

SOLUTIONS



05

Conferences
& trends

18

Artificial
intelligence

AI supercomputing goes Nano

The **HP ZGX Nano** supercharges AI fine tuning, prototyping, and experimentation, cutting cloud costs, simplifying your stack, and keeping your sensitive data exactly where it belongs: in your environment.

- NVIDIA GB10 Grace Blackwell Superchip
- Up to 1,000 TOPS AI Compute
- 128 GB Unified LPDDR5X system memory
- Up to 4 TB self-encrypting storage



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Table

OF CONTENTS



04

Letter from our
marketing leader

05

Conferences & trends

13

Profiles

18

Artificial intelligence

29

Data center

41

Cybersecurity

47

IT asset management

53

End-user computing
& modern workplace
solutions

61

Brand ambassador
spotlight

A LETTER FROM

Matt Fisher

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GROWTH MARKETS



If I had five cents for every time a customer said, “I didn’t know you did that,” after we’ve hosted a summit, executive briefing, webinar, or workshop ... well, I might not be enjoying retirement on a beach somewhere, but I’d be a little closer than I am now.

It’s an understandable reaction. Over the last 36 years, SHI has grown from a small Microsoft licensing reseller into a \$16 billion technology partner with a wide – and sometimes surprisingly diverse – set of capabilities. Today, we help customers tackle complex software licensing challenges, build intelligent device lifecycle programs, deploy and manage cybersecurity solutions, stand up AI environments, optimize cloud spend, transform their data centers, and more.

Or you might still know us as your Microsoft licensing partner.

It can be a challenge to fully appreciate the full scope of SHI’s solutions and services. And that’s part of why we’re excited to bring you this new quarterly *Solutions* magazine.

Each edition will provide expert perspectives on hot topics from across SHI’s solutions architect and field CTO/CISO community. It will also highlight people at SHI you might like to get to know better, and showcase technology and services capabilities that are proven or new.

I hope you enjoy reading this first issue of our new magazine. If you do find yourself thinking, “I didn’t know SHI could do that,” reach out to your SHI rep for the right introductions.

More than ever, you can depend on SHI to solve what’s next as much as we’re helping you solve what’s now.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Matt Fisher in black ink, featuring a large, flowing 'M' and 'F'.

Matt Fisher
Senior Vice President, Growth Markets

Are you attending 2026's top tech conferences?

Let's connect!

Each year, we scour our calendars to bring you the top tech conferences recommended by our subject matter experts. These events promise to deliver valuable information and networking opportunities to everyone from the C-suite and network admins to developers and engineers — and SHI will be attending all of them.

We'd love to connect with you if you're participating in any of these events!



SHI EVENTS

April

SHI Summit: Making smart end-user computing decisions in an AI-driven, budget-constrained world

April 28-29, 2026 | Somerset, NJ

Join our AI and EUC experts as we explore strategies for an AI-first, cost-pressured era — optimizing lifecycles, strengthening security, and elevating device experiences.

October

SHI Summit: Fall 2026

October 14-15, 2026 | Somerset, NJ

This SHI Summit focuses on data center and cloud, delivering proven frameworks and real-world insights to help you move from experimentation to execution, modernize your infrastructure, and operationalize secure, scalable production-ready AI systems — without breaking budgets or compromising operations.

Registration opens in August.

Q2 2026: TOP TECH CONFERENCES

April

Google Cloud Next

April 22-24, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

Join us to see Google's latest and greatest AI innovations and product launches, and to learn new ways to drive growth and efficiency.

May

ServiceNow Knowledge 2026

May 5-7, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

ServiceNow Knowledge features the latest developments in the IT world and shares best practices for leveraging ServiceNow solutions. As an Elite ServiceNow partner with over 30 years of enterprise IT experience, we bring unique skills to the NOW platform to help you automate IT management workflows and maximize your investment.

IAITAM Annual Conference and Exhibition

May 12-14, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

IAITAM ACE is the world's leading IT asset management conference. At ACE, C-level executives, IT, financial, and legal professionals come together to explore the latest in ITAM and its impact on business operations, compliance, and profitability. We'll be there to show you how SHI can transform your ITAM strategy with solutions that improve utilization, governance, and compliance-related risk management.

Dell Technologies World

May 18-21, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

At Dell Technologies World, you'll learn new ways to adapt, transform, and scale your organization to lead in the age of AI. SHI received the 2025 North America Client Partner of the Year award from Dell Technologies, putting an exclamation point on another stellar year as an authorized Titanium Black partner.

Cisco Live

May 31-June 4, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

Cisco Live offers an opportunity to learn about Cisco products, technologies,

and services, including AI, security, and networking. SHI is a Cisco Preferred Partner. In 2025, Cisco recognized our strong relationship by naming us the Services and Software Excellence Partner of the Year, USA East Area.

June

FinOps X 2026

June 8-11, 2026 | San Diego, CA

FinOps X offers practitioners and those who manage the value of technology a deeper understanding of the FinOps ecosystem, helping them solve their challenges and accelerate their practices.

HPE Discover

June 15-18, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

Discover what's next across networking, AI, and hybrid cloud at HPE Discover. SHI is an HPE Platinum Partner – and we're their second-largest National Solution Provider in the United States.

Pure//Accelerate 2026

June 16-18, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV

The pace of innovation continues to accelerate. From edge to cloud, SHI is positioned to help you select, manage, and deploy Pure Storage's portfolio of solutions as the reigning Subscription Partner of the Year.

ISTELive 26

June 28-July 1, 2026 | Orlando, FL

Our Education Strategy team will represent SHI at ISTE Live 26, one of the most influential education events in the world. This show is one of the year's best opportunities to engage with thought leaders and learn about the latest transformational technology solutions in education.



Q3 2026: TOP TECH CONFERENCES

July

Practice and Experience in Advanced Research Computing (PEARC)

July 26-30, 2026 | Minneapolis, MN

PEARC is an annual forum where members of the research computing community discuss challenges, opportunities, best practices, and solutions. The 2026 theme, Resilient Roots, Empowered Communities, is designed to recognize the work already accomplished within the advanced Research Computing and Data (RCD) community while looking toward the future.

August

VMware Explore

August 31-September 3, 2026

Las Vegas, NV

VMware Explore aims to help attendees unravel cloud complexity, stay ahead of AI-driven advancements, and

foster professional growth. This year, attendees will see firsthand how VMware Cloud Foundation advancements simplify private cloud so you can shift from managing your cloud to reaping the benefits of a modern, future-proof solution.

Fal.Con

August 31-September 3, 2026

Las Vegas, NV

CrowdStrike's Fal.Con 2026 will feature opportunities to network with industry experts, explore the latest technology, develop skills at hands-on workshops, learn from top threat hunters, and tap into the full power of the CrowdStrike ecosystem.

September

TribalNet Conference & Tradeshow

September 20-24, 2026 | Dallas, TX

The Annual TribalNet Conference & Tradeshow brings together tribal leaders, IT professionals, and industry experts to explore the role of technology in tribal operations and enterprises.

The conference features educational sessions, networking opportunities, and a tradeshow floor showcasing the latest technology solutions for tribal organizations.

Jamf Nation User Conference

September 23-25, 2026 | Kansas City, MO

At JNUC, we'll connect with the Apple admin community, Apple IT professionals, users, and information security leaders to discover new and better ways to manage and secure Apple devices.

EDUCAUSE

September 29-October 2, 2026 | Denver, CO

EDUCAUSE is a showcase for technology trends in higher education. Our Education Strategy team will be there to soak it all in so we can continue to help your institution meet the future with technology.

Q4 2026: TOP TECH CONFERENCES

November

SC26

November 15-20, 2026 | Chicago, IL

The International Conference for High Performance Computing, Networking, Storage, and Analysis brings together scientists, engineers, researchers, educators, programmers, and developers from the high-performance computing community for sessions, speakers, and networking.

California IT in Education (CITE)

November 17-19, 2026 | Anaheim, CA

At CITE, CTOs, network managers, engineers, database administrators, and education professionals converge to discover the latest and best technology tools to help improve teaching, learning,

and administration. We'll be there to provide guidance on transformational technology for education.

Microsoft Ignite

November 17-20, 2026 | San Francisco, CA

Microsoft Ignite is designed to help attendees achieve more by combining the power of the Microsoft Cloud, Microsoft Copilot, and the latest innovations in AI transformation. SHI and Microsoft have been proud partners for over 35 years.

AWS re:Invent

November 30-December 4, 2026

Las Vegas, NV

SHI is a Premier Consulting Partner for Amazon Web Services, and we've continued strengthening our partnership each year. With SHI's Cloud Governance Framework and over 300+ AWS certifications, we're here to help you confidently transform your AWS landscape.



Virtual events

Looking to connect from the comfort of your office? We've got you covered.



Webinars

Check out our webinars on SHI.com to keep up with the latest technology trends and best practices. Here, you'll find dates for upcoming sessions and on-demand access to dozens of scintillating discussions.



Podcasts

Innovation Heroes: Innovation Heroes explores the people and businesses driving change in our drastically disrupted world. Host Ed McNamara uncovers some of the most inspiring stories of business innovation in the post-pandemic era.

Research Breakdown: SHI's

Research Breakdown is your audio companion to SHI's Research Roundup newsletter, offering sharp, focused conversations that take you beyond the headlines. Each episode dives deep into a single research topic from the newsletter, unpacking key insights, implications, and unanswered questions with subject matter experts from across the tech industry.

We Got Your Mac: Our hosts team up with SHI experts, IT leaders, and specialists from the world of Apple and Mac. Together, they dive into what adoption across the enterprise means and explain how to progress on your Mac journey.



Briefings/trainings

We offer dedicated briefings and trainings on a variety of today's most compelling technology topics, including immersive technologies, hyperconverged infrastructure, and data protection. Our goal is to give you the information you need to make the right decision for your organization.



Spring Summit

Making smart end-user computing
decisions in an AI-driven,
budget-constrained environment



Boards expect progress on AI, finance teams expect cost visibility, and employees expect tools that support a productive work experience. IT leaders are managing these demands (and more) while facing complexities like rising hardware costs and supply chain volatility that make it increasingly difficult to balance innovation with fiscal responsibility.

The SHI Spring Summit, taking place April 28-29 at SHI New Jersey Headquarters in Somerset, New Jersey, brings those pressures into focus with two days of practical engagement designed to optimize lifecycles and support informed end-user computing.

Registration closes April 10. There is no cost to attend, and travel and accommodations (airfare and hotel) can be arranged upon request.

To request an invitation or learn more about attending, speak with your SHI representative.

The SHI Spring Summit is built for CIOs and CTOs who are responsible for making and justifying complex technology investment decisions, as well as senior IT and procurement leaders at the director level and above who want to build and execute a secure, sustainable AI workplace strategy.

Attendance is limited to SHI customers and prospective customers evaluating modern workplace solutions through SHI and our partners. Account caps (two attendees for Commercial, Enterprise, Public Sector, and Strategic; four for Global) maintain focused engagement and support peer-level discussion alongside direct access to our technical specialists and technology partners.

THE AGENDA INCLUDES ...

Workshops on cost, compliance, and readiness

Tackle planning pressures facing IT and procurement leaders, including navigating Microsoft's pricing and licensing models to fix misaligned commitments and improve cost predictability. Use SHI's Intelligent Refresh analysis to identify underperforming endpoints and explore Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) and client strategies that create secure, cost-effective BYOD-friendly solutions.

Hands-on validation

Tour SHI's AI & Cyber Labs and Next-Gen Device Labs to see LLMs and security solutions in action, then confirm your AI



endpoint strategy and de-risk deployment. Test assumptions and assess deployment considerations tied to AI-enabled workplace environments.

The Modern Workplace Innovation Lounge

Join interactive demos, including live walkthroughs of ServiceNow, SHI SHIELD's Microsoft 365 cost-reduction capabilities, ChromeOS solutions with built-in security and AI features, and HP's AI-integrated PC, print, and collaboration tools designed for device modernization.

