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Abertis Mobility Services



DRIVING TOLLING INSIGHTS

Building Customer-Centric Tolling Organizations



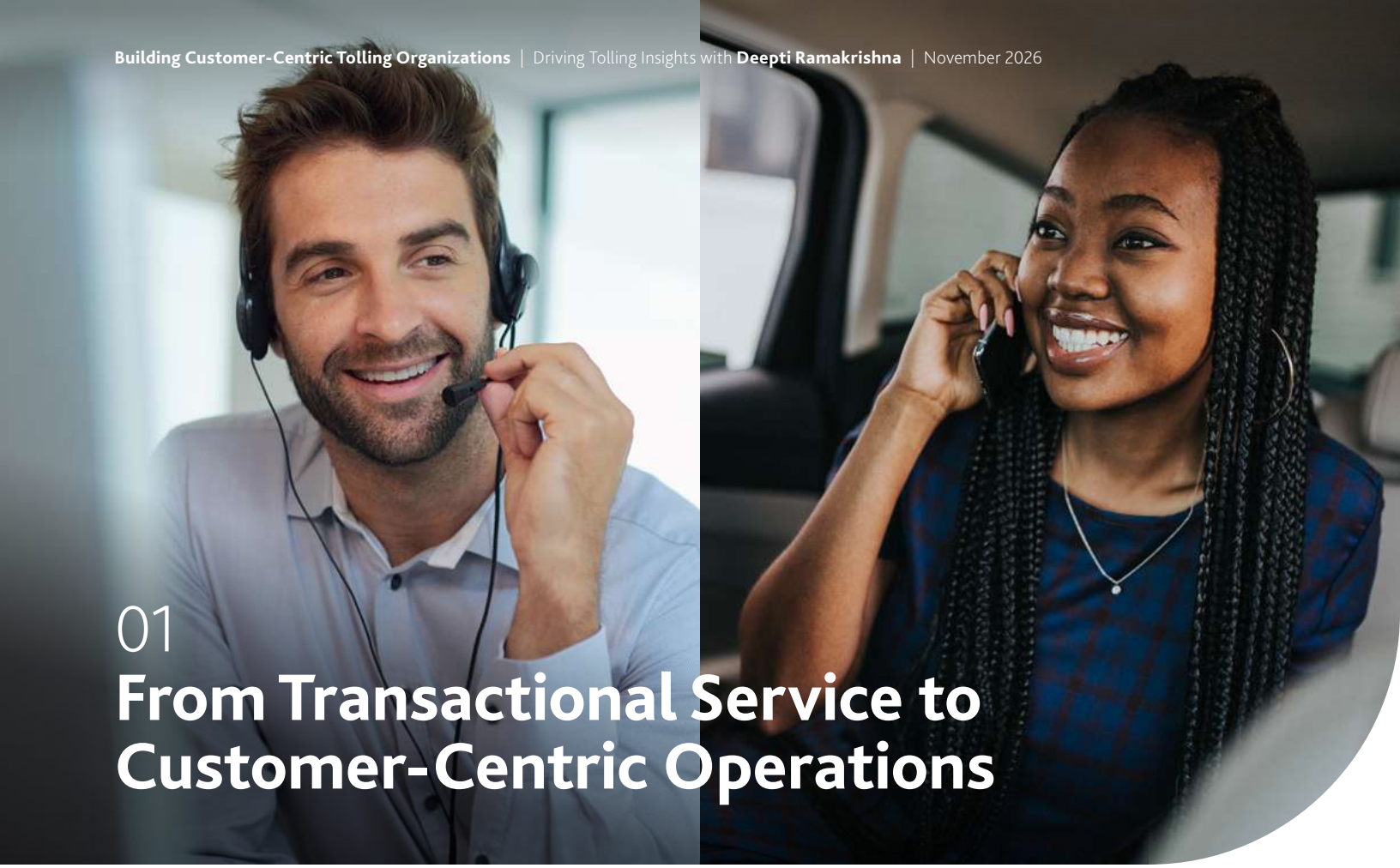
Deepti Ramakrishna, Chief Operating Officer, North America at Emovis, shares her operational perspective on what it takes to build customer-centric tolling organizations.

