

BRITER™ ORGANIZATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM • BOOK 3 • FOR
EXECUTIVES

Organizational Intelligence *Handbook.*

Books 1 and 2 built the experience and the leaders who create it. This one gives executives the instrument panel — how to read, diagnose, and steer the health of the whole organization.

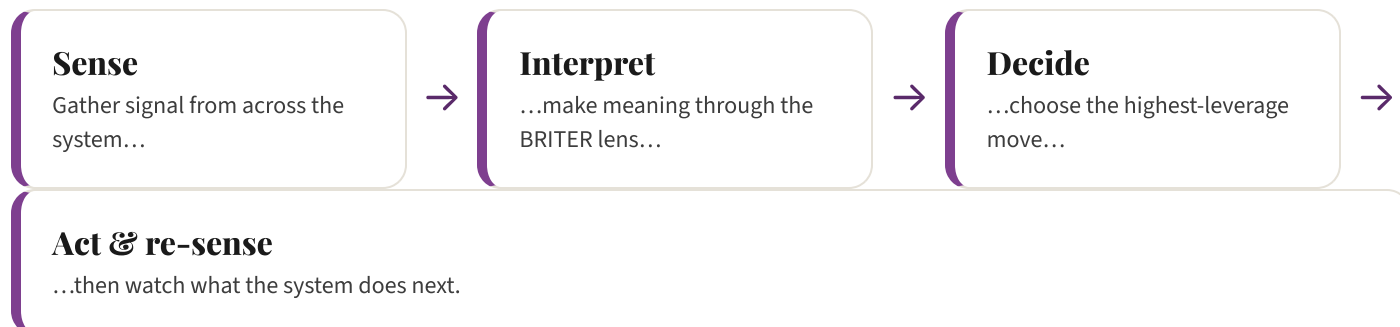
THIS HANDBOOK ANSWERS ONE QUESTION

"How healthy is my organization, really — and what do I do about it?"

THE CORE IDEA

Organizational Intelligence is a system you can read.

Most executives fly on lagging financials and gut feel. **Organizational Intelligence** is the capacity to sense, interpret, and act on the real health of the system beneath the numbers — leadership, culture, trust, alignment, and mission. Read it well and you see problems while they're still cheap to fix.



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01 What Organizational Intelligence Is

The executive's real job.

An organization that hits its numbers while losing its people has not actually won — it has borrowed against a future it can't see yet.

Organizational Intelligence (OI) is the organization's capacity to **understand itself** and act on that understanding. It is not data. It is not dashboards. It is the ability to sense what is happening beneath the numbers — in relationships, trust, identity, meaning, and culture — and to respond with clarity rather than reaction.

Most organizations are data-rich and meaning-poor. They can tell you what happened last quarter but not why. They can measure engagement but not explain what people are actually experiencing. They can track turnover but not see the trust erosion that preceded it by 18 months.

BRITER positions OI as a leadership discipline, not a technology. It lives in how leaders sense, interpret, and decide — not in a software platform. The executive who develops OI stops managing symptoms and starts reading the system.

Not just data

Dashboards without interpretation are noise. OI is the capacity to make meaning from information — to ask what the number reveals about the people and conditions that produced it.

Not just culture

Culture is one system among several. OI reads how leadership, culture, structure, trust, and meaning interact — and where those interactions are breaking down.

A leadership capacity

OI is developed, not installed. It requires reflexivity — the willingness to examine your own assumptions, question your own conclusions, and see what you'd prefer not to see.

SENSEMAKING OI begins with the BRITER question: **What meaning are people making from their experience here?** Two people in the same organization, same role, same manager — and one is thriving while the other is planning to leave. The difference is not the experience. It's the meaning they made from it.

● EXECUTIVE REFLECTION

Before you read further, sit with these

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

- *If you asked ten employees what it feels like to work here, would the answer match what you believe?*
- *What is your organization excellent at measuring — and what does it refuse to measure?*
- *Where are you managing numbers while ignoring the conditions that produce them?*
- *What would change if you treated trust, belonging, and meaning as organizational infrastructure — not soft skills?*

02 The Six Pillars at the Organizational Level

The diagnostic lens.

