

Moving sideways can be tough, so be positive

A new position in a company brings with it fresh opportunities but also new expectations.

Moving to a new role in an organization can often be as daunting as the prospect of moving to a different company. A new position in a company brings with it fresh opportunities but also new expectations. It is an opportunity to prove yourself again while building a fresh set of skills. Certainly, there are ways to make the transition to a new role as painless as possible.

Role changes are not always simply a matter of promotion, but may come about through a company restructure, merger or the employee's desire for a career change. Although different in nature to promotions, sideways moves are not always as easy as they first seem. A promotion brings with it the challenges of leadership, but often those who are promoted will find themselves working at a higher level in a team structure they are already familiar with.

A sideways move, however, can see employees outside of their comfort zone in an entirely new set of circumstances. If it is a sideways move to a different department, you will have to deal with your new team's set of procedures, accustom yourself to their perceptions and attitudes, and learn how to cope with them. Your relationships with colleagues will probably change slightly, especially if you have moved into a leadership role.

A particularly tough transition can be when you have to take a step back in the hierarchy to move into a new career. These moves are becoming more common in today's workplace, where we have more career changes than ever before.

If you find yourself in this situation, do not be disheartened. Keep a positive, conscientious attitude by going back to the basics of focusing on your long-term goal and setting the small objectives you need to achieve along the way. When you feel discouraged, imagine yourself looking back on this time from a point in the future when you have achieved your goals. Most people have been too scared to take the plunge, so your courage is enviable.

Review and assess the skills that landed you in a new role and determine where your best transferable skills are. Think about what you have learnt in your career that you can apply in this next phase - the experience you bring from a different field may give you an edge. Focus on the positives and remember that your company has taken a chance on you, so prove it was worth it.

Make sure you are given a clear job description and speak to your manager so you have a clear understanding of expectations. Embrace feedback and solicit it as often as you can. Ask your manager if there is specialized transition support available to you, and, if not, do not be afraid to make this request of your HR department.

Above all, it is vital to remember that your career transition is a process, and sometimes what seems like a step backwards can end up being a step on the way to your career goals.

Moving to a new role

- A role change can be a promotion in the same department or a sideways move to a different one in the same company, or an embarkation on a new career
- When encountering a tough transition, always keep a positive attitude, focus on long-term goals and set small objectives
- Apply transferable skills and resort to previous work experience in the new role
- Embrace feedback and solicit support from your manager and the HR department

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