



SUNCOAST SPARK

KEEP

12 Early Warning Signs of Customer Adoption Risk

Renewal problems usually start earlier than renewal.

Adoption risk is often quiet

Customers rarely announce "this is not working." There is no escalation email. No cancelled meeting with an explanation attached. Instead, behavior changes first — and by the time the risk is visible, it has usually been building for weeks or months.

What you see

Slower responses. Fewer questions. Less engagement in check-ins. Usage that plateaus instead of grows. These are not complaints — they are signals. And they are easy to rationalize away one at a time.

What is actually happening

The customer is quietly deprioritizing the tool, the relationship, or both. The original business problem may have shifted. Confidence in the value delivered — or still to be delivered — is eroding.

Why this checklist exists

The twelve signs that follow are early, observable, behavioral indicators. None of them alone means a renewal is lost. Together, they tell you where to look — and what to ask — before the risk becomes a conversation you cannot recover.

Warning signs 1–4

Each signal is listed with what it may mean and a question worth investigating.

Signal	What it may mean	Question to investigate
1. Executive sponsor disappears	The initiative has lost internal air cover. Priorities above the customer-side champion may have shifted.	When did you last hear from the sponsor directly — and what changed in their calendar or mandate around that time?
2. Key users stop attending	The people who need to adopt the product are being pulled elsewhere, or they have quietly concluded it is not worth their time.	Who decided attendance was optional, and was that decision made out loud or by drift?
3. Adoption stalls after launch	Initial momentum was driven by novelty or obligation, not genuine value discovery. The product has not yet earned daily relevance.	At what point did the adoption curve flatten, and what was happening inside the customer at that moment?
4. Customer asks the same foundational questions repeatedly	Core concepts are not landing. Either the onboarding was insufficient or the right people were never in the room.	Who is asking — and are they the same people who were in the original onboarding, or is this a different audience entirely?

Warning signs 5–8

Signal	What it may mean	Question to investigate
5. Success metrics remain undefined	There is no shared standard for what good looks like. Without one, neither side can honestly assess whether value is being delivered.	What would the customer point to at renewal to justify the spend — and have we agreed on that together, in writing?
6. Implementation milestones slip	The customer's internal bandwidth is lower than assumed, or the business case is not strong enough to compete for resources.	What is blocking the milestone — a capacity problem, a priority problem, or something we have not surfaced yet?
7. Customer ownership is unclear	No one internally feels accountable for adoption outcomes. The tool was bought, but it was not assigned.	Who inside the customer is responsible for this being a success — and do they know that is their role?
8. Product usage is concentrated in one person	The relationship and the value both depend on a single user. If that person leaves, changes roles, or loses interest, the account leaves with them.	What would happen to usage and renewal if that person left the company tomorrow?

Warning signs 9–12

Signal	What it may mean	Question to investigate
9. Original business problem loses priority	The context that justified the purchase has changed. The solution may still work, but the problem it was bought to solve is no longer the most urgent thing.	What is the customer focused on right now — and is our product connected to that, or to something that used to matter?
10. New leadership arrives	New leaders conduct their own audits. Inherited tools are natural targets. The relationship starts over at the top whether you are ready or not.	Have we met the new leader? Do they know why this was purchased and what it is delivering?
11. Customer feedback becomes less specific	Engaged customers ask pointed questions and give detailed responses. Vague or brief feedback often signals disengagement — they have stopped investing in the relationship.	When did the feedback quality change — and was there a conversation, an event, or an experience around that time that we should revisit?
12. Conversations become support-only	The customer no longer talks with you about their goals. Every interaction is transactional. The relationship has contracted from partner to vendor.	When did we last have a conversation about where the customer is trying to go — not about a ticket or a problem?

Risk triage

Use this framework after reviewing the twelve signals. Assess the pattern across what you are seeing — not each signal in isolation. Then ask the evidence question at the bottom.

Green — Normal variation

One or two signals are present. They are mild, recent, and explainable by known context. The relationship and usage trajectory are otherwise healthy. Monitor and note, but no immediate action required.

Yellow — Needs investigation

Three or more signals are present, or one signal is pronounced and unexplained. You do not have enough information to assess severity. A direct conversation is needed — with the right person, not just the most accessible one.

Red — Value or renewal at risk

Multiple signals are present and have been building over time. Usage, engagement, and stakeholder access are all declining. A structured recovery conversation — likely involving leadership on both sides — is required before renewal comes into view.

The evidence question: For each signal you have identified — what evidence would move this risk up a level? What evidence would move it down? If you cannot answer that, you do not yet have enough information to triage accurately.



AE ON DEMAND

Do not wait for renewal to discover the customer lost momentum.

AE on Demand helps organize customer context, adoption evidence, stakeholder changes, risks, and recommended next actions — so you can see the full picture before the conversation becomes urgent.

What it organizes

Customer context, adoption evidence, stakeholder changes, open risks, and recommended next actions — in one place, ready when you need it.

How AEs use it

Available inside ChatGPT or Claude as a company-specific sales operating system. Decide what to do next — and get help doing it — without switching tools.

Explore AE on Demand at aeondemand.com