

OCTOBER 29, 2025

DISRUPT OR BE DISRUPTED

WHY REAL LEADERS DON'T LEAD

Tracye McDaniel, President
John Karras, VP Business Development



AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. The Challenge
3. The Response
4. Regional Integration Example

10-Minute Break

5. Live Polling & Discussions
6. Frameworks & Tools
7. Reflection & Live Poll
8. Closing Thoughts



The image features a solid orange background. On the left side, there is a large, light orange geometric shape that resembles a stylized '1' or a corner of a building. It has a vertical rectangular section and a horizontal section at the top left. The word 'WELCOME' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, positioned in the lower right area of the image.

WELCOME



THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Committed to **holistic thinking** and **sustainable development**.

We design strategies that will support your community's **vision for the future**.

1995

YEAR FOUNDED

600+

ENGAGEMENTS

425+

CLIENTS

44

STATES

7

COUNTRIES



Tracye McDaniel

Principal and President

- ▶ 30+ years of experience in economic development and destination marketing, with significant contributions at local, regional, and state levels, advising five governors in Texas and New Jersey
- ▶ Trusted advisor to CEOs, nonprofits, public organizations, and private enterprises
- ▶ 2019 past chair of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and is an advisory board member of the Department of Energy's Environmental Management Advisory Board
- ▶ A sought-after speaker and instructor, Tracye has taught at the Harvard Kennedy School-SLED Program, the LBJ School of Public Affairs-Urban Lab (The University of Texas at Austin), and the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute, mentoring the next generation of leaders
- ▶ Proud bonus mom and aunt who enjoys music and travel



John Karras

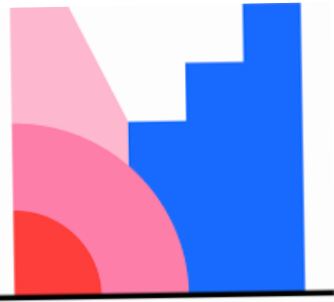
Vice President, Business Development

- ▶ 15 years of consulting experience, focused on strategic planning for economic development
- ▶ Joined TIP Strategies in 2014 (prior to TIP created urbanSCALE.com and worked at AngelouEconomics, NYCDOT, and AECOM)
- ▶ Adjunct lecturer at UT-Austin for Sustainable Urban Economic Development Planning (Masters program in Community & Regional Planning)
- ▶ Course instructor for data analysis section of Texas Basic Economic Development Course (BEDC) and strategic planning section of True South BEDC in Hattiesburg, MS
- ▶ Course instructor for strategic planning, marketing and attraction, and tech-led economic development courses for the International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
- ▶ Food and outdoor enthusiast

LEADERSHIP TODAY ISN'T ABOUT CONTROL—IT'S ABOUT CREATING FLOW.

Just as an ecosystem thrives through interconnection, a successful region grows through bridges (relationships), currents (shared energy), and conduits (strategic pathways).





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The background is a solid orange color. On the left side, there is a large, stylized number '2' in a lighter shade of orange. The number is composed of two overlapping shapes: a large circle on the left and a smaller circle on the right, creating a sense of depth and movement.

THE CHALLENGE



CHALLENGES FACING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

2025 IEDC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE LIVE POLL

Rank these challenges from most to least relevant for economic development leaders

1	Politics	 Most Relevant
2	Federal Funding	
3	Workforce	
4	Tariffs	
5	Immigration	
6	Climate Resilience	
7	Real Estate	
8	AI	
9	Health	
10	DEI	
		Least Relevant

CEO TRENDS: US METRO CITIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of IEDC exclusive peer session

Regional priorities:

Public safety, housing vacancy, and tax base diversification; build talent pipelines and infrastructure while balancing quality of life; drive job growth and capital investment amid high visibility.

Adapting to federal shifts:

Heavy reliance on federal funds; replace funding gaps; success timelines are driven by political terms; and engaged a lobbyist/political counsel.

State–federal dynamics:

Stay nonpartisan, data-driven, and consistent; navigate political change with calm leadership and strategic communication with elected officials.



Leading through disruption:

Disruption includes political factors, technology and social changes; respond with steady, clear messaging and disciplined execution.

