The Successful Leader’s First 100 Days
– Taking charge and delivering results

By Jeremy Kourdi and Brian Edwards

Whether you are an established leader taking on a new role or someone becoming a leader for the first time, the first 100 days are vitally important. During this period, people form their views about the type of person you are and your priorities, values and style. You have an unrivalled opportunity to move, direct and energise people, to call a halt to past practices and to move the business confidently in a new or modified direction. If you succeed, you will gain momentum and make the task of leadership easier and more rewarding; if you fail, you will, at best, miss an opportunity and may make your task more challenging in the future. To prepare, there are several issues you can consider and techniques to apply that will help you succeed as a new leader.

Included with this Executive Briefing:

» Action checklist: succeeding as a new leader
» Avoiding problems, dos and don’ts
» Key questions and further action
The benefits of succeeding as a new boss are clear: greater authority; quicker progress and success; the avoidance of uncertainty, drift and associated problems, and renewed commitment, energy and momentum. Seen another way, the difficulties resulting from failing as a new leader are immense – stress, inaction or incorrect action, valuable team members and customers departing, sustained or worsening problems and missed opportunities. Starting in a leadership role can be daunting, but taking the right approach from the outset sets the tone for the future and it enables you to attain your goals more easily.

**Action Checklist: Succeeding as a New Leader**

Moving into a new role is always challenging, but taking action in several areas during your first 100 days will help you to succeed. In particular:

- Establish credibility and promote yourself
- Understand the challenge
- Accelerate your learning and get oriented
- Match your approach to the situation
- Secure early wins
- Agree success and negotiate resources
- Build your team
- Communicate your vision
- Manage yourself
- Build trust

**Establish credibility and promote yourself**

Promoting yourself does not mean boasting about your achievements but it does mean establishing your credibility, being clear about why you were the best candidate and reassuring those around you that you will enable the business to succeed. To do this, prepare yourself mentally for the new role by understanding what you have to offer, what you have achieved and why you were the best appointment.

Mental preparation also means taking a step back and considering what skills are required for you to succeed. One of the biggest pitfalls is assuming that what has made you successful in the past will ensure success in the future – it won’t. Experience is valuable but you also need to focus on the specific, individual needs of the new role. Above all, when starting a new senior role, you need to be yourself and understand your leadership style. Although there are no hard and fast rules, leaders tend to be more credible when they are:

- Demanding but realistic, accessible but not overly familiar.
- Decisive, thoughtful, focused and flexible.
- Active and energetic but not distracting or disruptive.
- Willing to make tough decisions but focused on fairness and people.
Understand the challenge

Even the best-prepared leader is unable to know everything they need to function effectively in a new role; you will need to climb the learning curve quickly – after all, expectations are high when a new leader arrives and it is an excellent opportunity to make progress. Unfortunately, the pressure of time increases the likelihood that something will be missed. To understand the challenge of the new role swiftly and thoroughly you should:

- **Establish new working relationships and build trust.** While this takes time, it also takes attention and effort. A common failing is to assume that, because you have the status, you will have access to all the information you need. In truth, you may be missing valuable insights and knowledge of pitfalls and opportunities, if people do not feel able to discuss issues with you openly.

- **Master technical issues** – these may include unfamiliar markets, technologies, processes and systems. Talking to people is essential, not just employees at all levels but also customers and suppliers – what are their perceptions and aspirations?

- **Be sensitive to political and cultural issues.** This means understanding the ‘shadow’ organization, the informal processes and alliances that exist.

- **Manage expectations.** This may mean carefully deflating those views that are unrealistic, while taking advantage of those that are useful.

- **Maintain your equilibrium and set the right pace.** It is easy to get carried away as a new leader, either trying to do too much or else moving too cautiously. You need to find a pace that is good for the business and sustainable for you.

Accelerate your learning and get oriented

You need to get to know your new organization quickly, and this means understanding its markets, customers, products, systems and structures, as well as the people, culture (the way things are done) and politics. Of course, learning also means struggling to avoid information overload. Handling a mass of details of varying significance is tricky, and this is complicated by the fact that the data you have may not contain the information you need. To solve these dilemmas:

- **Categorise formal information** into three piles: A, B and C. Information in category A is vital, valuable or time-sensitive. B is useful now or it will be very useful in the future. C is either useful background information or material that can wait.

