OrbusSoftware

EBOOK AI VALUE AND ROI

Bridging the AI Value Gap

How EA teams help CIOs prove ROI to the CFO and board

Connecting AI initiatives to strategy, outcomes, and ROI with enterprise architecture and business architecture.

01 The gap

02 The evidence

03 The context

04 The decision



INTRODUCTION

Project Updates Alone Won't Convince the CFO

As AI investment grows, CIOs are under increasing pressure to prove that these investments are delivering real business value.

However, project updates and technical milestones alone aren't enough to convince CFOs and boards, which creates an AI value gap.

Using enterprise architecture, supported by strong business architecture, helps to close this gap by providing the business context and traceability necessary to connect AI initiatives to strategy, outcomes, and ROI.

> **Enterprise architecture and business architecture provide the business context and traceability that connect AI initiatives to strategy, outcomes, and ROI.**

FOUR SECTIONS, ONE VALUE STORY

01	02	03	04
The gap	The evidence	The context	The decision

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What Is the AI Value Gap?

The AI value gap appears when organizations invest in AI but struggle to show the business value it creates.

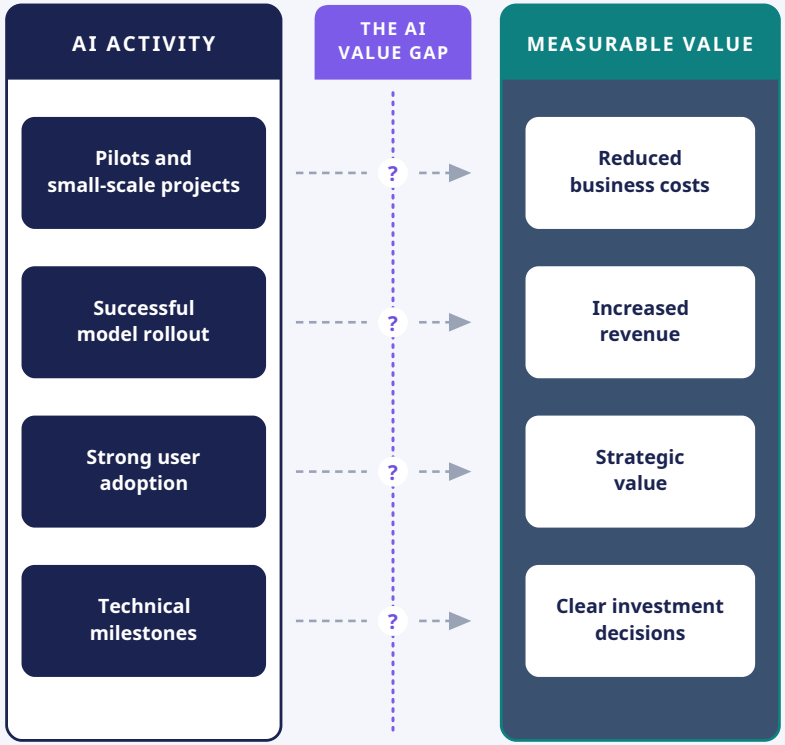
It typically happens when initiatives start as pilots or small-scale projects designed to demonstrate what the technology can do. However, when leaders are later asked whether these initiatives have actually improved the business, they struggle to do so.

For example, an AI model might be rolled out successfully and attract strong user adoption. However, this doesn't necessarily mean it has reduced business costs or increased revenue. Without clear links to prove this, it's difficult to judge whether the investment has been worthwhile. This creates a problem for CIOs who need to show which AI initiatives are delivering strong financial or strategic value.

Closing the AI value gap and increasing visibility helps CIOs determine which initiatives warrant additional investment, which need changes, and which should stop.

