

Most AI Pilots Don't Fail on the Model. **They Fail on the Use Case.**

MIT research is explicit: poor use case selection, not technology, is what kills first AI pilots. Here's the six-criterion framework to get it right.

SWIPE →

The six-criterion framework.

01 Why organisations pick the wrong first use case

02 The three high-weight gating criteria

03 The medium-weight risk criteria

04 The one criterion that should never drive the decision

01

Data availability.

Is the data already there, usable, and accessible without months of cleanup? This is the primary gate — every other dimension depends on it.

02

Workflow integration.

Can AI slot into how work already happens, instead of requiring the workflow to be redesigned first? Two change-management problems at once tend to slow each other down.

03

Measurability. A clear before-and-after metric, measurable within 90 days. Without it, a successful pilot produces impressions, not evidence.

Three more criteria matter too: business value, reversibility, showcase potential — but none of them should gate the decision.



The model does not fail. The selection process failed before the model was ever involved.

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on why AI pilots stall before they scale

The instinct vs. the evidence.

THE INSTINCT

Start with something impressive

Signals strategic seriousness

Hard to measure in 90 days

THE EVIDENCE

Start with what's provably ready

Fits an existing workflow

Reversible if it underperforms

Strategic ambition comes **later, not first.**

The first pilots aren't designed to prove the ceiling of what AI can do for your organisation. They're designed to prove AI works in your organisation's specific operational context — and to build a coalition of internal advocates who've watched it happen, not just heard about it.

Weighted, not checklisted.

Data availability



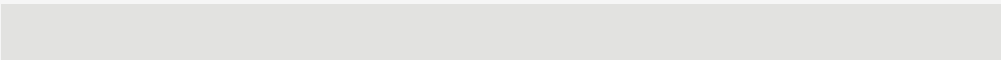
Workflow integration



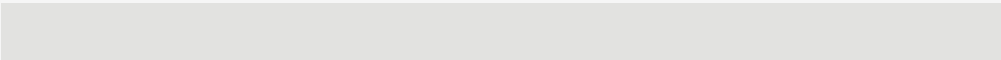
Measurability



Business value



Reversibility



Showcase potential



The full scoring framework, weightings, and worksheet:
terencekok.com/blog/why-your-first-ai-use-case-will-make-or-break-the-programme

Score honestly. Foundation first.

The impressive story comes later. Choose the use cases that reach production, not the ones that sound best in a board deck.



Terence Kok · Enterprise AI Strategist

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