



# Building a Future- Proof Transformation Office

A Practical Guide for Global Leaders



**Aric Wood**

Chief Strategy Officer  
Tigerhall

# Glad to meet you!

## About me...

- ✓ Author of “The Strategy Activation Playbook”
- ✓ Former CEO of change design consultancy **XPLANE** and strategy consultant at **Bain & Company**
- ✓ Former senior leader at **Intuit** and other tech companies
- ✓ Advisor to dozens of **Fortune 500** and global **Government, NGO, and Non-Profit** organizations leading change and transformation



# Transformation Office Webinar Series

This 5-part webinar series provides senior executives and transformation leaders with a comprehensive playbook to establish, scale, and sustain a future-proof enterprise Transformation Office (TO).

- ✓ Why Transformation Capacity is a Competitive Advantage
  - Transformation Models: Centralized, Distributed, and Hybrid
  - How to Set Up a Transformation Office
  - Sustaining the Transformation Capability Over Time
  - Executive Panel: Lessons Learned from Building and Leading TOs



## In Our Last Episode...

### “Why Transformation Capacity is a Competitive Advantage”

#### Point of View:

- 1) Change is accelerating, and the cost of poor execution is rising
- 2) A Culture and Capability of Transformation is the Competitive Advantage of the Next Age

#### What is the solution?

- 1) An enterprise transformation capability
- 2) A culture of transformation agility

→ **“Change Capacity” will become the basis of organizational competition and durable advantage**

*The ability to rapidly adapt, execute, and evolve will determine who thrives in an environment of continuous disruption.*



# We need to build “Change Capacity”

Change Capacity will become the basis of organizational competition because the ability to rapidly adapt, execute, and evolve will determine who thrives in an environment of continuous disruption.

## Change Capacity

The volume or bandwidth an organization has to absorb and execute change. A measure of organizational limits or scalability.



# Change Capacity

The volume or bandwidth an organization has to absorb and execute change

=

# Change Capability

The institutionalized systems, skills, and structures that enable change

+

# Change Agility

The speed and flexibility with which an organization can respond to change.



# Today's Objectives

With an eye towards a future defined by accelerating change and a requirement for more rapid transformation, we will explore the current models for Transformation Office design and the tradeoffs with each.

- ✓ differentiate **between centralized, distributed, and hybrid Transformation Office (TO) operating models**, and the strengths, risks, and ideal use cases for each
- ✓ explore how **organizational factors** such as size, culture, maturity, and pace of change influence model selection
- ✓ assess your own organization's needs and select or evolve the **model that best supports scalable, enterprise-wide transformation**



