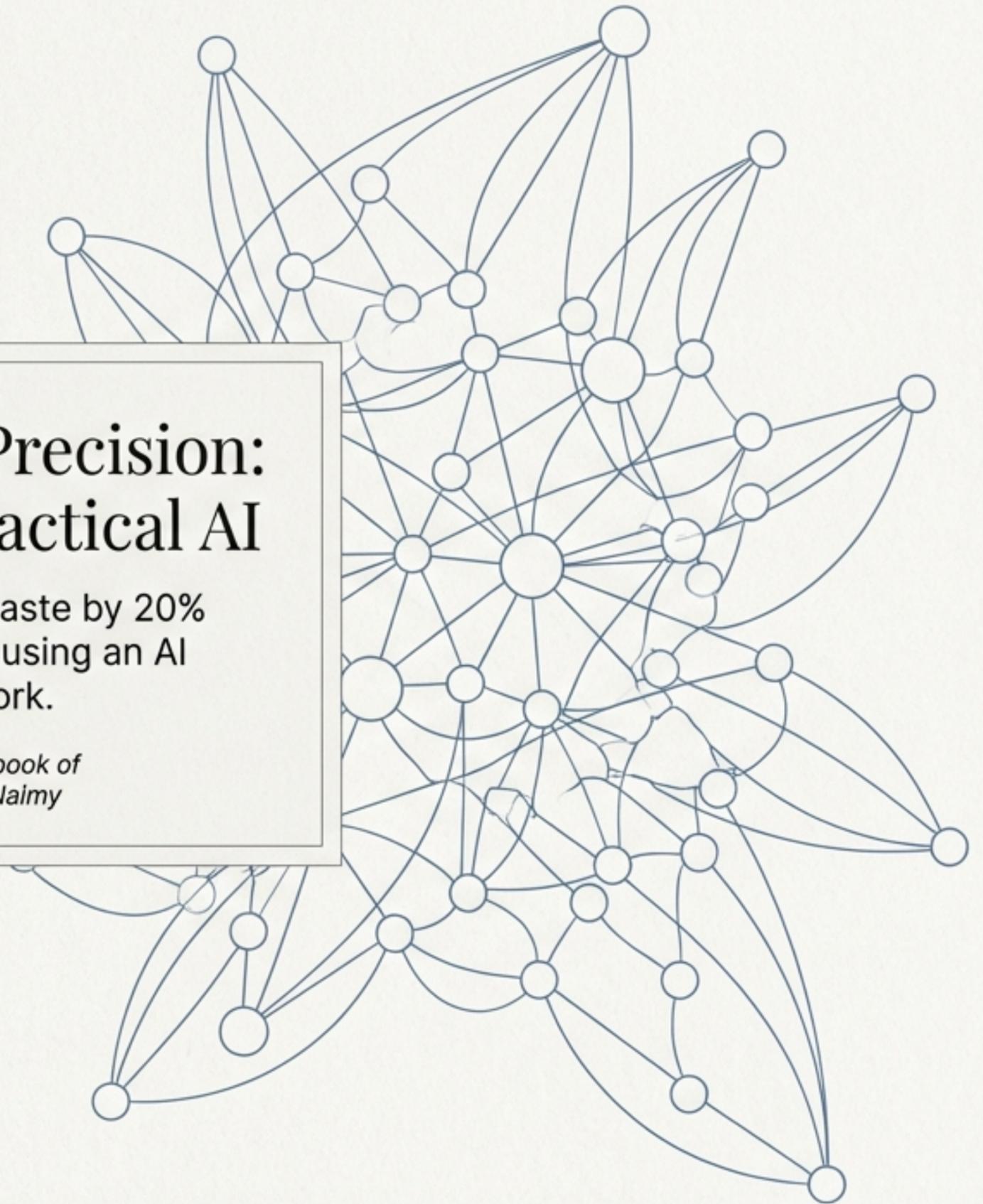# From Intuition to Precision: A Case Study in Practical AI

How Lia's Flowers reduced waste by 20% and streamlined operations using an AI automation framework.

Based on the operational playbook of Strategic AI Leader Richard Naimy

The Limits of the 'Florist's Gut'

For years, inventory planning relied entirely on the owner's intuition. While experienced, the "gut feeling" approach created a cycle of volatility that manual spreadsheets couldn't fix.

The Waste Trap

Overstocking led to an average of 3–4 buckets of wasted stems every week.

