

Purpose. Identify and mitigate potential ethical harms before they reach users, customers, or the organization.

What it captures. Who could be harmed and how, the Red Lines that must not be crossed, the safeguards and mitigations, and the monitoring that keeps those safeguards effective.

When to use it. At design and again before launch, and whenever a decision touches user agency, fairness, or safety.

Common mistake. Completing the canvas only once, just before launch, when the design is too fixed to change. Project Swift assessed all five dimensions before the pilot began and assigned each mitigation an owner.

Decision rule. Ethics is a Gate, not a Weight: if any dimension crosses a Red Line, the initiative stops, regardless of its projected return. Every other plausible harm needs a safeguard, a named owner, and a monitoring signal before launch.

Project or initiative *e.g., Swift Retail Returns Flow*

Stakeholders who could be harmed *e.g., store associates, customers, specific demographics*

Harm dimensions

Data and privacy

Plausible harm *How could data collection or use harm someone? Could it be used punitively?*

Likelihood

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Impact

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

☐ **This harm is a Red Line** *If it occurs, the project stops regardless of commercial potential.*

Safeguard or mitigation *What reduces or prevents this harm?*

Owner *Who owns it?*

Monitoring *What signal keeps it honest?*

Automated decisions

Plausible harm *What happens when an automated rule is wrong, for the business or the user?*

Likelihood

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Impact

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

☐ **This harm is a Red Line** *If it occurs, the project stops regardless of commercial potential.*

Safeguard or mitigation *What reduces or prevents this harm?*

Owner *Who owns it?*

Monitoring *What signal keeps it honest?*

User agency and control

Plausible harm *Does the design reduce a person's autonomy or ability to use judgment?*

Likelihood

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Impact

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

☐ **This harm is a Red Line** *If it occurs, the project stops regardless of commercial potential.*

Safeguard or mitigation *What reduces or prevents this harm?*

Owner *Who owns it?*

Monitoring *What signal keeps it honest?*

Fairness and bias

Plausible harm *Could the system encode bias or subject some groups to extra scrutiny?*

Likelihood

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Impact

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

☐ **This harm is a Red Line** *If it occurs, the project stops regardless of commercial potential.*

Safeguard or mitigation *What reduces or prevents this harm?*

Owner *Who owns it?*

Monitoring *What signal keeps it honest?*

Societal impact

Plausible harm *At scale, could this deskill roles or cause broader harm?*

Likelihood

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Impact

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

☐ **This harm is a Red Line** *If it occurs, the project stops regardless of commercial potential.*

Safeguard or mitigation *What reduces or prevents this harm?*

Owner *Who owns it?*

Monitoring *What signal keeps it honest?*