# Dynamic Behavior Readiness: Engineering Sustainable Performance

Why capability building fails without readiness engineering—and how to fix it.

CAPABILITY
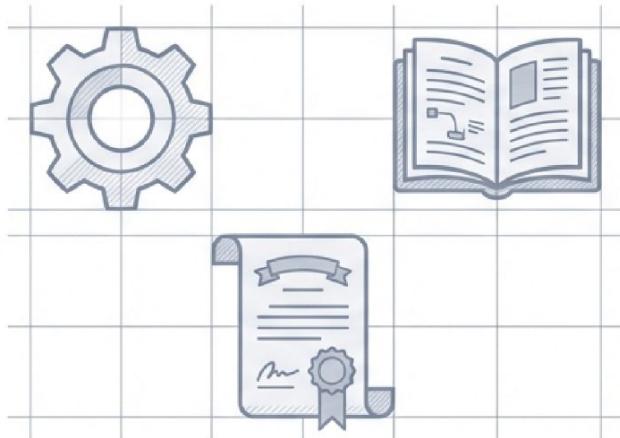
Skills, Knowledge, Training (Static Toolkit)

READINESS
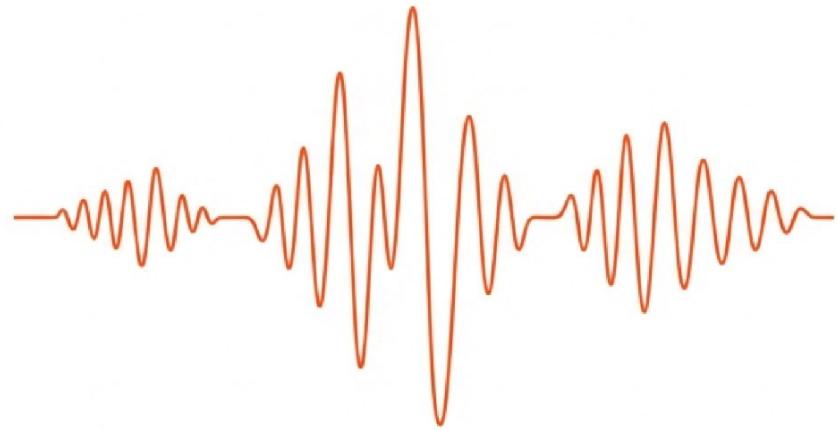
State, Context, System (Dynamic Ecosystem)

Behavioral Readiness: An individual's momentary capacity and inclination to engage in a specific behavior at a given point in time.

The Shift: From "What can our people do?" to "What state are they in to do it?"

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The Capability-Performance Gap Costs Billions and Delivers Inconsistency

Global Training Investment

$370 Billion+ Annually

The Gap: Inter Regular

Wasted Investment & Unreliable Behavior

Transfer to Job

10–20%
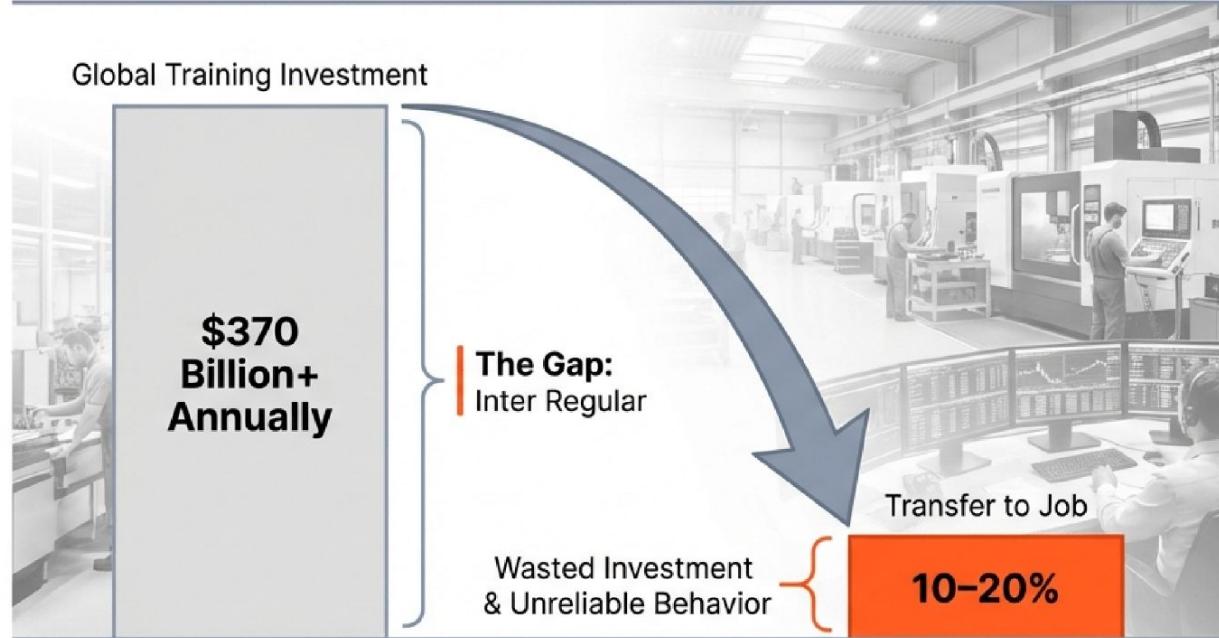
⚠ **Healthcare:** Clinicians knowing protocols still commit errors under load.

