



BATISTE ADVISORY GROUP™

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Before the Next Solution

*Why Persistent Performance Problems
Require Ground Truth*

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CLARITY BEFORE TRANSFORMATION

Why Persistent Problems Require Ground Truth

Organizations rarely struggle because leaders have failed to act. More often, they struggle because action begins before the conditions producing the problem have been fully understood.

When a performance problem becomes visible, the pressure to respond is immediate. Leaders introduce a new initiative, revise a policy, require additional training, restructure accountability, or replace the person believed to be responsible. The response may produce short-term improvement. The organization moves forward. Then the same problem returns.

Recurrence changes the nature of the leadership question.

The question is no longer simply, "What should we do next?" It becomes, "What conditions continue to make this outcome possible?"

That distinction matters for organizations shaping how care is taught, designed, led, and delivered. Persistent performance problems rarely exist in isolation. They are influenced by how roles are defined, decisions are made, leaders operate, resources are distributed, expectations are communicated, and formal structures are experienced in daily practice.

A visible problem may be the point at which the organization finally notices the issue. It is not necessarily where the issue begins.

Recurrence Is a Signal

When the same problem returns after repeated intervention, recurrence should be treated as information.

It may indicate that the organization has addressed the symptom without changing the conditions surrounding it. It may also reveal a gap between what leaders believe is happening and what people experience in the daily work.

This does not mean previous interventions were unnecessary or poorly designed. It means they may have been asked to solve a problem that had not yet been fully understood.

A recurring problem invites leaders to look beyond the most visible event, person, or performance measure. They must examine the environment in which the problem continues to emerge:

- Are roles and decision rights clear?
- Do policies reflect how work is actually performed?

- Are leaders operating with the authority and capability the organization expects of them?
- Do teams have the resources and support required to meet stated expectations?
- Are changes integrated across the organization, or added as another layer of work?
- Is the organization receiving an accurate picture of what people encounter in practice?

These questions create a different starting point. Instead of prescribing the next solution, leaders begin by developing a more accurate understanding of current conditions.

That is the purpose of ground truth.

FORMAL DESIGN AND DAILY REALITY

The Distance Between Formal Design and Daily Reality

Leaders make decisions using the information available to them. That information often comes through dashboards, performance reports, policies, organizational charts, formal meetings, and established escalation pathways.

These sources are necessary, but they do not always reveal how the organization is functioning in practice.

A policy may clearly define a process while teams rely on workarounds to complete the work. An organizational chart may assign accountability without providing the authority required to act. A performance dashboard may show improvement while employees continue to experience the conditions that originally produced the problem.

Both the formal account and the daily experience may contain truth. Neither is necessarily complete on its own.

The distance between them is where persistent performance problems often live.

Over time, that distance can become difficult to see. Workarounds become normalized. Teams compensate for unclear roles. High-performing individuals absorb structural deficiencies. Leaders respond to isolated events without seeing the pattern connecting them. The organization continues to function, but at a growing human and operational cost.

Ground truth is not the elevation of one perspective over another. It is the development of a more complete and evidence-informed understanding of how the organization is actually operating.

That understanding allows leaders to see where formal expectations and operational realities align, where they diverge, and what those differences mean for performance.

TRUTH STRUCTURE AND CAPABILITY

The Conditions Beneath the Symptom

Performance is shaped by conditions.

When those conditions support the work, people are more likely to make sound decisions, coordinate effectively, and sustain results. When the conditions are misaligned, even capable and committed people may struggle to meet organizational expectations consistently.

BAG examines these conditions through three interconnected dimensions: Truth, Structure, and Capability.

Dimension	Core concern	What it examines
Truth	What is actually happening	Patterns, lived experience, trust, reporting gaps, and the difference between formal expectations and daily reality.
Structure	How work and authority are organized	Role clarity, decision rights, governance, policies, workflows, communication pathways, and resources.
Capability	Whether expectations can be performed and sustained	Judgment, skills, leadership capacity, support, operational readiness, and the ability to carry strategy forward.

Truth, Structure, and Capability do not operate independently. A structural problem may appear to be a leadership problem. A capability gap may be intensified by unclear decision rights. A lack of trust may prevent leaders from receiving the information needed to recognize either one.

This is why persistent problems cannot always be understood by examining the visible outcome alone. Leaders must understand the conditions interacting beneath it.

RECOGNIZING THE DECISION POINT

When Leaders Need Ground Truth

Not every organizational problem requires an extensive assessment. Some challenges are clearly defined, limited in scope, and ready for a focused decision or intervention.

Ground truth becomes necessary when the organization cannot confidently explain why a problem continues to occur.

