

UNLED[®]

How To Build A Team That Doesn't Need You

Sean McPheat

Founder & CEO, MTD Training & Skillshub

Sean McPheat



9,000+ Organisations

9 Awards

96% - 2,500 Reviews

Sean McPheat



*It all **started**
back in 2001!*



Sean McPheat



Is This You?

Is This You?



Team keeps interrupting you

They are asking you questions they know the answers to (or should know!)



Feel like you're firefighting

Same problems. Same issues.
Nobody owns the fix.



Wall-to-wall meetings

Your calendar is packed. Lots of meetings, check-ins and updates.



Team waits for you

They check, they pause, they won't move without your say-so.



You feel busy but not progressing

Your days are full but never have time to think, plan or build.



Re-explaining priorities

You've said it before, but your team keep asking "What should I be focusing on?"

A Tale of **Two** Managers

Manager One: The Centre of Everything

- Calendar packed with meetings
- Every decision flows to them
- Team hesitant without approval
- Feels indispensable & overwhelmed
- Progress stalls when they step away

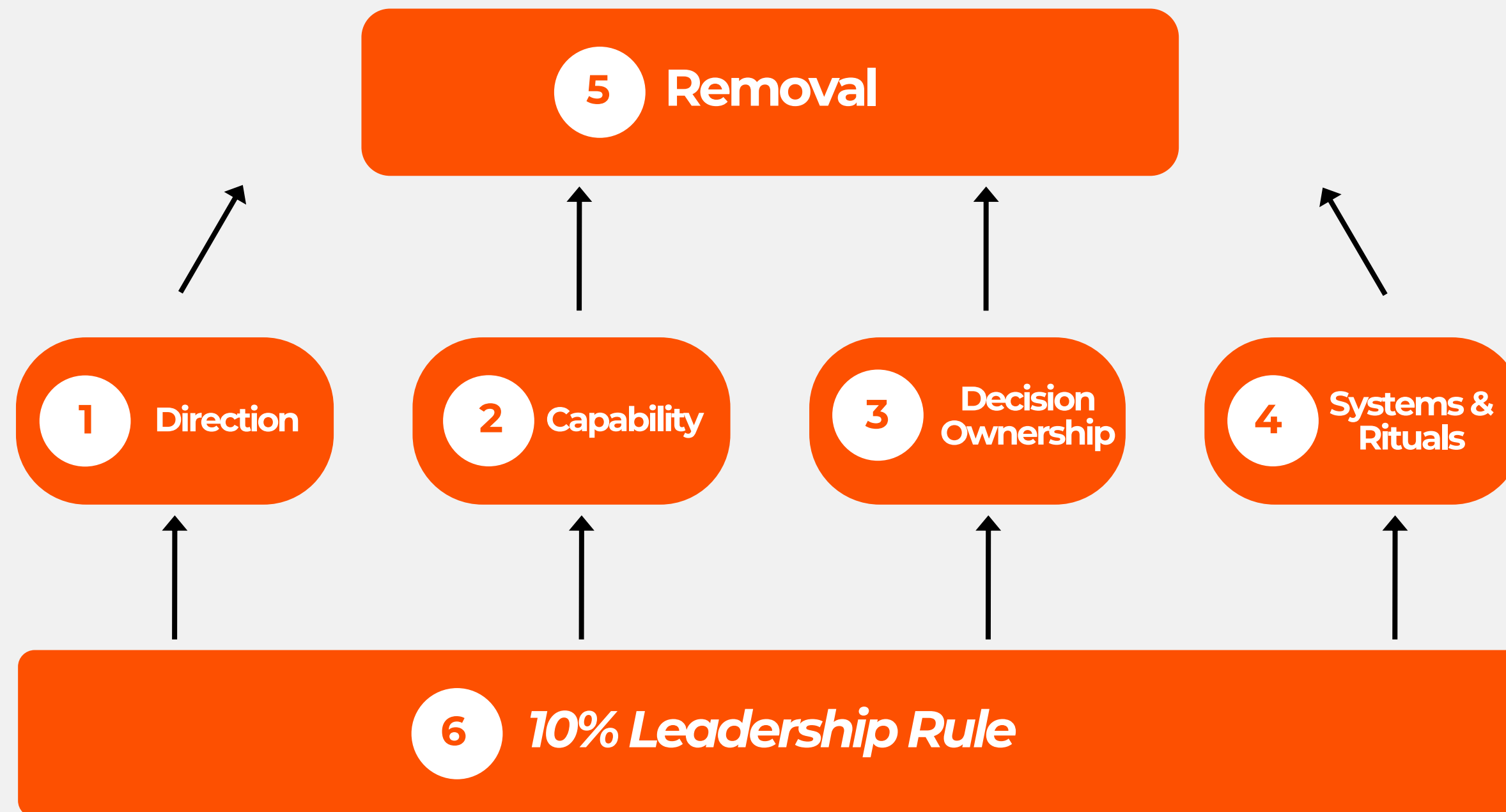
Manager Two: The Architect

- Calendar has space
- Not on every call or email
- Team moves quickly and owns outcomes
- Presence is a bonus, not a requirement
- Better results, more engagement

Which one sounds more like you right now?

The UNLED[®] Framework

Six elements that build a team which performs without constant management input.



The **New** Goal of Leadership

"The ultimate test of your leadership isn't how much your team needs you. It's how well they perform when you're not there."

FROM

Being present everywhere

Being the approver

Solving every problem

Value = busyness



TO

Creating presence through systems

Being the enabler

