Mastering the Human Side of Change: Inspire, Adapt, Deliver

October 21, 2026 | 9:00 a.m.

PMI Culture Value: Aim Higher

Kim Beynon
PMI New York City | Immediate Past President
CEO, Courageously Becoming

Project Management Institute.

Award –Winning Executive, Keynote Speaker, Executive Coach and Board Director Specializing in High-Stakes Decision-Making, Transformation & Board Leadership

Through *Courageously Becoming™*, a neuroscience-backed framework combined with emotional intelligence practices, Kim helps leaders move from fear-driven reactions to clear, intentional action—enabling more effective decision-making by turning fear and uncertainty into a competitive leadership advantage

Community Leader

- Immediate Past President & Board Member, PMI New York City (PMI NYC)
- PMI NYC President & Board Chair as well as first Vice President of Strategy & Consulting
- Under her leadership, PMI NYC achieved record growth, strengthened governance, expanded volunteer engagement, and received a Citation from the Mayor of New York City for service to the City
- Inaugural recipient of the PMI NYC Leadership Impact Award
- Served more than 18 years on nonprofit boards and advisory committees

Extensive Global Leadership Experience

Held senior roles at Deloitte, GE Capital, Macquarie, AIG and Bridgewater where she built PMOs, led global teams, integrated acquisitions and delivered large-scale transformations spanning strategy, finance, operations, compliance and regulatory environments

Qualifications

- Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Certified by the Neuroscience School
- International Board Director Competency Designation (IBDC.D)



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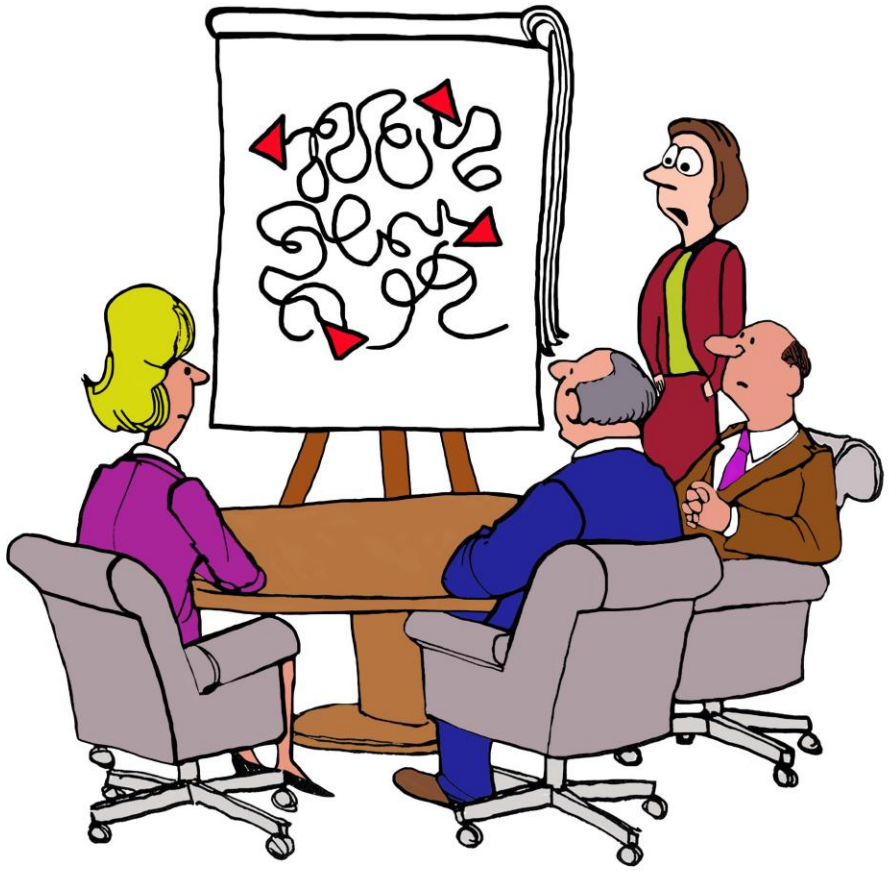
Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Apply neuroscience-backed strategies to reduce resistance and increase engagement during change
- Lead with hope to build trust, motivation, and team alignment in uncertain times

Key Takeaways

- A neuroscience-informed leadership model for guiding teams through change
- Techniques to reduce fear and increase trust using hope and clarity
- Tools to build psychological safety, emotional resilience and team alignment



“The way forward is clear.”

CartoonStock.com



What do you believe causes people to resist change?

The Case – A Deadline Nobody Chose

September 28th

Canadian carrying broker is closing due to financial distress. You have been brought in to run a failing project to convert to a new carrying broker

November 9th

IIROC, Canadian regulator, mandated migration date, monitored by Big 4 Firm

The Consequences

Reputational Loss – Market, Client & Regulatory

Trading Ceases

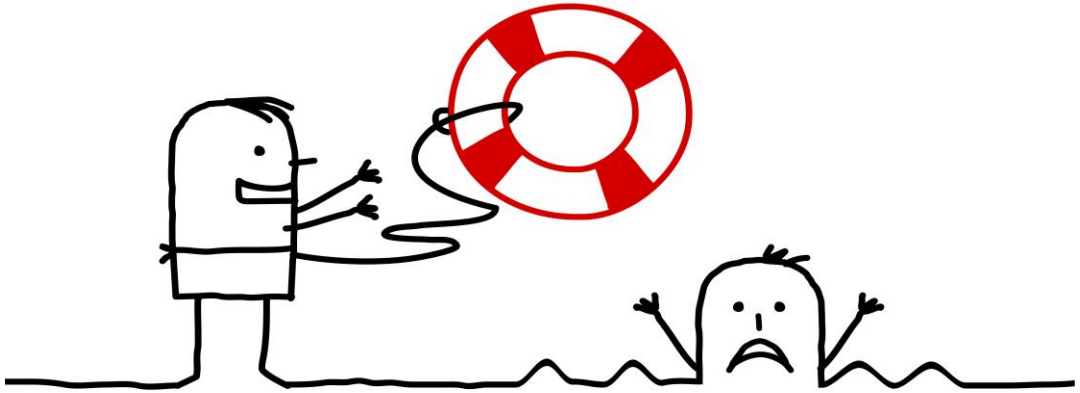
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The Case - Project Assessment Key Findings

