

A CEO's guide to **AI ROI**

How enterprise leaders successfully
implement generative AI solutions



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Our [State of Teams report](#) shows just how costly ineffective collaboration has become. Within the Fortune 500 alone, teams lose an estimated **25 billion work hours per year** due to ineffective collaboration, while 89% of executives say their organizations need to move more rapidly than ever to keep up with the competition.

Most leaders know that even minor alterations to processes or tooling can be off-putting to the status quo. With GenAI (generative AI), the stakes feel even higher. Team members may be wary of adopting it due to unfamiliarity, concerns about job security or data privacy, or simply not knowing where to start.

At the same time, our State of Teams series research found that teams that use AI on a regular basis are:



On top of that, we found that leaders who use AI regularly report spending **19% more time collaborating** and **12% more time focusing** on their top priorities.

It's now a fact that teams and leaders who use AI collaborate more effectively. **But there is a right way and a wrong way to implement AI.**

The wrong way: focus solely on personal productivity. Companies that are hyper-focused on personal productivity are 16% less likely to drive organization-wide innovation.



The right way: focus on AI-enabled coordination. Companies that use AI-enabled coordination as their north star are nearly twice as likely to say that AI has significantly transformed organization-wide efficiency.



The organizations that are successfully bridging the gap between individual productivity and company-wide impact:

- **Work in ways that build a connected, company-wide knowledge base**
- **Set up the right systems to enable AI-powered coordination**
- **Effectively make AI part of the team** Explains why you're investing in AI and how you'll use it

These actions enable AI to become the connective layer across an organization, bridging silos, driving action based on the right context, and aligning everyone around shared goals. When you implement AI with care and are intentional about how it is integrated into the workday, employees are more likely to feel empowered to make the most of human-AI collaboration, rather than feeling like AI is being “done to” them.

To simplify the process, this guide highlights **four key areas** every leader should address to drive change management and AI adoption, along with a practical **framework for measuring AI ROI** to prove value, secure funding, and sustain momentum.

When your teams begin to use AI as a collaborative partner, they can create more space for creativity, deep work, and strategic thinking.

Four things to do now to drive AI adoption

1. Address trust and security concerns
2. Deeply understand technical and cultural barriers
3. Identify use cases where AI will drive significant ROI
4. Set clear targets and encourage knowledge-sharing



So, let's uncover how to seamlessly drive AI adoption and how to measure AI ROI so you can track progress and keep your AI investments accountable.

Address trust and security concerns

How does your team react when you announce a new change?

Even when leaders are excited about AI's potential, employees may feel anxious. Concerns about data privacy, surveillance, or job loss can undermine even the best-designed rollout. Without trust, the best tools sit unused.

Leaders must be open, attentive, and transparent in their internal communication about AI. That means preparing to address fears and misconceptions while creating an environment where people feel safe asking questions, experimenting, and surfacing risks.

Many experts recommend drafting an internal **AI communications playbook** that:

- Explains why you're investing in AI and how you'll use it
- Defines approved tools and use cases
- Sets explicit standards and guidelines for safe, ethical AI use
- Builds in channels for two-way dialogue and feedback

Ultimately, your teams need to know they can trust you to thoroughly vet any AI solution. To maintain security and assuage concerns around data privacy, your AI technology vendor should at a minimum:

- **Explicitly state these commitments** and make details easy to find. For example, Atlassian publishes our AI approach on the [Atlassian AI Trust](#) page.

At Atlassian, we recommend addressing security and adoption concerns by:

-  Involving employees early in the adoption process
-  Hosting open forums and office hours where people can ask questions and see live demos
-  Providing concrete examples of how their personal information is or isn't being used
-  Regularly updating policies and FAQs as tools evolve

By keeping communication open and consistent, you can anticipate obstacles, adjust your AI strategy, and make trust a pillar, not an afterthought, of your AI rollout.



How do I know if my data is secure?

Read more about [Atlassian's security practices](#) and approach to compliant AI.

Deeply understand technical and cultural barriers

When implementing AI at enterprise scale, **technical** and **cultural** barriers often slow adoption. You need to diagnose both.

