

Trust Is a Product Feature

Release Gates for the Governable Corporation

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The Argument in Brief

A complete overview from the book. Original pagination is retained. This sample includes the publication notice and the selected overview only.

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Publication Notice

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This book provides general management guidance, not legal, accounting, tax, employment, privacy, cybersecurity, investment, engineering, audit, or regulatory advice. Verify current duties, evidence, and local requirements for the system and jurisdiction at issue.

Public cases are cited. Scenarios are labeled by type and contain no private outcome claim.

All Leadership Principles are original author text. Historical quotations are used for perspective, not as evidence.

The Argument in Brief

The short version

Trust is not a tone of voice, a principles page, or a badge. It is a bounded management claim:

For this system, version, use, affected population, authority, and operating context, specified evidence supports specified reliance under specified constraints until a specified change or date.

That sentence is deliberately uncomfortable. It forces the organization to name what it wants others to rely on, which evidence supports the claim, which controls keep it true, who owns the decision, and when the decision expires.

The system is larger than the model. It includes prompts, data, retrieval, tools, identities, permissions, people, vendors, interfaces, downstream actions, and the operating environment. A strong model evaluated in isolation can still sit inside a weak system. A modest model inside a narrow, observable, reversible workflow can be easier to govern.

The four executive decisions

1. **Release:** Is this defined system and version acceptable for this use and population, under these conditions?
2. **Runtime:** What authority can it exercise, what must be observed, and what can interrupt or contain it?
3. **Accountability:** Who can approve, challenge, stop, remediate, and answer for the system?
4. **Claim:** What may the organization responsibly say to customers, directors, regulators, insurers, auditors, and partners?

Approval is not permanent. It expires after material change, serious incident, evidence decay, an elapsed review period, or a change in the intended use, population, data, provider, permissions, environment, or claim.

The proof pattern

For every material proposition, ask five questions:

- **The claim:** What do we want a person to rely on?
- **The evidence:** What observation, test, legal analysis, or control record supports that reliance?
- **The control:** What prevents, detects, constrains, or contains failure?
- **The owner:** Who has the authority and accountability to maintain or withdraw the claim?
- **The expiry:** What event or date invalidates the prior decision?

This pattern does not require certainty. It requires honesty about scope and uncertainty. A conditional approval with clear limits can be stronger than an unconditional green status built from weak evidence.

The twelve-section AI Trust Dossier

The book builds the Dossier in order:

System and release

1. AI System Boundary and Intended Use Record
2. Materiality, Consequence, Threat, and Misuse Model
3. Release Assurance Case and Decision
4. Runtime Authority and Telemetry Plan

Institution and dependencies

5. Human Oversight and Redress Design
6. Board Mandate and Risk Appetite
7. Three-Lines Accountability Map

8. Vendor and Dependency Evidence Schedule

Evidence, resilience, and claims

9. Contextual Evaluation Record

10. Assurance Scope and Claims Map

11. Incident, Rollback, and Resilience Plan

12. Defensible Claims and Customer Trust Pack

Sections 1 through 4 establish technical trust, while Sections 5 through 8 make the corporation governable. Evaluation and assurance occupy Sections 9 and 10. The final two sections prepare the organization to learn, recover, and say only what the evidence supports.