- **Focus on the information that you need to know.** This can be grouped into information about finance, customers, people or processes.

- **Use informal sources of information.** Don’t simply rely on written reports, documents and emails; speak to people at all levels of the organization. What do they think? How do they feel? Get to know the people in the business and find out what they would like to see – in particular, find out about their aspirations, views and concerns. This
may sound easy but there are several pitfalls to avoid, including patronising people, making unrealistic promises and circumventing the management structure.

**Match your approach to the situation**

One of the first steps for a new leader is to diagnose the business situation. Professor Michael Watkins of Harvard Business School identifies four types of business situation that new leaders must contend with: start-up, turnaround, realignment and sustaining success. Each of these situations has their own specific challenges.

**Start-up** is characterised by the need to assemble the capabilities needed to launch and develop a new business. These capabilities include people, funding, customers, technology and knowledge.

**Turnaround** involves taking a business that is struggling, stabilising it and getting it back on track. Both situations are resource-intensive, as there is usually not much to build on and both require determination and a capacity to make tough decisions quickly – ruthless prioritisation is particularly important.

**Realignment** – the task is to revitalise a business, product or team that is drifting, showing signs of concern or operating on a plateau rather than improving. The challenges are to deal with deeply ingrained and probably outdated attitudes that no longer contribute to performance, to convince employees of the need for change and to refocus the organization (probably by restructuring the top team).

**Sustaining success** is no less challenging. The task is to preserve and build on the best features of a team or business and take it to the next level. This means avoiding decisions that cause problems and finding ways to innovate and do even better. Invariably, the foundations for sustained success are already present and a strong team is already in place, but this success can also mean that people are wedded to the current business formula, without seeing the need for it to evolve. Changing these attitudes is particularly challenging, if a revered leader has created the top team and you are seen as an out-of-touch newcomer. The solution is to recognise success, involve people in new developments and challenge them to go even further.

**Secure early wins**

Achieving early wins is important – they energise people and build momentum, they establish your credibility and they show that there is still room for improvement or they highlight how things could be done better (and are beneficial in their own right). Early wins don’t need to be big but they do need to be significant and quick, and you need to avoid the potential pitfalls. These include: failing to accurately understand the situation; failing to get wins that matter to your boss, as well as your reports; letting your means undermine your ends. Several techniques help when starting:

• Focus on business priorities and behavioural changes – this will highlight where and how early wins can be secured.

• Plan to make changes in waves (rather than too much too soon).

• Establish long-term goals and prioritise your work.
Agree success and negotiate resources

You need to agree with your boss and your direct reports what will constitute success; it is essential that everyone’s thinking is fully aligned. When dealing with your boss or your direct reports, avoid surprises, recognise past successes and failings, be open and accessible and balance problems with opportunities. Also, recognise that, while people may change and develop their outlook, you will need to work with people as they are now. With your new boss, you need to take responsibility for making the relationship work, clarifying expectations early and often. You should also negotiate timeframes for action – what will be achieved when – and find early successes that are important.

Another priority is to secure the necessary resources. This can be achieved in several ways:

- Understand the underlying interests of your boss and others whose support may be needed. How will they benefit by giving you the resources you want?
- Try to find mutually-beneficial solutions that both support your boss’s agenda and your own. Similarly, look for ways to support your peers in return for their help.
- Link resources to results, emphasise the benefits that more resources will bring and consider producing a menu of what can be achieved with current resources and what different sized incremental increases will enable you to do.

Build your team

This is quite possibly the most important challenge for new senior executives and one where many stumble. Without the right team working effectively, success will be severely limited. So, what are the potential problems and what do you need to do? Potential pitfalls include: keeping the existing team for too long; failing to refocus the existing team on your top priorities; overlooking the need for team restructuring to be kept in line with the overall aims of the business; failing to retain good people, and trying to do too much yourself. These difficulties can be avoided by:

- **Assessing your existing team.** Consider what matters to you and the business, and rate each team member against these criteria. If you are unsure, then test their judgment and see how they perform.
- **Restructuring your team.** This may mean assigning people into specific categories: people who you want to keep in place, promote, retain and develop, move laterally, observe for a while (on probation), replace as a low priority and replace as a high priority.
- **Aligning goals, incentives and measures,** to motivate people and to focus them on priority issues. This may mean adjusting incentives, reporting systems and operating procedures, as well as encouraging teamwork and developing a shared vision.
- **Deciding how you want the team to work.** Start by understanding how members of the team are used to working, with the intention of preserving the best of what worked well and changing what did not.
Next, focus on the issues or levers that will enable you to build your own team. This means understanding the role each individual plays in the team, the frequency and agenda for team meetings, the way decisions are made and the strengths and weaknesses of your predecessor’s style.

