



Leadership Transition Self-Assessment

A Framework for Leaders Navigating Their First 90 Days

The first 90 days in a new leadership role are when reputations are built. Not the reputation you want to have – the reputation you'll actually have, based on how people experience you during a period when everyone is watching and forming opinions. This self-assessment helps you think through the critical areas most leaders underestimate when stepping into something new.

Be honest with yourself. This isn't a scorecard. It's a thinking tool.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

Rate yourself 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely clear) on each item.

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1 I can articulate the three most important priorities my leader expects me to deliver in the first 6 months.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I understand the political dynamics of my peer group – who has influence, who has history, who has agendas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I know which of my direct reports are strong performers, which are developing, and which may be in the wrong role.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I understand the culture of this organization – not the stated values, but how things actually get done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5 I have identified the key stakeholders outside my direct team whose support I'll need to succeed. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Reflection: If any item is below a 3, that's a gap you need to close in the next 30 days. The leaders who stumble in transitions usually do so because they assumed they understood the landscape instead of deliberately learning it.

SECTION 2: HOW YOU'RE SHOWING UP

Rate yourself 1 (not at all) to 5 (consistently) on each item.

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1 I am asking more questions than I am giving answers in my first weeks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 I have had individual conversations with each of my direct reports about their goals, concerns, and what they need from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 I am resisting the urge to make big changes before I fully understand how things work and why.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 I am managing my tendency to over-prove myself by doing too much, too fast.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 I am building relationships with peers, not just focusing on my own team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reflection: Items 3 and 4 are where most leaders in transition struggle. The pressure to prove immediate value often leads to premature action – restructuring a team, redesigning a process, or launching an initiative before understanding the context.

SECTION 3: POTENTIAL BLIND SPOTS

Answer each question honestly. These are the areas where transitions typically go wrong.

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- 01** What feedback have you received in past roles that you dismissed or minimized? Is there a pattern?
 - 02** When you're under stress, what behavior do people closest to you say they notice first?
 - 03** What is the most likely reason this role could go wrong for you – not external factors, but something about how you operate?
 - 04** Who on your new team might you be underestimating? Who might you be over-relying on too early?
 - 05** Are you trying to replicate what worked in your last role, or are you genuinely adapting to what this role requires?
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USING THIS ASSESSMENT

Complete this assessment at day 30, day 60, and day 90 of your transition. Your scores should increase over time. If they don't – or if certain areas are stuck – that's a signal worth paying attention to. The leaders who succeed in transitions aren't the ones who have all the answers on day one. They're the ones who know what they don't know and build a deliberate plan to close the gaps.

About the Author: Jamie O'Brien is the founder of J. O'Brien Coaching and a certified Hogan practitioner. With 19+ years of experience in organizational development, talent strategy, and executive coaching, he specializes in helping leaders navigate transitions and close the gap between intention and impact.