



EPISODE 6

The Real Meeting Happens Before the Meeting

Your best data keeps losing in the room because decisions rarely start with data — they start in private conversations and the unconscious mind. This episode gives you the pre-wire playbook: map the room, have the corridor conversation, lead with the story, and write the summary.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

1. Executives Prepare the Meeting, Not Just For It.

Mid-senior leaders prepare *for* the meeting; executives prepare *the* meeting. Complex decisions start in the unconscious mind and get justified afterward — so whoever shapes the thinking before the room gathers shapes the decision. Perform in meetings and you look like a presenter; shape what happens before and after them and you look like a leader.

2. Map the Room Before the Room Gathers.

Name everyone whose support is required — and everyone who can veto it quietly. If you cannot name the quiet vetoes, you are not ready.

3. Have the Corridor Conversation First.

One on one, informal, curious. You are not selling — you are listening for what each person is protecting and what winning looks like for them.

4. Lead with the Story, Then Bring the Data.

The unconscious decides and the conscious justifies — so lead with an emotionally compelling narrative: who is affected, what is at stake, what future you are asking them to choose. Let the data be the proof, not the opener.

5. Write the Summary Before the Meeting Ends.

Like those board chairs, end every important conversation by saying what you heard and what is decided, in your own words, out loud. Whoever writes the summary writes the history — never leave that job to someone else.

Rachel (alias), a senior director, watched the chief operating officer kill her immaculate proposal in ten minutes — the decision had been made weeks earlier, in conversations she was not part of. She rebuilt her approach around pre-wiring, and the next presentation took twenty minutes with zero resistance.



ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- ☐ **Map the room for one upcoming decision.** Write down every person whose support you need and every person who could quietly kill it. A name you are unsure about is your first conversation.

My room map (supporters / quiet vetoes / unsure):

- ☐ **Schedule one corridor conversation.** A coffee, a walk, a quick call. Ask: what is your biggest concern about this direction? Then listen, and write down what you hear, word for word.

My corridor question and what I heard (word for word):

- ☐ **Rebuild one upcoming pitch to lead with the story.** Open with the human narrative — who is affected, what is at stake, what future you are asking people to choose. Let the numbers be the evidence, not the opener.

My story-first opener (who is affected / what is at stake):

- ☐ **Write the summary for your next important conversation.** Before it ends, say what you heard and what is decided, in your own words, out loud. Practice being the person who shapes the conclusion, and notice how the room responds.

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus