

A WORKING SESSION FOR LEADERS

Show Every Manager What Good Looks Like

Management by Design: how clarity and consistency carry your culture into the way your managers lead.



60 minutes · 45 minutes together, 15 minutes of your questions

YOUR HOST

Two sister companies, one idea

CultureWise designs how everyone works. Persistently designs how managers lead that work. Both are part of the PMH family of companies.

Dustin Campbell

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, CULTUREWISE
FOUNDER, PERSISTENTLY

25+ years in middle-market business as a CEO, board member and private equity operating professional. Built Management by Design while running Adtech Systems.



CULTURE BY DESIGN

A Culture Operating System, built on *Culture by Design* by David J. Friedman. Named behaviors everyone practices, kept alive through regular rituals.



MANAGEMENT BY DESIGN

The management system your company is already running, built on purpose. Written Standards for what good management looks like, and a rhythm that keeps them in use.

A Healthy Organization Needs All Five Systems

Just as the human body functions through interconnected systems, great companies thrive when structure, culture, management, operations, and strategy are all working in harmony.



Foundations

The skeleton gives shape and structure to everything.

- Clarify Purpose & Values
- Initiative setting & executive rhythm
- Planning & team accountability



Culture by Design

The heart pumps life through the organization.

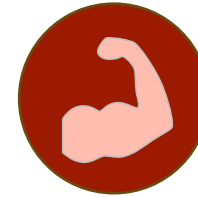
- Principle-based Fundamentals
- Rituals that teach & reinforce
- Light-touch digital nudges



Management by Design

The brain coordinates decisions and enables learning.

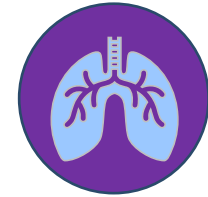
- Management standards & handbook
- Management Collaboration Teams
- Strengthens middle management



Operations by Design

Muscles convert intent into visible, disciplined action.

- Documented playbooks
- Operations blueprint & dashboard
- Visible tradeoffs
- Working “on the business”



Strategy by Design

Lungs sustain endurance — breathing in signals, breathing out direction.

- Brand & Strategy
- Feedback loops (voice of customer, employee & industry)
- Timely, actionable executive signals (working “on the business”)

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Four parts, one through-line

Put questions in the chat as they occur to you. We'll take every one at the end.

PART ONE

Remember the beginning

What it felt like to start, and how long it took to feel comfortable joining in.

PART TWO

The two links

Clarity and consistency connect Culture by Design to Management by Design.

PART THREE

The system grows with you

The Persistence Management System, and what each stage of growth adds.

PART FOUR

Start with what you know

Write it down, add to it, and start the continuous improvement engine.

What you'll leave with: one Standard you can write this week, and a place on the calendar to teach it.

PICKING UP FROM LAST TIME

Culture makes the story repeatable. Managers make the culture repeatable.

“Most companies don’t have a culture problem. They have a clarity problem, and then a repetition problem.”

FROM THE BRAND AND CULTURE SESSION

Every behavior your company names reaches people through a manager. If each manager runs a private version of the company, the culture gets as many versions as there are managers.

A clarity problem



Define what good looks like

A repetition problem



Give it a rhythm

Managers carry the load. Few were trained for it.

70%

of the variance in team engagement comes down to the manager

44%

of managers have ever received any management training

8.2 → 12.1

average direct reports per manager, 2013 to 2025: up almost 50%

82%

of the time, companies pick the wrong person for the manager role

22%

of managers are engaged at work, down 9 points since 2022

20%

of employees worldwide are engaged at work

Source: Gallup, State of the Global Workplace 2026 and Gallup workplace research, 2025–2026.

PART ONE · THINK BACK

Remember your first year of work.

What were you expected to know that nobody told you?

How long before you felt comfortable speaking up in a meeting?

Who showed you what good looked like, if like, if anyone did?

Take thirty seconds. Then put one word in the chat for how it felt.

A man with glasses and a suit is shown from the chest up, gesturing with his right hand. He is in a dark, industrial-looking environment with blurred background elements like pipes and lights. The text "Management" is written in red above the main sentence, and "Baseball thinking is medieval." is written in white below it.

Management
Baseball thinking is medieval.

