Operationalising AI: From Strategy to Sustainable Impact

As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, organisations face the pivotal challenge of moving beyond isolated experimentation towards enterprise-wide integration that delivers lasting value.

AI has long been heralded as transformative, yet many leaders are unsure how to kickstart that transformation. In short, how can we operationalise AI by shifting from ad hoc tool use to integrated systems that drive sustainable growth?

It's clearly a question many are struggling to answer. **According to Boston Consulting Group,** 74% of companies failed to translate AI initiatives into lasting value in 2024.

To explore how organisations can harness AI's full value-generating potential, I hosted a webinar with Darren Jackson, Director of People at **Correla**, and Daniel Spence, CEO of **Cybix.ai.** Together, we discussed what it takes to unlock enterprise-wide value from AI through strategic clarity, cultural alignment and a people-first mindset.

Here are some of the key insights that emerged from our conversation.

What's holding businesses back?

For many organisations, the biggest challenge is knowing where to start with AI to ensure it drives lasting value. As Daniel of Cybix explained: "You'd be surprised how many people don't have an AI strategy. Quite often, they just know it needs to be done but they don't know what it looks like."

This uncertainty is often compounded by legacy systems and rigid operating models - reshaping them can seem like an insurmountable challenge.

But Daniel highlighted that one of AI's strengths is its ability to work with existing technology: "The real beauty of AI and automation is integrating it with what's already there. You don't need to tear everything to the ground and start from scratch. You can use the existing toolbox and then integrate AI in the gaps where you would normally need a human to make a decision."

This pragmatic approach reduces disruption and helps ease the anxiety that often accompanies technological change. Employees understandably fear being replaced or left behind, especially when AI is introduced without clear communication or support.

By recognising that resistance can stem from a desire for clarity and reassurance, organisations can turn scepticism into engagement. In practice, that means helping teams understand what's possible and how AI can enhance rather than diminish their roles.

Aligning AI strategy with business objectives

Driving company-wide integration takes strategic direction. And that comes from the top. Daniel and Darren both emphasised the importance of aligning AI strategy with core business goals from the outset.

At Cybix, this begins with understanding what the organisation is trying to achieve - whether that's growth, efficiency, or preparing for an exit - and ensuring that AI implementation supports those outcomes. Even tactical initiatives, such as automating social media, can deliver strategic value when they're tied to broader objectives and embraced by teams on the ground.

At Correla, CEO Sian Jones has embedded an "AI-first mindset" into the company's vision and values to make sure it is at the core of everything they do.

# Empowering people to shape the AI journey

The top-down clarity noted above provides a strong foundation, but sustaining momentum requires more than leadership intent. It requires mechanisms that connect values and strategy to the realities of how people work every day from the bottom up.

Operationalising AI isn't just a technical challenge, it's a human one. For AI to succeed, it must be relevant to individual roles, allowing employees to co-create the outcomes leaders have set.

At Cybix, Daniel's team takes an immersive approach to achieve this. They spend time inside departments observing workflows and identifying opportunities for AI to add value. This hands-on method builds trust and ensures that solutions are tailored to real needs.

Correla has also invested in grassroots engagement. They host an "AI moment" each month that gives colleagues the space to share how they've used AI, what worked, and what didn't. It's a simple but powerful way to build confidence, normalise experimentation and share practical insights.

Cross-functional collaboration plays a key role too. Darren described how Correla has used the idea of "communities of practice" to connect innovators across teams. These networks help ideas flow, prevent silos developing, and ensure that AI adoption is shaped by those closest to the work.
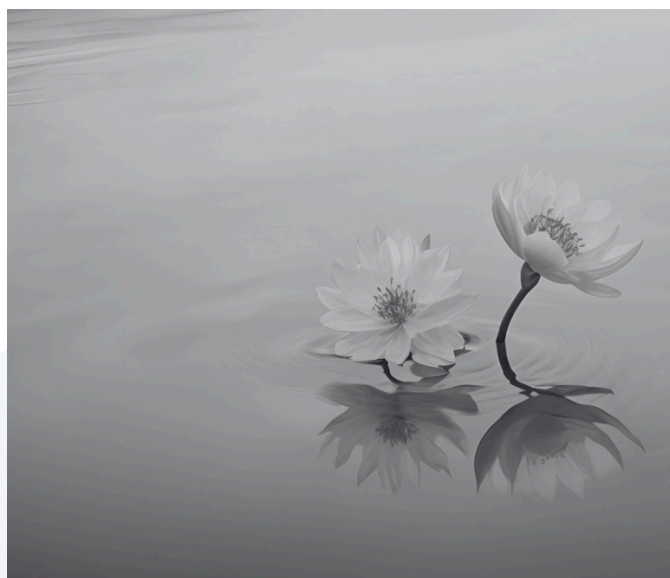
Rethinking governance in the age of AI

Looking ahead, Daniel sees a workplace in which every employee collaborates with an AI agent such as a marketing assistant, virtual PA, or data analyst.

