

Strategic Investment in Automated Knowledge Handover Systems: Efficiency, Error Reduction, and Architectural Imperatives

I. Executive Summary: The Strategic Imperative of Automated Knowledge Handover

High-continuity operational sectors—including engineering, maritime logistics, and IT operations—are increasingly exposed to risks stemming from fragmented knowledge management and inefficient shift change procedures. Traditional verbal or unstructured digital handovers are a primary vector for preventable errors, operational delays, and excessive cost accruals.¹ As operational complexity and regulatory scrutiny increase, executive leadership must recognize that automated knowledge handover systems, leveraging structured protocols and sophisticated Large Language Models (LLMs), represent not merely an efficiency measure but a core strategic capability for maintaining continuity and achieving operational excellence.

The empirical evidence strongly demonstrates that automation delivers verified, measurable competitive advantages. In complex logistical tasks, processing time reductions of approximately 99% have been achieved.² For financial and IT operations, digital solutions generate rapid returns on investment (ROI), with organizations frequently reporting 200-400% returns within 18 months of implementation.³ Crucially, in high-stakes domains, structured handover methodologies—upon which automation is built—have led to critical error reductions of up to 47% in patient harm events, metrics directly translatable to incident reduction in engineering and IT.⁴

However, the effective implementation of these systems is critically dependent upon addressing inherent technological barriers. The primary challenges relate to the management of dynamic operational context over time, including versioning of facts, managing data obsolescence, and ensuring complete source attribution and traceability back to original

documents.⁵ Strategic investment must therefore focus equally on developing robust Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) architectures and structured knowledge frameworks to mitigate these fidelity risks. Furthermore, in highly regulated industries, the capacity of automation to enforce consistent compliance checking and maintain comprehensive audit trails transforms it into a foundational tool for proactive risk management.²

II. Taxonomy of Operational Handover Systems: Frameworks and LLM Integration

Mapping Traditional Methodologies to Structured Input

Successful automated knowledge systems are fundamentally predicated on enforcing structure and consistency in the input data, moving away from subjective narrative transfer. Established frameworks, proven in high-stakes environments, such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) and I-PASS (Illness Severity, Patient Summary, Action List, Situation Awareness and Contingency Planning, Synthesis by Receiver), provide the standardized templates essential for automated systems.⁴ This standardization is the critical precursor to automation, as it directly counters the primary LLM challenge of generating summaries that omit or distort vital context.⁸ By enforcing structured inputs, the system ensures that all necessary data elements flow smoothly between shifts without loss or distortion.⁴

Defining the Role of LLMs in Knowledge Continuity

LLMs fulfill three critical roles in achieving high-continuity operations:

1. **Summarization and Condensation:** LLMs are highly effective at condensing longform operational data—such as maintenance logs, incident reports, or shift journals—into concise, relevant, and coherent summaries.¹⁰ The quality of these summaries is measured by their *faithfulness* (consistency with the source) and *coherence* (ease of following the narrative structure).¹¹
2. **Information Extraction and Knowledge Fusion:** Beyond simple summarization,

advanced applications utilize LLMs as generic Information Extraction (IE) components to retrieve structured data (facts, entities) from scattered, unstructured documentation, such as technical manuals or historical project documentation.¹² This allows for the creation of a *unified data structure* or ontology across disparate departments, a necessary step for organizations pursuing scalable growth.¹²

3. **Optimization and Predictive Scheduling:** Leveraging machine learning algorithms, AI scheduling tools analyze historical handover patterns to predict optimal transition windows and create shift patterns that maximize effective knowledge transfer while balancing operational needs.⁹ This capability directly reduces unnecessary paid overlap between shifts, leading to minimized operational costs.⁹

The application of LLMs accelerates the pace of discovery and analysis, enabling pattern identification across large datasets and broad operational contexts, thereby ensuring consistency in calculations and coding—a significant benefit for engineering and software research domains.¹³

III. Empirical Validation: A Data-Driven Overview of Benefits

The financial justification for investing in automated knowledge handover systems is rooted in quantifiable metrics related to efficiency, cost reduction, and risk mitigation. The following case studies provide empirical evidence of the profound impact of these systems across diverse high-continuity domains.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators of Automated Knowledge Handover Systems

Domain/Operational Area	System/Tech nology Focus	Primary Benefit Metric	Quantified Impact	Source Domain/Citation
Maritime Dangerous	AI Automation (ASTRA DG)	Processing Time	Reduced processing	Logistics / Maritime ²

