



RESOURCE 3

The AI Spend Sanity Check

Four questions before AI spend becomes speculative

USE THIS WHEN

Use this before signing off spend where the idea looks impressive, but the problem, workflow, data, or value is still not clear enough.

WHY IT MATTERS

AI spend becomes speculative when it solves a problem the business has not properly named. A strong business case should survive plain English questions from the CEO, COO, and CFO before money, people, or operational change are committed.

Question one: What problem are we solving?

- Avoid vague goals such as "improve efficiency" or "increase productivity." Name the actual business problem.
- Ask whether the problem is expensive, frequent, risky, or strategically important enough to justify an AI intervention.

Question 2: Have we fixed the workflow first?

- AI will not rescue a process that no one understands.
- If the workflow is inconsistent, unclear, or full of avoidable handoffs, simplify that first.

Question 3: Is the data ready for this use?

- Check whether the data is accurate, accessible, permissioned, and appropriate for the decision being made.
- Bad data does not become safe because a new system is placed on top of it.

Question four: What value will this create?

- Name the financial, operational, customer, or risk outcome you expect to improve.
- If the value cannot be measured or described clearly, approval should pause until the business case is stronger.



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Working Page

Use this page with your leadership team. If the answer is vague, leave it blank and treat that as useful evidence.

CHECK	QUESTION	ANSWER / EVIDENCE
PROBLEM STATEMENT	What specific business problem are we solving?	
WORKFLOW STATUS	Is the process clear enough to improve, or are we automating confusion?	
DATA READINESS	Is the data accurate, accessible, permissioned and appropriate for this use.	
EXPECTED VALUE	What value will be created, and how will we know?	
SIMPLER ALTERNATIVE	Is there a simpler process or decision fix we should try first?	

If you cannot clearly name the problem, assess the workflow and data, and explain the expected value, the decision is not ready. Take a Human Pause before approval.