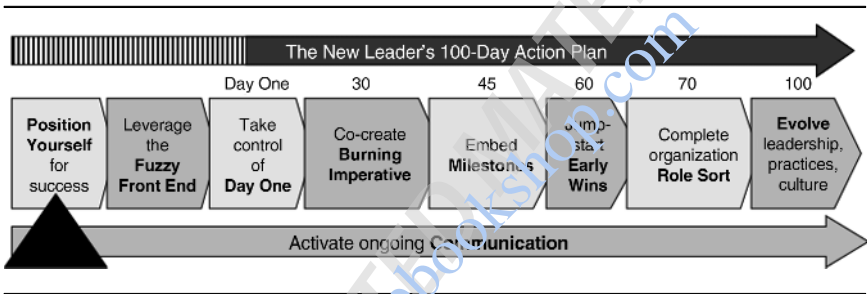


# Position Yourself for Success

GET THE JOB. MAKE SURE IT IS RIGHT FOR YOU.  
AVOID COMMON LAND MINES.



**A**s discussed in the executive summary, the four main ideas in this book are: (1) Get a head start; (2) Manage the message; (3) Set direction. Build the team; (4) Sustain momentum. Deliver results.

As you start to position yourself for success, know that leadership is personal. Your message is the key that unlocks personal connections. The greater the congruence between your own preferences across behaviors, relationships, attitudes, values, and environment and the new culture you enter or create, the stronger those connections will be. This is why the best messages aren't crafted—they emerge. This is why

great leaders live their messages not because they can, but because they must. “Here I stand, I can do no other.”<sup>1</sup>

Knowing your strengths and motivations will help you better create career options that are a true fit for your skills, will allow you to better position yourself in interviews (sell before you buy), and will help you do a thorough due diligence to mitigate risks.

“I wish I’d read this chapter before I accepted that job!”

We hear that a lot.

## Culture First

In many respects, leadership is an exercise in building culture. However you define it, culture is the glue that holds organizations together. It may be the only truly sustainable competitive advantage for any organization. Culture is often impacted by pivotal events, such as a new leader joining an organization, presenting opportunities to accelerate culture change and deliver better results. Culture change is about bridging the gap between the current state and the desired state—that which is needed to achieve the organization’s mission and goals.

The greater the cultural differences, the more difficult the adaptation or change will be. There’s real power in understanding the most important cultural differences and then building a plan to bridge those gaps over time.

Some define culture simply as “the way we do things around here.” Others conduct complex analyses to define it more scientifically. Instead, blend both schools of thought into an implementable approach that defines culture as an organization’s behaviors, relationships, attitudes, values, and the environment (BRAVE). The BRAVE framework is relatively easy to apply yet offers a relatively robust way to identify, engage, and change a culture. It makes culture real, tangible, identifiable, and easy to talk about.

It’s helpful to tackle the BRAVE components from the outside in with five questions, as shown in Table 1.1.

When evaluating each element of culture, think of it on a sliding scale (say 1–5), rather than in absolute terms. The specific dimensions within each cultural component may vary from situation to situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed to Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, 1521, when asked to recant his earlier writings.

**Table 1.1**  
**BRAVE Framework**

Environment	Where to play?	(Context)
Values	What matters and why?	(Purpose)
Attitudes	How to win?	(Choices)
Relationships	How to connect?	(Communication)
Behaviors	What impact?	(Implementation)

You may find the components and dimensions below particularly useful.

**Environment** is where the organization decides to play in the context of the situation it faces. Consider:

- Is the impetus for growth found more in opportunities to capture or more in problems to solve?
- Are the growth enablers more human, interpersonal, and societal or more technological, mechanical, and scientific?
- Are the main barriers more external hurdles or more internal capabilities?

**Values** are what matters to the organization and its people and why. Consider:

- What's the organization's purpose: mission (why), vision (what), and values (how), and is it interpreted more as intended and evolving or more as written and set?
- Is the approach to risk more about risking more to gain more over time or more about protecting what is now?
- Is the approach to learning more open and shared or more directed?

**Attitudes** are how the organization chooses to win across strategy, posture, and approach. Consider:

- Is the fundamental strategy more premium price, innovation, and high service or more low price, minimum viable product, and self-service?

- Is there a bias more toward creating ideas and pushing them out to the market or more toward doing things in response to customers' needs?
- Do people strive to be more proactive or more responsive?

**Relationships** are about how the organization connects. Consider:

- Are power and decision making more diffused and debated or more controlled to the point of being monarchical?
- Do people communicate more informally, verbally and face-to-face, or more formally, directed and written?
- Do people identify more with the overall organization or more with their particular unit or subgroup?

**Behaviors** are how the organization acts when deploying its plans. Consider:

- Do working units of people act more as independent individuals or more as interdependent teams?
- Is discipline more fluid and flexible or more structured?
- Do people have a bias more toward creating surprising breakthroughs—big leaps—or more to making reliable, repeatable, steady progress?

Culture is an essential consideration in many of the tasks and tools you will deploy in your 100-Day Plan and beyond.

