

I Just Got Promoted. Now What?

Resource Type: Articles

Topic: HR Risk and Employment Practices

Many nonprofits pride themselves on promoting leaders from within their organization. If you're reading this because you recently got promoted at your nonprofit, congratulations! Here are some tips to help you adjust to your new role.

Ask lots of questions. You might be tempted to pretend you know everything there is to know about your new role. But that will likely lead to mistakes, and it won't help you grow your relationships with colleagues. Ask your team members what their daily workload looks like, what projects they currently juggle, and how you can best support them.

Create a transition plan. You may need to cover your old role's duties as your nonprofit hires to fill the job or find an existing team member or multiple team members to assume your former duties. Communicate with your boss so you understand your responsibilities for handling duties during the transition to your new role. And don't hesitate to negotiate for what you need, like a definite end date for your old responsibilities. A clear transition benefits everyone.

If you're managing your former peers, spell out what's changed. Explain to your team members what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. Do this as soon as possible after your promotion, so old habits don't persist and create problems. Let your team members know you want to communicate clearly and treat them fairly. Those are two of the main things any employee seeks from their boss, no matter what your relationship with them looked like before you became their manager.

Take time to plan. Your new role may include executing task that rely on other people. Find out the specific goals your team is expected to accomplish and determine how you will measure success. Work with team members to learn their likes, dislikes, strengths, and areas for improvement. For each goal, determine how team members will contribute to it. Set deadlines and regular check-ins with team members to monitor progress, address challenges, and celebrate wins.

Your job is to get interrupted; prepare accordingly. You have tasks you must complete as a manager. But when a team member comes to you in need of assistance, you should prioritize working with that person if at all possible. Anticipate these kinds of interruptions, and include enough time in your schedule to get tasks done even with interruptions.

Show you care. Set aside time to connect personally with your team at the beginning of group meetings or one-on-one check-ins. When they share something that's important in their lives, listen, and ask them about it later. Communicate that employees can ask for help when they need it, and model that behavior. Give them feedback to help them complete their tasks well. Don't wait to address problems, and make sure to give lots of positive reinforcement.

Manage up. Make sure to have regular check-ins with your new boss. Ask for specifics about how the team's work supports the nonprofit's overall strategy and mission. Ensure you understand the team's short-term and long-term goals. Bonus: Find out what your boss's biggest challenges are, and consider how you could help them meet those challenges.

Understand your HR responsibilities. If you're now managing people, you'll need to understand expectations of supervisors. Re-read the employee handbook and make sure you understand your responsibilities for reporting issues and managing conflict, as well as who to turn to if you need help.

Connect with other leaders. Networking might feel like too big of a time commitment as you adjust to new responsibilities. But you'll think more creatively and feel more inspired if you find peers to connect with. A fresh perspective on a challenge you're facing can help you get unstuck. Connecting with people who are also navigating leadership issues can give you needed support and help build your confidence.

Resources

- [How to "Step Up" After a Big Promotion](#), Harvard Business Review
- [Just Promoted to Manager? How to Deal with Your 6 Biggest Challenges](#), Bizjournals