



DATASTREAM OMS⁺

As seen on Forbes Business Council

Why Waiting To Embrace AI Is No Longer An Option

As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes the way organizations operate, compete and grow, business leaders face a critical choice: Embrace the technology as a driver of growth and efficiency or wait.

Author: Tim Yates
CEO DataXstream

Many I have spoken to are waiting for perfect clarity, complete regulations or a fully mapped-out strategy. I think that hesitation is a mistake.

The greatest risk business leaders face today is not adopting AI too quickly; it is failing to adopt AI fast enough. Therefore, CEOs must embrace a new role as chief evangelist, learning about the technology, pushing their teams to use it and setting the pace for change.

1. The Competitive Window Is Closing

The first reason companies cannot afford to wait is that the scale of AI's impact is far greater than most realize. I find that too many executives are underestimating its potential.



AI is not just another tool to improve efficiency; it is a transformative capability that will alter entire business models. As CEO of a technology company, I am comfortable with new tools, but the risk I see across industries is leaders who treat AI as optional.

If you wait until the landscape is fully stable, you will likely already be behind. Competitors will have integrated AI into their customer experience, operations and supply chain, leaving late adopters scrambling to catch up. The window for competitive advantage is narrow, and hesitation only increases the gap.

2. Responsible Adoption Requires Strong Safeguards

Of course, adopting AI responsibly requires planning, especially around privacy and security. Concerns in this area are valid, and they must be addressed with urgency and seriousness. Enterprises cannot move forward without a privacy plan and a secure technology stack. I often look to leaders like SAP and Microsoft, who are investing heavily in building enterprise-grade protections into their platforms.

In following their lead, organizations should deploy AI within secure enterprise accounts, backed by firewalls and governance structures. It's true that attacks are becoming more sophisticated, and they will only grow more so as AI itself advances. But the answer is not to delay adoption, but rather to invest in safeguards from the outset.

3. Leadership And Investment Drive Adoption

The third reason to act now is the organizational learning curve. AI is not a single project; it is a capability that must be included in the operations of every division. That requires not only strong leadership but time for experimentation as well.

Every organization can use an AI evangelist team whose mission is to help business units identify problems and apply AI to solve them. This is not work that can be accomplished by a small innovation group tucked away in IT. It must be enterprise-wide. And yes, investment is required.

We have seen firsthand the cost of adoption, even in unexpected ways. For example, we built a solar array designed to power our data center. With the addition of AI workloads, that same array now only covers half our needs. So, yes, the energy consumption is real, but so is the gains we have seen from our AI systems.

Leaders must prepare their organizations to absorb these costs and invest in scaling AI for long-term gain.

Practical Use Cases Are Already Delivering Value

Finally, companies should not overlook the immediate, practical use cases already delivering value today. In our organization, we use AI every day in prospecting, legal review, development and testing. When

we receive redlined contracts, AI helps us quickly identify changes against the original, ensuring nothing slips through. In development, AI accelerates code testing and improves quality.

Even in daily tasks such as email and customer support, AI saves time and improves accuracy. Our customers are using AI in equally impactful ways: matching materials, enabling chat within our product, scanning documents to automate order creation and processing unstructured information with speed and precision. These are not hypothetical pilots; they are tangible examples of AI driving business value right now.

Seizing The AI Moment

I believe waiting for AI to fully mature before you act is not a strategy; it is a risk. The technology is advancing too quickly, and the cost of delay is too high. The CEOs who take ownership of this moment, becoming the chief evangelists for AI in their organizations, will drive transformation, staying abreast of this new wave.

That means learning how to use it personally, insisting on adoption across teams, investing in secure and scalable platforms and preparing for the resource demands that come with it.

AI is not a future initiative; it is a present imperative. The organizations that recognize this will lead. Those who hesitate will not catch up.