

Hitachi Solutions

From Hype to How

A Real-World Business Guide to AI Readiness





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Reframing the AI Conversation

Artificial Intelligence is everywhere: it's echoing across boardrooms, appearing in strategy decks, and cropping up in vendor proposals. The pressure to “do something with AI” is mounting, and so is the confusion. From GenAI to predictive models and automation, it's become the surround sound of business modernization: constant, complex, and impossible to ignore.

The truth is this: AI is not something you simply switch on. It's not a single tool or a shortcut to innovation. It's the result of something more foundational: governed, connected, high-quality data that your organization can trust and use.

This guide is here to refocus the conversation. It's not about trends, quick fixes, or installing the latest platform. It's about getting your house in order. Modernizing your data estate is what makes AI work, and what enables it to deliver real value across your business.

A practical pathway to AI readiness

Hitachi Solutions helps organizations unlock the real value of AI by starting where it matters most: your data. With a flexible and proven approach to modernization, we help you build a data estate that fits your business model, supports your goals, and is ready for what comes next.

Whether you're exploring first steps or piloting AI in specific functions, this eBook will give you a practical, grounded path forward. From understanding the Microsoft AI Readiness model and why many businesses stall at the planning stage, you'll gain the clarity and structure needed to move forward with confidence.

Let's begin.



Why Data Modernization Leads to Successful AI Transformation

The business case for AI is clear, 96% of organizations at the most advanced stage of AI readiness report realizing measurable value, with many shifting their focus from cost savings to growth-oriented goals like innovation and new revenue streams.

Modern AI needs more than interest. It needs structure. What is preventing this?

Common blockers include:

- Legacy systems that weren't designed for scale or integration
- Siloed data spread across disconnected platforms
- Poor governance that undermines data quality and trust
- Manual processes that slow everything down

These are not just technical problems. They are structural obstacles to AI adoption.

Why this matters

Successful AI transformation starts with a modern data foundation. While AI models get the spotlight, it's clean, connected, and accessible data that powers them. Organizations that invest in modernizing their data estate are better positioned to unlock the full value of AI: accelerating deployment, improving accuracy, and scaling impact across the business.

This is where the Microsoft AI readiness strategy comes into play. Developed to help organizations move from exploration to enterprise-wide value, this strategy provides a practical, maturity-based framework that supports AI readiness across five stages, from experimentation to scale, and beyond.

These five stages are:

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Exploring – Teams are curious about AI but haven't committed to a direction. There's interest, but no strategy, no roadmap, and no real alignment with business goals.
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Planning – The organization is experimenting. It may be running pilots or proofs of concept, often in isolated pockets, but lacks the data foundation to scale those efforts.
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Implementing – AI is beginning to be applied to specific processes. Success is possible, but results are limited by fragmented systems and inconsistent access to data.
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Scaling – AI is moving beyond individual use cases and gaining traction across departments. Integration with analytics and governance frameworks becomes essential.
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Realizing – AI is embedded into the business. Value is measurable, repeatable, and aligned with long-term goals. At this stage, organizations see improved agility, faster insight, and better decision-making across the board.

Most organizations today are stuck between Planning and Implementing. The vision is there, but the data and infrastructure aren't yet ready to support scale.



How Hitachi Solutions helps

We help break that cycle by modernizing and unifying your analytics estate, making AI not just possible, but scalable.

We do this through:

- Flexible modernization models including Platform-in-a-Box, hybrid, and custom engagements
- Governed, AI-ready data foundations that connect structured and unstructured data
- Advisory-first support, aligning data transformation to your business goals

AI doesn't start with a model. It starts with modernization. And that's where the shift begins.

The Shift: From Analytics to AI-Enhanced Intelligence

Modernizing your data estate isn't just about fixing what's broken. It's about setting the stage for a more intelligent way of working. That starts with bringing analytics and AI into alignment.

For years, analytics has helped organizations understand what has happened and why. Dashboards and reports have driven performance conversations and shaped business strategy. But these tools are backward-looking by design.

AI changes that. It introduces the ability to look ahead by identifying patterns, anticipating outcomes, and suggesting actions before issues arise.

Put together, analytics and AI offer a more complete picture:

- Analytics explains what happened and why
- AI predicts what might happen next and what to do about it

This combination unlocks a new kind of intelligence: one that is not only reactive, but proactive. When powered by clean, connected data, it can help organizations shift from describing the past to shaping the future.

Making AI accessible

One of the most meaningful shifts underway is the way AI is becoming more accessible to the people who need it most. Business users, not just data teams or developers, can now explore and interact with insights on demand. Instead of waiting on scheduled reports or relying on technical support, users can engage directly with data using natural-language tools that put intelligence at their fingertips.



This matters because:

- Teams can ask questions in plain language and receive clear, contextual answers
- Time spent interpreting dashboards is reduced, freeing up capacity for action
- Insight becomes part of daily decision-making, not something that happens in hindsight

This new accessibility is being driven by two distinct forms of AI working together behind the scenes.

