

THE NEW LEADER'S 100-DAY ACTION PLAN

**How to Take Charge, Build Your
Team, and Get Immediate Results**

**GEORGE B. BRADT
JAYME A. CHECK
JORGE E. PEDRAZA**



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan

THE NEW LEADER'S 100-DAY ACTION PLAN

**How to Take Charge, Build Your
Team, and Get Immediate Results**

**GEORGE B. BRADT
JAYME A. CHECK
JORGE E. PEDRAZA**



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright © 2006 by George B. Bradt, Jayme A. Check, and Jorge E. Pedraza.
All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
Published simultaneously in Canada.

Certain pages from this book may be downloadable from the web and customized and reproduced for personal use, and small scale consulting and training purposes (provided you do not exceed 100 copies per page, per year). The reproducible pages are designated by the appearance of the following Copyright Notice at the foot of each page:

New Leaders 100-Day Action Plan by George Bradt et al. Copyright © 2006 by PrimeGenesis® LLC. Reproduced by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Bradt, George B.

The new leader's 100-day action plan : how to take charge, build your team, and get immediate results / George B. Bradt, Jayme A. Check, and Jorge E. Pedraza.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-471-78977-2 (cloth)

ISBN-10: 0-471-78977-1 (cloth)

1. Leadership—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Check, Jayme A.

II. Pedraza, Jorge E. III. Title.

HD57.7.B723 2006

658.4'092—dc22

2005031906

Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would need a separate book to acknowledge the people that have influenced our work on leadership transitions over the years. But we must acknowledge the contributions of our partners in PrimeGenesis up front. We started the firm in 2002 with an awareness of a real need and an idea and have managed to turn that into a set of tools and techniques that have helped people get on-board into new team leadership roles, deliver better results faster, and reduce their failure rate from 40 percent to less than 10 percent. Our partners' fingerprints are all over that success and all over the materials in this book: Ed Bancroft, Bill Berman, Meg Bradt, Bill Crain, Rob Gregory, Mark Hubbard, Mary Kaiser, Harry Kangis, Suzanne Pennella, Sandy Reeser, and Jim Singh. Think of them as co-authors.

We are indebted to our clients on a number of different levels. We are the first to admit that we have learned as much from them as they have from us. There are far too many individuals to name, and we have masked any story involving any of our clients, but those of you at the following firms know who you are: Ann Taylor, ARC, Barton Center for Diabetes Education, Boot Camps Unlimited and its boot camp attendees and partners, Citibank, The Coca-Cola Company, The Columbian Coffee Federation, Cornell University, Elizabeth Arden, FT Interactive, Goldman Sachs, Grey Advertising, Johnson & Johnson, Kinetic Concepts, Peter Kiewit, LexisNexis, Microsoft, Miller Brewing Company, MTV Networks, Neutrogena, Opus, Pepperidge Farm, Playtex, Prevention, Reebok, Royal Bank of Scotland, Sanofi-Aventis, Stora Enso, Stryker, 2 Spot Digital, Terex, T-Mobile, UBS, Unilever, The United Way, The YWCA.

Finally, abounding gratitude to our editor Richard Narramore, our agent Jim Levine, and our friend and sometimes skipper Philip Ruppel, who introduced us to both of them. Without those three, this book simply would not exist.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	Executive Summary: An “On-Boarding” Process for Leaders at Every Level	1
------------------	---	----------

PART I BEFORE YOU ACCEPT A NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE

CHAPTER 2	<i>Sell Yourself First: How to Negotiate for a Leadership Position</i>	15
	Five-Step Career Plan Worksheet (Downloadable), 27	
	Negotiating Worksheet (Downloadable), 29	
CHAPTER 3	<i>Do Your Due Diligence: Make Sure the Job, the Culture, and Your New Boss Fit Your Strengths and Weaknesses</i>	31
	Five Cs Situation Analysis Guidelines (Downloadable), 44	
	SWOT Form (Downloadable), 46	
	Due Diligence Checklist (Downloadable), 47	

PART II THE 100-DAY ACTION PLAN

CHAPTER 4	You Must Start <i>before</i> Day One: Especially with Your Boss and Key Stakeholders	51
	100-Day Checklist (Downloadable), 69	
	Stakeholder List (Downloadable), 71	
	On-Boarding Conversation Framework (Downloadable), 72	
	Relocation Checklist (Downloadable), 74	
	On-Boarding Checklist for HR (Downloadable), 76	
CHAPTER 5	Decide How to <i>Engage</i> the New Culture: Assimilate, Converge and Evolve, or Shock	77
	ACES Framework, 80	

