JADE TRUONG

THE FIRST 90 DAYS WITH JADE

jadetruong.com · California

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By day 14 your people feel the first blockage clear. By day 90 your teams run a rhythm of business they own, and you hold a 12-month roadmap with names and dates on it. This is what it looks like when I step into your company as your operating number two.

WHY THE FIRST 90 DAYS MATTER

Between 40 and 50 percent of new leaders fail within their first 18 months, and 92 percent of external hires take well over 90 days to reach full speed (McKinsey). Corporate Executive Board research puts the failure rate as high as 50 to 70 percent. Michael Watkins calls the goal the breakeven point: the day a new leader gives back more than the company invested. Leaders with a deliberate plan reach it up to 40 percent faster.

WHY NEW LEADERS STALL	HOW I WORK
They repeat what worked last time, in a company that needs something else	I arrive with no template. Your people already hold most of the answer, so I listen first
They underestimate peers, bosses and the people below them	I meet everyone, from the founder to the front line, plus customers and vendors
The view from the top gets filtered, and every word gets amplified	I hear the company directly, and what people tell me reaches you clean, with no names attached
They hesitate to use their authority, or use it to protect themselves	I make decisions in the open, and I use my seat to protect my teams

McKinsey also finds a transition is finished when five things are settled: the business, the culture, the team, the leader and the other stakeholders. This plan uses the calendar as a guide and those five as the real test.

THE 90 DAYS AT A GLANCE

Three moves, in this order: cross every aisle, find the root cause, hand it back.

BEFORE DAY ONE
Agree the mandate
- Three outcomes
- Who owns what
- Workspace set up

DAYS 1 TO 30
Cross every aisle
- Meet everyone
- Hear the front line
- Check the numbers

DAYS 31 TO 60
Find the root cause
- One shared outcome
- One flagship fix
- A weekly rhythm

DAYS 61 TO 90
Hand it back
- Teams run the fix
- 12-month roadmap
- Board-ready read-out

Day 14 First fix · **Day 30** Read-back · **Day 60** Rhythm runs · **Day 90** Five-test review

BEFORE DAY ONE

We agree the mandate in writing before I start, so nobody spends the first month guessing.

- **Three outcomes for year one.** In your words, with the number or date that proves each one.
- **Who owns what.** I run operations, the teams and the customer experience. Your CFO owns financial planning and reporting, and you own the investors and the board.
- **My teams are mine to protect.** Decisions about the people who report to me go through me.
- **What is already decided.** Commitments, contracts and promises I inherit, so I honor them from day one.
- **Who I meet in week one.** You introduce me to your leaders, and I set up time with everyone else myself.

Before I arrive I read what you can share: board decks, the last two quarters of operating reviews, customer complaints and churn data, the org chart and the meeting calendar. My workspace is set up: my own office, with adjustable lighting and my own monitors.

DAYS 1 TO 30: CROSS EVERY AISLE

For the first two weeks I listen and meet everyone I can, and I announce no changes. At day 14 I clear the first blockage, and by day 30 you see the company the way your people see it.

Weeks 1 and 2: listen

- One-to-one time with every leader, then the people doing the work: support, sales, engineering, operations, finance.
- A seat on the front line: I sit in on customer calls and read the tickets myself.
- Customers and key vendors, in their own words. This is the Voice of the Customer.
- What your people say about the company, gathered without names. This is the Voice of the Company.
- A check of the numbers: which reports people trust, which ones they quietly work around.

> **Day 14: the first blockage clears.** I pick the easiest one your people have raised, the friction everyone has accepted as normal. The people closest to it fix it with me, and your front line feels the change before anyone announces it.

Weeks 3 and 4: make sense of it. I sort what I heard into what costs you money every quarter, what costs you people, and what is simply noise.

Day 30: the read-back. A short report in plain words: what I heard, the three root causes underneath it, and what each one costs. No names, no blame.

> "She emerged as a solutions-oriented individual with cross-departmental insight, developing a hiring and onboarding process at scale, then filling gaps across IT and facilities so the center was ready for launch."
>
> SCOTT SANFORD · DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER CARE, AT&T WIRELESS

DAYS 31 TO 60: FIND THE ROOT CAUSE AND SET THE RHYTHM

This month we agree on the one fix that matters most, and your teams start running a weekly rhythm built on revenue, profit and churn.

