

College grads: 5 things you need to know to succeed at your first job

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Starting a new job is nerve-wracking for everyone. Here's how you can decrease your stress and ensure a successful start in your new job.

You graduated from college. Congratulations! Now you've landed your first job and want to do well. Here are five things you need to know to help you succeed.

Create a 30/60/90 day game plan. This document should be broken into 30-day increments and capture what you plan to accomplish. It should include the key tasks, projects and initiatives you need to complete, along with the key people you need to meet, prioritized over your first 90 days on the job. Meet with your manager to ensure he or she shares the same performance expectations and relevant timelines/deadlines.

Ask your boss, “*How can we best work together?*” Establish a positive working relationship by learning your manager’s leadership style and preferred method of working and communicating — and then flex yourself to work with his or her style. An excellent book on this topic is [“People Styles at Work ... And Beyond: Making Bad Relationships Good and Good Relationships Better.”](#) by Robert Bolton and Dorothy Grover Bolton.

Clearly understand the criteria on which your performance will be judged. When it comes time for your performance appraisal, you don’t want any surprises. Don’t be afraid to ask your manager to define the requirements for success in the job. Then, schedule update meetings on a regular basis with your manager; it gives you the opportunity to share your progress as well as obtain your boss’s feedback on how you’re doing in your job.

Get to know your co-workers. Try to meet with co-workers in groups, such as during lunch, and also individually, such as for coffee, so you can get to know them. Find out their areas of expertise and some of their projects. This will give you a broader picture of the department and help you determine how you’ll best fit in.

Continuously prove you are an asset to the organization. You did a great job finishing your first project on time. Good for you. Now, you have to do it all over again. Don't expect to skate by on past performance. Every day when you get up and go to work, prove your value to the company.

Starting a new job is nerve-wracking for everyone. It's the grown-up version of the first-day-of-school jitters. But by using these five tips, you can decrease your stress and help ensure a successful start in your new job.

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