

Product Overview

Rapid-Cycle AI-Enabled Productivity Improvement (RCAPI) Support

A Strategic Design Vignette

August 2026

Strategic Design
by Argon&Co formerly Bevington Group

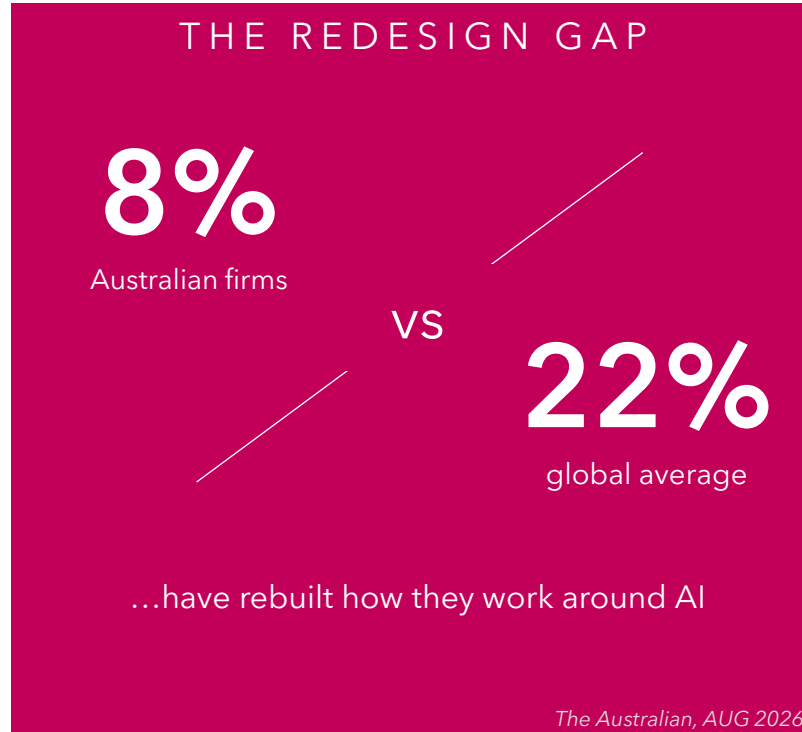
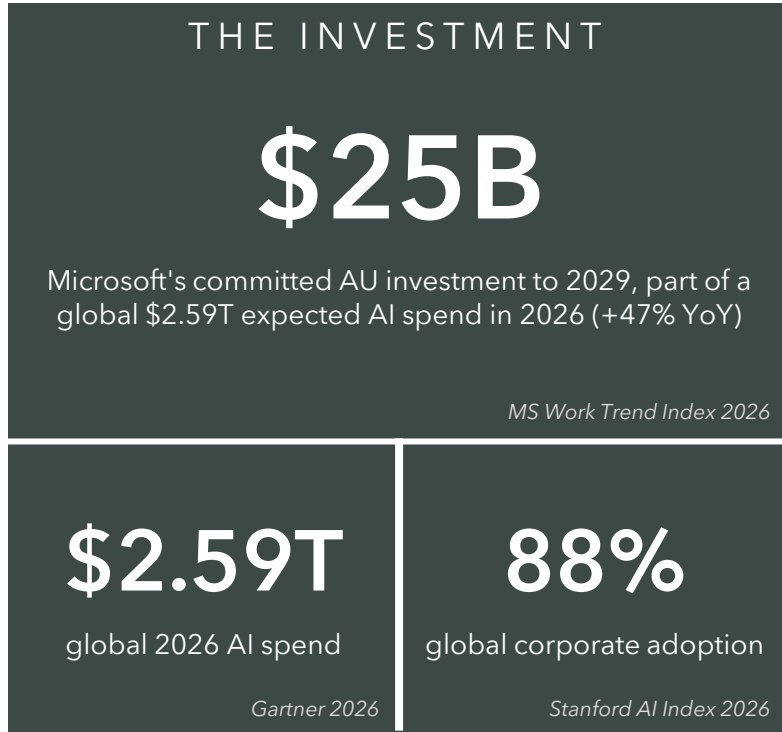
State of the Industry

Redesigning work is the next step in unlocking AI's value

* STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Australian organisations are investing in AI faster than they are redesigning the work around it

Capital and tools are flowing in. Rebuilding how the work actually gets done is not keeping pace. That gap reflects the extent of the payoff



**"AI's real payoff isn't the model.
It's what you build around it"**

- Jane Livesey,
President, Microsoft Australia and New Zealand

MS Source Asia, JUL 2026.

