

Opportunity is not *savings.*

Five evidence states prevent a signal, model, approval, implementation, and realized result from being reported as the same thing.

THE CONTROL BOUNDARY

Savings exist only after an implemented control is measured against an approved baseline for an agreed observation window.

SOURCE-LINKED | DETERMINISTIC | HUMAN-APPROVED

FIVE STATES. ONE CURRENT CLAIM.

No silent promotion.

Every margin claim carries one current state. Advancement requires new evidence, not stronger language.

01

SIGNAL OBSERVED
Identify the source, period, location, and exception.

INVESTIGATE

02

OPPORTUNITY MODELED
Reconcile sources, formulas, ranges, cost, and overlap.

CHALLENGE

03

ACTION APPROVED
Finance validates math; Operations owns feasibility.

AUTHORIZE

04

CONTROL IMPLEMENTED
Document the live cohort, start date, and exceptions.

OBSERVE

05

SAVINGS REALIZED
Complete the window and clear baseline and confounder controls.

REPORT

DO NOT SKIP A STATE TO IMPROVE THE STORY

STATE 01 | INVESTIGATE

Signal observed

A variance or operating exception exists. No economic outcome is claimed.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

- Named source system and source record
- Defined period and affected location
- Specific variance or control exception
- Known data-quality limitations
-

EXECUTIVE DECISION QUESTION

Is the signal real enough to justify investigation?

PERMITTED MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

"A variance requires investigation."

PROHIBITED SHORTCUT

Calling the variance recoverable cash.

STATE 02 | CHALLENGE

Credible opportunity modeled

The source-to-formula chain reconciles and the potential value is bounded.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

- Reconciled sources and deterministic formula
- Low, base, and high cases with confidence
- Implementation cost and operating risk
- Overlap and double-count controls
-

EXECUTIVE DECISION QUESTION

Can Finance reproduce the range and challenge every assumption?

PERMITTED MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

"The evidence supports a bounded opportunity range."

PROHIBITED SHORTCUT

Calling annualized opportunity realized savings.

STATE 03 | AUTHORIZE

Action approved

Finance accepts the math and Operations accepts the bounded change.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

- Finance and Operations approval
- Named owner and due date
- Defined cohort and operating guardrails
- Risk, exception, and rollback conditions
-

EXECUTIVE DECISION QUESTION

Who owns the action, and what must remain protected?

PERMITTED MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

"Management approved a controlled test."

PROHIBITED SHORTCUT Calling approval implementation.

STATE 04 | OBSERVE

Control implemented

The approved change is operating in the bounded cohort.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

- Live control and implementation evidence
- Cohort, site, and start date
- Exceptions and operating side effects
- Rollback state and owner confirmation
-

EXECUTIVE DECISION QUESTION

Is the control actually operating as approved?

PERMITTED MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

"The control is operating in the approved cohort."

PROHIBITED SHORTCUT

Calling early movement a validated result.

STATE 05 | REPORT

Savings realized

The observation window is complete and the measured result survives challenge.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

- Completed observation window
- Approved baseline and comparable cohort
- Mix, timing, volume, seasonality, and overlap controls
- Finance and Operations sign-off

EXECUTIVE DECISION QUESTION

What was measured, for which cohort, over what period?

PERMITTED MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE

"The measured result is realized for this cohort and period."

PROHIBITED SHORTCUT Extrapolating beyond observed scope without a new gate.

THE MANAGEMENT RULE

Three tests before *the number moves.*

FINANCE

Can we reproduce it?

Trace the claim from source row to formula. Challenge timing, annualization, cost, overlap, and baseline.

OPERATIONS

Can we execute it?

Reject actions that damage food safety, throughput, availability, labor capacity, product quality, or the guest promise.

EXECUTIVE

What decision clears?

Stop, validate further, approve a bounded action, or scale only the result that survived the prior state.

APPLY THE STANDARD

Assess pilot readiness without uploading operating data.

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