- Line Manager serving as PM
  - Day job responsibilities
  - No Project Management expertise

Certain key areas under-resourced

  - Finance
  - Project Management
  - Testing Coordinator



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People are not Responding to Change – They are Responding to Perceived Threat



- Speed of change
- Imposed change
- Lack of control
- Fear of the unknown
- Lack of predictability
- Fear of failure
- Bad Past Experiences

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People do not resist change.

They resist threat.

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What state is a team in when threatened?

Negative Emotional Attractors

- Activates the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) - stress, focus, urgency
- Occurs when in the Task Positive Neural Network (TPN) - analytical, problem-solving
- Emotional State is stress, defensiveness, urgency



Source: Boyatzis, et al. (2015)

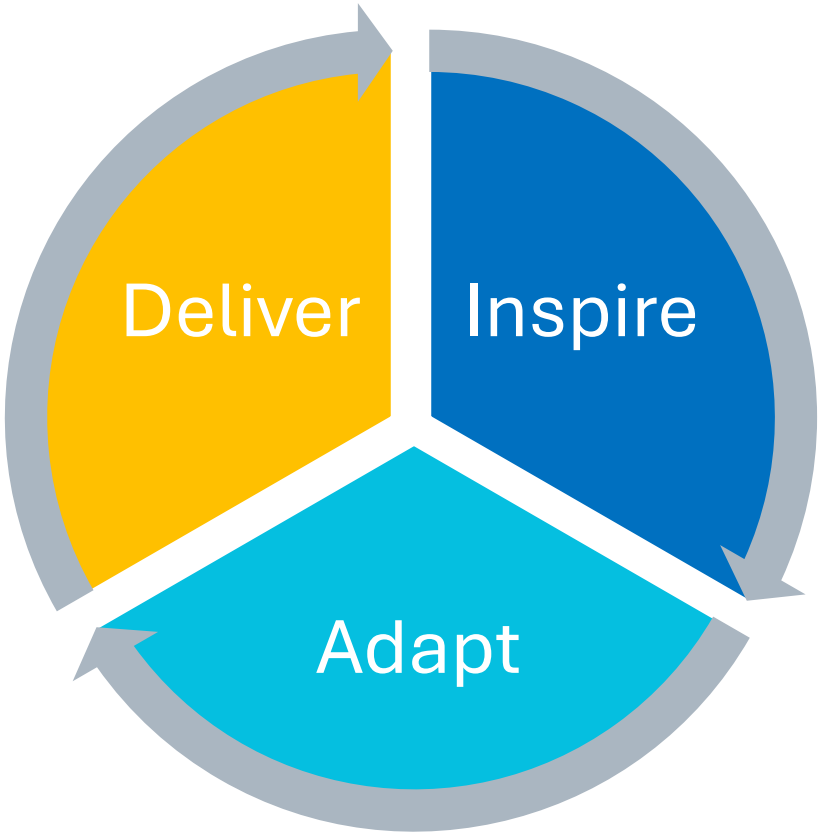
Positive Emotional Attractors

- Activates the Parasympathetic Nervous system (PNS) - relaxation, openness, renewal, receptive
- Occurs when in the Default Mode Neural Network (DMN) - empathic, creative thinking
- Emotional State is optimism, openness, creativity

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The Framework: Inspire, Adapt, Deliver

How do I sustain engagement and execution?

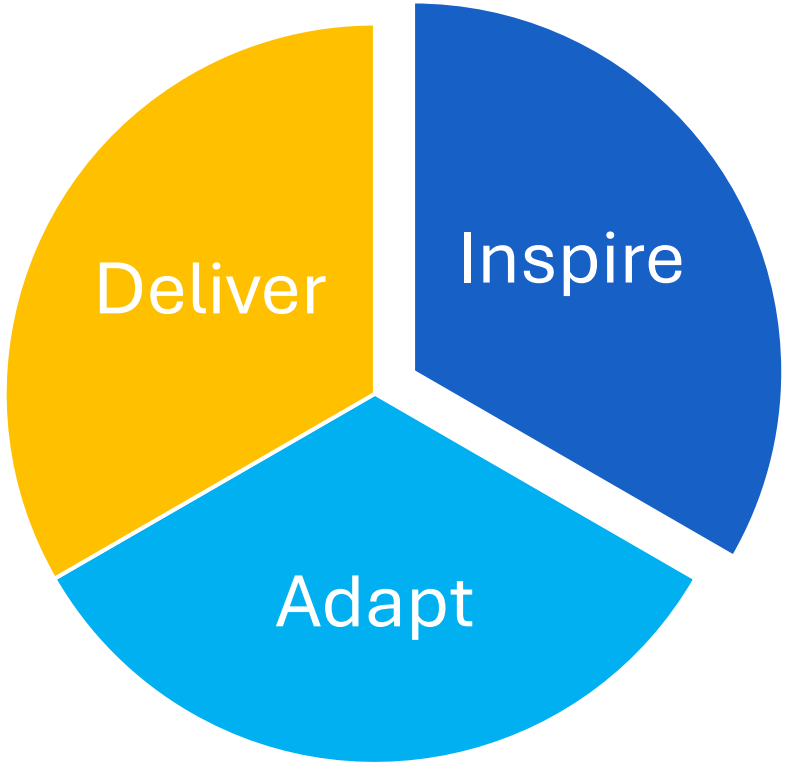


How do I reduce threat and restore possibility?

