



Individual Invincibility Blueprint

Managerial Competency Assessment

An evidence-based reading of how you lead today, and a practical plan for what to build next.

Prepared for: David Mercer

Assessment date: 15 May 2026 · **Report date:** 15 May 2026

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Prepared by Greg Kurnikov



Front Matter

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About This Assessment

This assessment measures 20 management competencies, organised in three groups. **Character**¹ covers how you manage yourself: your thinking, planning, self-awareness, and emotional discipline. **Structure** covers the systems and architecture you have built: your operating system, how you regulate performance, how you manage your team's composition, and how you delegate, coordinate, and control work. **Influence** covers how you lead others: your authority, your standards, how you encourage, discipline, communicate, manage conflict, and develop people.

You are Operations Director at Hartwell Logistics Group, managing around 220 staff across three sites with eight direct reports covering site management, fleet, health and safety, continuous improvement, and contract logistics. You described your core challenge as managing growth without the infrastructure catching up, and your ambition as reaching a managing director role within two to three years. The findings below are calibrated against what is expected of a senior operations leader running a multi-site logistics operation at the point of transition from operational management to business-level direction.

Each competency is assessed on a four-point scale: **Undeveloped** (no functioning practice), **Emerging** (awareness and early steps, not yet consistent), **Established** (working practice in place, room to deepen), and **Developed** (meets the full standard expected at your level). The scale is developmental, not judgemental: every position is a starting point for growth, and movement between positions is the purpose of the development plan at the end of this report. Terms marked with a superscript reference number are defined in the Report Glossary (Section 12).

Beyond individual competencies, this report assesses your readiness across nine core management responsibilities². These show how your individual competencies combine in practice, because management effectiveness depends not just on individual skills but on how those skills interact under real conditions.



Executive Summary

Your analytical capability is the strongest feature of this profile, and it is also the feature that disguises the gaps most effectively. You make sound decisions when the evidence is numerical, present them with senior-level calibration, and hold standards through a control architecture that catches problems before they mature. The system works. The question this assessment answers is whether the system will continue to work as the demands of the role shift from operational management to organisational leadership.

You manage a 220-person, three-site logistics operation with eight direct reports, and you described the tension between commercial growth ambitions and operational capacity limits as the challenge nobody is naming clearly enough. The findings below are read against what is expected of a senior operations leader at the point where the role begins to demand planning architecture, team independence, and motivational systems that your current practice does not yet provide. The gap is not between competence and incompetence. It is between individual capability and organisational capability, and it runs through five of the nine management responsibilities assessed.

Top 3 Strengths

Strength	Key Finding
Presentation of Decisions (Personal)	You calibrate how you present decisions to each individual listener, investing weeks in pre-work before formal meetings, and your bad-news architecture converts potential resistance into acceptance before the conversation begins.
Decision Making	You reverse publicly stated positions on the strength of evidence, apply genuine analytical discipline, and build checkpoint architecture into delegated decisions that catches errors before they compound.
Presentation of Decisions (Team)	Genuine consultation that changes outcomes, with clear boundaries between negotiable and non-negotiable elements. Two of five process steps were modified through team input, and the signal your team receives is that their contribution shapes the final decision.

Top 3 Development Priorities

Development Priority	Key Finding
Emotional Management (Team)	Public emotional signals are corrected only privately, morale detection is indirect and presence-dependent, and the effect of your own emotional climate on team behaviour is unaddressed.
Emotional Management (Personal)	Displacement is recognised after the fact but there is no proactive system for interception. No trigger identification, no self-monitoring routine, no deliberate pause mechanism. Recovery is competent; prevention is absent.
Encouragement	Recognition defaults to results regardless of method, your strongest performer describes genuine developmental attention as rare, and no systematic practice exists for valuing management quality alongside operational output.



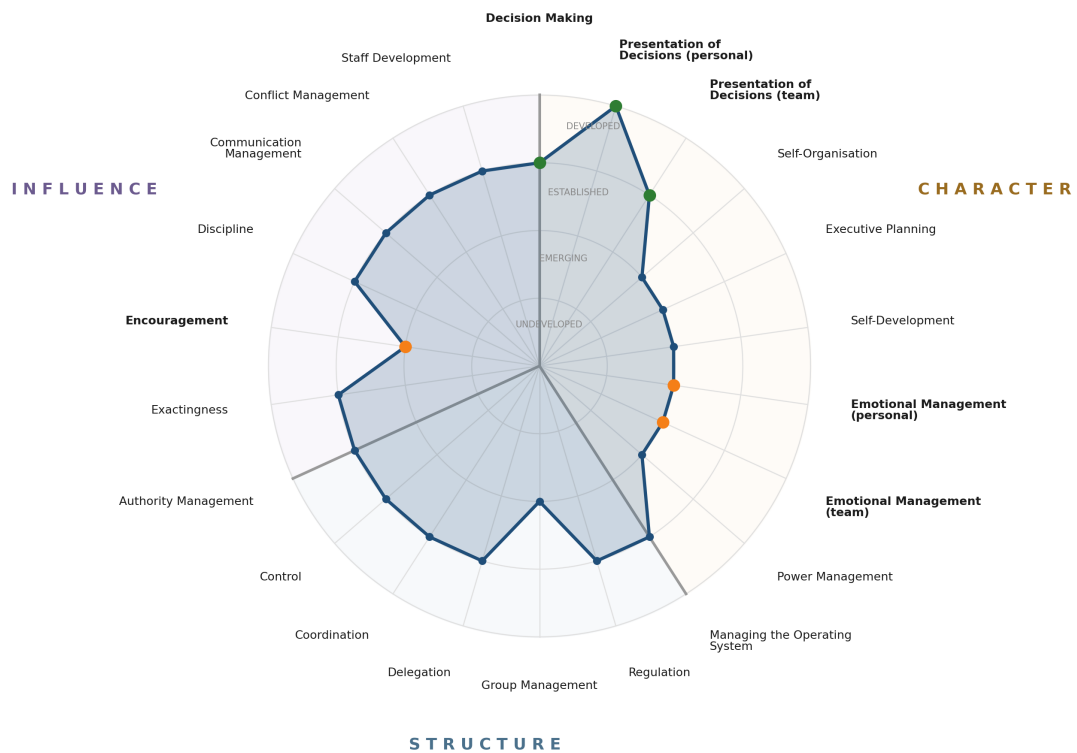
Responsibility Readiness Overview

Across the nine management responsibilities, you are fully ready for one (Ensuring Task Completion), ready with identified risks for three (Task Allocation, Shaping Interpersonal Relationships, Assessing Interim and Final Results), and still developing five (Setting the Direction, Organising Work Interaction, Building Motivation, Developing Employee Skills, Optimising Work Processes). The five developing responsibilities are not independent gaps: executive planning directly caps three of them, and encouragement caps two.



Competency Profile

Your profile across 20 competencies (22 axes with dual-dimension splits), organised in three blocks: Character, Structure, and Influence. The shaded polygon is your shape of strengths and development areas.



■ Your competency profile	● Top 3 strengths	● Top 3 development priorities
TOP STRENGTHS		
● Presentation of Decisions (personal)	Developed	
● Decision Making	Established	
● Presentation of Decisions (team)	Established	
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES		
● Emotional Management (team)	Emerging	
● Emotional Management (personal)	Emerging	
● Encouragement	Emerging	

Development priorities are the highest-leverage gaps to address now, given your level and growth path. A competency at Established may still be a priority if closing it unlocks the next stage of your role, or a strength if you already draw on it well.



Assessment Themes

Three cross-cutting patterns emerge from the full set of findings. None is visible in any single competency; each becomes clear only when the competency results are read together.

The gap between thinking quality and system quality. Your analytical capability consistently outperforms your architectural capability. You diagnose problems with precision, make sound individual decisions, and present them with senior-level calibration. But the systems that should translate those individual acts into sustained organisational performance are either absent (executive planning), informal (self-organisation), or dependent on your personal attention (control, coordination). The result is an operation that performs well when you are present and attentive, and whose performance under your absence is untested. The Cannock capacity model, the fleet compliance transfer, and the WMS investment case all demonstrate what happens when you build a system. The question is why the discipline that produced those outcomes has not been extended to the management architecture as a whole.

Selective investment in people. Your development of your Wolverhampton site manager is one of the strongest examples in this assessment: two and a half years of sustained, progressive challenge that has produced a leader who now develops others. The rest of your team receives a fraction of that investment. Six of eight direct reports manage their own growth by default. Your fleet manager suspects you have given up. Your strongest performer describes genuine developmental engagement as rare. The pattern is consistent: your attention goes to people who are either high-potential or high-maintenance, and the middle ground is left to manage itself. Encouragement defaults to results, which means the signal your team receives is that producing good numbers matters more than how those numbers are produced. The motivational architecture runs on autopilot.

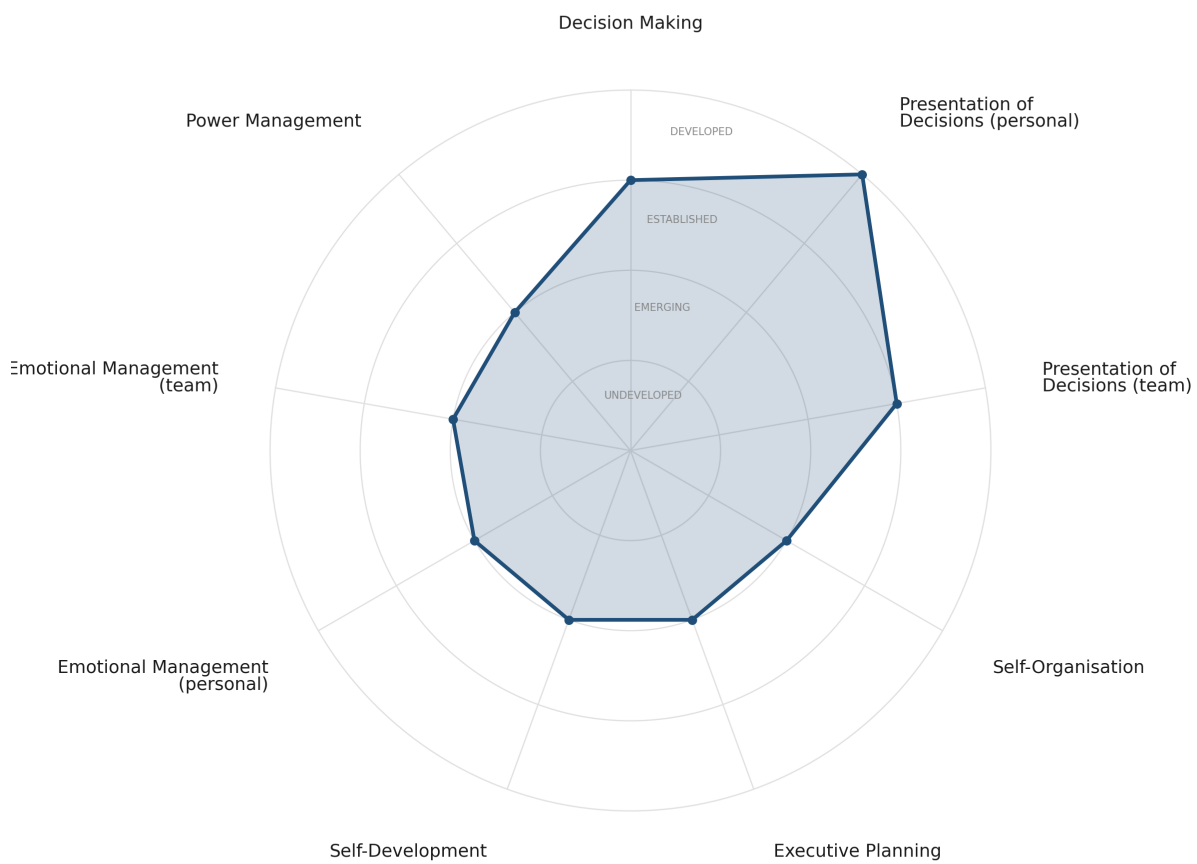
Speed varies with emotional proximity. Junior misconduct with clear evidence produces a prompt, proportionate response. Senior underperformance involving someone you appointed, backed publicly, and feel responsible for produces delay you recognise and have not corrected. The Cannock site manager appointment is the clearest case: you identified the misjudgement within three months and have not acted for over fourteen months. The same graduated pattern appears in your decision-making (data decisions are fast, people decisions are slow), your discipline (junior cases are swift, senior cases stall), and your self-development (the diagnosis is complete, the treatment has not begun). Emotional proximity slows the mechanism, and the cost falls on the teams below the person whose performance you have tolerated.



Detailed Assessment

What follows assesses each of your 20 competencies individually, grouped by Character, Structure, and Influence.

Character: *The personal foundations of your management practice*





1. Decision Making

Competency	Decision Making
Group	Character
Current position	Established
<i>The pattern in your answers</i>	<i>You make better decisions when the evidence is numerical than when the evidence is a person, and the gap between the two is wider than you have acknowledged.</i>

You make better decisions when the evidence is numerical than when the evidence is a person. That single line divides your decision-making cleanly and it runs through almost every answer you gave.

Every morning walkround, WMS data check, and dispatch review tells the same story: when you suspect information has been shaped, you go to the source and verify it yourself. Your Cannock site manager rounded down an error rate; you caught it the following day by checking the raw data. Your fleet manager presented a cost analysis on agency drivers that contradicted your long-held position; you changed your mind publicly because the numbers were clear and you could not argue with them. Your Wolverhampton site manager laughed. You absorbed the credibility cost without defensiveness. These are not small things. The ability to update a publicly stated position on the strength of evidence, and to do so visibly, is uncommon among senior operations leaders.

On the other side of this line, where decisions involve people rather than data, the picture shifts. Your Cannock site manager is not operating at the level the site needs. You know this. You have known it for over a year. You can articulate the business case for making a change, name the three reasons you have not acted, and identify which of those reasons is emotional rather than analytical. The self-awareness is complete. The decision is not made. The same pattern appears in your response to the continuous improvement programme: you saw it failing at month two, told yourself to give it another month, and acted at month four. Nothing you learned between month two and month four changed the picture. The delay was driven by hope, not by analysis.

At your level, the expectation is that decisions involving people are made with the same discipline as decisions involving data. The analytical architecture is strong. The willingness to sit with discomfort while evidence accumulates against a person you appointed, backed publicly, and feel responsible for is the pattern that limits your decision-making most. You set conditions for action on the data side and act when the conditions are met. On the people side, the conditions for action are not defined, and their absence allows the delay to continue indefinitely.

Both the fleet compliance transfer and the agency driver decision show what happens when you apply the same discipline to both domains. Both involved discomfort. Both required you to change a position. Both produced better outcomes because you acted on evidence rather than preference. The architecture exists. It is not yet applied consistently.



2. Self-Organisation

Competency	Self-Organisation
Group	Character
Current position	Emerging
<i>What your answers show</i>	<i>A weekly planning rhythm exists and has identifiable components, but sixty per cent of your time is reactive and the protected blocks for longer-term work collapse at the first interruption.</i>

A weekly rhythm exists. Sunday evening planning, Monday walkround and standing operations meeting, protected Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for longer-term work, a PA managing your calendar. The components are identifiable and the system has structure.

A single number carries the diagnostic. Sixty per cent of your time is reactive. Forty per cent is protected for longer-term work. For someone running three sites, that ratio should be closer to the reverse. The longer-term work you describe (capacity planning, fleet replacement, operational reviews) occupies the minority of your time and is the first to be sacrificed when disruption arrives. Two afternoons lost to a DVSA audit and the fleet replacement business case was still undone weeks later. The protected blocks exist but they do not hold. They collapse at the first interruption that “genuinely cannot wait,” and your threshold for what qualifies appears generous.

At Cannock, the capacity model is the counterweight. You built a utilisation model mapping current capacity against projected client growth for eighteen months. Nobody asked you to do it. There was no deadline, no client requirement, no board pressure. It identified that Cannock would hit full capacity earlier than anyone else in the business had flagged. That is genuine forward-looking output produced without an external deadline, and it proves the system can deliver when you protect it.

It still took three sessions over two weeks because the first two were interrupted. Longer-horizon work that requires sustained concentration does not survive in forty-five-minute fragments between operational demands. You see this clearly and describe it honestly. You do not measure your time allocation with any precision. The sixty-forty split is your estimate, not a tracked figure. Without measurement, the system cannot self-correct. You do not know whether the ratio is stable, improving, or worsening, and you cannot intervene on a trend you are not tracking.

Pruning the fleet inspections shows a different capability. You stopped a weekly activity you had done for eight years because your fleet manager made a sound case that your involvement was undermining the role’s authority. The data channel survived; defect rates improved after you stepped back. That decision freed capacity. Whether the freed capacity reached longer-term work or was absorbed by the next operational demand is less clear.



3. Executive Planning

Competency	Executive Planning
Group	Character
Current position	Emerging
<i>The gap to close</i>	<i>Your planning system looks one week ahead; the structured multi-horizon architecture that would keep your organisation pointed at the right objectives across quarters and years does not exist.</i>

One week. That is how far forward the planning system looks. The Sunday evening review and Monday operations meeting cover that window. There is no evidence of a monthly strategic review that reconnects daily activity to longer-term objectives. The capacity planning and fleet replacement work exist as projects in your head, not as items in a structured planning rhythm that ensures they progress regardless of what the week brings.

Elsewhere, the continuous improvement programme reveals a planning methodology gap at a different level. The original plan had no early-warning checkpoints built in at the planning stage. You noticed attendance was patchy at month two, gave it another month, and restructured at month four. The recovery worked: smaller group, protected time, committed leaders. But the original plan was launched without verifying that the conditions for success were in place. Staffing levels made full attendance impossible from the start. You started the work before full-kit conditions were met.

Your restructuring scenario answer shows a more developed planning capability when you have time to think it through. The three-stage plan includes genuine buffers, fortnightly reviews with leading indicators, board expectation management, and an honest admission that performance will deteriorate before it improves. The monitoring architecture is specific: staff turnover, error rates, client complaints, internal escalation volumes. These are predictive indicators, not lagging ones. What is absent from that plan is switching triggers: defined conditions under which the plan would be revised or abandoned. The buffers are built in but the decision architecture for using them is not.

At your level, the expectation is a planning system that operates across multiple horizons simultaneously: this week, this quarter, this year, and beyond. Your weekly system functions. Your quarterly and annual systems are informal and depend on your personal initiative rather than a structured rhythm. The Cannock capacity model was produced by discipline, not by architecture. It happened because you noticed something in the daily numbers, not because a system prompted you to examine capacity at regular intervals. Good instincts are not a substitute for planning architecture, because instincts depend on your attention being in the right place at the right time.



4. Presentation of Decisions

Competency	Presentation of Decisions
Group	Character
Current position - personal	Developed
Current position - team	Established
<i>The strength to build on</i>	<i>You present five versions of the same case to five individuals, calibrating the framing to each listener's priorities as preparation rather than improvisation, and your bad-news architecture arrives with changes already implemented rather than promises to investigate.</i>

Personal dimension

Eighty per cent of your WMS investment decision happened before the board meeting. Six weeks out, you conducted individual conversations with each board member. The MD received the growth case. The finance director received cost-of-inaction framing. Each non-executive received risk-mitigation framing because you had read their value orientation as risk-averse. By the time the board convened, every member had heard the case privately, had specific concerns addressed, and knew where the others stood. The meeting took twenty minutes. The decision was unanimous.

You did not present one case to five people. You presented five versions of the same case to five individuals. That distinction is the finding. You calibrate the framing to the listener's priorities, and you do it as preparation rather than improvisation. The picking process standardisation shows the same instinct: you stated the objective, shared the data, gave each site manager a week to return with specific objections, and accepted modifications from your Wolverhampton site manager on two of five process steps. That changed the dynamic from compliance to co-ownership.

One Q1 profit miss shows the same architecture applied to bad news. You sent the numbers to the MD and finance director twenty-four hours before the board meeting. You led with the number, explained causes in order of impact, acknowledged that the agency labour overspend was partly your own planning failure, and arrived with a recovery plan already in place. The non-executives' questions about cost control were answered by changes already implemented, not by promises to investigate.

Verification is the weakness. Your Cannock site manager's commitment to the picking standardisation was never tested. The timing objection was addressed with a phased rollout, but you did not check whether genuine commitment followed the accommodation. You treated the absence of further objection as sufficient. Across several answers, this pattern appears: the persuasion architecture is strong, the follow-through verification is incomplete. You invest heavily in securing the decision and less in confirming that the decision has genuinely landed.

Team dimension

Your consultation is genuine. Your Wolverhampton site manager's input changed the outcome on two of five process steps. You were transparent about what was negotiable and what was not. The boundary between



participation and democracy was clear: standardisation itself was non-negotiable, but the method within each step was genuinely open.

Where you deploy it, the team dimension is consistently strong. The risk sits in the situations where you do not. Your board preparation works because you invest time in understanding each person's perspective before the formal conversation. Where that investment is not made, the message lands unevenly. The picking process cascaded differently at each site because each site manager filtered it through their own context. The follow-up correction was effective, but the initial communication was uniform where it should have been calibrated.

5. Emotional Management

Competency	Emotional Management
Group	Character
Current position - personal	Emerging
Current position - team	Emerging
<i>Where this sits today</i>	<i>You recover from emotional displacement competently and honestly, but there is no system for intercepting the impulse before it lands, and the team dimension of your emotional climate is managed by accident rather than by design.</i>

Personal dimension

Frustration from a client call landed on your fleet manager. You were sharp, did not allow an explanation, used a hard tone, and did it in earshot of others. You recognised the displacement within about an hour. Faster than many in similar roles. You returned before end of day, apologised, and reframed the conversation from blame to problem-solving.

Recovery is competent. Recognition, apology, reframe. But there is no evidence of a structured approach to catching the displacement before it happens. You directed frustration at the nearest available target, and you name that honestly. The recognition came from reflection after the fact, not from a mechanism that would have intercepted the impulse in the moment. Your description does not include any practice for monitoring your own emotional state under pressure: no identification of recurring triggers, no self-checking routine, no deliberate pause between the emotional event and the next interaction.

At Cannock, a different facet emerges. The unresolved decision is partly driven by the emotional discomfort of admitting a public misjudgement. You backed the appointment against advice. Acting now means accepting that the person who warned you was right. The self-awareness about this emotional driver is precise; the action lag despite it is the pattern. You recognise your emotional patterns clearly but have not built a system for managing them proactively rather than recovering from them after the fact.

Team dimension

You know that the witnesses to the fleet manager incident drew their own conclusions about how you behave under pressure. The management of the team dimension was limited to a private apology to the individual. You



did not address what the wider team saw. The signal that your emotional control can fail under pressure was sent publicly and corrected privately, which means the correction reached one person and the signal reached several.

Your ability to read the emotional climate around you is, by your own assessment, weaker than your ability to read operational data. You watch for silence, for the absence of normal operational noise. The Cannock January example is specific: team leaders stopped raising issues in daily briefings, and you discovered two were considering leaving only by visiting the floor yourself. Your detection is indirect and relies on physical presence. You have no structured approach to monitoring morale or engagement.

