DECISION CLARITY

How leaders remove friction and speed execution

Most execution problems get diagnosed as people problems.

They're almost never that. They're decision-clarity problems — and the structural conditions that produce them are fixable.

THE REAL PROBLEM

Most of what slows execution comes down to unclear decisions. When it isn't clear who can call it or what they need to know or see to move forward, people default to:

- Re-deciding the same issues
- Escalating to get sign-off (or "just to be safe")
- Running two versions of the same work because nobody committed to one
- Sitting on decisions because the downside feels real and the authority isn't clear

This is rarely a motivation problem. It's uncertainty at the point of decision — especially where downside risk is real. The pattern looks like disengagement or resistance. It's neither.

WHAT DECISION CLARITY MEANS

Decision clarity is about five things people can use in the moment:

Decision owner	Who can make the call now — named, not implied
Evidence standard	What we need to know or see to proceed
Stop / escalate	When we pause, hold, or escalate — based on defined triggers
Handoff acceptance	What "done" means at the next handoff — so output isn't sent back
Leader reinforcement	What leaders praise, allow, correct, and review — after the call is made

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Decision rules that are co-developed with the people who use them tend to hold.

Rules handed down tend to erode — not because people are resistant, but because they never owned them in the first place.

THE DECISION CHAIN

Three questions sit underneath every decision that stalls:

Who decides	What we need to see	What leaders reinforce
Decision owner named	Evidence + stop triggers	Praise, allow, correct, review

The handoff standard — what "done" looks like — sits between knowing who decides and knowing what they need to see. What leaders do after the call is made is what determines whether any of this holds.

WHY THIS MATTERS

When it's clear who decides, what they need, and what leaders back up:

- Escalations drop — and those that remain are legitimate
- Decisions get made faster — and stay made
- Rework tapers off — and stays down
- Handoffs hold

This is also what determines whether Lean and CI gains hold past the initial push. The tools don't change — the way decisions get made around the work does.

HOW YOU'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING

Four indicators — all observable without a new measurement system:

Indicator	What improvement looks like
Escalation rate	Fewer escalations overall; the ones that remain are there for a real reason
How long decisions take	Things get called faster and don't sit
Re-deciding	The same calls aren't being made twice
Work sent back	Less comes back because something wasn't finished or wasn't clear