

> The MSD Team Leader competency framework: practical applications

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> Four domains of MSD team leader competency



I. Managing a portfolio of interventions:
deal-making, experimentation, and
capacity building within a broader vision of
systemic change

“Finding and managing good partnerships”

II. Shaping the team’s learning culture:
culture, motivation and capacity.

“Centering learning”

III. Creating the space to operate:
politics, relationships and expectations.

“Managing pressures for fast results”

IV. Managing across functions:
integrating HR, operations, finance and
MEL.

“Pulling the pieces together to work cohesively”

Managing a portfolio of interventions

A. Build the team's capacity to find and manage partnerships

- Chief deal-maker early - > coach and delegator
- Be willing to drop/exit partnerships

B. Technical application of MSD

- Enough depth to guide strategy, QA
- Know when to trust the team's judgment

C. Develop/sell a systemic change vision

- Can your team explain the programme's systemic change vision in their own words? Can your donor?

D. Connect interventions to the systemic change vision

- Active interventions link to the bigger picture.
- Layer interventions tackling different issues.

Shaping the team's learning culture

A. Culture of performance and learning

- Are failures shared as openly as successes?
- How does TL react to bad news?

B. Effective structure for technical teams

- Knowledge flows across sector teams
- Prevent silos that hide systemic patterns

C. Open flows of information & feedback

- Staff feel safe to challenge upwards
- TL seeks honest feedback on their leadership

D. Bridges between MRM and technical

- MRM embedded in strategy conversations

Creating the space to operate

A. Donor relationships

- Move from accountability to problem-solving
- Share early signals, not just polished results

B. Implementer HQ relationships

- Cultivate allies who push for flexibility needed

C. Navigating local politics

- Does your team have the political networks and judgment to work in sensitive spaces?

D. Empowering and investing in deputy

- A strong deputy strengthens the whole leadership function
- Delegate real responsibility, not just tasks

Adaptive operations

A. Finance: strategic budget management

- Are technical teams involved in budget?
- Can you move budget lines around?

B. Procurement: use the right instruments

- Coach procurement staff on why MSD partnerships look different
- Match instrument to risk and scale of each deal

C. HR: recruit, promote, performance

- Competency-based hiring to get the right skills
- Performance reviews that reward learning and creativity alongside results

Domain 1: Manage a portfolio of interventions

Sub-Domain A: Building the team's capacity to find and manage partnerships

Leader behaviors	Org behaviors/dynamics
<i>Leaders with this competency.....</i>	<i>Organizations/programs/teams with this capacity.....</i>
• Are the project's chief deal-maker, or at least one of the most proficient partnership builders at the project's early stage. They lead high-profile partner meetings and can negotiate and close deals where necessary. • Coach team members on approaching and finding shared value with partners. • Are decisive about when to drop/exit partnerships, reinforcing the message that this is part of a bigger strategy (doesn't reflect individual/personal failure). • Encourage staff to take risks and make bets - acknowledging the portfolio approach (not all bets will pay off, and that's expected).	• Quickly build and maintain a large portfolio of partners, with streamlined processes. • Network heavily within focal market systems, maintaining a wide range of contacts to consistently bring new potential partnership opportunities back to the project for consideration. • Start and exit partnerships regularly, with support from procurement/operations. • Codify knowledge about how to develop partnerships and relationships – all technical staff can point to successful partnerships they have both discovered and manage.
Competency Check: What does it look like?	
✓ How many new partnerships are your team members bringing in? ✓ How fast can you move a potential partnership from initial discussion to agreement? ✓ Do you have the freedom to adapt initial partnership ideas to be more systemic? ✓ Does the team have an appetite for failed partnerships? What does that look like?	