### **Netflix Reinvents Itself Again**

Netflix received 34 Emmy Award nominations in 2015 for shows it created. Yet, a few short years before, it was purely a distribution channel, producing no content. This strategy shift represents a complete reinvention to take advantage of changing circumstances and opportunities.

It's the second time Netflix reinvented itself. A decade ago the growth of streaming videos threatened its video-by-mail delivery system. So it chose to keep the cannibals in the family, cut the heart out of its existing business model, and moved into streaming.

In some ways this is not surprising because its origins lay in cutting the heart out of Blockbuster's video store business model. The question is what allows an organization such as Netflix to reinvent itself and continue to grow while an organization such as Blockbuster can't get out of its own way.

The difference is culture. Blockbuster was more set in its ways, focused on protecting what it had and working to build reliable, repeatable processes in a structured, disciplined way. Its decision making was tightly controlled, and communication was so formal and directed as to leave little room for discussion.

On the other hand Netflix people talk about their culture like this: "Instead of a culture of process adherence, we have a culture of creativity and self-discipline, freedom and responsibility." Certainly they try to avoid "irrevocable disasters," but "mostly though, rapid recovery is the right model."<sup>2</sup>

### Army versus Navy

As Boris Groysberg, Andrew Hill, and Toby Johnson describe in "Which of These People Is Your Future CEO?"<sup>3</sup> the U.S. Navy and Air Force are strong on process and light on flexibility, whereas the Army and Marines are lighter on process and stronger on flexibility. They argue these differences stem from the equipment with which the different services deploy. A small mistake on a ship can have devastating impact, as can not reacting to a changing situation in ground warfare. So the Navy has built a culture based on command and control to minimize mistakes whereas the Army has built one designed to push decisions down and out to encourage initiative.

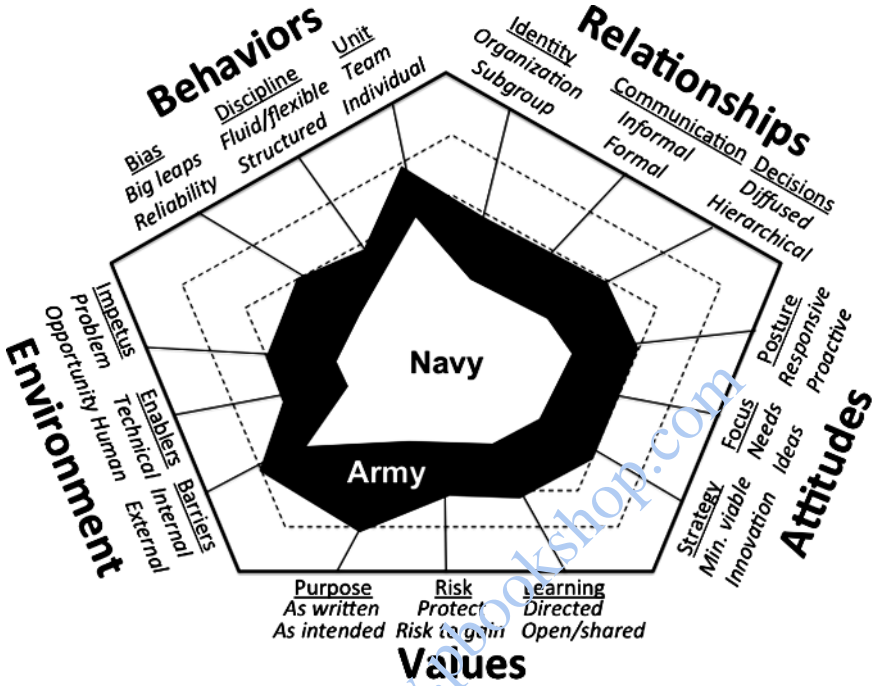
Not surprisingly, when you look at the way the Army approaches behaviors, relationships, attitudes, values, and the environment, you get a markedly different picture than you do with the Navy. As you can see by the spider chart in Figure 1.1, the Army is more fluid, flexible, informal, and collaborative than the Navy on almost every dimension.

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<sup>2</sup> Reed Hastings (Netflix's chief executive officer), 2009, "Culture," SlideShare, August 1.

<sup>3</sup> November, 2010, "Which of These People Is Your Future CEO? The Different Ways Military Experience Prepares Managers for Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*.

FIGURE 1.1 BRAVE Preferences



It's not that one is better than the other. It's just that they are different, appropriately so, given their different missions and circumstances.

This chart is based on Tool 1.1, which can help you map your culture. Like all the tools in this book, it is printed at the end of the chapter and included in the downloadable tools at [www.onboardingtools.com](http://www.onboardingtools.com). Most find it easier and more elegant to write in those than in the book. Plus, you'll find other tools and more in-depth discussions around a number of ideas on that site. The website is an important resource to accompany this book. Use it.

**NOTE ON CULTURE**

See Tool 1A.10 on [www.onboardingtools.com](http://www.onboardingtools.com) for a discussion of culture across all the steps of onboarding. (Same material as in the book, just compiled into a single tool on BRAVE culture.)

