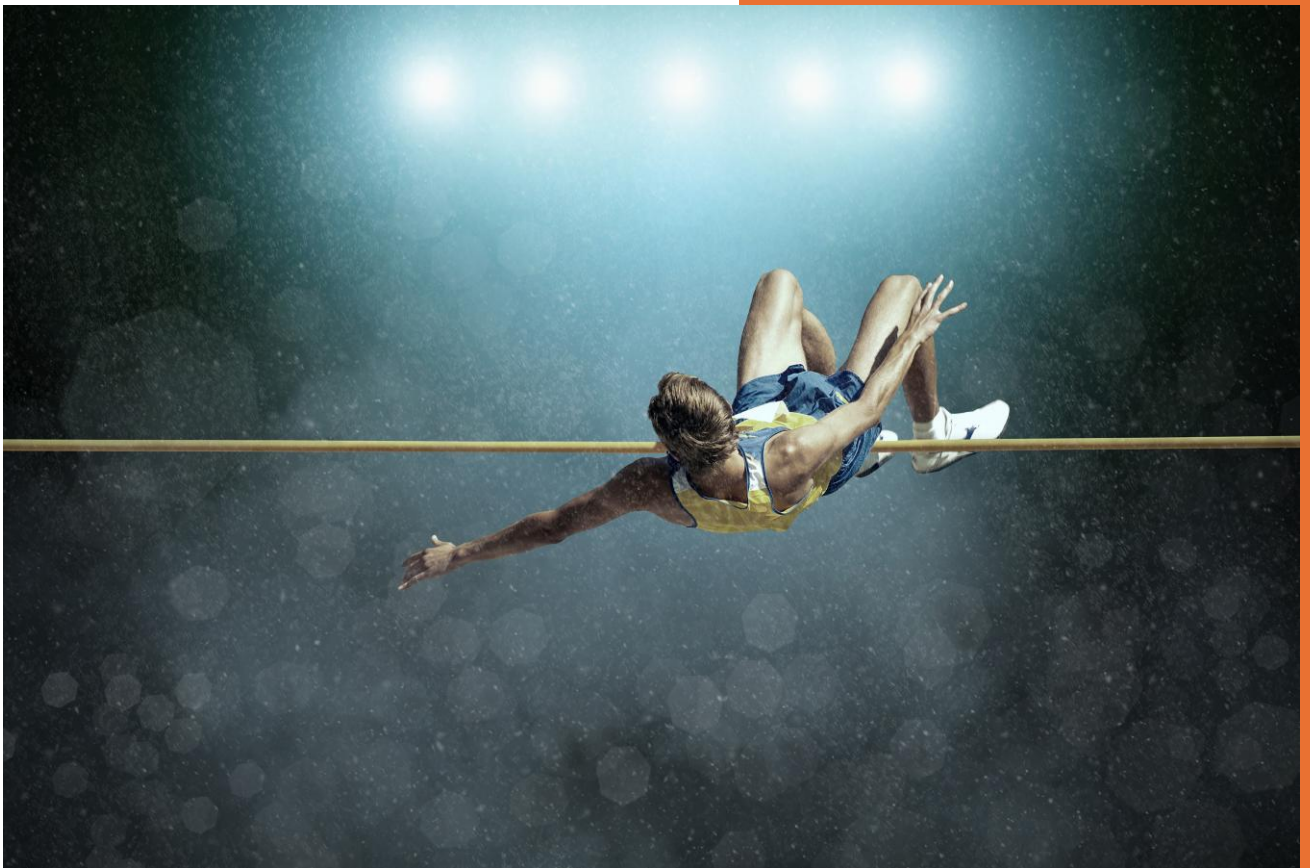


THE FIRST 100-DAYS IN OFFICE

Building momentum and Measurable Impact from Day One

**A practical guide to navigating the first 100 days
in a new sales leadership role**



Pascal Hermant & Nikolaus Bremerich
POWERING

PREFACE

The first 100 days in a new leadership position are decisive. As a Sales Leader, you enter a role where expectations are high and time to deliver impact is short.

Having been in this situation ourselves, we remember how quickly daily business tended to overwhelm you. If you want to create impact, you need invest the time to understand first, then define your strategy and quick wins and then execute consequently.

This sounds easy, but it isn't.

Harvard Business Review found that nearly half of new executives underperform in their first 18 months. Why? They push their own solutions before understanding the context.

This guide provides the structured EARN-framework, including in depth explanations, as well as a ready to use Checklist for tasks to be executed, helping you to navigate this critical phase with clarity and confidence.

It outlines the key priorities, explains why they matter, and translates them into actionable steps. With this guidance, you can establish credibility, align your team, and set the foundation for sustainable success.

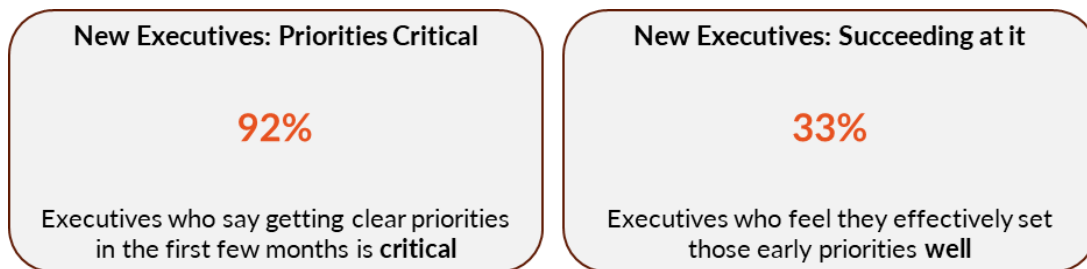
It is structured in 3 parts:

1. a comprehensive guide of what should be done when and how
2. a quick guide with the most important actions
3. a checklist that helps you stay on track.



