

AI Without Chaos ^{1, 2}

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Introduction - The Acceleration Trap

Artificial intelligence (AI) is fundamentally changing how organizations make and execute decisions. Previous waves of digital transformation improved efficiency and scale, while AI accelerates decision making. Organizations adopting AI are making decisions more frequently and at significantly higher speed (McKinsey & Company, 2023). However, faster does not mean better. In many organizations, decision speed is outpacing the structures required to ensure decisions are clear, accountable, and aligned.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) defines governance as a “cross-cutting” function that shapes organizational culture, policies, and risk practices across the AI lifecycle (NIST, 2023). This reflects a shift from static control to an embedded organizational capability. Similarly, the Project Management Institute (PMI) positions governance as an integrated lifecycle discipline spanning data, models, and outcomes rather than stage gated oversight (PMI, 2023; PMI, 2024).

Despite these advances, a critical gap remains. Existing frameworks address risk and ethics but do not fully account for the tension between decision speed and execution clarity. This paper argues that governance must function as an execution discipline that deliberately links speed with clarity to ensure accountability, alignment, and coordinated execution. This perspective extends existing governance frameworks by explicitly connecting decision speed with execution alignment in AI-enabled environments.

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The Diagnostic Lens: Decision Velocity vs Decision Clarity

Building on this gap, decision velocity reflects how quickly organizations generate, evaluate, and act on decisions in AI-enabled environments. That speed is real, and it is increasing. AI systems process large volumes of data, identify patterns, and produce recommendations in near real time. The expectation quickly becomes that decisions should move just as fast.

Decision clarity operates differently. It shows up in whether people actually understand what was decided, why it matters, and what happens next. Clarity requires defined ownership, a clear rationale, visibility into downstream impact, and alignment on what success looks like. Without those elements, speed alone does not translate into effective execution.

In practice, velocity and clarity have to scale together. When they do not, the gap becomes visible almost immediately. Decisions move faster, but accountability becomes diffuse. Teams act, but not always in alignment. Work accelerates, but outcomes do not improve at the same rate.

This is where execution risk lives. This does not always show up immediately, but when it does, it tends to compound quickly. As AI increases decision velocity, many organizations have not yet built the structures needed to sustain decision clarity at the same pace. The result is a familiar pattern: breakdowns in accountability, stakeholder misalignment, duplicated effort, and rising delivery risk. Activity increases, but execution integrity does not. It can feel like progress, but it is often movement without coordination.

PMI's emerging AI guidance acknowledges parts of this challenge through continuous governance, model monitoring, and alignment with business objectives (PMI, 2023; PMI, 2024). These are important steps forward. However, they do not fully address the imbalance between speed and clarity as a systemic condition that must be designed for, not managed after the fact.

This is where the role of the project manager begins to shift. The work is no longer limited to coordinating tasks or tracking milestones. It increasingly involves designing decision systems that ensure speed and clarity move together, so that faster decisions actually lead to better execution.

Reframing Governance as an Execution Discipline

Governance has traditionally been treated as bureaucracy, a set of controls, checkpoints, and approvals that slow teams down. In AI-enabled environments, that assumption becomes a liability. AI operates at machine speed, and governance models that rely on periodic, manual intervention cannot keep up.

This is where the shift has to happen. Governance is no longer just about control. It is about how decisions are shaped before they are made and how they hold up under speed.

In practice, this is where many organizations begin to feel the strain. Decision cycles accelerate, but governance structures remain anchored in slower, more centralized models. The result is not just delay. It is inconsistency. Some decisions move too quickly without alignment, while others stall waiting for review that was never designed for this pace.

Reframing governance as an execution discipline is an operational shift. It requires moving away from viewing governance as something that happens after decisions are made. Instead, governance becomes embedded in how decisions are designed, validated, and acted on in real time.

When done well, governance does not slow execution. It stabilizes it. By coupling decision speed with decision clarity, organizations can move quickly while maintaining accountability and alignment. Without that coupling, speed does not translate into advantage. It simply increases exposure to risk.

Legacy governance models were built for a different environment. They assume slower cycles, centralized review, and clear handoffs between decision points. AI disrupts each of these assumptions. Decisions are now continuous, distributed, and, in many cases, partially automated. That creates a structural mismatch between machine-speed inference and human-speed governance.

As outlined in Table 1 (Hajela, 2026), this mismatch shows up in predictable ways: fragmented architecture, delayed or overridden decisions, misaligned KPIs, low trust, and gaps in AI literacy. These are not isolated issues. They tend to reinforce one another, making execution less stable as systems scale.

