

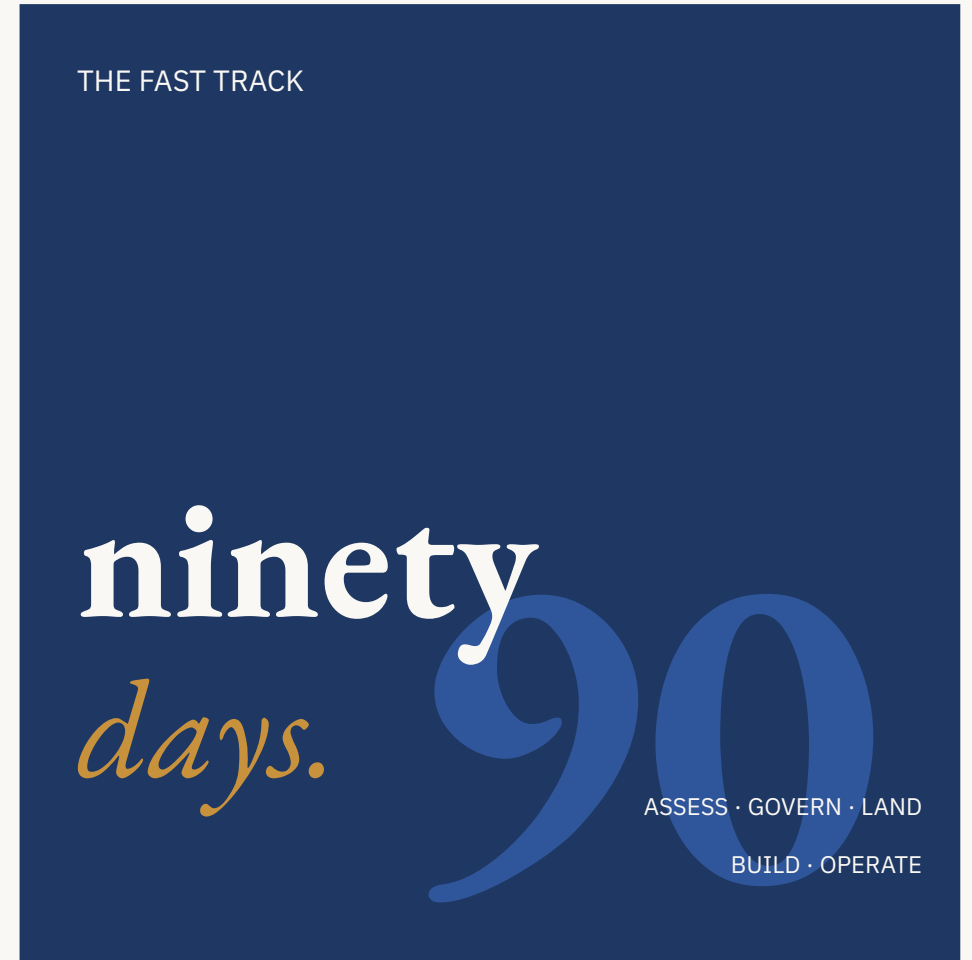
THE FABRIC FAST TRACK

# The Fabric Fast Track *Workbook.*

*Deploy enterprise analytics in 90 days — without the 18-month rebuild.*

JONATHAN STEWART

SOUND BI · PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT.



[ SPONSOR — REPLACE THIS SLIDE ]



# About Me.

25+ Years in Data & Analytics

*Helping enterprises migrate to and scale on Microsoft Fabric — from architecture and data modeling to Power BI and production governance.*

## **01** Creator/Founder: SQLBites Community

*Building the next generation of data practitioners.*

## **02** Migrating Enterprises to Fabric

*Real production migrations across healthcare, finance, retail, and manufacturing.*

## **03** Hundreds of Technical Talks Globally

*International speaker on data architecture and analytics engineering.*



# The Fabric Chronicle

MAY 2026

FABRIC FAST TRACK

VOL. 1 · NO. 1

— TODAY'S AGENDA · 6 STORIES —

30 MIN

## Phase Walkthrough

*Five phases. Five gates. Twenty slides of shippable checklists.*

SEC. 01 · 6 MIN

### Hook + Credibility

*Two orgs, one platform, same Fabric, wildly different outcomes.*

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SEC. 02 · 12 MIN

### The 3 Failure Modes

*Three failure modes that wreck most deployments, diagnosed and named.*

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SEC. 03 · 5 MIN

### Playbook Introduction

*The 90-day framework, the gate system, and how to read the workbook.*

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SEC. 05 · 6 MIN

### Composite Org Story

*The composite org story: one timeline, one stakeholder map, one payback calc.*

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SEC. 06 · 7 MIN

### Takeaways + Q&A

*Anti-patterns one-pager, three pre-answered questions, the Monday-morning action.*

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CHAPTER ONE

# OPENING

1

# Two programs. Same scope. *Same vendor.*

**STALLED** PROGRAM A · MFG · 2024

# 18<sub>mo</sub>

*Three rebuilds. Two project managers. Zero reports in production.*

SPEND	REPORTS LIVE	SPONSOR
<b>\$2.4M</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Rotated 2×</b>

