

# CIO strategy guide: Managing organizational impacts of generative AI



GenAI presents a wholesale change to how we think about and carry out our work, making it critical for CIOs to get ahead of its use in the enterprise.

## Introduction

Generative AI (GenAI) has brought us to a technology inflection point, thanks to its advancement of the human/machine relationship. Its ability to rapidly process large data sets has delighted users as they prompt these solutions, for example, to create text, generate images, and perform basic computing tasks.

Individuals and businesses alike have demonstrated great enthusiasm for using it, causing rapid growth and investment.

Still need convincing? Consider that 92% of organizations are exploring, piloting, or implementing GenAI solutions and cite great expectations for the technology<sup>1</sup>:

- **58%** believe that GenAI will play a role in improving employee productivity.
- **55%** expect it to create better business outcomes, such as improved employee experiences and heightened innovation.
- **55%** believe that it enables employees to focus on value-adding tasks.

The majority (70%) of employees agree, saying they would delegate as much work as possible to artificial intelligence to lighten their workload.

Organizations have generated — and continue to create — a wealth of data that is surpassing our ability as humans to process it. Between emails, texts, and apps, it's easy to be overwhelmed by a constant barrage of red dot notifications. Managing all these inputs is distracting and detracts from the truly creative, value-added work we all aspire to (see “Obstacles to innovation” box).

So how exactly can GenAI make a difference in the way we work? Although AI-related technologies — including machine learning (ML) and natural-language processing (NLP) — are not new, the models underlying GenAI solutions have made significant leaps and can now process enormous data sets and respond to an individual's prompt within seconds.

The capacity and speed of GenAI platforms and tools are changing how we find and use information. Large language models (LLMs) can seamlessly unify enterprise data across applications, putting contextualized information at people's fingertips within seconds to help streamline daily tasks such as:

- Summarizing meetings
- Creating drafts of proposals or contracts
- Creating data visualizations
- Organizing your inbox
- Formatting documents
- Automating workflows

Yes, GenAI is worthy of the buzz. Which only increases the urgency for CIOs to get ahead of its rapid implementation curve. Software vendors are already incorporating GenAI functionality into their products and services. And your employees are likely already using the technology to complement their work, which means that new types of vulnerabilities and risks are being introduced into your organization.

This e-book is a guide to help IT leaders manage the implementation of GenAI up, down, within, and across the organization. It identifies the challenges you'll face and some of the guidance you'll need in order to operationalize GenAI — in a safe, secure, and value-generating way — to enhance the way people work.

## Obstacles to innovation

**Most employees (68%)** today say they lack focus time in their workday.

Their ability to innovate is limited:

**62%**  
spent too much time searching  
for work-related information

**8.8 hours/week:**  
spent on email by the most  
substantial of email users

**7.5 hours/week:**  
spent in meetings by the heaviest meeting users

Source: Microsoft “Work Trend Index Annual Report: Will AI Fix Work?”

<sup>1</sup>Foundry, “AI Priorities Study 2023”

<sup>2</sup>Microsoft, “Work Trend Index Annual Report: Will AI Fix Work?” May 9, 2023

# Table of contents

- 4 Chapter 1:**  
Managing up: Strategy, execution, and business outcomes
- 5 Chapter 2:**  
Managing down: GenAI and the employee experience
- 7 Chapter 3:**  
Managing within: GenAI and the IT experience
- 9 Chapter 4:**  
Managing across: Building a foundation for broad adoption of GenAI
- 10 Chapter 5:**  
Next steps for successful GenAI adoption



# Chapter 1:

## Managing up: Strategy, execution, and business outcomes

GenAI will massively change how work gets done, which presents CIOs with an opportunity to enhance their influence as change-makers. Because GenAI is not just another technology rollout. Yes, it does involve the usual planning, testing, integration, and deployment, but IT leaders will need to emphasize extra layers of strategic tasks such as collaboration, communication, and change management. Successful adoption will rely on an organization-wide understanding of how GenAI reshapes tasks and processes, as well as the cognitive skills people will require to create successful outcomes.

