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AI

CONCRETE SUCCESSFUL PRAGMATIC

THE HANDBOOK | FIRST EDITION | 2026

Dear readers

Artificial intelligence is having a tangible impact on the Swiss economy. It is increasing productivity, enabling new forms of value creation and transforming business models. For Switzerland, as a knowledge- and export-oriented country, the effective use of AI is is a key success factor.

However, what is crucial is not the potential, but its application in the everyday operations of companies. This is exactly where our AI Playbook comes into play: it is aimed at managers and decision-makers in Swiss SMEs and offers practical guidance on how AI can be clearly understood, realistically assessed and implemented step by step.

Our competitiveness increasingly depends on how consistently AI is used where it creates real added value. Using concrete approaches and examples, this playbook shows how companies can take their first steps, gain experience and integrate AI into existing processes in a targeted manner.

The creation of this playbook was only possible thanks to the combined expertise. I would like to express my special thanks to Implement Consulting Group and to all the experts who have contributed their knowledge and practical experience.

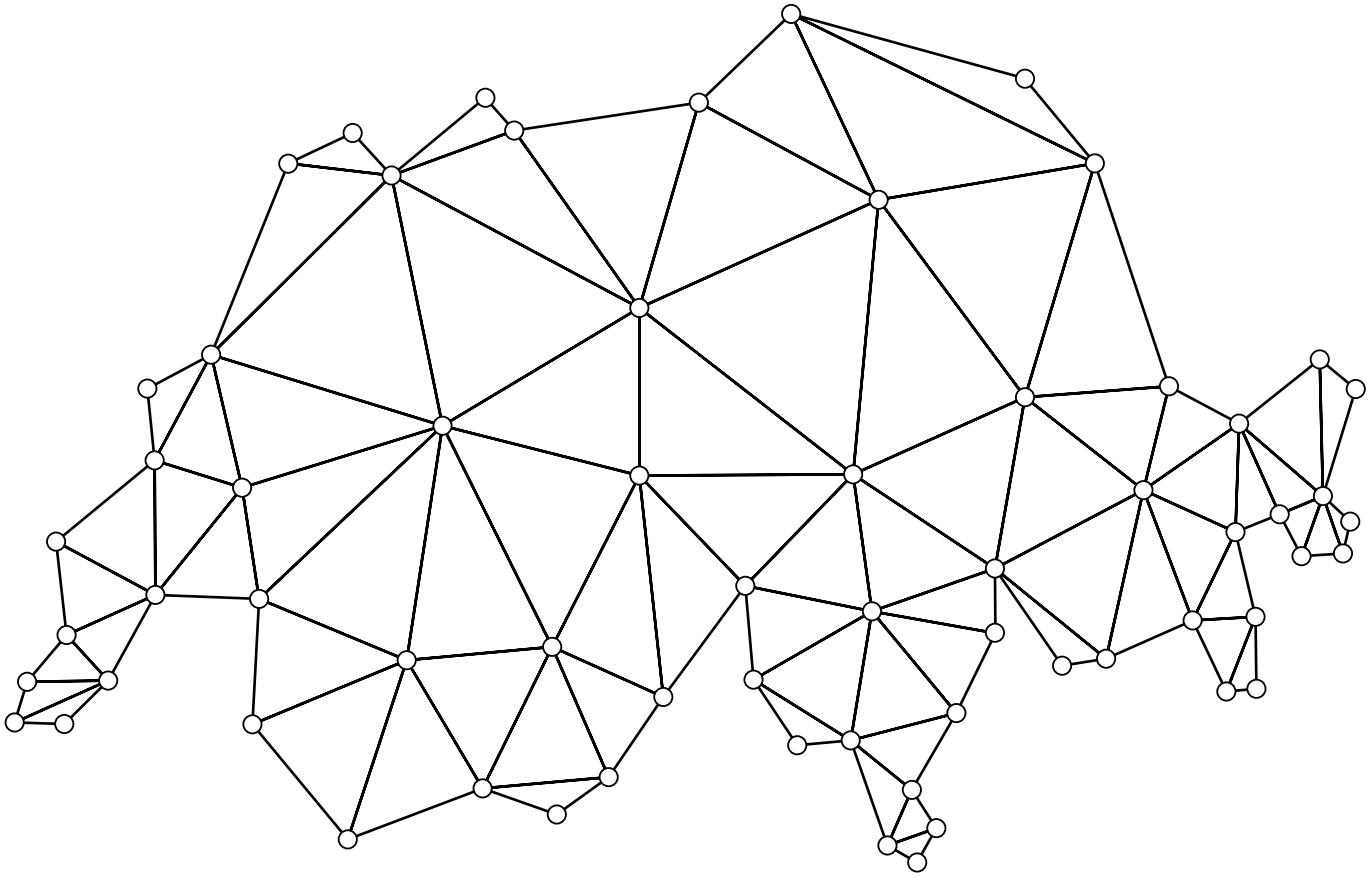
Now it is up to you. Take advantage of the opportunities of this technology and actively shape the change. We hope that this AI playbook will support you in implementing AI effectively and responsibly within your organisation.

Andreas Meyer,
President of digitalswitzerland

“As the targeted use of AI is also crucial for many Swiss SMEs, the aim of this hand-book is to make a practical contribution to the well-being of companies and Switzerland.”

Franziska Barmettler,
CEO digitalswitzerland

CONTENTS



digitalswitzerland as the umbrella organisation for digitalisation, brings together the forces of business, science, civil society and public authorities to drive forward digital change responsibly. With a public-private AI action plan, resources are mobilised across Switzerland to promote the importance of AI for quality of life, the economy and research, as well as trust, openness and collaboration. The focus is on dialogue about principle-based, agile and pragmatic digital governance. Together with its members, digitalswitzerland initiates projects, strengthens cross-sector cooperation and builds bridges between the private sector and public authorities to ensure that Switzerland can use AI in a meaningful, secure and competitive way.

“The bottleneck for scaling is not technology. It is capacity, gover-nance simplicity, and execution.”

Frank Dannacher, Data & AI Team, Implement Consulting Group

For whom this handbook makes a difference

With this handbook, digitalswitzerland addresses decision-makers, shapers and innovative minds across Switzerland. It is aimed at anyone who defines the direction, legitimacy and impact of AI* within their organisation. This handbook provides concrete, pragmatic approaches, ideas and guidance on how AI can be used effectively, responsibly and in alignment with the company's goals.

FOR WHOM IS THIS HANDBOOK PARTICULARLY RELEVANT?

Strategic corporate leadership
This handbook is aimed at corporate leadership who develop strategic direction, help shape corporate culture and are responsible for investment decisions. The handbook supports the anchoring of AI as a strategic priority, responsible decision-making and the balancing of impact and risk.

Overall responsibility for the operational business
For the executive management, the handbook provides guidance on how to decisively integrate AI into market-oriented strategies, value creation models and project portfolios. It helps to set cross-functional priorities, clarify objectives and consolidate resources in order to achieve measurable results.

Responsibility for transformation and scaling
People responsible for major transformation initiatives will find practical guidance in this handbook for planning, managing and scaling AI across units and locations. The focus is on commitment, coordination and ensuring that organisational prerequisites, capabilities and guidelines are consistently established and implemented.

In short:
This handbook is a practical tool for anyone who wants to not only introduce AI into their organisation, but also anchor it sustainably and effectively.

AI is a leadership task – but it only pays off if employees are on board

AI transformation starts at the top. As a leader, you are the driving force: you set the direction, provide guidance and create enthusiasm. However, even the best AI initiatives will have no impact if they are not supported by the people in your organisation.

Your task is to understand how you, as a leader, need to approach AI and then to inspire, empower and lead by example – so that AI is not only introduced but also truly lived.

*In this handbook, AI primarily refers to generative AI, but other levels of AI are occasionally addressed – an introduction follows.

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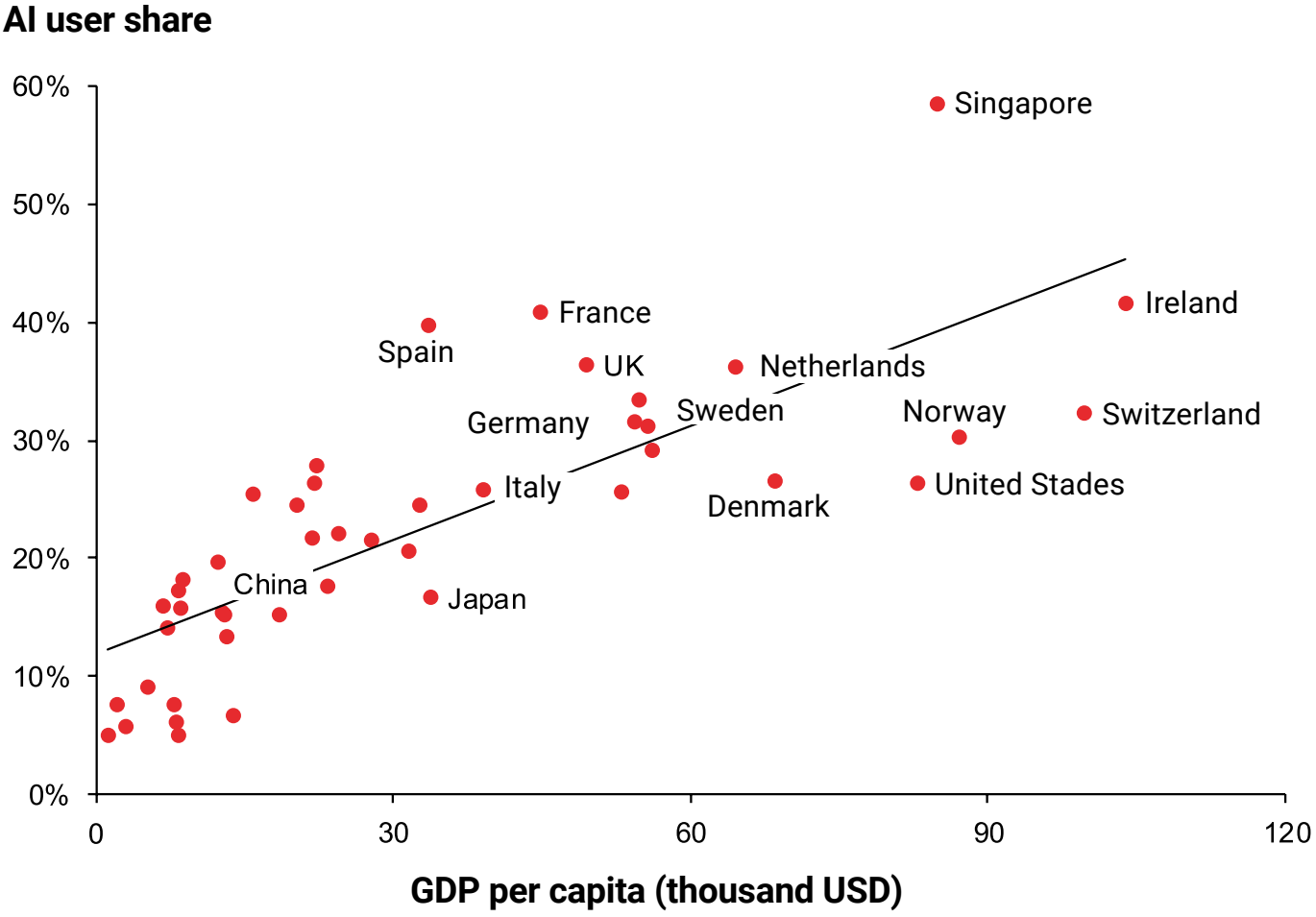
SWITZERLAND & AI

Economic potential and starting position

AI user share and GDP per capita

of selected countries (as of June 2025)



In international comparison, Switzerland has potential to catch up to countries with comparable GDP per capita. Countries in Europe such as France or Spain also have a comparatively higher proportion of AI users.

Sources: Microsoft Telemetry, World Bank, CEIC (June 2025)

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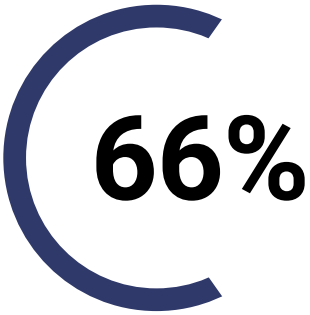
AI potential in Switzerland

+11% GDP



Annual GDP contribution in peak year
If AI is widely used in Switzerland, it could increase gross domestic product by up to 11%. AI improves the quality of processes and decision-making, speeds up workflows through automation and enables employees to handle more complex tasks more efficiently. This allows companies to respond more quickly to change, drive innovation and strengthen their long-term competitiveness. AI thus becomes a key lever for productivity, growth and long-term success in the Swiss economy.

of jobs are expected to be enhanced by generative AI
Around two-thirds of all jobs in Switzerland are expected to be affected by generative AI in the future. Professions requiring higher education will be particularly affected, as AI acts in a supportive and automating role, in contrast to previous waves of automation, which primarily affected jobs with lower educational requirements

Source: Study by Implement Consulting Group on behalf of Google (link)

AI can strengthen Switzerland's position as an innovation hub in the long term and promote growth

Economic opportunities
Generative AI can strengthen future economic growth in Switzerland and exceed current long-term GDP forecasts. Leading banks are already raising their growth forecasts from 2028 onwards due to new expectations regarding generative AI. The 11% increase in annual GDP in the peak year assumes that Switzerland will overtake other European countries in AI adoption.

Sectors with productivity increases
The highest productivity increase in Switzerland are expected in the financial and information sectors, business services and the public sector. In these sectors, AI can provide particularly strong support to people at work. Productivity increase of up to 1.9% per year are expected there.

As the Swiss economy is strongly shaped by these sectors, this results in an overall potential GDP contribution of up to 11%. However, this assumes that AI is used effectively on a large scale by Swiss companies and organisations.

"If AI is a marathon, then we are currently at kilometre 5."

Alexander Ilic, Head of ETH AI Centre

Swiss super computer "Alps"

Why Switzerland?
Switzerland is a major financial centre and a hub for international companies, particularly in the pharmaceutical, industrial and high-tech sectors. This international orientation, combined with strong institutions and leading AI research, creates ideal conditions for the rapid and widespread adoption of artificial intelligence.

Adoption and innovation driver Switzerland
In an international comparison, Switzerland is in a strong position and possesses key foundations for the development of AI and the large-scale use of the technology. These foundations include not only universities and institutes but also infrastructure and the regulatory environment.

In particular, the radiance of world-leading institutions such as ETH, EPFL and CSCS (Swiss National Supercomputer Centre) is decisive for attracting technology companies from abroad that are looking for well-trained specialists.

Likewise, AI infrastructure, including the Alps supercomputer inaugurated in 2024, is an important location factor for Switzerland.

However, the Swiss economy is unable to raise the necessary investment amounts for financing and commercialising AI, which are required for the cost-intensive development of a local AI economy. Therefore, Switzerland relies heavily on foreign investors, particularly from the USA but also from the EU.

Open questions for the Swiss economy
Despite the great potential of AI, companies in Switzerland face important decisions that often need to be made under uncertainty. In addition to geopolitical challenges, the enormous speed of technological development is a new and difficult-to-assess variable. Many leaders wonder when and to what extent they should launch AI initiatives, whether they should rely on their own solutions or use existing offerings ("make or buy"), and best to prepare their organisation and employees for the changes. These questions cannot be postponed. Those who wait too long risk leaving valuable potential untapped and causing Swiss companies to fall behind in international comparison.

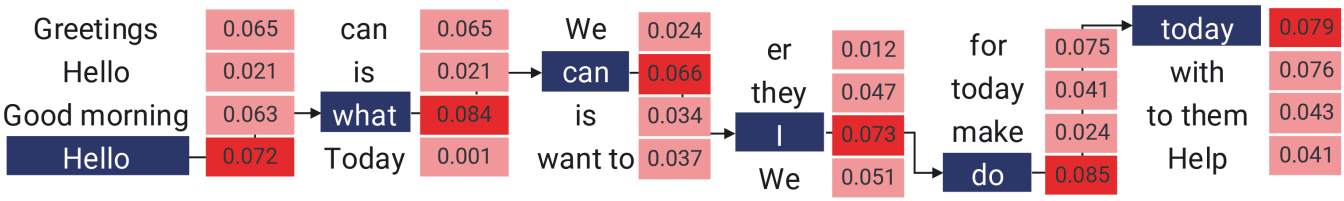
1

INTRODUCTION

- What is artificial intelligence
- Current developments and challenges in AI
- Structure of the handbook

How does generative AI generate a response?

“Next Token prediction”



“Hello, what can I do today?”

- While traditional software is deterministic (same input —> same output), LLMs work probabilistically:
- They calculate probabilities for many possible next tokens and select differently depending on the settings. In doing so, LLMs follow the concept of the most probable next token and select the sentence element with the highest probability.
- Result: **The same prompt can generate different responses.**
- This leads to significantly different outputs, often described as a form of hyper-personalisation.

The capabilities of AI are developing rapidly and go far beyond mere analytical tasks

Artificial intelligence is long since more than a buzzword – AI already shapes how we work, make decisions and communicate today. But what exactly is behind AI, and how do the new possibilities differ from previous technologies?

AI can help people solve tasks faster and better. With generative AI (GenAI), machines can understand humans and interact with them using language, sounds and images.

THE CAPABILITIES OF AI:

Forecasting and prediction
In addition to weather forecasting, similar predictive models are also used, for example, in inventory management.

Categorisation and recognition
In addition to filtering spam in emails, AI can also be used for categorisation and pattern recognition in legal documents.

Optimisation
AI not only supports optimisation in GPS navigation but also plays a crucial role in improving energy efficiency in data centres.

FOCUS ON GENERATIVE AI

AI has become accessible to the general public, particularly since OpenAI released ChatGPT in 2022 and has come into the focus of many private companies, NGOs and politicians. Generative AI is a subcategory of artificial intelligence and significantly extends previous capabilities. (see graphic on the right)

Multimodality
A major change brought about by generative AI is that these systems are capable of processing and combining different types of data such as text, image, audio and video. This enables new, innovative applications – from automated contract analysis to creating presentations based on voice commands. In this context, four fundamental capabilities of generative AI can be defined:

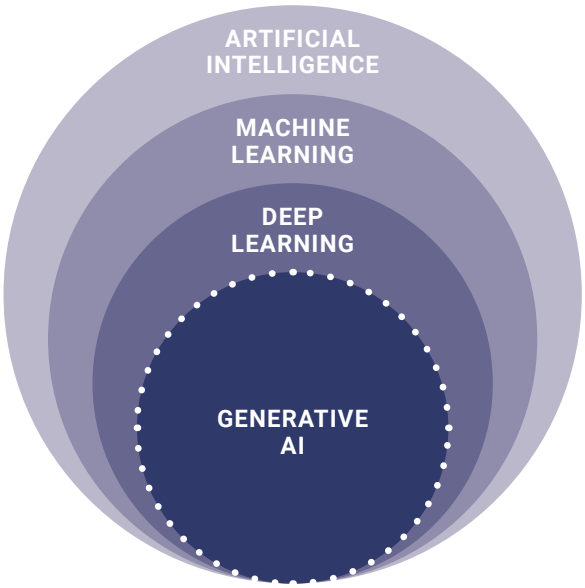
Generate content
GenAI can be used to create content, such as drafting an email, creating a graphic or composing a song.

Modify content
GenAI can modify existing content, for example by simplifying and translating texts or by adjusting the style of an image.

Analyse content
GenAI can derive insights from a variety of different data types such as text, image or audio, and can simplify and summarise them.

Dialogue
GenAI can be used to simulate a conversation with experts, conduct brainstorming session or obtain feedback.

With these capabilities, the use of AI is shifting from purely analytical tasks to creative, dialogue-oriented and multimodal applications. For companies, this means that processes can not only be automated, but also improved in quality, enabling entirely new business models. The key is to identify the potential in a targeted manner and to apply it responsibly – always with a focus on quality, safety and the concrete added value for all stakeholders.



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The rapid development of generative AI

2022

Initial practical trials
- AI chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT) demonstrate broad utility in everyday life for the first time.
- Companies begin to experiment: texts, emails, simple analyses.
- Discussions on data protection, reliability and responsibility begin.

Implication for SMEs:
There is **no obligation to use** yet – but initial **eye-opening moments and learning curves.**

2023

From experiment to tool
- AI is integrated into existing workflows (e.g. writing, research, programming).
- Productivity gains become measurable, especially in knowledge work.
- Images, languages and text are converging – AI is becoming more versatile.
- Companies are paying more attention to guidelines and rules for its use.

Implications for SMEs:
AI becomes a **useful tool for individual roles,** no longer just a toy.

2024

Integration & regulation
- AI functions are becoming an integral part of standard software (Office, CRM, marketing tools).
- The focus is shifting from "What can AI do?" to "Where does it provide concrete added value?"
- Regulation (EU AI Act) and quality requirements are gaining importance.
- Trust, traceability and data protection are coming to the fore.

Implications for SMEs:
The focus is now on **targeted use, cost-benefit analysis** and **clear rules.**

2025

AI in day-to-day business
- AI takes on clearly defined tasks (e.g. support suggestions, internal evaluations, drafts).
- Processes are partially automated, but humans remain responsible.
- AI is becoming cheaper, more reliable and easier to use – even without large IT teams.
- More solutions run directly on end devices or within existing tools.

Implications for SMEs:
AI becomes **practical, affordable and suitable for everyday use** – competitive advantages arise from smart use, not from size.

2026

2026 – Consolidation & focus on impact
- AI is a standard working tool – similar to email or Excel.
- Successful companies use AI in a targeted, responsible and economical manner.
- Clear distinction: What do we automate? Where does human judgement remain crucial?
- The focus is on sustainability, security and scalability.

Implications for SMEs: It is not about “more AI”, but about making **better decisions with AI.**

Democratisation and scaling is one of four defining trends among 85% of companies already using AI

The development of generative AI is progressing rapidly, transforming the economy, society and technology at an unprecedented pace. Never before has a technology reached such a broad user base so quickly: for example, ChatGPT took only 60 days to gain 100 million users.

Companies around the world are experimenting, scaling and professionalising their AI applications. In doing so, they are facing new challenges.

FOUR TRENDS ARE SHAPING THE AI LANDSCAPE:

Democratisation and scaling: AI is no longer just a topic for programmers and academics. Thanks to intuitive user interfaces and natural language, employees from all areas can now work with AI. Already 85% of companies use generative AI in at least one business area, with the trend rising.

