1-Page Summary 1-Page Book Summary of The First 90 Days

If you’re preparing to enter a professional transition—perhaps by accepting a promotion, moving to a new geographic location, or shifting laterally into a different unit—this book will provide you with key principles for setting yourself up for success in the first 90 days of your new role as well as practical exercises for implementing those principles throughout the transition process. Ultimately, after completing the book, you’ll be poised to efficiently move towards the “break-even point” in your role, whereby you have contributed as much to your new job as you have received from it.

The goal for your first 90 days is to avoid the traps that can lead to vicious cycles down the road (e.g., choices that undermine your credibility or erect structural or cultural barriers for your transition) while focusing on positive principles that can create virtuous cycles to support your success. Ultimately, this book will discuss several essential themes, including:

- The importance of gathering information early on about the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for your company and using that information to better understand the unique skills, leadership styles, and expectations that will be pertinent to your new role
- Helping set yourself and your company up for success by developing a strategy that is grounded in a nuanced understanding of the company's developmental stage and how it can best align its overall vision with its day-to-day operations
- Working with your boss and your direct reports to clearly outline expectations for everyone's roles and to help define success and plans of action early on
- Identifying early wins and building alliances to achieve those wins in a way that will prop up your credibility and support your longer-term vision for your role
- Recognizing and preparing for how the transition will impact your personal life and your family life as well as helping your company support all team members in their own job transitions by institutionalizing effective and reliable acceleration systems

Information Is Power

As you begin your new role, information is power. Although it might seem tedious at first, gathering as much knowledge as possible early on about your position or company will accelerate your success in the long-term. Gathering this information will also help you avoid a few traps, including:

- Trying to enact sweeping change without knowing the history of the company
- Falling prey to the action imperative, whereby you are so concerned with making your mark right away that you take action without careful thought, which ultimately is not conducive to your long-term goals
- Undermining your credibility early on by coming across as a know-it-all before you have engaged in sufficient learning about your company

The first step in your learning process will be to identify essential questions to be answered, perhaps about your company’s history, its current operations, or its vision for the future. Think creatively about where you can turn to answer those questions. For example, you may gain helpful insights both from external sources (customers, suppliers, or key stakeholders) and internal sources (heads of departments, sales staff, or long-term employees with a broader arc of insight).

Consider also which processes will be most effective in gathering the desired data. You may want to conduct systematic interviews with all of your direct reports or you may decide instead to send out surveys, have a retreat, or schedule tours of key facilities. As you access more information, begin to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (known as the SWOT) for your company in order to gain essential insights about best next steps for your role. Also use this information to better understand the ways in which you may have to adapt from your previous approach or style.

For example, if you've accepted a promotion, you'll need to create a delegation plan that is informed by the specifics of your new role, including the size of your team or the tasks that must be accomplished. Remember too that in your new leadership role (and perhaps in contrast to your previous position) even the small choices you make—how you treat people or how you handle minor challenges early on—will contribute significantly to your overall reputation.

Alternatively, if your professional transition entails joining a new company, you may want to use the first 90 days to focus on different considerations, such as developing a nuanced understanding of the company's culture (which often consists of unspoken norms and assumptions related to communication, dress, and so on) or building connections with key stakeholders.

However, regardless of the transition type entailed, it will also be important for you to identify the skills or areas you might have a tendency to default to if or when you are feeling insecure. It's common to lean too heavily on those tendencies during times of transition, which ultimately prevents you from being fully open to the new approaches that might be necessary for achieving success.
Finally, for all job transitions, psychologically demarcate your transition (perhaps through a formal ceremony or personal celebration) to begin the process of relinquishing an attachment to how things were done in your prior role.

