

“The First 90 Days” written by Michael D. Watkins is a book mainly for a manager-level person to handle new job challenges. It presents step-by-step instructions within 90 days time frame to achieve an early win. However, **I think it is also useful for a software engineer** to improve the onboarding process and build trust within the team and organization.

The first 90 days can be broken down into three separate 30 days.

## 1st 30 days

To start a new job, you need to let go of the old jobs and embrace the new ones.

At company-level or team-level

- understand/engage in business planning and performance management (of your team)
- understand the culture in your team: visible and invisible
- know the key people you should connect with early on
- figure out work culture, identify culture interpreters
- who is capable/trustworthy/has influence in your team?
- what are the challenges/opportunities/barriers/resources for your team?
- identify the untouchables: what is proprietary to others
- a successful start-up: visible, easily measurable individual accomplishment
- create supporting alliances

Talk with your manager/boss

- discuss the expectations/roadmap/task list in our 1st week/month/year
- figure out what you need to learn so that you can focus your efforts!
- clarify expectations
- reach out yourself, don't surprise our boss
- for problems, bring plans to address them
- take control of your calendar, schedule early meetings with key persons
- figure out the working styles with bosses
- agree on how your boss measure progress
- agree on short- and medium-term goals and timing
- what are the expectations? from whom might you seek advice?

Relationship with peers

- focus on lateral relationships, not only vertical ones
- pursue good marks from those whose opinions your boss respects
- understanding of how to work together to achieve common goals

To achieve your goal

- what would you focus your attention on? Define learning agenda
- build personal credibility, establish key relationships, harvest the low-hanging fruit
- aim for early wins in areas important to your boss
- do not run down your checklist, focus on top-3 priorities, and ask for help if needed
- be clear about what your task is
- adapt to your boss's style, and make the relationship work
- self-management: strategies, dev personal disciplines, build your support systems
- gain intelligence: talk to people who have critical knowledge about your situation
- figure out where to get some early wins, build supportive coalitions
- use data, factors, and reasoned rationals to build your case
- secure early wins: build credibility/momentum
- what are your strengths/need improvement/projects that might help you develop skills?
- figure out the tasks, break them down, and prepare your skillsets
- conservative in what you promise

Tasks for each week

- understand what you are expected to do: check/recheck expectations
- review detailed performance data/personnel data
- regularly confirm and clarify
- gain individual expertise: training/education/experience
- draw influence diagrams: identify supporters, opponents, and persuadable
- You might need transition coaching and development coaching

## 2nd 30 days

To communicate with your boss/manager

- negotiate timelines for action planning
- meet with your boss to discuss the hypothesis/findings
- negotiate with your boss to establish realistic expectations if needed

Tasks for each week

- conduct an informal check-in with your boss/peers to gauge the adaptation process
- regularly confirm and clarify
- review the progress regularly
- keep your long-term goals in mind

To achieve your goal

- secure early wins: build credibility/momentum
- complete a key project by an agreed-to deadline

## 3rd 30 days

To communicate with your boss/manager

- check your progress and the onboarding process

To achieve your goal,

- secure early wins: build credibility/momentum

Tasks for each week

- meet with your boss to discuss the hypothesis/findings
- regularly confirm and clarify
- keep your long-term goals in mind

Some Quantifiable Steps for the 3 months ([link](#)):

- Ask  $\geq 20$  questions per week
- Starting from the 2nd month, hands-on time is more than {read, listen, write, think}
- Weekly 1on1 with the mentor
- 1on1 per month with supervisor/manager
- At least 1 time with an up-level manager (e.g., VP)
- Ask directly if there are any questions
- When there is a problem, think about “we” (as a team), rather than “they/he/she”
- Don't bring personal emotions
- Be responsible and reliable