AI Opportunity Scorecard

A practical framework to evaluate your AI project ideas by **impact**, **effort**, and **data readiness** — so you invest in the right opportunities first. Use this scorecard to cut through the hype and prioritise AI initiatives that deliver real business value.

FOR BUSINESS OWNERS DECISION-MAKING TOOL

Why Score Your AI Ideas?

Not every AI idea is worth pursuing. Without a structured evaluation, businesses risk wasting budget on initiatives that are technically complex, data-poor, or low-impact. A scorecard gives you an objective lens — replacing gut feel with a repeatable, defensible process.

Focus Resources

Concentrate time and budget on AI projects with the highest return potential.

Compare Ideas Fairly

Evaluate multiple initiatives on the same criteria to make confident trade-offs.

Reduce Risk

Catch data gaps and effort overruns before they drain your budget.

Move Faster

Clear scoring criteria accelerate stakeholder alignment and decision-making.

The Three Scoring Dimensions

Every AI opportunity is evaluated across three core dimensions. Score each dimension from **1 (low) to 5 (high)**. A combined score above **11** signals a strong candidate for investment.

1

Business Impact

How significantly will this initiative improve revenue, efficiency, or customer experience? Consider both the scale of the opportunity and the speed to measurable results.

- Revenue uplift or cost reduction
- Number of users or processes affected
- Strategic alignment with business goals

2

Implementation Effort

How much time, cost, and technical complexity is required to deliver this solution? Lower effort scores indicate faster, cheaper, and less risky delivery paths.

- Internal skills and tools required
- Vendor or integration dependencies
- Estimated time to first value

3

Data Readiness

Do you have the data needed to train, run, or validate the AI model? Poor data readiness is the most common reason AI projects stall or fail entirely.

- Data availability and volume
- Data quality and labelling status
- Access permissions and compliance

The Scoring Rubric

Use the table below to assign a score of **1–5** for each dimension. Be honest — overscoring effort or data readiness is the most common mistake teams make during evaluation.

Score	Business Impact	Implementation Effort	Data Readiness
5	Transformational — core revenue or ops	Minimal effort, off-the-shelf solution	Clean, labelled, accessible data exists
4	High — significant efficiency gains	Low effort, minor customisation needed	Data exists, minor cleansing required
3	Moderate — measurable improvement	Medium effort, 3–6 months to deliver	Partial data, gaps can be filled
2	Low — marginal or hard to measure	High effort, complex integrations	Sparse data, significant collection needed
1	Negligible or unclear benefit	Very high — custom build, 12+ months	No usable data, starting from scratch

Scoring tip: Score Effort inversely — a high-effort project scores **low** (1–2), while a low-effort project scores **high** (4–5). This ensures the final composite score rewards feasibility.

Interpreting Your Score

Once you have scored all three dimensions, add them together for a **composite score out of 15**. Use the bands below to prioritise your AI project pipeline and make confident investment decisions.

12–15 • Prioritise Now

High impact, feasible delivery, and strong data foundation. Move to planning and budget allocation immediately.

8–11 • Develop & Monitor

Solid potential but one or more dimensions needs strengthening. Address gaps — typically data or resourcing — before committing fully.

4–7 • Revisit Later

Foundational barriers are too significant right now. Park the idea and reassess in 6–12 months as capabilities mature.

Below 4 • Do Not Proceed

The idea lacks the impact, feasibility, or data to justify investment at any near-term horizon.

