

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Connecting Your Work to Strategic
Impact

September 23 | 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | Online

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Begin with a real challenge

Think of one issue in your current work that is taking a disproportionate amount of your attention.

1

What makes it feel urgent?

2

What makes it difficult?

3

What might be influencing it beyond your immediate area?

45 seconds • private reflection

Today's leadership questions

- 01 — What moment are we leading in?
- 02 — What is actually happening?
- 03 — Where does the issue sit within the system?
- 04 — How does the work connect to larger purpose and priorities?
- 05 — **What does this moment require from leadership?**

Intersecting ecosystems

SOCIETAL + POLITICAL

Public trust • scrutiny • changing community needs

HIGHER EDUCATION

Expectations • talent • enrollment • resources

POLICY + RESOURCES

Federal/state policy • legal constraints • funding

INSTITUTIONAL + LOCAL

Mission • strategy • culture • people • processes

Complexity means the factors shaping the situation are connected.



What is shaping your work?

Which aspect of the current environment is having the greatest effect on your work?

- 1 Societal or political context
- 2 Higher education pressures
- 3 Policy or resource constraints
- 4 Institutional priorities
- 5 Workforce or culture
- 6 Student, faculty, or staff needs
- 7 Several of these at once

Respond in the poll or place the number in chat

Different positions create different views

Teams see deeply into the work

- Daily realities
- Process breakdowns
- Immediate needs
- Effects on people
- Emerging operational concerns

Captains Connect Strategy To The Work

- Local context
 - Team priorities
 - Resource needs
 - Coordination points
- Barriers requiring action or elevation

Leaders must see across and ahead

- Broader context
- Institutional direction
- Cross-unit connections
- Competing priorities
- Approaching conditions and risks

Strategic leadership depends on connecting both views.

LEADERSHIP IN MOTION

SEE MORE. GUIDE FORWARD. EMPOWER OTHERS.

Different roles. Shared destination.
Working together to turn perspective
into progress and impact.



LEADERS

Provide Perspective & Direction

- See across the broader environment
- Clarify purpose and priorities
- Make connections visible
- Anticipate conditions and consequences
- Remove or elevate systemic barriers



CAPTAINS

Translate Strategy into Action

- Interpret direction for the local context
- Organize people, priorities, and resources
- Communicate what strategy means in practice
- Adjust plans as conditions change
- Surface information leaders need to know



TEAMS

Execute the Work
that Moves the Organization Forward

- Bring expertise and firsthand knowledge
- Carry out the work
- Identify operational realities
- Adapt, improve, and solve problems
- Produce outcomes and impact



TWO-WAY TRUST. BETTER DECISIONS. STRONGER IMPACT.

Context and direction flow toward the work.
Insight and operational reality flow back toward leadership.

LEADERS CREATE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS BY:



Clarifying direction



Providing meaningful context



Aligning priorities



Securing and allocating resources



Removing and elevating barriers



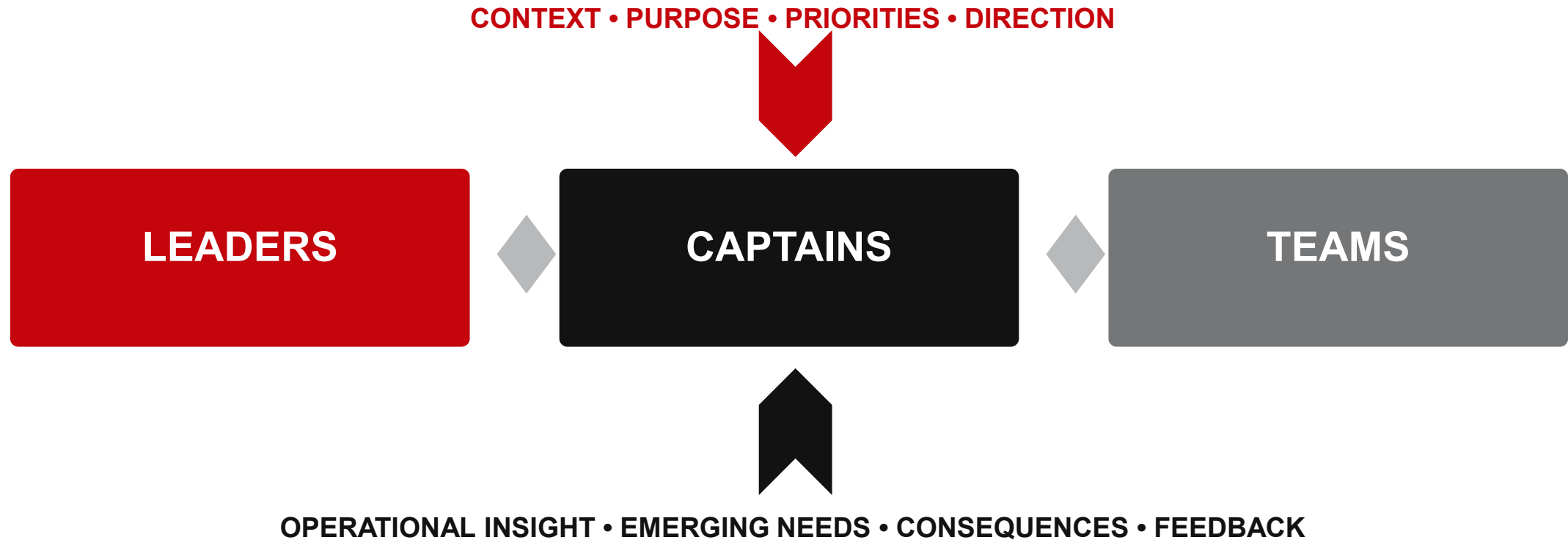
Responding to information
from the work



SHARED DESTINATION

We advance institutional purpose
and create people-centered impact.

