

— DIAGNOSTIC WORKBOOK

Momentum Map.

Six dimensions. Three questions each. One exercise to make it real.

Sara Gallagher

President, The Persimmon Group

— HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The questions are deliberately blunt.

The exercises are short — the kind a leadership team can run in a working session, not a six-month assessment. Run this alone as a private audit, or use it to facilitate a structured conversation with your team. The questions surface the same issues either way.

Each dimension includes three diagnostic questions and one quick exercise. The questions are designed to be answered from the inside — not as a theoretical assessment of how the system should work, but as an honest account of how it actually works on a regular Tuesday.

01	Strategy Is it clear what we are solving for?	THE CLARITY CHECK · 20 MIN
02	Culture What is normal here — and is it working?	THE BEHAVIOR AUDIT · 30 MIN
03	Process How does work actually flow?	THE MAGIC WAND · 15 MIN
04	Structure Are we organized to execute?	THE BLANK SLATE · 45 MIN
05	People Do we have the capabilities the system requires?	THE GAP ANALYSIS · 30 MIN
06	Tools Accelerating execution — or adding to the load?	THE REALITY CHECK · 25 MIN

AFTER ALL SIX DIMENSIONS

Use the Pattern Summary on the final page to look across your notes. The most powerful interventions are rarely sweeping. Usually, one well-placed shift in the system — one decision right clarified, one approval step removed, one norm made visible — unlocks movement that felt impossible the week before. The diagnostic isn't done until you see the pattern.

01

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

Strategy*Is it clear what we are solving for?*

Strategy gets buried under corporate language — words that sound compelling in a presentation but don't help a project manager make a decision on a Tuesday afternoon. Ambiguous strategy doesn't just slow decisions — it makes the right behavior genuinely harder to choose than the wrong one.

- 1 Can project leads explain the strategic purpose of their work in plain English — without "on time, in scope, on budget"?

- 2 Do all stakeholders actually agree on how success will be measured, or are they nodding in the meeting and interpreting differently afterward?

- 3 Can the team name the top five priorities in the portfolio — and if asked to rank them independently, would the order match?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Clarity Check

20 MIN

List every active major initiative. Write a one-sentence "Why" — no corporate language. Describe the end state in the present tense. If writing the "Why" column is difficult, or if different leaders would write different answers for the same initiative, that's the drag point.

INITIATIVE	THE "WHY" <i>(one sentence, plain English)</i>	SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE <i>(present tense)</i>

WHERE THE ANSWERS DIVERGED OR THE "WHY" WAS HARD TO WRITE

02

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

Culture*What is normal here — and is it working?*

Culture is what happens when the leader leaves the room — the micro-decisions people make every day about how to handle bad news, whether to flag a risk, and whether it's safe to say "I don't think this timeline is realistic." Organizations that reward caution get paralysis. Organizations that punish the messenger get silence. Neither is compatible with fast execution.

1 What behavior actually gets rewarded here — and does it match what the organization says it values?

2 When a project fails or a deadline is missed, does the team get curious about root causes, or do they get blamed?

3 What would a new hire learn in their first 90 days that isn't written in any handbook?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Behavior Audit

30 MIN

Write down four to six behaviors that appear regularly in the organization. For each, ask how leadership — or the system itself — might be rewarding or ignoring it. Then define one small shift that would signal a change. No amount of governance compensates for unsafe culture. Heavy governance often makes it worse.

BEHAVIOR <i>(what you observe)</i>	CAUSE <i>(what's rewarding or ignoring it)</i>	LEADER ACTION <i>(one small shift)</i>

PATTERN I NOTICE ACROSS THESE BEHAVIORS

03

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

Process*How does work actually flow?*

Most organizations run on a combination of legacy habits, shadow processes, and individual heroics. Work moves not because the system carries it, but because someone is constantly nudging it. The official flowchart and the actual path work takes rarely match. When the workaround is easier than the official path, the workaround will win.

- 1 Can members of the team clearly explain how a decision gets made — who's involved, at what threshold, and how long it should take?

- 2 Where do handoffs or approvals consistently create delays, confusion, or rework?

- 3 Do meetings generate momentum — meaning decisions — or are they primarily status reporting?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Magic Wand

15 MIN

Ask the team a single question. Collect the answers. Look for the pattern — the gap between those answers and current reality is where execution friction lives. Common patterns: slow approval chains, unclear ownership, and meetings that consume time without producing decisions.

"If you had a magic wand, what three things would you change about how we get work done here?"

1 CHANGE

2 CHANGE

3 CHANGE

PATTERN | NOTICE ACROSS THESE ANSWERS

04

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

Structure*Are we organized to execute?*

Structure isn't just the org chart. It's the system of decision rights, accountability, and connection that determines whether the right people are talking to each other at the right time. Smart people with good tools and a clear strategy can still produce gridlock if structure routes decisions through the wrong people. Structure problems are often mistaken for people problems.

- 1 When something strategic slows down, is it immediately clear who has accountability for moving it forward?

- 2 Is the organization structured around how work flows — or around legacy roles and silos that predate the current strategy?

