

Structure Beats Activism

Success factors for integrated AI
capabilities in media companies

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Management Summary

While most media companies have already adopted artificial intelligence (AI) into their operations, a significant portion of these initiatives struggle to move beyond the experimental pilot stage or demonstrate a tangible return on investment. However, the failure of AI projects is typically not a reflection of the technology's limitations, but rather a consequence of three fundamental structural deficiencies: a lack of organizational integration, insufficient technological maturity, and a persistent gap in internal expertise.

AI projects should not be isolated experiments carried out by individual interested teams. Instead, it is the responsibility of senior leadership to integrate AI into the business strategy from the outset and establish an impact-oriented KPI framework that makes the specific benefits of AI measurable. Uncontrolled use of AI can lead to significant reputational damage, but the controlled and regulated use of AI ensures transparency and builds trust among employees and customers.

Instead of isolated, ad-hoc solutions, a central AI platform provides access to various language models and integrates secure, proprietary data sources. This ensures enhanced security and cost control across the entire organization. A modern and modular IT architecture is essential for this.

However, modern technology and architecture alone do not create added value. Employees must be empowered to critically validate AI results and incorporate them into new routines. Change management thus becomes a business-critical core competency.

Only through clear strategic leadership from management and investments in infrastructure and skills can technological potential turn into a competitive advantage.

1 **Generative AI: The Next Shockwave for the Media Industry**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a technology at least as significant as the internet, but its impact is unfolding much more rapidly. Media companies worldwide have recognized both the strategic potential and the threat to their business models and, as a first step, have integrated AI into their editorial workflows.

The scope of application has expanded significantly in a short period of time; from simply taking over individual steps in the creation and editing of content to more complex use cases with an increasing focus on improving the quality of journalistic work. Although media companies are working intensively with generative AI, they are still far from fully tapping into its potential. Examples of problems with the AI used or failed AI projects are just as prevalent as success stories.

This situation can be attributed to three structural challenges that repeatedly arise in practice: a lack of institutional embedding within companies, insufficient technological maturity, and a lack of know-how and expertise. This white paper highlights the success factors for the sustainable use of AI in media companies. It demonstrates how AI can be systematically embedded beyond isolated experiments through a clear strategic direction with defined KPIs, robust governance structures, modern IT architecture with AI platforms as a central hub, and targeted skill development at all levels. The responsibility lies with management to strategically embed the technology and invest in infrastructure and competencies. Only in this way can the sum of individual experiments become a sustainable track record, and technological potential turn into a genuine, defensible competitive advantage. The transformation is in full swing. The question is no longer whether media companies will use AI, but how structured and sustainable their approach will be.

2 The operational integration of AI is well underway

AI is no longer a topic of the future; rather, it has become a key factor in economic competitiveness across many industries. This is particularly evident in the media industry, which is among the early adopters of this technology, partly due to advances in the field of generative AI (GenAI). Newsrooms have long since begun integrating GenAI into their editorial workflows. A survey by BDZV & Retresco (2025) shows that 96% of German media companies use AI in their newsrooms.¹ In a North American study, over 90% of newsrooms reported using AI in their workflows, primarily to optimize text, video, and image content, as well as to automate routine processes. Nearly all media managers surveyed in the study plan to increase their AI budgets before the end of the year.² The potential is also already being recognized strategically in Germany. According to BDZV & Retresco, 89% of German publishers have already integrated AI into their corporate strategy or are in the process of doing so.³

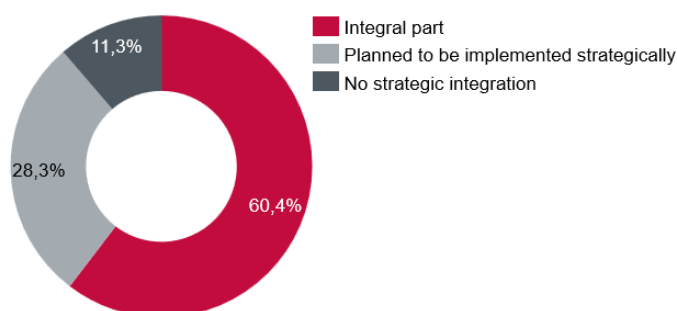


Figure 1 : AI in corporate strategy according to BDZV & Retresco, 2025

The potential applications of generative AI have expanded rapidly in a short period of time, ranging from simply taking over individual steps in content creation and editing to more complex use cases with an increasing focus on improving the quality of journalistic work. For example, AI can analyze, structure, and condense large, heterogeneous data sets. This creates a significantly broader and more precise factual basis for investigative reporting, as seen in the example of a Norwegian regional newspaper⁴ or the New York Times.⁵ AI systems can also examine and analyze issues from various perspectives, giving articles greater depth and a wider range of viewpoints. At the Dutch broadcaster NPO, for example, digital twins of underrepresented target groups are used to identify missing perspectives at an early stage and make the creative process more inclusive, while the Swiss broadcaster RTS uses the “BakerStreet” Story Angle Generator to systematically categorize content according to user needs and support editorial teams in identifying new perspectives or content gaps in their reporting.⁶ Furthermore, interactive user interfaces, such as chatbots or dialogue-based systems, enable more intuitive access to information and editorial content. In the News Queries and Engagement (NEO) project by SR and

¹ (BDZV & Retresco, 2025)

² (KressPro, Leading in the AI Era – Paths to Greater Innovation and Efficiency, 2025)

³ (BDZV & Retresco, 2025)

⁴ (Spiegel, 2025)

⁵ (KressPro, The New York Times' AI Strategy, 2025)

⁶ (European Broadcasting Union, 2025)

the EBU, a transparent news chatbot based on verified content was developed that provides structured answers to user queries while simultaneously delivering valuable insights into information needs and user expectations.⁷

