SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

Operator-Grade People Systems:
A Briefing for Founders, COOs & Heads of People

How DLI, MOA% & EAV turn people friction into faster execution, consistent managers, and shipped actions.

Presented by:
Dominic Shaughnessy, SPHR | Principal
Success Ally | December 2025

What This Deck Will Give You

What This Briefing Provides:

- A clear model for how people systems actually run

- The 3 OS metrics used by operator-grade teams

- What's missing in most mid-market operating models

- The blueprint components that accelerate execution

- How to engage if you need a rapid clarity path

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE PROBLEM: WHY PEOPLE SYSTEMS BREAK

Why Growing Teams Slow Down, Even As Headcount Increases

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE PROBLEM:

Decision Drift

No clear owner → issues stall → work ricochets across Slack → more meetings compensate for missing structure.

EX Without Action

Surveys → reports → no shipped action. Employees stop believing feedback matters.

Manager Variance

15 managers → 15 different systems. Variance becomes inconsistency → inconsistency becomes friction.

Reactive HR

Programs are added without architecture. Each new problem gets a new initiative. Systems never stabilize.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

"Execution doesn't fail from lack of talent. It fails from unclear accountability and broken systems."

WHAT AN OPERATOR-GRADE PEOPLE SYSTEM ACTUALLY IS

Most companies have people programs. Very few have a People Operating System.

A People OS is:

- Intentional, not accidental
- Architectural, not programmatic
- Measurable, not philosophical
- Independent of personality or leadership style

It defines how your company runs:

- How decisions move
- How managers operate
- How employee feedback turns into action
- How performance loops reinforce accountability

The system is not dependent on any one person. It's foundational to organizational design, reorgs, turnover, and scaling.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE THREE-LAYER PEOPLE OS STACK

Below is the full architecture of an Operator-Grade People System.

Layer 1 — **People Architecture (Foundation)**

- Organizational design
- Decision rights
- Cross-functional interfaces
- Governance and leadership cadence

Layer 2 — **Manager Operating System (Manager OS)**

- Weekly/biweekly cadence
- 1:1 structure
- Goal setting + updates
- Feedback delivery
- Commitment tracking

Layer 3 — **Employee Experience Action System (EX System)**

- Survey inputs
- Signal detection
- Priority scoring
- Action pipeline
- EAV tracking (speed-to-action)

The Full People OS must include all three layers. Missing one creates organizational drag and accountability gaps.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

WHAT MAKES OUR APPROACH OPERATOR-GRADE

Not HR-programs. Not theory. Actual operating mechanics.

- **Architecture-Before-Programs**

We fix how decisions, accountability, and manager cadence work before layering on training, tools, or initiatives.

- **Metrics That Measure How the System Runs (Not Engagement Scores)**

DLI (speed), MOA% (consistency), and EAV (follow-through) give executives a measurable view of how the company actually operates.

- **Designed by an Operator, Not a Career HR Generalist**

15+ years in multi-site, PE-backed, and high-growth environments — building systems that have to work in the real world, not on paper.

- **Built Around Real-World Constraints**

Time-starved managers, unclear ownership, cross-team friction, and constant reprioritization — the system is designed for all of it.

- **Durable, Transferable, Leader-Agnostic**

The OS is designed to survive leadership changes, scaling, & reorganization. It does not hinge on one leader.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE DEFINITION

An operator-grade People System is a ***designed system,*** not an accidental collection of tools, trainings, and initiatives.

It removes the randomness from decisions, expectations, and behaviors.

It is the system that determines **how your company actually runs**, day to day:

- How fast things move

- How consistently managers behave

- How employees experience accountability

- How teams adapt and improve

- How the organization scales without chaos

This is the work most organizations skip. It's also the work that separates productive teams from burned-out teams.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE THREE OS METRICS

How We Measure the System: **DLI, MOA%,** and **EAV**

DECISION LATENCY INDEX (DLI)

Speed

How long does it take your company to actually make a decision?

MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM ADOPTION (MOA%)

Consistency

What % of managers are running the required cadence?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ACTION VELOCITY (EAV)

Follow-through

What % of survey-derived actions ship within 30 days?

Together, these metrics give executives a measurable view of how the company actually runs.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

DEEP DIVE: **DLI (DECISION LATENCY INDEX)**

Definition:

Median elapsed time from:
issue → owner → approved decision

Why It Matters

High DLI = *slow company.*

Meaning: Work stalls, escalations increase, meetings multiply.

