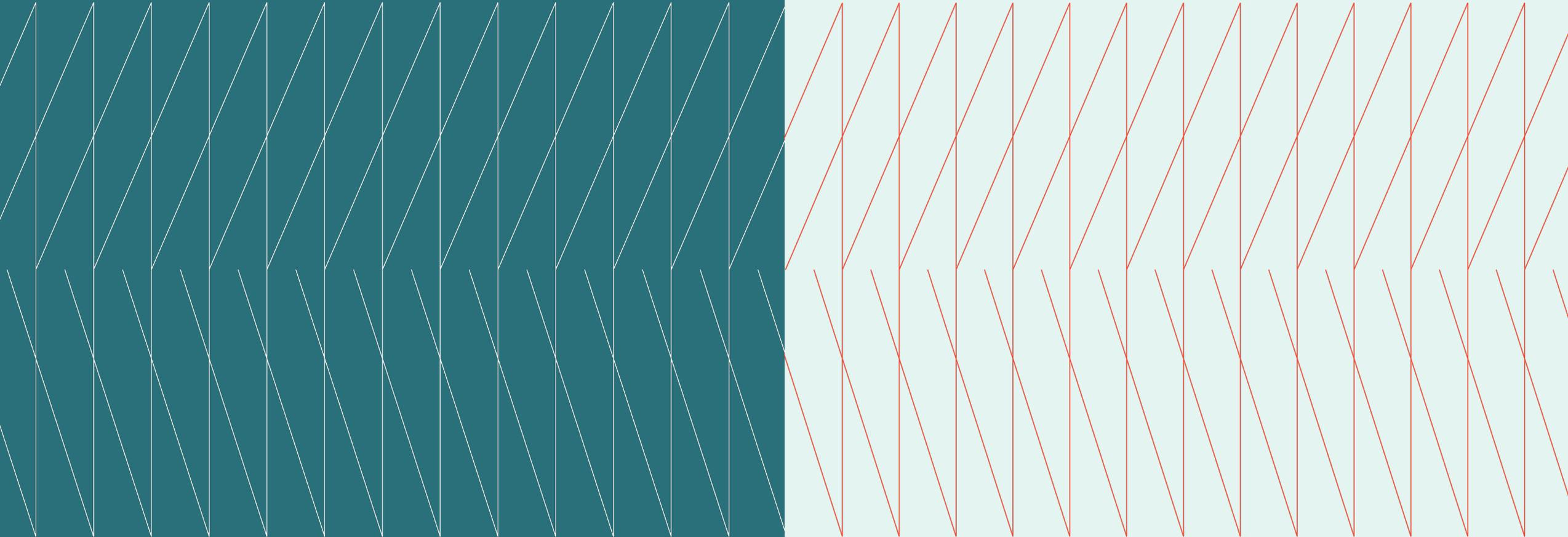


AI Leaders

# Expert Exchange

Q3 Executive summary  
December 9, 2025





# Overview

This report summarizes the Kyndryl AI Leaders Expert Exchange. During this virtual roundtable, senior technology leaders from diverse industries came together to discuss AI strategies aimed at achieving meaningful business results and enabling organizations across the board. Key topics included measuring ROI beyond just cost savings, encouraging workforce adoption, managing risks, ensuring effective governance, and synchronizing testing with the fast pace of AI development.

## Host(s)

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# Key topics

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# Measuring Return on Investment and Business Value

- Participants debated whether to focus on strict financial metrics or broader productivity gains, ultimately agreeing that specific business goals must drive implementation strategy.
- Participants highlighted a specific challenge in software development, noting that traditional "story points" used to measure effort are becoming obsolete. Because AI coding assistants significantly reduce the difficulty of tasks, historical metrics no longer accurately reflect the volume of work being accomplished.

- While some suggested the definition of ROI needs to evolve to accommodate AI's capabilities, others maintained that financial standards must remain consistent. One leader emphasized that executives must still demonstrate benefits using standard financial tools to maintain credibility with the C-suite, regardless of the technology used.
- One member questioned how to measure success for initiatives that improve productivity rather than directly impacting revenue or costs. In response, another participant argued that instead of vague efficiency metrics, organizations should target specific output goals, such as increasing pipeline productivity by five times, which creates a measurable business outcome.

