

Expert guide to **value-based GRC**

From gatekeeper to growth partner

Insights provided by
GRC Strategy Director,
Paul Cadwallader



Introduction

Thinking outside the (tick) box

“The goal of risk management is to build a way of working in terms of capabilities and business partnership that drives responsible growth and will benefit the company for years to come.” – Marlene Debel, Chief Risk Officer and Head of MetLife Insurance Investment (McKinsey).



Often, though, that isn't the reality. In boardrooms, ops meetings and project reviews, GRC professionals feel out of touch with organizational priorities.

At the same time, they're struggling with:

- **Siloed teams** that only interpret risk in their own context
- **Error-prone manual processes** that consume time and effort
- **Tech stacks** riddled with overlap, gaps, fragmentation and hidden costs.

Too often, we hear GRC (governance, risk and compliance) viewed solely as a defensive function, a necessary but onerous tick-box exercise designed to protect against regulatory breaches or reputational harm. A barrier to business agility rather than a positive partner in growth.

At CoreStream GRC, we take a different view. Just as the nature of risk has changed, we see GRC changing, too. It's not just a shield against downside risk. **Today's GRC should be a positive force to help organizations drive growth, achieve their goals and sustain their business into the future.**

Welcome to value-based GRC

“With value-based GRC, your organization can achieve more and have greater competitive advantage.”

Paul Cadwallader, GRC Strategy Director,
CoreStream GRC

Watch the on-demand webinar conversation with Paul on value-based GRC, [here](#).

Value-based GRC: rethinking GRC's true purpose

Let's take a step back. What exactly is GRC?

OCEG defines GRC as the capability to reliably achieve objectives (governance), address uncertainty (risk management) and act with integrity (compliance). It views this as the enabler of Principled Performance.



The definition is central to GRC's role within an organization, but too often the pillars of governance, risk and compliance have been built in isolation from the organization's vision and performance.

Traditional GRC focuses on the mechanics of compliance and reporting, on avoiding fines, meeting regulatory obligations and satisfying auditors.

Introducing the value dimension brings GRC back to the performance goal of OCEG's original definition.

Value-based GRC is more than penalties avoided. It is more than the hours saved by ticking boxes more efficiently.

Value-based GRC aligns governance, risk and compliance with what matters most – the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

A value-based approach asks:

- How does GRC help us **achieve** our strategic goals?
- Are we **confident** we can achieve those goals without unexpected setbacks?
- What are the **obstacles**, i.e. the risks, that could prevent us achieving our goals?
- Can we identify, manage and mitigate those **risks** before they impact our performance?

By building a 360-degree architecture – almost a digital twin – of the organization, and by identifying, quantifying and mitigating potential risks, value-based GRC becomes a true competitive advantage for businesses, a secret weapon for strategy, providing confidence and assurance to the board and wider stakeholders.

As [GRC pundit and analyst](#), Michael Rasmussen states in his GRC Orchestrate series: *"The future of Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance (GRC) is not just digital: it is autonomous, intelligent, and orchestrated."*



"Value-based GRC empowers an organization to achieve the right objectives with confidence."

Paul Cadwallader

From policing to profit: building the business case for GRC

Value, for most organizations, means achieving the best possible outcome for the lowest possible cost. In healthcare, for example, that could mean improving patient health and experience while optimizing resource use and reducing waste.

In retail, it could mean enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty while optimizing inventory levels, streamlining supply chains and reducing operational costs.

In building a business case for value-based GRC, we need to consider 3 areas of value:

1. **Business outcomes**
2. **Transparency and accountability**
3. **Cost effectiveness**

GRC is not only about avoiding the downside. It should actively drive value. Value-based GRC enables you to unlock the upside and achieve what your organization truly wants.

Paul Cadwallader



Business outcomes

As Paul cautions, *“People tend to focus on the efficiency dimension but often that’s the least of the three. Saving maybe 40% from automating processes might be great, but there’s a much bigger impact when you design your GRC project around the outcomes the organization is aiming to achieve.”*

This is sometimes easier for younger, fast-growing organizations that have avoided the siloed approach and – with a wealth of available operational data – can more easily create their digital twin. For all, however, **the goal should be to eliminate GRC siloes and look holistically at strategic objectives.**

As Westpac’s CRO Ryan Zanin says, it’s about *“getting real clarity on what a risk function is supposed to do, compared to what it has historically done, and freeing up people to check, challenge, oversee, and manage policy as a true second line.”*



Linking risks and controls together and aligning them under strategic objectives enables better stewardship (a critical board function). Risk management then becomes an exercise in **identifying potential barriers or challenges and determining how to manage those risks.**

For example, if GRC can help meet an objective of, say, 20% revenue growth, and can identify and mitigate the risks of achieving only 10%, that is a powerful demonstration of GRC’s value to the business.

