AMATIS INSIGHT 002

Why AI Projects Fail Before They Begin

The organisational conditions
that determine whether AI succeeds

Evidence, Strategic Insight and Practical Guidance
for Leaders Delivering AI-Enabled Change

AMATIS
TRAINING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Artificial intelligence has moved rapidly from experimentation into everyday organisational use. In June 2026, around 35% of UK businesses with ten or more employees reported using at least one AI technology (Office for National Statistics, 2026).

Adoption is not the same as transformation. Access to AI has expanded faster than many organisations have developed the processes, data, governance and workforce capability required to use it successfully.

The conditions for failure often appear before formal delivery begins. A convincing demonstration, available funding or pressure to keep pace can turn AI into the preferred response before the organisational need is understood.

The organisation may then begin a pilot without defining success, assessing its foundations or examining how work and accountability must change. Later analysis is asked to justify the selection rather than evaluate it.

This does not mean that AI is inherently unsuitable or that every discontinued pilot represents failure. A controlled experiment that disproves an assumption can prevent waste and improve the next decision.

This Insight identifies six conditions that should be examined before substantial resources are committed: purpose, value, work, foundations, trust and capability.

Business Analysis provides connective discipline across these conditions. It helps leaders clarify the need, compare genuine options, define evidence and decide whether to proceed, test an assumption or pause.

That contribution depends upon early involvement and sufficient technology fluency. Business Analysts must understand modern technologies well enough to assess possibilities without allowing technology to become the purpose of change.

Central Proposition

AI success is determined long before technology is selected. Organisations must establish clear evidence of need and prepare the conditions required for success before making a major commitment.

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WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

AI capability is increasingly available through familiar business software, embedded assistants and externally hosted services. Organisations no longer need to build a machine-learning model before they can begin experimenting with AI.

This accessibility creates valuable opportunities. It also shortens the distance between identifying an organisational concern and selecting a technological response.

A convincing demonstration, available funding or pressure to follow another organisation can quickly turn AI into the preferred solution. Sponsorship and resources may then be secured before the problem, intended outcomes and alternatives have been properly examined.

Evidence suggests that organisational capability is not developing at the same pace as access. The average number of AI technologies used by adopting businesses increased only modestly between late 2023 and June 2026.

The Office for National Statistics also found that only 11% of businesses with 10 or more employees had trained over half their workforce in AI-related skills (Office for National Statistics, 2026).

Adoption is Accelerating - Depth Remains Limited

Around 35% of UK businesses with ten or more employees reported using at least one AI technology by June 2026. Only 10% of adopting businesses reported extensive use.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2026.

The public sector faces additional considerations. AI may affect access to essential services, the handling of sensitive information and decisions concerning individual rights. Errors can harm people, reduce public value and weaken trust.

The National Audit Office found that 70% of surveyed government bodies were piloting or planning AI use. However, large-scale benefits require changes to processes and workforces, alongside improvements to legacy systems, data access and skills (National Audit Office, 2024).

The result is a widening gap between technological access and organisational readiness. An organisation can pursue an AI solution faster than it can understand the change required to use that solution successfully.

THE PRE-IMPLEMENTATION FAILURE CHAIN

The model below shows how the order of organisational decisions can create the conditions for failure before resources are committed to a new change initiative.

The chain does not suggest that every AI initiative follows the same route. It shows how an attractive technological possibility can become an organisational commitment before sufficient analysis has taken place.

Figure 1. The Pre-implementation failure chain (Source: Amatis Insight)
Business Analysis changes the sequence: Problem → Outcomes → Readiness → Evidence-based decision

Once AI has attracted sponsorship, funding and expectations, later analysis may become an exercise in validating the selected solution rather than evaluating whether it is appropriate.

A Familiar Transformation Pattern

AI is not the first promising approach to be mistaken for an organisational outcome. Research into large-scale Agile transformations identified recurring challenges involving management support, culture, training, alignment and contextual adaptation (Dikert et al., 2016).