However, alongside the opportunities and potential, risks are also widely cited, such as the fear that misinformation (90%) will be generated and lead to a loss of trust among users (83%), as well as high costs (79%) and the fear of dependence on AI (85%).⁸

These fears are supported by a number of publicly reported cases. A highly publicized incident occurred in 2023 at Sports Illustrated⁹ when AI-generated articles were published under fictitious authors' names. This resulted in significant reputational damage, similar to what ZDF recently experienced. Similar incidents have also occurred at other media companies. For example, the U.S. publisher Gannett halted an AI experiment after content errors were found in automatically generated sports reports.¹⁰ CNET was also forced to retroactively disclose that AI had been used to create financial articles after factual errors occurred repeatedly¹¹. These examples illustrate that a lack of governance, insufficient quality assurance, and a lack of transparency in AI usage not only pose operational risks but can also directly undermine trust in editorial brands.

⁷ (European Broadcasting Union, 2025)

⁸ (KressPro, AI Revolutionizes Newsrooms, 2025)

⁹ (PBS, 2023)

¹⁰ (Daily AI, 2023)

¹¹ (Digital Pioneers, 2023)

3 Structural deficiencies are limiting AI's full potential

Despite the intense pressure to innovate, there is a clear discrepancy between expected benefits and actual results. While media companies are working intensively with generative AI, they are still far from fully tapping into its potential.

The MIT study “The GenAI Divide” shows that around 95 percent of all AI pilot projects fail to achieve a demonstrable return on investment. Even if this figure cannot be directly applied to media companies, it nevertheless accurately describes the challenge: Many projects remain in the pilot phase, results are inconsistent, dependent on individual teams, and difficult to scale.

At the same time, the next wave of technology is already on the horizon. Agent-based AI systems that independently pursue goals and take on tasks are already available, even though many newsrooms and teams have not yet firmly established the fundamentals of generative AI. This widens the gap between technological development and organizational resilience.

This situation can be attributed to three structural challenges that repeatedly arise in practice.

Lack of Organizational Integration:

One problem lies in the still-lacking organizational maturity required to embed AI within companies. According to BDZV & Retresco, fewer than half of employees are familiar with their company's AI strategy. This communication gap fosters the emergence of isolated initiatives with no connection to the overall strategy. At the same time, a similar pattern emerges in governance: Although 79 percent of publishers have already formulated guidelines, operational tools for implementation are often lacking. Only just under half have a prompt database, and a mere 23 percent have an AI handbook or wiki. This means that precisely those tools that would be necessary to reliably incorporate principles such as transparency, data quality, or copyright compliance into everyday work are in short supply.¹²

Other studies also show that while many media companies have recognized the need for structured approaches, the operational tools for successfully integrating AI into editorial and business processes are lacking. A [current industry outlook](#) reveals mixed readiness: 84 percent of German companies are already using generative AI, and 97 percent plan to develop their own models by 2027. However, only 60 percent claim to have adequate governance measures in place. This discrepancy between AI adoption and organizational readiness raises the question of how targeted control and compliance regarding AI use can be ensured in the long term.¹³

Lack of Technological Maturity:

The market for AI-based services is currently taking shape. It is not yet clear which providers will prevail in the market or how their business models and services will develop. This situation is comparable to the early years of the online boom, when the pioneers and early technologies were quickly overtaken by developments; viable business models had to first emerge, and mergers and new players with new technologies changed the structure of providers and their services.

¹² (BDZV & Retresco, 2025)

¹³ (Databricks, 2024)

Against this backdrop, it is more important than ever to design enterprise IT as an architecture orchestrated from modular, loosely coupled components, as we have described in other publications (see [Publishing in Transition – The Path to Holistic IT Transformation](#) , [Transformation of a Media Company’s IT Architecture | CORE](#)).

Companies that have already restructured their IT architecture in response to the growing importance of digital business models and constant cost pressures, and that have consistently collected high-quality data in recent years, are now in a significantly better position to implement AI comprehensively and successfully.

In many media companies, however, the targeted modernization of IT architecture has not been completed or has not been carried out with the consistency required for effective and deep integration of AI. Consequently, the number of parallel IT-focused modernization and optimization measures increases exponentially, making it difficult to fully harness the potential of AI - even through successful prototypes - without deep integration into processes.

In addition to the IT infrastructure and architecture, the associated security aspects must be taken into account. AI increases the attack surface due to the data that needs to be protected and the underlying infrastructure. Not only can malicious actors manipulate AI, but even everyday users without technical knowledge can trigger unintended or harmful behaviors. LLMs thus bring with them a range of new security risks, yet the complexity of AI makes conventional security methods less effective and more labor-intensive.

