

# The New Manager's 90-Day Kit

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Your Complete Playbook for the First 90 Days

Action plans · Checklists · Conversation scripts · Templates

One-on-one frameworks · Team assessment tools

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## PART 1

# Before You Start

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### The Mindset Shift: IC to Manager

The biggest mistake new managers make is continuing to do their old job while adding 'manager' to their title. Your role has fundamentally changed. Your output is no longer your individual work — it's the combined output of your team. This is a difficult transition because the skills that made you successful as an individual contributor (deep focus, personal execution, technical expertise) are not the same skills that make a great manager.

Here's what changes:

FROM (Individual Contributor)	TO (Manager)
Doing the work yourself	Enabling others to do their best work
Being the expert in the room	Asking the right questions
Solving problems directly	Coaching others to solve problems
Personal productivity	Team throughput and morale
Getting feedback from your manager	Giving feedback to your reports
Optimizing your own time	Protecting your team's time

*Pro Tip: Schedule 30 minutes every Friday for the first month just to reflect on this shift. Ask yourself: "Did I spend most of my time enabling my team, or doing their work for them?"*

### What Your Team Actually Needs From You

Research consistently shows that the top drivers of team performance under a new manager are not strategy or technical direction — they're psychological safety, clarity, and consistency. Your team needs to know three things:

Need	What It Sounds Like	Your Action
Safety	"Can I be honest without consequences?"	Listen more than you talk in Week 1–2
Clarity	"What exactly do you expect from me?"	Define expectations in writing by Day 14
Consistency	"Will you show up the same way tomorrow?"	Establish a weekly rhythm by Day 7

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## The 5 Things to Learn Before Day 1

If you do nothing else before your first day as a manager, get answers to these five questions:

1. What are the current team goals and how is progress tracked?
2. What's the biggest challenge the team is facing right now?
3. Who are the key stakeholders your team interacts with?
4. What management tools/processes are already in place? (standups, 1:1s, retros)
5. What did the previous manager do well, and what frustrated the team?

*Pro Tip: Ask your own manager or HR for this context. If the previous manager is available and willing, a 30-minute handoff conversation is invaluable.*

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## PART 2

# Days 1–30 — Listen & Learn

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Your first 30 days are about building trust and understanding. Resist the urge to change things. The fastest way to lose your team is to walk in with answers before you understand the questions.

## Week 1 Action Plan

Day	Focus	Key Actions
Mon	Introductions	Meet each direct report 1:1 (30 min). Ask: What should I know? What's working? What's not?
Tue	Observe	Attend existing meetings as a listener. Take notes, don't direct.
Wed	Stakeholders	Meet your key stakeholders. Ask: What do you need from my team?
Thu	Systems	Review team dashboards, project boards, docs. Map current workflows.
Fri	Reflect	Write down your top 5 observations. Share nothing yet — just learn.

## One-on-One Meeting Framework

One-on-ones are your most important tool as a manager. Start them in Week 1 and never cancel them. Here's a framework for your first round:

### First 1:1 — The Discovery Meeting (30–45 min)

- "Tell me about your role. What does a great week look like for you?"
- "What's the biggest obstacle you're facing right now?"
- "How do you prefer to receive feedback — direct, written, in the moment?"
- "What did your previous manager do that worked well? What didn't?"
- "What's one thing I could do in my first month that would make your life easier?"
- "Is there anything you've wanted to raise but haven't had the chance to?"

*Pro Tip: Take notes and send a brief summary to each person after. It shows you were listening — and creates accountability for follow-through.*

## Team Assessment Worksheet

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After your first round of 1:1s, fill out this grid for each team member. This becomes your private management reference.

Name	Strengths	Growth Areas	Motivation	Risk/Concern

## Stakeholder Mapping Template

Map every person or team that depends on your team or that your team depends on. Rate their current satisfaction and your relationship strength.

Stakeholder	What They Need	Satisfaction (1-5)	Relationship Strength	Action Needed

## 30-Day Checkpoint Checklist

By Day 30, you should be able to check off every item below:

- Completed initial 1:1 with every direct report
- Met all key stakeholders
- Documented current team workflows and processes
- Established a regular 1:1 cadence (weekly recommended)
- Identified top 3 team strengths and top 3 challenges
- Sent a brief 'Here's what I've learned' summary to your manager
- Set up your weekly management rhythm (1:1s, team meeting, planning time)
- Started a private management journal or log

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## PART 3

# Days 31–60 — Build Trust & Set Direction

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You've listened. You've learned. Now it's time to start shaping — carefully. The goal of Month 2 is to establish your management rhythm and start aligning the team around clearer expectations.

## Establishing Your Management Rhythm

Consistency is the foundation of trust. Your team should be able to predict how you operate. Here's a weekly rhythm that works for most new managers:

Day	Activity	Duration	Purpose
Monday	Team standup or weekly kickoff	15–30 min	Align priorities for the week
Tue–Thu	1:1 meetings with direct reports	30 min each	Coaching, unblocking, feedback
Wednesday	Stakeholder check-in (rotating)	30 min	Relationship maintenance
Thursday	Deep work / strategic thinking	2 hours	Planning, process improvement
Friday	Week-in-review (personal)	30 min	Reflection and next-week prep

## Giving Feedback: The SBI Framework

Most new managers either avoid feedback entirely or deliver it clumsily. The SBI model gives you a reliable structure:

**S — Situation:** Describe the specific context.

**B — Behavior:** State the observable behavior (no interpretation).

**I — Impact:** Explain the effect on the team, project, or you.

### Example — Positive Feedback:

"In yesterday's client meeting [**Situation**], you proactively addressed the timeline concern before the client raised it [**Behavior**]. That built a lot of confidence with the client and saved us a difficult follow-up conversation [**Impact**]."

