



Commissioned by



# Chief AI Officer Playbook

## A Pathway to AI Excellence

Empowering AI leaders to bridge vision and execution through responsible AI leadership, strategy, and measurable business outcomes.

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## Introduction

The rapid advances in AI technology promise to greatly transform governments, businesses, and societies, generating significant economic value worldwide over the coming years. AI is poised to reshape industries, create new markets, and alter competition on a global scale. IDC estimates that the economic value generated by AI will total \$19.9 trillion by 2030, contributing 3.5% to global GDP. This impact will be driven by increased AI adoption, the deeper integration of AI into business operations, and the development of AI-infused products, services, and business models.

While interpretive and predictive AI have already been in use for several years, the emergence and rapid adoption of generative AI (GenAI) has unlocked new opportunities, promising to accelerate digital transformation at an unprecedented pace.

GenAI technology continues to advance at breakneck speed. Since the release of the first version of ChatGPT with over 100 million parameters, we have witnessed the development of models with tens of billions or even trillions of parameters. Larger context windows have improved accuracy and reduced hallucinations, while today's models also feature multimodal capabilities across text, audio, images, and video. IDC predicts that within three years, foundation models will seamlessly integrate these multimodal capabilities to enhance accuracy, insights, and intermodal context. At the same time, newer, lightweight models that require significantly less power and computational resources are emerging. This shift could substantially reduce AI costs, driving wider adoption across industries.

Recognising the transformative potential of AI, progressive governments are actively investing in AI competitiveness. Many are procuring AI graphics processing units (GPUs), building AI data centres, incubating local AI firms, developing localised large language models (LLMs), and launching large-scale AI skills development programs to strengthen their positions in the global AI landscape and drive private sector AI adoption.

As AI adoption accelerates, organisations across the public and private sectors can expect disruptions that will redefine entire business models. AI will unlock new monetisation strategies for data and assets, reshape customer experiences through hyper-personalisation, and optimise internal operations with streamlined workflows and enhanced decision-making.

To navigate these shifts, some governments and organisations have established senior AI leadership roles to oversee and drive their AI journeys. In 2024, the U.S. government mandated all federal agencies to appoint chief AI officers (CAIOs) to manage AI strategies and mitigate risks, while Dubai designated 22 CAIOs across government departments, and Singapore appointed a CAIO to spearhead its national AI strategy. These roles are critical in ensuring that AI initiatives align with organisational goals, addressing ethical considerations, fostering innovation, and driving workforce transformation.

By providing strategic oversight, these leaders help organisations harness AI's transformative power responsibly. Whether advancing AI-driven automation, hyper-personalisation, or connected value chains, senior AI leaders play a pivotal role in unlocking new opportunities as they navigate the many challenges that inevitably arise.

## AI Technology Adoption Trends

CEOs around the world are increasingly prioritising AI as part of their corporate strategies and encouraging AI technology investments.

As AI moves up the list of priorities, spending on AI technologies is expected to soar over the next few years. IDC forecasts that global spending on AI-related technologies, including AI-enabled applications, infrastructure, and IT and business services, will reach \$337 billion in 2025 and \$749 billion in 2028, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 31%. However, at the moment, most organisations are in the early stages of the AI adoption maturity curve. Many are in the experimentation phase with GenAI, unable to scale AI adoption beyond proofs of concept (POCs), and are being held back by barriers related to data privacy, the unpredictability of costs, a lack of data readiness, and a lack of suitable governance, among other factors. Over the next few years, organisations will invest in key capabilities such as integrated AI strategies, data architecture, governance models, skills, and infrastructure for AI as they look to pivot towards AI at scale.

Although GenAI is generally still in the early stages of experimentation, many organisations in the Middle East, Türkiye, and Africa (META) region are moving from experimentation to POCs to actual deployments, in line with global trends.

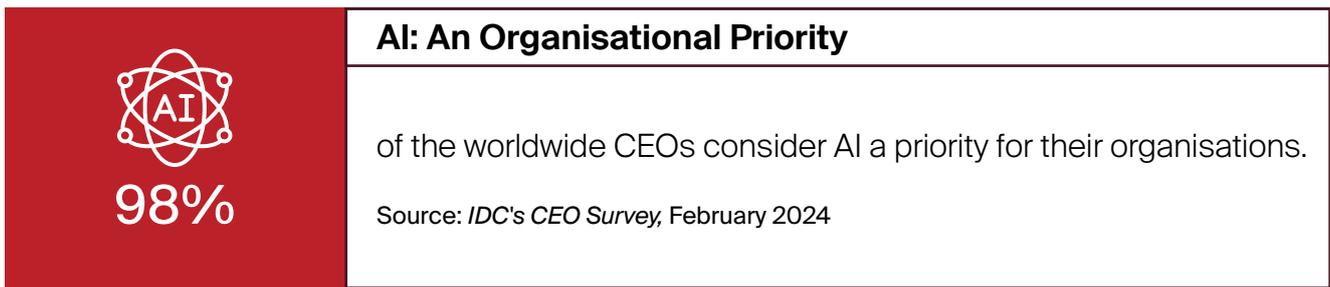
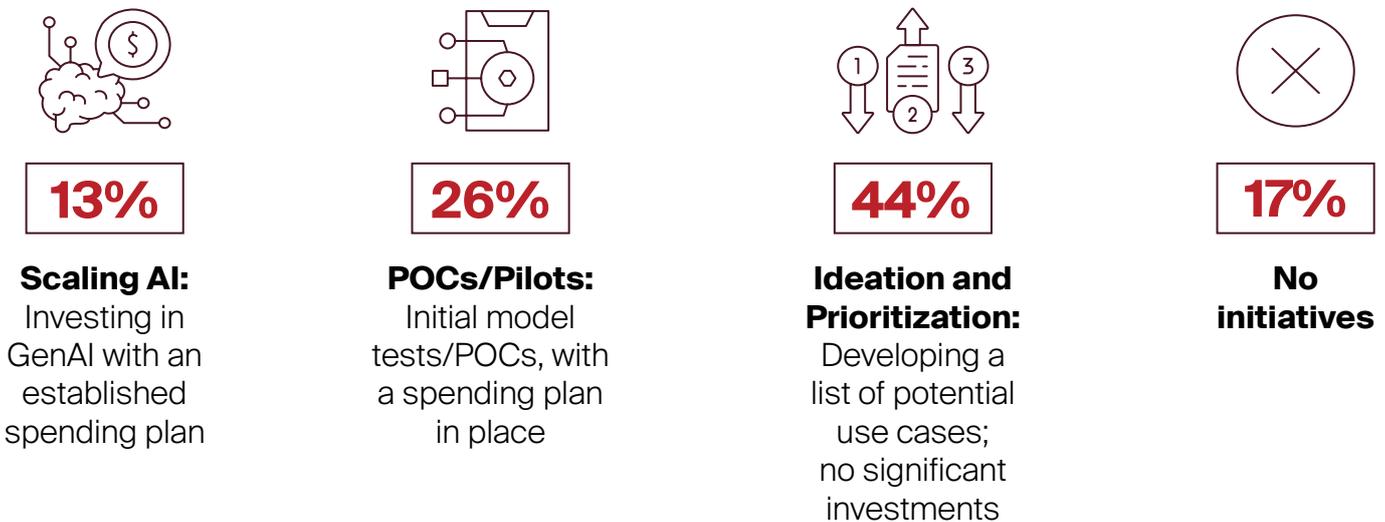


Figure 1: The State of GenAI Adoption in the META Region

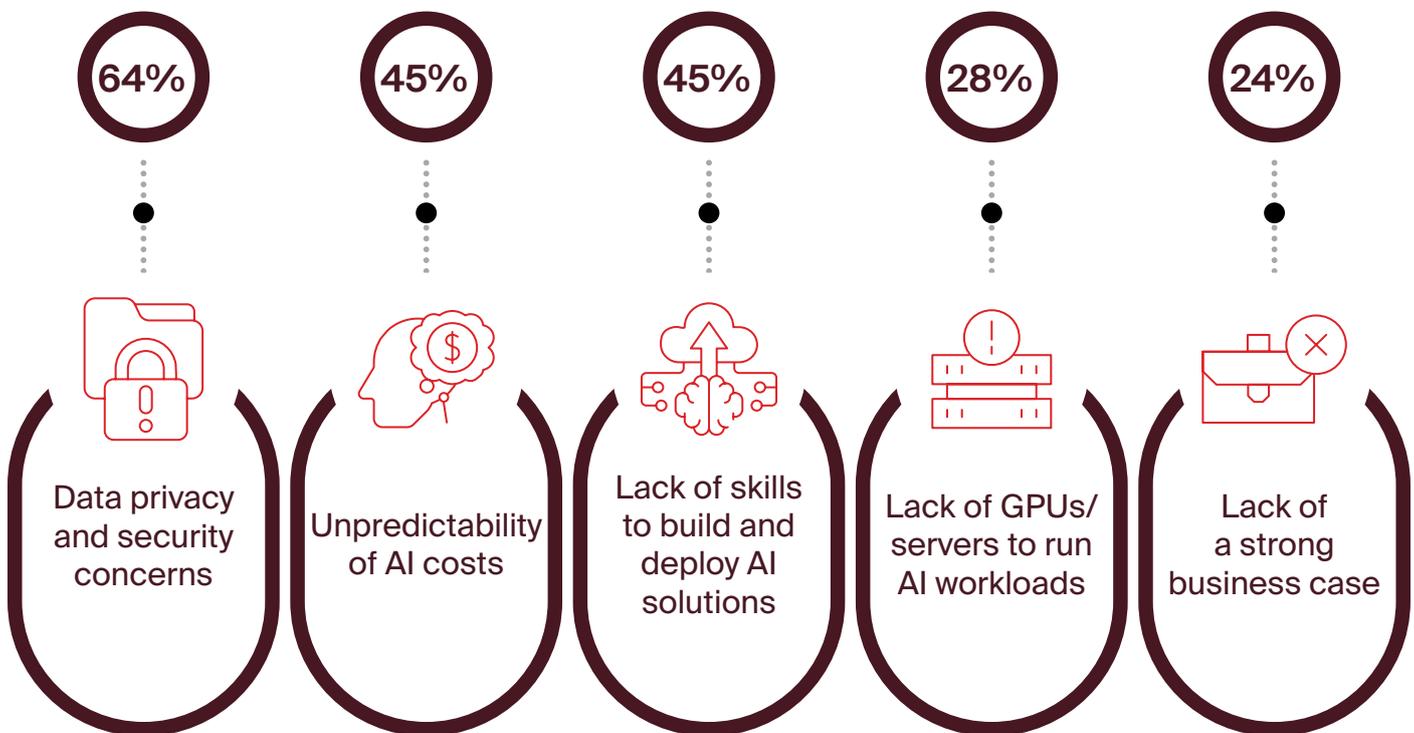


Source: *IDC's Data and AI Survey for the META Region, 2024 (n = 360; 100+ employees)*

## Barriers to AI Adoption at Scale

Several barriers prevent organisations from rapidly moving from experimentation to production and industrialisation of AI.

Figure 2: Factors Limiting AI Adoption at Scale in the META Region



Source: IDC's Data and AI Survey for the META Region, 2024 (n = 360; 100+ employees)

**Limited Organisational AI Readiness:** Many META organisations adopted GenAI early but soon realised they lack readiness for an organisation-wide AI journey. Challenges include insufficient quality data, inadequate digital infrastructure, outdated business processes, cultural barriers, and talent shortages. Organisations now recognise the need for a structured AI strategy that aligns with their overarching business goals.

**Data Privacy and Security Concerns:** Data sovereignty, data leakage, and privacy issues limit the adoption of public cloud AI solutions hosted abroad. However, increasing investments in local data centres by hyperscalers and domestic data centre service providers are set to address these concerns.

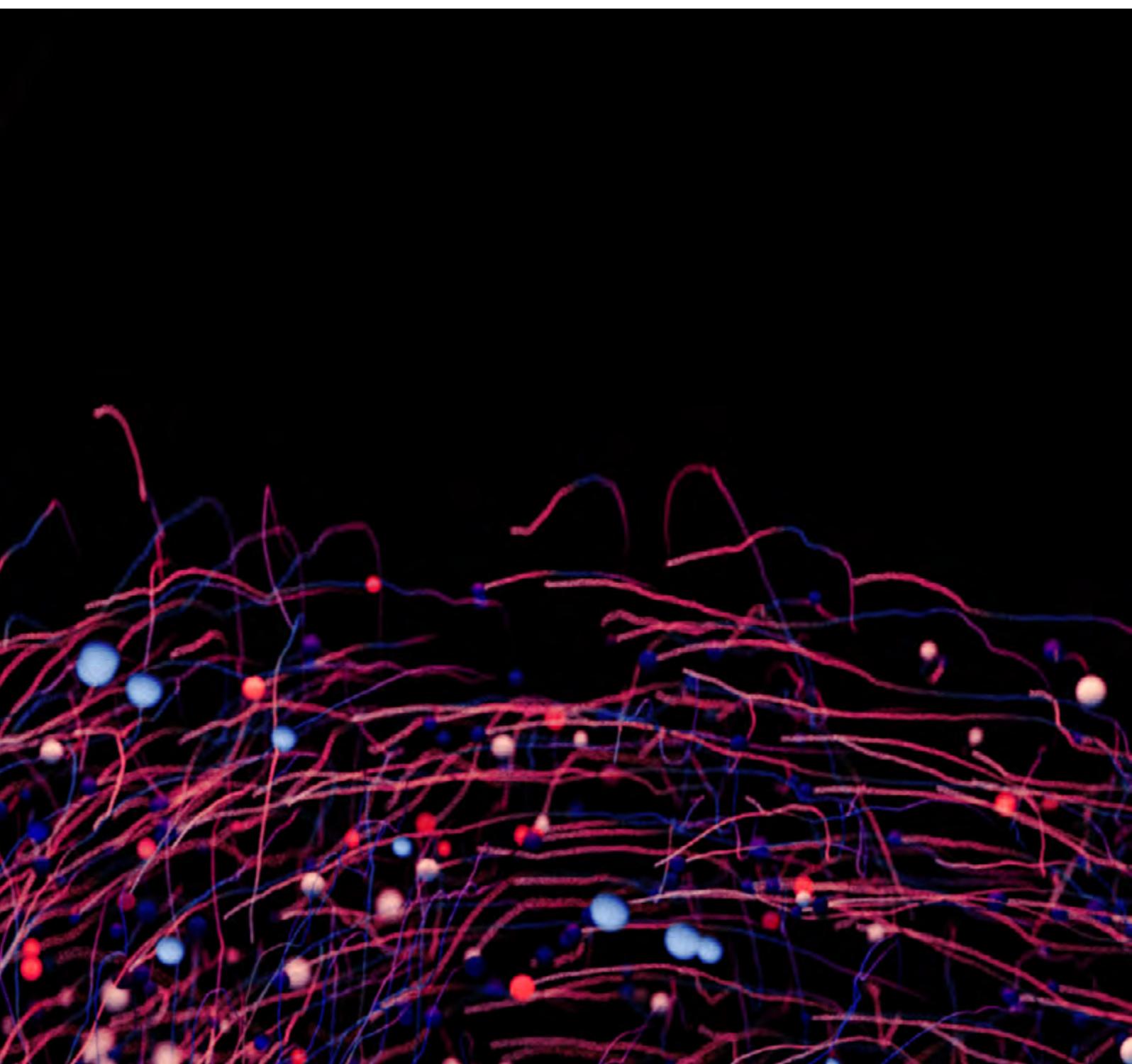
**Lack of Skills and Expertise:** Significant AI talent development efforts are in the pipeline; however, these will take time to yield results. The rapid pace of AI development will put pressure on organisations to develop the tech and non-tech skills required to address the needs of an AI-enabled organisation.

**Unpredictability of AI Costs:** Organisations often struggle with predicting AI costs, especially inferencing and infrastructure costs, and are apprehensive about spiralling bills as use increases.

**Lack of GPUs and Compute:** The lack of access to affordable GPUs and servers capable of handling compute-intensive AI/GenAI workloads is a challenge, particularly for organisations that plan to build

and train their own models. The emergence of lighter-weight models that consume less power, coupled with greater supply of compute over time, will help to ease the pressure. However, GPU availability may not be an issue for organisations that use ready-made AI functionalities embedded in applications or via infrastructure in the cloud.

**Lack of a Strong Business Case:** A weak AI business case results in unclear ROI, poor stakeholder buy-in, and stalled initiatives – a challenge many organisations have faced in recent years. However, with growing awareness, businesses are now focusing on defining clear key performance indicators (KPIs), aligning AI with strategic goals, and demonstrating tangible value to secure funding for future initiatives and drive successful adoption.



## Understanding Organisational AI Maturity and Readiness

CEOs around the world are increasingly prioritising AI as part of their corporate strategies and encouraging AI technology investments.

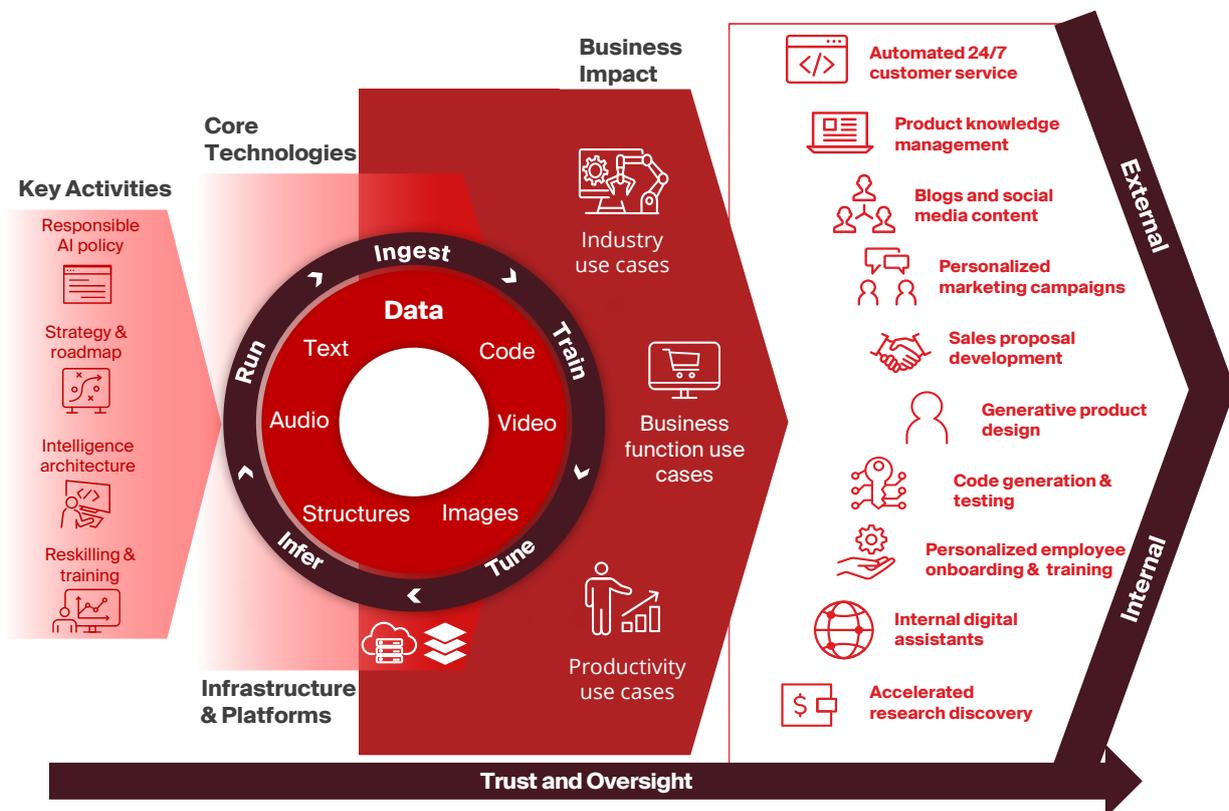
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Although GenAI is generally still in the early stages of experimentation, many organisations in the Middle East, Türkiye, and Africa (META) region are moving from experimentation to POCs to actual deployments, in line with global trends.

