MMG EXECUTIVE OPS SERIES

THE CLARITY-TO-EXECUTION DOCTRINE

A CEO Handbook for High-Velocity Organisations

> **OPERATING PREMISE**
>
> Reduce organisational friction without reducing organisational understanding.

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OPENING

Executive Summary

The Clarity-to-Execution Doctrine is an operating system for CEOs who want their organisations to think clearly, decide at the right level, communicate with precision, and execute without avoidable delay. It treats organisational friction as a management variable: something leadership can identify, measure, reduce, and redesign.

THE DOCTRINE IN ONE SENTENCE

Do not minimise communication. Minimise the amount of communication required to create shared understanding and make a good decision.

The operating problem

As organisations grow, coordination expands faster than many leaders expect. Meetings multiply. Approval chains deepen. Reporting becomes ceremonial. Senior executives are asked to reconstruct analysis their teams could have completed. Employees wait for decisions that should have been delegated. Information moves slowly even when authority is clear.

The result is organisational latency: time lost not because the work itself is difficult, but because the operating system surrounding the work is slow, ambiguous, or over-layered.

The seven operating commitments

Commitment	Executive meaning
1. De-layer the problem	Strip symptoms, noise, and peripheral detail until the real decision variables are visible.
2. Push analysis downward	Expect the people closest to the work to diagnose, evaluate options, and recommend action.
3. Compress information upward	Give executives the highest-value information in the smallest useful form, with supporting detail available on demand.
4. Decide at sufficient clarity	Stop analysis when additional information is unlikely to change a responsible decision.
5. Push decisions outward	Distribute decisions quickly so affected teams know what changed, who owns execution, and what happens next.
6. Put authority close to the work	Delegate reversible and routine decisions to the lowest responsible level.
7. Measure outcomes and remove friction	Judge the operating system by decision quality, execution speed, accountability, and measurable results.

The operating equation

OPERATING EQUATION

Complexity down -> Clarity up -> Decision latency down -> Execution speed up

What changes under this doctrine

From	To
Problems are escalated as descriptions.	Problems are escalated with analysis, options, recommendation, risk, and a precise decision request.
Meetings exist because they are recurring.	Meetings exist only when synchronous interaction materially improves a decision, coordination, or sensitive discussion.
Senior leaders become analytical bottlenecks.	Senior leaders focus on judgment, trade-offs, allocation, standards, and decisions that genuinely require their authority.
Information travels through layers.	Information moves directly to the people who need it, while decision rights remain explicit.
Activity is treated as performance.	Outputs, outcomes, decision speed, and execution quality define performance.

The CEO mandate

This doctrine cannot be delegated as an administrative initiative. The CEO establishes the standard through behaviour. If the CEO rewards concise thinking but requests exhaustive decks, the deck wins. If the CEO says decisions should be delegated but repeatedly overrides competent owners, delegation disappears. If the CEO tolerates recurring meetings with no decisions, the calendar becomes policy.

- Demand clarity before volume.
- Ask for recommendations, not unprocessed problems.
- Make decision rights visible.
- Protect fast information flow, especially for bad news and material risk.
- Remove approvals and meetings that no longer improve outcomes.
- Model the difference between healthy brevity and careless under-communication.

FROM THE FOUNDER

Foreword

Some management ideas announce themselves through elaborate frameworks. Others reveal themselves through a simple behaviour that forces a deeper question.

The immediate inspiration for this handbook came from reading a widely shared Entrepreneur Media post summarising reporting on Roland Busch, CEO of Siemens. What caught my attention was not merely the headline about brief email responses. It was the operating philosophy behind them: reduce a problem to its core variables, communicate with economy, avoid unnecessary meetings, and preserve leadership attention for the decisions that actually require it.

The same post drew a parallel with Jensen Huang of NVIDIA, whose leadership model is also associated with unusually direct information flow, a broad span of executive relationships, and group problem-solving rather than defaulting to conventional one-to-one management rituals. The two leaders operate different companies, in different contexts, and their practices should not be copied mechanically. What interested me was the shared logic beneath the surface.

WHAT INSPIRED THIS HANDBOOK

The principle is not "say less" or "meet less." The principle is to remove whatever does not improve understanding, judgment, accountability, or execution.