Why you should attend

Hardware pricing and supply constraints are shaping refresh strategies, security posture, and licensing commitments. AI adoption timelines are adding new planning pressure. Decisions made this year will influence cost structures, device performance, and operational flexibility across future planning cycles.

The Spring Summit provides a dedicated setting for you to work through these considerations before your renewal and refresh decisions are finalized.

Part of the SHI Summit series

The Spring Summit opens SHI's 2026 summit calendar. The **SHI Fall Summit** in October will focus on data center and cloud strategy.

These events address a distinct area of enterprise technology planning while maintaining a consistent emphasis on execution and accountability.



How ITAM and FinOps help reclaim latent value from your IT investments

By Howard Daws, Michael Brown, Zack Donnenberg

IT waste is an acute and perennial issue impacting organizations of all sizes. Flat or shrinking IT budgets are flanked by increased costs. CFOs and CIOs are forced to do more with less while organizations must balance investments, risk, and opportunity. Gartner^{®1} predicted “Global IT spending will grow to \$5.7 trillion in 2025.” This is an increase of 8.2% year-over-year.

Organizations need new ways to deliver value to business stakeholders. Many are looking inward, searching for opportunities to optimize their IT spending so they can reinvest in innovation and growth.

IT spend optimization is a continuous journey — a multi-team effort that requires breaking down silos and looking holistically and honestly at your environment. Doing so can unlock lasting

gains compared to periodic, topic-focused initiatives, but the path forward isn't so simple.

In part one of this two-part series, we'll explore the challenges of IT spend optimization and how you can begin increasing value from your investments.

Why is IT spend optimization so challenging?

IT spend optimization is particularly difficult because it spans so many functions, including finance, IT operations, vendor management, architecture, cloud engineering, business stakeholders, and more. Each group has its own priorities. Engineers focus on development, finance on renewals, operations on service and system maintenance, and so on.

As your organization grows and technology options multiply, having clear sponsorship, joint buy-in, and a shared value management framework become major hurdles.

Meanwhile, many organizations struggle to overcome siloed decision making, governance gaps, and reactionary behaviors. IT asset management (ITAM) and FinOps teams can help address these obstacles, though organizations rarely position, fund, or empower them to tackle the many elements of value management.

It's time to bring ITAM and FinOps together

ITAM and FinOps have traditionally lived in separate spheres — ITAM focusing on compliance and risk management, chasing after events, while FinOps works



to maximize value in the cloud. When they work together, and when supported by IT and finance leadership and enabled by trustworthy data, their combined skillsets can dramatically reduce waste.

Some organizations are catching on. Flexera's 2025 State of ITAM Report finds collaboration between FinOps and ITAM teams has grown from last year, from 29% to 43% of respondents, while optimizing and finding savings in software spend will be the top-ranked software asset management (SAM) initiative of 2026.

FinOps and ITAM are core to achieving other objectives such as sustainability, accurate forecasting, and budgeting, as well as demonstrating financial ROI. To realize sustainable value, shift your culture and operations to make optimization a core accountability

across stakeholders. Ensure this shift is supported by leadership, incentives, and daily practices.

How to mobilize your teams toward IT spend optimization

Start by evolving your organization's mindset. Position ITAM and FinOps together as your "technology value" group — your enablers of innovation and control. Their objective will be to optimize costs and deliver governance for clear, efficient processes and informed decision making.

A cross-functional steering group should sponsor and guide technology value contributors, drawing voices across groups, including finance, procurement, engineering, legal, ESG, and more.

Help stakeholders understand their role in the process

Ensure every stakeholder understands their role and the "what's in it for me" benefits of effective value management. You can do this by mapping interdependencies and touchpoints across the technology lifecycle. Include inputs like skills, data sources, knowledge, and toolsets as well as requirements such as reporting, incentives, processes, and outcomes.

Make full use of your personas

Identify what each persona group can contribute and how they stand to benefit from effective value management. Leverage their wide range of capabilities and facilitate an accountability culture that doesn't conflict with each team's primary function.

Gain organization-wide support

Empower your technology value group to engage stakeholders and garner support. Your steering group can aid them by widely communicating the group's mission statement and objectives, building the momentum needed to overcome obstacles and resistance. Set minimum expectations and success criteria alongside areas of prioritization. Review these two-to-four times per year and adjust as you progress.

Reclaim and reinvest wasted IT spend with spend optimization services

Fostering this collaboration between ITAM and FinOps is just the beginning of your IT spend optimization journey. As work begins, you'll realize optimization touches every stage of the IT lifecycle. Each step is an opportunity to contain costs, streamline operations, and achieve measurable business outcomes.

That's why we've aligned our ITAM, FinOps, Licensing Advisory, Long-tail Spend, and Procurement service capabilities into a single, dependable practice: Spend Optimization Services

(SOS). We'll help you break down internal silos and address the roadblocks to IT value realization.

With SOS, IT spend optimization experts will work with you and your stakeholders to identify and eliminate waste, foster support across your business units, create

governance for continual optimization over the long term, and more.

Reclaiming IT spend is an ongoing journey, but you don't have to do it alone.

¹Gartner, Technology Market Essentials Primer for 2025, Niketa Patel, 29 January 2025



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Shane Cronin

TITLE

Head of ITAM & FinOps

SHI DIVISION

Spend Optimization Services

LOCATION

New York City, NY



Shane Cronin makes sure investments deliver real returns.

After watching consultants deliver recommendations that never get executed, Cronin joined SHI to build something different.

For more than a decade, Shane Cronin has seen the same pattern play out with hundreds of clients: First, they bring in expensive consultants to focus on the clear tactical problems across the organization. However, the ideas in the polished decks stop short of enacting real change due to a company's lack of budget, people, frameworks, or, at times, all three.

Over the years, Cronin noticed how SHI was going a step further and solving these problems for its clients by delivering

business value through technology spend optimization. This drove him to join the organization in April 2025 as the Head of ITAM & FinOps Services.

"Most companies have limited visibility to their software and cloud spend," Cronin says. "Most are still challenged with licensing renewals and in realizing value from their investments, or they're getting audited by major publishers. To make our customers successful, we have to meet them where they are, while delivering a world-class experience."

"SHI is investing not just in the capability of ITAM and FinOps, and there's not just aggressive goals to be a leader in this space. SHI's primary focus is the customer experience."

The problem nobody wants to admit

Across most enterprises, technology decisions don't fail because teams lack intent. They fail because stakeholders are operating from different vantage points. Engineering focuses on innovation outcomes, Finance monitors budget adherence, Legal manages contractual risk, and business units pursue their own KPIs. Each group makes rational decisions within its own context, but without a unified data foundation or shared governance model, organizations experience fragmented spend, inconsistent reporting, and technology programs that never reach their full potential.

Cronin's team specializes in bridging that fragmentation. Instead of asking customers to adopt an ideal-state framework on day one, they meet organizations exactly where they are. Many customers begin with limited visibility, inconsistent processes, or insufficient tooling. The team starts by identifying the most accessible opportunities for value capture, such as a high-risk renewal, a cloud cost anomaly, a compliance exposure, or an underutilized investment. These early wins create the credibility and momentum needed to bring stakeholders together around a single, data-driven narrative.

From that foundation, SHI builds the platform required for true executive alignment. By translating technical findings

into financial outcomes, risk profiles, and operational impacts tailored to each stakeholder group, Cronin's team helps organizations replace siloed decision-making with a unified strategy rooted in real data from their environment. The result is a shared understanding of where value is being created or lost, along with a coordinated plan to improve spend efficiency, organizational maturity, and long-term technology governance.

Delivering tangible customer outcomes

Since joining SHI, Cronin has prioritized delivering real, measurable outcomes for customers by integrating commercial and technical expertise within his team. Combining business case analyses, total cost of ownership assessments and spend optimization with hands-on technical execution, SHI ensures that clients receive holistic solutions tailored to their needs.

For example, when supporting AI implementations, customers are not only shown the potential of AI through demos and prototypes, but they also receive clear financial guidance. This includes articulating the value for decision-makers, calculating the total cost of ownership, and putting controls in place to manage expenses post-deployment. Cronin emphasizes that this unified, outcome-driven approach sets SHI apart in the market. While other providers may stay siloed due to internal structures, SHI's focus remains on what matters most: delivering seamless, effective

solutions that address the full spectrum of customer challenges. As Cronin puts it: *"Customers don't care about our org chart. They care about getting results."*

The execution advantage

There's another differentiator Cronin emphasizes. SHI has scale that translates into execution capability, not just advisory services.

"Compared to similar organizations, we have more technical and product experts on hand to provide deep expertise across thousands of software publishers as well as hardware, which is unique in the industry," says Cronin. *"Our major investments into AI, through our SHI AI Labs, gives us an advantage because of the opportunity to build upon FinOps principles and drive usage of best practices for emerging technology, which is something the traditional ITAM and FinOps practices haven't done."*

This distinction matters when recommendations need to become reality. Any consultant can build a deck outlining optimization opportunities. Having teams who can execute those changes, who can turn off unused subscriptions or renegotiate contracts or implement new processes, requires different infrastructure.

"I could build a pretty PowerPoint all day and say, 'Here's what you should do,' but their IT team doesn't have 100 people to do it," Cronin says. *"At SHI we have those resources to operationalize on behalf of our customers, turning advice into reality."*

Beyond cost control

The conversation around technology spend is shifting.

For years, the focus stayed on cost control and budget management: Don't overspend. Stay compliant. Avoid audit exposure. Those concerns remain valid, but Cronin sees the discussion evolving toward something broader.

"We're starting to pivot to, 'Am I getting the value of that investment?'" Cronin says. "If we believe investing in AI is going to drive revenue, for example, and you can calculate and manage that ROI instead of worrying about the budget ... I would argue that if I could prove that I could get \$10 back for every dollar I spent, you'd give me all the money in the world." With the investment into SHI AI Labs, SHI can utilize AI adaptive

cost modeling to help organizations measure and optimize the value of their AI investments.

It's a different framing. Instead of asking Finance for approval to spend, IT leaders can demonstrate they're generating measurable returns. The shift requires better data, better frameworks, and better ways to track outcomes. And it changes the nature of the conversation with executive leadership.

Meeting the moment

Customers engaging with Cronin's team typically aren't starting from scratch, yet they might not possess the operational maturity that some vendors assume. These clients often face challenges, encounter risks, and require support to establish effective frameworks for managing increased complexity.

The transformation practice, integrated commercial and technical perspectives, execution proficiency, and commitment to thoroughly understanding each client's unique circumstances all demonstrate a strategic focus on prioritizing customer experience.

"Ultimately, the purpose is to serve our customers," Cronin states. "They are the most critical stakeholders." While the principle is straightforward, building an organization that consistently adheres to this vision presents significant challenges. For Cronin, this work is both meaningful and necessary: not only assisting businesses in optimizing technology expenditures, but also reshaping perceptions of value, risk, and potential by partnering effectively.

"Compared to similar organizations, we have more technical and product experts on hand to provide deep expertise across thousands of software publishers as well as hardware, which is unique in the industry."



Russell Cantwell

TITLE

Lead Field Chief Technology Officer

SHI DIVISION

Advanced Solutions Group

LOCATION

Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

Russell Cantwell believes IT decisions shape revenue — and he's built a career proving it.

Today, he leads of team of former CIOs and CTOs helping IT departments prove their strategic value.

Russell Cantwell was 19 years old when layoffs hit the organization where he worked. Everyone in the IT department immediately started updating their resumes. He had no idea why.

When he asked, they told him what seemed obvious to them. IT would be the first to go. They were an expense to the company. Cantwell, who had some finance background, couldn't make sense of it. He saw IT's role differently.

When he watched basketball, the person who made the shot wasn't the one who scored in his mind. He saw the four or five things that happened before that, the assists and positioning that created the opportunity. That's how he viewed IT.

"In my mind, the decision you make on a storage array can be what dictates your revenue for the next nine months. ..." Cantwell says. *"But IT as a cost center was obvious at that time. So, I made it basically my life's mission to combat the notion that IT is just a cost center."*



Three months after those layoffs, the company pulled almost the entire IT team back. They realized what Cantwell already understood about the importance of IT.

