Leadership gap map

Skills that earned your last step vs. skills the next step requires. Circle the three that do not overlap — those are this week's curriculum.

NAME

DATE / ROLE

What got you here

The craft, output, and habits that earned the last promotion or the current seat.

What the next seat requires

Communication, mentoring, decisions, business judgment, people — name them specifically.

The three that do not overlap

#	GAP	FIRST PRACTICE THIS MONTH
1		
2		
3		

Who will notice if you close one

Stop-doing list

Five items to transfer in writing, with names and dates. If it is faster to do it yourself, you are training the team to wait.

LEADER

WEEK OF

WORK I STILL FINISH	WHO TAKES IT	SUPPORT I WILL GIVE	DATE TRANSFERRED	DONE
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

The two I will not take back

Write the sentence you will say when someone tries to return the work.

What I will do with the recovered hours

Influence map

Ten people who can stall or accelerate the current bet. Influence is accumulated evidence that following your framing will not embarrass anyone.

THE BET / DECISION

DATE NEEDED

NAME				
ROLE				
STANCE NOW				
WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT				
NEXT CONVERSATION				

One conversation this week

Who, the question you will ask (not the speech you will give), and what a good outcome looks like.

One-page altitude brief

Customer, bet, risk, ask — about 150 words. Lead with the decision you need. Put the architecture third.

FROM

TO

DATE

DECISION NEEDED (ONE SENTENCE)

Customer / outcome

Who is helped, and how we will know.

The bet

What we will do, by when, instead of what.

Risk if we wait

The ask

Decision, options, recommendation.

Ninety-second spoken version

Decision log

Owner, type, date to revisit. A decision without an owner is an anxiety. Install this for seven days.

TEAM

WEEK OF

Type: one-way (hard to reverse) or two-way (cheap to reverse). Date to revisit is not optional.

DATE	DECISION	OWNER	1-WAY / 2-WAY	REVISIT	OUTCOME / REVERSE?

One debate this log should kill

90-day leadership plan

Stop-doing, deputies, decision rights, stretch assignments. For the first ninety days in a new seat — or a reset in the current one.

NAME / SEAT

START DATE

MANAGER

Days 1–30 · Listen and map

PEOPLE I WILL SIT WITH

WHAT I WILL STOP DOING

Days 31–60 · Install

DECISION RIGHTS I WILL WRITE DOWN

DEPUTIES / WORK I WILL TRANSFER

Days 61–90 · Stretch

ONE PUBLIC BET

TWO PEOPLE I WILL DEVELOP

How my manager will know this is working

1:1 checklist

Person, not status. Next move. Feedback that is still warm. Status belongs in writing.

WITH

DATE

30 / 45 MIN

Before

- [ ] I read their last notes / written status. This is not a status meeting.
- [ ] I have one piece of specific, still-warm feedback — or I will say I do not.
- [ ] I know one career / growth question to ask if they do not bring one.

During — they talk first

WHAT IS ON THEIR MIND

BLOCKERS ONLY THEY WILL SAY IN PRIVATE

FEEDBACK GIVEN (BEHAVIOR + NEXT MOVE)

Close

THEIR NEXT MOVE

MY NEXT MOVE

If you talked more than they did, you ran a briefing. Try again next week.

Hiring bar for leaders

How they treat the room, not only how they treat the compiler. Hiring is culture with a start date.

CANDIDATE

ROLE / DATE

Signals in the room

- [ ] Treats juniors as colleagues, not an audience.
- [ ] Can explain a technical call to a non-engineer without condescension.
- [ ] Disagrees without scoring points. Invites a minority view.
- [ ] Names a time they reversed themselves in public.
- [ ] Talks about growing someone, not only shipping something.
- [ ] Asks about the team they would inherit — not only the architecture.
- [ ] Bad-news story: they delivered it early, not decorated.

Missed signals (write what you saw)

Hire / no / tighten the loop

A no without a better process is just a no. If you pass, write what the next search must catch earlier.

Executive briefing checklist

Decision, options, recommendation, risk. Ninety seconds. If you start in the how, you will be asked when it makes money.

MEETING / AUDIENCE

DATE

Before you walk in

- [ ] I can say the decision I need in one sentence.
- [ ] I have two options plus a recommendation — not a tour of the architecture.
- [ ] Risk is in business language (time, money, customer, people), not only technical.
- [ ] The first 90 seconds do not require a slide.
- [ ] I know the one question I hope they ask — and the one I fear.
- [ ] Depth is ready if they want it. It is not the opening.

