

Implementor's Guide to AI

A guide to AI maturity and adoption strategies for Indian businesses.



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Executive summary

AI adoption in India is accelerating, yet the implementation of AI technologies is still quite challenging for businesses. We came up with this national-scale study to benchmark the progress of AI adoption in India and help businesses define their strategic priorities in this space. We conducted a study involving a survey of 1,500+ industry professionals and 16 expert interviews, analysing AI adoption trends, organisational readiness, and key challenges across industries.

- **Widespread adoption:**
69% of Indian organisations use AI, with early adopters focusing on cost reduction (39%), and mature ones on customer engagement (33%) and revenue growth (27%).
- **Evolving concerns:**
Early concerns centre on AI reliability; mature users worry about data bias (82%) and toxicity (80%).
- **Data readiness gap:**
Only 39% have fully integrated customer data, limiting AI effectiveness.
- **Weak governance:**
Just 7% have a formal responsible AI framework.
- **Integration confidence paradox:**
AI adoption scales, confidence in ethical usage declines – a paradox where technical integration improves, but ethical trust weakens.

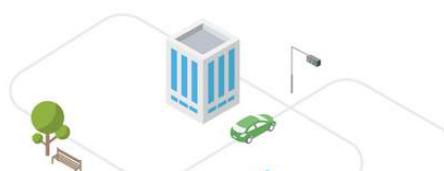
This Implementer's Guide to AI provides business leaders with key insights into AI maturity, governance, and best practices. As AI adoption grows, organisations must focus on responsible implementation, strategic alignment, and compliance to unlock AI's full potential.



Santosh Abraham

CEO and Founder

Research **NXT**



Foreword by Salesforce

We've only just begun scratching the surface of what's possible with AI. Already, autonomous AI agents are transforming how businesses serve customers and support employees. These trusted digital assistants can work 24/7 to answer queries, troubleshoot issues, schedule meetings, summarise calls, recommend next best actions, and much more.

For Indian businesses, the real challenge lies in moving from AI experimentation to large-scale execution. One in seven businesses is stuck in a “strategy paralysis” – they're aware of AI's value, but are unclear on how to operationalise it.

Here's how to realise the potential of agentic AI

- **Unify data:**

A single, real-time view of customer data and other relevant information gives AI agents the context they need to act intelligently.

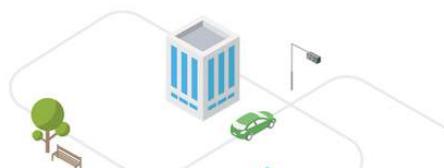
- **Prioritise AI governance:**

Proper guardrails such as data masking, zero retention, and toxicity detection help ensure that AI agents operate ethically and responsibly.

- **Move up the agentic maturity scale:**

Scaling agentic AI effectively across the business requires a thoughtful, phased approach that typically unfolds across five levels:

- **Level 0: Early stage AI agents like chatbots and co-pilots** automate repetitive tasks, but lack reasoning or learning capabilities.
- **Level 1: Information retrieval agents** assist humans by retrieving information and recommending actions. For example an agent can check corporate policy documentation to let an employee know how much they're allowed to spend and even remind them to create an expense entry for the dinner.
- **Level 2: Simple orchestration, single domain** - Building on capabilities of Level 1, a Level 2 agent has the ability to act on the data it finds and autonomously execute low-complexity tasks such as summarizing an account record, or cancelling a flight.



- **Level 3: Complex orchestration, multiple domain** - A Level 3 agent delivers concierge-level service, orchestrating end-to-end workflows with harmonized data across multiple domains. Example - An agent dynamically “triggers” a seat upgrade action based on the customer’s unique CRM data and then straddles multiple systems, including billing, to complete the transaction
- **Level 4: Multi-agent orchestration** - The future state of agentic AI where a bustling ecosystem of AI agents seamlessly connect to other agents across disparate tech stacks. Example - Imagine a future where the airline booking agent automatically connects to a ride share company’s agent to meet the traveler upon arrival, or even connect to the hotel agent to make sure their room is ready for check-in.

The path from simple automation to multi-agent orchestration shows how far AI can evolve. Now is India’s moment to lead with AI – not just by adopting the technology, but by doing so in a way that inspires trust.



Sridhar Hariharasubramanian

Senior Director, Salesforce



Approach and methodology

1.5K+

Survey responses

Professionals provided insights on their current scenario of AI adoption.

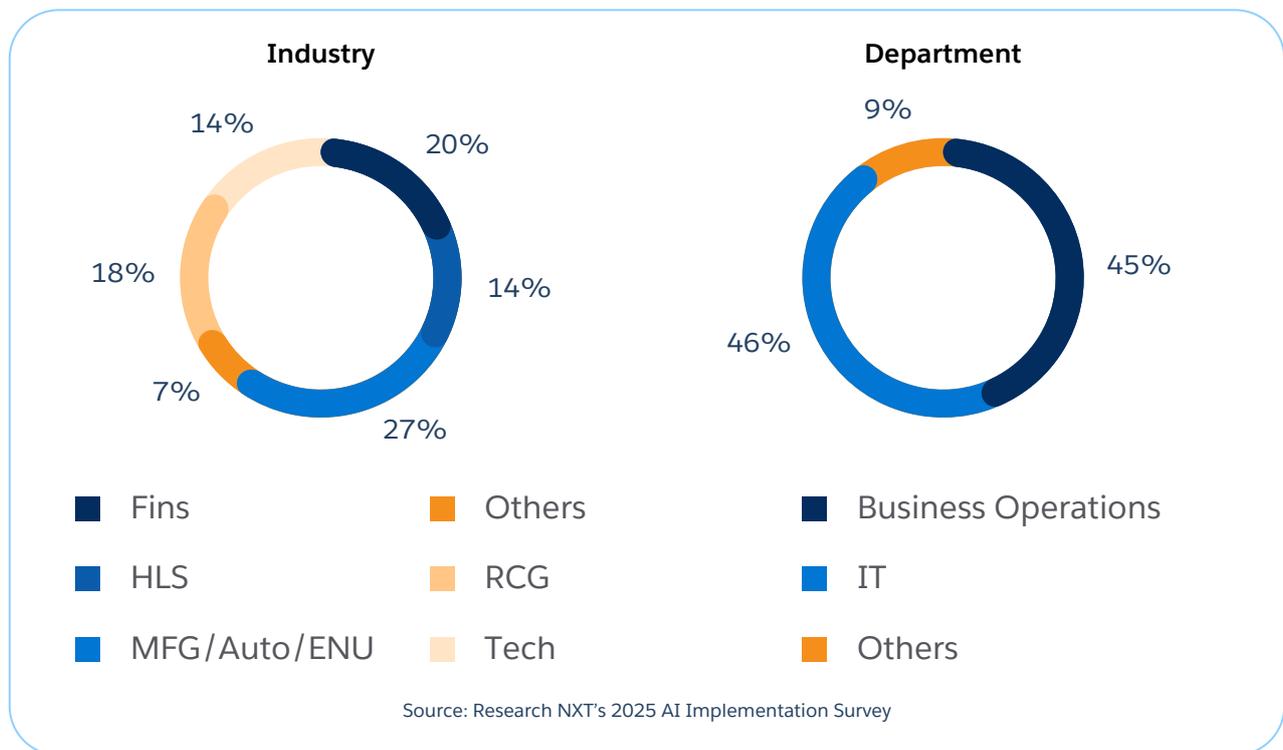
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Expert interviews

