

THE FOUNDATION CHECK

A Self-Assessment for Leaders and the People Who Do the Work

Before you adopt another AI tool, find out whether your organization is built on solid ground — or is running on workarounds.

HOW TO USE THIS ASSESSMENT

This is not a scorecard. It is a starting point for an honest conversation with yourself, and then with your team.

There are two versions: one for leaders, one for workers. Each has ten questions rated on a 1–3 scale. Complete the version that fits your role. Score yourself at the end. Then sit with the questions that made you pause — those are the ones that matter.

Rating scale: 1 = Rarely or never 2 = Sometimes, but inconsistently 3 = Yes, clearly and consistently

Part One: For Leaders

Rate each statement honestly. No one is watching. The point is not to pass — it is to see clearly.

THEME 1: ROLE REALITY

1. I know what every person on my team actually does day to day — not what their job description says, but what they actually carry.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

2. I can name which roles have quietly absorbed responsibilities that were never officially reassigned.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

THEME 2: DATA & ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATION

3. Someone in my organization officially owns our data and filing systems — and has the time and authority to maintain them.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

4. If we introduced a new AI tool today, I could tell you clearly what data it would be working with and whether that data is accurate.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

THEME 3: WORKLOAD REALITY

5. If my highest-performing team member left tomorrow, I would know the full scope of what they were carrying.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

6. I have asked my team in the past three months whether the pace of work is sustainable — and created enough safety that they told me the truth.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

THEME 4: STRATEGIC CLARITY

7. Every person on my team has been explicitly told our top priorities for this year — not implied, actually stated.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

8. My team understands how their daily work connects to the direction we are trying to go.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

THEME 5: TRUST & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

9. My team would feel safe telling me something is broken — without worrying it would reflect badly on them.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

10. When I introduce a new tool or process, I consult the people closest to that work before I roll it out.

1

Rarely

2

Sometimes

3

Yes, clearly

YOUR LEADER SCORE

Add up your ratings. Total possible: 30.

Score	What It Means	Where to Go From Here
24–30	Strong Foundation	<i>You are likely stewarding your team well. AI tools have something real to build on. Keep going — and stay curious about what you might still be missing.</i>
15–23	Cracks Showing	<i>These gaps are manageable — but they will amplify under AI pressure. Name the two or three questions that were hardest to answer. Start there.</i>
Under 15	Foundation First	<i>This is not a failure. It is information. The most important thing you can do right now is slow down, look clearly, and fix problems with your team, not around them.</i>

Part Two: For Workers

You do not have to share your score with anyone. This is for you — to name what is true and to see it clearly.

THEME 1: ROLE REALITY

1. My official job description reflects what I actually do each day.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly
2. If there is a workaround I run regularly, someone in leadership knows about it and is actively working to address it.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly

THEME 2: DATA & TOOLS

3. I can find what I need in our shared files or systems without spending significant time searching.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly
4. When new tools are introduced, I feel genuinely prepared — not just handed a login and expected to figure it out.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly

THEME 3: WORKLOAD

5. My workload feels sustainable week to week — not just survivable.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly
6. When I complete work faster with a tool or process improvement, I actually get relief — not just a higher volume of the same work.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly

THEME 4: STRATEGIC CLARITY

7. I know what my organization's top priorities are for this year — not because I inferred them, but because someone told me.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly
8. I understand how my specific role connects to the direction the organization is trying to go.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly

THEME 5: VOICE & TRUST

9. I feel safe flagging inefficiencies or broken processes to my manager without worrying it will reflect badly on me.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly
10. If I could change one thing about how my team operates, I would feel comfortable saying it out loud at work.	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Yes, clearly

YOUR WORKER SCORE

Add up your ratings. Total possible: 30.

Score	What It Means	What You Might Do With This
24–30	Healthy Ground	<i>You are in an environment where clarity and trust are working. That is worth naming — and worth protecting as things change.</i>
15–23	Mixed Signals	<i>Some things are working and some are not. The questions you rated lowest are worth paying attention to. You are not alone in feeling this.</i>
Under 15	This Is Real	<i>What you are experiencing is not a personal failing. It is an organizational one. You deserve a workplace with a stronger foundation — and this assessment is a start.</i>

What to do with your score

Go back and read it. Notice which questions made you pause the longest. Those pauses are information.

Then come back to The Commonwealth Circular and share what you found. What question hit hardest? What did you see that you had been avoiding? I am collecting these responses and may feature what I am hearing in a future issue.

If you are an HR director or organizational leader who wants to use this with your team — I would love to hear from you. There may be something more we can build together.

Book a free 30-minute conversation: calendly.com/maria-aiforworkandlife/30min

Or reach out directly: maria@aiforworkandlife.com

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