

Masterclass Series

Leading AI Transformation:

What Works and What Doesn't

Acknowledgment of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Melbourne Business School acknowledges that we are on the lands of the Wurundjeri people who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community, and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Kayannie Denigan

An early career Australian Aboriginal artist. She is Luritja by birth - connected to Ilitjari and Unturu in Central Australia through her grandmother and great-grandmother respectively.

Melbourne Business School

WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE NOT BORN!

Melbourne Business School is where the world's brightest minds come to develop the skills and attitudes, they need to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Our Purpose:

We unleash ideas and leaders for a sustainable future.





Professor Jon Whittle

Distinguished Fellow at Institute for Digital Innovation and AI (IDIA)

Program Director, Leading Strategically with AI

State of AI in 2026



2025

AI experimentation
Enterprise licenses



2026

Enterprise-wide scale, real ROI
Agentic AI

What I'll cover today

1

AI adoption anti-patterns

5 ways to get AI adoption 'wrong'

2

14 dimensions for AI adoption success

Ingredients for success: leadership & vision, people & culture, governance & trust

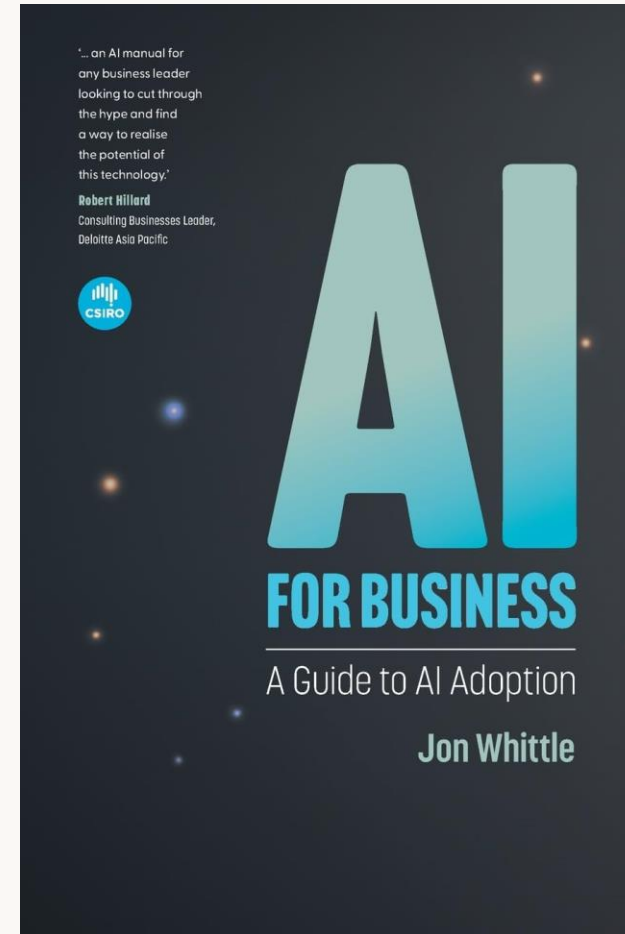
3

Melbourne Business School AI Leadership Academy

New course: Leading Strategically with AI

The Evidence base for what works

- Global research on AI adoption
- Worked with 100s of ANZ & global organisations
- At board and C-suite levels
- 30 years at the forefront of AI development and adoption (e.g., at NASA, CSIRO's Data61)



75%

watchers

20%

adaptors

5%

disruptors

01

AI Adoption Anti-Patterns

5 ways to get AI adoption 'wrong'

The Goldilocks Zone: not too fast, not too slow

MOVING TOO FAST

- 1 The Efficiency Trap**
Optimizing what's easy to automate, not what actually matters.
- 2 Use Case Chaos**
Hundreds of use cases, no sense of direction
- 3 The Ambition Gap**
Not taking the time to agree and clearly articulate AI Ambition

MOVING TOO SLOW

- 4 Governance Paralysis**
AI Governance doesn't need new governance frameworks
- 5 Who's in Charge?**
Avoiding accountability, or defaulting to the wrong leader

02

14 dimensions for AI adoption success

Ingredients for success: leadership & vision, people & culture, governance & trust