95%

of organisations report
zero measurable return
from enterprise GenAI

~5%

of AI deployments are
workflow-integrated at
scale

MIT NANDA, JUL 2025



Capital and tools are not the bottleneck. The operating model is.

These are the roles, processes, and decision rights that decide whether a use case ever leaves the pilot stage.

* STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Bolting AI onto broken processes just makes broken processes faster

Most organisations are functionally organised. AI applied inside a silo speeds up the silo; it doesn't fix the **handoffs, rework, and waste** that sit between silos.

	 Technology-led AI	 Business-led AI
Starting point	A tool or model, then a search for use cases	Rigorous analysis of where economic value sits
Selection	Pilots disconnected from strategic value drivers	Initiatives selected, prioritised, and funded by strategic value
Process	AI bolted onto unchanged work, creating process debt	Work redesigned around AI capability, not retrofitted
Returns	Marginal, hard to justify at scale	A managed portfolio balancing risk, return, and time horizon
Capability	Ongoing dependency on vendors	Internal capability transferred so returns compound



AI ROI =
Technology × Work Redesign



Deconstruct jobs, not just
automate them



Redesign is not a one-off,
it's a repeatable process

MIT Sloan, "Want AI-driven productivity? Redesign work", MAY 2025

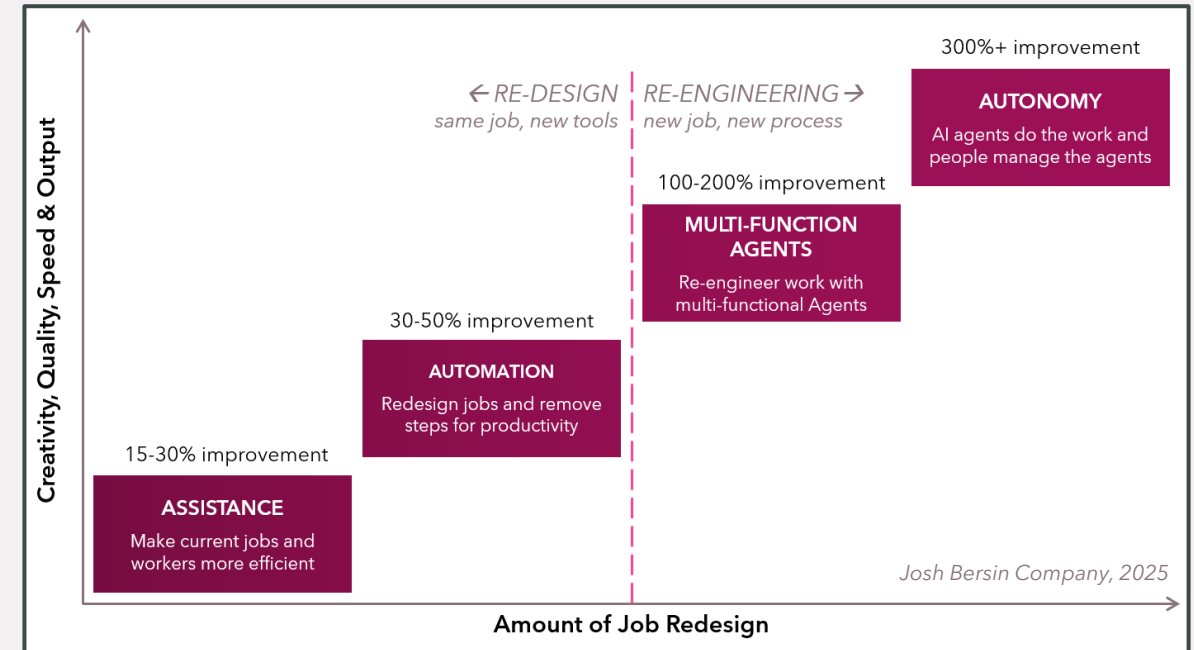
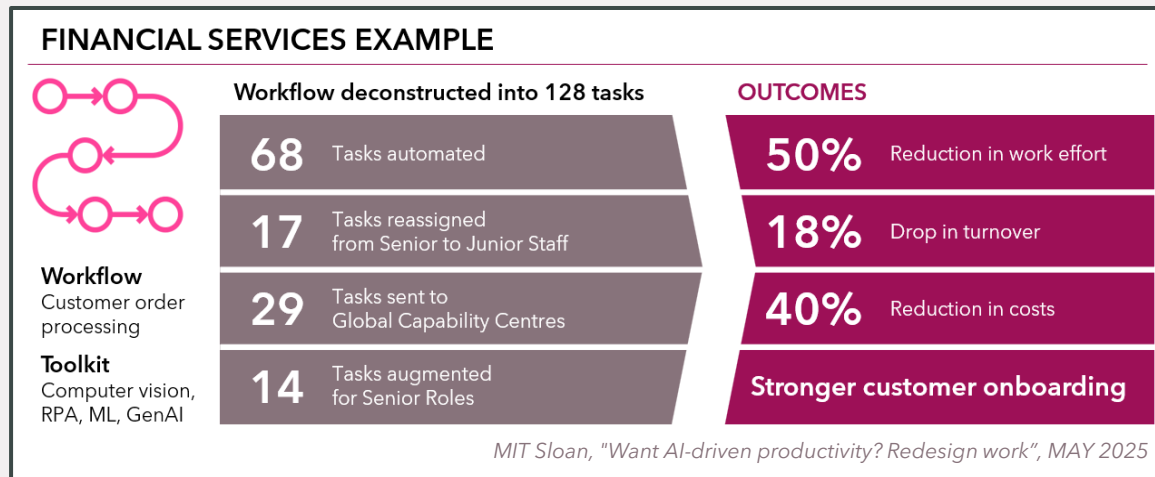
* STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Redesign lifts the ceiling on what AI can do; process debt caps it

