

The First 90 Days with AI on Your Team

A BEHAVIOURAL SCIENTIST'S FIELD GUIDE FOR LEADERS · DR KEITH O'BRIEN

Most AI rollouts don't fail on the technology. They fail on the humans around it: roughly **70% of AI transformations stall on organisational factors**, not technical ones. The first 90 days set the pattern. Here is what the behavioural science says to do with them.

Days 1–30 · Lower the cost of trying

- 1 Pick one personally useful task per person, not one strategic use case per department.** Adoption follows relief, not vision statements.
- 2 Take performance measurement off the table while people experiment.** Nobody explores a tool they're being graded on. Psychological safety is an adoption technology.
- 3 Use it visibly yourself.** Behaviour copies behaviour. A leader who delegates AI adoption has already communicated its priority.

Days 31–60 · Build the habit loop

- 4 Anchor AI use to an existing routine** (the Monday report, the meeting prep, the inbox triage). New behaviours survive by attaching to old ones.
- 5 Make wins social.** A two-line 'what I automated this week' ritual beats a training module. Social proof is the strongest adoption lever you have.
- 6 Name the anxiety.** Some of your team are privately wondering if they're training their replacement. Unspoken fear doesn't disappear; it becomes quiet resistance. Say the thing.

Days 61–90 · Shift from use to judgment

- 7 Teach the override.** Celebrate the person who caught the AI being confidently wrong, louder than the person who used it most.
- 8 Treat AI output as an argument, not an answer.** Ask 'under what conditions does this stop being true?' in one meeting per week, out loud.
- 9 Review what you stopped doing.** If nothing was retired after 90 days, you added workload, not capability.

The pattern behind all nine: AI adoption is a behaviour change problem. Capability, opportunity, motivation; most rollouts fund only one of the three.

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