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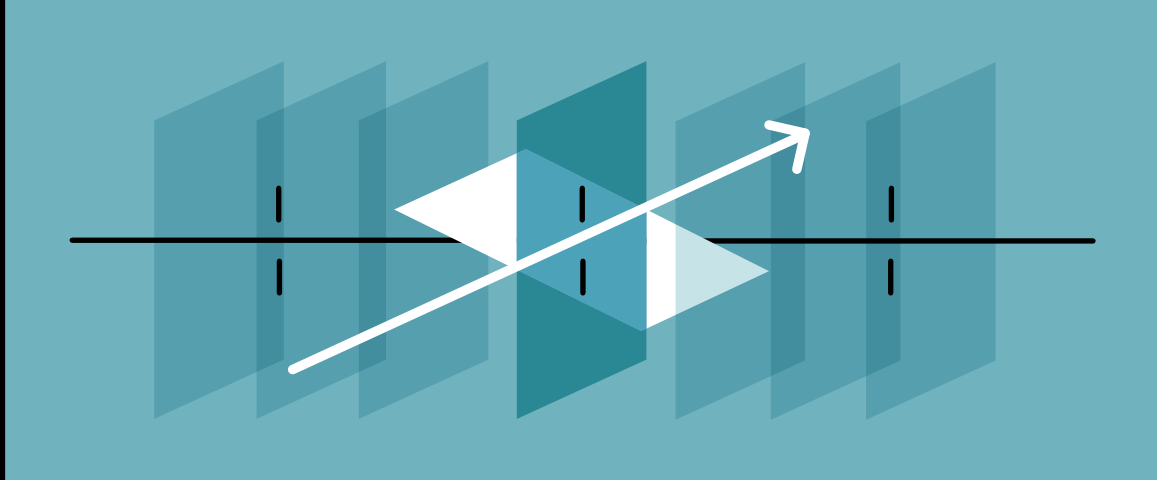

Navigating the Generative AI Landscape

Global Strategies for Implementation and Scaling

HBR Analytic Services **BRIEFING PAPER**

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Red Hat

Turn Gen AI Potential into Business Impact

As the early wave of excitement about generative AI (gen AI) begins to settle, a more nuanced understanding of its practical impact on organizations is taking shape worldwide. From Europe and the U.S. to Latin America and Asia Pacific, businesses are now reflecting on their initial investments in gen AI infrastructure and capabilities. It's becoming clear that gen AI holds considerable promise for enhancing customer engagement, reducing operational costs, fostering data-driven decision making, and boosting productivity.

While evaluating how to adopt and scale gen AI within your organization, it's important to recognize common roadblocks that many leadership teams encounter. While early pilots may show promise, expanding these initiatives enterprise-wide often reveals deeper challenges. A recent survey of *Harvard Business Review* readers exploring or evaluating gen AI revealed that 49% identify data security and cybersecurity risks as major concerns. Other key obstacles include a shortage of skilled artificial intelligence (AI) talent and gaps in IT and data infrastructure. Many organizations also struggle with aligning AI solutions with specific business use cases, managing deployments across hybrid environments (cloud, on-premises, and edge), and navigating evolving regulatory requirements, particularly in the EU. Despite these complexities, the urgency to stay competitive has pushed many forward. The organizations seeing real success are those with a clear strategy, cross-functional alignment, and a scalable foundation to support gen AI adoption at speed and scale.

Unlocking the full value of gen AI investments requires a thoughtful approach to these challenges. Learning from the strategies of companies that have navigated similar issues can be invaluable. Key success factors include a comprehensive strategy, a unified and modern platform approach, robust infrastructure, and a flexible deployment model that spans varied environments. Having successfully piloted a use case that delivers value is necessary—but not sufficient—to enable scaling as executives grapple with the cost of such an effort and the need to prove ROI.

This report, sponsored by Red Hat, serves as a practical guide to initiating or expanding your AI journey, and it offers a benchmark by which to assess your organization's AI maturity. The insights here illustrate that AI is accessible to businesses of all types, and we're excited to continue sharing stories of how chief information officers and business leaders are transforming their organizations through AI and machine learning. This

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Harvard Business Review Analytic Services paper explores how organizations across regions are preparing for successful gen AI implementation, and it highlights decision-making factors, key use cases, common challenges, and workforce implications. We invite you to read on and to discover further insights into AI on our website.

