

AI Adoption Triage Framework

FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

Business leaders need a clear triage process to decide where to apply AI for maximum value. Many AI initiatives stall because companies pursue projects without assessing feasibility or ROI – one MIT study found 95% of AI projects never progress beyond prototypes, often due to poor ROI or scaling challenges. The framework below provides an industry-agnostic, strategic decision guide to help leaders prioritize AI opportunities that are realistic and high-impact. It is presented in two formats – first as a decision tree with branching questions, then as a linear checklist – to facilitate easy application with clients.

AI Projects Stuck in Prototype



95%

Share of AI initiatives that never reach production due to unproven ROI or execution hurdles.

DECISION TREE

Key Questions for AI Project Triage

This decision tree guides you through three critical questions to determine how to proceed with an AI use case. Each branch addresses whether to **use off-the-shelf tools**, **skip the project**, or **invest in a custom AI solution** based on the nature of the problem and the potential business value. Following this sequence ensures resources are focused on AI projects that are both technically feasible and financially worthwhile.

STEP 1

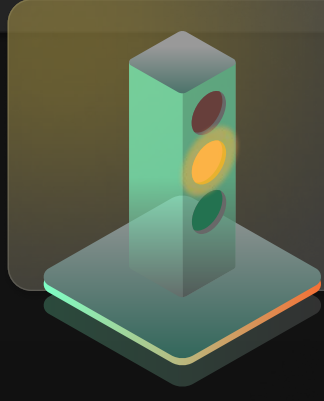
Leverage Off-the-Shelf Solutions for Generic Needs

Can we meet the need with an existing AI solution?

YES

NO

- **Buy off-the-shelf** → typically faster and cheaper than building in-house.
- Works best for **generic problems** (e.g., language, vision, analytics).
- **Buy carefully** → choose reliable vendors, ensure integration, check compliance.
- If the tool solves the problem, **adopt it and stop here** — no custom build needed.



Adopt it and stop here

STEP 2

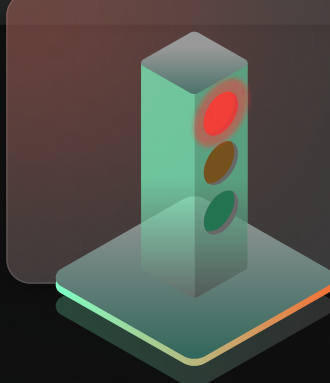
Assess Feasibility with Current AI Capabilities

Is the problem solvable with today's AI technology?

YES

NO

- The outcome requires abilities AI cannot yet deliver at scale.
- The project depends on **human-level reasoning** or **error-free performance**.
- Investment would be wasted on something too uncertain or immature.
- Best approach: **skip for now, monitor progress** until tech matures.



Skip the project for now.

STEP 3

Focus on High-ROI Custom Solutions Using Internal Data

Can we create high business value by applying AI with our proprietary data/processes?

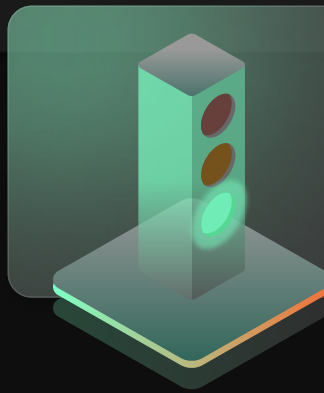
The framework recommends focusing on AI projects that leverage internal data or IP to re-engineer a business process for significant ROI.

In this stage, ask whether combining current AI models with your unique data and expertise could dramatically improve outcomes or efficiency.

YES

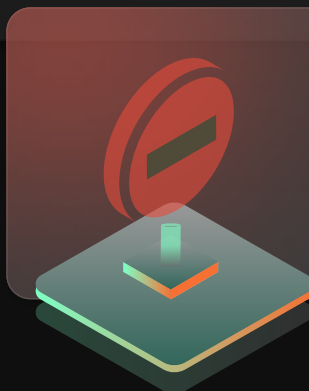
NO

- The project leverages **proprietary data or processes** for a unique advantage.
- AI can **re-engineer workflows** for major efficiency or value gains.
- ROI is **clear, measurable, and substantial** (cost savings, productivity, revenue).
- The organization has the right **talent, governance, and cross-functional support** (or can “call a friend” for expertise).
- Building it positions the company for **competitive advantage**.



Invest and build.

- The project is technically feasible but would deliver only **marginal ROI**.
- It doesn't address a **core cost center, revenue driver, or efficiency gap**.
- Benefits are unclear or hard to **quantify in business terms**.
- Resources would be better directed to **higher-impact opportunities**.



Do not proceed (backlog or drop).

SUMMARY

This triage framework helps organizations prioritize “what to build” with AI in a pragmatic way. It directs leaders to use off-the-shelf solutions for standard needs, avoid efforts that aren't yet viable, and double down on high-ROI applications of AI with their own data. Following this approach fosters a disciplined AI adoption roadmap: companies move beyond the experimentation phase and into delivering real ROI by focusing on the right use cases. Ultimately, applying this framework means AI investments will be grounded in business value, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation and measurable outcomes.

Palo Alto
101 University Avenue, Suite 301
Palo Alto, CA 94301, USA
Phone: +1 415 490 8175
Email: office-sf@htecgroup.com

London
Huckletree Bishopsgate, 8 Bishopsgate
London EC2N 4BQ, UK
Phone: +44 203 818 5916
Email: office-uk@htecgroup.com

Belgrade
Milutina Milankovica, 7D
Belgrade 11070, Serbia
Phone: +381 11 228 1182
Email: office-bg@htecgroup.com

