

Powerful First Steps on the Path to Greatness

Your First 100 DAYS In a New Executive Job

“The clock is ticking from day one in your first 100 days. Show the board you’re going to make a difference or get your exit plan ready.” - Daniel L. Vasella, CEO, Novartis



ROBERT HARGROVE

Author of Masterful Coaching & Your Coach in a Book



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Your First 100 Days in a New Executive Job

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Preface

How This Book is Different

For Leaders Who Want to Be *Great* Versus Merely *Good*

Whether you are president of your nation, CEO of your corporation, or a leader on the front lines, *Your First 100 Days* will show you how to take powerful first steps on the path to greatness. Every new job, however profound in scope or mundane it may seem at first glance, presents the leader with a choice: to seek an Impossible Future that alters the course of history or to just deliver on the job description. Every first 100 days requires that the leader take stock of the current situation (a group's struggles, a company's fallen fortunes, or humanity's throbbing needs and wants) and dare to take the stand that a difference can be made. Every day presents the new leader with a complex tangle of situations where they may have to offer an inspiring vision, stand up for empowering values in the face of darkness, or take bold and unreasonable action.

Seal your leadership with a few well-chosen words and small symbolic acts, elevating followers to their better selves

The first 100 days are on one level a time for successful executive onboarding in a new job that looks as tough as climbing Mt Everest, shrouded in the fog of political wars and in a culture that is strange, weird, and unfamiliar. Yet on another level, it is the time when a few chosen words and symbolic acts can create a lasting impression of who you intend to be in the matter, convey what you stand for, and inaugurate a new era for your nation, company, or group. When in his inaugural address John F. Kennedy said, "The torch has

been passed to a new generation of Americans,” and then challenged the nation to “ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” he instantly lifted millions of people to become their better selves.

Realize an Impossible Future that will make a difference, while also keeping your Day Job by meeting expectations

When Steve Jobs started Apple and said he was going to “change the world with the personal computer,” he took a stand for an Impossible Future and inaugurated a new era. Yet at the same time he had to deliver on his Day Job which included hiving off a project to build the Mac, making a marketing splash at the 1984 Super Bowl, setting up sales and distribution channels, returning profits to shareholders. When Indra Nooyi became CEO of Pepsi Co, one of her first priorities was to take a trip to India. She told people there that “this is a company with a soul,” then said what Pepsi would do to improve drinking water and the environment. The media shared this, and soda sales increased. This book is all about how to create an Impossible Future, while at the same time, delivering on your Day Job and meeting expectations.

Getting to the top is not enough; you must also master the political chessboard

Today Presidents, CEOs, and other leaders discover in their first 100 days that, while they may have the charisma and style to land the big job, it is actually tremendously difficult for them to knit all the forces of the organization together to make something happen. Where the new leader may enter the path to greatness with a vision or goals with transformational potential, these can only be realized if the leader also finds the path to power. The book will show you how to use your first 100 days to begin to understand and master the vagaries of the political chessboard with its conflicting interests and shifting power grids. You must start, right now, immediately, to create a network of commitment, communication, and support that will allow you to move your agenda forward.

Inspiration to reach for the stars, along with a treasure trove of practical, down-to-earth advice to immediately apply

What makes this book different is the powerful context it is wrapped in, much more than any tip or technique. This context is largely defined by such distinctions as: *Path to Greatness* versus *Path to Power*, *transformational* versus *transactional* leadership, create an *Impossible Future* versus deliver on your *Day Job*, *mastering the political chessboard* (playing their game) versus *being a change insurgent* (play your game). Your First 100 Days provides successful winning strategies and practical advice: start with your going-in mandate; assess current reality; create a 100 Day Plan; turn things around; define the opportunity; realign the organization; get some quick wins; and manage your boss. Yet it takes into account that these tools will not get you all the way to the top of the mountain, they really only represent the necessary equipment to have in your pack at the base camp.

