



The Forest-Orchard Resilience System (FORS)

*A Vision for the Antifragile Organisation
in the Age of AI*



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Preface

Executive Summary

This document is a blueprint for the fundamental reimagining of how organisations can structure themselves in the age of artificial intelligence. It is not a prescription, neither does it attempt to offer universally applicable solutions. Instead, it is a bold vision for what the future of organisations, and of work itself, could look like. While aspirational in nature, it is grounded in emerging trends and realities that are already being tested and practiced by early adopters.

Who this is for

Senior Executives

Forward-looking business leaders who recognise that AI is opening up new frontiers and that now is the time to get on the winning side.

Visionary People Officers

Executives following a people-led strategy who see how current ways of working are an obstacle to growth in a totally disrupted world.

Change Leaders

Transformation leaders who understand that adopting alternative organisational structures is not a radical move but a smart business strategy.

What this document offers

This executive briefing is a summarised version of a detailed architectural framework for building antifragile organisations called the Forest-Orchard Resilience System. This is an operating system that combines the focused productivity of a cultivated orchard with the adaptive resilience of a natural forest.

The four key elements of this system are multi-disciplinary **Super-Teams** that oversee an entire value stream; knowledge **Guilds** that are the stewards of proprietary enterprise value; the Guild members or **Guilders** who are embedded within the teams to ensure the integration of excellence and delivery; and the **Knowledge Base** which forms the architecture for business intelligence and frictionless collaboration.

Why now?

Previous attempts at organisational redesign struggled due to the administrative effort required to maintain accuracy, visibility and timely availability of resources and enterprise knowledge. The mainstream emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally changed what is possible. For the first time, small teams can deliver results that previously required entire functions, transparency can exist without bureaucracy and expertise can scale without creating bottlenecks. This merger of organisational redesign and AI capabilities is what positions FORS as a blueprint for the future of work.

I

The Strategic Imperative

The Fragility Paradox

The Cost of Hierarchy

Today's organisations were built for a world in which markets were stable, competition was predictable and five year plans still make sense. This world no longer exists. The reality now is continuous disruption, and traditional hierarchies can't respond fast enough.

Take a familiar organisational concept like the department. Organised by functions such as finance, human resources, marketing or operations, this specialised group of people, often led by a manager, is designed to perform a specific set of tasks that contribute to the business's strategic goals. Org charts, however, conceal complexity that becomes increasingly unmanageable as the company grows. The very mechanisms designed to create strength, like standardisation, specialisation and controlled efficiency, now create a fragility that doesn't hold up in a disrupted world.

The norms that we've accepted as inevitable have led to three costly unintended consequences.



The Fragility Paradox: The Cost of Hierarchy

1

Departments have become kingdoms

Consider what happens when functional specialisation evolves into territorial behaviour. The marketing manager who once collaborated naturally with sales colleagues now operates under incentives that reward lead volume regardless of quality. This creates a perverse dynamic where marketing celebrates hitting their numbers while sales struggles with unqualified prospects.

Meanwhile, sales teams maximise their commission by making promises to clients without consulting operations about delivery. When customer service receives feedback about critical product issues, the development team remains focused on their next launch deadline, too busy to absorb insights that could prevent future problems.

Each department optimises for its own metrics, inadvertently creating friction for adjacent teams. The marketing team's lead quality issues become sales' conversion problem. When sales teams overpromise, they create a delivery crisis for operations. Customer service insights become development's missed opportunities. This territorial optimisation generates waste and missed opportunities that are difficult to quantify, but cost the business dearly in both immediate performance and long-term competitive advantage.

2

Processes meant to help start to hurt

The evolution from helpful guideline to bureaucratic nightmare is a gradual process. What begins as a sensible policy, perhaps a simple approval process to ensure quality, gradually accumulates layers of oversight, documentation requirements, and stakeholder sign-offs. Each addition seems reasonable in isolation, designed to prevent a specific problem or satisfy a particular compliance

requirement. However, the cumulative effect transforms what once took hours into processes requiring weeks or months.

Faced with these bureaucratic obstacles, employees inevitably develop workarounds to maintain operational flexibility. Shadow processes emerge, informal networks activate, and exceptions become the norm. Worse, these workarounds often bypass the very safeguards the original processes were meant to provide, with serious implications for bottom-line performance and regulatory compliance. The organisation finds itself simultaneously over-controlled and under-controlled, burdened by process overhead, while governance becomes increasingly fragmented.

The Fragility Paradox: The Cost of Hierarchy

3

Leaders become micromanagers

One of the most insidious costs of organisational complexity is the transformation of strategic leadership into operational micromanagement. As departments multiply and processes proliferate, steering committees are required to coordinate increasingly isolated functions. Multiple sign-offs mean that even routine decisions flow upward through various management layers. Reporting processes demand that leaders spend their time reviewing details that should be managed autonomously at lower levels.

This creates a vicious cycle in which leaders find themselves drowning in operational details precisely when the organisation most needs strategic vision and decisive direction. The grand efficiency initiatives meant to streamline operations instead create new coordination overheads. Hiring sprees designed to relieve stretched resources generate fresh management complexity as new team members require integration and oversight. Each solution creates new problems, generating an internal tax that compounds with organisational growth.

The true cost extends beyond leadership bandwidth. When senior executives focus on operational minutiae, strategic opportunities go unrecognized, competitive threats remain unaddressed, and the organisation loses its capacity for bold decision-making. The very people responsible for navigating uncertainty become trapped in the certainty of day-to-day process management, leaving the organisation rudderless and exposed to an ever-changing market.



The Internal Tax of Traditional Org Design

How much it costs to manage friction across touch-points

When responsibilities are divided, accountability is unclear, and outcomes are ignored, businesses incur costs and miss opportunities, as revealed in recent research:

25%

10-15%

\$8.8T

Productivity drain

Atlassian's 2025 State of Teams research found knowledge workers waste 25% of their time navigating internal systems and hunting for information across silos. That's a quarter of your payroll spent managing complexity.

Untapped revenue

McKinsey analysis shows companies that fix cross-functional coordination see revenues jump 10-15% whilst cutting service costs 15-20%.
The flip side: poor coordination actively destroys value on both sides of the P&L.

Disengaged talent

Gallup research estimates that employee disengagement costs \$8.8 trillion globally in lost productivity.
When smart people spend more time fighting the system than doing meaningful work, they leave.

