

ELE in Plain English

Solving Real Work Through Peer-Powered Community Hubs

For Community Hub Directors & Licensing Partners

1. The Problem Everyone Knows

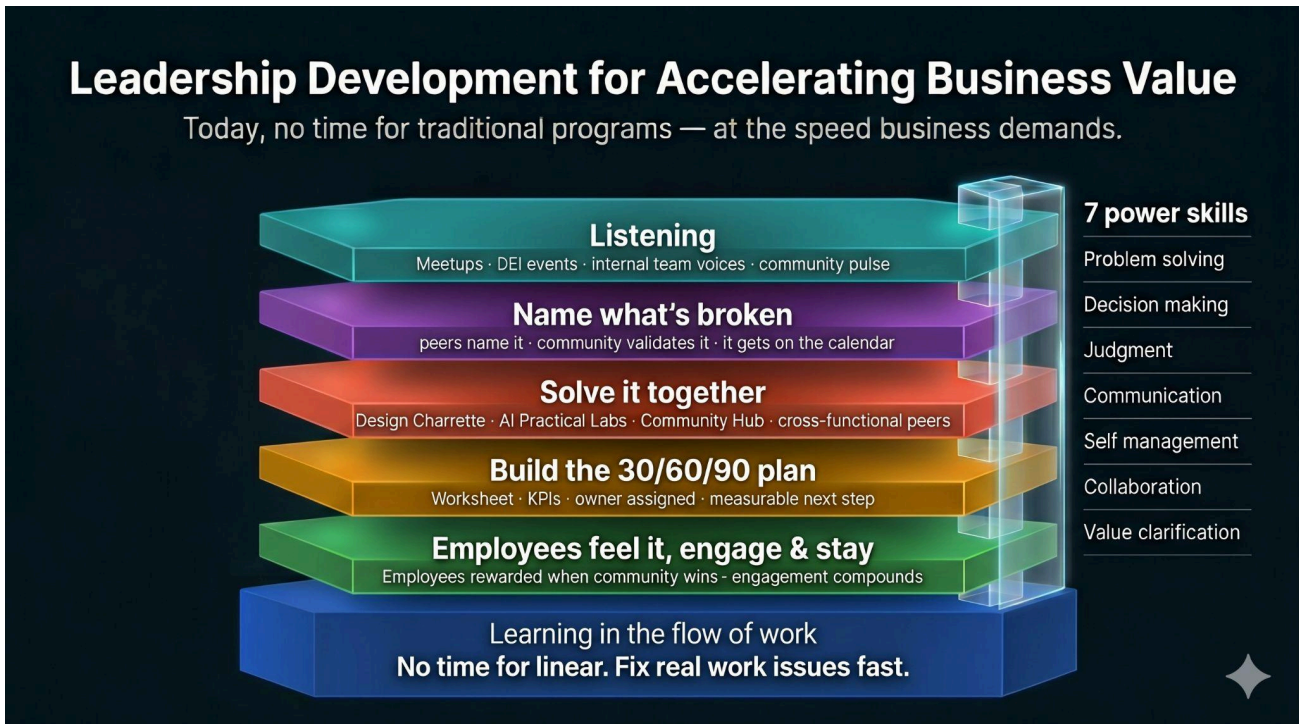
For 22 years, ELE has been helping people-leaders whose teams are stuck. By creating a safe space for peer-learning, we've developed a deep understanding -- it's not a people problem. It's a leadership problem. Leadership development is our sweet spot.

ELE by the numbers 22 years · Fortune 1000 members · 5 Community Hubs · 2 anchor events annually · 1 peer-powered model that does it all at once

Fast forward to today. AI is moving faster than your leadership model was built for. Leadership development programs are expensive, annual, and disconnected from real work. Burnout is keeping C-suites up at night. And the traditional fixes -- offsite retreats, case study training, engagement surveys -- were designed for a world that no longer exists.

There's no time for linear. You can't solve today's problems with last year's program.

Let's get real. When the people doing the work are stuck, your leadership development is stuck. Your peer community unsticks it.



2. What ELE Is

*ELE is an **Intelligence Organization** — where Community Hubs develop next-gen leaders, solve real work issues, and accelerate business value at the same time.*

What is an Intelligence Organization?