In your own words, the core finding: you tend to focus your attention on problems you can see in the data rather than problems you need to sense. For a leader of your scope, the emotional climate you create, whether you intend it or not, is one of the most powerful forces shaping your team’s behaviour. Your answers do not address this dimension. The question asked about it directly, and your response focused on reading the team’s emotions rather than managing the effect of your own.

6. Self-Development

Competency	Self-Development
Group	Character
Current position	Emerging
<i>What stands out</i>	<i>Three capabilities have atrophied with success and you name them precisely; the diagnosis on each is complete but the treatment has not begun on any of them.</i>

“I find the operational and strategic work more engaging than the people side, and I gravitate towards what I find engaging.” That sentence, from your answer about the leader you intended to become, captures a trade-off you have made without fully deciding to make it.

You intended to be close to people, visible, approachable. The leader you describe is someone who spends most of the day in meetings and at a desk. Your morning walkrounds are shorter than they used to be and you are usually thinking about something else while doing them. You know your direct reports but are much less connected to people two and three levels below. The distance accumulated through thousands of small choices, each justified by the immediate demands of the role. You did not decide to become distant. Distance happened.

Three capabilities have atrophied with success, and you name them precisely. First, patience with ambiguity: you now want to reach the answer quickly and move on, which served you in building operational systems but limits you where nuance is needed. Second, technical depth: you rely on site managers for detail you once held yourself and occasionally get caught out. Third, and most significantly, openness to other perspectives. Your operations managers have commented that you tend to arrive at meetings with a view already formed and that the discussion feels like it is working towards your conclusion rather than being genuinely open. That feedback came from people who work with you daily, not from self-reflection, and it carries weight.

Your response to that feedback is equivocal. You are not sure whether the observation is true or whether it reflects you simply having more context. The equivocation is itself diagnostic. A leader who has fully reckoned with the feedback would not still be weighing whether it is accurate. You have reached the point of recognition on all three fronts. The fleet manager’s challenge to your fleet inspection involvement shows you can act on



uncomfortable feedback when the evidence is specific and the person delivering it is trusted. The agency driver decision shows you can change a position publicly when the data is clear. What has not yet happened is the equivalent act of correction on the three atrophied capabilities. The diagnosis is complete. The treatment has not begun.

You learn from your mistakes honestly. Your analysis of the Cannock promotion misjudgement separates operational competence from leadership capability with precision. Your identification of the continuous improvement programme failure names the real cause: emotional delay, not analytical delay. The quality of your post-failure analysis is consistently high. The limitation is in translating that analysis into changed behaviour before the next situation arrives. Pattern recognition without pattern change is an incomplete cycle, and you have been in the recognition stage on several fronts for longer than the evidence would justify.

7. Power Management

Competency	Power Management
Group	Character
Current position	Emerging
<i>The signal in your practice</i>	<i>Three people tell you the truth, and all three formed through accumulated personal history rather than deliberate architecture; you have no strategy for building more.</i>

Three people tell you the truth. Your PA of nine years, who challenges through careful questions. Your Wolverhampton site manager, who pushes back openly in meetings because confidence and track record provide the standing to do so. And the MD, who has known you for twelve years and has no difficulty telling you when you are wrong.

Three is the minimum functional number, and the composition is narrow. One personal assistant, one strong direct report, one superior. No peers. No external advisors. Two of the three formed through accumulated personal history, not through deliberate architecture. You have no strategy for building these relationships, and you named that directly: the reason there are only three is that you did not design for more. A single departure from that group would reduce the system below its minimum viable level.

Part of this is structural, part behavioural. Your operations managers defer to you once you have stated a position. Your own assessment connects this to a habit you have identified elsewhere: arriving at meetings with a view already formed. If the team perceives the decision as already made, challenge feels futile. The narrow truth-telling circle follows predictably from a decision-making style that signals conclusions before the discussion begins.

Where you do exercise power deliberately, the results are strong. The warehouse bay capital approval shows a structured approach: you identified that the formal process would produce the wrong answer, secured the MD's support informally before the formal meeting, and returned to the finance director with both positional backing and a strengthened business case. The sequencing was deliberate and the objective was legitimate. The finance director's acceptance was structural rather than persuaded, which you recognise but accepted as sufficient.

Your power field at Cannock has low stability. Your site manager checks decisions that sit within delegated authority. Longer-term projects would stop in your absence because they exist only in your personal operating system. Standards enforcement would gradually weaken because it is maintained by your follow-up, not by a self-sustaining system. The Wolverhampton site would hold because your Wolverhampton site manager operates

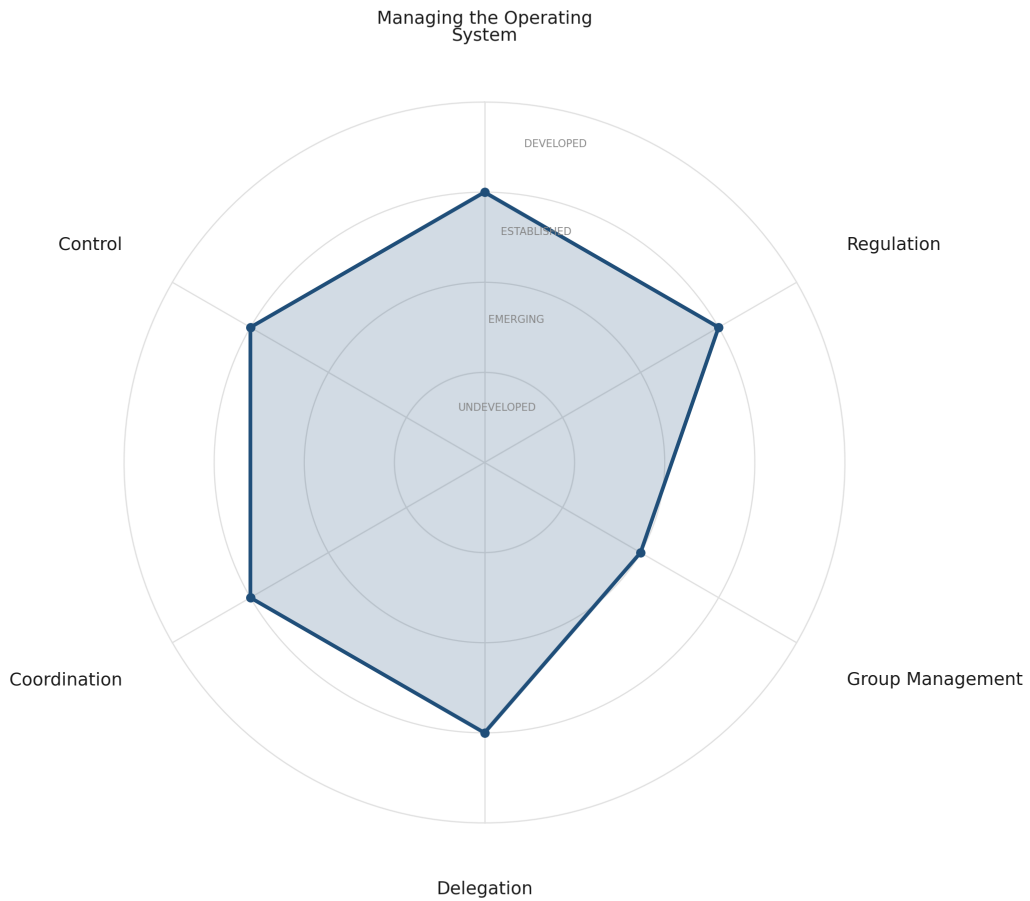


independently. The contrast between the two sites is a direct reflection of the capability difference below you, and the stability of your power field is only as strong as the weakest link in your management layer.

Seven competencies above shape your quality as a thinker and decision-maker. Your personal analytical discipline is strong, but the next question is whether you have translated those personal qualities into systems that work without your constant involvement. The Structure competencies that follow suggest the translation is incomplete: the systems you have built depend more on your personal attention than on the architecture itself.



Structure: The systems and architecture you have built





8. Group Management

Competency	Group Management
Group	Structure
Current position	Emerging
<i>The key finding</i>	<i>Only one of eight direct reports operates with genuine independence, the Cannock appointment remains unresolved after fourteen months, and the team cannot resolve non-data disagreements without your adjudication.</i>

Five of eight direct reports were inherited. Three were chosen. Of the three you appointed, your Wolverhampton site manager was the most deliberate: headhunted from a competitor, three months of conversations, designed to fill a specific capability gap in independent site leadership. The continuous improvement manager was a deliberate capability addition. The Cannock site manager was an internal promotion you now call a misjudgement.

As you describe it, the team functions but is not the team you would build from scratch. Your fleet manager is technically competent but passive. One operations manager is adequate but not exceptional. You name these compromises explicitly and have reasons for each: the fleet manager’s institutional knowledge would be costly to replace, the operations manager’s accounts are stable. The reasons are practical. They are also the reasons that allow a suboptimal team to persist indefinitely without intervention.

At Cannock, the appointment decision is the sharpest signal. You promoted someone who was not ready, recognised the error within three months, and have not acted. Warning signs appeared quickly: checking decisions that should have been autonomous, reluctance with difficult conversations, presenting problems as questions rather than recommendations. Fourteen months later, the same gaps persist. The rationalisation that served as emotional cover for the delay has expired, and the inaction continues.

What you have done with the inherited members is revealing. You have accepted the team you found rather than shaping it toward the team you need. The practical reasons for each compromise are sound individually. Collectively, they produce a leadership layer where only one member operates with genuine independence, one requires weekly intervention to maintain basic site performance, and the rest occupy a middle ground you have not invested in developing. The distance between the team you have and the team you would build from scratch is the measure of accumulated tolerance.

Unable to resolve its own disagreements, the team reflects a structural consequence of how you lead meetings. When a disagreement cannot be settled by data, both parties look at you. You make the call. The team has not developed the capability to work through non-data disputes without your adjudication. Your Wolverhampton site manager is the only member who disagrees with your decisions privately and then implements fully. Others accept in the room and occasionally drag their feet on execution. The real views do not surface in the formal setting, and the dependency on you as decision-maker is efficient but developmental dead weight.



9. Delegation

Competency	Delegation
Group	Structure
Current position	Established
<i>What the evidence suggests</i>	<i>Your best delegation reaches the full standard expected at your level, but the quality correlates with your trust in the recipient, and lower-trust delegations are permanently scaffolded without a defined endpoint.</i>

Fleet compliance audit transfer is one of the strongest examples of completed delegation across all your answers. You owned the audit personally for six years because the consequences of failure are existential. You transferred it based on three evidence points: two clean interim audits, a compliance tracking system more thorough than your own, and demonstrated ability to handle the regulatory relationship. The handover was staged over two months. You sat alongside, then observed, then withdrew. Three subsequent audits passed cleanly.

What happened afterwards is the most revealing moment. You found yourself checking the compliance tracker weekly despite the evidence that the transfer had succeeded. You recognised the checking as a control habit rather than a control need, and you stopped. That self-correction is itself a capability signal: you can distinguish between necessary oversight and residual anxiety, and you can act on the distinction.

With the fleet replacement business case, a different story emerges. The handover was structured: objective specified, template provided, deadline set, checkpoint built in. The checkpoint caught a fifteen per cent cost overstatement early enough to correct. The structure was sound. The completion was not. The final document was competent but thin. You gave feedback, then amended and submitted. The amendment improved the document but may have taught the delegate that the work will always be polished before it reaches its audience. That is half-delegation: it produces a better document but not a better delegator.

