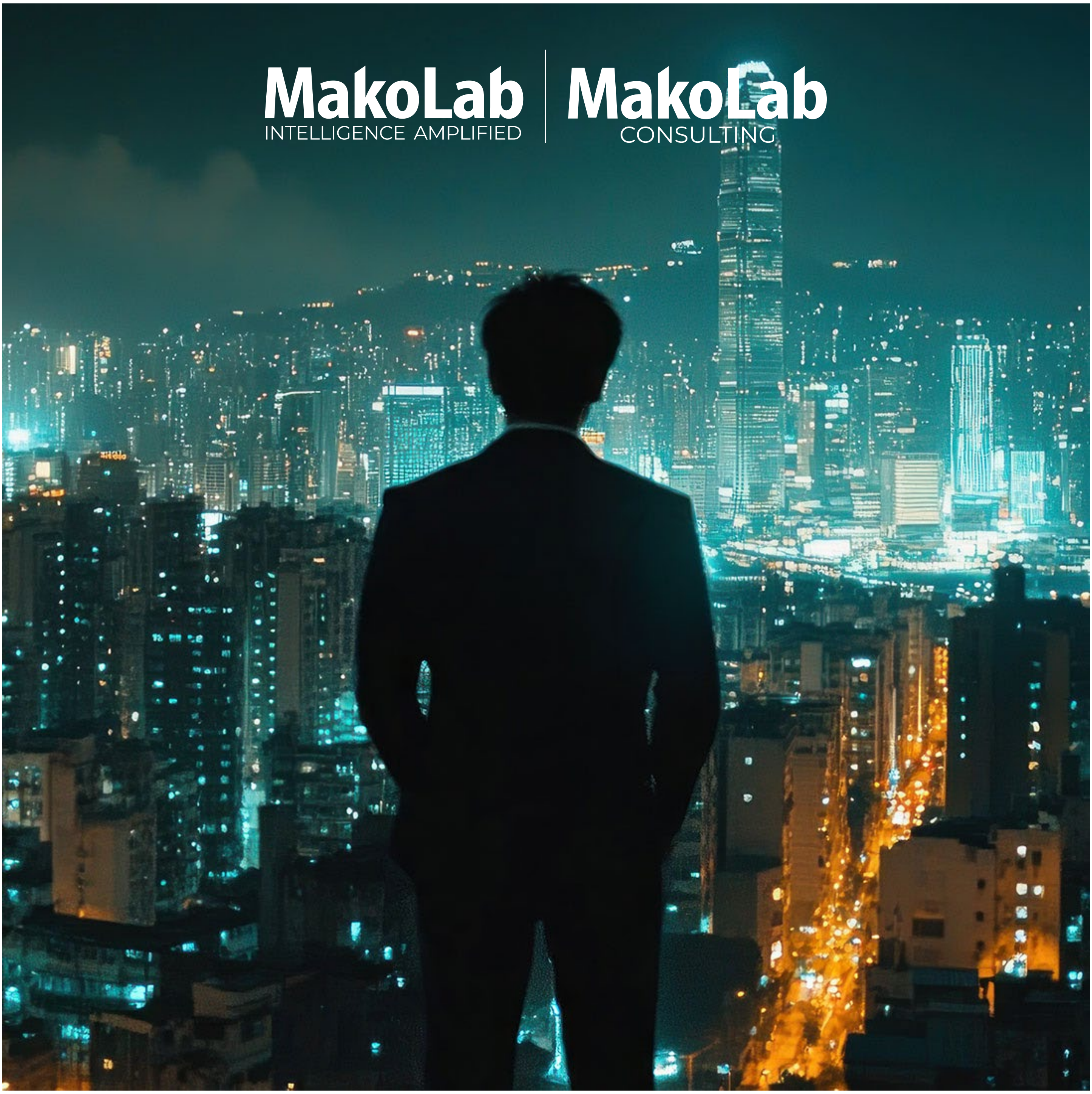


5 moments

when value-first changes everything

Five business areas. One shift in thinking.
Measurable results every time.