THE FIRST 100-DAYS IN OFFICE

Why building and executing a strong plan is crucial



Stepping into a new Sales Leadership role represents one of the most critical transitions in a leader's career. The first 100 days often determine not only how effectively a leader establishes credibility, but also the long-term trajectory of the organization's commercial performance^[1]. This early phase is the moment to set the tone, create alignment, and build momentum for sustained success.

Yet, it is also one of the most challenging leadership transitions: McKinsey research shows that while 92% of new executives recognize the importance of setting clear priorities early on, only about one-third believe they do so successfully^[2]. This underscores how demanding and defining these first months truly are.

This guide provides a structured framework to help new Sales Leaders navigate this high-stakes period with clarity and impact. It outlines a phased plan with concrete steps, key focus areas, and best practices that enable leaders to balance quick wins with foundational learning, ensuring they deliver immediate results while building a durable platform for long-term growth^[3].

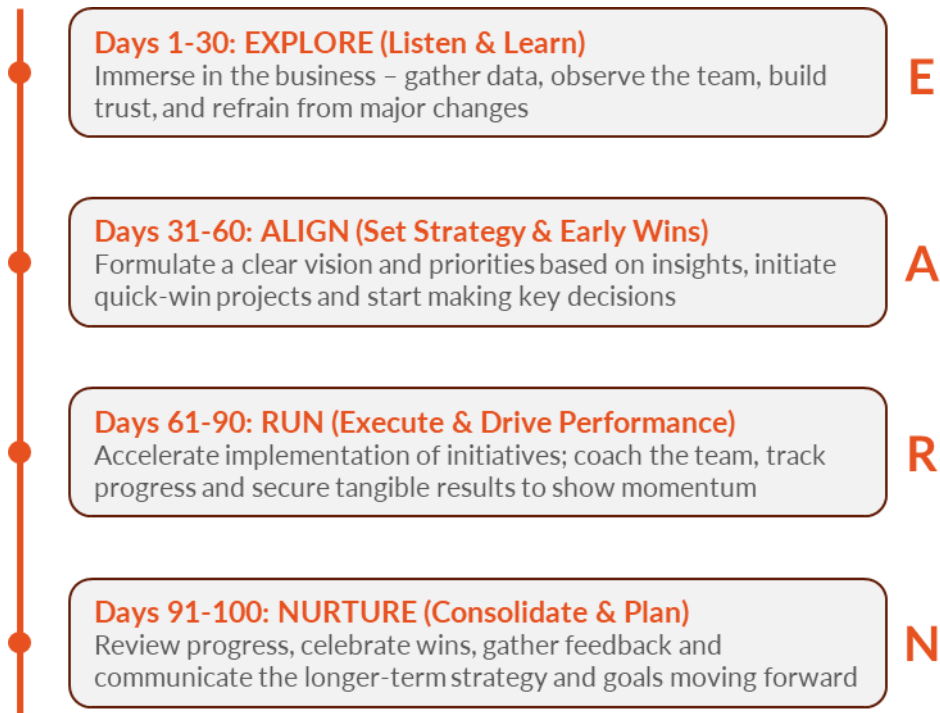
To succeed, a Sales Leader must first **align with the company's strategy and leadership expectations**, creating a shared understanding of priorities and direction from day one. Equally important is to **build trust** through structured listening and a rigorous assessment of the current sales landscape, allowing for fact-based decisions and credible engagement with teams and stakeholders. As the understanding of the organization deepens, leaders should focus on **delivering quick wins** - targeted, visible achievements that demonstrate competence, generate momentum, and strengthen confidence in their leadership. Finally, to secure lasting success, they must **transform for growth** by identifying key transformational levers and initiating strategic plans that elevate performance beyond immediate results.

By approaching the first 100 days with this deliberate balance, learning while acting, listening while leading, Sales Leaders can not only establish themselves quickly but also lay the groundwork for a high-performing, growth-oriented sales organization.

Phased Plan for the First 100 Days

A structured 100-day plan is usually broken into phases, typically covering **the first 30, 60, 90 days (and up to day 100)**. Each phase has distinct objectives that build on one another.

By following a phased approach, a new Sales Leader can transition methodically from learning to strategizing to executing. **Figure 1** provides a high-level timeline of key focus areas by phase.



Below, we delve into each phase with detailed actions and considerations:

Days 1–30: **E**xplore - Listen, Learn, and Build Trust

Focus: *Understanding the landscape and building credibility before making changes.*