Creating problem-solvers

Value = team independence

1. Direction

If your team doesn't know what great looks like, missing the mark is inevitable.

1

Vision

Where we're going and why. The compass that keeps people oriented.

2

Priorities

What matters most right now. Make trade-offs visible for the team.

3

Standards

How we expect things done. What 'great' looks like in practice.

Toolkit

**Clarity Brief | 3-Word Strategy | Weekly Anchor Questions
| "Not Now" List | Visible Standards**

Exercise!

3-Word Strategy

Internal Guideposts

“Pick 3 words or a short phrases that sum up your current focus”

When someone is unsure, they hold it up against those words.

Exercise!

3-Word Strategy

Some of mine

“Speed wins”

“Better, more, new”

“Progress not perfection”

“Success leaves clues”

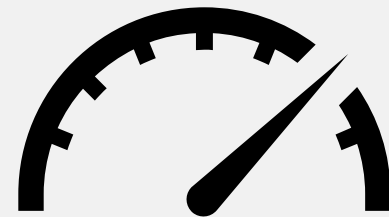
Exercise!

3-Word Strategy

"Speed Wins"

Carved into how my sales team works. Ask any of them what matters most and the answer is always the same.

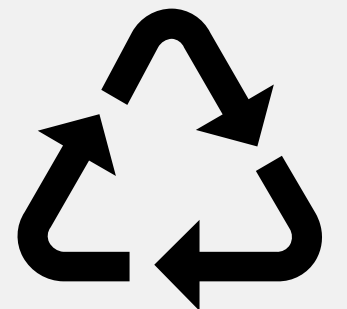
- Fast on leads
- Fast on proposals
- Fast on follow-ups



"Better, More, New"

Inspired by Alex Hormozi. Make it better, then make more of it, before chasing anything new.

- Make it better
- Then make more
- New comes last



2. Capability

Direction tells people where to aim. Capability determines whether they can move forward without you.

Skill - Can they do the work?

- Diagnose the gap specifically
- Build scaffolding, not handholding
- Coach fluency under pressure
- Track progress and confidence

Will - Will they step forward?

- Celebrate attempts, not just outcomes
- Respond to mistakes with curiosity
- Remove the fear of judgement
- Model vulnerability yourself

Exercise!

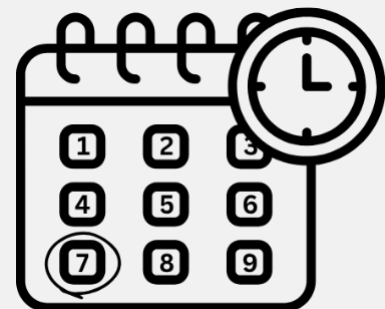
“What would you do if I wasn’t here?”

For 1 Week

Let them answer.

Back their call (unless risky)

Reflect on the outcome.



Outcomes

Who is ready for more?
Who still needs coaching?

Dynamic shifts from “Ask the manager” to “Think it through first”





3. Decision Ownership

Tasks are easy to delegate. Decisions are not.

Level 1

Without me

Routine, low-risk, close to the work. No approval required.

Level 2

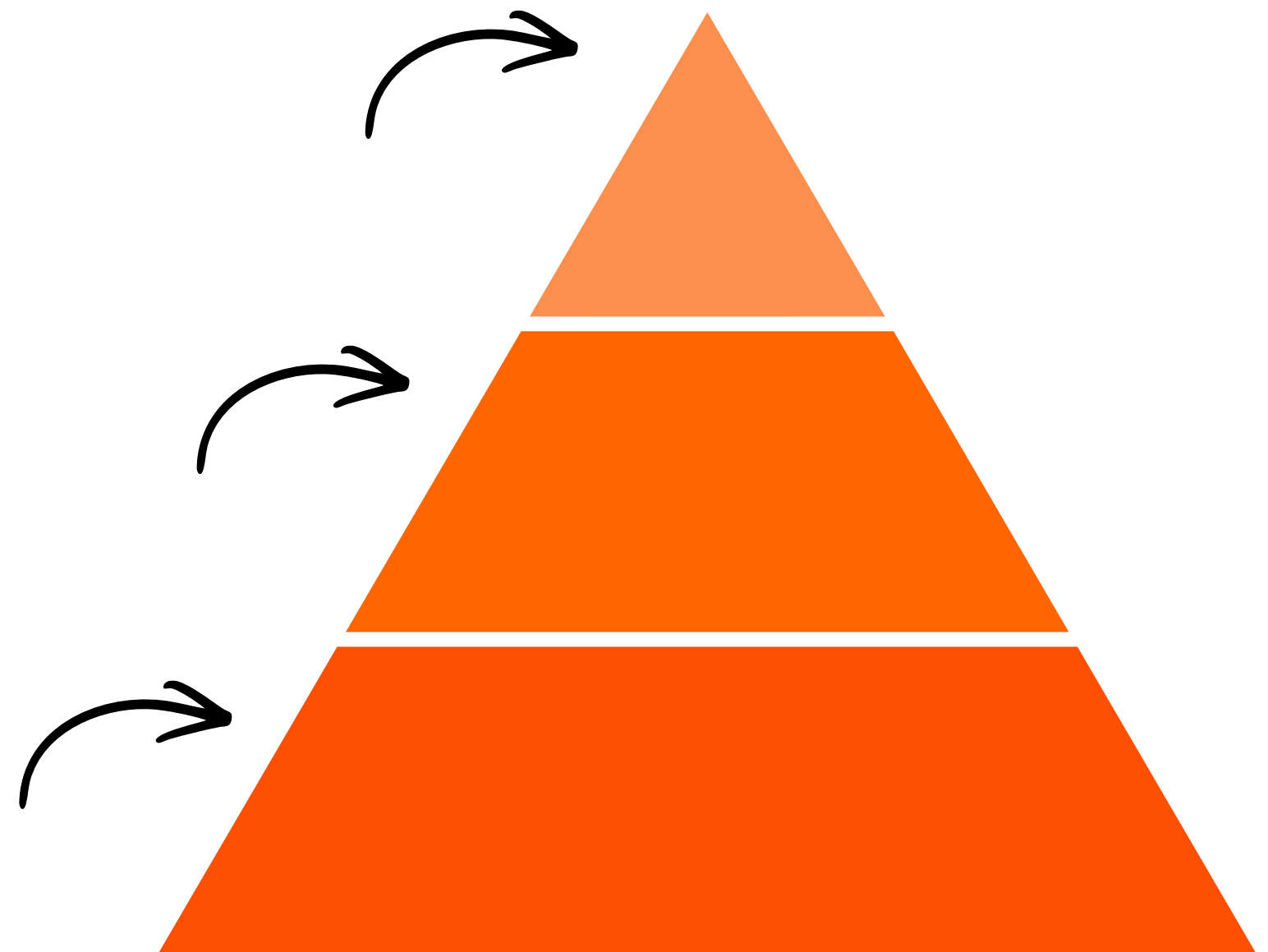
Heads up

Decide first, communicate after. Alignment, not control.

