

AI Dos and Don'ts

Six principles. Twelve habits. One page to keep on the table when AI decisions get made.

Most AI failures aren't technical. They're the meeting nobody held. In 2018, Amazon scrapped an experimental recruiting tool after finding it downgraded résumés that included the word "women's." It had learned from ten years of hiring data that favored men (Dastin, 2018). The model did exactly what it was trained to do. What was missing was a leader asking whose history it was learning from.

1 Transparency

DO Tell people when AI plays a role in decisions that affect them, including hiring, performance, and service.

DON'T Deploy a tool that no one on your team can explain in plain language.

2 Accountability

DO Name one person who owns each AI system's outcomes before it goes live.

DON'T Accept "the vendor handles that" as your governance plan.

3 Equity

DO Test results across different groups of people, both before launch and after.

DON'T Assume historical data is neutral. It records yesterday's decisions, including the unfair ones.

4 Integrity

DO Check every AI use against your stated values, not just your budget.

DON'T Let a pilot quietly become permanent without a formal decision.

5 Confidentiality

DO Set clear rules for what staff may and may not paste into public AI tools.

DON'T Put client, employee, or health information into any tool without an approved data agreement.

6 Human-in-the-Loop

DO Give a real person the authority to override or pause the system.

DON'T Rubber-stamp AI output. A reviewer who approves everything isn't oversight. It's decoration.

The five-question gut check

If you can't answer all five, pause before you launch.

1. Who owns this system's outcomes?
2. Who could it harm, and how would we know?
3. Can we explain how it reaches its results?
4. What data does it touch, and do we have permission to use it?
5. Who can switch it off?

Ready to go deeper?

This checklist is the starting line. The free OSAIL AI Governance Framework shows how to build these habits into your organization over 365 days, with a readiness self-assessment for your leadership team.

Download it from the Resources section of our website, or write to info@odsynergisticsconsultingllc.com