CULTURE EATS AI FOR BREAKFAST

CI&T

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WHY 95% OF AI INITIATIVES FAIL AND HOW TO BE THE 5% THAT SCALE

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Learn About:

LEAN FRAMEWORK — ENGINEERING CHANGE
CULTURAL ADOPTION — MEASURABLE OUTCOMES
DATA & GOVERNANCE — VERTICAL IMPACT
ECOSYSTEM ORCHESTRATION — FUTURE GROWTH

FORWARD

In North America, the urgency around AI is unmistakable. The pace of innovation is relentless, expectations rise every quarter, and the distance between experimentation and real enterprise scale is often wider than it looks. In this environment, the challenge is rarely access to technology—it's the ability to industrialize learning.

CI&T's presence in North America is consolidating around that reality: helping organizations move beyond proof-of-concepts toward ingrained capabilities—teams that can adapt, governance that can keep pace, and operating models designed for human-and-AI collaboration. We're not here to add noise to a crowded conversation; we're here to contribute structure, candor, and shared learning.

That's why we're bringing this to the market: to help shift the dialogue from "What can AI do?" to "What must organizations become to make AI work?" We've learned that progress requires more than momentum—it requires discipline: clear narratives, measurable outcomes, and a culture that turns friction into improvement rather than resistance.

We offer this as part of our commitment to the ecosystem. If AI is redefining competition, then shared lessons—across industries, partners, and practitioners—are one of the most practical forms of leadership. Our aim is to help more organizations close the gap from potential to performance, faster and more responsibly.

BRUNO GUICARDI
PRESIDENT, CO-FOUNDER

PREFACE

Three years ago I shared a provocation: "Software is eating the world, and AI is changing the menu." I borrowed from Marc Andreessen's famous thesis and added what felt like an obvious truth—that generative AI wasn't just another wave. It was a different ocean.

Peter Drucker allegedly said that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." If that's true—and I believe it is—then culture devours AI for every meal of the day. The data is stark: 95% of organizations report low measurable return from their AI investments. Not because the tools failed. Because we failed to change how we work, how we lead, and how we learn.

The technology worked. We didn't.

This paper is a response to that failure. Not a celebration of it, but a dissection—and, I hope, a path forward.

At CI&T, we've spent three decades learning one lesson over and over: transformation is not a technology project. It's a human project, enabled by technology.

The real constraint on how fast an organization can change is how fast it can learn.

The companies that truly scale AI are not the ones with the best models or the biggest budgets. They are the ones brave enough to redesign their culture around a simple question: what must we learn—and who must we become—to make this work?

The framework we share here is born from practice, not theory. From real friction. From the hard truth that most pilots fail not because they didn't prove value, but because organizations couldn't absorb the change.

Isaac Asimov once wrote that "the saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom." This has never felt more urgent. AI is accelerating faster than our institutions, our governance, our habits.

The gap between what's possible and what's wise is widening. Faster than our courage. This paper is our attempt to close that gap—or at least to offer a map for those willing to try.

The menu has changed.
The question left: do we have the appetite?

CESAR GON
FOUNDER & CEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past three years, artificial intelligence — especially the emergence of advanced models and the rise of autonomous agents — has transformed the landscape of technology and business on a global scale. What was once seen as an incremental productivity tool is now understood as a strategic imperative for organizational survival.

This shift is profound because it is not limited to the use of new technologies. It changes how companies operate, create value, and engage with customers, employees, and partners. According to McKinsey, roughly 70% of AI transformation initiatives fail, while an MIT study confirms that 95% of organizations are still seeing zero measurable return[1] — and the main cause is not technology, but cultural barriers, lack of governance, and lack of clarity in vision.

In parallel, Gartner projects that by 2028, one-third of digital interactions will be mediated by autonomous agents,[4] radically transforming how products and services are consumed.

