



**Institute of
Commissioning &
Assurance**

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH GLOBAL GOVERNANCE TRENDS IN MANAGEMENT AND AI

by Peter Foxley

Institute of Commissioning and Assurance

Global Director | Governance and Policy Integration

The Institute of Commissioning & Assurance is on a mission to fix the broken and antiquated construction industry. That is a huge and audacious goal, but great things have never been accomplished by aiming for small goals. To do this, projects need leadership and governance that are aligned with achieving project outcomes, individuals that have delivered major capital projects in the past and know what it takes to align systems and teams to build the infrastructure that society depends on. A new governance structure is required, with commissioning-led governance at the helm to guide all project groups to successful outcomes.

Two recent narratives highlight the need to reshape global governance and delivery systems of major capital projects:

- *Steve Denning's Forbes article: "Why Millions of Managers Are Becoming Obsolete"*
- *The White House's Winning the Race: America's AI Action Plan (July 2025)*

A Global Shift in Governance Logic

Both Denning and the AI Action Plan signal a profound shift in how institutions govern complexity, deliver value, and earn public trust. The common thread is clear: Traditional managers are simply trying to solve the wrong problem. A focus on cutting costs and improving efficiency, rather than a focus on creating value, have led to two-thirds of the famous blue-chip firms in the Dow Jones Industrial Average to perform below average. These profit seeking firms have generated below average value and are having difficulty in surviving. On the other hand, the fast-growing businesses are the ones that have shifted from cost-cutting and profits to value creation for customers.

The construction industry's move toward Commissioning-Led Governance and Outcome Assurance with a focus on providing value is inevitable, to mirror the results the business community has already realized. ICxA is leading this transformation into this future – with commissioning-led governance as the key to making this transition.

Alignment with Denning's Thesis: Value Creation Over Cost-Cutting and Profits

Denning argues that traditional management has failed by solving the wrong problem - prioritising cost-cutting over value creation. The article discusses “the goal of enhancing the quality of managerial decision-making”, with a shift from cutting costs to instead creating value. The primary dynamic of a business has shifted from increasing efficiency by cutting costs to expanding demand by creating more value. The projects industry must follow this approach if the construction industry is to improve performance. This mindset shift is ingrained in commissioning folks' DNA, since they see the end of projects and understand what moves the needle to provide net-worth as opposed to the wrong decisions earlier in projects that hinder value creation.

The article goes on to discuss how “value-creating enterprises not only satisfy customers: they make much more money than firms focused on making money. As a result, the primary goal of fast-growing businesses has shifted from cost-cutting and profits to value creation for customers. Because the potential gains from value creation dwarf any potential gains from efficiency, value creation for customers has become the primary goal of fast-growing businesses today.”

Denning calls for a new discipline in his article that:

- Centres on customer and societal outcomes
- Mobilises cross-functional collaboration
- Embeds legitimacy and adaptability into decision-making

The Institute of Commissioning & Assurance's Response:

Commissioning must be redefined as a sovereign discipline of governance - not a technical box to tick at the end. At ICxA, the career development pathway is clear, to produce outcome-focused leaders that understand what it takes to deliver projects, and the decisions required at the beginning of projects to enable successful outcomes. It makes no sense for project governance to be led by individuals who have never delivered projects – experience matters, and experienced individuals who have successfully delivered projects are required to lead projects from the start, so that outcome-focused value is the goal, rather than task-based decisions that inhibit project success.

Alignment with America's AI Action Plan: Infrastructure, Innovation, Integrity

You've heard about the transformation taking place in the tech-industry, with the advances of AI creating massive investments in data center systems and energy infrastructure to power these systems. However, you feel about these new technologies, one thing is clear – the world is changing, and the pace of change continues to increase. The US AI Action plan discusses the need to accelerate development to compete on the global stage. The world 10 years ago does not look like the world today, and the world in 5 years from now will look drastically different.

The antiquated construction industry has held on to the past, with governance ill-equipped to deal with today's challenges, let alone the new challenges that the industry will face in the years to come. Sure, these new technologies will be used in the industry, but on the current trajectory, they will be used for all the wrong reasons.

