

# Executive Whitepaper Data Readiness for AI



Generative AI promises transformative impact, yet most enterprises are stuck in a Gen AI paradox: widespread adoption without measurable returns. Why? Data readiness. Nearly 80% of companies have deployed AI, but fragmented systems, poor data quality, and unclear governance block scaling and value realization. Without clean, accessible, and well-governed data, even the most advanced AI initiatives fail. This whitepaper reveals why data readiness is the critical enabler for AI success, quantifies the cost of inaction, and outlines the pillars - accessibility, governance, security, compliance, and strategic alignment - that unlock trapped value. Finally, we show how Trissential Essential Business Model and deep data expertise deliver a tailored path to close readiness gaps and accelerate AI ROI. Executives will leave with a clear roadmap and an invitation to kickstart their journey.

**Data readiness isn't optional... It's the difference between AI hype and AI impact.**

## The Data Readiness Challenge in Large Enterprises

Ensuring data readiness is easier said than done in large enterprises. Over decades, Fortune 1000 firms have accumulated sprawling data estates – across legacy IT, cloud platforms, and third-party systems – often working in isolation. This leads to data silos: critical information trapped within departmental or application-specific databases that don't talk to each other. It's common to find separate data fiefdoms in marketing, sales, finance, and operations, each providing only a fragment of the full picture. The result is partial insights, inconsistent metrics, and an organization that cannot fully leverage its collective knowledge <sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup>. Despite rhetoric around “data-driven” strategy, fragmentation and lack of accessibility remain endemic.

Nearly 80% of companies report moderate to high degrees of data silos, and 69% admit they cannot achieve a comprehensive, single view of enterprise data or customers <sup>[4]</sup>. In practical terms, this means different teams rarely operate from the same data, undermining collaboration and agility.

Another major hurdle is data governance (or lack thereof). Governance defines the policies, ownership, and quality standards for data – yet many large organizations have significant governance gaps or unclear accountability. Multiple versions of truth proliferate, and data quality issues (duplicates, errors, stale records) go uncorrected. Ownership issues are rampant: it's often unclear

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who “owns” a dataset or is responsible for its accuracy and maintenance. Without clear data stewardship and governance frameworks, it becomes extremely difficult to prepare reliable data for AI at scale. In one survey, 80% of organizations acknowledged they lack a robust data governance program to enforce policies and standards, and 23% admitted to persisting ungoverned data silos within their business <sup>[5]</sup>. These gaps explain why data preparation is so difficult in large enterprises – no one has full visibility or control.

Compounding the problem, many enterprises face outdated data architecture and tooling. Data may be spread across on-premises legacy systems that were never designed for today's analytics, as well as modern cloud data lakes – without seamless integration. Metadata management is minimal, meaning teams struggle to even find what data exists and assess its lineage or quality. As a Gartner analyst succinctly put it, traditional data management practices are often “too slow,

too structured, and too rigid” for AI needs; data is frequently collected in silos across various repositories, with inadequate metadata to evaluate its AI readiness <sup>[6]</sup>. This technical debt makes it laborious to gather and curate data for machine learning or generative AI projects.

Finally, organizational culture and processes often impede data readiness. Siloed mindsets keep departments guarding their data, while strict hierarchies and compliance rules can lock data away from analysts and data scientists. Without an enterprise-wide commitment to break down silos and treat data as a strategic asset, these barriers remain entrenched.

Why is data readiness so difficult? In summary, large enterprises are wrestling with a perfect storm of siloed systems, governance gaps, lack of unified access, fragmented tooling, and unclear ownership. Each of these issues is a formidable challenge on its own; together, they create friction at every step of an AI initiative, from data discovery and cleaning to model training and deployment. The next section quantifies just how widespread these problems are – and the value at stake for organizations that fail to solve them.

**63% of organizations do not have (or are unsure if they have) the right data management practices for AI <sup>[7]</sup>**

## The High Cost of Poor Data Readiness

Data readiness is not just an IT inconvenience, it's a fundamental business problem with measurable impact on AI adoption and bottom-line results. Quantitative market research reveals the scope of the issue: a majority of enterprises are facing data-related obstacles that slow down or derail their AI efforts. According to Gartner, 63% of organizations do not have (or are unsure if they have) the right data management practices for AI <sup>[7]</sup>. This lack of foundational data capability is directly undermining AI projects. Gartner predicts that through 2026,

60% of AI projects will be abandoned because they do not have AI-ready data supporting them <sup>[8]</sup>. In other words, well over half of AI initiatives could fail not due to algorithms or talent, but due to the inability to get the right data in the right condition for AI use. For executives investing in AI, this is a stark warning: without data readiness, the odds of success are grim.

Numerous studies underscore that data issues are a top barrier to AI value. A Deloitte survey found 55% of organizations have avoided certain generative AI use cases specifically due to data quality, privacy, or security concerns <sup>[9]</sup>. More than half of companies are essentially saying “we can’t even attempt some AI projects because our data isn’t up to par or is too risky to use.” This shows how poor data readiness directly translates to lost opportunities – use cases that never get off the ground. Even when AI projects do launch, data problems often keep them stuck in pilot mode. McKinsey’s 2025 global survey on AI notes that about 90% of high-value “vertical” AI use cases (e.g. function-specific solutions) remain stuck in pilot and aren’t scaled, due in part to technical and data hurdles <sup>[10]</sup>. The consequence is a widespread “AI adoption–value gap”: Nearly eight in ten companies have experimented with AI, yet almost the same number report no significant bottom-line impact from it <sup>[11]</sup>. Poor data readiness is a major contributor to this paradox, as data complexity and silos prevent AI from delivering tangible results at scale.

The economic opportunity cost of these data issues is enormous. Globally, the economic impact of data silos and poor data quality is estimated around \$3.1 trillion per year in lost productivity, inefficiency, and missed opportunities <sup>[12]</sup>. Employees spend an estimated 12 hours per week hunting for information across disparate systems <sup>[13]</sup> – time that could be refocused on analysis and innovation if data were more accessible <sup>[14]</sup>. Revenue loss is also significant: organizations with fragmented data architectures can see up to 30% lower revenue due to inability to cross-sell, analyze markets, or respond quickly <sup>[12]</sup>. In one metric, 83% of organizations lack a defined data strategy for AI and 76% admit they do not leverage data consistently to drive performance <sup>[15]</sup>. These figures explain why so much potential value remains untapped. McKinsey estimates generative AI alone could add \$2.6-4.4 trillion in economic value annually across industries <sup>[16]</sup> – but

only if enterprises can harness their data for AI. Those failing to do so will miss out on their share of this value, ceding competitive advantage to data-mature peers.

Beyond lost upside, poor data readiness carries direct risks and costs. Inadequate data controls and integration can lead to compliance violations or security breaches – the average cost of a data breach is \$4.35 million per incident globally <sup>[17]</sup>. Silos and lack of governance exacerbate these exposures by making it harder to monitor data usage and quality. It is telling that 58% of organizations are concerned about data privacy issues in AI, and 57% worry about data security <sup>[18]</sup>. These concerns often slow down or halt AI deployments in sensitive domains, for fear of regulatory or reputational fallout. The message is clear: the cost of doing nothing (maintaining the status quo of low data readiness) is far higher than the cost of investing in data enablement. Enterprises stand to lose millions in inefficiencies and forgo millions (or billions) in unrealized AI-driven value if data issues persist. Conversely, those who make data readiness a strategic priority can unlock substantial value quickly by accelerating AI use cases that boost revenue, reduce costs, and mitigate risk.

Gartner predicts that by 2026, 60% of AI projects will be abandoned due to lack of “AI-ready” data <sup>[8]</sup>. This can be visualized as a chart of AI project outcomes, highlighting the portion lost to data issues – a compelling call-to-action for any executive reviewing AI investments.

The quantitative evidence leaves little doubt: data readiness problems are pervasive and materially slowing down AI adoption across the enterprise landscape. The next section outlines what “data ready” really means by breaking down its key components. Understanding these elements will help organizations diagnose their gaps and focus their improvement efforts where it counts.

