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# IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:  
Actual 100-Day Transition Plan

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## ACTUAL 100-DAY TRANSITION PLAN

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### Summary

The plan that follows was developed before the CEO actually accepted the job offer. It shows the level of detailed planning, questioning and thought that a CEO must invest prior to starting the job. The plan lays-out in crystal clear terms exactly what this CEO expects to achieve and the core initiatives that he will focus on in the critical first 100-Days of in his new role as Leader and visionary. Naturally, the names have been changed to protect client identity.

### The First 100-Days

#### ***CenterPoint Sample Business Bank***

- Establish Performance Standards
- Build Coalitions Supportive of Change
- Evaluate the Existing Management Team
- Determine new Management Structure
- Remain Calm and Collected, yet Decisive
- Communicate at every possible opportunity
- Limit the Focus and Scope of Key Initiatives to 3 – 5
- Energize, Motivate and Inspire the Team
- Build a Sense of Urgency to Quickly Create Momentum; early wins!
- Learn the Existing Business; Review Existing Plans and Budgets
- Determine the Direction and Vision of our Company
- Create some Personnel Contingency Plans
- Get a clear understanding of exactly what the Board/The Chairman expects
- Determine the Best way to Execute the Plans for our Key Initiatives
- Conduct Training sessions about how we do business, including:
  - "The Leadership Toolkit"
  - Business Philosophy and Business Standards
  - How we prefer to do business and what's unacceptable
  - Out Marketing Philosophy
  - Our Sales Philosophy and expectations for results
  - Our Performance Guidelines and Expectations
  - Our Cost Control Philosophy



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- The Working Environment we hope to create at CenterPoint
- How we are open to ideas from anyone, anywhere at anytime

### The Key Steps to Transforming CenterPoint Sample Bank

- 1. Understand exactly what the Board's expectations are. Exactly!**  
Nail-down with clarity and precision exactly what the Board and The Chairman expect of me. Do not make any assumptions. Explain to them how I intend to get things moving and accomplished. Make sure they are OK with my methods.
- 2. Establish a sense of urgency.**  
Examine the market and competitive realities. Identify and discuss any crisis situations, potential problems and major business opportunities.
- 3. Form a powerful Coalition Supportive of our Change Initiatives.**  
Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort and a group that will support the changes; this must include management up to The Chairman and the Board or I'll get FIRED! (See: Why CEOs Fail). Also, form broad networks of informal, but informative relationships among staff.
- 4. Create a powerful, widely shared and compelling vision.**  
Create a vision to help direct the change effort. Get Board's OK with the direction. Develop strategies and action plans to help achieve the vision.
- 5. Communicate constantly, especially the direction/vision.**  
Use every vehicle and every opportunity to widely and constantly communicate the new vision and the strategies and tactics we will employ to achieve that vision. Teach new behaviors by example of our leadership and the guiding coalition of support.
- 6. Empower others to act on the Vision.**  
Eliminate all obstacles to change. Change any systems, policies, people or structures that could seriously undermine the change effort and the accomplishment of the vision.
- 7. Planning for and creating short-term wins; building momentum.**  
We must plan for short term wins in order to build momentum and support for the continued change efforts. Recognize and reward employees involved in the improvements. Make it exciting to get involved. Have some fun during the process of building pride and esprit de corps!
- 8. Consolidate the improvements to produce even greater change.**  
Use the increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit with the vision. Hire, promote, develop and reward those employees who can implement the vision. Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and change agents once some of the initial initiatives have been achieved.
- 9. "Hard-wire" the changes and new approaches into the culture.**  
Develop the systems and standards to ensure that the new behaviors will endure and remain. Set performance standards consistent with what is expected of our team and what is required to ensure consistent success.



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### Determine *Exactly* What the Chairman and the Board Expect

