

BREAKTHROUGH OR BREAKDOWN?

What the Next Generation of Research Actually Looks Like



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THE SHIFT

When convenience wins, trust starts to crack. We saw it happen in sample. It is now starting to happen in insight creation.

WHAT HAPPENED IN SAMPLE

Speed and scale improved. Quality got harder to see.

Faster Access



Lower Cost



Less Visible Rigor

RESULT: More supply, less trust.

WHAT IS STARTING TO HAPPEN IN INSIGHTS

AI tools makes outputs easier to create. Judgment is easier to skip.

Faster Outputs



Lower Effort



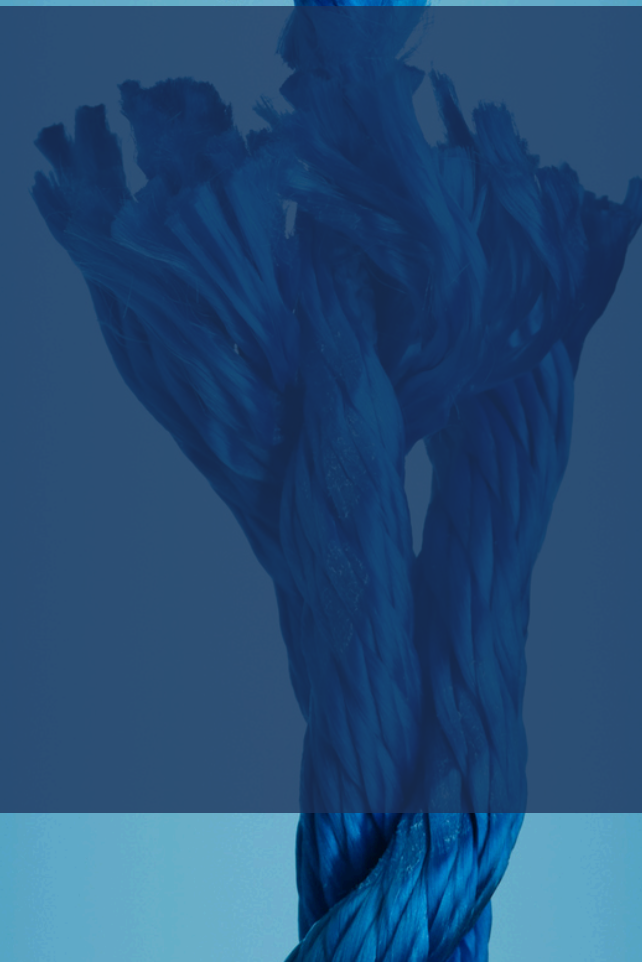
Easier to Commoditize

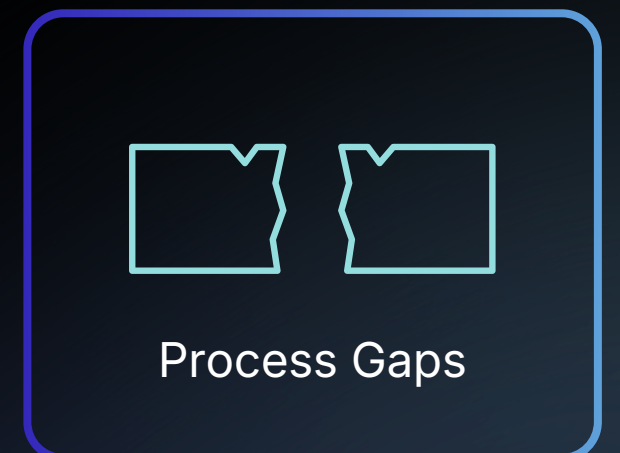
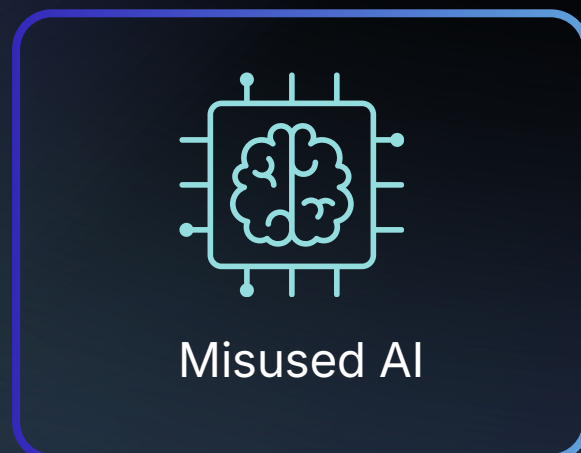
RESULT: More content, weaker differentiation.