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## Key Components of Data Readiness for AI

Achieving data readiness for AI involves a multifaceted approach. It's not just one thing, but a combination of people, process, and technology capabilities that ensure data is fit for AI consumption. The following are the key components of data readiness and why each is vital:

### 1. Data Accessibility and Silos

Data governance for AI includes forming a council, using data quality tools, and documenting definitions and lineage via catalogs or glossaries. Metadata management (part of governance) provides visibility into data origins and usage. Strong governance aligns policies with business goals; for example, personalization requires unified, complete customer data. Better data quality builds analyst confidence and enables AI models to perform significantly better. Conversely, if data remains siloed, AI initiatives will produce partial or biased results at best. As one industry study put it, fragmented data and analytics make it impossible to get a single view of customers or operations, impairing insights and decision-making <sup>[4]</sup>. Thus, establishing pipelines or APIs to connect formerly isolated data is a cornerstone of readiness.

Practically, improving accessibility might entail creating a centralized data catalog or repository, using cloud data warehouses that many applications feed into, or deploying enterprise integration platforms. It also includes fostering a culture of data sharing rather than hoarding. Leadership must encourage teams to view data as a shared asset. When done right, better accessibility means data scientists spend less time wrangling or searching for data and more time building AI solutions. One can measure progress by metrics like reduction in time to locate and prepare data, or increase in cross-department data usage. The bottom line: Eliminating data silos and ensuring broad accessibility is foundational – it unlocks the latent value in enterprise data that AI can then amplify.

### 2. Data Governance and Quality

Data governance provides the framework and accountability to manage data as a strategic asset. It encompasses defining data owners/stewards,

data standards, quality controls, and policies for how data is used and maintained. Without governance, chaos reigns – different versions of data proliferate, quality issues go unaddressed, and compliance risks multiply. For AI, governance is especially critical because AI systems are highly sensitive to garbage-in, garbage-out: poor quality data yields poor model outcomes. Key governance elements for AI readiness include: establishing a single source of truth for core business entities, setting data quality criteria (and monitoring them), and instituting processes for data correction and enrichment. Data ownership must be clearly assigned so that every important dataset has someone responsible for its accuracy and lifecycle. Notably, Gartner has observed that many organizations lack these basics – recall that 80% of firms admitted not having a robust data governance program in place <sup>[19]</sup>. Closing this gap is essential for trustworthy AI.

Data governance for AI often includes forming a governance council, using data quality tools (profiling, deduplication, etc.), and documenting definitions and lineage through catalogs or glossaries. Metadata management - covered next - is part of governance, providing visibility into data origins and usage. Strong governance aligns policies with business goals; for example, if personalization is a priority, customer data must be unified and complete. Improving data quality delivers direct benefits: analysts gain confidence, and AI models trained on consistent, high-quality data perform far better. Effective governance and quality management reduce the time spent cleaning and reconciling data (which today eats up ~80% of data scientists' time) and increase the reliability of AI insights. As a result, organizations with good governance see faster AI project cycles and far fewer failures. Data readiness = data you can trust. Achieving that trust at enterprise scale is the mission of data governance.

### 3. Metadata Management and Discovery

If data is to be ready for AI, organizations must know what data they have, where it resides, and how to find it. This is the role of metadata management – handling the “data about data.” Metadata includes information like data schemas, definitions, owners, provenance, and usage history. Robust metadata management is a linchpin of

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data readiness because it enables data scientists and AI engineers to discover useful datasets and understand their context without tedious manual investigation. Imagine a library without a catalog; that's what a large enterprise is like without metadata management – a trove of knowledge with no easy way to navigate it. Sadly, many companies are in exactly this position: valuable data exists that could power AI use cases, but no one is aware of it or they don't trust its contents. Gartner notes that organizations often lack the metadata to assess the readiness of data for AI <sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, moving from “passive” metadata (minimal or static info) to “active” metadata (continuously enriched, searchable, and utilized for automation) is key <sup>[20]</sup>. Active metadata can power data recommendation systems, automated data prep, and intelligent data catalogs that significantly speed up AI development.

