THE AI STAIRWAY™ · SELF-CHECK

Where is your organisation, area by area?

For each area, tick the highest level where you can show the evidence today, consistently. Not sure? That's a check to make, not a fail. Your areas will land at different levels, and the shape tells you more than any average.

Leadership and ownership

- ☐ **Early** (steps 0–1): You can name the one person who owns AI adoption, and find the written position on allowed tools, dated within the last year.
- ☐ **Practising** (steps 2–3): In the last month a senior leader showed their team how they use AI, including something that didn't work.
- ☐ **Building** (steps 4–5): Every live AI workflow has a named owner who isn't the AI lead, a dated next step, a decision date and a fallback.

Process and measurement

- ☐ **Early** (steps 0–1): You can list, from asking people, the three to five recurring tasks where AI is already used.
- ☐ **Practising** (steps 2–3): At least one recurring task has a written current best way, and you recorded its time or rework before.
- ☐ **Building** (steps 4–5): At least one workflow reports turnaround, rework and exceptions against a pre-build baseline every month, and someone has decided what the saved time is for.

Data and systems

- ☐ **Early** (steps 0–1): Someone has checked who can see what in your main shared files before the approved tool is connected to them.
- ☐ **Practising** (steps 2–3): The documents your best AI-assisted task relies on are in one place, current and owned.
- ☐ **Building** (steps 4–5): An AI workflow reads from the system of record through an approved connection, and a second workflow uses the same source.

Security and oversight

- ☐ **Early** (steps 0–1): Staff can find the guidance on what must never go into an AI tool in under a minute, and you've asked anonymously how many use personal tools.
- ☐ **Practising** (steps 2–3): There's a risk-tiered approval route: low-risk uses need no committee, and you know how long the last approval took.
- ☐ **Building** (steps 4–5): Each agent has a fixed set of test cases re-run after every change, a record of what it did, and a fallback someone has actually used.

People and delivery capacity

- ☐ **Early** (steps 0–1): You know what share of staff used the approved tool last week, and who has had any training.
- ☐ **Practising** (steps 2–3): Every team has practice time in the diary this month, and your best users can say what sharing has earned them, other than more work.
- ☐ **Building** (steps 4–5): Someone other than the original champion has built or changed an AI workflow, and the work kept going through the champion's last holiday.

Step 6 is when building is true in most areas. Mark your people as well as your organisation, and look again in six months.

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