



**Institute of
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WHY OUTCOMES CANNOT DEPEND ON INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCE

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Outcome Assurance is required as a governing layer to protect outcome accountability beyond project delivery.

Many projects assume that strong outcomes come from hiring strong people. The logic feels sound. If capable individuals are selected, trained, and experienced, outcomes should follow. In practice, this assumption fails more often than it succeeds.

Outcomes persist long after individuals move on. Projects change hands. Teams dissolve. Operations begin under different leadership, incentives, and pressures. When an outcome depends on who was present at a particular moment, it is already unstable. The project may complete, but the outcome is not secured.

Competence explains how work is performed. It does not explain how decisions are authorized. Critical outcomes fail not because people lack skill, but because no structure exists to decide - clearly and formally - when an outcome is ready to be relied upon. In the absence of such structure, decisions default to optimism, schedule pressure, or informal consensus.

In these conditions, capable people compensate. They resolve gaps through extra effort, experience, and judgment. This can create the appearance of success during delivery. But it also masks the absence of governance. The system learns nothing. The outcome is never formally tested, authorized, or recorded as ready.

When operations begin, the compensating individuals are gone. What remains is the system as it truly is. If readiness was never explicitly established, the outcome must now prove itself under real conditions, often at public or operational risk.

Outcome Assurance addresses this failure mode by separating performance from proof. It does not ask whether competent people believe an outcome will work. It requires evidence that the outcome has been demonstrated and authorized. Authority is exercised once, at the correct moment, based on defined criteria—not repeatedly through individual heroics.

This approach does not reduce the value of expertise. It recognizes its limits. Expertise informs evidence. Governance evaluates it. Together, they ensure that outcomes are dependable regardless of staffing, turnover, or organizational change.

Outcomes that matter cannot be sustained by memory, trust, or professional reputation. They must be deliberately secured. When the system carries that responsibility, individuals are free to perform their roles without also carrying the burden of guaranteeing the outcome alone.