Symptoms of High DLI

- Slack messages waiting days for resolution
- Cross-functional decisions stall in ambiguity
- Decisions escalate based on personality
- Endless relitigating in meetings

Impact of Improving DLI

- Faster cycles (20–40% improvement)
- Cleaner handoffs
- Reduced rework
- Fewer backchannel escalations

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN
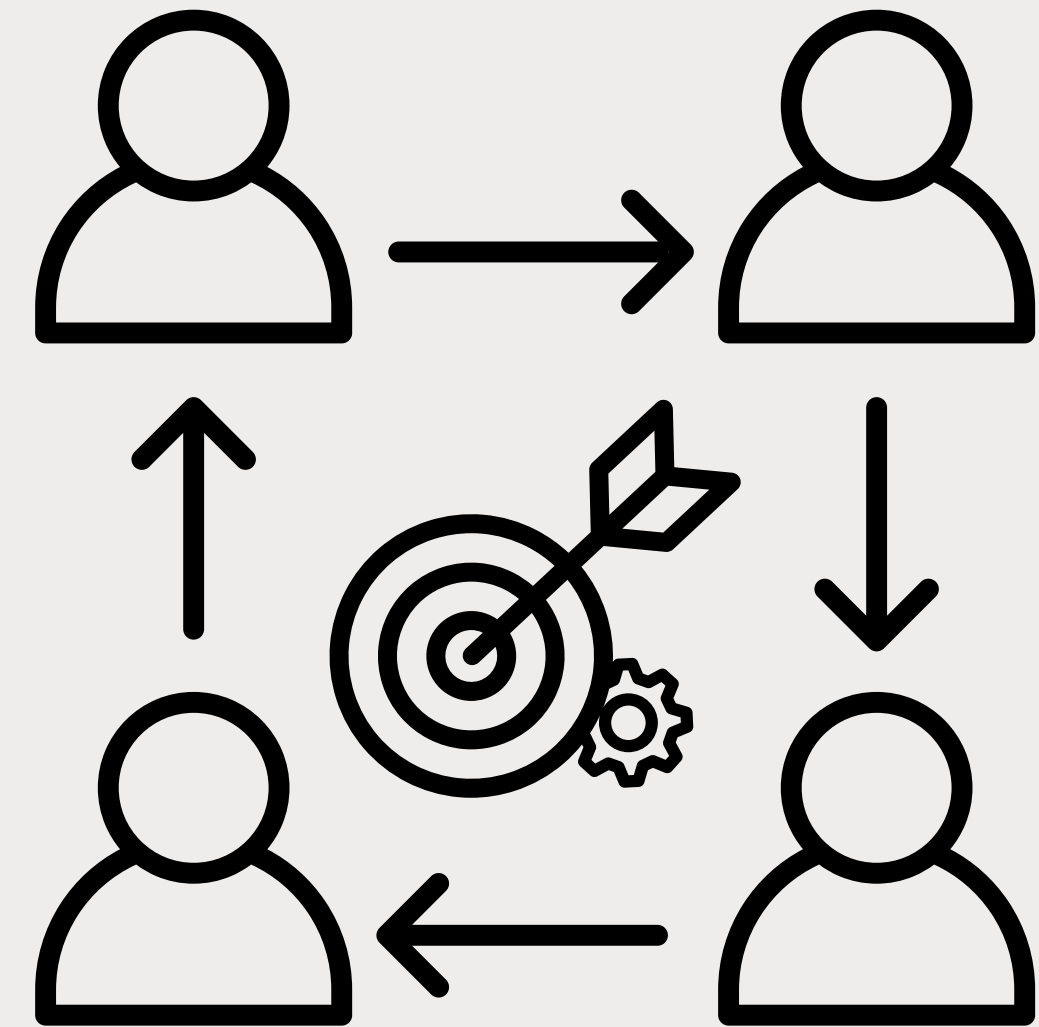
DEEP DIVE: **MOA% (MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM ADOPTION)**

Managers don't need more training — they need a system.

MOA% Measures:

- Consistent 1:1s
- Weekly/biweekly cadence
- Goals set + updated
- Feedback delivered
- Commitments tracked
- Criteria-based escalations

Why MOA% Matters:

Execution quality isn't driven by capability; it's driven by consistency. Most mid-market orgs start at 10–30% MOA%.