**Your Company's Success Is Your Success**

Understanding the current stage of your company's business development will be essential for building a strategy for success. The five most common stages include:

- Start-ups (new companies)
- Turnarounds (struggling companies)
- Accelerated growth (rapidly expanding companies)
- Realignment (companies in need of a reboot)
- Sustaining success (flourishing companies which require planning for long-term growth)

Each of these stages (known collectively as STARS) will present their own unique challenges that should inform how you approach your new role. For example, start-ups will often be defined by strong energy and vision but may lack necessary structure. By contrast, a company in realignment may be defined by complacency that demands a shake-up to avoid stagnation. **These five stages may exist in a company of any size or shape, and it's possible for one company to be experiencing several stages at once.**

Once you have identified which STARS stage is applicable to your work, use that information to determine an appropriate leadership style for moving forward. Two common leadership styles include the "hero" approach, whereby the leader boldly takes the reins to move the company in a new direction, and the "steward" approach, whereby the leader deftly applies diplomatic processes to enact more subtle or incremental change. While you may be naturally inclined to one style over the other, don't allow those natural inclinations to trump what's best for your company. A turnaround in need of drastic change would not be served well by the steward approach, whereas a company in realignment would likely react negatively to a "hero's" attempt to swoop-in and aggressively disrupt the status quo.

While a keen understanding of your company's STARS stage will help inform how you approach the new role, your ability to succeed will also be largely informed by your company's overall ability to align its vision with its operations and implementation. **If a business is out of alignment—because it's experiencing tensions between key mechanisms such as strategic direction, organizational structure, core processes, or skill bases—it will quickly hit a ceiling for attaining further growth.** For that reason, it's important to use your new role as an opportunity to evaluate ways in which any such tensions can be resolved.

Use your first 90 days to diagnose any misalignments. For example, there may be a misalignment between the direction your company wants to grow into and the current skill sets within the team.

Consider the following steps to conduct your diagnosis:

1. **Develop a clear understanding of your company's vision and strategic direction so that you can evaluate how that vision is being implemented.** To aid in that process, consider meeting with your boss or other company leaders to learn more about the origin story of your company's vision.
2. **Determine whether the necessary skills, organizational structures, and processes are in place to accomplish the identified strategic direction.** You may be able to do so by reviewing records such as mission statements, budgets, annual reports, and so on.

Through this process, you may identify areas that need to be adapted or improved. As you do so, keep in mind that deciding how to structure your company (i.e., how to group employees into units, how to organize reporting and supervision, and so on) can be particularly tricky. **Be careful about engaging in any restructuring before you have a clear understanding of its potential consequences and without taking into consideration the possible push back,** as people can perceive a restructuring as scary and threatening. Finally, remember that no one structure is perfect but that your company should determine which set of trade-offs make the most sense considering the articulated vision and the STARS stage(s) pertinent to your company.

**Invest in Interpersonal Relationships**

There are two key interpersonal dynamics that will fundamentally impact the transition into your new role: your relationship with your boss and your relationship with your team. Both require an investment of time and a deliberate approach.

As you build a foundational relationship with your boss, consider the following:

- It's important to ensure that you are both on the same page about which STARS stage you are operating in so that you can appropriately align later conversations about expectations and resource allocation.
You can help inform your boss's expectations for your role by initiating a conversation about what success should look like both short and long-term.

There are benefits to building credibility early on by under-promising and over-delivering and by keeping lines of communication open in case expectations shift over time.

Advocate for yourself by telling your boss about what resources you'll need to be successful. Connect the dots clearly for him by explaining, “If you want X, I will need Y.”

Just as important as these substantive conversations about your role will be stylistic conversations about how you and your boss will work together. Gather information from other team members for initial insights about your boss's style and consider asking your boss directly about how she likes to communicate and when she will want to be folded in to your decision-making processes.

At the end of the first 90 days, consider scheduling a personal development conversation with your boss that focuses on how things are going so far in your role, (i.e., what is going well, and what could still be improved).

The first 90 days will also be an essential period for developing strong foundational relationships with your direct reports. Essential to that foundation will be evaluating your team members using a fair and consistent process that allows you to determine whether any human resources changes need to be made. To do so, use the following steps:

1. Identify the key evaluation criteria for a given role such as competence, judgment, trust, and interpersonal skills.
2. Create consistent questions to be used in one-on-one meetings to measure those criteria for each team member.
3. As you prepare for those meetings, remember to consider how your company's STARS stage might inform your determination about which roles or competencies are most important for success.

Once your evaluations are complete, categorize each employee based on whether they should...

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The First 90 Days Summary Introduction

Professional transitions, such as shifting locations, moving internally to a new unit, or accepting a promotion, are becoming more and more common, as most individuals will experience an average of 13.5 major transitions for 18.2 years of work, or one transition every 1.3 years. Such transitions present great opportunities and also many challenges as a new role allows you to start fresh and have a strong impact but also exposes you to new and heightened scrutiny. Once opinions are formed about you, they're hard to change. So starting off on the right foot is key. That’s why this book focuses on your first 90 days in a new role.

Those first three months present an opportunity for you to effectively and efficiently move towards the “break-even point.” The break-even point is the juncture at which you have given as much to a role or to a team as you have received from it. Your company has chosen to invest resources in hiring, onboarding, and training you. Your goal will be to return that investment as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The best way to do so is by creating virtuous cycles early on which support you in developing the trust of your team and bosses, building respect for your judgment, and creating a foundation for ongoing success in your role. To support you in developing these virtuous cycles, this book will discuss ten key principles (one per chapter) to apply in your first 90 days of a new role, including:

1. Preparing yourself effectively for the upcoming change
2. Accelerating your learning by being a sponge and also focusing energies on what is most important early on
3. Matching your transition strategy to the unique needs of your company's situation by diagnosing those needs properly
4. Negotiating for success by effectively creating and communicating expectations with your boss and team
5. Securing early wins to build credibility, access the resources that you need, and create a virtuous cycle
6. Achieving alignment by ensuring that the structures in place properly support your articulated strategy
The first principle of creating a virtuous cycle in the first 90 days of a new role is to proactively prepare yourself for the transition. Do not rest on your laurels and assume that you can merely keep doing what you were doing before. Start by properly identifying the kind of transition that you are undergoing (promotion or entering a new company) and then confronting the unique challenges that you might face as a result.

Promotions

Promotions represent a great recognition of and reward for your hard work. But you are also forging a new path and want to set yourself up to exceed the expectations of those who elevated you. Consider these key principles as you prepare for your new responsibilities:

- **Balance details with the big picture**—With more authority, you'll now have greater insight into the inner workings of your company and the many moving pieces. Shift your perspective to fully understand the broader range of issues that are likely before you, but do so without getting overextended and pulled in a million directions.
- **Re-approach your strategy for delegation**—Your success as a leader will depend on developing competent and trustworthy team members. Crucial to that development will be a thoughtful approach to delegation. What should be delegated and to whom might look very different now that you are in a higher leadership role. Depending on the size of your new team, for example, you may be delegating small concrete assignments or entire products or processes.
- **Exert your influence wisely**—While it might seem like a promotion is conducive to having more influence, your choices will now be perceived more politically and those choices will often be far more complex. Additionally, you are now in a different echelon of peers who are all driven, ambitious, and talented—they are also trying to exert their influence. Egos may be in conflict and thus you'll need to build alliances to support your choices (more on this later).
- **Stay connected at all levels**—Don't get too isolated at the top by failing to stay informed...

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The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 2: Accelerate Your Learning

Now that you have started your new job, the second principle for setting yourself up for success in your first 90 days will be to effectively and efficiently absorb as much information about the company as possible so that you can incorporate it into your plans moving forward. Failing to set aside time to accommodate this essential learning process will likely undercut your credibility and your long-term success.

Consider, for example, Chris, who accepted a lateral move from an established software services company to a smaller struggling software developer. Upon starting in his role, Chris quickly decided that the new company's systems were totally ineffectual and would require a complete revamp in line with how his prior company had set things up. His efforts to fundamentally alter the company's structure, however, surprisingly resulted in a decrease rather than increase in productivity. Chris's mistake was in assuming that what worked in one company would also work in another and in failing to allocate time to understanding why things had been done in a particular way and which positive aspects of the new company's work might be worth holding onto.

In order to avoid these same missteps in your new position, commit to developing a robust learning process early on. First, beware of certain roadblocks that may thwart your learning, such as:

- **Not setting aside time at the onset to clearly identify the most important questions that you need to ask.** It's hard to prioritize the step of actually outlining a learning plan when you are overwhelmed by a fire hose of new tasks and information, but it will prove a worthy investment of time.
- **Ignoring the history of the organization.** Before you enact sweeping changes, make sure you have a clear understanding of the undergirding rationale and bases for the current approach. Otherwise, you risk throwing out the good with the bad.
- **Moving too quickly.** Remember the action imperative from Chapter One? Your desire to make a mark early on can prevent you from taking the time to observe critical...
Shortform Exercise: Implementing Your Learning Plan

Start off on the right foot by proactively developing insight into how your company is currently doing and use that insight to inform your goals for moving forward.

