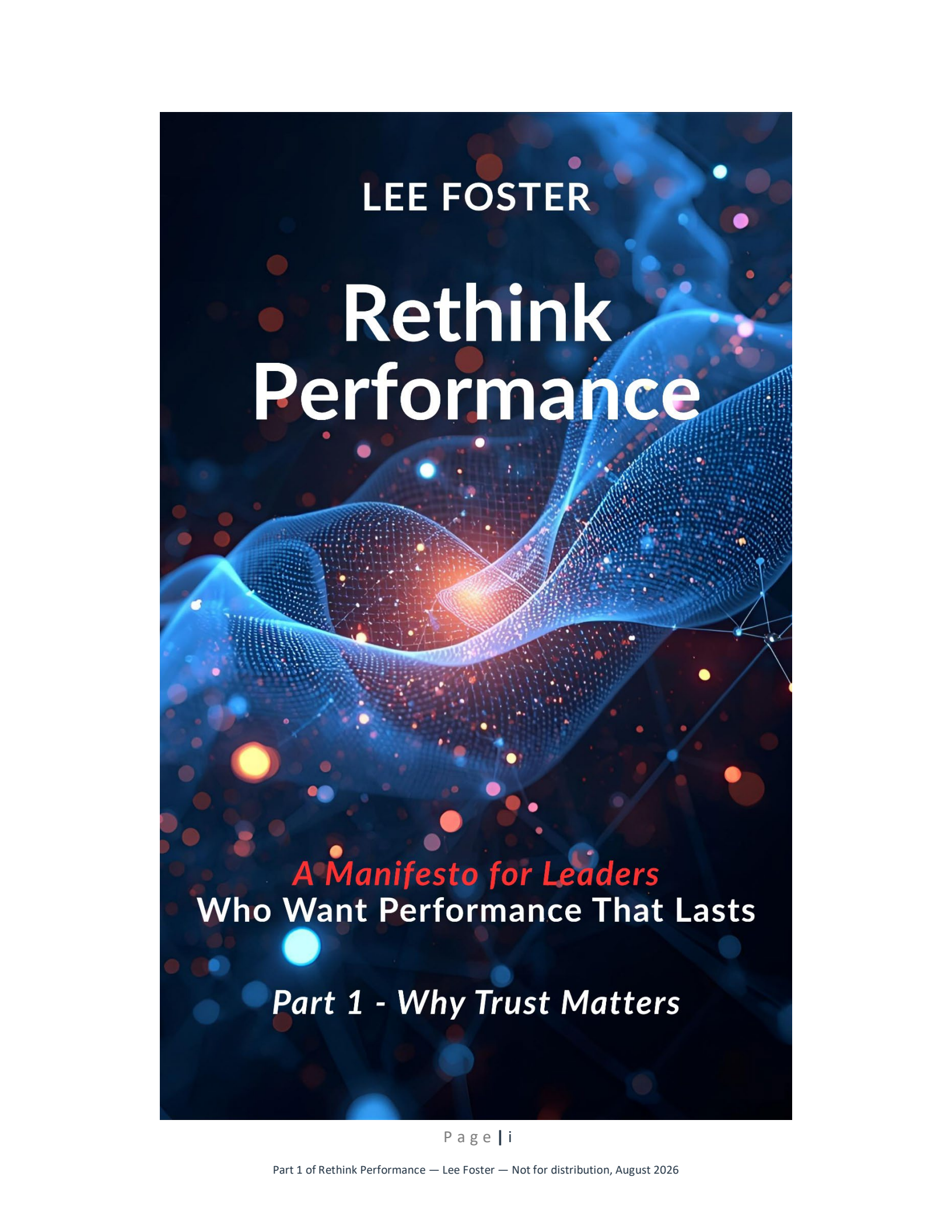




LEE FOSTER

Rethink Performance

A Manifesto for Leaders
Who Want Performance That Lasts

Part 1 - Why Trust Matters

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A Manifesto for Leaders

Who want performance that lasts

Part 1 – Why Trust Matters

By Lee Foster

“Innovation moves at the speed of trust.”

— Julia Spicer OAM

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The examples in this book are drawn from the author's research and professional practice. Some details have been condensed or de-identified to protect participants and organisations.

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How to use this book

Rethink Performance is designed to be useful on its own and even more useful when applied to a real initiative. Choose one project, program or change effort that matters to you. It may be progressing, struggling or still taking shape. Keep that same initiative in mind as you read.

We know that reading creates awareness and application creates insight. To support your learning we have created questions at the end of each chapter to help you notice what conventional means of managing performance may not yet show.

The central question

Can you see why a technically sound project is losing momentum before the conventional KPIs reveal the problem?

Introduction — Performance starts moving before the KPI does

Performance is usually discussed as an outcome. Standard metrics would normally measure whether the work was delivered on time, within budget and to the required standard. We track milestones, defects, benefits and risk. These measures do matter. However, they primarily tell us what has already happened. These are lag indicators and they often tell us too late.

By the time cost, schedule or quality begins to reveal a problem, the conditions that produced the result may have been deteriorating for months. People may no longer agree on the problem. Critical knowledge may sit with one person or one part of the organisation. It may be too late to prevent delay, rework or lost momentum. Decisions may be repeatedly deferred. Stakeholders may comply in meetings but remain unconvinced outside them. The project can appear active while its ability to move is quietly weakening.

Leaders often respond by adding another report, meeting, process or layer of control. More visibility at the outcome level can be useful, but it does not necessarily reveal what is happening underneath the work. The deeper question is not only, *“Are we delivering?”* It is, *“Do the conditions still exist for delivery to succeed?”*

My work as an engineer and researcher has led me to three conditions that deserve much more attention:

1. **Trust** — whether people have sufficient confidence in the problem, the evidence, the approach, one another and the support around the work.
2. **Knowledge** — whether the right insight exists, moves to where it is needed, in the form that it is needed and becomes part of the organisation’s or communities capability.
3. **Energy** — whether people and the system have the capacity, attention and resources to keep the initiative moving.

These conditions are interdependent. Knowledge does not flow simply because a document exists. People decide whether to share it, question it and use it. Those decisions are shaped by trust. When trust and knowledge weaken, effort becomes harder to sustain. Energy is consumed by rework, uncertainty, defensive behaviour and repeated decisions.

The result of a loss in any of these conditions eventually appears in the conventional metrics. The cause, however, began much earlier.

A different performance architecture

The InnoWise® framework emerged from my research into knowledge, governance and innovation in a project-based environment. It does not replace engineering discipline, project management, governance

or commercial controls. It does, however, add visibility to conditions that those systems often assume will take care of themselves.

The framework is unique as it treats the three core principles as follows:

- trust as a structural condition,
- knowledge as system memory, and
- energy as adaptive capacity.

Together, the principles of the framework help explain why capable teams can struggle inside technically sound initiatives; and, why some projects regain momentum after one honest conversation while others continue to consume effort without resolving the real issue. The shift may appear subtle, but it changes the questions leaders ask.

The questions that the InnoWise® framework and tools ask are designed to bring performance management closer to its source. For instance,

- Instead of asking whether the plan is being followed, we also ask whether the people involved still trust that the plan addresses the right problem.
- Instead of asking whether documents have been completed, we ask whether the knowledge needed for decisions is understood, credible and available to the people who must act.
- Instead of interpreting slow progress as resistance or poor motivation, we ask what is draining the system's capacity to move.