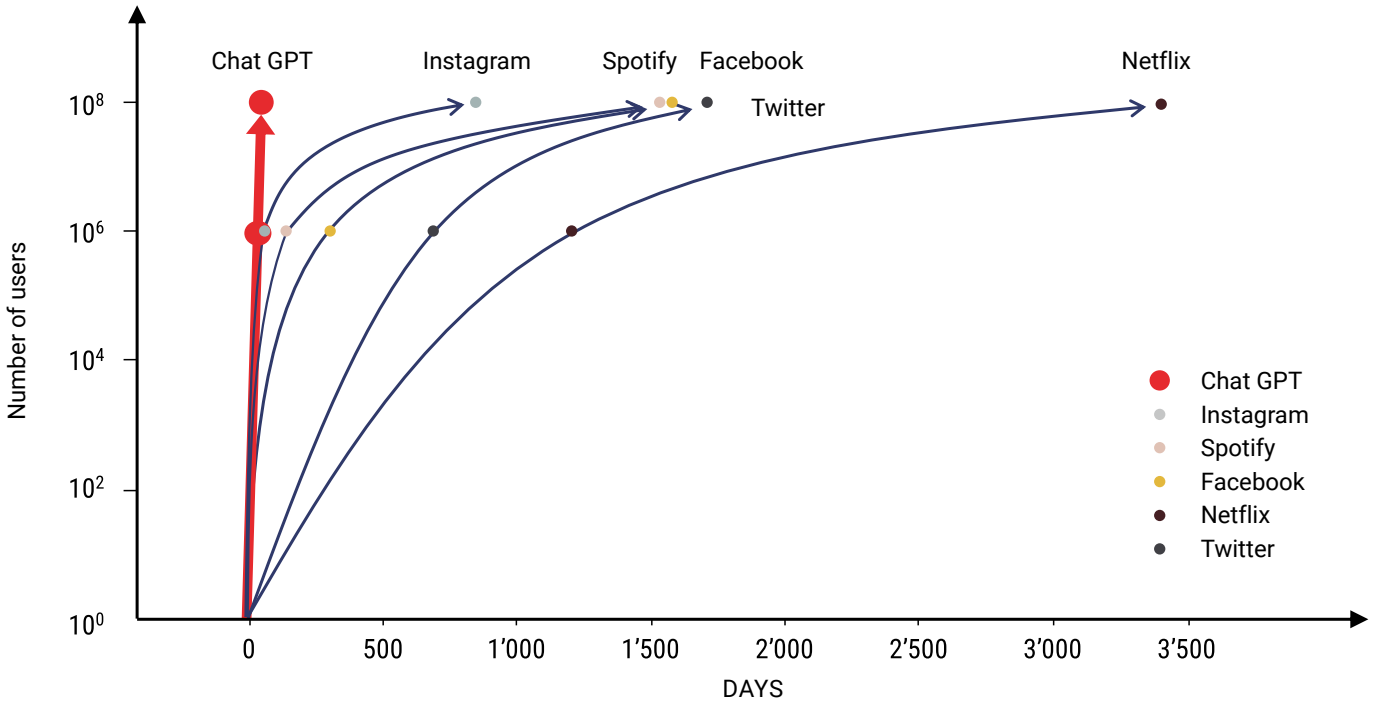
Data as a bottleneck and competitive advantage: The integration of AI with proprietary, often sensitive company data is becoming a crucial success factor. However, many companies struggle with fragmented data landscapes, poor data quality and outdated infrastructure. Only 22% of companies consider their current IT architecture to be AI-ready.

Investment and innovation boost: Enormous sums are being invested worldwide in AI infrastructure, chips and cloud capacities. At the same time, new business models are emerging and companies are experimenting with a wide range of use cases – from productivity tools to complex, domain-specific solutions.

Governance, security and regulation: With rapid proliferation comes increasing demands on data protection, security and ethical guidelines. Regulatory initiatives such as the EU AI Act are setting new standards, while companies are establishing their own governance structures and “Centres of Excellence” to manage risks and enable innovation.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this dynamic, many companies are still struggling to embed AI widely and sustainably. Many organisations are surprised or simply overwhelmed by the speed of development.

Number of days until 100 million users of the technology (ChatGPT: 60 days)



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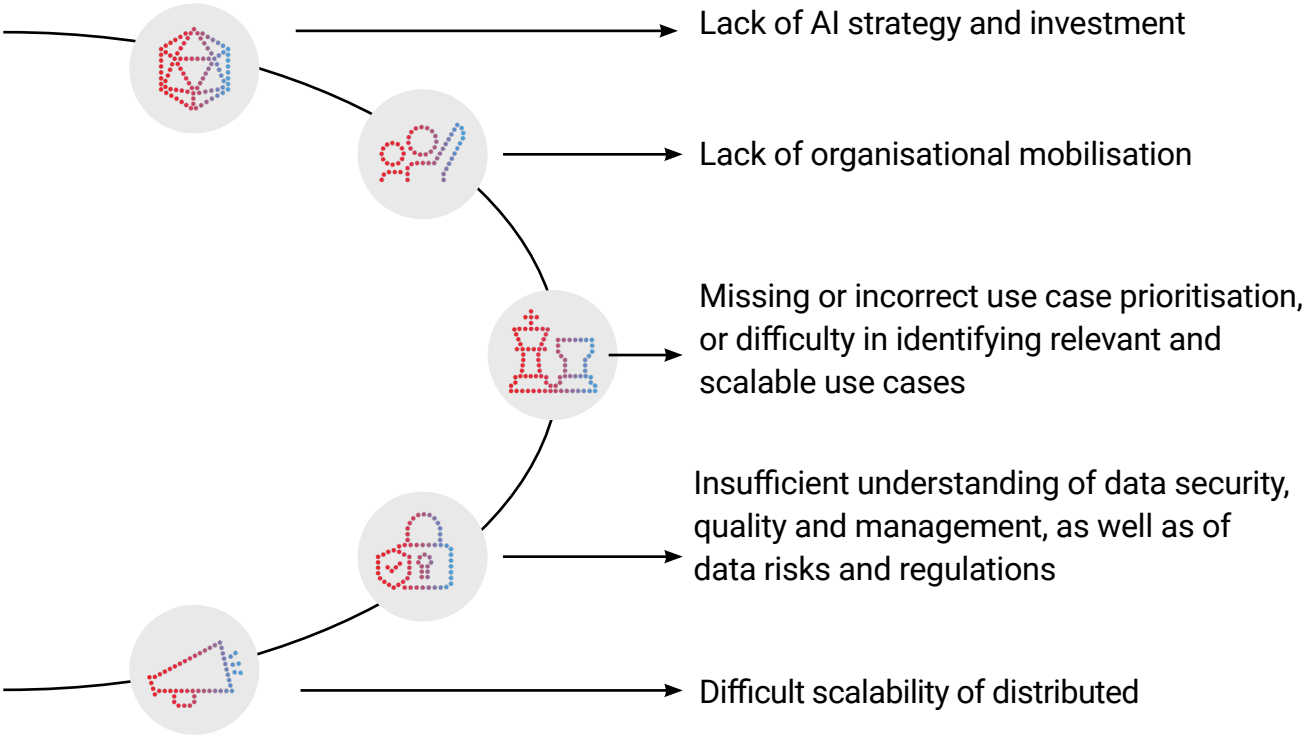
ADOPTION

comes with various obstacles

Adoption obstacles

Many companies face similar hurdles when adopting AI. The main pitfalls on the path to successful AI adoption are …

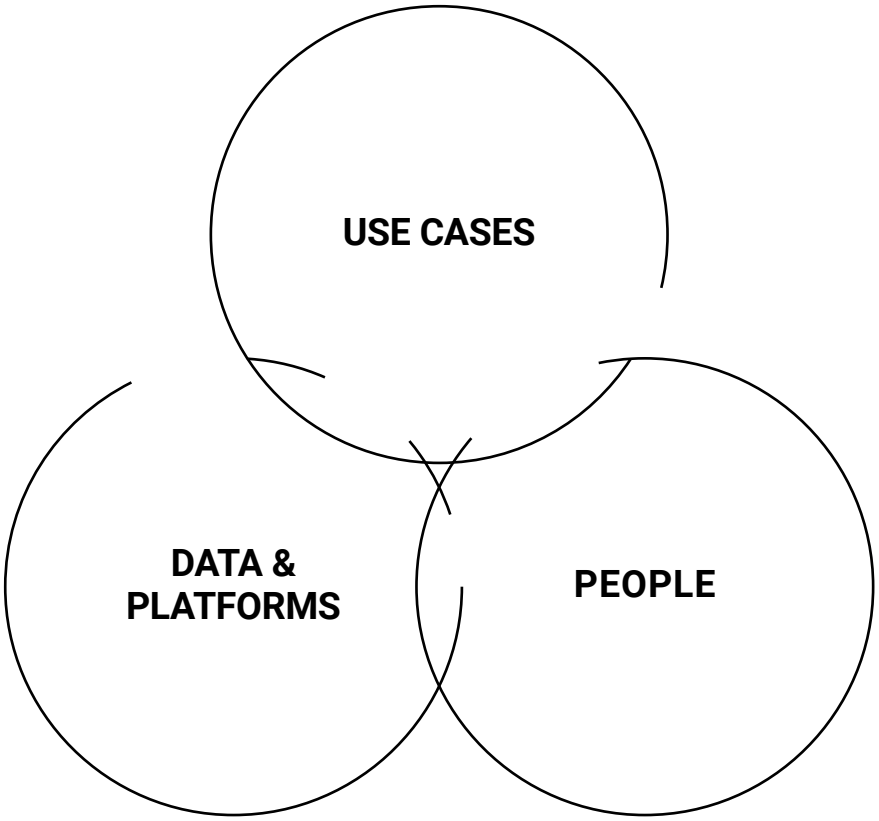


Studies show that a systematic approach to AI adoption is needed to overcome these obstacles.

1. **AI is a reality – but real value creation remains the exception:**
   According to studies, 85% of companies worldwide already use generative AI in at least one business area. However, only 37% consider their solutions production-ready and less than a quarter feel truly "AI-ready". (Economist, "Unlocking enterprise AI: opportunities and strategies", 2024)

2. **Success is achieved through systematic implementation and not through individual initiatives:**
   Those who consistently address all dimensions of use cases, data & platforms and people, scale AI faster and more sustainably. This is shown not only by international benchmarks but also by the latest empirical analyses (OpenRouter, "State of AI", 2025).

3. **Sustainable anchoring is the new success indicator :**
   It is not the rapid introduction, but the permanent anchoring of AI solutions that determines success. Companies that establish a genuine "fit" between business problems and AI solutions early on build sustainable competitive advantages. (OpenRouter, "State of AI", 2025)



Only the systematic combination of these three success factors leads to sustainable success with AI

The handbook is structured around three key success factors: use cases, data & platforms and people

This handbook is structured around the three key success factors that are crucial for the successful use of AI in organisations: use cases, data & platforms and people.

Each chapter addresses the most important challenges and presents pragmatic solutions.

Use cases
The first chapter addresses how companies can identify, prioritise and successfully implement the right AI use cases. The focus is on linking AI initiatives closely with the corporate strategy and creating concrete added value, rather than simply pursuing isolated individual projects. Step by step, it shows how suitable use cases are developed, tested and scaled from a clear ambition.

Data & Platforms
The second chapter covers the technological and data-related foundation for AI. It shows why a solid data foundation, consisting of structured and unstructured data, is more important today than ever. Modern data management approaches and flexible platforms help to make data from across the entire company usable and maintain it continuously. Particular attention is given to challenges such as data quality, security and regulatory requirements.

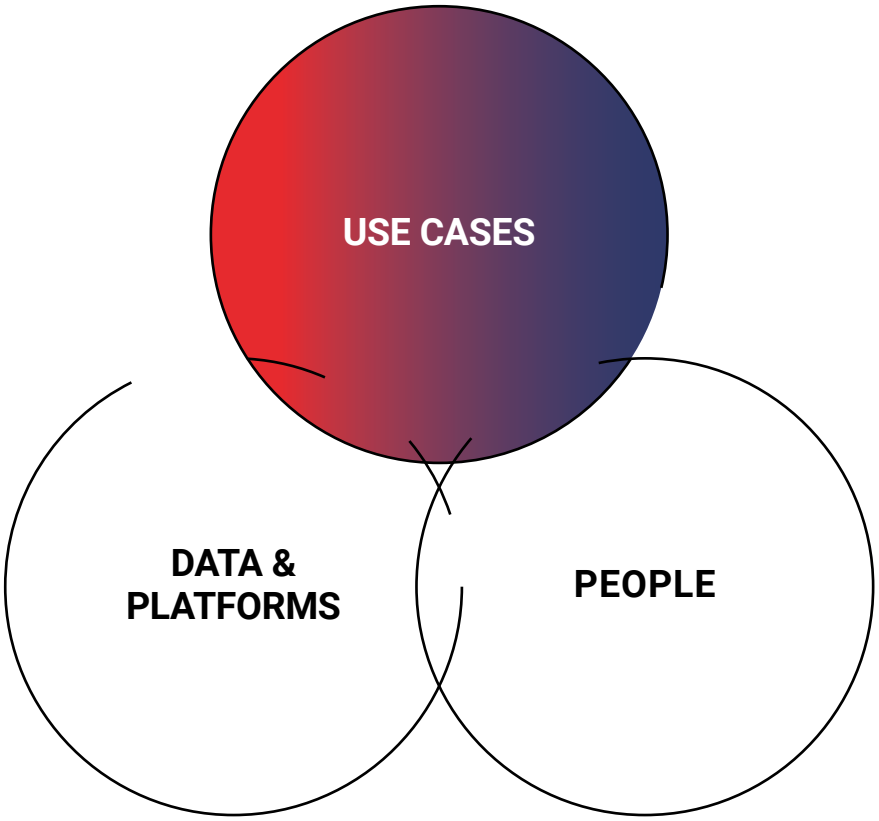
People
The third chapter focuses on people. Successful AI implementation and scaling can only be achieved if employees are empowered and involved. The chapter shows how organisations can build the necessary skills, shape change management and create a culture in which AI can be used responsibly and effectively while fostering innovation.

Each chapter includes **practical examples, checklists and specific recommendations for action,** so that Swiss companies can not only introduce AI but also embed and scale it sustainably.

2

USE CASES

- AI Ambition
- Identify use cases
- Assess and prioritise use cases
- Test and implement use cases
- Use case inspiration


USE CASES
DATA &
PLATFORMS
PEOPLE

Through a four-phase process, use cases are strategically identified, prioritised and implemented

USE CASES AS THE CENTRE OF AI IMPLEMENTATION
For Swiss organisations, the question is no longer whether to engage with AI, but where it can deliver real benefits. The discussion about specific use cases, their added value and how to achieve it, is omnipresent.

Definition: *An AI use case describes a specific application scenario with a comprehensible objective, in which AI is used to solve a particular problem or address a defined business need*

The art lies in identifying the "right" use cases and developing them systematically further.

Challenges from practice
Typical main pitfalls in identifying use cases are:

- Bottom-up identified use cases are often not scalable
- Use cases are not systematically collected and cannot be assigned to a clear domain
- Prioritisation is not based on clear criteria

This often leads to a “use case jungle”: lots of ideas, little impact and quick frustration.

Why approach use cases strategically?
Although a very quick discussion about AI use cases is popular because of its concreteness and relevance, but it often skips an important first step.

The topic of use cases should be approached strategically and thoughtfully in order to identify the most promising use cases and start with a few focused ones. The goal is to achieve initial success early on and gradually add more areas – without overwhelming the organisation.

Strategic guiding questions for selection
To be successful with AI, a strategic view is crucial:

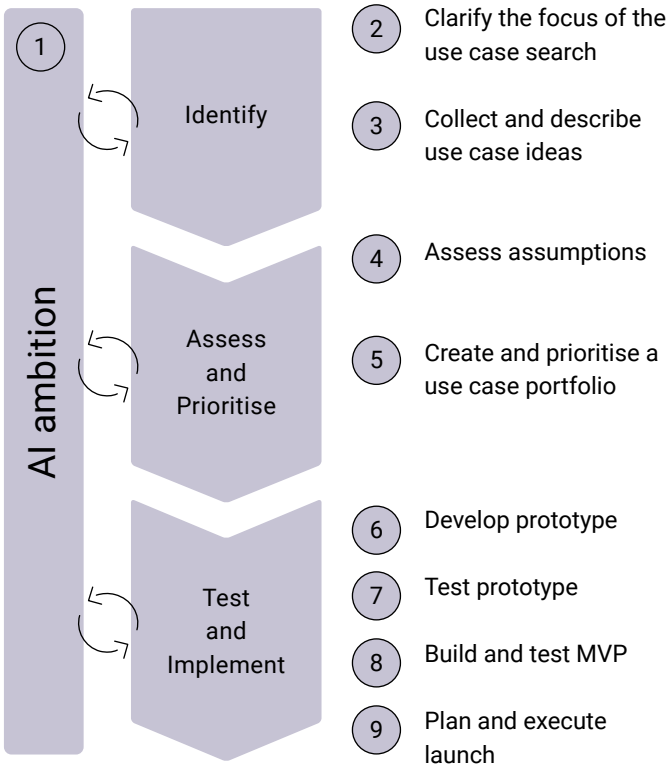
- What problem should be solved with AI?
- What benefits do we expect from using AI?
- What contribution does AI make to the corporate strategy?
- What strategic problem should the use of AI solve?

Recommended process
The recommended process for identifying use cases **therefore begins with defining an AI ambition.**

Based on this ambition, use cases are systematically collected, evaluated, prioritised and tested.

Only the most promising use cases are then further developed and scaled.

In four phases to use cases
- Define AI ambition
- Identify use cases
- Assess and prioritise assumptions
- Test and implement



Conclusion
Premature selection of use cases can lead to frustration. Only a structured approach will ensure that the "right" AI use cases are selected.

This chapter walks through the recommended approach step by step.

“The crucial question is not whether AI brings benefits, but where it already delivers business-critical results today.”

Iansiti & Lakhani,
authors of “Competing in the Age of AI”

The AI ambition defines the intended focus impact and the strategic contribution that the use of AI should have

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF AI USE

AI can have an impact on various levels and along four dimensions:

Individual dimension
AI changes how employees work and interact. Use cases at this level aim to increase personal productivity and skills.

Organisational dimension
This dimension concerns AI applications that map sub-processes or entire end-to-end processes. The aim is to replace, accelerate or improve the quality of workflows.

Externally oriented AI applications
These use cases have an external impact and create value for customers, partners or the market, for example through new business models, innovations or improved service quality.

Internally oriented AI applications
Here, the focus is on optimising internal processes, for example through automation, process innovations or increased efficiency.

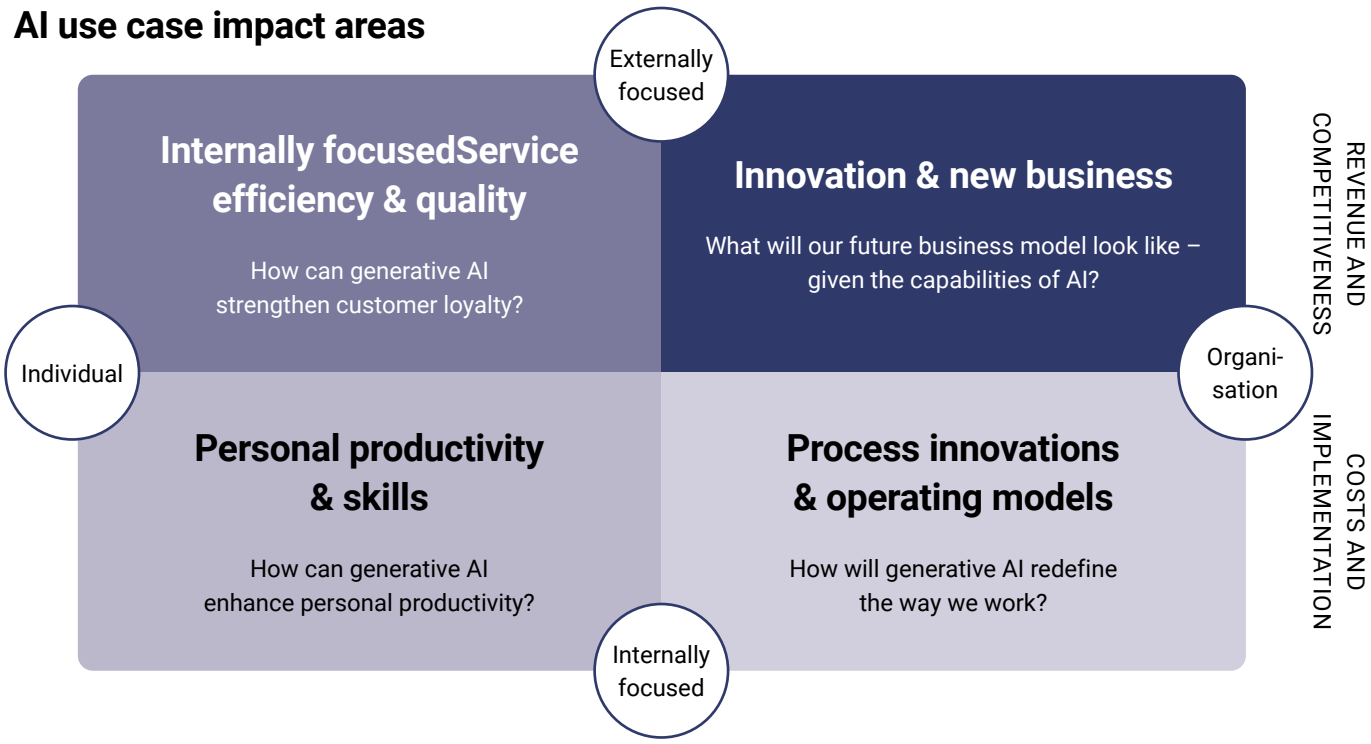
AI use case impact areas (see figure)
The entire spectrum of possible use cases can be identified along these dimensions, forming the basis for a clear AI ambition.

The following impact areas can be identified:
- Service efficiency & quality: How can AI strengthen customer loyalty?
- Innovation & new business: How does AI change our business model?
- Personal productivity & skills: How can AI enhance individual performance?
- Process innovations & operating models: How will AI redefine the way we work?

Why is this important?
A common misconception is to view the use of AI merely as (typically) an internally focused means of productivity and efficiency.

However, impact also arises where AI improves the customer experience or further develops the business model, value creation and market positioning.

The most successful companies use AI to explore new business areas and strategically reposition themselves, not just to make existing processes temporarily more efficient.



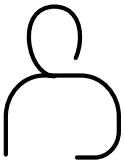
"AI Ambition 2026" – Our ambition to transform the company ABC with AI

QUANTITATIVE AMBITION

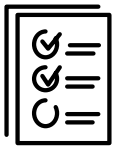
2025	2025	2026	2026
5	**50+**	**3**	**1**
AI use cases	**employees**	**AI applications**	**KI Community**
systematically tested for feasibility and impact (PoC, MVP, pilot)	in service, marketing and sales trained in AI application	implemented with ≥15% efficiency increase and producti	established across companies and with participation from all functions

GUIDING PRINCIPLES "AI AMBITION 2026"

Start small, grow big: start with smaller but achievable use cases



End users are always in the driver's aseat



Systematically sharing successful approaches and learnings within the company

Anchoring AI at all hierarchical levels

Continuous measurement of impact and acceptance

QUALITATIVE AMBITION

Systematically build the necessary structures for AI capability

- ABC consciously positions itself as a proactive shaper in dealing with AI: with the clear goal of being recognised as a pragmatic pioneer among industrial SMEs.
- AI is anchored as a key strategic priority in top management and is continuously managed and further developed at the highest level. Overall responsibility lies with ABC as the central driver of the transformation.
- AI capability is systematically embedded across all relevant functions. Key roles and teams are specifically empowered, continuously supported and equipped with uniform standards and tools.

Unleashing business impact through AI

- AI solutions deliver demonstrable added value in operational processes – particularly through efficiency gains, quality improvements and time savings.
- In the initial phase, the focus is on internal use cases with high leverage, especially in marketing, sales, customer service and administrative processes. Further scaling to additional areas will occur gradually.
- Initial productive use cases will be in operation by the end of 2026 and demonstrate measurable benefits and high user acceptance along the operational value chain (target: ≥15% efficiency increase in the processes addressed).

Mobilise, empower and inspire the entire organisation for AI

- A cross-functional AI community will be established by early 2026 and will act as a driver for knowledge exchange, peer learning and the company-wide dissemination of successful use cases.
- The introduction of AI will be a participatory process – employees will be involved early on, voluntarily and actively.

Develop a clear target vision for long-term success with AI

- ABC continuously develops and revises the target vision that defines the required structures, skills and technical foundations to unlock the full potential of AI in the long term.
- Missing skills are developed internally or through targeted partnerships to enable the implementation of more complex internal and customer-oriented AI use cases in the medium to long term.
- ABC is perceived in the market as a modern, forward-looking employer that attracts AI and digital talent through credible leadership and attractive development opportunities.