Goods (DG) Processing	Bot	Reduction	time from 48 hours to 10 minutes (approx. 99% time savings)	
IT Operations & Scheduling	AI/Digital Scheduling Tools	Overtime Cost Reduction / Efficiency Gain	15-20% overtime reduction (within 60-90 days); 200-400% ROI (within 18 months)	IT Operations ³
Clinical High-Stakes Handoffs (Analogue)	Structured Handoff Tools (I-PASS)	Error/Adverse Event Reduction	47% reduction in handoff-related harm events; Perceived errors reduced from 0.42 to 0.06 per handoff	Medical/Safety ⁴

The spectrum of quantifiable benefits reveals a bifurcated return structure depending on the complexity of the automated task. Simple process automation, particularly in IT scheduling and audit reporting, yields measurable results quickly—often within 60 to 90 days.³ This rapid success provides the initial financial justification and momentum for wider adoption. Conversely, complex knowledge fusion tasks, such as regulatory compliance in maritime or critical error reduction in clinical settings, require deeper architectural integration but offer exponential savings through massive risk reduction and efficiency gains (e.g., 99% time reduction).²

Furthermore, these systems enhance workforce management by shifting the focus of automation from mere task completion to optimizing the entire transition period. By analyzing handover data, AI tools minimize excessive paid overlap between shifts while guaranteeing high-quality knowledge transfer, thereby delivering measurable improvements in both operational metrics and employee experience.⁹

IV. Deep Dive Case Study 1: Transforming Maritime Logistical Compliance

Narrative: The Strategic Enabler in Maritime Dangerous Goods (DG) Operations

The handling of dangerous goods (DG) in the maritime sector is one of the most regulation-heavy and complex logistical challenges globally. Manual processes are often characterized by high cognitive load, extensive policy review, and lengthy compliance checks, frequently resulting in a multi-day delay for processing.² The adoption of AI-driven automation, such as the ASTRA DG Bot described in research, transforms this operation by integrating real-time compliance checking with existing regulatory frameworks.

This system is viewed by senior maritime executives as a strategic enabler that addresses multiple business priorities simultaneously, demonstrating that the value lies not just in labor cost reduction but in fundamental risk mitigation and market positioning.²

Metrics and Operational Impact

- **Processing Time Reduction:** The most striking metric is the reduction of complex DG operations processing time from **48 hours to just 10 minutes**.² This represents an approximate 99% time saving, which is only achievable by integrating and automating the decision-making processes regarding regulatory policies and operational requirements.
- **Operational Scalability:** Automation enables the enterprise to handle growing DG volumes without requiring proportional increases in staffing costs.² This inherent scalability directly supports strategic growth initiatives and market expansion plans without compromising service quality standards.
- **Regulatory Risk Mitigation:** The system employs automated compliance checking, significantly reducing the probability of regulatory violations and associated penalties. By maintaining comprehensive audit trails, it ensures transparency and accountability. The ability of the system to adapt automatically to regulatory changes ensures sustained compliance without manual intervention, transforming compliance into a systematic advantage.²
- **Competitive Differentiation:** Early adopters gain immediate competitive advantages

through superior response times and service availability, allowing them to capture market share in high-value dangerous goods segments. The technological advantage compounds over time, establishing market leadership positions.²

This degree of time reduction indicates fundamental process re-engineering. For such automation to be successful, all policies, requirements, and procedures must be clearly documented and digitized prior to implementation. The system compels staff to shift their focus from routine manual processing to exception management and advanced customer service roles, resulting in more strategic and engaging work.²

Visual Suggestions

1. **Flowchart Visualization:** A clear "Before and After" comparison illustrating the DG processing steps. The "Before" flow depicts a long, sequential, manual compliance check process spanning 48 hours. The "After" flow illustrates parallel, AI-verified checks integrated early into the booking or handover phase, executed in 10 minutes.
2. **Compliance Dashboard Snippet:** This display should show real-time compliance status indicators (green/red), a searchable audit trail of automated checks, and a current risk score related to regulatory non-adherence.

V. Deep Dive Case Study 2: Efficiency Gains and Cost Optimization in IT Operations

Narrative: Rapid ROI in Infrastructure Management and Incident Resolution

IT Operations environments are defined by repetitive, high-frequency tasks involving infrastructure management, incident resolution, and system monitoring.¹⁵ In these contexts, automated handover systems provide concise, actionable context during shift transitions, particularly when managing active incidents or critical system states. The rapid financial returns achieved in IT environments make these systems ideal candidates for pilot projects

and initial investment.

