

# The ROI of AI:

Why projects stall and how to accelerate your journey.

Discover early signs of low AI maturity and the strategic moves you can make today to see measurable results.

# The ROI of AI

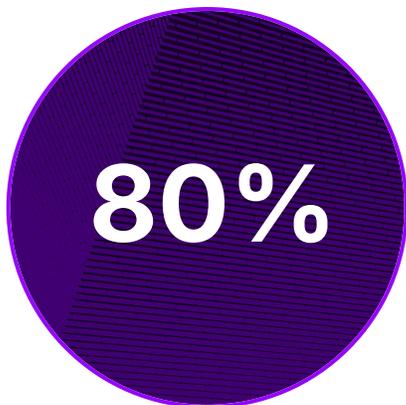
## Reduce Project Friction to Bolster Your Bottom Line

According to the World Economic forum, AI is "[the main technology impacting business transformation over the next five years.](#)" It's promise is extraordinary: new revenue models, accelerated operations, competitive advantage.

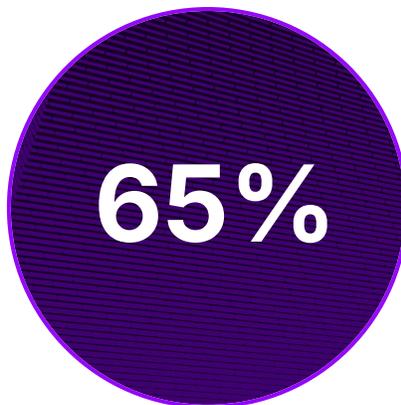
But despite the investment and enthusiasm, up to [80% of AI project fail to deliver measurable ROI.](#)

At first glance, these failures may look like isolated project issues. But in reality, these are **symptoms of deeper organizational maturity gaps**- issues that emerge long before any model is deployed.

This impact report reframes AI failure patterns not as tactical mistakes, but as evidence that an organization is operating without clarity, proof or confidence to scale.



of AI  
projects stall



have to abandon  
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AI has become  
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## 4 signs your AI initiative **has stalled.**

Early maturity stages are defined by **lack of clarity, fragmented ownership, and reactive execution**. The symptoms show up as project failures or stalls — but the root cause is structural, not tactical.

Below we breakdown four common indicators that your organization is operating in too early a stage of maturity.

### Poor data quality

At this stage you are not facing a “project problem”- but rather a structural pain, treating data as a project input instead of a strategic asset. Up to [85% of all AI projects fail](#) due to poor data quality or lack of relevant data, compromising AI's ability to learn and eroding both **leverage** and **value delivery** maturity.

In the rush to execute AI initiatives, organizations may overlook the fact that AI-specific projects have unique data requirements. Data that's considered complete, quality, and unbiased for other use cases isn't necessarily the case for AI applications.

AI isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor. For instance, the data set and mix required for an LLM differs from what's required for GenAI. Every use case is unique. And, unlike other data-reliant measures, the data for specific AI projects cannot always be sourced and ready ahead of time.

For organizations to maximize the ROI of AI initiatives, strong AI data governance must exist. In addition, a thoughtful data plan must be mapped out for each use case—one that:

- takes into account what type of information is needed to meet the definition of quality data at the onset
- is agile in its ability to change data if needed based on project evolutions that call for a data pivot
- ensures all project team members are fully trained around data hygiene and data literacy



## Lack of AI skills

A shortage of AI skills undermines both **leadership** and **velocity** maturity. In fact [35%](#) of data leaders cite shortage of skills and data literacy as a top obstacle to AI project success, and [65%](#) of organizations have had to abandon AI projects due to insufficient expertise. This affects your Leadership and Velocity maturity.

In early-stage maturity environments, AI capabilities sit in isolated pockets, teams are overloaded or undertrained and talent strategies depend on reactive “just-in-time” hiring. The market reflects this pressure: job postings mentioning GenAI have grown [170% year-over-year](#), and in just 16 months, AI acumen has gone from being the sixth most scarce tech skill to the [#1 scarcest skill](#).