Organisations face a stark choice:

Accept this tax as a permanent cost of growth, or reorganising to remove friction from the system.

Because there are so few examples of successful growth without complexity, most choose acceptance.

As we will see, that's not necessarily the case.

The Inflection Point

A new organisational logic

For business leaders, decision-making often involves weighing up the trade-offs across a set of imperfect choices: maintain the strategy that made the company great in the first place or risk investing in a new one?

The situation we see today is reminiscent of the horse and carriage vs. automobile moment in the early 1900s. While carriage makers continued to perfect their craft, Henry Ford was reimagining transportation with mass-produced automobiles. Retailers in the 1990s celebrated bigger malls, while Jeff Bezos launched Amazon and paved the way for the global e-commerce industry, which changed consumer expectations forever. Newspapers in the 2000s restricted access to their content, while Google gave away information for free and monetised online advertising instead. The companies that won didn't optimise the old model, they built on entirely different foundations.

But what if you can have your cake and eat it too? A few outliers paint a hopeful story. Companies like Gore, Handelsbanken and Valve have managed to transcend these trade-offs. However, their success is based on unique prerequisites that most organisations will never be able to replicate: founder-leaders with a bold vision, market conditions that were ripe for disruption or business models that support novel organisational design.



The Inflection Point

How AI is changing the game

The emergence of AI is now levelling the playing field, making this approach accessible to any business willing to embrace radical architectural change.

It's also important to remember that in this scenario, AI means more than deploying chatbots, automating routine tasks or analysing more data. If processes are already bloated, decision structures conflicted and teams dysfunctional, then adding AI represents a fundamental misunderstanding of its strategic potential. The real opportunity lies in a deep redesign of organisations along value streams rather than functional departments. Artificial intelligence is then the nervous system that enables everything to work together seamlessly.

These use cases illustrate what is already possible today:



Small teams with superpowers

AI-augmented super-generalists can now manage an entire value stream that previously required separate departments of specialists. This gives teams a sense of ownership and purpose that drives motivation, ambition, engagement and talent retention.



Autonomy with accountability

AI provides greater visibility into team performance and decision-making. Details that were too tedious to track can now be explored without superfluous administration. Teams enjoy greater autonomy, while leaders have better information at their fingertips.



Painless quality control

Instead of creating bottlenecks for the essential checks and approvals, specialist insights and company policies can be directly embedded into workflows. Compliance, security and quality assurance become real-time capabilities that help avoid delays and doubts.



Enterprise knowledge unlocked

AI makes it possible to create, collate, retrieve and synthesise data from disparate sources, and turn it into unique, proprietary insights that drive strategy and innovation. This is what gives companies a clear advantage compared to other players in their market.

II

Introducing the Forest-Orchard Resilience System (FORS)

Introducing FORS

A balance between serendipity and control

Chapter one established the inherent vulnerabilities and complexity of traditional organisational structures that drive up the running costs as the company grows and scales. This internal tax erodes both margin and morale, and the imperative is not to optimise outdated organisational models, but to rethink them entirely.

This chapter introduces an alternative approach in more detail: the Forest-Orchard Resilience System (FORS). This is a vision for a fundamental redesign of the organisation's core operating system. It calls for a bold shift from the traditional rigid, top-down hierarchy to dynamic, modular architecture designed to thrive and draw strength from volatility and disruption.

Core design principles

In his bestselling book, *Antifragile*, Nassim Nicholas Taleb observed that while we have words for things that break under stress (fragile), and things that resist it (resilient), we lack a term for systems that gain from disorder. To describe this phenomenon, he coined the phrase "antifragile", which occurs quite frequently in the natural world. A muscle grows stronger from the stress of weightlifting, pruning a fruit tree produces a more abundant harvest, a forest ecosystem becomes more robust after a fire clears the ground from deadwood and allows new seedlings to grow.

Applied to a business setting, the organisations that win are those that have the focused productivity of the orchard combined with the adaptive resilience of the natural forest. This fine balance of serendipity and control is the inspiration for the Forest-Orchard Resilience System (FORS).



The Orchard aspect represents the qualities of traditional organisations, optimised for stability and predictable output. Every process is standardised for maximum efficiency in a controlled environment. Such organisations are highly productive in times of stable continuity, but also vulnerable to collapse when unprecedented competitive and disruptive forces arise.



The Forest aspect stands in for organisations that embrace a more decentralised structure in which serendipity and autonomy are the drivers for productivity, creativity and innovation. However, when controlled wildness becomes chaos, accountability suffers, leading to unfocused growth and unpredictable business results.

FORS is a business operating system for organisations which combines the disciplined productivity of a well-tended orchard with the adaptive resilience of a natural forest, creating an antifragile organisation that gets stronger under stress.

The Four Pillars of FORS

Super-Teams: The engine of execution

FORS replaces traditional departments with “Super-Teams”. These are self-contained, multidisciplinary groups of specialists and generalists who own a critical value stream from beginning to end. A single Super-Team might, for instance, manage a complete customer lifecycle or an entire product line with minimal external supervision and without the typical handoff, delays and frictions that plague departmental models. AI takes a central role, bridging skills and knowledge gaps, and serving as the accountability enabler.

Super-Teams are the organisation’s primary engine for delivering value.

Guilds: The stewards of enterprise value

FORS recognises the importance of evidence-based and data-driven rigour when managing processes and outcomes, which is why the concept of the Guild is central to the framework. A Guild is an internal network of specialists in a specific domain, such as marketing, finance, IT, or human resources. Guilds are responsible for defining and curating and maintaining the standards, tools and best practices in their field and making it available to the wider organisation. Empowered by AI agents and automations, **Guilds turn proprietary enterprise knowledge and data into a highly dynamic, usable and actionable asset.**

Guilders: The experts integrating excellence & execution

To connect the Guild’s knowledge with the Super-Team’s activities, FORS introduces the role of the Guilder. This is a subject-matter expert who is embedded within the Super-Team as a full-time member, and at the same time is a member of their respective Guild. This ensures that enterprise knowledge, guidelines and standards are implemented at the point of delivery. Crucially, Guilders also capture new insights and learnings from the Super-Team’s work and feed them back to the Guild. This makes the **Guilders the conduit for a virtuous loop of continuous improvement that strengthens the entire system.**

Knowledge Base: The architecture for frictionless collaboration

When different teams work together, there’s the risk that poor communication, confusing protocols, disparate storage systems and inconsistent behaviours may hinder collaboration. To minimise this, FORS uses an ecosystem of AI-powered tools that deliver content authoring and management, smart search, intelligent dashboards and integration with existing CRM and ERP systems. This makes enterprise knowledge easier to access, organise, retrieve and synthesise so that valuable insights are surfaced for competitive advantage. **The Knowledge Base is the organisation’s brain memory, and nervous system, driving everything from strategy to operations.**

Bringing the FORS Vision to Life

The preceding chapters established the strategic imperative for a new organisational model that transcends the inherent fragility of traditional hierarchies. We have made the case for FORS, not merely as an incremental improvement but a fundamental redesign, enabled by AI.