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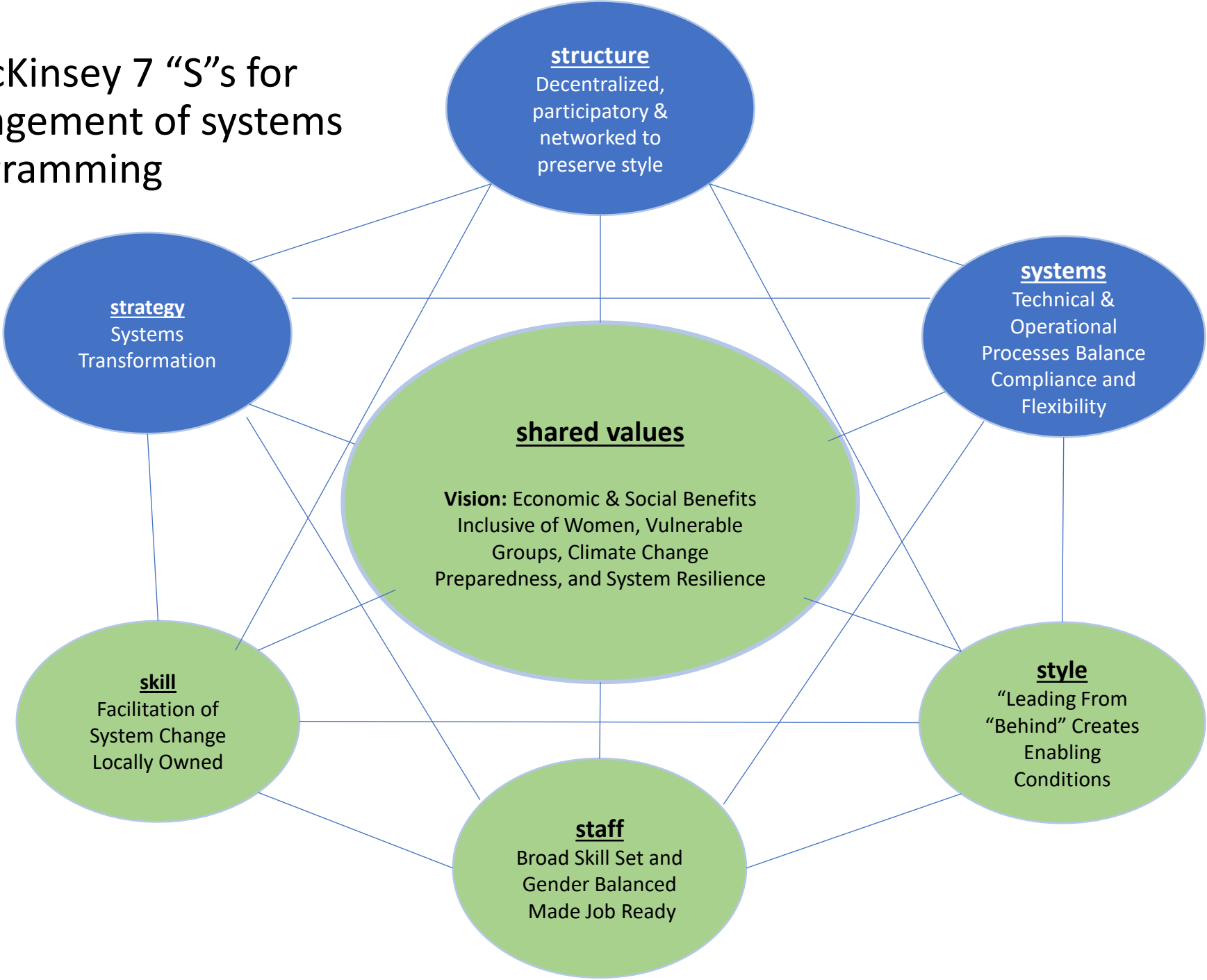
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