The same six pillars employees experience and leaders practice become your **diagnostic lens** at the top. Each pillar operates at every level — individual, relational, team, and organizational. At the executive level, you're reading the system-wide health of each one.

The BRITER lens works because it reads what traditional metrics miss. Financial performance, operational efficiency, and strategic execution are necessary — but they are lagging indicators. The pillars are leading indicators. When Bridging weakens, silos form. When Trust erodes, information stops flowing. When Identity blurs, mission drifts. These happen before the numbers move — and by the time the numbers move, the damage is expensive.

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION For each pillar: read the healthy indicators, compare them honestly to your organization, then sit with the executive question. If the question makes you uncomfortable, that's where the work is.

● PILLAR · DIAGNOSTIC

Bridging

Connection across the system.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Information flows across silos
- Teams know how their work connects
- Decisions include those affected

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- Departments hoard information
- People don't know the bigger picture
- Chronic 'us vs. them' between functions

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *Where are our worst silos, and what do they cost us?*

● PILLAR • DIAGNOSTIC

Reflexivity

The organization's capacity to learn.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Failures become lessons, not blame
- Decisions get revisited with new data
- Reflection is built into cadence

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- Same mistakes repeat
- Post-mortems hunt for someone to blame
- No time is ever made to reflect

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *What has this organization refused to learn?*

● PILLAR • DIAGNOSTIC

Identity

Clarity of who we are.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Shared, lived sense of purpose
- People see themselves in the mission
- Consistent story across levels

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- Mission is a poster, not a practice
- Identity fractured across departments
- Constant reinvention with no core

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *If we asked 10 employees who we are, would we get one answer?*

● PILLAR • DIAGNOSTIC

Trust

The system's operating currency.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Commitments are kept up and down
- Bad news travels fast and safely
- Repair happens after ruptures

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- People withhold or spin information
- Fear drives silence
- Broken promises go unaddressed

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *Where has trust quietly thinned, and why?*

● PILLAR • DIAGNOSTIC

Empowerment

Distributed ownership.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Authority sits near the work
- People own decisions in their lane
- Ideas flow up and get used

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- Everything routes to the top
- People wait for permission they have
- Bottlenecks at senior levels

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *What decisions am I holding that others should own?*

Resilience

Capacity to sustain and recover.

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

- Workload treated as finite
- People recover between pushes
- Change is absorbed without breaking

AN AT-RISK ORGANIZATION

- Chronic overload as normal
- Burnout and turnover rising
- Every change lands as a crisis

EXECUTIVE QUESTION

- *Are we sprinting toward a wall we can't see?*

03 The Organizational Intelligence Dashboard

Nine layers, one read.

The Dashboard connects six measurement signals with three conditions. No layer tells the whole story alone. Read them together to see the outcome, the practices behind it, and the conditions that make those practices possible.

OKR

Are we pursuing the right objectives?

KPI

Did we achieve the result?

KBI

Did we show the behaviors?

KCI

Is the culture getting healthier?

KMI

Are we advancing the mission?

KPA

Are people aligned to role & priorities?

The six signals show direction, results, behavior, conditions, mission, and people alignment. Three additional layers examine the foundations, motivation and energy, and trust that shape what the numbers can mean. Together they form the nine-layer read.

CSF

Critical Success Foundations. Are the essential systems, staffing, tools, and resources in place?

KMPE

Key Motivation and Psychological Energy. Is there enough meaning, agency, and capacity to sustain the work?

KTI

Key Trust Indicator. Can people speak honestly, rely on follow-through, and seek repair?

Read conditions with the gauges. A flat KPI may reflect broken tools, depleted capacity, or low trust rather than an individual performance gap. Coaching cannot repair a condition only the organization can change. Each leadership level reads the layers it can act on; senior leaders need the full view.

