

People-First Digital Transformation For Credit Unions



*How to modernize
without losing your
cooperative values*

BOXD

Better Organizations by Design

About This Guide

Most digital transformation projects begin with great promise and end with many regrets...or in some cases never seem to end at all.

In our experience we've seen that credit unions are especially vulnerable. Not only at risk of failing to meet your business goals, but of a special kind of failure: to betray your cooperative values and lose sight of your mission and perhaps your most important market differentiator — your values.

Inside this guide, you'll find some of the frameworks and tools we use to design people-first transformation, including frameworks you can use to evaluate your initiatives, alignment activities you can run right away, and KPIs that surface organizational friction before it derails your project.

Obviously a free guide isn't going to solve your problems. Ideally we provoke your thinking a bit. You'll consider things like power dynamics, misaligned incentives, and cultural patterns that feel risky to challenge. Any discomfort is part of the work you need to do.

You can't talk your way out of a misaligned system and you can't communicate people into new behaviors if the system incentivizes old ones. People-first transformation requires you to redesign the less visible systems that determine whether your strategy lives or dies.

WHO WE ARE

Better Organizations by Design (BOxD) redesigns the misalignments holding organizations like credit unions back, especially during major moments of change like digital transformations. We consult across three levers of change: how leaders lead, how teams collaborate, and how systems work together, and make sure they work the way they should.

Culture work is inside work. But sometimes you need someone from outside the system to help you see what you're too close to notice. If you need some help, we'd love to be considered.

[Find us at boxd.us](https://boxd.us)

Digital Transformation Is Not an IT Project

Digital transformation involves two fundamentally different kinds of work. Most organizations only re-source the first kind and then wonder why it doesn't actually feel like a "transformation".

Technical challenges are problems with known solutions. Installing software. Configuring workflows. Integrating systems. Meeting security and regulatory requirements. Training people on new interfaces. This work is complicated, but it's manageable. It has clear deliverables, vendor contracts, project plans, Gantt charts, and go-live dates. It's the kind of work IT departments and tech vendors know how to do.

Adaptive challenges are problems that require people to change how they think, decide, and collaborate. Letting go of old identities and definitions of "good work." Building new habits, new trust, new ways of handling conflict and making decisions. Redistributing power, status, and control. Admitting that "how we've always done it" might not serve the next generation of members.

This work is hard. You can't solve it with a software upgrade.

It requires leaders to surface tensions, have conversations they've been avoiding, and model vulnerability in front of their teams.

It requires teams to be able to communicate and collaborate across functions in ways they previously didn't need to, with a high likelihood of small but important details falling through the cracks.

And thus it requires redesigning many different elements of the organizational system, including the way you approach developing current talent and hiring future talent.

This is genuinely a transformative process. The word's there for a reason.

Yet too many credit union digital transformation projects are **governed as if the main changes and risks are technical**. IT leads the initiative. The roadmap is centered on the software itself and the rest of the organization is consulted or informed, but not part of the transformation.

Success is defined as on time, on budget, and system stable.

But the mission-aligned metrics are missing:

Do members trust us more or less?

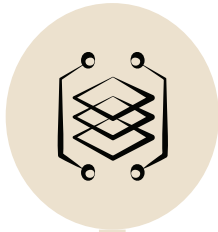
Are we serving our community better or worse?

Are we improving financial wellness for our members?

Are the values that were previously seen and felt in the branches coming through in these now more automated experiences?

Technical challenges are on the surface, but transformation goes much deeper.

Tech Stack



What's here: Cores, digital banking, LOS, CRM, data and analytics tools, AI, etc.

Why it matters: The technology is a tool to empower your organization and your people to better serve your members.

The problem: It's visible. It's easy to put in RFPs, demos, and board decks. Success looks like "go-live" dates and adoption metrics. But it's only the tip of the iceberg of real transformation. Without redesigning the other layers, the initiative is doomed to fail.

Operating Model



What's here: How the work gets done — processes and workflow, decision rights, escalation paths, cross-functional coordination. *"I know how to do it."*

Why it matters: Technology automates what you do. The operating model defines how you do it. If processes remain siloed and convoluted, new systems just digitize confusion.

