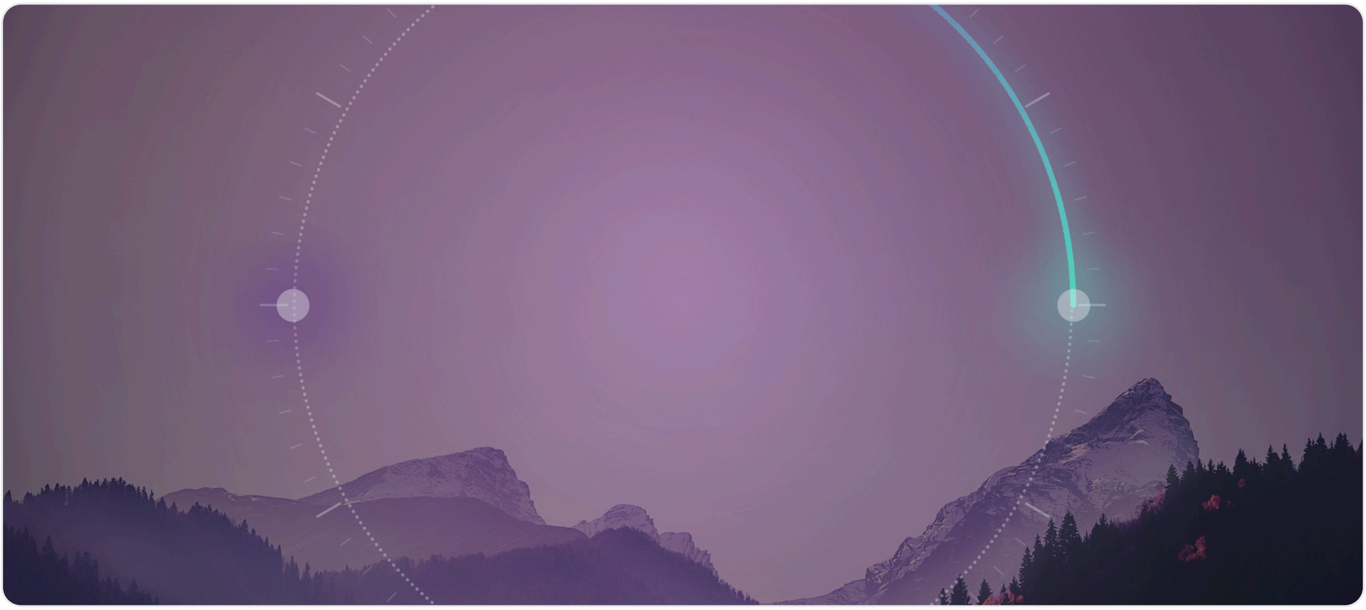
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

What Is a Value Creation and Portfolio Operations Platform?

A value creation and portfolio operations platform connects a value creation plan to the initiatives that deliver it, the work required, and the EBITDA impact they produce, in one system. Here's what it does, how it differs from tools you already own, and how to tell whether you need one.

Ayesha Khan September 15, 2026



A value creation and portfolio operations platform is software that connects a value creation plan to the initiatives funded to deliver it, the work required to execute them, and the EBITDA impact they produce, in one system. The portfolio company uses it to execute the plan. The fund uses it to see how the plan is going and compare across the portfolio.

That sentence is the whole category. The rest of this page is what it means in practice, why the category exists, how it differs from tools you probably already own, and how to tell whether you need one.

THE STATUS QUO

What problem does it solve?

Ask an operating partner how value creation actually gets run today and the honest answer is PowerPoint and Excel.

Here’s how it usually goes. The fund brings a methodology, typically a toolkit of PowerPoint slides with frameworks and Excel templates. Someone from the fund’s value creation team sits down with the PortCo’s management team and builds the plan, and then works through how to operationalize it and govern it. All of that is manual.

Most portfolio companies do not have a transformation office or a PMO, so there is nobody obvious to hand it to. There is usually one person who has fallen into the job with a day job as well. An “accidental transformation officer”.

So, the operating partner at the fund does the heavy lifting. They build the trackers. They chase the updates. They assemble the pack. That is time the operating team should be spending with management on steering the business rather than collecting status updates.

It costs more than time. In our work with transformation offices and PE value creation teams, we consistently see roughly ten percent of a program's targeted value erode before it is ever realized. It goes to three places.

Where the value goes missing

~10%	**25%**
of a program's targeted value erodes before it is ever realized.	of a large program's effort goes into collating status for the executive pack — the reporting tax.

Three places it leaks

Wrong work funded	Problems surface late	The reporting tax
Without a shared way to score initiatives, funding goes to whoever argues best in the room.	By the time a slipping initiative reaches a board meeting, the delay has already cost money.	Collating status into an executive view eats a quarter of a large program's effort.

WHO'S IN THE SYSTEM

What it looks like for the people using it

This is the part that decides whether it works. Three groups use it, and each needs a different view.

Three groups, three views

Initiative owner	Program lead	The C-suite
Owns a lever in the business and updates it directly. If this is hard to use, the data stops.	Tracks what moved, what's blocked, and what needs a decision — instead of building the pack by hand.	Sees the plan on one page. Where the numbers stand, what's at risk, and what needs them.

Good software here is judged the way the portfolio company judges it. How hard is this to use, and what do we get from it day to day.

THE LOOP

What does it actually do?

Think of it as a loop. The plan goes in at one end, realized EBITDA impact comes out the other, and everything in between is connected.