The lesson is not that Agile was inherently ineffective. Problems arose when organisations adopted visible practices without changing the wider conditions affecting delivery. AI faces the same risk when adoption becomes the objective rather than a response to an understood problem.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US

Academic studies, government publications and industry research use different methods, populations and definitions of success. However, they repeatedly identify the same broad issue: AI implementation is a socio-technical change.

'Socio-technical' means that technology, people, processes and organisational structures must work together. A technically capable AI system cannot compensate for an unclear purpose, unsuitable data or work that has not been redesigned.

RAND interviewed 65 experienced AI engineers and researchers. Misunderstanding or miscommunication about the project's purpose was the most frequently reported cause of failure.

Other reported causes included unsuitable data, weak infrastructure, technology-led choices and attempts to use AI beyond its practical limits (Ryseff et al., 2024).

A peer-reviewed study involving 25 AI experts identified readiness factors across strategy, resources, knowledge, culture, data and technology. Its authors argued that readiness should be assessed before adoption decisions are made (Jöhnk et al., 2021).

Industry research presents a similar picture. BCG found that only one-quarter of surveyed executives reported significant value from their AI initiatives.

The organisations reporting stronger results concentrated on fewer priorities, redesigned core processes, developed workforce capability and measured operational and financial returns (Apotheker et al., 2025).

These studies do not measure the same outcomes and should not be combined into a universal AI failure rate.

Interpreting the Evidence

The widely repeated claim that more than 80% of AI projects fail is reported by RAND as an estimate from other sources. RAND's own study was qualitative and did not calculate a universal failure rate.

Taken together, the evidence supports a more defensible conclusion. Many AI failures do not begin as failures of technology. They begin as failures of purpose, readiness, organisational design and decision-making.

What Counts as Failure?

Failure should not be defined only as cancellation. An AI solution may reach production and still fail strategically, operationally, financially or ethically.

Several forms of failure can be created before deployment:

- A technically successful system can fail strategically because it addresses the wrong problem;
- A deployed tool can fail to demonstrate value because no baseline, target or benefit owner was agreed;
- An accurate model can fail operationally because it does not fit the workflow or earn user trust;
- A pilot can fail to scale because the required data, infrastructure or operational support is unavailable;
- An apparently efficient service can fail ethically if people cannot challenge its outputs or reach a human decision-maker;
- A functioning solution can fail commercially if its continuing costs exceed the value it creates.

A discontinued experiment is not automatically a failure. An experiment that disproves an assumption can prevent larger waste and provide evidence for a better decision.

The aim is not to eliminate experimentation or demand certainty before action. It is to design experiments around explicit assumptions, evidence and decision points.

This allows an organisation to proceed, adapt or stop intelligently — before avoidable uncertainty becomes cost, dependency or harm.

A More Useful Definition

A pilot that disproves an assumption early may protect public or organisational value.
A deployed system that cannot demonstrate benefit may not represent success.

SIX CONDITIONS THAT DETERMINE WHETHER AI SUCCEEDS

AI readiness is not simply the ability to purchase, pilot or deploy a technology. It is the ability to make a responsible commitment based on clear evidence of organisational need and a realistic assessment of the conditions required for success.

No checklist can guarantee success, and every condition does not need to be perfect before exploration begins. However, significant gaps and assumptions should be visible before resources are committed.

These six conditions provide a practical readiness test. They draw together recurring findings from academic research, government guidance and industry evidence.

1. Purpose Before Technology

A strong initiative begins with a problem statement that does not contain the preferred solution. It identifies who experiences the problem, why it matters and what evidence demonstrates its scale or impact.

Understanding the problem is necessary, but it is not sufficient. The organisation must also compare credible responses before deciding that AI is appropriate.

Options may include policy change, process improvement, better information, integration, workflow automation, established technology, AI or a combination of approaches.

This analysis requires both business understanding and technology fluency. Decision-makers must know enough about the available possibilities to compare them fairly, while involving specialists where deeper technical assessment is required.