WHAT IT FELT LIKE

Most of us learned the job by guessing

The work itself was rarely the hard part. Knowing what good looked like was.



Unwritten rules

How decisions really got made, who to ask, and when it was safe to push back.



Guessing at the standard

You found out what good looked like after you missed it.



Watching before speaking

You held back in meetings until you were sure you wouldn't get it wrong.



Learning by cost

The lessons that stuck were usually the ones that cost you something.

Most of us figured it out eventually. The real question is how long it took, and what it cost along the way.

What starts as proximity must become design



Proximity

Everyone sits near the founder and learns what good looks like by watching.

Growth

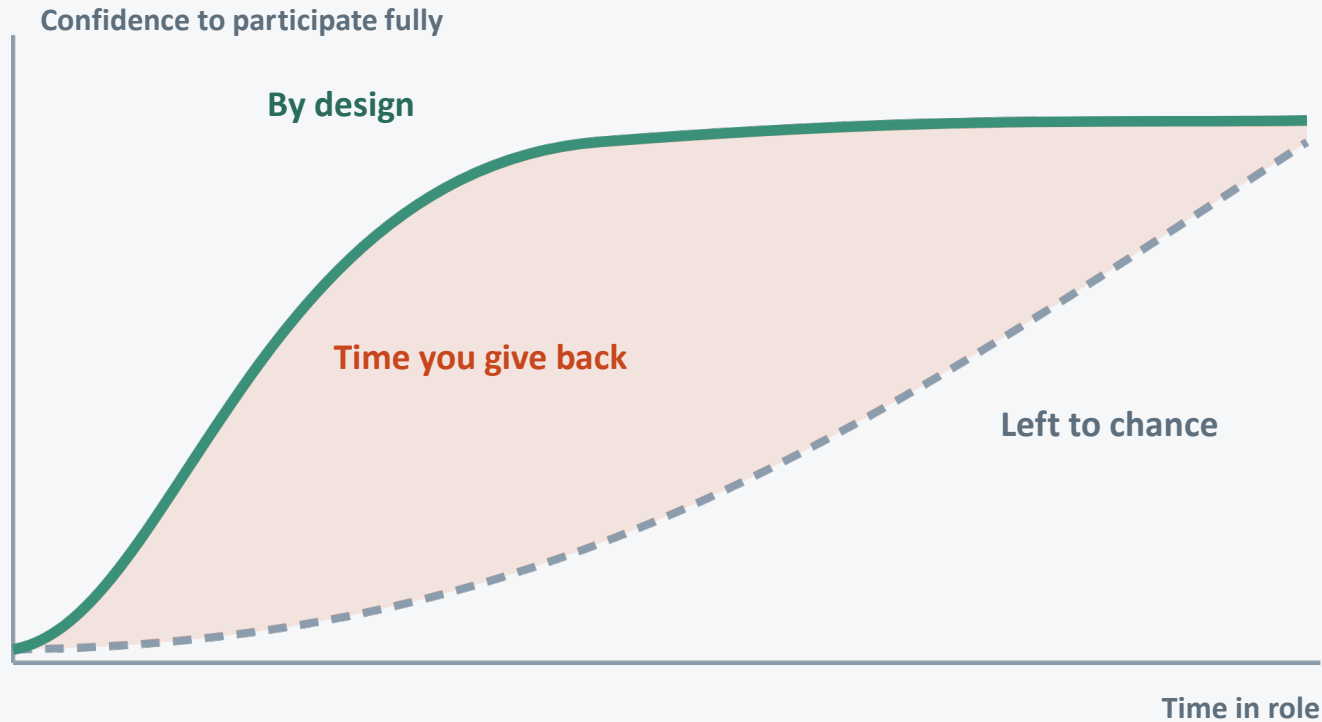
The distance gets too big. New people and new managers start guessing.

Design

Shared standards and rhythms carry what proximity used to carry.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Shrink the time to full participation



Clarity

Standards show what good looks like, so people stop guessing.

Consistency

A regular place to practice, discuss and question, so people speak up sooner.