CHAPTER 6	Take Control of <i>Day One</i>: Make a Powerful First Impression	81
	Day One Checklist (Downloadable), 89 New Manager Assimilation Session, 90	
CHAPTER 7	Get Buy-In for the One <i>Burning Imperative</i> and Create the New Strategy (by Day 30)	91
	Imperative Workshop, 111	
CHAPTER 8	Use Key <i>Milestones</i> to Drive Team Performance (by Day 45)	113
	Goal Recording and Tracking Worksheet (Downloadable), 125	
CHAPTER 9	Invest in <i>Early Wins</i> to Build Team Confidence (by Day 60)	127
	Team Charter Worksheet (Downloadable), 134	
CHAPTER 10	Get the Right People in the Right Roles (by Day 70)	135
	Performance/Potential Grid (Downloadable), 148	
CHAPTER 11	Shape the Team <i>Culture</i> with an Ongoing Communication Campaign (throughout Your First 100 Days)	149
	Communication Campaign Milestones (Downloadable), 161 Culture Change Management (Downloadable), 162 Communication Planning (Downloadable), 164	

PART III

WHAT LEADERS KNOW

CHAPTER 12	<i>Adjust</i> to the Inevitable Surprises	169
	Crisis Management Checklist (Downloadable), 173 Crisis Communication Checklist (Downloadable), 180	
CHAPTER 13	<i>Avoid</i> the Most Common Mistakes	183
CHAPTER 14	<i>Build</i> Loyalty, Trust, and Commitment	191

APPENDICES
TEAM, MARKETING, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING
TOOLS USEFUL ACROSS STEPS

APPENDIX I	Strategic Planning	197
APPENDIX II	SIPOC Tool	207
APPENDIX III	Decision Tool	209
APPENDIX IV	Brand Positioning	211
APPENDIX V	Creative Brief Tool	213
APPENDIX VI	Marketing Asset Management Tool	215
APPENDIX VII	Partnerships/Alliances Guidelines	217
APPENDIX VIII	Strategic Map Tool	219
APPENDIX IX	Profit Pools Tool	221
REFERENCES		223
INDEX		225
ABOUT THE AUTHORS		229

Executive Summary

AN “ON-BOARDING” PROCESS FOR LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL

Whether you are a veteran CEO taking the reins of your next organization, or a new frontline supervisor, *The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan* will help you manage your leadership transition so you can take charge, build your team, and deliver better results faster than anyone thought possible. This matters because 40 percent of leaders going into new roles fail in their first 18 months. (Yes, 40 percent!)¹

What do these leaders not know or see? What do they not do? Why are they not able to deliver? In most cases, they miss one of the crucial tasks that must be accomplished in their first 100 days. Some don't understand the impact of their early words and actions and inadvertently send their new colleagues all the wrong messages. Some focus on finding a new strategy, but fail to get buy-in and fail to build trust with their new team. Some do a lot of work without accomplishing the one or two things that their bosses are looking for. No leader wants this to happen.

We have designed this book as an action plan, with a timeline and key milestones you need to reach week-by-week, to set you and

¹ The 40 percent failure rate comes from a study by the Center for Creative Leadership as cited by Anne Fisher in “Don't Blow Your New Job,” *Fortune*, June 22, 1998. Brad Smart cited a failure rate of 50 percent in his book *Topgrading*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999. *Human Resources* magazine cited a Right Management Study on August 21, 2004, that indicated the 2004 rate was 35 percent. Leadership IQ published a study September 20, 2005, suggesting that the failure rate is 46 percent at 18 months. So, 40 percent is still looking like a good benchmark.

your team up for success in your first 100 days. These are distilled from insights gleaned from working with clients of our consulting firm, PrimeGenesis, whose sole mission is to coach executives moving into new leadership roles. You will find our clients' stories throughout this book (masked to preserve confidentiality). We hope you will find this to be a practical handbook that helps you know what you need to know, see what you need to see, and do what you need to do to deliver success quickly and decisively.