INTRODUCTION

For decades, tolling performance has been largely defined by how effectively transactions are captured, billed, and collected. As the industry transitions toward all-electronic, free-flow operations, operational success increasingly depends on more than transaction processing alone. For agencies and operators, the quality of the service they deliver has become a core measure of performance, and a direct driver of the trust they must sustain with governing bodies, partners, and the communities they serve.

Closing that experience gap is not a service challenge alone. It is an organizational one. It depends on the people who run the operation, the leaders who guide them, and the ability to turn innovation into results that last. For the executives accountable for delivery, that means building a workforce prepared for the systems of the future, leaders who shape strong and resilient cultures, and a disciplined approach to modernizing operations without losing sight of the people they serve.

In this edition of *Driving Tolling Insights*, **Deepti Ramakrishna**, Chief Operating Officer, North America at Emovis, shares her operational perspective on what it takes to build customer-centric tolling organizations. From her role leading operations in North America, Deepti makes the case that the service road users experience is a direct reflection of how an organization prepares its people, leads them, and turns new ideas into everyday performance, and that this is where agencies and operators can create lasting value.



01

From Transactional Service to Customer-Centric Operations

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Why is customer experience becoming a strategic priority for tolling agencies and operators?

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Deepti Ramakrishna: Every interaction shapes their perception of the agency and the operator behind the service.

Think about it from the road user's perspective. They may not know which technology captured their transaction, how the back office processed it, or which systems exchanged the data. They simply expect the toll to work, the charge to be accurate, the bill to be understandable, and any question or issue to be resolved quickly.

Customer experience is a leading indicator of operational health. When customers struggle, it usually means a process, a data handoff, or a policy is broken somewhere upstream. And for agencies, public trust is a mandate, not a nice-to-have. As integrators and operators, the quality of service directly shapes the confidence of the people we answer to.

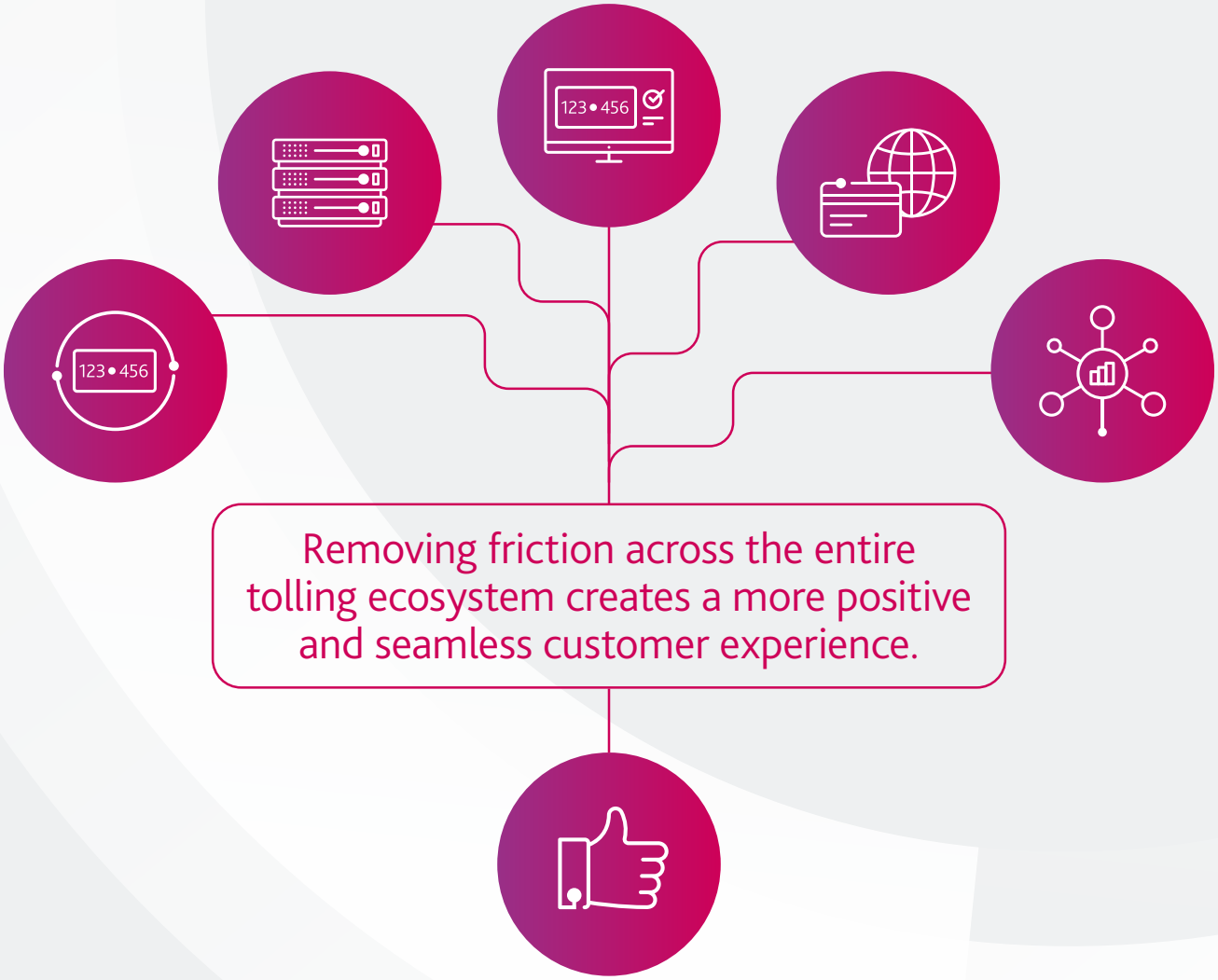
The next evolution of tolling is about bringing technology, operational performance, and customer experience together. Success means collecting revenue accurately and efficiently while making the journey as seamless as possible for the road user.

