



## The Seven Positions

### Sponsor

**Tensions: Authority, Stewardship**

Owns objectives and resources. Decides whether the implementation is worth pursuing and has authority to make organizational changes. Cuts through decision stalls.

*Product owner, project sponsor, technical lead, founder, executive stakeholder*

### Architect

**Tensions: Translation, Empathy**

Makes the invisible visible. Documents systems so everyone can see how they work. Advocates for users when builders optimize for technical elegance. Owns the Playbook.

*UX researcher, product designer, service designer, systems thinker, product manager*

### Sage

**Tension: Context**

Understands why things are the way they are. Knows unwritten rules, historical constraints, and which "simple" changes broke things before. Prevents repeating past mistakes.

*Senior team member, domain expert, legacy system owner, long-tenured employee*

### Scout

**Tension: Curiosity**

The curious challenger. Asks questions others skip, designs experiments, ensures the team builds on evidence rather than consensus. Can block deployment when assumptions remain untested.

*Frontline worker, QA lead, research scientist, test engineer, user researcher*

### Smith

**Tension: Execution**

Builds working systems. Translates designs into functioning software, surfaces ambiguity through building, and discovers what plans missed.

*Developer, engineer, technical lead, systems architect*

### Sentinel

**Tension: Safety**

Manages risk. Asks what could go wrong, ensures boundaries are defined, monitors for drift after deployment. Can veto deployment when safety criteria aren't met.

*Risk owner, compliance lead, security officer, finance representative*

### Guide

**Tension: Integrity**

Maintains method integrity. Ensures the team follows the Canons, facilitates key sessions, holds the process when pressure mounts to skip steps.

*Coach, facilitator, program manager, external consultant*

## Dangerous Combinations

Combination	Risk
Smith + Sentinel	Builder overrides the risk manager
Sponsor + Sentinel	"I want this" overrides "this is safe"

### TEAM SIZING RULE

Every tension needs exactly one owner. One person can hold multiple Positions if they have the skills and bandwidth. Below three people, you're missing the perspectives that catch blind spots.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When Position holders disagree, that's the system working. When it becomes gridlock, escalate to the Sponsor. If the Sponsor is a party, the Guide holds the process.