Steps to improve in this area include deploying modern data catalog tools, instituting data tagging and documentation as part of the data lifecycle, and encouraging a data culture where employees contribute knowledge about datasets (crowdsourced metadata). When done well, metadata management means an analyst can, for example, quickly find all available customer-related data across the enterprise and determine which tables are most reliable or recent. It reduces duplication because teams can discover existing data instead of creating yet another extract. For AI, metadata is also crucial for features like data lineage and model transparency – knowing what source data fed an AI model and how it has been processed. This feeds into governance and compliance as well. Overall, metadata is the connective tissue that links data assets to those who would use them. By investing in metadata management, enterprises create a data environment where AI teams can move with speed and confidence, rather than hunting for needles in haystacks. It's an often overlooked but absolutely essential component of data readiness.



## 4. Data Security and Compliance

Any AI initiative depends on responsible, secure data use, making security and compliance a core pillar of data readiness. Enterprises must ensure mobilizing data for AI doesn't expose sensitive information or violate regulations. This requires strong controls for access, encryption, anonymization, and auditing. In regulated industries, compliance rules like GDPR and HIPAA extend to AI datasets and models. A data-ready organization classifies data by sensitivity, enforces role-based access, and monitors data flows into AI systems. Without these measures, projects risk being blocked by legal or security teams. Over 55% of organizations cite data security and privacy as a major barrier to adopting generative AI <sup>[9][18]</sup>. A breach or misuse can derail AI projects, damage brand reputation, and incur hefty fines.

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To be AI-ready, data security should be “baked in” from the start. Strategies include data masking or tokenization for training data, secure data enclaves or sandboxes for AI development, and clear guidelines on what data can be used for which AI purposes (aligned with consent and regulatory constraints). Compliance and security teams should partner with data scientists to conduct Privacy Impact Assessments and ensure models do not inadvertently leak sensitive information. Aligning with frameworks for Responsible AI (which Trisential practices via a human-centered AI philosophy <sup>[21]</sup>) can give structure to these efforts. A practical outcome of robust security/compliance readiness is that organizations can pursue AI use cases (even in sensitive domains like customer analytics or HR) with confidence, because they know controls are in place to protect individuals and comply with laws. It turns data from a liability into a trusted asset. In summary, no enterprise can be truly data-ready for AI without fortifying the security, privacy, and ethical safeguards around its data. This not only avoids the downside (breaches,

lawsuits) but also builds trust – both internally and with customers – that AI solutions are being deployed responsibly.

## 5. Alignment to Business Strategy

Last but certainly not least, data readiness must be aligned to business strategy. This means that the efforts to improve data (access, quality, etc.) are guided by the organization's strategic goals and AI use cases that matter most. Too often, companies invest in data lakes or platforms without a clear linkage to business outcomes – leading to “data infrastructure for its own sake.” In contrast, a strategic alignment approach starts with questions like: What are our top business priorities where AI can make a difference? Is it improving customer experience? Optimizing supply chain? Enhancing product innovation? Once these are identified, data readiness initiatives should target the data domains that feed those priorities. For example, if customer experience personalization is a strategic goal, focus on unifying customer data across channels as a primary data readiness task. If operational efficiency is a goal, ensure operational data (logs, sensor data, process data) is accessible and analytics-ready. This alignment ensures data readiness efforts deliver tangible value quickly, building momentum and executive support. It also helps prioritize resources – you can't boil the ocean, but you can tackle the most strategically important data first.

Alignment also implies that business leaders are closely involved in data readiness programs, not just IT. The voice of the C-Suite and business unit heads should drive what “ready” looks like. After all, data and AI are means to an end – the end being competitive advantage, revenue growth, cost reduction, risk management, etc. Organizations with high data maturity often have a strong data strategy that mirrors the business strategy. Notably, a survey found 83% of organizations do not have a clear data strategy for AI or a roadmap for how data will support business objectives <sup>[15]</sup>. This is a sobering statistic, but it highlights an opportunity: by formulating a data strategy tightly linked to business aims, companies can join the elite ranks of those who do derive real value from AI. Concretely, alignment may be achieved via governance bodies that include business and IT, OKRs/KPIs that connect data improvements to business metrics, and selecting AI pilot projects

that demonstrate quick wins in line with strategic goals. When every data readiness initiative can answer “which strategic priority does this serve?”, you know alignment is in place. The outcome is an organization where data is not just an IT asset, but a strategic asset fueling growth and innovation, with AI as the engine converting data into insights and action.