## Sell Before You Buy

Securing a new leadership position usually requires interviews. You can ace any interview if you remember three things during the process:

Thing 1: You cannot turn down or accept a job offer that you have not received.

Thing 2: There are only three fundamental interview questions—ever.

Thing 3: There are only three fundamental interview answers—ever.

### Thing 1

Before you accept a job, you must first get an offer. Then, and only then, can you decide whether you should accept it. Do not do these steps out of order. Your initial focus should be on getting the job offer. If you start to imagine or assume you have the job before you have the offer, you have diverted some of your energy away from reality and are wasting your time. Once you have received the offer, your approach should change.

Everything you do in the interview process should be designed to get someone else to offer you the job. This includes not only your answers to their questions but also your questions to them. At this stage in the process, your questions are not about helping you decide whether you want the job. They are about helping them decide to offer it to you. Sell yourself first. Secure the offer. Then, after you have the offer, and only then, figure out whether it's right for you.

### Thing 2

There are only three interview questions.

Every question you've ever been asked, and every question you've ever asked in any interview, is a subset of one of these three fundamental questions:

1. Can you do the job?
2. Will you love the job?
3. Can I tolerate working with you?

Those three questions asked in a more traditional way are:

1. What are your strengths?
2. Will you be motivated to do the job?
3. Are you a fit?

That's it: strengths, motivation, fit. The questions may be asked in different ways, but every question, however worded, is just a variation on one of these. As each question comes, it is your task to determine which of the three is really being asked.

### Thing 3

Because there are only three fundamental interview questions, there are only three fundamental interview answers.

Every answer you give in an interview should be a subset of these three answers:

1. My strengths are a match for this job.
2. My motivations are a match for this job.
3. I am a good fit for this organization.

That's it. Those three. Your answers to questions will be more elaborate, but your answers should always be dressed-up versions of one of the three.

Because there are only three interview questions and only three interview answers, all you have to do is to prepare three answers in advance and recognize what question you are being asked. Then you are ready to ace any interview.

The bad news is that it is going to be a lot more work than you might think to prepare these answers in advance of each interview. Interviews are exercises in solution selling. They are not about you. They are about your interviewers—their needs, their problems. You are the solution. Think of the interview process as a chance for you to show your ability to see, hear, and solve the organization's and the interviewer's problem.

If interviewers know what they are doing, they will be looking beyond a narrowly defined problem (and solution) and for technical expertise across a broader set of criteria: strengths, motivations, and fit. When they don't really know what they're doing, they can be brought



around to seeing things the right way. Still, in every case the solution must be presented from their perspective. Thoughtful preparation can be the deciding factor between a yes and a no. This is tricky stuff, but it is worth the investment of time.

Question 1: Can you do the job? Or more likely: What are your strengths? (Strengths)

Answer 1: Prepare three situation/action/results examples that highlight your strengths in the areas most important over the short term and long term to the people interviewing you.

Question 2: Will you love the job? Or more likely: What are you looking to do? (Motivation)

Answer 2: Discuss how the role you are applying for matches what you like to do.

Question 3: Can I tolerate working with you? Or more likely: What sort of people do you like to work with? (Fit)

Answer 3: Discuss how your preferences across behaviors, relationships, attitudes, values, and the environment match the organization's culture on those dimensions.

Note you'll find more discussion about the questions behind the questions on [www.onboardingtools.com](http://www.onboardingtools.com).

Imagine that you are interviewing for a job where a new leader and a new team are being put together to solve a specific problem or to address a specific need or goal. To become the winning candidate, you may need to act as a management consultant, helping the decision makers and team members get a better sense of what the problems, or needs, really are, and then conveying confidence that under your supervision the right things will get done.

## HOT TIP

Everything is part of the interview: You won't go too far wrong if you imagine that everything you do and say is being videotaped to be shown to the final decision maker. This is why you must use every part of every interaction with everybody in the organization as an opportunity to reinforce your strengths, motivation, and fit. Until you've been offered a job, it's all about getting the offer.

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## The Seven Deadly Land Mines

The first 100 days in your new role will be rife with land mines; just like the real thing, they are usually hidden and are often undetected until it is too late. Being aware that land mines exist and learning how to anticipate them will limit their devastating potential. Learning how to deactivate them safely will help you sail straight through to success (see Table 1.2).

Land mines will always exist but they are most easily hidden from you leading up to and through your first 100 days. Know that you must always be mitigating all of these land mines well beyond your transition.

### WARNING!

What follows discusses these land mines one by one, but they frequently come in multiples and often interact with each other. Exposure to one risk heightens others, and failure has a way of gaining its own terrible and often unstoppable momentum.

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#### Land Mine 1: Organization

The lack of a clear, concise, differentiating, and winning strategy creates an organizational land mine.

You do not want to get on a ship that is doomed to sink. Some people thrive on this risk and want to be part of the turnaround. It is one thing to be a turnaround expert going into an organization that knows it needs to make significant changes fast. It is a recipe for disaster if you are not a turnaround expert and you're going into an organization that needs those skills but doesn't actually realize it.

Louisa had been looking for a job for 18 months. She took a job with a growing division of a major player in the software business. It was trying to expand into a completely new area and asked her to come in as vice president of marketing for the new group. She had been lobbying for the general manager role, but settled for the marketing job because she was so excited about the new division's prospects. She should not have been.

As it turned out, the division had no competitive advantage and was competing against an entrenched competitor that had quickly

**Table 1.2**  
**Deadly Seven Onboarding Land Mines**

<b>Land Mines</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Best Stage to Mitigate/ Deactivate</b>	<b>Deactivation Method</b>
Phase 1			
1. Organization	Lack of a winning strategy or the inability to implement that strategy	Before accepting job	Ask tough questions.
2. Role	Expectations and resources or key stakeholders are not aligned	Before accepting job	Listen for inconsistencies.
3. Personal skills	Gaps exist in your strengths, motivation, or fit.	Before accepting job	Ask yourself tough questions.
Phase 2			
4. Relationship	Failure to build or maintain key relationships, up, across, or down.	Between acceptance and start	Activate a 360-relationship compass and use it to help guide you through potential challenges.
5. Learning	Failure to gain adequate information, awareness, or knowledge of customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, or conditions.	Between acceptance and start	Activate an ongoing learning campaign to thoroughly master the 5Cs. Keep your learning sharp.
Phase 3			
6. Delivery	Failure to build a high-performing team or deliver results fast enough.	First 100 days	Identify and validate clear and genuine winning deliverables and timetable. Empower and execute with team.
7. Adjustment	Failure to see or react to situational changes	As appropriate	Monitor business conditions and results actively. Understand the causes of change. Replan and execute quickly.

stepped into the gap on which Louisa's new company had staked the division's future. Six months into the job, Louisa recommended that the company abandon the effort and focus its efforts on other things. It was the right recommendation for the organization, but bad for Louisa because she was out of a job again.

*Deactivation method: Ask tough questions.*

### **Land Mine 2: Role**

If expectations, resources, or key stakeholders are not aligned, you will encounter a role land mine. Often new leaders step into jobs that are virtually impossible from the start because the expectations are unrealistic or cannot be delivered for whatever reason.

One new president had done a great job of negotiating his title and package, but had failed to consider reporting lines and resources. He soon learned that none of the heads of marketing, finance, information, or human resources reported to him. His only direct reports were the heads of sales and business development. By taking the title of president—without the appropriate authority—all he had managed to do was to paint a target on his back for his peers to shoot at so they could get him out of the way and strengthen their own positions.

*Deactivation method: Listen for inconsistencies or uncertainty around your (1) role and responsibilities, (2) deliverables, (3) timetable, (4) authority, (5) interactions, and (6) access to essential resources.*

### **Land Mine 3: Personal**

Personal land mines are the ones that you bring to the new job. They are activated when significant gaps exist in your strengths, motivation, or fit for the job. Often executives assume that their strengths are well matched to a particular role, when in fact they are not. Assumptions about strengths usually are based on prior success without a true in-depth assessment of the match between strengths and the particular situation. Although a new job may sound like your former job, there will be a whole new range of dynamics that may require significantly different skill sets. By missing this factor, leaders often fail to realize that they may not possess certain strengths that are essential for success in the new role. But this is not you.

After years of working at large consumer product companies, Alice moved to Silicon Beach in Santa Monica, California, to join a start-up social networking site as the chief marketing officer. She was thrilled to be moving into a “hot new company,” and she was thrilled with her promotion in title. Alice was hired to bring her experience in traditional marketing to the start-up. On her first day in the job, she called the marketing team together to ask for the market research studies, the most recent membership feedback, focus group results, the brand positioning strategy, and the current marketing strategy and category spend. She was shocked that none of that existed in the typical format and depth that she had grown accustomed to, if at all.

Alice knew that she had to make quick decisions on some key marketing areas, but she had no idea how to do that without her traditional tools or how to motivate a staff that was far different from the traditional marketing staff that she had worked with in the past. She struggled with the entrepreneurial environment and discovered that just being an expert in brand management was not enough to survive in a fast-paced, broken-field-run start-up. She struggled in almost everything she did and soon realized that the hot new company was not a fit for her motivations, her strengths, or her basic temperament. “I had the marketing skills, but I did not have any clue about the skills required in a start-up environment,” she said.

*Deactivation method: Ask yourself the tough questions about whether you really have the strengths, motivation, and fit required for success.*

#### **Land Mine 4: Relationship**

If you fail to identify, establish, or maintain key relationships up, across, or down, you will encounter relationship land mines (There may be clusters of these, and they can set each other off in succession; watch out!). These key relationships are those that have a stake in or can impact your success. These stakeholders can be found up, down, or across the organization from you.

When you miss the needs or agendas of other key stakeholders or outside influencers, there is a good chance that some impact will be felt. The problem is you won't necessarily know that this has started to happen, but it can get a life and a momentum of its own outside of your presence or even awareness. If you lend an insufficient or ineffective effort to building a productive teamwork environment with direct reports, land mines are often the result. If expectations of up stakeholders are not clearly

understood, go unchecked, or frequently change, this is certainly dangerous territory for land mines. Finally, poor preparation and communication follow-through are often key culprits in activating these land mines.