How do I create agency and capability?

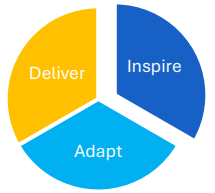
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Inspire – How do I reduce threat and restore possibility?



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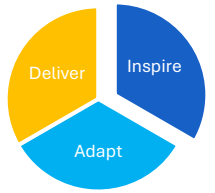
The Case – Where to Start?



What action would you take first?

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Psychological Safety – The First Operating Condition



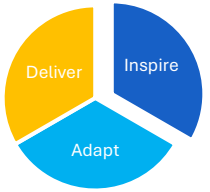
What is psychological safety?

"a belief that **one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up** with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that **the team is safe** for interpersonal risk-taking"

Amy Edmondson

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What type of environment are you creating?



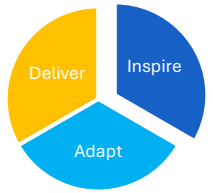


"Brainstorming sessions might work if the boss didn't always have to attend."

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Google’s Project Aristotle - Key Finding

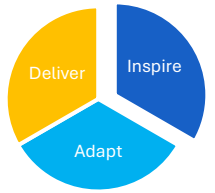


Google discovered that **psychological safety** — whether people feel safe to take interpersonal risks with each other — was the single most important factor separating its highest-performing teams from the rest.

Google analyzed 180 teams across 250 attributes over two years in 2012.

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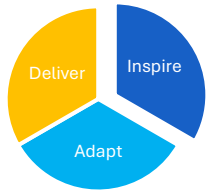
How to Create Psychological Safety



- Set the Stage
- Issue Invitations
- Respond in appreciative manner

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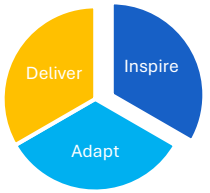
What Psychological Safety Isn’t



- Being Nice
- Lowering Standards
- Avoiding Accountability

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The Case – How was Psychological Safety Achieved?



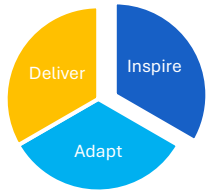
First action - Interviews with every team member

- Acknowledged circumstances and challenges ahead
- Asked questions for understanding – gave the team a voice
- Listened – identified risks
- Developed a plan – team felt seen and supported

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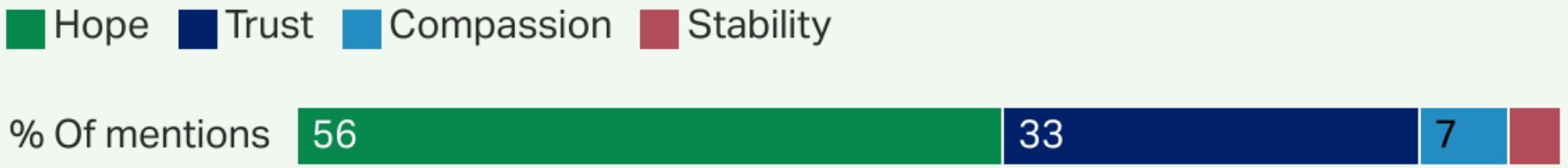
What word best describes what a leader contributes to your life?



What People Need From Leaders

The Four Needs of Followers -- Distribution

Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)

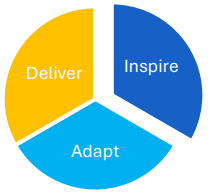


Base: n=72,439 responses across 52 countries and territories

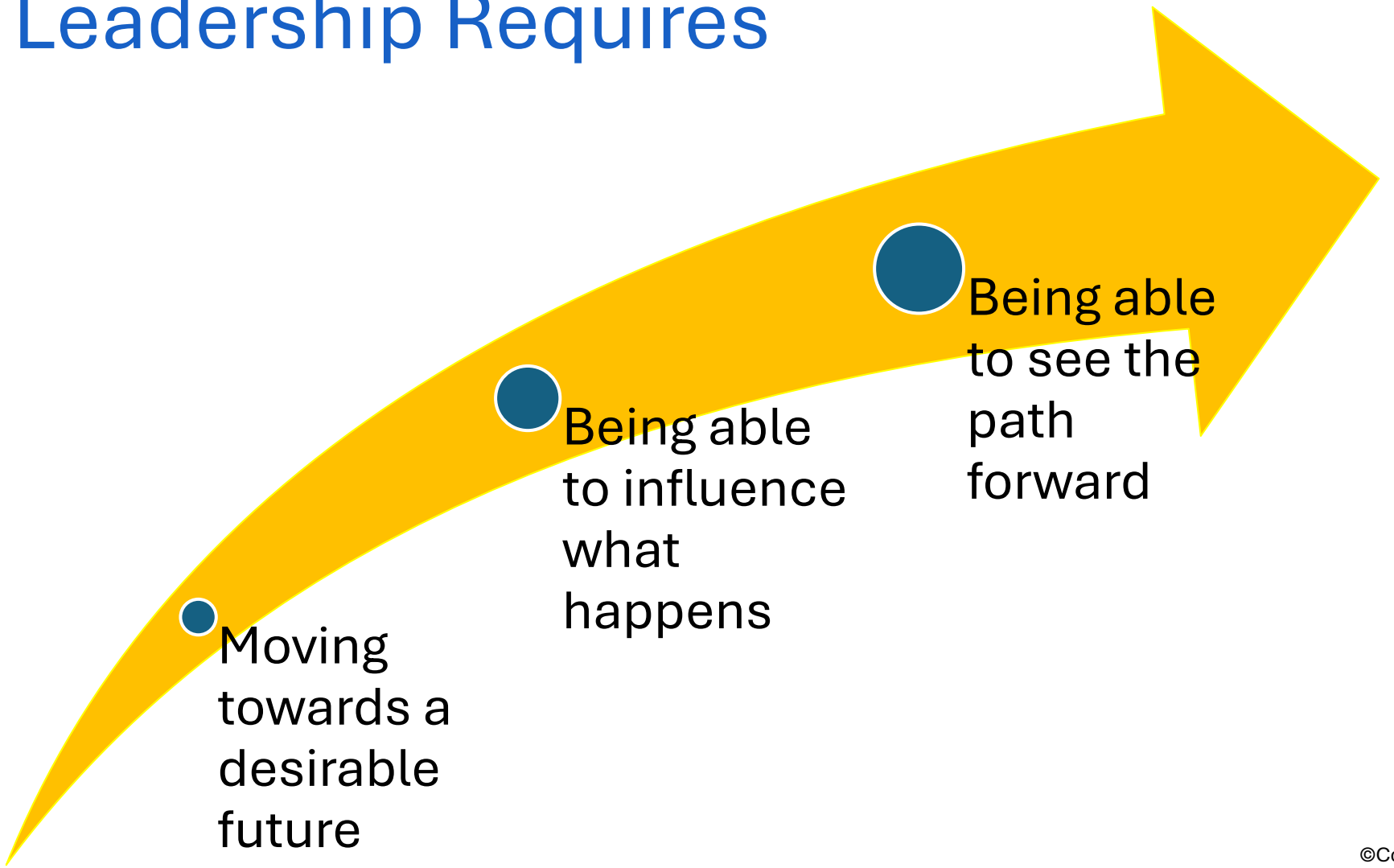
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

