

# AI is hard, so how do you fast-track your AI initiatives?

HPE expert explains the three first decisions you will need to make.



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**T**ECHNOLOGY OFTEN SEEMS TO MOVE AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT. But some things never change.

A decade ago, any business user with a corporate credit card could spin up a server in the public cloud without ever notifying the IT department. Back then we called it shadow IT, and it was often the bane of technology leaders trying to maintain control over their companies' technology budgets. Over time, however, the cloud moved out of the shadows and became a vital component in the enterprise technology stack.

Compare that to today's enterprise, where many data scientists are running their own small-scale generative AI experiments with little-to-no oversight from the people tasked with managing their company's technology deployments. Welcome to shadow AI.

It's not terribly surprising that 9 out of 10 of these proof-of-concept (POC) pilots never make it into production.<sup>1</sup>

As HPE Executive Vice President Neil MacDonald noted at HPE Discover Las Vegas, there are multiple reasons for this, including prohibitive costs, enterprises lacking access to enough clean data to scale their experiments, and the failure of POCs to address real-world business needs or prove their value in a timely way.<sup>2</sup>

"Enterprise teams can struggle to enable AI and IT ops to drive those AI pilots to production and prove the business impact fast enough," he said. "Data silos can limit the amount of data that's available for AI work, which can lead to biased models or stifled innovation. Solution environments are typically too complicated today, placing the burden on these teams to operate and manage while also ensuring the security, governance, and regulatory compliance enterprises need."

Many of these pilots lack the standardized tools, processes, and thoughtful oversight that IT can bring. For GenAI to make a real difference in how enterprises operate

<sup>1</sup>"Reasons why Generative AI pilots fail to move into production," Peter Bendor-Samuel, Forbes, Jan 8, 2024

<sup>2</sup>"The next five years of AI and how to prepare," HPE Discover Las Vegas 2024, June 19, 2024

— and to boost the success rate of pilots significantly above 10 percent — enterprises will need experienced technologists to help these experiments emerge from the shadows and move into the mainstream.

But IT won't be able to do it on its own. All of the relevant stakeholders within an organization will need to work together to define what their GenAI future looks like and how they'll get there. Here are the three first decisions you need to make.

### **1. Decide whether you're an AI enabler or an AI disruptor**

In the future, every company that hopes to remain competitive will be an AI-savvy company. The question is, what kind? For most enterprises, it boils down to a choice between two options. You can be an AI-enabled enterprise or you can be an AI disruptor. Up until now, a disproportionate amount of public attention has been focused on the disruptors — the organizations that are spending billions to develop their own large language models (LLMs).

In reality, these organizations represent an infinitesimally small fraction of companies working with GenAI today. The vast majority of organizations do not have the resources or the expertise to be disruptive at an industry or market level. Most are simply looking to take existing LLMs and augment them with their own unique enterprise data. They're trying to tackle very basic use cases, such as how to get a chatbot to sound like it actually understands their company instead of being just some disembodied voice in the ether. A few more ambitious organizations will be looking to use GenAI to disrupt their internal operating models or re-engineer how they deliver goods and services. The more data-driven the organization, the greater the impact this technology will have on how it operates.

At this stage of the game, a lot of corporate interest in GenAI is driven by fear of missing out. Companies don't know exactly what advantages they will gain by deploying GenAI, but they're afraid their competitors will figure it out before they do. They may not be seeking to be disruptive, but they definitely don't want to be disrupted. Deciding what kind of AI company you want to be, and the kinds of benefits you hope to gain from this technology, is the first step toward moving from experimentation to execution.

### **2. Determine what problems AI can solve for you**

Next, you'll need to tackle the following questions: What are the most pressing problems your business is facing today? Where can GenAI have the greatest impact in solving them? Only after determining what use cases you want to address with AI should you move on to technical questions: Does your company have enough clean data for GenAI to produce actionable insights for the use cases you've identified? Do you have sufficient guardrails in place to protect against bias, misuse of intellectual property, or data leaks? And do you have the necessary technology assets in place to make your GenAI dreams a reality?

At HPE Discover, NVIDIA® CEO Jensen Huang called generative AI “the greatest fundamental transformation of computing platforms in 60 years.”<sup>3</sup> It's a transformation that will enable organizations to finally capitalize on the data they have been collecting for decades.

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“Enterprises are sitting on a mountain of data, but until now we really haven't had the ability to refine that data, discover insights, and codify it into a company's digital experience,” he said. “We have the ability to turn our corporate intelligence into digital intelligence. Once we connect our data to our AI flywheel, we'll be able to provide better services, be more productive, do things more efficiently at a larger scale, and create new products.”

### **3. Finally, start building your AI ecosystem**

For enterprises to be successful in their AI endeavors, Huang added, they'll need to choose the right AI models, feed them the right data, and deploy them on the right computing platforms. And they'll also need the domain expertise that comes from working with networks of experienced partners.

That brings us to the third big challenge: How do you pick the right partners to fast-track your GenAI initiatives? The easy answer is to look for those with an AI-first mentality. Does the provider offer AI-embedded outcomes in their offerings? Do these help your organization operate in a leaner and more cost-effective way?

Working with vendors that offer AI tools in a standardized and pre-integrated way will allow IT teams to bring GenAI workflows into production more quickly, without having to build everything themselves or figure out which tools work best together.

### Are you ready to take the next leap forward?

Shadow AI isn't necessarily a bad thing. As enterprises experiment with GenAI, they're gaining valuable experience about what works and what doesn't, as well as where they need better data or improved governance. They're figuring out which use cases can truly drive the company forward and how to minimize risk while maximizing value.

Organizations don't need to become the next large language model builder for GenAI to make a difference in their organizations. There are enormous productivity gains to be had right now through careful, well-planned deployments of existing LLMs.

As Neri said at HPE Discover, "When you can extract all the knowledge that lives in your data, we believe your enterprise can truly have no limits."<sup>3</sup>

### About the author

Craig Partridge is the worldwide senior director of the Digital Next Advisory at HPE. He has 30 years of experience in the industry, leading global programs of change. He pioneers innovative and thought-leading customer engagement, forging better stakeholder understanding of their digital transformation and AI-enabled journeys.

<sup>3</sup>"Keynote by Antonio Neri: Intelligence has no limits," HPE Discover Las Vegas 2024, June 19, 2024

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