Over the years, we have noticed that many new leaders show up for a new role smiling, but without a plan. Neither they, nor their new companies have thought things through in advance. On their first day, they are welcomed by such confidence-building remarks as: "Oh, you're here. . . . We'd better find you an office."

. . . Ouch!

Thankfully, some enlightened companies have a better process in place. If you are lucky, you will be associated with a company that actually puts people in charge of preparing for a leader's transition into a new role. Imagine the difference when a new leader is escorted to an office that is fully set up for her, complete with computer, passwords, phones, files, information, and a 30-day schedule of orientation meetings.

Better. . . . But still not good enough. Even if the company has done this for you in advance, if you have waited until this moment to start, you are already behind, and you have stacked the odds against yourself. We have tested and evolved PrimeGenesis' on-boarding methodology in many different environments, with all types of leaders. We have found there is a huge difference between the leader who has a plan, hits the ground running, and makes an impact on his first day on the job, and the leader who waits until Day One to start planning. Clients who have used our methods have been able to deliver better results faster. And they've reduced the rate of failure of leaders going into new roles fourfold—from the 40 percent we quoted to well under 10 percent.

Here are our three most important recommendations for leaders going into new roles:

1. *Take charge of your own "on-boarding" process.* It should include discrete steps structured and driven by you over time. (Mirroring the steps in this book.)
2. *Get a head start before your first day.* Day One is a critical pivot point, and a major opportunity to accelerate progress—

if you can hit the ground running. A little early momentum goes a long way.

3. *Think team.* In the first 100 days, it is essential to put in place the basic building blocks of a high-performing team. You will fail if you try to do everything yourself without the support and buy-in of your team. As a team leader, your own success is inextricably linked to the success of the team as a whole.

Consider the example of the Puritan Foods team at Procter & Gamble, which in six months, accomplished more than anyone thought possible. The new team leader was given a budget to test market Puritan Foods. A budget, but no team. He had to recruit volunteers to work on the project in their spare time. The good news was that this meant that everyone who worked on the project was doing it by choice. Their mandate was to get a set of new products into test market as quickly as possible to learn about those products and their consumers.

The team was comprised of people from product development, finance, sales, market research, and marketing. They identified outside suppliers to create, manufacture, and distribute the products and to manage in-store tests. They rented a townhouse as a base for the team in the test market, established their own sets of communication and decision practices, laid out their plans and timelines. And they went to work, picking up some early wins along the way and adjusting team members' roles as appropriate.

The result was that they went from "Make it happen" to 12 new products on the shelf in under six months—faster than anybody thought possible at Procter & Gamble at that time. Four of the 12 test products were expanded into successful businesses. Furthermore, what the team learned about health-conscious consumers made a big impact both on the balance of the Puritan business and on other Procter & Gamble businesses. Better than anybody thought possible!

How? Why? In essence, the leader and his team did everything they were supposed to do in the first 100 days. The new leader had a plan for hitting the ground running. He got started working with key people before Day One. And he focused on getting the right people on his team, aligned around one burning imperative throughout. The details of how you can do that fill the rest of this book.

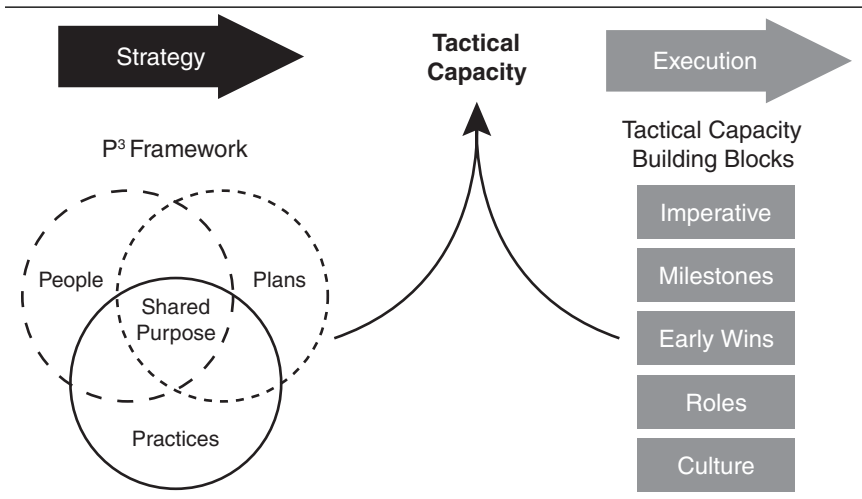
How to Quickly Build a Highly Effective Team or Organization: The Core Principles

We are going to take you through a step-by-step on-boarding process that can be followed by leaders at every level to deliver better results faster. Paradoxically, the best way to accelerate a transition into a new leadership role is to pause long enough to think through and put an on-boarding plan in place.

