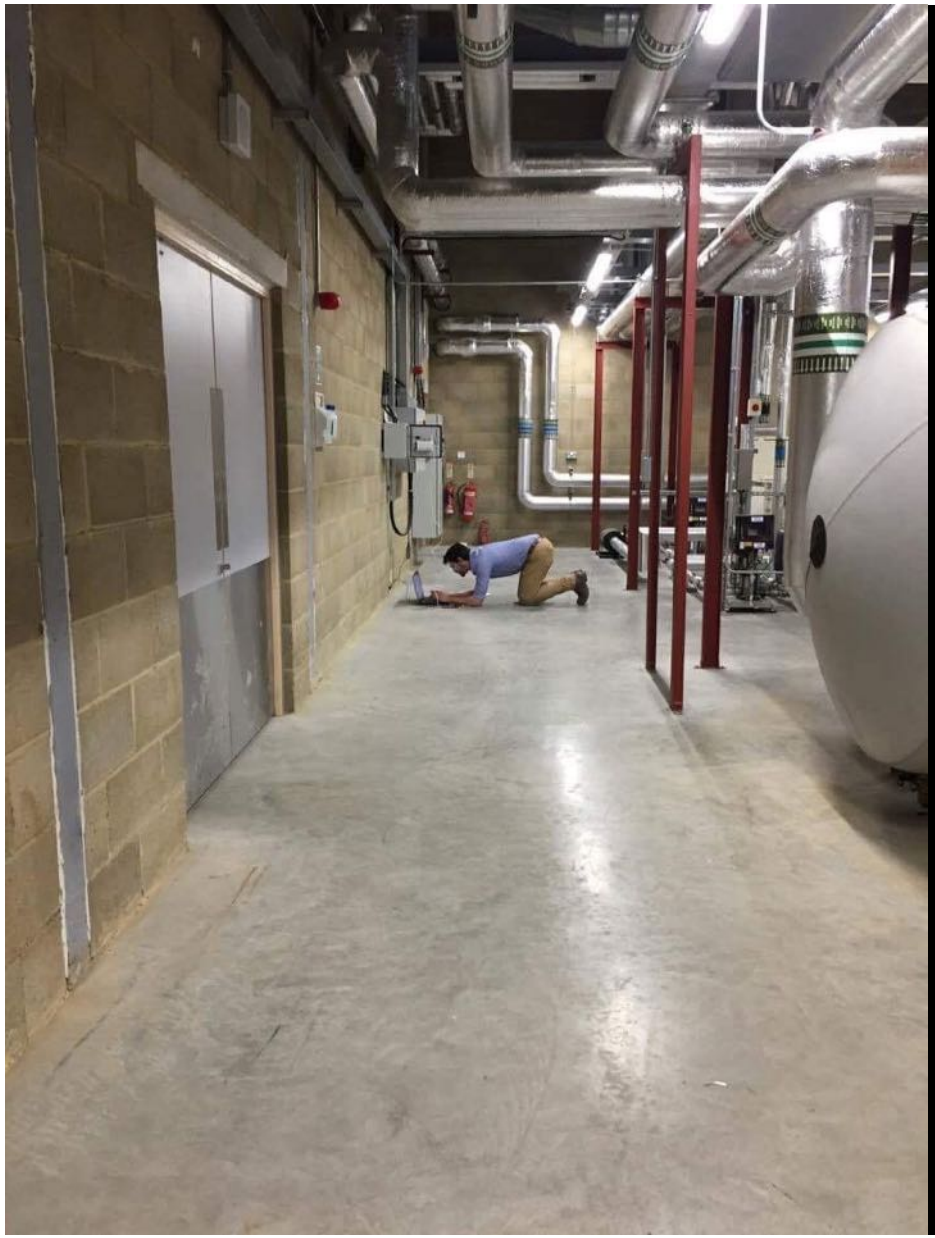
BURO HAPPOLD

Are we buying smart buildings right ?

The value tether between the boardroom and the plant room

Smart Buildings Show 2026 · Management & Proptech Theatre

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Brahm Lategan

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Systems & Solutions Capability and Service Line Lead, UK Advisory.

Building the practice clients turn to for independent technical judgement on smart places: cities, buildings, portfolios and built assets.

Impartial advice on what to buy, how to integrate it, and how to hold delivery to account — so digital ambition survives contact with reality.

The value we offer is trust.