That distinction matters. A two-word response can be a sign of a highly developed operating system, or it can be a sign of poor leadership. The difference is whether the organisation has already done the work required to make the response sufficient. Brevity only works when the question is well framed, the context is shared, the recommendation is clear, the decision rights are understood, and the next action is obvious.

I therefore set out to translate those observations into something broader and more useful for chief executives: an operating doctrine that can be applied without imitating another leader's personality, calendar, or communication habits. The aim is to make complexity manageable without making the organisation complicated; to push thinking closer to the work; to compress information before decisions; and to expand clarity after decisions.

This handbook is designed for CEOs and executive teams who are willing to treat meetings, approvals, reporting layers, communication patterns, and decision latency as design choices rather than inherited facts. It is equally a handbook about restraint. Not every process should be removed. Not every decision should be rushed. Not every one-to-one conversation should disappear. Certain matters demand depth, confidentiality, consultation, or deliberate challenge. High velocity without judgment is simply faster failure.

The standard proposed here is more demanding: use as much process as the decision requires, and no more. Put authority as close as responsibly possible to the work. Make one person accountable for outcomes. Allow relevant information to travel faster than hierarchy. Measure what changes because of the work, not how busy the organisation appears while doing it.

If this doctrine succeeds, the visible outcome will not be shorter emails. It will be an organisation that understands faster, decides faster, executes faster, and learns faster - without sacrificing responsibility, governance, or quality.

Tony Dara, Founder, Meridian Media Group

NAVIGATION

Contents

How to use this handbook

This is not intended to be read once and filed. CEOs can use it in three ways: as a leadership standard for the executive team; as a diagnostic lens for reviewing the organisation's operating model; and as a practical toolkit for redesigning decision, meeting, escalation, and reporting routines.

- Read Parts I-III to align the executive team on operating principles.
- Use Part IV to redesign recurring management routines and accountability mechanisms.
- Use Part V to convert the doctrine into measurable executive practice.
- Use the appendices directly in leadership meetings, decision reviews, and quarterly operating audits.

PART I

First Principles

> High-velocity organisations do not eliminate complexity. They prevent complexity from becoming organisational drag.

1. Organisational Friction Is a Management Variable

Every organisation performs two broad categories of work. The first produces direct value: designing, building, selling, serving, solving, operating, investing, and delivering. The second coordinates that work: meetings, approvals, reporting, escalation, documentation, planning, and management.

Coordination is necessary. The problem begins when coordination expands beyond the value it creates. At that point the organisation pays a friction tax - time, attention, and decision capacity consumed without a proportionate improvement in outcomes.

The friction tax

- Decision latency: issues wait for meetings, committees, or senior availability.
- Approval depth: routine actions move through more layers than the risk warrants.
- Information distortion: each layer reinterprets the issue before it reaches the decision-maker.
- Meeting load: calendars consume the time required to think, build, sell, and execute.
- Ownership ambiguity: multiple contributors exist but no single accountable owner is obvious.
- Executive substitution: senior leaders repeatedly perform analysis that should have been completed closer to the work.
- Reporting theatre: teams produce updates because the process exists, not because the information changes a decision.

> CEO TEST
>
> Ask of every recurring process: Does this improve clarity, decision quality, risk control, accountability, or execution? If it does none of these, it should be challenged.

Necessary time versus organisational latency

Speed is not the absence of deliberation. Some time is necessary: investigation, consultation, testing, compliance, challenge, and risk control. Organisational latency is different. It is time lost waiting for permission, information, meetings, or hierarchy when none of those delays materially improves the result.

Necessary time	Organisational latency
Technical analysis required to understand a material failure.	Waiting three days because the responsible executive only reviews decisions on Fridays.
Legal review of a high-risk contractual commitment.	Requiring five signatures for a routine expense inside an approved budget.
Customer research before a major market entry.	Scheduling a status meeting to repeat information already available in writing.
Independent challenge of a difficult-to-reverse investment.	Senior management reconstructing a problem because the escalation arrived without analysis.

