

AI Pricing as Hidden Wealth Tax: How Token Billing Makes Swiss Enterprises Dependent

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

Token billing acts like a hidden wealth tax: Uber burned its 2026 AI budget in four months, and according to McKinsey 93 percent of enterprises exceed their AI budget even as token prices fall sharply in 2026. The rebound effect turns cheaper tokens into an amplifier, not a relief. Swiss decision-makers need cost control, governance and sovereign alternatives.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

In a widely noted CNBC interview on July 1, 2026, Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir Technologies, chose unusually blunt language: the pricing model of leading AI providers resembles a wealth tax on enterprises. His criticism targeted a business model where companies pay for tokens that create no measurable value while simultaneously feeding proprietary data into providers training pipelines.

The numbers validate Karp's warning: Uber consumed its entire AI budget for 2026 by April just four months in. With 5,000 engineers and spending between 500 and 2,000 dollars per power user monthly, costs escalated faster than financial planning anticipated. Andrew Macdonald, Uber's COO, admitted in the Rapid Response podcast: It is very hard to draw a line between one of those stats and Okay now we are actually producing like 25 percent more useful consumer features.

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 Uncontrolled scaling: Every employee can independently trigger API calls without central budget accountability.
- 02 Opaque pricing structures: Model upgrades, context window expansions or new features change consumption patterns without warning.
- 03 Missing governance: Only 43 per cent of organisations have formal AI governance policies, just 21 per cent have mature agentic governance frameworks.
- 04 Vendor lock-in: Once implemented, workflows are difficult to migrate to alternative providers, reducing price negotiation leverage.

SWISS COMPLIANCE & ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES

- ☑ Full compliance with revised Swiss Data Protection Act (revDSG).
- ☑ Zero vendor lock-in on closed proprietary models.
- ☑ Seamless integration into Abacus, Bexio and M365 ecosystems.

Non-Binding Process Analysis

Let us review in 20 minutes where AI agents create immediate measurable efficiency in your workflows.

ki-outsourcing.ch