⚠ **Finance:** Risk-trained traders succumb to herd behavior in volatility.

⚠ **Manufacturing:** Safety-certified operators bypass procedures under pressure.

The Reality: Competence does not guarantee application. The failure isn't a lack of skill; it is a collapse of readiness.

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Behavior Is Not a Fixed Trait—It Is an Emergent System Property

Performance = Capability × Readiness

What you CAN do
(Stable Skills/Knowledge)

What you WILL do right now
(Dynamic State)

The **Multiplier Effect:** If Readiness is 0, Performance is 0, regardless of Capability.

Old Model (Static)	New Model (Dynamic)
- Focus on Attributes: Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes.	- Focus on Interaction: Internal State + Environment.
- Assumption: Capabilities are always accessible.	- Reality: What people CAN do ≠ what they WILL do under pressure.
- Leadership Goal: Inventorying Skills.	- Leadership Goal: Engineering Conditions.

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The Five Interdependent States of the DBRS Framework

Cognitive Readiness
Working memory & executive function.

Interpersonal Readiness
Psychological safety & trust.

Emotional Readiness
Affect regulation & hijack prevention.

Physiological Readiness
Biological capacity, stress, recovery

Motivational Readiness
Autonomy, competence, purpose.
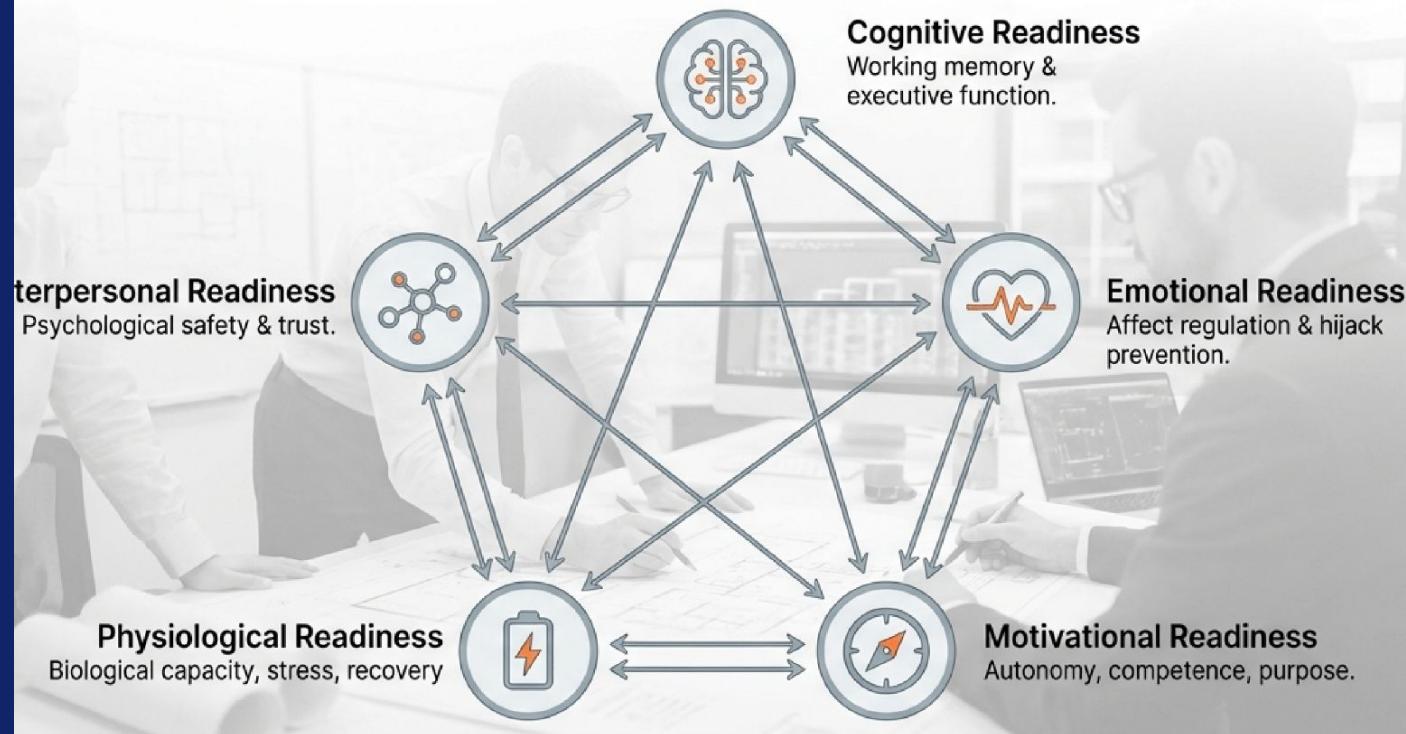
System Logic:
- Degradation in one state propagates to others.
- Restoration in one facilitates recovery in others.