The question, however, remains: How does this vision translate into operational reality?

The next chapter builds on the "why" and "what" to explain the "how." Here, we dissect the core architectural pillars of FORS, providing a blueprint for leaders to begin their implementation journey. We will explore the interplay between the key elements of this system: the Super-Teams, the Guilds and Guilders, and the Knowledge Base.

We will examine the mechanics of each component, illustrating their function with concrete examples and clear definitions.

As we unpack these elements, the full potential of the FORS model becomes clear, not as a distant aspiration, but as a practical and achievable framework for organisations to thrive in the age of AI.



III

The Four Pillars of FORS

SUPER-TEAMS

The Engine of Execution



Super-Teams: The Engine of Execution

The foundational delivery unit of FORS is the Super-Team. This is not simply a new label for a project team, a department or cross-functional task force. A Super-Team is a persistent, multi-disciplinary entity that owns an entire value stream, end-to-end. It is the organisational equivalent of a small, entrepreneurial startup embedded within the larger enterprise, with the autonomy and resources to deliver strategic business outcomes.

Where traditional departments are inherently fragmented and require close coordination, Super-Teams stimulate entrepreneurial ownership and accountability. They are designed to eliminate the friction, delays, and miscommunication that plague siloed organisations. Imagine a team that doesn't need to "liaise" with marketing, "submit a ticket" to IT, or "wait for approval" from finance. Instead, it has the necessary capabilities, or direct, real-time access, within its own ranks. This is the power of the Super-Team.

Core characteristics

End-to-end ownership: A Super-Team is responsible and accountable for a complete value stream, from ideation to delivery and ongoing iteration.

Multi-disciplinary composition: Super-Teams are comprised of individuals with a diverse range of skills, often referred to as "T-shaped" or "E-shaped" people, who have deep expertise in one area and broad knowledge across many others. In the FORS model, they are called "super-generalists". The team is augmented by embedded Guilders who provide deep, specialised knowledge as needed.

AI-augmented: The AI-powered Knowledge Base acts as a cognitive partner, providing real-time data, synthesising information, automating routine tasks, and enabling a level of collective intelligence that was previously impossible. This enables small teams of 8–12 people to achieve what once required multiple departments.

Outcome-oriented: Super-Teams are measured not by their activity, but by their results. Their performance is tied to clear, quantifiable business outcomes such as revenue growth, customer satisfaction, or market share. This fosters a culture of accountability and a relentless focus on value creation.

The Super-Team is the execution engine of the FORS model. It is where the focused productivity of the orchard meets the adaptive resilience of the forest. By organizing around value streams and empowering small, AI-augmented teams, organisations can unlock new levels of speed, agility, and customer-centricity.

Making Super-Teams Work

Every company operates within a unique environment: industry dynamics, regulatory requirements, business model constraints, company size, and cultural heritage. A fintech startup will organise its value streams differently from a manufacturing conglomerate. A healthcare provider will have different compliance considerations from a media company. The strength of the Super-Team approach lies not in its rigid application, but in its adaptability.

The Super-Team examples outlined above are not prescriptive blueprints to be implemented wholesale. They are illustrative frameworks designed to spark your thinking about what is possible within your own organisation.

For example, depending on the company size and industry, there may be multiple product teams, each responsible for the development and commercial success of their respective product line. The product team then becomes a dynamic entity that can be created, reconfigured or disbanded at any time.

The goal is not to force your organisation into a predetermined mould, but to use these examples as a starting point for reimagining how work flows through your enterprise.

- What are the critical value streams that drive your business?
- Where do handoffs create the most friction?
- Which capabilities need to be tightly integrated to deliver exceptional customer outcomes?

These are the questions that will guide you towards the configuration of Super-Teams, and one that reflects the realities of your business, marketplace, customers, and competitive landscape.

The FORS model provides the architectural principles; the specific design is yours to create.

Scenarios of Super-Teams in Action

1

Customer & Growth Super-Team: Owns the entire customer lifecycle, from initial awareness and acquisition through to retention and expansion. It combines the functions traditionally found in Marketing, Sales, and Customer Service into a single, outcome-oriented unit. The team uses AI-powered analytics to understand customer behaviour, personalise interactions, and optimise conversion funnels across all touchpoints. Their success is measured by clear metrics such as customer acquisition cost, lifetime value, and Net Promoter Score, ensuring that every activity is directly tied to sustainable business growth.

2

Product & Operations Super-Team: Merges the creation of products with their efficient delivery and maintenance, combining functions traditionally found in Research & Development, Operations, and Information Technology. The team is responsible for the complete product lifecycle, from ideation and design through to deployment, scaling, and ongoing optimisation. They use AI-enhanced development tools, automated testing platforms, and real-time monitoring systems to accelerate innovation while ensuring operational excellence and reliability.

3

Internal Enablement Super-Team: Functions as the organisation's operational investment and support partner, providing the foundational services that enable all other Super-Teams to thrive. The team leverages intelligent automation for routine tasks such as payroll and compliance reporting, while focusing human expertise on strategic workforce planning, financial forecasting, and creating the cultural and operational conditions for organisational success. It combines the capabilities traditionally found in Finance, HR, Legal, and Administration within a unified support function and has the most interfaces with other Super-Teams and senior leadership.

4

Strategy & Innovation Super-Team: Serves as the organisation's strategic compass and innovation catalyst, responsible for sensing market shifts, identifying new opportunities, and guiding the long-term direction of the enterprise. It combines strategic planning, competitive intelligence, innovation management, and transformation leadership within a single forward-looking unit. The team uses AI-powered market analysis and trend detection to anticipate disruptions, while working closely with other Super-Teams to ensure strategic initiatives are successfully translated into operational reality.

