DOCUMENT 02 · SPHERES WHERE VALUE IS CREATED

Spheres where value is created

Customer, Product and service, People and Operations: what each sphere covers, why it matters, examples by ambition level and what the board should ask

Fernando García Varela Version 0.1 17-09-2026 Under construction

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01

Why these four spheres

Spheres 01 to 04 are **the only ones in which AI creates direct value** for the company. The others make it possible (05 to 07), set its boundaries (08) or govern it (09).

Sphere	Where the value shows	Who usually leads it
01 · Customer	Revenue, retention, conversion and experience.	Sales, marketing or customer management.
02 · Product and service	Offering, differentiation, margin and new revenue.	Product, business or innovation management.
03 · People	Productivity, capabilities, roles and organisation.	People management together with the areas affected.
04 · Operations	Cost, time, quality and operational resilience.	Operations, finance or technology management.

Each sphere is presented with the same structure: what it is, why it matters, what it covers and what it does not, examples by ambition level, an illustrative case, questions for the board, warning signs and how it is measured.

The examples are generic and illustrative. They are neither recommendations nor market references, and any company or figure that appears is fictitious.

> **Why it matters.** If an AI use case does not move any indicator in these four spheres, it does not create direct value. It may be necessary (a data platform, a regulatory control), but it must be justified as an enabler, a boundary or governance, and not with savings or revenue that it will not produce.

02

Sphere 01 · Customer

Motto: knowledge, relationship and anticipation.

What it is

The Customer sphere brings together everything AI can change in **how the company knows, acquires, serves, retains and anticipates the needs of its customers**, across all channels.

> **Why it matters.** The customer is where competitive advantage or disadvantage is felt first. If a competitor knows our customers better because it uses AI better, it will make them a better proposition at the right moment. Loss of relevance does not happen all at once: it happens customer by customer, and by the time it shows in the results it is usually too late.

What it covers and what it does not

Covers	Does not cover
Customer knowledge and segmentation.	The design of the offering: that is sphere 02.

Covers	Does not cover
Acquisition, sales and recommendation.	The internal efficiency of the customer service back office, unless the main metric relates to the customer: that is sphere 04.
Customer service, support and incident resolution.	Customer data as an asset: that is sphere 05.
Retention and anticipation of needs or churn.	
Information and transparency towards customers when they interact with AI.	

Examples by ambition level

Level	Examples	What distinguishes it
Optimise	Behaviour-based segmentation instead of static demographic data · Classification and routing of enquiries · Early detection of churn risk for existing campaigns.	Customers receive the same service; its cost or accuracy improves.
Augment	Real-time personalisation of the proposition · Conversational assistants that resolve complete enquiries with controlled handover to people · Sentiment analysis across all channels to anticipate crises · Preparation of each sales visit with the customer's likely needs.	Sales and customer service teams do what they could not do before.
Transform	An AI agent becomes the main point of contact · Discovery of unserved market segments with a dedicated offering · Product co-creation with the customer mediated by generative AI.	How the company relates to customers, or whom it targets, changes.

Illustrative case

Fictitious telecommunications services company.

The company starts with **Optimise**: a model classifies incoming enquiries and assigns them to the right team, which reduces time to first response. It then moves to **Augment**: during the call, customer service agents see the customer's churn risk and the retention offers that make sense for that customer, something that previously only a specialised team could do. Management is considering a **Transform** bet: a conversational assistant as the main channel for customers in a specific segment, with people handling complex cases. Before approving it, the board asks how repeat contact and satisfaction will be measured, not only how many conversations the assistant resolves, and what information customers will receive about the fact that they are talking to an AI system.

Questions for the board

- If a competitor knows our customers better because it uses AI better, how long will it take us to lose relevance?
- What part of the customer relationship is already mediated by AI systems, and who is accountable for its quality?
- Do we know whether AI improves retention and conversion, or whether it only reduces the cost of serving?
- What information do we give customers when they interact with an AI system?

Warning signs

- The number of conversations the assistant "contains" is measured, but repeat contact and satisfaction are not.
- There is no control group to attribute retention or conversion to AI.
- Complaints related to automated responses increase and nobody analyses them separately.
- Customers do not know they are interacting with an AI system when regulation requires that they be informed.

