

INNOVATION

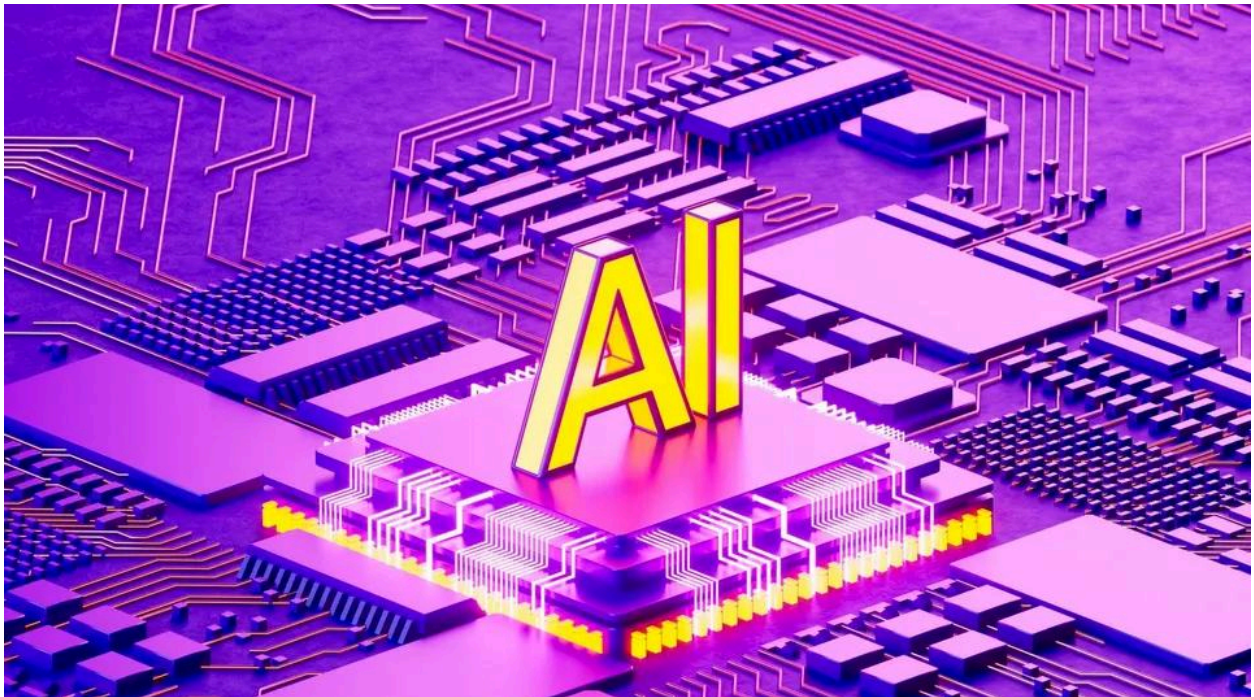
The Five-Dimension Assessment For AI Readiness: A Board-Level Framework For Scaling AI



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It is a striking paradox: Organizations are investing in AI at unprecedented levels, yet nearly [95%](#) of AI pilots never reach production. AI is often described as a productivity accelerator. In practice, it quickly becomes a stress test, revealing how decisions are made, how authority works and whether the operating model can really handle AI. That is why AI readiness is no longer an IT concern; it is a leadership responsibility.

The problem is not enthusiasm or experimentation. While [65%](#) of enterprises are deploying AI, only about [5%](#) report material business value. Meanwhile, an average of [46%](#) of AI initiatives are abandoned before production. This gap reflects a lack of organizational readiness rather than a technology issue. Without the governance, talent and operational maturity needed to scale across the enterprise, AI remains isolated. The real question is no longer whether AI delivers value but whether the organization can capture it.

The Enterprise AI Scaling Gap

This gap between pilot success and production failure shows a common misunderstanding of readiness. A model that works in a sandbox says little about whether people, processes and systems can run it at scale. Pilots test AI in ideal conditions but rarely show whether the organization can deploy, govern and sustain it in real work.

Why Maturity Models Miss The Mark

Most AI maturity frameworks focus on visible technical metrics, such as model accuracy, tools and platforms, but they underestimate the organizational friction that appears during real deployment. The real blockers are messy data, integration headaches, unclear ownership and resistance when AI shows up in daily work.

