

The New Role – 10 Impactful Ways to Begin Anew

1. Stay New

There is something special about being the new person. It gives permission (and forgiveness) for many things that perhaps is absent for the incumbents. Early engagements are lighter, less loaded with expectation and urgency. The default way with which you are treated is biased towards kindness and care. The new person is likely to be heard more clearly, more acute listening and a willingness to be fully cognisant of their views and interjections.

So it's a no brainer, stay new as long as possible. Act like it, continue asking questions, stay alert and perky, be refreshed and refreshing, keep the attitude up the positive end (on everything from corporate strategy to the dregs from the coffee machine).

2. Meet More

Everyone is new to you in the new role, from direct colleagues to co-located staff and those you pass en-route to your workplace. It is easy to become immersed in a new role and work hard with those that more obviously matter. To all others you will simply be 'that new person' and eventually lost in the organisation. Meet more people, shake hands, engage in brief dialogue, get to know names, challenges, connections. Attend side-events early (when your diary is less frantic). Keep notes, build a massive wide network, fast.

3. Stay Aloof

Once past the "I'm new..." intro stage it is common for newbies to put effort into personal connections and relationship building and binding. Working to be liked, finding out hot buttons, pressure points, controversies, no go areas etc. can be found out when on 'insider' terms with new friends. However unbeknown to the newcomer there may be clicks and in and out-group, vested interests and tough conversations ahead potentially compromised in too-close a relationship.

Stay friendly but not friends, take a more aloof position, non-committal to any regime, political stand-point or high-ground



4. Distinctions

Among all the people, places, brand, equipment, processes and many things noticed in a new environment there are three elements that get mixed up in your noticing that deserve to be a little more distinct. These three are often 'learned' and can be unique to the new company, only the new comer has the capability to spot them for being what they are. If you don't find these distinctions, soon enough you will be unconsciously adopting the same 'learned' ways.

Behaviour – the ways in which things get done, the ways staff communicate, the 'accepted' ways for agreeing or disagreeing, the ways in which people are treated. Often an entire company or division can be described in terms of a behavioural profile (e.g. Insights, DISC or MBTI). This is neither good nor bad, just worthy of note!

Credibility – what roles or departments have more credibility? This may be down to the leaders therein but possibly the leaders in the past, whose legacy lives on. The credibility of Finance, HR, Marketing, Sales, Engineering all vary widely in different companies, leading to their voice being heard, or not, involved, or not, worth partnering with, or not!

Belief – this again may be down to the current individuals but can also be heritage-based. What do the teams believe is possible for them, this can stretch from goals, achievement, change, risk-appetite, partnerships. It undoubtedly plays out in habits, language and affects behaviour and credibility.

5. Three Phases

The strategies to be employed when taking on a new role are much written about (e.g. The First 100 Days), but irrespective of the amount of time you are granted to become immersed there are three phases that when separated allow you to catch more, miss less and have greater business impact in the long-term.

Phase 1 – Watch – watch what happens when decisions are made or delayed, watch interactions between people and teams, suppliers and stakeholders, watch the paper or data flow, the processes, the must dos, the goal setting, the dialogues, what is acceptable, what is not.

Phase 2 – Enquire – the phase full of questions, more accurately based following the first phase. Why are we, what impact do we have, who influences decisions, what has worked, where are delays, what flows, what gets stuck.

Phase 3 – Change – this is where your impact is felt and the ripples emitted. Change your team structure, realign to the faster more dynamic parts of the business, cut processes, cancel orders, order new things, change the layout, do things differently, install new habits (e.g. stand-up team meetings), champion a new thing (e.g. an app) and build your (and your team's) brand.

Often the overly keen newcomer jumps to change too soon, putting their accuracy and credibility at risk, creating a notoriety that may be unhelpful and inhibitive.

6. Deciding Your 'In' Square

You only get one chance to make a first impression, as the saying goes. So there is massive value in spending more time, not less on being deliberate about your 'In' square, i.e. who you are on day one (and the first of every encounter or event in your initial days and weeks). Consider:

- Your attitude (every morning and your methods to stay attitudinally-resilient)
- Your wardrobe and dress-code
- Your attachments (briefcase, bag, notebook, tablet, phone and whether you carry any of them at any time)
- Your handshake and greeting
- Your email sign-off
- Your pace (of dialogue, of walking, of response)
- Your body language
- Your habits (detectable or otherwise)

7. Standard Upgrade

There's no better time than in a new role and a new environment to review and reset your personal standards, expectations are almost zero as your new colleagues await the revelation of your style and way of working.

Standards are the recurring most common way you act out in the role of you. The lowest performance common denominator in everything in which you are involved. What has got you here won't necessarily take you to your next level of personal and career growth, look again at your standards and upgrade a couple:

- Time keeping (what you deem as acceptable sets the tone and the acceptable levels)
- Speed and volume of response (to emails, texts, social media)
- Language
- Dress-code
- Time for others and special causes
- What you are seen doing/focusing upon (e.g. what are you reading)

8. Best When?

(see *"The 'Keep It Simple' Book" #1*)

It's pretty obvious that in a new role you want to be at your best all the time, and be seen in the best light in all situations. This isn't an accidental alignment of you simply finding the perfect role. Make this more certain by setting yourself up to be at your best more often, if not every day.

Spend a few minutes each day for a week completing the sentence "I'm at my best when..." Describe the things that are true or in place when you are at your best. What have you got, what is around you, what have you eaten or drunk, how much sleep did you have, who have you spent time with, what have you read (or been exposed to), what is going on with your thinking?

Once the list is full, look again at what you can more deliberately put in place to build the foundations of another good day before it has even begun.

9. Determined Weeks and Months

Joining a new company with an empty diary and nothing scheduled is wonderful, but won't last long, as deliberately or compliantly you fill the spaces. Your wonderful new attitude and approach to the new role will see you here and there, involved in much more than any of your new colleagues thought possible. But your deliberateness must remain!

Determine soon (once you have an understanding of pace, expectations, needs and requirements), how would you want your ideal week and month to take shape. Where is personal time, where is response time, where is the mix of tactical and strategic. What spaces do you want to retain. Get them in your itinerary NOW.

10. Personal Board of Directors

(see "The 'Keep It Simple' Book" #33)

Those that have the best insight into you and your journey, and those that have a delightful contrasting view to you in difficult situations are rarely, if ever around when you need them.

Yet, using the magic of your mind, they could be. Build your own virtual board of directors!

Who are the people who have helped you the most or had the biggest influence on your life and career (alive or dead)? Who are the people you admire or respect the most (personally know, public domain or even fictional characters)? Who have you emulated, copied or aspired to be?

Write a word or a sentence against each that describes their effect on you, or their approach.

Now you have a huge board of directors on which you can call at any time. When you face any predicament, challenge or decision point, 'offer' it to a selection of your board. Pause and consider what their response might be, how would they approach the situations, what might their advice be? Collect the varying pieces of advice and consider your approach, which may mean taking their advice or may even strengthen you on your initial intuitive response anyway.

Good luck, keep it simple and fall in love with your new role.

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Simon is one of the world's leading business coaches and speakers. He has helped business leaders make life simpler and more successful; he is an incisive consultant, inspirational writer, provocative public speaker and master facilitator.

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