



Leading from the ground up



For new or renewing leaders

Key transition factors

When any leader, new or experienced, moves into a new role, there are significant risks. Researchers have identified many of the factors that can undermine or facilitate the transition. Here are some of the critical ones.

Managing transition risks with the Leadership Action Circle

A significant amount of research and practitioner effort has gone into understanding the risks of transitioning into a new leadership role. This is because, on average, evidence shows 40% of transitions fall over.

The Leadership Action Circle collates the key findings into one framework. Addressing these factors can help manage the risks and create a successful transition. Some of these factors are done up early in the transition. Others take a few years of effort.

Audit the culture in and around your team to identify norms

Identify how the organisation recognises success

Identify where cultural norms differ across the organisation and among key leaders you deal with

Implement a culture strategy

Act as the leader immediately
Plan your 'arrival' on the job
Manage first impressions (both ways)
Negotiate so expectations match what is possible
Establish evidence of your trustworthiness
Build a vision with your team
Target quick wins to build confidence
Check for 'predictable surprises'

Create your transition plan

Get personal support people in place, as well as a coach and/or mentor
Put basic personal work needs in place

Clarify your preferred leadership style

Prepare for emotional highs and lows

Work out how this role is different to past roles

Review the effectiveness of your business systems

Assess, plan and act to align business strategy, targets, structure, systems, skills and culture

Work to close any gaps between systems capability and what it is expected to deliver



Clarify your boss' expectations

Assess the status of the business you lead

Identify key sources of valid information

Develop a business strategy

Deliver some quick wins

Identify key stakeholder and customer relationships

Meet with stakeholders and people in influential roles to build rapport and clarify expectations

Conduct an analysis of stakeholder requirements and the business' ability to meet them

Clarify the expectations of the people you supervise
Establish how your team will work with you as the leader
Clarify roles, norms and expectations within the team
Assess the competencies within the team
Manage resistance to leadership change
Ensure key people in the team meet yours and the organisation's standards

Build a collaborative relationship with your boss

Arrange access to meet key people

Build alliances to achieve goals

Build relationships with peers and clarify their expectations

One of the most common factors in transition failure, regardless of what other factors are at play, is the 'lone ranger' syndrome. This is where leaders try to function on their own without building collaborative relationships with others. All leaders belong to multiple teams. They are also responsible for guiding the work of others. Collaborative relationships are essential.