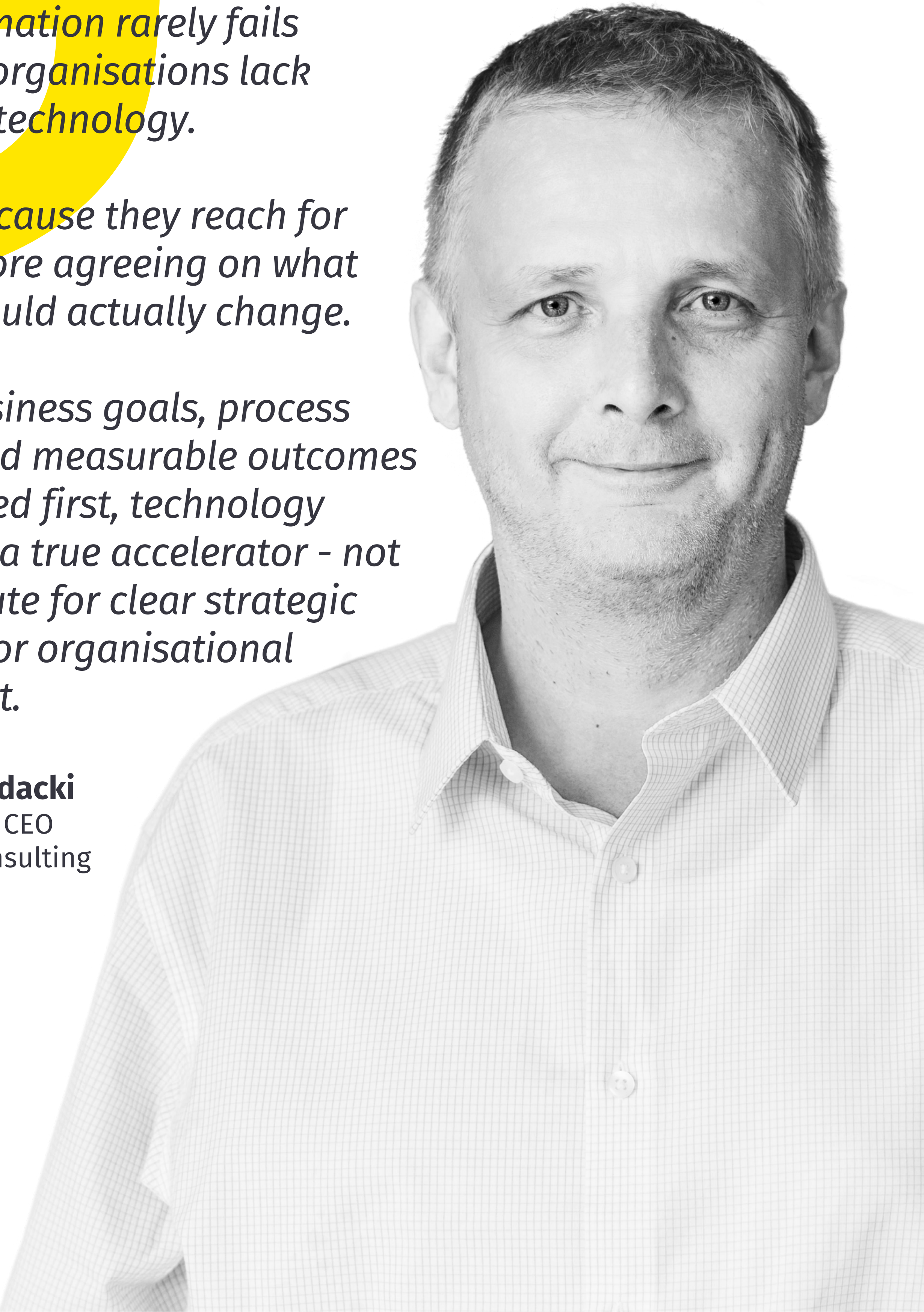
A practical collection of inspirational business shift stories

Transformation rarely fails because organisations lack the right technology.

It fails because they reach for tools before agreeing on what value should actually change.

When business goals, process reality and measurable outcomes are defined first, technology becomes a true accelerator - not a substitute for clear strategic thinking or organisational alignment.

Robert Sendacki
Founder and CEO
MakoLab Consulting



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5 moments
when value-first changes everything

Before you read this

Every story in this guide starts in the same place: a business under pressure, reaching for a familiar lever - technology, investment, new tools, more budget.