An Intelligence Organization (IO) replaces slow, top-down hierarchies with something faster — people closest to the work solving real problems together, in real time, while building the skills and decisions that move the business forward.

It's a growing model where learning, problem-solving, and leadership development happen all at once — in the flow of work, not separate from it.

Organizational Intelligence (OI) is not a new idea. Karl Albrecht — who coined the term in 2003 — defined it as the capacity of an organization to comprehend and create knowledge relevant to its purpose. He even built an assessment tool to measure it across seven dimensions. Most organizations score lower than they think¹.

What Albrecht described, ELE executes. In plain English: OI is what happens when the signals from people closest to the work connect with the data leaders already have. Together, they create the complete picture. Better decisions. Sustainable business value.

ELE is not a conference. Not a consulting firm. Not a survey tool. Not a networking club.

In practice, ELE develops next-gen leaders through bottleneck problem-solving — accelerating employee engagement and business value in the flow of work.

3. The Community Hub Advantage

Most communities are networking communities -- a monthly calendar, a Slack channel, and vibrant connections that feel good and build real relationships.

ELE is a fundamentally different model -- one that adds value to that core and makes it stronger. When peer connections have a real problem to solve, a structured method to solve it, and a 30/60/90-day plan to act on it, the community doesn't just feel good. It maximizes everyone's limited time -- delivering action-learning leadership development, upskilling, and employee engagement while giving every participant a personal WIIFM reward and accelerating measurable business value.

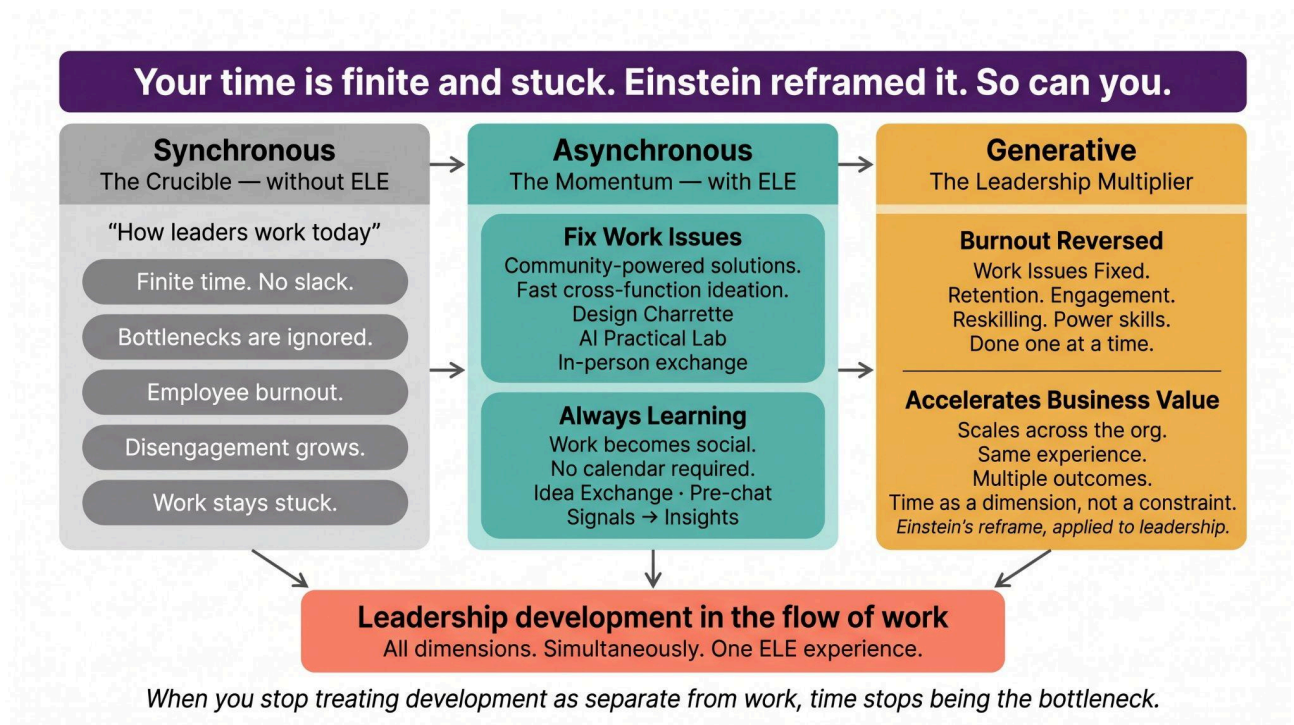
All at once. In the flow of work.

