Category

Enterprise Transformation

Measuring Digital ROI & Value Realization Playbook

A benefits realization method that tracks digital transformation value from business case through delivery to actual, measured impact.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

- Mithun A. Sridharan

- 15 May 2023
- 8 minute(s)

Overview

A structured approach to defining, tracking, and proving digital transformation ROI, closing the gap between projected business case value and what actually shows up in the P&L.

How is this different from standard project ROI tracking in a business case?

Most business cases estimate ROI once, at approval, and never revisit it after go-live. This playbook adds the tracking discipline that continues past delivery — baselines captured before the work starts, quarterly measurement against those baselines, and a formal reconciliation 12-18 months later comparing promised value to what was actually realized.

What if an initiative has already gone live without a captured baseline?

Reconstruct the best available baseline from historical data (prior-period reports, system logs) and clearly flag it as a retrospective estimate rather than a pre-captured baseline. It's weaker evidence than a true baseline, but still far better than no value tracking at all going forward.

Who should be the named business owner for a benefit, if not the project manager?

The leader who controls the process or budget line where the benefit shows up — for example, the operations director who would need to actually reduce headcount or cost for a claimed savings to materialize. If no one in the business is willing to own that accountability, that's a signal the benefit may not be realistic.

How do we measure soft benefits like productivity or employee experience credibly?

Use a consistent, repeatable proxy metric (time-on-task studies, survey instruments with a fixed methodology, adoption/usage data) measured the same way at baseline and follow-up, and report it separately from hard-dollar benefits rather than converting it into an estimated dollar figure that invites scrutiny.

What should happen if quarterly tracking shows a benefit isn't materializing?

Treat it as an early warning, not a final verdict — investigate whether the gap is a measurement issue, an adoption issue, or a genuinely flawed original assumption, and escalate to the initiative's business owner for a corrective action plan well before the 12-18 month reconciliation makes it official.

{ "@context": "https://schema.org", "@type": "FAQPage", "mainEntity": [{ "@type": "Question", "name": "How is this different from standard project ROI tracking in a business case?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Most business cases estimate ROI once, at approval, and never revisit it after go-live. This playbook adds the tracking discipline that continues past delivery — baselines captured before the work starts, quarterly measurement against those baselines, and a formal reconciliation 12-18 months later comparing promised value to what was actually realized." } }, { "@type": "Question", "name": "What if an initiative has already gone live without a captured baseline?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Reconstruct the best available baseline from historical data (prior-period reports, system logs) and clearly flag it as a retrospective estimate rather than a pre-captured baseline. It's weaker evidence than a true baseline, but still far better than no value tracking at all going forward." } }, { "@type": "Question", "name": "Who should be the named business owner for a benefit, if not the project manager?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "The leader who controls the process or budget line where the benefit shows up — for example, the operations director who would need to actually reduce headcount or cost for a claimed savings to materialize. If no one in the business is willing to own that accountability, that's a signal the benefit may

not be realistic." } }, { "@type": "Question", "name": "How do we measure soft benefits like productivity or employee experience credibly?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Use a consistent, repeatable proxy metric (time-on-task studies, survey instruments with a fixed methodology, adoption/usage data) measured the same way at baseline and follow-up, and report it separately from hard-dollar benefits rather than converting it into an estimated dollar figure that invites scrutiny." } }, { "@type": "Question", "name": "What should happen if quarterly tracking shows a benefit isn't materializing?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Treat it as an early warning, not a final verdict — investigate whether the gap is a measurement issue, an adoption issue, or a genuinely flawed original assumption, and escalate to the initiative's business owner for a corrective action plan well before the 12-18 month reconciliation makes it official." } }] }

Subscriber access

Unlock this playbook

This playbook — including every framework, template, and step-by-step section — is available free to Think Insights subscribers. Enter your email to unlock it instantly and get our weekly insights newsletter. No account needed, and access is remembered on this device.

First Name

Last Name

Email

Country - Select -

- [ ] I agree to data processing in accordance with GDPR

Submit

Leave this field blank

References

Related playbooks

Enterprise Transformation

Telco Network & 5G/Edge Services Digital Transformation Playbook

A framework for telecommunications network and 5G/edge services digital transformation that identifies genuine new revenue and service opportunities enabled by

- Executive
- Advanced
- Template Included

Read playbook

Enterprise Transformation

AI & Digital Transformation Talent, Skills & Capability Building Playbook

A framework for building AI and digital transformation talent and capability deliberately — targeted skills assessment, structured capability building, and tale

- Executive
- Intermediate
- Template Included

Read playbook

Enterprise Transformation

Digital Transformation Risk, Resilience & Business Continuity Playbook

A framework for digital transformation risk, resilience, and business continuity planning that treats the transformation program itself as a source of operation

- Executive
- Advanced
- Template Included

Read playbook

Talk to our digital transformation team

Author

Mithun A. Sridharan Thought Leader

I'm Mithun A. Sridharan, Founder of this website - Think Insights - on Strategy, Management Consulting, Leadership, Digital Transformation, and Data Literacy. Follow me on social media or connect with me on LinkedIn for updates.