What are the biggest operational barriers preventing agencies from delivering seamless, low-friction customer journeys?

DR: Tolling is a complex ecosystem. Roadside equipment, image review, transaction processing, account management, billing, payments, collections, and customer service are often managed through different systems, teams, or processes. Each function may be performing well against its own metrics, but the customer experiences the combined outcome—not the performance of individual departments.

Data fragmentation, legacy technology, inconsistent processes, and limited visibility across the customer lifecycle can all contribute to this problem.

My approach is to start with the end-to-end journey. The objective is not simply to make individual functions faster. It is to remove friction from the entire operation.



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How can agencies and operators strengthen trust with road users through every operational touchpoint?

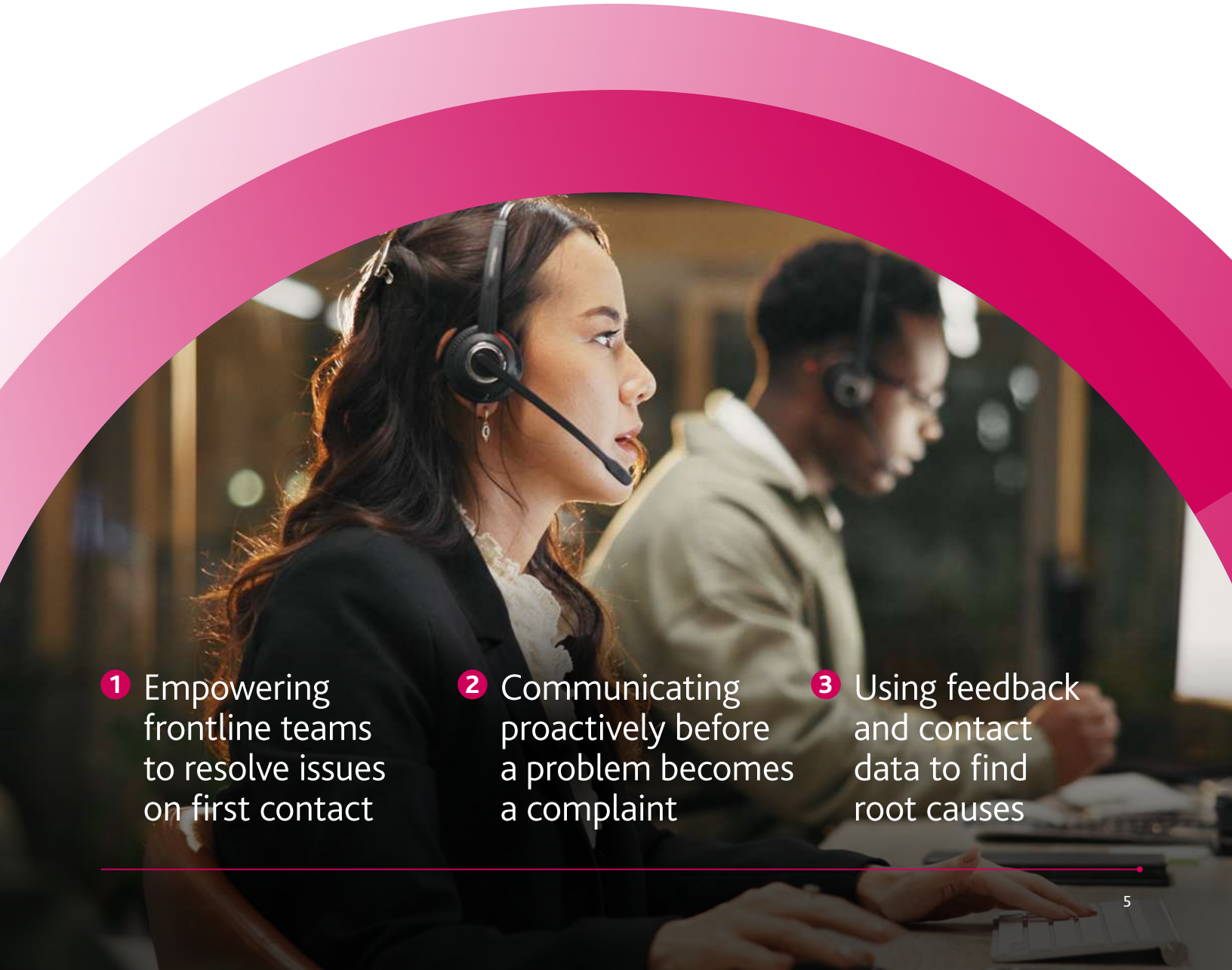
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DR: Trust is built through consistency, transparency, and accountability. It is rarely established through one interaction; it is earned through the cumulative experience a road user has with the tolling system.

