

THE SIGNAL MOST BOARDS MISS

The problem is rarely a sudden departure. It is a slower misalignment - a leader whose strengths built the business to this stage but who is not the right person to lead it through the next one.

THE COST STARTS BEFORE THE EXIT

By the time the board acts, the organization may already have spent months absorbing slower decisions, lost confidence, hidden workarounds, stalled talent, and execution drag. The departure is not the first sign. It is the last one.

WHAT CHANGES FIRST

01 DECISIONS

Strategic choices slow down, circle back, or move outside the leader's control.

02 TALENT

High performers stop bringing ideas, seek protection, or quietly begin to leave.

03 TRUST

The executive team manages around the leader instead of working through them.

04 ENERGY

More effort goes into preserving alignment theater than producing business results.

BOARD TRUTH

A leader can be highly capable and still be wrong for the organization's next chapter.

EIGHT SIGNALS OF EXECUTIVE-STAGE MISALIGNMENT

One signal is a prompt. A pattern is a governance issue.

01

THE STRATEGY HAS OUTGROWN THE LEADER'S RANGE

Past strengths no longer match the complexity, scale, speed, or stakeholder demands ahead.

02

DECISION VELOCITY IS COLLAPSING

Important calls are delayed, repeatedly reopened, or escalated because confidence and clarity are missing.

03

THE EXECUTIVE TEAM IS WORKING AROUND THE LEADER

Side channels, shadow decisions, and informal power structures replace direct leadership.

04

CRITICAL TALENT IS DISENGAGING OR EXITING

Strong performers lose access, stop challenging assumptions, or leave without naming the real problem.

05

ACCOUNTABILITY HAS BECOME SELECTIVE

Missed commitments are explained away for some leaders while standards remain high for everyone else.

06

THE SAME PROBLEMS KEEP RETURNING

Reorganizations, new plans, and new hires change the surface, but the operating pattern remains intact.

07

STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE IS BECOMING CONDITIONAL

Investors, customers, or employees seek reassurance from others before trusting the leader's commitments.

08

THE BOARD IS DEBATING PERSONALITY INSTEAD OF EVIDENCE

Conversation centers on style, loyalty, or tenure because success measures for the next stage are unclear.

THE BOARD'S NEXT QUESTION

What will the next stage demand - and do we have evidence this leader can deliver it?

Assess the role against the future mandate, not the leader against their past success.