Level 3

With me

Financial, strategic, irreversible. Decide together.



When people still escalate, don't absorb the decision. Strengthen their thinking.

"What options have you considered?", "What do you recommend?", "What risks do you see?"

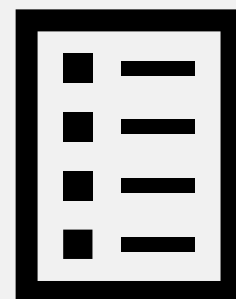
Exercise!

The Decision Map

Pick One Project/Area

List every decision that typically comes up.

- Client responses
- Design
- Problem resolution
- Budget tweaks
- Scheduling



3 Levels

1. Without me
2. Heads up
3. With me

Do this visibly with your team.



4. Systems & Rituals

Systems define how work gets done. Rituals define how work keeps moving.

Systems

- Reduce repeated questions
- Improve output consistency
- Allow work without the manager
- Checklists > detailed manuals

Rituals

- Weekly planning to align priorities
- Short progress check-ins
- Decision meetings where issues resolve
- Monthly reviews to improve performance

**Core areas: Priority & Planning | Progress Visibility | Decision-Making |
Learning & Improvement**

Exercise!

The Dependency Audit

Review Your Last 2 Weeks

- Reminders you had to send
- Questions you answered that had been answered before
- Approvals that sat waiting for you
- Updates you had to chase
- Problems you solved that others could have handled



