

HOW DATA READINESS POWERS ENTERPRISE GROWTH SYSTEMS



INTRODUCTION: DATA READINESS IN A GROWTH SYSTEM

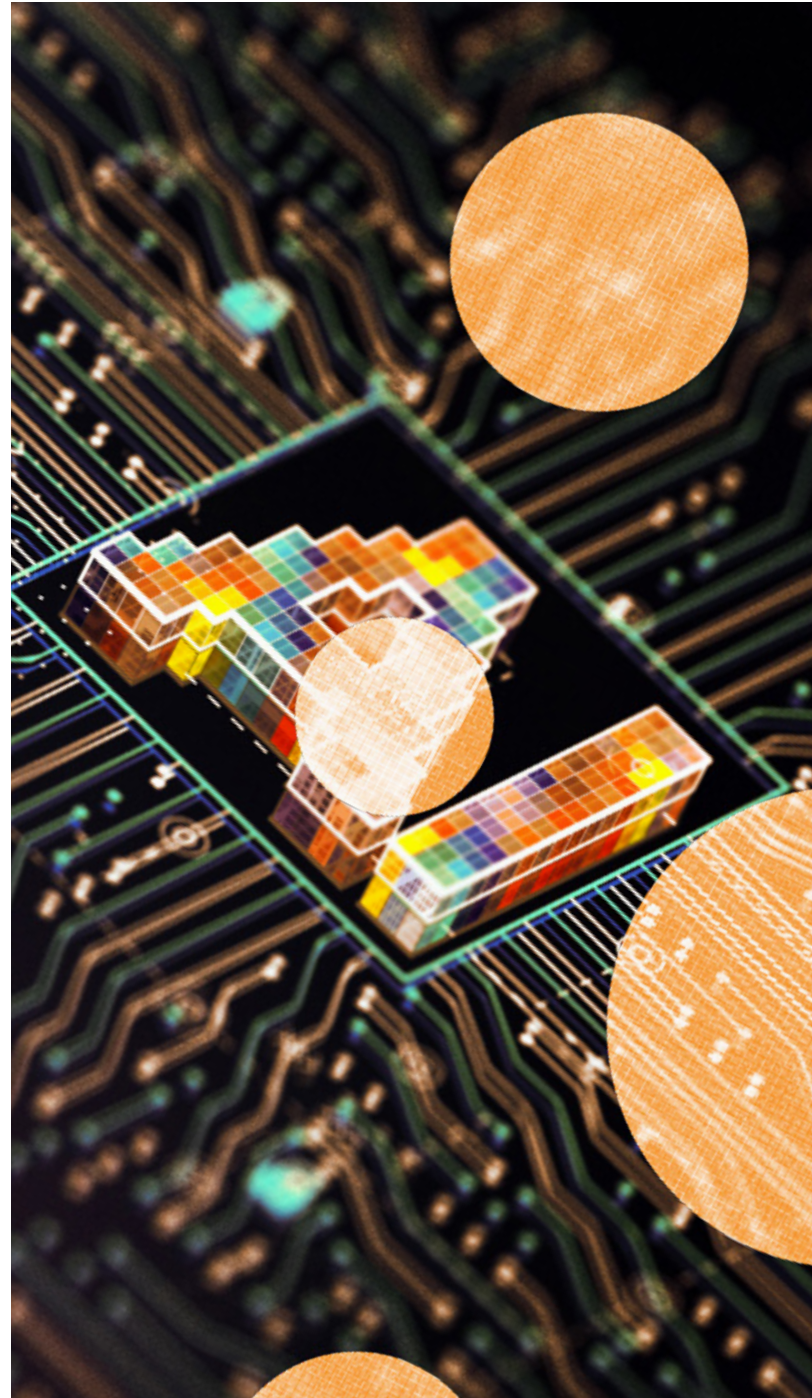
Artificial intelligence has moved from the sidelines to the center of enterprise transformation — but in isolation it does not constitute a growth system.

