

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR NEW JOB ISN'T YOUR DREAM JOB

*If your new job isn't the love of your life, make the most of it during your search for a better one.*

You made it! After endless hours of filling out job applications, rehearsing your interview responses, and sending post-interview follow-up thank you notes, you finally received a job offer.

It may not be your dream job, but it will cover the rent. And although you're happy to have the promise of a paycheck, you feel disappointed that this wasn't the job that you planned on having.

If you accepted a job that's less than ideal, never fear. The tips below will help you make the most of your new job while you continue your pursuit of a better career.

## **Start your new job on the right foot.**

It doesn't matter if it's a job you love or you simply just love the paycheck. It's never too early to start building your personal brand in the workplace. You already know that it's important to make a good impression on the very first day of your new job, but take this a step further by creating a list of things you can do during your first week, month, and 90 days on the job that will set you up for success.

## **Make the most of your situation.**

Start off by setting realistic expectations, just because this isn't your dream job, doesn't mean it will be a waste of your time. Think of your new job as a stepping stone toward your long-term goal.

As a recent college grad starting your first entry-level job, your goal is to get a foot in the door, even if that means taking an entry-level job outside of your field of study or outside of your targeted list of employers. Your first job after college will require grunt work. If your entry-level job is making you question your career path, take a look at the work the person two levels above you is doing for the company. If that person's role interests you, then you know you're on the right track.

## **Network like it's your job.**

Studies find that you're 10 times more likely to land a job when your application is accompanied by an employee referral. However, you can't get those coveted references without networking. Make it your mission to become an active networker.

Develop a valuable network of professional connections by getting involved in your alumni organization, joining relevant LinkedIn groups online, and finding face-to-face networking opportunities through relevant professional organizations.

You don't have to leave the office in order to network. Get to know the colleagues in your department and take advantage of company-wide events to meet those outside of your group. Networking with your new colleagues is especially helpful if you want to pursue a different role within the same company or plan to continue working in the same industry.

**Build the skills you need.**

You may find that your new job isn't providing you with the opportunity to build certain skills that are important for your professional advancement. If that's the case, take matters into your own hands and seek out opportunities to fill your skill gaps. For example, you can sign up for an online course through sites like Coursera, Lynda.com, edX, or Skillshare. You may also learn about relevant seminars, webinars, and other professional development opportunities through the professional associations you join and the conferences or networking events you attend.

**Keep the search alive**

While some would argue you want to avoid being labeled as job hopper by employers, most career experts agree that employed professionals should always be looking for new job opportunities. Keep up your job-search activities by regularly updating your resume, monitoring your online presence, updating your LinkedIn profile, making networking a priority, and applying to positions you're interested in and qualified to pursue.

**Keep your eye on your long-term job goals and make the most of your current situation. You've got this!**