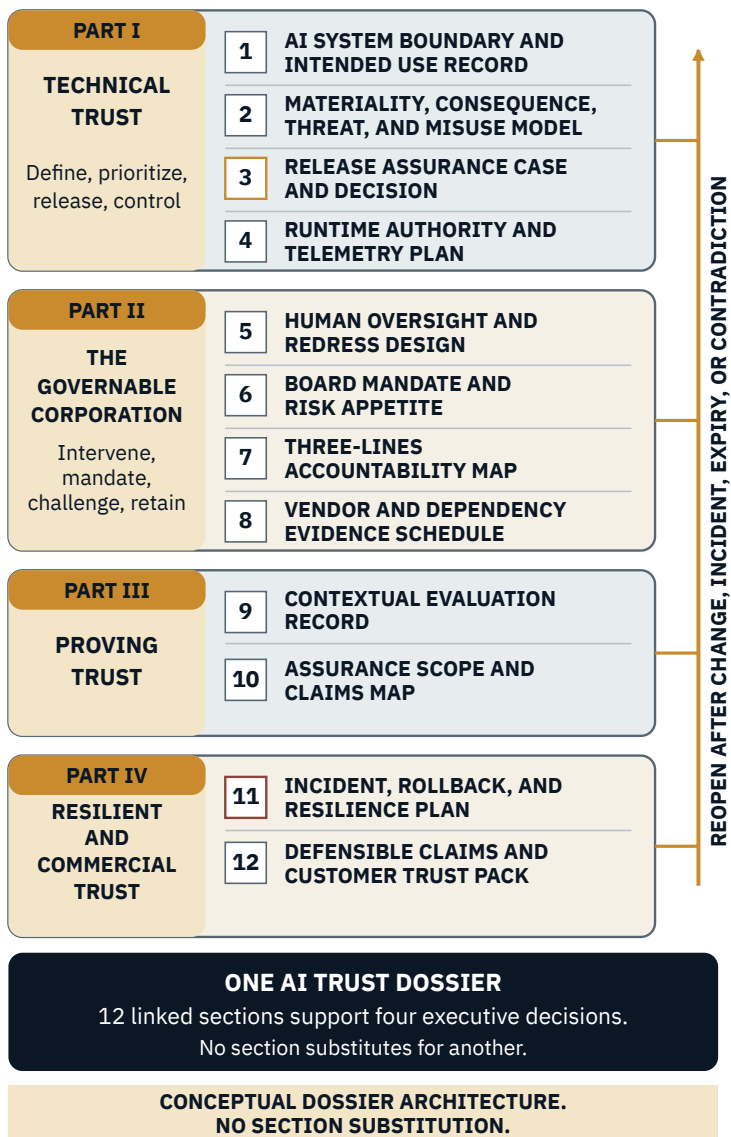


Figure B3.2. The Dossier connects system boundary, consequence, release, runtime, institutional authority, evaluation, assurance, resilience, and external claims. No section substitutes for another.

What this figure shows: The architecture stacks the twelve Dossier sections in three bands: Sections 1 to 4 hold the system, consequence, release, and runtime record; Sections 5 to 8 add intervention, board mandate, challenge, and dependency accountability; Sections 9 to 12 add evaluation, assurance, resilience, and the external claims pack. Read each section against its neighbours: the Section 3 release decision activates only when the later sections it depends on are current or validly restricted. That is what "no section substitutes for another" means in practice.

Your first 30 days

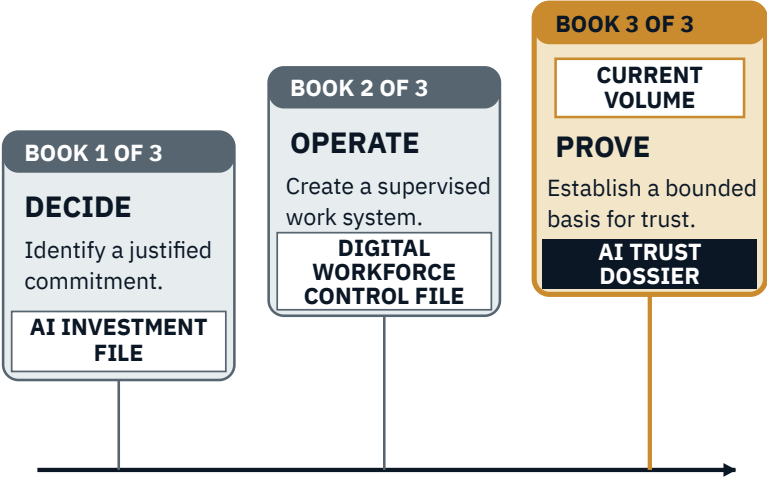
Start with one production or near-production system whose failure could cause a material consequence. Import or reconstruct its ten-field operating view without filling gaps by assumption. Bring together the owners of the business result, technology, operations, security, privacy, legal duties, and risk decisions that matter for this use.

Draw the deployed system and name the intended use, prohibited use, affected parties, and maximum credible consequence. Trace a representative set of failure and misuse paths, sized to the system's authority, operating variety, affected groups, and reversibility. Prioritize the paths where a feasible control can most change the consequence.

Convert the launch checklist into a claims-and-evidence release decision. Trace the highest-consequence action from request to effect, including identity, permission, limit, approval, telemetry, intervention, and rollback. Record missing artifacts, untested controls, unsupported claims, owner gaps, and policy requirements without enforcement points. Narrow or pause the use if management cannot explain who can stop it or how the consequential action is constrained. Give every effective decision an expiry date and material-change triggers.

By day 30, management should be able to answer: **What exactly are we trusting, why is that reliance justified now, and what will make us stop trusting it?**

Decide, Operate, Prove



CONCEPTUAL SERIES MAP. NO QUANTITATIVE SCALE.

Figure B3.1. Decide identifies a justified commitment. Operate creates a supervised work system. Prove establishes the bounded basis for release, reliance, assurance, and external claims.