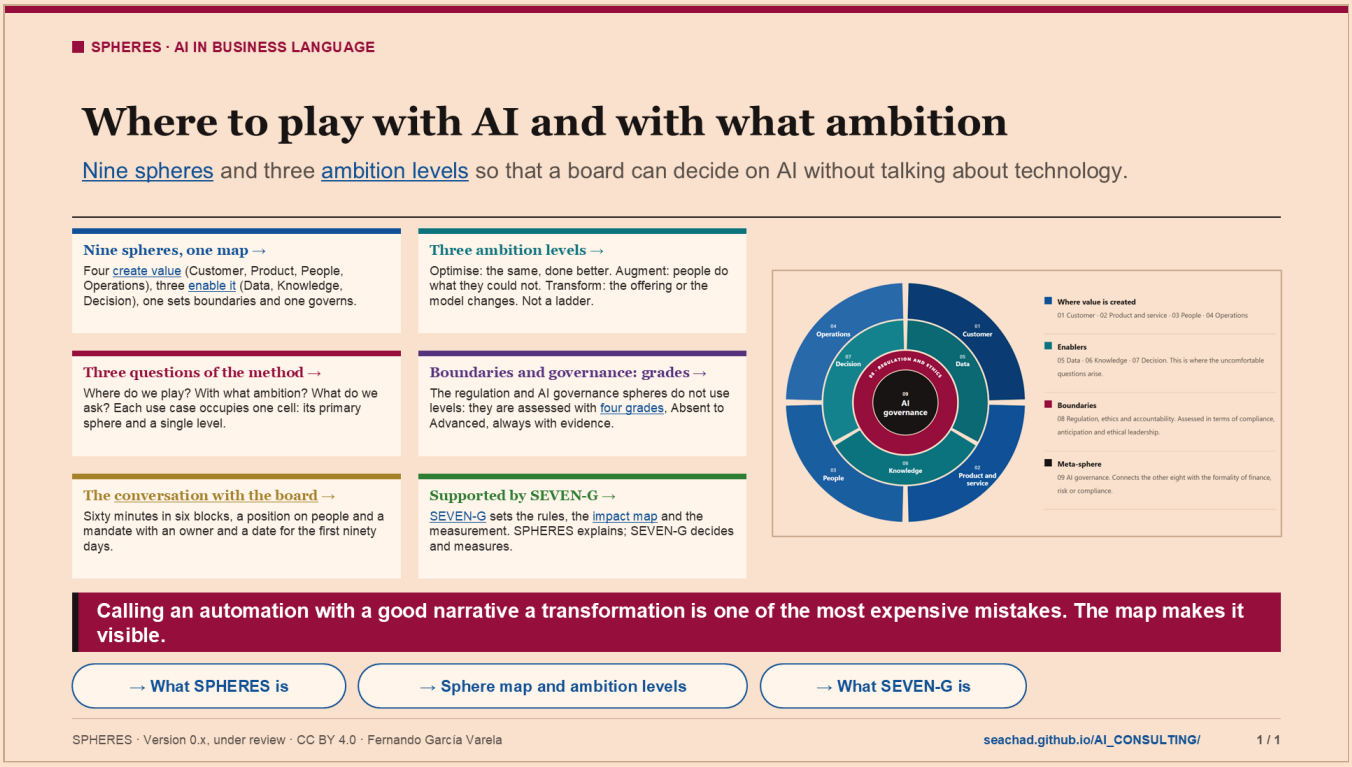


Notes

SPHERES organises everything that artificial intelligence can change in a company into nine spheres and grades each bet with three ambition levels. Its purpose is to let a board talk about AI in business language: where to play, with what ambition and what to ask. The name is not an acronym: it is the English word spheres.

The nine spheres are read from the outside in, in four types:

- Where value is created: 01 Customer, 02 Product and service, 03 People and 04 Operations. They are the only ones with direct value: revenue, retention, margin, productivity, cost or quality.
- Enablers: 05 Data, 06 Knowledge and 07 Decision. They do not generate value in themselves, but they constrain it. A Transform ambition in Customer without reliable data is a sign of risk, not of boldness.
- Boundaries: 08 Regulation, ethics and accountability.
- Meta-sphere: 09 AI governance, which connects the other eight.

The three levels describe what changes in the business, not the technology used. Optimise means doing the same thing faster, more cheaply or with fewer errors; for example, classifying the enquiries that reach customer service. Augment means that people do what they could not do before; for example, a copilot that enables analysts to review transactions that they previously referred to specialists. Transform means changing what is offered, how the company competes or how it is organised; for example, a machinery manufacturer that starts selling guaranteed operating hours thanks to predictive maintenance. They are not a ladder: Transform is not better than Optimise. Investment, uncertainty and resistance increase from one level to the next; that is why each level is decided and measured with different criteria. To classify a use case there are five questions, answered with evidence. In case of doubt, the lower level is assigned.

The three questions of the method are: where do we play? (the sphere map), with what ambition? (the levels) and what do we ask? (questions, warning signs and a script for each sphere). Each use case occupies one cell of the map: its primary sphere, which is the sphere of the metric that justifies the investment, and a single

level. The map is read at three points in time (current situation, target ambition and portfolio) and almost always shows concentration, gaps and incoherences. Fictitious example: a distribution company with twenty use cases finds that nineteen are Optimise, that Product and service is empty and that nobody is accountable for AI. It is becoming more efficient, not transforming. The board takes five decisions without needing technical knowledge.

Spheres 08 and 09 do not use ambition levels, because they do not generate value in themselves. Each has three dimensions (08: Compliance, Anticipation and Ethical leadership; 09: Structure, Balance between speed and control and Supplier ecosystem) that are assessed with four grades: Absent, Basic, Systematic and Advanced. A grade is assigned with evidence, not with an optimistic self-assessment.

The conversation with the board follows a sixty-minute script in six blocks: framing, value spheres, enablers, regulation, position on people (whether AI replaces, augments or reorganises work) and governance. It ends with a mandate for ninety days: diagnosis, risks and opportunities by sphere, and governance structure.

SPHERES is component A (impact map) of SEVEN-G. SPHERES explains; SEVEN-G sets the rules. SEVEN-G document 10 sets the sphere and level rules, the indicators with a formula and the heat map (T16); document 12, the five questions and the transformation index; document 13, the target ambition by sphere; and document 61, the full script for the board. The use case register (T01) records the sphere and level of each one, and the board AI dashboard (T17) shows the heat map. When a use case builds its solution, SEVEN-G also governs it in its design and delivery phases (phases 4 and 5, document 53): it decides what is built, with what risk and how it is measured.

Why it matters: without a common language, each area talks about AI in its own way. With the same map, the board compares bets, detects gaps and decides where to invest.

Question for the classroom: place three AI use cases of a company you know on the map. Which one is presented as a transformation and is, in fact, Optimise?

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
- **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
- **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
- **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
- **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

- **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

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
- **SPHERES 01 · Ambition levels: 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
- **SPHERES 05 · Conversation with the board: sixty-minute script** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/05_SPHERES_Conversacion_con_el_consejo.html#sixty-minute-script
- **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 · AI thesis, ambition and risk appetite** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SEVEN-G/html/en/13_SEVEN-G_Tesis_de_IA_ambicion_y_apetito_de_riesgo.html
- **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
- **What SPHERES is** https://seachad.github.io/AI_CONSULTING/SPHERES/html/en/00_SPHERES_Que_es_y_para_que_sirve.html
- **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

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