

After the Theater: The First Ninety Days

One honest quarter, three disciplines. Stop, listen, and prove one thing slowly.

The working companion to the Transformation Theater Diagnostic and Ideas and Innovations Issue 277

Before day one: score the six statements of the Transformation Theater Diagnostic with your leadership team. Your total, between six and thirty, is the baseline. You will score the same six statements again, with the same people, at day ninety. The comparison is the quarter's real report.

Days 1–30: Stop, Visibly

The first month has one job, and it is subtraction. Run the Portfolio Audit: a conference room and the openness to be candid.

- 1 List every active change initiative.** Expect the list to surprise everyone in the room.
- 2 Sort each with one question.** Does this require people to think differently about themselves and their work, or just to use a different tool? No sacred cows.
- 3 Count what the sorting reveals.** More adaptive challenges than the organization can handle at once, most disguised as technical projects.
- 4 Eliminate initiatives, publicly.** Not paused, not phase two. Ended, named, and explained. Then a thirty-day moratorium: no new initiatives, committees, or measurement systems.

Measure the month by what stopped. Nothing else.

Days 31–60: Listen Like It Is Intelligence

Small groups, real questions, and leaders who have decided in advance that nothing they hear will be argued with in the moment. The agenda:

- 1** Where did we assume you were ready when you were not?
- 2** Where did we explain the strategy but never connect it to your actual day and role?
- 3** Where did leadership know the new system but not what the change felt like inside your job?
- 4** Where did we treat a team as a collection of individuals rather than a social system?
- 5** Where do you want to do the right thing but feel unsafe or unsupported doing it?

Ask what people actually do on a Tuesday, and treat the gap between the official answer and the Tuesday answer as the finding. The workarounds are the map. And decide, before the first session, what you will do with the first piece of unwelcome truth.

Measure the month by what surfaced that your reporting systems could never have told you.

Days 61–90: Prove One Thing Slowly

Choose one commitment, the one that most directly tests whether leadership means it this time. Three criteria govern the selection:

Adaptive, not technical

A technical win proves only that the organization can still install things. Nobody doubted that.

Visible to ordinary staff

In the daily experience of real work, not inside a steering committee's charter.

Falsifiable

Anyone in the organization can tell whether it happened. No interpretation required.

Watch for the test: someone will try the new reality with a genuine objection, a broken thing, an admission of being lost. What happens in the next forty-eight hours, thanked or managed, sets the ceiling. At day ninety, rescore the diagnostic and share the comparison either way.

Measure the month by what one commitment proved.

Ninety days does not transform an organization. It rebuilds the credibility that makes transformation possible.

The full Transformation Readiness Assessment tells you where your organization stands, and what to do next:

transformationassessment.com