**SHIPPED** PROGRAM B · MFG · 2025

# 90<sub>d</sub>

*One product. Named sponsor. In production on day 84.*

SPEND	REPORTS LIVE	SPONSOR
<b>\$340K</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>VP Ops</b>

# Fabric adoption is accelerating. Most implementations aren't ready for it.

**Microsoft retired Power BI Premium licensing**

*Fabric is the path forward*

1

**Direct Lake closed the import/DirectQuery gap — the architecture decision is now**

*Direct Lake closed the import/DirectQuery gap — the architecture decision is now simpler*

2

**The orgs that deploy well in year one own the analytics narrative for years two**

*The orgs that deploy well in year one own the analytics narrative for years two through five*

3

*“Most Fabric deployments that fail don't fail at the technology layer. They fail at the process layer — in the first 30 days.”*

# Who This Is For

## LEFT — IF YOU'RE TECHNICAL

- You've been handed a Fabric deployment and need it live in 90 days
- You've seen a governance retrofit eat 6 weeks of a project
- You want a pipeline pattern that doesn't require rebuilding at silver

## RIGHT — IF YOU'RE BUSINESS-SIDE

- You've watched a data platform get delivered and not adopted
- You've approved budget for a "modern analytics" project with no payback target
- You want to know what questions to ask before you write the next check

*Both of you need the same thing: a sequence that works. That's what this session is.*

# You'll leave with three things:

## A phase-by-phase playbook

*what to build, in what order, and why the order matters*

1

## A go/no-go gate for each phase

*the checklist that tells you when you're ready to move*

2

## The templates Org B used

*not described, not linked, right here in the slides*

3

*“Screenshot what you need. The deck IS the workbook.”*

*This deck is the workbook. Screenshot what you need.*

FABRIC FAST TRACK · JONATHAN.STEWART@SOUNDBI.COM

CHAPTER TWO

# FAILURE MODES

2

# "We'll add it later."

**14 workspaces created with no naming standard**

*nobody can find anything*

1

**Shadow reports rebuilt in Excel because the official**

*ones can't be trusted*

2

**Compliance audit at week 11**

*project stops, team scrambles to document what they built.*

3

*"In our experience, most stalled Fabric deployments trace back to a governance decision not made in week one."*

# Failure Mode 1: What Week 8 Looks Like



*2 days of governance work in Week 2 = 2 weeks of retrofit in Week 8. 10x cost multiplier.*

# "The data was supposed to be clean."

**Source system discovery finds 3× more complexity than**

*the kickoff call suggested*

1

**Bronze layer skipped**

*raw data lands directly in reporting tables*

2

**Month 2 spent rebuilding what month 1 built wrong**

3

*"A logistics company rebuilt their ingestion layer twice before day 45. The root cause: bronze was skipped to hit an early demo deadline."*

## Phase 2: The *Rebuild Tax*.

	ITEM	TIME LOST
01	Root cause analysis	2 days
02	Rebuilding silver transformations	5 days
03	Re-validating all gold tables	3 days
04	Re-running UAT for affected reports	4 days
05	Total	14 days

*Alternative: 1 day building the silver layer correctly the first time.*

# Platform delivered. Nobody uses it.

**Business team kept the Excel  
pivot tables**

*"we trust what we know"*

1

**IT declares success, closes the  
project**

2

**Finance misses payback**

*the cost is real, the adoption isn't*

3

*"Technically complete. Organizationally failed."*

# Failure Mode 3: The Adoption Graveyard

*“The reports were accurate. The business owner never saw them.”*

Cause of death: No UAT, no training, no adoption plan.

*“IT delivered on time and under budget. Finance still uses the spreadsheet.”*

Cause of death: Success defined as deployment, not behavior change.

*“The semantic model had 47 measures. Nobody knew what any of them meant.”*

Cause of death: No measure descriptions, no training, no self-service path.

*“The dashboard loaded in under 2 seconds. It had 0 active users after 90 days.”*

Cause of death: No business owner engaged until go-live.

