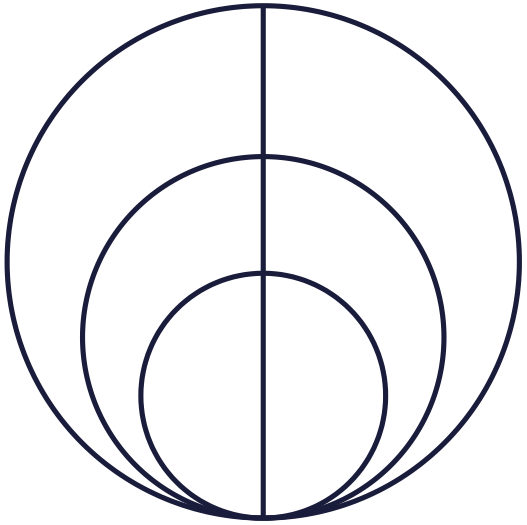
From board work to leading the future.

Ideology, the board’s plans and the rhythm of leadership.

For the owner and the chair who want more from their board than the law requires.



To the reader

Too many Finnish companies do not grow or make a sufficient profit. Even the best owners and investors do not succeed in all of their companies.

I have seen the same thing for three decades as an owner, an investor and on boards. The cause is rarely the business idea, the industry or even the CEO. Most often the problem lies in the same place: the owner–board–management chain is broken. The owner does not quite know what they want from the board. The board does not know what value it should create. And management is left too alone to carry responsibility for the future. The money and the competence are there, but they do not turn into results, because the owner's will breaks somewhere on its way to management's execution.

That is why I keep repeating a sentence I have said for years: good board work may be the most underused opportunity in Finnish companies. The problem is not that Finnish board professionals lack skill. The problem is how narrowly board work has been defined: meetings, the rear-view mirror and supervision.

Aura Boards changes this. The owner creates the opportunities, the board creates tomorrow and management delivers the results. The owner writes down in an owner strategy what they want from the company. The board's new task is to build the company's future together with management: long-term goals, the annual plan, the metrics and the forecast. The conversation then moves from history to tomorrow. No longer just "what happened?", but "what do we do next?"

This does not mean mixing up roles. Quite the opposite. The CEO leads the company, but does not have to know or solve everything alone. The board acts as part-time reinforcements – the right expertise for the right problem, when it is needed.

The future is not led by guesswork. The board needs a place where the company's information lives between meetings and can be trusted – I call it the data pond. On top of it sits the AI situation room, which shows the forecast, the deviations and what needs attention next. The machine calculates, the human decides.

In the pages that follow I describe how the chain is rebuilt – in the same order as good board work. First the ideology: why the board exists and what the owner should get from it. An interlude on the five pillars on which everything else rests. Then the plans: what the board actually builds. Finally the rhythm: how owners, board and management stay on the same map between meetings too.

Every chapter ends with one sentence. Read only those sixteen and you already have the essentials.

– Ville Tolvanen

Three parts, sixteen chapters and five pillars

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No company is perfect

The perfect company is a paradox. It does not exist. Owning and leading a company means living with permanent unfinishedness: when one problem is solved, the next one is already waiting its turn.

That is why I do not believe in “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. I believe in versioning. No company is perfect, but every company can be rebuilt as a better version of itself. Not by chance. Systematically, one version at a time.

A good cookbook does not promise a perfect restaurant. It teaches the basic techniques a chef can use to build a good dish in any kitchen. The same goes for a company. Fashions change. The basic techniques remain: the business idea, ownership, the board, management, growth and continuous renewal.

The best companies are rarely outstanding at one thing. They are good enough at almost everything. One weak link is enough to stop an otherwise strong whole: unclear ownership, weak sales, poor financial discipline, the wrong team or a passive board.

This leads to one important idea. The owner’s job is not to know everything. It is to recognise what the company lacks and to bring in better capability. The board is one of the most important ways to complement the capabilities of the owner and management.

Exposure is part of leadership. Other owners, new members, customers, the market and different perspectives reveal things you cannot see from inside your own bubble. What you do not know, you cannot fix.

A strong leader is not the one who knows everything. A strong leader knows what they do not know – and builds a team around them that does.

IN PRACTICE

Ask your board: what is our weakest link right now – and who takes responsibility for it? Choose one improvement, one owner and one deadline. Then on to the next version.

