

FIRST

90

DAYS

A

CAREER HABIT

JOURNAL

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INTRODUCTION

Your first 90 days on the job

Congratulations! You've landed a job! Finding a new job is a lot of work, so make sure to celebrate your accomplishment before you get back to it. As strange as it may seem...

Now is the perfect time to start

It may seem counterintuitive, but the beginning of your job is actually the best time to think about your next role and start out on the right foot. [See this post for more details]. The first few months are often referred to as the "honeymoon" period for many reasons:

- Generally, there is a lot of learning as you build and polish your skills
- You have a grace period to ask "dumb questions" and make mistakes
- Often you can push boundaries since the role may be still be fluid
- Your outside perspective is valued while it is fresh

Note: Each person and culture is different. These are general guidelines, which can and will vary. Adapt and apply them as necessary. These first few months are your opportunity to get the "lay of the land", connect with your team and leadership, and take charge of your career. It is also the time to establish your reputation and cultivate strong business habits.

I've spent over twenty years* helping companies and consultants "pitch," "sell," and "persuade" either through marketing, consulting, or change management projects. Very few enjoy the meta-work of updating their resumes and the project reports. Scratch that! Most people don't want to think about it at all! I've spent years training folks on how to make the process suck less.

Our economy is changing quickly. The average job tenure has been steadily decreasing for years. That means that we have less formal and informal career coaching and management. And let's be honest, there are a lot of bad managers out there.

The career habit is career management process that aligns your career portfolio, brand, network, and skills. It's meant to help you focus on what matters. Your first 90 days is your jump start into this process.

*(wow -- really?! Oh my gosh, I'm old)

“No strategy survives the battlefield.”

Before Day One

Know your “Goal”

Write down your goals for this position. It is not uncommon to find that the position you thought you applied for is different than the one you are doing. Such changes may or may not work in your favor. Regardless, you should be aware of your expectations. Be prepared to have candid conversation with your manager to ensure you are on the same page. It will help if you understand your personal reasons and goals for taking the job.

Quick story, Christine took a job with an established non-profit with the expectation that working so closely with the CEO would give her the credibility and the contacts she wanted to progress in a new field. Instead, she found a disjointed culture and her impact diluted by internal politics. After 3 months, it was clear that she had achieved as much as she could. Although she had expected to stay in the role for 2 years, she reignited her job search and learned that one of the start-ups she had been interested in was still very interested in working with her. She took the job and within three years was VP of operations, the role of her dreams!

Me-Guide

If you’ve been following the **Career Habit**, you may have already started your [me-guide](#). This journal has worksheets to help you complete your “me-guide.” When used correctly, the me-guide will accelerate your relationship and help you discover if you’re “drift compatible.”

Read How to Win Friends and Influence People

Read it with a grain of salt since it’s a bit corny. The goal, however, is to take away tips to help establish that you are trustworthy and likable. To be successful in general, you need friends. The point of the book is not to be fake and manipulative. I use it for inspiration on ways to be a better friend.

Set up industry and alerts

This should be obvious. Know what is going on in your industry, company, clients, and with your competitors. Generally glancing at the headlines is enough.

First Month Focus:

Understand the basics + bond with your team

Journal your daily/weekly check in

This is an exciting time and you’ll be tempted to just go with the flow and not make time to take care of yourself. That’s a mistake. Now is the time to set up patterns of behavior as an employee as well as best practices to model as a leader. Make the time to exercise, meditate, grow, learn, stay on track, and hold yourself accountable!

Network: Get to know your team.

Do this with intention!! You want to establish trusting relationships with your team. No need to be a Pollyanna and to LIKE everyone, but you do need to understand their value, respect their contributions, and be kind. Practice people’s names. Understand what they want and how they are measured. What do you do if you are stuck with some who are shady? Think like a superspy. If you can’t trust someone as a person - you can at least trust their motivations! So if your boss is a jerk and all she cares about is making money and assuming that aligns with the business goals, then help her do it in the short term but make an escape plan to work with folks you trust!

