



## MODULE 2

# Leadership-level strategy with AI

Move AI from drafting to the strategic work, and be honest about where it helps.

- ▶ **The “what is it for” audit** *what the automation frees*
- ▶ **The upstream map** *where AI helps the strategy*
- ▶ **Three prompts** *to start today*

Built by Michael MacLennan, twenty years in communications.  
Free. Five pages, in one sitting.

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Version 1.0 · June 2026



## Start here, and the gap this closes

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For most teams, AI is stuck at drafting. Useful, but the smallest prize. The larger one sits upstream, in the strategic work the function is valued for: reading the landscape, mapping stakeholders, building and stress-testing the message, modelling risk.

There is a trap on the way. Redesign without intent: point AI at your existing work simply to do it faster, and you get a leaner version of the same function, optimised for a world that is changing around it. The discipline is to reclaim capacity and redeploy it deliberately. Efficiency is the byproduct, not the goal.

### Start here

Run the “what is it for” audit below on the single task you would most like to hand to AI. It is the five-minute exercise that keeps the rest honest. Public-sector leaders: read “strategic work” as your policy, campaign and stakeholder work; the upstream uses apply just the same.

In Deloitte's 2026 study of more than 3,200 leaders, only 34% reported using AI to deeply transform how they work; the other two-thirds were applying it to existing processes without redesigning the work underneath. For communications, surface use looks like faster drafts. It leaves the strategic value, the value that justifies the seat, untouched.

*Deloitte AI Institute, State of AI in the Enterprise, 2026 edition.*



## The “what is it for” audit

Before automating anything, make yourself answer one question. List the three tasks you would hand to AI tomorrow. For each, name what the reclaimed time will be redirected to.

Task to automate	Time it frees	Redirected to
e.g. weekly monitoring summary	e.g. half a day	e.g. stakeholder strategy for the restructure

If you cannot name the redirect, the automation will produce efficiency, not repositioning, and the freed time will be swallowed by the next urgent thing. The primary decision is not what to automate. It is what the automation is for.



## The upstream map

Where AI earns its place in the strategic work, and where it does not. Use this to pick one or two upstream uses to build, rather than scattering effort.

Strategic task	What AI does well	Where your judgement stays
<b>Landscape synthesis</b>	Compress large volumes of coverage and comment into themes and shifts	Deciding what matters, and what the organisation should do
<b>Stakeholder mapping</b>	Draft a first map of stakeholders, interests and likely positions	Reading the relationships and politics the model cannot see
<b>Message architecture</b>	Generate variations, stress-test a message against objections	Choosing the line the organisation can stand behind, and why
<b>Risk simulation</b>	Model how a message or crisis might play across audiences	Judging plausibility and the second-order consequences

*The pattern holds across all four: AI widens the input and speeds the groundwork; you keep the judgement and the accountability.*



## Three prompts to start with

Practitioner-built starting points for the highest-value upstream uses. Each takes twenty to thirty minutes with your own material added.

### Landscape synthesis

*You are helping a communications leader read the landscape on [topic]. Here is recent coverage, comment and stakeholder material [paste]. Synthesise the three or four themes that matter most, the shifts since [date], and the two or three things a [organisation type] should be alert to. Flag where the evidence is thin; do not overstate.*

### Stakeholder map

*Help me draft a stakeholder map for [issue]. Our key audiences are [list]. For each, set out their likely interest, likely position, what would build their confidence and what would lose it. Mark where you are inferring rather than drawing on what I gave you, so I can check those.*

### Message stress-test

*Here is our draft key message and supporting points for [audience] [paste]. Stress-test it. Where is it vague, where could it be misread, what is the strongest objection a sceptic would raise, and where might it not hold up to scrutiny? Do not rewrite it; show me where it is weak.*

This is the strategic counterpart to the governance (Module 0) and capability (Module 1) foundations. Elif Güvencer's The Two Clocks ([reputationsignal.co](https://reputationsignal.co)) argues that redesigning the function from intent, not efficiency pressure, is what keeps communications strategic.