

A MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE FOR IT OPERATIONS

The 7 Essential *First-Line* Management Systems

The Operational Architecture That Separates Two Kinds of Managers:
Those Who React, and Those Who Lead

Imad Lodhi

29 Years · IBM Global Delivery (1999–2023) · CGI (2023–Present) · 42+ Countries · 1,000+ People

29

Years in
Delivery

42+

Countries

1,000+

Professionals
Led

100+

Enterprise
Clients

PREVIEW EDITION

Seven Systems.

One Integrated Architecture.

Each system answers a specific organizational question. Read them as a diagnostic — where the answer varies by person, the system does not yet exist.

Code	System	The Question It Answers
FLM1	Roles & Responsibilities	Who does what — and why it matters to everyone.
FLM2	Processes & Procedures	How work gets done — consistently, not just when the right person is available.
FLM3	Technology & Tools	Whether your team has what they need to do the work well.
FLM4	Meetings	Whether your team communicates with discipline or just when things break.
FLM5	Reporting & Measurements	Whether you know how the team is performing — or only think you do.
FLM6	Analytics & Optimization	Whether you learn from performance data or simply report it.
FLM7	Continual Service Improvement	Whether the organization gets better over time — by design, not by accident.

“A system is not a system until it functions without its architect.”

— Imad Lodhi

Real Engagements.

The Cost of Missina Svstems.

FLM4 + FLM5 · MAJOR MANUFACTURING ENGAGEMENT · \$650M CONTRACT

The CTO's Trap Questions

In a \$650M global outsourcing engagement, the CTO who had opposed the deal routinely asked the same operational question to five different functional managers. Because the team lacked a shared measurement framework (FLM5) and a standardized reporting cadence (FLM4), he received five different versions of the truth. He used this inconsistency as evidence of incompetence — nearly derailing the entire relationship.

Fix: Implemented FLM4 + FLM5. Identical data-backed answers eliminated the political ammunition.

FLM3 · TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE DESK

The Dual Monitor Problem

A service desk was generating long wait times and high abandonment rates. Management assumed a training problem. The actual cause: every agent worked on a single monitor, toggling between four applications on one screen. The cognitive overhead added minutes to every interaction. The remote access tool was additionally unstable, requiring periodic restarts that extended handle times further.

Fix: Dual monitors + stability remediation. Handle times dropped. Satisfaction recovered. People hadn't changed.

“Capable people working with inadequate tools will produce inadequate results.”

FLM3: Technology & Tools

Which System Is Costing *Your Team Right Now?*

The full book includes a 56-question self-assessment — 8 questions per system — with a five-tier maturity model. Here is a sample of the diagnostic.

FLM1 Can every team member describe their primary responsibilities without referring to a document? Yes No

FLM2 When a new team member joins, can they execute core processes using only the documentation? Yes No

FLM3 Does every team member have access to the tools their role requires — on day one? Yes No

FLM4 Does every meeting produce documented decisions and named action items within 24 hours? Yes No

FLM5 Can you state, right now, whether your team's SLA performance last week was above or below target? Yes No

FLM6 When a metric falls below target, do you investigate the pattern — not just the incident? Yes No

FLM7 Over the past 12 months, can you name specific improvements that are demonstrably still in place today? Yes No

MATURITY TIERS

Level 1: Reactive (8–11) Level 2: Emerging (12–14) Level 3: Developing (15–17) Level 4: Performing (18–21) Level 5: Optimized (22–24)

BEGIN

Build one system well. *Then build the next.*

Excellence is not an event. It is a compounding structure.
Every system you build makes the next one easier — and your team less dependent on your presence to perform.

“The difference between a manager who thrives and one who burns out is rarely effort. It is almost always systems.”

— Imad Lodhi

[DOWNLOAD THE FULL E-BOOK →](#)

imadlodhi.com/product/the-7-essential-first-line-management-systems

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