

RUNNING SMART, SAFE PILOTS

Audience: Builders | Type: Innovation

Why this matters

Pilots are how teams learn but only when everyone is clear that a pilot is an experiment, not a finished solution. A good pilot creates shared understanding: What were we testing? What did we learn? What should happen next?

What a pilot is (in practice)

A pilot is a small, time-bound experiment designed to answer a specific question, such as:

- Does this actually save time?
- Does it reduce frustration or add to it?
- Does this output meet our quality and trust standards?

The goal is learning, not perfection.

What makes a pilot effective

Strong pilots are intentionally narrow:

- One clear problem worth exploring
- One specific use case for AI support
- One person responsible for running it
- One clear moment to reflect and decide

This keeps the work focused and safe.

A simple pilot structure

- **Name the problem:** What are we trying to learn by testing this?
- **Define the boundaries:** What's in scope? And just as important, what's out of scope?
- **Run it briefly:** Try it on a small scale without disrupting daily work. Don't aim for perfection.
- **Pause and reflect:** Did this help? What worked? What didn't?

How to tell whether it's working

Instead of complex metrics, start with simple signals:

- Did this save measurable time?
- Are people less frustrated doing the task?
- Are the outputs clearer or easier to work with?

What decisions come after a pilot

At the end of a pilot, you should be able to say one of three things:

- This is worth continuing.
- This needs adjustment before continuing.
- This isn't a good fit right now.

All three are valid outcomes.

AI principle

A successful pilot teaches you something. It doesn't have to produce something.

For advanced teams (optional exploration)

Teams with strong governance and support may explore:

- Running multiple small pilots in parallel for comparison
- Adding lightweight success criteria before starting
- Testing agent-style or automated flows only with clear stop points, owners, and human review

Advanced pilots should remain reversible, visible, and easy to stop.



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