What this book will — and will not — do

Part 1 of Rethink Performance makes the case for seeing trust, knowledge and energy as early performance conditions. It offers a practical lens, examples from project environments and questions to apply to your own work.

The book does not pretend that one person's view can diagnose an entire organisational system. Nor does it reduce trust to a single score as context matters. A project that is still forming requires different questions from one that is trying to embed a completed solution.

That distinction is central to the Innovate Wisely approach:

Locate the work before you measure it. Measure the right conditions before you decide what to do.

The chapters that follow will help you understand why. We begin in Chapter 1 by examining why conventional performance measures often reveal problems too late. Chapter 2 explores trust as a structural condition, Chapter 3 knowledge as system memory and Chapter 4 energy as the capacity to

act. Finally, these elements are brought together in Chapter 5 to show how leaders can recognise emerging constraints earlier and create a clearer path forward.

1 Chapter 1 — What your performance metrics see too late

Another strategy that looked convincing on paper but quietly stalled in practice.

Another strong idea that never quite became normal work.

Most organisations do not lack strategies, plans, dashboards or capable people. Many have sophisticated systems for tracking delivery. Yet projects still lose momentum, transformations underdeliver and useful ideas struggle to become adopted practice.

The scale of the gap is difficult to ignore. Clayton Christensen and his co-authors reported that more than 90 per cent of approximately 30,000 new consumer products launched each year failed. In 2018, the World Economic Forum reported that companies would spend more than US\$1.2 trillion on digital transformation that year, while analysis suggested only about 1 per cent of those efforts would achieve or exceed expectations.

The exact rate will vary with the definition of success, the sector and the type of initiative. The figures should not be used to suggest that every experiment ought to succeed. Innovation involves uncertainty, and learning can be valuable even when an idea is not adopted. The figures do show the size of the opportunity to turn more investment, knowledge and effort into sustained outcomes.

The problem is not that conventional metrics are wrong. Time, cost, scope, quality, safety and benefit measures remain essential. The problem is that they are mainly evidence of consequences:

Traditional metrics show the wake behind the boat.

Leaders need that view, but they also need to know what is happening at the bow:

- whether people can see the obstacle,
- whether the crew shares the same map, and
- whether anyone has enough confidence to change course.

1.1 Symptoms are not causes

When an initiative begins to drift, the first explanations are often familiar:

- communication has broken down,
- stakeholders are resisting change,
- scope is creeping,
- decisions are taking too long, or
- the team needs to be more accountable.

Each explanation may be true. However, none is yet a diagnosis. For example:

“Poor communication”, can describe several very different conditions. People may not know who holds the relevant knowledge. They may not trust the information being presented. They may fear the consequences of raising a concern. The project’s purpose may have changed without being reconsidered. Leaders may be sending frequent updates while avoiding the one conversation the initiative needs. And applying a generic communication action to all of those conditions is unlikely to solve the problem.

The same applies to resistance. What looks like resistance may be a rational response to an unclear problem, an untested assumption, previous experience, workload pressure or a solution that does not fit operational reality. Labelling people as resistant can hide valuable knowledge and make trust worse. Performance improves when leaders become more precise about what they are seeing. The secret sauce here is to be able to have the means to see.

1.2 The assets that rarely meet

Whilst undertaking the research behind InnoWise® I recognised the pattern through the industry I was working in: water treatment and supply. Across my organisation, I observed that treatment plants often had two rich knowledge assets that did not connect as well as they should.

The first knowledge asset was the operators. Experienced operators knew their plants through years of changing seasons, unusual source water, equipment behaviour and hard-won judgement. They could recognise a problem before it appeared in a report.

The second asset was the formal records: drawings, procedures, laboratory results, incident reports, models and folders of project information. Of course, both knowledge assets mattered. However, neither was complete alone.

Furthermore, when experienced people retire or move on, knowledge leaves with them. New engineers could study drawings and data yet remain disconnected from the lived experience of those who had operated the system. Previous trials would be repeated because no one knew where the result sat or who remembered the outcome or the decision.

“We tried that before. It didn’t work,” a colleague once said. The next sentence mattered more: “But nobody asked me.”

The immediate issue appeared to be a missing conversation. The structural issue was that the organisation had no reliable way to connect knowledge, confidence and decision-making at the point where they were needed.

The pattern extends well beyond water treatment. APQC reports (2021) that fewer than 20 per cent of the hundreds of organisations assessed using its Knowledge Management Capability Assessment Tool

had reached Level 3 or higher. Where Level 3 marks the point at which knowledge management moves beyond localised and repeatable practices to common, standardised approaches that support knowledge sharing across organisational silos.

Fewer than 20% of organisations had achieved standardised knowledge-management practices or higher

The cost of remaining below Level 3 is rarely captured as “knowledge loss”. It appears later as duplicated work, inconsistent decisions, avoidable risk, rework or another delayed project. By contrast, stronger knowledge-management practices help project teams find and reuse relevant knowledge, connect with the right expertise, deliver better and faster results, and help future teams avoid repeating mistakes.

1.3 Activity can conceal decline

Busy projects are not necessarily healthy projects. A team can produce reports, hold workshops, update schedules and close actions while confidence in the initiative declines. People can remain polite and professional while withdrawing the discretionary effort that helps solve difficult problems. A steering committee can receive green status reports while the operational team quietly believes the proposed solution will not work.

The lagging metrics remain stable until the accumulated friction becomes too large to hide. Leaders therefore need visibility across three connected layers of performance: the conditions that shape the work, the behaviours those conditions produce and the outcomes that eventually follow. These relationships and when each layer usually becomes visible are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: What Leaders See

What leaders see	What it reveals	When it usually appears
Conditions — trust, knowledge and energy	Whether the system can keep producing sound decisions and coordinated action	Early
Behaviours — candour, sharing, decision speed and follow-through	How the conditions are affecting the work	During delivery
Outcomes — time, cost, quality, risk and benefits	What the system has produced	Later

Trust, knowledge and energy provide the earliest indication of whether the system can continue producing sound decisions and coordinated action. During delivery, the effects become visible through candour, knowledge sharing, decision speed and follow-through. Measures such as time, cost, quality, risk and benefits appear later, showing what the system has already produced. Viewing all three layers

together helps leaders respond to weakening conditions and behaviours before they become poor outcomes.

For managing performance only at the outcome level is like managing water quality only at the customer's tap. The endpoint matters, however reliable performance depends on understanding what is happening throughout the system.

1.4 My reason for asking a different question

Water is life

That belief, that 'water is life', shaped my engineering career and my desire to improve how we treat and manage it. Consequently, water providers are appropriately cautious. A poor decision can have serious public-health consequences. Technical rigour, evidence and risk management are non-negotiable.

Yet caution and improvement must coexist. Climate pressure, ageing infrastructure, water scarcity and community expectations demand better solutions. I became increasingly curious about why sound ideas were so difficult to progress inside organisations full of capable, committed people. The question that eventually took me back to university was simple:

Why do good ideas die inside good organisations?

My research did not reveal a shortage of ideas. It revealed the importance of the system around them:

- how knowledge was governed,
- whether people trusted the problem and the proposed response, and
- whether the work continued to attract enough energy to move.