“GRC is not only about avoiding the downside. It should actively drive value. Value-based GRC enables you to unlock the upside and achieve what your organization truly wants.” – Paul Cadwallader

By managing risk and ensuring the organization continues to be viable, to succeed and flourish, **GRC becomes an essential, strategic asset.**



Transparency and accountability

Value-based GRC helps build stakeholder trust.

Shareholders, lenders, customers and regulators **all look to organizations for evidence of stability, competence and integrity**. A business with transparent decision-making and risk-management processes, that reliably meets its targets, builds a foundation of trust that delivers tangible benefits:

- Greater investor **assurance** and access to capital
- Enhanced reputation and customer **loyalty**
- Regulator **confidence** that can mitigate scrutiny and ease oversight burdens
- Improved share price **performance** for listed businesses.

"Value-based GRC is about enabling your investors to back you and help you move faster. Various stakeholders, including regulators, trust you because they know you'll do the right thing and act with integrity; they've seen it and believe in your capability.

Rather than hindering progress, these engaged parties actively support you, making processes and approvals significantly quicker. This has been a huge advantage for many organizations when we've helped them embed value at the center of their GRC program." – Paul Cadwallader

One CoreStream GRC client was able to **reduce the time needed for headcount approvals from 6 months to just 1 week, thanks to the data and transparency provided by the CoreStream GRC platform** that aligned with greater confidence in the team's decisions.

Cost effectiveness

Even if smaller in total than the potential GRC contribution to business outcomes, the operational efficiency benefits that come from moving beyond manual reporting, fragmented data systems and duplicative processes can be **more visible, more quickly.**

By breaking down organizational siloes and creating a 360-degree, interconnected architecture, value-based GRC **enables automation.** Processes become more time- and cost-efficient and provide a **faster route to improved business outcomes.**

With value-based GRC, GRC professionals are no longer just police or gatekeepers enforcing policy, but **growth and profit partners who ensure objectives are pursued with confidence, integrity and the foresight** to create a long-term, lasting impact.

This was Naba Banerjee's goal when he was Head of Trust and Safety at Airbnb: *"I definitely wanted Airbnb to be one of the most trusted brands out there. By the time I was done with that work, fraud and safety incident rates were down more than 50 percent."*



"Effective, interconnected GRC achieves the desired outcome as efficiently as possible, meaning we use our resources effectively and we minimize any unnecessary cost."

Paul Cadwallader, GRC Strategy Director,
CoreStream GRC

A blueprint for better: how to begin your value-based GRC journey

Moving from traditional GRC to a value-based approach might seem daunting, but it doesn't need to be an immediate, wholesale change. In fact, it's often better to **build support through 2 or 3 priority use-cases, first.**

#1 Start with a sketch

The first step is to **map out an architecture** for how value-based GRC could work in your organization. This doesn't need to be complex, a **brainstorm on a whiteboard** can do. With that, you can begin to **socialize the idea** within your organization, demonstrating where it can add

value. Your goal is to **paint a vision of how things will link together** and help leaders and decision-makers understand the potential.

It is important to think strategically, as Trevor Adams, former group CRO of Nedbank observes, *"It is about optimizing risk. And it's as much about maximizing the upside as it is about minimizing downside risks."*⁴



"Start the conversation. It can be as simple as a sketch on a whiteboard – but it unlocks hearts and minds"

Paul Cadwallader, GRC Strategy Director,
CoreStream GRC

One of the things that we've tried really hard to do is to be forward looking. Our strategy isn't a maintain strategy, it's a growth strategy.

Helga Houston, CRO of Huntington National Bank



#2 Pick 2 or 3 use cases

Piloting 2 or 3 use cases initially will give you the best chance of demonstrating success. Smaller scale initiatives can **yield tangible value quickly** and help win the trust and engagement of stakeholders. When executives begin to see GRC as an enabler of business objectives, **broader support will follow.**

Early focus areas might include:

- **Third-party risk management** – Segment and prioritize vendors based on criticality and risk. Select those with greatest impact (direct or indirect) upon your strategic objectives and ensure they are aligned with the organization's strategy.
- **Policy management** – Review your policies and procedures. Are they linked to the continued viability of the business? Do they support the achievement of your strategic objectives? Can users find the answers to what they need quickly? If not, consider their purpose and value. Integrate policy management with your HR system to ensure that, as people are hired or promoted, they have immediate access to the information they need, ensuring effective communication, transparency and the best employee experience.
- **Incident management** – An incident is the crystallization of a risk. If an incident can affect achievement of a strategic objective, or the ongoing viability of the business, it should have a different management approach to other incidents. Ensure a proactive incident-management process that maps severity to the impact on principal risks and business outcomes. This will ensure teams stay ahead of the headlines and help to forecast trends so you know what's coming and can mitigate effectively.

