

Thriving in Tough Times: How Strong HR, Benefits, and Finance Practices Drive Team Engagement

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Your Speakers Today



Nicole Davidson
Founder & CEO
Beacon HR



Dane Christianson
Partner
Informa Financial

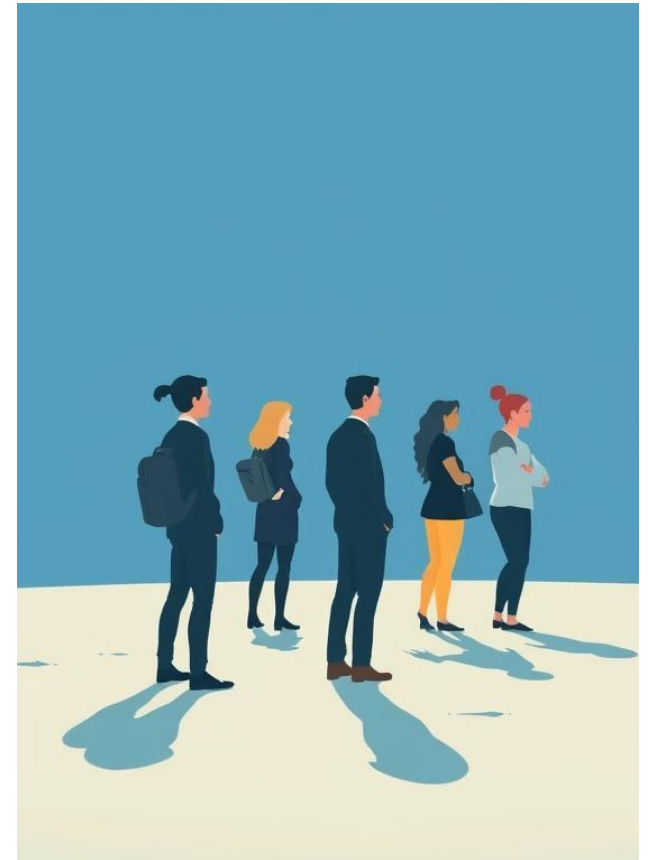


Omar Visram
Co-Founder & CEO
Enkel

Building a People-First Culture with Strong HR

Nicole Davidson
Founder & CEO

Strong HR isn't reactive — it's the foundation for clarity, culture, and performance at every level of your organization.



Since 2017

Our HR Consulting Approach

We've offered HR consulting for growing businesses, helping them to reduce costs, boost engagement, and stay compliant.

We combine deep HR expertise with a people-centric approach, building solutions that not only ensure compliance but also foster a positive work environment and engaged workforce.

This translates to reduced stress for leaders, a thriving company culture, and ultimately, a powerful partner to drive business growth.

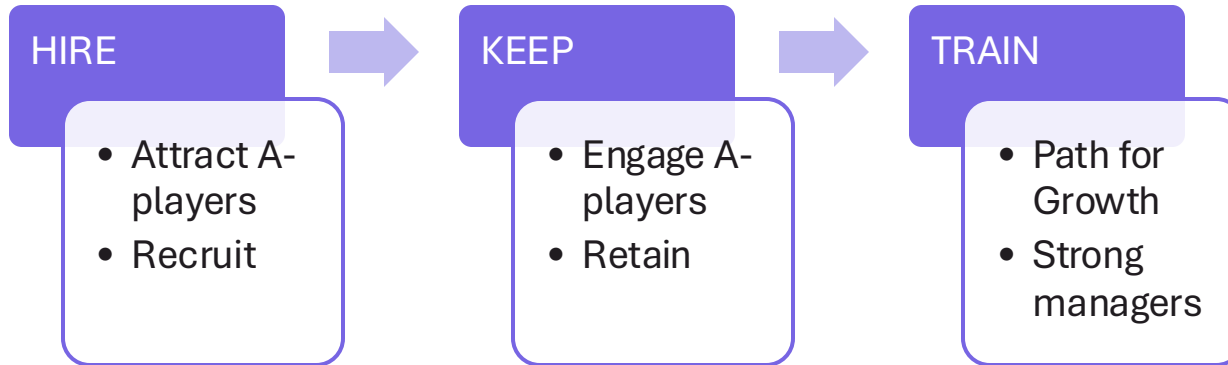


People are the #1 challenge.



