



Practical guide

Exiting AI Pilot Purgatory

How to move AI initiatives from POCs to real business value in 6–8 weeks

Author:

Katia Cassano



Automation and Augmentation: a Matter of Balance

Automation and augmentation are not opposites.

The problem starts when one dominates without an explicit decision.

Automation drives efficiency and speed.

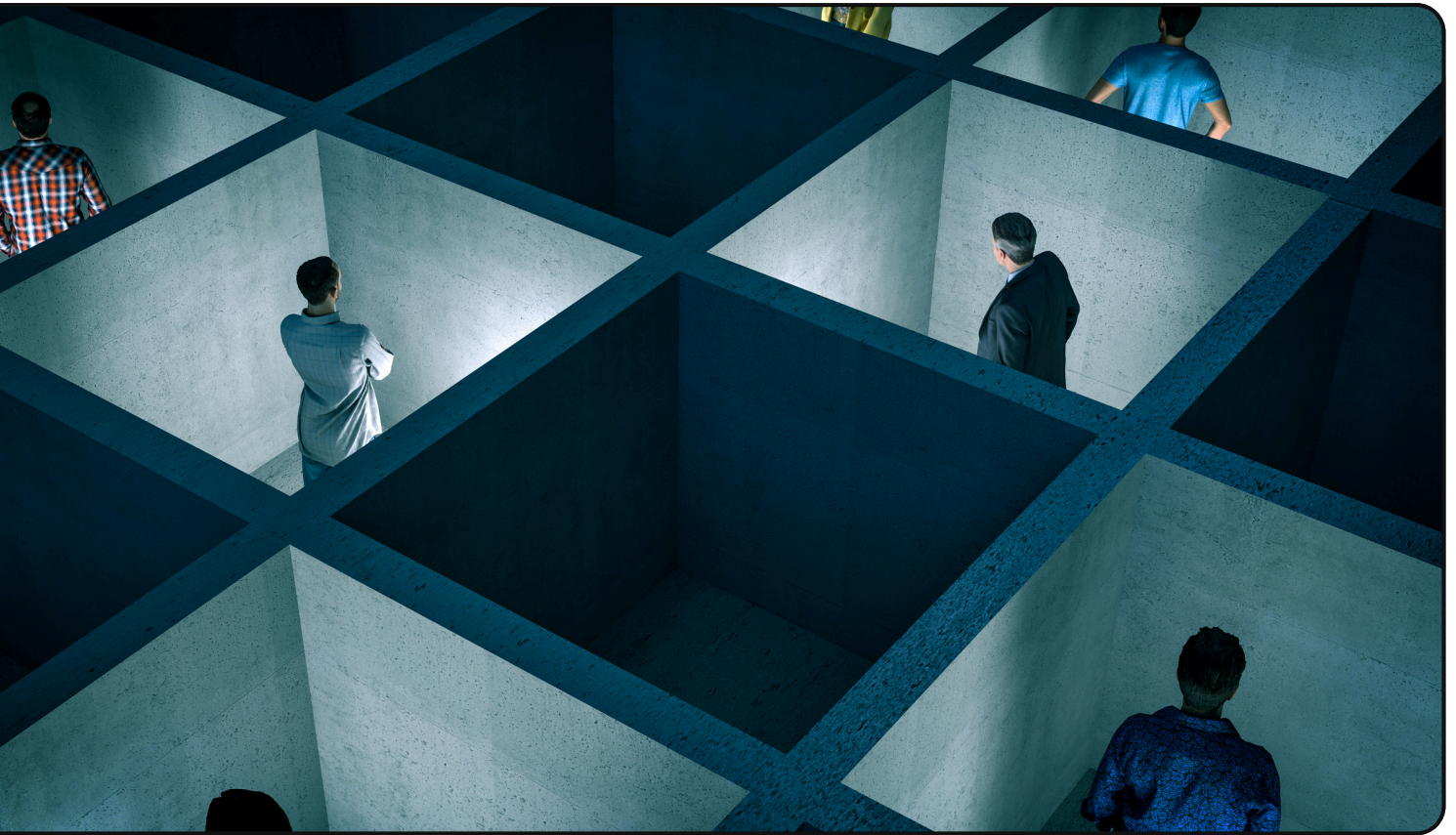
Augmentation improves decision quality and long-term resilience.

Organizations stuck in *AI Pilot Purgatory* don't fail technically.

They fail to **govern the balance** between the two.

Getting out of Pilot Purgatory means deciding **where to automate, where to augment, and how to govern both.**

The K-Compass makes this balance visible across purpose, people, process, governance, and customer value.

