

By Carole Gaskell, CEO, Full Potential Group

LEADING HYBRID TEAMS

Leading Hybrid Teams Playbook

Practical strategies to build trust, accountability and performance in a flexible world.



Build trust and connection



Drive accountability



Improve team performance



Strengthen communication



Lead with clarity, flexibility and impact



Carole Gaskell

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**“The strongest hybrid teams aren't
built by chance. They're built by
leaders who create trust, clarity and
accountability on purpose.”**

THE NEW LEADERSHIP AND TEAM CHALLENGE

If hybrid feels harder, it's not just you.

If you're leading a hybrid team, you've probably discovered that some things have become easier and others have become much harder.

Building trust. Creating accountability. Keeping people connected. Developing future leaders. None of those challenges are new. But they don't happen by accident and require a different kind of leadership than many of us learned.

The strongest hybrid teams aren't built by chance. They're built by leaders who create trust, clarity and accountability on purpose.

This playbook isn't about hybrid policies. It's about the everyday leadership conversations, mindset and behaviours that help teams perform at their best, wherever work happens.

As you read, keep your own team in mind and ask yourself one simple question:

"What's the one change that would make the biggest difference for us?"

I hope the ideas that follow help you answer it.

Carole

WHAT WE HEAR

The questions **leaders are really asking.**

Because the challenge isn't hybrid working. It's leading hybrid teams.



Why do some hybrid teams outperform others?



Why do some managers create trust while others create confusion?



Why are some teams energised while others feel disconnected?



How do we balance flexibility with accountability?



How do we maintain culture without relying on the office?



How do we develop managers capable of leading hybrid teams?

HYBRID TEAM LEADERSHIP AFFECTS ALMOST EVERY PEOPLE PRIORITY



Engagement

Keeping people motivated, connected and involved.



Retention

Holding on to great people in a more flexible world.



Leadership development

Developing leaders who can lead from anywhere.



Succession

Building a strong pipeline of future leaders.



Collaboration

Working together effectively across locations and teams.



Culture

Keeping culture strong when people aren't together.



Performance

Driving clarity, accountability and results remotely.



Wellbeing

Supporting mental health, balance and sustainable energy.



AI adoption

Helping teams embrace AI with confidence and skill.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The biggest advantages of **hybrid working**.

Hybrid leadership decides whether people **stay, engage and perform**.



REFLECTION

Which of these benefits is your team fully capturing today?

THE CHALLENGE

The common challenges **exposed by hybrid working.**

The challenges leaders are seeing most often.



Connection starts to thin out

-  Reduced spontaneous collaboration
-  Weaker culture transmission
-  Siloed teams
-  Eroding trust



Execution starts to slow

-  Slower decisions
-  Accountability drift
-  Innovation stalls
-  Communication overload
-  Meeting fatigue



Leadership gets harder

-  Visibility gaps
-  Developing future leaders
-  Leadership capacity strain
-  Rising wellbeing concerns



Most hybrid team challenges are not technology problems. **They are leadership challenges amplified by distance.**

