

Program Alignment Assessment Checklist

Find the seams where accountability disappears, and the number nobody can produce today.

How to use this (about fifteen minutes)

Most organizations can name who owns each program. Almost none can name who owns the gap between how a program was designed and how it now runs. This checklist finds that gap. Work through it for your critical programs and you will leave with two things you probably cannot produce today: a count of the handoffs no one owns, and an estimate of what those gaps are costing you.

Four steps. List your critical programs. Walk the ownership checks for each. Tally the unowned seams. Estimate the exposure. Best done with the people who run the work.

Part 1 · Program Inventory

List the programs, platforms, or core processes that matter most to the business. Aim for your top five to eight.

#	Program or system	Business owner	Last reconciled (design vs. running)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Part 2 · The Ownership Checklist

Run these seven checks for each program in your inventory. Check the box only when the answer is a clear yes, in writing. Every unchecked box is an unowned seam, a place where drift accumulates with no one accountable for it.

GROUP A · THE SEAT (WHO OWNS THE GAP)

- ☐ **1** A single named person is accountable for the difference between how this program is documented and how it runs. Not the process owner. The owner of the gap.
- ☐ **2** When that owner is promoted or moves on, ownership of the running system is reassigned in writing to a named person.
- ☐ **3** The gap between documented and running is inspected on a set cadence, a scheduled reconciliation, not only after an incident or an audit.

GROUP B · THE FOUR SEAMS (WHERE OWNERSHIP DISAPPEARS)

- ☐ **4** Business and technology. A named owner holds the handoff between what the business needs now and what technology runs now.
- ☐ **5** Team and vendor. A named owner reconciles the living relationship against the contract, on a cadence.
- ☐ **6** Project and run. One person is accountable across the build-to-run crossing, named before the project team disbands.
- ☐ **7** Leader and successor. The running system is handed over deliberately, with the judgment transferred, not only the title and the documents.

Scoring Grid • one row per program

Copy your programs from Part 1. Mark each check as a yes or a no. Count the empty boxes in each row. That row count is how exposed that program is.

Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unowned

Part 3 • Your Numbers

Now the numbers most leadership teams cannot produce on demand.

Total critical programs assessed: _____

Programs with no named owner of the gap (check 1 unchecked): _____ THE COUNT YOU COULD NOT PRODUCE THIS MORNING

Total unowned seams across all programs (every empty box): _____

If the second number is above zero, you have found at least one empty seat. That is not a failure of your people. It is a responsibility no one was assigned.

Part 4 • Cost Estimate

A directional estimate, not a guarantee. It is enough to size the problem and earn the seat a budget.

- A. Annual budget of your largest at-risk program\$ _____
- B. A realistic overrun for a misaligned program of this kind (guidance: 10 to 30 percent) _____ %
- C. Share of that overrun driven by unowned seams (research and our program data put this at 40 to 60 percent; use 50 if unsure) _____ %
- Estimated annual exposure = A × B × C\$ _____

The Project Management Institute has put project waste near ninety-seven million dollars for every billion invested. Most leaders attribute it to scope and estimates. A large share lives in the seams this checklist just mapped.

Part 5 • Reading Your Result

- 0 unowned seams • Governing. Rare, and worth protecting. Keep the cadence and keep the seats named.
- 1 to 3 • Where most well-run organizations sit. It holds today, carried by a few people who know how everything connects. It stops holding the day one of them is promoted.
- 4 or more • Exposed. The running system is held by memory and goodwill, and the seat that should own the gap is empty. The good news: an empty seat is fixable once you can see it, and now you can.

Name the owner of your riskiest seam, in writing, this week.

One owner, one cadence, one seam. When you are ready to build the seat and not only spot the gap: we build it, you own it, you run it.

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