

ROADMAP

AI-Ready Data Roadmap

Data alignment, qualification and governance for AI that serves a business purpose.

Data readiness depends on the use case

A well-managed dataset still needs to be tested against the demands of a specific AI application.

Business context

Start with the decision or workflow the AI will support. Define who uses the output and what a useful result looks like.

Representative data

Include normal cases, relevant exceptions and the populations the system will encounter. Document gaps and limitations.

Operational evidence

Check whether data and outputs remain useful in operation. Changes in sources, models or business conditions can change readiness.

The three disciplines of AI-ready data

Readiness is an ongoing practice supported by metadata and evidence.

Align

Match coverage, meaning and quality to the use case. Examine trust, fairness, diversity and provenance.

Qualify

Validate data and outputs against acceptance criteria. Track service levels, versions, regressions and operational performance.

Govern

Assign stewardship and control access. Set rules for sharing, derived data, retention and the standards that apply to the use case.

The roadmap at a glance

Each stage ends with evidence for the next decision. Revisit earlier stages when the use case or data changes.

01**Assess**

Use-case
requirements
and readiness gaps

02**Secure support**

Sponsor, resources
and decision rights

03**Evolve practices**

Metadata, quality
and evaluation

04**Extend the
ecosystem**

Tools and skills
tested in context

05**Scale and
govern**

Ongoing controls
and value reviews

Assess data management readiness

Define what the chosen AI use case needs before selecting a technology.

Data fit

Map required sources, business definitions, coverage and quality.
Identify missing or unreliable data.

Confidence

Set evaluation criteria for output quality, latency, cost and other operating requirements.

Control needs

Identify data owners, access restrictions and governance obligations for the proposed use.

OUTPUT

A use-case brief, source inventory and prioritized readiness gap register.

DECISION

Proceed when owners agree on acceptance criteria and a feasible gap-closure plan.

Secure executive support

Connect the data work to a business objective and a decision the sponsor can make.

Business value

Describe the workflow, its current baseline and the outcome the initiative will test.

Resources

Estimate effort and operating cost.
Separate measured facts from assumptions and unresolved dependencies.

Decision rights

Name the sponsor and accountable owners. Define the pilot boundary and the conditions for stopping or expanding it.

OUTPUT

A sponsor brief with options, resource estimates and explicit approval requests.

DECISION

Proceed when the sponsor approves scope, ownership and resource commitments.

Evolve data management practices

Build and evaluate a bounded application around sources the team understands.

Source handling

Classify structured, semistructured and unstructured sources. Document how each is prepared and updated.

Metadata

Capture meaning, provenance, permissions and freshness. Preserve context when preparing documents for retrieval.

Use-case testing

For retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), test retrieval and answers together. Include difficult cases and compare versions.

OUTPUT

A versioned data pipeline and evaluation set linked to the pilot use case.

DECISION

Proceed when evaluation evidence meets the agreed acceptance criteria.

Extend the data management ecosystem

Evaluate capabilities against the application before committing to a broader rollout.

Platform fit

Check integration, metadata support, retrieval needs and operating requirements against existing systems.

Team capability

Train users to recognize data limits and inappropriate outputs. Assign support and escalation responsibilities.

Vendor evidence

Test proposed capabilities with representative data. Assess accuracy, security, privacy and operating cost.

OUTPUT A capability assessment with test results, limitations and an operating owner.

DECISION Proceed when selected tools meet requirements and the team can operate them.

Scale and govern

Expand only with continuing evidence of usefulness and control.

Accountability

Extend existing data governance to the AI use case. Assign review, incident response and change authority.

Monitoring

Track data and output quality, access, cost and business outcomes. Define thresholds and a response for breaches.

Change management

Review source, model and policy changes. Update evaluations, training and controls when the application changes.

OUTPUT

An operating review cadence, monitoring record and documented escalation plan.

DECISION

Continue, adjust or pause based on current evidence and accountable review.

Who needs to be involved?

Functions can share roles, but every decision needs a named accountable owner.

Business sponsor and finance

Define expected value, approve resources and review outcomes.

Technology and architecture

Align platforms, integration and application requirements.

Security and governance

Set access and risk controls, review changes and handle escalation.

Data leadership and stewardship

Own readiness standards, business meaning and source accountability.

Data engineers and AI team

Build pipelines and evaluations, then monitor production behavior.

Procurement and application owners

Evaluate providers and make the application workable for its users.

The executive decision brief

A reusable structure for turning readiness findings into an investment decision.

Business question	Which decision or workflow will change, and for whom?
Evidence and gaps	What do we know about data fitness, and what remains untested?
Options and resources	What can we pilot, with which people, effort and operating cost?
Ownership and controls	Who accepts the outcome, operates the system and handles incidents?
Decision requested	What needs approval now, and what evidence unlocks expansion?

A practical readiness review

Record evidence, a responsible owner and an open issue for each area. Avoid a single score that hides critical gaps.

Use-case fit	Coverage and meaning match the intended application.
Quality and evaluation	Tests cover expected conditions and relevant exceptions.
Provenance and access	Sources, permissions and update paths are documented.
Operations	Performance and cost limits have owners and responses.
Business outcome	The team can compare results with a defined baseline.

Review outcome: proceed, resolve gaps, or pause. Record who made the decision and why.

Your next AI data decision

A conversation about your use case, data readiness
and the business outcome you want to test.

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