Twenty years later, Cantwell serves as SHI's Lead Field CTO, overseeing a Strategic Technology Office staffed with former CIOs, CTOs, and CISOs who understand what IT leaders face every day. They spend their time helping those leaders shift the conversation with their own executive teams, proving that technology decisions directly impact business outcomes.

The hardware problem that everyone should be talking about

Cantwell's focus shifts based on what customers are dealing with in real time. Two months ago, he was thinking about lifecycle management and hyperautomation. Then the hardware supply situation changed.

Now he's focused on a different question. What happens to a customer's business if they can't receive a server in calendar year 2026?

Major players are buying up manufacturing capacity for AI infrastructure. Hardware backlogs are growing. Lead times are extending. Some customers might not be able to get the equipment they need when they need it. The constraints could be worse than what organizations experienced during COVID-19.

That creates immediate planning challenges. If your first-choice hardware isn't available in reasonable timeframes, what are the alternatives? How do you maintain operations when supply chains create constraints? What gets prioritized when budget exists but hardware doesn't?

His team works through these scenarios before customers face them in crisis mode. Customers live these constraints day to day. They're making decisions about what to deploy, what to defer, what alternatives exist. SHI's role is having those conversations early, bringing options, helping customers plan around uncertainty.

"Do we have all the answers for right now? No. Do we have thoughts? Absolutely," Cantwell says.

Why independence makes the difference

One reason SHI can help customers navigate these challenges is independence. At organizations heavily tied to specific manufacturers, recommendations get constrained by partner relationships. SHI's scale and breadth of partnerships changes that dynamic.

Cantwell can evaluate options based purely on whether they make sense for a customer's specific situation. When a preferred vendor has extended lead times, he can look at alternatives without political constraints. When an emerging technology vendor might solve a problem faster, he can validate whether they're technically and fiscally viable for enterprise deployment.

That independence is critical when market conditions shift rapidly. Hardware shortages force trade-offs. Customers need guidance they can trust about which trade-offs make sense and which create bigger problems down the road.



SHI works with established partners but also qualifies new entrants constantly. The company sold the first Pure Storage array years ago. We work with newer companies and assess whether these vendors can deliver for enterprise customers when traditional options face constraints.

Cantwell's Strategic Technology Office brings that same approach to broader planning challenges. As former IT operations professionals, his team understands budget constraints, supply chain issues, and the pressure of making decisions with incomplete information because they've faced those challenges themselves. And customers are better for it.

What matters in the end

The lesson from when Cantwell was 19 still holds. Technology decisions matter. The people making those decisions matter.

Hardware shortages are just the current example of why IT needs to operate strategically rather than reactively. The challenge will shift again. Two months from now, Cantwell might be focused on something entirely different. But the principle stays constant.

His team's job is to help organizations approach technology decisions with the right perspective. Not as expenses to minimize, but as investments that shape what the business can do — and with enough lead time to plan effectively.

Ready to innovate without the risk? Find your breakthrough at SHI's AI & Cyber Labs

Imagine. Experiment. Adopt. SHI's certified experts are there for every step.

By Laura Torres

The pressure on IT leaders to deliver on the promise of AI and prove the ROI is immense. The last thing they need is another failed pilot that burns through budget and credibility. But we've seen this happen time and time again.

Organizations rush into AI deployments without proper validation, only to hit integration roadblocks, security gaps, or performance issues that could have been caught early.

But here's what we've also seen: The teams that *do* properly validate deploy AI solutions 40% faster than their peers, with fewer post-deployment issues, and they're building game-changing, competitive advantages.

In SHI's AI & Cyber Labs, we have created a space where innovation, experimentation, and enterprise enablement converge — where you can *actually* break things safely in testing before they break in production.

The vision behind SHI's AI & Cyber Labs

Our AI & Cyber Labs were born from a simple but powerful idea: to give organizations a safe, scalable, and cutting-edge environment to test, build, and deploy AI and cybersecurity solutions.

But the labs also came from frustration. Too many came to us after costly failures, asking, "Why wouldn't this work with our existing systems?" Now, our customers are asking different questions: "How quickly can we scale this to other departments?" and "What's our next AI opportunity?"

"The introduction of SHI's AI & Cyber Labs will empower many organizations to bring both clarity and speed to their AI efforts, helping them identify use cases with strong ROI and the best way to achieve the shortest time to value," said Thai Lee, SHI President and CEO. *"With the new AI & Cyber Labs, we are fulfilling our ongoing promise to help our customers solve what's next."*

Whether you're a CIO exploring generative AI or a CISO preparing for the next wave of cyber threats, the labs provide the tools and expertise to turn ideas into action. We've built an enterprise-



Alongside distinguished guests, partners, and customers, SHI celebrated the ribbon-cutting of a space built to accelerate innovation.

grade environment and experience where you can identify and validate high-impact AI use cases and stress-test solutions against your workflows, data, and security requirements. Our testing environment reflects your actual production environment, spanning multiple clouds, systems, and security controls.

We've learned the devil is always in the integration details. Yet, that's where most AI projects stumble. Here, you can "*fail fast, win faster,*" increasing the probability of a successful deployment where it counts.

What the labs offer

SHI's AI & Cyber Labs are a fully operational innovation hub, designed to accelerate your AI journey from ideation to deployment. This includes:

1. Generative AI sandbox

We've built environments that mirror the complexity of real enterprise deployments. Explore the latest in large language models (LLMs), computer vision, and multimodal AI. Test real-world use cases like document summarization, chatbot development, and intelligent automation using your actual data, with your security policies, against your performance requirements.

2. Cybersecurity simulation and testing

Run security exercises and testing, simulate advanced persistent threats (APTs), and evaluate your security posture in a controlled environment.

3. High-performance data infrastructure

Leverage enterprise-grade compute, storage, and networking powered by NVIDIA GPUs and SHI's robust architecture to support AI workloads at scale. Run the same hardware configurations you'll need in production, so you can actually validate performance and cost projections.

4. AI workbench for rapid prototyping

Build, train, and deploy AI models using pre-configured environments and curated datasets — ideal for proof-of-concept (POC) development and pilot testing. We help you test integration with your existing systems from day one, creating working solutions that integrate seamlessly and dramatically reduce deployment timelines.

Partnerships that power innovation

We've partnered with leading providers to deliver a hands-on experience equipped with next-generation solutions, including:

Multi-cloud testing environments: Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure with cross-cloud connectivity. We can replicate your exact cloud configuration, including those hybrid setups that make demos crash.

Enterprise-grade infrastructure: NVIDIA DGX H200s and Quantum-2 InfiniBand networking. Try the same gear you'll be buying, configured the way you'll deploy it.

Security-first approach: Integration with tools from Cisco, Okta, and Palo Alto Networks. We test security integration from the start, not as a bolt-on addition.

Test drive state-of-the-art AI technology and benchmark performance while running your AI models and solutions. Get compute power from top OEMs, choose from storage platforms, explore networking, and leverage security tools from industry leaders. We'll help you document everything — performance metrics, integration requirements, security findings, and more — so you have the evidence you need for your deployment planning.

Find your next breakthrough in the labs

Whether you need a workshop, a POC, or a full-scale pilot, SHI's team of experts is here to help you succeed with whatever solution works for your environment. You'll have access to hundreds of our AI-certified architects, data scientists, and engineers, delivering:

- Specialized support to engineer and scale generative AI applications that integrate with your existing systems.
- Expert guidance in decision-making, lab testing, customization, and integrations based on what we've learned from similar deployments.
- A vendor-neutral, structured approach for environment replication, testing, evidence-based planning, and enterprise documentation that will satisfy your most skeptical stakeholders.

We help with AI readiness assessments, AI literacy and adoption services, AI use case workshops, two-week targeted POCs, six-week solution testing, custom programs, and more. Our goal is to give you the confidence and documentation you need to move forward — or the evidence you need to pivot before you waste resources. Move easily from imagination and experimentation to full-scale implementation; our labs are co-located with SHI's Data Center Factory (DCF), enabling an end-to-end solution approach to global procurement, testing, and deployment of AI infrastructure.

"Every organization is on a unique AI journey," said Jack Hogan, SHI Vice President of Advanced Growth Technologies. "SHI's next-generation generative AI lab allows us to meet customers where they are on that journey, at any stage or on-ramp, through a consultative, collaborative, experimentation-as-a-service approach."

AI isn't magic, and it's not going to solve every problem. But when implemented thoughtfully, with proper testing and validation, it can deliver transformative results.

"With the new AI & Cyber Labs, we are fulfilling our ongoing promise to help our customers solve what's next."

Jack Hogan

TITLE

Vice President

DIVISION

Advanced Growth Technologies

LOCATION

Orange County, California



Jack Hogan doesn't need to be the smartest person in the room. He just wants to be in the room.

As SHI's VP of Advanced Growth Technologies, he's positioned himself to see AI's possibilities across every industry — and translate them for customers navigating the most expensive technology decisions they've ever made.

He was working in financial services, fresh out of college and heading down the investment banking route. The program was successful. What he didn't know then was that he was using the

early foundational elements of what would eventually become modern artificial intelligence (AI).

Thirty years later, he's helping companies navigate AI decisions that make currency predictions look straightforward. As SHI's VP of Advanced Growth Technologies, Hogan leads a team of more than 200 people focused on the full stack — from data center concrete and power requirements to the applications users interact with daily.

He's lived all three sides of the technology triangle. At LifeScript, where he spent 19 years as co-founder and CTO, he was the customer making infrastructure bets. He managed dozens of data centers, processed tens of billions of transactions per month, and was a pioneer and very early adopter of transformative technologies including server virtualization, high-density compute, all flash storage, and hybrid multi-cloud infrastructure deployments.

Then he moved to Pure Storage as VP of Technology Strategy, building go-to-market approaches and unique product offerings for SaaS, MSP, data center, and cloud hyperscalers, and was responsible for developing partnerships with Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, and major global data center providers.

He came to SHI in mid-2024 because he'd been frustrated with value-added resellers (VARs) that didn't really add value. The ones that processed transactions instead of bringing consultative expertise.

Having experienced customer-side pressures, limited vendor capabilities, and unfulfilled partner potential, he now has a perspective that most people in his role don't have. He's seen what works, what fails, and what gets promised versus what gets delivered. That's what makes him effective at helping customers make decisions today that will matter in three, five, even 10 years.

Translating what Jensen says into what it means

Hogan follows market trends closely. He tracks analysts, maintains relationships with thought leaders, and pays attention to what's happening at the design level of physical infrastructure. When Jensen Huang, CEO of NVIDIA, announced that the next-generation "Vera Rubin" line of GPUs would ship this year, most people heard about faster processing. Hogan heard something else.

The power requirements doubled from the last generation. That means racks are drawing 300 kilowatts (kW) of power. Five years ago, a 10-kW rack was considered large. Now, the industry is marching toward one megawatt racks and beyond. Huang said customers could expect a five times improvement in tokens generated per unit of power. When you can get an 80% or 90% gain instead of 10%, that changes what's possible for a business.

Hogan's role is connecting those dots. Taking what gets announced on stage and translating it into what customers need to prepare for now.

Proving AI before buying it

SHI invested in our new advanced AI & Cyber Labs for a specific reason. Customers can't afford to trust marketing claims when they're making decisions that could define their competitive position for the next five years.

Our labs give customers a place to test real workloads with real data before they spend the big money on infrastructure of their own. Engineers validate whether the specific outcomes customers are looking for can be achieved with

the configuration they're considering. They test data quality, data pipelines, networking, storage, and applications. They optimize for NVIDIA stacks, CUDA layers, or open source alternatives depending on what makes sense.

Right now, AI projects are failing for a variety of reasons. The labs exist to validate most of those potential failure points before the purchase order gets signed.

The questions that matter

When customers come to SHI shopping on price, Hogan's team takes a step back because they want to know what the customer is trying to achieve.