Example of a Super-Team in Action

The Seamless Home Delivery Super-Team

Consider a large retail organisation. In a traditional model, the customer's home delivery experience is a fragmented journey, passing through e-commerce, marketing, warehouse logistics, third-party couriers, and customer service. When a problem occurs, the customer is bounced from one department to another, and no one has a complete picture. They have the authority to change warehouse processes, redesign communication workflows, and even select and manage courier partners, all without the bureaucratic hurdles of a traditional hierarchy.

In the FORS model, this entire value stream is owned by the "Seamless Home Delivery" Super-Team:

Super-Generalists: Individuals with skills spanning logistics, customer experience design, and digital marketing.

Embedded Guilders:

- A **Data & Insights** Guilder to analyse delivery performance and predict potential issues.
- A **Brand & Storytelling** Guilder to ensure all communication, from order confirmation to delivery updates, reflects the company's brand voice.
- A **Trust & Compliance** Guilder to navigate the complexities of data privacy and consumer protection regulations.

The Knowledge Base provides real-time visibility into the entire delivery chain, is responsible for a single set of metrics: the percentage of deliveries that are on-time, complete, and result in a positive customer rating.

GUILDS

The Stewards of Enterprise Value



Guilds: The Stewards of Enterprise Value

The Super-Team model appears to sacrifice deep expertise for broad capability. How can generalists match the performance of a specialist? Where is the oversight to ensure that AI outputs are checked for accuracy and validity? Who decides which information of strategic importance becomes the company's proprietary best practice?

Guilds are the FORS answer to this challenge. These are communities of practice that define what "good" looks like in their domain. They cultivate deep expertise, and are core contributors and guardians of business and operational intelligence.

Unlike traditional departments where expertise is often trapped in silos, Guilds ensure that knowledge flows smoothly throughout the organisation by embedding their members (i.e. Guilders) directly into Super-Teams where the work actually happens.

Guilds also represent a critical career advancement pathway for technical and functional specialists. Not everyone with domain knowledge becomes a Guild member, as this requires demonstrated expertise, experience, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the collective knowledge of the organisation. For specialists who excel in their craft and wish to deepen their expertise rather than move into traditional management roles, Guild membership offers a prestigious alternative career trajectory that focuses on deep mastery and knowledge stewardship.

The strategic purpose of a Guild

Defining excellence: The Guild sets the standard for what "good" looks like in their domain. They are responsible for developing and maintaining the playbooks, frameworks, and methodologies that guide the work of everyone in the organisation who touches their area of expertise.

Cultivating talent: Guilds are one of the primary vehicles for professional development in a FORS organisation, offering alternative career pathways that focus on expertise rather than traditional management. They provide a forum for members to share their experiences, learn from one another, and collectively push the boundaries of their craft.

Setting standards: By embedding their members (Guilders) in cross-functional teams, Guilds ensure that best practices are not just documented, but consistently applied at the point of execution.

Driving innovation: Guilds are the engine of innovation in their respective domains. They are constantly scanning the horizon for new trends, tools, and techniques, and are responsible for integrating them into the organisation's practices.

The Guild acts as a force multiplier, amplifying the impact of its members' expertise across the entire organisation.

Scenarios of Guilds in Action

- 1 Customer Experience & Brand:** Ensures that the company's core narrative is a shared responsibility, expressed consistently and compellingly at every stage of the customer journey. Comprised of members from marketing, sales, product, and customer service, this Guild moves the customer lifecycle beyond a single department and embeds it directly into the teams building products and interacting with customers. It empowers teams to make decisions, from feature design to client conversations, that are both functional and emotionally resonant with the brand's promise. This integrated approach fosters deep customer loyalty and turns every touchpoint into an opportunity to strengthen the company's market position.
- 2 Data Literacy & Decision Intelligence:** Acts as an engine of empowerment, focused on elevating the data fluency of the entire organisation. Its mission is to democratise insights by curating the right tools, establishing clear analytical frameworks, and fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making. Rather than acting as a centralised gatekeeper of information, the Guild's embedded Guilders partner with Super-Teams to help them answer their own questions, test hypotheses, and measure success autonomously. This focus on enablement multiplies the organisation's analytical power, accelerating the pace of learning and ensuring that strategic and operational decisions at all levels are smarter, faster, and more reliable.
- 3 Risk & Resilience:** Transforms risk management from a reactive burden into a strategic advantage by embedding experts in legal, security, and compliance directly into the innovation process. Its Guilders act as proactive partners within product and customer-facing Super-Teams, helping them navigate the intricate landscape of risk and regulation from the very beginning. By integrating safety, security, and ethics into the design process, the Guild enables teams to build robust solutions and move with greater speed and confidence. This forward-leaning posture not only mitigates threats but also builds profound trust with customers and regulators, strengthening the organisation's reputation and its long-term resilience.
- 4 People & Performance:** Composed of HR experts and respected leaders with a proven record of building high-performing teams, this Guild is dedicated to cultivating the organisation's most valuable asset: its people. Specifically, it defines and champions the company's talent development principles, including coaching, career growth, and constructive feedback. Through its embedded Guilders, it ensures that the ability to attract, develop, and retain exceptional talent is a core capability and strategic advantage. As a result, high standards of performance and culture are strengthened, and the entire system becomes more adaptive to disruption.

How Guilds Avoid the Silo Trap

A common question when encountering the FORS model is why core functions like Sales or Product Development do not have their own dedicated Guilds. This is a deliberate and critical design choice that highlights the fundamental difference between a Guild and a traditional department. Departments are organisational silos defined by what people do; Guilds are centres of excellence defined by a craft or capability that must be consistently excellent across the entire organisation.

The core distinction is Execution vs. Enablement.

Super-Teams are built for execution. Functions like Sales and Product Development are core execution activities, and their natural home is within the Super-Teams that own a value stream from end to end. For example, the Customer & Growth Super-Team is the engine for sales execution. Creating a separate "Sales Guild" would simply recreate the old departmental silo, pulling accountability away from the customer-focused team and creating friction.

Guilds, in contrast, are designed for enablement. They exist to elevate the quality and consistency of work across all teams. Instead of creating a "Sales Guild," the FORS model addresses the craft of selling through the Customer Experience & Brand Guild. This Guild ensures that sales team engagement with customers is aligned with the company's core narrative and brand promise, providing the principles for high-quality interactions without dictating the day-to-day sales process. Similarly, the craft of building excellent products is honed directly within the Product & Operations Super-Team, which is already a centre of product expertise, supported by Guilds such as "Data Literacy" to improve its decision-making.