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The High Cost of Readiness Neglect

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

- **Cognitive:** Fatigue contributes to **70–80%** of accidents in high-reliability industries.

- **Motivational:** Disengagement costs billions; **<35%** of global employees are engaged.

- **Physiological:** Burnout costs **$190 billion** annually in healthcare & productivity losses.

HUMAN IMPACT

- **Health:** Chronic cognitive overload predicts cardiovascular disease.

- **Wellbeing:** Work-family conflict reduces life satisfaction.

- **Exclusion:** Workplace ostracism triggers neural responses similar to physical pain.

Takeaway: Ignoring readiness isn't just inefficient; it's dangerous and expensive.

HCI Human Capital Innovations

Engineering Manageable Cognitive Load (Cognitive Readiness)

The Science

Cognitive Load Theory

Working memory is limited to **4±1** information chunks. Overload triggers processing failure regardless of expertise.

Input

Working Memory **(4 Chunks)** → Action
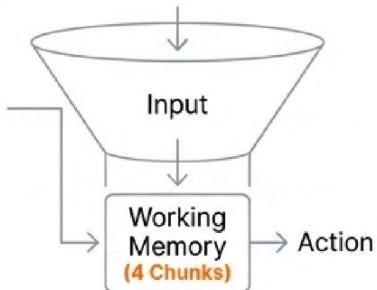
Evidence in Practice

Cleveland Clinic
EHR Redesign

- **Problem:** Clinician cognitive overload led to fatigue and errors.
- **Intervention:** Reduced clicks by **40%** and surfaced critical data without navigation.
- **Result:** **15% reduction** in documentation errors over 18 months.

Task Simplification: Remove extraneous decision points.

Interruption Management: Batch comms; "notification-free zones".

Recovery: Designate cognitive breaks.

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Building Capacity for Affect Regulation (Emotional Readiness)

The Science

Regulation vs. Suppression

Suppression ("Surface acting") depletes depletes resources and leads to burnout.

Reappraisal reduces stress reactivity and improves decisions.

Suppression

Regulation
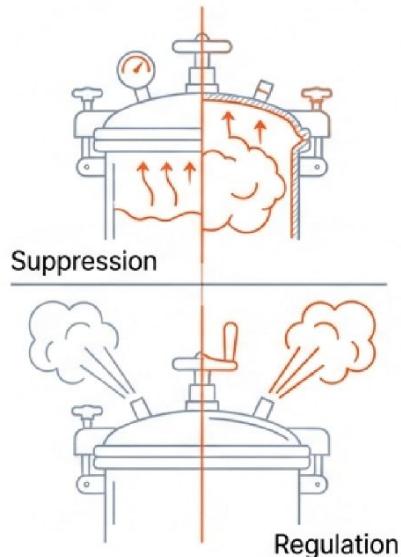
Evidence in Practice

Pixar Animation Studios

- **Intervention:** Institutionalized "Postmortems"—sessions to process emotional/interpersonal difficulty.

