

SYSTEM BUILD

Creative Approval Ops

Marketing Ops · Airtable · AI compliance check

This document describes a compliance-gated approval workflow I designed and built on Airtable's free plan for healthcare ad copy: a regex check for forbidden terms, an AI check for the claims a regex can't see, a transition guard that reverts invalid status changes and logs every move, and a per-client SLA with a one-time breach alert. The AI flags; a person decides.

All data is synthetic: the agency, the three clients, the people and the ad copy are invented. The compliance rules are simplified summaries of healthcare-advertising principles and of Meta's personal-attributes policy, written for this demo. They are not legal advice. Built October 2026.

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THE PROBLEM

Two kinds of risk, one shared sheet

Healthcare ads fail on two kinds of risk: claims a regulator or an ad platform would reject ("guaranteed results", "say goodbye to back pain", "Do you suffer from sciatica?"), and the client's own brand rules.

The usual setup is a shared sheet, a status column anyone can overwrite and an approval history that lives in email threads. When a claim slips through, nobody can say who approved it, or whether anyone checked it at all.

This base keeps the rules, the checks and the history in one place. Every asset is checked twice before a person decides, moves only along allowed paths, and leaves one log row for every status change.

WHAT I BUILT

Five layers, one base

RULES

Rules as records, linked to clients

Each rule is a row: type, severity, a regex pattern or a plain-language explanation, and its source. Rollups compile them per client into one regex and one brief for the AI. Adding a rule to a client changes both checks on every asset of that client, with no automation edited.

CHECKS

Regex first, AI second

A formula runs the client's regex against the copy: free, instant, auditable. The AI receives only the rules a regex can't apply (implied cure, personal health attributes, comparisons with other professions, testimonials as proof, missing disclaimers) and returns None, Low or High with one quoted line per violation. Randomness 0, no internet access, it writes only to its own two fields. If it fails, the asset stays Unchecked.

GUARD & LOG

Validation rules, rebuilt

Airtable can't refuse a save, so the base detects and corrects: a formula compares Status with the last valid state, one automation reverts blocked moves and another confirms allowed ones. Every change, allowed or reverted, is one row in the Approval Log.

CLIENT SLA

A deadline per client, one alert per breach

An automation stamps the send date when an asset reaches the client, a WORKDAY formula sets the deadline from that client's SLA, and an email goes to the owner once, when the asset becomes overdue.