- 3 Where do responsibilities overlap — and does that overlap create useful redundancy, or turf conflicts and confusion?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Blank Slate

45 MIN

Set aside the current org chart. Starting from the same goals, answer the three questions below as if you were designing from scratch. Compare that ideal to the current structure — a full reorganization is rarely possible, but the gap often reveals one or two adjustments that would meaningfully reduce friction.

HOW WOULD THE TEAMS BE GROUPED?**WHERE WOULD DECISION RIGHTS SIT?****WHO NEEDS TO COMMUNICATE WITH WHOM ON A DAILY BASIS?****MOST MEANINGFUL GAP FROM OUR CURRENT STRUCTURE****ONE ADJUSTMENT THAT WOULD REDUCE FRICTION**

05

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

People*Do we have the capabilities the system requires?*

Execution isn't only about having capable people — it's about having the right capabilities for the specific system being built. When leaders assign work based on availability rather than fit, top performers get punished with an expanding workload while skill gaps go unaddressed. The issue isn't whether people are good. The issue is whether the organization has developed the skills its execution system requires.

- 1 Do we know which critical skills are missing or over-relied on — and which individuals represent single points of dependency where one person's absence would stall the work?

- 2 Are we actively developing people to support the future execution system, or just trying to survive today?

- 3 Who is consistently tapped for high-impact work — and who is being overlooked?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Gap Analysis

30 MIN

List three execution goals your organization is working toward. For each, answer the four questions below. The goal isn't to produce a training plan — it's to make visible the distance between what the execution system requires and what it currently has, and to surface whether that distance is being actively closed or quietly ignored.

GOAL 1 _____	
WHAT CAPABILITIES DOES THIS REQUIRE? <input type="text"/>	WHERE ARE WE CURRENTLY STRONG? <input type="text"/>
WHERE ARE THE GAPS? <input type="text"/>	WHAT ARE WE DOING TO CLOSE THEM? <input type="text"/>
GOAL 2 _____	
WHAT CAPABILITIES DOES THIS REQUIRE? <input type="text"/>	WHERE ARE WE CURRENTLY STRONG? <input type="text"/>
WHERE ARE THE GAPS? <input type="text"/>	WHAT ARE WE DOING TO CLOSE THEM? <input type="text"/>
GOAL 3 _____	
WHAT CAPABILITIES DOES THIS REQUIRE? <input type="text"/>	WHERE ARE WE CURRENTLY STRONG? <input type="text"/>
WHERE ARE THE GAPS? <input type="text"/>	WHAT ARE WE DOING TO CLOSE THEM? <input type="text"/>

06

DIMENSION

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

Tools

Accelerating execution — or adding to the load?

Tools should reduce execution friction. In practice, they often add to it. When a complex system is layered on top of a broken process, the result isn't better execution — it's an expensive problem with a dashboard. Teams end up working for the tool: updating systems no one reads, maintaining parallel spreadsheets, attending meetings whose primary purpose is reconciling information that should have been in one place.

- 1 Do the tools in use reflect how work actually gets done — or how leadership wishes it worked?

- 2 Where are people duplicating effort — maintaining a slide deck and a project tool with the same information, or running shadow processes alongside the official system?

- 3 Which tools are genuinely working, and which could be changed or removed if they're creating more friction than value?

— QUICK EXERCISE

The Reality Check

25 MIN

For each major tool in the execution system, write what it was supposed to do — and what is actually happening. A planning platform intended to be a single source of truth but updated only the day before a steering committee meeting isn't infrastructure. It's overhead. This isn't a technology audit. It's a visibility check on where tools are creating drag rather than removing it.

TOOL	INTENDED PURPOSE	WHAT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING

TOOLS CREATING MORE FRICTION THAN VALUE

— AFTER ALL SIX DIMENSIONS

Look for the pattern.

The diagnostic isn't done until you see where drag concentrates. Most patterns sort into one of these four. When the same underlying issue appears across more than one dimension, that's the leverage point — where the diagnostic stops and the design work begins.

Pattern • Clarity

SHOWS UP IN: STRATEGY → PEOPLE

Teams are guessing at priorities or defining success differently. Often spreads to People when capabilities are being developed against the wrong target.

Pattern • Safety

SHOWS UP IN: CULTURE → PROCESS

Bad news stays hidden. Silence feels safer than visibility. Often shows up in Process when reporting feels like admitting failure rather than surfacing information.

Pattern • Friction

SHOWS UP IN: PROCESS → TOOLS

The right behavior is harder than the workaround. Look for where the same workflow is failing both filters — official process and the tools meant to support it.

Pattern • Accountability

SHOWS UP IN: STRUCTURE → PEOPLE

Decision rights are unclear. Ownership is diffuse. Often misread as a People problem when it's a routing problem — the wrong people are being asked to carry decisions.

WHERE DOES DRAG CONCENTRATE IN THIS ORGANIZATION?

WHICH PATTERN APPEARS ACROSS MORE THAN ONE DIMENSION?

MY LEVERAGE POINT — ONE WELL-PLACED SHIFT THAT WOULD UNLOCK MOVEMENT