



10 Questions Every Organization Should Answer Before Adopting AI

A practical executive readiness guide for responsible, governed, and business-aligned AI adoption

AI readiness is not a technology decision alone.

It is a business, governance, operating model, data, risk, and accountability decision.

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*Use this guide before approving an AI pilot, purchasing an AI-enabled platform,
automating a business process, or allowing AI to influence an important decision.*

How to Use This Guide

Bring together a small cross-functional group that represents business leadership, operations, technology, privacy, security, legal or compliance, and the people who will use or be affected by the capability. Discuss each question in plain language before selecting a vendor or approving implementation.

Step	Action	Purpose
1	Discuss	Use each question to expose assumptions, uncertainty, and missing ownership.
2	Record	Capture decisions, evidence, risks, dependencies, and unresolved questions.
3	Prioritize	Separate what must be resolved before a pilot from what may be refined during controlled testing.
4	Decide	Proceed, redesign, defer, or reject the use case based on business value and managed risk.

A readiness guide is not a compliance certification or a substitute for legal, privacy, security, human resources, or regulatory advice. The purpose is to support better executive questions and more disciplined decisions.

The 10 AI Readiness Questions

1

What business problem are we trying to solve?

Start with a measurable business need, not a tool. Define the process, decision, service, or customer outcome that should improve.

- What is not working well today?
- Who experiences the problem?
- What measurable outcome would indicate improvement?

2

Is AI actually the right approach?

Some needs are better addressed through process redesign, workflow automation, improved data, clearer accountability, or conventional software.

- Does the use case require language interpretation, prediction, classification, recommendation, or content generation?
- Could a simpler and more predictable solution deliver the outcome?
- What would AI add beyond standard automation?

3

Who owns the outcome and the risk?

Every AI use case needs a named business owner and clearly defined decision rights. Technology ownership alone is not enough.

- Who approves the use case?
- Who is accountable for business results?
- Who reviews AI content for quality, consistency, and accuracy?
- Who can pause or stop the capability if problems emerge?

4

What information will the AI use?

Identify the data, documents, prompts, records, and external sources the capability may access. Apply least-privilege access and minimize unnecessary exposure.

- Does the information include personal, confidential, privileged, regulated, or proprietary content?
- Is the information accurate, current, authorized, and appropriate for the use case?
- Is anyone validating the data before AI receives it to ensure it isn't skewed in responding?
- Who ensures the AI Agent receives all the necessary information to provide a valid response or report?
- Will organizational data be retained or used to train a third-party model?

5

What must remain a human decision?

Define where AI may assist, draft, summarize, classify, or recommend, and where a qualified person must review and approve.

- Could the output affect a client, employee, financial transaction, legal position, safety outcome, or regulatory obligation?
- What requires human verification before action?
- What must never be automated?

6

How will we validate quality and reliability?

Set acceptance criteria before launch. Test realistic scenarios, edge cases, incomplete information, and situations where the correct response is to stop or escalate.

- What does a correct, useful, and safe output look like?
- How will errors, hallucinations, bias, drift, and inconsistent results be detected?
- Who signs off on testing and ongoing performance?

7

What governance controls are required?

Governance should define policy, accountability, acceptable use, approval, monitoring, incident response, exceptions, and third-party oversight.

- Do we have an AI policy and an inventory of AI use cases?
- Are roles, review points, escalation paths, and documentation requirements clear?
- How will vendors and externally supplied models be assessed?

8

How will the capability fit our operating model and architecture?

An isolated tool may solve one problem while creating fragmented access, duplicated controls, vendor lock-in, and future integration costs.

- Which business capability and process will change?
- How will identity, permission, approval, data access, logging, retention, and integration work?
- Can components be replaced without redesigning the business workflow?

9

How will we monitor use, outcomes, and incidents?

AI risk management continues after deployment. Establish monitoring, audit evidence, feedback, issue handling, and periodic review.

- What activity and decisions will be logged?
- How will users report incorrect, harmful, or unexpected results?
- What triggers review, retraining, restriction, rollback, or retirement?

Are leaders, staff, and affected stakeholders prepared?

Adoption depends on shared understanding, role clarity, training, communication, and realistic expectations about what AI can and cannot do.

- Who needs training before access is granted?
- How will workflows, responsibilities, and performance expectations change?
- How will feedback from users and affected stakeholders shape improvement?
- Is there an audit trail to handle any regulatory, compliance or potential liability matters?

Readiness Snapshot

For each question, select the statement that best reflects the organization today. This is a discussion aid, not a maturity certification.

Score	Current state	Meaning
0	Not addressed	No clear answer, owner, evidence, or established practice.
1	Partially addressed	Some understanding or activity exists, but it is informal, inconsistent, or incomplete.
2	Clearly addressed	Ownership, decisions, controls, evidence, and review expectations are defined for the proposed use case.

No.	Question	Score	Evidence or action required
1	What business problem are we trying to solve?	0 1 2	
2	Is AI actually the right approach?	0 1 2	
3	Who owns the outcome and the risk?	0 1 2	
4	What information will the AI use?	0 1 2	
5	What must remain a human decision?	0 1 2	
6	How will we validate quality and reliability?	0 1 2	
7	What governance controls are required?	0 1 2	
8	How will the capability fit our operating model and architecture?	0 1 2	
9	How will we monitor use, outcomes, and incidents?	0 1 2	

No.	Question	Score	Evidence or action required
10	Are leaders, staff, and affected stakeholders prepared?	0 1 2	

Total score: _____ / 20

Interpretation: A lower total indicates more foundational work is needed before broader adoption. A higher total suggests stronger preparation, but each proposed AI use case still requires its own context, assessment, controls, testing, and approval.

Turn the Discussion Into an Action Plan

Do not treat the score as the final decision. Use the unanswered questions to build a short, accountable action plan.

Priority gap	Required decision or deliverable	Owner	Target date

A Strong Foundation Usually Includes

- A prioritized AI use-case inventory linked to business outcomes
- Named executive, business, technology, risk, privacy, security, and operational responsibilities
- Clear decision rights, approval points, human oversight, and escalation paths
- Approved information access, retention, logging, integration, and vendor requirements
- Defined testing, acceptance, monitoring, incident response, review, and retirement practices
- A reusable enterprise architecture and governance foundation that can support more than one isolated AI solution

Need help turning these questions into a practical roadmap?

MADSolutions provides fractional enterprise architecture leadership, AI readiness assessments, governance reviews, operating model design, and transformation roadmaps.

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Framework note: The guide is informed by the NIST AI Risk Management Framework functions Govern, Map, Measure, and Manage, and by ISO/IEC 42001 concepts for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving an AI management system. It is an original MADSolutions executive discussion guide and is not an official NIST or ISO checklist.

Sources: National Institute of Standards and Technology, AI Risk Management Framework Core and Playbook; International Organization for Standardization, ISO/IEC 42001:2023 and ISO/IEC 42001 explained.

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