

# Organizational Design for Innovation and Agility:

## A Sheridan Experiment

Polytechnics Canada Conference 2023

Presenters:

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# The Challenge

## *Organizational Design for Innovation:*

Sheridan's strategic plan calls on us to fortify our strengths in delivering purposeful, career-focused learning, while boldly stretching to meet the future with trailblazing, transformational education. The imperative for foresight and agility demands the revision of deeply entrenched organizational culture and structures. Siloed functions, disciplinary domains and thick administrative processes are misaligned to turbulent conditions.

How does this challenge manifest  
in your organization?

# Emerging Imperatives

VS

# Legacy Practices

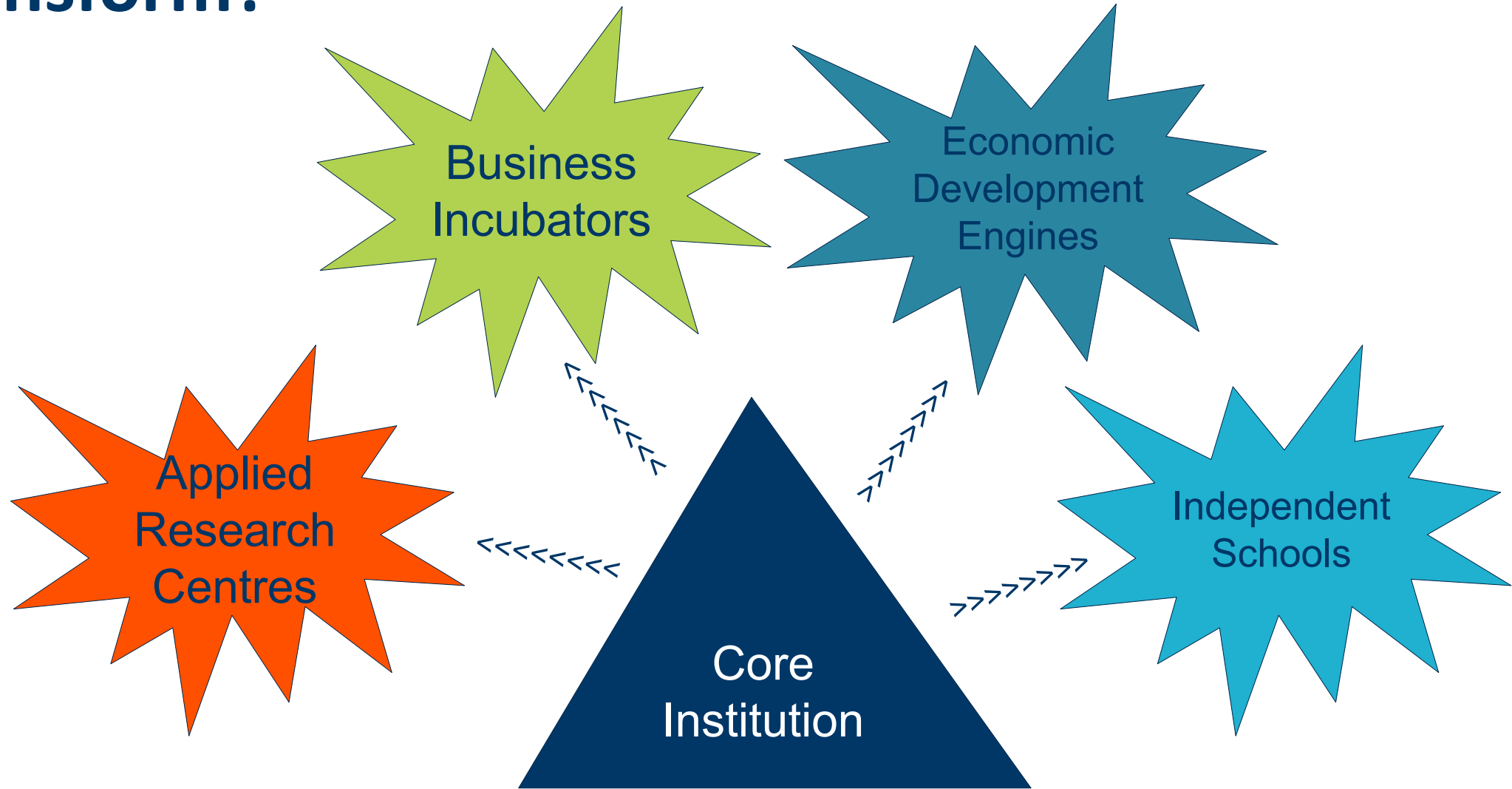
## What Learners Need

- Increased choice to add-in, add-on
- Flexible schedules & delivery modes
- Interdisciplinarity
- Problem-based learning
- Team skills & emotional intelligence
