

7 Tips for New IT Grads



TO HELP YOU MAXIMIZE SUCCESS AND MINIMIZE SETBACKS

If you have just entered (or will soon enter) the booming IT world, then your career path promises to be interesting and exciting! To help you maximize success and minimize setbacks, here are 7 tips to follow:

1. Never stop learning.

One phase of your learning may be over or soon coming to an end — but another is just getting started! It's extremely important to acquire as much knowledge as you can. If possible, connect with mentors (ideally in your workplace) who will share insights with you that they've learned over the years. You can also enhance your knowledge and boost your career path with certifications, which we will discuss in the next tip.

2. Start thinking about certifications.

Certification is very important in the IT world because it is essential for organizations/clients to hire people who are competent — since so much is at stake, and the wrong decisions can have catastrophic consequences.

As someone new to the IT world, you may be frustrated right now because so many certifications — including all of the [top-paying certifications that we recently highlighted](#) — require at least a few years of experience. However, there are a couple of things you can consider:

Acquire a certification that doesn't have experience prerequisites, such as [CompTIA A+](#) which is considered by many to be the starting point certification for a career in IT. Note that 9-12 months of experience is recommended, but it's not mandatory. If you're willing to put in the time and effort to learn and study, then you should be able to do it!

Start shaping your career path towards certifications that interest you. For example, if you want to acquire [AWS Cloud Certified Practitioner](#) certification in a few years, then you can talk to your manager about working with or helping the cloud services team in your organization. This will help you gain valuable knowledge and experience that will support your certification aims down the road.

3. Develop your communication skills.

Please don't take this tip the wrong way: you may currently have great communication skills. But hey, even world-class musicians, athletes and other performers are constantly improving, right? And besides, one thing that IT pros come to learn — some happily, and others unhappily — is that the ability to communicate effectively with others, including those who are a bit (or a lot!) difficult to work with — is an extremely important and valued ability.

If you're looking to brush up your communication skills, then a great place to start is [Coursera](#), where you'll find many online courses that you can audit at no cost. This means that you can enroll, but you can't submit

assignments for grading, and you won't get a certification upon completion. If you want these then you can enroll for a fee (or better yet, your company will pay for it!).

4. Build your network.

No, we aren't talking about a network with hubs and routers. We're talking about a network with peers from within and outside the IT world, who can help you in ways that you can imagine — and probably in more ways than you cannot. Indeed, an estimated [70% of job opportunities are unadvertised](#). Knowing someone in the inside — or knowing someone who knows someone who knows someone — could make a huge difference.

And keep in mind: networking is a two-way street. Right now, you may not be able to offer the more experienced IT pros in your network much advice — because they know it already. But soon you'll be a seasoned pro, and that is when you should remember to pay it forward. And always remember to be grateful, humble, and patient when asking for advice or support from people in your network.

5. Don't expect to be perfect.

Everyone — repeat everyone — makes mistakes, and if you're the type of person who HATES committing errors, then you're going to have a tough experience ahead of you. At times, the IT world is a giant troubleshooting exercise. Sometimes, ideas, strategies and decisions are successful. But other times, they aren't. When (not if!) you make mistakes, don't be too hard on yourself. What really matters is that you LEARN from your mistakes and use these experiences to expand your knowledge and ability.

6. Be ambitious — but don't be impatient.

This may be the toughest tip on the list, but it's also arguably the most important. It's great if you're ambitious and envision yourself becoming a manager, and then eventually joining the ranks of executives — maybe even starting your own thriving company. But don't have unrealistic expectations about things like timelines, job titles, and salary. Sometimes to take a big step forward, you must stay in the same place for a little longer; or maybe even take a step back. Just keep focused on the big picture. You have decades of work ahead of you. It's a marathon, not a sprint!

7. Have FUN!

Working in IT can be stressful at times. There are some bad days and [scary stories](#). But it's also tons of FUN, and you get to meet some truly unique and interesting people on your adventure. If you're looking for some ways to put a smile on your face, we suggest:

- Enjoying some [Sysadminotaur comics](#)
- Joining our VIP Advocate Community "[Devolutions Force](#)"
- Come visit Devolutions HQ and [play some pinball](#)

And sometimes, the best way that you can have fun in your career is to TAKE A BREAK from all of the texts, emails, voicemails, and knocks on your door, and enjoy some quiet time by yourself, or with a family member or friend (provided of course that they don't start asking you to fix their computer!). Achieving work-life balance in IT is difficult, but it's very important. Remember: you are much, much more than your job. You are a wonderful, unique, and invaluable human being. There will never be anyone in the universe quite like you ever again. Don't ever forget that!

Send Us Your Tips

We hope that you find these tips helpful, and that they support your career development now and for many years to come. Do you have some advice for new IT grads? Please share your wisdom by commenting below.