2. De-Layer the Problem

The first discipline of the doctrine is problem compression. Leaders should not accept complexity as a finished product. Teams are expected to separate symptoms from causes, causes from assumptions, and decisive variables from contextual noise.

CORE PRINCIPLE

The responsibility of the person closest to the problem is not merely to describe complexity. It is to compress complexity into something that can be acted upon.

The de-layering sequence

Layer	Question
Symptom	What are we observing?
Expected state	What should have happened?
Gap	What is materially different?
Cause	What is driving the gap?
Decision variable	Which factor actually changes the choice in front of us?
Action	What decision or intervention follows?

The seven-question de-layer test

1. What exactly has happened?
2. What should have happened?
3. What evidence explains the difference?
4. Which facts are decisive and which are merely contextual?
5. What happens if we do nothing?
6. What options are genuinely available?
7. What decision is actually required, by whom, and by when?

Common failure modes

- Escalating a volume of facts instead of a defined problem.
- Confusing urgency with importance.
- Treating the first explanation as the root cause.
- Using data accumulation as a substitute for judgment.
- Presenting every possible option rather than the viable options.
- Escalating without specifying the decision required.

The five operating laws

The remainder of this handbook is built on five laws. They are sequential, but they also reinforce one another.

Law	Standard
I. De-layer the problem	Find the variables that actually determine the outcome.
II. Push analysis downward	Expect judgment and recommendations close to the work.
III. Compress information upward	Give leaders signal, not unprocessed complexity.
IV. Decide at sufficient clarity	Stop discussing when additional information is unlikely to improve the decision.
V. Push decisions outward	Turn decisions into distributed clarity, ownership, and action.

PART II

Decision Architecture

> The organisation should escalate authority when necessary, but it should not escalate unfinished thinking by default.

3. Push Analysis Downward

Authority may sit higher in an organisation. Analysis should not. The people closest to the work usually have the richest operational context and should perform the first level of diagnosis, option development, and recommendation.

The default escalation format is therefore: situation -> analysis -> options -> recommendation -> decision required. Executives should not routinely receive a problem followed by the question, "What should we do?"

The recommendation rule

Anyone escalating a material issue should normally provide the following, proportionate to the scale of the decision:

- The issue in one sentence.
- The most relevant facts and assumptions.
- The operational, financial, customer, legal, strategic, or reputational impact.
- The realistic options.
- The recommended option and rationale.
- The material risks and mitigations.
- The precise decision, resource, or intervention required.
- The deadline after which the decision deteriorates or becomes irrelevant.

ESCALATION PRINCIPLE

Escalate decisions, not unfinished thinking. Exceptions apply to emergencies, safety issues, ethical concerns, regulatory threats, or situations where responsible analysis is not yet possible.

Why this matters for CEOs

An executive team that accepts unprocessed problems eventually becomes the organisation's analytical service desk. This creates dependency, weakens managerial judgment below the executive layer, and makes senior leadership the bottleneck for issues that should have been resolved elsewhere.

A CEO should add value through judgment, enterprise-wide trade-offs, standards, capital allocation, talent decisions, strategic context, and decisions whose consequences justify chief executive attention. The CEO should not become the default analyst for routine complexity.

4. Decision Rights, Reversibility and Delegation

Decision speed collapses when people do not know who may decide. Every recurring class of decision should have a visible owner, an understood consultation requirement, and clear escalation thresholds.

Four decision classes

Class	How it works	Use when
Individual	One accountable person decides; others may advise.	Routine or specialist decisions with clear ownership.
Consultative	The owner must seek defined expertise, but retains decision authority.	Cross-functional decisions where informed challenge materially improves quality.
Collective	A formal group approves because governance requires shared authority.	Board, investment committee, statutory, ownership, or high-governance matters.
Emergency	Authority temporarily moves to the person best positioned to protect people, assets, continuity, or integrity.	Time-critical threats where delay creates disproportionate harm.

Reversible versus difficult-to-reverse decisions

Reversible	Difficult to reverse
Bias toward speed, experimentation, measurement, and adjustment.	Bias toward analysis, independent challenge, validation, and explicit risk ownership.
Delegate close to the work.	Escalate to the level where enterprise consequences can be judged.
Use small tests where uncertainty remains.	Require clearer assumptions and downside analysis.
Accept some local error as the price of organisational learning.	Protect against errors whose cost, permanence, or reputational effect is disproportionate.

