

The Operator's Playbook

FIELD DIAGNOSTIC

Rebuild or Bleed

Whether your reduction is a rebuild or a bleed, read from the arithmetic and not the announcement.

Check every statement that is true of your business since the reduction. Each one is a bleed tell.

The count does the work.

- ☐ **01** The reduction was announced with the word rebuild, repositioning, or investing where it matters.
- ☐ **02** Since the reduction, good people you were told to build around have left on their own.
- ☐ **03** When someone leaves unplanned, the empty chair is treated as savings, not as a hole to fill urgently.
- ☐ **04** The roles you were told would be rebuilt are still open, with no named date to fill them.
- ☐ **05** This year's lighter, partial-year spending has quietly become next year's run rate.
- ☐ **06** Refilling the promised roles would now read as spending more than last year.
- ☐ **07** The investment that was supposed to follow the reduction keeps getting deferred.
- ☐ **08** The word rebuild is said less often now than it was on the day of the announcement.
- ☐ **09** No one can point to a specific new thing being built, only to a smaller organization.
- ☐ **10** You are still repeating the rebuild message while privately doubting it.

READ YOUR COUNT

0–2 **This is a rebuild.** Empty chairs are treated as holes, the build is funded, and you can point to the specific thing being built. Lead it as the real thing it is.

3–6 **It is not settled, and it is turning.** The language still says rebuild while the arithmetic has started voting the other way. This is the window where what you do with the baseline still decides the outcome.

7–10 **This is a bleed wearing the word rebuild.** The baseline has already foreclosed the build, whatever is still being said. Name it honestly to yourself first. What you owe the

people who stayed is the truth in the register you are allowed to tell it, not a word you have already buried.

The words will always say rebuild. The baseline is the one telling the truth.

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FROM THE ENGINE ROOM TO THE BOARDROOM