Here are the three main conceptual frameworks underpinning the on-boarding plan in this book (Figure 1.1):

1. High-performing teams and organizations are built of people, plans, and practices aligned around a shared purpose.
2. Tactical capacity bridges the gap between strategy and execution, ensuring that a good strategy doesn't fail because of bad execution.
3. Five building blocks underpin a team's tactical capacity: a *burning imperative*, *key milestones*, *early wins*, getting the right people in the right *roles*, and shaping the *culture* with an ongoing communication plan.

FIGURE 1.1 Core Frameworks



People-Plans-Practices—P³

An organization or a team's performance is based on aligning its people, plans, and practices around a shared purpose, what we call P³. This involves getting the right *people* in the right roles, getting clarity around the strategies and action steps included in *plans*, and getting *practices* in place that enable people to implement the plans in a systematic and effective way.

Tactical Capacity

Tactical capacity is a team's ability to work under difficult, changing conditions and translate strategies into tactical actions decisively, rapidly, and effectively. It is the essential bridge between strategy and execution. In contrast to other work groups that move slowly, with much of the direction and most of the decision making coming from the leader, high-performing teams empower each member to come up with and quickly implement critical solutions to the inevitable problems that arise on an ongoing basis. They build on strategy and plans with the right people and practices to implement ever-evolving actions that work.

You have seen this yourself. You have been on teams with members that operate in loosely connected silos, incapable of acting without specific direction from above. They may know the strategy. They may have the resources they need. But any variation or change paralyzes them.

In contrast, a great example of tactical capacity at work was how NASA team members came together during the Apollo 13 crisis. Right from "Houston, we've had a problem . . ." the team reacted flexibly and fluidly to a dramatic and unwelcome new reality—a crippling explosion en route, in space. They went beyond their standard operating procedures and what their equipment was "designed to do" to exploring what it "could do." Through tight, on-the-fly collaboration, the team did in minutes what normally took hours, in hours what normally took days, and in days what normally took months. This was critical to getting the crew home safely.

If you're lucky, you've been on teams where actions and results flow with great ease, where team members know what is really required and support each other in making those things happen. Those teams have tactical capacity.

Here's a mouthful of jargon, but it's important: Tactical capacity is built on the alignment of people, plans, and practices around a shared purpose. As the new leader, it's your job to orchestrate this

alignment. You must convince key people to turn a shared purpose into a burning imperative and get widespread buy-in for it by communicating constantly with the team and broader organization. A burning imperative is the antidote to silos and departments that don't cooperate. Tactical capacity is not only about the team being able to respond quickly to changes in external circumstances, it also is about team members working well with each other in support of the team's burning imperative.

Building Blocks of Tactical Capacity

The good news is that you, as a leader in a new role, can build tactical capacity into your team quickly by implementing five building blocks, each of which is described in its own chapter in this book:

1. Get buy-in for the one *burning imperative*.
2. Use key *milestones* to drive team performance.
3. Invest in *early wins* to build team confidence.
4. Get the right people in the right *roles*.
5. Shape the team *culture* with an ongoing communication campaign.

The NASA team dealing with the Apollo 13 crisis got each of these five building blocks in place, allowing it to react with tactical capacity of the highest order:

1. The team's mission changed from "going to the moon to collect rocks" to the one *burning imperative* of "get these astronauts home alive." This was galvanizing enough (as a burning imperative must always be) to transcend all petty issues and focus everyone's efforts.
2. The team's *milestones* were clear: turn the ship around, preserve enough energy to allow a reentry, fix the carbon monoxide problem, survive the earth's atmosphere, and so on.
3. The carbon monoxide fix kept the astronauts alive temporarily, and was the *early win* that made the team believe it could get the crew back to earth safely. It gave everyone confidence.
4. Everyone was working with the same end in mind. But they were working in different and essential *roles*. One group figured

