

What to do when you're gunning for an internal position

Sometimes the perfect next step can be right in front of you, in the place where you already work. But how do you apply for an internal position without burning any bridges?

This decision can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, you're probably a good cultural fit as you're already with the company and possess valuable knowledge of the business. You might even have the advantage of knowing why the role has become available, and what the hiring manager is looking for. But on the other hand, there may be some office dynamics you have to navigate and potentially awkward situations you might find yourself in.

So what are the key things to consider and do when gunning for an internal position? Career Consultant Leah Lambart, of Relaunch Me, shares her tips.

- **Familiarise yourself with your workplace's internal recruitment policy.** To avoid getting yourself into a compromising situation, find out the company's protocol. There may be a process you need to follow which includes notifying your current manager and asking them to speak with the hiring manager, Lambart says. "You don't want to upset your current hiring manager by going behind their back – especially if you're not successful and still have to work with them."
- **Take advantage of your insider status.** As a current employee, you're in a unique position to get an in-depth understanding of what the hiring manager is looking for, so use it to your advantage, says Lambart. Speak to others in the team or to human resources to ascertain how you meet the criteria. "You probably already know the hiring manager and members of the team you would be joining, which should give you a good indication as to whether you would be the right fit for the team."
- **Be professional and prepare a proper application.** "You should always treat an internal application the same way you would an external one," Lambart says. In other words: prepare a tailored cover letter and resume, using the

information you gathered from talking to the hiring manager or members of the team to ensure it includes the key skills and attributes needed for the role. “You should also include recent achievements from your current role that highlight your ability to do the job.”

- **Don’t get blindsided by the familiarity of the interview panel.** “The interview can be the trickiest part of applying for an internal role, particularly if you already know the recruitment panel,” says Lambart. “Don’t let your guard down and treat it as a casual chat. Be on time, dress professionally and provide clear and concise responses to demonstrate your competency.” Just because you work for the same company doesn't mean the panel knows what you're capable of, so don't make any assumptions and stay on top of your game.

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- **Be upfront with your coworkers if you get the job.** Avoid any awkward office politics by being honest with your coworkers. “If you are successful in obtaining the role then you may soon be managing colleagues who have always been your peers,” explains Lambart. “Tell them that you feel a bit uncomfortable moving into a management role, but that you believe you have the skills to do the job well and that you would appreciate their support as you transition into the role.”

At the end of the day, if an internal position arises that sounds good to you, you should go for it. It could be your time to shine, and with the right preparation, application, and communication, you could make it happen.