The Real Reason AI Fails in Business: Adoption, Not Models

Turning PoC applause into behaviour change at scale

Dilshat Uteshev · London 2026 · Chief AI Officer Summit UK
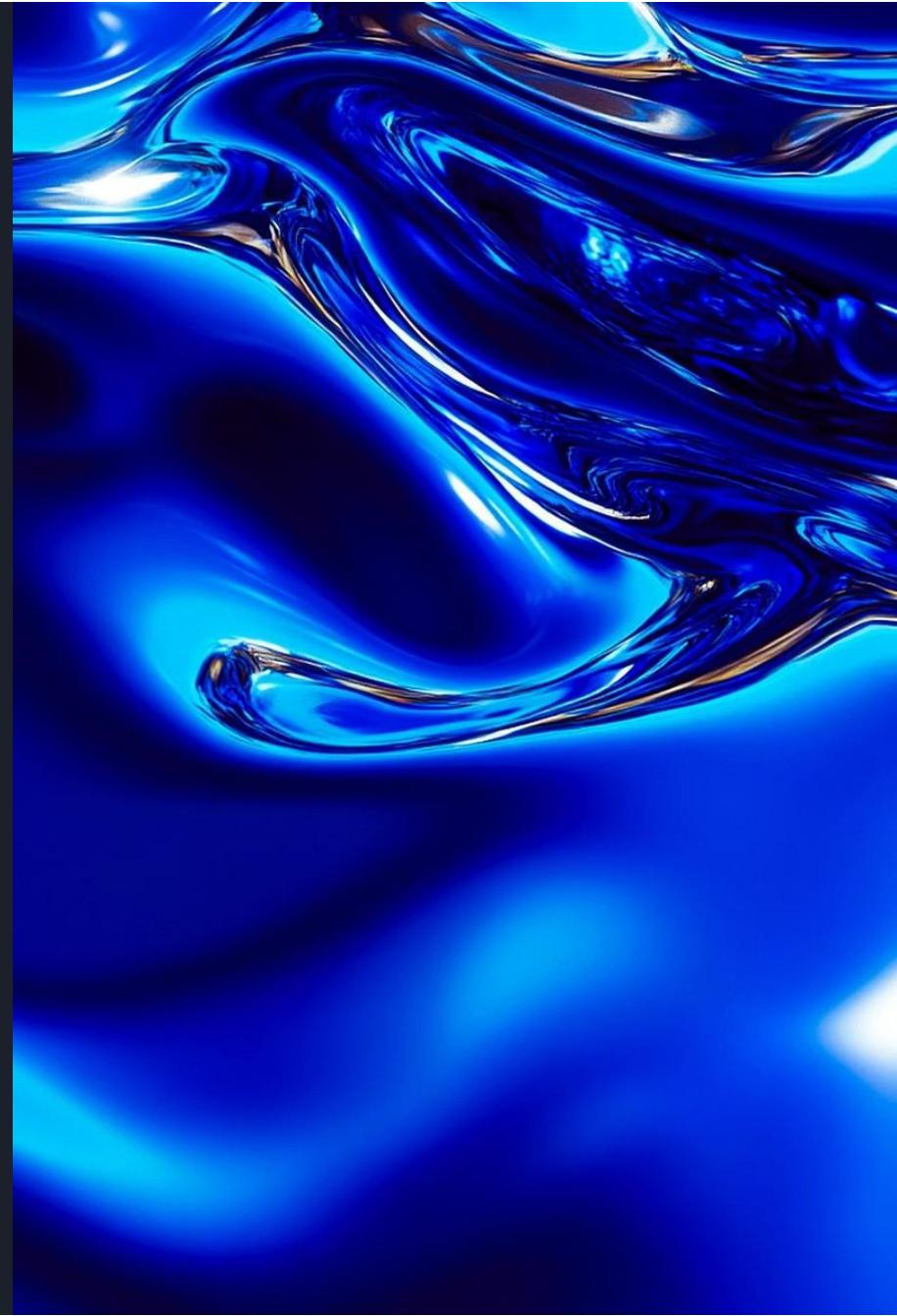
The Demo Deception

PoCs create applause, not change

Value =Behaviour Change ×Reach

Adoption is a system, not a feature

Most pilots don't fail because the AI didn't work 4 they fail because the org didn't change

Myth: "Launch and they will come"

On Paper

' Metrics look good, targets achieved.

In Reality

o Behavior remains unchanged, no real impact.

Pilot b Rollout

Adoption =Behaviour Change

True value comes from effective usage under real-world pressure.

Sceptics

Need proof before trust. In enterprises 4 often compliance and senior management.

Adopters

Want to use it but lack guidelines, training, or permission.

Champions

Drive peer adoption through stories and demonstration.

Design for all three, or adoption dies in the middle management layer.

Where Adoption Breaks: Fear >Features

A single 'near-miss' moment can shatter trust completely, leading to a complete collapse in usage

Technical Success, Usage Failure

AI may technically "work," but effective usage dies off

Accountability Shift

Old way: slow +shared accountability

vs New way: fast +exposed accountability

Uncertainty Kills Adoption

Uncertainty about AI's impact kills adoption faster than any technical failure

Fear kills AI faster than bugs

My experience behind this lens

- Shipped AI into regulated enterprises (banking, pharma) 4 saw PoCs pass and still fail in usage

- Worked with startups and buyers 4 on both sides of the adoption wall

- Today: not stacks 4 how adoption actually happens (or doesn't)

J.P.Morgan   GSK   accenture

Views are my own. Logos for identification, not endorsement.