Do they have liquid cooling capabilities? Do they understand what it means to put liquid cooling in a data center? Do they have staff who can manage Kubernetes clusters at scale? Do they understand the difference between InfiniBand and RoCE networks? Do they know what happens when they hit scaling limits?

These questions aren't about creating obstacles. They're about making sure the system will deliver what the customer expects.

"Cost is only one factor," Hogan says. "Is it actually going to output what you thought it was going to be outputting? We can test that, validate that in the lab. We can give them informed decisions."

Technology is changing rapidly enough that yesterday's chip can be 20%-80% less efficient than tomorrow's. Customers need someone who can help them traverse those decisions. SHI's scale and breadth of partnerships give Hogan's team the independence to evaluate what makes sense for a specific situation.

What's possible in the next five years

Hogan talks about data as the new oil. It's a phrase from Clive Humby, a British researcher who used it in 2006 and got mocked for it. At the time, there weren't refinery capabilities to make the analogy work. Those capabilities exist now.

Data isn't just databases or documents anymore. Camera feeds and video feeds are data. Vision AI is opening up possibilities that didn't exist a few years ago. Vail, Colorado used 120 existing cameras around town for early wildfire detection. That's a public safety application no one imagined when those cameras were installed.

Digital twins and synthetic data let companies build and validate entire factories virtually before breaking ground. Physical AI is making robotics spatially aware and dramatically more efficient. Hogan came back from CES '26 talking about robotic lawn mowers, pool cleaners, and vacuums that can navigate their environments intelligently.

The combination of deep reasoning models and simple reactionary models is creating systems that function more like the human body. Hogan uses blinking as an example. Humans blink regularly without thinking about it — an involuntary reaction that doesn't require deep reasoning. But they can also close their eyes intentionally when needed. AI systems are starting to operate with that same kind of layered intelligence.

"These are all just tools," Hogan says. "The next generation is now using these as operating systems."



What excites him most is how these tools can create entirely new business lines for customers, not just improve productivity. A manufacturing customer using vision AI to optimize factory floor operations might discover applications in quality control they never considered. A healthcare organization working on patient data analysis might find ways to predict equipment failures.

SHI sees customers across every industry applying AI in new ways, and that cross-pollination of ideas is where the real innovation happens.

Being in the room

Hogan doesn't need to be the expert on every emerging technology. He needs to see what's working across industries and translate those insights for customers making decisions under pressure with incomplete information.

SHI's approach — Imagine, Experiment, Adopt — helps customers think beyond immediate problems to what might be possible. The

AI lab gives them a place to test before committing. The team's interrogative customer engagement approach ensures they understand the real implications of their choices.

Thirty years after programming neural networks to predict currency futures, Hogan is still working with AI. The technology has changed dramatically. His role has changed. But the fundamental challenge remains the same: taking complex technology and figuring out what it means for the business outcomes people are trying to achieve.

Hogan has positioned himself to be in the room where those conversations happen. That's where he needs to be.

“These are all just tools... The next generation is now using these as operating systems.”

CASE STUDY

The first agentic AI smart city solution is here: Explore what's possible

Discover the Unleash AI innovation powered by SHI, HPE, NVIDIA, and our ISV partners Kamiwaza AI, ProHawk AI, Vaidio, and Blackshark.ai.

By Jack Hogan
October 28, 2025

What comes to mind when you think of Vail, Colorado?

Ski slopes, mountain air, and postcard views.

But for the town of Vail's leaders, the vision reaches further: creating a community that's safer, more accessible, and more connected — using the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

That vision is coming to life through the HPE Agentic Smart City Solution, supported by SHI, HPE, NVIDIA, and the Unleash AI Partner Program, with contributions from leading ISVs Kamiwaza AI, ProHawk AI, Vaidio, and Blackshark.ai.

AI for good: From possibility to blueprint

The HPE Agentic Smart City Solution reimagines what an AI-enabled municipality can look like. Rather

than isolated pilots or single-purpose apps, it provides a unified framework where agentic AI coordinates multiple systems — from data analysis to resident engagement — across departments.

An agentic AI Smart City:

- Applies the right intelligence at the right time to solve real-world problems.
- Securely connects infrastructure, applications, and data to deliver scalable services.
- Meets compliance and accessibility requirements while improving daily life for residents and visitors.

Built on HPE Private Cloud AI, developed with NVIDIA, and accelerated by NVIDIA RTX PRO 6000 Blackwell Server Edition GPUs, the HPE Agentic Smart City Solution combines performance and control. Through SHI's integration and lifecycle services, it arrives as a turnkey,

repeatable model that any municipality can adopt — whether you're improving safety, streamlining operations, or expanding digital access.

The Vail proof point

The town of Vail will be the first to deploy the HPE Agentic Smart City Solution.

Initial applications demonstrate both breadth and depth:

- **Fire prevention:** Using ProHawk AI and Vaidio, camera networks will detect early signs of smoke and fire, enhanced by Kamiwaza's agentic reasoning and Blackshark.ai's geospatial mapping to assess risk before incidents escalate.
- **Digital accessibility:** A Kamiwaza-powered Section 508 solution will automate compliance across public websites and digital assets, ensuring inclusive access for all.

- **AI concierge:** An intelligent civic assistant will answer visitor and resident questions instantly – from parking to public events – through voice and text interfaces.
- **Housing automation:** AI will streamline deed-restriction compliance and reporting, turning hours of manual work into minutes.

These are just the starting points. The same agentic AI backbone can extend to traffic management, environmental monitoring, and dozens of future use cases – all using the same integrated infrastructure.

Ecosystem in action

No technology provider can deliver enterprise-grade AI alone. The HPE Agentic Smart City Solution showcases how ecosystem collaboration turns innovation into impact:

- SHI provides program leadership, integration, and the AI & Cyber Labs where cities can test and validate solutions.
- HPE delivers secure, scalable infrastructure foundation through Private Cloud AI, which is part of the NVIDIA AI Computing by HPE portfolio.
- NVIDIA accelerates workloads with RTX PRO 6000 Blackwell Server Edition GPUs optimized for edge and data-center performance.
- Kamiwaza AI, ProHawk AI, Vaidio, and Blackshark.ai contribute specialized software that brings intelligence to accessibility, vision, reasoning, and geospatial domains.

Together under the Unleash AI Partner Program, this partnership creates solutions greater than the sum of our parts.

Why it matters

Cities everywhere are under pressure to do more with less. They're expected to improve safety, manage resources, and meet new compliance standards while budgets stay flat. The HPE Agentic Smart City Solution gives them a head start:

- **Market opportunity:** Municipalities can now adopt secure, scalable AI beyond pilots and proofs of concept.
- **Differentiation:** Leverage one of the first production-ready platforms for running multiple AI workloads on shared infrastructure.
- **Customer impact:** Deliver real-time, measurable outcomes, from faster emergency response to inclusive digital access.
- **Strategic value:** Demonstrate the power of the Unleash AI ecosystem to accelerate adoption across the public sector.

The art of the possible

For SHI's AI & Cyber Labs, this is just the beginning. The same framework that will support the town of Vail can be replicated and customized for other municipalities – large or small – to explore new use cases, validate integrations, and scale AI with confidence.

"AI is helping accelerate the ability to create better digital access and process improvements," said Jack Hogan, Vice President of Advanced Growth Technologies at SHI. *"It's about helping governments deliver more efficient systems – and agentic AI is making that real for smart cities."*

Building the blueprint together

The town's HPE Agentic Smart City Solution deployment will be a model for what's next. By combining vision, infrastructure, and ecosystem collaboration, the Unleash AI Partner Program is redefining what it means to build *intelligent cities with purpose*.





SERVICES CORNER

SHI AI Solutions

We know there is an AI transformation journey to be taken before technology decisions are made. This is not a single event but a strategic process.

This journey involves focusing on business goals, addressing lines of business needs, and considering broader organizational adoption impacts.

We have created a successful AI business model that will allow you to:



Imagine

Align AI with business goals



Experiment

SHI AI & Cyber Labs



Adopt

Develop a holistic strategy

SHI has successfully guided organizations through their AI journeys – helping them drive tangible business value, experiment in our unique state-of-the-art AI & Cyber Labs, and implement solutions that deliver measurable outcomes – all while working within existing systems and teams.

Take your AI journey with us, and we will help you build a successful business transformation.



Imagine. Experiment. Adopt.

AI & Cyber Labs

Accelerate AI innovation by prototyping, testing, and deploying AI use cases in cutting-edge facilities.

The SHI® AI & Cyber Labs empower you to explore the latest AI solutions and confidently deploy new technologies. With help from our AI experts, you can easily accelerate innovation and integrate leading AI solutions across your entire organization.

Bring your AI strategy to life

Imagine. Experiment. Adopt. This is our methodology for helping your organization scale generative AI solutions that deliver business results and quantifiable ROI.

We have developed a proven AI business collaboration model that will allow you to define your business needs and gain critical insights to design and architect your AI solution. Our approach begins by guiding organizations through this fast-evolving landscape to imagine new business outcomes made possible with AI and to identify and prioritize top use cases that are strategically aligned with your business objectives and goals.

We give you the ability to do something unique with SHI – experiment and rapidly validate prototypes of your AI solutions – in our unique, state-of-the-art **AI & Cyber Labs**, designed to support your AI solution infrastructure and implementations.

About SHI AI & Cyber Labs

Our AI & Cyber Labs are purpose-built to enable enterprise-grade ideation, experimentation, and adoption. We empower organizations like yours to imagine what's possible with AI, experiment in secure, scalable environments designed for rapid prototyping and production rollout, and adopt solutions with confidence – backed by our deep expertise in infrastructure, data governance, and enterprise AI.

You'll benefit from:

- Our vendor-neutral expertise.
- Pre-validated architectures that minimize your technical debt and security vulnerabilities, all while accelerating your time to value.
- Efficiency gains and failure prevention: SHI customers achieve 20-40% efficiency gains while maintaining enterprise security and compliance.

SHI AI solutions

We know there is an AI transformation journey to be taken before technology decisions are made. This is not a single event but a strategic process. This journey involves focusing on business goals, addressing lines of business needs, and considering broader organizational adoption impacts.

We have created a successful AI business collaboration model that will allow you to:



Imagine

Prepare to innovate with structured generative AI readiness assessments and workshops. These will identify three to five viable AI use cases that align with your infrastructure and objectives, focusing on those with the highest technical feasibility and business impact.



Experiment

SHI's AI & Cyber Labs provide a sandbox for validating AI solutions with your actual data, workloads, and integration requirements across leading platforms. Our data scientists and AI architects will enable proofs of concept in two to six weeks, significantly reducing the trial-and-error phase.



Adopt

Implement solutions with our phased approach, which integrates with your security controls, governance frameworks, and compliance requirements. You can expect to complete initial production deployments in 12 weeks, with defined milestones and technical validation at each stage.

SHI has successfully guided organizations through their AI journeys, helping them drive tangible business value, experiment in our AI & Cyber Labs, and implement solutions that deliver measurable outcomes, all while working within existing systems and teams.

SHI AI & Cyber Labs solutions and modules

We deliver hands-on solution modules that showcase the art of the possible – empowering you to experiment, validate, and scale enterprise-ready AI securely and at speed.

- SHI FineTune (Fine-tuning-as-a-service)
- SHI Digital AI Ambassador
- SHI AI Fraud Detection Service
- SHI Multi Modal ChatAgent
- SHI GenAI Lab
- SHI Agentic Event Planner
- SHI RAG Studio
- SHI AI Report Generator

“SHI is a full-stack, one-stop shop for AI solutions.”

“SHI recently achieved status as an NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD Specialization Partner.”

— SENIOR LEADERS AT NVIDIA GTC 2025



FAST FACTS

Infrastructure and investment at SHI's Data Center Factory at Ridge:

\$20M investment

Facilities upgrades, advanced technology systems, and personnel

Total Facility

394,255 square feet

60+ GPUs

Deployed in the lab (L40s, H100s, and H200s)

Building power

13,200 medium voltage switchgear

Backup power

2x 1500 KW diesel generators; current: 4 MW (capable of 8 MW)

2MW

Solar array on roof



Are you at **one** with your technology refresh cycles?

