

# YOUR FIRST 100 DAYS

SECOND EDITION

**MAKE MAXIMUM  
IMPACT IN YOUR  
NEW ROLE**

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**FT**

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# Praise for *Your First 100 Days*

"Provides a great framework for your first 100 days. Helps you to focus on what is really important."

**Peter Rawlinson, Chief Marketing Officer, Malwarebytes**

"*Your First 100 Days* will set the tone for all that follows. This book is chock full of practical down-to-earth advice that will help you make the most of those first 100 days. I'll be recommending this book to all of my executive MBA students. And I recommend it to you. If you're in a new job, just read it. Now."

**John Mullins, Professor, London Business School**

"*The First 100 Days* framework and template helped me prepare for an important interview. I used it to describe my leadership vision and what I would do in my first 100 days if appointed to the role. Happy to report I got the job! Thank you!"

**Senior Director, Global Sales Effectiveness, Solar Winds**

Depending on the category, Ashley could arrange different meeting and communications formats – from one-to-ones with his direct reports to group meetings with senior managers, and a town-hall or social event with all others. Ashley knew it was the right thing to do to set aside time early on for mutual listening and understanding. He realised he had been in danger of focusing all his time and efforts touring Asia and building his new client relationships and he admitted to his coach that, if he hadn't stopped to prepare adequately, he might have neglected to touch base with his teams in the first 100 days.

Ashley had the opportunity of meeting some of his senior team members as part of his preparations, and he was surprised at their slow pace of decision-making. Everybody was waiting for him to turn up and take charge and tell them what to do. It seemed like this team were very used to their leader telling them what to do, every step of the way. Ashley explained to his coach that his leadership style would be completely different from that of his predecessor. He didn't want team members to wait to be told what to do. His style was to set out clear expectations of goals to be achieved, but he preferred his team members to use their own initiative on how to do it.

By reflecting on his predecessor's leadership style and preference for people to be dependent on being told what to do, Ashley realised that he would need

to invest time in his first 100 days retraining and empowering his direct reports. In discussion with his coach, Ashley realised that this point of difference might be a very positive change and might inspire much better performance from his team, but it was about communicating this message in the right way.

As Ashley spoke, his coach encouraged him to take notes of these insights, as they would all need to be reflected in his first 100 days plan. 'What about the profiling exercise?' asked his coach. 'Was this a worthwhile use of your time?'

Ashley replied that he now had a more thorough understanding of the big picture. First, he had reflected on the nature of his own leadership step-up, and how he needed to change from being a functional expert in sales to more of a general manager of people. He had also invested time in profiling the market, and realised that the market was getting more competitive as new players had recently entered and were jostling for position.

When he applied the technique of 'starting with the end in mind' Ashley realised his division had to become more strategic about what products they offered. By thinking more clearly about what he wanted to achieve with the role within three years, he realised that the team needed to take a completely fresh look at how they were going to market. As Ashley and his coach talked it through, Ashley had a new idea about dividing the team into



‘strategic cells’ of three and having each cell focused on key strategic leapfrog moves.

Ashley felt even more energised about the task ahead. He listened attentively as his coach explained how to take all these insights and organise them in a way that culminated in writing an optimal first 100 days plan.

## 2 Be strategic and start your plan with the end in mind

If you think more strategically about the future and your vision for this role, it means you will be more strategic about what you have to achieve in your first 100 days. By starting with the end in mind, you will realise what new strategic initiatives need to be kicked off in your first 100 days. With your higher goals as the backdrop, what is it that you now want to achieve with this role? If you were to fast-forward to three years from now, how would you like to describe your successes and the new state of play?

Start with the end in mind:

- Envisage a three-year role horizon. What do you want to have achieved within three years in this role?
- Establish your first 12-month strategic priorities. Given what you want to achieve within three years, what are your priorities in the first 12 months?

. . . and only then are you ready to put all the pieces together and write your first 100 days plan.

If you don't know where you are going, you will end up in the wrong place. Gathering information for this exercise may require you to meet your boss and key role stakeholders before officially starting in your new role, but usually this will be welcomed and accommodated – and will be seen as a positive mark of your enthusiasm for the role. Try not to overwhelm them with too much newbie enthusiasm before you start, but it should be okay to set up a relatively informal pre-joining coffee or introductions meeting to gather the information you need.

## ENVISAGE A THREE-YEAR ROLE HORIZON

Think about your role in terms of a three-year commitment. Even if your contract has unstated timelines, my advice is that you assume you are moving on from this role in three years. This gives you a sense of urgency in which to attack the core challenges. With role timelines shrinking even faster than ever before, it's more realistic for high-performing leaders to assume a three-year tenure and, either way, it forces the pace.

Two years is a bit short in terms of the kind of commitment you want to give to a new start. It may result in too much unhelpful short-termism, reactive tactics and is not a conducive mindset for vision development and strategic planning. If your role tenure subsequently lasts beyond three years, you can simply refresh and reset your plans, as you enter into a new three-year rhythm.

Always remember that your legacy will come back to haunt your long-term career if you don't get it right. Don't focus on short-term gains only. Think about your contribution

in a stewardship fashion and how your lasting legacy and reputation in each role lives beyond the lifetime of your appointment.

Write a list of what you would like to have achieved with this role by the end of the three years on:

- vision and strategy
- people and teams
- results and deliverables

	THREE-YEAR ROLE ASPIRATIONS
On vision and strategy	<div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>Example: <i>We are the go-to provider of premium services in our industry. We outrank the competition on product mix, value for money, customer service and employer of choice.</i></div>
On people and teams	<div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>.....</div> <div>Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A dynamic leadership team in place</li><li>● A positive work culture</li><li>● People want to work here</li><li>● Our teams feel connected globally</li></ul></div>

	THREE-YEAR ROLE ASPIRATIONS
On results and deliverables	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● £ sales and % growth targets achieved</li> <li>● We have a reputation for getting things done</li> <li>● Proven results track record across all our metrics</li> <li>● Robust financials including healthy sales pipeline</li> </ul>

## ESTABLISH YOUR FIRST 12-MONTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Having set out your aspirations to be achieved within three years, now write your set of first 12-month strategic priorities in that context, also taking the time to sense-check your priorities against everything you have already learned regarding:

- your key transition challenges
- profile of the role, organisation and market
- early stakeholder conversations
- your career goals and leadership purpose

When you consider the early stakeholder conversations or the role requirements outlined during the recruitment interviews or promotion process, take into account that this recruitment phase may have included a ‘selling’ of the role to you – and some difficult challenges or priorities