

Beyond Traditional Partner Selection

Organizational Capabilities for Effective AI Decision-Making

Whitepaper Co-created by Anna Bisch & Edwin Knoop. June 2026.

Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally changing how organizations evaluate, select, and adopt technology. Traditional procurement methods—designed for stable enterprise software markets—are increasingly inadequate in a world where AI capabilities evolve monthly, business use cases shift rapidly, and vendor landscapes change continuously.

This whitepaper argues that AI success depends less on selecting the right technology but once and more on developing the organizational capability to make sound AI decisions *repeatedly*. Organizations that build this capability will be better positioned to create sustainable competitive advantage. Too many enterprises nowadays buy a race car ('AI'), but lack the AI capabilities (critical thinking, strategic acumen, competitive edge to extract real business value, human adoption, data governance) for successful adoption at scale. For successful AI adoption at scale, experiment, fail fast, learn quickly, and iterate continuously.



1. Introduction: Why AI Changes Technology Decision-Making

Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally reshaping how organizations evaluate, select, and adopt technology. What was once a relatively structured and predictable discipline, centred on clearly defined requirements, vendor comparisons, and formal procurement processes, is now becoming a continuous exercise in decision-making under uncertainty.

For decades, enterprise technology adoption followed a familiar pattern:

- Define requirements
- Issue an RFP
- Compare vendors
- Select solution
- Implement over multiple years

This worked because software markets evolved slowly.

AI introduces a different reality:

- Rapid innovation cycles
- Emerging vendors
- Open-source disruption
- Shifting regulation
- Unclear long-term value

Organizations are no longer selecting static software. They are making strategic decisions in a continuously moving market.

Figure 1: Traditional vs AI Decision Environment

Traditional Software Environment	AI Decision Environment
<i>Stable</i> market landscape	<i>Rapidly</i> developing market
Fixed requirements	<i>Evolving</i> requirements
Long technology lifecycle	<i>Continuous</i> Agile iterations
Vendor comparison	<i>Evaluation of Ecosystem</i> and Interoperability
One-time selection	<i>Ongoing</i> reassessment

Executive insight: Traditional procurement optimizes for certainty, while AI decision-making requires adaptability.

2. Why Traditional RFP Processes No Longer Work

Traditional procurement assumes:

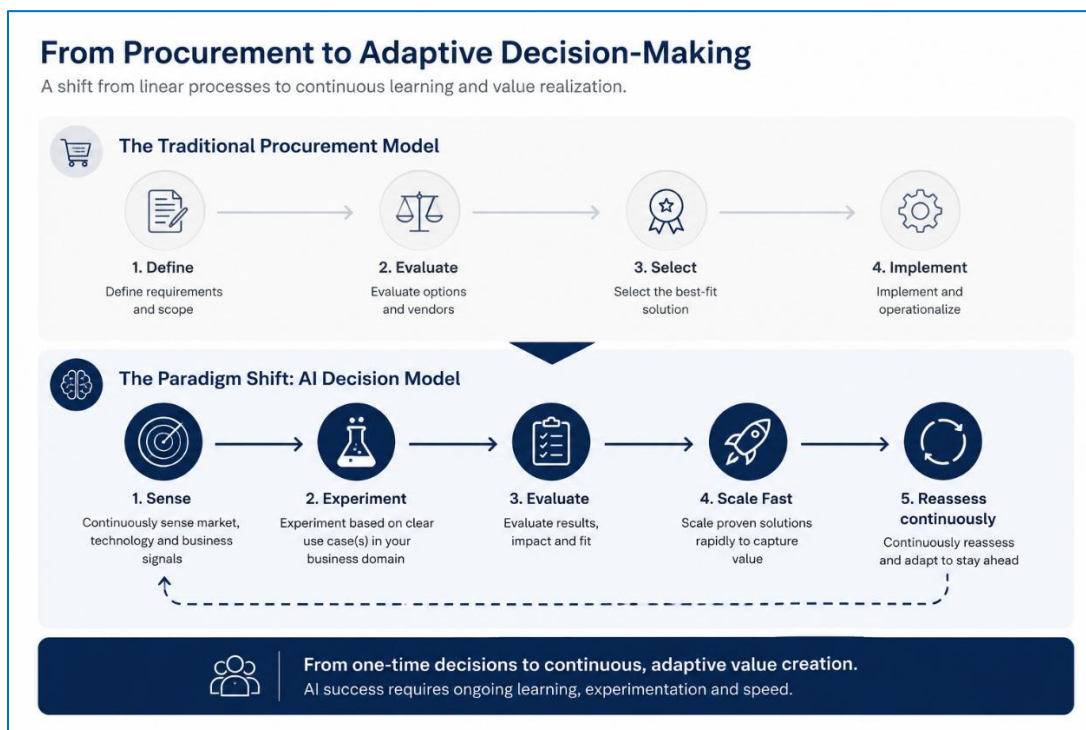
- Requirements can be fully defined upfront
- Vendor offerings remain stable
- Business value can be estimated in advance
- Implementation follows a predictable roadmap