Current leaders will certainly look for ways to apply these technologies to cut costs and gain efficiencies, only to further inhibit value creation. These new technologies can be hugely beneficial to the industry, but only if used to create valuable outcomes, rather than siloed efficiencies to benefit individual groups. Regardless of the changes to come and the world transformation that is underway, projects need outcome-focused governance to guide the use of these technologies for improved outcomes, rather than siloed optimization. The industry will be in a lot worse condition in 5 years from now without outcome-focused governance to guide the application of these powerful new technologies.

In addition, the US AI Action plan discussed the need to accelerate infrastructure development. The US lags behind other areas of the world in the expansion of power systems. The US AI Action Plan outlines three pillars:

- Accelerate Innovation
- Build intelligent Infrastructure
- Lead in International Governance and Security

The construction industry is not in a healthy position to take on these challenges. With the current governance structure, 9 out of 10 projects will continue to be late and over-budget. Without a heightened focus on successful project outcomes, the industry will remain in its antiquated state, and continue to underperform. The industry does not need band-aide fixes, it needs a wholesale reset on the mindset approach to projects, and outcome-focused commissioning leaders hold the keys to success. The pipeline of new and upcoming commissioning leaders being groomed for success at ICxA are the transformational change that the industry needs, if the industry is to step up to the challenge outlined in the US AI action plan.

The Institute of Commissioning & Assurance's Response:

ICxA has built a commissioning credential architecture that guides professionals as they grow – from technical contributors to socio-technical strategic leaders in project governance and outcome assurance. This pathway directly reflects the Action Plan's call for trusted, scalable governance designed for legitimacy, impact and long-term growth. To guide individuals to this systems-based thinking approach to focus on outcomes, ICxA is developing PAS and ISO standards, based on the current ICA Global Commissioning Standard and ICA Global Outcome Assurance Standard. These standards set the global benchmark for measuring infrastructure performance with consistency, credibility, and outcome-focused leadership right from the start.

ICxA is working with institutions, educators, and policymakers to bring the US AI Action Plan's vision of cross-sector alignment to life. This includes collaboration with government and policymakers to mandate a systems-based thinking approach to focus on value outcomes rather than individual cost-cutting and profits. This will be mandated, and those groups that wait or refuse to deliver value will be quickly left behind, while the value creation organizations will thrive in this mandated environment.

Strategic Opportunity for ICxA

The global narratives of Denning's Forbes article and the US AI Action Plan validate ICxA's direction and open new pathways for influence. The call for improved project performance is no longer a whisper in the shadows, it is a global mandate being shouted from the highest rooftops. Organizations can continue to resist the change, or can join the transformation and become leaders in the industry.



ICxA is leading the charge:

Opportunity	ICxA Leverage Point
Redefining management as outcome stewardship	ICxA Certified Commissioning Leadership Program
Embedding trust in infrastructure development	Commissioning-led assurance frameworks
Aligning with global standards and diplomacy	PAS - ISO harmonisation and academic integration
Mobilising cross-sector coalitions	ICxA's global movement and institutional partnerships

ICxA Next Steps

ICxA is not reacting to global change - it is leading a transdisciplinary response to the governance vacuum left by antiquated management models and fragmented oversight. By aligning with the principles in Denning's article and the AI Action Plan, ICxA affirms its role as a global steward of system-level accountability, lifecycle performance, and public value.

ICxA is committed to:

- Ensuring that infrastructure systems remain accountable, adaptive, and aligned with public interest.
- Engaging with academic and policy networks to embed commissioning into curricula and regulatory frameworks.
- Amplifying ICxA's narrative in global forums where emerging technologies, infrastructure, and governance intersect.
- Exploring strategic partnerships with AI infrastructure developers to integrate commissioning-led assurance into digital delivery systems.
- If you want to be part of this global transformation for outcome-focused governance for improved project performance, contact ICxA at info@icxa.net to join the movement.