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Value doesn’t get destroyed. It dies in translation.

BOARDROOM

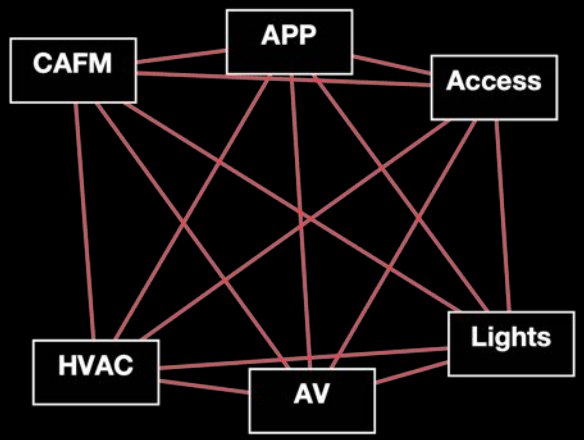
PLANT ROOM

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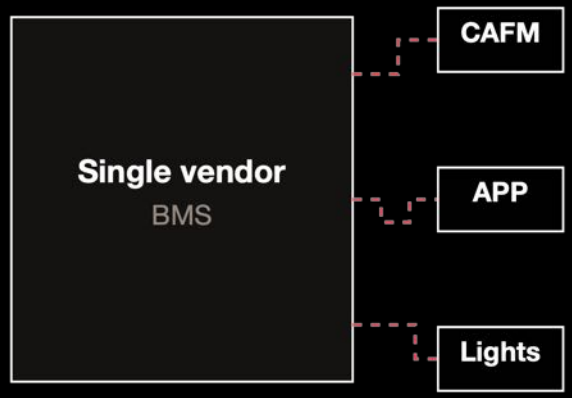
A SYSTEM OF SYSTEMS

The value is in the connections.



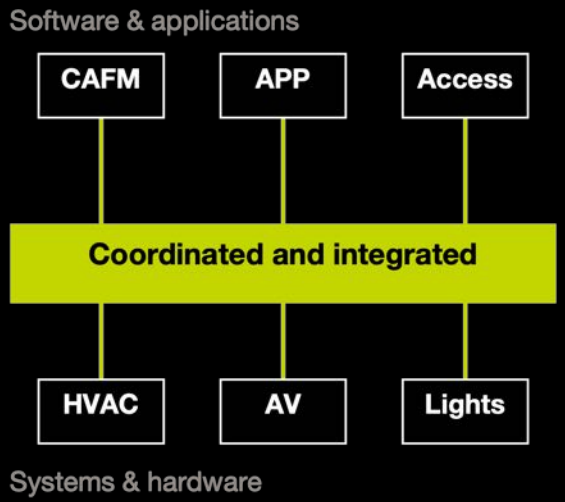
Point to point

Fragile, costly. Every system adds risk.



Single vendor

Governed, but locked in.



Integrated approach

Secure, resilient, scales cleanly. Value unlocked.

