

Last week I wrote about building an AI system from scratch in 98 days, and the three times it technically worked but the output was unusable.

The most common reply was the same question: what does this change? Six things. Here is the list.



1. Redefine "done" before the sprint starts.

Done in AI means: working correctly, with the current model, on the current data, within the current prompt structure. Any of those three can change mid-programme. The definition of done must account for all three from day one.

2. Treat model changes as delivery events.

Switching model families is not a configuration task. One model switch broke three separate extraction points in my build simultaneously. From now on, any model change triggers a full regression pass before anything reaches a stakeholder.

3. Make output reconciliation a sprint exit criterion.

If two systems produce the same type of output, they must reconcile in the interface before the sprint closes. Not before go-live. Before the sprint closes. Contradictory outputs in front of a stakeholder end adoption.

4. Build human review gates into the success criteria.

AI outputs that feed calculations, decisions, or reports need a defined human checkpoint written into the delivery criteria at programme initiation. Not added later. Not treated as change management.

5. Run end-to-end tests at every phase gate.

I declared a phase complete, then found 16 issues in a single end-to-end session. Feature complete is not delivery ready. Every phase gate now includes a full end-to-end pass as a mandatory exit criterion.

6. Measure stakeholder trust explicitly.

Traditional RAG reports do not capture this. Contradictory outputs and non-deterministic behaviour erode trust before any risk flag turns red. Trust signals go on the dashboard from sprint one.

None of these are in any PMO framework I have used in 20 years.

All of them are obvious once you have deployed.

If this resonates and you run programmes where AI is part of the delivery, I am putting together a small founding group of programme leaders.

Drop me a direct message or find me at www.alfafintec.com

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