HOW TO KEEP YOUR NEW JOB

In this economy, a job is like a bar of gold. A bar of gold encrusted with diamonds and pearls, with the cure for cancer etched into it.

Forbes magazine says 25% of new employees don't last a year, and 50% are gone by 18 months. So if you land a new job, it's quite important to keep that job. There are plenty of other people who want it.

Some advice for the newly employed:

Make sure you and your boss have the same understanding of your job description. Maybe you applied for Assistant Regional Manager, but your boss hired you for Assistant *to the* Regional Manager. Or perhaps you and your supervisor agree on the title, but not on what the job responsibilities are. Employers have a tendency to make positions more attractive than they are, just as job applicants exaggerate their own qualifications.

If there seem to be any differences between what you and your boss expected, bring the issue up at once. You might be doing a great job at what you thought your position was, while your boss might think you're screwing up. Clear the air, make sure you're on the same page, and don't overuse tired cliches like "clear the air" and "on the same page."

Don't march in on day one and try to change everything. Some particularly egotistical people (especially in management) think they need to establish themselves on the first day as the new gun in town. As soon as they hit the ground, they are running --right into other employees, who may not appreciate the new person marking his or her territory.

Don't try to remake your office, department or company as soon as you arrive. First, there may be perfectly valid reasons why your new company does things the way they do them. And second, your bosses and co-workers don't know you or trust you yet. No one wants a stranger to show up and tell them everything they're doing is wrong.

Spend at least a few weeks meeting your co-workers and discussing why they do what they do the way they do it. Then, once you've established yourself, start making suggestions to co-workers, and instituting your way of doing things with subordinates.

Promote yourself. You may be doing great work, but when the layoffs come six months from now, the newest hires will be the first to go. And if none of the managers can remember who you are or what you do, they will have no compunctions about letting you go.

Meet as many people as you can at your new job. Stay in communication with your supervisor, and keep him or her apprised of what you're working on. Go to work parties and after-work drinks. Get noticed -- it's much harder to lay off a friend or acquaintance than a total stranger. And networking will promote your career in other ways as well.

Be honest if you don't know what you're doing. New hires are often terrified to admit they're not sure how to complete a task, or are unclear on their job requirements. If you don't know how to deal with something, there are two choices -- face the embarrassment of admitting this to your boss, or never get the task done and turn what may be a small problem into a big disaster.

I've had to go to a new supervisor and say "I don't know how to do this," and face the boss' confusion and anger. *But your resume said you could [job skill]! What kind of a [insert job title here] doesn't know how to do this?* The problem may stem from you and your boss have differing ideas about your job description; or maybe the person you replaced had a different skill set than you do.

But keeping your problem a secret will only make it worse. Learn what you need to learn, and the problem is solved.

Don't be tardy; dress appropriately; stay late; work hard. I shouldn't have to add these, but apparently not everyone knows that the first 90 days of your job are like a trial period. Do your absolute best.

Got any further advice for new employees? Let us know in the comments.

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