A DIAGNOSTIC FOR CEOS AND COOS FACING A MAJOR TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATION

Why the fix costs less than the proposal.

Six signals that tell you whether the technology problem your vendor diagnosed is actually the real problem — before you commit to a solution built around the wrong answer.

CTO
STRATEGY
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THE PROPOSAL	Replace the platform. Re-implement from scratch. Budget: significant. Timeline: 12–18 months. Vendors aligned. Decision pending.
THE REALITY	**Most mid-market technology failures are operating model problems. The platform usually isn't the cause.**

Keith Piccininno
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THE DIAGNOSTIC

Check any signal that rings true for your current situation.

Read each signal. Check the box next to any that apply. Tally your score on the next page. Honesty beats optimism here — the more accurately you score, the more useful the result.

01

☐

The diagnosis came from someone selling a solution.

The assessment of your problem was performed by the same firm now proposing to fix it. The problem was defined during the sales process — which means it was defined in terms of what they sell.

A vendor with a hammer will always find a nail.

02

☐

Multiple consultants recommended the same expensive fix.

You've had two or three conversations and the answers converge on the same category of solution. The consensus feels like confirmation. It may mean you've only heard from one side of the market.

Vendor consensus isn't an independent diagnosis.

03

☐

Your team can describe the symptoms but not the source.

Everyone knows the system is slow, the reports are wrong, the integrations break. Nobody has traced it to a specific decision, configuration error, or process gap that predates the technology.

Replacing the platform moves symptoms to a new address.

04

☐

The last major technology project came in over budget and under-delivered.

Not because the technology was wrong — because the operating model wasn't ready for it. The new system ran on top of old problems. Now the next budget is larger and the scope is wider.

A bigger investment in the wrong fix produces more expensive results.

05

☐

Nobody internally can push back on the vendor's technical claims.

The proposal is detailed and confident. Your team understands the business problem but can't challenge the solution architecture, timeline, or licensing. You're evaluating a technical recommendation without a technical counterpart in the room.

Vendors set the terms when there's no one on your side who speaks the language.

06

☐

You're comparing vendor proposals, not vendor-independent options.

Your shortlist is three versions of the same solution. Nobody has an incentive to tell you the real answer might be a configuration fix at a fraction of the cost. That option never made the shortlist because nobody brought it in.

The cheapest fix has to be found before the vendor process starts.

COUNT THE SIGNALS THAT RANG TRUE

Your score.

YOUR TOTAL	/ 6

0–2 SIGNALS	**You're evaluating this carefully.** You have enough independent perspective to catch the most common traps. A pre-commitment conversation can still surface savings — but you're not flying blind.
3–4 SIGNALS	**Gap between what you've been told and what's true.** The diagnosis driving this decision may not be complete. An independent review is the lowest-cost insurance against a multi-million dollar commitment to the wrong fix.
5–6 SIGNALS	**The proposal likely costs more than the fix.** Every signal you checked is a pattern that precedes an expensive outcome. Companies at this score consistently find a materially cheaper path forward through an independent diagnostic.

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20+ years across manufacturing, healthcare, fintech, and aviation. Works with CEOs and COOs at $50M–$250M companies where technology spending has outpaced results. Specializes in finding the operating model fix before the platform replacement budget gets approved.

$5.87M
ONE ERP DECISION

26%
INSURANCE REDUCTION

28%
INFRA COST REDUCTION

> *"He found the root cause on our ERP in a week. Three consultants before him missed it entirely and recommended we spend millions replacing the platform. Keith diagnosed a process problem, not a technology problem — and fixed it for a fraction of the cost."*
>
> OPERATIONS LEAD · $144M MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATION

THE ROOT CAUSE

> ***"Three consultants recommended replacing the ERP. We fixed the operating model instead. The client saved $5.87 million."***

Every signal you checked points to the same structural gap: no independent technical voice operating between the vendor's proposal and your decision.

The root cause took four weeks to find. It was process misuse — not platform failure. Finding it required someone with no financial stake in any solution and enough operational depth to know what mid-market technology failures actually look like from the inside.

NEXT STEP

If three or more signals rang true, it's worth a conversation before you sign anything.

No commitment. We'll walk through your signals together and I'll tell you what I see — whether the proposal looks right, oversized, or aimed at the wrong problem entirely.

BOOK A 30-MINUTE CALL

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Found this useful? Forward it to your CFO or the board member approving the budget. The conversation it starts is the point.