CHAPTER THREE

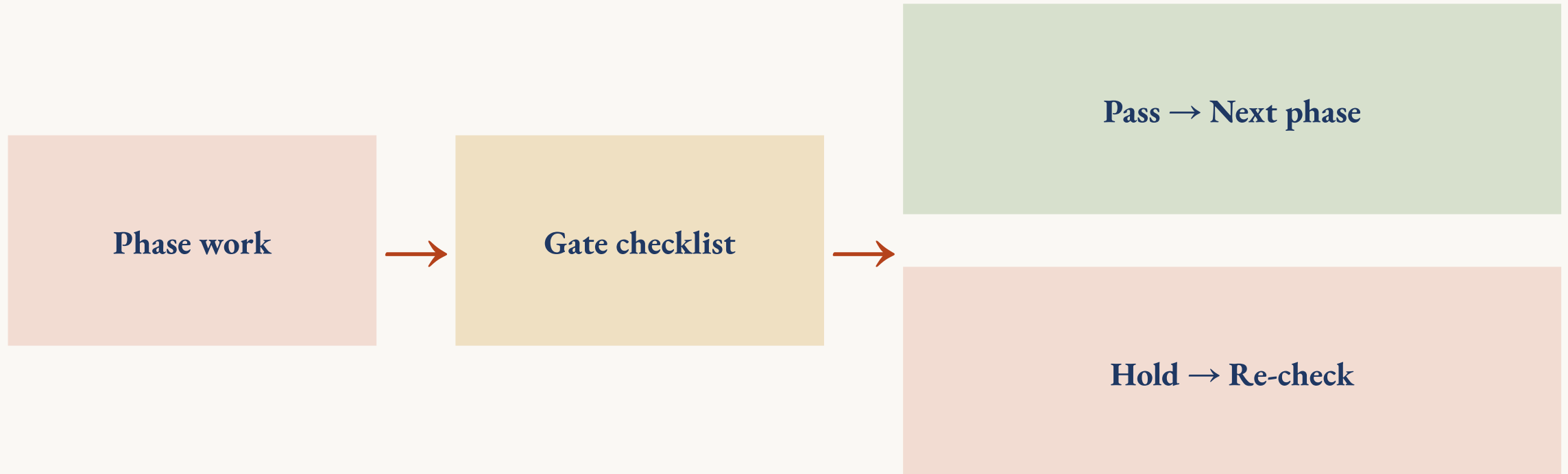
# THE 90-DAY FRAMEWORK

# 3

# The 90-Day Framework



# The Gate System



*Skipping a gate compounds. Cost shows up in Phase 4, not Phase 2.*

# How To Use This Workbook

**A checklist of what to complete**

**1**

**A named owner for each item**

**2**

**A go/no-go gate**

**3**

*“If you can't check every box in the gate, you don't move to the next phase. That's the whole system.”*

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE  
WALKTHROUGH

4

## PHASE 01

# Assess • Days 1–15

## CHECKLIST

- Current state data source inventory (count, type, owner, quality rating)
- Executive sponsor named (one person, accountable for go-live)
- Use case defined with measurable Day 90 outcome
- Stakeholder map complete (data team, IT, business unit, finance)
- Fabric capacity sizing estimate reviewed and approved

# 1

## GATE 01 — READY TO PROCEED

- ✓ Executive sponsor is named and engaged
- ✓ Use case has a measurable Day 90 outcome (e.g., "Finance team self-serves 3 reports without IT")
- ✓ Capacity sizing is approved by IT and finance

*If all criteria are met → proceed to next phase.*

# Phase 1: Deep Dive — The Data Source Inventory

SOURCE	TYPE	OWNER	VOLUME	QUALITY	CONNECTION	NOTES
ERP (SAP)	SQL Server	Finance	2M rows/day	3	ODBC	Schema changes 2×/year
Salesforce	REST API	Sales	50K records	4	Dataflow	Rate limits at peak
Excel files	SharePoint	Ops	5K rows/week	1	Manual upload	No schema standard
Legacy payroll	AS/400	HR	10K rows/month	2	Flat file	Encoding issues

# What an executive sponsor isn't, and *is*.

## WRONG

- A title on the kickoff slide
- A name in a CC field
- Someone who attends the demo
- A budget signer who disappears

## RIGHT

- Named, single person
- Commits 1 hour per week
- Resolves cross-team blockers in 48 h
- Signs each gate by name

*If you can't name them in one sentence, you don't have one.*

# Vanity vs. *validated*.

## VANITY

- "Migrate to Fabric for AI readiness"
- "Modernize the data stack"
- "Real-time everything"
- No measurable Day-90 outcome

## VALIDATED

- "Finance self-serves 3 reports without IT by day 90"
- "Inventory close 5 days faster by Q3"
- Owner signs the outcome before kickoff
- Outcome verifiable on day 90

*If the success line uses "better" or "faster" without a number, it isn't one.*

## PHASE 02

# Govern • Days 15–25

## CHECKLIST

- Workspace naming convention documented and approved
- Fabric capacity assigned to the correct domain
- Security model defined: domain → workspace → item permissions
- Service principal provisioned for pipeline execution
- Deployment pipeline strategy confirmed: dev / test / prod environments

2

## GATE 02 — READY TO PROCEED

- ✓ Workspace naming convention is documented and IT-approved
- ✓ Security model is approved — roles and permissions mapped before any item is created
- ✓ One Fabric deployment pipeline (dev → test → prod promotion) runs end-to-end, no manual steps

