

The Anatomy of Algorithmic Authority: Building Legitimacy Infrastructure

Algorithmic systems are “decision infrastructures”. To prevent reputational collapse and systemic bias, leaders must build a “Legitimacy Infrastructure”—a layered system ensuring AI decisions are stable, accountable, and contestable.

Legitimizing: Public Trust
(The Legitimizing & Contestability Layer)

Stabilizing: Implementing Adaptive Guardrails

Redundant Harm Detection:
Build “sensing” systems that scan for exclusion patterns before they become crises.

Adaptive Guardrails:
Use dynamic protocols and human-override rights rather than static, rigid compliance rules.

Meaningful Recourse:
Establish clear escalation pathways where humans can challenge and correct machine decisions.

Procedural Justice:
Trust depends on users feeling the process is fair, regardless of the outcome.

Transparent Decision Logic:
Provide plain-language explanations for outcomes instead of opaque technical jargon.