Organisations aiming to integrate AI across their operations must first assess their current readiness and establish a strategic vision for their target state, ensuring a smooth and effective transformation.

The framework below is designed for business and technology leaders and outlines key characteristics for developing an AI strategy, prioritising use cases, and engaging stakeholders to maximise AI's value.

Figure 3: IDC's AI Readiness Framework



Source: IDC PlanScape: Developing Your Path to Impact with Generative AI, August 2023 (IDC #US51157323)

### **Key Activities:**

Before exploring AI technologies and starting with large-scale implementations, organisations must assess their strategic preparedness. This includes evaluating their AI strategy or developing one, introducing AI policies, auditing and modernising their data architecture, and determining employee training needs. Addressing these areas ensures a strong foundation for AI deployment.

### **Core Technologies:**

With foundational activities in place, organisations must develop a clear understanding of available data and assess core AI technologies and their capabilities. This step ensures alignment between business objectives and technological solutions, enabling AI models to function effectively across various applications.

### **Infrastructure and Platforms:**

To support AI workloads, organisations must deploy AI-ready and cloud-native digital infrastructure optimised for the AI workloads that are planned to be implemented. Additionally, enabling a data and AI platform accelerates development, streamlines processes, and ensures scalable, efficient AI deployment.

### **Trust and Oversight:**

Responsible AI practices require a structured trust and oversight framework to manage transparency, biases, regulatory compliance, governance, and ethics. Establishing clear AI accountability structures reinforces stakeholder confidence and mitigates risks associated with unintended consequences.

### **Use Cases:**

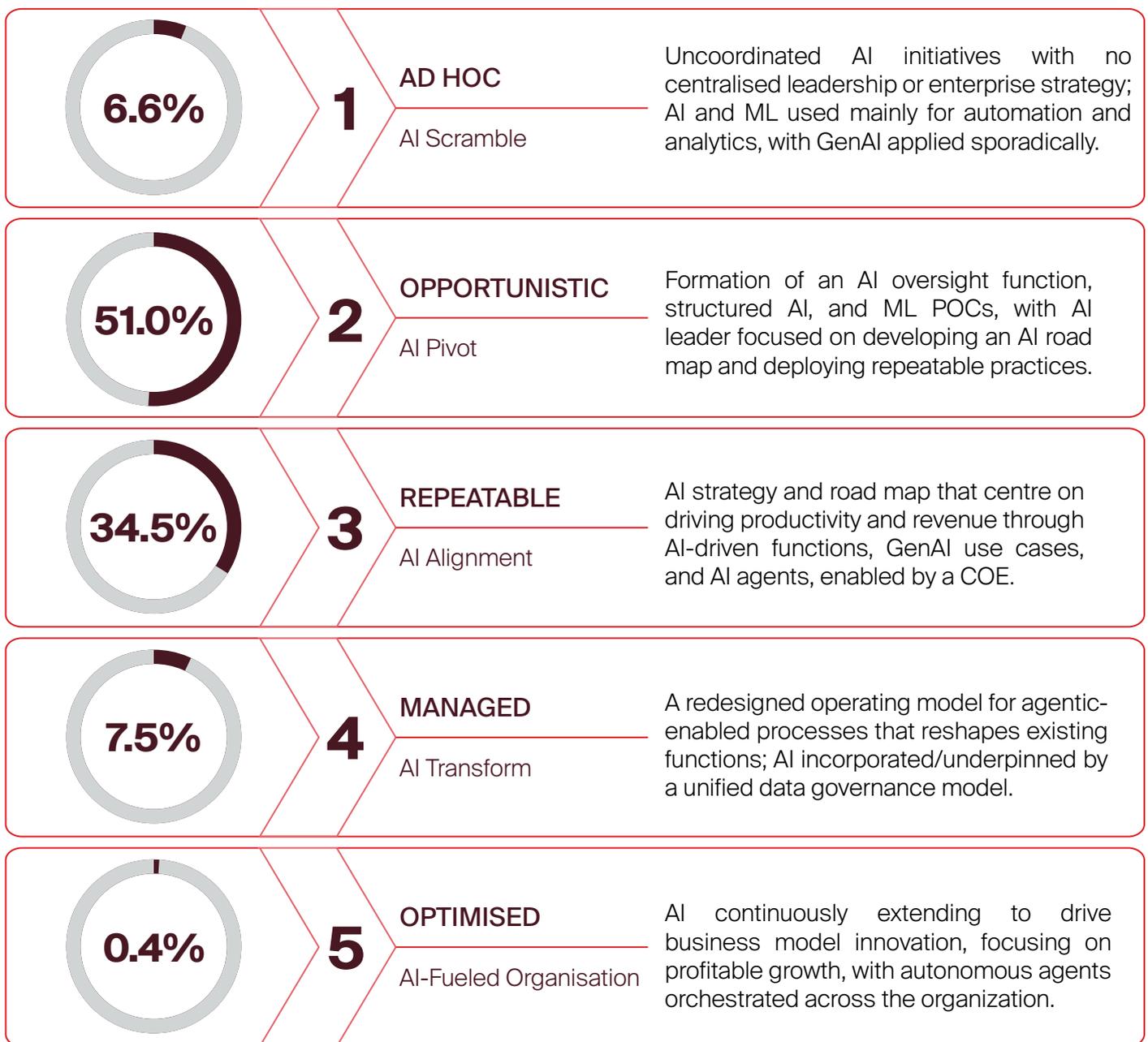
Use Cases: Once readiness factors are in place or as they are being addressed, organisations must prioritise AI use cases aligned with business needs. IDC defines a use case as a business-funded initiative enabled by technology that delivers a measurable outcome. This step ensures AI applications generate tangible value and drive strategic objectives.

By systematically addressing these AI readiness components, organisations can position themselves for sustainable AI adoption, maximising the benefits of intelligence-driven innovation.

## A Framework for Understanding Organisational AI Readiness

The AI maturity model depicted in Figure 4 outlines a five-stage journey that organisations follow as they evolve from fragmented AI use to full-scale transformation. In the “Ad Hoc” stage, efforts are uncoordinated with no clear leadership. The “Opportunistic” phase introduces oversight and early road mapping. At the “Repeatable” stage, organisations develop formal strategies and governance to drive consistent outcomes. The “Managed” phase sees AI integrated into redesigned processes, supported by unified data governance. Finally, the “Optimised” stage features AI as a core driver of innovation and growth, with autonomous agents orchestrating operations. This model guides businesses in scaling AI effectively and strategically.

Figure 4: IDC MaturityScape Benchmark: Worldwide Maturity Distribution Across the Stages



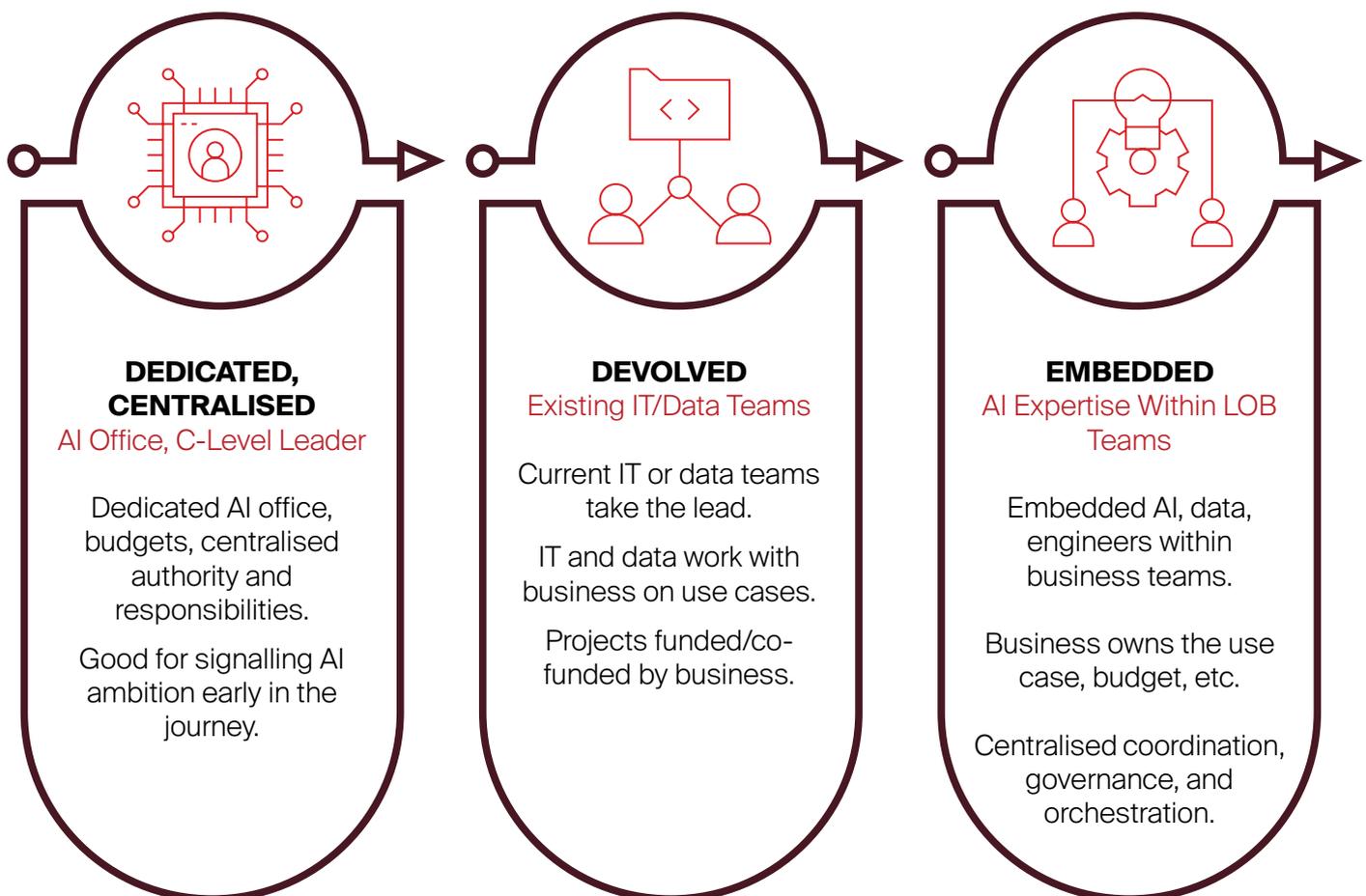
In February 2025, IDC fielded its MaturityScape Benchmark AI Survey to 1,534 respondents globally to determine where organisations are on their path to being an AI-fuelled organisation. Within this, IDC considered three dimensions – strategy, people, and technology – each with supporting sub-dimensions. The key takeaway is that very few organisations are at the stage where they can be considered a truly AI-fuelled organisation (i.e., Stage 5: Optimised). Indeed, over half are still in the process of pivoting to AI (i.e., Stage 2: Opportunistic), while just over a third find themselves at the alignment stage (i.e., Stage 3: Repeatable), having implemented an AI business model, data foundation, and governing function.

## AI Leadership, Operating Models, and the Emergence of the CAIO

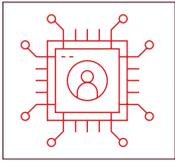
For organisations to drive an integrated AI strategy and scale AI adoption, they will need to identify and assign AI leadership roles and develop a suitable operating model for AI.

The speed of AI advancement and the potential business impact demands rapid decision-making, as well as integrated and coordinated strategy development and implementation across IT, data, and business functions, with well-defined ownership. Currently, organisations are adopting multiple models for AI decision-making and implementation (see Figure 5 below), including centralised, distributed, and hybrid. The model may vary by industry or company size and will evolve over time.

Figure 5: Three Different Approaches to AI Decision-Making

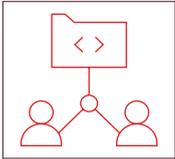


Approach will evolve based on industry, size, and maturity.



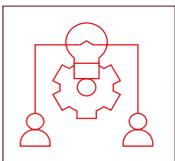
### **Dedicated, Centralised:**

Some organisations have created a dedicated AI office with a head of AI or CAIO who has full ownership of the AI strategy and budget, as well as responsibility for executing initiatives across the organisation. This model helps to signal strategic intent and drive initiatives from the top.



### **Devolved:**

Many organisations have devolved AI leadership to existing IT and data teams. The IT or data leaders then work with the C-suite, the digital office, and lines of business (LOBs) to develop the strategy and execute initiatives.



### **Embedded:**

As organisations move further along their AI journey, some of them will look to embed AI expertise within LOBs, giving them ownership of their AI initiatives, with centralised orchestration of governance and direction.

Each model presents distinct benefits and challenges, and choosing the right one hinges on the specific needs of the organisation.

## **Who Is the Chief AI Officer?**

In all the operating models described above, there is a need to assign AI leadership to specific individuals – either an executive who leads a dedicated AI office, or an executive who heads AI from within an existing IT, digital, or data team. For the purpose of this playbook, we are calling this executive the “chief AI officer,” regardless of the actual designation of the individual.

- In the “Dedicated” model, the CAIO leads an independent AI office, that owns the AI strategy and road map and often comprises AI engineers and experts. The CAIO may report into the CEO or COO.
- In the “Devolved” model, the CAIO role may be assumed by an existing CIO or chief data officer, who double-hats along with existing IT or data responsibilities. Some organisations have expanded the titles of existing CIOs and chief data officers to include AI.
- When organisations evolve into the “Embedded” model, the CAIO’s role becomes more focused on orchestration, centralised governance, and coordination.

The following sections provide a playbook for the CAIO, including responsibilities, stakeholders to engage with, and ways to engage with them.

## A Blueprint for AI Success: The CAIO Playbook

### Key Stakeholders for the CAIO

The CAIO must adopt a multifaceted role, engaging with a diverse range of key stakeholders while spearheading initiatives that foster the development of critical organisational capabilities. A pivotal aspect of the CAIO's responsibilities involves identifying and connecting with these stakeholders to ensure their expectations are not only aligned but also consistently managed. Crafting a clear road map of collaborative activities and defining effective channels for engagement is essential. Enabling strategic alignment and proactive engagement are fundamental benchmarks for the CAIO's success, accelerating the organisation's AI-driven innovation and growth.

The key highlights for stakeholder engagement are outlined below:

- Internal Stakeholders:
  - CEO/Executive Leadership: The CAIO may or may not be part of the C-suite executive team. However, the CAIO will invariably be required to periodically report to the CEO or to another C-level executive on AI strategy and initiatives.
  - Lines of Business: The CAIO role is cross-functional, and they work closely with key line-of-business executives and department managers.
  - CFO: Some CAIOs will have full budget authority for AI investments, while others will follow a budget set by the CEO or CFO and require sign-off by the board. In both cases, they must justify and track the business and technical value delivered by AI implementations.
  - IT and Data Teams: CAIOs often have data scientists and engineers, machine learning engineers, and AI product leaders reporting to them. However, in some cases they will need to work with IT, software engineering, and data teams outside their direct authority.
- External Stakeholders:
  - CAIOs will need to engage with external industry stakeholders, such as academic institutions, industry consortia, and regulatory bodies, to stay ahead of emerging trends, standards, and best practices in AI. He/she may need to work with third-party technology providers to build hybrid teams and centres of excellence that combine internal and external capabilities.

### Key Areas of Responsibility and Roles of the CAIO

The CAIO's role spans a spectrum of critical responsibilities: from developing an actionable AI use case road map and keeping abreast of technological advancements, to overseeing AI implementation and establishing robust governance frameworks. Table 1 delves into the CAIO's intricate duties, highlighting the strategic, operational, and ethical dimensions essential to harnessing AI's transformative potential within an organisation.

Across these areas of responsibility, the CAIO will need to engage with a broad spectrum of internal and external stakeholders. A crucial part of their responsibility is to identify and establish connections with these stakeholders, aligning and managing expectations. The CAIO will need to play various roles across these areas of responsibility. For some of the areas, the CAIO could be the owner of the area, such as AI strategy and road map. In others, he or she could play the role of a consultant, where the area is owned by another function or executive and the CAIO is expected to provide advice to align the function's strategies to the overall AI strategy. In yet other cases, the CAIO will play the role of an orchestrator, such as, potentially, in governance. The role will depend on the structure and AI maturity of the organisation.