Impact of Improving MOA%:

- Higher forecasting accuracy
- Reduced performance variance
- Stronger communication loops
- More predictable delivery

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN
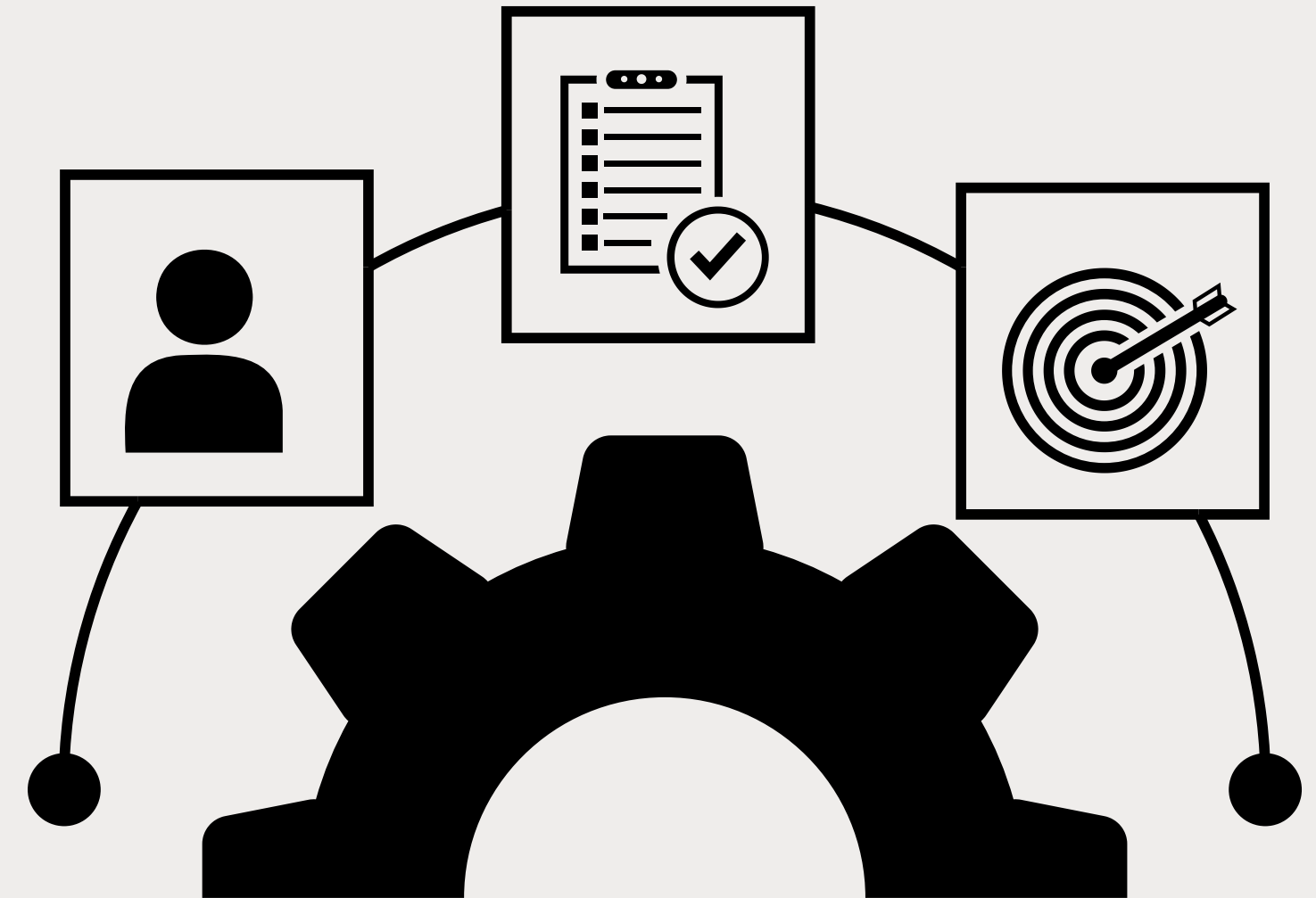
DEEP DIVE: **EAV (EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ACTION VELOCITY)**

Definition:

% of survey-derived actions completed within ≤30 days.

