



# Technology Isn't Failing—Legacy Processes Are

By Amber Sichler, Founder of iQuantify

After 17 years in mortgage underwriting, I've seen every workflow—from structured to chaotic. And now, as AI reshapes our industry, lenders face a pivotal question:

**Are we using AI the right way—or just layering it onto outdated processes?**

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## AI Is Changing Underwriting—But Workflows Haven't Kept Up

Traditionally, underwriters owned the entire loan decisioning process—reviewing docs, verifying details, and issuing conditions. Today, AI tools can:

- Cross-validate borrower data
- Generate (real) pre-approval letters
- Calculate income
- Issue conditions *before* a human ever sees the file

Sounds efficient, right? But in practice, these tools often create **new bottlenecks**. Why? Because AI still requires action—and without clear task ownership, files stall.

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## The Real Problem: Workflow Design, Not AI

Every AI-generated message needs a response. But who should handle what?

- **Missing bank statement?** → Processor

- **Date mismatch?** → Loan Officer
- **Self-employment income discrepancy?** → Underwriter (but does it need to be a senior UW?)

Without structured workflows, even simple issues get escalated—and that kills efficiency.

The next frontier? **Agentic AI** that doesn't just flag issues—but resolves them. Think: matching a name, prompting the right doc, or nudging the right person with context. Until then, it's up to us to design workflows where humans and AI actually work together.

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## The Solution: Task-Based Workflows

Automating a broken process just speeds up the dysfunction. The real power of AI comes when it's paired with *optimized* workflows. Here's how:

1. **Low-risk issues** get handled early by the right person
2. **High-risk issues** escalate only when needed
3. **Risk-based routing** ensures files flow efficiently

Humans no longer need to review every document—just the exceptions AI flags. That's the shift from manual review to intelligent decisioning—and it's how AI finally delivers on its promise.

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## Speed Wins: Why This Matters to Borrowers (and Banks)

When workflows align with automation, everyone benefits:

### Borrowers get:

- Faster closings
- Fewer unnecessary conditions
- Less back-and-forth

### Lenders see:

- Higher pull-through rates
  - Reduced repurchase risk
  - Better use of underwriting capacity = higher profitability
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## AI Is Not “Set It and Forget It”

AI systems must evolve with your business. Without regular review, you risk:

- False positives that slow approvals
- Misaligned risk thresholds
- Routing inefficiencies that stall files

High-performing lenders revisit their AI rules *multiple times per year*, refining based on real-world outcomes.

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## AI Won't Replace Underwriters—It Will Empower Them

As economist Richard Baldwin said:

**“AI won't take your job. Someone using AI will.”**

Lenders who train their teams to *leverage* AI—not fear it—will win. This isn't about replacing people. It's about giving them the tools to make faster, more accurate decisions—and to deliver a smoother borrower experience.

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## Final Thought: Don't Just Automate. Optimize.

The future of mortgage lending isn't just about implementing AI—it's about **using it wisely**. The lenders who rethink workflows, build around task-based automation, and continuously refine their process will lead the next generation of mortgage operations.

Those who don't?

They'll just be automating inefficiency.