

Summarizing meeting...

- Key points identified
- Decisions captured
- Action items report

Generating documents...

- Project brief
- Follow-up email
- Summary report

Working autonomously

People.
Purpose.
Progress.

Together.



The AI-Native Culture Framework

Human Trust, Connection and Alignment in an AI-Augmented Organization. A working research paper on what it actually means to be an AI-native company from a human point of view.

Research proposition

A traditional company creates trust as a by-product of work: people meet, coordinate, talk and gradually get to know each other.

An AI-native company removes much of that coordination work. Trust therefore stops emerging by accident and must be created on purpose.

Core proposition:

- AI scales work.
- Human connections scale trust.
- An AI-native culture is a deliberately designed trust network, not a technology deployment.

Prepared for

Sulava leadership, delivery managers, Copilot champions, change practitioners and customer executives exploring AI-native ways of working

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Version

001

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Source

Full working conversation, hypothesis narrative and two working diagrams developed by Sean McGuire

Status: Working hypothesis and research framing for management discussion. Nothing in this paper is presented as validated empirical research.



Executive Summary

The starting question. What does it actually mean to be an AI-native company from a human point of view? Sulava is a Frontier Firm that uses a large amount of AI, Copilot and agents, and this is reshaping the way people work together. The question is therefore not only technical. It is cultural: if AI removes a large share of the interactions that people previously needed in order to get work done, what becomes the foundation of organizational trust?

Central thesis: An AI-native company is not a company that uses AI. It is a company where work is coordinated primarily through AI, but trust is still created primarily through humans. AI can replace coordination. AI cannot replace trust.

The working hypothesis. Whether an organization is AI-native or traditional, the only load-bearing structure in the organization is human connection. In a large organization someone can call and say "hello, my name is...", and the only thing the other person knows is an email address. There is no context, so the conversation stays closed and cautious.

Building a relationship takes time, and it is usually shortcut through personal connections: "I heard about you from X", or a shared interest discovered over dinner, in a coffee break or at an offsite. That matters because people only take action together when they trust each other, and the trust base is always a human interaction and a human experience.

The mistake many organizations will make is confusing coordination with connection. Fewer meetings and faster execution are not the same thing as a stronger culture.

The structure of culture. Culture is built from the bottom up in 1:1 and 1:few relationships. It is never built in one-to-many settings such as town halls or large group meetings. What happens in many-to-many settings is verification: people compare their personal experience with the collective narrative. If the two match, trust is reinforced and the positive view of a small group is extended to the whole organization. If they do not match, the result is disconnect, encapsulation and, eventually, disengagement.

Three management choices. Leaders do not create culture directly. They create the conditions from which culture emerges, through three deliberate choices: culture (how we behave, decide, meet, socialise; authoritarian or collective; strictly hierarchical or flat), organization (reorganizations, departments, roles, business units, top-down silos or matrix structures) and vision (the long-term aspiration people can personally connect to). Each of these can strengthen or destroy the existing trust base.

The AI-native trust paradox: the more successfully AI removes unnecessary interaction, the more intentionally leaders must create meaningful interaction. More AI does not mean less human connection; it requires better human connection.

The outcome. Positive reinforcement leads to the conclusion "I want to stay and work for this company". Negative reinforcement leads to the conclusion "this is a toxic culture, and even if the pay is good I do not want to work here". The same logic applies in an AI-native firm, except that the raw material of trust, human interaction, is no longer produced automatically by the work itself.

Executive summary in one sentence

An AI-native culture is a deliberately designed trust network in which AI handles coordination and administration, while people invest the released capacity in relationships, judgement, creativity, learning, customer impact and a shared mission.