Example: Digital account opening touches marketing (lead gen), branches (ID verification), operations (funding), and compliance (KYC). Do these groups have a shared single agreement on the "way we do this now?"

People Systems



What's here: How people are directed and incentivized — roles and expectations, performance management and rewards, hiring, promotion and training. *"I can actually do it."*

Why it matters: Work will mirror whatever these systems reward. If you measure branch volume over member satisfaction, staff will undermine digital self-service. If "not making mistakes" trumps learning, teams avoid experimentation.

Example: Your new system enables instant loan decisions. But branch managers' bonuses tie to loan volume they personally close. They discourage digital applications: "Let me do this for you—it's faster."

Culture

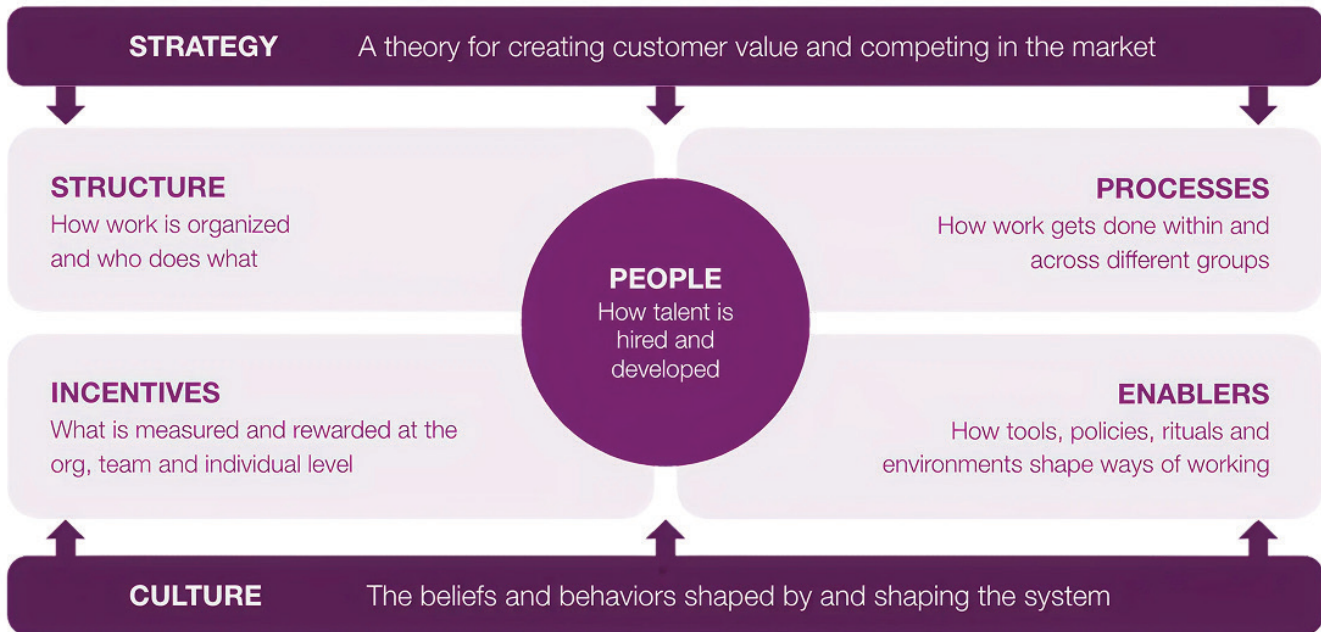


What's here: How people really feel — Norms around risk, member relationships, hierarchy, and speaking up. What happens when the boss leaves the room. *"I want to do it."*

Why it matters: Culture is the water leaders and teams swim in. If this layer doesn't shift, changes in Layers 1-3 gradually snap back to the old pattern. Cynicism grows: "This is just the latest system. It'll blow over."

Example: Your culture celebrates "serving members personally." Staff interpret this as "do everything for them." Digital self-service feels like abandonment, so they work around it—even when members prefer it.

The organizational system always wins.



