The Journey to Mastery – And How Organization Twins Stop the "Muddling Through"

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Mastery

Read Blog 3 of 3 on how to develop mastery in management.

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In Blog 1, we described the state of management with the default mode of "muddling through" that so many organizations find themselves trapped in. In Blog 2, we unpacked the nine features that define mastery in management from diagnostic to interactive and from human to regenerative.

Now the question becomes: How do we get there?

How do we move from where we are to where we want to be without getting lost, stuck, or overwhelmed?

The roadmap to better management what this final blog is all about: the journey to mastery. A practical path forward. A shift that is not just theoretical, but observable, trackable, and most importantly, doable.

The Five-Stage Journey: From Muddling to Mastery

Every organization is unique, but the path toward management mastery tends to follow a similar rhythm: the five-stage journey:

1. Assessment

Where are we, really?

This is the wake-up call. It is when an executives dare to look in

the mirror and ask, “*How well are we actually managing ourselves?*” not based on revenue or brand perception but based on how work gets done, how value is created, how people grow, and how decisions are made.

Assessment isn’t about judgment. It’s about awareness.

And it’s powerful because once you see the unmanaged state clearly, you can’t unsee it.

2. Adoption

What new insights or practices are worth trying?

This stage is about opening up. Leaders begin to adopt new ways of thinking that replace outdated assumptions and practices with new principles. Executives become curious again.

They realize that agility isn’t just a buzzword, it’s a mindset. Better performance doesn’t come from applying pressure on people to perform, but from purpose and coherence. Executives realize that management, like any craft, can be improved.

It is the beginning of a shift from denial to discovery.

3. Adaptation

How do we shape new approaches to fit our context?

Adapting means making the insights your own. It’s not copy-paste from the latest management book. It is choosing what fits, what resonates, and what works for your organization’s unique DNA.

Here, teams experiment, pilot new structures, rethink roles, adjust rhythms, and reshape collaboration. Tom Peters said it nicely “test fast, fail fast, adjust fast.”

The key is to learn *while* doing, not before. Adaptation is about building change into the fabric of everyday work.

4. Evolution

How do we scale what works and integrate it across the organization?

By this stage, management evolution isn’t a side project, it is changing the way the entire organization works. The nine features of mastery start showing up in culture, in systems, in how people lead, think, and act.

Evolution means continuous improvement. It is not “done” after one workshop or quarter. It is alive and shaped by feedback, learning, and growth.

Most high-performing organizations live in this space, never perfect, but always evolving.

5. Perfection

How do we sustain mastery over time?

Perfection isn’t about flawlessness; it’s about full alignment. Mastery is achieved when strategy, structure, people, and purpose all work together in a dynamic system. When this happens your organization becomes a reference point for others.

But in dynamic environments, perfection is *temporary*. What matters is your ability to renew mastery again and again.

Perfection, in the mastery model, is not the final destination. It’s a checkpoint on a lifelong journey.

Enter the Game-Changer: The Organization Twin

So how do you actually *see* where you are to begin this journey?

That’s where the Organization Twin comes in.

Imagine having a digital mirror of your organization, not just its org chart or processes, but how it *really works*. A twin that reflects your management model, culture, capabilities, and exposed blind spots. With a digital twin, you can compare your management effectiveness against hundreds of other organizations worldwide.

This is not science fiction, it is a reality and it’s changing how leaders lead.

What Is an Organization Twin?

An Organization Twin is a dynamic, data-driven model of your organization’s management. It uses years of accumulated survey data (including from 500+ organizations globally) to reveal how your management compares across the nine features of mastery.

It doesn’t just tell you *what* is going wrong. It shows you *why*,

where, and *how* to improve.

Here's what it does:

- Diagnoses your organization's current management maturity level
- Maps your practices against high-performing peers
- Surfaces gaps and tensions you might not see from the inside
- Guides your journey by offering tailored insights and recommendations

Think of it as an X-ray + GPS for management.

Why Organization Twins Work

Most transformation efforts fail because they start with good intentions with little clarity on where they start from and where they are going.

Leaders try to change without seeing what's actually going on. They classically invest in training, systems and tools, or recuring reorganizations without understanding the root causes of their struggles. They "muddle through" transformation just like they muddled through daily operations.

The Organization Twin breaks that cycle.

It confronts leaders with their own data. It replaces guesswork with grounded insight. And it fosters real, honest conversations about what needs to change.

In fact, in our work with clients, nothing has opened leaders' eyes faster than seeing their Twin. Awareness expedites the learning about the attributes of better management. It turns management into a competitive advantage.

Beyond Measurement: A Mindset Shift

To be clear Organization Twins aren't about scoring high or low.

They are about promoting awareness, reflection, growth, and offering choice.

The visual representation provided by Organizational Twins invites leaders to stop blaming individuals and start redesigning

systems. They shift the focus from “who’s failing” to “what’s missing.” From pressure to purpose.

Most importantly, they empower leaders to chart a move from muddling through to managing with mastery, step by step, and feature by feature.

The Future Is Mastery in Management

So here we are.

As AI continues to rise, leaders are once again drawn to the next big thing—hoping that technology, trends, or yet another leadership fad will finally deliver better results. Social media, conferences, and bestsellers feed that hope. But hope alone doesn’t change how we manage.

Meanwhile, the unmanaged state persists. Disengagement, inefficiency, and misalignment remain widespread. Hope fades—reality endures.

But Mastery in Management isn’t another silver bullet.

It’s not a trend—it’s a capability-based management transformation.

It’s a journey, structured around five stopovers, guided by nine principles of mastery, powered by insights, and accelerated by tools like the Organization Twin.

And yes—it matters.

Because in a world defined by ongoing disruption, how we manage determines how we perform.

Not just this quarter. But for the next decade.

If you’re tired of muddling through…
You don’t need another leadership fad.
You don’t need more rules.
You need a mirror.
You need a map.
You need the mindset of mastery.
And now—you have a starting point.

Begin your journey to Mastery in Management: Create your own

Organization Twin.

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The upcoming book: Michel, L; Nold, H and Bosbach G. (November 2025). *'Unmanaged': How Mastery in Management Replaces Muddling Through Leadership*. LID Publishing, London.

About Management Insights

Founded by Lukas Michel, Management Insights draws on more than 25 years of research and practice to help people understand how their organizations work. The Organization Twin brings organizational patterns into view for reflection, dialogue, and informed choice.

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