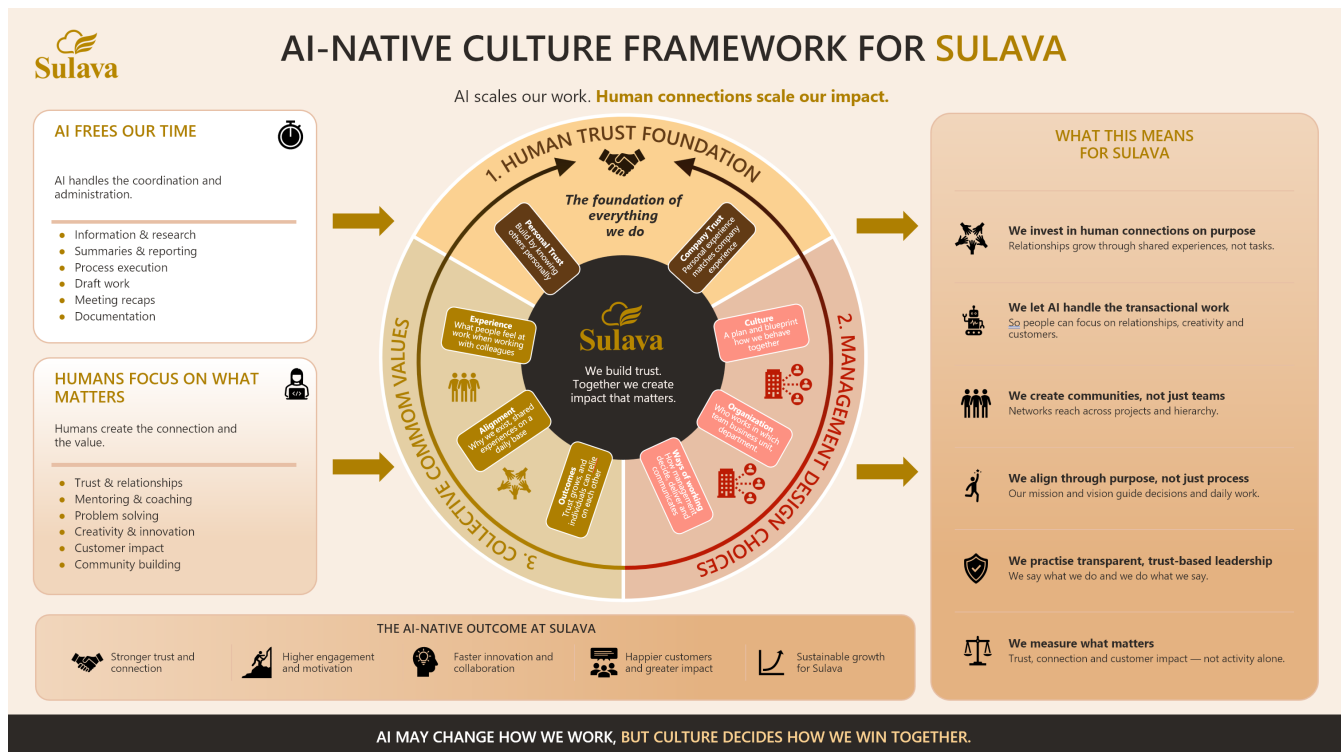


Figure 1. The AI-Native Culture Framework for Sulava: AI frees time, humans focus on what matters, and culture is built through the human trust foundation, management design choices and collective interpretation.

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1. Research Purpose and Scope

This paper develops the AI-native culture hypothesis into a structured management and research framework. It captures, in full, the thinking developed in the working conversation: the origin hypothesis, the working diagram "Visible company culture, trust and alignment", the three-layer model of culture, the comparison between traditional and AI-native organizations, the maturity model, the leadership implications and the recommendations for organizations that want to build an AI-native culture.

The purpose is deliberately not a summary. The document is intended as a thinking record for later review, so the reasoning, the examples, the metaphors and the intermediate steps are preserved rather than compressed. Where a formulation was sharp in the original discussion, it is kept in its original form.

Scope and status. This is a conceptual and decision-framing paper. It does not present validated empirical research, survey data or measured outcomes. It is a working hypothesis intended to be tested through voluntary, lightweight pilots and employee participation.

Element of scope	What is included	What is explicitly out of scope
Human perspective	How trust, connection and culture form in an AI-mediated organization.	Technical AI architecture, agent engineering and platform design.
Organizational perspective	Management choices on culture, organization and vision, and their effect on the trust base.	Specific reorganization proposals or named organizational decisions.
Sulava perspective	What an AI-native culture means for a Frontier Firm that uses Copilot and agents extensively.	Commercial service definitions, pricing or delivery packaging.
Evidence status	A working hypothesis with a structured model and testable recommendations.	Any claim of measured causality, benchmark data or financial return.

Core definition

An AI-native culture is a deliberately designed trust network in which AI handles coordination and administration, while humans build the relationships, judgement and shared purpose that make coordinated action possible.



2. The Origin Hypothesis: Culture Is Built on Human Connection

2.1 The hypothesis in the author's own framing

The hypothesis is that, regardless of whether an organization is AI-native or traditional, the only load-bearing structure in the organization is human connection.

The illustration used to explain this is deliberately simple. Someone calls inside a large organization and says "hello, my name is...". The only thing the other person actually knows is an email address. There is no context, no shared history and no basis for openness, so the conversation will not be very open.

Building that relationship takes time. In many cases the shortcut is an introduction: "I heard about you from X", or a reference to people you both work with. Personal connections are what make the conversation start from a different place.

2.2 Why this matters: action requires trust

The reason this is important is that, ultimately, for people to take action and to work together, they have to trust each other. The trust base is always a human interaction and a human experience.

The offsite example makes the mechanism visible. There are working meetings during the day, but in the evening there is a joint dinner, or a conversation in the coffee break. That is where the personal information appears: what you like to do, that you are a bike rider, that you have a dog, that you have a house by the sea, that you like sailing or skiing.

Those details create connections, and the important thing about the connections is the trust they create. You can call someone who also loves skiing. That reduces the resistance to reaching out, and it means you do not have to move out of your comfort zone in a work environment where you still need evidence that trust is present.

The trust shortcut: a shared personal detail removes the activation energy of a work conversation. It turns "an email address" into "a person I already have a reason to talk to".



2.3 What changes in an AI-native company

In an AI-native company the pattern is very different. On the one side, the huge amount of alignment meetings that carried cultural conversations is no longer needed. That is a genuine efficiency gain. But it also means there is less exposure between people, and therefore less time for people to get to know each other. The interactions that used to happen around the work disappear together with the coordination overhead they were attached to.

Observation from the discussion	Implication
Alignment meetings are reduced or removed by AI.	The cultural conversations that used to travel inside those meetings disappear with them.
Less exposure between colleagues.	Fewer opportunities to form the personal impressions on which trust is based.
Less time to get to know each other.	Relationship formation slows down even while work output speeds up.
Trust is still required to act together.	The requirement does not disappear, only the mechanism that used to satisfy it.

The core distinction

AI can replace coordination. AI cannot replace trust. The risk is that organizations mistake fewer meetings and faster execution for a stronger culture.



3. Reading the Working Model: Visible Company Culture, Trust and Alignment

The working diagram is the original hypothesis in visual form. It has two horizontal bands. The lower yellow band is the human trust foundation, where relationships are actually built. The upper white band is visible company culture, trust and alignment, where beliefs are formed, tested and either reinforced or broken. Green solid arrows represent strong reinforcement, green dashed arrows represent weak reinforcement, and red dotted arrows represent forces that weaken the trust foundation.

