

Don't Let Your TBM Program **BECOME** the Target

A YäRKEN + EW Consulting Perspective on Right-Sizing TBM Investments in a Cost-Takeout Climate

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Executive Summary

In today's environment of margin compression and top-down cost-takeout mandates, TBM programs are exposed to a paradox: they are built to drive savings, but if they are over-engineered or over-funded, they risk becoming the target of those very savings initiatives. The answer is not more tooling or more consulting, it is **right-sizing TBM** so that the cost to manage technology does not exceed the value it creates.

This article outlines a pragmatic approach to designing and operating a TBM program that is **fiscally responsible, value-focused, tooling-agnostic, and defensible to leadership.**

1) Overspending on Tooling Is the First Failure Mode

Many TBM programs fail before they ever deliver value because the majority of the budget is consumed by software licensing and foundational setup. Executives then see a large financial outlay with no realized savings, which makes TBM appear to be **a new cost center**, not a cost optimization function. Once cost pressure arrives, leadership does not cut what produces value, they cut what looks expensive and unproven. Oversizing the solution upfront puts the TBM team under a microscope and forces them to justify spend instead of proving results.

Right size principle: Tooling exists to *enable cost reduction*, not become the cost that needs to be reduced.

2) Buy What You Will Use *This Year*, Not What You Might Need in Year Three

The roadmap for TBM maturity is real, but you do not need to fund the entire journey on day one. Buying advanced capabilities years ahead of demand slows time-to-value and dilutes focus. Organizational pull, not framework compliance should dictate what is implemented next. Stakeholders must already be asking for (or will immediately use) a capability before it deserves budget and effort.

Right size principle: Prioritize “demand-backed capabilities” not “future-state capabilities.” Maturity is earned, not pre-purchased.

3) Avoid Consulting Burn That Consumes the Value You’re Chasing

TBM was not invented so organizations could redirect spend from cloud vendors to consulting vendors. When consulting firms staff large teams to “discover,” “interview,” “design,” and “realign” for months before anything is operational, the TBM program becomes a cost-to-operate initiative instead of a cost-takeout initiative. The value chain in TBM must bias toward *decision enablement*, not analysis for analysis’ sake.

Right size principle: Use consulting precisely for accelerators and gaps, not as a proxy workforce that eats the ROI you are meant to produce.

4) Be TBM-Ready *Before* You License a Tool

Much of the work that slows down a TBM implementation, sourcing cost data, normalizing datasets, defining allocation methods, agreeing on service catalogs is completely tool-agnostic. Organizations that wait to start this work until a tool is purchased end up spending subscription months on activities that don’t require software at all. That leads to “burning the clock,” delayed visibility, and impatience from sponsors.

Right size principle: Do foundational work before tool activation so that the first 90 days are value-producing, not data-reconciling.

5) Align Use Cases to Actual Demand and Stop Building Things That No One Uses

Maintaining a TBM model or report that is not actively used in business decision-making is pure waste if it consumes analyst time, data management cycles, and governance overhead. “Completeness” for its own sake is not value. If Finance, CIOs, or product owners are not using a view to make decisions or defend budgets, that artifact is not “underutilized”, it is noise.

Right size principle: If there is no stakeholder, decision, or value attached to an artifact, stop maintaining it until that changes.

6) The Principle That Protects TBM from Being Cut

When cost-takeout mandates hit, leaders do not cut functions that *pay for themselves*. The only way TBM remains safe is when its operating cost is low, its outcomes are visible, and its value is incontestable. A TBM program that is lean, producing savings, and visibly used by executives is politically uncuttable. A TBM program that is expensive, aspirational, and lightly consumed is an easy target.

Right size principle: A TBM program survives when it is visibly used and tied directly to realized savings and decisions.

Closing

In a cost-takeout environment, TBM cannot afford to be built as a luxury architecture or bought as a future-state aspiration. It must be sized to the present, operated with discipline, defended with outcomes, and expanded only when demand, data, and credibility support it.

Right-size the tool.

Right-size the consulting.

Right-size the scope.

Protect the TBM program by making it uncuttable.

About EW Consulting

EW Consulting specializes in pragmatic TBM execution ensuring organizations build governance, allocation logic, and decision-ready insights with discipline and efficiency. EW Consulting focuses on the work that creates savings and credibility, and the upstream preparation that shortens implementation timelines and protects the TBM office from becoming a cost line item under review.

About YäRKEN

YäRKEN provides a unified TBM + FinOps platform designed to deliver value quickly without the heavy operational burden of legacy multi-tool stacks. Yarken keeps the TBM operating cost low while accelerating measurable financial outcomes.

Contact Us

If your organization is evaluating options to launch, reset, or right-size a TBM program we'd welcome a conversation.

A short conversation now can prevent months of rework later and ensure your TBM program creates value instead of becoming the next cost-takeout target.