

The Buck STOP™

A practical framework for using AI in product development methods

Structured Work

For use within structured product development activities and methods.

Tactical Use

Applied at the level of individual methodological steps.

Improved Outcome

Scopes the tasks given to AI for an improved outcome.



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Operating Principles

The framework is guided by three principles...

The Buck Stops Here

The person owns the method, critical thinking, and result.

AI can support execution, but the situational awareness needed for great product development cannot be outsourced to it.

Bite-sized is Right-sized

Smaller and simpler AI tasks produce better output.

As prompt complexity increases, output quality and reliability tend to degrade (regardless of model tier).

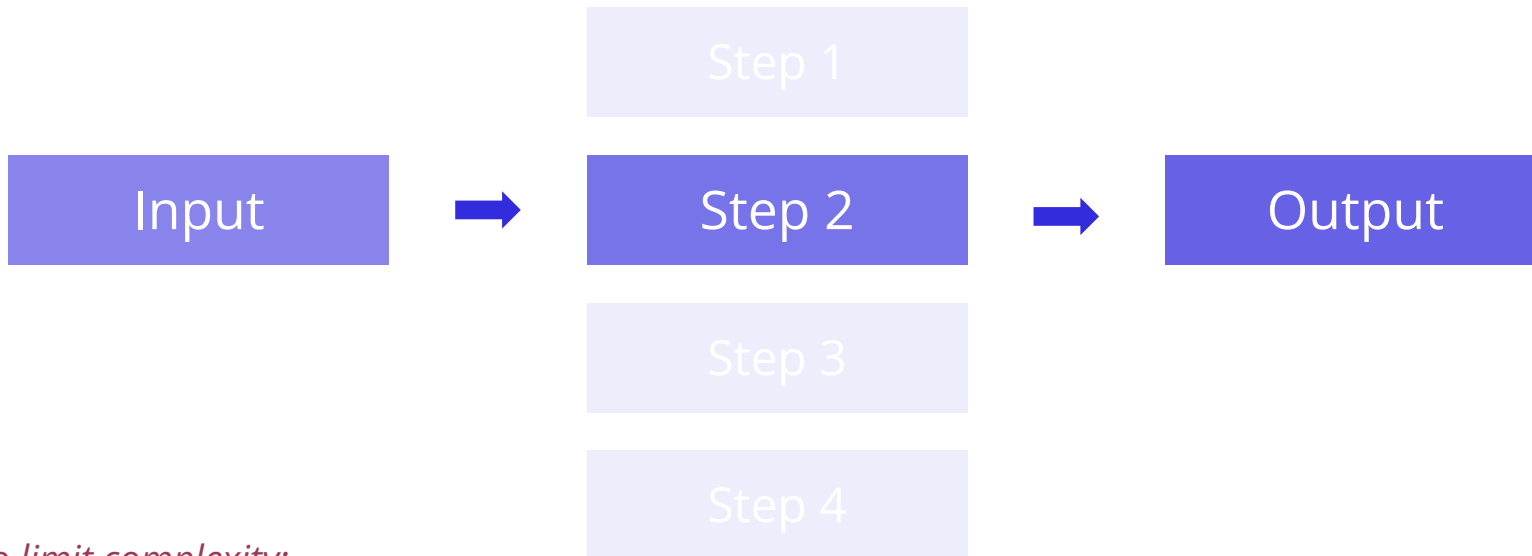
Backward Planning

Knowing the desired outcome is as important as ever.

The STOP acronym is intentionally reverse of a typical order of execution. This is to encourage outcome-first thinking.

Where

AI can be given a task at a step's input, execution, or output.



To limit complexity:
**Use prompts for Input, Step,
and Output individually.**

What

Four types of AI “cognitive” tasks within the framework.

Score

Evaluates existing material against existing criteria.

Examples:

- Check vs standard
- Gap assessment
- Rubric scoring

Think

Reasons about existing material.

Examples:

- Tradeoff analysis
- Implication mapping
- Decision support

Organize

Structures existing material into a defined format.

Examples:

- Build a hierarchy
- Populate a template
- Content sorting

Pull

Retrieves or generates material.

Examples:

- Generate examples
- Find domain knowledge
- Standards retrieval

To limit complexity:

Use prompts for Score, Think, Organize, and Pull individually.

Plan First

Four types of AI “cognitive” tasks within the framework.

Score

Think

Organize

Pull

Backward Planning

Use only the needed types.
When using multiple, plan backward before
executing forward in separate prompts.

Forward Execution

One Cell = One Prompt

To manage task complexity, limit the scope of a prompt to one cell.

	Input	Step	Output
Score	ASSESS INPUTS	EXECUTE AN EVALUATION STEP	ASSESS OUTPUTS
Think	INTERPRET INPUTS	EXECUTE A REASONING STEP	INTERPRET OUTPUTS
Organize	STRUCTURE INPUTS	EXECUTE A STRUCTURING STEP	STRUCTURE OUTPUTS
Pull	GATHER INPUTS	EXECUTE A RETRIEVAL OR GENERATION STEP	ENRICH OUTPUTS

Examples: Selecting parts for a Gage R&R

Individual examples for each cell (examples are not necessarily part of the same use case)

	Input	Step	Output
Score	Compare this planned approach to the criteria in this SOP.	Assess this selection of candidate part against ISO 22514-7.	Here is our final list of parts. Evaluate it against AIAG MSA Manual criteria.
Think	What does “span the process variation” mean for our high-precision parts?	I have two parts with nearly identical measurements. Should I substitute one?	Here is how we selected the parts. Do you see any selection bias?
Organize	Given these part selection criteria, build me a part selection checklist.	Give this list of parts ID codes per this SOP.	Format our part selection into a data collection sheet for the study.
Pull	What criteria are typically used to select parts for a Gage R&R study?	What are typical sources of variation in this type of measurement system?	How should we keep track of the parts we’ve selected?

Session Management

To manage chat sessions, consider persistence and when to start a new session.

Session Risks

Context Contamination

(over-persistence)

Previous prompts overly influence later responses.

Context Fade

(under-persistence)

Earlier info receives less weighting as sessions grow longer.

Improving Persistence

Persistence Features

(e.g., Projects, Gems)

Helps maintain continuity, especially with Context Fading.

Separate Context File

Portable across tools and forces you to articulate the method clearly.

Start a New Session

Performance Degrades

Once context issues start, recovery is problematic.

Change of Context

Changes of assumptions, goals, large methodological shift *(e.g., use AI in step 1 of a method and then not again until step 9)*