Relationship land mines catch many executives completely unaware. These are especially tricky because sometimes the results of stepping on one do not show up for months, or longer. What is worse, you can get caught by these land mines just by pure neglect of a key stakeholder or someone who you didn't even know should be a key stakeholder: "I was just too busy to reach out to her." "He has a role in all this? He's just the head of investor relations!"

Relationship risks are particularly severe for people who are brought in as change agents. Often those people come in with a hero mentality, thinking they are the organization's savior. This is not necessarily a problem and sometimes they're right. The problem occurs when new leaders *act* as if they are saviors. Nobody wants to see that, especially those who have been part of the situation that needs saving. Don't be a savior. Be a team leader. History is littered with many dead heroes who never made it home.

Sebastian came into the organization to create a new ventures group. He mapped out most of the key stakeholders and was building relationships with them. After a while, it became apparent that Suri, the head of another division, was undermining his efforts. Sebastian did not understand why, because he had never come in contact with Suri.

Eventually, Sebastian learned that Suri was upset that he had not seen her as important enough to establish a relationship with early on. She watched as he built relationships all around her and left her out. She felt he was purposely snubbing her. Suri was upset, not because of something Sebastian had done or said, but because he had not said anything to her at all. Her efforts to undermine him were an immature way of showing her disappointment, but she wanted him to know that she could make things difficult for him. Sebastian overlooked her when he built his key stakeholder list and it cost him months later.

*Deactivation method: Activate a 360-relationship compass and use it to help guide you to potential challenges and land mines.*

### **Land Mine 5: Learning**

Fail to grasp key information in any of the 5Cs—customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, or conditions—and you have effectively

created learning land mines. Executives often miss the importance of certain Cs or diminish the importance of one or more. If you don't have a learning plan in place for each and every C, the likelihood of undetected land mines greatly increases.

If you don't know what you need to know or—worse yet—don't know what you don't know, then land mines will surely be plentiful. So what do you need to know? At the very least, you need to know critical information about each of the 5Cs, especially about the real value chain of your business. If you use our guidelines for your 5Cs analysis, the information you gather will significantly diminish the risk of learning land mines.

Learning is essential. Being perceived as wanting to learn is almost as important as learning itself. You have heard it before: “Seek first to understand,”<sup>4</sup> “Don't come in with the answer,”<sup>5</sup> and “Wisdom begins in wonder.”<sup>6</sup> You hear it repeatedly in many different ways, because it is proven advice. Heed it. You need to learn and you'll want to be perceived as being hungry to learn.

Harold joined a company that was helping companies take advantage of favorable tax treatments for new technologies. He had done his homework well across most of the 5Cs. He liked the team. They liked him. He knew exactly how he could add value to the group and to its customers. What he had failed to learn about was that the government was about to change the law and take away the favorable tax treatments. So, a few months into the job, the company effectively got legislated out of business.

*Deactivation method: Activate an ongoing learning campaign to thoroughly master the 5Cs.*

## Land Mine 6: Delivery

In the end, it boils down to delivery. It's not what you do; it's the results you deliver. If you deliver, the organization can tolerate many other faults. If you are leading a team, you cannot deliver if the team does not deliver. At the end of your first 100 days, the most dangerous land mine

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen Covey, 1989, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, (New York: Simon & Schuster).

<sup>5</sup> Michael Watkins, 2003, *The First 90 Days* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press).

<sup>6</sup> Attributed to Socrates.

is failing to build a high-performing team fast enough to deliver the expected results in the expected time frame.

Steve was hired as the head of business development for a venture-backed technology company that had developed a cutting-edge digital rights management (DRM) software. Steve was excited about the opportunity because he knew that the technology was one of the best and the market was screaming for such a DRM product that was easy and reliable to use. Steve's main priority was to enter into long-term agreements with the major entertainment studios.

Steve made inroads with the studios quickly, but he became frustrated by their notoriously slow movement. While keeping his eye on the studio business, he began to concentrate on other industries that required DRM technology and was able to secure a strong deal flow.

A year later Steve was fired after a meeting with the venture capital company. Although Steve was pleased with his inroads at the studios, he had not yet closed any deals with a major entertainment firm. He felt that the deal flow from other industries compensated, but he didn't understand that his up stakeholders thought he was concentrating 100 percent on studio business, which had far greater potential than the other industries that Steve had mined. He delivered, but he delivered off strategy.

*Deactivation method: Identify clear and genuine winning deliverables and timetable. Validate with key stakeholders. Empower and execute with the team.*

### **Land Mine 7: Adjustment**

You can do everything correctly to this point, but if you do not see or react to the inevitable situational changes, then new land mines will certainly be created. The act of planning and managing is not a static exercise. You must be keenly aware of the fluid dynamics of your team's situation. Missing the need to survey the environment constantly and adjust accordingly is just like a skipper setting sail for a destination and never adjusting his or her sails for the ever-changing seas and weather conditions.

