

Organizational Design for Innovation and Agility:

A Sheridan Experiment

Polytechnics Canada Conference 2023

Presenters:

Carol Altilia Provost & Vice-President, Academic

Jock Phippen Associate Vice-Provost, Enrolment Innovation

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The Challenge

Organizational Design for Innovation:

Sheridan's strategic plan calls on us to fortify our strengths in delivering purposeful, career-focused learning, while boldly stretching to meet the future with trailblazing, transformational education. The imperative for foresight and agility demands the revision of deeply entrenched organizational culture and structures. Siloed functions, disciplinary domains and thick administrative processes are misaligned to turbulent conditions.

How does this challenge manifest
in your organization?

Emerging Imperatives

VS

Legacy Practices

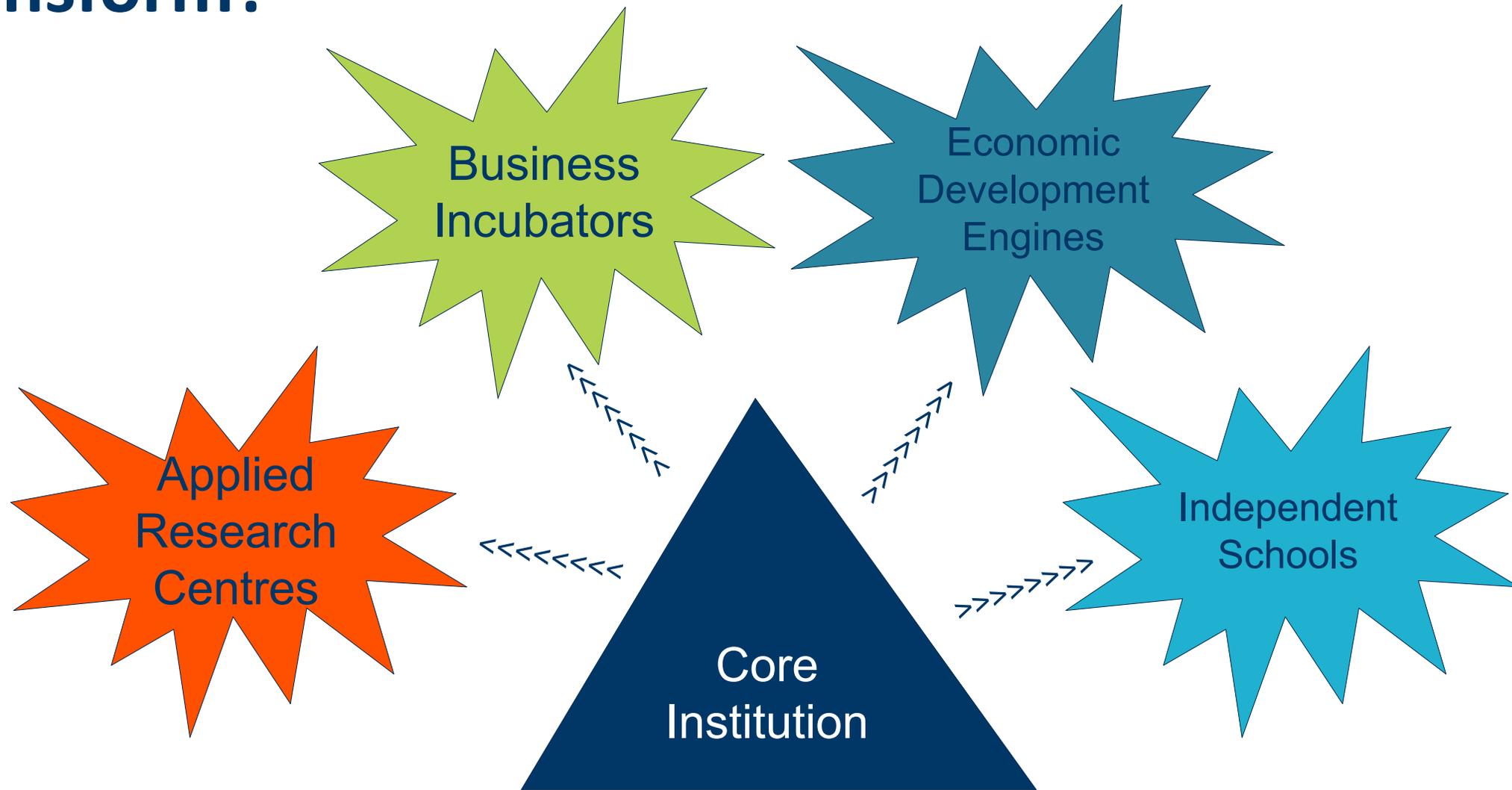
What Learners Need

- Increased choice to add-in, add-on
- Flexible schedules & delivery modes
- Interdisciplinarity
- Problem-based learning
