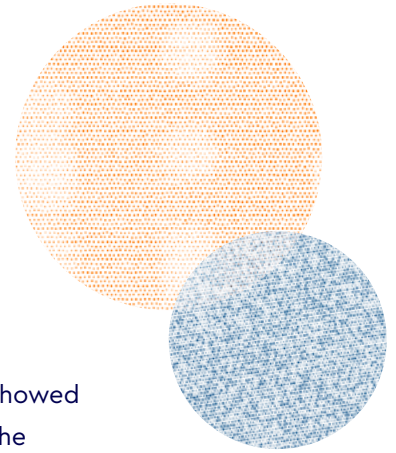


# EMBEDDING GEN AI TO SECURE AN ESSENTIAL, FUTURE-PROOF EDGE



# GEN AI IS HERE. TURNING IT INTO A WORKPLACE HABIT IS THE HARD PART.



Gen AI is likely already in your workplace. Our "AI at Work: From Adoption to Action" research showed that 61.3% of employees were using AI in 2025 – yet average usage is just 11 times per month. The technology has moved beyond hype, but without people-led enablement, it risks remaining a novelty. This guide is designed to help enterprise leaders embed Gen AI into everyday work – confidently, responsibly, and at scale – using proven change management principles.

This is a people challenge, not just a tooling challenge. Gen AI changes how decisions are made, how work gets done, and how customers interact with brands. Success depends less on the algorithms and more on the employees who adopt them. In times of rapid disruption, change management ensures people are aware, engaged, equipped, and confident – turning AI intent into durable habits.

What this guide sets out to achieve:

- Explain a practical, people-first approach to Gen AI enablement, grounded in change management.
- Introduce the WPP Enterprise Solutions AI Maturity Framework (Manual → Basic → Augmented → Intelligent → Agentic) with clear enablement phases (Discover, Transform, Scale).
- Provide four core principles to align leadership, assess readiness, build a change network, and sustain momentum.
- Equip you with a concise "Five Actions for Enterprise Leaders" checklist to operationalize adoption.

Taken together, this guide presents a pragmatic path to embed Gen AI into day-to-day work – keeping people at the center while maturing processes, governance, and culture.



**Helen McCoull**  
Senior Consultant  
WPP Enterprise Solutions

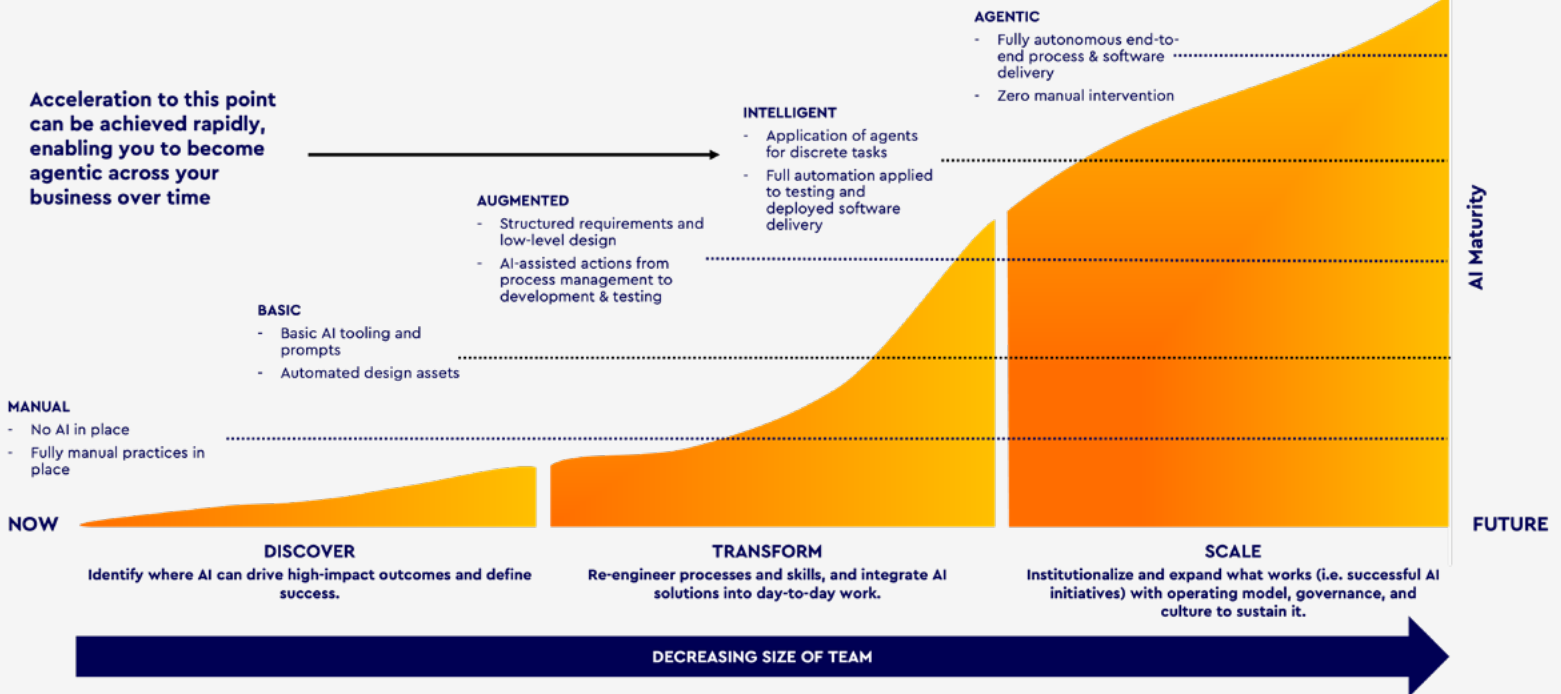
# INTRODUCING WPP ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS' AI MATURITY FRAMEWORK

