



2010 Fall Issue



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**Time to Tackle that Tricky Transition...**

*By Michael Pacolay*

There are many important milestones in the lives of all people as time moves forward. Many of these milestones, if not all, are accompanied by some sort of transition.

Given that you were capable enough to land a full-time position upon completing your internship/co-op, the following will discuss some nice-to-know things when adjusting to this ascendency into the "real world."

*\*The following will assume that this transition is within the same company, as is often the case, and my perspective is of one from within a health insurance field. Obviously, all experiences will vary.*

The hardest hurdles during any transition are often the nerves and anxiety you face that result from all the unknown variables involved. Eliminating or reducing these variables will greatly ease the experience for you not only during the jump into the real world, but also in other endeavors you may face. So, how do you reduce these variables at work, you may ask? Keep the following in mind:

- Get to know EVERYONE in your department. You never know which team may hire you after your internship, and down the line you may switch managers and/or fellow teammates.
- Get to know the types of work other people do. This way, you won't be completely in the dark about things if you need to change areas, and you will be more valuable in the event other openings arise.
- Accept the fact you are new and unaware of many things, don't be afraid to ask questions, and be open to learning as much as possible. Similarly, attempt to understand the work you do as opposed to just going through the motions. This understanding and comprehension will better equip you for future assignments.

If you keep these in mind both during your internship as well as throughout your transition period, you should feel pretty comfortable stepping into work everyday. You will also become a more amiable and knowledgeable employee—and that's exactly what makes you more valuable to your company.

The following table summarizes both the good and the not-so-good aspects of a full-

time transition. Please be mindful that these will vary not only from person to person, but also from company to company.

	Good	Not-so-good
Exams	Usually receive paid study time, materials and seminars. Pay incentives for passing	Workload may take precedence over studying. More pressure by company to pass
Pay	Higher pay, health benefits, retirement plan, and other company-provided benefits	What's not to like about more money and benefits?
Social Life	Meet plenty of new people, gain new friends and perspectives, and have more opportunities to network	Probably work a 40 hour (or more) week, not including travel time. Time spent with friends and family may be reduced
Personal Time	Receive paid vacation and sick days, and perhaps access to facilities like a fitness center, study room, etc.	Work becomes the largest slice of your time's pie chart. Relaxation and other spare time is reduced, so stress levels may increase
Respect & Responsibility	Coworkers/managers have a higher level of respect and trust for full-time employees. Thus, expect to receive more meaningful work and more responsibility	With this respect and responsibility comes higher expectations and increased pressure to meet those expectations. Some people do well under pressure—others do not

In the most simplistic of terms that actuaries can relate to, consider your internship as your study time and your full-time employment as the actual exam. The more you put into your studying, the more comfortable you feel writing an exam and the better your odds of succeeding. The same is true in this employment transition. Do your best to prepare yourself and the transition to success will follow suit.

I wish each and every reader who is going through this transition now or in the future the best of luck!

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