N.B. People could give up to three responses, so this report provides statistics at the responses level rather than the respondent level. Any nonsensical responses that could not be grouped into one of the four codes were excluded from the analysis.

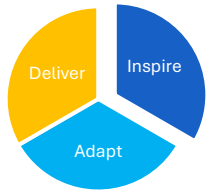
GALLUP



Hope Leadership Requires



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The Case – What made the team believe?

Being able to see a path forward based on their input

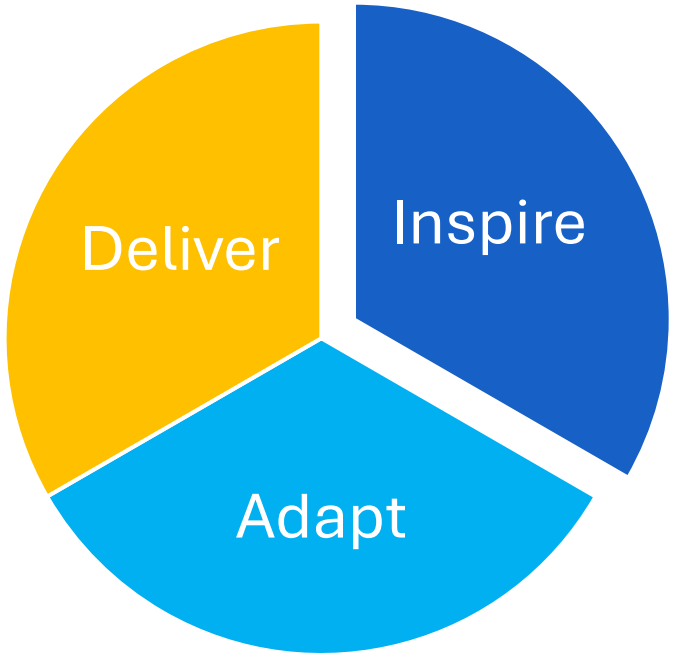
What changed?

- Added resources
- Negotiated responsiveness from vendors
- Used a 24-hour clock
- Recognition for daily progress
- Management delivered by clearing roadblocks



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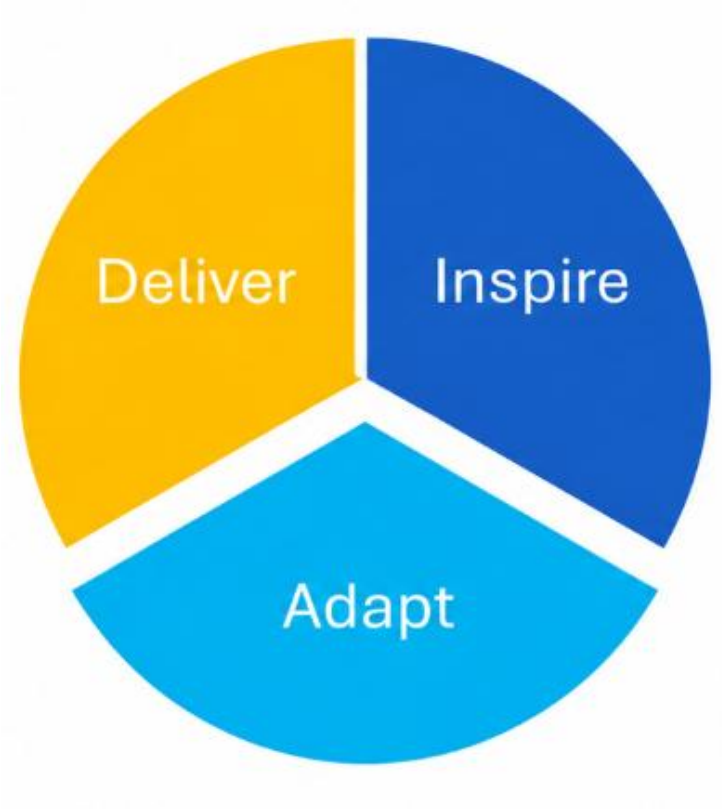
Inspire – How do I reduce threat and restore possibility?