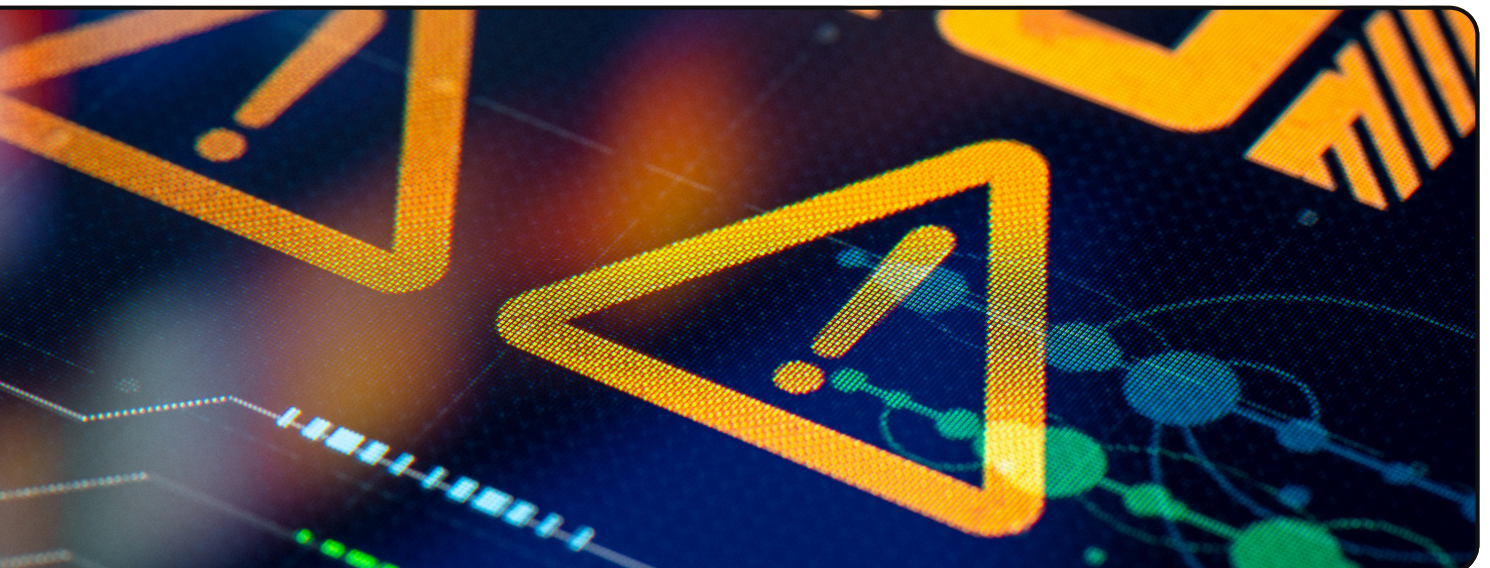


What is AI Pilot Purgatory?

Many companies have numerous POCs, compelling demos, and promising models in the lab, but no real value in production. This is the state where AI gets stuck between experimentation and delivery, is what we call AI Pilot Purgatory. It's not just a technical problem, but above all an organizational, cultural, and governance one.

The signs that you're in it

- more than three active POCs and none in production.
- models that perform well in the lab but fail in real-world environments.
- conflict between IT, Business and Data Science.
- slow or unresolved decisions.
- compliance and risk introduced too late.
- ROI is unclear and only hypothetical.
- frustrated teams and loss of motivation.



Why it really happens

01

Automation-first mindset

AI designed only for cost reduction, not for increasing decision-making capacity and quality.

02

Roadmap Theatre

Roadmaps built to satisfy internal politics rather than generate business outcomes.

03

Blame-Driven Delivery

Fear of failure blocks experimentation and organizational learning.

04

Compliance-as-Afterthought

Regulatory and risk managed at the end rather than by-design.

