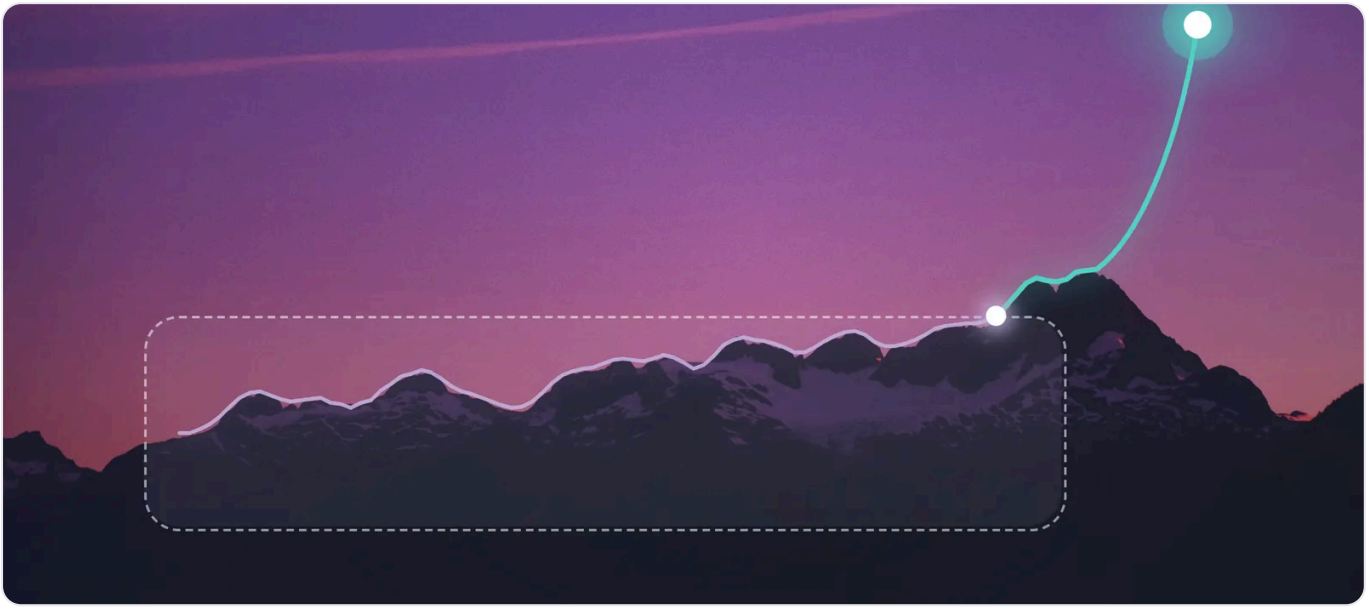
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Five Signs Your Transformation Has Outgrown a Consulting Platform (Wave, ARC, KEY)

Transformation has stopped being something you do once. Here's how to tell when the platform your consulting firm left behind can no longer keep up with your organization's needs.

Ayesha Khan October 16, 2026



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The shift to always-on transformation

You've established a transformation capability: the governance model, the business case standards, the stage gates and the KPI definitions.

You now want that to be a continuous transformation office rather than only an intervention.

You are not alone in this approach. When KPMG surveyed 200 C-suite and senior executives at companies above $1 billion in revenue, 60% described transformation as continuous or nearly so, and

two-thirds were running three or more programs at the same time. Arthur D. Little's 2025 study of 400 senior transformation leaders found that 71% plan their transformation over four to six years.

> Transformation offices are becoming a permanent function, which means you need a platform you own rather than one you borrowed.
>
> **Ayesha Khan**
> Director of Strategic Alliances, Sensei Labs

Where the consulting platforms stop

Think back to how the tool arrived. You hired a firm to design the transformation, size the initiatives, set the gates and prove the value, and the platform came as part of the package. It was designed to run their method, and their team set it up.

To be fair, McKinsey's Wave, Bain's ARC and BCG's KEY are all strong for a single intervention transformation. They were built to track benefits and tie strategy to the P&L, and they do both well.

The trouble starts when the transformation evolves, has new needs, and keeps growing its ambition.

Those tools don't handle tasks. Project tracking is thin, so the actual work requires a second tool like Monday or Asana and someone has to reconcile the two. There is no real view across multiple strategic programs, so someone builds one in Power BI. AI for strategy execution is not built in so you have to take the data into Excel before you can analyze it and then manually make updates back into the transformation platform. And because the program runs the firm's way, changing the approach means going back to them for customizations.

The five signs

Small changes are hard to make

What it looks like today: A dropdown you set up a year ago no longer fits the program. Changing it means a request to the firm or editing thousands of initiative records by hand. So the field stays wrong and people work around it.

What it looks like in Conductor: Your own admin changes fields and dropdowns. Edits don't disrupt anyone while they work, and nothing shows on a dashboard until you add it.