Every organization is a complex web of systems. Misalignments between the strategy, systems and culture are common. In fact, they're inevitable unless you intentionally design the organization to work the way you need it to. **When this system remains unchanged, even the most strategically motivated credit union modernization efforts using “best-in-class technology” will fail. You're putting a new shape in an old mold.**

For example, the new platform might be designed to enable member self-service and faster decisions. But your culture still rewards branch transaction volume over member satisfaction, so staff actively discourages self-service. “Oh, that's complicated online—let me do it for you.”

Or the system can support cross-functional collaboration and end-to-end journey ownership. But your org chart is still organized in functional silos, and performance reviews still reward departmental goals over member outcomes. So marketing optimizes acquisition, branches optimize transactions, and operations optimizes processing—and no one is accountable for how it all fits together from the member's perspective.



“Companies treat it as an IT upgrade, then are surprised when staff revert to old ways or members quietly defect to cleaner digital experiences elsewhere. The problem isn't the technology. It's that the system wasn't redesigned to support it.”

— Nenuca Syquia, CEO at BOxD

The Unique Credit Union Challenge

Credit unions aren't banks. You're built differently and that's your greatest strength. But it's also your biggest challenge when it comes to digital transformation.

Your cooperative DNA doesn't automatically translate to digital channels. Member ownership means something when people attend annual meetings and vote. Local presence matters when members visit branches. Financial inclusion is powerful when you receive personalized help face-to-face.

Technology companies generally don't design platforms around cooperative values. They design for scale, speed, and feature parity with JPMorgan Chase. Their demos show mobile wallets and AI chat-bots. Their success metrics are adoption rates and cost per transaction. Those are all important for you to compete in the financial market and remain relevant for your members. But you should also care about trust, inclusion, and financial wellness.

You know technology improvements can help make a better experience for your members while potentially reduce operating expenses. You also feel an immense pressure to modernize to attract a younger member-based. The average credit union member is 53 years old. That's not a sustainable future.

This "panic gap" between the need to implement new technology and the very real concern that the technology might move you away from your cooperative values is a difficult place to be.

"If we don't modernize fast, we'll age out with our current members."

Panic Gap

"If we move too fast, we'll break trust with our loyal members who sustain us."

The panic gap encourages either reactive decision-making leading to feature-chasing in a tech arms race you can't win, or decision paralysis making you too slow to modernize as your member pipeline dries. In most cases, it's a little bit of both — moving quickly on bells and whistles, but not genuinely embracing transformation.



"Some credit union leaders see competitors announcing new platforms and immediately wonder if they're falling behind. They begin prioritizing product features over member needs and cooperative values and buying someone else's vision of the future instead of building their own."

— Rachel Harner, VP Growth & Client Impact at BOxD

There's a reason for optimism.

Younger generations want seamless digital experiences. But they also prioritize values. They want justice, transparency, and social impact. And you're structurally aligned in a way that banks and fintech can't compete.

Credit unions can and should be winning this demographic.

But people must continue to feel your values through their digital interactions.

Your digital banking experience should be different from your big bank and fintech competitors. Users need to see evidence that their financial health and journey is the priority. They need to see your local knowledge and community commitment. They need to feel like they belong to the cooperative and what the means for them. It needs to be more than transactional.

When credit union digital transformation gets framed as “catching up on technology,” the conversation drifts from what matters most. It's easy for your mission to become an afterthought instead of the frame for every decision.

Your digital transformation shouldn't make you look like a bank. It should make you feel unmistakably like a credit union—only faster, smarter, and more accessible to every generation. The attributes that make you a credit union are your uncopyable assets. But only if you design digital experiences that make those advantages tangible.

This is the added benefit of genuinely approaching your transformation as an organizational redesign, and not just an IT initiative. You set yourself up for competitive success by making your culture the main star and the technology the supporting cast, ensuring you don't lose what makes you distinctive.

As we share some frameworks and activities to help you reframe your thinking around digital transformation projects over the remaining pages of this guide, be sure to keep this top of mind.

Never let the technology shape your mission. Have your mission shape the technology.