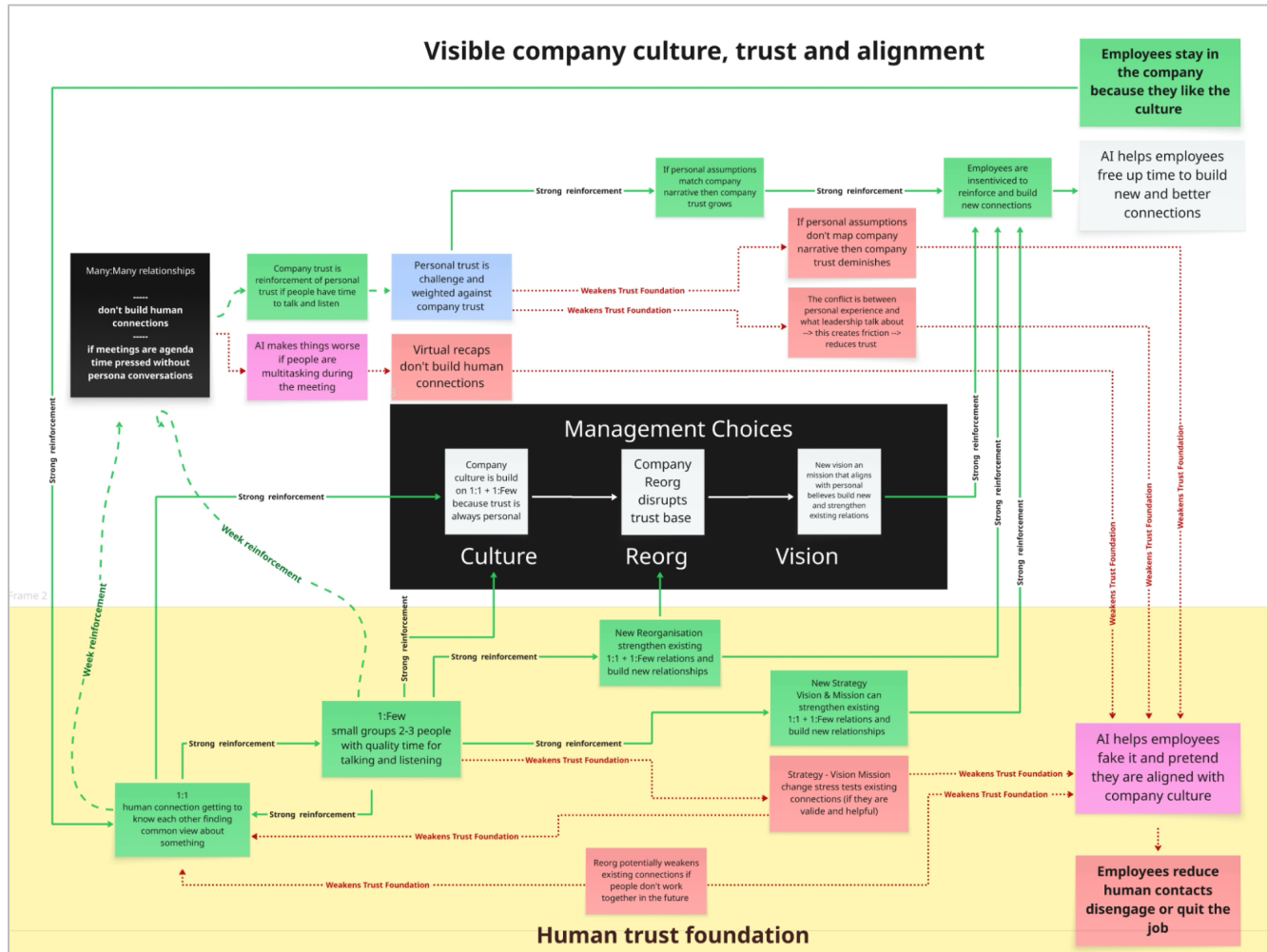


Figure 2. The original working model: visible company culture, trust and alignment, built on a human trust foundation.

3.1 The human trust foundation (lower band)

- **1:1 - human connection:** getting to know each other and finding a common view about something. This is the smallest and most important unit in the model, and everything above it depends on it.
- **1:Few -** small groups of two to three people with quality time for talking and listening. This is where team-level trust and shared interpretation are formed.
- **Mutual reinforcement -** 1:1 and 1:Few reinforce each other strongly, and together they feed upward into company culture, reorganization outcomes and the credibility of any new vision.



3.2 Many-to-many relationships (the black box, upper left)

- Many-to-many relationships do not build human connections.
- They make things worse if meetings are agenda-time-pressed without persona conversations, meaning without the space for people to appear as people rather than as roles on an agenda.
- Company trust is a reinforcement of personal trust only if people have time to talk and listen. Without that time, the large meeting cannot do the work that a small conversation does.

3.3 Personal trust versus company trust (the blue node)

The central mechanism in the diagram is that personal trust is challenged and weighed against company trust. The employee is constantly, and mostly unconsciously, comparing what they personally experience with what the company says about itself.

Comparison outcome	Mechanism in the model	Effect
Personal assumptions match the company narrative	Strong reinforcement upward	Company trust grows; employees are incentivized to reinforce and build new connections.
Personal assumptions do not map to the company narrative	Weakening loop	Company trust diminishes.
Conflict between personal experience and what leadership talks about	Friction loop	Friction is created, which reduces trust.

3.4 The AI-specific nodes

The diagram deliberately shows AI on both sides of the ledger. This is the heart of the AI-native question.

