

Leading with AI Programme

This was not a failure of strategy, it was a failure to land strategy.

Closing the gap between executive AI ambition and manager-level capability in a major financial services institution

130+

managers trained across Finance, HR, Risk, Legal and Technology

97%

identified a credible AI use case within Module 1

3.3/5

manager AI confidence at entry, over 1 in 4 felt underprepared to lead adoption

\$88m–\$226m

ROI range on pilot investment, payback period as short as 3.5 days

THE COMMERCIAL CHALLENGE

The bank needed to close a critical gap between executive AI ambition and manager-level capability. At programme entry, only 5–8% of managers had AI embedded in team workflows, and manager confidence in leading AI adoption averaged just 3.3 out of 5. The #1 barrier was not motivation, it was navigation. Managers were willing; they needed a framework to get started.

PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE

- 01 Use Case Discovery** Full-day workshop identifying 4–6 credible use cases and impact metrics.
- 02 Prompt Mastery & Copilot** Coaching structured prompts and curating a shared team prompt library.
- 03 AI Workflow Redesign** Redesigning one workflow with AI metaskills and quality review standards.
- 04 Sprint Labs** Production-grade prompt artefacts, red-teamed for safety and quality.

VALUE CREATED ACROSS THE PROGRAMME

£1.17M conservative annual productivity value, pilot cohort, 130 managers (112 hrs saved/mgr)

£1.92M moderate scenario annual value, pilot cohort (183 hrs saved/mgr, 67:1 ROI)

£88M+ projected net annual value at full rollout, conservative estimate, 10,000 managers

1,600 hrs saved annually by one team, a single AI use case identified across 6 regional managers

The ROI case is structural, not aspirational, at £220 per participant, payback requires fewer than 3 hours saved in Year 1.

THE TAKEAWAY

The pilot has demonstrated that executive AI ambition can land at manager level with measurable, auditable productivity returns. A curious, motivated workforce is already in place. The programme converts that readiness into adoption and value.

WHY IT WORKED

Clarity was the #1 adoption blocker, not leadership, so the programme led with structured use-case identification.

Guardrail clarity jumped +29 percentage points across cohorts, managers leaving with clear rules of engagement, not just skills.

Managers are equipped as multipliers, the highest-leverage intervention is enabling them to champion AI with their direct reports, not just use it personally.