

Turn Friction to Function in Procurement Collaboration

Building stronger procurement partnerships for
change and innovation in a new era



Friction or Function?

Strong partnerships have friction. The question is whether that friction is helping us function — or getting in the way.

1

A department disagrees with Procurement's recommended approach and says so openly.

2

Everyone agrees in the meeting, then complains privately and doesn't follow through.

3

Procurement asks, "What outcome are you actually trying to achieve?" before discussing process.

4

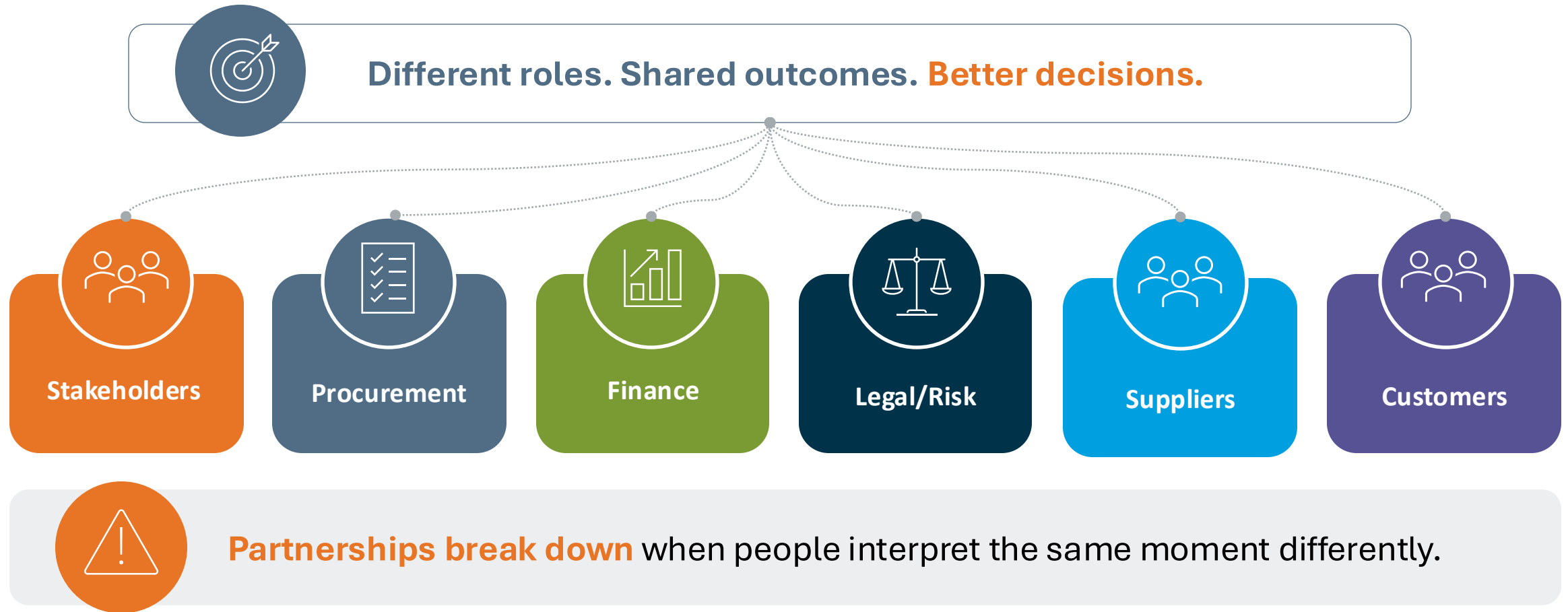
A supplier misses a deliverable, but nobody addresses it because the relationship is "really good."

5

A cross-functional team debates two options, makes a decision, and supports it afterward.

Why Partnership Work Feels so Different Now

The new partnership reality: We are not just managing procurement processes. We are helping people change how work happens.



The Framework

Where Friction Starts – and How Function Grows



Adapted from Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

The Framework

Inattention to results

- Individual priorities outrun collective outcomes



The Framework

Avoidance of accountability

- Issues are known, but not named



The Framework

Lack of commitment

- People leave unclear or unconvinced



The Framework

Fear of conflict

- Artificial harmony replaces useful debate



The Framework

Absence of vulnerability-based trust

- People protect themselves instead of openly sharing uncertainty, mistakes, or concerns



The Framework

Where Friction Starts – and How Function Grows



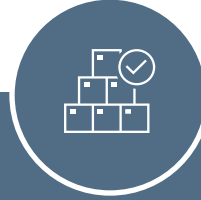
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Where Collaboration Breaks Down



Stakeholder engagement

Needs shift, priorities compete, and “urgent” means different things to different people.