WHY NOBODY WROTE IT DOWN

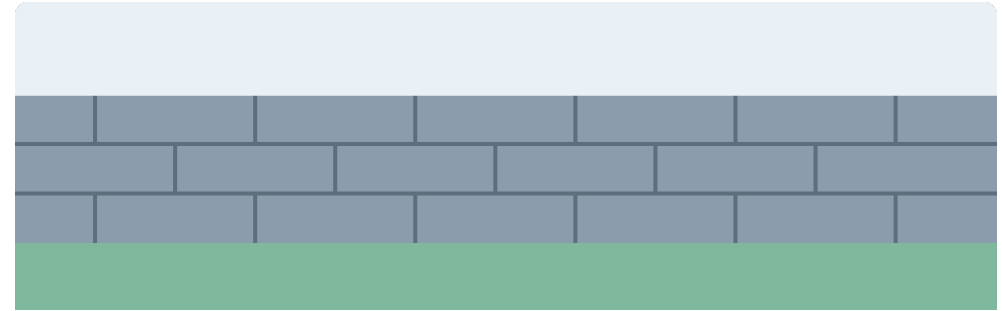
You can't see what you know

A ha-ha is a sunken wall at the edge of an English estate. It keeps the livestock out without spoiling the view.



From where you stand

The lawn runs all the way to the horizon. What you know feels obvious, so it never gets taught.



From where they stand

It's a wall. Your newest people hit it without knowing it's there, or how to get over it.

WHY THE USUAL FIXES DON'T HOLD

The dragons we're slaying

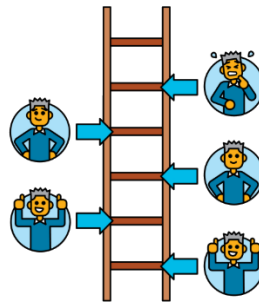
Three reasons good management stays rare, even at companies that invest in it.



THE A-PLAYER FALLACY

Pro Bowl vs Super Bowl

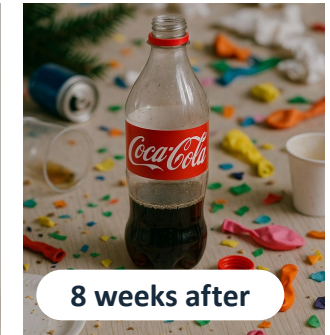
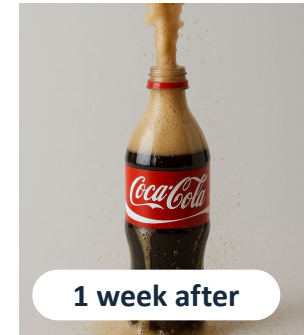
Teams win on more than individual talent.
The system someone plays in can lift both
the player and the team.



THE PETER PRINCIPLE

Rising to incompetence

People get promoted for today's success,
not tomorrow's job. Becoming a manager is
a big change in scope.



POST-TRAINING FIZZLE

The fresh Coke goes flat

Training creates a short spike in energy.
Without reinforcement it fades within
weeks.

PART TWO · THE TWO LINKS

Clarity and consistency.

They are what make Culture by Design work, and they are what make Management by Design work. Same principles, applied one layer down.

CLARITY

Define what good looks like

CONSISTENCY

**Make space to practice, discuss and question
question**

The same two links, one layer down



Culture by Design

How everyone works · CultureWise



Management by Design

How managers lead · Persistently

CLARITY

What good looks like

Fundamentals: the specific behaviors everyone in the company practices

Standards: what good management looks like here, written down

CONSISTENCY

A rhythm to practice it

Rituals: one Fundamental taught and discussed each week

Management Collaboration Teams: small groups that meet monthly to practice and discuss one Standard

THE RESULT

Everyone knows how we work

Managers run the company together

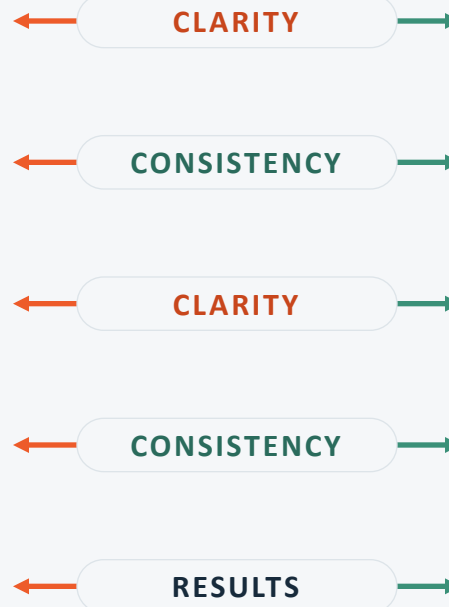
From Culture by Design to Management by Design



Culture by Design

CultureWise

- Define behaviors
- Ritualize practice
- Shared language
- Reinforcement
- Measurable engagement



Management by Design

Persistently

- Define management Standards
- Ritualize management rhythms
- Shared operating frameworks
- Peer accountability
- Measurable execution

Clarity means writing down what good looks like

Not everything needs to be written down. A small shared core beats trying to cover everything.