Several patterns may signal that a deeper understanding is needed:

- The same performance problem returns after multiple interventions.
- Similar teams operating within the same organization produce significantly different results.
- Leaders receive conflicting explanations for the same issue.
- Formal processes exist, but employees rely on informal workarounds to complete the work.
- Accountability is repeatedly assigned without resolving the problem.
- New initiatives are added while earlier changes remain incomplete or poorly integrated.
- Employees describe conditions that are not visible in formal reports.
- Leaders agree that something is wrong but do not agree on what is producing it.

These patterns suggest that the organization may be acting without a shared understanding of current conditions.

A defined and bounded challenge may be appropriate for Strategic Advisory. A recurring, unclear, or cross-functional problem requires a different starting point. Before selecting another intervention, the organization must determine what is actually happening, why it is happening, and which conditions must change for improvement to be sustained.

From Ground Truth to Informed Action

Ground truth is not an end in itself. Its value lies in improving the quality of the decisions that follow.

A clearer understanding of current conditions helps leaders distinguish between what requires immediate correction and what requires deeper redesign. It can reveal where expectations are sound but execution support is insufficient, where accountability has been assigned without adequate authority, and where an

apparent people problem is being produced or intensified by the surrounding system.

This changes the organization's response.

Rather than applying the same solution across every team or setting, leaders can determine where variation is justified and where it represents misalignment. Rather than adding another initiative, they can identify which existing efforts should be strengthened, integrated, redesigned, or discontinued. Rather than treating every performance gap as an individual failure, they can examine the interaction between people, leadership, structure, and organizational capability.

Ground truth also helps establish sequence. Some problems cannot be solved simultaneously, and some interventions will fail if foundational conditions remain unchanged. Leaders need to know what must be addressed first, what can follow, and what the organization is realistically prepared to sustain.

The objective is not simply to generate more information. It is to give leaders a reliable basis for choosing where to act, what to protect, and what must change before the next solution is introduced.

EXECUTIVE REFLECTION

Questions to Ask Before the Next Solution

Before introducing another intervention, leaders should be able to answer several foundational questions:

1. What do we know about the problem, and what are we assuming?
2. Where does the formal design of the organization differ from daily practice?
3. Which conditions make this problem more likely to occur or return?
4. Do the people accountable for the outcome have the authority, resources, and capability required to produce it?
5. What has the organization already tried, and what remained unchanged?
6. Are leaders receiving a complete picture of the problem from the people closest to the work?
7. Is the organization prepared to sustain the change it is considering?

These questions do not delay action. They improve the likelihood that action will address the right problem.

The Ground Truth Audit

The Ground Truth Audit™ is Batiste Advisory Group's signature assessment for organizations facing persistent, recurring, or insufficiently understood performance challenges.

Designed for organizations shaping how care is taught, designed, led, and delivered, the audit examines the cultural, leadership, operational, role, policy-to-practice, capability, and integration conditions surrounding the visible problem.

The assessment applies The Batiste Model™ across Truth, Structure, and Capability to develop a clearer understanding of how the organization is functioning, where formal expectations and daily realities diverge, and which conditions require executive attention.

Findings are synthesized into an executive-level view of current conditions, material risks, organizational strengths, priorities, and decision points. The purpose is not to prescribe a predetermined solution. It is to give leaders the clarity needed to determine the right path forward.

Continuing advisory or transformation support is considered only when it serves the organization's needs. The Ground Truth Audit™ stands on its own as a decision-support engagement.

A MORE INFORMED BEGINNING

A More Informed Beginning

The right next step is not always another action.

Sometimes the most responsible action is to pause long enough to understand why the organization keeps arriving at the same result.

Ground truth gives leaders a more informed beginning. It creates the clarity required to distinguish symptoms from conditions, activity from progress, and temporary improvement from sustainable change.

Before the next solution, understand what is really happening.

Begin With Ground Truth

If your organization is confronting a recurring performance problem and the cause remains unclear, Batiste Advisory Group can help you examine the conditions beneath it.

Begin a Ground Truth Conversation

About Batiste Advisory Group

Batiste Advisory Group, LLC is a nursing-led healthcare transformation and strategic advisory firm serving organizations shaping how care is taught, designed, led, and delivered.

The firm brings a clinically grounded and operationally informed perspective to organizational transformation, strategic advisory, leadership development, and executive education. Its work helps leaders understand current conditions, strengthen organizational capability, and make consequential decisions with greater clarity.

About Dr Quanna Batiste

Dr. Quanna Batiste, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, is the Founder and Principal Consultant of Batiste Advisory Group, LLC.

She brings nearly three decades of experience in nursing, enterprise clinical leadership, ambulatory operations, workforce strategy, and organizational transformation. Her work connects executive strategy with the daily realities of the people, structures, and systems responsible for carrying it forward.

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