

CHAPTER 3

Stakeholders, Trust and Executive Alignment

Speaking the Language of Leadership

Executive Summary

Trust is the currency of every Trusted Advisor.

Technology may be perfect, architectures may be elegant and business cases may be compelling, but without trust and stakeholder alignment, transformation initiatives rarely succeed.

Leading enterprise transformation is ultimately about people.

As Stephen M. R. Covey explains in *The Speed of Trust*, trust accelerates execution and reduces cost. Likewise, *Crucial Conversations* reminds us that difficult transformations require difficult conversations.

For Nordic Ventures Group, operating across fourteen countries and five factories, building trust and aligning stakeholders around a shared vision became just as important as building the Azure platform itself.

The objective was clear:

“Transform IT from a cost center into a strategic enabler of business growth.”

1. The Speed of Trust

Lessons from The Speed of Trust

Stephen M. R. Covey argues that trust is an economic driver.

When trust increases, speed increases, collaboration improves, costs decrease and decisions happen faster.

For Nordic Ventures Group, trust became essential because the organisation was being asked to consolidate

twelve datacentres, modernise legacy systems, change operating models and embrace entirely new ways of working.

None of these changes happen without trust.

A Trusted Advisor builds credibility by:

- Being transparent
- Acknowledging risks
- Communicating honestly
- Consistently connecting technology decisions to business outcomes

2. Speak the Right Language to the Right Person

Lessons from High Output Management

Andrew Grove reminds us that leaders have different priorities.

For Nordic Ventures Group, that meant tailoring the same transformation story for six very different audiences:

Stakeholder	Core Question	Key Topics
CEO	How does this help us grow and remain competitive?	International expansion, innovation, competitive advantage, time-to-market
CFO	How does this improve profitability?	25% cost reduction, resource optimisation, financial predictability, investment returns
CIO	How do we modernise without increasing risk?	Technical debt, operating models, platform scalability, modernisation
CISO	How do we remain secure and compliant?	NIS2, GDPR, Zero Trust, cyber resilience
Factory Manager	How does this improve production?	Availability, AI insights, reduced downtime, operational efficiency

Stakeholder	Core Question	Key Topics
HR Director	How does this improve employee productivity?	Collaboration, Microsoft 365, skills transformation, change management

3. Managing Resistance Through Dialogue

Lessons from Crucial Conversations

Every transformation creates uncertainty.

Resistance is normal.

At Nordic Ventures Group, resistance often came from teams responsible for maintaining legacy applications and local infrastructure.

A Trusted Advisor does not ignore resistance.

They listen, they create psychological safety, and they explain why change is necessary, what risks exist and what opportunities the future creates.

The objective is not to win arguments.

The objective is to build commitment.

4. Building Executive Alignment

Without leadership alignment, organisational silos inevitably reappear.

A Trusted Advisor helps leaders understand that their objectives are interconnected.

The CFO's cost goals, the CISO's security goals, the factory manager's operational goals and the CEO's growth ambitions all depend on the same technology foundation.

Alignment creates momentum.

The Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Primary Concern	Success Measure
CEO	Growth and competitiveness	Revenue and market expansion

Stakeholder	Primary Concern	Success Measure
CFO	Cost optimisation	25% cost reduction
CIO	Modernisation	Reduced complexity
CISO	Security and compliance	NIS2 and GDPR compliance
Factory Manager	Production efficiency	Reduced downtime
HR Director	Productivity	Employee adoption

The Nordic Ventures Group Lesson

Technology transformations fail when organisations focus exclusively on technology.

They succeed when leaders align around a common vision and trust the people guiding the journey.

Key Takeaways

Principle	What It Means
Trust accelerates transformation.	High trust reduces friction, cost and decision time.
Every executive speaks a different language.	Communicate value in the language of the stakeholder.
Resistance is natural.	Address it through dialogue, empathy and clarity.
Alignment is more important than agreement.	Leaders can disagree on details while supporting the same direction.
Business value must be tailored.	The same architecture creates different outcomes for different stakeholders.
Technology transformation is people transformation.	Culture and trust determine whether change lasts.

Reflection Questions

Which executive stakeholder would be most difficult to convince in your organisation?

How would you explain NIS2 compliance to a factory manager?

Which KPIs would demonstrate success to your CFO after the first year?

Where does resistance to change exist in your organisation today?

How would you build trust with sceptical stakeholders?

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CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

“People do not resist technology. They resist uncertainty.”

— Sazzad Khan