KESTON SCHOOL

WORK & WEALTH · FREE SAMPLE

Start Your New Job

Learn the team, build trust and make your first months count

CHAPTER 1 + WORKBOOK SECTION

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this book

By the last page you will have a simple plan for your first three months in a new job: how to learn how things really work, agree with your manager on what good looks like, get to know your colleagues, ask useful questions and become someone people trust.

1. Read one chapter at a time. Each one gives you a single idea and a single action.
2. Open the Start Your New Job Workbook and complete the matching section while the chapter is fresh.
3. Do the “Try this” action within seven days. Reading changes what you know; the action changes what you do.
4. Finish with the checklist in chapter 12 and come back to it whenever you slip.

© 2026 KESTON School. All rights reserved. For personal use only — please do not share, resell or redistribute this file.
This book is for education. It is not medical, psychological, legal or financial advice. For anything clinical or high-stakes, talk to a qualified professional.

CONTENTS

Start Your New Job

01 The New-Job Fog 4

Your next step 9

01

CHAPTER 1

The New-Job Fog

Recognize the overwhelm of a new role, the two ways most people react to it, and why working hard is not enough on its own.

It is Tuesday of your second week. You have a laptop, a badge and four logins that half work. There are three chat channels with nearly the same name, and nobody has told you which one matters. In the morning meeting, people mention a project by a nickname you have never heard, laugh at a story about something that happened last spring, and agree on a decision you did not know was being made. You nod along. On the way home you think: everyone else seems to know exactly what is going on, and I am pretending.

Almost everyone who starts a new job knows this feeling. You were hired because you are capable, and yet for a few weeks you feel slower and less sure of yourself than you have in years. This book is about getting through that stretch well, so that by the end of your first three months you are settled, useful and trusted.

What the fog is made of

The new-job fog is not one problem. It is several at once, and naming them makes them smaller.

Too much new information. Names, tools, acronyms, processes, customers, history. You are learning faster than at almost any other point in your working life, and your brain gets tired in a way your old job never made it tired.

Unwritten rules. Every team has habits nobody writes down. Who you copy on emails. Whether cameras are on in video calls. Which meetings are real decisions and which are updates. How fast people expect replies. You learn these mostly by getting them slightly wrong.

No track record. In your old role, people knew you. A rough week did not change their view of you. Here, you start at zero. Every small thing feels like it counts more, because, for a while, it does.

Unclear expectations. The job description said one thing. Your manager has said a few things in passing. Your colleagues seem to expect something else again. You are not sure what good work looks like yet, so you are not sure if you are doing it.

Put these together and the fog makes sense. It is not a verdict on you. It is what being new feels like.

The two common reactions

Most people respond to the fog in one of two ways. Both are understandable, and both cause trouble.

Prove-it-fast mode. You feel the pressure of being new, so you try to show your value immediately. You suggest changes in your first week. You take on more than you understand. You mention how things were done at your last company, often. Underneath is a good intention: you want to show you were worth hiring. But to the people around you, it can look like you are judging work you do not understand yet. And when you move fast without context, you make avoidable mistakes in public.

Keep-your-head-down mode. You go the other way. You do not want to bother anyone, so you work quietly through whatever is in front of you. You do not ask questions because you think you should already know the answers. You skip the coffee chat because you have real work to do. This feels safe. But after a month, your manager has very little idea what you are doing, your colleagues barely know you, and you are still guessing about half the unwritten rules.

Many people swing between the two. Quiet for a week, then a burst of proving, then quiet again after it goes badly.

> **Key idea:** The goal of your first months is not to look impressive or to stay invisible. It is to learn fast, in the open, while being useful in small ways.

Why working hard is not enough

The most common advice to someone starting a job is to work hard and let the results speak for themselves. Effort matters. But on its own, it leaves three gaps.

First, hard work on the wrong things is still the wrong things. If you have not checked what your manager actually cares about, you can spend weeks polishing work that nobody needed.

Second, results do not speak for themselves, especially early. People are busy. If they do not know what you are working on and why, they will not notice it, or they will fill the silence with their own guesses.

Third, the job is not only tasks. It is also people: who knows what, who decides what, who you will need help from next month. Hard work at your desk does not build those relationships.

What works better is a simple, deliberate plan for your first months: learn how things really work, agree on expectations with your manager, get to know the people around you, and make small contributions while you are still learning. The rest of this book gives you that plan, one tool at a time.

Where you are right now

It helps to be honest about your starting point. Some readers open this book before their first day. Others are three weeks in and already feel behind. Some are moving to a new team inside the same company, which brings its own fog: you know the building, but not the people or the work.

Wherever you are, the same principles apply. If you are early, you get to set things up well. If you are a few weeks in, you have the advantage of knowing where the fog is thickest. Either way, it is not too late. Three months is long enough to recover from a slow start, and short enough that small changes now make a visible difference.

Try this

Within the next three days, set a timer for fifteen minutes and write two short lists.

1. **What is foggy.** Everything you feel unsure about in the new role: tools, people, expectations, unwritten rules. Do not sort or solve. Just list.
2. **My default reaction.** Look at the two modes above. Write which one you lean toward when you feel unsure, and one recent moment when it showed up.

Keep both lists. You will use the foggy list in chapter 5 to build your learning map, and the default reaction will help you notice when you start sliding into it under pressure.

In the next chapter, we look at the other side of the fog: how your new colleagues are forming a picture of you, and what they are really paying attention to.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Feeling lost in the first weeks is normal, not a sign you chose wrong.
- Proving yourself fast and hiding quietly both backfire.
- A good start needs a plan for learning, not just effort.

→ Workbook, section 1

01 The New-Job Fog

Name what feels foggy and how you tend to react to it.

FILL IN

My foggy list

What I feel unsure about	Work / people / unwritten rule

CHECKLIST

My default reaction when I feel unsure

- [ ] Prove-it-fast: suggest changes, take on too much
- [ ] Keep-your-head-down: work quietly, avoid questions
- [ ] I swing between the two

One recent moment when my default reaction showed up:

RATE IT

How foggy does the new job feel right now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 · Clear

10 · Very foggy

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want the whole book?

You just read chapter 1 of Start Your New Job and tried the first workbook section. The full e-book has 12 chapters, a complete workbook and a final checklist. Here is everything inside:

01 The New-Job Fog

02 How Teams Size You Up

03 The Cost of a Shaky Start

04 Learn First, Help Small

05 Ask Better Questions

06 Agree on What Good Looks Like

07 Meet the People Who Matter

08 Four First-Month Moments

09 When the Start Feels Rough

10 A Simple Weekly Rhythm

11 From New to Trusted

12 Mistakes & Checklist

Thank-you gift for readers

KESTON15

15% off your next KESTON School title at https://www.etsy.com/shop/KESTONschool.

Thank you for reading.

If this book helped you, a short review on the shop page helps other readers find it — and helps us write the next one.

KESTON SCHOOL

https://www.etsy.com/shop/KESTONschool