- **Immerse Yourself in Data and Culture:** Devote the first month to a **fact-based diagnosis** of the sales organization. Dive into performance metrics, pipeline data, customer feedback, and financial reports to get an unbiased view of where things stand^[1]. Simultaneously, learn the company's culture and "how things get done" – the unspoken norms and history that influence the sales team's behavior^[1]. This dual learning (hard data *and* cultural context) will guide all your subsequent decisions.
- **Conduct a Listening Tour:** Prioritize listening over speaking in initial interactions^[1]. Schedule one-on-one meetings with your direct reports, key sales managers, and cross-functional peers (e.g. in Marketing, Customer Success, Product) to hear their perspectives^[4]. Participate actively in existing company and sales management routines. Do not change the agenda of the first meetings. Instead, take time to deeply understand the objectives, the roles, and the expected outputs of each routine. Do ride-alongs with salespeople of different teams to understand how they work. Ask open-ended questions about what's working, what isn't, and opportunities for improvement. *For a CSO or Sales Director, this also means talking to a few important customers early on.* For example, new Sales Leaders are advised to meet key clients and stakeholders across the business in the first weeks^[2]. Showing genuine curiosity and **actively listening** will start building trust with your team and stakeholders.
- **Engage with Your People (Team Focus):** In your first weeks, spend a **large majority of your time with people** – your sales team and key colleagues. "Organizational

health” starts with individuals feeling heard and valued[4]. Conduct introductory team meetings (e.g. a casual meet-and-greet or a sales team Q&A session) to introduce yourself and allow employees to get to know you beyond your title[4]. Hold early **one-on-one meetings** with each direct report and, if possible, skip-level team members to understand their goals and challenges. Signal your commitment to supporting them. Also identify any key talent “flight risks” or morale issues so you can address those before they fester[5][5]. Building these relationships lays the groundwork for trust.

- **Balanced Stakeholder Outreach:** Make sure your learning isn’t siloed. If you come from a sales background, resist spending the whole month only with the sales force (a common trap) while **neglecting other functions**[1]. Meet with other executives – e.g., the CEO, CFO, CMO, COO – to grasp their expectations and how the sales org can support broader goals. Understanding the broader business and **clarifying your role** in the context of the executive team is vital for alignment[3]. These early cross-functional touches also show colleagues that you’re a collaborative CSO or Sales Director, not just focused on your own silo.
- **Show Respect for Prior Efforts:** Quickly establish yourself as a leader who **respects the existing team and legacy**. Avoid any urge to criticize your predecessor or the current processes upon arrival – “**don’t start your legacy by saying what a lousy job the prior executive did.**”[4] Instead, acknowledge the successes and hard work of your predecessors and team. Even if change is needed, frame your approach as building on what’s been done rather than tearing it down[4]. This attitude will earn you goodwill and avoid putting the team on the defensive.
- **Resist Immediate Overhauls:** While you might feel pressure to “make your mark,” refrain from making major changes or proclamations in month one. As one expert put it, “*prescription without diagnosis is malpractice,*” so take time to diagnose before prescribing[4]. Avoid coming in “too hot” with drastic decisions or new strategies before you fully understand the context[1]. Conversely, ensure you aren’t invisible – engage actively, but focus on learning rather than imposing. Striking this balance demonstrates **humility and strategic patience**.

By the end of the first 30 days, aim to have a **comprehensive understanding of "the 5 Ps" – people, processes, politics, products, and priorities** of your organization[6]. In doing so, you’ll have built credibility as a leader who listens and respects the team, setting the stage for the planning to follow.

Furthermore, conduct a **30-Day Report & Formal Review with your Line Manager:** present your findings, share insights, and agree on priorities and implications for the next phase

Days 31–60: **Align - Define Your Strategy and Secure Early Wins**

Focus: *Drawing conclusions from your initial learning and translating them into an action plan, while delivering some quick wins to build momentum.*

- **Craft and Communicate Your Vision:** With a month of intensive learning behind you, start shaping a clear **strategic narrative** for where the sales organization needs to go[1]. This doesn’t mean unveiling a full long-term strategy by week 8, but you should articulate the broad vision (“the next mountain to climb”) and initial priorities based on what you’ve learned[1]. For example, decide if the focus will be on pipeline

growth, margin improvement, new market penetration, customer retention, or other key goals – and why^[2]. Begin **testing your vision in one-on-one discussions** with the CEO and key stakeholders: e.g. “Here’s what I’m thinking based on what I’ve learned – what’s your reaction?”^[1]. This helps refine the strategy and builds early buy-in.

- **Identify Quick Wins: Nothing builds credibility faster than early wins.** Look for a few impactful but achievable initiatives you can kick off in your first couple of months^[1]. These should align with your broader strategy (avoid random projects), but be narrow enough to show progress quickly. For a Sales Leader, a quick win might be *fixing a broken part of the sales process* (e.g., speeding up contract approvals to shorten sales cycle), jump-starting a stalled high-potential deal, or personally helping close a mid-sized customer that was wavering^{[4][4]}. By day 60, try to have launched one or two such quick-win projects and be able to report concrete progress (“we’ve already improved X”, or “Project Y is underway and yielding early results”)^[1]. Early wins not only prove that following your lead will lead to success, but they also boost team confidence.
- **Make Key Decisions – People and Process:** Around the 6–8 week mark, you’ll need to start **making some decisions** based on your assessments^[1]. Revisit the talent on your team: do you have the “*right people in the right roles*” to achieve the vision? By now you’ve seen your team in action; if there are glaring skill gaps or misalignments, plan how to address them. This could mean reassigning roles, providing coaching, or if absolutely necessary, transitioning out team members who are not a fit. Many experts advise not to delay tough people decisions: if a change in a key position is clearly needed, doing it sooner (compassionately and with stakeholder input) is better than letting problems persist^[1]. On the flip side, identify **high performers** and start ensuring they are recognized and engaged so you retain them. These structural moves (often part of installing an “accountability system” aligned to your priorities) signal how things will run under your leadership^[1].
- **Establish the ideal sales management routines and define what “best practice” looks like** for the organization. This includes developing or refining clear processes, performance standards, and tracking mechanisms. Set up a regular sales leadership meeting cadence (if it does not exist), implement a standardized pipeline review process if one doesn’t exist or introduce a simple dashboard of sales KPIs if reporting was lacking. The Sales Leader should then assess the current state of implementation and identify any gaps or missing capabilities. These insights will serve as the foundation for targeted actions and improvements in phase 3.
- **Drive Alignment with Stakeholders:** Continue investing in relationships and **stakeholder management** during this phase. Update your CEO (and board, if appropriate) pro-actively on what you’ve learned and your emerging game plan – this keeps them confident in your direction^[1]. Also communicate to the broader sales team (and possibly the whole company) around the 60-day point. Many leaders send a “60-day update” or hold a town hall to share: “*Here’s what I’ve learned, and here’s broadly what’s next.*”^[1] Being transparent about the issues you’re tackling and giving a sneak peek of the future vision can quell rumours and anxiety in the organization. It also shows the team that you heard their input and are acting on it. Externally, consider reaching out early to a few major customers or partners to share your excitement and commitment to them – reinforcing confidence that the sales organization under your watch will be responsive to their needs^[1].

