

AI FUNCTION: Process First, AI Second

Insights from the Panel

Thank you for joining us at our AI Function event. We hope you left with your process brain well and truly warmed up, because we certainly started the event by putting it to work.

Before we got anywhere near tools, prompts or automation, Andy Olrich from North St Partners had you straight into a really engaging numbers game. Without knowing the outcome, it was so interesting to see what happened in the room once a little pressure was added to the workflow. It was a great reminder that the way we explain, share and follow a process can make or break how smoothly the work actually gets done.

Here are Andy's Top Tips for process to automation:

- Start With The Process, Not The Technology**
- Don't automate chaos.**

Many businesses rush into AI expecting it to fix inefficiencies, but if the underlying process is broken, AI simply helps you make mistakes faster. Andy shared research showing that most failed AI projects stem from poorly understood processes and fragmented data. His advice was simple:

- 1. Clarify the problem**
- 2. Map the current process**
- 3. Remove waste and duplication**
- 4. Standardise how the work is done**
- 5. Then explore where AI can help**

Get Everyone Around The Table – START WITH THE PAIN POINTS

Before introducing automation, Andy also recommended sitting down with everyone involved in the process. Using butcher's paper and Post-it notes, businesses can visually map every touch point, identify bottlenecks, and uncover pain points that often go unnoticed. AI can help create process maps, but teams should always review them together to ensure critical steps haven't been missed and where human input is required.

Key Takeaway

AI should be the tool that delivers the process, not the process itself.

After Andy had us all stretching our process brains, we moved into the panel conversation alongside Paul Strang from Adept IT Solutions, who brought a practical technology and AI implementation perspective, and Salena Avard from Peoplefusion, who shared her insights around people, marketing and keeping the human connection in the AI conversation.

he 80/20 Rule when it comes to automation

A practical approach shared by the panel was:

- Let AI do 80% of the work.
- Humans are responsible for the final 20%.
- Trust, but always verify.

AI can accelerate productivity, but human oversight remains essential.

Key Insights from the Panel

Don't DIY Yourself Into A Corner

The panel agreed that businesses should absolutely start experimenting with AI. It is one of the best ways to build confidence and understand what is possible. But once you are dealing with customer data, system integrations or automation that impacts how your business operates, that is the time to **bring in a specialist early**.

Too often, businesses spend thousands of dollars on subscriptions and DIY solutions, only to call in experts later to untangle costly mistakes, disconnected systems or serious security risks. Paul reinforced the importance of using closed AI platforms, putting proper governance in place, and making security a priority from the beginning. A single mistake with business or customer data can create more than a technical issue. It can lead to data breaches, reputational damage and significant financial impact for the business.

Choose Your Platform Carefully

Once systems and processes are built around a platform, moving later can be expensive and disruptive.

The advice was to focus on trusted providers, strong security frameworks and long-term scalability from the beginning.

Marketing In The AI Era

Marketing specialist Salena reminded businesses that while AI can create content, Australians still connect with people.

Key messages included:

- Authenticity matters more than ever.
- Customers can quickly detect AI generated content. Research suggests consumers are increasingly disengaging from content that feels inauthentic.
- Build relationships before selling.
- Use AI for ideas, drafts and efficiency, but ensure the final content sounds like your brand.

A great practical reminder from this part of the conversation was that you can build your brand voice by talking to your AI generator. Tell it who you are, what your business sounds like, who you are speaking to, and what you want people to feel when they read your content. The more guidance and examples you give it, the better it becomes at creating content that sounds like you, not just generic AI copy.

It is also important to remember that your voice may need to shift depending on your audience. The way you speak to long-term customers might be different to the way you speak to new leads, community partners, staff, members or suppliers. AI can help with that too, but only if you tell it who the audience is and ask it to adjust the tone while still keeping the message aligned to your brand. And, social media Still Needs Humans!

Salena also reinforced AI can support content planning, SEO and idea generation, however:

- Real photos outperform generated images.
- Real stories build trust.
- Real people create connection.

People don't connect with bots. They connect with people.

Key Insights from the Panel

What Should Never Be Automated?

Now to the all-important conversation of what we keep human! While AI can absolutely help streamline repetitive tasks, speed up admin and support better workflows, the panel agreed there are some parts of business that should never be handed over to automation. **Trust, empathy, creativity, relationship building and critical decision-making** all rely on human judgement, lived experience and context. The same caution applies to **financial data of any kind**, where accuracy, privacy and accountability matter too much to leave unchecked. AI can assist, prompt and organise, but the responsibility for these areas needs to stay firmly with people.

And finally one piece of great advice from our AI Avengers Panel.....

"If you're making an important AI decision, write it down and think about it for a week. The businesses that succeed with AI won't necessarily be the ones using the most tools. They'll be the ones with the best processes."

Thanks for joining the conversation!
We hope to see you at our next event.

AI Tools that can help:

- Roi AI - Recruitment & marketing AI platform
- Co-Pilot with subscription

AI prompt to assess AI options for your industry:

Best Vendor Assessment Prompt

Paste a vendor website into Copilot and ask:

"Analyse this AI platform for <industry>.

Assess:

- Data security
- Automation capabilities
- How much time will it save
- Privacy compliance
- Training required
- SOC 2 certification
- ISO 27001 certification
- AI governance
- User permissions
- Data ownership
- Audit logging
- Microsoft 365 & CRM integration
- Business transformation potential
- Risks and red flags
- Return on investment
- Strategic value over 3 years
- What concerns would each stakeholder have, and what evidence would they need before approving this platform?"
- Score each category out of 10 and provide an executive recommendation