Table 1. Collision Points Diagnostic Matrix (Hajela, 2026)

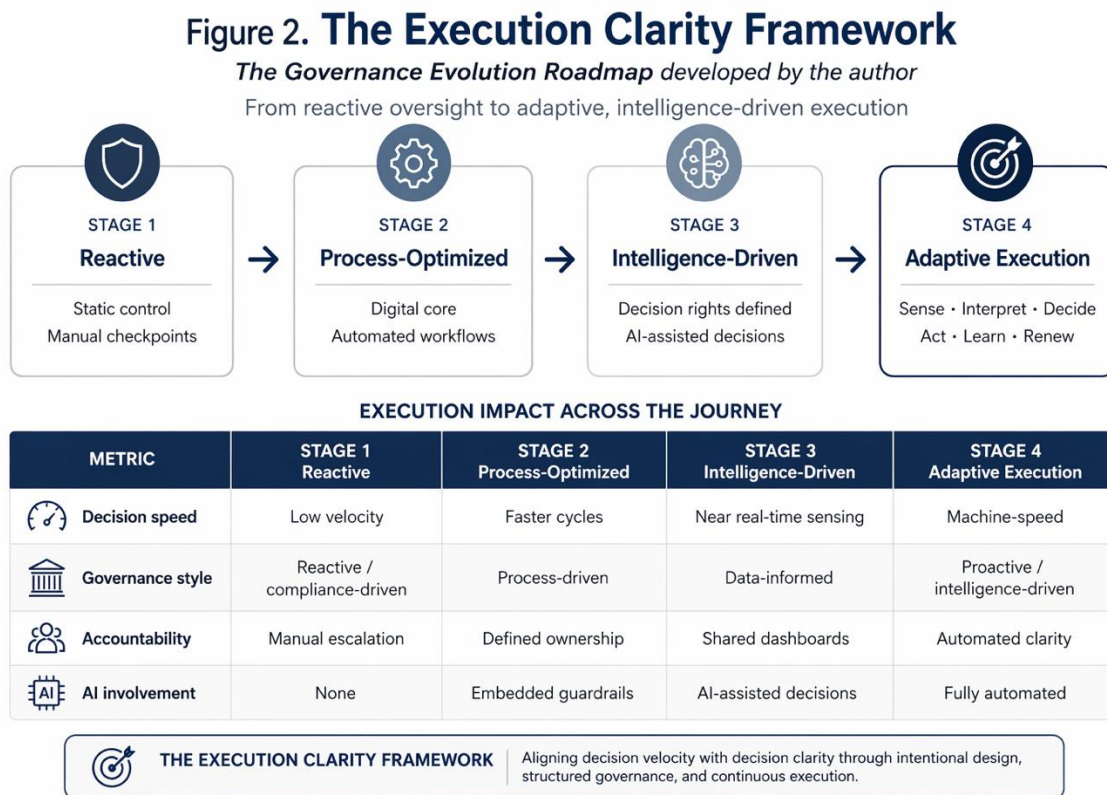
Collision Point	Structural Cause	AI Effect	Organizational Symptom
Architecture	Legacy cores, fragmented platforms	Models misread signals	Conflicting truths, unstable predictions
Decision-Making	Human-anchored judgment cycles	Faster inference than review ability	Delays, distrust, overrides
Purpose	KPI misalignment, unclear priorities	AI optimizes for the wrong outcomes	Local wins, system losses

Culture	Low trust, fear of automation	Resistance to adoption	Rework, shadow processes
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In practice, organizations rarely encounter just one of these breakdowns. They surface together, often quickly, and compound over time. This is why governance can no longer be treated as a control layer. It has to function as part of the execution system itself.

Strategies for Implementation: Designing for Clarity

As illustrated in Figure 2: The Execution Clarity Framework, developed by the author, this framework represents a shift from reactive, compliance driven oversight to an adaptive, intelligence driven execution model. It is not a maturity curve, but a structural shift in how decisions are owned, validated, and acted on in real time.



To operationalize this shift, leaders must design decision architecture before AI is embedded into workflows. This paper draws on three complementary frameworks: the A24 Decision.

Architecture Model (Automations24, 2026), the ACE Enterprise Framework (ASCENDARA, 2026), and the System Intelligence Capability Model (Hajela, 2026). Together, these inform the Execution Clarity Framework and provide a practical foundation for aligning decision velocity with decision clarity at scale.

First, Decision Rights Mapping defines whether workflows are automated, assisted, or human led (Automations24, 2026), preventing “Silent Decision Drift.” Second, Structural Coherence aligns decision authority across organizational layers to keep pace with machine speed (ASCENDARA, 2026). Third, Continuous Execution Loops embed governance across sensing, decision, action, and learning cycles (Hajela, 2026).

Together, these elements form the foundation of the Execution Clarity Framework, creating an execution system where speed and clarity scale in parallel and enabling accountable, aligned AI driven execution.

Case Study: Transitioning Impact AZ to Intelligence-Driven Execution

To illustrate how this framework operates in practice, the transition of the Impact AZ entrepreneur cohort from manual administration to AI enabled delivery provides a practical example. It shows how organizations can intentionally progress and where it may be appropriate to pause.