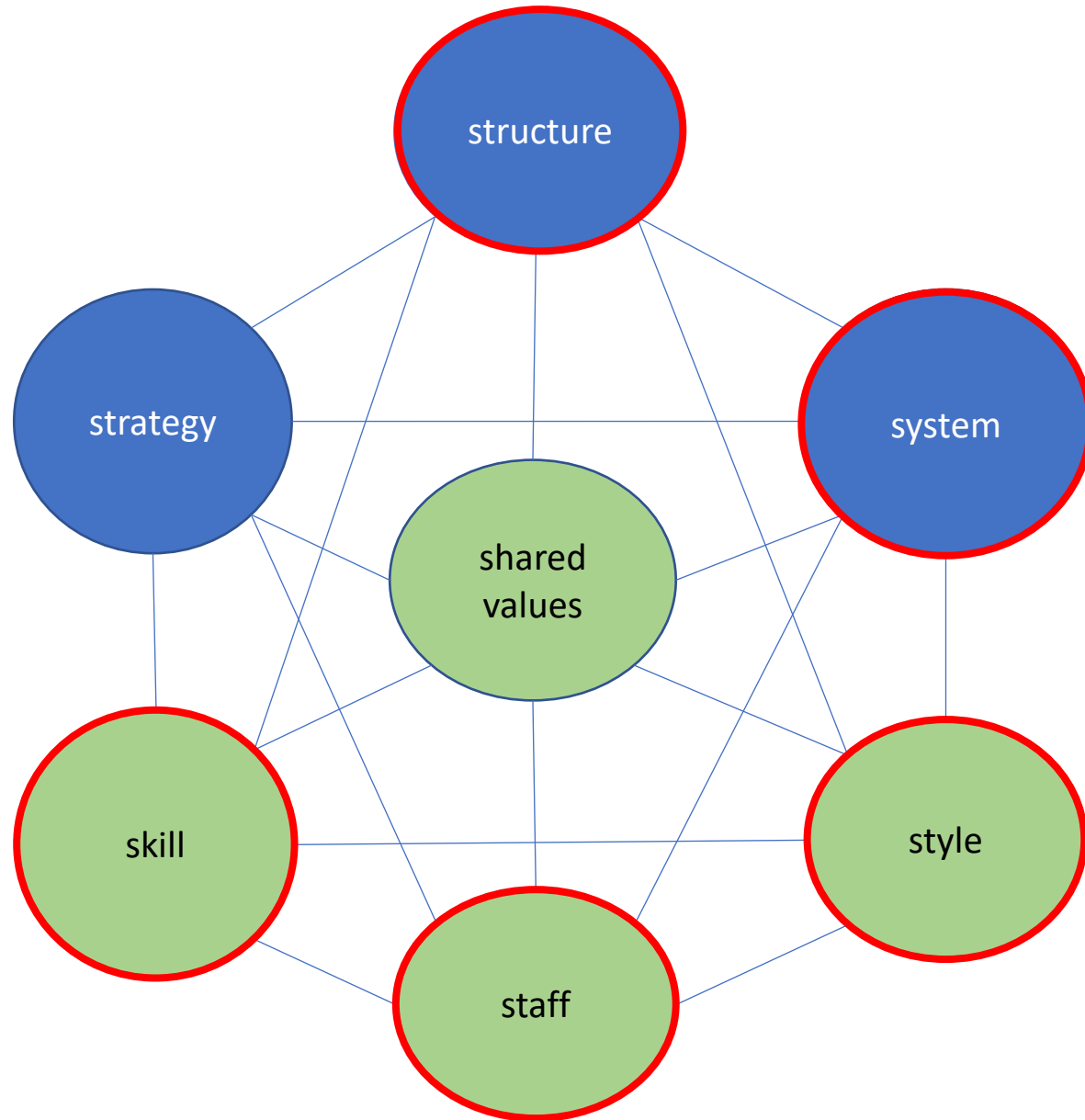
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Ground Truthing the TL Competency Framework: RECRUITING THE RIGHT STAFF