The use-cases you select should be those with the biggest impact on achievement of strategic objectives or the ongoing viability of your organization. This has to be balanced with speed and complexity to successfully deliver your initial pilots.

"One of the things that we've tried really hard to do is to be forward looking. Our strategy isn't a maintain strategy, it's a growth strategy," says Helga Houston, CRO of Huntington National Bank.



With several pilots running concurrently, you can also show the interconnectedness of a value-based approach, where everything ties back to the organization's strategic pillars.



#3 Decide on metrics

Ultimately, your goal should be to **articulate** how value-based GRC helps an organization achieve business outcomes confidently, and with integrity. But, it can take time to demonstrate measurable value, so ensure you develop a **blend of qualitative and quantitative metrics** to show the impact of your pilots:

Qualitative measures such as board confidence, stakeholder trust and cultural alignment. Articulating risk reduction, and getting ahead of events before they happen. These demonstrate a true risk culture, where employees across departments are actively thinking about risk, and the organization is capturing and managing this accordingly.

Quantitative measures like demonstrable cost avoidance through early risk detection and mitigation; reduced time-to-insight, and faster board or regulatory reporting. These metrics must reflect the interconnected nature of value-based GRC. Siloed efficiency metrics do not reflect the value that comes from a truly value-based approach to GRC.

Cross-organizational efficiency metrics can present early indicators of success but, as noted above, this is not where the larger benefit will ultimately be seen.

A **blended approach** of qualitative and quantitative measures will ensure that the benefits of value-based GRC are visible in both operational improvements and strategic outcomes. Also, it's worth noting that with risk-led decision making and true, value-based GRC, some of those benefits/outcomes might not be seen for years. You have to **be patient and focus on the long-term**, rather than traditional GRC, which is obsessed with vanity metrics to justify ROI.

"These forms of measurement/reporting shouldn't be seen as adding bureaucracy. They should help to add value. If they are seen as adding to bureaucracy, you've made the process too complex!" – Paul Cadwallader

To help avoid the complexity, we're offering a one-hour, bespoke, lunch-and-learn session with Paul and your enterprise risk and compliance teams.* During the session, Paul will provide actionable tips, candid feedback and a clear roadmap to value-based success for your GRC processes.

**Note, teams must include 3 senior stakeholders, either C-Suite or the level below, and the team must complete a comprehensive questionnaire to ensure Paul is prepared for the session.*

Book a workshop

A one-hour, bespoke, lunch-and-learn session with Paul and your enterprise risk and compliance teams.

[Book your workshop here](#)

Choosing your GRC technology partner

Choosing the right GRC technology is critical. **50% of businesses are unsatisfied with their current GRC tools**⁶(Risk.net) and, as you transition towards value-based GRC, you will need a tool-set that will support your ambitions.

What to look for in your next GRC tool

Here are key questions to ask as you evaluate alternative technologies:

- **Can it connect the various components of your GRC architecture?** – Will it support you in building a digital twin of your operations? Many solutions only offer predefined connections or a limited number of supported areas.
- **Will it work for your operating model?** – You can't compromise your operations to meet the needs of the GRC tool. Will the technology work for your people, your balance of centralized vs. decentralized?
- **How will the solution integrate with your existing technology stack?**
- **Are there hidden costs for additional users or customizations?**

"My advice for my peers looking for a new tool: we developed a requirement document, and the [vendor] companies had some time to provide written responses before we selected them for a demo."

Head of Risk, at [Pool Re](#), Helio Correa



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Head of Risk, at Pool Re, Helio Correa



Articulate your requirements

Before you begin, **be clear about what you need**. This should be more than a list of features and functions. Those are great, but you need to think deeper. What are the **processes** you need to digitize? How do those work within your **operating model**? Essentially, what should be **enabled** by your chosen solution?

The other side of that is to ensure you undertake the **necessary discovery** and explore a variety of solutions that might meet your needs. What are their **capabilities and flexibility**?

