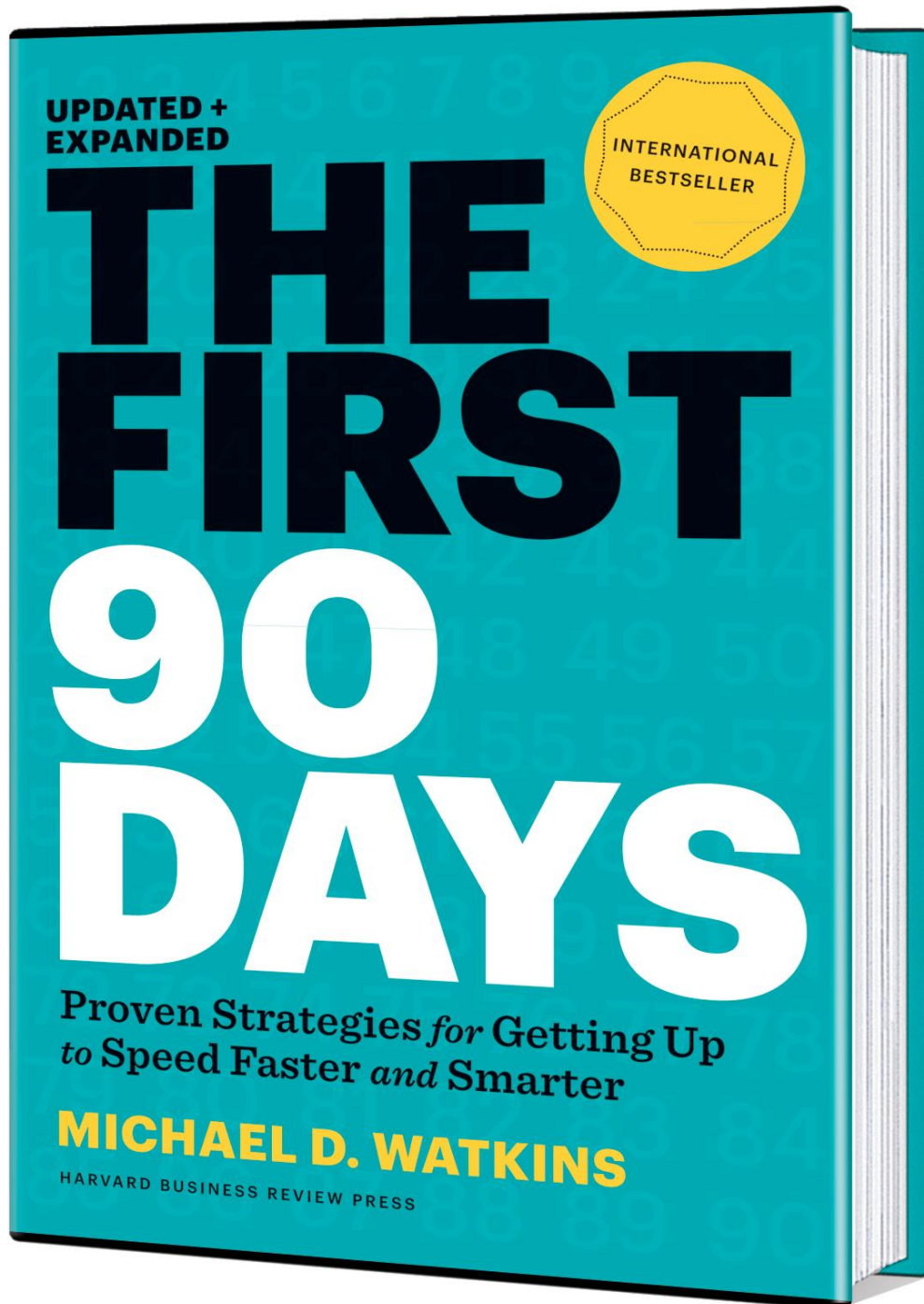




# Transitions in leadership

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Cliff Taylor  
January 2025



HBR survey

83% of 142 senior HR professionals agreed:

*"Transitions into significant new roles are the most challenging times in the professional lives of managers."*

Need to understand:

- Context of new role, and
- Adapt to that reality

*Source: HBR, January 2009, Michael D. Watkins*

# Typical Corporate Leadership Path

Individual Contributor

Step 1: First Line Manager

Step 2: Mid-Level Leader

Step 3: Business Unit Leader

Step 4: Senior Executive

Step 5: Chief Executive

- Transitioning from Individual Contributor to First Line Manager



# Step 1: Individual Contributor to First-Line Manager

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Increase	Decrease
+ Take charge and give direction	- Need to be socially accepted
+ Look towards the future and anticipate issues	- Consideration of others' thoughts and feelings*
+ Willing to depend on others	- Attention to daily details
+ Seek competitive situations	

*Based on research by PDI*

\*does not mean be heartless, but be objective how you take these into account



- 
- Transitioning from First Line Manager to Manager of Managers / Manager of Function or Business Unit



## Experiences that may differentiate mid-level leaders from first-line leaders

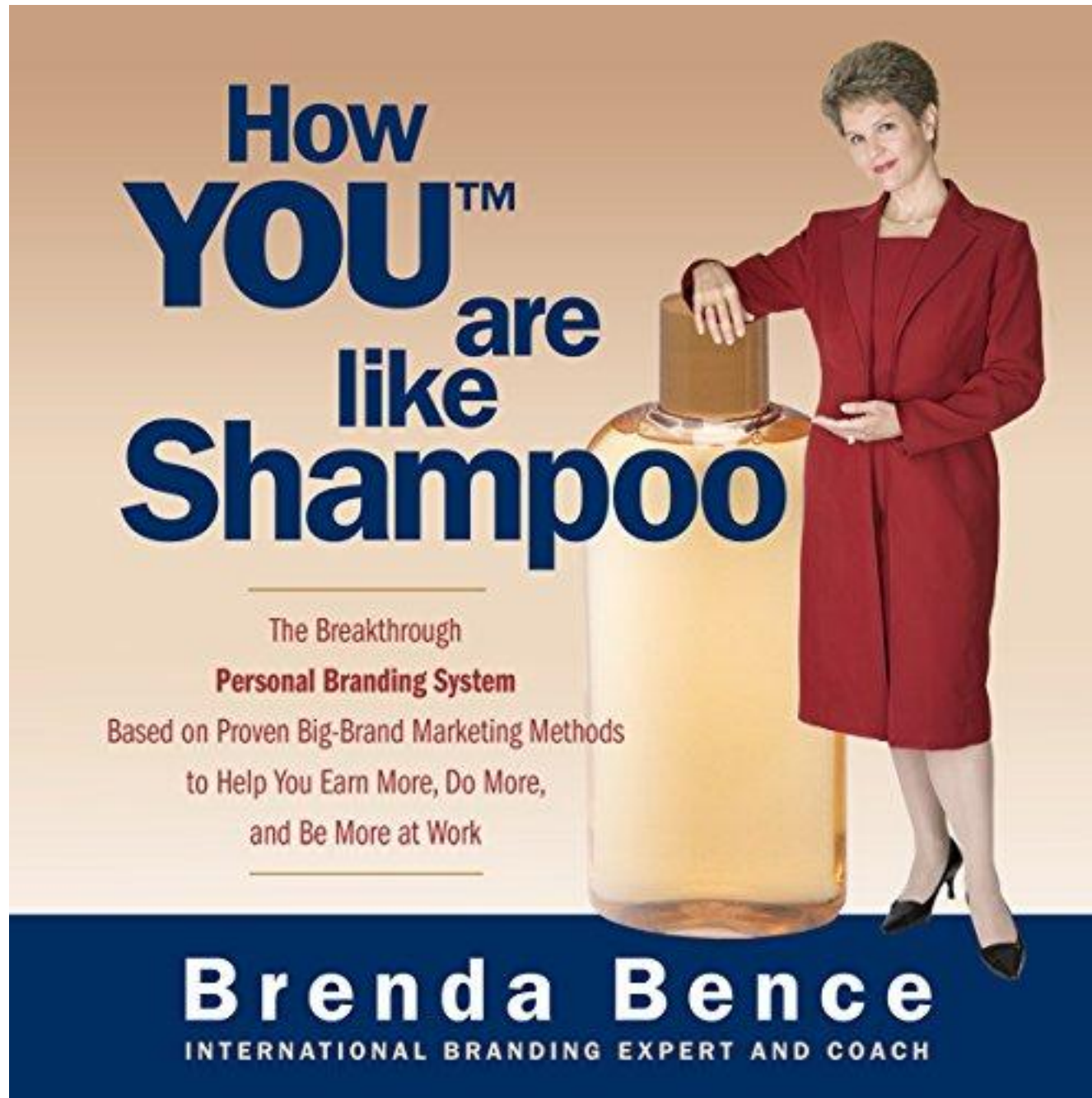
- Difficult staffing situations
- Financial management experience
- Interpersonally challenging experiences
- Managing a function
- Dealing with inherited problems and challenges