OKR — Objectives & Key Results. The strategic compass. OKRs answer whether the organization is pursuing the right goals. But a perfectly achieved OKR that damages culture or burns out your people is not a success — it's a debt. BRITER adds: *Was it the right goal, and did achieving it advance the mission or just the metric?*

KPI — Key Performance Indicators. The result. KPIs tell you what the organization achieved. They are necessary and insufficient. A KPI without a KBI is a number without a story — you know what happened but not how. BRITER adds: *What did we achieve, and what did it cost us in trust, people, and culture to achieve it?*

KBI — Key Behavior Indicators. The how. KBIs measure the leadership behaviors and team practices that produced the result. Two teams can hit the same number — one through collaboration and coaching, the other through fear and overwork. The KPI is identical; the KBI reveals the difference. BRITER adds: *Are the behaviors that produced this result sustainable and aligned with who we say we are?*

KCI — Key Culture Indicators. The lived experience. KCIs measure what happened to the people along the way — trust, belonging, psychological safety, meaning, workload sustainability. A team can hit every target while exhausting its people, breaking trust, or violating its values. The KCI makes that visible. BRITER adds: *What did people actually experience while producing this result?*

KMI — Key Mission Indicators. The purpose check. KMIs ask whether the result actually advanced the mission — or just moved a number. Organizations can be operationally excellent and mission-irrelevant. BRITER adds: *Did this matter? Did it serve the people and purpose we exist for?*

KPA — Key People & Priority Alignment. The fit check. KPAs measure whether people, roles, and priorities are aligned — whether the right people are in the right roles doing the right work with the right authority. Misalignment here creates friction that shows up everywhere else. BRITER adds: *Are people positioned to succeed, or is the system setting them up to struggle?*

● THE DASHBOARD READ

Three patterns every executive must recognize

PATTERN 1 — THE HIDDEN COST

- KPI rising + KCI falling = you're spending culture to buy results
- This is the most dangerous pattern because it looks like success
- Ask: "What are we consuming that we can't replace?"

PATTERN 2 — THE ALIGNMENT GAP

- KPA falling + KBI mixed = people aren't in the right roles or don't have the right authority
- Performance problems that are actually system design problems
- Ask: "Is this a people issue or a structure issue wearing a person's name?"

PATTERN 3 — MISSION DRIFT

- KPI stable + KMI declining = the organization is efficient at the wrong things
- Activity without impact — busy but not purposeful
- Ask: "If we removed every program that doesn't directly serve the mission, what would remain?"

REFLECTION

- Of the nine layers, which signals and conditions does your organization read well, and which does it avoid?
- When did you last check CSF, KMPE, and KTI before interpreting a result?
- *What would change if KCI and KBI carried the same weight as KPI in your leadership reviews?*
- *When was the last time a result was questioned because the behavior that produced it was wrong?*

04 Diagnosing Organizational Health

Symptom vs. root cause.

Executives get paid to tell the difference between a symptom and its root cause. **"We have a communication problem"** is almost never about communication — it's usually unclear decision rights, low trust, role ambiguity, or change fatigue underneath. The symptom is what everyone complains about. The root is what the system is actually producing.

BRITER's diagnostic discipline uses the **Feedback Loop** at the organizational level: **Pause** (don't react to the first read), **Scan** (look at the whole system, not just the loudest signal), **Listen** (gather perspectives from multiple levels), **Adjust** (update your assumptions), **Align** (match your interpretation to evidence), **Act** (respond on purpose, not on impulse).



● DIAGNOSTIC DISCIPLINE

Common symptoms and what they usually mean

THE SYMPTOM

- **"Communication is broken"** → Usually unclear decision rights or low trust
- **"We can't find good people"** → Usually a culture or leadership reputation problem
- **"People resist change"** → Usually unmanaged loss of identity or unaddressed fear
- **"Morale is low"** → Usually accumulated unaddressed feedback, broken promises, or invisible workload

THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

- If this problem were solved perfectly today and returned in six months, what would the real cause have been?
- Is this happening because of one person — or would anyone in that role produce the same result?
- What has the organization refused to address that keeps showing up in different forms?
- Who benefits from this problem staying unsolved?