The aim of this guide is to outline practical principles for making Gen AI stick across an organization. Before we dive into those principles, we'll start by anchoring them to a simple operating model: **WPP Enterprise Solutions' AI Maturity Framework**.

The WPP Enterprise Solutions AI Maturity Framework illustrates AI maturity across any business function, such as software delivery, marketing, customer service, finance, HR, operations, and beyond. It gives leaders a shared language for describing "where we are now", "what good looks like next", and "what enablement is required" to move from experimentation to everyday habit.

It progresses through five stages of maturity, from Manual to Basic, to Augmented to Intelligent to Agentic. These stages show development across three enablement phases, namely Discover to Transform to Scale.

## The WPP Enterprise Solutions AI Maturity Framework



With this as our common language, the following four principles show leaders what to do at each stage to turn Gen AI from a tool people try into a capability they count on.

# PRINCIPLE 1: LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT AND VISION COMMUNICATION

Embedding AI starts with visible, aligned leadership – but it's not about the specific tools. The priority is ensuring employees have the foundational knowledge, confidence, and curiosity to explore how AI can enhance their work.

While 77.3% of business owners believe leadership supports AI, only 37.8% of entry-level employees agree. Leaders must do more than endorse AI in board meetings; they need to actively guide the organization through the mindset shift AI demands. For many, this guidance begins in the Manual or Basic stages of our framework. Leaders should be explicit about the first step on the curve and the horizon that follows.

That means clearly communicating a vision for AI that connects to organizational goals and answers "what's in it for me?" for every role. We suggest running an AI Vision Communication Campaign: an ongoing, structured program that explains why AI is being adopted, how it will be used, and what it means for each audience, from the C-suite to frontline staff:

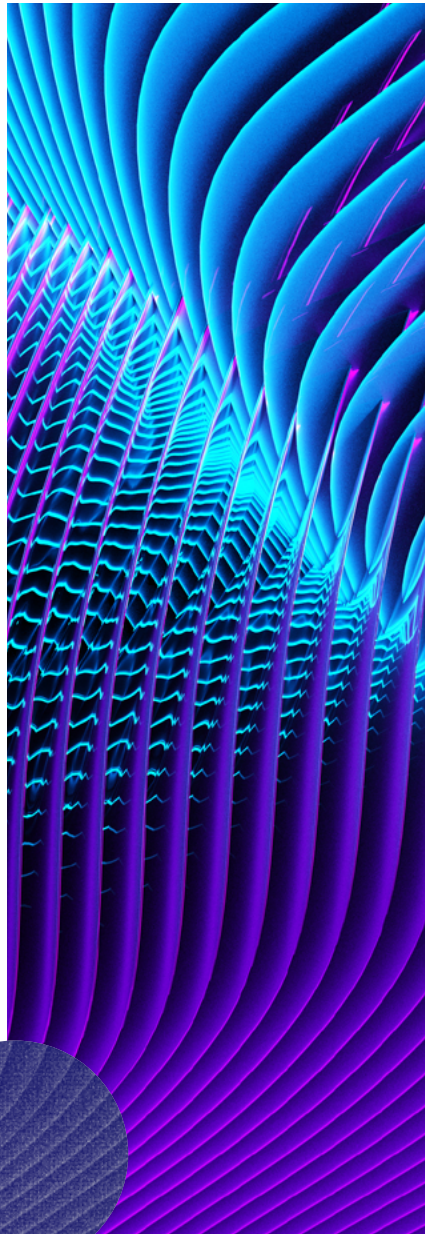
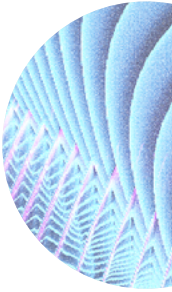
- For senior leaders: emphasize competitive advantage, innovation, and long-term growth.
- For operational teams: highlight role-specific benefits – reducing repetitive tasks, improving work quality, freeing time for higher-value activities.

Make the campaign multichannel (town halls, team meetings, internal system updates, videos, peer-led sessions) and interactive, with opportunities to ask questions, and see AI in action. As parts of the business approach Intelligent, explain guardrails for agents and how human oversight will work. Where units are Agentic, focus communication on ongoing assurance and how freed capacity is being reinvested.

Shift the conversation from "what tool are we using?" to "how can we all use AI effectively?" Make AI relevant, supported, and achievable for every role to turn intent into sustained cultural change.



# PRINCIPLE 2: ASSESS ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT AND READINESS



To move from surface-level adoption to deep integration, organizations must look inward. While 58.8% of workers believe their business is ready for AI, this optimism masks a readiness gap: 80% of business owners feel prepared, but only 42.2% of entry-level employees share that confidence. This gap is where many AI initiatives falter.

Closing it requires a structured, honest impact assessment. Start by understanding where each function sits on the maturity stages and which enablement phase it's in (Manual to Agentic / Discover to Scale stages in our framework).

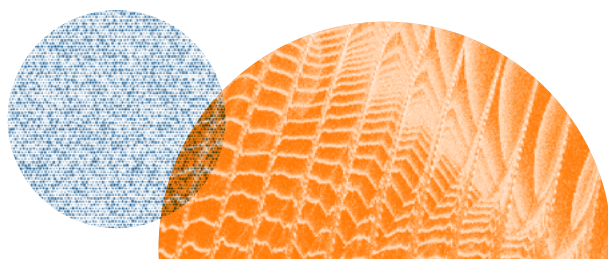
# 80%

● OF BUSINESS OWNERS FEEL PREPARED FOR AI, BUT ONLY 42.2% OF ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES FEEL THE SAME.

Choose a comprehensive framework that forces a 360-degree view. The McKinsey 7S model prompts leaders to analyze how AI will impact every interdependent element of the organization:

- Strategy, Structure, Systems - where 54.3% of employees already report feeling impact.
- Skills, Staff, Style, Shared Values - crucial people-centric dimensions that remind us it's not the tools that matter most, but the people using them.

A holistic analysis provides the blueprint for change: evidence-based, tailored to cultural and operational realities, designed to close the readiness gap between the C-suite and the frontline.



# PRINCIPLE 3: DEVELOP YOUR CHANGE NETWORK

With the vision communicated and impacts understood, appoint AI Champions across levels to bridge strategic intent and day-to-day reality. Our research highlights a clear hierarchy divide: senior leaders are far more optimistic and engaged with AI than entry-level employees. Champions close this gap by acting as trusted, relatable advocates.

Give champions early access to tools, targeted training, and clear expectations. They model desired behaviors, answer questions and share wins – building confidence and reducing resistance. In the Discover phase of our framework, champions help teams move from Manual or Basic to Augmented by demonstrating safe, everyday use and collecting local insights.