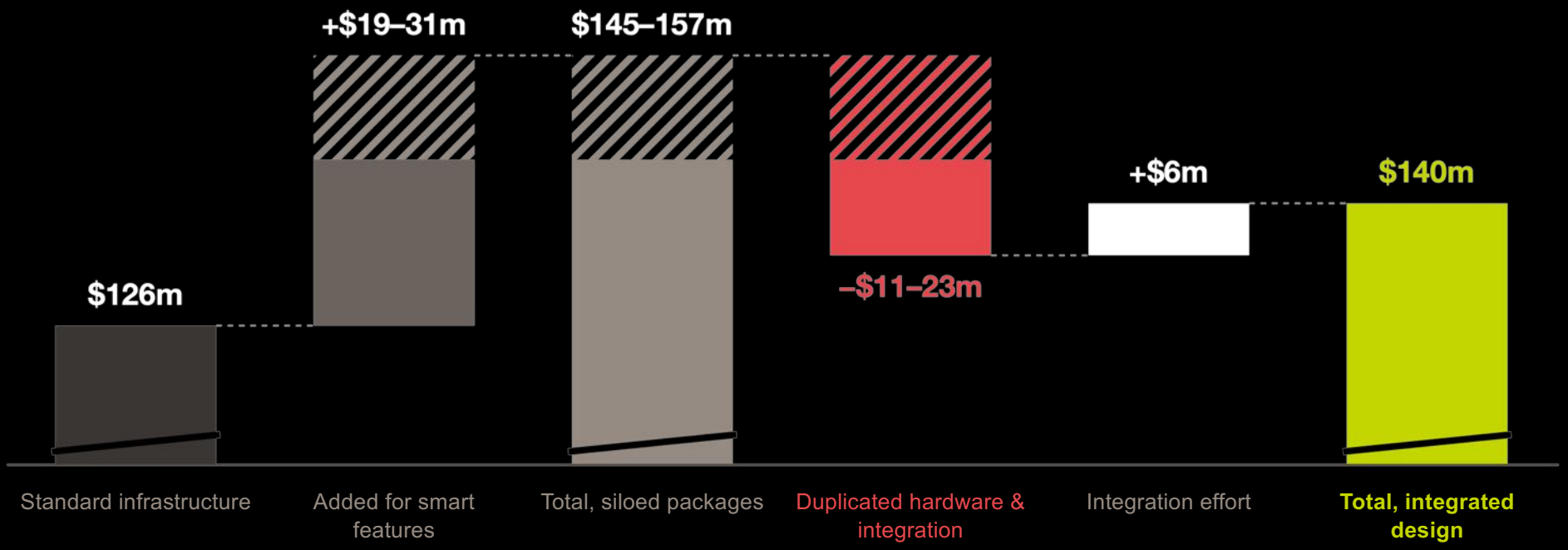
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WHAT CUTTING THE CONNECTIONS COSTS

$5–17m

CAPEX avoided. Same building. Same capability.

OPEX falls in operation too — total cost of ownership comes down.

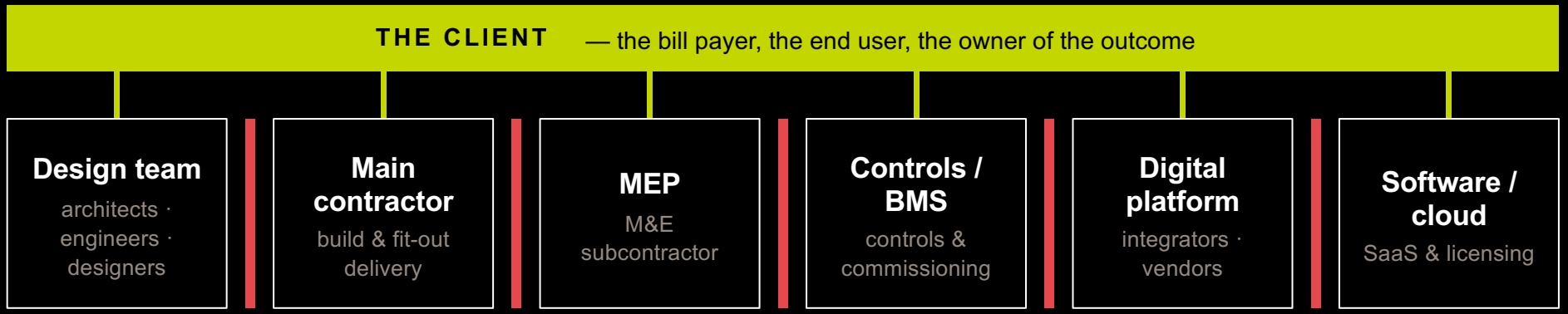


Rough order of magnitude · US$1.7bn mixed-use development

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Multiple contracts.
Nobody owns the whole.