Things change and you and your team need to change when they do. Sometimes you can get away with minor adjustments. Sometimes a complete restart is required. The risk lies in not seeing the need to change, not understanding how to change effectively, or in being too slow to react to the changes you do see.



Tony was hired by Victor to run the operations of the division that Victor headed. Tony reported directly to Victor and soon after joining, he realized that the division was significantly underperforming. Tony embraced the challenge and made great gains in operational efficiencies in a short time; but while operations were improving, other aspects of the division continued to falter. As a result, Wendy, one of Victor's counterparts from a sister division, was promoted to head both divisions. So now, Tony was reporting to Victor, who was reporting to Wendy. Tony thought that this move represented no big change for him.

He was wrong. He was sure that Victor would represent his work to Wendy, and he assumed that his style and approach would be embraced because it was producing results. What he did not know was that Wendy's division had been run under a completely different operational style and her division's results were far stronger than Victor's ever had been.

For Tony, the new reporting structure was a sea change, indicating that a huge adjustment was required. Tony underestimated the magnitude of the change, and therefore it never crossed his mind that a "huge adjustment" might be required. Any change in structure requires a relook at what is going on, if not a complete restart. Tony did not do that. He kept soldiering on, assuming that Victor would make his case to Wendy.

Two months later Victor and everyone he had brought in to work for him, including Tony, were fired.

*Deactivation method: Monitor business conditions, results, and organization changes actively. Understand the causes and implications of change. Report and execute quickly.*

You've got a choice. You can leverage our suggested approach to uncover and help you assess and mitigate those risks. Or, you can send us an e-mail later saying, "I wish I'd read this chapter before I accepted that job!" You won't be alone.

## **Do Your Due Diligence Before You Accept the Job Offer**

Should I take this job? To know the answer to that question, you need to make an informed assessment of the degree of risk. Almost nobody wants to do due diligence. Almost nobody likes to do due diligence. Almost nobody knows how to do due diligence well. It's as though

people don't want to do anything to spoil the moment of getting a job offer. Ignorance can be bliss. Until the things you didn't see show up and conk you on the head.

At the core, due diligence is an exercise in collecting and analyzing information from multiple sources to understand the risk inherent in a decision. As with just about everything discussed in this book, a carefully thought out and methodical approach will help.

## Mitigate Risk Before You Accept a Job

To avoid trying to boil the ocean, you've got to focus your risk assessment on exploring the few most important areas. Before accepting a job, you must gather information in the following areas to answer three fundamental questions around organization, role, and personal risks.

### Organizational Risk

When looking to identify organizational risk, be sure to assess risk elements across the 5Cs: customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, and conditions. The good news is that you probably have a significant head start on understanding many of these, or you wouldn't even have been considered for the job. But do not rely on what you think you know.

The goal is to build an understanding of customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, and conditions to help you understand the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Tool 1.3 provides more detailed guidance for your 5Cs analysis. Go through the exercise and use these thought starters to see what new things you can learn. Here are some headlines about the 5Cs to help trigger insightful questions for you to ask.

**Customers:** First line, customer chain, end users, influencers

**Collaborators:** Suppliers, allies, government/community leaders

**Capabilities:** Human, operational, financial, technical, key assets

**Competitors:** Direct, indirect, potential

**Conditions:** Social/demographic, political/government/regulatory, economic, market

The main questions you should answer with the 5Cs analysis are:

What is the organization's sustainable competitive advantage?

Are there any risks with the current *Customer* base?

Are there any risks with relationships with significant *Collaborators* of the organization?

Does the organization have the *Capabilities* required for long-term success?

Do *Competitors* pose significant risks to the viability of the organization?

Are there any outside *Conditions* that will impact the viability of the organization?

See Tool 1.4 on situational assessment for a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.

### Role Risk

The main questions you should answer here are:

Did anyone have concerns about this role, and if so, what was done to mitigate them?

Why does the position exist? Why did the organization need to create it in the first place?

What are the objectives and outcomes? What are you supposed to get done? By when is it supposed to be done?

What will the impact be on the rest of the organization? What kind of interactions can you expect with key stakeholders?

What are your specific responsibilities, including decision-making authority and direct reports?

To mitigate the first risk (internal concerns about the role), you should:

1. Find the people who had concerns.
2. Understand those concerns.
3. Understand what has changed to make those concerns go away.

4. Believe those people will support the role (and you) going forward, but keep a close eye on their actions to verify.

To mitigate the remaining risks and understand key elements about the role itself, you should ensure that the key stakeholders:

1. Are aligned around the role's reason to exist.
2. Understand and are in agreement with the objectives of the role.
3. Understand the impact that the role will have on them and the organization.
4. Are clear on the responsibilities of the role.
5. Understand the interdependencies that the role requires and that their relevant constituents will have the elements of the new role communicated to them in an appropriately thorough way.

### Personal Risk

The main questions you should answer here are:

What, specifically, about me, led the organization to offer me the job?