Table 1: Key Capability Areas, Roles, and Responsibilities

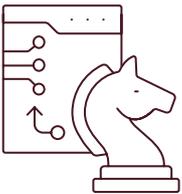
Capability Areas to Develop	Key Goals/Outcomes to Achieve	Role of CAIO in Developing the Capability	Stakeholders to Engage to Develop the Capability	Ways to Engage with the Relevant Stakeholders to Develop Capability
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AI vision, goals/targets, C-level KPIs, budgets</li> </ul>	Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of governors</li> <li>C-suite</li> <li>Strategy office</li> <li>Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision and goal setting workshops with executive team</li> <li>Consultation with external consultants to develop vision, goals, etc.</li> <li>Alignment with CFO/finance on budget, capex/opex needs</li> <li>Presentations to the board/executive team for approval</li> </ul>
Use case road map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use case identification and prioritisation</li> <li>Business case assessment and impact analysis</li> <li>Use case road map development – POC and production pipeline</li> </ul>	Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LOB leaders</li> <li>IT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideation workshops, including LOBs and IT, with/without external consultant moderation</li> <li>Consultations with external providers for use case examples, suitable for industry, segment, and region</li> <li>Implementation of POCs by internal teams or external providers</li> <li>Presentations to executive team for showcasing business impact, alignment, and approval</li> </ul>
AI implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>POC to production project management</li> <li>Tech infrastructure and resource needs for POC, production, and scaling of AI</li> </ul>	Owner/Orchestrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT, software engineering</li> <li>Security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with CIO/IT team on IT needs (infrastructure, cloud, etc.)</li> <li>Alignment with software engineering team for resources on product/app development</li> <li>Alignment with CISO/security teams on cybersecurity and compliance</li> </ul>
AI technology direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer-term direction of AI technology for the organisation – aligning with technology advances (e.g., agentic AI)</li> </ul>	Owner/Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of CTO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular consultation with futurists, analysts, and consultants to update on AI tech advancements</li> <li>Regular alignment with the CTO of AI with overall tech strategy direction</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with industry, national, and international AI/data/security/privacy regulations</li> <li>Unified AI governance policy development – with responsible AI at the centre</li> </ul>	Owner/Orchestrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data governance and chief data officer</li> <li>Corporate risk</li> <li>CISO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a unified AI governance committee, including relevant executives from data, risk, security, etc.</li> <li>Consultations with regulatory bodies</li> <li>Workshops with data governance teams, security, and risk management teams</li> <li>Consultations with external experts to develop policies</li> <li>Regular reporting to board and executive team on risks and mitigation measures</li> </ul>

Data strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data architecture modernisation and data life-cycle management</li> </ul>	Owner/ Orchestrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data science and engineering</li> <li>IT</li> <li>LOB leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops with data engineering and data science teams</li> <li>Consultations with external experts on data strategy</li> <li>Development of a modern data architecture and data management approach</li> <li>Alignment with LOBs</li> </ul>
Skills and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness sessions for setting realistic expectations about what AI can deliver and ensuring safe and responsible AI use</li> <li>Employee training on AI skills such as prompt engineering, data literacy, etc.</li> <li>Employee AI goals development</li> </ul>	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops with key HR leaders – including leaders for training, learning hub, knowledge management, recruitment, and compensation</li> <li>Consultation with external HR experts</li> </ul>
Innovation and IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incubation, development, and acquisition of AI-enabled IP – products, frameworks, accelerators, etc.</li> </ul>	Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AI COEs</li> <li>Innovation and co-creation centres</li> <li>Incubation centres</li> <li>Corporate strategy for acquisitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and management of AI COEs</li> <li>Engage with existing innovation centres to develop AI-enabled products; working with partners on co-creation</li> <li>Engagement with internal and external incubation hubs (e.g., universities)</li> <li>Continuous engagement with corporate strategy and M&amp;A teams on acquisitions.</li> </ul>
Change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee alignment to new ways of working</li> <li>Re-organisation of roles and teams</li> <li>Process and workflow analysis</li> <li>Communications (internal and external)</li> </ul>	Consultant/ Orchestrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformation office (if it exists)</li> <li>Business team leaders</li> <li>HR</li> <li>IT</li> <li>Corporate communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops with key leaders (i.e., LOBs, HR, IT, corporate communications) to support their change management plans</li> <li>Consultation with external experts on change management</li> </ul>
AI partner ecosystem strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulation of the partner strategy; level of third-party partner involvement against in-house capability building initiatives</li> </ul>	Owner/ Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of CTO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting and guiding the partner team on the AI partner strategy front</li> <li>Alignment with the CTO team on the partner prioritisation and selection process</li> <li>Building relationships with AI policymakers and AI-related authorities to partner with for strategic initiatives</li> </ul>

## 1. AI Strategy

An AI strategy should define the new digital business model of the organisation, focusing on measurable GenAI use cases that drive significant business impact over time. It must align AI initiatives with high-value business priorities to avoid fragmented efforts. Organisations should evaluate both current and future business needs, conduct internal workshops, and systematically identify and test AI use cases to ensure strategic alignment and meaningful outcomes.

Key highlights regarding the AI strategy development are outlined below.



As the owner and custodian of the organisation's AI strategy, the CAIO will take leadership in developing and updating the AI vision and goals, seeking buy-in and approval from the C-suite and the board, and reporting back to them on progress.



As AI becomes a priority for the board and the C-suite, defining C-level KPIs that can be reported to shareholders and investors, will become necessary.



Given that AI implementation often requires significant investment, the CAIO must work closely with the CFO and the board to secure appropriate budgetary allocations. This involves presenting a compelling business case for AI investments, outlining expected returns, managing risks, and ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to priority projects.

## 2. Use Case Road Map Development

An AI use case road map should be a practical, action-oriented guide that identifies and prioritises AI applications based on business needs and technical feasibility. It should map out specific use cases, detailing expected outcomes, required data, model complexity, integration challenges, and potential ROI. The road map must include a phased execution plan, from POC to full-scale deployment, with checkpoints for validation and iteration. Developing a use case road map and ensuring its continuous management are among the CAIO's key responsibilities. As such, he/she needs to understand different use case types/examples and accordingly develop a structured approach for use case ideation, identification, and prioritisation for POC and piloting.

### Types of Use Cases

There are a mix of internal and externally facing possible use cases, each with its own level of potential risk, opportunity, and business impact, all of which need to be incorporated into a use case prioritisation framework for any organisation kickstarting its AI journey. Generative AI has significantly transformed the way we approach use cases. IDC categorises use cases in three ways: productivity use cases, business function use cases, and industry use cases.

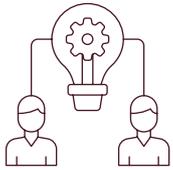
- **Productivity use cases** are used in tasks such as summarising a report, generating a job description, or generating code. GenAI functionality is being infused into existing applications (e.g., Microsoft 360, Google Duet).

Table 2: Examples of Emerging GenAI Productivity Use Cases

Activity	Example Use Case	Description	Examples of Underlying Technologies
Summarise	Online meeting summary	Real-time audio-to-text transcription of meetings provided in summary form with action items for all participants.	Otter.ai Microsoft Copilot for Teams Duet AI for Google Meet Krisp Fathom
Interact	Conversational search	Automatic extraction and summarisation key information from documents, emails, and other unstructured data sources delivered via a conversational question-and-answer interface.	ChatGPT Bard Hebbia Looria Glean AI
Generate	First-draft content creation	Create the first draft of an email, blog, or report based on a series of prompts.	ChatGPT Bard Writesonic Heyday
	Intelligent code completion	Coding assistance features to identify and suggest improvements to code. It can also include transformation of code into different formats.	Github Co-pilot Tabnine Replit Ghostwriter DeepCode
	Image generation for presentations	Text-to-image generation to create customised graphics to create impactful presentations.	Dalle Midjourney Stable Diffusion Hotpot
Generate	Real-time translation	GenAI is being used to improve machine translation (MT) by generating synthetic training data for MT systems as well as creating more creative and idiomatic translations.	DeepL Google Translate Microsoft Translate Lokalise AI

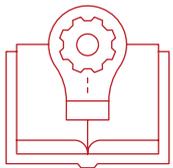
Source: IDC, 2025

Among the use cases illustrated in Table 2, the most frequently cited GenAI productivity applications in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region include the following:



**Communication and Collaboration:**

Many organisations have been running pilots with automated meeting summaries and AI tools to transcribe, summarise, and assign tasks following a meeting.



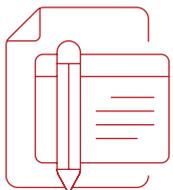
**Conversational Search and Knowledge Management:**

There is notable adoption of enterprise AI chatbots and assistants for employees to access company data, answer queries, and automate repetitive tasks.



**Real-time Translation:**

Bilingual capabilities are crucial for seamless cross-language communication and reporting in the Middle East.



**First Draft Content Creation:**

This is being leveraged by enterprises to accelerate productivity with AI-generated reports, emails, meeting summaries, and marketing content.

- **Business function use cases** tend to integrate a model with corporate data for use by a specific department (e.g., marketing, sales, procurement). These business function use cases require integration with established enterprise applications from vendors such as Salesforce, Oracle, SAP, and ServiceNow. Figure 6 below shows the global use case adoption trends by business function.

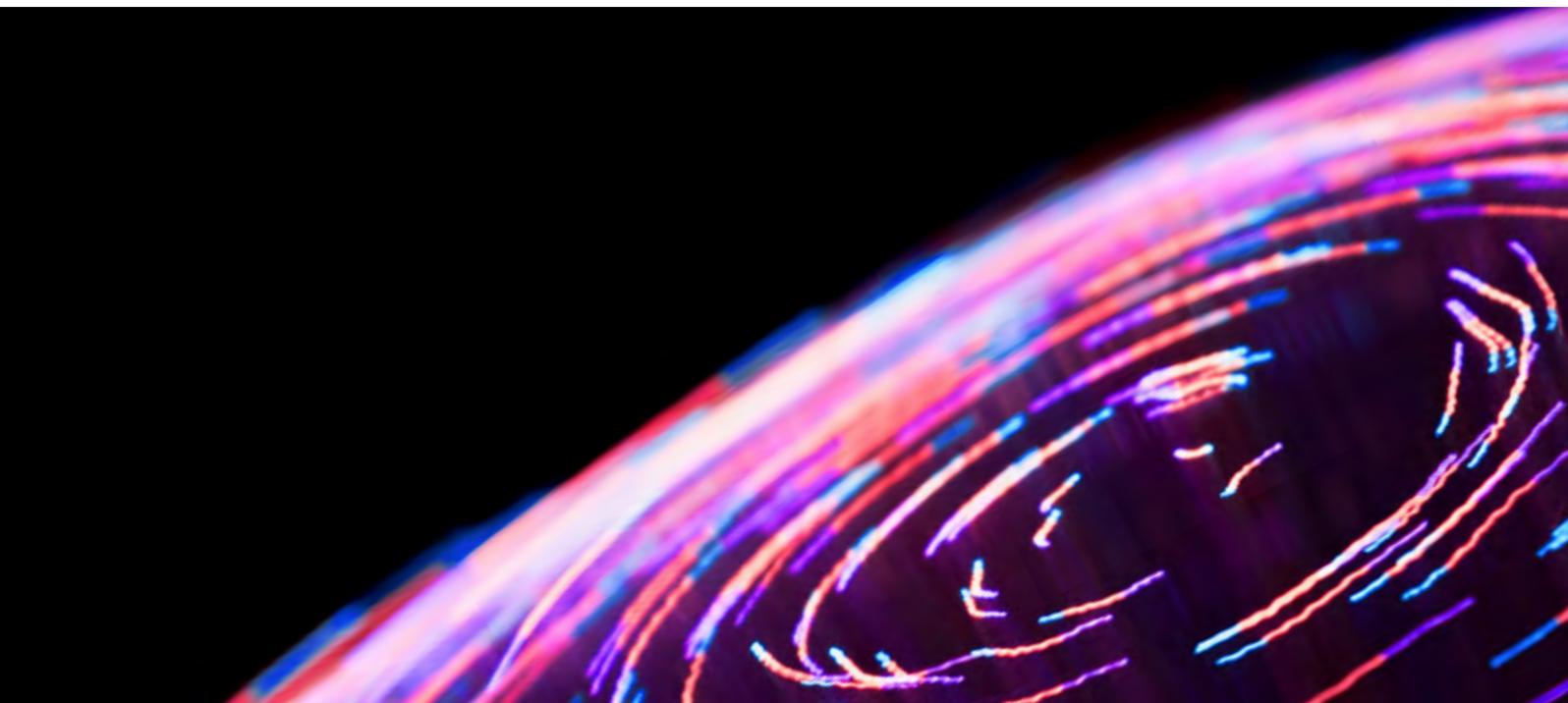
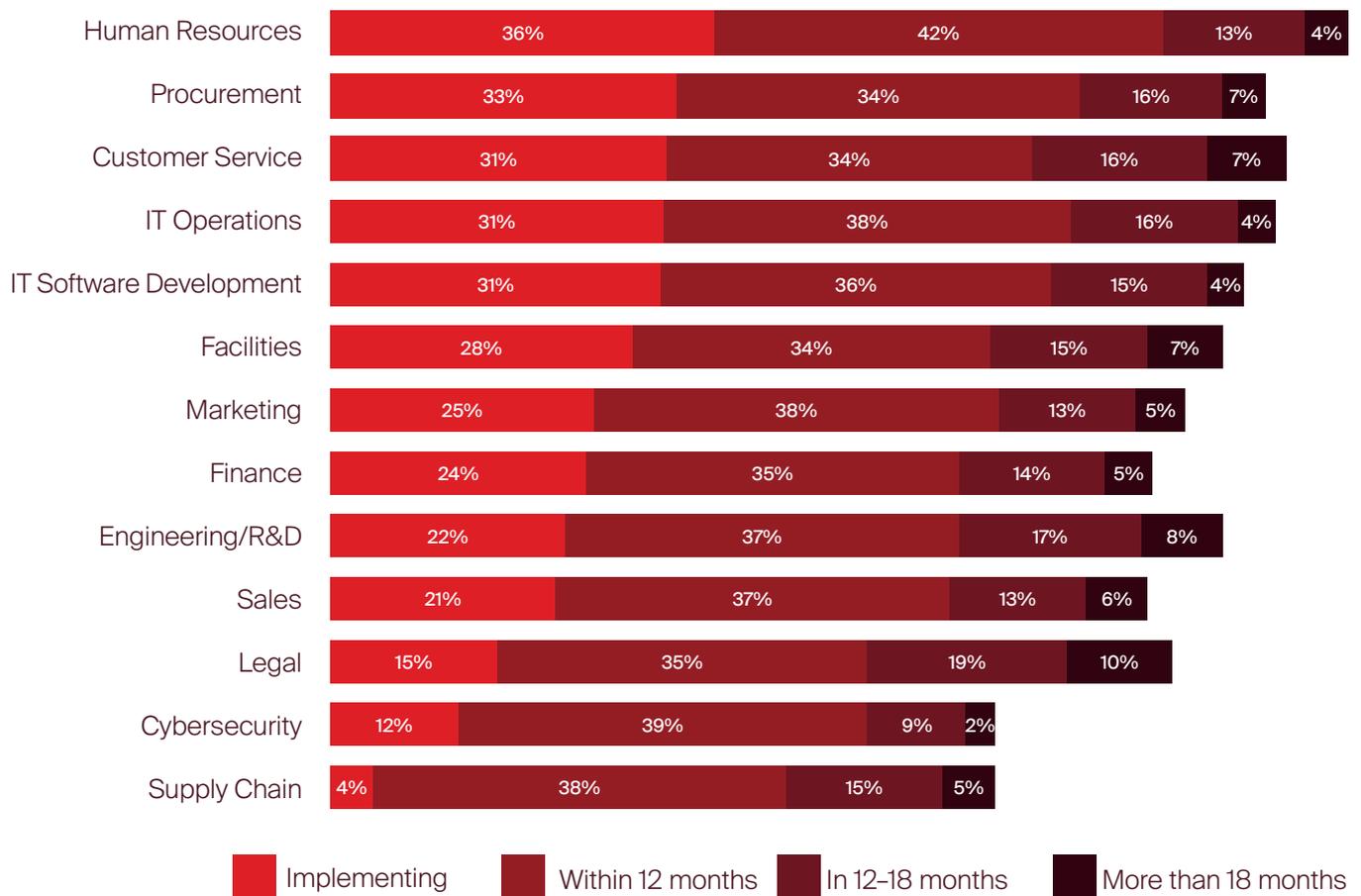


Figure 6: Implementation Timeline for GenAI Use Cases by Functional Area – Global Perspective



Source: IDC’s Worldwide GenAI Use Case Survey, July 2024 (n = 3,130)

- Industry use cases** will require more custom work compared to productivity and business function use cases. Examples include generative drug discovery in life sciences, generative material design and quality management in manufacturing, and wealth management advisory in financial services.

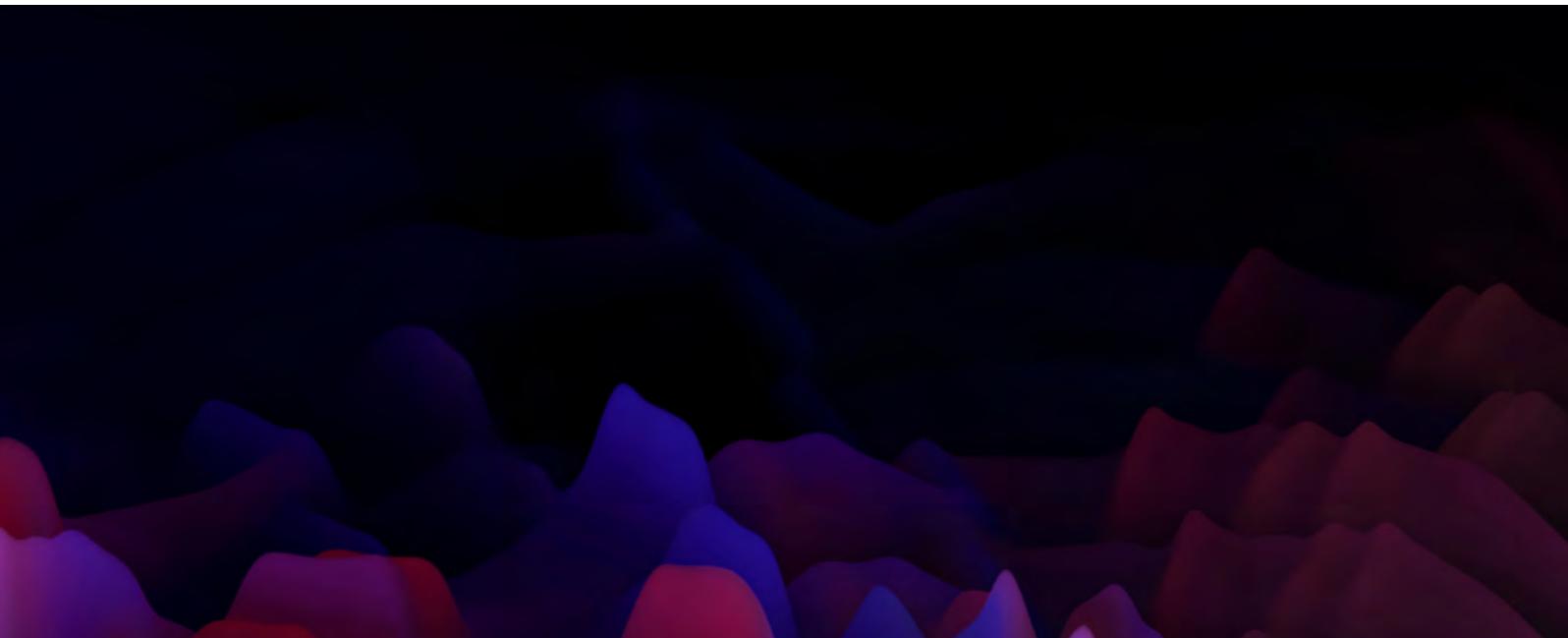


Table 3: Worldwide Perspective on Top GenAI Use Cases by Industry: Fully Implemented and Currently Being Implemented

Industry	Top Industry-Specific Use Case
Banking	Payment data analytics
Capital Markets	Customer segmentation and targeting
Insurance	Individualised insurance offerings
Hospitality, Dining, and Travel	Dynamic pricing and service
Retail	Intelligent retail customer support chatbots
Transportation and Logistics	Asset and driver summary reports
Wholesale	Service response
Manufacturing – Asset-Oriented Value Chains	Predictive maintenance
Manufacturing – Brand-Oriented Value Chains	Consumer product feedback
Manufacturing – Engineering-Oriented Value Chains	Predictive demand and supply
Manufacturing – Technology-Oriented Value Chains	Cost optimisation
Utilities	Conversational applications (e.g., chatbots)
Media and Entertainment	Content streaming profiles
Smart Cities	Next-generation non-emergency services
National Government	Automated tax compliance
Healthcare	Healthcare contact centre and virtual assistant
Health Payers	Healthcare contact centre and virtual assistant
Life Sciences	Drug safety platforms
K-12 Education	Automated grading and feedback
Higher Education	AI research and writing assistant
Defence and Intel	Financial oversight and analysis

Source: IDC's GenAI Industry Use Case Adoption Trends Survey, March 2025 (n = 3,224; unweighted data)

The above table highlights the industry-specific GenAI use cases that are already implemented or in the process of being implemented. Each industry is seeing a growing number of GenAI use cases being deployed. To support this, IDC has curated an extensive library of over 300 industry-specific use cases across 21 sectors – excluding functional, cross-industry applications. Below you can see some selected examples of these use cases across select industries.