To define and refine a GenAI strategy, CIOs need to closely partner with senior leaders across business functions — collaborating on the goals of GenAI — as well as recognize its potential pain points. Key strategic considerations include:

- **The achievable business outcomes from GenAI.** Productivity will improve, enabling employees to work more strategically. Where are the opportunities for greater business value? Understand where you can make the most impact, such as cost efficiencies in reduced IT or licensing costs, risk mitigation, or faster decision-making (see the “Business value opportunities” box).
- **Security and data privacy.** Which individuals, groups, or teams have access to mission-critical and sensitive data, and where is that data stored? You’ll need to refine your

data management strategy, revisiting access policies, data governance structures, privacy controls, and the general data life cycle from generation to destruction.

- **Metrics that provide a holistic view of value creation and return on investment.** This will consist of both hard and soft metrics. For example, do you want to measure how GenAI affects work quality and quantity as well as its speed of delivery? How will it affect employee morale, recruitment, and retention? Also factor in the cost of doing nothing — whether that might affect, for example, competitive advantage or the ability to deliver consistent customer service.
- **Cultural and operational hurdles to GenAI implementation.** Which groups might be most resistant to the technology’s deployment? Will certain individuals and/or business units need new data resources, training, skills, or infrastructure? Think about which teams can accelerate their innovation efforts with GenAI use as well as areas where you might encounter pushback.

With alignment across senior leadership, you can then build a business case that demonstrates a clear path to business objectives and improvements while always connecting back to the user experience.

## Business value opportunities

A recent study among 18,100 workers around the world asked where GenAI could have a positive impact on their job performance:

- **75% Salespeople** cited the ability to identify sales opportunities.
- **70% Customer service** cited the ability to intelligently route issues.
- **73% Finance** said that it simplifies financial reporting.

# Chapter 2:

## Managing down: GenAI and the employee experience

Given the attention to and excitement about artificial intelligence, CIOs need to manage employee expectations and experiences while addressing a mixed bag of uncertainty, cultural fears, and anticipation.

GenAI tools such as Microsoft Copilot are not just another software rollout. Work patterns will significantly change. Job functions and roles will be affected as people elevate their capabilities and streamline their workload. IT and business leaders will need to be intentional about how these tools are deployed to make the most of their capabilities to increase productivity and creativity and transform business processes.

### Help employees think like managers

Leaders will need to nurture and emphasize skills such as intellectual curiosity and analytical judgment (see the “New skills for a new way of working” illustration). Individuals will need training to create effective GenAI prompts. At a higher and more critical level, they will also need to be coached to think like managers — because they will be delegating tasks to their GenAI “direct reports.”

Training programs will need to nurture a growth mindset. Over time employees will gain the capacity to rethink their job routines, which will reduce their work stress and boost time

savings. In addition, GenAI ideally will open their eyes to new career paths and job functions as well as strategic innovation opportunities for the business.

### Collaborate with organizational peers to create value messaging

CIOs can help with these mindset shifts by cascading messaging through functional leaders and business unit managers about the benefits of GenAI. Counter fears with specific examples of how GenAI can lessen people’s workload and deliver positive impact to their job.

CIOs should also collaborate with their C-suite peers to prioritize “quick wins” or ways that employees can rapidly understand the value of GenAI for their work life. For example, encourage individuals to experiment with prompts that can ease their work burdens or demonstrate lightheartedness such as:

- > Summarize the transcript of a virtual meeting
- > Write an acceptance speech suitable for an employee-of-the-year award

## Proof points

Early users of Microsoft Copilot, which integrates LLM capabilities within Microsoft 365<sup>4</sup>, are already capturing benefits:

- 70%** say Copilot has made them more productive.
- 75%** say that it saves them time finding information.
- 85%** say Copilot has helped them create a good first draft of a document faster.
- 68%** cite its help in improving the quality of their work.
- 77%** say now that they’re using Copilot, they don’t want to give it up.

