



Default Is Not Destiny.

The Evidence.

Three organizations. Three industries. One keynote. In every room, leaders walked in unprepared to face their team's most costly response to change—and walked out, the same day, measurably ready to lead through it. This is the data, and the pattern underneath it.

3

INDUSTRIES
MEASURED

+72pt

PEAK JUMP IN
HIGH READINESS

1

DOMINANT DEFAULT,
EVERY TIME

Shawn Ellis

THE ENDINGS EXPERT · RADICAL ADAPTABILITY™

FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS

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01 WHAT THE ROOMS REVEALED

Your people aren't resisting the change. They're confused by it.

Roughly two-thirds of organizational change efforts fall short of their goal. The usual diagnosis is strategy, communication, or buy-in. The data from the room tells a different story—and it's more actionable.

Across these three engagements, attendees were asked to name the single survival pattern costing their team the most as they navigated change. In every organization, regardless of industry, one answer dominated.

THE REPEATING FINDING

Confusion was the most-named survival default in all three rooms—in two of them by more than 2× any other pattern.
People didn't lack will. They lacked clarity.

SHARE NAMING CONFUSION AS THEIR TEAM'S MOST COSTLY DEFAULT



Share of leaders naming Confusion as their team's most costly survival default.

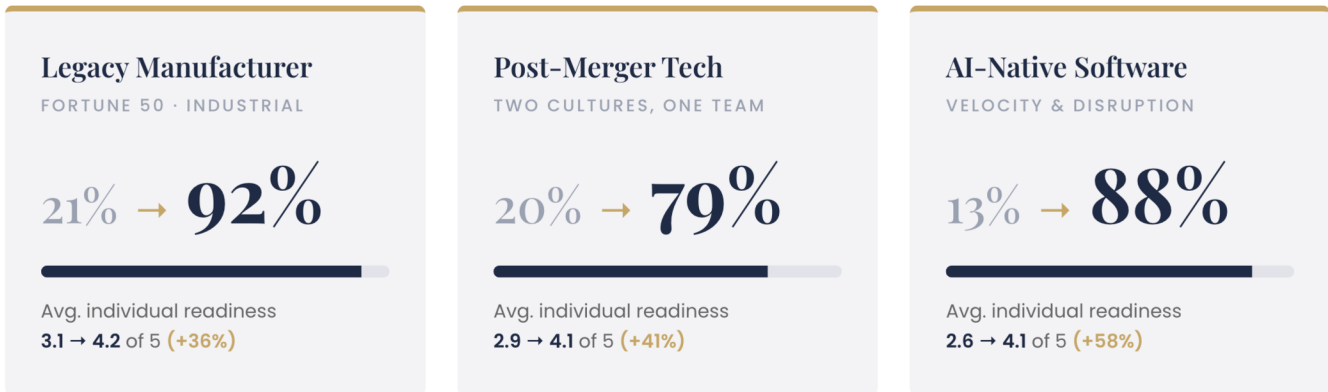
Why this matters for your event

Confusion is the most expensive default precisely because it hides. It looks like slow decisions, stalled initiatives, quiet disengagement, and rework—symptoms leaders try to fix one at a time. Name the real pattern, and you stop treating symptoms. The Radical Adaptability framework gives a room a shared language for what's actually happening to them, then hands them the tool that converts confusion into clarity: not more information, but **better questions**.

02 THE MEASURED RESULT

A large, fast, repeatable shift—recorded in the same room, on the same day.

In each engagement, leaders rated their readiness to address that costly default—before the session and after—on a five-point scale. The percentage scoring high readiness (4–5 of 5) moved like this:



One strong result is a good day. The same result, the same shape, across three unrelated industries is a system. And it held under the conditions that usually defeat a keynote:

IT WAS REPRODUCIBLE

At the manufacturer, the second of two identical sessions scored higher than the first (4.22 vs. 4.09)—the outcome wasn't a novelty effect.

IT SURVIVED A HOSTILE SLOT

The post-merger keynote closed Day 1 at 5:00 pm, after a full day of change conversations. The room stayed in it. One attendee: "I came in skeptical—and you got me."

IT CONVINCED SKEPTICS

A room of engineers used to shipping clean answers: "You said things I've heard before. I just never heard them put together in a way I could actually do something with."

HOW THE SHIFT WAS MEASURED

These figures come from a voluntary self-assessment completed at the close of each session, in which attendees rated their readiness before and after on a five-point scale. The numbers reflect those who opted in—a self-selected, engaged subset—and are reported as a directional, in-the-room signal, not a controlled study. That candor is the point: the shift is real, observed, and consistent, and we describe it exactly as it was captured.

Same framework. Three very different endings.

Every organization was being asked to let go of something that had worked—an identity, an operating model, a definition of personal value. Radical Adaptability gave each room a way to choose the ending rather than be dragged through it.