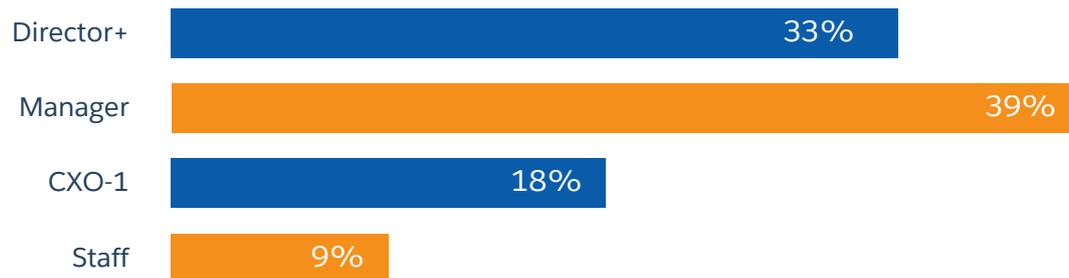
Leaders provided key insights from real-world AI practices.

Implementer's Guide to AI

Survey Demographics



Level

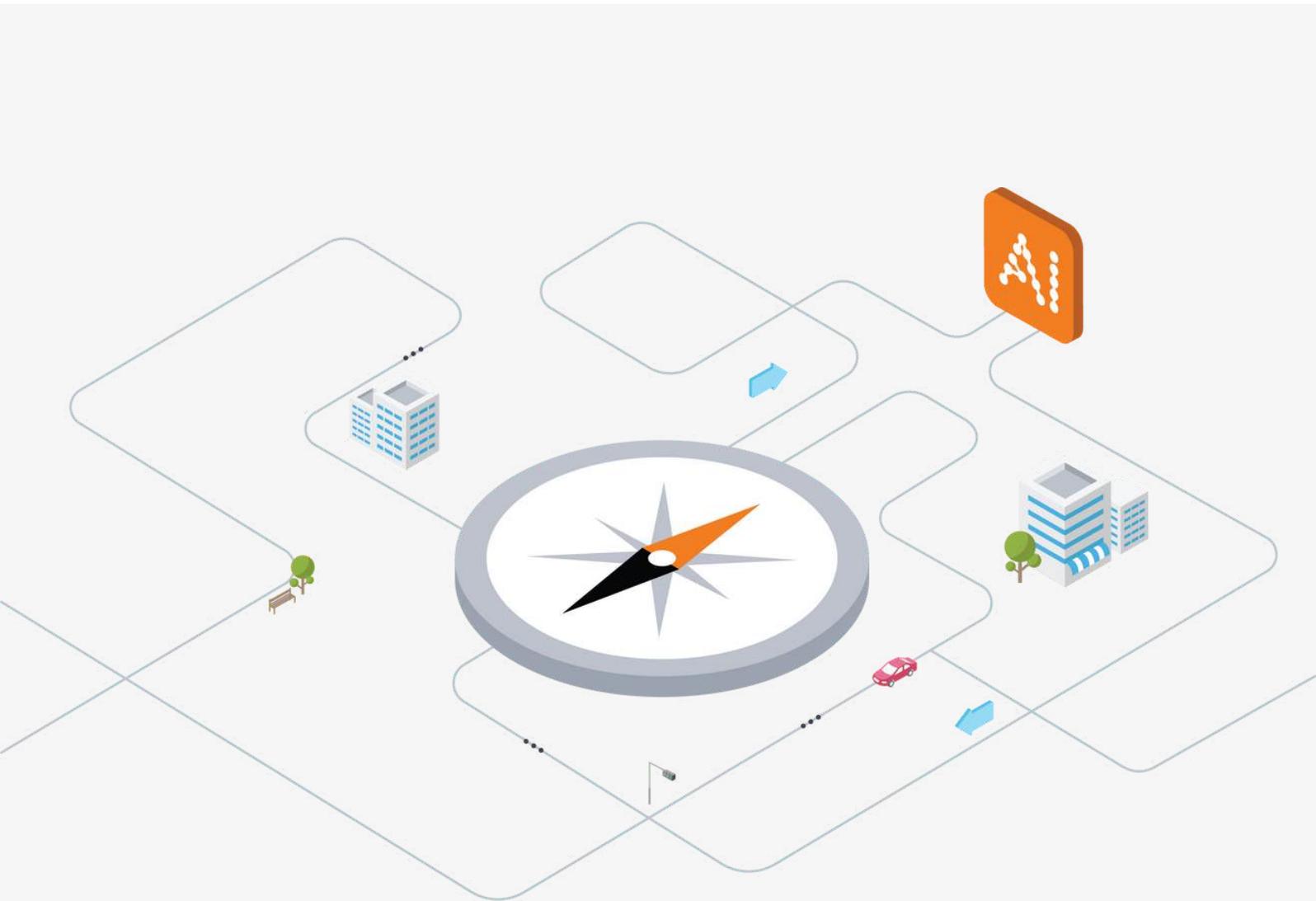


AI adoption trends

- The AI readiness paradox

- Integration-confidence paradox

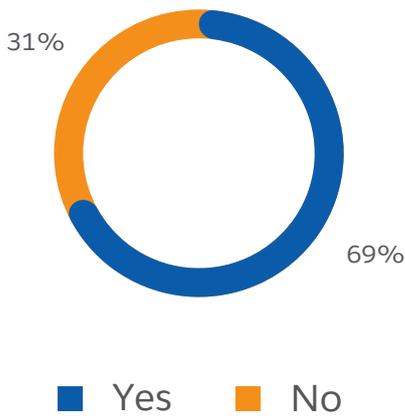
- Goals evolve with maturity



The AI readiness paradox

Infrastructure readiness is giving confidence to organisations to start, but most aren't ready to govern it, scale it, or get value

AI adoption among business



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

69% of organisations have already adopted AI, and a majority claim to have a strategic vision for it.

85% of micro-sized companies use AI tools.

77% of large enterprises have adopted AI.

46% of medium-sized companies haven't yet adopted AI.

Micro and large enterprises are leading in adoption, but medium-sized businesses remain behind, citing scalability and resource gaps.

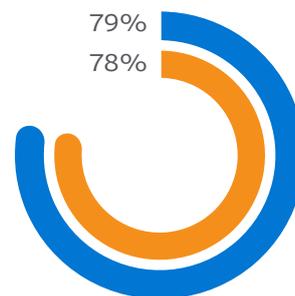
80% aligning on AI goals and value areas, there's a significant gap between intention and execution

1 IN 7 organisations is stuck in a "strategy paralysis" – aware of AI's value, but unclear on how to operationalise it.

The Indian AI journey is vision-rich but execution-light. Organisations need to strengthen data foundations, modernise infrastructure, and bridge the strategy-to-action divide.

