Planning Errors Compound at Every Later Stage — and Can't Be Fixed in Motion.

A 10-step, sequential framework for the pre-planning stage of an AI venture.

SWIPE →

Steps 1–4 of 10

01 Validate founder-market fit

02 Identify the “secret”

03 Define the monopoly target

04 Design proprietary data architecture

20–30

Structured Interviews per “Secret”

Not to validate a product concept, but to surface the gap between what the industry believes and what direct observation reveals.

10

Sequential Steps, Each Gating the Next

Completion of all 10, with documented evidence at each gate, is the minimum standard for planning-stage readiness.

3:1

Investors in 2026 scrutinise LTV-to-CAC ratios exceeding 3:1, and customer-acquisition-cost payback under 12 months, before funding a proof point.

"

Errors in foundational thinking compound at every subsequent stage and cannot be corrected once the organisation is in motion.

Terence Kok
Enterprise AI Strategist

Weak vs. Structural Secret

WEAK	STRUCTURAL
Based on a transient circumstance	Rooted in a structural feature
Already priced by the market	Not yet recognised by the market
Replicable by a fast follower	Defensible over time

The Founding Team Needs Four Capability Vectors.

Domain expertise, AI/ML engineering depth, commercial and regulatory navigation, and data/systems architecture. Startups that partner to fill gaps outperform those trying to build every function in-house.

Ten Gates, Completed in Sequence

Step 1: Founder-market fit → … → Step 10: Instrument for measurable outcomes

The full 10-step sequence, from founder-market fit to funding readiness: terencekok.com/blog/zero-one-ai-business-pre-planning-considerations

The Planning Stage Ends When All Ten Gates Are Passed — With Evidence, Not Assertions.

The full 10-step sequence for founder-market fit through funding readiness.

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