- Team skills & emotional intelligence
- Laddered & stackable credentials
- Industry co-created learning
- Marketplace of short form programs
- Effortless exit & re-entry
- Meaningful engagement with AI
- Seamless administrative processes

What Learners Get

- Disciplinary boundaries
- Siloed administrative functions
- Fragmented outdated tech platforms
- External constraints on flexibility
- Scheduling for faculty not learners
- Fixed start and stop of term
- Uneven classroom experiences
- Services “bounce”
- Thick quality assurance regime that limits agility and responsiveness

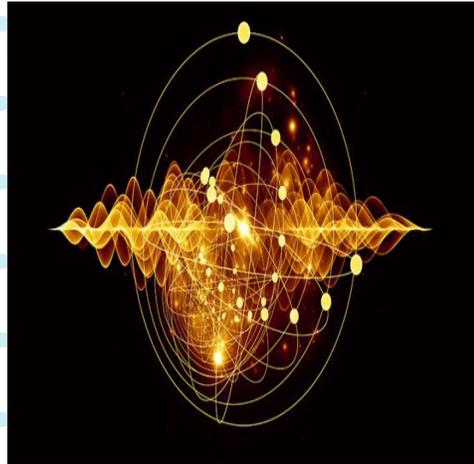
The Shape of Innovation in the Sector...does it transform?



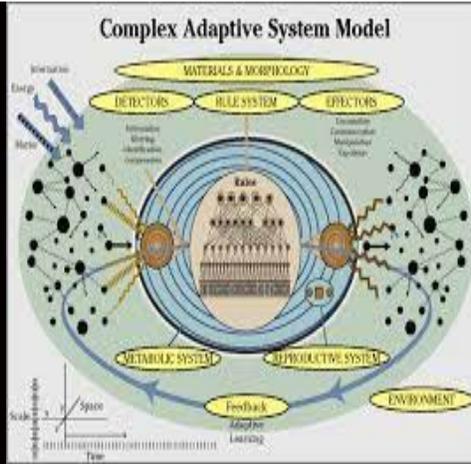
Thinking about a different state..



Biomimicry Institute



Stanford Online



Wikipedia



UCI Online



Two Spheres for Change



Identify Innovation → Agile, Integrated Implementation

Identify Innovation/Great Ideas



- **Strong commitment to the strategic plan**
- **Invite ideas from anywhere in the institution**