### Example — Constructive Feedback:

"During this morning's standup [**Situation**], you interrupted Alex twice while they were giving their update [**Behavior**]. It made Alex visibly uncomfortable and I noticed they cut their update short after that



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**[Impact].** Can we talk about how to handle that differently?"

*Pro Tip: Give positive feedback publicly, constructive feedback privately. Aim for a 5:1 ratio of positive to constructive.*

## 60-Day Checkpoint Checklist

- Weekly management rhythm established and consistent
- Delivered at least one piece of constructive feedback using SBI
- Team goals documented and shared with the team
- Run at least 4 weekly team meetings
- Completed second round of deeper 1:1s
- Identified one process improvement to implement
- Had a 30-day check-in with your own manager
- Started tracking team metrics or OKRs

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## PART 4

# Days 61–90 — Drive Results

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By now you have context, trust, and rhythm. Month 3 is about translating all of that into visible impact — for your team, your stakeholders, and your own manager.

## The Delegation Framework

As a new manager, you're probably still doing too much yourself. Use this framework to decide what to delegate:

Task Type	Delegate?	Why
Tasks only you can do (approvals, hiring)	No	Core manager responsibility
Tasks you're great at but others could learn	Yes — with coaching	Growth opportunity for your reports
Tasks someone else is already better at	Yes — immediately	You're the bottleneck
Tasks that feel urgent but aren't important	Yes — or eliminate	Protect your strategic time
New initiatives you'd love to own	Yes — pick one champion	Builds ownership on the team

## Having Difficult Conversations

At some point in your first 90 days, you'll need to have a conversation you've been avoiding. Here's a framework that keeps it constructive:

- 1. Prepare:** Write down the specific issue, the impact, and your desired outcome. Never wing it.
- 2. Open with empathy:** "I want to discuss something important because I care about your success on this team."
- 3. State facts, not feelings:** Use SBI. Stick to observable behavior.
- 4. Listen:** Ask for their perspective. There may be context you don't have.
- 5. Agree on next steps:** End with a clear, documented action plan.
- 6. Follow up:** Check in within one week. Acknowledge improvement.

## 90-Day Self-Assessment

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Rate yourself honestly on each dimension (1 = needs work, 5 = strong):

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	Notes
Team trust & psychological safety						
Clarity of expectations						
Consistency of management rhythm						
Feedback quality & frequency						
Stakeholder relationships						
Delegation effectiveness						
Personal time management						
Strategic thinking vs. firefighting						

PART 5

# Templates & Quick Reference

## One-on-One Meeting Template

Use this structure for ongoing 1:1s after the initial discovery round:

Section	Time	Content
Check-in	5 min	How are you doing? Anything on your mind?
Their agenda	10 min	What do you want to discuss? (They should drive this.)
Your agenda	5 min	Updates, context, or questions from your side.
Coaching moment	5 min	One thing they're working on growing. How can you help?
Action items	5 min	Summarize commitments. Who does what by when?

## Weekly Team Meeting Agenda

Block	Time	Details
Wins & shout-outs	5 min	Start positive. Recognize great work from the week.
Metrics review	5 min	Quick look at key numbers. Trends, not deep dives.
Priority alignment	10 min	What are the top 3 priorities this week? Any conflicts?
Blockers & asks	5 min	What's stuck? What help is needed?
One topic deep-dive	10 min	Rotate who presents. Builds ownership and visibility.
Wrap-up	2 min	Recap action items. End on time. Always.

## Feedback Conversation Quick Reference

Scenario	Script Opener
Positive reinforcement	"I want to call out something you did really well..."
Missed deadline	"I noticed the X deliverable came in past the deadline. Can we talk about what happened?"
Interpersonal conflict	"I've observed some tension between you and [name]. I want to understand your perspective."
Underperformance	"I care about your growth here, which is why I want to be direct about something I've noticed..."
Attitude/energy concern	"I've noticed a shift in your energy lately. Is everything okay? I want to support you."

Great initiative	"What you did with X showed real ownership. I want to find more opportunities like that for you."
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30-60-90 Day Tracker

Print this page and keep it visible. Check items as you complete them.

	Days 1–30: Listen & Learn	Days 31–60: Build & Align	Days 61–90: Drive Results
Week 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All initial 1:1s done</li> <li>■ Stakeholders mapped</li> <li>■ Current workflows documented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Management rhythm set</li> <li>■ First feedback delivered</li> <li>■ Team goals drafted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delegation plan active</li> <li>■ One process improved</li> <li>■ Difficult conversation handled</li> </ul>
Week 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Team assessment complete</li> <li>■ 30-day summary written</li> <li>■ Journal habit started</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 4+ team meetings run</li> <li>■ Metrics tracking live</li> <li>■ 60-day self-review done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 90-day self-assessment</li> <li>■ Stakeholder feedback gathered</li> <li>■ Next quarter plan drafted</li> </ul>

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# You've Got This.

The fact that you invested in a resource like this tells me something about you: you take leadership seriously. That already puts you ahead of most new managers.

Remember — the goal isn't perfection. It's consistent improvement. Show up for your team every day, keep learning, and trust the process.

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