Strategic impact depends on reciprocal trust



Perspective without translation remains abstract. Translation without execution produces plans without results. Execution without perspective can produce activity without strategic impact.

What kind of moment is this?



**Leadership judgment
helps us choose the
response.**

The goal is not the perfect label. The goal is the right response.

Diagnose before responding

CRISIS	Stabilize • communicate • decide	Watch for: Acting before understanding
CONFLICT	Clarify • listen • surface interests	Watch for: Treating disagreement as dysfunction
CHANGE	Orient • engage • support adaptation	Watch for: Underestimating uncertainty or loss
COMBINATION	Sequence • integrate responses	Watch for: Trying to address everything at once

1 Crisis • 2 Conflict • 3 Change • 4 Combination • 5 Not sure

Where does the issue sit?

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

INSTITUTION

SCHOOL / COLLEGE / DIVISION

DEPARTMENT / UNIT

TEAM / PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL

Where is it visible?

Where is it produced or reinforced?

Where is authority located?

Where are consequences
experienced?

A local problem or a system signal?

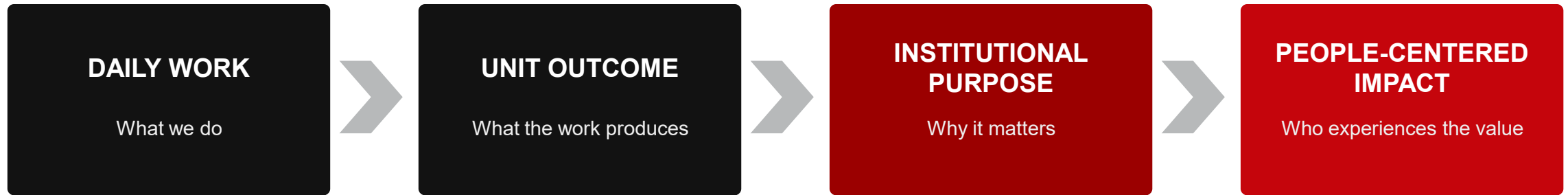
A unit is experiencing declining morale, delayed services, and increasing turnover.

The immediate request is to add another position.

- 1 What is visible?
- 2 **What may be producing or reinforcing it?**
- 3 Where might decision authority sit?
- 4 What information might the team have?
- 5 What broader context might leaders provide?

Chat waterfall: type one factor, hold, then SEND

From activity to strategic impact



Improving a service process → consistent, timely support → institutional effectiveness and access → less burden and uncertainty

My work on _____ contributes to _____ by _____.

Alignment requires judgment

ALIGNMENT IS NOT SIMPLE AGREEMENT.

- What is the organization trying to accomplish?
- How does local work contribute?
- What priorities or incentives are in tension?
- What tradeoffs does the decision create?
- What should be decided locally?
- What requires coordination or elevation?

Where might your issue reflect competing priorities rather than a failure of effort or commitment?

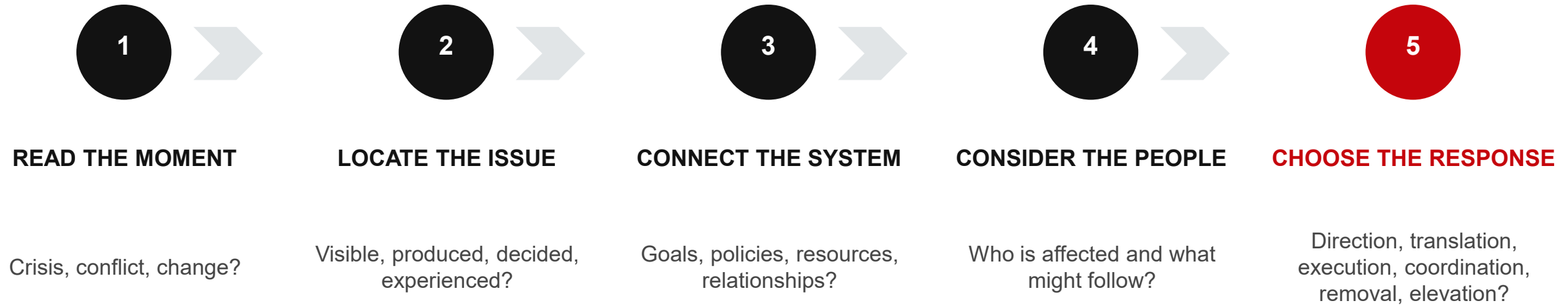
People experience systems



Distinguish between solving a problem and relocating it.

- ? Who is directly and indirectly affected?
- ? Who benefits? Who carries additional burden?
- ? Whose perspective is missing?
- ? What unintended consequences might follow?
- ? **What outcome would be meaningful?**

Strategic Context Map



Where does action belong? Leadership perspective and direction • Captain translation and coordination • Team expertise and execution

Apply the map to your challenge

The condition I may be leading through is...

The issue is visible at...

It may be produced or reinforced by...

The larger purpose connected to it is...

What people closest to the work may know is...

The consequence I need to consider is...

What requires attention now is...

My next leadership step is...

3 minutes • complete what is most useful

SEE MORE. CONNECT MORE. LEAD WITH JUDGMENT.

Seeing the big picture does not mean
seeing everything.



Read the moment



Connect local work
to larger conditions



Listen to people
closest to the work



Make purpose and
direction clear



Anticipate
consequences



Remove or elevate
barriers

Seeing the big picture is one way leaders make good work possible.

What is one question you need to ask or one action you need to take?

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Thank You!