

# THE EXECUTION FAILURE DIAGNOSTIC

**12 Signals Your Rollout Is Quietly Breaking  
Before It Becomes Expensive**

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# WHY THIS DIAGNOSTIC EXISTS

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**Your rollout may not be failing because your people are resistant.**

**It may be failing because the work was designed in a way real operations can't sustain.**

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Most rollouts don't break the way leadership expects. They break quietly through workarounds, shadow systems, decision stalls, and dashboards that say green while the floor tells a different story.

This diagnostic helps you read the early signals before they become recovery work.

# HOW IT WORKS

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**12 questions. Yes or No. No middle ground.**

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**YES** = 1 point      **NO** = 0 points

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Score yourself honestly. The pattern of your answers tells you where your rollout is actually breaking.

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## INTENDED AUDIENCE

**A diagnostic for project leaders and operations teams running rollouts, transformations, and multi-site implementations.**

# THE 12 DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

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## 01

### CATEGORY 1

## SHADOW WORK

Early signals that operational reality has diverged from the system design.

- 01 Are teams maintaining spreadsheets, WhatsApp threads, notebooks, or side trackers outside the official system to do work it was supposed to handle?
- 02 Are new employees learning shortcuts from peers instead of following the formal process?

### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

Your team is creating invisible manual labor to compensate for a workflow the system was supposed to eliminate. Left unchecked, this becomes expensive operational drag.

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## 02

### CATEGORY 2

## DECISION BOTTLENECKS

Early signals that ownership has fragmented.

- 03 When operational issues happen, is it unclear who has authority to fix them?
- 04 When operational issues span multiple departments, do they stall in cross-functional gaps with no clear owner?

### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

Your execution model is generating decisions faster than your organization can absorb them.

# THE 12 DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

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## 03

### CATEGORY 3

## ADOPTION BREAKDOWN

Active failure signals. Adoption isn't taking hold.

- 05 Have teams created workarounds instead of fully adopting the intended workflow?
- 06 Has your team started double-checking, ignoring, or quietly working around AI or automation tools that were supposed to save them time?

#### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

Your training and trust infrastructure is breaking down. Adoption isn't a behaviour problem. It's a design problem.

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## 04

### CATEGORY 4

## VENDOR REALITY GAP

Active failure signals. The people delivering the system and the people running operations are telling different stories.

- 07 Are vendors or platform partners reporting success while internal teams continue escalating operational issues?
- 08 When operational issues are escalated, does the conversation focus more on identifying who's responsible than on what's actually breaking?

#### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

Your rollout may be technically complete but operationally unstable. Vendor success criteria and operational success criteria have decoupled.

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# THE 12 DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

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## 05

### CATEGORY 5

## SCALE FRAGILITY

Advanced collapse signals. What worked in one place is failing elsewhere.

- 09 Does the process work well in one location or team but fail when replicated elsewhere?
- 10 When unusual situations happen (refunds, urgent requests, local variations, exceptions), does your team need to improvise because the workflow doesn't account for them?

### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

Your rollout was designed for ideal conditions. Both replication and real-world variation are exposing the gap between design and reality.

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## 06

### CATEGORY 6

## STABILIZATION RISK

Advanced collapse signals. The dashboards say one thing, the operation says another.

- 11 Are leadership dashboards showing green while frontline teams are still struggling?
- 12 Is there an operational reality everyone privately knows about, but no one is raising in steering committee meetings or formal reports?

### WHAT THIS SIGNALS

You may be managing optics instead of operational reality. The longer this gap holds, the more expensive the eventual recovery becomes.

# YOUR SCORE

Add your points across all 12 questions.

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## 0–3

### STABLE EXECUTION

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Your operational foundation appears healthy. Minor friction exists but isn't compounding.

#### WHAT TO DO

Follow Whitney on LinkedIn for ongoing insights on rollout failure patterns and operational execution. Re-run this diagnostic quarterly to catch drift early.

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## 4–6

### EARLY FRICTION

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Execution gaps are forming. They're not catastrophic yet, but they will compound if they aren't addressed in the next 60–90 days.

#### WHAT TO DO

Your execution gaps are still reversible. Re-run this diagnostic after your next major rollout milestone and address recurring friction before it compounds.

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## 7–9

### EXECUTION RISK

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Your rollout has structural failure points that need active intervention. The signals firing at this level usually predict where the operation will break in the next 60–90 days if uncorrected. This is typically the last stage before recovery becomes significantly more expensive.

#### WHAT TO DO

This is the highest-leverage window for intervention. Reach out at [whitneywafula.com](http://whitneywafula.com) to discuss what's actually happening in your rollout and where the next failure is most likely to land.

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## 10–12

### RECOVERY NEEDED

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Your rollout is likely accumulating operational debt at a pace that will outrun your ability to stabilize it without deliberate intervention. The signals at this level rarely resolve on their own. These patterns rarely self-correct.

#### WHAT TO DO

If you're scoring 10+, this is no longer a friction problem. It's a recovery problem. Contact [whitneywafula.com](http://whitneywafula.com) to discuss a recovery diagnostic conversation.

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## WHY THIS DIAGNOSTIC DOESN'T TELL YOU WHAT TO DO NEXT

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Every signal here has a specific intervention pattern. The right intervention depends on which signals are firing together, how advanced they are, and the surrounding organizational context.

Generic advice doesn't fix specific rollouts. That's why the next step depends on your score, and on the specific pattern of what's breaking.

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### SIGN-OFF

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