## Trissential's Solution

Data readiness may seem daunting, but this is precisely where Trissential helps enterprises turn strategy into results. We approach each client's challenges with our Essential Business Model, a proven framework that correlates strategy, management, and execution to drive sustainable improvement. Rather than one-size-fits-all consulting, Trissential practices “one-size-fits-one” solutions tailored to each organization's unique strategy, brand, and culture. This flexible, client-centric ethos is crucial for addressing data readiness because every enterprise has a different data landscape and business objective. We begin by understanding your strategic goals and current pain points – whether it's accelerating AI-driven customer insights or improving operational analytics – and then craft a roadmap that aligns data initiatives to those goals. By aligning strategy with execution, we ensure data transformation efforts directly support the outcomes the C-suite cares about.

How does Trissential enable data readiness and AI value? It starts with a fast, effective assessment. We offer a Data Readiness for AI Scorecard – essentially a data and AI maturity diagnostic that quickly gauges where your organization stands and what gaps exist. In a matter of weeks, our experts review your data architecture, governance practices, data quality, and AI use case pipeline. This accelerated assessment identifies critical barriers such as siloed data sources, governance weaknesses, or skill gaps, and benchmarks your AI maturity. The deliverable is a practical, prioritized roadmap for responsible AI adoption. This roadmap lays out both quick wins and longer-term investments to get your data ready (for example, integrating a key data silo, implementing a data catalog, establishing a governance committee, training staff on data ethics, etc.). Many organizations spend months

or even years stumbling due to unknown data issues – Trissential condenses that learning curve and provides clarity on where to focus now for maximum impact.

Next, we bring deep expertise in data transformation and governance to execute the roadmap alongside your team. Trissential has a 20+ year track record of partnering with Fortune 500 firms to modernize their data ecosystems and deliver complex digital transformations. Our Data & AI practice covers everything from data strategy and governance frameworks to advanced analytics, AI development, and hyperautomation. Importantly, our approach is holistic – we address the technology and the human aspects (process, culture, change management). For example, if a company struggles with silo mentality, Trissential can facilitate the creation of cross-functional data councils or implement collaboration tools as part of the solution. If data quality is an issue, we bring proven methods to cleanse and enrich data, establishing a single source of truth. And if compliance is a concern, we leverage our experience in regulated industries to bake governance and ethical AI principles into the pipeline from day one. Essentially, we act as a guide and an extra set of expert hands to rapidly elevate your data readiness in the areas that count.

Let's highlight a few of Trissential's key strengths and how they translate into value for clients:

- **Tailored, One-Size-Fits-One Solutions:** Trissential firmly believes that every company is unique. We avoid cookie-cutter approaches, instead designing solutions that fit our client's specific strategy and culture. For data readiness, this means Trissential won't push a generic data lake or governance model; we first understand what “ready” should look like for your business and then implement accordingly. Clients often cite this flexibility as a major differentiator – you get a solution that feels custom-built, because it is.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Trissential's consultants ensure that data initiatives are tightly aligned to business objectives (this is ingrained in our Essential Business Model). We help connect the dots between technical fixes and strategic outcomes. For example, when implementing a metadata management system, we will define success in terms of, say, faster product launch

analytics or improved customer retention metrics – not just technical KPIs. By keeping efforts business-focused, we guarantee executive buy-in and demonstrable ROI from data readiness investments