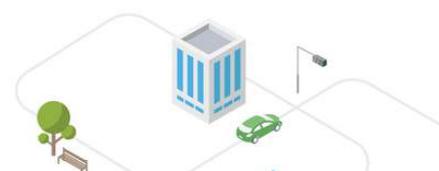
AI strategy

Vision vs execution readiness



■ Clarity in Vision
■ AI value identification

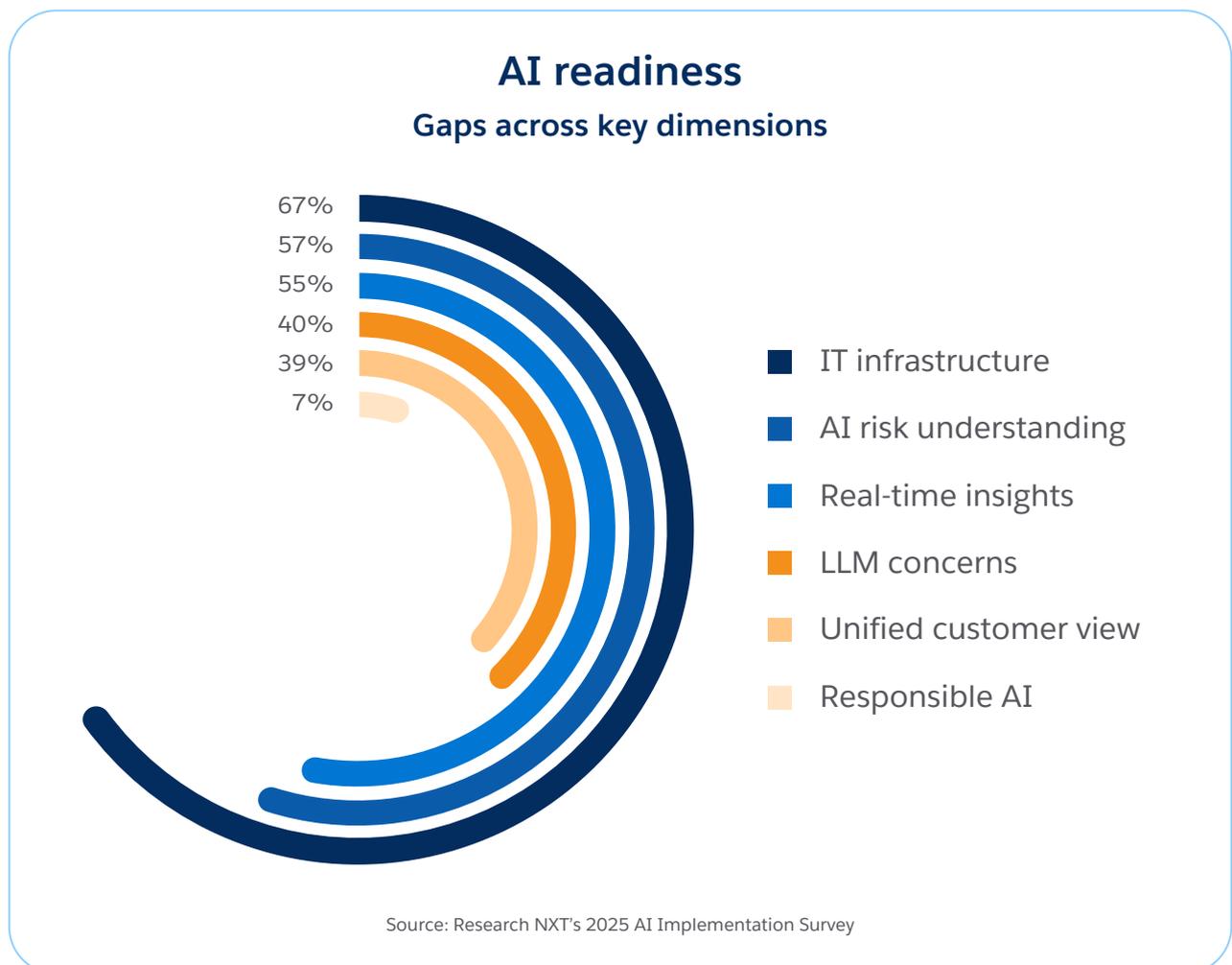
Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey



Top parameters for AI readiness

We focused on these 6 parameters because they provide a holistic measure of AI readiness, capturing both technical capabilities and ethical considerations essential for sustainable and responsible AI adoption.

- **Single customer view**- Unifying data across functions for a complete customer view.
- **Real-time customer insights**- Accessing and acting on live customer interactions.
- **IT infrastructure readiness**- Readiness of systems to scale AI effectively.
- **Understanding the risks/harms of AI**- Understanding and managing AI's potential harms.
- **Concerns about AI/LLMs**- Addressing risks like bias, hallucination, and misuse of AI.
- **Responsible AI maturity** - Having ethical frameworks and governance in place.



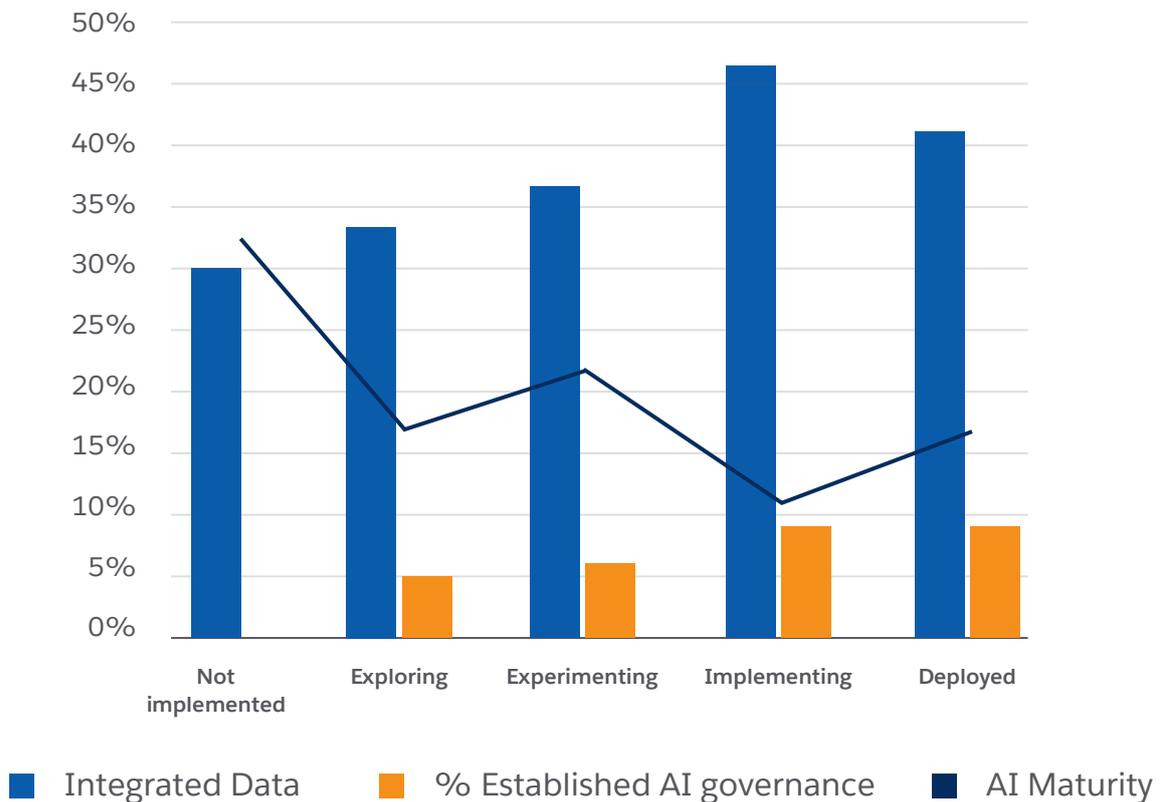
Despite strong infrastructure, most businesses lack unified data and governance, limiting trust in AI. The real challenge is not adoption but maturing responsibly with integrated data, clear guardrails, and continuous learning.