Common technical barriers

Your team is only as good as the context it has – and the same goes for your AI tools. To get real value and drive adoption, give AI secure access to the work your organization does across the tools you use. That requires connected, high-quality data that reduces silos and duplication so outputs are accurate, useful, and trusted.

When leaders dig into AI rollouts, they often discover that technical roadblocks, not just culture, are slowing momentum. Before you can scale experimentation or drive behavior change, you need a clear view of the infrastructure, data, and platform constraints that could get in the way.



Integration with existing systems

Compatibility issues can make it difficult to implement AI effectively. Build an “integration checkpoint” into your evaluation process: select only tools that integrate cleanly with your existing IT infrastructure and system of work.



Technical expertise and support

Specialized skills are still required to implement and maintain AI technologies. To reduce this bottleneck, Atlassian recommends choosing tools that are:

- Easy to learn and operate
- Well-documented
- Supported by robust enablement (playbooks, templates, example prompts)



Data quality and availability

AI systems require large amounts of high-quality data. Inconsistent, duplicated, or siloed data dramatically reduces the value of AI. A **data audit or cleanse** before you roll out AI can prevent garbage-in, garbage-out outcomes.



Scalability and platform choices

Look for partners whose AI suite is powered by a unified cloud platform with:

- Connected data from internal systems
- Multi-model LLM support
- Enterprise admin controls and guardrails

This ensures consistent scale, performance, and compliance as you expand AI across teams.



What is multi-model LLM support?

Multi-model LLM support lets your AI tap multiple specialized language models at once or choose the best one for each task, rather than relying on a single model.

Cultural barriers: where most AI rollouts stall

Technology is only half the story. From Atlassian's Teamwork Lab research, the teams that see the biggest ROI treat AI adoption as a behavior change problem, not just a tooling problem.

Key cultural barriers include:

Resistance to change and fear of replacement: Employees may worry AI will replace their roles or expose their weaknesses. Leaders need to champion human-AI collaboration, making it clear that AI is there to augment, not replace, human expertise.

Cultural misalignment and the “broadcast trap”: Many rollouts lean on launch emails, courses, and static wikis. Those artifacts help with awareness but rarely change daily behavior. As BUCK's Chief Creative Officer, **Kevin Walker** puts it:



“If you’re just broadcasting, just saying something, it’s not as impactful as the act of doing.”

KEVIN WALKER

BUCK's Chief Creative Officer

Research from Atlassian shows that:

- Formal training courses and self-serve knowledge hubs are among the least effective tactics for improving how people actually work.
- Teams that make time to experiment report a 21% bump in creativity and “win back” hours as experiments solidify into new norms.

Lack of visible, everyday leadership modeling: In other words, culture is shaped less by what you say about AI and more by what leaders do in public.



Teams are [4x more likely to experiment with AI](#) when a manager demos it live, sharing their screen and showing real workflows (messy bits and all).



What culture changes help?

Glad you asked! Here's what we recommend based on research and our own experimentation practices:

Lead by example in public forums

Run live demos in team meetings or town halls. Narrate your prompts, mistakes, and how you recover. This normalizes experimentation and lowers the perceived bar for participation.

Create “practice blocks,” not just policies

Borrow BUCK's approach:

- Hold recurring practice blocks on the calendar where small groups take one real workflow, try one new AI move, and then show the work.
- Keep stakes low and focus on learning, not performance.

Host “AI jam sessions” and micro-communities

- Set up regular sessions where teammates can demo experiments, swap prompts, and troubleshoot together.
- Create small Slack channels or Confluence spaces where people share before/after examples, prompts, and lessons learned to craft your living **AI playbook**.

How we do this at Atlassian

At Atlassian, we have AI hack channels dedicated to different departments that teammates can join and share tips, such as #product-management-AI-hacks and #marketing-ai-hacks.

Reward curiosity and learning

Recognize not only big wins, but also creative attempts and insights. Celebrate the process (experiments run, patterns discovered), not just outcomes.

By treating AI adoption as a cultural and behavioral shift, anchored in experimentation, you create the conditions for sustainable, organization-wide change.

