MANREAU
& PARTNERS

MANREAU BRIEF

What Leaders Must Resolve Every 90 Days

By Waheeda Görlitz | 1 November 2026

A 90-day cadence gives leaders enough time to produce operational evidence, and a short enough horizon to correct assumptions before drift becomes failure.

Cadence beats intensity because transformation requires recurring judgment, not occasional mobilization.

Transformation is often driven through bursts of intensity: launches, workshops, steering interventions, recovery sprints and executive escalations. These moments can create movement. They rarely create continuity.

The problem is not that leaders care too little. It is that intensity concentrates attention temporarily while the organization continues to learn, reinterpret and adapt every day. Once the intervention passes, old priorities return, assumptions remain untested and the transformation gradually separates from operational reality.

The 90-day rhythm rests on a different principle: cadence beats intensity in transformation. A recurring discipline connects evidence, collective judgment, decisions, execution and Booked Value before drift hardens into failure.

Ninety days is not a universal law. It is a practical management horizon: long enough for decisions to produce observable operational effects, but short enough to revise assumptions before a year has been lost. The value lies less in the number than in the obligation to resolve the same consequential questions repeatedly.

The cadence asks five questions in sequence, each building on the last. Together they operationalize SITT, See, Interpret, Translate, Transform, within a recurring management discipline, then test whether the rhythm has produced both stronger capacity and movement toward Booked Value.

© MANREAU 2026

1. What has materially changed?

The rhythm begins with reality, not the program narrative. Leaders need to know what has changed in customer behavior, competitive conditions, regulation, technology, operations and the organization's own capacity to execute.

This is more demanding than reviewing a dashboard. Most reporting systems show the measures leadership already decided to collect. They are less effective at revealing weak signals, contradictory observations and the operational knowledge that has not travelled upward.

The SEE discipline requires leaders to ask which observations are material, where they came from, what remains invisible and which prior assumptions the evidence no longer supports. A transformation cannot adapt to a reality it has not made discussable.

2. What does the evidence mean?

Evidence does not interpret itself. The same performance result may indicate a flawed value case, weak execution, an obsolete assumption, a local capability constraint or a consequence that will disappear once conditions change.

INTERPRET is the collective work of testing these competing explanations. The objective is not rapid consensus. It is a sufficiently coherent judgment that preserves relevant disagreement and makes uncertainty explicit.

Leaders should leave this part of the rhythm knowing which interpretation currently guides action, which alternatives remain credible and what further evidence would cause them to revise the conclusion. Apparent alignment that conceals different interpretations is deferred failure.

3. What must now be decided?

Transformation loses energy when interpretation produces discussion but not consequence. Every rhythm must translate judgment into explicit decisions: what will continue, what will change, what will stop, where resources move and who owns the result.

The TRANSLATE discipline is where strategic intent becomes an executable commitment. A decision is not complete because it appears in minutes or a presentation. It is complete when ownership, resources, dependencies, consequences and the evidence expected from execution are clear.

© MANREAU 2026

A poor answer sounds decisive but remains non-operational: improve adoption, accelerate execution or strengthen accountability. A good answer identifies the choice and its displacement effect: which approval will be removed, which resource will move, who can decide without escalation, what will stop and what evidence the accountable owner must produce before the next rhythm.

This is also where leaders must renegotiate commitments that no longer fit reality. Continuing an obsolete commitment because it was once approved is not discipline. It is avoidance disguised as consistency.

4. What must be different in the business within the next 90 days?

The cadence must specify the operational effect the next rhythm is expected to produce. Not activity completed, but something observably different in the business: a decision made closer to the customer, cycle time reduced, working capital released, failure demand removed, adoption expressed in changed work or an AI-enabled process operating under clear human accountability.

TRANSFORM converts the decision into action and observes its consequences. The work should be sufficiently bounded to produce evidence within the rhythm while remaining connected to the larger transformation mandate.

A poor 90-day commitment promises to complete workshops, deploy a tool or advance a workstream. A good commitment states the changed operating reality: planners use the new decision process in live work, exceptions follow a defined human escalation path, cycle time moves by an agreed measure and the accountable leader can show the resulting operational and financial evidence.

This prevents two common failures: initiatives so large that no result can be tested for a year, and activities so small that completion produces no material business effect.

5. What value has moved, and what capacity now exists?

Every rhythm must examine two forms of evidence. Outcome evidence shows whether operational performance moved toward finance-validated Booked Value. Capacity evidence shows whether the organization is becoming better able to transform without MANREAU or another external party producing the work on its behalf.

The two must not be confused. Booked Value may take longer than one rhythm to appear. Earlier capacity evidence should already be visible in how people surface disagreement, make decisions, correct assumptions, coordinate execution and maintain accountability.

© MANREAU 2026

A rhythm that produces activity but neither operational evidence nor stronger capacity has not advanced the transformation. A rhythm that produces short-term value through external effort but leaves the organization dependent has delivered a result without developing the capability required to sustain it.

What the 90-day cadence is not

It is not quarterly reporting with new terminology. Reporting explains what happened to a governance audience. A cadence changes what the organization does next.

It is not a universal sprint imposed on every initiative. Different work moves at different speeds. The rhythm creates common moments of organizational judgment while allowing execution pathways to retain the timing their work requires.

And it is not permanent urgency. A healthy cadence reduces the need for crisis mobilization because assumptions, constraints and value erosion become visible earlier.

The leadership obligation

Every 90 days, leadership must be able to state what changed, what the organization now believes, what it has decided, what will become operationally different and how that difference connects to Booked Value.

If those questions cannot be answered, the transformation may still be busy. It is not being actively governed.

The purpose of the rhythm is not to make transformation move faster at all costs. It is to ensure that movement remains intelligent, consequential and connected to value, and that the organization becomes more capable with every rhythm.

© MANREAU 2026

About MANREAU

A transformation program is not yet a transformation.

Your strategy can be sound, delivery disciplined and change carefully planned. Yet your transformation can still fail.

Managing the initiatives is one job. Managing the system that must transform the business is another. Most organizations manage the first explicitly. The second goes unmanaged. That system is the Transformation Operating System.

MANREAU works with leaders on their Strategic Mobilization to improve the conditions for successful transformation by making the Transformation Operating System visible and manageable. Strategic intent turns into coherent action, booked and sustained value, and the capacity to transform again.

About the author

Waheeda Görlitz is the founder of MANREAU. She works with leadership teams on the organizational, political and human system through which transformation becomes executable and enduring.

Read the founder conversation

Bring Us the Situation.

Discuss what your organization is facing and where transformation is losing momentum.

Start a Conversation

© MANREAU 2026