

CTRL + ALT + Lead

Rebooting Cyber Culture with Human Skills

PRESENTED BY

Amanda Kollmorgan



Why are you here?

*In IT and Cybersecurity, **technical mastery** often overshadows the **soft skills** that truly elevate impact.*

TODAY WE WILL

01

Explore

the leadership and mentorship gap in cybersecurity.

02

Understand

the impact of undervaluing soft skills.

03

Share

practical strategies to build human-centered cyber teams.

A bit about me



**Breaking firewalls and stereotypes —
*I'm not your typical IT & Cyber
professional.***

- Deputy State IT Director, WI Department of Military Affairs
- NCOIC, WI Defensive Cyber Operations Element
- Incident Responder / Lead / Program & Policy, WI Cyber Response Team
- Security Architect Lead, Veolia

// OFF THE CLOCK

Mother · Pet Lover · Gardener · Triathlete · Middle School Track Coach · Movie Quote
Junkie · Audiophile

From Back Closets to Boardrooms

The evolving role of IT & Cyber

STRATEGIC ENABLER

IT & Cybersecurity are now strategic business enablers — not just technical support.

TRUSTED ADVISOR

Trusted advisor status requires more than technical expertise.

EXECUTIVE TABLE

Digital transformation has elevated tech leaders to the executive table.

CORE COMPETENCY

Business alignment and communication are now core competencies.

The Cultural Problem

Why technical excellence alone isn't enough

Cyber roles prioritize hard skills: coding, IR, pen testing.

Communication is often reactive, not proactive.

Soft skills are sidelined in hiring, training, and promotion.

Strategic, ethical, and relational skills are overlooked.

Cyber culture rewards deep technical knowledge above all.

Emotional intelligence is needed — but rarely developed.

RESULT *Blind spots in leadership and business alignment.*

The Leadership Void

Rapid promotions and the cost of unprepared leadership

THE GAP

01

Digital acceleration plus flattened orgs are widening the management gap and removing mid-level oversight.

THE BAND-AID

02

Rapid promotions create "accidental managers" — strong technicians without leadership training or support.

THE COST

03

Burnout, miscommunication, stalled innovation, and emotional-intelligence gaps surface across teams.

THE CYCLE

04

Unstructured development perpetuates weak leadership and repeats the pattern in the next generation.

Soft Skills Gaps in Practice

Where the void shows up

LEADERSHIP

55%

GAPS REPORTED

of leaders report gaps in communication and collaboration. Real-world failures often stem from poor communication — not technical flaws.

MENTORSHIP

100%

ESSENTIAL

Structured mentorship and coaching programs cultivate future leaders and reinforce a culture of growth, trust, and collaboration.

SOFT SKILLS



UNDervalUED

Ranked lower in hiring and promotion — yet they build trust, resilience, and future-ready teams.

The Competency Stack

Soft skills aren't optional — they're the foundation



READ THIS BOTTOM-UP

Every higher-level competency rests on **personal effectiveness** — communication, EQ, conflict, and self-management.

Strip out the base, and ***everything above wobbles.***



What YOU can do

Individual leader actions — start tomorrow

01

Self-Assess

Audit your own communication, EQ, and coaching habits.

02

Coach in 1:1s

Run regular 1:1s that go beyond status updates.

03

Feedback Loops

Build growth plans with explicit, two-way feedback.

04

Get Uncomfortable

Lean into the conversations you'd rather avoid.

05

Don't Fear Conflict

Healthy conflict surfaces issues before they fester.

06

Adjust

Reassess and adapt based on what's actually working.

Building Human-Centered Cyber Teams

Organizational moves that compound over time

LEADERSHIP

Foster psychological safety

Make it safe to speak up, disagree, and surface mistakes. Build communication habits into the cadence of work — not just the offsite.

MENTORSHIP

Structure it intentionally

Create formal mentorship and coaching programs that bridge technical skill and leadership readiness. Invest in mid-level leaders.

SOFT SKILLS

Prioritize in hiring & promotion

Weight soft skills as heavily as technical skills in scorecards. Make EQ, communication, and coaching ability visible criteria.

Bottom Line

01

Technical skills open doors — *soft skills build careers.*

02

Leadership gaps and soft skill deficits are real — *and costly.*

03

Rebooting cyber culture starts with people — *not platforms.*

> READY FOR INPUT...

Q

&

A

> SCAN TO RESPOND



Let's reboot this together.

AMANDA KOLLMORGAN

//

DISCORD: FalcorMidwest