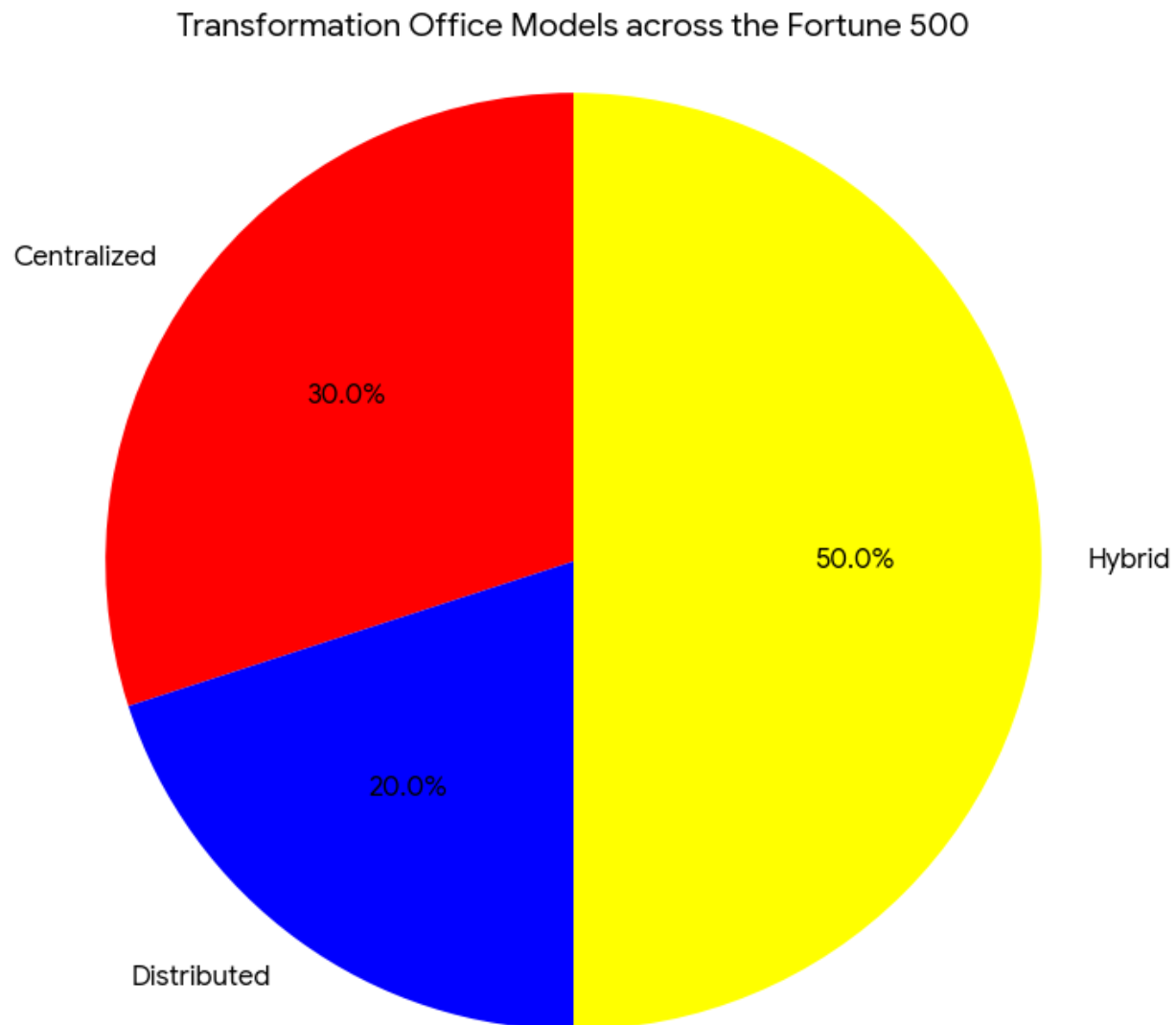
**Poll:**

**How would you describe the  
Transformation capability in your  
organization?**



# Fortune 500

Approximate distribution of models used



# Why have a Transformation Office?

In the era of continuous disruption, enterprise transformation is no longer a one-off initiative—it is a permanent condition of doing business. **Change is "Always On"**

- Companies around the world are establishing TOs to manage the complexity of change, activate strategy, and accelerate execution.
- Key Question: how should a TO be structured to deliver maximum impact?



# What is a transformation office?

It should be...

**Mission:** Align, orchestrate, and accelerate enterprise-wide change

## Align

*Ensure that every initiative, team, and resource is connected to the organization's strategic priorities, creating a shared understanding of purpose and direction..*

## Orchestrate

*Build connective tissue between functions, business units, and geographies to eliminate silos, manage interdependencies, and drive cohesive execution.*

## Accelerate:

*Remove obstacles, streamline decision-making, and provide focused support, tools, and best practices to speed up the delivery and impact of transformation initiatives.*