“Credit unions have a structural advantage in serving younger generations who say they care about values. But that advantage only matters if members can feel those values through digital interactions. Your technology should express cooperative principles, not erase them.”

— Scott Perkins, Practice Leader at BOxD

Avoid the Implementation Traps

These are common patterns BOxD has observed in credit unions.

Which of these traps have you observed in your own career?

#1: Building Forward from Tech, Not Backwards from User Needs

Symptoms: roadmaps that echo product brochures, features nobody asked members about, timeline pressure that sidelines staff training and testing.

Analysis: power shifts from member-owners to technologists and software; technology starts to define the cooperative rather than the other way around.

Diagnostic: “If members wrote our roadmap, what would they change?”

#2: Calling It an IT Project

Symptoms: digital steering committee stacked with tech and ops, minimal representation from branches or member advocates; comms = “here’s the new system” emails.

Analysis: credit unions treat a whole-of-organization shift as a departmental initiative, guaranteeing resistance and surprise.

Diagnostic: “Who feels ownership over vs. who feels work done-to?”

#3: Silos and Functional Roles vs. a Holistic Member View

Symptoms: multiple “sources of truth,” fragmented member experiences, no single accountable owner for journeys like “join,” “borrow,” or “get help.”

Analysis: culture of departments and functions beats culture of member-centricity.

Diagnostic: “Can you name the owner for account openings?”

#4: Risk Aversion Masquerading as Member Care

Symptoms: endless analysis, many pilots but no true transformation, fear that “members won’t like change” used to justify inaction.

Analysis: protecting members becomes a story that protects the institution from discomfort.

Diagnostic: “How much more often are we focused on which members we will frustrate vs. which members we are failing to attract?”

#5: Change as Communication, Not Capability

Symptoms: polished rollout campaigns but no time for practice, role clarity, or behavior change; “we told them” stands in for “they can do it.”

Analysis: leaders underestimate the work of shifting day-to-day routines and overestimate the power of messaging alone.

Diagnostic: “How much time have we put into actual practice vs. how much time have we put into town halls and memos?”

#6: Missing the Human Bridges

Symptoms: a missing middle layer of trainers and evangelists identified to help build the capability.

Analysis: people who can fluently move between operations and tech are valuable, as they help their teammates understand how their world will be reshaped

Diagnostic: “Do we know who has these skills and reward them for it or do we take them for granted?”

#7: Aging Culture in an Aging Membership

Symptoms: younger staff voices sidelined, experimentation discouraged, “we’ve always done it this way” as default.

Analysis: organizational age, not just member age, makes risk-taking and digital empathy harder.

Diagnostic: “How do you react to suggestions from younger staff members?”

#8: Values on the Wall, Metrics in Conflict

Symptoms: official values talk inclusion, member well-being, and community; KPIs reward cost-cutting, adoption at any cost, or sales volume. Technology is viewed exclusively as operational efficiency and not as an opportunity to genuinely enhance the member experience.

Analysis: the system (what gets measured and rewarded) beats the intentions, every time.

Diagnostic: “What gets celebrated in all-hands meetings?”

Designing a Culture That Can Actually Transform

These four principles work together as a system. Skip one, and the others lose power. Implement all four, and you create the conditions for sustainable transformation.

Principle #1

Start with a Vision, Not a Product Demo

Technology should be the supporting cast, not the star.

The pattern we see:

Most credit union digital transformations start backwards. A product demo catches fire. A peer announces a core conversion. The board asks, “Why aren’t we doing that?” Leaders build business cases around someone else’s product roadmap.

Six months in, the initiative feels tech-driven, not values-driven. Features get prioritized because they’re in the package, not because members need them. Staff feel like passengers on a train someone else is driving. And the nagging question emerges: “Is this still us?”

The alternative:

Successful institutions first envision the future cooperative they want to be, then align people and processes to support that vision, and only then choose technology that serves it. [Research shows](#) the three most important changes for digital transformation success are culture, organization, and budgeting mindset—not technology choices.

Vision defines the container. Technology fills it.

