

Strategies for New Leaders

1. Promote Yourself.

Make the mental break from your old role and prepare to take charge in your new role. One of the biggest problems you will face is assuming that what has been successful for you so far will continue to do so.

2. Accelerate Your Learning.

You need to climb the learning curve as fast as you can. This means understanding the role, your customers, products, system, structure, politics and culture. Constantly ask these two questions from people at all levels (the answers will give you a nice overview of people's perspectives and potential areas of focus):

If you were me, what would you do?

What don't I know that I need to know?

3. Match Strategy to Situation.

There is no universal way to do this. However, you will want to diagnose the business situation and clarify opportunities and challenges. A clear diagnosis of the situation is critical for developing an action plan.

4. Secure Early Wins.

Early wins build credibility and create momentum. In the first few weeks, you need to identify opportunities to build credibility, you need to create value as rapidly as possible to create a sense that good things are happening.

5. Negotiate Success.

The relationship with your new boss is critical. You need to figure out how to create a productive relationship and manage his expectations. This means planning a series of critical conversations about the situation, expectations, style, and gaining support for your action plan.

6. Achieve Alignment.

The higher your role in the organisation, the higher you have to play the role of organisational architect. This means figuring out if the organisation's strategy is sound, and bringing its structure into alignment with the strategy.

7. Build Your Team.

If you inherit a team, you will evaluate the judgment of the members and perhaps restructure to meet the needs of the situation. Your ability to make tough early personal calls and your capacity to select the right people for the right positions is one of the more important decisions you will make early on.

8. Create Coalitions.

Your ability to succeed will depend on your influence of people outside of your direct reports. Supportive alliances will be critical. You should immediately be looking for influencers and develop support for you from them.

9. Keep Your Balance.

A new role is always a busy time so keep a balance between work and home – you will need to work hard at this, or work will take over by default. Schedule time with your family and only break it in an emergency.

10. Expediate Everyone.

You need to help everyone in your organisation. The quicker you can help people and add value, the quicker you will help your own performance.

Adapted Watkins