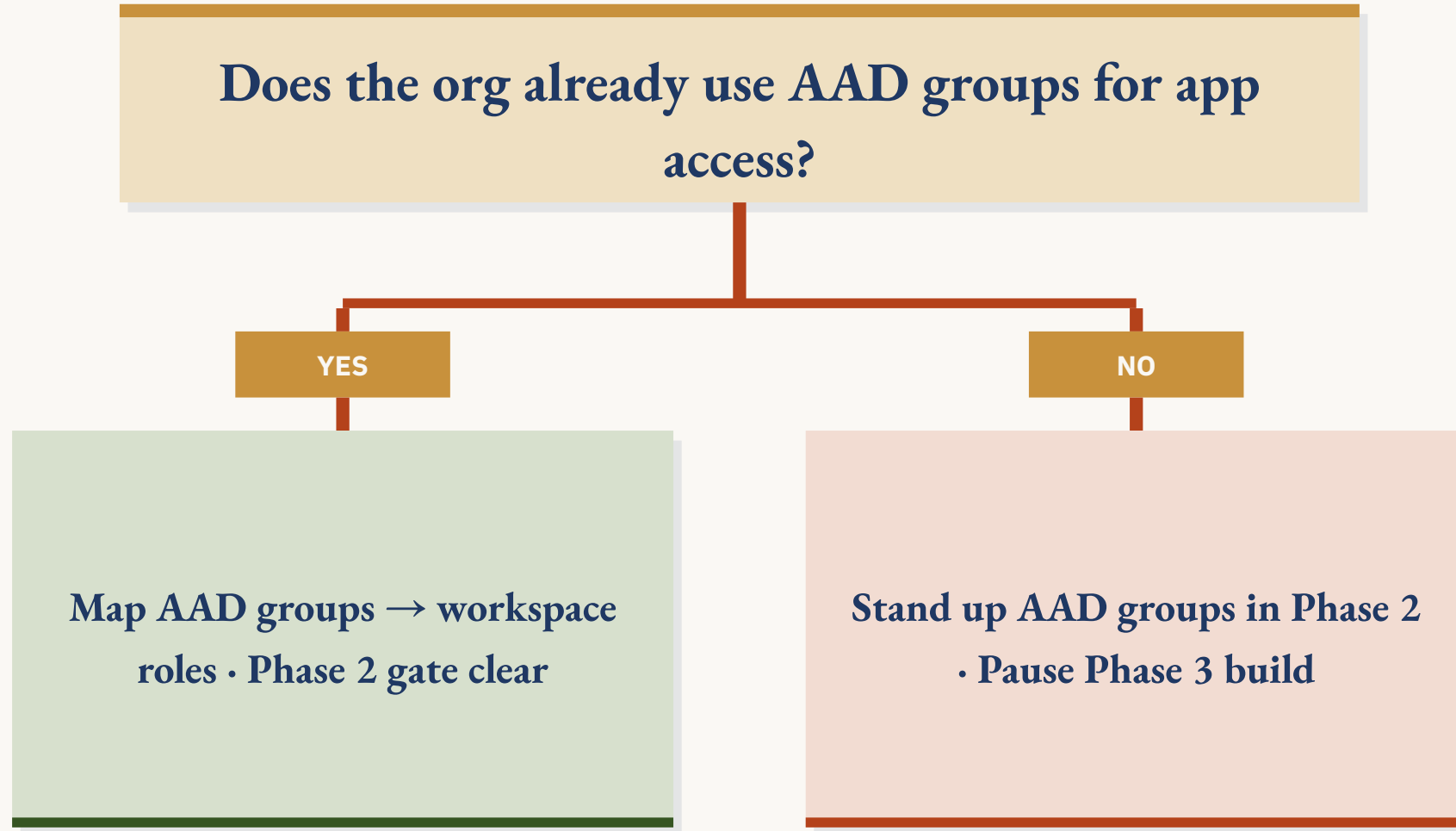
*If all criteria are met → proceed to next phase.*

# Naming convention *in practice.*

	PATTERN	WORKSPACE	ITEM
01	[env]-[domain]-[workload]-[tier]	prd-finance-erp-bronze	fact_sales_order
02	[env]-[domain]-[workload]-[tier]	prd-finance-erp-silver	dim_customer
03	[env]-[domain]-[workload]-[tier]	prd-finance-erp-gold	vw_finance_close
04	[env]-[domain]-[workload]-[tier]	dev-finance-erp-bronze	fact_sales_order_dev

*Convention is documented before the first workspace is created. Not after.*

# Phase 2: Deep Dive — The Security Model Decision



# Phase 2: Common Mistake — The SP Afterthought



*Provision the Service Principal in Phase 2. Test it against the dev workspace before Phase 3 begins. Five PowerShell steps — the provisioning checklist is on the Phase 2 workbook page.*

## PHASE 03

# Land • Days 25–50

## CHECKLIST

- All source connections tested (not just documented — tested)
- Medallion architecture decision made: bronze / silver / gold layers defined
- First pipeline to Lakehouse running and monitored
- Delta table validation passing (schema, row counts, freshness)
- Refresh schedule set and SLA documented

3

## GATE 03 — READY TO PROCEED

- ✓ Bronze data is landing on schedule
- ✓ Silver transformations are validated against source (row counts + spot checks)
- ✓ At least one gold table is ready for reporting — business owner has previewed it

*If all criteria are met → proceed to next phase.*

# Phase 3: Deep Dive — Medallion Decision Walkthrough

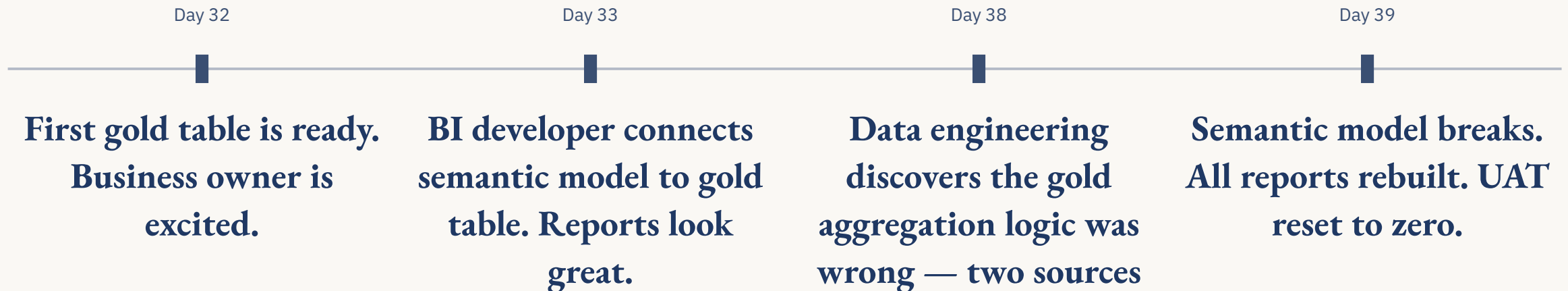
QUESTION	ANSWER
Source type	SQL Server via ODBC
Refresh frequency	Daily at 2am
Row volume	2M rows/day
CDC needed?	Yes — transactions can be backdated
Deduplication needed?	Yes — duplicate keys possible on retries
Joins with other sources?	Yes — joins to cost center dimension (HR system)
Business rules?	Yes — allocation logic across entities
PII?	No
Authoritative?	Yes

# Phase 3: Deep Dive — Pipeline Anatomy



*Every pipeline lands in bronze first. No exceptions. Silver tests gate gold.*

# Phase 3: Common Mistake — Connecting Gold to Reports Too Early



*Gold is not stable until the Phase 3 gate passes. No semantic model connects to gold until the gate is signed.*

## PHASE 04

# Build • Days 50–75

## CHECKLIST

- Semantic model built on gold layer — no direct raw or silver connections
- BPA audit run and passing: zero critical violations, fewer than 10 warnings
- Report acceptance criteria defined (written, not assumed)
- UAT completed with business owner sign-off on each report
- Row-level security tested with at least 2 different user profiles



## GATE 04 — READY TO PROCEED

- ✓ Business owner has signed off on at least 3 reports
- ✓ BPA audit: zero critical violations, warnings below team threshold (set in Phase 1)
- ✓ RLS validated — tested by someone who is not the developer

*If all criteria are met → proceed to next phase.*

# Phase 4: Deep Dive — Acceptance Criteria in Practice

## WITHOUT ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

- Day 62: BI developer shows finance team the GL variance report
- Finance: "This doesn't match what we have in Excel."
- Developer: "What number were you expecting?"
- Finance: "We'd have to check."
- [3-day alignment conversation about what the report should actually show]
- Day 65: Report rebuilt. UAT restarted.

## WITH ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

- Day 62: BI developer shows finance team the GL variance report
- Finance: "This doesn't match what we have in Excel."
- Developer: "What number were you expecting?"
- Finance: "We'd have to check."
- [3-day alignment conversation about what the report should actually show]
- Day 65: Report rebuilt. UAT restarted.

*If the developer is in the room, it's a demo, not UAT.*

# 78 BPA rules. These 10 stop your model from working correctly or fast.

01	● No implicit measures	<i>auto-sum columns produce wrong results across filter contexts</i>
02	● Date table marked as date table	<i>time intelligence breaks silently without this</i>
03	● All relationships active	<i>inactive relationships require USERRELATIONSHIP() everywhere</i>
04	● No bi-directional on large tables	<i>exponential query plan growth above 100K rows</i>
05	● RLS roles defined	<i>if security matrix requires RLS, model must implement it</i>
06	● All measures have descriptions	<i>self-service fails without discoverable measures</i>
07	● No deep CALCULATE nesting	<i>&gt;2 levels creates filter context bugs that are hard to find</i>
08	● High-cardinality columns: summarization = None	<i>prevents accidental aggregation</i>
09	● Primary key on every table	<i>relationship integrity depends on it</i>
10	● No measures on fact tables	<i>measure tables or dimension tables only</i>

# UAT done right vs. UAT *done*.

## FAIL

- Developer demos to business owner
- Acceptance == "looks good"
- No regression case run
- Sign-off in a chat thread

## PASS

- Business owner runs acceptance script alone
- Acceptance criteria written and signed in Phase 1
- Regression suite tied to last quarter's reports
- Sign-off via gate document