- What are the *specific* objectives, initiatives and financial goals you are tasking me with? Develop a crystal-clear understanding of The Chairman's expectations and the expectations of the Board. Are they in conflict? What are the specific goals and objectives for the Bank as established by the Board and The Chairman? I must know exactly what the expectations are!
- Ask The Chairman: Tell me how you would define in one year, three years and in five whether or not I have been successful with CenterPoint Sample from your perspective as an investment banker, business owner, Chairman and business owner? Further, what are the must-do's in your view? What do you want done and what are my local limits? When do you and the Board want to be contacted and on what kinds of issues, problems and decisions?
- Understand the pressures on The Chairman and the Board Members. What are the organizational and personal objectives of each Board Member? Do they have a personal agenda that I can help them with? Do they have any "pet projects"? What do they feel is most important to focus on? What would they like to see as the top-5 most immediate needs of the company?
- What is each person's preferred style of working? Do they want daily, weekly or monthly updates? Do they want to know about every hire? Do they want up to the minute information? When do they want me to pick up the phone and call them? Under what circumstances? Do they want me to just quietly run the company and report my actions after the fact, or do they expect me to get approval for every action? What is my level of authority? Where does it start and stop? How does each prefer to be informed?
- Do they want information via email, letters, memos, PowerPoint presentation, just a telephone call, a casual update from time to time, or to hold off all communication until the Board Meeting?
- When conducting Board meetings, what is their preferred style? Aggressive and confrontational, or collegial and supportive?
- What specifically led to the dissatisfaction with the current CEO? What would cause them to be concerned with my performance? What are your specific expectations of me as your CEO?
- What do they see as our greatest opportunities? Our greatest risks? Any blind spots?
- What will facilitate a very positive and constructive working relationship with you? What will impede such a relationship? What really bugs you and gets under your skin about a working relationship with a CEO? What will really frustrate you, and how can we avoid that? What kind of actions will delight you with my performance as your CEO? What are the pet peeves of The Chairman and each Board Member?
- OK, where are the skeletons? What is going to jump out and grab me and take up my time? HR issues? Staffing? Morale? Real Estate concentrations? Regulatory issues of any kind? Any risk of loyal customers leaving and causing us to have a liquidity issue? Any lawsuits? C'mon...tell me what the hidden issues, problems and agendas are.
- Have we, or are we currently negotiating for additional office/ branch space?



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- What are the current standards of performance at the company? How is performance measured, how were the standards established and are they working to propel success and build momentum?
- What is our Marketing and Growth strategy? Where are we exceptionally strong? What market niches do we have?
- How often does the Senior Team and the Board go offsite for Strategic Planning meetings? When was the last one and what results were obtained? Who has facilitated these meetings in the past?
- We should discuss the personalities within the company, especially those of immediate associates. A frank evaluation of the major personnel problems and a candid analysis of people who need counseling and people who probably should be released. Further, we should outline any "skeletons in the closet" that exist in the company. Also ask, what documents, files and plans should I read, and in what order?
- What are the festering problems that this company has just not been able to deal with to your satisfaction? What's hiding around the corner that is most likely to jump out and bit me? Where are these problems and who is specifically tasked with solving them? What level of priority are they currently being given?
- What is my specific level of authority on decision-making? What are my boundaries and limits before running things by the Board?
- What are the toughest problems and issues that I should expect to encounter during the first few months? List the top-5, in order.
- Are there any pending initiatives, mergers, major policy changes, relocations, expansions, etc.

### Employee Interviewing Questions

- Learn everybody's full names, and know something about them. Their kid's names, their hobbies, their backgrounds. Find out what they do and why their job is important. Be sure to call them by name and recognize their efforts in helping build the company, service customers or just make it a better place to work.
- When interviewing existing staff for the first time and trying to get to know them, ask them some of these kinds of questions: How would you describe success in your current role? Can you measure it? What do you actually do that makes you as good as you are? What are your natural talents and skills? Are you using those skills in your current role, or is there another role that may be more suited to your natural skills and style? Where are struggling in your current role? What don't you like about your current role? What would be the perfect role for you at the company?
- Leaders should often ask the following: How can I help you and how can I make your job easier? What am I doing that is making your job difficult, and what is it about my style or decisions that really bothers you? Do you feel that I am being consistent in supporting the priorities which I have established, or am I constantly confusing and frustrating you with new agendas and initiatives?
- What aspects of the company do you like the most?



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- What issues around here concern you the most? What are your ideas for improving the company?
- In your judgment, regardless of title or rank, who are the most innovative, helpful, and cooperative people in the company?
- What three things cause you to waste your time the most?
- By what means do new ideas bubble-up to the top in the company?
- Who in the company can be counted upon to be totally candid about our issues and problems? Who is the least political of the bunch?
- What major innovations or initiatives are currently underway?
- Leaders should ask: How can I help you? How can I make your job easier? What impediments has the company put in your way of doing a good job? What policies, programs, procedures, people or rules stand in your way?
- What are you shooting for in you current role? Where do you see your career heading? What personal goals would you feel comfortable sharing with me? How often do you want to meet to talk about your progress?
- Great managers give performance reviews that focus on the future rather than simply harping on the past. They discuss what could be, rather than allowing the conversation to descend into the past. "What do you want to accomplish in the next few months?" "What measuring sticks will we use?" "What is your most efficient route toward those goals? How can I help?"
- Senior staff in Finance and HR and Credit are very important sources of insight into the way the organization really works. Also look to those engaged board members who are getting information from sources on the line. Start by pulling each of them aside separately and asking them about the strategy, the business, the issues, their concerns etc. You should be looking to see any patterns and also if they are on the same page.