The success of automation in this domain is often measured by its ability to reduce operational costs associated with manual effort and overtime.¹⁵ For example, initial automation projects often focus on highly structured, regulated tasks such as automated audit reporting and cybersecurity monitoring, providing a foundation for expanding into more complex, narrative-driven handovers like incident resolution summaries.¹⁵

Metrics and Operational Impact

- **Overtime Reduction:** Organizations rapidly achieve measurable results within 60 to 90 days, consistently seeing initial **15-20% overtime reductions** through optimized scheduling and improved handover clarity.³
- **Financial Return:** The full ROI is typically realized within 6 to 12 months. Organizations frequently report significant **200-400% returns** on their technology investment within 18 months.³
- **Efficiency Increase and Cost Savings:** Businesses implementing comprehensive automation solutions experience a **20% to 40% increase in overall efficiency**, accelerating workflows and optimizing resource utilization. This efficiency gain translates into a reduction of overall IT operational costs by up to **30%**.¹⁵

A key benefit in IT operations is improved consistency. LLMs ensure that automated handovers provide a uniform response quality, regardless of the individual staff members involved in the transition. This enhanced consistency addresses the variability that plagues manual shift changes, contributing directly to higher efficiency and reduced operational risk.¹³

Visual Suggestions

1. **Bar Chart:** Visualizing baseline operational costs compared to post-automation costs, highlighting the achieved cost reduction percentage (up to 30%) across key operational areas.
2. **ROI Timeline Graph:** Tracking Cumulative Return on Investment (ROI) percentages over time, clearly demonstrating the achievement of 200-400% returns by the 18-month mark.³

VI. Deep Dive Case Study 3: Error Reduction in High-Continuity Shift Changes (The I-PASS Analogue)

Narrative: Applying Clinical Safety Protocols to Engineering and Operations

While direct error reduction metrics for fully automated LLM handovers in engineering are emerging, high-stakes clinical handovers provide the most rigorous and applicable data for structured knowledge transfer in any critical, high-continuity domain.¹ Failure in these settings (e.g., patient care) is immediately consequential, making them excellent benchmarks for operational incident reduction in complex machinery or IT systems. The main challenge identified in clinical settings—poor communication—is directly analogous to the issues facing unstructured engineering and IT handovers.¹

The implementation of structured protocols, such as the Patient Report Template (PRT) or the I-PASS bundle, ensures that essential patient information is conveyed in a comprehensive, easily accessible summary, reducing cognitive load and improving communication among staff.⁷ This structural discipline is critical for applying AI to engineering shift reports, which must focus on production summaries, ongoing task statuses, and key personnel.¹⁶

Metrics and Operational Impact

- **Adverse Event Reduction:** Structured handover programs, notably the I-PASS bundle, have proven highly effective, achieving a significant **47% reduction in handoff-related harm events** across diverse high-acuity environments.⁴
- **Reduction in Perceived Errors:** Post-implementation, the mean number of perceived handoff errors reported by inpatient nursing staff decreased dramatically from a baseline of **0.42 errors per handoff to a range of 0.06 to 0.19** post-implementation (at 8, 16, and 24 weeks).¹⁴ This rapid, sustained drop demonstrates the power of standardization enforced by a structured template.
- **Data Inclusion Compliance:** For written handoffs, the explicit inclusion of necessary data elements increased by **over 600%** following the implementation of the structured approach.⁴ This improvement in completeness directly addresses the problem of missing

context.

- **Anesthesia Care Replication:** In anesthesia care, the implementation of a structured tool, which raised adoption from 30% to 90%, was associated with a **parallel decrease in the risk of handover-related adverse patient outcomes**.¹⁷ This correlation between standardization adoption and improved safety outcomes reinforces the necessity of enforcing structured input in automated systems.

The core principle derived from this domain is that standardization precedes successful automation. The LLM's role is to enforce and synthesize against this standardized structure (e.g., I-PASS or SBAR), maximizing effective knowledge communication in minimal time.⁹ The resulting error reduction translates directly to improved operational continuity and a decrease in preventable adverse events (such as production outages) in engineering and IT systems.¹⁸

Visual Suggestions

1. **Line Graph:** Tracking the mean number of perceived handoff errors over time (Baseline vs. 8, 16, and 24 weeks post-implementation) to visually demonstrate the immediate and sustained impact of standardization.¹⁴
2. **Structured Handover Diagram:** Displaying the I-PASS mnemonic diagram to illustrate the necessary components of a standardized report (e.g., Illness Severity, Action List, Contingency Planning), serving as a template for engineering shift change content.⁴

VII. Critical Technical Hurdles in Automated Knowledge Systems

While the operational benefits of automated handover systems are clear, their scalability and reliability are threatened by several core technical challenges related to managing the lifecycle of operational knowledge. These challenges require dedicated architectural solutions rather than mere algorithmic refinements.