Navigating the Generative AI Landscape

Global Strategies for Implementation and Scaling

As the dust settles from the initial excitement and frenzy about generative AI (gen AI), a clearer picture of the tangible benefits to organizations is developing. Companies regionally—in North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia Pacific (APAC)—are taking stock of lessons learned from early investments in gen AI infrastructure and capabilities, and it is now commonly accepted that harnessing gen AI can enhance customer interactions, reduce costs, improve data-driven decision making, and drive productivity.

NOW EXECUTIVES ARE considering how best to implement gen AI in their organizations to reap benefits for their customers and employees. If there is any hesitancy, it generally stems from barriers that prevent organizations from proceeding at pace, including anxieties about data privacy and security, current IT and data infrastructure that is not sufficiently prepared for gen AI integration, and concerns about regulatory and legal implications.

"Across all industries, you've got C-suite individuals getting pressure from boards to just execute," says Keith Nielsen, director of technology strategy and innovation for Chicago-based Discover Financial Services Inc., a digital bank and payment services company. "My organization is very pragmatic in terms of how we go and evaluate technology in terms of its applicability to a use case, and that can take some time."

The size of the prize at stake has tempted many organizations to tackle such barriers and launch gen AI initiatives regardless. "One of the projections that we use suggests that gen AI can generate around $4.5 trillion in additional value for APAC companies by 2038—so in about 10 to 15 years," says Duncan Eadie, the managing director of cloud-first and infrastructure engineering for Asia Pacific at Accenture plc, a Dublin-based professional services company. "This is a big number. So the risks of not investing in gen AI mean missing out on a share of that $4.5 trillion."

Getting implementation right, however, is not always smooth sailing.

HIGHLIGHTS

85%

of respondents say their organization is using, piloting, or exploring generative AI (gen AI) for business purposes.

49%

of respondents whose organization has not considered or is not moving forward with gen AI cite leadership not seeing the use of gen AI as being critical at this time as a key barrier preventing the adoption of AI at their organization.

47%

of respondents whose organization has not considered or is not moving forward with gen AI cite data privacy and security concerns as a barrier preventing the adoption of gen AI at their organization.

> **“There is no AI [artificial intelligence] journey without a data journey, and there is no data journey without a cloud journey.”**
>
> Duncan Eadie, managing director of cloud-first and infrastructure engineering for Asia Pacific, Accenture plc

While many companies have launched and demonstrated use cases through successful pilots, scaling those efforts across the organization can be fraught with challenges. In November 2024, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services surveyed 682 members of the *Harvard Business Review* audience who are familiar with their organization's current state regarding the use of gen AI and decisions about it and found that among the respondents whose organizations are using, piloting, or exploring gen AI, 45% say the lack of a clear strategy or roadmap is a key challenge, while 42% cite a lack of talent with the necessary skills and knowledge. Disorganized or siloed efforts (cited by 39%) and data security or cybersecurity problems (38%) are other gen AI implementation challenges businesses are facing.

Learning from early adopter companies that have tackled similar problems is one part of the equation for getting return on investment with gen AI. The other part of the equation includes a well-thought-out strategy; a consistent, modern platform approach; and robust infrastructure. In either instance, the immense computational power and data storage requirements of gen AI make cloud infrastructure essential for its implementation and scaling. Meaningful gen AI development and implementation require large amounts of data to train algorithms. To handle these mammoth amounts of data, organizations need scalable, flexible, and cost-effective storage and processing capabilities. Cloud computing provides this infrastructure, allowing businesses to store, manage, and analyze data at scale. “There is no AI [artificial intelligence] journey without a data journey,” Eadie asserts, “and there is no data journey without a cloud journey.”

This paper will explore how organizations in North America, Europe, Latin America, and APAC are preparing for successfully implementing gen AI. It will delve into the factors for deciding to deploy gen AI; how to identify key, impactful use cases; and navigating the barriers and challenges to implementing and scaling gen AI, including the role cloud infrastructure plays. The report will also highlight key steps to consider both in getting started with the technology and in scaling up its value.