## Banking :



### **Lending Regulatory Compliance:**

Monitors all state and federal lending regulations, ensuring that past and pending lending decisions are compliant. Identifies instances of possible violations and recommends corrective action.

### **Personalised Banking Offers:**

Creates a scoring model for all current products, which in turn can develop an individualised customer score based on historical transactional usage of all current products to determine opportunities for growth.

### **Cyber Bullying and Extortion Recognition:**

Identifies a pattern of behaviour based on transaction history along with verbal/written clues during contact centre or text/email engagement from customer to learn and quickly identify low-dollar cyber-bullying tactics.

### **Fraud Detection Based on Social Network Analysis:**

A variety of AI tools aim to improve the understanding of criminal protocol schemes within large relationship networks. Social network analysis is an emergent data mining methodology and will be amplified by GenAI to test and apply patterns in fraud models faster, making the process more predictive and dynamic.

### **Risk Model Training:**

Builds, enriches, optimises, and tests new credit risk models including open, unstructured data sources and synthetic data.

## Retail :



### **Fraud and Loss Prevention Anomaly Detection:**

Uses GenAI to detect anomalies and categorise complex behaviours based on smart video surveillance for retail fraud and loss prevention purposes. Enhances detection capabilities and automates system training. Uses synthetic data for improved insights and outcomes.

### **Optimisation of Pricing/Promotions/Markdowns:**

Optimisation of seasonal promotions and pricing across product sets using GenAI and new parameters, new facets (product attributes), and better weighting systems for more appropriate filtering that both automates and minimises manual oversight.

### **Advanced Product Recommendations/Offer Management:**

Product recommendations leverage advanced AI models to suggest relevant products and personalised offerings based on individual customer profiles, previous shopping histories, and preferences.

### **Intelligent Retail Customer Support Chatbots:**

Customer support chatbots and virtual agents offering intelligent support through real-time and retail-specific data and analytics. Manages FAQs and other support tasks on demand, enabling rapid scalability.

### **Sourcing Optimisation and Auto-Negotiation:**

Generates new insights into supplier interactions and performance by analysing supplier capabilities, capacity, pricing, risk, and other factors. Retailers can develop auto-negotiation, supplier selection decisions, and optimised sourcing processes.

## National Government:



### **Hyper-Personalised Services and Benefits:**

Digital assistants powered by GenAI can coordinate benefits programs across federal, state, local, and private programs, removing the onus from individuals and their families to navigate this complex landscape. Individuals no longer need to determine which programs they are eligible for and only need to provide their information once.

### **Integrated Public Health Protection:**

Leverages GenAI digital assistants to protect public health by identifying residents at risk of disease and detecting accidental harmful emissions/leaks, problematic chemicals, and/or harmful additives in the food supply. Proactively informs recommendations for benefits and equips care plans with bespoke information.

### **Intelligent Immigration and Citizenship Processing:**

Streamlines the visa process using instant language translation and natural language processing (NLP) to create a competitive advantage for identifying high-value talent, while enabling the verification of details and identifying misrepresentation of skills.

### **Critical National Infrastructure Protection:**

Protects critical infrastructure with GenAI-enhanced cybersecurity features. GenAI can enable automated incident response playbooks to optimise infrastructure protection. It can also be used to reverse engineer malware, simulate threats, and automate recovery tasks.

### **Intelligent Evidence Management and Case Investigation:**

GenAI presents numerous use cases for predictive analysis in public safety. GenAI can aid organisations in analysing evidence, case data, and other factors to identify patterns and predict future outcomes.

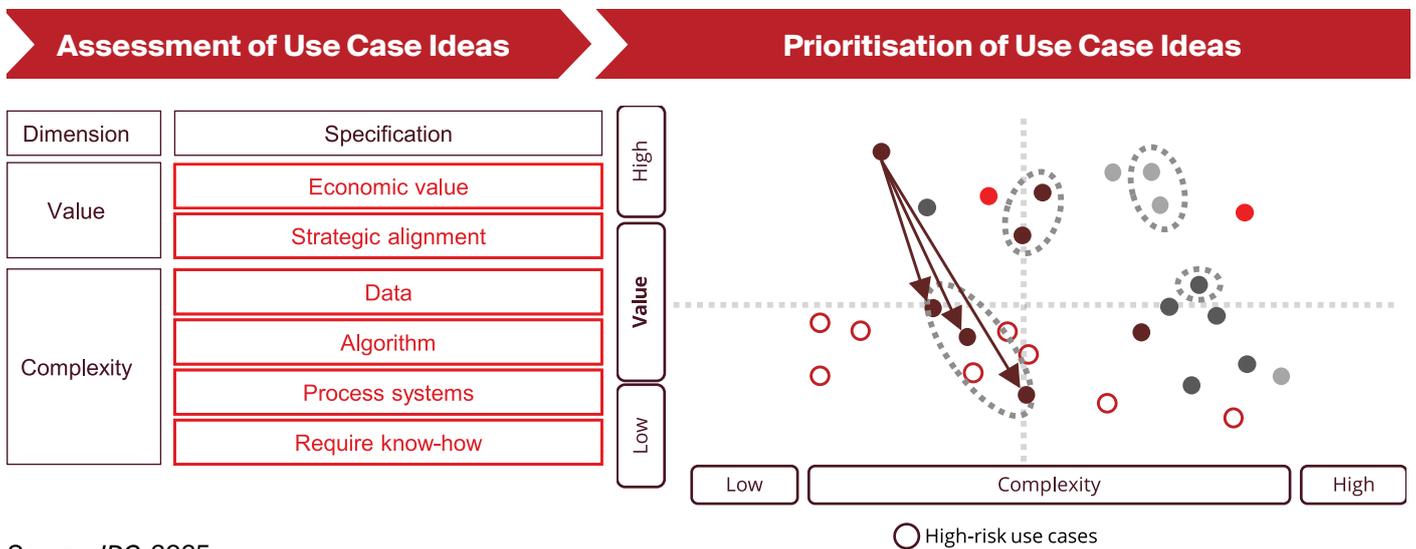
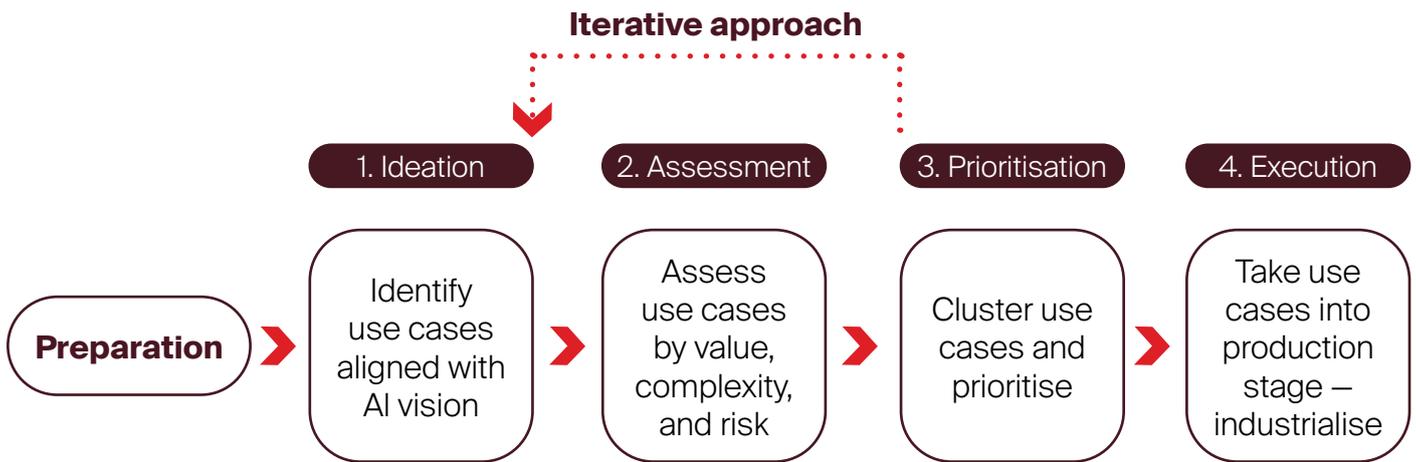
## AI Use Case Selection and Implementation

Achieving AI readiness is crucial for organisations aiming to leverage the full potential of generative AI. This readiness entails laying a strong foundation, such as developing the necessary skills, establishing governance frameworks, and building robust digital infrastructure. Without these elements, organisations may struggle to implement AI initiatives effectively, leading to suboptimal outcomes.

That said, organisations do not need to wait to achieve full AI readiness to embark on the use case selection journey, as this is a continuous improvement process; however, they should be aware of the gaps and improvement areas, so that they can make more informed investment decisions. Additionally, as part of this journey, small POC projects allow organisations to explore and understand the requirements for identifying, trialling, and implementing AI use cases at scale. These initial efforts help to pinpoint skill, data, policy, and technology gaps in a controlled and cost-effective manner.



Figure 7: Prioritising AI Use Cases Based on the Business Impact



Source: IDC, 2025



Figure 7 provides a structured, step-by-step framework to guide organisations on how they should approach the use case selection process. Below you can see an explanation for each step of the use case selection and implementation life cycle.

- Preparation:** This step involves ensuring data availability, infrastructure readiness, and setting up governance frameworks. It includes collecting clean, labelled data, establishing data pipelines, and ensuring computational resources are scalable. It also includes securing stakeholder buy-in and aligning teams on AI readiness and strategic objectives.
- Ideation:** During this step, teams brainstorm potential AI use cases that align with the organisation's AI vision and strategic goals. This phase encourages innovation while focusing on identifying problems that AI can solve effectively. Stakeholder input is critical to generate a diverse list of viable AI applications.
- Assessment:** This step requires organisations to evaluate each AI use case by considering factors like business value, technical complexity, and associated risks. This involves calculating potential ROI, understanding resource requirements, and identifying legal or ethical challenges. Scoring models help quantify these factors for a balanced evaluation. Figure 8 below provides a view of IDC's AI Business Value Benefit Framework. The framework encapsulates the key parameters needed when measuring ROI potential for AI use cases and projects. It involves nine categories – a mix of direct and indirect indicators. Organisations that are looking to drive organisation-wide adoption of AI should take a systematic approach to measuring the business impact.

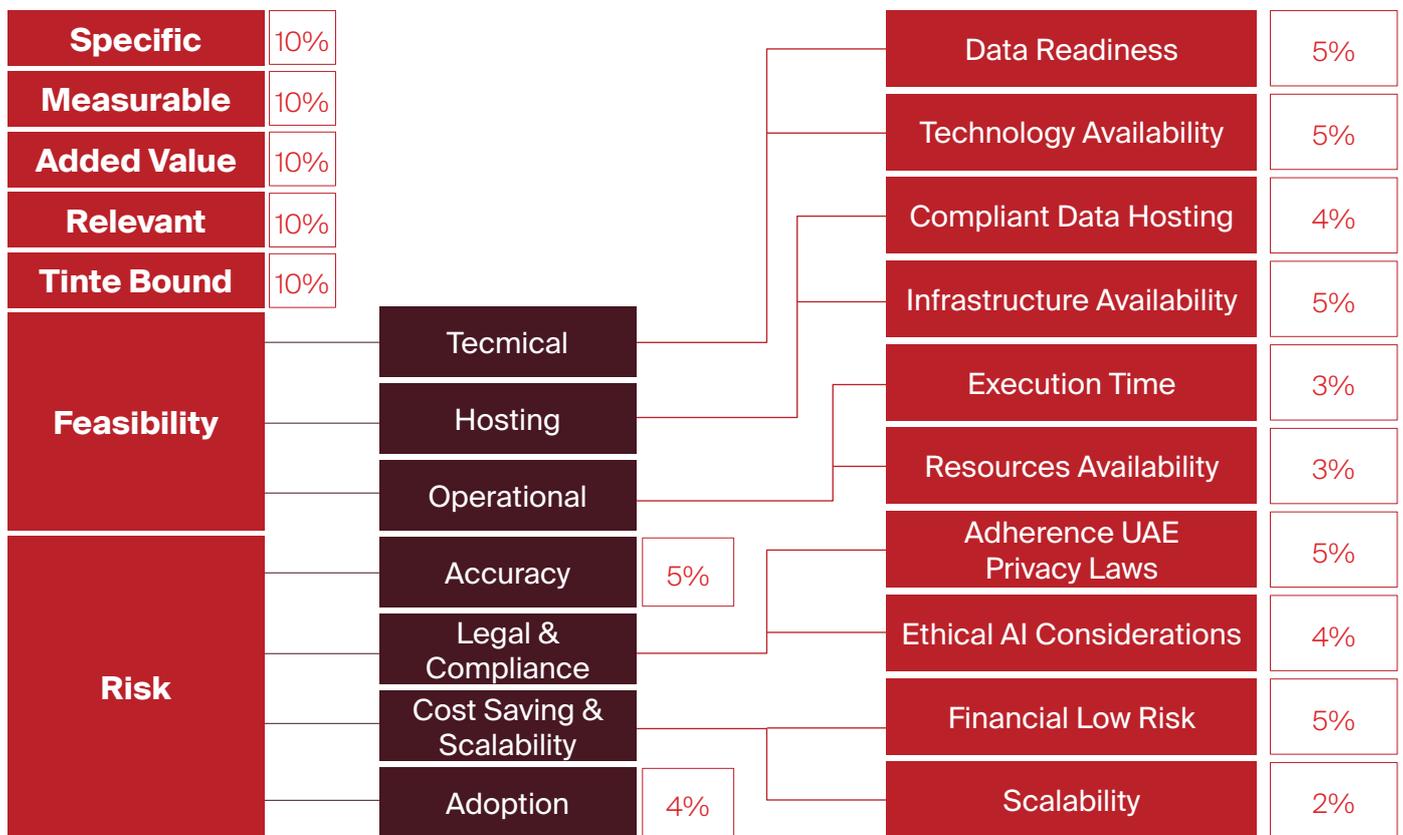
Figure 8: IDC's AI Business Value Benefit Framework



Source: IDC's *From AI Return on Investment to Business Value: A Practical ROI and Business Value Calculation Framework for IT Leaders*, March 2025 (IDC #EUR153267225)

Figure 9: Benchmarking and Scoring Model and Framework

**Benchmarking & Scoring Models-Scoring Framework**



Source: e& enterprise, 2025

- Prioritisation:** This step involves ranking use cases based on their assessed value, complexity, and risk. It helps in determining which use cases should be developed first, ensuring that high-impact, low-complexity projects are addressed promptly to maximise early returns and learning.
- Execution:** This step focuses on industrialising selected use cases, transitioning them from pilot to production. It includes deploying models, monitoring performance, and managing the life cycle to prevent issues like data drift and model decay. Continuous feedback loops are established for iterative improvements and sustained success.

The AI use case selection process should be iterative. If a use case is not delivering expected value or performance, it should be reevaluated for potential improvements. If enhancements are not viable, the use case should be dropped to focus resources on more promising opportunities, ensuring continuous learning and optimisation. Organisations can benefit from engaging consulting, development, implementation, and managed services partners. These partners provide expertise in ideation workshops, developing robust AI models, and ensuring smooth deployment and life-cycle management.

Developing and sustaining the use case road map will be among the key responsibilities of the CAIO. This road map serves as a strategic guide for identifying and prioritising AI initiatives that align with the organisation's goals. Managing the POC and production pipelines that emerge from this road map will be critical to the CAIO's success. To ensure these POCs are approved and scaled, the CAIO must work closely with LOB and IT teams to clearly demonstrate the potential business impact and value of use cases. Without showcasing how these use cases can drive tangible benefits, such as increased efficiency, cost savings, or revenue growth, they may not gain the necessary approval to proceed further. Key tasks in these POCs include:

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing all necessary internal teams and external consulting and implementation partners together.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering ideas through bottom-up ideation workshops.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating these ideas in collaboration with LOB executives and the IT department based on their value and implementation complexity.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking agreement and approval to move forward with the most promising initiatives.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|---|

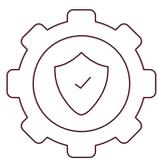
### 3. AI Implementation

The CAIO will need to have overall oversight of the implementation of AI use case and solutions, from piloting to production.



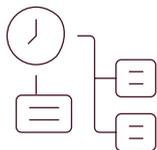
- **Resource Requirements:**

This will entail working with the CIO and IT teams to allocate required IT infrastructure, cloud, network, and IT administration resources, as well as with the software engineering team to obtain developers and testers for algorithm and app development,



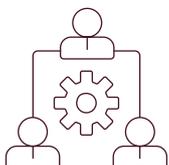
- **Security and Governance:**

The CAIO will also need to align with the security team to ensure that security is embedded in the design and that compliance with the risk and governance framework is achieved.



- **Project Management:**

While the tasks may be performed by various stakeholders, the CAIO will need to have oversight of overall management of all use case implementation projects.



- **Stakeholder Management:**

The CAIO should stay in close contact with LOB teams to ensure that the implementation delivers the expected business outcomes.

## A Platform-Led Approach to AI Innovation

AI platforms are pivotal for operationalising and scaling AI implementations, offering a centralised foundation to ensure efficient use case management throughout the life cycle. By harmonising resources, fostering collaboration, and enabling automated workflows, these platforms contribute to sustained value creation while minimising risks. Equally important is their role in optimising AI model costs, balancing performance with resource allocation to enhance ROI and long-term scalability.

