

Notes

SPHERES is Fernando García Varela's methodology for placing artificial intelligence in the business before talking about technology. The name comes from the English word spheres. It is not an acronym: it describes the central idea of the method. AI is not a project for the technology area. It is a change that reaches customers, the offering, people, processes, data, knowledge, decisions, obligations and governance.

The method has two parts:

- Nine impact spheres, which cover all the areas of relationship of a company, regardless of its sector.
- Three ambition levels to grade each bet: Optimise, Augment and Transform.

The chart shows the nine spheres in four types that are read from the outside in: the spheres where value is created (01 to 04), the enablers (05 to 07), the boundaries (08) and the governance meta-sphere (09).

Why it matters. Without a common language, each area talks about AI in its own way: technology talks about models, finance about savings, the business about use cases and compliance about risks. SPHERES gives everyone the same map. In this way the board can compare bets, detect gaps and decide where to invest without understanding how each system works.

SPHERES is a supporting methodology of SEVEN-G, the same author's framework for the value, governance and measurement of AI: it is its component A, the impact map. Its use is free, under the CC BY 4.0 licence for content and MIT for code. The examples in this presentation are fictitious or illustrative.

Question for the classroom: if you had to explain in one minute what your company does with AI, would you talk about technology or about business?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

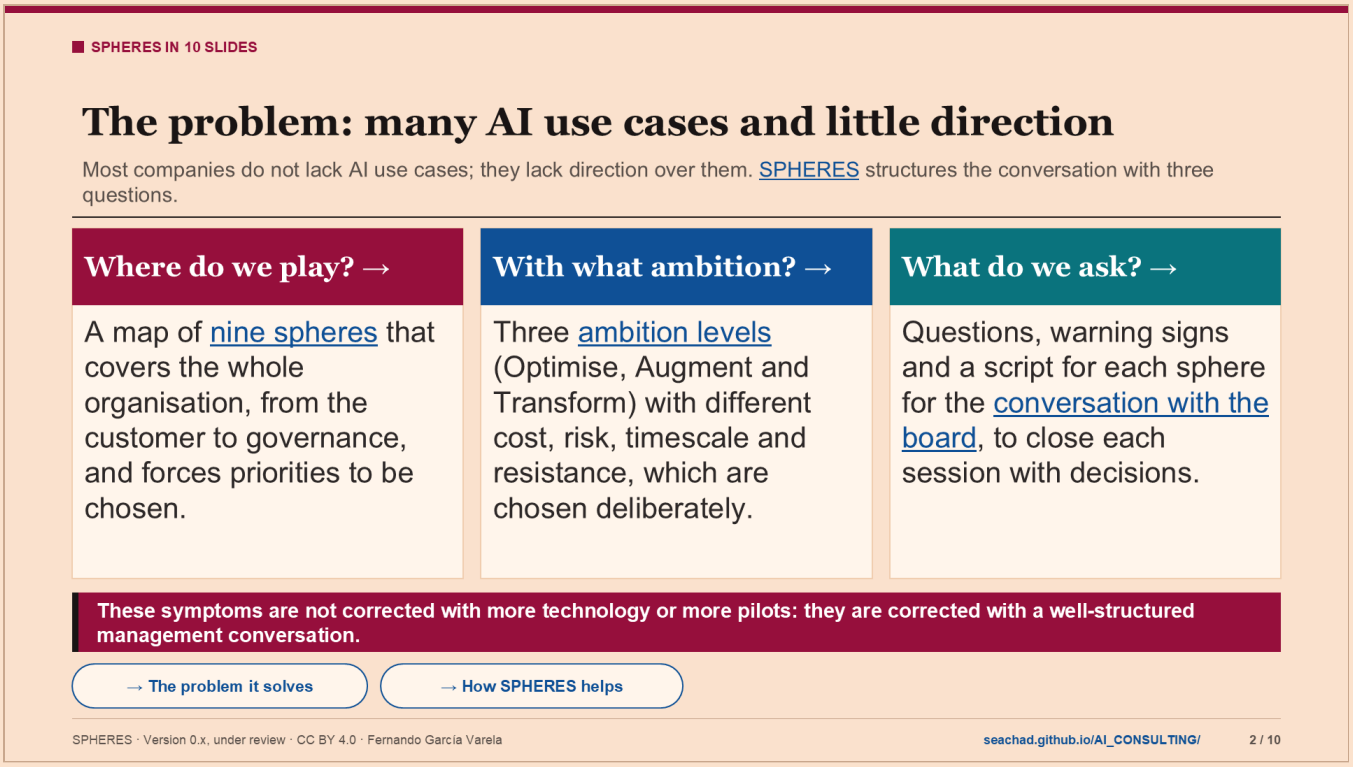
- **The nine spheres** (esferas 01–09): Nine areas where AI acts in a company: four where value is created (01 to 04), three enablers that make it possible (05 to 07), the limits of regulation and ethics (08) and the governance of

AI itself (09). Each use case sits in one primary sphere. The link opens the overview in SPHERES. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#the-nine-spheres-at-a-glance

- **Ambition levels**: Three levels stating how much a company wants to change with each use case: Optimise (do the same better), Augment (extend what people can do) and Transform (change the business). Each level is decided, funded and measured differently. The link opens the SPHERES document that explains them with examples. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 00 · What SPHERES is and what it is for** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#what-spheres-is
- **SEVEN-G 10 · Sphere map and ambition levels** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html
- **What SPHERES is** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#what-spheres-is
- **SPHERES library** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/index.html
- **Site home page** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/en/index.html



Notes

SPHERES starts from an observation: organisations do not have a problem of a lack of AI use cases, but of a lack of direction over them. The symptoms are recognisable:

- The board receives a list of «use cases» that it does not know how to prioritise, because the technology is described and not the effect on the business.
- All the effort is concentrated on automating internal tasks, because efficiency is easier to justify and to measure.
- A «transformation with AI» is announced that changes nothing visible.
- Use cases stop in advanced phases for lack of data, accessible knowledge or decision rules.
- Regulation appears at the end, when the system has already been built.
- Nobody knows who is accountable for AI in the company.

SPHERES responds with three questions that any board or management committee should be able to answer. Where do we play? The map of nine spheres answers it. With what ambition? The three levels answer it. What do we ask? The questions, the warning signs and the conversation script answer it.

Why it matters. With the same spheres, the same levels and the same questions at every review, the conversation becomes repeatable. That makes it possible to compare one quarter with the next and one year with the next.

Illustrative example: a list of twenty use cases presented as «our AI strategy» becomes a map. In it you can see at a glance where the effort is concentrated and which spheres are empty.

