

Program Drift Signals Checklist

Eight questions that reveal whether a transformation program is drifting — before the status report does.

Programs rarely fail suddenly. They drift — quietly, while dashboards stay green. Work through these signals honestly for any program you are responsible for. Each one you check is a symptom worth investigating; a cluster is a pattern worth acting on.

The Signals

- ☐ **Status is green, but confidence is not.** The reports are reassuring, yet something about the program's trajectory does not sit right with the people closest to it.
- ☐ **Milestones have been re-baselined more than once.** Dates have moved, and the new dates were not obviously more credible than the old ones.
- ☐ **Decisions wait weeks for an owner.** It is unclear who holds specific decisions, and choices that should take days are taking a month.
- ☐ **Vendors are managing you, not the reverse.** The program's rhythm is being set by vendor reporting rather than by client governance.
- ☐ **The roadmap no longer feels credible.** Privately, few people believe the current plan reflects how the work will actually unfold.
- ☐ **Executives learn of risks late.** Significant issues reach leadership after they have already constrained the available options.
- ☐ **Scope moves without impact analysis.** Things are added or changed without a clear account of what it costs the schedule or the budget.
- ☐ **Governance meets, but nothing changes.** Steering committees convene on cadence and adjourn without decisions.

Reading your result

0–2 checked: Watch and re-check. Drift compounds; a baseline reading now gives you something to measure against.

3–5 checked: A pattern is forming. A structured assessment would surface what the status reports are not.

6–8 checked: This is consistent with active program drift. An independent diagnostic is warranted before options narrow further.

The Program Drift Diagnostic scores your program across five dimensions in about five minutes:
diagnostic.ontargetconsulting.biz

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