Guided exercises: Three-perspective visioning

Run this with your leadership team before you sign contracts or set timelines.

For members:

“Three years from now, what should banking with us feel like—online, on the phone, in person?”

Not features. Feelings and experiences:

- “Opening an account feels like joining something, not filling out forms”
- “When something goes wrong, I get a human who knows my history”
- “The app anticipates my needs before I ask”

For staff:

“What should working here feel like during and after this transformation?”

Be honest about the dual reality—change is hard and necessary:

- “I have time to learn, not just ‘go live and figure it out’”
- “My expertise shapes decisions, not just executes them”
- “Transformation makes my job easier, not just different”

For community:

“How should our digital presence strengthen the local economy and cooperative movement?”

This surfaces mission clarity:

- “Digital tools help us serve underbanked members we couldn’t reach before”
- “Data helps us spot predatory lending patterns and intervene”
- “We share what we learn with other credit unions, not hoard competitive advantage”

Two critical lists

After visioning, create these lists. Post them. Reference them in every transformation decision.

What must never change (examples):

- Fairness in lending decisions
- Human access when members need it
- Local accountability and democratic governance
- Commitment to financial inclusion

What must change for us to survive and serve (examples):

- Response times (24-hour callbacks → instant chat)
- Self-service capability (10% digital → 70% digital)
- Data usage (reactive → proactive member guidance)
- Decision speed (weeks → hours for standard requests)

The tension between these lists is where your strategy lies.

WHEN TO BRING IN OUTSIDE HELP

External facilitation surfaces tensions leaders are too close to see or too invested to name. A skilled facilitator ensures:

- Quieter voices (frontline, newer staff, younger board members) shape the vision
- Status quo defenders can’t dominate through positional power
- Uncomfortable truths get named without blame
- The vision reflects aspirations, not just current constraints

Consider an outside partner for visioning if:

- Your last planning session felt performative
- The same few people dominate every conversation
- You suspect misalignment but no one will say it
- You need to challenge what has been previously unchallengeable

Principle #2

Align Systems With Strategy

Strategy lives or dies in the invisible systems beneath your org chart.

When these systems remain unchanged, even the best credit union technology gets bent back into the old shape. Digital account opening still takes too many handoffs. Loan exceptions still escalate through too many layers. Staff still optimize for metrics that conflict with member outcomes.

Checklist: Four system alignment questions

Run this diagnostic with your team.

Decision-making: *“Who can say yes or no to changes in key journeys, and how quickly?”*

- Can your digital team change a feature without 3 committee approvals?
- Can a branch manager resolve a member issue without escalating?
- Do decisions get made in the room, or relitigated in hallways?

Incentives and performance: *“What exactly do we reward in performance reviews and bonuses?”*

- If a branch manager boosts digital adoption but lowers transaction volume, do they get promoted or penalized?
- If staff collaborate cross-functionally, does it show up in their review?
- Do we celebrate learning from failure, or just punish the failure?

Structures and ownership: *“Does our structure make it easy or hard to own end-to-end journeys?”*

- Is there one person accountable for “digital account opening” from lead to funded account? Or do 5 departments each own a piece, with no one owning the seams?
- Can journey owners make decisions, or just recommendations?

Resource allocation: *“Does budgeting reinforce our priorities, or keep us locked into legacy habits?”*

- Do we fund new capabilities, or just maintain old ones?
- Is the budget process annual (slow) or continuous (adaptive)?
- Do we measure ROI on culture work, or only on tech spend?

Start with one journey

Don't try to redesign everything at once. Pick one high-stakes journey and redesign the systems around it. For example, take a digital account opening and ask each of the four questions around it.

Once you prove it works, apply the model to other journeys.

Principle #3

Clarify Roles and Shared Ownership

Everyone is impacted, not just the implementation team.

Unclear ownership is a pressure valve that causes:

- **Burnout:** Everyone feels responsible but no one has authority
- **Rework:** Decisions get revisited because “we thought you were handling that”
- **Passive resistance:** Staff comply just enough to avoid blame, then work around decisions
- **Finger-pointing:** When things break, no one owns the fix

Role clarity releases that pressure. It answers: “Who leads? Who decides? Who aligns? Who informs?” It makes accountability specific and public.