RAND advises leaders to focus on enduring problems rather than the newest technology. The UK Government AI Playbook similarly recommends using the right tool and remaining open to established technologies (Government Digital Service, 2025; Ryseff et al., 2024).

Failure conditions arise when AI becomes the purpose of the initiative rather than one possible response to an understood organisational need.

2. Success Defined Before Investment

AI objectives are often expressed as intentions: improve productivity, enhance experience, reduce cost or accelerate decisions. These statements provide direction, but they do not establish whether the proposed change will succeed.

A credible case identifies the baseline, intended outcomes, targets, measurement method, benefit owner and review date. It should also recognise costs, dependencies, disbenefits and possible unintended consequences.

Measures may include service quality, time, cost, revenue, employee experience, accessibility, complaints, accuracy or risk reduction.

BCG found that most surveyed organisations did not track financial key performance indicators for their AI initiatives. Measurement is therefore not merely an evaluation activity after implementation.

Defining success before investment helps the organisation decide whether AI is worth pursuing, what evidence a pilot must produce and when the initiative should pause or stop (Apotheker et al., 2025).

3. Work and Services Designed Around People

AI changes work. It may remove tasks, create checking activities, alter decisions or shift responsibility between people and systems.

Without analysis, an apparent efficiency gain in one team can create delay, additional work or unmanaged risk elsewhere. A technically successful solution may therefore weaken the wider service.

Teams should examine current workflows, user needs, exceptions, accessibility requirements and operational pressures. They must also define future responsibilities and determine where human judgement remains necessary.

Organisational readiness includes commitment to change and confidence in collective capability. Complex change requires coordinated behaviour across roles, rather than enthusiasm from isolated individuals (Weiner, 2009).

Employees and service users should be involved early enough to influence the design. Consultation after the main decisions have been made is unlikely to reveal every operational consequence.

4. Data and Technology Ready for the Intended Use

AI performance depends upon data and technical infrastructure. Data must be sufficiently accurate, representative, lawful, accessible and current for the intended use.

The question is not simply whether data exists. Teams must understand its ownership, lineage, quality, bias, permissions, security and continuing maintenance.

Technical readiness also extends beyond a successful demonstration. Integration, performance, scalability, resilience, supplier dependency and compatibility with existing systems must be examined.

A pilot may operate successfully with a small dataset and specialist support. Those conditions may not continue when the solution reaches more users, processes larger volumes or becomes operationally important.

The National Audit Office warns that data access, information sharing and ageing technology can restrict public-sector AI adoption (National Audit Office, 2024).

5. Governance, Trust and Human Accountability from the Start

Governance should begin with the decision to explore AI. It should not be added shortly before launch.

Early questions include legal basis, privacy, equality, security, transparency, explainability, procurement and accountability. The depth of assurance should be proportionate to the likely impact and risk.

The NIST AI Risk Management Framework organises responsible practice around governing, mapping, measuring and managing risk. The UK Government AI Playbook also requires meaningful human control at appropriate stages (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2023; Government Digital Service, 2025).

Public trust is not an optional benefit. People need to know when AI affects a service, how to challenge important outcomes and where responsibility sits when something goes wrong.

Human involvement must also be meaningful. Requiring an employee to approve an AI recommendation provides limited protection if that person lacks the information, time or authority to challenge it.

6. Capability to Deliver, Adopt and Sustain

An AI pilot can be supported by specialists for a short period. A reliable service requires continuing ownership, operational support, data management, monitoring, security, learning and improvement.