Defining an AI ambition forms the starting point of the AI journey and informs subsequent steps

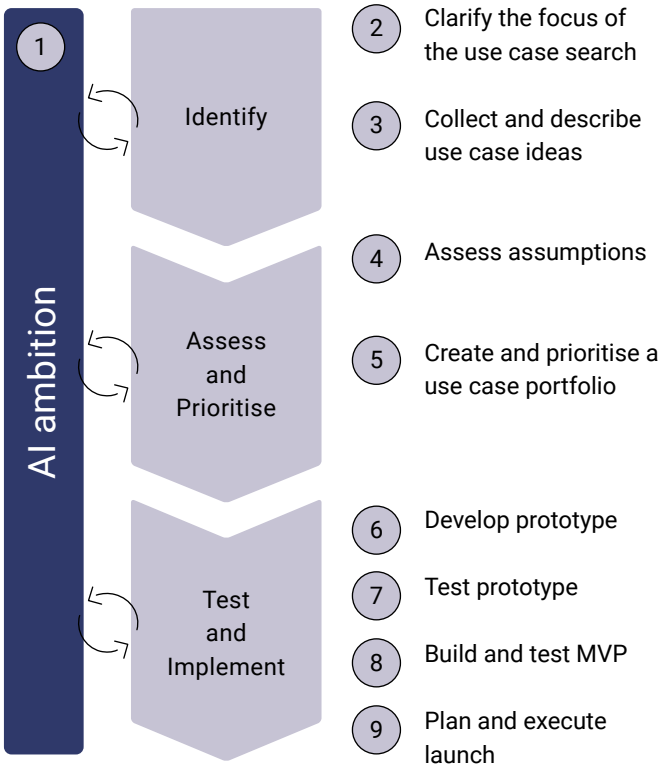
Step 1: Define a clear AI target contribution

The range of transformation levels across potential use cases illustrates how differently AI can be applied within organisations. Therefore, it is more important to define a clear ambition for how AI should be used in the company and what target contribution is hoped for, before searching for use cases.

Definition: The AI ambition defines the goals and guiding principles in dealing with AI and forms the basis for decision-making.

An AI ambition follows a cascading logic. This means that the corporate strategy provides inspiration and guidance for the AI ambition. These must be taken up and addressed by the AI ambition to ensure that it fits into the corporate strategy and supports it.

In practice, an ambition includes both qualitative and quantitative aspects and outlines a clearly measurable, time-bound goal.



The ambition is formulated by a core team involving executive management and senior leadership, as well as representatives from IT to ensure technical feasibility.

The following guiding questions must be answered when formulating an ambition:

1. **Which framework conditions should be adopted from the corporate strategy? What is non-negotiable?**
2. **What contribution does AI make to the corporate strategy?**
3. **What qualitative and quantitative ambition is pursued in connection with the use of AI? How should success in / through the use of AI be defined?**
4. **Which principles should be observed when dealing with AI?**

Methods for collecting ideas:

1. **Generative AI as a creativity assistant –** GenAI is ideal for generating ideas for AI use cases within the company. A detailed description of the intended benefits and context is essential for this.

2. **Workshops with interdisciplinary teams –** Involve various departments, IT and management to ensure different perspectives are considered.

3. **Use creative methods –** Methods such as Crazy 8s are suitable for quickly visualising and trying out different ideas.

3. **Best practice scans –** Inspiration from existing AI applications in your own industry or in comparable companies.

4. **Process analyses –** Identification of work steps with high automation potential.

5. **Customer journey mapping –** Examining the customer journey to identify opportunities for personalised services and improved customer experiences.

After formulating the AI ambition, the focus of the use case search is defined and the first use case

Step 2: Define the focus of the use case search

AI use cases are diverse and the creativity of possibilities seems limitless. But where can use cases be found that generate value within the organisation?

An initial direction has already been set by the preliminary work with the AI ambition. From this, guidelines for use case identification are derived, which define the search area for application scenarios. The AI impact areas should be considered when searching for use cases.

Many of the use case discussions are currently taking place primarily at the workplace and processes. Companies are investing in increasing personal productivity through applications such as CoPilot or internal company chatbots.

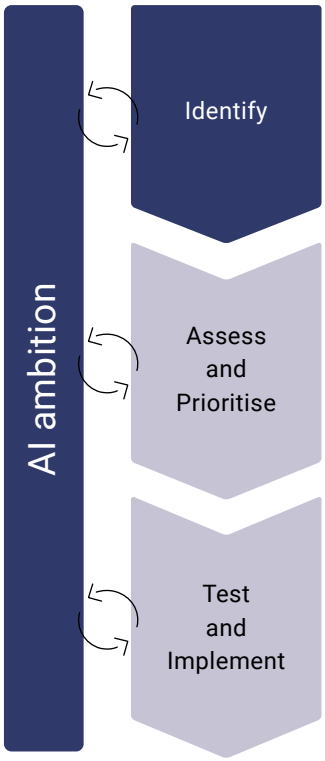
However, the long-term goal should be to identify applications with clear impact on results, which is why this comprehensive view of impact areas should be adopted. Use cases should always be defined from an organisational perspective rather than a technological one.

To advance the identification of use cases in a structured manner, a core team should be appointed to coordinate idea collection, select the relevant AI impact areas and determine broad directions as well es, for example, initial functions in the organisation. At the same time, the team is responsible for organising workshops and ensuring adherence to the process. This team must then involve company representatives from various areas to ensure a comprehensive business perspective.

Step 3: Collect use case ideas

Based on the AI ambition, a brainstorming session with the defined AI core team should be conducted at all levels of impact areas. The following guiding questions help the idea generation process:

- Which recurring tasks in the organisation could be simplified through automation or assistance systems?
- Where are bottlenecks, waiting times or errors currently occurring that could be reduced through data-based solutions?
- Which decisions are still largely made based on gut feeling today and could be supported by data-based analyses?
- In which areas is there particularly a lot of unused data that could create added value?
- Is there direct influence on customer experience, employee satisfaction or new business opportunities?



2 Define the focus of the use case search

3 Collect and describe use case ideas

- If we were to rethink our business, what would it look like if AI were a natural component?
- How do we build a balanced AI portfolio of quick wins, strategic investments and experimental projects?

The goal is to have a long list of ideas that contribute to the achieving our ambitions.

Structured templates help to maintain a comprehensive overview while still considering enough details so that the AI idea is described with sufficient granularity. An example of such documentation can be found in the appendix. This granularity is necessary to examine underlying assumptions in the next phase and thereby assess and prioritise the use cases.

CHECKLIST "IDENTIFY"

- [ ] AI ambition consulted and focus defined
- [ ] AI contributors and core team defined
- [ ] GenAI research and workshop conducted
- [ ] At least 30 ideas generated
- [ ] Ideas roughly documented

AI use case assessment

Example

Title: Automated invoice recognition and processing

Description
Incoming invoices are automatically recognised by AI, relevant data is extracted and directly transferred into the ERP system. Goal: Less manual data entry, fewer errors, faster processing.

Assessment of exceptional risks required?

- [ ] Ethical (e.g. handling of gender or diversity)
- [ ] Cyber security risk (e.g. in fully automated processes)
- [ ] Legal (e.g. pending regulatory changes)
- [ ] Human-in-the-loop (e.g. black swan events)

VALUE – Business and/or user value created

1 **How does the use case contribute to the AI vision?**
It increases efficiency and quality in administration, reduces the workload on employees and frees up time for value-added activities.

2 **What strategic advantages does the use case offer?**

- [ ] Better customer experience
- [ ] Revenue growth
- [ ] Increased sales
- [x] Reduced complexity/risks
- [x] Improved responsiveness / efficiency
- [x] Improved quality of service or product
- [ ] New market
- [ ] Better decision-making through insights

3 **What is the estimated business value (e.g. savings, additional revenue)?**
Savings of approx. 200 hours/year (~CHF 15,000) through the elimination of manual data entry, reduction of error costs.

FEASIBILITY – Ease of implementation

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
If you are unable to rate a statement, please enter (–).

1. Data & infrastructure		2. Methods & solutions		3. Processes & systems		4. Required know-how	
5	We have access to the required data.	5	We know how to solve this problem.	5	New processes do not need to be introduced.	4	The required technical know-how is available.
4	We have the necessary infrastructure.	4	A similar solution has already been implemented.	4	Existing processes can be easily adapted.	5	The required domain-specific knowledge is available.
4	We have the necessary data quality.	5	We are familiar with technologies that are suitable for this problem.	4	No significant changes are required.	4	A general understanding of AI is available.

How long does it take to develop the use case until the verified PoV (proof of value) is reached?

- [x] < 3 months (+5 points)
- [ ] 4–6 months (+4 points)
- [ ] 7–9 months (+3 points)
- [ ] 10 –12 months (+2 points)
- [ ] > 12 months (+1 point)

COMPLETED AI USE CASE ASSESSMENT

Total score: Feasibility index (max. 65) **61**

In a second phase, the underlying assumptions behind the use cases will be examined and assessed

Step 4: Assess assumptions

The created longlist of ideas needs to be further detailed. To prioritise the possible use cases in later steps, an assessment should be made along the following dimensions:

- Value: What value does the use case generate?
- Feasibility: Is the use case technically feasible?

For a structured assessment of these two points, the following procedure is recommended, which is documented on the template on the left:

Title & description
Here the use case is briefly described, outlining the problem addressed, the required database and the expected output.

Risk assessment
Examination of exceptional risks – such as ethical issues (bias, fairness), regulatory requirements, cyber security or necessity of human oversight. Marked relevant points should be subjected to a detailed analysis.

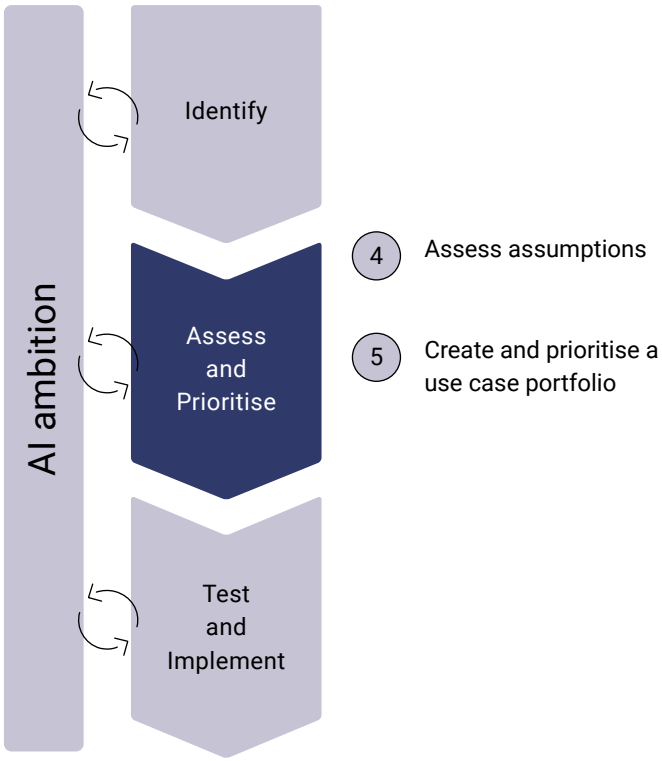
Value contribution estimation

- **AI vision:** Classification of the use case within the strategic AI orientation.
- **Strategic benefits:** Assignment of benefit categories (e.g. improved customer experience, increased efficiency, new markets).
- **Business value:** Estimation of the potential impact in financial terms (savings, sales increases) and documentation of underlying assumptions.

Assessment of feasibility

Four areas are considered when assessing the feasibility of a use case:

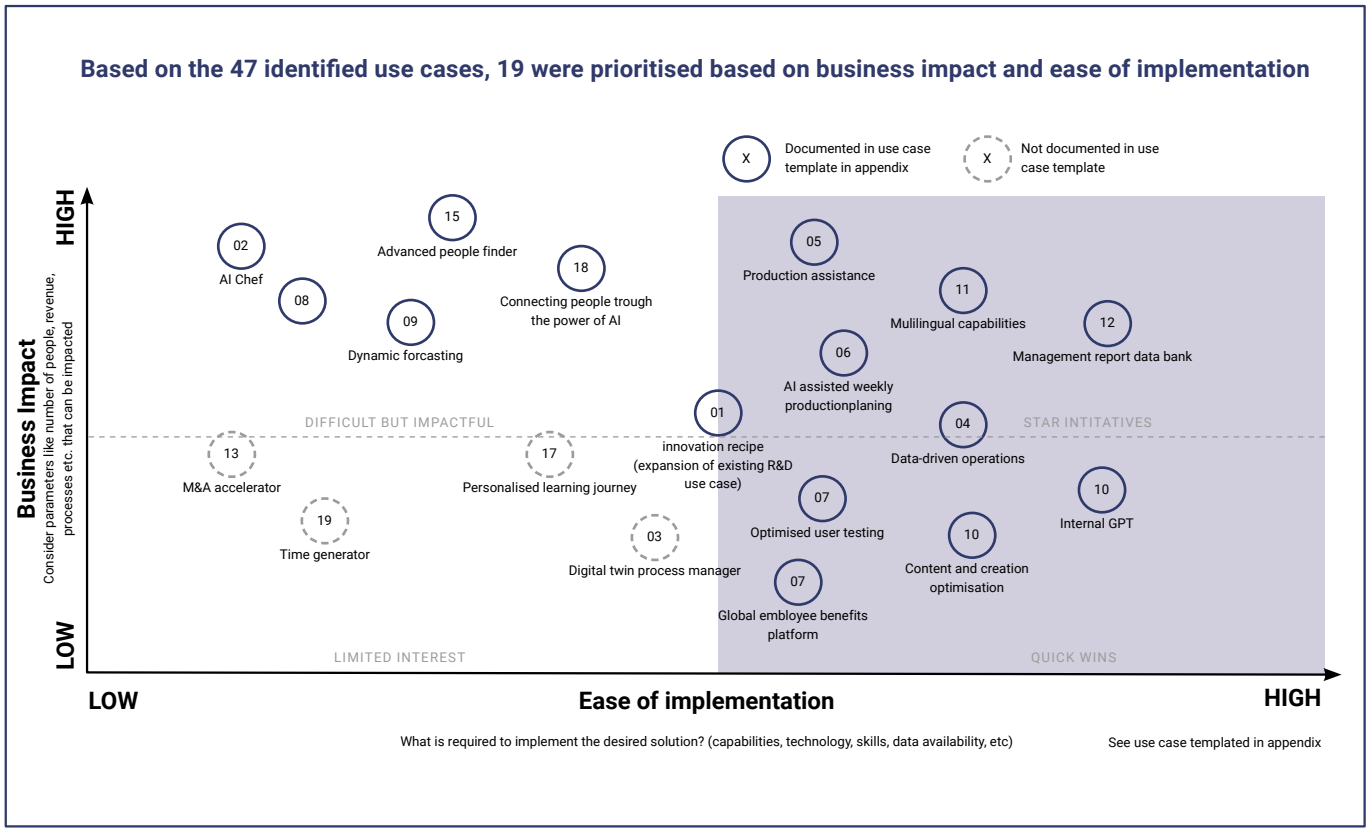
- **Data & infrastructure:** Access to the required data, sufficient data volume and appropriate quality.
- **Methods & solutions:** Availability of suitable technical resources, reference to similar problems that have already been solved, known procedures for application.



- **Processes & systems:** Need for adjustments in processes, IT systems and organisation should be kept to a minimum.
- **Required know-how:** Availability of technical and specialist knowledge as well as the possibility to provide training promptly.

In each dimension, clarifications must be made and the findings evaluated accordingly. In terms of feasibility, the result is an overall assessment (numerical) that enables the comparison of different use cases.

This assessment must be carried out for all identified use cases. Based on this, an overview of all described use cases can be obtained in a next step, enabling assessment and prioritisation.



Matrix for prioritising use cases

CASE STUDY:

Generative AI for marketing and communication – innovation and efficiency in a global industrial group

A global leading company in the aluminium and energy sector was faced with the task of harnessing the potential of generative AI in marketing and communications. The aim was to increase innovation and efficiency and to get teams excited about using new technologies.

The project kicked off with a large-scale virtual workshop attended by around 100 employees from marketing and communications. The focus was on jointly developing use cases, with a particular emphasis on multimodal applications – that is, the combination of text and image generation. The participants contributed their domain-specific challenges and ideas, resulting in a wide range of use cases.

The next step was to identify the most promising ideas and classify them as quick wins or exploration areas. For the pilot project, clear hypotheses were formulated and a minimalist governance was defined – for example regarding data handling and approvals. The aim was to test the first prototypes as quickly as possible and make the results transparent.

Success was evident after just six months: generative AI was widely implemented throughout the department. Standardised prompts, clear dos and don'ts, and measurable quality criteria led to a noticeable increase in productivity. At the same time, a culture of innovation emerged, encouraging teams to rapidly test new ideas and put them into practice.

Key insights

Quick, visible successes were crucial in promoting acceptance and motivation. Governance was kept pragmatic – as much security as necessary, as little bureaucracy as possible. Clear guidelines, targeted training and regular feedback cycles were particularly important for sustainable adoption.

Summary

The case study demonstrates how a structured, participatory approach and rapid piloting contribute to the successful and sustainable anchoring of generative AI in marketing and communications.

By creating a use case portfolio, use case ideas are collected transparently and presented in a comparable manner

Step 5: Prioritisation of use cases

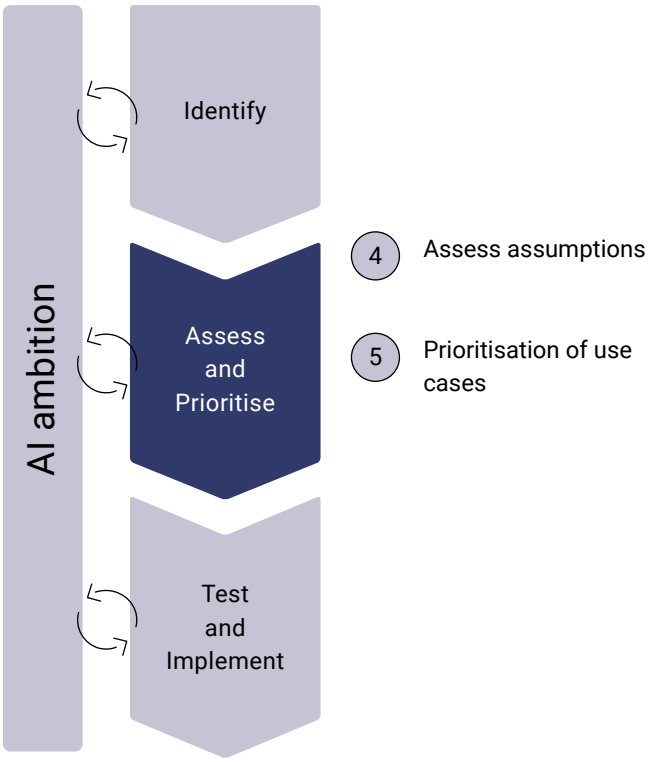
To prioritise, the identified use cases are classified in a two-dimensional overview along the following dimensions (see figure on the left):

- **Business impact:** Expected contribution to revenue increase, cost reduction, efficiency, quality or customer satisfaction.
- **Ease of implementation:** Assessment of how easily a use case can be implemented in terms of technology, organisation and personnel (e.g. availability of data, process adaptation, existing expertise).

The two dimensions create four fields into which the use cases are classified.

Four categories for prioritisation:

- **Key initiatives (star initiatives) – Top right:** High benefit and good feasibility; these cases form the core of the AI strategy.
- **Quick wins – Bottom right:** Use cases with low effort and visible benefits in a short time.
- **Difficult but impactful – top left:** High benefit, but with greater effort and longer implementation time.
- **Limited interest – Bottom left:** Low benefit and difficult to implement; no priority.



In addition to the quick wins, the use cases classified as key initiatives should be pursued with focus. These will be further examined in the next process step, "Test and Implement", and associated uncertainties will be systematically reduced through various experiments.

To "mature" and concretise the use case ideas, the core team should be enriched with additional technical expertise (e.g. technical architects) and change managers should also be involved to assess feasibility and consider change components early on. The assumed value contribution should also be reflected with business representatives.

Recommended approach:

1. **First, quick wins should be implemented to gain experience and create visible results.**
2. **The focus should then be on key initiatives, as these generate the greatest benefit for the organisation.**
3. **More challenging but impactful projects are included in a strategic pipeline to be implemented when the right conditions are in place.**
4. **Use cases with low relevance are simply monitored.**

Checklist “Assess & Prioritise”

- ☐ "AI Use Case Assessment" template completed for each use case idea
- ☐ Assessed use cases classified in prioritisation matrix
- ☐ Ideas in the categories "quick wins" and "key initiatives" were examined in more detail and 2–3 core ideas were selected for each
- ☐ Key persons defined for each core idea and preparations made for the test phase

GAINING CLARITY IN THREE PHASES

1

Proof of concept (PoC)
Key question: **Is the AI solution feasible and effective in terms of the identified problem or opportunity?**

- Development of a relevant PoC test concept for the core of the use case
- Selection and collection of suitable test data
- Definition of evaluation criteria
- Development and evaluation of the PoC

2

Minimum viable product (MVP)
Key question: **Does the AI solution provide real benefits in everyday life and can it be improved iteratively?**

- Refinement of the AI solution based on findings and feedback from the PoC
- Expansion of the scope and salability of the model
- Development of the necessary user interface
- Launch of the MVP and collection of user feedback

3

Introduction and scaling
Key question: **How can the solution be optimised, integrated and maintained in the long term to create sustainable value?**

- Optimisation of the AI solution based on user feedback
- Integration of the solution into existing systems
- Implementation of robust monitoring and maintenance processes
- Development and implementation of training and support programmes for successful application
- Ongoing evaluation of the solution's performance, impact and ROI

Between PoC and MVP, the make-or-buy question arises:
Do we need to build the test/tool ourselves to understand the use case – or can we buy it?

The following dimensions need to be considered:

Strategic relevance
A. Is AI a core competence or a support function?
B. Does it directly contribute to differentiation for the customer?

Data & know-how
A. Is our data unique?
B. Do we want/must share it externally (data protection, IP)?

Speed & resources
A. How quickly do we need results?
B. Can we manage operation & further development?

Total cost of ownership (TCO)
A. Consider not only development, but also operation, maintenance, updates and dependencies!

Buy if:
- AI is a **commodity function**
- Time-to-market is critical
- Internal know-how is lacking
- Focus on business rather than technology

Make if:
- AI is a **strategic differentiator**
- On data creates the main value
- Long-term control is crucial
- Scaling is part of the competitive strategy

Testing use cases provides experience on feasibility and reduces uncertainty

After use cases have been prioritised, the presumed potential benefits need to be confirmed through concrete tests.

Three phases are central for this: proof of concept, minimum viable product and implementation and scaling.