Some of the key capabilities of AI platforms include:

**End-to-end pipeline management for seamless AI model development and deployment.**

**Cost optimisation tools to manage GPU cycles and computational efficiency.**

**Comprehensive tools for model security, explainability and ethical compliance.**

**Scalable infrastructure supporting high-performance AI workloads.**

**Advanced data preparation, enrichment, and governance features.**

**Robust MLOps frameworks for monitoring, tuning, and improving models.**

**Integration with diverse data ecosystems and enterprise software.**

**Enabling collaboration across technical and non-technical teams.**

## 4. AI Technology Direction

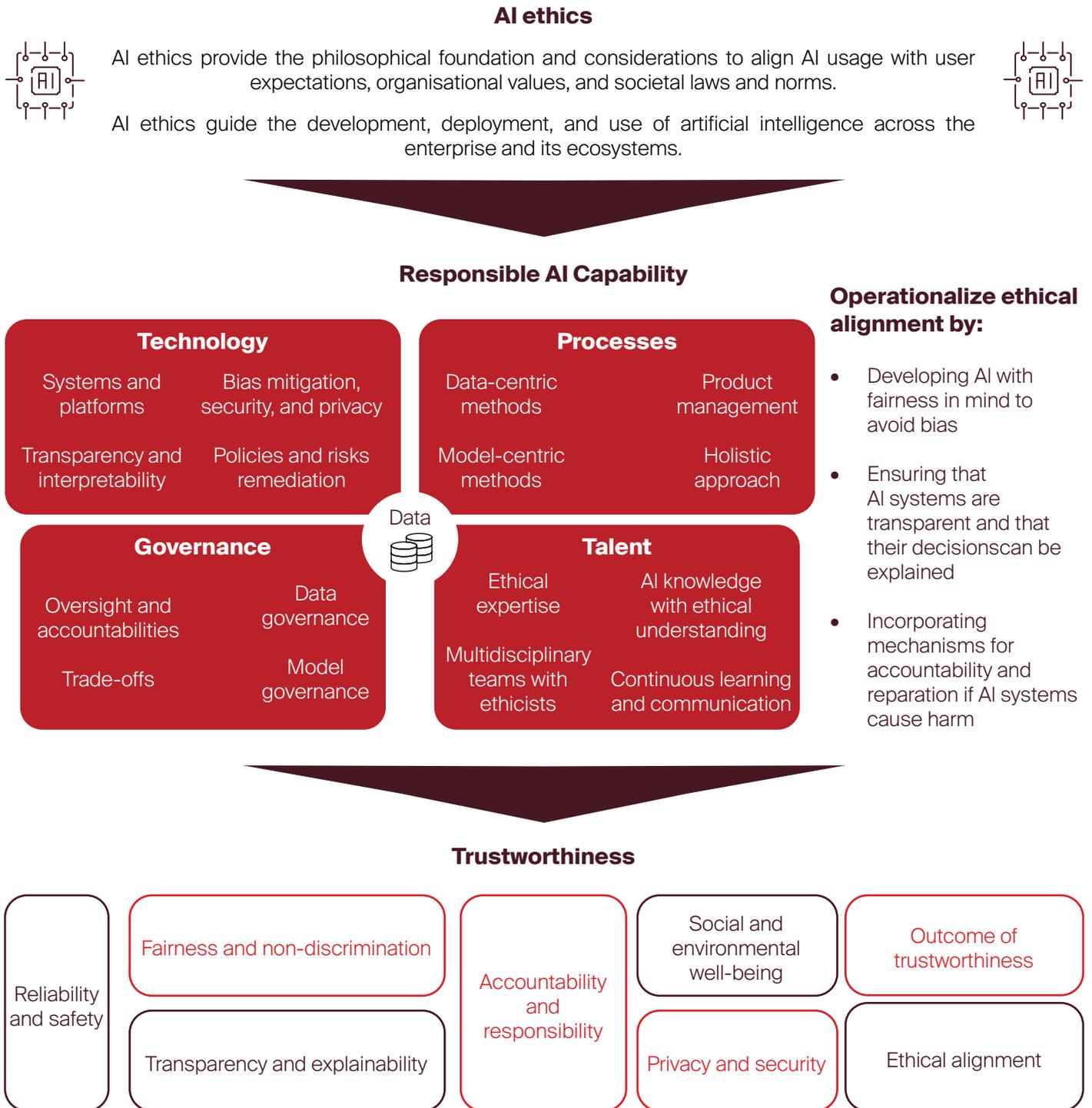
The CAIO must possess a strong and up-to-date understanding of advancements in AI technology and the possibilities it offers. This includes knowledge of various aspects such as types of models, build vs. buy approaches, model training, fine-tuning and grounding techniques, pricing and costs, consumption models, and the shift towards agentic AI. By staying engaged with futurists, analysts, and industry conferences, the CAIO can continuously absorb the latest technological developments. Acting as a consultant and guide, the CAIO should leverage this expertise to help shape the organisation's technology direction. Additionally, collaboration with the CTO (if present) is essential to ensure alignment with the overall technology strategy, while coordination with the CIO addresses infrastructure needs, and engagement with the CISO focuses on the security implications and requirements for AI.

## 5. Governance

AI adoption necessitates the establishment of a robust governance model to ensure responsible AI practices. The CAIO should lead the orchestration of this unified AI governance model by collaborating with key teams, including data governance, security, and risk management. This governance framework should incorporate and align with national, international, and industry-level AI regulations, guidelines, and toolkits. It is essential for the CAIO to facilitate the integration of these external standards with

the organisation's internal ethics, culture, and values. The model should also address critical areas such as security and privacy, ensuring that AI systems are designed and operated in a manner that protects sensitive data and adheres to privacy laws. Moreover, responsible AI principles should be embedded throughout, guiding the ethical development and deployment of AI technologies to prevent bias, ensure fairness, and maintain transparency. Effective data governance is crucial to support these efforts, ensuring that data used for AI is accurate, well managed, and compliant with regulatory standards, thereby fostering trust and accountability in AI systems.

**Figure 10: A Holistic AI Governance Framework**



## 6. Data Strategy

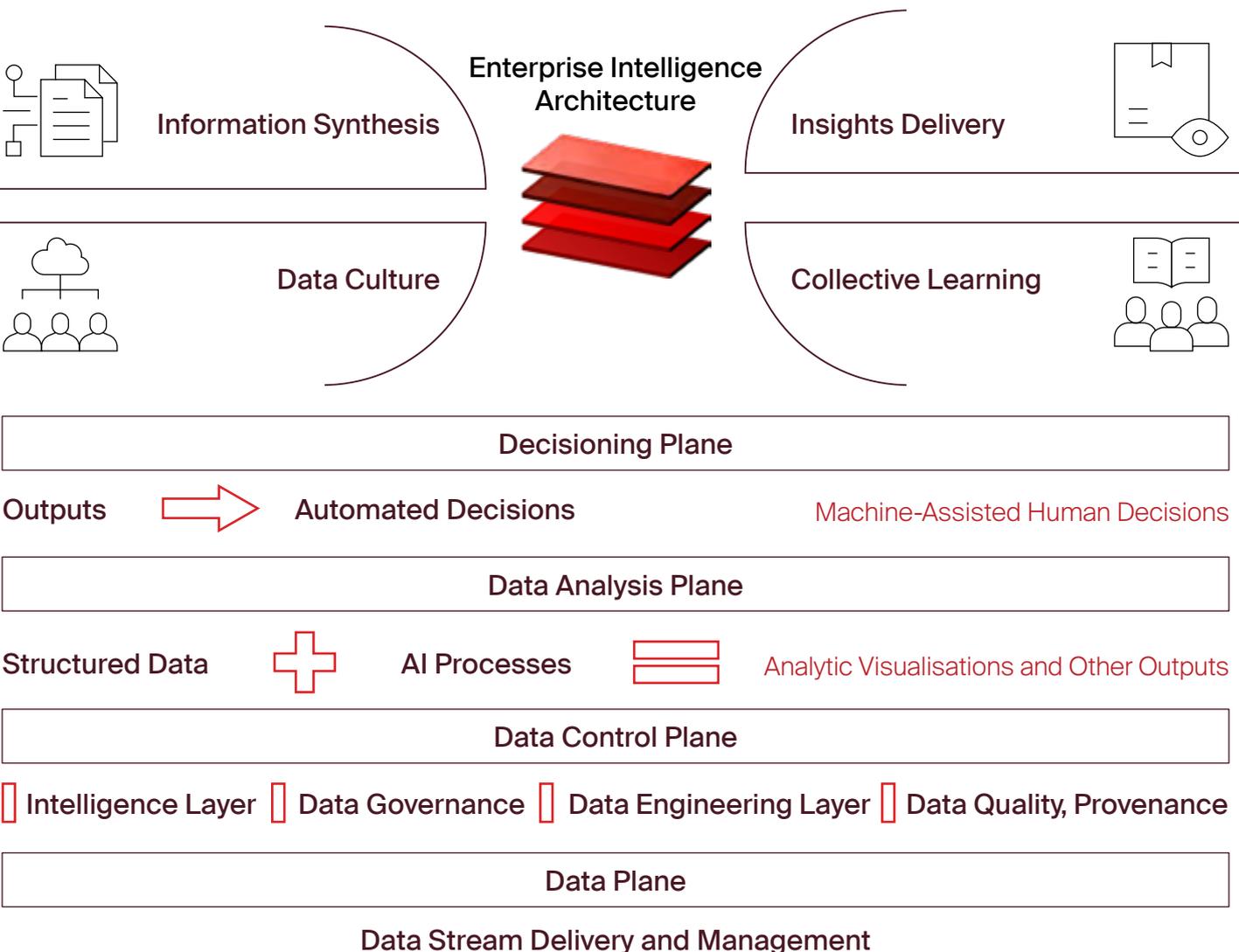
The CAIO must collaborate closely with data teams – including data engineering, data governance, and data science – to ensure the availability of high-quality data for AI use cases. Data science and engineering resources may be part of the CAIO's direct team, which facilitates tighter integration and alignment, whereas there are also cases where these teams can stay with CIO organisations or the line of business.

Equally important is ensuring that business teams take ownership of their data, working closely with the data teams to maintain data integrity and relevance. This collaborative approach helps business units understand the value of their data, ensuring it is well managed and fit for AI applications. By fostering this partnership between business and data teams, the CAIO can create a culture of shared responsibility for data quality and governance, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of AI deployments.

### Achieving Data Readiness

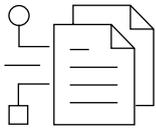
Figure 11 provides a high-level framework for how organisations should take a holistic approach to becoming a data-driven organisation.

Figure 11: Data Readiness: Unified Enterprise Intelligence Architecture



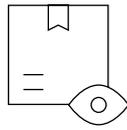
Source: IDC, 2025

In order for their data strategies to be successful, organisations must develop strong capabilities in four key areas:



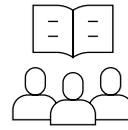
**Information Synthesis:**

Integrating and analysing internal and external data to generate actionable insights.



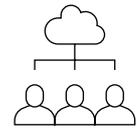
**Insights Delivery:**

Ensuring that insights reach the right stakeholders at the right time, enabling informed decision-making.



**Collective Learning:**

Continuously capturing, curating, and sharing knowledge to foster innovation across the enterprise.



**Data Culture:**

Embracing a data-driven mindset and equipping teams with tools to enhance data literacy and fluency.

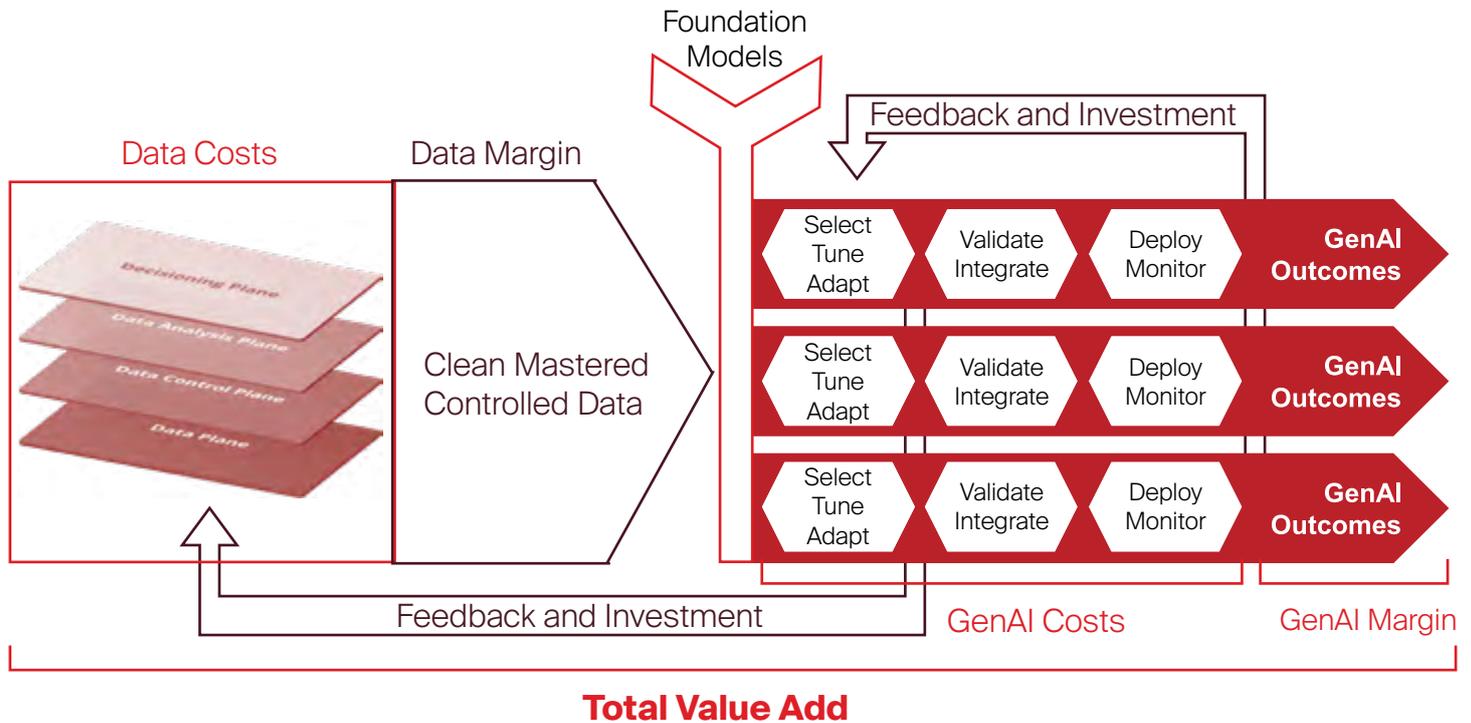
However, these capabilities can only drive meaningful impact if they are supported by a robust data management strategy. Enterprises often struggle due to fragmented data management. To address this, organisations must treat data as a strategic asset rather than an isolated operational input. AI leaders can partner with data teams to facilitate this shift by implementing a unified enterprise intelligence architecture, which integrates four key operational planes:

- 1 — The Data Plane:** Managing diverse, distributed, and dynamic data sources through structured storage solutions like databases, warehouses, and lakes.
- 2 — The Data Control Plane:** Applying governance frameworks to transform raw data into usable intelligence.
- 3 — The Data Analysis Plane:** Using analytics and visualisation tools to explore data trends and unlock insights.
- 4 — The Decisioning Plane:** Leveraging modelling and simulation to drive data-informed strategic decisions.

## Why Is It Important to Enable Data Governance for GenAI?

Generative AI introduces new data value chains into enterprises in which internal data is used with external models to augment model outputs, tune and refine public models, and in some cases, build private models.

Figure 12: A Framework for Enabling Robust Data Governance



Source: IDC, 2025

Enabling data governance for AI drives improved relevancy and accuracy of AI model output, thus leading to meaningful and more impactful business outcomes. It also supports compliance with policies and regulations regarding the use of personal and/or corporate sensitive information in a responsible way.

## Data as a Product for Maximising AI's Impact

To maximise the potential of this architecture, organisations must move beyond viewing data as a static input and instead treat it as a product – a managed, refined, and continuously optimised resource. Embracing a data product approach not only reduces enterprise data silos and inefficiencies but also enhances decision-making and operational cost management.

Modern enterprises adopt this strategy because it enables repeatable processes and ensures more consistent, reliable data-driven outcomes. IDC recently predicted that by 2026, data-as-a-product architecture will help 50% of large enterprises to significantly break down data silos.

By developing integrated data products, organisations can eliminate redundancies, reducing storage and management costs while streamlining IT infrastructure. Additionally, centralised data products enhance governance by establishing common protocols for data usage and sharing, mitigating the risk of isolated practices that contribute to fragmentation.

## 7. Skills and Training

The CAIO should work closely with HR to facilitate comprehensive training programs for employees on essential data and AI skills, such as prompt engineering, data literacy, and other relevant competencies. The role should focus on developing tailored learning resources and content to support continuous skill development across the organisation. The CAIO should also assist in crafting detailed job descriptions for AI-related roles to ensure effective recruitment of top talent. To foster a culture that embraces AI, the CAIO and HR should also collaborate on integrating AI-centric KPIs into employee performance evaluations, aligning individual goals with the organisation's AI strategy and encouraging innovation and accountability.

## 8. Innovation

The CAIO should play a pivotal role in incubating new AI-infused products, services, process frameworks, and proprietary tools with the goal of creating long-term intellectual property for the organisation. To achieve this, the CAIO – if needed – should develop and leverage AI centres of excellence and innovation and incubation centres, fostering collaboration among start-ups, driving forward innovative initiatives. Additionally, depending on the size and aspirations of the company, the CAIO can work closely with the corporate strategy team to identify and pursue strategic acquisitions that can accelerate the organisation's AI capabilities and enhance its competitive edge in the market.

## 9. Change Management

Transitioning into an AI-fuelled business requires significant organisational change, and the CAIO should play a key role in managing the AI-driven aspects of this transformation. He/she will need to collaborate with various LOB executives, HR, IT, and the transformation office (if it exists), on change planning, management, and review. Figure 13 below provides a sample change management framework that should be applied to drive AI-infused business transformation.

