

The activation kit for Emotional Metabolism Index.

A diagnostic, a curriculum, an eight-week pilot blueprint, and an intervention library — designed to be operator-grade out of the box.

FRAMEWORK

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INSTRUMENT & SCAFFOLDING

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The kit you forward to your team. The brief makes the case; this gives function leaders, transformation leads, and people-ops practitioners everything needed to run the framework without the authors in the room. Each layer is self-contained.

THE FOUR-LAYER TRANSFORMATION STACK

<p>LAYER 1 · LIVE NOW The Diagnostic</p> <p>Five dimensions, twenty-five questions, five minutes. A score from 0 to 100, archetype placement (Brittle → Regenerative), and an action plan scoped to role and industry. Take it as a leadership team and compare divergence — that is the first conversation.</p>	<p>LAYER 2 · READY TO RUN EMI in Practice — Five Interventions</p> <p>One pathology-specific intervention per dimension. Each is a self-contained artifact a manager can run on a Tuesday morning without a consultant. Identity Portability Worksheet, Sunset Audit Checklist, Vaccination via Sandbox, Integration Rituals Guide, Retirement Co-Design Template.</p>	<p>LAYER 3 · EARLY ACCESS Training & Enablement</p> <p>Three audiences, three curricula. ICs get a 20-minute self-paced module. Managers get a half-day workshop with role-plays per pathology. Pops and transformation leads get a three-week train-the-trainer certification. Currently delivered as coaching; self-serve modules in development.</p>	<p>LAYER 4 · FOR TRANSFORMATION LEADERS Pilot Blueprint</p> <p>An 8-week pilot, pre-designed. Named workflow, named cohort, week-by-week timeline, lead and lag indicators, exit criteria, three-failure pre-mortem with mitigations, comms plan, Phase 2 with named tracks. The operator artifact for leaders ready to run the framework, not just read it.</p>
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THE INSTRUMENT · HOW THE DIAGNOSTIC WORKS

Each dimension is scored from five questions on a 1-5 anchored scale. Composite is dimension-equal-weighted to 0-100. Cross with the OMI (structural metabolism) score to land in one of four immune profiles. Live instrument at the activation page link in the footer.

<p>01 HILL TO DIE ON</p>	<p>Identity</p> <p>Whether role identity stretches with workflow change, or fuses to a tool, an artifact, or a process. The single highest-leverage dimension on early absorption — get this right and every downstream conversation gets cheaper.</p>	<p>SAMPLE ANCHORED ITEM</p> <p>"In the last 12 months, how many senior ICs successfully moved to adjacent roles after the workflow they led was retired?" Anchors range from "None — they left or were reassigned downward" to "Nearly all; redeployment is the default, exit is the exception."</p>
<p>02 GHOST WORKFLOWS</p>	<p>Closure</p> <p>Whether retired workflows get explicit closure, or persist as shadow versions. Closure is the metabolic cost of obsolescence — pay it through sunset rituals or pay it through ghost workflows that eat productivity for months.</p>	<p>SAMPLE ANCHORED ITEM</p> <p>"After a workflow is retired, how common is it to find informal 'ghost' versions running in parallel?" Anchors range from "Extremely common; most retired workflows survive as shadows" to "Nearly nonexistent; retirement is enforceable and enforced."</p>
<p>03 ALLERGIC REACTION</p>	<p>Trust</p> <p>Whether the immune system fires on real threats — privacy, safety, ethics, strategic mis-fit — or over-reacts to all change as if equivalent. The fix is shared vocabulary that lets people stand down without losing face.</p>	<p>SAMPLE ANCHORED ITEM</p> <p>"In hindsight, what share of the internal resistance to recent process changes was about actual risk versus identity protection?" Anchors from "Overwhelmingly identity; the risk framing was a cover" to "Almost entirely real concerns; the org is honest at this."</p>
<p>04 INNER CIRCLE</p>	<p>Belonging</p> <p>Whether new people and new workflows can find a group to belong to, or whether the original in-group closes ranks. New coalitions form quickly when belonging is permeable; old coalitions fight retirement when it is not.</p>	<p>SAMPLE ANCHORED ITEM</p> <p>"How often do the same individuals show up in both the old and the new coalition during a workflow transition?" Anchors from "Rarely; change requires replacing people" to "Systematically; the same humans bridge workflow generations."</p>
<p>05 QUIET QUITTING MOST DIAGNOSTIC</p>	<p>Agency</p> <p>Whether retirement is decreed top-down or co-designed with the team. Most predictive dimension of long-term immune health — and the hardest to fake.</p>	<p>SAMPLE ANCHORED ITEM</p> <p>"Of workflow retirements in the last 12 months, what share were proposed by the owning team?" Anchors: "Under 10% — almost always imposed" → "Over 75% — self-retirement is default."</p>

