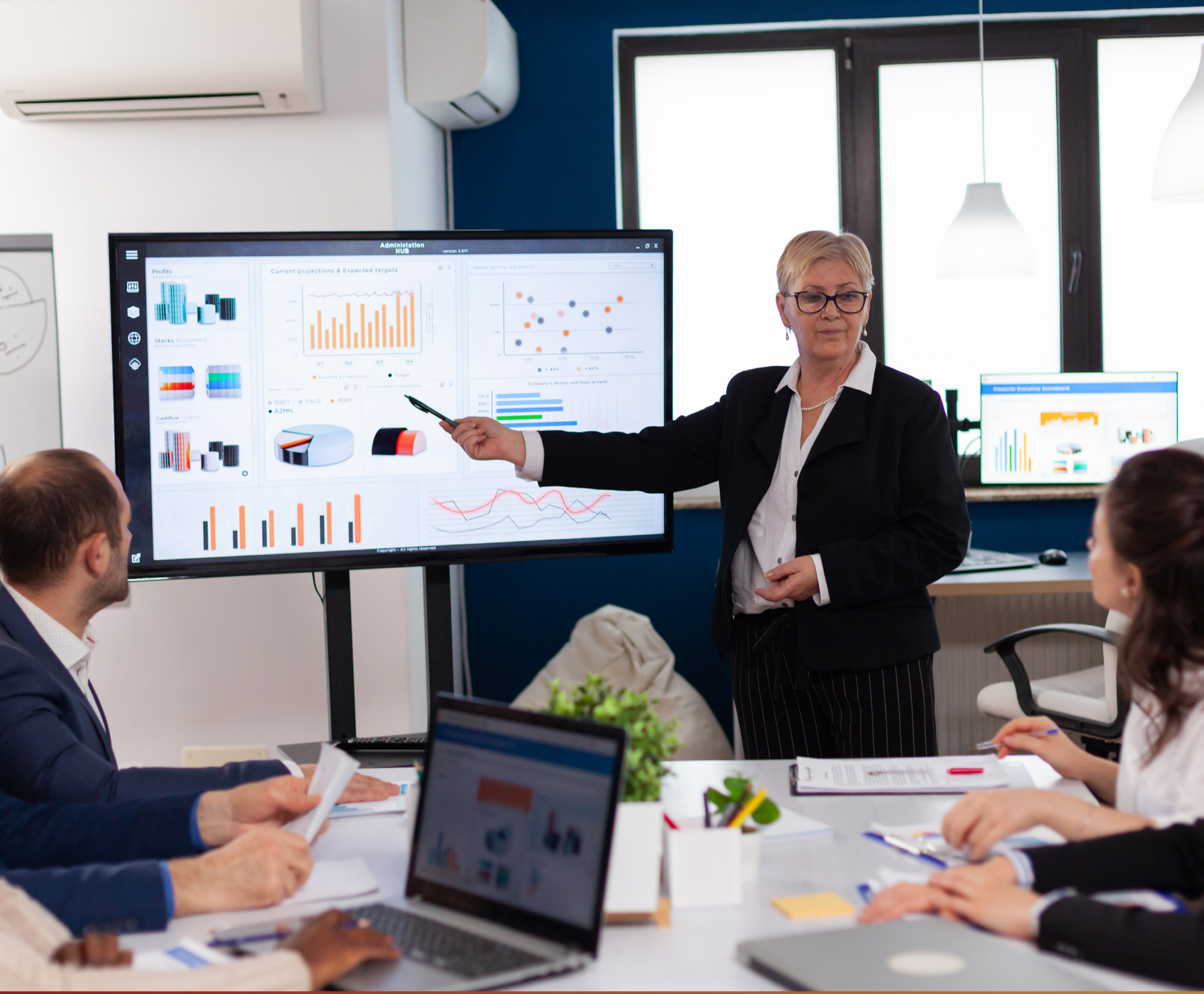

THE HUMAN FACTOR | LISTENER GUIDE

Do We See the Same Business?

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Strategic Initiatives Group

Get clearer on what is really getting in the way of performance, before your team commits more time, money and effort.

In The Human Factor conversation, Kevin Novak and David Edward explored a simple idea: capability can be present while performance still lags because the conditions around people, customers and the work have changed.

