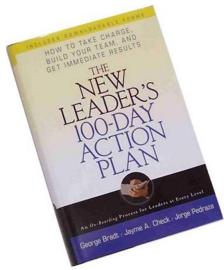




Adapted from the Executive Summary of

The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan

An "OnBoarding" Process
for Leaders at Every Level



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Whether the new leader is a veteran CEO taking the reins of their next organization, or a new frontline supervisor, *The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan*¹ will help manage that leadership transition so they take charge, build their team and deliver better results faster than anyone thought possible. This matters because 40 percent of leaders going into new roles fail in their first eighteen months². (Yes 40%!)

What do these leaders not know or see? What do they not do? Why are they not able to deliver? In most cases they miss one of the crucial tasks that must be accomplished in their first 100 days. Some don't understand the impact of their early words and actions and inadvertently send their new colleagues all the wrong messages. Some focus on finding a new strategy, but fail to get buy-in and fail to build trust with their new team. Some do a lot of work without accomplishing the one or two things that their bosses are looking for. No leader wants this to happen.

This summary and the book itself are designed as action plans, with timelines and key milestones new leaders need to reach week-by-week, to set them and their team up for success in their first 100 days. These are distilled from insights gleaned from working with clients of our consulting firm, PrimeGenesis, whose sole mission is to help executives moving into new leadership roles. But even this summary will help you know what you need to know, see what you need to see, and do what you need to do to deliver, or to help them deliver success quickly and decisively.

Over the years, we have noticed that many new leaders show up for a new role smiling, but without a plan. Neither they, nor their new companies have thought things through in advance. On their first day, they are welcomed by such confidence-building remarks as: “Oh, you're here... We'd better find you an office.”

...Ouch!

Thankfully, some enlightened companies have a better process in place. If you are lucky, you will be associated with a company that actually puts people in charge of preparing for a leader's transition into a new role. Imagine the difference when a new leader is escorted to an office that is fully set up for her, complete with computer, passwords, phones, files, information and a 30-day schedule of orientation meetings.

...Better.

¹ From *The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan*, Bradt, Check and Pedraza, (Wiley, New York, 2006)

² The 40% failure rate comes from a study by the Center for Creative Leadership as cited by Anne Fisher in “Don't Blow Your New Job” in *Fortune*, June 22, 1998. Brad Smart cited a failure rate of 50% in his book *Topgrading* (Prentice Hall 1999). Human Resources Magazine cited a Right Management Study on August 21, 2004 that indicated the 2004 rate was 35%. Leadership IQ published a study September 20, 2005 suggesting that the failure rate is 46% at 18 months. So, 40% is still looking like a good benchmark.

But still not good enough. Even if the company has done this for the new leader in advance, if they have waited until this moment to start, they are already behind, and they have stacked the odds against themselves. We have tested and evolved PrimeGenesis' on-boarding methodology in many different environments, with all types of leaders. We have found there is a huge difference between the leader who has a plan, hits the ground running, and makes an impact on their first day on the job, and the leader who waits until Day One to start planning. Clients who have used our methods have been able to deliver better results faster. And they've reduced the rate of failure of leaders going into new roles fourfold -- from the 40% we quoted above to well under 10%.

Here are our three most important recommendations for leaders going into new roles:

- 1) Take charge of the "On-Boarding" process. It should include discrete steps structured and driven by the leader over time. (Mirroring the steps in this summary.)
- 2) Get a head start before the first day. Day One is a critical pivot point, and a major opportunity to accelerate progress - if the new leader can hit the ground running. A little early momentum goes a long way.
- 3) Think team. In the first 100 days it is essential to put in place the basic building blocks of a high performing team. New leaders will fail if they try to do everything themselves, without the support and buy-in of the team. As a team leader, their own success is inextricably linked to the success of the team as a whole.

Consider the example of the Puritan Foods team at Procter & Gamble, which in six months, accomplished more than anyone thought possible. The new team leader was given a budget to test market Puritan Foods. A budget, but no team. He had to recruit volunteers to work on the project in their spare time. The good news was that this meant that everyone that worked on the project was doing it by choice. Their mandate was to get a set of new products into test market as quickly as possible to learn about those products and their consumers.