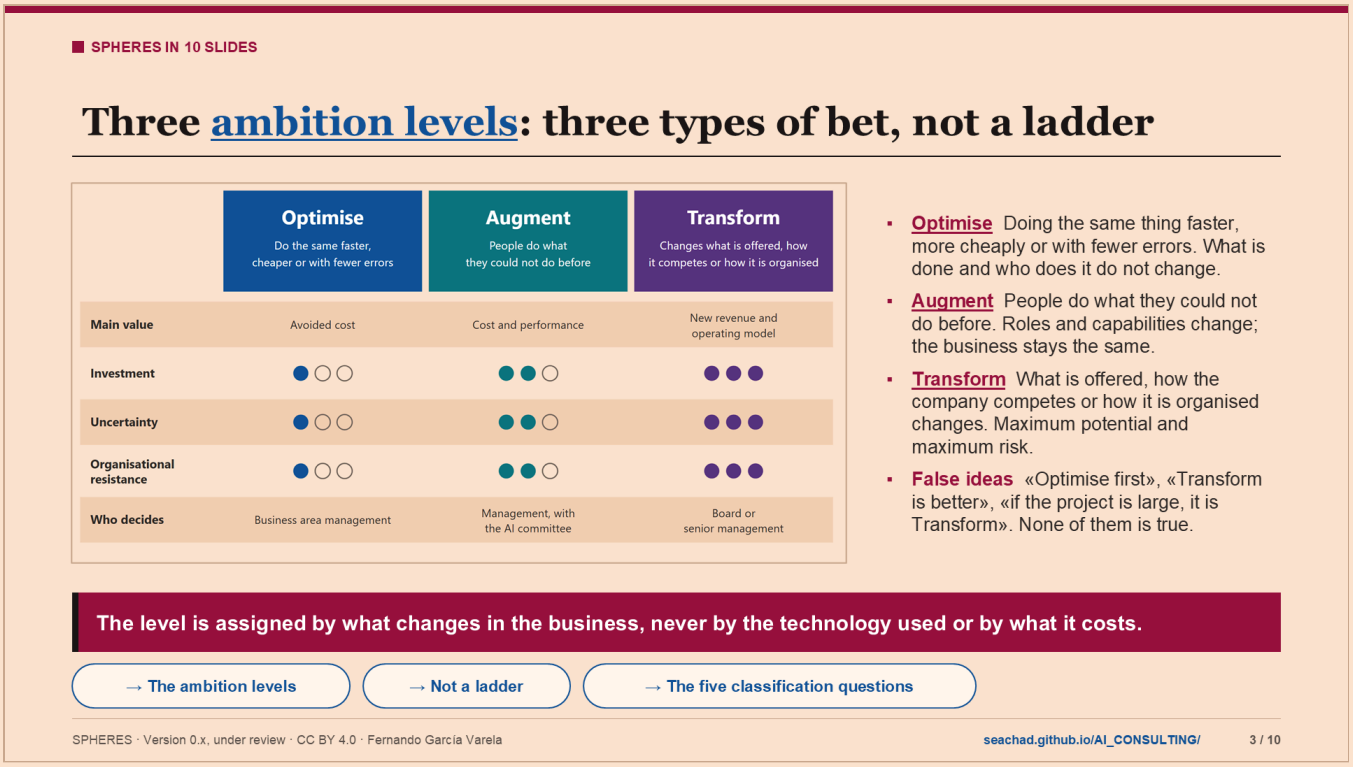
Question for the classroom: which of the six symptoms have you seen in an organisation that you know? What would a structured management conversation have changed?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **SPHERES**: A methodology that explains where AI can create value in a company and with what ambition, through three questions: where do we play?, with what ambition? and what do we ask? It is the explanatory layer of the spheres and ambition levels; the operating rules are in SEVEN-G. It supports conversations with management and the board. The link opens its presentation document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#what-spheres-is
- **The nine spheres** (esferas 01–09): Nine areas where AI acts in a company: four where value is created (01 to 04), three enablers that make it possible (05 to 07), the limits of regulation and ethics (08) and the governance of AI itself (09). Each use case sits in one primary sphere. The link opens the overview in SPHERES. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#the-nine-spheres-at-a-glance
- **Ambition levels**: Three levels stating how much a company wants to change with each use case: Optimise (do the same better), Augment (extend what people can do) and Transform (change the business). Each level is decided, funded and measured differently. The link opens the SPHERES document that explains them with examples. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html
- **Conversation with the board**: A SPHERES document with a script for talking about AI with the board using the spheres and ambition levels: what to ask in each sphere, which signals to look for and how to lead the conversation to decisions. The link opens the document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 00 · The problem it solves** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#the-problem-it-solves
- **SPHERES 00 · How it helps** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#how-it-helps
- **The problem it solves** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#the-problem-it-solves
- **How SPHERES helps** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#how-it-helps



Notes

An ambition level describes what an AI use case changes in the business. It does not describe the technology it uses, what it costs or how novel it seems. The levels apply to spheres 01 to 07.

The same technology serves different levels. Illustrative example: a generative AI agent that drafts replies for the customer service team is Optimise, because the service and the job are the same. A classical statistical model that makes it possible to launch pay-per-kilometre insurance is Transform, because the customer receives an offer that did not exist before.

Investment, uncertainty and organisational resistance increase from Optimise to Transform. That is why each level has its own criterion for continuing: net benefit in Optimise; real adoption and improved performance in Augment; learning milestones, an investment limit per stage and market evidence in Transform.

Common false ideas:

- «You must optimise first and transform later»: a company can bet on Transform in Product while it optimises Operations.
- «Transform is better than Optimise»: in a non-priority sphere, Optimise can be the right ambition.
- «A mature company has everything in Transform»: a healthy portfolio combines the three levels.
- «If the project is large, it is Transform»: a large automation is still Optimise.

How it is classified: five yes-or-no questions, with evidence. An affirmative answer without evidence counts as no. In case of reasonable doubt, the lower level is assigned. The complete rules are in SEVEN-G document 12.

Why it matters. The level distinguishes a company that is transforming from one that is only becoming more efficient. Calling an automation with a good narrative a transformation is one of the most expensive mistakes.

Question for the classroom: what level is a copilot handed out to the whole workforce, without an adoption plan?