When conditions keep changing, the need for certainty is understandable. So is the instinct to add more.

Leaders often respond by adding capability: more people, more systems, more tools, more investment. But a company can become more capable without becoming more effective. Capability matters. The conditions around it determine how much of that capability becomes useful performance.

Teams can also lock onto the first plausible explanation, the familiar answer or the strongest voice. That can hide customer signals, employee experience and system friction that do not fit the story. A better shared picture helps the team decide what deserves attention before it adds more activity, investment or pressure.

Use it in 20 minutes

- Pick one question, not all three.
- Have each leader answer independently in two or three sentences before comparing views.
- Be curious before being certain. Encourage healthy skepticism around assumptions everyone takes for granted.
- Bring in what customers and employees are experiencing, not only what the numbers say.
- Do not force agreement. Ask what evidence supports each view and what evidence would change it.

Start here

Where are we working harder than the results justify?

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Three questions to sharpen the picture

Together, these questions look at three parts of performance: the capability already inside the company, what customers need now, and the conditions that help capability become results. Before deciding what needs to change, the leadership team should be working from a sufficiently shared picture of what is happening now.

See the same business before you try to change it.

1. Are we getting enough from the capability we already have?

A company can invest heavily in people, development, systems and AI and still reach the point where someone says, "We should be better than this." Before assuming the answer is more, test what is already present but underused.

- Where are our best people busiest, but not necessarily doing their best work?
- Are we creating the conditions for better judgment, initiative and contribution, or mainly increasing the volume of work?
- Are people working for the system, or is the system helping them use judgment, initiative and experience?

2. What are customers telling us that we have not fully acted on?

Change often shows up in customer behaviour before it appears neatly in a plan. Needs, expectations and definitions of value can move faster than the company's assumptions.

- What has changed in what customers value, expect or struggle with?
- What customer evidence does not fit our current story about the business?
- Where are AI, new choices or changing behaviours altering what customers now consider valuable?

3. Do the conditions inside the company support the performance we need now?

Strategy can call for customer centricity, judgment, speed, innovation and ownership while the day-to-day system rewards something else. Culture shows up in what the business makes easy, difficult, safe and worthwhile.

- Where does what we ask people to do conflict with what the company rewards, permits or makes easy?
- Do our people see themselves in our purpose and mission, or are we mostly asking them to comply with the words?
- Where do leaders see the same performance issue differently, and what might those differences be telling us?

Where to start

Start with the question that feels closest to the issue your team is facing now.
The discussion will usually signal where to go next.

What did the conversation show you?

If your team answered the same question in materially different ways, that's good to know. Follow that difference. It may mean leaders are working from different assumptions, customer signals have not been fully acted on, employee experience does not match leadership intent, or the most obvious problem may not be the one driving performance.

The differences may be in what leaders think the problem is, what customers need now, or what the company is making harder than it should be.

Which of these differences matters most to performance?
The value of the conversation is not that it gives you an answer. It tells you where the answer may not yet be clear.

Why that matters

The wrong diagnosis creates the wrong action.
More meetings, more process, more investment or more pressure can deepen the problem when the team is acting on the wrong explanation.

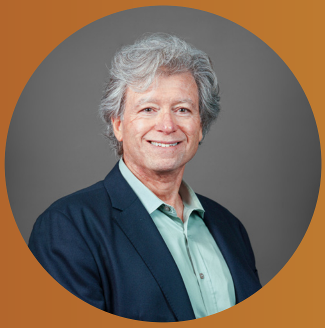
When more than one answer still looks right

If your team sees two or three credible explanations for what is limiting performance, the risk is defaulting to the most familiar one. You are about to commit people, money and leadership attention. Choosing the wrong issue can mean another quarter of effort behind the wrong priority.

A Performance Alignment Session is built for that moment. In four hours, the leadership team works from one shared picture of the business, identifies the primary constraint on performance, and agrees the few priorities that deserve attention over the next 90 days.

If several answers still sound reasonable and you are trying to work out which one deserves closer attention, let's talk it through. A short conversation can help determine whether your team already has enough clarity to act, or whether a Performance Alignment Session would be the smarter next step.

Talk with David



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