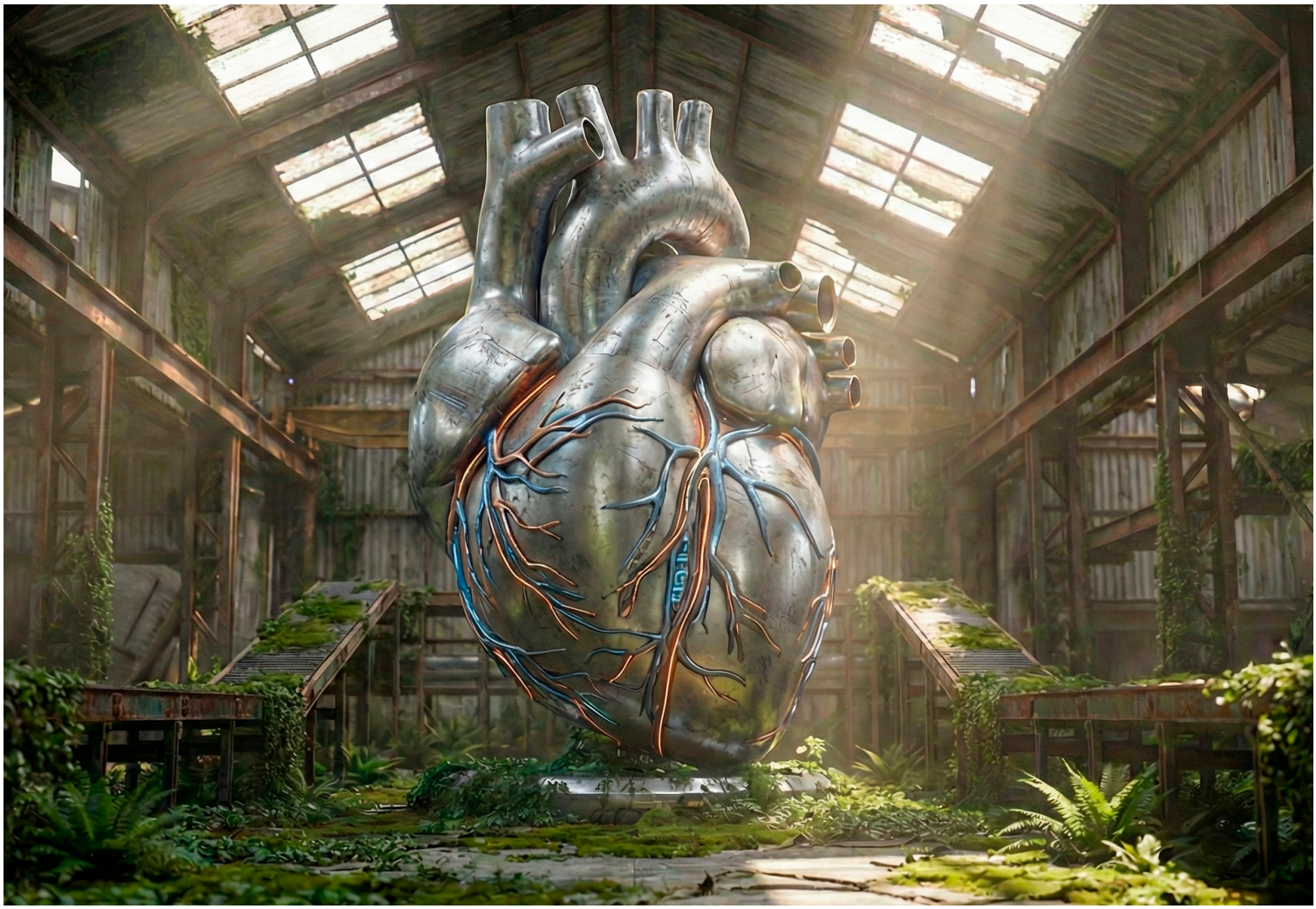
CI&T, with three decades of experience in digital transformation and a history of integrating culture, processes, and technology, has developed its own approach to guide companies on the AI journey. This white paper presents that integrated vision, based on Lean Transformation principles, solid governance practices, and CI&T FLOW, our AI Management System, which today supports more than 140 global clients and orchestrates thousands of AI agents at scale.

The message is clear: AI adoption is no longer an occasional choice—it's a structural necessity.

Organizations that succeed in orchestrating people, processes, and technology around this new paradigm can achieve productivity gains of up to 20x, unlock new sources of revenue, and create business models that ensure their future relevance.

