

The Deep Dive | April 2026

By Deepsky Leaders

Clarity under pressure. Performance that lasts.



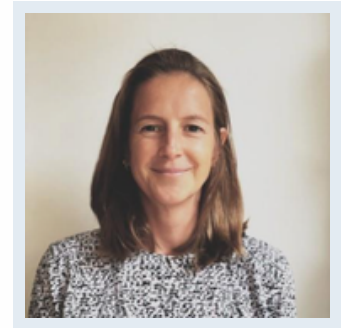
Welcome to The Deep Dive

This month, we look at one challenge that cuts across every organisation: translating intent into consistent leadership action.

Before we dive in - a warm welcome to Cordelia Fyler, who joins Deepsky as Partner, leading our commercial efforts. Cordelia brings 15 years' experience from MindGym, working with elite organisations to develop leaders who take ownership and consistently turn intent into action.

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Leadership Performance

The update lands mid-week. Priorities have shifted again. Direction is clear at the top - less so everywhere else. Conversations slow. Decisions take longer than they should. Not because people don't understand the strategy. But because they're working out what it means in practice.

Insight

Gartner - 2026 CHRO Priorities

Gartner's 2026 research, drawing on 400+ CHROs, identifies four priorities: harnessing AI, navigating the human-machine era, mobilising leaders amid uncertainty, and addressing cultural atrophy.

The throughline is clear: adaptability is now an organisational requirement. And beneath each priority sits a simple truth - future-ready leaders create clarity where there is none, and sustain momentum when confidence drops.

Deepsky View

CHRO priorities are delivered through leadership decisions, not intent alone.

Development becomes the mechanism connecting strategy to execution - not through theory, but through repeated exposure to the conditions leaders will actually face. At scale, this consistency is what allows organisations to adapt quickly and maintain cultural cohesion while evolving.

The Deep Dive | April 2026



Sally has spent 25+ years working with senior teams across global organisations, helping leaders turn intent into momentum.

A weekly practice: At the end of each week, ask:

- Where did I focus purely on delivery?
- Where did I actively build for what's next?
- What trade-offs did I avoid making?

High-Performing Teams

A team raises a strong idea. Well thought through. Grounded in the customer. Everyone can see the value. The room agrees. And then... nothing happens.

Insight

Permission Culture - Sally Earnshaw

Last month we explored psychological safety as a performance condition. This month, Sally Earnshaw introduces permission culture - what comes next.

Psychological safety alongside accountability creates the conditions for honest dialogue. Permission culture extends this into action: giving people the clarity and trust to move without waiting for approval.

Check out this clip from a RISE Live Session:



The Deep Dive | April 2026

Deepsky View

Psychological safety alongside accountability removes friction from speaking up. Permission culture removes friction from acting.

The gap between the two is where momentum dies. People may feel able to contribute, yet still hesitate to decide or move without explicit direction. In customer-focused environments, this hesitation costs.

The organisations that perform best define boundaries clearly, build shared understanding of intent, and reinforce decision ownership at every level.

Deepsky Practice: Ask one question more often: **"What do you recommend?"**

This shifts people from passive reporting into active problem-solving.

Executive Coaching

A decision sits with a leader longer than it should.

Not because they don't know what to do. But because they're aware of how it might land.

So, they ask for one more input. Then another.

Insight

How Leaders Can Build a High-Agency Culture (Nir Eyal, HBR, March 2026)

In uncertainty, organisations default to hesitation. High-performing leaders do the opposite - they shape the underlying beliefs that drive behaviour. When people expect progress to come from initiative rather than permission, they experiment earlier, solve problems faster, and take real accountability.

Deepsky View

Culture is defined by the behaviours leaders demonstrate, encourage, and tolerate. High-agency isn't a standalone concept - it is a feature of a high-performance environment.

Executive coaching helps leaders move from understanding this in theory to applying it consistently.

Small actions - over-direction, inconsistent expectations, unclear context - can quietly diminish agency, even with good intentions.

Through coaching, leaders gain awareness of these patterns and learn how to reset them.

For More, read Deepsky Partner [Chris Whipp's article: Implementing a High Performance Culture - Deepsky](#).

The Deep Dive | April 2026

Executive Assessment

Over the past three months, we've explored flaws in traditional performance systems, the gap between promotion and leadership capability, and what it means to prepare yourself for the next step.

This month: practice.

A simple weekly rhythm of reflection builds the judgement, adaptability, and agency that modern executive assessments look for, and gives you the evidence base to demonstrate it.

Deepsky View

When the opportunity comes - an interview, an internal panel, a conversation with a board member - leaders who reflect consistently can articulate real examples, clear decision logic, and how they lead under pressure.

Your reflection becomes your leadership evidence base.

Start here. At the end of each week, ask:

- Where did I create clarity, and where did I create noise?
- What decision am I most uncertain about and why?
- What pattern am I noticing in how I lead under pressure?

In Closing

Across each theme this month, the same pattern appears.

Performance isn't limited by awareness. It's shaped by what leaders do consistently - especially when conditions are demanding.

Adaptability, ownership, strong culture: organisations understand the need. The challenge is making these qualities show up in decisions, in communication, and in how teams operate day to day.

The opportunity isn't more frameworks. It's embedding the actions that make them real.

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