No company is perfect. A better version can always be built.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, prologue and chapter 1 · The origins of Aura Boards · What is Aura Boards?

The difference is in the structure

I have analysed more than a hundred Finnish companies as an investor, owner or adviser. Between the top tier and the average, one difference keeps recurring. It is not the industry, the product or the CEO's personality.

The difference is in the structure.

In a good company, success is not one person's energy budget. The owner does not have to remember everything. The CEO does not have to carry everything. Strategy does not disappear with a change of people. When the market shifts, the company does not sit waiting for the next meeting.

A company's basic architecture has four levels. Each has its own responsibility, its own tool and its own metric.

LEVEL	RESPONSIBILITY	TOOL	METRIC
Owner	Creates the opportunities	Owner strategy	Growth in owner value
Board	Builds tomorrow	1000 days, annual clock	Growth, profitability, value creation
CEO	Leads this year's work	Annual plan, budget, rhythm	Delivery of the annual result
Management team	Implements the strategy	Functional plans, metrics	Progress of the plans

In a small entrepreneurial firm the same person may sit on all four chairs. That is natural. As the company grows, however, the chairs must be separated. A firm is a "me" company: much of it lives in one person's head and hands. A company is a "we" company: the structure carries people and changing situations.

The most common empty row is the board's row. The board meets, but it has no plan of its own, no rhythm of its own and no metrics. Aura Boards is built around exactly this gap.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapters 1 and 3 · Air traffic control – what makes a good board?

IN PRACTICE

Draw the four levels and ask: are all of them working? Where do roles overlap? Where does nobody own the responsibility? The first fix goes into the emptiest box.

A firm can run on one person's energy. A company must carry on without any one person.

The owner creates the opportunities, the board creates tomorrow and management delivers the results

In dozens of companies I have asked the owner, the chair and the CEO the same question separately: who decides the direction of this company?

If I get three different answers, the company does not have a strategy problem. It has a role problem. Unclear roles turn every big decision into a negotiation and every difficult situation into something personal.

The owner creates the opportunities. The owner's task is to say why the company is owned, what it is meant to achieve, how much risk is acceptable and over what time span value is built. The owner strategy is the board's brief.

The board creates tomorrow. It turns the owner's intent into direction, choices, targets, investments and follow-up. The board must spend clearly more time on what can still be changed than on what has already happened.

Management delivers the results. The CEO and the management team turn the direction into this year's plan, decisions and actions. A good board does not come to run the business on management's behalf. It makes sure management can lead well.

Roles do not mean silos. Quite the opposite. Together, in different roles, on the same side of the table. The owner's will, the board's direction and management's execution form one chain.

Three chairs. Three responsibilities. One company.

IN PRACTICE

Ask the owner, the chair and the CEO separately: what does the owner want, what is the board responsible for and what may management decide? If the answers do not meet, clarify the roles before the next strategy day.

The owner creates the opportunities. The board, tomorrow. Management, the results.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 3 · The CEO and the chair – the perfect pair · Who owns the strategy?

The seven sins of the traditional board

The duties set out in the Companies Act are the board's starting point. Not its goal. Beyond the law, the owner should ask a second question: what value does the board create for the company? I have distilled the shortcomings of traditional board culture into seven sins.

1. **Meeting-centricity.** The board tries to deliver all its value in a few meetings a year. The time between meetings stays empty, although that is where the company's everyday life happens.
2. **Rear-view focus.** Time goes into explaining actuals. The board deals with things it can no longer influence, and tomorrow is left as the last item.
3. **Closedness.** The same composition, the same information, the same networks. The company changes, but the board does not change with it.
4. **Passive supervision.** Supervision is part of the board's job, but on its own it does not add value. The owner also needs sparring, choices and future-building from the board.
5. **Lack of time.** A board seat is seen as a side job, prepared for only as far as the meeting pack goes. Good board work needs bandwidth between meetings too.
6. **The same line-up.** Four generalists do not automatically make a good board. The composition must match the needs of the company's next thousand days.
7. **Silo leadership.** The owner owns, the board governs and management manages – with different information, at a different rhythm and with too little dialogue.

These do not fix themselves at the meeting table. The movement starts with the owner and the chair. First you must decide that you want more from the board.

IN PRACTICE

Go through the seven sins with your board. Do not score people, score the way of working. Pick one sin to eliminate in the next 90 days.

