

Synapse

2026

A graphic element to the right of the word 'Synapse' consisting of several small circles in white, yellow, and blue, connected by a blue, stylized, branching line that resembles a neural network or a molecular structure.

The Pulse of **AI-led Digital Transformation and Change Management**

The Playbooks



**04TH
AUGUST**



RADISSON BLU

Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru

The Playbooks

Masterclass 1: The Metric That Could Have Saved Your Last Rollout

Recap

Built around one theme: technical delivery and business value are not the same thing, and treating go-live as the finish line is how organisations lose value they already paid for. Vani Gopalan anchored the argument with two cases — Nike's real supply-chain rollout, where software was sequenced ahead of process, and "Apex Global," an illustrative \$45 million ERP scenario used to show how a project can hit every technical milestone while the P&L shows nothing moved. The fix: measure four leading indicators — proficiency, utilization, speed of adoption, and business outcomes — during the pilot, not six months after go-live.

What we took away:

- Automating a broken process doesn't fix it — it just breaks it faster and at scale: when Nike deployed demand-planning software before standardizing its supply-chain processes, the result was a \$100 million revenue shortfall and a 20% immediate drop in stock value.
- The default instinct — customize the platform to match how the organisation already works — is close to backwards. The stronger sequence: fix the process first, prepare the people second, and treat the platform's standard capabilities as a constraint rather than something to bend.
- A workaround isn't laziness, it's a symptom: employees choosing offline spreadsheets over the platform is usually caused by one of three roughly-equal frictions — a skills gap, a broken process, or a slow, missing-data platform.
- Platform customisation is one of the most expensive ways to solve a process problem: reshaping software to fit legacy habits accounts for up to 60% of total lifetime cost overruns (Gartner).



The moment the scorecard stopped being a slide and became the room's shared language.



Vani Gopalan

GCC Advisor and CEO, Zion Leadershift Hub

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADERS

Evaluate your organisation's implementation across the four leading metric categories on a scale of 1 to 10. Be brutally honest.

1-4 CRITICAL

5-8 MODERATE

9-10 HIGH

1

PROFICIENCY

EARLY SKILL VALIDATION

CHECK: Are users demonstrating practical task mastery during training and pilots, rather than just generating training completion certificates?

SCORE
____ / 10

1-4 CRITICAL

<50% pass rate; high completion rates mask severe operational inability and high post-launch supervisor burden

5-8 MODERATE

60% -85% pass rate; users complete training but struggle with unguided operational execution.

9-10 HIGH

>85% of users pass practical scenario checks during piloting/training without post-training remediation required.

CIRCLE ONE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2

UTILIZATION

EARLY USAGE SIGNALS

CHECK: Are we tracking real, organic operational usage during pilot/soft-launch, rather than waiting for post-rollout usage audits?

SCORE
____ / 10

1-4 CRITICAL

<50% in-system usage; system is actively bypassed via offline spreadsheets or batch re-entry.

5-8 MODERATE

50%-80% in-system usage; core tasks performed in platform, but secondary workflows fall back to offline tools.

9-10 HIGH

80% organic, real-time in-system usage during launch; zero reliance on offline workarounds or batch uploads.

CIRCLE ONE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3

SPEED OF ADOPTION

MILESTONE PACE TRACKING

CHECK: How rapidly are teams moving through adoption milestones relative to the baseline target timeline?

SCORE
____ / 10

1-4 CRITICAL

Severe drag (>1.5x baseline timeline); adoption stalled for extended periods post-launch.

5-8 MODERATE

Minor velocity drag (1.1x-1.5x baseline timeline); users adapt eventually but require extended support.

9-10 HIGH

Cohorts reach operational proficiency milestones on or ahead of schedule (<=1.0x baseline timeline).

CIRCLE ONE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4

TIE-BACK TO BUSINESS OUTCOMES

OPERATIONAL SIGNAL ALIGNMENT

CHECK: Are early operational metrics showing target behaviour shifts during launch, ahead of quarterly financial reports?

SCORE
____ / 10

1-4 CRITICAL

<50% of targeted operational gains achieved; tool adds administrative burden without moving metrics.

5-8 MODERATE

50%-99% of early target gains achieved; inconsistent operational impact across sub-teams.

9-10 HIGH

=100% of early target operational gains (e.g., cycle-time, error reduction) realised during pilot/launch.