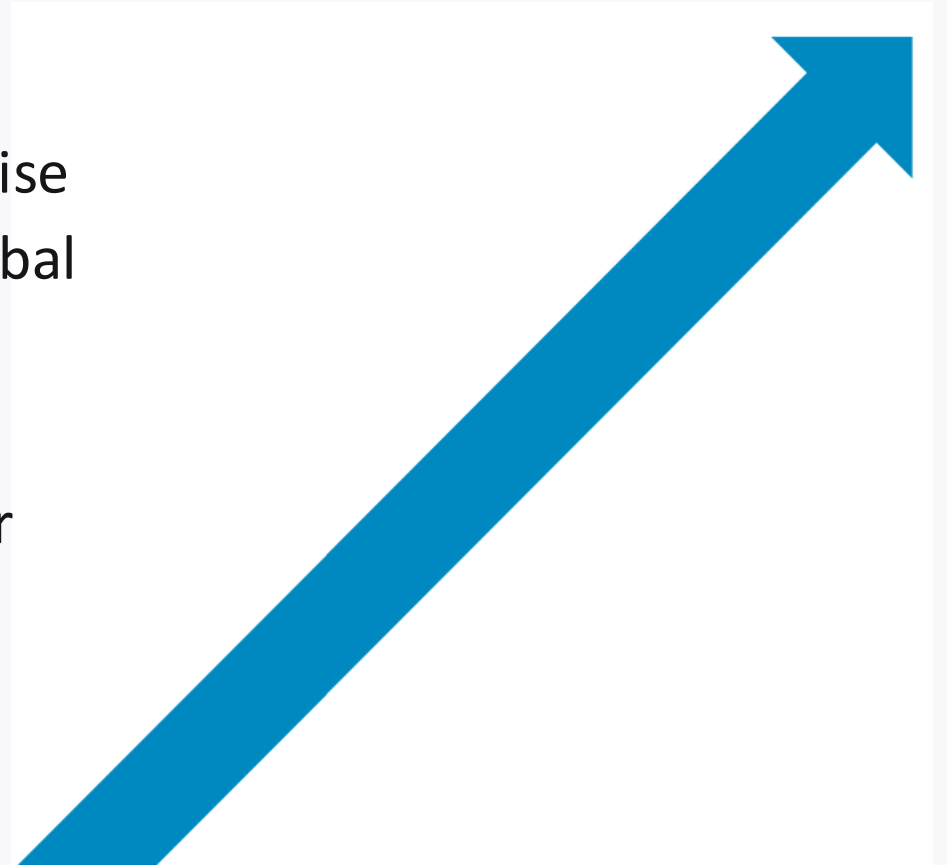


# The Myth: “One Right Way”

There is a persistent myth in the corporate world that there is "one right way" to structure a TO. In reality, successful models vary depending on an organization's scale, structure, culture, and transformation maturity.

→ What worked for a centralized, monolithic enterprise may fail spectacularly in a fast-moving, federated global business.

→ As the pace of change accelerates, so too must our flexibility in designing the right operating model.



# The Reality: “Many Paths”

There are multiple effective ways to structure a Transformation Office to support your unique enterprise

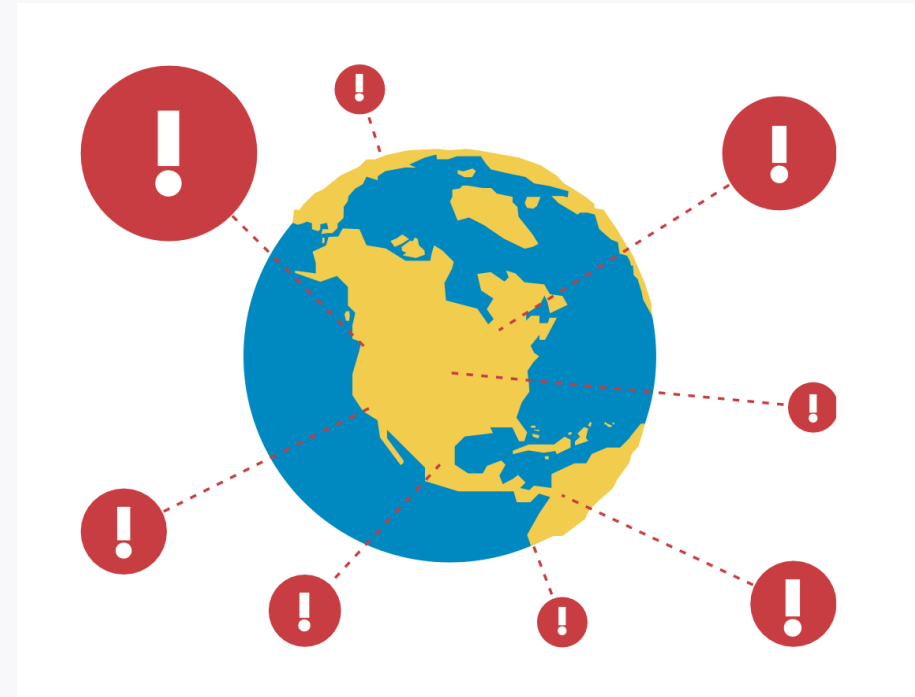
- Successful organizations will intentionally tailor their model to fit their unique context—balancing strategic alignment with execution flexibility
- the model will need to change constantly, by evolving that model over time as your business and environment change



