October 2026 · Application-ready, research-grounded

THE PEOPLE STRATEGY FOR AI ADOPTION

A practitioner-built maturity guide to the 7 Human Systems

AI adoption maturity is the demonstrated ability to redesign work, decide, develop people, and govern AI for sustainable value.

MATURITY PROGRESSION

From experimentation to systemic intelligence

STAGE 1 EXPERIMENTING → STAGE 2 OPERATIONALIZING → STAGE 3 INTEGRATING → STAGE 4 REINVENTING

A cycle, not a line: progress is uneven and iterative

CORE QUESTION	What can AI do?	How do we use AI reliably?	How does AI change how we run the business?	How does AI redefine our business model?
VALUE REALIZATION	Isolated productivity	Functional efficiency	Cross-enterprise impact	New value creation
WHAT TO MEASURE	Active use, learning, early value	Task time, quality, rework	Workflow outcomes, cost per outcome	New capacity, revenue, value

THE 7 HUMAN SYSTEMS: WHAT EVOLVES AT EACH MATURITY LEVEL

1 WORK DESIGN	AI as tool	AI as assistant	AI as contributor	AI as catalyst
2 WORKFORCE CAPABILITY	Curious tool users	Role-specific fluency	Judgment as core skill	Humans lead oversight
3 DECISION & GOVERNANCE	Safe to try	Clear rules, owners	Governance in the flow	Oversight fits the risk
4 LEADERSHIP & CULTURE	Leaders go first	Direction and trust	Shared accountability	Leaders own outcomes
5 MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS	Curiosity first	Reward effective use	Cross-enterprise impact	Pay follows value
6 OPERATING MODEL	Local and uneven	Central standards	Cross-functional flow	Humans + AI by design
7 ECONOMICS & VALUE	Cost is hidden	Spend visible	Best human–AI mix	Price value, not effort

Scan to read the full paper and framework.

For the full model, refer to: Sarkar-Barney, S., Arjannikova, S., Grantham, C., Rogowski, R., Pui, S. Y., & Baill, B. (2026, October). *The people strategy for AI adoption: An explainer and action guide to the seven human systems* [Working paper]. HR Strategy Forum, AI Collaboratory.