

15 Questions for CEOs to Ask During Their First 100 Days

Jozef Papp | Managing Partner Stanton Chase Prague
Amit Agarwal | Managing Partner, Stanton Chase India



If you're taking on a new leadership role, your first 100 days are critical.

This is the time when you should set the tone, establish priorities, and lay the foundation for your vision and strategy.

But taking the reins at a new company can be intimidating. For many CEOs, things don't always go as planned. Within the first 18 months, 33% to 50% of new CEOs are considered to have failed in their roles, and a large number of those CEOs are removed from the corner office shortly thereafter.

Some of the main challenges new CEOs face include:

- Establishing credibility quickly
- Addressing underperformance in the existing team
- Aligning expectations
- Adjusting to the organizational culture and dynamics
- Picking the wrong battles (and knowing which battles to pick)

The Key to a Smooth Transition is Asking the Right Questions

Your first 100 days in a new CEO role represent a unique window of opportunity before you become deeply absorbed in the responsibilities of the position.

Drawing on our extensive experience in the world of executive recruitment, we have seen many successful executives follow this set of questions to hit the ground running and make a positive impact early on.

15 Powerful Questions CEOs Should Ask During Their First 100 Days

- 1 What are the company's mission, vision, and values?
- 2 What is the organization's culture?
- 3 What's the rallying cry, i.e., the #1 priority for the organization right now?
- 4 What are the Very Short-term Goals (VSTGs) for the role?
- 5 What areas of the business do I need to learn more about? Where are my knowledge gaps, and how will I close them?
- 6 Who's my core team? Meet individually with the leadership team and ask them these three questions:
 - What do you most hope I will do?
 - If I could change one thing for you, what would it be, and why is it important?
 - What advice do you have for me? How can I help you be more successful?
- 7 How are roles and responsibilities currently defined across the executive team and departments?
- 8 What are the most important relationships, both inside and outside the company, that I need to nurture to be successful?
- 9 What is the company's current strategy and how well is it working? What strategic adjustments may be needed?
- 10 What is the organization's track record with change? Have past change initiatives been successful, and how does the organization typically react to change agents?
- 11 What changes should I implement in my first year to align the company with its mission and improve performance?
- 12 How can I communicate my vision and plans clearly to employees, customers, and other key stakeholders?
- 13 Who are the company's main competitors and how does the company differentiate itself in the market?
- 14 What's one simple, inexpensive thing I could do to improve the organization?
- 15 How will success be measured after the first 100 days and the first year?

Be sure to print out this cheat sheet and carry it with you as a compass in the uncharted waters of your new CEO role.

At Stanton Chase, we don't believe in the sink-or-swim approach. Our [Executive Onboarding Service](#) helps our clients' new executives make a smooth transition into their new roles during the critical first 100 days.

Our proven onboarding acceleration enables leaders to deliver value on day one. [Click here](#) to reach out to one of our consultants if you're interested in learning more.

About the Author



Jozef Papp

a Managing Partner at [Stanton Chase Prague](#), has been in the executive search industry since 1998. Before joining the search industry, Jozef worked in the management consulting division of Deloitte. His professional career also includes various sales roles within the IT industry, particularly focusing on ERP software sales in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. While Jozef primarily focuses on the technology and industrial market sectors, he has conducted searches across all market sectors. He has been a certified coach since 2009.



[Amit Agarwal](#), a Managing Partner at [Stanton Chase India](#) and the Regional Functional Leader for [CFOs and Financial Executives](#) in APAC, has been an executive search consultant for over 17 years, personally completing more than 500 assignments. As a strategic adviser on leadership matters, Amit helps his clients ramp up management teams from the ground up, hire key executives for senior and critical positions, and assists boards in brainstorming and executing succession planning for apex roles. Amit began his career during the Y2K dot-com boom, working on various Internet concepts and ventures, including online discount portals, gaming, internet radio, and ecommerce. He later transitioned to television, where he worked as a Project Manager on one of India's first reality shows.

STANTON CHASE

Your Leadership Partner

stantonchase.com