

WHITE PAPER

Practical AI Guidance for Growing Organizations

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Executive Summary

Generative AI has the attention of organizations worldwide, including growing organizations (i.e., those with fewer than 1,000 employees), as they seek innovative solutions to improve efficiency, productivity, and creativity. Many already have generative AI in production, with a goal of improving operational outcomes like increased efficiency, productivity, and innovation.

Growing organizations are struggling to establish clear AI strategies because they don't know where to begin, which use cases to pursue, or how to align AI initiatives with their business goals. Limited resources and expertise, combined with rapidly evolving AI technologies, make it a challenge to keep up. AI systems require unique infrastructure and data management adjustments, and it is often hard to overcome these barriers. Security and privacy, particularly regarding data protection and compliance, are also major concerns. Growing organizations should choose AI solutions that align with their needs, balancing infrastructure, scalability, and strong security to protect critical data.

Dell stands out as a trusted partner for growing organizations, with a comprehensive portfolio of AI solutions through its Dell AI Factory approach. Dell AI Factory provides businesses with the flexibility to experiment with or deploy AI at scale, whether on premises, at the edge, or in the cloud, ensuring data protection and compliance through built-in security features. Dell's expert professional services help companies develop AI strategies, target high-impact use cases, and scale their AI infrastructure to maximize ROI. Dell empowers their customers to confidently operationalize generative AI, optimize their resources, and remain competitive in an increasingly AI-driven market.

AI Captures the Imagination of Growing Organizations

AI, and especially generative AI, has inspired organizations of all sizes across the globe to dream big about the possibilities. Foundation models introduce potential economies of scale, enabling organizations to tap into the collective power and knowledge of massive data sets.

In the past, nearly all AI models were developed using smaller, private data sets. While these data sets were tailored to individual organizations, they were often too limited in size to create truly effective AI models on their own. By tapping into vast, collective data sets, generative AI offers immense potential on a much larger scale, prompting organizations to work relentlessly to understand how they can harness its benefits. Importantly, generative AI is no longer just an idea, but rather a technology that is quickly being adopted around the world.

Growing organizations are adopting AI, and they have specific thoughts about the value they hope AI brings to bear, the benefits it provides, and where they need to invest. Recent research from Enterprise Strategy Group found this from small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs):

- 33% have generative AI in production, compared to 42% of enterprise organizations.¹
- 68% reported that they believe generative AI delivers or will deliver transformative or significant value to their organizations in areas such as efficiency gains, productivity gains, and innovation and creativity.
- 30% said their organization's generative AI budget will significantly increase over the next 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.

Market Insight:



33% of SMBs have generative AI in production.

¹ Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research Report, [The State of the Generative AI Market: Widespread Transformation Continues](#), September 2024. All Enterprise Strategy Group research references in this white paper are from this report unless otherwise noted.

- When asked which areas they think their organization needs to invest in to support generative AI, the top responses were training or employee skill (45%); information management (e.g., data science or machine learning, 40%); data privacy, compliance, and/or risk (38%); cybersecurity (38%); and cloud, infrastructure, and operations (34%).
- SMB respondents claim the top metrics they use, or plan to use, to measure ROI of generative AI are increased employee productivity or output quality (50%); customer satisfaction, retention, or acquisition (46%); reduced operational costs or overhead (45%); and time or cost savings from automation (45%).

Market Insight:

Top areas SMB organizations said they need to invest in to support generative AI:

- Training or employee skill (45%).
- Data privacy, compliance, and/or risk (38%).

Identifying and Understanding the Challenges for Operationalizing AI

Clearly, growing organizations have plenty of hope and expectations that generative AI will create significant benefits for their businesses, but there are also some big challenges they face to realize those benefits. Enterprise Strategy Group research provides some insights into what is top of mind. Respondents from SMBs said the top challenges they face in implementing generative AI are employee expertise or skill (42%), data quality (36%), solutions' immaturity (33%), ethical or legal considerations (bias and fairness, 32%), and integrating with existing systems or tackling legacy systems (31%).

This research surfaces several challenges that are important to explore, including:

- The complexity of establishing a clear AI strategy and deciding where to start.
- Finding the best use cases for their business goals.
- Limited resources and expertise.
- Data quality and access issues.
- Infrastructure fit.
- Scalability.
- Measuring ROI.
- Managing the secure use of AI to eliminate attack surface.

Following is a deeper look at some of these challenges.

