Leading Through Unrelenting Change

Executive Briefing

Sustaining energy, momentum and critical mass through transformation
Insights from the Energy Driven Transformation Executive Roundtable

At our recent Executive Roundtable in London, we welcomed a diverse group of senior leaders to explore leading through unrelenting change. The discussion highlighted a sobering reality: **Transformation rarely fails because of poor strategy or inadequate effort. It fails because organisations run out of energy.** Workforce burnout pushes teams back to old habits in a cycle of change exhaustion. With horizons compressed to two or three years, leaders must move from linear planning to sustaining organisational energy, momentum and critical mass.

WHY CHANGE FAILS

70 - 88%

of corporate transformations fail to meet their objectives

Rather than stemming from poor strategy or inadequate effort, this failure is primarily driven by energy depletion and widespread workforce burnout, which causes organisations to revert to old habits in a cycle of change exhaustion.

VOLATILE HORIZONS

2 - 3 years

is now the compressed planning horizon for leaders

In an unpredictable landscape, constant disruption means the priority shifts from traditional, linear planning to sustaining energy and momentum.

A DISCIPLINED APPROACH

3 phases

to sustain transformation: ignite, maintain, scale

Igniting energy overcomes cynicism from past failed initiatives. Maintaining momentum, then reaching critical mass, carries the change through the whole organisation.

AI Focus

Technology in the mix: organisations view AI with both excitement and caution. It boosts productivity, but it also magnifies existing organisational dysfunction, so it needs thoughtful structural adaptation and quality oversight.

3 Phases of Sustaining Transformation

Phase 01

Ignite Energy
Overcoming cynicism

The Challenge
Cynicism rooted in past failed initiatives.

The Shift Required
Inspire people and build positive mindsets.

Phase 02

Maintain Momentum
Avoiding echo chambers

The Challenge
Echo chambers at executive level stall the cascade.

The Shift Required
Make sure initiatives cascade effectively.

Phase 03

Acheive Critical Mass
Engaging the wider organisation

The Challenge
Echo chambers at executive level stall the cascade.

The Shift Required
Bring the broader organisation along, especially the vital middle layer.

Core Leadership Strategies

01 Extreme clarity & simplicity

Distil complex strategic challenges into straightforward business models. Set a clear "North Star" so teams know the destination even as tactics shift.

02 High-trust, psychologically safe cultures

Tell the truth and deliver on promises. Encourage constructive disagreement and allow safe experimentation without disproportionate punishment.

03 Patience over speed

Invest time at the outset to build relationships and align teams, rather than defaulting to top-down, command-and-control mandates.

04 Actively support middle management

Embed regular appreciation and recognition into daily workflows.

05 Build resilience

Foster resilience so teams emerge from challenge enhanced rather than diminished.

The Takeaway

Sustaining energy, not just setting direction, is what carries transformation to the finish line.