

FIELD GUIDE 04

A UK field guide

Current to June 2026

THE IGNITE ALMANACK OF **GOVERNANCE IN A WEEK**

How to make AI safe in a week, so your
team actually uses it.

A FIELD GUIDE FOR UK SMES

IGNITEAI SOLUTIONS

THE PROBLEM

Governance sounds like the brake. So it gets skipped.

Most owners hear "AI governance" and picture lawyers, delay, and a document nobody reads. So they park it, roll the tools out, and hope. Meanwhile the team is already using AI with no rules at all.

Skip the rules and you get two failures at once. The cautious freeze, too scared to touch AI in case they break something. The keen press on, pasting client data into free tools to get ahead. Same root cause both times. Nobody drew the edges.

Governance earned its bad name honestly. It usually arrives as a 40-page policy that lands once, gets filed, and dies. A document like that does nothing for safety and nothing for adoption. It just sits there looking responsible.

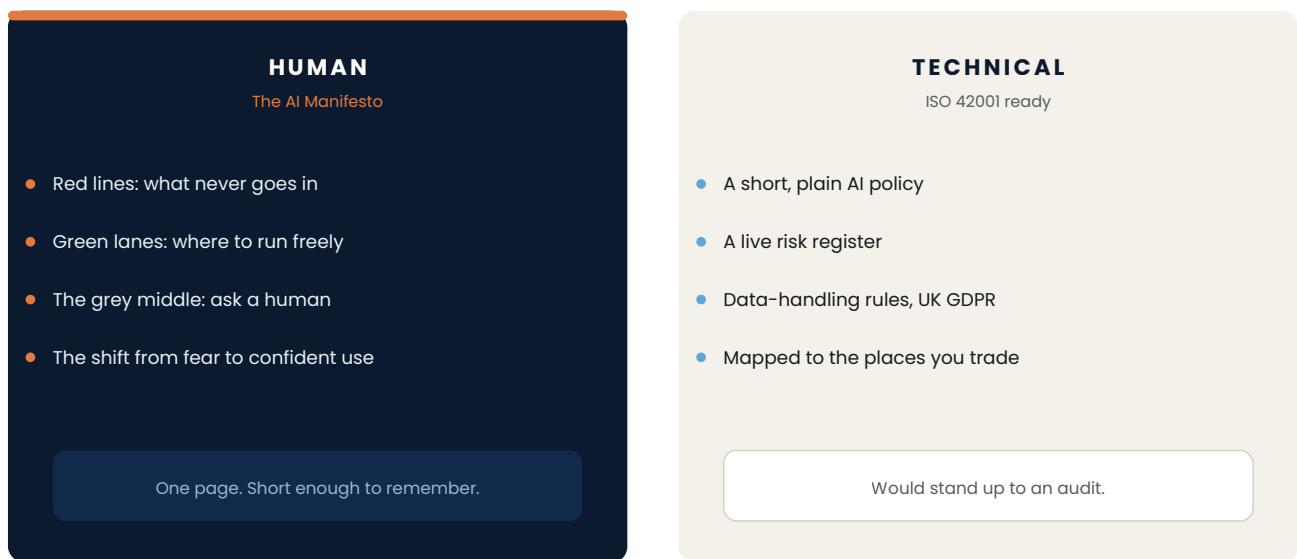
WHY THIS MATTERS

With no red lines, every employee makes their own call about what is safe to paste into a chatbot. You are carrying the risk of a hundred private decisions you never saw. The fix is not a bigger document. It is a clear set of edges, written fast and actually used.

THE IDEA

Write the red lines first, and adoption follows.

This sounds backwards and it holds up across every engagement. People use AI freely once they know where the edges are. The thing holding a team back is the fear of getting it wrong. Give them clear green lanes and clear red lines and that fear goes. Governance done well is the green light.



Two fronts, run together. The human manifesto sets the culture, the technical layer makes it stand up. Adoption is what you get when both are in place.

What governance actually contains.

Stripped of the jargon, it is two short things working together. One is for your people, one is for your systems. Neither needs to be long to be real.