Discover how to call yourself forth into your new job situation

Make your job a transformational assignment. Every job is what you make of it and an opportunity to remake yourself in the process. You can choose to live out your job description or to go for a big vision that will require reinventing the organization, recognizing that you may have to reinvent yourself first. This book will help you break the grip and excel beyond the “winning strategies” that got you here, but which may not get you there. You will be encouraged to take a look at your job and ask, “*Who do I need to be and what do I need to do in order to succeed?*” It will teach you how to call yourself forth into the emerging situation as required— as a tough boss or servant leader, visionary game-changer or inspired profit mechanic, cop or coach.

Taken as a whole, your first 100 days in your new leadership role can be the ultimate self-development and growth experience.

Introduction

Don't Just Hit the Ground Running The Clock is Ticking From Day One

Congratulations! You've won. You have begun your first 100 days in a big, new job, one that comes with high expectations and demands that you perform from day one. You may be a new leader of your nation in a crisis, the CEO of a big corporation in an economic downturn, the director of a school or hospital that needs reinvention, someone on the front lines of your business, or in the government or the military. You may feel yourself alternating between *euphoria* that this could be just the opportunity to realize an Impossible Future and make a difference you've been waiting for and *fatigue* due to the staggering demands of your Day Job.

As executive search consultants Thomas Neff and James Citrin *provocatively ask*, “*So you're in charge! Now what?*”¹ *What do you think about and do first to have a successful onboarding experience? How do you seal your leadership and make your mark? Do you have the right people on the bus? How do you make sure you get enough coaching on the vagaries of the political chessboard and culture to make sure you don't bump your head on the transparent Plexiglas door on your way into the board room or bosses office? How do you avoid costly mistakes?*

Your First 100 Days is a Time to Not Only Hit the Ground Running, *But Sprinting*

The First 100 Days is not just about executive onboarding, but about sealing your leadership and making your mark.

According to one CEO, “The words climbing Mt. Everest, steep learning curve, and disaster management quickly spring to mind when I look back on my first 100 days.” “The sheer avalanche of email, phone calls, meetings and workload that hurtles towards you is

staggering,” said a newly-elected MP in Britain. “I had a mandate, but I don’t think anything can prepare you for the roller coaster ride of trying to actually bring about change,” said a business unit manager. One thing is certain, the first 100 days is a time to shape events before they shape you. It is a time to sound the tone that you want to be a *great* leader, not just a *good* one. It’s a time to figure out the conflicting demands of your vision and day job. It’s a time to gather and distill information. It’s a time to take your change agenda and get at least a piece of it over the line before the window of opportunity closes.

Your First 100 Days Will Be Viewed as a Measure of Your Leadership Dynamism

The idea of the “first 100 days” was given birth by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) as a measure of leadership dynamism and has become the benchmark for assessing the early successes of United States presidents. FDR, who took office in 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression, realized that there was no honeymoon period and he used his first 100 days to hit the ground running. FDR chose to forego the traditional celebratory balls on the eve of his Inauguration and instead used that time to hand-craft a 100 Day Plan. Also it was that same day, in an unprecedented fashion that his cabinet was unceremoniously sworn in at the White House. Almost immediately there was a change in Washington. FDR pushed 15 major bills through Congress in his first 100 days and has since come to personify the term “first 100 days”. “I do not see how any living soul can last physically going the pace that he is going,” said Senator Hiram Johnson of FDR at the time, “and mentally any one of us would be a psychopathic case, if we undertook to do what he is doing.”²

Your First 100 Days Will Be Viewed as a Bellwether of Your Leadership Effectiveness

Whether you are a newly installed head of state, business executive, or military officer, you are likely to have to start your first 100 days on a very steep and slippery slope. How well you deal with the climb will be viewed as a benchmark of your leadership effectiveness. When Barack Obama became President, he was immediately faced with a global financial meltdown that posed the collapse of the American banking system. He didn’t have a simple answer or obvious plan, but he did take dramatic steps to get the economy back

on track. When General David Petraeus took over command of Afghanistan after General Stanley McChrystal was fired, his first task was to convince the American people that we had gained enough momentum to win the war, rather than just plan for a graceful exit. When Jeff Immelt became CEO of General Electric, he was asked, “How many days do you think you have to make your mark?” He said, “None! You are expected to perform from day one.”²