99% of problems come from not having A-players on board, engaged, and aligned to your mission.

Why people strategy matters



The case for strong HR

- 01 **Less risk** Strong HR practices help organizations mitigate legal, compliance, and operational risks.
- 02 **More profit** Effective HR structures contribute to higher employee engagement, productivity, and overall profitability.
- 03 **Small HR shifts = massive ROI** Even minor improvements in HR processes can deliver significant returns on investment for the company.
- 04 **Lack of structure = bottlenecks and burnout** Without organized HR, teams face workflow delays and increased employee stress, leading to burnout.

5 signs you have strong HR



Every employee knows what's expected of them and how they're doing



Managers have hard conversations early and often



People feel a sense of connection to your business, through transparent communication and trust



Hiring, onboarding, and performance processes are simple and effective



Your culture is intentionally designed and values are lived daily

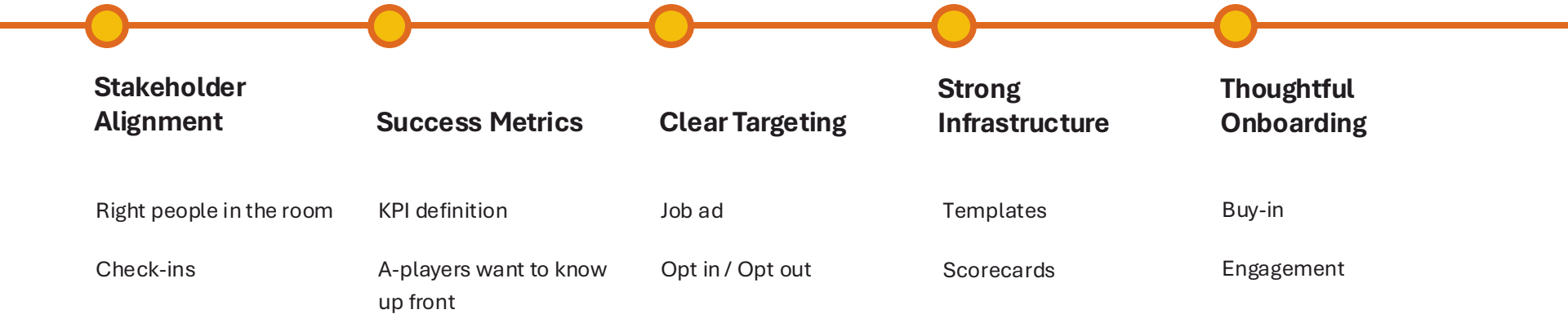


What's working (and what's not) right now

Not working	Working	Use Cases
Lack of transparency	More transparency = more trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•State of the business•Compensation•Communication
Complex, cookie cutter processes	Simple, tailored processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Employee engagement surveys•Performance management
Burnout, reactivity	Proactive interventions to support engagement and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•New manager training•Stay interviews
Weak HR and/or Recruitment foundation	Intentionally designed, efficient, systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Scorecards•HRIS or ATS•Employer brand•Candidate experience



How this works in practice



RESULTS

Cost-to-hire declined

The cost associated with hiring new employees has decreased, improving overall efficiency and budget allocation.

New hire exits decreased

No new hires have exited, indicating improved retention and onboarding effectiveness.

