

First Day Success Manual for New Managers



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Whether you are a [first time manager](#) or an experienced manager taking over a [new team](#), your first day offers a great opportunity to make a positive impression and begin building credibility with your new team members. Everyone is watching, from your team members to your boss and peers, and it is essential to start strong in your new role. This article offers ideas and tips for making the most of your first day as a manager.

Key Actions In Advance of Your First Day

Once you have accepted the offer and established a start date, ask your new boss (the hiring manager) if it is possible to connect with your direct reports in advance of your start date via the telephone. While this may not be appropriate in all cases, in many instances when your arrival is expected, your new boss may find it agreeable.

If acceptable, take the time to talk with each direct report, introduce yourself and let them know how excited you are to be joining the team. Ask some casual questions about their role, prior path and tenure with the company and reiterate your excitement to meet them on your start date.

This small effort to reach out, introduce yourself and learn about your team members will set a positive tone even before your first day on the job.

Prepare Your Attitude Before You Reach the Office on Day One

It is one of those career moments where it makes good sense to organize your thoughts and prepare your mind for this important day long before you arrive at the office. Take time the evening before your start date to remind yourself of the following important issues:

You are joining the company to help the firm pursue its mission and execute on its core strategies

You are a member of the larger group, and your function is an important part of the overall business.

Your role is first and foremost about forming an [environment](#) for motivated people to do their best work

Your job is not about being in charge, but rather, it is about what you can do to support and help develop your team members.

Your role is to build a [high-performance team](#)

Everything we do new in our organizations takes place on teams, from [projects](#) to innovation efforts to strategy execution.

Resist the urge to criticize past practices no matter how outdated or ineffective they seem

Your team members have been a part of working with those practices, and they do not need to be told they were wrong. You will have ample time to gain their input on identifying [improvements](#).

Do not spend a great deal of time showcasing your past achievements in other organizations

No one appreciates the manager who constantly references: "At my last company, we did it this way." It is only interesting to you. It is annoying to everyone else.

Smile, pay attention, learn people's names and show respect at every encounter

Respect is the base ingredient for [trust on a team](#).

Your team members are likely anxious about your arrival and that you must find a way to put them at ease as quickly as possible

Eliminating fear from the work environment is essential for success.

Dress to Fit the Culture

If you are new to the organization, you should have observed and learned the dress code during the interview process. Do not make my mistake of showing up for my first day as a senior executive in an ultra-casual software firm in dress slacks and a suit coat. The most formal engineer in the building was dressed in worn-out blue jeans complete with holes in the knees. I quickly ditched the jacket and dashed out after work for some acceptable casual clothes to replace my suit and tie wardrobe.

If the work environment is formal, be careful not to dress down too much. Your clothes do make a statement, so do not forget to take this issue into account.

Getting Beyond the Meet and Greet

First days are typically awkward. Your goal is to go out of your way to meet everyone on your team and ideally to meet as many people across the organization as possible.

For all businesses, the work continues regardless of the fact that it is your first day.

You should ask for the opportunity to attend scheduled meetings where you will introduce yourself and mostly listen and observe. Resist the urge to assert authority on your first day. You will have ample opportunity to prove credibility and share your ideas and approaches in the near future.

A helpful idea on day one is to commit to meeting with every team member individually during your first few weeks on the job, relying upon the following three question sets as an agenda:

What's working? What should we do more of?

What's not working? What do we need to quit doing or change?

What do you need me to do to help you succeed in your role?

Be certain to lock in your calendar dates and to keep your appointments. Your willingness to commit to meeting with and listening to the individuals on your team is a sign that you respect them.

Take good notes during the sessions; seize upon any easy issues to fix, and without compromising any requests for anonymity, summarize and distribute the notes.

It is a best practice to debrief on the outcomes from these meetings with the broader group and let them identify opportunities to step-in and make changes.

Start Out Working Like A Manager

It has been said that a [good manager](#) manages to get things done through others. You may have been the best accountant in the company's history, but as the accounting manager, it's time to put aside the balance sheets and focus on leading and motivating your department. From day one, show them that you are here to help them, but don't do their work for them.

Some References On What Not To Do

Equally important as knowing what to do on your first day is knowing what not to do.

Here are the [Top 10 New Manager Mistakes](#). These mistakes have already been made by others, so there is no need for you to make them too.

If you could ask a group of management pros for advice, here are the management secrets they would share with you.

The Bottom Line

We all know that you get one opportunity to make a first impression. Make yours count on day one as a new manager. Focus on "breaking the ice" and beginning the important and challenging process of establishing credibility with your new team.