AN IDEA

“Be a good communicator.”

A STANDARD

“Describe what success looks like like before the work starts.”

One you agree with. The other tells a manager manager what to do.

A Standard has four parts

- 1 Name it (or steal it), in your own words
- 2 What it looks like when someone does it well
- 3 What it looks like when it's missing
- 4 One question a manager can ask in the moment

THE BOOKSHELF

There's no shortage of good advice

Twenty of the most recommended books for managers, from 1936 to 2019. Many of them say similar things.



The hard part is agreeing on one way to do it here, and practicing it together.

Holding effective 1:1s

An excerpt from our own playbook. Short, specific and written down, so every manager runs 1:1s the same way.

What we expect

Regular cadence. Weekly or every two weeks.
Never “stop by when you need me.”

Employee-driven. They bring the agenda; you listen and ask.

Structured, not rigid. A consistent format with a relaxed tone.

Track it. Log issues and actions in a shared tracker.

Every 1:1 covers

- 1 A personal update
- 2 Two curious questions: development, strategy, the industry
- 3 Roadblocks to our goals
- 4 Feedback on the manager (Situation → Behavior → Impact)

A monthly rhythm

Week 1 Results review: what went well, lessons learned

Week 2 People: who’s progressing, coaching plans

Week 3 Roadmap and OKRs: on track, off track

Week 4 Development: what are you learning?

Done well: the employee drives the agenda, and both leave clear on priorities and next steps.

Missing: people wait for a good moment to stop by, and important feedback never reaches you.

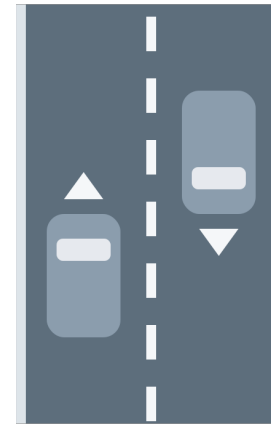
Everyone on the same side of the road

Sweden drove on the left. Every neighbor drove on the right, and more than 90% of Swedes already drove left-hand-drive cars.

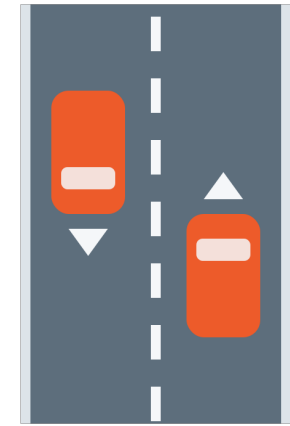
In a 1955 referendum, 83% voted to keep the left. Parliament decided to switch anyway, and on 3 September 1967 the whole country changed sides on the same morning.

The new side wasn't the point. The danger was never left or right. It was drivers who weren't doing the same thing.

BEFORE: KEEP LEFT



AFTER: KEEP RIGHT



Everyone switched together, on one planned day

In management, the same is true. Many frameworks say similar things. What makes one work is everyone agreeing to use it the same way.

OUR TAXONOMY

Five Management Capabilities

Most of those books offer a variation on this. Pick one taxonomy and go. You can evolve it over time.

1

Lead Yourself

How you show up as a manager: working on the business and not only in it, owning your decisions, and holding steady when news breaks.

2

Develop Your People

How you build your team's capability: feedback, coaching, delegating, development plans and recruiting for your own team.

3

Communicate & Build Trust

How you align up, down and across: cascading direction, describing what success looks like, hard conversations and keeping commitments.

4

Run the Work

How work gets planned, run and reviewed: 1:1s, huddles, effective meetings, structured problem-solving and clarity on who decides.

5

Know the Business

How your team's work connects to the business: how the company makes money, your own numbers, the financials and building a business case.