Delegation quality correlates with your trust in the recipient. Where trust is high, you delegate genuinely, withdraw progressively, and accept the delegate's output on its own terms. Where trust is lower, the delegation is permanently scaffolded. The fleet manager receives weekly coaching through one-to-one sessions that have become a management coping mechanism rather than a developmental tool with a trajectory. The Cannock site manager receives the same. Neither delegation has an endpoint or a defined set of milestones that would signal readiness for a longer leash. The question is whether the scaffolding is building capability or preventing it from developing. The fleet compliance transfer proves you can execute the full cycle when you choose to. The missing step is applying the same staged withdrawal to the people and tasks where you are less confident of the outcome.



10. Coordination

Competency	Coordination
Group	Structure
Current position	Established
<i>The working picture</i>	<i>Three coordination mechanisms function well and your one-to-ones are calibrated to the individual, but the system depends on your personal attention and the Cannock coordination is sustained without a developmental trajectory.</i>

Three mechanisms keep you connected below your direct reports. Daily morning walkrounds at Wolverhampton, fortnightly at Cannock. Quarterly skip-level meetings with team leaders from each site, without their site managers present, with an open agenda. And the informal information these channels provide.

Skip-level meetings are specific and structured: small groups, no site managers, positioned as the team leaders' time. They have surfaced issues that site managers "either do not see or choose not to escalate." The operational tension is genuine: when you discover something through skip-level channels and raise it with the site manager, the source can be inferred. You manage this by framing questions in general terms, but you call it an imperfect workaround and suspect the team leaders are aware of the dynamic. That tension is inherent in any skip-level mechanism and your management of it is pragmatic rather than resolved.

Your approach to resource disputes between directors follows a deliberate three-step process: individual meetings to understand the real stakes, a joint meeting with both positions laid out transparently, and a decision with immediate follow-up to the person who did not receive the allocation. Your refusal to split resources by default is the strongest signal: diluted outcomes teach directors that disputes result in compromise rather than clear decisions. The follow-up within twenty-four hours to the person whose case was not accepted manages the relationship cost of the decision.

Your one-to-one conversations are calibrated to the person. With your Wolverhampton site manager: forward-looking, open-ended, minimal operational content. With the Cannock site manager: operational, directive, structured around explaining reasoning and validating or correcting decisions. The calibration is deliberate and you name the reason: the conversations are different because the capabilities are different. That differentiation is appropriate and shows a coordination instinct that many operations directors lack. The risk is in the Cannock one-to-one becoming sustained indefinitely without a developmental trajectory. The weekly intervention keeps the site running but it is not building the independence that would make the intervention unnecessary. You are coordinating around a weakness rather than developing through it, and the coordination cost falls on your own time every week without a defined path to reducing it.



11. Control

Competency	Control
Group	Structure
Current position	Established
<i>The strength to build on</i>	<i>Your monitoring is deliberately risk-based, your early warning capability detects behavioural changes before performance dashboards move, and your checkpoint architecture is designed into the delegation rather than added after failure.</i>

Daily dispatch reports from all three sites. The weekly client complaint log. Monthly fleet compliance status. These are the three things you monitor personally. The selection is deliberate and risk-based. Dispatch is where the entire operation converges. Client complaints are where internal performance becomes visible commercially. Fleet compliance is existential. You can articulate why each area requires your attention and what you would miss if you stopped.

Your early warning capability is genuine. You watch behaviour changes rather than waiting for performance dashboards to move. A shift in the type of questions your site managers ask, overtime request patterns, tone changes from the client service team. The Cannock overtime example is specific: a thirty per cent increase over three weeks that the site manager had not flagged, caused by two experienced team leaders reducing hours. Without your personal detection, the situation would have run for another three weeks before the performance numbers moved.

Structurally, this detection depends entirely on you. There is no system that surfaces these signals automatically. If you stop checking overtime patterns, the early warning disappears. The Cannock site manager should have flagged a thirty per cent overtime spike independently. That this did not happen is both a control gap in that role's practice and a gap in the expectations you have set. Your fleet compliance checking has reduced from weekly to monthly, which shows a trajectory toward releasing direct involvement. The dispatch and complaint reviews show no equivalent trajectory.

Your checkpoint architecture in delegation is sound where you use it. The halfway checkpoint on the fleet replacement business case caught a fifteen per cent cost overstatement before the rest of the case was built on it. The checkpoint was planned at delegation, not added after a problem surfaced. That is the right sequence: build the control into the handover rather than adding it when something goes wrong.

Whether you should have submitted the fleet manager's work without amending it is the right question. Your amendment before submission improved the document but may have taught the fleet manager that the work will always be polished by you before it reaches the board. The control architecture is sound. Whether it is producing development or dependency in the person you are controlling is the open question.



12. Regulation

Competency	Regulation
Group	Structure
Current position	Established
<i>The pattern in your answers</i>	<i>Where you changed the structural conditions that made non-compliance rational, the change held; where you tried to enforce behaviour without changing those conditions, the enforcement decayed.</i>

Cost per unit shipped. That is the metric the board watches most closely, and it drives wrong behaviour. It creates a perverse incentive to prioritise volume over quality. When the number trends up, the pressure is to push more through, which leads to cutting corners on checking, rushing picks, and accepting unsuitable loads. You have seen this pattern three or four times in the past year and can trace the causal chain from metric to behaviour to outcome with precision.

Your response has been partial. You added a quality cost metric as a counterweight. It gives you data for conversations but has not changed the board’s primary focus. The behavioural signal remains mixed: cost per unit is still the headline number. You have not replaced the dysfunctional metric or persuaded the board to change the primary measure, and you acknowledge that the design problem has persisted for at least a year.

Post-delivery client feedback forms tell a parallel story. Target completion rate: one hundred per cent. Actual: forty to sixty per cent. You have tried three interventions over an extended period. Making it a KPI worked for a month. Asking operations managers to audit weekly worked while active but created resentment. Automating the trigger improved timing but people filled in minimum content. Each intervention failed for a different reason, and your diagnosis of why is precise: “The fundamental problem is that the people completing the forms do not see the value.” Compliance without perceived purpose produces surface compliance or gradual non-compliance.

Supplier payments offer the counterpoint, and the most instructive contrast across all your answers on this competency. You successfully changed an established custom by addressing the structural conditions rather than trying to enforce compliance against a structural incentive. The metric was changed. The policy was changed. Supplier relationships improved within three months and two suppliers offered better rates. The difference between the feedback form failure and the supplier payment success is clear in your own analysis. Where you changed the structural conditions, the change held. Where you tried to enforce behaviour without changing the conditions that made non-compliance rational, the enforcement decayed.



13. Managing the Operating System

Competency	Managing the Operating System
Group	Structure
Current position	Established
<i>What stands out</i>	<i>You read the real rules beneath the formal structure with unusual clarity, but your interventions in existing systems tend toward diagnosis and partial mitigation rather than the comprehensive structural change your scenario thinking describes.</i>

In practice, the real operating system³ is not the one on paper, and you read it with unusual clarity. You identified three unwritten rules, traced each to its origin, and assessed whether each was helpful or harmful. The MD makes the final call on top-three client accounts regardless of the formal reporting structure. People do not leave on time. Bad news travels slowly upward but fast sideways. Two of the three trace their origin to the managing director. You see the mechanism clearly: the formal structure says one thing, the actual practice says another, and the actual practice wins because it has been reinforced by years of precedent.

Your approach to the presenteeism culture is diagnostic but not yet interventional. You call it damaging, identify the cause, and have not changed it. The bad-news travel pattern is the most significant of the three because it connects directly to the information quality issues that appear elsewhere in your answers. You have tried to change it in your own area by responding to bad news with questions rather than blame, but the wider culture has been slow to shift. Consistent practice is the right instinct, but changing an established norm requires a vivid act that visibly breaks the pattern, not just a steady alternative practice that operates alongside the old one.

Your division takeover scenario shows the strongest operating system thinking across all your answers. The first month is observation only: understand, do not change. Meet every manager individually, sit in on team meetings, map how work actually flows. The second month builds minimum viable systems: decision rights, meeting rhythm, one or two high-visibility standardisations chosen because the inconsistency is most visible and the fix is straightforward. Months three to six expand the framework and develop the management layer's confidence in autonomous decision-making. You set realistic expectations with the board: improved consistency by month four, improved results by month five or six.

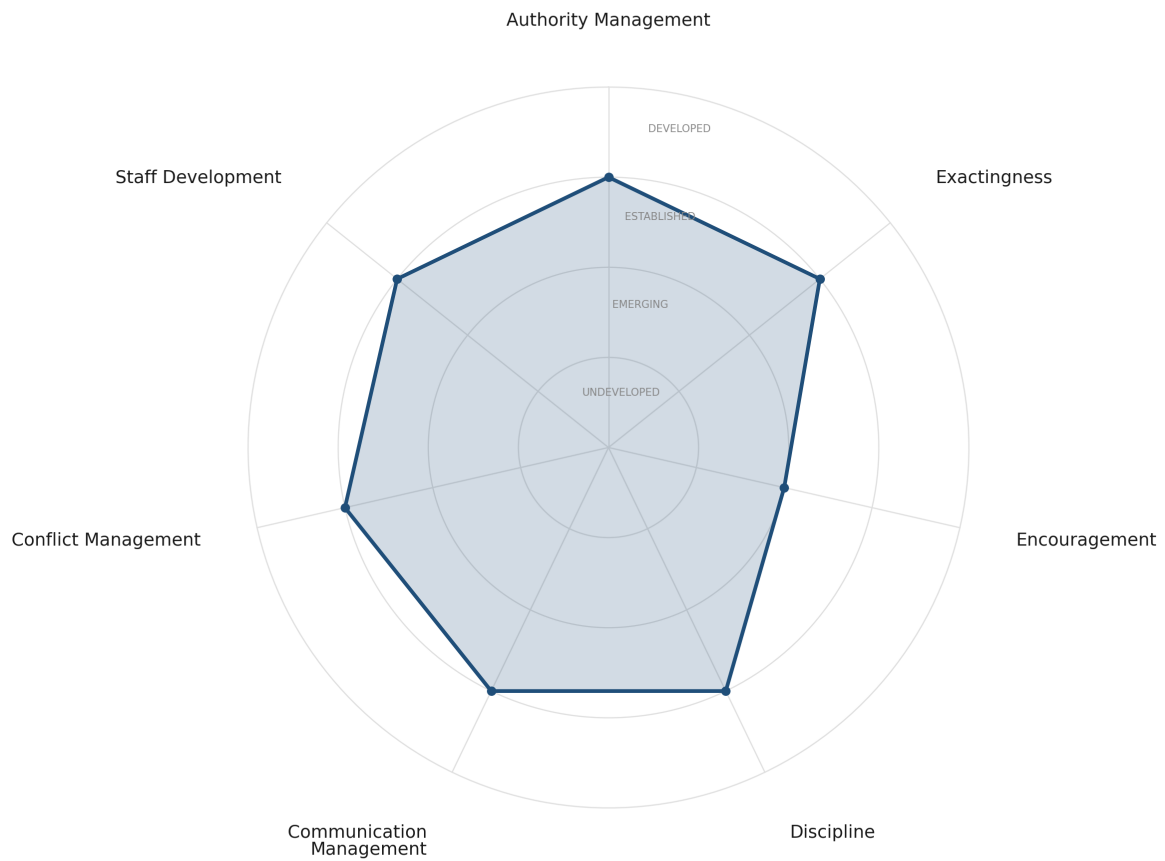
From observation to minimum order to expanded systems, the progression demonstrates sophisticated system-building thinking. The gap between this scenario answer and your actual practice in existing operations is notable. You can design a system-building sequence from first principles when starting from scratch. Applying the same discipline to an existing operation where you are already embedded, where relationships constrain action, and where momentum favours the status quo is harder. Your interventions in existing systems tend toward diagnosis and partial mitigation rather than the comprehensive structural change your scenario answer describes.