BEFORE YOU FUND A FIX

- *Are you solving the symptom or the root?*
- *Have you heard from the people closest to the problem — not just the people reporting it?*
- *What assumption are you treating as fact that you haven't tested?*

EXECUTIVE DISCIPLINE The most expensive organizational mistake is solving the wrong problem confidently. Before funding a fix, ask: **"What if we're wrong about what this is?"**

05 The Organizational Maturity Model

Where you are, where you're going.

Organizations mature through predictable stages of intelligence. Rate the organization honestly — the goal isn't to be at Level 5 everywhere, it's to know where you are and move **one level up** on what matters most right now.

Most organizations overestimate their maturity. They confuse having a policy with practicing it, confuse talking about culture with building it, confuse leadership training with leadership development. The maturity model asks: **What does your organization actually do — not what does it say it does?**

L1

Reactive

The organization responds to symptoms as they appear. No shared language, little measurement, leadership by firefighting.

L2

Aware

Leaders recognize patterns and begin naming them. Some measurement, inconsistent practice, pockets of good leadership.

L3

Practicing

BRITER language and conversations are common. The Dashboard is watched; culture is measured; leaders coach.

L4

Integrated

Organizational Intelligence is built into systems — hiring, reviews, planning, governance. Health is managed, not hoped for.

L5

Generative

The organization improves itself continuously and develops leaders who develop leaders. It teaches and regenerates.

Where is your organization — honestly?

RATE EACH PILLAR INDEPENDENTLY

- *For each of the six pillars, what level is your organization actually operating at — not aspirationally, but in daily practice?*
- *Where is the widest gap between where you believe you are and where your people would say you are?*
- *What would moving one level up on your weakest pillar require — and what's preventing it?*
- *What does your organization do that keeps it from advancing — and who benefits from staying where you are?*

06 Culture as a System

What you tolerate, you teach.

Culture isn't the poster on the wall; it's the pattern of behavior the organization actually rewards, tolerates, and repeats. As an executive you don't *create* culture by declaration — you **shape** it through what you model, what you allow, and what you measure. Culture is built one conversation at a time — that is the Leadership Conversation Standard in action at the organizational level.

The BRITER lens on culture: Culture is what people experience, not what leaders intend. The gap between the stated culture and the lived culture is your credibility gap — and people read it clearly even when leaders don't.

What you model

The behavior at the top becomes the ceiling for everyone below. If the executive team doesn't practice CEO QuickCoach™, no one else will either. Leadership is observed, not explained.

What you reward

People do what gets recognized, promoted, and celebrated. Watch who rises — that reveals your real values more honestly than any values statement.

What you tolerate

The worst behavior you permit becomes the actual standard. When a high performer is allowed to damage trust, the organization learns that results matter more than people.

What you measure

Attention follows measurement. If you measure KPIs but not KCIs, you're telling the organization that results matter and culture doesn't. People believe the metric, not the speech.

What you resource

Budgets and calendars reveal true priorities louder than any strategic plan. Where you put time and money is where the organization puts belief.

How you decide

Whether people have voice in decisions that affect them builds or erodes trust and empowerment. Decision-making is where culture is performed, not just described.

Six questions that reveal your real culture

ANSWER THESE HONESTLY — THEN ASK YOUR FRONTLINE STAFF THE SAME QUESTIONS

- *What behavior gets someone promoted here — and is it the behavior you'd put on the poster?*
- *What is the worst behavior currently being tolerated — and what is it teaching everyone who sees it?*
- *What does leadership "feel like" at the lowest level of the organization?*
- *If a new employee asked a tenured one "what's it really like here," what would they hear?*
- *Where is the biggest gap between what we say we value and what we actually practice?*
- *What conversation about culture has the executive team been avoiding?*

07 Strategic Alignment

Is everyone pulling the same direction?

