AFP FP&A FORUM

Designing Finance Bots That Don’t Break the Close

The B.O.T.S.A.F.E. Blueprint for Useful, Safe AI Agents

Hi, I’m Mike

- Corporate FP&A Leader
- Founder of F9 Finance
- Automated more than 100,000 hours out of finance processes

DEMO

Why Most Finance Bots Fail

“Automate a bad process… get bad results faster”

Most “AI projects” in finance die for three boring reasons:

- No clear business goal
- Messy inputs and vague processes
- Zero guardrails

What Is The B.O.T.S.A.F.E. Blueprint?

- B – Business Goal
- O – Owner & Users
- T – Triggers
- S – Steps
- A – Acceptance Criteria
- F – Failure & Fallback
- E – Evidence & Metrics

It is NOT a tech framework.

It’s a design and governance framework for finance teams.

The Bot Design Canvas

B.O.T.S.A.F.E. Bot Design Canvas

Use Case: Month-End Variance Commentary Agent

B – Business Goal

Primary Goal:
- Reduce month-end variance commentary drafting time from ~90 minutes per business unit to ~10 minutes.

Business Outcomes:
- Faster close cycle with commentary ready by Day 2.
- More consistent, standardized narratives across business units.
- Reduced analyst rework and manager review cycles.

O – Owner & Users

Bot Owner:
- FP&A Manager (accountable for accuracy and outcomes).

Primary Users:
- FP&A Analysts responsible for business unit commentary.

Stakeholders:
- Controller
- CFO
- Business Unit Leaders

T – Triggers

Primary Trigger:
- Automatically runs on Day 2 of close at 10:00 AM after actuals are confirmed loaded.

Secondary Triggers:
- Manual re-run by analyst if updated data is posted.
- Manual re-run if prior run failed validation checks.

Trigger Guardrail:
- Bot will not run if source data timestamp is not current.

S – Steps

Process Steps:
1. Pull standardized Actuals, Budget, and Prior Year data.

- A structured template that mirrors BOTSAFE
- Something anyone can fill out in 30 minutes
- The bridge between idea and build
- Designed for AI-assisted development

Business Goal

- Every bot starts with a business problem, not a prompt
- Good goals focus on:
  - Time saved
  - Consistency
  - Quality
  - Speed to decision

Example

Bad Goal:

- Use AI to help write variance commentary.

Good Goal:

- Reduce BU variance drafting time from **90 minutes → 10 minutes**
- Improve consistency across analysts
- Cut rework cycles by 50%

B O T S A F E

Low Risk, High ROI

- Highly repetitive
- Structured inputs
- Standard outputs
- Clear acceptance rules
- Already happening today

Example

Month-End Commentary Agent

- Happens every single month
- Same reports, same structure
- Predictable workflow
- Clear materiality rules
- Currently done manually in Word and Excel

Owner & Users

Every bot needs:

- A clear business owner
- Defined users
- An approval chain
- An escalation path

Example

- **Owner:**
  FP&A Manager
- **Primary Users:**
  BU Finance Analysts
- **Stakeholders:**
  Controller, CFO, Business Partners

B O T S A F E

Triggers

Triggers define **when and how** a bot runs.

- Time-based
- Event-based
- Manual

Example

Primary Trigger:

- Day 2 of close
- 10:00am
- After actuals load confirmed

Secondary Triggers:

- Rerun on demand
- Rerun if new data posted

B O T S A F E

Steps

Define the process in plain language

- Triggers
- Data/Inputs
- Decisions/Rules
- Outputs

Example

1. Pull standardized actuals and budget
2. Calculate variances
3. Apply materiality rules
4. Draft narratives
5. Format outputs
6. Route for review

B O T S A F E

Acceptance Criteria

What does good look like?