UI/UX was a key requirement for NHS NUH Trust, for example, as Andrew Tait (who, as Data Protection & Security Support Specialist, handled SARs daily) explains:

“Our previous system had challenges in relation to its user interface and being user friendly. We were looking for a solution with a more intuitive and streamlined interface.”



Nottingham University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Challenge your vendor

Look at the responses from your potential vendor. Are they **flexible**? Can their tool fit your model and give you the **360-degree GRC architecture you need, now and in the future**?

Challenge your vendor to prove it. You can't ask them to build your final GRC solution as an investment, but equally don't settle for a stock demo. Ask them to prove key elements of your interconnected GRC architecture.

The risks in using the wrong GRC tool

21% additional cost when using multiple tools due to overlap

73% or organizations need developer resources to update their GRC tools

CoreStream GRC: the last GRC platform you'll ever buy

CoreStream GRC **empowers** risk and compliance teams, and the businesses they support, to achieve true value-based GRC.

We created the CoreStream GRC platform to be a **flexible, no-code solution** that empowers organizations to **design their perfect GRC system**.

Using pre-built, customizable features, it's as intuitive and versatile as building with Lego bricks – the solutions are **limitless**.

Simply tell us what you need and we'll **deliver it, quickly** and without unnecessary complexity.

Trusted by leading organizations and global brands like BBC, PwC Middle East, NHS, Fortune 500 and Shell Energy, we aim to consistently **deliver real, measurable value** for all your risk and compliance management needs. Now and into the **future**. In fact, with a **102% client retention rate**, we're confident that we'll be the last GRC tool you'll ever buy.

"CoreStream GRC provided an adaptable and reliable solution that transformed our processes and reduced costs. They are a trusted partner for all technology initiatives."

— [Simon Rose, Operations Manager, Interactive Compliance, BBC](#)



[Book your demo here](#)

"Going from a manual process to CoreStream GRC, took it from 0 to 100 – truly game changing. We're more accurate, complete and thorough with access to data exactly as we need it"

[PwC Middle East](#)



Lead the change you need

The nature of risk is changing. At the same time, organizations everywhere face challenges to their bottom line. Traditional approaches to GRC – focused on compliance and avoidance – can't keep pace.

Value-based GRC is more than a methodology. It's an **evolution** from gatekeeper to growth partner. It is positioning GRC as a **driver of strategic advantage, stakeholder trust and sustainable success**.

For GRC professionals, this is an **enormous opportunity**, but also a challenge. GRC teams that seize the opportunity and lead the transformation will **redefine their roles from administrators of compliance to architects of value**.

The journey can start with a simple map, a few test cases and the right technology partner. At CoreStream GRC, we aim to be the preferred and trusted GRC partner for enterprises worldwide by delivering intuitive, flexible solutions that drive efficiency and value, their way.

[Book a workshop](#)

How can we help you on your journey to value-based GRC?

Book a complimentary workshop with your team and Paul, or schedule a demo today to find out.

"We found the workshop incredibly useful. Paul clearly has a great wealth of knowledge and I really appreciated the time taken to offer us an in-depth workshop tailored specifically to our needs. The style, pace and content were exactly what we needed and the discussion has helped clarify our thoughts and direction on Risk, Controls and Audit. I look forward to working together more in the future."

(One of the largest employee owned companies in the world)



About Paul Cadwallader

When Paul's not just helping clients succeed, he's challenging them to rethink what's possible in governance, risk, and compliance. With over 25 years of experience in the GRC space and a background as a former Deloitte Partner, Paul has a knack for transforming complex requirements into powerful solutions that drive real business impact.

Follow Paul on 



About CoreStream GRC

The intuitive, flexible GRC platform that delivers efficiency and value – your way.

Driven by the belief that technology should be an enabler—not a barrier—we created the CoreStream GRC platform: a flexible, no-code solution that empowers organizations to design their perfect GRC system with our expert team. You tell us what you need, and we deliver it—quickly and without unnecessary complexity. Using pre-built, customizable features, it's as intuitive and versatile as building with Lego bricks – the solutions are limitless.

With seamless scalability, an intuitive interface, and rapid implementation, CoreStream GRC turns GRC from an administrative burden into a powerful enabler for your business. Trusted by leading organizations like the BBC, Deloitte, NHS, PwC Middle East and Shell Energy, CoreStream GRC consistently delivers real, measurable value for all your risk, and compliance management needs.

[Learn more](#)