Misalignment is expensive and invisible until it isn't. Every seam between mission, strategy, culture, behavior, role, and measurement is a potential fracture. When they're aligned, the organization accelerates. When they're not, effort is consumed by internal friction that no one budgeted for.

BRITER reads alignment through the Bridging pillar. Bridging is connection across differences — and at the organizational level, the most critical bridging is between what the top intends and what the bottom experiences. If the strategy is clear at the executive table but fog by the time it reaches the front line, you have a Bridging failure, not a communication problem.

Mission ↔ Strategy

Does the strategy actually serve the stated mission — or has growth, funding, or opportunity pulled it sideways? Mission drift is slow and feels like success until it doesn't.

Strategy ↔ Culture

Can this culture execute this strategy? A strategy that requires collaboration will fail in a culture of competition. The culture will quietly reject any strategy it can't metabolize.

Culture ↔ Behavior

Do daily behaviors match the culture we claim? If the values say 'people first' but the calendar says 'meetings first,' people believe the calendar.

Behavior ↔ Role

Do people know what their role requires and how it connects to the mission? Role ambiguity is one of the most common and least diagnosed sources of organizational friction.

Role ↔ Measurement

Are we measuring what the role should actually deliver — or measuring what's easy to count? The metric shapes the behavior; the wrong metric shapes the wrong behavior.

Measurement ↔ Mission

Do our metrics roll back up to mission impact — or just activity? An organization can be operationally perfect and mission-irrelevant.

● ALIGNMENT CHECK

The seam test

FOR EACH SEAM ABOVE, ASK

- *Is this seam tight or fraying?*
- *Who would know first if it were breaking — and would they tell you?*
- *What evidence would show you this alignment is real, not assumed?*
- *Where is the organization saying one thing and doing another — and has anyone named it?*

08 Developing Leaders at Scale

Your true multiplier.

The single highest-leverage executive act is building leaders who build leaders. One great executive helps dozens; a system that develops leaders helps thousands. But most organizations confuse **leadership training** (10% formal) with **leadership development** (the full 40-30-20-10 continuum).

The BRITER 40-30-20-10 Development Continuum applies at the organizational level: **40% real experience** (stretch assignments, acting roles, cross-functional projects), **30% making sense** (reflection, debrief, journaling, facilitated dialogue), **20% coaching** (CEO QuickCoach™, mentoring, developmental relationships), **10% formal learning** (institutes, workshops, certifications). Most organizations invest 80% in the 10% and wonder why leaders don't develop.

Leadership pipeline

Know who's ready now, ready with development, and an emerging bet. Use the Succession Planning Worksheet for every critical role — not just the top.

Succession planning

Every key role has a named successor and an active development path — not a name in a binder. If the plan hasn't been reviewed in 12 months, it's not a plan.

Institutes by level

Role-based BRITER learning journeys from C-Suite to Frontline. Each uses the same philosophy and language — scaled to the developmental needs of the role.

Coaching culture

CEO QuickCoach™ used at every level, not just at the top. When leaders at every level pause before conversations, check assumptions, and reflect after, the culture shifts.

Stretch & sponsorship

Grow people through real assignments with real backing. The 40% — experience — is where development actually happens. A course is the 10%; the assignment is the 40%.

Calibration

Align leaders on what 'good leadership' looks like here. Without calibration, every manager defines leadership differently and the organization has no shared standard.

Is your organization developing leaders or just training them?

HONEST QUESTIONS

- *What percentage of your leadership development budget goes to formal training vs. structured experience, reflection, and coaching?*
- *Can every leader in your organization name their development focus and their development plan?*
- *Who is being developed — and who has been overlooked because their style doesn't match yours?*
- *If your top three leaders left tomorrow, who steps in — and are they being prepared right now?*
- *When was the last time a leader was promoted because of how they develop people, not just what they produce?*

09 Leading Organizational Change

The system resists for reasons.