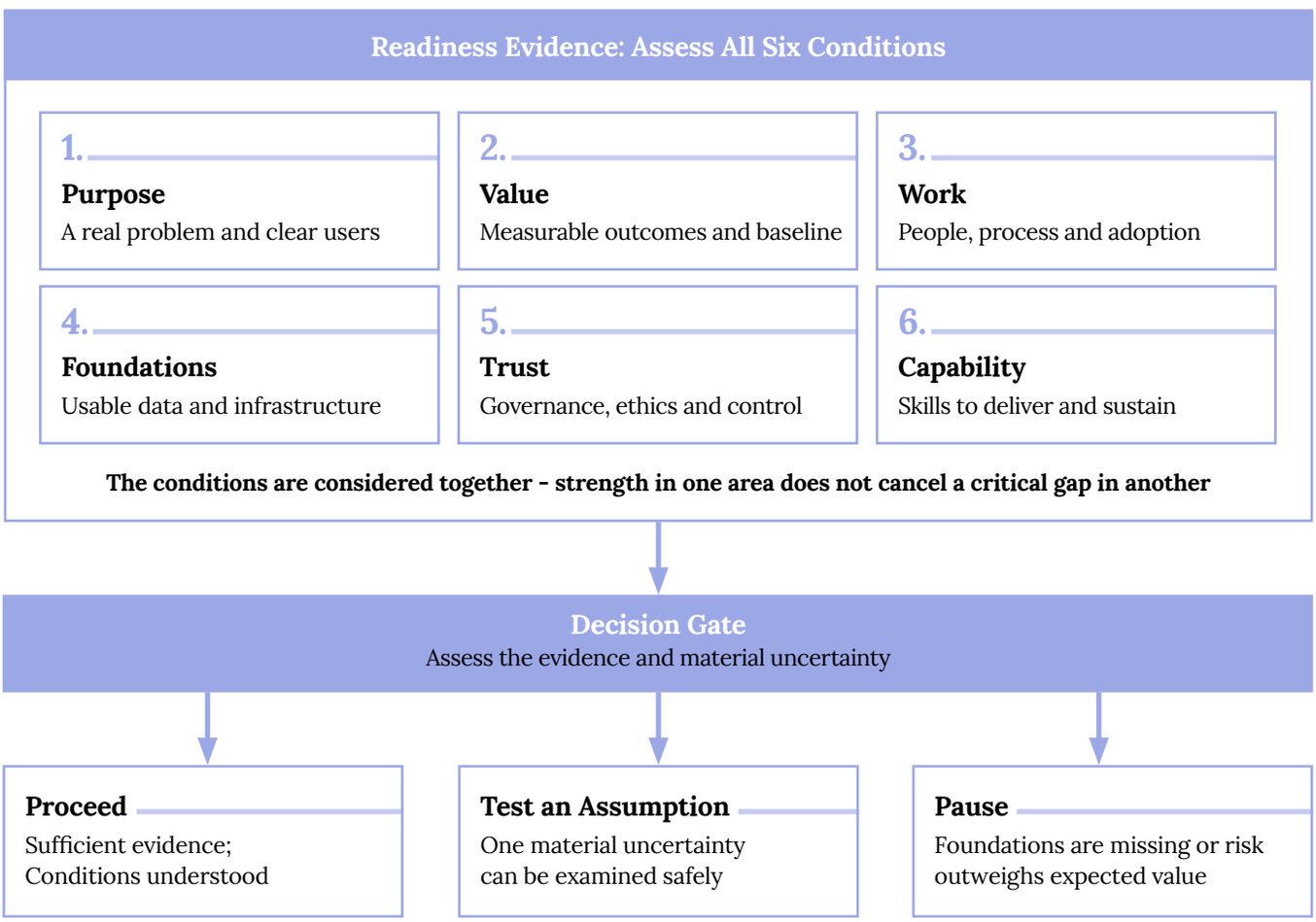
Individual competence and organisational capability are related, but they are not interchangeable. Skilled employees still need sufficient authority, time, tools, processes and leadership support to apply their knowledge effectively.

The World Economic Forum found that 63% of surveyed employers viewed skills gaps as a major barrier to transformation. UK research found that only three in ten employers had staff able to work with existing AI (Fenton et al., 2026; World Economic Forum, 2025).

Readiness therefore concerns more than technical specialists. Leaders, Business Analysts, operational teams, HR, L&D, commercial colleagues and assurance functions all require appropriate knowledge.

Capability must also continue after deployment. The organisation needs people who can monitor performance, respond to incidents, manage suppliers, update processes and reassess whether the service remains appropriate.