The Revenue Gap

Understocking caused missed revenue opportunities during demand spikes.

The Logistics Drag

Delivery routes overlapped significantly, resulting in wasted fuel and unnecessary delays.

The Time Sink

The team spent 90 minutes every week on manual planning and reconciling spreadsheets.

Layer 1: Predicting Demand Before It Happens

Replacing guesswork with data science.

The Mechanism

- **Data Inputs:** Ingested weekly sales history by stem type mapped against local event spikes (e.g., Valentine's Day, graduations).

- **The Model:** A lightweight model trained to predict demand by specific stem and week.

- **The Shift:** Purchasing moved from large monthly buys to smaller, frequent batches based on data-driven signals.

Stem ID: Rose-Pink

Demand Spike: Feb 14

Avg Life: 7 Days
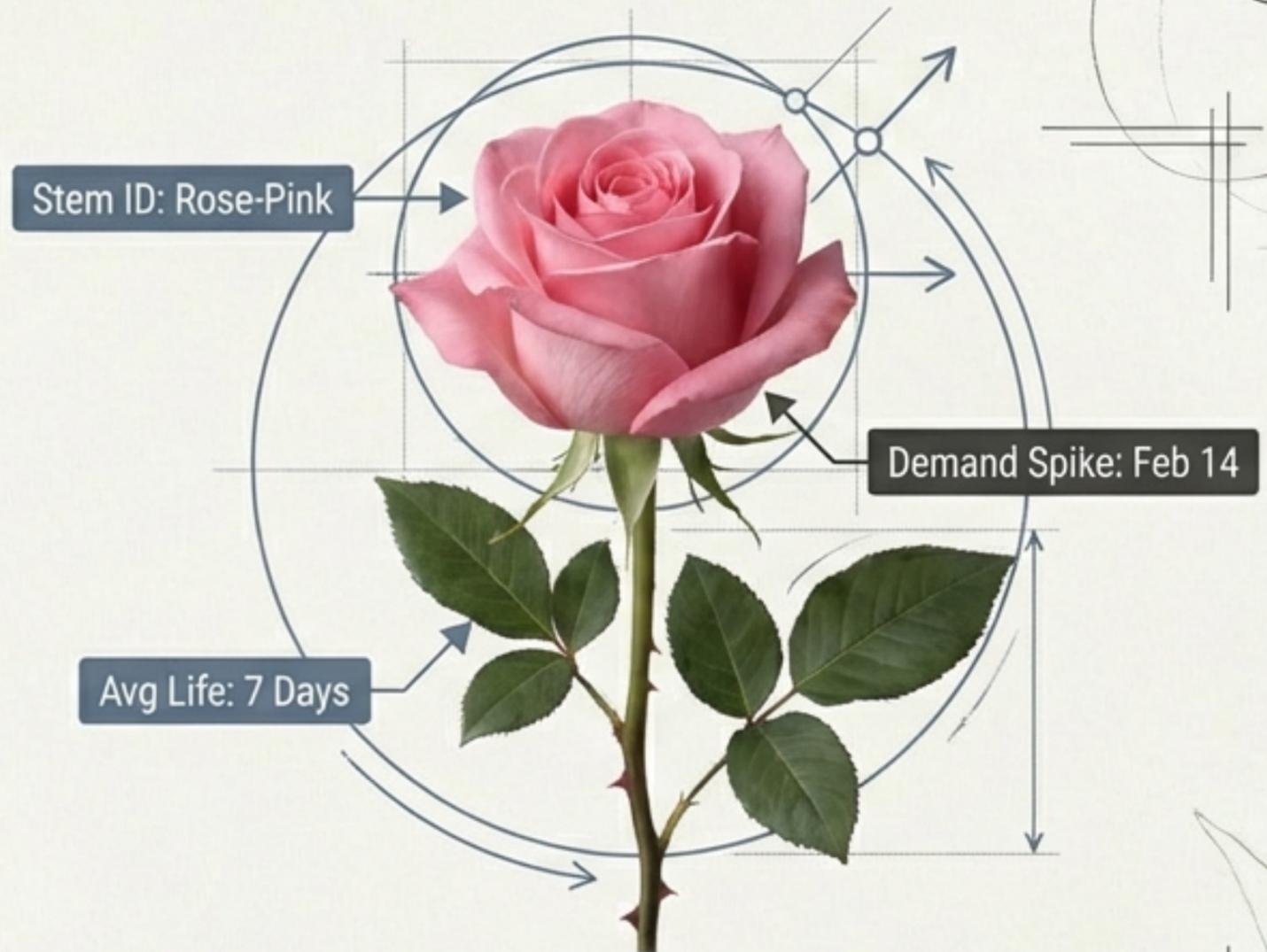
Impact: Addressed the 'Waste Trap' by aligning supply with predicted consumption.

