Truth 9
Run before you walk

You have just been hired, transferred, promoted, or had your responsibilities expanded to taking on and leading your team’s change agenda. If this is a new or significantly modified assignment, chances are that an organizational announcement has been or will be distributed to all colleagues with the news. The announcement will include an overview of your background, the position’s major responsibility areas, as well as an effective date.

If you wait until “day one” to start in your new role, you have waited too long.

Effective managers know that in today’s fast-paced business world, you want to hit the deck running. Therefore, before the pomp and circumstance of your “official” first day, you have a vested interest in surveying the landscape. Your goal is to gain a working familiarity -- that will evolve into a working knowledge -- about the business and your team as soon as possible.

To get started, you need a plan -- specifically covering those first 90 days. Research tells us that there are some conceptual and practical adaptation strategies that you can tailor to your needs, which should get you off on solid footing.

• Start fresh -- It’s a new day. Throw out old mindsets. Don’t believe that what worked yesterday will work today. Divorce yourself from the past. This is a new job with new responsibilities directing a new team. A clean slate approach is required.
• Accelerate your on-the job learning -- you need to get “up to speed” as quickly as possible. This means understanding markets, products, technologies, systems, stakeholders, politics, and the company’s culture. Be organized in your approach. Review operating plans, performance data and personnel records. Individually meet with all team members. Analyze key points of interface and processes. Look out for barriers. Interview customers and suppliers.
• Diagnose the business challenges accurately. Early and often, perform a SWOT analysis -- listing the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This will identify the rationale for why the organization must shift direction.
• Secure early wins -- This cannot be emphasized enough. Making a visible difference in a positive manner, early, will help build your credibility and create a sense on your team that the direction is proper. Define priorities and problematic areas (i.e., a lack of urgency, teamwork, innovation, discipline, or focus). Concentrate on ways to add value and improve business results. Look for ways to engage in collective learning. Remember, your early actions will have a disproportionate influence on how you are perceived.
• Negotiate success -- Build a productive relationship with your boss. No relationship is more critical for your success.
• Achieve alignment -- Identify your vision, as well as the strategy and tactics necessary to accomplish the desired ends. Identify the values and desirable norms of behavior. Make sure that your organizational structure, core systems, and skills are optimal for what you are trying to accomplish. Channel energy in positive and predictable directions.
• Begin to build your team -- You will need to evaluate current staff and hire to fill gaps. Know the key opinion molders on your team, your team’s perceived effectiveness, the demographics the key capabilities and skills of each individual, turnover rates and reasons, and an overview of the existing culture. Discuss roles and interdependencies. Exploit every communications opportunity. Outline individual and collective performance measures. Displace those who do not fit into your new paradigm.
• Create coalitions -- Identify those key people who bring expertise, access to information, status, control of resources, and personal loyalty. Identify your supporters, opponents, and those you need to convince. Determine how to bring your influence to bear.
• Maintain your Equilibrium -- Keep your perspective, priorities, and stay "connected." Don't over
The right sounding boards are essential. Keep networking.
• Expedite everyone -- Help get others acclimated to your speed and expectations.

By being cognizant of and following the above, you'll be sure to touch all early bases, ensuring a
successful transition into your new role.