Establish habits (e.g. Gratitude, Feedback, Listen)

If someone helps you acknowledge it and the individual likes public praise, consider doing it at a team meeting. Investigate internal “thank you” programs, where you can often send someone a gift card for going above and beyond. Understand how things are currently being done before your offer suggestion. Use your networking time to ask questions about the current process. While you network, try to understand how things have been done in the past. While you’ll be tempted to “blurt” out suggestions, think like a consultant, and make sure your team hasn’t already “been there done that.”

Nail your job basics

J.T. O’Donnell, founder of [Workitdaily.com](#), suggests you should be able to learn your basic job function within 40 hours.

Second Month Focus:

Find your rhythm +set goals + get aligned

Continue with your daily and weekly journal

Build relationships

While you continue to build and cultivate your relationships with your immediate team, expand your circle to those outside of your group. This includes understanding your internal “service providers” and folks in parallel groups. Developing a positive rapport with your expanded team can smooth out communication errors and provide perspective. Connecting with folks in similar roles can often reveal unexpected insights, opportunities to consolidate processes, and knowledge sharing. Prioritize your attention on and who give as good as they get.

Identify external networking opportunities

Look into the organizations your firm sponsors. Leverage that into a leadership role or speaking opportunity. Do your peers or leaders belong to groups and/or meetups? Do you work with any outside consultants? Establishing a trusting relationship with such folks can be mutually beneficial for future employment opportunities. Be generous with assisting others. Set healthy limits on your time, but the more you can help others succeed, the more likely they will be able and willing to help you in the future.

Grow your skills

Once you have your job basics down. What are the skills that will help you get to the next level? How can you get those skills, practice them, and demonstrate your impact? Make a plan. This does not necessarily have to be “within” your organization. There are many inexpensive options on-line and off (I.e. Coursera, Udemy, General Assembly etc.).

Understand your company/product

Identify the “centers of power and knowledge” in your organization. Generally, it is a good rule of thumb to be positioned in an area that is a core or strategic focus. Bad managers and organization don’t share “power” easily and obfuscate employees’ impact. Recognizing this cultural red flag early can save you a ton of frustration.

Third Month Focus:

Setting your Vision + Find Balance

Journal + continue to build and cultivate relationships

Focus your attention on the folks you like and trust as well as those most essential to your role’s success and growth. Establish your dependability. If you don’t have your mastermind group (i.e. five to eight folks you can rely upon for advice), this is the time to develop it.

Maintain your career habits + build your brand

Ask for feedback. By now, you have started to identify the people you truly trust and who understand your vision. Ask your “posse” to help you stay aligned with your goals. Don’t be afraid to ask them for recommendations and to identify opportunities they may see that you don’t. Remember by definition your posse are folks who can be both kind and candid with you.

For example, after a presentation, ask those your trust whether you seem prepared, present, and calm? They can also observe the audience and/or potentially tell you what is being said about you when you are not there. Good managers can also do this.

Set the vision of the next year

Think in terms of growth and make sure to traffic and document your journey! As you progress and grow, remember to raise your hand for projects. You want room to grow i.e. in a position where you have 60 - 75% of the skills needed. In a recent Yale webinar, Laszlo Bock, Google’s former top People executive said to find leverage! Seek to acquire human leverage even if it’s mentoring an intern. The fact is, with automation, these opportunities are dwindling. If you can’t do it inside the firm, consider hiring freelancers for your side projects. Finally, if you trust your leadership, have them co-create your vision with you.