THE DIFFERENCE

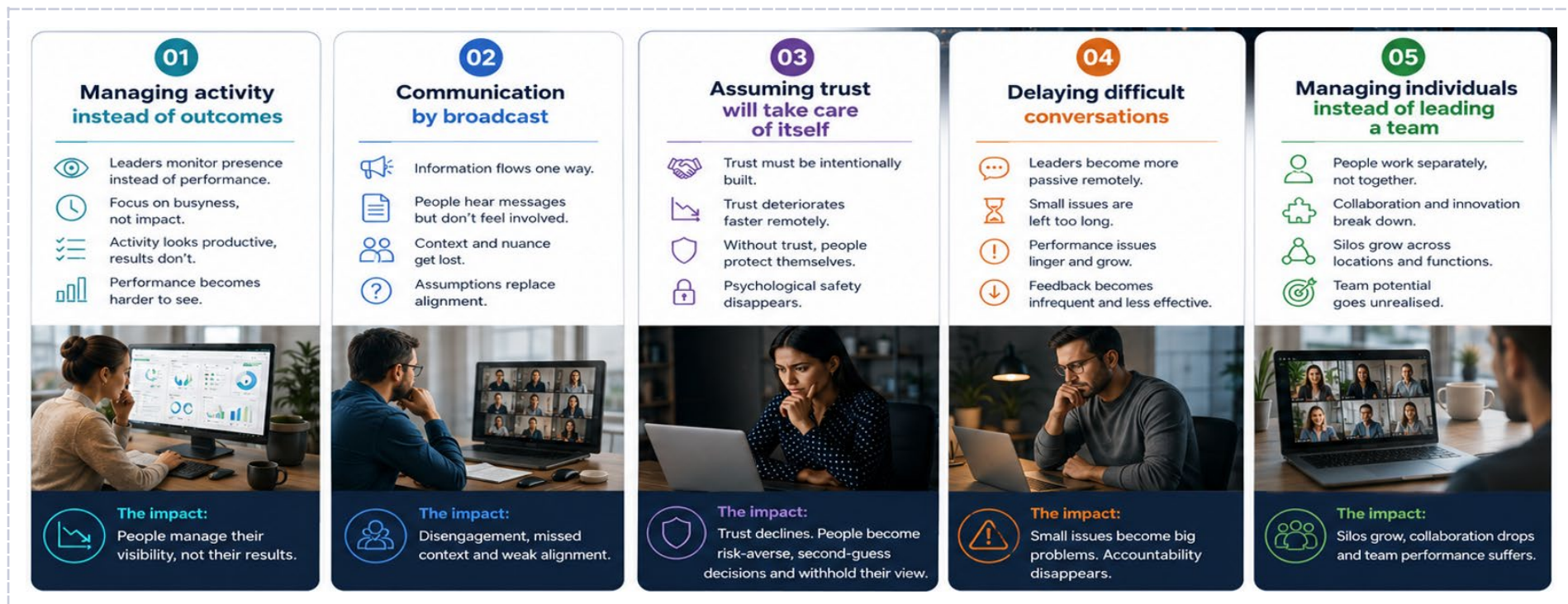
Hybrid working isn't the differentiator. Leadership quality is.



THE LEADERSHIP TRAPS

The five leadership traps **destroying hybrid performance.**

These aren't hybrid working problems. They're leadership habits that hold teams back. Hybrid performance doesn't happen by accident; it is built through intentional leadership.

