



NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

Landing your first management role is cause for celebration, yet it's a time when you also feel nervous. **Karen Deehan** looks at how to hit the ground running and make a good impression

As a new manager, one of the first hurdles you'll face is winning over your new team. Some will feel ill at ease with your presence and pointedly display their displeasure; others will sit unmoved waiting for their moment to throw you off-guard. It's a test for the hardiest of souls.

Understanding each member is key, says Wayne Clarke, managing partner at Best Companies, an organisation that assesses the workplace. "Spend time with each person, find out what drives them and discuss the good and bad experiences they've had," he says. "By doing this, you'll not only get to know your team quickly, you'll also build up a true picture of what the company is like, rather than the version you were given in your interview."

As a new manager, there's always the temptation to rush in and make your mark, but Jordan O'Connor,

talent and resourcing manager at Groupama Insurance, advises taking a step back.

"Speak to your own manager and clarify exactly what you've been brought in to do," she says. "You can then feed that back to your team so that they're clear on what your objectives are. It's important to take things slowly in your first few weeks and assess your team and any political undercurrents in the company."

If you've been recruited externally you are starting with a clean slate, but internal promotions can be very different. What happens when you have to manage someone who used to be your equal? Sarah Jenkins, communications manager for an NHS Trust, found herself in this position. "It was a tough balancing act because I wanted to maintain a friendly relationship but I also had to establish boundaries", she explains.

"One lady was quite set in her ways and very sensitive to criticism, especially as I'm younger than her and used to be her peer. It's an

ongoing problem, but I try to get round it by praising her whenever she does well and suggesting areas for development during structured feedback sessions. She wants to be promoted, so instead of criticising her I outline what she needs to do to progress. That way it's more like advice than a personal attack."

Showing your team that you're still on their side is important. "If you've been promoted internally, don't let it affect the way you communicate," warns Clarke. "If you change the way you deal with people it'll seem unnatural and you'll alienate them. Show your team that you still care about them and will use your new position of influence to help them achieve their own goals."

One advantage of an internal promotion is that you already know what the team is like. "You've been working alongside these people so you know what their capabilities are," says O'Connor. "You can help them play to their strengths while developing their weaker areas. If