1

THE IMPERATIVE OF AI TRANSFORMATION



The impact of generative artificial intelligence and autonomous agents can already be compared to the great industrial revolutions of the past. Companies that, until a few years ago, organized their value chains around linear human and digital processes now face a paradigm shift.

Tasks that once required months of collective effort can now be executed in days, and innovation cycles previously planned on three to five year horizons can now be compressed into quarters.

This acceleration, however, is not uniform. Some organizations are already reaping tangible benefits: revenue growth from personalized customer journeys, cost reductions of

MORE THAN 50%

IN OPERATIONAL PROCESSES, AND UNPRECEDENTED SPEED OF DELIVERY.

Others, meanwhile, remain stuck in an experimental phase, limited to isolated pilots that cannot scale across the organization.

This imbalance creates a concrete risk: companies that do not move quickly toward an AI-driven culture and operation may lose their competitive edge irreversibly.

In this context, a structured approach is needed—one that goes beyond occasional tool adoption and enables the construction of a new backbone for the business.

2

THE MAIN ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

Despite the enthusiasm, many organizations quickly discover that implementing AI at scale is far more difficult than it seems.

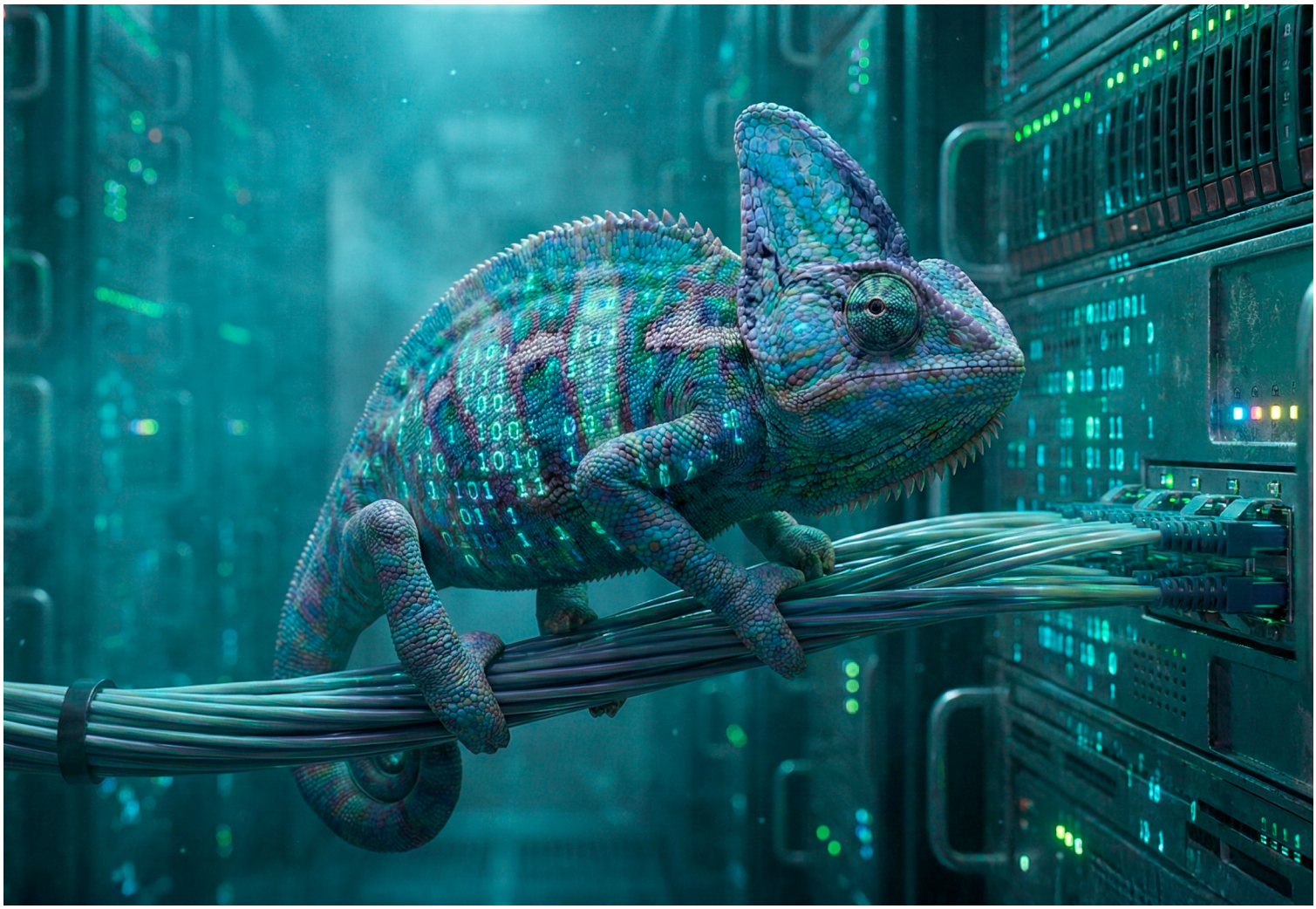
AMONG THE MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY CI&T IN ITS GLOBAL EXPERIENCE ARE:

CULTURE	The perception that AI replaces humans generates fear and resistance, one of the biggest barriers to adoption. This "narrative gap" leads to silent resistance, low engagement, and initiatives disconnected from business reality.
STRATEGY	Companies that do not define a clear purpose end up treating AI as a side experiment, unaligned with core organizational objectives. This fragmentation prevents the creation of a long-term vision and reduces impact.
PROCESS	Many processes are still organized for human, linear, bureaucratic flows. In this setup, even the best AI tools deliver only marginal gains. End-to-end value streams must be redesigned to capture real efficiency.
TECHNOLOGY	Adopting multiple market solutions without integration or the applied knowledge to embed them into real workflows leads to chaotic environments with redundancy, lack of governance, and increased risk.
GOVERNANCE	Without ROI (Return on Investment), ROE (Return on Experience), and ROF (Return on Future) metrics, executives cannot justify investments or sustain transformation.

These obstacles explain why so many initiatives stall halfway. Addressing them requires a systemic approach that treats culture, processes, technology, and governance as interdependent parts.

3

CI&T'S AI TRANSFORMATION FRAMEWORK



With over a decade of experience in Lean and digital transformation, CI&T has developed its own framework for AI Transformation.

It combines organizational pillars with a clear adoption journey, allowing companies to progress through successive maturity stages.

AI transformation begins with discipline. Frameworks grounded in Lean principles help enterprises move from pilots to purpose.

Lean enforces clarity: What problem are we solving? For whom? How will we measure value? Without this discipline, organizations risk fragmented pilots that never scale.

CI&T'S FRAMEWORK APPLIES LEAN TRANSFORMATION TO THE AI CONTEXT, GUIDING ENTERPRISES TO:

Identify value streams where AI can drive impact.	**Define measurable KPIs connected to business outcomes.**	**Align cross-functional stakeholders around a single vision.**

Importantly

Lean builds organizational resilience by turning problems into fuel for improvement. Resistance is expected—and managed deliberately. Research shows GenAI pilots fail when organizations try to avoid friction. CI&T scales problem-solving capability through structured feedback loops, transforming resistance into learning and sustained performance.

FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS
OF CI&T'S AI TRANSFORMATION

PEOPLE

Investing in reskilling and creating "AI-native talent" roles is critical. CI&T has already trained more than 5000 professionals with this profile in dedicated training programs.

PROCESS

Hybrid human+AI squads, agile governance, and value streams guided by metrics.

TECH

CI&T FLOW, our AI Management System, acts as a central nervous system, integrating agents, data, and governance in a single environment.

MINDSET

Transformation starts with do → think—applying AI to real problems, learning from experience, and then consolidating culture and strategy.

THE CI&T'S AI TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY IN ACTS

Technology does not transform businesses on its own. People do. Studies show 70% of AI projects fail due to cultural resistance[2,3].

Employees fear replacement, managers lack clarity, and pilots stall without engagement.

CI&T'S PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH REFRAMES ADOPTION AS BOTH A JOURNEY IN THREE ACTS AND AN EVOLUTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY:

EXPERIMENTATION

ACT 1 Decentralized pilots that validate value in specific areas. At this stage, adoption is tactical—AI is applied in targeted use cases to capture specific, localized gains and build evidence for what scales.

