PXB ECOSYSTEM™

AI-M FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

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AI CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

THE MISSING ORGANISATIONAL BLUEPRINT



WHY COORDINATION ALONE WILL NOT DELIVER AI VALUE

HOW PXB CONNECTS WORK, HUMAN JUDGEMENT, CAPACITY AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE



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Does an AI Centre of Excellence Need an Organisational Blueprint?

Why coordination is not enough—and how PXB connects AI strategy, work design, human judgement, workforce capacity and business value

Tess Hilson-Greener | Founder, AI-M Foundation | 8 November 2026

The case for an AI Centre of Excellence is becoming stronger. Organisations need a way to coordinate a growing portfolio of tools, agents, use cases, data, platforms, standards and controls. But coordination is only one part of the problem.

An AI CoE can manage the AI portfolio. It does not automatically redesign the organisation that must absorb AI. It cannot, by structure alone, determine how work changes, who retains decision authority, what human accountability remains, whether new workloads are sustainable, or how technology investment becomes enterprise value.

The central argument: an AI CoE can coordinate AI, while PXB provides the missing organisational design architecture that connects people, decisions, technology and business value.

1. What is an AI CoE?

An AI Centre of Excellence is a central, hybrid or federated operating structure created to coordinate AI strategy, expertise, use cases, platforms, standards and governance. It commonly brings together technology, data, cybersecurity, legal, risk, compliance and business representatives. IBM describes the CoE as a hub for expertise, best practice and resources that helps align AI activity with strategic goals. [1]

Microsoft identifies three common operating models. It also cautions that many organisations blend more than one model because delivery patterns, maturity and risk differ across the enterprise. [2]

Table 1. Three AI CoE operating models

Model	Where delivery and governance sit	Main strength	Principal design risk
Centralised	One central team sets standards, builds or approves solutions, and monitors production.	Consistency, control and a clear enterprise view.	The centre becomes a bottleneck; business ownership and local innovation weaken.
Hybrid	The centre sets standards and provides expertise; central and local teams share delivery.	Balances enterprise guardrails with local speed and domain knowledge.	Shared ownership creates coordination complexity, duplication and stalled decisions if interfaces are unclear.
Federated	Business units own delivery and outcomes; the centre provides standards and governs by exception.	Scales through distributed ownership and parallel delivery.	Standards drift, uneven capability and limited visibility across independent teams.

Source: adapted from Microsoft Learn. The appropriate model depends on maturity, risk, regulation and the readiness of business teams—not simply the existing organisation chart. [2]

The structural choice matters, but it does not answer the deeper organisational questions: what work should change, what work should remain human, who decides, who is accountable, what capacity is released, and where value is expected to appear.

2. How many AI CoEs have been established?

There is no global register of AI Centres of Excellence, so a reliable absolute number does not exist. The strongest answer is to use prevalence evidence and explain that surveys use different definitions, samples and thresholds.

Table 2. What the prevalence evidence tells us

Evidence	Sample or scope	Reported position	What it means
IBM Institute for Business Value, 2025	Global organisational research on AI infrastructure and readiness.	38% had established an AI CoE.	A formal CoE is no longer unusual, but most organisations in this study had not yet established one.
Wavestone UK Tech Leaders Survey, 2026	200 senior UK IT leaders; fieldwork in late 2025.	24% had a dedicated AI Centre of Excellence.	Within UK technology functions, dedicated CoEs were present but far from universal.
IDC survey, published 2026	894 organisations; IDC Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending Survey, August 2025.	25% had a CoE working with functions against a C-suite-prioritised roadmap; 33% had a CoE working with business units on use-case roadmaps without deliberate enterprise prioritisation.	58% reported one of two CoE arrangements, but only part of that group had explicit enterprise prioritisation.

These percentages must not be added or averaged: they describe different populations and definitions. The defensible conclusion is that AI CoEs are becoming a mainstream enterprise structure, while their maturity, authority and scope vary considerably. [3–5]

3. Why an AI CoE needs PXB

An AI CoE can coordinate tools, models, use cases and standards. That does not automatically create an organisation capable of absorbing AI.

