



Critical First Year on the Job

Your long-term career success can depend upon how well you do during your first year in the work world.

Every year, thousands of college students from all over the country work hard at planning their careers, honing their interview and resume writing skills, and preparing for their job searches. Many will find good jobs and start work with high enthusiasm and energy....only to be disappointed in the results. Why? Because most of them will overlook a critical step and make much of the hard work that went into finding a job worthless. Many of them haven't learned how to go to work.

Starting to work in an organization is a unique and critically important time that requires you to have a special perspective and use special strategies to be successful. You need to recognize that first year on a new job is a separate and distinct career stage. It is a transition stage; you're not a college student anymore, but you're not really a professional yet, either. It is only by considering the first year on the job separately from the rest of the career ladder that the world of work begins to make sense.

Savvy graduates know that many new graduates hang on to their student attitudes and behaviors too long. But few realize that it also takes time to understand and earn the rights, responsibilities, and credibility of a full-fledged professional. There is an intermediate stage that lasts from the time you accept your job until about the end of your first year that can make or break the early part of your career.

By following the "Twelve Steps to First Year Success" you will be ensuring a smooth transition.

1. Adopt the right attitudes
2. Adjust your expectations
3. Master breaking-in skills
4. Manage the impressions you make
5. Build effective relationships
6. Become a good follower
7. Understand your organizations culture
8. Develop organizational savvy
9. Understand your new hire role
10. Develop work savvy
11. Master the tasks of your job
12. Acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities you need

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC, PLEASE VISIT THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES, CISZK HALL. ADAPTED FROM JOB CHOICES 2003. THE CRITICAL FIRST YEAR ON THE JOB, BY ED HALTON.

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