How it is measured

The reference indicators are AI coverage of the customer relationship, effective resolution without handover or repeat contact, the satisfaction differential between interactions with and without AI, incremental retention and conversion in monetary terms, and complaints attributable to AI. Their formulas are in SEVEN-G 10 · Sphere map and ambition levels, section 5.1.

Relationship with other spheres. Customer depends on Data (05) to know the customer, on Decision (07) when AI recommends prices, offers or risks, and on Regulation (08) for transparency and for automated decisions that affect people.

03

Sphere 02 · Product and service

Motto: AI inside, on top of or as the product.

What it is

The Product and service sphere brings together AI **embedded in what the company sells**, AI that **speeds up its design and launch** and AI that **is the product itself**.

Position of AI	What it means	Illustrative example
Inside	AI is a feature of the product.	Management software that suggests the accounting category of each expense.
On top of	AI improves how the product is designed, tested or launched.	Assisted generation of code and tests to reduce time to launch.
As the product	Without the model there would be no product.	A demand forecasting service sold on subscription.

> **Why it matters.** This sphere decides whether AI **protects the current business or builds the next one**. Both strategies are legitimate, but they compete for the same resources, talent and management attention. If nobody decides explicitly, protecting the current product always wins, because its return is easier to demonstrate.

What it covers and what it does not

Covers	Does not cover
AI features within the product or service.	The commercial relationship with the customer: that is sphere 01.
AI-assisted design, development, testing and launch.	The efficiency of internal processes that are not part of the product: that is sphere 04.
Products and services that exist only thanks to a model.	
AI cost per unit of service and its effect on margin.	
Accountability towards customers for the behaviour of the AI included in the offering.	

Examples by ambition level

Level	Examples	What distinguishes it
Optimise	Automated testing and defect detection · Assisted generation of code, design or copy to reduce time to launch · Product tuning based on actual usage.	The product is the same; it is produced or improved at lower cost or in less time.
Augment	Intelligent features within the product (recommendations, predictions, assistants) · Product that adapts to each user's context · Documentation and help generated according to what each user does.	The product offers users new capabilities without changing the business model.
Transform	Service that exists only because there is a model behind it · Shift from selling a product to selling an ongoing capability or outcome · Modular offering of capabilities orchestrated by AI.	What is sold and how it is charged for changes.

Illustrative case

Fictitious manufacturer of industrial equipment.

The manufacturer uses AI to **optimise** the quality testing of its equipment and reduce defects before delivery. It then **augments** its product with a module that alerts customers to likely wear. The **Transform** bet comes when it decides to sell guaranteed operating hours instead of equipment: predictive maintenance stops being a feature and becomes the basis of the revenue model. The board asks for two things before approving it: an investment limit per stage with learning milestones (first customers, prediction reliability, margin per contract) and an analysis of the AI cost per unit of service, because in a pay-per-use model that cost goes directly against margin.

Questions for the board

- Are we using AI to protect the current product or to build the next one? If both strategies compete for the same resources, who decides?
- What part of our revenue comes from products or services that would not exist without AI?
- Do we know the AI cost per unit of service and its effect on margin?
- What accountability do we assume towards customers for the behaviour of the AI included in our product?

Warning signs

- AI features are announced without measuring their actual usage.
- The AI cost per unit of service is unknown or grows faster than the product's revenue.
- There is no product owner accountable to the customer for the behaviour of the AI.

- New product use cases are assessed with the same payback period as efficiency use cases and are stopped before market evidence is obtained.

How it is measured

The reference indicators are AI-enabled revenue, use of AI features, reduction in time to launch, AI cost per unit of service, margin of the AI-enabled offering and defects contained before launch. Their formulas are in SEVEN-G 10, section 5.2.

Relationship with other spheres. Product depends on Data (05) and Knowledge (06) to differentiate itself, on Regulation (08) for accountability towards customers and on Governance (09) for dependence on model suppliers and their cost.

04

Sphere 03 · People

Motto: recipients, subjects and promoters of AI.

What it is

The People sphere brings together the effect of AI on **work, capabilities, roles, organisational structure and the relationship with employees**. It is the most sensitive sphere, because AI does not only change what people do: it can also change how many people are needed and for what.

> **Why it matters.** The company's position on whether AI **replaces, augments or reorganises** work defines its culture, its employer brand and its ability to retain talent for years. When that position is not taken explicitly, projects take it one by one, without consistency and without anyone being accountable for its effects.