Figure 2. The AI readiness decision model. (Source: Amatis Insight)



Using the AI Readiness Decision Model

The six conditions are decision areas, not implementation workstreams. Their purpose is to make uncertainty visible before the organisation commits substantial resources.

The evidence may support one of three decisions:

1. Proceed when the purpose, expected value and organisational conditions are sufficiently understood;
2. Test an assumption when a material uncertainty can be examined through a controlled and proportionate experiment;
3. Pause when evidence is insufficient, significant foundations are missing or the likely risk outweighs the expected value.

A pause is not necessarily a rejection of AI. It may allow the organisation to improve its data, redesign a process, develop capability or reconsider the available options before making a larger commitment.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS BEFORE AI

The six organisational conditions do not assess themselves. Organisations need people who can investigate the problem, connect different forms of evidence and keep credible options open before resources are committed.

AI initiatives require multidisciplinary teams. The UK Government AI Playbook identifies business experts, data scientists, engineers, user researchers and designers among the roles that may be required.

Legal, security, commercial, operational, HR and L&D expertise may also be necessary. The appropriate combination depends upon the intended use, affected stakeholders and level of risk.

Business Analysis provides connective discipline across these perspectives. It helps the team develop a shared understanding of purpose, value, work, data, technology, governance and organisational capability.

The Business Analyst should therefore be involved before AI becomes the preferred response. If the analyst arrives only to document requirements for a selected product, the organisation has already restricted the contribution Business Analysis can make.

The final investment decision belongs to accountable leaders. The Business Analyst's contribution is to ensure that the decision is based upon visible evidence, explicit assumptions and genuine comparison between options.

The Business Analyst's Contribution

Before resources are committed, Business Analysis can:

1. Clarify the organisational need, affected users and intended outcomes;
2. Investigate root causes rather than accept the initial solution narrative;
3. Maintain a solution-neutral problem statement while credible options are compared;
4. Define benefits, disbenefits, baselines, measures, owners and decision criteria;
5. Model current work, information flows, decisions, exceptions and operational pressures;
6. Work with data and technical specialists to expose dependencies, constraints and feasibility concerns;
7. Identify stakeholders, including people who may experience indirect harm, additional work or exclusion;
8. Assess the effect upon roles, responsibilities, capability and human judgement;
9. Translate assumptions into testable requirements, experiments and acceptance criteria;
10. Make risks, decisions, evidence gaps and responsibilities visible.

This work does not replace technical feasibility analysis, data science, user research, legal advice or security assurance. It helps those disciplines work from a shared understanding of the organisational need and its context.

A Translator — and a Challenger of Premature Decisions

Business Analysts are often described as translators between business and technology. Translation is important, but it is not enough.

> A translator can faithfully translate a poor decision.
> The Business Analyst must also be prepared to challenge it.

Business stakeholders may overestimate AI, underestimate risk or confuse automation with improvement. Technical specialists may understand system behaviour without seeing the wider service, policy, workforce or accessibility implications.

The Business Analyst should test assumptions on both sides and assess the proposed change holistically. The POPIT model — People, Organisation, Process, Information and Technology — provides a practical set of lenses for examining how a decision may affect the wider operating environment (Paul et al., 2020).

Evidence concerning users, operations, data, technology, finance and governance can then be considered across these lenses. This helps reveal dependencies, unintended consequences and situations where improvement in one area may create risk or additional work elsewhere.

This challenge is not intended to obstruct innovation. It protects decision quality by ensuring that enthusiasm, authority or supplier influence does not substitute for evidence.

Challenge has the greatest value while options remain open. Once funding has been approved, expectations announced or contracts signed, financial and organisational pressures make reconsideration more difficult.

Business Analysis therefore creates its greatest value before commitment — when the organisation can still choose to proceed, test an assumption, select another response or stop.

THE TECHNOLOGY FLUENCY GAP IN BUSINESS ANALYSIS

A Business Analyst cannot challenge a premature technology decision without understanding enough about the available possibilities.

