ROSEMOUNTS INSTITUTE
WELL-BEING › SKILLS › CAREERS

A ROSEMOUNTS INSTITUTE WHITE PAPER

The Science Behind the VIP+™ Career Pathway Program

How the evidence discovered the Rosemounts model — and what every Career Pathway Report is allowed to promise.

A student sits across a table and is told something about themselves. This paper answers one question: on what does that sentence stand?

Version 2.0 · August 2026
Written from the frozen Rosemounts research corpus: Working Papers 1–6, the Theory v1.0, and the Master Predictor Database v1.1

MEMBER

APCDA Asia Pacific Career Development Association

IAEVG International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

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THE METHOD BEHIND EVERY NUMBER IN THIS PAPER

Approximately **700 falsifiable claims** were extracted from the primary peer-reviewed literature and put through a **three-vote adversarial verification protocol** — every claim reviewed by three independent verifiers instructed to *refute* it against the original published tables — across **six deep-research passes and three targeted extraction sweeps**, 11–12 July 2026. The surviving evidence is held in a **69-row Master Predictor Database**, each row carrying its effect size, sample size where the source reports one, recorded criticism, and verification vote.

Where a figure appears here, it was checked against the published article, not a summary of it. Where a number could not be checked against a primary source, it is labelled so — permanently. Where the evidence deflates a popular idea, the deflation is recorded, not hidden.

How to read the labels

Three labels appear throughout this paper and on every Rosemounts product. They are not decoration. They govern what may be said.

LABEL	WHAT IT MEANS
VERIFIED	Meta-analytic or randomised-trial evidence, checked against primary sources. **Quote the number.**
PROMISING	The mechanism is verified, but the intervention evidence is quasi-experimental, small, or unverified in our passes. **Say the word "promising". Build with humility, measure everything.**
FRONTIER	Nobody has the evidence yet. **Admit it.** Rosemounts' own longitudinal data becomes the study.

01

WHY THIS PAPER EXISTS

The model was not designed. It was discovered.

Nobody buys a theory. They buy outcomes — and they are right to ask what those outcomes rest on.

Most career-guidance organisations build a framework and then go looking for evidence that flatters it. In July 2026 Rosemounts ran the process in the opposite direction, under one rule:

> **No framework enters the model — or any product claim — unless it earns its place through verified evidence.**

The ten steps ran in a deliberate order: define success, catalogue every predictor ever proposed, evaluate the evidence for each, discover the mechanisms, organise the survivors into a taxonomy, study the interactions, map the system, audit our own measurements, test what can actually be taught — *and only then, last, never first, write the theory.*

That rule has teeth, and the proof is what it destroyed. It demoted grit as a distinct trait. It reduced the 10,000-hour rule to a caution. It deflated growth mindset as a universal lever. It collapsed the protean and boundaryless career constructs into one thing that already had a name. And when a reviewer proposed an entire additional layer for the theory — a layer that intuition liked and that would have been commercially convenient — it **refused the layer on the evidence**, and recorded the refusal in the theory document itself.

Two rival AI systems produced independent versions of the same research and then reviewed ours. Their convergence on the same skeleton strengthened the work. Their errors were caught by the verification passes. The strongest challenge either of them raised was put through a dedicated adversarial pass and refused — which is the moment the programme proved it was science rather than enthusiasm.

> **WHAT THIS PAPER IS FOR**
>
> A school leader deciding whether to bring a career programme onto campus is entitled to know whether its claims are load-bearing. This paper is the answer, written to be checked. Every figure carries its source, and where possible its sample size, so that a sceptical reader can go to the original paper and disagree with us.

02

FIRST, A DEFINITION

What "career success" actually is

You cannot promise an outcome you have not defined. The field defines it on three planes — and two of them barely speak to each other.

Two ledgers that barely correlate

The intuition that a well-paid career and a satisfying career are broadly the same thing is the single most expensive assumption in career guidance. The field's foundational meta-analysis — Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman (2005), 140 studies, 33 predictors — finds that **salary correlates with career**

satisfaction at only ρ = .30 (k = 23, N = 10,903), and **promotions with satisfaction at ρ = .22** (k = 12, N = 8,701). VERIFIED

That is a shared variance of roughly **3–9%**. Objective attainment and subjective evaluation are, empirically, two different ledgers.

The consequence is sharp: *any report, programme or promise that speaks of "success" without naming which ledger it means is unfalsifiable.* It cannot be wrong, because it never said what it was claiming.

The subjective ledger is not one thing either

Most research measures subjective success as "career satisfaction" and stops. Shockley et al. (2016) built the Subjective Career Success Inventory: **24 items across eight validated dimensions** — authenticity, growth and development, influence, meaningful work, personal life, quality work, recognition, and satisfaction. The inventory correlates **.14–.23 with salary** but **.63–.74 with career satisfaction**. Their verdict on satisfaction as a proxy for the whole concept: it is an important component, *"but alone, it is a deficient measure of the concept."* VERIFIED

This matters for honesty about our own evidence base: what predicts *meaningful work* may not be what predicts *recognition*, and facet-level meta-analysis does not yet exist. When we quote a predictor of "career satisfaction," that is what we mean — not the whole subjective ledger.

Weighted by culture, not fixed by it

The 5C consortium (Briscoe et al., 2021) surveyed **18,471 respondents across 30 countries** on seven dimensions of career success, each rated twice — once for importance, once for achievement. The *structure* held across cultures. But **every dimension showed statistically significant between-country differences in importance**. VERIFIED

The structure of success can be universal while its weighting is personal and cultural. This is the empirical warrant for asking an Indian student what they actually want, rather than importing a Western ranking and calling it objective.

A third plane: sustainability

Van der Heijden & De Vos (2015) and De Vos et al. (2020) add a plane the other two miss — whether a career can be *continued*. It is evaluated through exactly three indicators, each a dynamic person–career fit:

- **Health** — fit with one's mental and physical capacities
- **Happiness** — fit with one's values, career goals and needs
- **Productivity** — fit with the organisation's human-capital needs

A programme that optimises the objective ledger while quietly draining this floor produces failures that arrive years later, long after anyone is measuring. This is the evidential root of **Well-being › Skills › Careers™** — not a philosophy imported into the research, but a plane the research insisted on.

AN HONEST HEDGE ON OUR OWN DEFINITION

Each element of the Rosemounts three-plane definition rests on unanimously verified primary sources. **The composite is our construction** and should be treated as a hypothesis to be stress-tested, not settled doctrine. In particular, the sustainability triad is a conceptual framework, not yet a meta-analytically validated outcome taxonomy — an opportunity for Rosemounts data to contribute to, not a settled fact to inherit.

