

## Part 1: Your First 6 Months — The 30-60-90 Day Plan

### *First 30 Days: Learn the Landscape*

- Your first boss leaves a lasting imprint on how you see your career and professional standards
- Establish regular one-on-one meetings with your manager — understand their expectations, communication style, and leadership approach
- Study the organizational chart — know who's above you, around you, and below you
- Read and understand company policies and procedures — this is critical to avoid early missteps that can lead to termination
- Learn the company's flow charts, approval processes, and how work actually gets done
- Understand your work expectations — is this a standard 8-hour day, a 5/4 schedule, 10-hour days, or a 60-hour-week culture with overtime?
- Identify 5–10 early accomplishments you can realistically achieve
- Ask your manager and peers: "What does great performance look like in this role?"
- Start learning the names, roles, and responsibilities of key people across the organization
- Listen 2-5x more than you talk — absorb before you suggest

### *60 Days: Build Credibility*

- Deliver on your initial commitments. Nothing builds trust faster than doing what you said you'd do.
- Define key accomplishments for the next 30 days based on what you've learned
- Begin understanding the broader business and how your work connects to revenue, customers, and the company's mission
- Learn to "connect the dots" to understand how your role links to suppliers, customers, and other departments
- Start building relationships beyond your immediate team

### *90 Days: Establish Your Value*

- Have a clear picture of what success looks like in your role and how you're tracking against it
- Begin developing a 5-year plan: where do you want to be and what skills or experience is needed?
- Think of yourself as an "idea generator" by identifying improvements, not just executing tasks
- Discuss your performance with your manager and don't wait for the formal review cycle

## Part 2: Company Structure & Processes

- Study the organizational chart thoroughly to understand reporting lines, departments, and how decisions flow
- Learn company policies and procedures early because ignorance is not an acceptable excuse
- Understand the approval and decision-making processes for your area
- Learn the formal and informal communication channels: who emails, who calls, who walks over
- Pay attention to how meetings are run because this tells you a lot about the culture
- Identify the unwritten rules: every company has them, and they matter as much as the written ones
- Figure out how people and systems work to be able to leverage your abilities through others

## Part 3: Navigating Company Politics

### *What "Politics" Means in the Workplace*

- Company politics is NOT about Democrat vs. Republican. It's the informal sharing of information, rumors, and personal dynamics affecting relationships, trust, morale, promotions, raises, assignments, and performance reviews.
- Accept that politics exist in every organization and that you can't opt out, only choose how to engage
- Understand the three approaches people take:
  - Play aggressively = high risk, can work but can also backfire spectacularly
  - Go with the flow / fly low = safer, but limits visibility and advancement
  - Be negative = very dangerous; negativity is career poison
- Internal politics influence who gets promoted, who gets the best assignments, and who gets resources
- Know the people above you (leadership priorities), around you (peer dynamics), and below you (team expectations)
- Observe before acting and understand the power dynamics before you try to influence them

### *Practical Navigation*

- Don't be the person who complains about the process, the culture, or "how things should be" especially in your first year
- Avoid gossip and taking sides in conflicts that don't involve you
- Build genuine relationships with people at all levels, not just transactional ones
- If you disagree with a direction, provide an alternate solution rather than just criticism
- Speak truth to authority, but have the wisdom to know the right moments
- Don't act as a self-appointed union rep — rallying complaints makes you a target, not a leader
- Be part of the solution, not part of the problem

## Part 4: How to "Fit In"

- Ask your peers and manager directly: "What does success look like here?"
- Listen to both peers and management; they often have different perspectives on the same situation
- Understand team dynamics: who collaborates well, who has influence, what the unspoken norms are
- Ask questions — it shows willingness to learn. But don't ask the same question twice; take notes
- Share your ideas, then ask if they meet the team's standards (i.e. don't assume your ideas are automatically better)
- Be helpful to other new employees; they're going through the same adjustment you are
- Adapt your communication style to the team's norms. Some teams are formal, some are casual; and misreading this creates friction
- Don't try to change the culture in your first year. You must earn the right to influence by first demonstrating competence and reliability.
- Don't act like fresh college thinking will revolutionize the company. Humility earns respect faster than brilliance.
- Don't assume you know more than the people already doing the job — they have context you don't.
- Never get drunk at a company event. One bad night can undo months of good work.