Technology fluency is the ability to understand the broad capabilities, limitations and dependencies of current technology. It includes knowing which questions to ask and when specialist expertise is required.

It does not mean that every Business Analyst must build machine-learning models, write software or become an expert in every emerging technology.

> Business Analysts must be sufficiently technology-fluent to recognise what modern technologies make possible — and sufficiently business-focused to judge which possibilities should be pursued.

Without this fluency, option analysis can fail in two directions.

An analyst may default to familiar processes and technologies, overlooking an approach that could materially improve the outcome. Alternatively, the analyst may accept a fashionable or supplier-led solution without questioning its limitations and dependencies.

Both failures narrow the decision before the organisation commits resources. The resulting recommendation may appear rigorous while being based upon an incomplete understanding of the available options.

What the Evidence Supports

Professional guidance already recognises the importance of technology knowledge.

BCS argues that Business Analysts need sufficient understanding of emerging technologies, information systems and integration. IIBA guidance similarly identifies AI terminology, capabilities, limitations and implementation approaches as relevant knowledge (BCS, 2022; International Institute of Business Analysis, 2019).

A peer-reviewed exploratory study by Evans and Fernando examined the changing role of Business Analysts in digital transformation. Its literature review and focus group indicated that traditional competencies may be insufficient for increasingly digital organisations.

The participants emphasised the need for Business Analysts to understand emerging technology without becoming technical specialists. The study was based on nine experienced analysts, so its findings should be treated as exploratory rather than representative (Evans & Fernando, 2025).

IIBA's 2026 global research indicates that Business Analysis professionals are using AI widely. Common applications include drafting, formatting, communication and idea generation (International Institute of Business Analysis, 2026).

This demonstrates adoption, but it does not necessarily demonstrate technology fluency. Using an AI assistant is different from evaluating whether an AI-enabled service represents the right response to an organisational need.

The evidence base is not strong enough to state how many Business Analysts currently meet the required standard. It would be equally unsafe for organisations to assume that the capability is already widespread.

The responsible response is to assess technology fluency directly, rather than infer it from job title, experience or access to AI tools.

What Sufficient Technology Fluency Looks Like

A technology-fluent Business Analyst should be able to:

1. Recognise the main categories of established and emerging technology;
2. Explain their broad capabilities and limitations in accessible language;
3. Distinguish between generative AI, predictive models, search, analytics, workflow automation and rules-based systems;
4. Ask informed questions about data, integration, security, scalability, accessibility and human oversight;
5. Compare technological options with policy, process, information and organisational changes;
6. Understand how technology may alter work, decisions, responsibilities and user experience;
7. Recognise when deeper technical, legal, data or security expertise is required;
8. Update their understanding as technology, regulation and organisational practice change.

This is not a requirement for technical mastery. It is the level of understanding needed to investigate responsibly, involve the correct specialists and avoid presenting an incomplete option appraisal.

Technology Fluency Is Wider Than AI

Technology fluency should not become another name for AI training.

The analyst needs sufficient awareness of the wider landscape. This includes integration, enterprise search, workflow tools, analytics, low-code platforms, rules-based automation, robotic process automation and established software.

The appropriate response may combine several approaches. It may also improve the existing service without using AI.

Business need	Possible approaches	Questions the analyst should raise
Answer repeated service questions	Better content; enterprise search; rules-based guidance; generative assistant	Who owns the source material? How will accuracy, accessibility and escalation be managed?
Reduce manual transfer between systems	Process redesign; integration; workflow automation; robotic process automation	Are the rules stable? Is AI needed, or would integration remove the failure point?
Identify likely demand or risk	Business intelligence; statistical analysis; predictive machine learning	Is the data representative? What happens when the prediction is wrong?
Create or summarise content	Templates; structured data; generative AI; human-assisted drafting	What information may be entered? Who validates accuracy, copyright and tone?

Table 1. Technology fluency supports option comparison; it does not require specialist engineering expertise. (Source: Amatis Insight)

The table does not suggest that the Business Analyst selects the solution alone. Its purpose is to ensure that the initial shortlist is not restricted by limited awareness or enthusiasm for one technology.