ACCELERATION

ACT 2 Creation of governance, reskilling at scale, and prioritization of high-impact cases. The organization starts operating more collaboratively, with humans and agents working together in day-to-day workflows to reduce friction and improve efficiency.

DISRUPTION

ACT 3 Reinvention of business models, multi-agent platforms, and AI operation as the default. AI becomes business-integrated—structurally influencing strategy, operating model, and customer experience rather than remaining a set of isolated initiatives.

CI&T's research on workforce adaptation to AI shows that targeted reskilling significantly accelerates adoption.

More than 5000 professionals have been trained under CI&T's AI-native capability model, emphasizing applied collaboration between humans and AI systems through structured experiments such as hackathons, workshops, and cross-functional squads.

By intentionally designing to finding problems, CI&T uses moments of resistance as diagnostic input—evidence to refine narratives, training, and workflows—enabling organizations to evolve in a disciplined, data-informed manner and avoid the stagnation common in pilot-heavy transformations.

4

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING CYCLE

(POWERED BY CI&T FLOW)

The software development lifecycle (SDLC) is undergoing a paradigm shift. Tasks that once required months of human effort can now be completed in days or even hours.

Generative AI models and autonomous agents are collapsing delivery cycles, enabling continuous value delivery. CI&T identifies the software engineering cycle as a core dimension of this evolution—showing how practices, tooling, and operating rhythms change when AI becomes embedded across build, test, deploy, and run.

THIS EVOLUTION CAN BE DESCRIBED AS
A SET OF PROGRESSIVE CAPABILITY LEVELS:

AI-Embedded (2x)	AI-Augmented (5x)	AI-Orchestrated (20x)
Individual productivity gains with code assistants and copilots.	Autonomous agents integrated into workflows, supervised by humans.	Complete reinvention of the SDLC, with coordinated agents, continuous flow, and automated decisions.

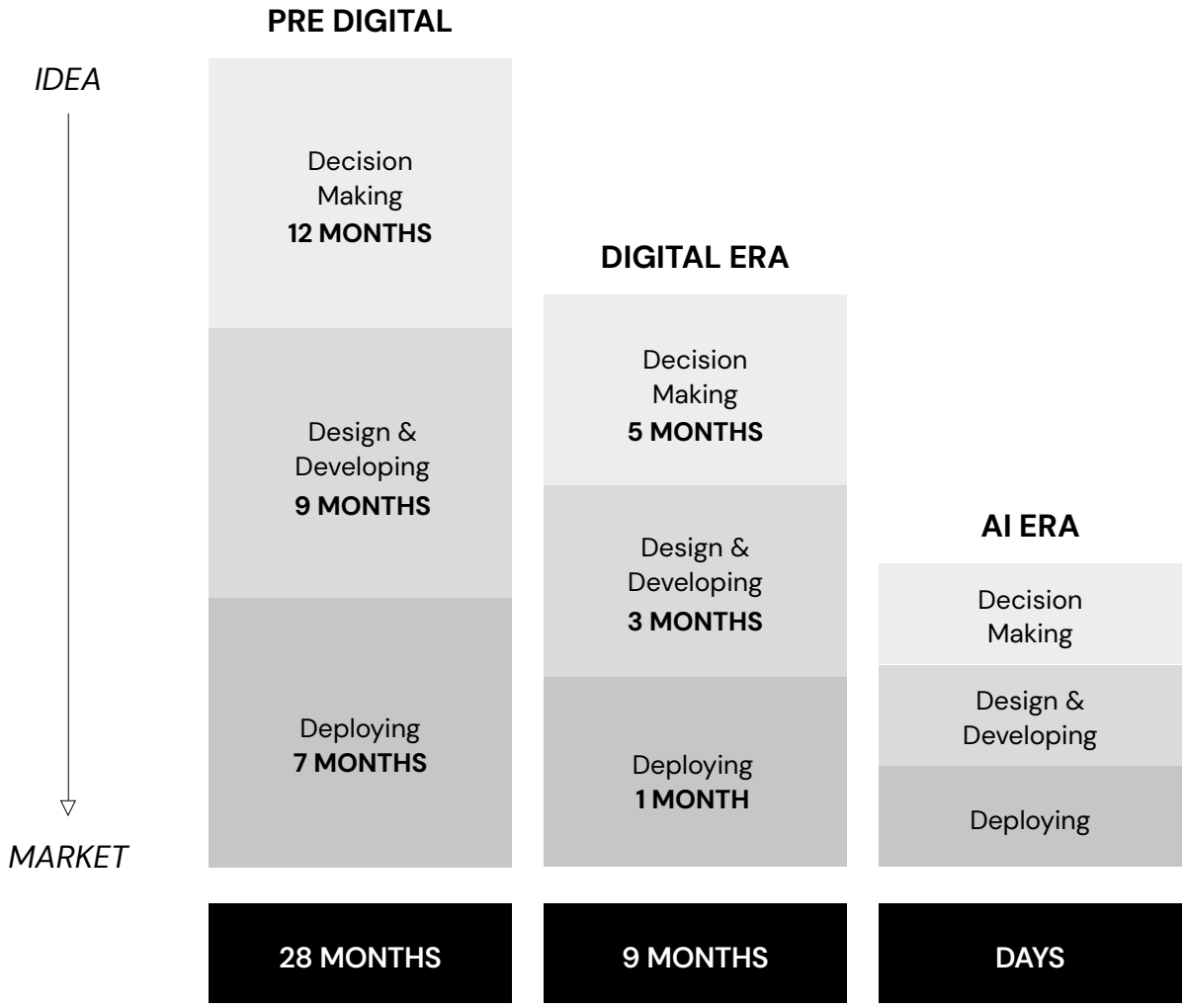
The impact is measurable: code generation, automated testing, defect detection, and deployment are all accelerated by AI orchestration, while roles evolve—developers become orchestrators, testers become validators of AI-driven processes, and data stewards ensure trust in the system.

