omd

Rapid Response

AI Readiness

Understanding the real challenges behind AI transformation

Updated: April 17th 2026

WE Create WHAT'S NEXT

Preparing for the intelligence age

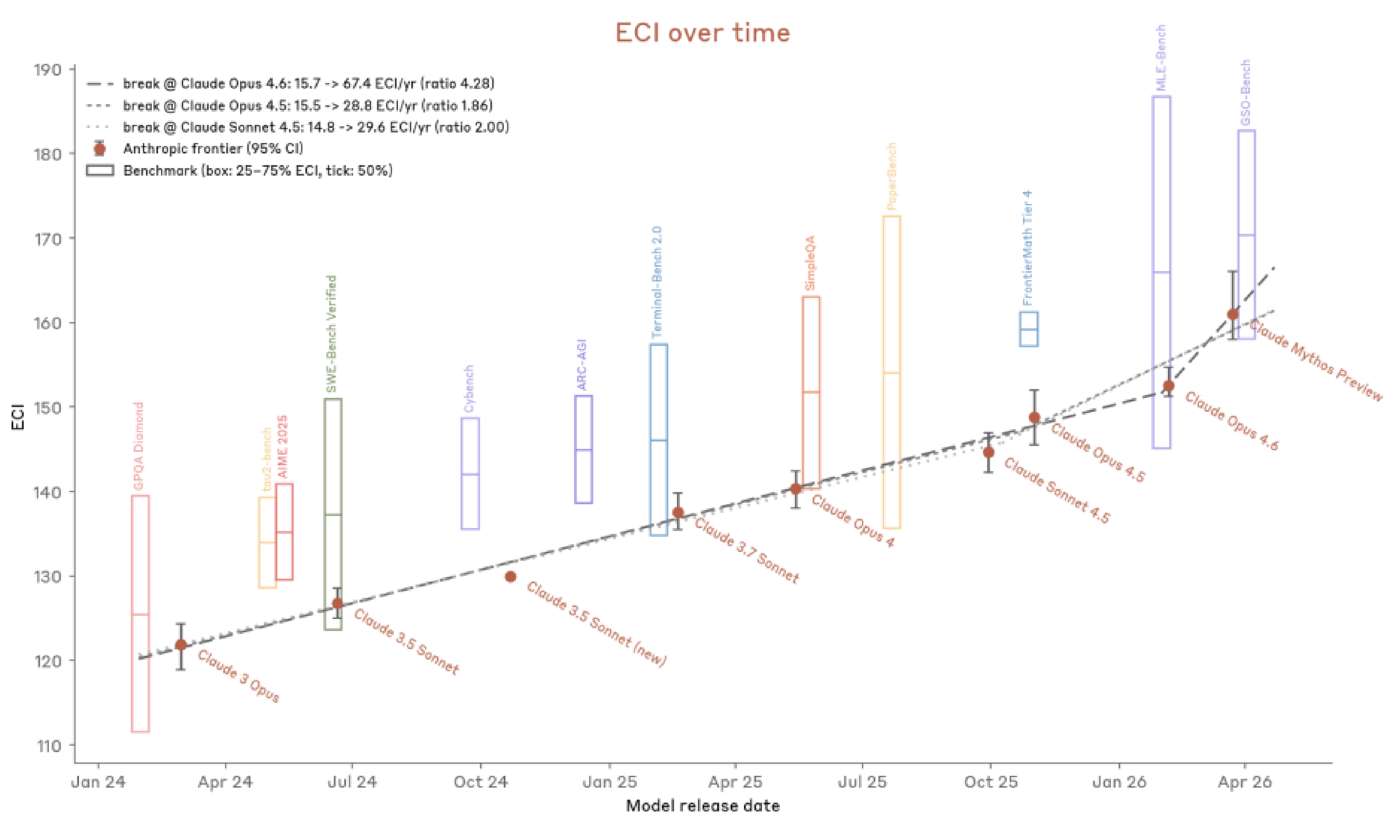
The frontier AI labs are signalling an acceleration in AI capability, they are asking the world to prepare for AI superintelligence, not as a long-term possibility but as an imminent impact.

