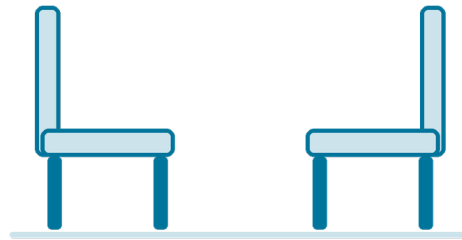


BRIEFING NO. 6

## How to talk to your team about AI

*Your people are already using it. The only question is whether you're in the conversation.*



Here's the situation in most offices, whether anyone has said it out loud or not: somewhere close to half of employees already use AI at work, and most of them are doing it on personal accounts, quietly, because nobody told them the rules — because there aren't any rules yet.

The instinct is to ban it. Resist that. A ban doesn't stop the behavior; it just moves it to personal phones and personal logins, where you can't see it and can't guide it. The better move is three plain conversations. None takes more than twenty minutes.

### Conversation one: “What are you using it for?”

Ask with genuine curiosity, not as an audit — and say the amnesty part out loud: *nobody gets in trouble for answering honestly*. You'll learn more in one staff meeting than any survey would tell you: which tedious jobs people are quietly automating, where the time actually goes, and who on your team has gotten good at this. That last one matters — every office has one or two naturals, and they're about to become useful.

## Conversation two: “Here's how we sort what's sensitive”

Most AI worry evaporates once people can tell the difference between the work that's fine anywhere and the work that isn't. The sorting tool is simple: general questions and public material are fine in any tool; everyday company business belongs in a company account; and anything confidential — financials, client records, personnel matters — needs a home the business controls. We wrote a whole briefing on that sorting (Briefing No. 3, one page). Hand it out. The goal isn't to scare anyone; it's to make the line easy to see *before* someone pastes.

## Conversation three: “Here's where to ask”

Name one person — owner, office manager, your IT contact — as the place questions go. Then make the rule explicit: **nobody here gets in trouble for asking**. Guessing is the thing that causes problems, and people only guess when asking feels risky. One named person plus one blame-free rule prevents more trouble than any monitoring software ever will.

## Then put it in writing

One page beats a binder. Write down the sorting rule, the approved tools, the named person, and the ask-first habit — in language your least technical employee can read in ten minutes. If you'd rather not start from a blank page, we publish a free, plain-language AI use policy that any business can adopt as-is or edit down; it's on our website, no strings on it. However you get there, the point is the same: your team is already in the pool. These three conversations are just you getting in the water with them.

Want to learn more about keeping your data private? Email [PrivateAI@sterling.net](mailto:PrivateAI@sterling.net)