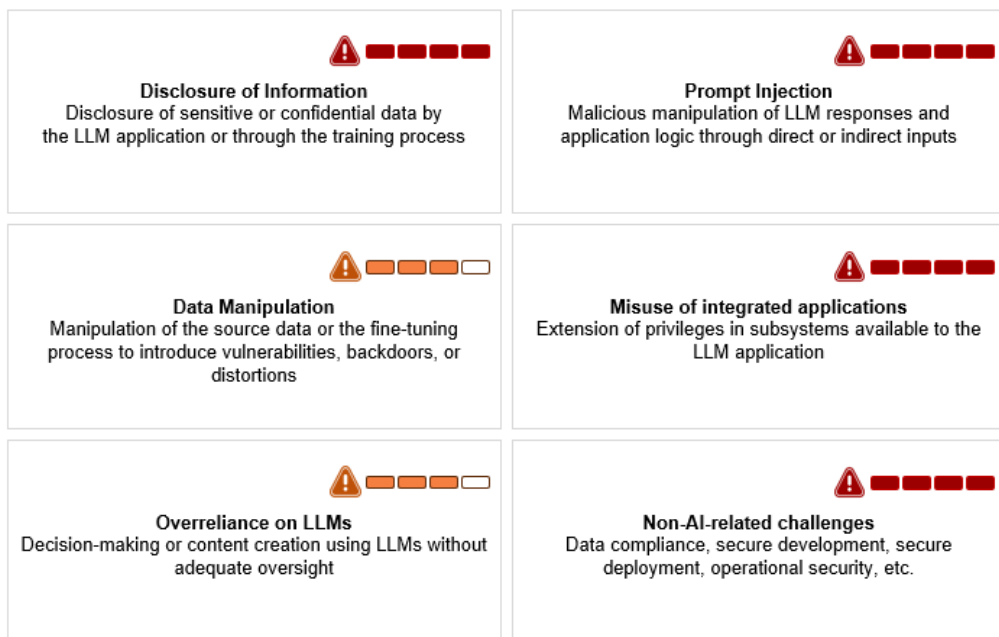


Figure 2 : Key areas of the risk landscape for the use of LLMs

Lack of expertise and skills:

Another bottleneck is the lack of expertise. According to the BDZV & Retresco report, 60% of the publishers surveyed cite a lack of skills in editorial and technical departments as the biggest obstacle. 51% struggle with quality and control issues, such as hallucinations and unreliable results. For example, in January 2023, CNET was forced to issue a statement that all AI-assisted articles would be reviewed retrospectively after repeated content errors were noticed. A few

weeks later, the company announced that it would not publish any further AI-generated content for the time being.

Another 45% view legal and ethical uncertainties as a key barrier, particularly regarding copyright, transparency requirements, and the responsible handling of data. Added to this are budget constraints (34%), which often prevent projects from moving beyond the pilot phase. 23% cite technical complexity, and for 21%, limited access to high-quality, structured data is a major obstacle that limits both model quality and scalability. Taken together, these figures show that technological and organizational bottlenecks are equally significant and reinforce one another.

The industry is thus open to innovation and ready to integrate AI into its strategic direction, but it is held back by a lack of expertise, unclear responsibilities, and limited technical resources.

4 A structured approach overcomes the phase of isolated projects

The challenges described show that the limited benefits of many AI initiatives in media companies are due less to a lack of technology than to shortcomings in structural implementation. Despite high levels of activity and numerous pilot projects, the impact often remains isolated, while technological development continues to accelerate and increases the pressure to act.

Against this backdrop, the question arises as to how AI can be deployed and embedded in a way that creates lasting value beyond isolated applications. A decisive factor is an integrated approach that brings together strategic objectives, organizational governance, technological prerequisites, and competency development. Only when these elements interlock can the transition from experimental applications to stable, scalable solutions succeed, establishing AI as an integral part of value creation.

The example of a phased adoption of AI shown in Figure 3 illustrates that the value contribution does not arise suddenly but develops systematically along with an increasing degree of adaptation. From opportunistic AI use through the efficiency improvement of individual processes to cross-process optimization and finally to the generation of new business models, the potential grows with each stage of maturity. However, it is crucial that each stage requires deliberate structural development.

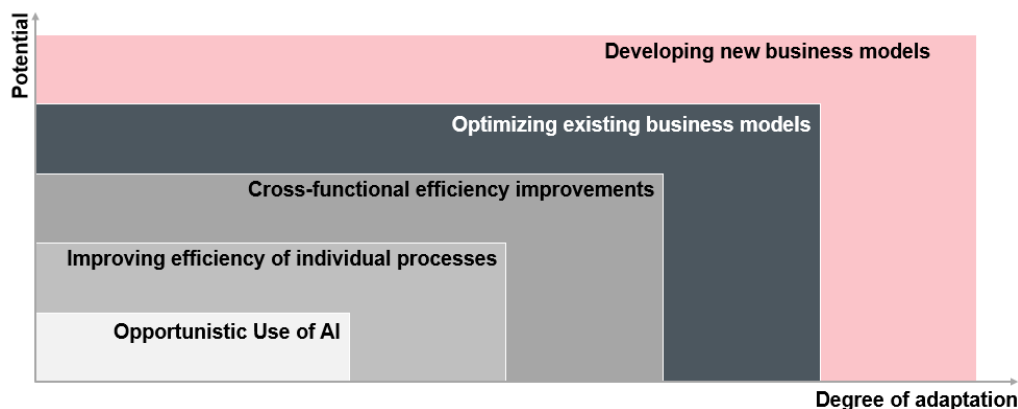


Figure 3 : Phased Adaptation of Technology (Example)

The transition to the next maturity level is not achieved solely through additional use cases or more powerful models, but by consistently navigating key areas of design. Before technological components are scaled, a clear AI North Star (vision and mission), systematic value realization through prioritized use cases with robust business value logic, and a sustainable organizational foundation must be established. Only on this basis do technological building blocks such as data quality, data architecture, and infrastructure unfold their full potential.