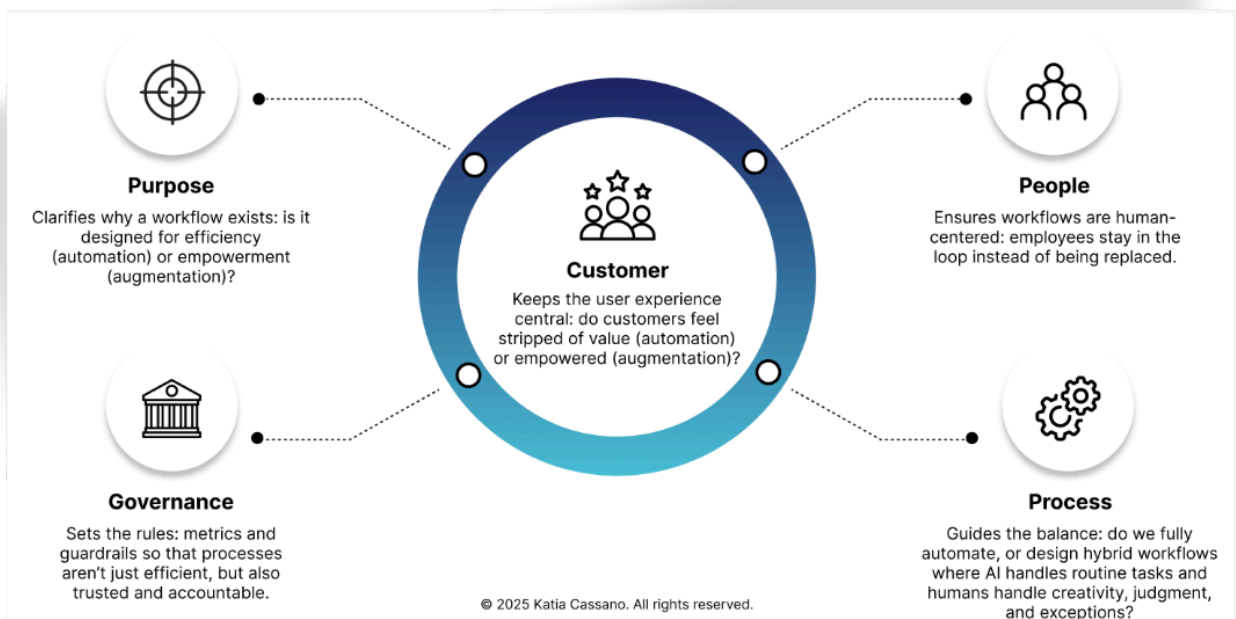
05

Wrong metrics

We measure the accuracy of the model, not its actual business impact.

The model for getting out of it: K-Compass

The K-Compass is a framework for bringing AI into production in a way that is measurable, responsible, sustainable and without a blame culture.



It helps balance automation and augmentation and works across five interconnected axes:

- **Purpose:** why does AI truly exist here?
- **People:** who decides, who uses it, who owns the outcomes?
- **Process:** how does real work change?
- **Governance:** how are risk, priorities, and accountability managed?
- **Customer:** what value is actually perceived?



Playbook 6–8 weeks

Week 1-2

No-Blame Review

Let's map out what we've done so far without hunting down the culprits and reconstruct decisions, constraints, and lessons learned.

Week 3-4

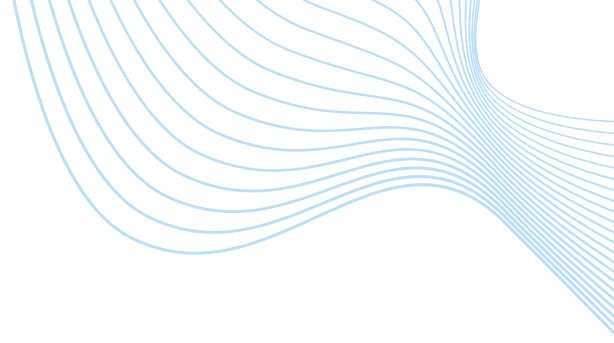
Outcome & Risk Reset

We define measurable business outcomes and design risk and compliance by design.

Week 5-6

Experiment & Rollout

We conduct high-learning experiments with human-in-the-loop and progressive rollout.

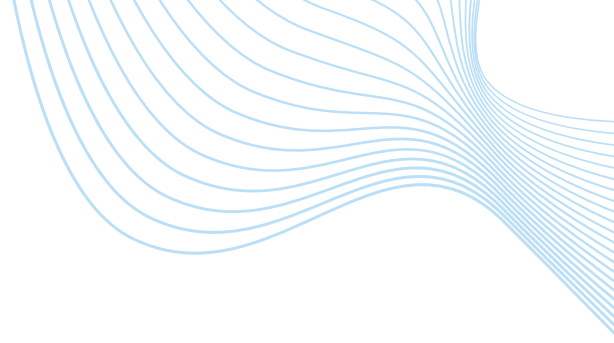


Checklist finale

You're ready to leave Pilot Purgatory if you have:

- clear and shared outcomes.
- a defined owner.
- a documented decision log.
- risk & compliance by design.
- a human-in-the-loop where it matters
- business metrics, not just model metrics.





Let's define your next chapter.

Get in touch to assess your context and book an AI Recovery Call:



info@katiacassano.com



www.katiacassano.com