

ThoughtWorks®

ELEPHANTS CAN DANCE

TWO CONTRASTING TRANSFORMATIONS

Sunil Mundra

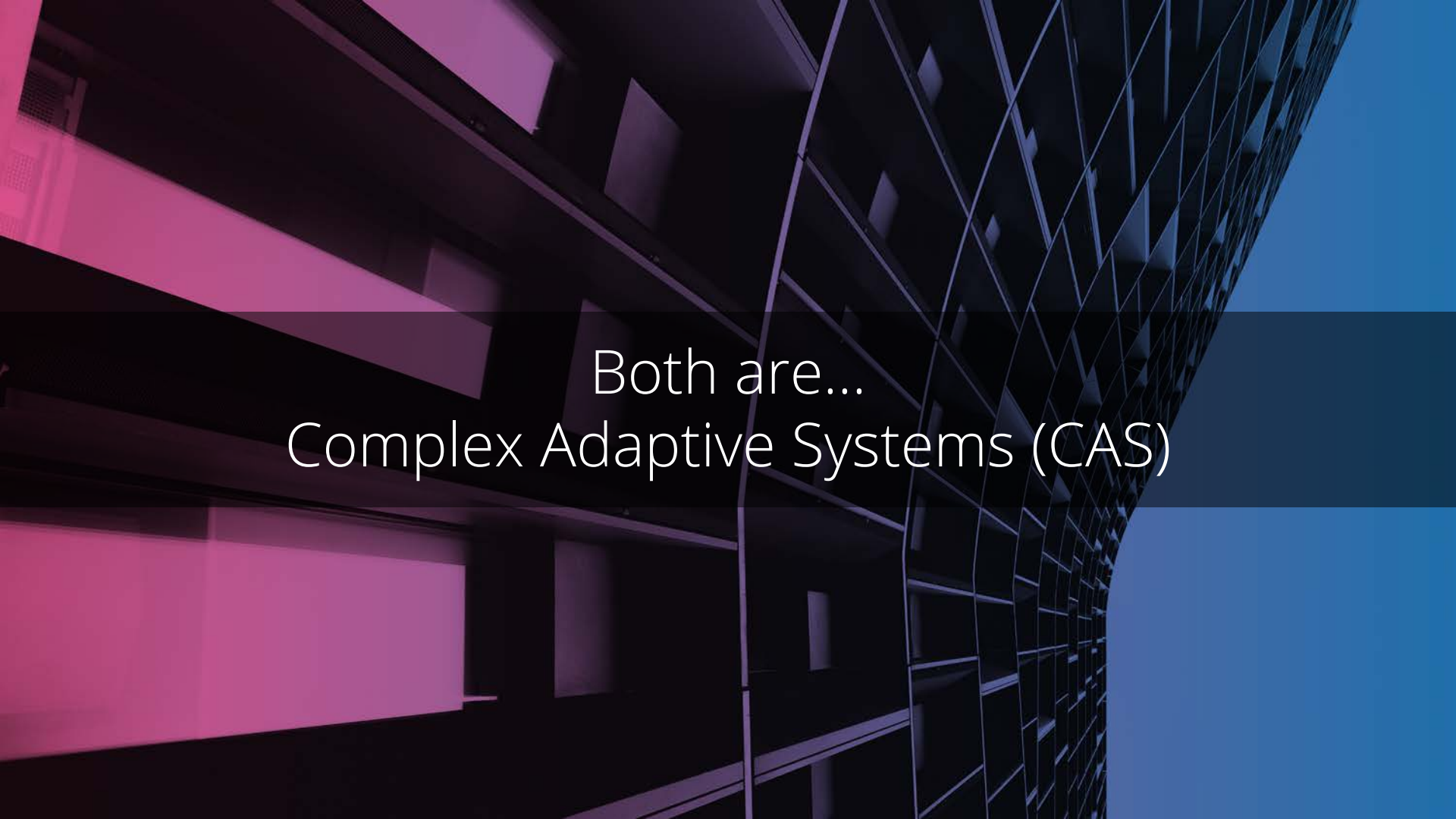
Principal Consultant-Advisory






The image features two elephants in a savanna setting. One elephant is in the foreground, facing left, with its trunk partially visible. Another elephant is behind it, also facing left. The background shows a line of trees and a body of water. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent gradient that transitions from a bright pink on the left to a deep blue on the right. Centered over this gradient is the text "What Is common between Elephants and Organisations?".

