

CapTech Research: 86% of Technology Leaders Say Internal Decision-Making Is Slowing AI Progress

Study finds organizations are confident in AI adoption and modernization, but governance, stakeholder alignment, and decision-making continue to impede scale.



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-- New research from [CapTech](#) finds that organizational decision-making, governance, and stakeholder alignment are emerging as major barriers to enterprise AI scale. [Explore the full research here.](#)

“

... Decisions become the bottleneck. Organizations that establish clear ownership, governance, and measures of success early are better positioned to turn AI into business outcomes.”

Brian Bischoff, CapTech CTO

[Key Findings]

Organizations Are Moving Aggressively into AI
AI has become the highest technology priority for enterprise leaders.

- 60% selected either scaling AI use or building AI infrastructure as a top technology priority.
- 93% agree successful AI implementation will save their organization money.

AI Adoption Is Accelerating, but the Pressure Is Mounting

As AI moves from experimentation to execution, organizations face growing pressure to deliver measurable outcomes.

- 78% report experiencing high or extreme pressure to implement AI-based solutions.
- 61% are more concerned about failing to modernize quickly enough than becoming locked into a specific technology vendor.
- Only 28% describe themselves as completely confident they will achieve their technology priorities over the next 18 to 24 months.

Decision-Making Is Creating More Friction Than Technology

Most organizations believe organizational issues now create greater obstacles than technical challenges.

- 86% say their organizations are capable of rapidly implementing AI solutions, but internal decision-making slows progress.
- 56% say stakeholder misalignment and decision-making hinder modernization more than technical barriers (44%).
- 90% say modernization decisions would improve if stakeholders established a shared understanding of tradeoffs.

Governance and Alignment Are Underestimated

The findings reveal a recurring gap between what organizations prioritize and where they report execution challenges.

- Only 25% of leaders rank stakeholder alignment among their top modernization priorities, yet 56% say stakeholder misalignment slows modernization more than technical barriers.
- 90% believe modernization decisions would improve if stakeholders shared a common understanding of tradeoffs.
- Governance approval emerged as the most commonly cited point where initiatives stall or reverse course, despite only 27% of respondents identifying governance as a leading AI transformation priority.
- Unaligned stakeholders are the top risk to moving initiatives from pilot to scaled program.

Organizations Increasingly Want Objective Guidance

Leaders recognize that successful AI execution requires more than technology expertise.

- 88% agree objective third-party advisors would improve technology modernization decision-making.
- Organizations most want help with infrastructure readiness, moving beyond experimentation to implementation, prioritizing initiatives, and demonstrating ROI.

[Organizations are confident in AI adoption, but operational challenges continue to impede scale.]

Organizations are moving aggressively to scale artificial intelligence, but new research from CapTech finds that technology itself may no longer be the primary barrier to progress. Instead, governance, stakeholder alignment, and internal decision-making are emerging as the greatest challenges organizations face as they move AI initiatives from experimentation into enterprise-scale implementation.

Conducted in partnership with The Harris Poll, CapTech's 2026 Executive AI Research surveyed 302 IT decision-makers at organizations already running AI in production environments. The study explores how leaders navigate technology modernization, AI implementation, governance,

and organizational decision-making during large-scale transformation efforts.

The findings reveal a growing disconnect: organizations are highly confident in their ability to deliver AI initiatives, yet operational and organizational challenges are preventing many from realizing AI's full potential.

Organizations Are All-In on AI

AI is shifting from an innovation initiative to a business mandate.

The study found that scaling AI use (41%) and building AI infrastructure (31%) are now the two most common technology priorities among enterprise IT leaders, significantly outpacing priorities such as talent development, technology debt reduction, and cost control. Collectively, 60% of respondents selected at least one AI-related priority among their top technology initiatives.

Organizations also face mounting urgency. Nearly four in five respondents (78%) report experiencing high or extreme pressure to implement AI-based solutions, while 61% say they are more concerned about failing to modernize quickly enough than becoming locked into a particular vendor or platform.

