



JOB HUNTING

# How to impress your boss

## Use these tips to stay on your boss’s good side from your first day

**By Kathleen Walder**  
*Monster contributor*

It can be a fine line. You want to figure out how to impress your boss, but you don’t want to look insincere or be seen as a suck-up by your co-workers.

There are concrete benefits to knowing how to impress your boss. When you’re on the boss’s “A-list,” you’re more likely to be assigned high-profile projects that will help advance your career. Your input is more likely to be heard.

And while we’d like to think managers give performance appraisals based on work results, studies prove supervisors give more favorable evaluations to employees who are likable.

When it comes to layoffs, you’re less likely to be on the RIF list if you’re in good standing with your boss.

So how do you stay on your boss’s good side? We’ve put together a list of tangible things you can do if you want to know how to impress your boss at work.

**HOW TO IMPRESS YOUR NEW BOSS**

You may be excited and a little anxious on your first day. You’ve got co-workers’ names to memorize and the challenge of finding your way around a new building. You also need to concentrate on how to impress your boss. On the first day of your job, you set the tone and establish that relationship.

Each supervisor has differ-

ent things that trigger the good impression button, but here are five suggestions to start on the right foot with nearly any boss:

Take notes: You’re going to have a lot of info thrown at you. Write it down so you can refer to it later. Note the names and functions of people you’ll be working with. That way, you won’t have to ask your boss for information they’ve already covered, saving both of you precious time.

- Ask smart questions: Asking questions shows interest. But refer to your notes or do some research first. When you do ask your boss a question, it will be an important and well-informed one.
- Reach out to co-workers: Your boss will make initial introductions. Show initiative by following up with co-workers. Assimilating early into the team is how to impress your boss right away.
- Hit the ground running: As soon as you can, ask your boss for your first assignment. Then, take the initiative and ask what’s next rather than waiting for another project.
- Follow up: Again, refer to those notes and turn in first-day paperwork and assignments early. Respond to “think abouts”—problems or projects the boss mentioned in passing: “After you’ve gotten settled, I’d like you to think about how we can clean up the XYZ spreadsheets.”

**10 WAYS TO CONTINUE MAKING**

- A GOOD IMPRESSION ON YOUR BOSS**
- After that first day of good impressions, keep up the momentum. Your boss will continue to evaluate you the first few weeks to validate that you were a good hiring decision.
- 1. ARRIVE EARLY AND STAY LATE**  
Arriving early and staying late demonstrates your work ethic. If you’re at your desk (or online) before your boss arrives and when they leave, they’re sure to know you’re there. You don’t want to find out the boss has been looking for you before you showed up.
  - 2. SHOW UP**  
Speaking of showing up, be visible. Don’t call off work unless it’s a true emergency. Participate in company events, meetings, etc., even if they are “optional.” Be punctual to meetings. It shows enthusiasm for your job and that you want to be part of the team.
  - 3. BE VESTED**  
Show you are fully focused on your job while at work. Save personal work and phone calls for your break or lunch—and do it away from your desk. Show up to meetings prepared and give your full attention by turning off your phone, asking questions, and speaking up when the boss asks for input. If you’re working from home, be accessible and don’t use the company laptop for personal work or web surfing.
  - 4. BE COPACETIC**  
Have a pleasant attitude, so people want to be around you. Don’t be the guy that stumbles in every week complaining that it’s Monday, he’s got too much work, and company policies are stupid. Embrace a positive attitude. If you genuinely don’t like your boss or job, quietly look for another one.
  - 5. WALK QUICKLY AND WITH INTENTION**  
Whether you’re briefly speaking to a