- An executive provided a counterexample where efficiency directly drove revenue through accessibility, noting that automating after-hours scheduling captured customers who would have otherwise gone to competitors. This automation allowed staff to focus on complex cases, effectively retaining revenue and improving customer access simultaneously.
- One member argued that many organizations fail to establish a clear performance baseline before implementing AI, making it impossible to accurately calculate ROI later. Without knowing the initial state of operations, leaders struggle to prove the specific impact of the technology on customer experience or speed.

**“It is easy to prioritize something that is going to have cost take out or that you can tie to revenue, but I was interested in how others are measuring productivity and the softer numbers.”**

**– AI Leaders Expert Exchange  
Community Member**

# Workforce Enablement and Change Management

- The group discussed strategies for driving adoption across different demographics and departments, highlighting the need for tailored training and internal "evangelists" to bridge cultural gaps.
- Executives observed distinct disparities in adoption rates across different business functions, with marketing and finance teams embracing tools quickly while sales teams often lag behind. One member noted that finance teams, tired of manual spreadsheet work, surprisingly became early adopters of agent-based automation tools.

- An executive described a "draconian" approach to access, restricting usage to protect intellectual property and requiring strict oversight. In contrast, another executive successfully utilized an internal "AI challenge" to generate excitement among younger staff, resulting in workable prototypes and increased engagement despite union pressures.
- To address resistance, one leader recommended identifying internal "evangelists" who possess "street cred" with the general workforce to promote these tools. These advocates help colleagues understand not only the benefits of the technology but also the critical risks, such as copyright infringement and data privacy.

- A participant noted that fear of job replacement diminished when automation focused on "low-hanging fruit" like scheduling and prescription refills. By removing mundane tasks from overworked staff, the technology was viewed as a relief rather than a threat to their employment.
- Discussions regarding generational differences revealed that while younger employees often expect these tools, older workforce segments may ignore them. To combat this, one company is moving toward making AI fluency a formal job expectation, catering the requirements to specific roles like analysts or developers. used.

**“We develop what we call an evangelist... Somebody who's got, I'll call it street credit with the masses and that person, you really help them understand all of that because they start to evangelize it to everybody else, help them understand why they want to use it, but also then what the pitfalls are.”**

**— AI Leaders Expert Exchange  
Community Member**

# Governance, Risk, and the Speed of Delivery

- Discussion centered on the tension between rapid AI development and the organizational capacity to test, validate, and govern these new tools effectively.
- Legal and copyright risks were identified as a major barrier to widespread adoption, particularly regarding image generation in retail. Teams must understand the provenance of the content they generate to avoid infringing on intellectual property rights when materials are used publicly.

- Several participants expressed concern regarding "shadow IT," where employees utilize unauthorized external tools for sensitive work. A member noted that without approved internal alternatives, staff might inadvertently expose personally identifiable information to public platforms, necessitating a strong governance structure.
- An executive highlighted a novel operational bottleneck where development teams now deliver enterprise-grade products in days rather than months. This acceleration has shocked business units, which lack the capacity to test and sign off on products at the speed they are being created.

- One leader shared a cautionary example involving a junior employee who used generative tools to write a report that contained hallucinations. This incident underscored the necessity of human oversight and quality assurance, as the rapid generation of content can easily bypass traditional error-checking processes.
- Kyndryl concluded that looking at problems in silos often creates constraints that hamper the full benefit of the technology. If the product is built quickly but the organization is not ready to launch or govern it, the theoretical Return on Investment cannot be realized.

**“[Because of AI acceleration of development], what they ask for is showing up in short order and they are having a hard time coping with some of it... when you can not get things tested, all of a sudden that is the critical path that is failing out.”**

**– AI Leaders Expert Exchange  
Community Member**



The AI Leaders Expert Exchange is hosted by Kyndryl. Please contact Deepika Sharma (deepika.sharma.ds@kyndryl.com) or Rob Reynolds (rob.reynolds@kyndryl.com) with any questions about Kyndryl or this Exchange.

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