

These 6 simple steps will put you on the fast track for a promotion

You've squared off against some tough competition, and finally come out on top—the job's officially yours. First of all, kudos to you! But now it's time for a reality check: Not everything is going to be a cakewalk from here on out. In particular, snagging your first promotion is no easy feat. And yet, 40% of millennials expect a promotion every one to two years, a recent [Addison Group survey](#) found.



You'll need to [make an ace impression](#) when you step through the door, says career coach Roberta Matuson, author of *Suddenly in Charge: Managing Up, Managing Down, Succeeding All Around*. "From day one you need to produce and start delivering great results," says Matuson.

If you're serious about wrapping up your first 12 months on the job with a promotion, there are a few things that need to happen first.

Get clear expectations from your boss

The key to being a star performer at any stage in your career: Make the boss happy. Sit down with your manager when you start the job and set specific goals for your first 90 days. "Say, 'I want to hit the ground running and exceed your expectations. What can I do?'" recommends Julie Cohen, career coach and CEO of professional training program Work. Life. Leader.

Express that you'd like to connect quarterly to review your performance, says Cohen, and use your first meeting to broach the subject (e.g., "As you can see, I'm committed to delivering great work. What will it take to get promoted?")

Document your achievements

Your boss probably isn't tracking your every accomplishment, so keep a log of your [quantifiable accomplishments](#)—that way you have concrete results to cite when you ask for a promotion. Matuson calls this "strategic bragging." "You have to toot your own horn in order to be heard in a sea of cubicles," she says.

Also, record the skills you acquire and make sure to consistently [update your resume](#) to reflect them, says Cohen.

Cozy up to HR

[A friend in HR](#) may be your ticket to nabbing a promotion. "Having an informant in HR who can tell you about job openings gives you an advantage over your peers," says Donald Asher, career consultant and author of *Who Gets Promoted, Who Doesn't and Why*.

Take the person to lunch to start building rapport. Once you've established a relationship, your confidant may even be able to tip you off about promotion opportunities in other departments. "HR has a pulse on what's happening

across the organization,” says Cohen.

Push beyond your job description

At the six-month mark—once you’ve proven yourself capable of delivering great work—ask your manager to take on more responsibility. But be specific by asking to work on particular tasks or projects. You want to take on “stretch assignments,” or jobs that give you a trial run at the promotion you’re eyeing, says Asher. You can say, “I heard there’s going to be a new product line. How can I get involved with that?”

Requesting specific work also shows initiative. “Don’t put the onus on your boss to find you new responsibilities,” says Cohen.

Prove you’re a leader

While your boss wants to see you’re a team player, you still need to [distinguish yourself from your peers](#). “Individuals get promoted, not teams,” says Asher.

Executive coach Joel Garfinkle, author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level* advises taking ownership of a group project. “Even if there’s not an assigned leader, assume that role,” he says. “Be the one who makes the final presentation. Be the one who updates the boss.”

Ask for the promotion

It sounds basic, but many employees expect their boss to hand them a promotion. However, if you don’t ask, you shall not receive.

Of course, there’s the possibility that you won’t get promoted during your first 12 months on the job (even if you do all of the above). There may be circumstances outside your control, says Matuson: The company could freeze raises, your boss quits, or—gasp!—one of your peers gets tapped for the job.

If it’s the latter, find out why you were passed over, but keep the focus on you. Say, “What could I have done differently so that would have been me?” Then, use the feedback to improve your performance and position yourself for a promotion in the coming year.