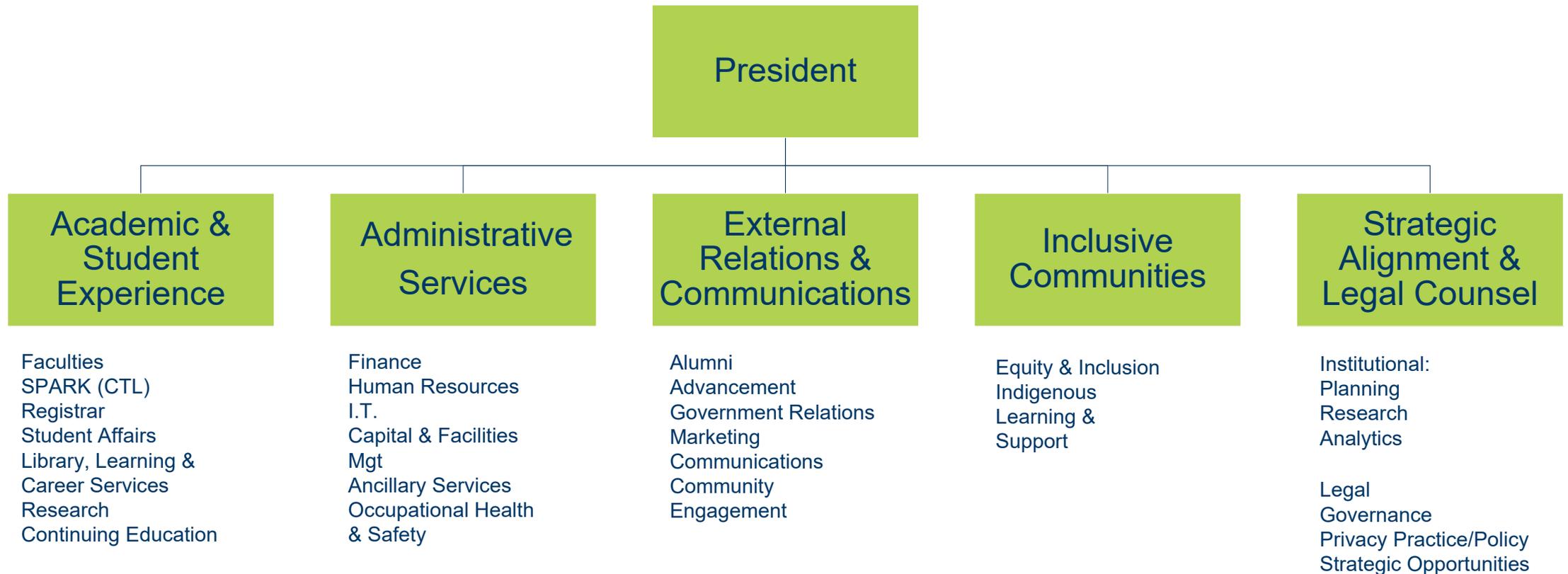
Galvanizing Education Hub:

a table with flexible membership, bringing institutional SMEs to review, research, assess, refine the best ideas for recommendation to be resourced.

It's OK to not know how

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Sheridan College Organizational Structure



Agile, Integrated Implementation at Scale

Some key principles:

- Intentional community engagement
- Commitment to practicing what we teach!
- Inclusion from across the college
- Commit to unlearning, engage bold, eclectic thinking
- Take an ecosystem, not systems approach
- Communicate, communicate, communicate



Strategic Initiatives Framework

Year 5 - 2023/24

Revised SIF Leadership Team

The SIF Leadership Team meets every 8 weeks for strategic collaboration and implementation huddle.

KEY LEADS

Carol Altilia
Sean McNabney
Sheldon Pereira
Deanna McQuarrie

Zafar Syed
Lindsay Engel
Matt Rempel

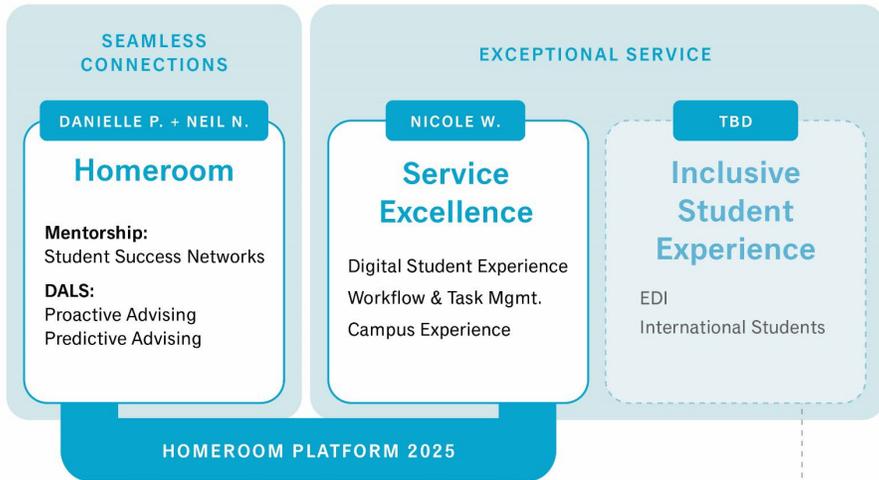
EXTERNAL

Michael O'Leary
Rajan Sandhu
Mark Chapman

Alison Horton
CIO (tbd)