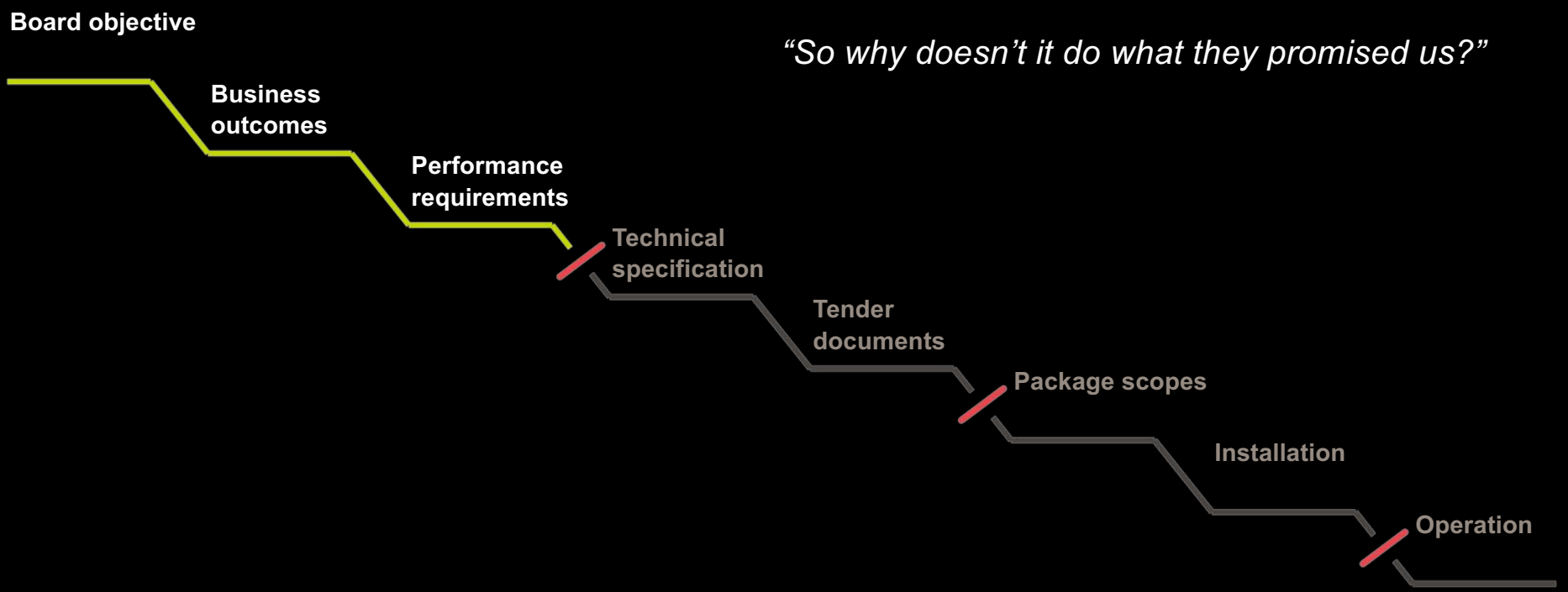


"Are standard form construction contracts fit for the 'Smart Infrastructure' of the future?" — Hogan Lovells, 2023

One licence. Several contracts. Nobody's line item.

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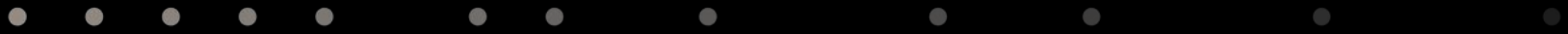
“So why doesn’t it do what they promised us?”

“…three or more levels down the food chain from the owner.” — Optergy, 2018

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BREADCRUMBS



Dropped along the way. Eaten on the way down.