Traditional AI techniques, like machine learning and predictive modelling, help identify patterns, spot anomalies, and forecast what might happen next. These models operate in the background, quietly powering smarter automation and faster recommendations.

Generative AI builds on this by making those insights easier to access and act on. Instead of interpreting charts or combing through reports, users can simply ask a question and get an answer. Tools like Microsoft Copilot bring this conversational layer into the workflow, enabling people to work with AI directly without needing to understand the underlying models.

Together, they move organizations from reactive analytics to proactive intelligence. One builds the capability. The other unlocks its potential.

Building an AI-Ready Data Estate

The shift to AI-enhanced intelligence depends on more than just ideas. It depends on infrastructure. If your data is scattered, siloed, or unreliable, no AI initiative (no matter how advanced) can deliver meaningful results.

An AI-ready data estate isn't just about storage. It's about access, structure, quality, and governance. It ensures that the right data is available at the right time, in the right format, and for the right purpose. It allows organizations to move from isolated experiments to connected intelligence.

What does an AI-ready data estate include?

- Unified access to structured and unstructured data
- High-quality, governed data that can be trusted
- Scalable infrastructure that supports automation, real-time insight, and advanced workloads
- Flexibility to support hybrid systems, legacy apps, and future innovation

This is where Hitachi Solutions brings real value. As a trusted Microsoft integrator, we use a combination of technologies including Azure, Microsoft Fabric, Databricks, and our own Empower Data Platform to help businesses build a connected and intelligent foundation for AI.

The role of each platform

Azure

Azure provides the secure, scalable cloud environment needed to run analytics and AI workloads. It offers the compute power and flexibility to handle everything from simple automation to complex machine learning models.

Microsoft Fabric

Fabric simplifies and unifies data architecture. It brings together data integration, engineering, warehousing, and real-time analytics into a single, accessible layer. This reduces friction, improves speed to insight, and sets the stage for connected intelligence across the business.

Working together, and with the Microsoft AI readiness framework at the core, these technologies don't just provide a foundation. They create an environment where data can flow, AI can thrive, and business users can finally make decisions with clarity, speed, and trust.

Databricks

For more advanced AI needs, Databricks supports data science at scale. It enables deep analytics, model training, and management of complex or high-volume datasets. It is especially useful when working with large, diverse sources of data or deploying machine learning in production.



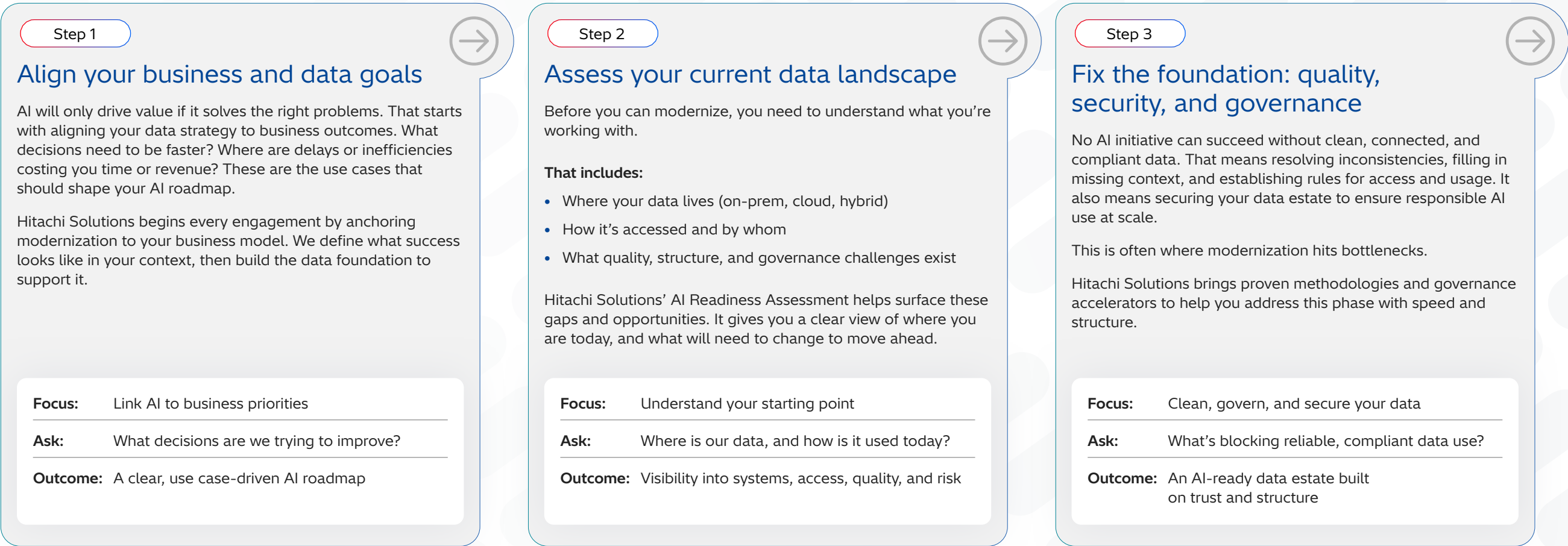
Empower

This is where Hitachi Solutions' unique IP comes in. Empower is our platform-in-a-box, a preconfigured, flexible data platform that accelerates time to value. It integrates with Azure, Fabric, and Databricks, providing a faster path to modernization without compromising on customization. Whether you're starting from legacy systems or scaling an existing investment, Empower helps you move forward with speed and confidence.