By changing the team's state of mind

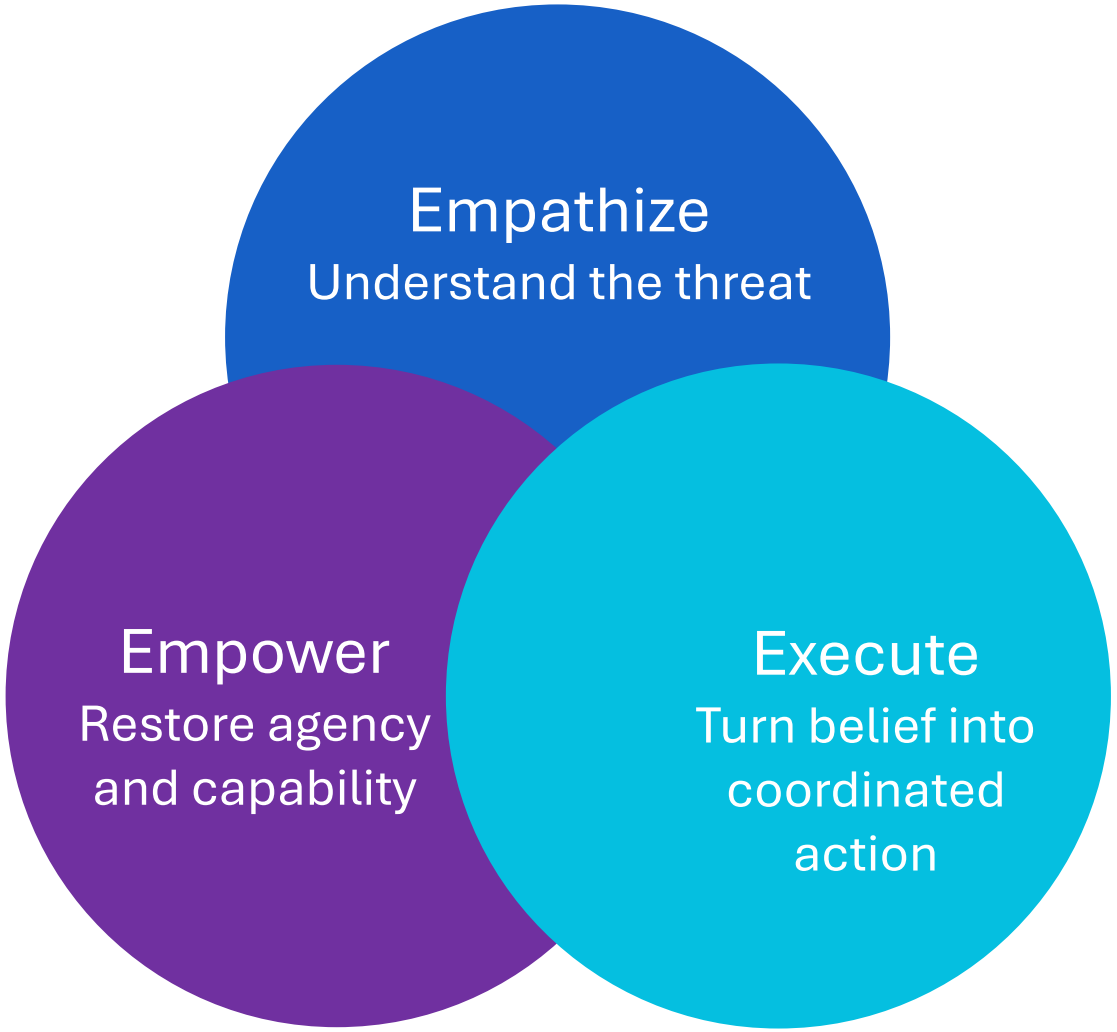
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Adapt – How do I create agency and capability?



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The 3E Model – Turning Understanding into Action

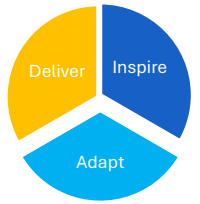


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Which E in the 3E Model does your organization underuse?

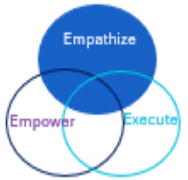
E1: Empathize



Empathize - To understand, share or relate to another person's emotional experience by imagining yourself in their positions

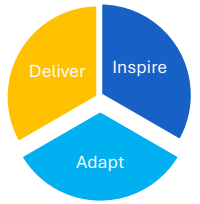
What it is not

- Agreement
- Lowering or Removing standards



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E1: Listening Exercise – How do you Empathize?



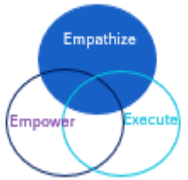
Ask these four questions. As a leader,

- What are you observing?
- What does this mean for you?
- What are you most concerned could happen?
- What would help you contribute at your best?

Interviewer can only respond with

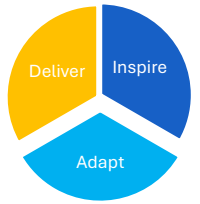
- What I hear is…
- Have I understood?

Goal: Understand the threat the person is facing



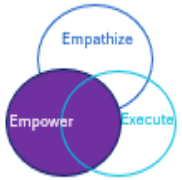
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E2: Empower



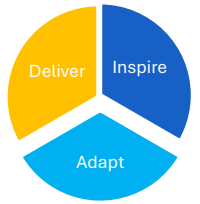
Restore agency without pretending every decision is negotiable

- Clarify what is fixed
- Identify what the team can influence
- Match autonomy with capability
- Make progress visible

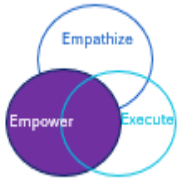


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E2: Empower Reflection

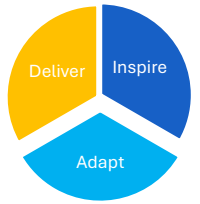


Where can your team have more voice in an action that is otherwise non-negotiable?