A New Performance Bar

The allure of gen AI for organizations lies in its transformational nature. “Gen AI will have probably the most profound impact on ways of working since the agricultural and industrial revolutions,” Eadie explains. “The impact will be seismic.” It is a technology that offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance decision making with vast reams of data; automate mundane, repetitive, and even complex tasks; and improve customer experience.

Small wonder that organizations are enthusiastically jumping into the fray. Eighty-five percent of respondents say their organization is using, piloting, or exploring generative AI for business purposes. FIGURE 1

For some organizations, the imperative to experiment with gen AI is in their organizational DNA. For example, the Agency for Electronic Government and Information and Knowledge Society (AGESIC), a government agency in Uruguay responsible for leading the implementation of electronic government strategies to create an efficient and citizen-centered state, has been supporting institutions and organizations in exploring the incorporation of gen AI into their processes and services. Examples such as chatbots for tax-related assistance or for supporting parents and families with early childhood care have been fundamental to understanding the technological and ethical challenges posed by this new technology. While a great deal has been learned, none of these projects have been put into production yet. Part of AGESIC's purpose is to apply gen AI to enhance efficiency within the agency and improve its services to citizens. An immediate use case that AGESIC spotted is the potential of gen AI to help its employees with communication. “We are continuously experimenting with the possibility of applying new technology in digital government,” says Maximiliano Maneiro, deputy director of information technology at AGESIC. “And we started to understand that gen AI is good for translation, for creating better emails, and for generating better responses.”

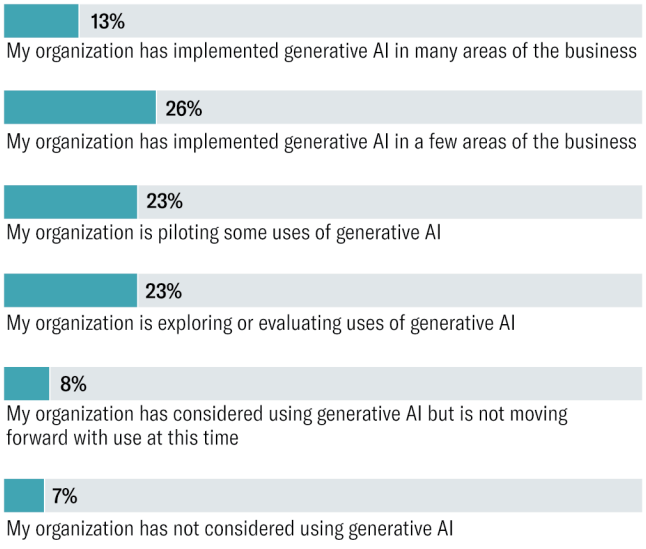
For other organizations, the imperative to proceed more cautiously stems from the highly regulated nature of their

FIGURE 1

Current Usage of Generative AI

Most respondents say their organization is using, piloting, or exploring the technology

Which of the following best describes your organization's current state regarding the use of generative AI for business purposes?



Base: 682 respondents.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, November 2024

industry. This is particularly true in financial services. Discover, for example, is using gen AI to consistently improve customer interactions during interactive voice response (IVR) and chat, as well as for post-interaction sentiment analysis to understand how customers felt about their experiences across channels.

"We operate in a highly regulated industry, which means we are very pragmatic in our approach and very measured in what we are stepping into," says Discover's Nielsen. "There are no direct public-facing interactions with our customers in any way that might create a negative experience or compromise us from a regulatory perspective."

The accessibility and ubiquity of gen AI are among the factors driving rapid and widespread adoption in organizations. "Most people running large businesses or small independent companies see their kids using gen AI to do their homework," Accenture's Eadie notes. "It is in the house, and therefore it is not a scary new technology. It is something that has become very familiar very quickly. This means that gen AI is really poised to provide incredibly significant changes to the way we work, as well as economic benefits."

