

## 3 SECRETS FOR SUCCESSFUL CUBE DWELLING

By Rachel Wagner, June 2008

You just came from your yearly review and hoped your boss would tell you to get packing! No, you weren't fired, but you were hoping to move from cube city to the vacant office down the hall—the one with the window!

If you're a cube dweller, you know the positives to this work arrangement—a more connected staff and sense of camaraderie. But, also there are negatives—a lack of privacy, more interruptions, and increased noise level.

Here are three secrets for successful cube dwelling. These ground rules and etiquette tips will help all cubicle dwellers feel more productive as well as neighborly.

### 1. Optimize privacy.

- Never enter someone's cubicle without permission. Knock softly on the wall or announce yourself at their doorway. Then wait for a response—either verbally or via eye contact—from the occupant before entering.
- If he or she is on the phone, don't loiter outside their cube waiting; go back a few minutes later.
- Never "borrow" supplies from someone else's cubicle just because there's no door
- Avoid reading what's on someone's computer screen.
- Don't peek in or look over cubicle walls as you walk past.
- Remember, no phone call is truly private. Take personal calls in another room or outside.
- Meet with visitors in a conference room rather than in your cubicle.
- Avoid taking calls when you have a visitor to respect the caller's privacy.

### 2. Ditch distractions

- Use a headset when listening to music.
- Try to pick up the phone after one or two rings.
- Turn down the ring tone on your phone.
- Resist using screensaver sound effects.
- Avoid or limit the use of speakerphones to respect the privacy of the caller. Keep the volume as low as possible. Better yet, use a conference room.
- When away from your cube, set your phone to take voice messages. If leaving your cell phone behind, place it on off or vibrate.

### 3. Show respect

- Don't keep people from their work by stopping by for long chit chats. Even if you don't have a busy day, someone else may.

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- Resist bringing up anything you overhear from a neighbor's conversation.
- Don't have impromptu meetings outside someone's cubicle; go to the conference room or break room instead.
- Use good taste when decorating cubicle walls with posters and pictures.
- Eat smelly foods in the kitchen, not in your cubicle.
- Use the restroom to floss, spray on fragrance, or to fix the chip in your manicure.
- Don't hang coats or other items over cubicle walls. Invest in a small corner-size coat tree.

By following these tips, you and your cubicle dwellers can co-exist as good neighbors and have a productive day as well. And, perhaps when you get the okay to start packing—it will be for that office with the window!

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