Burnout is not a wellness problem. It's a leadership model problem. 75% of CEOs cite it as a top concern -- and the root cause is the same everywhere: leaders are being asked to do more with less, sequentially, in a world that no longer moves that way.

Einstein reframed time as a dimension, not a constraint. ELE applies that same thinking to leadership development. When you stop treating development as something that happens

^{1 2} Karl Albrecht, *Organizational Intelligence & Knowledge Management: Thinking Outside the Silos*, 2003.

separately from work -- before it, after it, instead of it -- and start embedding it inside the real work, time stops being the bottleneck. Solving work problems becomes the development itself.



On day one, Hub members connect with 22 years of trusted peer relationships and a global network of Intelligence Organizations ready to help solve what matters most locally. The execution gap is the same everywhere -- and so is the fix.

4. How It Works

The pace of change is not slowing down. AI adoption and generational leadership transitions alone are creating new work issues faster than traditional systems can absorb them.

Bottlenecks are visible signals. Leaders can see them -- in missed deadlines, quiet exits, workarounds, frustrated managers, and AI tools generating more noise than value. What most organizations lack is a structured, real-time way to surface those signals, compare them across peers, and turn them into action before the damage shows up in the metrics.

Left ignored, real work issues don't just slow work. They stall leadership development, erode culture, and compound over time into the kind of organizational drift that turns a Walgreens or GE from a blue chip into a cautionary tale.

ELE is built to create 30/60/90 day action plans to fix bottlenecks – where a conversation with a peer who has already solved the same problem is worth more than any consultant, course, or dashboard. Three steps:

SUBMIT

Anyone — member or not — names a real work bottleneck. What's not moving, what's at stake, why it matters now.

VOTE	Active community members signal which bottlenecks are most urgent. The community shapes the calendar -- not ELE, not Dirk.
SCHEDULE	ELE curates the strongest real work issues into live peer exchanges -- Listening Meetups, Design Charrettes, AI Practical Labs -- that move work forward fast.

Between live exchanges, the Idea Exchange keeps peer conversations moving -- pre-chat, post-chat, Q&A on your schedule. In your time zone.

The business value is consistency and measurability at scale. Every exchange runs on structured rubrics -- roles, worksheets, assumption challenges -- so outcomes are repeatable, not random. Participants leave with a specific decision to revisit, a signal to check, and a next move to bring back.

As signals become strategic insights and flow to implementation, an Action Planning Worksheet (APW) -- introduced by Aaron K. Olson (EVP, Aon) -- turns every conversation into 30/60/90 practical steps with clear ownership.²

What Makes ELE Different	
When work gets stuck and ignored, both the people and the business suffer.	
AI can't fix bottlenecks. Humans do.	
The old way	The ELE way
A human resource is assigned	A small peer team steps in
It's called "work"	It's called "social"
Burnout increases	Employee engagement improves

5. Why Nothing Else Does This

Every organization is already spending on leadership development -- we all know it's too expensive and needs to be fixed. The question is whether it's moving work forward or just filling calendars. Here's how ELE compares to what most organizations are already buying:

VISTAGE / YPO	Relationship and referral network. Value is who's in the room. Quarterly cadence. Sponsors in the room. No execution engine.
CONSULTING FIRMS	Sell to organizations, not across them. Conflict-averse. Can't convene competitors. Monetize content delivery, not execution outcomes.
ANNUAL CONFERENCES	ELE runs two full-day immersive experiences -- Spring Conference and Fall Summit -- plus continuous peer experiences year-round.

² Aaron K. Olson, Ward Ching, Richard Waterer & B. Keith Simerson, *Strategy and Change: Finding Opportunity in Disruption Through Insight, Choice, and Risk*, Wiley, 2025.

Peer-powered. Outcome-focused. Continuous. Real work issues surface, get solved, and move forward -- with leadership development, upskilling, and employee engagement happening at the same time. 30/60/90-day commitments as the success metric. Work that was stuck, moving fast.