Nielsen, too, emphasizes the impact of this accessibility on enterprise adoption. "Gen AI is completely different," he says. "I have never seen such a transformational technology that is so accessible by the masses."

He explains that this circumstance contrasts with cloud, which was neither accessible nor particularly useful directly by the business, so the pressure for short-term delivery wasn't there the way it is with gen AI. Cloud was generally driven by the technology department and not the business more broadly. In contrast, gen AI technologies having to do with chat and agents are both accessible and immediately useful to the business, heightening the pressure for rapid adoption.

The Benefits of Harnessing Generative AI

While the full potential of gen AI is still being explored, early adopters are already seeing benefits in productivity and efficiency gains. Dhahran, Saudi Arabia-based Saudi Arabian Oil Co., better known as Aramco, is one of the world's largest integrated energy and chemicals companies and is responsible for managing extensive hydrocarbon reserves and operating across the entire energy value chain. "We are using gen AI to optimize drilling operations, enhance exploration accuracy through advanced subsurface analysis, and improve production efficiency with predictive maintenance and real-time data insights," explains Omar Al Thukair, vice president and chief digital officer at Aramco.

Aramco's vast reams of data are a spur to harness gen AI to improve and accelerate decision making at a very high level. As Ahmad Al Khowaiter, executive vice president of technology and innovation at Aramco, explains, "We see gen AI as a means of bringing together all the information we have and setting the stage for a 'data first' future that pushes the boundaries of value creation and enables Aramco to be the first truly intelligent enterprise. The oil and gas business is famous for tremendous data sets like seismic data sets, reservoir data, our production data, our operations data—all

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>
> Ahmad Al Khowaiter, executive vice president of technology and innovation at the Saudi Arabian Oil Co.

of which [are] very difficult to analyze manually in an integrated and comprehensive way.”

Al Khowaiter goes on to explain that Aramco has a deep history of decades of physical data modeling and that gen AI now offers the opportunity to extend that to modeling and optimizing human knowledge and decision-making processes in areas such as HR, finance, and industrial operations. “Over the years, we have created rigorous physics- and science-based models to analyze the physical data that we have,” he asserts. “But there has never really been a way of modeling our business data. Now, for the first time, gen AI allows us to take that human data and model and optimize it. In other words, we are taking the same scientific approach that we apply to our physical data to our human knowledge that we have gathered over the last 90 years and using it to make better decisions and accelerate performance in our business.”

At Aramco, an early decision was made not to outsource model development because of the use of confidential data. “The real benefit is in analyzing our confidential data,” Al Khowaiter says. “So, this meant building from the bottom up and building that capability in-house.”

Curating all the data—Aramco’s standards, manuals, history, and engineering reports for the past 90 years—was a massive up-front task. Now Aramco’s industrial gen AI initiative, Aramco Large Language Model, is empowering various AI products across the business, including upstream and downstream, supply chain, sustainability, finance, and beyond. In downstream operations, according to Al Thukair, Aramco is using gen AI “to provide a cognitive and interactive layer to daily detailed reports, enabling analysts to interact with rich data, run scenarios, and reason out insightful highlights. Also, in finance, gen AI enhances financial analysis, improves report generation through advanced data integration, and optimizes decision making with predictive insights using real-time data.”

Discover, meanwhile, is exploring value from gen AI in areas such as compliance review, customer service enhancement, and code assistance. “We have a whole bunch of policies and procedures which are written annually and which answer questions about compliance and how we interact with our consumer base,” explains Nielsen. Discover has used gen AI to give call center employees access to the collated library of policies. One of the metrics of Discover’s call centers is call-handling time, and this is where gen AI shines. “Searching through PDFs or documentation obviously isn’t always feasible in the given time you have to handle a call,” he says. “We found that we can reduce average call-handling time by just giving someone really accurate information quickly. We are already seeing meaningful impact on average call-handling time.”

The use of gen AI is also helping Discover continuously improve customer experience. “Understanding the intent of our customers as they interact with Discover across all channels is key to customer satisfaction, and when the reason for customer engagement is unclear, responses suffer,” says Nielsen.