- Laddered & stackable credentials
- Industry co-created learning
- Marketplace of short form programs
- Effortless exit & re-entry
- Meaningful engagement with AI
- Seamless administrative processes

## What Learners Get

- Disciplinary boundaries
- Siloed administrative functions
- Fragmented outdated tech platforms
- External constraints on flexibility
- Scheduling for faculty not learners
- Fixed start and stop of term
- Uneven classroom experiences
- Services “bounce”
- Thick quality assurance regime that limits agility and responsiveness

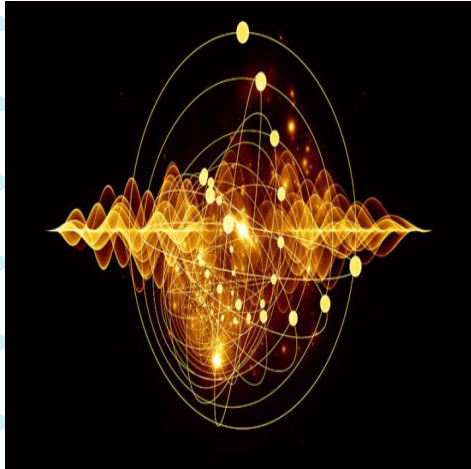
# The Shape of Innovation in the Sector...does it transform?



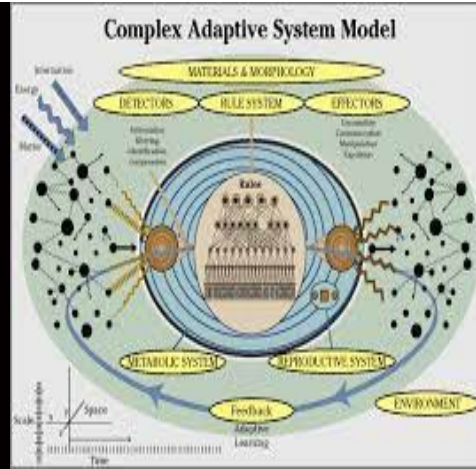
# Thinking about a different state..



Biomimicry Institute



Stanford Online



Wikipedia



UCI Online



# Two Spheres for Change



Identify Innovation → Agile, Integrated Implementation

# Identify Innovation/Great Ideas



- **Strong commitment to the strategic plan**
- **Invite ideas from anywhere in the institution**