- **Mechanism:** Creates space for repairing relationships and processing frustration.

- **Result:** Reduced resentment; restored readiness for next project.
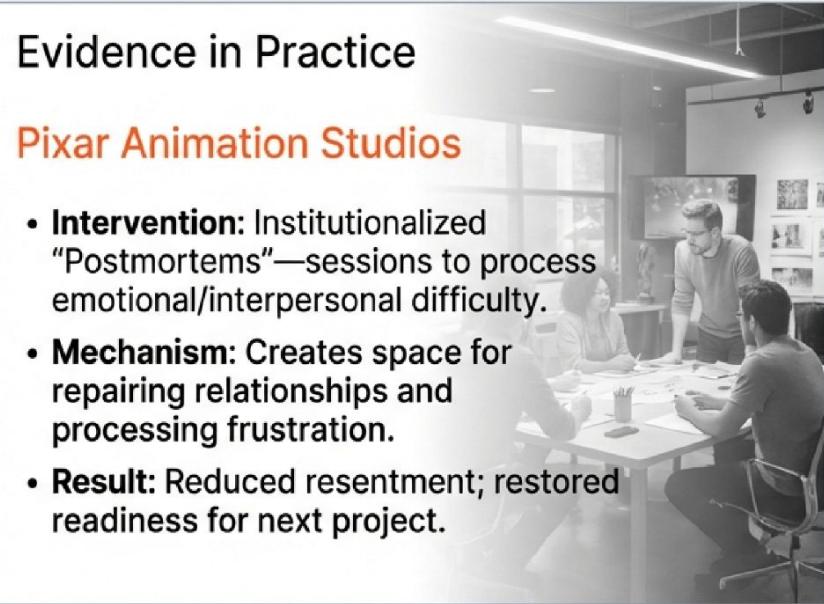
Actionable Interventions

Skill Building: Train in cognitive reappraisal.

Processing: Forums to debrief intense experiences.

Leadership: Model emotional regulation, not volatility.

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Aligning Work with Intrinsic Drivers (Motivational Readiness)

The Science

Self-Determination Theory

Motivation relies on three pillars: **Autonomy**, **Competence**, and **Relatedness**.

Controlling supervision depletes these resources.

Autonomy

Intrinsic Motivation

Competence

Relatedness

Evidence in Practice

Case study: W.L. Gore & Associates

— **Structure:** Lattice Organization with no fixed bosses.

— **Mechanism:** Radical Autonomy—associates commit to projects based on interest.

— **Result:** Consistently high innovation rates and "Best Place to Work" Work" status.

Actionable Interventions

Job Crafting: Reshape tasks toward personal strengths.

**Autonomy Expansion:** Grant discretion over *how* goals are achieved.

Purpose: Connect contributions to impact.

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Managing Energy Reserves and Recovery (Physiological Readiness)

The Science

Allostatic Load

Chronic stress (cortisol) causes biological wear-and-tear, impairing executive function.

The Burnout Curve

Performance (y-axis) vs *Stress Duration* (x-axis)
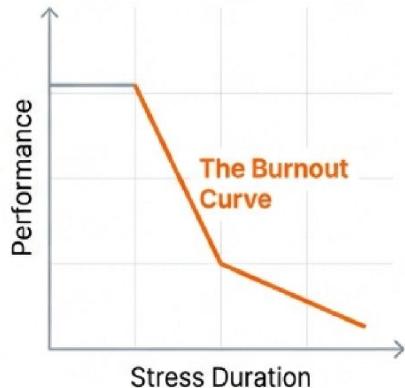
Evidence in Practice

Microsoft Japan
4-Day Workweek

- **Intervention:** Fridays off (no pay cut); meetings capped at 30 mins.
- **Result:** **40% productivity increase** (sales per employee).
- **Mechanism:** Protected recovery reduced stress, allowing higher intensity.