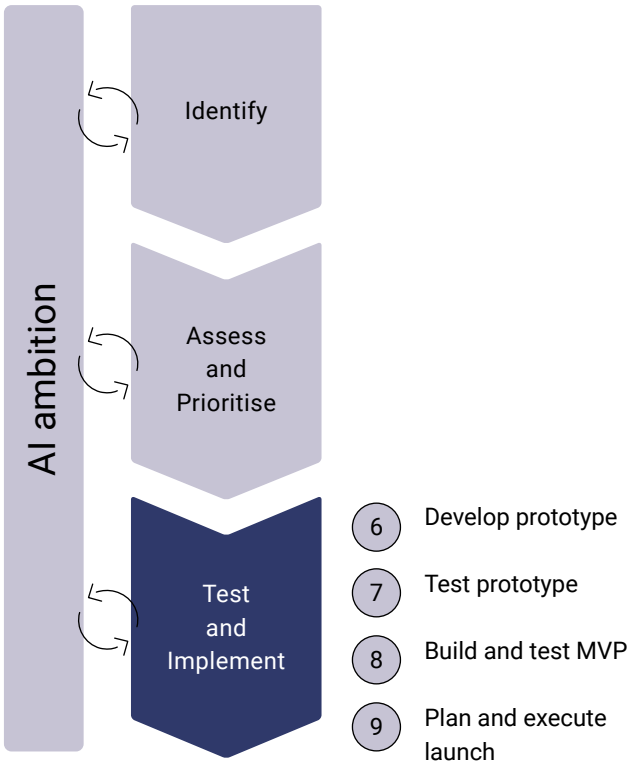
Steps 6 & 7: Develop and test the prototype

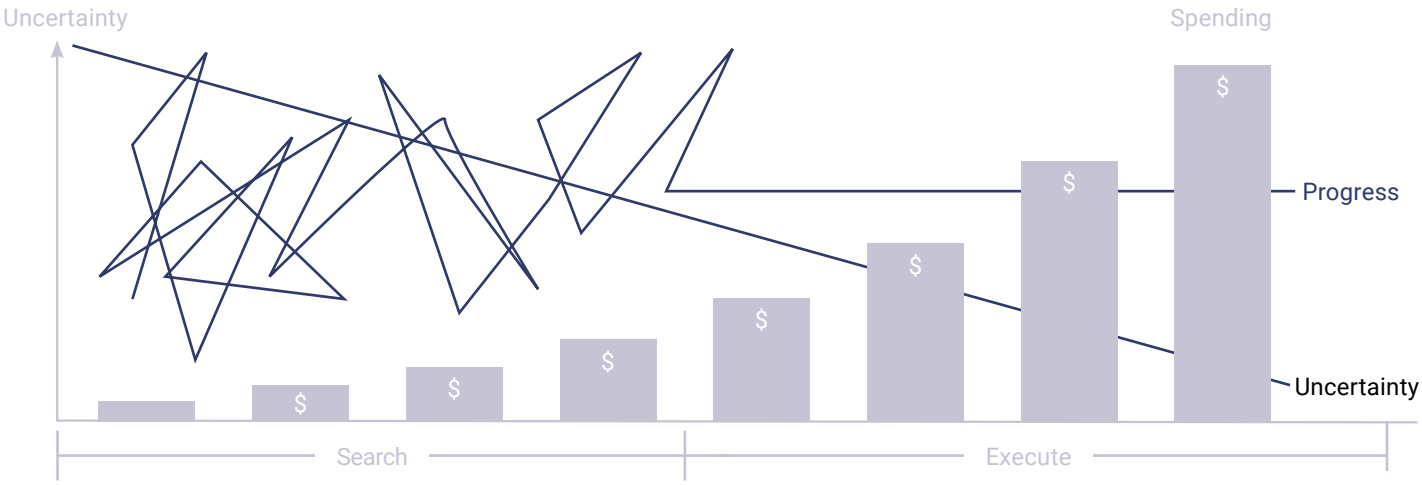
Start small at the beginning. A clearly defined use case is tested with manageable effort. Data is collected, evaluation criteria are defined and a prototype is built. The goal is not a finished product, but rather proof that the solution works technically and can solve a real problem. At the end of the prototype phase, a decision is made on whether the use case should be abondened, the experiment adjusted and repeated, or the use case continued.

Step 8: Minimum viable product (MVP)

In the second step, the prototype is developed into the first usable product. Functions are expanded, a simple interface is implemented and a pilot group of users is involved. It is important to systematically collect feedback. Only in this way can it be checked whether the solution creates added value in everyday use and whether it can be gradually improved.

Pragmatic guiding principle – iterative execution
No leap into the unknown, but a disciplined, iterative process – this is the modus operandi in testing the use case.





Continuously reducing uncertainty through systematic testing as envisaged by Strategyzer

“Less than 20% of AI pilot projects make it into production. It takes a lot of experimentation to find out what really creates value.”

Gereurd Roberts, Group Managing Director,
Seven Digital, Seven West Media

Practical recommendations for Swiss companies

- **Start with focused experiments:** Keep experiments short, no longer than 8 to 12 weeks. This keeps the focus on quick results.
- **Combine technical and business expertise:** Successful AI initiatives require collaboration between technology and business. Ensure that your experiments address real business problems.
- **Reduce project risk through experiments:** Use small experiments to test ideas and demonstrate value before scaling. Treat experiments like mini start-ups to maintain agility.
- **Scale flexibly:** Once the added value has been proven, remain adaptable while integrating AI into core processes

For use cases to be effective, their implementation into operations is a key moment with complexity not to be underestimated

By going through steps 1–8, a clear strategic direction was ensured and suitable AI use cases were identified, described and systematically tested. The most promising ideas from a longlist were tested and their anticipated impact was demonstrated and confirmed in tests.

The final step is to transfer the use cases from the test environment into operations and implement them across the organisation.

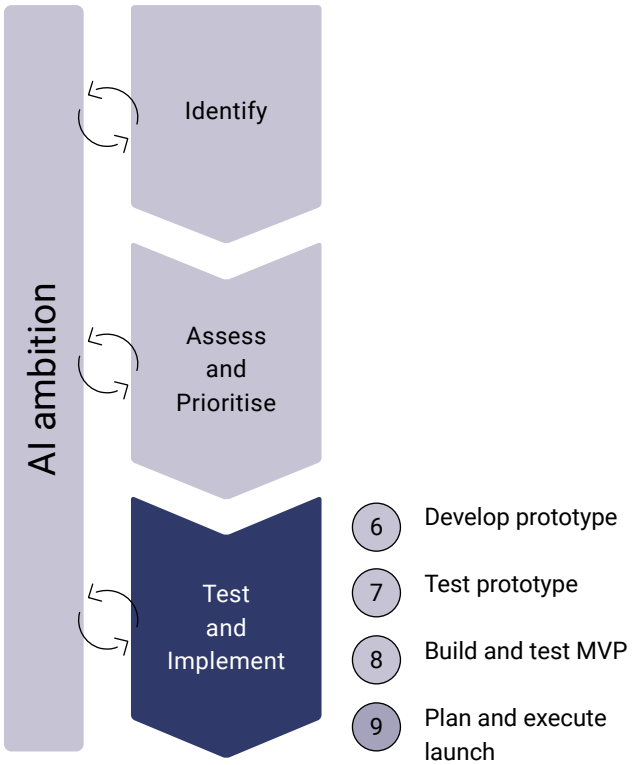
Experience shows that this is the critical point at which organisations fail to successfully transfer the use case from the test environment into everyday business. With poor implementation, the anticipated effect does not materialise and the return on investment is absent.

The following activities are to be carried out in this step:

Step 9: Implementation and scaling

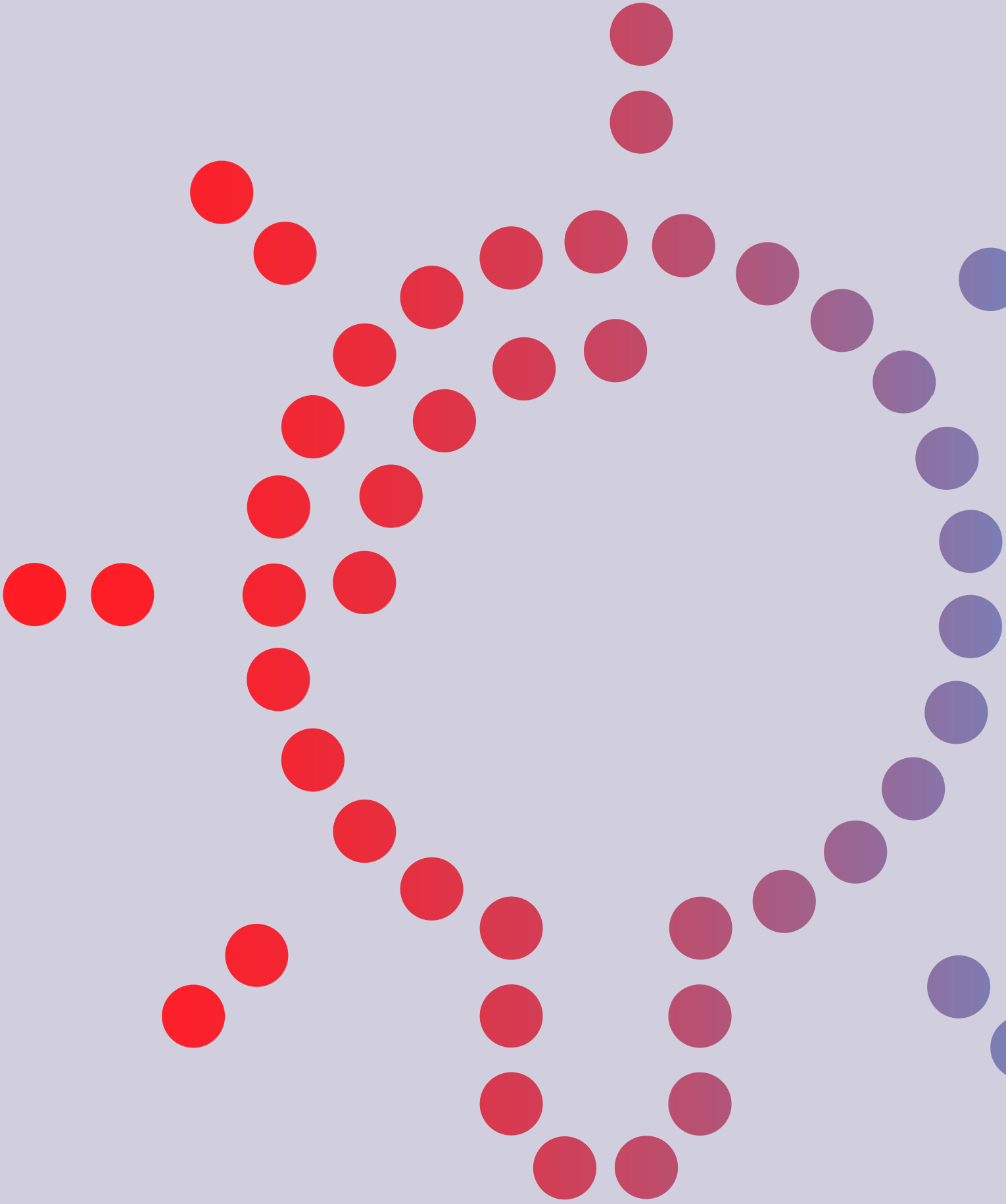
Once the MVP has been successfully implemented, the use case must be anchored within the organisation. This includes integration into existing systems, setting up monitoring and maintenance, as well as training for employees (training and adoption are discussed in more detail in the "People" chapter).

The generated value must be continuously, for example against criteria such as acceptance, impact and return on investment. It is only through this phase that an AI use case becomes sustainably value-creating and strategically effective.



Checklist “Test and implement”

- ☐ **PoC completed and evaluated**
  Goals, test cases, data and success criteria defined; results documented and go/no-go decision made.
- ☐ **MVP built, usable and improved based on feedback**
  Core functions implemented, pilot group active, feedback loops running, acceptance measured.
- ☐ **Monitoring, operational and maintenance processes established**
  Logging/monitoring active, incident and change processes defined, data/model governance established.
- ☐ **Training and adoption started**
  Target groups trained, quick reference/guides available, support ensured.
- ☐ **Impact and ROI made measurable**
  KPIs defined, baseline vs. post-measurement completed, reporting/review rhythm established.



USE CASES INSPIRATION

Illustrative Use Cases

Manufacturing companies

Maturity	Low (limited digitalisation)	Medium (ERP/CRM, initial data)	High (data-driven, API-capable)
Small (<100 employees)	• Digital document recognition (invoices, delivery notes) • AI-powered translations (export)	• Demand forecasts with simple ML tools • Automated quality control with camera & AI (low-cost solutions)	• AI-powered planning (optimising production batches) • Digital twins for small production lines
Medium (100–500 employees)	• Automated offer generation • Email/chatbot for customer enquiries	• Predictive maintenance with sensor integration • Automated customs/ export documents	• AI-powered supply chain optimisation • Adaptive robotics (AI-supported cobots)
Large (>500 employees)	• RPA (robotic process automation) for repetitive administrative processes • Text analysis (customer satisfaction)	• Real-time production and quality data analysis • Automated complaint handling	• Fully integrated smart factory (IoT + AI) • Sustainability optimisation (controlling energy consumption with AI)

Service companies

Maturity	Low (limited digitalisation)	Medium (ERP/CRM, initial data)	High (data-driven, API-capable)
Small (<100 employees)	• AI-powered accounting tools • Text and voice assistants for customer appointments	• Social media content generation (marketing) • Chatbots for standard enquiries	• Hyper-personalised newsletters with AI • AI-powered risk/ compliance analyses
Medium (100–500 employees)	• Automated quotation/ contract review • Meeting summaries via voice AI	• CRM with AI recommendations (cross-selling) • Predictive analytics (customer utilisation, outages)	• Virtual assistants for entire service processes • AI-powered risk/ compliance analyses
Large (>500 employees)	• Automatic clustering of customer feedback • Automated HR recruitment (screening)	• Knowledge management with semantic search • AI in customer support (ticket triage)	• Fully automated consulting or service workflows • AI-powered innovation radar systems

Comparisons inspire and reveal potential, but they do not replace company-specific analysis

After presenting the process for identifying and prioritising AI use cases, the question arises: **What do concrete use cases look like in practice?** This chapter provides a structured overview of how organisations – depending on their industry, size and digital maturity – can tap into typical fields of application for artificial intelligence.

The aim of this section is to provide guidance and highlight the range of possible use cases. The examples are deliberately kept concise and are intended to serve as inspiration for one's own use case discovery.

Logic of the overview
The tables on the left show typical AI use cases, differentiated by:

- Sector: Manufacturing companies vs. service companies
- Company size: small, medium, large
- Digital maturity: From low digitalisation to data-driven, API-capable organisations

Comments on the tables:
The higher the digital maturity and the larger the organisation, the more complex and value-adding the possible use cases become. For smaller and less digitised organisations, the focus is usually on automation and efficiency gains (e.g. document recognition, accounting tools).

With increasing maturity, data-driven optimisations, intelligent planning and AI-supported innovations become possible (e.g. predictive maintenance, smart factory, hyper-personalisation).

The tables provide a quick guide to which use cases could be particularly relevant for your own situation – and where initial benefits can be realised.

Note:
The overview does not claim to be complete but is intended to help identify typical patterns and to start developing your own use cases in a targeted way.

The following pages describe selected focus cases in more detail to show how companies have implemented specific use cases, what results were achieved and what lessons learned can be derived from them.

INNOVATION TEAM

A team that takes on the majority of the "heavy lifting" within the generative AI delivery engine. Initially, it can often be as large as the agile delivery teams. It facilitates ideation workshops, idea maturation, overall project management and, in some cases, product responsibility.

REVIEW BOARD

A group of senior stakeholders (often CxOs) that evaluates mature ideas according to a fixed schedule. Meetings are efficient and well prepared; senior management only deals with ideas that have fully developed business cases and compliance approvals. The review board is the final decision-making body before a solution goes into development for implementation.

BUSINESS PERSON WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

A key role that brings professional know-how and ensures that AI solutions meet business requirements. This role evaluates the quality of AI outputs and ensures that results are technically correct, relevant and practically usable.

AGILE DELIVERY TEAMS

Largely traditional software development teams but complemented with prompt engineering and generative AI skills.

Process

Ideation workshops	Develop ideas	Decision of the review board	Agile delivery teams
Activities			
• Invite business units to ideation workshops • Workshops are facilitated by the innovation team • Start with an introduction to generative AI, then focus in depth on relevant use cases for the respective business unit as inspiration • "The more, the better"	• Examine raw ideas and develop them into cases ready for decision making • Create a rudimentary business case • Conduct security, legal, data protection and ethics reviews • Prioritise ideas	• Decision by management level on the mature ideas • Ideas are presented to the review board • Ideas are evaluated in a stop/go procedure • Approved ideas receive funding according to the business case • Rejected ideas receive brief feedback	• Start of IT development • Agile delivery teams, project management/PO from the innovation team, follow ideas from the workshop to implementation • Team consists of software developers and GenAI specialists with close feedback loops from end users • Close collaboration with the generative AI
Results			
• Raw ideas • Stimulated and motivated organisation	• Mature ideas • Business case per idea • Compliance approval	• Confirmed ideas • Funding available for ideas	• Operational solutions

Use case identification process – a practical example

Case study: Generative AI in legal consulting – increasing productivity and ensuring standards

A leading law firm faced the challenge of unlocking the potential of generative AI for legal work. The aim was to significantly increase the productivity of lawyers, promote innovation and, at the same time, ensure the highest ethical standards.

To anchor the topic broadly within the organisation, the firm launched a large webinar that raised awareness among all employees about the possibilities of generative AI. This was followed by a cross-departmental workshop in which over 100 use case ideas were collected – from automated document analysis to intelligent research. It was especially important to define clear guidelines for responsible use from the outset: confidentiality, human-in-the-loop and consistent source verification were established as fundamental principles.

The collected ideas were evaluated based on added value, risk and feasibility and prioritised through a transparent decision-making process. A review board of partners and subject matter experts decided which use cases would move on to the next phase. Prototypes were developed for the selected ideas and tested in practice – always with the aim of demonstrating both productivity gains and adherence to professional ethical standards.

The result: within a few months, a clear use case funnel with prioritised projects, governance principles and a solid foundation for selecting technology partners was created. Initial prototypes showed that repetitive tasks such as reviewing standard contracts or summarising case law could be carried out much more efficiently – without compromising quality or reliability.

Lessons learned:
The broad involvement of employees created acceptance and trust in the new technology. Clear governance and transparent decision-making processes were crucial to address uncertainties and accelerating implementation. Small, pragmatic steps – from the webinar to the prototype – helped build momentum and get the organisation excited about further scaling.

Key lessons for leaders

1. **Leadership is key:** without a clear vision, governance and quick results, AI remains an experiment.
2. **Impact before activity:** Involve your team early on, focus on measurable use cases – and only scale what delivers real added value.
3. **Your mission:** Set the framework, create momentum, demand impact.

Swisscom: AI-powered IT operational processes – from vision to reality

Romain Bonjour (Swisscom) and Anna Wiedemann (Institute of Digital Technology Management, BFH)

Swisscom is one of Switzerland's leading companies in the fields of telecommunications, IT and entertainment.
To continue providing customers with top service, Swisscom is currently transforming central IT operational processes – such as the analysis of incidents (occurrence or malfunction) including root cause investigations or error-free upgrades. These processes are cost-intensive and highly routine – ideal conditions for using AI to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

The key question is: what concrete value does AI bring to IT operational processes?

How to build it: a step-by-step, iterative approach
Building AI-powered operational processes is not a "big bang" event. It is an evolutionary journey that takes time and is never truly finished. Early versions are not perfect; later ones will be closer to state of the art. Quality improves gradually as:

- More data is integrated and normalised
- Dependencies and integrations mature
- Feedback from practice reveals gaps and drives refinement

Companies should avoid aiming for "maximum quality" from the start. Learning loops and incremental improvements are more effective. **Start small – validate – scale, iteratively.** This keeps development sustainable and avoids costly failures.

These use cases answer the key question: **What value does AI bring to IT operational processes?**
The answer is clear: **efficiency, quality and resilience**.

Use Case	Description	Value
Incident summary	AI creates concise, context-rich summaries of complex incidents for faster decision-making.	Reduces cognitive load and accelerates the solution.
Root cause analysis	Correlation of signals across systems to identify causes within seconds.	Reduces troubleshooting time by up to 70%.
Dynamic runbooks	GenAI generates adaptive, context-aware recovery steps.	Increases consistency, reduces human error.
Predictive incident warnings	Detects anomalies and predicts failures before they occur.	Prevents disruptions, improves SLA compliance.

Swisscom: AI-powered IT operational processes – from vision to reality

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Making the right technical decisions
An AI system for IT operations is not just LLM magic. It is a full-fledged software engineering project. Success is based on robust architecture and disciplined engineering:

- **Backend & frontend fundamentals:** reliable APIs, UI/UX for operators and secure data flows
- **Integration layers:** seamless connection to ITSM tools, monitoring systems and automation platforms
- **Observability & testing:** logging, monitoring and continuous validation for reliable operation
- **LLM as a component:** language models are building blocks– not the entire solution. Architecture, workflow design and data quality are more important than model choice

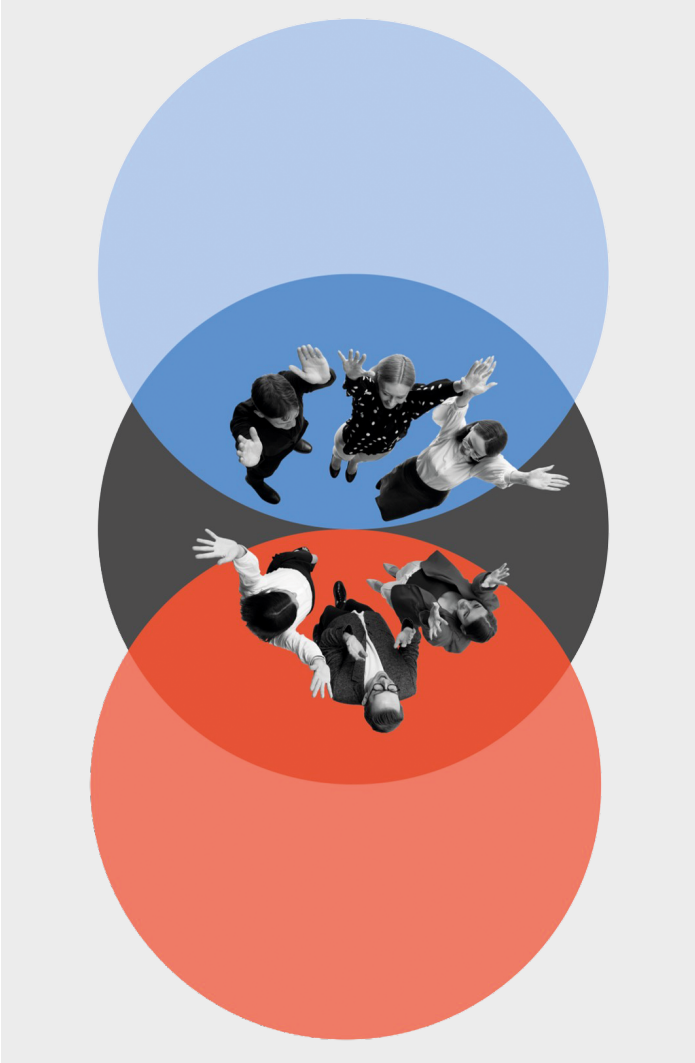
This perspective shifts the discussion from "Which model?" to "How do you build a resilient, scalable system?"

People & culture: the hidden success factor
Technology alone does not transform operations – people do. Cultural adoption is crucial and must be carefully designed. Typical measures:

- **Engage users early:** adjust workflows and learn to use AI re commendations
- **Invest in training and transformation:** build trust and skills
- **Start with deterministic agents:** reliable, helpful assistants – autonomous workflows come later
  Lay solid foundations first and only move towards autonomy later – this ensures that operational transformation is sustainable.

