FOUNDER'S READING NOTES

The Leadership Dozen: Eight Early Signals

A one-page worksheet for seeing a problem while it is still small.

THE SIGNAL	THE QUESTION TO ASK	THE EVIDENCE TO REQUEST
A name is doing the work of a check. Dark Wire and Billion Dollar Whale	Who looked at the artifact itself, and what did they see?	Primary records and independent testing records: key custody, endpoint access and update authority.
One person or service can see the whole system and nobody else can. The Mastermind	If that person were gone tomorrow, who could reconstruct this?	Architecture documentation, durable identities and an access inventory, an action log, and a tested recovery path.
A score has never once embarrassed the person who commissioned it. The Fund	What number would have to appear here for us to change course, and has anyone written that number down?	Metric definitions, the weighting choices, known failures, independent challenge cases, and a threshold that can block release.
An exception has no expiry date and no author. Regime Change	Who approved it, what was the objection, and when does it end?	A dated exception record: who approved it, why, what objections existed, and when it expires.
A known anomaly has stopped being discussed. Challenger	What would we need to see to prove it is safe, rather than assuming it is?	Incident trends, root-cause analysis, independent tests and corrective action records.
Speed is being measured, but nobody can say which minutes were thinking time. Project Maven and Unit X	Which delay added knowledge, and which was waste?	Queue volume, time and context per review, real rejection rates, and evidence that reviewers can stop execution.
A supposedly redundant service shares an upstream. Chokepoints	Do both depend on the same gate two layers down, and when did we last rehearse the exit?	A dependency graph and a demonstrated exit or failover, including upstream services.
A problem is visible only in pieces, and nobody owns the whole. Biological War	Who has the authority to act before the picture is complete?	A named escalation owner, cross-team reporting, and criteria for combining weak signals.

THREE QUESTIONS I ADD TO EVERY REVIEW

Who stands to profit if we accept this assurance? Who absorbs the harm if it is false? Is the person with the most to gain also controlling the evidence used to approve the decision?

The evidence must keep the ability to disappoint the person who asked for it.

These signals are prompts for a closer look. They are not findings about any organization.