



AI Board Operating System.

For SMEs and Mid-Market Companies
Executive alignment, TokenOps and P&L linkage.

A structured framework to manage AI as a portfolio of business use cases with clear owners, measurable economics, and explicit links to revenue, margin, and cash conversion.

5 layers. 9 sections. 90-day rollout.

Why most AI programs fail.



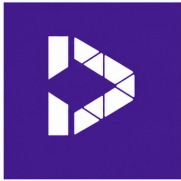
EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Mid-market AI programs fail not because of model quality, but because companies launch disconnected pilots without clear problem selection, governance, or a financial control mechanism. The result: fragmented experimentation, hidden spend, and no credible answer to whether AI is improving operating income or cash generation.

USE CASES Selected because they look innovative — not because they solve expensive or revenue-critical bottlenecks.	\$
TOKEN COSTS Buried in software or IT budgets instead of being mapped to workflows and cost centers.	\$
GOVERNANCE Managers use AI tools individually, but there is no layer to define approved models, data rules, or quality thresholds.	\$
KPI TRACKING The company tracks outputs (prompts, content volume) — not the P&L; lines that should move as a result.	\$

An effective implementation starts with operating discipline, not model experimentation.

Executive alignment sprint.



LAYER 1 · 5-DAY SPRINT

The 5-day sprint aligns the CEO, COO, CFO, and business-unit leaders on baseline maturity, strategic priorities, and the current AI cost structure. It ends with a 90-day launch plan and the first version of the executive AI scorecard.

DAY 1 — STRATEGIC CONTEXT Establish the case for action. Produce a one-page statement of why AI matters now, a readiness assessment, and a baseline view of current AI spend.
DAY 2 — USE-CASE DISCOVERY Convert general interest into a shortlist of 10–15 concrete use cases per function, scored by business impact, feasibility, and time to value.
DAY 3 — ECONOMICS & DESIGN Convert shortlisted use cases into mini-products with economic logic — target user, workflow event, token budget, and measurement KPI.
DAY 4 — GOVERNANCE & RISK Establish an AI council, define approved models and data rules, set human-review thresholds, and document incident escalation paths.
DAY 5 — ROADMAP & SCORECARD Deliver a 90-day launch plan, 12-month roadmap, and the first executive AI scorecard showing owners, P&L; impact, and token budgets.

Portfolio design.



LAYER 2 · USE-CASE PORTFOLIO

AI should be treated as a portfolio of business bets, not a single technology project. Each use case belongs in one of three buckets with explicit financial linkage.

PRODUCTIVITY
Save manager or team time. Examples: meeting summaries, proposal drafts, HR policy Q&A.;

FINANCIAL LINK: Opex leverage

EFFICIENCY
Reduce unit costs or errors. Examples: support triage, forecasting support, invoice classification.

FINANCIAL LINK: Margin improvement

GROWTH
Improve revenue speed or retention. Examples: lead qualification, campaign optimization, AI customer service.

FINANCIAL LINK: Revenue and gross profit

QUICK-WIN TAKEAWAY
A good portfolio includes quick wins and strategic builds. Quick wins create confidence and free capacity, while larger use cases can later become differentiated workflows.

Token economics, P&L and cash.



LAYER 3 · TOKENOPS & P&L

TokenOps extends FinOps discipline into the AI layer. Every AI interaction should be tagged with business function, workflow, feature, environment, and user role so that costs can be allocated correctly.

CORE TOKEN METRICS
Cost per 1,000 tokens by model and vendor · Tokens per workflow event · Average cost per business event · Active AI users by function · Quality metrics (approval rate, edit rate, accuracy).

P&L MAPPING
Customer-facing AI belongs in COGS. Internal copilots sit in departmental Opex (sales, support, finance, G&A;). The CFO must explain where spend sits and what output it produces.

CASH-POSITIVE LOGIC
Many AI wins first show up as working-capital improvements. Reducing DSO improves cash quickly. Reducing manager time improves accounting margins only if headcount growth is avoided.

AI ROI FORMULA
AI ROI = (Incremental gross profit + Labor savings + Churn avoided)
– AI run cost – Implementation cost

Sales and Marketing AI.



LAYER 4 · CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

SALES — THE PLAY

AI in sales improves research speed, response quality, and pipeline conversion. Use cases: lead qualification, account research, proposal drafting, call summaries, next-best-action.

SALES — KEY KPIs

Qualified meetings per rep · Pipeline coverage · Win rate · Sales cycle days · Average deal margin · AI-assisted output per rep. Maps to revenue growth and gross profit.