Node in the diagram	Direction	What it says
AI helps employees free up time to build new and better connections	Positive	The intended, healthy outcome: capacity released by AI is reinvested in human relationships.
AI makes things worse if people are multitasking during the meeting	Negative	AI-assisted meetings can reduce presence. Attention, not attendance, is what builds trust.
Virtual recaps do not build human connections	Negative	A recap transfers information. It does not transfer familiarity, credibility or belonging.
AI helps employees fake it and pretend they are aligned with company culture	Negative	AI can generate the appearance of alignment, which hides cultural gaps instead of resolving them.



3.5 Management choices (the black band in the middle)

Management choice	What the diagram states	Trust effect
Culture	Company culture is built on 1:1 and 1:Few, because trust is always personal.	Strong reinforcement upward from the human trust foundation.
Reorg	Company reorganization disrupts the trust base.	A new reorganization can strengthen existing 1:1 and 1:Few relations and build new ones, but it potentially weakens existing connections if people no longer work together in the future.
Vision	A new vision and mission that aligns with personal beliefs builds new relations and strengthens existing ones or challenge current beliefs and weak expectations and solid connections because the vision contradicts personal beliefs and experiences.	Strategy, vision and mission change stress-tests existing connections, revealing whether they are valid and helpful and either reinforce or question current trust.

3.6 The two end states (right-hand side)

- **Positive end state** - Employees stay in the company because they like the culture. This is reached when personal experience and company narrative reinforce each other, and when AI-released time is used to build new and better connections.
- **Negative end state** - Employees reduce human contacts, disengage or quit the job. This is reached when the trust foundation is weakened repeatedly, and it is accelerated when AI is used to fake alignment rather than to create it.



What the diagram proves structurally

Every positive path in the model runs through the human trust foundation, and every negative path runs through something that weakens it. There is no route to company trust that bypasses 1:1 and 1:Few relationships.



4. The Three Layers of Culture

The working model can be expressed as three layers. This is the structural version of the hypothesis and the backbone of the framework.

4.1 Layer 1: Human trust foundation

This is the most important layer and the actual building block of culture. It is not vision, not strategy, not town halls and not the organizational chart. Trust begins when I know your face, I know your story, I know your intent and I know how you behave. Everything else is built on top of that.

Building block	How it is built	What it produces
1:1 relationships	Coaching, mentoring, project collaboration, coffee conversations, customer visits, shared experiences.	Personal trust
1:Few relationships	Small groups of two to six people: project teams, workshops, problem-solving sessions, team dinners, informal collaboration.	Relationship networks

Human interaction → Personal familiarity → Trust → Psychological safety → Collaboration → Better outcomes → More trust

The fundamental culture engine: a self-reinforcing loop that begins and ends with human interaction.

4.2 Layer 2: Management design choices

This is where culture, reorganization and vision sit. These are management choices, but they are not culture itself. They are culture design mechanisms, and the distinction is critical: leaders do not create culture directly, they create the conditions from which culture emerges.

Lever	What it defines	The question it answers	Examples from the discussion
Culture design	The explicit operating model of the organization.	How do we behave together?	Decision-making style, leadership behavior, meeting culture, feedback culture, degree of autonomy, how conflict is handled, whether people meet after work, authoritarian or collective, strictly hierarchical or flat.
Organizational design	How humans are connected.	Who works with whom?	Departments, teams, reporting structures, business units, communities, expert networks, top-down vertical silos or a matrix organization, and reorganizations that move people between them.
Vision and mission	Shared direction and purpose.	Why are we here?	A long-term aspiration that people can personally connect to, for example "we want to be the number one healthcare provider in the world, helping a huge number of people live healthy lives".



4.3 Layer 3: Collective interpretation

This is the top layer. Employees continuously compare their personal experience with the corporate narrative. Not consciously, but emotionally, and every day.

If the answer is	What employees conclude	Result
Yes, my experience matches the story	Leadership is authentic, culture is real, the vision is credible.	Trust grows: commitment, engagement, retention.
No, my experience conflicts with the story	Leadership says one thing and reality is different.	Trust declines: disengagement, cynicism, attrition.

This is exactly the green and red reinforcement logic drawn in the working model. A positive verification extends the trust felt inside a small group to the whole organization: I start liking and loving the complete organization. A negative verification produces a disconnect, where a small group feels like a group of outsiders who see the world very differently from the organization they work in, which reinforces encapsulation.

The distinction that matters most

Management choices are culture design mechanisms, not culture. Culture is what employees conclude from their own experience once those choices meet the human trust foundation.

5. Why Many-to-Many Meetings Do Not Build Culture

Culture is rarely created in town halls, all-hands meetings or leadership broadcasts. Those activities validate culture. They do not create it. Culture is created before people enter the room.

Setting	The question it actually answers	What it can and cannot do
1:1 and 1:Few	Can I trust these people?	Creates familiarity, credibility, safety and willingness to act together.
Town hall / all-hands / large group	Is my personal experience consistent with the company story?	Verifies or contradicts existing beliefs. It cannot manufacture a relationship that does not exist.

This is why many organizations spend enormous effort on communications while employee trust barely moves. Communications amplify culture. They do not manufacture it. In the working model this appears as the black box stating that many-to-many relationships do not build human connections, and that they get worse when meetings are agenda-time-pressed without persona conversations.

Practical consequence for leaders

If the trust was not built before the town hall, the town hall cannot create it. Investment in broadcast communication should therefore never substitute for investment in small-group connection.



6. The Traditional Company Model

Historically, organizations created trust accidentally. People became connected because work forced them together: meetings, workshops, office conversations, travel, coffee breaks, shared projects and departmental interactions. Trust was often a side effect of work.

Work together → Human interaction → Personal familiarity → Trust → Collaboration → Better work
In a traditional company the organization does not have to design trust. Trust emerges naturally from the friction of working together.

People worked together, then became friends, then trusted each other, then collaborated better. The important and easily missed point is that the friction of coordination was also the mechanism that produced relationships.

