



Your first 90 days

Toolkit Quick Start Guide



Introduction

Congratulations on starting your new position!

As leaders, we've all been there. Having gone through a rigorous and often protracted process of securing a new role, you arrive and begin making your mark. The expectations usually are that you make a positive impact quickly by securing early wins so that peers and teams can see your value.

If you have been brought in to disrupt the status quo or refresh thinking the pressure increases, no one wants to fail in the primary expectation formed at the outset. Therefore, it's crucial to be conscious of the traps you don't sabotage yourself from the start. After all, we've either seen others do this unwittingly or done it to ourselves.

Research and experience have identified the main themes. Failure can be down to the words and actions a new leader uses that sends the wrong message. Others fail to develop trust and support first before introducing a new direction. Or they invest too much energy in pointless projects, ignore specific stakeholders and invest in the wrong initiatives. If the organisation is very unlucky, all these may happen.

There are, of course, other factors that any new leader must get to grips with quickly: understanding how decisions happen, the characteristics of previous successful change and how best to influence buy-in.

New leaders must also be careful not to make assessments based on flawed assumptions. Replication of what has worked for them elsewhere, without a proper understanding of the context, is dangerous. You must be able to see the value in rethinking and grappling with new concepts and realities. Failure to acknowledge these factors means that there is a high probability that clouds of darkness will quickly gather.

As organisational effectiveness specialists, we recognise the significant challenges, opportunity and expectations of establishing yourself and learning during your first 90 days. It is why we have combined our experience with research and designed an easy to use toolkit which will help you build understanding and relationships.

Susan De Fazio

Your First 90 Days -Toolkit Design

The richness of the design is a combination of research and hands-on experience of the highs and lows when transitioning into new roles. Your toolkit has a system made up of 257 prompt cards within four main themes.

These cover the majority of what any individual will need to focus on during their first 90 days. However, you may experience some unique moments, so there are blank cards provided in each theme for you to capture your thoughts.

Remember that this system covers your first 90 days, and the prompt cards span that entire period. How you apply, the design is dependent entirely on the context. These are tools that help you build an understanding of yourself, your co-workers and the business you are there to deliver value. The pace is essential, as is how you ask questions in a style that feels natural to you and the colleagues you are communicating with and building bonds.

Your first 90-day system is a valuable toolkit for helping you to gain clarity, connection, control and confidence. Through visualisation, hand and brain coordination, you can transition more effectively, reduce stress, and improve productivity.

Each prompt card supports how you can assimilate and accelerate your learning, process information and helps you determine how to navigate your entry into a new function, ethos and team.

The four main themes

To make each of the themes and segments easily identifiable, they are colour coded.



Relationships

How businesses cultivate relationships differ in the methods they favour for making progress. How you approach, influence and make connections are vital to how work gets done and how you build trust with your leaders and co-workers. One of the most important skills you can develop to succeed in your professional life is to be successful in nurturing and growing relationships.

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Our brains are wired to make automatic judgments about others without spending too much time & energy on understanding everything we see or experience”

Andy Puddicombe, Founder Headspace

The four main themes cont.



Communication

Communicating effectively at work means you have to use different methods and styles. There are no one-size-fits-all, and the way you choose depends on urgency, the size of the issue, question, complaint, hierarchy, how many people are involved, and the informal or formal nature of the topic. It is essential to understand what type of approach works well for your leaders and co-workers.



Decision Making

Achieving good quality decisions is a collective competency that is often underdeveloped or lacking in rigour. Generating understanding and evaluating alternatives before making a decision or taking action means that each key stakeholder understands the balance of risks and reward. How companies make decisions varies. Understanding if a culture has a bias for action or analysis or consensus is critical to how you assimilate into your new position.



Change

Whilst the concept of change is accepted, it is often not welcomed. However, change is an integral part of avoiding stagnation and any unhelpful entrenchment that hinders how we develop personally. Being open to how our external context is evolving helps organisations prepare for how they remain relevant both in the short term and the future.



“Most organisations will recruit you for past experiences, but your future success will be determined by the impact you make in your new role, environment and relationships with co-workers. Depending on how well you understand and work within your new environment will determine whether your impact is amplified or derailed.”

A Church & J Conger, Harvard Business Review.

The Four Segments within each theme

Your prompt cards divide into a repeatable structure of 4 segments – Question, Observe, Reflect and Act within each of the main themes.



Question

Building understanding begins with asking powerful questions. Doing so helps to clarify context, intent and expectations. Good questions support a continuous process of discovery that is best approached with an open, probing mind and an ability to listen and explore ideas.

When using the prompt cards, you should be aware of the context, framing, and tone, using your skill to enhance cohesion and collaboration.



Observe

As individuals, we communicate through rituals, routines and non-verbal interactions. Observation is an integral part of how we develop an understanding of the context and behaviours we operate within.

Tuning in to how people respond and the potential triggers that create action allows us to build a picture of how tasks and situations play out. A word of caution to be a good observer, you must remain neutral. Observations shouldn't include personal feelings or judgment because those things are based on limited information and perhaps bias.



Reflect

Very few companies give their workers time for reflection, especially when competitive pressures are escalating. Usually, the imperative is to double down and work harder – don't stop to think, drive forward. But research demonstrates the value of reflection in helping people do a better job.

Reflective thinking takes practice. It requires us to slow down, pause and consider the information we see and hear. The process of reflection helps us make sense of our day-to-day experiences. It can help us move forward, come to decisions, create a course of action, challenge ourselves to switch off autopilot and habitual ways of doing and thinking.

It requires self-awareness, the ability to challenge the assumptions you make about yourself and others, have an orientation for learning and focus on the outcomes you seek for yourself and others.

The Four Segments within each theme cont.



Act

Being part of an organisation means that we are there to embrace a common purpose. Any action taken should be in line with that context.

The considerations may include the positive impact on others, improving lives, performance, productivity, effectiveness, continuous improvement, profitability, innovation, reducing environmental or social injustice, being part of a more significant movement and having a societal purpose beyond profit maximisation. Whatever the aim, it is essential to consider the consequences and the actions you take to impact the scope of your responsibilities.

Your First 90-day Toolkit includes a **visual notebook** for capturing the insights and thoughts that form as you progress. By scanning this QR code, you will be able to access your copy.



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We are experts in business growth, organisational effectiveness and health with 25 years of experience working worldwide.

We have a passion for empowering internal capabilities by making 'the how' possible for leaders and practitioners. Our focus is on creating self-enabling toolkits that simplify our World of Work, improve personal effectiveness and delivering value to the triple bottom line.

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