Organisational absorption means that work, roles, decision rights, capability, capacity, governance and measures of value change together. Without an enterprise design architecture, the CoE may inherit:

- Disconnected departmental pilots and duplicated investment.
- Conflicting business priorities and multiple local definitions of value.
- Undefined decision authority and unclear human oversight.
- Roles that change through practice without formal job or workflow redesign.
- Hidden capability, verification and capacity pressures.
- Governance treated as policy rather than embedded in everyday decisions.
- An overloaded central transformation team expected to reconcile competing demands.

This is the problem illustrated in the Fragmented AI Operating Model: local optimisation does not automatically create enterprise coherence. A collection of technically successful initiatives can still produce duplicated work, incompatible priorities, unclear handoffs and weak accountability at enterprise level.

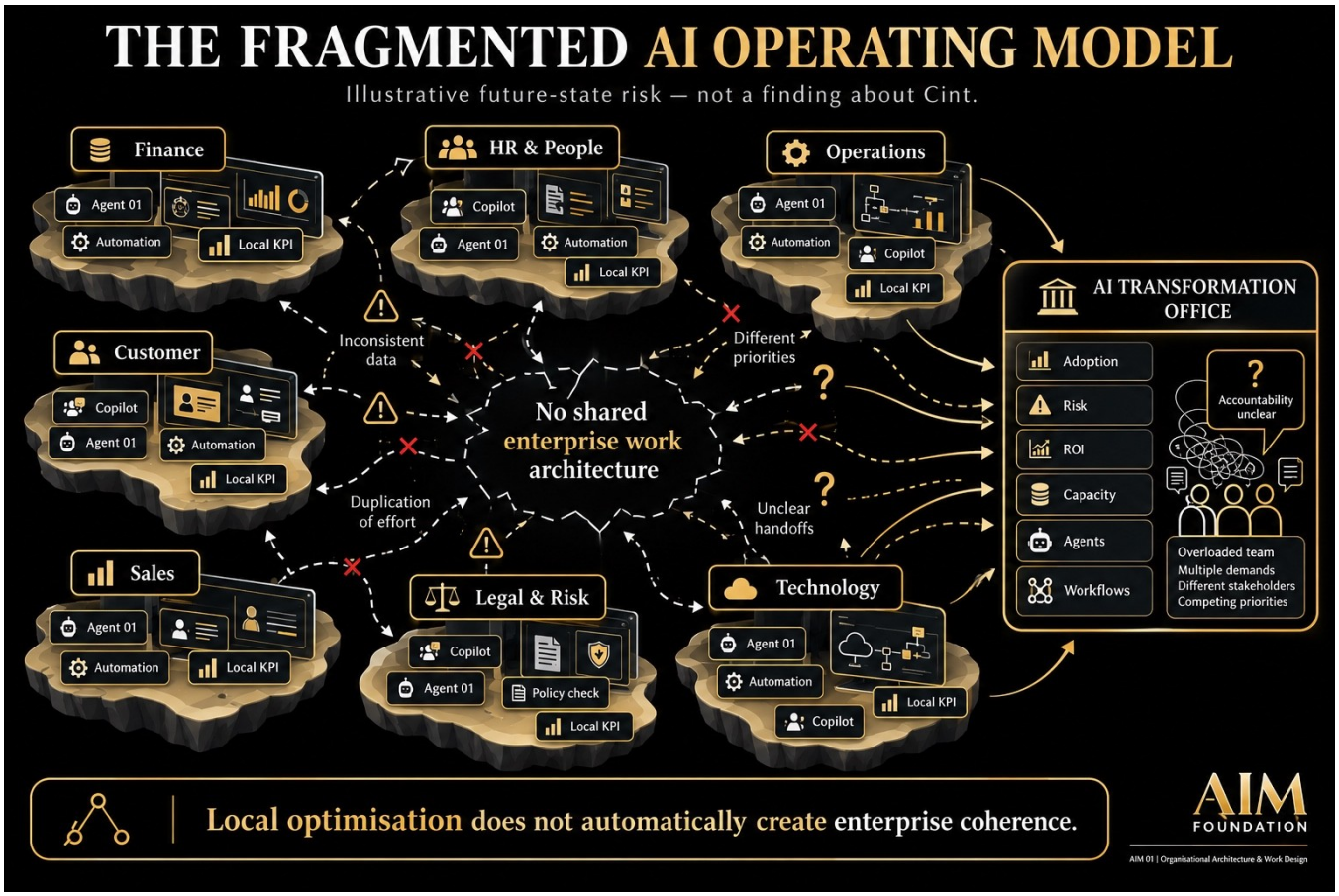


Figure 1. The Fragmented AI Operating Model: local optimisation does not automatically create enterprise coherence. © 2026 Tess Hilson-Greener / AI-M Foundation.