The leader's first job is to define reality. -Max Dupree

Have a Story Ready as Stakeholders Will Look for Important Signals Immediately

Whether you are taking over the leadership of a super successful organization or one that has been knocked back on its heels in a brawl with the competition, stakeholders will be watching and waiting to hear what kind of mark you intend to make. When Jack Welch took over as CEO of General Electric, it was already a successful company. He held a press conference at the Pierre Hotel in New York City in which he was asked about this vision. He said that GE would be #1 or #2 in every business it was in. When Tim Armstrong took over as CEO of AOL after its separation from Time Warner, people asked whether the company had a future. Armstrong said AOL was a great brand with strong assets. He added that although it was a content site, AOL had a new breakthrough technology that would make it a key player in social networking. The point is, get your story ready from day one, as stakeholders will look for important signals immediately. Make it be a transformation story, shift from something old to something new.

People are afraid of change, but want change.

One of the First Jobs of a New Leader is to Get People to Face Reality

It's my observation that when a new leader comes into a job and does their due diligence, they often discover that the people in their organization have been shading or avoiding reality with regard to the difficult facts and circumstances their organization is

facing. *How can we be so blind to the fact that the people who elected us are turned off by our party's indifference to the issue of affordable healthcare and will vote us out of office if we don't act? How can we not recognize that airline customers are deeply frustrated not just with our company, but the entire industry? How come we act as if we don't know that costs are spinning completely out of control?* One of the first jobs a leader will need to do is to bring his or her team together and get people to face reality. In many cases, this paradoxically leads to a discussion of a vision of what's really possible.

It is Better to Be Known for Shock and Awe vs. Walking on Egg Shells

On 11 May, 2010, David Cameron succeeded Gordon Brown as Prime Minister of Great Britain, taking the helm of the country's first coalition government since 1945. At the age of 43, Cameron was the youngest British leader since Lord Liverpool in 1812. Cameron took advantage of the combination of a brief honeymoon period and his mandate from the voters who wanted change. The May 2010 Queen's Speech which marks the commencement of Parliament proposed a program of radical government for radical change, "one that will affect our economy, our society – indeed, our whole way of life." The Queen's Speech (on Cameron's and the coalition government's behalf) unveiled 23 bills and one draft bill detailing ambitious plans for major reform of schools, welfare, the police, and the political system. On August 18th, 2010, Cameron marked his first 100 days in office. His style as Prime Minister during this time had been the same style that secured him the conservative party head, one of shock and awe. ⁴ In contrast, liberal Gordon Brown had walked on eggshells in his first 100 days and has since been viewed as being weak.

Even Without a Proper Mandate, You Can Bring About Intended Change By Building Coalitions

Leaders like FDR and Barack Obama had a mandate to bring about change by virtue of winning the election. In David Cameron's case, he didn't even win, but merely became Prime Minister as a result of building a coalition government with the support of liberal Democrat Nick Clegg. Inside the space of two months and behind the cover of an

“emergency” and “unavoidable” budget, Cameron took steps to dismantle the British Welfare State that was bankrupting the country. It wasn’t long before Cameron began to get push back from the opposition: “Unless the policy is reversed, it will wreck the coalition, increase social conflict, and damage the country.”⁵ Nonetheless, Cameron was able to get enough of his change agenda through Parliament in his first 100 days so as to be able solidify his political position and build momentum.

Your First 100 Days Requires Situational Leadership

This book is written for both government and business leaders, which requires that at times you may need to read the book extrapolatively. If I use a business example, you need to extrapolate that to government and vice a versa. Having said that, I think business leaders will find the STARS Model—which shows the different phases of business evolution—very useful in both assessing their situation and developing a strategy to match. Ask yourself which situation you are walking into and then reflect on the strategies that are suggested next to them.