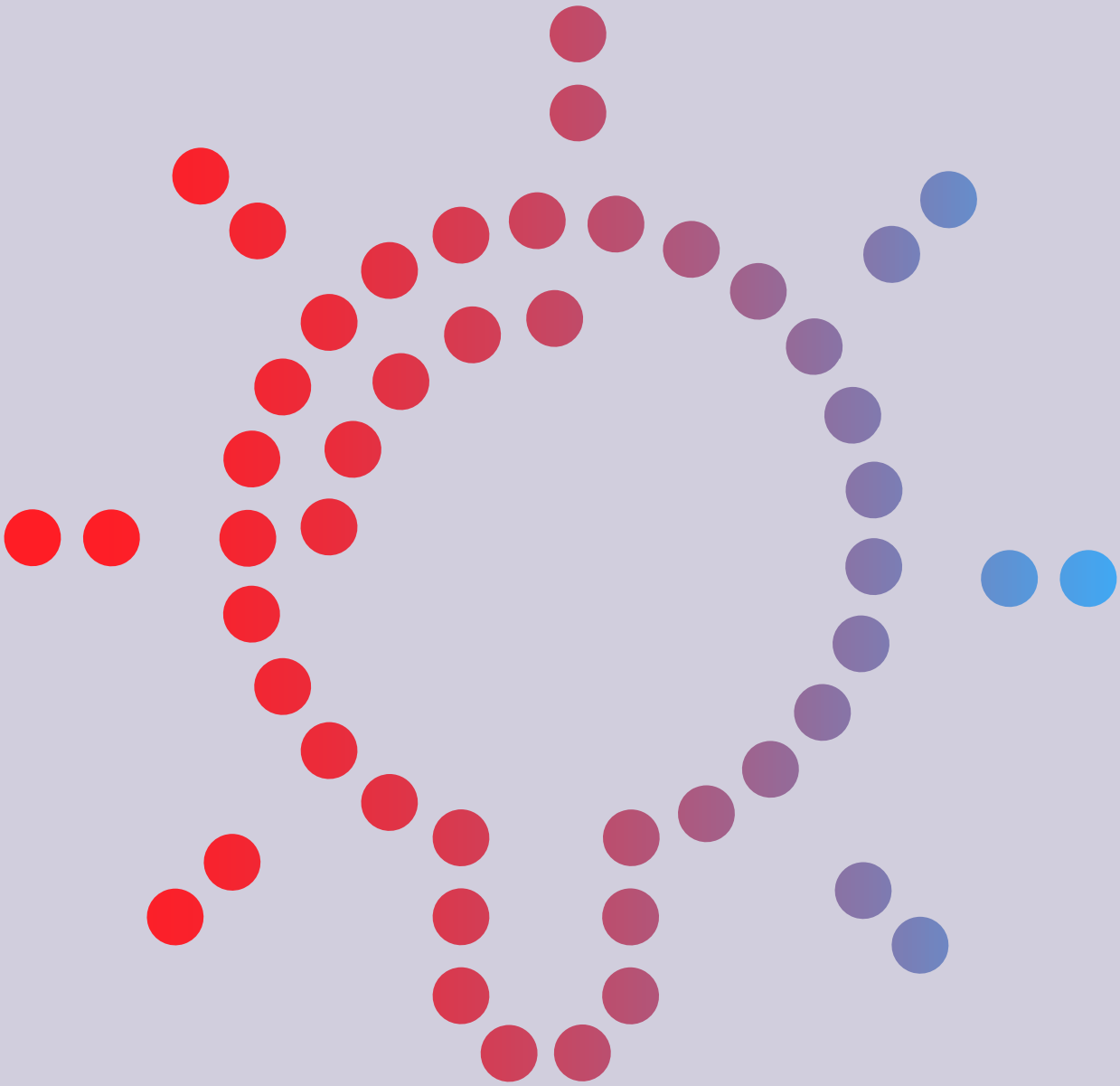
In the end, this journey is at least as much about a mindset change as it is about coding.

The way forward
The future of IT operations is intelligent, adaptive and proactive. AIOps will usher in a paradigm shift – towards self-healing systems, predictive capacity planning and autonomous operational processes. This long-term transformation is already opening the door to greater resilience, efficiency and innovation. The possibilities are great.



Key lessons for leaders

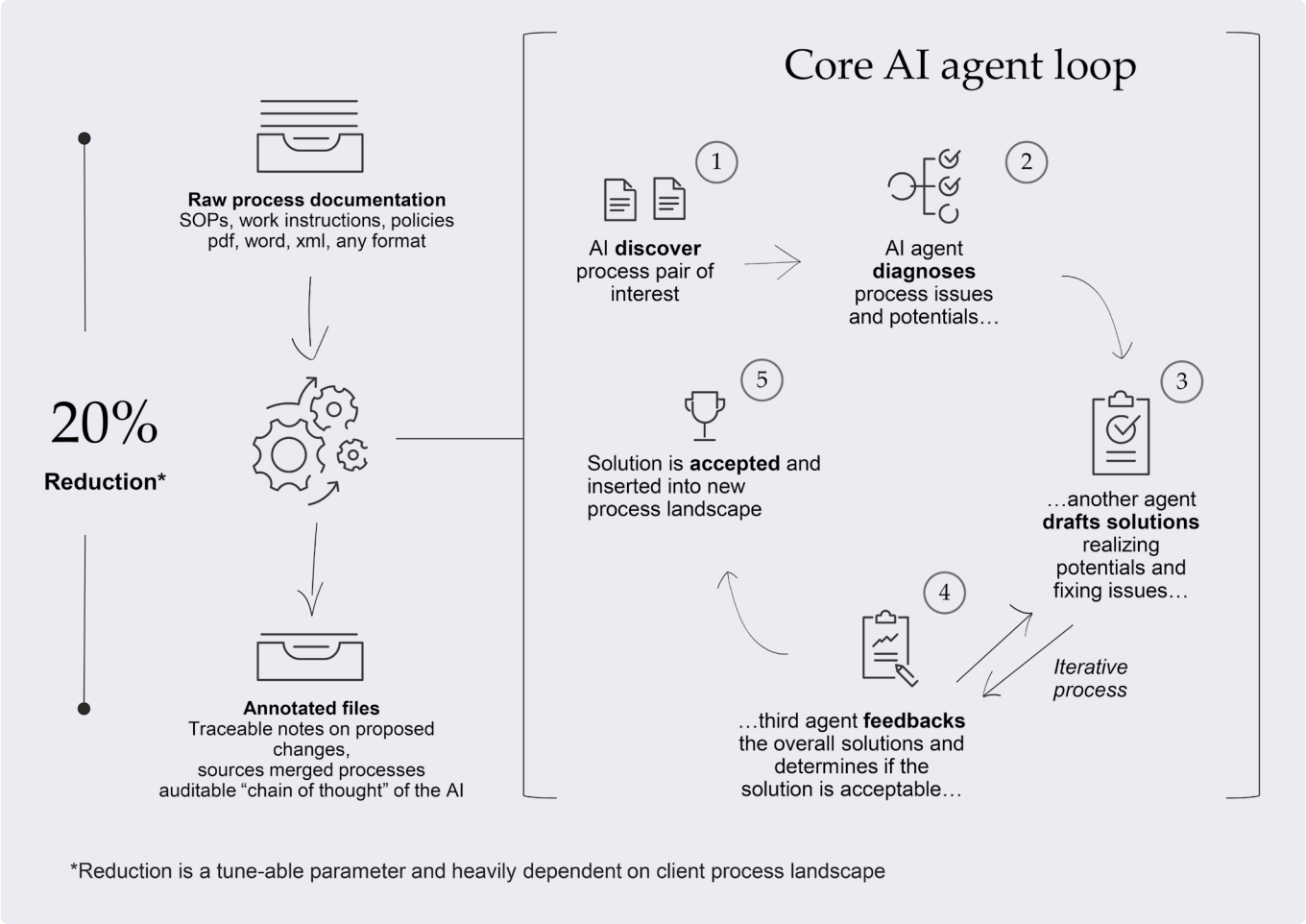
1. **Start with clear, value-driven use cases:** Avoid generic AI experiments – focus on measurable impact.
2. **Build iteratively:** Accept imperfection at the beginning; continuously improve through feedback and data maturity.
3. **Design for reliability:** Treat AI as part of a robust software product, not as a magical black box.
4. **Prioritise adoption:** Involve users, train them – and start with simple, deterministic agents.



Excursus: HYPE about AI agents

What leaders need to know

Practical example



*Reduction is a tune-able parameter and heavily dependent on client process landscape

The project

A complex post-merger documentation landscape required **simplification** and **consistency.**
Implement introduced a **generative AI solution** with LLMs, enabling the system to autonomously identify redundant or contradictory documents and make simplifying/unifying adjustments directly (but traceably) within the documents.
This AI-driven approach **reduced complexity** and increased **quality, compliance** and **efficiency.**

The impact

Direct impact

- **20–30 % reduction** in process document corpus
- Improved compliance and quality standards
- **Simplified** document management enabling faster updates

Further impact

- **Fewer errors** and **improved resource efficiency** in downstream processes
- I**mproved process performance** and reduced risk of regulatory penalties
- **Faster employee onboarding** with clearer and more accessible documentation

AI agents: from prompt to process impact

AI agents – what are they and why now?

AI agents or agentic AI represent the next evolution of generative AI: they do not just provide answers on a chat interface, but independently handle multi-step tasks, use tools and data, check intermediate steps and work iteratively towards a goal, achieving impressive results through multiple loops. For Swiss companies, this means that complex knowledge and process tasks can be automated and carried out with higher quality – especially in areas where time, attention and precision are required today.

Core features and relevance for Swiss organisations

- Decision-making and action competence: agents plan, execute actions (e.g. web search, ERP entry), use context and reflect on their steps.
- Collaboration: Agents can interact with humans or other agents – for end-to-end processes or as a team.
- Technological maturity: Reasoning models, tool usage and multi-agent frameworks can now be used productively – agents are no longer experimental.

Practical examples

- **Research agent:** Conduct structured web and internal research, create reports.
- **Admin agent:** Fill out forms, process invoices, prepare payroll.
- **Customer service agent:** Answer standard inquiries, initiate follow-up processes.
- **Shopping/procurement agent:** Compare markets, recom mend products, prepare orders.
- **Multi-agent teams:** Combine research, coding, planning and ops agents for automated processes.

On the left is a practical example of a multi-agent team in the pharmaceutical industry, illustrating how multiple AI agents interact with each other – and that this is no longer science fiction.

How do you get to agents?

In the familiar use case discovery process, it is necessary to check whether one or more AI agents should be deployed in the potential use case solution. AI agents offer a powerful way to specialise tasks, automate interconnected and repetitive actions – unlike "simple" chat interactions. This brings Swiss companies one step closer to increasing business efficiency.

> **"Agents are no longer experiments, but a productive option for Swiss companies – provided that governance, data and skills are right ..."**
>
> **Frank Dannacher, Data & AI Team, Implement Consulting Group**

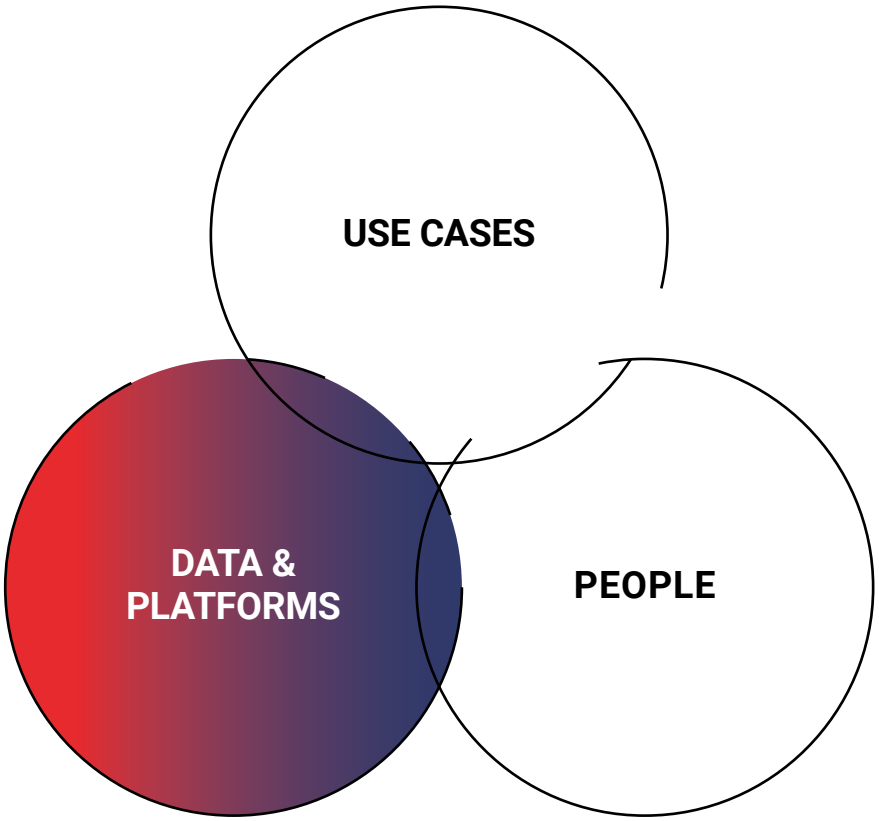
3

DATA & PLATFORMS

- Making data fit for AI
- AI platforms architecture and key decisions
- Responsible use of GenAI & EU Act
- Recommendations for reducing security risks related to GenAI

“We trust in God, everyone else brings data”

William Edwards Deming,
American physicist and statistician



Data & Platforms

Data is the "gold" of the AI age
It forms the basis for the development and training of AI solutions and models. Artificial intelligence is not a new invention. Neural networks and machine learning algorithms have existed since the 1990s and 2000s. The big difference today: modern AI models (so-called foundation models) can utilise huge amounts of unstructured and multimodal data (e.g. text, images) through self-supervised learning.

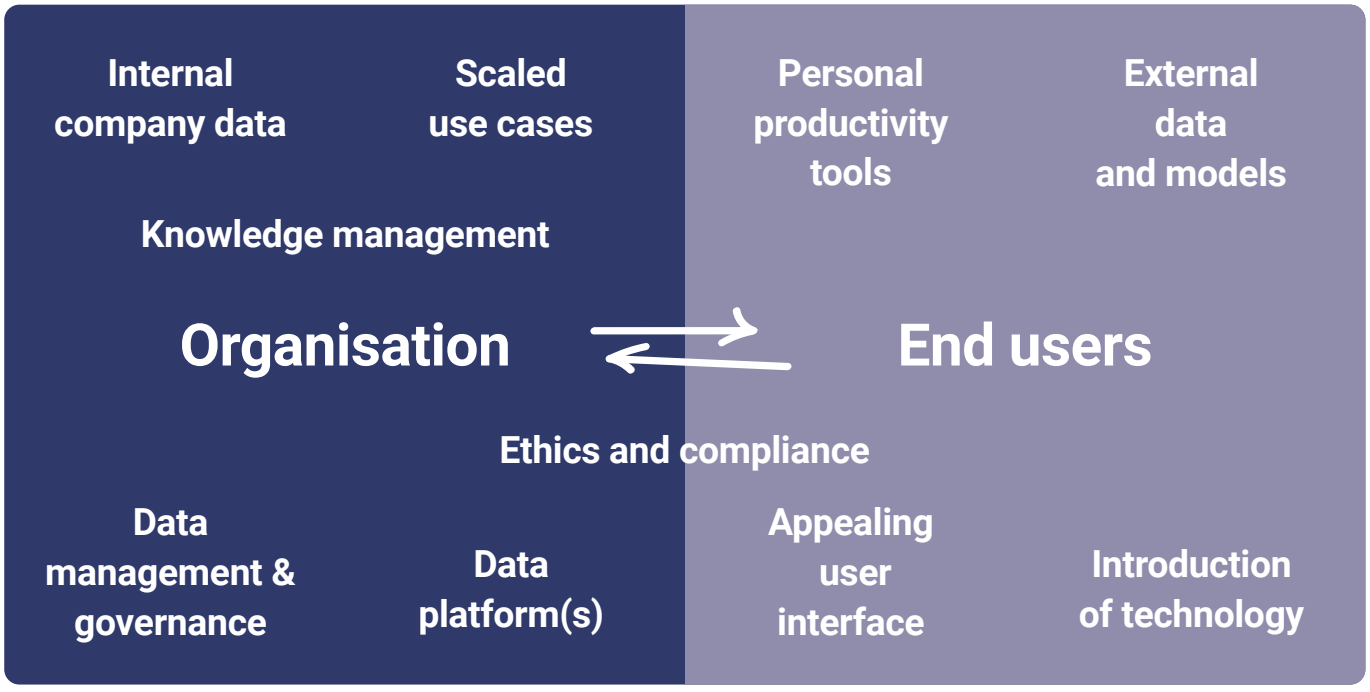
Platforms as a basis for AI applications
Besides data, platforms are the central infrastructure for the use of AI. A platform is the technical foundation that enables an organisation to develop, deploy and operate AI solutions securely and at scale. It ranges from infrastructure (e.g. cloud services) to data storage (data lake) and on to apps and user interfaces with which users interact.

Data as a competitive advantage
Company-owned data is the most valuable asset for organisations – it offers the potential for real competitive advantages. New data formats such as text in documents and images should also be taken into account. Around 90% of all company data remains inaccessible today because it is "trapped" in documents. Artificial intelligence opens up the possibility of conducting genuine knowledge management and exploiting historical as well as complete data sets. However, this requires solid data management to avoid erroneous AI results and uncontrolled data access.

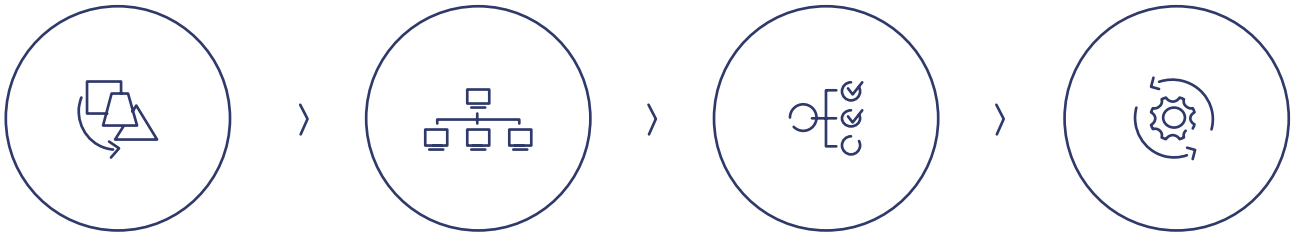
Data preparation as the key to success
To ensure that AI models – whether public or internal – can be used effectively, clean data preparation is crucial. Without it, errors, biases or lack of transferability arise. Typical main pitfalls include poor data quality, lack of data access, fragmented data landscapes and lack of relevance to the business context.

Conclusion
Only with a clear data strategy, a robust platform and clean data management can AI unfold its full potential – for the organisation and the end users.

Data and its relationship to the organisation and end users



Pragmatic data management model



Identify data required for the prioritised use cases	Organise unstructured data ("document readiness")	Establish data quality and governance	Ensure security and data protection
Select Data For each use case, companies should: • List required data sources (internal + external). • Check the format in which the data is available (structured, unstructured, documents, emails, systems). • Assess data access, data quality and gaps.	**Provision of the data** Step-by-step instructions: • Create a document inventory (SharePoint, file server, Google Drive, etc.). • Remove duplicates, outdated and irrelevant files. • Classify documents (public/internal/ confidential). • Convert non-machine-readable files (OCR, normalise PDFs). • Add lightweight metadata (owner, date, sensitivity).	**Ensure data quality** No complex enterprise governance model — just "right-sized": • Define clear data owners. • Set sensitivity levels. • Simple approval processes for data in AI systems. • Documentation: Which data flows into which AI service? Rule: Build governance step by step — not monolithic.	**Use responsible data** Concrete guidelines: • Which data should not be included in external models? • Handling of PII, contracts, customer data. • When to anonymise? When to mask? • What checks must Legal/ Compliance approve before production? Creating a checklist: "Is this dataset suitable for AI?"

Before data can create value, it must be made fit and accessible for AI

Four consecutive steps (illustration on the left) are necessary in data management to effectively use AI, to integrate structured and unstructured data, and enable a holistic overview of the knowledge within the organisation.

Knowledge management of central importance

- The management of unstructured data is crucial to leverage an organisation's knowledge resources:
- Managing unstructured data is synonymous with knowledge management, as both involve the organisation, control and utilisation of information for the benefit of an organisation.
- Data management is about ensuring that data and information are accurate, reliable, accessible and processed to effectively support decision-making and innovation.
- Data management requires the establishment of policies, processes and systems to maintain data quality, ensure compliance and facilitate the sharing and use of information across the organisation.

Tips

- Define good contextual data or ontologies for your most important use cases that can be used in application-specific systems.
- Data quality is crucial for trust in the results of generative AI. Therefore, define your expectations for output quality, as this can influence data management.
- A 2-4-week "document cleanup sprint" delivers quick wins.

Why is data management essential for the use of AI?

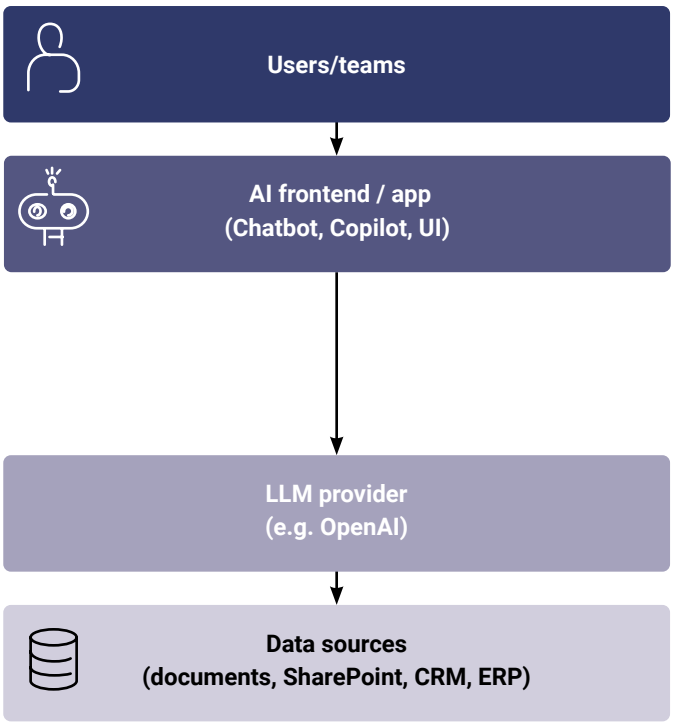
1. Ensures the quality, relevance and accessibility of the data used to train AI models or serve as the basis for a RAG.
2. Ensures compliance with data protection and security regulations, especially when handling sensitive or personal data.
3. Ensures the maintenance of the integrity and consistency of the data used in generative AI applications.

Checklist “Data”

- [ ] Data used for generative AI (and AI) use cases should be treated as a strategic asset.
- [ ] A data strategy should be developed that supports the central business strategy and core processes – this will focus the data management efforts.
- [ ] Solid principles of data management and data governance (ownership, data quality processes and data sovereignty /master data management) should be applied to optimise AI results.
- [ ] Define context data and ontologies for key use cases.

