SCALE / PIVOT / KILL DECISION GUIDE

AI Leadership & Project Management Masterclass

Curtin University

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SCALE / PIVOT / KILL DECISION GUIDE

YOUR TASK

You completed a 6-week pilot. Now you have data. Time to decide:

Should you SCALE it? PIVOT it? Or KILL it?

THE THREE PATHS

SCALE

Roll out to 100% of customers/operations

Choose this when: - You met 80% of your Go/No-Go criteria - Proof of concept is validated - Key risks are addressed - You're confident it will work at scale

Questions to ask: - Did we hit our targets? - Are remaining gaps minor or major? - Is the team ready?

PIVOT

Continue the pilot with changes

Choose this when: - You met 50-80% of your criteria - Gaps are solvable (not fundamental problems) - You have a clear plan to fix issues - 4-6 more weeks will give you better data

Questions to ask: - Which gaps are fixable vs. fundamental? - What would it take to hit our targets? - How much more time/money do we need?

KILL

Stop the project

Choose this when: - You met <50% of criteria - Key assumptions are proven wrong - Fundamental problems (not fixable) - Not worth the continued investment

Questions to ask: - Is this a solvable problem or a fundamental failure? - What evidence would change our minds? - What's the cost of continuing vs. stopping?

HOW TO DECIDE

Step 1: Score Your Criteria

Look at your original Pilot Scoping worksheet.

For each Go/No-Go criterion, ask: **Did we meet it?**

Count: - Criteria MET - Criteria CLOSE (within 2-3 points) - Criteria MISSED

Step 2: Identify Solvable vs. Fundamental

Solvable problems: - "Accuracy is 88% vs. 90% target" → 4 weeks of model training can fix this - "Cost is $14 vs. $12" → Will improve with higher volume - "Team adoption at 75%" → Sarah is now leading adoption, others will follow - "Escalations at 3.5% vs. <2%?" → Normalized after Week 3, stable now

Fundamental problems: - "AI can't handle this type of work" → Wrong approach, might need to kill - "Team refuses to use it" → Deep trust issue, hard to fix - "Accuracy stuck at 60% and won't improve" → Data problem might be unfixable - "Cost is 2x worse than human agents" → Math doesn't work

Step 3: Make Your Call

80%+ criteria met + gaps are solvable? → SCALE

50-80% criteria met + gaps are solvable? → PIVOT

<50% criteria met + gaps are fundamental? → KILL

REMEMBER

Sunk costs don't matter. You spent $150K. That's done. Only question that matters: *Will scaling this create more value than other options?*

Data beats gut feel. Use your numbers. Don't say "I think it's ready" when the data says it's not.

Pivot is often the right answer. Not everything is Scale vs. Kill. Most projects are "continue with improvements."

You can decide with imperfect data. Perfect information doesn't exist. Make the best call you can with what you have.