Furthermore, the scale of a Guild is flexible and strategic. A Guild is not defined by its size, but by its purpose.

For a smaller organisation or a highly specialised field, a Guild could be a single, recognised expert, like a Chief Scientist who advises all teams as the "Guild of one" for scientific innovation. For larger activities, it can be a formal network of embedded specialists (Guilders). Whether a single advisor or a broad network, the structure is tailored to the company's size, industry, and strategic priorities, ensuring the model is both powerful and efficient.

In short, the FORS model places the responsibility for doing the work squarely within the Super-Teams. Guilds exist to ensure that work is done to the highest possible standard, breaking down silos rather than rebuilding them under a different name.

GUILDERS

Integrating Excellence & Execution



Guilders: Integrating Excellence & Execution

A Guilder is a master practitioner of their area of expertise, and spends the majority of their time embedded within a Super-Team. They are not like an external auditor who appears for reviews or a consultant who provides advice from the sidelines. They share accountability for business outcomes, while simultaneously ensuring that the standards and expertise of their Guild are consistently applied.

For instance, the security expert in a Product Super-Team isn't someone who shows up at the end to find problems. As part of the team from day one, they are there to help build security into every decision while sharing responsibility for the product's success.

This model solves the expertise paradox. Teams get deep specialist knowledge exactly when needed, without the coordination overhead of external reviews. Experts see their guidance implemented in real-time, without the frustration of being ignored. Knowledge flows naturally through the organisation via the Knowledge Base, whilst accountability remains crystal clear within the Super-Teams.

The Guilder role represents the pinnacle of the specialist career path within a FORS organisation. These are not simply domain experts, but proven practitioners who have earned their place within the Guild through demonstrated excellence, deep experience, and the ability to translate complex expertise into practical guidance. For technical and functional specialists who wish to advance their careers through mastery rather than management, becoming a Guilder offers a prestigious pathway that values expertise and knowledge application.

The benefits of Guilders' embedded expertise

Teams get deep specialist knowledge exactly when needed: No more waiting for expert reviews or struggling to interpret generic guidelines. The expertise is immediately available for consultation and validation.

No meeting marathons: As the expertise is already embedded within the Super-Team, there is less need for external coordination, handoffs to other departments, or delays waiting for expert input.

Experts see their guidance implemented: Guilders don't just give advice that might be ignored, they're part of the team implementing it, ensuring their expertise translates into real outcomes.

Knowledge flows naturally: Guilders manage knowledge transfer, ensuring that learnings and innovations spread organically across the organisation and minimising the need for formal reporting processes.

Accountability remains crystal clear: Guilders share full accountability for outcomes, eliminating the finger-pointing that often occurs between "doers" and "reviewers."

Scenarios of Guilds in Action

1

Customer Experience & Brand Guilder: Acts as the custodian of the company's narrative within the Super-Team, ensuring that every decision is aligned with the brand promise.

Day to day, this Guilder helps shape customer journeys, coaches colleagues on communication tone, and ensures consistency across touchpoints, from product design choices to frontline interactions. They typically bring backgrounds in marketing, service design, or customer psychology, often with experience leading cross-channel campaigns or customer insight initiatives.

As both a team member and Guild representative, they translate brand standards into practical guidance, while feeding back emerging customer sentiment and frontline learnings that refine the Guild's playbooks.

2

The Data Literacy & Decision Intelligence Guilder: Provides the analytical backbone of the Super-Team, making sure decisions are grounded in evidence rather than assumptions.

Their tasks include setting up relevant metrics, guiding hypothesis testing, and embedding simple analytical tools into everyday workflows. With expertise in data science, business intelligence, or operational research, plus a knack for making complex insights understandable, they democratise data within the team.

In their Guild role, they curate standards for data use, ensure that local experiments add to enterprise-wide learning, and bring back field-tested methods that elevate the organisation's overall decision intelligence.

Scenarios of Guilds in Action

3

The Risk & Resilience Guilder: Turns risk into a strategic enabler by embedding safety, ethics, and compliance into the team's delivery process from the start. They scan for regulatory blind spots, design guardrails that support speed without sacrificing trust, and anticipate vulnerabilities before they surface as crises. Their qualifications usually include legal, security, or compliance expertise, complemented by experience working directly with product or customer-facing units.

Inside the Guild, they co-develop risk frameworks and resilience strategies. Inside the Super-Team, they translate those principles into pragmatic action, ensuring resilience is a daily practice rather than an afterthought.

4

The People & Performance Guilder: Anchors the human dimension of performance inside the Super-Team, ensuring that collaboration, feedback, and growth are treated as core business drivers. They shape practices for peer coaching, talent development, and constructive conflict, and are often the first to spot cultural frictions or leadership gaps that could derail outcomes. Their expertise comes from HR, organisational psychology, or extensive experience leading high-performing teams.

As Guild members, they refine the organisation's leadership and performance frameworks. As embedded partners, they adapt those standards to the realities of daily execution, ensuring that team success is matched by individual growth and long-term capability building.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Architecture for Frictionless Collaboration



The Knowledge Base: Frictionless Collaboration

What prevents the Super-Team and Guild structure from suffering the same problems as traditional departmental organisations? How do autonomous teams maintain alignment without bureaucratic oversight? How do distributed Guilders share knowledge without endless meetings? What does the organisation capture to leverage its collective intelligence without drowning in information overload?

The Knowledge Base is the FORS answer to these challenges. It is not a static repository or a traditional intranet filled with outdated documents. It is a dynamic, AI-powered organisational brain and nervous system that connects every Super-Team, Guild, and Guilder into a cohesive, intelligent whole. As the technological backbone, it is what makes the entire FORS model possible, transforming the vision of a truly antifragile organisation into a practical, operational reality.

The Knowledge Base serves as the organisation's collective intelligence platform, creating a single, unified source of truth that is accessible to everyone, everywhere, in real-time. It transforms information from a scarce resource hoarded in silos into a living, breathing asset that enhances every decision and accelerates every action.

How the Knowledge Base transforms collaboration

Intelligent information synthesis: The Knowledge Base doesn't just store information; it understands, organises, connects, and synthesises it. Team members and leaders can quickly identify patterns across customer feedback, sales data, product development notes, and financial reports to surface insights that would otherwise be difficult and time-intensive to process.