Is this the company and role that can best capitalize on my strengths over time?

Will I look forward to coming to work three weeks, months, or years from now?

Where do my preferences fall along the BRAVE scale?

- Use Tool 1.1 to record your own personal BRAVE preferences.

Will I fit with the culture?

- Use Tool 1.1 to assess how you think the new organization rates (based on what you know now) along the BRAVE preferences.
- Compare and contrast your preferences to those of the organization to determine fit.

The objective is to understand how closely your strengths, motivation, and fit match what is required to deliver the expected results. Knowing what you know, would you hire yourself for the job? If your

assessment indicates that there might not be a fit, you should seriously consider walking away. Executives often convince themselves that they can make themselves fit but that approach rarely works.

In your efforts to understand these risks, you'll want multiple potential sources of information. You'll need scouts and spies to help you. Scouts are people outside the company who can give you a view of what's going on inside the company. Spies are people on the inside who can give you special insight into the organization and its environment. Look to these allies for supplemental information across the 5Cs to round out your understanding of the situation.

### Now What?

You've gathered your information. You've analyzed it and thought about it. Now what do you do? Categorize the risk as low, manageable, mission crippling, or insurmountable and then take appropriate action.

- If the overall risk is **low**, move forward—keeping your eyes open for things you've missed or things that change.
- If the risk is **manageable**, move forward, managing the risks as you go.
- You cannot succeed in the face of a **mission crippling** risk until you've figured out how to mitigate the risk. The critical judgment in this exercise is separating manageable risk from mission crippling risk.
- If the risk is **insurmountable**, a mission crippling risk that cannot be mitigated, walk away.

Note you'll find some additional thoughts on risk mitigation and negotiating as well as an onboarding risk calculator at [www.onboardingtools.com](http://www.onboardingtools.com).

## Position Yourself for Success: Summary and Implications

- **Culture**—Understand your own cultural preferences and strengths in the context of potential job opportunities.

- **Sell before you buy**—Get the offer first. You cannot turn down an offer you have not received. So sell before you buy, positioning your strengths, motivation, and fit in the context of the interviewing organization's needs.
- **Due diligence**—Do a real due diligence before accepting, understanding the level of risk you face across the seven deadly land mines (organization, role, personal, relationship, learning, delivery, and adjustment).
- **Manage risk**—Manage that risk appropriately with the help you need.

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF

Do I have examples to support my answers to the three interview questions?

Have I done sufficient due diligence?

Am I clear on my strengths with regard to this role?

Am I clear on my cultural preferences? How do my preferences compare with the organization's culture?

Is the job right for me in terms of strength, motivation, and fit?

Do I understand the risks and have I thought through my approach to manage those risks?

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## Additional Articles and Tools on [www.onboardingtools.com](http://www.onboardingtools.com)

- 1A.01 Communicating Your Leadership Potential
- 1A.02 Five-Step Career Plan
- 1A.03 Six Basic Elements of Leadership
- 1A.04 Personal Branding
- 1A.05 The Questions Behind the Interview Questions
- 1A.06 100-Day Plan for Interviews
- 1A.07 Sources for Uncovering Risk
- 1A.08 Onboarding Risk Assessment Calculator
- 1A.09 Negotiating
- 1A.10 BRAVE Culture

## TOOL 1.1

## BRAVE Culture Assessment/Preference\*

For each of the components below, estimate on a scale of 1–5, where 1 means the text in the middle column completely describes the preference and 5 means the text in the right column completely describes the preference, where your and the organization’s culture preferences fall. Add and score other subcomponents as you identify them. Identify the most important gaps and determine whether or how the gaps can be bridged.

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### Environment—Where to Play

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1. Impetus:	Opportunity to capture	Problem to solve
2. Enablers:	Human/interpersonal/ societal	Technical/mechanical/ scientific
3. Barriers:	External hurdles	Internal capabilities
Other insights:		

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### Values—What Matters and Why

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1. Interpretation of mission, vision, values:	As intended (evolving)	As written (set)
2. Risk appetite:	Risk more/gain	Protect what is
3. Learning:	Open/shared	Directed
Underlying beliefs:		

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### Attitude—How to Win

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1. Strategy:	Premium price/service/ innovation	Low cost/self-service/ min. viable
2. Focus:	Ideas out	Customer needs in
3. Posture:	Proactive	Responsive
Other observations:		

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*(continued)*

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## TOOL 1.1 BRAVE Culture Assessment/Preference (continued)

**Relationships—How to Connect**

1. Power, decision making:	Diffused/debated	Controlled/monarchical
2. Communication, controls:	Informal/verbal/face-to-face	Formal/directed/written
Identity:	Overall organization	Unit/subgroup
Others:		

**Behaviors—What Impact**

1. Working units:	Independent individuals	Interdependent teams
2. Discipline:	Fluid/flexible	Structured/disciplined
3. Bias:	Surprising breakthroughs	Reliable/repeatable/steady progress
Others:		

<http://www.pbookshop.com>



## TOOL 1.2

**Risk Assessment\***

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For each of the components below, estimate the level of risk for each land mine on a scale of 1 to 4. Then look at the individual rankings to come up with an overall risk assessment.