Establishing a Clear AI Strategy Is Difficult

Figuring out how to start with generative AI is challenging due to a combination of factors. Many companies lack a clear understanding of what generative AI can do to meet their specific needs, so it's difficult to pinpoint the best use cases or determine which problems AI can solve effectively. The overwhelming number of AI tools, models, platforms and frameworks available can create confusion. Many also don't know which tools are best suited for their industry and size, making it hard to even evaluate potential solutions. AI technology is advancing with dizzying speed, so the market faces the additional challenge of staying up to date with the latest developments, especially when they have limited or no dedicated R&D resources. There is also the challenge of shifting processes and existing systems, as operationalizing generative AI often requires a shift in thinking in terms of business processes, data management, and technology infrastructure. Many growing organizations don't have the resources to make

these adjustments. All these factors combined make it hard for growing organizations to take the first step toward operationalizing generative AI.

Working With Limited Resources and Expertise

Growing organizations often struggle to address the generative AI expertise gap due to limited budgets. They typically can't afford to hire dedicated AI experts or consultants, and upskilling existing employees is both expensive and time-consuming. There is fierce competition for AI talent, and larger companies can attract top candidates with higher salaries and more advanced projects. This is particularly challenging for growing organizations in non-tech industries or smaller markets. With generative AI evolving so rapidly, companies often lack the resources to keep up, which leaves them dependent on vendors for cookie-cutter tools, solutions, and infrastructure that might not be easily customized to fit their needs.

Market Insight:



42% of SMBs said a top challenge they face implementing generative AI is lack of employee expertise or skill.

Data Quality and Access Issues

Market Insight:



36% of SMBs said a top challenge they face implementing generative AI is poor data quality.

Data quality and access issues pose significant challenges to operationalizing generative AI due to several key factors. Generative AI applications rely significantly on high-quality, well-structured data to produce accurate and useful outcomes.

Some growing organizations don't have robust data management systems, leading to incomplete, inconsistent, or noisy data that can hinder AI performance. Cleaning and organizing this data can be both time-consuming and costly. Data access is an issue because data might be siloed or stored in legacy systems that aren't easily integrated with AI tools. The lack of centralized, accessible data limits the potential for generative AI to unlock valuable insights. This becomes an even bigger issue when companies lack the infrastructure or technical expertise to streamline data collection and storage processes.

Infrastructure Fit

Several factors related to existing technology environments and resources make infrastructure fit a major challenge. Many rely on legacy systems that weren't designed to integrate with modern AI tools. These older systems usually lack the necessary flexibility, scalability, or computational power generative AI applications require. Adapting these systems or migrating to newer platforms is expensive, time-consuming, and complex, often requiring specialized technical expertise that growing organizations don't typically have. Running generative AI models requires significant computational resources, including high-performance servers, cloud infrastructure, and advanced hardware such as GPUs. Growing organizations can struggle to find the budget to invest in such infrastructure or the capability to maintain and scale it. Without this kind of purpose-built infrastructure, running AI models can be inefficient or even unfeasible.

Market Insight:



31% of SMBs said a top challenge they face implementing generative AI is difficulty integrating with existing and legacy systems.

Security and Privacy

When it comes to AI, security and privacy are major concerns for a few reasons. Most businesses need to handle sensitive data while ensuring regulatory compliance. Many growing organizations have limited resources or expertise to manage data protection, which increases the risk of non-compliance and legal issues. Third-party AI tools can expose businesses to security risks, particularly if these AI vendors don't have strong security measures in place for data storage and processing. The lack of internal expertise in managing the security of AI systems can be problematic. Growing organizations might not have dedicated IT teams to handle the complexities of protecting generative AI models from cyberattacks, vulnerabilities, or misuse. Without robust security protocols, these organizations are at risk of data breaches or the generation of biased or misleading outputs, which can damage corporate reputation and erode customer trust.

Market Insight:



72% of SMBs said one of the generative AI risks they are most concerned about is data privacy and security.

Generative AI Use Cases

Generative AI use cases have exploded over the past two years, and they continue to evolve into impactful, real-life applications. There are several use cases that resonate particularly well. According to Enterprise Strategy Group research, SMB respondents said the following generative AI use cases were among their top priorities: data analysis and insights (64%), content creation (44%), content summarization (41%), and data augmentation or data generation (29%).

Data Analysis and Insights

Data analysis and insights help organizations make faster, smarter decisions without needing a full team of data analysts. Many collect data on things like customer behavior, sales trends, website traffic, or inventory logs but don't have the tools or expertise to extract useful insights. Generative AI can be used to analyze this data, identify patterns, and generate summaries or even recommendations. This turns organizations' proprietary data into actionable insights that can lead to better marketing strategies, inventory planning, or customer service. Because these generative AI applications are user-friendly, non-technical teams can use them to make data-driven decisions. This levels the playing field, helping growing organizations operate with the kind of insight and agility typically seen in larger companies.

Content Creation

Content creation is one of the most valuable generative AI use cases for growing organizations because it can be used to produce high-quality marketing and communication materials quickly and affordably. Typically, growing organizations don't have significant resources invested in dedicated in-house writers, designers, or marketers. Generative AI applications enable smaller teams to generate blog posts, social media content, email campaigns, product descriptions, and personalized marketing—often in minutes. It enables companies to not only keep up but become proactive with content demands, test ideas, and stay visible to their audience without burning out limited staff. Automating the repetitive parts of content creation enables teams to focus more on strategy, creativity, and customer engagement.

Content Summarization

Content summarization helps save time and boost productivity without getting overwhelmed. Long emails, reports, meeting notes, articles, or customer feedback require resources to ingest them, but many growing organizations don't have sufficient resources to read and process everything in detail. Generative AI can quickly condense this

type of content into clear, concise summaries that highlight the most important points, which makes it easier to take action or share insights. It's especially valuable for small teams juggling multiple roles. Content summarization also enhances internal communication by turning dense information into digestible content, improving collaboration and efficiency.

Data Augmentation and Data Generation

Data augmentation and data generation help growing organizations overcome one of the biggest hurdles they face: limited access to high-quality data. Many don't have large data sets to train AI models, test products, or run meaningful analyses. Generative AI can address this by creating synthetic data that mimics real patterns for things such as customer profiles, product variations, or market scenarios. This enables growing organizations to experiment, build prototypes, or train AI models without needing vast amounts of real-world data.

Data augmentation and data generation are especially useful for e-commerce (e.g., generating product images or descriptions), predictive modeling, and scenario testing. Enhancing or expanding existing data sets enables growing organizations to innovate faster and compete more effectively with larger players.

What Growing Organizations Should Look for in an AI Solutions Partner

Growing organizations should seek a solutions partner that simplifies AI for their specific business needs, right-sizes AI to maximize ROI, and provides top-tier protection for critical data.

Addressing Where to Start

The first and most important step in operationalizing AI is to determine what problem needs to be solved. Organizations should align AI projects with core business goals to ensure they deliver real value. They need to start small, leveraging low-code tools that don't require a major investment and focusing on high-impact use cases and then build on and learn from that experience to tackle more complex initiatives that require more time and investment.

However, this approach is commonly known, and while these fundamentals make sense, growing organizations can greatly benefit from finding a partner that not only has experience with AI but has experience with guiding growing organizations on their AI journey. Such partners will not only smooth the path for defining goals and use cases but will bring to bear a comprehensive network of other AI partners that also specialize in the growing organization segment.

Right-size AI to Maximize ROI

Growing organizations can make the mistake of investing too much or too little in AI. Doing so can waste resources and limit success. Overbuilding AI infrastructure can lead to high costs without a clear return, while underbuilding can create integration headaches and performance issues.

Right-sizing AI infrastructure enables businesses to match the scale and complexity of their needs. Companies should look for an AI partner that offers flexible infrastructure options (PCs, workstations, data center, cloud), that enable them to experiment with AI, spin up proofs of concepts rapidly, and then scale quickly. A partner experienced in helping growing organizations with AI will also design a right-sized AI solution that brings AI to where the business' data lives—at the edge, in colocation facilities, on devices, or on premises.

Protect Critical Data and Systems

The right AI infrastructure can help protect critical data and systems through enterprise-grade security, automated threat detection, and systems that provide compliance with data protection standards. Such infrastructure can monitor systems in real time for issues like unauthorized access or data anomalies and automatically flag or block potential threats. Proactive defense of this kind is especially valuable for growing organizations, which often have limited cybersecurity resources. By using infrastructure with strong security protocols and monitoring, organizations can protect their data, maintain business continuity, and build trust with their customers. Savvy organizations will opt for a partner that has security in every layer of its portfolio, starting with hardware and firmware protections.

How Dell AI Factory Delivers on Operationalized Generative AI Solutions for Growing Organizations

Dell is a partner that can provide growing organizations with practical guidance and an AI approach that is custom-tailored for their business—the Dell AI Factory approach. Whether a business is at the initial stages of exploring AI or is ready to scale existing strategies, the Dell AI Factory combines Dell's leading AI portfolio, expert professional services, and broad partner ecosystem, all designed to meet organizations' desired outcomes and operationalize their use cases. Dell offers flexible deployment options—at edge locations, on premises, in colocation facilities, in public clouds, and in a hybrid approach—to meet their evolving needs. Furthermore, Dell offers built-in security features, a secure supply chain, and value-added capabilities and services to safeguard an organization's environment while providing a strong foundation for growth.

Simplify AI for Business Needs

Dell AI Factory enables growing organizations to begin their AI journey with ease. Dell Professional services offer expert consulting on how to start, including setting goals and honing in on use cases that best fit an organization's goals. With Dell Technologies' broad AI portfolio, open ecosystem, and comprehensive services offerings, organizations can build AI applications that are tailored to their business needs.

Dell AI Factory offers tailored support and custom solutions through Dell channel and global alliance partners, which ensures growing Dell customers can confidently navigate the complexities of AI adoption.

But expert AI guidance doesn't stop with just Dell's team. The Dell AI Factory collaborates with top AI ecosystem partners to develop validated solutions designed to help save time and effort. Reference guides and solutions help streamline deployment, cut down on complexity, and lower the chance of mistakes. This empowers Dell customers to focus on harnessing AI for growth and maintaining a competitive edge.

Maximize ROI on AI

Demonstrating the value of AI investments is essential for maximizing ROI. The Dell AI Factory offers the world's broadest AI solutions portfolio, from PCs and workstations to the data center to the cloud. It enables Dell customers to deploy an AI proof of concept to deliver quick wins or scale up for more complex, widespread use cases that are tailored to organizations' required model sizes, usage patterns, and user bases. By right-sizing solutions to fit an organization's exact needs, it can not only optimize operational efficiency and strategic alignment but also avoid overprovisioning, reducing wasted resources and supporting sustainability goals. This flexibility ensures a choice of solutions that best fit an organization's operational needs and strategic goals to help them make the most out of their AI investments.

Dell AI Factory customers take advantage of flexible consumption models with AI solutions on premises, at the edge, in the cloud, or within a hybrid environment. It's this versatility that enables organizations to place AI workloads in the ideal environment for optimal performance and cost-efficiency. Dell APEX offers predictable pricing

and eliminates the hassle of hardware management. For example, according to Dell, Dell APEX PC-as-a-Service results in 30% support costs saved.

Many organizations store their data and run their workloads in different environments. Dell offers solutions that bring AI to where an organization's data lives—whether it's at the edge, in colocation facilities, on devices, or on premises. With Dell products, inferencing on premises can be up to 2.6x more cost-effective than public cloud alternatives.² This significant cost savings increases overall operational efficiency and reduces expenses, making on-premises deployment an attractive option for growing organizations looking to maximize their ROI.

Dell Protects Critical Data

Dell builds security into every layer of its portfolio, starting with hardware and firmware protections through Dell Trusted Workspace. Dell Trusted Infrastructure extends this protection to servers, storage, and networking, ensuring an organization's entire IT environment is secure, resilient, and ready to support growth.

Dell also integrates detection and response capabilities into its solutions. Dell customers gain access to advanced threat protection through Dell's partnerships with industry-leading software providers, spanning an organization's devices and networks, as well as the cloud. In addition, Dell's rigorous supply chain oversight is designed to ensure secure, reliable, and tamper-free products. Dell PowerProtect Cyber Recovery provides advanced capabilities to shield organizations from cyberthreats, minimizing downtime and disruption.

To complement these built-in features, Dell offers a range of powerful data protection solutions designed for modern businesses. For example, Dell APEX Backup Services delivers comprehensive coverage for SaaS applications, endpoints, and hybrid workloads, ensuring critical data is safeguarded across diverse environments.

Conclusion

While growing organizations are eager to harness the power of AI to drive transformation, most face challenges in knowing where to begin and how to optimize their limited resources. A trusted AI solutions provider that offers the right balance of expertise, flexibility, and security is a sure-handed way to success. With the Dell AI Factory, Dell is the partner of choice for many because of its deep experience in both AI and the tech needs of growing organizations, comprehensive portfolio of AI solutions, scalable support for AI workloads, and industry-leading security integrated throughout the AI stack. In short, the Dell AI Factory empowers growing organizations to confidently embark on their AI journey.

² Source: Based on Enterprise Strategy Group White Paper commissioned by Dell, "[Understanding the Total Cost of Inferencing Large Language Models](#)," April 2025. Analyzed models show a 70B parameter LLM leveraging RAG for an organization of 50k users being up to 62% more cost effective over 4 years. Actual results may vary.

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