Open AI this week published a paper on the economic impacts of super intelligence seeking to define 'Industrial Policy for the Intelligence Age', with a New Deal for Superintelligence .

This week Anthropic announced Claude Mythos Preview, a new model family that is so powerful that it is not planned to be released to the public.

Instead, Anthropic is working with trusted security partners through Project Glasswing to better shield against the novel attacks this level of AI intelligence can potentially instigate.

Brands will need redouble security efforts to keep data and AI surfaces secure. Even long trusted software has had security vulnerabilities exposed by an AI that can connect several small weaknesses into one critical attack vector.



The Epoch Capabilities Index aggregates model performance across many benchmarks, steady progress had been made over the past two years, now there is an inflection point inductive of a faster take-off in model capability.

Meanwhile, an open-source project called Paperclip crossed 30,000 stars in three weeks by offering orchestration for "zero-human companies" complete with org charts, budgets, governance, and agent coordination. The infrastructure to run agent-first businesses is arriving.

The question is whether incumbent organizations can restructure fast enough.

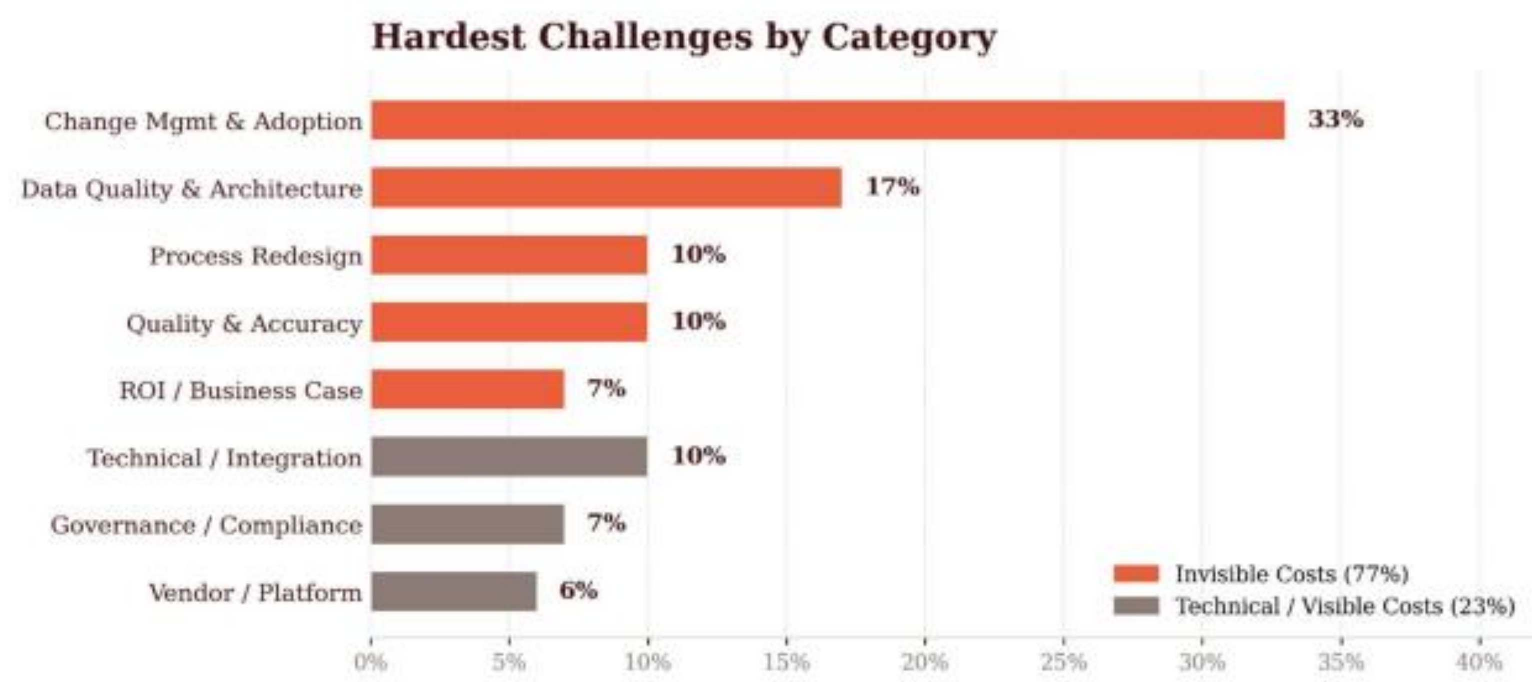
The accelerating nature of AI model capability highlights the need for enterprise to adopt and leverage ever more powerful tools across virtually every imaginable workflow.