Barriers to adoption are human, not technical



LEADERSHIP & VISION

Strategic AI Ambition
Every leader is an AI leader



PEOPLE & CULTURE

Change management
Mindset shift



GOVERNANCE & TRUST

Security & data
Risk appetite

The 14 dimensions of AI adoption

● Leadership & Vision ● People & Culture ● Governance & Trust

D1	Investment & Hidden Costs <i>Full cost of AI — integration, monitoring, rework, and failed experiments, not just licences.</i>	D6	Productivity to Headcount Decisions <i>Whether there is a clear, communicated position on what AI productivity gains mean for headcount.</i>
D2	Time-to-Value & Methodology <i>Whether AI projects use structured, iterative delivery and fix processes before adding AI.</i>	D13	Tribal Knowledge Capture <i>How actively expert knowledge is being made explicit and captured before it becomes unavailable.</i>
D4	Executive Sponsorship <i>Quality and resilience of leadership backing — will sponsorship hold through the first failure?</i>	D8	Agentic AI Readiness <i>Readiness for AI agents that act autonomously — infrastructure, data access, and oversight.</i>
D7	Beyond Cost: Revenue & New Capability <i>Whether measurement goes beyond cost savings to include new revenue and capabilities.</i>	D9	Data Foundations <i>How accessible and usable organisational data is for AI — focused on connectivity, not just cleanliness.</i>
D12	Scaling from Pilots to Enterprise <i>Whether pilots are explicitly designed to scale to enterprise practice — not just to prove a point.</i>	D10	Security as Infrastructure <i>How embedded security is in AI deployment — treated as infrastructure, not a late compliance step.</i>
D3	Human-in-the-Loop Design <i>How deliberately human oversight is designed into each deployment — from automation to high-stakes approval.</i>	D11	Model Strategy & Orchestration <i>Whether tasks are routed to the most suitable AI model rather than relying on a single provider.</i>
D5	Resistance & Change Management <i>How well different sources of resistance (users, managers, Legal, HR) are identified and addressed.</i>	D14	Agentic Governance <i>Governance for AI agents: who is accountable, what requires approval, how agents are monitored.</i>

The 14 dimensions of AI adoption

● Leadership & Vision

D1	Investment & Hidden Costs <i>Full cost of AI — integration, monitoring, rework, and failed experiments, not just licences.</i>
D2	Time-to-Value & Methodology <i>Whether AI projects use structured, iterative delivery and fix processes before adding AI.</i>
D4	Executive Sponsorship <i>Quality and resilience of leadership backing — will sponsorship hold through the first failure?</i>
D7	Beyond Cost: Revenue & New Capability <i>Whether measurement goes beyond cost savings to include new revenue and capabilities.</i>
D12	Scaling from Pilots to Enterprise <i>Whether pilots are explicitly designed to scale to enterprise practice — not just to prove a point.</i>



LEADERSHIP & VISION

77%

of the hardest AI challenges are invisible costs — not the model

61%

of successful AI projects had failed once before they worked

100%

of successful deployments were iterative — none used waterfall

“The highest returns came from companies that pointed AI at revenue.”

The 14 dimensions of AI adoption

● People & Culture

D3

Human-in-the-Loop Design

How deliberately human oversight is designed into each deployment — from automation to high-stakes approval.

D5

Resistance & Change Management

How well different sources of resistance (users, managers, Legal, HR) are identified and addressed.

D6

Productivity to Headcount Decisions

Whether there is a clear, communicated position on what AI productivity gains mean for headcount.

D13

Tribal Knowledge Capture

How actively expert knowledge is being made explicit and captured before it becomes unavailable.



PEOPLE & CULTURE

71%

productivity gain from
escalation-model AI vs.
30% for approval-only

35%

of resistance came from
Legal, HR, Risk &
Compliance — not end-
users (23%)

Naming exactly
where freed-up
capacity goes turns
resistance into
advocacy.

The 14 dimensions of AI adoption

D8 Agentic AI Readiness

Readiness for AI agents that act autonomously — infrastructure, data access, and oversight.

D9 Data Foundations

How accessible and usable organisational data is for AI — focused on connectivity, not just cleanliness.

D10 Security as Infrastructure

How embedded security is in AI deployment — treated as infrastructure, not a late compliance step.

D11 Model Strategy & Orchestration

Whether tasks are routed to the most suitable AI model rather than relying on a single provider.

D14 Agentic Governance

Governance for AI agents: who is accountable, what requires approval, how agents are monitored.



GOVERNANCE & TRUST

71%

productivity gain from agentic AI
— highest of any type

4

conditions for agentic fit: volume,
success criteria, recoverable
errors, data access