Interview three different external resources and three different internal resources about the status of your company using the SWOT framework. Jot down notes about how each resource categorizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of your company and highlight any areas where there is overlap while underlining answers that seem to be in tension with one another.

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The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 3: Match Strategy to Situation

Another key principle for your first 90 days is to develop an accurate diagnosis of the stage of growth and development that your company is currently in. Once you are armed with that information, you'll be able to more effectively answer two key questions including: (1) what kind of change will I be leading the charge on?, and (2) what is my personal style of enacting change as a leader?

The STARS Model

STARS is an acronym used to describe five different business stages. It stands for:

1. Start-up
2. Turnaround
3. Accelerated growth
4. Realignment
5. Sustaining success

We will learn a lot more about the nuances and implications of these five stages over the course of the book. But, as a general matter, they are defined as:

- **Start-up**: You are launching a new business, product, project, or relationship and will have to organize and implement the various pieces needed for success (e.g., people, money, technology, and so on). Start-ups are often defined by a lot of energy and ambition but can be plagued by a lack of structure or focus. As a leader in a start-up, you'll have the opportunity to shape key facets of the work but also may have limited resources.

- **Turnaround**: The business may be a sinking ship and requires immediate action to recover or redirect. The need for change is often urgent, necessitating a “ready-fire-aim” approach that means making tough decisions earlier on and with less information than might be ideal. Coming in as a leader during this stage can often be high risk/high reward.

- **Accelerated growth**: Things are moving forward within your company but a scale-up or plan for expansion may be needed by creating new structures, processes, or personnel. Adding these pieces while sustaining the core company culture and vision presents challenges and risks of undermining the factors that led to success in the first place.

- **Realignment**: Perhaps your company is experiencing general success but is suffering from problems rooted in stagnation or complacency. As a leader at this...
Armed with knowledge about how important the STARS stages can be to supporting your success, conduct a diagnosis of how these stages might impact your work priorities in the first 90 days of a new role.

Below, list out the key aspects of your current projects and identify which STARS category each component likely falls into. For example, you may be building a team for a new product (which may manifest as more of a start-up phase) and also overseeing efforts to improve overall customer satisfaction (which could benefit from some realignment). Once you have identified each work component, allocate it a percentage out of 100, reflecting how much of a priority it should be in your first 90 days. Remember that your particular role or business might not have work elements at issue for all five stages.

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**The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 4: Negotiate Success**

This chapter discusses the fourth principle for your first 90 days: **Negotiate success in your role by helping to define the playing field in a way that aligns with your needs and priorities**. You may find yourself working with a difficult boss or a boss with a fundamentally different style from your own and thus need to take initiative in setting up the framework for your role.

Take, for example, Michael, who accepted a new job as Chief Information Officer in his unit but was told by coworkers that his new boss, Vaughan, would be impossible to please—especially because she was intensely action-oriented, whereas Michael was more of a planner. Still, Michael proactively approached his boss with a concrete plan of action for the first 90 days in his new role. Even when Vaughan tried to accelerate his plan, Michael pushed back with a clear rationale for his plan. Eventually, Michael gained Vaughan's confidence and trust because he was able to deliver results, even though his process and style were different from Vaughan's preferred approach.

There are several key principles for building a productive and beneficial relationship with your boss just like Michael did. For example, consider the following "Dos and Don'ts":

**Do:**

- Clarify expectations on a regular basis.
- Take responsibility for developing and growing the relationship.
- Be patient and take time to accurately diagnose what action is needed.
- Prioritize early wins in areas that matter to your boss.
- Remember that your boss will be evaluating your performance not just from direct interactions but from information shared through other conduits. Keep this in mind as you navigate relationships with peers, heads of other groups, and so on.

**By contrast, don't:**

- Avoid your boss. If she is not proactive about establishing a relationship, don't leap into the temptation of flying under the radar. Get on her calendar early and stay actively in touch about expectations.
- Shy away from giving bad news. Communicate concerns early on so that your boss is on notice and...