While technical capability remained essential, it was not (and is not) sufficient on its own.

1.5 Pause and notice

Think about the initiative you chose at the beginning of this book.

What would have to weaken before the schedule, budget or quality measures moved — and where might you see that change first?

Do not solve it yet, just take notice of the earliest signals.

2 Chapter 2 — InnoWise®: a framework to Rethink how we manage performance

2.1 The research behind InnoWise®

InnoWise® emerged from my university level research that investigated the relationship between knowledge and innovation. At the time, knowledge-management and innovation processes were generally represented through separate frameworks. An original contribution of my research was to align these processes within one continuous, knowledge-based innovation framework. The findings were subsequently published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* (2024).

The original research model described four stages: initiation, development, implementation and feedback. These stages later evolved into the applied InnoWise® phases of: Form, Create, Adopt and Critique as illustrated in Figure 1 which describe these knowledge and innovation processes in practice.

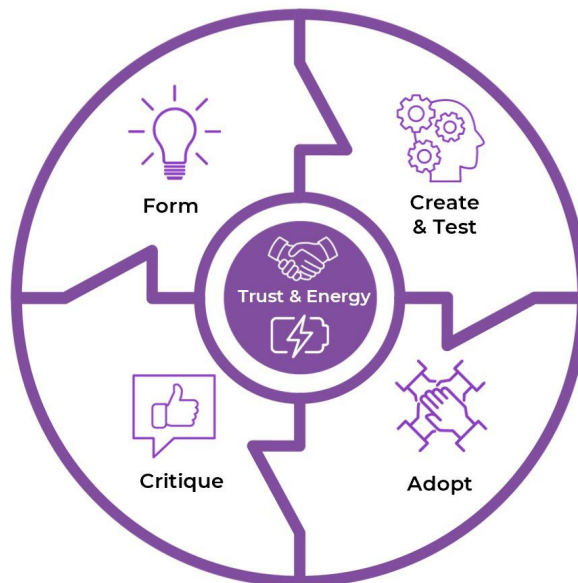


Figure 1: The InnoWise® knowledge-based framework

InnoWise® places trust and energy at the centre of the framework because both influence what can be achieved in every phase. Trust affects whether people commit to the purpose, collaborate openly, share knowledge, rely on the proposed solution and support the decisions being made. Energy represents the time, effort, attention and resources available to act and sustain momentum.

My research also found that trust and energy are closely connected. Trust helps generate the confidence needed to commit energy to an initiative. When trust weakens, people may withdraw effort, knowledge may stop flowing and momentum may fall. Together, trust and energy influence how effectively

knowledge is created and transferred, whether an initiative progresses and whether its intended value is ultimately realised.

2.2 The gap InnoWise® fills

Innovation frameworks tend to describe how an idea or solution progresses, while knowledge-management frameworks focus on how knowledge is created, shared, applied and retained. When these processes are managed separately, leaders can lose sight of the knowledge needed to move an initiative forward—and whether that knowledge is reaching the right people at the right time.

InnoWise® addresses this gap by aligning the innovation process with the knowledge process across one continuous framework. It recognises that every phase of innovation both depends on existing knowledge and generates new knowledge that must be transferred, applied or retained for the initiative to progress and deliver lasting value.

Trust and energy sit at the centre of the framework because they influence the outcomes of every phase. Trust affects whether people contribute openly, share what they know, rely on the evidence and solution, and commit to the decisions being made. Energy reflects the willingness and capacity to act, including the attention, effort, time and resources available to sustain momentum.

By bringing the innovation and knowledge processes together—and recognising the influence of trust and energy—InnoWise® gives leaders a more complete way to understand why work may be progressing, slowing or becoming vulnerable. Each phase identifies both the innovation work to be undertaken and the knowledge that must be found, created, shared, applied or retained for progress to continue. This guidance helps leaders look beyond visible symptoms, such as delay or poor adoption, and consider the underlying conditions that may be affecting decisions, collaboration and momentum.

2.3 The InnoWise® lifecycle

InnoWise® views an initiative through four connected phases: Form, Create, Adopt and Critique. These phases describe the work and knowledge needed for an initiative to progress, rather than simply reflecting the stages shown in a project plan.

Form establishes why the work matters. It involves understanding the problem, clarifying the intended outcome, identifying the people who need to be involved and determining the knowledge and resources required.

Create turns that intent into a workable solution. Ideas are developed, tested and refined while new knowledge is created and important assumptions are examined.

Adopt moves the solution into practice. Attention shifts towards implementation, capability, ownership, knowledge transfer and the support needed for people to use and sustain the solution.

Critique examines what happened and what should be carried forward. Results are reviewed, benefits and unintended consequences are considered, and learning is captured to strengthen future decisions and organisational capability.

The phases are connected, but initiatives do not always move through them in a simple sequence. Work may overlap phases, return to an earlier phase or be described as further advanced than it actually is. Understanding where the work truly sits is important because the conditions needed for progress—and the questions leaders need to ask—change throughout the lifecycle.

2.4 Making the conditions visible

A framework can guide attention, but leaders can only manage these conditions effectively when they can see and assess them. I developed the InnoWise® tools to translate the framework into practical insight and action:

1. The InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist
2. The Trust Analyser™
3. The Knowledge Canvas™

The InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist (included in Chapter 6.1) helps leaders locate where the work actually sits within the four phases and provides a practical way to reflect on where the unresolved work is. From that context, The Trust Analyser™ then measures the trust conditions influencing progress and provides insight into related knowledge gaps and the energy available to move. Factors that might otherwise remain hidden—such as weak confidence in the problem, uncertainty about the solution, limited management support or insufficient resources—can then be discussed and managed before they appear as poor performance outcomes.

The Knowledge Canvas™ helps leaders navigate the knowledge dimension of each phase. It clarifies the knowledge goal, identifies what is known and what is missing, and guides how knowledge needs to be created, shared, applied and retained. Together, the tools enable leaders to locate the work, make its underlying conditions visible and take informed action to strengthen progress.

2.5 Pause and reflect

Think about the initiative you chose at the beginning of this book.

What would change when innovation, knowledge, trust and energy were managed as one connected, integrated system?

3 Chapter 3 — Trust is delivery infrastructure

Trust is often discussed as a cultural aspiration: something organisations would like more of because it makes work feel better. And when work feels better, attrition rates will lower. However, that description understates its role.

Trust shapes whether people share incomplete information, challenge assumptions, accept advice, commit resources, rely on decisions and act under uncertainty. Those are not peripheral behaviours; they are part of the infrastructure through which work is delivered.

Trust does not mean believing in everyone, removing scrutiny or avoiding hard conversations. High-trust environments can be demanding. They make scrutiny more useful because people are able to test evidence and expose risk without spending most of their energy defending identity, territory or status.

3.1 Trust is contextual

My research found that the right trust questions change as work moves. Early in an initiative, people need confidence that the problem has been understood and that the right knowledge and collaborators are involved. During design and testing, they need confidence in the evidence, the process and the way trade-offs are managed. During adoption, the emphasis shifts to usability, capability, local ownership and management support. During review, people need enough trust to examine results honestly and carry learning forward.

Measuring trust without locating the work in its lifecycle risks asking a valid question in the wrong context. That is why the InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist comes before a Trust Analyser™ pulse. The checklist helps establish where the work sits, not merely what the project plan calls the current phase.

