

## College Grads: 10 Things You Need To Know To Succeed At Your First Job

By Lisa Quast, Forbes | June 22, 2015

You graduated from college. Congratulations! Now you've landed your first job and want to do well. Here are 10 things you need to know, to help you succeed.

**Create a game plan.** Work with your manager to create a game plan for your first 90 days. This document should be broken into 30-day increments and capture what you plan to accomplish. Your 30/60/90 day game plan should include the key tasks, projects and initiatives you need to complete, along with the key people you need to meet, prioritized over your first 90 days on the job. Meet with your manager to ensure he or she shares the same performance expectations and relevant timelines/deadlines.

**Clearly understand the criteria on which you will be judged.** When it comes time for your performance appraisal, you don't want any surprises; so don't be afraid to ask your manager to define the requirements for success in the job. It's always better to understand this up front than to remain quiet and have misunderstandings occur later on.

**Ask your boss, "How can we best work together?"** Establish a positive working relationship by learning your manager's leadership style and preferred method of working and communicating – and then flex yourself to work with their style. An excellent book on this topic is *"People Styles at Work...And Beyond: Making Bad Relationships Good and Good Relationships Better"* by Robert Bolton and Dorothy Grover Bolton.

**Be professional, prompt and efficient.** Show up every day on time (better yet, early) and stay until the very end of the day when the majority of the employees in the department go home. It can be helpful to stay late and get to know the employees who are working late, as this is often when you'll learn the really important information.

**Get to know your coworkers.** Try to meet with coworkers in groups, such as during lunch, and also individually, such as for coffee, so you can get to know them. Find out their areas of expertise and some of the projects they're working on. This will give you a broader picture of the department and help you determine how you'll best fit in.

**Pay attention during meetings.** Put down your smart phone and close your laptop. Focus on what is going on during the meeting and avoid multi-tasking at all costs, it will only distract you from actively participating.

**Be a role model of professionalism in every email.** Think before you send anything via email and consider the repercussions that could occur if the email you're about to send gets published for anyone in the world to read. Strive to make every email you write a representation of your high level of professionalism, character and integrity.

**Deliver on your commitments.** Always deliver on your work commitments. As soon as you realize you cannot complete something on-time, speak with your manager. I jokingly call this "going ugly early." No manager likes to be surprised, so make it part of your work practice to notify your boss as soon as you see something is going off-track. By delivering on your commitments and working through issues as soon as they arise, you will build a reputation that you are someone who is honest, trustworthy and accountable.

**Become an expert in something.** People turn to the experts when there are challenges and to solve problems. Look for areas in your organization where you can put your skills to use and become an expert. Then, volunteer for projects that will allow you to use these skills and show them off.

**Continuously prove you are an asset to the organization.** You did a great job finishing your first project on time. Good for you. Now, you have to do it all over again. Don't expect to skate by on good past performance. Every day when you get up and go into work, prove your value to the company.

Starting a new job is nerve wracking for everyone. It's the grown-up version of the first day of school jitters. But by using these 10 tips, you can decrease your stress and help ensure a successful start in your new job. You can do it!

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