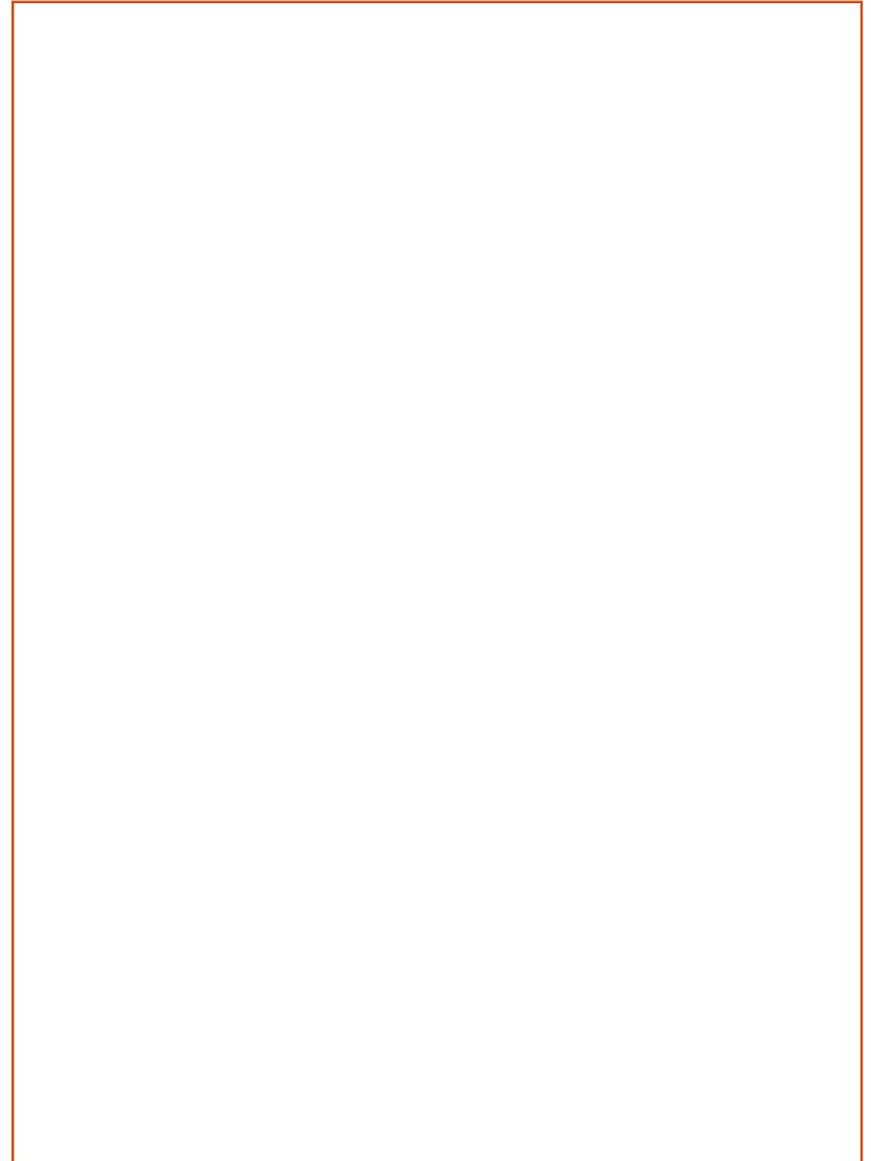
Stretch Goal: Career portfolio

They say that planes use the most energy when taking off and landing. Once you are at a cruising altitude in your full time job, you can start to think about developing or scaling your side gigs. (For a deep dive on this, read Dori Clark’s “Entrepreneurial You.”)

BEFORE DAY ONE

Your goal in accepting this position

Write down why you took this job - the pros and the cons. Where do you want to go and how will this job help get you there? Is this your dream job or a bridge opportunity? Understanding your vision will help determine assess your future goal. Think about the skills you want to improve and ways to practice and prove your competence. What is the kind of impact you want to have?



Job Description

Get a copy of the job description. If you negotiated a different role make sure to update it with those details. Understanding the starting point will help you demonstrate growth during reviews.



House Keeping

- Set up Industry alerts
- Set up competitor alerts
- Review and update the leaders you follow on social media
- Read "How to Win Friends & Influence People"

Me Guide

Start to fill in the details below to build our your “me-guide.” For more information check out this [post about ways you can use the “Me-Guide”](#).