Simple tool: DAI (Doer / Advise / Inform) mapping

Pick a key journey (e.g., digital account opening, loan servicing, dispute resolution).

Build a one-page table:

Activity	Who does the work?	Who must be advised during?	Who must be informed after?
Change onboarding flow	Journey Owner (Ops)	Compliance, IT, Marketing	Branch network, Board
Approve new feature	Digital Product Lead	CEO, Risk	All staff
Handle edge cases	Branch Manager	Journey Owner	Member, Ops

“If this goes wrong, who is the one person you call when you’re frustrated? That’s your owner.” If the answer is “I don’t know” or “it depends,” you have a role clarity problem.

For more reading, check out this BOxD article on role clarification for teams:

<https://www.boxd.us/role-clarification-for-teams/>

Principle #4

Build a Learning Rhythm, Not a One-Off Project

Genuine transformation cannot be rolled out. It has to be learned.

Most organizations treat transformation as a project with a beginning, middle, and end. You plan. You execute. You go live. You declare victory. Then you move on.

The problem: Culture doesn't shift on go-live. It shifts through repeated cycles of experimenting, learning, and adjusting. If you don't build those cycles into normal operations, transformation dies the moment project momentum fades.

The alternative: Treat transformation as building organizational learning capacity. Experimentation and retrospectives beat giant, one-time bets and blame cycles.

What a learning rhythm looks like:

Leading regular retrospectives:

- "What did we try this quarter?"
- "What did members and staff experience?"
- "What did we learn about our culture?" (Not just the tech)
- "What will we do differently next quarter?"

Embracing a culture of experimentation:

- "This project failed" becomes "this experiment generated valuable learning"
- "We need to avoid mistakes" becomes "what's the minimum viable test"
- "Let's get this right the first time" becomes "how can we design for iteration"

BOxD has a Ritual Revolution Guide that helps organizations design the exact meeting formats, retrospective structures, and learning rhythms that make transformation stick. If you want to go deeper on building learning capacity, that's a resource worth exploring.

<https://boxd.us/all-tools/ritual-revolution-guide>

Activity Worksheets

*These are activities you can run right away.
Each includes setup, facilitation prompts, timing,
and expected outcomes.*

What Are We Really Transforming?

Purpose: Map current initiative across four layers, identify systemic gaps, and initiate conversations about required organizational shifts.

Who: Executive team + digital transformation leads (6-10 people)

Time: 3 hours

Materials needed:

- Four-layer diagram (re-create on digital or physical whiteboard)
- Sticky notes (4 colors, one per layer), Markers, Timer
- Digital doc to capture your From/To activity

Part 1: Gap Analysis (90 min)

1. Specify the initiative you are discussing (e.g., “Core Replacement”)

2. Give each person sticky notes (ideally in 4 colors - one per layer).

Individual reflection (10 min): For each layer, write out what’s actually changing in this initiative:

- **Layer 1 (Tech):** What systems, platforms, tools?
- **Layer 2 (Operating Model):** What processes, decision rights, workflows?
- **Layer 3 (People Systems):** What roles, metrics, incentives?
- **Layer 4 (Culture):** What norms, stories, behaviors?

3. Post & cluster (20 min): Everyone posts sticky notes across the layers. The facilitator reads aloud. Team clusters the similar items.

4. Gap analysis (60 min) - open discussion:

Round 1 (20 min): “Which layer has most/least activity? What does this predict?”

Round 2 (20 min): “What assumptions underpin this plan? What if they’re wrong?”

Round 3 (20 min): “Review the implementation traps from earlier in this guide. Where do we see potential traps active in our initiative?”

Deliverable: Visual map + gap summary

Part 2: From → To Mapping (90 min)

1. Individual work (20 min): Each person picks one high-impact gap from Part 1. Identify a From → To of what process, structure, incentive, behavior, etc. needs to shift.

Current State (From): What is the current state today?

Target State (To): Where should it be when the project is finished?