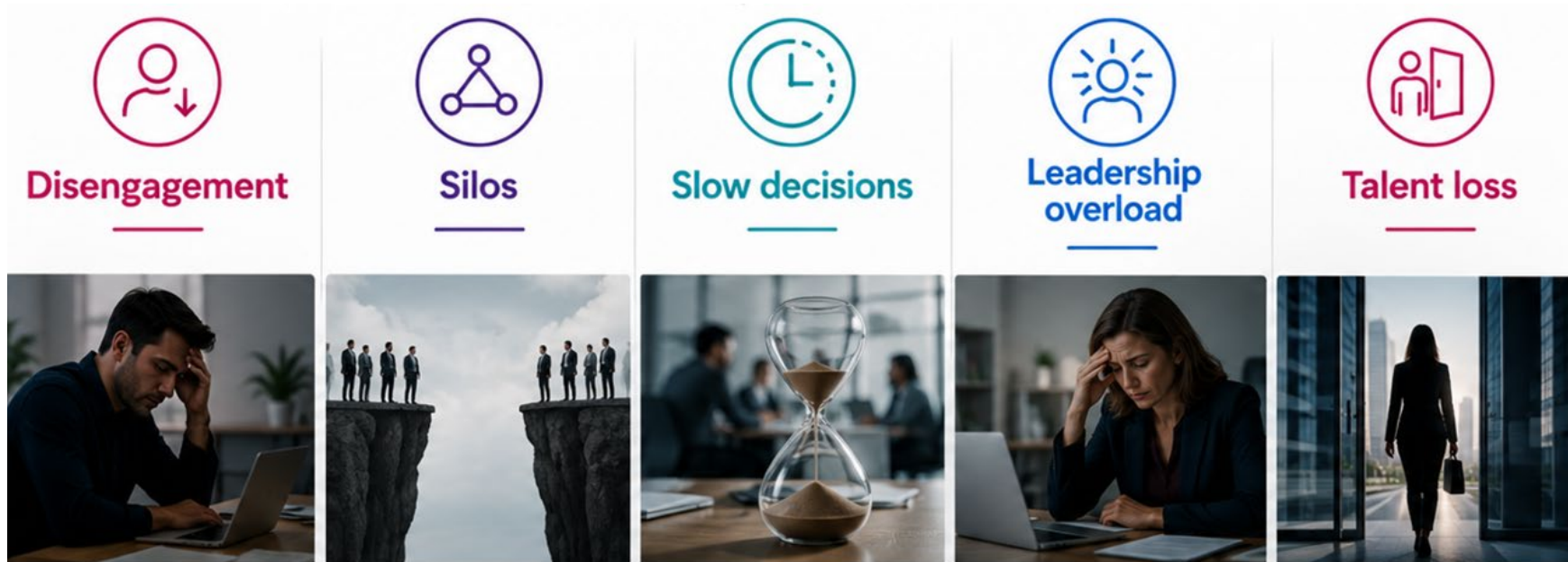


THE FIVE HYBRID TEAM LEADERSHIP TRAPS

1	Managing activity instead of outcomes What it looks like. Leaders and teams monitor presence; busyness is mistaken for impact.	Why it matters. Activity looks productive while results don't move, and performance gets harder to see.	Team Conversation. <i>How clearly have we defined what success looks like? Are we measuring activity or outcomes? Where could we give people more ownership while increasing accountability?</i>
2	Communication by broadcast What it looks like. Information flows one way; people hear messages but don't feel involved.	Why it matters. Context and nuance are lost, assumptions replace alignment, and engagement falls.	Team Conversation. <i>How do we know people understand? Where could we create more dialogue rather than simply sharing information? What conversations aren't happening often enough?</i>
3	Assuming trust takes care of itself What it looks like. Trust is left to chance and deteriorates faster at a distance.	Why it matters. People protect themselves, withhold their view, and psychological safety disappears.	Team Conversation. <i>How would the team describe the level of trust today? Where might trust have weakened without us recognising it? What could we do this month to strengthen it?</i>
4	Delaying difficult conversations What it looks like. Leaders become more passive remotely; small issues are left too long.	Why it matters. Minor issues grow, feedback becomes infrequent, and accountability disappears.	Team Conversation. <i>What conversations are we avoiding? What impact is that having on individuals, the team and performance? How can we address issues earlier with greater confidence?</i>
5	Managing individuals, not leading a team What it looks like. People work separately, not together; collaboration breaks down.	Why it matters. Silos grow across locations and functions, and team potential goes unrealised.	Team Conversation. <i>Do we operate as one team or several individuals? Where do people collaborate well and where do they work in isolation? What could we do to create stronger connection and shared team ownership?</i>

THE COST OF HYBRID TEAM TRAPS

The real cost of these **hybrid team traps**.



Hybrid doesn't magnify great leadership.
It magnifies weak leadership.

THE HYBRID FRAMEWORK

The 8 drivers of **hybrid team performance**.



Hybrid working doesn't fail because people aren't together. **It fails when leaders neglect one or more of these eight drivers.**

1

PERFORMANCE • DRIVER 1

Outcome-Based Leadership

Presence is easy to measure. Performance is harder.

For decades, visibility was often mistaken for contribution. Leaders could see who arrived early, stayed late and appeared busy. Hybrid working has removed that comfort blanket.

The highest-performing organisations have responded by becoming clearer about outcomes. People know what success looks like, how it is measured and where accountability sits.

Hybrid working doesn't reduce accountability. It requires more clarity.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Attendance becomes a proxy for contribution
- People focus on activity rather than outcomes
- Trust falls, high performers become frustrated
- Productivity becomes a constant debate

KEY PRINCIPLE

Trust people with how they work. Hold them accountable for what they deliver.

Questions to ask yourself

- Is success clearly defined for every role?
- Do people know exactly what outcomes they are accountable for?
- Are you measuring activity or impact?
- Could every member of the team explain what success looks like in the next 90 days?
- Are performance conversations focused on value creation or visibility?

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Shift conversations from hours worked to value created
- ✓ Establish clear performance measures and expectations
- ✓ Reward results, collaboration and contribution rather than visibility

REFLECTION

What percentage of your team still equates visibility with value?



1. Outcome-Based Leadership

Lead outcomes,
not attendance.

2

PERFORMANCE • DRIVER 2

Communication & Alignment

Most hybrid organisations either under-communicate or overwhelm people. High-performing ones build a rhythm.

In an office, alignment topped itself up through a hundred unplanned exchanges. Hybrid removes that ambient correction, so small misunderstandings now compound in silence. The answer is not more messages; it is a predictable rhythm people can rely on.