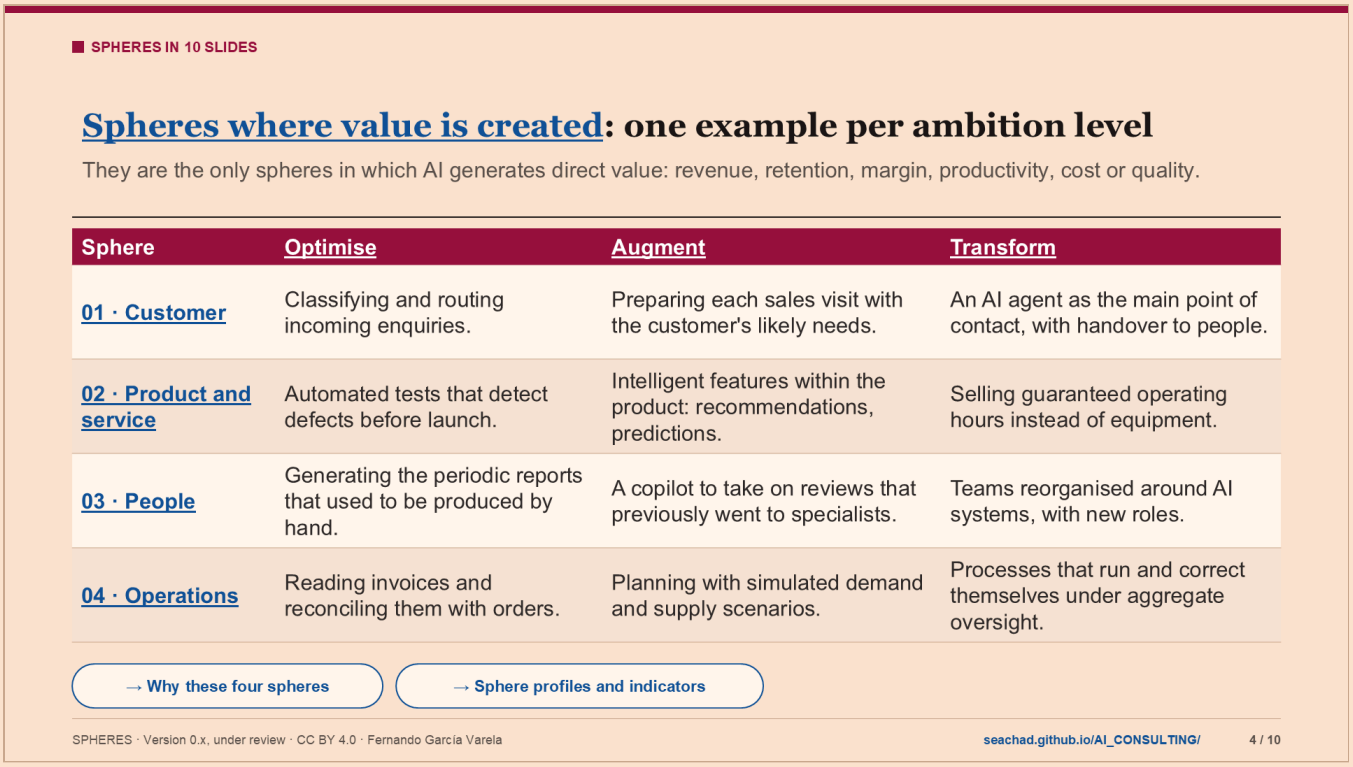
Do not confuse ambition levels with the adoption "horizons" used by some publications (enablement, automation and reinvention). Horizons say how much the way of working of the whole organisation has changed. Levels say what business change each use case seeks. A company in the first horizon can have a Transform bet. The comparison is in SPHERES 01, section 7.1.

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

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- **Optimise**: The first ambition level: AI makes what the company already does cheaper or faster, without changing the process. Its value is measured in savings and time and must be shown early. It is the most frequent level and the one that transforms least. The link opens its explanation in the spheres methodology. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#optimise
- **Augment**: The second ambition level: AI extends what people can do, with better decisions, higher quality or new capabilities in the process. Its value combines efficiency and better results. It requires changing how work is done, not just installing a tool. The link opens its explanation in the spheres methodology. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#augment
- **Transform**: The third ambition level: AI changes the business model, the product or the way of competing. Its value takes longer and is more uncertain, so it is funded in stages and approved by the board (at the hypothesis gate and when scaling). The quick-return criteria of Optimise are not applied to it. The link opens its explanation in the spheres methodology. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#transform

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 01 · Comparison of the three levels** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#comparison-of-the-three-levels
- **SPHERES 01 · Not a ladder** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#not-a-ladder
- **SPHERES 01 · How to classify a use case** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#how-to-classify-a-use-case
- **SEVEN-G 12 · The five classification questions** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/12_SEVEN-G_Indice_de_transformacion.html#3-1-the-five-questions
- **The ambition levels** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#what-an-ambition-level-is
- **Not a ladder** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#not-a-ladder
- **The five classification questions** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/12_SEVEN-G_Indice_de_transformacion.html#3-1-the-five-questions



SPHERES IN 10 SLIDES

Spheres where value is created: one example per ambition level

They are the only spheres in which AI generates direct value: revenue, retention, margin, productivity, cost or quality.

Sphere	Optimise	Augment	Transform
01 · Customer	Classifying and routing incoming enquiries.	Preparing each sales visit with the customer's likely needs.	An AI agent as the main point of contact, with handover to people.
02 · Product and service	Automated tests that detect defects before launch.	Intelligent features within the product: recommendations, predictions.	Selling guaranteed operating hours instead of equipment.
03 · People	Generating the periodic reports that used to be produced by hand.	A copilot to take on reviews that previously went to specialists.	Teams reorganised around AI systems, with new roles.
04 · Operations	Reading invoices and reconciling them with orders.	Planning with simulated demand and supply scenarios.	Processes that run and correct themselves under aggregate oversight.

→ Why these four spheres → Sphere profiles and indicators

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

- 01 · Customer: how the company knows, acquires, serves, retains and anticipates the needs of its customers. The value shows in revenue, retention, conversion and experience.
- 02 · Product and service: AI inside the product (a feature), on top of it (it speeds up design and launch) or as the product (without the model there would be no product). The value shows in the offering, differentiation, margin and new revenue.
- 03 · People: the effect of AI on work, capabilities, roles and structure. The value shows in productivity, capabilities and organisation.
- 04 · Operations: internal processes, supply chain, production, maintenance, back office and fraud. The value shows in cost, time, quality and resilience.

Illustrative case, from a fictitious manufacturer of industrial equipment. First it optimises its quality tests. Then it augments its product with a module that warns the customer of likely wear. The Transform bet comes when it sells guaranteed operating hours instead of equipment. Before approving it, the board asks for an investment limit per stage with learning milestones and for the AI cost per unit of service.

Why it matters. If a use case does not move any indicator of these four spheres, it does not generate direct value. It may be necessary, but it must be justified as an enabler, a boundary or governance, and not with a saving or revenue that it will not produce. The indicators with a formula for each sphere are in SEVEN-G document 10.

