



INTERVIEWS

Unlocking Enterprise Potential: How AI Drives Operational Efficiency and Innovation

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CXOToday has engaged in an exclusive interview with Shishir Saxena, Executive Vice President & India Head, Innover

How can AI enhance operational efficiency and innovation for enterprises?

Across industries, AI already has had a significant impact across the board, not just restricted to driving efficiencies or innovation and this has been made possible by bringing forth possibilities and scenarios that simply weren't viable before it's at-scale adoption. As per some estimates, over 65% of companies in India are actively adopting or experimenting with AI, highlighting its growing strategic significance.

By leveraging datasets across sources, historical ranges and past event patterns, by using AI – we are now so much better at aspects like predicting failure rates of an operations value chain, bubbling up potentially fraudulent transactions at a financial institution, building hyper-personalized digital journeys or even throwing up scenarios for strategic planning for executive leadership teams as they make budgeting provisions for the future. In customer service, AI-powered bots equipped with natural language processing resolve common issues autonomously and seamlessly route complex queries to human agents.

Generative AI (Gen AI), a relatively recent groundbreaking branch of AI, is accelerating these advancements, powering unprecedented operational efficiency and innovation. The rate of experimentation and prototyping has received a massive boost with the advent of agentic solutions, allowing the idea-to-value cycle shrinking even further, enabling innovation to rapidly scale out of the PoC (Proof of Concept) realm.

The integration of AI with Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has further propelled enterprises into the realm of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA), automating repetitive tasks and freeing employees for strategic, value-added roles. This efficiency boost not only reduces costs but also fosters a culture of innovation. Additionally, AI enables hyper-personalization, leveraging rich customer data to deliver tailored engagements that drive brand loyalty and satisfaction.

At Innover, an AI-first digital engineering firm, this transformation is driven by Innferre™, our Gen AI foundational bot. Innferre™ leverages Domain Data Encapsulation (DDE), Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) and Knowledge Graph frameworks to deliver highly accurate, context-aware responses by integrating structured, external data into generative outputs. Innferre™ is primed to serve across industries driving significant enhancement in operational capabilities and propelling innovation.

What strategies should organizations employ to embed AI into core business processes for faster decision-making?

To embed AI meaningfully into core processes, organizations must focus on strategic alignment and phased implementation. This involves prioritizing three key strategies: aligning AI initiatives with business objectives, investing in scalable data infrastructure, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and agility.

Align AI with Business Objectives

A successful AI strategy starts with identifying business areas where AI can create the most value—whether by optimizing supply chains, enhancing customer engagement, or improving financial forecasting. Piloting AI initiatives in targeted functions allows organizations to assess their impact before scaling. By aligning AI with strategic goals, companies can deploy AI in ways that directly support business outcomes, enabling faster and more relevant decision-making.

Invest in the Right Data Infrastructure

AI thrives on data. Developing a robust, scalable and secure data ecosystem is essential to ensure the right foundation layer for building enterprise-grade AI capabilities that integrates data across silos and formats, making it accessible and actionable. Advanced tools like Knowledge Graphs and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) further enhance data quality, providing AI models with richer, contextually relevant information. This approach not only boosts AI accuracy but also builds trust in AI-driven insights among decision-makers. At the same time, there needs to be a strong focus on robust governance around data usage, privacy and security that overcomes vulnerabilities across the lifecycle of an implementation.

Foster a Culture of Learning and Agility

Embedding AI into core processes requires a culture of experimentation and adaptability that not just allows but encourages team members to fundamentally re-think their baseline assumptions and constraints in the pursuit of creating sustainable value. Leaders should encourage the formation of cross-functional teams that are

continuously challenging themselves and each other with the ever-expanding toolset or AI-enabled capabilities and its implications. Promoting continuous learning ensures that teams remain relevant and are capable of leveraging AI effectively to help themselves and their organizations thrive in today's dynamic business landscape.

Through our extensive experience of working with practitioners across functions, roles and industries, Innover's AI Framework includes a suite of resources, such as solution frameworks, reference architectures, IP-powered accelerators, responsible design methodologies, and industry-specific applications. These resources empower organizations to embed AI into core business processes, driving faster decision-making, innovation, resulting in sustainable growth.

What role does digital transformation play in enhancing customer experiences and data management?

As more and more customer engagement journeys migrate to the digital realm either completely or the boundaries between physical and digital become harder to demarcate, it is imperative for companies to have both the strategy and execution aspects of digital transformation figured out for their own unique context. Consistently delivering world-class connected experiences for its customers, requires enterprises to have a strong focus on data management across the business value chain combined with an underlying agile, yet secure digital architecture which allows for a high degree of personalization across all the brand touchpoints.

Strong data management foundation allows enterprises to keep innovating through a culture of rapid experimentation, followed by an accelerated adoption at-scale model for driving real on-ground impact. Given that no business today operates in vacuum, digital and data initiatives today have to be purpose-built for thriving in a connected ecosystem. For example, a key enabler for our clients in their journey to drive real-time customer engagement is LEAP®, our award-winning Advanced Analytics platform. LEAP® seamlessly integrates structured and unstructured data from diverse sources to create secure, enterprise-compliant pipelines, accelerating the data journey. Using advanced statistical and Machine Learning algorithms, it transforms raw data into actionable insights. Its modular, scalable, and technology-agnostic design ensures adaptability at any stage of the analytics journey. In conjunction, Innover's AI-powered DataOps platform simplifies the data lifecycle with the core DevOps principles—automation, continuous integration, and collaboration. It streamlines data workflows, enhances team collaboration, and ensures data accuracy, consistency, and accessibility across the organization.

Further, Innover's pre-built industry accelerators enable faster deployment, delivering accurate results with minimal iterations. These features drive tangible business outcomes, enhancing customer experiences and fostering deeper engagement.

