AME MILWAUKEE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

BUILDING RESILIENT TEAMS — THE KEY TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

HELENE SMUTS

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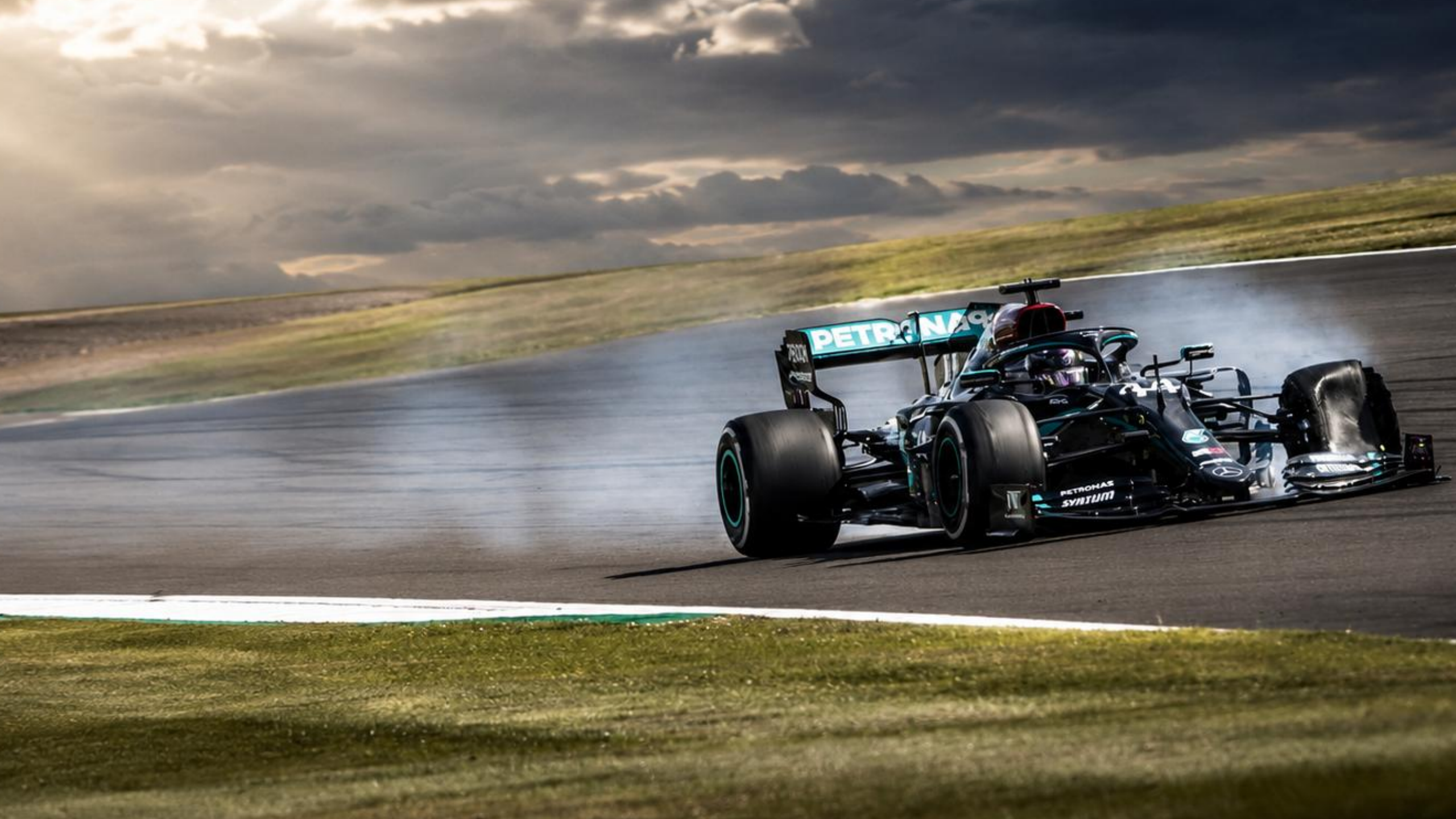
SILVERSTONE

TWENTY 20



1ST – LEWIS HAMILTON

BRITISH GRAND PRIX


PETRONAS
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COMPOSURE
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BLACK LIVES
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PETRONAS
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THE RITZ-CARLTON
CROWDSTRIKE
THE RITZ-CARLTON


THAT IS
RESILIENCE
INEOS
PIRELLI
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WAS HAMILTON'S RESILIENCE THE STRATEGY ... OR WAS IT THE EMERGENCY BACKUP PLAN?