SHI One tracks your upcoming software renewals and end-of-life hardware dates, so you're never caught unprepared again.

Renew. Refresh. Relax.

One.SHI.com

Why AI demands a new kind of infrastructure — and how to build it

AI demands more power, more cooling, and smarter orchestration. Is your infrastructure ready?

By Dan Vargas

Traditional data centers were built for predictable workloads. Then artificial intelligence (AI) happened.

A single AI rack now demands as much as 20 times more power than traditional servers require. That's like trying to power an entire city block through a household electrical outlet.

According to Berkeley Lab's "2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report," data centers consumed 4.4% of U.S. electricity in 2023. That figure is projected to reach as much as 12% by 2028 as AI workloads multiply. Tech giants Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, and Microsoft poured over \$350 billion into AI-ready facilities in their respective 2025 fiscal years, while legacy systems buckle under the new demands.

Software-defined data centers offer a path forward, but only

for organizations ready to abandon their attachment to outdated infrastructure approaches.

Why legacy infrastructure can't handle AI demands

AI places a technical strain on infrastructure, and as these workloads grow, their energy demands ripple through budgets and drive up costs across the board.

The power crisis is already hitting budgets. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis notes that PJM capacity prices will have jumped from \$28.92 per megawatt(MW)-day in 2024 to \$329.17 per MW-day in 2026, driven largely by data center demand. In Virginia, for instance, the state's Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission projects that residential customers could



see bills rise \$14-37 monthly by 2040 due to generation costs driven by data center expansion.

Legacy data centers also cannot support edge computing requirements. AI inference often needs to happen closer to where data originates, requiring distributed infrastructure that traditional centralized architectures simply cannot provide.

Software-defined data centers solve these problems by using software to manage configuration and dynamically shape infrastructure to match demand. This approach provides enhanced security and increased agility.

Building AI-ready infrastructure, step by step

Creating software-defined infrastructure requires addressing current needs while planning for future growth.

1. Plan for power and cooling

...because advanced systems support power densities exceeding 150 kW per rack. Sustainability compliance adds complexity. Under the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact, Europe requires data centers to operate using 100% renewable energy



by 2030. Power planning must now incorporate renewable energy sourcing and carbon footprint management.

2. Build your software foundation

Choose management overlays based on your infrastructure requirements. Today, most data center switching vendors have aligned around VxLAN Fabric (also known as EVPN-VxLAN) as the primary architecture for modern data centers. This design enables scalable, resilient Layer 2 and Layer 3 connectivity across distributed environments — a critical requirement for AI workloads. The result is a flexible underlay that supports dynamic policy management, microsegmentation, and the high east-west traffic volumes AI demands.

3. Select orchestration platforms that coordinate the entire stack automatically

The selection of automation tools — such as Ansible, Terraform, and other infrastructure-as-code solutions — plays a critical role in streamlining provisioning, policy enforcement, and lifecycle management. Modern platforms include AI-powered capabilities that can predict failures and trigger self-healing policies without human intervention.

4. Design for shared economics and edge integration

Last summer, SNS Insider projected that the multi-tenant data center

market will grow from \$39.86 billion in 2023 to \$112.38 billion by 2032 as organizations realize they cannot afford dedicated AI infrastructure. Multi-tenant environments enable cost sharing for expensive AI hardware while maintaining security through logical separation.

5. Plan for rapid scaling

AI demands fluctuate dramatically between training phases and inference workloads. Your software-defined infrastructure must accommodate these variations without manual reconfiguration.

Turn complexity into competitive advantage

Building AI-ready software-defined infrastructure requires expertise that most organizations lack. Power system design for AI workloads, cooling architecture, multi-tenant security frameworks, and orchestration platform selection demand specialized knowledge across multiple technical domains.

That's where SHI comes in.

We eliminate this complexity through end-to-end infrastructure transformation expertise. We assess your current environment, design power and cooling upgrades, and architect software-defined solutions that support your AI requirements while maintaining security and compliance. And our services extend beyond

infrastructure. We help organizations navigate the entire AI journey — from early exploration and prototyping to full-scale deployment. Through our AI & Cyber Labs, customers can validate use cases, test workflows, and de-risk investments in a safe, expert-led environment.

Our Advanced AI Demo Lab gives teams hands-on access to use cases like code generation, intelligent automation, anomaly detection, vision AI, and conversational interfaces, enabling you to identify the right mix of AI solutions before making major investments.

Our engineers can implement monitoring systems, establish governance frameworks, and optimize performance for AI workloads. This includes selecting orchestration tools, designing multi-tenant architectures that reduce costs while improving security, and planning edge computing integration for future growth.

Additionally, we solve the business case challenge. Our financial modeling quantifies total cost of ownership (TCO), including operational savings from automation and resource optimization, while demonstrating how shared infrastructure reduces AI deployment costs.

The new infrastructure reality

AI infrastructure costs make dedicated data centers unaffordable for most organizations. Multi-tenant software-defined infrastructure makes them accessible.

The organizations building AI-ready facilities — or looking at shared colocation AI workload offerings — today will have competitive advantages tomorrow. Those waiting for costs to drop will find themselves priced out of the infrastructure they need.

3 strategic AI frameworks to move from experiment to execution

How to build AI infrastructure, establish secure governance, and prove value to your stakeholders.

By Lauren Baines

Remember the halcyon days of artificial intelligence, when your coworker asked ChatGPT to write his out-of-office vacation message as a limerick? Or when your teenager prompted it to write a rap battle between a revolutionary hero and a current chart-topper for school?

Those experimental days are over.

AI is now a core business driver that requires a new operational framework to lead your organization into the future. Successfully scaling AI across the enterprise means revisiting your infrastructure, shoring up your governance, and reassessing your value indicators.

At our recent SHI Summit — Scaling smarter: Infrastructure for the AI era — leaders from SHI and beyond shared real-world insights to help you build the operational AI frameworks needed to move your visionary projects from experimentation to execution.

1. Build specialized, scalable AI infrastructure

The infrastructure your organization built a few years back may still be well-positioned for a pre-AI world. But AI's compute and cooling demands are forcing innovative organizations to rethink their infrastructure strategies entirely.

On-prem versus cloud versus hybrid infrastructure

Ian Fisk, Chief Technology Officer of the Simons Foundation, has found that the best way for his organization to afford AI projects is to bring its infrastructure on-prem. He likened the economies of scale to obtaining a car; while the cost of

purchasing a car initially exceeds that of a rental, it would be far more expensive over time to rent indefinitely because the car rental agency needs to make a profit — as do cloud providers.

Of course, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to infrastructure. But we're already seeing some shifts. In a poll of SHI's summit attendees, 23% indicated they're already running production AI workloads on-prem, while only 8% are cloud-only for AI workloads. The rest are still developing their AI strategies and evaluating how they want to shape their infrastructure for 2026 and beyond.

AI-ready cooling strategies

Beyond infrastructure location, organizations must build cooling strategies and consult unlikely sources for assistance. Concerns about the amount of particulate in water lines and filter systems for water safety mean IT leaders must now check in with plumbers on a regular cadence. When asked about their primary cooling strategies for high-density AI workloads, 44% of summit attendees admitted they're still hoping for the best with traditional air cooling, while 27% have pivoted to hybrid air and liquid cooling solutions. But even these modernized strategies bring their own questions.

Liquid-cooled servers require a pipe connecting the cooling system to your server. Who owns the pipe? Who owns the server? If one of the servers gets clogged with particulate, who owns the fix? Your contractor? Facilities? You need an ecosystem of partners involved to ensure you have the right temperature, flow, purity of water, and worker safety measures in place to automatically shut down rack power in the event of a leak.



Upgrading your power system is still a hidden “gotcha” in these nascent days of AI. It requires planned outages, which is often an unpopular conversation — you must sell leadership on downtime for upgrades to infrastructure no one sees. But it’s critical to shift this conversation. Building AI projects requires simultaneously growing your power capacity and cooling strategies.

We recommend that you:

- **Assess** your spare power and cooling capacity.
- **Understand** what you need to successfully launch your AI project.
- **Build** a realistic path between points A and B prior to investing in AI infrastructure.

2. Establish governance frameworks for cost, compliance, and security

As organizations rush to demonstrate value from AI, new risk factors are materializing. Last year, just 43% of organizations believed they had full visibility across their software assets, according to Flexera’s 2025 State of ITAM Report. This is largely because of shadow AI or machine learning (ML) tools in their environments that IT was not previously aware of,

which is putting data at risk every day. Even well-meaning employees are feeding confidential information to public generative AI tools. It’s time to lock these practices down.

Building AI software governance

Governing your AI software stack requires three phases: discovery, management, and optimization. If you haven’t established rules yet, start by defining scope, ownership, and functionality; for instance, are your employees using generative or predictive AI? Talk to your stakeholders to figure out what tools are being used, for what purposes, and what goals. We recommend conducting an employee survey to gather this information, but you can also shore up your investigation by reviewing procurement records to see what’s being expensed. Look into formal AI governance frameworks as guardrails, like NIST AI Risk Management Framework or the ISO/IEC 42001 AI Management system.

Once you understand what your employees are using and what their goals are, integrate with FinOps and start reviewing policies and setting controls. According to Flexera’s 2025 State of ITAM Report, 38% of organizations have ITAM teams working closely with FinOps teams. Get ahead of the curve and start small and iterative. Is that

public chatbot approved in your organization? Are your AI tools providing discriminatory results? Determine which tools you are comfortable with and set boundaries to ensure employees cannot use unapproved solutions. These policies are the foundation of your AI software governance plan.

Post-rollout, treat AI like your other software assets by implementing lifecycle management controls. Who is using it? How much does it cost? Who is paying? When will it be retired? Conduct real-time monitoring and reporting on usage and compliance. Don't wait for the monthly bill to explore spikes; be proactive and understand your data across the organization. And continue to optimize and improve upon your investment — AI will only become more complex over time. But embracing the rush to AI doesn't have to mean chaos.

Meet compliance mandates

Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies, state and local governments, and their contractors to ensure all websites, applications, and digital services are accessible to individuals with disabilities via features like alt text and captions. The Americans with Disabilities Act also uses WCAG to establish web accessibility compliance. State and local governments are required to meet these standards by April 2026 or April 2027, depending on headcount.

To assist public sector organizations with this directive, SHI has released a comprehensive Section 508 compliance solution developed in collaboration with HPE, NVIDIA, and Kamiwaza. This solution "addresses accessibility barriers across visual, auditory, motor, and cognitive needs, ensuring compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards."

Are you embedding accessibility into your AI and cloud initiatives? These steps are foundational for your data, allowing more complex autonomous systems to be built on top of it.

Contain identity sprawl

Traditional identity models are not equipped to handle AI projects. CyberArk estimates that non-human identities in AI-powered enterprises outnumber humans 82:1 — and will soon skyrocket. And with 29% of our summit attendees planning to use agentic AI within the next 12-18 months, it's clear that now is the time to bolster identity and access management (IAM) strategies before a catastrophic breach.

But in this case, the problem and the solution are aligned — intelligent AI-driven IAM is capable of analyzing billions of events in real time to spot threats. Already, AI agents, bots, and IoT devices outnumber human users in many organizations. We're seeing organizations add model context protocol (MCP) interfaces to their IAM solutions to handle this influx of agentic AI. These open-source frameworks standardize how large language models interact with external data, applications, and services.

According to the 2025 IBM Cost of a Data Breach report, organizations using AI-driven security save an average of \$1.9M per breach. By operationalizing your IAM solutions, aligning with zero-trust principles, and reducing identity sprawl, your organization can build more secure user experiences. Our modern IAM playbook can help you build a cohesive strategy across lifecycle and governance, authentication, privileged access management, cloud identity management, customer IAM, and identity threat detection and response.

