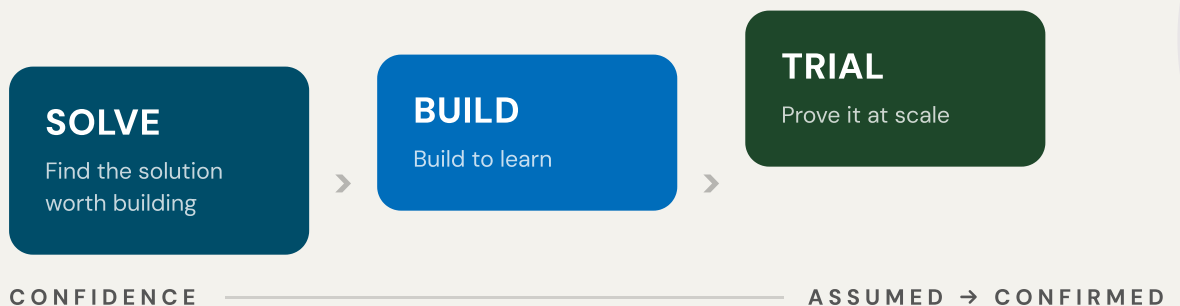


DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE · THE OVERVIEW

Our role is to develop solutions, and **confidence** in them.

The other guides tell you how to do the work. This one tells you what the work is. Read it once. It is the mental model behind everything else we do.



WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO · THE OVERVIEW

WHY THIS EXISTS

The mental model behind everything else.

If you understand this, the playbooks will make sense. If you skip it, you will do a lot of activity that feels like progress but does not move the only things that matter.

THE OTHER GUIDES

How to do the work

Playbooks, methods, templates. The step-by-step practice for problem-led discovery and solution-led risk scans.

THIS GUIDE

What the work is

The thinking the playbooks rest on. The quality of the solution, and our confidence in it. Nothing else is the goal.

Read it once and keep it close. Without the model, teams chase **activity that looks like progress** but never moves the solution or the confidence we have in it.

THE WHOLE JOB

Develop solutions, build confidence, recommend whether to invest.

We develop new solutions to problems and opportunities, build confidence in them through experimentation, and produce an evidence-based recommendation on whether the business should invest further. It has two halves.

WE CREATE

Develop new solutions

Something is not performing well enough, or a change in technology enables new value. Where there is no solution yet, our role is genuinely generative.

For our stores, our team members, and our customers.

WE DE-RISK

Build honest evidence

Once we have a solution and a hypothesis, we find what must be true for it to work, and build evidence, for or against, so someone can decide with their eyes open.