Drawing on Experience:

Cities are using strategic plans, resiliency frameworks, trends and peer analysis, and long-term visioning as tools. Lean into peer networks and safe spaces to draw on experience.

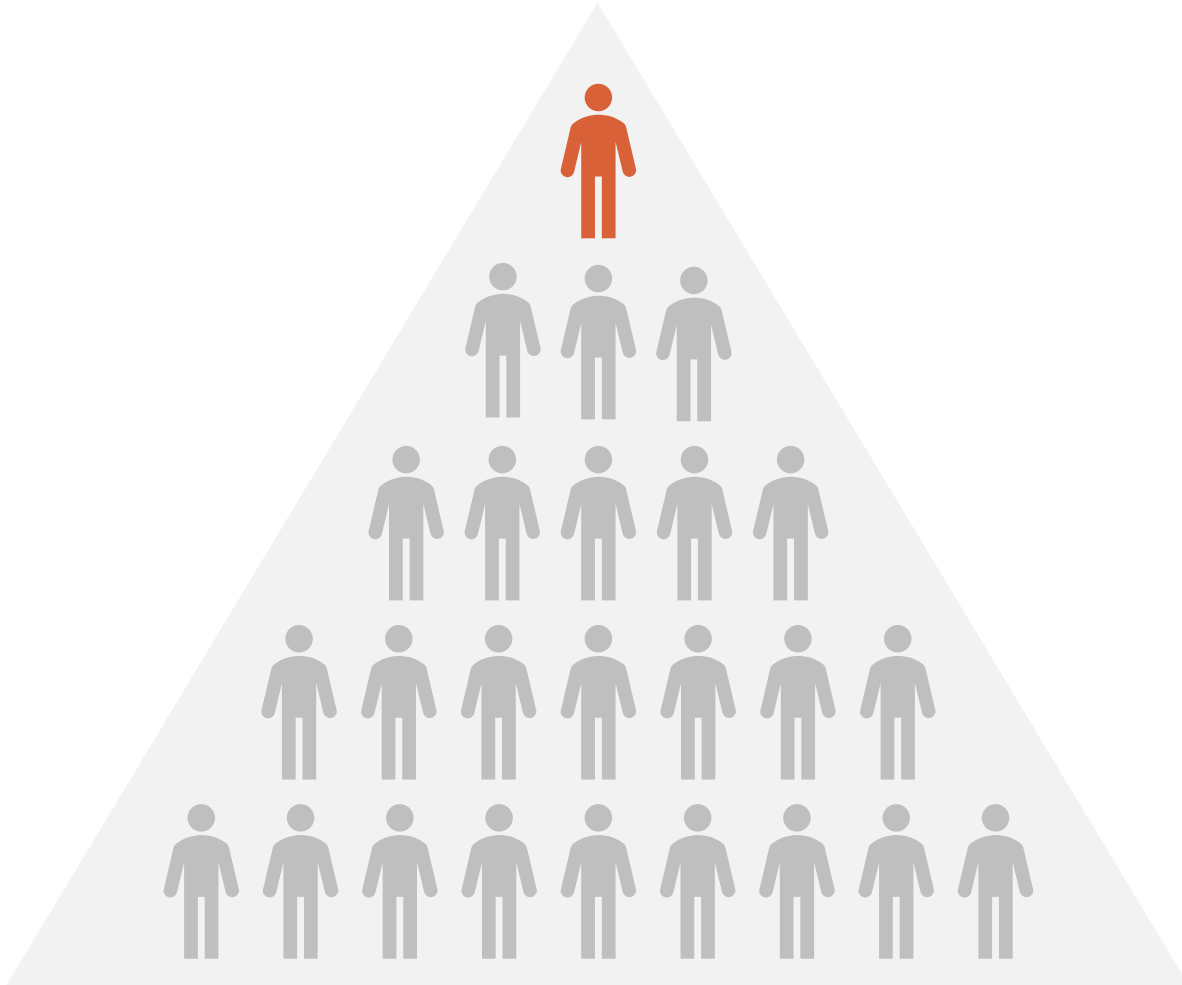


THE RESPONSE

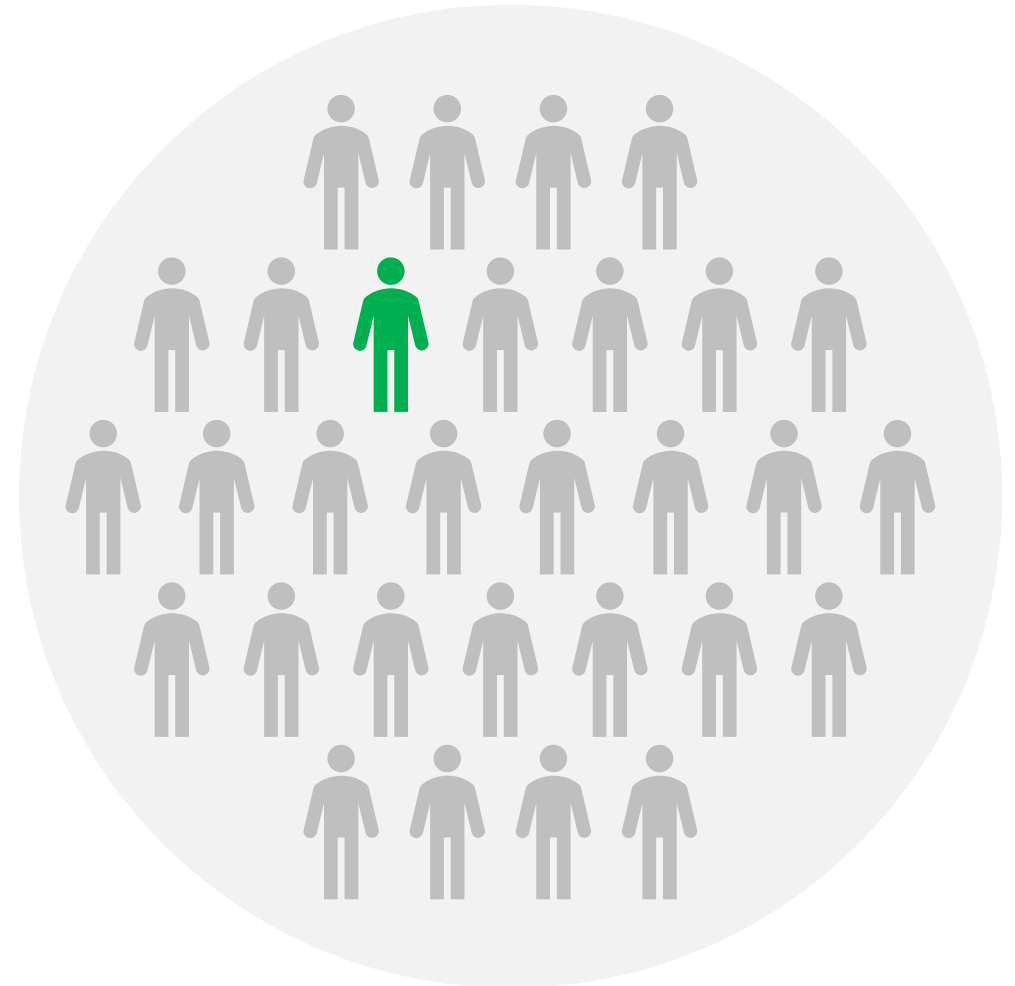
THE LEADERSHIP SHIFT

A new world requires new leadership

ME



WE



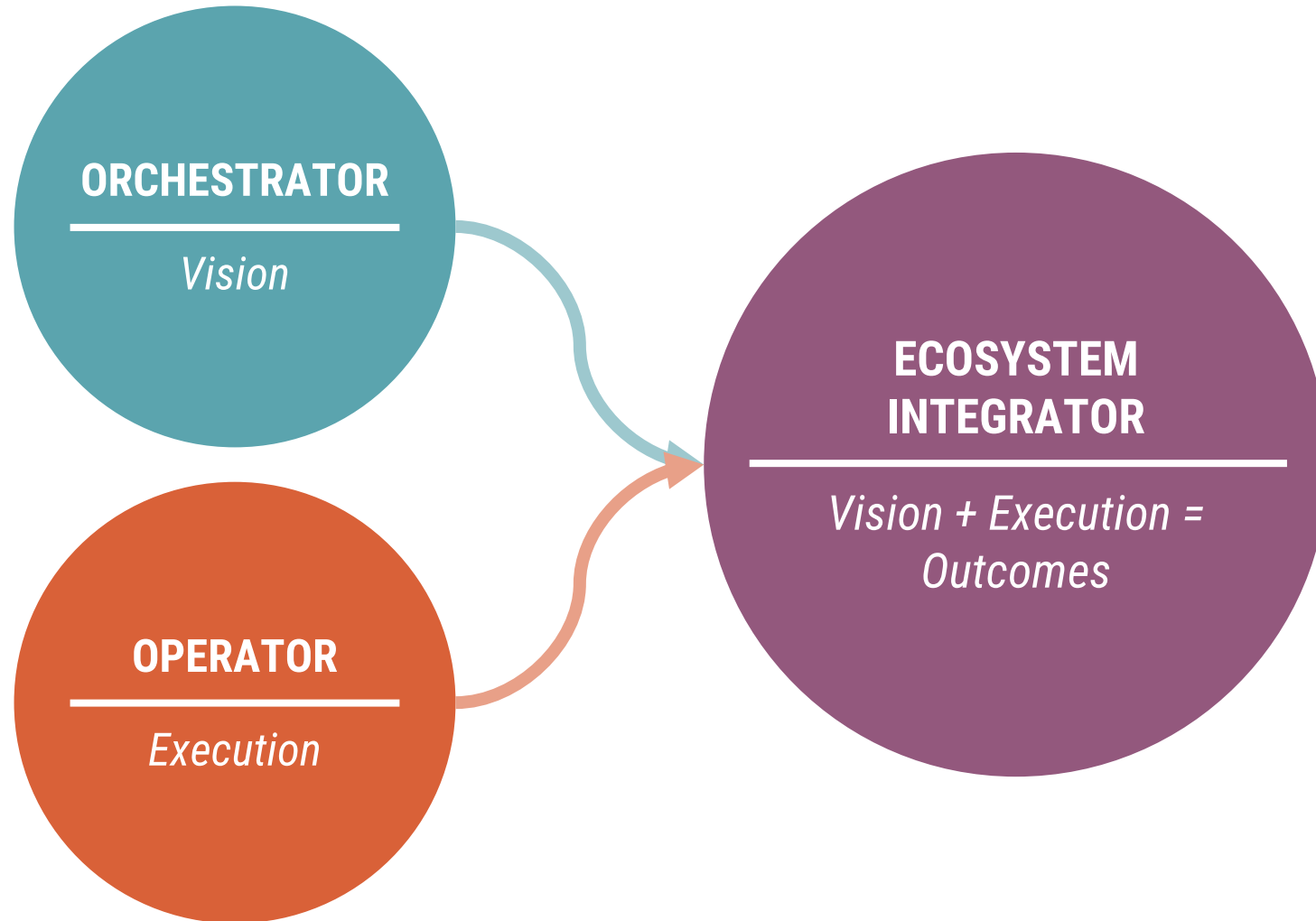


REAL LEADERS DON'T LEAD

Real leadership means
amplifying others,
not commanding control.

WHAT DOES THIS NEW SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

A new Ecosystem Integrator role is emerging



THE ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATOR

Definition:

Think of an ecosystem integrator as a mastermind who brings together strategy and action, like a conductor leading an orchestra. They're the glue that connects different parts of an ecosystem, making sure everyone's on the same page and achieving real results.

Why it fits:

The word "integrator" means they're all about strategy, execution and outcomes.

You'll often see this term in systems engineering and when teams are working together, where they're trying to bring different departments together into a unified whole.

Use case:

This role is perfect for regional economic development leaders who need to work with lots of different people and make sure their programs are successful.





REGIONAL INTEGRATION EXAMPLE

LESSONS LEARNED FROM REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Texas 2025-2029: Transforming Vision into Regional Action



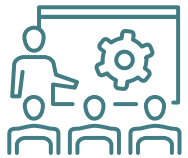
Cross-sector data sharing aligning education, business, and workforce and infrastructure players.