The three roles of people with regard to AI

People play **three roles at the same time**. Forgetting any of them causes a different problem.

Role	What it means	What it requires of the company	What happens if it is forgotten
Recipients	AI changes their tools, processes and productivity expectations, without them having chosen it.	Change management, training and AI literacy appropriate to each role.	Adoption stalls and the investment remains a cost.
Subjects	AI can restructure, reassign or eliminate jobs.	Explicit decision by management and the board, dialogue with employee representatives where appropriate, and responsible treatment.	Rejection, loss of trust, conflict and reputational risk.
Promoters	Those who know a process best can identify uses of AI that no outsider would see.	A channel for proposing use cases that enter the register and compete in the portfolio on an equal footing.	The source of ideas closest to real work is lost and unauthorised use of AI tools grows.

> **Why it matters.** The promoter role is the most undervalued source of value. The people who do the work every day know where the wasted effort lies and what information they lack to make better decisions. If there is no channel for those ideas to reach the portfolio, they are lost or turn into uncontrolled uses.

What it covers and what it does not

Covers	Does not cover
Task automation and released capacity.	The efficiency of the process as such, when the main metric relates to process cost or time: that is sphere 04.
Copilots and assistants that change the content of the job.	The organisation's knowledge as an asset: that is sphere 06.
Training, AI literacy and professional reskilling.	
Redesign of roles and organisational structures.	

Covers	Does not cover
AI use cases proposed by employees themselves.	

Examples by ambition level

Level	Examples	What distinguishes it
Optimise	Automation of repetitive tasks (reports, data entry, triage) · Accelerated onboarding with knowledge assistants · Training adapted to each employee's level.	The job is the same; low-value work is eliminated.
Augment	Specialised copilot by function · Employees who propose and deploy uses of AI in their area under control · Continuous reskilling so that the role evolves with AI and not in spite of it.	People carry out tasks they could not do before; the role changes.
Transform	Reorganisation of teams around AI systems · Disappearance of functions and creation of new roles · People who oversee autonomous systems instead of executing each task.	The organisational structure and the division of work change.

Illustrative case

Fictitious financial services company.

The company deploys a writing assistant for the entire workforce (**Optimise**) and finds, six months later, that active usage is low outside two departments. In the risk analysis team, by contrast, it redesigns the jobs: with a copilot, analysts take on reviews that were previously outsourced, receive specific training and their performance assessment incorporates the new responsibility (**Augment**). Management is considering reorganising the claims function around a system that resolves simple cases, with fewer people dedicated to execution and new oversight and quality roles (**Transform**). Before deciding, the board demands an explicit position on the people affected: what part of the released capacity is reassigned, what reskilling plan exists, how people are informed and when dialogue with employee representatives takes place.

Questions for the board

- Does AI replace, augment or reorganise people's work? That answer defines the culture, the employer brand and talent retention.
- What happens to released capacity: does it become lower cost, is it reassigned or does it simply disappear?
- Do the people who use or oversee AI have training appropriate to their role?
- What proportion of use cases originates from employees themselves?

Warning signs

- Released hours are reported without stating whether they have become lower cost or have been reassigned.
- The number of assigned licences is measured, not actual usage.
- Decisions on jobs are taken as a technical consequence of a project, without an explicit management decision.
- There is no adoption plan in Augment or Transform use cases.
- Turnover in the affected groups rises without anyone analysing it.

How it is measured

The reference indicators are effective adoption, realised and reassigned released capacity, AI literacy by role, redesigned roles and employee-promoted use cases. Their formulas are in SEVEN-G 10, section 5.3, and their management in SEVEN-G 50 · People and organisation.

Relationship with other spheres. People is almost always the **secondary sphere** of Augment or Transform use cases that change roles, even when their primary sphere is Customer or Operations. It is also related to Knowledge (06), because what people know is part of the asset that AI can preserve or lose.

05

Sphere 04 · Operations

Motto: processes, value chain and efficiency.

What it is

The Operations sphere brings together AI applied to **internal processes, supply chain, production, maintenance, back office, fraud control and operational risks**.

> **Why it matters.** Operations is the sphere with the easiest return to demonstrate and the one that accounts for most early use cases. That ease is both its advantage and its trap: a portfolio can fill up with isolated task automations that add up released hours but do not change actual cost or the design of processes.

