

CONGRATULATIONS WITH YOUR NEW JOB

Tips for you - the new employee

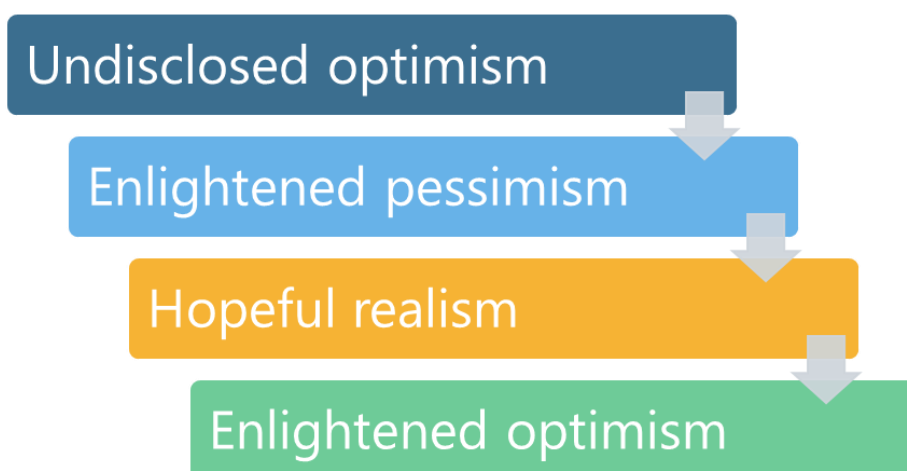
For starters we congratulate you with your new job! You are probably happy, excited and perhaps you can feel butterflies in your stomach? In this material, you can read about how to strengthen yourself mentally in order to gain a good foothold in your new job. It is very human to experience challenges when you are to be an integrated part of a new "tribe".

These are useful tips which will be helpful to browse through – and keep in mind. If something bothers you or makes you anxious: reach out to your advisor – much can be fixed with a good talk!

Which reactions can you expect when starting your new job?

Though we all react differently when facing new situations, studies have shown that we all experience the same phases when we undergo large changes in our lives. The transition to a new job is no exception. During the transition most new employees will experience feelings and thoughts which will occur simultaneously with four phases: Undisclosed optimism, Enlightened pessimism, Hopeful realism and Enlightened optimism.

The figure below illustrates the four phases. The duration and the intensity of these feelings differ from person to person. When you become familiar with this process it will help you to cope with the feelings when they appear.



Here below you can read more about some of the thoughts and feelings that you might experience during each phase of the transition to a new job.

Undisclosed optimism:

Being a new employee, you will often enter your new position filled with energy, enthusiasm and idealism. You have accepted your new role because it appears to contain attractive possibilities. During the job interviews and the decision-making-periods you have built up expectations to the role you are about to play. This phase is described as "Undisclosed optimism". The reason is that you have these expectations though you have limited knowledge about the organization. This should not be interpreted that you have misjudged the job during the interview process, but it is likely that you are not able to understand everything about your new job simply because you haven't tried it yet.

Enlightened pessimism:

At some point in the phase of being a new employee you are likely to discover some kind of "Enlightened pessimism". This will happen if you experience some situations which do not match the expectations you had when you started. At this point you might feel overwhelmed getting used to your new responsibility, finding out how the organization works, developing social networks, and at the same time balancing it all with your private life. It takes time to build up a feeling of security and confidentiality. You might even have second thoughts about whether you have made a huge mistake by changing job.

Hopeful realism:

Gradually, as you obtain more success in your new job and you start feeling more confident and have faith in your ability to gain success you will enter the phase "Hopeful realism". You start to realize that your new position is not either positive or negative, and slowly you will integrate your first expectations in the actual job (both positive *and* negative aspects). In this phase you will focus on the positive aspects in the new position, and you will develop strategies to deal with the less desirable contents of your new job.

Enlightened optimism:

"Enlightened optimism" is developed along with you as you start to get an overview of the organization and the new position, and you get more confident about what it takes to succeed in the job. At this point you will have endured the teething troubles and are about to get a hang of the new company's culture. You are now in a position where you have

developed a network of contacts who can help you perform your tasks. You now consider yourself as part of the team and no longer an outsider. You have started to look for ways to gain influence and ways to affect the organization.

Getting through the changes – tips and tricks:

Undisclosed optimism:

When you take up the new position you must realize that some of your expectations might not be fulfilled – on the other hand, other things might turn out better than expected.

Walk through all your assumptions about the position and the way things may turn out. If possible, try talking to someone from the organisation to find out if your assumptions were right.

Enlightened pessimism:

Realize that everyone will live through a phase of “Enlightened pessimism”. Keep in mind that the feelings you experience are just normal. You are not alone. Most colleagues have experienced the same.

Focus on the things that attracted you about this job and all the positive aspects that you have discovered since you started.

Think about the expectations that were not fulfilled:

- Will it just be a matter of time?
- Is there a way you can change your expectations, so they match the present situation?

After all, how important are these job facets for you?

Try to write down – in key words - your thoughts in a notebook, or have a conversation with someone you are confident with, it could be a good friend or perhaps another new employee.