The 70-90 percent delegation rule

If a capable person closer to the work can make a recurring decision roughly 70 to 90 percent as well as the executive above them - and the downside is bounded - the decision should normally move downward. Leadership capacity is scarce. It should be reserved for decisions where senior perspective materially changes the outcome.

> DELEGATION EQUATION
>
> Local information + clear guardrails + delegated authority = faster execution

Delegation is not abdication

Delegation requires guardrails. Owners need defined objectives, spending or risk limits, escalation conditions, and access to relevant information. The CEO remains responsible for the design of the decision system even when individual decisions are distributed.

5. Decide at the Point of Sufficient Clarity

Discussion is valuable while it improves the decision. After that point, discussion becomes latency. The executive standard is not "Do we know everything?" It is "Do we know enough to make a responsible decision?"

The decision threshold

- The problem is sufficiently understood.
- The material assumptions are visible.
- The major risks have been identified.
- Viable alternatives have been considered.
- The consequences are reasonably understood.
- The decision-maker has the authority and context to exercise judgment.
- Additional analysis is unlikely to change the choice enough to justify the delay.

Once those conditions exist, decide. Do not schedule another meeting merely because another meeting can be scheduled. Do not request another deck merely because more data exists.

A practical question for indecisive rooms

> THE CHANGE TEST
>
> Ask: "What additional information would cause us to choose differently?" If the room cannot identify it, more analysis may be serving comfort rather than decision quality.

Speed without recklessness

The doctrine does not celebrate speed as an absolute. It distinguishes between avoidable delay and responsible deliberation. The faster organisation is the one that spends time where time has decision value - and removes time where it does not.

PART III

Communication Architecture

> The aim is not less communication. It is higher information density, faster shared understanding, and cleaner decision signals.

6. Compress Information Upward

Senior leaders should receive the highest-value information in the smallest useful form. This is not the hiding of complexity. It is the organisation of complexity.

As information moves upward, the entry point should become progressively more concentrated while supporting detail remains available underneath. An executive should not be forced to discover the actual decision on slide 37.

The information compression stack

Level	What should be visible
Operational	Detailed evidence, data, investigation, customer context, technical analysis, correspondence, and supporting documents.
Management	Key findings, implications, options, dependencies, and proposed action.
Executive	Decision required, recommendation, decisive reasons, impact, risk, and deadline.

The executive decision brief

Field	Question it answers
Decision required	What exactly needs to be decided?
Recommendation	What should we do?
Why	What are the decisive reasons?
Impact	What changes if approved?

Field	Question it answers
Risk	What could go wrong and how is it mitigated?
Deadline	When must this be decided?
Supporting detail	Where can the executive go deeper if needed?

The brevity doctrine

Brevity is encouraged after clarity has been achieved. It is not a substitute for clarity. A response such as "Approved," "No," "Proceed," or "Hold" can be entirely appropriate when the request is unambiguous, the context is shared, the implications are understood, and the next action is obvious.

> **BREVITY STANDARD**
>
> The correct communication is not the shortest message. It is the shortest message that preserves the necessary meaning.

The hidden cost of ambiguous messages

A short message that creates five follow-up questions is not efficient. It has simply transferred communication work to other people. Effective compression reduces the total amount of organisational interpretation required, not merely the sender's typing time.

7. Push Decisions Outward

A decision that remains inside a meeting room is not yet an operational decision. Once a material decision is made, it must travel quickly to everyone whose actions, priorities, resources, or assumptions are affected.

The decision cascade

Question	Required clarity
What was decided?	State the decision in plain language.
Why?	Provide enough rationale to enable intelligent execution.
Who owns it?	Name one accountable owner.
What changes now?	Specify behaviours, priorities, budgets, timelines, or operating assumptions that change.

Question	Required clarity
What remains unchanged?	Prevent unnecessary reinterpretation.
When does it take effect?	Set a clear start point.
How will success be judged?	Define the result or metric that closes the loop.

CORE COMMUNICATION PATTERN

Compress information before the decision. Expand clarity after the decision.

Information hierarchy versus authority hierarchy

Authority may remain structured. Information should move much more freely. Bad news, customer intelligence, safety concerns, material risks, and strategic opportunities should not be forced through ceremonial layers when delay destroys value.

This is the anti-hierarchy principle of the doctrine: hierarchy exists to establish accountability and decision authority; it should not unnecessarily slow relevant information.

No information hoarding

Information should not become a source of internal power. Unless confidentiality, regulation, or legitimate role separation requires otherwise, relevant information should reach the people responsible for acting on it. Managers should be evaluated partly on the quality of information flow they create, not the amount of information they personally control.

Open-door leadership with discipline

Formal reporting lines must not prevent employees from surfacing critical risk, ethical concerns, major opportunities, or unresolved cross-functional problems. At the same time, open access should not encourage routine bypassing of competent managers. The aim is to prevent hierarchy from becoming an information barrier without destroying accountability.

PART IV

Meetings, Management and Accountability

> Calendars, reporting lines, and management rituals should exist because they create value - not because they have become tradition.

8. The Meeting Doctrine

Meetings are instruments, not rituals. A recurring meeting has no permanent right to exist. It should periodically justify the attention it consumes.

When a meeting is warranted

- A decision requires live challenge or negotiation.
- A problem requires genuine multi-disciplinary problem-solving.
- Coordination is sufficiently complex that asynchronous exchange would create more work.
- A sensitive personnel or stakeholder matter requires conversation, context, or confidentiality.
- Creative development materially benefits from real-time interaction.
- A crisis or fast-changing situation requires a common operating picture.

The no-meeting default

1. Can this be answered in one message?
2. Can the necessary information be shared asynchronously?
3. Can one accountable person make the decision?
4. Does the issue genuinely require live collaboration?
5. What would fail if this meeting did not happen?

Meeting entry requirements

Requirement	Standard
Purpose	Why are we meeting?
Desired outcome	What must exist when the meeting ends?
Decision owner	Who decides if a decision is required?
Required participants	Who genuinely needs to contribute?
Pre-read	What should participants know before the meeting starts?

Meeting exit requirements

Output	Question
Decision	What was decided?
Owner	Who is accountable?
Action	What happens next?
Deadline	By when?
Dependency	What could block execution?

On one-to-one meetings

The public leadership examples that inspired this doctrine include executives who use fewer conventional one-to-one meetings than many management systems recommend. That should not be treated as a universal rule. One-to-one conversations remain valuable for confidential feedback, performance issues, career development, compensation, interpersonal conflict, sensitive concerns, and matters that employees may not appropriately raise in a group.

> **CEO CAUTION**
>
> Do not copy the visible ritual of another leader. Copy the underlying logic. Remove meetings that do not create value; preserve conversations whose value depends on privacy, trust, or depth.

9. Management, Ownership and Accountability

The doctrine requires clear accountability because speed without ownership produces confusion. Multiple people may contribute to an outcome, but one person must be accountable for the result.

ONE-OWNER PRINCIPLE

One outcome. One accountable owner.

Management and employee accountabilities

What managers are for	What employees are accountable for
Managers exist to create clarity, establish priorities, define decision rights, remove bottlenecks, build capable teams, improve judgment, protect standards, resolve conflict, communicate context, and ensure accountability. They should not create unnecessary dependence on themselves. • Create context so teams can make good local decisions. • Push ownership and authority downward as capability grows. • Intervene where enterprise trade-offs, risk, or standards require it. • Build successors and systems that reduce managerial bottlenecks. • Make bad news safe to surface and difficult to hide. • Correct weak thinking without taking the thinking back from the team.	• Distinguishing facts from assumptions. • Identifying the real problem rather than merely reporting symptoms. • Developing viable options and making recommendations. • Communicating concisely without hiding material information. • Escalating early when risk or authority limits require it. • Executing within agreed guardrails without unnecessary supervision. • Documenting material decisions so institutional memory is preserved.

Activity is not performance

Emails sent, meetings attended, reports produced, presentations delivered, and hours worked may describe activity. They do not, by themselves, establish value. The operating question is: what changed because of the work?