**The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 5: Secure Early Wins**

Your fifth principle for success in the first 90 days is to **secure early wins that will prop up your credibility and provide an opportunity to invest in key relationships that will be essential for a successful overall transition**. Of course, enacting change within a company will come in waves over time and each wave will present an opportunity to (1)
company, (2) design new changes, (3) build support for that change, (4) implement the change, and (5) evaluate the results. A strong leader will deepen this process during each new wave in order to achieve more effective results for the company. However, it's important that you start by establishing early wins that will build a foundation for subsequent waves of change down the road.

Identifying Areas for Early Wins

How can you identify potential areas for early wins? Many people are tempted to jump on low-hanging fruit that will result in quick wins but that will not contribute to longer-term goals and will not help build momentum for the harder work that needs to be done. To avoid that temptation, be sure to:

1. Choose areas for early wins based on the expectations for your position and as laid out in prior conversations with your boss and stakeholders. Those expectations provide insight into the company's business goals, which should be at the heart of your early wins.

2. Ask whether the possible early wins that you have identified will help introduce new patterns of behavior that will support a broader vision for change. For example, perhaps you have noticed a lack of focus (marked by no clear goals or a reactionary rather than proactive approach) among your team. Reflect on how your early wins might be able to change behaviors related to those patterns. Other behavioral patterns that might require improvement include:

   - Lack of discipline
   - Lack of innovation
   - Lack of teamwork
   - Lack of urgency

However, it's not enough to simply avoid low hanging fruit when identifying your early wins. Instead, use the following principles to ensure that you...

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Shortform Exercise: Rate the Desirability of Your Early Win Project

Before you commit to an early win project, make sure it's the one that maximizes impact and progress towards your greater picture goals. Evaluate the relative strength of different possible early win projects by rating them using the questions below. The higher the score for a proposed early win, the better situated you may be to move forward with it.

How likely is it that this early win project will also support your longer-term goals? (Very likely to not likely at all). Why do you think
The first five chapters have focused on ways in which you can begin to prepare for your own personal success in a new role. But the sixth principle to apply in your first 90 days is to understand that your success is inextricably linked with the overall success of your company and therefore you must contribute to the broader project of achieving alignment within your company.

What is organizational “alignment”? There are four key components to how companies are designed, including:

- Strategic direction (vision and mission)
- Structure (how people are organized and how work is coordinated, measured, and incentivized)
- Core processes (how information and materials are processed through systems)
- Skill bases (the technical abilities and competencies of individuals and groups within the company)

If there are tensions between any of these facets, the business cannot thrive. Of course, being in a new role likely means that you cannot single-handedly or immediately alter core aspects of the company. Still, the first few months at a new job provide a great opportunity to diagnose any needed alignment shifts.

Consider the example of Hannah, who previously worked as a human resources consultant and was hired by a company in crisis to oversee necessary personnel changes. However, as Hannah learned more about the company's struggles, it became clear that they could not be resolved simply by replacing key actors. Instead, Hannah recognized that the company's structure (which was organized into units around different product lines) was discouraging cooperation and undermining the overall integration of customer services. Hannah gathered data that brought these tensions to light and eventually convinced her boss to restructure the business rather than overhaul leadership.

Diagnosing Possible Misalignments

You can use the first 90 days in your new role to diagnose possible misalignments between the four core elements articulated above. Examples of common misalignments include:

- Strategic direction and skill bases misalignment...

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Shortform Exercise: Identify the Impact of Your Proposed Alignment Change

Any change to your company's strategic direction, structure, processes, or skills will have a wide spectrum of implications. Use this exercise to identify potentially undesirable consequences of a particular proposed change.

