The NΞXXT Perspective

Most InfoComm conversations about AI this year circled predictable orbits - "transformative platforms," "paradigm shifts," and other board-level buzzwords. That's why my chance introduction to Miles Dean at an evening social event stopped me in my tracks. Over a single drink he sketched a very different narrative: one of a project-manager in an 18-person shop who treats AI not as headline material, but as a silent co-worker that clears the fog of drudgery & friction so he can spend hours on the phone with customers, or be in the bleachers cheering on his kids.

What struck me wasn't the sophistication of the AI tools transforming his/Pensar's evolution, indeed the contrary. A $20 ChatGPT licence and a few free or basic 3rd party platforms. And it wasn't earth-shattering transformations or new business models, just practical reshaped workflows and simple one by one nudges evolving Pensar's culture toward AI experimentation.

Miles' story reminds us that leadership often starts on the front line, where the friction is felt first and the permission to improve is self-granted. It's proof that you don't need a chief-anything title—or a venture budget—to move an organisation forward. You need curiosity, a willingness to iterate in public, and the conviction that every minute rescued from paperwork is a minute you can reinvest in the human side of project management.

For anyone who still wonders how AI fits into their day-to-day reality, Miles offers a clear invitation: start small, aim practical, and let the ripple effects compound. Transformation doesn't have to arrive from the top down; sometimes it starts with the person who simply decides there has to be a better way and builds it—one prompt at a time.

From Paperwork to Peoplework: A Project Manager's AI driven Shift from Admin to Advocacy

Miles Dean joined **Pensar LED** (www.pensarled.com) in March 2025 carrying three assets that don't always coexist well: a project-management résumé, a past life in coaching and business development, and most importantly two young children who expect Dad in the bleachers by 6 p.m. Pensar, a custom LED manufacturer of just eighteen employees, seemed like a great fit—until he hit the realities of the *volume* of hats he would need to wear.

- Project manager for millions of dollars of concurrent projects - many highly demanding in the military space

but also

- Ad-hoc marketer producing spec sheets and LinkedIn posts.
- First-line tech support when a display module blinks two states away.

Perhaps not unusual in any small business, the reality still for a large majority of the companies within "AV" industry. All of it landed on one truth Miles voiced in our interview:

> *"The paperwork in project management isn't what makes me valuable; it's the human conversations the paperwork is supposed to enable."*

Job 1, if he couldn't let the paperwork keep winning. Time to recruit a silent teammate.

A Quiet Pivot: Drafting an AI Shadow

Miles had dabbled with ChatGPT to date, but Pensar's multitasking demands forced a tougher question: Could GPT allow him to offload the grunt work *without* dulling the craftsmanship?
He set two personal guardrails:
1. No family time tax. Weekdays could stretch to 45 hours, but evenings belonged to home.
2. No data risks. Sensitive government specs stayed offline; everything else was fair game for experimentation.

Within a month he wasn't dabbling—he was iterating.

The Mounting-Surface Breakthrough

If any single form screamed for reinvention, it was the *mounting-surface questionnaire*. Penetrations varied - metal stud, wood stud, concrete, combinations in layers. Missing a layer meant the factory picked the wrong trim and installers arrived with the wrong anchors.

On 6 May, 2025 Miles spun up a fresh ChatGPT thread titled *Mount-Form v0*. The first prompt:

Generate a one-page checklist that captures every layer of a wall assembly and returns:

• exact fastener recommendations

• required trim depth

• line-art diagrams in Pensar grey-and-yellow

Prompt Failure #1: ChatGPT pictured generic drywall and ignored the layers.
Prompt Failure #2: The model mislabeled metal studs as "steel reinforcement."

It took two days of revision and lessons learned in prompting and teaching GPT construction jargon it could reuse forever. But by Friday morning the finished form went live. *Customers tick boxes, sign, and send.* Result? The eight jobs since:

- Zero trim errors.
- Zero emergency supply runs.
- Zero delays or overruns
- Zero customer dissatisfaction

Compressing a 41-Page Spec into First-Pitch Time

Another more recent test arrived as a 41-page military-grade LED specification. But instead of half a day parsing technical jargon or hunting down engineers and SME's, Miles dropped the PDF into ChatGPT with a plain request:

"Ten-bullet executive brief. Flag compliance red-lines. Use layman's phrasing."

Two minutes later he had load-ratings, cable-feed notes, and environmental clauses summarized on his phone - *while tying his son's cleats before a Little League game.*

Fifteen minutes of reading replaced four hours of analysis, and none of the evening family rhythm shifted.

Turning Pre-Install Chaos into a One-Page Snapshot

A week prior to any install, Miles pushes a *Comprehensive Review* to every stakeholder: date, site address, access hours, power requirements, staging plan. Before AI, compiling that info meant pasted paragraphs and formatting edits that blurred ownership.

Now he pastes raw notes into his standing GPT chat and instructs:

"Recast as bullet snapshot, bold labels, Pensar yellow headers, polite confirmation line."

