



New HR Role: Succeeding in Your First 90 Days



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Congratulations on your new role! As you know, the first 90 days in your new position offers you a critical opportunity to prove that the employer made the right decision in hiring you and to build a solid foundation for your successful growth, development and promotion as a Human Resources professional. We've put together a few tips to keep top-of-mind to help you succeed.

Think fit, not simply technical proficiency

Obviously, you need to excel at the technical aspects of your role, but, just as important, you must demonstrate your fit with your manager, team, and organization.

Prepare for the challenges of the first 90 days

You will not know the “lay of the land” in terms of the culture and how things are done:

- What are the personalities and working norms?
- How do people communicate (e.g. email, formal meetings, drop in meetings)?
- What are the exact “in’s and out’s” of your new role?
- How can you best establish your working relationships?

You are being scrutinized. You need to prove your expertise, garner respect, and, if you have a leadership role, confirm your authority.



Take primary responsibility for on-boarding

Whether or not the organization has a robust onboarding process, you are primarily responsible for successfully transitioning into the new role and organization.



Take time to listen and observe the dynamics of the organization and its people



Leverage opportunities for impromptu conversations to get to know people



Do not wait for others to introduce themselves to you; make eye contact and be seen as approachable



If you are not being informed, ask directly when you need something, whether it is supplies or direction and policies for approaching a task

Avoid these common pitfalls

The most obvious pitfalls involve disregarding rules, regulations, procedures and dress code. But you should also avoid performing your role as if you were still with your previous organization, ignoring differences in culture and style in the new organization. You have to recognize that success will come from embracing new ways of doing things and developing new skills and competencies. Do not make assumptions based on your experience with your previous organization.



Other dangers to avoid

- Failing to clearly establish goals and objectives with management and all team members
- Coming on too strong or being the “know-it-all”
- Acting quickly without thought and consultation
- Taking on too much and setting unrealistic expectations
- Focusing on building a relationship only with your manager



Establish clear and achievable objectives

If the objectives of your role are not clear, you may need to negotiate your specific mandate with your manager. Focus on key initiatives – ones that meet your manager's needs and objectives. Be sure to set objectives that are clear to you and your manager, and those that are achievable .

In the early days, feel free to contribute some of your own ideas but do so in moderation. Always listen more than you speak at first. Try not to alienate people. Do not be the "last in/first out" member of your team.

Don't forget the people

Just as you put effort into in building a relationship with your manager, you need to invest time into building relationships with:

- Members of your team
- Your peers
- Internal stakeholders
- Clients
- Suppliers

The idea is to create a supportive network of people that will allow you to succeed and progress going forward.



Elements of a high-level 90-day plan

Your first priority is figuring out what your manager wants done and how they like things done. This will help you determine what you need to accomplish. How much onboarding time are you allowed? What does success look like to you and the organization? What does the company expect from you? Are there formal and/or informal reviews?

How can you get comfortable with your work environment? Consider practical matters like parking, your work area, where you can take your lunch or have a break. Start to form professional relationships with co-workers. Learn the company “lingo” and “attitude”.

Take into account the employee handbook, work rules, job processes, job goals relative to company goals, “landmines” that could get you into trouble,

your manager’s style, expectations for meetings with your manager and colleagues, and your manager’s definition of success in the context of the greater organizational definition of success.

Find out exactly how success is measured and then demonstrate your value to succeed with the manager and with yourself. Do not forget to determine how you can contribute to team success, making sure to participate in and contribute to team events. Ensuring your co-workers’ success can help ensure your success. Get a better understanding of other parts of the organization and how they intersect with your role and success. The key to success is to accomplish what your manager wants first and then what you think is necessary.





Concrete 90-day plan

Days 1-30

Stage 1: Learning

In the first 30 days, you will mostly be learning, asking questions and figuring out your new organization, the people, and the culture.

Days 31-60

Stage 2: Emerging

In the second 30 days, you will begin letting your skills and experience emerge, highlighting how you can contribute to your new organization through the suggestions you make. Think of quick wins. For example, recommending a more efficient database system for recording client interactions or a more direct communication channel for direct reports to use in offering you suggestions for improvement. Your suggestions and/or actions need to be in line with your level and mandate.

Days 61-90

Stage 3: Solidifying

In the final stage of 30 days, you will be solidifying your place in your new organization. Your intense period of learning should be complete and you can be in a position where you are contributing more than just learning.



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About Verity

Our mission is to deliver learning, growth and discovery – one person, one team and one organization at a time.

Verity is a Canadian HR consulting firm focused on Leadership Development and Coaching, Career Transition, and Organizational Development. For over 30 years, we have provided caring, impactful and practical support to individuals and organizations across all industries and sectors. Through longstanding national and global partnerships, we serve customers across Canada and in 30 countries worldwide.

Known for our personal, responsive and high-touch approach to client service, we pride ourselves on acting as a trusted partner. We bring insights and perspectives that help people to connect, create alignment and inspire excellence. Our passion is to positively impact the growth and development of people, teams and organizations every day.

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