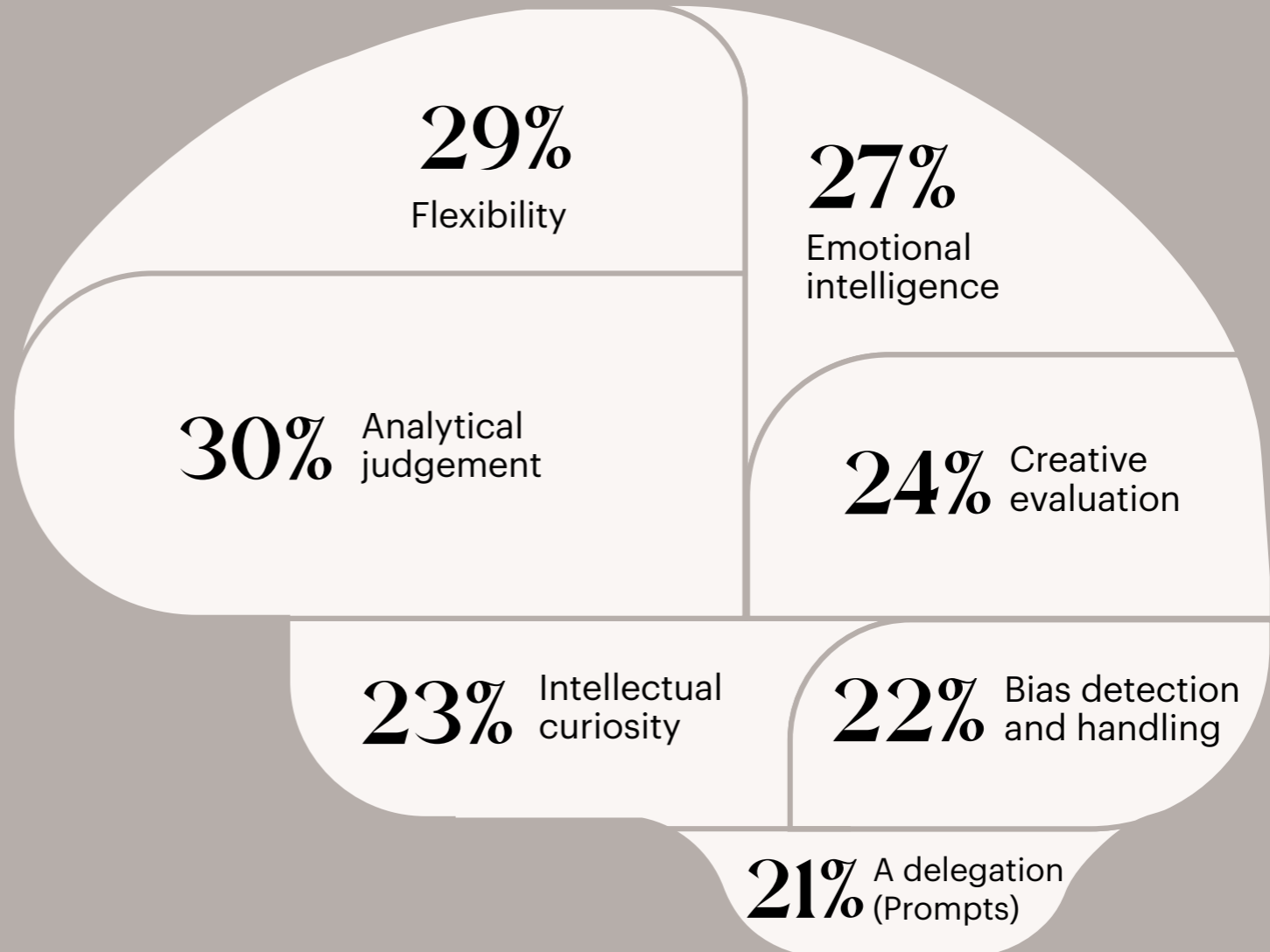
<sup>4</sup>Microsoft, “Work Trend Index Special Report: What Can Copilot’s Earliest Users Teach Us About Generative AI at Work?” November 15, 2023

### Maintain ongoing and easily accessible training

Be prepared for ongoing, yet snackable, training. Many employees already have skill sets that are useful for GenAI — such as the ability to prioritize tasks. Others will need to learn how to securely share documents in these new environments. Provide a variety of resources, such as fact sheets, videos, infographics, and trivia quizzes, in order to encourage retention and engagement.

