

Leading through Ambiguity

Rob Blaine

Key High-Gain Questions

1. What mindset did you have to let go of in order to lead the transformation?
Shifting from practicing law to leading a firm through structural and cultural change, what did you have to reframe?
2. How did you know your vision was working before the numbers showed it? When you're playing the long game, what early signals helped you stay the course?

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The first three months would be about listening deeply and building credibility. I'd spend time with partners across offices and practices, trying to understand what they see, where they think we're strong, and what's holding us back. That helps build buy-in and uncovers leverage points.

I'd also start to clarify a thesis: what does Goodwin want to be known for, and how does that show up differently than it does today? Based on slides 5–7, we'd need to shift from “undifferentiated and under the radar” to something sharper and more focused. That starts by aligning leadership around what success looks like and where we want to win.

Finally, I'd look for a couple of key early moves, something that shows we're not just talking about change, we're starting it.

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I'd expect early signals within 6–12 months, not in profits, but in behavior.

Some things I'd watch for:

- Are people repeating a shared vision in meetings and pitches?
- Are top recruits and laterals starting to show interest in the firm?
- Are clients naming us for the kind of work we want more of?

Cultural and reputational shifts happen gradually, then suddenly. The first signs show up in tone and energy before they ever hit the metrics.