



Issue 259 - February 2026

Writing the Rules WHILE THE GAME IS ON



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SCAN TO READ

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"An Outlook on Leadership & Change" on the go!





LEADING SELF

Decisive Leadership: Making Clear Choices in Uncertain Times

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Decisive Leadership

Making Clear Choices in Uncertain Times

By now, the "new year enthusiasm" has likely met the friction of reality. As leaders, we are currently balancing competing priorities in an environment that demands both speed and soul. In these moments, the greatest risk to an organization isn't a wrong choice, it's the cost of hesitation. Uncertainty amplifies analysis paralysis, but decisive leadership is about moving forward with clarity while others wait for "perfect" information.

The Framework: The 70/70 Rule

To avoid stagnation, use a simple, repeatable model: The 70/70 Rule. If you have 70% of the data and 70% confidence, you must act. Waiting for 100% certainty is no longer leading; it is reacting and usually too late.

Balancing Speed with Responsibility

Acting quickly does not mean abandoning ethics. True decisiveness is anchored in a long-term vision that views sustainability and inclusivity as core drivers, not compliance checkboxes. Communicate your choices with confidence by focusing on the process and values behind the decision, even when outcomes aren't guaranteed.

Leading Self: A Wellness Check

Sustainable performance requires protecting your mental wellbeing. In a world that rarely pauses, we must intentionally find "small joys" to maintain our energy. Reflect on these questions:

- Purpose: Does your personal purpose align with where you are leading?
- Safety: Do your people feel safe disagreeing with you, or are you rewarding conformity?
- Boundaries: Are you modeling the healthy boundaries necessary to sustain high performance?

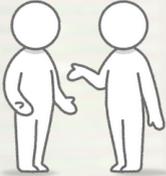
When we cultivate a culture of purpose and growth, we create an environment that is productive, realistic, and most importantly, sustainable.

Leeann Lorilla
Managing Director,
Human Dynamic Philippines



THE POWER OF CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION:

Breaking Silos for Agility



Dear Coach,

My company talks a lot about collaboration, yet in practice, teams still work in silos. Projects slow down, and people seem disengaged. How can leaders make cross-functional collaboration work?

What you see is usually not just a commitment problem. Often, there are underlying psychological drivers behind the behavior. People focus on what is measured and rewarded, protect what they own, and avoid sharing issues that might bring blame. This can result in duplicated work, slow decisions, and lower morale.

A practical way forward is to understand what the barrier is and respond to it.

Type	Observation	Possible underlying psychological factors
Goal driven	Teams protect their own targets	Measures and rewards push local optimization
Expertise driven	Information and knowledge stay within one group	Control, status, or fear of being misunderstood
Emotion driven	Risks and issues surface late	Concern about blame, budget, or consequences

Considering starting with these 3 principles. First, make sure everyone is aiming at the same priorities and measured in a way that encourages shared success. Second, help teams understand each other's work through regular cross-team dialogue and increase work transparency. Third, enhance psychology safety where people can raise issues early without fear.

Here are some practical moves that can be helpful,

- 1 **Shared outcomes:** Agree the top priorities, tradeoffs, and decision owners. Review monthly.
- 2 **Cross functional check-in:** Short check-in to understand any issue and necessary decisions needed.
- 3 **Shared dashboard:** Set clear milestones and metrics visible to all teams involved.
- 4 **Increase role and work transparency:** Short shadowing or rotating roles on key projects to reduce assumptions.
- 5 **Humble inquiry:** Leaders can model open, non-blaming questions that help people share what they know early, such as "What are you seeing from your side?" or "What might we be missing?"

Start small but stay consistent. Align with what matters, connect with people across boundaries, and respond well when problems surface. When teams see that cooperation is supported and rewarded, they stop working around each other and start working with each other.

Ines Wong

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SUSTAINABILITY AS STRATEGY:

Retention & Succession Pipelines



In an era defined by constant disruption, talent sustainability is no longer about filling vacancies as they arise. It is about intentionally building bench strength and ensuring leadership continuity. Organizations that will thrive beyond the next decade are those that integrate retention and succession as part of their core leadership strategy.

