BARYONS

AI TRANSFORMATION

AN EXECUTIVE BRIEF FOR LEADERS TURNING AI ROLLOUT INTO RESULTS

From AI adoption to operating value

The human readiness gap: why AI usage and operating maturity are different questions, and what leaders can check in one workflow.

Workflows | Decision rights | Manager routines

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Usage is visible. Operating change is not.

Most AI programs can report licenses, usage and deployment milestones. The harder question is whether the work itself has changed: who decides, which handoffs moved, and where the time AI creates is going. Operating value depends on those answers, and most of them sit with people rather than the technology.

1%

OF C-SUITE RESPONDENTS DESCRIBED THEIR GEN AI ROLLOUTS AS MATURE (LATE 2024)[1]

69%

OF HR LEADERS SAY LEADERS AND MANAGERS ARE NOT EQUIPPED TO LEAD CHANGE (2024)[2]

McKinsey found only 1% of C-suite respondents described their gen AI rollouts as mature, meaning fully integrated into workflows and driving substantial business outcomes.[1] The survey covered C-suite and employee respondents, mostly in the U.S., in late 2024. It does not say why rollouts stall or describe any one company. It does suggest that deployment and maturity sit far apart for most organizations.

Technology plans usually specify tools, access and training. Fewer specify how workflows, decision rights, manager routines and employee behavior should change around the tool. Those changes happen anyway, one team at a time, and they rarely match. When they differ, the same tool produces different results in different teams while the usage figures look identical.

WHAT THIS BRIEF COVERS

1. **Why adoption and operating change diverge.** The mechanism, and why it appears.
2. **A hypothetical example.** One AI-enabled workflow, two teams, two outcomes.
3. **Five checks for your next AI review.** Usable this week, with no new tooling.
4. **Where Baryons fits.** What it adds to a rollout, and the limits of what it does.

A QUESTION TO TAKE INTO THE NEXT TRANSFORMATION REVIEW

For one AI-enabled workflow, could two connected teams say who now owns the decision?

Why adoption runs ahead of operating change

A tool can be fully deployed while the decisions around it still run the old way.

An AI rollout changes what a person can do. Operating value depends on what the organization then does differently: which decisions move, which handoffs shorten and where the freed time goes. Those choices are rarely in the rollout plan, so each team makes them locally.

WHERE THE READINESS GAP SITS

- **Decision ownership blurs.** When AI drafts a recommendation, it is often unclear whether the reviewer, their manager or the tool's owner answers for the call.
- **Old approvals stay in place.** Sign-offs designed for slower work remain, so a faster step waits in the same queue as before.
- **Freed capacity has no destination.** Time saved in one step is absorbed by whatever is closest, rather than by the work leaders intended.
- **Managers carry the translation.** Managers decide what changes in practice for their team, usually without a shared rule for what should change.

WHY IT HAPPENS IN WELL-RUN COMPANIES

Strong teams adopt new tools quickly and adapt them to their own work. That initiative is valuable. It also means two teams can use the same tool and settle on different decision rules, without either one noticing.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

A meta-analysis of team cognition found that shared understanding of the work explains differences in team performance beyond motivation and behavior.[3]

Gartner found 69% of HR leaders say leaders and managers are not equipped to lead change.[2] That figure covers change in general. In an AI rollout it describes the people who decide how a workflow changes in practice and who answer their teams' questions about what the tool means for their role. Their clarity is part of the rollout whether or not the plan names it. When managers are unsure, they tend to keep the old approvals, because nobody has said those can go.

Usage can rise while the decisions around the tool stay exactly where they were.

03 · HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE

One tool, two operating outcomes

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE. NOT A BARYONS CUSTOMER.

Workflow: AI-drafted claim summaries in an operations team

A 1,200-person insurer rolls out a tool that drafts claim summaries. Within a month both claims teams use it daily, and the rollout report shows strong adoption.

Team one treats the draft as a starting point and drops a review step its manager no longer needs. Team two keeps every sign-off, so adjusters edit drafts and still wait two days for approval. Nobody decided which approach was intended.

After a quarter, cycle time has moved in one team and not the other. The tool is the same. The decision rules around it are different.

What the example shows. Adoption was real in both teams. The operating change depended on who owned the review decision, which the rollout plan left open.

