

Workplace Myths

By Pamela Superville

1. Punctuality is not important.

Being on time to work shows that you are a detail-oriented and responsible person. It also shows that your family situation or personal obligations will not hinder your availability or job performance. It also shows other people (supervisors, co-workers and even friends and family!) that you value their time, too.

2. One does not have to be “open” to performing reasonable and proper assignments from authorized personnel if it is outside of their job description.

When at work, you should be there to help in any way you can to get the job done. That’s why most employers say they are looking for “team players.” Ever notice that almost every job description has the statement that you are required to do “other duties as assigned?” That encompasses all those other things you might be asked to do such as answering the phones when the receptionist is out to lunch.

3. As long as I’m not using the company’s phone, it’s okay to use my cell phone.

All personal matters should be dealt with when you are “off the clock.” And never use your cell phone when at your desk or in the office! Take your break outside the building to return personal calls and save personal e-mails for when you are at your home computer.

4. I can surf the Internet or send personal e-mails if I’m not busy.

Even though the company provides you with a telephone or computer, that doesn’t mean that your communication is private. The company has the right to monitor your communication and use of their computers. Looking for a new job on company time using their computer to surf the web? There’s a good chance that your employer will know about it!

5. Especially while on probation, one should be excused from work for “family situations.”

During your probationary period, you are the most vulnerable to losing your job. The probationary period is designed so your employer can see if you are a “good fit” with the organization. If you are requesting time off for “family situations,” that sends the message to your employer that you may not be committed to the job.

6. It’s okay to have a romantic relationship with a co-worker or supervisor.

Always steer clear of romantic relationships at work, especially with a supervisor. Remember to read your personnel policies or handbook when you are hired. Most workplaces will specifically mention that co-workers and supervisors should not be engaged in these types of personal relationships. But even if your policies don’t mention them, having a personal relationship with a co-worker or supervisor opens the door to negative feelings from co-workers or harmful office gossip.

7. It’s okay to disappear or leave the work area at any time, without informing a supervisor.

It is never okay to leave the work area or job site without first informing your supervisor! Even when going on scheduled breaks, it is a good idea to inform your supervisor before you leave so that he or she knows what time you left and when you are coming back. If that’s not possible, be sure to talk to your supervisor ahead of time about how you should handle leaving for breaks or in case of an emergency.