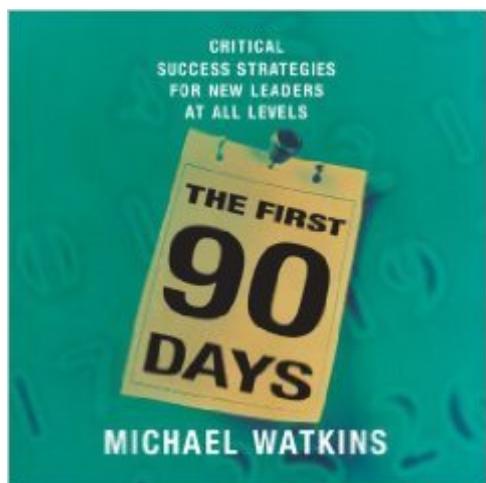


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# The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies For New Leaders At All Levels Unabridged On 6 CDs [1st 90 Days]



## **Synopsis**

The window of opportunity in a new position is a short one; according to career transition expert Michael Watkins, a new leader has 90 days to determine his success or failure on the job. In **THE FIRST 90 DAYS**, Watkins offers a practical, proven-effective guide for anyone moving into a new professional role. Whatever the stage of the listeners career, whether starting a new position or just adding additional responsibilities, these techniques can insure that this critical transition period proceeds quickly, smoothly and effectively. Drawing on both real-world examples and his groundbreaking research on leadership, Watkins provides a framework for success in all stages of the process, including: Diagnosing the new situation Crafting winning transition strategies Taking charge quickly and authoritatively Building teams and coalitions Securing early wins Avoiding the most common pitfalls Laying the groundwork for long-term success A breakthrough personal and professional survival guide, **THE FIRST 90 DAYS** will speak to self-help listeners across the career spectrum.

## **Book Information**

Audio CD

Publisher: Coach in a Box (2007)

Language: English

ASIN: B002NBXQ6E

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ  [See all reviewsÂ  \(598 customer reviews\)](#)

Best Sellers Rank: #646,126 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #236 inÂ  Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Rural #6973 inÂ  Books > Books on CD #17691 inÂ  Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

## **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. They create virtuous cycles that leverage organizational energy. In the first few weeks, you need to identify opportunities to build personal credibility. In the first 90 days, you need to identify ways to create value and improve business results.5. NEGOTIATE SUCCESS. You need to figure out how to build a productive working relationship with your new boss and manage his or her expectations. No other relationship is more important. This means having a series of critical talks about the situation, expectations, style, resources, and your personal development. Crucially, it means developing and gaining consensus on your 90-day plan.6. ACHIEVE ALIGNMENT. The higher you rise in an organization, the more you have to play the role of organizational architect. This means figuring out whether the organization's strategy is sound, bringing its structure into alignment with its strategy, and developing the systems and skills bases necessary to realize strategic intent.7. BUILD YOUR TEAM. If you are inheriting a team, you will need to evaluate its members. Perhaps you need to restructure it to better meet demands of the situation. Your willingness to make tough early personnel calls and your capacity to select the right people for the right positions are among the most important drivers of success during your transition.8. CREATE COALITIONS. Your success will depend on your ability to influence people outside your direct line of control. Supportive alliances, both internal and external, will be necessary to achieve your goals.9. KEEP YOUR BALANCE. The risks of losing perspective, getting isolated, and making bad calls are ever present during transitions. The right advice-and-counsel network is an indispensable resource.10. EXPEDITE EVERYONE. Finally, you need to help everyone else - direct reports, bosses, and peers - accelerate their own transitions. The quicker you can get your new direct reports up to speed, the more you will help your own performance. This book is not only relevant on the individual level. This transition process for new managers happens so often that it should be handled with more professionalism by (big) organizations. Whereas we as managers try to work actively with introduction programmes and training for new employees, then many managers must face their

transition challenge alone. It shouldn't be like that. The "sink or swim" approach should be doomed.Peter Leerskov,M.Sc. in International Business (Marketing & Management) and Graduate Diploma in E-business

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." Make his priorities your priorities.
- Be proactive in doing things that will allow your boss to hear from people he trusts that you're a good worker.
- Don't bring your boss bad news early, at least without bringing good news too.
- Don't assume he will change. He has a style, foibles, accept them and work around them and move on. You can learn a lot from a bad boss, and you will likely have many.
- Examine how others relate to your boss and how he responds.

Strategy

- Begin figuring out who you need to move off your team immediately, whose roles need to change, and who you need to evaluate further.
- Think strategically. After your first 90 days you should be able to present a plan that is actionable.
- Evaluate the vision of the organization, its values, and use SWOT analysis.
- Ask yourself feedback questions every week.
- What isn't going well. Why? What can you change?
- What are you least happy about. What can you change about it?
- What meeting troubled you the most? ""
- What conflict needs to be most resolved? ""
- Family also has to be considered. How is your new role and time commitment affecting your family? Was the move worth

it? The author doesn't state it like this, but focus on doing what's best next. I give this book 4.5 stars out of 5. I highly recommend it.

This is a fine book with a lot of substance, and I place it slightly second to Thomas Neff and James Citrin's "You're in Charge--NOW WHAT?." From my point of view as the reader, Neff & Citrin actually catalyzed me and inspired me into preparing a 100 day plan broken into 10 ten-day blocks, while Watkins is more of a manual with lots of useful checklists and suggested questions and so on, but between the two, Neff & Citrin actually drove me to the needed outcome: my own 100 day plan. Both are good. If you buy only one, buy Neff & Citrin, but I do recommend that you buy both, read Neff & Citrin first, and then cherry pick from Watkins--the cost of these books is trivial in comparison to the return on investment.

I bought "The First 90 days" by Michael Watkins and Neff/Citrin's book titled "You're in Charge - Now What." I found Neff's book to be a stronger and more practical guide. Both offered excellent guidance however Neff & Citrin produced a more interesting and readable (less text-book like) book with real life examples and a road map. Word of warning in that both books are written for senior business management and less applicable for lower levels of management or line positions.

First shared with me by my new boss, I quickly realized the approach and framework were going to be very useful and purchased my own anniversary copy. I'm 6 weeks into my transition as a senior executive at a new org and I'm finding the process very helpful. From the time you accept your position to crafting a 30-60-90 day plan I highly recommend for all transitioning executives and new managers.

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