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Layer 2: Solving the 'Last Mile' Problem

Connecting the forecast to the road.
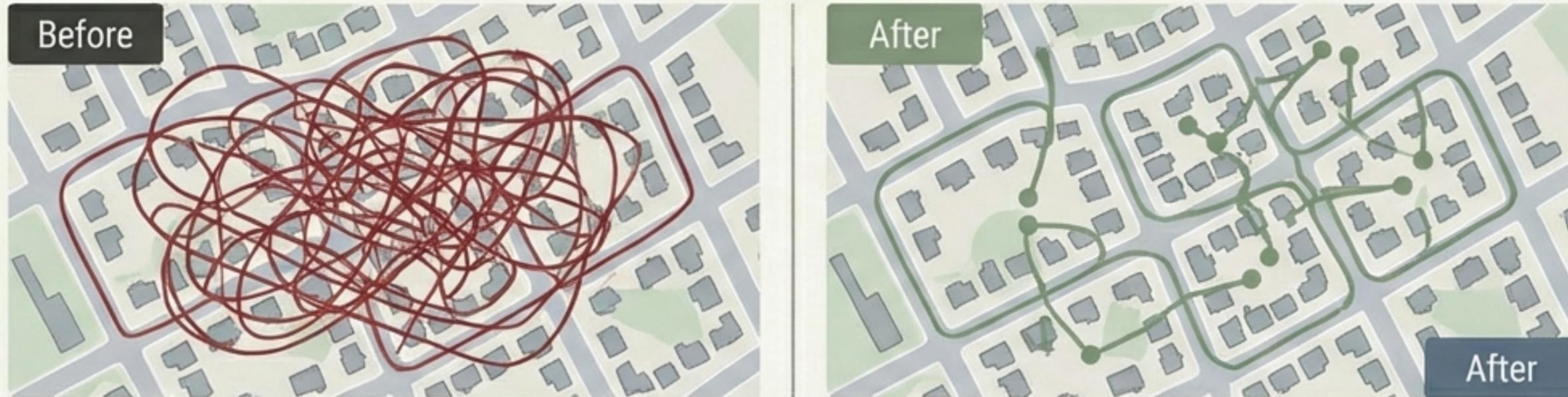
The Mechanism

- **Clustering:** AI grouped deliveries by ZIP code and specific timing windows.
- **Route Planning:** Algorithms replaced manual sorting to eliminate overlapping trips.
- **Real-World Constraints:** System balanced algorithmic efficiency with driver knowledge (traffic, experience).

Impact: Improved punctuality and reduced fuel usage by minimizing redundant travel.

Layer 3: The Control Tower

Visibility drives accountability and adoption.

The Mechanism

Moving from static spreadsheets to live dashboards. The system automatically aggregated live forecasts against actuals to surface patterns.

Key Metrics Tracked

- Usage rates
- Shrink (waste) percentage
- Fulfillment accuracy

Cultural Shift

Weekly planning meetings shifted from arguing over spreadsheets to reviewing clear, objective data.

Impact: Provided a single source of truth, fostering data-driven decision-making and reducing waste.