Integration-confidence paradox:

Confidence in governance is high in beginners, but lower in organisations that are deeper into implementation and deployment

AI maturity vs data integration, AI governance



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

The overall stage of AI adoption is determined using a weighted average methodology. Each organisation is assigned a stage based on its highest level of adoption across multiple use cases.

Indian organisations show a progressive journey where most organisations are navigating the early to mid-stages of AI adoption, with fewer having reached full deployment.

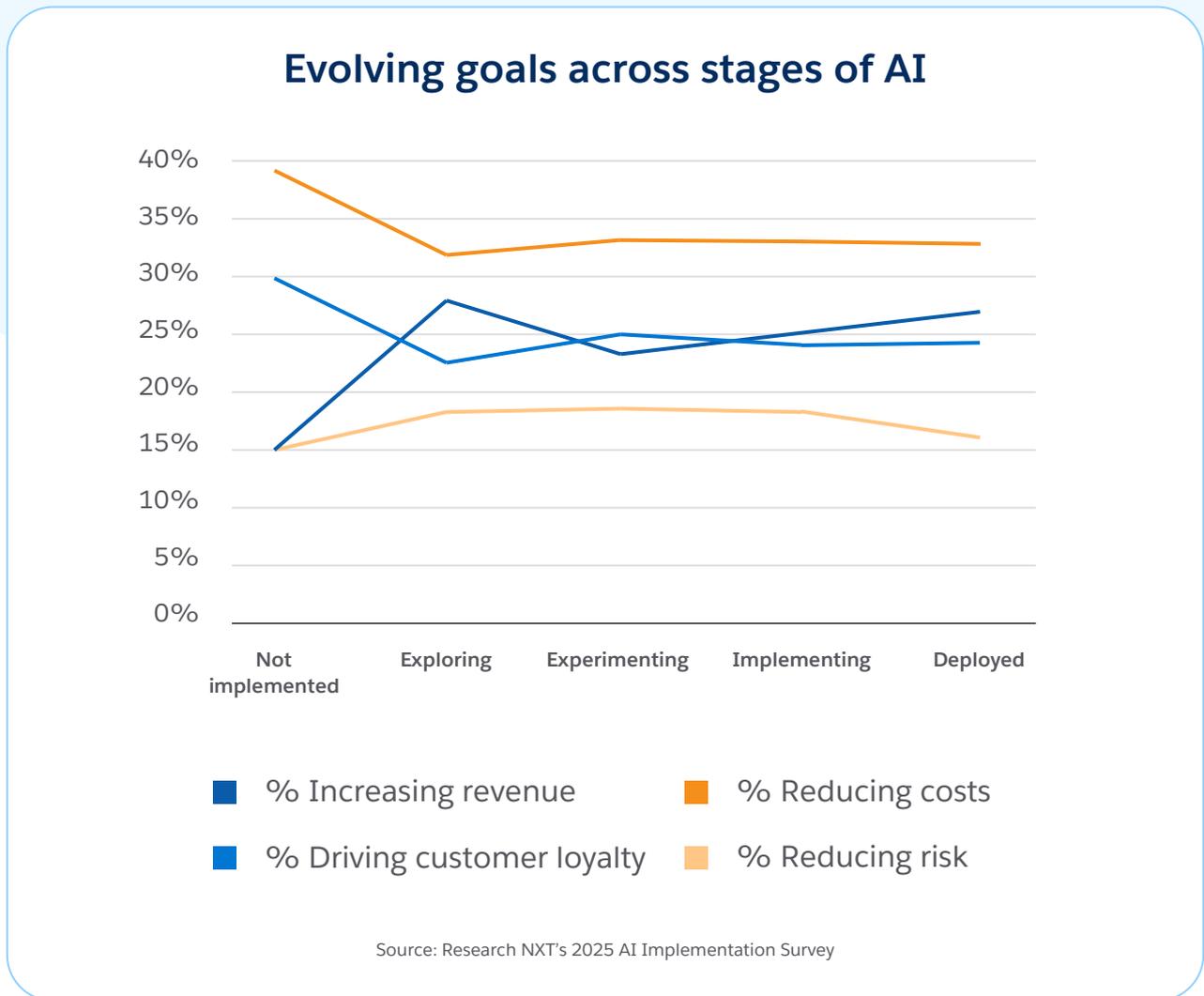
AI governance maturity does not follow the same upward trend. In fact, confidence in governance structures appears to stagnate – or even decline – as AI adoption advances.

Data integration correlates positively with AI maturity, improving as organisations advance through implementation stages.



Goals evolved through AI adoption stages

Most companies in the early stages focus on using AI to reduce cost, but organisations deeper into implementation start seeing more potential for revenue gains



As organisations progress along the AI maturity journey, their strategic priorities shift significantly

- In the early stages, such as "Not Implemented" or "Exploring", the primary focus is on cost reduction – reflecting a need for immediate operational efficiency.
- However, by the time AI is fully deployed, the emphasis moves toward increasing revenue and enhancing customer loyalty.

AI adoption begins as a tool for efficiency but matures into a catalyst for growth and long-term value.



Real-world impact of AI implementation

- **Stages of AI maturity**

- **AI use case breakdown - by adoption maturity**

- **Exploring stage**

Understanding potential and identifying opportunities

- **Experimenting with AI**

Testing & refining use cases

- **Implementing AI**

Scaling innovation for business growth

- **Deployed stage**

AI in action

- **Scaling AI for business transformation**

- **AI-Driven decision making – Unlocking the power of data**



Stages of AI maturity

During our discussions with industry leaders, we have arrived at these five stages where an organisation can be when it comes to AI maturity.



Non-implemented:

Organisations lack a formal AI strategy, viewing AI as irrelevant or complex, and relying on traditional practices.



Exploring:

Organisations have begun researching AI use cases, assessing its potential benefits and adoption costs for their operations.



Experimenting:

Organisations run small-scale AI projects and integrations, testing feasibility, measuring ROI, and identifying challenges for implementation.



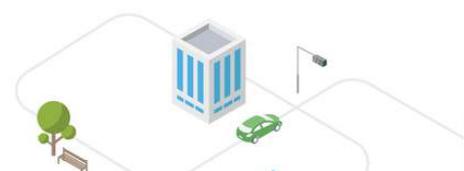
Implementing:

Organisations integrate AI pilots into broader operations, refining models and establishing regulatory practices.