And in every case, the real answer came from a different direction entirely.
Not from a new system.
Not from a larger headcount or a bigger automation budget.

From a clear-eyed answer to one question asked first:
„What does value actually mean here — and for whom?"

What follows are 5 scenarios drawn from real transformation work across different industries and functions.

The contexts vary. The principle does not.

1 When the instinct is to cut or invest - but the answer is to understand

The situation

A business operation is underperforming. Margins are thin, output is inconsistent and leadership is under pressure to act.

The options on the table are familiar: cost reduction, headcount changes, investment in new equipment or automation.

Something needs to happen **- fast.**

But nobody has yet asked the most important question:
„Where exactly is value being lost, and why?"

When the instinct is to cut or invest
- but the answer is to understand

The shift

Analysis

Before any investment decision is made, the work starts with a structured analysis of the operation as it actually runs - not as it was designed to run.

Examination

Every area is examined: what contributes to output, what does not, where time and resource disappear without trace.

Data-based recommendations

Improvement actions are built around what the data reveals, not what feels intuitive. Frontline teams are brought in as a source of intelligence, not just execution.

The result

Performance improves - measurably, within months - without the capital spend that seemed inevitable. In one such engagement, a business unit that was close to being shut down **reached break-even in year one** and was **running at full capacity with a growing order backlog by year three.**

The principle

When an operation is struggling, the reflex is to spend or cut.

The value-first approach says: **understand before you act.**

Define what drives your numbers - really drives them - before you touch a single process or tool.

2 When two organisations become one - and technology is not the first answer

The situation

Two organisations **are merging.**

Different systems, **different** processes, **different** cultures - in some areas, fundamentally **different** ways of doing everything.

The standard playbook **starts with a large, expensive technology integration programme.** The systems need to talk to each other.

That means IT. That means cost. That means time.
„But does it?"

When two organisations become one
- and technology is not the first answer

The shift

Analysis

Before any technology decision is made, the focus goes to processes and people. A structured analysis of both organisations - mapping what each does, how, and how well.

Examination

This stage is necessary not to prove one way is right and the other wrong, but to identify what is genuinely best from each side and design a combined operation around that.

Technology assessment

Technology is reviewed, assessed and recommended only once the process picture is clear.

The result

In one financial services merger, the conclusion was that existing systems from both organisations - properly aligned around newly defined processes - were sufficient.
The result: **double-digit revenue** and profit growth in year one, **minimal additional spend** on technology integration, and no **key people lost** in the transition.

The principle

In a merger, the pressure to solve everything with technology is enormous.

But **technology can only integrate what processes have already clarified.**

Process clarity first - technology selection second. In some cases, the technology problem almost disappears entirely.

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3 When the pipeline looks healthy but conversion does not follow

The situation

A sales organisation is **underperforming** against targets.

The leads are there. The products are competitive. The team is experienced. And yet **conversion rates are low**, **the pipeline is slow**, and nobody can quite explain why.

The usual responses: more training, new CRM features, revised incentive structures, more leads.

All this is treating the symptom. But nobody asks: *„What happens between first contact and closed deal?"*

The shift

Analysis

The sales process is mapped end to end - not as it is assumed to work, but as it actually works.

Examination

Every stage is examined: where do opportunities stall? Where does information get lost? Where are business rules unclear, inconsistent, or simply unknown to the people applying them?

Actionable recommendations

At this stage, the gaps between what the process is supposed to do and what it does in practice become visible - and properly addressed.

The result

In one retail banking engagement, this approach surfaced a set of process and knowledge gaps that, once resolved, **doubled the sales hit rate** - without adding headcount, changing the product, or overinvesting in new technology.

The principle

Sales underperformance is rarely a people problem or a technology problem.

It is usually a process problem in disguise. **Map the value stream first.**

The fix often costs far less than the tools being considered to solve it.

