XONIK

GUIDE

AI-to-Production Readiness Playbook

A playbook for taking one AI pilot or use case to go-live: the owner, live data, approvals, the working process, a plan for failure and the go-live review.

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For	The person who has to get one specific pilot or use case live.
Use with	The AI-to-Production Readiness Assessment on the XONIK website, which scores the same areas.

Why pilots stall

A pilot shows that a model can do a task under the conditions of the pilot. Going live needs things the pilot never had: data that keeps arriving, approval from the people who answer for risk, a place in the working process where the output gets used, and an owner. Pilots stall at the hand-off, because nobody owns what comes next. This playbook breaks the hand-off into steps, each with a record you complete.

Use it for one pilot at a time. Work through the steps in order, with the owner in the room from step one.

The steps

Step	What it settles	Done when
1. Name the owner	Who has authority over the live system.	The owner has agreed in writing and has seen the design.
2. Prove it on live data	That the system works on the data it will really see.	It has run through the production route on live data.
3. Take it to approval	That those who answer for risk have agreed.	Each approval is held, with its conditions.
4. Redraw the process	Where the output is used and what changes around it.	The people in the process have agreed the new route.
5. Plan for failure	What happens when it is down or wrong.	The fallback has been tested once.
6. Hold the go-live review	That everyone agrees it can go live.	The review is recorded with its conditions.
7. Run the first weeks	That it keeps working after launch.	The owner has reviewed it on schedule.

Step 1. Name the owner

The project team owns the pilot, and the project team will move on. A live system needs one person who decides when it changes, notices when it is wrong and can switch it off. Name that person now and bring them into the design.

- [ ] The owner is named, and has accepted in writing.
- [ ] The owner has authority to change the system, to pause it and to stop it.
- [ ] The owner has seen the design of the live system as well as a demonstration.
- [ ] The owner has time for the work, and it is part of their objectives.
- [ ] A named deputy can act when the owner is away.

Owner (name or role), deputy, and the date they accepted

Step 2. Prove it on live data

A model that works on a clean extract has only shown that it works on the extract. Run the pilot on the live source, through the route production will use, before you call it ready. Decide what happens to the output when the data is late, wrong or missing.

- [ ] The pilot has run on live data through the production route.
- [ ] Someone has compared a sample of output with the live source and with the right answer.
- [ ] Late, wrong and missing data have each been tried, and the result is known.
- [ ] Where data cannot be trusted, the system says so and does not guess.
- [ ] The permission to use the data for this purpose is written down.

What was tried, what happened, and what changed as a result

Step 3. Take it to approval

Take the design of the live system, not the pilot, to the people who answer for security, privacy and risk, and ask what conditions they would set. Ask early: approval sought late tends to arrive late, or not at all.

Approval needed	From whom	Conditions set	Date held
Security			
Privacy and data protection			
Risk and compliance			
Business owner of the process			
Other (name it)			

Step 4. Redraw the process

Until the process is redrawn, the system is an extra step beside the old one. Draw how the work runs once the system is in it, agree the drawing with the people who work in it, and set a day on which the old manual route stops.

- ☐ The process around the system is drawn as it will run.
- ☐ The people in the process have seen the drawing and agreed it.
- ☐ It is clear where a person reviews, corrects or overrides the output.
- ☐ A day is set when the old route stops, and the people affected know it.
- ☐ Support and preparation for those people is planned.

The new route in a few sentences, and the day the old one stops

Step 5. Plan for failure

The first real failure is a poor moment to find out that nobody knows what to do. Write down what the business does when the system is down or gives a wrong answer, name a person to call, and test the fallback once.

- [ ] The fallback is written down: what the work does when the system is unavailable.
- [ ] The fallback has been tested once, with the people who would use it.
- [ ] A named person can be called, with a second if they are away.
- [ ] Wrong output can be reported, and someone is responsible for acting on the report.
- [ ] A way to switch the system off, and who may decide, are known.

The fallback, the person to call, and the date it was tested

Step 6. Hold the go-live review

Bring the owner, the people who answer for risk, the business owner of the process and the sponsor together. Go through each step and ask for the record. Decide: go live, go live with conditions, or not yet.

Step	Evidence shown	Ready, ready with conditions, or not yet
1. Owner		
2. Live data		
3. Approvals		
4. Process		
5. Failure plan		

Decision, conditions and who took it

Step 7. Run the first weeks

A live system drifts quietly, and a customer is often the first to notice. The owner reviews it often at the start, then on a schedule.

- [ ] A sample of output is checked against the right answer on a schedule, by a named person.
- [ ] Anything reported as wrong is recorded, and the cause is found.
- [ ] Changes to the model, the data or a supplier are reviewed before they reach users.
- [ ] The old route has actually stopped, as agreed.
- [ ] The owner reports to the sponsor on a set date, and the conditions for retiring the system are written.

Review dates, findings, and what was changed

Limits of this document

XONIK wrote this document as a working aid. It is general guidance, not legal, financial, technical-audit or regulatory advice, and it certifies nothing. It records your own reading of your own organization, so it is only as good as the answers you give. It does not guarantee any result. Completing the playbook makes the hand-off visible and nothing more. It is not an audit.