03

THE PREDICTORS

Two ledgers, two engines

Because the ledgers are distinct, the things that drive them are distinct too. Almost nothing that predicts one predicts the other.

The salary engine

All rows below from Ng et al. (2005), verified unanimously (3–0).

PREDICTOR	P	K	N	RECORDED CRITICISM
Education level	.29	45	45,293	Signalling vs skill content debated; range restriction by occupation
Political knowledge & skills	.29	—	—	Self-reported; construct boundaries fuzzy. *Ties education as top salary predictor — and is rarely taught explicitly anywhere*
Work experience	.27	27	10,841	Confounded with age and tenure
Cognitive ability	.27	8	9,560	Small k in this meta-analysis
Age	.26	52	40,197	Proxy for experience; near-zero for satisfaction
Hours worked	.24	22	15,428	Reverse causality plausible
Training opportunities	.24	—	—	Access partly determined by prior performance
Career sponsorship	.22	—	—	Who gets sponsored is not random
Extraversion	.10	—	—	—
Conscientiousness	.07	—	—	All Big Five $\|\rho\| \leq .12$ for salary
Openness	.04	—	—	—

PREDICTOR	P	K	N	RECORDED CRITICISM
Agreeableness	**−.10**	—	—	Agreeable people negotiate less, or enter lower-paid fields
Neuroticism	**−.12**	—	—	—

Objective career success — correlations with salary. ρ = sample-size-weighted, reliability-corrected correlation.

The satisfaction engine

PREDICTOR	P	K	N	RECORDED CRITICISM
Internal locus of control	**.47**	3	668	**k = 3 — unstable; flag until replicated.** Salary link only .06
Supervisor support	**.46**	6	1,653	Contextual, not portable across jobs. Salary link only .05
Career sponsorship	**.44**	18	6,255	Twice its own salary effect (.22)
Training opportunities	**.38**	—	—	—
Proactivity	**.38**	3	1,072	**k = 3 — unstable.** Prefer Fuller & Marler (.31, k = 32)
Neuroticism	**−.36**	6	10,566	Emotional stability is the Big Five's main satisfaction lever
Career planning	**.33**	7	2,367	Causality debatable — satisfied people may plan more
Gender	**.01**	—	—	Not significant
Age	**.00**	—	—	Not significant

Subjective career success — correlations with career satisfaction. Note the k column carefully: two of the largest figures rest on three studies.

Read the two tables side by side and the structure of the field appears. **Human capital and demographics drive the objective ledger. Sponsorship, support and disposition drive the subjective one.** Sponsorship pays .44 on satisfaction and .22 on salary. Internal locus of control pays .47 on satisfaction and roughly .06 on salary. These are not the same machine running at different speeds. They are different machines.

WHERE WE CORRECT THE RECORD ON OURSELVES

The two strongest satisfaction figures in Ng's table — locus of control at .47 and proactivity at .38 — each rest on **three studies**. Larger and more stable estimates exist and we prefer them: Judge & Bono (2001) put internal locus of control → job satisfaction at **.32 across k = 80, N = 18,491**; Fuller & Marler (2009) put proactive personality → career satisfaction at **.31 across k = 32, N = 9,592**. Where this paper needs a dispositional number, it uses the larger one.

Has this held up?

Heslin, Mayrhofer et al. (2019) revisited the picture. Their findings are **directional only** — the numeric tables were never published, confirmed through July 2026 — and we label them accordingly. Three directions were verified: sponsorship and dispositions still beat human capital for subjective success; sociodemographics have become *less* influential on income since 2005; and human capital's advantage for objective success has diminished further.

DIRECTIONAL ONLY — NUMERIC TABLES NEVER PUBLISHED

04

THE MECHANISMS

Traits never act directly. Everything runs through behaviour.

This is the most consequential finding in the corpus, and the reason a school programme is possible at all.

Knowing that conscientiousness correlates with performance tells you nothing about what to do on Monday morning. So the research went looking for the formally tested causal chains — path analyses, longitudinal structural equation models, meta-analytic SEM — and asked what actually carries the effect.

Every tested causal chain shows partial mediation. Nothing in the verified literature supports a direct, unmediated trait → success arrow.

WORKING PAPER 2, MECHANISM MAP V1.0

TRAIT OR ORIGIN	CARRIED BY	KEY COEFFICIENTS	STUDY
Proactive personality	Innovation, political knowledge, career initiative	Three of four tested mediators carried the effect; **voice did not, and related negatively to progression**	Seibert, Kraimer & Crant (2001) — 2-year longitudinal SEM, N = 180
Proactivity → salary	Organisational citizenship, far more than task performance	Indirect β = **.084** via citizenship vs **.004** via task performance	Zhang et al. (2022) — meta-analytic SEM, N = 101,131
Cognitive ability	Job knowledge	Ability → knowledge **.61–.80**; knowledge → performance **.55–.80**; retained direct path .19–.31	Hunter (1983/1986) — 14 studies, N = 3,264
Conscientiousness	Autonomous goal setting and goal commitment	→ goal setting β = **.44**, commitment β = .35 → sales β = .21, ratings β = .33. Direct and indirect paths equal (.23 / .23)	Barrick, Mount & Strauss (1993), N = 91; corroborated at latent level by Zakharin & Bates (2023), pre-registered, N = 517: conscientiousness–goal-setting association **= .89**
Social capital	Higher-level contacts → information, resources, sponsorship	Weak ties & structural holes → contacts **.44 / .31**; sponsorship → satisfaction .32, promotions .17, salary .12	Seibert, Kraimer & Liden (2001) — SEM, N = 448
Emotional intelligence	Affect regulation	**Full mediation — the only one in the entire map.** Self-report EI → satisfaction via positive affect (indirect .15) and reduced negative affect (.08)	Miao, Humphrey & Qian (2017) — meta-analytic SEM
Job crafting	Work engagement	Resources → engagement β = .45–.65, but **engagement → performance indirect = .01**. Promotion-focused crafting → engagement **.39**; prevention-focused **null to negative** (−.08 engagement, .24 burnout)	Tims, Bakker & Derks (two 3-wave studies, N = 288); direction figures from Lichtenthaler & Fischbach (2019)

The verified mediation chains. Every one was checked against the primary study.

Two findings inside that table deserve to be pulled out, because they change what a school should actually do.