4 When the backlog is full but the business is not moving

The situation

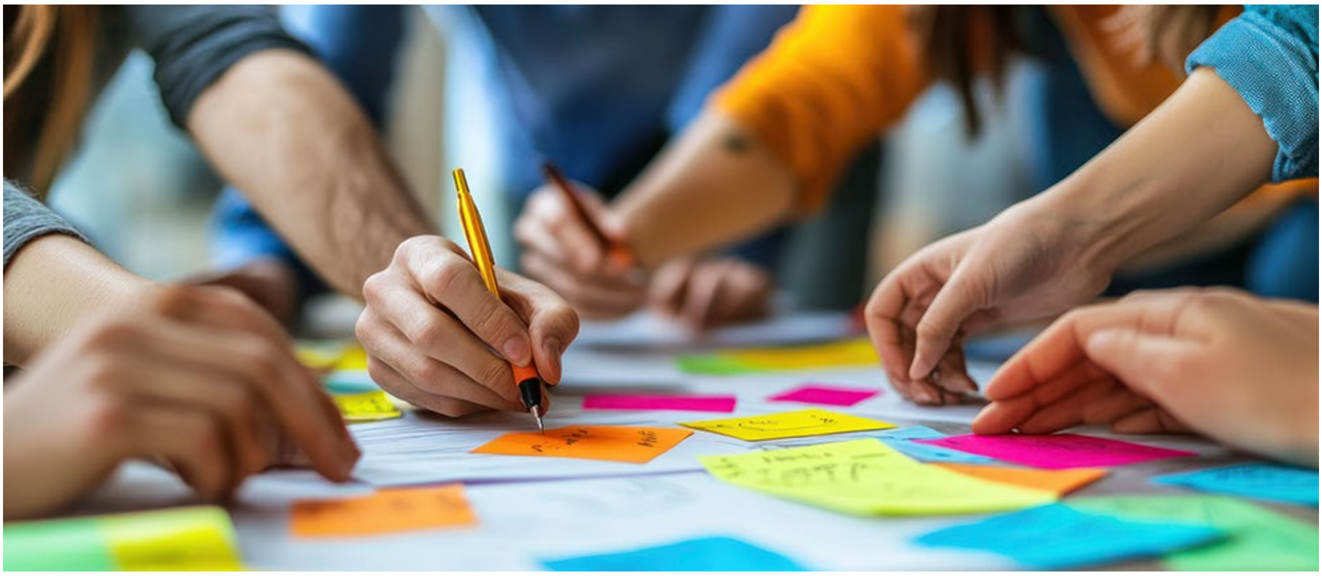
The IT department is **busy**. The backlog is **long**. Projects are **in flight**.

And yet business stakeholders feel like nothing is getting done - or at least, nothing that matters. **Priorities shift constantly. Delivery timelines slip**.

The relationship between business and IT is defined by **mutual frustration** rather than shared momentum.

The instinct is to optimise delivery: manage better, sprint faster.

„But isn't the real problem upstream?"



The shift

Analysis

The work starts not with delivery, but with definition. What does the business actually need - and how is that need being translated (or mistranslated) into IT requirements?

Examination

Value Stream Mapping is used to trace the flow from business objective to delivered output, surfacing where alignment breaks down.

Action

BPMN 2.0 becomes a shared language - not a technical artefact, but a communication tool that business and IT can both read and challenge.

The result

In one organisation, this **shift freed thousands of work-days per year** previously consumed by rework, clarification loops and misaligned delivery. Projects started landing closer to what the business actually needed - because for the first time, what the business needed had been clearly defined before development began.

The principle

A slow IT delivery engine is rarely an IT problem.

It is a **requirements problem** - which is a value definition problem.

Align on what value means before you build anything, and the delivery process tends to fix itself.