What Is common between
Elephants and Organisations?



Both are...
Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)



The fundamental attribute of
Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) is..

Agility



Photo: Alexei-scutari

SOME FACTS ABOUT ELEPHANTS

- Demonstrate leadership
- Think holistically
- Have empathy
- Have technical agility
- Focus on learning

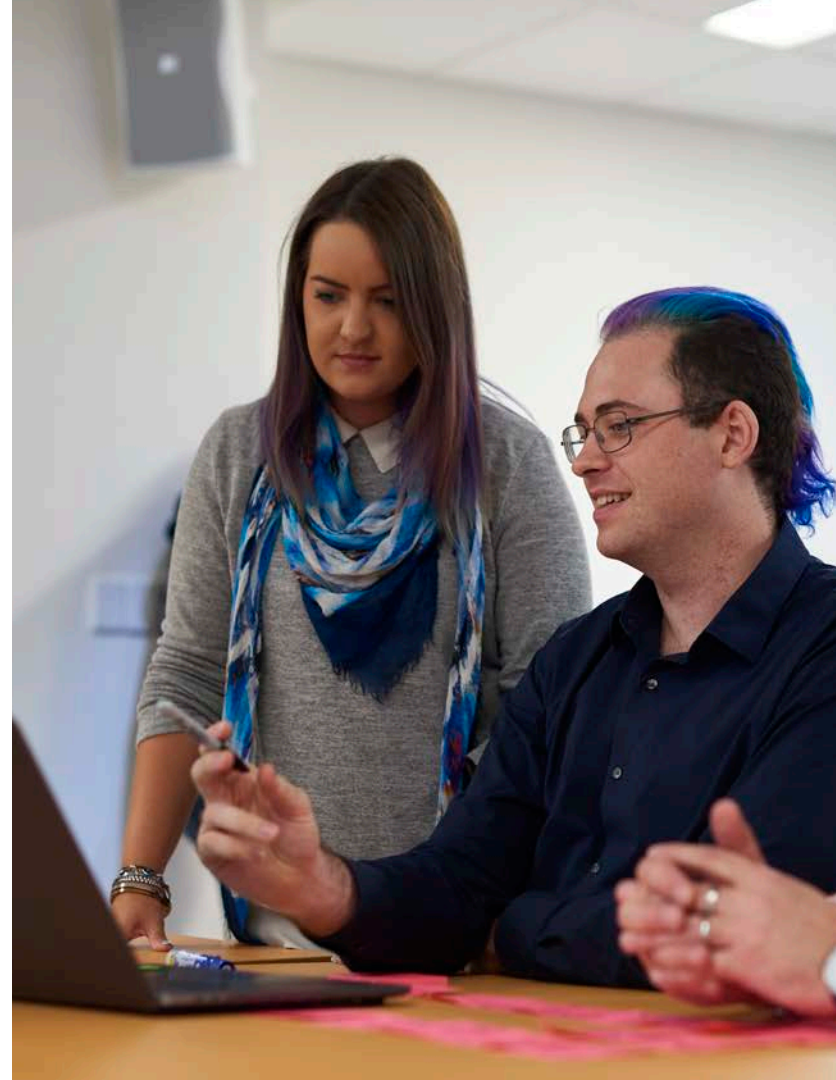


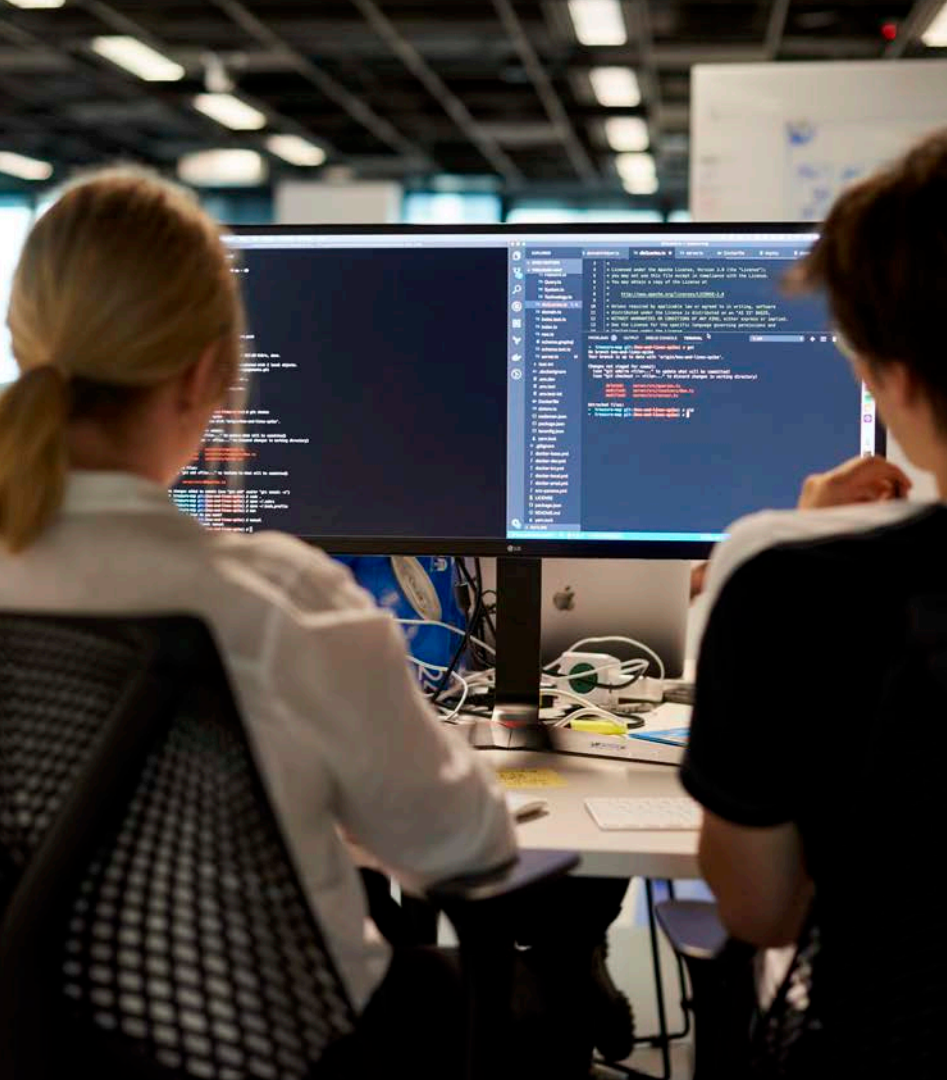
The background features several thin, intersecting lines in shades of brown, grey, and dark blue, creating a complex geometric pattern. A semi-transparent white horizontal band is centered across the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

Unsuccessful Transformation

CONTEXT

- Health Care division of a Global Engineering Conglomerate, dealing in Medical Imaging Product
- Product created initially with small hospitals as target.
- Strategy modified to cater to large hospitals as well
- Senior Management mindset oriented towards traditional engineering
- Development team was offshore





ORG. CHALLENGES

- 'Flood' of new requirements
- Large and Unprioritized backlog
- Delivery not aligned with business needs
- Excessive focus on speed of delivery resulted in high tech debt and therefore poor quality
- Vicious circle of unhappy business and demotivated IT

WHY IT FAILED

- Senior leaders not aligned
- Disregarded engineering practices
- Divide between Business and IT functions
- Local optimisation
- Not focused on 'being' Agile