Activity indicator	Outcome question
Meeting volume	What decisions, commitments, or resolved dependencies resulted?
Report production	What did the report cause leaders to decide or teams to change?
Email volume	Did communication reduce uncertainty or accelerate execution?
Hours worked	What output, learning, risk reduction, or customer value was created?

Operational documentation

DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Documentation exists to preserve decisions, accountability, institutional memory, standards, critical knowledge, and repeatable processes. It should be short enough to use, detailed enough to execute, structured enough to find, and current enough to trust. A document nobody uses is storage, not operational infrastructure.

PART V

Execution, Measurement and CEO Practice

> The doctrine becomes real only when it changes the organisation's operating cadence, metrics, incentives, and leadership behaviour.

10. The Execution Loop

Execution should form a closed loop. A decision is not complete when it is approved; it is complete when the organisation acts, measures the result, and incorporates what it learned.

Stage	Operating question
1. Observe	What is happening?
2. De-layer	What is actually driving it?
3. Analyse	What are the realistic options?
4. Recommend	What should we do?
5. Decide	Who has authority and what is the decision?
6. Communicate	Who must understand what changed?
7. Execute	Who owns implementation?
8. Measure	Did the decision produce the intended result?
9. Learn	What should change next time?

Friction metrics for the executive team

Revenue, margin, growth, customer and operational metrics show what the business is producing. CEOs should also examine the efficiency of the operating system producing those outcomes.

Metric	Definition	CEO use
Decision latency	Time from issue identification to authorised decision.	Identify bottlenecks and over-centralisation.
Approval depth	Number of layers required for common decisions.	Find approvals that exceed the risk.
Meeting load	Share of leadership time consumed by meetings.	Protect capacity for thinking and execution.
Escalation quality	Share of material escalations arriving with recommendation and clear decision request.	Measure analytical maturity below the executive team.
Execution latency	Time from decision to meaningful action.	Expose unclear ownership and weak decision cascades.
Decision reversal rate	Frequency of major reversals caused by poor initial analysis rather than changed circumstances.	Balance speed against decision quality.
Ownership clarity	Ability of relevant employees to identify the accountable owner.	Detect distributed ambiguity.
Recurring meeting yield	Proportion of recurring meetings producing decisions, resolved dependencies, or measurable coordination value.	Challenge calendar inertia.

The quarterly stop-doing discipline

Operational excellence requires subtraction. Every quarter, each executive function should identify work that can be eliminated, delegated, simplified, automated, merged, or moved closer to the point of execution.

- Meetings to eliminate or reduce in frequency.
- Approvals to remove or delegate.
- Reports no longer used for decisions.
- Duplicated handoffs between teams.
- Obsolete procedures or governance steps.
- Decisions repeatedly waiting for senior executives.
- Manual coordination suitable for automation.
- Information that is generated but not consumed.

11. The CEO Operating System

The CEO teaches the doctrine through repeated behaviour. Formal policy helps, but executive conduct is the stronger signal. Teams study what the CEO asks for, what the CEO rewards, what the CEO tolerates, and where the CEO inserts themselves.

Leadership behaviour standard

- Ask for the core issue before asking for more detail.
- Require recommendations from capable managers.
- Make decisions promptly once the threshold of sufficient clarity is reached.
- Explain strategic context so delegated decisions remain aligned.
- Avoid becoming a bottleneck for reversible decisions.
- Reward early escalation of bad news.
- Reject reporting and meeting rituals that no longer create value.
- Preserve depth where risk, people, ethics, or governance demand it.
- Communicate material decisions quickly and consistently.
- Review the operating system itself as a strategic asset.

Twelve questions a CEO should keep asking

Instead of asking...	Ask...
Tell me everything.	What is the core issue?
What do you want me to do?	What do you recommend?
Can we schedule another meeting?	What additional information would change the decision?
Who is involved?	Who owns the outcome?
Why has this not moved?	Where exactly is the bottleneck?
Have we discussed this enough?	Do we have enough information to decide responsibly?
Why was I not copied?	Did the right people have the information they needed?
Can I approve this?	Why is this decision sitting at my level?
How many updates have we had?	What changed since the last update?
Is everyone aligned?	Where is the real disagreement?
What is the process?	What risk is the process controlling?
What else can we add?	What can we remove without reducing quality?

