MODULE OVERVIEW

# Leading a team you don't know yet: Four traps to avoid

Adaptive module | ~20 min

A manager arriving from outside, from another department or organization, lacks informal knowledge of how things work, and the first weeks shape what follows. Drawing on the work of Michael Watkins (The First 90 Days), this module defuses four named traps (parachuting in, invisibility, naivety about the welcome, and rushing in) and secures the most underrated asset of a new role: an alliance with their own manager, who decodes the unwritten rules.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Prepare your arrival before day one: a handover with your predecessor, strategic files, and an official team announcement.

02 Make your start visible and stay present where the work happens, beyond files and video calls.

03 Decode the team's real welcome (loyalties, concerns, a disappointed candidate) and clear the air through direct conversations.

04 Listen before deciding, following Watkins's "listening tour," and build the alliance with your own manager from the first weeks.

## WHO IT'S FOR

Managers coming from another department or organization who want a successful start with a new team.

- **Prerequisite:** none

## HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

## ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

### METHODS & MODELS

- The 4 traps when taking on a management role (parachuting in / invisibility / naivety / rushing in) – Afthonios method, built on the work of Michael Watkins
- The First 90 Days / listening tour / breakeven point – Michael Watkins
- Alliance with your own manager – Michael Watkins

### SOURCES & REFERENCES


- Michael Watkins – "The First 90 Days": a structured start reaches the breakeven point up to 40% faster than an unprepared one
- Corporate Executive Board (CEB) – 60% of new managers fail or underperform in their first 24 months
- CMI / YouGov, Better Managed Britain (2023, presented in 2024) – how managers are trained and prepared
- Gallup (2023, updated 2026) – useful, regular feedback, linked to engagement



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