Real-time decision support: Depending on pre-defined role permissions, everyone has instant access to the collective wisdom of the organisation. When facing a complex decision, they can query the Knowledge Base in natural language and receive contextually relevant insights, precedents, and recommendations drawn from the entire organisational memory.

Seamless knowledge flow: Within parameters defined by the organisation, the Knowledge Base has the potential to capture and index every piece of dynamic and static data to create a complete, searchable history of the organisation's activities. This eliminates the knowledge loss that occurs when experts leave or projects transition between teams.

Proactive intelligence: Like a built-in strategic consultant, the Knowledge Base can monitor organisational activity and proactively surface relevant information, potential risks, and emerging opportunities to the right people at the right time. Key learnings from project delays or failed products are no longer wasted, but instead add to the collective intelligence for future initiatives.

Scenarios of the Knowledge Base in Action

1

Product launch scenario: A Product & Operations Super-Team is preparing to launch a new feature in the European market. Instead of scheduling multiple meetings with different departments, they simply ask the Knowledge Base: "What did we learn from our last three European product launches?" The system instantly provides a comprehensive brief including market-specific compliance requirements, messaging strategies that resonated, pricing insights, and technical considerations from previous product launches. The team receives not just the information, but the context and lessons learned, allowing them to avoid past mistakes and build on successes.

2

Customer crisis response: A member of the Customer & Growth Super-Team receives a complex complaint about a billing issue that seems to involve multiple systems. Rather than escalating through traditional channels, they query the Knowledge Base with the customer's specific situation. The system immediately surfaces similar cases, identifies the root cause pattern, provides the exact resolution steps that worked previously, and alerts the relevant Guilders and Super-Teams to a potential systemic issue, quickly and proactively.

3

Compliance innovation: A member of Product Super-Team needs to navigate new AI ethics regulations while maintaining rapid innovation. They ask the Knowledge Base: "How are other teams handling AI transparency requirements in customer-facing features?" The system provides real-time access to approaches being tested by other Super-Teams, regulatory interpretations from the Guild's collective knowledge, and even flags emerging best practices from external industry sources that have been vetted by Guild experts.

4

Strategic pattern recognition: While analysing sales trends, the Strategy & Innovation Super-Team notices an unusual trend in customer behaviour data. The Knowledge Base automatically correlates this with recent product changes, market events, competitive actions, and internal initiatives, revealing that a seemingly minor feature update has unexpectedly created a new customer use case. This insight is immediately shared with relevant Super-Teams and Guilds, enabling rapid capitalisation on an emerging opportunity.

What is Different Today

Previous attempts at organisational knowledge management have largely failed due to the limitations of traditional technology and the burden they placed on users to manually input and maintain information. The recent breakthroughs in Large Language Models (LLM), natural language processing, and AI reasoning have fundamentally changed what's possible.

For the first time, you can create a system that automatically captures, understands, and synthesises vast amounts of unstructured organisational data, such as emails, documents, manuals, conversations, decisions, and outcomes, without manual data entry or complex taxonomies. The Knowledge Base learns continuously from organisational activity, becoming more intelligent and valuable over time.

The Knowledge Base is the force multiplier that enables small, autonomous Super-Teams to operate with the knowledge and context of the entire organisation. It is the technological foundation that transforms the FORS model from theory into a practical system with the potential to deliver superior outcomes at scale.

IV

Leadership & Governance

Leadership & Governance

In a FORS organisation, leadership isn't a chain of command, it's an engine for clarity, coherence, and long-term organisational health. The leader's job isn't to micromanage, but to set context and direction, shape the architecture of the system, and orchestrate the portfolio. They create the boundaries, the shared language, and the governance principles that make it possible for Super-Teams to operate with autonomy and generate compounding value.

Greater clarity and empowerment

The FORS Leadership Team holds the dual mandate of empowerment and alignment. Their presence is felt less in approvals and permissions and more in the strength of the system itself: a transparent decision architecture; a coaching culture that grows capability faster than headcount; and a portfolio approach that turns scattered efforts into compounding organisational advantage.

In essence, they steer by principle, not permission. This fundamental shift from operational management to strategic stewardship enables small, autonomous Super-Teams to act with the coherence and strategic focus of a unified organisation while still thriving in conditions of uncertainty and change.

In the FORS paradigm, leadership attention focuses on three enduring responsibilities.

1 *Portfolio Orchestration: Capital and Talent as Living Assets*

The Leadership Team treats the flow of capital and talent across all Super-Teams as a living portfolio, not a frozen budget. Investment decisions rest on transparent metrics and strategic fit rather than internal politics or historical precedent. With the Super-Teams responsible for execution, the Leadership Team provides strategic guidance and decision clarity regarding resources, product focus and strategic activities, and where they can generate business impact. This means having the courage to double down on initiatives that are delivering exceptional results while redirecting resources away from those that are underperforming, regardless of past commitments or political sensitivities.

Thanks to AI tools and systems, the Leadership Team can see real-time performance data from each Super-Team and respond proactively and decisively to changing market conditions and emerging opportunities. This ability to quickly allocate and re-allocate resources enables FORS organisations to capitalise on disruption rather than being constrained by it.

Orchestrating Strategy & Portfolio

2 *Purpose and Positioning: Supplying the "Why," and the "How"*

The Leadership Team's second critical function is to supply the strategic context and guardrails within which Super-Teams operate, while resisting the temptation to dictate the specific methods of execution. They coach Super-Team leaders to build judgment, resilience, and strategic range, helping them develop the capability to make excellent decisions independently.

Leadership Teams also contribute to organisational memory by adding principles, decision protocols, and strategic rationales into the Knowledge Base. This creates an internal reference library of leadership guidance that enables consistent decision-making across the organisation without requiring constant consultation. When a Super-Team faces a novel challenge, they can reference institutional knowledge to understand how similar situations have been addressed and the principles that should guide their response.

This approach scales leadership wisdom without creating bottlenecks, and pushes decision-making authority to the level of delivery. Super-Teams can operate with confidence because they understand the strategic context and have an expanded remit.

3 *Platform & Risk Stewardship: The Antifragile Architecture*

The Leadership Team is responsible for continuously refining the boundaries of Super-Teams, governance mechanisms, and scaling rules to ensure the organisational architecture remains optimally configured as the business evolves. They intervene directly only when risks or opportunities outstrip the remit of any single Super-Team, such as financial shocks, reputational crises, or existential product bets that could affect the entire organisation.