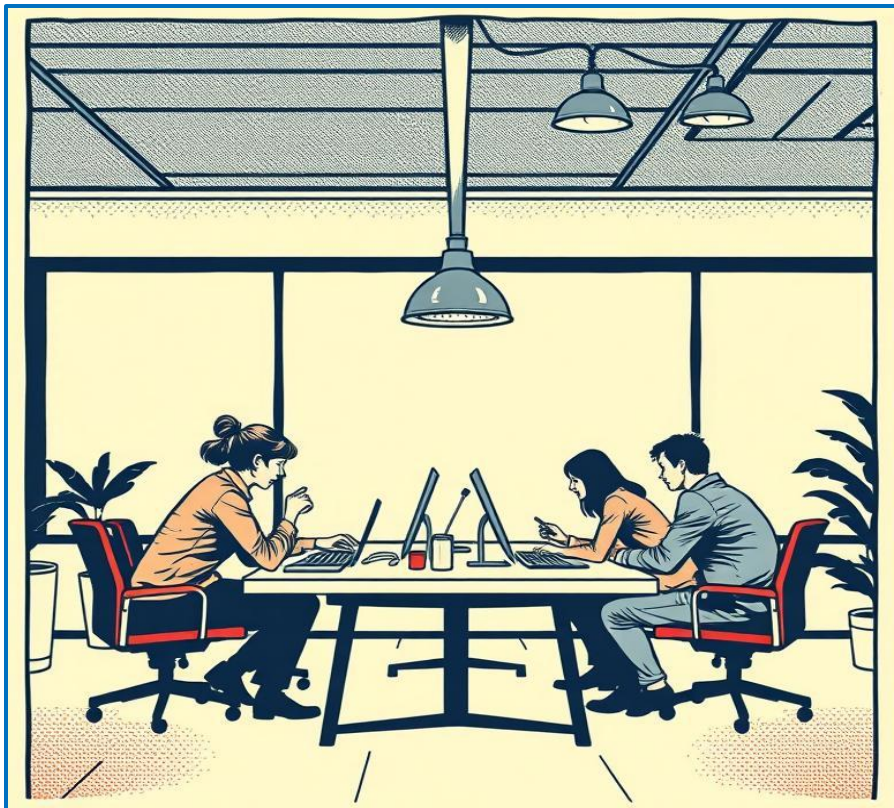
Time to hire declined

The average time required to fill open positions has been reduced by 15%.



**Mastering HR
creates more
freedom, profit,
and peace of
mind.**





Rebuilding Trust with Benefits

Dane Christianson
Partner
Informa Financial

Key Message: *“Modern benefits aren’t about offering more — they’re about offering what matters most, clearly and intentionally.”*

Challenges in Benefits Engagement

It's not always about what's offered — it's how it's perceived



Rising Disengagement

- Disengagement rising due to burnout, inflation, and low morale among employees



Traditional Benefit Limitations

- Traditional benefits ignore the evolving needs of the modern workforce



Employee Assessment

- Employees assess company care based on the benefits they experience

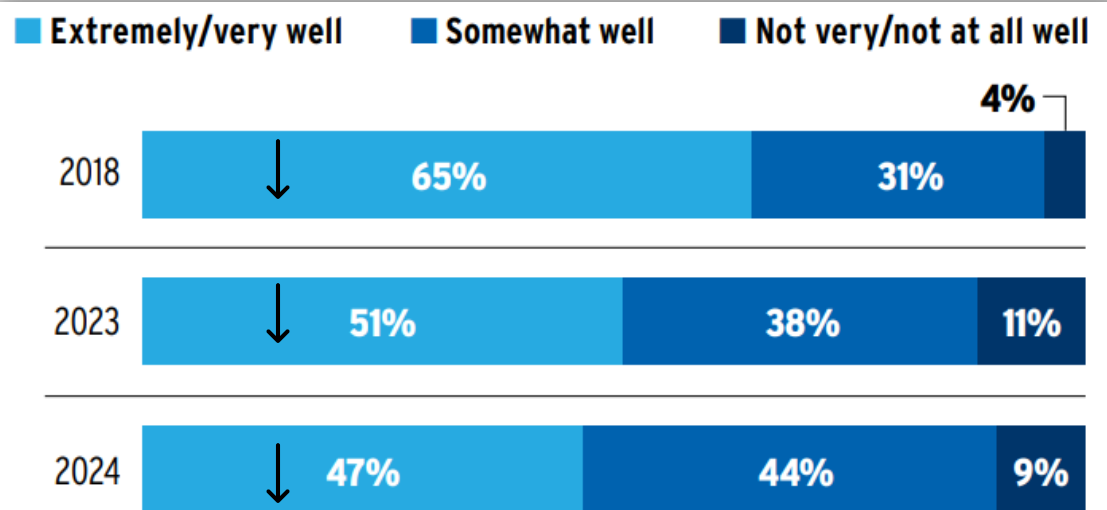


Problem of Invisible Benefits

- Disengagement apparent when benefits feel 'invisible' to staff

Employee Understanding of Health Benefits Is Declining

“While email is top choice for communication amongst those 18 to 34 (51%), they were more interested (24%) than those aged 55 and older (9%) also interested in a smartphone app (24%)”



SOURCE: 2024 Benefits Canada Healthcare Survey. April 2024. BASE: All plan members (2018 N=1,503; 2023 N=1,004; 2024 N=1,001)

What's Undermining Your Benefits Strategy?