**Communicate your vision and keep focused**

A real test of a leader’s skill is their ability to create and communicate an effective vision for their team or business. This is what sustains both the leader and the team during good times and bad. One of the reasons that leaders come to the fore is because people generally need to know where they are going, what their priorities are and how the future might look. Developing a successful vision often means changing – or transforming – the team so that it can move in a determined way in the right direction. Vision and transformation are, therefore, closely interrelated.

The characteristics of a successful vision include:

- **Realism** – it must comprise feasible, attainable goals.
- **Powerful** – this has two parts: it must be imaginable and paint a clear picture of what the future will look like; it must also excite and inspire as many people as possible.
- **Communicable** – it must be possible for the vision to be communicated to anyone, quickly (within a few minutes) and easily (without burying people in pie charts, reports or projections).
- **Desirable** – appealing to the long-term interests of customers, employees and shareholders.
- **Focused** – the vision needs to be specific and real-world enough to be used as a basis for action and decision making.
- **Adaptive** – the vision needs to be general enough to allow individual initiative in how it is attained and flexible enough to allow for changing conditions.

**Manage yourself**

When taking on a new role, you need to stay confident, focused and balanced, exercising sound judgment. To do this:

- Prepare yourself (at least mentally) before taking on the new role. Even if you only have a few days, it is helpful to reflect on your style and how you intend approaching the challenge. Consider your greatest vulnerabilities and how you will compensate for them, as well as your strengths and how you will use them.
- Avoid the pitfalls: being too hasty or moving in all directions at once; becoming isolated or overly familiar; being tired, brittle or stressed, or being too biased and subjective.
- Allow time for self-reflection, perhaps at the end of each week for the first month. Examine what is concerning you and what is encouraging you. Assess what has gone well and what has gone poorly. Think about your next priorities.
• Build support systems – people whose judgment you can rely on, and make sure that your personal life is stable and secure.

**Lead other leaders**

When taking on a new, senior role, it is worth bearing in mind the specific challenge of leading people who are themselves leaders. The techniques are largely the same as for leading anyone else, with several notable additions.

**Grant as much freedom for other leaders to lead and manage as possible** – including, where feasible, the opportunity to decide what is to be implemented as well as how. Other leaders must have the freedom to decide how best to achieve what you (or the business) require of them, although it is often not possible to separate what needs to be achieved from how it will be accomplished. Although ultimate responsibility will still rest with you, this approach has the potential advantage of gaining commitment and understanding.

**Show trust and support.** The best results are achieved when people are trusted with their responsibilities and are shown support. This requires a high level of trust and patience. Support should always be given by one leader to another in public. Not doing this can harm the subordinate’s confidence and their long-term ability to lead others. When disagreeing with someone in private, consider two interrelated questions. How will this person respond to being overruled? Is the long-term harm that will be caused by this disagreement greater or smaller than the long-term benefit that will result from having your own way?

**Support leaders and empower them to create change.** This means communicating a compelling vision to employees, ensuring that systems are compatible with that vision and that any obstacles to change are removed. Also, provide the training that people need – without the right skills and attitudes, people feel uncertain. Finally, confront people who undermine needed change.

**Consider how best to challenge and develop leaders.** A common mistake is to assume that leaders, having already achieved success, do not need challenging opportunities or professional development. Life-long learning is an essential aspect of successful leadership, and leaders should be encouraged to develop their skills. Some areas where leaders might benefit include: risk-taking, developing a willingness to push out of comfort zones; self-reflection, honestly assessing successes and failures, and soliciting opinions using 360-degree appraisals to highlight areas to be reinforced.

**Dos and Don’ts**

**Do:**

• Avoid accepting the status quo, when change is needed.
• Get the balance right between learning, planning and acting.
• Change your team if necessary.
• Connect with people – and avoid being captured by the wrong people.
• Balance short-term priorities (first 12 months) with longer-term planning (years two and three).