# Design Decision: What model is right for you?

We'll examine this through three lenses:

- 1) Frameworks: centralized, distributed, and hybrid
- 2) Features: strengths, risks, tradeoffs
- 3) Fit: which best fits your context?



## **Point of View:**

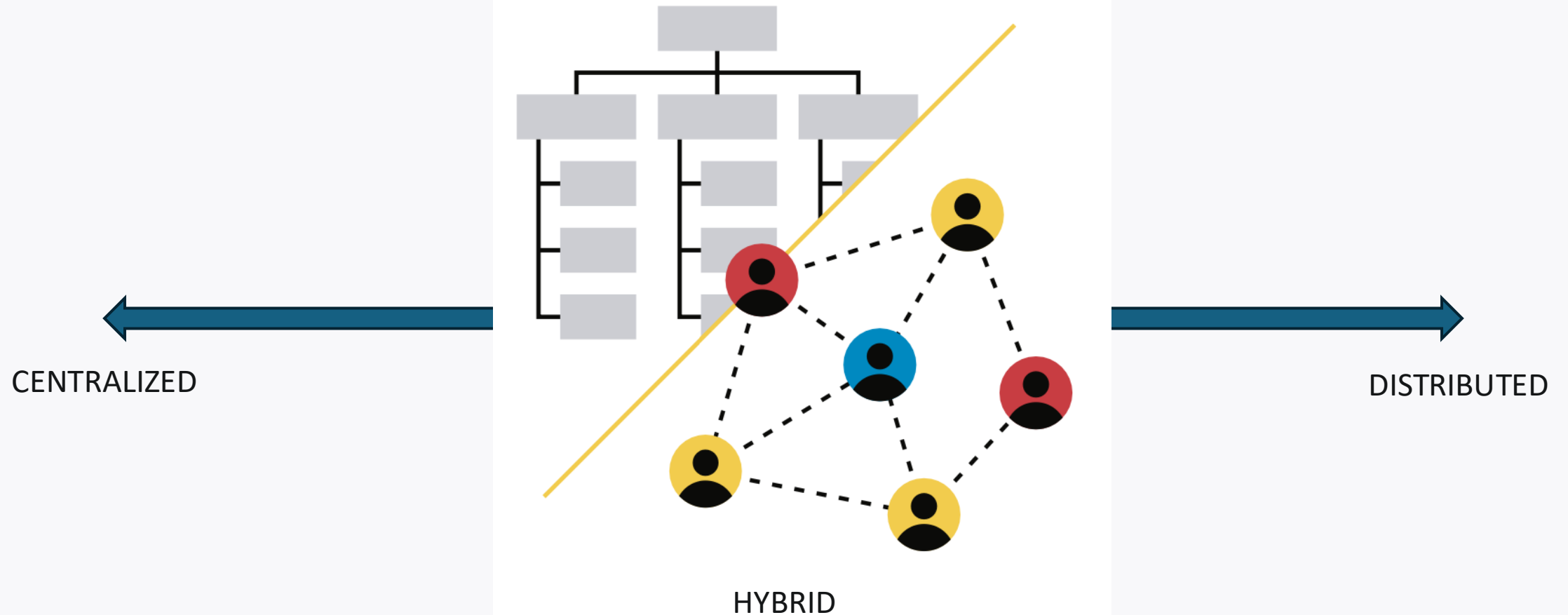
- 1) The correct model depends on an organization's current structure, culture, and operating environment**
- 2) However, we all face a new and transformative future of exponentially accelerating change**
- 3) Our selection must take both into account: Our context today and our operating environment tomorrow**

**→ We will all need to evolve!**



# Frameworks:

There are three basic flavors, with various models along a continuum



# The Centralized Model

In a centralized model, the Transformation Office sits at the corporate center and has end-to-end ownership of governance, planning, and execution oversight. It acts as a hub of expertise, methodology, and performance management.