Seconds later the email mirrors every Pensar standard. *Clients skim. Techs arrive prepared. The audit trail lives in the chat thread.*

The Ripple Effect: From Admin to Advocacy

Four-Hour Call Windows

During our interview Miles had just spent four uninterrupted hours on the phone with two customers, troubleshooting designs and clarifying timelines. "That block wouldn't exist in a paper-first world," he said. Those hours used to belong to form-filling and follow-up emails. Now they're relationship capital, the part of PM work AI cannot replicate.

Peer Adoption
- A sales rep cloned Miles' packaging prompt to craft warranty letters in minutes.
- The applications engineer uploads 100-page white papers for quick learning curves.
- Even Pensar's CEO jokes about *"hiring AI before hiring another person."*

Measurable Time Return
- ≈ 5 admin hours/week saved.
- Evenings intact. Work rarely spills past 18:00.
- Stress markers down. Miles reports greater focus on coaching and client empathy, skills honed in his pre-PM career.

Why It Works: Leveraging a Coach's Mindset

Miles' résumé in both sports and coaching, and account-management sales taught him how to break complex motions into teachable drills; and that *questions* often matter more than *answers*. Both perspectives shape how he interacts with AI:
1. Iterative prompting mirrors coaching drills - small tweaks until the model "learns the play."
2. Active listening with clients is possible because AI absorbs the administrative overhead.
3. Co-creation beats delegation. He compares GPT to a junior staffer: *"Give it clarity, get clarity back."*

The Ongoing Experiment

Miles keeps a running scratch-pad, no grand tech roadmap, just next tweaks:

- Warranty-letter macro: one click generates legal language plus friendly tone.
- Image bank refresh: Ideogram templates for upcoming industry-day posts.

Every small win returns minutes he reinvests in *people conversations* - with installers at 10 a.m. or toddlers at bedtime.

> *"Every five-minute save is five minutes for what actually moves the needle."* – Miles

Lessons for Fellow PMs in Lean Teams

1. Start with Your Pain Point, Not the Tool. Miles didn't chase AI to create an answer without a question, the mounting-surface confusion opportunity came to him.

2. Iterate Out Loud. The two-day prompt marathon to create a new form and workflow bought a return in a matter of weeks.

3. Guard the Human Slot. Use the reclaimed time for the part of PM that differentiates you - stakeholder trust.

4. Teach as You Go. Miles' peers adopted AI because they saw the output; a quick screen-share beat any policy memo.

Your Turn

Think of the project ritual you dread - the bloated SOW, the field-report PDF. Paste the last version into a fresh chat and ask for a cleaner format or a 10-bullet brief. Iterate three times. Save the prompt. You've just drafted your own shadow teammate, and like Miles, you might find the real payoff isn't minutes saved but **people reached**.

Leadership Doesn't Always Start in the Boardroom

What Miles has proven is simple but profound: transformation often begins far from the C-suite. Front-line leaders - the people who feel the friction first - are uniquely positioned to spot the tiny process gaps that sap momentum. When they pair **a $20 ChatGPT license** with a bias for action, those small fixes accumulate. One smarter form turns into eight flawless installs; a trimmed-down spec brief unlocks an evening at the ballpark; four reclaimed admin hours open a phone line for deeper customer trust.

Individually, each tweak is incremental. Collectively, they shift culture. Peers are inspired and take their own next steps, the entire workflow improves, and suddenly a lean 18-person shop delivers enterprise-

grade consistency without the overtime burn. That is leadership - visible not in titles or org charts, but in the ripple effect of countless micro-innovations that let people spend more time on the human work that matters - whether that's in the office, or on family time. What's the old saying, work smarter, not harder!

Nothing in Miles' story is out of reach for any project manager - or anyone else juggling multiple hats. The tools are accessible, the steps are repeatable, and the payoff is measured in balanced lives and delighted customers. All it takes is the decision to lead from where you stand.

Miles Dean is Senior Project Manager at Pensar LED, where he draws on a decade of pro-AV expertise—and a career that has spanned manufacturing, business development and end-user operations to deliver immersive direct-view LED environments to all manner of demanding display applications and customers.

 Before Pensar, he sharpened his commercial acumen in business development roles, first at Planar, and later as Sports & Entertainment Business Development Manager at Unilumin USA.

 It was that Unilumen role that saw him cross to the end user's seat, spending almost 4 years founding and coaching George Fox University's varsity esports programme. During that time he built a 40-station arena and steered Rocket League and League of Legends squads to national-bracket finishes, while also helping stage Oregon's first in-person High-School Esports Championship.