Good board work begins where mere administration ends.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 13 · Good board work 2026 · What is good board work?

The board is a service, not just a governing body

In the eyes of the law, the board is a governing body of the company. From the owner's and management's point of view, it should feel like a service: better decisions, a clearer direction, higher-quality sparring and faster learning.

This is the original idea behind Aura Boards: the board as a service. The owner does not need more meetings. They need a board that helps the company succeed. Management does not need a second management team. It needs a board that brings perspective, experience and challenge without taking over management's work.

The aim is to help a firm grow into a company. In a "me" company, knowledge, relationships and decisions live in people's heads. In a "we" company, the owner's will, the board's plan, the leadership rhythm and the metrics form a structure that can be transferred, taught and improved.

THREE LOAD-BEARING PRINCIPLES

1. **Owner strategy and a 1000-day direction.** The board must know what the owner wants and what kind of company is being built next.
2. **Continuous interaction.** Information does not wait for the meeting. The owner, the chair and the CEO talk often enough for surprises to shrink.
3. **Sparring and renewal.** The board brings experience, networks, alternatives and challenge. Value is created above all between meetings.

The investment in a board can be measured with four questions: are the owners and management satisfied with the board process, is the planned growth happening, is the business profitable and is owner value growing?

IN PRACTICE

Ask the owner and the CEO separately: what do you get from the board right now? The answer must describe impact, not meetings. If the benefit is hard to name, the service needs a new plan.

A board is not a meeting calendar. It is a service process for the owner and management.

Sources: Good board work 2026 · Aura Boards 2026 · Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 14

Methods, tools and the experience of others

Aura Boards is not a single product. It is an equation.

Methods. Systemic leadership connects ownership, the board and management into one chain. The owner's will becomes the board's direction, the board's direction becomes management's plan and the plan becomes action. The method answers the question: in what order is a company built?

Tools. Owner strategy, health check, Balance Radar, the 1000-day playbook, the board's annual plan, the annual clock, a shared situational picture and the AI situation room. A tool is not a substitute for thinking. Its job is to make good thinking visible, repeatable, challengeable and trackable.

The experience of others. This is the hardest part to copy. An owner learns from another owner, a chair from another chair and a board from another board. Over three decades I have learned that the best new practice is often found at someone else's table.

Order matters. First the idea, then the operating model, then the tool. An AI situation room does not fix an unclear owner strategy, poor reporting or a missing forecast. It helps make a working leadership system faster, more transparent and more forward-looking.

The parts of the equation need each other: a method without practice stays talk, a tool without a method stays a feature, and without peer experience everyone reinvents the same thing. From board work to leading the future is a mission, not a product name.

IN PRACTICE

Ask one thing of every tool: does this improve decisions or does it just add activity? The AI situation room comes in only once the owner's will, the plans and the leadership rhythm exist.

Methods + tools + the experience of others = Aura Boards.

Sources: What is Aura Boards? · The origins of Aura Boards · Täydellinen yritys v2.9 · Brand canon v2.2 · AI Situation Room White Paper v1.1

The five pillars

The ideology explains why the board exists. The pillars explain what good board work rests on. They are neither software nor a checklist, but five questions through which any board can be examined: what exists, what is missing and where development should begin.

PILLAR	QUESTION FOR THE BOARD	CHAPTERS
1 · Foresight and forecasting	Are we looking ahead, or in the rear-view mirror?	08 · 15
2 · Strategy and documentation	Are the owner's will, the board's direction and management's plan written into one chain?	07
3 · Real-time information	Does information move between meetings, or does it wait for the meeting?	09 · 12 · 14
4 · Structured encounters	Does every encounter have a theme, a goal and a decision?	10 · 11
5 · AI support	Does the machine help us see further, or just produce more reports?	13 · 15

The pillars form a whole. None is enough on its own. Foresight without strategy is daydreaming. Strategy without real-time information is paperwork. Information without structured encounters is noise. Encounters without AI support stay stuck in yesterday.

The order is the same as in chapter 06: AI support is the fifth pillar, not the first. It strengthens the other four but replaces none of them. Chapter 16 brings all five together into a 100-day plan.

IN PRACTICE

Go through the five questions with your board. Mark each one: working, partly or missing. Start with the weakest pillar – it is your company's weakest link in board work.

