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Shabby office assignments

By Paperitalo Staff

This is for the younger generation. You get your degree (associate's or bachelor's) and head off to the mill to work. Or perhaps your first job is with a supplier. In any case, you are proud of your accomplishments to date, but reality is about to set in.

After you sign the pile of papers from the human resources department, you will be taken to your new office. Unless the entire facility is brand new, expect to be taken to the darkest, dankest hole in the building. After all, you are the junior person on board.

Do not despair. There is nothing personal about this. No one hates you. You are not being smitten down by a higher power. You are simply the no-name, most junior of all junior people.

Period.

What to do? Start by making this office the neatest office on the planet and keep it that way. I don't care what the walls look like, what the furniture looks like: you are going to stay late and get all the crud off of it. It may take several evenings. There also may be several piles of other people's stuff stored in your new office. Find the owners and be polite, but clean it out. Give them a few days to find a new home for their junk and then nicely inform them that you will have to put it in the trash by the day after tomorrow. It will leave.

Now that you have your domicile in the best shape possible (and you are going to keep it that way—don't let it get cluttered up again), what to do? This is easy to say but a bit more difficult to accomplish: make your domicile the best ROI by volume at the facility. This means that you do the best projects—the projects that are most valuable to the operation. Most importantly, you do these humbly and somewhat quietly. Don't worry—you will get noticed. First of all by your lazy peers who will try to trip you up. But eventually, upper management will see your performance and notice your office, because they will come visit you.

Now, of course, this whole column is not about your office. In fact it was never meant to be about your office. It is about getting your attitude and career off to a good start. Hence, we don't want to let that hole-in-the-wall that they put you in affect you in any way. It is just a place to sit while you start to become a great contributor to your company.

Now, when it comes to safety, make sure you know at least two paths of egress from your office.

If there is only one (not surprising if you have the worst office in the building), and miraculously there is a window, quietly and personally buy a short handled sledge hammer, safety glasses (to use while you use the hammer to break the window) and enough heavy rope to reach the ground. The rope should be long enough to tie around something heavy (like a desk leg or file cabinet) and be knotted every three feet for grip. When in doubt, buy a long rope. Keep these items handy in a sack in the bottom drawer of a file cabinet or other unnoticeable place. They may just save your life one day.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##