

## **Transitioning to Full-Time Work**

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It takes some adjustment when transitioning from being a full-time college student to being a full-time working Industrial Engineer. Adapting to a 40-45 hr. work week with ongoing meetings, small Teams, office politics, etc. – can be more difficult than you might think.

Even if you have done one or two Internships, they may not fully prepare you for the transition to a full-time job. More will be expected of you by your new manager, and you will be given daily activities and more scheduled meetings. At first this will seem new and interesting, but about your second month in the new job you may experience some difficulty fitting in, or you may find the 8-9 hr. days seem long and sometimes tedious. It helps to eliminate outside distractions your first few months and plan to get plenty of sleep, so you can get up early and have enough energy to complete each day. It also is important to learn your manager's "hot buttons" as soon as you can, so you don't do the one or two things that may make them mad. Try to focus on being a good Team member and help the group be successful, along with the company and its products or services.

Often students can find the mental adaption to their new job duties as challenging as the physical challenges. Sometimes the Team Dynamics can be deceptive, since you will no longer receive special treatment as an Intern; since now you will just be the newest, most junior member of the group. The other members of the group will have high expectations of you, and may not be pleased to have you give your opinion too often, until you have learned more about the current conditions, and you have earned their trust. It is best to listen a lot more than you speak, particularly when it comes to sharing your opinion. Later, after you have built some trust with the group, they will ask for your opinion as you become an equal member of the group.

A good way to improve and even speed up your acceptance by the group (and your manager), is to volunteer to help with some activities that you may have newer skills: such as setting up a simulation, helping build a website, or doing statistical analysis. You can usually take your recent software knowledge from your university classes and adapt quickly to the software being used by your new company.

You will no longer be an Intern, planning to return back to college life, after your work session has been completed. It helps to think of this transition as the start of your Industrial Engineering career. Build trust and instill confidence with your work group and all the Teams you are assigned to. Begin expanding your professional Network of useful contacts within the company. Learn the company's products & services, and start to grow into your current job description.