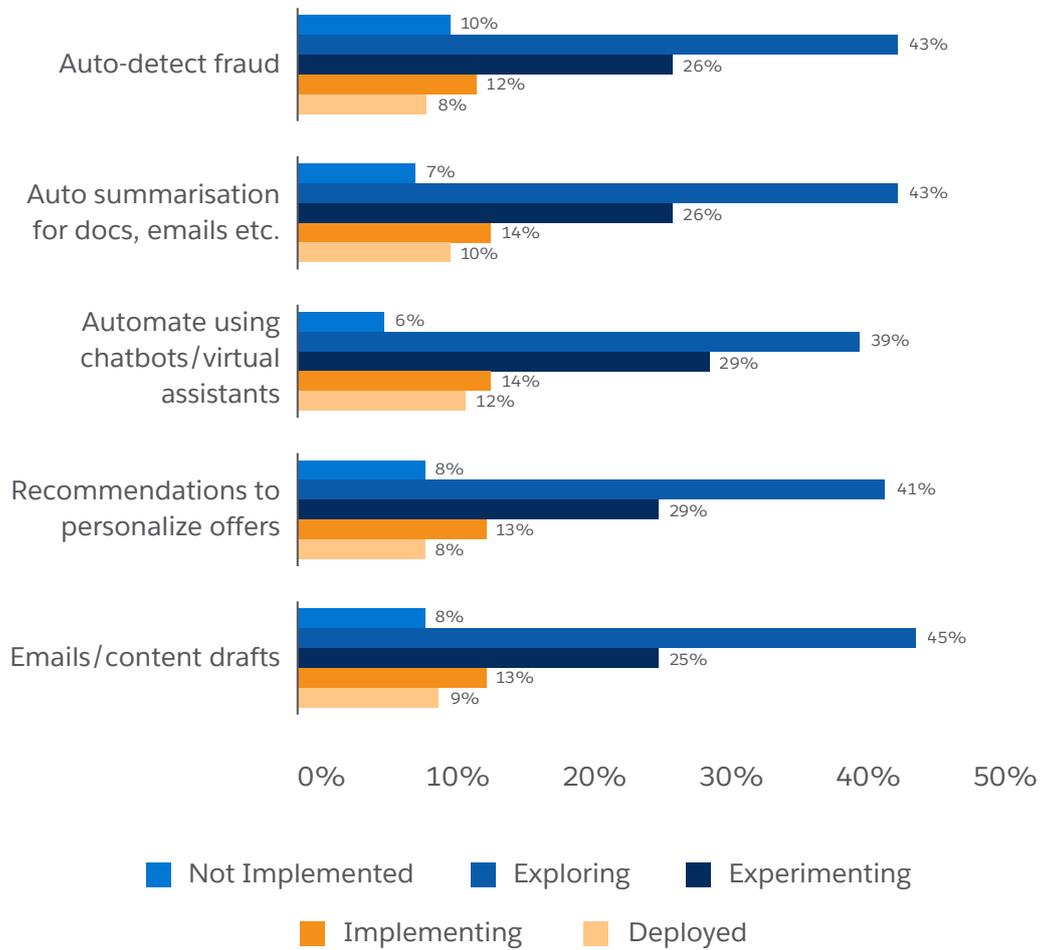
Deployed:

Organisations fully integrate AI across their operations, using it to drive innovation, efficiency and competitiveness.



AI use case breakdown - by adoption maturity

Organisational levels of AI adoption across use cases



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

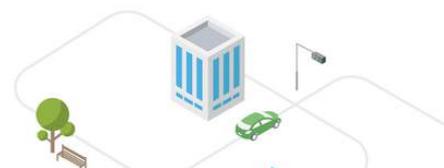
Data represents AI adoption stages across specific use cases based on survey responses. Percentages reflect the distribution of organisations in each stage for given applications.



We're in the exploratory phase, leveraging tools to improve operational efficiency and output, especially in content creation and campaign management.

Nimish Thaker
Head of Marketing
Spacewood

[Read the full interview](#)



Exploring Stage- Understanding potential and identifying opportunities

Overview:

At this stage, businesses assess AI's feasibility and impact while overcoming scepticism. Adoption remains fragmented due to limited tools, lack of understanding, and the challenge of balancing automation with creativity. Companies explore AI for personalisation, efficiency, and customer experience.



AI empowers us to personalise at scale, shifting marketing from operational execution to storytelling and customer empathy.

Diptarup Chakraborti

Chief Marketing Officer
MoveInSync

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Best Practices

- **Define clear use cases & expectations** - Spacewood uses AI-powered design tools & AR, cutting 3D rendering time from 2 days to 2 minutes.
- **Experiment with AI for personalisation & efficiency** - SaaS marketing shifts from automation to AI-driven storytelling for hyper-personalisation.
- **Enhance customer journeys with AI** - Spacewood's AI chatbots streamline interactions, reducing manual effort.
- **See AI beyond automation** - It boosts creativity, predictive analytics, and consumer insights.
- **Address AI scepticism with measurable impact** - Track engagement, efficiency, and customer satisfaction to validate AI's effectiveness.





Impact of AI exploration

- **Increased operational efficiency:** AI tools help streamline workflows, reduce manual effort, and enhance customer engagement.
- **Faster content & product visualisation:** AI accelerates processes such as design rendering, content creation, and customer communication.
- **Improved customer experience & personalisation:** AI-driven personalisation & engagement result in higher conversion rates and brand loyalty.
- **More decisive decision-making & experimentation culture:** Early AI adopters identify scalable opportunities, improving data-driven decision-making.

Path to the next stage: Decision-making & structured AI strategy

Shift from exploration to decision-making:

Move from testing AI in isolated areas to identifying scalable AI opportunities.

Build an AI adoption framework:

Establish clear metrics for AI success to validate ROI and ensure alignment with business objectives.

Address AI integration & data challenges:

Invest in data readiness & quality to support AI's scalability across multiple functions.

Overcome internal AI scepticism:

Drive AI awareness & training to ensure buy-in from leadership & teams.



Experimenting with AI – Testing & refining use cases

Overview:

At this stage, businesses move from theory to real-world AI testing, refining strategies, and measuring impact. Key challenges include data accuracy, human oversight, and aligning AI recommendations with real needs.



Businesses must first define their priorities and identify the problems they aim to solve. Only then should they explore how AI can contribute to achieving those goals.

Avnish Anand

[Read the full interview](#)

Best Practices

- **AI for personalisation & engagement** – Enhances customer experience with tailored recommendations.
- **Validate AI with human expertise** – SkinQ’s AI Mirror supports skin analysis, but dermatologists ensure accuracy.
- **Balance AI with context** – Oversight is crucial in sensitive domains like healthcare & luxury retail.
- **Automate & scale repetitive tasks** – Reduces manual effort, freeing teams for strategic work.
- **Monitor & refine AI** – Continuous testing ensures accuracy and effectiveness



While AI is evolving, it hasn't yet reached the level where it can effectively replace the personalised consultations we provide, which are highly case-specific.

Meera Iyer

Co-founder and CEO
SkinQ

[Read the full interview](#)





Impact of AI experimentation

- **Enhanced customer experience & trust:** AI tools like AI Mirror and personalised marketing improve engagement & retention.
- **Operational efficiency & scalability:** AI reduces manual work, automates time-intensive tasks, and optimises marketing & personalisation strategies.
- **AI-driven personalisation at scale:** Brands can target micro-segments with customised messaging & recommendations, increasing conversion rates.
- **Informed AI strategy for future adoption:** Businesses gain clarity on AI's strengths & limitations, guiding long-term AI investment decisions.