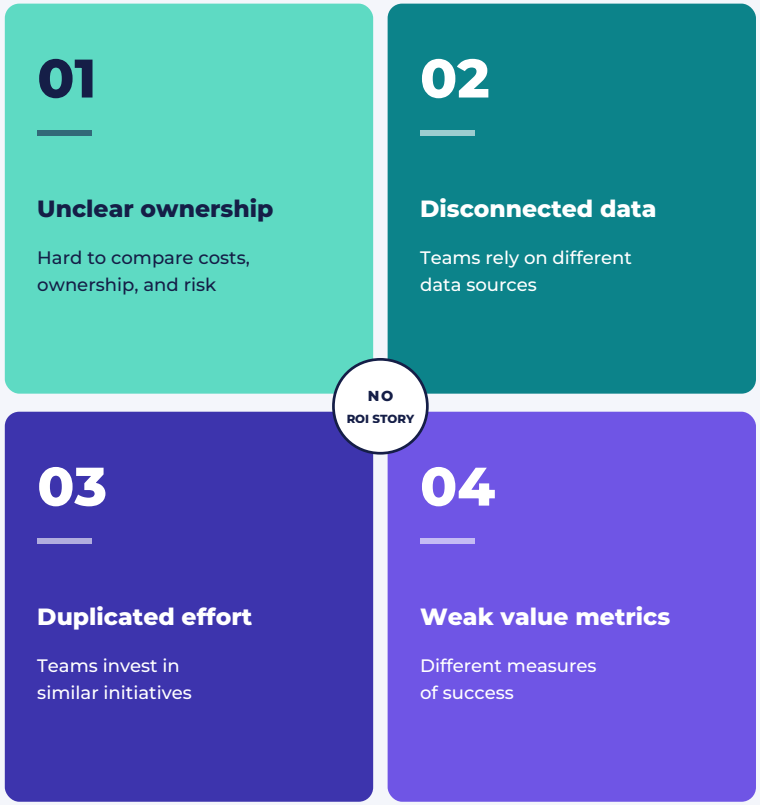
> **The AI value gap isn't only a funding problem. It's a visibility and traceability problem.**

DEFINITION: ACTIVITY IS NOT VALUE



A successful rollout and strong user adoption don't necessarily mean reduced business costs or increased revenue. Without clear links, the gap stays open.

FOUR BARRIERS TO PROVING AI ROI



Disconnected AI projects create disconnected value stories.

01 THE GAP

Why AI ROI Is Hard to Prove

Proving AI ROI becomes difficult when AI initiatives are viewed in isolation rather than as part of the wider business.

Although these initiatives can demonstrate what's technically possible, they aren't always connected to clear business goals or agreed measures of success.

AI projects often develop in different parts of the business without a shared view of what is already underway. Teams may invest in similar initiatives, rely on different data sources, or use different measures of success. This makes it difficult to understand the value these initiatives are creating. A successful technical rollout doesn't always translate into a clear business impact story for the CIO to share with senior leaders.

Tracking AI projects separately also makes it difficult to compare costs, ownership, and risk across the organization. Teams may work from incomplete or inconsistent information, which makes it harder to measure progress or understand where money is being well spent. As a result, CIOs struggle to demonstrate which initiatives are worth scaling and which should be reassessed.

