

Data Governance for AI Agents: Why AI Projects Fail on Bad Data

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

AI agents rarely fail because of the model — they fail because of the data beneath it. Gartner projects that 60% of AI projects without AI-ready data will be abandoned through 2026, and MIT NANDA found 95% of GenAI initiatives deliver zero ROI. For Swiss SMEs, data governance is a precondition for success, not an IT afterthought.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

When an AI agent underperforms, the instinct is to blame the model. The evidence points elsewhere: the failure almost always sits one layer down, in the data foundation the agent operates on. Gartner quantified the scale of this problem in February 2025, and the forecast is uncomfortable reading for anyone planning agent deployments.

Gartner also found that 63% of organisations simply lack the right data management practices for AI. RAND's 2024 research put the overall AI project failure rate above 80%. The exact figures vary between studies, but the direction is unmistakable: most AI initiatives fail not because of the technology, but because of insufficient preparation.

CORE ACTION ITEMS

01 Data readiness gaps: inconsistent formats, scattered sources, missing or outdated metadata

02 Workflow integration gaps: the agent receives data that isn't connected to actual business processes

03 Undefined outcomes: the project starts without a clear, measurable business goal

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