College / University:

Degree:

Extracurricular / Awards:

College / University:

Degree:

Extracurricular / Awards:

Additional Education:

Hometown:

Preferred Pronoun:

Mottos:

Preferred Hours:

Interests:

Growth Areas:

Preferred Industries:

Personality / Strengthsfinder

My favorite work style tool is the Clifton Strengthsfinder - however you'll want to get on the same page with your team - i.e. DISC, Myers Briggs.

Results:

Notes on your collaboration style:

Communication Style:

Values

Top Personal Values:

Notes on Values:

Rita Goodroe, one of my favorite business and success coach, once said, “your self-esteem plummets when your actions are out of alignment with your values.” At the time I was struggling to show up authentically and confidently at work. Those words made me realize that the problem wasn’t simply my confidence in myself, but in my leadership. It made me realize how important it was to notice and understand of how changes in circumstances - in this case my shifts in team and leadership style - could affect my ability to do my job.

Technical Skills

Review the skills you peers and those 3-4 years ahead of you list on LinkedIn. If your organization has a skill inventory system, ask your HR or leadership what skills you to get to the next level. Keep in mind as you progress as a leader, you may find you need to focus less on technical skills and more on soft skills.

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Soft Skills

Skills are only strong when they are practiced. Seek feedback and learning opportunities. Your skills should tie back to your stories and include “proof” and testimonials for internal and external clients.

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Career Highlights

List out the work you that you are most proud of. These are the stories you tell when you are bragging or asked “what have been your greatest successes.

1

2

3

4

5

Publications

Include articles, white papers, e-books, blogs, podcasts etc. Model authenticity and give your team the opportunity to really get to know you through your publications

Article:
Name of Publication:
Date:
Link:
Notes:

90 DAY OVERVIEW

We don't have time.

We make time.

Use the monthly overview to record your activities.
Some items to note:

- Networking events
- Mastermind dinners
- Projects milestones
- Personal goals and milestones
- Career habit sprint dates + meetups
- Training+ learning opportunities

90 DAY JOURNAL

This journal not intended to take the place of a daily planner, although it can be used that way or integrated into your time management system. As productivity expert, Francis Wade says, most of us are just looking for the 5 percent tweak that fits our style.

Be curious & find what works for you

Daily Tips

- Focus on what you can control
- Don't reinvent wheels
- Notice what scares you, use that a compass
- Double down on the things you enjoy
- Manage your energy (not just your time)
- Be unapologetic in your quest for impact
- When you don't feel like shining - think of all the people who need your gifts and shine on!

Ask for feedback

We can not do this alone. To improve any skill we must engage in deliberate practice, which requires feedback. Feedback can be obtained from a coach, teammates, or a tribe. Keep in mind that feedback is also only as good as the source. Seek reliable expert feedback whenever you can.

Monthly Goals Review

Month 1 - Understand the basics + Bond with your team

Month 2 - Find your rhythm + Set goals + Get aligned

Month 3 - Set your vision + Find balance

TEAM SHEETS

Network with intention

Linda Aivoltis, networking coach and mastermind coach, has a wonderful metaphor for the way that most folks go about networking. “It’s like we are all living on top of a diamond mine,” she says, “we search and search for diamonds on the surface, but the truth is we need to go deeper.” Most of us can dive deeper into the relationships we already have. Think about the ways you can spend better, more meaningful time - some times less is more.

Building trust and other lessons from Google

- According to Google’s Project Aristotle, a data driven study of what makes teams productive, “Psychological Safety” aka trust is by far the most important factor in high performing teams.
- Assume good intentions, this comes from both **Laszlo Bock**, the former SVP of Google People Operations and **Indra Nooyi**, the CEO of Pepsi. You get better results when you trust people. *That said, trust but don’t be stupid about it.*
- Everyone, no matter their level or age, wants to be appreciated. Remembering the details shows respect and consideration, a little goes along way.