02 THE EVIDENCE

What CFOs and Boards Need to See

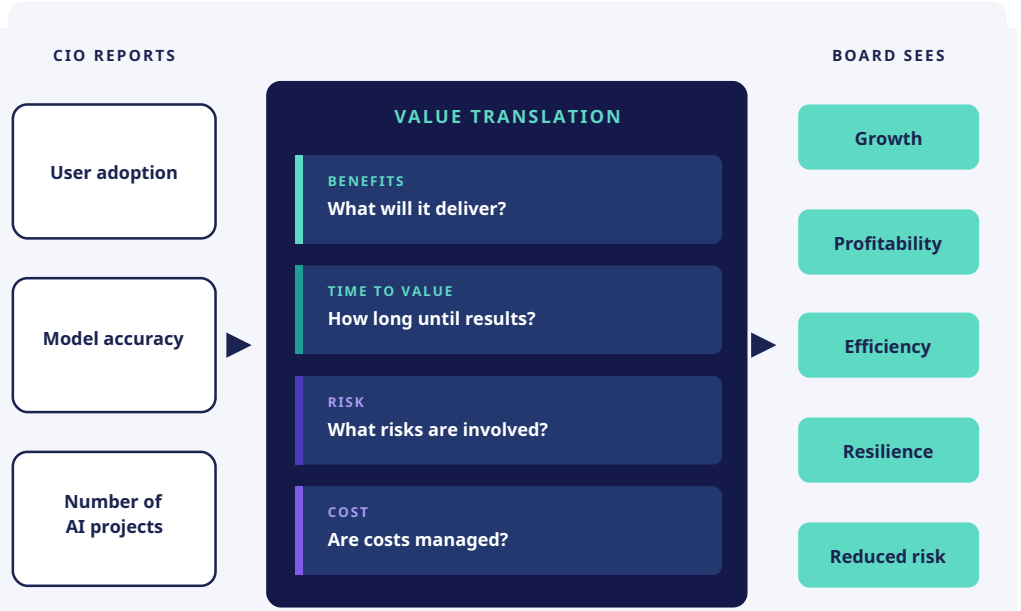
To approve more funding, CFOs and boards need concrete evidence that AI investments are helping the business achieve its goals.

THEY TYPICALLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND

- ✓ What benefits an AI initiative is expected to deliver
- ✓ How long it will take to see results
- ✓ What risks are involved
- ✓ Whether costs are being managed effectively

On their own, measures such as user adoption, model accuracy, or the number of AI projects underway don't explain whether an AI investment is improving business performance or contributing to strategic goals.

Strong AI business value conversations focus on outcomes. They show how AI initiatives contribute to growth, profitability, efficiency, and resilience across the organization, while reducing risk. Together, these metrics give CFOs and boards a clearer view of whether AI investments are delivering the expected business value.



BOARD TAKEAWAY

Boards don't need more AI activity. They need a clearer view of AI impact.

03 THE CONTEXT

How Enterprise Architecture Connects AI Investment to Business Context

AI initiatives often span different systems, teams, and business processes, which can make it difficult to see how they fit into the wider organization. AI in enterprise architecture provides the context CIOs need to understand how AI initiatives connect to the rest of the business. Business architecture then links these AI initiatives to the business strategy, ROI, and outcomes the organization is trying to achieve.

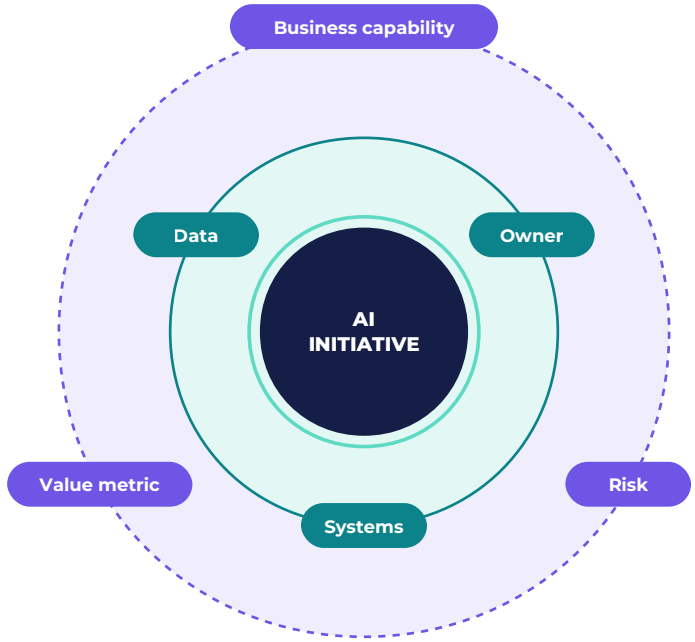
Seeing the bigger picture makes it easier for business leaders to understand the impact of each AI initiative.