3. Quantify and communicate AI business value

Without measurable ROI, AI initiatives stall out. That exhilarating look at a time-saving automation or efficiency driver fades away when you can't measure success. To avoid this corporate heartbreak, we recommend embracing FinOps as a strategic enabler of AI that can offer winning functions like cost modeling for generative AI to help support your business case.

When it comes to quantifying AI value, many of the principles you establish in your governance framework can be leveraged again:

- **Inform** — Do you have visibility into what tools you're using and how they are allocated?
- **Optimize** — What does your total utilization look like?
- **Operate** — Are you using data to continuously improve and optimize your AI toolshed?

Adopting a standard methodology for your CIO to review business value and establish accountability goes a long way toward empowering future data-driven decisions. Quantifying the business value of AI requires more than theory. It demands accurate data, targeted frameworks, and strategic calibration across people, process, and technology.

How to create the future in the era of AI

The path to the future isn't paved with AI use cases, incremental improvements, quick wins, and low-hanging fruit. It must start with a bold vision — and the resources to make it happen. AI strategist Brian Evergreen likens this sentiment to building the Duomo di Firenze in Florence, Italy. This UNESCO World Heritage site wasn't built by handing every citizen a shovel and telling them to get to work. Filippo Brunelleschi was a visionary architect, designer, and sculptor who conceived of the brilliant dome and led a team in bringing it to life.

"We're all going to the future," Evergreen noted. *"The difference is how we're going to get there. Are you going to back into it, or are you going to create it?"*

Evergreen argues that as humans, our goal should always be to create new value. In his Total Addressable Value Creation Framework (TAVC), he points out what's addressable by humans and what's addressable by AI agents and implores us to shift our focus. Rather than focusing on using AI to make what humans can already do slightly faster, consider what could be.

"Your career is filled with people telling you what to do next," Evergreen said. *"But that's not where vision comes from. Pick up the mantle, be the visionary leader; data won't tell us and it won't come from trend analysis. Move beyond that to something that would actually be valuable."*

AI is a strategic imperative

Organizations that master these operational AI frameworks will lead us into the future.

SHI offers proven, actionable AI frameworks for CIOs and technology leaders. Our team has deep expertise in FinOps, ITAM, and AI strategy, and our data-driven calibration helps organizations like yours unlock hidden value. Still not sure what solutions are right for your team? You can access, test, and validate technology at our AI & Cyber Labs prior to investing, with guidance from our staff.

It's time to be bold and bring your AI vision from experiment to execution.



"We're all going to the future ... the difference is how we're going to get there. Are you going to back into it, or are you going to create it?"

CASE STUDY

SHI helps iQor modernize IT, streamline operations, and accelerate AI innovation

Customer profile

iQor is a global BPO leader, delivering AI-driven customer experience solutions for Fortune 500 companies.

Solution

SHI developed a modernization plan for iQor, focusing on cloud migration, security, and IT efficiency.

OUTCOMES



AI innovation

SHI helped alleviate iQor's IT burden, enabling them to focus on next-generation AI technology.



Efficiency

SHI helped iQor reduce complexity and cost by streamlining its data center infrastructure from 70 racks to just 10.



Security

SHI helped iQor develop a zero-trust foundation for greater security.

Challenge

iQor is a global business process outsourcing company operating in eight countries across 35 locations. Specializing in customer experience solutions for Fortune 500 companies, iQor leverages cutting-edge technology like AI and private cloud platforms to support complex business needs on demand.

The organization faced challenges in managing its legacy technology infrastructure while advancing its AI strategy. The need to modernize its data centers, transition to cloud computing, and adopt SaaS-based applications was compounded by a lack of strategic IT partnerships. This made it difficult for iQor to allocate resources effectively toward its AI initiatives, which are critical for driving value for its clients.

Solution

To address these challenges, iQor partnered with SHI to develop a comprehensive modernization plan. The collaboration began with detailed strategic planning sessions that brought together teams from across iQor's IT ecosystem, including networking, storage, servers, and application development. These sessions allowed SHI to gain a deep understanding of iQor's long-term goals and create a multi-year roadmap for transformation. A critical focus was on transitioning iQor's compute workloads to the cloud while simultaneously building a new data center. This new facility replaced a legacy 70-rack setup with a streamlined 10-rack solution, significantly reducing operational complexity and cost.

SHI also played a pivotal role in enhancing iQor's security posture. Together, the teams established a foundation for a zero-trust architecture, addressing previous vulnerabilities and positioning iQor for greater resilience. By outsourcing tactical tasks to SHI, iQor was able to reallocate internal resources toward its strategic priorities, particularly its AI initiatives. This partnership also provided essential support for optimizing cloud financial operations, ensuring cost-effective implementation during the migration process.

Outcome

The partnership with SHI delivered transformative outcomes for iQor, enabling the company to achieve its modernization and growth objectives. By transitioning a significant portion of its compute workloads to the cloud and modernizing its infrastructure, iQor achieved greater operational efficiency and reliability. The streamlined data center setup drastically reduced its physical and financial footprint, allowing for more strategic investments elsewhere. iQor's improved security posture also set the stage for a robust zero-trust architecture, ensuring the company's IT framework remains resilient in an increasingly complex threat landscape.

Most importantly, the collaboration with SHI allowed iQor to redirect its focus to its core strength — AI innovation. Freed from the demands of managing legacy systems, iQor's teams could dedicate their efforts to developing cutting-edge AI tools, including its Symphony AI ecosystem and generative AI technologies. These advancements are already driving value for iQor's clients and are projected to propel the company toward accelerated growth in the years ahead. Through this partnership, SHI helped transform iQor's IT operations, enabling it to realize its strategic goals and prioritize innovation for the future.

“This partnership has impacted our innovation and growth by letting us focus on the things that we really want to focus on, which is AI and the development of all of our technologies in that generative AI space.”

— PJ SINGH, CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER, IQOR





How SHI Integration Centers **STREAMLINE** your EUC and data center configuration

See how SHI's End-User Integration Center and Data Center Factories simplify complexity.

By Chris Gibson

We know what you're up against: resource constraints, tight timelines, compliance demands, and the need for specialized expertise. And that's just the start.

You're also facing the challenges of large-scale rollouts, from ensuring device consistency, security, and employee productivity, to managing configurations, software deployments, and tracking IT assets.

We understand because we thrive in tackling the complexities of end-user computing (EUC) and data center solutions, so you don't have to. Our teams configure and ship over 4.5 million devices annually with precision and global scalability, made possible by our SHI Integration Centers.

What are SHI Integration Centers?

SHI Integration Centers are state-of-the-art facilities providing comprehensive warehousing, configuration, and high-quality shipping for everything data center and end-user computing.

SHI's Compliance Management System (CMS) is meticulously designed to deliver safe, secure, and environmentally friendly IT solutions, systems integration, and equipment resale that align with customer requirements. The system adheres to the standards of ISO 9001:2015 and 27001:2022, with compliance verified through annual third-party audits.

SHI's End-User Integration Center (EIC) handles end-user configuration services, while our Data Center Factory (DCF) at Ridge supports data center manufacturing and integration services, and is co-located with our AI & Cyber Labs — where you can experiment with next-generation AI technologies in a secure environment, without the risk.

What capabilities do SHI Integration Centers have?

Procuring devices, accepting and warehousing the delivery, and unboxing and checking the equipment? Check. Imaging laptops or tablets with the right operating system (OS) and settings, and pairing them with the desired peripherals, like screens, docking stations, mice, and more? We're here to help.

Whether you need devices packaged up as a single shipment or individually delivered to an end user's home address, we can meet your specifications. SHI's network of integration centers ensures predictable, repeatable, and high-quality operations worldwide. And our strong partnerships with OEMs guarantee seamless deployment of production-ready solutions for servers, storage, network, and other devices or appliances.

End-User Integration Center

SHI's 305,000-square-foot EIC expands our initiatives in supporting all your configuration needs. With our extended capabilities, multi-vendor network, and advanced security, we can warehouse, configure, and ship your hardware when the time is right for you. The result? Invaluable ease and efficiency of receiving fully configured hardware that is ready to plug and play. We offer a full spectrum of configuration and deployment services, including:

- Asset tagging, device labeling, BIOS settings, component installation, and image installation (Bronze, Silver, and Gold tiers).
- Advanced hardware and mobile device configuration of end-user device imaging.
- Custom kitting and packing, as well as inventory and logistics management.
- AI-ready PC lab for configuring and deploying the latest AI-powered devices.
- Custom stocking, storage, depot, and warranty services.
- Global recovery and sustainable disposal of aging IT equipment.
- Real-time inventory reporting for informed decision-making.

Data Center Factory at Ridge

At SHI's 400,000-square-foot DCF at Ridge, we offer comprehensive integration and configuration services, spanning single-device provisioning deploying to multiple sites, or thousands of fully configured racks for global data center rollouts. The New Jersey facility is the flagship of a global network, including our Data Centre Factory at Nexus in the U.K., Data Center Factory at Tampines in Singapore, and Data Center Factory at Tiel in the Netherlands.

Our team of experts can help you design, build, configure, test, and validate your data center rack configurations. We ship the fully configured racks directly to you for easy installation, ensuring a hassle-free experience.

As a major NVIDIA partner, our technicians are DGX SuperPOD-certified globally, allowing SHI to deploy high-performance AI infrastructure.

AI & Cyber Labs

SHI's DCF at Ridge works in conjunction with our AI & Cyber Labs, allowing you to seamlessly move from experimenting and testing AI solutions to full-scale, global deployment.

Our advanced AI labs offer hands-on experience with cutting-edge AI technologies, enabling you to prototype generative AI applications and test use cases in real-world scenarios.



Collaborate closely with our data scientists, certified AI architects, and engineers to quickly build, rigorously test, and validate AI solutions on a small scale — prior to full production deployment.

Our approach allows you to:

- Explore next-generation AI technology stacks.
- Test and validate use cases.
- Assess the feasibility and impact of AI and large language models (LLMs).
- Integrate large multimodal models (LMMs) with data modalities such as text, images, audio, video, and more.

Five reasons to leverage SHI integration services

Why should your organization trust SHI's integration services?

Here are five reasons:

1. Reduce overhead costs

You only pay for what you use, when you need it — no need to buy storage space to develop your own configuration center.

2. Avoid new labor costs and optimize resources

Instead of hiring and training new IT staff or turning to temporary workers, put your resources where they'll be most beneficial to your business. Free your staff to focus on core objectives without being pulled in multiple directions.

3. Access to expertise and experience

SHI's team of experts is proficient in multiple IT technologies, giving you access to the latest technology and the high-quality support you need.

4. Faster deployment times

Why pause your regular operations to ensure your deployment runs smoothly? SHI works with you to create a customized plan that fits your needs. With preconfigured systems, you'll experience a faster deployment.

5. Decrease risk

SHI works with countless OEMs and stays up to date on industry best practices, taking a vendor-neutral approach to technology. We can help you avoid costly mistakes and maintain flexibility as your business evolves.



Getting started with SHI Integration Centers

Whether you need advanced server rack and stack, hardware and mobile device configuration, server and end-user device imaging, hard asset tagging, custom kitting and packing, or inventory and logistics management, we have you covered.