AI violates these assumptions. In AI:

- Requirements often emerge & evolve during experimentation. Stay focused on your Business Vision, your use case(s) and ROI
- Vendors release new capabilities continuously
- Business value is discovered iteratively
- Governance evolves alongside deployment

The result is that conventional procurement frameworks often create false certainty. Organizations are not merely selecting a vendor. They are selecting a future operating model and an ecosystem.

Figure 2: From Procurement to Adaptive Decision-Making



Executive insight: AI shifts technology selection from a linear process to an iterative one.

3. The Six Core Organizational Capabilities

3.1 Strategic AI Literacy

Executives need enough AI understanding to:

- Separate hype from opportunity
- Understand limitations of existing AI products and Models
- Recognize strategic implications
- Ask relevant questions to really discover the value AI can bring to their businesses

All the above to be able to define the vision on where AI can bring the greatest value to their business. Without AI literacy, organizations risk poor decisions driven by vendor narratives.

3.2 Use Case Prioritization

Successful organizations can identify:

- Strategic opportunities
- High-value use cases specific to their business
- Problems that can be solved
- What pilots must be scaled and how

Key capabilities:

- Value assessment
- Process analysis
- ROI modelling
- Prioritization discipline

3.3 Experimentation Capability

AI cannot be evaluated only on paper and tender processes like in the recent past.

Organizations need:

- Rapid PoC (Proof of Concept) and Pilots to come to Minimal Viable Products (MVP)

- Fast learning loops, including learnings from others (internal and external)
- Experimentation platform, controlled, secured and automated
- ROI monitoring: measurable KPIs to deliver value to business
- Safe failure mechanisms
- Trained people in business, data and IT, open to deliver through experimentation.

The strategic paradigm shift is from *‘Procurement-led decisions’* to *‘Experiment-led decisions embedded in an AI Governance Framework’*

3.4 Data Readiness

Many AI initiatives fail due to low-quality data, unavailable in volumes and in real time. Organizations need to build their data foundation upfront, including:

- Data governance: definitions, business ownership, rules etc.
- Data Engineering & Management Tools. The best practice is the data platform where the workflows of high-volume real-time data are automated, including governance, security and compliance.
- Data Owners and Data Stewards trained across the organization.
- Readiness to integrate data from many data sources from the business ecosystem.

Without data foundation, even the strong AI solutions can’t deliver the required results.

3.5 AI Governance and Risk Management

AI introduces many new risks, the key ones being:

- Data-induced bias
- Vulnerabilities leading to data leaks
- Privacy violations
- Non-transparency of how models operate
- IP exposure
- Dependencies on vendors
- Unaffordable total cost of ownership (TCO) as the vendors’ pricing models evolve.

Organizations need governance that balances:

- Innovation
- Risk Management & Compliance
- Accountability.