Integrating gen AI into IVR and chat empowers Discover to respond more accurately or to route customers to agents with accurate information. Sentiment analysis—again enabled by gen AI—helps Discover understand how customers feel about their experiences across channels so that Discover can change the policy or process as required.

Accenture has developed a gen AI-powered agent called Maya, who provides a meet-and-greet service for the Accenture offices in San Francisco. “We bring clients around, and Maya is there, and she embodies our brand’s voice and values,” Eadie says. “She can also deliver meaningful interactions, and those can be tailored to the specific visitors who we know are coming in. Maya guides visitors around the office and shares insights with them. It is really quite amazing how engaged our visitors are.”

This application is now being used for the hospitality and events sector. For example, Accenture worked with a global hotel brand to develop a similar AI-powered concierge—an interactive 3D avatar—that resolves common guest issues, offers personalized recommendations, and even supports hotel staff during peak times.

Navigating Barriers and Challenges

While the productivity gains, innovations, and new capabilities that gen AI use cases offer are compelling, the barriers preventing organizations from using gen AI remain front of mind for many executives. Among respondents whose organization has not considered gen AI or has considered but is not moving forward with gen AI, 49% say that a key barrier preventing their organization from using gen AI is that leaders don't see the use of gen AI as critical at this time. Other barriers include data privacy/security concerns (cited by 47% of respondents), a lack of talent with the necessary skills/knowledge (47%), and being unsure how or where to get started (40%). FIGURE 2

Leadership support has played a key role in driving the implementation of gen AI within Aramco. "On the leadership buy-in side, our CEO has been a believer in AI for the last 10 years," explains Al Khowaiter. For AGESIC, too, leadership played a crucial role. "In our case, getting leadership buy-in was not necessary. They were the ones who showed us," says AGESIC's Maneiro.

With regard to data privacy and security, organizations need to consider regional differences in data regulation. For example, Uruguay's data regulation rules are stringent, particularly in terms of personal data protection and information system hosting requirements, including a decree requiring public administration information systems to be hosted within national territory. International data transfer is allowed only under certain conditions, including consent and recommended anonymization or encryption. "We have a strong personal data protection law, a decree that says that every information system of the Central Administration must be hosted in secure data centers located within national territory, except for those that do not pose a risk to the organization, in accordance with the [government's] Guidelines for the Implementation and Use of Secure Data Centers. So perhaps our country is going to be more difficult to penetrate than other markets. You might have to comply with a lot of regulations, but in a world where data is so valuable, this can be a differentiator," explains Maneiro.

For Aramco, sovereign laws in Saudi Arabia decree that data, including oil fields data, company data, and personal data, cannot be stored anywhere but in the kingdom. This edict means that experimentation with gen AI use cases was initially on very small data sets. Another constraint has been access to semiconductors, as graphics processing units (GPUs)—specialized electronic circuits designed to rapidly process and render graphics, images, and video—have become increasingly difficult to obtain.

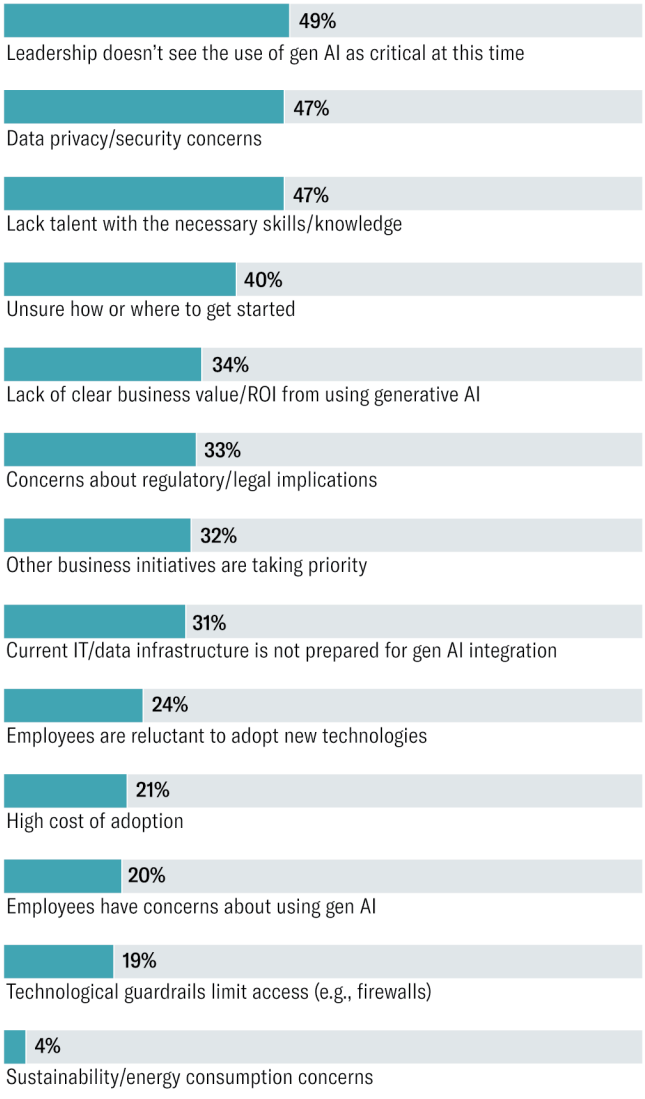
To combat ethical and data security challenges, Aramco's commitment to advancing responsible AI and AI