Identify use cases where AI will drive significant ROI

AI should never be adopted “because everyone else is doing it.” Instead, leaders should prioritize specific workflows and pain points where AI can meaningfully improve outcomes.

From Atlassian’s research and customer work, high-ROI use cases tend to cluster in four domains:

1. Engineering and software development workflows

AI can:

- Delegate repetitive development tasks to agents, freeing engineers for higher-value work
- Suggest tests, catch regressions, or identify code smells
- Clean up backlogs and group related issues
- Highlight customer themes across tickets, feedback, and incidents
- This accelerates development and reduces time-to-value for new features.

2. IT operations and service management

In IT and shared services, AI is powerful for:

- Analyzing historical incidents, predicting likely owners, and routing tickets based on expertise
- Grouping related incidents or requests in seconds, not hours
- Crafting AI-powered virtual agents that handle routine inquiries, freeing human agents for complex issues
- These capabilities reduce mean time to resolution (MTTR), increase CSAT, and cut operational costs.

3. Business intelligence and insights

AI-powered analytics and summarization help all teams:

- Surface trends and patterns in product usage, service metrics, and customer feedback
- Summarize long reports or threads into concise, decision-ready briefs
- Compare options and risks in language executives can quickly scan

Rather than replacing analysts, AI becomes a force multiplier, speeding up analysis and freeing experts to focus on interpretation and decision-making.

4. Knowledge discovery and management

Teams are drowning in information but starved for context. AI can:

- Turn scattered pages, emails, and decks into a searchable, summarized knowledge engine
- Generate summaries of Confluence pages, Jira issues, and comments
- Suggest action items and decisions from meeting notes or Loom transcripts
- Search across Confluence, Jira, Google Drive, and other tools without constant context-switching

Our State of Teams research shows that difficulty finding information is the #1 barrier to moving fast. AI that improves knowledge discovery is often where leaders see the fastest, most visible ROI.

Connect use cases to experimentation rituals

Use Atlassian's experimentation guidance to turn these use cases into real behavior change:

In a **practice block**, have the team:

- Ask AI to draft a kickoff agenda, then tweak and send it.
- Paste a recurring task and ask AI for a checklist, then run it once and refine.
- Use AI to role-play a skeptical customer and add strong responses to your library.

Then, in an **AI jam session**, compare AI-assisted and manual versions of a workflow (e.g., incident triage, status updates) and keep whichever is measurably better.

The goal is to start with **specific, narrow experiments** that solve real problems. Over time, successful experiments roll up into a portfolio of high-ROI AI use cases.

How to measure AI ROI

AI investments often stall because leaders can't answer a basic question:

"Is this working?"

Atlassian's [Measure AI ROI](#) play breaks AI value into four stages, each with different metrics and time horizons.



The enterprise AI value framework

This framework gives leaders a simple way to track AI value as it matures, from early adoption through efficiency and quality gains to long-term innovation. It also sets up the four categories that follow so you can benchmark progress, choose the right metrics for each stage, and prioritize next steps.

AI delivers value across four categories

Exploring – Adoption

You're letting teams experiment and see what's possible.

Example metrics:

- 👤 Weekly/monthly active AI users and “superusers”
- 🏠 AI labs or incubators formed
- 🎵 AI experiments or pilots run
- 🤖 AI hackathon participation

Optimizing – Efficiency

You're using AI to make current workflows faster or cheaper.

Example metrics:

- 🔄 Cycle time per workflow
- ⌚ Time saved per task
- 🤖 Automation rate
- 💰 Cost reduction or avoidance attributable to AI

Enhancing – Quality

You're using AI to improve the quality and consistency of outputs.

Example metrics:

- 📊 Accuracy, error rates, and rework
- 📋 Adherence to standards
- 😊 CSAT or internal satisfaction with outputs
- 📊 Before/after comparisons vs. pre-AI baselines

Transforming – Innovation

You're using AI to create new products, services, and revenue streams.