The team was comprised of people from product development, finance, sales, market research, and marketing. They identified outside suppliers to create, manufacture, and distribute the products and to manage in-store tests. They rented a townhouse as a base for the team in the test market, established their own sets of communication and decision practices, laid out their plans and timelines. And they went to work, picking up some early wins along the way and adjusting team members' roles as appropriate.

The result was that they went from "Make it happen" to twelve new products on the shelf in under six months – faster than anybody thought possible at Procter & Gamble at that time. Four of the twelve test products were expanded into successful businesses. Furthermore, what the team learned about health conscious consumers made a big impact both on the balance of the Puritan business and on other Procter & Gamble businesses. Better than anybody thought possible!

How? Why? In essence, the leader and his team did everything they were supposed to do in the first 100 days. The new leader had a plan for hitting the ground running. He got started working with key people before Day One. And he focused on getting the right people on his team, aligned around one burning imperative throughout.

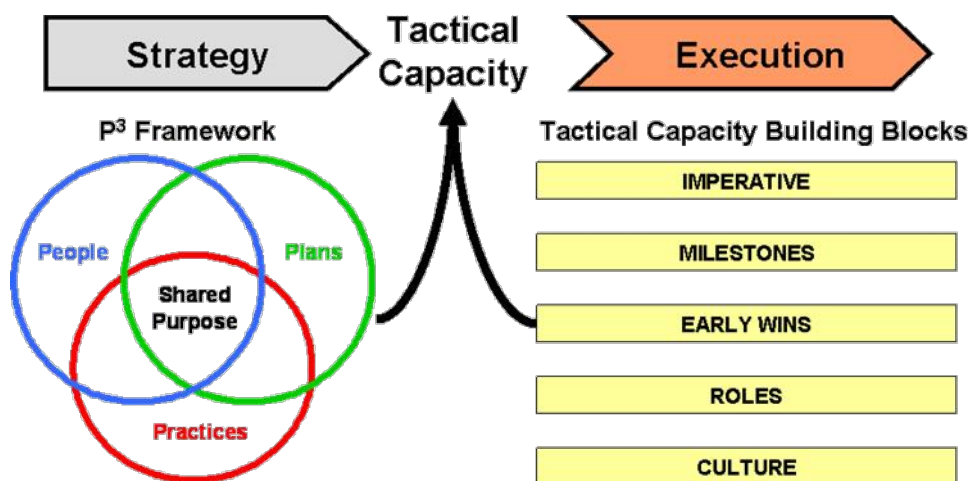
How to Quickly Build a Highly Effective Team or Organization: The Core Principles:

We are going to take you through a step-by-step on-boarding process that can be followed by leaders at every level to deliver better results faster. Paradoxically, the best way to accelerate a transition into a new leadership role is to pause long enough to think through and put an on-boarding plan in place.

Here are the three main conceptual frameworks underpinning the on-boarding plan:

1. High performing teams and organizations are built of people, plans, and practices aligned around a shared purpose.
2. Tactical Capacity bridges the gap between strategy and execution, ensuring that a good strategy doesn't fail because of bad execution.
3. Five building blocks underpin a team's Tactical Capacity: a burning *imperative*, key *milestones*, *early wins*, getting the right people in the right *roles*, and shaping the *culture* with an ongoing communication plan.

Figure 1.1 - Core Frameworks



1 - People-Plans-Practices – P³

An organization or a team's performance is based on aligning its People, Plans, and Practices around a shared purpose - P³. This involves getting the right People in the right roles, getting clarity around the strategies and action steps included in Plans, and getting Practices in place that enable people to implement the plans in a systematic and effective way.

2 – Tactical Capacity

Tactical Capacity is a team’s ability to work under difficult, changing conditions and translate strategies into tactical actions decisively, rapidly and effectively. It is the essential bridge between strategy and execution. In contrast to other work groups that move slowly, with lots of direction and most decision-making coming from the leader, high performing teams empower each member to come up with and quickly implement critical solutions to the inevitable problems that arise on an on-going basis. They build on strategy and plans with the right people and practices to implement ever-evolving actions that work.

