

YOUR COMPETITORS ARE MOVING. YOUR BOSS SAYS NO.

When your boss is afraid of AI

How to read the fear behind the blocking, build a case your boss can say yes to, protect yourself if it turns toxic, and know when to leave.

THREE THINGS THIS COVERS

01 Fear and toxicity

Two different problems that need different responses

02 A case your boss can say yes to

Competitor evidence, a small result, credit and control

03 When to stop trying

Protecting yourself, and setting a deadline

WHICH CASE ARE YOU IN

Fear can be moved. Toxicity needs a different route.

Fearful

Says no, delays, asks for more analysis, points to the risks.

Stays professional. Can often be moved with evidence and credit.

Toxic

Belittles you, takes credit, punishes disagreement, tells you to stay quiet.

About power. Needs documentation and HR.

WHAT YOUR BOSS IS USUALLY AFRAID OF

01 Losing standing

Others understanding the new way of working better than they do

02 Being blamed for a failure

A failed pilot has their name on it

03 Their expertise mattering less

Years of judgement against a draft produced in seconds

04 Their team shrinking

Headcount tied to budget, status and pay grade

WHAT MAKES IT WORSE

- ✗ **Unapproved tools on company data**
You hand your boss the failure they feared
- ✗ **Going over their head without warning**
The relationship rarely recovers
- ✗ **Arguing in a team meeting**
They will defend the position in front of their people
- ✗ **Forwarding articles about AI**
It raises the temperature and gives them nothing to approve

BUILD A COMPETITOR FILE

Public sources only. Every entry dated.

- **Product and service announcements**
- **Job advertisements for new AI roles**
- **Annual reports and results briefings**
- **Tenders lost on speed or price**
- **What customers tell you**

Write it up as a one-page risk note. A fearful boss is already thinking in risks.

HOW TO PRESENT THE RESULT

Start with one small task in your own lane.

Give them the credit

Make the next step theirs to sponsor and present upward.

You gain a sponsor where you had a blocker.

Give them the brakes

A pilot with limits they set: data, reviewer, failure point, stop date.

People approve what they can switch off.

KNOWING WHEN TO LEAVE

2

quarters. Enough time to make the case properly and see whether anything moves.

If nothing has moved and the competitor gap has grown, you have learned something about where the business is heading. Your own skills fall behind while you wait.

WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH

- 1 Decide which case you are in**
Fearful, toxic or a mix
- 2 Start the competitor file**
Ten minutes a week
- 3 Pick one task in your own lane**
Approved tools, time and errors recorded
- 4 Talk to a peer or to risk and compliance**
Ask what worked for them
- 5 Set your two-quarter date**
Put it in the calendar

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Most people asking this are trying to protect the business and keep their job. Both are reasonable things to want.

Start with the competitor file and one small task. Give it two quarters.



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