Leadership in these stages often lacks clarity around ownership, and workflows assume employees will “figure it out” as they go. This creates inconsistency, burnout, and stalled initiatives. With experienced AI talent in highest demand and shortest supply, even well-planned AI investments struggle to deliver ROI without the right expertise to support and scale them.

Talent must be intentionally architected, supported by defined capability models, nearshore delivery partnerships, and hybrid skill systems that ensure the right expertise is consistently available when needed.

## Internal misalignment

Internal misalignment is a hallmark of early **work design** maturity. In early stage organizations, AI lacks a unified mandate: infrastructure readiness is unclear, success metrics vary across teams, and leadership expectations are misaligned. In these environments, AI is treated as a project rather than a vector of **transformation**, creating stalled initiatives long before the first model ships.

Misalignment often begins with infrastructure confusion. Legacy systems frequently cannot support modern AI workloads, and even upgraded environments may fall short on integration, data governance, or compute capacity. While infrastructure assessments are necessary, they only address part of the problem. The deeper issue is that leaders often do not share a common understanding of where AI can deliver meaningful business value or what “success” realistically looks like.

Infrastructure readiness must be paired with strategic clarity. Organizations define the business need, align on measurable outcomes, acknowledge AI's limitations, and accept that data, model performance, and training requirements will evolve. Without this shared mandate, scope drifts, expectations become unrealistic, and progress stalls. In higher maturity stages, AI is treated as a business transformation initiative, not a technical experiment—anchored by alignment, ownership, and strategic intent.

## AI burnout

AI burnout is an increasingly visible sign of low maturity in both the **Work Design** and **Velocity**. Research shows that frequent AI users report [higher burnout](#) than those who rarely engage with these tools, and [45% of employees believe AI will increase their workload](#)—not reduce it. This creates a paradox: the technology meant to streamline work and increase productivity can, in early-stage maturity environments, accelerate stress instead.

Much of this strain stems from capability gaps. When organizations cannot source or structure the AI talent they need, existing employees absorb the pressure—taking on experimentation, self-training, and troubleshooting without the support or clarity required. Some receive upskilling; many are left on their own to meet rising AI expectations. This directly undermines Work Design maturity, because AI is adding work rather than reshaping it.

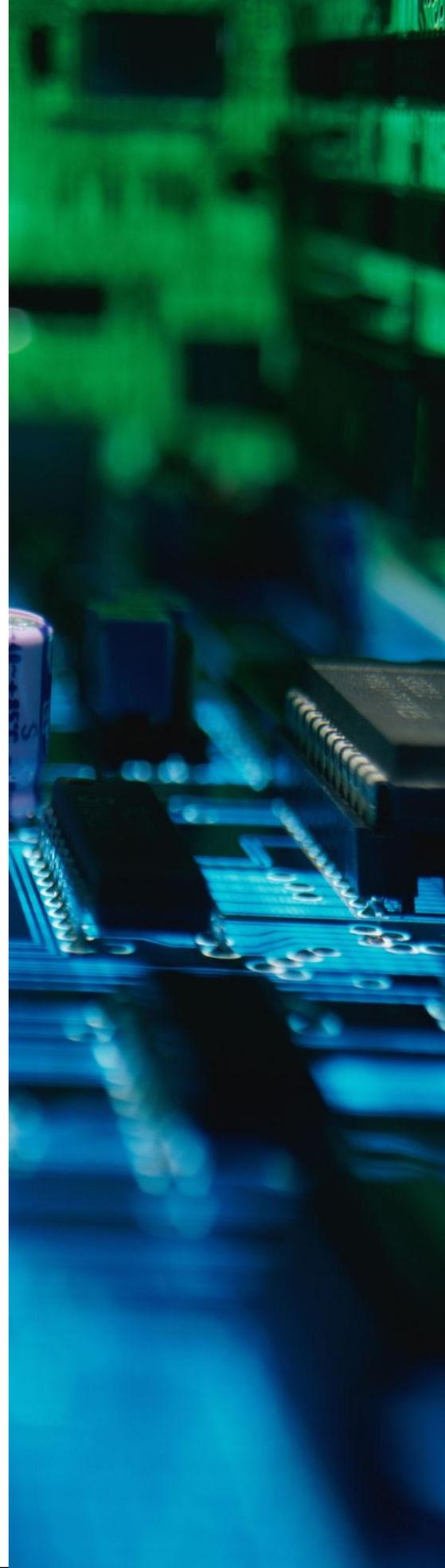
Emotional and psychological pressures compound the problem. Employees may fear that mastering AI too well could eventually make their jobs less secure, creating quiet anxiety about proving value in an AI-enabled workplace. Meanwhile, the relentless pace of AI innovation—new models, tools, and capabilities every week—makes continuous learning feel overwhelming. As these pressures accumulate, burnout slows delivery cycles, weakens leadership trust, and erodes the Velocity and Leadership dimensions, ultimately stalling adoption and diminishing the value AI could deliver.