Research found GenAI didn't reduce hours where process wasn't redesigned; work just changed shape

MIT Sloan, "GenAI Success Metrics", JUL 2026

*Advice from 2025 still stands.
The research moved on. Most companies didn't.*



"Productivity gains at the edge do not automatically become enterprise transformation at the core"

Dr Karim Lakhani (Harvard Business School), MS Work Trend Index 2026

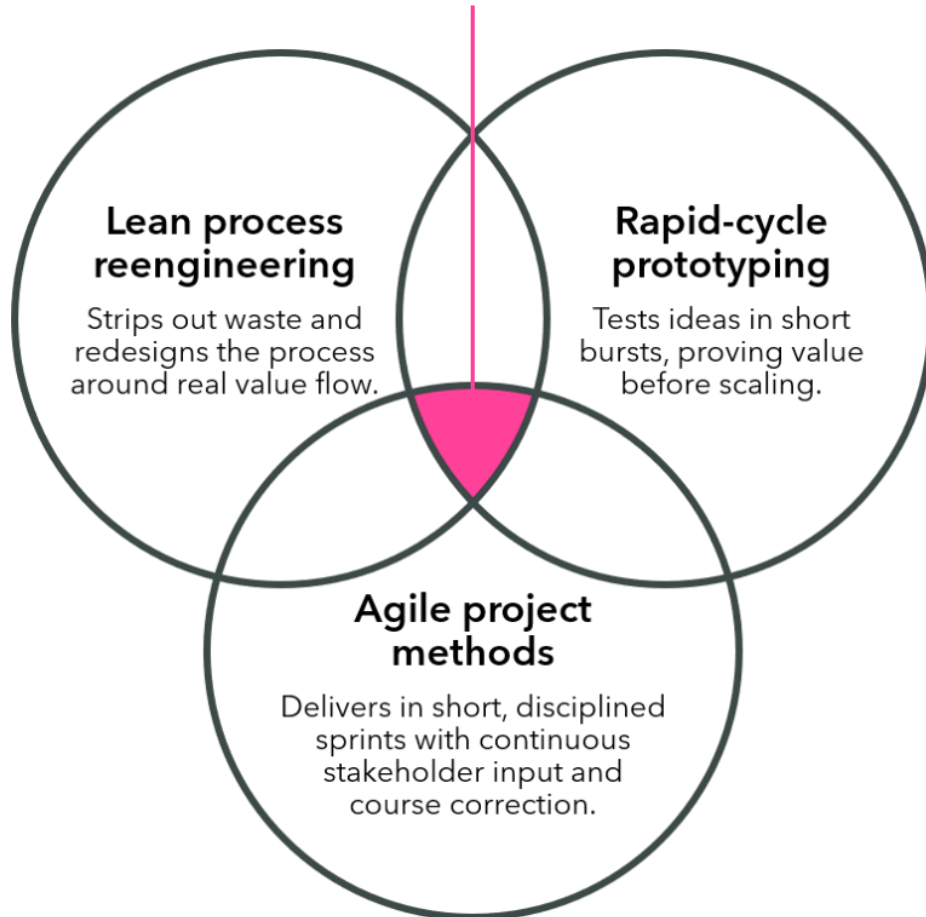
Introducing RAPI

Rapid Cycle AI-Enabled Productivity Improvement

* INTRODUCING RAPI

Redesign the traditional way, and AI will have moved on before you finish. We recommend Rapid-Cycle, AI-Enabled Productivity Improvement (RCAPI)

RCAPI brings together three proven methodologies, each with a track record of speed.



The core features of the model include:

- Defined problem statements and measurable outcomes, agreed up front.
- Rapid prioritisation of sub-opportunities into clear, sequenced backlogs.
- Short diagnostic and test cycles that keep delivery moving at pace.
- AI-supported insight generation, prototyping, and validation at every stage.
- High transparency of performance and benefits, tracked throughout.
- Embedded BAU capability through coaching, simple tools, and repeatable routines.

* INTRODUCING RCAP

RCAP moves from problem to embedded solution through eight disciplined steps, accelerated by AI and automation.

The eight steps follow the familiar rhythm of Plan, Do, Check, Act. These broad themes are sharpened into more granular stages so progress and ownership are visible at every point. AI and automation compress the time each step takes, without skipping any of them.

Phase	What happens	AI & automation role
SCOPE	Clarify the problem, objectives, and success measures.	Rapid synthesis of existing documentation and prior data.
DISCOVER	Gather data on current process and performance.	Automated data pulls; analysis of unstructured records
DIAGNOSE	Identify friction points and causes.	Pattern detection and root-cause clustering across large datasets.
DESIGN	Co-design workflow changes and automated steps.	AI-supported logic design; simple rules and workflow mapping.
