

Faster is not always better

The next challenge in AI adoption is knowing when to slow down



Over the past year, this newsletter has made a consistent case: AI is a real business tool, not a novelty. We have seen it cut task times, reshape entire companies, and sharpen how we use data and visibility.

Now it is time to talk about the part nobody puts in the brochure.

The Pattern We Are Seeing: In organizations that have adopted AI most aggressively, the tools are working. But the people using them are not always getting the relief leaders expected. In many cases, AI is not reducing the burden. It is increasing it.

THE TRAP HIDDEN INSIDE EVERY EFFICIENCY GAIN

When a tool makes a task faster, leaders understandably raise the bar. More gets done, so more gets asked

A salesperson who can prepare a proposal in twenty minutes instead of two hours does not get ninety minutes back. They get asked to prepare four more proposals.

Researchers call this "effort substitution": time saved by a tool gets immediately claimed by new demands. People end up just as stretched, at a higher volume, producing more without necessarily thinking more clearly.

This matters for businesses like ABS. Every key decision we make, whether it is a price, a delivery commitment, or an engineering recommendation, carries real consequences for our customers and our reputation.

WHAT GETS LOST WHEN EVERYTHING MOVES FASTER

AI amplifies whatever habits an organization already has. Teams with strong review practices get better. Teams that skip steps get faster at skipping steps.

Speed is not the enemy. But speed without discipline quietly erodes three things that cannot be automated.

01 THE PAUSE

The moment of doubt before a decision, where the most important errors get caught.

02 THE CONVERSATION

Informal check-ins that surface problems early, before they become expensive.

03 THE THINKING

Strategic analysis that drives growth, easily crowded out by more execution.

TWO WAYS TO SCALE WITH AI

The companies navigating this well are deliberate about how AI fits into their workflows, not just which tools they choose. The difference shows up clearly side by side:

Acceleration Without Intent

More output, same review habits

Speed becomes the goal

Recovered time refills with more tasks

Errors scale with volume

Acceleration With Intent

More output, stronger checkpoints

Speed serves the decision

Recovered time funds deeper thinking

Judgment scales with volume

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ABS

The organizations that get the most from AI will not be the ones with the most tools. They will be the ones who know exactly what those tools are for, and who protect the human judgment that makes every output worth acting on.

ABS has been building AI tools with a clear purpose: better visibility, fewer preventable errors, and more time for the work that requires human judgment. That foundation is solid. The next step is using it with discipline.

As our AI capabilities grow, three questions are worth keeping in front of every team:

- ✓ Are the hours we are recovering going toward better thinking, or just more volume?
- ✓ Are the decisions AI helps us make being reviewed with the rigor they deserve?
- ✓ Are we measuring what actually matters to the business, or what is easiest to count?

Key Takeaway

AI is not a strategy. It is a tool. The strategy is knowing what you are trying to accomplish, then designing your workflows, checkpoints, and culture so that faster execution leads to **better decisions**, not just more of them.

Stay Deliberate.
Stay Ahead.