THEY WEREN'T RIDING
ON RESILIENCE.

THEY WERE RIDING
ON CONSISTENCY.

CELEBRATING RESILIENCE



WE PRAISE
the person who always absorbs the chaos

WE ADMIRE
the team that 'just pushes through' again

WE NORMALISE
firefighting

THIS BECOMES THE STANDARD

THE COST



ENGAGEMENT DROPS

TEAMS BECOME DISGRUNTLED AND BURNT OUT

PEOPLE STOP TAKING OWNERSHIP AND START JUST SURVIVING

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RISES

IF YOUR PEOPLE CONSTANTLY NEED TO BE **RESILIENT** … WHAT DOES THAT TELL YOU ABOUT THE **ENVIRONMENT** THEY'RE OPERATING IN?

THE REAL GOAL

WHAT WE SHOULD AIM FOR IS NOT RESILIENCE. IT'S SUSTAINABILITY.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE ~~RESILIENT~~ TEAMS — THE KEY TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

HELENE SMUTS

TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE TEAMS, WE FIRST NEED TO LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL — BEFORE WE LOOK AT THE TEAM.

THE QUESTION TO START WITH

WHAT MAKES A PERSON STAY ENGAGED — NOT JUST SHOW UP?

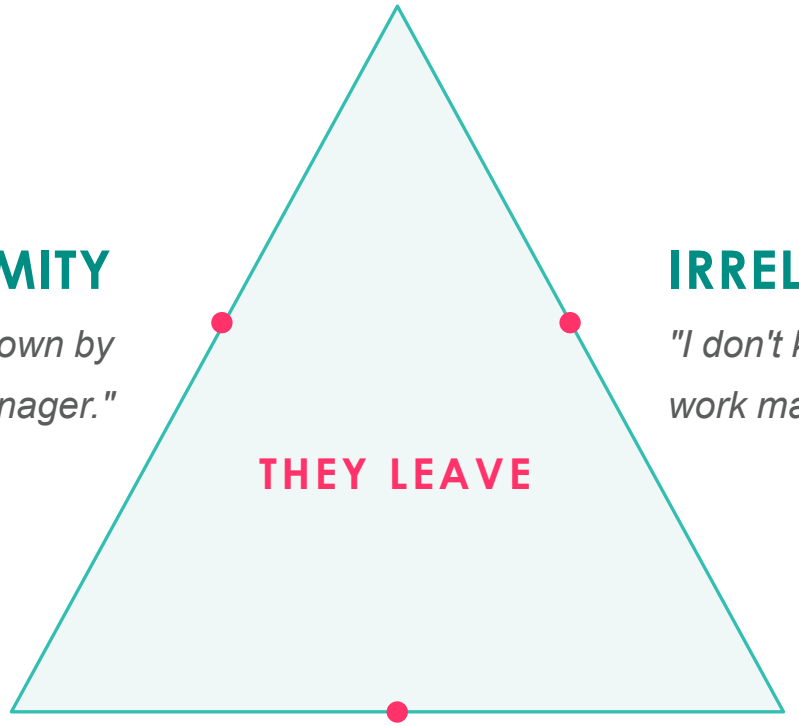
Patrick Lencioni

one of the most-used **leadership thinkers** in the world



THE COMPOUND EFFECT

THREE REASONS EMPLOYEES DISENGAGE




People
need to feel like
they matter.