Five pillars. None carries the load alone.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 14 · Methodology White Paper v1.1 · Brand canon

PILLAR 2 · STRATEGY AND DOCUMENTATION

Four documents

The board's work becomes visible in four documents. They must exist, be up to date and, above all, be aligned with each other.

1. **Owner strategy on one page.** Why do we own, what are we after, over what time span and within what boundaries? The board's brief.
2. **1000-day plan.** A three-year playbook: targets, the key choices, investments, risks and development projects.
3. **The board's action plan.** What the board does this year: the annual clock, themes, decisions, development projects and its own evaluation.
4. **Business strategy and management's annual plan.** How management turns the 1000-day direction into this year's actions, resources and results.

When these four talk to each other, the owner's will runs through the company. When one is missing, someone has to guess. Often it is the board that improvises, because the owner strategy or the board's own plan is missing.

The chair's job is not to write all the documents. It is to make sure they are created, updated and kept aligned.

Every plan breaks down into five questions: what, who, how, when and how it is measured. Without a name and a metric, a plan is a wish.

IN PRACTICE

Put the four documents on the same table. First check whether they exist. Then ask whether they say the same thing. Missing or conflicting points go into the board's own action plan.

Four documents. One chain from the owner's will to management's action.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapters 17–18 · Annual Planning White Paper v1.1 · Board annual plan 2027

PILLAR 1 · FORESIGHT AND FORECASTING

A thousand days

What will we do in the next thousand days?

The question is simple and hard. A thousand days is roughly three years. It is long enough that the company is forced to change, but short enough that the plan can still be seen, resourced and led.

Many companies get through a year by carrying on as before. Not a thousand days. Customers, competition, skills, technology, costs and the owners' lives all change. That is why the board must decide what kind of company it wants to build before change forces its hand.

A 1000-day plan contains four things: clear targets, a few metrics, the key development projects and named owners. Not a hundred projects. Not dozens of targets. Few enough to be remembered.

The plan is not a file opened once a year. It must be visible in every board meeting. Where are we, what changed, what did we learn, what do we decide next?

I use one question myself: which of this meeting's decisions makes the company a better version of itself a thousand days from now? If there is no answer, the meeting probably spent too much time looking back.

A thousand days also fits ownership changes, leadership transitions and preparing the next generation. Three years is a long time if you start early and a short time to discover you are late.

IN PRACTICE

If there is no 1000-day plan, make the first version at the next strategy workshop. It can be rough. What matters more is to start, name the choices and return to them regularly.

What will we do in the next thousand days? The board must be able to answer.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 18 · What is Aura Boards? · Board annual plan 2027

PILLAR 3 · REAL-TIME INFORMATION

52/12/365 – value is created between meetings

A board is not a series of six meetings. It is a year-long process. 52/12/365 makes the rhythm visible: the week, the month and the year serve different purposes.

I have calculated the cost of a good board process from the owner's point of view many times. The investment is small compared with what is at stake in the company. What matters is not the number of hours but continuity. The board knows what is happening, and management knows help is available before the next meeting.

LEVEL	RHYTHM	WHAT HAPPENS
52 weeks	Continuous contact	A short signal or a chair–CEO conversation. Deviations and opportunities surface immediately.
12 months	Monthly	Actuals, management's forecast and A Moment for Tomorrow. What changed and what do we do next?
365 days	Annually	Owner strategy, the 1000-day direction, annual plans, budget, strategy season and board evaluation.

Most boards use only the annual rhythm: meetings, financial statements, budget and a strategy day. Information piles up, deviations go stale and decisions wait for the calendar.

The common thread is A Moment for Tomorrow. At least once a month the owner, the chair and the CEO stop to look ahead: what is changing around us, where are we heading, what needs a decision or sparring?

A deviation is dealt with when it arises. In a growth company, three months is too long to wait. Real time does not mean constant meetings. It means that nothing important has to wait for the meeting date.

IN PRACTICE

Start with one weekly signal and one monthly A Moment for Tomorrow conversation. Do not build more meetings. Build a better rhythm of information and sparring.

Value is created between meetings. A meeting gathers the work; it does not replace it.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 18 · Aura Boards 2026 · A Moment for Tomorrow · Planning, organising and leading board work

PILLAR 4 · STRUCTURED ENCOUNTERS

The annual clock and the strategy day

An annual clock built on administration alone belongs in the bin. A good annual clock does not start from the mandatory dates of the financial statements but from the company's strategy. Every meeting has a theme, a goal and a decision to make. Form follows purpose.

