

The B2B AI Readiness Guide

A framework for understanding where your organisation stands, where it needs to go, and how to get there without wasting time or budget.

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What's inside

01	Why most AI adoption stalls	3
02	What your quiz score means	4
03	The five readiness dimensions	5
04	How to prioritise where to start	6
05	Ten questions to ask before adopting any AI tool	7
06	Tier-specific action plans	8
07	A note on governance	9
08	Working with Mo	10

This guide is built around the same five dimensions the quiz measures: strategy, skills, data and infrastructure, tooling, and governance. Each section gives you context you can act on, regardless of your current score.

Why most AI adoption stalls

The organisations that struggle most with AI often mistake access for strategy. They buy a subscription, assign it to whoever asked loudest, and call it adoption.

A tool gets trialled by one enthusiastic team member. Results look promising in isolation. Leadership hears about it third-hand and either mandates rollout or dismisses it as a toy. Either way, nothing changes at the level that would actually move the business forward.

What's missing is a clear answer to three questions: where in the business does AI create the most leverage right now? Who owns the decision and the outcome? And how will we know if it's working?

The organisations that make real progress pick one function, run a time-boxed experiment, measure it honestly, and build from there. That process is slower at the start and considerably faster at scale.

The rest of this guide helps structure your organisation's answers to those questions.

What your quiz score means

The quiz measures five dimensions of AI readiness: adoption stage, team capability, policy maturity, workflow integration, and change culture. Your score maps to one of three tiers, each with its own set of priorities.

AI-Curious

0–40%

You understand the opportunity but haven't committed to a path yet. The risk at this stage isn't moving too slowly, but moving without direction. One poorly chosen tool can generate enough internal scepticism to set adoption back by a year.

Focus: Choose one high-impact, low-risk use case. Prove value. Build from evidence.

AI-Active

41–70%

You're using AI in pockets, with uneven adoption. Some teams are well ahead; others haven't started. The challenge now is coordination: turning scattered usage into a coherent approach with shared standards and measurable outcomes.

Focus: Establish ownership, policy, and a shared evaluation framework.

AI-Scaling

71–100%

You've built real habits around AI use and are seeing consistent value. The next challenge is governance at scale—making sure the way your team uses AI stays intentional, auditable, and aligned with how your industry is changing.

Focus: Optimise for quality, not just speed. Invest in training. Tighten governance.

The five readiness dimensions

Readiness consists of five separate variables; most organisations are strong in one or two and weak in the others. Knowing which dimensions are holding you back is more useful than an overall score.

01 Strategy

Do you have a clear answer to why you're using AI, which functions it should touch first, and how you'll measure success?

02 Skills

Can your team evaluate AI tools critically, prompt effectively, and catch errors before they propagate? Skills aren't just about knowing which tools exist—they're about knowing when not to use them.

03 Data and infrastructure

Do you collect useful, organised data that AI tools can act on? Most AI underperforms because the data feeding it is messy, siloed, or simply not there.

04 Tooling

Are your current systems integrated well enough to support AI features without requiring expensive overhauls? The best AI investment is often a better-configured existing tool, not a new one.

05 Governance

Do you have policies—even informal ones—that define how AI should and shouldn't be used with customer data, internal communications, and external content?

How to prioritise where to start

The matrix below helps you rank potential use cases across two axes: business impact (how much value it generates if it works) and implementation ease (how quickly you can run a meaningful test). Start with high-impact, easy-to-implement use cases. Set aside low-impact, difficult-to-implement ones entirely.



When scoring use cases, involve more than one person. A solo assessment skews toward what's familiar. The goal is a shared view of where the biggest leverage is, not a consensus on what's comfortable.

Ten questions to ask before adopting any AI tool

Use this checklist before committing to any new AI tool. One unsatisfactory answer isn't a dealbreaker. Several unsatisfactory answers means you're not ready for that particular tool yet.

- 01 What specific problem does this tool solve?**
If you can't name it in one sentence, you're not ready to buy.
- 02 Which team member will own the outcome?**
A tool without an owner gets abandoned.
- 03 How will we measure whether it's working?**
Define success before you start, not after you've committed.
- 04 What data does it need, and is that data clean?**
Garbage in, garbage out.
- 05 What happens to our data once it enters this system?**
Check the terms of service.
- 06 Can we run a meaningful pilot in 30 days?**
If you can't test it quickly, it's too risky.
- 07 What's the exit plan if it doesn't work?**
Know the switching costs before you sign.
- 08 Does this integrate with what we already use?**
A disconnected tool creates more work.
- 09 Who else in our sector is using it, and what are they saying?**
Case studies from your industry carry more weight than general reviews.
- 10 What does our team need to learn to use this well?**
Budget for training time.

Tier-specific action plans

Jump to the section that matches your quiz result.

AI-Curious

Next 30 days

- Identify one workflow that's repetitive, time-consuming, and low-risk
- Pick one tool and run a two-week test with one person
- Document what worked, what didn't, and what you'd need to scale it
- Present findings to one other stakeholder before you scale anything

AI-Active

Next quarter

- Map which teams are using AI and what they're using it for
- Identify the two or three use cases generating the most value
- Write a one-page internal policy: what's allowed, what isn't, who decides
- Assign a named owner for AI decisions

AI-Scaling

Next six months

- Audit current AI tool spend against measured outcomes and cut what isn't working
- Run a skills gap assessment across teams most dependent on AI outputs
- Formalise your governance policy, circulate it, and schedule a quarterly review
- Identify the next tier of use cases—harder to implement, higher strategic value

A note on governance

Governance has a reputation problem. Most teams hear the word and picture compliance departments and approval chains.

At the scale most B2B organisations need it, governance is a one-page document that answers four questions: what AI tools are approved for use, what data can be fed into them, who has authority to add new tools to the approved list, and how outputs are reviewed before they reach clients or the public.

The organisations that skip this step tend to discover why it's necessary in the worst possible way—a confidential document fed into a public model, a client deliverable that was entirely AI-generated without disclosure, or a team member using a tool that violates a data processing agreement.

These are common, preventable outcomes with thirty minutes of upfront thinking.

A lightweight governance starter

- List the AI tools currently in use across your organisation
- Categorise data by sensitivity: public, internal, confidential
- Define which data categories can enter which tools
- Name one person who approves new tool additions
- Agree on a disclosure standard for AI-assisted client work
- Review the policy every six months

Working with Mo

I'm Mo Shehu—AI strategist, TEDx speaker, and founder of Column, a B2B research and technical content agency. My work supports organisations looking to make clear-headed decisions about AI: what to adopt, how to sequence it, and how to communicate those decisions to teams and stakeholders.

I've spent the last few years building AI-assisted workflows for B2B clients across SaaS, healthcare, fintech, and professional services. I've also published research on AI policy in Africa, agentic AI in journalism, and how B2B marketers are using AI in their organisations.

If your quiz result left you with more questions than answers, a 30-minute call is a useful next step.

Book a free 30-minute call

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