

Examples of a 30 60 90 day plan for new managers

From the moment the job interview ended and the hiring manager offered her the managerial position, Jennifer could not wait to begin her new role. Her new team looked promising, and she was eager to implement her ideas on how to improve the department. Ready to hit the ground running, she envisioned making a great first impression on everybody encountered.

Instead, Jennifer often arrived home frustrated and exhausted. Some team members seemed unhappy with a procedural change she made her first week. Paperwork piled up, from budgets needing review to onboarding forms requiring completion. HR kept sending reminders to finish those managerial training modules. She had intended to get to those later on Thursday, but the staff meeting ran long (despite not even touching the last three items on her agenda). Then, there was that issue with the project management system. She assumed it would operate like the one at her last company. She quickly found out it didn't — after three different people mentioned her errors.

Overwhelmed and unsure of herself, she often wished she had a roadmap to provide direction.

Creating a 30-60-90-day plan

As all new hires will attest, those first weeks on the job pose a challenge. New managers like Jennifer face an extra obstacle. They know others look to them as leaders, but it is hard to guide when you have not yet mastered the lay of the land.

A great way to handle the situation is to formulate what is known as a 30-60-90-day action plan. As the name suggests, its contents cover the first 90 days on a new job. This amount of time corresponds to the three-month grace period/probation time employers commonly provide for new employees to get up to speed and establish themselves. A 90-day plan template contains three main sections. Each part focuses on goals and activities for a specific period: the first month (30 days), the second month (60 days on the job), and the third month (90 days of employment).

Formulating such a document helps people in a new position become better time managers. The writer looks at the bigger picture and prioritizes what needs to be done when. Laying out a concrete vision of specific, measurable, and realistic goals offers a sense of control. Accomplishing the stated milestones boosts motivation and confidence.

Some individuals taking on a new manager role will find their employer requires such a plan. Human resources may provide a 30-60-90-day template to guide the process and perhaps a plan example or two. Those looking for ideas often find going over their job description helpful.

Whether your new company asks for a 30-60-90-day plan or you create one on your own, show it to your supervisor. He or she can offer valuable input as well as reassurance that you are on the right track. While every person's end product will look different, the following provides some guidance on constructing a 30-60-90 plan.

Be certain to start each section with the actual dates covered (such as July 15-August 15) for easy reference.

The first 30 days of the plan

The initial month of employment is a time filled with handling the basics. Do what is needed to get up to speed, and set learning goals. Focus on absorbing as much information as possible about the company's mission, operations, and people.

While not as “splashy” as trying to make an immediate impact, accumulating knowledge and connections will pay off. What you learn will guide future actions and decisions. Others will view you as thoughtful, curious, and caring. You will begin to build trust and respect.

Consider including some of the following items in the 30-day section of the plan.

Complete onboarding

You want to receive your paycheck, insurance, and other benefits without delay, right? Do yourself and HR a favor by filling out all appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Likewise, schedule blocks to do manager training modules and read provided material. Pay particularly close attention to the employee handbook. Look at it both as a worker and as a manager. You will get a firm grasp of company policies on issues likely to arise, such as dress code, absenteeism, and progressive discipline.

Master company technology

Effective communication and project management are difficult when you don't know how to use the tools. Familiarize yourself with everything from the get-go, such as how to share documents, what Slack channels exist, and how to set up video conferences.

Meet one-on-one with direct reports

Get to know members of your team. Read each person's job description before the meeting to get a sense of his or her expected duties, but be ready to go beyond what's on paper. What does the individual see as his responsibilities? What is her preferred work style? What are the major challenges of the position? What motivates the person to put forth his best? Learn things about the worker's interests and life away from the office, too.



Schedule a team meeting early on

Share a bit about yourself both personally and professionally. Express excitement about working with this group. Discuss any pertinent issues and short-term plans. Be open to what team members want to talk about.

Circulate

Spend time away from your desk and out in the main work area. Listen and observe. You'll learn plenty about office operations and workflow. Evaluate the vibe. You can find out much about company culture and employee engagement by considering the general mood. And since your presence may lead some employees to spontaneously strike up a conversation, go with the flow. Random chats build camaraderie and may bring important issues to light.

Connect outside your department

Don't limit interactions to just your own team. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible, and learn what they do. Building connections with other managers will help you navigate the new company. Interact with support staff, too. Besides enhancing your reputation, rapport with administrative assistants and maintenance workers will likely prove valuable down the line.

Familiarize yourself with where things stand

Gain an understanding of the nitty-gritty. What are the company's key performance metrics? Where do budgets stand? Who are the primary clients, and what services does your organization provide for them? Higher-ups likely will judge your success as a manager based on factors such as productivity figures, staying within budget, and pleasing key customers. Thus, it pays to know the indicators used.

Check in with your own manager

As the end of the month draws near, get feedback on your performance so far. It will ease concerns about how you are doing. If there is a problem, you can address it quickly to right the ship. Ask about any new issues or priorities you should attend to going forward.

The middle 30 days of the plan

By month two, new managers typically start feeling more comfortable. Learning continues, of course, but the basics become second nature. You know general operations, names, and likely even have pretty good insight into the personalities of your direct reports.

Building on knowledge acquired and connections made, new managers can start contributing more during days 31-60. Asking questions and listening remain important. But, at the same time, you can begin making a name for yourself by expressing your own ideas and taking measures to shape your team.

The following are some things the new manager might want to put in this section of the plan.

Brainstorm

Think about what struck you during the previous period. Perhaps a certain problem kept appearing, morale seemed low, or a way of doing something seemed very inefficient. How might the company go about making improvements to these areas?

Analyze data

Now that you understand the numbers, dig deeper into them. Where might budgets be trimmed or reallocated? What patterns do you notice in performance metrics?

Standardize

Look for ways to save time and establish consistency by developing routines. Setting up a meeting agenda template, for instance, makes it easy to quickly create the document before each gathering and to keep content limited to the timeframe.

Hold one or more team meetings

Spend some of the time covering current issues, but also look to the future. Discuss and get feedback on some of the initiatives you are considering. Work together to develop various team goals. Strategize on how to accomplish them, perhaps using the SMART goals method. (Each letter in SMART stands for an important element of successful goal-setting: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.)

Issue a challenge

Motivate your team by giving them ownership over an objective. Maybe you'd like to gain five new clients this month. Encourage them to problem-solve and act together on this mission — with the promise of a pizza party if accomplished.

Continue to meet one-on-one with direct reports

Checking in with individuals remains a priority. Conversations now, however, can move beyond general introductions. Help team members identify their strengths and weaknesses. Look for skill gaps and measures that can fill them in. Seek feedback on what management can do to improve productivity and company culture.

Implement small projects

It still might not be the ideal time to overhaul a marketing campaign or seek funding for a new software system. However, start putting minor initiatives into action. You will gain a sense of accomplishment and start gaining a reputation as a mover and shaker. Since you showed patience by first learning the ropes and generating trust

during the first month, others will likely be ready to give your ideas a try. (Jennifer from earlier might have had better luck with the staff accepting her procedural change if she had waited until this stage to put it into action.)

Recognize and appreciate

Employees love to know that their manager notices what they do well. Look for opportunities to pat people on the back. Send a heartfelt email thanking someone for staying late or putting in extra effort. Pen a personal note congratulating the month's top seller. Surprise the team with bagels one morning as a thank-you for their assistance in getting you up to speed in your new managerial role.

Check in with your own manager again

Discuss progress and challenges. You are still new enough that feedback on your performance will dominate much of the conversation. However, you also can start talking about future goals and plans, especially as they relate to the company's mission.

The last 30 days of the plan

Get ready to shine in days 61-90! You know a great deal about the company and its people now. Bigger moves are possible and probably even expected by both direct reports and upper management. Confidently embrace putting your strong leadership skills into action.

Include items like these in the last phase of the 30-60-90-day plan.

Make staffing decisions

The previous 60 days provided time to thoroughly examine your team. If you are short-handed, go full throttle on hiring and recruiting now. Likewise, put what you have learned from evaluating the staff into practice. Perhaps someone seems better suited for a different role on the team than the part he currently plays. Work on making that switch. Or, if your department is carrying a worker who is unproductive or toxic, start the termination process.

Put bigger ideas into action

Draw on what you have learned during the past two months to make significant changes. Maybe this means reallocating money to build a larger budget for a project that would benefit the company's mission. Perhaps you want to try out a novel morale-building exercise. Make your move to do the things that will truly make a difference.

Hold one or more staff meetings

Discuss the outcome of the team goals created last month. Also, people likely will have questions about some of the new procedures you are putting into place. Use this time to clarify, explain the reasoning behind changes, and build buy-in.

Keep up individual meetings with staff members

One-on-one check-ins remain integral and will stay that way even beyond the 30-60-90 plan. But, kick your conversations up a notch this month. After issuing feedback and addressing any employee concerns, spend time talking about career ambitions. Where does this person want to be in six months, a year, or five years? What further skills or education does she desire? What types of goals can she set to prepare for advancement? Development plans motivate workers. They also increase retention because they offer the vision of a future with the company.

Check in with your own manager

Provide a summary of your probation period accomplishments, and ask for feedback. Show that you are an agent of change by presenting your thoughts for even more achievement going forward. Just as you did with your own charges this month, discuss career goals. If the 30-60-90-day plan worked as it should, you should be able to come out of this meeting feeling good about yourself and clear on what is ahead for you at this company!