

THE MODEL The Performance Bridge (Swarup Biswas, 2026) connects daily work to strategic results through a five-link causal chain. You design it top-down — strategy first, structure last — and run it bottom-up: structure enables actions, actions move drivers, drivers deliver outcomes, and outcomes prove the strategy. *"Build structure. Manage actions. Watch drivers. Outcomes follow."*

THE FIVE LINKS, APPLIED TO AI

Strategy · commit	A strategy is a diagnosis plus an approach. The Strategy Test asks one question: <i>what is in the way?</i> If no specific obstacle can be named, the AI programme is running on fear of missing out, and no result can ever be validated.
Outcomes · report	Baseline, target, validation. A claimed AI outcome must survive examination by an adversarial party — a union, a regulator, a journalist, an auditor. Announce nothing as achieved that is only projected.
Drivers · watch	The few measures connecting daily work to the outcome: leading (usage depth, workflows redesigned), lagging (cycle time, cost-to-serve), and vitality (trust, incidents, override rates). The link AI programmes most often skip.
Actions · manage	The one action that cannot be skipped is workflow redesign — reworking the process around what the AI now does. Place AI at the point of toil; sequence autonomy assist-first; run pilots that can prove failure as well as success.
Structure · build	Governed data, a sanctioned convenient AI channel, grounding in a source of truth, permission boundaries enforced in the system, evaluation infrastructure, training, and governance sized to risk. Structure persists without ongoing attention.

THE FOUR TRAPS, IN AI FORM

Traps 1 and 2 — the visible pair

- **Managing outcomes.** Projected savings announced as achieved results; the reversal arrives in public.
- **Activity without direction.** Licences, prompts, and raw adoption on the dashboard; 30–50% of seats sit unused while the value pipeline stays empty.

Traps 3 and 4 — the quiet pair

- **Demanding without enabling.** Usage mandates on a workforce given no training, no redesigned workflow, and no ready data.
- **Neglecting structure.** Over 80% of employees use unapproved AI tools; the vacuum of sanctioned tooling is where leakage and liability incidents happen.

DRIVER DISCIPLINE

Four tests every driver must pass

LINK	Moving this number genuinely moves the outcome.
MEASURE	It can be measured reliably and affordably.
WATCH	It updates fast enough to act on — a monthly pulse, never an annual survey.
COMPLETE	The set covers the outcome: hitting every driver cannot coexist with missing the goal.
COMMITMENT LEVELS	
• GUARDRAIL never breach (security incidents) · COMMITTED expected to hit (containment, cycle time) · STRETCH genuine ambition (first-year profit attribution).	

Counter-driver pairs — gaming made visible

Handle time	Pair with first-contact resolution and 24-hour re-contact rate.
Cost per contact	Pair with satisfaction, complaints, and escalations on AI-touched journeys.
Output volume	Pair with rework rate and downstream recipient ratings.
Adoption rate	Pair with output-quality audits on sampled work — graded usage is inflated usage.
METRIC UPGRADES	
• ✗ Licences bought, prompts sent, deflection rate, self-reported time saved	
• ✓ Weekly active depth, containment net of 24-hour re-contact, measured cycle time against baseline	

KEY INSIGHT The documented AI failures of 2023–2026 cluster at the **quiet ends of the chain** — no diagnosis at Strategy, no validation at Outcomes — while the visible explosions happen in the middle. Leadership leverage lives in Drivers and Structure, the two links most programmes neglect.

BEFORE YOU BUILD — THE THREE-CHECK GATE

Readiness	When someone surfaces an AI failure, are they thanked or punished? Blame culture silences the incident reporting all AI governance depends on. If readiness is missing, build safety first.
Data maturity	Levels 0–3, from not captured to real-time dashboard. A pilot in a process with no baseline data can never be proved to have worked; instrumenting the process is then the first AI investment.
Sponsorship	Ask before starting and record the answer: will you personally resolve the conflicts this creates? Chief-executive accountability roughly triples the rate of realised value (14% versus 4%).

THE ROADMAP

● FOUR PHASES, EACH GATED ON THE ONE BEFORE IT		
Phase 0	first weeks	Diagnose; run the three checks; Tier 1 controls and a sanctioned tool
Phase 1	first quarter	Lighthouse domains; 90-day baseline; charter with kill criteria; drivers
Phase 2	months 3–9	Assist-first pilots; redesign the workflow; Tier 2; kill weak pilots
Phase 3	month 9 +	Scale through structure; manage the portfolio; report against baseline
SME	weeks	Same sequence compressed: one tool, one workflow, one honest metric