Example metrics:

- 🚀 New features, products, or offerings launched
- 📈 New revenue attributable to AI
- 💰 Margin impact or new business lines enabled by AI

Scaling AI is a team sport, not a solo act: individual experiments reveal what's possible, but cross-team coordination turns wins into systems. As usage moves from individual gains (adoption, efficiency) to shared practices (quality, innovation), ROI grows.

Set clear targets and encourage knowledge-sharing

Leaders who understand how they plan to use AI are best positioned to set **specific, realistic targets** and connect AI work to business outcomes.

However, goals alone aren't enough. You also need the right **rituals and storytelling** so that knowledge doesn't get trapped in pockets of the organization.

According to Atlassian's Teamwork Lab:

- Many organizations over-rely on **broadcast tactics** (emails, decks, static training) that build awareness but not skill.
- The real unlock is **visible, recurring practice** – leaders demoing real work, teams sharing before/after examples, and small experiments that everyone can see.



“If there’s something we have to protect, it’s our creativity...You can’t defend your way through it, you have to create.”

MIKE CANNON-BROOKES
CEO, Atlassian

In the AI era, that means redesigning workflows and making AI-enabled practices visible, not just adding another tool to the stack.

Practical ways to set targets and share learning

Define what “good” looks like with AI

For each team, clarify:

- Which workflows will use AI?
- What success metrics matter (time saved, fewer errors, faster incidents, better decisions)?
- What guidelines apply (e.g., when AI is allowed for drafting, when human review is required)?

Turn experimentation into a team sport

Run recurring **AI jam sessions** or **practice blocks** (as described in Atlassian’s Practice blocks for effective adoption article). After each session:

- Post a quick before vs. after example
- Save one artifact (prompt, template, checklist)
- Capture **three bullets**: what to keep, change, and kill next time

Build and maintain a shared AI playbook

Use Confluence to maintain a living repository:

- Approved prompts and workflows
- Playbacks from workshops and experiments (Loom recordings, transcripts)
- Examples of AI-assisted artifacts that meet your standards

Reward visible learning and contribution

Shout out to teams who:

- Share new prompts or workflows
- Help others debug use cases
- Move from pilots to measurable impact

How we do this at Atlassian

At Atlassian, we put this into practice by raffling off monthly prizes for the most creative and impactful AI hacks, encouraging teams to experiment and share what they build.

This turns AI adoption from a one-time rollout into an ongoing, shared learning loop.

How to make it happen while balancing AI responsibility

At Atlassian, we're committed to building AI in the most responsible way possible, balancing the potential of generative AI with its risks. We leverage ethical AI models in products like [Rovo](#), Atlassian's AI offering, to enhance our organizational capabilities, and we apply stringent criteria to assess vendors and AI partners. For a full breakdown of our philosophy and practice, see our [responsible tech principles](#).

We're also our own first users. Across Atlassian, teams are already using AI for:

- Reviewing and summarizing change logs
- Assisting with onboarding and ramp time
- Mapping issues across multiple software platforms
- Turning scattered notes into clear, shared documentation
- Drafting and refining communications, meeting notes, and decision records

In short, responsible AI adoption is less about a single policy document and more about the combination of **guardrails, experimentation, and measurement**.

JUMPSTART YOUR TRANSFORMATION

Share these resources with your teams

Wherever your organization is on its AI journey, encourage your teams to:

- Experiment in small, safe slices of real work
- Share their learnings openly (including misfires)
- Treat AI as a collaborative partner that amplifies their creativity and impact

GenAI is not here to replace your teams, but to **extend their capacity**, help them move faster without sacrificing quality, and make it easier to align work to what matters most.

As you continue to explore AI's transformative potential, tools like [Rovo](#) go beyond search: they help teams find context across tools, brainstorm and shape ideas, draft plans and work artifacts, and automate repetitive workflows, all while maintaining enterprise-grade security and governance.

To go deeper and help your teams build confidence and skills, you can share:

- [State of Teams 2026](#)
- [How to make space for AI experimentation on your team](#)
- [Avoiding the broadcast trap: A simple ritual for effective adoption](#)
- [How hands-on workshops boost teamwide AI confidence](#)
- [Measure AI ROI – Atlassian Team Playbook](#)