7. The AI-Native Company Model and the Trust Paradox

AI changes this. Copilot summarizes the meeting, an agent finds the expert, AI creates the draft, AI answers the question and AI coordinates the process. Something important disappears: the human moments in between. The friction is gone, but friction was where relationships formed.

AI performs coordination → Less human interaction → Fewer personal connections → Lower trust formation → Potential cultural fragmentation
Trust no longer emerges naturally. It must be intentionally designed.

The AI-native trust paradox

The more successfully AI removes unnecessary interaction, the more intentionally leadership must create meaningful interaction. More AI does not equal less human connection. More AI requires more deliberate human connection.

Traditional organization	AI-native organization
Human interaction is a by-product of work.	Human interaction becomes a deliberate investment.
The coffee conversation happens by accident.	The coffee conversation is no longer accidental.
The offsite is a pleasant addition.	The offsite is no longer optional.
Mentoring is a nice-to-have.	The mentoring relationship is no longer nice-to-have.
Community gatherings are social fluff.	Community gatherings become strategic infrastructure, because they produce the thing AI cannot create: trust.



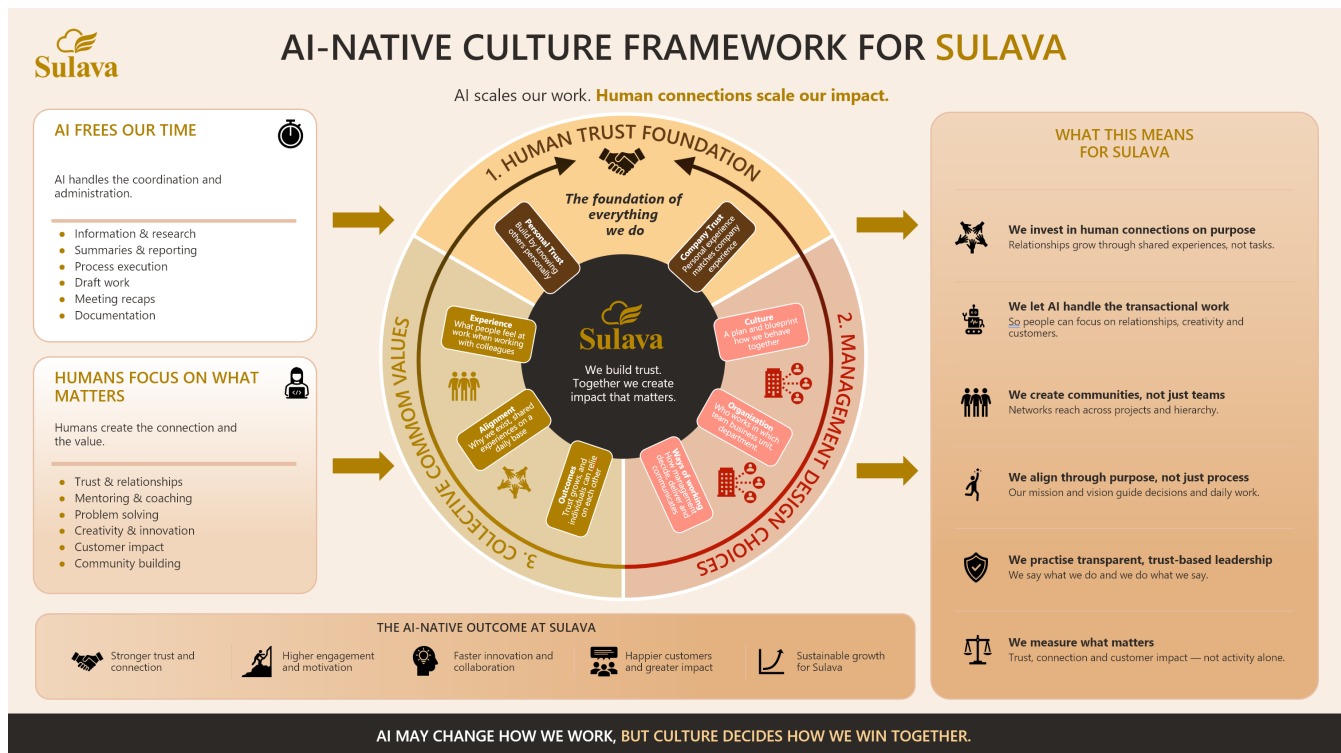
8. The Sulava AI-Native Culture Framework

Definition. Sulava's AI-native culture is a deliberately designed trust network in which AI handles coordination and administration, while people invest their capacity in relationships, judgement, creativity, customer impact and a shared mission.

8.1 The culture equation

Human trust foundation → Management design choices → Collective employee experience → Organizational culture

Most organizations focus on AI, processes and productivity. AI-native organizations recognize that trust is the operating system underneath all organizational performance.



8.2 The four-part framework

Element	Purpose	What it includes	Primary outcome
1. AI frees our time	Remove low-value coordination and repetitive effort.	Information and research, summaries and reporting, process coordination, repetitive work, meeting recaps, documentation.	Capacity
2. Human trust foundation	Turn released capacity into meaningful connection.	1:1 relationships that build personal trust and 1:Few relationships that build strong team trust, through coaching, mentoring, shared delivery and informal conversation.	Trust
3. Management design choices	Create the conditions for people and AI to work well together.	Culture (how we behave together), organization (who works with whom) and vision and mission (why we exist and where we go).	Alignment
4. Collective interpretation	Test whether lived experience matches the company narrative.	Experience (what I see and feel), alignment (when experience matches the narrative) and outcome (trust grows, engagement rises, we win together).	Commitment

8.3 What humans focus on when AI takes the transactions

AI handles	Humans focus on
Information and research	Trust and relationships
Summaries and reporting	Mentoring and coaching
Process coordination	Problem solving
Repetitive work	Creativity and innovation
Meeting recaps	Customer impact
Documentation	Community and culture

8.4 Sulava operating principles

We invest in human connections on purpose. Protect regular 1:1s, small-group reflection, coaching, mentoring and shared experiences. 1:1s, small groups and shared experiences build trust.