For instance, an initiative labelled “implementation” may still be struggling to agree on the problem. A technically complete solution may still be in Create because it has not generated the knowledge needed for adoption. A project may be closing administratively while the organisation has not critiqued what should become future capability. Identifying and naming the stage correctly can be the first important insight.

3.1.1 Case in point: Holcim’s Cage Machine

Holcim was testing and commissioning an innovative robotic welding machine at one production facility while beginning to plan installations at other sites. Because the machine had been built and wider implementation was being considered, the project lead initially believed the initiative had reached Adopt. However, feedback from the people involved in developing the idea, the solution and the supporting knowledge showed that the project remained in Create. The initial machine was still being tested and was not yet ready for repeatable installation, wider implementation or training.

The distinction mattered as treating the project as being ready for the Adopt phase would have directed attention towards rollout, training and knowledge transfer. Recognising that it remained in Create redirected attention towards completing the testing, resolving outstanding gaps and developing the knowledge needed to replicate the solution reliably. The finding also contributed to the development of the InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist, which is now used to locate the work before selecting the relevant Trust Analyser™ questions.

The Holcim case demonstrates that a technically functioning solution is not necessarily adoption-ready. Correctly identifying the stage ensures that the questions being asked—and the actions that follow—reflect what the project actually needs to progress.

3.2 Trust across the project ecosystem

In project work, trust is not simply a judgement about whether particular people are trustworthy. It can be understood as sufficient confidence to move. That confidence may be strong in one aspect of a project and weak in another. InnoWise® 360 (illustrated in Figure 2) therefore examines trust across six connected areas: leadership, people, the problem, the solution, knowledge and resources.

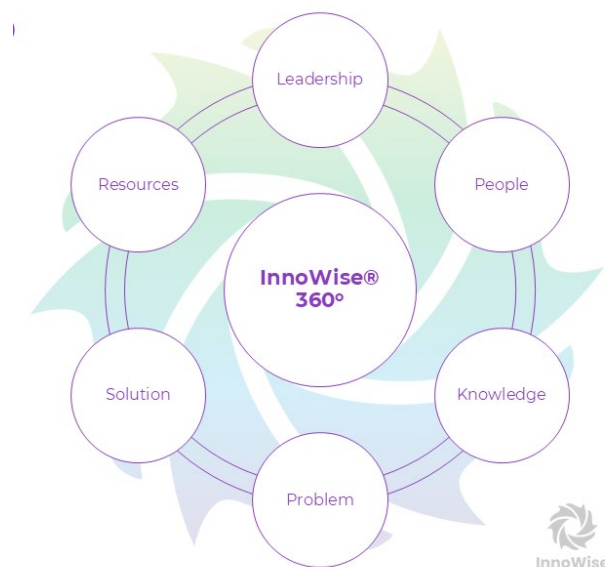


Figure 2: InnoWise® 360 examines trust across six connected areas of the project ecosystem

1. **Leadership** — People need confidence that leaders understand why the project matters, can connect it to organisational strategy and will provide clear direction. Leadership commitment becomes visible through timely decisions, appropriate support and a willingness to provide the authority and protection people need to learn, question and experiment safely. Enthusiasm can help generate energy, but consistent action is the stronger demonstration of support.

2. **People** — Trust is needed among the team, customers, stakeholders and collaborators involved in the work. When people have confidence in one another's intentions, competence and reliability, they are more likely to speak candidly, share knowledge, work through differences and follow through on commitments. These behaviours create stronger conditions for collaboration and increase the likelihood that innovation will succeed.
3. **Problem** — People need confidence that the problem is important, sufficiently understood and worthy of their attention. Different customers and stakeholders may have different reasons for wanting it solved, so those perspectives need to be surfaced and connected. The problem must also provide enough value and priority to attract the resources and sustained attention required to realise the solution's potential.
4. **Solution** — Confidence is also needed in the proposed solution, whether it involves a new technology, process or way of working. The solution must respond to customer and user needs and demonstrate sufficient effectiveness, reliability and practicality. Those needs may differ between users. If the solution repeatedly fails to meet them, confidence, participation and willingness to adopt it will decline.
5. **Knowledge** — Innovation creates new knowledge, but that knowledge must also be trusted, shared and applied. Teams need clarity about the knowledge they are seeking to create, the gaps in evidence or expertise, and the people who can contribute. They must also consider which artefacts, records, conversations and feedback mechanisms will help knowledge move to those who need it, and in the way they need it.
6. **Resources** — People need confidence that the project will have sufficient time, funding, capability, capacity and tools to progress. Those resources do not necessarily need to support the entire journey from the outset, but they must be appropriate for the next phase of development. They must also be provided in a manner that the team believe that the project is genuinely supported.

These six areas are closely connected and are not sequential. They are connected lenses through which confidence can be examined throughout a project.

- Leadership influences confidence in resources;
- people determine whether knowledge is shared;
- understanding of the problem shapes confidence in the solution.

A project can be strong in several areas and still lose momentum because one remains unresolved. Examining the areas separately turns a general concern about “trust” into a clearer indication of where

attention may be needed. Although, a single question such as: “Do you trust the project?” **cannot** reveal those differences nor the insights needed to make clear and informed decisions.

3.3 What trust makes possible

When trust is sufficiently strong for the work at hand:

- people surface risk earlier,
- knowledge crosses role and organisational boundaries,
- decisions can move closer to the source of relevant knowledge,
- uncertainty can be acknowledged without being mistaken for incompetence, and
- effort is more likely to compound into coordinated action.

When trust weakens, the reverse often occurs. Information becomes more polished and less useful. Decisions travel upwards because people no longer feel authorised to act. Stakeholders defend positions. Leaders receive agreement in the room without commitment outside it. Meetings may continue, reports may be produced and milestones may still be recorded, but the project’s underlying capacity for sound decisions and coordinated action has weakened.

3.3.1 A case in point: when the goal is not clear

During the Millennium Drought, South-East Queensland faced severe water shortages. Seqwater needed water-quality data to model Wivenhoe Dam and understand the potential impact of new water sources, including purified recycled water.

A research team proposed automated water-quality profilers in the dam. The technology was novel in that context and the original knowledge goal was clear: collect data to build and calibrate a model.

Then the environment changed. Floods altered priorities and interest shifted from research to operational monitoring and efficiency. The technology moved through repeated cycles of trial, setback and revival.

In interviews across research, operations and management, the recurring issue was not simply whether the profiler worked. Participants were working from different understandings of what it was now expected to do.

One senior scientist reflected that the project had begun with a clear goal, but “we never revisited the goal” as the business need and technology evolved. Another participant described communication as the primary barrier.

The research team trusted the profiler for the research task. Operational users required a different level of reliability, maintainability and decision usefulness. Confidence in the solution could not be separated from confidence in the purpose it was being asked to serve.

The technology had not changed simply from “trusted” to “untrusted”. The context had changed, and the trust awareness had not changed with it.

3.4 Trust as an early measure

Trust cannot be understood through a single universal score. It can, however, be examined systematically.

Structured questions can test confidence in the problem, knowledge, approach, relationships and support around an initiative. Scaled responses help reveal patterns. Open comments provide the language and context needed to understand those patterns. Differences between stakeholder groups can be more valuable than an average score because they expose where the system is experiencing the work differently.