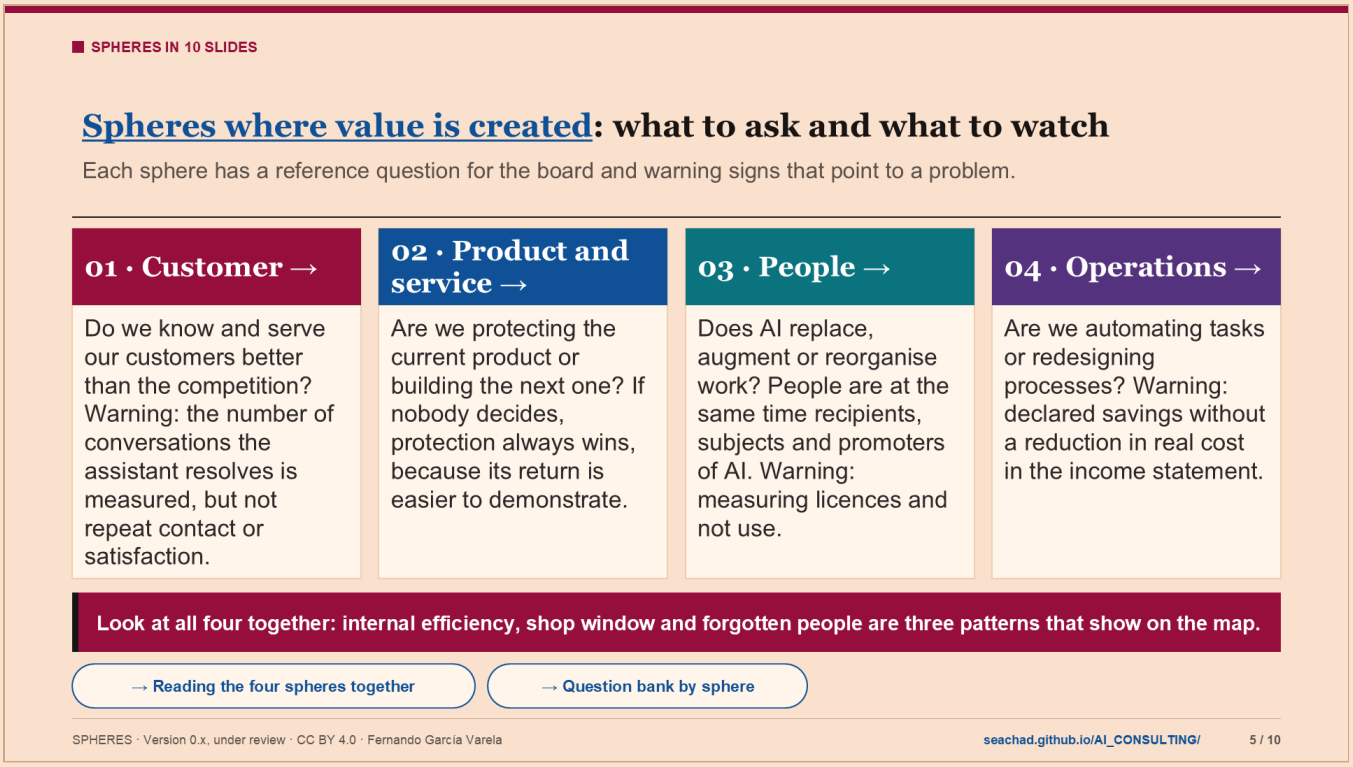
Question for the classroom: choose a company that you know. In which cell of this table is its most visible AI use case today?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **Spheres where value is created** (esferas 01–04): The four spheres in which AI creates direct business value, such as the customer relationship, operations or the product. For each one, the document gives examples by ambition level, why it matters and what to ask. The link opens the SPHERES document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html
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- **Augment**: The second ambition level: AI extends what people can do, with better decisions, higher quality or new capabilities in the process. Its value combines efficiency and better results. It requires changing how work is done, not just installing a tool. The link opens its explanation in the spheres methodology. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#augment
- **Transform**: The third ambition level: AI changes the business model, the product or the way of competing. Its value takes longer and is more uncertain, so it is funded in stages and approved by the board (at the hypothesis gate and when scaling). The quick-return criteria of Optimise are not applied to it. The link opens its explanation in the spheres methodology. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/01_SPHERES_Niveles_de_ambicion.html#transform

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 02 · Spheres where value is created** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#why-these-four-spheres
- **SPHERES 02 · Sphere 02 · Product and service** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#sphere-02-product-and-service
- **SEVEN-G 10 · Profiles of spheres 01 to 07** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#profiles-of-spheres-01-to-07
- **Why these four spheres** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#why-these-four-spheres
- **Sphere profiles and indicators** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#profiles-of-spheres-01-to-07



Notes

The reference questions are deliberately uncomfortable. Their purpose is not to obtain an immediate answer, but for the board to recognise that it does not have one and to commission the work to obtain it.

People occupy three roles at the same time:

- Recipients: AI changes their tools, processes and expectations. It requires change management and training suited to each role.
- Subjects: AI can restructure, reassign or eliminate jobs. It requires an explicit decision by management and by the board.
- Promoters: whoever knows a process best identifies uses that no outsider would see. It requires a channel for those ideas to enter the portfolio.

Three patterns appear when the four spheres are read together:

- Internal efficiency: most use cases in Operations and in Optimise, with Customer and Product almost empty. AI is used to reduce cost, not to compete.
- Shop window: visible use cases in Customer and Product without measured use. AI is used to communicate, not to change.
- Forgotten people: Augment or Transform use cases that change roles without People as a secondary sphere.

Illustrative case, from a fictitious distributor: it has eleven Optimise use cases in Operations. The sum of declared «released hours» is equivalent to dozens of jobs, but the real 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.

Why it matters. No sphere tells the whole story on its own. Looking at them together makes it possible to distinguish a deliberate strategy from a set of accumulated projects.

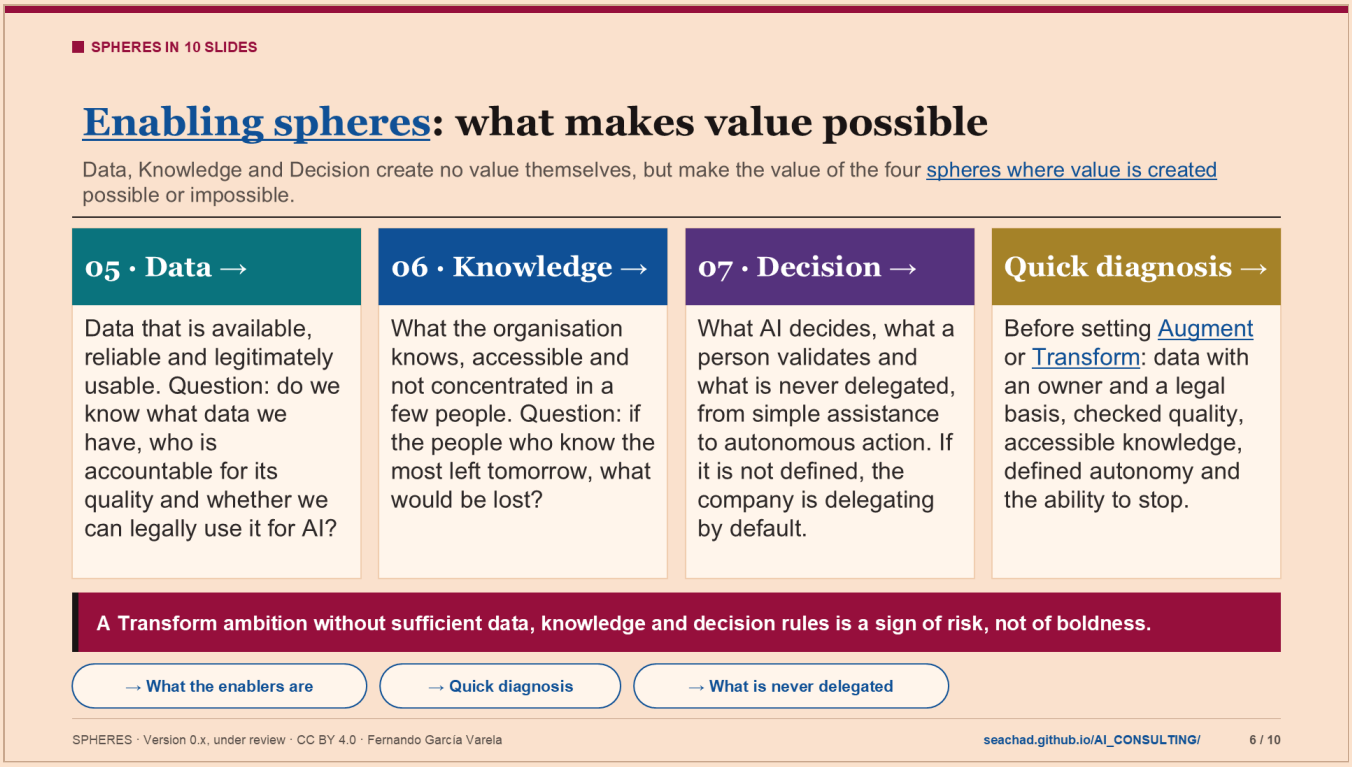
Question for the classroom: which pattern do you recognise in the news about AI at large companies?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