Using the box below, create “if/then” statements to help understand the broader consequences of trying to achieve alignment in a particular manner. For example, maybe you are seeking to create greater alignment between the company's strategic direction and skills by hiring a new team of app developers. Work through the natural logic of such a choice. “If we hire more app developers, then we will need a bigger budget. If we need a bigger budget, we may have to siphon off funds from the marketing team. If we siphon off funds from the marketing team, the VP of Marketing will likely build a blocking alliance against the project” and so on. Write out these statements below to more effectively anticipate the impact of any given alignment change.
right goals. The first 90 days will be critical for assessing your current team members and identifying any needed role shifts or new hires. Human resources decisions can either set you up for a virtuous cycle that informs your long-term success, or for a vicious cycle that leaves you isolated and without needed support. To avoid the latter when building your team, consider the following potential traps:

**Potential Traps**

- **Focusing too much on the failures of the outgoing leadership.** While you certainly want to learn from their mistakes, outwardly criticizing their work is counterproductive to the goals of moving your team forward.
- **Being skittish about letting people go.** If it becomes clear that members of your team are not capable of supporting your goals, then equivocating on a decision to fire them will only hurt you both in the long run. Of course, your STARS stage may impact how realistic or desirable it is to make significant human resources changes early on. And you might not have full authority to make that call. Regardless, give yourself a clear timeline for evaluating team members and making a choice about their future in the company.
- **Doing too much too fast.** Focus on key changes that may need to be made but don’t undermine overall stability by trying to change too much at once. Holding onto a few folks who are competent but not stellar might be a necessary compromise early on as you prioritize changes at other levels.
- **Failing to consider organizational alignment in tandem with team development.** You cannot make informed HR choices if you don’t know what strategic direction your group is heading in.
- **Losing good people** by engaging in haphazard processes that make key members feel unstable. Be sure to provide positive and productive feedback to those team members that will likely be integral to your success in the future.
- **Allocating resources to team building before the...**

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**Shortform Exercise: Flesh Out Your Evaluation Criteria**

You can begin to identify top priorities for evaluating your team by assigning values to different criteria such as competence, judgment, energy, focus, relationships, and trust. As you assign a value to the different evaluation criteria, be sure to (1) check your biases, and (2) consider how the STARS stages might influence which traits need to be prioritized within your team. Consider also that different values may be pertinent to different job types or categories. For example, what you are looking for in your customer service team may be distinct from what is important in your financial development group. Iterate this exercise as many times as needed.

What are the most important criteria for evaluating your team members? After each criteria, explain how it supports your goals and the current STARS stage of your company or team. Put an asterisk next to any criteria that you deem non-negotiable and explain why it’s a threshold requirement.

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**The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 8: Create Alliances**

Everyone needs alliances and support as they transition—especially into a new company, which is why you’ll want to implement the eighth principle for success: **build alliances that help support your long-term goals.** Remember your early wins? Consider who you’ll need in your corner to achieve them. Remember also that **having an alliance doesn’t mean having unanimous support.** Focus on who you really need to get on board and allocate your time and energy there. Identify early on where you might face push back or blockage—include a strategy for winning those people over in your plan. Below are the steps to take in order to effectively build your alliances.

**Know the Playing Board**

In order to build your alliances, you’ll need to learn more about the landscape of your company.

**Map Out the Players**

Who do you need help from? What role do they play in achieving your objectives? At what stage will you need to get them on
board? Consider creating a chart mapping out each of these players. After you have identified the various individuals with power in your company, evaluate which ones you need on board for each specific goal. What combination of these players would constitute a winning alliance? What constitutes a “blocking alliance”? Think proactively about why they might be opposed to your plan/agenda and how you can assuage their concerns.

Map Out the Networks

You should be thoughtful not only about who has the power to help or hurt, but also about how they make decisions and who influences them. Sometimes those channels of persuasion are informal but provide key insight into how information and decision making flows within the structure of the company. Identifying those channels may take time but consider the following options for gaining key insight sooner rather than later:

1. Notice how and where your business engages with outside actors such as other companies, suppliers, or various stakeholders. Such engagements will likely highlight key focal points where important members of your company come together.

2. Use both formal...

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Shortform Exercise: Track Your Winning and Blocking Alliances

As you start to plan a strategy for building out your alliances, keep track of the moving pieces and players by using the exercise, below.

Identify five individuals that are uniquely situated to impact (either positively or negatively) your early win project. For each individual, write down your assessment of the following considerations: (1) what their current stance is on your project, (2) what externally drives them (e.g., certain board members, media coverage, and so on), (3) what internally drives them (e.g., wants to be promoted this year), and (4) potential strategies for influencing their perspective (e.g., will be influenced by another actor or responds well to incremental change). Use these notes to inform your next steps in building your winning alliances and fending off any blocking alliances.