MANAGEMENT TEAM IN FINTECH

0–5.9 Low 6.0–7.9 Moderate 8.0–10 High



	Feb 2024	Change	Sep 2024
Attention to Team Results	6.4	▲ 4.69%	6.7
Peer to Peer Accountability	5.6	▲ 8.93%	6.1
True Commitment	6.2	▲ 8.06%	6.7
Passionate Dialogue and Debate	6.2	▲ 4.84%	6.5
Vulnerability Base Trust	5.9	▲ 6.78%	6.3

PROCUREMENT TEAM IN AUTOMOTIVE

0–5.9 Low 6.0–7.9 Moderate 8.0–10 High



	May 2023	Change	Oct 2023
Attention to Team Results	6.6	▲ 6.06%	7.0
Peer to Peer Accountability	5.6	▲ 7.14%	6.0
True Commitment	6.0	▲ 23.33%	7.4
Passionate Dialogue and Debate	5.4	▲ 35.19%	7.3
Vulnerability Base Trust	4.8	▲ 31.25%	6.3

MARKETING TEAM IN MANUFACTURING

0–5.9 Low 6.0–7.9 Moderate 8.0–10 High



	2024	Change	2025
Attention to Team Results	6.3	▲ 3.17%	6.5
Peer to Peer Accountability	5.9	▲ 19.05%	7.5
True Commitment	6.8	▲ 17.64%	8.0
Passionate Dialogue and Debate	6.9	▲ 18.84%	8.2
Vulnerability Base Trust	6.5	▲ 13.85%	7.4

ONCE YOU CAN SEE WHAT'S BROKEN IN A TEAM, HOW DO YOU LEAD IN A WAY THAT FIXES IT — AND KEEPS IT FIXED?

