

A KMS WORKBOOK

# The Four Friction Quadrants

A self-diagnostic for finding where AI actually belongs in your business.

A 30-minute working exercise used by KMS during the Lighthouse Approach. Now in your hands.

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**KMS – Knowledge Management Solutions**

Master Reseller for Allmates.ai across Southeast Asia

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# Most AI projects fail for the same reason.

Ask five business leaders where AI should go in their company, and you'll hear five versions of "customer service chatbots" and "automated reporting." Both are reasonable answers. Neither tells you where AI will actually create value in your business.

The businesses that succeed with AI don't start with the technology. They start with friction — the real, observable, daily friction in how the business operates. Manual work that shouldn't be manual. Decisions that take too long. Knowledge that sits in one person's head. Opportunities that keep getting missed because no one has time.

AI doesn't belong wherever it technically can go. It belongs wherever friction is expensive and the work is patterned.

This workbook helps you find those places in your own business.

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## How to use it:

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### Block out 30 minutes

Walk through the four quadrants in order.

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### List your frictions honestly

For each quadrant, list the frictions you can honestly see in your business today. Don't filter for what AI "can" do — just describe what's broken, slow, or expensive.

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### Leave with a ranked list

At the end, you'll have a ranked list of specific AI opportunities, grounded in your actual operations. Not theory. Not hype.

# Four quadrants. One complete picture of where friction hides.

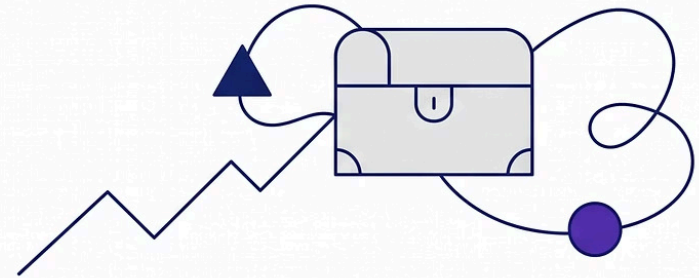
Every business has friction. It just hides in different places depending on who's looking. Over dozens of AI engagements, we've found that almost every meaningful AI opportunity sits inside one of four quadrants.

## BOTTLENECKS



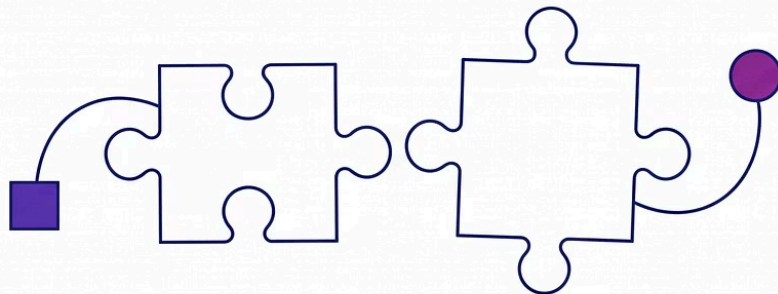
**Where time goes to die — manual repetitive work that consumes hours and produces little.**

## MISSED OPPORTUNITIES



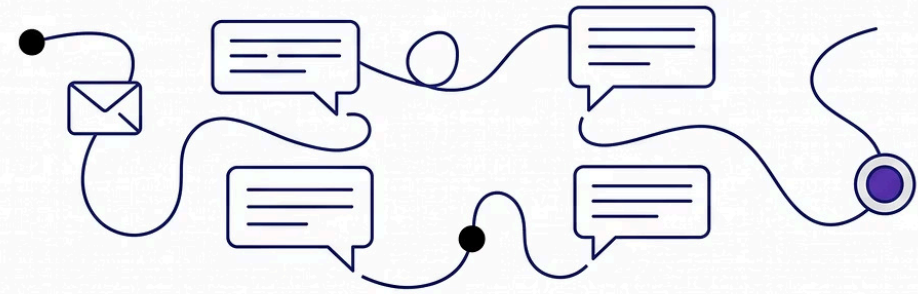
**What the team knows it should be doing and never has capacity for.**

## STRATEGIC GAPS



**Capabilities the business needs but doesn't have because no one on the team has them.**

## COMMUNICATION VOIDS



**Knowledge, context, and alignment that fails to flow between the right people at the right time.**

The next four pages walk you through each quadrant with specific prompts. Work through them in order. Don't skip quadrants — even if one seems unfamiliar. The value of this diagnostic is that it surfaces friction you don't already see.

# Bottlenecks – Where time goes to die.

Bottlenecks are the work that consumes disproportionate team time without producing proportionate value. They're usually manual, repetitive, and obvious to the people doing them – but invisible to everyone above them in the org chart.

✔ Bottlenecks are the easiest quadrant to surface and often the fastest to relieve. They're usually where an AI deployment pays for itself in the first 90 days.