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The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 9: Manage Yourself

Remember that professional transitions are stressful and overwhelming not only because of the potential implications for your career but because your personal life will be impacted as well. Accordingly, it's important to implement the ninth principle for success in your first 90 days: manage yourself by supporting your psychological transition and the transition of your family.

During your professional transition, you might be losing access to your normal support network, and your family might be undergoing significant changes as well. And yet, you will likely also have greater responsibility than before.

These issues were all at play for Stephen when he accepted a new position at his firm's unit in Canada. Not only would his family be moving from New York to Toronto, his children would need to change schools in the middle of the year, his wife would need to find new clients for her freelance work, and Stephen would need to build a new professional network while proving himself in his new role. Without a plan for managing these moving pieces, Stephen risked reaching a stage of burnout that would undermine his ability to be successful overall.

By choosing to proactively manage all aspects of your job transition, you can fend off potential burnout and build a positive foundation for you and your family.

Manage Your Stress Levels

Start by taking stock of how you are feeling by using the structured reflection guide outlined below:
How do you feel so far? On a scale of high to low do you feel:

- Excited? If not, why not? Are there any steps you can take to change this?
- Confident? If not, how can you build security around the transition?
- Agency over your own success?
- Disconnected? Are there gaps in key contacts you need for a smooth transition?
- Concerned? Have you already observed certain dynamics in meetings or early interactions that worry you?
- Proud? Are there moments or steps that you have already handled well? By contrast, have you recognized some things you could have handled differently?

Based on these...

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**Shortform Exercise: Confronting Possible Areas of Weakness**

Avoiding or shying away from your areas of weakness or growth will only come back to bite you later on as your new role demands more leadership and responsibility. However, by acknowledging these shortcomings head-on, you can fend-off the possibility of erecting your own roadblocks to success.

Focus on one personal weakness which might make the job transition difficult (refer back to the list of examples in Chapter 9 or identify one of your own). Recall a time when that personal difficulty previously manifested itself and write down the effects that it had on you and those around you.

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**The First 90 Days Summary Chapter 10: Accelerate Everyone**

Independent research has shown that the nine principles reviewed thus far can help decrease the time for you to reach the break-even point by up to 40%. But not only do you benefit from investing in a smooth transition into your new role, so does your company. A successful leadership transition can help businesses by speeding up project implementation and creating competitive advantages. But a poor leadership transition can cost a company millions of dollars and substantially slow growth. For that reason, implement the tenth principle for success in your first 90 days: **help develop strong acceleration (or transition) systems that can be implemented not only at the top leadership levels but across all team members.** Indeed, you can use the 90 day model described here to transition employees at all levels and improve teamwork, relationships, and outputs.

Consider these key design principles for implementing a successful acceleration model:

**Focus on the Crucial Transitions**

All companies are undergoing many transitions simultaneously. **Take a step back and identify where acceleration is most needed and where it would most benefit the company.** Gather data about transition frequencies such as where and when there will be movement in the company such as onboarding, inboardings, promotions, or lateral changes.

One way to organize this information is to create a “transition heat map” which identifies all movement, where it’s happening, what kind it is, and the level it’s happening at. This can be done by identifying each unit and the types of transitions that might affect it. Then, use four common transition categories (onboarding, promotion, geographic moves, lateral moves) and indicate whether such transitions are likely to be of high, medium, or low intensity in a given group. Use this map to identify and plan for acceleration priorities.

**Change Failing Processes**

Your company may already be engaged in certain practices that undermine the goal of an effective acceleration process. Identify and target those failures, which may...

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**Shortform Exercise: Conduct an Acceleration Audit**

Gathering more information about your company's current acceleration processes may inspire you to create new and more effective approaches. Perhaps, for example, you have some questions or concerns about how training is conducted. Use this exercise to evaluate whether there is room for improvement moving forward.

Choose to focus on one acceleration process that you believe is failing within your company. Identify three individuals involved in that process and write five questions below that you can ask them to better understand the history of that approach, how it's currently being implemented, and how it could be improved.

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