 His 360-degree industry perspective he has regularly shared his practical insights with integrators, universities and municipalities on monetising next-generation fan engagement at the intersection of esports and AV, and it now informs what in reality is a multidisciplined role at Pensar in both the "art and science" of Project Management, and the various other hats required of him a small team.
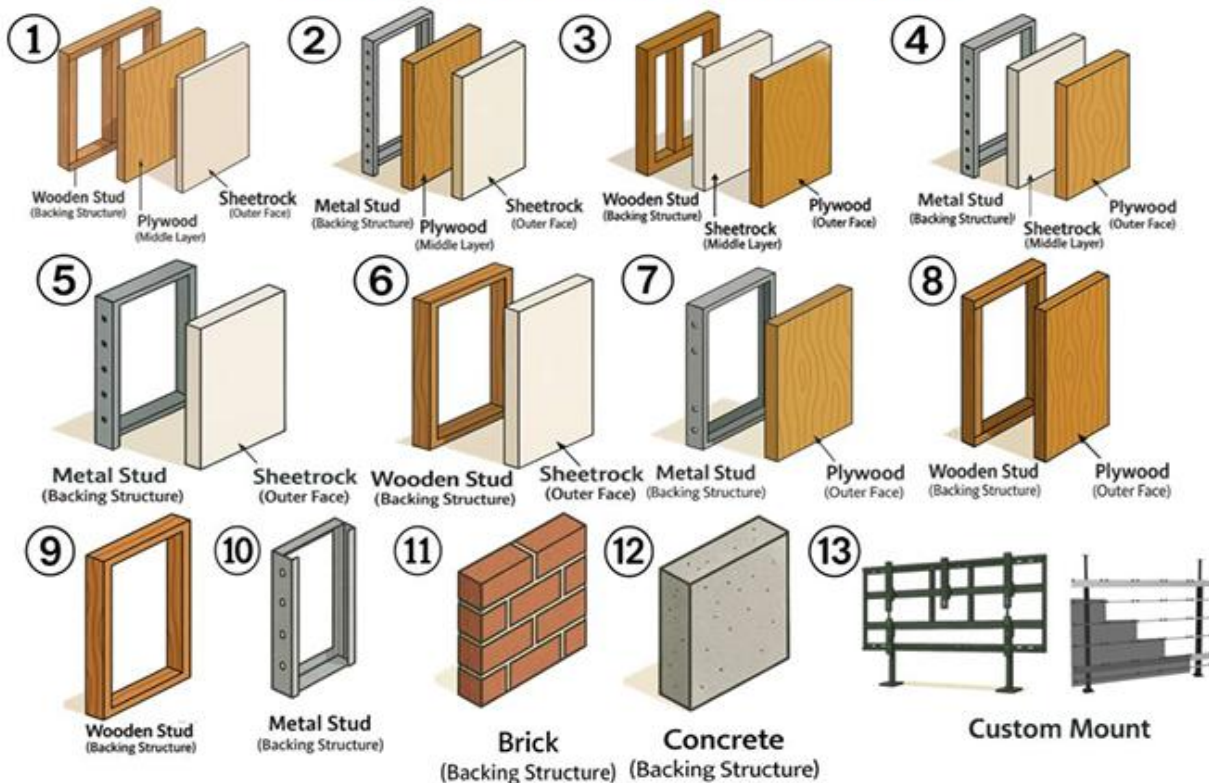

Appendix – GPT generated Surface & Trim-Selection Form

Mounting Surface Form

Date: _____

Customer	Job	PO Number	Video Wall Description

Select the Following Mounting Surface: 1 - Sheetrock over Plywood to Wooden Studs ▼

ALL PLYWOOD SHOWN BELOW IS BASED ON 3/4 INCH THICK SHEET

① Wooden Stud (Backing Structure) Plywood (Middle Layer) Sheetrock (Outer Face)

② Metal Stud (Backing Structure) Plywood (Middle Layer) Sheetrock (Outer Face)

③ Wooden Stud (Backing Structure) Sheetrock (Middle Layer) Plywood (Outer Face)

④ Metal Stud (Backing Structure) Sheetrock (Middle Layer) Plywood (Outer Face)

⑤ Metal Stud (Backing Structure) Sheetrock (Outer Face)

⑥ Wooden Stud (Backing Structure) Sheetrock (Outer Face)

⑦ Metal Stud (Backing Structure) Plywood (Outer Face)

⑧ Wooden Stud (Backing Structure) Plywood (Outer Face)

⑨ Wooden Stud (Backing Structure)

⑩ Metal Stud (Backing Structure)

⑪ Brick (Backing Structure)

⑫ Concrete (Backing Structure)

⑬ Custom Mount

Above details are confirmed by:

_____ (Digital Signature)

_____ (PM's name)

_____ (Email)

_____ (Phone)

_____ (Date of Signature)

Mounting surface details and trim requirements must be submitted within seven (7) business days following receipt of the purchase order and deposit. If confirmation is not received within the time frame, Standard Trims Depth of 68mm (covering the panel, bolt, and mount) will be produced.
Any changes made after this period may be subject to additional charges.

INTERNAL USE ONLY

Trim Selection: Standard Trim ▼