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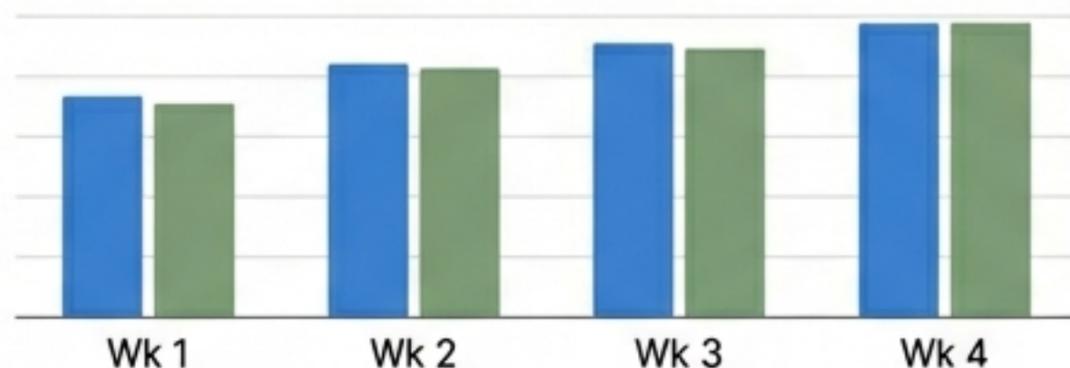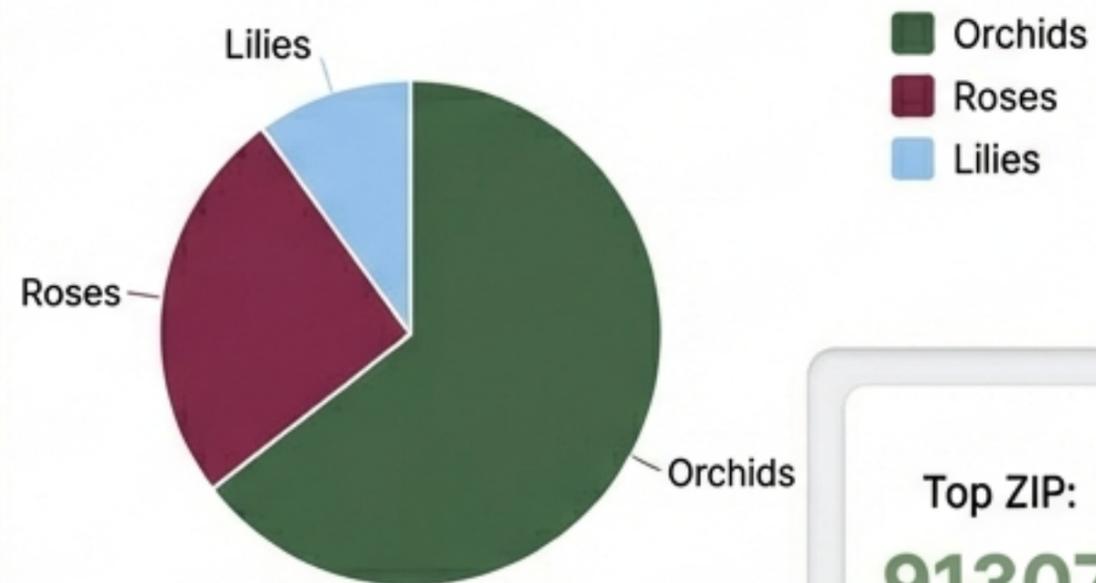
Quantifiable Operational Transformation

	Before AI	**After AI**
Ordering Method	Based on intuition and gut feeling.	Based on ML patterns and event mapping.
Weekly Waste	3–4 buckets of stems per week.	**Dropped 20%** in the first season.
Logistics	Overlapping routes, delays, fuel waste.	On-time delivery improved by **15%**.
Planning Time	90 minutes/week reconciling spreadsheets.	**30 minutes/week** (66% reduction).

AI Didn't Replace Decisions, It Sharpened Them

The system provided the signal; the humans made the call.

The Orchid Call

Forecast called for 390 stems vs. usual 480.
Result: Prevented over-ordering and unsold inventory.

The Sunflower Spike

Forecast suggested 640 stems, but AI flagged a graduation spike risk.
Result: Team adjusted to 720, preventing stock-out.

The Ruscus Trim

AI spotted slower usage patterns.
Result: Order was trimmed to prevent overbuying greens.

"With AI forecasting, I finally feel in control... and I have more time to fo focus on my customers and designs." — Lia, Owner

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Insights for Scaling Practical AI

Green Lights (What Worked)

✓ **Scale Agnostic:** AI works for small businesses if data is structured weekly.

✓ **Combined Value:** Forecasting + Logistics together multiply value.

✓ **Visibility = Trust:** Dashboards helped staff buy in, reducing resistance.

✓ **Small Bets:** Frequent, small adjustments beat big monthly bets.