Examples to prime thinking:

- **[Operating Model]** From 7 handoffs for account opening → To 2 handoffs, one owner
- **[People Systems]** From Bonuses for branch volume → To Bonuses for member NPS
- **[Culture and Stories]** From Silence when bosses speak → To Frontline ideas welcomed

2. Group work (60 min): Each person presents their From → To. Group discusses:

- “Is this the right shift?”
- “What levers unlock it?” (Org redesign, new process, coaching, etc)
- “Who’s best positioned to own?”

3. Closing (10 min): Commitment - An entire process won’t be figured out in one sitting. What are the next steps to continue this momentum forward?

Facilitation Tips

- Push for specificity: “What exact metric changes?” “What meeting format tests this?”
- Surface power dynamics: “Who loses if this happens? How do we manage that?”
- End with energy: Celebrate naming hard truths

Asking the Right Questions About Digital Transformation

Purpose: Equip directors to govern culture and risk, not just approve spend

Who: Board members

Time: 20-40 minutes (as part of a board meeting)

Prep: Email the three questions (below) a few days before meeting

Agenda

1. Context:

“Before we invest in digital transformation, let’s make sure we’re centering our mission and properly assessing the real risks, not just the technical ones. These 3 questions will help facilitate the conversation.”

2. Questions:

Q1 – Member Impact: “How will this change affect our most vulnerable members? How will it help attract new and younger members?”

Q2 – Organizational Readiness: “What organizational changes does this assume we’ve made or will need to make to ensure it’s successful?”

Q3 – Mission Fit: “How will this make us more or less capable of fulfilling our mission without betraying our values?”

3. Commitment & Next Steps

Don’t forget to clarify who reports progress in the next meeting

Listen Before Your Roll It Out

Purpose: Surface friction, fears, and frontline wisdom before go-live

Who: Frontline staff (branches, call center, ops) in groups of 8-12

Time: 60-90 minutes per session

Run 3-5 sessions across locations/functions

Facilitation Guide

1. Opening:

Set the right tone: *“This transformation affects how you work every day. We’re here to listen. Your insights make this better.”*

2. Round 1: Current friction points

Ask:

“Where does the current system make it hard to serve members well?”

“What workarounds have you created that leadership doesn’t see?”

“If you could fix one thing about how we work today, what would it be?”

Capture verbatim on flip chart. Don’t debate or justify.

3. Round 2: Transformation fears

Ask:

“What scares you most about the upcoming changes?”

“What could go wrong that no one in the steering committee is talking about?”

“What support would make this feel doable vs. overwhelming?”

4. Round 3: Frontline wisdom

Ask:

“What do you know about our members that should shape this transformation?”

“If you were in charge, what would you do differently?”

“What’s one thing we should absolutely not lose in this transition?”

5. Closing:

- Thank participants
- Explain next steps: “We’ll integrate insights across all sessions and share themes with leadership. You’ll see how your input shaped decisions.”
- Critical: Actually do this. Share back findings and what changed because of their input.

What to track across sessions:

- **Patterns:** What shows up in every session?
- **Surprises:** What did leadership miss?
- **Quick wins:** What could be fixed now to build trust?
- **Red flags:** What could derail go-live?

Co-Design, Iterate & Improve

Purpose: Test digital journeys with diverse members before scaling

Who: 6-8 members representing:

- Age diversity (20s to 70s+)
- Digital comfort (tech-savvy to tech-wary)
- Member tenure (new to 20+ years)
- Life stage (students, families, retirees)

Cadence: Run whenever you are in the prototyping stage on a new initiative

Session Structure

Format:

- Members interact with prototype while thinking aloud
- Facilitator observes and takes notes
- Track: Where do they pause? Get confused? Express delight or frustration?

Questions:

- “What felt easy?”
- “Where did you get stuck or confused?”
- “How does this compare to [competitor]?”
- “Does this feel like us? Why or why not?”
- “Where do you see us acting like a bank instead of a credit union?”
- “What would make you recommend this to another member?”