A word of caution

This journal is not a “slam book” (if you don’t get the reference we can’t be friends until you watch *Mean Girls*). Avoid trash talking anyone and be careful with recording negative feedback -- even if it’s true. It’s ok to assess someone negatively and/or as untrustworthy but chances are it’s not actually your job to assess their job performance Do not let personal dislike affect the way that you treat them. Also opinions change. You don’t want Mr. Darcy to read that you used to think he was a stuck up prat - because otherwise you’ll have sprint after him in the snow, in your underwear, in London. (See Bridget Jones’s Dirary for the reference).

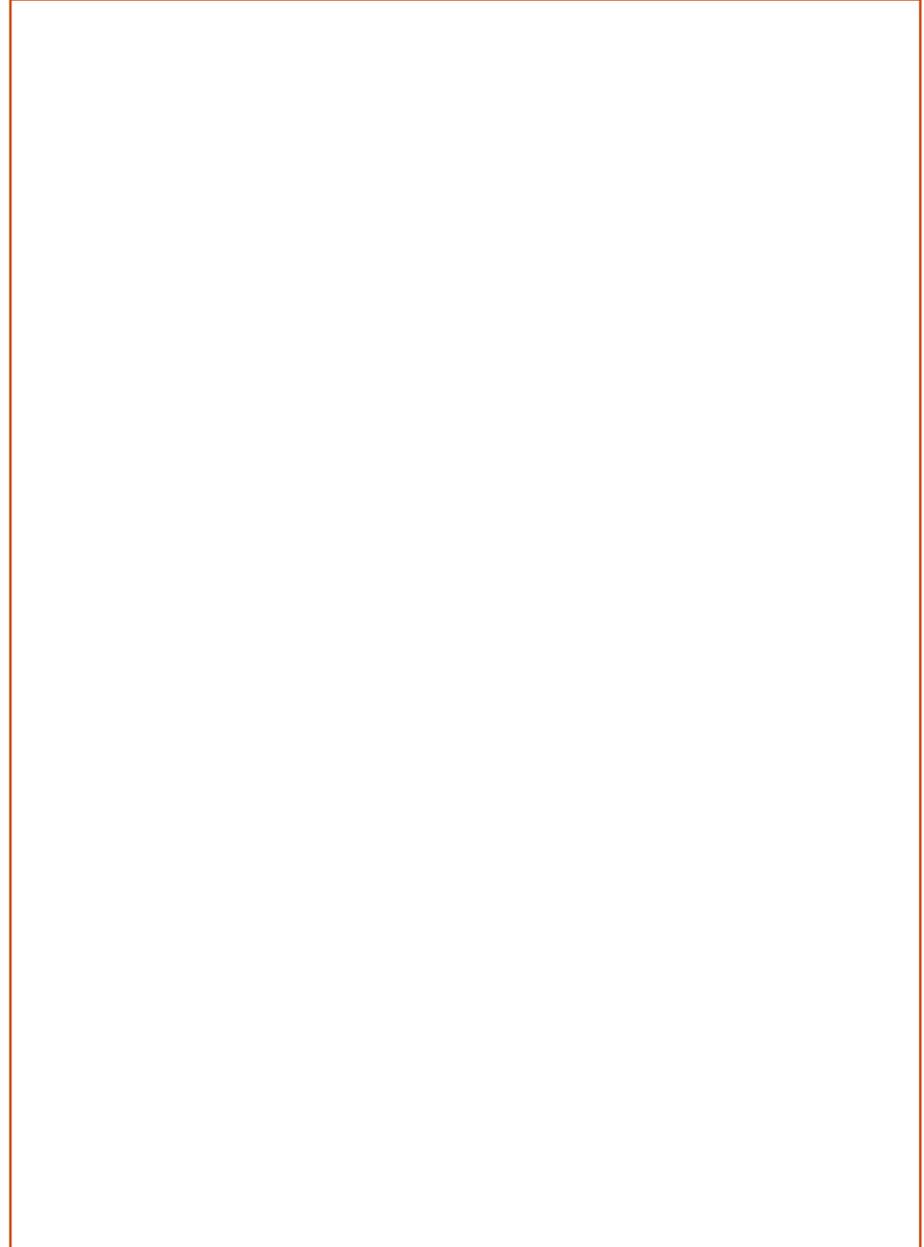
Notes about your team:

Some of this information you can learn from a bit of LinkedIn stalking. Use your one-on-one time to get to know them, but don’t make it an interrogation. It’s a marathon not a sprint. Capture Birthday, Work Anniversaries, Interests, Goals Personal and Professional Goals. What are the proud of? What are their values? What is the educational background? Personality Type, Strengths. Etc.

Name:
Role:
Notes:



Name:
Role:
Notes:



IMPACT STORIES

Kristin Sherry, one of my favorite career influencers, reminds us that our resume and interviews are composed of stories that demonstrate three things

1. Impact
2. Skills
3. History of success.

Story Tips

Like all stories they benefit from basic storytelling tricks.

- **The hook!** Like a click-bait article you want to pull in your audience
- **Use sensory details.** This is especially true for when you recount the story in an interview of a network event
- **Show don't tell.** If you're creative have portfolio, if you're insightful provide insight, if you're funny make them laugh.

Don't be afraid to be on brand and to stand out.

The S.T.A.R. format

- **Situation.** What was client problem being solved? This is an opportunity to SHOW how well you understood the situation.
- **Task/Actions.** What did you do? Keep this story focused. The trick here is to speak at the right level, you want to be as specific as possible. One way to figure this out is to ask your audience - to go into more or less details depending on their understanding
- **Result.** What was your impact! This is also an opportunity to show a keep insight! "As a result, we helped the client accurately report to the SEC and avoid fines of up to \$5 Million."

Feedback and follow-up

Too often we launch projects but we don't always get feedback or follow up. This is especially true for consultants who are typically called into to get a product up and running. We fail to capture our successes, rushing from project to project. This is often a missed opportunity - to learn, improve, and take advantage of what we're already doing right! It also can help improve our mood and keep up aligned and inspired! Think in terms of AUM -- the sound of the universe - A- what can you start U - what should you continue and/or accept and M - what can you stop. (see also Triggers)

IMPACT STORIES

Project Date:

STAR:

Wins/Lessons Learned:

Skills:

Get Feedback

IMPACT STORIES

Project Date:

STAR:

Wins/Lessons Learned:

Skills:

Get Feedback

REFERENCES

&

GRATITUDE

A few books to read

[Creative Confidence](#) - Tom Kelly and David Kelly
[Designing Your Life](#) - David Evans and Bill Burnett
[Deviate](#) - Beau Lott
[Entrepreneurial You](#) - Dorie Clark
[Gifts of Imperfection](#) - Brene Brown
[Grit](#) - Angela Duckworth
[Humble Consulting](#) - Ed Schein
[Money Master the Game](#) - Anthony Robbins
[The Obstacle is the Way](#) - Ryan Holiday
[Originals](#) - Adam Grant
[Outliers](#) - Malcolm Gladwell
[Pivot](#) - Jenny Blake
[Powerful](#) - Patty McCord
[Presence](#) - Amy Cuddy
[Prosperous Coach](#) - Steve Chandler and Rich Litchin
[Reinvention Roadmap](#) - Liz Ryan
[Strength Finder 2.0](#) - Tom Rath
[Start With Why](#) - Simon Sinek
[Stumbling on Happiness](#) - Daniel Gilbert
[Triggers](#) - Marshal Goldsmith & Mark Reiter
[You are a Badass](#) - Jen Sincero
[Work Rules!](#) - Laszlo Bock

Thank you to these coaches and thought leaders

Linda Aivalotis - networking advice
Nicole Farkouh - visionary leadership + strategy
Rita Goodroe - boldness and accountability
Spencer Ingram -- looping and taking bold action
Kristin Sherry - career building blocks
Michael J. Sullivan - epic story crafting advice