Do not:
• Make changes, when stability and continuity are required.
• Fail to understand the business, to learn or to get oriented quickly.
• Become isolated – this reduces your effectiveness and leaves people feeling concerned and distracted.
• Think that you have (or should have) all the answers or try to do too many things at once.
• Make promises that may be difficult to keep.

Key Questions

The following questions will help you prepare for your new role, by focusing on some of the most significant issues.

Improving performance
• How has this organization or team performed in the past? How do people think it has performed?
• What factors have determined the organization or team’s performance? List the top ten root causes. If performance has been good, how can it be sustained? If performance has been poor, where do the primary causes lie – in the organization’s strategy, market, products, structure, capabilities, culture or something else?
• How were goals set? Were they easy, challenging or unrealistic? What happened if goals were not met?
• What performance measures have been used and what behaviours have these measures encouraged or discouraged?
• What have been the greatest influences on the business or team?
• How strong are the team’s links with other parts of the business? In what ways could these links be enhanced to improve performance?

In the short-term, consider:
• What potential issues could consume your time and energy, and what could frustrate your plans?
• What potentially damaging issues or decisions should you avoid at first?
• In what areas could you achieve some early wins (perhaps relating to people, processes, relationships, products or customers)?

Leading a customer-focused organization
• What do customers like about the business? What do customers dislike? What do customers see as the strengths of the brand, and what are the weaknesses?
• How good is the business when it comes to: a) attracting new customers, b) retaining existing ones and c) capturing customers from competitors?
• How strong is the sales culture? How effective is the sales team?
• What are the most, and least, profitable products?
• Who are the main competitors and what do they do that makes them so strong? Who could be the most significant competitors in five years time and why?

**Leading people and managing resources**
• Who is capable and who is not? Who has the greatest potential? Who has the most influence?
• How strong is morale – are people engaged and committed? Why do people feel the way they do?
• Do people possess the capabilities needed for the business to succeed? Which capabilities need to be acquired and strengthened?
• Which elements of the culture should be preserved and which need to change?
• Do people work well together – for example, learning from each other and sharing information? If not, why? Are there examples of best practice that can be shared?

**Driving business vision**
• How easy will it be to change the organization? What has been the history of change initiatives? What are the most formidable obstacles?
• What is the organization’s current vision and strategy? Are these still relevant – if not, why? Do they guide the way people act and the decisions that are made?

Finally, consider the following a) for the next 12 months and b) for the next five years: Where do the greatest opportunities lie and how can they be realised? What challenges lie ahead – and what are their implications and how can they be overcome?

**Things You Can Do**

**Build trust**
Building trust internally and externally is vital when adopting a new senior management role. It can be accomplished by repeating each stage in the trust cycle in sequence.

Missing one stage takes you back to the start and makes it harder to build trust in the future. This approach can be taken with team members or clients – wherever trust needs to be built. Trusted leaders hold certain values, behave in certain ways and do certain things.
• **Create an atmosphere and expectation of trust.** Leaders who cultivate trust work hard to retain it. Look out of the window to apportion credit to outside factors when things go well, and look in the mirror to apportion responsibility when things go poorly.

• **Trust others.** Trusted leaders trust people; they don’t rely on power, control and an overload of rules. They believe that people want to do the job well. This tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Also, ensure your intent is clear and honest, without hidden agendas. Trusted leaders are open.

• **Genuinely have the business’s interests at heart.** Trusted leaders want to leave a legacy and build something far beyond their tenure with the company. How can people really trust those who would rather pursue their own personal agenda than a collective one?

• **Be consistent.** This does not mean doing exactly the same thing in the same way. It means treating people fairly, upholding certain standards of behaviour and performance no matter what.

• **Confront people without being confrontational.** We trust someone who we can rely on, yet leaders can fall down when tackling performance issues incorrectly, undermining credibility.

• **Let others see your passion and what you care about.** People will be much more inspired to follow you if it’s obvious that you truly care about the project, company or product. Think of the projects you have worked on that you really enjoyed. It is the passion and motivation that makes the difference. Trusted leaders speak from the heart, not just from their intellect.

