



► If you're here, you're ready to take charge. But don't kick back just yet: You still need to produce results. Set a clear direction for your team, determine exactly what each team member needs from you, and make sure everyone has the resources to meet your expectations.

**Congratulations!**

**LEADERSHIP**

You need to prove you have the personal skills to manage and delegate in such a way that your subordinates stay motivated and productive. If they fall short, you'll take the heat.



**Do you inspire the people who work around you?**

YES NO

**Lead a Nonwork Team**

Sign up to teach or coach in your spare time, and use the opportunity to develop communication skills and empathy. Tutoring, for instance, can teach you patience and creative ways to guide others in the office.

**VISION**

Being strategic about how you spend your time and energy will prepare you to manage high-stakes resources—like multiple employees and a budget—down the line.



**Do you map out all the steps before starting a new project?**

YES NO

**Set Meaningful Goals**

Ask your boss about the department's objectives and use those to set three to five concrete goals of your own. If you're wasting time on superfluous tasks, put them on a "Do Not Do" list to stay focused.

**SELF-AWARENESS**

You can't improve if you don't know your shortcomings. Moving up means surrounding yourself with people whose strengths offset your weaknesses.



**Are you able to explain how your weaknesses affect you at work?**

YES NO

**Review Your Performance**

Ask your boss (or a trusted colleague) to ID your three biggest strengths and weaknesses and to suggest ways to improve. After six months, do a follow-up to check your progress.

**VISIBILITY**

Hirers prefer candidates they relate to, say researchers at Northwestern University. When a position opens, you want to be the first one they think of.



**Does your boss's boss recognize you in the elevator?**

YES NO

**Start with Small Talk**

When you catch the VP in the elevator or break room, ask about one of his or her projects or presentations. Or scan the exec's social media feeds for shared interests and drop them into conversation: "You're a Packers fan? They're killing me this season."

**DEPENDABILITY**

Earn more responsibility by proving you can handle what's already on your plate. Whatever the task, do it well and meet the deadline.



**You say you'll have the project in by Friday. Will you?**

YES NO

**Make a Better To-Do List**

List all your projects and note two details for each: the deadline and the next concrete action ("Send e-mail to Bob in marketing"). As you check off one action, add the next. Then, every Friday, do a major review of your calendar, noting your top priorities and making sure you're not neglecting anything important.

**Start Here**

# Will You Ever Be the Boss?

The corporate ladder can be shaky. See if you have what it takes to climb it. BY LILA BATTIS