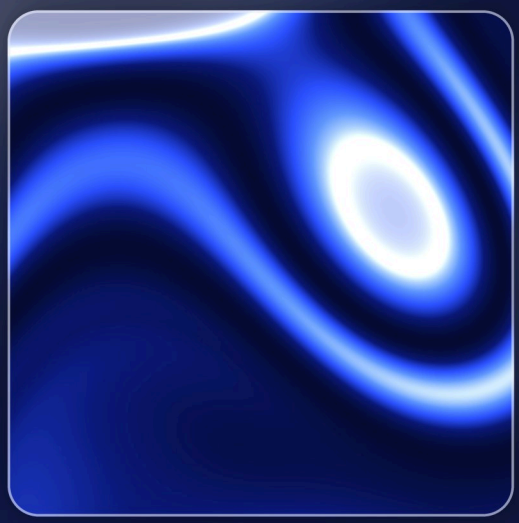
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The Board AI Briefing



Ten questions every board should ask about AI, and the red flags to listen for.

Board, Governance, Leadership

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How to use this

Send this to your leadership team a week before the board meeting, so nobody gets ambushed. In the meeting, ask the ten questions in order. Listen for the "good answer" and note any red flags you hear. Then rate each question green, amber or red on the scoring grid (page 3) and agree three actions before you close the item.

You don't need to be technical to run this. You need to ask clearly and keep asking until the answer is plain. Allow 45 to 60 minutes. Run it again in six months and compare the grids.

The ten questions

1 Where will AI create value for us, and how much?

Why it matters: AI without a business reason becomes an expensive hobby. The board should hear a link to revenue, cost, speed or quality.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We've picked three processes where AI saves the most time. Here's what each one costs today and what we expect to save."

Red flags to listen for:

- "Everyone else is doing it, so we need to."
- A list of tools with no named process or number attached.
- Value described only as "efficiency" with nothing you could measure.

2 Who owns AI here?

Why it matters: If everyone owns it, nobody does. One accountable person keeps decisions, spend and risk in one place.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "Our COO owns it at leadership level. She reports to the board each quarter and has a small group from operations, finance and IT behind her."

Red flags to listen for:

- "IT is looking at it." (AI is a business decision first.)
- Several people each think the others own it.
- The owner has no time, budget or authority to act.

3 What AI are we already using, including what staff use on their own?

Why it matters: In many businesses, staff already use more AI than leadership realises. They often use free tools with company information, and the board can't manage what it can't see.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We asked every team. Here's the list of tools in use, who uses them and for what. We've approved some, paused one and given staff a clear policy."

Red flags to listen for:

- "Nobody here uses AI yet."
- No acceptable use policy, or one that nobody has read.
- Staff pasting customer or financial data into free tools and leadership only finding out by accident.

4 What data does AI touch, and how do we protect it?

Why it matters: Customer, staff and financial data carry real legal and trust risk. The board needs to know where that data goes once AI is involved.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We know which tools see personal or confidential data. We've checked how UK GDPR and any other relevant rules apply with our data protection lead, and we've kept sensitive data out of tools that don't meet our standard."

Red flags to listen for:

- "The supplier handles all that."
- Nobody can say where data is stored or whether it's used to train someone else's model.
- Data protection hasn't been part of the conversation at all.

5 How are we keeping AI secure?

Why it matters: AI tools add new ways in for attackers and new ways for information to leak. Security has to be part of the plan, not an afterthought.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "Every AI tool goes through the same security check as any other software. Access uses company accounts, and we can switch any tool off quickly."

Red flags to listen for:

- Tools signed up for on personal email accounts or personal cards.
- No one has asked the security team, or there isn't one to ask.
- "It's only a chatbot, it can't do any harm."

6 How do we check AI output is right, and where does a human sign off?

Why it matters: AI can be confidently wrong. Anything that reaches a customer, a regulator or the accounts needs a person who checks it and owns it.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "For each use, we've decided what a person reviews before it goes out. We spot-check quality weekly and log mistakes so we can fix them."

Red flags to listen for:

- "The AI is very accurate, so we don't need to check."
- No one can name who signs off on AI-produced work.
- Mistakes get fixed quietly with no record.

7 Which suppliers are we relying on, and how easily could we switch?

Why it matters: AI tools and prices change fast. Getting locked into one supplier can leave you with rising costs and no way out.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We know our main AI suppliers, what we pay and what our contracts say about data and exit. We could move our key work elsewhere in weeks, not months."

Red flags to listen for:

- Long contracts signed with no exit or data return terms.
- Costs that rise with usage and nobody tracks them.
- "We've built everything around one product."

8 Do our people have the skills, and how are we bringing them with us?

Why it matters: AI only pays back when people use it well. Fear of job loss can quietly stall any rollout.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We've trained a first group of champions in each team. We've told staff honestly what will change and what won't, and we're tracking who uses the tools."

Red flags to listen for:

- One person in the business "knows AI" and everyone else waits for them.
- No training budget or time set aside.
- Staff heard about AI plans through rumour first.

9 How will we measure the return?

Why it matters: If you don't measure before you start, you can't prove the gain afterwards. The board should see a baseline and a payback date.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We measured how long the process takes today. We'll report hours saved, cost and payback monthly, and we'll stop anything that misses its target after one quarter."

Red flags to listen for:

- No baseline taken before the project started.
- Success measured by "usage" or "excitement" alone.
- Payback always "next quarter".

10 How much risk are we willing to take, and when do we stop?

Why it matters: The board sets the appetite for risk. Clear stopping rules mean a bad project ends early instead of draining money and trust.

> **A good answer sounds like:** "We've agreed what we won't use AI for. Each project has a budget limit and a review point, and we know what would make us pause it."

Red flags to listen for:

- No list of uses that are off limits.
- Nobody has ever stopped an AI project, and nobody can say what would trigger it.
- Risk appetite never discussed at board level.

Scoring grid

Rate each answer after you've heard it. **Green:** clear, owned and backed by evidence. **Amber:** partly there, with a plan to close the gap. **Red:** no answer, or one or more red flags.

#	Question	Green	Amber	Red	Notes
1	Where will AI create value, and how much?	☐	☐	☐	
2	Who owns AI here?	☐	☐	☐	
3	What AI are we already using, including staff on their own?	☐	☐	☐	
4	What data does AI touch, and how do we protect it?	☐	☐	☐	
5	How are we keeping AI secure?	☐	☐	☐	
6	How do we check output, and where does a human sign off?	☐	☐	☐	
7	Which suppliers do we rely on, and could we switch?	☐	☐	☐	
8	Do our people have the skills, and are they with us?	☐	☐	☐	
9	How will we measure the return?	☐	☐	☐	
10	How much risk will we take, and when do we stop?	☐	☐	☐	
	Totals				

Date of briefing: _____ **Next review date:** _____

The three actions we agree today

Start with your reds. Pick no more than three actions, give each one an owner and a date, and check them at the next board meeting.

#	Action	Owner	Due by	Done
1				☐
2				☐
3				☐

This briefing is a practical guide, not legal advice. For anything involving data protection or AI regulation, check how the rules apply to your business with a qualified adviser.

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Want help running this?

Book a 30-minute call at imrananwar.ai

I run this briefing with boards and leadership teams across the UK and the GCC. I can chair the session, press for the plain answers and help you turn the reds into a plan your team can deliver.

Use this template alone, or bring me in to run it.

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