3.6 Dynamic Vendor Evaluation

AI vendor selection must evaluate many additional elements:

- Product maturity
- Vendor's ability to innovate at (high) speed to address your use cases
- Model transparency and explainability
- Compliance to regulations
- Ecosystem fit – organizations often discover that to benefit from AI they need to modernize their IT landscapes
- Interoperability / Portability

Conclusion: Traditional scorecards are no longer sufficient to track the business value.

4. The Framework for Decisions on AI

Figure 3: A practical framework for AI decisions

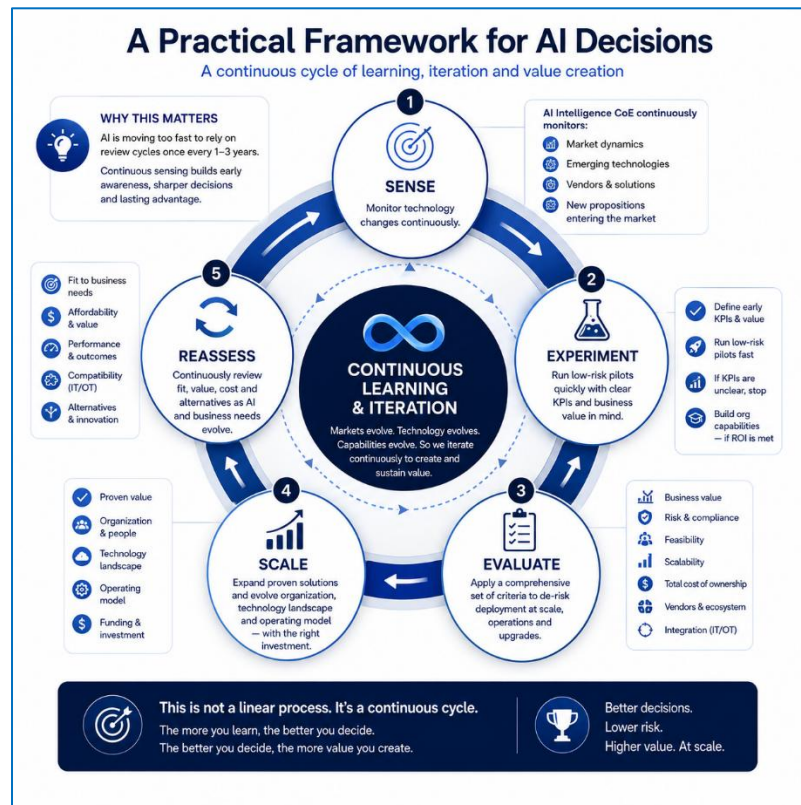


Figure 4: AI Decision Cycle

Step	Purpose	Leadership Question
Sense	Monitor technological shifts	What has changed in the market?
Experiment	Test controlled use cases	What can we learn quickly? Does it add value to the business (e.g. ROI, Customer Satisfaction, People Happiness)
Evaluate	Assess value and risk	Is this strategically relevant?
Scale	Expand proven initiatives	Can this create enterprise value?
Reassess	Continuously refine	Should we continue, adapt, or stop?

