



**think ahead**

// AI\_TRANSFORMATION

# AI-Transformation Roadmap

Become AI-ready in 6-12 months

Sometimes the most honest outcome of an AI scan is: "Not yet."

Not because AI offers no opportunities, but because you first need to arrange some basics: data, processes, ownership, technology.

This roadmap helps you build a foundation in 6-12 months, so AI pilots will be promising afterwards.



## // OVERVIEW

# Four phases to AI-readiness

1

### **Direction & ambition**

0-2 months

2

### **Data & processes in order**

2-6 months

3

### **Organization & skills**

4-8 months

4

### **Prepare first experiments**

6-12 months

#### **Note:**

Don't see this roadmap as a strict project plan, but as a sequence of focus areas. You can do some steps in parallel, as long as the logic remains: first foundation, then experiment.



# 1

PHASE 1 • 0-2 MONTHS

## Direction & ambition

### 1. Determine why you want to work with AI

- Formulate 2-3 sentences about what AI should deliver for you (e.g., less manual work, better customer service, faster insights).
- Link this to existing goals (e.g., strategy, annual plan, digitization agenda).

### 2. Choose an owner and a small core team

- Appoint one person as the driver (not necessarily an AI expert, but someone who gets things done).
- Form a compact team (3-5 people) with someone from: business, IT/BI, and possibly operations/customer service.

### 3. Make an initial inventory of opportunities and concerns

- Where do people in the organization see opportunities?
- What are they afraid of (jobs, loss of control, errors)?
- Document this - this becomes input for your later communication and pilots.

#### DELIVERABLE PHASE 1

- 1 page with your AI ambition (why, roughly what, for whom)
- Named owner and core team
- Overview of top 5 opportunities + top 5 concerns



## 2

PHASE 2 • 2-6 MONTHS

# Data & processes in order

### 1. Map your core processes and data sources

- Choose 2-3 core processes (e.g., sales, customer service, project management).
- Note per process: which systems, which data sources, where is the most manual work.

### 2. Determine ownership per data source

- Who is responsible for the quality of customer data? Product data? Contracts?
- Document this explicitly - without owner, no serious AI.

### 3. Improve basic data quality

- Clean up the most disturbing things: duplicate records, missing fields, outdated lists.
- Make simple agreements about input (e.g., required fields, naming conventions).

### 4. Establish basic privacy & security agreements

- Check together with your DPO/CISO/IT what is and isn't allowed.
- Which data absolutely cannot go to external AI services? Where are possibilities under conditions?

#### DELIVERABLE PHASE 2

- Process overview + data landscape for 2-3 core processes
- Overview of data owners
- Basic set of privacy/security guidelines for future pilots



## 3

### PHASE 3 • 4-8 MONTHS

## Organization & skills

### 1. Make AI a theme, not a hobby

- Discuss AI regularly in management/teams: not just "scary or cool", but linked to concrete goals.
- Schedule 1-2 internal sessions showing what's possible with your type of data.

### 2. Build basic knowledge with a few key people

- Give the core team access to a few good AI tools (ChatGPT, Claude, etc.) and let them spend time on it.
- Let them experiment with their own documents (but within the privacy frameworks from Phase 2).

### 3. Put light governance in place

- Who may experiment and with which tools?
- How do you prevent everyone from going off with their own AI solutions (shadow IT)?
- When does something become an "official" experiment?

### 4. Already outline criteria for good pilots

- Clear business question (not "we want something with AI")
- Measurable effect (time, quality, costs, satisfaction)
- Owner, users and data known

#### DELIVERABLE PHASE 3

- Internal slide or intranet page "How we view AI"
- Agreements on who may experiment and how
- Checklist for selecting good pilot ideas



## 4

PHASE 4 • 6-12 MONTHS

# Prepare first experiments

### 1. Collect and prioritize pilot ideas

- Ask teams to submit concrete pain points (short form, max 1 page).
- Prioritize together with management and core team on: feasibility, impact, support.

### 2. Choose 1 promising pilot at a time

- Don't start with 5 things at once.
- Choose one pilot with clear business case and a process you already have reasonable grip on.

### 3. Work out the pilot at high level

- Goal and scope (what yes, what no)
- Involved systems and data
- Success criteria and timeline (e.g., 4-6 weeks)

### 4. Find the right partner(s)

- Determine what you do yourself and where you need external help.
- Make sure your partner can work with your tech stack and data - no black box.

#### DELIVERABLE PHASE 4

- 1 detailed pilot description that is "management-ready"
- Decision: are we doing this, with whom and when?



## // SUMMARY

# 10 concrete actions

- 1 Formulate your AI ambition in 2-3 sentences.
- 2 Name an owner and assemble a small core team.
- 3 Map 2-3 core processes and associated data sources.
- 4 Document ownership per data source.
- 5 Clean up the biggest data quality problems.
- 6 Make basic agreements about privacy, security and use of AI tools.
- 7 Ensure a few key people get time to experiment with AI.
- 8 Document how you choose and evaluate pilots.
- 9 Collect and prioritize pilot ideas from the organization.
- 10 Work out one pilot idea into a concrete proposal and decide if you're going to do it.

Once you've checked off these ten points, your organization is ready to start a targeted AI pilot.

## Ready to start?

roel@thinkahead.digital | +31 6 24963800 | [linkedin.com/in/schief](https://www.linkedin.com/in/schief)