## **Galvanizing Education Hub:**

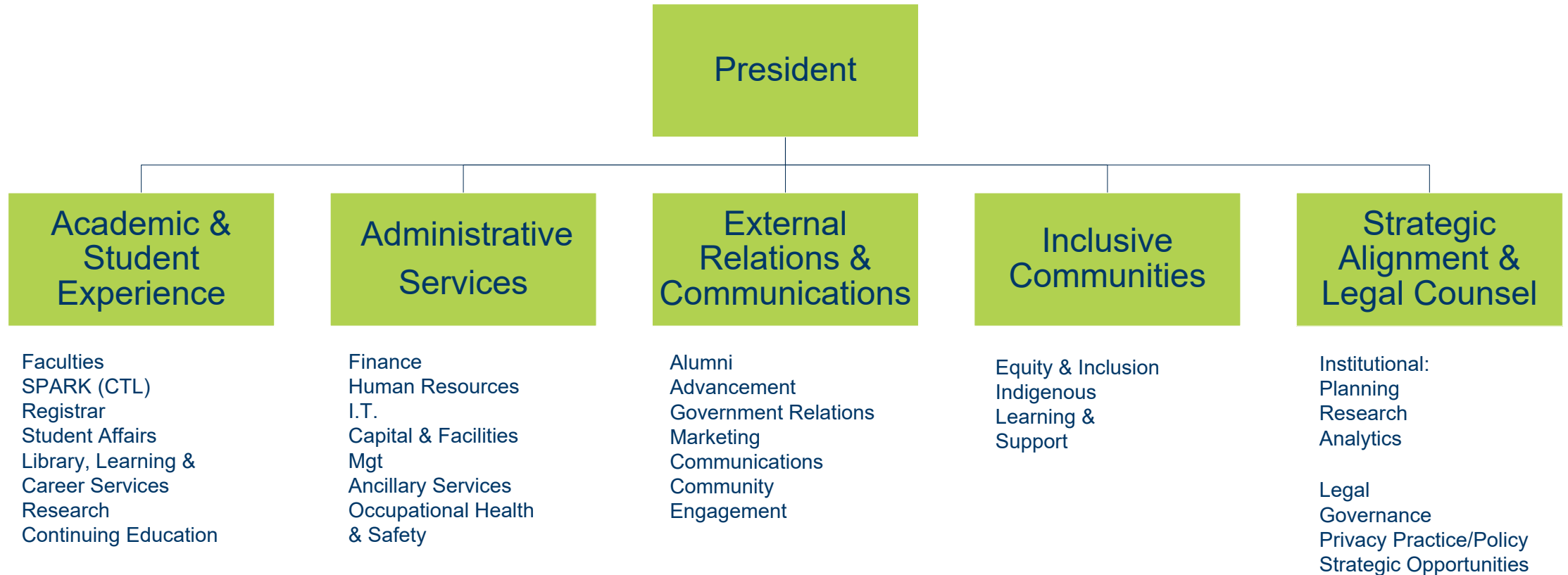
a table with flexible membership, bringing institutional SMEs to review, research, assess, refine the best ideas for recommendation to be resourced.

It's OK to not know how

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# Sheridan College Organizational Structure



# Agile, Integrated Implementation at Scale

## Some key principles:

- Intentional community engagement
- Commitment to practicing what we teach!
- Inclusion from across the college
- Commit to unlearning, engage bold, eclectic thinking
- Take an ecosystem, not systems approach
- Communicate, communicate, communicate



# Strategic Initiatives Framework

## Year 5 - 2023/24

### Revised SIF Leadership Team

The SIF Leadership Team meets every 8 weeks for strategic collaboration and implementation huddle.

#### KEY LEADS

Carol Altilia  
Sean McNabney  
Sheldon Pereira  
Deanna McQuarrie

Zafar Syed  
Lindsay Engel  
Matt Rempel

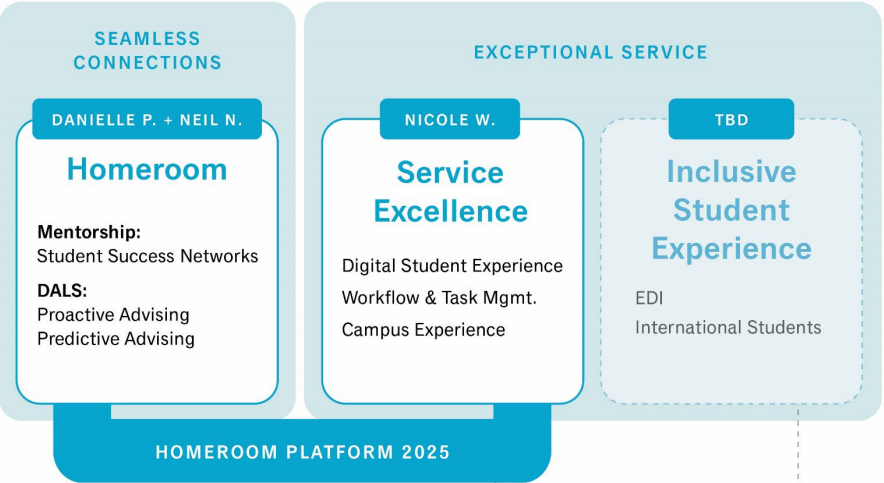
#### EXTERNAL

Michael O'Leary  
Rajan Sandhu  
Mark Chapman

Alison Horton  
CIO (tbd)

SHELDON P.