The organizations seeing durable commercial impact are those that treat AI as one component within a connected operating model that spans strategy, customer experience, commerce, CRM and loyalty, content, and technology and data platforms.

Across the sample of 4,000 business leaders in eight countries, 85% of digital transformers now view AI as the most important technology for achieving strategic goals — yet 37% of digital transformation projects still fail to achieve their objectives, and 59% of leaders admit their data practices are not mature enough to support advanced digital technologies.

The gap between ambition and outcome is less an AI problem than a data and system design problem: without clean, connected, and accessible data, AI cannot operate as the integrator of a growth system.

This paper sets out how data readiness underpins the performance of enterprise growth systems, the structural barriers that currently stand in the way, and the actions leaders can take to move from isolated AI experiments to connected, outcome-accountable growth systems.



FROM AI COMPONENT TO GROWTH SYSTEM

In the early wave of digital transformation, AI was often treated as a component — a chatbot layered onto customer service, a model added to an existing analytics stack, or a pilot confined to a single function.

Those efforts delivered incremental value, but rarely changed how enterprises grew.

The research shows a step-change: 85% of digital transformers now view AI as their most important technology, and 78% believe it will improve their ability to run and deliver transformation projects.

In leading organizations, AI is being repositioned as the orchestration layer of an enterprise growth system — connecting customer journeys, optimizing operations, and aligning investment to measurable outcomes across functions.

When AI sits on top of fragmented data and siloed operating models, it simply mirrors the fragmentation.

When it is embedded in a growth system designed around unified data, shared governance, and system-level measurement, it becomes the engine that turns transformation investment into compounding growth.



85%

- OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMERS VIEW AI AS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGY — BUT ONLY WHEN GROUNDED IN A DATA-READY GROWTH SYSTEM.

DATA — THE FUEL FOR THE GROWTH SYSTEM

The gap between AI ambition and commercial impact is often a data problem.

59% of leaders say their data practices are not mature enough to support advanced digital technologies, while 62% say data silos significantly hinder digital transformation progress.