- **Fast and Effective Assessments:** Speed matters in today's environment. Trissential's Data Readiness for AI Scorecard jump-starts the journey by quickly uncovering gaps in data, governance, and skill. This "strategy sprint" prevents analysis-paralysis. One CDO remarked that Trissential's team accomplished in a few weeks what their organization had struggled with for a year – providing a clear-eyed view of their data maturity and a roadmap forward. The rapid assessment means you can take action sooner and begin realizing value in months, not years
- **Cost & Value Efficiency – 30% Better, Faster, Cheaper, Deeper:** Trissential prides itself on delivering solutions with exceptional efficiency and depth. Internally, we've put a stake in the ground: the work we do is 30% better, faster, and more cost-effective than traditional approaches. This isn't just a slogan – it comes from optimized processes, reusable frameworks, and a focus on "essential" improvements that matter. For clients, it means engaging Trissential can be significantly more efficient in terms of time-to-value and budget impact. We cut through complexity to drive results quickly (for instance, streamlining a data integration that might take others 6 months into a 4-month project). And "deeper" refers to the thoroughness – Trissential doesn't just address surface symptoms; we tackle root causes in data governance or architecture so the improvements are sustainable (hence the "lasting outcomes" they strive for)
- **Proven Success Stories:** Trissential's experience is not just theoretical – we have delivered tangible outcomes for diverse clients, which serve as proof points. For example, we helped a manufacturing company turn 30 years of isolated internal knowledge into a generative AI-powered assistant, effectively creating a virtual expert that alleviated a critical talent shortage. This involved integrating unstructured data (emails, documents) and applying AI – a true data readiness feat that unlocked new value from dormant information. In another case,

Trissential partnered with a major bank in Asia to modernize and automate its anti-money-laundering compliance processes. By integrating data from multiple systems and applying AI for pattern detection, they achieved 93% accuracy in detecting suspicious transactions and enabled 24/7 real-time processing – all with seamless data integration and no manual data silos hampering the flow. These success stories illustrate Trissential's ability to deliver end-to-end solutions – from data consolidation and governance to AI algorithm deployment – resulting in measurable business outcomes (faster scaling, improved accuracy, cost savings, etc.)

- **Trusted Partnership and Change Management:**

A subtle but important strength is Trissential's emphasis on trust and people. We call our team members "Essentialists," reflecting a culture of committed, hands-on partnership. Clients often note that we feel like an extension of their own team, working with high transparency and integrity. This matters for data initiatives because getting buy-in across an organization requires trust. Trissential helps manage the change – whether it's persuading teams to share data or adopt new governance processes – through workshops, training (they even conduct Generative AI literacy programs), and collaborative design. The result is not just a technical fix, but a lasting change in how the organization treats and uses data

In sum, Trissential operates as a catalyst and enabler to accelerate your journey from data chaos to data confidence. Whereas many technology integrators focus narrowly on tools, Trissential addresses the strategic big picture and the execution details in tandem. And unlike pure strategists, we roll up our sleeves to implement, ensuring recommendations turn into reality. This balanced approach – strategy + execution, tailored to each client – is at the heart of Trissential's Essential Business Model and is exactly what's needed to solve complex data readiness challenges.

**The work Trissential does is 30% better, faster, and more cost-effective than traditional approaches**



## Your First Step Toward AI Transformation

Data readiness for AI is no longer optional... it's the foundation of successful AI transformation. Neglecting data fundamentals leads to stalled projects, wasted investments, and missed opportunities. Organizations that break silos, strengthen governance, manage metadata, secure data, and align with business goals position themselves to capture the full promise of generative AI and advanced analytics. They move faster and with confidence, turning data into a competitive advantage. For senior leaders, the mandate is clear: invest in data readiness today to unlock AI value tomorrow.

The journey doesn't have to be complex. Trissential's **Data Readiness for AI Scorecard** offers a practical first step. **In under two weeks and less than 90 minutes of your team's time, you'll get:**

- A **benchmarked scorecard** against industry best practices
- Visibility into **hidden revenue and savings opportunities** in your data
- **Confidence to deploy and scale AI** safely and effectively

From there, you can leverage Trissential's tailored partnership to implement solutions efficiently, tapping into our deep bench of data engineers, governance specialists, and AI experts. The result? Data that's accessible, trusted, and fully leveraged to drive innovation and growth.

Don't let poor data readiness stall your AI initiatives because the value at stake is too high. Contact Trissential to receive your Scorecard and start unlocking data-driven value today. With the right partner, you can turn data readiness from a challenge into your organization's secret weapon for AI success.

**Let's unlock your AI potential together... one strategic data step at a time.**

# Is your data ready for AI and delivering business value?

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