A question I am often asked is: *which comes first - retention or succession?* My personal view is clear: **effective succession planning drives retention**. When people see a future, they are more likely to stay. So why does succession planning often fail? From my observation, there are three common pitfalls. First, leaders talk about developing people but fail to invest meaningfully in development.

Second, many leaders focus heavily on present-day stability and short-term performance, while neglecting future readiness. Third and perhaps the hardest, leaders hesitate to make tough decisions. Even when a candidate may not be “perfect,” leaders avoid taking calculated risks, delaying appointments until it is too late. In doing so, momentum, confidence and talent are lost.

Identifying, Nurturing and Accelerating Talent Early

Future-ready organizations take a proactive approach to leadership development. They identify high-potential talent early, looking beyond tenure to performance, mindset, learning agility, values alignment and leadership behaviours. Development is intentional and visible across the workforce through stretch assignments, cross-functional/cross-regional exposure, coaching and meaningful accountability. Talent accelerates when leaders actively sponsor individuals, open doors to critical experiences and provide timely, constructive feedback. As a result, leadership pipelines remain strong and ready, supporting continuity, confidence, and long-term organizational resilience.



Aveline Teh

Managing Director: Human Dynamic Malaysia, Singapore, Australia & New Zealand

Retention and Succession as Integrated Strategies

Today's workforce spans multiple generations, each with different expectations and definitions of meaning. People stay engaged when they can connect their work to what matters to them personally. This requires leaders to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach and engage in genuine conversations to understand individual drivers.

Strong succession planning includes proactively identifying critical roles requiring successors, clearly communicating high-potential status, investing in structured development and mentorship and offering transparent career pathways. *Retention*, on the other hand, is strengthened when people are involved in decisions and ideas, given opportunities to contribute to meaningful and exciting projects, receive regular feedback and feel that their wellbeing is genuinely cared for.

Beyond sustainability lies strategic leadership. When people leaders get retention and succession right, they are not filling positions, they are shaping the organization's future.



Micro-Moments of Joy

The Overlooked Leadership Advantage



As leaders, development is not only about personal growth but also plan and monitor team performance. This is never an easy job, especially in today's challenging global economic climate. However, management isn't always about controlling, pushing or tracking results, which can increase stress and burn out for both them and their team.

Taking small moments of joy in daily leadership practices can help relieve stress, restore energy, and create space for human connection.

Last year, during a Positive Communication session at a chemical factory, the General Director sensed the team's hesitation to speak. He broke the tension with a simple joke "I'm not going to eat you" prompting laughter and open conversation. That moment of humor transformed the session by making people feel safe enough to engage.

A 30-second interaction can shift the emotional tone of an entire meeting. A moment of recognition can change how effort feels. Over time, these micro-moments shape culture more effectively than formal programs.

Four Micro-Joy Practices Leaders Can Start Today

1

GRATITUDE CHECK-INS AT THE START OF MEETINGS

Beginning a meeting with a simple question "What's one thing that went well this week?" This is not about forced positivity, but about grounding teams in what is working, even amid challenges. Leaders who model appreciation help teams move from survival mode into problem-solving mode.

2

MICRO-CELEBRATIONS FOR SMALL WINS

Progress is built through small steps that often go unnoticed. Acknowledging these moments matters. A recognizing team's adaptability, or a simple "thank you for pushing through" reinforces motivation. Over time, teams learn that their effort, not just the final outcomes, is valued.

3

USING HUMOR TO RELEASE TENSION—THOUGHTFULLY

Humor is one of the quickest ways to reduce tension. A light remark, or an acknowledgment of a difficult situation, can relieve emotional pressure while maintaining professionalism. Humor should never be used to diminish others. When used well, it creates psychological safety.

4

MODELING PERSONAL ENERGY RITUALS

Leadership shapes both results and energy. When leaders model healthy micro-rituals like pausing before responding, taking a moment to reflect, embracing gratitude, they give permission for others to do the same. They send a powerful message: sustainable performance matters more than visible exhaustion.

Perhaps the most important leadership question today is not how to push people harder, but how to help them stay energized and engaged. And sometimes, the answer begins with something as simple as a moment of joy.



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