Consistency means room to practice, discuss and question

A Standard on a page changes nothing by itself. People get comfortable with it by using it, with peers, on a regular rhythm.



Practice

Try the Standard on real work between sessions, then compare compare notes.



Discuss

Managers from different teams talk through what worked, what didn't and and why.



Question

People push back, ask why and suggest better versions. That is how the Standard gets better.

How we run it: a large-group session introduces each Standard, then small groups of managers meet monthly, led by your own executives.

Where consistency happens

Small groups of managers who meet on a fixed rhythm to practice one Standard at a time.

Organize them

- 5–8 managers per team
- Cross-functional on purpose
- Same members over time
- No one sits in a team led by their own boss

Pick a cadence

- Once or twice a month, then don't move it
- Alternate large group (introduce or review a Standard) and small group (work the current Standard or any live management issue)

Executives facilitate

- Ask more than tell
- Bring the Standard to real problems
- Capture themes to take back to leadership
- Over time, managers co-teach

A 60-minute session

Opening
15 min

Review the Standard
20 min

Work a live issue
20 min

Close
5 min



CONSISTENCY BEATS INTENSITY

PART FOUR • TRY THIS NOW

Write down three practices (actual actions you take) that you know about managing people that you didn't know when you started.

Write them the way you'd say them to a friend, not the way they'd read in a handbook.

1

2

3

Now score your three lessons

For each one, count the questions you can honestly answer yes.

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
I am confident that people reporting to me do this.	☐	☐	☐
I have spent time teaching it to others.	☐	☐	☐
I am confident that all managers in my	☐	☐	☐
Could my newest manager state it back to me today?	☐	☐	☐

My score: ____ out of 12

Most leaders check the first box and stop at the third.

That gap is the opportunity. You already know it. It just hasn't been written down or practiced yet.

THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ENGINE

Start with what you know. Then keep improving it.



- ✓ **Use what you already know**
Most of the content is in your leaders' heads today.
- ✓ **Add new things as you grow**
The system has room for what the next stage needs.
- ✓ **Improve it going forward**
Revisit priorities every quarter. Version two beats a perfect version one.

WHERE THIS CAME FROM

We built it with the team we already had

When Erik Waters and I bought Adtech Systems, every decision routed through the former CEO and COO. We couldn't recruit seasoned leaders into every role, so we built a system to make our own people more effective.

25% → 1.5%

Voluntary annual turnover

50%+

Increase in gross margins

350 → 80

Customers per year at the same revenue,
because we could prioritize

And teams started finding cost savings and improvements, and bringing them forward on their own.

Clarity and consistency, in practice

CLARITY

Show people what good looks like

- Pick one taxonomy and go
- Write down your Standards: what good looks like, and what it looks like when it's missing
- Keep them short and in your own words
- Everyone works from the same version

CONSISTENCY

Give them room to get there

- A fixed cadence that doesn't move
- MCTs to practice, discuss and question
- Executives facilitate, then managers co-teach
- Review the Standards every quarter

Clarity shortens the time to “I’ve got this.” Consistency makes it stick.

GETTING STARTED

Five steps to get your system running

1 Identify your Standards

Start with what your leaders already know. Pick the few that matter most and write them down.

2 Build your MCTs

Groups of 5–8 managers, cross-functional, each facilitated by an executive who isn't anyone's boss in the room.

3 Pick a cadence. Don't move it.

Once or twice a month. Alternate large group (introduce or review a Standard) and small group (discuss it, or any management issue).

4 Enlist the team

Set the expectation: this is about us getting better as a team. If something feels basic, make sure everyone in your MCT is confident in it.

5 Start simple, then build

Begin with the basics, like 1:1s and effective meetings. Move to advanced topics, like a common problem-solving framework.

IF YOU REMEMBER ONE THING

Clarity shows people what good looks like. Consistency gives them room to get there.

Culture by Design makes how we work repeatable. Management by Design makes how we lead repeatable.
Both start with what you already know.

THE NEXT FIFTEEN MINUTES

Your questions

Drop them in the chat or come off mute. Either is fine.

Want to talk about your own managers? We'll walk through how your managers learn what good looks like today, and you keep what we put keep what we put together.

Dustin Campbell

dustin@culturewise.com

dustin@persistently.us



culturewise.com



persistently.us