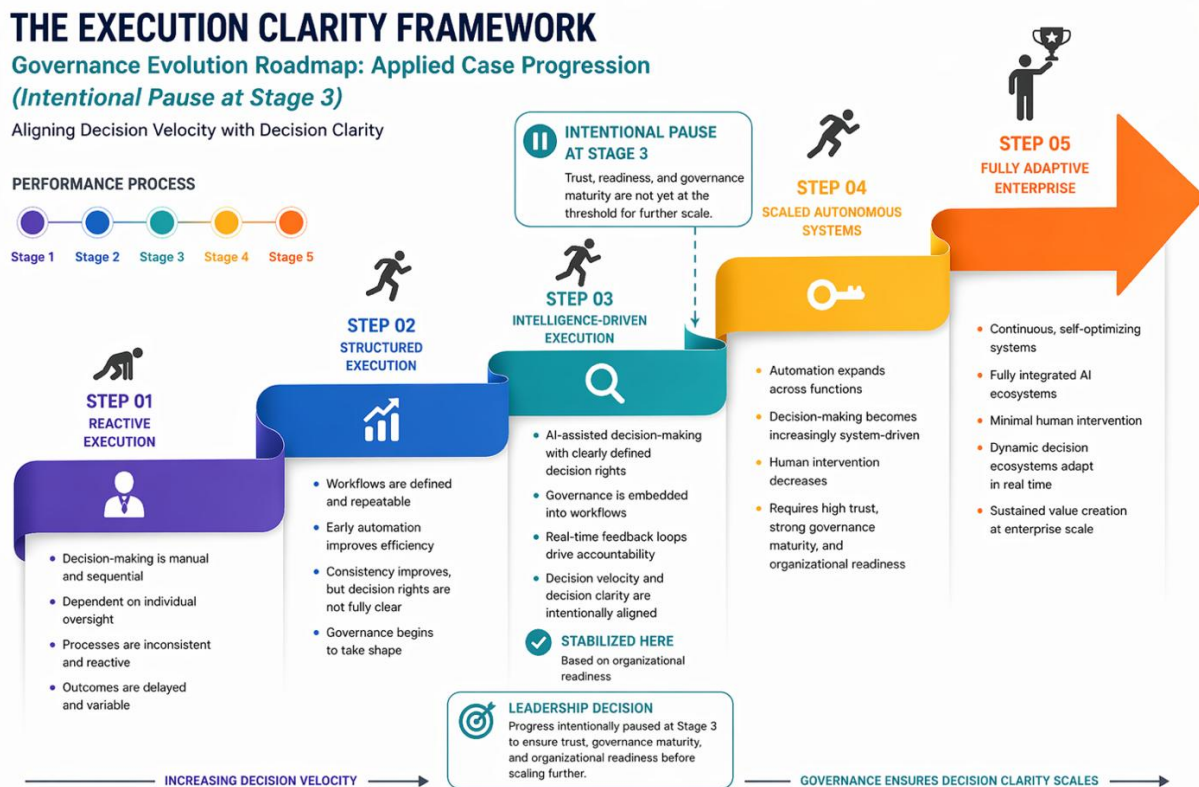
At the outset, the program operated in Stage 1 with reactive, manual execution. Decision making was largely human driven, with inconsistent workflows and delays from sequential review. Governance existed but was informal and dependent on individual oversight.

The first shift established Decision Rights Mapping using the A24 Decision Architecture Model (Automations24, 2026). Routine tasks were automated, while screening moved to AI assisted workflows with human validation. Final decisions remained human led, moving the program into a structured, semi-automated model.

The second shift addressed Structural Coherence using the ACE Enterprise Framework (ASCENDARA, 2026). Leadership removed delays by aligning decision authority with workflow speed.

The third shift embedded Continuous Execution Loops using the System Intelligence Capability Model (Hajela, 2026), enabling real time, proactive intervention.

Together, these shifts moved the program into Stage 3, where decision speed and clarity were aligned, and leaders intentionally stabilized before further scaling.



Conclusion: Restoring Control in the AI Economy

Artificial intelligence is not merely a technical project to be managed. It is an infrastructural force that reveals the readiness of leadership systems. The central premise is that AI does not create execution chaos, it accelerates it. The path forward requires a shift where project managers move from facilitators to Designers of Decision Architecture.

To move from chaos toward sustainable machine speed, leaders must clarify decision ownership before AI driven insights amplify existing ambiguity. By implementing the A24 Decision Architecture, organizations prevent “Silent Decision Drift” and ensure machine outputs remain anchored in human accountability. Adopting the ACE Enterprise Framework and the System Intelligence Capability Model shifts governance from a bureaucratic hurdle to a proactive leadership discipline.

As demonstrated in the Impact AZ case study, this transition enables an intelligence driven environment where predictive analytics and automated workflows support proactive intervention rather than retrospective cleanup. Restoring execution clarity is the only way to capitalize on AI accelerated velocity while preserving human judgment and ethical oversight.

This is the purpose of the Execution Clarity Framework: to ensure that as speed and alignment increases, clarity, accountability, and execution integrity scale with it.

Use of Generative AI

Generative AI tools were used to support research synthesis and the creation of visual diagrams. The Execution Clarity Framework and all associated concepts, analysis, and conclusions are the original intellectual work of Diane W. Roberts.

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