



EPISODE 5

The Override Call: When to Trust Your Judgment Over the AI

Senior leaders are more confident in AI-assisted decisions than ever — yet nearly four in ten sign off on AI strategy with no human review. This episode introduces **veto literacy**: knowing when to override the AI and defend the call. You'll get the three-question override framework — context, stakes, pattern — and four practices that turn good judgment into a promotion case.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

1. Veto Literacy Is the New Promotable Skill.

Bench Media's Confidence Equation survey of more than seventy senior marketing leaders found the scarce skill is shifting from prompting AI well to knowing when to override it — and defending that call to a board that increasingly assumes the machine is right. Senior leaders are not impressed that you use AI. They are impressed by someone who can defend a call against the machine and be right.

2. The Override Framework: Context, Stakes, Pattern.

Before you sign off on any AI recommendation, run three questions. The context test: what do you know that the model was never told? The stakes test: is this reversible, or a bet the division publicly owns? The pattern test: is the data describing the future, or just the past? If the winning move requires the future to look different from the past, the model is the wrong oracle.

3. Override Out Loud: Dissent, Test, Own.

Disagreeing with the machine in your head is not a leadership skill. Write the dissent in two paragraphs — the model's call, your call, your reasoning. Make it testable: Elena held the price in one channel, measured the result, and brought the data. Then own the call in front of senior leaders.

4. Explanations Can Degrade Judgment.

Harvard Business School and MIT researchers found reviewers deferred to wrong AI calls more often when the model explained itself — explanations degraded judgment. And with Deloitte projecting roughly half of all business decisions to be AI-augmented soon, the routine is being absorbed. A survey of one thousand deal makers found forty five percent say signing should always remain a human decision. The point of commitment is where promotions are decided.



ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- ☐ **Start an override log.** Once a week, write down one decision where the AI said one thing and you did another — or did the same thing.

My override log entry (model's call / my call / why):

- ☐ **Run the context test out loud.** Before accepting the next AI recommendation, ask the room: what does the model not know? Saying it in the meeting is the skill.

- ☐ **Write one dissent memo this month.** Pick a real decision and write the two-paragraph version: the model's call, your call, your reasoning. Share it with your boss.

My dissent memo (model's call / my call / my reasoning):

- ☐ **Apply the two-levels-up test.** Would the leader two levels above you make this call the same way you would? If no, go learn what they see.

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus