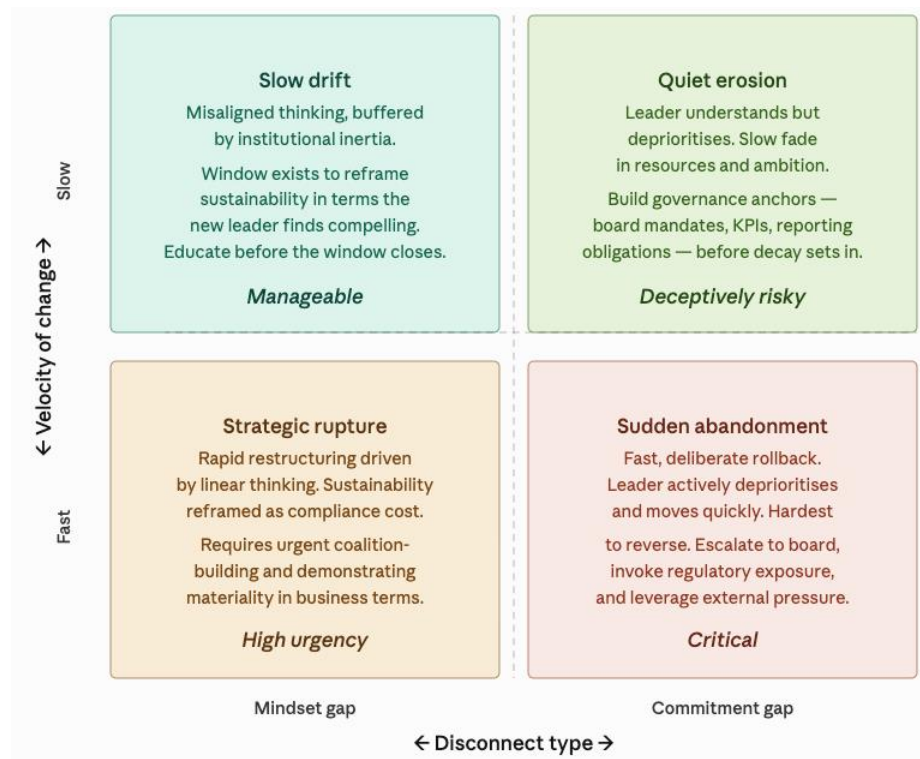


Key Takeaways: Managing Changes in Leadership

Key points from the Peer Discussion on April 29, 2026.

Shifting geopolitical and economic factors have been causing shake-ups among senior leadership teams. In this peer discussion we chatted about how sustainability teams can better prepare and adapt to new leadership, particularly in a time where they are being asked to demonstrate and even defend the role they play in supporting core operations and strategy.

- **Anticipating and understanding the nature of the leadership shift you may be facing.** We heard that teams need to be attentive to both the velocity of the shift and the nature of the disconnect (is this about leaders that understand sustainability but may have shifted their priorities or is this about a more fundamental mindset gap where the new leadership is less informed about the value you bring to the business). The image below summarises these different dimensions of leadership change and highlights some of the concerns we heard from sustainability teams as well as advice on how to respond.



- **Do your homework.** Where possible, try to learn as much as you can about your new leader(s) from interviews, profiles, and/or former colleagues and direct reports. Try to get a sense of their working style and how they prefer for information to be delivered. For instance, some new leaders may prefer details straight away while others may appreciate a broader overview to begin engaging with your team.
- **How does your work fit into the new narrative?** Each era of leadership cultivates a new narrative. Your team needs to work to understand the perspectives and priorities of your new leader(s) and then align your work within those new frames.

New leadership can often be accompanied by restructuring, so make sure to determine how your work fits into the new agenda and what differentiates it and brings value to the business. What does your group do that brings unique value? To the extent that you can, try to quantify (anchored in credible data) the value that your team / particular sustainability initiatives offer to the organisation.

This can include leveraging new language and framings that more clearly demonstrate where sustainability supports key new strategic priorities. You may even consider leveraging a tool like AI to construct a persona of your new leader or leadership team and get feedback on whether your main arguments are likely to resonate with them.

- **Leverage sustainability's role in risk management.** Have a clearly defined value proposition for your team and build it from the bottom-up. For instance, you may want to start with how your team supports risk management and then once you build trust, you can begin to offer opportunities, and depending on the leader and their priorities, work your way up to an alignment on values.



- **Build a foundation of trust.** Consider how you can demonstrate that you are a valuable ally that can support your leader with strategic insight. Signal your commitment to supporting them and demonstrate it by working to provide the information they need at the time when they need it.
- **Be patient – wait for the right window of opportunity.** New leadership often enters during a time of crisis or significant change. Begin to prepare right away but be attentive for right window of opportunity when your new leader can process the information that you are trying to convey. In the first few weeks or months, they may need to get situated and/or they may be dealing with urgent issues. Get a sense of where sustainability ranks in terms of urgency and try to anticipate the right timing in their onboarding process. Follow their lead in terms of how they prefer to receive information. In these early meetings, focus on key trends and strategic insights and try to limit granular operational complexity unless your leader has specifically called for this level of detail.