What to track across sessions:

- Tally themes across all sessions
- Prioritize by volume + emotion (largest friction points)
- Assign quick wins vs. systemic changes
- Share a few select raw quotes with leaders

Defining the Right KPIs

Purpose: Create a transformation dashboard that measures the whole organization, not just tech adoption. Builds ownership across the leadership team.

Who: Executive team + key functional leads

Cadence: Integrate into your normal cadence of reviewing key performance indicators

Actions:

First, conduct a baseline Reality Check

Ask:

- “What metrics do we track now?”
- “What do they tell us?”
- “What do they miss?”

Then, all leaders should be able to recommend a set of key metrics around the three deeper layers of transformation (beyond the tech layer, which has its own metrics). Narrow down to only a handful in each section to incorporate into a decision dashboard.

Layer 2 — Operating Model

What you’re measuring: Are processes, workflows, and decision-making actually changing or just digitized?

Example metrics —

Metric	What It Reveals	How to Measure
End-to-end journey time	Process efficiency beyond just the tech	Track time all the way through including on and offline processes
Handoff count per journey	Silo persistence	Map number of handoffs pre and post transformation

Decision velocity	Decision rights clarity	Average time from “issue raised” to “decision made”
Exception rate	Process fit vs workarounds	% of transactions requiring manual intervention
Cross-functional meeting effectiveness	Collaboration quality	Post-meeting surveys and debriefs

Questions to pick YOUR metrics:

- “Which journey matters most to transformation success?”
- “Where do we suspect workarounds?”
- “What decision keeps stalling?”

Success looks like: Fewer handoffs, faster cycles, lower exceptions, faster decisions.

Layer 3 – People Systems

What you’re measuring: Do rewards, roles, and development align with new ways of working or preserve the old?

Metric	What It Reveals	How to Measure
Performance review content analysis	What actually gets rewarded	Audit reviews: % mentioning collaboration, learning, experimentation
Promotion / recognition patterns	Who gets ahead	Track promotions for cross-functional work vs functional depth
Manager capability: coaching transformation	Middle management readiness	360 survey: “my manager helps me adapt” (1-5)
Skills invested vs skills needed	Training alignment	Compare training hours to identified transformation skills gaps
Role clarity scores	Structural ambiguity	Survey: “I know who own [key journey]” (1-5)
Misalignment tax	Conflicting incentives cost	Track time spent resolving metric conflicts (e.g., branch volume vs digital adoption)

Questions to pick YOUR metrics:

- “What behavior do we need more of?” (Collaboration? Risk-taking?)
- “Where’s role confusion causing friction?”
- “Are managers equipped to lead transformation?”

Success looks like: Performance systems reward new behaviors, promotions cross silos, managers coach (not just manage).

Layer 4 – Culture

What you’re measuring: Is culture shifting toward learning, transparency, and healthy risk or staying defensive and hierarchical?

Example Metrics —

Metric	What It Reveals	How to Measure
Psychological safety index	Can people speak up?	Survey: “I can challenge ideas without fear” (1-5)
Failure response	Fear vs learning	Survey: “Failures generate learning, not blame” (1-5)
Frontline voice in decisions	Hierarchy vs inclusion	Track: % of transformation decisions with frontline input
Change energy vs fatigue	Stamina for transformation	Survey: “I feel energized by change” vs “exhausted”
Trust in leadership transparency	Credibility during change	Survey: “Leaders are honest about challenges” (1-5)

Questions to pick YOUR metrics:

- “Where do we see fear blocking transformation?”
- “Is learning happening or just compliance?”
- “Are people exhausted or energized?”

Success looks like: People speak up, failures generate learning, energy rises, old behaviors don’t resurface when leaders leave.

The work starts here.

Transformation is a capability you build over time.

People-first transformation doesn't guarantee success. But it dramatically improves your odds. And it ensures that if you fail, you'll fail forward with learning intact and relationships stronger.

Remember, culture is your uncopyable asset.

Fintechs can copy features. Banks can outspend you. But they can't copy decades of member trust and commitment to financial inclusion.

Digital transformation should amplify those advantages, not erase them.

Be sure to modernize without betraying what makes you special.

Get in touch —

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