

Navigating AI Adoption: From Hype to Lasting Value

A structured briefing on the 6 P's framework and the principles behind durable, value-driven AI—not AI theater.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chris Willis and Cody Irwin explore why so many AI initiatives fail to deliver lasting impact—and what separates real transformation from “AI theater.” Drawing on years of adoption experience, they introduce the **6 P's framework** as a step-by-step, first-principles approach to using AI that starts with identifying real pain points instead of jumping straight into prototyping. The core message: the foundations are as important as ever.

1 The Current Landscape: Hype, Anxiety, and Misconceptions

AI adoption sits at a fever pitch, but so does the anxiety surrounding it. Writer's **AI adoption in the Enterprise survey (April 2026)** of 2,400 respondents surfaced a striking picture of organizational pressure:

54%

of C-suite executives say AI adoption is “tearing their company apart.”

64%

fear they could lose their job if they fail to lead the AI transition.

Cody frames this as a classic innovation hype cycle—but one that feels more personal, with anxiety hitting everyone simultaneously. Chris challenges the instinct to treat AI as categorically different from prior tech waves.

“The greatest lie in innovation is ‘this time it’s different.’ Fear and hype short circuit smart thinking—and fear becomes the strategy.”

— Chris Willis, Chief Design Officer, Domo

The result is the **“peanut butter spread” AI strategy**: Buying a foundation model, adding a chat interface, and declaring victory. It encourages experimentation but rarely drives true, lasting change.

2 The Pitfalls of “AI Theater” and Prototyping Without Strategy

Current AI has what Chris calls **“jagged intelligence”**—it excels at certain tasks out of the box, then fails unpredictably at adjacent ones. This makes prototyping dangerously easy and deceptively reassuring.

Why Proof of Concepts (POCs) Stall

- Prototypes become ends, not steps
- Critical upfront thinking gets skipped
- Language as interface accelerates the illusion of progress
- AI-generated results can sound confident and be wrong

The Real Problem

- Most orgs have an *impatience* problem, not an innovation problem
- Chaos and demoralization follow when POCs don't scale
- Accessibility of tools creates the illusion of expertise
- Strategy is skipped in favor of speed.

“Everyone has a POC. But most of them are bright and shiny experiments that rarely make it to production—and cause new problems when they do.”

— Chris Willis, Chief Design Officer, Domo

3 The 6 P's Framework for Value-Driven AI Adoption

Domo's 6 P's framework is a **sequential, battle-tested path** to genuine AI value. It deliberately positions prototyping as step four—not step one. Skipping the first three steps “almost guarantees” problems.

STEP 01

Pain

Identify the core problem. What do you hate? Current state analysis—the real starting point.

STEP 02

Plan

Define the ideal future state and how the problem could actually be addressed.

STEP 03

Prioritize

Align the initiative to business goals. Understand what truly matters before building anything.

STEP 04

Prototyping

Now build a rapid proof-of-concept. Validate feasibility—not a greenlight to production.

STEP 05

Production

Take the validated prototype live in a real production environment.

STEP 06

Problem Solved

Maintain the solution and ensure it continues to deliver durable value over time.

Why Steps 1, 2, and 3 Change the Game

The first three steps—Pain, Plan, Prioritize—separate organizations that transform from those that spin in place. They create productive conversations about change, define what you're trying to become, and answer the question AI often can't: *Should we even use AI here?*

4 The Enduring Importance of First Principles and Human Judgment

Both speakers are emphatic: The fundamentals haven't changed—they've become *more* important.

“The first principles still matter. The foundations still matter. They have not gone away. They're probably more important now than they ever have been.”

— Cody Irwin, AI Adoption Director, Domo

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Strategy is a human capability—LLMs are poor strategists

LLMs have inherent strategic biases regardless of prompting ¹

Humans must ask the “why” questions AI can't

Define where automation ends and human judgment begins

¹ Harvard Business Review (March 2026), “[Researchers Asked LLMs for Strategic Advice; They Got Trendslop in Return](#)”

The framework encourages **chronicling decisions at every step** to build organizational memory, validate hypotheses, and encourage a culture that learns and grows rather than just reacts.

5 Foundations for Success: Data, Tools, and Organizational Learning

Data as the Critical Foundation

- Research consistently points to data as the #1 enabler.
- Orgs with clean data (often driven by compliance) outperform.
- Domo's data-first approach directly supports this.

What “Good Tools” Enable

- Fast prototyping with hardened, enterprise-grade components.
- No need to rebuild from scratch.
- Orchestrated intelligence layer over your existing data.

Organizations must also build a discipline around **learning**—moving from reaction to incubation to creation. The goal is a shared organizational understanding so that everyone grows in the same direction.

6 The Opportunity: From Fear to Fulfillment

When the 6 P's framework is applied correctly, AI stops being a source of anxiety and becomes a genuine source of value, optimism, and fulfillment.

The North Star

The ultimate goal isn't to automate for automation's sake—it's to help individuals automate what they hate. When AI is applied with intention and discipline, it creates more space for meaningful work. Domo offers bootcamps and its orchestrated intelligence layer to put the 6 P's into practice—with validated solutions delivered within 24 hours when the right tools and process are in place.

“AI will create opportunity, optimism, value, and fulfillment in the work we do—if we apply these principles correctly.”

— Chris Willis & Cody Irwin