MARKETING — THE PLAY

Campaign ideation, content production, segmentation, performance analysis, and lead scoring. AI adds value when it improves campaign velocity without driving up CAC.

MARKETING — KEY KPIs

MQLs · Cost per lead · Lead-to-opportunity conversion · Campaign ROI · CAC payback · Repeat purchase uplift · AI content productivity. Connects to marketing Opex and lifecycle gross profit.

QUICK-WIN TAKEAWAY

Even without large engineering teams, AI can already increase research speed, qualification quality, and response rates for SME sales teams.

Customer Service and Operations.



LAYER 4 · CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

CUSTOMER SERVICE — THE PLAY

High-value use cases: agent assist, automated triage, knowledge search, response drafting, and self-service deflection. Labor cost and service speed can be measured directly.

CUSTOMER SERVICE — KEY KPIs

First response time · First contact resolution · Cost per ticket · Deflection rate · CSAT · Churn from service issues. Connects to support Opex and revenue retention.

OPERATIONS — THE PLAY

Focus on planning quality, throughput, and waste reduction. Use cases: demand forecasting, scheduling assistance, reorder recommendations, anomaly detection, SOP copilots.

OPERATIONS — KEY KPIs

Forecast accuracy · On-time delivery · Inventory turns · Scrap or defect rate · Labor productivity · Overtime % · AI-driven planning savings. Maps to COGS and working capital.

QUICK-WIN TAKEAWAY

Customer service improvement can often be measured within weeks — support cost is visible quickly and makes an ideal first AI pilot for SMEs.

Finance, HR and IT.



LAYER 4 · CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

FINANCE — THE PLAY
Variance commentary, scenario analysis, forecasting support, spend review, and AI cost governance. AI accelerates interpretation and decision support — not accounting controls.

FINANCE — KEY KPIs
Monthly close days · Forecast accuracy · DSO · DPO · Operating cash flow · Budget-vs-actual Opex · AI spend by cost center. Links directly to operating cash and working capital.

HR — THE PLAY
Job-description drafting, interview support, employee policy assistants, onboarding material generation, training content creation. Good candidates for safe early deployment.

IT & DATA — THE PLAY
Code assistance, documentation, log analysis, incident summarization, internal search. Increases speed for scarce technical talent and improves knowledge transfer.

QUICK-WIN TAKEAWAY
Finance-team AI is particularly important at scale — AI spend can grow rapidly and become one of the fastest-rising software costs if not governed early.

Board-level metrics.



LAYER 5 · KPI COCKPIT

KPI	WHY IT MATTERS	CORRELATED LINE
Revenue growth	Captures top-line momentum.	Revenue
Gross margin %	Shows delivery and service efficiency.	COGS, gross profit
Operating income / EBITDA	Tracks operating performance.	Opex, operating profit
Operating cash flow	Tests whether profit converts to cash.	Cash flow
Working capital	Shows short-term operating health.	Current assets/liabilities
Cash conversion cycle	Measures cash discipline.	AR, inventory, AP
AI spend as % of revenue	Prevents hidden AI expansion.	Opex and COGS
AI ROI realized	Shows economic return from AI portfolio.	Margin, revenue, cash

Dashboard design rules.



LAYER 5 · KPI COCKPIT

REVIEW CADENCE Review weekly at executive level and monthly in more detail by finance and function leaders. Keep it on the leadership meeting agenda — not a standalone reporting session.
EACH KPI MUST INCLUDE Owner · Target · Threshold · Prior-period comparison · Last refresh date · One-line action note. Without these, the dashboard is a passive report — not a management system.
STAGE 1 — ASSISTED MODE AI drafts or recommends but humans approve every external or financially material output. Ideal for sales outreach drafts, meeting summaries, support suggestions, forecast narratives.
STAGE 2 — SEMI-AUTOMATED Once quality thresholds are stable, automate low-risk repetitive tasks while keeping humans in the loop for exceptions: ticket tagging, lead routing, reminder emails, internal summaries.
STAGE 3 — MANAGED SCALE Shift focus to model routing, usage optimization, vendor leverage, and long-term economic tuning. TokenOps becomes a core finance capability for cost-to-quality optimization.

Days 1–30.

90-DAY ROLLOUT



First month: alignment and pilots.

Complete the alignment sprint, prioritize the first pilots, establish baseline measurements, and connect the main data sources for those workflows. Human approval must remain in place for all externally visible use cases.

