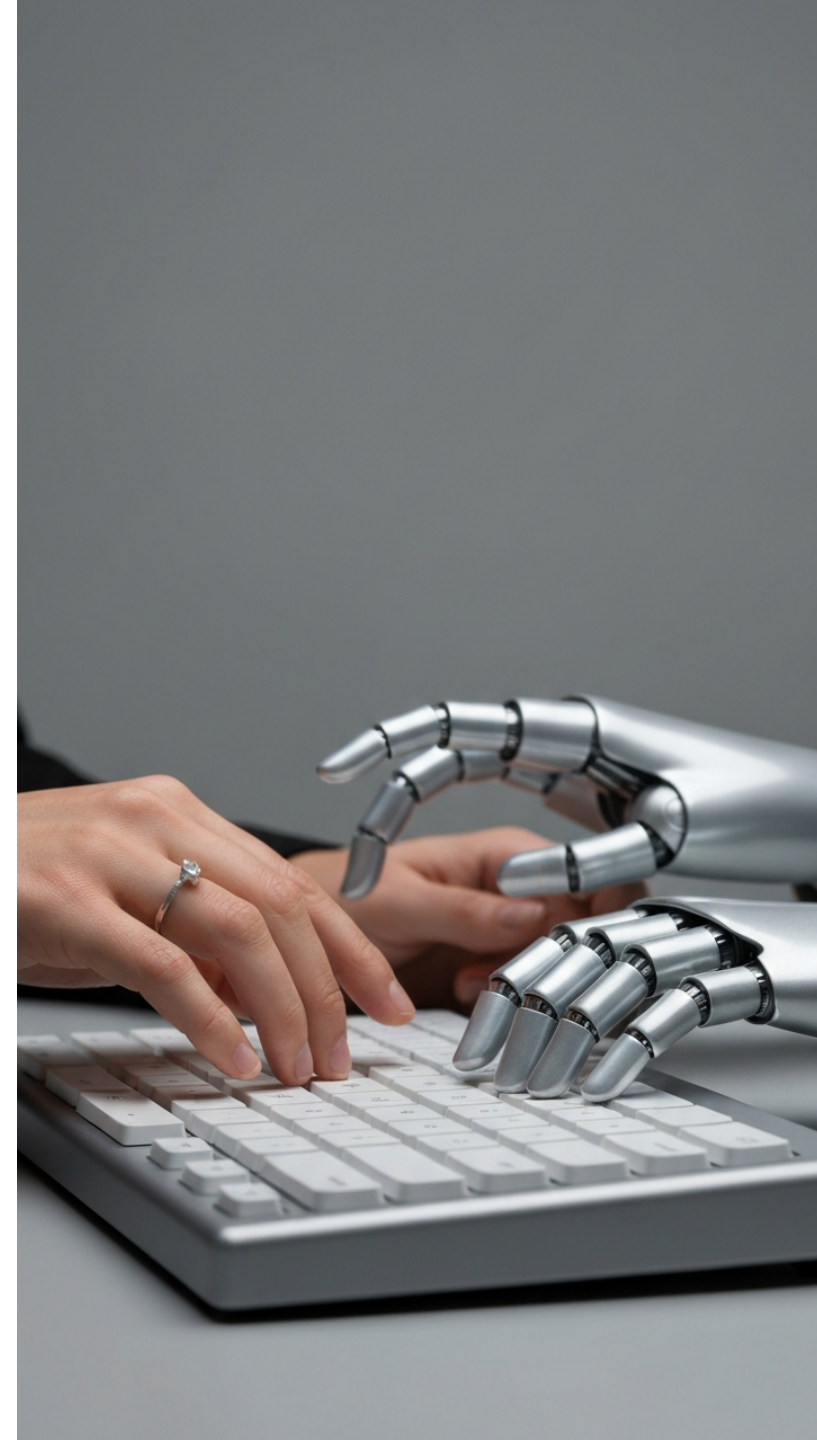


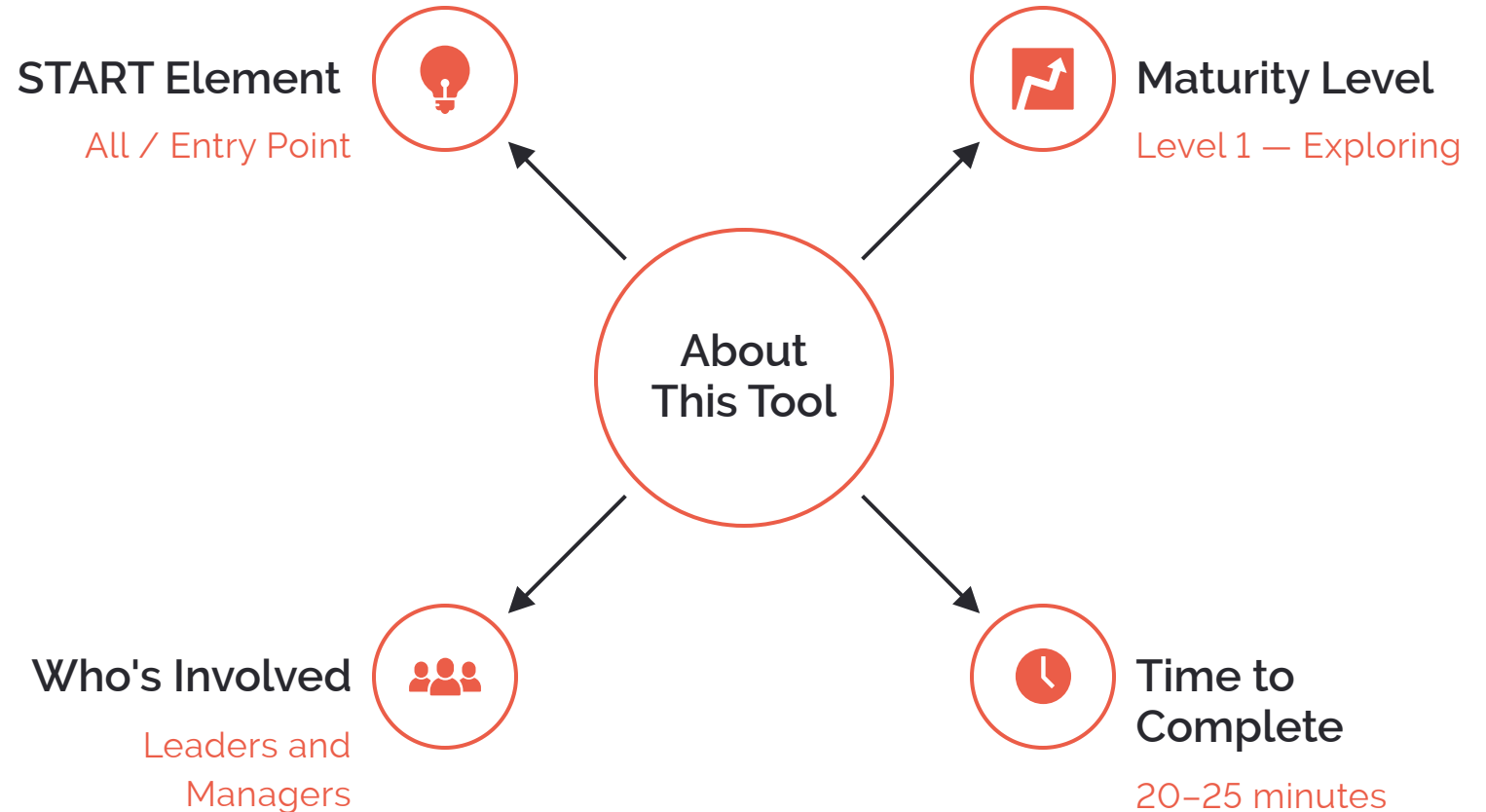
Getting Your Team on Board

A practical guide for leaders introducing AI to their people — the right way.



Getting Your Team on Board

For leaders who want to bring their team with them on the AI journey — not drag them.



What you'll leave with: A practical approach to introducing AI that builds confidence and buy-in — not fear and resistance.

Building Team Buy-in

A practical guide for leaders introducing AI to their people — the right way.



What is it?

A practical change management guide for SME leaders introducing AI to their team. Honest, human, grounded in what works.



Why Use it?

Research shows employee resistance is the number one barrier to AI adoption in SMEs — ahead of cost, data, and technology. This addresses it directly.



Benefits

A structured approach to the human side of AI adoption — so your team moves forward with you, not against you.

Why People Resist AI

Resistance isn't irrational. It's human.

Why People Resist AI



Fear of Job Loss

The most common concern. Needs to be addressed directly and honestly — not dismissed.