AT A GLANCE, THEY CAN SEE

- ✓ Who owns it
- ✓ Which systems and data it depends on
- ✓ Which business processes and capabilities it supports
- ✓ Whether there are any duplicate projects
- ✓ Potential integration challenges
- ✓ Gaps in ownership or alignment

This information gives CIOs a much better basis for making investment decisions. Rather than relying on technical updates alone, they can see which AI initiatives are likely to deliver the most value, where the biggest risks are, and how well each one supports the organization's goals.

AI INVESTMENT CONTEXT MAP

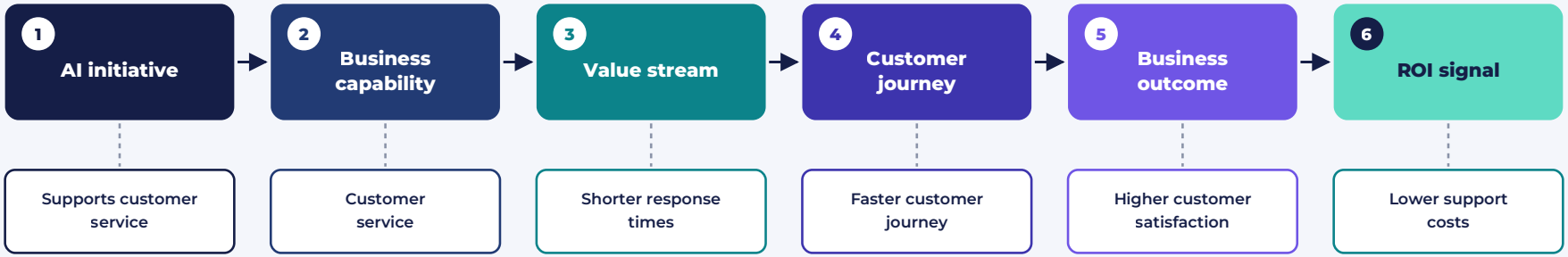


WHY IT MATTERS

Enterprise architecture helps CIOs show what each AI investment touches and why it matters.

How Business Architecture Turns AI Activity Into Business Outcomes

TRACEABILITY MAP



EXAMPLE: CUSTOMER SERVICE If an initiative can't be linked to a value stream, customer journey, or measurable outcome, it is harder to justify.

AI in enterprise architecture helps organizations understand how AI initiatives connect to business capabilities such as customer service, fraud detection, finance, or supply chain management.

Business architecture builds on this by linking those capabilities to value streams, customer journeys, and measurable business outcomes. CIOs can use this increased traceability to show the impact of AI initiatives across the organization, including expected costs and benefits.

For example, an AI initiative that supports customer service can be directly linked to a faster customer journey, shorter response times, higher customer satisfaction, and lower support costs. Clearly spelling out these connections makes it easier for leaders to tell the difference between AI initiatives that are creating real value and those with little business impact. If an initiative can't be linked to a value stream, customer journey, or measurable outcome, it becomes much harder to justify further investment.

TRACEABILITY TAKEAWAY

Business architecture turns AI value from a claim into a traceable story.