Think of communication as a leadership system, not a series of events. A simple cadence: weekly priorities, monthly performance, quarterly direction, an annual strategy refresh; means people always know when clarity is coming and stop filling the gaps with their own assumptions.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Priorities are interpreted differently in and across teams
- People feel either under-informed or buried in noise
- Decisions get revisited because alignment never really held
- Cross-functional work stalls in the gaps between teams

KEY PRINCIPLE

Communication is not an event. It is a leadership system.

A communication rhythm

- Weekly: team updates, priorities, progress, key decisions
- Monthly: business performance, wins, lessons, strategic updates
- Quarterly: future direction, market insight, leadership Q&A
- Annually: strategy, purpose and a vision refresh

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Set a predictable rhythm and protect it
- ✓ Make priorities and progress visible, not just available
- ✓ Protect attention: more signal, far less noise
- ✓ Build a shared language for how people communicate and decide

REFLECTION

If you asked your team for the top three priorities, how many answers would you get?



2. Communication & Alignment

Ensure everyone understands priorities, progress and direction.

DRIVER 2 • GOING DEEPER

Communication is a people challenge.

A rhythm fixes the cadence of communication. It does not fix the fact that people communicate, process information and make decisions differently. In hybrid teams, where tone and body language are stripped out, those differences quietly become friction.

Insights Discovery®

Insights Discovery uses a simple, memorable model of four colour energies to help people understand themselves and each other. It gives teams a shared language for difference, so that what used to cause friction becomes something they can name and work with.

It helps teams understand:

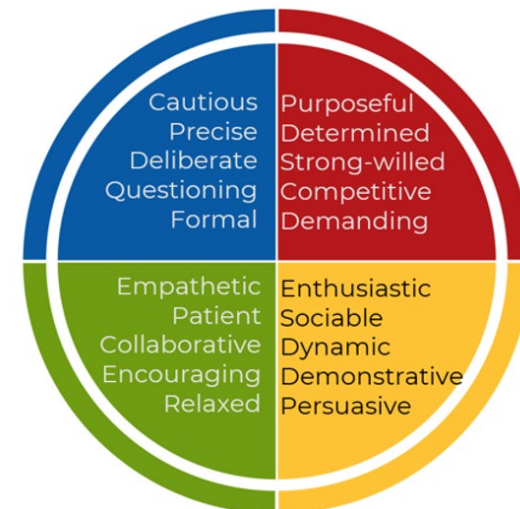
- ✓ Communication style
- ✓ Collaboration preferences
- ✓ Decision-making
- ✓ Blind spots

Why it matters in hybrid

People communicate differently. People process information differently. People make decisions differently. When you can read the room, you adjust without thinking. When you can't, a shared language for difference is what keeps a team aligned.

The outcome:

- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Alignment
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Team effectiveness



3

PERFORMANCE · DRIVER 3

Clear Accountability

Hybrid environments require greater clarity, not greater control.

Distance makes it easy to assume someone else has it. Without the friction of a shared room, unclear ownership turns into quiet gaps, and underperformance can sit unaddressed far longer than anyone intends.

Accountability does not thrive on surveillance. It thrives on clarity made visible: everyone can see who owns what, what was committed, and whether it happened. Then the team holds itself, not just you.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Ownership is fuzzy at the edges between team members
- Commitments slip without anyone noticing
- The same issues resurface meeting after meeting
- People chase progress rather than reviewing it

KEY PRINCIPLE

Accountability thrives in clarity and visibility, not control.

Questions to ask yourself

- Is ownership of key priorities genuinely clear?
- Can people see what success looks like, and the commitments others have made?
- Is underperformance addressed early, or allowed to drift?

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Clarify ownership of key priorities
- ✓ Use simple, shared scorecards
- ✓ Track commitments publicly and review progress consistently
- ✓ Address underperformance early and constructively

REFLECTION

Where in your organisation is ownership currently ambiguous, and what is it costing?



3. Clear Accountability

Create ownership, follow-through and shared responsibility.

4

CULTURE · DRIVER 4

Build Culture Intentionally

Team culture no longer develops naturally through proximity. It must be designed deliberately.

Culture was never the posters; it was the thousand small behaviours people absorbed by being around each other. Remove proximity and team culture stops transmitting on its own. What isn't modelled deliberately, simply doesn't reach the people who weren't in the room.