- **Show You're Willing to Change the Status Quo:** By the end of 60 days, people should feel some **new energy or direction** since you took the helm. Even if you inherited a strong sales engine, find opportunities to signal that “we’re not just doing business as usual”^[1]. This could be as simple as challenging a long-held sales policy or launching a small initiative that encourages innovation or cross-team collaboration. The idea is to honour what’s working but also show that you’re going to add fresh value. The first 100 days are the best time for **bold moves and clarity of purpose**^[1]. Use this window to start **shaping the culture** – for instance, if you want a culture of accountability and high-performance, you might introduce weekly progress check-ins on key deals or new incentive contests to spur healthy competition^[4].

By Day 60, you should have **outlined your strategic priorities and gained buy-in** from top stakeholders, while also having a couple of early wins and new routines in motion. In essence, the “plan” phase is wrapping up, and you’re about to shift fully into **execution mode**.

Additionally, a **60-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager** helps you to present your strategic priorities, results of quick wins and implications for the next phase.

Days 61–90: **R**un - Execute, Iterate, and Drive Performance

Focus: *Translating plans into action and demonstrating tangible progress on key initiatives and targets.*

- **Accelerate Execution of Initiatives:** In the third month, move decisively into **implementation**. The strategies and changes you decided on should now be underway. Push your top initiatives forward and start **knocking down milestones**^[1]. For example, if you kicked off a project to improve lead generation or to restructure the account management team in Phase 2, ensure those efforts have clear owners and deadlines – and check that by around Day 90, they’re hitting initial targets. Establish a steady **cadence of accountability**: short weekly check-ins on critical projects can keep everyone focused and surface issues early^[1]. At this point, you are no longer “new,” so the organization expects results, not just plans. Use any management systems you put in place (meetings, KPI dashboards, pipeline reviews) to monitor progress. If something is stalling, dive in to problem-solve or allocate more resources. Being hands-on now will prevent small problems from growing into big disappointments by month six^[1].
- **Drive Sales Performance and Culture:** As a Sales Leader, delivering numbers is paramount. **Keep the team focused on hitting short-term targets** without losing sight of long-term strategy. Now is the time to enforce a culture of execution and accountability: make sure sales reps and managers are clear on their goals and key performance indicators, and review these metrics regularly^{[4][4]}. Continue to foster an environment of coaching and development – by the 60-90 day window, you should establish regular 1:1 coaching sessions if not already in place (high-performing sales teams are ~3x more likely to have structured coaching routines)^[2]. Encourage frontline sales managers to stick to their “coaching plans” for each rep^[4]. This period is also about **reinforcing the culture** you want: celebrate the small victories achieved so far, recognize individuals who have embraced new behaviors, and keep communicating the principles (e.g. customer focus, urgency, teamwork) that you expect everyone to live by^[4].

- **Engage Key Customers and Markets:** By now, ensure you as a Sales Leader have gotten **external exposure**. If you haven't met your top 5-10 customers yet, do so in this phase (through calls or visits)[4]. Showing up in front of customers demonstrates commitment and helps you gather market feedback. Internally, it also boosts morale – the sales team sees that you're willing to roll up your sleeves and even help close deals. In smaller companies, new sales leaders often become a “player-coach” during this time: actively participating in sales calls or negotiations to land a couple of wins yourself[4]. This hands-on selling can give you valuable insight into what customers are thinking and what obstacles your reps face, while also directly contributing to revenue. Additionally, review the **sales pipeline health** in detail: analyse deal velocity, win rates, and any bottlenecks in the funnel[2]. Conduct a thorough **win/loss analysis** on deals closed or lost in your first quarter to spot patterns (e.g., are pricing issues common in losses? is a competitor outmanoeuvring you in a certain segment?)[4]. Use these insights to fine-tune sales tactics and coach the team on adjustments.
- **Secure and Publicise Early Results:** Aim to have **tangible achievements by Day 90** that you (and others) can point to[1]. Examples are: sales for the quarter are trending above forecast, or the team brought in a significant new client, or a process change you implemented already reduced proposal turnaround time from 5 days to 2. Also, the full implementation of the sales management routines across the organisation is an achievement worth securing and publishing. These concrete wins are incredibly important for proving your approach is working. When such wins occur, **communicate and celebrate** them. Let the CEO and peers know about the progress (without bragging – frame it as “the team's success”). More importantly, celebrate with your sales team: acknowledging their hard work and early adoption of your initiatives reinforces a winning culture[2]. Just as important, reflect on any shortfalls – not everything will go perfectly. Use end-of-quarter reviews to discuss openly what isn't yet on track and how you'll address it. This transparency builds credibility.
- **Adapt and Iterate:** Execution is rarely linear. Stay agile and be willing to **iterate on your plans** based on what the first 2-3 months have taught you. Perhaps you discovered an initial strategy assumption was off, or one of your new programs isn't gaining traction. Don't hesitate to adjust course now. It's easier to pivot or tweak an approach in month three than to wait until problems compound by month twelve[1]. For example, if a new sales training initiative isn't resonating, refine its content or approach rather than pressing on unchanged. Show the team that feedback loops are in place – you listen and refine as you go, which encourages a culture of continuous improvement.