*Strong enterprise control and top-down transformation governance.*

- ✓ Walmart – Centralized control from Bentonville has historically driven large-scale initiatives like supply chain transformation and ESG integration.
- ✓ Pfizer – Executes transformation centrally, especially during large-scale R&D, compliance, and manufacturing initiatives.
- ✓ Citigroup – Operates a top-down, global Transformation Office focused on risk reduction, cost management, and regulatory response.



# The Centralized Model

## Advantages

- **Strategic Alignment:** Centralized control ensures that all transformation initiatives are tightly aligned with enterprise strategy and leadership priorities.
- **Consistency and Standardization:** Common frameworks, tools, and metrics drive uniform execution across functions and geographies.
- **Visibility and Control:** Leadership has clear oversight of initiative progress, risks, and resource allocation.
- **Scale and Efficiency:** Shared services, repeatable processes, and enterprise dashboards reduce duplication and increase speed-to-value.

## Risks

- **Bureaucracy and Bottlenecks:** Centralized governance can slow decision-making, particularly in fast-moving environments.
- **Distance from the Business:** If not carefully designed, the central TO can feel disconnected from day-to-day operations and frontline realities.
- **One-Size-Fits-All Thinking:** Applying the same approach to every business unit or region can lead to misalignment with local needs and conditions.



# Bottom Line: The Centralized Model



*Centralized models have historically worked well in highly regulated industries or large enterprises with strong corporate cultures. However, as transformation efforts become more adaptive and iterative, this model can struggle to keep pace without deliberate flexibility built in.*



# The Distributed Model

In a distributed model, ownership is embedded within individual business units, regions, or functions. The central office may provide light-touch guidance or be entirely absent. This model favors speed, ownership, and adaptability.



*Autonomous business units lead transformation locally; the center plays a minimal or advisory role.*

- ✓ Berkshire Hathaway – Each subsidiary runs independently with full accountability; no central TO exists.
- ✓ Alphabet (Google) – While some enterprise programs exist, innovation and transformation are largely led at the product or business unit level.
- ✓ Johnson & Johnson – Historically allowed each sector (pharma, medical devices, consumer) to lead its own transformation initiatives.



# The Distributed Model



## Advantages

- **Local Ownership and Accountability:** Business units have direct control over transformation, increasing commitment and follow-through.
- **Faster Decision-Making:** Proximity to operational realities allows teams to act and adapt quickly.
- **Tailored Solutions:** Approaches can be customized to specific markets, cultures, or customer segments.

## Risks

- **Fragmentation and Redundancy:** Without a unifying structure, initiatives can overlap, conflict, or duplicate effort.
- **Inconsistent Standards:** Lack of common methods and metrics can lead to uneven execution and unclear outcomes.
- **Limited Strategic Cohesion:** Distributed TOs may pursue local wins at the expense of enterprise-level transformation goals.



# Bottom Line: The Distributed Model



*Distributed models are often favored by organizations with entrepreneurial cultures or those operating in highly diverse markets. However, without a strong coordination mechanism, the risk of misalignment increases as complexity grows.*

# The Hybrid Model

It combines enterprise-wide governance and strategic alignment with localized execution and adaptation. Often referred to as a "hub and spoke" or "federated" model, it is increasingly seen as a highly resilient approach.



*Combines central strategy and support with distributed execution across BUs or geographies.*

- ✓ Unilever – Has a global transformation framework and tools, but regional markets and categories adapt execution to local context.
- ✓ Nestlé – Uses a federated model where global initiatives (like sustainability) are driven centrally but activated locally.
- ✓ Microsoft – Under Satya Nadella, the company shifted to a federated model that empowers product groups but aligns through central strategy and culture change.