Implications for L&D, HR and Practice Leaders

Technology fluency cannot rely upon occasional product demonstrations. Product knowledge may become outdated quickly and can encourage the learner to view every problem through the functions of one tool.

A structured learning pathway should combine technology concepts, practical use, data, ethics, process impacts, option evaluation and reflective practice.

Leaders should:

1. Define the level of technology fluency expected at each Business Analysis career stage;
2. Assess capability through realistic scenarios rather than self-reported confidence;
3. Use exercises requiring comparison between AI and non-AI approaches;
4. Bring Business Analysts, technical specialists and operational colleagues together to examine real problems;
5. Provide protected time for supervised experimentation and continuing professional development;
6. Incorporate learning into live work through peer review, communities of practice and decision retrospectives;
7. Assess the quality of applied judgement rather than familiarity with individual tools;
8. Review learning regularly because capabilities, risks and regulation continue to change.

Learning impact should not be measured only through attendance or course completion. More meaningful indicators include stronger option appraisals, earlier identification of constraints, reduced decision risk and greater confidence in recommendations.

Over time, these improvements should narrow uncertainty, reduce avoidable rework and give leaders greater confidence when committing organisational resources.

Organisations cannot expect Business Analysts to protect decision quality while leaving them unprepared to understand the choices they are required to evaluate.

COMPOSITE CASE STUDY

When an AI Chatbot Was Not the First Answer

This composite case reflects recurring issues identified in public-sector guidance and AI implementation research. It does not describe a single named organisation.

A large local authority wanted to reduce pressure on its contact centre. Senior leaders proposed a public generative AI chatbot that could answer questions continuously and reduce avoidable calls.

A supplier demonstration was convincing, funding was potentially available and another authority had announced a similar service. AI quickly became the preferred response.

Before procurement began, a Business Analyst was asked to document the requirements. Instead, the analyst investigated demand, service content, current workflows and user experience.

What the Investigation Found

1. Service information was distributed across webpages, documents and internal guidance;
2. Some guidance was inconsistent, duplicated or lacked a named owner;
3. Important enquiries required professional judgement;
4. Residents sometimes called because earlier digital journeys had failed;
5. Language, disability, confidence and digital access affected how people sought help;
6. Monitoring, human escalation and continuing support costs had not been defined.

These were not chatbot configuration issues. They were organisational conditions that would affect any technology introduced into the service.

A chatbot using unreliable information could provide incorrect answers more efficiently and at greater scale.

The original statement — 'the council needs an AI chatbot' — was replaced with:

> Residents and staff need reliable answers and effective routes to the correct service at the point of need.

Options Considered

1. Continue with the existing service. This avoided immediate investment but did not address the underlying problems.
2. Improve information and digital journeys without AI. This included content ownership, clearer navigation, improved search and rules-based routing.
3. Improve the foundations and pilot an employee-facing assistant. Contact-centre staff would validate outputs before information reached residents.
4. Introduce a public assistant after improving the foundations. This offered continuous access but carried greater accessibility, accuracy, governance and trust risks.

The Recommendation

The authority was not advised to reject AI. It was advised to change the sequence.

Information and service foundations would be improved first. An employee-facing assistant would then be tested in a controlled setting.

A public assistant would proceed only if the evidence demonstrated sufficient accuracy, accessibility, operational value and safe escalation.

Measures included first-contact resolution, answer accuracy, handling cost, escalation, complaints, employee confidence and user experience. The evidence would determine whether the initiative should proceed, adapt or stop.

Purpose was clarified before technology was selected. Value, work, data, governance and capability were examined before public deployment.

> Business Analysis did not slow the AI project. It prevented the organisation from scaling uncertainty into a public service.

PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR LEADERS

Organisations do not need a lengthy assessment before every use of AI. The depth of analysis and assurance should be proportionate to the intended impact, cost and risk.

The following actions move scrutiny upstream — where uncertainty is less expensive to resolve, choices remain open and unsuitable ideas can be stopped responsibly.