Diagram I.1
The STARS Model of Business Evolution

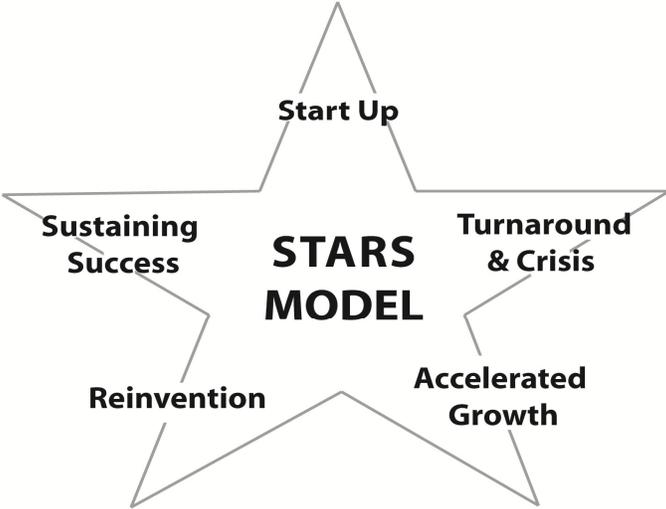


Diagram I.1 Use the STARS Model of Business Evolution to assess your situation and then find a corresponding strategy to match.

ARE YOU IN A START-UP SITUATION?

Situation: The business was started with a “great idea” and hard work. The problem is not enough staff, customers, or cash.

Strategy: You need to make sure you are targeting a high growth market. Develop a brand value proposition, provide exceptional value to customers and become a sales hound.

ARE YOU IN A TURNAROUND OR CRISIS SITUATION?

Situation: Here the business model seems to have run out of gas with problems with operations and customers and staff defecting. The business is losing money and you need to do something urgently.

Strategy: Come into the job and have a story ready day one that will give confidence to key employees, customers, and other stakeholders. Stabilize the situation with a 100-day turnaround plan that starts with getting everyone to face reality. Make some tough people decisions and do something to stop the bleeding.

ARE YOU IN AN ACCELERATED GROWTH SITUATION?

Situation: The company has weathered the start-up and turnaround or crisis stage, and is now in accelerating growth. While there is a good growth strategy, there are not enough good leaders to carry it out. The products and services are good, but many business processes are either missing or dysfunctional.

Strategy: Don't think in terms of doing it all yourself, but focus on creating a team of 'A' players. Your mindset: “get me the best in the world,” rather than just fill slots. Do an assessment on what's working and not working, and address what's missing that could make a difference— *build a brand name, leverage new technology, and outsource missing or broken processes.*

ARE YOU IN A REINVENTION SITUATION?

Situation: The company has achieved a degree of critical mass and is being pushed along by the momentum of the marketplace. However, the innovative product or service that helped it to grow into a Global 1000 is being commoditized, and sales and margins are shrinking. Profits are maintained through cost cuts. Employees are setting reasonable goals and pursuing incremental improvement. Meanwhile, the Chinese are already in your market and eating your lunch.

Strategy: Start by praising the team for taking the organization to the top of the mountain, but declare that it is time to climb the next peak. Bring people together and present a white paper that shows how the industry is changing due to globalization, new competitor's fresh from the niche, or new technology, and that you must change too. Brainstorm a game-changing strategy, product, or service. Launch with a 100 day catalytic breakthrough project. Design one to three change initiatives that will reinvent core business processes. Put out TPOV to shift culture from creeping incrementalism and entitlement to one of breakthrough and accountability.

ARE YOU IN A SUSTAINING SUCCESS SITUATION?

Situation: Rather than an entrepreneur who creates something new, this company has been run by a steward who upholds what made the organization successful. Think of the CEO of a company like Boeing, the Chancellor of Harvard University, and the President of Switzerland. These organizations work, but a loss of vision or slip up in values can seriously tarnish the organization's image or lead to more serious problems.

Strategy: Provide a vision of the future and keep advancing the state of the art of the product, while continuing to uphold the governing values that made the organization great. Always act like you are on stage in terms of your personal behavior, because you are. Boeing was a successful company for generations, but its business success and credibility was seriously harmed by its CEO's ethical violations.

