READY-TO-USE TEMPLATE

Your First 90 Days as a Manager

A flexible 90-day plan with listening prompts, practical checkpoints, and visible commitments.

45 minutes to plan | Listening, learning, and useful commitments

Use the supplied wording as it is, or change it together. The Word file and Notion template are editable. Keep only notes you need.

Before you start

Clarify the role with your manager and arrange essential access. Separate urgency from inherited assumptions.

What am I accountable for? Which decisions are mine? What needs attention immediately, and what evidence supports that? Who should help me understand the work? What must I learn before making a promise?

Days 1-30 · Listen and follow the work

Meet people across boundaries and shifts. Do not judge the whole system from the most available voices.

[ ] Meet each colleague and ask what helps or hinders good work.
[ ] Follow one real task from request to completion.
[ ] Learn the team's history, commitments, and constraints.
[ ] Clarify immediate safety, service, or access needs.
[ ] Keep an assumptions log: what I think, what supports it, what might change my mind.

Notes and changes for our situation

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WORKING AGENDA / CONTINUED

Around day 30 · Play back what you heard

Check your account before announcing the plan. Protect confidentiality and avoid identifiable quotations without agreement.

Here is what I think matters, what seems to be working, and where people are compensating for the system. What is missing or wrong? What should we protect? Which one or two changes would be useful to try first?

Days 31-60 · Make small commitments

Choose changes with the people affected. A visible improvement should solve a real problem, not demonstrate your arrival.

Change to try:
People involved in shaping it:
Expected benefit and possible cost:
Support or authority needed:
What we will stop or reduce:
Owner and review date:

Notes and changes for our situation

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WORKING AGENDA / CONTINUED

Days 61-90 · Learn and establish a rhythm

Review the effects before expanding. Agree how the team will keep learning without everything depending on you.

What changed, and for whom? What did not improve? What should we keep, revise, or stop? Agree a working rhythm for 1:1s, decisions, team learning, and sharing context. Make ownership and escalation clear.

Around day 90 · Review the role and the conditions

Compare accounts with the team and your manager. Ninety days is a planning aid, not a universal test of competence.

What can I now explain that I initially misunderstood?
What commitments did I keep?
Where did my actions make work harder?
What still needs learning, resources, or authority?
Priorities and support for the next period:

The thinking behind it

A new manager is shaped by the team as well as shaping it. Make it possible for their experience to change your plan, especially when it complicates your first impression.

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne

Keep the useful part

A shared record, not a transcript. Agree what belongs here and what should stay private.

Date / people / purpose

What we agreed

Next step / owner / support / date

What remains open

When we will return to it

Which early certainty have I earned the right to revise?