### 100-Day Transition Plan

#### ***CenterPoint Sample Bank***

***By the end of the First Week: (September 6 – 10, 20\_\_)***

#### ***Key Objectives***

- Introductions and meetings with all staff and management
- Develop a crystal-clear clarity of exactly what the Board and The Chairman expect from me.
- Clarify the current goals of the company



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- Walk around and explore. Seek-out those curious observations
- Meet the Senior Team (one-on-one and in group meetings)
- Analyze all Marketing programs and expenditures
- Meet with Credit Admin regarding bank wide risk management

### **Quantifiable Achievements**

- Memo on Cost Control and signing all bills for payment

### **Questions**

- What does management believe are the Bank's greatest challenges?
- How much cooperation or conflict does there appear to be among key groups?
- Do the senior managers have a sense of urgency?
- Are all the senior managers on the same strategic page? Do they seem to know where they are going? Do they have a plan? What are their frustrations? Where are the greatest opportunities?
- What do the employees actually think about the company?
- What happens here when goals are not met?
- What about the bonus systems? What do people think about bonuses here? Are they driving the behavior we want?
- What's really on the mind of the employees?
- Where do we have significant opportunities? Where do we compete best?
- What are the core drivers of our revenue?
- Why do people do business with us? What's our USP?
- What gaps appear in our existing strategy?
- What are employee relations like?
- What are the Board's three biggest issues and concerns?
- What are my curious observations about this place?
- How effective do the internal decision making process appear to be?



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- What is the difference between the stated strategy and the de facto strategy?
- What does management believe that our greatest challenges are?
- Are there any barriers to growth noted anywhere in the company?

### 100-Day Transition Plan

#### *CenterPoint Sample Bank*

***By the end of the First Three Weeks: (September 30, 20\_\_)***

#### ***Key Objectives***

- Develop an excellent understanding of our costs
- Develop an excellent understanding of our income sources
- Assess how the Bank interacts with our customers
- Get a run-down of the strengths and weaknesses of each of our top people. Read all of the manager's personnel files.
- Identify the key power coalitions and informal information networks throughout the bank and which I must connect with.
- Review all Plans, budgets, business plan, marketing plan, Y2K preparedness update, contingency plans and all incentive compensation plans
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses, work styles and needs of each person I am working with
- Go out and meet customers and find out why they do business with us, what keeps them so loyal and what we do that really bothers them. Is there any way we could get additional business from them?
- Examine our Y2K exposure and potential issues
- Quickly gauge the overall attitude and morale of our staff and officers.
- Make known my commitment to high expectations of performance and my support of those who will consistently attempt to meet those expectations with a sense of enthusiasm and urgency.
- Review the existing Budget and Plans for next year (2000). Make changes as needed.
- Develop performance measurement systems and clear standards of performance of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.
- Determine where we have management weakness/holes and make plans accordingly.





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- Cut costs and immediately introduce a culture of cost containment

### **Quantifiable Achievements**

- Establish a complete set of crisp, clear, quantifiable objectives and goals from The Chairman and the Board. A list of all their top-5 individual concerns, issues, and how each of them wants to work.
- One half-day Saturday session for Sr. Management regarding our future direction, leadership, business philosophy, goals and objectives, how I will work with the Sr. Team. Further, I will explain my high expectations of each of them individually and collectively (the ground rules).
- Launch a Commercial Banking Initiative (Initiative #1)

### **Questions**

- Where are the key opportunities for growth most evident?
- What are the biggest threats we face? What could sneak-up and bite us in the tail? How can we mitigate those threats?
- What is the quality of our loan portfolio?
- Are the right people in the right places? If not, where would they be a better fit, if at all?
- Do we have the capacity to meet our growth plans? If not, where are we weak, where do we need to beef-up? How long will this take and how much will it cost? Does the potential return justify the cost?
- How do our customers feel about the bank, our people and our level of service?
- Is there a pervasive customer-orientation at all ranks in the company?
- How do the tellers and back shop support staff feel that they are treated? Are they supportive, do they understand the environment we operate in? Do they have a customer service orientation?
- Do people follow through on their commitments to deliver? What happens when commitments are not met?
- Who seems to be on top of their game? Who has the power?
- Do we have any new products in the pipeline? Any new branch expansions planned? What is the status?
- What is our Unique Selling Proposition? On what basis do we effectively compete? Why do people do business with us?



