



## Job Transition Action Plan

Congratulations, You Got the Job! Now What?

Landing a new job is so exciting...and stressful. You're not out of the woods yet! Making a smooth transition into your new role requires forethought. Follow these best practices to set yourself up for success from the beginning.

### Give Appropriate Notice

If you are employed when you land a new job, your first step is to provide notice to your current employer that you are leaving. (Only do this once you have received and accepted a formal written offer.) Always provide an appropriate notice period, which is generally two weeks. For some higher-level positions, a month may be more appropriate.

However, unless you are bound by a contract, you are never obligated to provide any notice. At the time of this writing, all states in the US are "at-will" employment states, which means that employees and employers can part ways at any time, for any (legal) reason, without notice, and the decision can be made by either side. (Some states do have exceptions to this law so please seek counsel from a legal professional if you have questions.) Many people suggest that, since your company can terminate your employment without notice, there's no need for you to provide the courtesy of notice to them.

I strongly disagree. It is far more responsible and better for your long-term professional reputation to leave with grace and dignity. Providing notice allows you the time to get your work in order, hand it off to the appropriate people, and help ensure the team experiences minimal disruption in your absence.



There is no better way to leave a job than by putting your best foot forward to help the team. People notice, and they appreciate it. This will leave a lasting positive impression, which will ensure your colleagues remain valuable players in your professional network in the future. You've worked hard to establish relationships with them during your tenure in this role. You don't want to burn those bridges in the last few days. As hard as it may be, do your best to stay engaged right up to the very end.

If your organization does not want you to stay for the notice period you offer, that's their choice. But making the offer, and being willing to follow through on it to the fullest extent, is still always the right thing to do.

**Stay In Touch with Your New Employer During the Notice Period**

In the time that passes between acceptance of the job offer and your first day at the new job, you should primarily be focused on making a smooth exit with your current employer. However, you don't want to completely disconnect from your new one. Stay in touch and find out if there's anything you need to do to prepare for your first day. You may need to submit some documentation, complete paperwork, or have a brief phone call with your new manager, etc.

**Create Your Transition Plan**

Upon starting your new job, take some time to sit with your new manager and collaborate on a transition plan. Define your priorities for the next 30, 60 and 90 days and ask to schedule regular times for checking in on progress. This will help set up a good cadence for communication.



If you already know some of the specific things you will be working on, you may choose to create a plan ahead of time. That way, you can present the proposed plan to your new manager and get a running start from day one.

Keep in mind that much of your time in the first few months will be devoted to learning, so don't be overly ambitious. You will have plenty of time to "go big" in the future.

The Transition Plan Template (provided with your program materials) can help you organize your priorities.

**Observe**

In your first few months, your primary role is really to be an observer. Take note of how the team operates, the culture, the communication styles and personalities surrounding you. Yes, you want to demonstrate who you are as well, but don't go in too forcefully. The team already has a dynamic and, merely by your presence, you have disrupted it. It's normal for there to be a period of reorganization as everyone gets acclimated to you.

One of the biggest challenges new people face is that they often want to "shake things up" too quickly. They see things they want to change or improve—and while those might be valid things—it's too early for that. Remember that you need to earn some social capital first. People don't yet know, like or trust you. So, you really have limited influence. I'm not suggesting that you shrink away or stay silent. But find a happy middle ground where you are a visible and active participant, but you're not going in "guns blazing."

That being said, there may be instances where you are specifically instructed to take big action early on, and perhaps hired specifically for this purpose. If that's the case, you have a challenging job ahead of you. The goal then is to quickly earn the trust of your team to minimize resistance as much as possible.



**Be Prepared for Discomfort**

The first few months of any job are incredibly uncomfortable; there's no way around it. Many people suddenly feel lost and child-like. On day one, you have no idea where to find the breakroom room, the bathroom, or where you should put your things. You have to ask questions that you know are basic. You have to remember a million names and software systems and acronyms and passwords. It's exhausting.

For this reason, I encourage you to simplify your personal life as much as you can during this time. You will be very tired at the end of the day for at least a few months. It's totally normal, but you need to prepare for it.

Additionally, be cautious of judging your new job too early. Because the transition phase is often difficult, many people begin to worry that they've made the wrong decision. This can taint your perspective moving forward and cause every small irritation to be amplified. Postpone judgement for at least 6 months. This will give you enough time to really understand what you've gotten yourself into.

**Consider Yourself “New” for One Year**

You don't really know your role until you've experienced it for a full 12 months. You need to see how the job evolves through the course of a year—the seasonality, the routines, the ebbs and flows. Therefore, I consider any employee who has less than one-year of tenure to be “new.”

Taking this mindset for yourself will help you stay in a state of constant curiosity. It will prevent you from becoming too comfortable. You will continue to learn and observe, and you won't put too much pressure on yourself to “know everything.” Instead, you can



accept that you're still in transition. While it will certainly get easier after the first few months, you will continue to discover new things on a frequent basis.