CREDO LEADERS FRAMEWORK

01
CONNECT
BEFORE CORRECT

02
RELATE
WORK TO MEANING

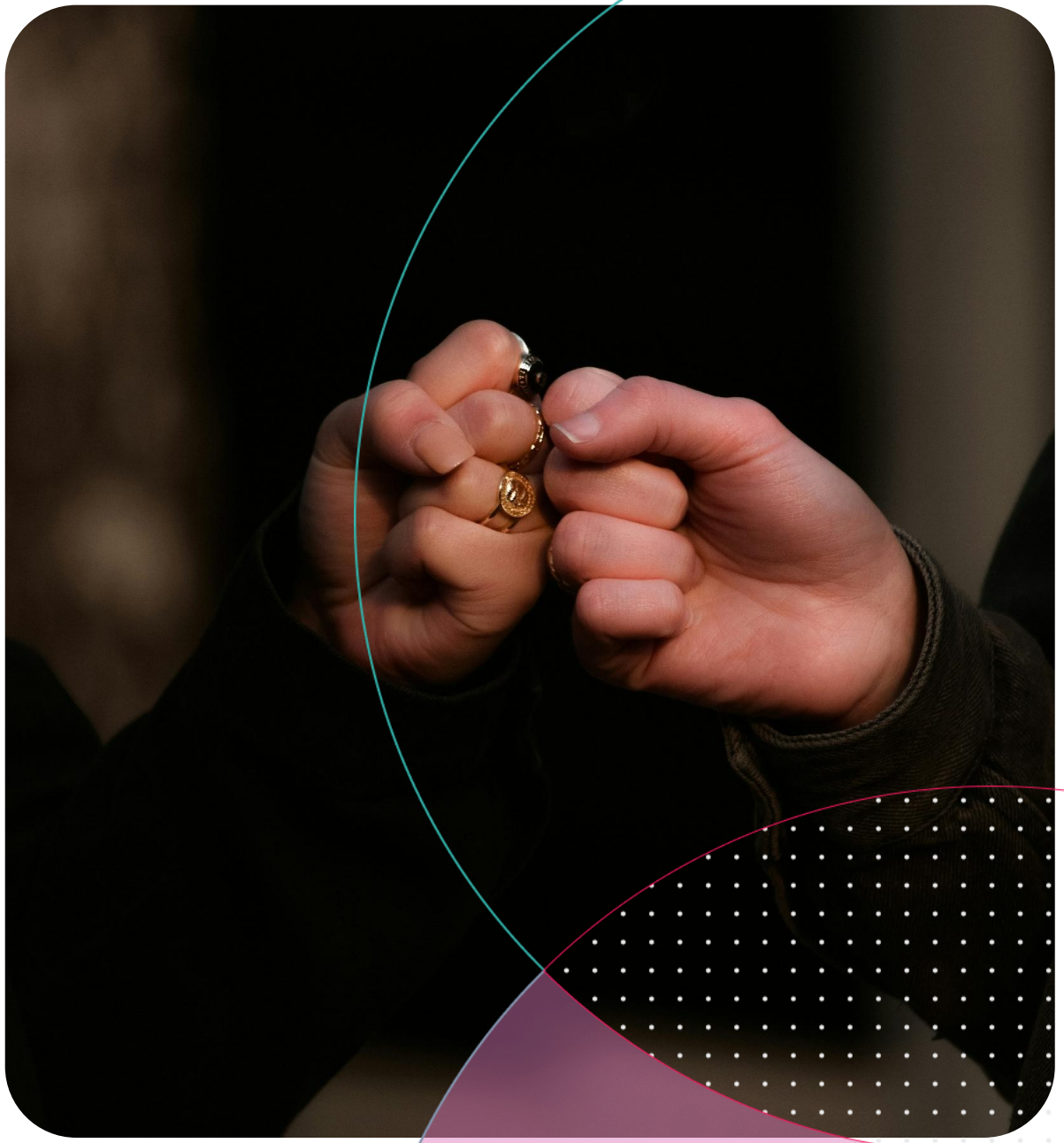
03
EXPECT
A LOT & EXPRESS BELIEVE

04
DEVELOP
THROUGH COACHING AND FEEDBACK