Their emphasis is on designing guardrails and constraints so that most decisions can be made closer to the task at hand - where the best information exists, and the fastest response is possible. This requires sophisticated thinking around organisational design, and understanding how to create structures that promote good decision-making while preventing catastrophic errors.

The Governance Foundation

This new approach to organisational intelligence fundamentally changes how governance operates. Instead of bureaucratic oversight, teams benefit from institutional wisdom that emerges naturally from their daily work and interactions.

- **Intelligent transparency:** Every interaction feeds the collective knowledge base, creating visibility that emerges from work rather than requiring additional reporting. Teams cannot hide conflicts or shift blame when the system automatically captures context, decisions, and outcomes
- **Predictive conflict resolution:** The system learns from past team interactions and successful resolutions, proactively suggesting proven approaches when similar situations arise. This prevents conflicts from escalating by providing teams with relevant context and successful precedents.
- **Shared accountability:** Success metrics are informed by analysis of what drives business outcomes, not just what teams claim to deliver. This creates alignment around results that matter rather than activities that are, in fact, just busy work.
- **Contextual decision support:** When teams coordinate, they receive relevant background, similar past decisions, and potential implications automatically, enabling faster and more informed choices without extensive meetings or documentation.
- **Strategic leadership enablement:** For leadership teams, this represents a fundamental shift from operational oversight to strategic orchestration. Rather than managing through reports and in meetings, leaders gain real-time insights into organisational health and can make resource allocation decisions based on actual performance patterns rather than political presentations. The system enables what most executives crave but rarely achieve: the ability to govern strategically without getting pulled into operational firefighting.

This intelligence system enhances rather than replaces human judgment and communication. While AI handles the tedious work of capturing, organising, and surfacing information, the critical decisions about strategy, priorities, and team dynamics remain firmly in human hands. The technology serves as a strategic enabler that eliminates information friction, allowing teams to focus their energy on collaboration, problem-solving, and building the trust relationships that drive organisational effectiveness.

V

Four-Phase FORS Implementation Scenarios

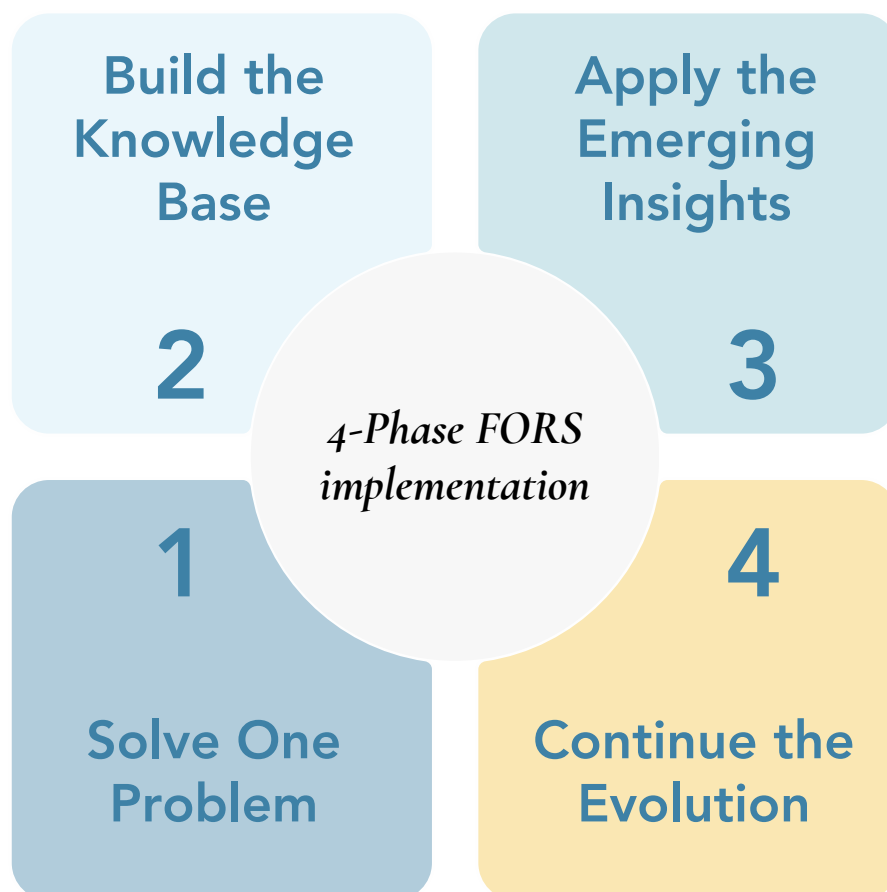
The 4-Phase FORS Implementation

This four-phase approach enables you to build organisational antifragility incrementally, with each phase delivering independent value while you prepare for the next. Rather than attempting a wholesale organisational transformation, we recommend a phased or modular approach. The key is to start with intelligence gathering for the Knowledge Base, as it immediately improves decision-making while revealing the natural patterns that will guide your organisational evolution, including where, what and how to set up the appropriate Super-Teams and Guilds.

Each phase creates value independently while laying the groundwork for the next. You can stop at any phase and still capture meaningful benefits, or continue building toward a fully FORS-enabled organisation.

If cultural resistance prevents a full FORS implementation, the effort you have invested doesn't go to waste, you'll still have solved expensive coordination problems and built a valuable knowledge infrastructure.

Organisational intelligence compounds as you systematically capture it. Every problem solved, every decision recorded, every pattern identified makes your organisation smarter and more capable of adapting to change.



Phase 1: Solve One Problem

Q: Which friction point can we eliminate as we build our first Knowledge Base module?

Start by identifying your most expensive coordination failure, focusing not only on fixing the problem, but on capturing the intelligence about the problems it causes, how team members deal with them, and what behaviour patterns have emerged. This will also help you identify and clean up inconsistencies, redundancies and inefficiencies in the systems and processes themselves.

By capturing the decisions, context, and outcomes around specific problems, every conversation, every decision, every process step becomes data that feeds your growing organisational intelligence.

Investment

- Approx. \$10-20K
- Including AI tool subscriptions, knowledge capture setup
- 1-2 weeks team availability for implementation

Timeline

- 30 day sprint to achieve measurable results or pivot

Success Metrics

- 30-50% reduction in coordination time for the specific problem
- Plus functioning knowledge capture system

ROI

- Aim for 5-10x improvement within 60 days on coordination time saved
- Plus foundational Knowledge Base infrastructure

If things don't work out?

- Pivot to a different problem within a week, but keep building the intelligence system.
- You've spent £5-10K learning something valuable about your coordination challenges and built the beginning of your Knowledge Base.

Phase 2: Build the Knowledge Base Foundation

Q: How do we systematically capture the intelligence hidden in our organisation?

Expand beyond your initial problem to start gathering comprehensive organisational intelligence. This phase focuses on building the AI-powered nervous system that will make everything else possible. Deploy knowledge capture across multiple areas, starting with the most business-critical. You don't necessarily have to solve problems immediately. It's more important to understand how work actually flows through your organisation, and where to cut redundancies and waste.

Use AI tools for predictive analytics and process mining to map coordination patterns, identify where expertise is most needed, and discover the natural value streams that could potentially become Super-Teams. This intelligence gathering reveals the answers to your three foundational questions while building the infrastructure for future phases.

Investment

- Approx. \$30-75K
- Including AI tool subscriptions, knowledge capture setup
- 2-3 months team availability for implementation

Timeline

- 60-120 day sprint to build foundational Knowledge Base

Success Metrics

- Extensive visibility into organisational coordination patterns
- Identification of 3-5 natural Super-Team opportunities
- Mapping of critical expertise domains

ROI

- You're building the foundation that makes autonomous teams possible while improving decision-making across the organisation

If things don't work out?

- You've still built valuable infrastructure for knowledge management and have unprecedented visibility into how your organisation actually works.
- This intelligence, and the ROI it delivers, compounds over time

Phase 3: Apply the Emerging Insights

Q: Where do our Knowledge Base insights point to natural organisational improvements?

Use the intelligence you've gathered to identify the value stream where a Super-Team is most easily deployed, and which expertise domains need to become Guilds. The outcomes from previous phases and your foundational Knowledge Base will show you the coordination patterns, the expertise flows, and the value streams that are struggling under current structures.

This is where you begin formalising what your data reveals. Transform the most promising coordination improvements into your first Super-Team. Identify the experts who are consistently pulled into multiple problem-solving efforts and formalise them as your first Guild. Let the data intelligence guide structure, not the other way around.

Investment • Approx. \$500K-2M+ for full platform deployment, systematic organisational restructuring, comprehensive Guild formation

Timeline • 12-24 months to first functional Super-Teams and Guilds

Success Metrics • Aim for 30-50% reduction in coordination overhead organisation-wide
• 2-3x improvement in speed to market
• Self-sustaining improvement cycles

ROI • By year two, you should be aiming for savings typically exceeding total transformation investment by 3-5x, though results vary significantly by industry and implementation quality

The Continuous Advantage • Your Knowledge Base will continue to learn and improve, making your organisation more intelligent and adaptive over time. This compounds competitive advantage in a way that's difficult for other market peers to replicate.

Phase 4: Continue the Evolution

Q: How do we apply the lessons learned to scale organisational improvements?

With proven results from your first Super-Teams and Guilds, use your Knowledge Base to continue guiding systematic expansion. The intelligence you've built shows you exactly which value streams to transform next, which expertise domains need Guild formation, and what the expected returns will be.

It's a data-driven organisational evolution where your Knowledge Base continuously learns from each improvement, making subsequent transformations faster and more effective. The organisation evolves, and the FORS principles come to life, guided by proven metrics and enterprise intelligence.

Investment • Approx. \$150–400K for functional platform integration, team restructuring, Guild formation, training and change management

Timeline • 90-180 days to first functional Super-Teams and Guilds

Success Metrics & ROI • One value stream operating 2-3x faster with 30-50% less coordination overhead
• Operational Guilders providing expertise across multiple teams

The Reality Check • This is where leadership courage becomes essential.
• Formalising new structures based on data means acknowledging that current structures aren't optimal, and that some redundant processes will need to be cut.
• Your Knowledge Base will make the case based on evidence, not opinion.

Your Call to Action

Now you've seen what's possible with FORS, the next step is to turn insight into action. Don't overthink it, don't wait for the perfect moment. You can start this week by applying the principles where they matter most.

Checklist to get things started

Pinpoint the biggest coordination failure

- Identify the single most expensive coordination breakdown in your organisation this week.

Map available AI solutions

- Research which AI tools already exist to address that failure.
- Note practical fits and potential gaps.

Capture process intelligence

- As you investigate, document how problems move through your organisation.
- Record insights, patterns, and bottlenecks beyond the immediate issue.

Start building the Knowledge Base

- Use the captured intelligence to start constructing the first Knowledge Base module.
- Ensure knowledge capture happens in parallel with problem-solving.

Safeguard the process

- Protect and prioritise this intelligence-gathering effort until its value is demonstrated.
- Avoid micromanagement—provide consistent attention, not constant intervention.

Shift your perspective

- Treat FORS not as a one-time project but as the seed of a living system for evidence-based improvement.

Now keep up the momentum. Every small move counts. And if you want to stay ahead as these shifts accelerate, I share practical insights and examples every week:

- Subscribe to my newsletter for fresh strategies.
- Follow me on LinkedIn for ongoing commentary and case studies.
- Or reach out directly if you're ready to explore how FORS can take root in your organisation.

Company Profile

Why Changentum

Most organisations don't fail for lack of strategy or technology, but because their structures can't handle disruption. Layers slow decisions, silos dilute accountability, and "best practices" turn into hidden fragilities.

Changentum stands for change + momentum and we help leaders flip that script. We design antifragile systems, structures that thrive under pressure, elevate ownership, and free leadership energy for what matters most. Backed by two decades of global experience and the new capabilities AI unlocks, we help organisations grow stronger through disruption.

Who We Work With

We partner with senior executives and leadership teams who want more than incremental change. Leaders who see that AI adoption without structural redesign is a false economy. Leaders ready to cut through internal silo management, decision debt, and prioritisation paralysis.

Contact

Email: dawn@changentum.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dawnspringett/>

Newsletter: www.changentum.com

About Me

I'm Dawn Springett, the founder of Changentum and creator of the Forest-Orchard Resilience System. With over 20 years' experience guiding global corporations and midsize firms through crisis, transformation, and growth, I now advise senior executives on scaling and leading in the age of AI. My focus is on accelerating AI-readiness, empowering teams and building the foundation for antifragile organisational excellence.