Even the best plans fall short when communication, usability, or relevance are missing



Wasted Benefits = Wasted Budget

- Unused benefits plans fail to deliver ROI or retain talent.



Confusion Kills Perceived Value

- When employees don't know how to use their plan, they don't value it



One Size No Longer Fits All

- Generational differences demand flexible, tailored benefits

Quick Audit: Where Benefits Plans Break Down

Do employees know *how* to use their benefits?



Is mental health coverage clear and accessible?



Does your plan reflect generational needs (e.g. family support vs therapy apps)?



Are your benefits communicated at least annually?



Can employees tailor their benefits to their needs?



Three Modern Moves for a Smarter Plan



Drive Engagement with Low Cost Additions

Offer virtual **mental health** coaching, **caregiver** support, **financial** wellness tools and **preventive care** subsidy- drive engagement and Total Rewards without inflating claims.



Audit & Re-market Your Plan Strategically

Regularly **benchmark your benefits plan** against industry standards and **re-market** it to ensure cost control and relevance to employee needs.

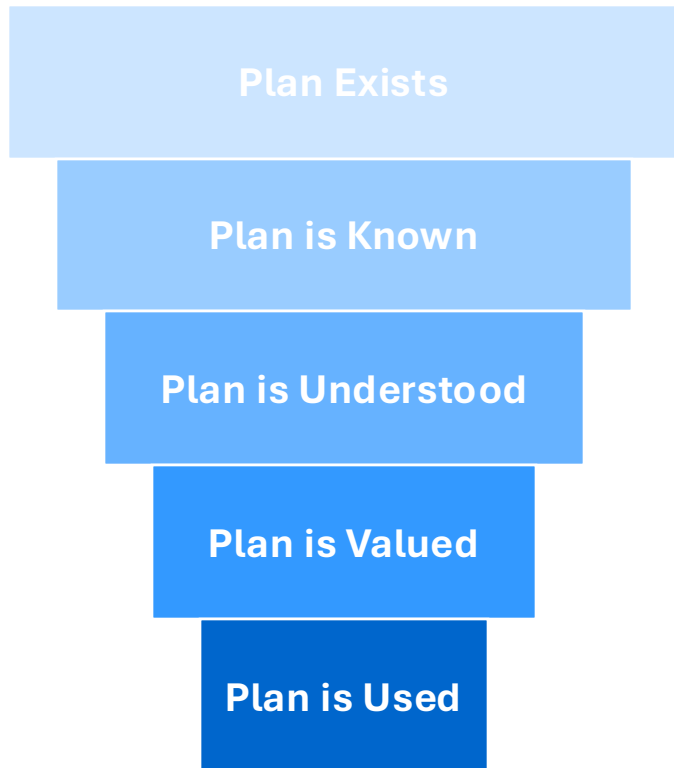


Explore Cost-Saving Funding Models

Consider alternatives like **ASO dental or self-insured short-term disability** that can unlock savings while maintaining coverage quality.