Practical Steps to Move from Planning to Scaling

The journey from AI ambition to AI value doesn't happen in one leap. Most organizations stall in the Planning stage, not because they lack intent, but because they don't have a clear, step-by-step path forward.

Here's what it takes to move with confidence from early-stage pilots to meaningful, enterprise-wide AI adoption.



Step 4



Enable access: self-service, automation, and Copilot-readiness

With the foundation in place, the next step is enabling people across the business to interact with data and AI in meaningful ways.

This includes:

- Self-service analytics tools for faster, independent insight
- Low-code solutions to reduce the burden on IT
- Copilot integration, so that business users can explore data and trigger automation through natural language

This is where GenAI meets real business use. Hitachi Solutions' approach ensures your data estate is structured in a way that makes it usable, not just by systems, but by people.

Focus: Empower users to generate insights and take action

Ask: Can teams explore and act on data without barriers?

Outcome: Self-service analytics, low-code automation, and Copilot readiness

Step 5

Pilot and iterate

Scaling AI doesn't mean betting everything on one big rollout. It means running pilots with clear goals, learning from results, and iterating based on what works.

This could include:

- Fabric proofs of concept to validate unified data scenarios
- Copilot Studio pilots to test automation in real business processes
- Data science engagements to surface predictive use cases tied to your P&L

Focus: Test what works before scaling

Ask: Where can we prove value quickly and build momentum?

Outcome: Scalable models, validated use cases, and measurable outcomes

These steps align with the Microsoft Azure AI readiness strategy, a practical framework for scaling AI with confidence. It helps organizations move from pilots to real-world results, backed by built-in governance, security, and performance tools.

Hitachi Solutions brings this model to life. We combine Azure, Fabric, Databricks, and our Empower platform to help you build an AI-ready foundation that's secure, scalable, and Copilot ready.

For more mature organizations that are ready to move their AI projects from pilot to production, the Microsoft Azure AI Foundry provides a powerful platform to turn AI ideas into real-world solutions across the business. With built-in Microsoft integrations, support for rapid model development, and tools for responsible AI governance, AI Foundry helps teams take what works and scale it with confidence.





Why Hitachi Solutions

Choosing the right partner for AI transformation is as important as choosing the right technology. Hitachi Solutions stands apart by combining deep Microsoft expertise with a business-first mindset and a proven track record of guiding enterprise teams through complex data modernization journeys.

Microsoft recognized expertise

Hitachi Solutions is consistently recognized by Microsoft for its excellence in delivery and innovation. We are a Microsoft Partner of the Year for Low Code Application Development and a finalist in Intelligent Automation. Our teams are deeply embedded within the Microsoft product ecosystem and engineering roadmaps ensure that we bring forward-looking insight and early access to emerging capabilities.

Embedded in Fabric's evolution

We are not just early adopters of Microsoft Fabric, we're part of its development. With over 50 Fabric proof-of-concept projects delivered to date, Hitachi Solutions is actively involved in helping shape how Fabric evolves. That means our customers benefit from practical experience, lessons learned, and hands-on knowledge that goes far beyond documentation.

Advisory-first, industry-informed

What makes our approach different isn't just what we build, it's how we build it. Every engagement starts with understanding the business model, goals, and challenges at hand. From there, we tailor the right modernization path using flexible models: Platform-in-a-Box, hybrid, or fully custom.

Our teams bring industry-specific expertise across sectors including retail, manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, and field operations. And because we lead with strategy, not just technology, we help customers avoid common missteps and accelerate toward measurable value.

Hitachi Solutions goes beyond technical implementation. We help organizations turn Microsoft tools into practical outcomes, resulting in faster insights, stronger governance, and smarter operations.

Take the First Step with Hitachi Solutions

Becoming AI-ready starts with understanding the current state of your data estate and knowing what to improve. That's exactly what the 2-Week Modern Data & Analytics Platform Assessment is designed to deliver.

This is a paid engagement for enterprise teams that are ready to take meaningful action. If you're working with legacy systems, disconnected data, or uncertainty about how to apply AI in your business, the assessment will give you a clear, practical path forward, grounded in the Microsoft AI readiness framework for responsible, scalable AI adoption.

What you'll receive:

- A detailed review of your current data and analytics setup
- A step-by-step modernization plan based on your goals
- Identified areas for cost savings and improved governance
- Technology recommendations tailored to your environment, including Azure, Fabric, Databricks, and Copilot
- A clear picture of your progress across the Microsoft AI readiness stages, with guidance on what comes next.

This is not a discovery call or a sales pitch. It is a short, structured engagement that provides high-value guidance to help you move forward with clarity and confidence.

Interested in learning more? Let's build your roadmap together.



Contact Us

Want to learn more about how Hitachi Solutions can support your data and AI transformation?

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