*If the developer is in the room, it's a demo, not UAT.*

## PHASE 05

# Operate • Days 75–90

## CHECKLIST

- Monitoring alerts configured (capacity, pipeline failures, refresh failures)
- Operational runbook written and reviewed by IT and business owner
- Capacity utilization baselined — normal range documented
- Business owner trained: can pull their own report without calling IT
- Day 90 go-live checklist signed by sponsor, IT lead, and business owner

5

## GATE 05 — READY TO PROCEED

- ✓ Go-live checklist signed by all three parties
- ✓ At least one business owner demonstrated self-service — no IT assist
- ✓ Runbook reviewed and first on-call person has read it

*If all criteria are met → proceed to next phase.*

# Phase 5: Deep Dive — The Runbook That Gets Used

**01**

## Cover page

*Owner, on-call rotation, escalation tree*

**02**

## Capacity baseline

*CU%, p95 query, refresh window — filled in week 1*

**03**

## Alert table

*What fires, what doesn't, who owns each*

**04**

## Runbook entries

*5 most likely failures + the exact remediation*

**05**

## Change log

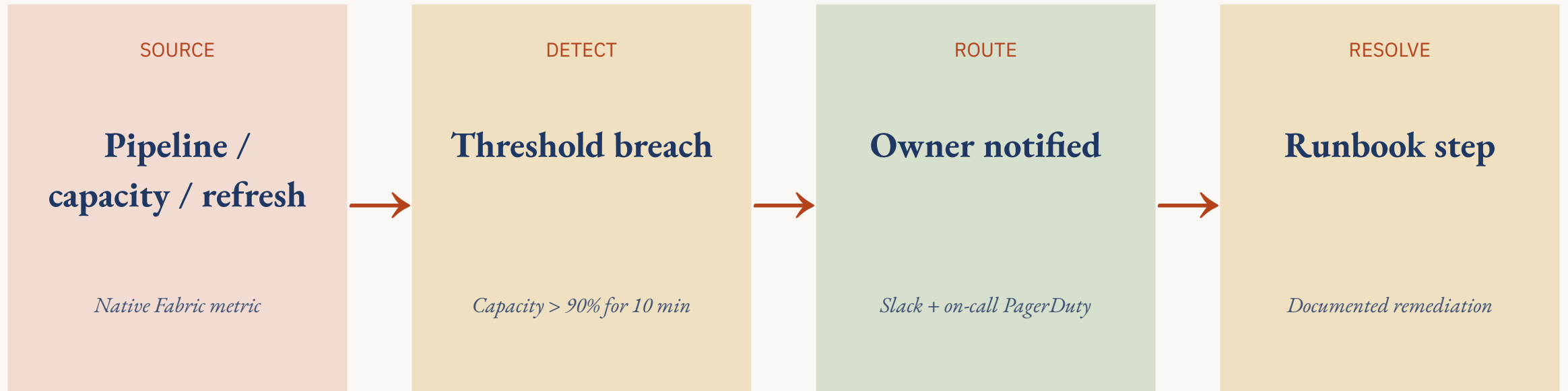
*Every prod change, who/when/why*

**06**

## Quarterly drill

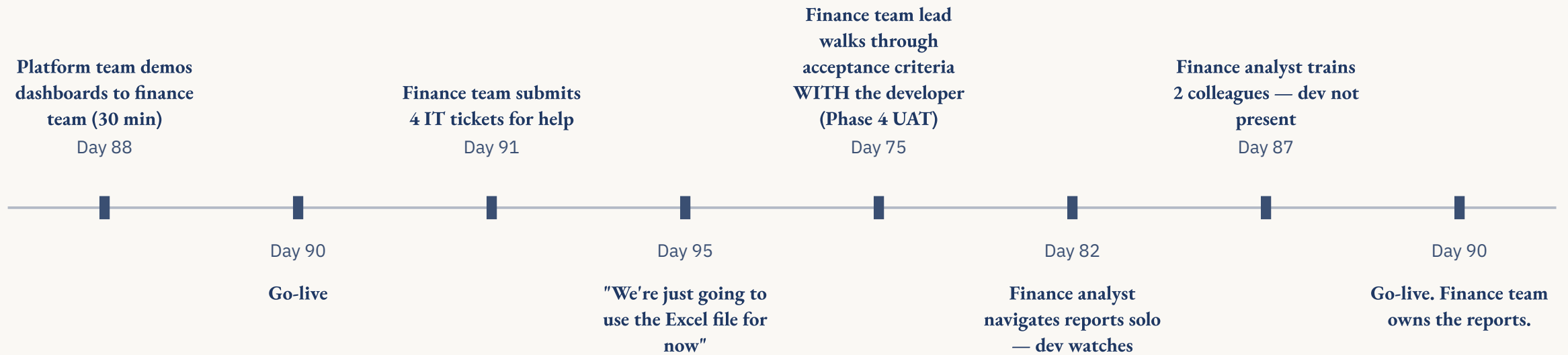
*Run the runbook end-to-end every 90 days*