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- Ask our people daily at first, and always at least weekly, what they are doing to increase market share and the value of the company. When an employee consistently refuses to take any risks to increase market share, they should no longer be part of our team or they should be demoted. Sales are *everyone's* job. Period. A single demotion sends a crystal clear message that the safe, traditional banking route is no longer an acceptable option at CenterPoint Sample.

### 100-Day Transition Plan

#### **CenterPoint Sample Bank**

**By the end of the First Month: (October 15, 20\_\_)**

#### **Key Objectives**

- Assess the Bank's direction, success and strategy
- Start the change process with a frank evaluation of the major personnel problems and a candid analysis of people who need counseling. Uncover the "skeletons in the closet" and other problems not readily known at the surface level.
- Communicate. Communicate. Communicate. But keep it simple (K.I.S.S.) and say it a thousand times. Keep the message consistent. Remember to use the 30 second elevator ride test.
- We MUST deliberately plan and create short term wins to keep motivation high! Don't just "try," we must actually record quick wins!
- Build motivation and momentum. Get people excited about moving quickly.

#### **Quantifiable Achievements**

- Establish new Performance Standards and distribute those standards in employee meetings. I will be in every meeting to ensure that they see that it's coming from the top.
- Write and talk about my Business Philosophy which will outline how we do business and what we stand for. This letter should be circulated in draft form ahead of time so that my key lieutenants can be comfortable with what they will be expected to support and emulate.
- Some early projects should include: Changing the way performance is measured. Also, identifying where our strengths are and building on those. Do we have a particularly profitable niche that we can further exploit? And also work at ways to improve the culture to more of a results-oriented team of winners.

### 100-Day Transition Plan

#### **CenterPoint Sample Bank**



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**By the end of the Second Month: (November 15, 20\_\_)**

### **Key Objectives**

- During the early transition period, we should develop a clear vision of how the company will ultimately work and I should extend and build upon my political base so I will have the support necessary for the inevitably necessary changes.
- Begin to modify the culture of the company by introducing new operating norms (i.e. turnaround times, wait times, etc.), expectations and performance and service standards.
- Establish defined Bonus Plans for loan officers, senior team and others. Must determine who will be eligible and what those standards will be. Work closely with the CFO, Board and The Chairman.
- Establish the overall direction of the company.
- Develop the 3 - 5 key initiatives that will define my six month agenda.
- Develop a crisp, clear and concise statement of direction and my operating philosophy and expectations.

### **Quantifiable Achievements**

- All new Bonus plans must be completed and approved for all Loan Officers and Managers
- Establish our 3 - 5 most critical strategic initiatives, and launch them with some fanfare
- Establish and distribute all budgets and performance objectives for 2000

### **Questions**

- What is the image of the company in the community, among employees, customers, suppliers, etc.? How does this reality compare to the perceptions of the board and employees?
- Do we have the talent to meet our business objectives?

### **100-Day Transition Plan**

#### **CenterPoint Sample Bank**

**By the end of the 100<sup>th</sup> Day: (December 15, \_\_)**

### **Key Objectives**

- Determine all of my A-item priorities



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- Who has to be replaced, with whom and by when?
- Uncover the conceptual flaws in existing business strategy
- Determine who is fired-up and who isn't. Who has a great winning, supportive can-do attitude and who are the negative nay-sayers?
- Within 90 days, we should have thoroughly assessed our competitors the needs of the customers, our senior team and the entire business proposition of the Bank. We should have established a compelling vision and created detailed plans for achieving your 2 –3 year goals.
- Develop a corporate business plan.
- Build a strong coalition of support and broad networks of informal, but informative relationships. Get the disparate groups talking and working together in an environment of support and trust and esprit de corps.