CIRCLE ONE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

YOUR TOTAL VALUE REALIZATION SCORE

Add the four category scores from page 1.

/ 40

SCORE BANDS

34-40	Predictive Success
23-33	The Adoption Drag
Below 23	The Sequence Trap

SCORE DIAGNOSTIC & ACTION MATRIX

Use your total score to identify the next move.

34-40

TOTAL SCORE

PREDICTIVE SUCCESS

Leading metrics confirm a high probability of full ROI.

FOCUS ON REINFORCEMENT & SCALING

Lock in early operational habits and scale advanced automation features.

23-33

TOTAL SCORE

THE ADOPTION DRAG

Platform live, but human execution velocity is lagging.

INTERVENE WITH TARGETED REMEDIATION

Build practical ability, remove system friction, and eliminate workarounds.

BELOW 23

TOTAL SCORE

THE SEQUENCE TRAP

System built to fit broken legacy processes.

PAUSE & RE-SEQUENCE

Stop custom coding. Redesign core workflows and rebuild leadership.

MY PRIORITY ACTION AFTER THIS MASTERCLASS

The Playbooks

Masterclass 2: Leading When The Ground Keeps Moving

Recap

Nithya opened with two Monday mornings, eight years apart. In 2016, a competitor's price cut gave a director three months to reprice, retrain, and adjust targets — change with a start date and an end date. In 2026, she opens her laptop to a competitor's AI agent already closing deals in half the time, her own team's new tool needing replacing six weeks after launch, and her best performer asking whether to bother. The gap between the two mornings is the session's argument: leaders expected AI to change the tools. It's changing the job.

What we took away:

- Leaders expected AI to change the tools. It's changing the job — roles evolving faster than organisations can redesign them, boards expecting results faster than leaders can adapt, decisions moving to the front line faster than governance can follow.
- The session's answer is a four-part discipline, not a one-off initiative: Clarity (continuously clarifying impact, ownership, and trust boundaries), Capability (a habit of learning, unlearning, and relearning — not a training program), Adaptability (pivoting with purpose when priorities move, not just reacting faster), and Context (rooting decisions in what's true here, not generic best practice).
- Participants ran the scenario live: business unit head of a 500-person organisation, handed a CEO mandate to lift productivity by 25%, improve customer experience, and free employees from repetitive work — then had 90 seconds to name their single biggest friction point, the one C they'd bet on first, and a 90-day plan with one action each for leaders, the organisation, and employees.
- A capability score is a starting point, not a verdict — participants rated themselves on all four Cs at the start of the session and again at the end; the gap between the two is the actual work.



Same four questions, asked twice—once at the start of the hour, once at the end. The gap between the answers was the work.



Nithya Subramanian

Strategic AI Advisor and Fractional CXO

My Monday Plan Canvas

Change stopped being a project.
It's the job now.

Leadership

Managers, colliding judgment, direction

Enterprise

Patchy adoption, data, governance, ROI

People

Fear, resistance, change fatigue

The Single Biggest Friction

Of everything above, the one that blocks the rest

The One C I'm Being on

☐ Clarity ☐ Capability ☐ Context ☐ Adaptability

Because

Pick the sharpest friction in each category — not the list.

My 90-Day Action Card

Specific enough that someone
else could start it tomorrow.

THE C I'M BETTING ON

One action for my leaders

What I ask of managers

BY WHEN

One action for the organization

Structure, process, governance

BY WHEN

One action for my employees

What changes for the team

BY WHEN

THE ONE THING I DO MONDAY

Pick one C. Start Monday. Momentum beats perfection.

Where do I stand?

The gap between the two columns is your priority.

1 — NOT YET STARTED

2 — AD HOC

3 — INCONSISTENT

4 — DELIBERATE

5 — A HABIT

THE FOUR CS

START OF SESSION

END OF SESSION

CREATE

Clarity

Do my people know what changed this month, who owns what, and when to override the AI?



BUILD

Capability

Is learning a habit on my team, or a training we ran once?



CULTIVATE

Adaptability

When priorities move, do we re-pivot with purpose — or just react faster?



STRENGTHEN

Context

Are decisions rooted in what's true here, or in generic best practice?



A score is a starting point. The gap is the work.



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easiest for you.**

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