

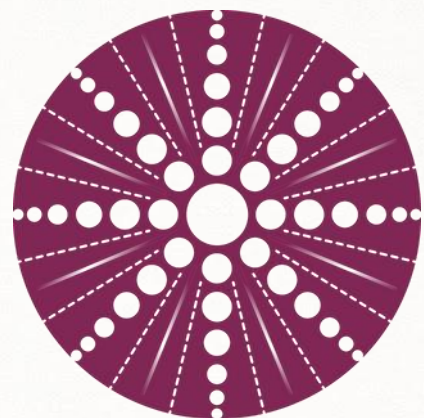


# ***From Firefighting to Strategic Focus:*** **Overcoming Workforce Gaps To Drive IT Performance**





On a scale from 1-10, *how would you rate your ability or your team's ability* to balance urgent and strategic priorities?



# WHY NOW?

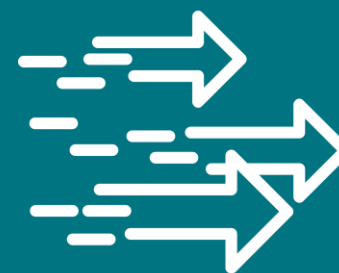


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## ***Rising Threats & Shrinking Pipeline***

- Frequency of breaches expected to rise with AI
- Mid-level workforce shortage with little focus on leadership development



## ***Change Accelerators***

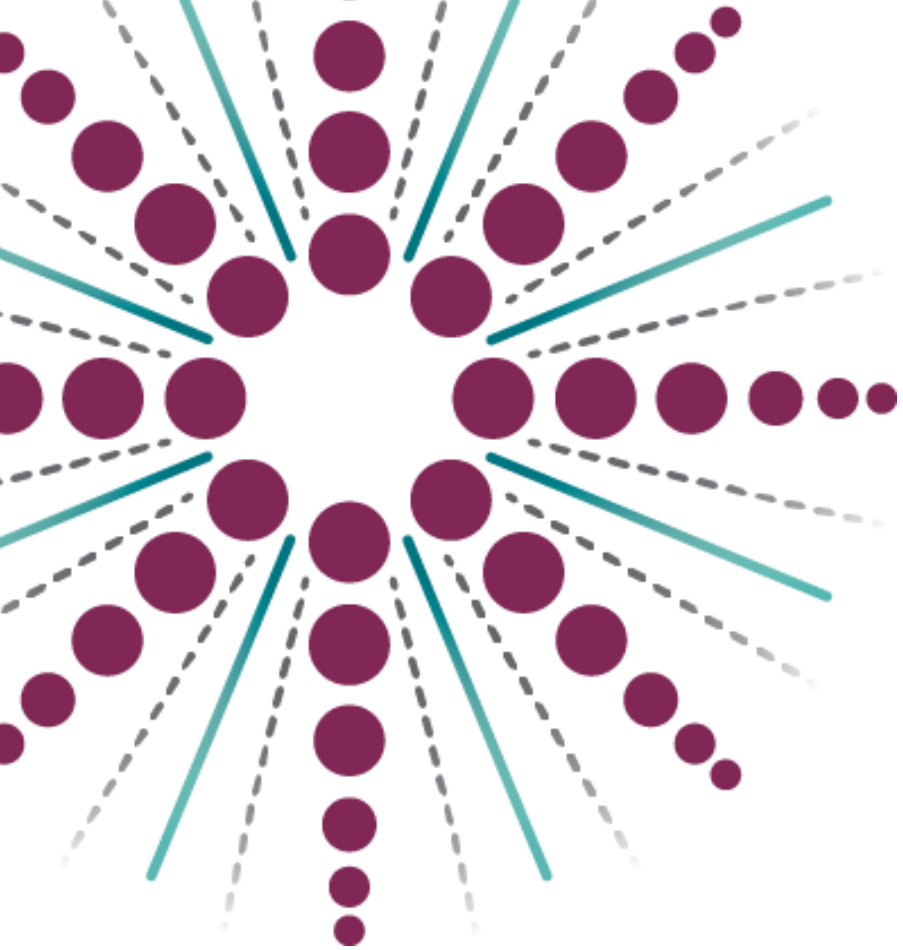
- 5x's more organizational change than 6 years ago
- Estimated 35.9% CAGR for AI adoption over next 5 years



## ***Inadequate Change Agility & Resilience***

Fall 2024 Garter Study:

- 74% Change leadership skills gap
- 73% organizational change fatigue



# ***PARTICIPANT DETAILS***

- ▶ ***14 Respondents***
- ▶ ***Mix of private, federal, HR, association leaders and consultants***
- ▶ ***Organizational Size: 1000 - 40,000+***

# ***INSIGHTS KEY THEMES***

## **▶ Operational Demands: Tyranny of the Urgent Threatens Strategic Focus (86%)**

- Heavy time constraints
- Misalignment between IT/IS priorities and senior leadership expectations

## **▶ Change Management Is Ineffective & Misaligned (64%)**

- Slow, incomplete and often requires help from HR
- Focus on implementation instead of adoption
- Customer service impacted by generational & cultural shifts

## **▶ Skill Gaps Creating Operational & Succession Planning Challenges (64%)**

- Manager and mid-level leadership skills
- Cross functional communication & EQ
- AI impact on succession planning



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# ***What Is the Top Challenge Impacting Your Team?***

**1**

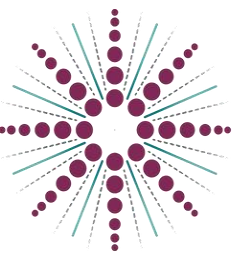
***Tyranny of the  
Urgent***

**2**

***Operational &  
Succession Planning  
Challenges***

**3**

***Change Management  
Ineffective/Misaligned***



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# ***PARTICIPANT VOICES***

**1**

“We need to stop sharing information as a technology team, and start sharing as a representative of the customer experience.”

**2**

“Cyber isn’t a job that’s tied to revenue unless there’s a negative impact.”

**3**

“In the past, I have underestimated how much people dislike change and transformation.”

**4**

“There’s a huge need for emotional intelligence skills but people don’t know how to measure it.”

**5**

“Communication [alone] is not change management.”

# ***BROKEN STATUS QUO***



## ***Skill Gaps Increasing Risk***

2024 IBM Data Breach Report:

- Skill gaps on cybersecurity teams contributed to a \$1.76 million increase in average breach cost
- Race to adopt gen AI is expected to bring unprecedented risks



## ***Lack of Strategic Clarity & Low Adoption Rates***

Concept 2023 Survey:

- 45% of IT team leaders are unclear about business objectives connected to project implementation
- Low adoption rates lead to increased risk (only 20-34% of small businesses follow recommended protocols)



## ***Urgent need for soft skills***

US Cybersecurity Institute:

- Soft skills are top development priority in 2025
- Includes communication, critical thinking and adaptability



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# ***SOLVING THESE CHALLENGES WILL REQUIRE A 3-PRONGED APPROACH***



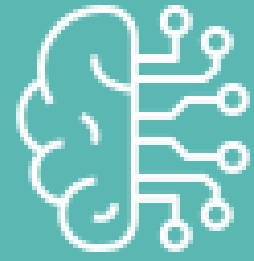
Strengthen  
Operational Agility



Build Strategic  
Influence



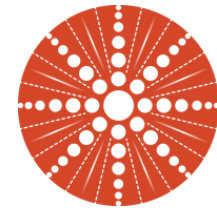
Develop Power  
Skills



# *Strengthen Operational Agility*

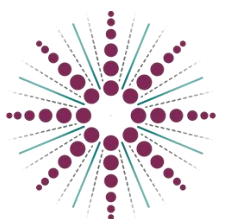
Structured systems to  
track urgent vs strategic  
work

Working agreements to  
negotiate internal and  
cross-functional  
competing priorities

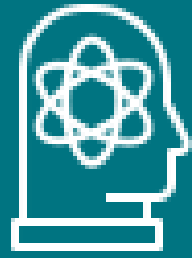


## ***Best Practices***

- Situationally aligned teams (instead of organizationally aligned)
- Create focused lanes on teams for strategic vs. urgent work
- Agile methodologies: Just-in-time planning, regular progress measurement, and iterative problem-solving



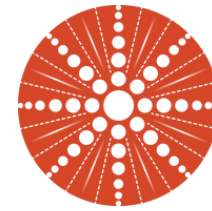
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# ***Build Strategic Influence***

Emphasizing big picture  
vision and business unit  
goals for all projects

Shifting from cost-center  
to strategic business  
partner



## ***Best Practices***

- Establish business case for actions taken or not taken to strengthen position as business partner
- Clearly articulate benefits and interdependencies of new paradigms to improve collaboration with business units
- Lead discussion around discernment of emerging AI tools to find the “5% that’s really valuable”



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# ***Develop Power Skills***

