

Discover three characteristics that foster an AI-ready culture



Introduction

A successful AI strategy must consider cultural issues as well as business issues. Becoming an AI-ready organization requires a fundamental transformation in how you do things, how employees relate to each other, what skills they have, and what processes and principles guide your behaviors. This transformation goes to the core of an organization's culture, and it's vital for organizations to tackle such transformation with a holistic approach.

Fostering an AI-ready culture requires:

- 1) Being a data-driven organization
- 2) Empowering people to participate in the AI transformation and creating an inclusive environment that allows cross-functional, multidisciplinary collaboration
- 3) Creating a responsible approach to AI that addresses the challenging questions AI presents

Of course, this is only possible with strong leadership that drives change by both adopting the changes this transformation will require and actively supporting people through them.

Below, we share our perspective on the changes you need to make to achieve an AI-ready culture.

Data-driven

The first step is to ensure that you have **the best and most complete data**, and that you **can reason over your entire data estate**. This is the foundation of any good AI system.

Due to data ownership or storage issues, most organizations generate, organize, and use data in a siloed manner. While each department may have a good view of the data coming from their own processes, they may lack other information that could be relevant to their operations.

For instance, a sales department might not have a complete view of a customer, because they're missing pieces of data, like e-commerce activity and payment status, that are controlled by other departments. In this case, a seller may make the mistake of trying to sell a customer an insurance policy that they had already purchased through an online channel.

By sharing data across the organization, the sum is greater than the parts. It's no longer each piece of data that matters, but what that data adds up to: a unified view of the customer. **With that unified view, you can make better decisions, act more effectively, and provide a better customer experience.**

AI Business School



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BECOMING DATA-DRIVEN



Share data across your organization



Adopt rigorous data practices

The quality of the data is also key. In this example, if the customer data was riddled with errors, like inaccurate contact information, irrelevant data, or duplication, it wouldn't matter that the data had been unified; the seller could still make significant mistakes in interacting with the customer.

Just as quality of data is key to creating next-level experiences for customers, it's also key to successful AI. **An AI model is only as good and complete as the data it can operate on and learn from.** So, it is of paramount importance to work in a way that ensures your data is as complete and rigorous as possible.


In summary, becoming data-driven means acquiring a mindset of data sharing and rigor that drives how you work and relate, and ultimately how you collaborate. This enables you to realize the value of AI and better confront the challenges that AI brings.


Empowering and inclusive


Fostering an AI-ready culture means **empowering people to be part of the AI transformation**. Fundamental to empowerment is enablement: giving people the space, resources, security, and support to improve what they do with AI. Empowerment also requires allowing room for errors, encouraging experimentation and continuous improvement, helping people get the knowledge and the skills they need, and of course celebrating and acknowledging success.

It also means creating an **inclusive environment**, one that is predicated on the **willingness and ability of employees to work in cross-functional teams that cut across organizational boundaries**. Furthermore, it means making those who best understand the business a central piece of your transformation process. Data scientists working in isolation often create models that lack the business knowledge, purpose, or value that would make them an effective AI resource. Similarly, business people working in isolation lack the technical knowledge to understand what can be done from a data science perspective.

BECOMING EMPOWERING AND INCLUSIVE

 Provide resources

 Create a culture of sharing and collaboration

 Make those that know your business a central piece of your transformation process

But by enabling cross-functional teams that include both data scientists and the business employees closest to the business need, you can create powerful and effective AI solutions. An example of this is our hugely successful compliance predictive analytics tools, which were inspired and developed by employees working on our finance teams. As explained in the introductory video of this module, **they were successful only because they were created with the insights of those closest to the business need**. This illustrates how powerful it is to create an inclusive, cross-organizational collaborative approach.

In summary, creating an **empowering and inclusive environment** means **providing resources, creating a culture of sharing and collaboration**, and **making those that know the business a central piece of your transformation process**. This enables you to continuously develop and enhance your organization's capabilities with AI.

Responsible

From our perspective, the third key element of an AI-ready culture is fostering a responsible approach to AI. As AI continues to evolve, it has the potential to drive considerable changes to our lives, raising complex and challenging questions about what future we want to see. Organizations need to ask themselves: How do we design, build, and use AI systems to create a positive impact on individuals and society? How can we ensure that AI systems treat everyone fairly? How can we best prepare the workforce for the new AI era?

These are questions that deserve a dedicated discussion and will be explored more deeply in the following module, Implications of responsible AI for business.

Next step

As Mitra Azirad explained in her introductory video, this cultural transformation is only possible with strong leadership that drives change. Continue on to the [next document](#) to learn how leaders can use change management approaches to make these cultural changes real.