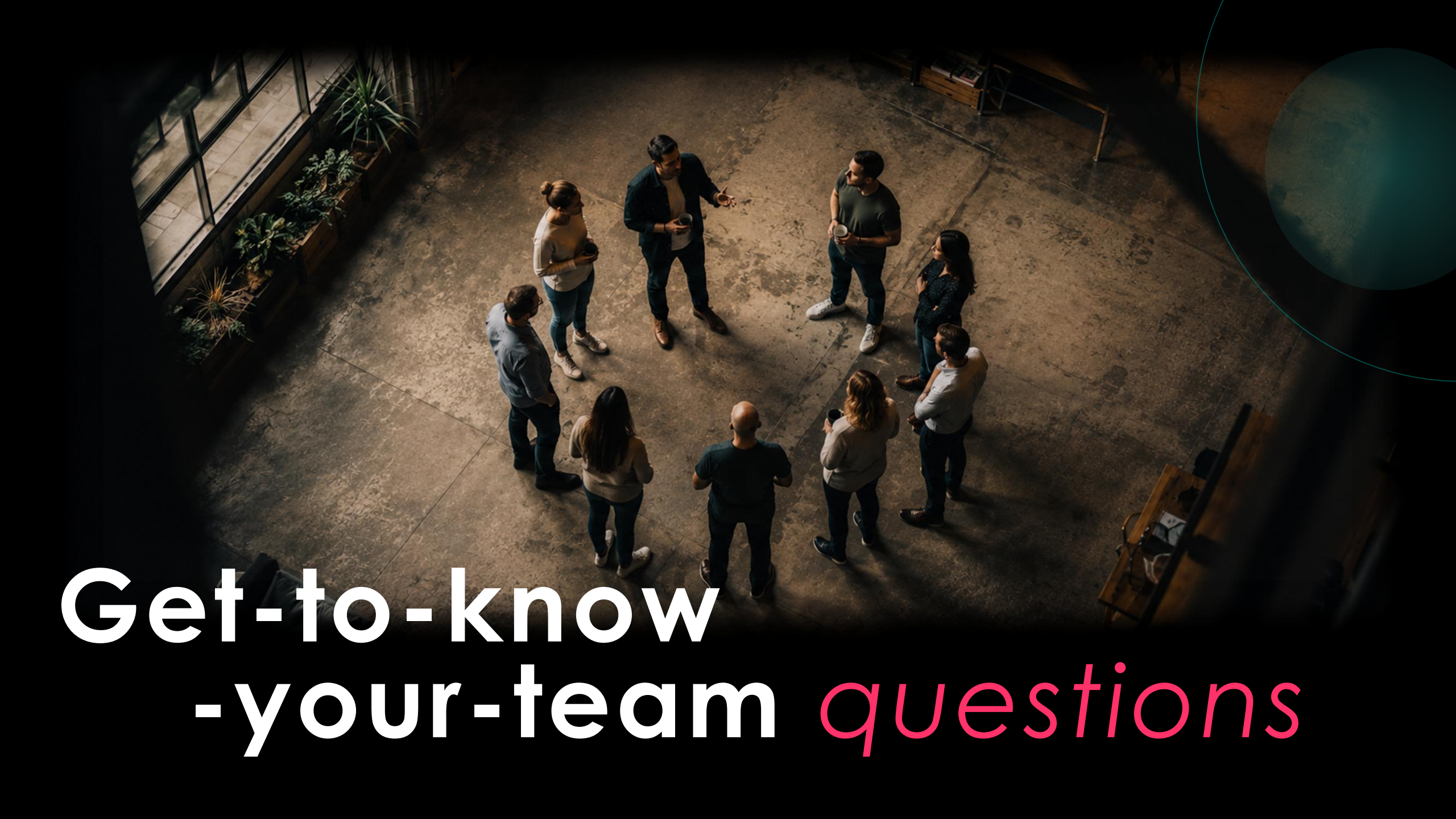
05
OFFER
HUMANITY

Tool #1:

Connect before you correct.



HOW DO I BELIEVE YOU HAVE MY BEST INTERESTS AT HEART IF I DON'T KNOW YOU?