Hopeful realism:

Think about all your successes (large and small) that you have achieved so far in your new position. How can you use them in order to increase your influence?

Aim to develop your professional relations to the people who have been positive and supportive.

To gain more confidence in yourself and increase your credibility towards

others you can with advantage look for other and new areas where your experience and competences can be brought to life.

You must be able to recognize that it takes time to learn all that your new position demands from you. Put some short-term learning goals for yourself. Focus on the aspects which here and now have the largest importance to how you perform your tasks.

Enlightened optimism:

Look back at the time you have been in your new job and be happy about how far you have come since your first day.

Reach out to other new employees and support them through their transition. Perhaps your experience can be helpful for them too!

Continue the good work in getting to understand your new company. If you have any suggestions to improvements make sure you communicate these in an appropriate way.

Identify your emotions in matters of your insecurities:

It is very common to experience a time with insecurity when you are in transition to a new job. Here below we have listed some typical thoughts and feelings many people experience during the first months of their new job. Perhaps you have some of these thoughts yourself. In front of each thought or feeling we have placed an alternative, a more realistic assessment of the given situation. Identify your feelings in order to move on.

Thought or emotion

Realistic assessment of the situation

“This isn’t what I expected. I am afraid that I’ve made a mistake”.

Most people will reach a point where realities (both positive and negative) will stand in contrast to the expectations they had to the job. This is called “Enlightened pessimism” in the previous sections. It is a normal phase that most people will undergo when starting a new job. *Take your time to get used to the situation before you make any decisions about the job.*

“I feel overwhelmed. Am I really capable to handle this job?”

You wouldn’t have been offered the position if your superior or the other people in the group didn’t think you would succeed. Everyone has a learning period when starting a new job.

Concentrate. Ask questions. Before long, you will start feeling confident about your new responsibility.

"I have to learn this job as fast as possible in order to be on the same page as my senior team members".

Of course, the company will appreciate that you get productive as soon as possible. But you are new to the job, and no one expects that you know everything. Give yourself some time. *Talk to your superior or the other people in your group about your concerns. They can give you a judgement of your present effort in relation to their expectations.*

"I have bitten off more than I can chew, and they will find that I am an incompetent imposter".

You have been hired because you are a gifted person who can contribute with great value to the company. You have a successful background, and it is very likely that you will achieve the same or even more success in your new position. *If you were an incompetent imposter it would have been discovered a long time ago, and you wouldn't have been offered this position.*

Or:

"When will they discover that I am useless?"

"If I ask too many questions, I will appear stupid, so I better keep quiet".

As a new employee you are not expected to know everything. There will also be stuff that even employees with higher seniority than you don't know. *The only way to learn more is to ask questions. There will of course be situations where asking questions makes more sense than others. But the fact that you are asking questions will contribute to your colleagues' perception of you as "eager to learn" and not stupid.*

Useful tips

Below here we have listed a couple of useful tips that will help you in your transition to your new job..

Say "goodbye"

Before you start your new job, it is a good idea to say a proper goodbye to your friends and colleagues in your former organization. Saying goodbye and sharing your feelings about the change is an important part of the transition

process.

Gain support from friends and family.

A job change can often result in a great deal of emotional stress. It helps a lot to have support from the people around you. When you commit yourself talking to friends, family and colleagues the transition will be easier for you. *Feeling their support will remind you that there are people who care for you, and that you are not alone.*

Accept that what you are going through is normal.

Whether people will admit it or not most people discover similar thoughts and feelings when starting a new job. Accept that you will discover both ups and downs, and that this is all a part of the process.

Give yourself some breaks

If you begin to feel overwhelmed take a break. Look for activities that will keep your mind off work for a few minutes. Go for a walk. Talk to a friend. Have a mental break. Taking a few minutes break will often give you a new perspective on the situation and increase your productivity significantly.

Be proactive

Look for ways to reach the goals you want. Being proactive will increase your chances to gain success and push your confidence at the same time. Don't be afraid to share it with others. If you choose to sit back and let others dictate your activities instead of being in control you will end up feeling like a victim.

Focus on matters within your reach

Realize there are things you can control, other things where you have influence and things that are out of your hands. *Focus on the things you can act on.* To waste time and energy on worrying about things that are out of your hands will keep you from focusing on the things you can change.

Limit the number of changes

Changes in our lives (both positive and negative) demand a lot of emotional and physiological energy. If possible, try not to change other aspects of your life when you have just started a

new job. At least not for the first month. There will be times when you can't be in control but if possible, try to limit the number of simultaneous major changes in your life.

Take responsibility for your needs

You are the first to know what you really need. Having a successful transition to your new job is a partnership between you and the new company. If you have questions, if you don't get what you need or if you are feeling insecure about some things - say it. *If you are not open about your needs how are other people supposed to know what you need?*

Talk to your superior

If it is unclear what people expect from you, you have difficulties in solving a task, or if you are uncertain about who can help you book a meeting with your superior. He or she will probably be able to answer your questions or tell you whom you should talk to.

Have fun!

Don't take yourself or your work too seriously. It is important to have fun and gain a good balance in order to maintain your efficiency at work and your joy in your private life.

Best of luck!