A TALK FOR LESS PROFESSIONALS

Did We Lose Buy-In, Or Did We Design It Out?

Larman's Laws meet the Manager's Vise

Introducing...

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Servant Leader with over 30 years of experience designing and facilitating meaningful transformations for leaders, teams, lines of business, and enterprises.

- Coach, Facilitator, Change Manager, Culture Builder, Continuous Improver
- Project, program, and portfolio management, delivering business and technology outcomes.
- Lean Six-Sigma Black Belt, Certified Scrum Master, SAFe Agilist, LeSS Practitioner, Certified Professional Life Coach, Value Stream Mapper and PMP.
- Father of 2; Amatuer Meat Smoker, Cheese Maker, Book Reader, Bourbon Sipper, Cook.

Who has been a part of a transformation where the structure changed...

but the behavior didn't?

"Lack of buy-in" is the most expensive misdiagnosis in our field.

Management Resistance

Cultural Impediments

Lip-service Leadership

Frozen Middle

Corporate Bloat

Organizational Antibodies

Organizational Antibodies

What if.... we are causing the thing we're blaming on other people.

Quick Refresher

Larman's Laws

1. Orgs are wired to protect existing manager and specialist roles.
2. Change gets renamed until it means roughly the old thing.
3. Change gets dismissed as too pure, or wrong for "our context."
4. Displaced managers become the coaches of the change.
5. **Culture follows structure.**

Let's talk managers for a minute

How do people usually become managers?

1. They do it better than everyone else. (task mastery)
2. Because they got the job done. (successful project delivery)
3. They asked for it. (career ambition)
4. It was the only way to make more money (career advancement)

What is the role of a manager?

EXECUTE THE STRATEGY

↓

THE MANAGER

↑

DEVELOP THE PEOPLE

This is what I call...
The Manager's Vice

Rarely enough time or authority to do both. That squeeze is the ***Vise****.*
A structural condition, not a character flaw.

What happens to Managers when we descale?

Managers...

1. Become highly skilled Individual Contributors
2. Become Product Owners
3. Become Scrum Masters or Coaches
4. Transition out of the company
5. They inherit WAY too many people to manage well

The Vise Tightens

The Vice applies even more pressure

Larman suggests the "why".

The Vise points us toward some "whats".

WHY THE MIDDLE RESISTS

Four things to consider from the Manager's perspective...

01 Mismatched Objectives

02 Redefinition of Value

03 Loss of Power

04 Promotion Gravity

01

Mismatched Performance Objectives

"We pay them to do the opposite of what we asked."

POSSIBLE FIX Change the scorecard with the structure, not a year later.

- Realign individual performance objectives for EVERYONE involved in (and tangengent to) the change.
- Retrain people-managers on how to write and assign SHARED objectives

02

Redefinition of Value

"They woke up next to the value, instead of inside it."

POSSIBLE FIX Redesign how creating value is rewarded. Individual contributions are good, team success is better..

- Leaders are incented to set achievable result goals. Teams are incented to make decisions about how to achieve those goals.
- Rewards are based on how well teams work together to achieve goals within guardrails.

03

Loss of Perceived Power

“They used to decide. Now someone (or the team) does.”

POSSIBLE FIX Issue new authority - who made the decision doesn’t matter as much as who brought the solution to life.

- Creating “Senior” or “Principal” roles that have added responsibility for guiding solutions and growing capability across the team.
- Make visible, and publicly reward successful transitions. Align the success of those transition to the increased value created by the team.

04

Promotion Gravity

"You removed the layer. Is the reward system there to reinforce broadening skill?

POSSIBLE FIX Build a structural home for breadth and mastery.

- Org redesign is more than flattening. Create incentives (defined career growth) to incent people to become generalists in addition to specialist skills.

If you want LeSS *(yay)* resistance, design a SAFe *(boo)* place to land for the middle.

Realign Personal Objectives

Change objectives with the structure

Value

Value creation is a group effort, not an individual sport.

Authority

Authority is how the solution is crafted, not who decided to fix it.

Breadth

Reward broader, not only up

Then make it real: design the role before you remove the old one. Put it on the backlog. Measure their engagement.

WHAT MAKES THIS EVEN HARDER?

Where do we generally focus our attention during transformations?

The Timeline

The Budget

The Work
(Technology / Process / Operating Model)

The People Doing The Work

The People Who *SUPPORT* The People Doing The Work

What's missing from this list?

Loosen the vise, and Larman's Laws have less grip!

Maybe we should along some folks we don't usually think about...

Human Resources Business Partners

- Realign Performance Objectives
- Rewrite Career Progressions
- Rewire Recognition and Incentive Programs

Finance Partners

- Outcome focused budgets
- Embedding capability within the team
- Shared accountability for achieving rather than just reporting

Corporate Comms

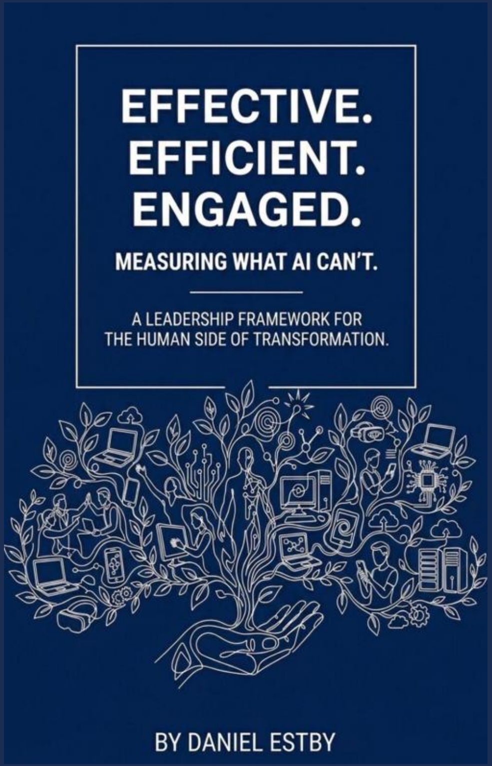
- Feature teams instead of individuals
- Articulate value creation in a different way

Shameless plug...

Want to learn more?

EFFECTIVE. EFFICIENT. ENGAGED. Measuring What AI Can't : A Leadership Framework for the Human Side of Transformation.

Available on Amazon



What's stopping us?

What's stopping us from designing our transformations to negate Larman's Laws and loosen the Manager's Vise?

AND LASTLY

What are you taking away from this talk?

What will you do differently?

We all win together.

Thank you!