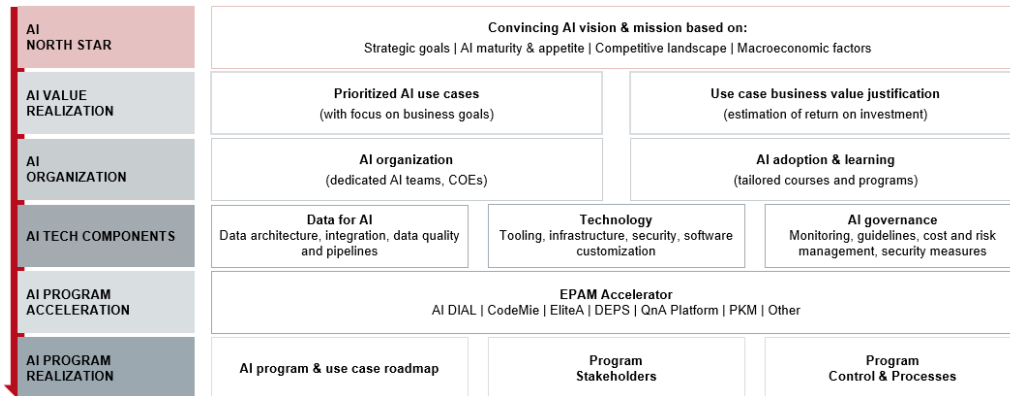


Figure 4 : Building Blocks of Successful AI Adoption

The AI strategy serves as an integral lever for achieving business goals

Just as important as choosing the right application areas is the way in which AI is embedded within the company. Media companies should think beyond isolated individual applications when deploying artificial intelligence. Before a technical decision can be made or a project launched, it is up to individual companies to scrutinize their ideas and goals. Key questions are often asked too late. What is the intended impact of AI, and what are the expectations for AI? These must be clarified and documented at the highest level.

As Figure 5 illustrates, the AI strategy is not an isolated document but an integral part of the business strategy, closely intertwined with IT and data strategy. It is derived from the overarching strategic objectives and must contribute to their priorities, value drivers, and competitive positioning. Thus, the initial question is not about technological options, but about strategic relevance: What specific contribution should AI make toward achieving business goals? Where do measurable effects on growth, efficiency, differentiation, or new revenue models arise? If this connection is missing, there is a risk that AI initiatives will remain technologically ambitious but commercially ineffective.

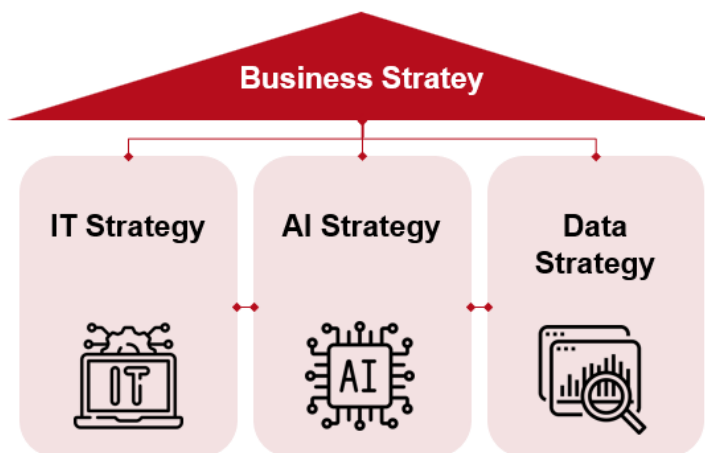


Figure 5 : AI Strategy as an Integral Part of Business Strategy

An AI strategy therefore does not need to be formulated in every detail, but it must be clearly derived from the business strategy and address a comprehensible impact on the business model. Only on this basis can IT architecture, data strategy, and organizational embedding be consistently aligned.

Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that AI cannot be managed as a collection of individual initiatives. If it is to make a substantial contribution to the business strategy, it requires a clear framework, target visions, and structured integration within the company. Rather than limiting oneself to isolated use cases, therefore, a comprehensive strategic approach is recommended that helps set priorities, clarify responsibilities, and gradually empower the organization.

This approach is based on three central pillars:

1. a clearly defined, regularly reviewed, and short-cycle AI strategy (flexible enough to respond promptly to technological developments)
2. clear leadership responsibility for AI-related issues
3. as well as the targeted development of cross-functional competencies.

Building on this, media companies can systematically identify and specifically develop the success factors relevant to their industry and their specific business model.

When it comes to success factors, media companies are increasingly faced with the challenge of demonstrating the actual value added by their AI initiatives. This requires metrics that not only focus on operational efficiency but also reflect the entire value chain. In addition to return on investment, which is often the primary focus, qualitative and usage-based metrics play an equally central role. Relevant indicators can, for example, show the extent to which editorial processes are streamlined, how content quality changes, or what effects personalized content delivery has on usage duration and engagement.

Acceptance within the editorial team and the intensity of use of new tools are also becoming important indicators, as they determine whether a solution is implemented long-term or remains in the pilot phase. Similarly, the measurability of model behavior is gaining importance, such as the stability of results, the frequency of necessary corrections, or the robustness against changes in the data set. For many organizations, it is also becoming relevant to what extent AI-based offerings contribute to the development of new products and whether additional revenue streams can be derived from them.

An impact-oriented KPI framework is therefore not merely a technical instrument, but a strategic management tool. It makes progress visible, ensures reliability in prioritization, and forms the basis for targeting investments effectively. The more clearly KPIs are linked to the strategic direction and the more regularly they are reviewed, the more successfully media companies can further develop AI initiatives and char

the path from pilot applications to sustainably established, value-creating solutions.

Once the strategy is in place with established KPIs, the focus shifts to “doing things right.”

Governance plays a central role in this. In the context of AI, “AI governance” refers to the governance framework for AI, i.e., the development and implementation of organizational

measures, processes, controls, and tools that help ensure the use of AI is trustworthy, responsible, ethical, legally compliant, and efficient.

In particular, ethical guidelines should be understood by strategic leadership not as an obstacle, but as a quality feature and competitive advantage. The starting point here is explainability, which is also required by the EU AI Act. In a journalistic context, causality and data processing pathways must remain transparent and verifiable at all times to ensure editorial control over automated processes. This ethical orientation is complemented by the dimension of trustworthiness, which integrates technical reliability and compliance with legal requirements. Ultimately, this approach protects the brand from reputational risks and lays the foundation for a sustainable digital transformation.