Conscientiousness is, functionally, chronic goal-setting

Zakharin & Bates found the latent association between conscientiousness and goal-setting mechanisms to be **.89**. Conscientious people essentially *are* chronic goal-setters. Which means that when you teach goal-setting machinery, you are training the active ingredient of conscientiousness — and, as it turns out, of "grit" too. **The trait may be fixed. The machinery is not.**

Being valuable to the system pays more than being good at the task

Zhang's meta-analytic SEM across 101,131 people found proactivity converts into salary overwhelmingly through organisational citizenship behaviour (β = .084) rather than task performance (β = .004). This is uncomfortable and worth teaching honestly.

THE RADICAL IMPLICATION

If stable traits acted directly on outcomes, career guidance would be sorting — measure the child, assign the destiny. Because every chain runs through behaviour instead, **the mediators are teachable even where the traits are not.** This single structural fact is what separates a career programme from a career test, and it is why the Rosemounts model puts a teachable behavioural layer at its centre.

A CAUTION WE HOLD AGAINST OURSELVES

Self-efficacy is robust between persons (ρ = .42 with performance), but Sitzmann & Yeo's within-person meta-analysis found it is primarily a *product* of past performance rather than its driver (ρ = .01 after controls) — with Bandura's forceful methodological rebuttal recorded. Claims about "building confidence first" should therefore be made carefully. **Building competence appears to come first.**

05

THE INTERRUPTION POINT

The most hopeful finding in the field

And the scientific case for putting career guidance inside a school rather than beside one.

In 1969 Sewell, Haller & Portes published the founding mechanism study of the entire field — a longitudinal path model on N = 929. Its verdict is the most hopeful in this paper.

≈ .05
Parental socioeconomic status → educational attainment, **direct path**

.00
Parental SES → occupational attainment, direct path

.45
Significant others' influence → aspirations

.34
Aspirations → attainment (model R^2 = .50)

Family background is not weakly related to where children end up — it is powerfully related. But **almost none of that effect travels directly.** It runs through the encouragement of significant others — parents, teachers, peers — and through the aspirations that encouragement forms. Davis-Kean (2005) replicates the pathway via parental expectations on N = 868. VERIFIED

A structural force that transmits through aspirations is a structural force that a teacher can reach. Not a slogan. A path coefficient.

THE CRITIQUE THAT BELONGS IN ANY HONEST TELLING

Kerckhoff's critique of the Wisconsin model is recorded in our corpus and we carry it here: **aspirations may reflect constrained opportunity rather than cause attainment.** A child who does not aspire to something may be reading their circumstances accurately rather than failing to dream. This does not remove the intervention point, but it changes its character — the work is partly about widening what a student can plausibly imagine, which means changing what is actually available to them, not merely how they feel about it.

06

THE DEFLATION REGISTER

Six ideas the evidence took away from us

This is the most valuable section in the paper, and the one most organisations would delete.

A research programme that only confirms what its sponsor already sells has not been run. Here is everything the founding rule destroyed — including things that would have been easier to keep.

1. Grit is very nearly conscientiousness with a new name DEMOTED

Credé, Tynan & Harms (2017) meta-analysed the construct. **Grit correlates with conscientiousness at ρ = .84** (k = 22, N = 18,826) — higher than two different measures of conscientiousness typically correlate with each other (≈ .63). Incremental validity beyond conscientiousness: **ΔR² = .000–.004.** Grit → academic performance: .18.

And the finding that should end the conversation: **the grit meta-analysis contains no salary, promotion or career-satisfaction outcomes at all.** The most popular idea in modern character education has never been meta-analytically linked to career success.

What survived: the **perseverance-of-effort facet alone** shows ΔR² = .023–.085. Small, but real. **Product consequence:** DAT+M™'s Grit component aims its items at perseverance of effort — the facet that survived — rather than at the composite.

2. Ability-based emotional intelligence predicts almost nothing DEMOTED

Miao, Humphrey & Qian (2017): **ability-based EI → job satisfaction ρ = .07** (k = 6, N = 1,056), with confidence intervals including zero in most subgroups. O'Boyle et al. (2011): ability-EI → job performance ρ = .24, but it **adds only 0.4% of variance** beyond cognitive ability and the Big Five.

What survived is better news: **affect regulation** — a behaviour, not a trait — which produces the only full mediation in the entire mechanism map. It sits in the machinery layer, where it can be taught.

3. The 10,000-hour rule does not describe professional work CAUTION ONLY

Macnamara, Hambrick & Oswald (2014), k = 157, N = 11,135: deliberate practice explains **12% of performance variance overall** (r = .35, uncorrected). By domain:

DOMAIN	VARIANCE EXPLAINED	R
Games	**26%**	.51
Music	**21%**	.46
Sports	**18%**	.42
Education	**4%**	.21
Professions	**under 1%**	.05 *(p = .62, not significant)*

Alongside this, Ng & Feldman (2008): **hours worked → salary ρ = .24** (k = 46, N = 27,902), **but hours worked → job performance ρ = .02** (k = 10, N = 5,672). Hours buy pay, not quality. Practice matters enormously in chess and music. The professions are not chess.

Recorded fairly: Ericsson's rebuttal — that most included studies measured structured or purposeful practice rather than deliberate practice as he defined it — is in our database, and retrospective practice-hour self-reports are noisy.

4. Growth mindset is not a universal lever DEFLATED

Sisk et al. (2018), **k = 273, N = 365,915**: the belief–achievement correlation is **r = .10, with 58% of effects non-significant**; for adults it is **.02, non-significant**. Interventions overall: **d = 0.08** (k = 43, N = 57,155; **86% non-significant**). Macnamara & Burgoyne (2023) found the intervention effect falls to **d = 0.05, non-significant after publication-bias correction** — and that financially-incentivised authors reported d = .18 against d = −.10 for non-incentivised ones.

What survived: targeted effects in specific subgroups — academically high-risk d = 0.19, low-SES d = 0.34 (small k) — and Yeager's 2019 *Nature* RCT (N = 12,490) showing **+0.10 GPA in lower-achieving students only**, and only where peer norms supported challenge-seeking.

Standing instruction in our database: never build a generic mindset programme; targeted use only.

5. "Protean" and "boundaryless" careers are one thing, already named

CONSTRUCT COLLAPSE

Wiernik & Kostal (2019) took two decades of literature and found the constructs collapse: self-direction, values-driven orientation and psychological mobility **load on a single factor** (loadings .76 / .76 / .91; one-factor TLI = .988 against .786 for the traditional two-factor model), overlapping heavily with proactive personality (ρ = .59) and self-efficacy (.56).

