



Congratulations! After great effort and focused energy, you've finally landed a fabulous new position—one that is sure to advance your career and meet your work and personal goals in a way your old position never could.

But don't stop there. Getting hired is just the first step.

You'll need to spend as much effort and energy—and maybe more—preparing for and making the transition. And this is where it really counts, for the first three to six months in any new position is a period of extreme vulnerability.

"It's the highest-risk period, and the higher up you are, the riskier it is," says Jeff Gunderson, CEO of Executive Connections, an executive search and placement firm.

Basically, the risk is that within the first few months, you either "stand up" in your new job and start moving forward—or fail.

During this transitional period, everyone in your new company—boss, direct-reports, other employees—and even suppliers and customers are all forming initial impressions that will shape their expectations and actions. This dynamic is exacerbated when people in your new company expect you to bring about change within the organization.

This transitional period might even be riskier today than

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL



**HERDLINGER
ASSOCIATES**

"Turning potential into performance"

P.O. Box 20389
St. Simons Island, GA 31522

912.634.9300
877.626.2960 (toll-free)
potential@herdlinger.com

Herdlinger Associates provides the vehicle to help people expand and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to achieve a higher degree of success both personally and professionally.

Our programs incorporate attitude development, goal setting and skills development into a process that results in greater utilization of the potential inherent in all people.

We help people create a plan that enables them to balance the profit motives of their business with the personal motives of their lives.

Our professional staff is committed to a common purpose:

**Developing People
to
Achieve Their Full Potential
...That's What We Do!**

Learn more about Herdlinger Associates at our website...

www.herdlinger.com

continued from page 1

seven or eight years ago. Shrunk budgets mean less training, reduced staff support, increased workloads and, perhaps most of all, increased expectations for newly hired managers and executives. Should you end up leaving after a short time, it can look bad on your resume and raise questions for future employers about your judgment commitment.

So what can you do to assure that your transition is smooth and productive? Here are a few suggestions:

- Ask your new company if it will commit to transition support by hiring a coach to work with you. Be bold in your request; you may even choose to make it a point of negotiation. If possible, look to your search firm for coaching support. Gunderson says his company feels so strongly about the need for transition support that it includes six months of it in all its search placements.
- Use the period before you actually start at your new position to learn as much as you can about the company, its vision, its strategies and the industry.
- Examine the challenges and opportunities of the company, and identify the barriers to success.
- Talk to people at the new company. What is the culture, and what are the processes? What kind of a team will you have to work with, and on whom will you be able to depend?
- Assess your own strengths and weaknesses, and identify personal vulnerabilities that could come into play in your new position.

In his book, *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels*, Michael Watkins outlines 10 broad strategies and fundamental principles for successful transitions. Here are some of them:

Accelerate Your Learning

As Watkins notes, learning your new company can feel like drinking from a fire hose. But the faster you can understand your new organization's markets, products, technologies, systems,

structures, culture and politics—the firmer your footing and the less likely you'll be to trip.

Match Your Strategy to the Situation

Every situation, every business will dictate its own needed strategy. The trick is to accurately diagnose the situation before creating your action plan.

Secure Early Wins

When you create value and improve business results quickly, you build your credibility and create momentum.

Build Your Team

Again, learning plays a key role, as you evaluate existing team members. One of the key drivers of transition success is being willing to make difficult personnel calls and to select the right people for the right positions.

Create Coalitions

Even before you start your new position, begin to identify the supportive alliances you will need. How will you be able to influence them and draw them to your "side"?

Keep Your Balance

Allow for downtime to assimilate your learning and protect your energy. Work out. Get enough sleep and nutritious food. Without those, you risk losing perspective and making bad calls. Don't be afraid to seek help if things seem "off."

Expedite Everyone

Yours is not the only transition when you come into a new position. Everyone you work with is in a transition, as well. Helping others to transition quickly helps you.

"Failure to create momentum during the first few months virtually guarantees an uphill battle for the rest of your tenure in the job," Watkins writes. "Building credibility and securing some early wins lay a firm foundation for longer-term success."