## Diagnostic prompts:

Ask yourself, or ask the person running each function:

What work do you or your team do every day, every week, every month – that takes hours and produces a document, report, or file that almost no one reads closely?	Where in your operations does a human spend most of their time on moving information rather than deciding anything?	Which employee (or employees) routinely work evenings or weekends to keep up with the workload – and is that workload mostly repetitive?
Where do approval chains take longer than the actual work they're approving?	What task does everyone hate doing but nobody has ever tried to fix?	

## Write your bottlenecks here:

For each bottleneck, add:

- Who does it? (Function or role)
- How many hours per week does it consume?
- What would be possible if those hours came back?

### Bottleneck 1

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### Bottleneck 2

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### Bottleneck 3

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# Missed Opportunities – What should be happening but isn't.

Missed opportunities are the things your team knows should be happening – and never has the capacity to do. They're the proactive work that keeps getting deferred. The follow-ups that never happen. The analyses that never get run. The experiments no one has time for.

ⓘ These are often the most valuable quadrant to address, because they represent upside rather than just efficiency. A bottleneck solved gives you hours back. A missed opportunity captured gives you growth.

## Diagnostic prompts:

What proactive work would you do if the team had spare capacity – that you know would create value?

Which customers, leads, or partners are you not following up with because nobody has time?

What patterns in your data would you analyse if someone had the hours to analyse them?

Where are you losing potential revenue because nobody's systematically checking for it?

What quarterly initiative has been on your roadmap for three quarters and hasn't started?

## Write your missed opportunities here:

For each missed opportunity, add:

- What value do you estimate it's worth (revenue, retention, growth)?
- What's the one reason it's not happening today?
- Is it a capacity problem, a capability problem, or a prioritisation problem?

### Opportunity 1

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### Opportunity 2

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### Opportunity 3

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# Strategic Gaps — Capabilities you need but don't have.

Strategic gaps are the skills, analyses, and capabilities your business needs to compete — that no one on your team possesses or has time to build. Unlike missed opportunities (which you could do with more hours), strategic gaps require expertise you don't currently have.

⚠ These are often invisible to leadership because the business has been running without them for so long that their absence feels normal.

## Diagnostic prompts:

What decisions do you make with gut feel today because no one can run the analysis that would inform them better?

What do competitors clearly do — that your team doesn't know how to do?

Where do you pay external consultants or specialists because your team can't do it in-house?

What analyses do you wish you could run but don't even know where to start?

What capability gap would you hire for if you could find the right person?

## Write your strategic gaps here:

For each strategic gap, add:

- What's the business impact of not having this capability?
- How have you been working around it?
- If you could solve this, what decision or initiative would get unlocked?

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### Gap 2

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### Gap 3

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# Communication Voids – Where knowledge stops flowing.

Communication voids are where information, context, and alignment fail to reach the people who need them. Knowledge sits in one person's head. A conversation that happened in Bangkok never makes it to the team in Singapore. A customer's preferences get captured in an email thread and disappear from organisational memory.

☐ These voids are the quietest quadrant – they rarely cause visible failures. They cause quiet, cumulative drag on everything else.

## Diagnostic prompts:

What knowledge lives in one person's head that would hurt the business if they left tomorrow?

Where do your teams duplicate work because nobody knew someone else had already done it?

What information does your sales team wish they knew about a prospect that your operations team actually has?

Where do customer conversations die once they leave the customer-facing team?

What question does your team answer for external parties over and over – that should be answered by a system, not a person?

## Write your communication voids here:

For each communication void, add:

- Which two or more roles or teams are affected?
- What's the consequence – what goes wrong because the information doesn't flow?
- Who would benefit most if the void was closed?

### Void 1

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### Void 2

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### Void 3

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# You've just done Lighthouse Phase 1. In 30 minutes. By yourself.

If you completed this workbook honestly, you now have something most businesses never produce: a ranked, specific, operationally-grounded list of where AI could create value in your business.

This is exactly the output of Phase 1 of our Lighthouse Approach – the flagship 8-week engagement KMS runs for clients deploying AI for the first time.

## Three ways to use what you've just built:

1

### Prioritise on your own

Look at your four lists. For each friction, score it on two dimensions: **impact** (how much value closing it would create) and **velocity** (how quickly it could be addressed). The top-right quadrant – high impact, high velocity – is your first AI deployment candidate.

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### Share it internally

Your workbook is a conversation starter. Walk a co-founder, a function lead, or a board member through your four lists. You'll often find they add frictions you missed – and disagree on priorities. That disagreement is where the real clarity comes from.

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### Let us turn it into a Blueprint

If your list has something that feels worth building against, bring it to us. A 30-minute Lighthouse scoping call translates your workbook into a formal Blueprint – the kind that serves as the basis for a real 8-week AI pilot with measured ROI.

**i** **Next step:** Book a 30-minute Lighthouse scoping call with KMS.  
[www.kms-world.com/lighthouse](http://www.kms-world.com/lighthouse) or email us at [ask@kms-world.com](mailto:ask@kms-world.com)