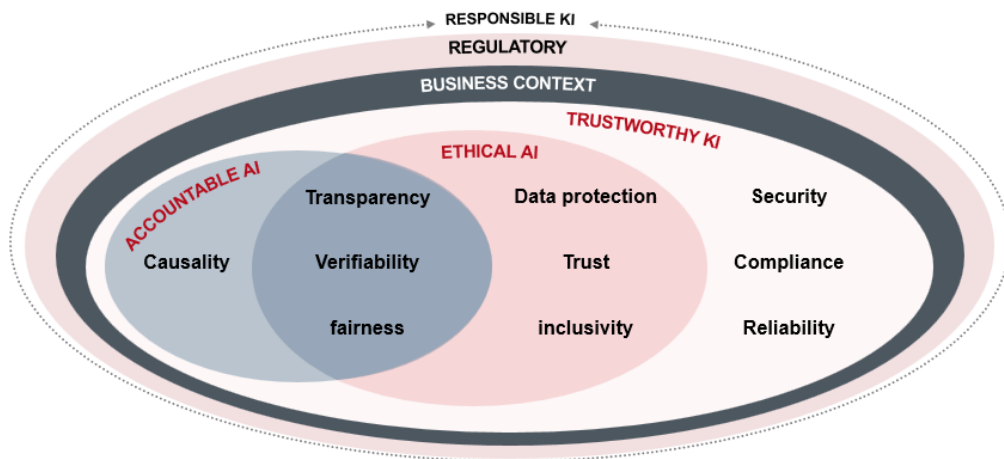


Figure 6 : Ethical Guidelines

Furthermore, effective governance also includes mechanisms for continuous monitoring and risk management. The design of these components must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and depends on risk appetite, existing infrastructure, and organizational conditions.

Below, we present several options that particularly highlight the close strategic and operational link to IT as well as the growing responsibility of management:

- Integrating AI into corporate strategy is an important step, but it must be complemented by the definition of binding guidelines and principles for data quality, fairness, data protection, explainability, and continuous monitoring of AI models.
- Establishing an interdisciplinary governance board comprising representatives from legal, IT security, data protection, and business units creates clearly defined roles and responsibilities, for example by appointing a Chief AI Officer (CAIO).
- Firmly embedding AI in corporate governance and ensuring ongoing senior management commitment to foster acceptance and secure resources.
- The integration of operational tools such as data and model quality assurance, monitoring dashboards for real-time oversight, employee training programs, and proactive risk and incident management systems.
- Reviewing : any existing AI controls in accordance with standards such as ISO 42001 to strengthen information security.

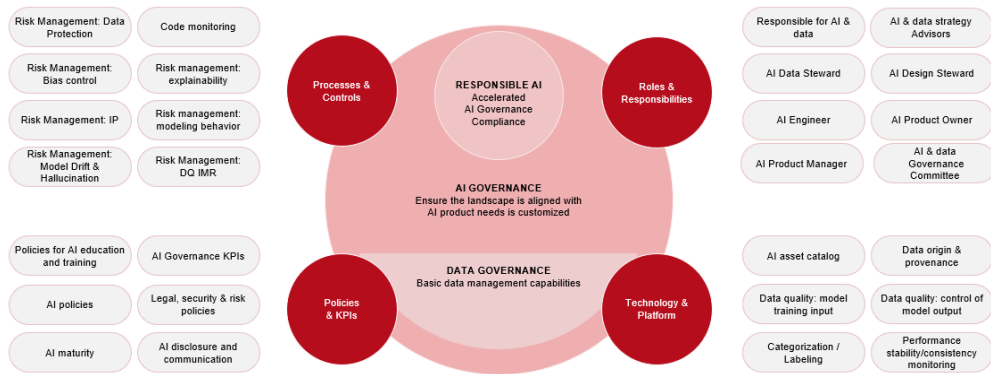


Figure 7 : AI-centric governance ensures the full realization of AI's potential

These structures and tools enable companies to implement AI systems responsibly, efficiently, and scalably while sustainably meeting regulatory, ethical, and technical requirements.

A central platform architecture forms the technological backbone for scaling

The counterpart to organizational and procedural embedding through strategy and governance is technological integration into the IT architecture and IT infrastructure. While governance defines the regulatory framework, architecture enables operational implementation. An architectural pattern that is becoming established as a standard is the creation of an AI platform on which the provision of AI functionalities is consolidated. This approach marks the transition from isolated individual projects to an industrially operating AI Factory that serves as the central authority for the development, management, and scaling of all AI activities.

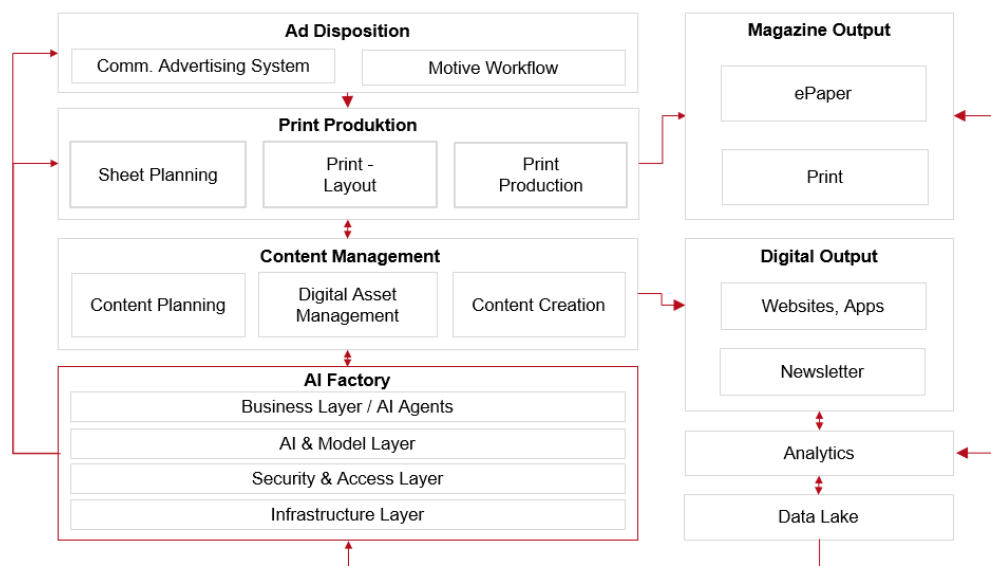


Figure 8 : In-house AI platforms (excerpt) – Example

Unlike conventional use cases, which often start as quick but fragmented, isolated solutions with limited reusability, this factory-like structure enables systematic scaling across the entire enterprise. Typically, such a platform encompasses the following core areas:

- Orchestrating the use of LLMs:
 - Managing (API) access to LLMs from various providers such as OpenAI, Google, or Anthropic, as well as self-managed models
 - Providing and managing the prompt library, including versioning, access management, and management of embeddings (reusable building blocks)
 - Event-driven execution of prompts
- Configuration and management of AI agents:
 - Configuring autonomous AI agents to perform dedicated tasks/roles
 - Deployment of AI agents for integration into operational systems or manual interaction
 - Linking AI agents to workflows to map complete process flows
- Providing and managing access to various internal and external data sources:
 - Building custom indexes for faster, more direct access to data sets
 - Enabling RAG (Retrieval Augmented Generation), the incorporation of proprietary data sets when executing prompts or through the AI agents
 - Incorporating data sets for training custom models
 - Ensuring data privacy and data security
- Centralized chat and collaboration features:
 - Centralized access for chat and team collaboration
 - Use of various LLMs
 - Integration of built-in data sources

In addition to these core functionalities, other features tailored to the specific situation within the company can be provided via an AI platform. These then benefit from the platform's central capabilities and functions, such as identity and access management, monitoring, or deployment pipelines. The platform thus not only serves a technological integration function but also acts as a technical enabler for governance requirements. By providing dedicated tools such as a prompt engineering hub, model governance, and a human-in-the-loop framework, it ensures that AI models not only function technically but also comply with ethical and regulatory standards.

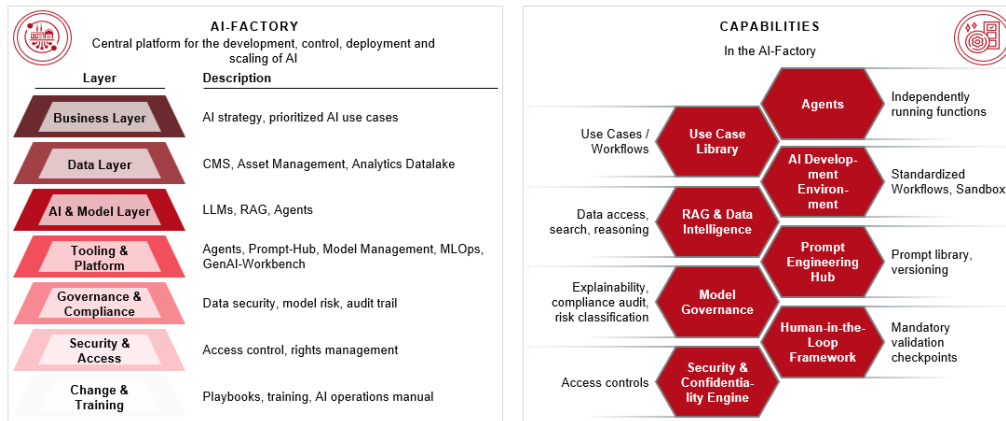


Figure 9 : AI Platform – The central platform for the provision and management of all AI-based use cases

In addition to the flexible and decoupled deployment of AI functionalities for all business processes, the strengths of an AI platform lie in supporting AI governance, as well as facilitating the assurance of operational stability, security, and compliance:

- Support for AI governance through:
 - Control over which use cases are implemented with priority
 - control over which providers and functions are used
 - ensuring quality and adherence to standards
 - planning and controlling costs for external pay-per-use services
- Ensuring security and compliance through:
 - Uniform standards for all AI applications
 - Secure architecture and standards for the integration of external services and confidential data sets
 - Traceability and transparency of all transactions with regard to compliance requirements
- Ensuring process stability through:
 - standardized procedures for exception and error handling
 - Redundant services for critical functions
 - Avoiding vendor lock-ins

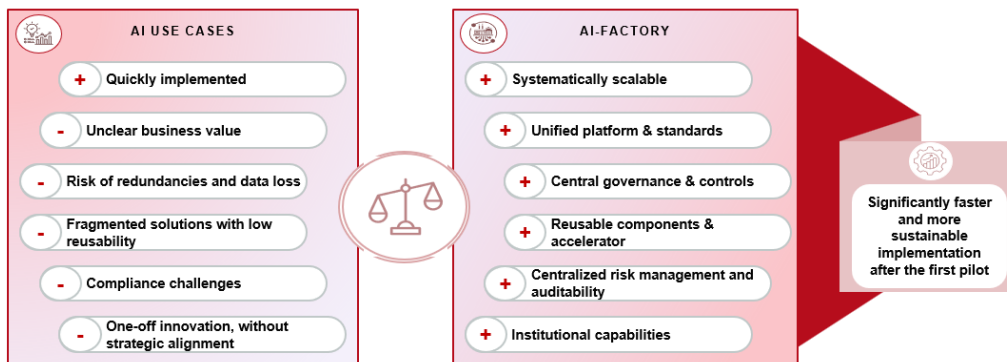


Figure 10 : Advantages and disadvantages of individual use cases compared to an AI platform

Even though the introduction of an AI platform may initially seem more complex than the isolated implementation of individual use cases, this impression can be put into perspective through a step-by-step implementation aligned with the specific requirements of the respective use cases.