By the end of the first 90 days, you should be **fully in command of the sales organization's operations** and have **demonstrated early proof points of success**. You'll have **built or solidified the team's trust** by combining decisive action with ongoing learning. This sets you up to use the final stretch (days 91-100) to cement plans for the future and transition out of “onboarding mode.”

To secure and present those achievements, prepare the **90-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager**, which includes a draft of the roadmap for the next year (see next phase).

Days 91–100: Nurture - Consolidate Gains and Plan Forward

Focus: *Solidifying what's been achieved in the first 3 months, adjusting where needed, and laying out the roadmap for the next year.*

- **Evaluate the First 90 Days:** Use the start of this period (around day 90) to do a **personal and organizational review**. Take stock of how the outcomes compare to the objectives you set at the beginning of the 100 days^[1]. Which goals were met or exceeded? Where did you fall short or move slower than expected? Identify the root causes of any shortfalls—is it a resource issue, a skills gap, an external factor? Consider writing a brief **“90-day report”** for yourself, your CEO, or the board, summarizing accomplishments and lessons so far^[1]. This reflection ensures you and your stakeholders have a clear, shared picture of progress to date. It also shows self-awareness and accountability on your part. Additionally, **solicit feedback** from your team and peers on your leadership during these first months^[1]. An informal 360-degree check-in can reveal how your new routines and changes are being received and where you might need to adjust your style or focus.
- **Communicate the Road Ahead:** As you wrap up the 100th day, **shift the narrative from “start-up mode” to the ongoing journey**. If you haven't already unveiled a detailed strategy, now is the time to articulate the full plan for the next year (and beyond). Many executives choose the end of 100 days to hold a company-wide meeting or send a comprehensive communication sharing their long-term vision and how the first 3 months' insights shaped that plan^[1]. For a Sales Leader, this could mean presenting an updated sales strategy document that defines targets for the next 4 quarters, key strategic initiatives (with owners and timelines), and any organizational changes made to support these goals. Tie this message back to the input you gathered: for example, *“Many of you told me in our first weeks that our pricing strategy was a pain point – we listened, and one key initiative in our new plan is to simplify pricing packages.”*^[1] Showing that the **listening done in early days led to concrete actions** closes the loop for the organization and reinforces trust. It signals that while the first 100 days are over, the real journey of execution and transformation is just beginning – and that you're committed for the long haul^[1].
- **Ensure Structures and Team are Set:** Double check that any new processes or structural changes you introduced are **running smoothly** as you exit the 100-day sprint^[1]. For instance, if you implemented a new weekly pipeline review meeting in month 2, evaluate if it's effective or needs tweaking. Make adjustments now so that these mechanisms continue to add value rather than becoming burdensome. Also confirm that your leadership team is solidified: any interim roles or vacancies should be resolved by now (e.g., if you redistributed territories or if you've been carrying dual responsibilities, finalize those arrangements)^[1]. By Day 100, everyone on the sales team should know **“who is doing what”** and how the team is structured going forward – providing clarity and stability after a period of change. This is crucial for maintaining momentum; people are more comfortable giving their all when they know where they fit in the plan.
- **Set Next Horizons (6–12 Month Goals):** While celebrating the close of the first 100 days, pivot quickly to future objectives. Lay out specific goals for the next 6, 9, and 12 months and share those with your team^[2]. These might include revenue targets,

market expansion goals, improvements in customer satisfaction scores, or sales efficiency metrics. Ensure these goals tie into the broader company objectives and that each team member sees how their work contributes. By establishing these medium-term milestones, you help the team transition from “startup sprint” mentality to a marathon mindset. Encourage everyone to pace themselves for sustainable success – the intense onboarding period is over, but now consistency is key^[1].

- **Celebrate and Acknowledge:** Take time to **acknowledge the team’s hard work and successes** during the first 100 days^[2]. Whether it’s an informal thank-you gathering or a shout-out in your 100-day town hall, celebrating wins (big and small) helps cement a positive, winning culture. It also energizes people for the road ahead. Importantly, acknowledge those who went above and beyond to support the transition – this could be a veteran sales manager who was your go-to adviser, or perhaps your sales ops lead who crunched data for your new strategy, etc. Recognizing these contributions publicly boosts morale and signals the kind of team culture you value.
- **Personal Regroup:** Finally, recognize that you’ve just completed an exhausting sprint. The first 100 days for a leader often involve long hours and constant engagement. If possible, take a moment (even if just a day or a weekend) to **recharge and reflect personally**^[1]. Ensure you have a plan to maintain your own energy and focus in the coming months – leadership is a marathon, and you need to sustain the pace. Successful Sales Leaders look beyond just 90 or 100 days and focus on the full first year and beyond^[3].

Completing the first 100 days is a significant milestone. By this point, you’ve likely established trust, shown some wins, and mapped out a clear path forward. You can now **shift from “onboarding mode” to driving long-term strategy execution** with credibility.