Path to the next stage: Scaling AI for measurable business impact

Transition from experimentation to full-scale AI deployment:

Move from pilots & testing to integrated AI strategies across business functions.

Strengthen AI data integrity & decision-making:

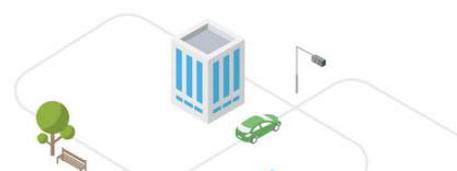
Ensure AI models are fed with clean, reliable data to enhance accuracy & performance.

Expand AI's role beyond experimentation:

AI should shift from single-use experiments to enterprise-wide implementations, impacting sales, marketing, and customer service.

Align AI strategy with business growth goals:

AI adoption must be aligned with business priorities and not just for technological novelty.



Implementing AI – Scaling innovation for business growth

Overview:

Businesses move beyond pilots to fully integrate AI into operations, marketing, and risk management, focusing on scalability and measurable ROI. AI is now a business necessity, but challenges like data fragmentation, scepticism, and alignment persist. Strategic governance and human-AI collaboration are key.



The cost of inaction is far more detrimental than the cost of AI adoption. AI is no longer optional—it is a competitive necessity.

Madhav Vemuri

[Read the full interview](#)

Best practices

- **Unify & structure data** – Example: Kotak Life’s CRM integration improved customer insights and campaign effectiveness.
- **Define measurable AI use cases** – Edelweiss Life’s AI-driven fraud detection boosted claims settlement to 99.23%.
- **AI-guided decision making** – AI models improve over time, reaching 85-90% accuracy with refinement.
- **Seamless AI integration** – AI should enhance, not replace, human-led workflows for efficiency.
- **Implement ethical AI & compliance** – Governance and data transparency are critical for customer trust.

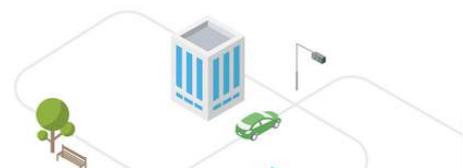


AI empowers us to make data-driven decisions, enhance operational efficiency, and ultimately deliver better outcomes for businesses and customers.

Abhishek Gupta

Chief Marketing Officer
Edelweiss Life Insurance

[Read the full interview](#)





Impact – AI driving business transformation

- **Enhanced operational efficiency:** AI-based automation in insurance and retail has reduced manual effort by up to 40%.
- **Higher customer retention:** AI-driven predictive analytics improved persistency ratios in insurance and reduced churn risks.
- **Increased marketing ROI:** AI-driven campaign optimisation by Kotak Life reduced customer acquisition costs (CAC) while improving conversions.
- **Fraud detection & risk mitigation:** AI-powered fraud detection in Edelweiss Life helped prevent high-risk cases, safeguarding revenue.
- **Scalable customer experience solutions:** AI-driven chatbots and GenAI-enabled call centers improved service consistency and response times.



In the long term, while some roles may be reduced due to AI implementation, many employees will move into more strategic & analytical positions, focusing on improving processes and planning.

Prasad Pimple

Executive Vice President & Head of Digital Business Unit
Kotak Life

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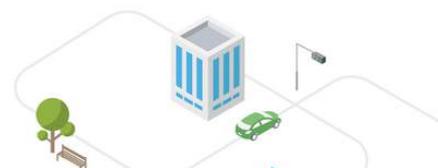


AI is transforming engineering and infrastructure, but for true impact, companies must integrate vast engineering databases, ensure responsible implementation, and continuously evolve with AI advancements.

Manish Kumar

Project Engineering Manager
Engineers India Limited

[Read the full interview](#)



Path to the next stage – AI as a business engine

Expand AI into critical business functions:

Move beyond isolated implementations to full integration across sales, customer experience, supply chain, and operations.

Develop a governance framework:

Establish AI committees and ethical compliance measures for long-term scalability and trust.

Measure AI ROI with clear KPIs:

Define and track performance metrics in efficiency gains, risk reduction, and customer experience improvements.

Build human-AI collaboration

Ensure AI augments human decision-making rather than replacing essential roles.

Continuously refine AI models:

AI systems must evolve with real-world feedback to maximise their predictive accuracy and business impact.



By focusing on data quality, managing biases, ensuring scalability, and fostering acceptance through change management, organisations can harness the full potential of AI.

Akshay Matkar

Chief Growth Officer
Pressto

[Read the full interview](#)



Deployed stage: AI in action

Overview:

At this stage, AI is now a core business strategy, scaling across industries like insurance, healthcare, and fintech. It enhances efficiency, drives revenue, and transforms customer experiences. AI-powered automation, hyper-personalization, and predictive analytics are now industry standards, reducing costs and improving decision-making.



AI is not about replacing human intelligence; it's about augmenting it. It empowers businesses to make decisions faster, with greater precision and efficiency.

Gaurav Suri

Chief Evangelist
Finlabs India Pvt Ltd.

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Best practices

- **Data-driven AI strategy** – High-quality data, integrated AI systems, and regular audits ensure accuracy and prevent biases.
- **Cross-functional collaboration** – AI adoption requires alignment across IT, marketing, finance, and compliance teams. AI literacy is key.
- **AI for personalization & engagement** – Micro-segmentation, AI chatbots, and voice assistants enhance customer experience.
- **Operational efficiency** – AI streamlines claims processing, underwriting, fraud detection, and marketing to cut costs.
- **Ethical AI & compliance** – Governance frameworks ensure transparency, fairness, and adherence to GDPR & India's Data Protection Bill.



Successful AI implementation requires high cross-departmental collaboration between marketing, IT, customer service, and other departments.

Suman Tewary

Associate General Manager
Allianz Partners

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AI should enhance human expertise rather than replace it, with a focus on collaboration, real-time solutions, and aligning AI adoption with clear organisational goals.

Dr. Karthik Anantharaman

Vice President International Sales Marketing
Apollo Hospitals

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AI enables precise audience targeting and timely, hyper-personalised messaging, fostering trust and credibility through relevance