PERIOD	WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE YEAR
January–May	Clarifying direction, the commercial situation, capabilities, investments and the first strategic choices.
June	Half-year picture. What did we learn, what changed and what must the strategy workshop resolve?
July	Rest. A good rhythm includes room to think.
August	Strategy workshop. A shared situational picture, alternatives, decisions and an update of the 1000-day plan.
September–December	Implementing the choices, planning next year, budget, investments and the board's self-evaluation.

The strategy day is the most important workshop of the year. It is not an extension of a normal meeting. People need time to step out of daily work, build a shared picture, weigh the alternatives and make choices. Preferably two days, away from the office.

For every meeting you can draw a simple attention map: how much time went to the past, how much to the future? The goal is not to ban history. The goal is to make sure the rear-view mirror does not take over the whole agenda. A good target is at least half the time on the future.

The chair turns the board year into a clear process. The owner sees what the board is building. Members know where their expertise is needed. Management knows what is being prepared and decided, and when.

IN PRACTICE

Build the annual clock together with the owner, the chair and the CEO. Write three things into every meeting: theme, goal and decision. If there is nothing to decide, ask whether the meeting is needed.

A board without its own annual plan meets. It does not yet lead.

Sources: Board annual plan 2027 · Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 18 · Annual Planning White Paper v1.1

PILLAR 4 · STRUCTURED ENCOUNTERS

The chair's promise

The chair represents the owners in the company, leads the board as a team and works as the CEO's partner. The chair is not a second CEO, nor an emeritus at the head of the table. The chair is the playmaker of company value.

I have distilled the chair's promise into five points. They say more about the role than the title does.

1. **I lead the board's year, not just its meetings.** The board has its own plan, rhythm and goals.
2. **I keep our eyes forward.** History is understood, but tomorrow gets more attention than yesterday.
3. **I build quality encounters and continuous dialogue.** Owner, board and management do not meet only at the minutes.
4. **I ensure the quality of plans, metrics, the shared situational picture and the forecast.** The board knows where we are, where we are going and what must happen next.
5. **I think like an owner and work as the CEO's partner.** Close enough to understand, far enough to see.

The chair and the CEO are a zip. When the connection works, the board can help management and management can make use of the board. When it does not, the rest of the structure soon starts to creak.

A good board is a coaching team, not a collection of stars. The chair's job is to put the members' expertise to shared use, build trust and make sure that even difficult things are said out loud.

IN PRACTICE

Owner, ask your chair three things: what is the board building this year, which choice for the next thousand days do we spend most time on, and how does the chair help the CEO between meetings?

The chair leads the board. A good chair builds the company's tomorrow.

Sources: The Chair's Promise v1.1 · The CEO and the chair – the perfect pair · A good chair is a co-pilot · Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 17

PILLAR 3 · REAL-TIME INFORMATION

We over Me – one team, one direction

The Aura Boards leadership idea fits into three words: We over Me. The company must not be the personal project of the owner, the chair or the CEO. It is a shared undertaking.

We over Me does not mean mixing up roles. Quite the opposite. Collaboration works only when responsibilities are clear. The owner decides the will of ownership, the board builds the direction and management leads execution. Different roles, the same side of the table.

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT IS NEEDED
1 · Shared direction	The same 1000-day targets	Everyone builds the same company
2 · Clear roles	Owner, board and management know their responsibilities	Decisions get faster
3 · Shared information	The same situational picture for everyone	Trust grows
4 · Continuous dialogue	Issues surface before the meeting	Fewer surprises
5 · Shared responsibility	Decided together, execution named	Silos break down

A team is built from the same direction, the same information, a common language and trust. You may, and should, disagree before a decision. After the decision, the team plays the same game.

The chair builds this zip. The chair hears the owner's will, keeps the board together as a team and works as the CEO's partner. The job is not to win arguments but to improve the company's decisions.

When We over Me works, information moves faster, difficult issues surface earlier and personal conflicts decrease. When it does not, strategy easily turns into a power struggle and meetings into defending positions.

IN PRACTICE

Ask the owner, the board members and management to write down separately the company's three most important goals for the next thousand days. Put the answers side by side. The differences show where the conversation must start.