## Student Experience



CRM Platform

Brampton Health Centre  
(Community Impact)

MICHAEL O.

Front Porch:  
Corporate Learning

MATT R.

Alternative Revenue  
Generation

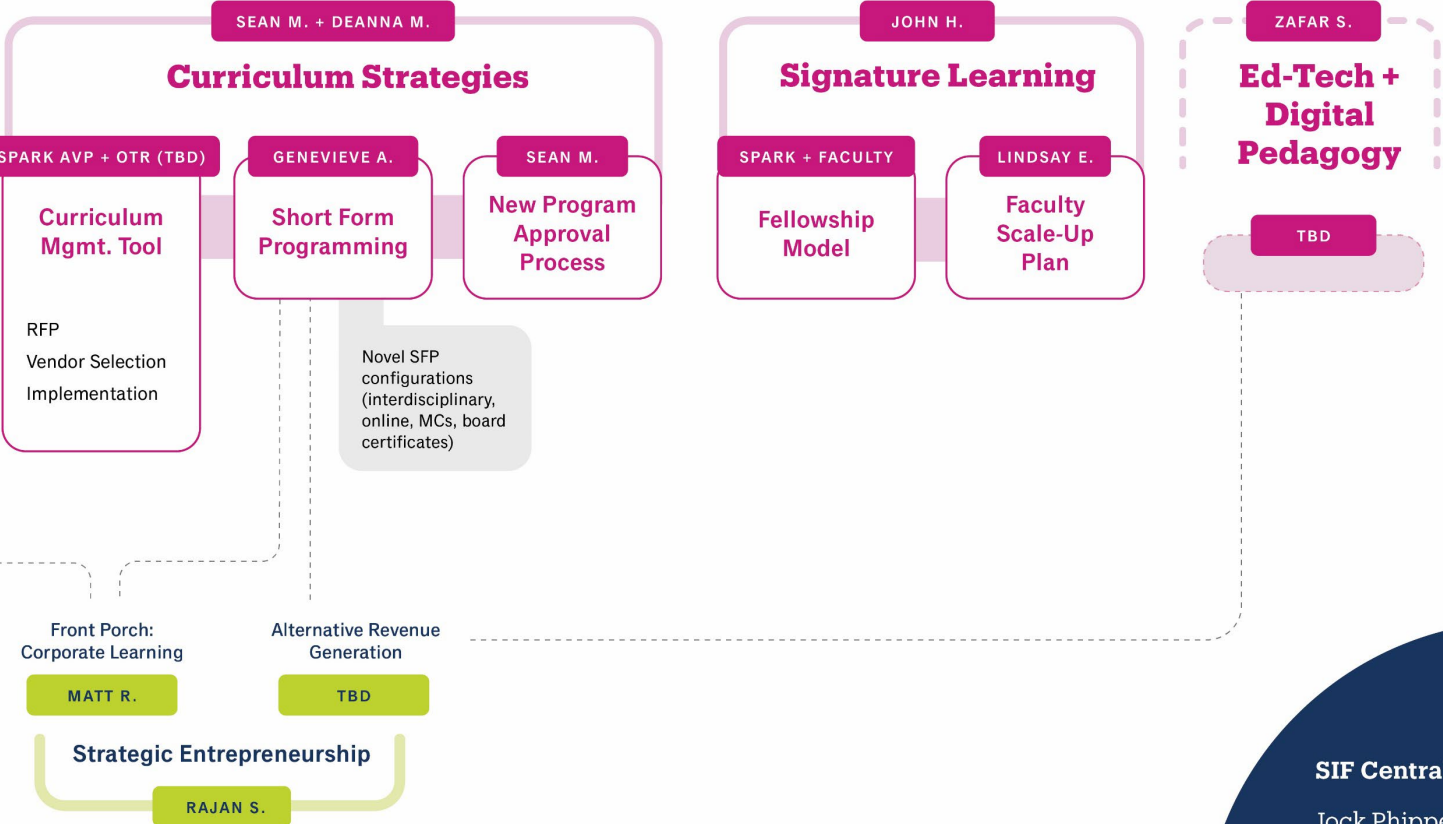
TBD

Strategic Entrepreneurship

RAJAN S.