In your final **100-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager**, you should therefore wrap up all key achievements of your first 100 days & present the finalised roadmap (which has been drafted at the end of phase 3) for the next year.

The table on the next page summarises the phased 100-day plan and its key objectives.



SUMMARY: KEY OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS BY PHASE OF FIRST 100 DAYS

Timeframe	Key Objectives & Actions
Days 1–30	<p>Listen and diagnose: Deep-dive into sales performance data and team capabilities[1]. Conduct one-on-ones and stakeholder meetings to gather perspectives[1]. Understand company culture and norms[1]. Avoid immediate drastic changes; instead, focus on building trust and credibility with the team[4][4]. Begin meeting key customers to gain external viewpoints[2].</p>
Days 31–60	<p>Set direction and score quick wins: Formulate a clear vision and a strategic plan based on insights from first 30 days[1]. Communicate emerging priorities to the CEO, your team, and peers to build buy-in[1]. Identify and initiate quick-win projects that show immediate progress (fix pain points, close a few deals)[1][4]. Make initial talent or structural decisions if critical gaps are identified (put the right people in the right roles)[1]. Establish new management routines (e.g. regular pipeline reviews, team huddles) to drive accountability[1]. Keep stakeholders updated on what’s been learned and what’s coming next[1].</p>
Days 61–90	<p>Execute and drive performance: Launch full execution of key initiatives – ensure projects and changes are being implemented on schedule[1]. Monitor sales metrics and pipeline closely; hold the team accountable for hitting targets and following new processes [4]. Continue coaching and developing the sales force (e.g. formalize regular coaching sessions, encourage peer learning)[2]. Engage actively with major clients and deals (be a “player-coach” to win important sales and lead by example)[4]. Publicize and celebrate early wins (e.g. improved KPIs or big client wins) to build momentum[1][2]. Adjust tactics or plans based on feedback and results – stay agile and correct course where needed[1].</p>
Days 91–100	<p>Consolidate and plan ahead: Evaluate progress against initial 100-day goals – identify successes and gaps[1]. Gather feedback from team and peers on your leadership and the changes so far[1]. Finalize and communicate the longer-term sales strategy (next 1–2 year plan) to the organization, linking it to insights from your first 3 months[1]. Ensure new structures and processes are functioning well or adjusted as needed for sustainability[1]. Set 6–12 month objectives and key results so the team knows the roadmap beyond 100 days[2]. Recognize the team’s hard work and celebrate the completion of the first 100 days to reinforce a winning culture[2]. Prepare to shift into steady-state execution with a focus on consistency and long-term growth.</p>

CRITICAL FOCUS AREAS FOR NEW SALES LEADERS (BEYOND THE TIMELINE)

In addition to the time-phased plan above, there are some **fundamental focus areas** that a Sales Leader should address in the transition.

These focus areas highlight that beyond completing tasks, new Sales Leaders must **align strategy with expectations, navigate the company context, win hearts and minds, and continuously drive performance**. By integrating these themes into each phase of your 100-day plan, you ensure a well-rounded approach.

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

Even with a solid plan, it's easy to stumble into some classic new-leader mistakes. Here are a few **pitfalls to avoid** in your first 100 days, as identified by experienced leaders:

- **Badmouthing the Past:** Never begin by tearing down your predecessor or the existing team's work. Criticizing the previous regime – even if improvement is needed – will alienate people. Instead, focus on the future and **build on what you've inherited**^{[4][4]}.
- **Moving Too Fast, or Not Fast Enough:** There's a balance between urgent action and patient learning. Don't rush in with big changes or bold declarations before you have data to back them up^[1]. But conversely, don't be so cautious that you seem invisible or indecisive in the early weeks^[1]. Stakeholders want to see you actively engaging and leading, but also doing so thoughtfully.
- **Staying in a Silo:** A Sales Leader who only talks to sales staff and ignores cross-functional partners will miss the bigger picture. **Broaden your perspective** by engaging with marketing, finance, operations, and others early^[1]. This prevents blind spots and shows you're a team player in the C-suite, not just a sales silo leader.
- **Overpromising Results:** Enthusiasm is good, but **beware of committing to unrealistic targets or timelines** before you fully understand the sales engine's capabilities^[6]. Overpromising and underdelivering is a quick way to lose credibility. It's better to set modest initial goals, then exceed them, than to trumpet aggressive promises and fall short.
- **Neglecting Culture and Morale:** Culture is not just about values written on the wall: it's about ensuring they are consistently translated into daily behaviours. Observe whether day-to-day actions reflect company values, listen to concerns, communicate often, and model the behaviours you expect (e.g., transparency, accountability) from day one. Focusing only on numbers and strategy without **addressing team morale and culture** can derail you. People drive the results. Too often the culture is clear in theory, but the expected behaviours are not embedded in practice. If the team is anxious or resistant, your best plans won't take hold. Make culture a priority – listen to concerns, communicate often, and model the values you preach (e.g., transparency, accountability) from day one^{[4][4]}.

By being mindful of these pitfalls, you can steer clear of early missteps that undermine leadership. Pairing **self-awareness** (avoiding these mistakes) with the proactive strategies in the framework above will increase your odds of a successful transition.

CONCLUSION

Your first 100 days as a Sales Leader will set the tone for your tenure and can make a lasting impact on the organization's trajectory. It's a unique window of opportunity: you have the latitude to ask questions, challenge the status quo, and rally people around a new vision. By following a structured plan – listening and learning before acting, securing early wins, and then driving execution – you establish momentum and credibility that carry into the rest of your first year and beyond.