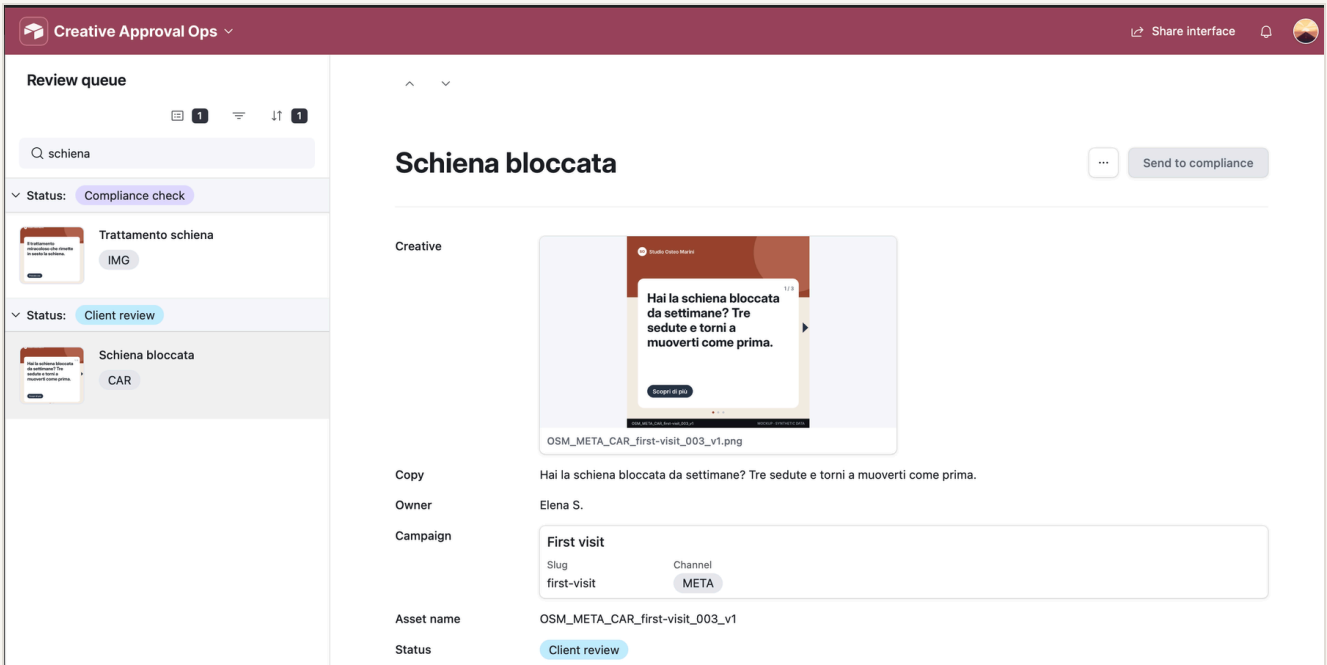
AUTOMATIONS

Six automations, native actions only

The free plan has no scripting actions or conditional buttons and allows about 100 runs a month. A status change costs one run, plus one for each AI check, send to client and SLA breach.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The review queue and both checks



Review queue: the creative mockup, the copy, the campaign and a computed asset name. Status moves only through buttons.

Owner	Elena S.
Campaign	<div>First visit</div> <div>Slugfirst-visitChannelMETA</div>
Asset name	OSM_META_CAR_first-visit_003_v1
Status	Client review
AI flags	No personal health attributes (Forbidden claim) — "Hai la schiena bloccata da settimane?" — This asserts the reader has a specific health condition. No implied cure or unsubstantiated efficacy (Forbidden claim) — "Tre sedute e torni a muoverti come prima." — This implies the treatment will resolve the condition and restore normal function.
AI risk	High
Term check	Clean
Override reason	
Sent to client	2026-10-01
Client SLA due	10/5/2026 12:00am
Client overdue	1
Approval Log	—

The case a regex can't see: Term check Clean, AI risk High, both phrases quoted. This asset reached the client before the AI step existed; the check found what the regex had missed, and the client deadline has already passed.

Rules as records, regex first

Every rule lives in one table, linked to the clients it applies to. Forbidden terms carry a regex pattern; claims and disclaimers carry a plain-language explanation. Rollups compile each client's rules into one regex for the formula and one brief for the AI, so the two checks always read the same source.

☐	A Rule	☑ Rule type	A Pattern ⓘ	☑ Severity	☑ Source	📖 Explanation
1	No guaranteed outcomes	Forbidden term	garantit[oaie][risultat[oi] ...	Block	Healthcare advertising...	Healthcare advertising
2	No miracle or permanenc...	Forbidden term	miracol[oi][miracolos[oaie]...	Block	Healthcare advertising...	Suggestive language t
3	No promotional pricing	Forbidden term	scont[oi][scontat[oaie]]of...	Block	Healthcare advertising...	Healthcare communica
4	No personal health attrib...	Forbidden claim		Block	Meta ad policy (simpli...	Copy must not assert
5	No implied cure or unsub...	Forbidden claim		Block	Healthcare advertising...	Copy must not state o
6	Testimonials used as pro...	Forbidden claim		Warn	Healthcare advertising...	Patient stories or befo
7	Mention registered physi...	Required disclaimer		Warn	Client brand rule	Every asset must state
8	No comparison with other...	Forbidden claim		Warn	Client brand rule	Never position osteop.
9	No weight-loss promises	Forbidden term	dimagri(re[sc]imento)[per...	Block	Client brand rule	Client focuses on habi

Claim Rules. Forbidden terms carry a pattern; claims and disclaimers carry an explanation the AI reads.