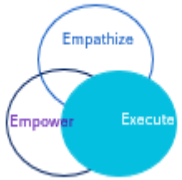
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E3: Execute



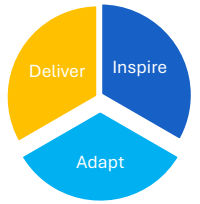
Execution under uncertainty is a learning loop

- Short cycles
- Clear ownership
- Frequent feedback
- Visible progress
- Safe escalation
- Deliberate practice



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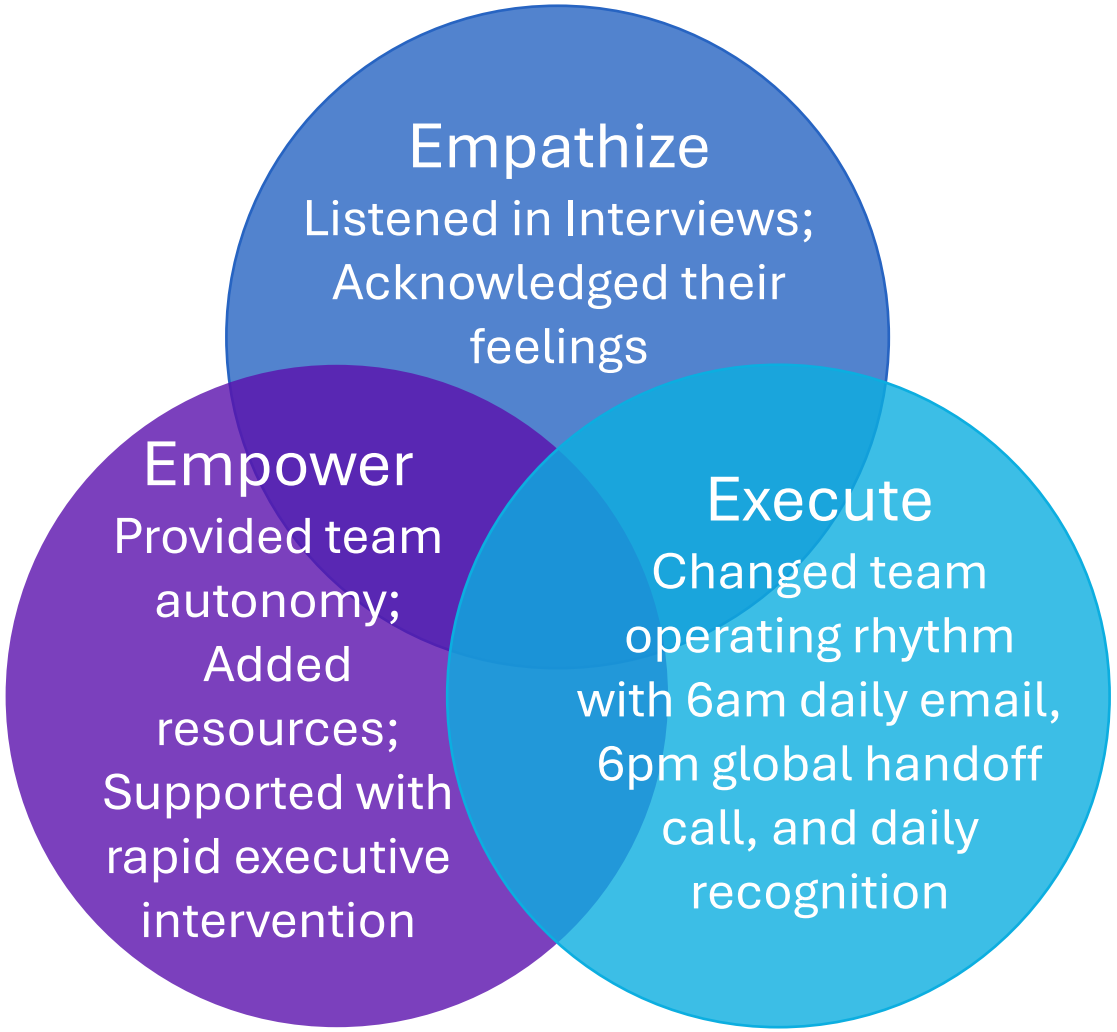
E3: Execute Reflection



What meeting in your calendar could become a learning loop rather than a status meeting?

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The Case – How was the 3E Model Applied?



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Table Exercise – Apply the 3E Model

THE SCENARIO

Your company has announced an AI transformation expected to reduce operating costs by 20% within 18 months.

Your 40-person team has been selected as one of the first functions to implement it. AI will automate approximately 30% of the work the team performs today.

Leadership has told employees that AI will “augment, not replace” them—but cannot say what roles will look like in 12 months or whether headcount will change.

The implementation date is fixed.

Six weeks into the project, adoption is low. Several experienced employees are openly skeptical. Others are unusually quiet. Managers are avoiding conversations about jobs because they don't have answers.

You need the team to engage with the transformation for it to succeed.

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Table Exercise – Apply the 3E Model

Consider these Questions:

EMPATHIZE – What is driving the response?

- Identify what employees may be experiencing

EMPOWER – Where can you restore agency?