PROTOTYPE	Build and trial a working solution in a controlled, low-risk setting.	Build prototype automations (logic, routing, auto-fill).
TEST	Compare real results to expected outcomes.	Comparison of actual vs expected data; regression testing.
REFINE	Adjust the solution based on test results.	Error detection and root-cause clustering to guide fixes.
DEPLOY	Embed into business-as-usual with training and controls.	Automated monitoring, alerts, and workflow nudges.

Proof of value
is tested
before a
solution is
deployed

OUTCOME: A faster, safer, data-driven delivery rhythm that shortens cycle times, improves reliability, and creates uplift that lasts.

* INTRODUCING RCAP

Before the Sprints (based on Argon AI strategic approach): We work with you to construct a portfolio of initiatives that balance value, effort, and impact

Our method deploys an established framework to filter noise from impact. By balancing effort vs. suitability, we ensure organisational energy is focused on “high-yield” opportunities – those that are highest-value, lowest-risk, and fastest-to-deliver

Selection Criteria

Value Impact

Member experience, cost reduction, risk mitigation, and flow efficiency

Delivery Effort

Complexity, SME availability, data access, and tech dependencies

Risk Uplift

Standardising controls, reducing error rates, and system reliability

Time-to-Value

Ability to deliver tangible, measurable wins within Sprint 1 or 2

AI Suitability

High volume, repetitive manual handling, and clear logic patterns

Readiness

Clarity of the core problem and immediate access to key people

THE ROADMAP TO A BACKLOG

- 1. Discovery**
Gather initial opportunity list via interviews & pain-point data.
- 2. AI-Enabled Analysis**
Rapid assessment of failure-demand and volume drivers.
- 3. Prioritisation Workshop**
Collaborative multi-stakeholder scoring session.
- 4. Backlog Architecture**
Building a structured, Agile-ready delivery queue.
- 5. Sponsor Confirmation**
Final sign-off on the portfolio and resource allocation.

