

From Peer to Manager

By Jennifer Anderson

Have you been recently promoted to a leadership position? Congratulations on a great accomplishment! With a new leadership position comes greater responsibility and the opportunity to grow in ways that you cannot even imagine. This article covers five key points to navigate going from “peer” to “manager” to help you prepare for the transition.

Personal Brand

The first thing you should always keep in mind is your personal brand. Your brand does not change now that you are in a leadership position. What changed is your title. You are still you. You are still composed of the same set of skills, personality traits, and habits. Yes, you will grow and learn new managerial skills, but your characteristics will remain with you for the rest of your life. Make sure to be clear about your personal brand (also known as your legacy or your mark on the world) so that you will know what kind of manager you want to be.

Social Media

If you are friends on social media with your peers, you will likely want to “unfriend” them when you become their manager. The main reason is to keep a professional distance. As a friend on Facebook, you will have access to their photos and posts, which exposes you to much personal information that could put you in a compromised position. For example, what if your work friend



Team Member Interruptions

As a peer, your “door” was likely always open for anyone to speak with you. When you become a manager, you will need to learn the power of protecting your schedule. Otherwise, you will be continuously interrupted and hard-pressed to get all of your work done. Certainly, you should make yourself available for an urgent situation but learning how to manage the interruptions will reduce stress (yes, your stress level is going to increase with the promotion).

One-on-One Time

One of the most powerful ways you can connect with your direct reports is through regular, individual, one-on-one meetings. These are not project status update meet-

consistent ... these meetings should never be rescheduled. Your direct reports will greatly appreciate your efforts to prioritize them.

Don't Forget

It is likely that there was a time when your manager did something that drove you nuts. At that moment, you might have said something to yourself like, “When I’m the manager, I will NEVER do that.” Well, now you are the manager! Do not do those things that will drive people nuts. Take some time to think about what kind of manager you do not want to be and write out what kind of manager you do want to be. Share that list with your direct reports and ask them to hold you accountable. Being vulnerable like this will help you to stay connected to your work peers in a way that is lasting to both of your professional careers.

Ultimately, going from peer to manager has many nuances that will be specific to your situation, but do not forget that it is YOUR career...make sure that you are growing and developing into your version of a leader. Be the manager that you’ve always wanted to work for!▪



Born into a family of engineers but focusing on the people side of engineering, Jen Anderson has over 21 years of helping leaders build stronger careers for themselves and their teams. (www.CareerCoachJen.com)

“With a new leadership position comes greater responsibility and the opportunity to grow in ways that you cannot even imagine.”

posted photos of drinking at a bar while on a business trip, and then you know that they drove the company car home from the bar? Depending on your company’s social media policy, you may now have to fire your work friend. As his manager, you know that he did something illegal and against company policy.

ings; one-on-one meetings are for your direct reports to get support and guidance from you about their career, personal and professional goals, and development at the company. One-on-one meetings are time well spent. A powerful connection happens during a closed-door, private conversation. One key thing about one-on-one meetings is to be