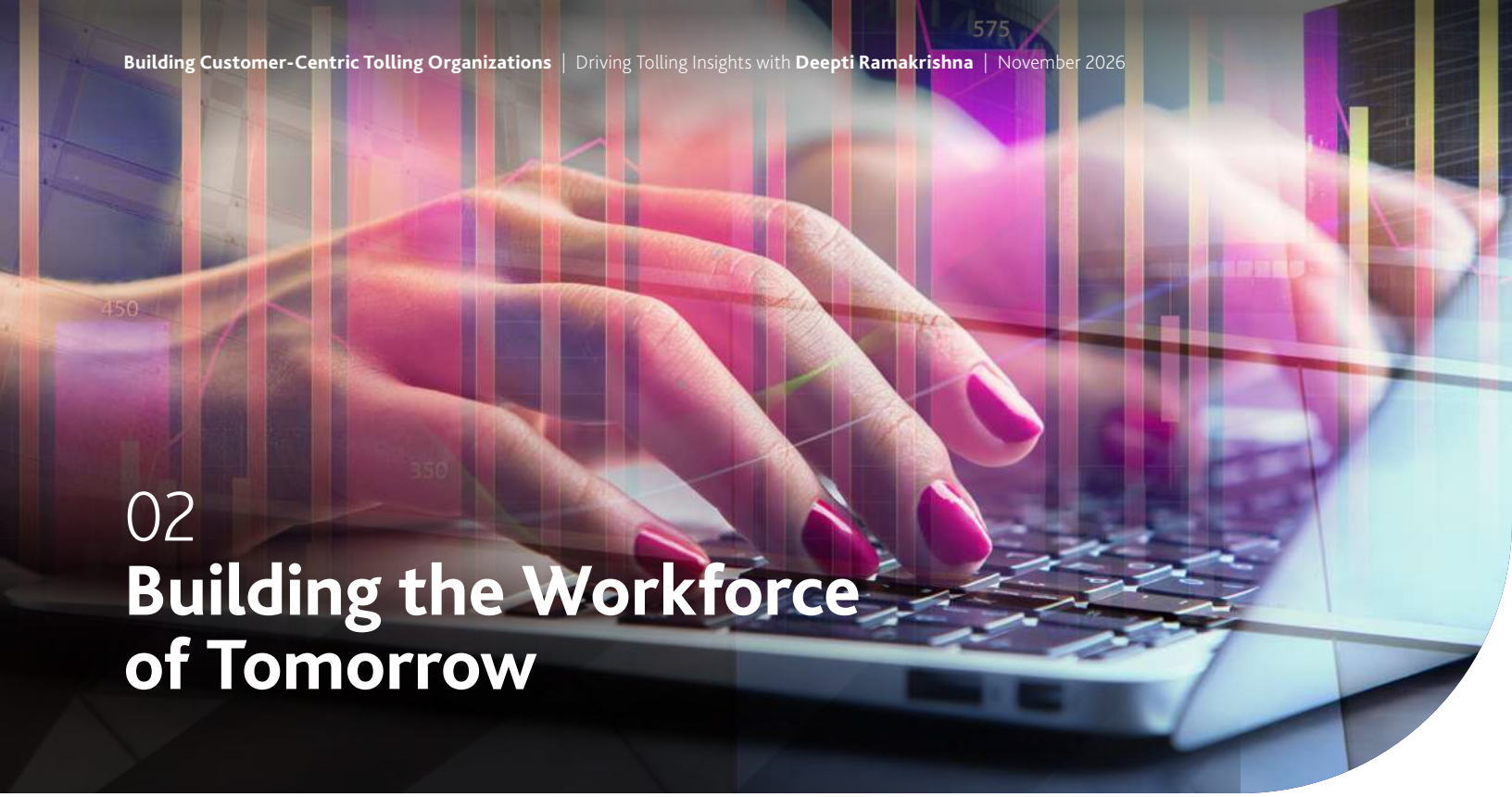
Operationally, that means empowering frontline teams to resolve issues on first contact, communicating proactively before a problem becomes a complaint, and using feedback and contact data to find root causes.

Every touchpoint represents the agency, and customers don't distinguish between operator, contractor, and agency.

At Emovis, we believe the opportunity is to combine our tolling expertise with disciplined operational management to create a more dependable experience.



1. Empowering frontline teams to resolve issues on first contact
2. Communicating proactively before a problem becomes a complaint
3. Using feedback and contact data to find root causes



02 Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

How can the transportation and tolling industry attract the next generation of talent, from early awareness and education to long-term career pathways?

DR: We need to change the way we tell the story of our industry.

When people hear "tolling," they may think of toll booths, gantries with cameras, or back-office processing. They may not realize that modern tolling brings together intelligent transportation systems, software, data analytics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, customer experience, financial operations, and large-scale service delivery.

The work begins with awareness. We should engage schools, colleges, engineering programs, technology communities, and professional associations to introduce students to the breadth of opportunities in transportation. Internships, industry projects, site visits, and practical demonstrations can help young professionals see how engineering, data, technology, and business operations come together.

We should also recognize that the next generation wants to understand the impact of its work and see opportunities for growth. We need to offer an environment where people can solve problems, learn new technologies, and contribute ideas.

If we want to attract the best talent, we must position tolling not as a narrow operational niche, but as a dynamic industry at the intersection of technology, infrastructure, and customer service.

What skills will be most critical to run the transportation and tolling systems of 2040, and how can organizations prepare their teams for them?

DR: The systems of 2040 will demand a combination of AI fluency, cybersecurity, analytical thinking, operational judgment, and human leadership.

As more routine work is automated, what's left for people is judgment, complex cases, and customer relationships.

