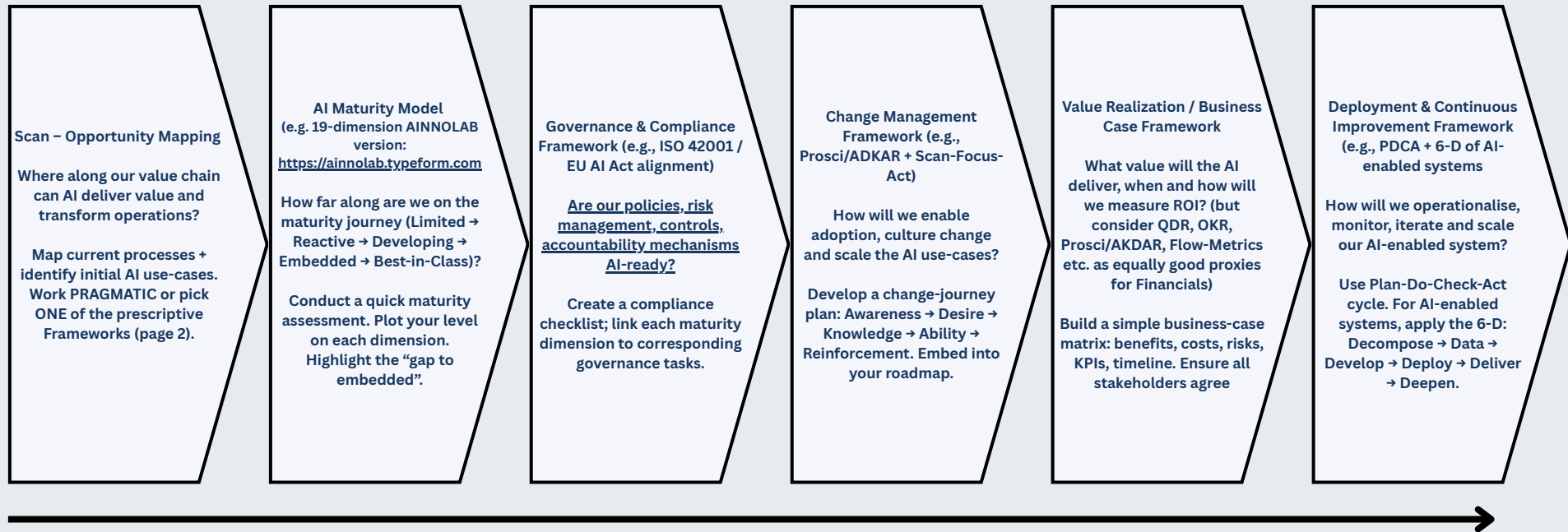


6-Step AI Adoption & Outcome Cookbook



Keep it Bold & Simple!

Consulting providers should refrain from creating increasingly descriptive and complex models and frameworks for AI adoption, and direct their efforts towards addressing the harder, messier, and less glamorous aspects of enterprise success with AI.

Many of the Frameworks (p. 2) overlap in scope, terminology, and goals.

Organizations are left asking questions like: Which framework best fits our organization? Do we have the required capabilities? Should we be focusing on “maturity,” “augmentation,” or “productivity”?

Such questions distract and stalls organizations’ ability to deal with the practical challenges of successfully implementing AI.

What Orgs should be focusing on

Success with AI requires an understanding of the AI Operating Model components:

- Data Management and Strategy
- Security and Privacy
- Governance (we recommend ISO42001 for the initial Blueprint with subsequent Internal Audits)
- Skills and Talent
- Outcome realization: make sure AI drives tangible business outcomes using AI as a strategic enabler
- Measurements: Financial Tangibles for ROI can be hard and time consuming (if possible at all) to monitor. So consider QDR (Quarterly Design Reviews), OKRs (Objectives & Key Results), Prosci/ADKAR reviews, Customer Satisfaction Measures, Flow-Metrics

