

The 5 Step Framework to Succeed in Your First 90 Days as an Executive

A proven 5-step framework to accelerate your success in your new executive role.

Congratulations!

Congratulations on stepping into your new executive role. Your first 90 days can make or break your momentum. This framework is designed to help you avoid the common pitfalls leaders face and accelerate your success by focusing on what matters most: clarity, trust, and early wins.

A Personal Note

Stepping into a new executive role is one of the most pivotal moments in your career. You don't have to do it alone. I'd be honored to partner with you as your thinking partner in this transition.

Gerry Nel - Executive Transition Coach

The 18-Month Problem

Half of executives fail within their first 18 months (McKinsey).

Your first 90 days define your credibility, trust, and team alignment. Without a clear plan, you risk being reactive instead of strategic.

This framework helps you focus on what matters most: clarity, trust, and momentum.

Why the First 90 days matter

Research shows that up to 50% of executives fail within 18 months (McKinsey).

The first 3 months set the tone for your reputation, credibility, and team culture.

With the right blueprint, you can gain traction fast while laying the foundation for long-term impact.

This Framework helps you focus on what matters most — clarity, trust, and early wins — to accelerate performance and establish credibility fast.

Self-Assessment: Where Are You Now?

Rate each statement from 1 (low) to 5 (high):

1. I am clear on what success looks like in my new role.
2. I know my key stakeholders and what they expect from me.
3. My team understands my priorities and vision.
4. I've identified where I can make early impact.
5. I am confident I'm balancing quick wins with long-term strategy.
6. I have a support structure or coach to help me think strategically.

Step 1: Clarify Success

Objective: Understand expectations and define success early.

Ask: "What does success look like in 6 months?"

Tool: 90-Day Clarity Map

Action: Identify your 3 top priorities and align them with your CEO or Board.

Step 2: Connect & Listen

Objective: Build trust before you lead change.

Ask: "Who are my key allies and influencers?"

Tool: Stakeholder Influence Grid

Action: Schedule 1:1s, listen actively, and map early trust indicators.

Step 3: Align & Lead

Objective: Translate conversations into aligned goals.

Ask: “How can I align what I’ve heard with where we need to go?”

Tool: Transition Compass

Action: Share your leadership intent, clarify direction, and align expectations across your team.

Step 4: Deliver Early Wins

Objective: Build momentum without overcommitting.

Ask: “Where can I make visible impact fast?”

Tool: Impact Matrix

Action: Choose 1–2 high-visibility wins that show progress and credibility.

Step 5: Review & Adjust

Objective: Reflect, recalibrate, and stay strategic.

Ask: “What’s working? What needs realignment?”

Tool: 90-Day Progress Tracker

Action: Conduct a 90-day review with your coach or mentor to build your next 90-day roadmap.

Common pitfalls to avoid

- # Trying to prove yourself too quickly without building trust.
- # Over-committing too many initiatives.
- # Ignoring cultural dynamics and team energy.
- # Staying stuck in 'expert mode' instead of leading through influence.

Do this instead

- # Focus on clarity and trust.
- # Prioritize a few meaningful outcomes.
- # Lead through questions and collaboration.

What's next:

You don't have to do this alone.

Join the **[90-Day Executive Transition Course](#)** and accelerate your success.

Includes:

- # The full 5-module course
- # Fillable templates
- # Opportunity to network and learn with other executives



Book a free clarity call: calendly.com/gerry-102



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