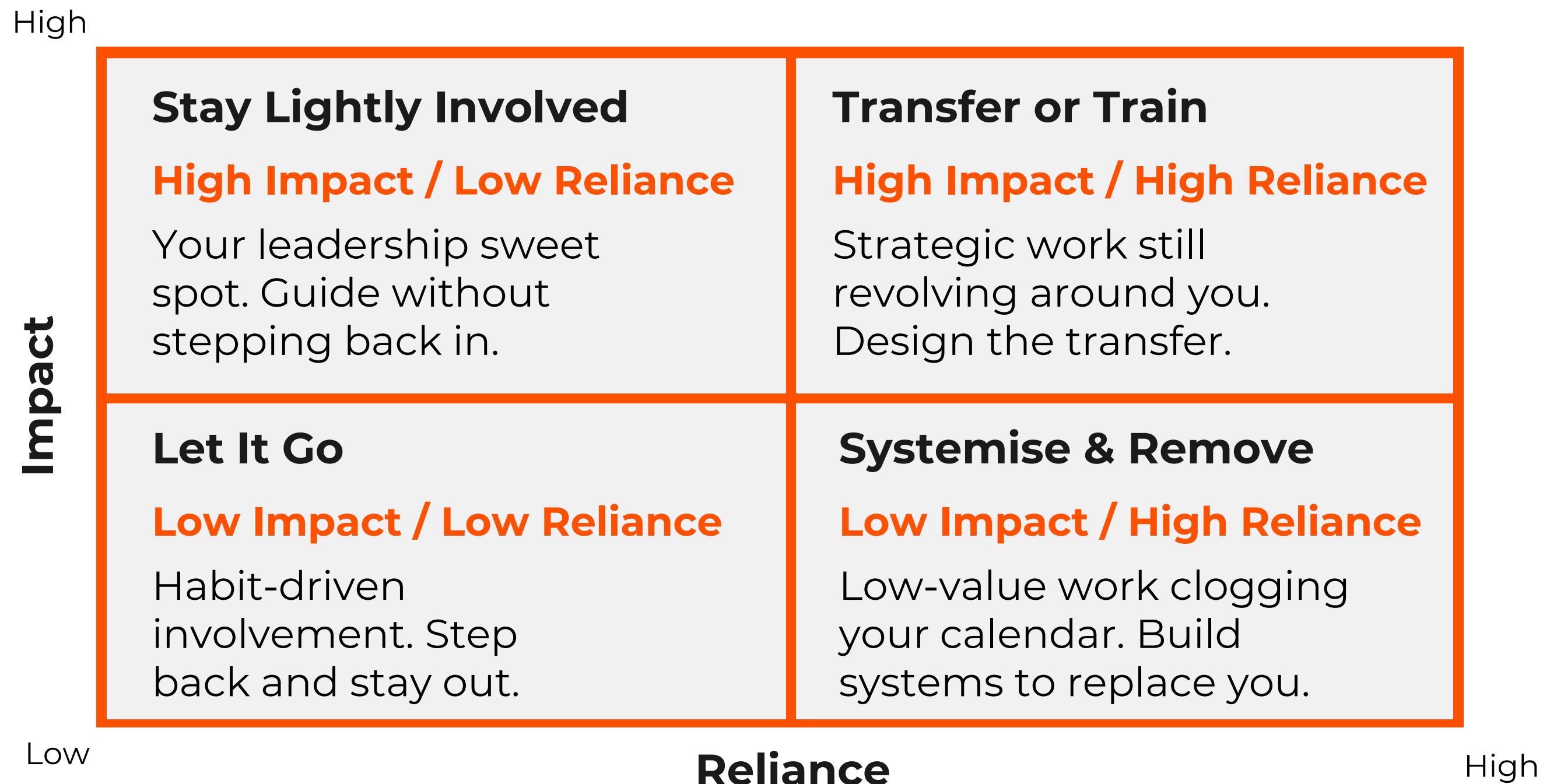
For Each Pattern Ask

1. What system would remove this?
2. What information needs to be visible, so they don't ask me?
3. What process would prevent this happening again?



➡ 5. Removal

Getting out of the way at the right time, so your people, systems and culture carry the weight.



Exercise!

The Exit Declaration

Pick One Thing You Want To Step Back From

- A meeting you always chair
- A client relationship you always lead
- A process you always approve
- A report you always review
- A project you always steer



Say It Out Loud Using This Script In A Team Meeting

“Going forward, Jenny will own this fully. You don’t need to copy me in unless [clear boundary]. I’ll still be around for coaching, but the day-to-day calls are now with them”



6. The **10%** Leadership Rule

If you could only spend 10% of your time leading, how would you use it?

