

# The 10-Step AI Execution Framework

How to turn broken processes into AI-powered workflows in 3 weeks · By Priyanka Wadhwa, Let's Execute AI

This framework works for teams of 5–50 with at least one process that eats 5+ hours a week. It will not work if you just want to "use AI," need a strategy deck, or are not willing to cut steps. **Audit the workflow first. Then automate.**

## BEFORE YOU START · 4 NON-NEGOTIABLES

01

### A Process That Hurts

Not "AI would be nice." A real pain. Something that eats time, causes errors, or makes good people quit. If nobody complains about it weekly, pick a different target.

02

### The Person Who Does the Work

Not the manager. The human who opens the spreadsheet every morning. You need 2 hours of their time. Non-negotiable.

03

### Permission to Kill

This framework will ask you to throw away parts of your process. You need someone who can say "we're done doing that" and make it stick.

04

### A 3-Week Window

Not 3 months. Not 3 days. 3 weeks to build, test, and hand over. If you're mid-fundraise, bookmark this and come back.

**Missing any of these?** Don't start. Fix the gap first. I've watched companies waste 6 months because they skipped a prerequisite and built on sand.

## PHASE 1 · AUDIT (STEPS 1-5)

### 1 The Shadow

Spend 2 hours watching someone do the exact process you are about to automate. Not to understand it — to see what is really happening. The workarounds. The time sucks. The things done the same way for 3 years they cannot articulate. Bring a notebook. No laptop — it changes behaviour. End with one question: **"If you could delete one part of this, what would it be?"** That answer is where you start.

### 2 The Leak Finder

Draw every person and system involved. Draw arrows for every time data moves — email, copy-paste, phone, Slack, manual entry. Count the arrows. **Anything over 4 is bleeding time.** Circle every arrow where a human is doing what a script could do. Those circles are your automation targets.

### 3 The One Thing That Actually Matters

For every step, ask: "Could a new hire do this on day one with written instructions?" If yes — data movement, mark for automation. If no — you found a decision point. That is the human skill. **Most processes have 1–2 real decisions buried under 15–20 steps of data shuffling.** Protect the decisions. Kill the shuffling.

### 4 The Kill List

Apply the 6-month test to every report, dashboard, and recurring task: **"If we stopped doing this 6 months ago, would anyone have noticed?"** No = delete it. Maybe = 2-week watch list. Yes, a client would call = keep it. You will find 30–50% of the process fails this test. Every single time.

### 5 The Ugly First Version

Build the ugliest thing that works. One data source out of four. Five clients out of fifty. Wire it end to end: data in, output out, delivered to the person who needs it. This should take days, not weeks. **Nobody believes a plan. Nobody trusts a roadmap. But show someone their Tuesday report generated automatically on Monday night — now you have their attention.**

**6 The Reality Check**

Run yesterday's actual work through your pipeline. Put outputs side by side — your pipeline vs. the team's manual version. Every difference is either a bug to fix or a mistake the team was making that you just caught. If your pipeline cannot survive yesterday's mess, it will not survive tomorrow's.

**7 The Ghost Run**

Run both systems in parallel for one full week. Your pipeline runs automatically. The team keeps doing their manual work. Compare everything at week's end. **You need to handle 100% before you switch. 90% means the team goes back to the old way the first time something falls through.**

**8 The Safety Net**

Before going live, build three things: an alert for when the pipeline stops, a fallback holding the last successful output, and a log showing exactly where things broke. **The team's biggest fear is not that the new system will fail. It is that it will fail silently.** Remove that fear first.

**9 The Owner, Not the Committee**

Pick one person. Sit with them. Walk through every scenario. Show them where things break and how to fix it. Make them the expert. When someone has a question, they go to this person. **"We all know how it works" means nobody knows how it works.**

**10 Burn the Boats**

Do not sunset the old process. Do not phase it out. **Delete the old spreadsheet. Remove access to the old workflow. Make it physically impossible to go back.** If the old way is still available, someone will use it just this once under pressure. Then again the week after. Then it is back.

## AFTER THE 10 STEPS · WHAT COMES NEXT

**Week 4-6**

**The next process.** The team picks it. Once they see one workflow disappear, they start pointing at others. Let them choose — the one they hate most is usually the right next target.

**Month 2-3**

**Connect the pipelines.** Isolated automations save time. Connected automations change how the business operates. The output of one feeds the input of another. This is where the compounding starts.

**Month 3+**

**The team builds their own.** When they start saying "can we automate this?" instead of "can you automate this?" — you are done. That is the real win.