1. **Keep the need solution-neutral.** Remove the preferred technology from the problem statement. Confirm the affected users, evidence, root causes and consequences before discussing products.
2. **Require genuine option analysis.** Compare AI with the current position, process improvement, policy change, better information, established technology and combined approaches.
3. **Introduce an AI readiness gate.** Assess purpose, value, work, foundations, trust and capability before the organisation moves from exploration into funded delivery.
4. **Create a multidisciplinary team early.** Include operational expertise, Business Analysis, data, technology, user research, security, legal, commercial, HR and L&D according to the context.
5. **Define success before experimentation.** Agree outcomes, baselines, costs, benefits, disbenefits, owners and review dates before launching a pilot.

6. **Invest in technology fluency and organisational capability.** Develop people who understand the possibilities, ask informed questions and recognise when AI is not proportionate.
7. **Design experiments that support decisions.** State the assumptions being tested, the evidence required and the criteria for proceeding, adapting or stopping.

Questions for Leaders

Before committing resources to a new change initiative, leaders should be able to answer:

1. What organisational need is being addressed, and what evidence demonstrates its importance;
2. Who experiences the need, including people who may be excluded, disadvantaged or harmed;
3. Which alternative responses have been considered, and why is AI more appropriate;
4. What outcomes, baselines, costs and measures will demonstrate success;
5. How will work, roles, decisions and human judgement change;
6. Are the required data and technical foundations usable, lawful, secure and sustainable;
7. Who will own the benefits, risks, governance, operational support and continuing capability;
8. What evidence would cause the organisation to proceed, adapt, pause or stop.

An unanswered question does not automatically mean that AI should be rejected. It may indicate that further investigation, foundation work or a controlled experiment is required.

The important point is that the organisation makes a deliberate decision before enthusiasm becomes commitment.

CONCLUSION

AI will continue to become more accessible, capable and embedded within everyday software.
This progress will create valuable possibilities, but it will not remove the need for organisational judgement.

The organisations most likely to succeed will not necessarily launch the greatest number of pilots.
They will understand where AI can improve outcomes, prepare the required conditions and stop unsuitable ideas before they absorb significant resources.

AI should be neither treated as the default answer nor rejected because it introduces uncertainty.
It should be selected when evidence demonstrates an organisational need and shows that AI represents an appropriate response.

Making that judgement requires more than technical expertise. Leaders need clear purpose and governance. Operational teams need involvement and confidence. Data and technology teams need usable foundations.

HR and L&D leaders must develop sustainable capability, rather than relying upon isolated training or product demonstrations.

Business Analysis occupies a critical position within this system. It connects purpose, people, processes, information, technology and value while choices remain open.

However, Business Analysts can only perform this role effectively when they are involved early and possess sufficient technology fluency. They must understand the possibilities well enough to compare them without losing focus upon the organisational need.

> AI projects rarely begin with code. They begin with a decision. The quality of that decision shapes everything that follows.

The final question is therefore not, ‘How quickly can the organisation implement AI?’
It is, ‘What evidence justifies committing resources, and has the organisation prepared the conditions required for success?’

That is where successful AI begins.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- AI projects can inherit the conditions for failure before resources are committed to a formal change initiative;
- Easier access to AI can accelerate solution selection faster than organisational readiness develops;
- Successful AI depends upon purpose, value, work design, technical foundations, trust and sustainable capability;
- A controlled experiment can succeed by disproving an assumption and preventing greater waste;
- Business Analysis creates its greatest value before commitment, while options remain open;
- Technology-fluent Business Analysts can compare modern technologies without allowing technology to become the purpose of the change;
- Leaders should measure decision quality, readiness and outcomes rather than the number of pilots launched.

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ABOUT AMATIS INSIGHT

Amatis Insight is an evidence-led publication series examining Business Analysis, organisational change, digital transformation, leadership and capability development. Each edition is vendor-neutral and designed to support better decisions by leaders and practitioners.

SELECTED REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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