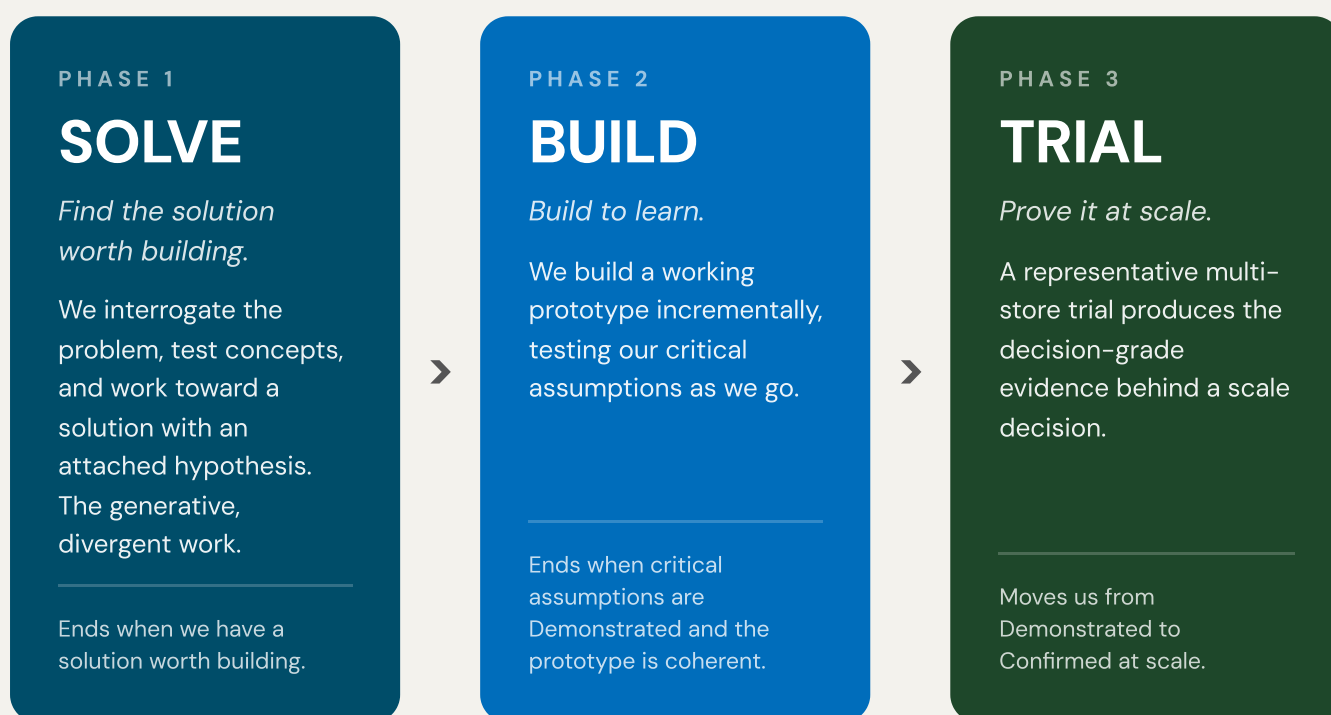
We are not here to prove an idea is good or fall in love with a solution.

THE BEST OUTCOME

Not "we were right." The best outcome is a **confident recommendation**, whichever way it points.

From a rough problem to a decision the business can trust.

Everything we do sits inside one of three phases. They form the journey, and confidence is the thread running through all three.



Confidence is the thread. SOLVE moves us toward Demonstrated, BUILD secures it, and TRIAL takes us to Confirmed at scale.

WE START IN ONE OF TWO PLACES

Our initiatives don't always start in the same place, which is important to recognise.

Your approach depends on where the initiative begins.

START WITH A PROBLEM

A pain point, gap, or opportunity

There is no solution yet. Our first job is not to jump to a solution. It is to work out what the real problem worth solving actually is, then develop and test concepts.

IF WE SKIP THE PROBLEM WORK

We risk a beautiful solution to a problem that does not exist, or nobody cares about.

START WITH A SOLUTION

A tool, feature, or process change

It comes attached to a hypothesis. Our job is to extract what must be true for the solution to deliver, then test the riskiest of those assumptions first.

WE DO NOT

Blindly run the solution to see what happens. We work out the beliefs it rests on.

FIVE WAYS AN INITIATIVE CAN BREAK

Every initiative carries assumptions across five categories.

01

Desirability

Do people want or need this?

Do users, customers, or team members experience the problem, and would this meaningfully improve their work?

02

Operational feasibility

Can the business operate this?

Does it fit real store routines, roles, and rhythms? Who owns it? What happens when it fails?

03

Technical feasibility

Can we build and maintain it?

Is the data there? Will it integrate? Can it perform reliably and be supported over time?

04

Viability

Is it worth doing?

Does the value justify the cost and effort? Does the business case hold beyond initial enthusiasm?

05

Adoption readiness

What stops it sticking in stores?

Do we understand the barriers, motivation, understanding, capability, competing or conflicting messages, and have we tested remedies? So deployment and change teams have the tools to make it stick.

ALL FIVE MATTER

A solution can be technically perfect and still fail because nobody wants it, operations cannot absorb it, the value is too small, or adoption is too hard.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND

You do not work through the five in order.

You hunt for the next most important thing that could break the initiative, wherever it sits. Two questions decide what you test next.

QUESTION 1

How critical is this assumption?

Critical If wrong, the whole initiative breaks. The solution fails, or the value disappears.

Trivial If wrong, we adjust and carry on. It does not change the direction of the work.

QUESTION 2

What is our current confidence?

Know nothing Still only Assumed. A critical assumption here is extremely urgent.

