

Lee A. Mazanec

Architect of HICD Forward



Lee A. Mazanec is the Architect of HICD Forward and an organizational development and institutional performance practitioner whose career has spanned more than three decades of performance improvement, leadership development, organizational change, human capital transformation, and institutional reform.

The professional foundations behind HICD Forward began early in Lee's career with exposure to change management, performance improvement, and leadership development at Ernst & Young. His work there included supporting executive development for partners and senior managers and strengthened an early understanding that organizational performance depends on more than structure, skills, or strategy alone. Leadership behavior, work systems, incentives, culture, and the conditions surrounding people all influence whether change produces results.

At Nationwide Insurance and Financial Services, that perspective became more strongly grounded in systems thinking through the work of Geary Rummler and Alan Brache. Their concept of managing the "white space" between functions had a lasting influence on Lee's approach to organizational performance. He applied those principles across initiatives that included catastrophe handling, vehicle evaluation centers, curriculum redesign, insurance simulations, process improvement, leadership development, and executive culture change. The recurring lesson was that many of the most important performance problems do not belong to a single function. They occur in the connections between people, processes, decisions, systems, and organizational boundaries.

Lee carried that thinking into increasingly complex organizational environments. At Deloitte, he contributed to and worked with the CYPRESS organizational performance framework in support of large scale human and institutional reform. That experience expanded his perspective from improving individual organizations and processes to understanding institutions as interconnected performance systems shaped by leadership, governance, human capital, workflows, capability, incentives, information, and the environments in which they operate.

Over the following years, Lee applied and continued to refine these ideas through corporate transformation and international development assignments involving ministries, public agencies, utilities, donor organizations, and major enterprises. His work increasingly focused on the space between technically sound solutions and the institutional capability required to make those solutions work in practice.

His professional grounding was further strengthened through the International Society for Performance Improvement and the Certified Performance Technologist discipline. Performance technology reinforced a principle that has remained central to his practice:

begin with the performance that must improve, understand the conditions producing the current result, and only then determine the appropriate intervention.

Lee's development as a practitioner has also been inseparable from his development as a leader. Over time, his leadership philosophy increasingly centered on servant leadership, listening, trust, participation, and creating the conditions in which others can succeed. Working across cultures and alongside executives, technical experts, government counterparts, project teams, and frontline staff reinforced his belief that sustainable change cannot simply be designed for people. It must ultimately be understood, owned, adapted, and carried forward by them.

Writing has become another important part of that continued learning. His work includes *The Human Side of Reform: Lessons Jim Taught Me About Listening, Leadership, and Change*, writing on Human Architecture, leadership and organizational systems, and the continuing HICD Forward Performance Leadership Series. His Substack essays, including *Why HICD Forward, and Why Now?*, provide a space to examine the practical lessons, leadership questions, and emerging challenges that continue to shape his thinking.

HICD Forward brings these strands of experience together. It reflects performance improvement and systems thinking, organizational development, human capital practice, change leadership, institutional reform, performance technology, servant leadership, and decades of learning from what happens when ambitious ideas encounter operating reality.

As Architect, Lee continues to develop HICD Forward through field application, practitioner tools, research, writing, and dialogue with leaders and practitioners. His focus remains practical: helping institutions build the capability to absorb change, translate it into better performance, and continue learning as their operating environment evolves.