Why Employees Lose Trust

People feel like "just another number", employees withhold essential feedback in fear of retribution, and toxic norms perpetuate.

Why EAV Matters

- Trust increases
- Survey fatigue decreases
- Behavior change accelerates
- Leaders demonstrate follow-through

Most orgs operate at <20% EAV. Efficient teams, running operator-grade SOPs target 70%-80%+.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN
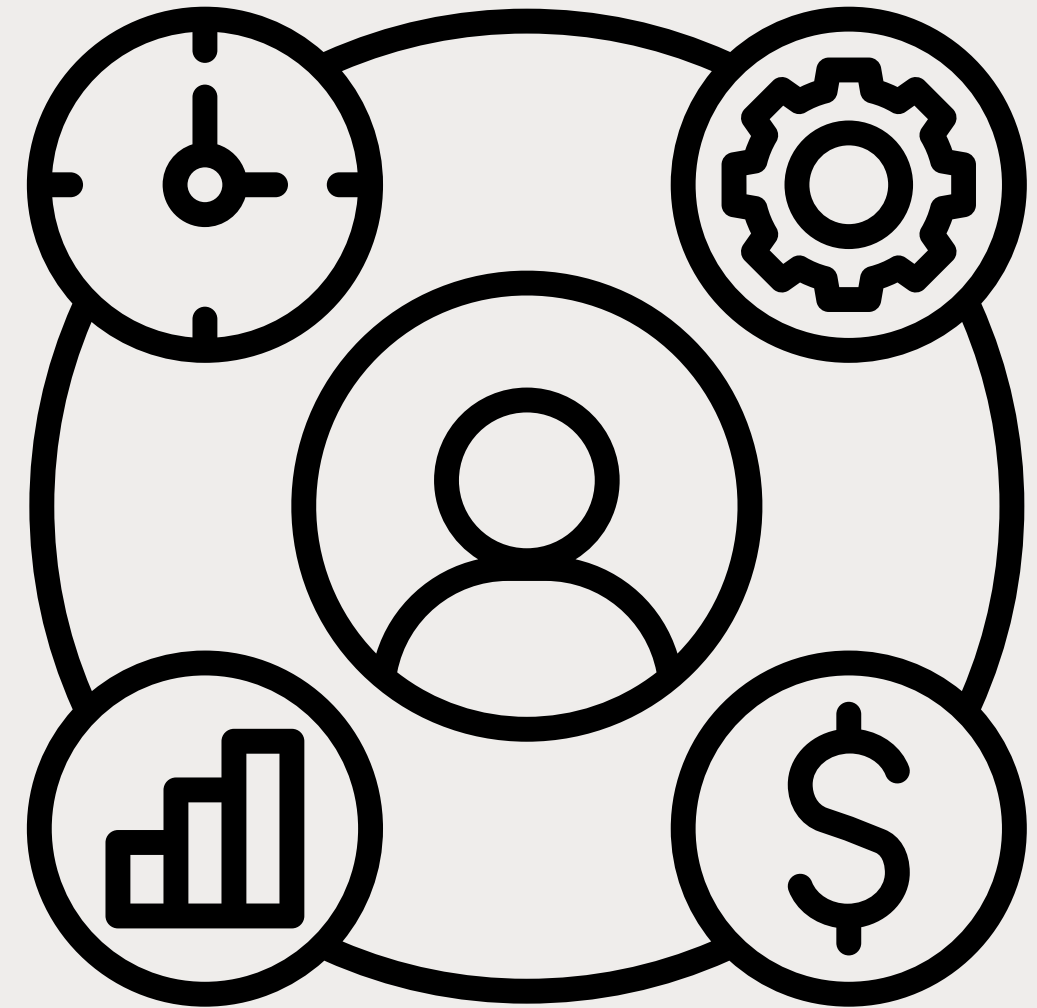
PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE BLUEPRINT

Design the System Once. Scale It for Years.

Why it matters:

- Most companies scale headcount faster than they scale their operating model.

- Without clear decision rights + governance, execution slows as teams grow.

- Architecture-first prevents manager inconsistency, tool sprawl, and decision drift.

What the Blueprint delivers:

- Decision rights map, operating model, governance cadence

- Performance loop + onboarding architecture

- A system managers can run consistently — not a culture deck or HR program

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE BLUEPRINT

Most companies scale headcount faster than their operating model.