Clear roles. Shared direction. The same side of the table.

Sources: What is Aura Boards? · Täydellinen yritys v2.9 · The CEO and the chair – the perfect pair

PILLAR 5 · AI SUPPORT

AI situation room – better questions from shared information

The board's job is to build tomorrow. A report on what happened last month is therefore not enough. It needs a shared situational picture, management's forecast and the ability to challenge assumptions before they turn into actuals. This is where an AI situation room becomes useful.

The AI situation room is not a decision-maker and not a new management system. It is a shared workbench for the board and management that gathers existing information, surfaces deviations, compares alternatives, builds questions and helps look at the material forward. The machine does not replace judgement. It helps you see more.

Its first benefit is reporting. When finance, strategy, sales, the market, people and development projects are in the same view, the board does not have to spend the meeting going through the material. The situation room can raise changes, contradictions and open questions before the meeting. Management brings explanation and insight. The board uses the time for discussion.

The second benefit is sparring. A good board does not need only answers but better questions. What are we assuming about the market? What in this plan could fail? Which alternative have we not considered? How might a competitor act? AI can produce counter-arguments, alternative readings and scenarios, which the board weighs against its own experience.

The third benefit is the future. When history, the budget, management's assumptions and leading indicators are combined, building a forecast becomes easier. AI can calculate, model and compare. Management owns the assumptions and the forecast. The board owns the decisions. Responsibility does not move to the tool. The machine calculates, the human decides.

The value of the situation room is not that it knows the answer. The value is that it helps the board prepare better, see alternatives earlier and spend meeting time on what matters.

IN PRACTICE

Try four tasks at your next meeting: ask the situation room to raise the report's most important deviations, pose five hard questions, build three scenarios and compare management's forecast with the budget. Then discuss as people.

The machine calculates and challenges. The human interprets and decides.

Sources: AI Situation Room White Paper v1.1 · Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapter 19 · Air traffic control – what makes a good board? · Board work after a crisis

PILLAR 3 · REAL-TIME INFORMATION

The data pond – where the streams flow

A board portal stores: materials in, meeting, decision, minutes, archive. It is a line, and it does that job well. Leading the future is a loop: information, a shared picture, forecast, decision, execution, learning – and a new picture. The loop needs a place where the company's information lives between meetings.

I call it the data pond. The name is deliberately playful. A pond is not a vast lake into which every scrap of raw data is poured. It is small and clear: only what can be trusted goes in. Strategy, finance, market, AI and experience are the five streams. They flow into the same pond, and the AI situation room reads it.

Trust comes from labelling. Every figure and document carries a **source card**: where the information comes from, when it was true, who is accountable for it, how reliable it is, whether it is current or superseded, who can see it and which version it is. In practice: a status label with a few extra fields – the difference between a guess and knowledge.

The same pond is viewed from three jetties – the same foundation, different responsibilities.

JETTY	QUESTION	WHAT IT SHOWS
Owner	Where are we heading?	Delivery of the owner strategy, the 1000-day direction, value
Board	What needs to happen next?	Forecast, scenarios, deviations, decisions with their assumptions
Management	What do we do now?	Execution and metrics – its own work in view

Shared information does not mean shared access to everything, and it does not mix up roles. It gives them the same reality.

The pond learns from decisions. Every decision is recorded on a **decision card**: what, who, how, when, how it is measured – and the assumption, meaning what must be true for the decision to have been right. When the actuals arrive, the assumption is checked. Without it the situation room reports; with it, it remembers.

The data pond is not an IT project or new software. It lives in the company's own environment and belongs to the company like any other asset. Change the tool – the pond stays. AI is everywhere. Reliable corporate memory is not.

SIX LAYERS: Sources → Data pond → AI layer → Situation room → Decisions → Learning

The first two are information work, the next two the situation room, the last two board work. The pond is built before anything is bought.

Sources: AI Situation Room White Paper v1.1 · Data pond inserts v1.0 · Situation room steps v1.0

IN PRACTICE

Before your next meeting, make two lists: what information is in the pond and what is not. Mark every current document with its source, date, status and version. Record the assumption behind your next decision – and come back to it when the actuals arrive.

The machine does not sit at the table; the machine is the table. The data pond is what the table is made of.