Actionable Interventions

DIN Next LT Pro Medium, Jet Black

- **Schedule Design:** Limit consecutive high-intensity periods.
- **Recovery Norms:** Discourage after-hours communication.
- **Biology:** Respect circadian rhythms.

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Cultivating Psychological Safety and Voice (Interpersonal Readiness)

The Science

Psychological Safety (Edmondson)

Teams that feel safe to take risks detect more **errors** and learn faster. Fear suppresses voice.

Fear — Mistake → Silence → Error Repetition

Loop A
B

Safety — Mistake → Voice → System Learning
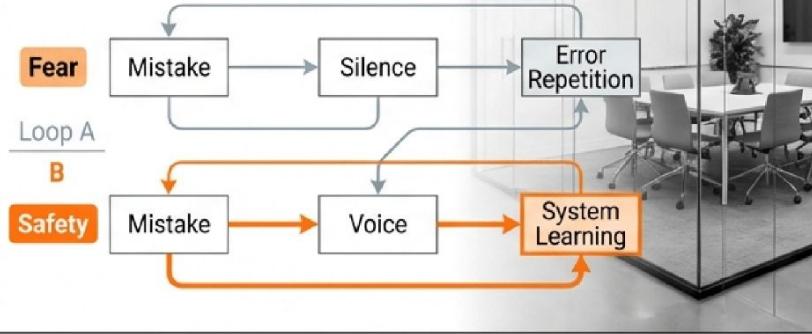
Evidence in Practice

Case Study:
Bridgewater Associates

- **Culture: Radical Transparency** (Recorded meetings, real-time feedback).

- **Mechanism:** Clear rules of engagement allow conflict to be about truth, not politics.

- **Result:** Exceptional error detection and learning cycles.

Actionable Interventions

- **Fallibility:** Leaders must model admitting mistakes.

- **Conflict:** Train on separating issues from identity.

- **Structure:** Define roles to reduce friction.

Readiness is Systemic: The Domino Effect of Compomised States

You cannot 'train' someone out of a cognitive error if the root cause is physiological.

Physiological
Lack of Sleep / Depletion

Emotional
Irritability / Dysregulation

Interpersonal
Eroded Trust / Conflict

Motivational
Withdrawal / Helplessness

Cognitive
Processing Failure & Error
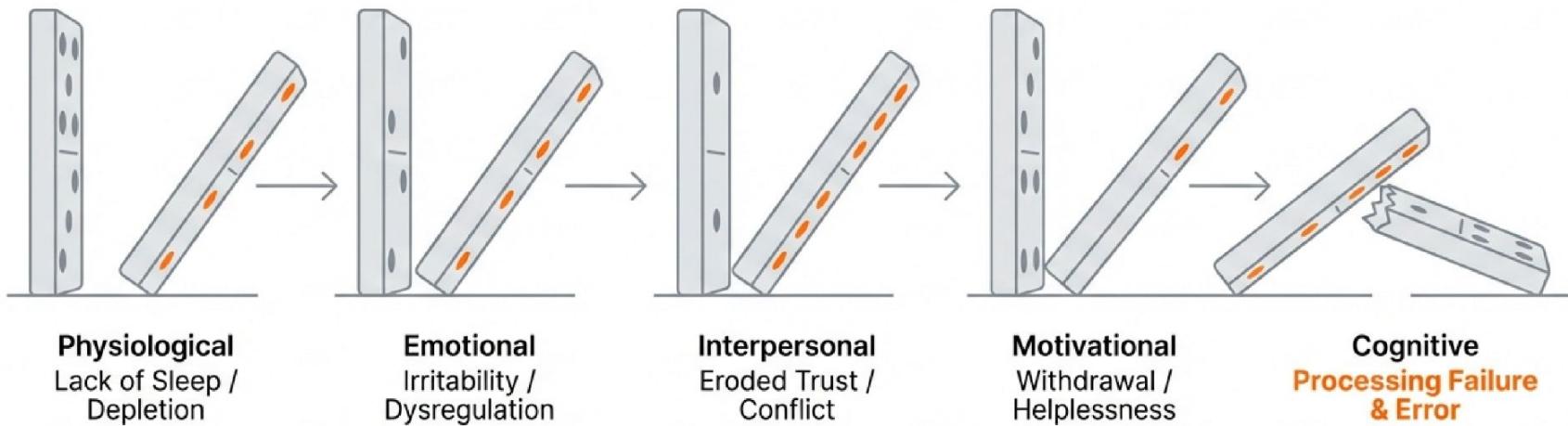
Conclusion: Interventions must be systemic, targeting the root readiness compromise.