Table 3. The cost of introducing AI without redesigning the organisation

Before PXB	Risks and costs	After PXB
Disconnected AI pilots	Duplicated investment; pilots that do not scale; repeated procurement and learning costs.	A connected operating architecture with an enterprise portfolio view.
Siloed HR, technology and finance plans	Conflicting decisions, competing priorities and delayed benefits.	People, Experience and Business aligned through a common plan.
Unclear decision authority	Delay, rework, accountability gaps and unsafe reliance on AI outputs.	A visible Judgement Spine™ for authority, oversight and escalation.
Technology introduced before work is redesigned	Poor processes automated; hidden verification work; expensive retrofitting.	Work, roles, decisions and technology redesigned together.
Governance treated as policy	Ethical, legal and reputational exposure; controls bypassed in everyday work.	Governance embedded in decisions, workflows and operating routines.
Capacity assumed rather than measured	Overload, quality loss, capability debt and benefits that cannot be sustained.	Capacity Architecture™ makes workload, released capacity and reinvestment visible.

The cost is not limited to technology spend. It includes duplicated effort, delayed value, rework, verification, capability pressure, risk exposure and the cost of retrofitting organisational design after deployment.

4. How PXB completes the model

PXB is not a rival to the AI CoE. It is the organisational architecture the CoE can use to connect technical coordination with work design, human judgement, workforce capability and sustainable business value.

Table 4. How PXB completes the AI CoE model

AI CoE requirement	PXB design component	Organisational result
Understand how AI changes work	WorkScope™	Maps tasks, workflows, roles, interdependencies and handoffs before technology is scaled.
Define authority and human accountability	Judgement Spine™	Makes decision rights, human oversight, escalation and ultimate accountability visible.
Prepare and support the workforce	BREATHES™	Connects capability, employee experience, engagement, learning and adoption to the redesigned work.
Understand capability and productive capacity	Capacity Architecture™	Shows workload, verification effort, capability demand, capacity released and where that capacity is reinvested.
Connect investment to sustainable value	BALANCE™	Links productivity and efficiency to customer, risk, workforce, performance and sustainability outcomes.
Integrate the enterprise design	PXB Ecosystem™	Connects People, Experience and Business through a shared organisational architecture and common plan.
Make the design governable	PXB Stewardship™	Clarifies who owns the architecture, maintains decision integrity and coordinates change across functions.

The CoE remains responsible for AI-specific expertise, platforms and controls. PXB ensures those capabilities are anchored in the wider organisation rather than operating as a technical layer above it.

The missing design piece: the AI CoE coordinates AI activity; PXB connects that activity to the organisation that must make it useful, accountable and sustainable.

5. The business case—and its limits

The business case for a CoE is strongest where organisations face repeated pilots, growing vendor spend, inconsistent controls, scarce expertise, weak reuse, fragmented data and difficulty moving from experimentation to scale.

The evidence shows why coordination is attractive. Capgemini reported that 25% of 962 organisations exploring generative AI had a GenAI CoE or accelerator. In the wider study, 46% had established an AI governance policy, yet among those with a policy, 47% said employees seldom followed it; 47% also reported inconsistent governance across business functions. [6] A centre may improve consistency, but its existence is not proof that governance is embedded.

The value case is equally nuanced. The UK Government's 2026 survey found that AI adoption among UK businesses had doubled to 32%, with efficiency and productivity the main adoption driver for 71%. Among adopters, 71% reported workforce-productivity improvements, but 64% reported no immediate operating-cost effect, compared with 24% reporting reductions and 9% an increase. [7] Activity and perceived productivity do not automatically translate into captured financial value.

McKinsey's 2025 State of AI survey found that workflow redesign had the strongest association with EBIT impact among the 25 attributes tested. Yet only 21% of respondents reporting GenAI use said their organisations had fundamentally redesigned at least some workflows. [8] This is why an AI CoE needs an operating-model and work-design capability, not only a technology and governance mandate.

6. What should an AI CoE actually do?

A useful AI CoE creates common foundations and a repeatable route from idea to value. It should not absorb every decision or become the owner of every outcome.