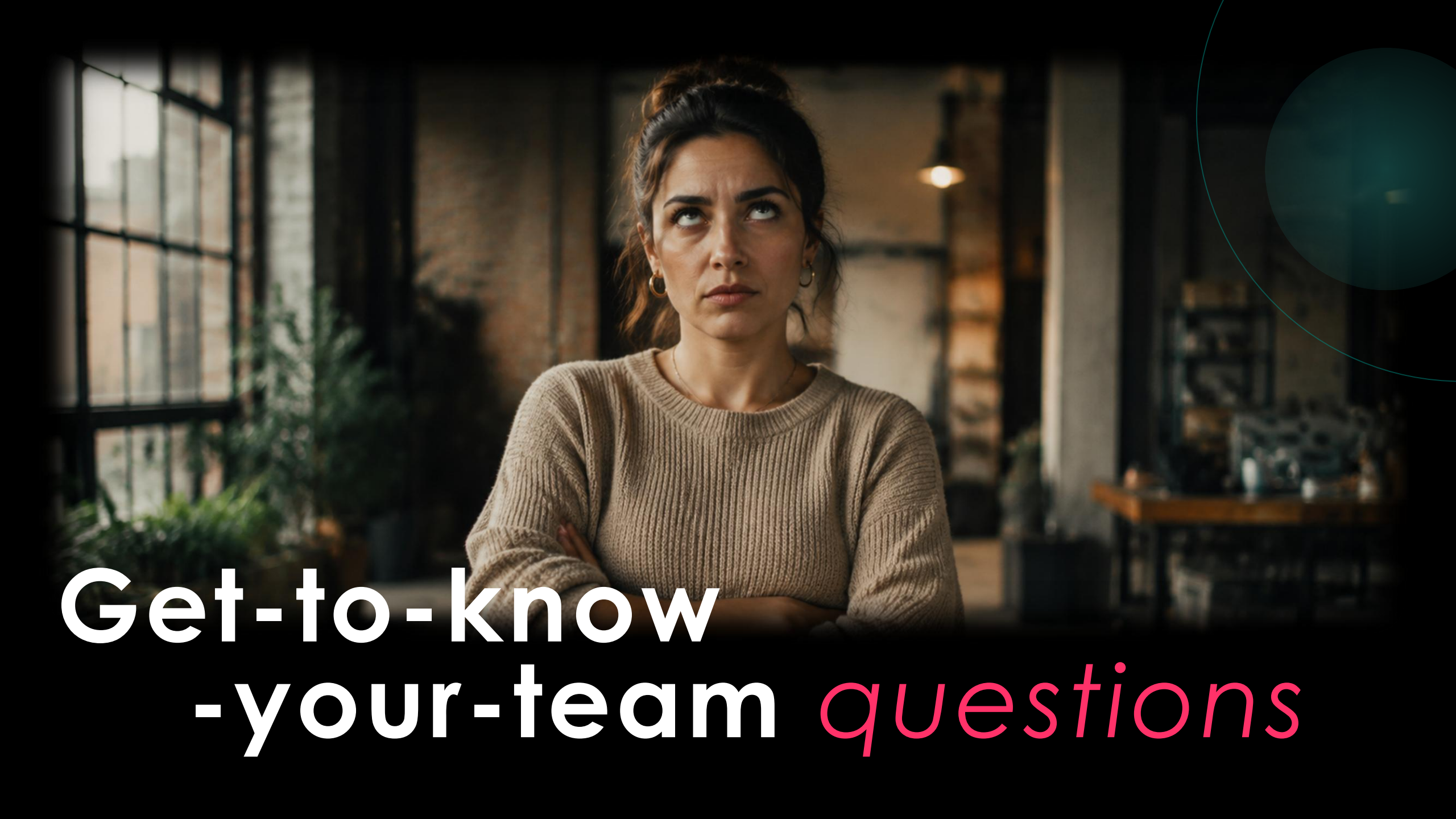


Get-to-know -your-team *questions*

GET TO KNOW YOUR TEAM

20 QUESTIONS

1. Are you confrontational?
2. What is a common misconception people have about you?
3. Are you religious or spiritual?
4. What talent do you wish you had?
5. What is one of the kindest things someone has ever done for you?
6. What is something new you tried recently and loved?
7. What is the most spontaneous thing you have ever done?
8. Do you want your children to be like you?
9. Have you ever broken someone's heart?
10. How do you feel about birthdays?
11. How would your friends describe you in a sentence?
12. What moves you to tears or gives you goosebumps?
13. Is there anything you wished you did not know?
14. What advice would you ask for from your greatest hero?
15. What advice would you give yourself five years ago?
16. What are you passionate about and want to spend more time doing?
17. What are you working towards that you could use help with?
18. What can you do that you could not do a year ago?
19. What do you find beautiful?
20. What would you rather do besides your current job?

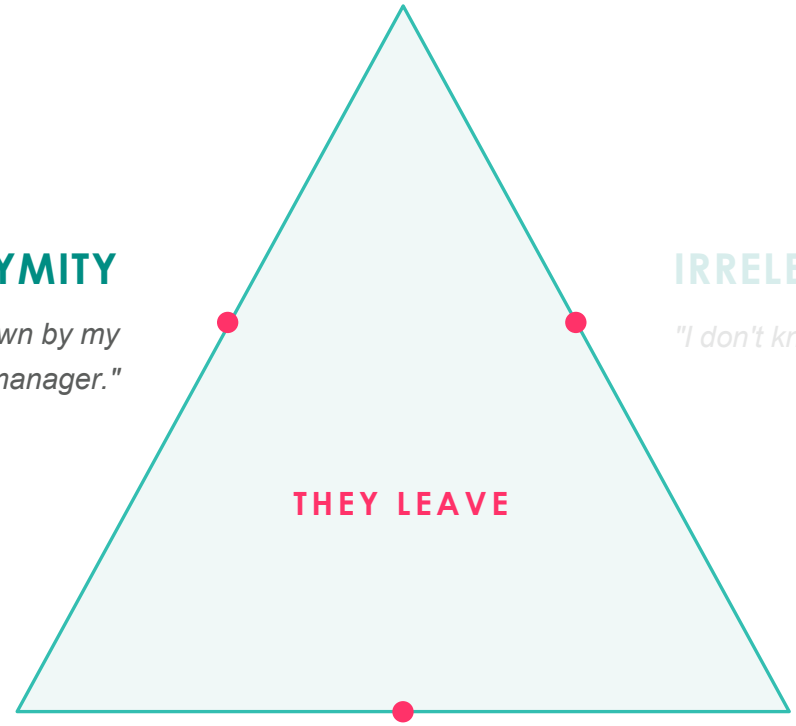


Get-to-know -your-team *questions*

THE COMPOUND EFFECT

THREE REASONS EMPLOYEES DISENGAGE

When all three are present, one fundamental human need gets violated — and the person leaves when the next opportunity comes along.