Equally important, focus on the *human* side of the equation: build trust with your team and peers, communicate relentlessly, and show that you value what has come before even as you chart a new path. As various frameworks suggest, success comes from balancing **quick strategic moves** with **deep relationship-building**. If you prepare thoroughly, act decisively on well-informed priorities, and bring people along with you, you'll not only survive your first 100 days – you'll **set the foundation for exceptional long-term results**^[1]. Good luck on your journey as you lead your sales organization to new heights!

QUICK GUIDE

DAYS 1–30: EXPLORE - LISTEN, LEARN, AND BUILD TRUST

What: Understand the sales organization’s landscape and build credibility before making changes.

How

Analyze Data:

- Schedule time to review sales performance dashboards, pipeline reports, customer feedback surveys, and financial statements. Take notes on trends, gaps, and outliers.

Learn the Culture:

- Attend informal team gatherings, shadow sales calls, and ask team members about unwritten rules and company history.

Conduct a Listening Tour:

- Book 1:1 meetings with all direct sales- and key sales managers.
- Conduct ride-alongs with sales people in different markets.
- Prepare open-ended questions: “What’s working well? What’s holding us back? What would you change if you could?”
- Document insights after each meeting and look for recurring themes.

Meet Key Customers:

- Identify top 5–10 customers and request introductory calls or visits.
- Ask them about their experience with your sales team and what would make them happier.

Respect Prior Efforts:

- Publicly acknowledge team achievements in your first team meeting.
- Avoid negative comments about predecessors; frame your approach as building on existing strengths.

Engage with People:

- Host a casual “meet the CSO/ Sales Director” session (virtual or in-person).
- Schedule skip-level meetings with high-potential team members.
- Ask HR for a list of recent departures and check for any “flight risks.”

Avoid Immediate Overhauls:

- When asked for your opinion, respond with curiosity: “I’m still learning—what do you think?”
- Keep a running list of ideas but don’t implement major changes yet.

Balanced Stakeholder Outreach:

- Set up introductory meetings with the CEO, CFO, CMO, and COO.
- Ask each: “How can sales best support your goals?”
- Summarize these conversations for your own strategic planning.

30-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager

- Present your findings, share insights, agree on priorities & implications for next phase

DAYS 31-60: ALIGN - DEFINE STRATEGY AND SECURE EARLY WINS

What: Draw conclusions from initial learning, create an action plan, and deliver quick wins.

How

Craft and Communicate Vision:

- Draft a one-page vision statement for the sales organization.
- Share it with the CEO and key stakeholders for feedback.
- Present the refined vision in a team meeting and via email.

Identify Quick Wins:

- Review your notes for “low-hanging fruit”—process bottlenecks, stalled deals, or easy fixes.
- Assign owners and deadlines for each quick-win initiative.
- Track progress weekly and celebrate small victories publicly.

Make Key Decisions:

- Use performance data and feedback to assess team roles.
- If a change is needed, meet privately with affected individuals, explain your reasoning, and offer support.
- Recognize high performers with personal notes or public praise.

Establish Core Processes:

- Launch a weekly sales leadership meeting with a set agenda.
- Introduce a standardized pipeline review template.
- Roll out a simple dashboard of KPIs and train the team to use it.

Establish the ideal Sales Management Routines:

- define what “best practice” looks like
- includes developing clear processes, performance standards, and tracking mechanisms.
- Assess current implementation state & identify any gaps or missing capabilities.

Drive Alignment:

- Send a “60-day update” email to the team and stakeholders summarizing what you’ve learned and what’s next.
- Hold a town hall to answer questions and address concerns.

Show Willingness to Change:

- Challenge one outdated policy or process and propose a pilot alternative.
- Encourage team members to suggest innovations and reward the best ideas.

60-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager

- Present your present your strategic priorities, results of quick wins and implications for the next phase

DAYS 61-90: RUN - EXECUTE, ITERATE, AND DRIVE PERFORMANCE

What: Translate plans into action and demonstrate tangible progress.

How

Accelerate Execution:

- Assign clear owners and deadlines for all strategic initiatives.
- Hold weekly check-ins to review progress and remove obstacles.
- Use project management tools to track milestones and accountability.

Drive Sales Performance and Culture:

- Set short-term targets for each team and communicate them clearly.
- Schedule regular 1:1 coaching sessions with sales managers.
- Review KPIs and pipeline health every week; intervene early if targets are missed.

Engage Key Customers:

- Personally join sales calls or negotiations for top deals.
- Ask for direct feedback from customers after each interaction.

Celebrate and Reflect:

- Publicly recognize team members who achieve early wins.
- Hold a quarterly review meeting to discuss what's working and what isn't.
- Encourage open discussion of failures and lessons learned.

Adapt and Iterate:

- Solicit anonymous feedback via surveys or suggestion boxes.
- Adjust strategies and processes based on team and customer input.

90-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager:

- Present your achievements and draft a roadmap for next years activities.

DAYS 91-100: NURUTRE - CONSOLIDATE GAINS AND PLAN FORWARD

What: Solidify achievements, adjust as needed, and lay out the roadmap for the next year.

How

Evaluate Progress:

- Write a “90-day report” summarizing accomplishments, gaps, and lessons learned.
- Share the report with the CEO and board, and discuss next steps.

Communicate the Road Ahead:

- Prepare a detailed strategy document for the next 12 months.
- Present it in a company-wide meeting or via a comprehensive email.
- Link new initiatives to feedback and insights from the first 100 days.

