

SURVIVAL TIPS *for a* **SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITION**



You often step into unknown territory when you make a career transition.

Here are a few strategies to make the change faster and easier, and to help you take advantage of opportunities to grow.

LEAVE ON GOOD TERMS

Give your boss plenty of time to create a plan. Agree on what you will close out, and what will be handed off. Sometimes a clean break is appropriate, other times serving as a consultant is needed.

TAKE A BREAK BETWEEN JOBS

Decompressing physically and mentally before you start a new job can prevent a lot of stress. A new career often means a clean slate, so it is a valuable opportunity to assess your strengths and vulnerabilities, think how you might want to leverage your positive attributes, and find ways to compensate for your weaknesses.

ADAPT TO THE NEW CULTURE

You will enter a new organizational context, even if your move is lateral or within the same institution. Each team may have its own social behavioral norms and beliefs, which need to be respected. Ask questions to help you understand how things are done, listen carefully, and observe those around you.

UNDERSTAND EXPECTATIONS

Make sure you are aligned with what your new boss wants, but also those who may influence how you are evaluated. Expectations may change, so keep checking in.

LEARN ABOUT THE NEW AREA

Ask about onboarding and resources that will enable you to grow in your new role. Learn the historical perspective to understand why things are done the way they are, how change is managed, and how to avoid repeating past mistakes. Also, learn about the area's goals, opportunities and challenges.

AVOID PERSONNEL LANDMINES

It may take time to know whom you can trust and rely on for counsel and advice, who are the influencers, and who to watch out for. If your peers become your reports, they may have difficulty accepting you in your new role. It is important to stay impartial and not show any favoritism.

Additional Resource

Watkins, M.D. (2013). *The first 90 days: Proven strategies for getting up to speed faster and smarter.* Boston, MA: *Harvard Business Review Press.*



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