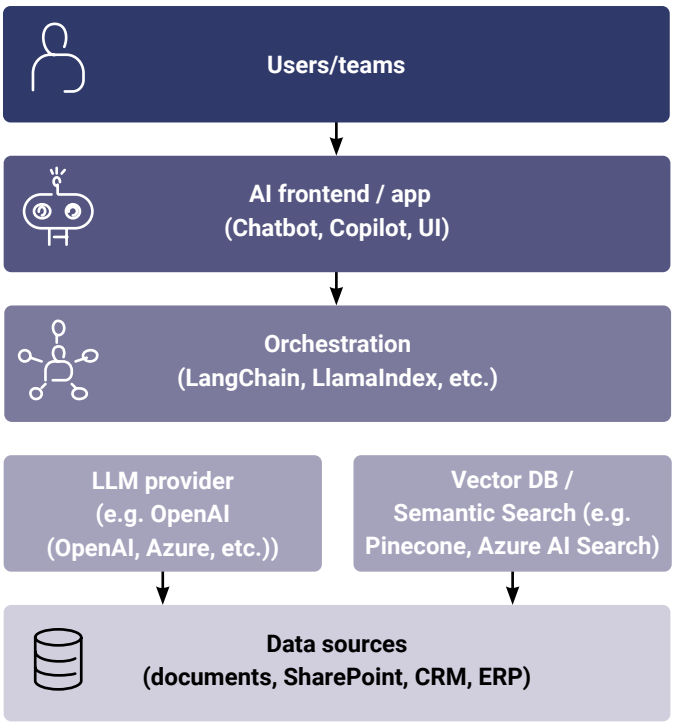
Simple architecture ("Lightweight AI stack")

Ideal for the first 1–3 use cases of a company



Advanced architecture ("Scalable AI stack")

For companies that want to operate multiple AI systems



Tips for leaders:

The architecture determines how quickly and sustainably AI can be scaled – clarify requirements and goals early on! Strategic architecture choice: Start with a simple architecture for a few use cases, scalable architecture with growing demand.

- **Quick start vs. future-proofing:** Simple stacks enable rapid piloting but reach limits with complexity.
- **Scalability through orchestration:** Advanced architectures integrate orchestration and vector databases for multiple systems and data sources.
- **Critical data integration:** The quality and connectivity of data sources is crucial for success in both approaches.
- **Conclusion:** Always align the architecture decision with AI ambitions and scaling needs.

The choice of AI platform is a crucial decision and must enable the use of one's own data both today and in the future

AI platforms: determine architecture and approach
One' Choosing the right AI platform is today one of the most important strategic decisions for Swiss organisations that want to use artificial intelligence successfully and sustainably. Current studies clearly show that those who want to scale AI and create real added value need a solid, future-proof platform architecture – and that goes far beyond the technology itself.

The focus here is on the ability to use one's own data as a competitive advantage. Many companies underestimate how crucial a unified, well-integrated data platform is. In fact, studies show that only about a fifth of organisations feel architecturally ready for AI – most struggle with data silos, fragmented systems and lack of real-time capability. Without this foundation, AI often remains piecemeal and fails to realise its potential.

The future belongs to hybrid platforms that flexibly combine different models and technologies. Successful companies do not rely on a single solution, but combine open-source and proprietary models, use cloud and on-premise approaches, and purposefully integrate their own domain-specific data. The combination of generative AI models with company-owned data is considered key to sustainable competitive advantages.

Another trend is the democratisation of AI: platforms must be designed so that even departments without IT knowledge can access data and AI services using natural language. This increases acceptance and accelerates innovation within the company. At the same time, broad usage raises the requirements for governance, security and compliance. Platforms must therefore provide technical and organisational guidelines from the outset – from access management to monitoring, audit trails and ethics standards.

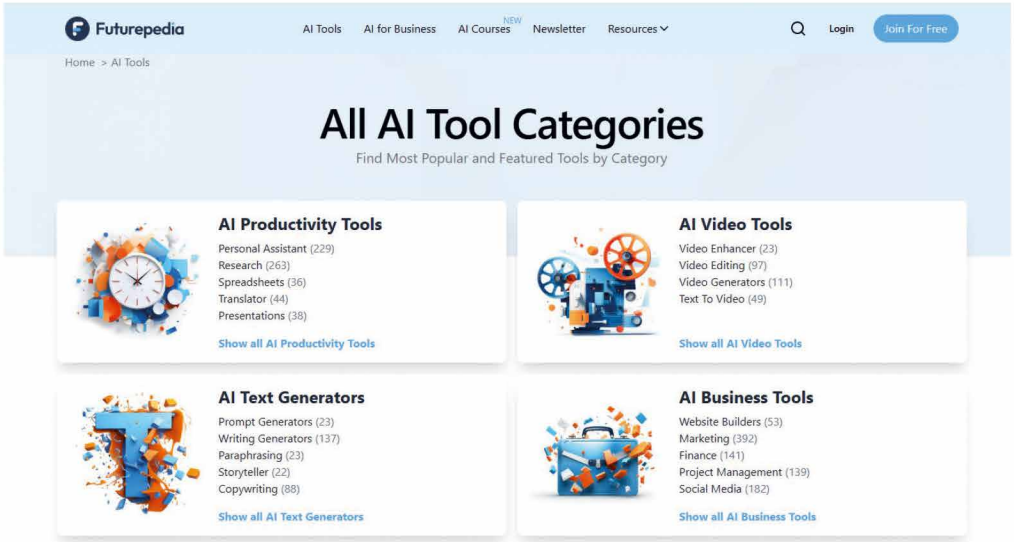
Studies recommend an iterative approach: start with clearly defined pilots, test different platform and model combinations, and only scale after successfully demonstrating benefit and safety. It is crucial that the platform architecture is always aligned with the most important use cases and the specific requirements of the company – not the other way around.

Conclusion:
The right AI platform is not purely an IT project, but a strategic decision for the future viability of your company. It determines how quickly, securely and effectively AI can be scaled. Those who invest now in a flexible, secure and data-driven platform are laying the foundation for sustainable AI success in Switzerland.

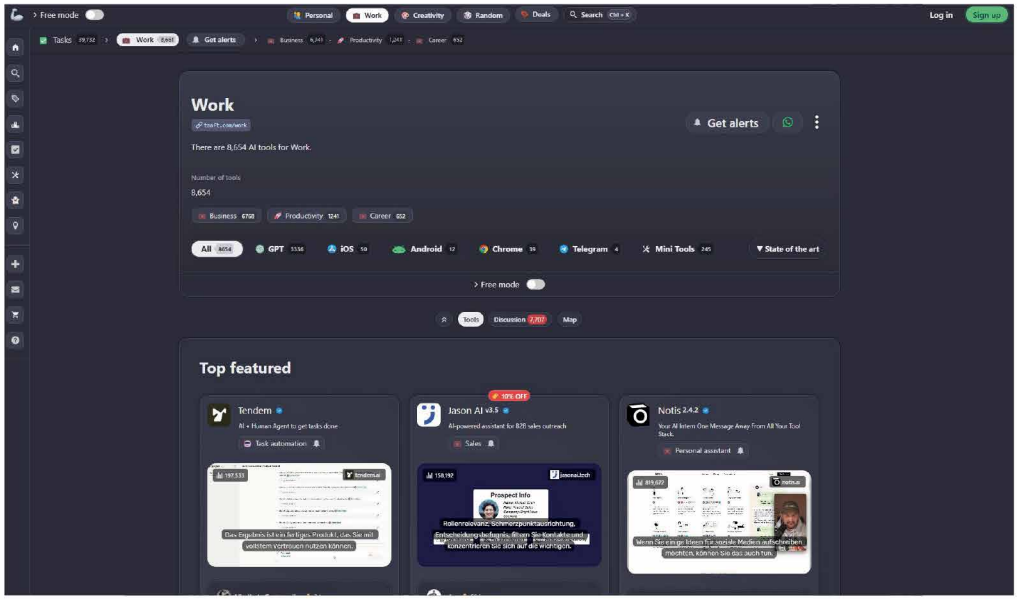
"In most cases, technology is not the problem when it comes to achieving successful AI project results ..."

Frank Dannacher, Data & AI Team, Implement Consulting Group

Make or buy?
A variety of platforms and tools exist



Websites like “Futurpedia” and “There's an AI for that” help to get an overview of the flood of tools



Key decisions mainly concern make or buy considerations

Make or buy?
The introduction of AI solutions in Swiss companies requires a pragmatic assessment between in-house development and purchasing. In practice, a staged approach is recommended: first, productivity-related SaaS solutions (e.g. copilots, specialised tools) are used to quickly realise initial added value and build up expertise. Only when specific processes, proprietary knowledge and data or special requirements for security and control exist does supplementation or in-house development become advisable.

Evaluation criteria for the decision:
- **Internal competencies:** Build up own capabilities or outsource to external parties?
- **Speed:** Purchasing allows for a quick start, while in-house development takes more time.
- **Cost control:** SaaS solutions offer predictable costs, in-house development involves higher initial expenses.
- **Degree of control:** In-house development increases control over data, processes and customisation.
- **Security requirements:** Strict compliance or data protection regulations favour in-house solutions.
- **Dependency on the provider:** Proprietary tools carry the risk of lock-in effects; open source or in-house solutions reduce dependency.

Choice of vector database/search layer
For searching and using company knowledge, a standard search (e.g. SharePoint) is often sufficient at the start. A vector storage only becomes relevant when semantic search, context understanding or retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) is required. For beginners, integrated search functions or low-code RAG solutions are recommended. As the need for scalability and performance grows, specialised vector databases such as Pinecone, Weaviate or Azure AI Search are recommended, as they offer robust APIs and easy administration.

Tips:
- **Start:** Use integrated search functions or low-code RAG.
- **Scaling:** Use Pinecone, Weaviate or Azure AI Search.

2.3.4 Integration strategy: AI + business systems
The integration of AI into existing business systems (CRM, ERP, ticket systems, email/Office) should ideally be carried out gradually. A good/better/best approach makes the selection easier:

Approach | Description

Development environment & tooling
For the sustainable development and operation of AI solutions, a modern, collaborative approach is recommended:
- **Prompt libraries** for reusable and documented prompts
- **Standardised** RAG pipelines for efficient development of retrieval-based applications
- **Monitoring and logging** (e.g. LangSmith, OpenAI Evals) to monitor quality, safety and performance

Summary:
A step-by-step, pragmatic approach – from acquisition through integration to in-house development – allows Swiss companies to get started with AI safely and efficiently.

Checklist "Platforms"

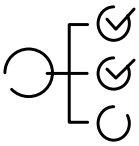
- [ ] Data platforms are crucial if you want to use your own data.
- [ ] Break down silos: if data exists in different systems, a central repository should be considered for use cases.
- [ ] Support all modalities: A good data platform must be able to process structured, semi-structured and unstructured data as well as multimodality (text, image, audio, video).
- [ ] Clarify make or buy: Evaluate available platform skills and resources to make an informed decision about whether to build in-house or purchase.
- [ ] Consider location and data security – preferably operate on your own platform.
- [ ] Compare available models and token costs; consider TCO and scalability.

Critical factors for the responsible use of GenAI

DATA QUALITY
The timely availability of high-quality, unbiased and representative data is crucial for training effective AI models.

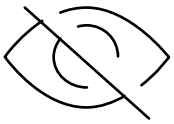
BIAS
Reducing bias in AI systems is crucial to prevent unfair or discriminatory outcomes and requires methods for identify and correct such distortions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
To ensure that AI systems respect human rights and societal values, ethical guidelines must be integrated into AI development and deployment processes.



COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL REGULATIONS
It is a major challenge to navigate the evolving landscape of AI regulations and to ensure that AI systems meet all legal and regulatory requirements..

TRANSPARENCY AND EXPLANABILITY
Developing AI models that provide clear and understandable explanations for their decisions is key to building trust and ensuring accountability.



PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION
For the responsible use of AI, it is important to balance the benefits of data with strict privacy protection and compliance with regulations such as the GDPR.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN HUMANS AND AI
It is crucial to design AI systems in such a way that they do not replace human abilities but complement them, while ensuring an appropriate level of human oversight and control.

SECURITY AND ROBUSTNESS
Ensuring the security of AI systems against adversarial attacks and robustness against unexpected inputs or conditions is crucial for maintaining trust and safety.

Responsible AI use should be viewed holistically and involves transparency, data protection, collaboration and security

The responsible use of GenAI begins with data quality: only when high-quality, unbiased and representative data is available can AI be reliably. Closely related to this is the issue of bias – that is, distortions in the data or models. Bias must be actively identified and corrected to avoid unfair or discriminatory outcomes.

Another key aspect is ethical considerations. AI systems must be designed to respect human rights and societal values. This requires clear ethical guidelines that are consistently integrated into all development and deployment processes. At the same time, compliance with legal regulations presents a major challenge: the regulatory environment is constantly evolving, and AI systems must meet all relevant legal requirements.

Transparency and explainability are key factors for trust and acceptance. Users and decision-makers must be able to understand how and why an AI reaches certain recommendations or decisions. Equally important is the protection of privacy and data: responsible handling of personal information and compliance with data protection regulations such as the GDPR are essential.

Cooperation between humans and AI is at the heart of sustainable AI use. AI systems should complement human abilities, not replace them, and should always be designed to ensure an appropriate level of human oversight and control. Ultimately, the security and robustness of AI systems are essential: they must be protected against attacks and unexpected inputs to provide trust and reliability.

Conclusion:
Only when all these factors – from data quality to ethics and law and including transparency, data protection, collaboration and security – are addressed holistically can GenAI realise its potential responsibly and sustainably.

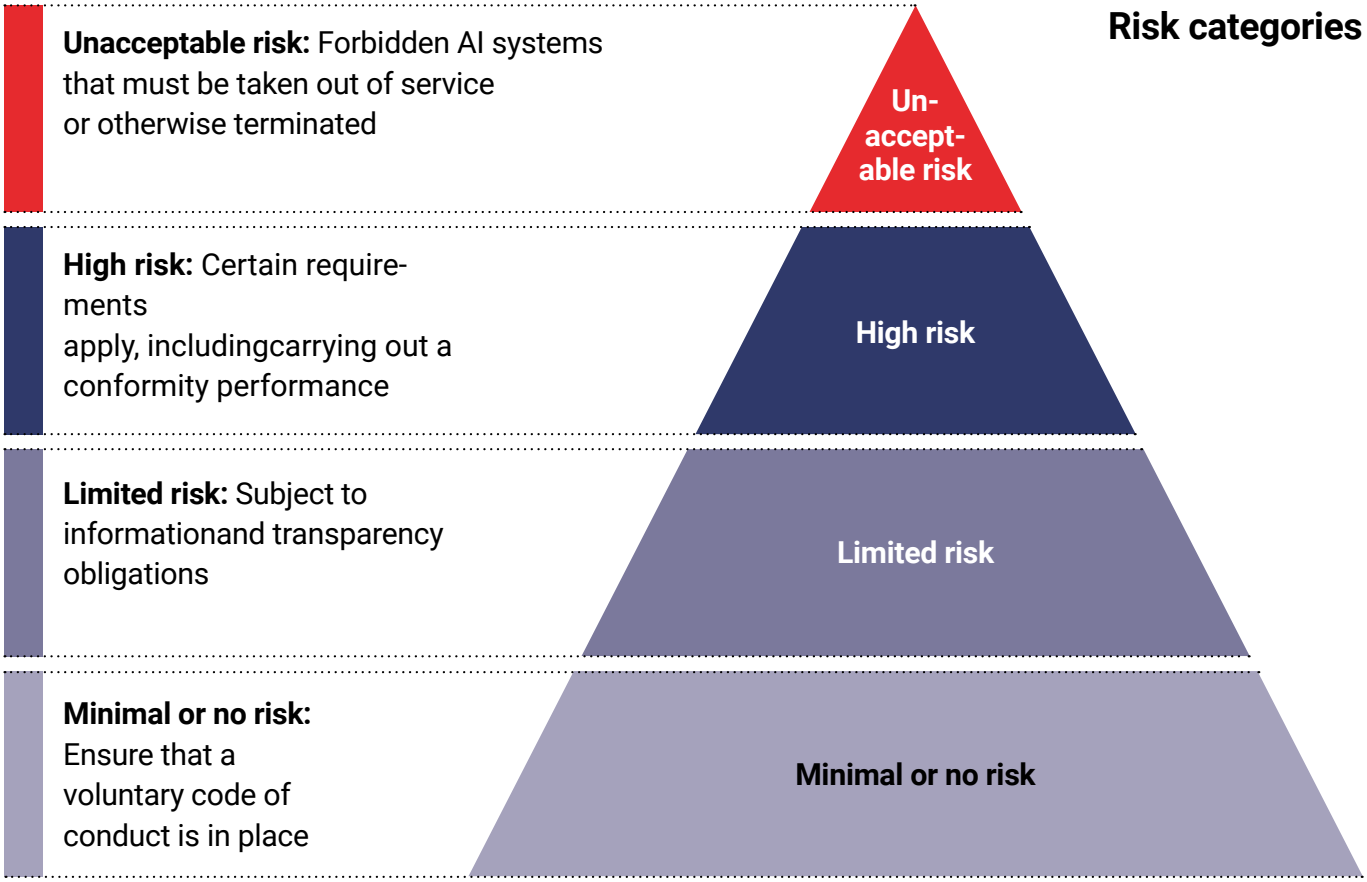
What does this mean for leaders?

- **Role model:** Actively demonstrate responsible AI use and set clear standards.
- **Establish governance:** Create structures (e.g. AI governance board) that monitor ethics, compliance and security.
- **Provide resources:** Invest in data quality, training and secure infrastructure.
- **Promote transparency:** Communicate openly about the opportunities, risks and limitations of GenAI.
- **Take responsibility:** Make conscious decisions about where and how AI is used – and where it is not.
- **Shape culture:** Promote a learning and error culture where employees can express concerns and take responsibility.

Checklist "Responsibility in AI"

- [ ] Check data quality: Are the data used current, high quality and representative?
- [ ] Perform bias checks: Are data and models regularly checked for bias?
- [ ] Apply ethical guidelines: Are there clear AI ethics guidelines and are they implemented in the project?
- [ ] Ensure legal compliance: Are data protection and all relevant laws (e.g. EU AI Act, GDPR) being followed?
- [ ] Create transparency: Are AI decisions understandable and explainable for users?
- [ ] Protect privacy: Are personal data processed only with clear safeguards?
- [ ] Ensure human control: Is a human always involved in critical decisions?
- [ ] Testing security and robustness: Are there protection mechanisms against attacks and unexpected errors?

EXCURSUS: EU AI ACT



Risk-based approach in the EU AI Act

- The EU AI Act regulates AI according to a risk-based approach.
- The higher the risk to health, safety or fundamental rights, the stricter the requirements.
- There are four risk levels: unacceptable, high, limited and minimal/no risk.
- AI systems can fall into different risk levels depending on their use.
- Violations can result in penalties of up to 7% of annual turnover.

The EU AI Act is the world's first comprehensive legal framework for AI

Current situation
The EU has passed a new AI law that will come into force gradually from December 2024 until June 2027.It regulates over 144 pages how AI may be developed, deployed and used in the EU. The law establishes a unified legal framework and classifies AI systems according to their risk.It prohibits certain dangerous applications andimposes strict rules on transparency and accountability.

Objectives of the EU AI Act
1. Protection of fundamental rights: Ensuring that AI respects the rights, safety and freedoms of people.
2. Unified rules: Creating a clear, EU-wide legal framework for the development and use of AI.
3. Promotion of innovation: Supporting trustworthy and responsible AI development in Europe.

Significance for Switzerland
Swiss organisations must comply with the requirements of the EU AI Act if they distribute or use AI systems there or have subsidiaries in the EU. Switzerland does not adopt the EU AI Act directly but relies on flexible, sector-based regulation. The new Swiss regulations, including consultation, are expected to be in place by the end of 2026.

AI systems are divided into four risk levels (unacceptable risk, high risk, limited risk and minimal risk):

The higher the AI risk, the stricter the rules. The highest risk level includes systems with unacceptable risk (e.g. social scoring, manipulation), which are prohibited.

High-risk systems (e.g. HR decisions, medical diagnoses) are subject to strict requirements such as training and documentation; systems with limited risk (e.g. chatbots, marketing texts) are subject to transparency and information obligations. Systems with minimal risk (e.g. spam filters) are only subject to voluntary measures.

The higher the risk, the stricter the regulatory requirements.

Good to know:
For small and medium-sized organisations (organisations with a revenue of less than £50 million), simplified procedures, regulatory support and access to test environments apply in some cases.

Recommendations for companies to ensure compliance with the EU AI Act

Evaluation

- Check whether and which AI systems are already in use or being developed.
- Roughly classify systems according to their function, impact and environment.
- Bring together responsible teams (technology, legal,compliance).
- Seek support from industry associations (e.g. Swissmem).

Risk assessment according to the EU AI Act

- Classify AI systems into one of four risk categories: minimal, limited, high, unacceptable.
- Document which systems are affected and how.
- Be cautious with high-risk categories (e.g. human resources, medicine,surveillance).

Implementation and control

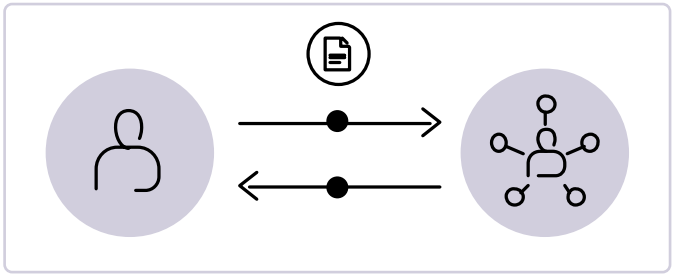
- Implement duties: fulfill requirements according to risk level.
- Clarify responsibilities: define internal responsibilities and establish clear processes for use, review and control.
- Training for all persons working with or monitoring high-risk AI systems.

Responsible use of GenAI
Security: 4 key risks when dealing with AI

1 Oversharing & data leaks

Users/employees may unintentionally enter or make confidential information accessible in insecure AI tools.

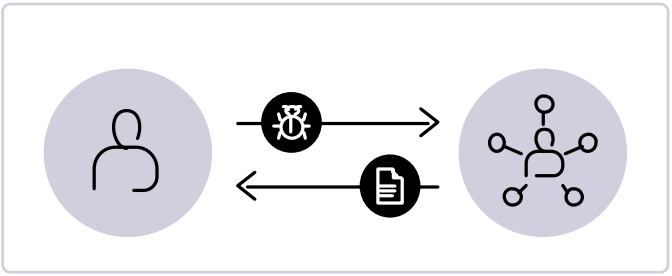
Examples:
- Use of shadow AI (unauthorised tools)
- Sharing sensitive data in ChatGPT without security precautions ("guardrails")
- Inconsistent handling of sensitive information due to lack of data classification



2 External attacks & internal model risks

AI systems can be manipulated by attacks or produce unreliable results due to inherent model risks such as hallucinations, bias and lack of transparency.

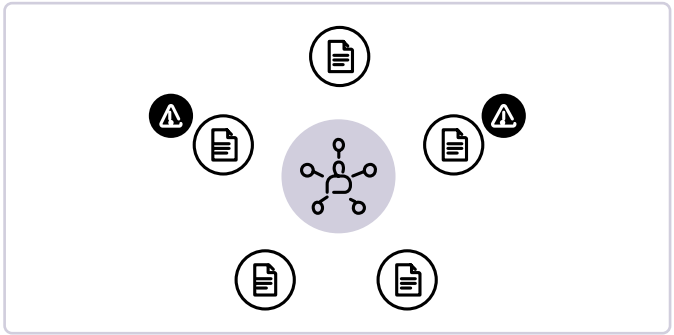
Examples:
- Prompt injection and manipulation of inputs to access sensitive data
- Manipulation of training data
- Hallucinations/distortions (bias)
- Low transparency of models ("black box")



3 Non-compliance

Insufficient control over the use of AI can lead to violations of legal requirements and liability risks.

