

Process compliance and outcome accountability are two different questions

Track them separately. Each combination produces a distinct diagnosis — and a different corrective action. Combining them into a single verdict guarantees the wrong one.

	SYSTEM RUNNING?	OUTCOMES MOVING?	DIAGNOSIS	ACTION
01	Yes	Yes	<p>The system is working</p> <p>Process and outcomes are aligned. But ask whether results are driven by skill or luck before scaling — a confounding variable may be doing the work.</p>	<p>MAINTAIN</p> <p>Hold the system. Validate causation before attributing results to process design.</p>
02	Yes	Not yet	<p>Timing or design issue</p> <p>The system is running as designed but outcomes are not yet visible. Either the gestation period has not elapsed, or the system design needs revision.</p>	<p>INVESTIGATE</p> <p>Check timing first. If sufficient cycles have passed, review the system design — not the owner.</p>
03	No	Unknown	<p>Compliance problem</p> <p>If the system is not running, outcomes are irrelevant. A broken system cannot produce a verdict about whether the design is right or wrong.</p>	<p>FIX COMPLIANCE FIRST</p> <p>Restore the system to full operation before drawing any conclusions about outcomes.</p>



THE DIRECTION MOST LEADERS MISS

Diagnosis 01 also runs in reverse. **Just because outcomes are moving does not mean the system deserves credit.** A competitor closing, a news story, a seasonal shift — all can drive results without your process doing anything. Credit the system only after ruling out confounders. Otherwise you are building on sand.