Dogma Trap

The Operator's Dictionary · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/dogma-trap/

Definition

The condition where an operator adopts borrowed certainty from external frameworks without testing relevance to their own operation. Results in an operation trying to be all things to all people, committed to no position.

Explanation

The trap works by substituting someone else's confidence for the operator's own tested judgment. A framework, a consultant's playbook, or an industry best-practice list arrives with built-in certainty -- it worked somewhere, for someone, and that success is offered as evidence it should work here too. The operator adopting it wholesale skips the step of testing whether the specific mechanism actually fits this operation, this market, this Guest base.

The failure mode this produces is strategic incoherence rather than any single bad decision. An operator absorbing multiple borrowed frameworks, each with its own confident prescription, ends up trying to satisfy all of them simultaneously -- which in practice means trying to be all things to all people, since no single borrowed framework was built with the others in mind. The result is an operation with no distinct position, because every position was borrowed rather than chosen.

This connects to the strategic-courage argument that strategy is deciding whose business you are going to turn away -- a decision [Dogma Trap] makes impossible, because turning away business requires a specific committed position, and a position built from borrowed, untested certainty from multiple sources cannot commit to anything specific without contradicting one of its own borrowed inputs.