OUTCOME

**Product Sold...
To Another Company**

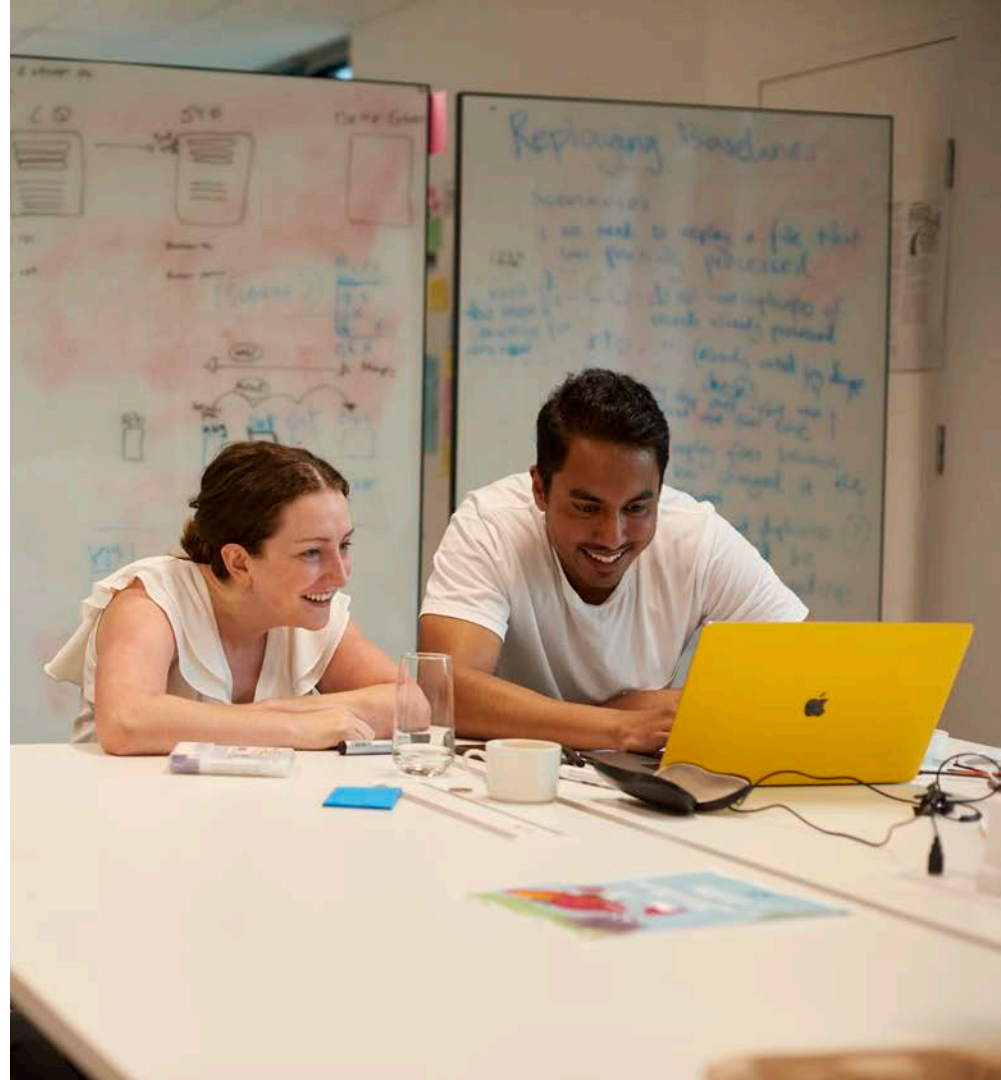




Successful Transformation

CONTEXT

- Insurance division of a large financial conglomerate
- Acquired another company twice its size
- A 'Courageous Leader' launches Agile Transformation
- Transformation Period: Approx. 5 years





ORG. CHALLENGES

- Products overlap and misalignment
- Disconnected systems and applications
- Cultural differences
- Org. crumbling under its own weight
- Rapid loss of market share

WHY IT SUCCEEDED

- Courageous leadership
- Attention to technical agility
- Investment in capability building
- Focus on sustainability
- Systemic approach to change