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SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 02 · Sphere 03 · People** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#sphere-03-people
- **SPHERES 02 · Reading the four spheres together** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#reading-the-four-spheres-together
- **SEVEN-G 61 · Questions by sphere** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/61_SEVEN-G_Guia_de_conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#questions-by-sphere
- **Reading the four spheres together** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html#reading-the-four-spheres-together
- **Question bank by sphere** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#question-bank-by-sphere



Notes

The uncomfortable questions appear in the enabling spheres. Talking about opportunities in Customer or Product is easy. Admitting that nobody knows what data the company has, that critical knowledge is in the heads of three people or that a system already sets prices without anyone having decided it, is not.

- Data: availability, quality, catalogue, lineage (where the data with which each system decides comes from) and the legal basis for using it in AI.
- Knowledge: data records facts; knowledge explains how things are done and why something was decided. A generative AI assistant answers with what it finds: if knowledge is disorganised or out of date, it answers badly with complete confidence.
- Decision: the four autonomy levels. A0, assistance: it informs and the person decides. A1, recommendation: the person validates each action. A2, supervised action: it acts within limits and the person can interrupt. A3, autonomous action: it acts without individual review, within strict limits and with a kill switch. The autonomy level is not the same as the ambition level.

An enabler is the primary sphere only when the result of the use case is the capability itself: a data catalogue or a knowledge base. The fact that a use case uses data does not place it in the Data sphere.

Illustrative case, from a fictitious insurer: three Customer use cases stop in the same phase. The reason is not technical: customer data is in four systems, without an owner, and nobody has confirmed whether consent allows it to be used. The company first opens a Data use case.

Why it matters. Most delays and failures are not due to the model, but to unavailable data, undocumented knowledge or decisions without rules. The quick diagnosis is cheap and avoids approving bets that will stop months later.

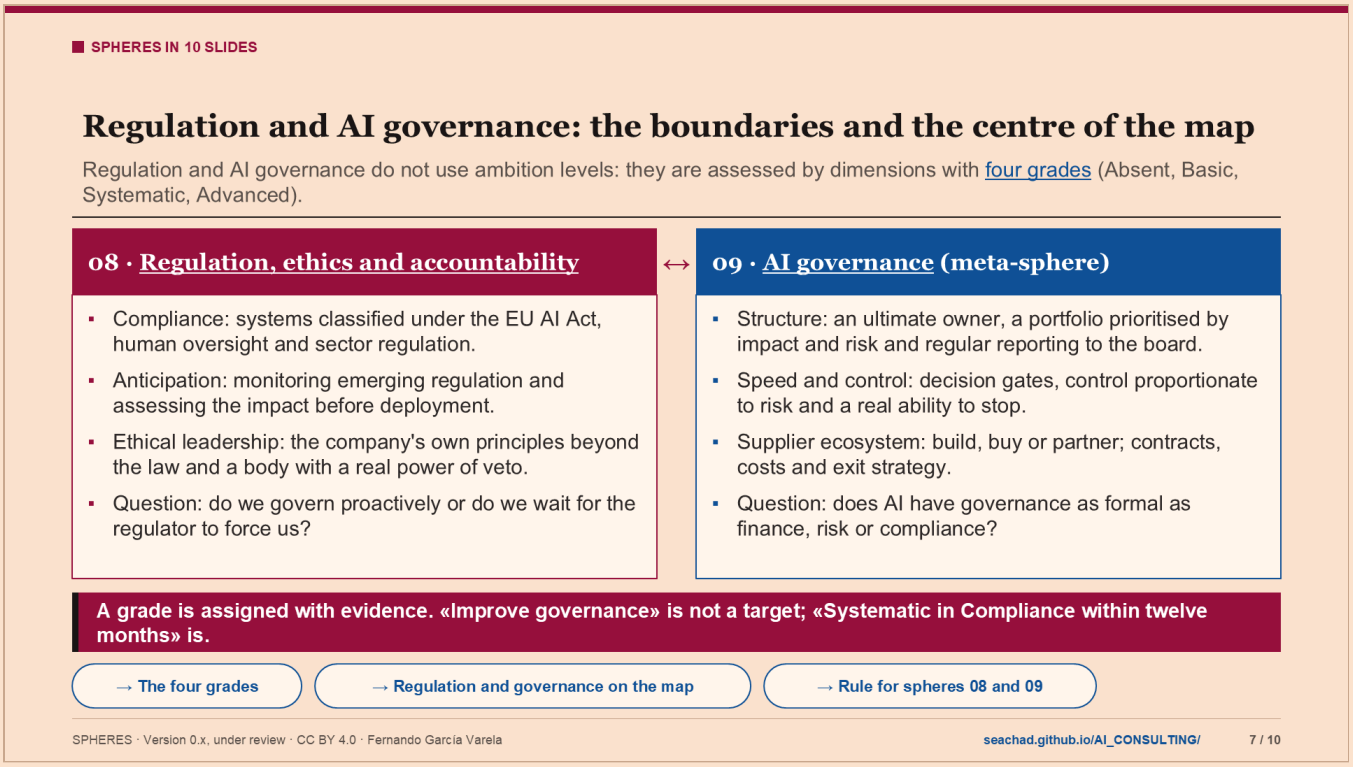
Question for the classroom: which decision in your organisation should never be delegated to a system?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **Enabling spheres** (esferas 05–07): The three spheres that do not create value on their own but make it possible, such as data, technology and people. Without them, use cases in the value spheres stay as pilots. The document explains each one with examples and questions. The link opens the SPHERES document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/03_SPHERES_Esferas_habilitadoras.html
- **Spheres where value is created** (esferas 01–04): The four spheres in which AI creates direct business value, such as the customer relationship, operations or the product. For each one, the document gives examples by ambition level, why it matters and what to ask. The link opens the SPHERES document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/02_SPHERES_Esferas_donde_se_genera_valor.html
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SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 03 · Sphere 07 · Decision and autonomy levels** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/03_SPHERES_Esferas_habilitadoras.html#sphere-07-decision
- **SPHERES 03 · Quick diagnosis of the enablers** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/03_SPHERES_Esferas_habilitadoras.html#quick-diagnosis-of-the-enablers
- **SEVEN-G 10 · Sphere 07 · Decision** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#5-7-sphere-07-decision
- **What the enablers are** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/03_SPHERES_Esferas_habilitadoras.html#what-the-enabling-spheres-are
- **Quick diagnosis** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/03_SPHERES_Esferas_habilitadoras.html#quick-diagnosis-of-the-enablers
- **What is never delegated** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/13_SEVEN-G_Tesis_de_IA_ambicion_y_apetito_de_riesgo.html#11-2-what-is-never-delegated-to-ai