### **Quantifiable Achievements**

- Develop a Mission, Vision, Cultural Values
- Develop a detailed strategic and business plan for the next 24-36 months and share that plan with the Board
- Decisions about who stays and who goes will have been executed
- Conduct a Leadership boot camp session.
- Announce the overall direction of the company

### **Questions**

- Is the senior management team able to work together to achieve common objectives, or are there turf wars and other subtle sabotage issues.
- What must happen to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of our decisions?
- How motivated are the people on the front lines? Are they getting the backshop support they need?
- Ask employees, managers and the Board: What am I doing that is making your job difficult and what is it about my style or decisions that really bothers you? What has been my biggest mistake so far? What suggestions to do have that could help improve our working relationship?



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### Initial Employee Survey Questionnaire

The only way to generate enduring profits is to begin by building the kind of work environment that attracts, focuses, and keeps talented employees. This kind of environment is a place where performance levels are consistently high, where turnover levels are low, and where a growing number of loyal customers seek-out the company. Measuring the strength of a workplace has been simplified to twelve questions through a comprehensive survey by the Gallup organization. These questions measure the core elements needed to attract, focus and keep the most talented employees. So here is the survey we should use, and use the questions in the exact same order!

1. Do you know exactly what is expected of you in your current job?
2. Do you have the materials and equipment you need to do your work right?
3. At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best, everyday?
4. In the last seven days, have you received adequate recognition or praise for good work?
5. Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages your development?
7. At work, do your opinions and ideas seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of the bank make you feel like your work is important?
9. Are your co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do you have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, have you talked with someone about your progress?
12. At work, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

These twelve questions are the simplest and most accurate way to measure the strengths of any workplace. If you can create the kind of environment where employees answer positively to all twelve questions, then you will have built a great place to work. Ask employees to respond to each of the twelve questions on a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being strongly disagree, 5 being strongly agree. After over 100,000 people took this test it was found that the people who responded more positively to the questions also worked in business units with higher levels of productivity, profit, retention and customer satisfaction.

For the most part, these questions relate to the success of the immediate supervisor. They discovered that the manager-not pay, benefits, perks or a charismatic leader- was the critical player in building a strong workplace. As a manager, if you want to know what you should do to build a strong and productive workplace, focus on trying to lead and manage in a way that earns you sold 5's on at least the first six questions. Also, try linking the manager's performance evaluations to the answers on these questions by their subordinates.

Rank and compare the various managers/business units based on the percentage of survey respondents that scored a "5" on each of the questions. The great managers know that the core of a strong and



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vibrant workplace can be found in the first six questions, in order, of the survey. Securing 5's to these first six questions is one of your most important responsibilities, but it is far from easy! To warrant positive answers to these questions, a manager must be able to do four activities extremely well: select/hire, set expectations, motivate and develop his people. These four activities are the manager's most important responsibilities. If you cannot perform these four activities well, you will never excel as a manager.

### **Advice for CenterPoint Sample Leaders in the Change Process**

- The situation is never what you thought it would be once you get inside, it's always worse!
- Be firm on goals, but flexible on the methods or means.
- One of the great success formulas of the best leaders is the building and nurturing of a braintrust. Leaders should be in close contact with one to two hundred bright and knowledgeable people outside of their immediate organizations.
- Spend at least one uninterrupted hour every day in hard planning and focus. Dream, ponder, plan, tinker, scheme, calculate, devise, consider all options, and strategize. Take mental stock and figure out how to do things better and get things done. Further, one good, uninterrupted workday in a quiet library will enable you to accomplish ten times more than you could with the same number of hours in your office. The feeling of getting so much done will embolden you, give you a sense of being ahead, in control, and will motivate you to work hard on your regular responsibilities.
- Do not become overconfident or smug because you have been promoted to a leadership role. Assume nothing. Earn your job title daily. Never underestimate an opponent's intelligence, stamina, skill or cunning. Never underestimate their capacity for good or evil, duplicity and dishonesty.
- The fundamental purpose of leadership is to produce useful change, especially nonincremental change. Strong management with no leadership tends to entrench a company in deadly bureaucracy.
- Developing good working relationships with people in the company and outside referral sources is an important aspect of a leader's job. This includes managing the relationship of superiors.
- An education and communication program can be ideal when resistance is based on inadequate or inaccurate information and analysis.
- Considerable research has conclusively demonstrated that involving people up-front in the change process redesign will help get their buy-in to your initiatives. (Avoiding Pitfalls and Traps, continued)
- Resist the temptation to tweak your presentations or reports right up to the last minute. Weigh the value of a change against a good night's sleep. At some point, usually well before the actual presentation, nitpicking changes no longer add value. Learn to recognize that point and draw the line on changes well in advance of the meeting. Tell yourself and your team that you want the report done at least 24 hours before it is due. Spend the time between then and the even to rehearse, discuss possible questions that may arise, etc.



