

 SINGAPORE LEADERSHIP SERIES

Leading Change Through Communication

An Executive Playbook for Modern Leaders Navigating Complex Transformations Across Generations, Cultures and Geographies

FEATURED PANELISTS



Ivin Lim

CFO Asia Pacific, Arup



Geraldine Chin

Former Chairman & MD, ExxonMobil Asia Pacific



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CEO, Mindsprint (Former Senior Executive of Olam)



Delicia Tan

CEO (SG, HK, TW), Edelman

Playbook Overview

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1

Transformation, Restructuring & Matrix Structures

 **Speakers:** Ivin Lim & Suresh Sundararajan

- > **Strategic Hierarchy:** Establishing governing objectives before tactical shifts.
- > **IQ + EQ Framework:** Balancing financial rationale with psychological empathy.
- > **Deconstructing Fear:** Upfront role clarity and mapping organizational structures.
- > **Matrix Filtering:** Filtering signal from noise through objective ground channels.

 **Focus:** Aligning strategy, driving operational execution, and building organizational trust.

CHAPTER 2

Disruption, Generations & Lived Experiences

 **Speakers:** Geraldine Chin & Delicia Tan

- > **Overcoming Albatrosses:** Eliminating strategic liabilities & legacy inertia.
- > **Strategic U-Turns:** Executing direction shifts with fact-backed transparency.
- > **Lived Experience:** Moving past generational age labels to trust-brokering.
- > **Fact-Based Safety:** Empowering teams to speak truth to power cleanly.

 **Focus:** Cultural resilience, generational alignment, and executive longevity.

Setting the "North Star" & Hierarchy

CHAPTER 1

📌 Tier 1: Governing Objective & Purpose

Why We Exist (Sacrosanct Anchor)

🎯 Tier 2: 5-Year Stretch Vision

Where We Are Going

📈 Tier 3: Strategic & Financial Goals

What We Measure

❤️ Tier 4: Operating Values & Behaviors

How We Act & Make Decisions

Sacrosanct Hierarchy: Always anchor change messages in purpose before introducing shifts.

The "Core Process": Spend 3 full days onboarding new hires directly into core corporate values.

Insurgent Mindset: Challenge leaders to think without artificial constraints for stretch goals.

"When I was at Olam... the senior executive used to spend three full days taking newcomers through what everything stands for... It was a very signature process called Core Process."

— SURESH SUNDARARAJAN

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST THROUGH STRATEGIC TRANSLATION

Rational Rationale (IQ)

- > Financial models, market facts, and strategic performance metrics.
- > Clear business logic justifying direction choices.
- > **Leader Action:** Multi-directional briefings & transparent progress tracking.

Emotional Connection (EQ)

- > Psychological safety, empathy, and personal relevance.
- > Addressing human anxieties during shifts.
- > **Leader Action:** Pair high challenge with high support.

Key Takeaway: Leaders process decisions months ahead; employees need time and structured support to digest and catch up.

"Communication is not the amplification of a message. It's really about translating strategy into meaning... meaning then translates into actions, and eventually into trust."

— IVIN LIM

Alleviating Employees' Fears

CHAPTER 1

FEAR 1

Why change?

Action: Detail sum-of-parts value creation and business logic transparently to remove speculation.

FEAR 2

Is my job safe?

Action: Provide immediate, upfront clarity on role security, transition timelines, and growth trajectories.

FEAR 3

Which house do I belong to?

Action: Explicitly map team structures and empower teams to co-create their new operating identity.



Pre-Decision Engagement

Engage 20–30 key influencers 2–3 months before formal decisions are locked.



Quarterly Cadence

Use investor-grade transparency internally to stop rumors before they start.

"If communication happens when a decision is made, that is too late. The multi-directional conversation should happen before formal communication goes out."

— IVIN LIM

Matrix Feedback & Signal Filtering

CHAPTER 1

▼ Filter 1: Pattern Recognition

Identify recurring feedback themes across departments rather than overreacting to isolated noise.

⚖ Filter 2: Objectivity Filter

Strip away emotional delivery to isolate hard facts: What happened? How did people respond? What was the outcome?

⚡ Filter 3: Agile Channels

Deploy 2-minute mobile video updates and 10-minute skip-level catchups ("Tell me how to make the firm better—no positive fluff").



"Strip away all the emotions... get down to the objectivity: what are the facts of the case, what happened, how people responded, what was the outcome."

— SURESH SUNDARARAJAN

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Overcoming "Albatrosses"

CHAPTER 2

Reclaiming Organizational Agency & Removing Legacy Liabilities

A linear path to shifting from "victim of circumstances" to owner of destiny.



Step 1: Identify Albatross

Pinpoint legacy pricing loops, outdated structures, or strategic liabilities holding the team back.



Step 2: Decisive Action

Take bold steps—even if accepting short-term volume or margin hits to break legacy inertia.



Step 3: Reclaim Agency

Shift culture from helpless victim to taking control of your organization's destiny.

Core Concept: Treat structural barriers as temporary "speed bumps" navigated by re-anchoring to the North Star.

"The organization went from thinking 'I am the victim of the situation' to 'We can take our fate into our own hands.' It took that whole episode to get rid of that Albatross."

— GERALDINE CHIN

Strategic U-Turns & Pivots

CHAPTER 2

PHASE 1

Pre-Existing Transparency

Share the underlying logic, assumptions, and rationale when original strategic paths are initially set.

🕒 Sets the baseline so teams understand future pivots.

PHASE 2

Fact-Based Pivot

When circumstances shift, demonstrate changed facts so teams view the U-turn as rational and necessary, not frivolous.

🔄 Maintains leadership credibility and alignment.

Execution Guardrail: Balance global mandates, regional goals, and local market realities with risk-weighted Plan Bs.

"Executing U-turns is fundamental to how you lead... sharing the logic and rationale, because when the situation changes, you can say 'Situations have changed... these are now our choices.'"

— GERALDINE CHIN

Fact-Based Psychological Safety

CHAPTER 2

AVOID

Subjective Claims

"I feel this won't work..."

- > High friction and emotional deadlock.
- > Low credibility with executive leadership.
- > Perceived as personal bias or complaining.

ADOPT

Primary Source Data

"Fact A, B, and C show X outcome..."

- > High psychological safety and objective clarity.
- > Irrefutable authority backed by evidence.
- > Empowers junior staff to speak truth to power.

Bypass Social Echo Chambers:

Require teams to return to primary source data and policy texts rather than secondary commentary.

"For junior consultants that need to speak truth to power... make sure that you're backed up by fact. Don't say 'I feel this is not going to work'—say 'This won't work because we know A, B, and C.'"

— DELICIA TAN

Executive Endurance & Habits

CHAPTER 2

1. Courage to Decide

Decide when options are highest, even when information is minimal (The Kissinger Paradox).

2. Long-Form Cognitive Feed

Read 300+ page long-form texts regularly to train multi-variable mental models and deep thinking.

3. Grounding in Core Values

Anchor personal identity in core principles and self-worth, not temporary corporate titles.

4. Protecting Personal Space

Maintain non-work interests to prevent personal identity burnout and sustain long-term energy.

"Outside of an organization, you need to be very clear of who you are as an individual, what defines you, and what your interests are outside of the office."

— DELICIA TAN