ARCHETYPE INTERPRETATION · WHAT THE SCORE MEANS

Composite EMI score lands the org in one of five archetypes. The action under each is the critical move that compresses time-to-Adaptive — not a wishlist, the binding constraint at that level.

Brittle

0–20

Every retirement is existential. Nothing ends; everything accumulates. Common in legacy enterprises. **Action:** name one retirement and run the full arc as the first training rep.

Defensive

21–40

Retirement happens at hidden cost — quiet quitting, attrition. **Action:** one blameless allergic-reaction audit, published inside leadership.

Reactive

41–60

Leader-dependent. Right manager, dignified retirement. Wrong manager, autoimmune. **Action:** codify the retirement playbook; track transition cycle time.

Adaptive

61–80

Most retirements are internally initiated. Sunset rituals are normal; redeployment is default. **Action:** protect the posture through the next leadership rotation and the next bad quarter.

Regenerative

81–100

Workflow retirement is a source of renewal. Identity portability is a practiced muscle. **Action:** stay paranoid; share the playbook externally — recruiting advantage follows.

CURRICULUM · THREE AUDIENCES, THREE TRACKS

TRACK 1 · INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Survival kit · 20 min, self-paced

Your workflow is being retired — here's how to not feel like you are.

Built for the engineer, designer, recruiter, or analyst whose work is changing. Survival kit, not theory.

- What just happened — recognizing the moment
- The five things you'll feel — and why each is rational
- Writing your bridge sentence — the artifact that survives
- What good managers do — and what to ask for if yours doesn't
- When to stay, when to move — the honest version

TRACK 2 · MANAGERS

Half-day workshop · in-person or live virtual

How to retire a workflow your team built without breaking trust.

Each manager leaves with a draft Identity Portability Worksheet and a commitment to run it inside fourteen days.

- The five pathologies — recognize them in your team's language
- Identity Portability Worksheet — practice live, with coaching
- Sunset Audit drill — surface the ghost workflows you didn't know you had
- Allergic-reaction-or-legitimate-concern — the framing that changes meetings
- Co-designing retirement — the 90-minute working session, run live

TRACK 3 · POPS + TRANSFORMATION

3-week certification · cohort of six

Train-the-trainer. Run EMI inside your function without the authors in the room.

Award is on a completed pilot with measurable outcome, not on attendance.

- Week 1 — Diagnostic mechanics; reading divergence maps; the cohort selection error that kills pilots
- Week 2 — Intervention prescription; reading the pathology behind the symptom; sequencing across dimensions
- Week 3 — Pilot design; the 8-week template; pre-mortem; lead and lag indicators that actually correlate
- Practicum — Each participant runs a pilot inside their function with shadow coaching
- Certification — Award on completed pilot with measurable outcome

INTERVENTION LIBRARY · ONE ARTIFACT PER PATHOLOGY

01 · IDENTITY

Identity Portability Worksheet

45 min per IC, before the retirement is announced. One-page artifact filled with each senior IC: what capability survives this workflow, what is actually being retired (artifact, practice, or relationship), what they want their name attached to next.

Signal: IC uses the bridge sentence with a new stakeholder unprompted within 60 days.

02 · CLOSURE

Sunset Audit Checklist

30 min, day 30 / 60 / 90 after retirement. Twelve-item checklist surfacing zombie artifacts — calendar items, shared docs, Slack channels, dashboards, role names. Each gets yes/no plus a decommissioning owner.

Signal: by day 90 a new hire could not reconstruct the workflow from surface artifacts.

03 · TRUST

Vaccination via Sandbox

Three small retirements in 90 days, before any big one. Each runs the full arc — announce, identity portability, sunset audit, ritual, debrief. The point is acquired immunity, not the workflows themselves.

Signal: "allergic reaction", "sunset ritual", "identity portability" appear in leadership meetings unprompted by sandbox three.