While AI-driven advertising spend is projected to reach $57 billion in 2026, a 63% increase, only 6% of marketers report AI is fully implemented in their operations.

Learning from success

A recent report from Stanford's Enterprise AI shares lessons from 51 successful cases in nine industries.

The key finding is that technology is consistently described as the easiest part.



Instead, 77% of the hardest challenges were invisible costs: change management, data quality, process redesign. For every dollar spent on technology, up to ten are spent on intangibles. 61% of successful deployments included at least one prior failure whose costs never appeared in the final ROI.

There are three key findings for brands.

First, in many marketing functions escalation-based operating models where AI handles 80%+ autonomously, and humans review only exceptions delivered 71% median productivity gains versus 30% for all approval-based models. Those layering excessive human oversight onto AI workflows are leaving the most value on the table.

One financial services company in the study cut campaign production time from seven weeks to six hours using an 80/20 AI-to-human model while doubling click-through rates.

Second, for 42% of implementations, the foundation model was fully interchangeable. The durable advantage was the orchestration layer: data architecture, process design, integration infrastructure.

This echoes what MIT's NANDA initiative found last year: the failures stemmed not from model quality but from poor workflow integration and misaligned organizational incentives.

Third, agentic AI implementations delivered 71% median productivity gains versus 40% for high-automation alternatives but they represented only 20% of cases, the agentic frontier is real but narrow.

As agent-driven architectures scale, managing model selection and inference costs will become a core capability, what the study calls "tokenomics." The next wave of competitive advantage for everyone will be operational, not technological.

Implications for advertisers

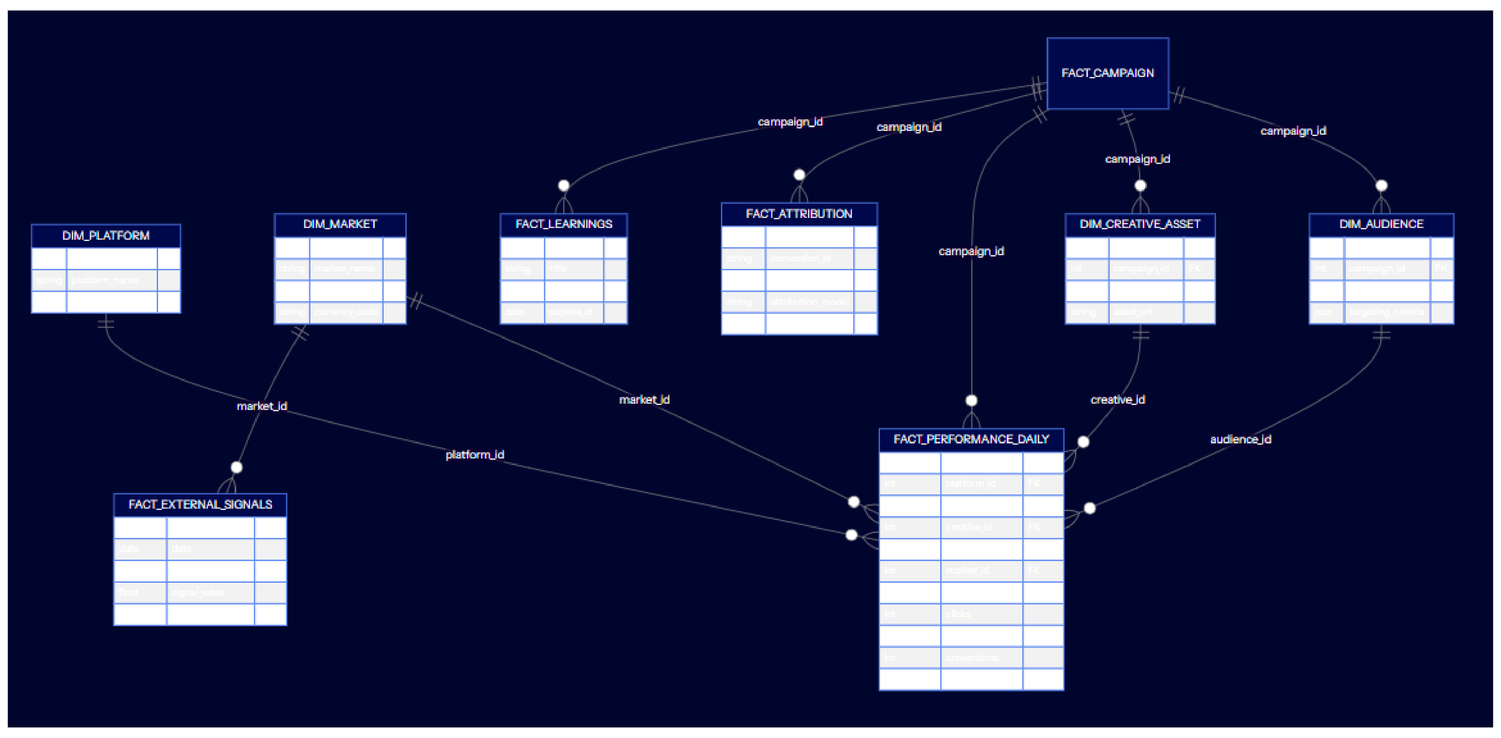
66% of organizations report productivity gains from AI, but only 34% are reimagining business processes around it.