- ACTION 1**
Complete the 5-day executive alignment sprint. Align the CEO, COO, CFO and function heads on the AI priority list and scorecard format.
- ACTION 2**
Prioritize 2–3 pilots with the highest business impact and fastest time to value. Define the use case owner, KPI, and token budget for each.
- ACTION 3**
Establish baseline measurements for each pilot: volume, cost, quality, and time. Without a baseline, you cannot claim improvement.
- ACTION 4**
Connect the main data sources. Identify any data-quality or access issues that would block the pilot from running in production.
- ACTION 5**
Keep human approval on all externally visible outputs. Set up a simple log to track approvals, edits, and rejections — this is your earliest quality signal.

Days 31–60.

90-DAY ROLLOUT



Second month: standardize and measure.

Move toward standardized prompts, role-based training, workflow documentation, and first dashboard reporting. Refine usage tags and cost attribution so finance can see the initial token-economics picture clearly.

- ACTION 6**
Standardize prompts for each active use case. Document the approved prompt templates and store them in a shared location all users can access.
- ACTION 7**
Run role-based training sessions. Ensure each function understands how to use the AI tool, when to escalate, and what the quality thresholds are.
- ACTION 8**
Publish the first AI dashboard report to the leadership team. Show cost by function, usage volume, quality metrics, and a preliminary ROI estimate.
- ACTION 9**
Refine usage tags and cost attribution. Every token call should map to a business function and workflow event. Finance must be able to read the cost report.
- ACTION 10**
Review the governance structure. Confirm the AI council is meeting regularly and that the escalation path for incidents, hallucinations, and compliance risks is clear.

Days 61–90.

90-DAY ROLLOUT



Third month: scale what works.

Review which pilots improved speed, quality, margin, or cash — then scale only those use cases with clear evidence. Low-performing or low-adoption experiments should be stopped rather than allowed to persist as innovation theater.

ACTION 11	Review each pilot against its baseline KPIs. Declare each use case a pass, fail, or needs adjustment based on the evidence — not on enthusiasm.
ACTION 12	Scale only the use cases with clear evidence of improvement. Define what 'scale' means: more users, more functions, higher volume, or reduced human review.
ACTION 13	Stop low-performing experiments explicitly. Document what was learned and why it was stopped. This is a sign of discipline, not failure.
ACTION 14	Update the AI scorecard with 90-day results. Present to the board or executive committee: ROI realized, token costs, governance status, and Q2 roadmap.
ACTION 15	Publish a Q2 roadmap based on what you learned. Identify the next 3–5 use cases for the next quarter. Assign owners and initial token budgets.

Board and CEO checklist.



GOVERNANCE

The leadership team should review these questions at every quarterly board meeting.

STRATEGY Are AI use cases tied to strategic priorities and budget logic? Can each use case be explained in terms of the P&L; line it is intended to improve?
FINANCE Can the CFO identify where AI costs sit in the P&L; and which workflows they support? Is there a clear view of AI's cash effect — not just technology spend?
ADOPTION Are managers adopting the tools in their actual workflows, or only testing them informally? What is the active-user rate by function?
RISK Are low-risk workflows being scaled faster than high-risk, customer-facing ones? Is the human-review threshold appropriate for each use case?
GOVERNANCE Is the AI council meeting regularly? Are incidents, hallucinations, and compliance risks being logged and escalated through the defined path?
VALUE Is the KPI cockpit helping management make faster decisions, or is it only adding reporting complexity? Is each KPI owned and actioned?

The practical lesson.



FINAL SYNTHESIS

The most effective AI implementations in SMEs and mid-market companies behave less like innovation labs and more like disciplined operating systems. Companies that align leadership quickly, pick use cases with explicit business logic, govern token economics tightly, and connect operational KPIs to P&L; and cash outcomes are far more likely to scale AI successfully.

PRINCIPLE 1: DISCIPLINE FIRST

Start with operating discipline, not model experimentation. The governance layer, ownership structure, and financial linkage must be in place before you scale.

PRINCIPLE 2: PORTFOLIO LOGIC

AI should not be managed as a technology trend, but as a portfolio of controllable business decisions with visible economic consequences.

PRINCIPLE 3: CASH VISIBILITY

Track cash impact separately from accounting impact. Many AI wins show up as working-capital improvements before they appear in the income statement.

PRINCIPLE 4: STOP FAST

Low-performing experiments should be stopped, not extended. Innovation theater is the enemy of operating leverage. Two paying plays beat ten half-done experiments.