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Implementation Step 1: Developing Readiness Literacy

Shift from Character Judgment (Trait) to State Diagnosis

Old Language	→	Readiness Literacy
They are **Unmotivated**.	→	Look for **Motivational Depletion**. Are autonomy or purpose blocked?
They are **Careless**.	→	Look for **Cognitive Overload**. Is information complexity too high?
They are **Difficult**.	→	Look for **Emotional Dysregulation**. Are they under threat or exhausted?

Action: Train leaders to spot signals (silence, fatigue, withdrawal) and ask: "**What conditions** enabled this outcome?"

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Implementation Step 2: Distributed Stewardship

Bottleneck: Manager-only Responsibility

Resilient: Distributed Stewardship

Key Strategies

Peer-to-Peer Monitoring:
Normalize "checking in" when a colleague shows signs of degradation.

Self-Regulation:
Equip individuals with tools to manage their own load and recovery.

Collective Norms:
Agreements on protecting focus time and recovery buffers.

Outcome: Resilience becomes decentralized. State degradation is detected earlier.

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Implementation Step 3: Measuring What Matters

The Trap: Measuring only outcomes incentives burnout.

Readiness Dashboard

Quadrant 1
Load Metrics

🕐 Meeting Hours: 18/week

🔀 Task Switching Freq: High

Quadrant 2
Sentiment

❤️ Pulse Survey Score: 6.5/10

💬 Exit Interview Themes: Burnout & Growth

Quadrant 3
Capacity

📈 Overtime Trends: Increasing

📅 Sick Leave Patterns: Frequent

Quadrant 4
Cohesion

🤝 Conflict Incidence: Low

👥 Collaboration Ratings: 8/10
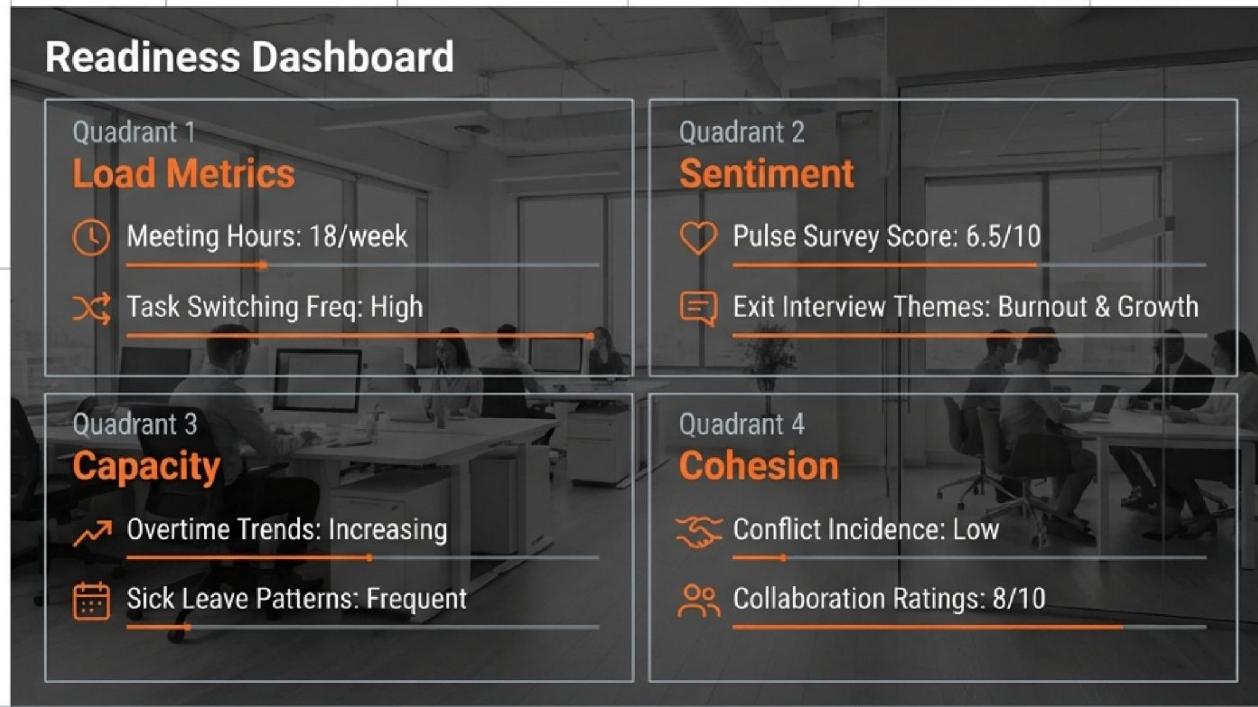
Process vs. Outcome