10%

of your time on
high-impact
leadership actions

 **Coach one-to-one
rather than direct**

 **Give actionable
feedback**

 **Set and realign
vision**

 **Recognise and
reinforce progress**

 **Ask questions that
grow thinking**

 **Remove
roadblocks**

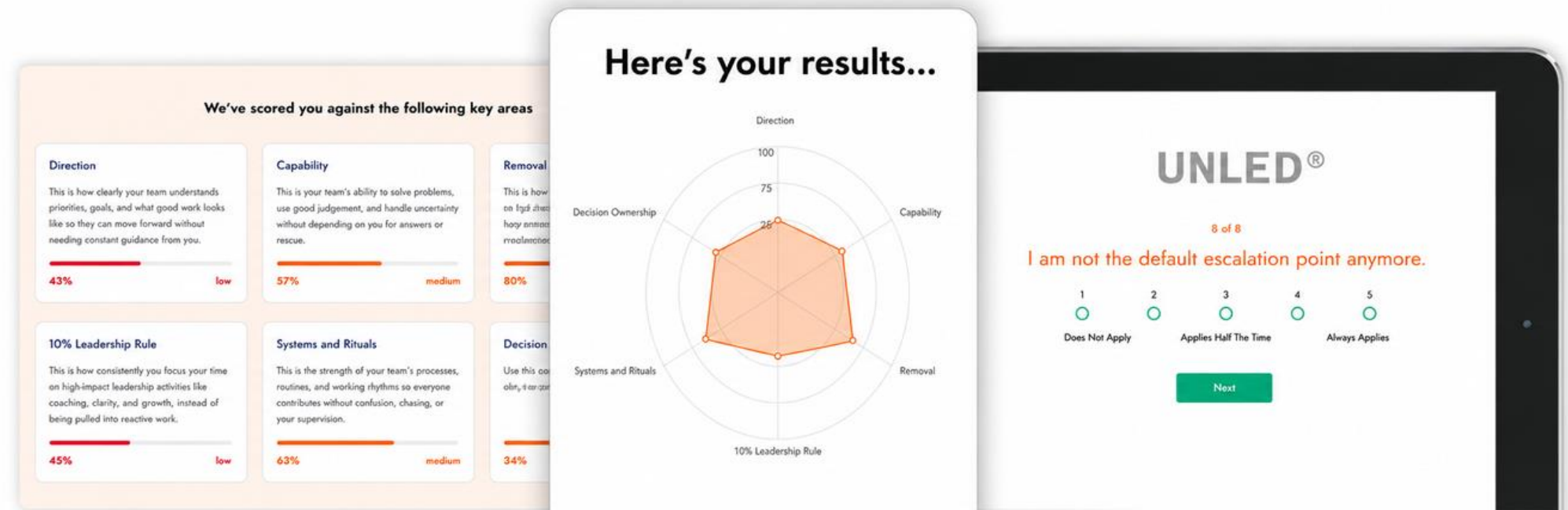
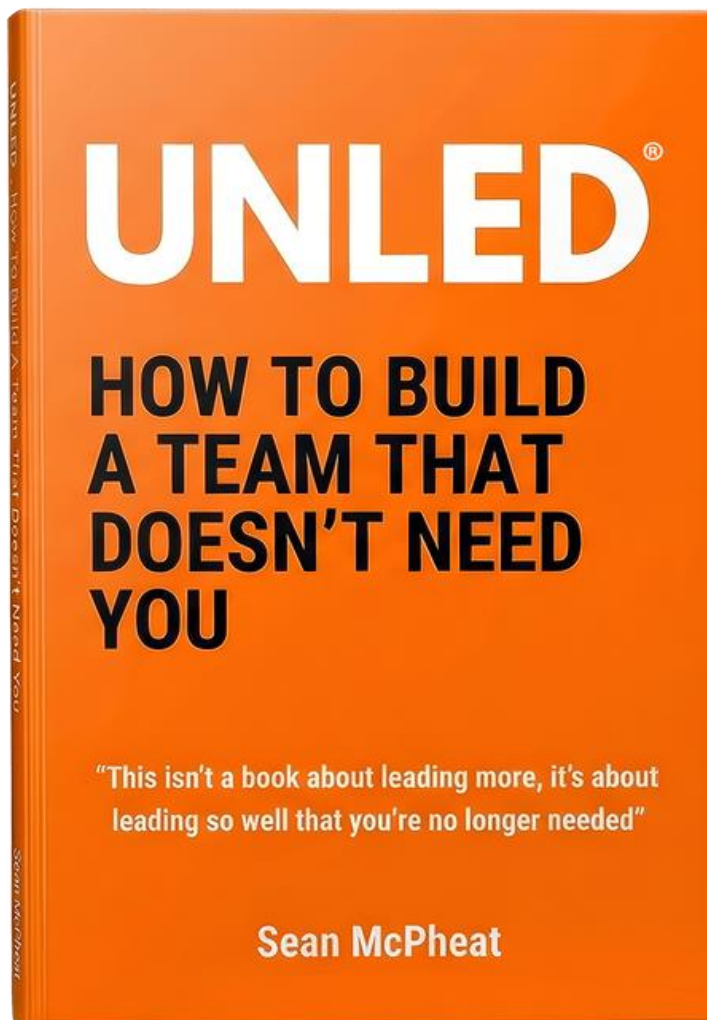
 **Clarify expectations
and boundaries**

 **Design systems
and rituals**

5 Questions That **Shift** Everything

- 1 If I disappeared for two weeks right now with no notice, what would break?
- 2 Where am I still the bottleneck? Where does everything still come through me?
- 3 What's something I do that nobody else knows how to do yet?
- 4 Where am I being helpful but harmful? Where's my help holding my people back?
- 5 What would my day look like if I trusted my team 30% more?

Useful Resources



<https://www.unled.co.uk>

Get the book | Diagnostic | Workshops & Programmes | Keynotes