Organizational Handshake Assessment™: Executive Overview

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The Organizational Handshake Assessment™ examines how accountability, information, decisions, and commitments flow between functions, programs, partners, and operating teams. Use it when stalls work between organizational owners or when delivery is complete but operational acceptance remains unclear.

What constitutes an organizational handshake

A handshake is an explicit agreement between a sending owner and a receiving owner. It specifies what transfers, the acceptance criteria, timing, resources, decision rights, and the response when a commitment changes. The receiving owner confirms acceptance rather than leaving it to assumption.

Where to look first

- Strategy to investment: Has the funding decision retained the intended outcome and benefit owner?
- Portfolio to delivery: Are priorities, resources, dependencies, and authority agreed upon?
- Delivery to operations: Are processes, workforce, controls, support, and adoption ready?
- Enterprise to partner: Are obligations, information access, acceptance, and escalation explicit?
- Operations to benefits owner: Is outcome evidence available and acted upon?

Evidence of a weak handshake

Look for repeated rework, decisions circulated without an accountable owner, conflicting dates, unaccepted deliverables, resource commitments that were never confirmed, or benefits assigned to teams that did not influence the investment.

Review one critical handshake

Review element	Question
Owners	Who sends the commitment and who accepts it?
Content	What output, information, or decision must transfer?
Acceptance	What evidence shows that the receiver can use and accept it?
Readiness	Are capability, capacity, controls, and change impacts addressed?
Authority	Who can approve a variation or resolve a cross-functional conflict?
Escalation	Which threshold triggers escalation, to whom, and by when?
Value	What enterprise outcome is affected if this handshake fails?

Agree on the repair

Handshake being reviewed: _____
Sending owner: _____ Receiving owner: _____
Gap and supporting evidence: _____
Acceptance criteria and required date: _____
Decision authority and escalation trigger: _____
Corrective action and review date: _____

Use the findings

Confirm the agreement with both owners and the relevant sponsor. Update the dependency record, resource commitment, and readiness plan. Track whether acceptance occurs as agreed. A structured review can begin with one important boundary before expanding across the portfolio.

Discuss your execution priorities

For executive leadership and advisory conversations, visit https://kenrickfraser.com or contact kenrick@enterpriseexecution.com.

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