Change fails less from bad plans than from unmanaged **transition** and lost trust. The plan is the structural change — new roles, new process, new strategy. The transition is the human experience of loss, uncertainty, and identity disruption that the change creates. Most organizations manage the plan and ignore the transition. That's why the reorg won't stick.

BRITER reads resistance as data. When people resist change, they are usually not resisting improvement. They are responding to unacknowledged loss — loss of competence, relationships, identity, autonomy, certainty, or belonging. Name the loss and you unlock the transition.

Readiness

Assess capacity for change before launching — not after it stalls. Does the organization have the trust, energy, and leadership bandwidth to absorb this change right now?

Coalition

Line up executive and influencer commitment first. Change without visible leadership alignment teaches the organization that the change is optional.

The why

Over-communicate purpose; repeat it past your own boredom. By the time you're tired of saying it, it's just starting to land. People need to hear the why seven times before they believe it.

Identity & loss

Name what's staying the same, not only what's changing. People need an anchor. When everything changes, identity fractures and the organization loses its sense of self.

Quick wins

Show early proof to sustain belief through the messy middle. The middle of every change is where commitment dies — visible progress keeps people moving.

Sustain

Embed the change in systems — hiring, measurement, rewards, meetings, reviews — so it outlives the initiative. If it's not in the system, it's a project, not a change.

Before launching the next change

QUESTIONS THE EXECUTIVE TEAM MUST ANSWER TOGETHER

- *What are people going to lose in this change — competence, relationships, identity, autonomy, certainty?*
- *Have we acknowledged the loss, or are we only talking about the gain?*
- *Does the organization have enough trust to absorb this change right now — or will it break something?*
- *What is the human transition plan — not just the project plan?*
- *How will we know if people are complying but not committing — and what will we do about it?*
- *What story will people tell about how this change was led?*

10 Governance & Stewardship

Protecting the system.

Executives are **stewards**, not owners, of the organization's intelligence and integrity. You inherited a system built by others, and you will hand it to someone after you. Governance is the discipline that keeps the system honest, accountable, and sustainable as it scales — especially when doing the right thing is expensive.

BRITER positions governance as a Trust and Resilience discipline. Trust requires transparency, kept commitments, and honest communication — especially with boards, funders, and stakeholders. Resilience requires building systems that survive their leaders — succession, documentation, distributed authority, and institutional memory.

Board partnership

Give the board real signal on organizational health — not just financials and program metrics. Share KCI and KBI data. If the board only sees KPIs, they're governing with one eye closed.

Decision rights

Make clear who decides what — and publish it. Decision ambiguity erodes trust and speed. When people don't know who owns a decision, they either wait or fight.

Ethical standards

Name the values that hold when they're costly to hold. Ethics are tested in hard moments, not easy ones. What the organization does when the right thing is expensive reveals its real character.

Data & privacy

Handle employee and organizational data responsibly and transparently. Assessment results, performance data, and culture metrics require stewardship — not weaponization.

Mission integrity

Guard against mission drift as growth, funding, and opportunity pull sideways. Every new program should pass the test: 'Does this serve our mission — or does it serve our budget?'

Continuity & resilience

Build resilience so the organization survives its leaders. Document institutional knowledge. Develop successors. Distribute authority. The organization's health should not depend on any single person — including you.

The steward's questions

ASK YOURSELF AND YOUR BOARD

- *If you left tomorrow, what would break — and what does that tell you about how you've built (or not built) the system?*
- *What decision have you been making alone that others should own?*
- *What information does the board need that they're not getting — and why aren't they getting it?*
- *Where has the organization compromised its values for expedience — and has anyone named it?*
- *What is the organization's most important asset that isn't on the balance sheet?*

11 Executive Case Studies

Reading the system in real life.

Five situations executives actually face — read through the BRITER lens: symptom, root, and the highest-leverage move.

