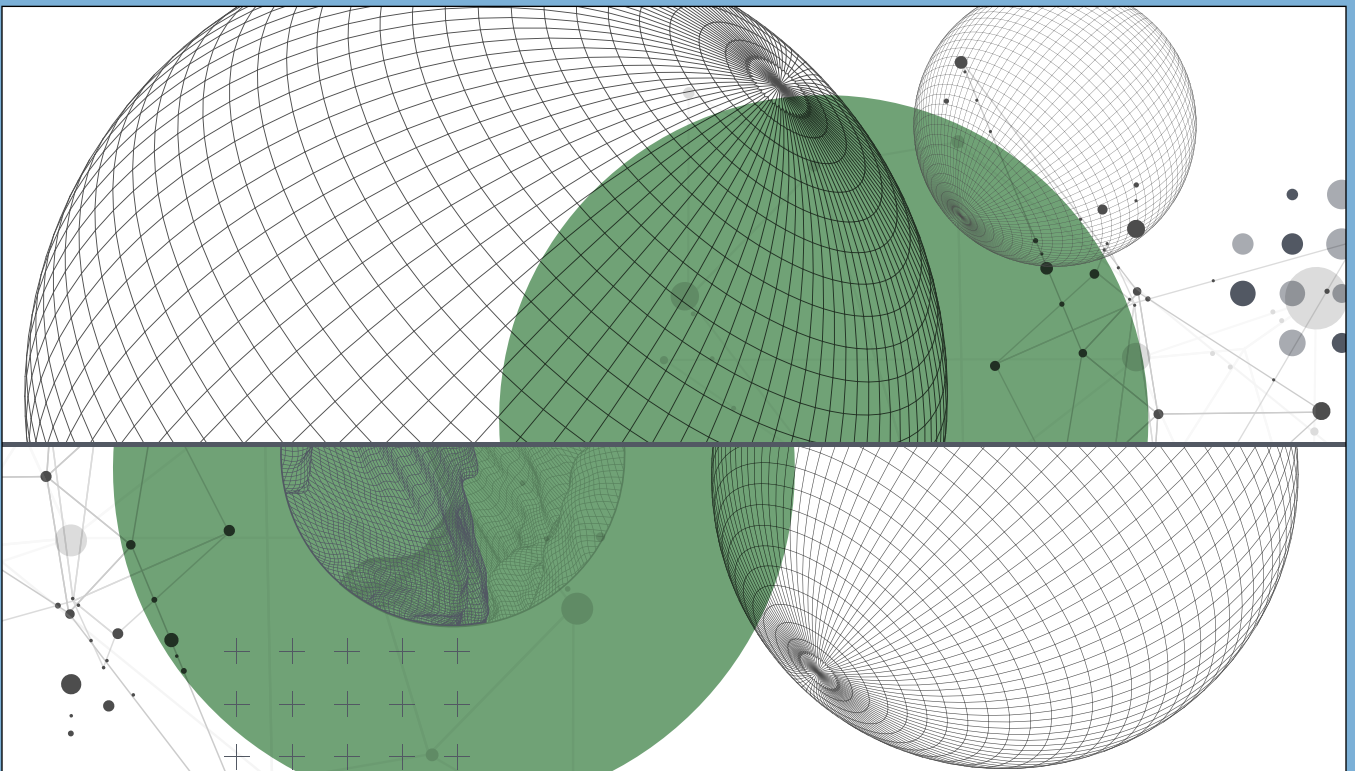


Building Agentic and  
Generative AI:  
**Making Enterprise  
Data AI-Ready**



# Introduction

Generative AI adoption continues to accelerate across the enterprise, but production-scale impact remains uneven. In a recent TDWI survey, many organizations reported experimenting with generative AI assistants, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and even early-stage agents. However, most initiatives remain in pilot mode. While organizations are using enterprise data, relatively few have fully operationalized AI across business processes.

A pattern is emerging. Enterprises are not jumping directly to autonomous, multi-agent systems. Instead, they are starting with AI that augments human work. Early deployments focus on summarization, classification, structured extraction, and workflow acceleration. More advanced agentic use cases (such as those that influence pricing, reconciliation, forecasting, or audit workflows) are few.

At the same time, organizations are discovering that simply centralizing data in cloud data warehouses or lakehouses does not automatically make that data usable for AI. Data

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Centralized data is not automatically usable for AI. When data is not accessible in a way that users can easily apply context, logic and assumptions, AI pilots often stall before reaching production.

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may be governed and stored, but not accessible in a way that those in the company, including business users, can easily apply context, logic, and assumptions. The result is that AI pilots often stall before reaching production.

To understand this dynamic, TDWI spoke with Jason Klein, director of portfolio marketing for AI at Alteryx.

