



LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

REFLECTION 03

Data Informs Decisions. People Make Them.

“ *The strongest recommendations don't just answer questions. They build confidence in the path ahead.* ”

One of the lessons I've learned in executive leadership is that better data doesn't always lead to better decisions.

That isn't because data doesn't matter.

It's because data is only one part of how decisions are made.

Over the years, I've learned that executive decisions are shaped by far more than analysis. They reflect the experiences people bring into the room, the risks they're prepared to accept and the confidence they have in a particular path forward.

Two experienced leaders can review the same data and arrive at different conclusions.

Both believing they're acting in the organisation's best interests.

Earlier in my career, I found that frustrating. I believed that if the analysis was thorough enough, the best path would reveal itself.

Experience has taught me something different.

Data informs decisions. People make them.

That realisation changed the way I approach leadership.

Rigorous analysis remains essential.

But over time I've realised it earns you a seat at the table but it doesn't make the decision for you.

The strongest recommendations don't just answer questions. They build confidence in the path ahead.

That means understanding what sits behind the questions, listening for the concerns that remain unspoken and recognising that trust is built long before a decision is made.

Data will always matter.

However, experience has taught me that leadership isn't only about presenting the strongest case.

It's about creating the confidence that allows good decisions to be made.

Looking back, what lesson about executive decision-making has experience taught you that data alone never could?