# Step 2: First-Line Manager to Mid-Level Leader

Increase	Decrease
+ Continue to be more competitive	- Attention to daily details
+ Continue to rely on others, and let them work independently	
+ Continue to take charge and give direction, plus adopt a more direct communication style	
+ Continue to be future-oriented	
+ Be willing to lead and take risks	
+ Identify trends and themes in information	
+ Desire to perform well and be promoted	
+ Tolerate high expenditures of energy	
+ Act independently and autonomously	8
+ Ability to persuade and negotiate	





# How **YOU™** are like **Shampoo**

The Breakthrough  
**Personal Branding System**  
Based on Proven Big-Brand Marketing Methods  
to Help You Earn More, Do More,  
and Be More at Work

**Brenda Bence**  
INTERNATIONAL BRANDING EXPERT AND COACH

- You already have a brand!
- It is what people say about you when you are not there
- Find out what it is
- If you don't like it, change it through your actions

# When I was at Company X...

- No-one really cares about your past roles so don't talk about them specifically.
- Everyone assumes you are competent so get on with what you are good at.
- The difference is how you go about establishing yourself in a new organisation – which is **building relationships**.



# Step 3: Mid-Level Leader to Business Unit Leader

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Increase	Decrease
+ Continue to be willing to lead and take risks	- None
+ Continue to identify trends and themes in information	
+ Continue to be future-oriented	
+ Continue to tolerate high expenditures of energy	
+ Continue to persuade and negotiate	
+ Continue to communicate directly, and be more honest and straightforward	
+ Continue to let others work independently	
+ Have a positive outlook on the future	
+ Weigh new data and alternatives before making a decision	
+ Generate new ideas	
+ Possess an aptitude for change and being flexible	

# Experiences that differentiate business unit leaders from mid-level leaders

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Strategy development

Highly visible or critical assignments

High-risk situations

Critical negotiations

External relations

Common denominator: **less discretionary time**





# Managing Your Energy

It takes energy to do everything!

Make sure you build your energy by paying attention to the following five areas:

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition & Hydration
- Meditation / Deep breathing
- Personal relationships



what is it?  
is it actionable?

**NO**

**YES**

**eliminate**

- trash
- recycle

**incubate**

- someday/maybe
- tickler list / review folder

**reference**

- paper / digital files  
and folders (retrievable)

multiple steps?

**it's a project**

what's the desired outcome?

plan the project (review for actions)

**what's the next action?**

**do it**

- if less than 2 minutes

**delegate it**

- track in "waiting for"

**defer it**

- calendar
- next action lists
- tickler file



## What situation are you taking on?

Think STARS:

S = Start-up

T = Turnaround

A = Accelerated growth

R = Realignment

S = Sustaining success

# Your first 100 days

- 1) organize & learn about the business
- 2) fix high A-item priorities
- 3) define strategy & start
- 4) get the leadership team in place fast
- 5) identify where you can bring early wins
- 6) create enabling alliances

Excellent Book:

## **The First 90 Days**

by Michael Watkins



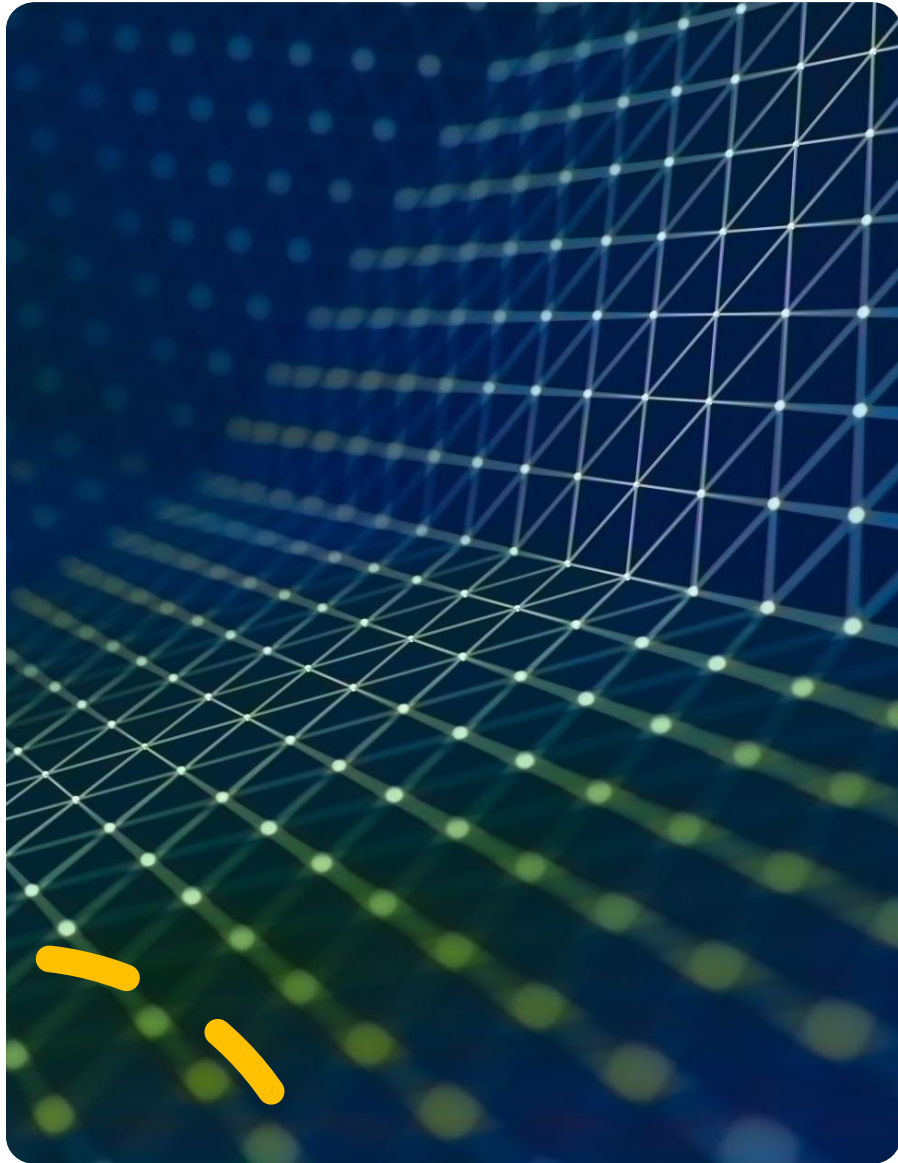
# Step 4: Business Unit Leader to Senior Executive

Increase	Decrease
+ Continue to tolerate high expenditures of energy	- Attention to daily details
+ Continue to be willing to lead and take risks	- Try to keep other people happy
+ Continue to persuade and negotiate	- Act independently and autonomously
+ Continue to weigh new data and alternatives before making a decision	- Demonstrate open-mindedness and acceptance of other's different values
+ Continue to be future-oriented	
+ Continue to communicate directly, and be more honest and straightforward	
+ Continue to let others work independently	
+ Desire to perform well and be promoted	
+ Seek competitive situations	
+ Ability to remain calm in stressful situations	
+ Places value on following the rules	

# Top 5 Leadership Experiences By Level

Front-Line to Mid-Level	Mid-Level to BU	BU to Sr Executive
1. Difficult staffing situations	1. Strategy Development	1. Strategy Development
2. Financial Management	2. Highly Critical/ Visible Assignments	2. Start-up Business
3. Interpersonally Challenging Situations	3. High Risk Situations	3. Highly Critical / Visible Assignments
4. Support Functions	4. Critical Negotiations	4. High Risk Situations
5. Inherited Problems and Challenges	5. External Relations	5. Interpersonally Challenging Situations

*Based on research by PDI*



Past success does not guarantee future success

Your job is mostly about people now

Over-reliance on yourself can lead to failure

Behavioural shift away from 'doing'

Develop your own skills, build self-awareness

Develop skills and expertise of your team

Artificial Intelligence skills are expected more



## Top Ten People Skills

1. Design Thinking
2. Analytical Skills
3. Team Management
4. Strategic Thinking
5. Team Leadership
6. Problem Solving
7. Operational Excellence
8. Mentoring
9. Self-Learning
10. Cross-team Collaboration

*Source: LinkedIn*





## Avoid common traps!

1. Let go of previous roles
2. Must embrace new relational dynamics with old colleagues
3. Manage stakeholders and politics intentionally
4. Seek out leadership development training, mentor, and coach

# Thank you



*Helping lift you to greater success in business and happiness in life*

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