Establish a formal change network to move from informal enthusiasm to a strategic asset. The network creates a two-way communication channel, ensuring frontline feedback reaches the project team and key messages are translated accurately. Champions become a trusted focus group for testing new ideas and a source of expert users who provide practical support for new processes, reducing the burden on central transformation teams. This is the engine room of the Transform phase and readies teams for the step toward Intelligent.

Recruit respected, credible peers – not necessarily the most senior – who can dedicate time to the project. Induct and educate them on AI tools and change management capabilities: basic change models, active listening, and handling resistance. As agent-supported work emerges, many champions evolve into "agent owners" who steward local adoption and controls – essential as you move into the Scale stage.

This network provides the human interface for a technological revolution, ensuring change is done with the organization, not to it.



# PRINCIPLE 4: SUSTAIN MOMENTUM AND FOSTER CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

The real measure of AI success isn't tied to a single launch date. Some organizations start by giving everyone access to enterprise tools like Microsoft Copilot; others begin with education and exploration. In every case, the goal is the same: build a workforce that is informed, confident, and curious – able to identify opportunities and integrate AI into everyday work.

Emphasis varies by stage: in Manual or Basic, you build literacy and confidence; Augmented and Intelligent teams in Transform integrate AI into habitual workflows; truly Agentic areas emerge during Scale.

Foundational competence is critical. WPP Enterprise Solutions' "AI at Work" report reveals a stark skills gap: 74% of business owners believe their company provides adequate AI training, but only 27.4% of entry-level employees agree. Close this gap with practical, role-specific learning that equips people to experiment, adapt, and apply AI. Address the inevitable "learning dip" (temporary slowdown as people adapt) with patience, support, and reinforcement.

# 74%

- OF BUSINESS OWNERS BELIEVE THEIR COMPANY PROVIDES ADEQUATE AI TRAINING. ONLY 27.4% OF ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES AGREE.



Leaders must also address a significant human barrier: the fear that "AI will take my job." Left unaddressed, anxiety stalls progress and undermines trust. Apply proven change management strategies: transparent communication, active listening, and involving employees in shaping AI use cases. Show how AI augments roles, removes repetitive tasks, and creates opportunities for higher-value work – especially as discrete tasks progress to Intelligent agents and some processes trend toward Agentic autonomy.

Foster a culture of continuous adaptation. Create psychological safety (Edmondson, 2014) – an environment where employees feel safe to experiment, share learnings, and even fail without blame. Use "safe-to-fail" environments to quickly test and scale what works: introductory sandboxes in Discover, production-adjacent pilots in Transform, and monitored optimization loops in Scale.



# FIVE ACTIONS FOR ENTERPRISE LEADERS

With the AI Maturity Framework as your operating model, use this checklist to accelerate Gen AI adoption and convert early experimentation into durable, enterprise-wide capability.

## ● 1. Align leadership and communicate the vision

Define a clear, role-specific "what's in it for me?" and a maturity roadmap from Manual/Basic to Agentic. Run a sustained, multichannel AI Vision Communication Campaign with interactive Q&A and real examples.

## ● 2. Run a holistic readiness and impact assessment

Map each function to the maturity stages and enablement phases. Use the McKinsey 7S model to assess Strategy, Structure and Systems alongside Skills, Staff, Style, Shared Values. Build an evidence-based change blueprint.

## ● 3. Establish and equip an AI change network

Recruit respected champions across functions and levels. Provide early tool access, role-specific training, and change skills (listening, facilitation, resistance management). Evolve champions into agent owners as autonomy grows.

## ● 4. Build capability and safe-to-fail experimentation

Deliver practical, role-based training to close the 74% vs 27.4% skills perception gap. Stand up sandboxes and pilots aligned to Discover and Transform, with clear guardrails and telemetry to learn and iterate.

## ● 5. Govern and scale responsibly

Define guardrails, oversight, and escalation for Intelligent and Agentic work. Instrument usage, outcomes, and assurance across Scale. Reinforce psychological safety so teams continuously adapt and improve.