• **Don't mind admitting you don't know.** Trusted leaders don’t mind talking about their vulnerabilities or admitting when they are wrong. We tend to be suspicious of people who act as though they are always right, who think they know all the answers and who won't admit mistakes.

• **Behave with integrity.** Integrity means being honest, keeping confidences and promises and respecting others. A leader without integrity cannot hope to gain the trust of their people.

• **Use power positively.** Trusted leaders are interested in power only because it will enable them to do the right thing, not to support their ego. They use power for productive reasons.
Behaving this way means that people are better informed and focused on doing the right things. Also, less time is wasted and problems are identified and solved early. More time and energy is spent on the customers and less on managing internal politics. Finally, remember that trust is not a temporary quick-fix approach we can use when it suits us and discard when we choose. It is a genuine belief system. We don't trust people for our own gain. We trust them because it is the right thing to do – and in the end, we all benefit.

**Take customer-focused actions**

- Meet with current and potential customers within the first month. This will help you to understand the business from their perspective, as well as quickly giving you authority and signaling to the rest of your team the importance of customer relationships.
- Review key customer ratios – for example, profit per client, cross-sales ratio, sales per employee, customer acquisition and departure rates.
- Review pricing and discounts.
- Find out about competitors: why are they good and where are they weak?

**Develop your team**

To do this, start by recognising your team’s strengths and successes, acknowledging areas for development and highlighting your priorities for the future. Also:

- Meet with team members informally, and work hard to find out what they *really* think. This is also an opportunity to build mutual trust.
- Ask each team member for five ways to reduce costs or improve performance and five ways to increase revenue. These ideas can be presented and discussed at your second team meeting.
- Establish regular meetings and provide information.

**Prepare and plan your progress**

- Write down targets for what you want to achieve after 6 and 12 months, two and three years.
- Make sure that, on arrival, you already understand the business’s current strategy, goals and challenges and have formed a view about its operating priorities. During the first six months, these priorities should be tested and either validated or changed.
- Be prepared to balance your focus on a few vital priorities with flexibility about how and when they are implemented.
- Within the first *week*, identify early wins that will build credibility and momentum, and achieve these as soon as possible.
- Within the first six months, decide whether the inherited people, structure and processes need to change. Of these, the most important is the organizational structure.
- Recognise that the original mandate for your business, from your board or Chairperson, needs to be regularly reassessed. The situation
will change, if only because you uncover facts that may have been ignored or that provide a new perspective, and you need to keep pace with this change. Too many leaders do what they were hired to do, only to find that they were ejected because that was not enough or what they achieved was rendered irrelevant by changing circumstances.

- Work hard to build coalitions of people who share your vision and support change.
- Find a coach – a sounding board who can provide you with a chance to reflect, as well as providing advice about your approach.

### Avoiding Problems

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Potential Solutions</th>
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| **Focusing on priorities** | • Organization is unable to define priorities or has too many priorities.  
• Resources are spread too thin, leading to fire-fighting responses.  
• People are rewarded for their ability to fight fires. | • Establish a clear, practical vision.  
• Define a strategy that sets clear priorities and targets for the business, and then cascade these through to each individual.  
• Review resources – are you getting the most from your resources, are there other resources available? |
| **Managing performance** | • People and processes exhibit wide variations in performance.  
• People fail to meet commitments (and excuse this behaviour).  
• Managers fail to resolve performance issues fairly and decisively. | • Review reward systems – do they encourage the right behaviours?  
• Establish ‘support and challenge’ groups of four or five people. Each group meets informally, with each member spending 10 minutes explaining, uninterrupted, about a problem or challenge. Other group members ask questions and comment, helping their colleague to progress or solve the issue.  
• Lead by example – resolve a performance issue. |
| **Innovating** | • The focus is on internal rather than external measures of performance.  
• Processes, products or services develop slowly, with incremental improvements.  
• People are rewarded for maintaining stability, not for successfully developing the business. | • Find and reward ideas for improvement. Also, encourage a questioning approach and challenge assumptions.  
• Listen to customers and generate ideas that benefit customers.  
• Initiate and lead an improvement project.  
• Remove obstacles to innovation. This may mean building an open, blame-free environment where people are encouraged to think differently and take greater risks. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complacency, a lack of urgency or cynicism</strong></td>
<td>• Lack of focus on customers (internal and external).</td>
<td>• Set challenging, relevant and audacious goals.</td>
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<td>• Responsiveness and flexibility are neither valued nor displayed.</td>
<td>• Create a crisis or find an opportunity that forces the business to take action.</td>
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<td>• Attitudes are either 'We are the best and always have been' or 'There's no point – it won't make any difference anyway'.</td>
<td>• Challenge and remove sources of cynicism. Consider restructuring to provide a fresh impetus for action.</td>
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<td>• Revise reward systems to encourage greater effort, commitment and urgency.</td>
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<td><strong>Team-working</strong></td>
<td>• Competitiveness is directed internally, not externally.</td>
<td>• Establish regular opportunities for colleagues to meet informally.</td>
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<td>• The business works in silos, with managers protecting their turf instead of co-operating.</td>
<td>• Allow time at team meetings for an open exchange of views: look for what people think, as well as what they say.</td>
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<td>• Establish a project team with complementary skills, drawing on people who do not usually collaborate, and get them to work on a specific issue or challenge.</td>
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<td>• Confront poor performance. If people are behaving ineffectively and are unaware that their actions are causing concern, tell them (preferably in confidence).</td>
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Best Practice: Avoiding the Pitfalls