SEAN M.

## Academic Innovation



# Start with the Backbone

- Reimagining some of the core work of the college
  - Program design, curriculum strategies, student service approach
- Projects are engines of impact
  - Projects cannot be seen as outside the “real work” of the college
- Championed by college leaders

# Example 1: The Structures Merge

## Stage 1: “Homeroom” project is concept.

- Pain-points & gaps with existing practice and systems emerged easily
- A new integrated service model is designed by the x-functional team
- Review of “best-practice” models and demos (within and outside higher-ed) inspires optimism

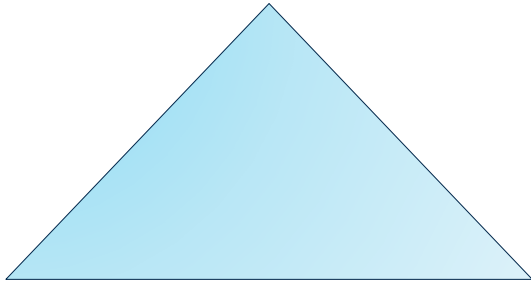
And...regular work continues as-is.  
Largely siloed, disconnected, inefficient.

## Stage 2: From concept to practice.

- Breaking the concept into actionable “swim lanes” changes how people work
- Student Success Networks pilot across 30 programs reorganizing key staff into networks vs. by department
- New omni-channel comms and service application changes info, data sharing, and workflow across departments
- Survey of student and staff satisfaction provides strong evidence of improvement

And...staff and managers are pumped for the next phase of the project!

# Example 2: Embedded Pedagogy



## What we would have done?

- Attempt an orderly approach
- Engage existing structures like program learning outcomes
- Top down, systematic implementation with a CTL project lead

**Methodical, systematic.....slow, thin**

## What we are trying....

- Engage complexity
- Leverage excitement + expertise
- Create communities of practice
- CTL to create capacity vs operationalize
- Distributed allocation of resources
- Set the desired outcomes, not the process

**Networked, organic replication, immediate outcomes**



# Lessons We've Learned

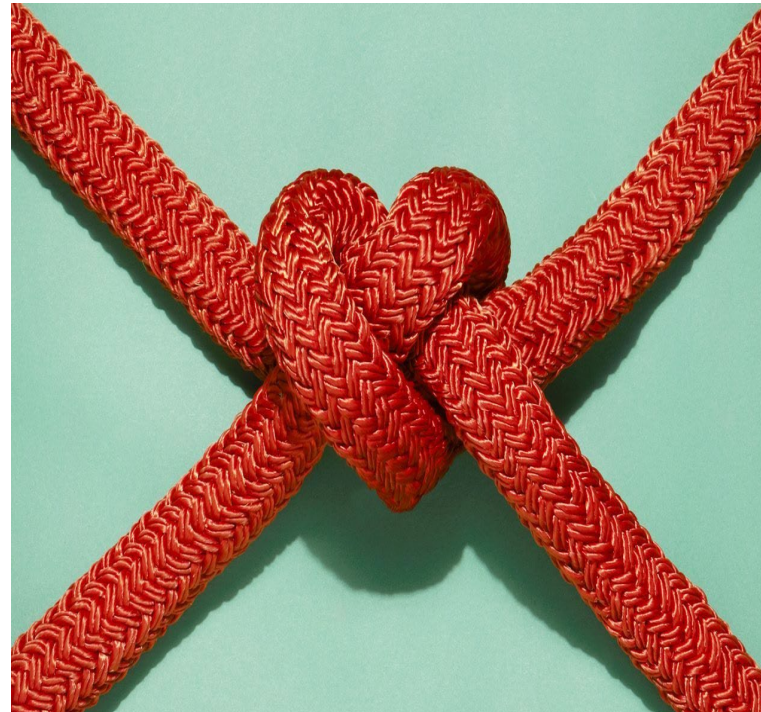
Can't put a race car on a minivan chassis:

**Balance New and Core**



Alignment and sequencing matter:

**Aim for Convergence**



Engagement pays big dividends:

**Focus on Your People**



# QUESTIONS

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