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- A good business presentation should contain nothing new for the audience. Walk all the players through the recommendations well before your formal presentation. If they are not supportive, it's best to find out beforehand and to take corrective action then. You must get support at all levels. Don't neglect the people on the line. The changes you propose may have the greatest effect on them, so their buy-in is vital to a successful implementation.
- Show empathy for the person you are succeeding.
- Great managers take the time to understand the unique abilities of each of his employees and then they capitalize on them. They do not focus on the weaknesses, they build on their strengths. Great managers do not believe that everyone has unlimited potential, that's why they do not help people fix all of their weaknesses. They focus on building on their strengths and they put them into positions where they can consistently add-value and win.
- The most important difference between a great manager and a great leader is one of focus. Great managers look inward. They look inside the company, into each individual, into the differences in style, goals, needs and motivations of each person. These differences are small, subtle, but great managers pay attention to them. The subtle differences guide them toward the right way to release each person's unique talents into performance. Great leaders, by contrast, look outward. They look out at the competition, out at the future, out at alternative routes ahead. They focus on broad patterns, finding connections, cracks and then press home their advantage where the resistance is weakest. They must be visionaries, strategic thinkers, activators and motivators.
- The core activities of a manager and a leader are simply different. It is entirely possible for a person to be a brilliant manager and a terrible leader. But it is just as possible for a person to excel as a leader and fail as a manager. Few people can ever excel at both because each requires fundamentally different skillsets.
- Great managers define the right outcomes, not the right steps. When motivating someone, focus on strengths, not on weaknesses. Don't ever try to change people. Great managers build on strengths and have the following mantra: "People don't change that much. Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out. Try to draw out what was left in. That is hard enough." Great managers are adept at spotting a glimpse of a talent in someone and then repositioning him so that he can play to that talent more effectively. The best way to help an employee cultivate his talents is to find him a role that plays well to his inherent and natural skills. A manager's basic responsibility is to turn natural talent into sustained performance.
- Try this exercise. On the left side of a sheet of paper, write down the names of people who report to you in descending order of productivity, the most productive at the top, least productive on the bottom. Then on the right hand side, write down the same names, but this time in descending order of "time you spend with them," the most time consuming at the top of the page, the least time consuming at the bottom. Now, draw straight lines joining the same names. If the lines cross, you are spending too much time with your least productive people and not enough with your most productive. Investing lots of time with your laggards and strugglers appears shrewd, yet the most effective managers do the complete opposite. The great managers know that the less attention they pay to the productive behaviors of their superstars, the less of those behaviors they will get.



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- Leaders should facilitate problem solving, but should let associates solve most problems. It builds self-esteem and enhances their ability to solve problems in the future. Even though leaders often can solve the problems more quickly than others, it is poor practice to be the company's problem solver.
- Poor performance must be confronted head-on, if it is not to degenerate into a dangerously unproductive situation. Great managers will first ask themselves if this sub-par performance is (Avoiding Pitfalls and Traps, continued) trainable. If so, they will get them the training. If it's not a matter of training, it could very well be the fact that you have the wrong person in the job. You could have a person whose natural skills do not mesh with the job requirements. If that's the case, move the person to where they can be successful. If it is an attitudinal issue, there may not be much hope.
- When somebody comes to you with a good idea, you should challenge them, because there's a real good chance that they haven't challenged themselves enough, that they aren't yet at the height of their thinking. If you ask them questions and you push them, they will make the idea even better.
- A manager can dramatically improve the chance of success in an organizational change effort by doing the following:
  - Conduct an organizational analysis that identifies the current situation, problems, and the reasons for those problems. What is the importance of these problems? How quickly must they be addressed? What changes are needed?
  - Determine who might resist change and why. To what degree? Determine who has information that is needed to design the change and whose cooperation is essential in implementing it.
  - Select an overall change strategy based on the analysis that specifies the speed of change, the amount of preplanning, and the degree of involvement of others.
  - Determine how quickly must change occur? How much involvement is necessary from others? What are the best tactics to use for implementing change and getting the buy-in?
- Set up a system to actively monitor the progress of all the change effort.
- Management is about coping with complexity. Leadership is about coping with change. Companies manage complexity first by planning and setting targets and goals for the future. They establish detailed steps for achieving those targets and then allocating the resources to accomplish those plans.
- Management develops the capacity to achieve its plan by organizing and staffing, creating an organizational structure and set of jobs for accomplishing the plans. Then, the managers must go out and staff the jobs with qualified people and delegate responsibility for carrying out the plan and decision systems to monitor implementation.
- Since the function of leadership is to produce change, setting the direction of that change is fundamental to leadership. Leaders should work on aligning people. Communicating the new direction to those who can create supportive coalitions that understand the vision and are committed to its achievement. the leader's job involves achieving a vision and motivating and inspiring people to keep moving in the right direction, despite major setbacks and the inevitable pitfalls.





