

**Target Keyword:** Ensuring a successful onboarding experience with your new employer

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So you've done your homework, put your best foot forward in the interviews, and finally landed that new job. Don't get lulled into thinking this is the honeymoon period when you're immune from scrutiny and criticism. This is the time to reinforce and build upon that competent, professional image you put forward during the courtship stage.

Ultimately, you were chosen because you were seen as the person who could make the greatest contribution to achieving the company's goals. Use these tips for a successful onboarding experience and confirm that they made the right decision to hire you.

### **Don't let any grass grow under your feet**

You might be tempted to use the interim between your previous position and new one for some rest and relaxation, but it's the perfect time to start laying the groundwork. Contact the associates with whom you'll be working and let them know how excited you are to be joining them. Don't forget that in this age of electronic communication, hand-written thank-you notes are more impressive than ever.

### **Learn the lay of the land**

Review the associate handbook to learn the company policies and procedures. Don't assume that you'll be given some slack just because you're new. It's important to assimilate the workplace culture and understand the protocol, and you could save yourself from potential embarrassment.

Check for a formal dress code. If there isn't one, try to find out what the standards are. When in doubt, dress on the conservative side. Many companies have adopted more casual dress, but make no assumptions. Your physical appearance is going to be the first impression you make.

### **Establish yourself as part of the team**

You're the newcomer, so it's up to you to reach out to your fellow associates. Cultivating relationships makes for a more pleasant work situation and helps you grasp the office structure more quickly. If it helps, don't be afraid to mentally plan some small-talk topics for your introductions. Make an effort to go out to lunch a

couple of times a week. Spending time away from the office can encourage conversation and strengthen the bonding process.

One thing you should NOT do: get involved in office gossip. It'll mark you as petty and derail your reputation before it's even established. People may try to suck you in to personal animosities and even want you to choose sides. Simply smile and change the subject or politely excuse yourself and walk away.

### **Get some serious face time with your boss**

Have an in-depth meeting with your boss to discuss the company's mission, values and goals and to clarify what he sees as your role. This is also the time to learn about his personal working style, such as his preferred method of communication. Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as possible. Arming yourself with information will take much of the guesswork out of your transition, and your boss will appreciate your proactive approach.

### **Build your personal road map**

Set goals for each month of your first 90 days on the job. Having a clear-cut path carved out demonstrates your grasp of the company's goals and how you'll contribute. Carefully document your progress along the way, particularly noting any challenges you faced and how you overcame them. Arrange to meet with your boss at the end of each month to review and make any necessary adjustments.

You might be chomping at the bit to put your stamp on the business, and you were most likely brought in with the idea that you'd be making significant contributions. But it's best not to come on board with both guns blazing. You need to learn everything you can about current operations to ensure that any changes you propose are relevant and necessary. Otherwise, you could end up being labeled a hotshot who's looking only to fatten up his resume.

### **Maintain a stellar online profile**

Social media means that nothing is secret anymore. Part of building a sterling professional reputation is polishing your online presence. Assume that anything posted on the Internet can and will be seen by people in your company. Use platforms such as LinkedIn appropriately and make sure there's nothing on any of your sites that could potentially damage your standing.

Whether it's your first or your fifth, starting a new job is stressful. Let these ideas help you craft a smooth onboarding that will create a solid foundation for your future.

