

Module 9: AI-Powered Process

Lesson 3: Process Adoption

Ensuring Organization-Wide Adoption of New Processes

Rolling out new or optimized processes across an organization can feel like an arduous task, but this is where the AI effort will start to reveal its impact on productivity, optimization, and ROI.

Following our process, which includes upfront planning and a structured approach, your company can successfully transition staff to new ways of running their workflows.

However, process adoption requires diligence on the part of leadership, department managers, the team leads, and, of course, the CAIO. Change may be perceived as “hard” for some team members, especially if they haven’t been too involved in the discussions around the AI deployment. It takes time to change muscle memory. It may seem easier to keep doing things as they’ve always done. Still, consistent communication, a clear upskilling & training path, and leadership engagement accelerate progress toward adopting AI-powered processes.

Below are our proven guidelines for driving organization-wide process adoption.

Secure Leadership Buy-In

Leadership endorsement accelerates adoption, plain and simple. Ensure executives and managers understand the rationale for process development or changes, expected benefits, and their role in supporting the transition.

It is usually a good idea to develop talking points in advance to address any inertia on the part of leadership. Knowing that this will be a common encounter for a CAIO in charge of deployment, we advise you to focus on the pain points that the new way of doing things will alleviate and especially communicate the forecasted ROI on the effort.



Involve Users Early On

Domain expertise is the secret sauce when ensuring an AI-powered process has maximum effect. Those executing the existing processes on a regular basis have invaluable insights. Engage those we like to call **Process Champions** early in identifying and developing processes. The Process Champion is the person or people in the organization that does their portion of the process in such a way that you would like everyone else to follow their lead.

Set Clear Expectations for Adoption

Set clear expectations that compliance is mandatory, not optional.

The guidance on adoption should include a timeline for when the user is expected to:

1. Attend training on the new workflow.
2. Start using the new AI-powered process.
3. Provide initial feedback on the new process (can it be improved?)
4. Transition out of the legacy process and the old way of doing things

Provide Extensive Training

Hands-on training is essential for capability building and mitigates resistance to the new way of doing things.

A saying we've found relevant in this scenario is, "A confused mind always says no." By having a clearly mapped out upskilling path for each role, you are able to reduce confusion on the HOW and WHY of the new processes, making it easier for the new processes to be adopted and followed.

We recommended training all individuals who will participate in any specific process as a team to have clear cross-departmental expectations. This group environment helps ensure that the team members can learn together and support each other in the learning process.

As discussed in the lesson on Change Management, be sure to record your trainings. As new members join the company, this will provide them with the same training that everyone else on the team initially received, so there is no concern that the onboarding of the new employee will go off script because they weren't adequately trained on the workflows they will be involved in.



Simplify and Streamline

Complex, tedious processes won't be followed consistently. That's why we have domain experts and workflow users involved in the process mining step in our Change Management lesson in the previous module.

Friction leads to workaround behavior, so encouraging feedback from the users of the workflows should be solicited regularly. Are there steps we can remove? Are there steps that are confusing or cumbersome?

Implement Gradually

Many CAIOs have found that easing into integrating AI-powered processes helps achieve overall adoption.

By starting with pilot efforts, the CAIO will have the bandwidth to focus exclusively on those processes and be ready to step in and troubleshoot any issues that may arise. This allows the CAIO and managers to learn where their employee training plan may have fallen short so they can update it before rolling it out to a larger set of employees.

This level of attention to the pilot effort will help ensure that the initial usage of the new processes is successful and assist in removing doubts or concerns about whether or not the AI deployment will get results.

Enforce Through Audits

Having a way to audit process compliance and providing clear consequences of non-compliance goes a long way in reinforcing the AI-powered processes as the new normal.

When the usage and compliance audits reveal less-than-optimal participation from the workflow users, it is best to address those gaps through coaching first and escalation last. However, it should be communicated that non-adherence has consequences.

Phase Out Legacy Workflows

If you leave a backdoor or alternative way of performing the workflow, some may backslide into doing things "the old way."

You can prevent this by phasing out and removing access to old systems and processes and tying employee performance measurements to their usage of the new AI-powered processes.

Automate and AI-ify Wherever Possible

During Impact Assessment, you reviewed the roles on the org chart to determine opportunities to Automate, Augment, or AI-ify the role and its main workflows/processes.

AI is constantly added to automation tools, and new AI software is available daily. Train the Team Leads and Process Champions to look for ways to continually improve or remove each step of the processes they are in charge of.

An easy way to do this is to set calendar reminders for the users to reach out to their tech stack vendors to inquire whether any new AI functionality has been introduced. This can also include things like checklists, notifications, and multi-step workflows.

Address Resistance

Expect some resistance, especially from those comfortable with old ways.

By listening to concerns from the workflow users, you will gain very actionable insight that can be used to further calibrate the process mapping and training efforts.

Additionally, a framework to incentivize user adoption through recognition, promotions, and celebrations will normalize the new processes and show that leadership is paying attention to and rewarding user adoption.

Show Benefits

When you can communicate quick wins, successes, and benefits achieved through new workflows, more and more users see social proof that AI is helping, making roles easier and more productive. This builds further momentum for adoption across the organization.

Conclusion

Adopting new processes, especially those powered by AI, isn't merely about introducing new tools or workflows—it's about shaping an organizational culture receptive to change.



From securing leadership buy-in to continuously showing benefits, every step ensures that the members of an organization not only accept but also thrive with the new processes.

As a CAIO or a leader responsible for adoption, remember that every individual in the organization plays a pivotal role. Their insights, concerns, and successes are extremely helpful for ensuring a smooth transition from legacy to AI-enabled processes.

Through diligence, communication, and collaboration, the power of AI can be fully harnessed, benefiting both the organization and its stakeholders.