04 · BELONGING

Integration Rituals Guide

Four rituals across two quarters, two hours each. Story Exchange · Bridge Appointments · Vocabulary Trade · First Decision Shared. Sequence matters — out of order halves the effect.

Signal: six months in, a new hire cannot tell which side anyone was originally on.

05 · AGENCY

Retirement Co-Design Template

One 90-min session, before the retirement is announced externally. Forces seven decisions to be co-owned by the team: what's retired, why now in their voice, who decides specifics, who gets credit, what's next, bridge length, 30/90/180-day success.

Signal: within 60 days a cohort member voluntarily proposes a second retirement using the same template.

THE 8-WEEK PILOT BLUEPRINT · ONE NAMED WORKFLOW, ONE COHORT

The pilot is the smallest unit that produces a measurable result. Eight weeks, one named workflow being retired, one cohort, two leadership sponsors. Below is the pre-designed timeline. The point of the structure is that the framework runs the same way every time — the variable is the org, not the protocol.

WEEK 1 Diagnostic + cohort Leadership team takes EMI; cohort is selected; binding constraint is identified.	WEEK 2 Identity portability Manager runs the worksheet 1:1 with each affected senior IC. Bridge sentences captured.	WEEK 3 Co-design session 90-minute working session with the affected team. Seven decisions signed in a one-pager.	WEEK 4 Public announcement Retirement announced using the team's voice from week 3, not leadership's frame.	WEEK 5 Sunset ritual Named ritual closing the workflow. What it taught, who built it, what comes next.	WEEK 6 Sunset Audit · day 30 Twelve-item checklist run by the workflow owner. First ghost-workflow sweep.	WEEK 7 Allergic-reaction audit Blameless review of which resistance was identity, which was legitimate. Vocabulary lands.	WEEK 8 Debrief + Phase 2 Pilot debrief published inside leadership. Phase 2 named: which dimensions to harden next.
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LEAD INDICATORS · WEEKS 1–4

- Bridge-sentence completion rate across affected ICs (target: 90%+)
- Co-design template signed before public announcement (binary: yes/no)
- Vocabulary uptake in leadership meetings — count of "allergic reaction" / "sunset ritual" / "identity portability" usage by week 4
- Manager one-on-ones documenting the identity conversation (target: 100%)

LAG INDICATORS · WEEKS 5–12

- Transition cycle time — days from announcement to team behaving as if the change is real
- Ghost-workflow count at day 30 / 60 / 90 (target: zero by 90)
- Voluntary attrition in the affected cohort vs. comparable non-cohort group
- Self-proposed retirement of a second workflow, in writing, by a cohort member (binary: yes/no)

THREE-FAILURE PRE-MORTEM · WHAT KILLS THE PILOT

Failure mode 1 · Identity skipped

Manager treats the identity worksheet as optional and goes straight to the announcement. The IC reads the announcement as role-end. The full immune response fires; weeks 5–8 are spent unwinding it. **Mitigation:** identity portability is the gate to the announcement, not a parallel track. No worksheet, no Week 4.

Failure mode 2 · Sponsor wobble

Leadership sponsor goes quiet between weeks 3 and 7 because the soft economics make them nervous. Cohort reads the silence as abandonment; quiet quitting begins immediately. **Mitigation:** sponsor co-signs the week-3 one-pager and is required to be visible at the sunset ritual. Sponsor calendar held by POps lead.

Failure mode 3 · Cohort selection error

Cohort is selected for tractability, not for representativeness. Pilot succeeds, but lessons don't transfer because the chosen workflow was the easy case. **Mitigation:** cohort selection criteria signed off by both authors before week 1. Hard mode is the default; easy mode requires written justification.

COMMS PLAN · WHAT GETS SAID, WHEN, AND BY WHOM

Internal cadence

- Week 0:** sponsor pre-brief to direct skip-levels (cohort selection rationale).
- Week 4:** public announcement co-authored by sponsor + affected team lead, using the week-3 one-pager language.
- Week 5:** sunset ritual broadcast (calendar invite is the comms artifact; tone is named).
- Week 8:** internal pilot debrief, distributed inside leadership team only.

What not to say

- Banned phrases:** "exciting transformation journey", "right-sizing", "doing more with less", "embracing change". Each one telegraphs that the immune system is being asked to override itself instead of being respected.
- Replace with:** name the workflow ending, name what the team owned, name what comes next, name who decides specifics. Specificity is the trust signal.

