

Transition to a new level of responsibility

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Purpose

When moving to a more senior level within an organization or a new role, it makes sense to plan ahead in order to make the greatest positive impact when you start. This exercise facilitates such a process.

Description

You've just heard that you've been promoted. The challenges ahead are not clear at this stage and you don't know how you'll meet them, but you know that you want to make a positive impact in your first three months. Here is a quick road map for taking control quickly and effectively during that critical period of transition with strategies based on three years of research into leadership transitions at all levels.

Process

Following these 10 quick strategies will accelerate your learning and ability to add value quickly. It will produce a tailored transition plan for your situation.

- **Promote yourself** – make a mental break from old job to new. Don't assume that what made you a success before will bring you equal success in your new role.
- **Accelerate learning** – understand products, markets, technologies and systems as well as the culture (professional, organizational and geographic) and politics as

soon as possible. Be systematic and focused in achieving this.

- **Match strategy to situation** – identify a clear diagnosis of the situation as this is essential for developing your action plan.
- **Secure early wins** in order to build credibility and create momentum. In the first few weeks, you need to identify opportunities where you can build personal credibility. In the first 90 days, you need to identify ways to create value and improve business results.
- **Negotiate success** – you need to build a productive working relationship with your new boss and manage his/her expectations. It is crucial to gain their support on your 90-day plan.
- **Build your team** – evaluate the team members; do you need to restructure the team to better meet the demands of the situation? Make tough early personnel calls as your capacity to select the right people for the right positions is among the most important drivers of success during your transition.
- **Create a coalition** – as success will depend on your ability to have an influence outside your direct line of responsibility.
- **Identify your key stakeholders** – this will help you further in gaining allies, which will help you to recruit others to increase your resource base and increase the likelihood of achieving your business objectives.
- **Keep your balance** both professionally and personally. Your personal transition is crucial so you will need the right advice-counsel network so that you don't become isolated.
- **Expedite everyone** – help others with their transitions. The quicker you can get your new direct reports up to speed, the more you will help your own performance.

Bibliography

Watkins, M. (2003) *Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels: The First 90 Days*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.