

From groupthink to governance

Leadership, alignment, and the courage to close the gap

50+ 1:1 interviews with CEOs, Chiefs of Staff, executive and senior leaders from North America, Asia, Oceania, Africa, UK and Europe

Strategic alignment is critical to performance. Leaders know it. Most organisations still struggle to enable it. The evidence spans seven years and tells the same story: the gap between strategic intent and organisational reality has barely moved. Our research identifies why and what it takes to shift.

The uncomfortable reality: strategic alignment is often little more than an exercise in groupthink. In a world of AI and accelerating change, that's no longer a viable position.

WHAT IS ALIGNMENT? A WORD USED OFTEN, BUT NOT UNDERSTOOD.

Alignment is when people across an organisation share a genuine understanding of where it's going and why, and that shows up in how they make decisions and do their work. Goals are reflected in every employee's:

PRIORITIES	ACCOUNTABILITY	CAPABILITIES
Day-to-day work, structure, conversations.	Reward and recognition.	Development plans and decision rights.

THE MISALIGNMENT TAX HAMMERS PERFORMANCE AND CULTURE FROM EVERY DIRECTION.

TIME	CAPACITY	SPEED	RELATIONAL
Firefighting Re-aligning priorities Fixing downstream issues	Duplicated work Rework and misdirection Work not completed	Slower decisions Delayed execution Reduced adaptability	Reduced trust Higher disengagement False harmony

SEVEN INSIGHTS: WHY ORGANISATIONS STRUGGLE TO ENABLE STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT.

1 The Alignment Paradox	2 Misalignment starts earlier than leaders think	3 The Accountability Paradox	4 Drift is the default	5 The top team goes first	6 People choose to align	7 The middle holds or breaks it
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FROM GROUPTHINK TO GOVERNANCE — THE FOUR SHIFTS THAT CAN CLOSE THE GAP.

SHIFT 1 From a group of leaders to a leadership group The executive team does the real work first. Ensure shared clarity before engaging the organisation.	SHIFT 2 From proxies to proof Measure what actually reflects direction, decisions, and behaviour — not what is easy to report.	SHIFT 3 From cascade to conversations Direction is built through dialogue. It is developed with stakeholders, not presented to them.	SHIFT 4 From annual to agile Holding direction requires ongoing attention — an active practice, not a periodic event.
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Leaders, teams and organisations naturally drift apart. The capability is in knowing when — and having the courage and the tools to bring them back together.