THE EIGHT FAILURE MODES OF 2023–2026 — THE CATALOGUE

FAILURE MODE	WHAT HAPPENS	LINK BROKEN	EARLY WARNING	ANCHOR CASES
FM1 Adoption without diagnosis	The tool is adopted because competitors have one; with no baseline, no result can ever be validated	Strategy	No written diagnosis or baseline before money is spent	Chevrolet dealership bot; the abandonment statistics
FM2 Workflow not redesigned	AI is bolted onto an unchanged process; exceptions still flow to humans who are now fewer or slower	Actions	Share of workflows actually redesigned; exception-queue length	Klarna; McDonald's drive-thru; Taco Bell
FM3 Wrong autonomy level	Customer-facing or destructive authority granted beyond demonstrated reliability; or alert volume trains humans to dismiss everything	Actions, Structure	Override and escalation rates; adversarial tests before release	Replit agent; Air Canada; Cursor; Epic sepsis model
FM4 Data and structure not ready	No grounding source of truth, no sanctioned tooling, no audit trail; shadow use fills the vacuum	Structure	Data-maturity check; share of AI traffic outside sanctioned tools	Samsung; the Whisper clinical pipeline
FM5 Governance and legal gaps	Liability, disclosure, discrimination, and vendor-change controls are absent; the law attaches regardless	Structure	Registry coverage; contract-clause checklist	Air Canada; Deloitte Australia; hiring-bias cases
FM6 Trust and change failure	Staff, unions, or customers discover the substitution and withdraw trust; sabotage and workarounds follow	Structure	Trust pulse falling; workarounds and grievances rising	Commonwealth Bank cuts; Klarna; Taco Bell
FM7 Vanity metrics, unvalidated returns	Projected savings announced before outcomes are measured; volume and cost tracked instead of quality	Outcomes, Drivers	Counter-driver divergence: cost falls while quality falls	Klarna; Commonwealth Bank; Babylon Health
FM8 Vendor and model risk	The vendor overclaims, silently changes behaviour, regresses on update, or fails commercially — and it lands on the employer	Structure	Vendor-assessment currency; update regression tests	DPD chatbot; NEDA Tessa; Salesloft Drift

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AS A MEASURED DISCIPLINE

The vitality drivers

- Trust in AI outputs, displacement fear, shadow-usage rate, incident reporting rate, human-override rate, rework burden, redeployment of freed time, skill progression.
- The inversion rule:** early in a transition, rising incident reports are good news — the alarming signal is an empty register beside heavy usage.

Security in three tiers

- Tier 1** (every firm, weeks): acceptable-use policy, sanctioned default tool, payment verification against deepfakes.
- Tier 2** (broad use): contracts, AI inventory, data-loss prevention, human sign-off on high-stakes outputs.
- Tier 3** (agentic, regulated): red-teaming, least privilege, and the Agents Rule of Two — no agent holds untrusted inputs, sensitive data, and external actions at once without human approval.

THE HINGE, AND THE BUSINESS CASE

Clearing the hinge: identify, own, act

- Between design and execution sits a critical blocker — the one obstacle that makes execution impossible rather than merely harder. Until it is removed, improving everything else improves nothing.
- Identify** the wall among the typical six: the legal sign-off queue, the unfunded people-and-process work, blocked data access, an unresolved sponsor conflict, AI bought like ordinary software, and the unbuilt labour agreement.
- Own:** the most senior leader removes it personally; the programme lead only escalates.
- Act** on a deadline, because tolerated blockers calcify into the way things are done.

The credible business case, in eight parts

- 1 · A diagnosis with a quantified do-nothing counterfactual 2 · A measured baseline (roughly 90 days) 3 · Full cost of ownership including tokens, integration, and the people-and-process line 4 · Benefits stated in one named ledger — utilisation, capacity, or headcount, never conflated 5 · A conservative scenario 6 · A multi-year adoption ramp 7 · Kill criteria agreed in advance 8 · A named accountable owner.
- The most common inflation:** booking gross time savings as value; hours become value only when their redeployment is designed and measured.

WHAT 43 DOCUMENTED CASES SHOW, READ TOGETHER

- Success is a complete chain.** Fourteen of the twenty-one validated successes ran all five links well; the winning profile is the absence of a broken link, not excellence at one.
- Failures compound.** Thirteen of the failure and caution cases broke at two or more links, and the links that broke most often — Structure and Drivers, eleven cases each — are exactly the two the book identifies as the seat of leadership leverage.
- The most common condition at Outcomes is silence.** In nineteen of forty-three cases the public record contains no validated outcome at all: no baseline, no audited result, no independent check.

KEY INSIGHT Roughly **70 per cent of the effort in a successful AI transformation is people and process change**, yet the commonly observed budget puts 80 per cent into platforms and tools. Fund the human work, or the transformation stalls with the tooling deployed and nothing else in place.

GO DEEPER This sheet summarises *The Performance Bridge* (Swarup Biswas, 2026) applied to AI transition. The full discipline — the tests, the traps, the hinge, and the vitality ledger — is in the book: ai-transition-framework.vercel.app/the-performance-bridge.html routes to the Amazon store for your region. The interactive explorer with the 43-case library is at ai-transition-framework.vercel.app.