OUTCOME: A validated, value-aligned rapid-cycle backlog and delivery portfolio.

* INTRODUCING RAPI

During the Sprints: We test each initiative for Proof of Value before it reaches the Deploy phase

Rapid-cycle delivery embeds a Proof of Value (PoV) testing early in each sprint cycle to ensure ideas are validated quickly before committing effort to broader deployment or automation.

What Proof of Value looks like

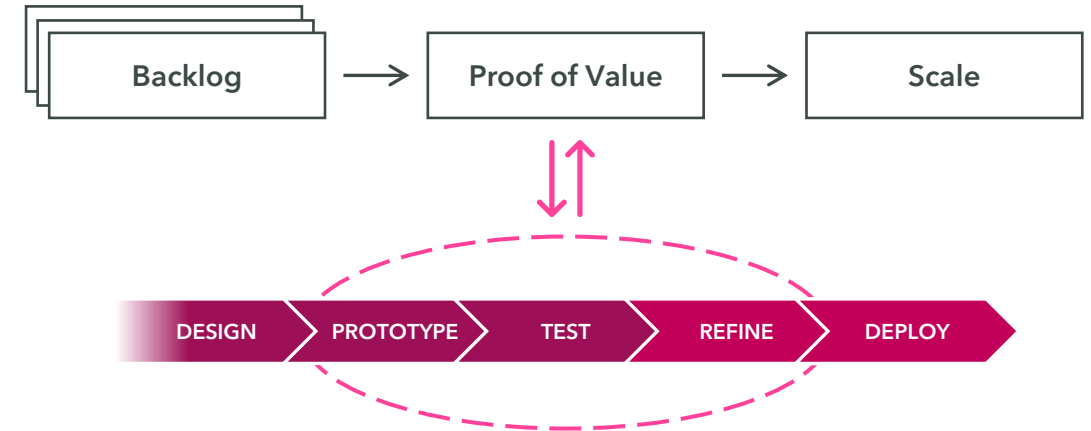
- Rapid prototype/MVP/POC of the proposed process and AI-enabled improvement
- Validation of success criteria (accuracy, speed, rework reduction, reliability)
- Assessment of change impact and feasibility
- Early test-and-learn loop to identify refinements
- Clear evidence of value before scaling

Why this matters for you

- De-risks automation and AI deployment
- Avoids large programs by validating small units of change
- Ensures investment only follows proven value
- Qualifies outcomes ahead of restructuring decisions
- Embeds value lens as part of your in-sprint learning

Harvesting value

- Teams can opt to treat the gap between sprints as a harvest point
- E.g., cancel software licences a redesigned process has made redundant, retire the manual workaround it replaced, and bank that saving before starting the next cycle



This approach replaces traditional stage-gate governance with a lighter, faster, evidence-based Proof of Value cycle that validates improvements before investment or scaling

OUTCOME: Validated improvements that are safe to scale – ready for deployment or automation when benefits are proven

Throughout the Sprints: We build internal capability across the tools and techniques needed to sustain improvement

Foundational skills

- AI basics and safe-use guardrails
- Lean methods (flow, waste, simplification)
- Pragmatic Agile methods and tools
- Data engineering and analytics (diagnostics, volume, breakdown analysis) to base level
- Your available, enabling tech stack, e.g., Microsoft: Power Automate, Power BI, PowerApps

In-sprint learning-by-doing

- Training the front-end of the sprint cycle
- Guided problem-framing
- Running design sprints
- Running deployment sprints
- Coaching on SOPs, prompt patterns, automation prototypes

Leadership uplift

- Operating rhythms
- Decision making
- Using dashboards and metrics
- Reinforcing reliability and simplification
- Reinforcing a rapid-cycle, learning-oriented way of working

COLLABORATE → CO-CREATE → LEAD

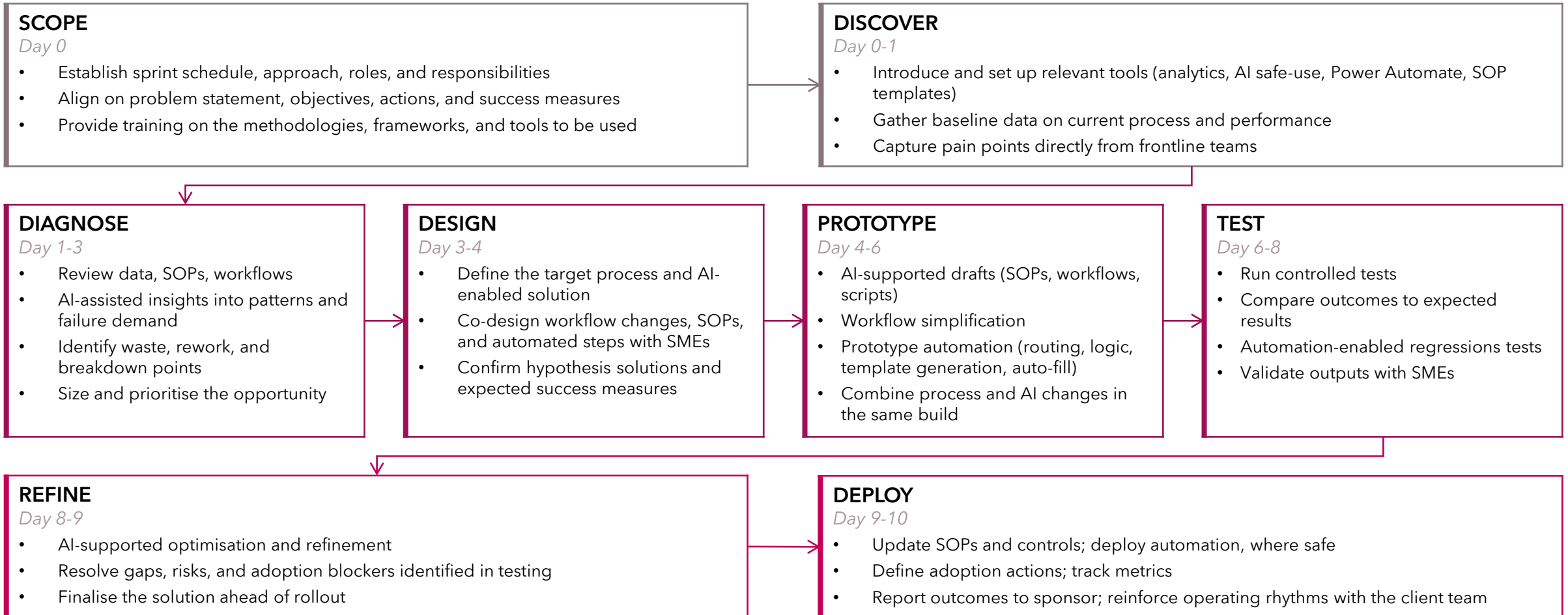
The first sprint delivery is consultant-led. The next shifts into co-creation. By the final sprint, teams are equipped to lead the RAPI cadence themselves.

OUTCOME: Capabilities embedded into your team. Not "training after delivery", but uplift built into every sprint.

* INTRODUCING RCAPI

Example rapid-cycle sprint flow

A typical 2-3-week sprint blends process redesign, AI and automation enablement, capability uplift, and rapid prototyping. Throughout all sprints, teams use a consistent toolkit including Lean methods, AI basics, analytics, Power Automate, Claude, and Orgvue, supported by standard operating rhythms.



Note: Sprints can run in parallel. Design sprints and deployment sprints often run concurrently (3-4 at a time depending on capacity).

* INTRODUCING RAPI

Every modern organisation needs an AI Strategy. RAPI is how that direction redesigns work

At Strategic Design, we see AI strategy as three connected elements:

- the architecture that lets you deploy safely,
- the focus areas worth pursuing, and
- the operating model that turns them into results.

Most organisations have all three. Few connect them.

Case Study

MIT Sloan researchers studied 87 practitioners across 23 organisations. Only two turned generative AI into a lasting capability. The rest fell into one of two failure patterns.

