



90-DAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

for First-Time Managers
& Supervisors

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

- Build trust fast with practical daily actions
 - Clear 90-day roadmap from day one
- SHEAF principles you can apply immediately
- Avoid the most common new-manager pitfalls

Based on the SHEAF Leadership Model

Sincerity • Helpfulness • Effectiveness
Attentiveness • Friendliness

A free practical resource by

Leon L. Chinner

SHEAF Learning & Leadership

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for First-Time Managers & Supervisors

Welcome. Stepping into your first management or supervisory role is one of the biggest transitions in any career. The skills that made you a strong individual contributor are not always the same skills that make you an effective leader. This practical 90-day survival guide gives you a clear roadmap so you can build trust, set clear expectations, communicate with confidence, and become the kind of manager people want to follow — without relying on authority alone.

How to use this guide: Work through each phase sequentially. Use the reflection questions weekly. Apply the SHEAF principles daily. Complete the free 2-minute SHEAF Self-Assessment at sheafleadership.com to identify your strongest principle and the one to strengthen first.

THE SHEAF LEADERSHIP MODEL

SHEAF is a practical, people-centred leadership framework that turns positive values into everyday behaviour others can trust. It stands for five memorable principles:

S — Sincerity

Let your words, intentions and actions agree so people experience honesty, fairness and trust.

H — Helpfulness

Offer useful support, recognise contribution and help people move forward with dignity.

E — Effectiveness

Turn good intentions into focused action, reliable follow-through and completed work.

A — Attentiveness

Listen carefully, notice what matters and help people feel genuinely heard.

F — Friendliness

Bring warmth, respect and human connection into everyday leadership without lowering standards.

These five principles form the backbone of this 90-day plan. Practise one visible behaviour from each principle every week.

PHASE 1: DAYS 1–30 — BUILD FOUNDATIONS & TRUST

Your first 30 days as a first-time manager or new supervisor set the tone for everything that follows. Focus on listening, learning, and establishing credibility through consistent, sincere behaviour.

Week 1–2 Goals (Days 1–14)

- Meet every team member individually (15–20 minutes). Ask: What is going well? What is frustrating? How can I best support you?
- Observe more than you speak. Take notes on workflows, communication patterns and unspoken norms.
- Clarify your role and expectations with your own manager. Confirm priorities for the first 90 days.
- Identify one quick win that removes a small obstacle for the team (Helpfulness + Effectiveness).
- Practise Attentiveness: put the phone away in every one-on-one and summarise what you heard.

Week 3–4 Goals (Days 15–30)

- Share a simple vision of how you want the team to work together — keep it short and human.
- Set or clarify 2–3 clear expectations for performance and behaviour. Write them down.
- Recognise one genuine contribution publicly (Friendliness + Helpfulness).
- Begin a weekly rhythm: short team check-in + individual 1:1s if the team size allows.
- Complete the free SHEAF Self-Assessment and choose one principle to strengthen this month.

Reflection Questions — End of Day 30

1. Where have I already built trust — and where is trust still fragile?
2. Which SHEAF principle felt most natural? Which felt hardest?
3. What is one behaviour I will protect and one I will change in the next 30 days?

PHASE 2: DAYS 31–60 — STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS & ACCOUNTABILITY

With foundations in place, shift toward clearer systems, consistent follow-through and balanced accountability. Practical leadership means results and relationships improve together.

Key Focus Areas

- **Effectiveness:** Turn meetings into decisions. End every discussion with a clear owner, deadline and next action.
- **Sincerity:** Keep every promise you make — even small ones. If you cannot deliver, say so early and renegotiate.
- **Helpfulness:** Remove one recurring friction point each week (unclear process, missing information, unnecessary approval).
- **Attentiveness:** Notice early warning signs of disengagement or overload. Ask before problems become crises.
- **Friendliness:** Deliver feedback that is direct yet respectful. People remember how you made them feel while correcting them.

Practical Habits to Install

- Run a short weekly team rhythm (15–30 min) focused on priorities, blockers and wins.
- Protect at least one focused work block per day for your own priorities.
- After every difficult conversation, ask yourself: Did I treat the person with dignity?
- Track three simple metrics that matter to the team's real work — not vanity numbers.

Reflection Questions — End of Day 60

1. Are expectations clear enough that people rarely need to guess?
2. Where am I still solving problems that the team should own?
3. How consistently am I modelling the five SHEAF principles under pressure?

PHASE 3: DAYS 61–90 — MULTIPLY IMPACT & SUSTAIN MOMENTUM

In the final 30 days of your first quarter, shift from surviving to leading. Develop others, protect culture, and create habits that outlast the initial novelty of your new role.

Leadership Priorities

- Coach one team member more deliberately — ask more questions, give fewer answers.
- Document the key processes and decision rights so the team can function without constant escalation.
- Solicit honest feedback on your own leadership: “What should I start, stop and continue?”
- Celebrate progress publicly and specifically. Recognition is fuel.
- Plan your next 90 days with clearer goals for team capability, not just output.

The 30-Day SHEAF Challenge (Bonus)

In the final month, run a personal 30-day SHEAF Challenge. Each week focus on one principle and practise one visible behaviour every working day. Track it simply. At the end of 30 days review what changed in how people respond to you. This is the same challenge included in *The SHEAF Leadership Model* book.

Reflection Questions — End of Day 90

1. What kind of manager have I become in 90 days — and what kind do I still want to become?
2. Which relationships are stronger? Which still need intentional investment?
3. What is the single most important leadership habit I will protect going forward?

QUICK REFERENCE: DAILY & WEEKLY HABITS

Daily (5–10 minutes)

- Choose one SHEAF principle to make visible today.
- Keep at least one promise you made yesterday.
- Listen fully in at least one conversation without interrupting.

Weekly

- Hold a short, focused team check-in.
- Have at least one genuine recognition conversation.
- Review your calendar: Does it reflect your real priorities as a leader?
- Note one thing you learned about each key team member.

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

- **Trying to be the hero** — Solving every problem yourself creates dependency and burnout.
- **Avoiding difficult conversations** — Small issues grow when left unspoken. Address them early and calmly.
- **Over-relying on authority** — Titles create compliance; consistent character creates commitment.
- **Neglecting your own development** — The best managers keep learning in public.
- **Inconsistent standards** — People watch what you tolerate more than what you say.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

1. **Take the free 2-minute SHEAF Leadership Self-Assessment** at sheafleadership.com — identify one strength and one area to improve this week.
2. **Get the full book** — *The SHEAF Leadership Model* by Leon L. Chinner is available on Amazon in Kindle, paperback and hardcover. It expands every principle with real-life examples, tools, self-assessments and the complete 30-Day SHEAF Challenge.
3. **Apply one behaviour today** — Leadership improves through small, repeated actions, not grand announcements.

Lead people better. Build trust that lasts.

www.sheafleadership.com

Amazon: Search "The SHEAF Leadership Model" or visit the link on the website

This guide is a free resource from SHEAF Learning & Leadership. You are welcome to share it with other new managers and supervisors.