Expanding 28 Workforce Board alliances implementing localized training pipelines.



Multi-region collaboration on infrastructure and broadband investments.



Vision-driven strategy operationalized by regional partners.

Bigger. Better. **Texas.**

*Blueprint to build a stronger
Texas of tomorrow*

Statewide Economic Development
Strategic Plan: 2025 – 2029



Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office
Office of the Governor



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Through Ecosystem-Style Collaboration

- ▶ **Joint planning councils** connecting education and workforce systems
- ▶ **Regional hubs** coordinating infrastructure like broadband and transit
- ▶ **Shared performance dashboards** tracking ROI, job placement, and innovation



ACTIVITY: DISRUPTION DRILL



WHAT HAPPENS...

When everything changes overnight?

1. **Break into small groups and choose one of the following disruptions.**
 - ▶ AI Job Loss
 - ▶ Grid Collapse
 - ▶ Workforce Migration
 - ▶ Supply Chain Delay
2. **Design a rapid 3-step collaboration response in your group.** You have 15 minutes.
 - ▶ **Goal** = Balance “Orchestrator” (vision) and “Operator” (execution) roles.
 - ▶ **Deliverable** = Two-minute share-out. Name 3 partners, 3 actions, 3 messages.

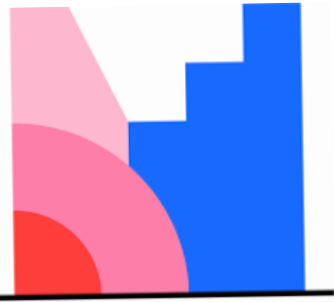


BREAK

Recharge. Reflect. Realign.

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LIVE POLLING & DISCUSSIONS



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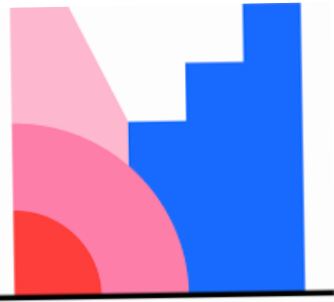
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WHAT ARE WE NOT SEEING?

Discussing leadership blind spots





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RESISTANCE ISN'T DYSFUNCTION
It's demand for better design



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FRAMEWORKS & TOOLS

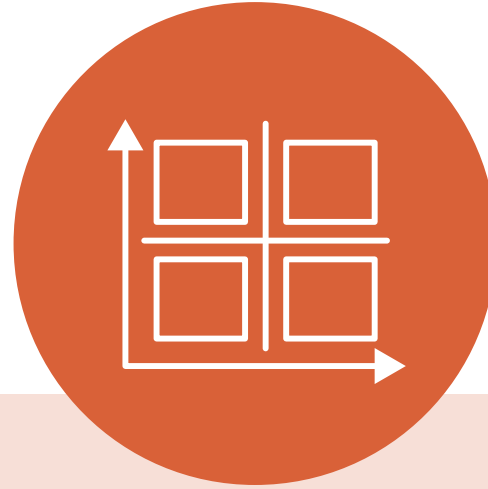
TRANSFORM CHAOS INTO COORDINATION

Three frameworks and their functions



Ecosystem Risk Mapping

See complexity through systems, not silos.



Stakeholder Alignment Grid

Align stakeholders by value, influence and urgency.



Communication Triangle

Lead communication under pressure with transparency, tempo and tone.

ACTIVITY: TOOLS



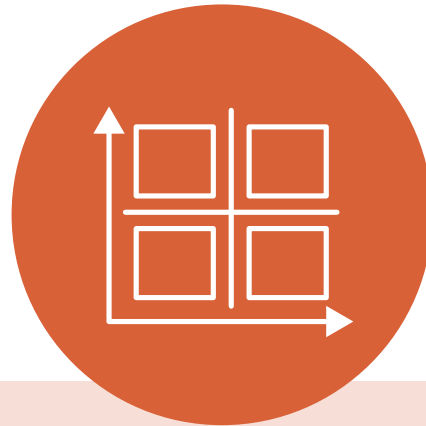
CHOOSE & APPLY YOUR TOOL

Rapid-fire exercise (2 minutes)

