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Leaders in the past tended to see that improvement as a by-product of their direct action. Successful leaders today, however, have learned to lead differently. They've learned that change is driven by organizational culture, and they've developed their ability to act as stealthy architects whose direct and indirect actions ultimately increase system-wide capacity to lead and implement change. It's this new culture that yields improved results throughout the organization, and the impact leaders make is by developing that culture.

Why 100 Days?

Organizations expect that your leadership impact will be felt immediately. Thus the title of this book, *100 Days to Leadership Impact*, suggests that leaders must take their positions with the intention of making a significant impact from the very beginning, quickly establishing the type of leadership culture that can continue to change during the first 100 days and beyond. You've got many more than 100 days ahead of you—but this book focuses on the impact you'll make in your first 100 days in a new leadership role and the momentum and expectations you'll set for day 101 and beyond.

Think of yourself as an artist, ready to unlock the greatness within the stone, as you move into the chapters ahead. Those who see you coming with that hammer and chisel will soon come to expect that they, too, will hammer, chip, and create alongside you.

Let's look at the 100-day timeline. The number of days you spend in each phase may vary by a few days.

The 100-Day Timeline

Phase 1: Days 1–6	Phase 2: Days 7–39	Phase 3: Days 40–69	Phase 4: Days 70–100
Creating a Lasting First Impression	Getting in Motion	Testing and Trusting	Celebrating and Looking Forward



Phase 1: Creating a Lasting First Impression

There is no substitute for the excitement and energy that characterize a leader's first few days on the job, and there's no better time to make a good first impression. Our first exposure to something new establishes the perception from which we will operate from that point on.¹ Get off to a tepid start in your first week, and you'll spend a great deal of time and energy challenging that perception.

Phase 2: Getting in Motion

In the first month or so on the job, a leader learns a great deal about what's going on at an organization. In this second phase, you start taking the actions that will ultimately lead to positive leadership impact.

Phase 3: Testing and Trusting

By six weeks into the job, the leader is fully in motion. You more clearly understand what's going on in the organization, and those around you expect that you are no longer new and confused. They are becoming familiar with your leadership style. You and your colleagues are carefully observing one another and, at times, testing each other's commitments, consistency, and resolve.

Phase 4: Celebrating and Looking Forward

By the end of the first 70 days or so, a new organizational culture has been established. The new leadership impacts will become increasingly obvious with each passing day. For an ineffective leader, this is the point when the wheels begin to fall off the wagon; the changes are short-lived. An effective leader, however, now sees new habits developing and better patterns emerging consistently. These last 30 days are a time for key observations of progress, notation of needed adjustments, and preparation for the culmination of the first 100 days.

Organization of the Book

This book can be utilized in two ways. You certainly can jump from chapter to chapter and pick up some valuable information about leadership. However, if you read the book chapter by chapter, you will see that it defines a purposeful 100-day trajectory to leadership impact.

Each chapter outlines specific steps you can take to prepare you for the next phases of development.

In chapters 1 and 2, I will more specifically define what I mean by *leadership impact*. I will show you how to explore your own leadership priorities and create what this book refers to as your *leadership dashboard*. By the end of chapters 1 and 2, you will have done your homework and will be ready for your arrival. Chapter 3 then discusses the all-important first impression and provides strategies you can implement in phase 1 to make your first impression positive, powerful, and lasting.

In chapters 4 and 5, I will address the steps you can take to move into phase 2 of your first 100 days. You will learn how to collect and analyze information on the current organizational culture and the individual and collective mental models that drive employee perceptions. Then you can begin to thoughtfully consider the steps you must take immediately to reshape the status quo where needed.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 explore the steps you can take to excel in the testing and trusting phase, phase 3. Specifically, we will look at the steps contemporary leaders take to clarify their vision and to recognize when, in fact, the new leadership impact is being tested or challenged.

Finally, in chapters 9 and 10, we will examine some of the steps you can take to identify the fruits of your labors in phase 4 and build real learning power by maximizing growth opportunities. Having laid the foundation for your leadership impact, your next step is to sustain it.

Seize the Day

This book is thoughtfully designed for the busy leadership practitioner. It's full of high-impact, easily applied leadership strategies that you can quickly absorb and apply right away. After reading this book, you will know how to make a significant leadership impact that results in a much more connected culture, fueled by increased team capacity to innovate and real learning power. Get ready to lead like never before. It's time to seize day 1 of your 100 days!