

# Surviving a New Job - - - Quick Guide

Growing your chances for career success by following 16 practical suggestions

One of the senior managers in our job search program expressed a very common concern about the prospect of starting a new job at a new company. While being thrilled at securing a position after only two months, this apprehension was brought to the fore because she had endured 3 terminations over the past 8 years. It is well known that one of the undesired yet common consequences of being fired is often a lowered self-confidence and a questioning of abilities. This can carry over into future endeavours with a hesitation like, "I know I can do the job but how do I make certain that I don't mess up?"

In any job, you are on display - - - discussed and judged by many of those around you. The acceptance you receive and the time it takes to become accustomed to a new job varies for each person and with the demands of the workplace. Some people seem to be immediately received positively everywhere they work while others may have a more difficult time getting on board and succeeding at a job in a particular environment. To increase your chances for success, be yourself, do your best, and function on the job the best way you can while following the 16 tips below.



W.N. ASSOCIATES INC.

Consultants in Human  
Resources Management

## 16 TIPS

### 1. COURTESY, COMMUNICATION, CONCENTRATION

Make a good first impression by ensuring that courtesy, communication and attention to the job are appropriate. Be yourself and be a sound individual contributor. Politeness counts. Increase the personal attributes that attract others to you. Stand out in a positive way, making it impossible for others not to notice and be impressed by the special flair you show. Be at ease with yourself and content with your virtues.

### 2. LISTEN & OBSERVE

Listen to and observe others to learn about expectations, internal politics, and accountabilities of the job. Read others' actions and reactions. Neither gossip nor tune out nor boast. Think consequentially before offering thoughts, opinions or judgements. Praise useful suggestions and give credit for ideas from others while discarding the words "Oh, I've done that before".

### 3. CULTIVATE AND NOURISH COWORKERS

Learn about those who are important to completing your job effectively and efficiently. Cultivate and nourish coworkers using your understanding of human nature as it applies to the workplace. Many employees progress through a system with relative distinction because of their well-honed talents of levelheaded thought and wisdom. As long as a work environment has fair and equitable rules, everyone has the opportunity to follow them and operate with a sense of fairness while tailoring conduct and opinions to the desired results. It is important to exercise caution so as not to compromise values or in the process lose the vision. Don't rely solely on clever maneuvering. Back it up with hard work. The real challenge faced is to integrate finesse with conscientious effort and genuineness - - - to steadily build relationships and avoid ever damaging them.

### 4. LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

While policies and procedures are usually written, there are often unwritten codes of conduct to understand. Listen, watch, ask and always stop and think before you act. Try not to make the same mistake twice. Understand the laws of cause and effect and learn from your experiences. Recognize and strive to address practical, pragmatic solutions that lead to implementation. This approach is best used in conjunction with the obtainable facts and "analytical proof" offered by others. Few things can aid

your career faster than gaining the reputation of being wise, acting appropriately and offering well-thought-out strategies for solving problems.

### 5. SHARE WITH THE TEAM

Be part of a sharing community where others feel free to participate. New learnings can be insightful and meaningful. Become a cooperative and loyal member of the team - - - sometimes as leader / facilitator and other times as active participant / team player. Take responsibility for making your team function in harmony with the rest of the organization. There is no room in business for the lone wolf -- the self-centred type of person who looks after #1 first and last. To some people, the concept of individuality promises more than it delivers. It is more an illusion than real. Success occurs more readily where there is an atmosphere of mutual effort. Yet avoid going too far with an altruistic "we" - - - the danger being of becoming a "YES" person, who compromises too much of the time.

### 6. GROW YOUR NETWORK

Maintain and grow your list of personal and professional contacts. These are the people who have helped you in the past, during a job search, as a mentor or perhaps as a client. Keep in touch. E-mail has dramatically increased the ease of communicating. A significant amount of professional life deals with written communication. A wide range of written ideas, information and emotions can be expressed on paper in a clear, concise fashion. While only about 4% of a person's time will actually be spent in written communication, successful people attribute 25% of their success to their written words. Read to stay current and become an interesting person. Keep it up and keep in touch if you want to take full advantage of your career status and move forward. This is your career insurance plan.

### 7. UPDATE JOB SEARCH TOOLS

Keep a record of successful job search techniques and the names of recruiters in your field. This includes updating your resume yearly. Become an invaluable employee to your firm - with options.

**Remember that the major difference  
between a wish and a goal  
is a disciplined time line.**

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#### 4. GROW YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE & SELF-CONFIDENCE

Stay focussed on priorities and long-term goals. This may involve training, attending seminars, reading and initiating contact and associating with professionals in your field. Join and participate in clubs, associations and volunteer boards. Do not dwell unduly on any shortcomings, nor waste time comparing yourself unfavourably to others. Boost your confidence in the ability to handle new situations. Get involved in volunteer drives, and social events. When you are optimistic about life and about achieving the goals that you have set for yourself, you enhance your career prospects.

#### 5. INCREASE SKILLS

Assess your strengths and limitations and begin to increase your skills and develop strategies to overcome identified weaknesses. Seek out a mentor or coach to assist you in your career. A career is not a job but an activity that one performs because it is a meaningful expression of needs, goals and self. It is what consumes most of a person's time and offers enjoyment and energy in return. Yes, it is possible to settle down in a job and build a secure nest. A job is not simply a way of obtaining future security and a pension, but can become a distinctive expression of yourself in real time - NOW. Instead, be open to suggestions and seek out new opportunities.

#### 6. SET MEDIUM-TERM GOALS

Set new medium-term goals that are congruent with your long-term career plan. Be specific rather than general. A goal must be plausible and actionable as well as realistic. State what it is you will accomplish over the next six months. Make the goal measurable so that you will know that an achievement has occurred. Set a time limit and schedule sub-stages and activities required to move toward your goal. Maintain an up-to-date record of your accomplishments in the form of power stories.

#### 7. MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Deal with reality, be honest with yourself and stay away from denial, scheming and immature reactions. To be successful in a career, one must be sensitive to and deal effectively with anxiety and stress. They are part of living. Accepting this can bring greater freedom of movement and thought. Use intelligence, skills and experience to resolve issues rather than becoming preoccupied with and negatively affected by matters that cannot be altered. Manage your expectations of success. Choose and integrate attitudes based on rational, logical, adult thinking into your actions and expectations.

#### 8. CULTIVATE APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION

A person's expressive language and ability to communicate verbally within a team or any group are critical to most career activities. In fact, it has been consistently found that the person who is a good conversationalist has a much better chance of being successful. There are very few people at the top who can't hold their own in conversation. Avoid tuning out. The fact of the matter is, most of us are a little nervous when talking to new people in groups and tend to limit the expression of thoughts, feelings and beliefs initially. Failing to express ideas is unfair to your own uniqueness and may encourage others to underestimate your abilities and talents. Self-consciousness prevents one from experimenting and learning. Clearly articulating thoughts and ideas is important in that it allows others to see how much you have to contribute.

#### 9. HAVE EMPATHY

Be empathetic but steer clear of being the rescuer. Help and guide where appropriate yet remember that others must also learn by their own mistakes. You may be a sensitive person who has genuine concern for others, and are among the first to offer assistance when others are in trouble. It is a matter of degree. Yes, it is important to be in concert with others' emotional feelings, and at times feel them as if

they were your own. It is not, however, your job to take on everyone's responsibilities or accept blame for their shortcomings or misdeeds.

#### 10. RESPECT EVERYONE

Even though you may disagree with another's idea, or find their comprehension too slow, it is still important to respect the person and their right to hold a belief. Patience is one of the attributes that help people integrate the needs of co-workers with those of the system thus creating a more productive human environment. Exchange information nonjudgmentally. Avoid the words like "should," "why" & "but" and remain open to new ideas. People consider an excellent co-worker to be one who is patient and finds time to be helpful and assist others in improving their performance rather than being argumentative, impatient or just offering critique.

#### 11. RECOGNIZE STRENGTHS

Recognize yours and other's strengths. Be the person who "pats others on the back". In any team endeavour, see yourself and others as partners. While gaining a clear understanding of the validity of your strengths, needs, feelings and actions, you can be 'other-conscious' and respect the rights of everyone and never put anyone down. A healthy assertiveness allows you to avoid manipulation by others or having the expression of your own feelings and beliefs repressed.

#### 12. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Rather than 'pointing a finger' saying: "YOU did such and such," start sentences with the word "I". In other words, speak for yourself. Responsibility is not a matter of taking on what others insist you do - - - rather, it is an ability to accept the consequences of what you have assumed voluntarily. Fulfill your own expectations, no matter if the results are immediate, or if they take years of patient work. Take responsibility for your actions and decisions with grace and avoid the blame game. When you need to, say "I'm sorry".

#### 13. BUILD MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Look for new ways of doing and build mental toughness rather than looking only at the way things WERE done in the past. Remember the experience of losing a job has brought with it the chance to develop strategies to be successful and helps you become mentally stronger.

#### 14. ASK FOR HELP

Ask for help when you need it - - - just as you would offer help when appropriate.

#### 15. TAKE CALCULATED RISKS

Taking risks can be valuable if they are calculated and gradually increasing beyond your comfort level. Taking chances is not usually effective if it is impulsively done; therefore, explore new opportunities from all angles, imagine the worst possible outcome and conclude whether or not an action is worth the risk. Then take action confidently. If the chances that you take, although gutsy, are neither rash nor reckless, you will likely prove to be an invaluable employee. With the ability to create success by examining risks rather than shunting them aside, life may treat you better than you expect.

#### 16. CHOOSE WORDS WISELY

For issues that must be addressed, openness is strength when coupled with concern for how any message will be received. Blatantly "telling it like it is" isn't always suitable. By choosing your 'battles' and gaining a keen understanding of other people, you can be viewed as accepting and calm, with the ability to always find the appropriate thing to say. Such adeptness will allow you to avoid trampling on others' sensitivities. By making appropriate social judgements you are unlikely to criticize or disregard the opinions, actions and needs of others. Diplomacy costs nothing and adds comfort to a situation rather than escalating upset feelings. You become an employee to keep.