Table 5. A practical division of responsibility

Capability	AI CoE leads	Business functions lead	PXB connects
Strategy and portfolio	Enterprise standards, intake, prioritisation method, portfolio visibility and reuse.	Business problems, outcome ownership, funding case and domain priorities.	Common enterprise architecture and cross-functional dependencies.
Technology and data	Approved platforms, architecture patterns, security baseline, model lifecycle, data and agent registry.	Domain data meaning, workflow requirements and operational ownership.	Technology choices with work, role and decision redesign.
Governance and assurance	Risk tiering, release gates, technical testing, monitoring and audit evidence.	Contextual controls, human oversight, service standards and incident response.	Decision rights, accountability, escalation and ethical judgement.
People and capability	AI literacy standards, specialist communities, reusable learning and guidance.	Role-specific capability, manager readiness, adoption and employee support.	Capability, experience, capacity, job architecture and workforce transition.
Value realisation	Comparable measures, portfolio reporting, cost visibility and benefit-assurance rhythm.	Operational performance, customer outcomes, quality and benefit ownership.	Productivity, capacity, workforce and business value in one measurement system.

The centre owns the shared foundations. The functions continue to own the work and its outcomes. PXB provides the connective architecture between them.

The most mature design is likely to evolve. Early in adoption, scarce expertise, high-risk use cases and immature controls may justify centralisation. As platforms, guardrails and business capability improve, delivery can move outward while the CoE concentrates on standards, enablement, assurance, reuse and exceptions. [2]

7. How should the CoE be measured?

CoEs are easily measured by what is visible: use cases received, pilots launched, users trained, tools approved and agents deployed. These are useful operating measures, but they do not establish whether AI has improved the organisation.

Table 6. A balanced AI CoE scorecard

Measurement layer	Useful measures	Question the measure should answer
Portfolio and delivery	Time from idea to decision; pilots stopped or scaled; reuse; time to production; cost by use case.	Are resources moving toward the strongest enterprise opportunities?
Work and service	Cycle time; quality; error and rework; handoff reduction; customer or employee experience.	Has the work improved, or has AI simply been added to the existing process?
Decision and governance	Decision quality; human-review coverage; escalations; incidents; auditability; control effectiveness.	Are authority, oversight and accountability working in practice?
People and capacity	Role clarity; capability readiness; verification workload; capacity released and reinvested; employee experience.	Can the workforce absorb and sustain the change without hidden capability debt?
Business value	Revenue, cost, risk, resilience, productivity, service outcomes and realised—not projected—benefits.	Is AI creating measurable and durable enterprise value?

Adoption, logins and licence utilisation may indicate reach; they do not show whether work, decisions, capacity or business performance improved.

IDC's 2026 publication supports the move toward mixed measures: 47% of 903 organisations said they had added structured tracking using technical and business indicators, and 31% had introduced formal business measures such as ROI or operational KPIs. [5] The next step is to connect those measures to workforce and organisational outcomes, not report them in separate dashboards.

8. The pressure to adopt

The CoE will often be asked to accelerate adoption. That creates a risk if speed, tool use or licence utilisation become substitutes for useful work.

GoTo and Workplace Intelligence surveyed 2,500 global workers and IT leaders in 2026. Sixty per cent of employees felt pressured to use AI to increase productivity; 47% said AI use was considered in performance reviews; 31% reported unspoken pressure to trust AI and keep quiet about mistakes; and 55% said they did not always double-check AI outputs, including high-stakes work. [9] These findings make human judgement, speaking-up routes and safe escalation design issues—not simply training topics.

Deloitte's 2026 survey of 25,000 UK workers found that half of GenAI users reported no time saving. Among those who did save time, around half used it to do more of the same work and 27% used at least some of it for personal tasks. Fifty-two per cent said losing the tool would make no difference to their ability to do their job. [10] That is not an argument against AI. It is evidence that access and adoption are not the same as work redesign or value realisation.

The CoE therefore needs permission to stop low-value initiatives, challenge inflated productivity assumptions and distinguish tool activity from enterprise improvement.

9. What changes for HR and other functions?

AI adoption changes work before many organisations formally change jobs. Tasks move between people and systems, verification work grows, decision influence shifts, managers inherit new responsibilities, and informal expectations appear in performance conversations. If HR enters only at the training or communication stage, much of the organisational design has already been decided.