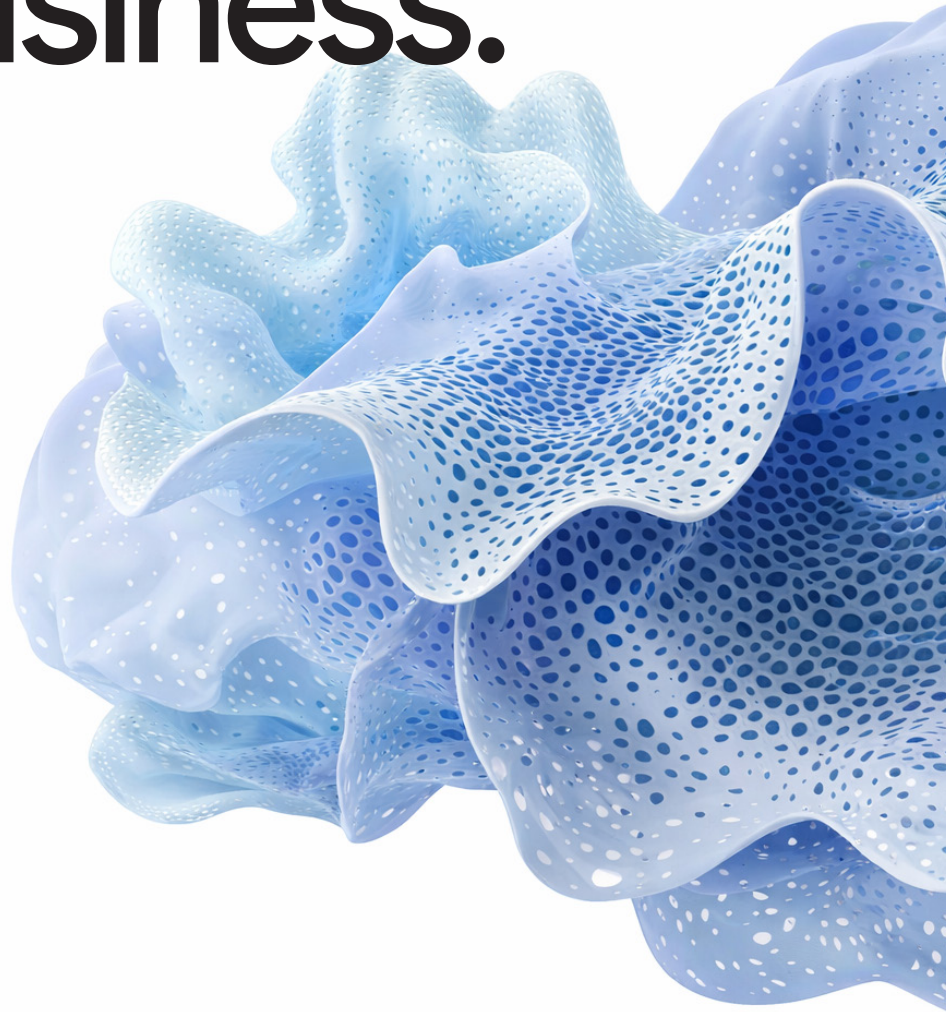
With advanced data center integration, device configuration, and global deployment experience, our teams are well-equipped to handle your needs and simplify your challenges.

SERVICES CORNER

Modernize your data center with confidence

You're under pressure to refresh aging infrastructure without sacrificing performance, security, or cost control. Our data center modernization experts simplify the process with end-to-end planning and architecture design, enabling you to build a scalable foundation for the future. See what's possible with SHI.

Gemini Enterprise
brings secure,
scalable AI to
your business.



Google Cloud

Defending your data in the age of the adversary

By Caleb McDowell, Quentin Rhoads-Herrera

Artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed the cybersecurity battlefield. Attackers can now use AI to automate and personalize phishing campaigns, generate sophisticated malware, and bypass traditional security measures. This has made it easier for adversaries at all skill levels to execute advanced attacks.

But despite changing tactics, the goal of the adversary hasn't shifted. Whether through dynamic malware or AI-driven reconnaissance, attackers relentlessly pursue sensitive information in the hopes of exfiltrating valuable data. This makes having a robust defensive strategy in place more critical than ever.

The good news is that an effective defense strategy doesn't need to be complicated — strong data governance can go a long way.

Rules before tools

Building AI-era protection for sensitive information starts at the foundation. Often, organizations rush to deploy the latest security tools or tactical solutions without an underlying data governance strategy. This creates complexity without real protection. Before introducing point solutions or layering on advanced technologies, focus on core data security principles.



That starts with:

Visibility: You can't protect what you can't see. Gaining visibility into your data landscape is essential, even if it means confronting uncomfortable truths about legacy systems and shadow IT.

Collaboration: Data protection is a shared responsibility. IT, governance, HR, finance, and cross-functional teams must work together to define what's sensitive and how it should be handled.

Governance: You must understand your data taxonomy. Get to know where your data resides and map how it moves inside and outside of your organization. Take the time to:

- Define clear data labeling and classification schemes for sensitive information.



PRO TIP:

A general set of labels can go a long way. This doesn't have to be an extensive exercise. Even basic labels can provide immediate visibility and control without overwhelming teams.

- Ensure that any internal tools and systems are deployed within a well-defined governance framework, with guardrails to prevent misuse or accidental data leakage.
 - Consider ISO 27001 or NIST CSF 2.0 as a foundational framework.
- Develop and enforce data loss prevention (DLP) policies to safeguard sensitive data. Pair these with robust backup and disaster recovery plans so your organization can recover quickly in worst-case scenarios.

A stark reality: Internal threats

AI doesn't just empower external attackers; it introduces internal risks, too. Employees may inadvertently leak sensitive data to AI models or external platforms. The same protections that guard against outside threats must apply internally, ensuring only authorized data is used for training or automation.

Start by getting clear visibility into your data estate and then begin sensitivity labeling. This means turning on auditing,



identifying what data you have, and tagging data based on business value. Clear governance frameworks, policies, and continuous monitoring ensure that AI can be adopted safely.

The double-edged sword

Attackers can weaponize AI, but defenders can use it to thwart them.

AI can empower defenders to quickly inventory data, classify it, and put up guardrails so that it's harder for adversaries to steal or use organizational data.

AI-enabled tools like Microsoft Security Copilot can help you quickly scan and map your entire data estate, making it easy to discover where data lives so your defenders can protect it.

What does it all boil down to?

While it may seem daunting to get a strong data governance strategy in place, it's better to start small and simple now than to wait:

- Inventory your data estate.
- Classify and label your data.
- Put controls in place.

Your sensitive data is a target that must be safeguarded.

The tool maturity paradox

By Rob Forbes

For more than two decades, IT and cybersecurity leaders have relied on a simple mantra: people, process, and technology. Like a sturdy three-legged stool, these pillars keep security balanced and strong. But what happens when technology advances faster than an organization's ability to use it effectively? Or when sophisticated platforms are introduced faster than teams and workflows can adapt? The balance shifts.

Organizations lean heavily on the technology leg, leaving people and processes behind. This imbalance is what we call the tool maturity paradox, a state where advanced tools outpace the maturity of the humans and processes meant to support them. The result is a stool that's no longer stable, and two legs struggling to keep up.

How we got here

So, how do organizations tip the stool? Three big trends:

- **Procurement-led security** — Boards love buying tools. Budgets favor visible action. A statement like “We deployed XYZ” sounds like progress, while “We restructured governance” rarely does.
- **Vendor promise inflation** — Terms like “AI-enhanced” and “turnkey” create the perception that maturity can be purchased and immediately activated, but it takes time and training.
- **Underinvestment in people and process** — Training and governance aren't glamorous. That's why they're often the first to be cut and deprioritized when they are the most needed.



People: The underdeveloped leg

Organizations assume employees can master new technologies as fast as they are deployed. But people's maturity rarely keeps pace.

Common challenges:


- Analysts trained on only a fraction of tool capabilities.
- Critical configurations known by just one or two engineers.
- Cloud teams unclear on identity and privilege flows.
- Incident response never tested with live tools.
- Documentation stuck in tribal knowledge instead of shared repositories.
- Control operators excluded from design decisions.


This results in unrealistic expectations. Teams are asked to deliver high performance without proper training, clarity, or time. Even capable people can't succeed in tool adoption with a weak process.


Process: The missing leg and role of GRC


Process is often the leg that barely exists, and this is where governance, risks, and controls (GRC) become critical. Too many organizations see GRC as a compliance checkbox rather than the structural backbone that keeps operations consistent and effective. In reality, the process is governance, risk alignment, control definition, measurement, accountability, and lifecycle management. These elements form the foundation that GRC provides, ensuring security isn't just reactive but disciplined and sustainable.


How GRC strengthens process maturity:

 **Governance | Who decides** — Every failure traces back to unclear decision paths. GRC defines who approves exceptions, owns identities, signs off on risk, and validates changes.

 **Risk | What matters most** — Not all alerts are equal. GRC aligns priorities with business impact, risk appetite, and regulatory exposure, turning noise into value.

 **Controls | How consistency happens** — A control is an owned, measurable capability with verification and a lifecycle. Tools execute controls, while GRC defines them.

 **Compliance | How we prove it** — Maturity requires evidence. You need reviews, certifications, and audit trails. Tools collect data, but GRC enforces cadence and structure.

 **Lifecycle | How controls stay relevant** — Controls must evolve with the environment. GRC enforces review cycles, verification of responsibilities, exception handling, and change approval.

Why technology fails without people and process

Tools are only as effective as the people who use them and the processes that guide them. Without those foundations, even the most advanced platforms underdeliver. Here's why:

- **Tools assume discipline that doesn't exist**
Advanced platforms expect mature workflows like onboarding, identity lifecycles, change management, and control reviews. When these don't exist, value evaporates.
- **Tools show risk; people decide what matters**
A tool can't judge what's acceptable or urgent. Prioritization requires human judgment and governance.
- **Automation needs guardrails**
Organizations avoid automation when workflows aren't mature enough for safe execution. GRC provides the structure that makes automation reliable, not risky.
- **Integration depends on ownership**
Technology is the last link in a chain of accountability and clear workflows. Without them, even the best tools fail to integrate.

If you're facing this paradox, remember this...

Cybersecurity maturity isn't something you can buy. It's something you build.

When organizations invest intentionally in people, processes, and the GRC structures that support both, they unlock the full potential of the tools they already own. That's when technology stops outpacing the organization and starts delivering real value.



Drive smarter data governance

Microsoft Security Accelerator for Purview

Companies sit on mountains of data, but struggle to get the clarity, control, and confidence to govern it effectively. The short end of that stick? Disconnected policies, sprawling data sources, and manual processes that leave them exposed.

Stratascale's Microsoft Security Accelerator for Purview transforms scattered data governance efforts into a unified, intelligence-led program. Our expert team deploys Microsoft Purview with precision and practicality, driving a stronger security posture, simplified compliance, and comprehensive data visibility.

Strategic, seamless purview adoption

Backed by deep Microsoft expertise and a structured four-phase approach, we'll drive a seamless, scalable Purview implementation aligned to your specific business and compliance priorities. Most importantly, we'll optimize your Purview environment to drive maximum ROI on your Microsoft investment.

1

Discover

We begin with in-depth discovery – reviewing policies, regulations, and business priorities through workshops and interviews – to build a right-sized strategy tailored to your environment.

2

Design

We architect a roadmap with adaptive protection rules, alerting workflows, and role-based access controls. Custom-sensitive data types are configured to minimize false positives and align with business requirements.

3

Build

Our team deploys and validates configurations in a staged rollout, ensuring data classification, labeling, dashboards, and alerts work seamlessly – with minimal disruption to end users.

4

Adopt

We perform extensive knowledge transfer to drive long-term adoption, ensuring your team is fully equipped to monitor, tune, and evolve your Purview controls.

Why Stratascale?

Purpose-built, expert-backed

Our implementation methodology is purpose-built to support programmatic Purview adoption, not just tool setup. We design custom-fit policies and frameworks around your unique risk profile. That includes contextualizing controls in real-world use cases, regulatory frameworks, and your business goals to ensure full alignment and long-term impact.

And as a Microsoft Security Elite Program member, we offer direct access to product teams, roadmap visibility, and exclusive program funding opportunities – delivering more value from your entire Microsoft stack.

Put your data to work securely and strategically – contact info@stratascale.com.



Solve what's next in cybersecurity

with services that drive growth,
build trust and reduce risk.

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 **stratascale**
CYBERSECURITY DIVISION OF SHI



6 key elements of IT spend optimization: Your guide to success

By Howard Daws, Michael Brown, Zack Donnenberg

Is your IT budget flat or shrinking while costs continue to spiral? Is your organization facing the pressure of doing more with less? You're not alone.