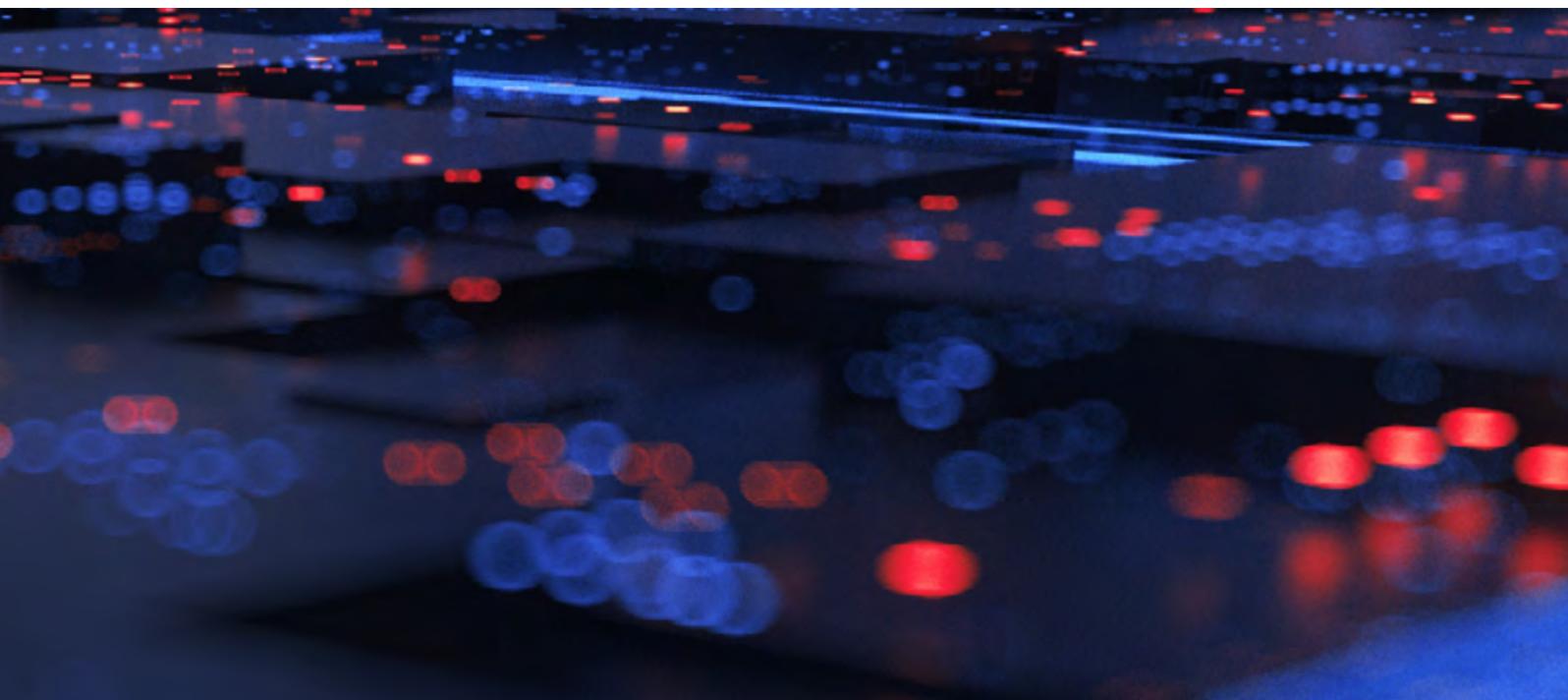
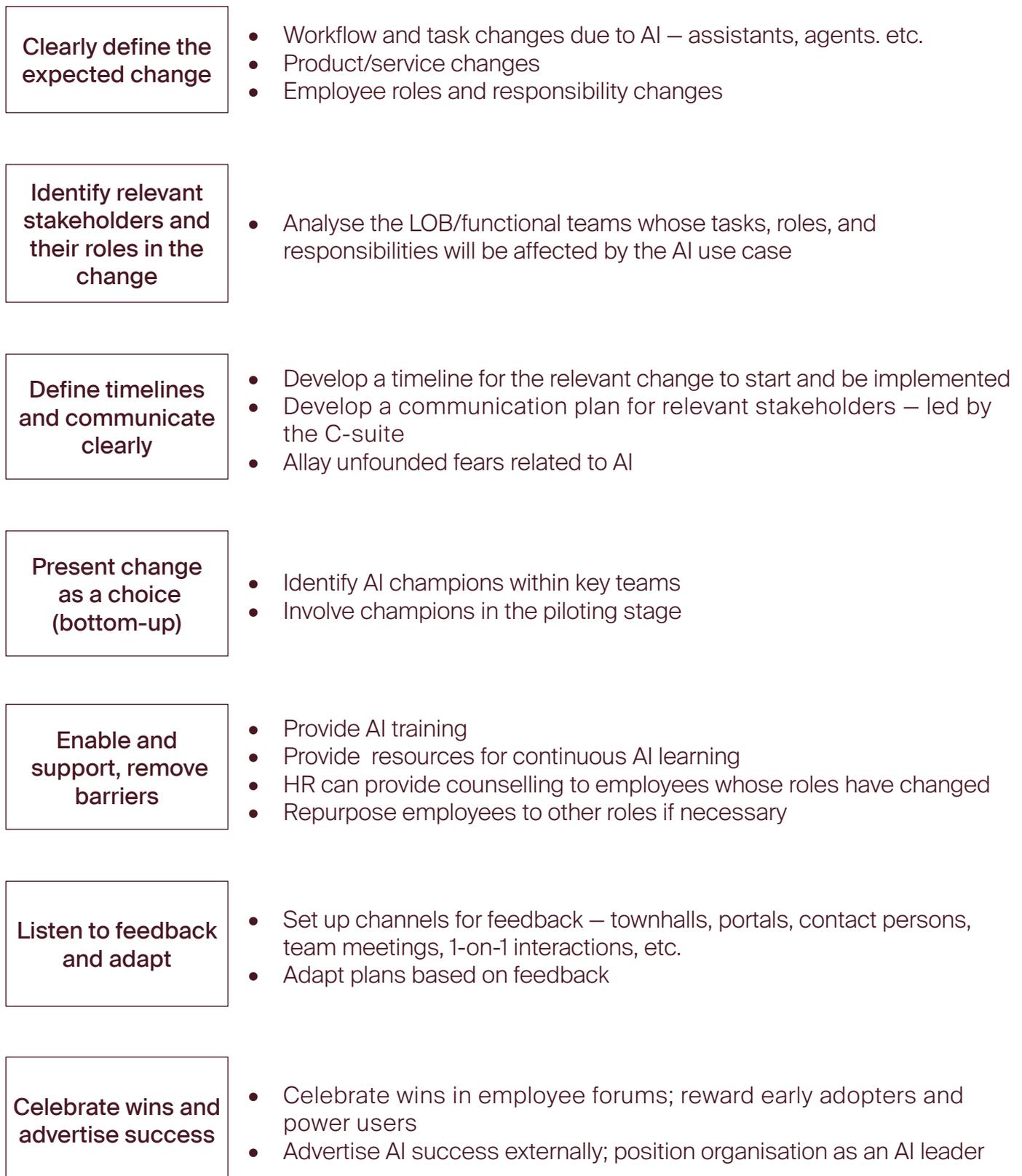


Figure 13: Change Management Framework



## 10. AI Partner Ecosystem Strategy

The CAIO plays a pivotal role in shaping and executing the organisation's AI partner ecosystem strategy, ensuring the company harnesses the full potential of external collaborations to drive innovation, efficiency, and competitive advantage. Strategic partnerships accelerate AI adoption by reducing implementation risks and fostering collaborative innovation, where life-cycle value becomes a key differentiator. Acting as a bridge between internal teams and external partners, the CAIO aligns technical, strategic, and business objectives to deliver impactful AI solutions.

The CAIO's engagement with partners is not limited to technology suppliers and solution providers, but also includes policymakers, academia, start-ups, research institutions, and industry peers. By embracing a multifaceted approach to partnerships, CAIOs can enable their organisations to address niche business challenges more effectively, leveraging co-innovation and co-creation to de-risk AI investments and enhance long-term scalability.

Strategic partnerships with technology services companies that can bring a consultative approach are essential for successful AI implementation. These organisations not only assess AI readiness and come up with a realistic AI road map, but also leverage tools, industry frameworks, and best practices that mitigate risks and accelerate value realisation. By conducting life-cycle value assessments, they ensure AI investments are scalable, adaptable, and aligned with evolving business needs.

The tables below provide a high-level framework for selecting technology vendors and professional services partners.

Table 4: Vendor Partner Selection Criteria

Dimension	Criteria Examples
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platform that supports development, deployment, and customisation of autonomous agents</li> <li>Tool/function calling support (APIs, plugins)</li> <li>Multi-agent collaboration</li> </ul>
Model Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compatible with major LLMs (OpenAI, Anthropic, Mistral, open source)</li> <li>Fine-tuning or RAG support</li> </ul>
Security and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role-based access</li> <li>Observability and logging</li> <li>Governance tools (e.g., approval loops, safety rails)</li> </ul>
Interoperability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrations with enterprise systems (Slack, SAP, ServiceNow, etc.)</li> <li>API-first architecture</li> </ul>
Scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Load-tested agent orchestration</li> <li>Deployment on public, private, and hybrid cloud environments</li> </ul>
Customization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developer extensibility (agent logic, workflows)</li> <li>Custom UI/UX for end users</li> </ul>
Maturity and Road Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated deployments in enterprise settings</li> <li>Clear road map for agent reliability and reasoning</li> </ul>
Business Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial and operational health</li> <li>Reference customers</li> </ul>
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparent pricing model (seat based, usage based, platform fee)</li> <li>ROI/TCO analysis</li> </ul>

Table 5: Technology Services Partner Selection Criteria

Dimension	Criteria Examples
Domain Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of agentic AI concepts</li> <li>• Prior experience in enterprise AI deployments</li> <li>• Familiarity with your industry and the requirements of different business function</li> </ul>
Technical Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong LLM/agent architecture experience</li> <li>• API integration, RAG, vector databases, orchestration tools</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven framework for POCs, pilots, and production workloads</li> <li>• Emphasis on agile co-creation and continuous improvement</li> </ul>
Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational change support</li> <li>• Business process engineering</li> <li>• Training, adoption, governance planning</li> </ul>
Security and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience meeting regulatory and security standards in your industry</li> </ul>
Team Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear roles: AI architects, prompt engineers, integration developers, PMs</li> </ul>
Support Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-deployment support, agent retraining, monitoring/observability setup</li> </ul>
Cultural Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative working model, transparent communication, trust alignment</li> </ul>
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible pricing option (e.g., value-based pricing options)</li> </ul>

## The Next Phase of the AI Revolution: Agentic AI Experimentation and Implementation

Agentic AI refers to an AI system that acts like an AI agent. These LLM-powered autonomous software entities are capable of perceiving their environment, engaging in reasoning, making decisions and acting upon them, and interacting with users or other systems like a human. Unlike standalone LLMs or rule-based software/hardware systems, AI agents have these common features:

### **Planning:**

AI agents can plan and sequence actions to achieve specific goals. The integration of LLMs has revolutionised their planning capabilities.

### **Perception:**

AI agents can perceive and process information from their environment to make them more interactive and context aware. This information includes visual, auditory, and other sensory data.

### **Tool Usage:**

Advanced AI agents can use various tools, such as code execution, search, and computation capabilities, to perform tasks effectively. AI agents often use tools through function calling.

### **Memory:**

AI agents have the ability to remember past interactions (tool usage and perception) and behaviours (tool usage and planning). They store these experiences and even perform self-reflection to inform future actions. This memory component allows for continuity and improvement in agent performance over time. Note: The usage of the term memory in the context of AI agents is different from the concept of computer memory (like volatile, non-volatile, and persistent memory).

According to the findings of a recent worldwide survey conducted by IDC, the concept of agentic AI appears to be gaining interest across industries, with sentiment leaning towards AI agents being involved in decision-making with human oversight.

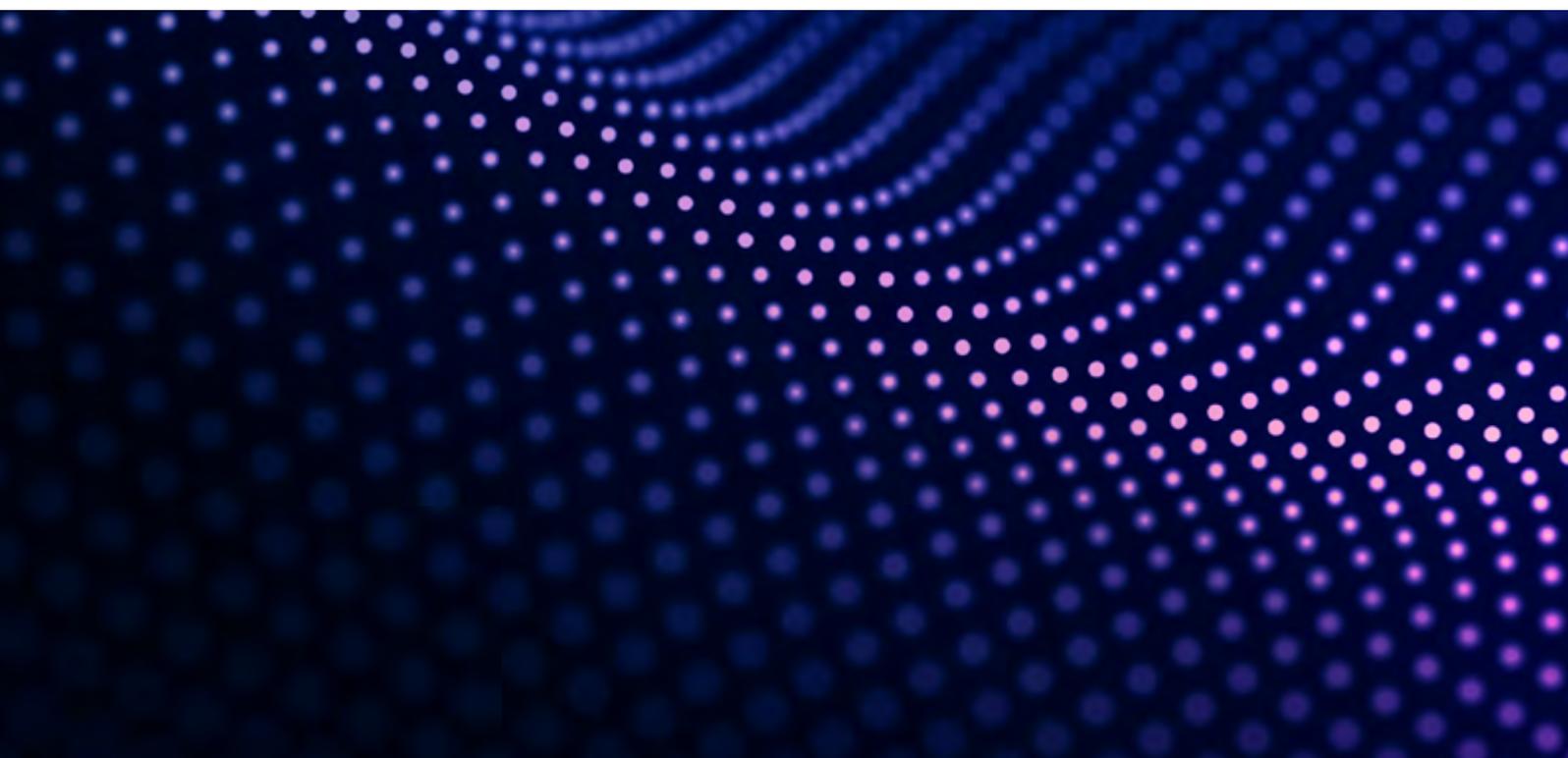
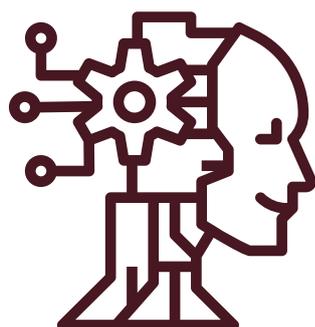
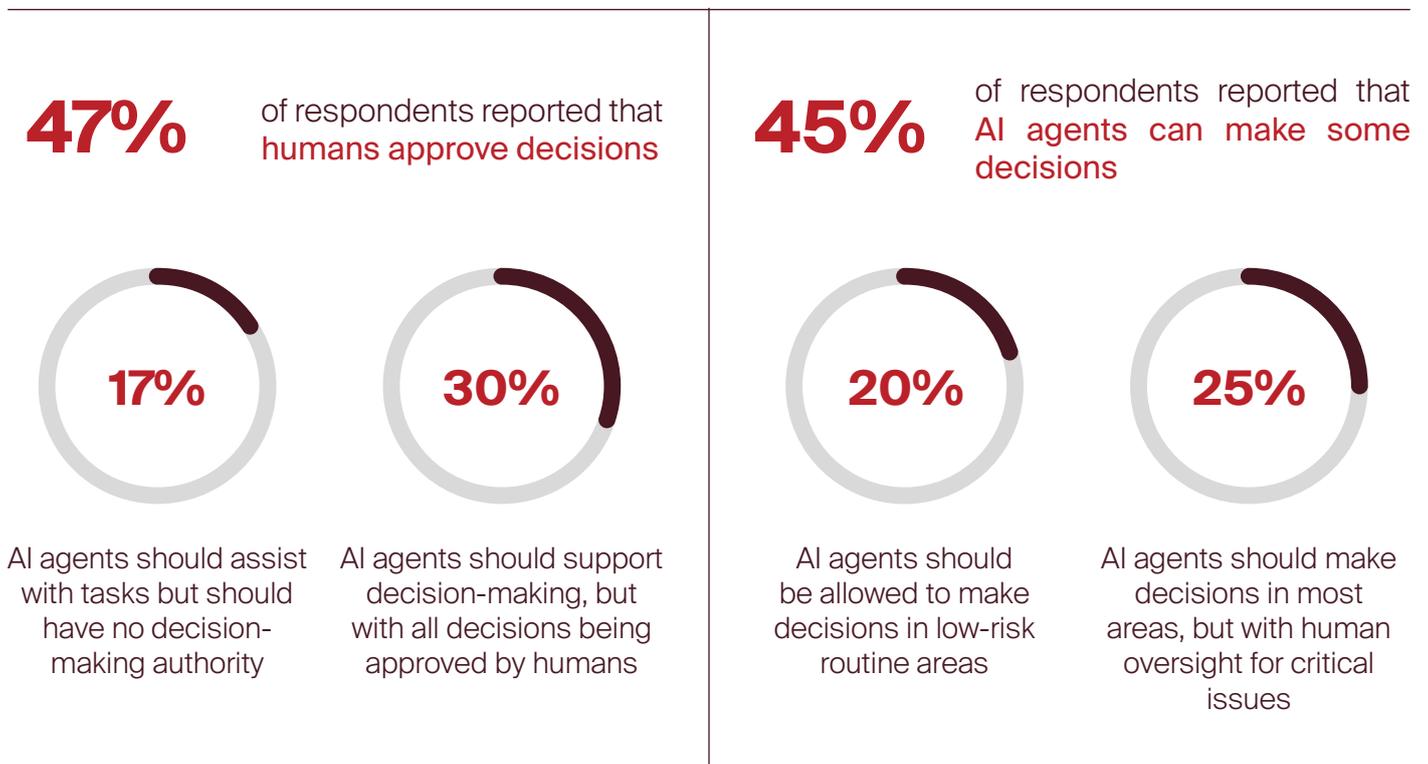


Figure 14: Organisational View of Using Agentic AI for Decision-Making Within Core Operational Processes

Which statement best represents your view of using agentic AI for decision-making within core operational processes in your organisation?