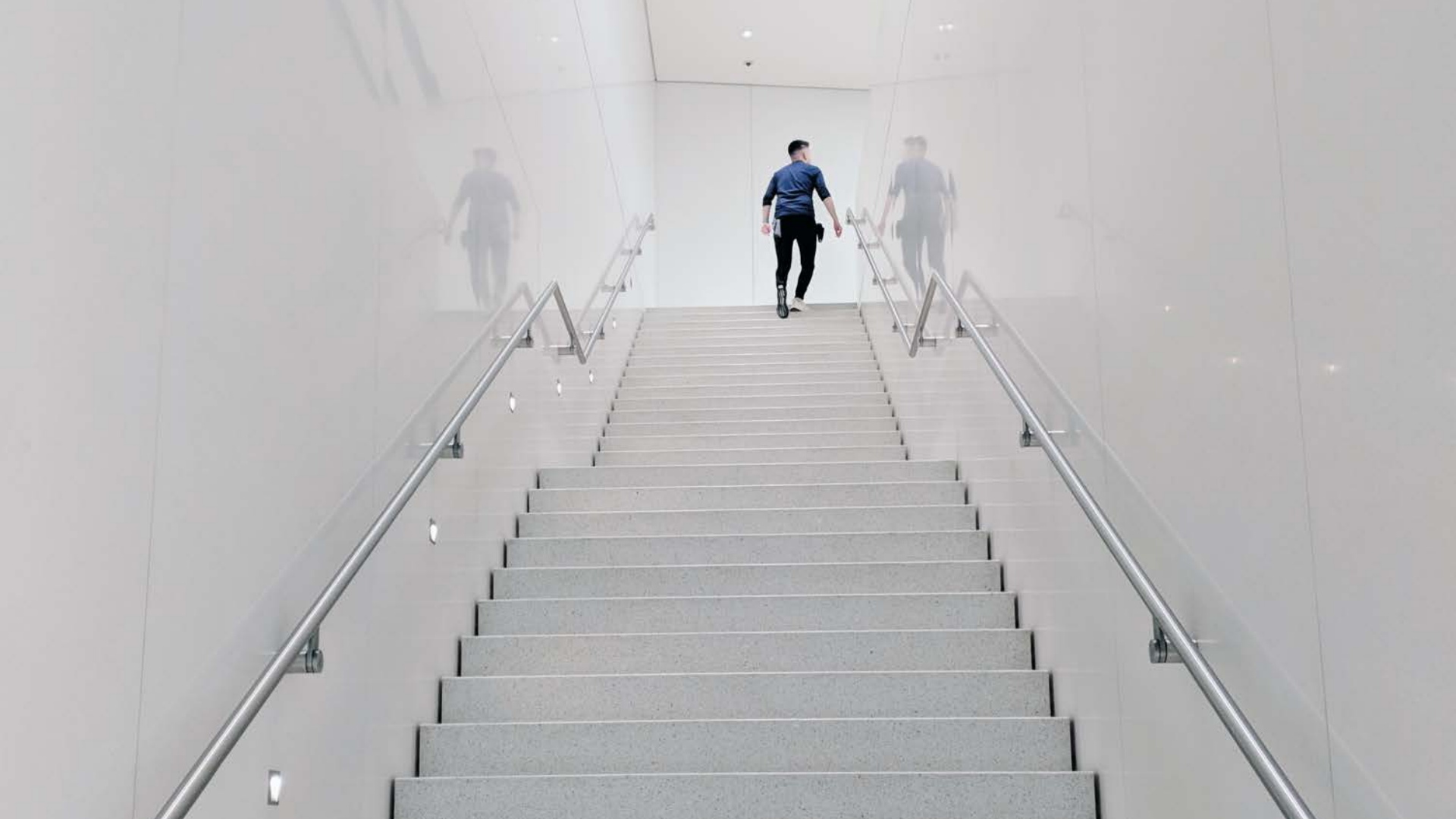




OUTCOME

**Regained
Market Leadership**





Key takeaways...
Leaders Transform First

REMEMBER?

- **Demonstrate leadership**
- Think holistically
- Have empathy
- Have technical agility
- Focus on learning





Key takeaways...
Impact of change - Holistic Approach

REMEMBER?

- Demonstrate leadership
- **Think holistically**
- Have empathy
- Have technical agility
- Focus on learning





Key takeaways...
Take Everyone On The Journey

REMEMBER?

- Demonstrate leadership
- Think holistically
- **Have empathy**
- Have technical agility
- Focus on learning






Key takeaways...
Focus on Technical Agility

REMEMBER?

- Demonstrate leadership
- Think holistically
- Have empathy
- **Have technical agility**
- Focus on learning



A photograph of two women standing in an office hallway, smiling and talking. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a black sleeveless top. The woman on the right has her hair pulled back and is wearing a grey patterned sweater. The background shows office shelves, a potted plant, and a whiteboard. The image has a blue and purple color overlay.

Key takeaways...
Create A Learning Culture

REMEMBER?

- Demonstrate leadership
- Think holistically
- Have empathy
- Have technical agility
- **Focus on learning**





THANK YOU

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