In hybrid teams and organisations, culture is created by leadership behaviour, not office location. Name the few behaviours that matter, role-model them under pressure, and make sure everyone lives and breathes them and new starters feel the team culture from day one.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- New joiners take months to 'get' how things work here
- Stated values and lived behaviour drift apart
- Culture feels different person to person
- Behaviour under pressure contradicts the espoused culture

KEY PRINCIPLE

In hybrid teams, culture is created by leadership and team behaviour, not office location.

Questions to ask yourself

- What behaviours define our team culture?
- How visible are these behaviours?
- How consistently are people role-modelling them?

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Clarify three to five non-negotiable team behaviours
- ✓ Celebrate clear examples of those behaviours regularly
- ✓ Create meaningful opportunities for connection beyond operational meetings
- ✓ Ensure new starters experience the team culture from day one

REFLECTION

If team culture is what people do when no one is watching, what is yours rewarding right now?



4. Intentional Culture

Create culture by design, not proximity.

5

CULTURE · DRIVER 5

Strengthen Trust Through Visibility

Trust is harder to build remotely and easier to lose. It grows when leaders are visible, accessible and authentic.

When leaders are physically distant, silence reads as secrecy and absence reads as indifference, neither of them intended. People fill the gap with their own story, and the story is rarely generous.

Trust in hybrid teams is rebuilt through deliberate visibility: being genuinely accessible, sharing what you know and what you don't, and talking openly about challenges. Manufactured certainty does the opposite of what you hope.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- People hear about decisions late, or second-hand
- Questions dry up in open forums
- Leaders are available in theory but rarely present
- Rumour fills the space where communication should be

KEY PRINCIPLE

Transparency creates trust. Silence creates stories.

Ask your team regularly

- What do you need from me?
- What concerns do you have?
- What are we not talking about?

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Hold regular visibility, open forums and Q&A sessions
- ✓ Share what you know and what you don't know
- ✓ Talk openly about challenges and lessons learned
- ✓ Increase leadership accessibility

REFLECTION

What is the one thing your people are unsure about that your silence is currently 'answering' for them?



5. Trust Through Visibility

Build trust through transparency and accessibility.

6

CULTURE · DRIVER 6

Create Connection & Belonging

People do not leave teams because they work remotely. They leave when they feel disconnected.

Belonging was subsidised by proximity, by watercooler conversations, corridors and the easy company of being co-located. Hybrid teaming withdraws that subsidy. Without intent, people work alongside a team rather than feeling part of one, and disengagement follows quietly.

Belonging is a business issue, not a wellbeing initiative. It shows up in retention, discretionary effort and the willingness to collaborate across lines you don't control.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Engagement scores soften, especially among remote staff
- In-person time is busy but not meaningful
- Some people are consistently out of the loop
- Collaboration happens only within, never across, teams

KEY PRINCIPLE

Belonging is a business issue, not a wellbeing initiative.

Questions to ask yourself

- Where do people feel genuinely connected, and where adrift?
- Is in-person time purposeful, or just expensive?
- Who is quietly drifting to the edges of the team?

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Create purposeful in-person time
- ✓ Encourage peer-to-peer collaboration
- ✓ Build cross-functional relationships
- ✓ Celebrate successes collectively and protect team wellbeing

REFLECTION

Who on your team would say they feel they truly belong, and who is quietly drifting away?



6. Connection & Belonging

Help people feel connected to the organisation and each other.

7

LEADERSHIP • DRIVER 7

Equip Managers to Lead Hybrid Teams

Most organisations underestimate the impact managers have on engagement. Hybrid amplifies weak managers.

Most managers were trained to lead what they could see. Hybrid demands a different skill set: coaching at a distance, giving feedback without the room, building motivation, engagement and trust through a screen. This capability rarely exists by default.

The hard question is whether you and your managers are leading hybrid teams, or simply supervising tasks remotely. The gap between those two is where most engagement is won or lost.

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Engagement varies sharply from one person to the next
- Feedback is rare, late, or avoided altogether
- Conflict is managed around rather than into
- Good people leave good teams because of weak managers

KEY PRINCIPLE

Are our managers leading hybrid teams, or just supervising tasks remotely?

Managers need capability in

- Coaching conversations and feedback
- Performance management and conflict resolution
- Remote engagement and psychological safety

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Invest in coaching and feedback capability, not just process
- ✓ Build confidence in remote performance conversations
- ✓ Treat hybrid leadership as a capability to develop, not assume
- ✓ Support the middle layer; they carry the team culture day to day

REFLECTION

If you ranked yourself and your managers by team engagement, what would explain the gap between top and bottom?



