



MODULE 3

Board and stakeholder confidence

Earn the seat where AI is governed, and keep your stakeholders confident.

- ▶ **The case for the seat** *why comms belongs in AI governance*
- ▶ **The stakeholder confidence map** *audience by audience*
- ▶ **What is the machine saying** *discovery before influence*

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Free. Five pages, in one sitting.

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Start here, and the gap this closes

There is a quiet demotion happening in a lot of organisations, one reasonable decision at a time. An AI governance group forms, and communications hears about it after the first meeting. A board paper on AI risk reaches the board through Legal, IT and the technology lead, with no communications input, because nobody thought to ask. Together these narrow the function's mandate without anyone deciding to.

Start here

Run the “what is the machine saying about us” exercise below. Ten minutes, and it gives you something concrete to take into the room rather than an argument in the abstract. In the public sector, “the board” is your board or committee and your accountable officer, and your stakeholders include elected members, the public and the FOI lens.

AI governance is forming inside most large organisations, with a recognisable core: Legal, IT, Risk, Compliance, increasingly HR. Communications is rarely on the list. Yet across the S&P 500, AI risk disclosures jumped from 12% to 72% of companies between 2023 and 2025, and reputational risk is the single most-cited category, named by 38%. The risk boards worry about most is the one communications is built to read.

The Conference Board, AI Risk Disclosures in the S&P 500, October 2025.



The case for the seat

A short argument you can adapt and take into the right room. The spine of it:

- ▶ Communications is the only function whose object is coherence itself, the whole picture rather than its parts. Every other function reads AI use through one lens: compliance, security, investor impact, adoption speed.
- ▶ Legal compliance and reputational coherence are not the same discipline. An organisation can be fully compliant and still incoherent, and incoherence is what damages trust.
- ▶ The contribution is a second reading, not a veto and not a substitute for the technology lead's mandate: how the reputational picture holds together, read independently.

A sentence you could say to a chief executive

“When we deploy these systems, someone needs to be accountable for whether the story they tell about us holds together. That is communications, and we should be in the governance conversation, not briefed after it.”



The stakeholder confidence map

Confidence is built audience by audience. Map what each key group needs to hear about your organisation's AI use, and where the gap or risk sits today.

Stakeholder	What builds confidence	Risk or gap now
Board	A clear, governed position and an honest view of the risks	[your note]
Employees	Why adoption matters, what it asks of them, what it protects	[your note]
Customers / members	Honest disclosure of how AI is and is not used	[your note]
Media and analysts	Consistency between what you say and what your systems do	[your note]
Regulators	Evidence of responsible, accountable use	[your note]
Elected members, public	Transparent use, and clear answers to an FOI request	[your note]

The internal story matters as much as the external one. When what you tell employees diverges from what you tell the market, the gap surfaces. Keeping the two coherent is work no one else is positioned to do.



What is the machine saying about us?

Discovery before influence. Before you try to shape how AI systems represent your organisation, find out what they currently say.

- 1 Pick the three questions a prospective customer, investor or journalist would most plausibly ask an AI assistant about your organisation this week.
- 2 Ask them, in whichever assistant you use, and ideally more than one.
- 3 Read the answers as that stakeholder would, encountering you for the first time.
- 4 Note where the picture is accurate, where it is thin, where it is fragmented across sources, and where the system fills a gap with something the record does not support.

The gap between what you see and what you would want them to see is your first map of the problem, and a concrete thing to take to the governance conversation. This follows Elif Güvençer's signal-architecture thinking in *The Two Clocks* (reputationsignal.co), which underpins this module on signal architecture and the trust consequence of AI systems.