New teams form, new managers are promoted, and new tools get layered in.

Yet the underlying system, how people make decisions, how work moves, and how managers run the business, are never intentionally designed.

This creates the classic mid-market pattern:

- **Decision drift**
- **Manager inconsistency / lack of accountability**
- **Execution drag**
- **Cross-functional relitigation**
- **Onboarding that doesn't stick**
- **Performance loops that collapse under real workload**

The People Architecture Blueprint solves this by designing the entire operating system end-to-end so managers can run it consistently, with in-place delineated processes to default to when uncertain.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE BLUEPRINT

What the People Architecture Blueprint Actually Delivers

This is not: Another deck, culture manifesto, or training program.

It is a **full-stack operating model** for how your organization runs as you scale.

The Blueprint answers:

- Who decides what
- How decisions move (and how fast)
- How teams interface and escalate
- How governance works (weekly → monthly → quarterly)
- How managers cascade decisions and maintain clarity
- How roles fit together without overlap or drift
- How performance loops operate across functions

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE BLUEPRINT OUTPUT

Operating Model

How the company actually works day-to-day:

- Core workflows
- Interdependencies
- Decision checkpoints
- Routing paths

Org. Structure

Clear roles, layers, and interfaces that match the work, not legacy org charts.

Decision Rights Map

A high-clarity model that eliminates:

- Ambiguous ownership
- Bottlenecks
- Personality-driven escalations

Role Clarity Model

A simple, visual way to define expectations for:

- Leaders
- Managers
- Individual contributors
- Cross-functional interfaces

Governance Cadence

Weekly → monthly → quarterly operating rhythm that prevents drift.

Performance Loop

How goals are set, updated, measured, and cascaded accountability

Onboarding Pathway

Defined pathways for:
New hires, new managers, and new leaders.

This is where the People Operating System is designed.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM

MOA% Engine

Why the Manager OS matters:

- Performance doesn't fail because of manager capability — it fails because of inconsistency

- Without a defined cadence, every manager invents their own system → variance skyrockets

- MOA% (adoption) is the true measure of execution reliability

What the Manager OS includes:

- Weekly/biweekly operating cadence

- Consistent 1:1 rhythm

- Monthly goals + feedback

- Commitments tracked and visible

- Criteria-based escalations

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM

Managers are the execution engine of the People OS.

But most organizations give managers training, not a system.

The Manager Operating System gives managers exactly what they need:

- Clear expectations
- Simple rituals
- Predictable cadence
- Criteria-based escalations
- Visibility into commitments

It turns good intentions into repeatable execution.

The People Architecture Blueprint solves this by designing the entire operating system end-to-end so managers can run it consistently, with in-place delineated processes to default to when uncertain.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE 6 CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MANAGER OS

1. Weekly/ Biweekly Cadence

A predictable rhythm that drives alignment and clears blockages early.

2. Structured 1:1s

One simple template used consistently, not 15 managers inventing 15 different systems.

3. Monthly Goals Update

Goals become active, living commitments, not quarterly wish lists.

4. Written Monthly Feedback

Clear expectations → fewer surprises → stronger accountability.

5. Commitment Tracking

Visible commitments, visible progress, visible follow-through.

6. Criteria-Based Escalations

Escalations flow by rule, not personality, dramatically lowering DLI.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM

MOA% = Manager OS Adoption Percentage

MOA measures:

- Which managers are running the cadence
- How consistently
- Where adoption drops
- Which teams slide back into reactive execution

Most mid-market companies start at:
10–30% MOA%

Operator-grade organizations target:

60–80%+ MOA%

Raising MOA% improves:

- Predictability
- Cycle time
- Clarity
- Retention
- Cross-functional flow

MOA% is the metric that makes performance management real.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ACTION SYSTEM

Turn employee feedback into measurable action

What This System Does:

- Converts survey signals into prioritized actions

- Creates an action pipeline with owners & deadlines

- Tracks 30-day execution velocity (EAV)

- Closes the loop with employees visibly and quickly

- Reduces "survey fatigue" with actual shipped improvements

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE 5 STAGES OF THE EX ACTION SYSTEM

1. Intake (Survey Signals)

Structured collection of insights tied to business outcomes, not "sentiment."