What it covers and what it does not

Covers	Does not cover
Document processing, reconciliations and administrative tasks.	Processes whose main metric relates to the customer (satisfaction, retention): that is sphere 01.
Demand forecasting, inventories and supply chain.	The effect on roles and structure when it is the main outcome: that is sphere 03.
Production, quality and predictive maintenance.	
Detection of fraud, anomalies and operational risks.	
End-to-end process redesign and orchestration by agents.	
Continuity of operations supported by AI.	

Examples by ambition level

Level	Examples	What distinguishes it
Optimise	Document processing and reconciliations · Demand forecasting and inventory optimisation · Predictive maintenance · Fraud and anomaly detection.	The process is the same; its cost, time or error rate improves.
Augment	Supply chain that adjusts to market signals · Planning with simulated scenarios · Quality control with computer vision or language processing.	Operational teams make decisions with capabilities they did not have.
Transform	Processes that run and correct themselves with aggregate oversight · Orchestration of workflows by multi-agent systems · Elimination of entire links in the value chain.	The process design and the operating model change.

Illustrative case

Fictitious distributor of consumer products.

The distributor has eleven use cases in Operations, all of them **Optimise**: reading delivery notes, invoice reconciliation, demand forecasting by store and others. In the annual review it discovers that the sum of declared "released hours" is equivalent to dozens of jobs, but the actual cost of the area has not fallen. The automations had sped up isolated steps and the work had piled up in the exceptions. Management decides to **redesign the procurement process end to end**: the system proposes and executes routine orders within approved limits and buyers focus on negotiation and exceptions (**Augment**, with a possible evolution to **Transform** if the change extends to the entire purchasing

function). The board asks what happens if the system fails in the middle of a peak season and whether there is a tested rollback plan.

Questions for the board

- Which processes have a demonstrable return within the horizon we have set, and which require a complete redesign?
- Do we know which are candidates for immediate automation? If we do not, that is the first piece of work.
- Are we automating tasks or redesigning end-to-end processes?
- What happens if an AI system supporting a critical operation fails or degrades?

Warning signs

- Declared savings with no actual cost reduction in the income statement.
- Isolated task automations that shift the bottleneck to the next step.
- Critical processes supported by AI without a tested rollback plan.
- Agents that execute operational actions without a defined autonomy level.

How it is measured

The reference indicators are cycle time reduction, change in unit cost, straight-through processing without manual intervention, error or rework rate, processes redesigned end to end and validated realised savings. Their formulas are in SEVEN-G 10, section 5.4.

Relationship with other spheres. Operations depends on Data (05) to forecast and automate, on Decision (07) when systems act without validation of each case and on People (03) when automation changes the work of teams.

06

Reading the four spheres together

The value spheres are read as a whole. Three patterns appear frequently:

Pattern	How it is recognised on the map	What it usually means	Question for the board
Internal efficiency	Most use cases in 04 and in Optimise; 01 and 02 almost empty.	AI is used to reduce cost, not to compete.	Is that our strategy or is it the easiest option to justify?

Pattern	How it is recognised on the map	What it usually means	Question for the board
Shop window	Visible use cases in 01 and 02 with no measured usage; few in 03 and 04.	AI is used to communicate, not to change.	What validated value do the use cases we announce have?
Forgotten people	Augment or Transform use cases in 01, 02 or 04 without 03 as secondary sphere.	Roles are changed without an adoption plan or an explicit decision.	Who has decided how the work of the people affected changes?

> **Why it matters.** No sphere tells the whole story on its own. Looking at them together allows the board to distinguish a deliberate strategy from a set of projects that have simply accumulated.

07

Related documents

Document	Relationship
document 00 · What SPHERES is and how it helps	Presentation of the complete map.
document 01 · Ambition levels	How the level of each use case is classified.
document 03 · Enabling spheres	Data, Knowledge and Decision, which condition the value of these four spheres.
document 05 · Conversation with the board	How to present these spheres in a sixty-minute session.
SEVEN-G 10 · Sphere map and ambition levels	Classification rules and indicators with formulas.
SEVEN-G 50 · People and organisation	Management of the People sphere.

08

Version control

Version	Date	Changes
0.1	17-09-2026	First version. Develops spheres 01 to 04 with what they are, why they matter, scope, examples by level, illustrative cases, questions for the board, warning signs, measurement and joint reading; includes the three roles of people with regard to AI.