Structure reveals a pattern that connects directly to the themes above. Your systems work, but they work through you. Control depends on your personal detection. Coordination depends on your personal calibration. The leadership team depends on your adjudication. The Influence competencies that follow show whether you have built the leadership practices that would make these systems self-sustaining: authority that survives failure, standards that hold without your enforcement, development that extends beyond your two strongest performers.



Influence: How you lead, hold standards, and develop people





14. Authority Management

Competency	Authority Management
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>The working picture</i>	<i>Your authority operates through competence, consistency, and explanation rather than through rank, and it tolerates challenge well, but it is outcome-dependent and offers limited structural defence if a visible decision fails.</i>

You won the authority question at a contract renegotiation by producing better terms than the commercial director expected. That matters because the challenge to your authority was public, personal, and partly true: an operations manager questioned whether you had the commercial experience to lead the negotiation. Your response in the moment was composed. You acknowledged the substance, reframed the decision on your terms (the negotiation was about operational commitments, not just price), and did not retaliate.

Privately, the follow-up separated content from conduct. You validated the substance of the challenge while addressing the delivery: the point about your experience had some validity, but the way it was raised undermined your authority in front of the team. You set a boundary for future behaviour without punishing the act of challenging. That distinction is precise and deliberate.

Your walkround decision tells the same story through a different mechanism. Three direct reports made a collective case for replacing it with an early management meeting. You held the position through explanation and partial compromise: a three-times-a-week management huddle at a shifted time, preserving the walkround itself. Two of the three remained unconvinced. Your Cannock site manager made a pointed comment. You absorbed the relational cost without escalating. Position maintained through demonstrated reasoning, not positional override.

Across both examples, the pattern is consistent. Your authority operates through competence, consistency, and explanation rather than through rank. You tolerate challenge, address it through private conversation and visible outcomes, and let results settle the question. Holding your Wolverhampton site manager to the same standard as everyone else, and that person's own observation afterwards that consistency strengthened your standing with the team, confirms the model works when applied evenly.

Where outcomes do not vindicate the position, the limitation becomes visible. The renegotiation succeeded and the authority question closed. If it had failed, the challenge would have reopened and you had no structural defence beyond the result itself. Your authority model is outcome-dependent. It works well when you are right. It offers limited protection when you are not, or when the outcome takes time to materialise. You have not described any deliberate strategy for building structural authority that would survive a visible failure. The informal trust you have accumulated over years with the MD and with your Wolverhampton site manager provides some buffer. That buffer comes from accumulated goodwill rather than architecture, and goodwill depletes faster than it accumulates.



15. Exactingness

Competency	Exactingness
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>What your answers show</i>	<i>Standards are held without exemption for performer quality, and your diagnostic principle for separating method problems from effort problems is clean and consistently applied.</i>

A quarterly operational review came back from your Wolverhampton site manager with thin analysis and generic recommendations. The data was adequate. You held the original deadline and provided specific written feedback identifying exactly what fell short. No adjustment for performer quality: you held your strongest performer to a higher standard precisely because the capability existed to meet it.

Your Wolverhampton site manager resisted initially, citing pressure and a staffing crisis. You acknowledged the pressure and held the line. The second version was excellent. The longer-term effect matters more than the immediate correction. The same person told you afterwards that accepting substandard work while holding others to a higher bar would have undermined the standing you had built with the team. The standard is visible because it is applied without exemption.

At Cannock, the picking team tells a different story, and the contrast is the finding. Accuracy was falling short despite effort. Your investigation found the cause was a paper-based pick list system while Wolverhampton used RF scanning. The technology gap meant more errors under volume pressure. Investment in RF scanners and retraining fixed the problem within six weeks. The people did not need higher standards. They needed better tools.

Your fleet maintenance team presents the mirror image. The tools and processes were adequate because the same system at another site produced better results. The technicians had internalised a lower bar. You spent two weeks on site, inspecting completed checks alongside them, showing the difference between what they were producing and what the standard required. Then you made the standard non-negotiable and introduced auditing. Quality improved and held.

Your diagnostic principle is clean and you articulate it with precision: if the best person on the team is also struggling, the problem is probably the method; if only some people are struggling and others are fine using the same tools, the problem is usually the standard. That separation prevents two common errors: raising pressure when the tools are wrong, and changing the tools when the effort is insufficient. You make neither error. The methods intervention changed the system. The standards intervention combined direct demonstration with structural enforcement. Neither relied on volume or repetition. Both addressed the actual cause.



16. Encouragement

Competency	Encouragement
Group	Influence
Current position	Emerging
<i>The gap to close</i>	<i>Recognition defaults to results regardless of method, and your strongest performer has told you directly that genuine developmental engagement has become rare, which is the clearest signal that the motivational architecture needs rebuilding.</i>

Results get recognised. That is the default. When a site manager hits targets, you acknowledge it. When your fleet manager gets a clean audit, you say well done. The recognition is genuine but it is outcome-focused, and you name the limitation precisely: the only behaviour you are reinforcing is the production of good results, regardless of how those results were achieved.

In practice, people who achieve good results through unsustainable methods receive the same recognition as people who achieve good results through good management. The metric you are reinforcing does not distinguish between the two, and neither does your attention.

Your recent effort with your Wolverhampton site manager was a deliberate correction. That person spent three months redesigning the induction process. Results were not yet visible. You praised the process design specifically rather than waiting for the numbers. You told your Wolverhampton site manager the quality of the design was impressive and that you wanted to use it as the template for the other sites. That changed the signal: management quality became a valued output for the first time. The work became the standard. Recognition through adoption is more powerful than recognition through words because it is structural, not momentary.

One deliberate act does not constitute a changed pattern. You have identified the problem. You have demonstrated the alternative. You have not built a systematic replacement for the results-focused default. There is no standing practice for recognising method quality, no regular review of how results are being achieved alongside whether targets are being met.

Your Wolverhampton site manager receives insufficient ongoing attention despite being your strongest performer. You are direct about this: the last genuine developmental engagement was about three weeks ago, a forty-five minute conversation about a warehouse layout case study. Your Wolverhampton site manager told you it was the first time in months you had engaged on something that was not an operational problem or a task you needed done. That comment is the diagnostic. Your strongest performer has been treated as a resource rather than as a person whose engagement and development you are responsible for.

Retention risk is real, and you name it without softening: losing your Wolverhampton site manager would be one of the most damaging things that could happen to your operation, and your neglect is a bigger retention risk than any external factor. The development investment that created that person’s current capability has been withdrawn now that the capability exists. The maintenance investment required for retention is not being made.



17. Discipline

Competency	Discipline
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>The pattern in your answers</i>	<i>Junior misconduct produces a prompt, proportionate response with system-level follow-through; the further up the hierarchy and the closer the relationship, the slower you act, and the cost falls on the teams below.</i>

You discovered a team leader at Cannock had been signing off quality checks without performing them. Timestamps showed checks completed faster than was physically possible. This was not an error. The regulation existed, was known, and was deliberately circumvented. Your response was proportionate and documented: evidence laid out, explanation requested, formal written warning issued, consequence for repetition made explicit.

It is the second conversation that reveals more. You spoke separately to your Cannock site manager about the conditions that created the breach. If the team feels the only way to hit targets is to skip quality checks, then either the targets are wrong or the resource is insufficient, and it was that role’s responsibility to flag it. You addressed the system alongside the individual. Whether the site manager fully internalised that distinction is something you are not certain about, and you did not follow up to verify.

Your removal of a night shift team leader at Wolverhampton followed a formal process: verbal warning, written warning, performance improvement plan with specific measurable targets over eight weeks. Partial improvement. You concluded the improvement was not sustainable and removed the individual from the role, offering a non-supervisory position at a reduced grade. The handling was dignified. The process was correct. The decision took about two months longer than it should have.

How the team responded confirmed the cost of the delay. Performance improved almost immediately. Absence rates dropped. Quality checks improved within the first month. Several people told your Wolverhampton site manager they had been carrying the consequences of poor management for over a year. Every month you delayed was a month where the team suffered the consequences of your indecision.

Speed is the variable. The Cannock quality check falsification was addressed within days. The night shift team leader took months beyond the point of clarity. Your Cannock site manager has been left indefinitely despite recognised inadequacy. The pattern is graduated: the further up the hierarchy and the closer the relationship, the slower you act. Junior misconduct with clear evidence produces a prompt, proportionate response. Senior underperformance involving someone you appointed, backed publicly, and feel responsible for produces delay that you recognise and have not corrected. The diagnostic capability is strong. The discipline architecture at the junior level is sound. At the senior level, emotional proximity slows the mechanism, and the cost falls on the teams below the person whose performance you have tolerated.



18. Communication Management

Competency	Communication Management
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>What the evidence suggests</i>	<i>You detect filtered information through specific behavioural signals and correct cascade distortion effectively, but the detection depends entirely on your physical presence and you have not yet designed communication that resists distortion at source.</i>

Something was wrong in the meeting about the agency driver trial, and you saw it before anyone spoke. The words were positive but the delivery was flat, eye contact was avoided when driver concerns were raised, and answers were shorter than usual. You asked directly whether something had been withheld. The disclosure followed: permanent drivers were complaining about route allocation favouring agency drivers, and the information had been filtered because you had championed the trial.

Detection came through specific behavioural signals, not general intuition. You can articulate what you saw and why it registered. The response was immediate and effective: you thanked the person, asked why the issue had not been raised earlier, adjusted the route allocation, and complaints stopped within a week.

Structurally, this detection depends entirely on you being in the room, paying attention, and noticing the signals. Your fleet manager defaults to telling you what you want to hear, and you have not solved that dynamic despite several conversations about it. The conversations have not altered the behaviour. The information filtering is a predictable consequence of your decision-making style: if the team perceives that you arrive with views already formed, honesty feels risky when the honest view contradicts your position.

Your cascade of the picking process standardisation across three sites exposed the same vulnerability at a different level. Within a week, the message had been interpreted differently at each site: Wolverhampton understood improvement, Cannock understood criticism, Birmingham thought it did not apply to them. Each site manager filtered the message through their own context. You corrected the distortion by going to each site and asking team leaders what they understood the change to be and why.

Your diagnostic of the distortion mechanism is accurate. When a message passes through intermediaries, each layer reinterprets it through their own context and interests. Your emerging countermeasure is practical: asking site managers to play back the message before cascading it. You name the gap directly: you have not cracked how to prevent the distortion in the first place. You are managing distortion after it occurs rather than designing communication to be distortion-resistant. The relay points need to be equipped with the specific arguments they will require for their own audiences, rather than relying on them to construct their own framing from a uniform brief.



19. Conflict Management

Competency	Conflict Management
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>The working picture</i>	<i>You maintain a conflict deliberately with a defined trigger for resolution and manage factional disagreements through a structured sequence, but the coordination costs of managed conflicts sit entirely on you and the structural mechanisms to reduce them are absent.</i>

You are maintaining a conflict deliberately and you can explain why. Your Wolverhampton site manager and an operations manager both believe they should be the primary contact for a client whose warehousing sits with one site and transport with the other. Both are managing the client well. The creative tension means the client gets more attention than consolidated ownership would provide.

You acknowledge the costs: occasional duplication of effort, sometimes inconsistent messaging that you have to smooth over, and a personal cost to both parties who find the ambiguity frustrating. You have told both that you are aware of the overlap and have chosen to leave it in place. You have set a clear trigger for resolution: if the duplication or inconsistent messaging becomes a client problem rather than an internal irritation, you will resolve it.

That is a managed conflict, not a tolerated one. The distinction matters. You are monitoring it, absorbing the coordination costs yourself, and you have defined the conditions under which you would intervene. The problem is that the coordination costs sit entirely on you. The messaging inconsistencies you smooth over are a symptom of missing coordination infrastructure, not an inevitable cost of creative tension. A shared account plan or role clarity document could preserve the tension while reducing the unmanaged duplication. The structural mechanism is absent.

