

WHY THE WRONG PROGRAMS KEEP GETTING FUNDED

A Capital Governance Briefing for CFOs

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Your IT budget was built bottom-up.

A list of projects. A list of requests. A list of vendor proposals.

Whoever argued best won. That's not capital allocation.

That's a pitch competition.

1. Every business unit believes its initiatives deserve funding. The Cash Cow wants to modernize. The Dog wants a digital transformation. The Question Mark wants to build a platform. None of them are wrong to ask. All of them are wrong to fund the same way.
2. The quadrant you're in determines the IT you deserve — not the IT you want. A Cash Cow gets the lights kept on and nothing more. Every dollar beyond that is opportunity cost that should have gone to your Stars.
3. Stars get growth capital, scalable architecture, and executive attention. That's where IT becomes a force multiplier. That's where the return actually lives. Most organizations underfund their Stars because their Cash Cows made a better argument.
4. Bottom-up budgeting rewards noise not strategy. It funds whoever shouts loudest not whoever creates value. The approval process doesn't ask which quadrant this belongs in. It asks whether the ROI works. Every bad investment had a great ROI.
5. Before you approve the next business case one question: which quadrant is this for and does it deserve this capital? That question alone changes the conversation. plateaustategy.com/capital-briefings #CFO #ROITheater #DigitalTransformation

Ask these five questions at your next steering committee.

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The answers — or the inability to answer them — will tell you everything.

Your IT budget was built bottom-up. A list of projects. A list of requests. A list of vendor proposals. Whoever argued best won. That is not capital allocation. That is a pitch competition.

Please see

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The quadrant you are in determines the IT you deserve — not the IT you want. A Cash Cow gets the lights kept on and nothing more. Every dollar beyond that is opportunity cost that should have gone to your Stars. Stars get growth capital, scalable architecture, and executive attention. That is where IT becomes a force multiplier. That is where the return actually lives. Most organizations underfund their Stars because their Cash Cows made a better argument.

Bottom-up budgeting rewards noise not strategy. It funds whoever shouts loudest not whoever creates value. The approval process does not ask which quadrant this belongs in. It asks whether the ROI works. Every bad investment had a great ROI.

Before you approve the next business case one question: which quadrant is this for and does it deserve this capital? That question alone changes the conversation.

Capital leakage on your watch doesn't stay on the balance sheet.

It shows up in your compensation review. Then your contract renewal. Then your LinkedIn status.

That's not a threat. It's a fact every CFO knows and nobody says.

The CFO who governs the real program leads the next five years. The one who governs the reported one spends them explaining the last five. That's not a threat. It's a fact every CFO knows — and nobody says.

Stop Funding Projects. Start Defending Capital.

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Most CFOs govern the reported program. P² governs the real one.

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