PILLARS 1 AND 5 · FORESIGHT AND AI SUPPORT

Leading with the forecast

Finance tells you what happened. That is essential, but not enough for a board whose job is to build tomorrow. In Aura Boards the focus shifts from actuals to management's view of where the company is heading.

The budget is an assumption made at the start of the year. The forecast is management's current best estimate. They must not be confused. A good board sees history, the budget and management's forecast side by side – and asks what has changed between them.

VIEW	WHAT THE BOARD ASKS
1 · Actuals	What happened and why?
2 · Budget	What did we promise and which assumptions was it based on?
3 · Management's forecast	Where are we heading now?
4 · Leading indicators	What signals change before the result?
5 · AI scenarios	What happens if a key assumption changes?
6 · Decision	What do we change now?

Leading with the forecast does not mean guessing a perfect future. It means making assumptions visible and preparing for alternatives. Which changes in sales, price, capacity, costs or cash flow tell you about the result before it shows up in the books?

This is where the AI situation room is at its best. It can combine history, the budget, the order book, the sales pipeline, capacity and management's assumptions into a rolling view. It can calculate alternatives quickly and show which assumption moves the outcome most. The forecast becomes easier to build – but it must still be management's view, not the machine's answer.

A good forecast leads to a decision. If the outlook weakens, what do we change? If demand grows, where do we invest? If the market shifts, what is plan B? A forecast without action is just another report.

IN PRACTICE

Put three columns side by side in the next board report: actuals, budget and management's forecast. Use the AI situation room to spar on the differences, the assumptions and the scenarios. The decision is made only after the discussion.

The rear-view mirror shows where we came from. The forecast helps decide what we do next.

Sources: Täydellinen yritys v2.9, chapters on leading with the forecast · AI Situation Room White Paper v1.1 · Board work after a crisis · Systemic leadership

ALL FIVE PILLARS

The first 100 days

A hundred days is enough to change how a board works. Not to finish the company, but to change the way it is led. Order matters: first the owner's will and the roles, then the plans and a shared rhythm, and only on top of those the AI situation room.

TIMING	STEP	WHAT IS DONE
Days 1–30	1 · Owner strategy and roles	The owner writes their will on one page. Owner–board–management responsibilities are agreed out loud.
Days 1–30	2 · The 52/12/365 rhythm	Weekly contact, a monthly A Moment for Tomorrow and the year's main meetings in the calendar.
Days 31–60	3 · 1000 days and the board year	Targets, projects, metrics and the board's own action plan.
Days 31–60	4 · Shared picture and data pond	Strategy, finance, market, people and projects into the same pond, with source cards. Actuals, budget and management's forecast side by side.
Days 61–100	5 · AI situation room	Condensed reporting, deviations, sparring questions and scenarios in use. People own the assumptions, the views and the decisions.

Every step is recorded in five columns: what, who, how, when and how it is measured. Without a name, a date and a metric, a project is not a plan.

After a hundred days the company should share one language: what the owner wants, what the board is building, what management does this year, how we know we are making progress, where the forecast points and at what rhythm we talk about the future. AI helps with this, but it replaces none of these decisions.

IN PRACTICE

Do not start with AI. Start with the owner's will and the roles. Once the plans, reporting and forecast exist, the AI situation room can make them faster, more challenging and more forward-looking.

First the order of leadership. Then AI to strengthen it.

Sources: Annual Planning White Paper v1.1 · AI Situation Room White Paper v1.1 · Data pond inserts v1.0 · Täydellinen yritys v2.9 · Board annual plan 2027

The owner creates the opportunities, the board creates tomorrow and management delivers the results.

METHODS

Systemic leadership: from the owner's will to the board's direction, from the board's direction to management's execution. The core is simple: clear roles, a 1000-day direction and continuous versioning. Five pillars: foresight and forecasting, strategy and documentation, real-time information, structured encounters and AI support.

THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS

Aura Boards is a table for owners, chairs and board professionals. The best practices are not created alone. They are found by sharing experience, comparing solutions and building the next version together.

LICENCE

Free to share and quote. Please name the source. The idea is open: use it, try it, improve it and share what you learn.

TOOLS

Owner strategy on one page, health check, Balance Radar, the 1000-day playbook, the board's annual plan, the 52/12/365 rhythm, a shared situational picture, the data pond and the AI situation room. AI helps with reporting, sparring, scenarios and building the forecast – under human responsibility and on top of the method.

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From board work to leading the future.

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