Your approach to factional conflict at senior level follows a different and more structured sequence. Meet each faction leader separately to understand the real stakes. Bring the full senior team together and name the split openly. Put both positions against business objectives rather than treating it as a personal contest. If the disagreement has genuine business merit on both sides, make the decision, explain the reasoning, and expect alignment. If it can be tested, design a test with clear criteria and a timeframe, and ask both parties to commit to the result.

Your most important observation is about speed. The longer a split persists, the more people invest their identity in their position, and identity investment makes resolution harder. Two weeks is an aggressive but realistic window for resolution or active management. That timing judgment is sound and it connects to the pattern visible elsewhere in your answers: where you act quickly on conflict, the outcomes are good; where you delay, the conflict calcifies. The Wolverhampton site manager-operations manager overlap has been stable and productive. The Cannock site manager situation has not been stable and has not been productive, and the delay there has no managed strategy behind it. The situation remains unresolved.



20. Staff Development

Competency	Staff Development
Group	Influence
Current position	Established
<i>What stands out</i>	<i>Your Wolverhampton site manager proves what your development capability produces when fully deployed; the gap between that benchmark and your default practice across the remaining six direct reports is the widest of any competency in this profile.</i>

One person stands as proof of what your development capability produces when fully deployed. Two and a half years of sustained, deliberate investment. Weekly ninety-minute sessions, half operational, half developmental. Progressively larger pieces of substantive work: process improvement business case, then annual operating plan, then board presentation. Each with draft review, challenge, and honest feedback. You put your Wolverhampton site manager in uncomfortable situations: chairing a cross-site meeting, representing the business at an industry conference, handling a difficult conversation you could have handled yourself.

Each assignment sat at the boundary of your Wolverhampton site manager’s capability: challenging but achievable with support. Each successful handover expanded that person’s zone of autonomous action before the next stretch was introduced. The results are concrete: your Wolverhampton site manager now runs the site with minimal input, presents confidently to the board, and has developed two team leaders into potential site manager candidates. Development has compounded. Your strongest performer is now developing others.

What made it work was consistency. You did not invest when it was convenient and ignore it when it was not. The weekly commitment was maintained even when you were busy, and your Wolverhampton site manager knew you took the growth seriously because you prioritised the time. That is the benchmark.

Beyond that investment, the picture does not match it. You invested actively in your Wolverhampton site manager and the continuous improvement manager. You neglected your fleet manager and the two operations managers. The reason is direct: they do not create problems and they do not ask for development. You know that is not a good reason. Your attention goes to people who are either high-potential or high-maintenance. Steady performers in the middle manage their own growth by default.

Your fleet manager’s limitations are, in your assessment, temperamental rather than skill-based: passive, avoids conflict, does not communicate proactively. You are not sure you know how to develop those qualities. But the honest admission follows: you stopped short of trying, and you suspect the person knows it. A person who suspects their manager has given up on their development has no incentive to stretch. The neglect reinforces the passivity you would like to change.

Your approach to the technically excellent person with high turnover shows your development thinking at its most structured. Get the facts first: exit interview data, peer feedback, specific patterns. Direct conversation with the data shared but sources protected. Redefine the performance standard to include management quality before applying consequences. Give a genuine opportunity to adapt. If adaptation does not come, evaluate whether technical contribution outweighs organisational damage. In most cases it does not, because the cost of turnover and the message it sends about what the organisation values are too high. The sequence separates diagnosis from



judgement and redefines the standard before holding the person to it. That is sound. The gap between this structured thinking and the actual development investment across your team is the finding.

All three patterns identified at the start of this report run through every group. An operation that leans on your presence rather than on the systems you have built. A motivational architecture that runs on results recognition without valuing the management quality that produces those results. A speed of action that slows as emotional proximity increases. The Management Readiness section that follows shows how these patterns combine across the nine responsibilities of the role, and where the cumulative effect on organisational performance is most visible.



Management Readiness

Nine management responsibilities represent the core functions of a senior manager. Each responsibility draws on a specific combination of competencies. The readiness assessment below shows where your combined competencies support the responsibility effectively, where specific risks exist, and where the combination falls short of reliable performance. Read it as a practical map of where your competency profile supports or limits your management effectiveness at the level expected of a senior operations leader, rather than as a pass-fail judgement.

Management Readiness Dashboard

#	Responsibility	Readiness	Primary Factor	One-Line Summary
1	Setting the Direction	Developing	Executive planning caps the planning architecture needed to translate strong decisions into sustained organisational direction	Strong decision-making and presentation cannot compensate for the absence of a multi-horizon planning system
2	Task Allocation	Ready, with identified risks	Executive planning limits the portfolio of work being delegated	Delegation mechanics are sound but the portfolio is assembled opportunistically rather than against organisational priorities
3	Organising Work Interaction	Developing	Group management caps the team's ability to coordinate independently	Individual coordination mechanisms work well but the leadership team cannot resolve disagreements without your adjudication
4	Ensuring Task Completion	Ready	Control, exactingness, and discipline all function at the required standard	The strongest management system in this profile; tasks get completed to standard reliably
5	Building Motivation	Developing	Encouragement caps the motivational architecture	Strong authority and control produce compliance, but the absence of systematic encouragement means the team may be compliant rather than genuinely motivated
6	Shaping Interpersonal Relationships	Ready, with identified risks	Emotional management creates risk under sustained pressure	Communication and conflict management both function well, but emotional displacement under pressure creates relational damage that takes longer to repair than it took to create



#	Responsibility	Readiness	Primary Factor	One-Line Summary
7	Developing Employee Skills	Developing	Encouragement and executive planning jointly cap the development system	Staff development capability is proven when deployed but concentrated on two of eight reports; the development system is selective rather than systematic
8	Assessing Interim and Final Results	Ready, with identified risks	Self-development creates vulnerability in how assessment findings are interpreted	Control architecture is well designed but the assessor's own development gaps (patience with ambiguity, technical depth, openness to other perspectives) affect the quality of interpretation
9	Optimising Work Processes	Developing	Executive planning caps the improvement architecture	Strong diagnostic capability produces sound individual interventions, but improvement is driven by what you notice rather than by a systematic improvement rhythm

1. Setting the Direction: Developing

Your decision-making is strong enough to set organisational direction when the evidence is numerical. The fleet driver reversal, the WMS investment case, the capacity model: each involved a clear choice backed by data, and you made each one well. The analytical side of direction-setting is not the problem.

Executive planning is. Your planning system operates on a one-week horizon. There is no structured monthly or quarterly planning review that reconnects daily activity to longer-term objectives. The capacity planning and fleet replacement work exist as projects in your head, not as items in a planning rhythm that ensures they progress regardless of what the week brings. At your level, setting the direction means maintaining a multi-horizon planning architecture that keeps the organisation pointed at the right objectives across this week, this quarter, this year, and beyond. A strong decision made in the absence of that architecture is a good decision made once. It is not direction.

Your operating system reading compensates partly: you identify the real rules beneath the formal structure and can articulate what needs to change. Your presentation capability is strong enough to land any direction you set. But the direction itself needs to be set more frequently and more systematically than your current planning practice provides. The supporting weakness in power management adds a further risk: with only three people who challenge your thinking, the direction you set may not receive the scrutiny it needs before it becomes the organisational position. Good instincts have carried you here. At this level, instincts need a system underneath them.

2. Task Allocation: Ready, with identified risks

Delegation and decision-making both operate at the standard expected of a senior leader. The fleet compliance transfer is one of the strongest examples in this assessment: staged handover based on evidence points, progressive withdrawal, and the self-correction when you recognised residual checking as anxiety rather than need. Your delegation quality at its best reaches the full standard. Your decision-making provides the judgement



needed to decide what gets delegated to whom and under what conditions. The presentation of decisions capability adds further strength: you calibrate how you frame tasks and expectations to the individual, which means the delegation lands as it was intended.

Executive planning is the risk. For a senior leader, task allocation extends beyond individual delegations to translating organisational priorities into distributed execution across directors and divisions. That translation depends on a planning architecture that connects longer-term objectives to operational activities across multiple time horizons. Your planning system operates at a single horizon. Major strategic work (the fleet replacement, the capacity analysis) exists as personal projects rather than as planned outputs within a structured rhythm. When planning is informal, the tasks that get allocated are the ones you happen to be thinking about, not necessarily the ones the strategy requires.

In practice, your delegation mechanics are sound. What you delegate is shaped more by operational pressure and personal initiative than by a structured planning process. The quality of the individual handover is high. The quality of the portfolio of work being delegated is less certain, because the portfolio is assembled opportunistically rather than designed against organisational priorities. The fleet replacement business case is instructive: the delegation structure was sound, but the project itself only existed because you decided to pursue it, not because a planning rhythm identified it as the next priority.

3. Organising Work Interaction: Developing

Coordination and communication management both function well. The skip-level meetings, the calibrated one-to-ones, the three-step resource dispute process: these are structured mechanisms that produce genuine information flow and resolution. Your communication detection capability (the agency driver meeting, the cascade distortion correction) shows you can read and respond to what is actually happening in conversations, not just what is being said.

Group management caps this responsibility. Your leadership team was largely inherited and has not been shaped toward the team you need. Only one member operates with genuine independence. The team cannot resolve non-data disagreements without your adjudication. Both parties look at you when data cannot settle the question, and that dependency is structural, not personal. It follows from a meeting style where you arrive with views already formed.

At your level, organising work interaction means building the organisational architecture for how people coordinate, communicate, and resolve disputes without depending on you personally. Your individual mechanisms are sound. The group dynamic they operate within is not yet managed as a system. Cross-divisional coordination still relies on you directly, and the leadership team's inability to work through disagreement without you creates a bottleneck that limits the organisation's capacity for independent action. Coordination works when you are present and paying attention. Whether it works when you are not is the question this responsibility asks, and the answer, on the current evidence, is uncertain. The conflict management support is strong, but it cannot compensate for a leadership group that has not been built to function independently.

4. Ensuring Task Completion: Ready

Control systems and coordination both operate at the standard required. The three monitoring areas you selected (dispatch, client complaints, fleet compliance) are deliberately chosen and risk-based. You can articulate why each area requires your attention and what you would miss if you stopped. Your early warning capability through behaviour change detection is genuine: the Cannock overtime spike caught three weeks before the performance



numbers would have moved. Your checkpoint architecture in delegation is sound, designed in at the handover rather than added after a problem surfaces. The halfway checkpoint on the fleet replacement business case caught a fifteen per cent cost overstatement before the rest of the case was built on flawed numbers.

Exactingness and discipline both support this responsibility at the required level. Standards are held without exemption, and the diagnostic principle for separating method problems from effort problems is clean and consistently applied. The Cannock picking team got better tools. The fleet maintenance team got higher standards. Each received the intervention the evidence called for, not a generic demand for improvement. Discipline at the junior and mid levels is prompt, proportionate, and documented, with system-level follow-through alongside individual correction.

This combination works well for ensuring completion of work already in progress. Your control finds problems before they mature. Your exactingness holds the standard. Your discipline addresses non-compliance. The system produces results. The question elsewhere in this assessment is whether the tasks being completed are the right tasks, which is a planning question, not a control question. This responsibility is about whether tasks get completed to standard. They do. The system you have built for this purpose is the strongest management system in this profile.

5. Building Motivation: Developing

Authority management is functioning: the contract renegotiation, the walkround decision, and the consistent application of standards regardless of performer quality all show that you have earned genuine standing with your team. Authority is the platform from which encouragement operates, and the platform is sound.