With clearly defined guidelines, the AI platform can be developed incrementally, implementing only the functions and integrations required for the current use cases. You structure the platform not functionally by use cases, but systematically by infrastructure, data, models, serving, and security, thereby creating a stable framework within which individual use cases can grow in a controlled manner.

At the infrastructure level, for example, containerized services, Infrastructure-as-Code, and separate resource pools for CPU and GPU workloads create a scalable and reproducible operational foundation. Critical services such as scoring or an LLM gateway are designed with redundancy to ensure high availability.

In the data and storage architecture, clearly defined layers (Raw, Curated, Feature, Online) and binding schema contracts ensure consistency and traceability.

The feature and embedding layers, along with a central model registry and lifecycle management, ensure that models are versioned, reproducible, and rolled out in a controlled manner. New model versions are tested in a controlled manner via traffic splitting or in shadow mode before they go fully into production.

In the serving layer, uniform APIs, circuit breakers, retry mechanisms, and a clear separation between real-time and batch processing ensure stable and scalable operation.

This is complemented by specific LLM and RAG guardrails, such as a central gateway service for all LLM calls, standardized prompt templates, and a controlled retrieval layer with approved document zones.

Finally, technical security and privacy mechanisms such as zero-trust architectures, encrypted communication, segmented zones, and PII controls form the foundation for regulatory compliance and the protection of sensitive data.








 Infrastructure & Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI services run in containers, infrastructure is consistently defined via Infrastructure-as-Code (e.g., Terraform, Pulumi) Clear separation between environments and separate resource pools for CPU (ETL, classical ML) and GPU (LLMs, Deep Learning) Critical AI services like Scoring and LLM Gateway are at minimum active-passive redundant and highly available across multiple regions
 Data & Storage Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data architecture with layers from Raw through Curated and Features to Online Each data source and every feature has a schema contract (e.g., Protobuf, Avro, JSON-Schema) Standardized Vector-DB instance for RAG, e.g., Chroma, Qdrant, Pinecone or Elasticsearch with vectors
 Feature- & Embedding-Layer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central registration and versioning of features, online/offline consistent Pipelines are deterministic and idempotent; same input time window leads to same output Clear specifications per domain for embedding model, dimension and normalization
 Model-Registry & Lifecycle <small>(classical ML + LLM)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central management of all models Model artifacts are not changed after deployment, but only replaced by new versions Support for different runtimes like on-prem deployments, cloud LLMs and own inference clusters for OSS-LLMs
 Serving Layer & APIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unified APIs for predictions and LLMs and resilience through circuit breaker, retries with backoff and timeouts Clear separation between synchronous real-time scoring/LLM chat and asynchronous batch/heavy jobs via queues and job status API New model versions are initially rolled out only to a small portion of traffic (e.g., 5-10%) or tested in shadow mode
 LLM-/RAG-specific Guardrails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All internal and external LLM calls run through a central gateway service Prompts are used exclusively via standardized templates Retrieval layer only delivers verified and approved documents and fixed context lengths and filters
 Security & Privacy <small>- extensively implemented</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero-Trust & access control (mTLS, OIDC, segmented zones, RBAC/ABAC) Secure management & encryption through central security management and encryption by default (at-rest & in-transit) Data protection & compliance must be ensured through, among other things, data protection-compliant PII controls, masking of sensitive data, etc.

Figure 11 : Technical guardrails for the successful, structured, and secure operation of AI platforms

These guardrails thus serve as a technical framework that enables innovation without compromising stability, security, and compliance.

Whether an AI platform is developed in-house or based on components from a service provider depends on the company’s specific situation, its existing technical expertise and development capabilities, as well as the roadmap for the productive deployment of AI support. Companies that already have an established technology management system find it easier to introduce an AI platform, as it can be planned and managed within existing structures. Even though the introduction of an AI platform involves challenges, it should be used as an opportunity to further develop fundamental elements of technology management and to drive the transformation of the IT architecture toward modular, loosely coupled services in a targeted manner (see also [Transformation of a Media Company’s IT Architecture | CORE](#)).

Interdisciplinary collaboration and targeted skills development ensure the acceptance of new workflows

Regardless of the technical approach taken, building expertise remains a key success factor for any AI implementation. Projects consistently demonstrate that technological capability alone is not enough if editorial, technical, and organizational skills are not developed in parallel. The experience of Swedish Radio (SR) illustrates this particularly well. There, a tool was developed that automatically generates headlines, bullet points, and alt text from audio transcripts. However, the technical solution was only part of the success. Crucially, the editorial team, development team, and system integration worked closely together and built a shared understanding of data quality, model behavior, and editorial requirements during the project. This cross-organizational learning led to the tool being reliably deployed within a short time and editorial staff being able to specifically control and evaluate the results. Competence building thus took place on multiple levels. The editorial team learned to critically review AI outputs and use them productively, the technical team gained insights into journalistic quality criteria, and the organization developed a shared understanding of process changes. Without this learning process, the project would hardly have gone beyond a technical experiment (see EBU News Report, Case #1)¹⁴.

¹⁴ (European Broadcasting Union, 2025)

Similarly, Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) demonstrates how important capacity building is for the stabilization and further development of AI projects. The development of automated, location-based news remixes was only possible through the close collaboration of an interdisciplinary team. Editorial, development, product, and external partners worked continuously together to understand user needs, test models, critically validate results, and reduce technical dependencies. This iterative, hands-on learning cycle ensured that the system not only functioned technically but was also editorially accepted and received positive feedback in the User Lab. The expertise did not arise solely from the finished product, but from the journey to get there (see EBU News Report, Case #3).¹⁵

Both examples make it clear that building expertise is not a secondary consideration, but a cornerstone of successful AI applications. Media companies that want to embed AI sustainably must simultaneously strengthen capabilities in editorial and technical departments and systematically promote collaboration. Only when employees understand how models work, how to interpret results, and how new processes must be designed does the foundation for scalability and quality emerge. Pilot projects then not only deliver technical results but also systematically build the knowledge, routines, and responsibilities that are crucial for long-term success.