Quick Tips & Best Practices

- Start small, scale fast: Select one pilot use-case, prove value, then expand.
- Link maturity to controls: For example, at “Developing” level you begin governance; at “Embedded” you institutionalize it.
- Governance using ISO42001 as Blueprint + value /outcome monitoring (e.g. ROI, OKRs or other tangible measures) go hand-in-hand: Without both you risk compliance gaps or value gaps.
- Change-journey is non-negotiable: Follow ADKAR or similar to engage people and embed new ways of working.
- Measure early, monitor continuously: Use simple KPIs (time saved, error rate reduction, new revenue) and tie to the roadmap.
- Iterate with PDCA: the system you deploy today needs check-and-act for tomorrow
- Iterate at least yearly using internal Auditing of your Compliance & Governance processes using ISO42001

If you are into prescriptive AI Frameworks...

| Framework | The Why | Details |
|--|--|--|
| <p><u>Microsoft – AI Maturity Model</u> → Map maturity trajectory</p> | <p>Proposes the stages of AI adoption in organizations and how human involvement changes at each stage: Assisted Intelligence: AI provides insights, but humans make decisions. Augmented Intelligence: AI enhances human decision-making and creativity. Autonomous Intelligence: AI makes decisions without human involvement.</p> | <p>Focus: Evolution over time. Use when: Planning 6-18 month roadmap. Question: How does human involvement decrease over time?</p> |
| <p><u>PwC – AI Augmentation Spectrum</u> → Define roles at each step</p> | <p>Highlights six stages of human-AI collaboration: AI as an: Advisor (Providing insights and recommendations); Assistant (Helping humans perform tasks more efficiently); Co-Creator (Working collaboratively on tasks); Executor (Performing tasks with minimal human input); Decision-Maker (Making decisions independently); or Self-Learner (Learning to improve over time).</p> | <p>Focus: Role definition at each step. Use when: Different steps need different AI involvement. Question: Should AI advise, assist, execute, or decide?</p> |
| <p><u>Deloitte – Augmented Intelligence Framework</u> → Categorize the work type</p> | <p>Focuses on the collaborative nature of AI and human tasks, highlighting the balance between automation and augmentation: Automate: AI takes over repetitive, rule-based tasks; Augment: AI provides recommendations or insights to enhance human decision-making; or Amplify: AI helps humans scale their work, improving productivity and decision speed.</p> | <p>Focus: Type of AI contribution. Use when: Categorizing what AI should do. Question: Automate, augment, or amplify?</p> |
| <p><u>AI Risk & Strategy - The 9 types Framework</u> → Define AI Assistant/human</p> | <p>Using '9 Types' Framework for Organizational Augmentation" it can be used to set out a strategic vision for the AI-powered organization from content creation towards agentic teams. The framework is NOT a maturity model but clearly describes guiding principles for augmentation, strategy and organization designs.</p> | <p>Focus: for each of 9 types, it defines what the AI system does and what the human equivalent is (this resonates very well with MITs)</p> |
| <p><u>Gartner – Autonomous Systems Framework</u> → Set autonomy boundaries</p> | <p>Categorizes work based on the degree of human involvement versus AI involvement: Manual Work: Fully human-driven tasks; Assisted Work: Humans complete tasks with AI assistance; Semi-Autonomous Work: AI handles tasks, but humans intervene as needed; or Fully Autonomous Work: AI performs tasks independently with no human input.</p> | <p>Focus: Degree of AI independence. Use when: Setting supervision requirements. Question: What can AI do without human intervention?</p> |
| <p><u>MIT – Integrating humans with AI in structural design</u> → Design oversight points</p> | <p>Ensures that humans remain an integral part of AI processes, particularly for tasks requiring judgment, ethics, and creativity: AI Automation: Tasks AI can handle entirely; Human-in-the-Loop: Tasks where humans make critical decisions or review AI outputs; and Human Override: Tasks where humans can override AI outputs in sensitive areas.</p> | <p>Focus: Control and override mechanisms. Use when: Legal, safety, or quality requirements exist. Question: Where must humans review or intervene?</p> |
| <p><u>How Can Teams Benefit From AI Team Members?</u> → Clarify relationships</p> | <p>Outlines a Human-AI Teaming framework, emphasizing that AI should augment human work, not replace it: AI as a Tool: AI supports human decision-making by providing data-driven insights. AI as a Collaborator: AI assists humans by sharing tasks and improving productivity. AI as a Manager: AI takes over specific management functions, such as scheduling or performance monitoring.</p> | <p>Focus: The human-AI relationship. Use when: Redesigning daily workflows. Question: Is AI a tool, teammate, or manager?</p> |

Introduction: Why AI Maturity Matters

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer the preserve of large corporations or cutting-edge research labs.

