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Question:

I've just been promoted from running an internal marketing group to leading the entire division. What should I do to get off on the right foot?

Answer:

Leading a new team, department or division can prove to be exciting, nerve wracking and demanding all at the same time. It is often difficult to strike a good balance between executing your vision while not creating a lot of change within the team.

Here are some key actions to consider:

- 1) Tune in** - It is important to sit and listen to the members of your division- Ask questions about their vision for the division, where they see opportunities, or areas for growth and development. Seek to understand what they like most about working with the team and what their expectations are of you. The best way to do this is through one-on-one meetings, particularly with your direct reports, they need to know in changing times, that you are present and engaged in them and that you recognize that you are part of the team and not just its leader.
- 2) Introduce the me in "we"** - Even if people have worked with you in the past, the team needs to know who you are, what you value and what is important to you-not about work but about your life. This is tricky- far too often, new leaders engage in (what feels to the audience) a disingenuous story about their family or personal lives. In order to make this presentation live and inspire, you have to be honest and real- tell people about your past, where you came from, how you arrived to this moment in your life, and what keeps you awake at night? The reality is that people follow those they can connect with, they perform for those they believe in- take the time to connect- the investment will be worth it.
- 3) Set the vision** - After gathering all of the feedback, and doing your own analysis, you really need to start off by engaging others in your vision for the team. Depending on your budget, consider an off-site meeting or at least an internal meeting that has a little flair and walk the team through your vision. This should not just include your business goals but the way that you want to achieve these goals, any new processes they you want to introduce and any new markers for success. Let people know how to reach out to you, what you expect of them and how you want the team to work. You should also credit their contribution to this vision through your internal market research with them. This is really your time to shine so make this event a splash- this will be the ultimate signal of your leadership.

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