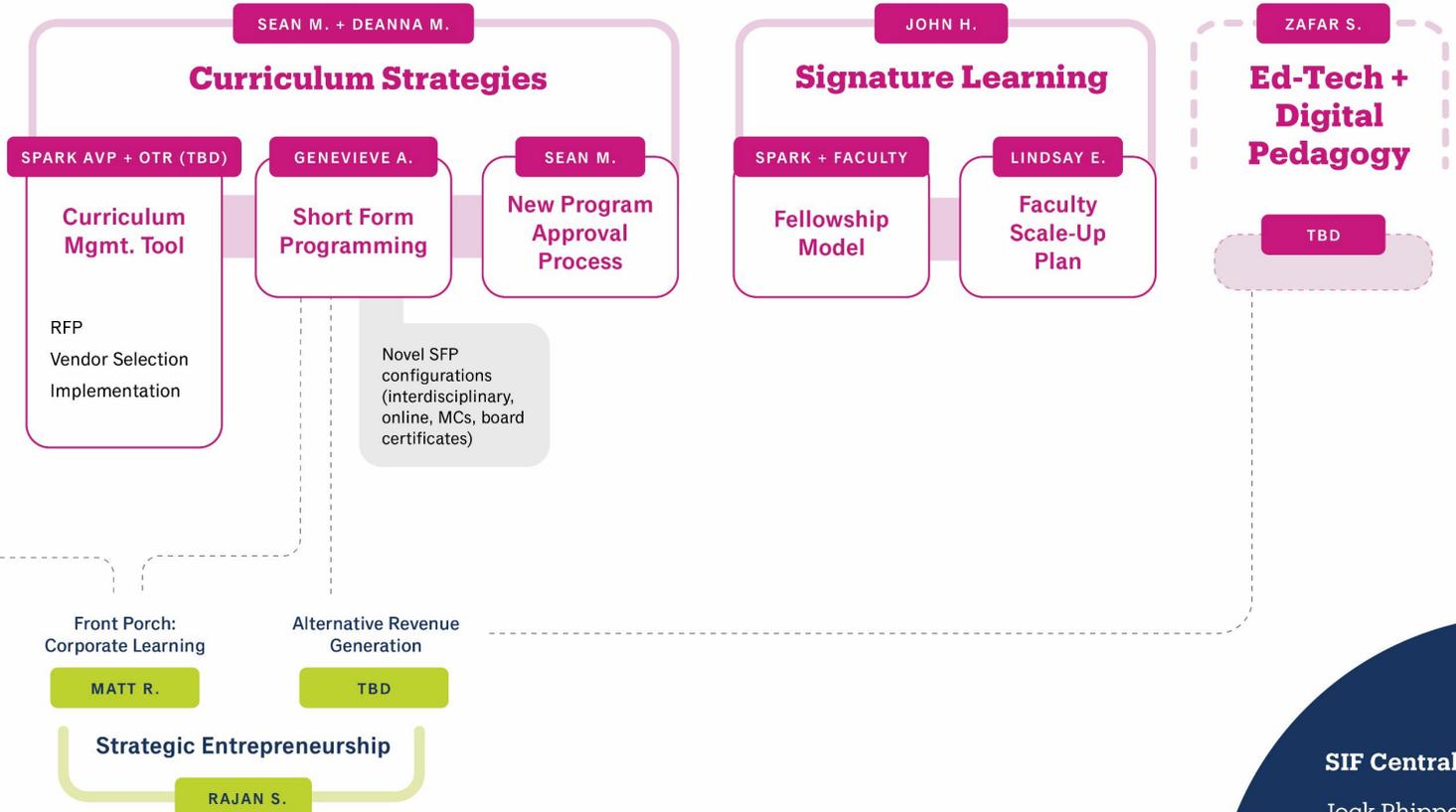
SHELDON P.

