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## LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR C-SUITE ONBOARDING

Transitions are a way of life in modern organizations. “Change is the only constant” is an oft-heard refrain. Perhaps you have been promoted within the C-Suite. Perhaps you are making a lateral move to broaden your experience. Perhaps there has been a re-organization and your span of control has increased or your boss is someone new. You will face the challenges of how to successfully get off one ride and back on another. Often we underestimate these.

### What are the critical steps to leaving your current position?

- Ensure your successor has established an onboarding plan. Work with your successor to ensure the ongoing success of your former division/organization.
- Say good-bye. Honor the relationships that you had with people. Do not brush off parties and communications about your moving on. A leader’s transition is a big deal; it is important for people who worked with or for you, as well as for yourself, to acknowledge the transition.
- Identify your legacy. Are you pleased with the legacy you left? Work on that hopefully started long before your departure. If there is still something that is gnawing at you about what you are leaving behind, figure out what you can do to fix it or position someone else to do so.

### What are the critical steps to ensure success in the new role?

- Make sure you have a plan for your own onboarding. Be organized about creating a “90-day learning plan” for yourself.
- Be sure to have a clear job description that has buy-in from key stakeholders. What are your areas of responsibility and authority, your decision rights? How will success in your new role be defined by your constituents, including senior management and perhaps the Board?
- Identify the “hidden job requirements” by seeking knowledge from your predecessor as well as all of your future constituents, including boss, colleagues, and subordinates. What attributes do you possess that resulted in your being selected for your new role? What attributes do you need to develop or enhance?
- Quickly establish trusting relationships. Be transparent. Disclose what you need to disclose. Focus proactively on building relationships across the new organization.
- Ask more questions than you answer. Always. But consider doing that in a very organized way. What do your constituents and key stakeholders think about the organization—its challenges and opportunities, its barriers and enablers. What do they need from a leader?
- Set up meetings to get to know all the players, and let them get to know you. Even if you already know them, meet to establish your new relationship/role with them. Many of these meetings will be one-on-one, some may be group.
- Create a stakeholder map once you get the lay of the land. Be intentional about how frequently you spend your time with key stakeholders, and what your goals are with them.

*Do you feel confident about an upcoming transition—that you know what to do on both ends of the journey?  
Are you ensuring both a successful legacy and future?*