Changes to how you measure wait in the firm's queue

What it looks like today: A new KPI or calculation goes back to the firm to build. You wait for their cycle, and you pay for the change.

What it looks like in Conductor: Your own admin builds calculated fields. One can build on another, so you can add new bands and ranges on top of what you already have.

Every initiative follows the same process, whatever its size

What it looks like today: Every initiative sees every tab. The small ones fill in the same long form as the complicated ones, and it reads like a form at the doctor's office.

What it looks like in Conductor: The form adapts. A few upfront questions send a simple initiative to a short form and open the detailed sections only when they apply.

Governance happens at the gate and nowhere else

What it looks like today: There is nowhere to do the work, so people update the record only when they need to pass a gate. The transformation office closes the gap by chasing initiatives one at a time.

What it looks like in Conductor: Tasks, boards, timelines, risks, actions, issues and interdependencies sit under the initiative. Status comes straight from the work already being done there.

Changing the operating model is off the table

What it looks like today: The setup was custom-built for you and stays with the firm. So you keep the model you were given, even as the office takes on more of the business.

What it looks like in Conductor: You can reshape the model yourself. Users and permissions take about an hour to learn, and dashboards and workflows an afternoon. Complex calculations are the one area where teams still ask us for help, and we build those with the same tools your admin already uses.

Why Conductor is the best platform to transition to

Conductor has been running transformations for over a decade. We have the best practices for modern transformation offices, and we know how to address the gaps they face in platforms that come from consulting partners:

YOUR PROGRAM, YOUR WAY	Your own team has complete access to the admin suite, to make any changes they need. Adding new programs, new fields, it's all in your control.
BENEFITS & VALUE REALIZATION	You keep benefit tracking against fixed targets. Your own admin builds calculated fields. One can build on another, so you add new bands and ranges on top of what you have.
CROSS-PROGRAM GOVERNANCE	Every program can have their own governance, allowing you to expand the transformation capability across the enterprise, for all different types of strategic programs.
TASK & PROJECT TRACKING	Tasks, boards, timelines, risks, actions, issues and interdependencies sit under the initiative. Status comes straight from the work already being done there.
STRATEGY-TO-P&L TRACEABILITY	You reshape the model yourself. Users and permissions take about an hour to learn, and dashboards and workflows an afternoon. Every initiative still ties back to strategy and the P&L as the model changes.

How our team supports the transition

You will naturally have questions about the transition: what comes over, who are your types of users and where are they running into friction with the old system; and the most important question, will they adopt a new way of working.

We bring your program across and do the initial set-up.

Your stage gate model, business case template, benefit definitions, KPI library and initiative data all come over. Our team maps every field to its place in Conductor and loads your data. A data check confirms every row, column and value came across, and your team signs off. Your users enter Conductor with their projects and programs ready from day 1.

We start from what each workflow or process is for.

Some of your setups are there only because of the old platform's limits, so we keep only what your program still needs. We simplify the experience for your end-users, ensuring they only see something when they need to see it.

We train your admins to run Conductor themselves.

We take them through every part of the admin tools while they build in their own workspace. Then we come back to review what they built. After launch, your admins maintain and update the system on their own and call on us only for complex calculations.

We take change management seriously.

We know your business is used to a specific way of working, and you are aware of the impact of any change big or small. We use our best practices for change management to ensure a smooth and seamless transition. Our change management is built in-app, in our training program, and with ongoing support post implementation including regular office hours for questions and feedback. We support you every step of the way.

We train your teams to build their own dashboards and reporting.

During the implementation period, we have dedicated sessions on reporting and onboarding. Your team has the power to build their own dashboards and reporting directly in the platform and using our AI tools. We build the initial set of dashboards, advising on changes based on our decade of experience running transformations. We ensure that your teams have the right training and tools to be able to get any reporting and insight from Conductor.

What happens next?

Transitioning from your existing transformation platform to another is an important decision, and we want to make sure we've earned that place. As you go through your evaluation journey, you will be building out a business case to your executive team on the why, talking to your users on their desires, and putting together your wish list.

One of our solution experts who is leading a current migration from Wave, KEY, ARC etc, can answer questions, show you our best practice methodology and give you a Conductor space to play around with.

Sources:

KPMG International, The new transformation agenda (December 2023), n=200 C-suite and senior executives at firms above $1 billion in revenue.

Arthur D. Little, Global Transformation Study 2025, n=400 senior transformation leaders.

Wellingtone, The State of Project Management 2026, 150+ organizations.

EY and University of Oxford Said Business School, Transformation Leadership research (2024), n=1,686.

READ ONLINE

Read this article on our website

getconductor.com/resources/five-signs-your-transformation-has-outgrown-a-consulting-platform-wave-arc-key

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Walk through an example with our team and see Conductor on your own programs.

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