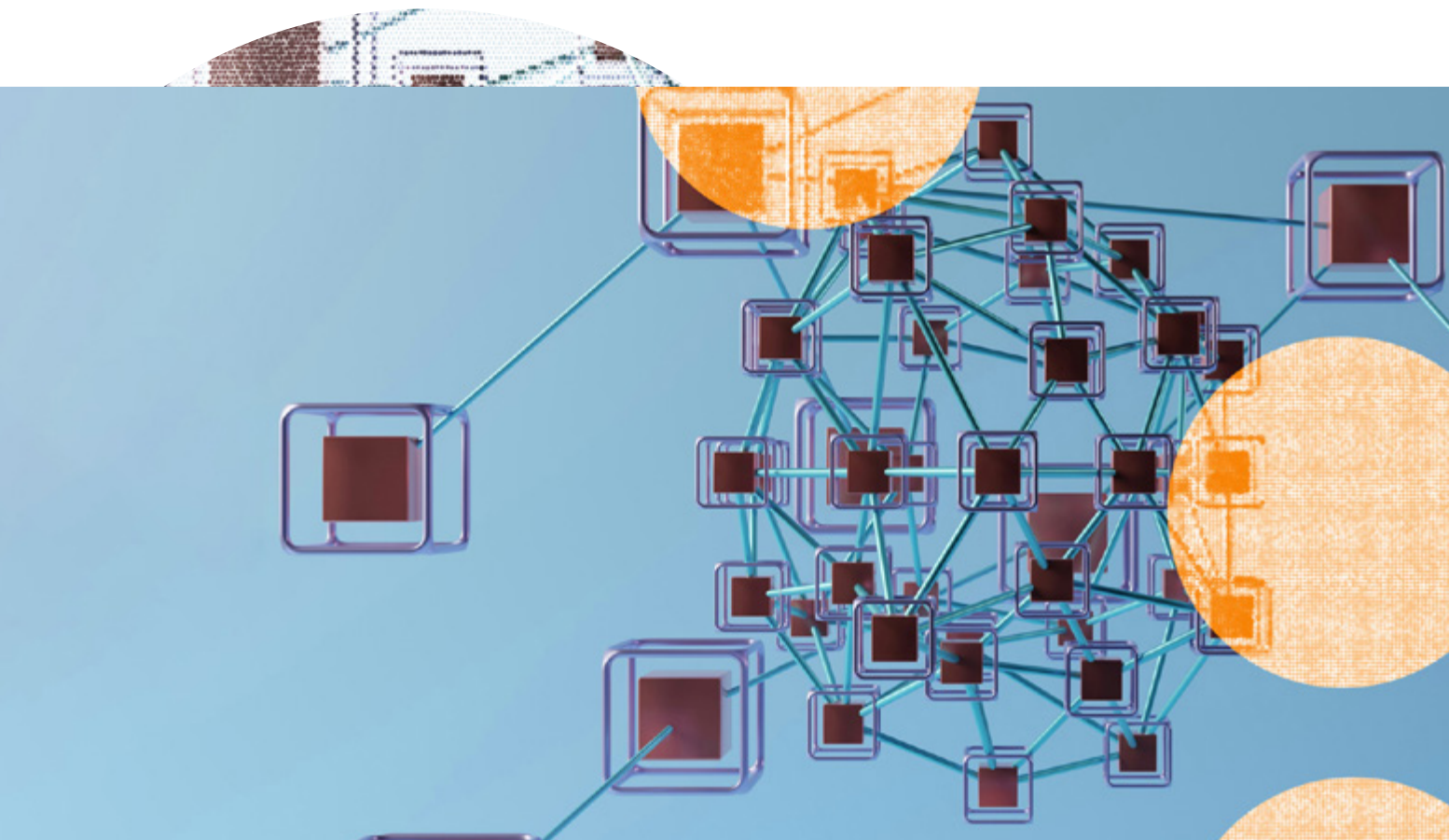
In this environment, recommendation engines trained on incomplete product data or predictive models fed inconsistent operational data erode trust in both AI and the wider transformation program.

By contrast, organizations that invest in unified, high-quality data foundations can introduce new AI capabilities faster, at lower risk, and with clearer attribution of impact — turning data into the fuel that powers a connected growth system rather than a series of disconnected pilots.

59%

- OF LEADERS SAY THEIR ORGANIZATIONS' DATA PRACTICES ARE NOT MATURE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT ADVANCED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES.





FROM REACTIVE REPORTING TO ANTICIPATORY GROWTH SYSTEMS

Strong data governance and integrated data architecture do more than support reporting — they enable anticipatory operations across the growth system.

When accurate, timely data flows consistently across strategy, experience, commerce, CRM, content, and platforms, AI can detect patterns and recommend interventions before customers or operators feel the friction.

In a connected growth system, this may mean proactively rerouting high-value customers to the most effective service channel, rebalancing media and commerce investment in response to real-time demand, or recalibrating content supply chains based on performance patterns.

The shift is from lagging, channel-specific metrics to a system-level view in which value is protected or created in the moments between functions.

THE HUMAN FACTOR IN GROWTH SYSTEMS

Technology alone does not create data readiness or growth system performance.

83% of leaders agree that digital change programs are as much about people as technology, yet 74% cite insufficient change management around people as a primary cause of project failure.

For WPP Enterprise Solutions, data readiness is not only a technical exercise but a cultural one.

Building a data-literate, AI-confident workforce means clarifying how data and AI reshape roles, decision rights, and accountability across the growth system — and equipping teams to use shared data assets and system-level metrics to guide everyday choices.

When people understand and trust the system, adoption accelerates and the organization moves from isolated experimentation to repeatable, scalable growth.