The aim is not to measure personalities or determine who is trustworthy. The aim is to make delivery conditions visible enough to discuss and manage.

An individual Trust Analyser™ Pulse can help one leader organise their perspective. A multi-stakeholder Trust Analyser™ diagnostic does something different:

- ✓ it compares perspectives,
- ✓ identifies patterns, and
- ✓ supports a facilitated conversation around the system.

Confusing those two levels would create false confidence. One person’s insight can be a useful beginning; though, it is not the whole truth.

3.5 Pause and notice

Consider your chosen initiative.

Which form of confidence is most important right now: confidence in the leadership, the people, the problem, the solution, knowledge, or resources — and what evidence tells you it is strong or weak?

4 Chapter 4 — Knowledge is system memory

Knowledge is often treated as a document problem. If a report has been written, a procedure approved and a folder created, the organisation assumes the knowledge has been captured. However, this means that information has been stored which is not the same as knowledge being available for action.

Knowledge includes data and documents, but it also includes experience, judgement, relationships, assumptions and the reasoning behind a decision. Some of it can be codified (explicit). Some can only be understood through conversation, observation or practice (implicit). Its value depends on whether it reaches the people who need it, when they need it, in a form they can trust and use.

Knowledge is therefore not static inventory. It is system memory in motion.

4.1 “Lessons learned” that no one can use

During a debrief at my workplace, the familiar phrase “lessons learned” prompted a harder question. People had written reports and training had occurred. Databases of these lessons learned existed; yet, similar frustrations kept returning.

“We wrote everything down, but no one used it.”

“By the time the next project started, the team had changed.”

“Does anyone actually look at the lessons learned database?”

The knowledge was not being lost because people did not care. It was being lost because the system did not reliably connect the lesson to a future decision, role or practice. Capturing knowledge at project close is not enough if the people who need it later cannot find it, understand why it matters or trust its relevance to their context.

4.2 From knowledge management to knowledge governance

Traditional knowledge management has often focused on information systems: where content is stored, how it is classified and whether people can retrieve it. While those functions remain important, knowledge governance asks a broader set of questions:

- What knowledge must this initiative create or obtain?
- Who holds relevant experience, and who is missing from the conversation?
- How will important assumptions be tested and decisions explained?
- What knowledge must be transferred for the solution to be adopted safely and effectively?
- How will learning become organisational capability rather than project residue?

Governance gives knowledge an explicit purpose, owner and pathway. It treats the knowledge created through a project as an asset that can strengthen future performance. This knowledge focus matters particularly in project-based organisations such as utilities, councils, engineering firms and public agencies.

Projects are temporary, yet, organisational consequences are not.

Teams form around a task and then disband. Contractors leave, structures change, and operational staff inherit assets or systems they did not design. A project can meet its delivery milestone while the organisation loses the reasoning, relationships and capability needed to sustain the outcome. Immediate project performance and long-term organisational performance are connected, but they are not the same.

4.3 Knowledge moves through people

Knowledge does not transfer because a procedure instructs it to. People decide what to contribute, what to withhold, what to question and what to ignore.

One field technician captured the issue clearly during a focus group:

“It’s not that I don’t want to speak up. It’s that I’m not sure what’ll happen if I do. Sometimes you get thanked; sometimes you get told to stay in your lane.”

The comment was not only about communication; it described the social conditions around knowledge. When people expect curiosity and fair treatment, they are more likely to share partial observations, challenge assumptions and admit what they do not know. When they expect dismissal, blame or appropriation of their ideas, silence becomes rational. Trust does not replace knowledge systems; it determines how well people will use them.

4.4 The hidden knowledge goal

Every initiative has a delivery goal. Fewer have an explicit knowledge goal. A delivery goal might be to install a new asset, implement software, improve a process or develop a strategy. The knowledge goal asks what the organisation and its stakeholders must understand, create, test, transfer and retain for that outcome to work.

For a new water treatment process, the physical asset may be delivered on time. However, sustainable performance of the asset also depends on source-water understanding, operating envelopes, maintenance requirements, alarm response, supplier knowledge, operator confidence and governance of future changes. If the knowledge goal is missing, if the knowledge management has been poor, then those elements may appear late as commissioning problems, adoption issues or operational risk.

The Knowledge Canvas™ was developed to make that goal and its supporting conditions visible. It helps a project map the knowledge it needs, the gaps and assumptions that require attention, the people who must be involved, the barriers to trust and the actions required for adoption and learning. The canvas is not simply another project plan as it connects the plan to what people must know, trust and be able to do.

4.5 Knowledge as a renewable asset

Knowledge can increase in value when it is shared, tested and combined with other knowledge. That value is not automatic. Poorly governed knowledge becomes fragmented, outdated or detached from context. Well-governed knowledge becomes capability which can be seen as:

- ✓ a stronger decision,
- ✓ a reusable method,
- ✓ a safer operating practice,
- ✓ a more informed stakeholder relationship or
- ✓ a lesson that prevents another team repeating the same work.

Performance that lasts is built when each initiative leaves the system more capable than it found it.

4.6 Pause and notice

Return to your chosen initiative. Consider lived experience and decision reasoning, not only documents.

What critical knowledge exists in the project but is not yet reliably available to the people who will need to decide, use, operate or sustain the outcome?

5 Chapter 5 — Energy reveals whether work can move

Energy is easy to feel and difficult to describe. A project with energy is not necessarily loud, fast or enthusiastic. It has the capacity to respond. People pay attention, make decisions, follow through and stay with difficult questions. Appropriate resources are committed and progress feels purposeful rather than performative.

Energy is also not a judgement about personal motivation. A highly committed team can be exhausted by a system that repeatedly revisits decisions, changes direction without explanation or asks for effort without providing authority. Within the InnoWise® framework, energy is best understood as adaptive capacity: the ability of people and the wider system to keep moving, learning and responding under real conditions.

5.1 Where energy goes

Energy is consumed whenever work requires effort, because good work is not effortless. The question is whether effort produces movement or is repeatedly absorbed by friction.

Common energy drains include:

- defending a position instead of testing the problem,
- recreating knowledge that already exists,
- waiting for decisions that no one feels authorised to make,
- managing unresolved stakeholder expectations,
- complying with a process that no longer fits the work, and
- carrying risk that has not been openly acknowledged.

More activity can temporarily hide those drains. Teams work longer, leaders add meetings and reporting increases. The visible effort rises while the system's capacity falls, which is why energy should not be inferred from busyness.

5.2 The Trust Engine™

My research identified trust and energy as linked knowledge-governance mechanisms in project work. Trust affected whether people were willing to share knowledge and engage in the innovation process. Energy could be seen in the level of attention, participation and resources moving towards the work.

The interaction of trust and energy is known as the Trust Engine™.

When people have sufficient confidence in the purpose, knowledge, approach and support around an initiative, they are more willing to invest effort. Knowledge moves, decisions become easier to make, and progress builds confidence that attracts further energy.

When confidence deteriorates, people become more cautious about what they share and where they invest effort. Knowledge fragments, decisions slow, and the loss of movement further weakens confidence. The pattern can compound in either direction.

The Trust Engine is not a promise that trust automatically produces success. Technical feasibility, commercial reality, governance, capability and risk still matter. Trust helps those disciplines work together. It allows problems to be surfaced early enough for the system to respond.

