

Build Your AI Workforce

From individual AI use to repeatable capability

Emma Rees on turning repeatable work into reusable skills, automations and AI-enabled ways of working.

1

BUILD A SKILL

Turn repeatable expertise into a focused capability.

2

AUTOMATE

Add triggers, tools and hand-offs.

3

STACK SKILLS

Coordinate specialists around outcomes.

4

REDESIGN

Map the workflow and future state.

AI capability starts with repeated work, not a new tool.

Emma's toolkit begins by looking for repeated requests, manual hand-offs, recurring preparation, duplicated effort and work that falls through the cracks. The point is to find where AI can improve a real workflow before deciding what technology to use.

01

REPEATED WORK

A task happens often enough to deserve a method.

02

CLEAR INPUTS

The information needed can be identified.

03

DEFINED METHOD

Good work can be described step by step.

04

USEFUL OUTPUT

The result has a clear destination and purpose.

Validify context

For retail leaders, this is a useful discipline: start with the business work that is slow, repetitive or fragile. AI becomes easier to evaluate when the problem, inputs and outcome are already clear.

Make good work repeatable before you automate it.

A reusable AI skill is not just a prompt. Emma's method asks teams to define the purpose, required inputs, the step-by-step method, quality checks and the final output format.

PURPOSE

What is this skill for?

CHECKS

What defines acceptable quality?

INPUTS

What information does it need?

OUTPUT

What should be produced, and where?

METHOD

How should the work be done?

The aim is consistency, not complexity.

The clearer the method, the easier it is to test whether AI is actually improving the work.

Automation needs triggers, hand-offs and a human checkpoint.

Once the skill works, the next question is whether it should run when something happens or at a scheduled time. Emma's framework then defines the information it needs, the tools it can use, where the output goes, what happens next and where a human must review.

01

TRIGGER

An event or schedule starts the work.

02

AGENT

The repeatable method runs.

03

HAND-OFF

The output goes to the right place.

04

HUMAN

Judgement or approval stays where risk is high.

A useful guardrail

Keep a human checkpoint anywhere the cost of a mistake is high. Automation should remove avoidable effort without removing accountability.

An AI workforce is an operating model, not a collection of chatbots.

Emma's next step is to break an outcome into a small number of specialist skills, each with a clear responsibility, input, output and hand-off, then identify one lead agent to coordinate the work.



The important shift

Move from asking AI to complete isolated tasks towards designing a system of specialised capabilities around a business outcome. That means clearer ownership, clearer hand-offs and a better view of where human judgement belongs.

Do not automate the old process unchanged.

Emma's toolkit maps the current state first: people, roles, recurring work, tools, decisions, approvals, hand-offs, time drains and blockers. Only then does it redesign the future state around the outcome.

CURRENT STATE

- Work enters through multiple routes
- Manual hand-offs create delay
- Decisions depend on memory
- Repeated work consumes specialist time

AI-ENABLED STATE

- Humans start the right work
- Agents complete repeatable steps
- Decisions stay explicit
- Value moves faster through the system

The mindset shift

Manage outcomes and systems, not every individual task. The goal is not more automation for its own sake; it is a better way for people and AI to move work from need to result.

Start with three manageable workflows.

Emma's closing recommendation is deliberately practical: prioritise work by frequency, effort saved and ease of setup. Test it manually first, then automate only once the method and safeguards are clear.

01

Choose

Pick work that is frequent, valuable and simple enough to test.

02

Test

Run the workflow manually and check the output before automating.

03

Learn

Use a short trial to refine the skill, hand-offs and safeguards.

ABOUT EMMA REES

Emma Rees is a 4x founder and VP AI Transformation at Mindstone, and the creator of The Human Engine. Her work focuses on helping organisations turn AI access and experimentation into practical capability, better workflows and measurable performance.

CONTINUE WITH THE FULL MINDSTONE BUILD YOUR AI WORKFORCE TOOLKIT

Workshop prompts, workflow mapping and Emma's AI village starter kit are available from the Forum landing page.