21%



92%

HIGH READINESS

The Legacy Manufacturer

FORTUNE 50 INDUSTRIAL · 300 LEADERS, TWO SESSIONS · ~14,000 DOWNSTREAM EMPLOYEES

A 100-year-old division asked to grow 1.5× by reaching a buyer it had never served—after four SVPs in four years and a full restructure. Earnings were up, which made the urgency invisible.

The ending: letting go of the behaviors that earned a century of success, to become what the next chapter required.

91 leaders wrote down a specific ending they were now willing to choose—unprompted, in their own words.

FROM THE ROOM

20%



79%

HIGH READINESS

The Post-Merger Technology Company

FOOD-SAFETY / CONDITION MONITORING · ~160 FROM TWO LEGACY TEAMS · TWO-DAY SUMMIT

Two organizations meeting under one roof for the first time, each proud of what it had built, now expected to operate inside one set of rules. A real ending was sitting in the room, unnamed.

The ending: the win-at-all-costs operating model one side had mastered—honored, then released, in service of what they could build together.

“Endings reinforce choice... The End is an opportunity—to grow, to stretch, to shift.”

FROM THE ROOM

13%



88%

HIGH READINESS

The AI-Native Software Company

AGENTIC TESTING · FULL-TEAM OFFSITE · RELEASES SHIPPING 3× FASTER THAN THE ORG COULD ABSORB

Engineering had leaned hard into AI-assisted development, creating communication debt and a quieter fear: if AI writes the code, where does individual value live? Some worked longer hours just to feel valuable.

The ending: the belief that your value is the work you produce—reframed as the outcomes you help create.

“Replacing doubt with confidence.” · “Collective excitement about a new way... instead of pushback.”

FROM THE ROOM

04 WHY IT WORKS

Five survival defaults. Five intentional choices. One discipline.

Under pressure, the brain asks one question—*are we safe?*—and uncertainty answers no. That triggers automatic survival patterns that kept our ancestors alive and keep modern leaders stuck. Radical Adaptability is the practice of overriding those defaults on purpose. The move is precise: you don't choose the state—you choose the tool that produces it.

Calm *over* Panic

TOOL · TAKE A BREATH

Clarity *over* Confusion

TOOL · CALIBRATE THE COMPASS

Courage *over* the Comfort Loop

TOOL · WOULD YOU RATHER?

Confidence *over* Doubt

TOOL · THE FAITH FILE

Community *over* Isolation

TOOL · RAISE YOUR HAND

Community over Isolation is the choice that makes the other four sustainable.

What makes this different from inspiration

Most keynotes install a feeling. By Friday it's gone, because insight without a practice doesn't rewire behavior. Radical Adaptability hands a room named, repeatable tools—and a shared vocabulary that lets a team catch its own defaults in real time. The audience is the hero of the story. The speaker is the guide who hands them the map.

And unlike nearly any keynote a buyer can book, the outcome is measured. The before-and-after readiness shift turns “they seemed to enjoy it” into a number a leader can take to the people who approved the budget.

“He didn't just motivate the room—he equipped our leaders with practical tools they could immediately apply. We're already weaving his concepts into our leadership conversations.”

MEGAN CHITTENDEN
VP OF SALES, US VISION CARE · ALCON

FROM THE
KEYNOTE

*“The pace of change today is the slowest it will be for the rest of our lives. The goal isn't to get **through** this moment. It's to build the tools to become our **best** in the face of it.”*

05 BRINGING IT TO YOUR TEAM

Three ways to put this in the room.

Every engagement begins with a planning conversation and pre-event input, so the framework is customized to the specific change your organization is navigating—the way it was for each of the three rooms in this report.

KEYNOTE

Spark

The Radical Adaptability keynote, customized to your moment. Gives the room a shared language and the five tools—the foundation everything else builds on.

KEYNOTE + WORKSHOP

Momentum

Keynote plus an interactive application session that puts the framework to work in the room—and captures the before/after readiness data you saw in this report.

HALF-DAY

Immersion

A deeper, three-session experience for leadership groups going through significant change—framework, application, and the work of choosing the ending in front of them.



Shawn Ellis

THE ENDINGS EXPERT · CREATOR OF RADICAL ADAPTABILITY™ & CHOOSE YOUR ENDING™

Known as The Endings Expert, Shawn Ellis helps leaders turn their most costly survival defaults into intentional change—with a message that is story-driven, neuroscience-grounded, and built for one outcome: audiences don't leave inspired, they leave decided. His pre- and post-session data consistently shows the share of attendees who rate themselves highly capable of navigating change climbing from roughly 10–20% before to 80–90% after. That's the number he tracks—not the standing ovation. He is the author of *Mastering the Moments*, with his next book, *Choose Your Ending*—a business fable about the five choices that change everything—arriving in 2026.

The next breakthrough for your team is on the other side of an ending.

Let's talk about choosing it on purpose.

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Up we go.