

What Law Firms Need to Tell First Year Associates

Recently I met with a young lawyer who advised me that he feels first year associates, especially those who have never had a "real" job before, show up for work unprepared for the "real" world and orientation does not answer some questions that arise later. I decided to put together a list of questions that may arise. I don't know if orientation is the time to deal with these, but I do know I have heard each question over my years working with young lawyers. Hope you find the list useful.

1. What do you do when you are working for the firm bully who abuses associates and staff by yelling, using foul language etc.?
2. What do you do when you are assigned to the "big case" to do only document review a legal assistant could do better and you have no other work?
3. What do you do when you don't know the answer?
4. What do you when you make a mistake and make the partner you are working for upset?
5. What do you do when you have too much work and another partner wants you to do an assignment for them?
6. What do you do when you are short of work and others in your practice group are busy?
7. What do you do when your practice group is slow and senior lawyers are hoarding work so they can get their hours?
8. What do you do when you have a personal commitment you really need to tend to that will prevent you from timely finishing an assignment?
9. What do you do when you are getting no feedback on your work?
10. What do you do when you go home exhausted every day from sitting in front of the computer and working all day?
11. What do you do if you are not getting secretarial support or help from a legal assistant because their allegiance is to a more senior attorney?
12. What do you do when you are asked to attend an important recruiting event and you have a brief a partner expects to receive the next morning?