# Phase 5: Deep Dive — Monitoring Alert Anatomy



*Every alert is either documented or deleted. No "informational" alerts.*

# Phase 5: Common Mistake — The Training-Free Handoff

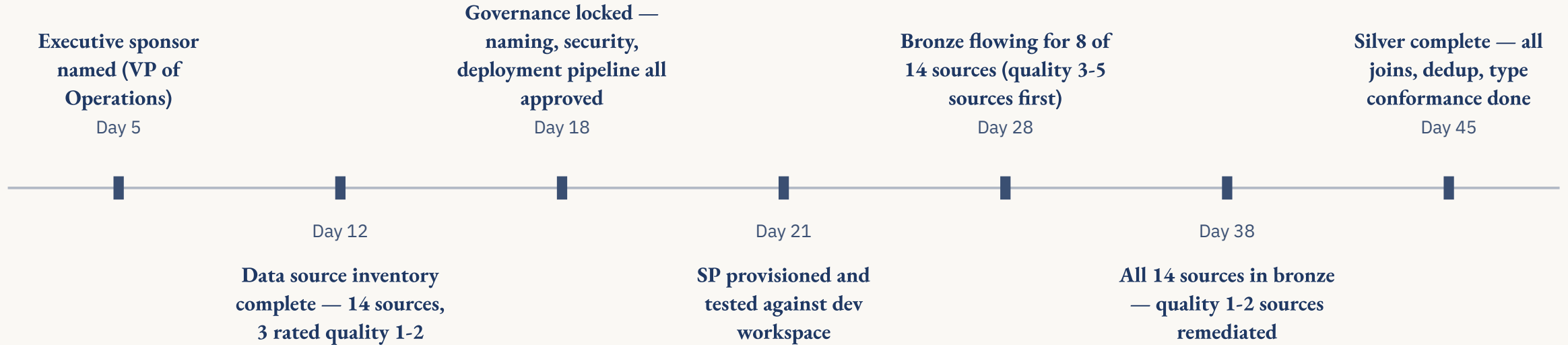


CHAPTER FIVE

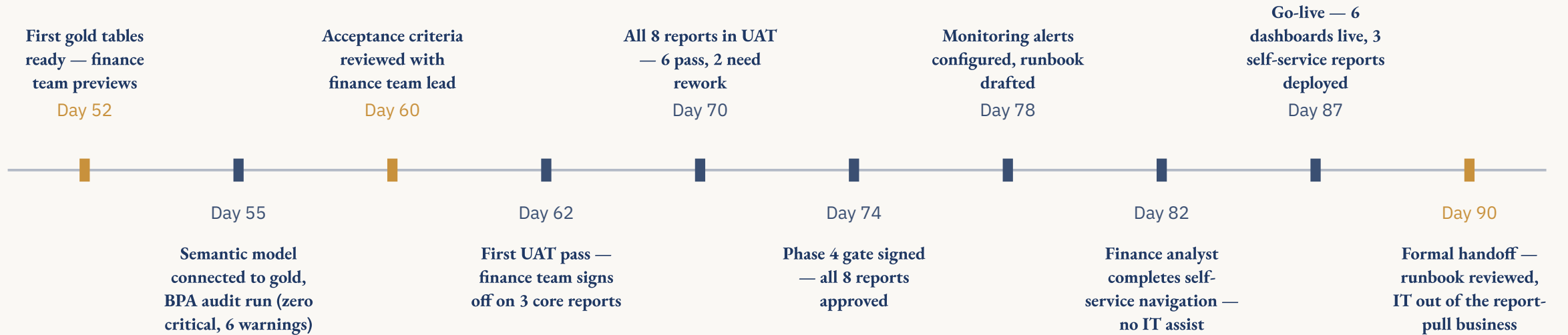
# THE FULL PICTURE

5

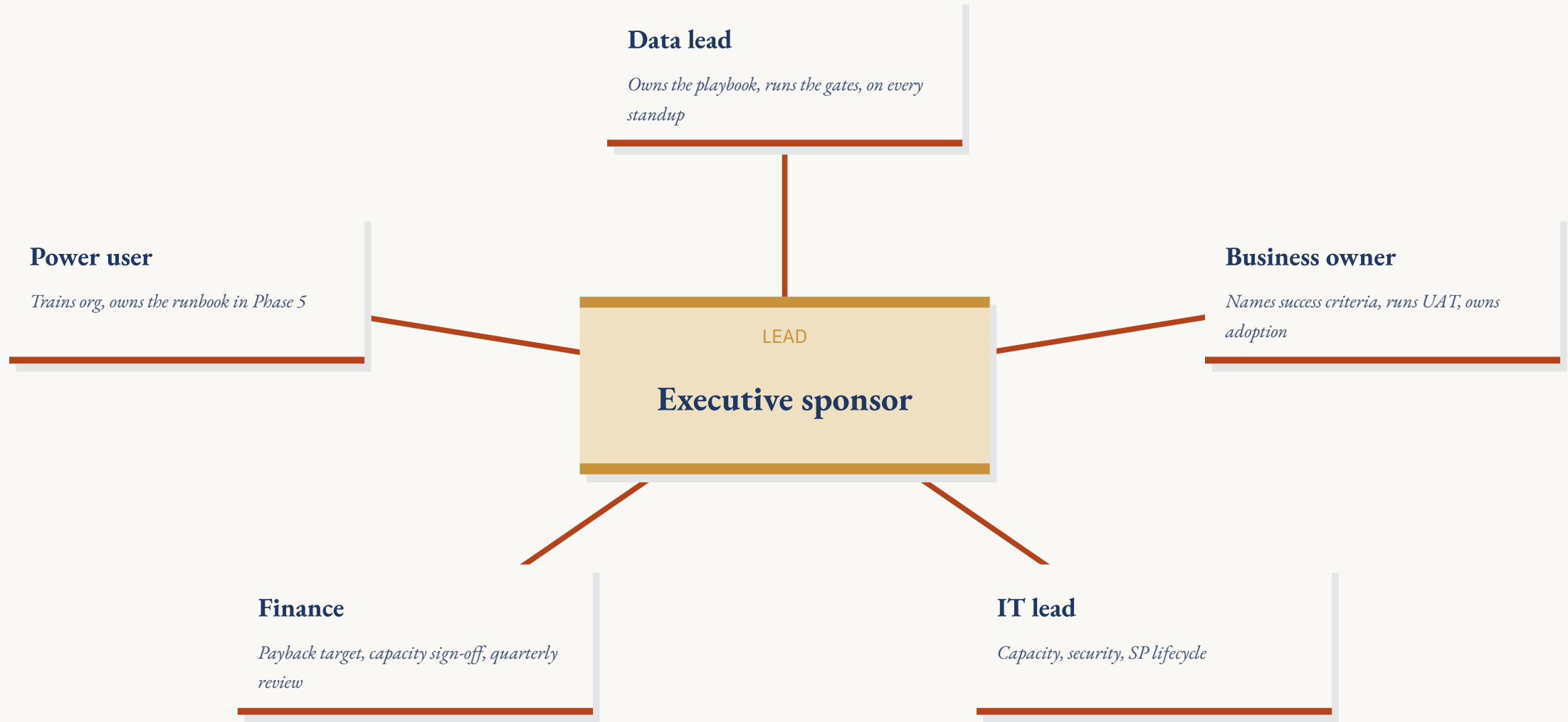
# The Full Picture: Days 1-45 (Phases 1-3)



# The Full Picture: Days 52-90 (Phases 4-5)



# The Full Picture: Stakeholder Map



# The Full Picture: The Payback Calculation

	ACTIVITY	TIME PER WEEK	STAFF INVOLVED
01	Finance pulls GL variance manually	6 hours	2 analysts
02	IT fulfills ad-hoc finance data requests	4 hours	1 data engineer
03	Operations reviews logistics KPIs from Excel	3 hours	3 managers
04	**Total**	**13 hours/week**	

CHAPTER SIX

# TAKEAWAYS

6

# Ten patterns that *kill* Fabric deployments.

ANTI-PATTERN	PHASE IT KILLS	THE FIX
No named executive sponsor	PHASE 1	<b>Gate:</b> <i>sponsor named before Phase 2</i>
Vanity use case	PHASE 1	<b>Gate:</b> <i>Day 90 outcome in one sentence</i>
Workspace naming retrofit	PHASE 2	<i>Convention before first workspace</i>
Service principal added later	PHASE 3	<i>Provisioned in Phase 2, tested in dev</i>
Bronze skipped for demo	PHASE 3	<i>Medallion matrix required pre-pipeline</i>
Gold connected to unstable silver	PHASE 3	<b>Gate:</b> <i>gold stable before semantic model</i>