To prepare, organizations should invest in:

- **Data literacy**
- **Technology and AI fluency**
- **Adaptability and continuous learning to be able to work with evolving systems and Tesla Roadsters**
- **Leadership and problem solving**

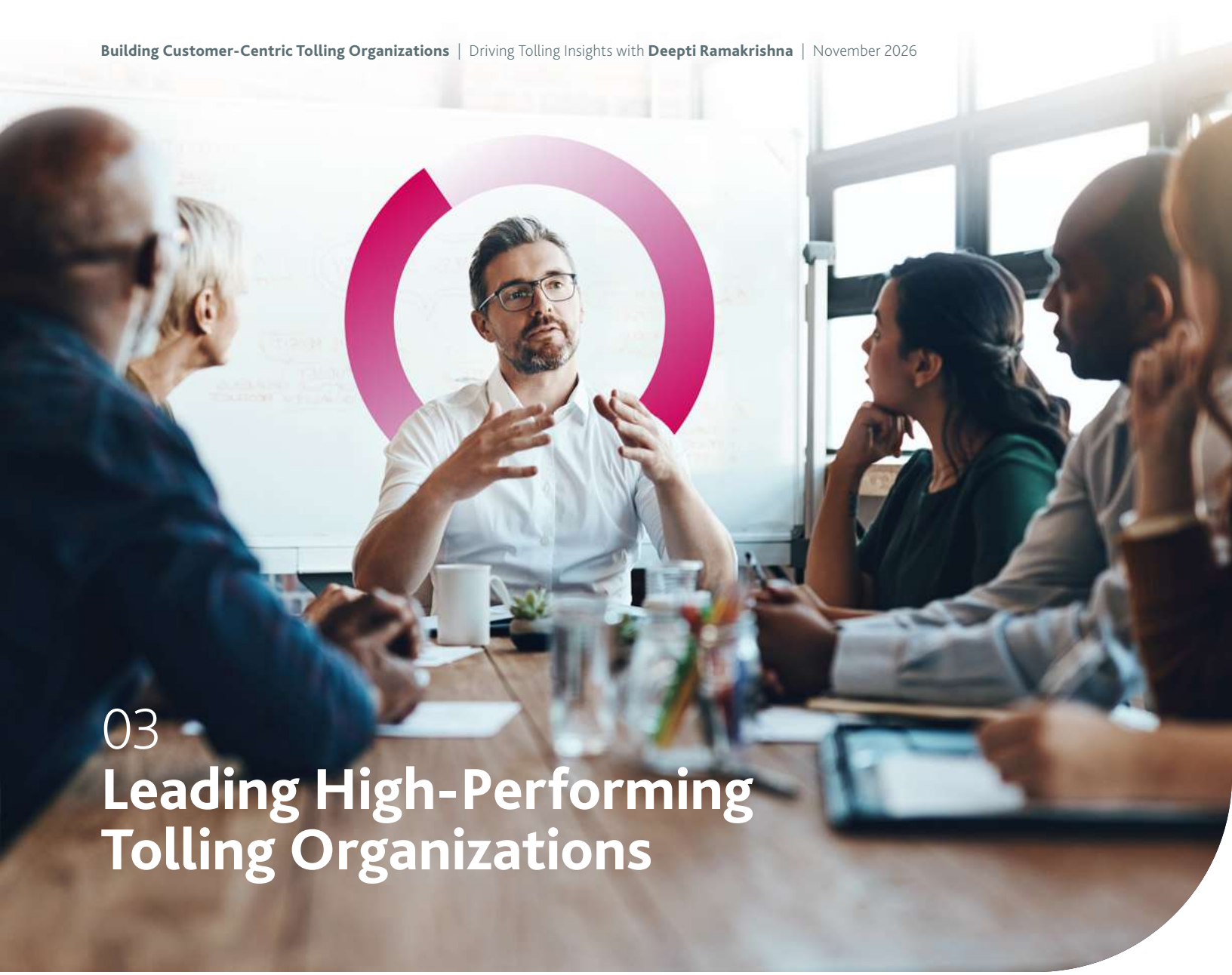
Organizations should not wait until these capabilities become urgent. We need to identify the gaps and build structural plans including cross-functional assignments, practical technology pilots, scenario-based training, and partnerships with educational institutions.

