

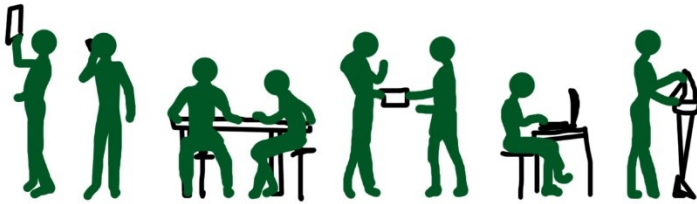
SPARTADIA

A BATTLE PLAN FOR TODAY'S BUSINESS

E-Book Excerpt

THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED DAYS

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By Ray Martin

E-Book: The First One Hundred Days excerpted from:
Spartadia: A Battle Plan for Today's Business
by Ray E. Martin

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First Edition

The First One Hundred Days

The first hundred days of an employee's tenure is a critical time. A newly hired employee might assume s/he has got the job and has passed the final barrier, but this is not the case. In addition, a manager might assume that the person who sat politely for the interview is the same person who now sits at their workstation three months later. Equally not so.

The first hundred days must start with a sober assessment of who this person actually is. How different is this individual, in terms of skills, attitude and personality, from the one who sat for the interview? How different is this person from the type that was envisioned? An employee's real personality is always present during the interview/audition process, but often a manager's optimism and desire to get the hiring over with and get back to business might cause him or her to turn a blind eye to particular personality traits, turns of phrase or even body language which could otherwise speak volumes.

People go through a metamorphosis once they join an existing organization. A predictable transition occurs as this "new person" moves from the polite formality of a newbie acclimatizing to the atmosphere of the environment they have been hired into, to a specific individual with an actual personality. This transformation can take people by surprise, especially when the person turns out to be someone very different from who they seemed to be at the very start, especially in those days or weeks prior to actually being hired. They are different now. Or more precisely they are more themselves. And this true self was there all along. It just might not have been noticed.

As much as possible, a manager's goal is to help train employees on the job, in a way that blends their true personality and aptitudes with the actual job for which they have been hired. However, it is very difficult for most businesses or departments to provide a dedicated resource assigned purely for training. A learning-by-doing method, however, allows a manager to ascertain quickly if the new hire can handle the job over the long haul, and whether s/he is a fit with the

rest of the team. In most cases, an employee needs less of this than one would think.

To hire people and then let them act completely of their own accord leads to a potential for drift. This is not to say that delegation and empowerment do not have a place; they certainly do, but delegation and empowerment involve guidance and steps to follow—a structured freedom, which is very different from allowing someone their own free reign.

Before an employee can be fully trusted with a delegated activity, or with the freedom that empowerment allows, they have to first prove that they are a true fit. An employee must earn that freedom: it cannot be given solely based on elapsed time.

There have been episodes where we at Qualifirst have given people freedom before they had truly earned it and we soon recognized this to be a mistake. This is why these first hundred days represent such an essential timeframe. As a manager it presents an opportunity to turn a good hire into a good employee. New employees, especially management employees, have to learn a lot, and they must continue to earn the right to manage.

It's a cart before-the-horse situation. Empowerment without guidance and training leads to bad decisions. Therefore, the manager's unique contribution is to make the employees more productive and efficient through clear training and coaching processes.

During these first hundred days an employee also needs to demonstrate both an understanding of the tasks assigned and the capacity and willingness to learn. This is not always done through book-study. I have found one of the best ways for an employee to learn is actually to have them train another person, because only someone who knows a procedure can truly teach it, and teaching another is the fastest route to finding out the parts that are still unknown or unsure.

A manager must hold employees accountable for what is expected of them. Accountability leads to personal discipline, which eventually leads to the mindset that paves the way for

empowerment. A manager must also provide measurable outcomes, by which an employee can measure performance and achievement.

This preliminary period of one hundred days allows an employee to remember that s/he is still on probation, and is still being molded, and that to a great degree, this probation will never truly end.

Download additional e-books at: spartadia-recruit.com.

SIDEBAR: The First Hundred Days

We have learned some tough lessons at Qualifirst over the years. One of these was that almost every manager-level hire that we brought on board in the early years failed.

Most people, it seemed, just stop working after the probationary period had elapsed. It wasn't that they did nothing, just that they settled into a routine and became too comfortable. This is not to say that they were lazy, but just that when peoples' jobs lack specific definition, it is easy for a one-hour task to become a two-hour task or longer.

I have found that for all employees, myself included, it is essential to define specific activities for each position. This has to be done and reviewed regularly.

Our warehouse has proven to be a good training ground for our staff, since the jobs are clearly defined and the outcomes are obvious.

In recent years, we have found that sticking to defined task plans for all levels of employees has allowed them to flourish within their own personality type—something that we hold as very valuable, so that they can simultaneously grow as individuals and follow a plan.