Notes

Spheres 01 to 07 describe where AI is used and what makes it possible. Spheres 08 and 09 describe within what boundaries it is used and how it is governed. They do not generate value in themselves: they set the conditions for the value of the others to be legitimate, sustainable and controllable. That is why they are not assessed with Optimise, Augment and Transform.

The four grades apply to the six dimensions:

- Absent: there is no owner or defined practice («each project looks after that»).
- Basic: there are practices and owners, but they depend on specific people and do not cover the whole perimeter.
- Systematic: an approved process applied to the whole perimeter, with verifiable evidence.
- Advanced: in addition, indicators on target for at least two quarters, continuous improvement and independent review.

Without the minimum evidence, the lower grade is assigned. The grades are not maturity levels of the company.

Illustrative case, from a fictitious financial institution: it has in production a model that prioritises financing applications and an assistant that answers customers, and neither is classified. Diagnosis: Compliance Basic, Anticipation Absent, Ethical leadership Basic. The board sets Systematic within twelve months for the first two. The first action is to classify all systems, starting with those that affect decisions about people.

Map rule: sphere 08 is never used to indicate that a use case in another sphere has regulatory risk; that goes in its regulatory classification and in its risk register.

Why it matters. Without Compliance, the company is in breach today; without Anticipation, it will be in breach tomorrow; without Ethical leadership, it can comply with the law and lose trust. And without governance, AI grows by the accumulation of projects and nobody is accountable for the whole.

Question for the classroom: who could stop a profitable but inappropriate AI use case in your organisation today?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **Four grades of spheres 08 and 09**: The scale used to assess the regulation and governance spheres: absent, basic, systematic and advanced. They do not use ambition levels because the point is not how much change is wanted but how much control exists. The link opens the grades in SPHERES. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/04_SPHERES_Regulacion_y_gobierno_de_la_IA.html#the-four-grades
- **Regulation, ethics and accountability** (esfera 08): The sphere of limits: what regulation requires, what the company considers acceptable and who answers for what AI does. It produces no direct value, but without it value is not sustainable. It is assessed with four grades. The link opens the sphere in SPHERES. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/04_SPHERES_Regulacion_y_gobierno_de_la_IA.html#sphere-08-regulation-ethics-and-accountability
- **AI governance** (esfera 09): The meta-sphere: how the company governs its own AI, that is, who decides, how it is measured and how the other spheres are controlled. It is the one SEVEN-G develops in detail. It is assessed with four grades. The link opens the sphere in SPHERES. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/04_SPHERES_Regulacion_y_gobierno_de_la_IA.html#sphere-09-ai-governance

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SEVEN-G 10 · Rule for spheres 08 and 09** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#4-2-rule-for-spheres-08-and-09
- **Regulation and governance on the map** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/04_SPHERES_Regulacion_y_gobierno_de_la_IA.html#how-08-and-09-are-presented-on-the-map
- **Rule for spheres 08 and 09** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#4-2-rule-for-spheres-08-and-09



Notes

The map crosses spheres and levels. In its simplest form it is a table in which each use case occupies one cell. The primary sphere is that of the metric that justifies the investment, not that of the area that sponsors it.

In SEVEN-G the heat map (T16) is built as follows (document 10, section 8):

- Rows: spheres 01 to 07. Below, in a separate block, spheres 08 and 09 with their current and target grade per dimension.
- Columns: Optimise, Augment and Transform.
- Cell: number of use cases, investment and recurring cost, validated net value and the target ambition of the sphere.
- Colour: proportion of the cell's spend over the total, with initial thresholds to be calibrated.

The target ambition per sphere is approved by the board in the direction stage of the corporate cycle (C2) and is stored in the use case register (T01). Without it, the dashboard cannot mark gaps.

Illustrative example, from a fictitious distributor with twenty use cases: nineteen are Optimise and eleven are in Operations; Product and service is empty although the strategic plan talks about digital services; Decision is empty while three use cases recommend prices; and there is no governance. Decisions it prompts: limit investment in efficiency, set Transform in Product with milestones per stage, strengthen Data before scaling Customer, define the autonomy of pricing decisions and appoint an owner for AI.

Why it matters. A map does not decide for the board, but it makes visible decisions that were being taken unintentionally. And it answers the question «are we transforming?» by comparing the declared ambition with what the portfolio delivers. None of this requires technical knowledge.