HR should therefore be involved in the AI portfolio before deployment decisions become job architecture by default. Its contribution includes:

- Analysing how tasks, workflows, roles and handoffs will change.
- Updating job architecture, role profiles, spans, performance expectations and career pathways.
- Defining manager capability for human–AI work and AI-influenced decisions.
- Assessing workload, verification effort, capacity and capability debt.
- Designing workforce transitions, consultation, learning and employee support.
- Protecting employee voice, speaking-up routes, inclusion and fair access to opportunity.

Skills England's 2026 evidence reinforces this need. It found that AI capability is often developed informally, that many organisations remain at an early or intermediate stage, and that effective upskilling must be practical, contextualised, integrated and sustainable. [11] Training should follow the design of work; it cannot compensate for a role, process or accountability model that remains unclear.

Finance, risk, legal, operations, data and technology have equally important contributions. The answer is not to move ownership of AI from one silo to another. It is to create a common plan in which each function can see the same work architecture, decision rights, capability demands, risks, costs and measures of value.

10. Recommended design: build the capability, question the box

The starting question should not be, "Where should we put the AI CoE?" It should be, "What enterprise capability is missing, and what is the lightest structure that can provide it?"

1. Define the coordination problem. Identify where pilots, standards, platforms, risks, data, skills and measures are fragmented.
2. Map the enterprise work architecture. Use WorkScope™ to examine workflows, roles, handoffs and dependencies before scaling technology.
3. Make decision authority visible. Use the Judgement Spine™ to define AI influence, human oversight, escalation and ultimate accountability.
4. Choose the CoE model by maturity and risk. Centralise high-risk foundations and scarce expertise; federate delivery only where business teams can own the full lifecycle.
5. Keep outcome ownership with the business. The centre enables and assures; functions remain accountable for service, work, customer and workforce outcomes.
6. Measure capability, capacity and value together. Use Capacity Architecture™ and BALANCE™ to test whether time, cost and productivity gains are real, sustainable and reinvested.
7. Design the CoE to evolve. Review its mandate, decision rights and structure as guardrails mature and delivery capability moves into the enterprise.



Figure 2. Start small, build the foundations, scale up: a phased route to an AI-centric operating model. © 2026 AI-M Foundation.

11. How PXB supports implementation

A recommended design only creates value if it can be implemented. PXB advice is organised around three connected moves, so that business, technology and people decisions are made together from the start rather than reconciled after the pilots have launched.

Shape the operating model. Define how the organisation needs to change, and how work, roles and workforce capacity change as AI is introduced.

Mobilise the organisation. Build AI fluency across the workforce and fund the productivity scale-up, so that adoption is resourced rather than assumed.

Execute in measured phases. Move in stages, with a clear view of how released capacity will be used, so that each phase can be measured before the next begins.

Figure 3 sets out the design principles that run through this work: the five new forms of exclusion that an AI-mediated organisation can create, and the six ways the PXB Ecosystem structures the organisation differently in response.