How can businesses assess their AI readiness and unlock the full potential of AI adoption?

For businesses aiming to unlock AI's full potential, assessing AI readiness is a critical first step. AI readiness transcends technology, requiring a holistic approach that integrates business strategy, data infrastructure, governance, and organizational culture.

1. Develop a Comprehensive AI Strategy

A clear and actionable AI strategy aligned with core business objectives is crucial for successful adoption. This involves identifying high-impact AI use cases—whether to improve customer engagement, optimize operations, or enhance product offerings. Leadership buy-in is essential to ensure AI is embraced as an organization-wide priority, rather than being siloed within specific departments.

At Innover, we adopt a top-down approach to AI readiness, with leaders actively sharing their knowledge and driving AI literacy across teams. Supporting this strategy is Innover's AI Center of Excellence, a hub dedicated to tracking emerging advancements and fostering innovation. This center enables us to design and deliver future-ready AI strategies for our organization and esteemed clients.

2. Establish Robust AI Governance

Strong governance is the backbone of successful AI initiatives. Effective AI governance ensures responsible management through clear guidelines and standards that address key areas like, Data transparency, Security, Bias prevention, Regulatory compliance. By embedding ethical considerations and accountability into every AI implementation, organizations can build trust in AI-driven insights while ensuring alignment with evolving regulations.

3. Ensure Data Readiness and Quality

The success of AI is intrinsically tied to the quality of data it processes. Businesses must ensure their data is accurate, accessible, and purpose-fit for AI applications. This requires robust data governance practices to manage compliance and improve quality continuously. Enterprises should regularly assess systems, enhance data integrity, and establish proper storage solutions to support seamless AI integration.

4. Build AI Literacy and Upskill Teams

AI adoption requires a workforce that understands its principles, capabilities, and best practices. By investing in AI education and upskilling, organizations can cultivate a culture of innovation where employees are equipped to integrate AI insights into decision-making.

At Innover, we prioritize fostering AI literacy among our teams. Our tailored learning programs are designed to educate employees on the scope and applications of cutting-edge Gen AI, enabling them to harness its transformative potential effectively.

What are the critical success factors for organizations looking to implement AI responsibly and at scale?

Implementing AI responsibly and at scale offers organizations the opportunity to harness transformative potential, yet doing so requires a careful balance between innovation and ethical integrity. At its core, responsible AI implementation begins with establishing a governance framework that ensures transparency, accountability, and privacy protection. These elements not only mitigate the risks of discrimination or unintended biases but also cultivate trust among users and stakeholders, making AI an asset rather than a liability.

Data integrity is equally crucial; AI models are as reliable as the data they are trained on. Organizations need high-quality, representative datasets to create unbiased and accurate models. Effective data governance practices—such as ongoing validation, cleansing, and secure data management—support this objective, enhancing both AI performance and compliance with privacy regulations. By upholding these standards, businesses can avoid potential pitfalls, fostering an environment where AI decisions are both reliable and secure. At Innover, the approach includes monitoring AI applications to prevent biases and inaccuracies that could impact decision-making. For instance, in customer service applications, bias in AI algorithms can have unintended consequences, so continuous monitoring is essential. Innover's use of human-in-the-loop oversight with auto-agents—where AI systems involve human verification for complex cases—has proven effective for managing risks and ensuring compliance.

Equally important is transparency, as users expect AI decisions to be clear and understandable. Through a commitment to accountability and continuous refinement, organizations can ensure that AI systems remain adaptable and in line with evolving ethical and regulatory standards.

How can companies navigate digital transformation while maintaining data security and addressing emerging cybersecurity risks?

As digital transformation accelerates, robust data security and cybersecurity resilience are crucial for safeguarding sensitive information and driving sustainable growth. Increased interconnectedness and cross-function or cross-company data flow have the potential to heighten vulnerabilities, necessitating cybersecurity strategies

seamlessly integrated with digital initiatives to protect data, foster trust, and enable informed decision-making. By building a reliable and secure data foundation, businesses can confidently pursue AI-driven transformations, ensuring both operational efficiency and robust protection against evolving threats.

A secure digital transformation also hinges on a security-conscious organizational culture. Educating teams on cybersecurity best practices, alongside transparent and accountable governance, empowers employees to recognize and manage risks effectively. This integrated approach to data security and governance enables companies to drive digital transformation confidently, ensuring that innovation and security remain aligned with evolving industry standards.

What are Innover's plans for leveraging global expertise to drive future innovation and transformation?

Being a truly global firm, Innover has the advantage of being able to stay at the bleeding-edge of the latest innovations and technology disruptions, while also benefitting from our rich set of customer engagements across industry domains and geographical regions. This global footprint allows us to provide a wide range of internal mobility opportunities for our talent pool, and over the years several of our key strategic market-facing roles have been taken up by 'Innovators' who have gone from strength to strength in their association with Innover. With our plans to continue the talent growth focus across our multiple locations in India as well as globally, we are always on the lookout for top talent in our areas of focus.

In addition, Innover has invested in building strategic partnerships with educational institutions that not only help us with our talent needs, but also enables opportunities for joint research engagements to test new concepts and solution approaches that can have a big impact on our ability as a firm to provide better value for our clients.

Innover's Center of Excellence drives innovation with a focus on software product engineering, intelligent automation, data and Gen AI capabilities, which helps us accelerate the development of fit-for-purpose solutions for our client while also investing in keeping our talent pool abreast with the latest technologies, methodologies and the larger ecosystem innovations. Right from our inception, we have always been intentional in investing significantly on R&D – developing products and platforms that have had a huge role to play in our ability to accelerate value delivery for our clients, and providing them with flexible operating models.

