

Starting a New Job

Starting a new job can be overwhelming, especially if you haven't done it in a while. Remember your first days at boot camp. The advantage there was someone told you where to go, what to do, when to do it, etc. etc. etc. The civilian workforce is not like that. While the HR community preaches a well-organized on-boarding, it usually doesn't happen that way. The ball is in your court and will be what you make of it.

First thing that you need to understand is that there will be mounds of paperwork to complete. These include the legal necessities of employment such as the I-9, the government form verifying the legalities to work in the U.S. There will be drug screenings, background and employment verifications, and possibly credit checks. Some of these will be completed once the conditional offer of employment has been made while others are after the official notification of the hire. Remember that you are really not on board and an actual employee until after you have started work.

A little research is necessary to get you mentally ready for day 1. Check out the company's website. Talk to HR and your future supervisor. Find out what to wear – casual, business, uniform, etc. I heard a story about an experienced HR director who really blew it. He was hired at the company headquarters of the GAP in San Francisco, CA. Yes, as in jeans. Day 1 he showed in a suit, very appropriate for an east coast corporate headquarters. WRONG! Day 2 he showed in Levis. WRONG! – A huge mistake since Levi Straus is a competitor. Day 3 finally worked out when he wore GAP jeans. That was a very rough start that a little research could have prevented.

You will hopefully spend the first days learning about the company, its policies, resources, culture, etc. This is the opportunity for the company, the supervisors and the new employee to get to know each other. You will learn the ins and outs of the location, the co-workers and the job. The best companies have a very organized on-boarding process to get you quickly integrated and assimilated into the new company and the new position. Be a sponge. Absorb all you can.

The biggest step is to develop a strong working relationship with your co-workers and supervisors. These folks are there to support you in “fitting in”. You will be with these people eight hours a day. Need I say more about building relationships?

Another opportunity to tap into relationships within the company is a new initiative by many. They have created a support interest group that links and networks employees by hobbies, backgrounds, etc. A flourishing SIG is a military group that provides a support network for veterans, reservists, guard and retirees within the company.

Success at a new job depends upon attitude. On the premise that you did your homework during the hiring process, you have joined a company that fits with you. Managing your

expectations and working them into the new employer's culture will be a key component to success. Now is your chance to develop this opportunity into a career.

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