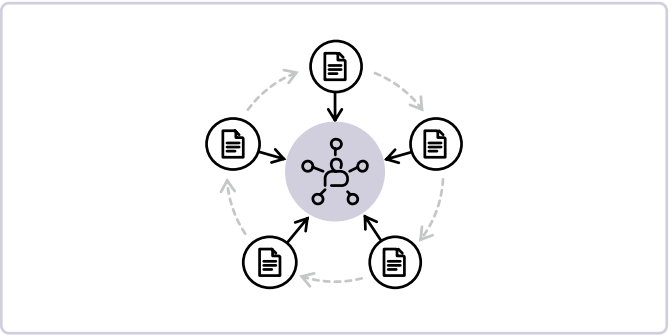
Examples:
- Compliance with the EU AI Act
- Datenschutzverletzungen



4 Data sovereignty & dependencies

Companies risk becoming dependent on individual AI providers and losing control over the location, use and protection of their data.

Examples:
- Lock-in with individual cloud or AI providers
- Lack of transparency regarding the location and storage of sensitive business data
- Geopolitical risks (e.g. USA, China, EU)



Four recommendations for action result from the reduction of security risks related to GenAI

Four key recommendations for action

To effectively reduce security risks associated with GenAI, a holistic approach is needed on multiple levels.

1. First, company-wide AI governance is essential: clear rules, roles and responsibilities must be defined and colla boration between business, IT, legal and security depart ments must be ensured. This is the only way to manage risks in a targeted manner and meet regulatory require ments.

2. Equally important is the strategic selection of AI platforms and models. Here, it is essential to carefully select suitable vendors and cloud providers, assess the quality and security of the models, and consider the location and storage of data with regard to sovereignty and geopolitical risks.

3. A third success factor is the establishment of technical security controls. In addition to actively providing AI tools, supplementary protective measures such as guardrails, shadow AI detection or network monitoring should be im plemented. Formal processes help to systematically review new tools and applications and identify risks early.

4. Last but not least, employees play a key role: regular training, clear communication about opportunities and risks, and an open AI culture promote awareness and safe use in everyday life.

What does this mean for leaders?
Leaders must actively advance these four areas of action, set priorities and allocate resources. They are required to establish governance structures, make strategic technology decisions, enforce security standards and promote an open, learning-oriented AI culture within the company. Only in this way can GenAI be used safely, compliantly and sustainably.

Checkliste Handlungsempfehlungen

- [ ] Establish AI governance:
  Are clear rules, roles and responsibilities defined for the use of AI and is collaboration between business, IT, legal and security ensured?

- [ ] Strategic platform and model selection:
  Have suitable AI platforms and cloud providers been carefully selected?
  Have LLM models been evaluated for quality, security and cost?
  Has the location and storage of data been reviewed with regard to data sovereignty and geopolitical risks?

- [ ] Technical security controls:
  Are guardrails and protection mechanisms been implemented for AI tools?
  Are tools for detecting shadow AI and network monitoring being used?
  Are there formal processes for reviewing and appro-ving new AI applications?

- [ ] Employees & AI culture:
  Are regular training session on AI risks and safe handling conducted?
  Is open communication between employees, IT and security encouraged?
  Are the most important AI dos and don'ts clearly communicated to everyone?

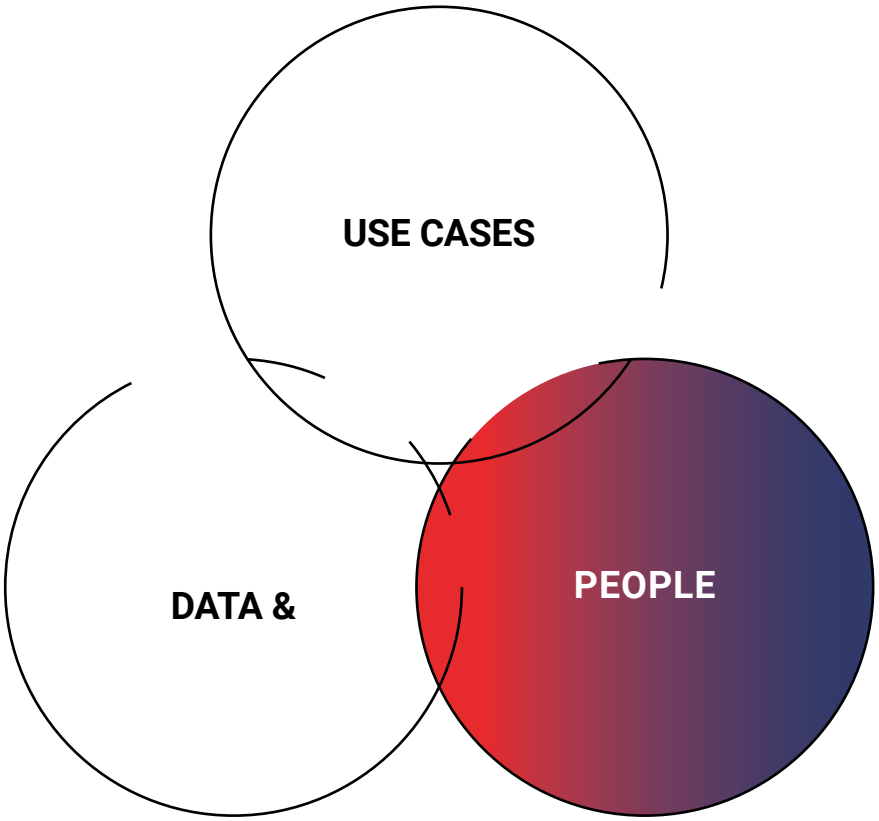
4

PEOPLE

- Obstacles and how to overcome them
- Training programmes & learning journeys
- Comprehensive empowerment of employees

“AI is changing the way we work in irreversible ways.”

Edouard Bugnion,
Vice President for Innovation and Impact at EPFL



People

The use of any kind of technology depends entirely on the users, the people who use the technology every day to improve their work routine. Despite or perhaps because of its disruptive nature, artificial intelligence is no exception in this regard, as realising the potential of AI for organisations, but also for society and individuals, people must be at the heart of every implementation. Various organisational levels play a role in implementation and scaling with and through people.

The individual, as the smallest organisational unit, forms the foundation. Teams, departments, business units/divisions and corporations are each higher organisational levels that must also be specifically considered when implementing and scaling AI. Especially, when scaling AI in organisations, leaders quickly realise that it is not the technology or the use case that poses the greatest obstacle, but the people who have to use the technology.

This adds another dimension to the introduction and scaling of AI in organisations and presents leaders, technology developers, implementation partners and employees with a range of fundamental questions.

To overcome typical obstacles in the implementation and scaling of AI in organisations, the following three success factors should be established:

- **Behaviour and skills:** Continuous employee empowerment is essential in the context of the dynamic development of AI.
- **Organisation and capabilities:** New capabilities must be developed, distributed and scaled within the organisation.
- **AI governance and ethics:** Security and monitoring according to the ethical standards of our society and the organisation are prerequisites for the compliant use of a powerful technology.

In the following chapters, we will specifically address each of the three success factors and provide concrete recommendations for action.

5 differences between AI and the implementation of conventional IT systems

1 Quality depends on skills

AI performance is not static and depends more on the individual skills of the users.

2 Dynamic development

AI is constantly evolving, so users often have to deal with changes in processes and interfaces.

3 Individual use cases

Compared to conventional IT systems, the use cases for AI are more individualised.

4 Blurred boundaries

AI tools often find their way into users' lives through private use. In addition, official introduction is often voluntary.

5 Ethical and regulatory risks

Users are confronted with risks such as data protection and copyright issues when using AI – often without clear ethical and legal guidelines.

"It's not faith in technology. It's faith in people."

Steve Jobs

Concrete obstacles

Lack of access
Users do not have easy or adequate access to the technology.

Limited time
Users lack the time to learn new tools and integrate them effectively into workflows.

Lack of understanding
Users lack knowledge of how AI can help and what capabilities the technology has.

Low trust
Users are sceptical about the reliability and accuracy of results.

Poor quality of results
Users receive poor results during their first interactions with AI without basic knowledge.

"GPT Hesistancy"
Users are concerned that the use of AI will be noticed by others.

Unclear expectations
Users are unsure how the tools relate to their roles within the organisation.

Overcoming obstacles

The development of artificial intelligence in its speed and scale make it difficult to draw a comparison that illustrate the transformative nature of AI.

“AI is the defining technology of our time.”

Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft

With such disruptive capability and speed, it is not only important to be aware of the typical obstacles in implementation and scaling, but also to have initiatives as a core part of the AI strategy that specifically address these obstacles.

The seven most important obstacles to the effective implementation and scaling of AI are described on the left side. Across all obstacles, three themes can be identified :

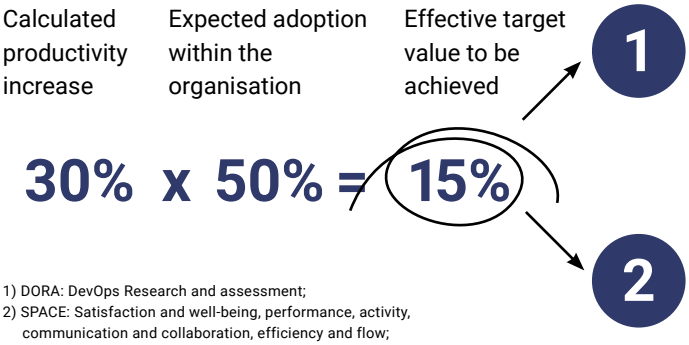
1. Individual approach and competence with AI
Habits must continually be retrained and dealing with AI is no exception. In addition, the technology is new, unfamiliar and often difficult to understand for the majority. Unlike disruptive technologies of the past, AI evolves within a few months or even weeks and requires constant engagement with the subject.

2. Future of work and technology scepticism
The quality and extent of change brought about by and with AI has already shown significant effects on the labour market. For the first time in history, the automation of work will be particularly noticeable in the service sector, in administrative functions and among knowledge workers. It will not be ballet dancer who is replaced by AI, but the lawyer. Combined with the rapid development and the difficult traceability of AI, this leads to scepticism towards AI and even fear of job loss.

3. Organisation and approach
It is not solely the individual, employee or leader from a “grassroots movement” who decides the success or failure of AI, its implementation and scaling. Organisation, structure and a shared approach are equally essential success factors.

The impact of "adoption"
The actual effect of AI measures does not depend solely on technical potential, but is largely determined by effective implementation and use within the organisation. Even if a calculated productivity increase of 30% were possible, the actual adoption – that is, how many employees actually use the solution – determines the achievable benefit. For example, if only half of the workforce is reached, the effective target value is reduced to 15%. This simple equation illustrates that **AI can only reaches its full potential when technology and adoption work together.** Therefore, it is crucial to systematically measure impact and actively involve senior management in the implementation process.

Impact is largely determined by effective adoption

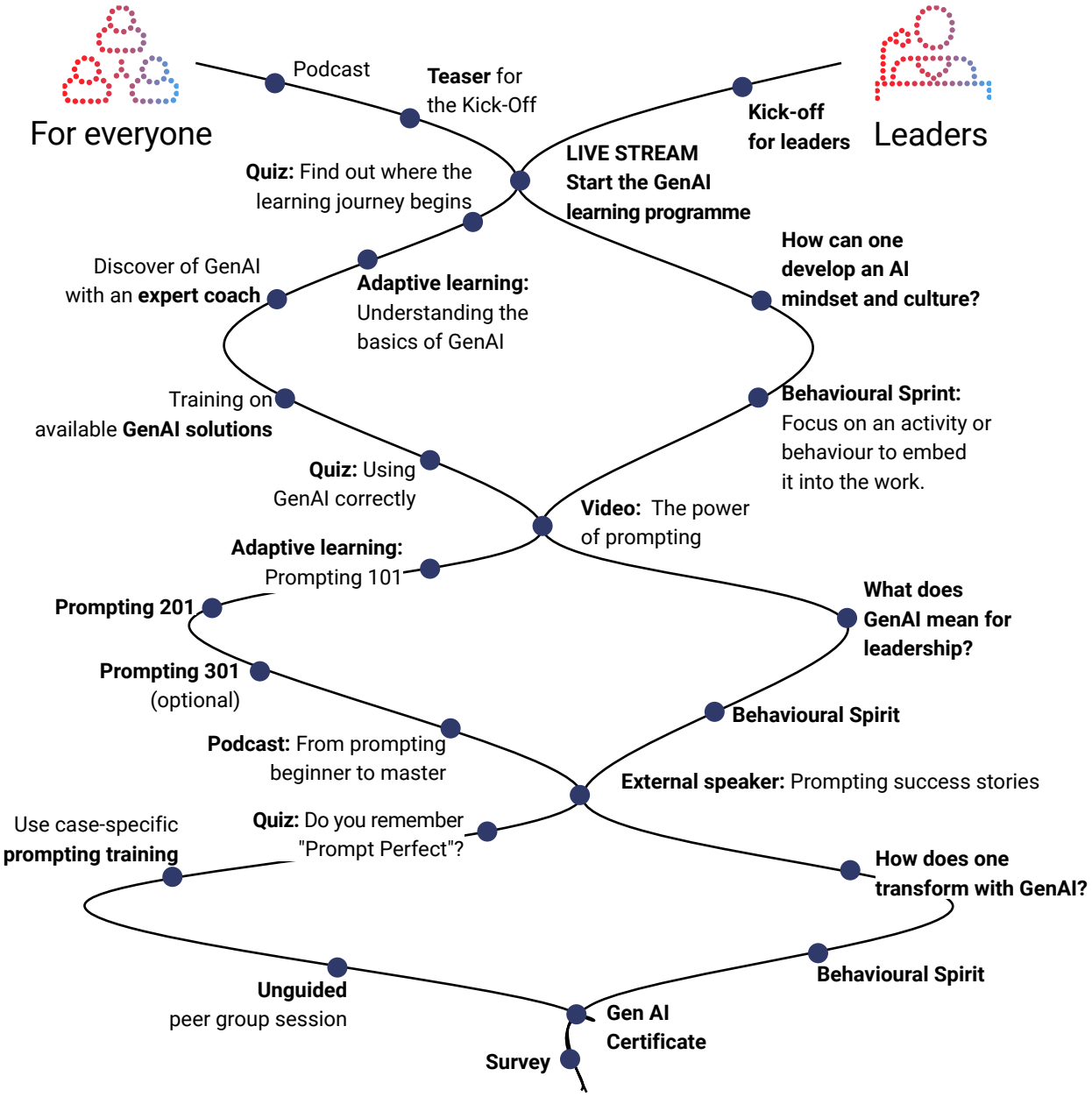


Measuring impact
Using industry-standard productivity metrics for software development such as DORA[1], SPACE[2], Velocity[3] or implementing developed frameworks to gain accurate insights into the speed and quality of processes

Management decision
To drive a targeted decision-making process on how to realise gains to achieve the strategic agenda for the company

1) DORA: DevOps Research and assessment;
2) SPACE: Satisfaction and well-being, performance, activity, communication and collaboration, efficiency and flow;
3) Key figure for "work done" in agile software development

Practical example: training programme



Concrete offers for employees can be created and obstacles overcome along six dimensions

The empowerment of the organisation and its employees is an important aspect of integrating AI into the processes, products and business models of organisations. After developing an AI ambition and defining clear objectives for the organisation and the use of AI, clear initiatives for empowerment are needed along six dimensions:

Training
Creating a decentralised learning model that promotes continuous AI education through various formats such as peer learning, project-based learning and micro-learning modules.

Communication
Build tension with a compelling AI core story and support the development with broad and targeted communication elements.

Culture & ways of working
Creating a culture where all employees, regardless of their age or knowledge of AI, feel comfortable and are able to use AI tools.

> **"[…] the effects of automation on workers today are more complex than a direct link between higher productivity and better wages."**
>
> Acemoglu & Johnson, 2024

Six dimensions for the effective empowerment of employees

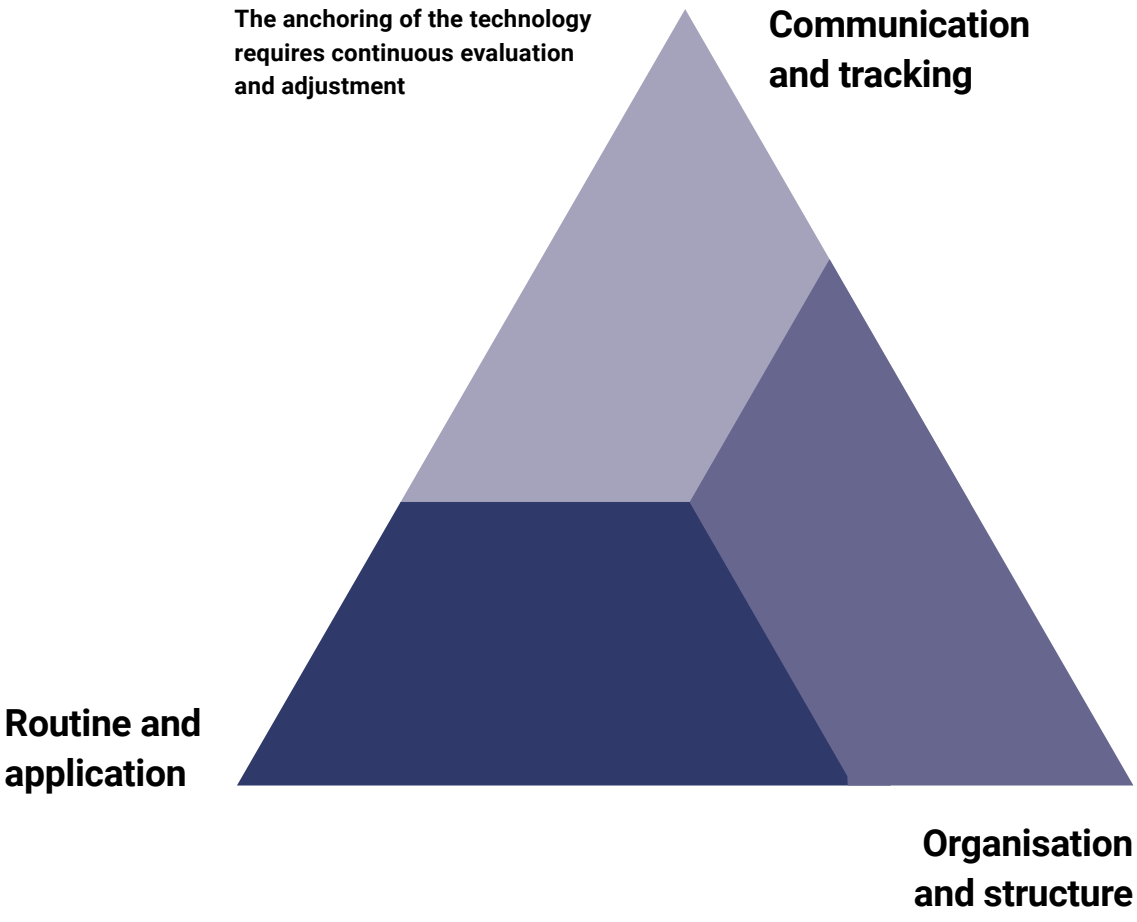
Performance management
Active measurement of KPIs to track the defined ambition must be presented transparently and communicated up to top management.

User experience & functionality
Users and developers must collaborate to maintain a continuous feedback loop for new user cases and further developments. The benefit for the user, whether internal or external, must be the top priority.

Leadership
Leaders need to be empowered to drive implementation in their areas, act as role models and set a clear agenda. For this, the leaders must build energy in their areas and actively contribute themselves.

“We will never achieve complete autonomy.”

Lee Bogner, Global Chief GenAI Architect MARS Inc.



Empowering employees requires continuous engagement with technology

Implementing AI in an organisation requires not only use cases, roadmaps and strategies, but also a more fundamental rethink of what employee enablement should look like. It is essential to view enablement not as a one-off training, but as structural support for employees at various points in their work or other interactions with technology. Only in this way can new AI skills be built, embedded and further developed within an organisation.

Organisation and structure

The enablement and development of skills within the organisation is supported through organisational building blocks that vary depending on the size and complexity of the organisation. These are options ranging from a champion network with clear guardrails (small/medium-sized organisations) to a centre of enablement with curated standards, UX/process backlog and prioritisation (medium-sized) up to a centre of excellence with dedicated roles, tool roadmaps and cross-functional management (large, complex organisations). In addition, onboarding modules, performance targets and reserved time slots for exploration support the framework. Feedback from everyday learning is converted into change requests in roles, processes and roadmaps, thereby translating learning impulses into lasting process improvements.

Routine and application

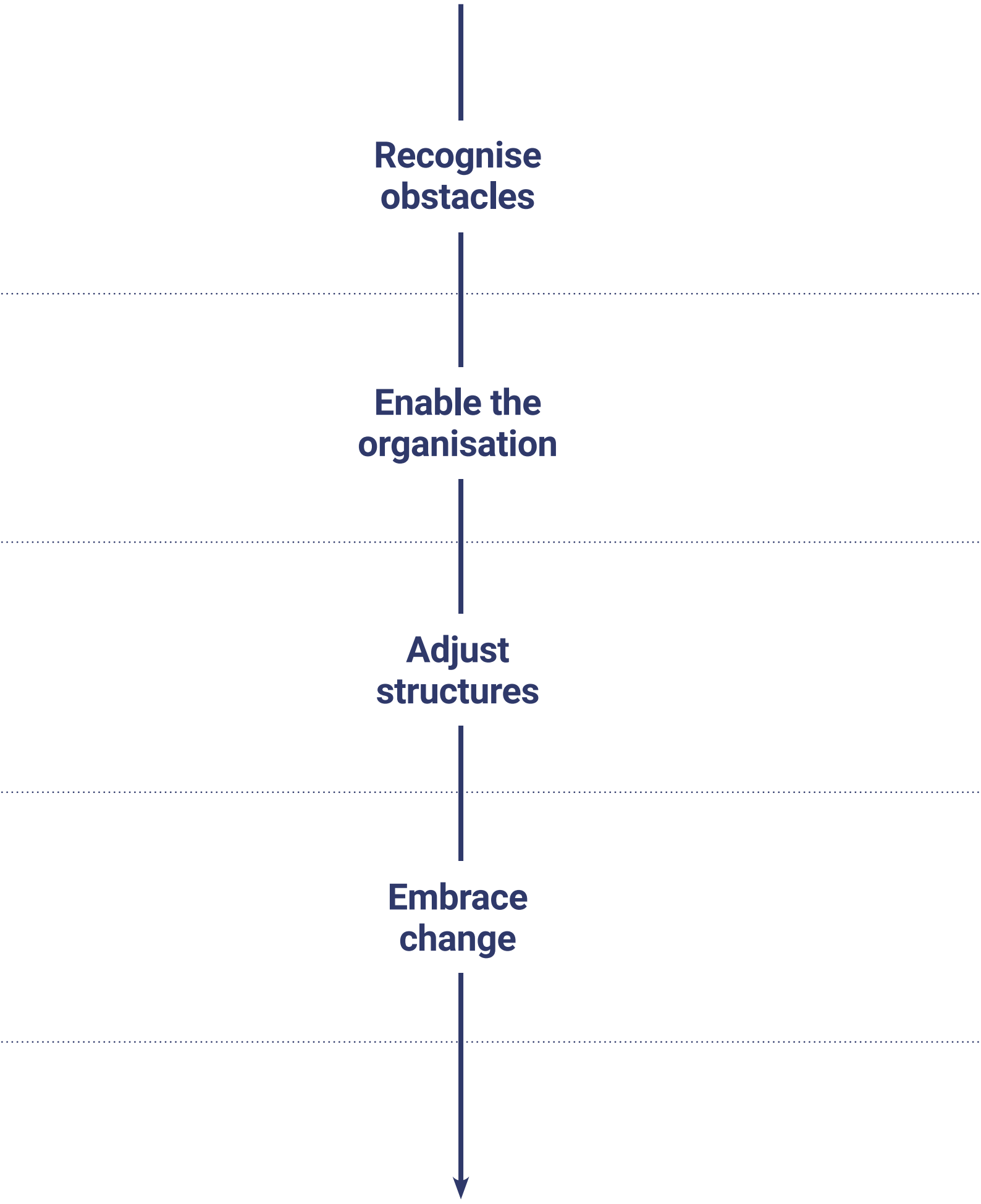
Recurring learning routine: short micro-learning units, peer sessions and "Learning Fridays" are firmly integrated into the calendar. Each learning unit ends with a concrete "apply" step in the real workflow (e.g. a standard prompt, a process step, a checklist). Direct user feedback is collected after each application (mini-pulse, short retro). Result: learning immediately leads to practice and generates actionable insights.

