

When the Honeymoon's Over

Some helpful advice for newly-hired professionals

It has been about three months since you landed the job of your dreams with your first-choice firm. The work is great, and your coworkers couldn't be better. Still, some of the luster has begun to wear off, and you're getting down to the hard base of routine and reality. What had been unbridled enthusiasm has given way to other considerations: responsibility, your place within the team, short- and long-term accommodations, and personal and professional growth.

The honeymoon is just about over. A period of euphoria is to be expected at the start of a new career adventure. Everyone wants the relationship to succeed. Still, there is bound to be a need for adjustment as professionals learn to adapt to one another's strengths and ideas. It is the nature of any creative endeavor.

Architects and engineers tend to be non-confrontational. That's not to say they lack individuality or conviction in their work; it simply means they may face challenges requiring a level of assertiveness and openness they prefer to avoid. Beyond the honeymoon if you are assuming a new role within an organization, joining a new company, or launching a new career, here are a few suggestions for easing the transition from the honeymoon period to an extended and rewarding work experience.

- ✦ **Clarify expectations.** Know precisely what's expected of you and be clear about what you expect from your bosses and the company. Ask questions. Offer suggestions. Be open to learning and don't be afraid to voice your own thoughts.
- ✦ **Negotiate conditions.** Build an action plan and run it past your boss to make certain you both understand your role in meeting goals. Work out reasonable, mutually agreeable timelines and commit to meeting deadlines.
- ✦ **Attract attention.** Aim for early wins that ensure you'll be noticed by your bosses. Develop plans for accomplishing goals that benefit the firm. Try to build solid client relationships that will pay off with repeat business.
- ✦ **Be positive.** Don't make problems be the only reason for approaching your boss. Ask for advice. Offer compliments. Engage your boss with comments about issues and projects.
- ✦ **Be accepting.** Don't try to change your boss. Your views may differ, but that doesn't necessarily mean either of you is wrong. Look for areas of agreement.
- ✦ **Request help.** When you need resources, ask for them. Keep your requests reasonable and obtainable. Relate your requests to performance improvement, economies, and efficiency.
- ✦ **Maintain urgency.** Develop a sense of importance for your assignments. Timeliness and competence rarely go unnoticed. Add value by including more than was requested. Once the honeymoon is over, the real work begins. With a little extra effort, you can build a meaningful and rewarding work environment both for you and your company. ■