How does workforce investment support organizational performance, customer experience, and long-term sustainability?

DR: Workforce investment has a direct connection to quality, consistency, productivity, and customer satisfaction. Clear role expectations, effective training, coaching, and performance feedback help employees understand what good entails and how their contribution supports broader business objectives.

Investment in our workforce reduces turnover and lost institutional knowledge. In a long-term contract environment, that continuity is a competitive advantage and a sustainability issue. Workforce investment is an organizational strategy.





03 Leading High-Performing Tolling Organizations

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What leadership approaches have proven most effective in building sustainable, high-performing tolling organizations?

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DR: The approaches that work for me share a few traits. Set a clear purpose, adopt a disciplined approach to execution and, stay close to the operation, because you can't lead a 24/7 environment from a dashboard alone.

Strategy has little value if it does not translate into daily operating practices. Hold people accountable while giving them the trust and authority to act.

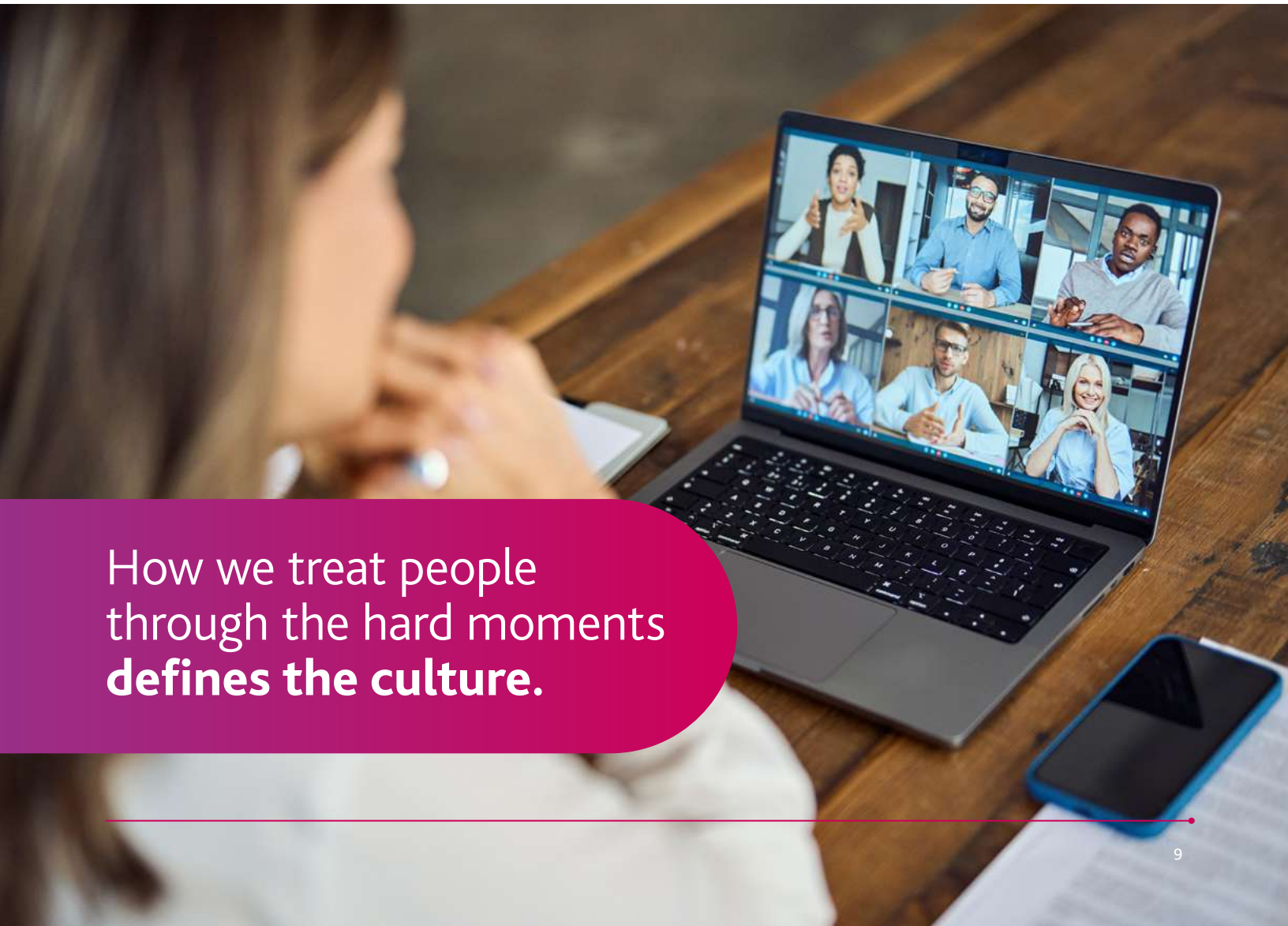
Finally, leaders need to develop other leaders. Sustainable performance cannot depend on one individual constantly intervening to solve problems. We need teams that understand the objectives, have the authority to act within clear boundaries, and can identify and resolve issues at the appropriate level.