And on the objective ledger they are close to nil: **salary ρ ≤ .13, promotions ρ ≤ .12, credibility intervals spanning zero.** Self-direction does predict career satisfaction at .41 — the constructs predict *feeling good about a career, not getting ahead in one*. Values-driven orientation adds almost nothing (.07).

6. The layer we refused REFUSED

This is the deflation we are proudest of, because it cost us something.

An external reviewer argued that our theory was missing a layer: **Career Judgement, or Decision Quality**, sitting between alignment and behaviour — on the argument that decisions, not behaviours, are the proximal causal engine of careers. It is an intuitive and attractive idea. A career-guidance business would like it to be true.

The standard we set: to earn a layer, decision quality had to predict career outcomes *beyond* the Big Five, core self-evaluations, and cognitive ability. What the evidence showed:

- Career decision self-efficacy has strong concurrent validity — **ρ = .57 with career indecision** (Choi et al. 2012, k = 12, N = 4,460).

- But it is saturated with what we already measure: **ρ = .68 with proactive personality, .48 with conscientiousness, .55 with self-esteem** (Wang et al. 2023, N = 17,143; Choi et al. 2012).
- **No study in the verified base tests decision quality against career success with personality, core self-evaluations and ability simultaneously controlled.** The definitive jangle test has never been run, anywhere.
- The closest direct test is negative: Zacher (2014, N = 1,723) found the decisiveness-adjacent 'control' facet of career adaptability added nothing beyond personality and core self-evaluations (career satisfaction β = −.06 ns; self-rated performance significantly negative), while the genuine 5–6% increment came from planful concern and confidence.
- Rudolph et al. (2017) classify career decision self-efficacy as an *"adapting response"* — the same stratum as the machinery, not a level above it.

> **Verdict: the layer is not earned on current evidence.**
>
> WORKING PAPER 5 §6, THE ROSEMOUNTS THEORY V1.0

What happened instead: decision acts were absorbed *into* the Machinery Law, and career decision self-efficacy is modelled as a domain-specific proximal mediator inside the existing chain.

And recorded honestly: **seven of the ten decision-science domains the reviewer invoked produced no verified claims in this pass** — they are *unestablished here, not refuted*. If our own longitudinal data eventually falls the other way, the layer enters in version 2, and that section will record it too.

> **WHY THIS IS A FEATURE, NOT AN EMBARRASSMENT**
>
> Every deflation above removed something we could have sold. Grit sells. Growth mindset sells. A "Career Judgement" layer would have sold. Publishing what did not survive is the only way a reader can trust what did — and it is the difference between a research programme and a brochure with citations.

07

CONTESTED MAGNITUDES

Where we quote a range, not a headline

Some numbers in this field are genuinely in dispute. We say so rather than picking the convenient one.

Cognitive ability and job performance: .22 to .51

For decades the operational validity of general mental ability for job performance was quoted at **.51**. Then Sackett, Zhang, Berry & Lievens (2022) argued that the classic figure rested on overcorrection for range restriction and revised it to **~.31** — reordering the league table so that structured interviews rise to the top at .42. Oh, Le & Roth (2023) rebutted at **~.38**. Sackett et al.'s (2023) 21st-century meta-analysis (**k = 153, N = 40,740**) landed at **ρ = .22**.

Our ruling: any Rosemounts material quoting the predictive power of cognitive ability presents the honest range — roughly **.22 to .51** — and never a single confident figure.

The same 2023 analysis found **zero moderation by job complexity (r = .00)**, contradicting the classic Hunter finding that ability matters more in complex work. That result may partly reflect restricted samples. We therefore treat the complexity gradient as **contested, not dead** — and it appears on our do-not-claim list: it may not be quoted as settled science.

Ability × motivation: the equation is wrong

"Performance = Ability × Motivation" is one of the most repeated formulas in applied psychology. Van Iddekinge, Aguinis, Mackey & DeOrtentiis (2018), across k = 40–55 samples and N = 8,507–11,283, found that **additive effects account for roughly 91% of explained variance in performance, against roughly 9% for the interaction.** Corrected relative weights: **60.1% ability, 30.5% motivation, 9.4% interaction.** Adding the interaction term raised corrected multiple R by **.02**.

Where interactions did appear, they were not consistently synergistic. Ability weighs roughly twice motivation, and they mostly add rather than multiply.

A citation correction we made during verification and record here: this finding belongs to Van Iddekinge et al. (2018, *Journal of Management*), not to a commonly-cited 2017 paper it is often attributed to.

Interest fit: .32 for performance, .19 for satisfaction — and they are not the same study

Nye, Su, Rounds & Drasgow (2017) found interest congruence predicts job performance at **.32**, drawn from 92 studies and 1,858 correlations — against **.16** for raw interest scores. Hoff et al. (2020) found interest fit predicts job satisfaction at **ρ = .19** (k = 194, N = 39,602, 95% CI .16–.21) — *weaker than the field expected.*

The caveat that must travel with these two numbers: the comparison between .32 and .19 is a *cross-meta-analysis* comparison, not a within-study finding. And Nye's .32 is a baseline, moderator-free estimate, not fully corrected for range restriction; congruence indices are themselves methodologically contested, since the choice of index affects the result.

Alongside it, Van Iddekinge et al. (2011) is sobering and belongs here: vocational interests measured as single scales predict job performance at only ρ = .14 (k = 80, N = 14,522), and **RIASEC dimensions pooled across jobs predict essentially nothing (−.03 to .02)**. Job-tailored scales reach

.23. Caveat carried: these values were corrected for criterion unreliability only, with no range-restriction correction, so they are conservative estimates.

> **WHAT THIS ACTUALLY LICENSES**
>
> **Raw interest level carries little validity. Fit carries it.** This is the core evidence for the VIP+™ matching logic — and it is also the reason a Rosemounts report never returns an interest score as a verdict. A score alone is close to meaningless; a score placed against an environment is where the validity lives.

08

THE FIELD

Careers are played on ground the player did not choose

Three components, verified. Two of them have known intervention points.