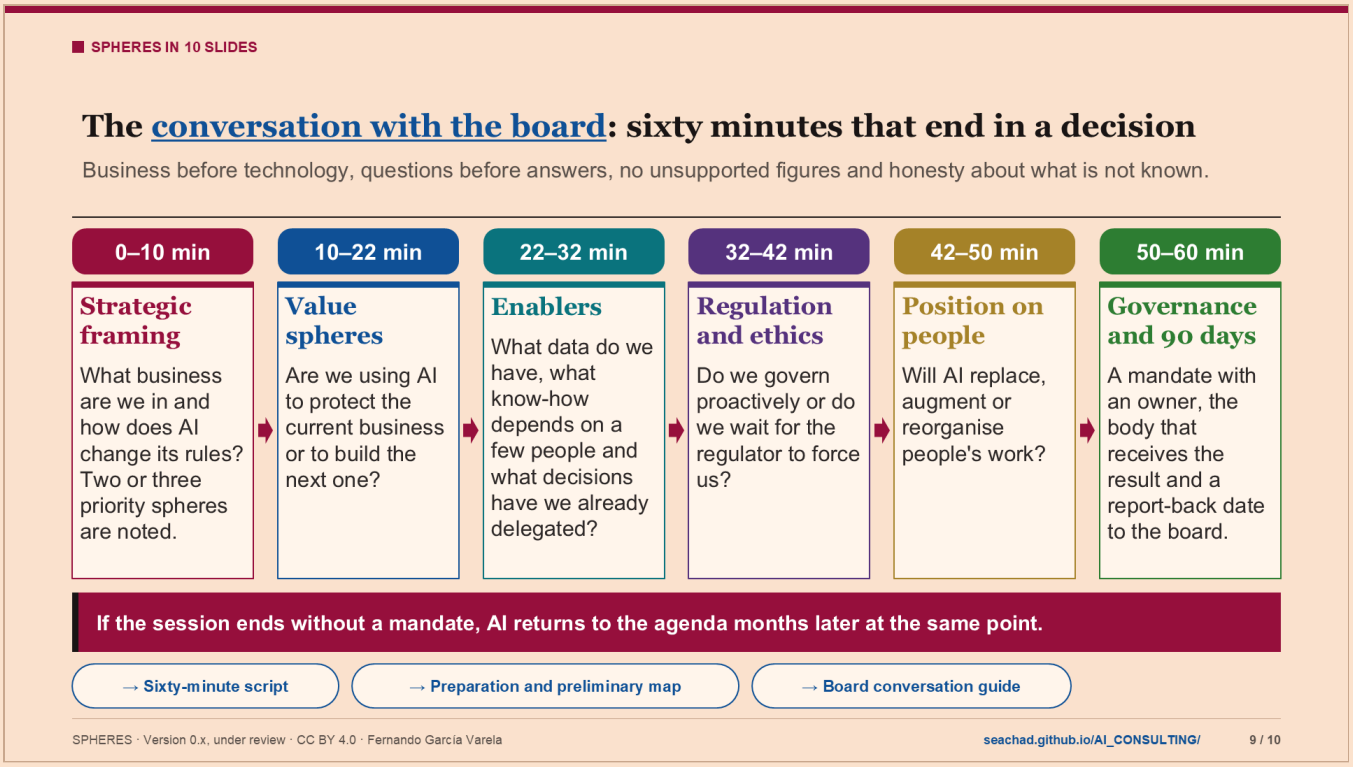
Question for the classroom: in this example map, which empty cell would worry you most as a board member?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **SEVEN-G**: SEVEN-G (Seven-phase Enterprise Value & Governance) is an open framework for a company to implement, govern and measure AI, and to know whether it is transforming or only gaining efficiency. It treats each use case as an investment with decision gates and gives the board figures it can trust. Management, the AI office, risk and the board use it. The link opens its entry page, with the story, the questions and the examples. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/entrada/index.html
- **Impact map** (T16): Component A of SEVEN-G: where and with what ambition AI acts. It is read as a grid of the portfolio, with the spheres in rows and Optimise, Augment and Transform in columns. Each cell shows use cases, investment, cost and value, and flags the gap against the ambition the board approved. It answers «where is the impact?». In the example board dashboard, look for the «Where the impact is» card (fictitious data, interface in Spanish). https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T17_panel_consejo/ejemplo/salida/t01_Dashboard_Casos_Uso_IA_v8.html
- **Board dashboard** (T17): A supervision dashboard generated from the use case register. It shows the board cost, validated versus declared value, the funnel, risks, incidents, adoption, maturity and what holds back scaling, with a «?» help on each card. It is for deciding, not just for informing. The link opens the example dashboard with fictitious data; the interface is in Spanish and the help texts are in both languages. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T17_panel_consejo/ejemplo/salida/t01_Dashboard_Casos_Uso_IA_v8.html

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SEVEN-G 10 · Sphere-level heat map (T16)** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#sphere-level-heat-map-t16
- **SEVEN-G 13 · Ambition per sphere** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/13_SEVEN-G_Tesis_de_IA_ambicion_y_apetito_de_riesgo.html#ambition-per-sphere
- **SPHERES 00 · A complete example** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#a-complete-example
- **Use case register (T01), fictitious data** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T01_registro_iniciativas/registro.html
- **Sphere-by-ambition heat map** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html#sphere-level-heat-map-t16
- **Board dashboard** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T17_panel_consejo/index.html
- **How the map is read** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#how-the-map-is-read



Notes

A board does not think about «AI use cases». It thinks about risk, opportunity, accountability and competitive advantage. The conversation that SPHERES proposes translates AI into those terms and ends with specific decisions.

Preparation, two to three weeks before:

- Short interviews with the chair, the chief executive and the business, people, technology and risk directors.
- A preliminary map: each known use case in its primary sphere and at its level, with the approximate grades of 08 and 09. What is not known is marked. A map with declared gaps is more useful than a complete and invented one.
- A two-page note for the board with the decision that will be requested at the end.

The block on people is the shortest and the most delicate. There are three positions: replace, augment or reorganise. A company can adopt different positions by function. What must not happen is that there is no position and each project decides it on its own.

The person supporting the board helps it to ask good questions and to interpret the evidence. They declare their interests, do not use market figures without a source to create urgency and do not recommend products in which they have an interest.

After the session: a note of conclusions within two working days, a record of the decisions with an owner and a date and, at the next session, the status of what was decided and an updated map.

Why it matters. Presenting the board with its own company on the map changes the tone: the discussion moves from AI in general to the company's own decisions. And the gaps in the map are often the first relevant finding.

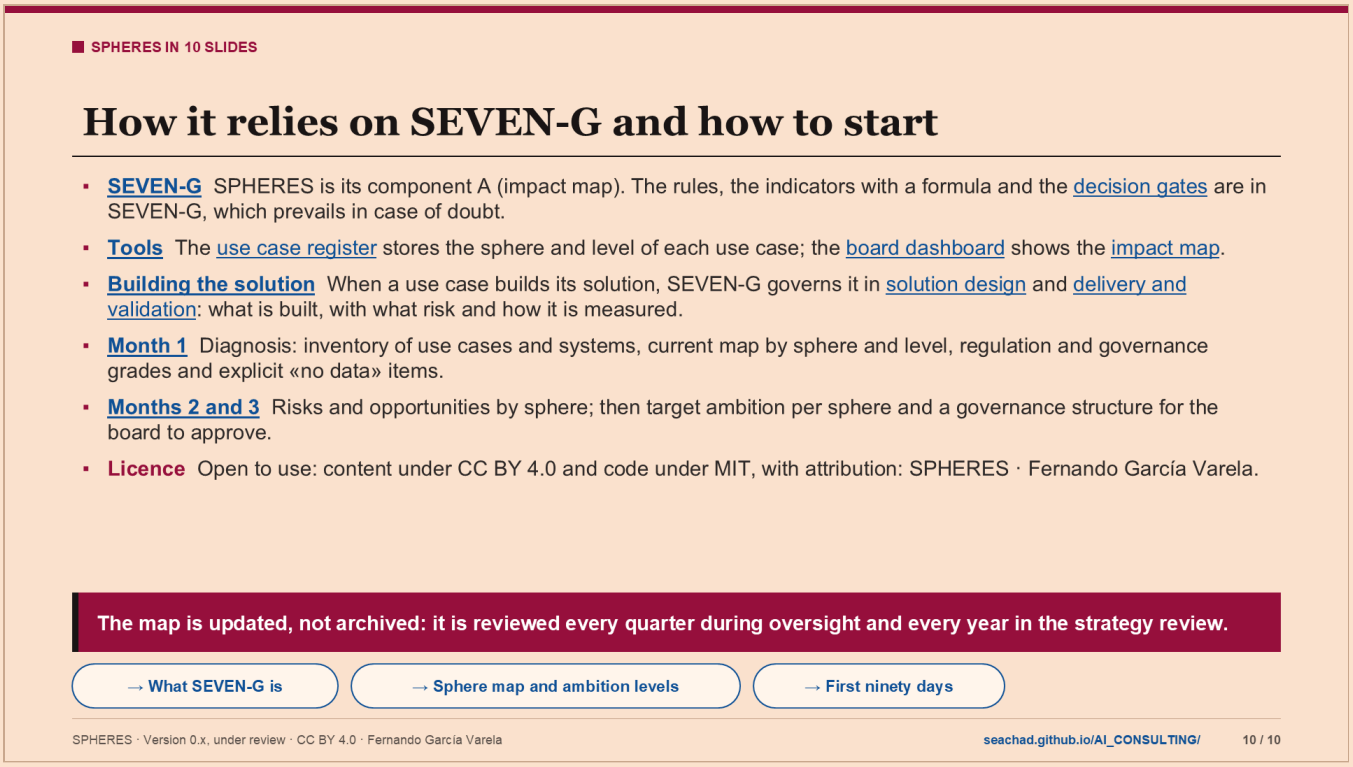
Question for the classroom: prepare the question for the people block for a board that you know. How would you prevent the answer from being «we will look into it»?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **Conversation with the board**: A SPHERES document with a script for talking about AI with the board using the spheres and ambition levels: what to ask in each sphere, which signals to look for and how to lead the conversation to decisions. The link opens the document. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 05 · Sixty-minute script** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#sixty-minute-script
- **SPHERES 05 · The position on people** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#the-position-on-people
- **SPHERES 05 · The role of the person supporting the board** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#the-role-of-the-person-supporting-the-board
- **SEVEN-G 61 · Guide to the conversation with the board** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/61_SEVEN-G_Guia_de_conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#script-for-a-60-minute-session
- **Sixty-minute script** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#sixty-minute-script
- **Preparation and preliminary map** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#preparation
- **Board conversation guide** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/61_SEVEN-G_Guia_de_conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#script-for-a-60-minute-session



