THE MID-MARKET DECISION FRAMEWORK

Three ways to put AI to work in your next round of strategic thinking

Picture your last strategy offsite. After a full day together, how many genuinely different growth options did your team consider and debate? Three? Four? Was that because only three or four good options existed or because that's all the time and mental bandwidth the room could produce?

AI removes the ceiling on three things every leadership team has always had to ration: how many options you consider, how current your view of the market is, and how hard your own thinking gets challenged before you commit to it.

1. OPTIONS — *Widen beyond what you already know.*

When you're mapping out how to actually grow the business, acquire a company, hire more sales, launch a new product line, expand into a new territory, most teams reach for the same handful of known moves. One of my clients did this with real numbers: their team generated thirty growth ideas the traditional way. Some obvious, some expensive, some hard to pull off. We ran the same question through AI and got past a hundred ideas, with real detail. Due to time and cognitive load, team's need to think about a few top ideas. AI doesn't have that limitation, so can get past the known-knowns into territory the team hadn't considered yet. This work is to do before the room, not in it: bring your own context, tell AI what you're actually facing, and ask what you might not be seeing.

Try it now: *"Here's a real growth question I'm facing: [acquisition, new product, new market, whatever's live for your business]. What are ten approaches I might not have considered?"*

2. VIEW OF THE MARKET — *Refresh what's always stale.*

Every leadership team has one or two slides on the competitive landscape, customer segmentation, and maybe a pricing map. These get updated once or twice a year and are out of date in a week. Make updating it a five-minute habit before every leadership meeting instead of a ritual you dread annually.

Try it now: *"Give me a current picture of [your competitive landscape / customer segments / pricing approach]. What's shifted in the last six months that I might not be tracking?"*

3. CHALLENGE — *Say what the room won't.*

This is the one that matters most, and it's not really about AI. It's about your team's health.

A genuinely healthy leadership team can challenge a plan without anyone paying a cost for it. That's what real trust gives you. Of course, building that kind of team is hard work. Many teams haven't done it yet or haven't treated it as ongoing work. Without that foundation, direct challenge doesn't happen. What happens instead is what we call artificial harmony: everyone nods, nobody says the hard thing, and the plan leaves the room untested. Often, not because it's the best decision, but because no one was willing to pay the price of being wrong out loud.

AI doesn't fix that. It doesn't build you a healthy team. But AI can give you one more voice in the room that isn't afraid to argue against the plan, while you're doing the harder work of building a team that can do the same.

Try it now: *"Here's our plan: [describe in a few sentences]. Argue against it like our sharpest board member or our top competitor. What are the three strongest reasons this plan fails?"*

In the DAC today, this will work best as one action, not three. Run one prompt on your phone and share one thing that surprised you.

Credit to Felipe Csaszar, "AI Is Revolutionizing Strategic Decision-Making," HBR, September–October 2026. The three-lens structure is his; the mid-market translation, the examples, and the prompts are built for this room.