

See What You're Missing

You don't see everything your team does. That invisible work is load-bearing.

Take 20 minutes. Pick one person on your team. Answer these five questions honestly. Start from two assumptions: you don't see everything, and what you don't see is holding things together.

1 Who on your team have you underestimated?

And what were you wrong about?

Be specific. Name the assumption you made and what evidence proved it wrong.

2 When this person pushes back, what are they seeing?

Not what you think they're doing — what are they tracking that you aren't?

What pattern or risk do they catch that others miss?

3 Where does this person absorb friction?

Who do they protect?

What breaks or blows up when they're not in the room? This is invisible labor. Name it.

4 What would you have gotten wrong without them?

Think back six months.

One decision, one conversation, one moment. What did they catch, redirect, or fix that you didn't fully credit?

5 What's their most important contribution you've never said out loud?

What would they say matters most to them that you've never acknowledged?

Write it down. Then say it.

One more thing. When you can name what someone does that no one else sees, you stop managing a job description and start leading a person.