A. The Challenge of Missing Context and Loss of Granularity

LLMs are designed to achieve high compression rates during summarization.¹⁰ However, in complex technical or operational environments, this efficiency often sacrifices crucial fidelity and granularity. The overzealous summarization of a system's working memory can lead to the loss of the core task objective, causing the AI helper to exhibit unpredictable behavior and potentially introduce unknown errors—an effect colloquially described as the AI losing focus and becoming "destructive".⁸

This issue represents a fundamental trade-off between the desired compression and the necessary fidelity and coherence of the output.¹¹ For organizations working in delicate codebases or managing complex machinery, the inability to retain granular context is an unacceptable operational risk. To mitigate this, systems require controls that allow operators to choose which critical context elements must be retained, enabling a "rolling context" retention strategy, even if it demands greater computational resources.⁸

B. Managing Versioning, Redundancy, and Obsolescence

Operational knowledge is inherently dynamic. Policies change, incident status evolves, and key facts become obsolete (e.g., a change in leadership or machinery specification).⁵ A significant failure point in automated knowledge bases is the inability to automatically reconcile new, conflicting information with historical records.

Key technical issues in dynamic knowledge management include:

- **Redundancy and Bloat:** Over time, the system extracts and stores similar or duplicate context, leading to storage bloat and inefficient retrieval.⁵
- **Obsolescence and Conflict:** New information (e.g., an updated procedure) can directly contradict older context, requiring complex automated conflict resolution mechanisms.⁵
- **Temporal Context:** Facts often apply only during specific time windows (e.g., a temporary operational procedure). Without explicit tagging of these temporal contexts, the system cannot accurately determine if a fact is current or obsolete, which is vital for engineering change management.⁵

The challenge of updating historical context without manual intervention necessitates treating context as a traceable, versioned entity, mirroring best practices in system requirements engineering.¹⁹

C. The Traceability and Source Attribution Gap

In high-stakes environments, every critical instruction, status summary, or regulatory compliance decision must be traceable back to its original source document for verification and auditing.¹⁹ The reliability of the output is compromised if the user cannot trust the system to link the generated statements back to the source data.²¹

Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) systems, common in LLM applications, struggle with this, often encountering several attribution gaps:

- **Loss of Local Context:** Statements may be extracted from source documents without considering the local context, leading to inaccurate conclusions in the summary.²²
- **Source Conflict:** When faced with conflicting information from multiple documents, RAG models may struggle to determine the most accurate source.²²
- **Misleading Merging:** The greatest risk is the system combining details from outdated and updated sources, producing a synthesized response that is factually misleading and lacks integrity.²²

If an LLM-generated handover instruction cannot be definitively linked to an approved document or recorded action, the organization loses its audit trail, transitioning the issue from a technical flaw to a severe legal and regulatory risk.¹⁹

VIII. Architectural Solutions for Contextual Robustness

Achieving reliable, scalable automated handover systems requires moving beyond simple text embedding and adopting architectures designed for complex knowledge representation and temporal management.

Knowledge Graphs and Vector Databases

A strategic architecture combines the efficiency of vector databases (for fast semantic retrieval) with the structural integrity of knowledge graphs (KGs). KGs define explicit, structured relationships between entities and concepts. By encoding knowledge using triples (Subject-Predicate-Object), KGs inherently support temporal versioning and complex conflict resolution. For instance, a relationship can be tagged with a time window (e.g., "X is the CEO of Company Y from 2023 to 2025").⁵

The approach of using LLMs to populate a pre-defined ontology structure from unstructured text, as seen in medical prosthesis manufacturing, validates this strategy. The ontology provides the necessary structure and semantic framework, while the LLM provides the extraction and population power, enabling reliable knowledge fusion from scattered data.¹²

Enhancing Versioning and Structural Fidelity

To combat redundancy and obsolescence, automated systems must implement structural checks and change logging, modeled on principles from systems requirements engineering. These checks automatically identify:

- Inconsistencies within the structure of the knowledge catalog.¹⁹
- Unsupported element types or property inconsistencies within the system configuration.¹⁹
- Syntax errors in property definitions.¹⁹

By applying automated scrutiny to the knowledge base, the system can self-correct and mitigate the need for constant manual intervention when historical context changes.⁵ Furthermore, to retain granular detail, context should be chunked at the level of specific facts, entities, or functional components, rather than relying on full sentences, maximizing efficient storage and high-fidelity retrieval.⁵

IX. Designing for Trust: Source Attribution and Traceability

In any mission-critical operation, trust in the AI output is non-negotiable. The LLM summary must not only be coherent and concise but also verifiable.¹¹ Establishing robust source attribution mechanisms is mandatory for auditability and compliance.