- co-worker, getting coffee, or heading to and from the restroom, use a brisk pace. Don’t stroll aimlessly or loiter. Keep on the move, and you’ll look busy and hard working. Your boss will get the impression that you’re focused and productive.
- 6. CHECK YOUR BAGGAGE AT THE DOOR**  
Don’t share everything. That’s definitely not how to impress your boss. They don’t have time to deal with your drama, and you may leave the impression you can’t do your job because you’re distracted.
- 7. NEVER PRESENT A PROBLEM WITHOUT A SOLUTION**  
Telling your boss about a problem adds it to their already long list. Instead, find a solution and present it with the problem, and you’ll be known as an ideas person who takes initiative.
- 8. STAY ORGANIZED**  
Find a system to keep track of everything you’re working on and know when it’s due. It’s not your boss’s job to police your workload. If you work in an office, keep your desk tidy so it looks like you can easily find things.
- 9. KNOW YOUR BOSS**  
Make your boss’s priorities your priorities. Even if you think your way is better, do things their way from start to finish the first time and then suggest changes once you’ve proven yourself. For example, want to know how to give a killer presentation to impress your boss? Ask them what they want you to cover, and then do it. Deliver work in the way your boss prefers, whether it’s a PowerPoint deck, written report, or by talking through the results.
- 10. PROVE YOU’RE A TEAM PLAYER**  
Chances are, your boss asked if you were “team-oriented” when you interviewed. Show you’re a good team member by helping and supporting your co-workers. One of the best ways to figure out how to impress your boss is to impress your team.



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RESUME ADVICE

# Does relevant coursework on a resume matter?

Experts are divided on whether this tactic helps your resume stand out.

By **Jamie Thork**  
*Monster contributor*

Can relevant coursework on a resume help grab the attention of hiring managers when you lack real-world job experience? It depends.

First, let's define relevant coursework. These are the classes and subjects you took at school that relate to the job(s) to which you are applying. Examples of relevant coursework for particular jobs include:

**For law firm jobs**

- American Government: Constitutional Foundations
- The Presidency and the Shape of the Supreme Court
- Comparative Judicial Systems

**For graphic design jobs**

- Introduction to Engineering and Design
- Integrated Digital Media
- Animation and CGI Motion

**For public relations jobs**

- Reputation Management in a Digital World
- Online Marketing Strategies
- Strategic Brand Management

You want your resume to be the most compelling advertisement for

your skills—of that there is no doubt. However, when you're gathering your credentials to apply to jobs, people are often divided on the subject. Experts generally believe three things when it comes to relevant coursework for a resume:

Some say it has no place whatsoever. Some are in favor. Others believe it depends on the job position you're pursuing

There's a designated spot on your resume for your education history; some prospective employers might be interested to know the details of your studies—and others might not. Ask yourself the following questions to help determine when and how to use your course experience to your best advantage.

**WHAT KIND OF JOB ARE YOU APPLYING TO?**

If you're applying for a summer job bussing tables at a restaurant, your coursework is obviously irrelevant because the skills you'll need to perform well on the job have little to do with what you studied in school.

On the other hand, if you're applying to intern at a magazine, the hiring manager may want to know that you took creative writing courses, were nominated for a short fiction prize, and spent time working on the school pa-



per. Those experiences and the knowledge you gained from them directly pertain to working at a magazine.

Think about the skills that you'll need in order to perform well on the job, and ask yourself if you've taken any classes or courses that contributed to those particular skills.

**WHAT'S YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE LIKE?**

We live in a strange

world where many employers request entry-level candidates to have a few years of work experience under their belts. It's a frustrating, convoluted predicament for graduates and anyone else who's new or just coming back to the workforce.

When you don't have a lot of work experience, you need something to fall back on. Relevant coursework on a resume is one of the more effective substitutes. Including it shows you have knowledge and

skills even if you don't have any real-world job experience. Just remember not to go overboard. You don't need to list every class, lecture, lab, and practicum you've ever taken. The keyword is relevant.

**PUTTING RELEVANT COURSEWORK ON A RESUME**

Opinions also vary regarding where to put your relevant coursework on a resume. Again, it generally

depends on the job.

For example, if you're applying to an academic position, put your coursework in a place of pride toward the top of your resume. If it's a technical position, place your coursework credits below your special skills. Otherwise, you could list it in the education section like this:

Bachelor of Arts, English, University of LMNO  
Relevant Coursework: Literature, Creative Writing, and Literary Explication.



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RECRUITMENT

# What is your ideal work environment?

When hiring managers ask about your ideal work environment, they’re trying to figure out if you’ll be a good fit for the job and the organization. Here’s what they want to hear.

By **Daniel Bortz**  
*Monster contributor*

Job seekers and employers alike care a lot about cultural fit, so when you’re asked, “What is your ideal work environment?” during a job interview, you can be sure everyone in the room is interested in what you have to say.