Structural origins

Strenze (2007), a longitudinal meta-analysis, sets the two forces side by side:

PATH	P	K	N
IQ → educational attainment	**.56**	59	84,828
Parental SES index → educational attainment	**.55**	17	69,082
IQ → occupation	**.43**	45	72,290
Parental SES index → occupation	**.38**	16	74,925
IQ → income	**.20**	31	58,758
Parental income → own adult income	**.20**	17	395,562
Parental SES index → income	**.18**	14	64,711

On the income criterion, **merit and structure tie**. Neither the pure-meritocracy position nor the pure-structure position is supported by these numbers. In Strenze's own words, intelligence is *"not an overwhelmingly better predictor than parental SES or grades."* VERIFIED

Chetty, Friedman, Hendren, Jones & Porter (2018), on US administrative data covering **20.5 million people**, established that **57–60% of cross-tract variation in adult outcomes is a causal exposure effect rather than sorting** — that is, place itself does the work, not merely who lives there. A move at birth from a 25th-percentile to a 75th-percentile neighbourhood — that is, a full childhood of exposure — is associated with roughly **+$387,000 in lifetime earnings.** VERIFIED *Caveat carried: US data, and the $387,000 figure is a model-based extrapolation.*

Situational gates — the same trait, opposite signs

Judge & Zapata (2015) coded 125 occupationally homogeneous studies against O*NET and found that situational strength significantly moderated the validity of **all five** personality traits (moderation coefficients B = .20–.42). In the weakest, most discretionary situations, model-predicted validities ran **2.6 to 5 times** their baselines — extraversion .29 against a .11 baseline; agreeableness .31 against .06; openness .16 against .04.

Trait by occupation: extraversion is activated by social interaction (B = .24), competition (.25) and difficult people (.31); openness by innovation (.33) and independence (.20). And agreeableness, valuable in social and difficult-person contexts (B ≈ .25–.26), **reverses sign in competitive jobs (B = −.40).**

> **READ THIS NUMBER CORRECTLY**
>
> **−.40 is a moderation coefficient (B), not an observed correlation**, and the doubled validities above are model-predicted values at extreme situational scores, not observed subgroup correlations. They come from a single — very large — hierarchical linear model. The direction has been replicated in field data (Mussel & Spengler, 2015) and is unrefuted since publication, and Meyer, Dalal & Hermida (2010) found 58% of relevant studies showed significant situational-strength moderation, roughly 90% in the predicted direction. But the specific magnitudes must not be quoted as correlations.

The practical meaning is nonetheless large: **a personality profile is not a verdict, because the same profile pays differently in different environments.** This is the evidential basis for treating alignment, not measurement, as the unit of career guidance.

Chance

Bright, Pryor & Harpham (2005) found **69.1% of 772 Australian students** reported chance events influencing their career decisions. Hirschi (2010, N = 474) found **64.7% of Swiss adolescents** reported some or great influence on their school-to-work transition, with 15.9% reporting "great". An older-adult benchmark (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996) sits at 63% of men and 58% of women.
VERIFIED — PREVALENCE ONLY

Caveat carried: these are retrospective self-reports, and "chance" attribution is partly a narrative and locus-of-control artefact — the percentages swing with question wording.

Pluchino, Biondo & Rapisarda (2018) simulated 1,000 agents over 40-year careers across 10,000 runs and found the most successful agent is almost never the most talented; agents two standard deviations above the mean on talent finished on top in only about 3% of runs. **This is a toy model with luck-dominance partly baked into its multiplicative assumptions. It is plausibility evidence, not an effect size**, and we quote it as nothing more.

What follows practically: chance is not pure noise. Open, exploring people encounter and convert more of it — which is why planned-happenstance behaviour belongs in the teachable machinery rather than in a shrug.

09

THE TAXONOMY

Six capitals a person carries, and one field that carries the person

Constructs that failed the evidence test were merged, not kept for popularity.

The clustering rule was explicit: two predictors belong to the same capital when the verified record shows they operate through the same class of mechanism *and* share a developability profile — because the taxonomy's purpose is to tell an assessment-and-intervention institute what to measure and what to build.

CAPITAL	WHAT IT IS	STRONGEST VERIFIED LINKS	DEVELOPABLE?	VIP+™ MEASURES?
1. Endowment *who you are*	Largely stable individual differences — the levers. For measuring and aligning, not changing.	Cognitive ability → education .56 · Big Five: emotional stability → satisfaction .36 · interests: congruence → performance .32 · core self-evaluations: self-efficacy → job satisfaction .45	Largely stable	**Nearly completely** — PAA™, RIASEC, PVQ, DAT
2. Behavioural *what you do*	The mediating behaviours every tested chain runs through. The most consequential cluster, because it is wholly teachable.	Goal setting (carries conscientiousness .44 → .21–.33) · initiative & political knowledge · networking behaviours · career planning .33 · knowledge acquisition · affect regulation · promotion-focused job crafting · perseverance of effort	**Yes — core trainable**	Fragments — DAT+M™
3. Human *what you've built*	Education, skills, job knowledge, work experience.	Education → salary .29 (strongest classic objective predictor) · experience → salary .27	Yes	Partial

CAPITAL	WHAT IT IS	STRONGEST VERIFIED LINKS	DEVELOPABLE?	VIP+™ MEASURES?
4. Social *who carries you*	The most under-taught capital relative to its evidence.	Sponsorship → satisfaction .44 (double its salary effect) · higher-level contacts .44 · supervisor support → satisfaction .46	Yes	**No**
5. Adaptive *how you steer*	Career adaptability, learning goal orientation, proactive disposition.	Proactivity → career satisfaction .31 · learning goal orientation → task self-efficacy .37 · *CAAS → income only .05*	Yes	Partial
6. Vitality *what sustains you*	Named Vitality rather than Health, to include psychological resources.	Sleep quality → job satisfaction .29 · PsyCap across 51 samples · emotional stability → satisfaction .36	Yes	**Not as a capital**
The Context *the field*	Not a capital a person owns, but the ground the capitals are played on.	Structural origins (SES ties ability for income; 57–60% of neighbourhood variation causal) · situational gates (validities double or reverse) · chance (65–69%)	Two of three have known intervention points	n/a

The six capitals. "VIP+™ measures?" is a self-audit, not a sales claim — note the two rows where the honest answer is "no".

OUR OWN MEASUREMENT AUDIT, PUBLISHED

In one line, from Working Paper 4: *"VIP+™ covers Endowment nearly completely, touches Behavioural and Adaptive Capital in fragments (DAT+M™), and does not yet measure Social or Vitality Capital as capitals — the two clearest instrument-development opportunities the evidence base identifies."*

We publish this because a school leader is entitled to know the shape of what they are buying, including its gaps. Sponsorship pays .44 on the subjective ledger — twice its own salary effect — and we do not yet measure Social Capital as a capital at all.

One further gap belongs on the record: **values are verified on the definition side** (through the 5C consortium and the Portrait Values Questionnaire) **but their predictor links are an evidence gap.** We measure values in VIP+™ because the definitional literature supports their place in how success is weighted — not because meta-analysis has established what they predict.

10

INTERVENTIONS

What can actually be taught — and at what size

This is the section that gates every claim on every school-facing Rosemounts product.

> **Career interventions work — modestly, honestly, and mostly on what students believe and decide, not (yet, on any verified evidence) on what they later earn.**
>
> WORKING PAPER 6, INTERVENTION EVIDENCE V1.0

Verified VERIFIED

Career choice interventions. Whiston, Li, Goodrich Mitts & Wright (2017): **overall g = 0.352, 95% CI .251–.454, k = 57, N = 7,364**, against no-treatment controls. This is the figure we quote — not the older, unweighted 0.45 that circulates widely.

OUTCOME OR INGREDIENT	EFFECT SIZE	NOTE
Counsellor support	**0.825**	The single strongest ingredient in the analysis
Values clarification	**0.522**	—
Psychoeducation about deciding	**0.506**	—
Career decision-making self-efficacy *(outcome)*	**≈ 0.45**	k = 32 — the largest outcome effect
Career decidedness *(outcome)*	**0.293**	k = 24
World-of-work information alone	**0.253**	Weak
Modeling	**0.264**	**Not statistically significant**

What carries the effect. These are the ingredients, ranked by the evidence.

Dose–response. Effects appear to peak at around five sessions (ES = 0.670) and fall at six to seven (0.376) — *but each cell holds only k = 5 studies.* We therefore say "around five sessions appears most effective" and never "proven". PROMISING

Psychological capital interventions. Lupșa, Vîrgă, Maricuțoiu & Rusu (2020), pre-registered: **d = 0.34 across 41 controlled trials, N = 3,911.** Resilience is the most responsive component (d = 0.49); hope the least (0.22). Luthans, Avey & Patera (2008) ran a true RCT (N = 364) showing significant

gains from a **single two-hour web module** — the format template for Open Garden™ HERO Sessions. *Caveats carried: self-report outcomes, no long-term follow-up.*

Promising PROMISING

Career adaptability training. Koen, Klehe & Van Vianen (2012): a **quasi-experiment — not an RCT — with N = 56 graduates**, showing durable six-month gains in control and curiosity, and higher employment *quality* among trained participants who were employed at six months. Our standing label instruction on this study is verbatim: *"promising, small quasi-experimental evidence — never 'proven to improve employment'."*

The promising-but-unproven shelf

Eight intervention domains produced **no surviving verified claims** in this pass. They are not refuted — several are probably real — but until re-verified, every product touching them carries the label "promising, not yet verified":

1. Goal-setting programmes
2. Networking training — *and here the one verified prior finding is a caution: a controlled study (N = 81) improved career planning and optimism but failed to increase networking behaviour itself*
3. Mentoring programmes
4. Aspiration and expectation interventions
5. Employer encounters and the wage-premium claims attached to them
6. Growth-mindset interventions
7. Decision-skills training transfer
8. Job-crafting and strengths interventions for adolescents

Products in these areas may run — carrying that label, and measuring — but they may not quote an effect size until the domain is re-verified.

The five design rules the evidence supports

1

Keep the counsellor central. Counsellor support was the strongest ingredient at 0.825. Technology assists the human; it does not replace them. Manan™ extends the counsellor between sessions — that is the evidence-consistent framing, and the only one we use.

2

Build in values clarification and decision psychoeducation (0.522, 0.506).

3

Design to around five sessions per intervention arc, with written exercises throughout.

4

Practice beats information. World-of-work information alone is weak (0.253) and modeling is non-significant. Build labs, not lectures.

5

Measure honestly and longitudinally. Pre/post CDSE-SF and CAAS on every pilot cohort.

THE HONEST CEILING ON EVERYTHING ABOVE

Every analysed outcome in this literature is a proximal self-report. No verified meta-analytic evidence anywhere shows career interventions changing employment rates, wages, or grades. Products must never claim it — and ours do not.

11

THE MODEL

Five laws, one gate, three loops

Frozen 12 July 2026. The theory survived one external adversarial challenge before freezing.

This was written last, not first. It is the shape left standing after everything above.

Law 1 · Two Ledgers and a Floor

Career success is kept in two ledgers that barely correlate — objective attainment and subjective evaluation (shared variance 3–9%) — standing on a floor of sustainability. The engines differ by ledger: human capital and demographics drive the objective ledger; sponsorship, support and disposition drive the subjective one. Any theory, report or promise that speaks of "success" without naming the ledger is unfalsifiable — and any programme that optimises one ledger while silently draining the floor produces failures that arrive years later.

Law 2 · The Machinery Law

Stable traits never act directly on success; every formally tested causal chain routes through behaviours — goal setting carries conscientiousness, knowledge acquisition carries ability, initiative and political knowledge carry proactivity, affect regulation carries emotional intelligence, contact-building carries network structure. Mediation is partial everywhere, but the machinery carries most of the load. The machinery explicitly includes *decision acts* — choosing goals, exploring options, committing to pathways — which the verified evidence places in the same causal stratum as behaviours, not above them. **The radical implication is pedagogical: the mediators are teachable even where the traits are not.**

Law 3 · The Alignment Law

Fit multiplies what endowment merely offers. Interest congruence predicts performance at double the validity of raw interest scores (.32 vs .16); personality validities double — or reverse sign — depending on whether the occupation activates the trait; and person–career fit is the named mechanism of career sustainability. **The unit of career guidance is therefore never the person alone nor the market alone, but the person × environment match.**

Law 4 · The Compounding Law

Behaviours convert into capitals that grow: knowledge accumulates into human capital, contact-building into social capital — and the capitals pay compound interest (networking predicts not just salary but salary *growth* over time; education remains the strongest classic objective predictor at .29; sponsorship pays .44 on the subjective ledger). Early behavioural investment therefore matters disproportionately — **the school years are the cheapest point on the compounding curve.**

Law 5 · The Law of the Field

Careers are played on a field the player did not choose. Parental SES ties cognitive ability as an income predictor (.18 vs .20); neighbourhood effects are causal, not correlational (57–60%); and 65–69% of people report chance events shaping their careers. A theory that omits the field flatters the winners. But the field's main pathway is interruptible: SES transmits almost entirely through significant others' influence and the aspirations it shapes (direct path ≈ .05) — **the one layer of the structural machine that a school, a teacher, or a counsellor can reach.**

The one gate

The laws are ordered in developmental time. **Aspirations form first and gate everything** — which makes Grades 6 to 9 the aspiration window. Alignment discovery belongs to adolescence, when interests and dispositions stabilise enough to measure and stream choices begin locking environments in. Machinery training runs from adolescence onward. Compounding dominates early career; sustainability management dominates the whole lifespan.