A structured education and training program that addresses all relevant roles within the company lays the groundwork for broad competency development, but it does not replace practical experience in implementation and application. Accordingly, education and training tailored to the implementation roadmap serve as effective preparation and support to ground and reinforce practical implementation.

Editorial staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic understanding of AI and machine learning ▪ Possibilities and limitations of AI in everyday editorial work ▪ Ethics, transparency, and responsibility in working with AI ▪ Collaboration with technical teams
Developers and Data Scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Model training, validation, and monitoring ▪ Data management and data protection ▪ Interfaces with editorial processes
Product Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying use cases for AI in a media company ▪ Translating user needs into technical requirements ▪ Managing interdisciplinary teams ▪ Evaluating AI projects in terms of benefits, effort, and risks
Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal and Ethical Framework ▪ Change Management and Cultural Transformation ▪ Developing an AI Strategy Aligned with Business Objectives ▪ Measuring Success and Scaling AI

Figure 12 : Training Content for Individual Roles

The growing role of AI in critical business processes necessitates, in some cases, far-reaching changes in workflows and organization. Change management skills thus become, alongside subject-matter and technical AI-specific expertise, an essential competency that should also be systematically strengthened.

¹⁵ (European Broadcasting Union, 2025)

5 Success arises from the balance between necessary structure and pragmatic, needs-based implementation

Strategy, use cases, architecture, governance, ethics, compliance – In the previous chapters, we have examined success factors across various dimensions in depth. Even though we argue that covering all dimensions is a prerequisite for successful AI deployment in media companies, this does not mean that every media company must develop a comprehensive plan for all areas from the outset. For a phased expansion of AI usage (for example, following the phases outlined in Chapter 4), the dimensions need only be developed to the extent necessary to support the strategic direction and ensure the realization of benefits.

As a foundation, starting from the first phase of a controlled AI deployment, clearly defined guidelines supported by all relevant stakeholders can serve this purpose. These guidelines—ideally covering the dimensions of strategy, architecture, governance, security, ethics, and compliance—then also form the basis for the further development of regulations within these dimensions.

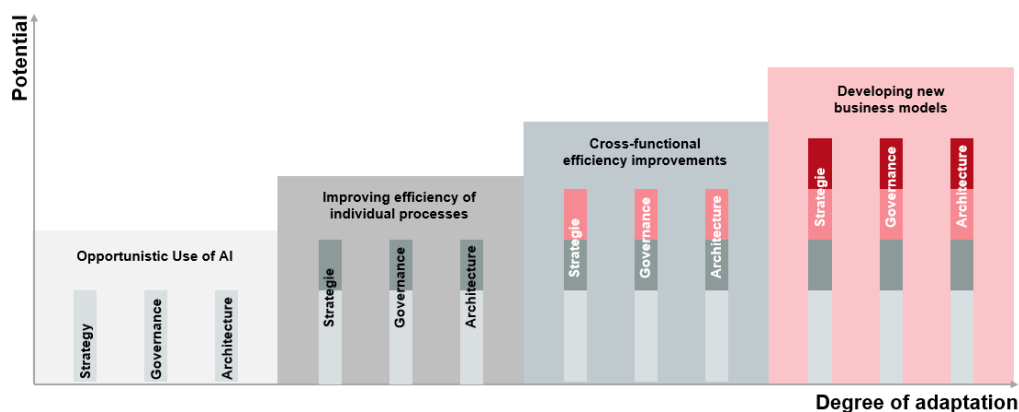


Figure 13 : Development of Strategy, Governance, and Architecture with Increasing Adoption of AI (Diagram)

The maturity level of the guidelines in the strategy dimension is crucial. If these are firmly grounded in a well-established corporate strategy, formulated in alignment with the IT strategy, and include a rough phased plan for implementation, they generally form a solid foundation for deriving the guidelines for the other dimensions and launching the first phase of a controlled implementation.

Readiness for the structured adoption of AI to realize its full potential can be assessed based on the following points:

- Are the strategic guidelines for AI deployment formulated and aligned with the corporate and IT strategies, and are the short- and medium-term goals specifically anchored within them?
- Is there at least an informal governance structure in place to coordinate which use cases should be implemented in what order in accordance with the strategic guidelines?
- Can corporate IT support the implementation of the selected use cases while adhering to the guidelines?

-
- Is it ensured within the framework of IT governance that all compliance requirements for implementation are met and that compliance can be verified?
 - Is it ensured that all stakeholders can build up the necessary expertise during implementation?

If the checkpoints are positive, in addition to the structured implementation of the use case for achieving short-term objectives, the conceptual cornerstones can be further developed to also achieve the broader goals.

6 Conclusion

In the media industry, artificial intelligence has evolved from a field of experimentation to a strategic necessity. The examples described in this white paper show that while the technology is available, initial use cases are functioning, and the potential is tangible, technological capabilities alone do not create sustainable value.

Rather, the ability to act stems from structure. A clear AI strategy derived from the business strategy provides direction and enables targeted investments. Robust governance structures ensure transparency, compliance, and trust. A modern IT architecture with a central AI platform enables scalability, cost control, and flexibility. And targeted skills development empowers employees to use AI tools critically and integrate them into their daily work.

“Structure beats activism” is not just a call to action, but a prerequisite for turning technological potential into demonstrable, sustainable business success.

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