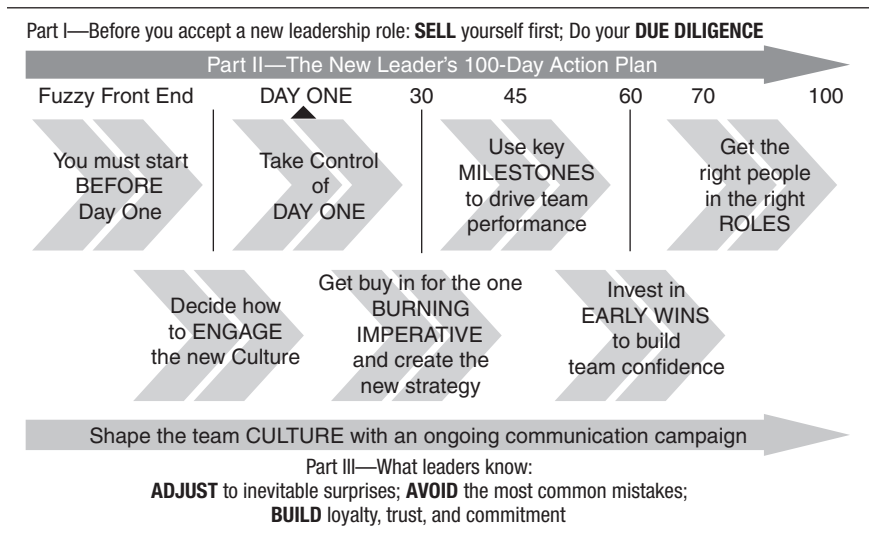
out how to turn the spaceship around. Another group fixed the carbon monoxide problem. Another dealt with the reentry calculations. And the spare crew did whatever it took. They were all working together, without getting in each other's way.

5. The *culture* had been strong. But everyone's words and actions reinforced the message that "failure is not an option" throughout the rescue mission.

Even though you're unlikely to jump into a situation as urgent as Apollo 13, in today's environment, almost all leadership transitions are "hot landings" where you must hit the ground running to have a chance of succeeding. Very often you will need to fix something, fast. Sometimes you and your team may have to react that quickly to changing situations. Sometimes you will have more time to plan. Fortunately, this is the case in most on-boarding situations. You will have at least a few days to create an on-boarding plan—if you get a head start.

The 100-Day Action Plan

Here are the steps in our on-boarding process (and, conveniently, this book's chapters).



An Overview of the 100-Day Action Plan

The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan is divided into three parts:

Part I describes things you need to do before you accept a new leadership role.

Part II is the heart of the 100-Day Action Plan. It picks up right after you accept the job and runs through your first 100 days.

Part III adds things you need to keep in mind throughout your first 100 days (and throughout your career as a leader).

Here are the main points, chapter by chapter.

Part I Before You Accept a New Leadership Role

Chapter 2: Sell Yourself First: How to Negotiate for a Leadership Position

You cannot turn down a job you have not been offered. So first put all your energy into getting the job offer. To that end, remember that there are only three real interview questions and be prepared to talk about your (1) *strengths*, (2) *motivation*, and (3) *fit* with the organization and the position. Then, when things get serious, make sure you are negotiating all the important dimensions of the job, well beyond just compensation to role responsibilities and authority.

Chapter 3: Do Your Due Diligence: Make Sure the Job, the Culture, and Your New Boss Fit Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Once you've been offered the job, and only after you've been offered the job, make sure it is right for you. This involves choosing between options and mitigating organization, role and personal risks by answering three questions:

1. What is the organization's sustainable competitive advantage?
2. Who had concerns about the way the role was designed; and what was done to make them feel better about it now?
3. What, specifically about me, led to your offering me the job?

Part II The 100-Day Action Plan

Chapter 4: You Must Start *before* Day One: Especially with Your Boss and Key Stakeholders

How do you take charge, build your team, and get great results . . . faster than anyone thought possible? Cheat. Seriously, create time by starting earlier than anyone thought you would. Key steps for this golden time between acceptance and start include:

- Identifying key stakeholders up, across, and down.
- Managing personal set-up.
- Conducting prestart meetings and phone calls.
- Gathering prestart information and learning.
- Planning your first 100 days.

Prestart meetings and phone calls are a great chance to jumpstart relationships and get at learning, expectations, and implementation.

Chapter 5: Decide How to Engage the New Culture: Assimilate, Converge and Evolve, or Shock

Be “choiceful” about how you enter an organization, using an ACES model to determine whether you want to assimilate, converge and evolve, or shock it at the start. You need to make this choice before you walk in the door because it will change your approach to Day One.