Manage change by communicating the need for ongoing feedback. Stay connected to the end user experience by regularly gathering feedback and data on what's working and what's not.

## New skills for a new way of working



Source: Microsoft

# Chapter 3:

## Managing within: GenAI and the IT experience

GenAI will have a significant impact on the IT organization itself. CIOs may find that IT teams have their own fears or resistance to the ways the technology will change their roles.

Successful GenAI deployments will rely on many of the traditional skill sets found in IT organizations, such as integration, security, support, and devops. Existing personnel, with some additional training, may be able to quickly get up to speed with GenAI.

Also, keep in mind that IT support teams will likely find themselves fielding new employee queries that are specific to GenAI tool use.

As with the broader workforce, it's important to emphasize that transforming IT processes will open up new growth opportunities for IT teams. Work with your staff members to assess how they can use GenAI capabilities to augment IT processes, such as assistance with code writing, rapidly finding technical documentation, or summarizing data about infrastructure or application health.

Prepare for this change with an assessment of existing IT skill sets, and then match them with potential new roles as well as opportunities for education and training. One recent

survey found a variety of in-demand IT skills related to GenAI,<sup>5</sup> including:

- NLP experience, including text classification, language modeling, key extraction, and more: Specific roles include data scientists, machine learning engineers, and software engineers and developers.
- Machine learning/deep learning model tuning skills: This involves creating parameters for the learning models for performance and efficiency. Engineers with machine learning and data expertise, AI scientists, and data analysts are relevant roles.
- Chatbot expertise, including individuals who can test, integrate, and analyze chatbot services: As GenAI use grows across the enterprise, these professionals can better customize chatbots to meet the needs of employees as well as regularly manage and maintain these services.

## Prepare IT support teams for change

- **Give early access to IT admins** so they can familiarize themselves with the solution's interface, features, and capabilities.
- **Pinpoint areas** where users may need extra training in the organizational rollout.
- **Strategize** where new support tickets may arise, such as requests for more training or privacy questions.
- **Prepare** to regularly revisit and audit access rights and permissions to ensure that security remains a priority.

<sup>5</sup>CIO.com, "[10 most in-demand generative AI skills](#)," September 29, 2023

It's important to look at the entire data management life cycle. Key steps include:

- **Review user settings and permissions for file sharing.** GenAI tools will typically inherit established user policies and leverage existing data sensitivity labels, making this the ideal time to coach employees through the right sharing settings.
- **Review data access permissions.** The IT organization should apply the principles of “just enough” and least-privilege access across your digital estate. Collaborate with line-of-business leaders to ensure that the right files are restricted and the correct data loss prevention policies are in place, based on specific employee, team, and endpoint needs.
- **Revisit data storage practices.** Your data strategy requires visibility across your entire data ecosystem. GenAI will enable employees to share organizational data, so review how cloud providers store your data and ensure alignment with regional regulations. Be sure that your data policies are consistent between GenAI solutions and the locations where your data is stored and processed.
- **Examine data retention and e-discovery policies.** GenAI activity is potentially discoverable, so also ensure that the right compliance controls for data sharing are in place.
- **Review software licensing and the need for application updates.** Are your CRM, productivity solutions, and other systems up to date? For example, your third-party travel system may provide a great use case for GenAI, helping users better coordinate expense reports or business travel scheduling. However, if it hasn't been updated, it may not easily integrate with your GenAI tool.

There's a lot to tackle, especially if your staff is stretched thin. So identify partners, suppliers, software vendors, and system integrators that can support the IT organization and provide best-practice recommendations.