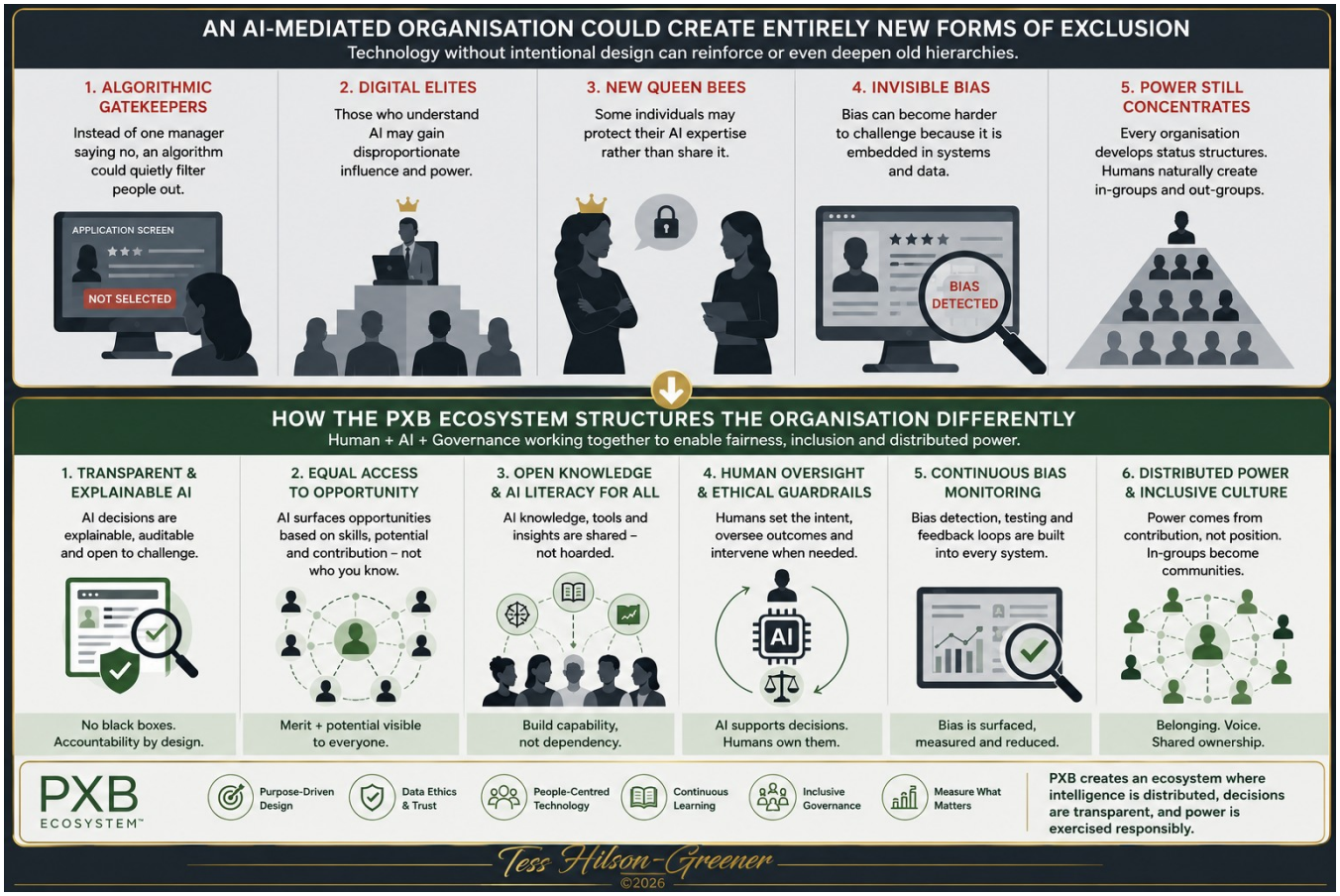


Figure 3. How the PXB Ecosystem structures an AI-mediated organisation differently: from new forms of exclusion to fairness, inclusion and distributed power. © 2026 AI-M Foundation.

The comments below are from one client organisation. They illustrate the intended pattern of work and are not a statistical finding.

What a client says

"We worked with the team at PXB and they helped us to: shape the operating model, mobilise the organisation, and execute in measured phases.

They helped us develop a plan on how the work, roles and workforce capacity change as AI is introduced. Build a fluency and funding the productivity scale. Define how the organisation needed change and how released capacity will be used.

That requires business, technology and people decisions to be connected from the start and the PXB architecture was a great fit."

MD, AI Centre of Excellence | Client organisation anonymous

Conclusion

An AI Centre of Excellence can be a good idea. It can reduce duplication, concentrate scarce expertise, create common standards, strengthen governance and help successful use cases scale. But its value depends on the problem it is designed to solve and the authority it is given.

A CoE becomes another organisational box if it coordinates technology without redesigning work, centralises control without clarifying decision rights, promotes adoption without building capability, or reports activity without demonstrating value.

PXB supplies the missing design piece. It helps organisations move from scattered AI activity to a coherent operating model connecting people, decisions, technology and business value. The result is not simply a better AI programme. It is an organisation better able to absorb AI responsibly, preserve human accountability and convert investment into sustainable performance.

The practical test: can leaders see how every priority AI initiative changes work, decisions, roles, capacity, risk and value—and who remains accountable for the outcome? If not, the organisation has an AI portfolio, but it does not yet have an AI operating model.

Sources and evidence notes

Survey percentages describe their own samples and definitions. They should not be treated as a single estimate of global AI CoE adoption. All links accessed 8 November 2026.

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About the author

Tess Hilson-Greener is the founder of the AI-M Foundation and designer of the PXB Ecosystem™. She is the author of The AI-Centric HR Operating Model: An Ethical Approach to Improve Workforce and Business Performance.

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