

succeeding in magazines



Magazine Publishers of America

A Guide for Professionals New to the Industry



Fundamentals to help you
achieve workplace success

Tips on how to **distinguish yourself**

Taking on **challenges** to boost
your career to the next level

Welcome to **magazines!**

You're about to embark on a fascinating, rewarding career in the magazine industry that offers both challenges and opportunities.

This guide is intended to offer helpful tips on how you, a professional new to the industry, can navigate and succeed in the magazine workplace.

Learn the fundamentals of your job and what is expected of you

Ask questions. Do not be afraid to ask questions, even if it means inquiring about tasks that appear simplistic. Workplace processes vary from place to place—find out how your specific magazine operates.

Set yourself up to learn fast. Do not assume that your supervisor will automatically grant you a lengthy learning curve: More than anything, **managers value inquisitiveness, resourcefulness, self-determination and critical thinking.** If the person who previously held your position is still with the company, talk to them about their experience to gain insights from them.

Find out where things are. Learn the landscape of your new workplace. There is nothing worse for your sense of confidence than being told to attend a meeting and not knowing where the meeting room is. Same goes for the mailroom, message center, human resources division and other key operations.

Get the political lay of the land. Once you've learned the general operational layout—the workflow chart, the magazine's production schedule and your place within them—it is time to turn your attention to the organization's political culture. **Observe the workplace to get a sense of how things operate, how decisions are made and who the key decision-makers are.**

Cultivate relationships with both key support staff and peers. As you progress in your new job, it is vital to understand which manager you can turn to at a given time, as well as who you can turn to should you find yourself in a quandary.

Know the company culture. Does it operate as a small, entrepreneurial organization or a large, corporate one—and how does your position fit into it.

Visit www.magazine.org for the latest career advice and resources.

✓ Distinguishing yourself is the **best branding**



Good work habits can go a long way toward developing your reputation as a valuable employee—and show management that you have a solid work ethic. Here are some ways to go the extra mile:

- Show up on time for work and for meetings, and make sure your presence is known.
- Pay attention and be alert.
- Listen more than you speak. When you do speak, be sure to contribute positively and add value.
- Be as prepared as much as you can for the day ahead, and the day after that.
- Be willing to work late or complete an extra assignment.
- Strive for excellence on every project you are assigned to.
- Display responsibility, dedication and a general air of integrity to build goodwill among the supervisors who evaluate your performance.

✓ **Don't be afraid to take on challenges,** but be realistic about your capabilities

Set boundaries. Once you've mastered the fundamentals of your job, always look for opportunities to grow and gather more experience. But beware of getting in over your head. Once you recognize your strengths—whether it's writing, editing, selling ads or planning marketing strategies—find ways to emphasize that strength. If you're an organizer, raise your hand for work that emphasizes those skills. Creative? Volunteer to be part of a brainstorming committee planning for a new initiative or story concept. Be judicious, be fair, but don't be shy about joining in a work-related discussion. You don't want to be seen as unsociable or unwilling to be a team player.

Mistakes are natural—but they don't have to define you as a worker. Even the world's greatest basketball player had a coach to tell him about flaws in his game and ways he could improve. As a new employee, you will have a lot to learn. It is inevitable that you will make mistakes, but the

trick is not to make the same mistake twice. Try to learn from your mistakes—be willing to admit them, take responsibility for them, make a plan not to repeat them and move on.

Ask for—and insist on—regular feedback on your performance Don't wait for your managers to praise you or tell you how you need to improve. Be proactive! Asking for regular, informal critiques from your supervisor can help keep you from making the same mistake twice, as well as signal that you care about your work and the quality of your performance. Catching problems early will help you to avoid unpleasant surprises later.

Find a mentor—and not necessarily someone who shares your similarities An experienced, insightful colleague can offer vital advice and review important work. You'll want to find someone who is invested in your success that can guide you through the workplace landscape.

Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity can mean many things, including age, religion, culture, educational level or career experience. Diversity is any combination of similarities and differences that make you or your coworkers unique.

Workplace diversity remains a challenge in most industries. But, you can be a part of facilitating a more diverse workplace in your new position. Some ways to do so include finding opportunities to network, share stories and build trust across differences.

Other ways to improve diversity where you work include:

- Put aside personal viewpoints to fully listen and learn from those with different perspectives
- Promote fairness in the workplace. Treat others with dignity and respect. Challenge those who make inappropriate and hurtful comments.
- Empower others to achieve potential
- Initiate conversations about diversity. Make an effort to increase your office's knowledge about different cultures, backgrounds and groups.

“A person is a person because he recognizes others as persons.”

—Desmond TuTu

Summary The tips provided here represent a long-term plan to help you succeed. If your work is beyond reproach—if you show up on time, work hard, demonstrate a willingness to grow, show potential and prove that you work well with your coworkers—you’ll be well on your way to a long and rewarding career in magazines.

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The screenshot shows the MPA website's career center. The browser address bar displays http://www.magazine.org/careers/Career_Guides. The page has a dark purple header with the MPA logo and navigation tabs for Advertising & PIB, Circulation, Editorial, and Government. Below the header, there is a 'Member Log In' section with fields for User Name and Password, and a 'Go' button. To the right of the login section, there is a 'Careers - Career Guides & Resources' section with links for 'Job Bank | Internships | Career Guides & Resources' and a 'Print this Page' button. Below this, there is a section titled 'Career information provided by MPA and others' which includes a paragraph about the MPA Career Resources Center and links to 'Building A Career In Magazines (pdf)' and 'Making the Switch to Magazines'. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a section for books available through Amazon.com, mentioning the MPA Career Resource Center.