Student Experience



SEAN M.

Academic Innovation



Start with the Backbone

- Reimagining some of the core work of the college
 - Program design, curriculum strategies, student service approach
- Projects are engines of impact
 - Projects cannot be seen as outside the “real work” of the college
- Championed by college leaders

Example 1: The Structures Merge

Stage 1: “Homeroom” project is concept.

- Pain-points & gaps with existing practice and systems emerged easily
- A new integrated service model is designed by the x-functional team
- Review of “best-practice” models and demos (within and outside higher-ed) inspires optimism

And...regular work continues as-is.

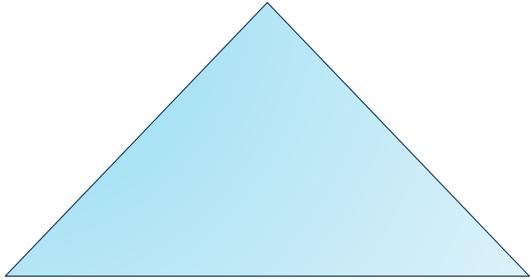
Largely siloed, disconnected, inefficient.

Stage 2: From concept to practice.

- Breaking the concept into actionable “swim lanes” changes how people work
- Student Success Networks pilot across 30 programs reorganizing key staff into networks vs. by department
- New omni-channel comms and service application changes info, data sharing, and workflow across departments
- Survey of student and staff satisfaction provides strong evidence of improvement

And...staff and managers are pumped for the next phase of the project!

Example 2: Embedded Pedagogy



What we would have done?

- Attempt an orderly approach
- Engage existing structures like program learning outcomes
- Top down, systematic implementation with a CTL project lead

**Methodical, systematic.....slow,
thin**

What we are trying....

- Engage complexity
- Leverage excitement + expertise
- Create communities of practice
- CTL to create capacity vs operationalize
- Distributed allocation of resources
- Set the desired outcomes, not the process

**Networked, organic replication, immediate
outcomes**

Lessons We've Learned

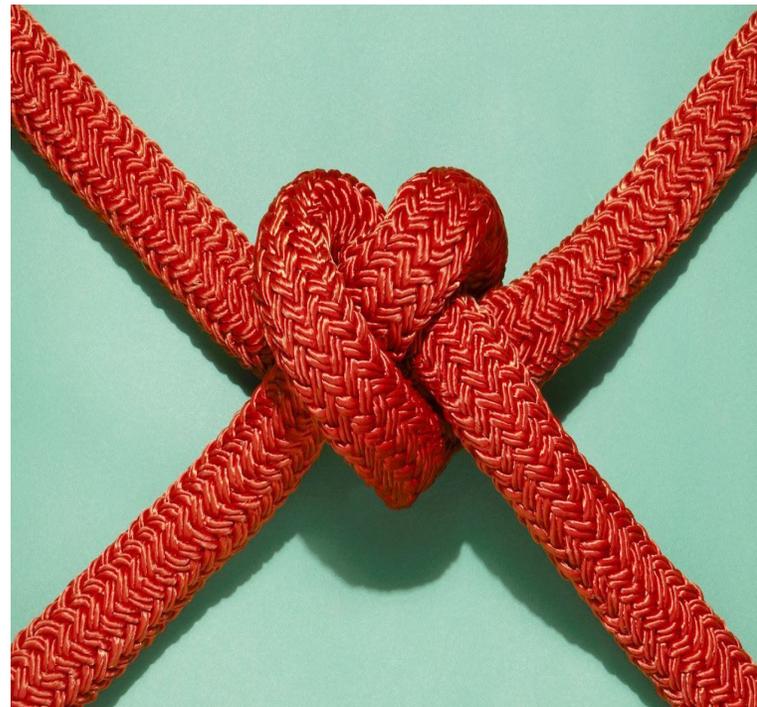
Can't put a race car on a minivan chassis:

Balance New and Core



Alignment and sequencing matter:

Aim for Convergence



Engagement pays big dividends:

Focus on Your People



QUESTIONS

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