The loop, in four steps

PLAN	The value creation plan is broken into initiatives, each with an owner, a timeline and a committed number. Everyone uses the same definitions, so pricing means the same thing in every part of the business.
PRIORITIZE	Initiatives are scored and modeled against capacity and expected value. You can see what happens to this year's number if something is cancelled, accelerated or added, before you commit.
EXECUTE	Initiatives move through stage gates, with real project management underneath. Gantt, Kanban, tasks, and governance of risks, actions, issues and dependencies. Because the plan and the actuals sit together, the system flags what moved and leaves the rest alone, so a small team can cover a lot of ground.
REALIZE	Every initiative carries its own targets, forecasts and actuals. Targets are set and locked, teams update forecasts, and actuals are entered or pulled from the ERP on a schedule. You end up with a history of what was committed and what happened, which is what makes the number defensible.

Because all four run on one data model, the reporting is a byproduct of the work. That is what removes the reporting tax.

> Rolling up across the portfolio is real value, and it compounds as more companies come onto the platform. It is worth setting up from the start, and it is worth being clear that the first return comes from each company running its plan better.
>
> **Ayesha Khan**
> Director of Strategic Alliances, Sensei Labs

THE CATEGORY MAP

How is it different from the tools I already have?

This is the question I get on nearly every first call. There are five categories of software used to run value creation, and they stack on top of one another.

EXHIBIT 1

How a value creation platform differs from what you already own

COLLABORATIVE WORK MANAGEMENT	Monday, Asana, Smartsheet. Strong on task collaboration and adoption, but no strategic alignment, no benefits tracking, no stage gates — governance across a program is painful. The company owns it.
PROJECT AND PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT	Planview, Clarity, OnePlan. Strong on stage gates and resourcing, but benefits tracking is partial and the execution layer is thin — teams keep a work management tool alongside it. The company owns it.
PORTFOLIO MONITORING AND FUND REPORTING	Chronograph, Cobalt, Allvue. Built for finance and investor relations — reports the result of value creation, but doesn't run the work that produces it. Fund finance owns it.
CONSULTING-FIRM PLATFORMS	McKinsey Wave, BCG Key, Bain Accelerator. Strong on stage gates and executive reporting, but stop before the execution layer — a Monday or Asana still runs alongside. The consulting firm owns it.
VALUE CREATION AND PORTFOLIO OPERATIONS PLATFORM	Conductor. Spans the whole stack — alignment and prioritization, stage gates, benefits realization, and real project management, on one data model. You own it.

> Monitoring tools tell you what the company reported this quarter. A value creation platform tells you which initiatives produced it and which are behind. Consulting platforms are strong at the layer work management tools lack, and they stop where the work happens.
>
> **Ayesha Khan**
> Director of Strategic Alliances, Sensei Labs

THE EDGES

What it is not

Where the edges are

Not an analytics tool

It has dashboards and it connects to Power BI, and you buy it to run the plan.

Not a methodology

It should run your plan, your stage gates and your KPI definitions.

Not fund reporting

Portfolio monitoring and fund reporting platforms collect financials and serve LPs.

Not your systems

The ERP, CRM and delivery tools stay where they are — the platform integrates with them.

EXHIBIT 2

Where it fits in the PE stack

FUND AND LP REPORTING	Chronograph, Cobalt, Allvue, fund administration. Collects financials from every company, holds valuations, and reports to limited partners. Owned by fund finance and investor relations.
VALUE CREATION AND PORTFOLIO OPERATIONS	Conductor. Holds the value creation plan, the initiatives under it, the work to deliver them, and the EBITDA they produce. The company runs the plan here; the fund sees how it's going. Used by operating partners, value creation directors, and portfolio company transformation leads.
PORTFOLIO COMPANY SYSTEMS	ERP, CRM, Jira, Azure DevOps, Monday, Asana. Where the work happens and the numbers are produced — these stay with the company. Used by the business and its delivery teams.

THE SIGNAL

When do you need one?

You need one when some of the following start to be true:

- The plan lives in a deck and a spreadsheet, and the current version depends on who you ask.
- Your value creation team is building trackers and chasing updates instead of working with management.
- Status arrives once a month, written by the people being measured.
- Nobody can trace a realized number back to the initiative that produced it.
- A consulting engagement is ending, and the tool is leaving with the consultants.
- You are about to do this in a second company, and then a third.

If two or three of those are true, the ten percent erosion is already happening, and you need visibility to it.

THE TEST

How to evaluate one

Whatever you look at, including us, test it against these.

- Will the people in the business use it? Look at it through the eyes of an initiative owner, not a sponsor.
- Does it span the full stack, from plan to realized EBITDA, in one system? If it stops at reporting, you will be buying a second tool.
- Can it run your governance, not just its own? Your plan structure, your stage gates, your business case, your KPI model.
- Does it hold up to audit? Locked targets, controlled actuals, and a record of who changed what and when.
- Does it surface what changed, so a small team can cover a lot of companies?
- How fast can it be live? A templated deployment should have a first version running in days.
- Who owns it when the consultants leave? You should.

Sources: Bain & Company, Global Private Equity Report 2026. McKinsey & Company, Global Private Markets Report 2026. Heidrick & Struggles, 2024 North American Private Equity Operating Professional Compensation Survey (n=251). Erosion figure from Sensei Labs engagement experience, consistent with the published Conductor strategy execution platform article.

READ ONLINE

Read this article on our website

getconductor.com/resources/what-is-a-value-creation-and-portfolio-operations-platform

GET STARTED

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