

Leadership for the new era: The 'make or break' of your first 30 days in role

Whether you have been promoted from within your organisation, vs been hired externally, here's some guidance to help you lay strong foundations to set you and your organisation up for success.

1 What is holding you back?

Be brutally honest about what is holding the organisation back. This is much easier done right at the start, than it is once you get into the weeds of your day to day. You only get the opportunity of fresh insight once, so take a bird's eye view and use it to your advantage.

💡 This is potentially easier if you have been recruited from within, as you'll likely have an informed view of the nuts and bolts of the organisation. If you're new to the organisation, getting to know what makes the organisation tick, who the players are, and understanding the root cause of the challenges takes a little longer.

🛠️ Seek different perspectives (from within and outside the organisation) that challenge your own thinking. Remember, those who shout the loudest don't necessarily have the right answers.

2 Your operating model

Create the internal organisation that needs to be in place to execute your strategy by taking an exhaustive look at the activity that needs to happen to achieve your strategy. And then plan out the capabilities required to deliver it.

💡 Be ruthless in your assessment of what exists (roles, teams etc) today, and carefully scrutinise whether or not those existing teams and roles get the organisation closer to your strategic objectives.

🛠️ Once you've got an operating model, design structural options based on the work - not on individuals, or current roles.

3 Designing your team

Designing a new leadership team is an exercise in being bold, ambitious but also realistic. However don't mistake "realistic" for making too many compromises – otherwise, whatever you implement will be a compromise from your ideal position. A compromise of a compromise is not a good starting position.

5 This is not a one-time exercise

This is not a one-time exercise. Leadership teams should be in the practice of reviewing and refining, and the top of the tree is no different. It's a capability we often see lacking, even in senior roles, so any opportunity to build strength in this area should be taken.

💡 By not taking the time out to routinely review your organisation or function's design, organisational issues may arise and quickly start to have a damaging impact on business performance and employee engagement.

🛠️ To avoid stalemate, re-establish continuous organisation design as a way of being and a key driver of good organisational health. Carve out time quarterly to re-assess progress against your strategy, and on at least an annual basis, revisit your strategy in combination with your operating model and organisational design to make sure you're leading in the right direction.

4 There isn't a one size fits all approach

When it comes to the process of redesign itself: there isn't a one size fits all approach. A balance of having a clear vision, whilst also being open to alternate routes to getting there is key.

🛠️ Decide whether you run an **open vs closed** process, and to what degree you want to (or can) get your team involved in designing the new team.

Open Closed

✔️ Early buy-in from Senior Leaders, increased 'stickability' of design in the long-run. Benefit of a mix of perspectives on the design. May unearth potential resistances/barriers sooner.

✖️ Requires Senior Leaders to 'divorce themselves' from personal ambitions and be able to design agnostic of their personal preferences for roles. The leadership team needs capacity.

✔️ Can execute design process faster, and therefore get to implementation a bit quicker.

✖️ Requires significant time investment at the end of the Design process to retrospectively get leaders buy-in. May inadvertently alienate leaders.