Pattern: One Role · One Job · One Metric

You're not deploying AI · you're delivering a better outcome under constraints

One Role

Named owner, not "the department"

One Job

Recurring, measurable, high-friction task

One Metric

Defensible ROI the budget holder can take upstairs

> If it aims to help everyone, no one owns it · no owner, no budget, no scale.

Pattern: Guardrails Create Confidence

People don't fear AI 4 they fear not knowing when to trust it

Policy-as-UX 4 build guardrails into the product, not a PDF

Red zones

These give sceptics confidence that there are **<sacred areas= AI won9t cross**

Rules of use

These create **clear accountability chains**

Controls

These give day-to-day users confidence **they9re never trapped** 4 Explain, Undo, Flag.

Trust isn't a feature. It's the absence of fear.

Pattern: Rituals Make It Stick

Teams learn from their own golden examples. If it doesn't enter team lore, it fades.

1 **Team-by-Team Adoption**

Adoption happens team by team, not org-wide

2 **Champions Share Stories**

Champions share stories 4 they normalise, not "train"

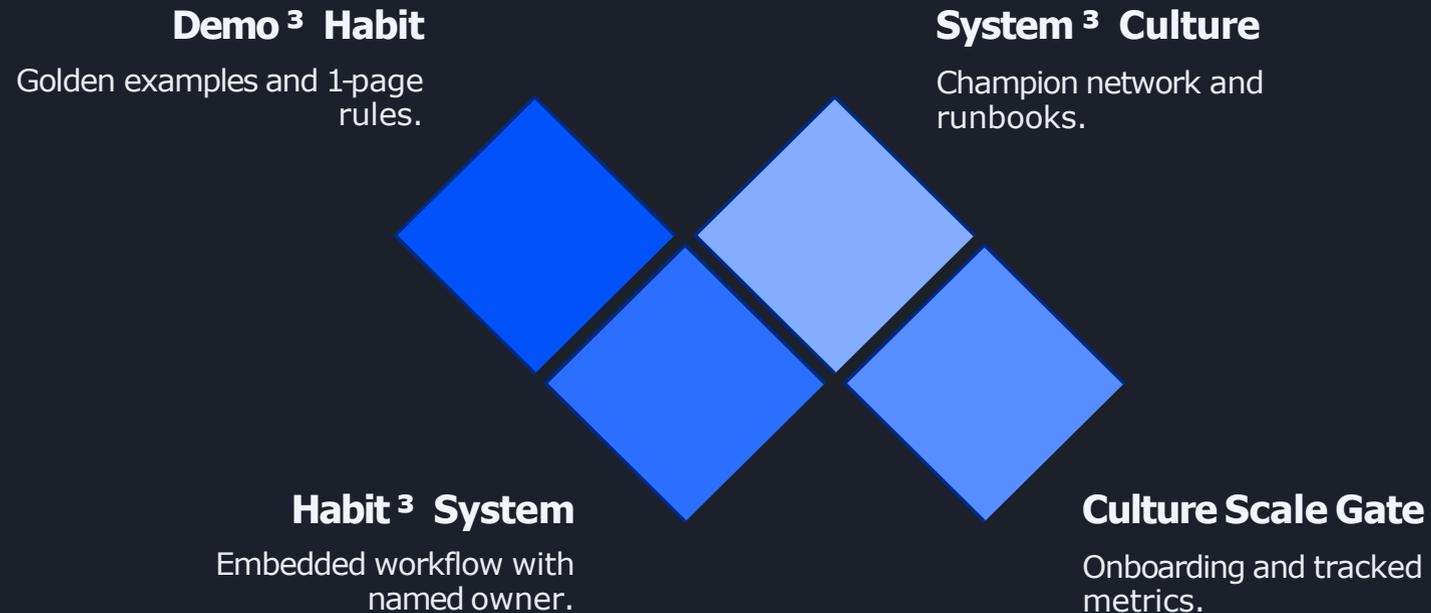**3** **Embed in Rituals**

Rituals >training: weekly wins, live demos, peer showcases

You don't 'enable' AI 4 you embed it into rituals

Demo ³ Habit ³ System ³ Culture

Pass the gate before you scale.

Demo ³ Habit
Golden examples and 1-page rules.

System ³ Culture
Champion network and runbooks.

Habit ³ System
Embedded workflow with named owner.

Culture Scale Gate
Onboarding and tracked metrics.

Most enterprises are stuck between Demo and Habit. The gates are organisational, not technical.

Proof in the Wild: AI Inside the IDE (SWE)

AI wins when it disappears into the workflow

What "Inside" Looks Like

- Repo-aware chat and edits
- Multi-model calls under the hood
- Autonomy sliders for control, **on a leash:** tap K block K file K repo

Why It Scales

- Fewer context switches for developers
- PR-gated safety mechanisms
- Habits form where devs live
- IDE native

The "So What"

This category perfectly illustrates the adoption law:

Embed +Guardrails +Rituals (habits) [3] Persistent Usage

When AI becomes an invisible co-pilot, it becomes indispensable.

Enterprise Leader Self-Check

Who is the **named adoption owner** 4 not just the executive sponsor?

Where does AI live in the **actual workflow** 4 not as a separate tool?

How will you teach and re-teach **the habit** 4 beyond the launch workshop?

What happens when someone **makes a mistake with AI**?

What makes this the **default way** of working in 6 months?

If any answer is fuzzy, pause and sharpen 4 then scale.

Thank You

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