Red Lights (The Hard Truths)

⚠ **Heavy Lifting:** Data prep (cleaning weekly sales/event data) requires discipline.
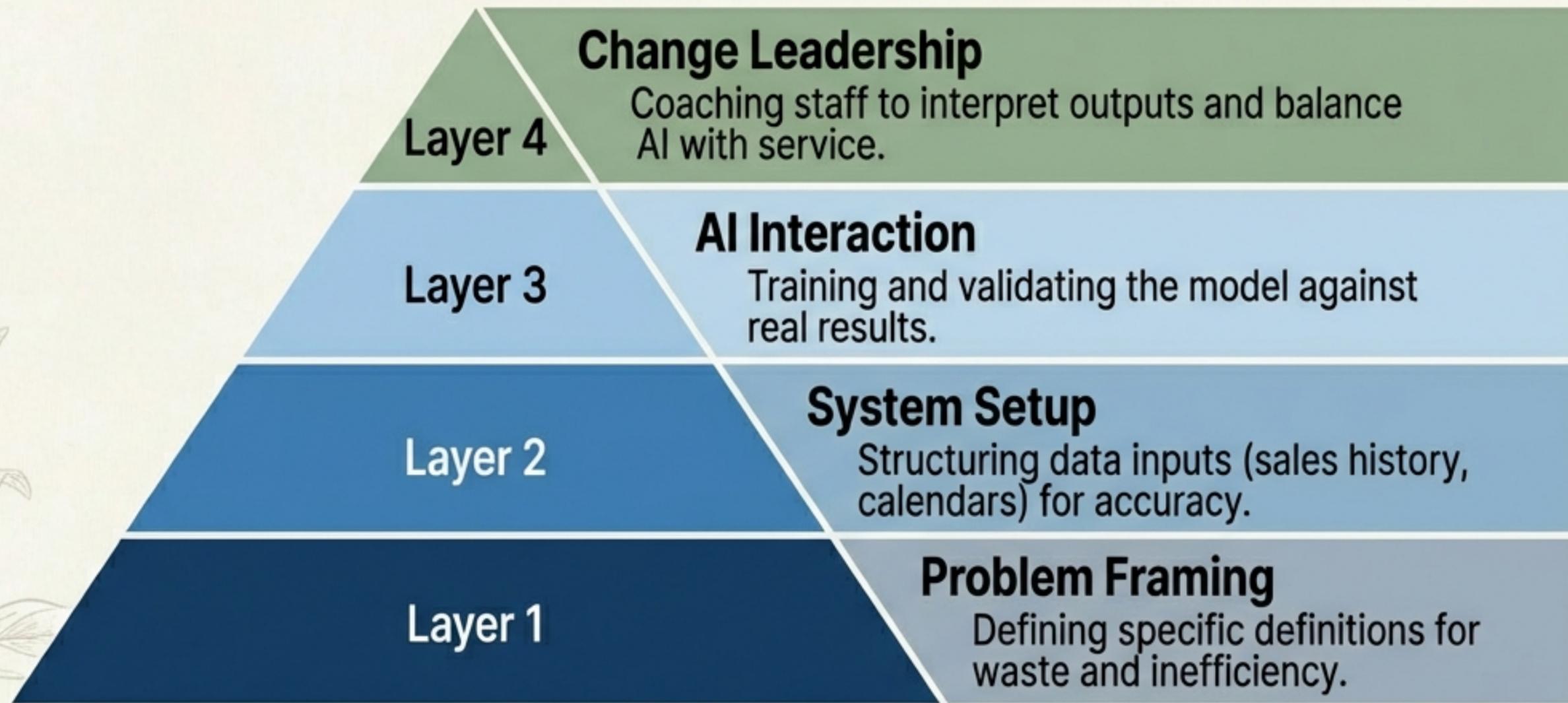
⚠ **External Shocks:** Models can still miss on unexpected events like funerals or weather.

⚠ **Coaching Required:** Staff initially feared AI replacement; leadership coaching was mandatory.

The Architect Behind the Code

Richard Naimy's role went beyond installing software. Success required a blend of technical setup and change management.

Layer 4 — **Change Leadership** — Coaching staff to interpret outputs and balance AI with service.

Layer 3 — **AI Interaction** — Training and validating the model against real results.

Layer 2 — **System Setup** — Structuring data inputs (sales history, calendars) for accuracy.

Layer 1 — **Problem Framing** — Defining specific definitions for waste and inefficiency.

The Future of Local Business is Smart

Core Takeaway: Lia's Flowers proves that you don't need to be a tech giant to leverage AI. By structuring data and trusting the process, 'boring' operations become competitive advantages.

Call to Action: Connect with Richard Naimy for more playbooks on AI Ops, Strategy, and MarTech Automation.

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