Asset name

CNE_META_VID_nutrition-path_002_v2

Status

Compliance check

AI flags

No personal health attributes (Forbidden claim) — "puoi perdere 5 kg in un mese" — Implies the reader has excess weight to lose, which asserts a personal health attribute.
No implied cure or unsubstantiated efficacy (Forbidden claim) — "risultati garantiti" — Implies guaranteed efficacy of the treatment, which is an unsubstantiated efficacy claim.

AI risk

High

Term check

BLOCKED: "5 kg in"

Override reason

Sent to client

–

Client SLA due

–

Client overdue

0

Approval Log

14

From status

To status

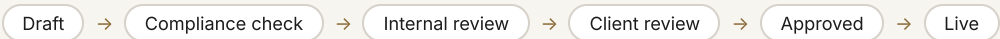
Draft

Compliance check

Term check BLOCKED on "5 kg in". A forbidden term can't leave compliance, whatever the AI says.

Validation rules, rebuilt

A Previous status field holds the last valid state and only automations write to it. A formula compares it with Status against the allowed paths and two gates: a forbidden term can't leave compliance forward, and a High AI risk can't reach the client without a written override reason. The revert automation writes the log row first, so the attempted status isn't lost. After either automation acts, the two fields match again and the trigger re-arms: no loops, one log row per change.



Compliance, internal review and client review can also send an asset to Changes requested, which leads back to Draft or to Superseded. Every other move is reverted.

☐	↕ Event	A From status	A To status	A Actor	🕒 Outcome	📝 Comment	📁 Asset
6	6	Draft	Compliance check	Luca D.	Allowed		Landing post-intervento
7	7	Compliance check	Changes requested	Compliance automation	Allowed	BLOCKED: "per sempre" ...	Landing post-intervento
8	8	Changes requested	Superseded	Luca D.	Allowed	Replaced by v2.	Landing post-intervento
9	9	Draft	Approved	Luca D.	Reverted	Disallowed transition Draf...	Valutazione di ottobre
10	10	Internal review	Client review	Elena S.	Allowed	Term check clean (before...	Dopo pranzo
11	11	Internal review	Client review	Marta R.	Override	Warning accepted: patien...	La storia di Anna
12	12	Draft	Approved	Andrea Ciccia	Reverted	Blocked: not an allowed tr...	Valutazione funzionale
13	13	Draft	Compliance check	Andrea Ciccia	Allowed	Allowed	Valutazione funzionale
14	14	Draft	Compliance check	Andrea Ciccia	Allowed	Allowed	Cinque chili
15	15	Draft	Client review	Andrea Ciccia	Reverted	Blocked: not an allowed tr...	Prima visita
16	16	Draft	Client review	Andrea Ciccia	Reverted	Blocked: not an allowed tr...	Prima visita
17	17	Draft	Internal review	Andrea Ciccia	Reverted	Blocked: not an allowed tr...	Prima visita
18	18	Draft	Client review	Andrea Ciccia	Reverted	Blocked: not an allowed tr...	Prima visita
19	19	Compliance check	Internal review	Andrea Ciccia	Allowed	Allowed	Valutazione funzionale
20	20	Internal review	Client review	Andrea Ciccia	Allowed	Allowed	Valutazione funzionale

The Approval Log: one row per status change, allowed, reverted or overridden. A blocked move keeps the attempted status and the reason it was refused.

DECISIONS

Why it's built this way

DETERMINISTIC FIRST A forbidden word doesn't need a model. The regex costs nothing, gives the same answer every time and shows exactly what it matched. The AI gets only the judgement calls, so its cost and its errors stay confined to the part that needs it.

THE AI FLAGS, A PERSON DECIDES The model can't approve, reject or move anything. A High risk can still go to the client, but only with a written override reason on the record, and the move is logged under the name of whoever made it.

THE INTERFACE PREVENTS, THE GUARD CORRECTS Reviewers move assets only with buttons, so most invalid moves never happen. The guard is there for what the grid or an integration still lets through.

EVENT, NOT POLLING A daily check for late approvals would spend a run every morning whether or not anything is late. The alert fires once, at the moment an asset becomes overdue.

NAMES COMPUTED, NEVER TYPED Asset names follow `CLIENT_CHANNEL_FORMAT_campaign-slug_ID_vN` and come from a formula. A missing piece shows up as `INCOMPLETE: missing ...` instead of a half-typed name.

The screenshot shows the configuration for an automation named "Compliance check - AI semantic review". The interface includes a left sidebar with a list of automations, a central workspace for building the automation flow, and a right sidebar with configuration details.

Left Sidebar: Lists six automations: "Compliance check - AI semantic review" (ON), "Transition guard - revert" (ON), "Transition guard - log allowed" (ON), "Client review - stamp send date" (ON), "Client SLA - breach alert" (ON), and "Measurement - AI backfill (one-off)" (OFF).

Central Workspace: Displays a flowchart with a TRIGGER "When a record matches conditions" (If Status is Compliance check and Previous status is "Compliance check") and three ACTIONS: "Review test results", "Update record" (AI risk), and "Generate structured data".

Right Sidebar: Contains configuration details for the trigger, including the trigger type, configuration (Table: Assets), conditions (When Status is Compliance check and Previous status is Compliance check), and a test step.

The six automations. The AI review fires only when Status and Previous status both read Compliance check: a confirmed state, not a passing one. The backfill ran once, for the measurement.

Two bugs, one measurement

1 · A SEND THAT NEVER HAPPENED

Clicking Send to client on a Draft asset put it in Client review for a few seconds before the guard reverted it. That was long enough for the send-date automation to fire, and the asset showed a client deadline for a send that never happened.

Fix: every downstream trigger now requires both Status and Previous status to match. Automations react only to confirmed states.

2 · FOUR ASSETS, ONE NAME

The first naming convention, client, channel, format, campaign and version, looked unique on paper. Seeding the dataset produced four identical names.

Fix: an auto-number ID inside the name, so uniqueness no longer depends on how the other fields happen to combine.

