

Why AI Projects Fail: The Real Culprit Isn't the Technology

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

AI projects don't fail because the technology is immature — they fail because organisations never prepare their people for change. Research shows adoption rates of roughly 15 percent without structured change management, rising to 75 percent with it. Change management isn't overhead — it's the actual precondition for AI success.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

The numbers are unambiguous, and they contradict conventional wisdom: roughly 70 percent of AI projects fail — not because algorithms malfunction or systems run unreliably, but because the people expected to work with them were never prepared for the change. Any organisation that treats change management as a dispensable overhead cost when investing in AI will eventually pay the full price: failed projects, frustrated teams, and burned budgets.

As early as 2015, McKinsey research found that 70 percent of all change initiatives fail due to employee resistance and insufficient management support — long before generative AI became a boardroom topic. The pattern hasn't changed with the AI wave; if anything, it has intensified. A Gartner survey from July 2024, covering 473 HR leaders, found that 73 percent of employees are change-fatigued, and 74 percent of leaders feel unable to lead change at all.

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 Early workforce involvement: affected employees become participants before the system goes live.
- 02 Visible leadership: executives take visible ownership instead of delegating responsibility to the IT department.
- 03 Internal ambassadors instead of top-down announcements: colleagues explain to colleagues what is changing and why.
- 04 Mandatory training instead of optional offerings: capability building becomes part of working hours, not an after-hours extra.

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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