Cross-departmental projects

Roles blur; people assume someone else owns the handoff, risk, or decision.



Supplier relationships

Transparency, fairness, and responsiveness affect trust on both sides of the table.



Red flag partnership signals

Silence

Side conversations

Rework

Missed handoffs

Escalation

Spot the Five Dysfunctions in the Wild

Dysfunction	Procurement signal	What you may hear
Absence of trust	People avoid sharing uncertainty, constraints, or mistakes.	<i>"I didn't know that requirement mattered."</i>
Fear of conflict	Important tradeoffs stay polite, vague, or offline.	<i>"We agreed in the room, but not after."</i>
Lack of commitment	Decisions are revisited because clarity or buy-in was missing.	<i>"I thought procurement owned that."</i>
Avoidance of accountability	Missed handoffs become escalations instead of peer resets.	<i>"No one wanted to call it out."</i>
Inattention to results	Activity replaces outcomes; the end user gets lost.	<i>"We completed steps but didn't improve service."</i>

Catch It Early. Reset It Together.



Notice

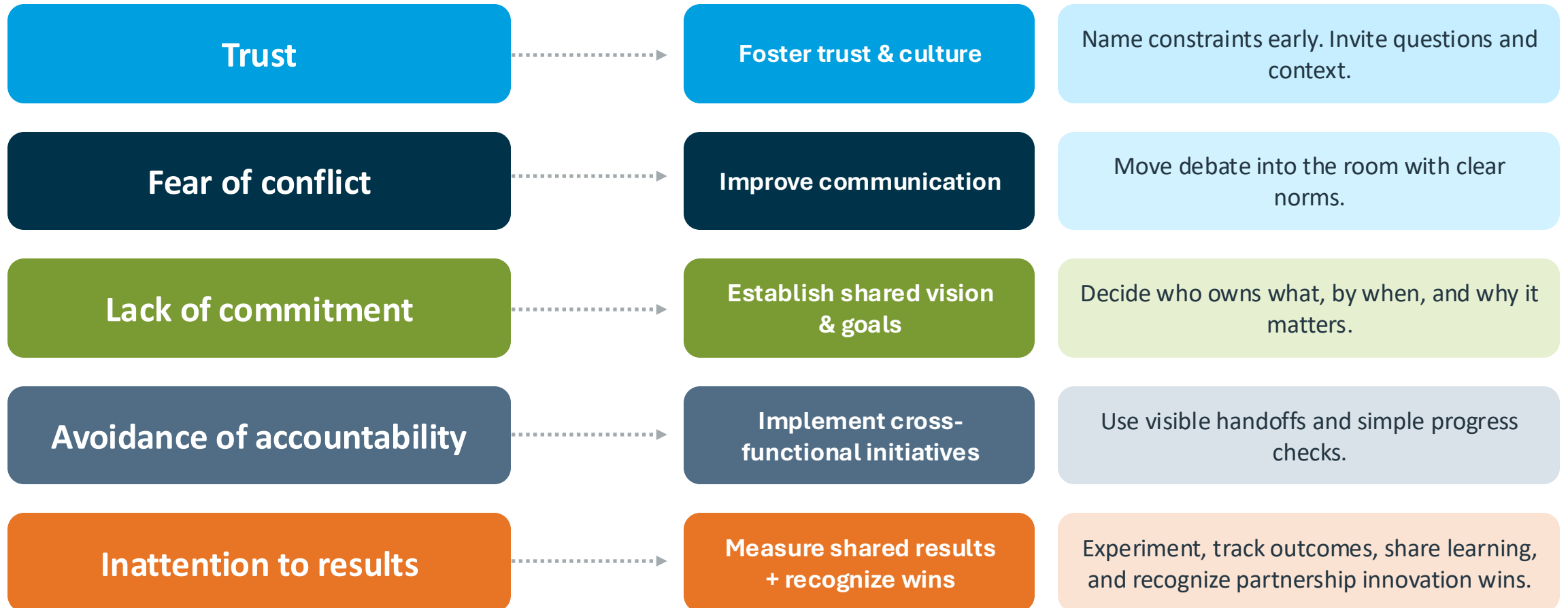


Name



Reset

Turn Dysfunction into Full Function



A stronger partnership is not a personality trait.

*It is the operating pattern that makes change and
innovation stick.*

Three Habits to Bridge the Gap

Ask

before
solving

What are we trying to protect,
improve, or decide?

Align

before
acting

What does success look like,
and who owns the next step?