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- Management ensures plan accomplishment by controlling and problem solving, monitoring results versus the plan in detail, by means of reports meetings and other tools. The manager works on identifying deviations and then planning and organizing to solve the problems.
- Early impressions are extremely difficult to reverse. Initial impressions can easily become self-fulfilling prophecies that block out contrary evidence: some onlookers will tend to judge your behavior selectively so as to confirm or reinforce their own early appraisals.
- Visions and strategies do not have to be brilliantly innovative; in fact, some of the best have an almost mundane quality, usually consisting of ideas that are already well known.
- A big challenge is to quickly build credibility so that people believe the message. These things contribute to credibility: your track record, the content of the message itself, the way in which the message is delivered, your reputation for integrity and whether or not you keep your word or just give lip-service.
- All leaders are bound to be criticized, both fairly and unfairly, by associates within the company, by bosses and by the competition. A leader who becomes too thin-skinned when criticized, or who becomes defensive and paranoid, is doing a disservice to the company. As a leader, it is important to observe your subordinate leaders and to ascertain how well they accept criticism and how willing they are to accept blame for the failures of the company.

### *Maintain a Laser-Like Focus*

- Leaders must balance an intense, single-minded focus on only a few vital priorities with flexibility about when and how they are implemented. The leader must determine what the three or four key strategic priorities must be.
- You must be relentless in prioritizing and focusing your efforts and must quickly develop a compact set of objectives which are used to keep everyone focused.
- The new leader must identify the core objectives or goals, explain why these are the goals and must constantly articulate them over and over again in order to get everyone on the same page within the first 100 days.
- When making recommendations, stick to the three most important-the ones with the biggest payoffs. Don't worry about the supporting data: you can always give that later when you have more time. When thinking of solutions, think of the elevator speech: the solution should be so crisp and clear that you could explain it to someone in a 30 second elevator ride.
- When developing a list of the core issues, objectives or contributing factors, you should generally come up with three to five "drivers" and everything else will tend to logically fall under one of the key drivers. (Note: keep it 3 – 5). When trying to figure out if you are really looking at the core problem, dig deeper. Gather more facts.
- Some leaders will decide on the core objectives and put them onto charts, demanding that all senior managers carry the charts and track progress daily toward the shared objectives.



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### *Building Momentum*

- Early wins energize people and focus their attention on the needed changes. If you can't get some major wins within 100 days, you will fail. So think very carefully about what you will get done in the first 100 days.
- In the first 100 days, the leader must energize people and focus them on solving the most vexing problems of the business. This is a time to lay the foundation for substantial growth and change. It's critical that the employees perceive momentum building during the first 100 days. Seeing tangible improvements in how work is performed boosts motivation and encourages further support for your initiatives.
- Figure out what momentum building actions are most likely to succeed and give you the greatest lift; focus on those.

### *Building the Management Team*

- Within 100 days, you should generally decide the composition of the new management team and decide if structural and personnel changes are necessary. Remember, you inherited what you got from day one, but after 100 days, you have bought into everything that's still going on. Regardless of whether it's good, bad, or ugly, after 100 days, you have bought in and you own it!
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- You will find that there are usually just a handful of people that will make all the difference. Your job is to search-out and find those people. Find out who those people are by announcing that you know this to be true and that you are looking to find those people. Announce that once you find them, you will work to remove all roadblocks and impediments so that they can be even more successful.

### *Executing the Plans*

- Be rigorous about implementation and execution. Making change happen takes a lot of work. Be rigorous and thorough. Make sure someone takes personal responsibility for getting the job done. You must have a plan of execution with timelines, objectives and goals. State what needs to be done, and when it needs to be done by, at such a level of detail and clarity that a sixth-grader can readily carry it out. To implement major change and stick to an aggressive timetable, pick someone who can kick tail and take names. Every two weeks the team should meet for detailed updates. Anyone who is behind plan must explain to the team why they are behind and what specific action steps that they will undergo in order to catch up by the next meeting.