## Industry Perspective

Klein describes a clear maturity curve in the market. “We are seeing progression, but a lot of projects are stuck in pilot and experimentation mode, not quite production-ready or operationalized across the business,” he said.

Where progress is happening, it is grounded in augmentation rather than autonomy.

“Organizations are starting with AI that augments human work, not replacing it but augmenting it,” Klein explained. “The fastest progress we’re seeing is where judgment can be accelerated, where manual effort can be reduced, and where consistency can be improved.”

Early generative use cases are practical and data-oriented. Klein highlighted unstructured-to-structured data transformation as one of the strongest areas of adoption. Organizations are extracting and normalizing information from invoices, contracts, audit reports, tax documents, and policy files. “Classification is another application of generative AI,” he noted. “Additionally, imagine enriching your data set by adding a new column that generative AI has assessed based on all the columns to the left of

it. You're enriching the data with generative AI inside of a workflow."

Narrative generation is another early win. Teams are generating financial commentary, audit summaries, and explanatory insights. Sales and operations teams are drafting personalized communications or generating machine performance summaries for plant managers. These use cases maintain a human in the loop, but they accelerate repetitive work.

Where organizations attempt to move beyond insight into decision automation, the bar rises quickly. Klein described a company that reduced a pricing quote process from 45 minutes to 30 seconds by orchestrating workflows across Salesforce, ERP systems, pricing logic, and an LLM-generated explanation. Yet he acknowledged that most enterprises are not there yet.

Why? In his view, the central issue is not model capability. It is business context. "The biggest challenge with AI is missing business context and explicit logic," Klein said. Models may have access to enterprise data, but they lack shared understanding of what that data means in business terms. "If someone says, 'Get me my best accounts,' what does 'best' mean?" he asked.

Definitions, metrics, thresholds, and assumptions are often fragmented across spreadsheets, systems, or even tribal knowledge. "Until that business logic, whether it's in people's heads or in spreadsheets, gets made explicit and reusable, AI initiatives will stay shallow and struggle to move beyond experimentation," he said.

This challenge is compounded by accessibility gaps. Organizations have invested heavily in centralized cloud data platforms, but that does not guarantee usability. "For most analysts and line-of-business teams, accessing and manipulating data in a cloud data warehouse

still requires coding knowledge or dependency on data engineering," Klein explained.

Alteryx is trying to close that gap. "What Alteryx excels at is enabling teams to prepare data, define their business logic, and make their assumptions explicit," Klein said. Large language models, he emphasized, "don't understand context on their own. They can see the data, but without complementary context and logic, the AI is just going to hallucinate and spit out bad results."

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In the augmented phase, AI enhances human decision-making with summaries and recommendations. In the assisted phase, AI participates in workflows, drafting updates, updating systems, or providing real-time prompts.

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The solution, in his view, is to let business users encode the logic themselves. "Finance teams can build the finance logic. Marketing teams can build the attribution logic. Supply chain teams can build the sourcing and planning logic themselves because they know the rules and they know the business better than anyone else," he said. IT and governance teams, meanwhile, focus on securing workflows and data connections.

Klein frames AI maturity as a progression from augmented to assisted to autonomous. In the augmented phase, AI enhances human decision-making with summaries and recommendations. In the assisted phase, AI participates in

workflows, drafting updates, updating systems, or providing real-time prompts. Only after trust is established does autonomy make sense. “The goal isn’t to move to autonomous as quickly as possible,” he said. “It’s about being deliberate and finding the right use cases where autonomy makes sense.”

Governance becomes increasingly important as organizations move from insight to action. “When AI begins to influence or execute real business decisions, the stakes change,” Klein warned. Organizations demand explainability, auditability, traceability, and clear control boundaries. Without that confidence, initiatives stall.

Alteryx positions itself as a business context and logic layer that sits above enterprise data platforms and below AI systems. “We exist to ensure AI operates with business context, defined logic, and the controls necessary to move from experimentation to production,” Klein said.

Rather than replacing cloud data warehouses or ERP systems, Alteryx aims to complement them, making their data usable and AI-ready.

## Conclusion

Organizations are experimenting with generative and agentic AI broadly, yet production success depends on data accessibility, business logic, and governance discipline.

Alteryx’s perspective reinforces a critical insight: centralizing data is not the same as making it usable. AI systems require explicit business context, structured logic, and workflows that business users can shape and trust. When those elements are missing, initiatives stall. When they are present, organizations can move from augmentation to assisted workflows and eventually to controlled autonomy.

## Read the TDWI Blueprint Report

For more on this topic, including a blueprint framework to help you identify and support the capabilities required for successful AI, download the new report based on TDWI’s latest research: *Building Agentic and Generative AI: Enterprise Data Foundations and Applications* at [tdwi.org/blueprint](https://tdwi.org/blueprint).

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