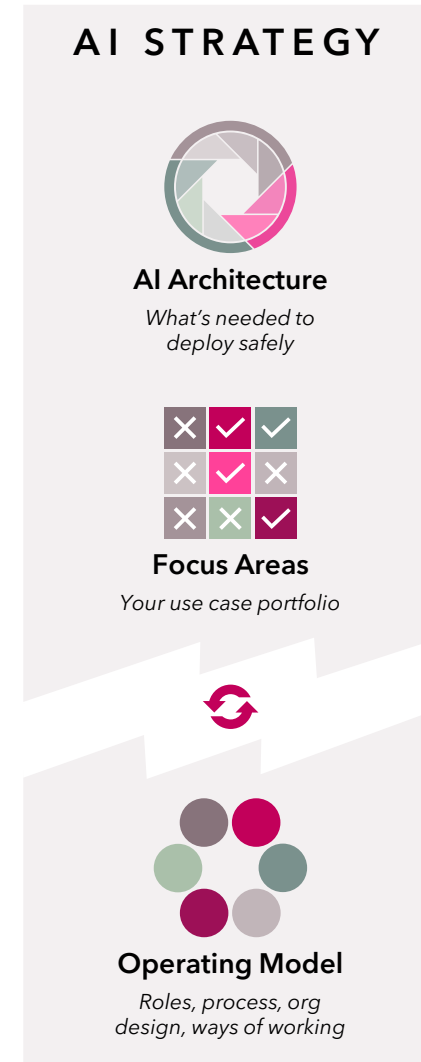
- Some built strong **architecture** centrally but had no reliable way to prioritise the **focus areas** that mattered to the business. Pilots stalled the moment they hit a real-world requirement nobody on the build team had seen coming.
- Others let individual teams chase their own **focus areas** with no shared **architecture** behind them. These were fast to launch, but duplicated and unsustainable once more than one use case went live.

The two that succeeded closed both gaps through **focus** changing their **operating model**, i.e., cross-functional team that sat between technology and the business.

MIT Sloan, "Create Generative AI Value at Scale", JUN 2026

That's the gap RAPI closes. Rather than let your AI strategy stall, RAPI brings architecture, focus areas, and operating model together as one connected system.

We can work with you to build and train your own 'RAPI Squad' to redesign work and embed it into business-as-usual.



RAPI is the repeatable engine that will move your organisation, sprint-by-sprint, from productivity ambitions and guardrails towards real change in how work is done

* INTRODUCING RAPI

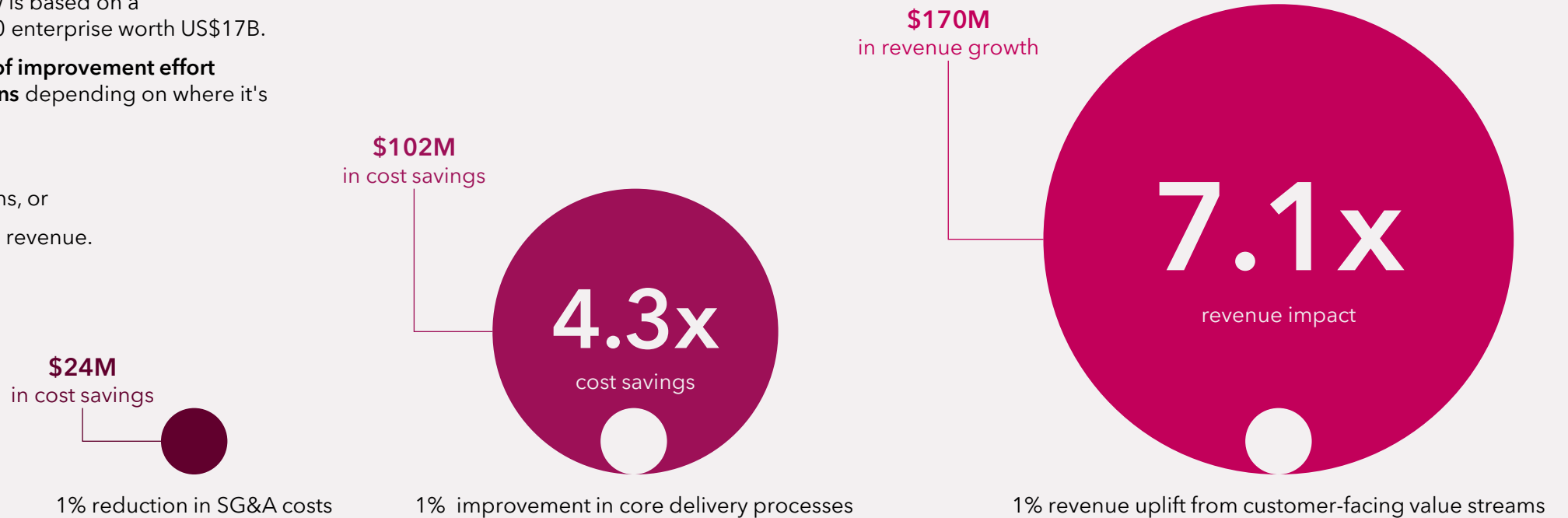
Where you redesign matters as much as whether you redesign at all