Notes

SPHERES began as an independent framework for the conversation with the board and is now component A (impact map) of SEVEN-G. The division of work is deliberate. SPHERES explains what the spheres and levels are, why they matter and how to use them in a management conversation. SEVEN-G governs, measures and audits AI: classification rules, indicators with a formula, decision gates, templates and tools. SEVEN-G documents that develop SPHERES: 10 (sphere map), 12 (transformation index), 13 (AI thesis and ambition per sphere), 14 (portfolio management) and 61 (conversation with the board).

SEVEN-G decides at each gate whether an AI use case goes ahead. When the use case builds its solution, SEVEN-G also governs it in the design and delivery phases (document 53): it decides what is built, with what risk and how it is measured, and what comes out of the build remains as evidence for the gates. SPHERES says where and with what ambition; SEVEN-G governs, decides and measures.

How to start: the conversation with the board ends with a ninety-day mandate.

- Month 1, diagnosis: the map of the current situation with evidence.
- Month 2, risks and opportunities by sphere, with an owner and a timescale.
- Month 3, target ambition per sphere, target grades for 08 and 09, main indicators, bodies and the rhythm of reporting to the board.

Why it matters. Separating the explanation from the rule avoids two risks: that the board receives a manual it does not need to read, and that the AI office applies criteria different from those explained. Everyone uses the same spheres, the same levels and the same names. SPHERES is a methodology under construction and its use is free.

Question for the classroom: which three spheres would you set as priorities in the company that you know best, and with what ambition?

TERMS ON THIS SLIDE

- **SEVEN-G**: SEVEN-G (Seven-phase Enterprise Value & Governance) is an open framework for a company to implement, govern and measure AI, and to know whether it is transforming or only gaining efficiency. It treats each use case as an investment with decision gates and gives the board figures it can trust. Management, the AI office, risk and the board use it. The link opens its entry page, with the story, the questions and the examples. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/entrada/index.html
- **Decision gates** (G0–G7): At the end of each phase there is a gate: a moment when a body decides, with verified evidence, whether the use case continues, continues with conditions, iterates, pivots or stops. There are at most two iterations before the decision is escalated. Gates turn enthusiasm into recorded decisions. The link opens their definition in document 01. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/01_SEVEN-G_Metodologia_fundacional.html#decision-gates
- **Use case register** (T01): It is the central SEVEN-G tool and the single data source for all the others. It records each AI use case like an opportunity in a CRM: phase, status, dates, criteria for each gate, risks, value and stop reason. The AI office and the teams use it; the committee and the board see what comes out of it. The link opens an example register with fictitious use cases; anything you change is stored only in your browser. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T01_registro_iniciativas/registro.html
- **Board dashboard** (T17): A supervision dashboard generated from the use case register. It shows the board cost, validated versus declared value, the funnel, risks, incidents, adoption, maturity and what holds back scaling, with a «?» help on each card. It is for deciding, not just for informing. The link opens the example dashboard with fictitious data; the interface is in Spanish and the help texts are in both languages. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T17_panel_consejo/ejemplo/salida/t01_Dashboard_Casos_Uso_IA_v8.html
- **Impact map** (T16): Component A of SEVEN-G: where and with what ambition AI acts. It is read as a grid of the portfolio, with the spheres in rows and Optimise, Augment and Transform in columns. Each cell shows use cases, investment, cost and value, and flags the gap against the ambition the board approved. It answers «where is the impact?». In the example board dashboard, look for the «Where the impact is» card (fictitious data, interface in Spanish). https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/herramientas/T17_panel_consejo/ejemplo/salida/t01_Dashboard_Casos_Uso_IA_v8.html
- **Solution design** (fase 4): The phase in which the full solution is designed: architecture, data, security, human oversight, rollback plan and adoption plan. It ends at the design gate (G4). It ensures controls are designed before building, not added later when they cost more. The link opens the phase manual in document 20. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/20_SEVEN-G_Manuales_de_fase.html#phase-4-solution-design
- **Delivery and validation** (fase 5): The phase in which the solution is built, tested with real data, piloted and validated to show it delivers what was promised without breaking any constraint. It ends at the go-live gate (G5), with multi-level sign-off. Nothing reaches production without verified evidence. The link opens the phase manual in document 20. https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/20_SEVEN-G_Manuales_de_fase.html#phase-5-delivery-and-validation

SOURCES AND LINKS

- **SPHERES 00 · Relationship with SEVEN-G** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html#relationship-with-seven-g
- **SEVEN-G 53 · Building solutions with AI** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/53_SEVEN-G_Construccion_de_soluciones_con_IA.html
- **SEVEN-G 90 · 90-day plan** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/90_SEVEN-G_Guia_de_implantacion.html#90-day-plan
- **Sphere map and ambition levels** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/10_SEVEN-G_Mapa_de_esferas_y_niveles_de_ambicion.html
- **First ninety days** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#first-ninety-days

LEGAL NOTICE

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