You want to find a work environment that suits your personality and work preferences, and employers want that too. Plenty of workers have had at least one job that wasn’t the right fit for them. That’s a situation in which nobody benefits.

Knowing the type of work environment that allows you to thrive is half the battle. You also have to know how to describe your ideal work environment without unintentionally knocking yourself out of the running for the job. Take these steps to prepare a well-crafted answer.

**What is an ideal work environment, exactly?**

There is no definitive answer. An ideal work environment is one where you feel supported, engaged, and have all the tools necessary to do your best work and advance your career. This is going to differ from person to person. A fast-paced work environment with few opportunities for collaboration and little involvement from managers will not work for someone who needs a quiet environment that has a mentoring program and a CEO with an open-door policy. It’s important to know what you need from a company in order to be positioned for success.

Here are five examples of things that can affect your connection to a company’s work environment:

- **Transparent communication:** Knowing what’s expected of you and your department
- **Professional development:** Do you have access to training programs, mentors, and other types of continuing education?
- **Work-life balance:** This is among the most important features of a job. How many days off are you given? Is your employer flexible on your work arrangement? Is there an option to work from home some days?
- **Recognition and rewards:** Getting praise for the work you do is a strong motivator. How will your successes be recognized and rewarded?
- **Leadership style:** How hands-on is your manager going to be? What level of feedback can you expect?

**How to answer “What is your ideal work environment?”**

Many hiring managers pose this question to candidates as a litmus test to see how well you’d fit into the organization. You need to dig around and find where your needs overlap with a company’s culture.

To do that, you’ll have to thoroughly research your prospective employer, which requires looking beyond the company’s website (though that’s a good starting point). These six sources can offer great insight into a company’s culture:

1. The company’s social media
2. Current employees
3. Press releases
4. A quick Google search can provide a look at what the company’s current initiatives and challenges are.
5. Company reviews on Monster
6. The job ads

If you don’t have any shared connections, tap into your college’s alumni database. Though you can certainly ask employees questions over email, meeting with them virtually or in person can help you cement relationships.

3. YouTube

To take advantage of this often under-utilized resource, enter the names of top figures at the company, and see what they say during media interviews. Bonus: You can mention that you saw the clip when you sit down with the hiring manager.

4. Press releases

A quick Google search can provide a look at what the company’s current initiatives and challenges are.

5. Company reviews on Monster

See what former employees have to say about working there. The caveat? One or two negative reviews isn’t cause for concern—after all, chances are good there will always be a couple disgruntled employees—but if you see an overwhelming number of negative reviews, take them as a warning sign.

6. The job ads

Job listings can help you glean information about a company’s work environment. Some job ads even describe what the organization’s culture is like, making your task a whole lot easier.

**Show you’ve done your homework**

Once you’ve done the leg-work required to answer the question “What is your ideal work environment?”, it’s time to apply your newfound knowledge during the job interview.

When you’re asked to de-

scribe your ideal work environment, your ultimate goal is to highlight the fact that you’ve researched the company and understand its culture, while giving examples of where your own values overlap.

Let’s say you want to work in a collaborative environment. In that case, you might say to the hiring manager, “From talking to a few employees here, I discovered that your organization prides itself on having a family atmosphere, where peers work closely together. I thrive in those kinds of environments. Does that match up with the way things work here?”

Remember, though, your core values should align

with the company’s mission (e.g., “I want to work for a company that cares about giving back to the community, and that’s why I’m so interested in this opportunity.”). If your ideal work environment is not aligned with what you learn about the company, carefully consider whether you should work there.

Moreover, only focus on describing the kind of work environment you want—not what you don’t want. So, instead of saying, “I don’t want to work for a company with a lot of micromanagement,” a better frame way to frame that would be to say, “I’m a self-starter, so I’m looking for some autonomy.”

**Find what you want**

Knowing how to answer “What is your ideal work environment?” can help you not only in the job interview but also in the overall job search. Finding the answer will go a long way in helping you find a satisfying job. Could you use some help narrowing your search? Make a free profile on Monster. You can get interview insights, career advice, and job search tips sent directly to your inbox. From lists of companies with awesome benefits to the traits all great companies have in common, Monster can help steer your search in the right direction so you end up with a job you love for years to come.

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