The 90-second script

Decision. Outcome it protects. Risk if we wait. Options. Recommendation. Stop talking.

After

WHAT THEY DECIDED / DEFERRED

FOLLOW-UP I OWN

Stakeholder question list

Ask marketing, sales, and finance before you design. Asking the right questions is a compass, not a courtesy.

PROJECT / DECISION

Before the meeting

- [ ] I know who is in the room and what they own.
- [ ] I have three questions that are not “does this make sense technically?”
- [ ] I will listen more than I explain.

Questions to take with you

QUESTION	ASKED OF	WHAT I HEARD
What does success look like for you in 9(		
What would make this a waste of time?		
Who else has to live with this decision?		
What have we tried that failed?		
If we can only do one thing well, which o		

Constructive feedback check

Specific, behavioral, actionable, respectful — never a personal attack. Destructive feedback is not “being direct.” It is being careless.

PERSON

WHEN I WILL SAY IT

Draft — test it against the bar

In [specific moment] you [behavior]. The effect was [what the room / work did]. I need [next move]. How do you see it?

The bar

- [ ] Specific — a moment, not a personality.
- [ ] About behavior or outcome, not character.
- [ ] Actionable — they would know what to try tomorrow.
- [ ] Balanced enough that a strength is not invisible.
- [ ] Respectful. I could read this aloud in front of them.
- [ ] Not a sandwich. Not waiting for review season.

After they respond

Problem rewrite

Technical version vs. customer, cost, or team version. A well-named problem is already half-led.

LIVE ISSUE (WORKING TITLE)

As a technical problem

The system, the defect, the elegant puzzle.

As a customer / cost / team problem

Who feels it, what it costs, what happens if we wait.

Whose definition have I not asked for?

The sentence I will use in the next meeting

Steel-man the other side

Write the strongest version of the view you do not hold. Share it with the person who holds it. Ask what you still missed.

THE DISAGREEMENT

THE PERSON

My current view (one paragraph)

The strongest version of theirs

No caricature. No “they just don’t get it.” What would have to be true for them to be right?

What I still missed (after they read it)

What I will do with that

Team strengths map

What each person brings that is not on the job description. Then move one piece of work so that strength can show.

TEAM / DATE

PERSON			
STRENGTH OTHERS MAY MISS			
WORK THEY SHOULD OWN MORE OF			
WORK I SHOULD STOP FINISHING FOR THEM			

Where I am still the bottleneck

One move this week

Conflict conversation

Issue without villains, root cause, next step both can live with. Some conflict is normal. Unhandled conflict is a tax.

WHO IS IN THIS

WHEN WE WILL TALK

The issue in one sentence — no villains

Likely root (circle in the conversation)

- ☐ Goals — we want different outcomes.
- ☐ Style — we work and speak differently.
- ☐ Resources — time, people, priority.
- ☐ Respect — someone does not feel heard or valued.

What I will ask first

Next step both can live with

Date we will check if it held

Time block for leaders

Protect two hours for high-value work. Your calendar is a confession of what you actually value.

WEEK OF

THE ONE OUTCOME THAT WOULD MAKE THE WEEK MATTER

This week's blocks (write them, then put them on the calendar)

DAY	HOURS	PROTECTED WORK	WHAT I DECLINED OR MOVED
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			

Meetings that exist from politeness, not purpose

What shipped because of a block that would not have shipped in fragments

ELBTG the project

Why, skill, ownership, change, who grows — one page. Keep it on the wall for the life of the project.

PROJECT

DATE

E · ELEVATE — WHY DOES THIS EXIST FOR THE ORGANIZATION?

L · LEARN — WHAT SKILL DOES THIS TEAM STILL NEED?

B · BUILD — WHO OWNS WHAT? MENTORSHIP AND EXPERIENCE ON THIS WORK.

T · TRANSFORM — WHAT WILL WE CHANGE WHEN THE TECHNOLOGY OR MARKET MOVES?

G · GROW — WHO IS BECOMING A STRONGER LEADER BECAUSE OF THIS PROJECT?

ELBTG mentoring loop

Establish goals, Listen, Build a tailored plan, Track and adjust, Give constructive feedback.
A partnership, not a lecture.

MENTOR	MENTEE	SEASON (E.G. Q3)

E · Establish clear goals

Specific objectives you both can recognize in 90 days.

L · Listen actively — what I heard, not what I assumed

B · Build a tailored plan

SKILL / EXPERIENCE	PROJECT OR PRACTICE	SUPPORT	BY WHEN

T · Track progress and adjust

Milestones. What changed. What we are dropping.

G · Give constructive feedback (both directions)