7. Hybrid Manager & Leader Capability

Equip managers and leaders to coach, engage, develop and lead effectively in a hybrid environment.

8

LEADERSHIP • DRIVER 8

Team & Leadership Capacity- the capability that enables every other driver

The hidden driver behind the other seven drivers. The future belongs to team leaders and people who can remain effective under pressure, complexity and uncertainty.

The first seven drivers explain WHAT leaders need to do. This eighth explains WHY some team leaders can consistently do it under pressure and others can't.

Sustained performance is impossible when everyone is permanently firefighting.

Capacity, not effort, is now the constraint on what a team can achieve. A team held together by individual heroics eventually breaks something, usually the leader, the team, or the strategy.

When leaders have capacity, they are more able to think clearly, remain emotionally balanced, prioritise, influence, build trust, create clarity and sustain performance.

Leaders need the capacity to

- Build trust quickly and navigate ambiguity
- Communicate with clarity and hold difficult conversations
- Manage competing priorities
- Coach rather than 'tell'
- Sustain energy and resilience without burning people out, and create alignment across dispersed teams

Transformational Leadership Practices

- ✓ Protect thinking time; strategy needs space, not just intent
- ✓ Build resilience and recovery into how their teams operate
- ✓ Reduce avoidable complexity before adding more capability
- ✓ Sustain performance without quietly burning your best people

REFLECTION

Which of your most relied-upon people is running closest to empty, and what happens if they stop?

SIGNS THIS DRIVER IS WEAK

- Leaders are busy but rarely think strategically
- Decision quality dips under sustained load
- Recovery is treated as optional until something breaks
- The leader hired and the leader three years on are not the same person

KEY PRINCIPLE

Hybrid working does not expose team weaknesses. It magnifies them.



8. Team & Leadership Capacity

Sustain performance under pressure, complexity and uncertainty.

DRIVER 8 • THE FIVE LEADERSHIP AND TEAM CAPACITIES

Hybrid team performance is not ultimately a location challenge. **It's a leadership and team capacity challenge.**

Leadership and team capacity is the ability to remain effective under pressure, complexity and uncertainty. Hybrid working stretches it further than ever.



Cognitive Sensemaking. Making better decisions in complexity, harder when you can't read the room or sense what isn't being said.

Relational Perspective shifting. Building trust, aligning and influencing remotely — with fewer informal moments to build the relationships that matter.

Emotional Self-relating. Remaining composed, leading yourself and others under pressure — with stress and strain less visible, and harder to catch early, at a distance.

Operational Navigating priorities. Prioritising what matters most, making balanced decisions and developing value through hybrid teams — across dispersed, asynchronous work.

Regenerative Sustaining energy. Sustaining energy and wellbeing, leading with purpose over the long term, as the boundary between work and recovery quietly erodes at home.

Hybrid teamworking raises the demand on all five at once. That is why capacity, not capability, is so often the real constraint in hybrid teams.

PRIORITISING THE EIGHT DRIVERS

Prioritising the eight drivers **is fundamental to improving hybrid team performance.**