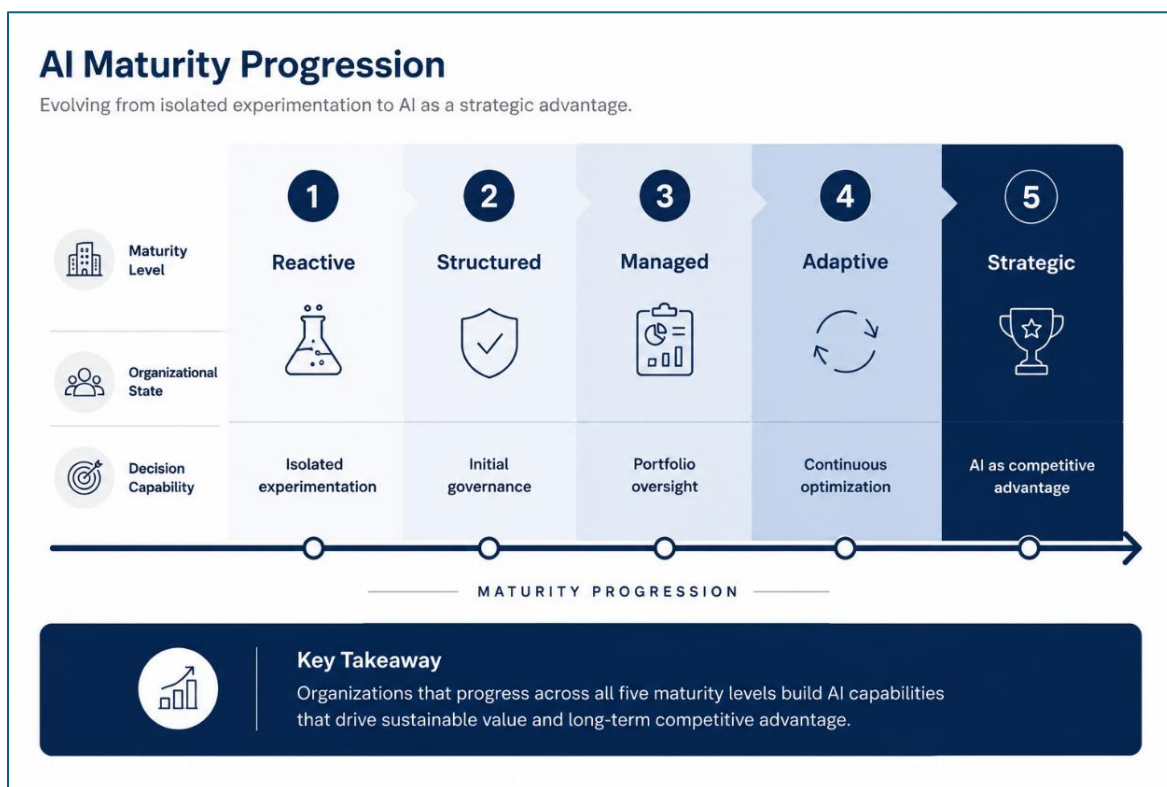
Executive insight: The strongest organizations institutionalize learning and critical thinking as part of their governance.

5. AI Decision-Making Maturity Model

Organizations can assess maturity across five levels.

Level	Description	Characteristics
1	Reactive	Ad hoc experimentation
2	Structured	Initial governance
3	Managed	Portfolio oversight
4	Adaptive	Continuous reassessment
5	Strategic	AI as enterprise capability

Figure 5: AI Maturity Progression



Executive insight: Maturity is defined by decision quality and critical thinking, not only just by the number of AI tools deployed and experimental PoCs/MVPs.

6. Executive Leadership Implications

Leadership must shift from asking “***Which AI vendor should we choose in our ecosystem?***” towards “***Do we have the capability to make good AI decisions repeatedly?***”

Executives must:

- Build organizational learning
- Encourage experimentation
- Encourage continuous learning
- Strengthen the governance
- Align AI with strategy
- Reduce the risk of dependency

7. Implementation

Phase 1: Assess

Evaluate current capabilities.

Phase 2: Build

Strengthen weak capability areas.

Phase 3: Pilot / MVPs

Create controlled AI pilots/ MVPs.