5.3 When the room moved

In a regional council setting, pressure had been building across operators, managers and executives. Compliance expectations were high, resources were constrained and conversations had become cautious.

Then the Mayor said to the staff involved:

“We trust you. We are here to support you.”

The technical issues did not disappear. The room shifted because the conditions around the discussion changed. What had been guarded became more open. The focus moved from defending roles to improving the outcome.

An operator said, quietly and powerfully:

“I want to go home at night knowing the water will stay safe.”

That statement reconnected the work to its purpose. It also made visible the knowledge and responsibility carried by the operator.

The shift did not come from reassurance alone. The Mayor’s statement mattered because it signalled support, gave permission for candour and recognised the people closest to the work. Trust changed what could be said and how the team felt. What could be said changed what the group could understand. Better understanding changed the energy available for action.

5.4 Read energy as a signal, not a verdict

Low energy does not prove that a team is disengaged or a project should be stopped. It signals a need to look more closely.

Useful observations can include:

- Are decisions becoming slower or repeatedly reopened?
- Are fewer people contributing candidly?
- Is communication increasing while clarity declines?
- Are resources aligned with the stated importance of the work?
- Does follow-through occur without repeated escalation?

The answers become more meaningful when connected to the project stage and the relevant trust and knowledge conditions. A short burst of lower energy during difficult testing may be normal. Persistent depletion during adoption may indicate that the solution, capability or ownership was never established. Context turns a signal into insight.

5.5 Pause and notice

Think about your chosen initiative. The contrast may reveal more than the volume of activity.

Where is effort producing movement, and where is effort being absorbed without improving clarity, confidence or capability?

6 Chapter 6 — Diagnose the conditions, not only the symptoms

The earlier chapters have shown how trust, knowledge and energy influence performance before their effects become visible in conventional measures. Chapter 2 introduced InnoWise® as a framework for understanding those conditions across the lifecycle of an initiative. The remaining challenge is practical: how does a leader apply that understanding to a live project and decide what to do next?

Noticing a symptom is not the same as understanding its cause. A delayed decision could reflect uncertainty about the problem, insufficient evidence, unclear authority, limited resources or low confidence in the proposed solution. A stakeholder who appears resistant may hold knowledge that has not been considered, doubt that the solution will meet their needs or believe that their involvement will not influence the outcome.

Responding to the first apparent explanation can direct effort towards the wrong problem. More communication will not resolve evidence that people do not trust. A team-building workshop will not compensate for unclear decision rights. Additional resources will not restore momentum if people no longer agree on what the project is trying to achieve.

The InnoWise® approach therefore follows a deliberate sequence:

Locate → Measure → Act

Locate establishes the context in which the work should be understood. Measure makes the relevant trust, knowledge and energy conditions visible. Act converts that insight into a focused response. Each step improves the quality of the next.

6.1 Locate: establish where the work depends on progress

Chapter 2 introduced the four InnoWise® phases of Form, Create, Adopt and Critique. Locating the work does not require leaders to explain those phases again or force the entire project into one label. The purpose is to identify which phase contains the unresolved work currently affecting progress.

A project may be formally described as being in implementation while still requiring Create work to test an important operating assumption. A solution may be in use while the organisation still needs to complete Adopt by transferring knowledge and establishing ownership. This does not necessarily mean the entire project has moved backwards. It means that progress depends on work or knowledge from a phase that has not yet been completed.

The InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist (provided in Figure 3) supports this assessment by examining the innovation and knowledge work undertaken in each phase. It helps distinguish between the administrative status recorded in a project schedule and the work the initiative actually requires.

InnoWise® Process Mapping checklist



How to use this checklist:

- Use it for self-reflection—not as a diagnostic or performance assessment.
- Respond based on the work actually completed, not the project plan.
- Use your responses to reflect on the project context and guide further discussion.
- When used as part of a Trust Analyser™ process, responses help align the questions with the relevant project phase and compare stakeholder perspectives.
- Remember that work may be occurring across more than one phase.

Ready to explore your project further?

- Complete the *Rethink Performance Video Sprint* to gain access to your personalised InnoWise® Project Pulse.

PROJECT _____
DATE / /

STEP 1: FORM

- The FORM phase of the process is about initiation and identification related to the idea and the problem that it is solving and the resources and knowledge aspects that will be needed.
 - The creation of the solution or the new knowledge has not yet commenced.
- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ A problem worth solving has been identified | ☐ A problem worth solving has been identified |
| ☐ A project has commenced to examine the problem in more detail | ☐ A knowledge gap to implement the solution has been identified |
| ☐ A potential solution the knowledge goal has been identified | ☐ Potential collaborators that could fill the knowledge gap have been identified |
| ☐ The players assisting developing or using the solution have been identified | ☐ Resources required to complete the project through each of the four phases of its development have been identified |

STEP 2: CREATE

- The CREATE phase involves development, creation and testing to make ready for the next ADOPTION phase.
 - The new knowledge is being created and starts to be transferred among participants, including collaborators. New knowledge objects (manuals, training objects, drawings) are being developed and tested.
- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ The solution is being developed. | ☐ Knowledge sharing between collaborators has commenced |
| ☐ The solution is being tested. | ☐ The new knowledge has been checked and tested and is ready for the implementation phase |
| ☐ The knowledge objects are being or have been developed. | ☐ The solution has been checked and tested and is ready for wider implementation |
| ☐ The knowledge objects are being tested | |
| ☐ The collaborators are on board and work is underway | |

STEP 3: ADOPT

- The ADOPT phase involves implementation and transfer of the solution and new knowledge.
 - The implementation component relates to the use of the solution created to solve the problem.
 - The transfer component relates to the new knowledge aspects.
- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ The solution has been developed and tested and is ready for a wider audience | ☐ The new knowledge is being transferred to a wider audience |
| ☐ The solution is being made available to more than one test case | ☐ Feedback is starting to be received but not yet acted upon |
| ☐ The knowledge objects are complete, tested and ready for a wider audience | |

STEP 4: CRITIQUE

- The CRITIQUE phase of the process involves feedback and realisation.
 - Feedback relates to the solution created to solve the problem.
 - Realisation relates to the new knowledge that has been created throughout the organisation or community.
- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Feedback is being or has been received on the solution. | ☐ A new problem that is worth solving has been identified |
| ☐ Feedback is being or has been received on the knowledge objects. | ☐ An improvement to the solution has been identified. |
| ☐ Feedback is being or has been collated. | ☐ A new benefit from the new knowledge for our organisation or customers has been identified |
| ☐ Feedback has been critiqued. | ☐ An improvement to the knowledge objects has been identified. The knowledge objects are being utilised. |

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Figure 3: the InnoWise® process mapping checklist

The outcome is a Stage Snapshot: a practical indication of where attention should be directed. The snapshot is not a verdict or a maturity score. It is a working diagnosis to be tested with the people involved.

For a simple initiative, one phase may provide a clear focus. Complex programs may contain workstreams in different phases. In those situations, the more useful question is not, “What phase is the whole program in?” but, “Where is the unresolved work that is currently constraining progress?”

Locating the work gives the next inquiry context. Without that context, leaders risk asking reasonable questions about the wrong part of the lifecycle.