04 THE DECISION

How CIOs Can Close the AI Value Gap

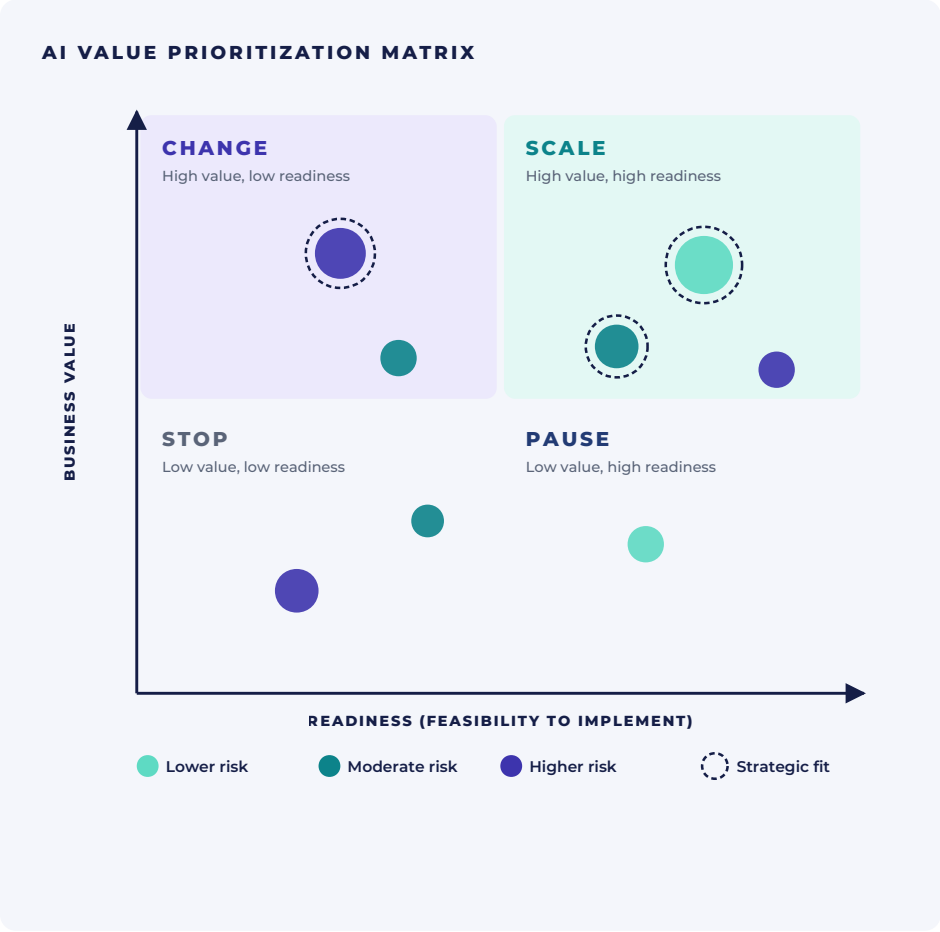
The most effective way to close the AI value gap is to establish a shared view of every AI initiative across the organization.

By using enterprise architecture, CIOs can bring this information together to make it easier to understand what each initiative is trying to achieve and how it supports the wider business.

The next step is to assign clear business and technical ownership to each AI initiative. Clear AI accountability ensures everyone knows who is responsible for implementation and measuring whether the initiative achieves its expected outcomes. Enterprise architecture teams can then help CIOs map each AI initiative to the systems, data, business capabilities, risks, and expected outcomes it depends on. With this context, leaders can compare initiatives more effectively to identify where the greatest AI business value can be created.

With this information in one place, CIOs can prioritize AI initiatives based on the value they could deliver, the risks involved, how feasible they are to implement, and how well they support business priorities. They can then track performance against agreed business metrics. This provides clearer evidence of which initiatives are working rather than relying on technical milestones alone, enhancing AI value realization.

