitude will go a long way towards getting that much needed mentorship.

*With your **colleagues*** – Civil engineering is a highly co-operative profession. Understanding your company culture will enable you to work seamlessly with other teams.

*With your **company*** – Honouring the terms of your employment is just that, honour. Respect your job and you will find satisfaction in it.

2

COMMUNICATE

Progress – Projects work on timelines. Strive to clearly communicate where you are on a task at all times. What have you done? What remains to be done?

Confusion – Ask questions. If you lack learning or understanding, ask Google. If you lack wisdom or insight, ask your supervisor.

Uncertainty – Insecurity is one thing, but if you are not clear on a task you need to ask for guidance.

Accountability – Take responsibility for your successes and your failures. The importance of honesty in your profession cannot be overemphasised. In civil engineering, integrity and safety go hand-in-hand.

Insight – Your perspective is unique so if you see something that hasn't been noticed or raised by others, speak up. You don't know everything, but you do know some things.

3

CULTIVATE

Knowledge – Continuous professional development is not just something you do for points, it's a way of life. Make it your mission to keep up with the latest developments and publications in your field. Your formal education was only the beginning.

Experience – Do more. You are too young to just stick with what you know.

Creativity – Creativity is like a waterfall, it's only there when it's flowing. Actively seek opportunities to be creative at home and at work. Practice creativity.

Networks – You can build your own professional network in at least three areas:

- Keep in touch with your **university friends**. Find out how they are doing in terms of career-growth and type of projects that they are working on.
- Keep track of the people you connect with on **project business**. Make sure you save contact details and, if possible, connect with them on LinkedIn.
- Participate and contribute in ANY **professional organisations**. SAICE has several technical division, branches that you can volunteer in. You can also participate in the SAICE events such as Civiltalk, branch meetings, site visits and socials.