5 When the constraint is not what it appears to be

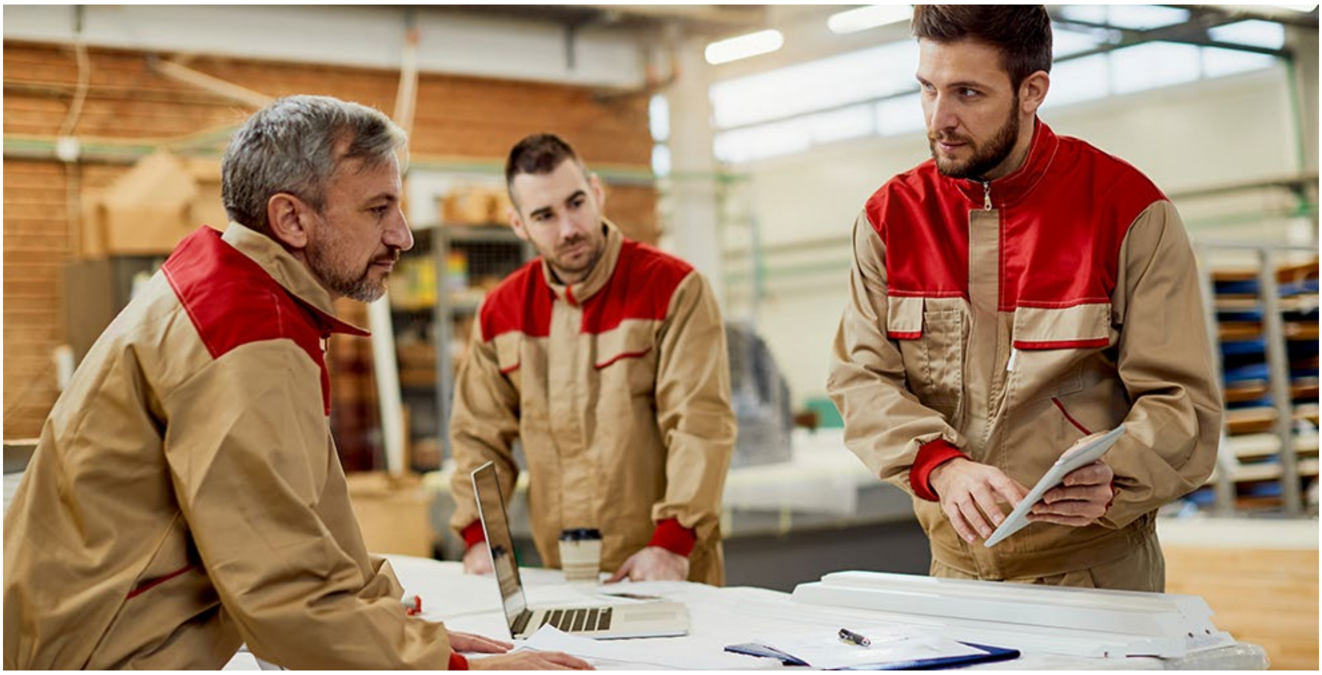
The situation

Demand is **outpacing output**. The operation **cannot keep up**.

The obvious conclusion: **more capacity is needed**.

New equipment, **more** automation, **additional** shifts. The capital case is being built.

Before investing, a question is worth asking:
„Is the constraint real, or hidden in an unmeasured process?"



The shift

Analysis

Instead of moving straight to investment, the team examines what is actually happening on the floor - not what is assumed to be happening.

Examination

KPIs are made visible. Changeover times are analysed and reduced. Frontline workers are treated as a source of intelligence, not just execution.

Action

Micro-stoppages - the small, frequent interruptions that individually seem trivial and collectively destroy output - are surfaced and eliminated.

The result

In one manufacturing engagement, this approach delivered a **~10% increase in net production output in three months**, with a measurable improvement in Overall Equipment Effectiveness - and no additional capital investment. The capacity was already there. It was hidden inside a process that had never been properly defined.

The principle

Before you invest in more capacity, **measure the capacity you have**.

Value-first thinking - *knowing what you are optimising for before reaching for a solution* - often reveals that the constraint is a process problem, not a resource problem.

Summing up

The pattern

Five different functions. Five different pressures. Five completely different contexts.

But one consistent thread runs through every scenario: the organisations that got results did not start by choosing a tool or making an investment.

They started by defining what value meant - for their customers, their process, their organisation - and worked forward from there.

Technology played a role in each case. But it was never the starting point.

What this means for your organisation

Before your next transformation initiative, consider three questions:

1. **Have we defined what value means** - specifically, measurably, before we have decided what to build or buy?
2. **Do we know where value is being lost in our current process** - not assumed, but mapped and evidenced?
3. **Are business and IT aligned on what success looks like** - or are they solving different problems in parallel?