We let AI handle transactions. Use Copilot and agents to reduce administrative effort, information searching, routine drafting and status coordination, so humans can focus on relationships, creativity and customer impact.

We create communities, not just teams. Build networks across Sulava beyond projects and hierarchy, so collaboration is not limited to the current org chart.

We align through purpose, not just processes. Our mission and vision guide decisions and daily work, especially when AI accelerates the pace of work.

We practice transparent, trust-based leadership. We say what we do and do what we say. The gap between leadership communication and employee experience is where trust is lost.

We measure what matters: trust, connection and customer impact. Because culture drives our performance, not only AI usage or hours saved.



8.5 Desired outcomes

- Stronger trust networks
- Higher engagement and retention
- Faster innovation and better solutions
- Happier customers and greater impact
- Sustainable growth for Sulava, without losing the human fabric of the company

The framework in one sentence

An AI-native culture is a deliberately designed trust network in which AI handles coordination and administration, while humans reinvest the freed capacity into building relationships, strengthening communities and advancing a shared mission.

Short version: AI frees time. Culture determines how that time is reinvested. High-performing AI-native organizations reinvest that time into human trust.

9. What AI Should Replace and What Humans Must Preserve

The single most useful management decision in an AI-native organization is to be explicit about the division of labor. The distinction is between transaction activities and connection activities.

AI should replace (transaction activities)	Humans must preserve (connection activities)
Status updates	Trust building
Information retrieval	Mentoring
Administrative work	Storytelling
Repetitive reporting	Conflict resolution
Meeting recaps	Coaching
Process coordination	Relationship development
Document generation	Shared experiences and community building

Rule of thumb

Never automate the moments where trust, judgement, accountability or care are the actual product. Automate everything that merely moves information between people.



10. The AI-Native Leadership Model

Traditional leaders managed tasks, projects, budgets and people. AI-native leaders must manage something new: trust networks. The question changes from "how productive are we?" to "how connected are we?", because AI increasingly handles productivity while humans increasingly provide judgement, creativity, adaptation and trust.

Traditional leaders optimize	AI-native leaders additionally optimize
Revenue	Trust networks across the organization
Utilization	Human-AI boundaries and responsible use
Delivery	Transparency between narrative and experience
Projects	Cross-company connection and community
Resources	Learning, mentoring and knowledge transfer

Key questions for an AI-native leader:

- Who knows whom?
- Who trusts whom?
- Where are silos forming?
- Which people have never worked together?
- How strong are community connections?

11. AI-Native Culture Maturity Model

Level	What it means	Focus	Risk or outcome
Level 1 - AI-assisted	AI improves individual productivity.	Efficiency, automation, productivity.	Risk: human connection declines.
Level 2 - AI-enabled	AI changes how work is done.	Digital workflows, agent collaboration, knowledge sharing.	Risk: culture weakens.
Level 3 - AI-native	AI handles coordination and humans focus on trust.	Relationships, community, purpose, innovation.	Outcome: high productivity and high trust.

The maturity model makes an important point: levels 1 and 2 are not failures, they are stages. The failure mode is stopping at level 2 while believing the organization has reached level 3, because efficiency gains are visible and trust erosion is not.



12. Traditional Company versus AI-Native Sulava

The comparison below distinguishes a conventional coordination-heavy model from the proposed Sulava model. It is directional, not a judgement that every traditional practice is ineffective.

Dimension	Traditional company	AI-native Sulava
Role of AI	AI supports individual tasks and existing processes.	AI and agents become part of the operating model and handle routine coordination and knowledge work.
Human interaction	Relationships form largely as a side effect of meetings, co-location and project work.	Relationships are deliberately designed, because AI removes many incidental interactions.
Meetings	Many meetings combine alignment, updates, decisions and relationship building.	AI handles updates and recaps; human time is reserved for decisions, ambiguity, learning and connection.
Trust formation	Frequent exposure gradually creates familiarity and trust.	Protected 1:1 and 1:Few experiences create trust across distributed and AI-mediated work.
Leadership focus	Manage tasks, resources, delivery, utilization and communication.	Also steward trust networks, human-AI boundaries, transparency and cross-company connection.
Organizational design	Teams and hierarchy define most working relationships.	Communities and networks complement teams, hierarchy and project structures.
Culture communication	Values and culture are expressed through leadership messages and group events.	Leadership messages must be continually validated by lived experience and trusted local relationships.
Knowledge flow	Employees search, ask colleagues and attend meetings to obtain context.	AI accelerates retrieval and synthesis; people add judgement, context, challenge and accountability.
Employee value	Productivity is often linked to output, availability and task completion.	Human value shifts toward judgement, creativity, empathy, trust, learning and customer impact.
Onboarding	New joiners learn the organization by sitting in meetings and absorbing context over time.	New joiners need AI capability plus a human coach, a peer network and deliberate exposure to how work really happens.
Primary risk	Slow coordination, information silos and meeting overload.	Efficient but disconnected work, weak trust formation, cultural fragmentation and performative alignment.
Failure signal	People complain about too many meetings.	People stop reaching out, reduce human contact, disengage or leave.
Success measures	Delivery, utilization, engagement surveys and financial performance.	Business performance plus trust, network strength, learning, responsible AI use and customer impact.



