

Systems for the Strategic Self

The agents felt like free leverage for a week. Each one drafted a reply, summarized a doc, stubbed a function, shipped a visible win. Then the second-order costs arrived: outputs that looked good but needed human repair, decisions escalated to you at 11pm, three people in the standup waiting on an output that never came. You added capacity on paper, lost predictable flow in practice, and became the only person who could see the whole picture.

The reflex is to add another agent, write a longer prompt, or switch to a better model. That scales the problem, not the work: a more capable agent optimizing the wrong objective just reaches the wrong outcome faster.

This book treats a mixed human and agent team as what it is: not a collection of tools but a designed operating system. The AI Team Dynamics introduces the SYNERGY framework (Shared intent, Yield to strengths, Negotiate interfaces, Evaluate loops, Review, Guardrails, Yield ownership): seven components you install deliberately, so the team compounds instead of making the founder the universal exception handler.

You will learn to:

- Write a one-sentence mission and three observable success criteria, so an agent optimizes the objective you own.
- Turn implicit handoffs into written interface contracts, so a Slack thread stops being where coordination lives.
- Set three non-negotiable guardrails and a kill-switch you have actually tested.
- Run a deskilling audit and schedule practice, so humans can still do the work when the agent is wrong.
- Measure compound productivity, not vanity throughput, and keep final judgment human.

The result is a team that compounds: every interface you write down is coordination the system stops paying for by hand, humans get sharper instead of deskilled, and a named human owns the 1% the agent gets wrong.

If you are adding agents and refuse to let speed erode judgment, this is for you.

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