Focus Your First 100 Days Not Just on What Ultimately Should Be Done, but What *Can* Be Done

Although FDR was elected in 1932 by a majority, it was not a landslide. He knew that, while he had a mandate to end the Great Depression, it was limited by the opposition of both Hoover Republicans and Huey Long Populists. FDR didn't know exactly what to do to deliver on his campaign promise to "put a chicken in every pot," so he asked questions and listened. He decided to "focus not on what *could* be done, but rather what *can* be done." He proved himself to be an able *transactional* leader in his first 100 days, wheeling and dealing in Congress to pass a torrent of legislation of remedial make-work programs.

"In the 100 days from March to June [1933]," wrote the American journalist Walter Lippmann, in the wake of FDR's first 100 day reforms, "we became again an organized nation, confident of our power to provide for our own security and to control our own destiny." ⁶ It wasn't until FDR's second 100 days, after he put together the great electoral coalition of 1936, that he became a *transformational* leader and passed legislation that amounted to an economic Bill of Rights for all Americans. In the words of the historian Arthur Schlesinger, his first 100 days were "the start of a process that ended by transforming American society." ⁷

The clock is ticking from day one. You have 100 days to prove yourself or you will be out the door. -Daniel Vasella, CEO, Novartis

Whether You Are a CEO or Team Leader, Work in Business or Government, Most 100 Days Issues are the Same

Jim Burns, author of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt biography, *The Lion and the Fox*, told me a story about his days in World War II that helps to illustrate the notion that new leaders often face the same issues whatever level they are on. "I was assigned, not just to combat but to be an army historian. I noticed once the fighting started, the colonels, captains, and lieutenants dropped into the background and leadership became the task of first lieutenants and sergeants." The new Commanding Office would have a short time to:

1) Get clear on their mission, “Here are our orders,” 2) Establish his leadership through immediate decisions and actions; 3) Get clear on the problem the group is facing; 4) Set goals and priorities and mobilize people; 5) Demonstrate (teach) the right attitudes; and 6) Defeat the enemy on the battle field and win the population. ⁸

Act Like You Are on Stage at All Times, Because You Are

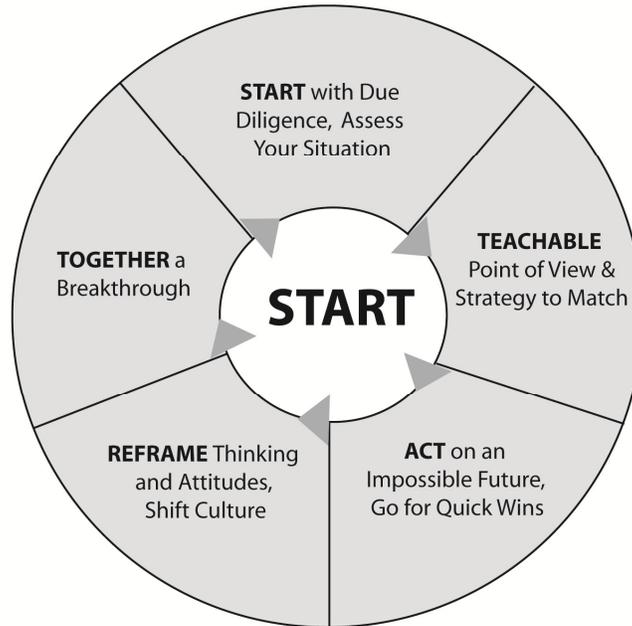
When Nelson Mandela stepped up to the podium for his Inaugural speech as President of South Africa, he made a stirring speech in which one of the themes was compassion for those who had been part of the Apartheid regime. Yet, what electrified the nation was that sitting next to him were his jailers from Robyn Island. Mandela, knowing he was on stage, skillfully orchestrated their appearance to make his point. Your first 100 days is a time when small steps or missteps—things spoken or misspoken—can have long-range consequences.

Bill Clinton’s stand for “gays in the military” in his first week in office is a classic example of this, one that cost him dearly. James McNerney of Boeing spend part of his first 100 days deciding whether or not to pay a \$600 million fine levied on the company for ethical violations by his predecessors. He decided to pay it to establish that Boeing was an ethical company, and the badly shaken morale of employees rebounded.

