

GET THE JOB

Learning From Coworkers

Everyday Workplace Moments Can Build Skills and Confidence

Some of the most useful career lessons do not come from a formal class or handbook. They happen during a quick conversation, a shared project or a few minutes spent watching how an experienced coworker handles a task.

In workplaces across America, newer employees often learn by working alongside people who have spent years building knowledge on the job. That kind of learning has long been part of how people develop skills, pass along standards and understand the rhythm of a profession.

Experienced coworkers can help explain the practical side of a role. A policy manual may outline what to do, but a seasoned colleague often knows how a process works in real time, what common problems to watch for and how to keep work moving when the day gets busy.

SHARED KNOWLEDGE

That transfer of knowledge can cover both technical and personal skills. An experienced employee may show a coworker how to organize a project, communicate with customers, prepare for meetings or respond calmly when plans



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change.

This kind of support also helps newer workers understand workplace culture. They can see how respected colleagues write emails, ask questions, solve disagreements and treat others with professionalism.

DAILY EXAMPLES

Learning from coworkers often happens in small ways. A short explanation after a meeting, a demonstration at a work

station or feedback on a draft can become a lesson that improves future performance.

The U.S. Department of Labor has long recognized the value of learning through observation and practice. Registered Apprenticeship programs, for example, combine paid work with structured instruction, reflecting a broad American tradition of gaining knowledge from more experienced workers while doing the job.

Even outside formal apprenticeship programs, the principle is familiar in nearly every field. In offices, factories, schools, hospitals and stores, people pick up methods and habits from colleagues who have already faced similar challenges.

BUILDING TRUST

These exchanges work best when they are met with respect. Asking thoughtful questions, listening carefully

and showing appreciation can encourage experienced coworkers to share what they know.

For seasoned employees, offering guidance can help strengthen the whole team. It supports continuity, reduces repeated mistakes and gives long-serving workers a meaningful way to contribute beyond their daily assignments.

Strong workplace learning does not require a formal title. A mentor may be a supervisor, but it can also be the person at the next desk, on the next shift or across the hall who is willing to explain not just how something is done, but why.

Over time, those everyday interactions can shape careers in lasting ways. They help employees gain confidence, avoid preventable errors and build habits that serve them well as responsibilities grow.

In many workplaces, progress starts with paying attention to the people already doing the job with care. Their experience can turn ordinary moments into practical lessons, and those lessons can help the next generation of workers move forward with skill, pride and a stronger sense of purpose.