MEASUREMENT

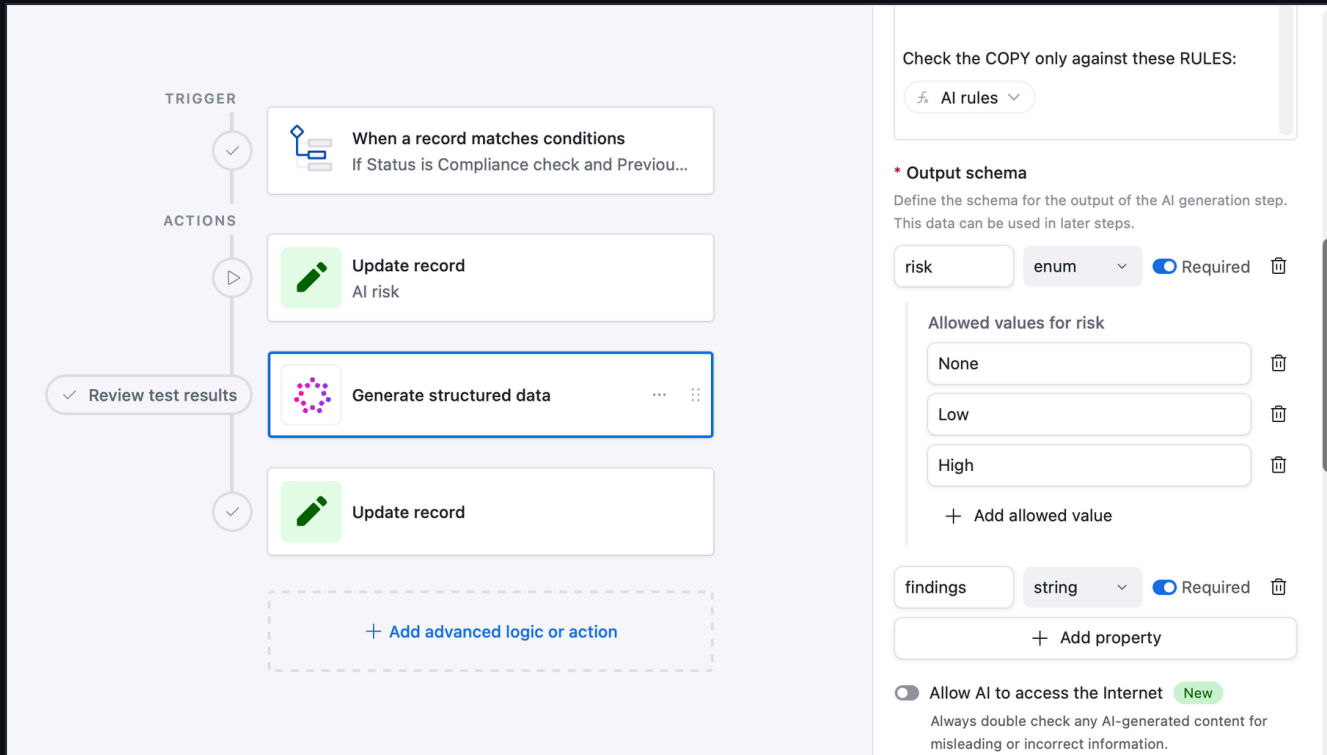
One run of the AI check over all 30 synthetic assets, compared with the violations planted in the dataset: 15 assets with at least one violation, 15 clean.

	REGEX	AI	REGEX + AI
Assets with forbidden-term violations (8)	8/8	—	8/8
Assets with semantic-only violations (7)	0/7	7/7	7/7
All non-compliant assets (15)	8/15	—	15/15
Individual semantic violations caught (14)	0	13/14	13/14
False flags on clean assets (15)	0	0	0

Read it as a consistency check, not a benchmark:

- 30 assets, synthetic, labelled by the same person who wrote the rules.
- The one miss, a missing disclaimer, had been caught on the same text in an earlier run at randomness 0. The AI step is not fully deterministic.
- Five AI flags went beyond the labels, all on assets the regex had already blocked. Four are defensible (a guaranteed result is also an efficacy claim); one is a clear error. None changed an outcome.

Rules and copy in, a closed answer out



Generate structured data: the client's rules and the copy in, a risk from a closed list and quoted findings out, internet access off.

AT A GLANCE

5

Linked tables

6

Automations

2

Compliance checks

1

Review interface

KNOWN LIMITS

- An invalid status change is visible for a few seconds before the guard reverts it: detect and correct, not prevention.
- On the free plan every button is always visible. Invalid clicks are reverted rather than hidden.
- Term check shows the first forbidden term it finds, not all of them. Text inside the mockup images isn't checked (no OCR).
- The ad copy is in Italian, because the rules summarise Italian healthcare-advertising principles.

SEE IT

Full write-up — andrea-ciccia.netlify.app/creative-approval-ops

Live base (read-only) — airtable.com/.../shrlKCSkH1gSawn29

Built with Airtable on the free plan: linked records, rollups, regex and WORKDAY formulas, native automations, the Generate structured data action and Interface Designer. AI assistance covered the mechanical parts (schema, formulas, seed data, supporting automations); the interface, the core automations and the AI step are my own build. Synthetic data.

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