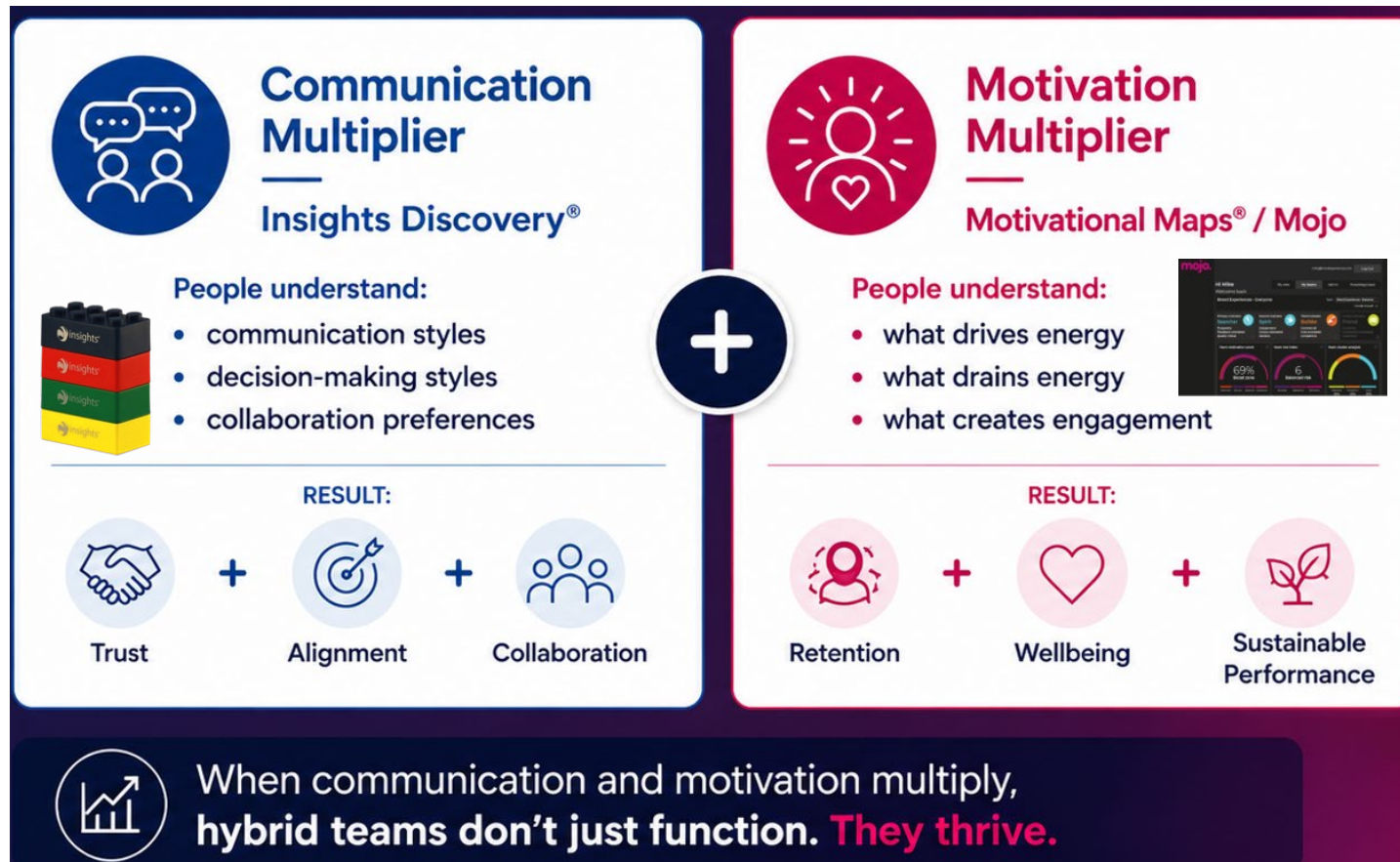
Where do you start? If the top three are weak, team performance suffers. If the middle three are weak, team culture suffers. If the bottom two are weak, everything eventually suffers. Every performance issue eventually becomes a leadership, people capacity and capability issue.