THE TETHER

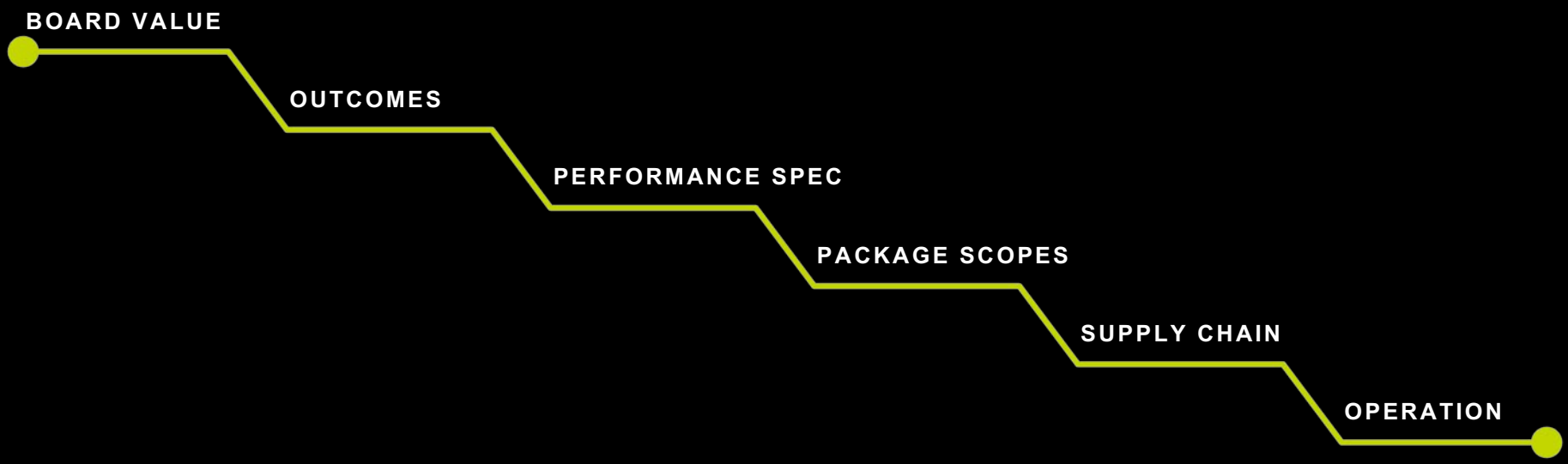


Tied at the entrance. Unbroken to the end.

Ariadne. Theseus. The labyrinth.

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The value tether



THE TEST

Can I trace the board’s outcome through this contract?

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Every document pays for outcomes.
Except one.

Lease	Loan	Valuation	Planning	Law	Contract
+3–6 pts occupancy for better-rated buildings	Performance priced into rates and LTV	10–20% brown discount	Operational targets in the City of London	EPC B minimum by 2031	Still pays for installation in construction

Source: JLL, 2026

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The contracts almost write themselves.

1

Name the outcome

If it is not a deliverable, it is a hope.

2

Own the integration

Accountability, with authority to match.

3

Specify performance

“Achieved” next to “installed”.

4

Pay against the tether

A slice of payment after handover.

No new contract forms. Proven inside design and build.

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Tie the tether at the entrance.

Outcomes tied to real value?

If you cannot articulate it, you cannot contract for it.

An operating model?

Not a product you buy. A capability you sustain.

Procurement that secures our data?

Suppliers change. Your data only appreciates.

This is where it starts: steps one and two of the tether — board value, then outcomes.

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Technology is not the answer. It is the enabler.

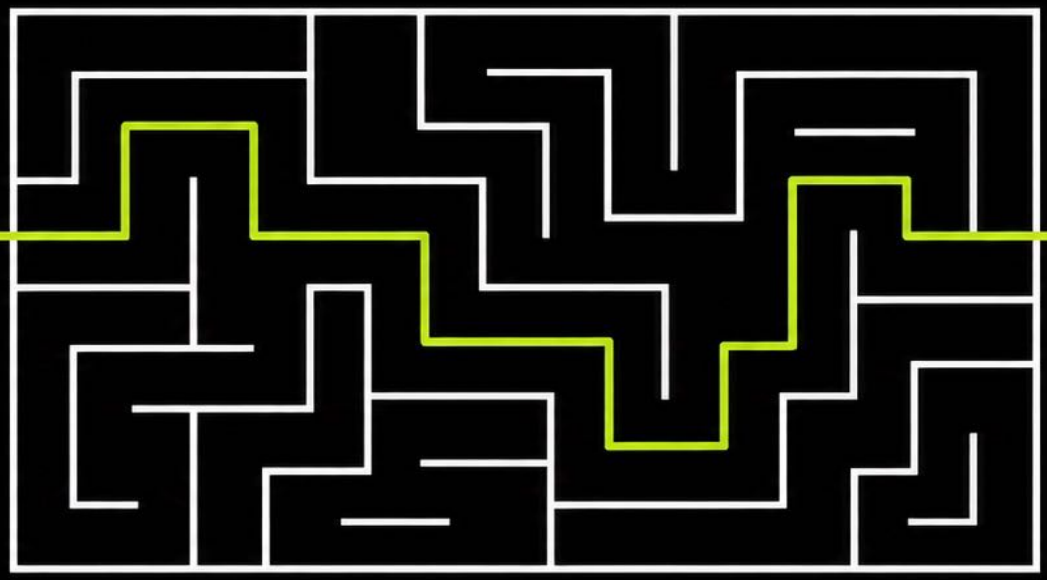
Confidence is lost not when the technology fails, but when the outcome was never considered as part of the whole.

And the whole is what smart buildings are measured against. How we buy must answer to it.

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Navigate the maze of procurement, and the right outcomes make it through.

The Wish



The Reality

We don’t need smarter buildings.

We need smarter ways of buying them.

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Thank you

Questions

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