

# RESEARCH AGENDA PROPOSAL

## AI Adoption Maturity: Closing the Execution Gap

David Youssef | AI Strategy Consultant | December 2025

### The Problem I'm Proposing to Solve

Organizations know what AI tools to buy. Between market analyses, vendor briefings, and analyst calls, technology selection isn't the bottleneck anymore. What kills AI initiatives is everything that happens *after* selection:

#### The Execution Gap (Industry Data)

**84%** of CMOs report high strategic dysfunction

**74%** of executives say strategies don't translate to action

**2,300+** clients lost over 10 consecutive quarters

*Clients aren't leaving because the research is wrong. They're leaving because knowing what to do isn't enough.*

### The Four Failure Modes

- 1. Discovery failure:** No one knows which applications will create value in their specific context. Top-down strategy mandates use cases that don't match operational reality.
- 2. Governance paralysis:** Organizations either block experimentation entirely or enable chaos. Binary 'allowed/forbidden' policies don't work when the right answer is 'it depends on the workflow.'
- 3. Capability stagnation:** 73% of AI users are doing the same thing they did in 2023 - paste text in, get text out, close the tab. No structure, no progression, no compounding value.
- 4. Expertise erosion:** People keep their titles while gradually losing their craft. AI handles more tasks, but humans stop developing the judgment that makes them valuable.

*These aren't technology problems. They're adoption problems.*

# MY RESEARCH PROGRAM

Helping Organizations Build Execution Capability

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I'm proposing research that helps organizations build execution capability - the missing layer between strategy and results. This means research that's **implementation-focused**, **stage-appropriate**, and **metrics-driven**.

## Research Focus Areas

- **AI Workflow Discovery:** How organizations identify high-value AI applications through structured experimentation
- **Governance Frameworks:** Risk-appropriate policies that enable rather than block - the Guardrail Matrix approach
- **Capability Building:** Structured progression from basic to advanced AI usage - the Evolution Ladder
- **Expertise Preservation:** Preventing skill erosion while leveraging AI - the Anti-Hollowing system

## Proposed Deliverables

Type	Description
Research Notes	Quarterly publications on adoption patterns, failure modes, and success factors
Frameworks	AI Adoption Maturity Model, Guardrail Matrix, Evolution Ladder, Anti-Hollowing System
Tools	Assessment instruments, implementation playbooks, measurement dashboards
Workshops	Executive briefings and hands-on implementation sessions

# WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

## The 40% Problem

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Industry research predicts over 40% of agentic AI projects will be canceled by 2027. The dominant failure mode is not model quality - it's operational readiness. Organizations need research that helps them build sustainable AI capability, not just select tools.

### How This Research Is Different

- **Implementation-focused:** Not what to buy, but how to succeed after buying
- **Stage-appropriate:** Different advice for different maturity levels
- **Measurable:** Clear metrics for adoption progress and risk
- **Practitioner-tested:** Frameworks refined through actual deployment

#### Bottom Line

**The gap isn't technology.** Organizations know what AI can do.

**The gap is execution.** They don't know how to make it work in their context.

**This research closes that gap.**