FIGURE 2

For Leadership, Generative AI Isn't Critical

Data privacy concerns and a lack of talent also are barriers to adoption

What barriers are preventing your organization from using generative AI? *Select all that apply.* (Among those whose organization "has considered but is not moving forward with" and "has not considered" gen AI.)



Base: 101 respondents. Not shown: 3% other, 2% none, 1% don't know.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, November 2024

30%

of software development work is already being enhanced by gen AI, says Eadie of Accenture.

cybersecurity began in early 2024 with the launch of the Aramco AI monitoring program, a transformative initiative designed to safeguard AI systems and ensure responsible innovation. "Rooted in four foundational pillars—visibility, cybersecurity, efficiency, and sustainability—we've built a robust framework to govern the AI life cycle, addressing ethical and critical security challenges such as hallucination and algorithmic bias, human-centric design, model inversion, data poisoning, and integrity risks," Al Thukair says.

Talent is another factor that plays an outsize role in whether gen AI is adopted in organizations. On the one hand, the critical technical talent needed to build and run gen AI applications is thin on the ground globally. On the other hand, current employees who are inspired and empowered to use gen AI applications in their daily work can serve as enthusiastic ambassadors for the technology.

To tackle the first challenge, Aramco has adopted a far-sighted approach to cultivating gen AI talent for the organization. First, Aramco actively forecasts future technology talent needs for the business, four to five years ahead, and recruits top students from across the kingdom to study around the world at top universities. "We model our pipeline," Al Khowaiter asserts. "We ask, 'What is the need in five years from now?' And the big need right now is data science and AI. A lot of those students are going to data science programs, AI programs, and computer science. We send about 400 high school graduates a year to the top 30 universities in the world. We sponsor the students, and in return, they work for us for the number of years that they were sponsored."

Second, Aramco has implemented a program for current executive management. As they are busy running operations, executive managers typically have little patience for innovation and tend to be hesitant to adopt new approaches unless there's a significant benefit and the risks are contained.

"The reality is our executives have operations to run," Al Khowaiter explains. "The plants must keep running and their businesses must keep producing. So, they don't want to try something new unless it is really going to make a huge difference and they can manage the risk. Part of our challenge is to show them what value they will gain."

The solution is an executive education program in partnership with Singularity, an educational institution that focuses on teaching managers how to use advanced technologies, taking executives to Silicon Valley to meet with technology startups to see the cutting-edge technology and how it is being applied in different companies. "This opens up the minds of the executives, and they come back really excited and enthusiastic about what they are going to do with AI," adds Al Khowaiter. Aramco also has an advanced degree program for scientists and developers who want a PhD in their field, either in R&D or in technology. "This is where we really train our professional workforce for the longer term," he notes.

Ashraf Al Tahini, vice president of the upstream data center at Aramco, explains how employees are using gen AI to unlock organizational excellence. "One of the key benefits has been the ability to provide employees with actionable insights related to Aramco operations as well as quick and easy access to critical information such as training resources, manuals, and industry standards," he explains.

