

## Hey! What's New? 2026 – 25

### The AI Transformation Manifesto

An article on the McKinsey & Company webpage says that twelve themes separate companies that are truly rewired for AI from their peers. “The companies that are truly innovating with AI are doing something very different from their peers: They are conceptualizing and developing AI capabilities that reshape their products, services, core business processes, and organizational systems.”

The authors summarize their perspective on how they do it in this AI transformation manifesto. “This declaration captures the defining themes that separate the companies that are successfully transforming their business with tech and AI from those that are not. And while there’s no question that agentic AI is pushing the boundaries of what’s possible, the themes are enduring because they focus on what it takes to harness technology to drive business goals.”

**1. Technology alone doesn’t create advantage; enduring capabilities do.** Who are the early winners at AI? “The same companies that have been winning before by building capabilities that allow them to harness any technology effectively. When these new capabilities are built – and they take time to build – the company accelerates its business transformation with technology and outperforms its peers. The capabilities become the competitive advantage.”

**2. Economic leverage points are your best focal points.** Any business model has a few key economic leverage points that provide the biggest impact when improved with AI. “Most companies have long lists of use cases. Successful ones focus on achieving deep business transformation in the few areas that matter strategically. That’s where they double down to build AI systems.”

**3. If the value you’re creating doesn’t move the business, you’re getting it wrong.** Successful companies concentrated their efforts on one to three business domains, reinventing them with AI. “That required creative problem-solving, coordinated use of tech and nontech levers, maniacal focus on the customers/users and clear accountability for the business KPIs that mattered most.”

**4. Building the tech and AI muscle of your senior business leaders should be a top priority.** Leading companies actively own the tech agenda – from defining how the business will be reimaged with technology to steering solution development to ensuring value delivery.

**5. Every tech and AI transformation is a people transformation.** Leading companies increase their tech talent capability and density by following what we call the “30–70 shifts”: more than 70 percent of talent should be in-house, more than 70 percent of them should be “doer” engineers who build great software-based solutions, and more than 70 percent of them should perform at higher skill levels (that is, competent or expert). This produces small, highly skilled teams that outperform large armies of lower-skilled staff.

**6. Speed is the defining organizational advantage.** Businesses are in an innovation race with companies that have access to the same technologies. “Companies win that race when their operating model redeploys resources more rapidly to important opportunities, empowers

teams to act without excessive dependencies, and reduces the “latency” from insight to decision and decision to action.”

**7. Tech platforms are strategic assets; invest in them that way.** Platforms determine a company’s execution speed, drive down its unit costs through reuse, get technology and data into the hands of the people who need them, and enable AI to scale responsibly. They provide standardized, safe, and shared tech and data capabilities that teams can access. Leading companies manage their platforms strategically with dedicated teams, road maps, budget, target service levels, and users whose needs shape how the platform evolves.

**8. Make data easy to consume – and enrich it for advantage.** Without good data, AI breakthroughs are impossible. “Over time, the game shifts to data enrichment, deepening its quality, context, and uniqueness for sustained performance gains with AI.

**9. Design for adoption and build for scale.** AI systems create value only when they are adopted and scaled. “Adoption often fails because adjacent upstream and downstream processes are left unchanged. An AI solution may predict equipment failures days in advance, but if maintenance still follows calendar-based scheduling, nothing happens.”

**10. No trust, no right to deploy AI.** “Digital trust grows when stakeholders have confidence that your organization protects consumer data, enacts effective cybersecurity, offers trustworthy AI-powered products and services, and provides transparency around AI and data usage. The challenges are only increasing with the expansion of agentic technologies, requiring much more time for testing agentic systems and automating risk controls.”

**11. Agentic engineering becomes the next capability to master.** Foundation models are now capable of sustained, autonomous work over long periods, making it possible to build complex agentic workflows.

**12. (Re)learn like your business depends on it.** The organizations that learn, unlearn, and relearn the fastest have the advantage. “As we have observed numerous times, these journeys are crucial for the top team to reach the *point of conviction* when both the strategic opportunity and transformation pathway become clear. At that point, every C-suite leader understands their role and the transformation truly accelerates.

Learn a whole lot more at [The AI transformation manifesto: 12 themes driving growth | McKinsey](#).