13. The Frontier Firm Principle

An AI-native company is not a company where humans talk less. It is a company where AI performs transactions, humans build relationships, managers design trust networks, culture is measured by connections, and vision aligns individual experience with collective purpose.

The Human Trust Principle

In an AI-native organization, work may increasingly be performed by AI, coordinated by agents and accelerated by automation. But culture remains a human phenomenon. Trust is built through meaningful 1:1 and small-group relationships.

The role of leadership is therefore not merely to deploy AI, but to intentionally create the human connections that allow people to trust each other, trust the organization and pursue a shared vision together.

AI scales work. Human relationships scale trust. A true AI-native company invests in both.



14. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion. Becoming AI-native is not only a technology transformation. It changes how people encounter one another, how trust forms, how knowledge moves and how culture is experienced. Companies that automate coordination without redesigning human connection may become more efficient while becoming less cohesive. The goal is therefore dual: scale execution with AI and intentionally strengthen the human trust foundation.

Leadership challenge. How do you build an organization where daily interactions naturally create those 1:1 and 1:Few touch points that foster and promote trust building and cultural bounding.

14.1 Recommendations for companies who want to create an AI-native culture

- 1. Define the human-AI division of labor.** State clearly which activities AI should accelerate and which human interactions must be protected. Avoid automating moments where trust, judgement, accountability or care are the product.
- 2. Reinvest saved time deliberately.** Convert a defined portion of AI-released capacity into coaching, mentoring, peer learning, customer conversations and small-group relationship building. If the time is not reallocated on purpose, it will be absorbed by more transactions.
- 3. Redesign meetings by purpose.** Separate transactional meetings from connection and decision meetings. Replace routine updates with asynchronous AI support, but do not replace the conversations needed for trust. Protect presence: AI-assisted meetings make things worse if people multitask during them.
- 4. Map and strengthen trust networks.** Identify where strong relationships exist, where teams are isolated, and where reorganization or remote work has broken connections. Use cross-functional communities and paired work to bridge the gaps.
- 5. Make change relationship-aware.** Treat reorganizations, new strategies and AI rollouts as disruptions to existing trust. Explain what will change, preserve valuable relationships and create new connection points early, because a reorg weakens existing connections when people no longer work together in the future.
- 6. Align narrative with lived experience.** Test whether daily reality matches leadership messages. Address gaps openly rather than using AI-generated communication to create the appearance of alignment. AI that helps people fake alignment hides the problem instead of solving it.
- 7. Build AI-native onboarding.** Give new employees AI capability, a human coach, a peer network and direct exposure to how the organization actually works. In an AI-native firm, a new joiner no longer absorbs the culture passively by sitting in meetings.
- 8. Measure balanced outcomes.** Track business value and AI adoption together with trust, belonging, cross-team connection, learning, responsible use and customer outcomes.
- 9. Start with a voluntary pilot.** Test the framework through small, facilitated 30-minute conversations or canvases. Gather anonymous themes, learn from participants and expand only where the experience is valuable.

Final management message

AI may change how Sulava works, but culture decides how Sulava wins together.

The objective is not to have fewer human connections.

The objective is to have fewer low-value transactions and more high-value human relationships.



15. First Steps, Management Decision and Discussion Questions

15.1 Suggested Sulava first steps

#	Step	Management intent
1	Agree the principle	Leadership confirms that AI-released time should partly strengthen human connection and learning.
2	Run a small culture canvas pilot	Invite a voluntary cross-section of employees into structured 1:1 or small-group conversations.
3	Capture themes, not personal disclosures	Collect anonymized outputs on connection, contribution, support, success, AI-native behavior and cultural do's and don'ts.
4	Select two or three practices	For example AI-native onboarding, protected mentoring time and quarterly cross-team connection sessions.
5	Review after one quarter	Assess employee value, participation, emerging trust gaps and whether the practices improve collaboration and customer delivery.

15.2 Management decision requested

Approve a limited pilot to test whether deliberate 1:1 and small-group connection strengthens cross-team trust in AI-mediated work. The pilot should be voluntary, lightweight and designed to produce anonymized themes rather than individual assessment.

15.3 Discussion questions

- Which interactions should Sulava automate, and which should Sulava deliberately protect?
- Where are trust and connection currently strongest or weakest across the organization?
- How will Sulava demonstrate that AI-released capacity is being reinvested in people, learning and customer value?
- What would we measure to know whether our culture is getting stronger rather than merely faster?



Appendix A. Visual Explanation of the Sulava Framework Image

The framework visual carries the headline "AI scales our work. Human connections scale our impact." It is organized as a circle with three segments around a Sulava core, with two supporting panels on the left and a "what this means for Sulava" panel on the right.

Area of the visual	Content
Centre	Sulava: we build trust. Together we create impact that matters.
Segment 1 - Human trust foundation	The source of our culture: 1:1 relationships build personal trust; 1:Few relationships build strong team trust.
Segment 2 - Management design choices	We create the conditions: culture (how we behave together), organization (who works with whom), vision and mission (why we exist and where we go).
Segment 3 - Collective interpretation	We align experience with purpose: experience (what I see and feel), alignment (when experience matches the narrative), outcome (trust grows, engagement rises, we win together).
Left panel - AI frees our time	AI handles coordination and administration: information and research, summaries and reporting, process coordination, repetitive work, meeting recaps, documentation.
Left panel - Humans focus on what matters	Humans create the connection and the value: trust and relationships, mentoring and coaching, problem solving, creativity and innovation, customer impact, community and culture.
Right panel - What this means for Sulava	Six commitments: invest in human connections on purpose; let AI handle transactions; create communities not just teams; align through purpose not just processes; practice transparent trust-based leadership; measure what matters.
Bottom band - The AI-native outcome at Sulava	Stronger trust networks, higher engagement and retention, faster innovation and better solutions, happier customers and greater impact, sustainable growth for Sulava.
Closing line	AI may change how we work, but culture decides how we win together.



