

The OrgChange.AI Dispatch — July 2026

Adoption is outrunning the systems built to manage it.

Craig Russell

Adoption is no longer the question. Across this month's evidence, near-universal AI use sits beside near-flat returns. Boston Consulting Group finds 74% of frontline employees are now regular AI users, up 23 points in a year — yet only 36% say they received sufficient training, and just 28% see strong alignment between what leaders say about AI and what their organizations actually do (BCG, 2026). Bain surveyed 951 companies and found nearly 40% of those measuring cost savings landed below 10% while targeting 11–20% — and 90% are raising their AI budgets anyway (Bain, 2026). The tools work. The value is leaking out somewhere between deployment and the operating model.

That leak has a name this month, and it is not technological. It is the gap between *deploying* AI and *managing* it. Workers are teaching themselves, routing around governance, and shipping output they cannot defend — because tools arrived faster than the redesign, training, and oversight that turn use into value.

This month: case studies showing where managed adoption converts to return and where unmanaged adoption stalls; leadership voices that locate the bottleneck in the organization, not the model; and the Nine-Square Grid™ mapping where the change work actually sits. The through line is simple: AI delivers returns only where adoption is managed as a work redesign — not merely switched on.

I. Case Studies

This month's organizations share a common thread: the AI worked as advertised, and the return depended entirely on the organizational scaffolding around it — data readiness, a named strategy, tool consolidation, and the human capacity to absorb change.

Sales Organizations (Salesforce)

AI Tools: Autonomous sales agents, lead-qualification agents, CRM-integrated automation.

How AI augments organizational change: Sales teams are pointing agents at the leads they used to abandon — in one account, agents contacted 130,000 previously untouched leads and generated 3,200 qualified opportunities in four months. Ninety-four percent of sales leaders with agents call them essential to growth. But Salesforce's own finding is that agent value “requires better data and fewer tools” — the return comes from consolidating the tech stack and cleaning the data agents run on, both change-management tasks, not model upgrades.

OCM Takeaway: Agent capacity is real, but it converts to revenue only after the unglamorous work of data readiness and tool consolidation is done.

Source: Salesforce, State of Sales, 7th ed. (2026).

Professional Services (Thomson Reuters)

AI Tools: AI-assisted legal and tax research, drafting, and analysis built on verified professional content.

How AI augments organizational change: 74% of professionals now use AI several times a week, but 34% are using tools their organization has not sanctioned — adoption outpacing governance, and a quiet liability. The differentiator is strategy: in firms with a named AI strategy, 66% of professionals say AI is meeting or exceeding expectations for creating value. Naming the strategy is itself the change intervention that pulls scattered, unsanctioned use into governed value.

OCM Takeaway: A named, governed strategy — not more tools — is what separates firms getting value from firms accumulating shadow-AI risk.

Source: Thomson Reuters, Future of Professionals Report 2026.

Supply Chain & Logistics (The Loadstar)

AI Tools: Demand-forecasting models, automation, exception-management systems.

How AI augments organizational change: The sector's early AI wins are real, but the report's blunt conclusion is that “talent, not tech, is holding AI back.” The hardest task is not model accuracy — it is changing the internal operating models, talent, and change-management capacity needed to convert AI opportunity into operational value. Adoption stalls on organizational conservatism, not technical limits.

OCM Takeaway: When a sector's AI barrier is talent and operating-model inertia, the intervention is change capacity, not another pilot.

Source: Rajamanickam, The State of AI in Supply Chain (The Loadstar, 2026).

Scientific Research & Pharma (Wiley / IQVIA)

AI Tools: AI-assisted literature synthesis, evidence generation, research dissemination tools.

How AI augments organizational change: AI is compressing the science-to-patient timeline — time-to-adoption of new findings is now under five years — but leaders across the field report that the trust infrastructure and incentive structures have not caught up. Discovery accelerates; validation and adoption lag, because the institutions around the science were not redesigned for the new pace.

OCM Takeaway: Accelerating the technical step exposes, rather than fixes, the trust and incentive systems that govern real-world adoption.

Source: Wiley & IQVIA, Scientific Discovery & AI: The Science-to-Patient Journey (2026).

At a glance

Organization	Capability Proven	Where Value Leaked	The OCM Fix
Sales (Salesforce)	Agents work abandoned leads	Messy data, tool sprawl	Data readiness + consolidation
Prof. services (Thomson Reuters)	Weekly AI use at 74%	34% shadow-AI, no strategy	Named, governed strategy
Supply chain (Loadstar)	Real early wins	Talent & operating-model inertia	Change capacity
Science/pharma (Wiley/IQVIA)	Discovery accelerated	Trust & incentive lag	Redesign institutions

II. Leadership Voices

Bain & Company

Michael Heric, Purna Doddapaneni, and Antoine Debarre

“AI keeps underdelivering on its promise. The fix is organizational, not technological.”

Who: Heric, Doddapaneni & Debarre, Bain & Company (2026)

Theme: Underperformance is a design and governance problem, not a technology gap.

Why it matters: The companies breaking the pattern, Bain finds, treat data access, governance, and process redesign as CEO-level problems rather than IT problems. That single reframing — from IT ticket to executive redesign — is the difference between budgets that compound and budgets that leak. Use it to move AI off the CIO's desk and onto the operating-model agenda.

Source: Bain & Company, Your AI Budget Is Growing. Your Returns Aren't. (2026).

Reuters (Legal Change Management)

Tara Lawler

“Legal organizations do not necessarily need entirely new management models to respond effectively, but rather greater discipline, coordination, and adaptability in applying existing ones.”

Who: Tara Lawler, writing in Reuters (June 2026)

Theme: Generative AI compresses multi-year transformations into changes measured in quarters — but the frameworks that manage them still hold.

Why it matters: This is the Grid's premise stated plainly. The answer to accelerating change is not to abandon Kotter, Lewin, and ADKAR but to apply them with more discipline. The speed is new; the management logic is not.

Source: Lawler, T. (2026, June). Strategic change management in the age of generative AI. Reuters.

III. The OrgChange.AI Nine-Square Grid™

This month's evidence concentrates on the People and Process rows, with the Technology row activated only where governance and data meet the human-in-the-loop reality of agents. Squares 4 (Process / Kotter) and 7 (Technology / Kotter) were not activated by this month's evidence — the story is not about short-term technical wins, but about the readiness and design work those wins expose.

At-a-glance Grid

	Kotter	Lewin	ADKAR
People	CEO-Owned Urgency	Managing the Strain	The Capability Gap
Process	—	Redesign Before Deploy	Strategy Converts Adoption
Technology	—	Human-in-the-Loop Reality	Data as the Barrier

Square 1 — People / Kotter: “CEO-Owned Urgency”

Definition: This is where leaders make the case for change credible enough to move people, and own the outcome rather than delegate it.

- 67% of executives agree their CEO actively owns AI as a strategic priority with clear accountability for outcomes (KPMG, 2026).
- Yet only 33% of frontline employees say leadership communicates clearly about AI, and 28% see alignment between leaders' words and organizational action (BCG, 2026).
- The urgency is real at the top and thin at the front line — a signal that ownership has not yet reached the people doing the work.

Square 2 — People / Lewin: “Managing the Strain”

Definition: This is where organizations address the human cost of continuous change before new behaviors can take hold.

- As agent workflows expand, many employees increasingly feel the strain of added complexity and workload (KPMG, 2026).
- Workers in “context-rich” AI organizations are 64% less likely to feel worn out by AI and 52% less likely to ship work they can't explain — strain is a design variable, not a personality trait (Glean, 2026).
- Organizations adopting AI more often report both expanding (34% vs 28%) and cutting (23% vs 16%) their workforce — the churn itself is a change-load employees absorb (Gallup, 2026).

Square 3 — People / ADKAR: “The Capability Gap”

Definition: This is where organizations build the awareness and knowledge people need to work differently — not just tool access, but capability.

- 72% of BCG respondents say skill expectations have shifted, but only 36% feel they received sufficient training — unchanged from 2025 (BCG, 2026).

- Absent that capability, workers improvise: 54% of high-achieving AI users rely on unapproved tools or use approved tools in noncompliant ways, and 36% hide how much AI is helping them (Glean, 2026).
- 86% of workers treat AI output as a starting point rather than a final answer — the judgment to do so is a trained capability, not a default (Microsoft, 2026).

Square 5 — Process / Lewin: “Redesign Before Deploy”

Definition: This is the active change stage where processes are rebuilt around AI — not the reverse.

- Companies that redesign workflows end-to-end outperform those that only deploy tools, and the gap keeps widening (BCG, 2026).
- Bain's high performers treat process redesign as a CEO-level problem; the laggards leave it to IT (Bain, 2026).
- Microsoft frames the challenge ahead as “managerial, organizational” — the work of redesigning the operating model around what agents now make possible (Microsoft, 2026).

Square 6 — Process / ADKAR: “Strategy Converts Adoption to Value”

Definition: This is where governance, a named strategy, and reinforcement turn scattered use into sustained value.

- In firms with a named AI strategy, 66% of professionals say AI is meeting or exceeding expectations for value; where strategy is absent, 34% resort to unsanctioned tools (Thomson Reuters, 2026).
- Only 13% of organizations report performing at the highest level of AI maturity, even as 87% of workers use AI (Glean, 2026).
- Nearly 40% of technology spend underperformed — the “execution gap” between buying capability and realizing it (WalkMe, 2026).

Square 8 — Technology / Lewin: “Human-in-the-Loop Reality”

Definition: This is where the technology is stabilized in practice — how agents actually run, versus how the business case assumed they would.

- Only 7% of companies run fully autonomous agents; 38% require human approval and 32% operate with guardrails and exceptions (Bain, 2026).
- A human-in-the-loop model is the top risk-mitigation approach for the second consecutive quarter, cited by 52% of leaders (KPMG, 2026).
- The gap between the full-automation business case and the human-in-the-loop reality is where promised returns quietly disappear (Bain, 2026).

Square 9 — Technology / ADKAR: “Data as the Barrier”

Definition: This is where the technical foundation — data access and integration — either enables adoption or blocks it.

- Data access and integration is the number-one barrier to AI progress, and top performers cite it as a bigger obstacle than laggards do — they have run far enough to hit it (Bain, 2026).
- 53% of workers say critical information they need is not accessible through their AI systems (Glean, 2026).
- Salesforce's agent returns depend on “better data and fewer tools” — the data layer is the change project (Salesforce, 2026).

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