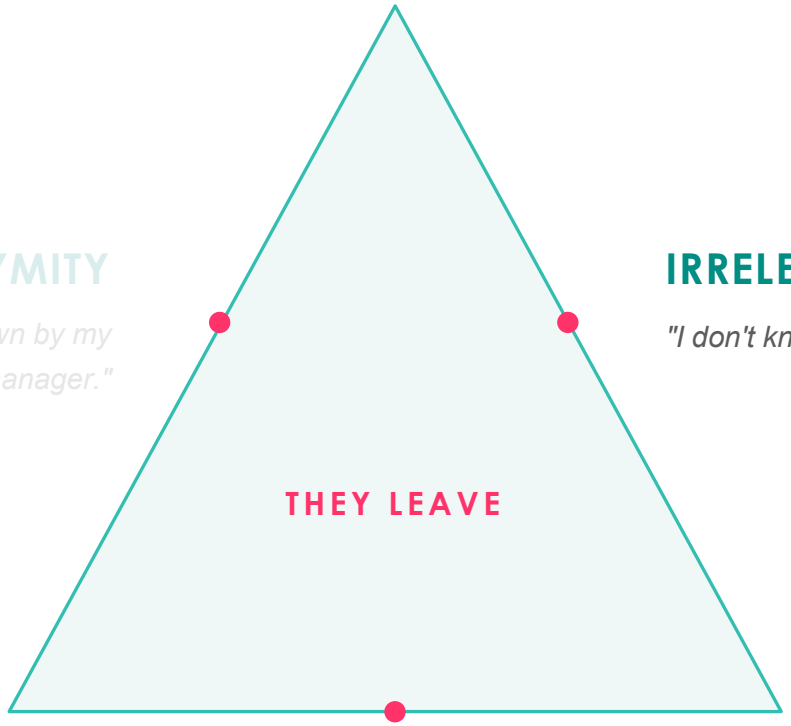
Tool #2:

Relate work to meaning and expect a lot while showing belief



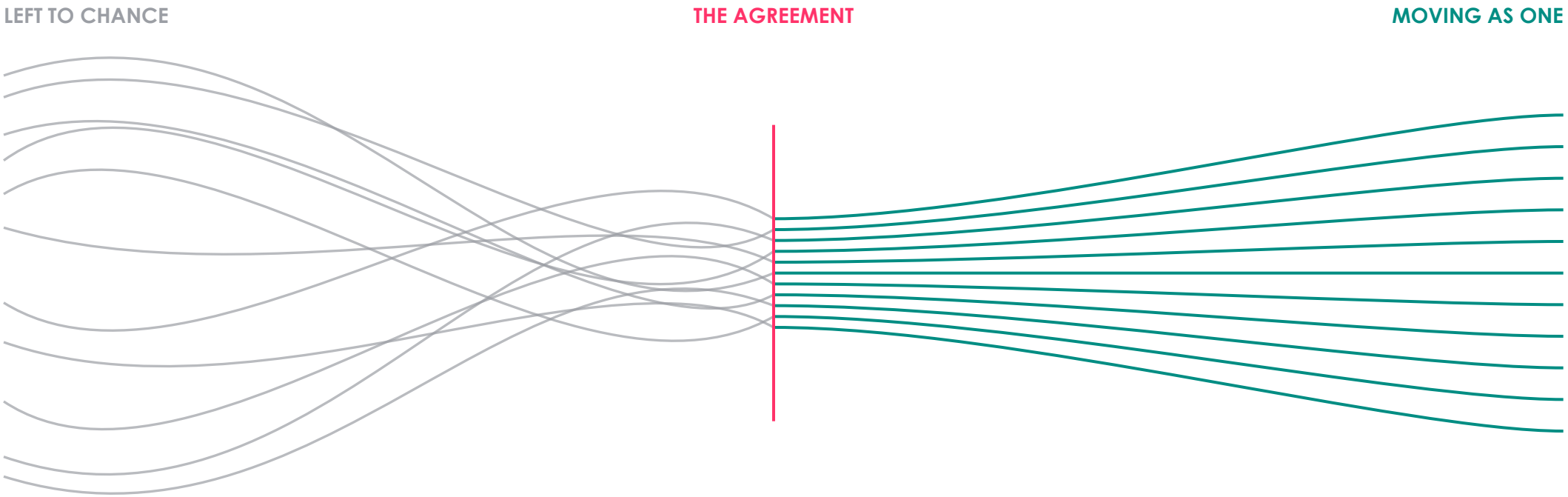
THE COMPOUND EFFECT

THREE REASONS EMPLOYEES DISENGAGE



STOP LEAVING TEAMWORK TO CHANCE

YOU MAKE THE "RULES OF ENGAGEMENT" CLEAR



TOOL #2 — RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

DISCUSS



How does my work affect yours, and vice versa?



What do I need from you as a team?