04 · EXECUTIVE CHECKS

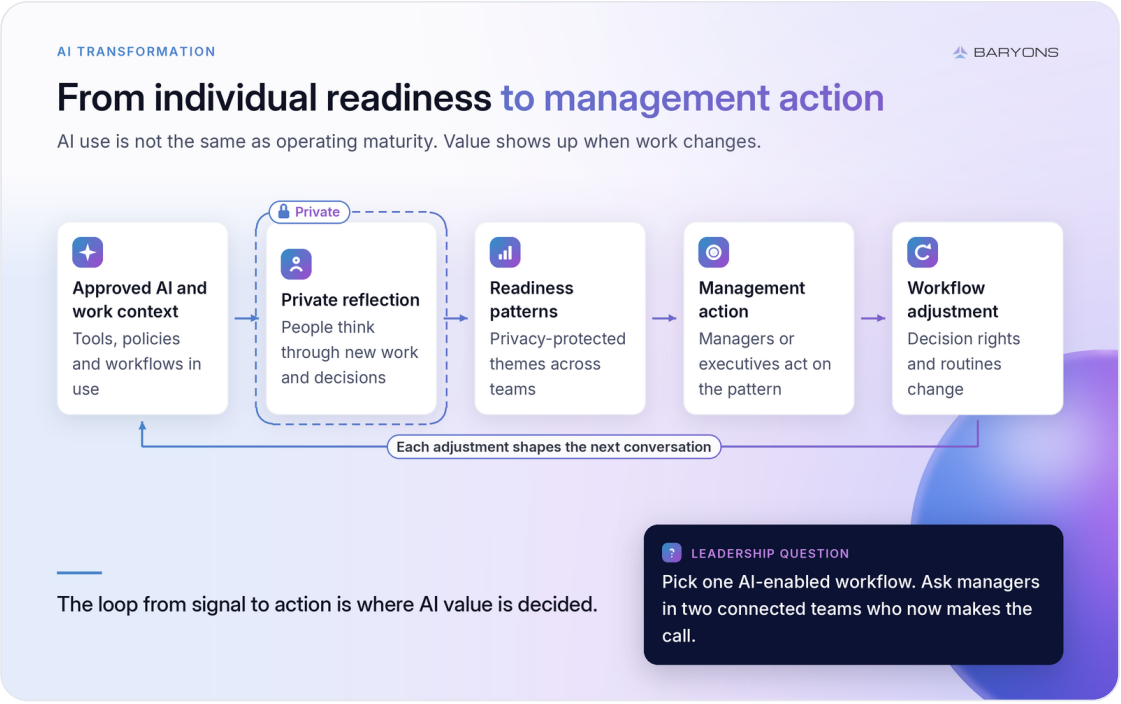
Five checks for your next AI review

Each check uses one AI-enabled workflow and needs no new tooling. Ask people in two connected teams separately, then compare. The aim is to find a decision that needs an owner.

1. **Name who owns the decision.** Ask each team who now owns the decision the tool informs, and who answers for an error.
2. **List the approvals that should change.** Ask which handoffs or sign-offs should now be different. Then ask whether they have changed.
3. **Ask where the capacity goes.** Ask where the time the tool saves should go. If nobody can say, it is going somewhere unplanned.
4. **Check what people were told.** Ask whether people can explain what changed in their responsibilities, and where to raise uncertainty.
5. **Agree how you will know.** Decide how leadership will know whether the work itself has changed, beyond usage figures.

What Baryons contributes to a rollout

Baryons complements an AI program. It does not replace change management, training or the technology itself, and it does not need access to email, meetings or task systems.



From individual readiness to management action. Illustrative.

- **Support for managers.** Whether AI spend turns into results is decided by managers. They choose which work goes to AI, coach people through the change and hold the team together as spans widen. Baryons gives every manager a private thinking partner to work those calls through first.
- **Private guidance for each person.** People get private guidance grounded in approved company priorities, in conversations of a few minutes by phone or web. Each person's conversation stays theirs.
- **Aggregate signal for leaders.** Each week, Team Resonance returns the patterns across a team, with no names in any section: what is resonating, where friction sits, and where to Act, Watch or Amplify.
- **No new system.** No new meeting and no integration project. Deployment is a participant list and a phone number.

What this brief does not claim

- The McKinsey and Gartner figures describe respondents across many companies. They do not show why rollouts stall or that any one company has this gap.
- The example is hypothetical. It is not a Baryons customer, and its details are invented to show the mechanism.
- Research on shared understanding shows a link with team performance. It does not show that any one practice or tool will change results in a given company.
- Baryons does not report AI usage, and it makes no claim about returns on any AI investment. Leaders never receive individual scores or conversations.

A NEXT STEP

Pick one workflow where AI is already in use.

Ask two connected teams the first three checks this week. If the answers line up, you have your confirmation. If they do not, and a focused discussion about that one workflow would be useful, we would be glad to have it at baryons.com.

SOURCES

References

1 **Superagency in the workplace: Empowering people to unlock AI's full potential at work.** McKinsey & Company (survey of C-suite and employee respondents, mostly in the U.S.), January 28, 2025. https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/tech-and-ai/our-insights/superagency-in-the-workplace-empowering-people-to-unlock-ais-full-potential-at-work

2 **Gartner Survey Finds Leader and Manager Development Tops HR Leaders' List of 2025 Priorities for Third Consecutive Year.** Gartner, press release (survey of HR leaders, July 2024), October 15, 2024. https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-10-15-gartner-survey-finds-leader-and-manager-development-tops-hr-leaders-list

3 DeChurch, L. A., and Mesmer-Magnus, J. R.. **The cognitive underpinnings of effective teamwork: a meta-analysis.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 95(1), 32-53, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017328

Team Resonance is a Baryons feature.