PHASE 2 · WHAT COMPOUNDS AFTER THE PILOT

The pilot is one rep. Phase 2 is the operating posture — the org running EMI as a standing capability instead of a one-off project. Below are the named tracks that follow a successful pilot. Sequence matters: do them in order, not in parallel.

PHASE 2.1 · POPS CERTIFICATION COHORT

Spin up the train-the-trainer track

Six POPS and transformation leads enter the three-week certification while the pilot is fresh. They run their own pilots in adjacent functions during the practicum, with shadow coaching. Outcome: six certified practitioners running the framework inside Alphabet without the authors in the room. Time-to-independence: ten weeks from pilot debrief.

PHASE 2.2 · MANAGER WORKSHOP SCALE

Roll out the half-day to manager population

Certified POPS run the manager workshop in cohorts of six. Each manager leaves with a draft Identity Portability Worksheet for one of their senior ICs and a 14-day commitment. Track worksheet completion as a leading indicator of the next round of retirements being cheaper than the last.

PHASE 2.3 · IC SURVIVAL KIT

Deploy the 20-minute self-paced module

Once managers have run the worksheet at least once, the IC module deploys via the standard learning surface. Sequence is non-negotiable — deploying to ICs before managers are equipped produces survey-driven cynicism.

PHASE 2.4 · OPERATIONAL METRIC

Make transition cycle time visible

Add transition cycle time — days from retirement announcement to team behaving as if the change is real — to the people-function dashboard. Correlate with retention and productivity in the affected team. This metric is the proxy for immune health and the cleanest single number to defend the posture to a board or investors.

HOW TO BRING THIS IN · THREE ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

OPTION A · DIAGNOSTIC-ONLY

Self-serve, two weeks

Leadership team and one extended cohort take the diagnostic. Authors read the divergence map and produce a written interpretation with the binding constraint named, the recommended pilot scope, and the highest-leverage intervention. No live engagement. The lightest possible first step.

OPTION B · PILOT

One named pilot, eight weeks

The full 8-week blueprint, run with one Alphabet sub-function. Authors embedded as advisors at weeks 1, 3, 5, 8 — the rest is in the function's hands. Outcome: one workflow retired with dignity, transition cycle time measured, cohort ready to propose the next retirement. The standard engagement.

OPTION C · CHARTER COHORT

Pilot + certification, fourteen weeks

Pilot in weeks 1-8 plus POPS certification cohort running in parallel from week 4. Outcome: one workflow retired plus six certified practitioners by week 14, ready to run Phase 2 across adjacent functions without the authors. Limited to one cohort per quarter to keep coaching quality high.

FREQUENTLY ASKED, BY THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD ACTUALLY RUN THIS

"What's the difference between this and our existing change-management work?"

Change-management treats resistance as something to overcome. EMI treats resistance as a symptom of an immune system doing its job and asks which dimension of the system is missing. Different frame, different interventions. The two are complementary — but you cannot reach the EMI conclusions from the change-management starting point.

"Can we run the diagnostic anonymously across our function?"

Yes. The instrument is anonymous by default. Recommended pattern: leadership team identified, broader function anonymous, cross-tab by level. The divergence between leadership perception and function reality is itself a diagnostic — sometimes the most important one.

"What if we don't have one named workflow ready to retire?"

Use Option A first. The diagnostic + interpretation surfaces the workflow that is the right candidate — usually the one whose immune defenders are quietest. Picking the loud workflow is a beginner error; the loud one is loud because the immune system already has it covered. Pick the workflow people don't fight over yet.

"Who owns this on our side?"

For a pilot, two named owners: an executive sponsor (CPO direct or skip-level) and an operational lead (POPs or transformation lead with calendar authority). The executive sponsor is the budget-and-air-cover signal; the operational lead runs the eight weeks. Both are required — single-owner pilots fail at week 5.

How to start. Take the diagnostic at the activation page. Forward the brief and this kit to your transformation lead. Pick one workflow you are about to retire that is not the easy case. Schedule the first conversation.

Framework: Fiona Clare Cicconi · Chief People Officer, Alphabet. **Instrument & scaffolding:** Rahul Jindal, second author. **Names and pathologies locked 2026-04-26.**