WHERE RESEARCH STARTS TO BREAK DOWN

More tools. More speed.
Still not a better research system.





**WHERE
BREAKDOWN
HAPPENS**



THE REALITY

The next phase is not buying more tools. It is building workflows that create usable outcomes.



88%

Organizations report regular AI use in at least one business function.

McKinsey & Company. (2025). The state of AI: Global survey 2025



1/3

Say generative AI is already being used in at least one business function.

McKinsey & Company. (2025). The state of AI: Global survey 2025



30%

AI projects are abandoned after proof of concept.

Gartner. (2024, July 29)

WHAT IS CHANGING

The opportunity is not the story anymore. Teams want proof AI / Innovation is offering value.

WHAT THAT MEANS

AI / Innovation only creates real breakthrough when it improves the full workflow, not just one task.



THE BREAKDOWN

Most AI / Innovation tools fix one step. Research quality depends on the whole system.

Context Drops

Question intent, quota logic, and client nuance get lost.

Quality Can Slip

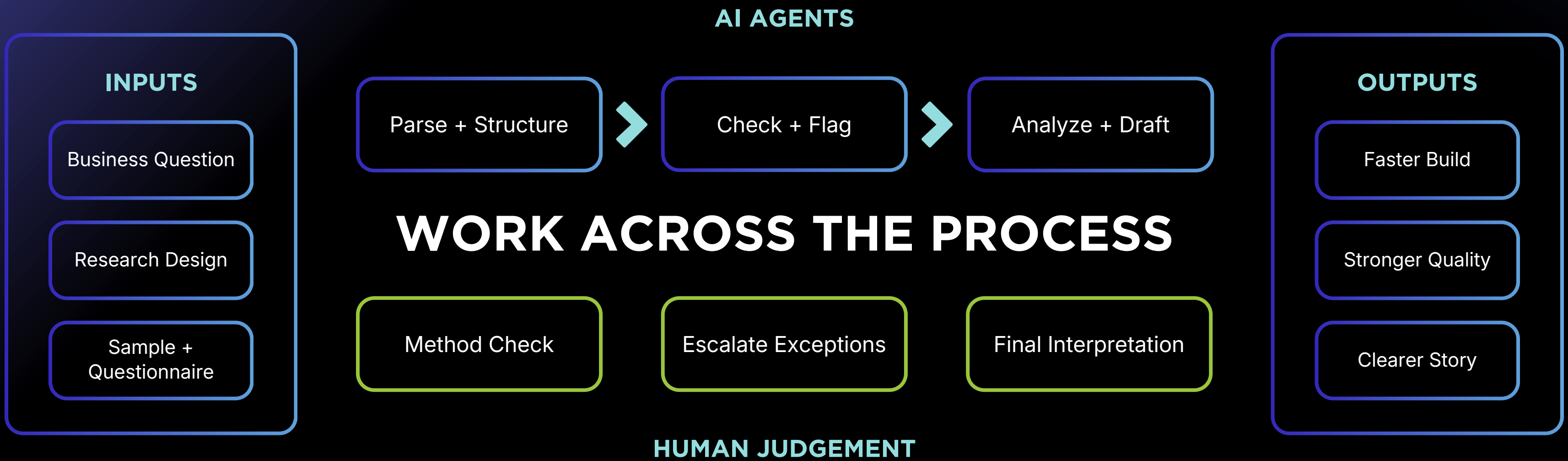
Disconnected steps can distort outputs or create quality risk.

Bad Design Stays Bad

No tool can compensate for weak research design upstream.

THE BREAKTHROUGH

Inputs stay connected. AI helps across stages. People make the calls that matter.