For employees, this capability has greatly reduced the time spent searching for specific information. Additionally, gen AI has proven invaluable in helping employees comprehend complex data. "By analyzing and presenting data in more digestible formats, it allows employees at all levels to better understand technical concepts like well geometry, geological data, or production forecasts—and apply this knowledge effectively in their roles," Al Tahini asserts.

Scaling and Cloud Are Interconnected

A clear example of the power of gen AI to accelerate work and increase scale is software development. "Thirty percent of software development work is already being enhanced by gen AI, and that is expected to grow to a much larger number in the coming years," says Eadie. "What's happening is what used to be one of the most complex things a company can do—generate code—is becoming more efficient than ever. And this doesn't just impact the bottom line. It's creating a huge opportunity to accelerate modernization, tackle backlogs, and reinvent how software itself is designed."

To be sure, there is never a shortage of demand for new and enhanced software features. Historically, organizations were constrained by capacity, and fixed budgets meant a fixed number of software developers. Now software developers can do more in the time available. "You can clear the backlog in six months instead of a year," Eadie explains.

The ability of gen AI to enhance software development is a good example of its potential to accelerate work and drive scale. This scaling effect is not limited to software development alone. In fact, the principles of scaling gen AI apply across different industries and business functions. Having successfully piloted a use case that delivers value is necessary—but not sufficient—to enable scaling, as executives grapple with the cost of such an effort and the need to prove ROI.

According to Accenture, 60% of C-suite executives expect their gen AI solutions to be scaled across their organization in 2025, up from 36% in 2024.[1] "Organizations are still grappling with scaling," Eadie says. "And the challenge is not that it cannot be done. Twenty-eight percent of C-suite executives we surveyed identified 'limitations with data or technology infrastructure' as the biggest hurdle to implementing and scaling gen AI. If I was to provide advice to any organization, I would say, firstly, you need a cloud-enabled digital core. Cloud is what gives you the ability to scale."

Cloud provides organizations with the ability to scale up or down as needed, which means they only pay for what they use. Additionally, cloud provides the flexibility to experiment, deploy quickly, and access resources universally. Any organization can get started on an existing model trained on publicly available data. "What is important is that you build on that training and adapt the model with your own company data," Eadie posits, "because that is the only way that you can get a competitive advantage. If you want to differentiate, then you do need to enrich the model's thinking and output with all the data you have available as your own unique asset."

At Discover, platform centricity means the organization can focus on building and improving its applications rather than managing the underlying infrastructure, ultimately leading to increased efficiency and innovation. "The enterprise application developers want models they can interact with," says Nielsen. "We are trying to create environments where we can both host and develop. That goes back to platform centricity. Our cloud strategy is based on Kubernetes, an open-source container orchestration platform that automates the deployment, scaling, and management of applications. This means that data science and enterprise applications can come together with common capabilities. Platform centricity is really critical for us because of limited resources."

Al Tahini explains that at Aramco, owing to the uniqueness of its needs, the organization opted to develop a customized on-premises cloud service. "This purpose-built solution ensures seamless adherence to our rigorous security standards, providing a robust foundation for constructing, deploying, and automating AI workloads, including large language models," he asserts.

"When embarking on our journey to rapidly adopt gen AI, selecting the right AI platform and cloud service provider became a critical decision," says Al Tahini. "To navigate this challenge, we established clear criteria focused on meeting our stringent regulatory requirements, particularly in cybersecurity and data sovereignty and confidentiality."

Steps to Implementation

As the hype surrounding gen AI calms down, there is less skepticism about the promise of gen AI and more belief in the genuine value being created by use cases across industries and regions—and a dawning realization that ignoring gen AI is simply not an option. "It is not so much that embracing gen AI will give you a competitive advantage but rather that not embracing gen AI is going to give you a competitive disadvantage," Eadie asserts. "The risk of not jumping in is simply getting left behind. And once you start getting left behind, you start losing customers and you start losing revenues."