This reframes AI as an extension of your team, carrying out day-to-day tasks – a digital colleague rather than a tool. In turn, organisations may need to review and make changes to their governance model in terms of where accountability lies, decision making rights and how teams are designed and operate.

Darren emphasised that this transformation isn't just structural but also social. Successful AI adoption depends as much on connection and shared learning as it does on technical capability. In this new landscape, governance must evolve from 'control' to 'enablement', creating the conditions for responsible experimentation that accepts failures as part of the learning process.
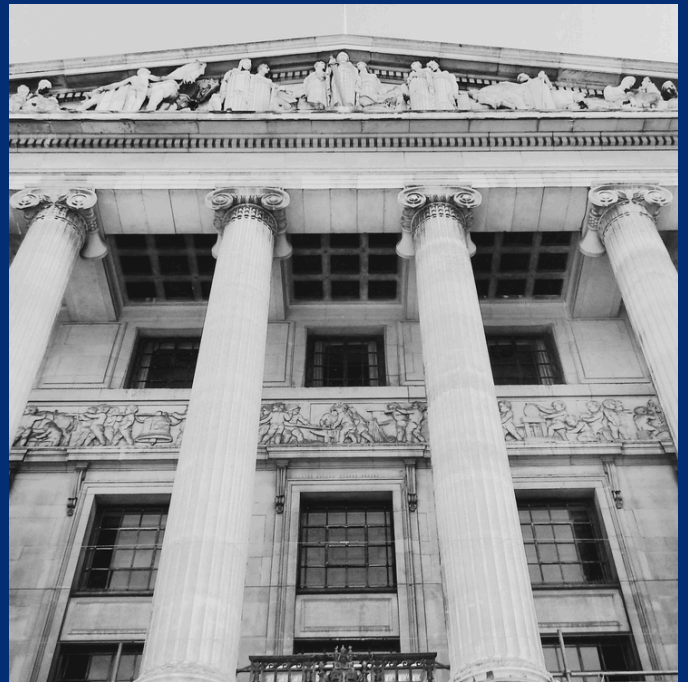
Turning possibility into practice

Operationalising AI is complex, but it's not something to fear. It is an opportunity to get ahead of the competition, yes, but also an opportunity to operate more effectively.

In a landscape often clouded by uncertainty and hype it's the practical, human-centred steps organisations are taking that are driving successful enterprise-wide adoption. And, ultimately, moving businesses beyond experimentation to deliver genuine, transformative value.
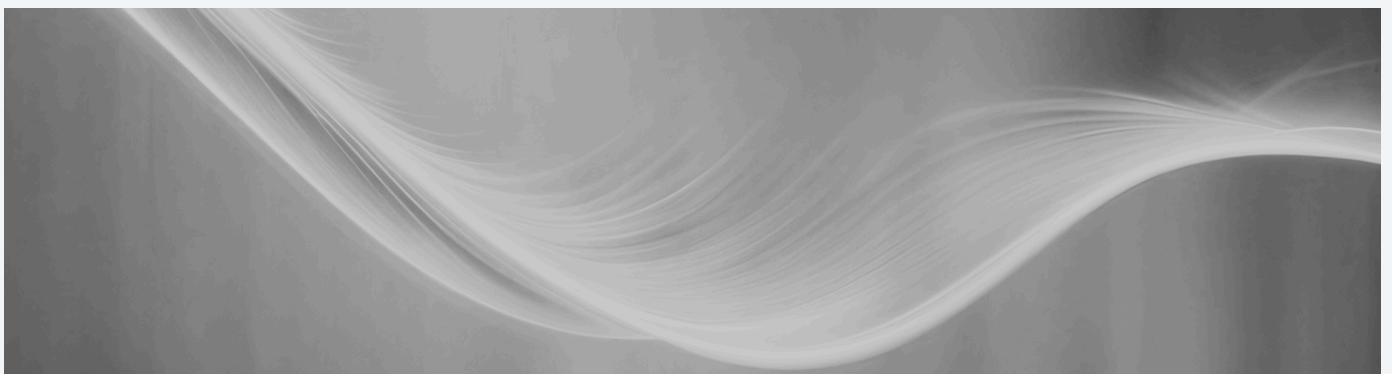
To find out how to accelerate the impact of AI in your business watch the full webinar on demand on the link below.

Watch now

And for support developing the strategic clarity and people-first approach you need to operationalise AI, get in touch.

Transformation • Organisation • Implementation