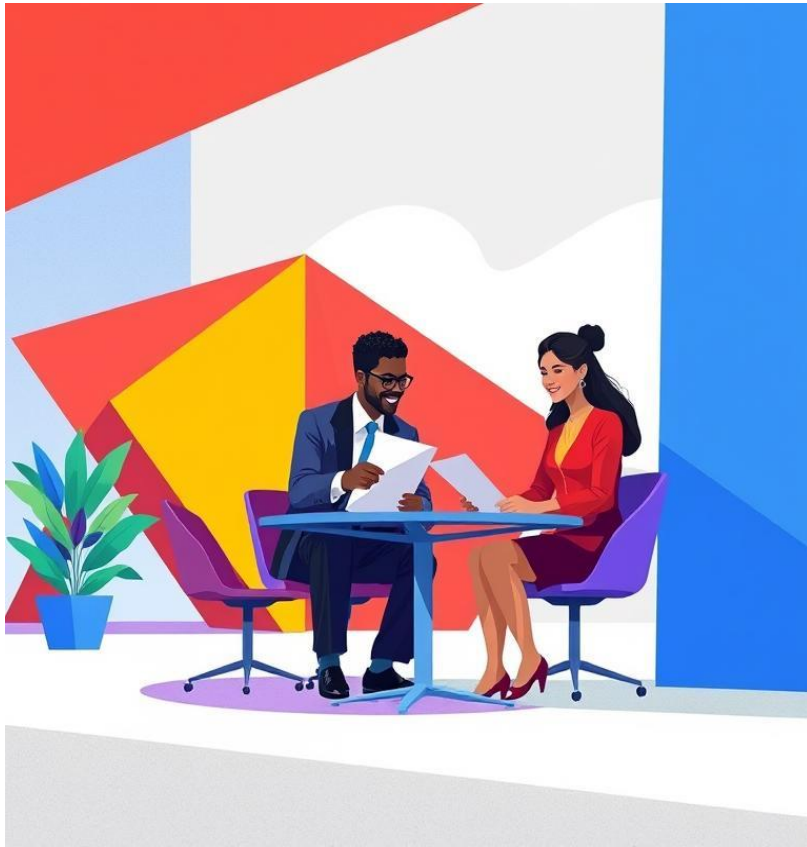
Communication Is the New Plan Design

Strategies for Plan Engagement & Understanding



- If it's not understood, it doesn't exist
- Use **semi-annual sessions** to regularly update and engage employees on benefits
- Provide simplified guides that clearly explain plan options and usage.
- Offer in-person support to help employees navigate their benefits.
- Focus on **plan clarity** rather than complexity to improve comprehension and utilization.

Benefits as a Relationship Strategy



- **Benefits are culture signals**, not just compensation — they reflect values and long-term commitment.
- In tough times, **strong plans show care**, meeting needs and making employees feel seen and valued.
- The message “**We recognize your needs. We invest in your experience**” must be felt through plan design to build lasting trust.

Finance as a Trust Engine

Omar Visram
Co-Founder
Enkel



Key message: "Strong finance foundations don't just prevent risk — they unlock strategy, performance, and engagement."



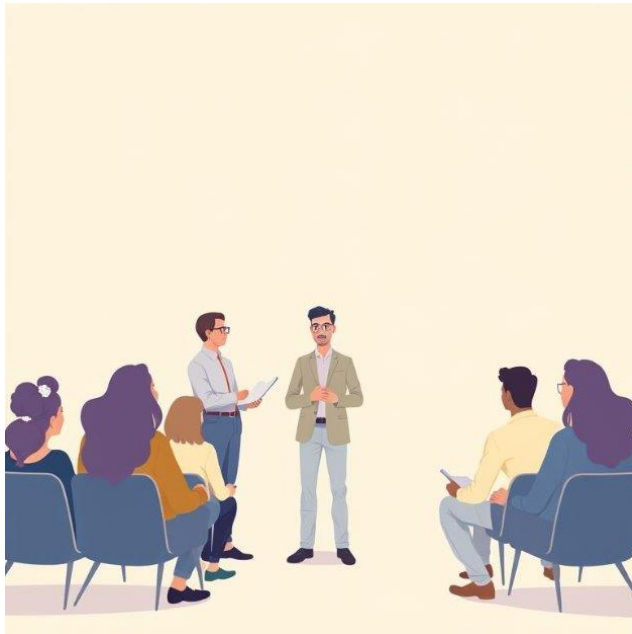


Better Reporting Means Clearer Stories

- You must have a well-functioning process to get timely and accurate numbers
 - What does good look like?
 - Financial statements after month-end on a consistent date
 - Visibility on cash flow
 - A customized Chart of Accounts that tells the story of your business (gross margin, marketing expenses, and all the things that matter to you)
- Peter Drucker: What gets measured gets managed*
- Clean and clear accounts receivable and accounts payable

Once you have these building blocks in place, you are ready to get going!