## Part 5: Creating Your Value (Value Proposition)

- Deliver on your current commitments first before volunteering for new things, be excellent at what you were hired to do
- Look for idea generation or innovation programs at your company: many have them and participating shows initiative
- Be proactive and raise your hand for opportunities even if you're not 100% qualified. You won't grow by only doing what's comfortable.
- Address areas needing change that come up in feedback and don't ignore constructive criticism
- Help other new employees succeed because this builds your reputation as a team player and leader
- Be willing to relocate or take on stretch assignments if required for advancement
- Think about what value you bring that goes beyond your technical skills. Examples include problem-solving, communication, reliability, initiative
- Document your accomplishments as they happen. Use these for performance reviews and future resume updates

## Part 6: Proactive Career Development

- Discuss your performance early and often and don't wait for the annual review to get feedback
- Ask about mentoring programs. Many companies have formal programs, and having a mentor accelerates your growth significantly
- Investigate company-sponsored education programs; many will fund a Master's or even Ph.D.
- Ask about rotation programs that let you learn different processes, business models, or departments
- Build a learning agenda: what skills do you need to develop in the next 1, 3, and 5 years?
- Seek feedback from multiple sources, including your manager, peers, and even people you support
- Take ownership of your career path because no one is going to engineer your success for you. There's no syllabus after college.
- Be self-aware about time management and *under-promise and over-deliver*
- Maintain curiosity in all interactions: a lack of curiosity is the marker of dysfunction

### *Negotiating Salary Increases*

- Most companies have an annual review cycle that feeds into merit increases so learn yours early
- The best negotiating position is being invaluable; be the person your manager relies on first
- In larger organizations, the path to bigger raises is often taking on additional responsibility or moving into higher-level roles, not just asking for more money in the same position
- Public sector tends to be the most rigid; small companies the most flexible; large private companies somewhere in between
- Build a working relationship with your supervisor where you can openly discuss performance and compensation
- If a recruiter contacts you with a competing offer, that's leverage — but handle it honestly and professionally with your current employer
- Support with data about what you've done and what you're worth in the marketplace: just like an engineer needs data for technical decisions, your manager needs data for business decisions

## Part 7: Developing Effective Presentation Skills

### *Core Principles*

- Presentation skills are essential for being seen as top-notch. If you can't communicate your work effectively, much of its value is lost.
- Know your audience including who are the decision-makers and what's their process?
- Know your subject matter cold — preparation is the foundation of confidence
- Understand how your audience absorbs information: some want data, some want stories, some want bottom-line impact
- Less is more: use bullet points, not paragraphs. Slides support your message; they don't replace it.

### *Presentation Structure*

- Open with a statement that MATTERS always answer "why are we here?" in the first 30 seconds
- Provide supporting rationale for your opening claim
- Close with a compelling call to action and be specific about what you need the audience to do
- Convey how the recommended actions lead to concrete benefits

### *Building the Skill*

- Consider Public Speaking courses, Dale Carnegie, or Toastmasters
- Practice presenting to peers and ask for candid feedback
- Prepare specifically for presenting to senior executives who want concise, high-impact information with clear recommendations
- Be heard and project your voice, make eye contact, and be positive in your delivery

## Part 8: Qualities Needed to Succeed

### *Professional Conduct*

- Be a fountain, not a drain and bring energy to every interaction
- Be fully present with others: no phone distractions, no drifting off in meetings
- Be responsible for how you show up including dress, mannerisms, body language, accountability
- Be collaborative and don't be a lone wolf; key employees think like owners, not occupants of a position
- Adopt an abundance mindset; always aim for win-win outcomes
- Under-promise and over-deliver — this is how reputations are built
- Have a thick skin and don't assume everything is personal
- Never give superiors the opportunity to say you've wasted their time
- Hard work is not optional; arrive before your boss and leave after
- Protect your professional reputation at all costs — it's the "wake" you leave behind you
- Don't burn bridges or job-hop excessively; a lack of loyalty is a red flag
- Accept responsibility rather than blaming others

### *The HOBBS Principle: Help Others Be Successful*

- Focus on helping others succeed and your own success follows naturally.
- Be self-aware: be yourself, stay grounded, know your strengths and limitations
- Be part of the solution, not the problem; if you disagree, bring an alternative, not just criticism
- Remain optimistic because optimism is infectious and people want to work with positive colleagues
- Know you're not perfect and neither is anyone else. Give yourself and others grace.
- Stretch, learn, grow — if you're comfortable, you're not reaching far enough
- Build trust by following through on every commitment, no matter how small. Your word is your bond.
- Step up like a basketball player: It's risky and you won't make every shot, but you can't add value without getting in the game.
- Enjoy the journey! You only go around once.

### *Final Wisdom*

- Look for a company that reinvests in you and your goals and not just one that extracts your labor
- Be effective, not just busy. Stay curious. Build genuine relationships.
- Work hard, but find and define your work-life balance
- Never accept mediocrity and always strive to be your best
- Find a career you're passionate about: if you love what you do, it won't feel like work
- Find YOUR passion and dive into it and don't borrow someone else's definition of success

*The transition from job seeker to valued contributor is where your career really begins. Show up prepared, stay curious, deliver results, build relationships, and take ownership of your growth. The habits you build in your first six months set the trajectory for years to come.*