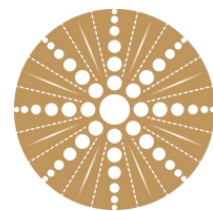
Re-thinking soft skills as power skills

Establish, track, and develop power skills on equal par with technical skills



## ***Best Practices***

- “Moneyball approach” to team composition/growth
- Develop hiring frameworks that evaluate both technical and power skill capabilities
- Identify and measure behaviors that drive business growth
- Promote based on leadership acumen vs technical acumen alone



## ***Recommend Development Areas***

- Leadership Skills
- Influencing Skills
- Emotional Intelligence Skills



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# Team Development: Behavioral Metrics

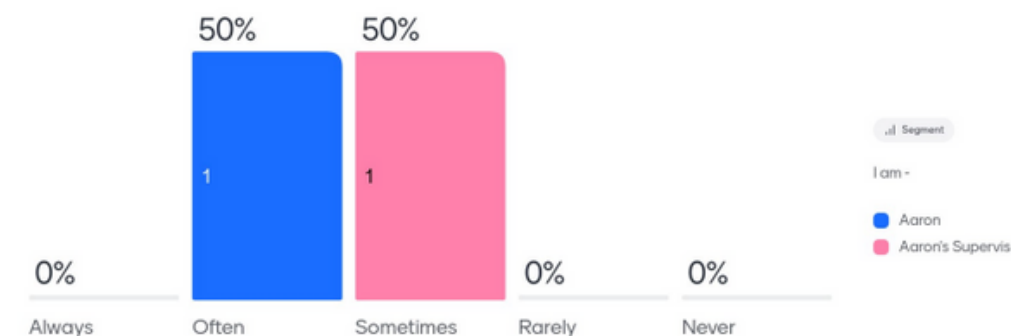


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## Delegating

Mentimeter

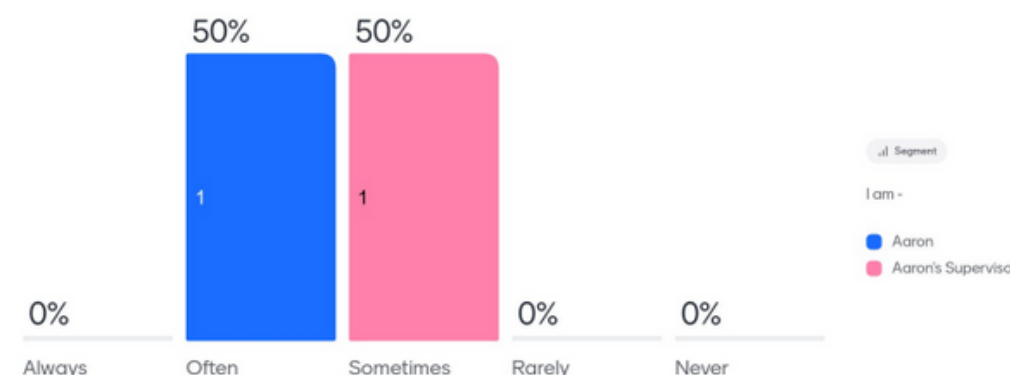
When Aaron delegates a new task to someone, they outline the standard for "done well" so the team understands what they're looking for.



Mentimeter

Mentimeter

Aaron gives specific deadlines for projects or tasks that they delegate.



Mentimeter

Aaron offers examples of the work product they're looking for when they delegate a new task or project.



Mentimeter

# ***Taking Action:***

***Think of your own teams – where could you start applying one of these shifts tomorrow?***



Strengthen  
Operational Agility



Build Strategic  
Influence



Develop Power  
Skills

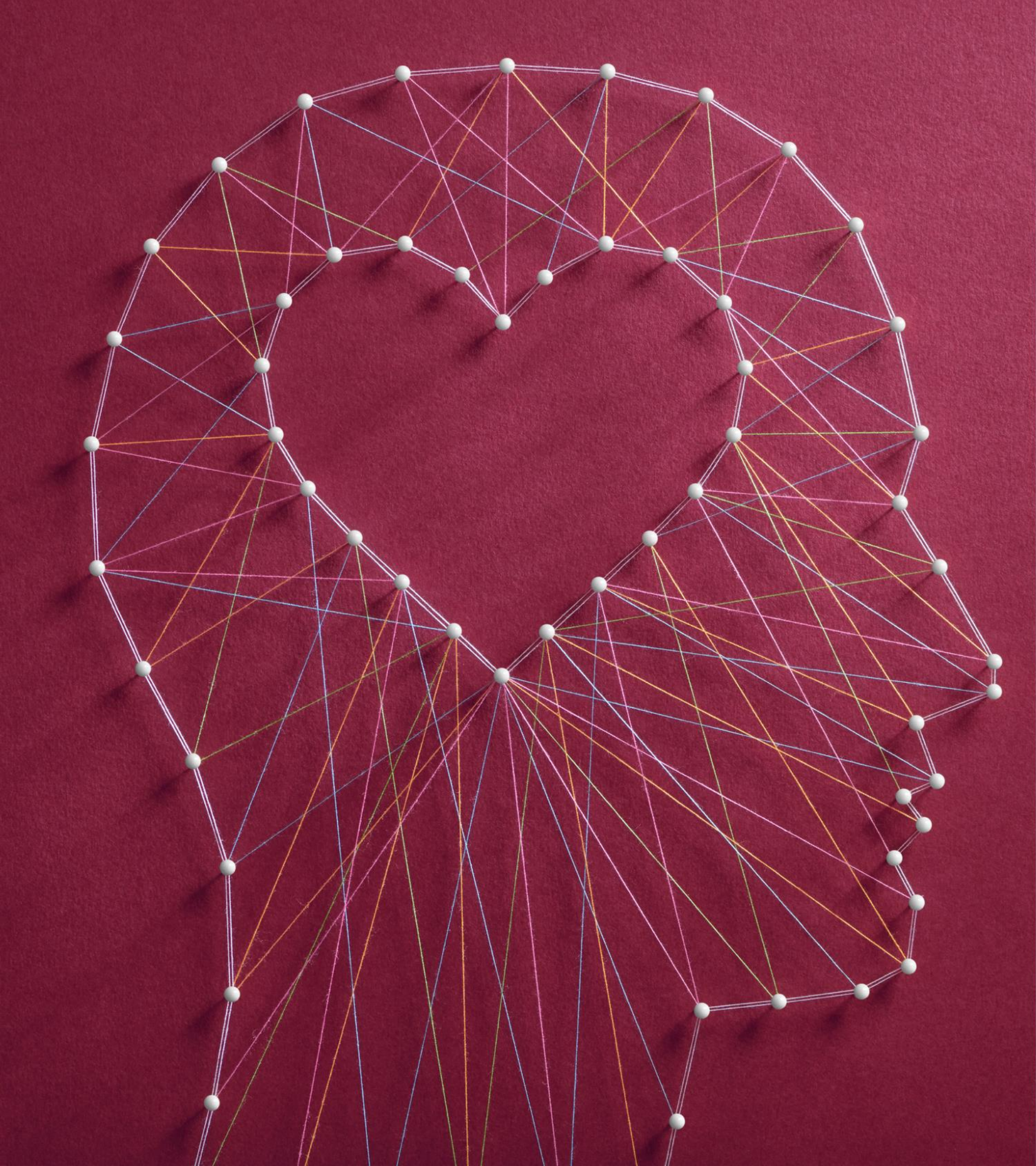


# *Immediate Next Steps*



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- Establish clear escalation criteria for when strategic work can be interrupted
- Schedule regular (monthly) alignment meetings to discuss strategic priorities
- Identify the top 3 power skills that drive success in your workplace and discuss as a leadership team how you will evaluate these skills (for hiring , promotion, etc.)



**If you had to pick one  
power skill to develop  
over the next year, what  
would it be?**

**Are you  
ready to  
upgrade  
your  
leadership  
operating  
system?**



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## **5 KEY TIMES WHEN ORGANIZATIONS CALL US IN:**

- Firefighting is replacing forward thinking
- Silos are stalling progress
- New leaders are struggling to gain traction
- Change initiatives are met with resistance
- There's talent—but not trust



**Let's  
Stay In  
Touch**

**Email:** [christine@risingculturegroup.com](mailto:christine@risingculturegroup.com)

**Sign up for our next leadership conversation at**  
[www.risingculturegroup.com](http://www.risingculturegroup.com)

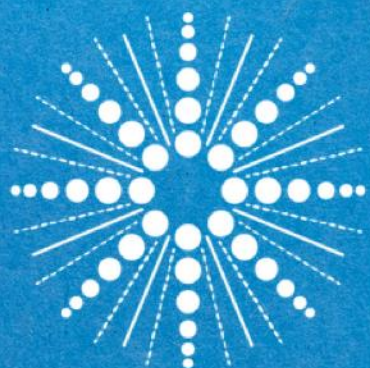
**LinkedIn:**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christinespringer1/>



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THANK YOU



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