**Risk level scale:**

- 1: Low
- 2: Manageable
- 3: Mission crippling
- 4: Insurmountable

**Organization:** Assess risks of organization's strategy and ability to implement (1-2-3-4):

(Look for the organization's sustainable competitive advantage.)

**Role:** Assess risks of stakeholders' alignment around expectations and resources (1-2-3-4):

(Understand who had concerns about the role and what was done to address them.)

**Personal:** Assess risk of gaps in your strengths, motivation, or fit (1-2-3-4):

(Understand what, specifically, about you led to your getting an offer.)

**Relationships:** Assess risks in your ability to build and maintain key relationships (1-2-3-4):

**Learning:** Assess risks in your ability to gain adequate information and knowledge (1-2-3-4):

**Delivery:** Assess risks in your ability to build a high-performing team that can deliver fast enough (1-2-3-4):

**Adjustment:** Assess risks in your ability to see or react to situational changes down the road (1-2-3-4):

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*(continued)*

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TOOL 1.2 Risk Assessment (continued)

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**Overall Risk:** Assess overall risk by looking all the land mines combined (1-2-3-4):

If the overall risk assessment is rated:

1. Low, then do nothing out of the ordinary (but keep your eyes open for the inevitable changes).
  2. Manageable, then manage it in the normal course of your job.
  3. Mission crippling, then resolve it before accepting the job or mitigate it before doing anything else.
  4. Insurmountable, then walk away.
-

## TOOL 1.3

**5Cs Situation Analysis\***

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Use this tool for guidance in your due diligence to build an understanding of customers, collaborators, capabilities, competitors, and conditions to help you understand the organization's strengths and weaknesses.

- 1. Customers** (First line, customer chain, end users, influencers)  
Needs, hopes, preferences, commitments, strategies, price/value perspective by segment:

**First-Line/Direct Customers**

- Universe of opportunity—total market, volume by segment
- Current situation—volume by customer; profit by customer

**Customer Chain**

- Customers' customers—total market, volume by segment
- Current customers' strategies, volume and profitability by segment

**End Users**

- Preference, consumption, usage, loyalty, and price value data and perceptions for our products and competitors' products

**Influencers**

- Key influencers of customer and end user purchase and usage decisions

- 2. Collaborators** (Suppliers, business allies, partners, government/community leaders)

- Strategies, profit/value models for external and internal stakeholders (up, across, and down)
- 

(continued)

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TOOL 1.3 5Cs Situation Analysis (continued)

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**3. Capabilities**

- Human (Style and quality of management, strategy dissemination, culture: values, norms, focus, discipline, innovation, teamwork, execution, urgency, politics)
- Operational (Integrity of business processes, effectiveness of organizational structure, links between measures and rewards, corporate governance)
- Financial (Capital and asset utilization and investor management)
- Technical (Core processes, information technology systems, supporting skills)
- Key assets (Brands and intellectual property)

**4. Competitors** (Direct, indirect, potential)

- Strategies, profit/value models, profit pools by segment, source of pride

**5. Conditions**

- Social/demographic—trends
- Political/government/regulatory—trends
- Economic—macro and micro—trends
- Market definition, inflows, outflows, substitutes—trends

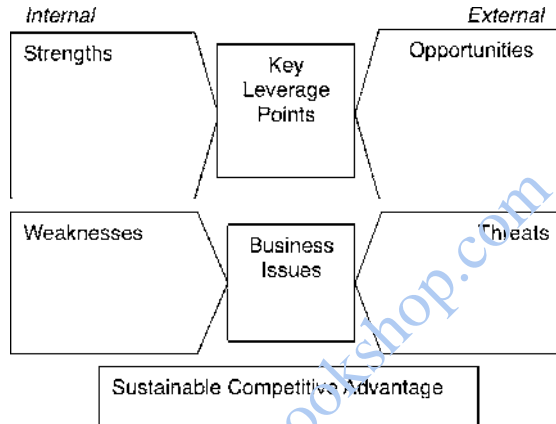
**Pulling It Together: SWOT Analysis and Thinking about**

- Sources, drivers, hinderers of revenue, and value.
  - Current strategy/resource deployment: Coherent? Adequate? De facto strategy?
  - Insights and scenarios (To set up: What/So what/Now what?)
-

TOOL 1.4  
**SWOT\***

Use this tool to complete a robust SWOT analysis, as shown in Figure 1.2.

**FIGURE 1.2 SWOT**



**Strengths:** Internal to organization—things we do better

**Weaknesses:** Internal to organization—things we do worse

**Opportunities:** External to organization—things to capitalize on

**Threats:** External to organization—things to worry about

**Key Leverage Points**

Opportunities we can leverage our strengths against (where to play to win)

**Business Implications**

Threats our weaknesses make us vulnerable to (where to play not to lose)

**Sustainable Competitive Advantages**

Key leverage points that can be sustained over extended periods

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<http://www.pbookshop.com>