Fear of Looking Incompetent

Many worry AI will expose a skills gap or leave them behind. Especially common in experienced team members.



Loss of Identity

For people who've built expertise over years, AI can feel like a threat to their professional identity.



Lack of Trust

People who don't understand AI don't trust it. Literacy and transparency are the antidote — not mandates.

"None of these concerns are wrong. Your job as a leader is to acknowledge them — not dismiss them."

The Augmentation Mindset

AI doesn't replace people. It changes what people do.

AI & Human Collaboration

AI Handles Tasks

AI excels at specific, repeatable tasks, automating routine processes and data analysis.

Humans Elevate Roles

Humans focus on judgment, empathy, relationships, and creativity – areas AI cannot replicate.

New Work Emerges

Effective collaboration with AI becomes a crucial skill, creating new types of work and enhanced capabilities.

THE QUESTION ISN'T 'WILL AI REPLACE MY TEAM?' IT'S 'HOW DO WE WORK BETTER TOGETHER?'

Redesigning Roles — Not Replacing Them

What does augmentation actually look like in practice?

Before

Consultant: 40% of time on reports and summaries.

Operations Manager: Hours on scheduling, data entry, routine reporting.

Customer Service Lead: Answering the same questions repeatedly.

After

Consultant: AI handles drafts. Time redirected to relationships, strategy, complex problem-solving.

Operations Manager: AI automates the routine. Focus shifts to process improvement and team development.

Customer Service Lead: AI handles routine enquiries. Human attention goes to cases that genuinely need it.

In every case — the role isn't smaller. It's better.

Before You Introduce AI

Do this before you say a word to your team.



- **Get aligned at the top first**

Inconsistent messages from leaders create more fear than silence.

- **Know your 'why' clearly**

Why are you introducing AI? What problem are you solving? If you can't answer this — your team won't be able to either.

- **Anticipate the hard questions**

What happens to roles? What data will be used? Prepare honest answers before the conversation — not during it.

- **Define the guardrails**

What will AI be used for — and what won't it? Clear boundaries reduce fear and build trust.

The Conversation Matters as Much as the Content



Why, Not What

Open with the problem you're solving, not the tool you're introducing. Context before content.



Acknowledge Concerns Directly

Name the fears yourself. Don't wait for people to raise them. It builds trust immediately.



Make It a Conversation

Ask what people are worried about. Ask what they're curious about. Listen before you conclude.



Follow Up

One conversation isn't enough. Check in regularly. Answer questions as they emerge.

Common Reactions and Responses

What you'll hear — and what to say.



Will this replace my job?

Here's what we're using AI for and what that means for your role specifically.



I don't know how to use it.

We'll give you time and support to learn. Nobody is expected to be an expert overnight.



I don't trust it.

Here's how we're making sure there's always a human check on the output.



Why now?

Here's the specific problem we're solving — and why this is the right time to address it.

A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, is holding a glowing lightbulb in his right hand, raised above his head. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid blue color.

Building Confidence, Not Compliance

- **Start with Volunteers**

Find the curious people. Give them space and visibility. Early adopters become internal advocates.

- **Celebrate the Learning**

Share what works. Create a culture where experimentation is recognized — even when results aren't perfect.

- **Make it Safe to Struggle**

People learn by making mistakes. If the environment punishes mistakes — people avoid the tool.

Compliance gets tools installed. Confidence gets tools used.

The Leader's Role in AI Adoption

This doesn't happen without you.

Key Leadership Principles



Model the Behaviour

Be visibly curious and willing to learn alongside your team. If you're not using AI yourself, your team will notice.



Stay Visible Throughout

AI adoption isn't a project with a launch date. Keep communicating after the launch.



Protect the Time

Make space for adoption. If people are expected to adopt AI on top of full workloads without adjustment, they won't.



Be Honest When Things Don't Work

Say so, explain why, and show what you're doing differently.

The human side of AI adoption doesn't manage itself. It needs a leader who takes it seriously.

AI Strategy Pillars

Ready to take the next step?

Foundational Steps for AI Implementation



Set your direction

Align your leadership team on AI direction before involving the wider team.



Assess your readiness

Understand where your business stands across all five dimensions.



Understand the governance

The minimum guardrails every SME needs before AI goes near their team.

Start Smart. Stay Strategic.

The Strategic Mind

— START SMART. STAY STRATEGIC —