6. ELE Today — A Community Built on 22 Years of Trusted Peer Intelligence

ELE was founded November 1, 2002 at Baxter Headquarters in Deerfield, IL by Susan Guest and Dirk Tussing -- both active today. Harvard Business School Publishing was at the table from day one, actively looking for alternatives to monetize business school case study content. What they found instead was something more valuable -- peer intelligence that no case study could replicate.

The anchor members who showed up that first day -- Abbott/AbbVie, Baxter, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Bank One, Johnson Controls, Kelly Services, McDonald's, Rockwell Collins, and Walgreens -- are the proof that peer intelligence was always the asset. Most have never left.

- Referral-based, invitation-only community -- 22 years of trusted peer relationships
- Community Hubs expanding to NY/NJ, Philadelphia, Wisconsin, Brazil/LATAM, HR LEADers, HRBPs, and AI-Driven Leaders
- Spring Conference (May) and Fall Summit (October) as full-day immersive anchor experiences
- Idea Exchange running continuously between all ELE experiences -- pre-chat, post-chat, and signals → insights → action year-round

ELE is now positioning for its next chapter -- Community Hub expansion, licensing partnerships, and the October 2026 Intelligence Organization Summit.

7. ELE as an Intelligence Organization

Most organizations have Business Intelligence — dashboards, metrics, scorecards. What they are missing is People Intelligence: the signals from people closest to the work that no dashboard captures.

ELE connects both. **People Intelligence** plus **Business Intelligence** equals Organizational Intelligence — the capacity to make better decisions, move stuck work forward, and build sustainable business value.

Karl Albrecht coined the term Organizational Intelligence in 2003 and built a 46-item assessment to measure it. Most organizations score lower than they think. ELE is how organizations close that gap -- fast.

In 2026 that gap is more urgent than ever. Consulting firms are purporting that systems thinking and headcount reduction are sufficient responses to AI adoption. They aren't -- and **will accelerate burnout**. Systems thinking is two-dimensional -- it maps connections but misses the human intelligence layer closest to the work. OI is the stronger framework because it combines what AI can

process with what only people can surface. That's the competitive advantage no dashboard captures.



A classic Intelligence Organization is Toyota. On the factory floor, the Toyota Production System works because frontline workers surface signals -- defects, slowdowns, bottlenecks -- before they become crises. Leadership listens. Problems get fixed the same day. People Intelligence plus Business Intelligence equals cars that last 300,000 miles.

But walk into Toyota's corporate offices, and you find the same struggle every large organization faces. Continuous Improvement stalls. Bottlenecks pile up. Employee engagement drops. Stress increases. Leadership fails. The best people leave. And the work that matters most stops moving. The factory figured it out. Corporate is still catching up.

That gap -- between organizations that surface and fix real work issues fast and those that don't -- is exactly what ELE exists to close. Not on the factory floor. In the leadership layer, where the real drag on business value lives.

That is what makes **ELE an Intelligence Organization**. Not a conference company. Not a consulting firm. Not an HR networking membership. An IO -- where Community Hubs **develop and upskill next-gen leaders**, solve real work issues, and **accelerate business value at the same time**.

Sustainable business value means the organization will exist and thrive in 10 years -- not because of dashboards or purchasing solar credits, but because leaders understood the real work behind the numbers.

8. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE FLOW OF WORK Intelligence Organization Summit — ELE Fall Summit 2026

October 1, 2026 | Chicago | <https://www.ele.llc/calendar/fall-summit-2026>

The ELE Fall Summit 2026 is not a conference rebrand. It is the public launch of a **new category — Leadership Development in the Flow of Work** — where Intelligence Organizations benchmark what's actually moving real work forward.

The invitation is simple: if your organization is already working to connect People Intelligence and Business Intelligence to move real work forward — you are already an Intelligence Organization. Come benchmark with peers who are doing the same.

Today's **senior leaders don't have time for disconnected executive education programs**. The old model — pull leaders out of the work, send them to a program, hope it transfers — was designed for a world that no longer exists. The Intelligence Organization Summit is where leaders who have already figured that out come together to benchmark what's actually working — real leadership development, built inside the real work, moving real business value forward at the same time.