Strong evidence Even a critical assumption is far less pressing. We have largely de-risked it.

PUT THEM TOGETHER

The assumption you test next is the one that is both **critical to the solution** and **lowest on the evidence scale**. Test it first, regardless of category.

HOW STRONG IS OUR EVIDENCE?

Confidence is not a feeling. Every assumption earns its way up.

Level 1

Assumed

Belief only. A hypothesis, expert opinion, or untested logic. Every assumption starts here. *Honest, not shameful.*

Level 2

Indicated

Signals suggest it may be true. Interviews, surveys, desk analysis. What people *say* they will do is Indicated at best.

Level 3

Demonstrated

We observed the behaviour in realistic conditions, in one real store. The first level that counts as behavioural evidence.

Level 4

Confirmed at scale

Decision-grade evidence. A representative multi-store trial, sustained past novelty, with Data and Finance co-designing the evidence.

Any level

Invalidated

A fair test contradicted the belief. Not failure: we avoided a more expensive mistake downstream. Report it with pride.

THE LINE TEAMS MOST OFTEN BLUR

Indicated vs Demonstrated: **Have we observed actual behaviour in realistic operating conditions?** What people told you in a room is never Demonstrated.

HOW MUCH CONFIDENCE IS ENOUGH?

Confidence is not pursued to infinity.

You do not need Confirmed at scale on every assumption. That would be slow, expensive, and pointless. You agree the target with your sponsor, up front.

1

The overall level the decision requires

A small, low-risk change may only need Demonstrated. A large, costly, network-wide commitment needs Confirmed at scale.

Small bet → Demonstrated

Network bet → Confirmed

2

The level you are targeting next cycle

What will we move, and to what level, in the time we have? A concrete commitment for the cycle ahead.

Which assumptions

To what level

WHY IT MATTERS

This agreement keeps us honest in both directions. It stops us **under-testing a big bet**, and stops us **over-testing a small one**.

OFTEN, BUILDING IS THE TEST

Developing confidence does not mean avoiding building.

What matters is building the right thing, at the right fidelity, for where we are. There are two kinds.

THROW-AWAY PROTOTYPES

Cheap, fast, disposable

Used early in SOLVE while we search for the right solution. They exist to prove one thing, then we bin them.

Quickly proving whether an AI can achieve an outcome consistently, before we commit to anything.

WORKING PROTOTYPES · THE BUILD CYCLE

Production-faithful, in a sandbox

Once committed to a real solution, we build a genuine working prototype incrementally, as close to production patterns as possible, off production.

Each increment proves an assumption and contributes a real component. We never build it twice.

THE BUILD CYCLE HAS A DELIBERATE SHAPE

1

Build the foundation

Stand up the production-faithful sandbox everything else gets built on.

2

Build by criticality

Build the feature for the most critical assumption, move it to Demonstrated, then the next. Order follows priority, not a roadmap.

3

Stitch it together

Pieces accumulate rather than getting thrown away. The result is a coherent prototype ready to test at scale.

CYCLES, AND THE RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation happens at the end of a cycle.

We work in time-boxed cycles to validate or invalidate a set of critical assumptions. At each boundary, the team makes one of three calls.

Continue

Testing broadly confirms the direction, but critical assumptions remain. Keep investing.

Resolves into another cycle, or a trial when testing has progressed enough for in-store validation at scale.

Pivot

The learnings show the solution needs to be fundamentally rethought.

The problem may still stand, but this solution, in its current form, is not the answer.

Stop

Something is not desirable, feasible, or viable, and it is not solvable or kills viability.

We off-ramp, with the learning banked.

AT THE END OF A TRIAL

Scale

Do not scale

Send back to innovation

Designing a trial is not a solo team activity. It requires the future owner, commercial finance, and stores experience governance, and should be designed with reference to the stores experience governance model.

THE WHOLE ROLE IN ONE PLACE

Develop solutions worth backing, and an honest recommendation on whether to keep investing.

Everything else — the five categories, the prioritisation, the prototypes, the confidence levels, the phases — exists to serve that one outcome.

We develop solutions, and we develop confidence in them. That is the role. Every concept we develop, every assumption we test, and every prototype we build feeds the recommendation.