You have seen this yourself. You have been on teams with members that operate in loosely connected silos, incapable of acting without specific direction from above. They may know the strategy. They may have the resources they need. But any variation or change paralyzes them.

In contrast, a great example of Tactical Capacity at work was how NASA team members came together during the Apollo 13 crisis. Right from “Houston, we’ve had a problem...” the team reacted flexibly and fluidly to a dramatic and unwelcome new reality – a crippling explosion en route, in space. They went beyond their standard operating procedures and what their equipment was “designed to do” to exploring what it “could do”. Through tight, on-the-fly collaboration, the team did in minutes what normally took hours, in hours what normally took days, and in days what normally took months. This was critical to getting the crew home safely.

If you’re lucky, you’ve been on teams where actions and results flow with great ease, where team members know what is really required and support each other in making those things happen. Those teams have Tactical Capacity.

Here’s a mouthful of jargon, but it’s important: Tactical Capacity is built on the alignment of People, Plans, and Practices around a shared purpose. As the new leader, it’s your job to orchestrate this alignment. You must convince key people to turn a shared purpose into a burning imperative and get widespread buy-in for it by communicating constantly with the team and broader organization. A burning imperative is the antidote to silos and departments that don’t cooperate. Tactical Capacity is not only about the team being able to respond quickly to changes in external circumstances, it also is about team members working well with each other in support of the team’s burning imperative.

3 – Building Blocks of Tactical Capacity

The good news is that a leader in a new role can build Tactical Capacity into their team quickly by implementing five building blocks:

- Get buy-in for the one **BURNING IMPERATIVE**
- Use key **MILESTONES** to drive team performance
- Invest in **EARLY WINS** to build team confidence
- Get the right people in the **RIGHT ROLES**
- Shape the team **CULTURE** with an on-going communication campaign

The NASA team dealing with the Apollo 13 got each of these five building blocks in place, allowing it to react with Tactical Capacity of the highest order:

- 1) The team’s mission changed from “going up to the moon to collect rocks” to the one **BURNING IMPERATIVE** of “get these men home alive.” This was galvanizing enough (as a burning imperative must always be) to transcend all petty issues and focus everyone’s efforts.
- 2) The team’s **MILESTONES** were clear: turn the ship around, preserve enough energy to allow a re-entry, fix the carbon monoxide problem, survive the earth’s atmosphere, etc.
- 3) The carbon-monoxide fix kept the astronauts alive temporarily, and was the **EARLY WIN** that made the team believe it could get the crew back to earth safely. It gave everyone confidence.
- 4) Everyone was working with the same end in mind. But they were working in different and essential **ROLES**. One group figured out how to turn the spaceship around. Another group fixed the oxygen problem. Another dealt with the reentry calculations. And the spare crew did whatever it took. They were all working together, without getting in each other’s way.
- 5) The **CULTURE** had been strong. But everyone’s words and actions reinforced the message that “failure is not an option” throughout the rescue mission.

Even though most new leaders do not jump into a situation as urgent as Apollo 13, in today’s environment, almost all leadership transitions are “hot landings” where they must hit the ground running to have a chance of succeeding. Very often they will need to fix something, fast. Sometimes they and their team may have to react that quickly to changing situations. Sometimes they will have more time to plan. Fortunately, this is the case in most on-boarding situations. They will have at least a few days to create an on-boarding plan – if they get a head start.

The 100-Day Action Plan

Here are the steps in our on-boarding process:



AJUST to the inevitable surprises; **AVOID** the most common mistakes;
BUILD loyalty, trust and commitment

Start **BEFORE** Day One - especially with the boss and Key Stakeholders

How do new leaders take charge, build their team, and get great results...faster than anyone thought possible? They cheat. Seriously, they create time by starting earlier than anyone thought they would. Key steps for this golden time between acceptance and start include:

- Identifying Key Stakeholders up, across and down
- Managing personal set-up
- Conducting pre-start meetings and phone calls
- Gathering pre-start information and learning
- Planning the first 100 days

Pre-start meetings and phone calls are a great chance to jumpstart relationships and get at learning, expectations, and implementation.