Encouragement is not yet functioning as a management system. Your recognition defaults to results. Good numbers get acknowledged. The method by which those numbers were achieved does not. You have demonstrated the alternative once: praising the induction process redesign for its quality and adopting it as the template. That changed the signal for your Wolverhampton site manager. It has not changed the signal for anyone else, and one correction does not constitute a new practice.

Emotional management adds a specific risk. Building motivation for a senior operations leader means creating the conditions where people are engaged, where good management is valued alongside good results, and where the emotional climate supports rather than undermines performance. Your emotional climate is shaped more by your operational focus than by deliberate management. The fleet manager incident, the Cannock January silence, and the acknowledgement that you focus on problems you can see in the data rather than problems you need to sense all point to a motivational environment that runs on autopilot rather than by design.

Results come because control and exactingness are strong. Whether your team is motivated to produce those results, or simply compliant, is a different question. Strong control with weak encouragement produces compliance without engagement. The system works. The people in it may not want to be in it, and your strongest performer has already told you that genuine developmental attention has become rare. That feedback is the clearest signal that your motivational architecture needs rebuilding, because it came from the person you have invested the most in, and even they feel the withdrawal.

6. Shaping Interpersonal Relationships: Ready, with identified risks

Two competencies carry this responsibility: communication management and conflict management. Both operate at the required standard. You detect filtered information through specific behavioural signals: flat delivery, avoided eye contact, shorter answers. You manage conflict deliberately: maintaining productive tensions with defined



triggers for resolution, using a structured approach to factional disagreements. Your authority management provides the relational foundation that makes both communication and conflict management effective, because people engage honestly with a leader they respect.

Emotional management is the risk. In your current role, shaping interpersonal relationships means managing the relational architecture of the organisation: how the leadership team interacts, how disagreement is handled across divisions, how trust is maintained under pressure. Emotional management supports this by ensuring that your own emotional state does not disrupt the relational environment you are building. The displacement incident (frustration from a client call landing on the fleet manager, in earshot of others) sent a signal about how you behave under pressure. The private correction reached one person. The signal reached several. You recognised the gap within about an hour. Faster than many in comparable positions. But the recognition came from reflection, not from a mechanism that would have intercepted the impulse before it landed.

Relationships across the team are functional and in several cases strong. The risk is that under pressure, emotional management gaps create relational damage that takes longer to repair than it took to create, and the repair mechanisms (private apology, reframing) do not reach everyone who received the original signal. The relational environment you have built is sound in stable conditions. Its resilience under sustained pressure is the open question.

7. Developing Employee Skills: Developing

Staff development capability, when deployed, is one of the strongest in this assessment. The Wolverhampton site manager trajectory is the proof: two and a half years of sustained investment, progressive challenge at the boundary of capability, development compounding until the person is now developing others. That is the full cycle, executed well. It sets the benchmark for what you are capable of producing.

Encouragement caps this responsibility because development and encouragement work as a pair. Development creates capability. Encouragement creates the motivation to use it and the signal that growing capability is valued. Your encouragement defaults to results, which means your development investment sends a mixed message: grow your capability, but the only thing that gets recognised is whether the numbers are right. Your Wolverhampton site manager has told you directly that genuine developmental engagement has become rare and that your attention arrives only when there is an operational problem or a task you need done.

Executive planning and self-development add further risk. Development at this stage of your career means building an organisational development culture, not just developing individuals when you choose to. That requires planning (structured development pathways, not ad hoc investment based on who catches your attention) and self-development (a leader who is not personally growing loses the credibility to demand growth from others, and you have been in the recognition stage on several fronts for longer than the evidence would justify). Your development investment is concentrated on two of eight direct reports. The rest manage their own growth by default, and your fleet manager suspects you have given up. That suspicion, whether accurate or not, removes any incentive to stretch. The gap between your best development practice and your default practice is the widest of any competency in this profile.

8. Assessing Interim and Final Results: Ready, with identified risks

Control and decision-making combine effectively for this responsibility. The three monitoring areas are deliberately selected and risk-based. Your early warning detection works: you catch behavioural changes before they appear in performance dashboards. Your decision-making applies analytical discipline to what the data



reveals, and you act on evidence rather than assumption when the evidence is numerical. The combination produces a reliable assessment capability for the operational areas you monitor.

Self-development is the risk here, supporting this responsibility by ensuring that the person assessing results is continuing to grow their own capability and judgement. Three specific developments are relevant here. Patience with ambiguity: you want to reach the answer quickly and move on, which can cause you to close on a conclusion before the full picture has formed. Technical depth: you now rely on site managers for detail you once held yourself, and you occasionally get caught out. Openness to other perspectives: your operations managers have commented that you arrive at meetings with views already formed. Each of these affects the quality of assessment. If you reach conclusions too quickly, miss detail, or discount perspectives that contradict your formed view, the assessments you make will be shaped by those tendencies rather than by the evidence alone.

None of this invalidates your control architecture, which is well designed. It introduces a specific vulnerability in how you interpret what the control system tells you. The assessment mechanism is sound. The assessor's own development of the qualities that make assessment reliable is the area that needs attention.

9. Optimising Work Processes: Developing

Analytical capability for process improvement is strong. The Cannock picking team intervention (RF scanners replacing paper lists) and the fleet maintenance standards reset both show you can diagnose whether a process problem is caused by the method or by the effort, and intervene accordingly. The supplier payment restructuring shows you can change structural conditions rather than just enforcing compliance against a structural incentive. Your own diagnosis of the difference is precise: where you changed the conditions, the change held; where you tried to enforce behaviour without changing conditions, the enforcement decayed. The diagnostic capability is strong, and where you apply it, the results hold.

Executive planning caps this responsibility. For a senior operations leader, optimising work processes means building the organisational architecture for continuous improvement: systematic identification of constraints, planned improvement cycles, and a management layer that carries process improvement forward without depending on your personal initiative. Your process improvements are driven by what you notice in the daily data, not by a structured improvement rhythm. The capacity model was built because you spotted something, not because a planning system prompted you to examine capacity at regular intervals. The distinction matters because improvement driven by personal observation depends on your attention being in the right place. A system that prompts examination at regular intervals does not.

Self-organisation and self-development add risk. Process optimisation at the organisational level requires sustained attention to longer-horizon work, which your self-organisation does not currently protect (sixty per cent of your time is reactive, and the protected blocks collapse under operational pressure). It also requires a leader who is personally developing their own practice alongside the processes they are improving. Your operating system reading is a counterweight: you can identify the real rules beneath the formal structure and design improvements that address the actual system rather than the documented one. The division takeover scenario shows this capability at its clearest. The pattern is that in your existing operations, you tend toward diagnosis and partial mitigation rather than the full structural overhaul your scenario thinking describes. The continuous improvement programme failure connects the planning and self-development risks: an initiative launched without verifying conditions for success, where the delay in correcting course was driven by hope rather than analysis. The recovery worked. The original plan should not have needed recovering.



Overall Responsibility Summary

One responsibility is fully ready: Ensuring Task Completion. Three are ready with risks: Task Allocation, Shaping Interpersonal Relationships, and Assessing Interim and Final Results. Five are developing: Setting the Direction, Organising Work Interaction, Building Motivation, Developing Employee Skills, and Optimising Work Processes.

A pattern runs through the five developing responsibilities. Executive planning directly caps three of them. Encouragement directly caps two. Group management caps one. These are not independent gaps. Executive planning and encouragement are Character and Influence competencies respectively, and their weakness cascades across multiple responsibilities because they feed the systems that connect individual competencies into management functions. The strongest individual competencies in this profile (control, decision-making, delegation) cannot compensate for the absence of the planning and motivational architecture that would make them work together as a system.



Development Plan

This plan is built from the specific gaps identified in your assessment. It follows three phases: immediate actions for the first 90 days, structural changes over the first year that take time to embed, and sustained development over two years for competencies that require long-term investment. Actions are sequenced by impact: the items that will shift the most responsibilities start first.

First 90 Days: *Clearing the path for the changes that matter most*

Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
1	Block one hour every Friday afternoon to review the coming week against your three to five current priorities. For each, ask: what progress did I make this week, and what is in my calendar for next week? If a priority has no calendar entry, it is not being worked on.	Executive Planning	Independent	Your priorities have calendar entries rather than existing only in your head. Check: at each Friday session, count how many of your top five priorities have a specific slot for the following week. Within 90 days, the answer should be five out of five.
2	For your next three one-to-ones, prepare one specific piece of recognition before you arrive. Identify the action, not the result: what did they do, how did they do it, and why does the method matter? Deliver it separately from any operational discussion.	Encouragement	Independent	Your direct reports begin describing their working methods, not just results, when reporting to you. Check: at each one-to-one over the next month, note whether the person volunteers how they achieved something or only what they achieved. A shift toward method-reporting signals your recognition is landing.
3	At your next leadership team meeting, present a decision you are still forming a view on. Ask each member for their position before you speak. Note who contributes independently and who waits for your signal. Repeat monthly for three months.	Group Management	Independent	The proportion of agenda items where your team reaches a position before you speak increases. Check: track how many items per meeting are resolved by the team versus by your adjudication. Within 90 days, the ratio should shift visibly.



Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
4	Identify three tasks this week that you are doing personally because they are faster than delegating. For each, write down what it would take to hand over: what the person would need to know, what checkpoints you would set, how you would verify completion. Hand over at least one.	Self-Organisation	Independent	The proportion of your week spent on management activities versus personal execution increases. Check: at your Friday review, estimate the split. Track it over 90 days. The target direction is toward 60% management.
5	Set a personal rule: after any operational pressure event (client escalation, site problem, deadline), you will not respond to anyone about a different topic for 30 minutes. Use that time to process the frustration before it reaches someone who did not cause it.	Emotional Management	Independent	Displacement incidents reduce in frequency. Check: after each pressure event over the next month, note whether you held the pause or broke it. Track the ratio over 90 days.
6	Ask your three most trusted challengers one specific question: "When I arrive at meetings with a formed view, how does that affect the quality of the discussion?" Write down their answers verbatim.	Power Management (also Self-Development)	Independent	You receive specific feedback rather than reassurance. Check: if all three give you the same comfortable answer, the question was not specific enough. If at least one gives you an uncomfortable truth, the channel is working. Repeat quarterly with a different topic.



Year One: Building the systems that make individual strengths work together

Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
1	Establish a monthly planning review (half a day, protected) where you reconnect operational activity to quarterly objectives. At each review, ask three questions: where were we aiming, where are we going, and what did we learn on the way? Document the answers and share them with your leadership team.	Executive Planning	Guided coaching recommended ⁴	Your leadership team can articulate the current quarter's priorities without asking you. Check: at a team meeting in month six, ask each director to name the top three priorities. If they agree with each other and with your list, the rhythm is landing.
2	Build a quarterly development conversation into your one-to-one rhythm with each direct report. Dedicate the full session to their growth: where they are developing, where they are stuck, what challenge you will set for the next quarter. Start with your two strongest performers and extend to all eight over the year.	Staff Development (also Encouragement)	Guided coaching recommended	Your direct reports describe developmental attention as a regular feature of your management. Check: at the six-month point, ask each person: "When was the last time we had a conversation specifically about your development?" The answer should be within the last quarter for all eight.
3	Redesign your leadership team meetings so that at least one item per meeting requires the team to reach a decision without your casting vote. Set the rule explicitly: you will not adjudicate unless they have exhausted their own ability to resolve the disagreement. When they look at you, redirect: "What would you do if I were not in the room?"	Group Management	Guided coaching recommended	Your leadership team resolves non-data disagreements without defaulting to you. Check: track items per meeting requiring your adjudication. Based on my experience with managers facing similar challenges, this number typically halves within six months.



Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
4	Protect two hours per week for work that is important but not urgent. Treat this block with the same discipline you apply to client meetings. When operational pressure arrives, move the block rather than cancelling it.	Self-Organisation	Independent	Your reactive time decreases from approximately sixty per cent toward fifty per cent or lower. Check: at your weekly review, note whether the protected block happened. The survival rate of the block across the year is the leading indicator.
5	For each direct report whose development you have left to chance, ask one question this quarter: "What do you want to be able to do in a year that you cannot do now?" Use their answer to set one specific challenge. Follow up monthly.	Staff Development	Independent	The six direct reports who currently manage their own growth begin to describe you as actively involved. Check: at year-end, ask each person whether they feel you have invested in their development. Compare the answer to where you started.
6	Extend the 30-minute pause from the first 90 days into a habitual practice: notice the emotional state, name it internally, and delay your next interaction by the time it takes to walk to a different room. The goal is a pause that operates without a timer.	Emotional Management	Independent	The displacement pattern becomes rare rather than occasional. Check: ask a trusted colleague to flag any time they notice your mood visibly affecting a conversation. The absence of flags over a sustained period is the signal.



Two-Year Horizon: Deepening capability in the areas that take longest to develop

Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
1	Move from monthly planning reviews to a multi-horizon system: weekly operational review, monthly tactical review, quarterly review against annual objectives. Each horizon has a defined purpose, output, and attendee list. The system should run whether or not you are present for any single session.	Executive Planning	Guided coaching recommended	Your organisation maintains direction during your absence. Check: take a two-week period away and compare the quality of decisions made without you against those made with you. Managers at a similar stage have typically seen this gap narrow significantly within two years.
2	Develop your leadership team so that at least three members (not one) operate with genuine independence: setting priorities, resolving cross-divisional disputes with peers, and developing their own people without waiting for your direction. The common thread is progressively withdrawing from decisions they can make themselves.	Group Management (also Delegation, Staff Development)	Guided coaching recommended	Cross-divisional coordination no longer depends on your personal attention. Check: track cross-divisional escalations per month. At the two-year point, escalations should be genuinely novel situations, not recurring disputes the team could resolve with established principles.
3	Build encouragement into your management system: one public recognition per team meeting (naming the person, the action, and why it mattered), one private recognition per one-to-one cycle (specific to method, not results), and one structural recognition per quarter (expanding someone's authority as a reward for demonstrated capability).	Encouragement	Independent	Your team reports feeling that good management practice is valued alongside good results. Check: in your annual feedback, look for the signal that people feel recognised for how they work, not just what they deliver. The clearest test is whether your strongest performer still describes developmental attention as rare.



Priority	Development Action	Linked Competency	Mode	How You'll Know It's Working
4	Commit to one area of personal development per year outside your operational comfort zone. First candidate: patience with ambiguity (sitting with incomplete information longer before reaching a conclusion). Second: technical depth (quarterly sessions reviewing operational detail you have delegated, to maintain your own understanding rather than to check others' work).	Self-Development	Independent	You can identify specific areas where your own practice has changed, with evidence. Check: at each annual review, write down one thing you do differently now than a year ago, with a specific example. If you cannot name one, the development has stalled.
5	Build a quarterly constraint review into your operations: what is the single biggest limitation on performance in each area? Follow each review with a planned intervention and a defined review point. The shift is from improvement driven by what you happen to notice to improvement driven by systematic search.	Executive Planning (also Managing the Operating System)	Guided coaching recommended	Improvement initiatives originate from the review cycle, not from your ad hoc observation. Check: track where each initiative comes from. Within two years, the majority should come from the quarterly review rather than from something you happened to spot.



Resources

Each resource below connects to a specific finding in this assessment, not to a generic recommendation.

Development Priority	Resource	Type	Why This Resource
Executive Planning	<i>The Goal</i> by Eliyahu M. Goldratt	Book	Introduces constraint thinking and cause-and-effect logic; directly applicable to building the systematic improvement architecture your planning currently lacks.
Executive Planning	<i>Critical Chain</i> by Eliyahu M. Goldratt	Book	Applies constraint thinking to project management, buffer design, and realistic scheduling; addresses the planning methodology gap visible in the continuous improvement programme launch.
Self-Organisation	<i>First Things First</i> by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, and Rebecca R. Merrill	Book	The most practical text on priority management and protecting important-but-not-urgent work; directly applicable to reversing the sixty-forty reactive split you described.
Self-Development, Decision Making	<i>The Effective Executive</i> by Peter F. Drucker	Book	Covers self-organisation, decision-making discipline, and contribution focus; relevant to the three atrophied capabilities you identified and the shift from operational management to organisational leadership.
Managing the Operating System	<i>High Output Management</i> by Andrew S. Grove	Book	Process-oriented management, performance indicators, and operational discipline; the closest parallel to the systematic approach your scenario thinking demonstrates but your daily practice does not yet sustain.
Encouragement, Staff Development	<i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i> by Dale Carnegie	Book	Covers genuine interest in people, recognition, and building cooperation; directly applicable to rebuilding the encouragement architecture that currently defaults to results.
Emotional Management	<i>How to Stop Worrying and Start Living</i> by Dale Carnegie	Book	Practical techniques for emotional containment and resilience under pressure; applicable to building the interception mechanism your emotional management currently lacks.
Group Management, Managing the Operating System	<i>The Ideal Executive</i> by Ichak Adizes	Book	Management roles and why no single person fills all four; directly relevant to understanding why your leadership team needs to be shaped rather than inherited.



Development Priority	Resource	Type	Why This Resource
Executive Planning, Coaching Programme	Business Fortification coaching (Greg Kurnikov)	Programme	A structured coaching programme addressing exactly the planning, encouragement, and group management gaps identified in this assessment, with accountability over twelve months. The assessment findings provide the starting brief; the programme provides the structured practice.

Aspects of this assessment draw on the work of Aleksandr Fridman. For more information: <https://www.asfridman.com/>



Next Steps

Block one hour every Friday afternoon for the priority review described in the development plan. It costs nothing, depends on no one else, and it is the foundation on which the more structural changes are built.

Return to this report at 30, 90, and 180 days. At each point, re-read the development plan and check your own progress using the “How You’ll Know It’s Working” indicators. The patterns you see in your own progress will tell you more than any single reading.

This report identifies what to work on. If you want structured guidance on how to work on it, with accountability and expert support, that is what the Business Fortification coaching programme is designed for. Contact Greg Kurnikov at greg.kurnikov@odexpert.co.uk to discuss how a coaching engagement could accelerate the development this assessment has mapped out.



Report Glossary

Part A: Key Terms

Term	Definition
Competency	A specific area of management practice that can be observed, assessed, and developed. This assessment measures 20 competencies, each representing a distinct skill or discipline required for effective management.
Character, Structure, Influence	The three groups that organise the 20 competencies. Character covers how you manage yourself. Structure covers the systems and processes you have built. Influence covers how you lead, hold standards, and develop people.
Undeveloped	No functioning practice in place for this competency. This is a starting point, not a judgement: every competency is developable from any position.
Emerging	Awareness and early steps are present, but practice is not yet consistent or reliable under pressure.
Established	A working practice is in place and used regularly. Room remains to deepen, extend, or make it more reliable.
Developed	Meets the full standard expected for your role. The practice is habitual, not effortful, and operates reliably under real conditions.
Ready	Across the competencies that feed this responsibility, your combined practice meets the standard expected for your role.
Ready, with identified risks	You can carry out this responsibility, but specific competency gaps create risks that could affect performance under pressure or over time.
Developing	The competencies that feed this responsibility are not yet strong enough for you to carry it out reliably. Targeted development would close the gap.
Not yet ready	Significant gaps exist across the competencies that feed this responsibility. This is a priority area for development before taking on the full scope of this responsibility.
Solid⁵	Information, a resource, or a commitment that can be relied upon under pressure. A plan built on solid elements holds up when conditions change.
Empty⁶	Information, a resource, or a commitment that will fail under pressure. A plan that depends on even one empty element is itself unreliable.
From strength⁷	A decision or action driven by a clear goal or purpose. The person is moving toward something they have chosen.
From weakness⁸	A decision or action driven by anxiety, avoidance, or external pressure rather than a clear goal. The person is moving away from discomfort rather than toward an objective.
Assessment themes⁹	Cross-cutting patterns visible across the full assessment. These are observations that sit above any single competency and show how your strengths and gaps interact.



Term	Definition
Management readiness ¹⁰	An assessment of whether your combined competencies equip you to carry out each of the nine core management responsibilities at your level. A practical map of where your competencies support or limit your management effectiveness, rather than a pass-fail judgement.
Independent ¹¹	A development action you can carry out on your own, without external guidance or support.
Guided coaching recommended	A development action where structured coaching would accelerate progress and reduce the risk of building the wrong habits. You can attempt it independently, but a coaching programme is designed for exactly this type of development.
Operating system (management context) ³	The principles, standards, and rules that govern how work gets done in your team or department. Not a technology term; this is the management infrastructure you have built, whether formally or informally.
Control points	Defined moments where progress is checked against the expected outcome. These are objective checkpoints, not micromanagement: they let you verify that delegated work is on track without hovering.

Part B: Competency Definitions

#	Competency	What It Measures
1	Decision Making	How you think through problems, weigh options, and arrive at sound decisions under real conditions
2	Presentation of Decisions	How effectively you structure and present your thinking to gain genuine agreement, not just compliance
3	Self-Organisation	How you manage your own time, priorities, and energy to stay effective under real working conditions
4	Executive Planning	How you plan across multiple time horizons and connect daily activity to longer-term objectives
5	Self-Development	How actively you identify and close gaps in your own management practice
6	Emotional Management	How you manage your own emotional state and its effect on the people around you
7	Power Management	How you build and maintain a network of people who tell you the truth and challenge your thinking
8	Group Management	How you shape your team's composition, capability, and ability to function independently
9	Delegation	How you hand over work so that it gets done well without your constant involvement



#	Competency	What It Measures
10	Coordination	How you maintain connection and information flow across levels, sites, and functions
11	Control	How you monitor progress, detect early warning signs, and verify that work meets the required standard
12	Regulation	How you design and maintain the rules, metrics, and incentives that govern how work gets done
13	Managing the Operating System	How you read the real rules beneath the formal structure and change them when they no longer serve the organisation
14	Authority Management	How you earn, maintain, and exercise the standing that makes your leadership effective
15	Exactingness	How you hold people to standards, and whether those standards are applied consistently regardless of performer quality
16	Encouragement	How you recognise and reinforce good management practice, not just good results
17	Discipline	How you address non-compliance, misconduct, and sustained underperformance
18	Communication Management	How you ensure that information reaches you accurately and that your messages land as intended
19	Conflict Management	How you manage disagreements, creative tensions, and factional disputes within your team
20	Staff Development	How you identify potential, invest in people's growth, and create pathways for advancement

1. The three competency groups (Character, Structure, Influence) are defined in the Report Glossary. [↩](#)
2. The nine management responsibilities and their feeding competencies are defined in Section 8 (Management Readiness). [↩](#)
3. See the Report Glossary for the definition of “operating system” in the management context used throughout this report. [↩↩](#)
4. A development action where structured coaching would accelerate progress and reduce the risk of building the wrong habits. You can attempt it independently, but a coaching programme is designed for exactly this type of development. [↩](#)
5. Information, a resource, or a commitment that can be relied upon under pressure. [↩](#)
6. Information, a resource, or a commitment that will fail under pressure. [↩](#)
7. A decision or action driven by a clear goal or purpose. [↩](#)
8. A decision or action driven by anxiety, avoidance, or external pressure rather than a clear goal. [↩](#)
9. Cross-cutting patterns visible across the full assessment. [↩](#)



10. An assessment of whether your combined competencies equip you to carry out each of the nine core management responsibilities at your level. [↩](#)
11. A development action you can carry out on your own, without external guidance or support. [↩](#)