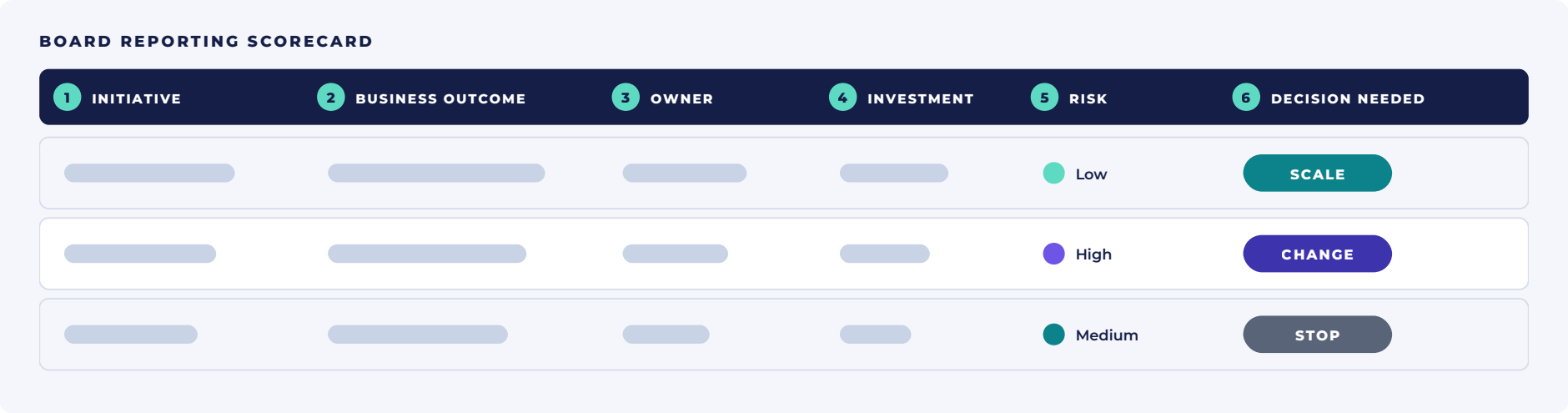
Finally, leaders can use AI governance architecture to review AI initiatives against agreed business metrics, risks, and strategic priorities. Regular governance should end with a clear decision to scale, change, pause, or stop each initiative based on its value, risk, performance, and strategic alignment.



WHERE TO START

Closing the value gap starts with deciding what should scale, what should change, and what should stop.

What to Show in an AI Value Conversation



An AI value conversation with the CFO or board should focus on decisions, rather than status updates.

Instead of just reporting what has been built, CIOs should clearly explain what decision they need and provide the evidence to support it. Over time, this approach supports more effective board reporting and better AI investment decisions.

The conversation should start by showing which AI initiatives are in progress and who is responsible for each one. It should also highlight which business priorities each initiative supports and which systems, data, and business processes it affects. This gives leaders the context they need to understand how it fits into the wider organization.

CIOs can then present the expected AI business value alongside current performance. This could include progress against agreed business metrics, expected cost savings, efficiency gains, or any improvements to customer experience. They should also highlight any key risks, controls, and dependencies that could affect success.

Bringing this information together makes AI ROI easier to prove, which helps CFOs and boards make more confident decisions about whether an AI initiative should receive more investment, be changed, or be stopped.

> **The strongest AI ROI story connects investment, risk, and outcomes in one view.**

CONCLUSION

AI in Enterprise Architecture Helps Prove ROI

Closing the AI value gap requires more than simply tracking AI activity across the organization.

AI-driven enterprise architecture helps CIOs connect AI initiatives to strategy, business outcomes, risks, and investment decisions. Combining enterprise context with effective governance helps leaders understand the potential business value of each AI investment and identify where adjustments are needed.

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAY

Boards don't need more AI activity. They need a clearer view of AI impact.

Enterprise context plus effective governance shows where AI creates value and where adjustments are needed.

CONNECT EVERY AI INITIATIVE TO

Strategy | **Business outcomes** | **Risks** | **Investment decisions**

Explore how Orbus Software helps organizations create AI-driven value through enterprise architecture, governance, and connected decision-making.

Book a Demo



ABOUT ORBUS SOFTWARE

Orbus Software is the global provider of OrbusInfinity®, the business transformation platform that enables enterprises to decide with clarity and act with confidence in the age of AI. The platform integrates with 150+ business systems, delivering a unified, real-time view of your enterprise operating model with embedded AI agents that drive leadership insights and automate informed decisions at scale. Trusted by 600+ enterprises and government organizations in more than 50 countries, Orbus Software empowers executives to govern AI adoption, optimize technology investments, and accelerate business transformation. orbussoftware.com.

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