The Strategic Stress Test

A Board-Ready Diagnostic
for the AI Era

We do not validate strategies.

We break them.

The world your strategy was built for no longer exists.

Three things are now true simultaneously, and most organisations have not fully reckoned with any of them.

Decisions are being executed by systems. Not advised by systems — executed. Pricing, routing, risk assessment, customer segmentation. The speed at which AI-assisted logic moves from recommendation to action has compressed what used to be weeks of human deliberation into hours. And in most cases, no one in the room has tested whether that logic holds under pressure.

There is a taxonomy to this that most governance frameworks have not caught up with. Assistants advise. Copilots act with you. Agents act for you. Most governance frameworks were written for the first. Most deployments are already at the third.

Accountability remains human. When an AI-assisted decision causes harm — financial, reputational, regulatory — the board answers. Not the vendor. Not the model. The people who signed off. This asymmetry is not theoretical. It is already the subject of enforcement action across Europe.

Most strategies have not been tested.
They have been assumed.

This is not a criticism. It is a structural condition. Organisations build strategy under time pressure, with incomplete information, and then move to execution. The testing — the rigorous, adversarial, board-level stress testing — almost never happens. Not because leaders are careless. Because no one has handed them a tool that makes it visible.

That is what this document is. Not a framework. Not a scorecard. A provocation.

The pages that follow outline the structure of a diagnostic that exposes the assumptions, dependencies, and blind spots inside a strategy before they become failures. It does not ask you to self-assess. It tells you what we can already see — and what we need from you to see the rest.

Regulators are demanding exit plans. The EU AI Act does not ask whether your AI works. It asks whether you can explain it, audit it, and shut it down if it fails. Most organisations cannot answer any of these questions in writing.

If your strategy has not been broken, it has not been tested.

The diagnostic is not one question.
It is a structured adversarial diagnostic.

THE FIVE MASTER QUESTIONS

1. Can you prove your strategy will survive its first contact with the market?

2. Do you know which assumptions it depends on — and which of those are testable?

3. If three of your critical dependencies failed simultaneously, what would happen?

4. Has anyone in your organisation been tasked with breaking this strategy?

5. Can you shut down every AI-assisted process in under 72 hours — and do you have it in writing?

60

diagnostic questions

across 4 domains

60+

strategic frameworks

in the portfolio

4

scoring domains

Green / Amber / Red

This is not a checklist. It is a systematic deconstruction of the logic underneath a strategy — drawn from a portfolio of 60+ strategic and risk frameworks, stress-tested through adversarial analysis against 60 questions, and scored across 4 independent domains.

Before we speak to you, we have already begun.

External intelligence analysis — competitive filings, regulatory disclosures, job postings, vendor partnerships, technology stack signals — is not a starting point. It is a pressure test in itself. Here is what is visible externally, before a single internal document is shared.

Competitive dynamics

Market positioning, pricing signals, and strategic intent as revealed through public filings and competitive behaviour.

Regulatory exposure

Compliance gaps, pending obligations, and enforcement risk as visible in public regulatory records.

Technology maturity

Capability signals benchmarked against sector peers — visible through hiring patterns, partnership announcements, and stack disclosures.

Perceived vs. actual position

Where the organisation believes it sits versus where the market, regulators, and competitors place it.

Vendor concentration

Single-point-of-failure dependencies in critical supply chains, visible through procurement and partnership data.

One signal that is increasingly visible:

Agent-class AI deployments.

Job postings, vendor integrations, and platform announcements reveal which organisations have moved beyond assistants into autonomous agent deployments. This is the category where governance lags furthest. And it is visible before you tell us anything.

Two dimensions.
One map.

Every element of a strategy can be positioned on two axes: how much strategic value it delivers, and how defensible it is under pressure. The intersection is where the real risk lives — and where most boards are not looking.

	HIGH VALUE **EXPOSURE ZONE**	HIGH VALUE **FORTRESS**
STRATEGIC VALUE	LOW VALUE **DEAD WEIGHT**	LOW VALUE **SAFE GROUND**

DEFENSIBILITY

What each quadrant tells you.

EXPOSURE ZONE

High strategic value. Low defensibility. This is where organisations lose. The initiatives that matter most are the ones least protected. Competitors can replicate them. Regulators can challenge them. Market shifts can neutralise them. If your strategy has a centre of gravity, this is where to look first.

FORTRESS

High value. High defensibility. These are the positions worth defending — and worth building toward. But they are rare. And they did not become fortresses by accident.

DEAD WEIGHT

Low value. Low defensibility. These are the commitments that consume resources without delivering strategic return. They are often invisible in board reporting because no one is asking the right questions.

SAFE GROUND

Low value. High defensibility. Stable. Unremarkable. These positions do not threaten the organisation — but they do not advance it either. The risk here is complacency.

Where the diagnostic stops being advisory.

Not every organisation that takes this diagnostic will be ready for a full strategic stress test. Some will be. Some will not. The diagnostic is designed to tell you which one you are — before you commit time or resource to a process that requires a different kind of readiness.

THE ENVELOPE RULE

If the diagnostic returns more than 12 Red scores across the 60 questions,
or more than 5 Red scores within any single high-value quadrant of the
Pressure Map, the organisation has moved beyond advisory territory.

At that point, a different conversation is required.

This is not a warning. It is a calibration. The stress test is built to surface exactly this kind of signal — and to do it before it becomes a crisis. Organisations that are inside the envelope can self-direct. Organisations that are outside it need a guided process.

One step.

This document has outlined the structure of the diagnostic. It has not run it. The next step is not a proposal. It is not a pitch deck. It is a conversation — short, specific, and without commitment.

PHASE 1 / STRATEGIC EXPOSURE MAP

We run the external intelligence layer. You tell us nothing.

We map what is already visible — competitive position, regulatory exposure, technology signals, vendor dependencies.

Then we show you what we found. And we ask if you want to continue.

Request a Strategic Exposure Map.

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No scope. No budget. No commitment. A conversation.