2. Synthesis (Themes)

Issues grouped into operator-grade buckets:

- Decision friction
- Manager consistency
- Workload
- Cross-functional clarity

3. Prioritization (Scoring)

A simple scoring model identifying:

- Impact
- Feasibility
- Time-to-action
- Ownership

4. Action Pipeline (Owners + Deadlines)

Clear owners, visible deadlines, and 30-day action cycles.

5. EAV Tracking (≤30-Day Throughput)

The metric that matters:

EAV = % of EX actions shipped within 30 days.

Most companies: <20%

Operator-grade teams: 60–80%

The EX System converts employee feedback into shipped actions.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ACTION SYSTEM

Turn Employee Feedback Into Measurable Action

Most organizations stop at:

- Running surveys
- Creating a report
- Presenting "themes"

Then everything stalls.
Trust erodes because nothing changes.

The **EX Action System** *turns listening into throughput.*

Why the EX System Matters

You get:

- A closed feedback loop
- A visible action pipeline
- A measurable trust engine
- A way to show progress without overcommitting

This EX System ensures your People Operating System is not just designed… It lives and evolves.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE INTEGRATED PEOPLE OS

Layer 1
People Architecture

- Organizational design
- Decision rights
- Cross-functional interfaces
- Governance and leadership cadence

Layer 2
Manager OS

- 1:1 structure & cadences
- Goal setting + updates
- Feedback delivery
- Commitment tracking

Layer 3
EX Action System

- Survey inputs
- Signal detection
- Priority scoring
- Action pipeline
- EAV tracking (speed-to-action)

Key Metrics
DLI, MOA%, EAV

- Speed (DLI)
- Consistency (MOA%)
- Follow-through (EAV)

Each piece reinforces the others.
This is how organizations scale without chaos.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

THE THREE OS METRICS

How We Measure the System: ***DLI, MOA%,*** and ***EAV***

DECISION LATENCY INDEX (DLI)

Speed

How long does it take your company to actually make a decision?

MANAGER OPERATING SYSTEM ADOPTION (MOA%)

Consistency

What % of managers are running the required cadence?

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ACTION VELOCITY (EAV)

Follow-through

What % of survey-derived actions ship within 30 days?

Together, these metrics give executives a measurable view of how the company actually runs.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH SUCCESS ALLY

**Three ways to begin, depending on your urgency and clarity needs.**

Three pillars:

- **Executive Strategy Intensive** — fastest path to clarity

- **1-Week Operating Review** — full diagnostic in 5 days

- **People Architecture Blueprint** — design the full OS

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

DECISION HEATMAP

Decision Flow Heatmap — Where Execution Actually Stalls
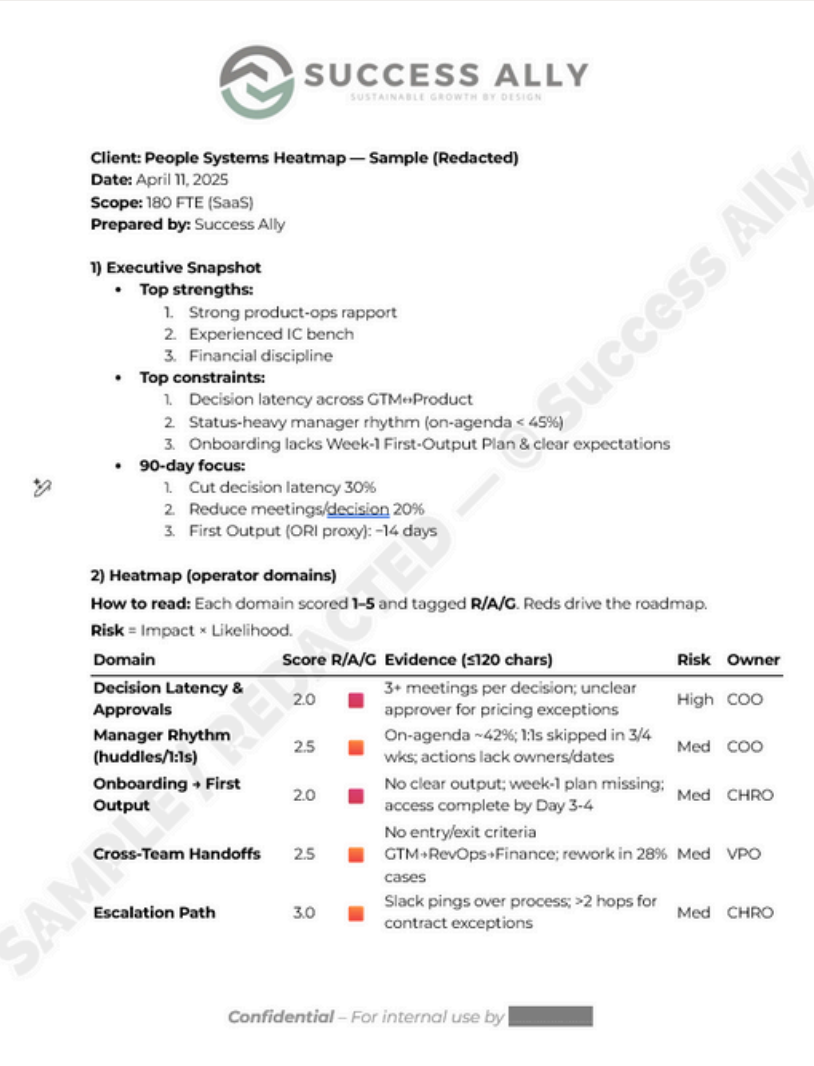
This is an *anonymized* view pulled from a 1-Week Operating Review.
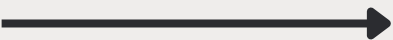
We map how decisions move across functions and identify:

