

Five-Lens AI Analysis

A structured framework for evaluating any AI system, tool, or policy — for departments, teams, and job seekers

CAREERCOMMS.COM

Most AI analysis is either uncritically enthusiastic or reflexively alarmed. This framework gives you a third option: **five structured lenses that apply to any AI system, tool, hiring decision, or workplace policy.** Use them whether you are evaluating a tool your department is considering, preparing for an interview question about AI, or trying to understand what a company's approach to AI says about how it will treat you as an employee. The goal is not a verdict. It is the ability to ask the questions the hype cycle skips.

01 Governance Lag — the gap between capability and oversight

Technology almost always moves faster than the rules designed to govern it. **Governance lag is the window in which harms accumulate before anyone is technically accountable for them.** Understanding where a tool sits in that window tells you a great deal about the risk being taken on.

FOR DEPARTMENTS

Before deploying an AI tool: what regulation governs this use case now, and what is likely to change? Deploying in the governance gap means your organisation may be first to absorb the liability when rules catch up. Who owns that risk internally?

FOR HR & PEOPLE TEAMS

AI hiring and performance tools sit in one of the most active regulatory zones globally. What disclosure obligations apply in your jurisdiction? What happens to your processes if the tool's compliance status changes? Who audits the outputs?

FOR JOB SEEKERS

If an employer uses AI to screen your application, you may have a right to know. Ask during the process: what tools are used in candidate evaluation? A company that cannot answer clearly has a governance gap of its own.

02 Tradeoffs — what is being gained and who bears the cost

Every AI deployment involves a choice between competing values. **The question is not whether a tradeoff exists — it always does. The question is whether the people who made it are the same people who bear its costs.**

FOR DEPARTMENTS

Speed and cost reduction are the gains most AI tools are sold on. What is the corresponding loss? Accuracy, human judgment, employee trust, data privacy? Name the tradeoff explicitly in your proposal. If you cannot name it, the analysis is incomplete.

FOR HR & PEOPLE TEAMS

An AI screening tool trades human review time for algorithmic filtering. The efficiency gain goes to the organisation. The cost — rejected candidates who were qualified but did not fit the model — is borne by applicants. Is that tradeoff disclosed?

FOR JOB SEEKERS

A company using AI heavily in hiring has made a tradeoff between efficiency and human evaluation. Ask yourself: does this organisation's approach to AI in hiring reflect how it will treat me as an employee? The answer is often yes.

03 Power and Autonomy — who gains decision-making authority and who loses it

AI systems redistribute power. **Every time a decision moves from a human to an algorithm, someone gains efficiency and someone loses the ability to be heard by a person who can exercise judgment.** Map the redistribution before it happens.

FOR DEPARTMENTS

Which decisions will this tool make, influence, or automate? Who held that authority before? What happens to accountability when the decision is attributed to a system rather than a person? Build the appeal pathway before you build the deployment.

FOR HR & PEOPLE TEAMS

Performance management decisions informed by AI shift power from managers to models. Employees who receive an AI-influenced evaluation deserve to know what factors were used and how to contest an outcome. Does your process allow for that?

FOR JOB SEEKERS

If your application is rejected by an AI screening tool, do you have recourse? Ask directly: is there a human review stage? A company with a fully automated screening process has removed human judgment from the first impression you make.

04 Escalation — what happens when this technology scales or migrates

Systems deployed for one purpose expand. **The infrastructure built for a narrow, acceptable use case becomes the foundation for a broader, more consequential one.** Evaluate escalation risk before deployment, not after.

FOR DEPARTMENTS

What is the stated scope of this tool today? What would it take to extend it? Who would need to approve that extension? If the answer is "nobody" or "the same team that deployed it," the escalation risk is higher than it appears.

FOR HR & PEOPLE TEAMS

An employee monitoring tool deployed for productivity tracking can migrate to performance evaluation, then to termination decisions. Document the intended scope at deployment. Review it annually. The scope you commit to today is the one you will be held to.

FOR JOB SEEKERS

Ask how long the company has been using AI in its hiring process and whether the scope has changed since deployment. An organisation that has expanded AI use without revisiting its policies is telling you something about how it handles technology governance generally.

05 Incentives — who benefits when this system fails

The most revealing question about any AI system is not what it is designed to do. It is **who benefits when it produces errors — and whether that party is also responsible for fixing them.** When the answer is the same group, the incentive to achieve accuracy is weaker than it appears.

FOR DEPARTMENTS

Does your vendor have a financial incentive to surface errors or conceal them? What does the contract say about accuracy guarantees and liability for failures? If the vendor is indemnified against errors and you are not, the incentive structure is misaligned.

FOR HR & PEOPLE TEAMS

A hiring tool that filters out qualified candidates gives the organisation plausible deniability — the error is attributed to the system, not the company. Build mandatory outcome audits into the deployment from the start, not after a complaint surfaces.

FOR JOB SEEKERS

If you are rejected by an AI screening tool and the error is never surfaced, the organisation loses nothing. You bear the full cost. Naming this asymmetry in an interview signals that you think critically about systems — which is a signal worth sending.

The goal is not a predetermined verdict on any technology. It is the ability to ask the questions that the hype cycle skips — and to be taken seriously when you ask them.

QUICK APPLICATION — WHICH LENS FIRST?

YOUR SITUATION	START HERE	THEN ADD
Evaluating a new AI tool for your team	Tradeoffs — name what you are giving up before you commit	Escalation — map where this could go beyond its stated scope
Reviewing your HR or hiring process	Power & Autonomy — who loses the ability to be evaluated by a person?	Governance Lag — what disclosure obligations apply right now?
Preparing for an AI interview question	Incentives — who benefits when the system produces errors?	Tradeoffs — what values are being treated as secondary and why?
Researching a company that uses AI in hiring	Power & Autonomy — is there a human review stage?	Escalation — has the scope of their AI use expanded since deployment?
Writing an AI policy for your organisation	Governance Lag — what regulation is coming and when?	Incentives — build audit requirements into the policy from the start