Architecting Robust Source Linking

To foster user confidence and fulfill regulatory requirements, the output of the automated

handover system must explicitly configure the generation to include the specific data source(s) used for every critical statement.²¹

Advanced solutions move beyond simple citations by framing attribution as a textual entailment task. This technique uses the LLM to verify that the generated summary statement is logically supported by the original source text, ensuring the output is not only cited but also factually reliable.⁶ For high-consequence operational handovers, traceability must also account for the identity of the *data provider* (e.g., the specific engineer who inputted the data), not just the document itself, allowing for efficient follow-up and verification across multi-team operations.²³

Evaluation and Validation

The internal evaluation of LLM performance for handover systems must extend beyond traditional metrics like ROUGE (recall-oriented understudy for gisting evaluation), which measures simple word overlap.²⁴ Crucially, the system must be evaluated against **Faithfulness** (consistency with the input) and the demonstrable **reliability of source citations**.⁶ Usability testing and external validation of the accuracy of AI-generated reports are necessary steps to ensure seamless integration into existing workflows, particularly in clinical and operational settings.⁷

X. Strategic Implementation Roadmap and Visualizing Success

The successful deployment of automated knowledge handover systems requires a phased rollout, continuous improvement based on performance data, and careful management of human-machine interaction.²

Phased Rollout and Staff Development

A strategic roadmap should prioritize quick-win pilot projects, such as optimizing scheduling and automated audit reporting in IT, where rapid ROI (200-400% returns) is achievable within

the first 18 months.³ Subsequent phases should integrate complex knowledge fusion architectures in core engineering or maritime processes.

Throughout implementation, extensive testing with historical data and edge cases is required before deployment to live operations.² A fundamental component of this transition is staff development, ensuring teams transition smoothly from manual processing roles to higher-value roles focusing on exception management and specialized judgment.²

Visual Reinforcement: The Necessity of Visual Management Systems

In physical domains like engineering and manufacturing, a purely digital handover risks becoming disconnected from the shop floor reality. To maximize continuity, the automated digital handover must be reinforced by a Visual Management System (VMS).²⁵ These visual tools provide crucial context, simplify problem resolution, and enforce the structured flow of information.²⁵

Table 3: Visual Management Suggestions for Automated Handover Systems

Visual Tool	Purpose in Handover	Data Illustrated	Source Domain/Context
Digital Shift Dashboard/Tiered Meetings	Real-time status transfer and continuity reinforcement.	Daily production/quality objectives; ongoing task status; visual summaries supported by images/videos.	Engineering/Manufacturing ¹⁶
Error/Safety Trend Chart	Tracking high-level operational risk post-implementation	Line graph showing adverse event rates; Fishbone	Medical/Safety/Engineering ¹⁴

	n.	diagrams for root cause analysis of system or handover failures.	
Process Flowchart (Gemba Walk)	Physically linking digital handover instructions to the shop floor/site reality.	Instructions supported by photos/videos to simplify resolution; tracking of "Beginning-of-shift" and "End-of-shift" walk status to enforce verification.	Engineering ²⁵

The automated summary must explicitly drive physical action and verification, integrating the digital output (e.g., the LLM-summarized action list) with the physical environment (e.g., Gemba walks) to ensure seamless continuity.²⁵

Conclusions

Automated knowledge handover systems represent a pivotal strategic investment for high-continuity operations. The evidence is conclusive: these systems deliver substantial, quantifiable benefits, including exponential time savings (up to 99% reduction in complex compliance processing)², robust financial returns (200-400% ROI)³, and critical risk reduction (47% reduction in adverse events).⁴

However, realizing these benefits requires a sophisticated understanding of the underlying architectural complexities. Technical success hinges upon overcoming the core challenges of knowledge fidelity: managing dynamic temporal context to avoid obsolescence, ensuring granularity to prevent loss of task objective, and implementing verifiable source attribution and traceability for regulatory compliance and user trust.⁵ Therefore, executive strategy must prioritize systems that enforce standardization (using protocols like I-PASS as a model) and integrate knowledge graph architectures to manage the evolving nature of operational facts, ensuring that the automation serves as a reliable, traceable, and scalable foundation for continuous operational excellence.

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