Act

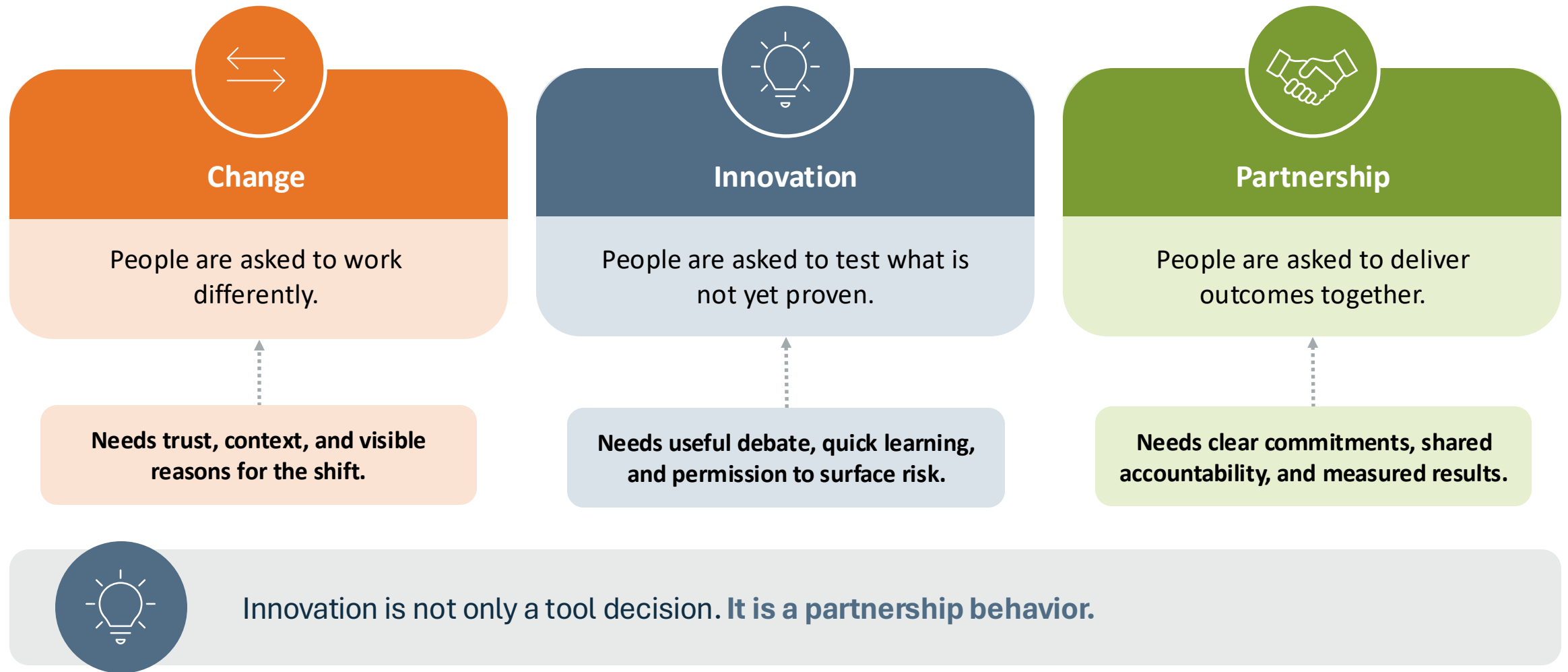
before
escalating

What can we clarify, document,
or reset together?



Change habit: make the invisible visible before asking people to adopt something new.

Change + Innovation Need Strong Collaboration



A Simple Loop for Moving Collaboration from Friction to Function



Use the loop to protect both innovation speed and public-procurement stewardship.

Practice Partnership Reset Conversation

Scenario 1

A department and Procurement disagree about whether a requested purchase meets the organization's standard purchasing approach.

During the meeting, both sides stay polite and avoid directly discussing the disagreement. Afterward, the department contacts another Procurement staff member to express frustration, while Procurement team members discuss the department's request among themselves.

No one brings the concerns back to the original group, and the purchase remains unresolved.



Let's Respond



Which dysfunction is most visible?



What partnership signal did you notice?



Which habit would you use first?

“Let’s pause and align on what success looks like, what constraints are real, and what decision or handoff we each own next.”

Scenario 2

A department asks Procurement to help purchase equipment from a supplier they have used before.

During the discussion, the department agrees to provide final specifications and confirm its budget, while Procurement agrees to verify the purchasing requirements and coordinate next steps with the supplier. A week later, the supplier is still waiting for direction. The department assumes Procurement is moving the purchase forward, while Procurement is waiting for the department's final information.

Neither side reaches out to clarify ownership, and the delay begins to affect the department's timeline.



Let's Respond



Which dysfunction is most visible?



What partnership signal did you notice?



Which habit would you use first?

“Let’s clarify what decision is needed, who owns the next step, and how we’ll know the handoff is complete.”

Application on the Job



Identify

Common behavioral and communication breakdowns in procurement partnerships.



Apply

Strategy fixes such as shared goals, communication techniques, and trust-building.

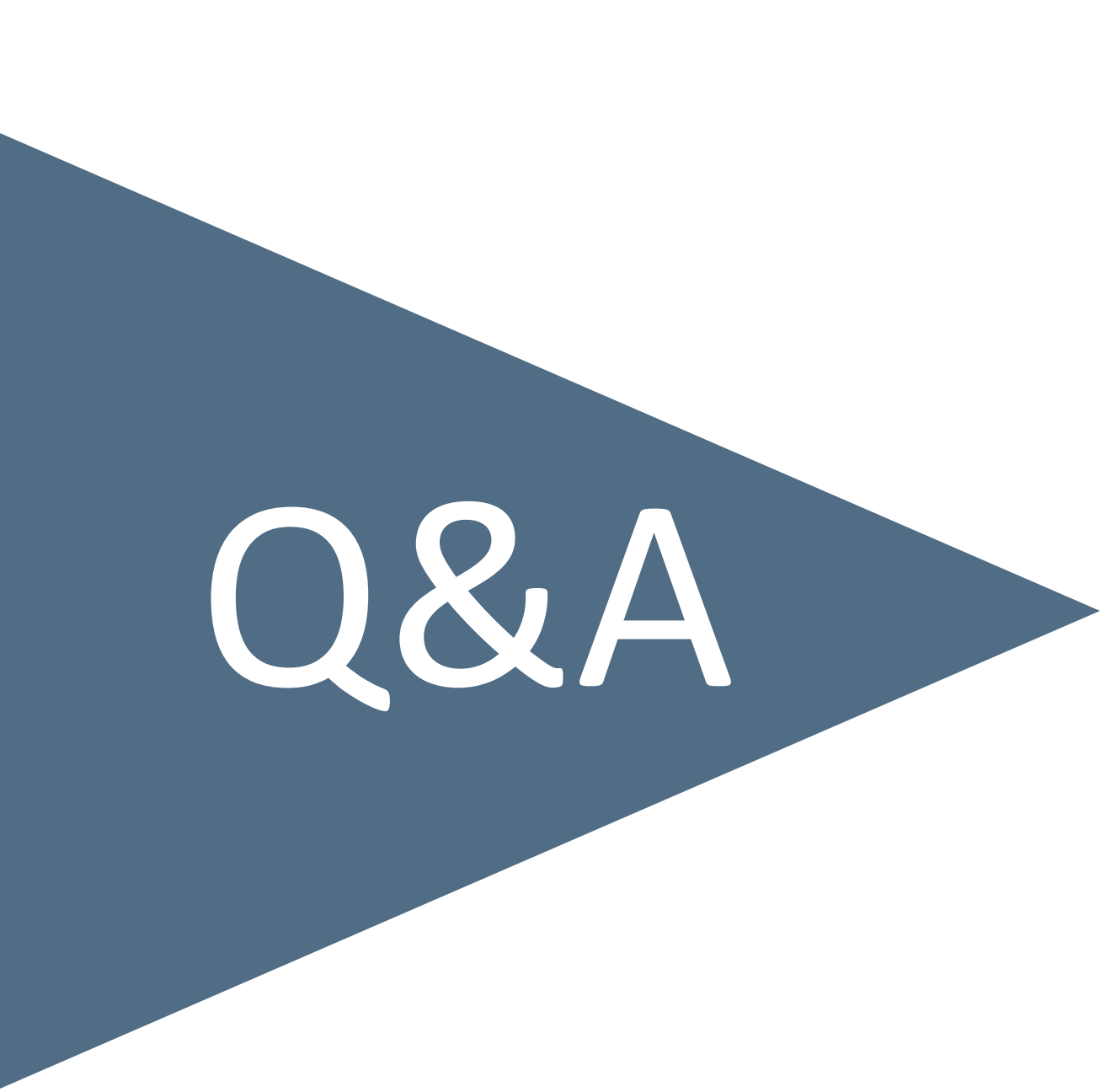


Develop

Simple partnership habits that support change, improve engagement, reduce inefficiencies, and enhance customer experience.



Full function shows up as **clearer decisions, stronger adoption, lower friction, better service, and smarter innovation.**



Q&A

What questions do you have?



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