A practical executive cadence

Cadence	Purpose	Doctrine check
Weekly	Resolve material blockers, decisions, and cross-functional dependencies.	Are issues arriving with recommendations? Are decisions leaving with owners?
Monthly	Review operating performance and the few enterprise issues that require collective executive attention.	Are we discussing signals or recreating operational detail?
Quarterly	Review strategy execution and the operating system itself.	Which meetings, approvals, reports, or decision rights should be redesigned?
Annually	Refresh decision architecture, governance thresholds, leadership spans, and management routines.	Has complexity grown faster than operating clarity?

12. Institutionalising the Doctrine: A 90-Day CEO Plan

The doctrine should be introduced as an operating redesign, not a slogan. The first 90 days should create visible behavioural changes while preserving governance and business continuity.

Days 1-30: Diagnose

- Map the 10-20 most common recurring executive decisions and identify where they currently sit.
- Measure meeting load across the CEO and executive team.
- Identify approval chains that regularly create delay.
- Review the quality of recent escalations: did they contain a recommendation and clear decision request?
- Interview selected leaders about where information slows, where ownership is ambiguous, and which rituals create little value.
- Baseline decision latency for several representative decision types.

Days 31-60: Redesign

- Publish a decision-rights map for high-frequency decision classes.
- Adopt the one-page executive decision brief.
- Remove, shorten, or redesign recurring executive meetings that fail the meeting test.
- Delegate reversible decisions that have accumulated at the top.
- Define escalation thresholds for financial, legal, reputational, customer, operational, and people risk.
- Create a consistent post-decision communication pattern.

Days 61-90: Embed

- Add decision latency, approval depth, and escalation quality to the executive operating review.
- Coach executives who continue to escalate unprocessed problems or centralise decisions unnecessarily.
- Run the first quarterly stop-doing review.
- Publish examples of excellent decision briefs and clean decision cascades.
- Review whether incentives reward ownership and outcomes rather than visibility and activity.
- Set the next 90-day friction-reduction targets.

> IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLE
>
> Do not add a bureaucracy for reducing bureaucracy. Use a small number of visible standards, measure whether they change behaviour, and remove the implementation machinery once the habits are embedded.

The final test

Every process, communication channel, meeting, reporting requirement, approval layer, and management practice should periodically face five questions:

1. Does it create clarity?
2. Does it improve decision quality?
3. Does it materially reduce risk?
4. Does it strengthen accountability?
5. Does it accelerate execution?

If it does none of these, it should not survive merely because it already exists.

TOOLKIT

Appendices

The following pages are designed for direct executive use. They can be adopted as-is or adapted to the organisation's governance, sector, and risk environment.

Appendix A - One-Page Executive Decision Brief

Use for material decisions requiring executive or cross-functional authority. The objective is to expose the decision before the detail.

Field	Executive brief
DECISION REQUIRED	State the exact decision in one sentence.
RECOMMENDATION	State the recommended action.
WHY	List the 2-4 decisive reasons.
IMPACT	Describe the material business, customer, people, financial, or operational effect.
RISK	State the principal risks and mitigations.
ALTERNATIVES	Name the viable alternatives considered and why they are not preferred.
OWNER	Name the accountable executive or manager.
DEADLINE	State when the decision must be made.
SUPPORTING DETAIL	Identify where deeper evidence can be found.

Appendix B - Meeting Charter

Element	Standard
Purpose	Why does this meeting need to exist?
Outcome	What must be different when it ends?
Owner	Who owns the meeting and who owns any decision?
Participants	Who must contribute? Who can receive the outcome asynchronously?
Inputs	What must be read or prepared in advance?
Cadence	What is the minimum useful frequency?
Duration	What is the shortest realistic time box?
Exit record	Decision, owner, action, deadline, dependency.
Sunset date	When will the meeting be reviewed or automatically expire?