At the same time, leaders remain optimistic. Ninety-three percent believe AI will save money when implemented successfully, and 62% believe AI will reduce waste and rework within their organizations.

Pressure Creates Risk Alongside Opportunity

Organizations experiencing the highest AI pressure expect the greatest returns, but they also report more challenges.

Among respondents reporting extreme pressure to implement AI, 69% expect AI-related initiatives to increase revenue by at least 20%, while 70% expect savings of at least 20%. At the same time, these organizations report narrower governance participation, more unintended consequences, and greater expectations of rework and waste. More broadly, only 28% of respondents describe themselves as completely confident they will achieve their technology priorities over the next 18 to 24 months.

The findings point to a growing leadership challenge: balancing the urgency to deliver AI outcomes against the governance and decision-making rigor required to sustain them.

The Biggest Barrier Isn't AI Capability. It's Organizational Decision-Making.

The research suggests many organizations have made substantial progress building technical capabilities yet continue to struggle with organizational execution.

Eighty-six percent of respondents agree their organizations are capable of rapidly implementing AI-based solutions but say internal decision-making slows progress. More respondents point to stakeholder misalignment and decision-making challenges as modernization barriers (56%) than technical issues (44%).

In addition, 90% believe modernization decisions would improve if stakeholders developed a shared understanding of tradeoffs. The finding highlights the importance of decision frameworks that align technology, business, risk, and operational priorities early in the modernization process.

"Most organizations have access to the tools, infrastructure, and talent they need to move AI forward," said Brian Bischoff, Chief Technology Officer at CapTech. "What we continue to see is that decisions become the bottleneck. Organizations that establish clear ownership, governance, and measures of success early are better positioned to turn AI initiatives into business outcomes."

Governance and Alignment Create the Greatest Drag on Progress

One of the clearest themes in the research is the gap between what organizations prioritize and what ultimately slows them down. When deciding which business problems to solve first through modernization, leaders rank competitive advantage (53%) and ROI (52%) as their top priorities. Stakeholder alignment ranks last, with just 25% including it among their top two considerations.

Yet alignment and governance consistently emerge as significant barriers to progress throughout the research. More than half of respondents (56%) say stakeholder misalignment and decision-making slow modernization efforts more than technical barriers, while 90% believe modernization decisions would improve if stakeholders established a shared understanding of tradeoffs.

The disconnect continues with governance. Governance approval emerged as the most common point where initiatives stall or reverse course, despite only 27% of respondents identifying governance as a top organizational priority in their AI transformation efforts. Respondents also identified unaligned stakeholders as the leading risk to moving initiatives from pilot projects into scaled business programs.

The findings suggest many organizations focus first on technology, speed, and business outcomes, only to discover later that governance and alignment can become significant barriers

to scaling initiatives successfully.

Organizations Want Help Closing the Decision Discipline Gap

As organizations navigate this complexity, many leaders acknowledge they need additional support.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents agree objective third-party advisors would improve technology modernization decision-making. Respondents also identified infrastructure readiness (30%), moving beyond experimentation to implementation (29%), prioritization (27%), and demonstrating ROI (26%) among the areas where they need the most assistance.

The findings suggest the next phase of AI transformation will be less about access to technology and more about helping organizations establish the governance, alignment, and decision frameworks required to turn AI investments into measurable business outcomes. This aligns with CapTech's broader focus on helping organizations deliver practical business value through technology transformation and AI enablement.

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About the Research

CapTech's 2026 Executive AI Research was conducted by The Harris Poll between May 8 and May 22, 2026. The survey included 302 director-level-and-above IT decision-makers at organizations with at least 250 employees. All respondents work in technology functions accountable for technology outcomes and represent organizations already using AI beyond the pilot phase. Respondents represent 20 industries across the United States.

About CapTech

We're an AI-first consulting firm that leads with a deep understanding of our clients' business and a holistic approach to data and technology that accelerates results. For over 30 years, CapTech has been at the forefront of every advancement in technology, leveraging our expertise to help clients navigate opportunities to solve real business challenges. Learn more at captechconsulting.com

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