SMEs across industries are beginning to integrate AI into their daily operations—from customer support chatbots to predictive maintenance and data-driven decision-making.

Yet, many organizations struggle to realize AI's full potential. They face common barriers such as unclear strategies, fragmented data, lack of skills, and high costs.

AI maturity assessment provides a structured way to understand where your organization stands today, identify opportunities, and chart a realistic path toward AI-enabled transformation.

Why SMEs Need It Now

1. **Competitive Advantage:** AI can increase productivity, lower costs, and enhance customer experiences. Those that hesitate risk falling behind
2. **Resource Optimization:** SMEs typically have limited resources. Knowing maturity levels helps prioritize the most impactful AI initiatives
3. **Risk Management:** AI adoption comes with challenges—ethical risks, bias, data privacy, and governance. Maturity assessments ensure risks are identified early
4. **Scalability and Sustainability:** Many firms succeed in pilots but fail in scaling AI. Structured maturity assessment prevents wasted investments

What is an AI Maturity Assessment?

An AI maturity assessment measures an organization's ability to adopt, implement, and scale AI solutions.

Maturity models—first developed for software engineering—have evolved into practical frameworks that:

- Define levels of capability (from “nascent” to “transformational”)
- Evaluate people, processes, technology, and governance
- Provide benchmarks against peers and industry standards

For SMEs, the assessment is not about comparing with tech giants but about aligning AI initiatives with business objectives and ensuring investments deliver real value.

Insights from Research and Industry Oct. 2025

- A systematic review of AI maturity models shows most organizations underestimate human and governance factors, focusing too narrowly on technology
- Studies in process industries (e.g., steel, cement, chemicals) show AI adoption lags due to complex operations, but structured maturity models help benchmark and guide progress
- Research on technology readiness emphasizes that successful AI adoption depends equally on people, processes, and data—not just tools

Synthesized dimensions of AI Maturity

| <p>AI Maturity Model Dimensions Research & industry frameworks converge on dimensions SMEs should consider:</p> | <p>The five Levels of AI Maturity While models differ in details, most define five progressive levels:</p> | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Strategy & Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is AI embedded in your overall business strategy? • Are there policies for ethical and responsible AI use? | | | | | |
| <p>2. Culture & People Do leaders and employees trust and understand AI? Are there training programs to build digital and AI literacy?</p> | | | | | |
| <p>3. Data Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are data sources integrated, clean, and accessible? • Is there a culture of using data for decision-making? | | | | | |
| <p>4. Technology & Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the right tools and platforms to deploy AI? • Are your systems interoperable, secure, and scalable? | | | | | |
| <p>5. Implementation & Value Realization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are AI projects delivering measurable business value? • Can successful pilots be scaled across business functions? | | | | | |
| <p>6. Operations & Continuous Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a process for monitoring, maintaining, and improving AI systems? • Are risks (e.g., bias, fairness, compliance) continuously managed? | <p>Awareness: Initial discussions, ad-hoc pilots, no formal strategy</p> | <p>Active: First AI projects launched, but fragmented and limited</p> | <p>Operational: AI integrated into selected processes, delivering business value</p> | <p>Strategic: AI embedded in business strategy, governance in place, scaling across unit</p> | <p>Transformational: AI drives innovation, agility, and long-term advantage across the enterprise</p> |

Ainnolab AI Maturity assessment overview

| | | | Awareness: Initial discussions, ad-hoc pilots, no formal strategy | Active: First AI projects launched, but fragmented and limited | Operational: AI integrated into selected processes, delivering business value | Strategic: AI embedded in business strategy, governance in place, scaling across unit | Transformational: AI drives innovation, agility, and long-term advantage across the enterprise |
|----------|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Question | Dimension | Question | Score 1 | Score 2 | Score 3 | Score 4 | Score 5 |
| 1 | Strategy & Leadership | Has your organization made AI a priority within its strategic objectives? | AI is not considered in the strategic objectives | AI is sporadically considered | AI is mentioned, but has left no footprint in the strategic objectives | AI is a significant and verbalized component of strategic objectives | AI is fully embedded in the strategic objectives with measurable business outcomes |
| 2 | Strategy & Leadership | To what extent does your organization's management sponsor AI initiatives? | Management displays no involvement in AI initiatives | Occasionally, Management shows informal involvement in AI initiatives | Some managers support AI initiatives, but there is limited sponsorship | Management actively support AI initiatives and allocate resources | Management's AI leadership is strong, consistent, and formalized |
| 3 | Strategy & Leadership | To what degree is AI governance embedded within your organization? | There is no clear AI governance | The AI governance is informal | Basic AI governance is emerging & accountabilities and roles are developing | A formal AI governance body exists and supports decision-making | AI Governance is robust and actively manages AI risks |
| 4 | People & Culture | To what degree does your organization invest in strengthening workforce capabilities for AI solution delivery? | AI-related training opportunities for employees are absent or very limited | Employees' understanding of AI concepts is largely limited to self-directed learning efforts. | Training initiatives exist but are not widely adopted | AI training is integrated in training programs across departments | he organization encourages high AI competencies and continuous AI learning |
| 5 | People & Culture | To what degree is a culture of piloting and fast learning embedded in the organization's AI practices? | The organization discourages piloting or sees AI as too risky | AI-related innovation is tolerated but not actively supported | Some business or IT areas pilot AI under local sponsorship | AI piloting and learning is promoted in several departments | AI piloting is encouraged, celebrated, and systematically supported |
| 6 | People & Culture | To what degree is AI collaboration and networking integrated across the organization's BizDevOps value streams? | There is minimal collaboration | Collaboration is inconsistent and primarily reactive | Networking & collaboration is developing | n-consistent collaboration & networking is operational | The collaboration & networking is fully embedded in the WoW |
| 7 | AI Usage/Adoption | To what degree is the deployment of AI use cases—driving automation and rapid learning—encouraged across the organization's BizDevOps value streams? | AI use cases are not considered | There is a fragmented adoption of AI use cases | AI use cases are adopted in many functions - but there is no integration to BizDevOps value streams | AI use cases are widely adopted across the organization with only minor BizDevOps value stream harmonization | AI use cases are systematically adopted & monitored throughout the Org across all BizDevOps value streams |
| 8 | AI Usage/Adoption | To what degree are business cases developed and applied to support AI initiatives in your organization? | BCs are unusual for AI initiatives | BCs arise ad hoc and without a formalized approach | BCs are defined & evaluated for all AI initiatives | BCs are regularly evaluated by Portfolio Mgmt. | BCs are continuously & systematically evaluated |
| 9 | AI Usage/Adoption | How effectively does your organization align AI processes with existing BizDevOps practices and workflows? | AI processes are disconnected from BizDevOps processes & workflows | There is minimal AI process integration with BizDevOps practices & workflows | AI processes are integrated with selected BizDevOps practices & workflows | AI processes supports key BizDevOps practices & workflows | AI processes are seamlessly integrated across all BizDevOps practices & workflows |
| 10 | Technology Adoption (UTAUT2) | To what degree do employees perceive AI as a driver of improved performance at the individual and organizational levels? | Employees see no added value from using AI | Some employees acknowledge AI potential but do not feel it improves their work | AI is viewed as helpful in certain tasks | Most employees perceive AI as a performance-enhancing tool in their work | AI is widely recognized as enhancing performance across the organization |
| 11 | Technology Adoption (UTAUT2) | How well does the organization cultivate optimal pathways for employees to develop AI knowledge and skills? | Employees are hardly offered AI related training & coaching | Employees are offered some initial AI training | AI training exists but is not sufficiently tailored to user needs | AI training & coaching are partially structured within defined "Learning Journeys" | AI training & coaching is dynamically directed towards all users |
| 12 | Technology Adoption (UTAUT2) | How effectively does the leadership foster employees' adoption of AI? | There is no encouragement from Leadership to adopt AI | Some informal encouragement exists, but it is not backed by Leadership | Encouragement varies across the organization; AI champions are emerging | Adoption is reinforced by Leadership using coordinated communication | Adoption is strongly encouraged through cultural norms & by leadership |
| 13 | Data Readiness | To what degree does the organization guarantee the availability, accessibility, and structuring of data required for AI solutions? | Data is fragmented and not readily accessible | Access to data is difficult and requires manual effort | Efforts exist to structure and unify data but coverage is limited | Data pipelines are in place for most AI solutions with reliable access | Data is highly accessible, structured, and consistently prepared for AI consumption |
| 14 | Data Readiness | How mature is the organization's AI data governance? | AI data governance practices are lacking or unclear | AI data governance exists for some data types | I data governance exists with some traceability & ownership practices | AI data governance is defined & enforced across the organization | AI data governance is mature with quality controls & role-based access |
| 15 | Innovation/Product Development & Delivery | How effectively is AI applied to drive innovation in products and services? | AI is not used in product/service innovation processes | AI practices are occasionally adopted in the product/service innovation | AI is piloted in product/service innovation processes | AI is extensively used in product/service innovation processes | AI is fully integrated into product /service innovation processes |
| 16 | Governance & Trust | To what degree does the organization practice AI lifecycle management, including monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and continuous improvement? | AI Lifecycle management Practices are ad-hoc or non-existent | Basic tracking of AI systems occurs without formal oversight | AI Lifecycle Practices are emerging but lack feedback integration | AI Lifecycle Practices are structured and includes review points | AI Lifecycle Practices are managed end-to-end with risk controls |
| 17 | Governance & Trust | How effectively are transparency and auditability ensured for AI solutions in alignment with the AI Act and ISO standards such as ISO 42001? | AI solutions are non-transparent nor auditable | Some AI solutions transparency is attempted through documentation | Some AI solutions are transparent but hardly auditable vs AI Act or ISO42001 | Transparency and auditability are key parts of most AI solutions design & deployment | Transparency & auditability is fully embedded in all AI solutions |
| 18 | Governance & Trust | To what degree are risks—such as bias, discrimination, and unfairness—systematically managed in the organization's AI solutions? | AI solution risks are not managed | Ad-hoc checks of risks exist—without formal processes | AI solution risks are acknowledged and partially addressed | AI solution risks are managed through reviews & controls | Risk mitigation is embedded in development, testing, and monitoring processes |
| 19 | Compliance vs AI Act & ISO 42001 | How well are AI Act and/or ISO 42001 on AI requirements embedded into the organization's practices? | The organization is unaware of the AI Act and/or ISO 42001 requirements | Initial awareness of requirements exists - but no formal actions are taken | Part of the organization is familiar with key obligations and have started preparations | Organizational awareness is widespread and some requirements are aligned to ongoing AI practices | Requirements are well-understood and fully adopted in governance & audits |

A Call to Action: Take Your First Step

How an AI Maturity Assessment Works

1. **Diagnostic Survey or Workshop:** SMEs answer structured questions aligned to maturity model dimensions
2. **Scoring & Benchmarking:** 1) Results place the organization on a maturity scale; 2) Benchmarks provides against industry peers
3. **Gap Analysis:** 1) Identifies strengths and improvement areas; 2) Highlights risks and bottlenecks (so a SWOT and TOWS analysis is useful)
4. **Action Roadmap:** 1) Define Initiatives/Features towards higher maturity levels; 2) Prioritize Initiatives/Features (quick wins vs long-term investments considering other portfolio priorities)

Benefits for SMEs

1. **Clarity:** Understand your current AI capability and readiness.
2. **Focus:** Direct limited resources to the most impactful areas
3. **Confidence:** Reduce risks by addressing governance, compliance, and data quality.
4. **Alignment:** Ensure AI investments support business strategy.
5. **Competitiveness:** Stay ahead in an increasingly AI-driven economy.

Your First Steps

AI adoption & the realization of ROI/Outcomes does not need to be overwhelming!

With a maturity assessment, your organization gains a clear picture of where you are today, where you want to be tomorrow, and how to get there—at a pace that fits your resources and ambitions.

Whether you are experimenting with your first chatbot or planning to scale predictive analytics across your operations, understanding your AI maturity is the foundation for success.

Now is the time for SMEs to act. The organizations that embrace AI responsibly, strategically, and confidently will secure their future in the digital economy.