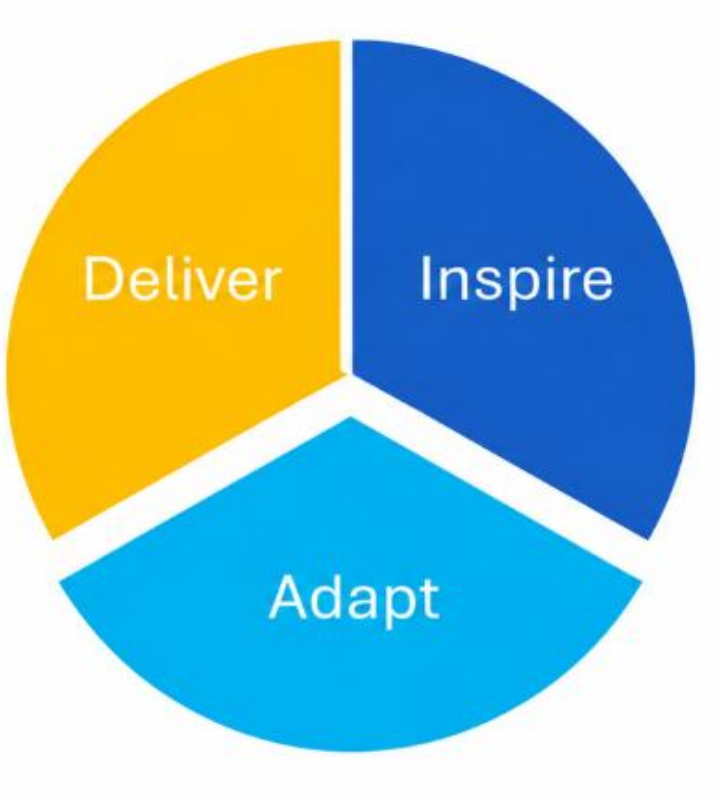
- What can employees genuinely influence when the decision to implement AI and the deadline are not negotiable?

EXECUTE – What will you do next?

- What is one action you could take in the next seven days that allows the team to act, learn and adjust?

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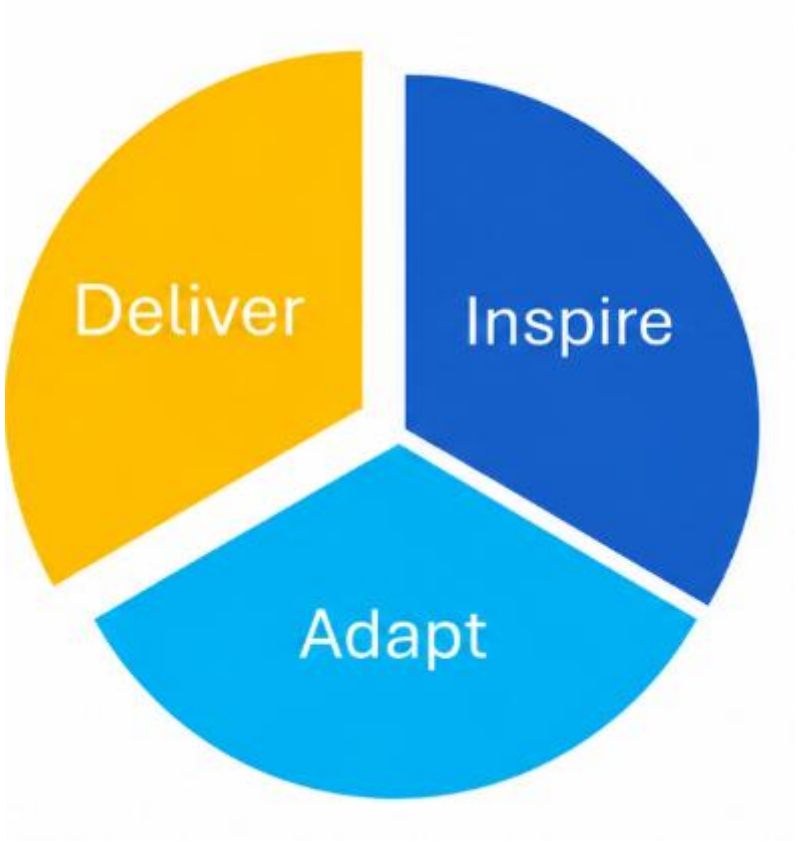
Adapt – How do I create agency and capability?



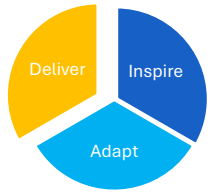
By changing the way you lead

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Deliver – How do I sustain engagement and execution?



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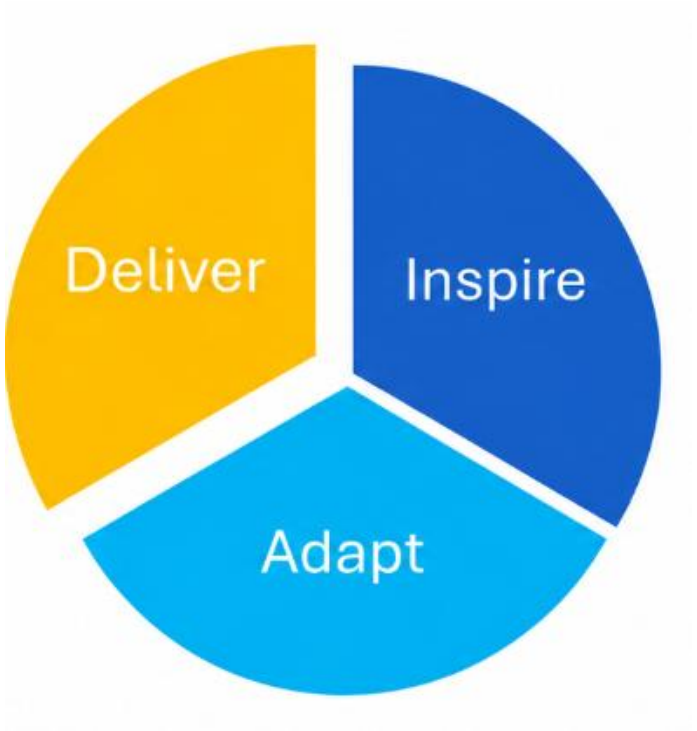
Deliver – The Team Operating System

- Psychological safety makes truth discussable
- Hope makes effort feel worthwhile
- Engagement turns belief into contribution



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Deliver – How do I sustain engagement and execution?