6%

of AI implementations had fully
ready data before they started

59%

succeeded with scattered, not centralised, data

10x

possible cost difference from routing tasks to the
right model

AI Diagnostic: How to measure your approach

■ Org-wide maturity assessment

Split by 14 dimensions. Identify areas of strength and weakness

■ Alignment

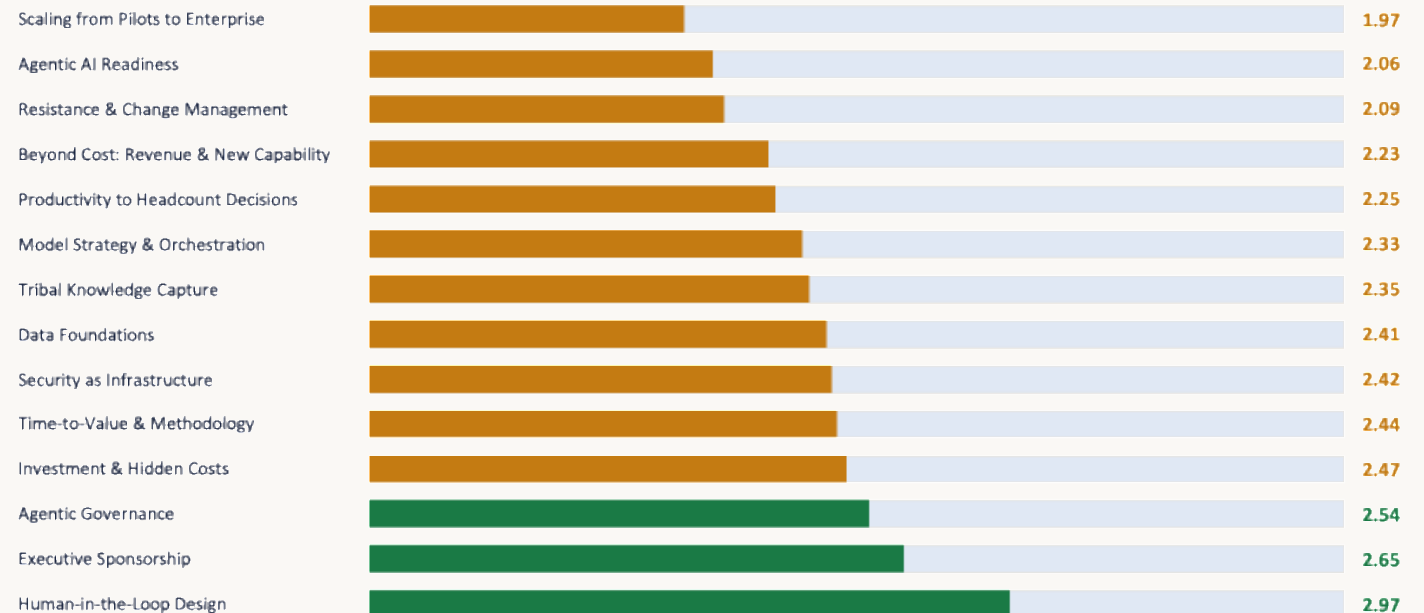
Identify areas of lack of alignment

■ Assessment by functional area

Compare maturity by function/BU

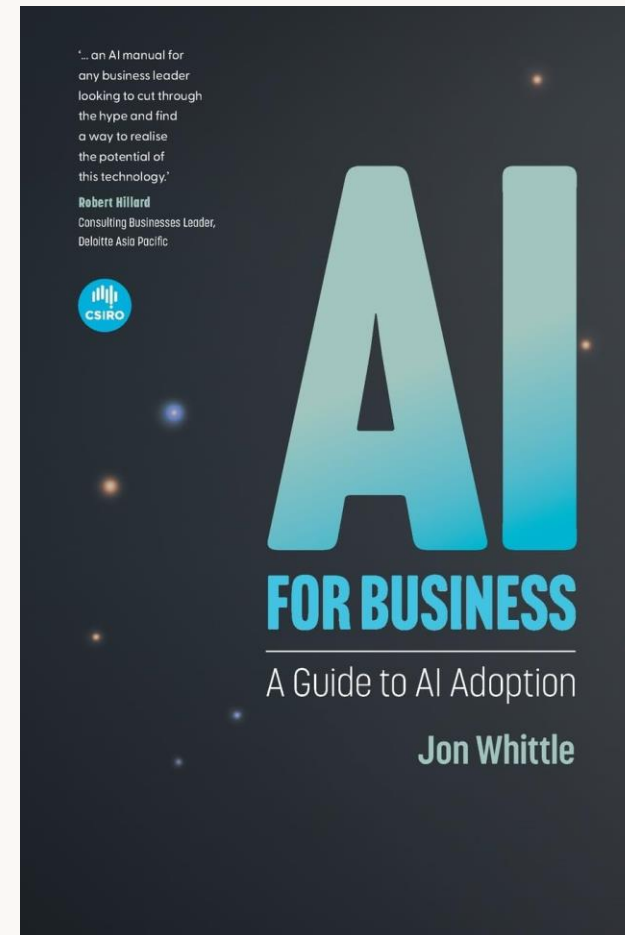
■ Action plan

Based on the results, develop a tailored action plan



For more content like this...

- Follow me on LinkedIn
- Subscribe to my Substack blog:
<https://jonwhittle.substack.com/>



Questions?

03

AI Leadership Academy

The Institute for Digital Innovation and AI (IDIA) at Melbourne Business School helps organisations understand and realise the opportunities of AI and digital technologies. We combine academic insight with industry experience to deliver practical skills that turn AI potential into business impact.

IDIA partners access resources, events, and insights to identify opportunities, upskill teams, and implement responsible, scalable transformation.



EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

Build AI Literacy and Leadership through immersive, applied learning techniques



APPLIED RESEARCH AND FRAMEWORKS

Offer evidence-based insights and practical frameworks that support responsible AI adoption



INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Co-design solutions with partners to tackle real-world digital challenges



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Convene leaders, academics, and practitioners to share insights shaping the future of AI



IDIA Whitepaper, June 2026

Get in touch to learn more about partnerships or executive education programs...



mbs.edu/idia



idia@mbs.edu



Institute for Digital Innovation and AI

Leading Strategically with AI

Lead your organisation's AI future with clarity, confidence and strategic conviction.



Enrol Now.



Carlton or Online



3 days or 5 weeks



27-29 October or 12 October-15 November 2026