- **One shared outcome.** Every team agrees on what they are all raising together, the way 38 MSN product teams did. The infighting drops once ownership is shared.
- **One flagship fix.** The teams choose it from the day-30 root causes. We fund it properly and leave the rest for later.
- **A rhythm of business.** Revenue, profit and churn, measured weekly against agreed milestones. It replaces most status meetings.
- **The meeting test.** I ask every team which meeting they would cancel tomorrow. We cancel it.
- **Decision rights.** Each team gets a clear limit it can decide within, with no approval needed. My AT&T reps had $2,000 per customer.
- **Your bench.** An honest read of each leader: who is ready for more, who needs support, and where you carry key-person risk.

Day 60: the weekly rhythm is running, every team knows what it can decide on its own, and the flagship fix has an owner, a budget and a date.

DAYS 61 TO 90: HAND IT BACK

By day 90 the people living in the work run the solution, and the first results show in your numbers.

- **The flagship fix moves its number.** Everyone can see how it moved, so the result holds after the first push.
- **A visible win for the front line.** Something they asked for in week one, delivered.
- **The rhythm becomes routine.** Weekly and monthly reviews run on their own, led by your team leads.
- **A 12-month roadmap.** What to repair first, what to change now and what to retire, with an owner and a date on every line.
- **Your board-ready read-out.** Where we started, what moved, what comes next.

Day 90: we check the five tests together (the business, the culture, the team, me, and your other stakeholders), then agree what I own for the year ahead.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

CHECKPOINT	YOU RECEIVE	YOUR PEOPLE FEEL
Before day one	A written mandate: three outcomes, who owns what	A clear introduction to who I am and why I am here
Day 14	The first blockage cleared, with the team that fixed it	Something that annoyed them for months is gone
Day 30	The read-back: what I heard, three root causes and their cost	They were heard, and nobody got blamed
Day 60	A weekly rhythm on revenue, profit and churn, plus a decision map	Fewer meetings, and clear limits they can decide within
Day 90	The flagship result, a 12-month roadmap, a board-ready read-out	They run the solution, and it is theirs

Every week you also get a one-page Monday note, a standing hour with me, and an open door.

PROOF FROM PAST ROOMS

WHERE	WHAT CHANGED	HOW FAST
Microsoft, MSN	38 product plans and one three-year roadmap across 100+ teams, approved by Bill Gates	About three months
Nuance and Dictaphone	80% of support calls automated during a merger, $4M+ saved in year two	Four months
Microsoft, Xbox	Micropayments approved and launched	Four months from the pitch
eBay	First iPhone app and a 13-country revamp, then $650M in revenue	Six months
A twelve-branch surgical group	$299 to $2,999 per procedure, profit up more than 230%	Within a quarter
AT&T customer care	1,528 reps, each trusted with $2,000 per customer	Six months

> "The Book of Insights is the most thorough and solid start to the planning process for a multi-year release roadmap that we have had to date."
>
> BLAKE IRVING · MSN / WINDOWS LIVE PLATFORM, MICROSOFT

WHAT I NEED FROM YOU

- The written mandate, agreed before day one
- A clean split with your CFO
- Introductions in week one, from you
- Two quiet weeks while I listen
- Backing in public for calls made inside agreed limits
- A standing hour each week, just the two of us
- My own workspace, with adjustable lighting and my own monitors

BEFORE YOU BRING ME IN

☐ Do decisions wait on you that your leaders could make?

☐ Do your teams argue over who owns the product, the customer or the number?

☐ Does your dashboard stay yellow while customers quietly leave?

☐ Would your front line tell you something different from your leaders?

☐ Is one person holding knowledge nobody else could cover?

☐ Are you ready to let your people own the fix?

How we start. One real conversation, decision-maker to decision-maker. Reach me through the contact form at jadetruong.com, or book Let's Really Talk, a 90-minute diagnostic for $500, at jadetruong.com/book. Case studies: jadetruong.com/work.

Sources: McKinsey, "It really isn't about 100 days" (2017); World Economic Forum, "4 common reasons half of all new executives fail" (2015), citing Corporate Executive Board research; Michael Watkins, The First 90 Days.