> **The prerequisite structure is strict at only one point: nothing downstream compensates for a foreclosed aspiration.** A student who never aspires never enters the pipeline the rest of the theory describes.
>
> WORKING PAPER 5 §3

The three feedback loops

1. **Competence precedes confidence.** Within-person evidence shows self-efficacy is primarily a product of past performance, not its driver — so the loop runs mastery → confidence → higher goals, and interventions should *engineer early mastery experiences rather than exhort belief.*
2. **Success buys access.** Attainment attracts sponsors, networks and opportunities, which is how early gaps widen — the field's Matthew effect.
3. **Mastery raises aspirations** — closing the loop back to the interruption point, and explaining why a single well-designed success experience in Grade 8 can echo for a decade.

> **THE THEORY IN ONE SENTENCE**
>
> Career success — objective, subjective, and sustainable — is produced when a person's stable endowment is aligned with environments that activate it, expressed through teachable behaviours that compound into human and social capital, sustained by vitality, and played on a field whose structural pathway is interruptible at aspirations.

12

FROM EVIDENCE TO PRODUCT

What a Career Pathway Report is permitted to say

Every theory box maps to a product, and every product inherits the evidence class of the box it came from — not the confidence of the person selling it.

THEORY BOX	PRODUCT	LABEL	WHAT MAY BE CLAIMED
Aspirations — the interruption point	The Aspiration Curriculum, Grades 6–8, and the Parent Conversation Kit	PROMISING	Mechanism is verified (SES flows via aspirations; direct path ≈ 0). Aspiration-intervention trials unverified in our pass — **no effect numbers in copy**
Alignment	The Alignment Lab — 5-session arc	VERIFIED *matching logic*	Congruence → performance .32 vs .16 raw; fit → satisfaction .19 *(two different meta-analyses — not a within-study comparison)*. Claim better matching, **never guaranteed outcomes**
Machinery: decision acts	The Decision Playbook — values clarification, decision psychoeducation, written exercises, ~5 sessions	VERIFIED *proximal*	g = 0.352 overall; CDSE outcomes ≈ 0.45; counsellor support strongest ingredient at 0.825. **Proximal outcomes only**
Machinery: goal setting	The Goal Engine	PROMISING	Mechanism verified (conscientiousness → goals .44 → performance). Training-transfer studies unverified
Machinery: networking	The Networking Challenge — 40 graded real-world challenges	PROMISING	Mechanism verified (contacts .44 → sponsorship; salary growth). **Caution: the one verified training study failed to change behaviour — build practice challenges, not lessons**
Machinery: initiative	The Initiative Lab	PROMISING	Mechanism verified (initiative → salary growth and promotions; voice failed). No intervention trials verified
Adaptive Capital	The Pivot Studio	PROMISING	Quasi-experimental, N = 56: durable six-month gains in control and curiosity. Say "promising evidence", **never "proven employment effects"**
Vitality Capital	HERO Sessions — 2-hour PsyCap micro-interventions, resilience-led, plus a sleep module	VERIFIED *small*	d = 0.34 overall, resilience 0.49, across 41 trials, N = 3,911. Small, real, honest. **Sleep content: correlational framing only**
Social Capital	The Mentor Builder — 8-week alumni and near-peer matching	PROMISING	Mechanism verified but **small on economic outcomes** — Allen et al. (2004): career mentoring → compensation r = .08, → promotions r = .10. The most consistent mentoring benefits are affective, not financial. Youth-programme meta-analyses unverified in our pass

THEORY BOX	PRODUCT	LABEL	WHAT MAY BE CLAIMED
Compounding capitals	The Career Portfolio (The Portfolio of Proof©)	PROMISING	Education and skills are the strongest verified objective predictors (.29). Portfolio-specific outcome evidence: frontier
Feedback loops	The Progress Dashboard — mastery-first feedback	VERIFIED *direction*	Within-person evidence: self-efficacy follows performance. Engineer early mastery; **do not run belief-first pep programmes**
The field: context honesty	Employer encounters and honest headwind conversations	PROMISING	Wage-premium claims from employer encounters are correlational panel data — **never present as causal**
The field: chance	The Luck Lab — planned-happenstance skills	FRONTIER	65–69% report chance-shaped careers (prevalence verified). Happenstance-training outcome evidence: **none verified**

WHY THE COUNSELLOR IS NOT DECORATION

Within Whiston et al. (2017), the single strongest ingredient was **counsellor support, at 0.825** — larger than any other ingredient in that analysis, and more than three times the effect of world-of-work information alone. This is not a sentimental commitment at Rosemounts. It is the highest-value finding in Working Paper 6, and it dictates the architecture: **Manan™ extends the counsellor between sessions; it never replaces one.** An organisation that automated the counsellor away would be automating away the most evidenced part of its own service.

13

THE LINE

What Rosemounts will not claim

A published list of things we could say, that would help us, and that we will not say.

THE ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION

No Rosemounts product — no report, no course, no page, no proposal — will claim an effect on salary, employment or grades until Rosemounts' own longitudinal data earns it.

This appears in five separate documents in our corpus. It is the single most repeated rule we hold, because it is the single easiest one to break.

The do-not-claim list

Six specific claims are barred from every Rosemounts document, with the reason recorded:

NEVER QUOTE THIS	WHY
The "five critical ingredients" and the .22 → .99 dose ladder (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000)	The most-cited "fact" in career intervention science. **No study in their database ever combined more than three ingredients**, so the five-ingredient claim was never tested; the ladder tops out on a tiny three-ingredient subset; the 2003 follow-up was hypothesis-generation from the same data. Decisively, **Whiston et al. (2017) explicitly failed to replicate it** — "very little overlap"
An intervention effect size of 0.80 (Langher et al., 2018)	Descriptive only, k = 9, outlier-inflated — *the authors themselves say it is descriptive*
An effect size of 1.38 (Ulaş-Kılıç et al., 2019)	The published confidence interval is broken
Causal wage premia from employer encounters	The data are correlational panel data, widely misquoted as causal
"RIASEC is invalid"	False — and on our list in the opposite direction. This is an *over-deflation* to avoid: congruence predicts performance at .32
The ability × job-complexity gradient as settled science	It is contested. Sackett et al. (2023) found zero moderation

Note what the first row costs us. The Brown & Ryan Krane ladder is the most quotable number in our entire field, and it would make a superb slide. What replaced it — counsellor support, values clarification, decision psychoeducation — happens to be better news for Rosemounts anyway. But we would have removed it either way.

