

From Model Race to Deployment Race: Why Swiss SMEs Fall Behind

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

For two years, the AI debate obsessed over which model wins. Now BCG shows the real bottleneck: only 5% of pilots reach sustained production. For Swiss SMEs, the differentiator isn't the model anymore - it's the ability to actually deploy it.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

For two years, the AI debate revolved around a single question: which model is best? GPT-4 versus Claude, Gemini versus the Chinese challengers, the US versus China. That debate hasn't fully faded, but it is losing relevance fast. The real question for Swiss companies today is different: who can actually embed AI productively into daily operations? And that question is decided not by the model, but by deployment capability.

The leading large language models are converging in capability. What was a clear edge two years ago has largely levelled out - and models are becoming cheaper and more widely available. For Swiss SMEs, that's good news: model choice is turning into a commodity decision. The real strategic work lies elsewhere - in redesigning processes, preparing data properly, and guiding people through change. A recent discussion on the [Swiss AI podcast examines this global race and the mistakes SMEs commonly make](<https://www.ki-podcast.ch/ki-standort-schweiz-kmu-strategie-und-globales-rennen>).

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 AI User: Individual employees use AI tools ad hoc and on their own initiative - without coordination or a system behind it.
- 02 AI-Assisted: AI supports defined tasks within individual teams, mostly as an add-on to existing processes.
- 03 AI-Orchestrated: Multiple AI applications interact with each other, and processes are redesigned around AI capabilities.
- 04 AI-Native: AI is an integral part of the operating architecture - no longer an add-on, but a foundation.

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.

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