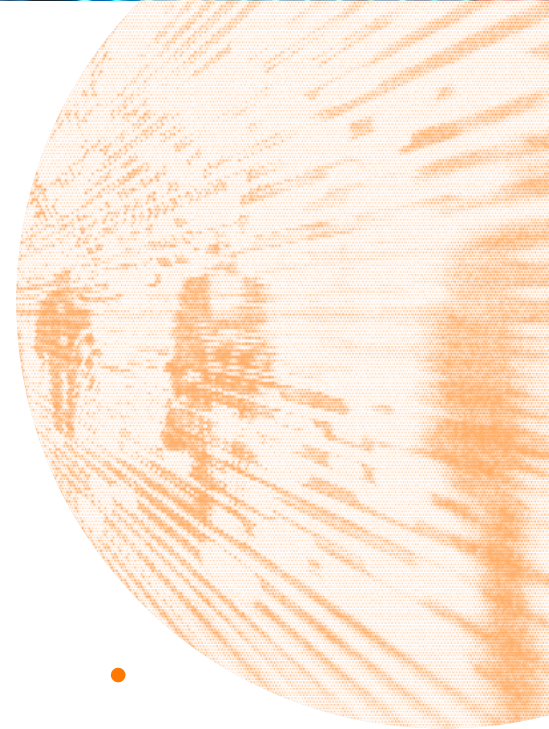
# FINAL THOUGHTS

The success of your Gen AI strategy will be measured not by the power of your algorithms, but by your ability to guide your people through fundamental change. This is not a technology project to be managed, but a human transformation to be led.

WPP Enterprise Solutions' AI Maturity Framework gives you a compass: know whether you are operating in Manual, Basic, Augmented, Intelligent or Agentic, be explicit about the next step, and understand the enablement phase you are in (Discover, Transform or Scale).

- **Discover:** make the case, choose high value workflows, and move from Manual/Basic to Augmented with visible leadership and clear guardrails.
- **Transform:** embed AI into everyday ways of working, maturing from Augmented to Intelligent through redesigned processes, strengthened skills, and a trusted change network.
- **Scale:** institutionalize what works so Agentic operations can grow responsibly, with continuous learning, telemetry and assurance – keeping people at the center.

Those who succeed will transform Gen AI from a tool that is merely used into a capability that is truly embedded – moving deliberately along the curve, one stage at a time, while bringing their workforce with them. Start where you are, communicate where you're going, and invest in the mindsets and mechanisms that turn novelty into habit.



# WHY WPP ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS?

At WPP Enterprise Solutions, we combine deep change management expertise with hands-on experience delivering AI adoption programs for some of the world's most recognized brands. With recognition from Forrester in its report "The Organizational Change Management Services Landscape, Q4 2025", WPP Enterprise Solutions bridges the gap between executive ambition and everyday reality, ensuring your people have the skills, confidence and mindset to turn AI's potential into lasting business impact.

## NEXT STEPS

- Contact [Helen McCoull](#) or [Shalina Ganatra](#) to discuss your Gen AI enablement ambitions and how we can help.
- Explore WPP Enterprise Solutions' dedicated [Change Management](#) practice.
- Download WPP Enterprise Solutions' 2025 survey "[AI at Work: From Adoption to Action](#)" with our compliments.



# ABOUT WPP ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS

## About WPP Enterprise Solutions

WPP Enterprise Solutions designs, builds, and operates the growth systems that competitive businesses rely on. In a world where AI is reshaping how companies drive growth, we lead clients in business transformation and marketing modernization, connecting strategy directly to execution. Our 12,000 experts in engineering and platforms, commerce, consulting, content transformation, CRM, and CX, work within a unified global operating unit across 40+ markets. WPP Enterprise Solutions works alongside best-in-class partners including Adobe, AWS, Braze, Google, Microsoft, Salesforce, and Shopify, as well as innovators in AI, to deliver growth solutions tailored to the needs of our clients' businesses. We have received distinction as a leader in Commerce Services and CX Strategy Consulting by the Forrester Wave™ reports and are designated by Gartner's Magic Quadrant™ as a Visionary in Digital Experience Services.

## About WPP

WPP is the trusted growth partner for the world's leading brands. WPP combines cutting-edge media intelligence, world-class creativity, next-generation production, and transformative enterprise solutions to drive growth at scale. WPP is a publicly listed company (NYSE: WPP).

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