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### *Understanding the Politics and Building Coalitions of Support*

- You must figure out what's important, who the decision makers are, who has the customer contacts, who the opinion-makers are and whose support you must have.
- Learn as much as you can about the politics and culture of the company. You must quickly learn about and understand the "shadow organization" which is really the behind the scenes politics and the people who can undermine your change efforts, or support them.
- People will want to see you, talk to you, spend time with you; do not isolate yourself behind a desk. Be visible.
- A lot of people will want to try to influence the new guy, and they will be watching to see how you react. Be very careful and deliberate.
- Map-out the likely opposition to your change initiatives. Who won't like this idea? Who does it impact? Who will have more work to do because of this initiative? Identify likely allies and opponents and those who may be on the fence. Then craft a strategy for consolidating support and overcoming resistance.
- You can quickly assess the health of an organization based on the attitude of the staff. Look at attitudes first. Are there a lot of interested, engaged people? Are they encouraged to speak-up and come forward with ideas? Do they care? Do they have a sense of urgency? Do they have a winning attitude?

### **Fact-Finding Methods and Analyzing Data**

- Develop an aggressive attitude toward fact finding and gathering. Despite the power of facts, many leaders fear them. Perhaps they are afraid that if they look too closely at the facts, they might not like what they see. But hiding from the facts is always a prescription for failure. You must never fear the facts. Hunt them down with a vengeance. Get the facts out into the open.
- Fact-based analysis requires hard evidence and rigorous analysis before any recommendations can be made to the Board.
- You have to be very clear from the very beginning: "Show me the facts, let me see the analysis." You will profoundly influence decision making by introducing a rigorous framework from which decisions are made and problems are analyzed.
- Require that decision-making be supported by hard data. Encourage this by demanding that people show you the facts that were used to arrive at the decision. The new leader can profoundly influence the decision-making capability of the company by introducing new decision making frameworks and requirements.
- When trying to boost profits, first look at where you are currently making money. When you have your data, put it on a spreadsheet or into a database and sort it in various ways. Play with the numbers and you will begin to see patterns or clumps that stand out. Those patterns will highlight



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aspects of your business that you probably didn't realize. They may mean problems, but they may also mean opportunities. Find the opportunities and make the most of them.

### The Kind of Environment We Intend to Create

- We are composed of bright, type-A overachievers desperate to prove that they are the best, not just by beating the competition, but by destroying it.
- When you walk into our offices or talk to any one of our staff, you can feel the energy and their sense of passion. We are vibrant and energized.
- Associates who do not concur with decisions being made in meetings must understand that they have a responsibility to speak up. By remaining silent during meetings, they do us a grave disservice. We want to create a decision-making environment where people feel free to express concerns, raise new concerns or just flatly disagree.
- When a job absolutely needs five people to complete it, four should be assigned. The philosophy behind this limitation is that only by choking-back resources to the barely survivable level will work be limited to only those critical things that absolutely must occur.
- Employees must have no worries about disagreeing with a manager. The simple act of disagreement, with valid reasons, is expected. When disagreeing, an employee is expected to have concrete, valid reasons supporting his or her viewpoint and must provide a superior alternative. Stating that you just don't like something is not acceptable.
- You have to be very open to criticism and create an environment that encourages the aggressive challenging to new ideas. Just don't shoot the messenger. We will create a very open environment where it is safe to challenge any idea or program.
- To stay on the "rested edge" new leaders must learn to manage their emotions under pressure, get enough sleep at night and try to leave work problems at the office. Also, the better your physical condition, the greater your capacity for productive, unrelenting work. Ninety percent of all people climbing the corporate ladder are out of shape. You will be able to start earlier, pause less often and end your day with a wind sprint if you eat right, stay fit and get the proper amount of rest.
- Esprit de corps is an essential component of a start-up and most turnaround situations. Esprit de corps results in people who are all charged-up to accomplish the near impossible and who are all focused on achieving the same goal. But a cold, sterile, humorless workplace fraught with onerous regulations and policy can never develop esprit de corps. Running around shooting Nerf Arrows at each other in the halls may not seem like a productive use of time. However, something very interesting is happening during the Nerf wars. People at work are having fun. Not just a little fun, but rather, an absolute blast. The office becomes a place where you have fun. The fact that you can do this at work is itself critically important. It tells employees that the company is supportive of them enjoying themselves in the workplace. And that as long as the job is getting done, that's all that matters. This esprit de corps will help you take market share away from your competitors and they won't even know how or why.