Rising Revenue, Rising Turnover

SYMPTOM	Numbers are up but good people keep leaving. Hiring costs are climbing. Institutional knowledge walks out the door every month.
ROOT CAUSE	KPI is bought at the cost of KCI — Resilience and Trust are being spent to hit targets. The organization is consuming its people to produce its results.
PILLARS AFFECTED	Resilience (workload unsustainable) · Trust (leaders not listening) · Empowerment (no voice in how work gets done)
HIGHEST-LEVERAGE MOVE	Rebalance the Dashboard — add KCI and KBI measures alongside KPI. Conduct Stay Interviews with your highest performers this month. Protect workload and recognition before the talent base collapses.

BEFORE YOU ACT — REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What would it mean if the people leaving are your healthiest — the ones who know they deserve better?*
- *What story are the people who stay telling themselves about why they're still here?*
- *If you removed the revenue number from this picture, what would the organization's health actually look like?*
- *What is this result costing you that doesn't appear on the P&L?*

FACILITATION MOVES

- Ask your leadership team: 'If we hit our number again next year but lost another 20% of our best people, would we call that a win?'
- Have each leader conduct one Stay Interview this week and report back what they learned.
- Review exit interview patterns from the last 12 months — what theme appears that no one has addressed?

THE TRAP — WHAT MOST LEADERS DO INSTEAD

Replacing people faster instead of understanding why they leave. Throwing retention bonuses at the symptom instead of fixing the condition.

The Reorg That Won't Stick

SYMPTOM	A new structure was announced twice and nothing changed. People returned to old patterns within weeks. Leadership is frustrated by 'resistance.'
ROOT CAUSE	Change was managed as an org chart, not a human transition. Identity and Trust were ignored. People were told where to sit but never helped make meaning of why.
PILLARS AFFECTED	Identity (people lost their sense of place) · Trust (the change felt imposed, not explained) · Reflexivity (no reflection on what the old structure meant to people)
HIGHEST-LEVERAGE MOVE	Name what's staying the same — not only what's changing. Over-communicate the why. Lead the loss, not just the boxes. Ask people what the old structure gave them that they're afraid of losing.

BEFORE YOU ACT — REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did the old structure provide that the new one doesn't replace — belonging, identity, clarity, relationships?*
- *Did anyone ask the people being moved what the change meant to them?*
- *What are you calling 'resistance' that might actually be 'I don't understand why'?*
- *If the reorg is right but the transition failed, what does that tell you about how change is led here?*

FACILITATION MOVES

- Gather a cross-section of affected employees. Ask: 'What did you lose in this change that no one acknowledged?'
- Have the executive sponsor restate the why in plain language — then ask the group to repeat it back. If they can't, the message hasn't landed.
- Identify three things that are NOT changing and communicate them loudly.

THE TRAP — WHAT MOST LEADERS DO INSTEAD

Announcing the reorg a third time, louder. Blaming middle managers for not 'driving adoption.'
Treating a meaning problem as a compliance problem.

Executive Team Misalignment

SYMPTOM	Leaders publicly agree in meetings, then privately pull opposite directions. Their teams receive conflicting priorities. Decisions get revisited and reversed.
ROOT CAUSE	No shared meaning on strategy. Bridging and Perspective Integration are weak at the top. The executive team has never had the conversation that would surface their real disagreements.
PILLARS AFFECTED	Bridging (silos at the top cascade silos below) · Trust (private disagreement signals low psychological safety among peers) · Empowerment (unclear decision rights)
HIGHEST-LEVERAGE MOVE	Facilitate shared meaning at the executive level — not another offsite with Post-Its, but a facilitated conversation about what the strategy actually requires and where real disagreement lives. Make decision rights explicit and public.

BEFORE YOU ACT — REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *Where do your executive team members actually disagree — and why hasn't that disagreement been surfaced?*
- *What would it cost to have the real conversation? What is it costing you not to?*
- *If their teams are confused, is the confusion coming from ambiguity or from active contradiction?*
- *What decisions are being made twice because ownership was never clarified?*

FACILITATION MOVES

- In the next executive meeting, ask each leader to write down the organization's top three strategic priorities — then read them aloud. Count how many different lists exist.
- For every major decision revisited in the last quarter, ask: 'Who decided? Who should have decided? Why was it reopened?'
- Ask: 'Where are we publicly aligned but privately divergent — and what would it take to close that gap?'