Four safeguards on practice

- Do not promise pay, jobs, grades or guaranteed outcomes from guidance.
- Do not use a matching engine as a final verdict about a student's future.
- Keep counsellor judgement, student voice, family context and real-world exploration in the loop.
- Label every claim honestly: verified, promising or frontier.

14

LIMITS

What this is not, and what we do not know

The gaps are published at the same volume as the findings.

> **WHAT THIS THEORY IS NOT**
>
> *"It is not a guarantee machine: the largest verified single-predictor effects sit near ρ = .3–.5, so most variance in any one life remains unexplained — which is precisely why the field and chance are inside the model rather than footnotes. It does not claim traits can be rebuilt; it claims the machinery can be. It quotes contested magnitudes as ranges (cognitive ability .22–.51). And it holds several of its own pieces as explicitly provisional: the interests→effort→performance decomposition, the adaptability sequence, and all seven interaction silences are dashed lines awaiting data."*

The seven silences

Of the ten interaction questions the programme posed, **the verified literature answers three. The other seven are documented gaps** — gaps in the verified record, not established nulls:

1. **Age and career stage.** No verified interaction effect sizes exist.
2. **Culture and country.** Predictor-validity moderation is untested — and **India is barely represented in any of this literature.** A Rosemounts India dataset would be publishable on novelty alone.
3. **Gender and sponsorship returns.** Advocacy literature, but no verified meta-analytic moderation test.
4. **Personality × interest congruence.** Untested at meta-analytic level — possibly the single most natural Rosemounts study.
5. **Capital compensation.** Can social capital compensate for average academics? Widely assumed, never verified as a formal interaction.
6. **The AI era.** Strong theoretical work, but no verified post-2023 causal evidence with wage or performance outcomes.
7. **Person–environment fit meta-moderators.** Unverified in this pass.

Where our own evidence is thinner than it looks

- **Two headline satisfaction figures rest on three studies each** (locus of control .47; proactivity .38). We prefer the larger replications and say so.
- **PsyCap and career adaptability were verified at abstract level only** — per-outcome extraction is still pending.
- **Ng & Feldman's (2014) support figures of .45–.55 are secondary-sourced** — the primary tables are paywalled with no open-access copy in existence — and are plausibly method-inflated.
- **Job-crafting evidence is almost entirely cross-sectional self-report**, and self-rated performance of .27 falls to .18 when other-rated. The inflation is visible in the data.
- **No meta-analysis anywhere links sleep to income or promotion.** That cell is empty in the literature itself, not merely in our reading of it.

- **Objective indicators are often self-reported** in the primary studies, and occupational prestige is used less consistently than pay and promotions.
- **Exactly one row in our 69-row database is not unanimous** — mixed-model EI → job satisfaction, verified 2–1. We record the dissent.
- Seven domains — values congruence, curiosity, creativity, learning agility, psychological safety, economic cycles and AI exposure — **have not yet been searched at all**.
- A standing **20% of Rosemounts' research capacity** is reserved for closing these gaps and pursuing the propositions in the next section, against 80% on building. The unsearched domains and the eight unproven intervention domains above are queued against that reserve.

And on our own instruments

PAA™ version 4 is not yet fully normed and carries hard reliability, scoring and well-being-threshold gates before any cohort is scored through it. DAT+M™'s reliability evidence is still being assembled and is not yet published; we will publish it when it is complete rather than quote it early. Relational Reach™ is a provisional idea whose measurement items are not yet built. We would rather write these down than have a principal discover them.

15

THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Seven questions we intend to answer

A theory that generates no testable predictions is a description. These are ours.

P1 Interest congruence **moderates** the conscientiousness → performance link: students in fit-aligned streams convert discipline into achievement at a higher rate. *VIP+™ measures both sides in every student. The field has never tested it.*

P2 Aspiration change **mediates** any SES → attainment gap reduction produced by school-based guidance in Indian cohorts — the Wisconsin model, replicated where it has never been run.

P3 Training the machinery raises outcomes beyond what trait levels predict — and **the gain is largest for students with mid-level endowment scores.**

P4 Fit-based guidance improves **sustainability** indicators — well-being, engagement — and not merely attainment. This is what separates the model from rank-and-push counselling.

P5 Predictor validities are **age-conditioned** across the ladder: adaptability and social behaviours gain validity from Grade 6 to Grade 12 as environments open.

P6 The importance-weighting of success dimensions among **Indian students and parents** differs measurably from Western 5C norms — and guidance calibrated to those weights outperforms uncalibrated guidance.

P7 **The definitive jangle test, never run in the published literature:** career decidedness and decision quality add no incremental validity for career success once endowment and machinery are controlled. Our longitudinal ladder can run it — *and if decision quality does clear the bar, the theory gains a Judgement layer in version 2, and we will say so.*

A NOTE ON NAMES

From the theory document, recorded without insistence: *"the theory's structure — stable seed, deliberate cultivation, right soil, seasons, and weather — maps with almost uncomfortable precision onto the gardening language Rosemounts already owns. If the evidence has been leading anywhere, it may be to a place the brand arrived at first."*

We include this not as a claim but as a curiosity, and because the alternative — quietly presenting it as a designed alignment — would be exactly the kind of thing this paper exists to avoid.

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

Colophon

The Science Behind the VIP+™ Career Pathway Program, Version 2.0, August 2026. Written from the frozen Rosemounts research corpus: Working Papers 1–6, the Rosemounts Theory of Career Success v1.0, the Build Roadmap v1.0, and the Master Predictor Database v1.1 — all frozen 12 July 2026, factual corrections only.

This version supersedes v1.0 (12 July 2026). It carries sample sizes throughout, the complete deflation register, the full do-not-claim list, the six capitals, the three feedback loops and all seven propositions — none of which appeared in full in the first version. One internal inconsistency inherited from the earlier draft has been corrected: the theory's single gate is **aspirations**, per Working Paper 5, not alignment.

Corrections are welcome and will be recorded. If any figure in this paper is wrong, we would rather know than not — that is, after all, the entire method.

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