

**UPDATED +
EXPANDED**

THE FIRST

**90
DAYS**

Proven Strategies *for* Getting Up
to Speed *Faster and Smarter*

MICHAEL D. WATKINS

CONTENTS

Preface for the 10th Anniversary Edition xi

Introduction: The First 90 Days 1

Why transitions are critical times. How new leaders can take charge more effectively. Building career transition competence. Assessing transition risk in taking a new role.

1. Prepare Yourself 19

Why people fail to make the mental break from their old jobs. Preparing to take charge in a new role. Understanding the challenges of promotion and onboarding. Assessing preferences and vulnerabilities.

2. Accelerate Your Learning 45

Learning as an investment process. Planning to learn. Figuring out the best sources of insight. Using structured methods to accelerate learning.

3. Match Strategy to Situation 69

The dangers of “one-best-way” thinking. Diagnosing the situation to develop the right strategy. The STARS model of types of transitions. Using the model to analyze portfolios and lead change.

4. Negotiate Success 87

Building a productive working relationship with a new boss. The five-conversations framework. Defining expectations. Agreeing on a diagnosis of the situation. Figuring out how to work together. Negotiating for resources. Putting together your 90-day plan.

5. Secure Early Wins 115

Avoiding common traps. Figuring out A-item priorities. Creating a compelling vision. Building personal credibility. Getting started on improving organizational performance. Plan-then-implement change versus collective learning.

6. Achieve Alignment 139

The role of the leader as organizational architect. Identifying the root causes of poor performance. Aligning strategy, structure, systems, skills, and culture.

7. Build Your Team 165

Inheriting a team and changing it. Managing the tension between short-term and long-term goals. Working team restructuring and organizational architecture issues in parallel. Putting in place new team processes.

8. Create Alliances 199

The trap of thinking that authority is enough. Identifying whose support is critical. Mapping networks of influence and patterns of deference. Altering perceptions of interests and alternatives.

9. Manage Yourself 221

How leaders get caught in vicious cycles. The three pillars of self-efficacy. Creating and enforcing personal disciplines. Building an advice-and-counsel network.

10. Accelerate Everyone 239

Why so few companies focus on transition acceleration. The opportunity to institutionalize a common framework. Using the framework to accelerate team development, develop high-potential leaders, integrate acquisitions, and strengthen succession planning.

Notes 259

Index 265

About the Author 279