

Transformations fail in plain sight.

The nine-domain field guide for reading whether a program will land, before it doesn't.

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The inside view has a structural blind spot.

Problems that sink a program are visible for months, sitting in reconciliations nobody ran, designs still churning, defect backlogs aging while the schedule keeps promising green.

Status rolls uphill and gets greener at every layer. A qualified amber at the workstream becomes “on track” by the time it reaches the board.

The remedy is not more status meetings. It’s a different vantage point.

Nine domains. One clear picture.

Each domain is a place programs reliably fail. Each has a tell.

01

**Governance &
Sponsorship**

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**Scope &
Requirements**

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**Program &
Plan Health**

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Readiness**

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**Data
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**Cutover &
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01

Governance & Sponsorship

Is there a single executive who truly owns the outcome, with authority over scope, budget, and go-live, or a committee that receives status instead of making decisions? Most surprise failures trace back here.

THE TELL

How fast cross-functional decisions get resolved. Strong governance clears them in days. Weak governance lets them sit for weeks while the work stalls.

02

Scope & Requirements

Is scope baselined and under real change control, or are small changes being absorbed silently until the plan no longer matches reality? Requirements gaps surface as expensive rework at the worst moment.

THE TELL

Whether every requirement traces to a design and a test. When it can't, you have gaps you'll discover as rework.

03

Program & Plan Health

Is there a genuine, dependency-linked critical path, or a list of milestones dressed up as a plan? Optimistic-fiction plans have no real critical path and unmanaged dependencies.

THE TELL

Ask the program to name its critical path. If it can't, the schedule is decoration, and the green status is an opinion.

04

Solution & Design Readiness

Are design decisions stable, signed off by the business, or still churning while the build races ahead? Designs that satisfy the build but not the business get discovered in production.

THE TELL

Whether the integration architecture has been tested at real volume. Everything else is a design on paper.

05

Data Readiness

Has a full-volume mock conversion been run and reconciled back to source, with named data owners signing off? Data is the single most common cause of a go-live that goes sideways.

THE TELL

If full-volume mock conversions haven't been run and reconciled, you don't know whether your data is clean. Data is where optimism goes to die.

06

Testing & Quality

Are critical defects trending down with controlled aging, and are stage-gate exit criteria enforced, or quietly waived when the date gets close? Thin or late testing is the other top go-live killer.

THE TELL

A program that has never failed a gate isn't disciplined. It's not really testing. Watch the defect curve and who controls the exit criteria.

07

Change, Adoption & Readiness

Is business readiness measured by role, based on whether these specific people can do their jobs on day one, or is “training delivered” being reported as readiness? Plenty of technically successful go-lives fail in the business.

THE TELL

Whether the super-users and process owners are confident, or merely trained. “Training delivered” and “ready to operate” are not the same thing.

08

Cutover & Go-Live Readiness

Has the cutover been rehearsed end to end, with timings, a real go/no-go, and a rollback decision point someone is empowered to pull? A cutover you've never rehearsed is a plan you're testing live.

THE TELL

Whether hypercare is staffed and scoped beyond the first few days. A support model that evaporates after week one guarantees a crisis in week two.

09

Vendor / SI Performance

Does the SI's reported status hold up against independent evidence, and has key staffing stayed stable? Your SI cannot objectively assess their own delivery: there's a structural conflict.

THE TELL

The gap between what the SI says and what the artifacts show. That gap is where the real program health lives.

A shared language for “how ready is ready.”

The scale forces specificity that comfortable language avoids.

1 Absent / Ad hoc

No defined approach; outcomes depend on individuals

2 Emerging / Inconsistent

Some pieces exist, applied unevenly

3 Defined / Functional

Documented and operating; a workable baseline

4 Managed / Proactive

Measured and controlled; risks anticipated

5 Optimized / Assured

Continuously improved and resilient

On track

At risk

Critical

You can't average your way to the truth.

Transformations don't fail on averages.

They fail on their single weakest link.

A program can be strong in seven domains and still be doomed by one. A blended score smooths exactly the gap that will sink you, handing everyone a comfortable number that hides the one thing that matters. Don't ask what the average says. Ask where the one red is, and whether anyone has the runway to turn it green.

INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE

Know whether your transformation will land.

The Transformation Health Check™ applies the full Index: a structured, independent, three-to-four-week diagnostic that gives sponsors an honest read on program health and a prioritized plan to protect the outcome. Not a committee. Not another status report. An independent view.