This redefinition requires continuous experimentation, observability, and adaptive engineering practices. Each iteration improves the system, embedding learning loops directly into workflows.

Moreover, this vision shows that the AI journey is not linear but multidimensional, requiring progress in people, processes, and technology simultaneously—and reinforcing that advances in the engineering cycle must move in parallel with organizational maturity.

For decades, innovation speed was constrained by execution capacity, with ideas moving slowly through decision-making, development, and deployment cycles often measured in years. Digital platforms reduced this latency but continued to rely on predominantly linear, human-centered workflows. The introduction of generative AI and autonomous agents into software engineering marks a new phase in this evolution, significantly compressing the distance between idea and market.

As delivery cycles move from months toward days, the software engineering cycle assumes a central role in AI transformation—shifting from a downstream execution function to a core operational mechanism through which strategy is translated into continuous, measurable value.



5

IMPACT CASES

Proof drives adoption. Efficiency must be tangible, not theoretical.

BY APPLYING ITS AI APPROACH, CI&T HAS OBSERVED CONSISTENT RESULTS:

- **Productivity Gains:** 3x to 20x, depending on maturity stage.
- **Speed:** 75% backlog refinement reduction; 70% fewer test creation hours; 56% reduction in lead time.
- **Adoption:** 85% daily usage of CI&T FLOW, our AI Management System; 72% sustained adoption.
- **Business Impact:** Cost reductions, revenue growth, improved customer experience.

CI&T'S FRAMEWORK HAS DELIVERED PROVEN RESULTS FOR CLIENTS ACROSS SECTORS. HERE'S SOME CLIENT STORIES HIGHLIGHTING THIS IMPACT:

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Built an AI transformation program with robust governance, professional reskilling, and prioritization of high-impact cases, resulting in a scalable AI journey in healthcare that has become a sector reference.

Nestlé

Implemented new AI-driven digital platforms, achieving 8.4% B2B revenue in the first month and 300% increase in consumer hub conversions.

Porto

Improved delivery efficiency by 38% and expanded automated test coverage by over 30%. Solved 79 critical legacy code problems in a single day.

BAYER

Deployed a data platform with AI in just 70 days, improving cloud infrastructure costs by 65%.