83%

- AGREE THAT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS AS MUCH ABOUT PEOPLE AS IT IS ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGY

74%

- CITE LACK OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT AROUND PEOPLE AS CAUSE OF FAILURE.

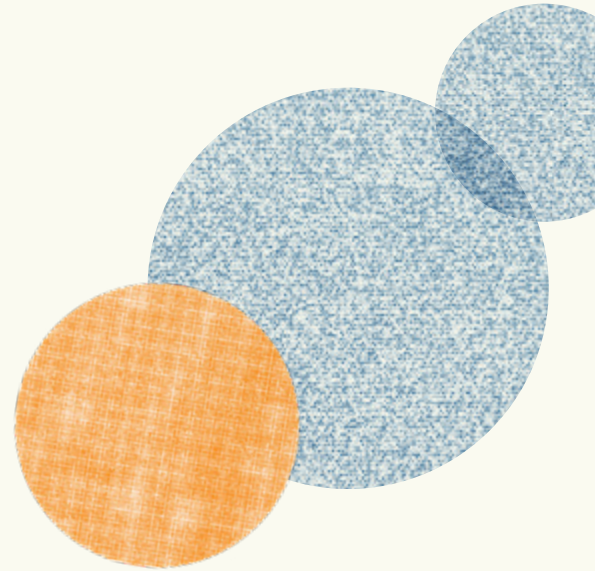




5 IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO MAKE THE GROWTH SYSTEM DATA-READY

- **1. Map the data-to-decision journey across the growth system**
Trace how customer, product, and operational data flows from capture to decision across strategy, experience, commerce, CRM, content, and platforms. This reveals where value leaks between functions and where AI can add the most system-level value first.
- **2. Establish a single source of truth for core entities**
Create golden records for customers, products, and transactions so every function and platform — from commerce to media to CRM — works from the same view of reality. This is the minimum requirement for AI models to operate consistently across the growth system.
- **3. Prioritize one to two high-impact system use cases**
Select business-critical opportunities — such as churn prediction, cross-journey personalization, or inventory optimization — and align data quality, governance, and measurement around them to prove value within 90–180 days.
- **4. Systematically break down data silos**
Use shared data layers, APIs, and governance frameworks to make data accessible across teams and platforms, addressing the 62% of leaders who say data silos significantly hinder digital transformation progress.
- **5. Run a data-ready pilot, then scale through the growth system**
Start where data foundations are strongest, demonstrate AI-driven impact, and then extend the same patterns — architecture, governance, and measurement — across the wider growth system.

FROM DATA READINESS TO GROWTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE



Data readiness is no longer a specialist concern; it is the structural precondition for any enterprise that wants AI to operate as part of a connected growth system rather than as a series of isolated pilots.

The findings across 4,000 business leaders and 2,500 employees show a consistent pattern: weak data foundations, siloed teams, and insufficient change management undermine transformation, regardless of technology choice.

WPP Enterprise Solutions was created to address this problem end to end by connecting customer experience, commerce, CRM and loyalty, content transformation, and technology and data platforms within a single operating model.

By combining these disciplines, it helps enterprises design and operate growth systems in which data is governed, accessible, and accountable to shared commercial outcomes.

Source for Statistics

This report draws on research from two surveys conducted by Censuswide on behalf of WPP Enterprise Solutions:

"Unlocking the Power of Digital Transformation" – 4,000 business leaders in the US, UK, China, Mexico, India, Germany, Netherlands and Brazil, covering senior positions in C-suite and management and functions including marketing, sales, operations and IT. The data was collected between 3 to 14 February, 2025.

"AI at Work" – 2,500 employees of enterprises with more than 10,000 employees across the US, UK, Germany, Netherlands and France. The data was collected between 7 to 15 November, 2024.

To schedule a Growth System Diagnostic and identify your highest-priority system-level interventions, contact the WPP Enterprise Solutions team.

Contact: contact@es.wpp.com

Visit: enterprisesolutions.wpp.com

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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