Appendix B. Element Inventory of the Original Working Diagram

This inventory preserves the individual statements in the original diagram so that nothing is lost when the model is later revised.

Zone	Element	Statement
Upper band	Title	Visible company culture, trust and alignment.
Upper band	Many:Many relationships (black)	Do not build human connections; worse if meetings are agenda-time-pressed without persona conversations.
Upper band	Company trust (green)	Company trust is reinforcement of personal trust if people have time to talk and listen.
Upper band	Personal trust (blue)	Personal trust is challenged and weighted against company trust.
Upper band	Match (green)	If personal assumptions match the company narrative, company trust grows.
Upper band	Mismatch (red)	If personal assumptions do not map to the company narrative, company trust diminishes.
Upper band	Conflict (red)	The conflict is between personal experience and what leadership talks about; this creates friction and reduces trust.
Upper band	Incentive (green)	Employees are incentivized to reinforce and build new connections.
Upper band	AI positive (grey)	AI helps employees free up time to build new and better connections.
Upper band	AI negative (pink)	AI makes things worse if people are multitasking during the meeting.
Upper band	AI negative (red)	Virtual recaps do not build human connections.
Middle band	Management choices - Culture	Company culture is built on 1:1 + 1:Few because trust is always personal.
Middle band	Management choices - Reorg	Company reorg disrupts the trust base.
Middle band	Management choices - Vision	New vision and mission that aligns with personal beliefs builds new and strengthens existing relations.
Lower band	Foundation label	Human trust foundation.
Lower band	1:1 (green)	Human connection: getting to know each other, finding a common view about something.
Lower band	1:Few (green)	Small groups of 2-3 people with quality time for talking and listening.
Lower band	Reorg positive (green)	New reorganisation strengthens existing 1:1 + 1:Few relations and builds new relationships.
Lower band	Strategy positive (green)	New strategy, vision and mission can strengthen existing 1:1 + 1:Few relations and build new relationships.



Zone	Element	Statement
Lower band	Strategy risk (red)	Strategy, vision and mission change stress-tests existing connections, showing whether they are valid and helpful.
Lower band	Reorg risk (red)	Reorg potentially weakens existing connections if people do not work together in the future.
Outcomes	Positive (green)	Employees stay in the company because they like the culture.
Outcomes	Negative (pink)	AI helps employees fake it and pretend they are aligned with company culture.
Outcomes	Negative (red)	Employees reduce human contacts, disengage or quit the job.

Appendix C. Key Formulations Captured from the Discussion

These formulations are preserved because they express the argument more precisely than a paraphrase would.

- "An AI-native company is not a company that uses AI. It is a company where work is coordinated primarily through AI, but trust is still created primarily through humans."
- "AI can replace coordination. AI cannot replace trust."
- "The mistake many organizations will make is confusing coordination with connection."
- "The only load-bearing structure in the organization is human connection."
- "Someone calls in a large organization and says hello, my name is, and the only thing you know is an email address."
- "For people to take action and to work together, they have to trust each other, and the trust base is always a human interaction and an experience."
- "The important thing about the connections is the trust they create: you can call someone who also loves skiing, which reduces the resistance for me to reach out."
- "Trust in an organization is never built in one-to-many meetings."
- "Town halls answer whether my personal experience is consistent with the company story. They do not answer whether I can trust these people."
- "Communications amplify culture. They do not manufacture it."
- "Leaders do not create culture directly. Leaders create the conditions from which culture emerges."
- "The friction is gone, but friction was where relationships formed."
- "The more successful AI becomes at removing unnecessary interactions, the more intentional leaders must become about creating meaningful interactions."
- "Traditional company: human interaction is a by-product of work. AI-native company: human interaction becomes a deliberate investment."
- "These activities become strategic infrastructure, because they produce the thing AI cannot create: trust."
- "The question changes from how productive are we to how connected are we."
- "AI scales work. Human relationships scale trust. A true AI-native company invests in both."
- "AI frees time. Culture determines how that time is reinvested."
- "AI may change how we work, but culture decides how we win together."



References and Source Notes

[1] Working conversation on AI-native culture, 10 September 2026. Primary source for the hypothesis, the human trust argument, the offsite and personal-connection examples, the three management choices and the interpretation of the working model.

[2] Working diagram "Visible company culture, trust and alignment" (Frame 2), supplied by Sean McGuire. Source for the human trust foundation, 1:1 and 1:Few mechanics, many-to-many limitations, management choices, reinforcement and weakening loops, AI-specific nodes and the two end states.

[3] AI-Native Culture Framework visual for Sulava, generated in the same discussion. Source for the four-part framework, the Sulava operating principles, the AI-handles versus humans-focus split and the outcome band.

[4] Sulava mission and Sulava MEA vision: making Microsoft cloud, AI, Copilot and agent technologies practical, human-centered and impactful in everyday work; empowering organizations to become AI-native, developing the next generation of AI leaders and building Frontier Firms of the AI era.

[5] Prior deliverable from the same thread: Sulava AI-Native Culture Framework management brief, 10 September 2026, which contains the condensed executive version of this material.

Method note

This paper is a qualitative synthesis and conceptual research framing based on a single extended working discussion and two working diagrams. It does not report causal evaluation, survey evidence or validated measurement. It is deliberately written as a complete thinking record rather than a summary, so that the reasoning can be reviewed, challenged and refined later. Recommendations are proposed for management consideration and should be tested through voluntary, governed pilots.

