

## LEADERSHIP

# Mind the Gap

A three-part series on the AI governance relay race

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What happens when AI accountability travels from the Board Chair to the CEO, the CEO to the CFO, and the CFO to the Marketing team. This is a satirical series on the relay race that passes for AI governance in too many organisations, told through the memos that pass the problem along, and the pattern each one reveals.

## Part One: The Board Asks

*From: Morgan Christie, Chair*

*To: Darcy*

*Subject: AI Governance: Board Requires Immediate Visibility*

*Darcy,*

*The Board raised AI governance at yesterday's meeting. There was agreement that we need immediate visibility of what is happening across the organisation and clear accountability at the executive level.*

*Specifically, the Board would like to understand:*

- 1. What AI tools and systems are currently in use across the business.*
- 2. Who approved them, and under what framework.*
- 3. What our exposure is from a legal, regulatory and reputational perspective.*
- 4. What our competitors are doing and whether we are falling behind.*
- 5. How we are ensuring AI is being used safely and responsibly across all functions.*

*The Board is supportive of AI as a strategic enabler but is conscious of its obligations. We would like a briefing at the next meeting. In the interim, please ensure there is a named executive accountable for this agenda.*

*I trust you will move on this quickly.*

*Regards,*

*Morgan Christie*

Chair

Sound familiar?

Boards are waking up to AI governance and the questions are legitimate. What is in use, who approved it, what is the exposure. The problem is that the question lands on a CEO without a framework to answer it, an executive team without clear accountability, and an organisation that has already been deploying AI while the governance conversation was still on the agenda.

Has your board had this conversation yet?

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## Part Two: The Executive Is Found

*From: Darcy, CEO*

*To: Alex*

*Subject: Your New Accountability: AI*

*Dear Alex,*

*Congratulations on being appointed the Executive accountable for AI across our organisation. As an executive team member, you are very familiar with the strategic importance of considering the right AI initiatives for us. Our competitors are getting ahead and we need to accelerate our use.*

*Of course, I am sure that you will step up to this additional responsibility as we have seen with your ability to deliver on the CFO role with what is needed to drive a financially sustainable business.*

*We all know that the implementation of AI has to be measurable and supported by a strong business case, provide the same system outputs as other technology projects, in addition to being legal\*, safe\*\*, ethical and contestable.*

*The economic climate is tough, so we need to achieve our new AI posture within the current resources we have. Trust you will have a plan to build our AI literacy.*

*I personally wish you all the best with this new responsibility and will provide additional KPIs through the internal goal setting system to ensure we review at end of year performance.*

*Yours,*

*Darcy*

*CEO*

*\*In respect to legal, Riley in Legal will provide the dozen or so pieces of legislation, regulation, standards, codes of conduct, industry frameworks and international instruments that we must comply with.*

*\*\*For safe, I would suggest you review the International AI Safety Report 2026. It is only 100 or so pages of frontier risk research. The relevant section for your purposes is probably all of it.*

The board asked the CEO. The CEO found an executive. Forty eight hours, problem solved.

Except it isn't. Accountability without enablement is not accountability. It is a KPI waiting to be missed.

This is one of the most common patterns I see at the board and executive level right now. Is there an Alex in your organisation? How is it going for them?

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## Part Three: The Relay Completes

*From: Alex, CFO*

*To: Jade*

*Subject: Your New Accountability: Human in the Loop*

*Dear Jade,*

*Congratulations on being appointed Human in the Loop for the current AI initiatives that are client facing. As a valuable team member, you are very familiar with the strategic importance of considering the right AI initiatives for us. We do need to ensure that we are considerate of our application of AI in delivering critical services to our clients who trust us with their most private of details.*

*Of course, I am sure that you will step up to this additional responsibility as we have seen with your ability to deliver on your Marketing role with what is needed to drive a growth orientated business.*

*We all know that the implementation of AI must be measurable and supported by a strong business case, provide the same system outputs as other technology projects, in addition to being legal\*, safe\*\*, ethical and contestable.*

*Growth is a priority and we need to be sure not to distract those who are delivering on this objective, so we need to achieve our new AI posture within the current operations and marketing resources we have. Trust you will have a plan to build AI literacy.*

*I personally wish you all the best with this expanded responsibility and will provide additional KPIs through the internal goal setting system to ensure we review at end of year performance.*

*Yours,*

*Alex*

*CFO*

*\*In respect to legal, Riley in Legal will provide the dozen or so pieces of legislation, regulation, standards, codes of conduct, industry frameworks and international instruments that we must comply with.*

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And there it is. The full relay race.

Board to CEO. CEO to CFO. CFO to Marketing. The accountability for safe, legal, measurable, contestable AI deployment, covering client-facing systems handling private data, has landed with Jade in Marketing. Within current resources. With additional KPIs.

If your organisation has a Jade, they deserve better than this. So do your clients.

This is exactly the gap Lucentis Advisory works in: helping boards and executive teams build the governance structures that mean accountability is real, not just delegated.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernadette Harkin GAICD is the Founder and Principal of Lucentis Advisory, an AI governance consultancy advising boards and executive leadership teams at mid-size organisations. She is also a Non-Executive Director at Archer Materials, Australia's only listed quantum technology company. A career technology executive, she brings decades of experience across technology, consulting and sustainable business growth, built across global markets.

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