

BLASH AI • PLAYBOOK

The Governed AI Playbook

How to find, build and govern your first AI
automation

Blash AI • a division of Blash Advisory • ai.blash.uk

THE PLAYBOOK

Most AI programmes stall on the first choice

The hardest part of using AI is choosing what to build first. Pick the wrong workflow and the programme stalls before it shows value. This playbook is the method we use at Blash AI to find the right first project, build it properly, and govern it so a board and an auditor can stand behind it.

01 Find your first automation

Start with an audit of how the work really flows. Map the tasks where your team copies, pastes, classifies and re-types, and score each one on a single number: hours saved or revenue recovered per month, divided by the cost to build it. The workflow with the best ratio and the clearest rules goes first.

02 The workflows that pay back first

After auditing dozens of operations, the same three candidates win almost every time.

- ◆ **Inbox-driven intake:** leads, bookings, invoices and support that arrive as unstructured email and wait for a person to read and re-key them.
- ◆ **Document work:** extracting fields from statements, contracts and reports, then reconciling them against another system.
- ◆ **Recurring reporting:** the same numbers assembled from the same sources every week, by hand.

A real example: short-let payout reconciliation for a UK short-let property operator. Every payout is parsed and matched against the booking ledger, and mismatches are queued as exceptions with the money at risk attached. The first month surfaced **£12.4k** of potential mismatches a human review had missed.

03

Build versus buy, and agents versus simple automation

Trigger-action tools are right for simple, deterministic hops between two apps. The moment a step needs judgement, such as reading a document, deciding what it is, and drafting a reply, you need an AI layer. Use the simplest reliable approach for each step, and measure any build against the loaded cost of the hours it replaces.

04

The build pattern that survives Monday

Every automation we ship has the same skeleton: a deterministic backbone with AI only at the judgement steps. Routing, retries, logging and the audit trail are plain code. Classification, extraction and drafting are model calls. That split is why the system keeps working when a model has a bad day, because the AI step fails into an exception queue instead of silently corrupting your data.

05

Govern it from the first day

This is where most AI suppliers stop and where Blash starts. Anything that sends money or messages out of the business gets a human approval step. Every action is logged and attributable. Performance is monitored, and the whole system is reported in terms a board and an auditor can read. Autonomy is a setting you earn with evidence, and it starts low.

06

Your data stays yours

Governance also covers where your data lives. We call model providers under API terms that exclude training on your data, so your documents and messages are never used to train someone else's model. The system runs inside your own accounts and infrastructure, so the workflow, the data and the audit trail stay under your control. When the engagement ends, you keep the repository and can run it yourself.

07

The toolkit

You can run much of this yourself with open-source tools. We use and recommend the following.

- ◆ **n8n** for the deterministic workflow backbone.
- ◆ **Ollama** and **LiteLLM** to run or route language models.
- ◆ **Chroma** and **LangChain** for retrieval over your documents.
- ◆ **Unstructured** and **Marker** to turn PDFs and contracts into clean data.
- ◆ **Metabase** for dashboards over the result.

Each of these, with install commands, is in the build library at **ai.blash.uk/resources**.

08

Your first 30 days

Day 0	A free 30-minute call to agree the gap and whether a build pays back.
Day 1 to 3	A written audit of the highest-payback workflows, scored, free and yours to keep.
Week 1 to 2	A working prototype on your real data.
Week 3 to 6	Build, govern and deploy, with training and handover.
Day 30 onward	Iterate, or take the repository and run it yourself.

BRING US YOUR HARDEST WORKFLOW

Put the playbook to work on one workflow

If a build does not pay back, we will tell you, and the written audit is yours to keep either way. Book a free 30-minute AI audit and we will scope your first build together.

ai.blash.uk/book

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