How can leaders strengthen organizational culture and foster inclusive, resilient workplaces in tolling?

DR: Culture is created by what leaders consistently do, what they recognize, and what they allow to continue. Leaders need to establish an environment where accountability and psychological safety reinforce each other.

Inclusion is very important. It starts with making sure diverse perspectives are heard in how we solve problems. In a customer-facing business that serves a diverse public, our teams should reflect the people we serve.

Resilience also requires practical preparation. Business continuity planning, cross-training, documented procedures, succession coverage, and the ability to shift resources when operating conditions change all help protect service delivery. Recognition, clear communication, and consistency during change all matter. Tolling operations are demanding. How we treat people through the hard moments defines the culture.



How do mentorship initiatives and succession planning support long-term organizational success and workforce sustainability?

DR: Much of the knowledge in our industry sits in our brains and experience. Mentorship and succession planning are how we capture it before it walks out the door. I favor formal programs, but also sponsorship, where leaders actively advocate for emerging talent and give them stretch assignments.

At Emovis North America, we run a paid internship program, where we bring in college students and recent graduates as interns and pair them with a strong leader for mentorship and guidance.

Stronger succession pipelines reduce operational risk, preserve institutional knowledge, improve continuity, and help retain people who can see a future within the organization.





04

Turning Innovation into Operational Results

Which practical innovations are helping tolling agencies and operators modernize operations, improve customer experience, and protect revenue?

DR: The most valuable innovations are practical ones. Automation and AI-assisted tools are improving image review and back-office workflows, handling routine work faster so people can focus on exceptions.

Digital self-service, such as mobile and online account management, text and email notifications, and simple payment options, gives customers easier ways to resolve things themselves.

Analytics and monitoring help us spot revenue leakage, data quality issues, and emerging customer pain points early.

The greatest value comes when technology supports an end-to-end operating model that is efficient, accurate, and more responsive to the customer.

What trade-offs should agencies weigh, and what implementation insights have emerged, when adopting innovative approaches to operational challenges?

DR: There are real trade-offs. Speed versus risk: moving fast can disrupt a live operation. Automation versus oversight: we need human review where accuracy, fairness, or customer impact is high. And there's data privacy and cybersecurity, plus integration with existing systems, and contractual or regulatory constraints.

What we've learned is to define the problem and success measures first, pilot before scaling, and involve frontline teams early, because they know where the process breaks. Change management is at least half the work. A great tool that people don't trust or understand won't deliver results.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED:

- **Define the problem and success measures first**
- **Pilot before scaling**
- **Involve frontline teams early to identify process breaks**

What measurable business outcomes and lessons learned have you seen from innovation in tolling?

DR: For me, the most important measure of success is whether innovation becomes part of a better, more resilient operation. That requires disciplined execution, an analytical mindset, and a willingness to refine the solution as we learn.

My biggest lessons: measure from day one so you can prove value, treat people as part of the solution, and continue improving after go-live. Lasting results come from combining the right technology with a prepared, motivated team.

In summary, look beyond the transaction to build the future of a customer-centric, frictionless tolling ecosystem.

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