# The Hybrid Model

## Advantages

- **Central Strategy, Local Execution:** The central TO sets direction, priorities, and standards while local teams lead initiative delivery.
- **Shared Capabilities:** Toolkits, playbooks, training, and data platforms are maintained centrally but accessible enterprise-wide.
- **Mutual Accountability:** Local units are responsible for outcomes, while the central TO ensures alignment and support.

## Risks

- **Governance Complexity:** Balancing centralized oversight with decentralized autonomy can create confusion around decision rights
- **Cultural and Operational Misalignment:** Local teams may interpret strategic directives differently or prioritize local goals over enterprise objectives
- **(Potentially) Higher Coordination Overhead:** Maintaining shared tools, playbooks, and communication across functions and geographies requires ongoing investment in infrastructure & collaboration platforms



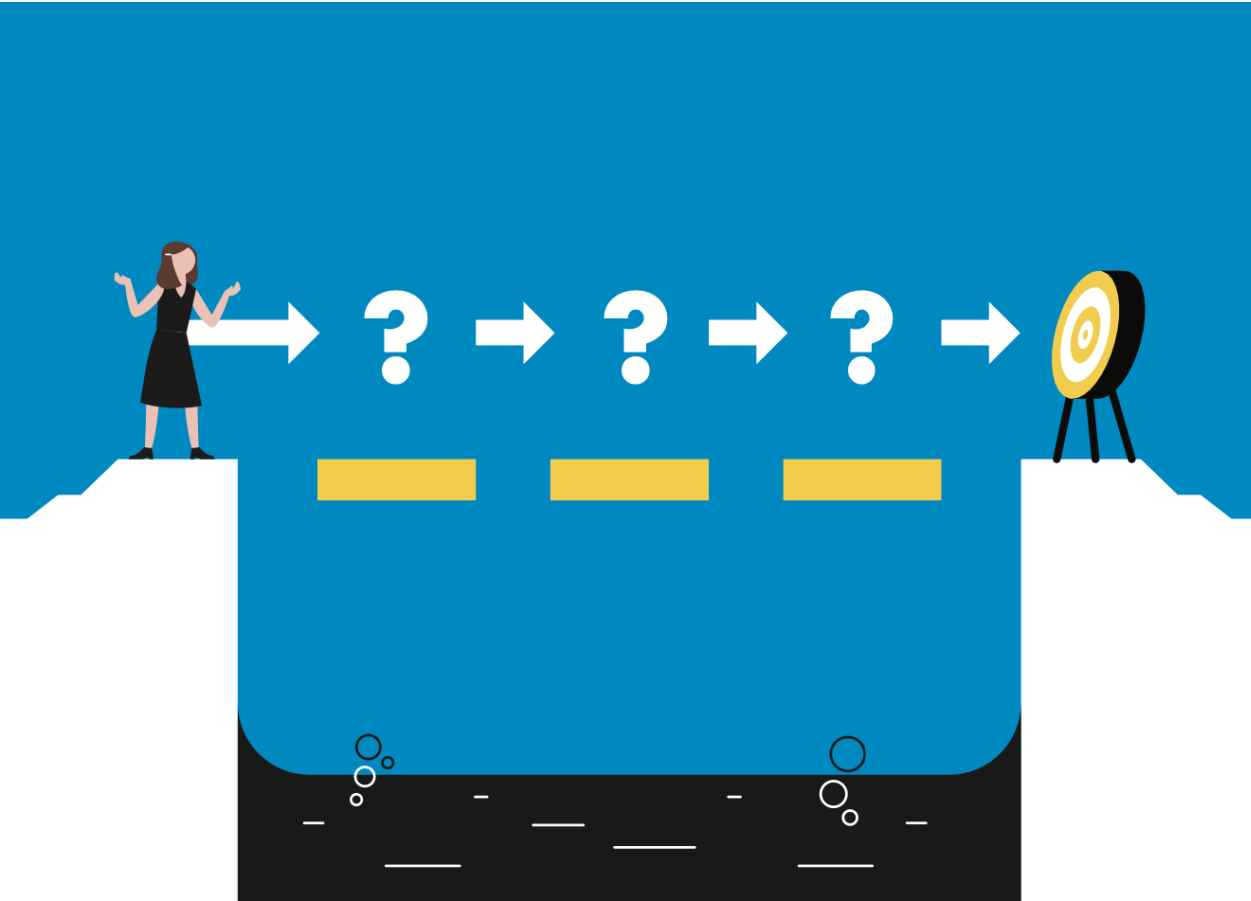
# Bottom Line: The Hybrid Model



*Hybrid models are increasingly preferred because they acknowledge the complexity of large enterprises while providing the flexibility to move fast where needed. However, they require strong communication, clearly defined roles, and investment in shared tools and language.*