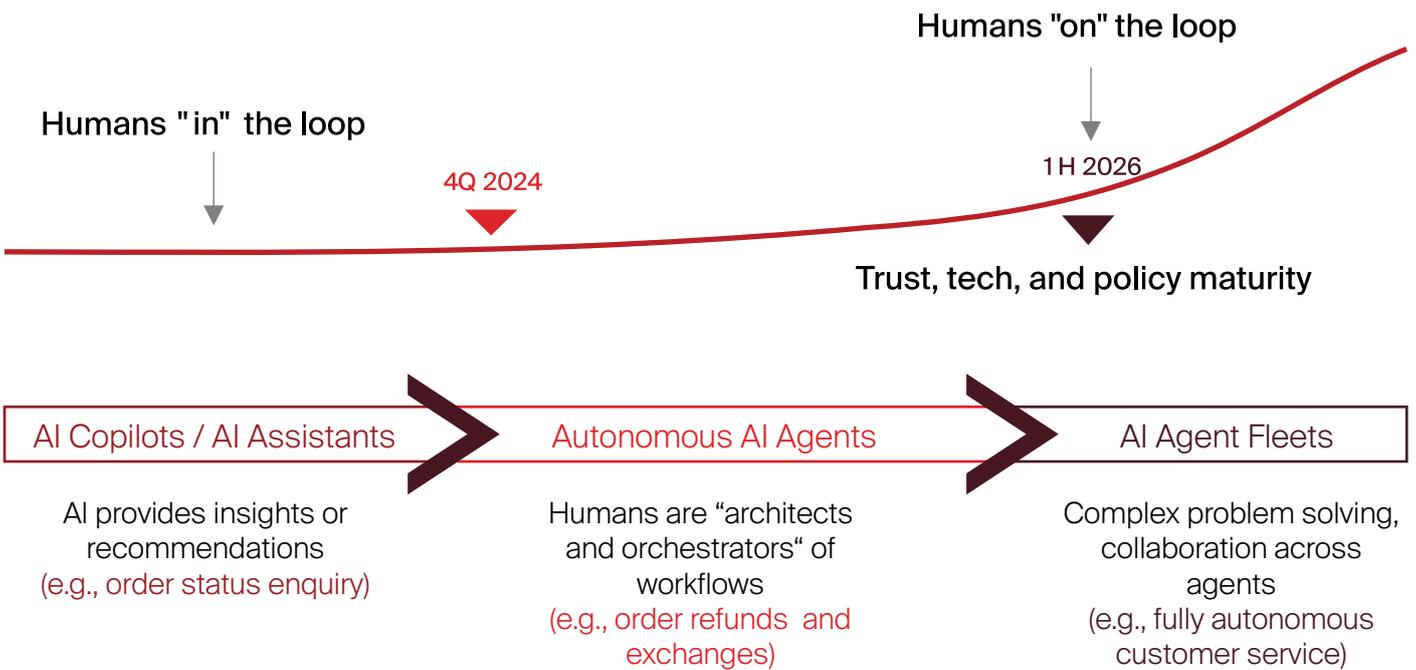


**7.8%**  
of respondents reported that AI agents should operate with full autonomy

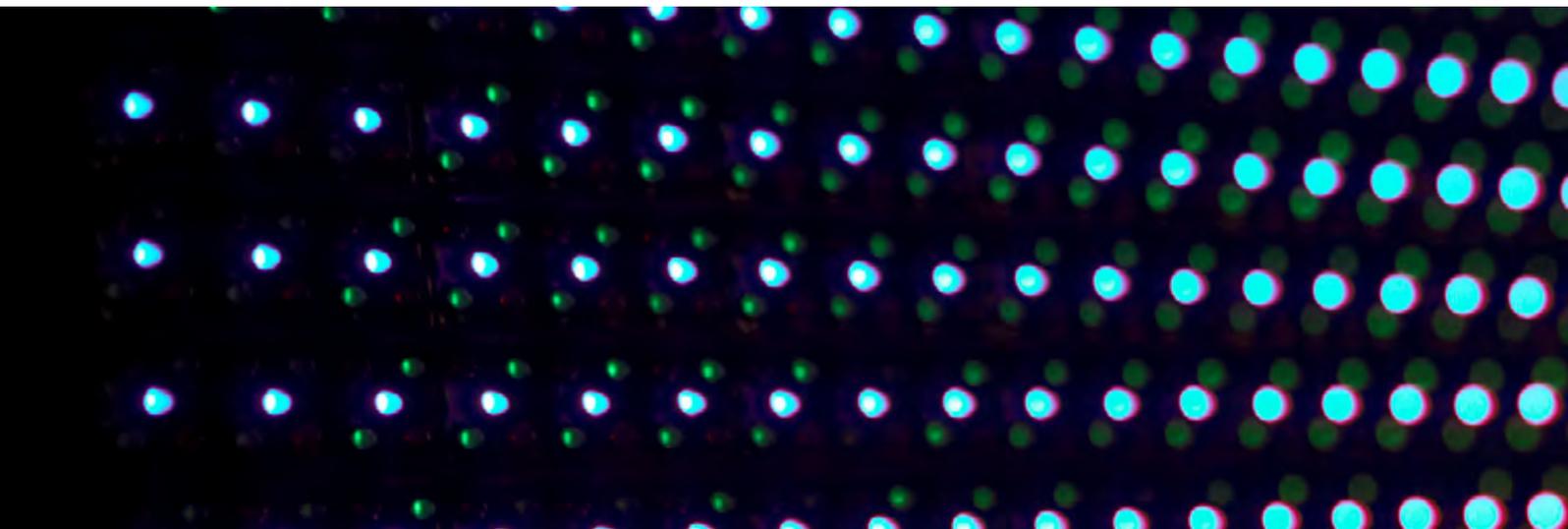
## The Evolution of Agentic AI

Agentic AI goes beyond copilots and assistants. While copilots and assistants provide recommendations or handle simple, predefined tasks like checking the status of an order, agents can act independently, make decisions, and carry out tasks with limited human input. The real shift starts with autonomous AI agents, which act independently within defined parameters, performing actions such as processing refunds, with humans serving as orchestrators of workflows. As technology, trust, and policy frameworks mature, we are moving towards AI agent fleets – networks of collaborative agents capable of handling complex, end-to-end tasks like fully autonomous customer service. This evolution requires centralised orchestration, where automation platforms manage, coordinate, and monitor agent activity. Systems of record and experience will become more dynamic and context aware, enabling fine-tuned workflows and proactive decision-making. As organisations progress, they will transition from "humans in the loop" to "humans on the loop," where human oversight ensures responsible, scalable use of agentic AI rather than direct task-level control.

Figure 15: The Journey from Copilots and Assistant to Agents



Source: IDC, 2025



## Sample Functional Use Case: End-to-End Customer Service Operations with Agentic AI

In a comprehensive customer service operation, agentic AI can manage the entire customer journey, from initial interaction to post-purchase support, by seamlessly integrating with order processing, inventory management, and shipment tracking systems.

**1**

### Customer Interaction:

The journey begins when a customer reaches out via chat, email, or voice. An AI agent autonomously engages with the customer, understanding their needs through natural language processing. Whether the customer is enquiring about a product, seeking support, or placing an order, the AI agent provides immediate assistance.

**2**

### Order Management:

Once the customer decides to make a purchase, the AI agent processes the order in real time. It confirms product availability by checking the integrated inventory management system, processes the payment securely, and sends an order confirmation to the customer. The agent can also handle modifications or cancellations autonomously, ensuring a smooth transaction process.

**3**

### Inventory Management:

The AI agent continuously monitors inventory levels, ensuring that the information provided to customers is accurate. It predicts future inventory needs based on current sales trends and historical data, automatically triggering restock orders to maintain optimal stock levels.

**4**

### Shipment Tracking:

After the order is processed, the AI agent provides the customer with real-time shipment tracking information. It integrates with logistics systems to offer updates on delivery status and estimated arrival times. If any issues arise, such as delays or address changes, the AI agent autonomously resolves them, keeping the customer informed throughout the process.

**5**

### Post-Purchase Support:

Following delivery, the AI agent remains available for any post-purchase enquiries, such as returns or warranty claims. It can autonomously handle these requests, ensuring that the customer receives timely and efficient support.

## Sample Task-Specific Use Case: Agent-Driven Software Development

Agentic AI in software development involves autonomous systems that can independently plan, build, test, deploy, and maintain software. These AI agents operate by controlling integrated development environments, continuous integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipelines, application programming interfaces (APIs), and data stores through connectors. For example, a development agent can write new code and refactor existing code, while a testing agent generates and runs unit, integration, and regression tests. This approach accelerates software delivery, enables developers to focus on higher-value tasks, and reduces costs by automating routine and complex development tasks.

## Key Performance Indicators for AI Success

Organisations must develop appropriate metrics and KPIs to measure the success of AI initiatives. These KPIs may be strategic, operational/functional, data and technology related, innovation driven, or skills focused. They will be assigned to different executive levels based on their roles and responsibilities in AI implementation and management.

The CAIO can advise and collaborate with the C-suite, business leaders, and human resources to establish KPIs from the top down. Additionally, the CAIO will own or co-own certain KPIs – particularly strategic ones – and, depending on the role's placement within the organisation, may also oversee technology-, data-, and innovation-related KPIs.



**Table 6: Key Metrics and Performance Indicators for AI**

Metric/KPI Category	KPI Owners	Metrics	Sample KPIs
Strategic	Board, CEO, executive leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue growth (%) from AI-infused products and services</li> <li>Cost savings (%) from AI-infused processes</li> <li>NPS improvement due to AI-enabled services</li> </ul>
Operational/ Functional	Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer satisfaction (CSAT) rating of AI-enabled customer service bots and agents</li> <li>% improvement in average resolution time with AI-augmented human agents</li> <li>% improvement in customer retention and churn rates due to AI-enabled personalisation</li> </ul>
	Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% improvement in average turnaround time for RFP responses, proposals, and bids with AI enablement</li> <li>% improvement in customer conversion rates due to AI-enabled customer and competitor analyses</li> </ul>
	Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalisation</li> <li>Content generation</li> <li>Lead generation</li> <li>360-degree customer view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in return on ad spend with AI-enabled personalisation</li> <li>Increase in revenue per customer from upselling, cross-selling, and next-best offers</li> <li>% of creative content (e.g., press releases, brochures, presentations, ads, promotions) developed with AI support</li> <li>Number of leads from website AI-enabled search assistant</li> <li>Time saved on customer data synthesis</li> </ul>
	Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy usage</li> <li>Sustainable products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% reduction in emissions and energy consumption due to use of AI (e.g., digital twins)</li> <li>% improvement in asset utilisation due to AI-enabled predictive maintenance</li> </ul>
	Operations, production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiency</li> <li>Productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% or number of business processes infused with AI/IPA-enabled automation</li> <li>% improvement in time to market with AI-enabled automation</li> <li>% of AI agents (vs. human workers) in operations or production</li> </ul>
	Finance, legal, procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiency</li> <li>Productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% time or number of man-hours saved in financial reporting with AI use</li> <li>% time or number of man-hours saved in contracting and negotiations</li> <li>% time or number of man-hours saved in RFP analysis for supplier selection</li> </ul>
	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of AI-enabled HR processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, training)</li> <li>% improvement in time to hire with AI-enabled recruitment</li> <li>% of AI agents (vs. human workers) in HR processes</li> </ul>

Metric/KPI Category	KPI Owners	Metrics	Sample KPIs
Data and AI technology related	Data office, IT, software engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data quality</li> <li>• Data accuracy</li> <li>• Data usage</li> <li>• Model performance</li> <li>• Developer productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of missing data in a dataset</li> <li>• Number of data incidents reported over a specified period</li> <li>• Track the number of data assets accessed or queries made by departments against total available data assets</li> <li>• Model output accuracy / content relevance score</li> <li>• Model response time / mean time to repair</li> <li>• % of code developed using AI</li> <li>• Developer time saved with AI</li> </ul>
Innovation related	CEO AI COE M&A team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI research and intellectual property development</li> <li>• Products and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number or % of AI-infused products</li> <li>• Number of patents / value of AI-enabled intellectual property (IP)</li> <li>• Number of AI start-ups incubated</li> <li>• Value of investment in emerging / advanced AI firms</li> <li>• Number and value of AI firm acquisitions</li> </ul>
Skills related	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of employees trained on AI use – e.g., prompt engineering</li> <li>• Number of AI resources available for self-learning</li> <li>• Number of AI experts, data scientists on employment</li> </ul>

Source: IDC, 2025

### Critical AI Skills and the CAIO Team

In order to rapidly implement AI, organisations need to invest in critical AI and data expertise. Some of these skills may already exist within an organisation’s IT or data teams, or could possibly be re-purposed for AI.

Organisations that adopt the "Dedicated" model may choose to move these skills into the dedicated AI office or allow the AI office to leverage them from where they currently reside. Many organisations have skills shortages and may need to invest in new recruitment and significant training efforts.

**Data engineers** make data available for data scientists and AI engineers. Initiatives around data ingestion, discovery and profiling, cleansing and labelling, enrichment, and publishing for AI model development are carried out by data engineers.

**Data scientists** are responsible for collecting and analysing data and developing advanced analytics and predictive models to extract insights and drive data-driven decision-making.

**AI business analysts** offer significant business domain and process expertise and play a crucial role in identifying opportunities, defining requirements, and ensuring that AI solutions align with organisational goals.

**AI engineers** design, build, and optimise machine learning models, ensuring scalability and integration with existing systems and processes.

**MLOps engineers** focus on the end-to-end life cycle of AI models, starting from deployment to monitoring and maintenance.

**AI researchers** conduct cutting-edge research to explore new AI models and methodologies, pushing the boundaries of current technologies.

**AI product managers** oversee the development and life cycle of AI products that are internally developed or comes from external third parties, ensuring they meet organisational needs and deliver value to users.

**UX/UI designers** craft intuitive and engaging interfaces for AI-driven products, enhancing user interaction and satisfaction. This role has been emerging as an important capability that organisations and solution providers seek as they want to build UIs that enable users to interact with organisational data via natural language queries.

**AI governance leads** are responsible for establishing governance frameworks for AI systems, ensuring compliance with regulations, managing risks, and aligning AI projects with ethical and organisational standards.

## From Sustainable AI to AI for Sustainability

As AI leaders, the mission to drive transformative AI adoption must align with broader organisational sustainability goals. AI technology, despite its potential, presents a double-edged sword regarding sustainability. On one hand, AI infrastructure, especially GPU-intensive operations, demands significant energy, potentially impacting environmental targets. On the other hand, AI offers transformative capabilities to enhance sustainability across industries.

For example, AI can optimise energy consumption in manufacturing, streamline logistics for reduced emissions, and support renewable energy adoption with predictive modelling. These advancements not only reduce environmental footprints but also unlock operational efficiencies and cost savings.

AI leaders must champion a balanced approach, leveraging AI's capabilities while mitigating its environmental costs.

Some considerations for building a sustainable AI practice are outlined below:

<p><b>Energy-Efficient AI Models:</b> Prioritise models that balance performance with resource optimisation.</p>	<p><b>Sustainable Data Centres:</b> Advocate for facilities powered by renewable energy and designed with cooling efficiency.</p>	<p><b>Circular Economy Principles:</b> Promote the reuse and recycling of high-cost AI infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>Net-Zero Frameworks:</b> Incorporate AI into broader environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives to achieve long-term environmental objectives.</p>
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Ultimately, AI leaders are uniquely positioned to lead the charge in transitioning AI from a sustainability challenge to a sustainability enabler. By embedding AI into their organisations' strategies responsibly, AI leaders can align technological transformation with the evolving expectations of internal and external business stakeholders as well as government and society. By leveraging AI for social good and strengthening governance practices, organisations can further enhance societal wellbeing, promote transparency, and ensure accountability, while fostering inclusivity and equity. In doing so, they ensure that technological advancements serve not just organisational goals but also the broader public interest.

## Achieving AI Readiness in Brief: An Overview for CAIOs

Table 15 provides a summary of the key activities for CAIO to focus on.

**Table 15: A Checklist for CAIOs**

Build an Organisation-Wide AI Strategy	Build an AI strategy and road map that aligns with the organisation's business goals, and identify all key business stakeholders to ensure successful execution.
Develop Organisational Guardrails and Policies	Implement a responsible AI policy to counter rollouts with essential governance – both for IT and business.
Develop Internal Skills; Enable an Innovation-Driven Culture	Assess workforce requirements and launch training programs to upskill and reskill the workforce in emerging technologies; ensure cross-collaboration among different functional teams for an accelerated innovation journey.
Create a Partner Ecosystem-Led Approach for AI Adoption	Build an ecosystem of trusted partners to co-create and co-innovate; build solutions to address specific industry challenges.
Embrace a Data-First Approach	Manage and govern data based on a structured approach; capitalise on the data to build an AI-enabled business use case.
Build a Hybrid, Multicloud Architecture	Modernise the entire IT stack to enable a microservices-based, cloud-native IT architecture to drive platform-led AI innovation.
Enable an AI Platform-Based Model of Life-Cycle Management	Invest in an AI platform to manage and govern the entire model development, implementation, and operations life cycle.
Assess and Address Privacy and Security Risks	Ask essential questions about data security and privacy risks based on an organisation-wide trust framework.
Define the Business Needs and Identify Use Cases	Design thinking-led, structured brainstorming and ideation sessions will uncover multiple value generators and business benefits.
Embark on Pilots and Measure Their Impact	Establish metrics and other measures to make decisions about the value of use cases.
Scale from Pilots to Actual Deployments	Prioritise use cases with the biggest value and start scaling to create a wider organisational impact; ensure continuous monitoring and improvement.

## The Importance of AI Leadership

As we look to the future, the importance of AI leadership, epitomised by the role of the CAIO, cannot be overstated. In an era where AI is reshaping industries and redefining competitive landscapes, having a dedicated leader to steer AI initiatives is crucial. The CAIO not only champions the integration of AI technologies into business strategies but also ensures that these technologies are leveraged ethically and effectively to drive innovation and growth.