The START MODEL Provides a Sure-Fire 100-Day Template for Getting Off to a Flying Start

Here is a simple template for getting off to a flying start in your first 100 days. Any new leader, whether the head of a nation, the CEO of a company, or a front-line leader, can practically and immediately apply this template. While studying new leaders who have been successful in their first 100 days, I have noticed that their approach almost invariably follows a certain pattern. I have articulated this pattern here so as to give you a mental model for how to approach your first 100 days. I call it the START Model. The START model is different from the STARS model we previously mentioned. This model is the underlying “red thread” that knits many of the chapters in this book together.

Diagram I.2 START Model
A Template for Your First 100 Days



The START MODEL is a powerful, concise template that tells you exactly what you need to do in your first 100 days

1. Start with due diligence, assess your situation

What's your going in mandate? For government leaders: *Why were you elected? Why did they throw the others out?* For business leaders: *What is the difference you are expected to make? What is the day job you need to perform?* Conduct due diligence interviews. *What is the problem? What needs to change?* Business leaders use the STARS Model to assess your situation: 1) *Start Up*, 2) *Turnaround*, 3) *Accelerated Growth*, 4) *Reinvention*, 5) *Sustain Success*.

2. Teachable point of view and strategy to match the situation

Develop a “teachable point of view” (TPOV) about success: *This is who I am and what I stand for as a leader*, and use that to introduce yourself to the organization. Develop a strategy to match the situation. For example, *Deal proactively with turnaround or crisis and take action within 72 hours*. Set goals and priorities for first 100 days with the intent of having an impact. Get your team to face reality. Make unreasonable requests.

3. Act on an Impossible Future and go for quick wins

Declare an Impossible Future and start building a shared vision at town hall meetings. Get going and create a *virtuous* circle of increasing credibility through a succession of quick wins, rather than a *vicious* circle of decreasing credibility through elaborate planning and preparation.

4. Re-frame thinking and attitudes, shift culture

Further develop your “teachable point of view” about success in your government or business that tells people, “This is how we are going to win.” For example for government leaders, a TPOV might be “All lives have equal value.” For business leaders, it might be: “Drive revenue growth and profit growth through innovation.” Put out your TPOV with every breath you take.

5. Together, a Breakthrough!

Make everyone a player in the “big game” by getting them to set leadership and business challenges in alignment with the Impossible Future. Ask each person on your staff to create an impossible goal every 90 days. Turn these into a “catalytic breakthrough project” that will take you and your organization to a different place.

This Book is Intended to Inspire, Empower, and Enable You in Your First 100 Days

Your first 100 days is an exciting time where you have great possibilities and opportunities in front of you. But as the hexagram in the Chinese book the *I Ching* says, there is often “difficulty in the beginning.” The first 100 days can result in your formulating an inspiring vision that causes everyone to say, “This is what we have all been waiting for,” or it can result in costly errors in mastering the political chessboard that leave you waking up every day staring at a wall. This book has been written to inspire, empower, and enable you in the face of all of that.

Please let me know how your first 100 days goes. You can contact me at:

Robert.Hargrove@RHargrove.com

About the Author

Robert Hargrove is a world-renowned, revolutionary thought leader in the field of talent development and coaching. His motto is *Better Leaders, Better World* and he believes that coaching leaders to achieve an Impossible Future is the fastest, most powerful way to achieve both.

Hargrove is the founder of Masterful Coaching and served as a Director of the Harvard Leadership Research Project. He has been awarded for Distinguished Public Service by the United States Government for his coaching work with political leaders.

Hargrove has also played a pivotal and highly instrumental role in rebranding campaigns in companies like Adidas, Philips Electronics, Estee Lauder, and the National Hockey League.

Hargrove's coaching approach is one of the only methods which delivers real ROI. According to one client, "We pretty much stuck with the Masterful Coaching approach and it made the company hundreds of millions of dollars."

Hargrove is the author of best selling business book *Masterful Coaching* and many other books on leadership, coaching and collaboration.

Contact

Robert Hargrove

+1 617-953-6230

Robert.Hargrove@MasterfulCoaching.com

www.MasterfulCoaching.com

www.MyFirst100Days.net

www.RobertHargrove.com

www.TheRevenueEngine.com