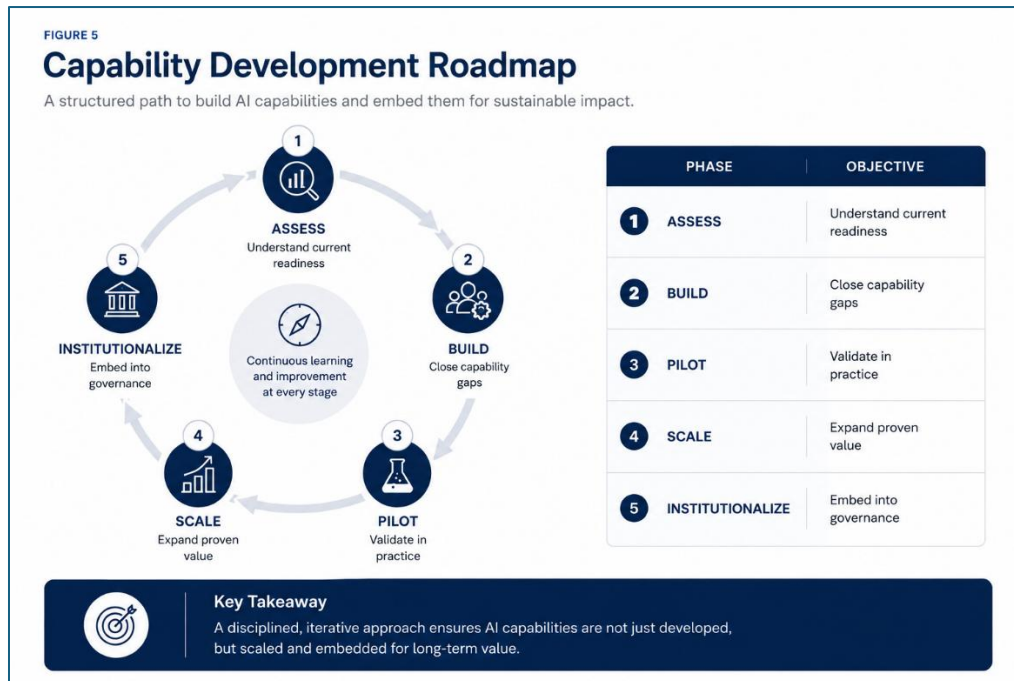
Phase 4: Scale fast

Expand successful initiatives.

Phase 5: Institutionalize

Embed AI decision-making into governance.

Figure 6: Capability Development Roadmap



Executive insight: AI capability should become a repeatable enterprise discipline, not a series of isolated initiatives.

8. Common Pitfalls

Organizations often fail because they:

- Treat AI as a software / SaaS procurement play
- Underestimate the data issues and required data foundation
- Ignore governance & security
- Move too slowly
- Scale too early
- Over-rely on vendors
- Underestimate the investment needed over time.

Avoiding these pitfalls is essential.

9. Strategic Recommendations

Organizations should:

1. Build executive AI literacy
2. Align AI with business priorities
3. Create cross-functional governance
4. Adopt experimentation frameworks
5. Modernize vendor evaluation
6. Be able to readjust the delivery of AI based on continuous learning & monitoring.

10. Conclusion

AI is not simply selecting “another software” technology. It’s transformative and a fundamental shift, operating under a new paradigm.

It requires organizations to rethink:

- Leadership
- Strategy
- Governance
- Procurement
- Operating models
- Organizational capabilities
- Future Knowledge & Skills (e.g. human in the loop)

The organizations that succeed will not necessarily be those that adopt AI first. They will be those that build the sustainable capabilities to make better AI decisions faster than competitors.

In the AI era, competitive advantage will belong not to organizations that buy the best AI, but to those that build the organizational capability to choose wisely in a market that never stands still.

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming foundational business infrastructure. Yet the real competitive advantage will not come from access to AI alone, but from the ability to select the right partners & platforms, align them with your business strategy, fast scale business value, integrate and adopt them effectively, and operationalize them responsibly across the enterprise-wide organization.

Organizations that move early, with the right balance of innovation, governance, and execution, will be best positioned to create sustainable competitive advantage in the years ahead.

If your organization would like to discuss which AI vision, strategy, and required organizational capabilities, feel free to get in touch directly (DM). We help organizations take concrete steps quickly, make the right strategic decisions, and successfully realize the business value with AI. Both Anna and Edwin can be contacted for AI-related questions and services. As they operate as an “extended enterprise” of consultants and technical partners and experts, they can deliver services fitting with your organizational needs, enable adoption and scale.

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Strategic Global IT Leader with 20+ years of driving the (digital) transformations across complex international environments. Trusted Executive Advisor to start-ups and scale ups driving growth. Chair of Advisory Boards. Proven strengths of understanding complexity of business challenges and translating the business needs into vision, governance, feasible strategies, roadmaps, investment plans and business proposals.

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