

01

THE HERO SERIES · EPISODE 01

Weed the Garden Before You Grow It

Most leadership teams know what they want to grow. Far fewer agree on what they will stop tending so that growth has room. The second conversation is harder, and it usually decides whether the first one succeeds.

Clear the bed before you plant



STARRING YOU, AS
The Leadership Team

THE HERO SERIES PRESENTS · EPISODE 01

STARRING **YOU**, AS THE LEADERSHIP TEAM · GUIDED BY COMPASS PERFORMANCE



YOUR STORY, AS
The Leadership Team

TEAM ALIGNMENT

Clear the bed before you plant

Weeding is not destruction. It is the work that makes growth possible.

The story in four acts

I

THE SITUATION

A garden that is already full

Every growth plan lands on customers, products, projects, reports and meetings that were started for good reasons and never formally stopped.

III

THE SHIFT

Weed together, outside-in

The whole team agrees what it will no longer do, starting from the customers and offerings that create most of the value.

II

THE TENSION

Why growth stalls

The same few people sit on every critical project, decisions wait for overbooked meetings, and a long tail of exceptions uses up the attention the strategy needs.

IV

WHAT CHANGES

Room to grow

Meetings get shorter, critical projects move faster, and growth becomes the work the organization has made room for.

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Pruning means focusing resources, never punishing people.

The weeding sort

TEND Work that serves the customers and offerings that create most of the value

Stop

Work that no longer earns its place

Simplify

Combine or standardize it

Move

To the people best placed to own it

Keep on purpose

Safety, compliance or a chosen future option

Front-to-Back 80/20 starts outside-in. Everything else is not automatically a weed, but it has to earn its place.

Before they grew, someone was willing to clear the bed.

THE FULL STORY

Every growth plan arrives in a garden that is already full. The organization is running its current customers, products, projects, reports and meetings, and each of them was started for a reason that once made sense. Very little of it was ever formally stopped. When a leadership team adds a new market, a new offering or a new system on top of all that, the new work does not land in empty soil. It competes for the same water and light as everything already planted.

A gardener knows this instinctively. Before planting, they clear the bed. They pull what is choking the strongest plants, prune what has outgrown its purpose, and leave some things on purpose because they matter for the season ahead. Weeding is not destruction. It is the work that makes growth possible.

Why growth stalls in a crowded garden

When growth disappoints, the usual explanations are external: the market softened, a competitor moved, the timing was wrong. Sometimes that is true. More often, the plan was sound and the organization simply did not have the capacity to carry it alongside everything else it was already carrying.

The signs are familiar. The same few people sit on every critical project. Decisions wait for meetings that are already overbooked. Teams give the same care to a marginal account as to a core one, and carry a long tail of

variants, exceptions and legacy commitments through every step of their work. None of this appears on a strategy slide. All of it consumes the attention the strategy needs.

Weeding is a leadership team decision

No single executive can weed the garden alone. A head of sales cannot retire a product line without operations, finance and service agreeing what happens to the customers who buy it. An operations leader cannot simplify a process that three other functions depend on. Each function can see its own weeds clearly and everyone else's only dimly, which is why the work so often stalls.

That is why the most useful question for a leadership team is not what each function will do next year, but what the team, together, will no longer do. A visible list of what we will not do, owned by the whole team and reviewed as seriously as the list of what we will do, changes the conversation. It turns trade-offs from private frustrations into shared decisions.

Start outside-in, with the vital few

Weeding goes wrong when it starts from cost. Cutting whatever looks expensive tends to remove the wrong things and frighten the right people. Front-to-Back 80/20 starts from the other end, outside-in: which customers and offerings create most of the value, and what work genuinely serves them? Everything else is not automatically a weed, but it has to earn its place.

SIMPLIFY then gives the team a practical way through the rest. Some work can stop. Some can be combined, standardized or moved to the people best placed to own it. Some must stay, because it protects safety, compliance or a future option the team has chosen to keep. The point is not to make the garden bare. It is to make sure the strongest plants get the light.

Protect the soil while you weed

Two cautions keep this honest. The first is that pruning means focusing resources, never punishing people. The individuals who built a legacy product or process usually did so because the business asked them to. If stopping their work feels like a verdict on them, the organization will learn to hide its weeds rather than surface them.

The second is that weeding is not a one-time clean-up. Gardens refill. New requests, new customers and new ideas arrive every week, and each one is easier to start than to stop. ARC gives the team a rhythm for this: analyze what is consuming capacity, refine the few choices that matter most, and commit to dated decisions, then return to the same list at the next review to see whether the space you cleared is actually being used for growth.

What changes when the garden is clear

When a leadership team weeds together, the effects show up in places the plan never mentioned. Meetings get shorter because fewer things are competing for the agenda. Critical projects move faster because the people they depend on are no longer spread across everything. Conversations between functions become less defensive, because the team has already agreed what matters most and what can wait.

Most of all, growth stops being an extra layer of effort on top of a full day. It becomes the work the organization has made room for. That is the quiet discipline behind many growth stories: before they grew, someone was willing to clear the bed.

TRY THIS · ABOUT 90 MINUTES

The leadership team weeding session

The full leadership team, one working session, with the current list of initiatives, products and standing meetings in front of you.

1. Each leader lists, privately, the three pieces of work in their own area they would stop tomorrow if they could, and the three in other areas they suspect are crowding out growth.
2. Share the lists. Group the items, and mark which ones serve the customers and offerings that create most of the value.
3. For every item that does not, choose: stop, simplify, move, or keep on purpose, and say why.
4. Write the team's What We Will Not Do list, with an owner and a date for each item.
5. Agree where the cleared capacity goes, and when the team will review the list again.

If the list is short, the team may be protecting each other's weeds. If it is long, choose the three that free the most capacity for growth and start there.

YOUR NEXT STEP

A confidential discovery conversation

If your growth plan is competing with everything the organization already carries, a confidential conversation is a place to think through what your leadership team could clear first. It is a conversation, not a proposal.

Schedule a Conversation: meetings.hubspot.com/steve-kopecky · skopecky@compassperformanceinc.com

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