Evaluate *how* results were achieved. Did the process sustain readiness assets, or consume them?

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Human Engineering

Don't Just Build Capability. Engineer Readiness.

DBRS System Ecosystem

Traditional training addresses only **10-20%** of performance reliability.

Reliability requires managing the **5 States**: Cognitive, Emotional, Motivational, Physiological, Interpersonal.

Moderate capabilities in optimal states outperform superior capabilities in degraded states.
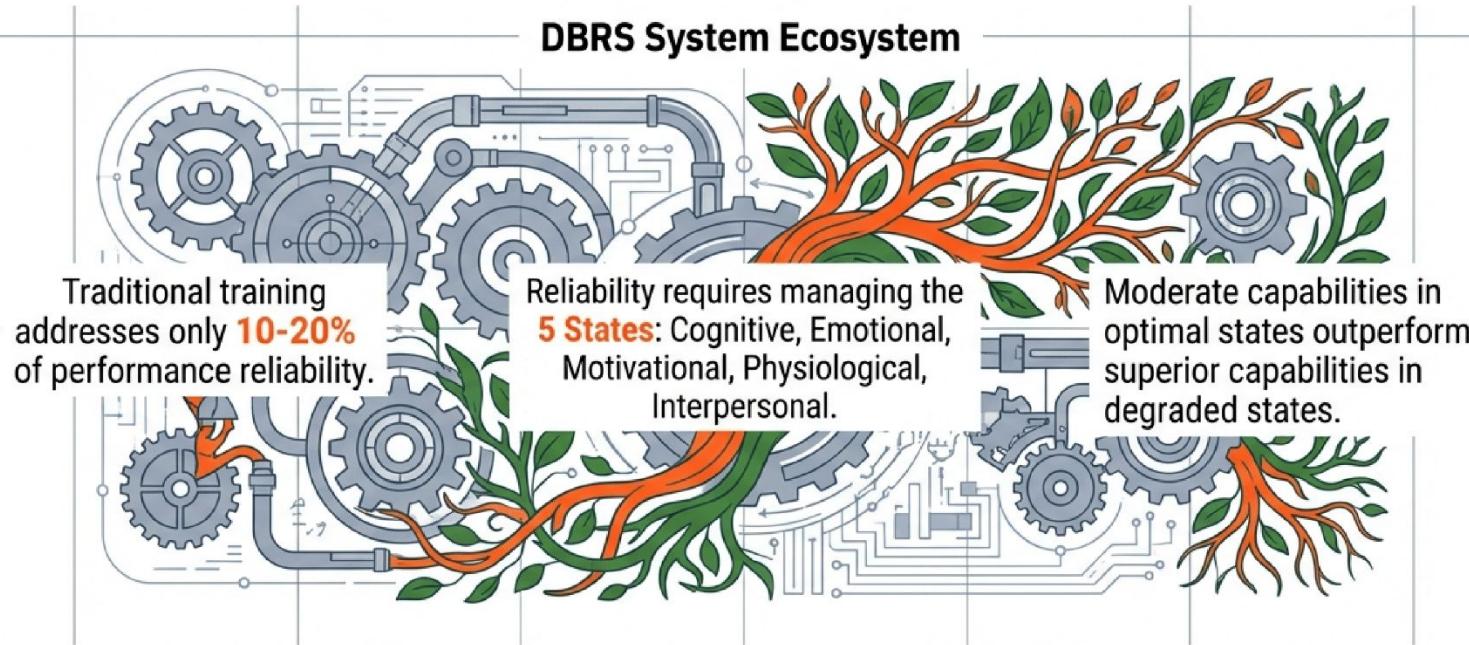
Stop asking "Do we have the right people?" Start asking "Have we built the right system?"

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