Ensure Structures and Team Are Set:

- Review all new processes for effectiveness; tweak as needed.
- Confirm all team roles and responsibilities are clear and documented.

Set Next Horizons:

- Define specific 6–12 month goals (revenue, market expansion, customer satisfaction, etc.).
- Assign owners and timelines for each goal.

Celebrate and Regroup:

- Organize a team celebration (lunch, virtual event, or recognition ceremony).
- Personally thank those who supported your transition.
- Take a short break to recharge and reflect on your leadership journey.

100-Day Report & Formal Review with Manager:

- Wrap-up all key achievements of previous phases
- Present a roadmap for the next years’ activities & initiatives

PHASE-BY-PHASE CHECKLIST

Days 1–30: **E**xplore - Listen, Learn, and Build Trust

Item	Task	Additional Comment	Status
1	Sales dashboards, pipeline reports, customer surveys, and financials, noting trends, gaps, and outliers are analysed.		
2	Immersed in the culture by attending informal team gatherings, shadowing calls, and learning about unwritten rules and company history.		
3	Execution of a listening tour: met 1:1 with sales leaders, asked open-ended questions, and documented recurring themes.		
4	Connected with the top 5–10 customers through intro calls or visits, gathering direct feedback on their experience.		
5	Respected prior efforts by acknowledging team achievements and building on existing strengths.		
6	Engaged with people through a “Meet the CSO/ Sales Director” session, skip-level meetings, and by reviewing recent departures with HR.		
7	Avoided immediate overhauls, staying curious and keeping a list of ideas without implementing big changes.		
8	Built balanced stakeholder relationships by meeting the CEO, CFO, CMO, and COO, and summarizing their input for future planning.		

Once you ticked the boxes for this phasis, you’ll understand the sales organization, build credibility & avoid premature changes

Days 31–60: **A**lign - Define Strategy and Secure Early Wins

Item	Task	Additional Comment	Status
9	Crafted a one-page vision statement, refined it with leadership, and presented it to the team.		
10	Identified and executed quick wins by removing bottlenecks, unblocking stalled deals, and celebrating progress.		
11	Made key decisions on team roles, addressing changes privately and recognizing high performers publicly.		
12	Established core processes: weekly leadership meetings, a pipeline review template, and a KPI dashboard.		
13	Fostered alignment by sending a “60-day update” email and hosting a town hall to address concerns.		
14	Showed openness to change by piloting alternatives to outdated policies and rewarding innovative team ideas.		

Once those tasks are executed, you’ll be able to draw conclusions, set direction & deliver quick wins. You’re now ready for phase 3.

Days 61–90: **R**un - Execute, Iterate, and Drive Performance

Item	Task	Additional Comment	Status
15	Accelerated execution by assigning clear owners and deadlines, holding weekly check-ins, and tracking initiatives in project management tools.		
16	Drove sales performance and culture by setting short-term targets, coaching sales managers, and reviewing KPIs weekly.		
17	Engaged directly with key customers by joining top deals and asking for post-interaction feedback.		
18	Celebrated and reflected by recognizing early wins, holding a quarterly review, and fostering open discussion about failures and lessons.		
19	Adapted and iterated by collecting anonymous team feedback and adjusting strategies and processes accordingly.		

After this phase, you've turned plans into action and built momentum. You're now set for the last phase.

Days 91–100: Nurture - Consolidate Gains and Plan Forward

Item	Task	Additional Comment	Status
20	Evaluated progress with a 90-day report, sharing achievements, gaps, and lessons with the CEO and board.		
21	Communicated the road ahead by preparing a 12-month strategy and linking new initiatives to early learnings.		
22	Ensured team structures were in place by reviewing processes and clarifying/documenting all roles.		
23	Set next horizons by defining 6–12-month goals and assigning owners and timelines.		
24	Celebrated and regrouped by organizing a team event, personally thanking supporters, and taking time to recharge		

In this final phase, you've locked in progress & set a roadmap for next year.

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- [2] [Your first 100 days in sales leadership - SBR Consulting](#)
- [3] [Navigating the First Year as a Chief Sales Officer](#)
- [4] [The First 100 Days – When a New VP of Sales or a CRO Starts](#)
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- [6] [The Chief Sales Officer’s First 100 Days - Gartner](#)

ABOUT POWERING

POWERING supports companies in accelerating and transforming their sales successfully. We uplift the growth trajectory of our clients usually by 5 – 15%. This is thanks to our unique methodology that combines concept work, tool creation, impact learning and a strong change component to ensure adoption.

Our customers are midsized global players of 0.5 to 5 bn€ revenue and PE owned portfolio companies.

We are able to deliver on a global scale.

AUTHORS



NIKOLAUS BREMERICH is Managing Partner DACH at POWERING and brings over 30 years of experience in sales and business development. Before joining Powering, he held senior leadership roles including Vice President Sales & EMEA Lead at BRITA, where he successfully drove growth across international markets. With a strong track record in building high-performing sales organizations and shaping go-to-market strategies, Nikolaus combines deep industry expertise with a results-driven leadership style.



PASCAL HERMANT is Managing Partner of POWERING Spain with more than 25 years of experience in sales and commercial leadership. Prior to joining POWERING, he served as Global Sales Strategy Director at Danone, where he shaped international sales strategies and drove sustainable growth. Throughout his career, Pascal has built a reputation for combining strategic vision with hands-on execution, enabling organizations to achieve commercial excellence and long-term success.