- Numeric rules
- Formatting rules
- Tone and content rules
- Validation checks

Example

Numeric Checks

- All variances tie to source data
- Materiality thresholds applied

Tone and Content Rules

- No new numbers invented
- Max 3 drivers per variance

Format

- Standard paragraph structure
- Consistent units and decimals

B O T S A F E

Failure & Fallback

Every design must define:

- Failure conditions
- Escalation paths
- Rollback procedures

Example

Stop Conditions

- Data doesn’t reconcile
- Missing required fields

Fallback Plan

- Flag exceptions
- Route to analyst

Guardrails

Protecting the process (and keeping the Controller happy)

- Data integrity
- Compliance
- Privacy
- Approvals
- Output controls

Example

- Must reconcile before drafting
- Cannot modify source numbers
- No PII in outputs
- Draft watermark required
- Manager approval before distribution
- Audit log of every run

B O T S A F E

Evidence & Metrics

Proof the bot works

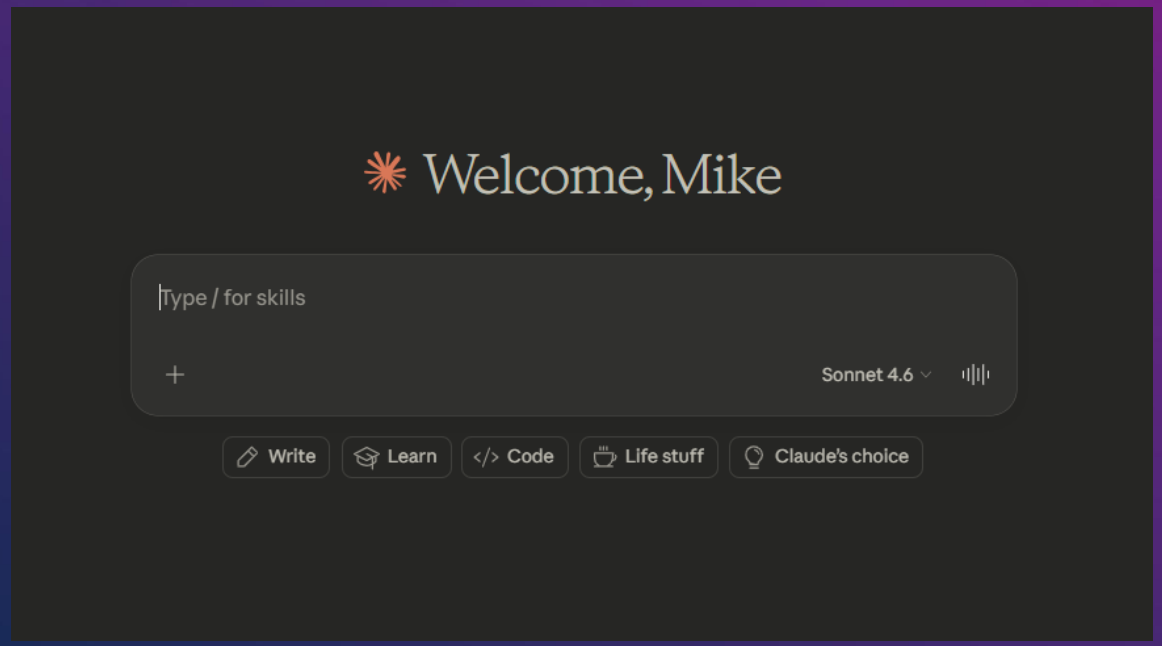
- Efficiency
- Accuracy
- Adoption
- Reliability

Example

- Time to draft: 90 min → 10 min
- SLA hit rate: 98%
- Rework rate: <10%
- Exception flags per run
- User satisfaction score

B O T S A F E

Building With AI



You are an FP&A automation architect.

Convert this completed BOTSAFE Bot Design Canvas into an implementation-ready AI Agent Orchestration Flow.

Create a concise blueprint with these sections:

1) Agent Overview 2) Triggers 3) Inputs 4) Orchestration Flow 5) Prompting Strategy 6) Outputs 7) Controls 8) Logging 9) Metrics 10) Rollout Plan

Rules:
- *Use only what's in the BOTSAFE canvas*
- *Do not invent new requirements*
- *Write in practical FP&A language*
- *Produce a blueprint ready for a build team*

DEMO

The 30-Day Playbook

Week 1 – Design

- Fill out BOTSAFE canvas
- Align with stakeholders

Start small.

Week 2 – Build

- Create prompts
- Configure data

Prove it.

Week 3 – Shadow Mode

- Run in parallel

Then scale.

Week 4 –Production

- Test and Adjust