If any of these feel uncertain, the technology decision is probably happening too early.

The value-first approach is not about slowing transformation down - it is about making sure every decision moves the business in the right direction.

When organisations truly understand where value is created, lost or blocked across their processes, they can invest with real confidence and turn change into measurable, lasting business progress that compounds over time.

Ewa Koprowska
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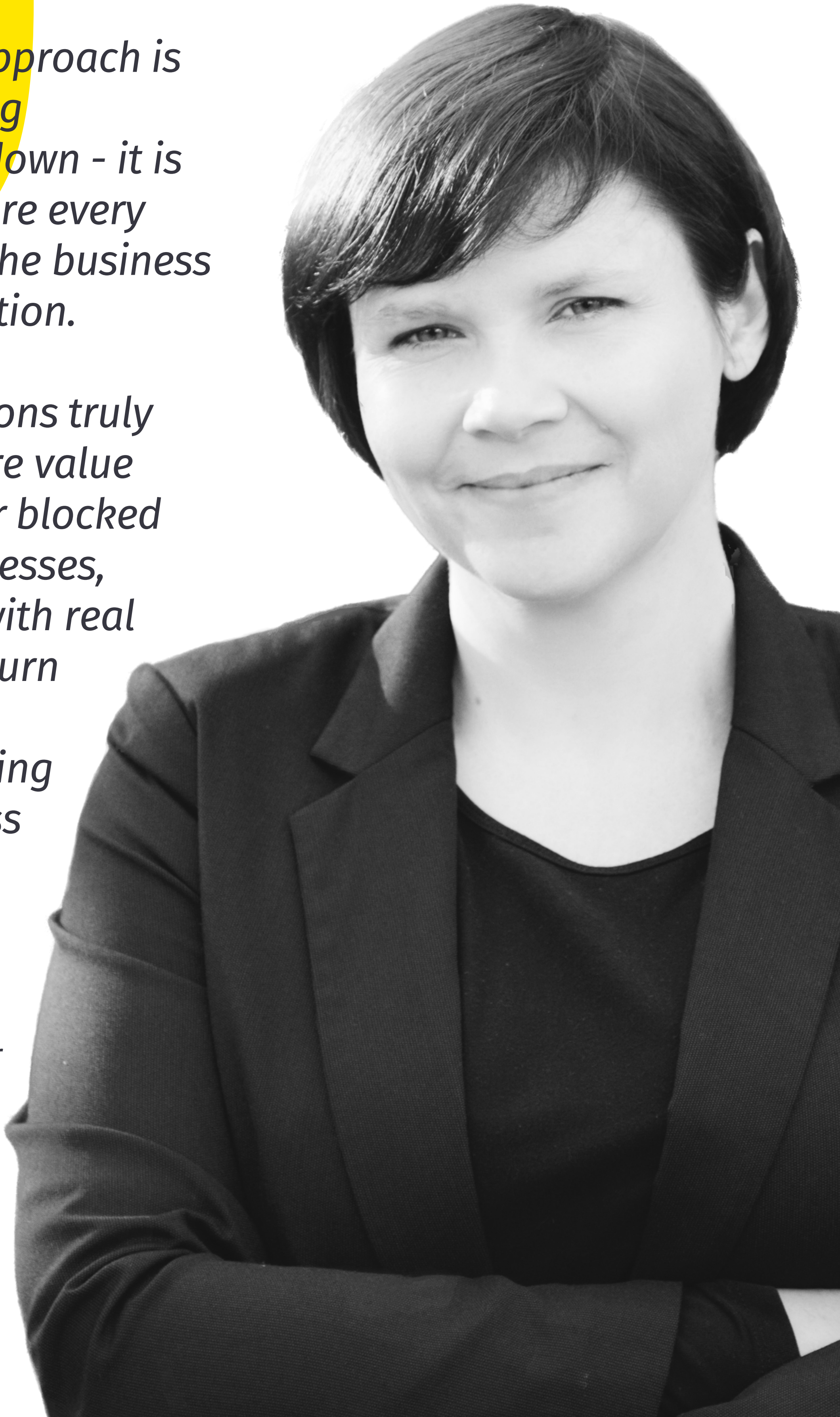

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your journey with MakoLab?

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