

Why Your AI Adoption Feels Slower Than It Should

A short diagnostic for leadership teams

A moment leadership might be experiencing

At this point, most leadership teams have done the “right” things around AI. You selected tools carefully, considered risk, talked about enablement, and some of your teams leaned in quickly. And still, the results feel uneven: a few people use AI all the time while others barely touch it.

The time savings everyone expected haven't fully shown up yet. That gap creates confusion, and sometimes frustration or the unspoken question: *are we behind?*

What we tend to see across organizations of different age and size is that this moment isn't usually about being late or early.

It's about whether the conditions for adoption are actually in place.



Where things tend to slow down

When AI adoption stalls, it rarely does so dramatically. People don't *revolt*, and they probably don't push back. They nod, attend sessions and probably even try it once or twice.

Across organizations, the early friction tends to show up in familiar ways:

- AI is approved, but leadership use isn't very visible
- Expectations and guardrails are implied rather than clearly stated
- People aren't sure where experimentation is welcome (or where it's not)
- Managers want to help, but don't quite know how
- AI lands in the middle of an already heavy period of change

None of this means adoption failed. More often, it means expectations started moving faster than capacity. This usually isn't a tech problem; it's just a leadership and operating reality.

A quick mirror, not a measurement

Before adding more training, more urgency or more tools, it can help to pause and take stock of what's actually true right now. *This is not a scorecard, a maturity model or individual performance.* It's simply a way to reflect on whether the environment people are operating in matches the expectations being placed on them.

How to use the next section:

For each statement, rate it from 1 to 5:

- 1 – Strongly disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Somewhat true / mixed
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly agree

A quick mirror, not a measurement



Leadership signals

- 1. Leaders visibly use AI in their own work - not just talk about it.
- 2. Leaders can name one or two concrete ways AI helps them do their jobs better.
- 3. AI comes up in leadership conversations naturally, not only in formal updates.

Day-to-day work

- 1. AI supports real, recurring work, not just isolated experiments.
- 2. People generally know when using AI helps and when it doesn't.
- 3. Using AI feels like it removes friction more often than it adds steps.

Clarity and safety

- 1. Employees are clear on what is and isn't appropriate to use AI for.
- 2. People feel safe experimenting without worrying they'll "get it wrong."
- 3. There's a place to ask practical questions without feeling exposed.

Capacity and pressure

- 1. AI adoption is being paced realistically alongside other changes.
- 2. Expectations about productivity gains are explicit, not assumed.
- 3. Managers feel equipped to support AI use in real, day-to-day moments.

How to Score

Sum your responses and view your diagnostic based on your score below.

Operationalizing AI 48 - 60

AI is becoming part of how work gets done. The focus now is less about introducing it - and more about reinforcing and scaling what's already working.

Building Consistency 36 - 47

Adoption hasn't failed, but it's uneven. Small leadership shifts and clearer expectations will matter more than large-scale programs.

Laying the Foundation 5 - 35

Adoption is still forming. The priority isn't speed; it's clarity, alignment and visible leadership signals.

Where to focus next:

Operationalizing AI

Reinforce what's already working. This is less about introducing new tools and more about making adoption stick through leadership visibility, shared practices and clarity on where AI should show up in day-to-day work.

Building Consistency

Close the gap between pockets of progress and the broader organization. Clear expectations, simple use cases, and leadership modeling tend to move the needle more than large rollout efforts.

Laying the Foundation

Start with clarity before scale. Define where AI should (and shouldn't) be used, align leadership on messaging, and build early examples people can actually follow.



If you're looking for a clearer view or a new perspective of what's happening as these changes roll out, we're always open to conversations like this - seeing how change is landing inside teams and where clarity can help you reach success.

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