If you prefer a printable copy, you can download a free version of the checklist here:

<https://www.innovatewisely.com/InnoWise-Process-Mapping-Checklist.pdf> which can be found on our resources page (<https://www.innovatewisely.com/resources/>).

6.1.1 Pause and reflect on the context

Return to the initiative you previously identified. Consider the work that has been completed, not simply the phase shown in the project plan.

- Where does the initiative currently sit across Form, Create, Adopt and Critique?
- Is unresolved work from an earlier phase affecting progress?
- What knowledge must now be created, shared, applied or retained?
- How might trust or energy be influencing the initiative’s ability to move?

It is normal for work to occur across more than one phase. The purpose is not to assign the initiative a definitive label, but to identify where attention may be needed.

Complete this statement:

The initiative appears to be in _____, but work may still be required in _____. The knowledge, trust or energy condition I most need to explore is _____.

6.2 Measure: turn assumptions into evidence

Once the relevant context has been established, the next step is to examine the conditions influencing progress. Leaders may sense that trust is weakening, knowledge is fragmented or energy is falling, but these conditions should not be inferred from silence, attendance, enthusiasm or visible activity alone.

The Trust Analyser™ uses stage-relevant scaled questions and open responses to examine confidence across the six InnoWise® 360 areas: leadership, people, problem, solution, knowledge and resources. It also surfaces related knowledge gaps and provides insight into where energy is building or being absorbed.

The numbers reveal patterns, while the language people use helps explain what those patterns may mean. A score can show that confidence differs across parts of an initiative; an open response can reveal whether the concern relates to evidence, experience, authority, capability or another unresolved condition.

The purpose is not to label trust as simply high or low. It is to determine where confidence is sufficient for the work to proceed and where uncertainty is affecting decisions, knowledge sharing, participation or follow-through.

Consider a project in which people strongly support the purpose but have little confidence that leaders will provide the necessary authority and resources. A team-building intervention would miss the constraint because the team may already be aligned. The problem sits in leadership support, decision rights or resourcing.

In another project, executive support may be visible while operational users have limited confidence in the solution. More leadership messaging could increase resistance if it is experienced as pressure to adopt before reliability, usability or operational concerns have been resolved.

Measurement helps leaders distinguish between these situations. It directs attention towards the condition requiring action, but it does not replace professional judgement, stakeholder engagement or technical evidence.

6.3 Match the evidence to the decision

An individual can begin the inquiry, but one person's experience should not be treated as organisational truth.

A personalised Trust Analyser™ Project Pulse Report provides a structured interpretation of one participant's perspective on a nominated project. It can challenge assumptions, sharpen the questions being asked and identify an action within that person's influence. It may also show where broader input is needed before a reliable conclusion can be reached.

A multi-stakeholder Trust Analyser™ diagnostic is more appropriate when an initiative crosses organisational boundaries, affects groups that may experience the work differently or requires shared ownership of the response. It compares perspectives and helps reveal differences that an average score could conceal.

For example, a project team may have strong confidence in a proposed solution while operators or customers remain uncertain about its practical value. Leaders may believe resources are sufficient while team members experience persistent capacity constraints. These differences are not inconvenient variations to be averaged away. They are evidence about where knowledge, expectations or confidence are not yet aligned.

The appropriate level of diagnosis depends on the significance of the decision and the number of perspectives needed to understand it responsibly. Individual reflection can identify a useful starting point. Organisational conclusions require organisational evidence.

6.4 Act: strengthen the condition affecting progress

A diagnosis becomes valuable when it changes a decision, conversation or action. The purpose is not to “fix trust” as an abstract objective or attempt to raise every measure at once. It is to strengthen the condition most relevant to the initiative’s next movement.

The Knowledge Canvas™ helps translate the diagnosis into a practical response. It connects the outcome required from the current phase with the knowledge, people, relationships and resources needed to achieve it. A focused canvas should clarify:

1. the immediate knowledge goal and the decision or outcome it supports;
2. the knowledge that already exists and the gaps or assumptions requiring attention;
3. the people who hold relevant knowledge or must have confidence in the outcome;
4. the conversation, test, decision, artefact or knowledge transfer needed next; and
5. the evidence that will show whether the action has improved movement.

The resulting action should be small enough to complete and important enough to change the conditions around the work. Depending on the diagnosis, it may involve:

- revisiting the problem with affected stakeholders so the purpose is understood and shared;
- testing an unresolved requirement with users rather than relying on further persuasion;
- clarifying authority, decision rights and leadership support;
- transferring critical knowledge to the people who will operate or sustain the outcome; or
- removing, resourcing or resequencing work that is consuming energy without creating progress.

A 30-day Knowledge Canvas™ creates enough structure to act without pretending that the entire system can be repaired at once. It identifies who needs to be involved, what must be learned or decided and how the team will know whether the intervention has made a meaningful difference.

Evidence of progress should reflect movement rather than activity. A decision that remains settled, an assumption that has been tested, an operational owner who is ready to proceed or knowledge that is being used by another team provides stronger evidence than simply holding another meeting or producing another report.

6.5 Why the sequence matters

The three InnoWise® tools perform different but connected roles (as summarised in Table 2). The Process Mapping Checklist establishes where attention should be directed. The Trust Analyser™ tests assumptions about the conditions influencing progress. The Knowledge Canvas™ turns the resulting insight into focused action and learning.

Table 2: InnoWise® tools

Step	Central question	Tool	Practical outcome
Locate	Where does the work currently depend on progress?	InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist	A Stage Snapshot identifying the relevant project context
Measure	What trust, knowledge or energy condition is influencing progress?	Trust Analyser™ Project Pulse or multi-stakeholder diagnostic	Evidence about the conditions supporting or constraining movement
Act	What must change next, and who needs to be involved?	Knowledge Canvas™	A focused action and learning map

The sequence matters. A Trust Analyser™ pulse used without first locating the work may ask valid questions in the wrong context. A Knowledge Canvas™ built on an untested diagnosis can become another plan that does not address the constraint. A checklist completed without measurement or follow-through may create awareness without movement.

Used together, the tools help leaders move from a general sense that something is not right to a more precise understanding of what the initiative needs next.

6.6 Use symptoms as prompts for inquiry

Visible patterns can provide useful early warnings, but they should be treated as prompts for inquiry rather than diagnoses. Repeatedly reopened decisions may indicate unresolved confidence in the

problem, evidence or authority. Stakeholder attendance without action may point to limited ownership or confidence. Recurring issues may signal that learning is being documented without becoming system memory. Rising activity accompanied by slower progress may show that energy is being absorbed by friction. A technically complete solution that is not embedded may indicate that adoption knowledge, capability or ownership remains incomplete. The guide in Table 3 helps convert these observations into more useful first questions.

Table 3: Observation summary

What you may observe	What may sit underneath	A better first question
Decisions are repeatedly reopened	The problem, evidence or authority is not sufficiently trusted	What has not been resolved strongly enough for this decision to hold?
Stakeholders attend but do not act	Agreement has not become confidence, influence or ownership	What would they need to know, trust or influence before committing?
The same issue returns across projects	Knowledge is captured but is not becoming system memory	Where should this learning live, and who must be able to find, trust and use it?
Activity rises while progress slows	Energy is being absorbed by uncertainty, friction or rework	Which effort is producing movement, and which is merely maintaining activity?
A solution is technically complete but not embedded	Capability, ownership or supporting knowledge remains incomplete	What knowledge and confidence must transfer before the outcome can be sustained?

