

Before we talk: six examples, answered in advance

The questions I usually get asked first. Pick any and we'll go deeper on the call.

How have you handled a high-risk exit?

John Holland, North West Program Alliance

The employee had been rated a 2 two years running and nobody had acted: a broken manager relationship, wellbeing support in place and a high profile inside a four-party alliance. I built trust and found he'd been holding in a grievance about how he was treated through a personal loss. In parallel, I coached his manager on setting expectations. Then I brokered it both ways: opened a without-prejudice conversation with the business, coached him on what to ask for, and worked with the in-house employment lawyers and the alliance to keep it inside guardrails and budget.

Voluntary redundancy agreed. Two years of drift closed out without escalation.

Tell me about someone you've developed.

Octave

A junior practitioner in my team was escalating most ambiguous issues to me. I didn't become her answer machine. Each time, we separated the legal, operational and political issues, clarified her authority and next step, and I left the ownership with her. When she spotted an on-call arrangement that didn't feel right, I walked her through the ER logic and she turned it into policy.

She now owns leave, recruitment, grievances and policy, leads training, and is on track to take on New Zealand.

How do you approach organisation design?

Australian Private Networks

I assessed which roles the business still needed, across marketing, training, HR and team leadership, and built the business case for CEO sign-off. Each went through a compliant process, and most settled without prejudice before reaching full redundancy consultation.

A leaner structure signed off by the CEO, 10% smaller, with no formal claims.

Tell me about a policy you changed to keep good people.

Thornton Engineering

An experienced workshop manager, who'd relocated for the role after a long search, was three months into a six-month probation when another employer offered him a job with none. Everyone was happy with him, but the owner's line was firm: everyone does six. I made the case on the risk of losing him, got the green light, then made it policy: a three-month check where managers make the call.

We kept him. New starters got certainty sooner, the business got flexibility in a skills-short market, and morale lifted on the floor.

Tell me about a change you've driven.

Octave

HR teams across APAC were losing hours to the same routine questions. I built an AI self-service assistant, now live across six countries, and designed the hand-off as carefully as the answers: anything out of scope goes to the HRBP, with an offer to draft the email for the employee.

95% accuracy across all HR queries, and an estimated 20% of HR enquiry time handed back in each country.

Give me an example of commercial impact.

Octave

The merged business carried a \$3m leave liability, and with a largely remote workforce, leave could go unrecorded. I built a tracker, briefed managers and made the monitoring visible, then pushed people to book leave over Christmas.

12% off the liability in three months, with further reduction expected after the year-end break.

Looking for

Head of People, Head of HR or People and Culture Director. Melbourne based.

Best fit

Businesses integrating, scaling or redesigning, that need a more commercial people function.

In short

Business problems first. HR is one of the tools.

Grounded in the Fair Work Act, NES and NZ ERA.