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Innovation still has to behave like research.

Research Craft

Method and design still set the standard. Human judgment makes the final call.

Process That Holds

If it breaks under pressure, it is not a breakthrough. The workflow has to work in the real world.

Responsible Setup

Protect PII, privacy, and data residency. Build in governance before you scale.

- Use AI to **support the process**
- Keep humans at **the judgment points**
- Scale discipline, **not shortcuts**



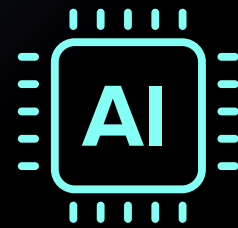
WHAT **BREAKTHROUGH** LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Examples of innovation working inside the research process, not outside it.





INPUTS



AI HELP



HUMAN CALL



OUTPUT

BRIEF + DOC
VERSIONS

PARSE + PREP

QA THE LOGIC

CLEANER LAUNCH

FASTER PREP FASTER INSIGHT

Using AI to parse and pre-program questionnaires.

2X
faster setup

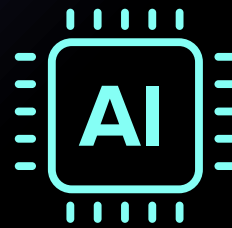
↓
less manual prep

+QA
more testing time

1
cleaner handoff



INPUTS



AI HELP



HUMAN CALL



OUTPUT

SAMPLE + QUOTAS

DETECT PATTERNS

APPLY METHOD

STRONGER DATA

TRUSTED DATA BETTER INSIGHTS

Using AI to review data for quality and consistency.

Early

issues caught



bad completes

+Fit

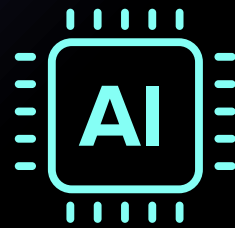
quota-aware



trust in output



INPUTS



AI HELP



HUMAN CALL



OUTPUT

FINDINGS + CHARTS

DRAFT THE FRAME

SHAPE THE MESSAGE

SHARPER DELIVERY

REAL-TIME CODING FASTER INSIGHTS

Using AI to code open end responses in real time.

1st

draft faster

+Time

for insight

Clear

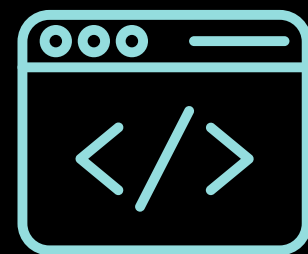
story arc



client action

PROCESS OVERLAP

Breakthrough happens when integrated tools overlap across the process to close gaps, reduce friction, and strengthen outcomes end to end.



DESIGN

PROGRAM

FIELD

ANALYZE

DELIVER



WHAT THE NEXT GENERATION REQUIRES

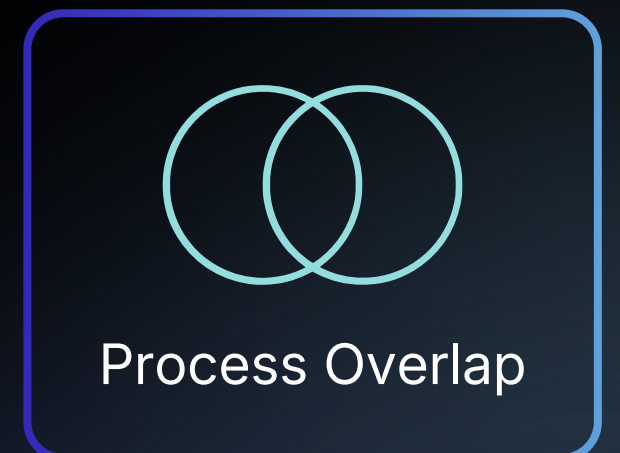
The operating model behind real
breakthrough results.