UAT run by developer	PHASE 4	<i>Business owner tests independently</i>
No acceptance criteria	PHASE 4	<i>Criteria written + signed in Phase 1</i>
Runbook never reviewed	PHASE 5	<i>Runbook reviewed is a gate item</i>
Training = demo only	PHASE 5	<b>Gate:</b> <i>self-service without IT assist</i>

*Every anti-pattern has a corresponding gate item that prevents it.*

# Questions I Always Get

Q.01

Q

## Our org is agile. Can we run the phases in parallel?

*Some overlap is fine — Phase 2 can start while Phase 1 is wrapping up. But the gates are sequential. You can't start Phase 3 build until Phase 2 governance is signed. The gates exist precisely because the phases depend on each other architecturally.*

Q.02

Q

## What if our data sources aren't ready by day 25?

*Push the timeline, don't skip the layers. A delayed Phase 3 is better than a brittle one. The quality 1-2 sources from your Phase 1 inventory are usually the culprits — plan remediation work in parallel with governance so you don't lose momentum.*

Q.03

Q

## We don't have an executive sponsor. Can we proceed?

*No. This is the one hard stop in the playbook. Without escalation authority, the first cross-team blocker kills the project. Find the sponsor before you write a single pipeline. If leadership won't commit, the project isn't ready to start.*

THE ONE ACTION.

*Without a named sponsor,  
Phase 1 has no gate-keeper*

*The order matters. Start with the sponsor.*