Communication and tracking

A consistent core story ("benefits of AI in a specific process") maintains orientation and momentum across multi-channel formats (tips, demos, use case highlights). Lean, everyday metrics (active users, frequency of use, time savings, throughput time, quality/error rate, satisfaction) provide a continuous picture of impact. Data and user comments are condensed in periodic "learn-to-improve" evaluations; the results feed into updated standards, training content and process designs and are made visible, thereby supporting scaling.

Checklist “AI adoption & enablement”

- [ ] **Build AI skills purposefully:** Establish continuous training, peer learning and micro-learning for all relevant target groups.
- [ ] **Promote culture and mindset:** Actively support an open error culture, willingness to experiment and acceptance of new ways of working.
- [ ] **Ensure communication:** Share a clear core story on the benefits and objectives of AI, regular updates and success stories.
- [ ] **User-centred introduction:** Involve end users early, enable feedback loops and quick wins.
- [ ] **Clarify structures and roles:** Define responsibilities (e.g. champions, centre of enablement/excellence) and support structures.
- [ ] **Measure and visualise impact:** Continuously track and transparently report adoption, usage and impact with KPIs and pulse checks.
- [ ] **Observe ethics and governance:** Set clear guidelines for data protection, fairness and responsible AI use.


Recognise obstacles
Enable the organisation
Adjust structures
Embrace change

- Typical obstacles are data trust, context gaps and lack of traceability, which slow down usage, quality and acceptance
- End users often struggle with lack of time, unclear expectations and scepticism towards AI results
- Without clear guidelines, risks arise for data protection, IP and compliance

- Enablement is embedded as routine through micro-learning, peer sessions and hands-on exercises in real workflows
- Leadership acts as a role model and signal transmitter; AI champions support the breadth
- Impact is made measurable (active users, frequency, time savings, quality) and

- Appropriate organisational design such as a champion network, centre of enablement or centre of excellence depending on the organisation
- Guardrails, onboarding modules and performance targets with AI KPIs ensure responsible use.
- UX/process backlog, standards (prompts, checklists) and secure tool access reduce friction

- Continuous feedback loop between users and developers
- Insights flow back into training, standards and process design and scale proven benefits
- A culture of openness and experimentation transforms AI from a tool into a way of working

LEADERSHIP & TRANSFORMATION

- Leadership mindset for AI transformation
- 5 dogmas for AI transformation
- AI transformation in stages
- Key lessons for leaders

LEADERSHIP MINDSET FOR AI TRANSFORMATION

Accept uncertainty. Remain adaptable to change and calm in the face of uncertainty.

Sharpen your focus. Ask the right questions and reduce the scope of issues to the essentials.

Allow trial and error. Create prototypes to accelerate the learning process and improve the chances of success.

Lead from the back. Identify early adopters and innovators in the team who will be the drivers of AI transformation**.**

Generate energy. Promote awareness and strive for joint strategy development.

Make decisions. Design an AI exploration process to enable and make decisions.

In the age of AI, leaders act as catalysts for the organisations and must serve as a role model

As the previous chapters have made clear, AI entails a fundamental engagement on strategic, operational and tactical levels and requires the entire organisation to have a high level of readiness for change. Change demands a high degree of willingness and motivation from every single person in the organisation. In this context, the leadership team plays a central role here and can and should significantly help shape the change and transformation process.

The leader effectively takes on two roles, each of which is associated with specific tasks.

Change catalyst

An organisation that wants to embed AI strategically, operationally and tactically needs leadership that converts the scattered AI benefits into clear priorities, decisions and measurable results. As a leader, this allows you to ensure that AI does not remain stuck in pilots, but is scaled up to create real added value for the organisation and other stakeholders. To achieve this, the following concrete measures must be taken by leadership:

Embed AI in the corporate strategy
AI is explicitly linked to business objectives (costs, quality, growth, risk) and established as a prioritised management agenda.

Clearly communicate the objectives of AI projects
For each initiative, the business contribution, scope, responsibilities and schedule are documented in writing to enable goal-oriented work and subsequent reprioritisation.

Set and track strategically relevant KPIs for AI
A lean set of outcome and usage metrics (e.g. throughput time, error rate, time savings, satisfaction, active users) is regularly reported and consistently used for stop/go/scale decisions.

Responsibility for AI initiatives must be placed high up within the organisation to give them the necessary attention and to be able to clearly communicate the commitment to AI both internally and externally.

AI role model

AI transformation affects individual working methods, professionalism and ethics. Leadership that makes the use visible and predictable builds trust, shapes attitudes and reduces barriers for widespread use in everyday workflows.

Participate in AI workshops and show presence
Attending training sessions and formats signals relevance and legitimises learning and experimentation in day-to-day business.

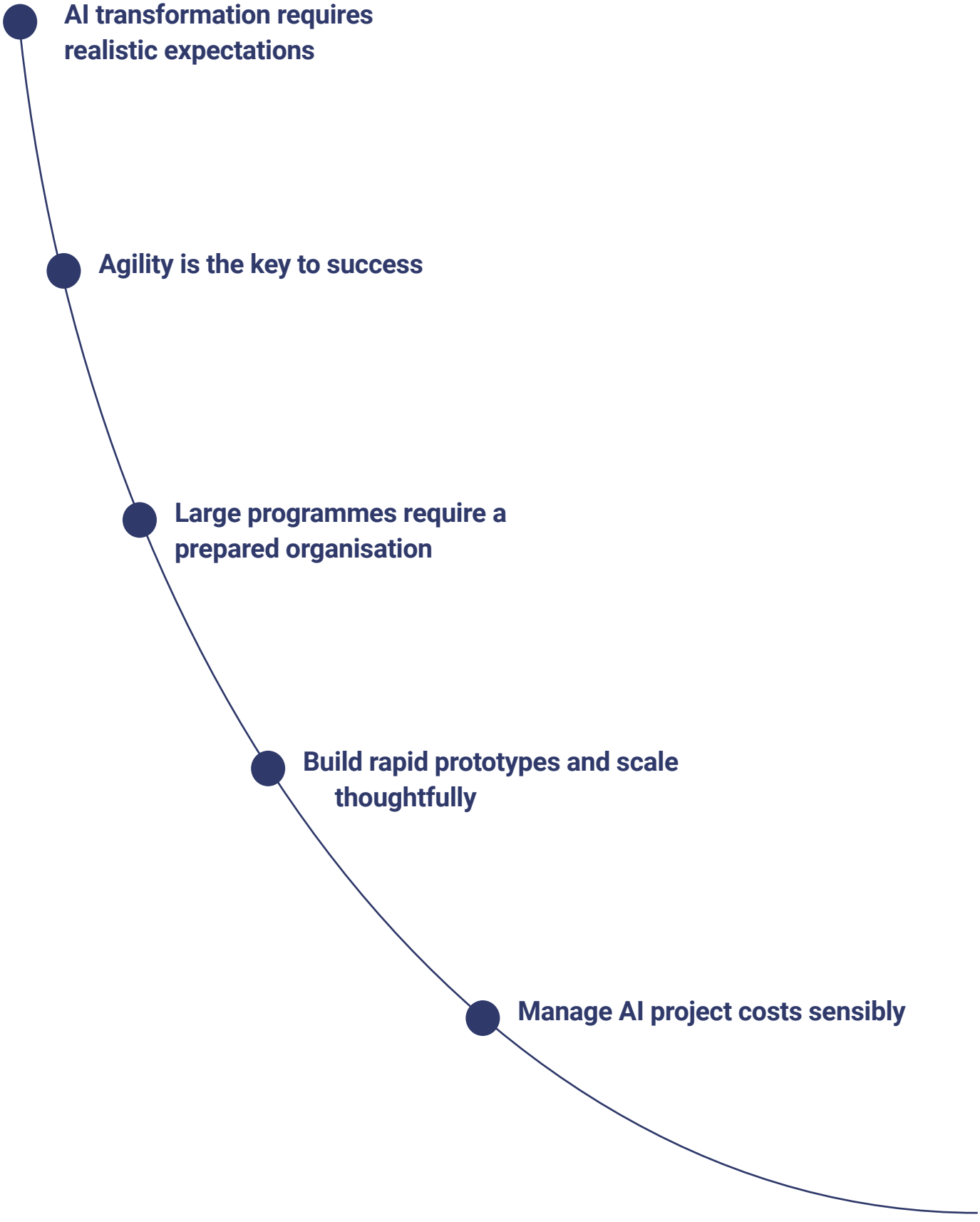
Publicly showcasing AI benefits
Concrete examples (prompts, results, learning points, limitations) are shared in meetings or internal channels to make responsible practice tangible.

Promote an open debate culture on AI
Regular Q&A sessions, clear dos and don'ts, and easily accessible guidelines create security and reduce shadow AI risks.

The role model effect helps to excite hesitant employees about using AI and spread the energy of AI enthusiasts throughout the entire organisation. This increases acceptance of change, and through practical experience, generates speed, trust and, ultimately, scalability.

> **“There is no technology strategy. There is only a business strategy that is supported by technology.”**
>
> **Melissa Pint, Chief Digital Information Office, Frontier**

5 Dogmas for successful AI transformation



Transformation conceived in stages

AI makes transformation multidimensional: organisations can operate on different levels – from minor optimisations to profound business model changes. The graphic below distinguishes three stages, which depending on the staring point, ambition and degree of maturity, can be addressed separately or sequentially. For management, this means consciously choosing the appropriate level of transformation and leading it consistently.

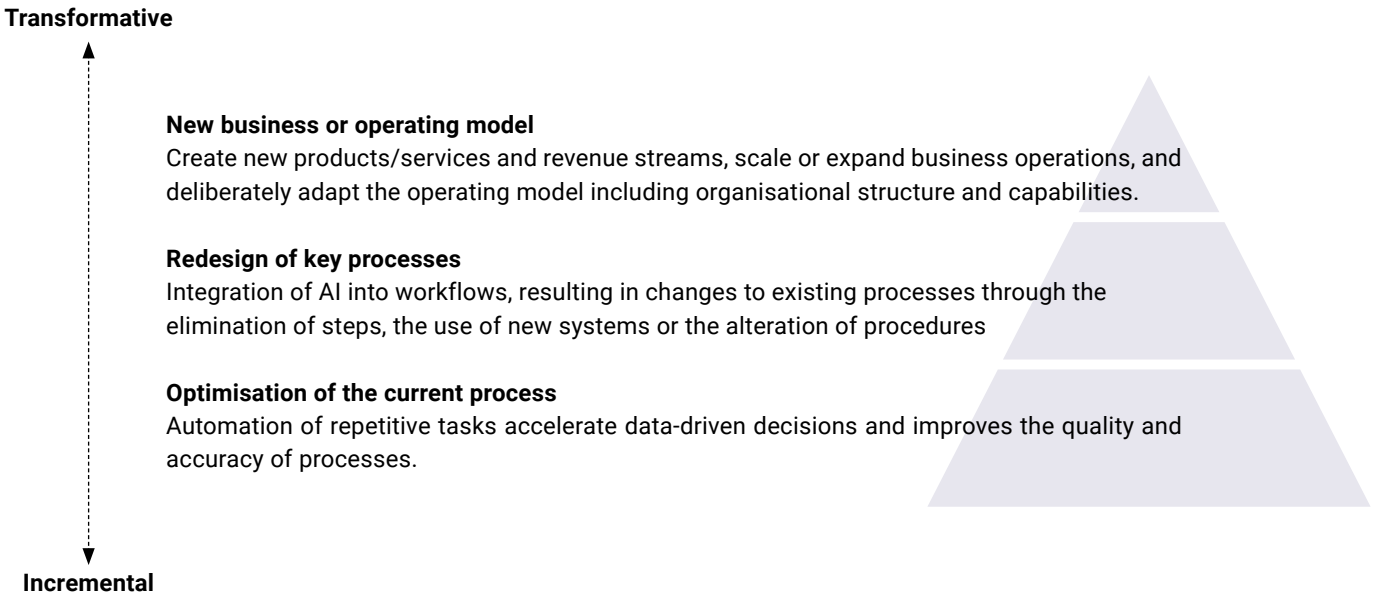
Optimisation of existing processes
At the lowest stage is incremental optimisation. Recurring tasks are automated, decisions are accelerated by data, and process quality is increased. This stage delivers quickly measurable effects in terms of time, costs and quality and is particularly suitable as a starting point for building acceptance and establishing practical skills, guardrails and KPIs.

Re-designing important processes
The middle stage focuses on the redesign of important end-to-end processes. Steps are eliminated, interfaces are simplified and new systems integrated – resulting in structural productivity gains. This stage requires targeted changes in roles, skills, and governance and is often chosen when initial optimisations are already showing results and scalable process improvements are sought.

Redesign of business and operating models
The top stage concerns the business or operating model. This is where new products and services are created. AI makes value creation more scalable and the operating model is adjusted. This stage is a strategic bet and is considered when market opportunities or efficiency potential justify a substantial leap; management is responsible for make/buy/partner decisions, capital allocation as well as risk and compliance setup.

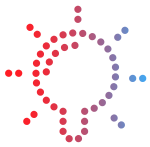
> **"With GenAI, there is the possibility to rethink and redesign an entire business process."**
>
> **Ryan Snyder, Senior Vice President & CIO Thermo Fisher Scientific**

Key lessons
AI transformation is a step-by-step model: depending on the goal and maturity, organisations start at different stages and develop step by step. Leadership consciously chooses the appropriate stage, aligns resources and governance accordingly, and consistently measures impact. This creates a scalable advantage without overwhelm.



Many leaders struggle to provide direction in a new and often unfamiliar territory

AI is a new technology
A structured approach and well-founded viewpoints on the direction of AI deployment are difficult to establish as the technology is new and there are many unknowns.



Emerging grassroots movement
The innovative power in this area is very high and many organisations face pressure from their employees to start with AI, which often leads to many initiatives at the grassroots level.

Technology-driven rather than business-oriented problem solving
To a greater extent than other digital transformations, the AI movement is heavily technology-driven. However, it should not be forgotten that the goal is to solve a business problem.

Concern vs. enthusiasm
The possibilities offered by AI can generate great excitement throughout the organisation, but many are also concerned about how this will affect their jobs.

Diverse narratives
Dealing with a technology like AI means that everyone has an opinion about it. This often leads to a variety of narratives between individuals and teams within the organisation.

Ethical considerations
The rise of AI is forcing leaders to make ethical decisions about where they want to introduce AI and where not.

Leaders are drivers in this kind of transformation

It is not just about technology – **people come first**

FOUR KEY-TAKEAWAYS

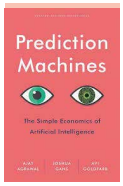
Focusing on specific areas of **application pays off**

By leading by example and actively participating, the technology becomes **less intimidating**

WHAT NEXT?

- Must-read recommendations
- Podcast recommendations
- Events and online materials

Our must-read recommendations



Prediction Machines – Ajay Agrawal, Joshua Gans, Avi Goldfarb

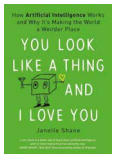
Why read it? The best book to understand economically what AI really changes: decisions become cheaper – and that is changing business models.
Key lessons for SMEs: Not "What can AI do?", but "What decision-making costs decrease for us?"

GAIN: Demystifying GenAI for Office and Home – Michael Wade

Why read it? A pragmatic and understandable introduction to GenAI – beyond hype and buzzwords.
Key lessons for SMEs: GenAI is a new all-purpose tool: productivity gains come from concrete use, not strategy papers.

Intelligent Change: The Science Behind Digital Transformations – Alexander Budzier et al.

Why read it? A research-based guide on how digital transformation really succeeds – with seven clear levers for change.
Key lessons for SMEs: Technology projects rarely fail because of code, but because of people and leadership – this book shows how to implement change systematically.



You Look Like a Thing and I Love You – Janelle Shane

Why read it? Entertaining AND educational about the limits of AI.
Key lessons for Swiss leaders: Those who overestimate AI lead dangerously.
Those who assess it realistically lead confidently.

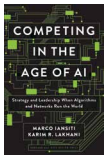
The Coming Wave – Mustafa Suleyman

Why read it?A strategic look at AI, power, regulation and responsibility.
Key lessons for Swiss leaders: AI is not just an opportunity –
it is also a governance matter (ethics, compliance, risk).

Thinking, Fast and Slow – Daniel Kahneman

Why read it? Fundamental for decision-making quality.
AI reference: AI is strong in System 1 (fast), leadership remains System 2 (reflective).

Our must-read recommendations



Competing in the Age of AI – Marco Iansiti & Karim Lakhani

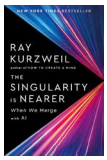
Why read it? Shows why data-driven companies are faster, more scalable and more robust.
Key lessons for SMEs: AI is not an IT project – it changes organisation, processes and leadership.

Human + Machine – Paul R. Daugherty & H. James Wilson

Why read it? Very practical: how humans and AI can work together productively.
Key lessons for SMEs: AI does not replace employees – it changes roles.

AI Needs You: How We Can Change AI's Future and Save Our Own – Verity Harding

Why read it? Appeal and roadmap for responsible AI design instead of a blind technology view.
Key lessons for SMEs: The future of AI is shaped by people – not b< algorithms.



The Singularity Is Nearer: When We Merge with AI – Ray Kurzweil

Why read it? A visionary view on the future merging of humans and machines.
Key lessons for SMEs: A long-term perspective on AI transformation creates strategic foresight.

Co-intelligence: Living and Working with AI – Ethan Mollick

Why read it? Practical guide for human + AI collaboration in everyday life.
Key lessons for SMEs: Productivity grows primarily through coordination between humans and AI.

Our podcast recommendations

a16z Podcast (Andreessen Horowitz)

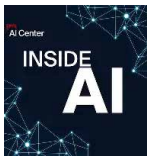
Why listen? Top strategy podcast on AI, tech, organisation and markets.
Key lessons for leaders: How entire industries are being transformed by AI – not just individual tools.

Hard Fork (New York Times)

Why listen? Entertaining, critical, current.
Key lessons for leaders: A realistic sense of where AI really stands today – including limitations and risks.

Exponential View (Azeem Azhar)

Why listen? One of the best strategic minds on AI and society.
Key lessons for leaders: Strong focus on regulation, power, geopolitics – extremely relevant for Swiss SMEs in the EU context.



Inside AI (EPFL)

Why listen? Exciting discussions with global AI experts and researchers from EPFL – understandable, close to practice and focused on what comes next.
Key lessons for leaders: A good reality check on how AI technologies create concrete value (and where the limits are) – helpful for setting clear priorities for strategy, partnerships and talent development.

The AI Daily Brief (Nathaniel Whittemore)

Why listen? Daily, concise AI news with context – ideal for staying up to speed without wasting time.
Key lessons for leaders: Early detection of trends and disruptions: Which tools/use cases are really gaining traction and what does this mean for work, industries and competitive dynamics?

Beyond The Prompt – How to use AI in your company (Jeremy Utley)

Why listen?Practical discussions on how companies truly use AI – focusing on implementation rather than tool hype.
Key lessons for leaders: Repeatable patterns for embedding AI in teams (finding use cases, setting up experiments, scaling adoption) – illustrated with concrete "this is how others did it" examples.

The AI Podcast (ARD | BR24 & SWR)

Why listen? Weekly AI update with understandable classification of news, applications and social consequences – fact-based instead of hype.
Key lessons for leaders: Reality check for strategy and investments: what is relevant now, which risks (e.g. AI fakes/reputation) are increasing – and what decisions follow from them.

Don't miss anything

Digital handbook and community

Discover all the content of the handbook digitally, use practical templates and access exclusive excerpts from training offers such as AI academies, courses, etc.

On the website, you also have the opportunity to register for the AI community of digitalswitzerland and Implement Consulting Group. The community offers exclusive events withexciting guests from business, society and research. Connect with other decisionmakers and AI enthusiasts and benefitfrom collective knowledge, experiencesand the latest developments.

About the authors

Frank Dannacher
Frank, Partner and Head of Data & AI Switzerland, has over 25 years of experience in ensuring the impact of data and AI within companies. He combines technology with business strategy to optimise the value of business data and AI capabilities. His work focuses on data and AI strategies, data and analytics operating models, data management and analytics adoption.

Richard Schierjott
Richard, Senior Consultant, combines analytical depth with experience in operational strategy and transformation. He recognises early how AI changes strategic decisions and translates these developments into clear options and actionable steps. With his structured thinking, technological understanding and focus on impact, he becomes a sparring partner who combines AI potential with strategic reality.

Manuel Fischer
Manuel, Managing Partner Switzerland, is an expert in strategy and organisational development and supports companies through challenging transformation projects. AI is increasingly driving new business models, efficiency and better decisions. For Manuel, these opportunities are consistently strategic – while he also ensures a pragmatic, people-centred implementation. In this way, he combines analysis, change and the sustainable anchoring of AI in organisations.

Nino Salvetti
Nino, Senior Consultant, works at the interface of strategy, innovation and technology. In his strategy and transformation projects, AI issues regularly appear as a key lever. Through his experience in strategy design and organisational change, he recognises early on where AI can have an impact and how it can be integrated into existing strategies. His approach: think strategically, implement pragmatically.

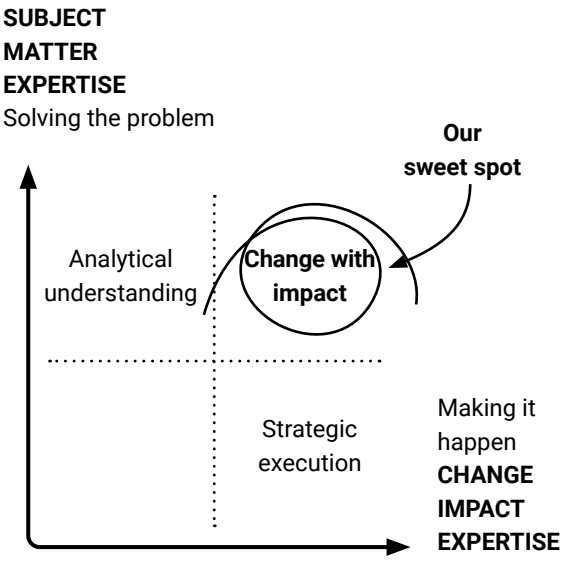
About Implement

IMPLEMENT
CONSULTING GROUP_

Implement Consulting Group is an international consulting organisation with Nordic roots and headquarters in Copenhagen. With 11 locations worldwide and 1,800 employees, Implement Consulting Group is a global transformation partner.

The Swiss office in Zurich combines local presence and Swissness with international clout. More than 100 employees support clients with their most important transformation challenges – from strategy & transformation to digitalisation & IT, as well as operations, commercial services and leadership & change.

Implement stands for a consulting approach that combines analytical depth, real change impact and collaborative implementation. Not pure strategists, not pure implementers – but both. Our sweet spot: solving problems precisely and enabling changes that haves a lasting effect.



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