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, the CAIO prepares organisations to navigate the complexities of an AI-driven world. This leadership role is pivotal in aligning AI efforts with strategic business objectives, thereby unlocking new opportunities for efficiency, enhanced decision-making, and superior customer experiences. As organisations strive to remain at the forefront of technological advancement, the CAIO will be instrumental in guiding them through the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, ensuring they are well positioned for sustainable success in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

### The Evolution of the CAIO

As organisations accelerate their AI adoption, an AI leadership role will become central to navigating this transformation, regardless of where the role of the CAIO resides within the organisation. The CAIO's journey begins with developing an AI vision and strategy, assessing AI readiness, bridging technology and business gaps, and ensuring the successful execution of AI initiatives. Success in this role requires vision, leadership, technological understanding, collaboration and communication skills, and adaptability. In the early stages, the CAIO will be required to get the AI strategy off the ground and strive for quick wins to develop confidence among stakeholders and secure their buy-in. Here, the CAIO needs to take calculated risks, while ensuring the necessary guardrails are in place and adhered to. His/her ability to raise awareness or educate LOB executives and get them to participate in use case identification will be key.

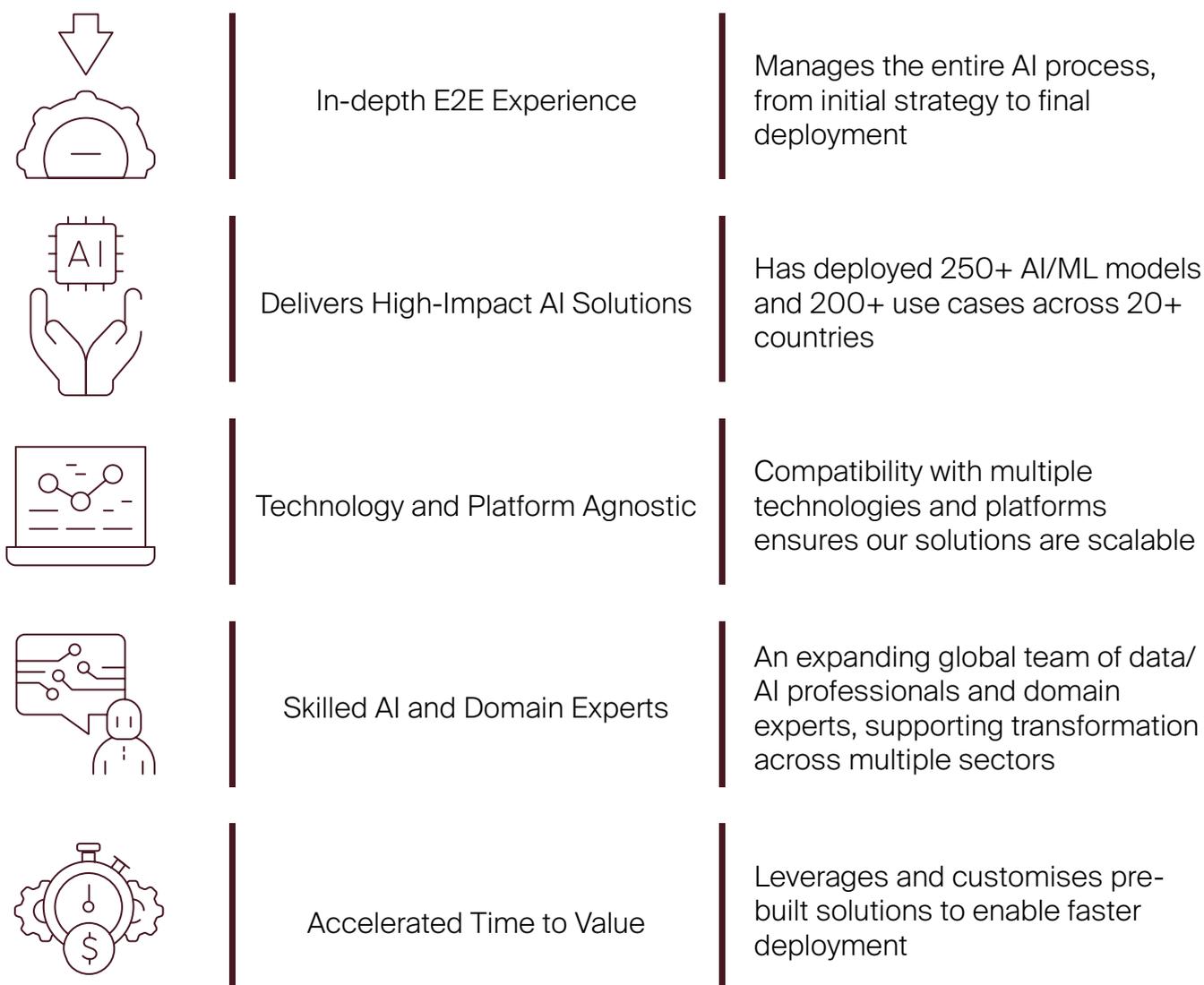
As the organisation progresses to more advanced AI usage, the CAIO will need to play the role of an orchestrator, ensuring the coordination of efforts and initiatives and enabling centralised governance. In the later stages of maturity, the CAIO should also look to transfer and embed AI capabilities within LOB teams so they can own and develop AI solutions for their needs. In summary, the role and responsibilities of the CAIO will continue to evolve as the AI adoption maturity of the organisation evolves.



## e& enterprise's Perspective on Enabling a Data and AI-Driven Business

e& enterprise, the technology services arm of the e& Group, is among the key regional technology companies based in the UAE. It is committed to driving digital transformation and maximising the value of enterprise technology investments. With a diverse client portfolio spanning the government, banking, transportation, education, retail, utilities, entertainment, resources, and technology sectors, e& enterprise serves over 1,200 enterprise clients across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye, with Egypt identified as a key market for future growth. e& enterprise's next-generation solution portfolio spans the cloud, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, data and AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and customer experience (CX) domains. With data and AI sitting at the centre of its solution delivery approach, e& enterprise supports organisations in leveraging AI to enhance business outcomes through a structured, end-to-end approach. By leveraging its in-house data and AI team, tools, and frameworks, the company focuses on improving customer lifetime value and delivering measurable business outcomes.

Figure 16: e& enterprise's Value Proposition



e& enterprise's approach begins with a consultative process, assessing AI maturity to align solutions with strategic priorities. This enables organisations to identify opportunities, structure initiatives, and develop an AI adoption road map tailored to their specific needs. The company also explores co-innovation and co-creation opportunities with its customers.

Figure 17: e& enterprise's Data and AI Services for the Entire AI Life Cycle



Once the strategy is established, e& enterprise drives the design, development, and implementation of solutions that align with customers' business objectives. This process follows a technology vendor-agnostic approach, ensuring that selected technologies deliver value. A key aspect of e& enterprise's go-to-market strategy is its AI platform-based model, which enables organisations to operationalise, scale, and manage AI solutions in a structured manner – aligned with internal policies, guidelines, and compliance requirements.

During the development and implementation phases, the focus remains on scalability, governance, and performance optimisation to support sustainable AI adoption. e& enterprise focuses on balancing accuracy, cost efficiency, and regulatory compliance, ensuring solutions remain effective and adaptable to changing business needs.

e& enterprise also provides support and managed services to optimise deployed solutions and deliver sustained performance and business value. These services prioritise workforce enablement, iterative improvements, and impact assessments to enhance the overall effectiveness of the solutions deployed.

e& enterprise delivers industry-specific and function-specific AI capabilities that integrate seamlessly into existing business processes. These solutions address vertical challenges while enhancing operational AI applications to improve efficiency, decision-making, and customer experiences. Some of these solutions are displayed in Figure 18.

“ AI agents are transforming business operations, enabling real-time automation, decision-making, and hyper-personalization. Success isn't about replacing human intelligence but augmenting it. The future belongs to organizations that seamlessly integrate AI agents—adapting strategy, governance, and collaboration to drive efficiency, enhance customer experiences, and unlock new levels of innovation and growth.

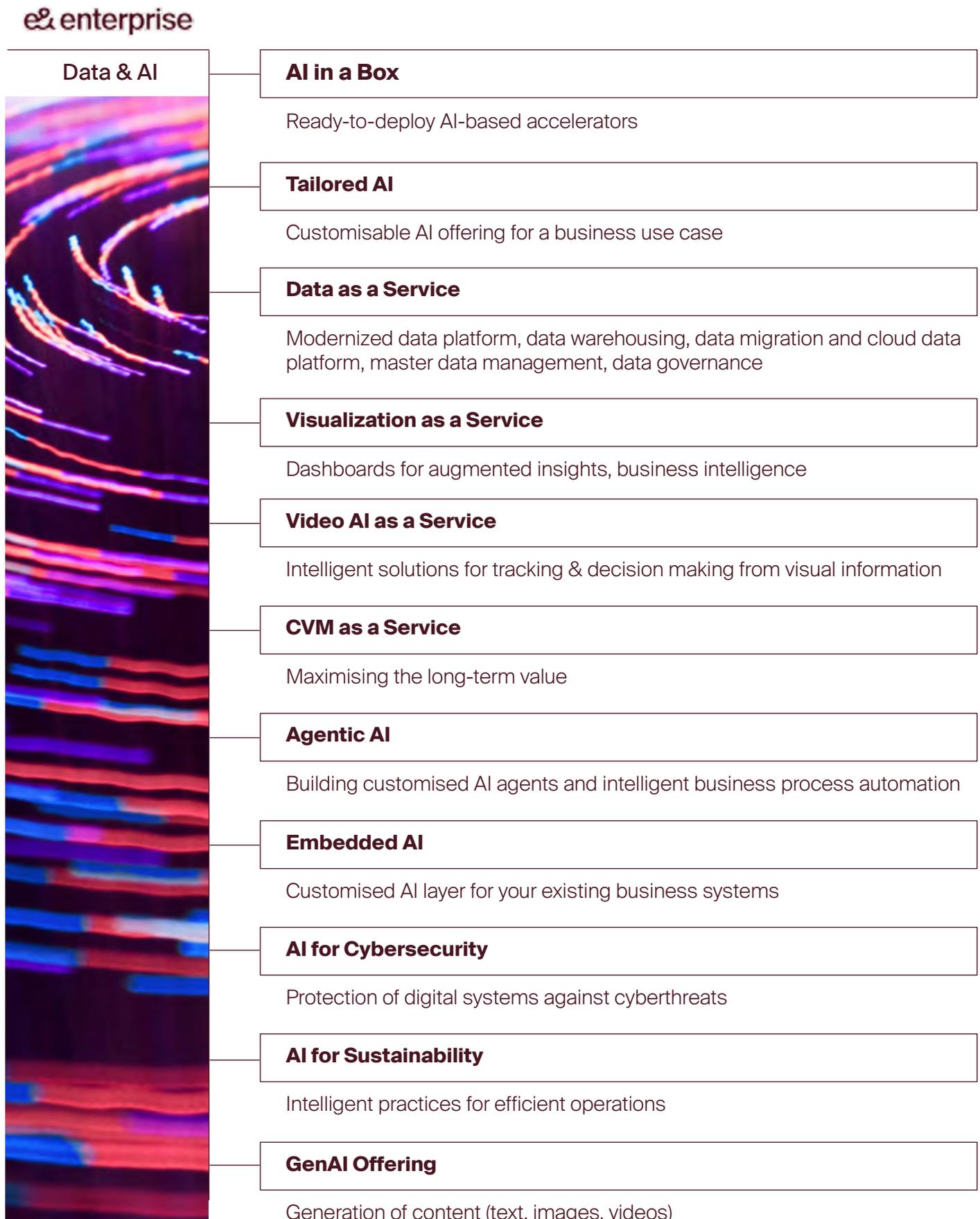
**Amit Gupta**

Vice President of Data & AI Practice, e& enterprise

”



Figure 18: e& enterprise Solutions Tailored to Specific Business Needs



## e& enterprise AI Academy

The e& enterprise AI Academy aims to accelerate AI adoption by serving as a global hub for education, collaboration, and innovation. It enables leaders and professionals to fully utilise AI, offering a practitioner-led approach where programs are crafted and delivered by industry experts with practical experience in implementing AI. Each course emphasises practical applications with real-life use cases, providing participants with insights that drive measurable business outcomes.

Figure 19: e& enterprise AI Academy

### e& enterprise AI Academy

The learning journeys blend objectives with cutting-edge global and regional AI trends and research, forming a robust and unified educational framework.









**AI for Executives**  
The executive imperative in AI and navigating the AI landscape to drive business value.



**AI for Product Managers**  
The executive imperative in AI and navigating the AI landscape to drive business value.



**AI for Business**  
Strategic AI considerations and public sector readiness for AI implementation.



**AI for Practitioners**  
Strategic AI considerations and public sector readiness for AI implementation.

Source: e& enterprise, 2025

As a global centre, the AI Academy bridges knowledge gaps across sectors, supporting the UAE AI Strategy 2031 by connecting academia, industry, and government to advance AI innovation. The Academy provides tailored learning pathways for various stages of the AI journey, including:

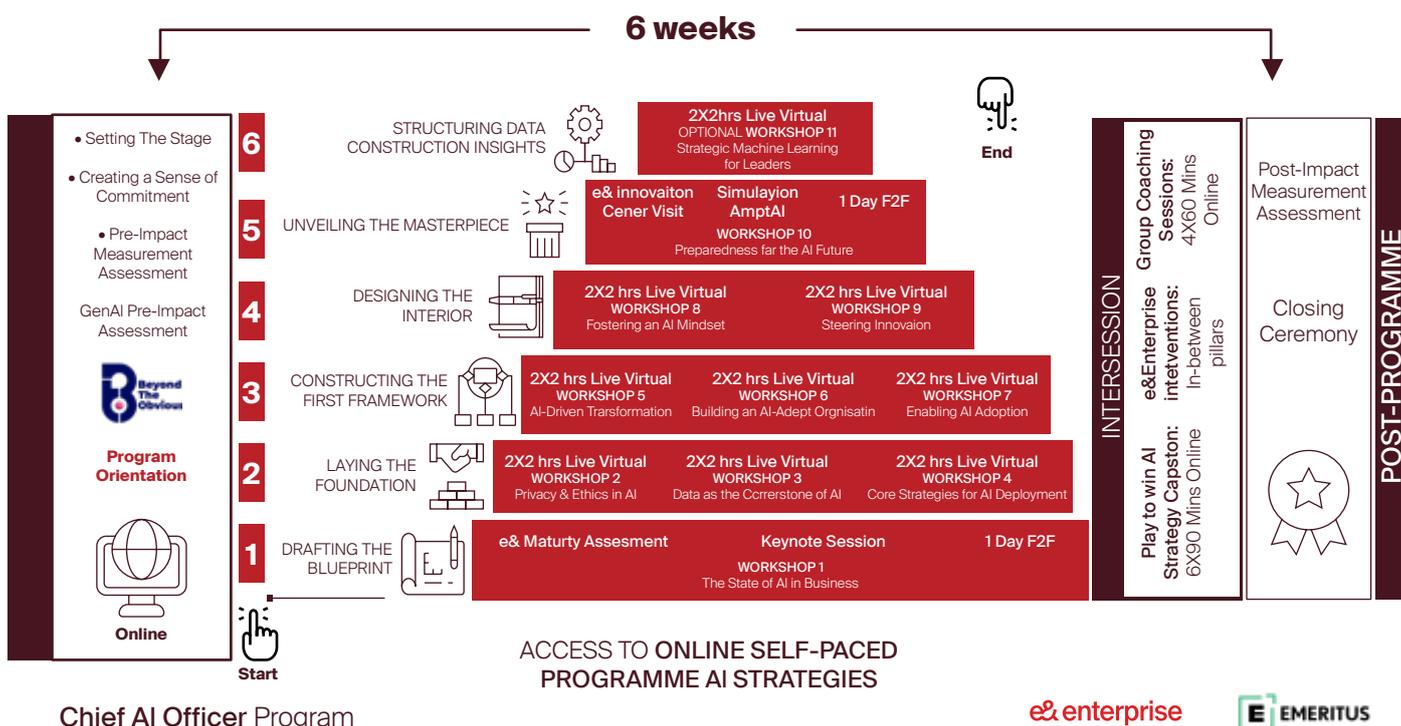
- **AI for Executives:** Featuring the Chief AI Officer Program, which equips leaders with skills to drive AI strategy and innovation.
- **AI for Business:** Focused on strategic implementation for decision-makers to improve business processes.
- **AI for Product Managers:** Enhancing product development through AI integration.
- **AI for Practitioners:** Offering technical expertise for data scientists and engineers.

Beyond traditional learning, the Academy hosts roundtables, hackathons, certifications, and initiatives like the FutureMinds youth program, along with an AI Council for leaders. These offerings support digital transformation while helping to build AI-native enterprises and redefine leadership for the future, ensuring participants are prepared to lead in the AI era.

### e& enterprise Chief AI Officer Programme

The e& enterprise Chief AI Officer Programme is tailored for executives eager to lead AI innovation and strategy within their organisations. This programme equips participants with cutting-edge insights, practical expertise, and industry-recognised credentials, empowering them to become trailblazers in an AI-driven future.

Figure 20: e& enterprise Chief AI Officer Programme



Source: e& enterprise, 2025

The programme is a high-impact, six-week executive experience designed in partnership with Emeritus. It offers a blended learning approach, combining in-person sessions with live virtual components, interactive webinars, and peer networking. The curriculum is structured to cover key aspects from AI fundamentals, trends, and enterprise strategy to ethical AI governance, risk management, AI strategy design, execution models, and fostering an AI-first leadership mindset. Participants culminate their learning with a Capstone Project where they develop a tailored AI Transformation Playbook, receiving expert input and peer feedback. Beyond the programme, graduates gain access to an exclusive alumni network, ongoing advanced insights, curated events, and opportunities for industry visibility, reinforcing e& enterprise's commitment to building a robust AI-savvy leadership community equipped to drive meaningful and responsible AI adoption across diverse industries.

The programme is ideal for CAIOs, CEOs, CIOs, CTOs, CXOs, and senior executives seeking to embed AI into their business strategies; government and public sector leaders shaping national digital agendas; and heads of digital transformation, strategy, and innovation leading enterprise-change initiatives.

## About e& enterprise

e& enterprise is a digital transformation leader supporting governments and large-scale organisations in building and scaling their digital core.

Through optimising operations, enhancing customer engagement, and data-driven decision-making, we enable seamless, sustainable, and secure transitions into the evolving digital world.

Currently operating in the UAE, KSA, Egypt, Turkey and Oman, e& enterprise brings cutting-edge digital scalable solutions designed to deliver tangible business value and address the unique challenges faced by organisations and executives across industries.

With a proven track record as a trusted digital transformation partner, technical expertise, and the ability to deploy and manage complex solutions, e& enterprise provides collaborative tailored solutions that empower customers to navigate their end-to-end digital transformation journey.

To learn more about e& enterprise, visit our site or reach out:

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📍 e& enterprise

🌐 [www.eandenterprise.com](http://www.eandenterprise.com)

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## About IDC

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. IDC helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community make fact-based decisions on technology purchases and business strategy. More than 1,100 IDC analysts provide global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries worldwide. For 50 years, IDC has provided strategic insights to help our clients achieve their key business objectives. IDC is a subsidiary of IDG, the world's leading technology media, research, and events company.



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