Burns Sheehan

Adopting AI:
From Curiosity to Commercial Impact

- Where should you start with AI adoption to unlock tangible value and build internal momentum?
- How do you balance quick wins with strategic investment in in-house capability?
- What does it take to foster a culture of experimentation and upskill teams to embrace AI?

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FRAME

WHERE TO START?

Planning costs & budgeting for AI projects isn't easy, with businesses struggling to predict usage and expenses.

Some things to consider:

- Keep your business mission central to any AI tool. It should align with helping your overall offering in some way.
- Security and privacy factors matter, especially if using company-sensitive information. Avoid skimping out on safer options – enterprise always.
- Shifting from experimentation to operational integration requires organisational change. Get to grips with what's expected to change, how and mostly who.

Are businesses spending too much time on AI instead of focusing on what they were created for.

Stay true to the core problem you're trying to solve – not just getting sucked into AI hype. Remember what your business is, lean into AI, don't force it.

WHAT IS THE MARKET SAYING?

A lot of leaders don't want to be first, but don't want to be last either. We're seeing a sweet spot of leaders keen to be in the first third of businesses to adopt AI.

Dangerous trends to watch out for:

- Generic questions yield generic answers. AI needs time and scope to learn properly.
- Are teams accepting AI answers without validation?
- Cost estimation nearly impossible:
- Token pricing constantly changing
- Multi-language processing significantly more expensive, are you overengineering what's needed.

Dedicate time and energy into making the most informed choice you can.

NAVIGATING KEY STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

We're seeing more and more investors pushing *"What are you doing about AI?"* questions, over whether or not you're just using it. Can you articulate your current AI position?
Think about what you're prioritising: walk before you can run, human-first, not immediate downsizing or full AI embedding; whatever it is, have you outlined this?

Key decision-makers vary by company:

- CFOs are just as receptive as CEOs for driving AI investment.
- It's good practice to have champions at multiple levels, not just leadership approval. More involvement means more adoption.
- AI doesn't need to be top-down.

HUMAN VS. AI

Keeping humans at the centre is important. Teams are already worried about job security.

- We're seeing a lot of success where AI is best used as a multiplier of human capabilities first, rather than replacement.
- In some instances, junior team members are often more willing to experiment with and adopt AI tools, lean into them to champion your AI efforts.
- Training programs can be really good ways to level the understanding in your business and keep channels clear. There's a LOT of buzz going around and if you're not setting standard practices for your team using AI they could be misinformed elsewhere.

THE FUTURE OF AI

AI is here to stay, but the playbook is still a WIP.
Stay curious but critical. Trial tools thoroughly, validate outputs, and always keep your team in the loop and give responsibility away. With AI making more decisions in your business, raimin in control, not the tools. Don't be afraid for outside help.