SECTION 5 • THE TWO MULTIPLIERS

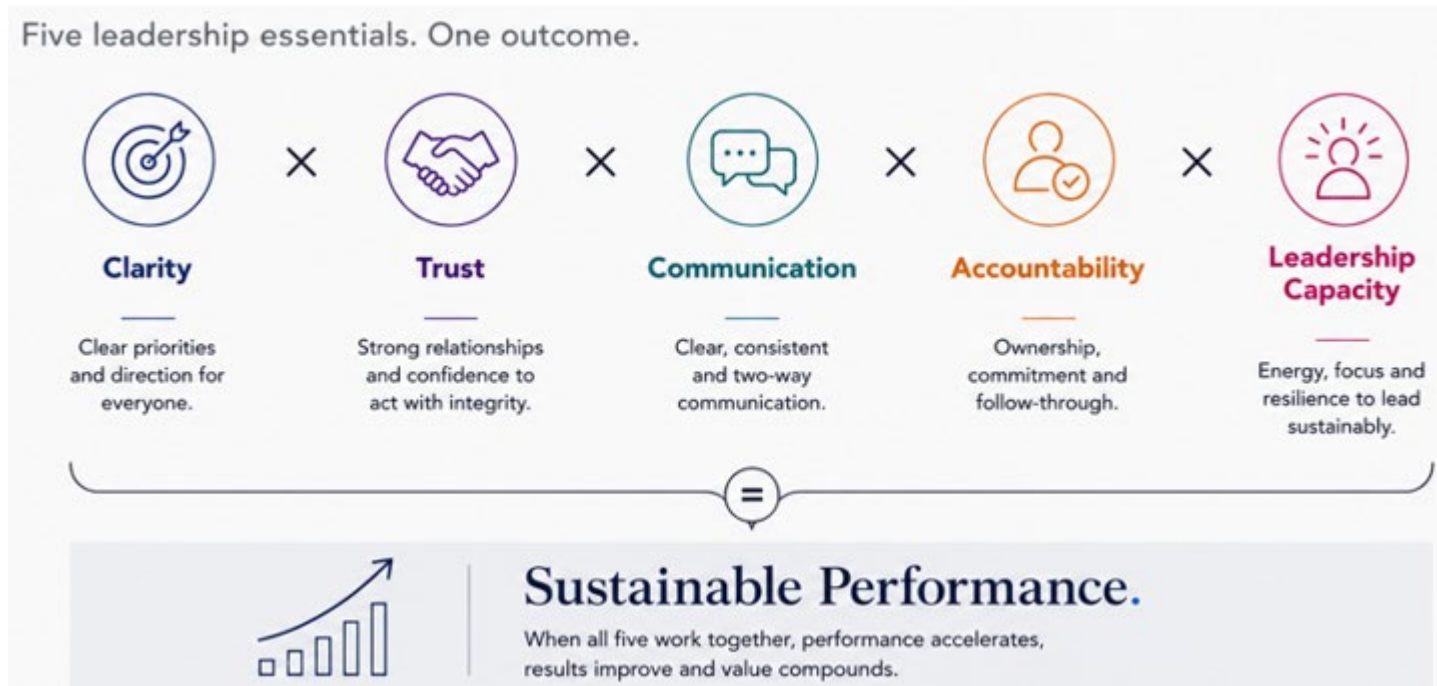
The two multipliers of **hybrid team performance**.

Every hybrid challenge sits on top of two invisible multipliers.



THE EQUATION

Leadership is a multiplier of hybrid team performance.



It is multiplicative

Weakness in any one factor collapses the result. You cannot compensate for low clarity with high capability.

It is a leadership equation

Each factor is set, modelled and protected by leaders, not by policy documents.

It compounds

Small improvements in connection or capacity create disproportionate gains over a quarter.

Leading Hybrid Teams Flywheel

A cycle of leadership behaviours that strengthens your team and drives results.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Score your team, then ask the **one question that matters.**



REFLECTION QUESTION

Which score, if improved by just 20%, would have the biggest impact on hybrid team performance and growth?

Hybrid teamworking raises the stakes on leadership. Trust must be built more intentionally. Accountability must be created more clearly.

Communication must become more deliberate. Team culture must be shaped more consciously. The teams that thrive won't be those with the best hybrid policies. They will be those with leaders capable of creating trust, connection and performance wherever people work.

NEXT STEP · YOUR 90-DAY COMMITMENT

Nobody changes eight things at once. **Start with one.**

You will not move all eight drivers at once, and you don't need to. Pick the one that is costing you most and run a deliberate experiment.

01

Identify your weakest driver

Choose the weakest of the 8 drivers. Name it openly in your next team meeting.

02

Agree one action and a measurable outcome

Run a 30-day experiment on the matching driver. Set one measurable target outcome and protect it.

03

Pressure-test it

Bring the plan to a coach, mentor or your team. Report back honestly in 90 days.

The teams and organisations that win won't be the ones that force people back, nor the ones that simply let people work anywhere. They will be the ones that build leaders and people capable of creating trust, alignment, accountability and high performance wherever they work.

About Full Potential Group

Full Potential Group is a global partner in leadership, team and culture transformation, helping organisations improve performance, accelerate change and build the leadership capacity needed for sustainable growth.

We build leaders with the capacity to navigate complexity, the maturity to lead under pressure and the judgement to create cultures where people and performance thrive. Our integrated approach combines psychological insight, diagnostics, coaching and experiential development to create lasting shifts in how leaders think, lead and behave every day.

With more than 25 years' experience and over one million people developed across 2,500+ organisations worldwide, we are trusted to strengthen leadership pipelines, build high-performing teams and create cultures that deliver measurable improvements in organisational health and performance.

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