PERSPECTIVE · TRANSFORMATION VALUE LANDING REVIEW

Before You Ask Whether They Will, Establish Whether They Can

When the business case is not reaching the books, the first explanation is often that people are not committed. Before you act on it, establish whether your organization can deliver the value under the conditions it has.

Waheeda Görlitz · Senior Strategic Mobilization Adviser · 21 September 2026

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01 A failure to act does not prove a failure of commitment.

02 Will is the commitment to make the choices and carry their consequences. Can is the real capacity to act and to keep acting.

03 Capacity is more than competence: it includes authority, resources, time, energy, and the experience and knowledge to turn strategy into financial results.

04 Will and can shape one another: prolonged inability erodes commitment, and weak commitment withholds the conditions action needs.

05 Before you commit further capital, establish how much of the promised value your organization can deliver under the conditions it has.

The First Explanation Is Usually About Will.

The milestones are green. The numbers have not moved. Your CFO cannot yet confirm the result your business case promised.

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When that happens, the first explanation is usually about will: people do not understand the ambition, managers are not committed, the organization is resisting change.

Sometimes that is true. People may not accept the consequences, may prefer the existing order or may have reasons to delay. But the same picture appears when people are willing and unable. This is especially likely when the people who must deliver the transformation are the same people who must keep the business running.

The difference is not semantic. It decides what you do next, and whether more pressure will move the numbers at all.

Will And Can Are Different Constraints.

Will is the commitment to make the choices, accept the trade-offs and carry the consequences a transformation requires. It rests on interests, credibility, conviction and whether people see the exchange as legitimate.

Can is broader than personal competence. It is whether people have what they need to act, and to keep acting, while running the business: the authority to decide, the resources, the time, the energy to sustain the effort, and the experience and knowledge to turn strategy into financial results.

A manager can believe in the transformation and still lack the authority to resolve a dependency with another function. A team can have the skill and still carry too many priorities. An organization can begin with genuine commitment and lose the capacity to sustain it through three years of repeated initiatives and value that never shows in the books.

None of these is a failure of will. They are gaps in capacity, and capacity can be built.

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The Same Symptom Can Have Different Causes.

Delay may be political obstruction, or it may reflect decision rights nobody has settled. Minimal compliance may protect an existing interest, or it may be the only feasible response to conflicting demands. Skepticism may signal opposition, or it may be what people learned from earlier promises that never reached the books.

You cannot read the cause from the behavior. And the cause matters most where your business case is concerned. The question is not which explanation is true in general. The question is what it means for the value you have promised: how much of it can your organization deliver under the conditions it has today, and which conditions must change for the financial result you expect to land?

Will And Can Shape One Another.

The two are distinct but not independent. Weak commitment can stop leaders from providing the authority and resources action requires. Repeated inability can wear down motivation until people stop believing further effort will matter.

This is why transformation fatigue is consequential: a practical constraint becomes a motivational one. When effort repeatedly fails to produce visible results, the organization learns to conserve belief as well as energy.

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Establish What Is Possible Before You Commit More.

Will and can are both conditions, and both can be improved. Will grows when interests and consequences are addressed openly, when leadership is credible, and when commitments are made explicit. Can grows when people have the authority, resources, time, energy and experience to act. Improving only one leaves the transformation incomplete.

This does not excuse weak performance. It makes accountability more exact. People are accountable for the choices within their agency. You and your leadership team are accountable for the conditions that decide whether coherent action is possible.

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It matters most before you commit further capital. If the constraint is capacity, more pressure will not move the numbers, and more funding may only add to the load. Before you ask whether your organization will deliver the value in your business case, establish whether it can.

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WHERE THIS LEADS

Transformation Value Landing Review

Know how much of the promised value you can count on, and what must change for it to land.

manreau.com/engagements/transformation-value-landing-review

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABOUT MANREAU

A transformation program is not yet a transformation.

MANREAU, The Strategic Mobilization Advisory, works with CEOs and leadership teams on the conditions a transformation depends on: the priorities, commitments, resources and decision rights that decide whether the business case reaches the books.

What Do You Need Now?

Start with a confidential conversation with Waheeda Görlitz about the decision ahead of you. You'll leave with a clearer view of what that decision depends on, and which engagement fits, if any.

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