Gen AI implementation can require a lot of different things for different organizations. But there are some common themes to follow.

Demonstrate leadership buy-in. Employees—your staunch champions if activated and your fierce opponents otherwise—will follow the example of your CEO and leadership team. "On the buy-in side, the good thing is that our CEO has been a believer in AI for the last 10 years or so," says Al Khowaiter about the situation at Aramco. "Our CEO is inspiring and pushing our vision."

Cultivate your future and current talent. Globally, top talent for gen AI is in short supply. Organizations leading gen AI implementation initiatives are taking a farsighted approach to their talent needs. They're forecasting future needs and putting in place plans to meet these needs. They are also taking pains to inform—and inspire—their current employees about the benefits of gen AI in the workplace. "It is important that people are trained in how to program and also prompt their gen AI models," Eadie explains.

Select your ecosystem partners wisely. Selecting the right AI platform and cloud service provider is a critical decision. Suitable partners bring expertise, infrastructure, and capabilities including technical knowledge, experience, and specialist skills in areas like data privacy and security. "The ecosystem is incredibly important," says Eadie. "You need applications, infrastructure, and data to be seamlessly integrated. And all of those are provided by the ecosystem partners." Working with multiple vendors to fulfill different

Implementing gen AI is not a race, despite the hype, and a thoughtful and disciplined approach is the best way to ensure wise choices about hardware, software, and talent.

technological needs—such as hardware (including GPUs), software, cloud services, or specialized AI solutions—is a proven way for organizations to access diverse expertise and reduce dependency on a single vendor.

Treat data privacy and differences in regional regulation seriously. While concerns about risks, security, and data privacy are all over the map, some industries and regions face more stringent regulation than others do. Implementing gen AI is not a race, despite the hype, and a thoughtful and disciplined approach is the best way to ensure wise choices about hardware, software, and talent. "Irrespective of the use cases, Discover will either have a person in the middle of AI and customers or will highly restrict and ground AI in terms of what it's allowed to respond to and what it can respond with," Nielsen reports. "We have a heavy focus on moderation capabilities from a technical perspective."

Get started. Many of the use cases described started with a single idea and a single action. Applications can be as simple as using gen AI to help employees with their email communications, thereby increasing internal efficiencies. "First, we started simply as users of existing gen AI technology, particularly ChatGPT," Maneiro says about AGESIC. "Then, we started to look at how we could integrate the technology, based on our history of developing services for the government."

Conclusion

Early investments in gen AI and use cases across different industries and regions are helping develop a clearer picture of the value that implementing gen AI holds. Organizations of all shapes and sizes are seeing the potential for enhanced customer interactions, reduced costs, improved data-driven decision making, and increased productivity.

To unlock the best of gen AI—and avoid pitfalls—senior executives can consider lessons learned from early adopters. A core element is to focus on their workforce, both on cultivating the future talent they will need and on creating ambassadors for gen AI in their current pool of employees. Alongside a focus on people, demonstrating leadership buy-in, selecting ecosystem partners wisely, treating regulations seriously, and just getting started are the key actions executives can take.

It's clear that gen AI innovation will continue to evolve—and the potential benefits of proceeding at pace will need to be balanced with thoughtful strategic choices. "We spent the last four years heavily automating processes via traditional robot process automation," Nielsen asserts. "This space will continue to be a space for innovation as we look at more intelligent automations that go beyond simple back-office automations. While pundits have proclaimed 2025 the year of the agent, I think you will see Discover step into this space carefully. And while there will likely be use cases that give agents a certain level of autonomy, I would anticipate that those are not directly customer facing and will have human validations on some level."

The future belongs to those organizations that can integrate gen AI not as a standalone tool but as a foundational element of their business strategy. Such a course involves choosing the right vendors, using robust infrastructure, and addressing critical barriers such as data security, ethical concerns, and talent gaps. The challenge—and opportunity—for organizations today is to navigate this landscape thoughtfully alongside the best ecosystem partners to ensure that the promise of gen AI translates into meaningful progress.

Endnotes

1 Accenture, "Accenture Pulse of Change," January 2025. https://www.accenture.com/ph-en/insights/pulse-of-change.

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