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The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies For New Leaders At All Levels



Synopsis

Fully a quarter of all managers in major corporations enter new leadership roles each year. Whether their assignments involve leading a work group or taking over a company as CEO, they face very similar challenges--and risks--in those critical first months on the job. How new leaders manage their transitions can make all the difference between success and failure. In this hands-on guide, Michael Watkins, a noted expert on leadership transitions, offers proven strategies for moving successfully into a new role at any point in one's career. Concise and practical, *The First 90 Days* walks managers through every aspect of the transition, from mental preparation to forging the right alliances to securing critical early wins. Through vivid examples of success and failure at all levels, Watkins identifies the most common pitfalls new leaders encounter and provides tools and strategies for how to avoid them.

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Customer Reviews

This book is not just for managers at the executive level. It's also for you and me. It's for functional managers, project managers, and supervisors. The book targets new leaders at all levels that are making the transition from one rung of the ladder to the next. If you have just been promoted to a new leadership position (or expect to be soon), then this book is for you. The book outlines ten strategies that will shorten the time it takes you to reach what Watkins calls the breakeven point: the point at which your organization needs you as much as you need the job. Here they are ... the ten strategies: 1. PROMOTE YOURSELF. Make a mental break from your old job. Prepare to take

charge in the new one. Don't assume that what has made you successful so far will continue to do so. The dangers of sticking with what you know, working hard at doing it, and failing miserably are very real.2. ACCELERATE YOUR LEARNING. Climb the learning curve as fast as you can in your new organization. Understand markets, products, technologies, systems, and structures, as well as its culture and politics. It feels like drinking from a fire hose. So you have to be systematic and focused about deciding what you need to learn.3. MATCH STRATEGY TO SITUATION. There are no universal rules for success in transitions. You need to diagnose the business situation accurately and clarify its challenges and opportunities. The author identifies four very different situations: launching a start-up, leading a turnaround, devising a realignment, and sustaining a high-performing unit. You need to know what your unique situation looks like before you develop your action plan.4. SECURE EARLY WINS. Early victories build your credibility and create momentum.

This is a really useful book filled with sage advice for anyone assuming a leadership position, particularly as a former outsider to the organization. It's filled with reminders that you don't walk in with "the answer," that instead winning the trust and respect of your cohorts is a learning process that you should begin with great intensity. The first half of the book relates directly to someone who is assuming a management role, the next quarter of the book is about what to do as a new employee serving under a boss or bosses (perhaps as a mid-level manager). The last bit of the book gives a brief introduction to strategic thinking and the book concludes with questions to ask yourself (and your family) in evaluating your transition. It is applicable to any firm, church, non-profit, and even (mostly) the government. Here's a summary of the points I gleaned: - Establish your integrity in first 30 days. - Learn all you can about the organization, put on your "historian" hat. - Don't suggest changes without examining what has been done previously. - Silence is not accession. - Meet with everyone in the organization to evaluate their expectations. Ask them what they think you should focus on. - Ask same questions of all so no one treated different and you have a cross-section. - Look for "early wins," low-hanging fruit of improvements you can make or other things to boost morale. Dealing with your boss in the first 30 days: - Be proactive, assume it's on your shoulders to build the relationship and get the support you need. - Schedule meetings to discuss expectations, evaluations, and personal development. - Figure out what would give your boss "early wins."

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