



The Integrator: The Missing Business Capability Your Organization Didn't Know It Needed

By Kim Bettinger

Ever wonder why cross-functional work is so hard?

Despite all the talent, tools, and cross-functional roles in organizations today, many still struggle. Collaboration breaks down. Finger-pointing becomes commonplace. Silos deepen.

Teams are frustrated because they can't succeed without "the other team" doing their part. Leaders are frustrated because—despite smart people and good intentions—this all feels harder than it should.

It's time to name and elevate the business capability that addresses this:
The Integrator.

What Is the Integrator?

The Integrator is a **business capability** that translates strategic vision into coordinated, cross-functional execution. It aligns people, processes, technology, and priorities—not just optimizing within functions, but transforming what happens *between them*.

Integrators dismantle silos, interrupt "us vs. them" dynamics, eliminate duplicative systems and mini-cultures, and resolve the cross-functional misalignments that quietly erode momentum.

When organizations embrace and train for this capability, it becomes a powerful differentiator—delivering results where traditional role boundaries fall short.

Why Do We Need This?

Too often, teams operate from an “us vs. them” mindset—but they’re not trained to see it, name it, or fix it. Especially under pressure, finger-pointing feels like self-preservation.

This mindset assumes:

- If one team wins, the other must lose.
- If I’m right, you must be wrong.
- There isn’t enough—budget, resources, attention—so we fight for what we can get.

That fear breeds **bad behavior**. People start to feel unsafe. They create false narratives and negative assumptions about “the other side,” which soon feel like facts:

- “They just don’t like change.”
- “They’re stuck in the past.”
- “They don’t care.”
- “They’re not accountable.”
- “They have no sense of urgency.”

That behavior **breaks relationships**—and broken relationships slow everything down.

This gets reinforced when **broken handoffs** between teams and **unaligned expectations** go unmet. Suddenly, those assumptions feel justified, and confirmation bias kicks in: “See? I was right about them all along.”

Meanwhile, in an effort to drive alignment, leadership makes sweeping declarations:

“Here are our shared goals. The shared metrics. The shared priorities. The new culture. The system of work we’ll all use.”

But those declarations rarely land—because each function works differently. Finance isn’t IT. Marketing isn’t Engineering. When a one-size-fits-all approach is forced, teams experience it as arbitrary barriers to doing their jobs.

Morale drops. Trust erodes. And momentum stalls.

So, if your relationships are fraying, your handoffs are breaking, and your shared goals aren’t translating into real alignment—I’d argue:

You don’t have a performance problem.

You have a fragmentation problem.

And that’s exactly what the Integrator is designed to solve.

Think about your favorite sports team. The players don't just excel individually—they practice together. They understand their roles *and* each other's roles. Their handoffs are clean. Their communication becomes shorthand. There is trust.

And those teams?

They win.

What's the Solution?

The Integrator capability intentionally builds this kind of high-trust, high-performance environment—especially across functions.

It includes tools like the **Behavior Wheel**, which helps interrupt the assumption-driven thinking that undermines relationships. And it focuses on the messy—but critical—work of realignment and repair.

Integrators act as:

- Bridge-builders
- Translators
- Mediators
- Coaches
- Truth-tellers

They ask the hard questions, surface what's unspoken, and ensure people have what they need to solve the right problems. They design systems of work that reflect both **organizational values** and **team realities**.

Importantly, they don't impose one way of working—they **translate**. They implement shared goals, metrics, priorities, culture, and systems in ways that are adapted to each team's character and workflow.

When the Integrator Capability Is Embedded:

- Execution speeds up
- Teams fight less and create more
- Strategy becomes real
- People feel safe to debate and challenge
- Workflows—not just within teams, but between them

The Integrator is **not** a job title.
It's a **missing business capability**.

In a fragmented world, it brings the clarity, coherence, and connective strength that teams need to move forward together.

This isn't about adding process.
It's about removing unhealthy friction that keeps good people from doing great work—and replacing it with **creative tension** that **fuels innovation**.

“Because execution breaks down between the boxes on the org chart.”

We've spent decades optimizing **within** teams.
Now it's time to optimize **between** them.

Let's reimagine what's possible when we build teams not only to perform—but to perform **together**.

I'd love to hear how this resonates with your organization.
Are you seeing this same pattern?
Are you already doing this work—but without a name for it?
Let's start the conversation.

#IntegratorBusinessCapability #BusinessTransformation #CrossFunctionalExecution
#Leadership #OrganizationDesign #TeamHealth