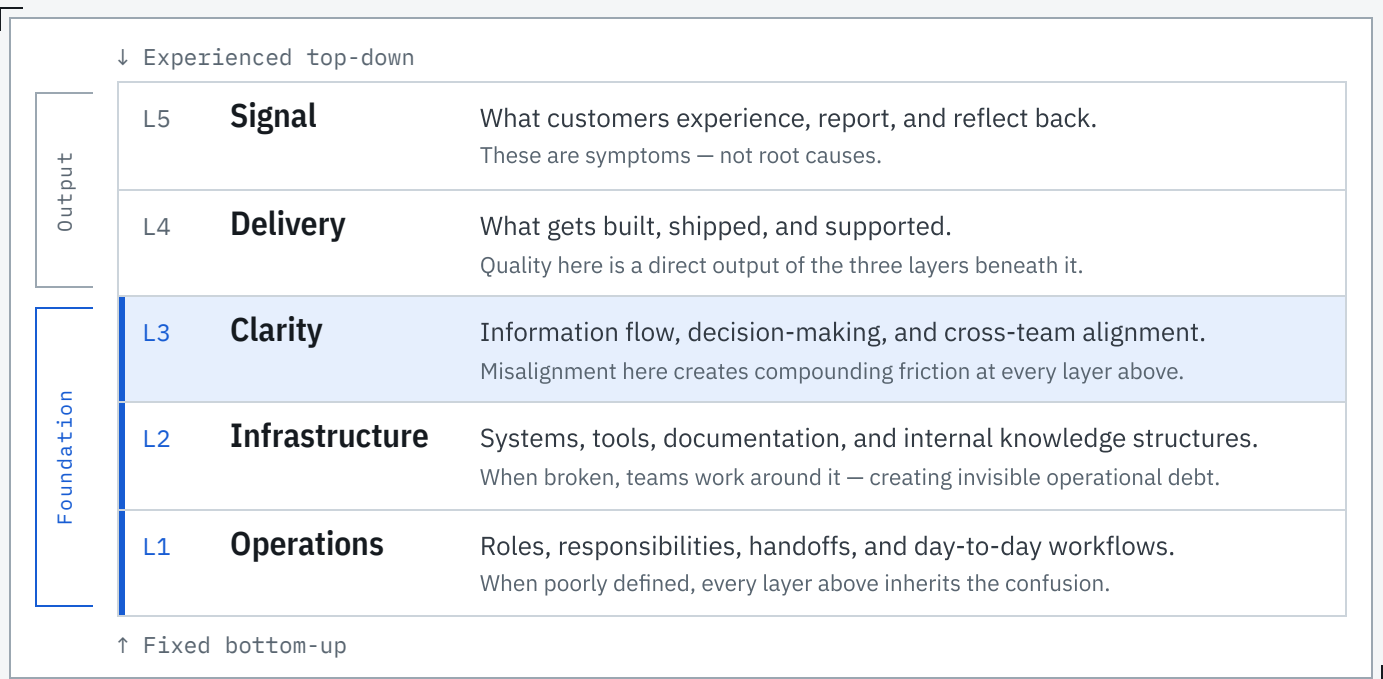


An operational design framework

The Foundation Layer

Organizations, like products, must be intentionally designed. Most operational problems surface at the top of this stack — but originate at the bottom. The framework maps where a problem actually lives, instead of where its symptoms appear.



Most problems surface at L5. Most fixes start at L1.

Companies try to fix L5 problems with L5 solutions — more tools, more headcount, more process bolted on top. The real leverage is in L1–L3, where foundations support what’s above them, or silently undermine it.

How to use this

- 01 Start with a symptom.** Take something customers or your team keep reporting. That’s L5 — real, but not the cause.
- 02 Trace it downward.** Ask “which layer is actually generating this?” and keep going until the answer stops changing.
- 03 Fix at that layer.** A fix that holds is one that survives the person who made it — that’s how you know it was foundational.