Organizations must design the work so that **AI reduces cognitive load rather than increases it**. By establishing clear change-readiness strategies, transparent communication from leadership, and structured pathways for upskilling that eliminate the guesswork driving burnout. Workflows must be redesigned so that humans and AI collaborate at scale, with AI absorbing repetitive tasks and teams focusing on higher-value judgment. Leadership should champion continuous learning, set realistic expectations, and provide the psychological safety needed for employees to adopt new tools with confidence. As a result, **velocity increases, adoption improves**, and both employees and customers experience the benefits of a well-integrated AI operating model.

# Know your maturity before you stall

Recognizing what undermines AI projects is only the first step. Eliminating these roadblocks — capability gaps, misalignment, weak data foundations, and burnout — requires a clear understanding of where your organization stands today along the [AI maturity map](#). Without that direction, leaders risk overinvesting in the wrong places, underestimating systemic constraints, and repeating the same failure patterns under new initiatives.

- 1. Transform your recruiting approach.** If you're struggling to find AI talent, the issue may not be scarcity — it may be strategy. Nearshore delivery models dramatically expand access to top-tier AI engineers who can be deployed immediately and often at a more competitive cost than U.S.-based counterparts. This is especially critical as employers expect AI to be the [fastest-growing skill](#) from 2025-2030. In higher maturity stages, organizations architect talent intentionally, blending internal teams with nearshore specialists to accelerate delivery and eliminate capability bottlenecks. But to know which roles you need — and when — you must first understand your maturity.
- 2. Embrace change management.** AI succeeds when people understand it, trust it, and see how it elevates their work. That requires proactive change management — aligning leaders early, involving teams in decision-making, and providing clear training and rollout plans. Mature organizations design work so that humans and AI collaborate seamlessly, reducing cognitive load rather than increasing it. But the right approach depends entirely on your leadership and work-design maturity — whether your organization is still Tinkering or already Building. Without knowing your AI maturity, it's impossible to design a change plan that sticks.
- 3. Champion proactive data readiness.** Data quality remains one of the biggest barriers to AI success, with [43%](#) of leaders citing it as a top obstacle. Maturity isn't defined by more data, it's defined by **governed data**, reusable pipelines, proactive monitoring, and the ability to pivot when use cases evolve. Mature organizations treat data as a strategic asset, not a project input. They build foundations that enable AI systems to learn continuously, scale reliably, and deliver consistent value to customers and stakeholders. But the level of data governance you need — and how fast to build it — depends on your maturity.



# Accelerate your AI journey with clarity, certainty and confidence.

Start with understanding your maturity.

Complete our [10-minute map](#) to understand where your organization sits and uncover the structural blockers affecting your ROI.

You'll receive a personalized snapshot that outlines:

- Your current maturity stage
- The gaps slowing your AI initiatives
- The next strategic moves to increase ROI in the next 30 days

Why begin here?

Because solving the right problems in the wrong order is the #1 cause of AI failure. Your maturity determines the sequence, investment, and capabilities required for AI to create measurable value.

## About CodeRoad

CodeRoad helps organizations move from strategy to working AI systems — fast. Our Velocity-as-a-Service model blends elite nearshore engineering teams with proven AI delivery frameworks to help you build, deploy, and scale AI with confidence.

**Activate your AI advantage**

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