

5 Tips When You Start A New Job

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A New Job



The crisis is over, the economy is recovering very well and many industries are hiring. The start of a new job is an experience as stressful as it is exciting, and stress often leads to mistakes that could otherwise be avoided. Preparation for your new responsibilities and surroundings is something

everyone starting at a new company would do well to consider, and so is being realistic about what you can accomplish in the first days on the job. Here are five things that could make the transition from an old to a new job smoother and reduce unnecessary stress.

1. Get familiar with the new corporate culture

Managers are clear that new hires cannot jump right in and become a team member from day one but they would also keep an eye on how they adapt to the new place. Familiarizing yourself with the corporate culture is a must. This includes paying attention to things like dress code, the style of communication used by co-workers and the usual times they come to work and leave (Robert Half Finance & Accounting) so you get a feel of what behavior in this respect is advisable; for instance, are people likely to come in early and leave late or most of them clock in the exact number of hours they've signed for. Getting familiar with the unwritten rules in the new company is also essential, so you can adopt them quickly and successfully. Part of this process is studying your immediate physical surroundings early on, advises Lisa Quast, head of career development consulting firm Career Woman. Getting a co-worker to walk you around and show you the different departments is one of the first things to do on a new job. Another thing is getting to know who your immediate co-workers will be. There is no need to rush into friendships but knowing who is the first person to turn to with a question is useful. Taking notes about all the new things you encounter in these first couple of days is smart, says Kathy Downs from Robert Half FA. Whether there is an orientation routine on the first day or not, you'd certainly be given quite a lot of information, and writing it down would help you cope with it. Yet another aspect of getting the lay of the land is familiarizing yourself with your direct manager's routine. Find out when it is best to approach him/her with a query or request, learn to read his/her body language and what is his/her preferred style of communication. Naturally, this won't happen over the first day, but the earlier you start, the better.

2. Get clear about your responsibilities

You would probably know theoretically what is expected of you ahead of your first day, but sitting down with your direct superior and clarifying your direct responsibilities and what is expected of you on a day-to-day basis is something to be done once you start at the new place. Don't be afraid to ask questions that will help you see your place in the



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bigger corporate scheme and how your work fits with the goals of the company. Find out what is first on the agenda for you and how you should report progress, and also ask for any tools and information that would help you do your work. Passivity leads to the risk of failure, so don't be passive, waiting for someone to show you the ropes, take things into your own hands, says author Kate Southam. Asking questions, however, should not be taken to extremes – use your own resources to find out what you can about your new responsibilities and anything else pertinent to the job. Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you, or, if you're the new manager, communicate clearly what you expect of your team, advises Amanda Augustine, a career expert working for job-matching website TheLadders. Establish how your superiors picture success when it comes to your work, which will help you avoid unnecessary strain in the beginning. Those who hired you know that you cannot start performing at the top of your abilities from day one, so give yourself time to adjust to your new duties after you make sure you know exactly what they are. A study of the Creative Group among 500 marketing and advertising managers has found that the average period in which it becomes clear whether an employee is well suited for a new job is nine weeks, so there is no need to rush into proving yourself from the first day.

3. Organize your work and set realistic goals

Once you know what is expected of you, plan your work in such a way as to make the transition into the new job as painless as possible. This is especially important in the first days because of the flood of new information you will be getting, much of it potentially crucial for your success. Make good on what you said in your interview, starting to demonstrate the qualities you were hired for as early as possible, Augustine advises, and make sure you start keeping a record of your successes along the way. Initially, set yourself more modest goals that would lead to a "quick win" (MindTools, "Starting a New Job"), as such wins will help convince your superiors that they have hired the right person for the job early on. Be realistic about what you can accomplish and use these quick wins toward attaining a more major, long-term goal. Your future success on the new job also depends on acquiring any new skills and knowledge that would be relevant; so don't wait too long before identifying them and starting work on developing these skills. You could make a learning plan to help you in this. One thing to remember is that everyone makes mistakes. It is only normal for a new employee like you to make some extra ones, says author and copywriter Larry Buhl, but the biggest of them all is refusing to admit a misstep in the hope that it will go unnoticed. It is much safer and smarter to admit the mistake, take corrective action and learn from it. Ask for feedback often, instead of waiting for your superior to give some; this will reassure you that you are doing well and will help you make amendments to your work, if they need to be made, as early as possible.

4. Get to know the people

The success of your work depends, most often, on the people you work with. Getting to know your colleagues we already mentioned, but you also need to know who to call if your computer breaks down or if you are out of printing paper, for instance. Getting to know your co-workers is an essential part of your adjustment process and it should start



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from your first day, Larry Buhl says. It would parallel and complement your familiarization with the corporate culture and will also help you start feeling like part of the team sooner. Amanda Augustine concurs, advising new employees to take the initiative in introducing themselves to their colleagues, and not just the immediate ones. A smart tactic to add to this is finding a company veteran who would help you find out how things in the company work. Such a mentor would be invaluable in helping you understand the corporate culture, reveal to you the unwritten rules that could harm your emerging reputation, even if they concern who uses which fridge in the kitchen, Augustine notes. These are small things but they could have unpleasant repercussions when you are in a position to yet establish yourself as a valuable member of a team that has been working together for some time. Getting to know them will make you more efficient in your work as you would know how those around you would react to your new ideas and how you could best present those ideas to them to ensure their acceptance. Adding your new co-workers as friends to your social media accounts will reinforce your relationship with them, but make sure you do it on appropriate social networks, such as LinkedIn, for starters, or Twitter.

5. Get to know the place

The kitchen of the office or the cafeteria is a good spot to develop new relationships, and it is also a good place to get a feel of the office. Equally important is to know where the IT department is, or HR, finance, or sales and marketing. Getting familiar with your physical surroundings is an important part of getting used to your new place of work and working toward fitting in. Besides, most probably, you are also in a new neighborhood that needs to be studied to find the best place to get lunch, aspirin or gas, for example. Logistics is important, it would help you save time later on when you need something small like a Band-Aid, Amanda Augustine advises.

Starting a new job can be daunting but if you're clear about exactly what you have been hired to do and confident that you have what it takes to do it, then you are already on a firm footing. The first days in the new office can shake you up a bit and make you feel a little disoriented but it is fully within your powers to get on top of the situation if you don't rush things and don't burden yourself with overzealous attempts to prove your worth 100% from day one.

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