

The Purpose Pyramid

A hierarchy that forces clarity: survival 'success' 'significance' 'legacy'.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Purpose is a ranked hierarchy of aims enforced by trade-offs, not a slogan.
- Most teams are not under-strategised; they are under-disciplined (no priority stack, no kill list, no cadence).
- Incentives reveal the truth: people obey what is rewarded, not what is preached.

OPERATING LOGIC

Why a hierarchy

You cannot pursue every good simultaneously. A hierarchy prevents mission creep by turning philosophy into operational constraint.

Trade-offs are the receipt

Anybody can write purpose. Only leaders who accept trade-offs actually have it. Trade-offs are the proof.

Incentives tell the truth

If your rewards contradict your stated purpose, your purpose becomes theatre. Incentives are the enforcement layer.