THE TRAP — WHAT MOST LEADERS DO INSTEAD

Assuming alignment because no one argued in the meeting. Treating silence as agreement. Adding another strategic planning session instead of facilitating the disagreement.

Mission Drift

SYMPTOM	The work is busy but no longer feels connected to why we exist. Programs have multiplied. People can describe what they do but not why it matters.
ROOT CAUSE	Measurement rewards activity over mission. KMI is missing from the Dashboard. Growth added programs without asking whether they serve the core purpose.
PILLARS AFFECTED	Identity (organizational purpose has blurred) · Reflexivity (no mechanism to ask 'should we still be doing this?') · Empowerment (people can't say no to new initiatives)
HIGHEST-LEVERAGE MOVE	Re-anchor metrics to mission impact. For every current program, ask: 'If we started from scratch today, would we create this?' Cut or sunset what doesn't serve the mission. Add KMI to the Dashboard.

BEFORE YOU ACT — REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *If you had to explain this organization's purpose in one sentence, would every leader say the same thing?*
- *What programs exist today only because they've always existed?*
- *What would you stop doing if mission alignment were the only criterion?*
- *When was the last time someone said 'That doesn't serve our mission' and was taken seriously?*

FACILITATION MOVES

- List every program and initiative. For each, ask the team: 'What mission outcome does this produce — and how do we know?'
- Ask frontline staff: 'What do you spend time on that feels disconnected from why this organization exists?'
- Have the board and executive team independently write the mission in their own words. Compare.

THE TRAP — WHAT MOST LEADERS DO INSTEAD

Adding a new mission statement instead of realigning the work. Launching a 'mission renewal' initiative that becomes another program disconnected from action.

The Trust Collapse

SYMPTOM	Engagement scores crater after a broken promise from the top. People are polite but guarded. Information stops flowing upward. The best people go quiet.
ROOT CAUSE	Trust ruptured and was never repaired. The system learned that leaders don't own their mistakes. People adapted by withholding rather than risking.
PILLARS AFFECTED	Trust (primary rupture) · Bridging (information hoarding as protection) · Resilience (emotional withdrawal as self-preservation)
HIGHEST-LEVERAGE MOVE	Own it publicly — name the specific promise, acknowledge the breach, and describe the repair. Then rebuild through kept commitments over time. Trust is rebuilt in small, consistent deposits, not grand gestures.

BEFORE YOU ACT — REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What was the promise, and what story did people tell themselves when it was broken?*
- *What did the silence after the breach communicate — and is that the message you intended?*
- *If trust were a bank account, how overdrawn is yours — and what would a first deposit look like?*
- *What are people protecting themselves from by going quiet?*

FACILITATION MOVES

- In a town hall or team meeting, say: 'I know trust was damaged when [specific event]. I want to hear how that affected you.' Then listen without defending.
- Ask each leader: 'What is one commitment you can make this week that you will absolutely keep?' Follow up publicly.
- Create a 90-day trust repair cadence: monthly check-ins where the executive team reports on commitments kept and broken — transparently.

THE TRAP — WHAT MOST LEADERS DO INSTEAD

Hoping people will forget. Launching an engagement survey to 'measure' trust instead of repairing it. Blaming the workforce for low morale after you broke the promise.

This is Book 3 of five

One system, five books, each written for a different reader — same language, same pillars, same measurement dashboard.

Employee Experience Handbook

EVERY EMPLOYEE • BOOK 1

Culture, expectations, policies, and growth.

Leader Handbook

SUPERVISORS & MANAGERS • BOOK 2

How to lead using the BRITER Operating System.

Organizational Intelligence Handbook

YOU ARE READING IT • BOOK 3

Strategy, diagnostics, metrics, and culture.

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