# Selecting the Right Model for Your Company

There is no universal answer to the question, "Which model is best?" The optimal TO structure depends on several interrelated factors. Here are key decision criteria to consider:



1. Organizational Size and Complexity
2. Culture and Operating Norms
3. Transformation Maturity
4. Pace and Nature of Change



# Selecting the Right Model for Your Company

To succeed in a world of accelerating disruption, organizations must choose a model that fits both their current reality and their future ambition. Here is a simplified framework:

Criteria	Centralized Model	Distributed Model	Hybrid Model
Strategic Alignment	High	Variable	High
Local Ownership	Low	High	Medium-High
Speed and Agility	Medium	High	High
Risk of Fragmentation	Low	High	Medium
Cultural Fit	Hierarchical	Entrepreneurial	Adaptive/Collaborative
Best Fit For	New or large-scale transformations	Fast-moving, diverse markets	Ongoing, enterprise-wide change

➔ You might move along this continuum as circumstances change



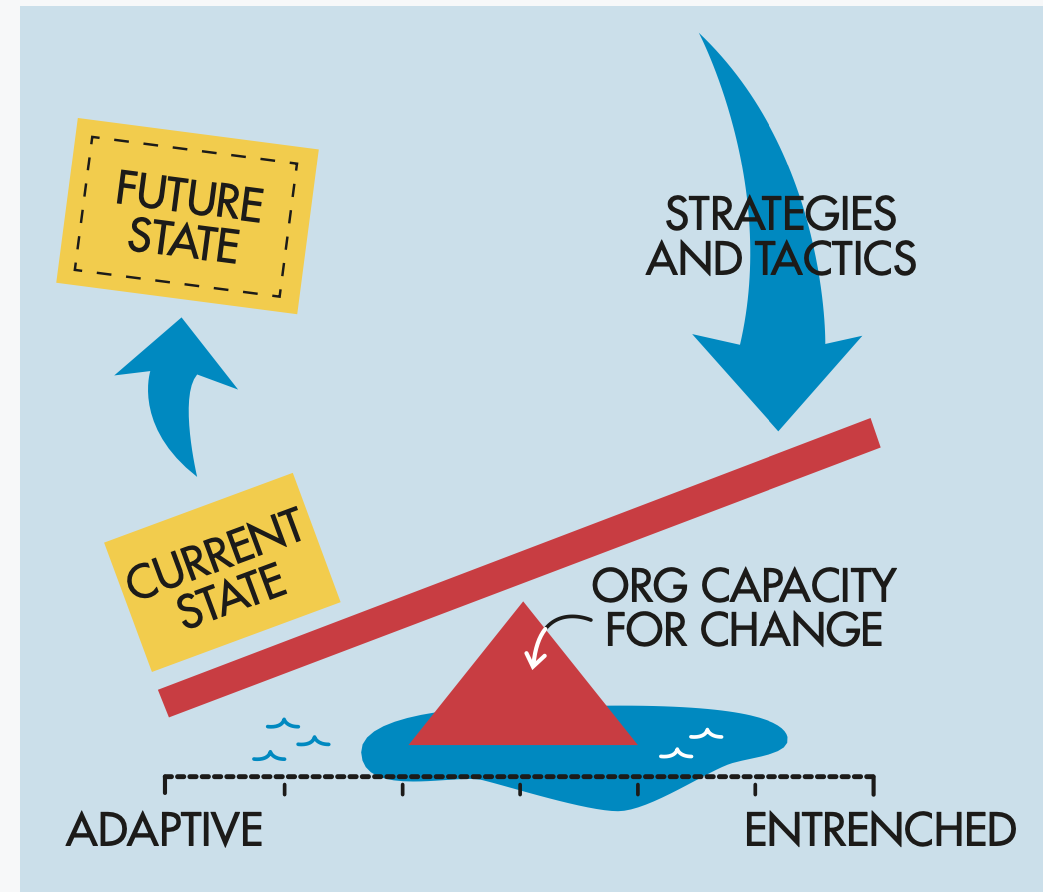
# Future-proofing the model:

## The future of the transformation office

As the pace accelerates, the role of the TOs will evolve from project overseer to enterprise enabler. In the future, TOs must not only manage change—they must become architects of agility.

→ For large, global companies, the **hybrid model** will likely prove to be the most effective.

→ In an environment of perpetual transformation, **only a model that supports both top-down direction and bottom-up adaptability can scale sustainably.**



# Future-proofing the model:

## Factors driving the shift towards hybrid:

- **Increased Complexity**: Global organizations need both alignment and local responsiveness.
- **Pace of change**: Faster disruption is forcing companies to decentralize execution while maintaining strategic oversight.
- **Tooling and tech advancements**: New digital dashboards, AI, and collaboration platforms make hybrid governance feasible at scale.
- **Lessons from failed transformations**: Many companies are learning that overly centralized or overly distributed models lack adaptability.



## The Takeaway

**In a time of accelerating change, hybrid is not a compromise—it's a competitive advantage when built intentionally**



# **“Best of Both Worlds”: Fortress or Folley?**

**If poorly implemented, a Hybrid  
Transformation Office could become a folly  
of failure**

- Lack of Role Clarity
- Over-Engineering
- Misaligned Culture
- Underinvestment in Enablement



# “Best of Both Worlds”: Fortress or Folley?

But in the face of accelerating change, the Hybrid Transformation Office (TO) model can be a fortress of durable advantage

- Strategic Alignment & Adaptability at Scale
- Institutionalized Learning & Innovation
- Balanced Power Dynamics
- Digital Infrastructure + Human Flexibility
- Future-Ready Framework for Flexibility



# Key Takeaways

## A well-designed, hybrid Transformation Office approach is the durable advantage of the future

- *In an environment of perpetual transformation, only a model that supports both top-down direction and bottom-up adaptability can scale sustainably.*
- *It requires a common core of standardized change capability and an organizational culture of agility*
- *The most resilient organizations will not only choose the right model—they will continually evolve it.*

## Call to Action:

- *Assess your current transformation capability against alternative frameworks, features and fit*
- *Start a conversation internally about evolving and future-proofing your Transformation Office*
- *Join the rest of the series!*



**Transformation is no longer episodic—it's continuous and accelerating.**

**Build a capability and culture for transformation to build durable, competitive advantage**



# Transformation Office Webinar Series

This 5-part webinar series provides senior executives and transformation leaders with a comprehensive playbook to establish, scale, and sustain a future-proof enterprise Transformation Office (TO).

- ✓ Why Transformation Capacity is a Competitive Advantage
- ✓ Transformation Models: Centralized, Distributed, and Hybrid
- How to Set Up a Transformation Office
- Sustaining the Transformation Capability Over Time
- Executive Panel: Lessons Learned from Building and Leading TOs



# What's Next?

## Webinar



[Link in Chat](#)

## Demo

---

See how Tigernall supports  
change activation at scale

[Link in Chat](#)

## Office Hours

30 Minute Meeting to  
discuss your change  
challenge or the content of  
this series

[aric@Tigerhall.com](mailto:aric@Tigerhall.com)



# Discussion





**Aric Wood**

Chief Strategy Officer

+1 503 804 9087

aric@tigerhall.com

@aric wood

[www.tigerhall.com](http://www.tigerhall.com)

# Thank You!



# Selecting the Right Model for Your Company

→ Industries facing fast, market-driven change may require decentralized agility.

→ Organizations undergoing deliberate, strategic shifts may benefit from centralized coordination.

Ask yourself: Are we trying to manage a single transformation, or build an enterprise-wide capability for continuous change?