The most useful response is rarely to select an intervention directly from the table. Instead, use the observation to identify a possible condition, locate the relevant phase and seek evidence from the people who experience the work.

Diagnosis does not require leaders to become psychologists or abandon established project controls. It requires them to avoid interpreting every problem as a failure of effort, communication or compliance. The aim is to understand what the system is making possible—and what it is currently preventing—before committing more energy to a response.

6.7 Pause and notice

Return to the initiative you have carried through this book and identify one visible symptom that concerns you. Consider where the unresolved work actually sits, what condition may be producing the symptom and whose perspective is needed to test that explanation.

Before adding another meeting, report, process or resource, complete this statement:

The symptom I can see is _____. The condition that may sit underneath it is _____. The evidence or perspective I need before acting is _____.

The purpose is not to achieve certainty before moving; it is to replace a generic reaction with a more credible and focused next step.

7 Closing reflection — From insight to action

Performance does not begin with the metric. It begins in the conditions that make coordinated action possible: whether people trust the purpose and the process, whether knowledge reaches the point of decision, and whether the system has enough energy to respond and adapt.

Conventional KPIs remain essential. They tell leaders whether commitments are being met. Trust, knowledge and energy add a different form of visibility. They help explain whether the system is strengthening or eroding before the outcome is fixed. The shift is from managing only what the project has produced to also governing what allows it to produce.

Five ideas matter most:

1. **Lagging metrics reveal consequences, not always causes.** Look for changes in confidence, knowledge flow and movement before cost and schedule shift.
2. **Trust is delivery infrastructure.** It shapes whether people can share risk, rely on evidence and act under uncertainty.
3. **Knowledge is system memory.** Documents matter, but capability depends on whether insight is understood, trusted, transferred and retained.
4. **Energy is adaptive capacity.** Busyness is not momentum; notice whether effort creates movement or disappears into friction.
5. **Context comes before measurement.** Locate the project, ask stage-relevant questions and then plan the next practical action.

The approach is intentionally grounded. It does not require leaders to become psychologists or abandon established governance. It asks them to see part of the delivery system that has been difficult to name and therefore difficult to manage.

Once these conditions become visible, the conversation changes. The questions change:

"Why are people resisting?"	→	"What do they know or experience that the current plan has not addressed?"
"Why is the project late?"		"Where did confidence, knowledge or decision capacity begin to erode?"
"How do we push this forward?"		"What condition must change for movement to become possible?"

8 The Rethink Performance series

The ambition of this series is simple: to redefine our understanding of performance by revealing the conditions that shape it, so organisations and communities can achieve better outcomes into the future.

Rethink Performance is a six-part series exploring the conditions that create sustainable results. The series will ultimately define the book which explores these conditions and their influence on performance. The six parts trace a shift from what we traditionally measure as performance to what actually creates it:

1. **Why Trust Matters** — why trust shapes knowledge flow, decisions and momentum.
2. **Why Traditional Metrics Lag and What They Miss** — why outcome measures rarely reveal the earliest performance conditions.
3. **Trust as a Structural Condition** — how trust supports transparency, responsiveness and sound decentralised decisions.
4. **Knowledge as System Memory** — how organisations turn project learning into enduring capability.
5. **Energy as Adaptive Capacity** — how attention, resources and movement shape the ability to respond.
6. **A Better Way Forward** — how trust, knowledge and energy come together as a practical performance architecture.

The series is being released progressively so the ideas can continue to evolve through research, application and reader feedback.

9 Research foundations

The InnoWise® framework originated in Lee Foster’s research into the relationship between knowledge, knowledge governance and innovation in a project-based water-utility environment.

Foster, L., Wiewiora, A. and Donnet, T. (2024), [*“Integrating Knowledge Management and Governance for Innovation Outcomes: A New Framework for Managing Innovation in a Project Environment”*](#), *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 15, 7143–7170.

The published research found that trust and energy operated as knowledge-governance mechanisms influencing how knowledge was created and transferred through an innovation process. The book extends that foundation through Lee’s subsequent engineering, facilitation and advisory practice.

Christensen, C. M., Cook, S. and Hall, T. (2005), [*“Marketing Malpractice: The Cause and the Cure”*](#), *Harvard Business Review*, December 2005. The authors reported that over 90 per cent of approximately 30,000 new consumer products launched each year failed.

World Economic Forum (2018), [*“The \\$1 Trillion Question: How Can Efforts to Digitally Transform Businesses Succeed?”*](#), 18 September 2018. The Forum reported planned company expenditure of more than US\$1.2 trillion in 2018 and analysis suggesting that only about 1 per cent of digital-transformation efforts would achieve or exceed expectations.

World Economic Forum and Bain & Company (2018), [*The Digital Enterprise: Moving from Experimentation to Transformation*](#), 18 September 2018. This companion report examines the barriers that prevent digital initiatives from progressing beyond experimentation and identifies the organisational conditions needed for transformation at scale.

APQC (2021), *Best Practices for Knowledge Management Excellence: 2020 Executive Summary*, K011242, pp. 1–2 and 5. APQC reports that fewer than 20 per cent of the hundreds of organisations assessed using its Knowledge Management Capability Assessment Tool had reached Level 3 or higher. Level 3 marks the point at which knowledge management moves beyond localised and repeatable practices to common, standardised approaches that support knowledge sharing across organisational silos.

10 About Innovate Wisely™

Innovate Wisely™ helps organisations rethink performance by making trust, knowledge and energy visible across projects, programs and organisational systems.

Its InnoWise® framework complements technical, project and governance disciplines through three practical tools:

- the **InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist**, which locates work in the relevant project context;
- the **Trust Analyser™**, which measures stage-specific confidence and draws insight from scaled responses and language; and
- the **Knowledge Canvas™**, which turns insight into a practical map for knowledge, stakeholders, adoption and learning.

The tools can support individual reflection, guided project work or multi-stakeholder diagnostics. The level of evidence and facilitation is matched to the complexity of the decision.

Innovate Wisely works particularly with councils, utilities, infrastructure organisations and teams delivering complex change — environments where technically sound solutions depend on trust, knowledge and organisational alignment to become sustainable outcomes.

Learn more at www.innovatewisely.com.

11 About the author



Lee Foster is a water engineer, researcher and founder of Innovate Wisely™. Across more than 30 years in water engineering, Lee has worked in treatment, operations, planning and complex infrastructure environments where technical decisions carry real community consequences. Her engineering experience taught her that strong solutions do not succeed through technical merit alone. They also depend on whether the right knowledge is available, whether people have confidence in the work and whether the system can sustain the effort required to deliver it.

Lee holds a Master's in Engineering and a Master's in Business Management and Innovation by research. Her peer-reviewed research with Queensland University of Technology integrated knowledge management, knowledge governance and innovation into the framework that became InnoWise®.

Today, Lee works with councils, utilities, project teams and delivery partners to make trust, knowledge and energy more visible in decision-making. She is the creator of the Trust Analyser™, Knowledge Canvas™ and InnoWise® Process Mapping Checklist. Her aim is practical: help organisations see performance risk earlier, make better decisions and leave each project more capable than it began.

Performance improves when trust is measured.

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