Five Dimensions That Define Readiness

True AI readiness depends on five interdependent dimensions, with the weakest one setting the ceiling for the entire system.

1. Leadership And Strategy Alignment

Without clear executive ownership, AI remains an experiment and gets pushed aside when budgets tighten. Stronger organizations make more deliberate choices. According to [BCG](#), they spend about 26% more of their budgets on IT and focus most of that investment (roughly 64%) on AI, building long-term capabilities instead of buying standalone tools.

This doesn't happen by accident. When no leader owns the outcome, pilots may

work, but they don't scale. Production requires real change, and without someone ready to own that disruption, AI never moves beyond testing.

2. Data Quality And Infrastructure Foundations

These are the most underestimated barriers to scaling AI. More pilots fail due to data issues than to model performance. Among high-performing organizations, [70%](#) cite data quality as a major challenge, largely because they are operating at scale, according to McKinsey.

The real difference is the data. Pilots run on hand-prepared, one-off datasets, while production needs automated pipelines with clear ownership and oversight. Many teams only uncover data issues when scaling begins and progress stalls.

3. Technology Stack And Architecture Readiness

Technology readiness reveals the gap between pilots and production. What works in a sandbox often breaks in the real world. Organizations need to progress through [clear maturity levels](#): from manual, ad hoc deployment (Level 0) through automated pipelines (Level 2) to real-time autonomous optimization (Level 5).

Skipping phases is how technical debt becomes a scaling liability. Organizations that rush from proof-of-concept to production without intermediate automation face integration breakdowns, performance drag and maintenance costs that surpass the original pilot.

4. Talent, Culture, And Ways Of Working

Here's the simple truth: Vendors can help build AI, but only internal teams can keep it running. Pilots lean on consultants and data scientists; real production needs product owners, MLOps and business leaders who work with AI every day.

Many companies train people on tools, but they don't rethink roles or team setups. And that matters. Cross-functional teams, supported by strong platforms, make AI move faster and actually get adopted.

5. Governance, Risk, And Responsible AI

These matter most when systems scale, yet they are still treated as barriers to

innovation. But in fact, they are enablers. Companies that downplay governance often run into regulatory and trust issues when it's time to roll out. And with [only 1 in 5](#) enterprises having mature governance for autonomous systems, many end up stuck, using late-discovered gaps as a reason to delay deployment indefinitely.

The Interdependence Trap

These dimensions depend on each other in very practical ways. When leadership is not aligned, no one approves the investment needed for production-ready data and infrastructure. Without that foundation, scaling simply does not work, no matter how good the model is. As teams try to integrate, hidden architecture limits drive costs up and stall decisions.

Even when systems do go live, there may be no one inside the organization who can run them day-to-day. And when people finally start using the tools, cultural friction often prevents them from being used in any meaningful way. Each issue feeds the next, keeping many initiatives stuck at the pilot stage.

From Readiness To Executive Action

Boards need to change the questions they ask. Instead of focusing on pilot timelines, leaders should assess readiness: Who owns the system after launch? Are running costs funded? What organizational changes are approved, and by whom?

There are also clear warning signs: unrealistic integration timelines, unclear ownership after deployment, missing run-cost budgets and pilot teams with no experience taking systems into production.

Equally important is discipline to make clear scale-or-stop decisions. When readiness gaps can't be fixed, ending the initiative early protects both budget and credibility.

AI Readiness As A Leadership Discipline

AI reshapes how organizations operate; it touches strategy, governance, talent, culture and infrastructure at once. Organizations that continuously strengthen all five dimensions can outperform their peers, achieving higher revenue growth and greater cost reductions.

AI readiness is a capability that develops over time. For leadership teams, AI readiness has become a part of day-to-day decision-making. Pilots can show that AI is efficient, but readiness decides whether it actually creates real value.



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Boris Kontsevoi is a founder and President of [Intetics Inc.](#), a leading global software engineering and digital transformation company. Under his leadership, a group of software engineers developed into a truly global technology company with multiple professional certifications, including ISO/IEC 42001 certification, for AI Management Systems, and industry awards, including the Global Outsourcing 100, Software 500, and Global Sourcing Association best of class company.

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