The most successful enterprises are spending multiples of their technology budget on the intangibles of reskilling, process redesign, organizational transformation. Technology delivers about 20% of an initiative's value; the other 80% comes from redesigning work.

AI copilots will be embedded in 80% of enterprise workplace applications by the end of 2026 but embedding tools into unredesigned workflows produces marginal gains, not transformational ones.

Gartner projects 60% of brands will use agentic AI for one-to-one interactions by 2028. The brands that arrive with escalation-ready processes will move at a fundamentally different speed.

Campaign production, creative versioning, programmatic optimisation, and reporting are high-volume, recoverable-error workflows where escalation-based AI should be the default operating model.



There are numerous demands in media for new capabilities coming from changing consumer behaviour, one of the most impactful of which is the rise of AI in search and commerce.

The brands that win in AI-mediated markets are not those with the best model, they are those whose data makes them interpretable, credible, and structured enough to be recommended by any model.

Omnicom's AI Optix applies this logic making brands visible not just to search engines but to AI decision systems in all contexts. Connecting consumer needs and intents with commerce data, optimized code, network credibility and original brand content.

LLMs unlock previously inaccessible data in 88% of successful cases, for brands, this transforms the value equation of first-party data, audience intelligence, and creative performance history.

Every unstructured dataset a brand holds from call transcripts, to research panels or CRM notes is now raw material for competitive advantage. The cost of not storing it is far greater than the cost of storing it.