By changing the team's operating system

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The Case – Outcome

100% Successful client conversion

95% Day 1 trade-settlement rate greater than typical BAU

All downstream systems operating on Day 1



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How did this case incorporate M.O.R.E. to achieve real project success?

Manage Perceptions	Own Project Success	Relentlessly Reassess	Expand Perspective
How did we shape stakeholder perceptions of value? Beyond just hitting scope, time and budget?	How did we think beyond managing tasks and take accountability for delivering meaningful, visible outcomes?	How did we navigate uncertainty and change? How did we adapt with purpose and learning in real time?	What impact did we have on the business?

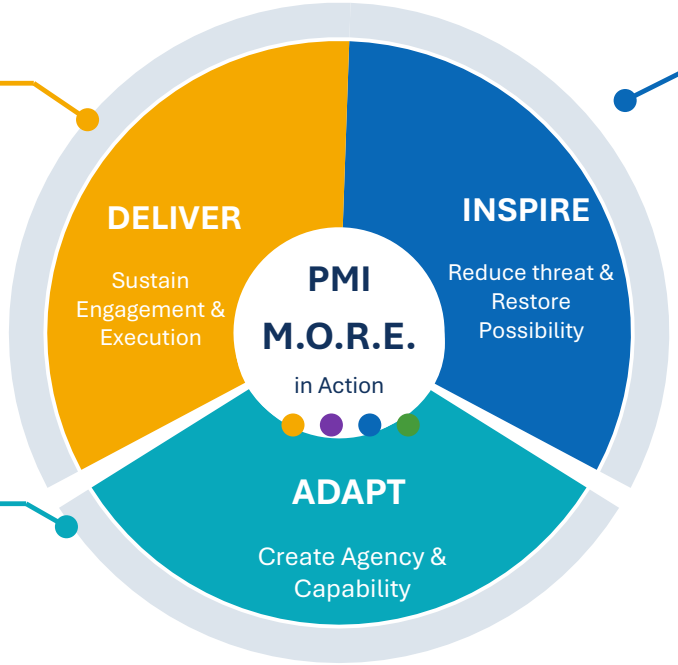
PMI M.O.R.E. in Action

DELIVER → Own Project Success + Expand Perspective

Own Project Success	Delivered a team operating system making truth discussable, effort worthwhile and engagement a contribution
Expand Perspective	Impacted business by enabling it to continue trading & retain reputation

ADAPT → Relentlessly Reassess + Own Project Success

Relentlessly Reassess	Executed using a learning loop with short cycles, frequent feedback and deliberate practice
Own Project Success	Utilized leadership behaviors to empathize with and empower the team



INSPIRE → Manage Perceptions + Own Project Success

Manage Perceptions	Inspired the team to deliver exceptional performance by creating psychological safety, reducing perceived threat and showing a path forward
Own Project Success	Enabled the team to influence the outcome and move towards a desirable future.

Inspire, Adapt, Deliver

Practical leadership behaviors bringing PMI M.O.R.E to life

Closing Thoughts

People do not resist change – they resist what the change threatens.

Great leaders do not eliminate uncertainty.

Great leaders create enough safety to tell the truth, enough hope to move forward and enough agency and discipline to deliver

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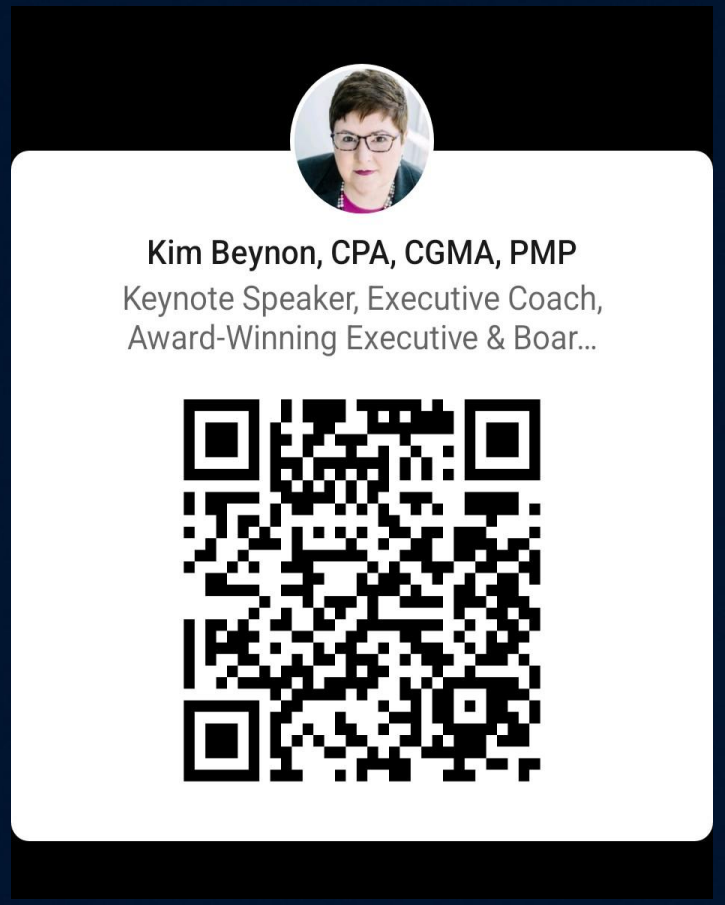
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