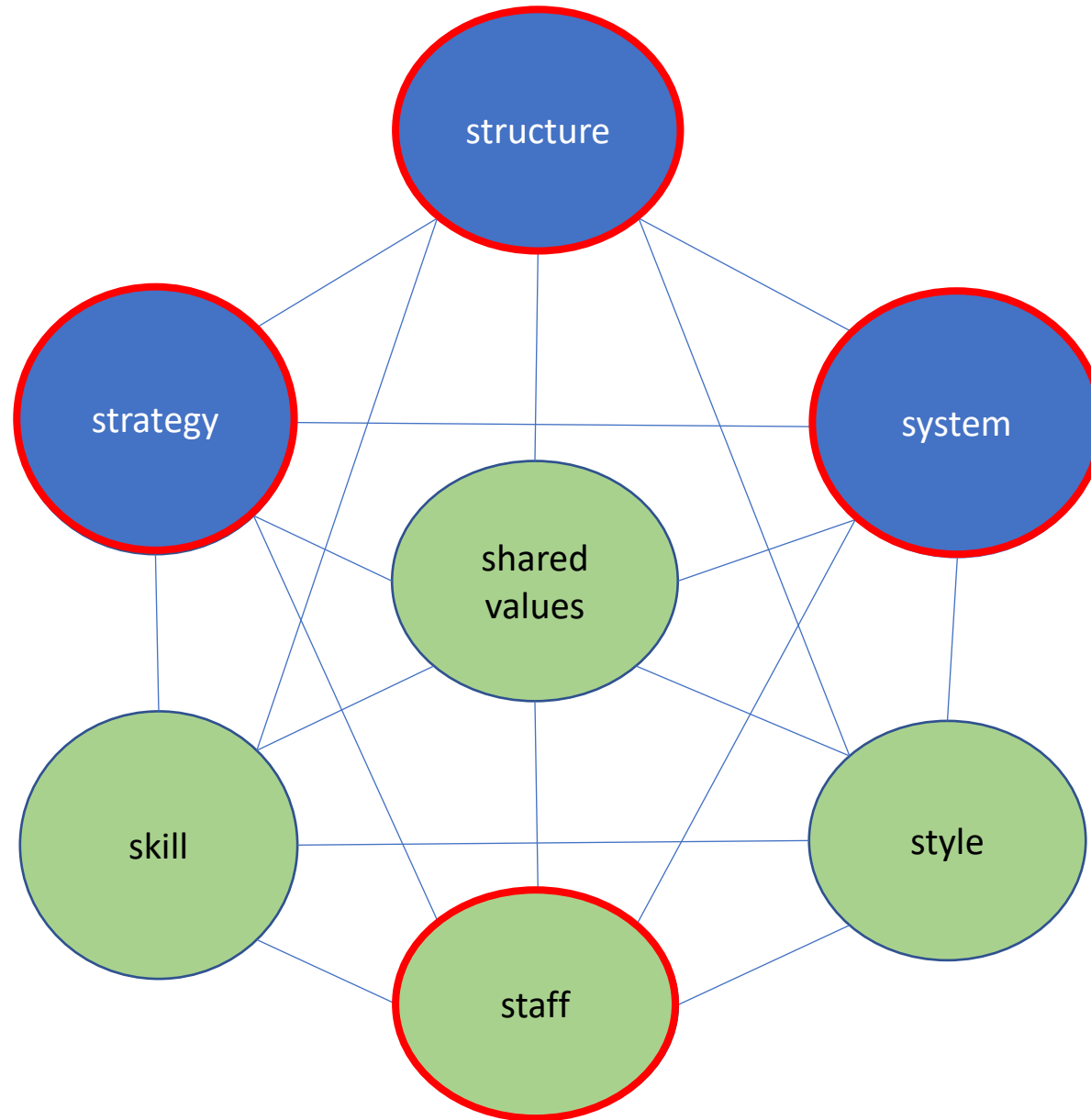
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Ground Truthing the TL Competency Framework: FLAWED DESIGN



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