

The Reveal Deck

**Power. Impunity. Loyalty.
Candor. Entrenchment.**

Surfacing the hidden operating system of leadership teams

Regulated industries · Public sector · Government-owned organizations

Every leadership team runs two operating systems simultaneously.

The visible one is documented in org charts, strategic plans, and meeting minutes. The hidden one governs what actually happens: who really makes decisions, who operates without consequence, where loyalty actually sits, and what cannot be said without consequence.

The gap between them is where execution stalls, transitions fail, and leaders exhaust themselves managing around what no one will name. Conventional approaches, strategic planning, change management, and executive coaching address the visible system. None of them is designed to surface the hidden one.

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The problem isn't that people don't speak up. It's what speaking up would cost, and who that cost is calibrated to protect.

Most leadership teams have tried to address this. Strategic planning sessions. Change management consultants. Executive coaching for key individuals. These interventions are not wrong. They are insufficient because a team that cannot acknowledge its own hidden operating system will absorb any new model and carry on as before.

In regulated industries specifically, the teams most in need of honest facilitation are the most skilled at performing engagement with it. They complete the assessments. They discuss the models. They produce behavioral commitments. And they return to how they actually operate the moment the consultant leaves the room.

The Reveal Deck does not add another model. It surfaces what the team already knows and holds it to account for what it has collectively refused to say.



Five categories. One system.

Power determines who operates with impunity. Impunity corrupts genuine loyalty. Corrupted loyalty makes candor impossible. The absence of candor produces entrenchment. These are not five parallel problems; they are one causal chain. Address only one, and the others reassert.



Why these five categories

The five categories were not constructed theoretically. They were identified through years of intervention work with leadership teams in regulated industries, through sessions that cracked something open and sessions that failed. What emerged consistently was that dysfunction in these organizations traces back to the same five dynamics regardless of sector, size, or presenting issue. Power is always the root. When it goes unnamed, impunity follows. Impunity corrupts where loyalty sits. Corrupted loyalty makes honest conversation structurally impossible. And the absence of honest conversation produces entrenchment, organizations that know they need to change and cannot.

Why this matters in regulated industries specifically

In regulated industries, public sector organizations, and government-owned entities, the hidden operating system is more entrenched and more costly than in other environments. The pressure of external accountability, to regulators, ministers, boards, and the public, creates powerful organizational incentives to maintain the appearance of alignment. Leaders in these organizations are exceptionally skilled at performing engagement with any intervention while the real dynamics remain intact. The cost of this is not just organizational. It shows up in failed transitions, in talent that leaves, in decisions that are made and never implemented, and in the exhaustion of leaders who spend their careers managing around what no one will name.



Schedule a discovery call

This is not a one-day workshop. It is a four-phase engagement.

The Reveal Deck methodology operates across four phases. Each phase is a prerequisite for the next. Skipping or compressing any phase does not accelerate the process; it invalidates it.

Candor Call

Individual conversations with every participant assess genuine engagement and intent. Sessions do not proceed if the conditions for honest work are not present, including a stop recommendation when they are not. This is the methodology's entry gate, not a formality.

Surface Session

The full-day facilitated group session. Peer cards are handed to participants to read aloud. Facilitator cards are held and deployed with precision at the moment the room is ready for what they ask. What the team knows but has never said gets said. Emotion surfaces, not as a risk to manage but as evidence that the work is landing.

Acknowledge Phase

Individual coaching conversations with every participant, sense-making, emotional processing, relational navigation. What surfaces in the group session can be so confrontational that people need individual space to process before they can commit to anything honest. This phase is complete when every participant is genuinely ready. Not when the calendar says it should be done.

Align Session

What to address, how, and what observable difference the team expects. The facilitator provides critical feedback on whether the selections reflect genuine commitment or comfortable avoidance of what is highest impact. One honest commitment honored is worth more than ten aspirational ones that evaporate within a month.

An internal facilitator cannot surface what they are part of.

An internal facilitator is inside the system they are trying to surface. They know who holds the real power. They know which relationships are protected. They know what it costs to name certain things, because they will still be in the building when the session ends. That knowledge does not make them more effective. It makes them less honest, even unconsciously. The questions they ask will be calibrated by what they cannot afford to surface.

The Acknowledge phase makes self-facilitation structurally impossible. Individual coaching conversations with every participant, holding each person's emotional processing in mind while maintaining confidentiality for all, cannot be conducted by someone whose own position in the organization depends on the relationships they are navigating. The moment an internal facilitator enters those conversations, they are no longer neutral. They are a participant managing their own exposure.

” *My job is not to make the team feel better about what we find. It is to make sure they cannot look away from it.*

The Facilitator: Lilian Nicolaas

Operational credibility

Ten years at KPMG and Deloitte, progressing to Head of Business Assurance; CFO experience structuring USD 45M+ funding rounds; Director at BDO, the 5th largest accounting firm globally; Executed transitions at RWE, one of Europe's largest energy companies.

Facilitation depth

Seven years coaching executives at the world's largest hedge fund administrator; Ten plus year organizational change management lead for public sector and government-owned entities in the Dutch Caribbean.

*** FOR PROFESSIONAL FACILITATORS**

The Reveal Deck is currently deployed exclusively by Lilian Nicolaas. If you work with leadership teams in regulated industries and want to explore authorized use of the methodology, reach out directly. Authorization requires demonstrated facilitation experience and the professional judgment to hold what this methodology surfaces, including sustained emotional intensity, systemic confidentiality across multiple individual relationships, and the discipline to stop a session when the conditions for honest work are not present.



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Ready to address what no formal process will reach?

A complimentary 30-minute
conversation to determine
whether there is a genuine fit.

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