Using your numbers



- Different philosophies on the level of financial transparency
- A lot of companies moving towards "open book" financials
- To build trust and create engagement, you need to balance these priorities; oversharing does not necessarily mean you will achieve the objective
- Sharing key metrics and aligning them to organizational goals and objectives can encourage action, lead to celebration, or bring clarity to problems



Engage Your Team

Financial data can drive alignment, motivation, and trust.

- **Simplify the Story**
Share what the numbers mean in clear, relatable terms.
- **Connect to Team Goals**
Show how team efforts impact financial outcomes.
- **Use Visuals**
Charts and dashboards make data easier to grasp.
- **Share Regularly**
Keep teams in the loop to build ownership and trust.
- **Celebrate Wins**
Highlight progress to keep momentum strong.

Case Study: Velvet Preserve – Lifting Margins with Better Financial Insight



How Do Fractional Financial Operations Services Work — and How Can They Help?

What It Is

Outsourced support for bookkeeping, payroll, and financial reporting, provided by a team instead of hiring in-house. Services scale based on your needs and budget.

Bookkeeping
Payroll processing
Financial reporting

How It Works

A dedicated team handles monthly tasks and deadlines.

Technology streamlines workflows and improves accuracy.

Controllers or CFOs provide oversight and strategic insight.

Monthly financial close
Automated workflows
Strategic oversight

Why It Helps

Removed person dependence that is common in small organizations.

Access to experts with the right experience. Better reporting, stronger controls, and peace of mind.

Expert support
Improved reporting
Stronger financial controls

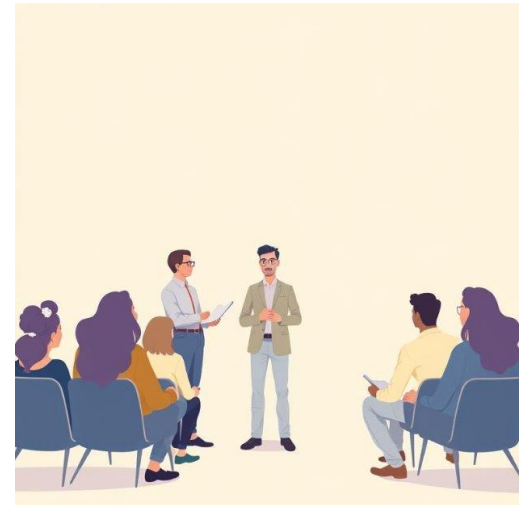
Get the right support at the right time, without overbuilding your internal team.



Unlocking Financial Clarity for Leadership & Teams

A one-time service to help you understand how to improve your reporting, increase efficiency through technology, and use numbers to create engagement and transparency

- Review your current chart of accounts and reporting structure to support clearer financial analysis and easier storytelling.
- Evaluate your existing financial reports for consistency, accuracy, and alignment with business goals.
- Recommendation on tools that can be used to improve efficiency in accounting.
- Receive a two-page summary report with actionable recommendations and suggested tools to better share financial insights with your team.
- Includes a 90-minute debrief session with our team.



Flat Fee \$1,995 – Credited to you if you engage us for ongoing services within two months of receiving the report

Email me at omar.visram@enkel.ca if you're interested in learning more



How it all comes together

Finance as a Strategic Ally to HR and Benefits

Informs People Decisions

Finance informs people decisions, not just cost control.

Clarifies Sustainability

Brings clarity to what's sustainable in salaries, bonuses, and benefits.

Provides Data and Insights

Provides data and insights that shape effective HR programs and resource allocation.

Aligns with Long- Term Goals

Aligns compensation and benefits with long-term goals and not just short-term savings.

Supports Engagement and Health

Supports lasting employee engagement and organizational health.

When HR and Finance work together, people strategy becomes both smart and sustainable.

Q&A Session

Please share your questions about aligning HR, Benefits, and Finance.

Our speakers are here to provide insights on rebuilding trust, strong people-first culture, and financial transparency.

