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Working Q&A: Don't just call me 'Dude.'

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Tapping area experts for insight on workplace issues

Q: I am a vice president in a corporate IT department. I recently hired a computer programmer straight out of college. During the initial interview, I told this person to call me Joe. Now, he's just a few weeks into the job and he's calling me "Dude." How do I set him straight that this isn't appropriate?

A: Be direct. Pull him aside and say you prefer to be called by your first name, not "Dude." Then explain that addressing people appropriately is important, whether it's the company president or clients, said Mary Crane, a Denver-based consultant to companies on generational issues in the workplace. Crane counsels baby-boomer bosses on coaching the newest members of the work force — millennials — who don't necessarily know basic workplace rules. She notes that this group of workers is accustomed to a lot of feedback from doting parents. For the manager this means, "They will need to invest time coaching their youngest employees." Tell them what your expectation is, how to approach different tasks and duties and check back often.

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