- 1. Choose one of the following frameworks. Which one could solve a current leadership challenge you face?**
- 2. Turn to your colleague and share how you would apply it in your region.**
 - ▶ Ecosystem Risk Mapping: Identify critical system interdependencies.
 - ▶ Stakeholder Grid: Realign who's at your table.
 - ▶ Communication Triangle: Redefine how and when you message stakeholders using transparency, tempo, and tone.
- 3. You and your colleague have two minutes to complete the exercise.**



Ecosystem Risk Mapping



Stakeholder Alignment Grid



Communication Triangle



Ecosystem Integrators don't manage chaos—they map risk, align stakeholders, and communicate under pressure to transform disruption into design.

CASE STUDY 1

Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
Electric Works Transformation



THE ELECTRIC WORKS TRANSFORMATION

Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana

Challenge

Revitalize a 40-acre vacant industrial site and catalyze equitable economic growth in downtown Fort Wayne.

Strategy

Transform the former GE campus into a mixed-use innovation district anchored by tech, education, and affordable housing.

Key Actions

- ▶ Secured a \$40M Regional Cities Initiative grant to catalyze \$412M in public-private investment.
- ▶ Partnered with Ivy Tech, Purdue Fort Wayne, and local developers to create a live-work-play innovation hub.
- ▶ Implemented community benefits agreements for local hiring, minority contracting, and 20% affordable housing.

Impact

- ▶ Attracted 1,500+ new jobs and \$1B in downtown investment since 2009.
- ▶ Created a regional anchor for workforce development and entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Set a benchmark for equitable urban redevelopment in mid-sized cities.

CASE STUDY 2

The Right Place
*New Community Transformation
Fund: Investing in Diverse
Entrepreneurs*



THE NEW COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION FUND

Greater Grand Rapids Area, Michigan

Challenge

Grand Rapids lacks capital for businesses owned by people of color, leading to underrepresentation in high-growth sectors and perpetuating regional wealth gaps

Strategy

Launch a targeted venture capital fund, exclusively supporting entrepreneurs of color through equity investments, board mentorship, and ecosystem alignment.

Key Actions

- ▶ Funding Raised: Over \$25 million from various sources. Launched by The Right Place (regional EDO) with initial funding from Bank of America and Consumers Energy.
- ▶ Investment Committee: Diverse committee with lived experience, a deal flow network and cross-sector knowledge.
- ▶ Support for Entrepreneurs: Capital, leadership coaching, financial literacy, and access to customers.

Impact

- ▶ Investment Impact: Portfolio firms created over 100 jobs and attracted \$14M in follow-on investment.
- ▶ Systemic Change: Catalyzed broader system change, with local banks and business development agencies now targeting similar entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Regional Impact: Positioned Grand Rapids as a Midwest hub for minority entrepreneurship.

REFLECTION & LIVE POLL

ACTIVITY: JOURNALING



THE INTEGRATOR SHIFT

Your leadership pivot starts here

Activity

Individual journaling for 2 minutes

Prompt

Name one action in each of the 3 following categories that you will do to lead more as an Integrator:

- ▶ A behavior you will **STOP**
- ▶ A behavior you will **START**
- ▶ A successful system that you will **SUSTAIN**



4 RULES OF THE ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATOR



Adapt to
disruption.



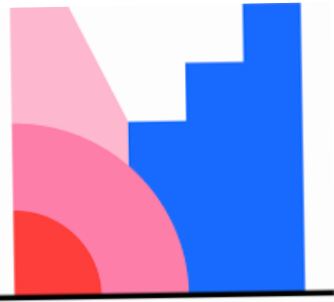
Align people
before processes.



Act with
transparency.



Amplify trust
beyond authority.



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An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide. It features two large, overlapping circles in a light orange shade. Within each of these circles is a smaller, solid orange circle. The arrangement of these circles creates a stylized silhouette of a person with their arms raised, similar to a common religious icon. The background of the entire slide is a solid, medium orange color.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CALL TO ACTION

Lead the disruption—or be replaced by it.

The future isn't waiting for permission. It's waiting for connection.





THANK
YOU

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