



AI summary

What the Next Phase of Enterprise AI Actually Looks Like

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What the Next Phase of Enterprise AI Actually Looks Like

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Participants

Wirawit Chaochaisit

Director, Data Science & Analytics Solution, Pfizer

Philip Rathle

CTO, Neo4j

Prerit Mishra

Head of Data & AI, Asia Pacific, DHL

Jukka Pulkkinen

Director of Tech Research Unit, Häme University of Applied Science

Summary

The session explored the rapid evolution of enterprise AI, focusing on its transition from experimental applications to operational integration. Participants observed the shift from chat-based AI to agentic AI, with a pressing need for organisations to adopt new analytics technologies at an unprecedented pace while balancing innovation with compliance and risk. The discussions highlighted that AI's value now lies in its integration into workflows, such as Pfizer's integration of AI into sales planning and execution processes, rather than standalone applications. This shift emphasised the importance of aligning AI developments with organisational goals, compliance protocols, and evolving technology infrastructures.



A recurring theme was the interplay between AI model sophistication and practical integration into business processes. Participants discussed the progression from large language models (LLMs) to retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) and graph-based RAGs, which enable contextual and semantic understanding in AI applications. Neo4j's representative underscored the increasing significance of graphs for knowledge contexts, marking what he described as a "graph moment" in AI. Others stressed the need for AI systems to balance economic viability with functional performance, advocating for both the use of powerful general models and specialised, domain-specific models tailored to specific applications.

The session emphasised the importance of organisational capabilities, particularly leadership upskilling and cross-departmental collaboration, to ensure successful AI adoption. Speakers identified the need to overcome silos and align key performance indicators (KPIs) across departments to prioritise company-wide goals. The fear of AI replacing jobs was acknowledged as legitimate, but participants highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of learning and collaboration. Peer-to-peer communication and showcasing AI-driven successes were suggested as strategies to mitigate resistance and encourage adoption, with a focus on empowering employees to engage with and benefit from AI tools.

Reliability emerged as a critical factor in scaling AI applications, with functional reliability tailored to specific use cases. For high-stakes applications, such as pharmaceutical workflows, stringent evaluations were deemed essential to ensure accuracy and trust. In contrast, creative or lower-stakes applications could tolerate greater margins of error. Participants also stressed the importance of explainability and governance in fostering trust, particularly when AI decisions impact end users or critical business operations. The need for reliable infrastructure, including GPU uptime and data orchestration, was also highlighted to support consistent AI performance.



Investment priorities were discussed, with a consensus on balancing technological, organisational, and data-centric initiatives. Suggestions included investing in data quality, leadership education, and creating roles focused on AI integration. While some argued for foundational improvements in data and legacy systems, others cautioned against using these as excuses to delay innovation. Instead, they advocated parallel investments in upskilling, organisational restructuring, and scaling AI pilots into full-fledged products. The importance of focusing on competitive differentiation by leveraging proprietary data and aligning AI initiatives with business outcomes was reiterated.

The session concluded with reflections on the future trajectory of enterprise AI, emphasising the transition from building models to integrating them into scalable, reliable systems. The panellists stressed that success would increasingly depend on aligning AI with organisational goals, fostering accountability, and addressing skill gaps. They observed that the AI landscape is moving towards a balance between experimentation and operationalisation, where organisations must navigate the complexities of integrating cutting-edge technology with human and organisational dimensions. Participant engagement underscored the urgency of addressing these challenges to maximise the transformative potential of AI.

Takeaways

Integration of AI into Business Processes Is Key

The panel emphasised that organisations must move beyond experimenting with AI and focus on integrating it directly into core business workflows. This shift ensures operational efficiency and measurable ROI, marking a transition from isolated pilots to full-scale deployment.

Balancing Experimentation with Accountability

While innovation and experimentation in AI remain crucial, organisations must also establish mechanisms for accountability and clear ROI measurement. This dual approach enables sustainable AI adoption while managing risks and aligning with business priorities.

Upskilling Leadership and Workforce Is Critical

The panel highlighted the importance of upskilling both leadership and employees to effectively navigate the AI-driven landscape. Educating top managers and fostering a culture of learning among employees were seen as essential for addressing adoption challenges and reducing resistance to AI.

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