

Starting your new job

Preparation

Research

- You will have already done some for your interviews. Re-read this and continue right up until the start day.
- Network and find someone in the business who you can get more information from.
- Ask for company presentations and information from your new employer or ask your recruitment consultant to get you some beforehand. If you can understand their company values, mission and strategy you will already start building a bigger picture.
- Talk to the customer. Even if you're going to work in HR, try to talk to the people who receive the goods or services your new company supply. Understanding them is the key to success.

You

Get yourself looking your best. Have a haircut and go to the dry cleaners. Also, get all the things that you need to get checked done before you start. It wouldn't look good to your new employer if you take time off to go to the dentist in your first 2 weeks.

When deciding what to wear, opt for more conservative clothes at the start until you know the score. You're making your first impressions to everyone around you and they will be (subconsciously) judging you and the way you look.

Route

Practice the time and route it takes to get you to work, also figure out alternative routes.

Starting

Set off early so that traffic / delays don't stop you getting to work on time.

Arrive early and leave late for the first few weeks to illustrate your enthusiasm.

Behaviour

- Smile 'til it hurts and be polite to everyone, from your boss to the security people.
- Write names down.
- Be a sponge. Listen more than talk.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, everyone has been in your situation and most people like being asked for advice. If you're forgetful, write things down so that you don't end up asking it twice.
- Also, if it isn't obvious, ask why you're doing something, it helps to build the bigger picture.

- Accept offers of help. Even if you think you know what you're doing, it's good to check and good to take the time to get to know someone else.
- Volunteer for things that aren't necessarily within your job description if you know you'll have time and if it doesn't step on anyone's toes.
- Don't be too obvious, loud, opinionated or try for a high profile yet. You need to prove yourself first.
- Forget the way you used to do it or how your old company used to. Even if it's a better way, for now, try it their way and then once you've gained your team's confidence, later on, get buy-in to change it. No-one likes a know-it-all and you have to prove your worth before people will take criticism positively.

Inductions

Most companies will organise an induction for you, which may last from a morning to a month. Most inductions will encompass the following (Even if they don't provide one for you, try to organise your own informal induction which takes in all of these key points):

Introductions

Make sure you meet all the following people:

- Your boss
- Your Direct Reports (meet them face to face quickly, even if you manage them remotely)
- Your Customers
- All your team members
- Any key contacts from cross-functional teams

Get a clear structure of their teams and the overall company – asking different people for the structure may not give you a clear picture, but it may alert you to the politics or at least the perception of reality

Ask each person the following questions:

- What their role is
- What they want from you
- How you can make their life easier – this puts you in a positive position
- The bane of their life – this one may help you understand their challenges and therefore help you work with them, it's also another opportunity to understand the politics

People

- All you have to do in your first few weeks is be nice, add value, and don't try to rock the boat too much.
- Try to understand as much as possible about the people around you, be interested in them, because most people's favourite subject is themselves.
- Don't try to play politics, simply try to understand it.
- Make as much effort with cross-functional teams as within your own – people appreciate this and lack of communication between teams is one of the most complained-about barriers to success in business.

Difficult People

Know your enemies! Keep them close! The best way to deal with someone difficult is to talk to them in private, and explain to them that you're new, and it would be great to have someone as a mentor / guide through your first weeks, and would they help you? If you put yourself in a humble position, most people won't see you as a threat, so will lay off the hostilities! They should also be flattered you think of them as a source of wisdom and welcome you with open arms.

Meetings

Book your recurring meetings in your diary

Also find out when key meetings are for your boss / colleagues, some of these may be good for you to attend, particularly process meetings which will have an impact on your work or which your work may feed into. Don't be afraid to ask, once you're further into your job.

Admin

- Make sure you have all of the following sorted ASAP:
- PC or laptop, email & logon
- Phone & logon – get your voicemail set up
- Car & Parking permit
- Security keys / pass / code / name badge
- Also, make sure HR have the following:
- Your P45
- Your bank details
- Your contact details & date of birth
- Your next of kin's details
- If you are taking part in a pension scheme / share-save, get the forms to fill out and return them.

Projects & KPIs

You should have a full meeting with your manager to ensure you understand your role and it's responsibilities early on. These should include KPIs and any projects you will manage or feed into.

For a project, make sure you understand the following:

- objectives
- deadlines
- who's involved and their role within it
- the budget (and who holds it)
- any work already done

Systems

If training is not provided on this, ask for it.

If this is not forthcoming, ask to shadow someone using it, tackle it logically, ask lots of questions, and make use of the help option.

Mentor

The easiest way to integrate and understand the culture of the company is to get a guide. Ask your boss who would make a good one, and ask them politely if they can help you.

Don't use them for technical advice but more for political, cultural, protocol and policy advice. They should be someone who will introduce you to the right people, and who has a positive profile within the company.

It's also nice to have someone to go to lunch with on the first few days. Offer to pay!
Also see Difficult People section.

Products

Even if you're in HR or Finance, get to know the products or services your company is supplying. Read about them, use them, eat them(!), understand the competitors.

Jargon

Most companies have a jargon-buster floating around.

If not, note down jargon and ask about it at an appropriate time.

Training & Development

After your first month or two, sit down with your boss and decide what training is appropriate.

Don't ask for everything – you were hired because of your competence not because you wanted to learn lots, but be honest about what will be necessary to succeed in your role, and book yourself on the courses.

Make sure you and your manager have a clear understanding, written down, of your goals for the next 3-5 years. Then write down the steps you need to get there in a PDP. Making this clear means that both you and your manager are on the same track and are both working towards the same things. It also shows you are keen to improve and develop.

If you're the boss

Manage their Expectations

Set realistic expectations. Do not over-promise.

Spend more time listening than or talking or making conclusions.

Your new employees will be simply trying to figure out if you are good for them or bad news.

All you have to explain is:

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- What do I hope to accomplish?
- And how do I hope to do it?
- Know your Team

Unless you have to change the situation immediately, take time to give underperformers a new chance and make sure that strong people demonstrate their strengths before making changes. You need to find a way to assess this fairly. Poor performers often pick up given new, stronger direction.

Set the Agenda

You don't have to build your strategy straight away. Actually, it's better to build an 'agenda' that puts structure around issues, opportunities, priorities, and actions in order to get the organization moving in the right direction.

Your Boss

Whether you report to a board or to a boss, the best place to start a productive relationship is to understand their motivations both commercial and personal. This includes the goals of building share value, meeting strategic, financial, and organizational objectives and building their industry reputation.

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Communicate

Great communications start with knowing your audience and establishing an emotional connection to your message. Repeat your message over and over again until it sinks in. If on the spot, get the information out immediately and explain the real challenges of the situation to establish credibility.