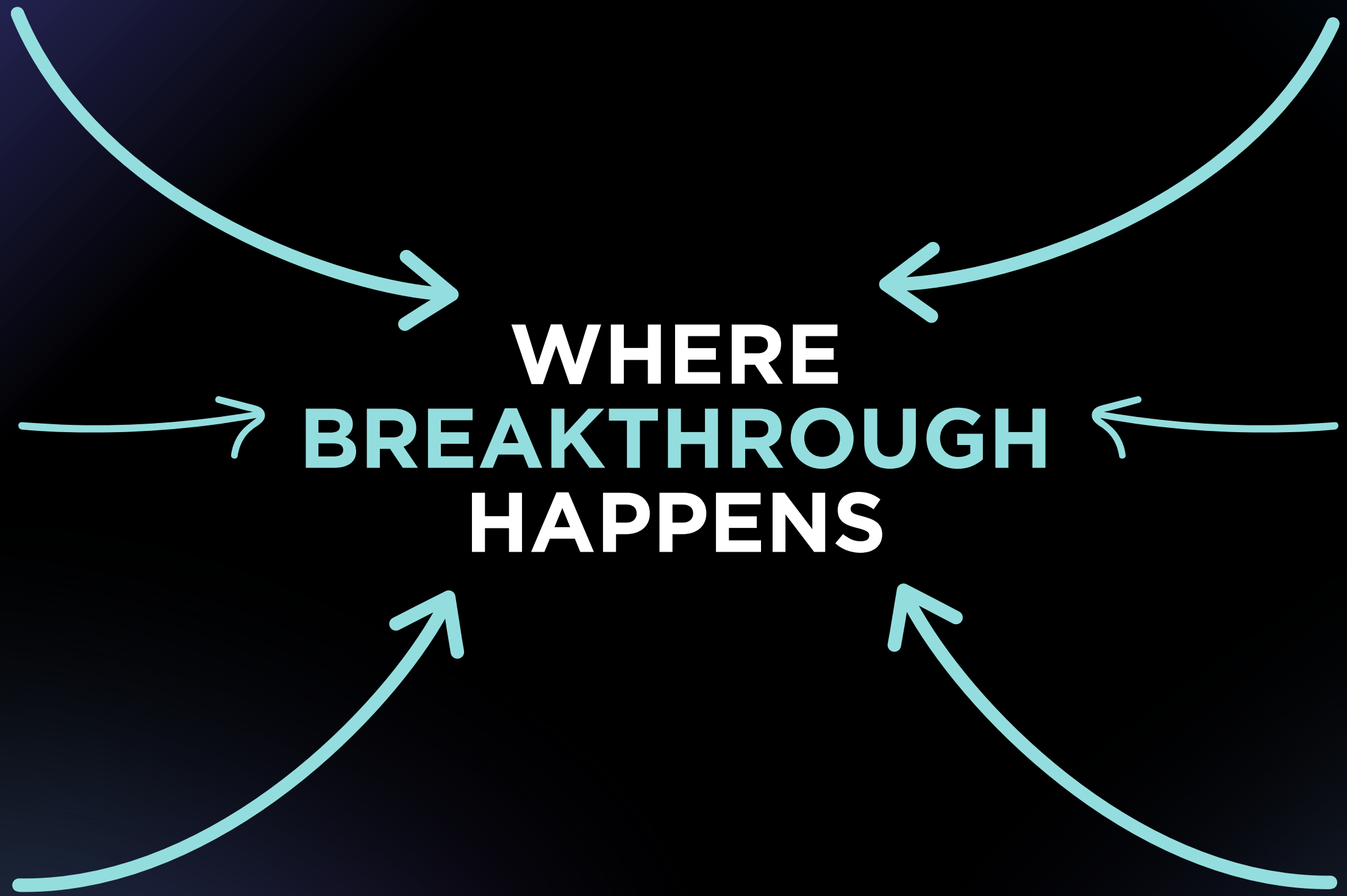
THE OPERATING MODEL

They do not buy more AI than everyone else. They build a better system around it.

- Start with a real workflow or **client-outcome problem**
- Use AI where it strengthens **speed, consistency, or scale**
- Keep research judgment and **quality standards in the loop**
- Turn outputs into action, **not just deliverables**



**WHERE
BREAKTHROUGH
HAPPENS**





THANK YOU