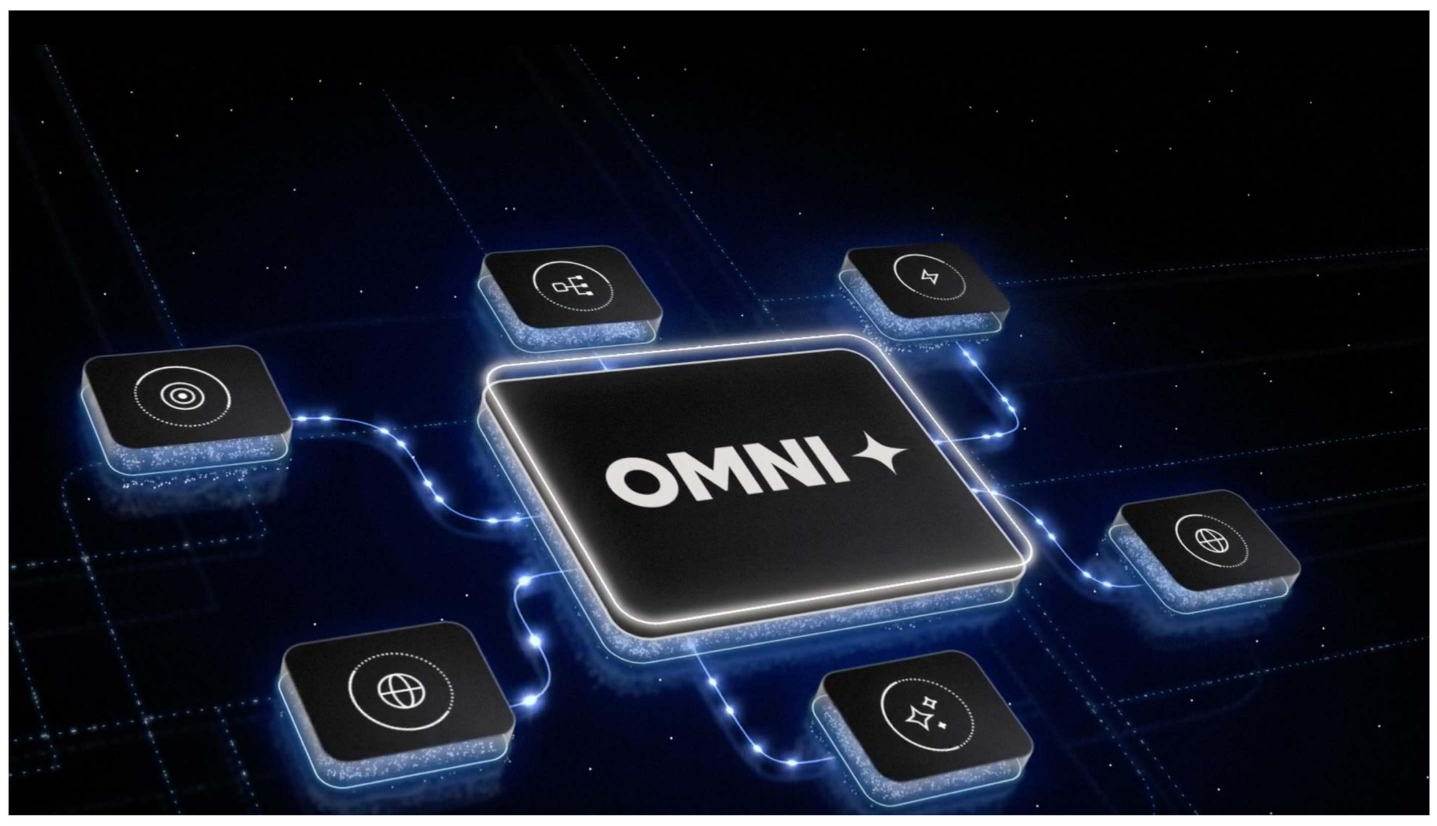
Close the readiness gap

Data readiness is now a competitive weapon, not a compliance exercise. Nearly 60% of AI leaders say legacy integration is a primary adoption challenge for agentic AI.

Advertisers whose first-party data, creative assets, and performance histories exist in clean, structured, agent-accessible formats will extract value from frontier models that competitors with fragmented systems and manual handoffs simply cannot.

These principles are core to the rollout of the new Omni across Omnicom Media.

Omni is built around a series of consoles with agentic AI capabilities across a redesigned workflow. All connected to proprietary identity, commerce and inventory data to deliver sustainable competitive advantage.



The constraint is no longer intelligence. It is the internal information architecture that determines whether that intelligence produces generic output or proprietary insight. Orchestration layers are becoming the new media moat, with a focus on data architecture, process design, and multi-model routing.

The agencies and brands that use AI to build new planning intelligence, new creative operations at impossible scale, new forms of measurement and new consumer surfaces within an integrated system will compound their advantage.

An era of AI evangelism is giving way to an era of AI evaluation. The organizations that treat this shift as an opportunity not a threat will define the next decade of competitive advantage.

The models arriving this quarter and next will be capable of enabling marketing operations at a speed that exceeds most organizations' capacity to absorb the change.

The readiness gap is not a technology problem. It is a management problem, the window to close it is narrowing with every model release.

Jean-Paul Edwards
Managing Director, Product
OMD Worldwide