

IBM + OpenAI: How Consulting Giants Are Cornering Enterprise AI

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

IBM is training tens of thousands of consultants on OpenAI technology, building a dedicated OpenAI practice within IBM Consulting. This signals a broader shift: major consulting firms are securing enterprise AI deployment expertise before companies build it internally. Swiss SMEs now face a narrowing window to decide how they build AI capability.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

On August 13, 2026, IBM and OpenAI announced a partnership that looks like just another technology deal on the surface — and marks a strategic shift on closer inspection. IBM Consulting is building a dedicated OpenAI practice, training tens of thousands of consultants on GPT-5.6, Codex, and ChatGPT Work, and embedding these models into industry-specific solutions for financial services, government, telecom, and retail — integrated into IBM's own Consulting Advantage platform. No financial terms were disclosed; as an operational resource, IBM is deploying so-called Forward Deployed Engineers who work directly alongside clients on implementation.

The real story isn't the scale of the training — it's the business model shift behind it. With this move, OpenAI is stepping away from the classic SaaS approach — API access, self-service, software-driven scale — and instead scaling through consulting integrators. The model is no longer 'buy access,' but 'buy implementation' through a partner who controls the implementation. Whoever controls implementation controls the client relationship — and, over time, pricing power.

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 Anthropic has launched its own AI-native enterprise services, backed in part by Blackstone, Hellman & Friedman, and Goldman Sachs.
- 02 OpenAI itself is building a 'Deployment Company,' backed by more than \$4 billion from TPG, selling implementation rather than pure software.
- 03 Coforge launched Momentum AI, a Forward Deployed Engineer model with outcome-based pricing.
- 04 Kyndryl is positioning 'Agentic Modernization' explicitly as services-as-software.

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