Shwetha Iyer

SVP and Head of Marketing
Kissht

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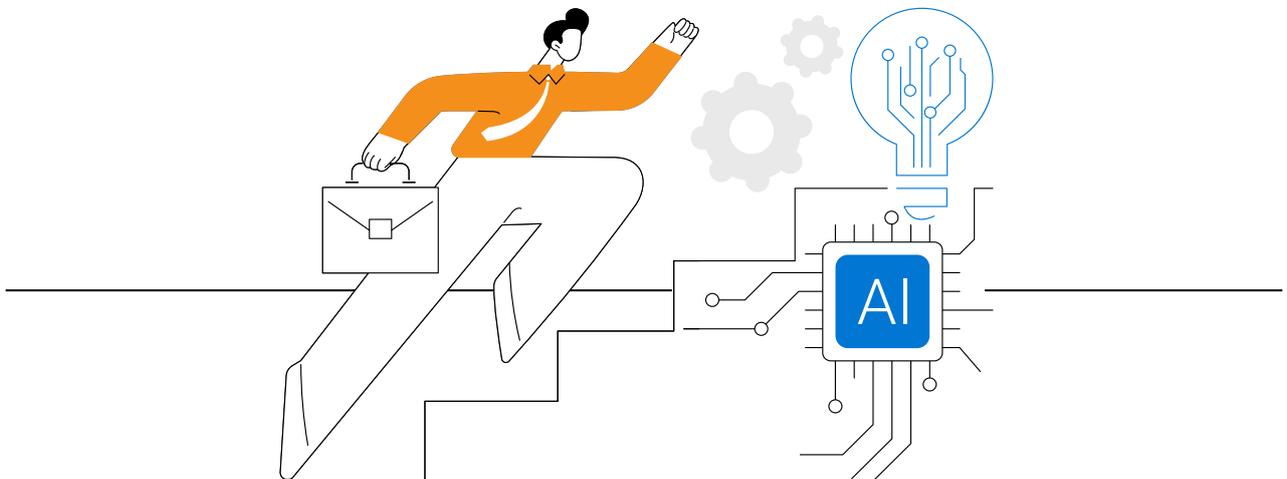


Start with the problem to be solved, not the technology to be applied. Choose mature AI solutions over speculative trends, begin with a proof of concept, and scale gradually for long-term success.

Sanjiv Kumar Jain

Group CIO
Krishna Maruti Group

[Read the full interview](#)



AI is the future of business

- AI is no longer an emerging trend—it is the driving force behind business transformation.
- Companies that master AI today will lead their industries tomorrow. Those that lag will struggle to remain competitive.

What's next?

- AI will move from automation to augmentation, enabling businesses to make smarter, real-time decisions.
- AI governance & ethical AI adoption will differentiate successful businesses from others.
- AI will expand into industries beyond tech, revolutionising legacy businesses and global markets.

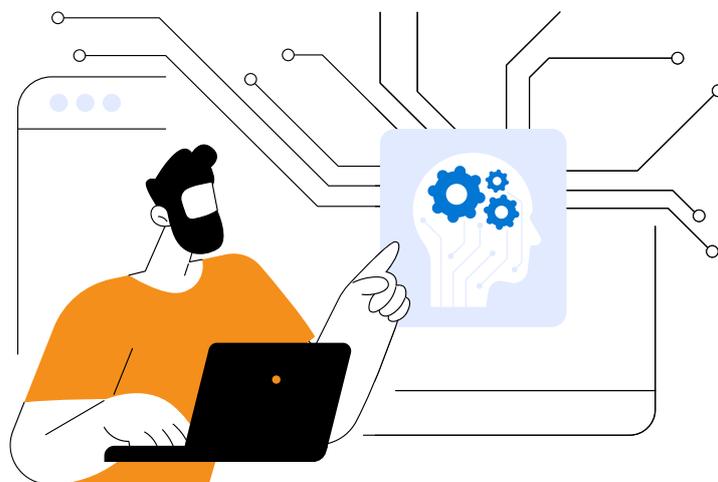


The difference between winning and losing often lies in how effectively a business interprets and acts on data insights. Intelligence—whether artificial or business-driven—is the foundation of success.

Varun Kaushik

Executive Vice President and Head of Marketing
PolicyBoss

[Read the full interview](#)



Scaling AI for business transformation

Key insights for enterprises:

- **AI as a business imperative** – AI is no longer optional; it is a strategic necessity for customer engagement, operational efficiency, and intelligent decision-making.
- **Beyond experiments: Scaling AI** – The shift from proof-of-concept to enterprise-wide AI adoption is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge.
- **Personalisation at scale** – AI is revolutionising customer interactions through predictive analytics, real-time automation, and hyper-personalized experiences.
- **Overcoming implementation challenges** – Businesses must focus on data readiness, legacy system modernisation, and stakeholder buy-in for seamless AI integration.
- **AI-driven future** – Autonomous AI agents, AI-generated synthetic data, and headless applications will reshape business operations in the coming years.

Strategic framework for AI success (DVFT model):

- **Desirability:** Does AI solve a real business problem?
- **Viability:** Can AI be scaled efficiently across business functions?
- **Feasibility:** Do you have the right data and technology stack?
- **Tolerance:** What is your organisation's risk appetite for AI-driven decisions?



AI-driven decision making - A roadmap to success

Key considerations:

Data readiness is the foundation:

AI's success depends on structured, unified, and clean data. Companies struggling with fragmented data will fail to scale AI effectively.

Measuring AI ROI is critical:

Businesses must track cost savings, revenue growth, automation efficiency, and customer retention metrics to justify AI investments.

Bridging the AI talent gap:

Low-code/no-code AI tools and upskilling programs are helping organisations democratise AI adoption.

Building ethical & compliant AI:

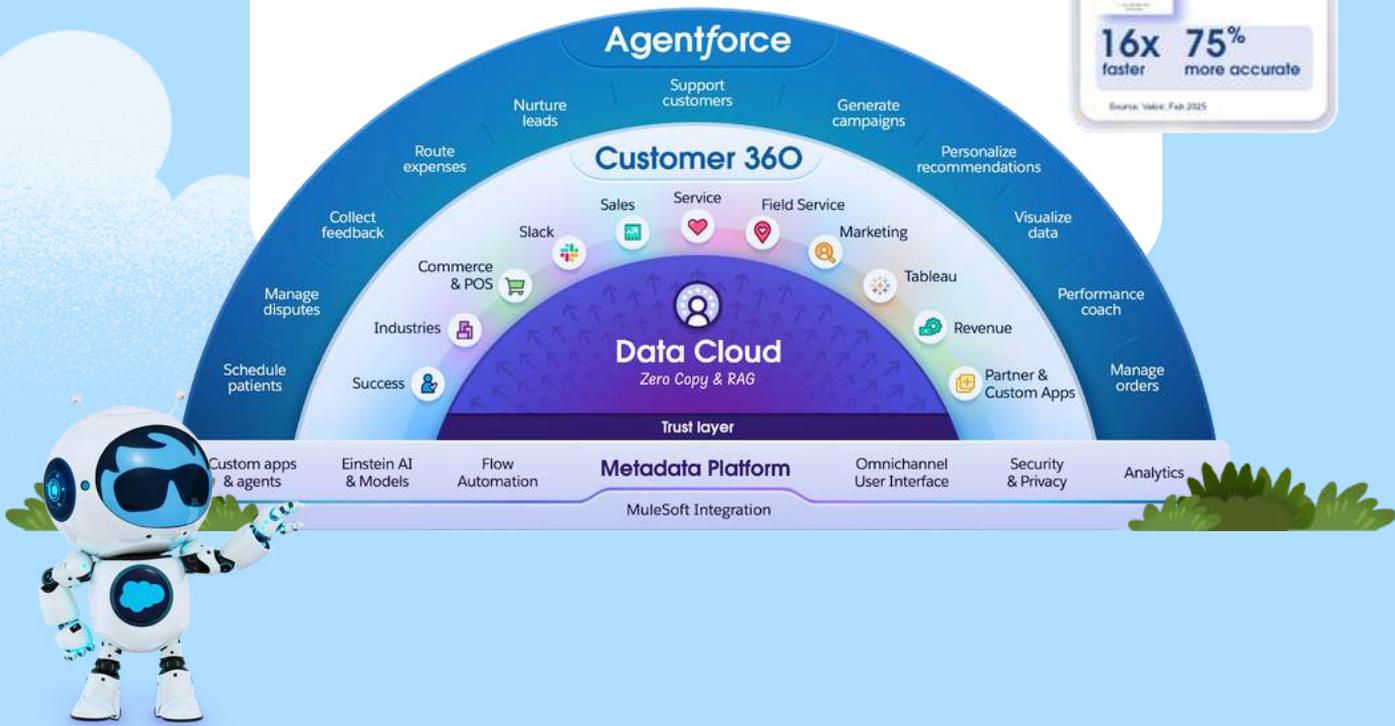
AI models should be transparent, unbiased, and aligned with global data regulations to foster trust and compliance.