Where Intelligence Organizations benchmark leadership development that actually moves work forward.

This is not a vendor expo. Not a keynote lineup. It is a working summit — Design Charrettes, AI Practical Labs, peer experiences — where the bottlenecks on the table are real, and the action plans leave with the leaders who brought them.

We will showcase a handful of ELE next practices and open them to critical peer review -- from community member companies and external organizations whose AI adoption is already accelerating business value. In small working sessions, we want to uncover what actually works. No polished case studies. No vendor pitches. Just real peers, real work, and honest conversation about what's moving and what's still stuck.

9. Your Next Move

Four ways in:

- Submit a real work issue at <https://www.ele.llc/calendar/shape> — anyone can submit, active members shape the schedule
- Experience ELE now at <https://www.ele.llc/plans> — the best way to understand what ELE is, is to be in it
- Benchmark [Leadership Development in the Flow of Work](#) — Attend the Intelligence Organization Summit — ELE Fall Summit, October 1, 2026, Chicago
- Start a conversation about Community Hub licensing or partnership — reach Dirk Tussing directly at engage@ele.llc

What is keeping your organization from thriving in 10 years? Bring it. Your peers have already seen it. Some have already fixed it.

Appendix: The Reading List Behind ELE's Framework

Three books that validate what ELE has been building for 22 years — from three different angles.

Strategy and Change: Finding Opportunity in Disruption Through Insight, Choice, and Risk

Aaron K. Olson, Ward Ching, Richard Waterer & B. Keith Simerson | Wiley, 2025

Aaron Olson is not just an author — he is an ELE Collective contributor who introduced the Action Planning Worksheet to ELE and taught it live at the Fall Conference. This book is the academic foundation behind the APW. In a world of compounding disruption, Olson and co-authors argue that leaders need insight, adaptive decision-making, and risk awareness built into the organization's core — not just the C-suite. That is exactly what ELE's bottleneck-to-action model delivers. The APW turns every peer exchange into a 30/60/90-day leadership commitment. Strategy and Change is the theory. ELE is where it runs live.

Hardwired to Learn: Leveraging the Self-Sustaining Power of Lifelong Learning

Teri Hart | 2021

Teri Hart is not just an author — she is an ELE Collective contributor whose work on lifelong learning runs directly through ELE's community model. *Hardwired to Learn* makes the neuroscience case that learning is not a program or an event — it is a biological drive that, when activated in the right conditions, becomes self-sustaining. That is exactly what ELE's peer community creates: the conditions where learning ignites naturally, through real work, real peers, and real problems worth solving. The book is the science behind what ELE members experience every time they're in the room.

Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter

Liz Wiseman & Greg McKeown | HarperCollins, 2010

ELE's community is a Multiplier engine by design. Every Design Charrette, AI Practical Lab, and peer exchange multiplies intelligence across organizations — not just inside one. Wiseman's research shows Multiplier leaders draw up to twice the intelligence from their teams. ELE creates those conditions across an entire peer community.

There's Got to Be a Better Way: How to Deliver Results and Get Rid of the Stuff That Gets in the Way of Real Work

Nelson P. Reppenning & Donald C. Kieffer | Basic Books, 2025

MIT Sloan's closest academic validation of ELE's bottleneck model. Solve the right problems small, locally, and fast. 30-60 day scopes. Huddles that connect the human chain. ELE runs dynamic work design at the peer community level — across organizations, not just inside them.

How Human-Computer 'Superminds' Are Redefining the Future of Work

Thomas W. Malone | MIT Sloan Management Review, 2018

AI is specialized. It can win at Jeopardy. It cannot unstick a leadership bottleneck. Malone, founding director of the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence, argues that humans working together in coherent groups create intelligence no algorithm can replicate. ELE is that group — a Supermind for senior people leaders solving real work in real time.

Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do

Studs Terkel | Pantheon Books, 1974

Long before anyone used the term People Intelligence, Studs Terkel was collecting it. In 1974 he interviewed hundreds of American workers — from steelworkers to executives — and let them describe in their own words where work felt meaningful, where it felt stuck, and what managers never seemed to understand. The signals were all there. Nobody had a system to act on them. ELE is that system.