The front	What goes in it
Human, the AI Manifesto	The red lines that are never crossed, the green lanes where people go freely, and the shift from fear to confident use. One page, written in plain English, that the team can recite.
Technical, ISO 42001 ready	A short AI policy, a live risk register, clear data-handling rules under UK GDPR, and a map to the jurisdictions you trade in. The scaffolding a regulated client or insurer will ask to see.

WHY ISO 42001 IS THE ONE TO AIM AT

ISO 42001 is the international standard for managing AI. Being ready for it means your governance would hold up if someone audited it, which is exactly what a regulated client, a tender, or an insurer will want before they trust you with their work. Aiming at the standard now saves you scrambling for it later.

THE SHIFT

From a policy that dies to a system people use.

The old way produces a thick document, signed off and filed, that changes nobody's behaviour. The way that works is small enough to live: a one-page manifesto people actually know, with the technical scaffolding sitting underneath it. Used every week, not read once a year.

THE OLD WAY

A 40-page policy. Signed once, filed, never read again.

THE IGNITE WAY

A one-page manifesto plus ISO 42001 scaffolding. Used every week.

Same intent. One of them changes what people do on Monday.

The point of the smaller version is that it gets used. A manifesto people can recite shapes behaviour. A policy nobody opens does not. And the small version takes a week to stand up, not a quarter.

HOW TO START

The week, day by day.

This is the sequence we run with clients. Five working days, and at the end of it AI is safe to use in the open.

- 1 Day 1, map it.** List where AI already touches the business, including the shadow tools nobody declared. One page, honest.
- 2 Day 2, draw the lines.** Red lines that are never crossed, green lanes to run in freely, and the grey middle that needs a human to decide. Plain English.
- 3 Day 3, write the policy and the risk register.** Short, ISO 42001 ready, mapped to UK GDPR and the places you trade. Scaffolding, not a novel.
- 4 Day 4, bring the team in.** A 90-minute session: here are the edges, here is why, here is what changes for you. They leave having shaped it, so they own it.
- 5 Day 5, sign off and go live.** Leadership signs the manifesto. It is live, and it is short enough that people actually remember it.

TRY THIS ON MONDAY

Write your three hardest red lines now, before anything else: **the data that must never go into a public tool, the decisions AI must never make alone, and the client work that always needs a human eye.**

Three lines on a single page, and your governance has started. The rest of the week fills in around them.

Three prompts to draft the first version.

Paste these into Claude or ChatGPT. They give you a real first draft to react to, which is far faster than a blank page. Replace the words in [brackets] with your own.

PROMPT 1: DRAFT THE AI MANIFESTO

Draft a one-page AI Manifesto for a UK [type of business] with [number] staff. Give me three sections: RED LINES (things staff must never do with AI), GREEN LANES (things they are free to do without asking), and ASK FIRST (the grey area that needs a human decision). Plain English, no jargon, short enough to fit on one page and be remembered.

The human half of governance, the part that actually changes behaviour.

PROMPT 2: DRAFT THE AI POLICY

Draft a short AI usage policy for a UK business, organised under the headings an ISO 42001 management system would expect: scope, roles, acceptable use, data handling under UK GDPR, risk management, and review. Keep each section tight. Flag anything that would need a specialist or legal review before we adopt it.

The technical half. Built to the standard a serious client will check.

PROMPT 3: BUILD THE RISK REGISTER

Act as an AI risk analyst. For a [type of business] adopting AI across [name the main use cases], list the top eight risks. For each, give the likelihood, the impact, and one practical mitigation we could put in place this month. Put it in a simple table I can drop into a register.

Turns a vague worry into a list you can actually work down.

THE NEXT STEP

MAKE IT SAFE TO MOVE

Governance is what makes adoption safe enough that people use the tools in the open. Get this right and the technology is the easy part. Get it wrong and the best tool in the world gathers dust.

Skills that stay when we go.

A SPARK Discovery baselines your governance, maps where AI fits your real workflows, and hands you the manifesto and the ISO 42001 starter to build on. One fixed price, £5,000, and you keep the findings whether you build with us or not.

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