What do you need from me as the leader so you can deliver successfully?

THEN AGREE ON



How will we deal with conflict?



How will we handle mistakes?



What are our expectations around response times, communication and emergencies?



“We just put things in a box.

What’s the point in us being a high performing team?”


"Wait!
... we help make
the beer!?"

WHEN PEOPLE FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG TO SOMETHING WITH CLEAR STANDARDS AND IMPACT — THEY RISE TO MEET THOSE STANDARDS.

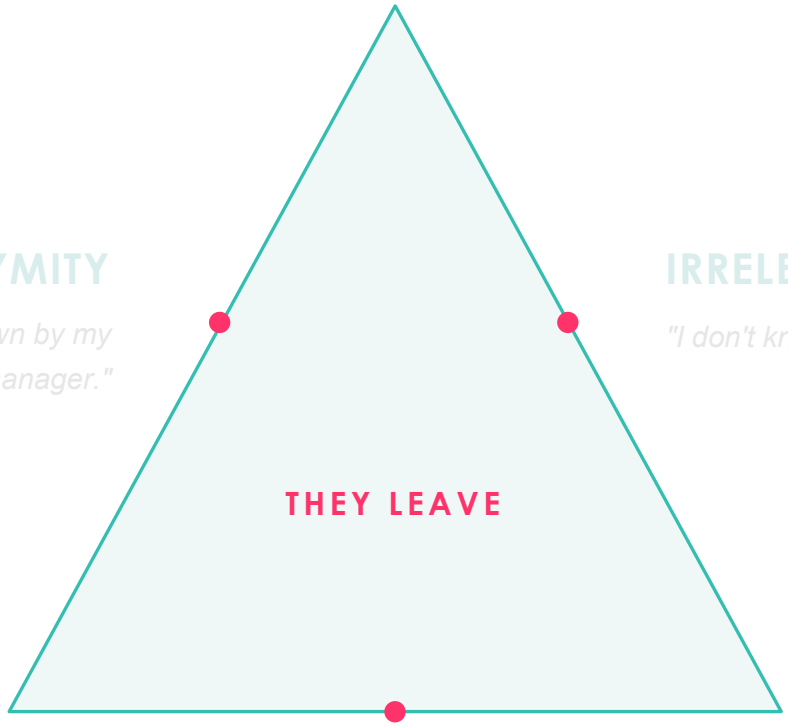
Tool #3:

Creating a culture of feedback.



THE COMPOUND EFFECT

THREE REASONS EMPLOYEES DISENGAGE



PEOPLE AVOID **FEEDBACK** FOR ONE SIMPLE REASON — THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO STRUCTURE THE CONVERSATION RESPECTFULLY.

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A SIMPLE THREE-STEP FRAMEWORK

SEE IT WHAT IS WORKING, OR WHAT IS CREATING TENSION?

SAY IT NAME IT DIRECTLY AND RESPECTFULLY.

OWN IT AGREE ON WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT.

GIVING FEEDBACK, IN PRACTICE



SEE IT

"James, I've noticed how you slow down and look at problems from different angles, this has its challenges, yet I want to acknowledge how it's helped the team think differently."



SAY IT

"What still creates tension is that the solutions often stay in your head and aren't communicated. This adds pressure on the team and causes us to do things twice"



OWN IT

"Going forward, could we agree you share your thinking in our weekly check-in before decisions are made?"



“The team don’t want to know how to do better.”



THERE'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL SITTING IN A FEEDBACK CULTURE.

RESILIENCE

WAS NEVER MERCEDES STRATEGY




PIRELLI
AMG

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER."

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~~"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER."~~ BS!

ACTION IS POWER.



01

START WEEKLY

GET-TO-KNOW-YOUR-TEAM

CONVERSATIONS

~~ANONYMITY~~



02

SCHEDULE A

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTING

SESSION

~~IRRELEVANCE~~



03

WRITE DOWN

3 FEEDBACK CONVERSATIONS

YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING

~~IMMEASURABILITY~~

DO YOU WANT A TEAM THAT SURVIVES PRESSURE ? OR ONE THAT PERFORMS SO SUSTAINABLY THAT PRESSURE ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY?

AME
MILWAUKEE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
2026

GO BUILD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS.

HELENE SMUTS

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