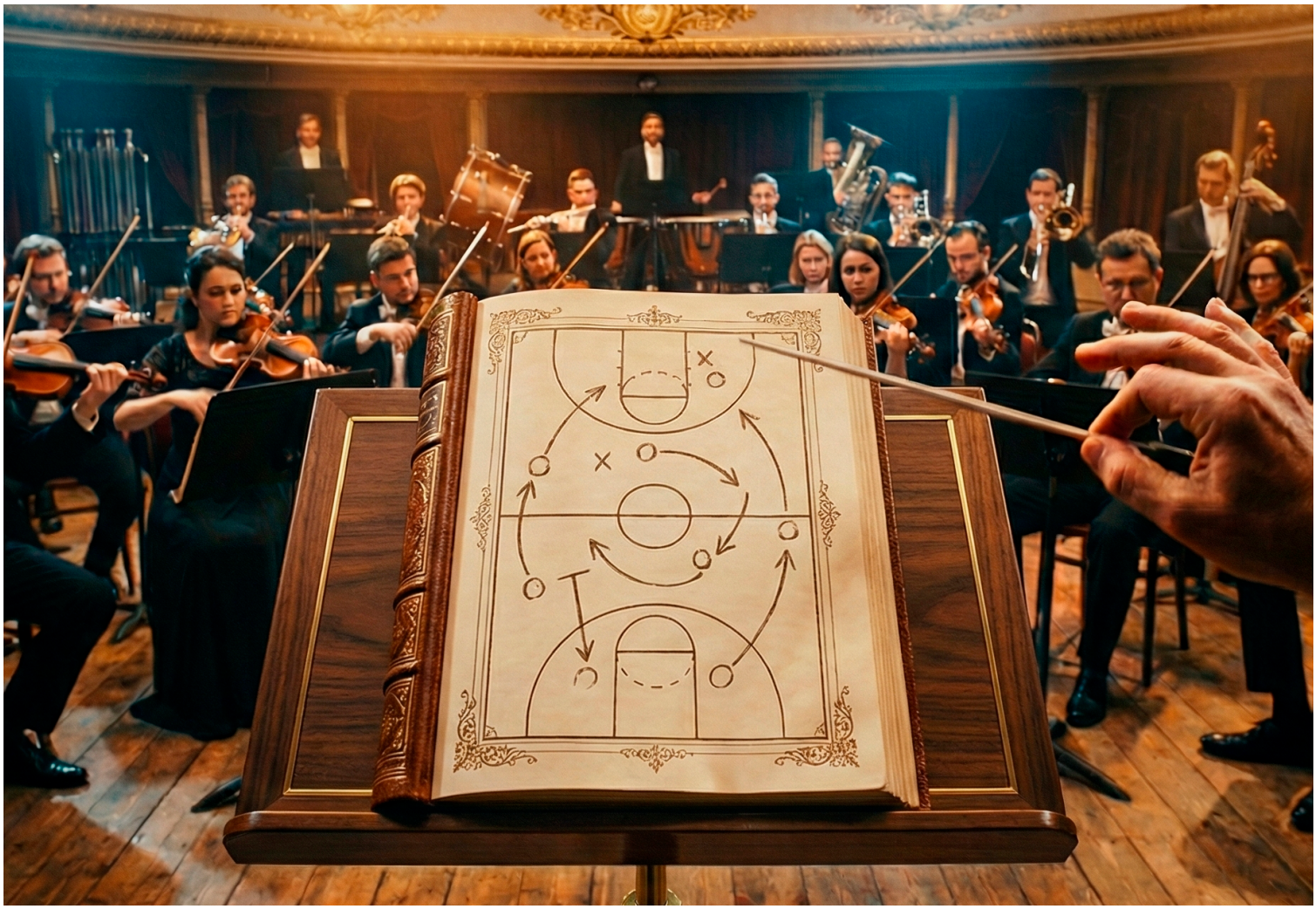
sami

Created a human+AI copilot that saves more than 900 hours monthly and increases coordinator interaction capacity by 50%.

These examples demonstrate that Transformation is not limited to incremental gains but generates tangible impact in productivity, revenue, and customer experience.