# Chapter 4:

## Managing across: Building a foundation for broad adoption of GenAI

A successful GenAI rollout requires a more deliberate approach than traditional software deployments. Microsoft Copilot, for example, will have a profound impact on people, data, and processes. Consider these four factors to create a flywheel effect that powers adoption:

1

### **Be programmatic about the rollout.**

Identify at least one use case where Copilot will quickly deliver a tangible benefit, and be specific about objectives. For example, if customer service is your starting point, flesh out the tasks where Copilot can make a difference, and then set intentions such as reducing incident resolution time.

2

### **Identify champions who can lead rollout and adoption.**

Work with line-of-business leaders — such as in Sales, Finance, and Human Resources — to determine where Copilot can make the most impact in terms of optimizing workflows, processes, roles, and functions. Ask them to use Copilot for a week to understand its benefits and where it will make the most difference for their teams. Then suggest that these individuals lead training sessions to encourage adoption.

3

### **Prioritize the skills needed to help individuals build new work habits.**

Yes, they will need product training, but consider how employees' processes and tasks will change due to GenAI. Work with team leaders and champions to understand pain points that can be eased and the need for individuals to work like managers, delegating tasks to their Copilot assistant.

4

### **Revisit your data management processes, and ensure that data is in order.**

Copilot inherits existing Microsoft 365 access and security permissions, so prioritize a data governance review and conduct a thorough data audit.

In addition, think broadly about GenAI's impact across the organization and the tool sets in use. Copilot can make a difference for every employee in every role. Ideate with peers to reimagine and innovate workflows, app development, communications, and much more.



# Chapter 5: Next steps for successful GenAI adoption

As your GenAI journey progresses, keep these three key elements in mind:

1

## 1. Build a foundation for success.

Get your platforms AI-ready. For example, make sure your cloud security settings are up to date and that you're using the latest version of devices, operating systems, and third-party apps. Seek to integrate productivity, security, collaboration, and management solutions to enable the best-possible employee experiences with GenAI.

2

## 2. Augment people skills with intelligence and automation.

Beyond the basics of using GenAI tools such as Copilot to recap meetings and draft documents, strategize how the technology can be used to transform entire work processes. GenAI is shifting the traditional view of human/machine interactions, yet humans must be the focal point. AI and automation ease mundane or repetitive tasks, freeing up individuals to use their cognitive skills for innovation. Incorporate and personalize GenAI tools to nurture these skills.

3

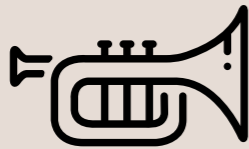
## 3. Improve as you go.

How will you know if your GenAI deployment is successful? Build in capabilities to monitor and measure each use case. Seek a platform that collates these metrics and delivers actionable insights that foster continuous improvement.



More than anything else, be inspired by the possibilities of Copilot and other GenAI solutions. Encourage people across your organization to do the same by taking GenAI for a test spin to see its possibilities. Here are some prompt ideas, both whimsical and practical:

## For fun:



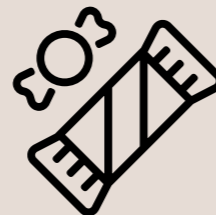
Explain generative AI in the style of a jazz composition.



Create a music playlist for my antivirus training session.



Write a vendor negotiation email in Jedi code.



Give me a list of tasty snacks for my next IT staff meeting.

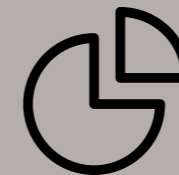
## For real-world practice:



Explain generative AI in simple terms.



Prepare a business case presentation for enterprise adoption of GenAI.



Develop a data governance framework to secure data assets.



Provide cost-effective strategies to optimize my IT budget.

# Final words

Microsoft Copilot is accelerating the enterprise into the world of modern work. But it is not your typical IT rollout. To increase its chances for success in your organization, take the time to understand the differences; manage all the key stakeholders; and create a thorough and thoughtful development, deployment, and management strategy.

**Learn more about capturing Copilot's potential by visiting [Copilot for Work | Microsoft 365](#).**

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sales@3cloudsolutions.com // 888-88-AZURE // 3cloudsolutions.com