Example: AI Customer Support Bot

Business Impact: 4 — reduces support costs significantly

Implementation Effort: 4 — SaaS tools available, 2-month rollout

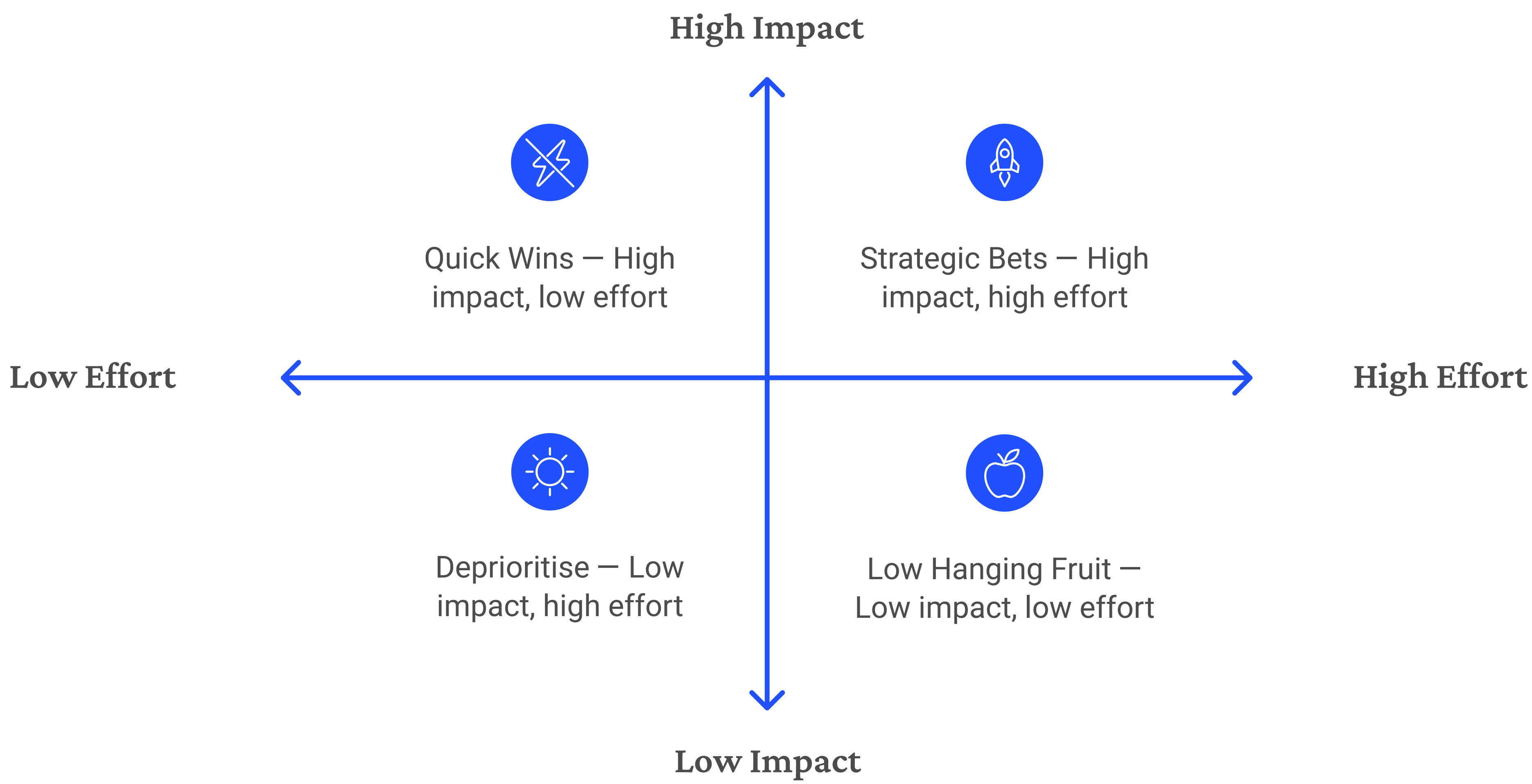
Data Readiness: 3 — chat logs exist, need tagging

Composite Score: 11/15

→ Develop & Monitor. Invest in data labelling to move this into the Prioritise Now band.

Your AI Opportunity Pipeline

Score all your current AI ideas using the rubric, then plot them on this simple matrix to visualise your portfolio. The goal is to build a pipeline with a healthy mix — a few quick wins now and transformational bets developing in parallel.



Start by pursuing **Quick Wins** to build internal confidence and demonstrate ROI. Use those learnings to tackle **Strategic Bets** with better data, skills, and stakeholder buy-in over time.

3

Quick Wins Target

Aim for 3 deployable AI projects in your first 12 months to build momentum.

11+

Composite Score

The threshold for green-lighting a project into active development.

6 wks

Review Cadence

Re-score your pipeline every 6 weeks as data readiness and tools evolve.

Next Steps

You now have everything you need to evaluate AI opportunities with confidence. Use this scorecard in leadership meetings, planning cycles, and vendor conversations to stay objective and focused on value.

01

List Your AI Ideas

Brainstorm all current AI initiatives and ideas across departments — no filtering yet.

02

Score Each Idea

Apply the 1–5 rubric across Impact, Effort, and Data Readiness for every candidate.

03

Prioritise the Pipeline

Plot scores on the matrix and agree on your top 3 Quick Wins to pursue first.

04

Review & Iterate

Reassess the scorecard every 6 weeks as your data capabilities and tools evolve.

Download the template: Use the accompanying spreadsheet to score and compare up to 20 AI initiatives side by side — with automatic composite scoring and priority classification built in.