PERSPECTIVE · STRATEGIC MOBILIZATION

Everyone Is On Track. The Transformation Is Not.

Strategy, delivery and change are each judged on their own terms. The transformation loses its coherence between them.

Waheeda Görlitz · Senior Strategic Mobilization Adviser · 26 August 2026

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01 A transformation can be well run and still miss its value. Its initiatives have owners; the system that decides their outcome usually has none.

02 Strategy, delivery and change are each judged on their own terms. The transformation loses its coherence between them.

03 What looks like an execution problem is often a condition the initiative did not create and cannot change.

04 A new order cannot be announced. It has to be negotiated between the leaders who must carry it.

05 The capacity to transform cannot be imported. It is built inside the organization, and it stays there.

The Familiar Questions Begin One Level Too Low.

Every initiative in your transformation has an owner. The governance meets, the budgets are allocated and the milestones are tracked. But ask who owns the system that turns those initiatives into value in the books, and you will rarely hear a name.

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That system exists in every organization: the way strategic intent becomes commitments, commitments become action, and action becomes results. It decides whether your business case arrives. It is rarely managed as one whole.

So when the value does not reach the books, the familiar questions come back. Is execution disciplined enough? Is the communication working? Are people committed?

Those questions matter. But they begin one level too low.

Behind the shortfall there are usually different problems, and each needs a different decision. The strategy may rest on an assumption that no longer holds. Leaders may have agreed to the direction without committing to its consequences. Others may be committed and still lack the authority, resources or time to act. Work may be completed without changing the result. None of these can be solved inside an initiative.

Initiatives Are Managed. The Conditions Are Not.

Most organizations manage transformation through a model built for bounded change: initiatives, owners, governance, budgets and milestones. When results fall short, attention returns to the initiatives, not to the system around them.

Strategy, delivery and change are usually governed in different forums, with different agendas and different measures of success. Strategy is judged by the quality of the direction, delivery by milestones, change by adoption. Each can perform well on its own terms while the transformation loses coherence between them. Often no forum is responsible for the path from strategic intent to value in the books as a whole.

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The Initiative Is Where The Gap Becomes Visible.

When nobody manages that whole, scope can be approved without an account of the capabilities it requires. Funding can be released before the uncertainty is understood. Dependencies can be recorded without anyone holding the authority to resolve them. A common direction can be declared before its consequences have been negotiated. Accountability can move downward while decision rights remain above.

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The gap eventually shows at the level of the initiative: delay, resistance, weak adoption, contention for resources or disappointing value. What looks like an execution problem may have been produced by the conditions around execution.

This does not let initiative leaders off. It means they cannot resolve through effort what was decided, or left undecided, above them. Their results are evidence about those conditions, and the organization has to be able to hear that evidence and act on it.

A New Order Has To Be Negotiated.

A transformation changes more than processes and technology. It changes priorities, authority, capabilities, and who gains and who loses. It establishes a new order in the organization.

That order cannot be announced into existence. Leaders can be aligned on the direction and agree in the room, and still have committed to nothing. The new order has to be negotiated between the leaders who must carry it: what must stop, where authority moves, who bears the cost of the transition, how much disruption the business can absorb.

Functions are not obstacles to dissolve. They hold specialist knowledge, responsibilities and legitimate interests. The problem is not that these perspectives exist. It arises when the organization has no reliable way to bring them into a direction the whole business can sustain.

Negotiation does not mean every interest is accommodated, or that you give up the responsibility to decide. It means consequences and disagreement become visible before a commitment is treated as real.

The Capacity Cannot Be Imported.

This matters more now, because transformation is no longer an interruption between periods of stability. AI keeps reopening how work is done, where judgment belongs and how value is created. Continuous transformation is easily mistaken for a continuous stream of new initiatives. The result is more governance, more competing priorities and more demands for commitment before earlier changes have landed.

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What continuous transformation needs instead is a way of improving the conditions themselves. That happens in a rhythm your leadership team keeps, within the governance and reporting you already have, and anchored in the results you report.

The capacity to do that lies inside your organization. It may be fragmented, stretched or never mobilized, but it cannot be imported. Only your leaders and management teams can exercise it. Every transformation they carry through this way leaves them better prepared for the next.

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The question is then no longer only why an initiative is not delivering. It is what your organization is doing, through its choices, its structures, its resource decisions and its unsettled negotiations, to make delivery possible or impossible.

WHERE THIS LEADS

Strategic Mobilization

The conditions your transformation depends on, improved by your leaders, the value followed into the books, and the capacity built to transform again.

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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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