Decide how to **ENGAGE** the new culture - Assimilate, Converge & Evolve, or Shock

Be choiceful about the entry into an organization, using an ACES model to determine whether to Assimilate, Converge & Evolve, or Shock it at the start. Leaders need to make this choice before they walk in the door because it will change their approach to Day One.

Take control of **DAY ONE** - Make a powerful first impression

Everything communicates. And, at the start of a new role, all communication is magnified. Thus, it is essential to be particularly choiceful about everything the new leader does and says and doesn't do and doesn't say – and in what order and to whom they do or say them. That's why the new leader, and only new leader, has to be in control of the first impressions they make on and around Day One.

Get Buy-in for the One **BURNING IMPERATIVE** and create the new strategy (by Day 30)

The Burning Imperative is the cornerstone of Tactical Capacity. Everything pivots off a team's mission, vision, and values. For this and the new strategy to drive everything everyone actually does every day, they must be truly shared. Get them created and bought into early on – even if they're only 80% right. The leader, and the team, will adjust and improve along the way. But don't let anything distract them from getting this in place and shared.

Use key **MILESTONES** to drive team performance (by Day 45)

The real test of a high performing team's Tactical Capacity lies in the formal and informal practices that are at work across team members. Tactical Capacity requires that significant leeway be built into those practices. Use a flexible team-based milestone management practice to build in nuances, insight, monitoring, and collaboration.

Invest in **EARLY WINS** to build team confidence (by Day 60)

Early wins are all about credibility and confidence. People have more faith in people that have delivered. It's important for the new leader's boss to have confidence in them. It's important for team members to have confidence in the new leader and in themselves. Early wins fuel that confidence. To that end, identify potential early wins by day 60 and deliver them by the end of the first six months.

Get the right people in the right **ROLES** (by Day 70)

- Support people that are in the right role and performing well
- Move people that are in the wrong role and performing poorly
- Invest in people in the right role but not performing well
- Evolve to new roles people in the wrong role and performing well

Shape the **CULTURE** with an on-going communication campaign (throughout the first 100 days)

Map the existing culture and coalitions. Then deploy an all-out, multi-media communication campaign over an extended period to shape and evolve the culture to where it needs to be. Doing this right requires a lot of effort. The payoff is both huge and lasting.

ADJUST to the inevitable surprises

It is essential to monitor the situation over time. Identify and classify surprises' impact as major or minor, enduring or temporary and be ready to react as appropriate. For major, enduring changes, redeploy and/or restart. For major, temporary events, follow the basic flow of prepare – understand – plan – implement – revise/prepare. And manage communication relentlessly.

AVOID the most common mistakes

Avoid stepping on seven common on-boarding landmines:

- 1) **ORGANIZATION**: Lack of a winning strategy; or inability to implement that strategy
- 2) **ROLE**: Expectations and resources or Key Stakeholders not aligned
- 3) **PERSONAL**: Gaps in individual's strengths, motivation or fit
- 4) **RELATIONSHIP**: Failing to establish/maintain key relationships up, across or down
- 5) **LEARNING**: Situation, Customers, Collaborators, Capabilities, Competitors, Conditions
- 6) **DELIVERY**: Failing to build a high performing team and deliver results fast enough
- 7) **ADJUSTMENT**: Not seeing or not reacting to situational changes

BUILD loyalty, trust and commitment

Great leaders focus more on their followers than on themselves. The more they sacrifice for the benefit of their followers, the more loyal their followers are to them. Leaders like that are around today. They are easy to spot. They are the ones people are following.

George Bradt, Jayme Check and Jorge Pedraza are principals of PrimeGenesis, an executive on-boarding and transition acceleration group that helps leaders in new and challenging positions deliver sustainably better results faster and reduce the risk of failure. Its expert specialists provide hands-on facilitation of practical tools based on their own senior line management and organizational development experience with leading companies around the world. There's more about them and PrimeGenesis at www.primegenesis.com.

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