

The Corporate Value Triad Explained

Who creates value who receives credit and how organizations decide

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Public brief | A proposed framework pending empirical validation

An organization can depend on someone's work without making that work easy to see. It can also reward a person whose most important contribution is connecting people, resolving a dependency, or securing a decision. The Corporate Value Triad asks how organizations distinguish the work, the credit, and the rewards that follow.

The framework uses three provisional archetypes. Builders create or sustain outcomes through domain work. Relationship Operators connect people, coordinate, negotiate, and influence decisions. Builder-Leaders combine domain judgment with the ability to mobilize collective effort. These descriptions can overlap and change with an assignment. They are not personality types or a ranking of human worth.

Relationships can create value

An engineer who prevents a failure, a coordinator who resolves a blocked dependency, and a negotiator who secures a workable agreement may all contribute to the same result. Technical work is not the only productive work. Research already connects social capital and careers [R01], and political skill is associated with performance as well as career outcomes [R04]. CVT's originality cannot rest on claiming that relationships matter.

Its proposed contribution is to examine the steps between an outcome and a career decision. Contribution concerns what a person helped produce. Visibility concerns whether relevant evidence reaches an evaluator. Attribution concerns who receives credit. Recognition makes some of that credit explicit. Reward concerns a later allocation such as pay, authority, or access to development. Influence can affect several of these steps and can also improve the work itself.

Three questions for a real workplace

First, what evidence shows the outcome and the actions that enabled it? Include maintenance, prevention, and coordination where relevant. A task count or a persuasive presentation is an incomplete answer.

Second, does the formal account describe those actions accurately? A project owner can deserve credit for direction while colleagues deserve credit for design and execution. Joint work does not require a single winner. Where evidence is uncertain, the record should say so.

Third, what is the later decision trying to accomplish? Recognizing excellent work and choosing a manager are different decisions. Someone can deserve acknowledgment without being the best candidate for a particular role. The criteria and available opportunities should make that distinction clear.

The proposed builders paradox

Sometimes an organization may repeatedly postpone a capable contributor's development because the current operation depends on them. CVT calls this the builder's paradox. It is a hypothesis about concentrated capability and transfer cost, not a finding that technical excellence usually harms careers. A useful response might combine protected development time with backup practice and actual work transfer. Whether that response works is a research question.

October 19 research extension

Three proposed ideas focus on recognition differences that could arise without deliberate credit taking. The Collective Attribution Paradox asks whether team-focused accounts leave individual work less visible in individual evaluations. The Attribution Dilution Effect asks whether acknowledgment of originating work fades as innovations spread. Contribution Signaling concerns how explicitly people communicate their own verifiable actions to evaluators. Collective credit and clear individual roles can coexist.

These are research questions, not established effects. The new assessment compares employee descriptions, manager accounts, and contribution histories without producing a score. The protocol adds five hypotheses with a crosswalk from the update's labels to the existing registry. A reported episode motivates the questions but establishes no recognition, promotion, or compensation disparity. Its identifying and internal details are excluded from the package.

What can be used now

The accompanying management audit helps teams reconstruct episodes, correct factual omissions, and examine opportunity criteria. The leadership kit supports voluntary practice with a clear workload agreement. These are experimental practices. They do not establish that an organization is fair or that a participant has become a builder-leader.

The diagnostic survey asks about reported experiences. It has no validated overall score, employee categories, benchmarks, or promotion cutoffs. It should not enter hiring, pay, promotion, or discipline. The research protocol explains how to test the framework with independent evidence, comparison conditions, and participant protections.

CVT should change if better measurement explains away an apparent recognition gap, if relational work accounts for the outcome, or if its proposed interventions fail. Version 0.1 is an invitation to examine a specific organizational problem with evidence. It is a conceptual proposal, not a scientific discovery already established by data.

References

[R01] Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2), 219-237. <https://doi.org/10.5465/3069452>

[R04] Munyon, T. P., Summers, J. K., Thompson, K. M., & Ferris, G. R. (2015). Political skill and work outcomes: A theoretical extension, meta-analytic investigation, and agenda for the future. *Personnel Psychology*, 68(1), 143-184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12066>