Chapter 6: Take Control of Day One: Make a Powerful First Impression

Everything communicates. And, at the start of a new role, all communication is magnified. Thus, it is essential to be particularly

choiceful about everything you do and say and don't do and don't say—and in what order and to whom you do or say them. That's why you, and only you, have to be in control of the first impressions you make on and around Day One.

Chapter 7: Get Buy-In for the One Burning Imperative and Create the New Strategy (by Day 30)

The burning imperative is the cornerstone of tactical capacity. Everything pivots off a team's mission, vision, and values. For this and the new strategy to drive everything everyone actually does every day, they must be truly shared. Get them created and bought into early on—even if they're only 80 percent right. You and the team will adjust and improve along the way. But don't let anything distract you from getting this in place and shared.

Chapter 8: Use Key Milestones to Drive Team Performance (by Day 45)

The real test of a high-performing team's tactical capacity lies in the formal and informal practices that are at work across team members. Tactical capacity requires that significant leeway be built into those practices. Use a flexible team-based milestone management practice to build in nuances, insight, monitoring, and collaboration.

Chapter 9: Invest in Early Wins to Build Team Confidence (by Day 60)

Early wins are all about credibility and confidence. People have more faith in people who have delivered. You want your boss to have confidence in you. You want team members to have confidence in you and in themselves. Early wins fuel that confidence. To that end, identify potential early wins by day 60 and deliver them by the end of your first six months.

Chapter 10: Get the Right People in the Right Roles (by Day 70)

Support people who are in the right role and performing well.

Move people who are in the wrong role and performing poorly.

Invest in people in the right role but who are not performing well.

Evolve to new roles people in the wrong role and performing well.

Chapter 11: Shape the Culture with an Ongoing Communication Campaign (throughout Your First 100 Days)

Map the existing culture and coalitions. Then deploy an all-out, multimedia communication campaign over an extended period to shape and evolve the culture to where it needs to be. Doing this right requires a great deal of effort. The payoff is both huge and lasting.

Part III What Leaders Know

Chapter 12: Adjust to the Inevitable Surprises

It is essential to monitor the situation over time. Identify and classify surprises' impacts as major or minor, enduring or temporary, and be ready to react as appropriate. For major, enduring changes, redeploy and/or restart. For major, temporary events, follow the basic flow of prepare—understand—plan—implement—revise/prepare. And manage communication relentlessly.

Chapter 13: Avoid the Most Common Mistakes

Avoid stepping on seven common on-boarding landmines:

1. *Organization*: Lack of a winning strategy; or inability to implement that strategy
2. *Role*: Expectations and resources or key stakeholders not aligned
3. *Personal*: Gaps in individual's strengths, motivation, or fit
4. *Relationship*: Failing to establish/maintain key relationships up, across, or down
5. *Learning*: Situation, customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, conditions

6. *Delivery*: Failing to build a high-performing team and deliver results fast enough
7. *Adjustment*: Not seeing or not reacting to situational changes

Chapter 14: Build Loyalty, Trust, and Commitment

Great leaders focus more on their followers than on themselves. The more they sacrifice for the benefit of their followers, the more loyal their followers are to them. Leaders like that are around today. They are easy to spot. They are the ones people are following.

Make This Book Work for You

By now you should understand that there is a better way to manage transitions than just showing up on Day One and doing what “they” tell you to do. Furthermore, there may be a better way for you to tackle this book than just starting on page one and reading straight through until you lose steam. You might want start with the 100-Day Checklist at the end of Chapter 4. You might want to begin with the chapter summaries. Or you may prefer to read straight through. Use the different elements in the way that work best for you. We have designed this as a flexible handbook: practically oriented, with ideas, examples, tools, forms, and checklists in the book, with easily downloadable and printable versions of them online.

The rest of the book will help you put this methodology into practice. As you set out to do that, understand that we have a bias to push you to do things faster than others would expect. This timetable is based on the needs of our clients who typically are in demanding new leadership roles, who need to meet or beat high expectations; but it may not be appropriate for your situation without some customization. We’re going to present you with options and choices. But you’re in charge. We wish you success in your new leadership role. We hope this book will help you and your team deliver better results faster than anyone thought possible!