PROCESS TO PRACTICE SUMMIT 2026 · SYDNEY · DAY TWO OPENING KEYNOTE

Architecting Organisational Intelligence

Building organisations that learn, adapt & improve — and the four design decisions behind the companies that actually did it.

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THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

Companies are dying younger.

33 yrs → **12** yrs

Average tenure of a company on the S&P 500 — 1964 versus the forecast for 2027. Source: Innosight, Corporate Longevity Forecast.

They weren't lazy. They weren't inefficient. Most of them executed yesterday's playbook — brilliantly.

The constraint is no longer the speed of execution. It's the speed of unlearning.

THE SHIFT

From organisations that do — to organisations that learn.

ORGANISATIONS THAT DO

- Optimised for repetition
- Knowledge lives in the hierarchy
- Change is a programme
- The question: “Did we hit the plan?”

→

ORGANISATIONS THAT LEARN

- Optimised for adaptation
- Knowledge lives in the work
- Change is the operating system
- The question: “What did we learn?”

Intelligence isn't a talent problem. It's an architecture problem.

Four design decisions. Four companies that made them.

01
MINDSET
What gets rewarded?
MICROSOFT

02
STRUCTURE
Who gets to decide?
HAIER

03
MEASURES
What counts as winning?
HANDELSBANKEN

04
MEMORY
What do we keep?
DBS BANK

Every organisation answers these four. Most answer them by accident. Architecting intelligence means answering them on purpose.

Microsoft didn't train unlearning. It paid for it.

"Know-it-all" → "learn-it-all" — wired into reviews, pay and promotion.

HOW THEY DID IT

1. **Rewired the reward system**
   Credit for learning from failure — and for other people's results.

2. **Made the leaders model it**
   Every meeting closes with the question, out loud.

3. **Scaled the habit**
   One Week — 70,000+ prototyping. Winners get funded.

MARKET VALUE

$300B →

$3T

2014 → 2024

THE TAX ON LATE UNLEARNING

$7.6B

handset write-off, 2015 — fifteen months after buying in.

Unlearning is not a training problem. **It's a reward-system problem.**

DESIGN DECISION 02 · STRUCTURE — WHO GETS TO DECIDE?

Haier shrank the unit of decision.

RenDanHeYi — zero distance between the decision-maker and the user.

THE RESTRUCTURE

~4,000

micro-enterprises — own P&L, own hiring, own customers.

#1 major-appliance brand, 15+ years running

HOW THEY DID IT

1. **Dissolved the middle**
   ~10,000 roles gone — and the approvals with them.
2. **Rebuilt around users**
   70,000 people into small self-managing businesses.
3. **Put a price on bureaucracy**
   Teams buy services from each other. The user signs off.

The self-evolving part: nobody redesigns the org chart. It redesigns itself.

DESIGN DECISION 03 · MEASURES — WHAT COUNTS AS WINNING?

One bank hit its number. One abolished the budget.

WELLS FARGO · THE RIGID KPI

“Eight is great” — eight products per household. Tied to pay.

~3.5M accounts nobody asked for

US$3B in penalties

The KPI worked. It was measuring the wrong thing.

HANDELSBANKEN · THE RELATIVE TARGET

- Budget abolished 1970. Never reinstated.
- One target: beat the peer-bank average.
- Branches set their own pricing and credit.

40+ yrs beating that average

0 bailouts. Ever.

A fixed target teaches people to hit it. **A relative target teaches them to improve.**

DBS turned knowledge into infrastructure.

From "Damn Bloody Slow" to World's Best Bank.

1

Changed the benchmark

GANDALF — measured against the tech giants, not the banks.

2

Made experimenting mandatory

Running an experiment went onto everyone's KPIs.

3

Turned knowledge into infrastructure

Instrumented journeys replaced binders of static SOPs.

18,000+ employees re-skilled in data

World's Best Bank Euromoney · Global Finance

Knowledge in systems compounds. Knowledge in heads resigns. AI cannot recover a "why" nobody wrote down.

All four levers. One established company. Four years.

A global technology business, 160 years old. Not a start-up. Not a greenfield.

MINDSET — Stopped rewarding milestone compliance. Started rewarding surfaced problems.

STRUCTURE — Decisions moved down to the teams closest to the work.

MEASURES — Flow and improvement cadences replaced milestone policing.

MEMORY — Know-how moved into shared ceremonies and communities — out of a few heads.

WHAT MOVED

$120M
saved over four years

12 → 52
learning loops a year

1,500+
practitioners

Savings you bank once. A learning loop pays forever.

Not one of these five ran a culture campaign. They changed consequences.

MONDAY, 9:00 AM

One lever. One loop. Ninety days.

No budget. No steering committee. One decision.

MINDSET

Celebrate one intelligent failure — publicly.

STRUCTURE

Push one recurring decision two levels down.

MEASURES

Turn one fixed KPI into a relative measure.

MEMORY

Give one process a living decision log.

POINT TO PONDER

Your organisation already has an intelligence architecture.

Most of it was never designed.

Which of the four will you choose on purpose?

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