

Making business numbers *safe to use.*

How one number travels from source system to decision: where its meaning is decided, who decides it, and where the Data Tax gets paid when nobody does.

01 The stack

Ready for the Gate

Engineering can make a number correct. It can't decide what the number means.

— That's why the gate sits on top

YOUR EXISTING STACK • UNCHANGED

Nothing you already run moves; the gate sits on top of it. YAIG Ch 3

WAREHOUSE

Sources
apps, ledgers

Raw
as loaded

Staging
cleaned, typed

Intermediate
joined, grain kept

Marts
facts, dims

CAUSE 3

Declared grain
fan-out and duplicate-key tests

Reconciled to the ledger
totals agree with finance

CI on definitions
every change reviewed and tested

CORRECT IS NOT THE SAME AS AGREED.

02 The gate

Your AI Is Guessing

When owners disagree
it goes to the executives who own the P&L; the head of data convenes and does not vote

Owners decide what each rule means
finance and commercial decide; operations explains statuses

THE FIX • EVERY FIGURE PASSES THROUGH

Semantic Layer Gate

An owner, a record and a test for every figure

Access checked first Ch 6
before anything is calculated

Owned definition Ch 2-3
one name, one meaning, decided by its owner

Cutoff fixed Ch 5
what was known when

Judgement recorded
an adjustment becomes a rule, with an owner

Versioned Ch 8
two versions, one label; retired, not removed

Returns the figure with its basis Ch 4
or a designed "can't answer"

Context explains; definitions compute Ch 6
owned, dated documents and an event log explain a figure, never produce one

A wrapper skips the gate and writes its own formula on the warehouse tables

03 The decision

Your Numbers Don't Match

WITH THE GATE
every tool calls one definition

Dashboards
reports, self-serve

Finance packs
month-end and board

AI assistants Ch 7, 9
ask the layer; claim only what it supports

Decide once
on a number everyone agrees on; any difference agreed and explained

Value realised
faster decisions, less meeting drag, AI that answers from agreed numbers

The business changes: the owner decides, a new version is recorded, tested and released YAIG Ch 8

WITHOUT IT
every tool carries its own rule

Wrapper or local calc
its own formula, no owner: fluent, sure and wrong Ch 1

Numbers don't match
dashboards, packs, spreadsheets and assistants disagree

Data Tax
checking, reconciling, rebuilding; AI scales the confusion

WHY YOUR NUMBERS DON'T MATCH • FIVE CAUSES. THE ORANGE "CAUSE" TAGS ABOVE SHOW WHERE EACH ONE IS FIXED.

Definition gap

CAUSE 1

One label, different meanings: one owned definition for each name.

Fixed at the gate

Timing gap

CAUSE 2

Refreshes, late refunds, time zones: one cutoff for what was known when.

Fixed at the gate

Grain problem

CAUSE 3

Joins at mismatched levels inflate totals: a declared grain and fan-out tests.

Fixed in the stack

Manual adjustment

CAUSE 4

Judgement living in a spreadsheet: recorded as a rule, with an owner.

Fixed at the gate

Ownership drift

CAUSE 5

Metrics outlive the people who built them: a named owner, and versions.

Fixed at the gate

THE JOB THAT IS YOURS Owners decide what a rule means. The head of data makes sure each one is decided, recorded, tested and kept current. Engineers build the pipeline that enforces it.

gavinsomers.com

Your AI Is Guessing

The gate. For heads of data: an owner, a record and a test for every figure.

Your Numbers Don't Match

The cost. For leadership teams: Reporting Trust and the Data Tax.

Ready for the Gate

The build. Free guide for analytics engineers: the practices a semantic layer depends on.

— WITH THE GATE - - - WITHOUT IT COLOUR = SOURCE

CAUSE 1 one of five causes of mismatched numbers (listed below), shown where it's fixed