Appendix C - Quarterly Friction Audit

Area	Questions	Action
Meetings	Which recurring meetings produced little decision or coordination value?	Eliminate, shorten, reduce frequency, or redesign.
Approvals	Where does approval depth exceed risk?	Delegate or establish thresholds.
Reporting	Which reports are produced but rarely change a decision?	Stop, automate, or reduce frequency.
Decision rights	Which decisions repeatedly travel upward?	Move authority downward with guardrails.
Information flow	Where do material issues wait or get distorted?	Create direct escalation paths and shared context.
Ownership	Where do outcomes have multiple nominal owners?	Assign one accountable owner.
Manual coordination	Where do teams spend time synchronising data or status?	Standardise or automate.
Documentation	Which procedures are obsolete or too difficult to use?	Rewrite, retire, or simplify.

Appendix D - CEO Friction Scorecard

Indicator	Current state	Next target
Median decision latency for selected decision classes	________________	________________
Average approval depth for common operating decisions	________________	________________
Executive meeting hours per week	________________	________________
Escalations arriving with a clear recommendation	________________	________________
Time from major decision to named execution owner	________________	________________
Recurring meetings reviewed this quarter	________________	________________
Decisions delegated downward this quarter	________________	________________
Reports / approvals / meetings retired	________________	________________

Appendix E - The CEO Operating Card

DOCTRINE

Think deeply. Communicate clearly. Decide decisively. Assign ownership. Execute rapidly. Measure reality. Remove friction.

Before a decision	After a decision	Every quarter
• What is the core issue? • What are the decisive facts? • What do you recommend? • What risk are we accepting? • Who has authority to decide? • What information would actually change the choice?	• What was decided? • Who owns execution? • What changes now? • Who needs to know? • When does it take effect? • How will we know it worked?	• Remove unnecessary meetings. • Reduce unnecessary approval layers. • Stop reports that no longer change decisions. • Delegate recurring reversible decisions. • Measure decision and execution latency. • Repair information bottlenecks.

Appendix F - Inspiration, Attribution and Source Notes

This handbook is an independent management framework developed for the MMG Executive Ops Series. Its immediate inspiration came from public reporting and commentary on leadership practices associated with Roland Busch of Siemens and Jensen Huang of NVIDIA, including themes of concise communication, lower meeting burden, direct information flow, broad executive engagement, and problem de-layering.

The doctrine does not claim that any individual practice caused the financial or operating performance of the companies referenced. It intentionally converts public observations into a broader set of principles that can be evaluated on their own merits and adapted to different organisational contexts.

Meridian Media Group is not affiliated with, sponsored by, or endorsed by Siemens, NVIDIA, Entrepreneur Media, Business Insider, or the individuals referenced in this inspiration note.

Sources & Notes

The source notes below document only the public leadership observations that inspired this handbook. The Clarity-to-Execution Doctrine itself is an independent framework developed for the MMG Executive Ops Series.

1. Roland Busch / Siemens

Business Insider, "I'm the CEO of Siemens. I reply to most emails with 2-letter responses and don't have recurring meetings - here's a day in my life," as told to Chi Odogwu, 14 August 2026. The article records Busch's comments on receiving about 200 emails a day, using brief replies, avoiding recurring meetings with direct reports, and applying a theoretical-physics approach to de-layering problems.

Source: https://www.businessinsider.com/day-in-the-life-roland-busch-ceo-siemens-germany-2026-8

2. Jensen Huang / NVIDIA

Lex Fridman Podcast #494, "Jensen Huang: NVIDIA - The $4 Trillion Company & the AI Revolution," published 23 March 2026. In the "How Jensen runs NVIDIA" section, Huang describes a direct staff of about 60 people, explains why he does not rely on conventional one-to-one meetings with that group, and describes problems being attacked collectively in the context of extreme co-design.

Source: https://lexfridman.com/jensen-huang-transcript/

3. Entrepreneur Media post

The immediate prompt for this project was an Entrepreneur Media social-media post supplied as source material for the handbook. The post summarised the Business Insider reporting on Roland Busch and drew a comparison with Jensen Huang. No independent publication date or post URL is asserted here because those details were not supplied with the source image.

THE CLARITY-TO-EXECUTION DOCTRINE

An organisation should be capable of handling enormous complexity without behaving like a complicated organisation.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLE

Understand faster. Decide faster. Execute faster. Learn faster.

MMG Executive Ops Series

Founder, Meridian Media Group