- **Red zones** → decisions stall
- **Orange zones** → inconsistent ownership
- **Green zones** → clean, repeatable flow

The result: a clear picture of why execution feels slow and where to intervene first.

Each engagement delivers actionable insights and a 90-day roadmap to accelerate decision speed and manager performance.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

EXECUTIVE STRATEGY INTENSIVE

75–90 minutes + a 72-hour memo that turns friction into a clear operating plan.

We will:

- **Diagnose the root cause of execution drag**

- **Identify the 1–2 highest-leverage system fixes**

- **Get a written summary within 72 hours**

- Applied credit toward Operating Review if booked in 60 days

Perfect for founders, COOs, and new CPOs.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

1-WEEK OPERATING REVIEW

A complete diagnostic of your People Operating System in 5 days.

You receive:

- **Decision Heatmap** (you already previewed this on page 29)

- **Baseline OS metrics** (DLI, MOA%, EAV)

- **Manager & workflow analysis**

- **A decision-ready 90-day plan**

- **72-hour executive readout**

This is the fastest, most accurate way to baseline your People OS.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE BLUEPRINT

Design the People System once. Scale it for years.

Blueprint includes:

- Operating model
- Decision rights map
- Cross-functional interfaces
- Manager OS
- Governance cadence
- Performance loop
- Onboarding pathways
- EX Action System
- Measurement plan (DLI, MOA%, EAV)

This is the full People Operating System. Designed for your scale stage.

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

ABOUT SUCCESS ALLY

Success Ally was built for organizations that need execution, not theory.

Success Ally was founded by Dominic Shaughnessy, an operator with 15+ years building People Systems inside fast-growing, multi-site, and PE-backed organizations.

Experience includes:

- Organizational design & system installation across 1,500+ FTE and 150+ locations

- Leadership & integration during 3 PE deals, 15+ acquisitions, and 1 M&A exit

- Deep experience in SaaS, professional services, healthcare, and field services

- Blends operational design, behavioral psychology, and measurable system performance

- Specializes in reducing decision latency, increasing manager consistency, and turning employee feedback into shipped action

Credentials:

- **HRCI—SPHR** (Sr. Professional in Human Resources)

- **Certified Coach, PCC** (Professional Certified Coach)

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN

READY TO SEE WHAT'S REALLY SLOWING YOU DOWN?

Start Here:

Executive Strategy Intensive

Your **fastest path to clarity** on decision bottlenecks, manager inconsistency, and people-system gaps.

→ **75–90 minutes + a 72-hour memo**

→ **Identify the real bottlenecks**

→ **Walk away with a decision-ready 30-day plan**

Next Step:

1-Week Operating Review

→ **Decision Heatmap**

→ **Baseline OS metrics** (DLI, MOA%, EAV)

→ **Clear 90-day roadmap**

→ Credit applied toward Blueprint if you move forward

SUCCESS ALLY
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH BY DESIGN