Agentforce

Build and deploy AI agents at scale on the world's #1 digital labour platform

Agentforce brings digital labour to every employee, department, and business process to augment employees and improve customer experiences. Agentforce works with your existing apps, data, and business logic and can take action across your entire enterprise. Plus, it's built on the trusted Salesforce platform, so your data always stays safe.



Agentforce is powered by an open ecosystem...

- Connect any data, bring your own AI, and run Salesforce on different clouds
- Get pre-built actions and templates from 200+ partners for faster deployment on AgentExchange, a marketplace for trusted AI agents

Zero Copy Data

aws, Google Cloud, IBM, Microsoft, X, Z, The Weather Company, MOODY'S, CLOUDERA, tu

LLMs

AI, Google Cloud, OpenAI, aws, A

Infrastructure

salesforce, Google Cloud, aws, Alibaba Cloud

AppExchange

AMADEUS, Appiphony, certinia, conqa, COPADO, COVEO, GENESYS, Honeywell, IQVIA, KANTATA, LinkedIn, LITIFY, ncino, Q2, servicemax, simplr, SITETRACKER, VONAGE

AgentExchange

aws, box, Bullhorn, Cisco, COPADO, COVEO, docuSign, EDMO, FINDOCK, Google Cloud, HIGHSPOT, IBM, InvestorFlow, KANTATA, Neuron7, opentext, PayPal, Seismic, stripe, TASKRAY, TechSee, SALESWINGS, workday, WRITER

...And takes action across any business workflow

- Agentforce works across every team and workflow
- It can take action outside of CRM, too, through Mulesoft integrations

Take action in Salesforce

- Qualify leads
- Schedule field service appointments
- Create campaigns
- Manage inventory
- Update data visualizations
- Search Slack
- + any custom action

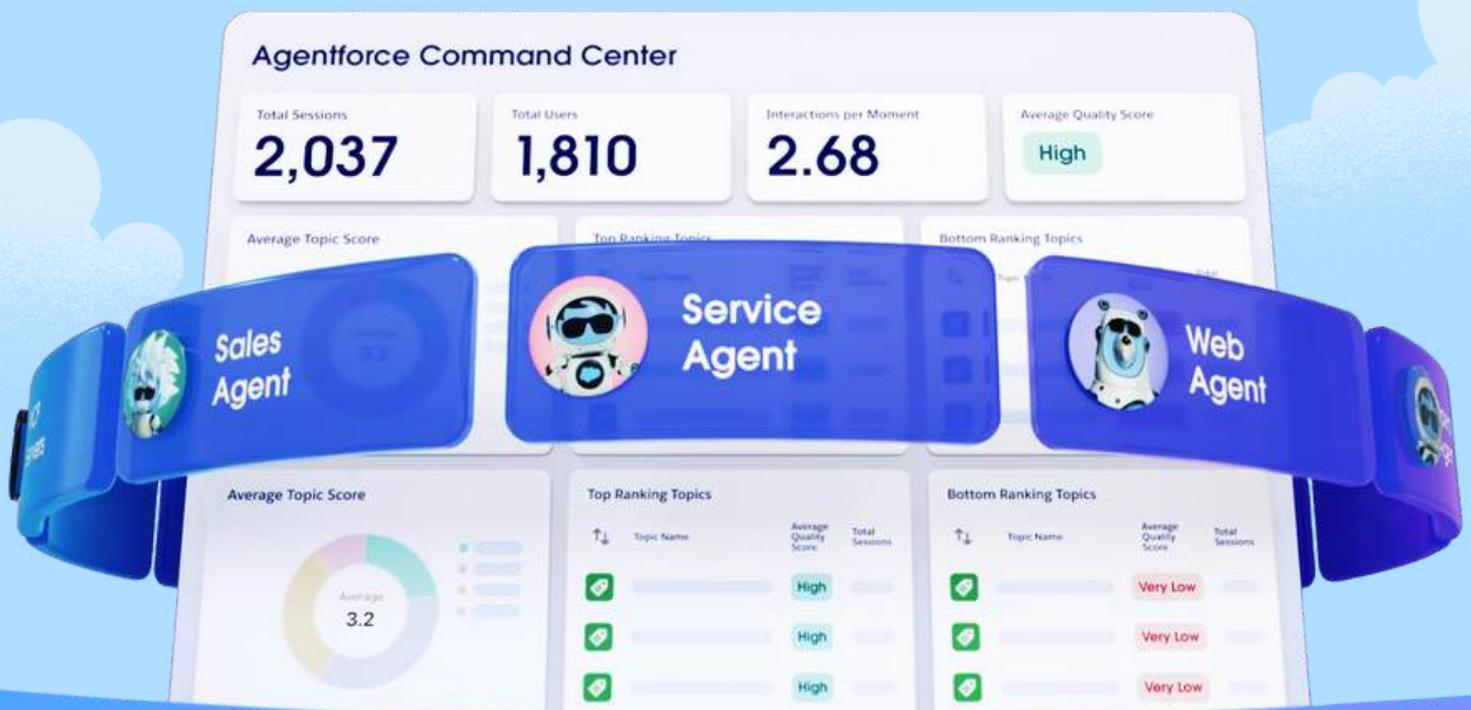
Take any action anywhere

- SAP Process refund
- Get order details
- Restock inventory
- Provide user access
- Analyze & suggest
- Inform customer
- IFS Onboard customer
- aws Add product
- Reprocess orders
- Report defect
- Check stock overview
- Purchase order
- Find anomalies
- Enable subscription
- Sign contract
- Process invoice
- Process payments
- Access credentials
- Support case routing
- Resolve issues faster

Agentforce also helps manage, optimise, and scale your hybrid workforce at enterprise scale...

The Agentforce Command Center gives you real-time visibility into agent activity and its impact on human productivity – so, you can drive positive outcomes, ensure accountability, and scale with confidence.

- Uncover patterns across interactions to optimise your agents
- Track agent health and intervene in real time
- Understand what's working and where to improve
- Build and test agents fast with AI-assisted development tools



Speed time to value with 200+ prebuilt industry actions

Discover practical, custom use cases across industries, so you can tailor agents to your business and customer needs.



OR



Credits & Disclaimer

See the full list of survey & interview participants

[Click here](#)

Research **NXT**

About us

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A background image of two hands shaking, symbolizing a partnership or agreement. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers interlocked. The background is a gradient of blue and purple.

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