Research by Dan Ciampa and Michael Watkins at Harvard Business School has highlighted various traps that lead senior managers to fail in their new roles (see Right from the Start, Harvard Business School Press, 1999). These traps are frequently encountered and pose significant risks.

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<tr>
<th>Pitfall or trap</th>
<th>How this undermines long-term success…</th>
<th>...and what you can do to avoid it</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Failing to prepare in sufficient depth</strong></td>
<td>Insufficient preparation and knowledge before starting leads to unsound early decisions, resulting in damaging judgements that undermine your credibility.</td>
<td>Recognise what you don’t know – where you need additional information. Learning can be divided into several main areas:</td>
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<td>• The priorities, challenges and opportunities for the team and business</td>
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<td>• Your customers</td>
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<td><strong>Isolation – emphasising data, over relationships</strong></td>
<td>Spending too much time gathering, reading or analysing information and not enough time talking with employees and others. Consequently, you fail to build the relationships and information channels necessary to understand what is really going on.</td>
<td>Set time aside to read and research and set at least as much time aside to talk with people, understanding the views and aspirations of customers, employees, suppliers and others. This will help you to benefit from their experience, to focus on the right priorities and to gain support in the short and long-term.</td>
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| **Arriving with all the answers**                   | Arriving in your new role with your mind made-up about problems, solutions, opportunities and other issues can alienate people. Quick fixes for complex problems can also miss opportunities. If you think you have all the answers, you may not have understood the question. | • Keep an open mind and question existing orthodoxy and business-as-usual thinking.  
• Consult widely, avoiding isolation or being captured by one view or interest.  
• Look for connections between factors previously overlooked or ignored.  
• Ask others for their views and ideas (and then give them credit).  
• Distinguish between ideas and their implementation. Past initiatives may have failed because of poor implementation – not because they were the wrong idea. |
<p>| <strong>Keeping an existing team for too long</strong>           | Retaining mediocre managers in the belief that your leadership will make a difference to their performance wastes time and energy trying to compensate for team, and individual, weaknesses. | Get to know people's strengths and weaknesses, their achievements and aspirations and their attitudes. If their attitude is positive or their skills are valuable, they may have a role in the future. If not, they may be a liability. |
| <strong>Going too far too fast</strong>                          | Attempting too much, launching a range of initiatives, with the expectation that some actions will pay off, causes confusion and means resources are never focused on the right initiatives. | Establish a few clear priorities for the first week, month, three months, six months, year and three years. Consult with people and agree what these priorities should be and when they can be accomplished. Try to ensure that each initiative builds on what has gone before. |</p>
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| Being too closely associated with the wrong people | Appearing to listen to some people and not to others alienates potential supporters, who will not contribute information in the future. This leads to biased advice and poor decisions. | • Find time to engage with everyone, understanding different views.  
• Work hard to balance multiple perspectives.  
• Be honest, open and fair – be tactful, mean what you say and don’t mislead. |
| Allowing unrealistic expectations and failing to agree objectives | Failing to negotiate your initial mandate, and neglecting to establish clear objectives, can mean you do not fulfil your boss’s expectations, despite performing well. | • Be clear about what you will achieve and agree this with your manager and your team. This requires careful planning, consultation and negotiation (for example, to secure resources).  
• Keep in mind possible add-ons – things you can accomplish that go beyond what you have agreed.  
• Decide what performance indicators should measure progress.  
• Make sure you highlight everything that is achieved, for your sake and your team’s. |

**Key Questions**

- What information do you need before starting your new role?
- How can you acquire this information?
- What are likely to be the most significant working relationships?
- Can you start building these before you take up your new role?
- How much time do you plan to set aside for yourself and your family?
- If you are moving location, what will you do to get to know your environment?
- What expectations do you have – what do you want to achieve – and what are your boss’s expectations?
- Are these reasonable?
- Can you manage expectations so that you achieve what is possible, while allowing yourself to excel and to exceed expectations?
- Are you aware of your leadership and decision-making style?
• Do you know how your behaviour affects others, and do you have the right style and mindset?
• Do you have a clear perspective about the business – its strengths and weaknesses, products, markets, customers, people and opportunities?
• Are you ready to engage people in your new role?
• Are you prepared to build coalitions with others?
• What long-term changes might be needed?
• Do you have a broad time scale for what you would like to achieve and the actions needed to accomplish this?
• Are you ready to develop a vision for the business – a view of the future, to guide people’s actions, to challenge and inspire individuals and to appeal to customers and other stakeholders?
• Have you assessed your own weaknesses?
• Is there a mentor or coach you could work with to support you during the transition and to help you achieve your aims?

Final thoughts…

Establish a few clear priorities for the first week, month, three months, six months, year and three years. Consult with people and agree what these priorities should be and when they can be accomplished. Try to ensure that each initiative builds on what has gone before.

*Article written by Jeremy Kourdi and Brian Edwards*
We provide executive coaching, leadership development and consultancy expertise for individuals and market-leading organizations worldwide.

About Entendeo
We are an international executive development business with a growing team of 40 coaches and consultants, offices in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific, and a client base including global, market leading businesses.

What we do
We coach people to improve the way they make choices and behave, delivering the culture shift and results that our clients are seeking.

How we do it
We provide a range of interventions – high impact executive coaching, consultancy and tailored development programmes – so that people:

- **Provide support and challenge**, both for themselves and for members of their team.
- **Generate practical insights**, leading to behavioural change.
- **Learn** and are open to the need for continuous development, flexibility and change.
- **Develop strong, effective business relationships** both internally (within the organization, leading to greater collaboration and teamwork) and externally.
- **Build their confidence, understanding, awareness and skills**.

Our approach is based on our values including the need to help people understand, build, innovate and execute.

Why we do it
We believe that amazing business relationships deliver amazing business results. Relationships provide the foundation for success – for individuals, teams and organizations. We deliver this by providing coaches who care about people and about achieving results.

What this achieves
We develop leaders with the skills, confidence and mindset – and the relationships – needed to make progress and succeed. In this way they can help their organizations achieve their goals.

Our products are briefly described below.

**Coach on Call** delivers fast, cost-effective, world-class coaching for all your employees via telephone or skype. Any person. Any issue. Any time.

**Coaching Connect** is premium-value coaching for leaders and high-potential managers, developing relationship and skills and delivering results.

**Leadership Connect** is our name for tailored leadership and change management programmes designed to suit your needs and situation.

**Strategy Connect** is our advisory service provided by Entendeo’s consultants, people who are expert in leading change and advising on organizational and people development.

Our Clients
Based in London and with offices in Hong Kong and Sao Paulo, we work with international clients worldwide. Our clients include:

- Barclays
- BBC
- Blake Lapthorn
- Citigroup
- DEFRA
- Duke Corporate Education
- Economist Intelligence Unit
- European Commission
- Financial Times
- HSBC Group
- IBM
- IMD Business School
- John Lewis Partnership
- KPMG
- London Business School
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Saudi British Bank
- Tetra Pak
- The Economist Group

Clients value our work because we develop executives and teams, enabling them to perform at the highest levels. Above all, our coaches ensure that people understand not simply what to do, but how and why. Our commercial approach emphasises execution, personal development and the need to deliver business objectives.

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