6

ECOSYSTEM ORCHESTRATION



No organization can scale AI in isolation. The ecosystem—hyperscalers, data providers, specialized models—is essential.

CI&T FLOW, our AI Management System, acts as the orchestration layer, unifying partners and technologies.

THIS ORCHESTRATION:

Prevents redundancy

Avoids vendor lock-in

Embeds governance across multiple platforms

Accelerates innovation by integrating external advances

Empowers people as builders, enabling the creation, sharing and reuse of agents across teams

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CI&T acts as the integrator, turning a fragmented market into a coherent enterprise-ready capability.

7

GOVERNANCE & RESPONSIBLE AI

AI cannot scale without a solid foundation. Many initiatives fail because they lack governance, integration, and trusted data.

Organizations must modernize their architecture and adopt Responsible AI practices, including:

Secure data integration	**Multi-area governance and compliance committees**
Clear global policies for ethical use, bias mitigation, and data privacy	**KPIs that balance ROI, ROE, and ROF (future readiness, long term adaptability and scale)**

This layer ensures that transformation occurs sustainably, reducing reputational and regulatory risks.

Governance is foundational, not optional.

Transparency, explainability, and traceability are embedded in CI&T FLOW, our AI Management System, making AI outputs trustworthy. Feedback loops and auditing capabilities turn governance into a growth enabler rather than a constraint.

8

FUTURE GROWTH

Reinvention Beyond Cost Savings

Efficiency opens the door.
Reinvention ensures survival.

AI is not only about productivity.

It's about creating new revenue streams, reshaping customer engagement, and reinventing business models.

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

Personalized, AI-driven customer journeys

Innovation cycles shortened from years to quarters

New product and service categories enabled by autonomous systems

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Resilient organizations that adapt continuously

By integrating Lean principles, governance, people, and technology, CI&T enables enterprises to move from efficiency gains to complete reinvention.

9

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVES

THE KEY STEPS FOR LEADERS ARE:

1 **ESTABLISH A CLEAR PURPOSE:**
Transformation begins with defining ambition and a single narrative for the entire organization.

2 **CREATE A UNIFIED PLATFORM:**
Avoid the chaos of multiple isolated tools; centralize in an orchestrator platform.

3 **INVEST IN PEOPLE:**
Without reskilling and AI-native talent, technology cannot be sustained.

4 **IMPLEMENT GOVERNANCE FROM THE OUTSET:**
Treat security, ethics, and compliance as foundations, not afterthoughts.

5 **ADOPT A PORTFOLIO VISION:**
Balance short, medium, and long-term investments to ensure immediate ROI and future innovation.

6 **ADD HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIMENTS IN YOUR PORTFOLIO:**
Balance quick wins with bolder pilots, the ones that demonstrate transformational value and can scale.

7 **CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR:**
Use clear KPIs to evaluate efficiency, adoption, and innovation, adjusting strategy in real time.

CONCLUSION

AI Transformation is not an isolated project but a multi-year journey, requiring discipline, vision, and courage.

Companies that confine themselves to isolated pilots will fall behind.

Those that embrace the journey with governance, culture, and integrated technology will achieve not only hyper efficiency but also new ways of creating value and reinventing their business models.

With its proven CI&T FLOW framework—an AI Management System—and global expertise, CI&T is positioned as the strategic partner that guides organizations through this journey.

SOURCES

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2. McKinsey & Company. The State of AI in 2023: Generative AI's Breakout Year. McKinsey & Company, 2023.

3. McKinsey & Company. Losing from Day One: Why Even Successful Transformations Fall Short. December 2021.

4. Gartner. Market Guide for AI and Machine Learning Platforms. Gartner, 2024.

CI&T (NYSE: CINT) is a global partner in tech-integrated business solutions for 100+ large enterprises and fast-growth clients. With a 30-year track record of helping clients navigate change, CI&T delivers accelerated business impact through deep expertise across AI, strategy, customer experience, software development, cloud services, data, and more.

CI&T's proprietary AI management system, CI&T FLOW, boosts team productivity, ensuring fast, efficient, and scalable delivery of world-class solutions. The company operates globally, supported by over 8,000 professionals across 11 countries.

Learn more at ciandt.com.

WITH THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF

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