

BOARDROOM BRIEF

Every CEO can buy the
same AI.

*Org design is what they
can't copy.*

The column, condensed: three layers of organizational architecture, a
CEO playbook and three questions for your board.

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AI access is now table stakes



Competitors can license the same models, platforms and use cases, on identical terms, often within the same quarter.

So the technology alone cannot be the advantage.

01

The same AI is on every boardroom table

Competitors can license what you licensed within a quarter.

02

The advantage is in the architecture

Companies getting real returns redesigned the work around the models.

03

Architecture is three layers, built in order

Redesign the flow, move the authority, then change what counts.

Three layers. The order is the point

Architecture is not a list of improvements. It holds only if you build the layers in sequence.



Out of order, companies spend heavily and change very little.



LAYER 01

Redesign the flow

Run functions as continuous workflows, not departments passing work along.



LAYER 02

Move the authority

Put decisions where the work now happens, with a named owner for each.



LAYER 03

Change what counts

Measure exceptions, judgment and outcomes, not throughput.

Functions are no longer containers

Functions were built to gather scarce expert work so it could be supervised. That scarcity has eased, so run them as continuous workflows instead of departments handing work to one another.

What survives is the judgment, not the throughput.



Look in the seams

Value rarely disappears inside a department. It disappears between them, where context is dropped and work is quietly redone.

FUNCTION	FROM	TO
FINANCE	Assembles the numbers	→ Interprets them
HR	Manages people	→ Runs a workforce of people and agents
PROCUREMENT	Processes spend	→ Shapes the supplier decisions behind it
SHARED SERVICES	Expected to disappear	→ Resequenced as the platform for cross-functional work

A fast process feeding a slow decision

1 quarter

Redrawing who may decide what, at what threshold and without escalation, often unlocks more value in a quarter than the technology did in a year.

The binding constraint is rarely the model. It is the approvals standing between an insight and a decision.



CAUTION 1

A reorganization is not an architecture

Boxes and lines are the fastest thing to change. Moving people between them without redesigning the work underneath brings disruption without benefit.



CAUTION 2

Every automated process needs an owner

Accountable for the output, not for the system producing it. A process nobody owns is a process nobody is watching.

Measure judgment, not throughput

STOP LEADING WITH

- ⊖ Throughput
- ⊖ Cost per transaction
- ⊖ Cycle time



START MEASURING

- ✓ How well exceptions are handled
- ✓ Human capacity freed for judgment
- ✓ Whether rework and escalation are falling
- ✓ Whether a business outcome moved



Change the measures before the operating model

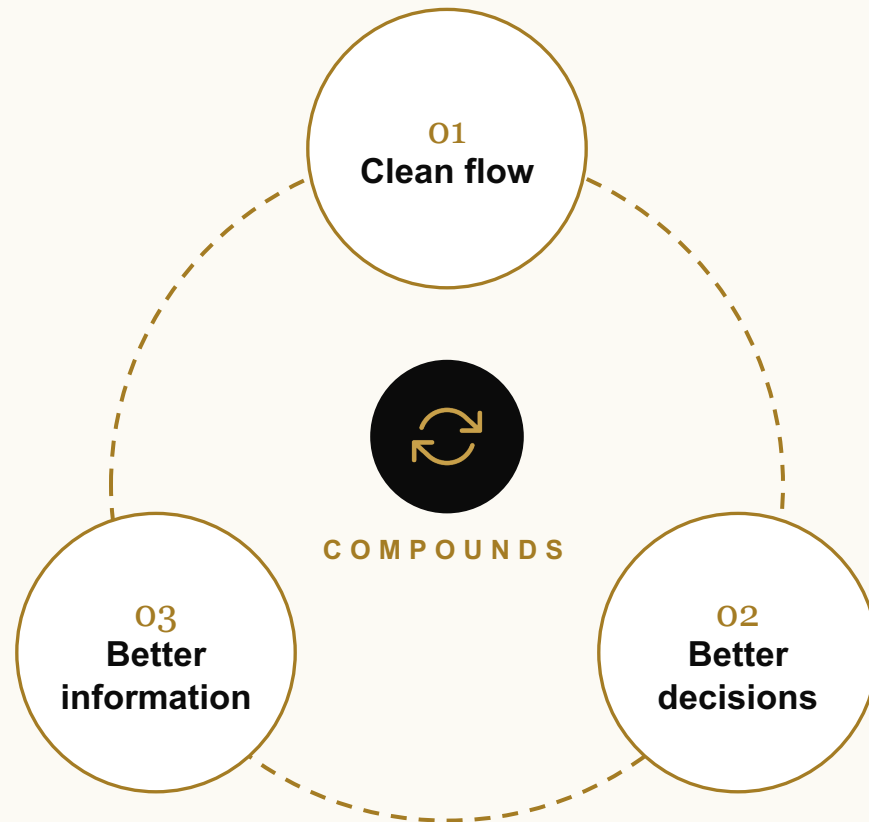
New metrics show within weeks whether the redesign works. The old ones keep reporting success from a process that is degrading.



Size managers by judgment load

What matters is how many consequential calls a manager makes each week, not how many people report to them.

Built in order, the layers compound



A competitor can license everything you licensed within weeks.

What they cannot buy is three years of deliberately improving how your company is built.

That is the only part of an AI strategy that is genuinely yours.

Six moves, in order

01



Map the seams

Trace two or three end-to-end flows. Find where context drops between functions.

02



Redesign the flow end to end

Rebuild the work across functions, not one function at a time.

03



Redraw decision rights

Set who decides what, at what threshold, without escalation.

04



Name an owner for every automated process

Accountable for the output, not for the system.

05



Rewrite the scorecard early

Exception, rework and outcome measures live before the new model goes live.

06



Reset the leadership conversation

Leaders defend judgment, not volume. Size managers by the calls they make.

Three questions to put to your leadership team

1

If a competitor licensed our entire AI stack tomorrow, what would we still have that they don't?

WHAT IT TESTS

Where our advantage really sits

2

How many approvals stand between an insight and a decision in our three most important processes?

WHAT IT TESTS

Whether authority has moved

3

Which of our metrics would still report success if a redesigned process were quietly degrading?

WHAT IT TESTS

Whether our measures can see failure

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