Not all redesign pays off equally. Focusing redesign in the right areas is key. 85% of executives say their AI initiatives fail to deliver ROI because they weren't designed to improve the outcomes of critical processes in the first place.

The illustrative model below is based on a representative Fortune 1000 enterprise worth US\$17B.

It shows how **the same 1% of improvement effort delivers very different returns** depending on where it's aimed:

- cutting overhead,
- tightening core operations, or
- growing customer-facing revenue.



IBM Institute for Business Value, "Redesign for Enterprise AI," July 2026



What separates the organisations that capture this opportunity is knowing which value streams to redesign first.

Next Steps

Test your readiness

Engage the right support if you are not there yet

* NEXT STEPS

RCAPI is not 'a handful of pilots and see how it goes.' It's how you avoid restarting from scratch every time AI moves again.

Questions every responsible AI leader should be able to answer



Do you have a clear AI strategy?

- Does it define your priority value streams?
- Does it support governance and safe deployment?
- Is it working with, or in spite of, your operating model?



What are your people already doing with AI that you don't officially know about yet?



Of the bigger opportunities on the table, which ones have actually been sized and sequenced (versus just talked about)?



Who owns the job of connecting what your frontline is discovering to what the enterprise is trying to build?

Note: grassroots 'Everyday' AI and Enterprise AI are sub-strategies of one AI Strategy. If you can't answer for both, the strategy isn't complete yet.

Pilots alone won't get you there

Most organisations aren't short on AI activity. They're short on a system for keeping it.

Charles Lamanna executive VP for **Microsoft** Copilot, points to "institutional inertia" as the biggest reason AI adoption fails conversion into real productivity gains, i.e., a reluctance to take the **risk of redesigning how work actually gets done**

Lou Compagnone, director of artificial intelligence at **Datacom**, calls the resulting pattern "AI confetti": tools scattered everywhere, with no system to capture or reuse what's actually been learned

Former **Atlassian** futurist Dom Price puts it more bluntly: organisations have treated AI as just another "transformation," without transforming anything

The Australian, AUG 2026

At the pace AI is moving, a pilot proves a point and then ages out within a few quarters. The fix isn't a bigger pilot, or more of them. It's a formal, repeatable way to keep redesigning, continuously.

* NEXT STEPS

RCAPI is how you formalise continuous improvement in AI. Strategic Design can run this with you end-to-end, from strategy through to sustainable change

Continuous improvement in AI isn't a project with an end date. It's a capability run with the same discipline as any other core capability, and **Strategic Design can build it with you at every stage:**

Test and develop your AI strategy.

We validate where your focus areas, AI architecture, and operating model implications actually sit, before you commit to anything at scale

Progressively **transfer knowledge and ownership** as we go.

Collaborate, then co-create, then lead, so by the time we step back, your team is running the method itself

Run RAPI sprints with you.

Diagnose-Prototype-Test-Embed cycles that turn that strategy into working, embedded improvement, not a slide deck

Where the **process and operating model impacts** are significant, we bring 30 years of experience to right-size and implement that change sustainably



The next step is a short scoping conversation, or a light-touch diagnostic run against the five questions earlier in this deck.

Either way, you'll know within weeks, not months, where the real opportunity sits.



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* FURTHER READING

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Contact details and disclaimer

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Strategy Design (including M&A services)



Operating Model Design & Restructuring



Process Reengineering & Automation



Enterprise Digital - Data - AI



Change Management & Delivery Support



Risk Intelligence

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