Waste is a persistent – and often unknown or accepted – factor of IT spending. As organizations assess every morsel of their environments in search of fat to trim, IT spend optimization has become a requirement for teams of all sizes.

In part one of our two-part series, we dissected the challenges of IT spend optimization and how organizations like yours can begin reclaiming latent value.

Now, let's explore the six elements of a successful IT spend optimization plan and how, with the help of a trusted partner, you can continue to optimize well into the future.

The six key elements of practical IT spend optimization

IT spend optimization is a continuous journey, one that's dictated by your unique functions, objectives, and needs. Factors such as organizational structure, market vertical, business health, and leadership personalities all play a role in molding the unique shape of your strategy.

Though there's no true one-size-fits-all strategy, here are several key steps you should take.

1. Create a strategic plan based on shared objectives

This plan includes a roadmap and timeline driven by a candid initial assessment. Its action plan should determine priority areas of focus. For example, is the most pressing barrier visibility, process, alignment, or taking action? Do you need to emphasize software as a service (SaaS) utilization, cloud spend, or AI token consumption?

2. Ensure your plan addresses your communications strategy

When you communicate your IT spend optimization plan to the wider organization, it should include details of what ITAM and FinOps intend to do and the rationale behind them. In addition, your communications strategy should encompass awareness, work to influence crucial buy-in, and sync with the goals and progress of change management.

3. Establish and document policies and workflows

Your new policies and workflows can begin as high level or aspirational. Evolve them over time, rather than having all the fine details in place before realizing returns.

At their core should be a RASCI matrix, with plenty of stakeholders having a 'supporting' designation across inputs and tasks, and 'consulted' for decisions and deliverables.

4. Assign responsibility to working groups

With your ITAM and FinOps teams collaborating as a cohesive technology value group, further delegation can help effectively address specific facets of your IT spend optimization program. For example:

- Processing assured and consistent source data for use across a variety of purposes.
- Joint review sessions of consumption trends and future demand to plan spending commitments and vendor negotiations.
- Identifying collaboration champions to embed a shared accountability ethos via support awareness and change management.

5. Determine what success looks like for your organization

As with documentation, success will also evolve over time. Early KPIs could include levels of visibility across major areas of spending and consumption, as well as the measurement of cost containment actions. This can expand, adding granularity through cost allocation and unit economic analysis. Targeted, agile activity can look at specific vendors, processes, or platforms.

As maturity grows, you may shift focus toward proactive interventions to avoid creating waste and applying commercial levers. You may, for instance, add softer factors such as efficiency of throughput in acquisition, renewal, change review processes, and stakeholder engagement. Track your trends and wastage gap over time.

6. Invest in data quality and appropriate tooling

Partial coverage, inaccuracy, and inconsistency are significant obstacles to IT spend optimization. At best, they increase workload and potential for erroneous decisions while delaying time to value.

Your tools must reliably capture, normalize, and process data with significant levels of automation to support strong returns on investment. They need to fit into wider systems and workflows, with connectivity to enable communications, dashboard reporting, and governance. Insights they provide on your IT environment should go beyond cost, providing utility to a range of stakeholder groups.

IT spend optimization is an organization-wide effort

When you avoid a silo-based mentality, you allow your technology value group to achieve more while benefiting from the wisdom of crowds and different perspectives. The result is a reduction in existing waste and prevention of future leakage.

How SHI helps unlock value from wasted IT spend

SHI's IT spend optimization experts take pride in helping organizations reduce costs, streamline operations, and achieve measurable business outcomes. With SHI Spend Optimization Services (SOS), SHI aligns our ITAM, FinOps, Licensing Advisory, Long-tail Spend, and Procurement capabilities into a single dependable practice.

SOS helps break down internal silos and address the challenges obstructing IT value realization. These services are designed to easily integrate with the technical delivery of cloud environments, AI solutions, and cybersecurity tools, as well as ITAM- and FinOps-related tooling, processes, and lifecycle management.

SHI's experts continually monitor the IT landscape, dissect trends and emerging disruptors, and use deep vendor relationships and knowledge to ensure you are informed and prepared across the entirety of your assets' lifecycles.

Start your IT spend optimization journey today

While organizations are expected to do more with less, you can start reducing wasted spend by breaking down silos and building a long-term IT spend optimization strategy. By uniting ITAM and FinOps into a joint technology value group, you can reclaim significant value by evolving how you acquire and utilize technology, as well as how you track and realize ROI.

Drive business value. Maximize ROI.

SHI Spend Optimization Services (SOS)

Even mature organizations waste **20–30% of their IT spend** but optimization is about far more than savings. SHI SOS transforms your technology investments into strategic advantage, guiding you from *"what's next?"* to *"what's possible?"*

With SHI's SOS, you gain:

- **Clarity and control** - Transparent visibility into spend, risks, and opportunities, empowering informed, data-driven decisions.
- **Aligned decisions** - Governance frameworks and actionable roadmaps that bring stakeholders together and support informed, FinOps-aligned decision-making – not just cost reduction, but continuous value optimization.
- **Joint value** - Sustained savings, measurable business outcomes, and a long-term partnership that evolves with your organization.

Our experts help you:

- **Uncover and eliminate hidden waste** across cloud, software, and infrastructure, typically reducing 20–30% of unused or underutilized spend within the first 90 days.
- **Optimize software, cloud, and hardware investments** by aligning costs with consumption and business demand, delivering **10–20% improvements in unit-cost efficiency** and stronger budget predictability.
- **Establish clear unit economics** that connect cloud spend to business value, enabling you to measure cost per customer, per transaction, or per product feature, and make investment decisions with confidence.
- **Build a foundation for innovation, agility, and responsible FinOps practices**, not just lowering costs, but improving decision-making, accelerating product velocity, and maximizing ROI on every technology dollar
- **\$1B+ in customer savings projected for 2026**. Start your optimization journey today.

CASE STUDY

Microsoft spend optimization services — decision advisory

A major U.S. insurance provider, one of the nation's oldest property and casualty carriers, was staring down a 2025 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) renewal that represented far more than a routine contract negotiation. With hundreds of applications, a growing Azure footprint, and multiple business units with distinct technology needs, the stakes were high.

But this wasn't just about negotiating better rates. The company needed to align its licensing strategy with both current usage and future plans across its entire Microsoft estate. And time was running out.

When companies negotiate with Microsoft in a specific year, they're locked into rates for that point in time. Replicating those same discounts three years later is extremely difficult. Markets change, costs increase, and customers often find themselves facing massive price jumps at renewal.

Here's how SHI helped the insurance provider turn a daunting renewal into a strategic transformation.

Starting early to avoid the pressure cooker

The insurance company reached out to SHI in early 2024, a full year before their renewal deadline. That timeline

was intentional. Large financial events demand preparation. Rushing into a major negotiation with just two months leaves little room for informed decision-making. The most successful renewals typically involve eight to ten months of advance work.

SHI's Microsoft Software Optimization Services (MSOS) team began by conducting in-depth workshops with multiple departments across IT, security, operations, and the executive steering committee. Understanding what Microsoft features and services were being used today mattered just as much as knowing what was planned for future consumption.

The team worked to identify which features were actively deployed in the Microsoft ecosystem and which capabilities sat on the roadmap. But roadmap items needed evaluation. Just because a feature appears in future plans doesn't guarantee successful adoption. Each potential technology shift received a value score based on likelihood of implementation and business impact.

One major consideration was the company's plan to move from WebEx to Microsoft Teams. Moving to Teams would increase Microsoft costs, but it would also eliminate a significant WebEx contract. These tradeoffs required careful analysis, combining data collection and storytelling with detailed financial modeling.



Mapping the technology landscape with Cloud Matrix

To build a comprehensive picture, SHI conducted our proprietary Cloud Matrix, an analysis framework covering more than 100 Microsoft technologies. The team mapped the customer's current usage, future plans, and overlapping third-party tools to build a holistic three-year roadmap.

The result was a finely tuned business case that demonstrated exactly where savings could be achieved and where Microsoft technologies could replace redundant spending. The insurance provider would enter negotiations fully informed about their actual Microsoft usage, rather than allowing Microsoft to control the narrative about what they should purchase.

A curveball from Microsoft

Just as the engagement was getting underway, a major complication emerged. SHI discovered that the insurance provider was on Microsoft's list to transition to a new "direct-direct" model. In this new approach, Microsoft would eliminate partner involvement entirely.

The customer had no idea this was coming.

SHI briefed the insurance provider on the situation before Microsoft made any official announcement, giving them time to understand the implications and prepare their response. The company's leadership was understandably concerned. Beyond the immediate financial pressures of the renewal, they now faced a fundamental shift in how they would receive support and guidance.

What used to take two or three days through SHI might take considerably longer through Microsoft's direct support channels. The insurance provider had historically leaned on SHI and the partner community for trustworthy advice and quick answers. Under the new model, they would lose that immediate access.

Three weeks after SHI broke the news, Microsoft made the official announcement.

The insurance provider also faced an internal resource challenge. The company had limited staff to manage such a large, complex contract. That gap had been filled by SHI's ongoing support and expertise. Now, both external and internal support structures were in question.

Building a path forward with licensing advantage and staff augmentation

To address the support gap, SHI formulated a solution. Through SHI's licensing advantage program, the insurance provider could maintain access to SHI's licensing expertise and advisory services, ensuring the critical connection would remain intact even as Microsoft's model shifted.

SHI also provided staff augmentation resources, placing SHI experts directly within the customer's organization to help address the bandwidth shortfall. Even as the insurance provider transitioned into Microsoft's direct model, SHI remained actively involved in supporting their day-to-day needs.

Securing funding and building consensus

Throughout the engagement, SHI helped the insurance provider secure significant Microsoft funding through End Customer Investment Funds (ECIF) to support cloud migration, Copilot readiness, and Microsoft Defender for Endpoint implementations.

But perhaps more importantly, SHI acted as a strategic advisor to build internal consensus among the customer's C-suite. The engagement went beyond negotiation to enable smarter, longer-term investment decisions across the organization that were optimal and limited the increase above its prior contract exit price.

Beyond any financial wins, the customer gained something equally valuable. It now had a clearer picture of its technology environment, consolidated teams around a unified roadmap, and a strengthened long-term Microsoft strategy. From a pure third-party perspective, SHI had demonstrated our value as an irreplaceable partner.

An ongoing partnership

While the formal renewal engagement lasted roughly 10 months, SHI's relationship with the insurance provider continues. Through licensing advantage and staff augmentation, we remain shoulder-to-shoulder with the customer as a trusted advisor.

Even after a full year operating under Microsoft's direct contract model, SHI hasn't gone anywhere. The insurance provider still has access to the expertise and support that had become integral to managing their Microsoft relationship.

For the insurance provider, what started as a complex EA renewal became something far more valuable: a strategic partnership built on deep analysis, honest guidance, and a commitment to long-term success rather than short-term wins.



Does your IT spend add up?
Make cents of the sprawl.



Do legacy applications **THREATEN** your AI dreams? They shouldn't

Don't let technical debt drag you down. AI PCs can help.

By Phalgun Saraf, Dave Gruver

Remember your old Sony Discman? Listening to your favorite CDs at the park, on the bus, or in your room had never been easier! That Discman served one glorious purpose — play music — and it served its purpose well.

And then iTunes came along. And Bluetooth. And streaming. And while your Discman still played CDs without missing a beat, it was simply incompatible with the new age the music industry had entered.

In a time when artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-powered devices are changing how we operate, your legacy applications are kind of like your old Discman — great at what they do, but incompatible with modern work. But maybe they don't have to be.

Legacy apps have a technical debt problem

AI demands power, energy, and data, and if your legacy apps are bogged down by years or decades of technical debt, they will struggle to perform.

Legacy apps often have obsolete technology stacks that include outdated programming languages and frameworks that are no longer supported. These applications struggle with scalability, making it difficult to handle increased workloads or adapt to changing demands. This already makes them difficult to maintain and upgrade, but the issue is amplified when integrated with newer AI-powered hardware and demanding AI workflows.

Large enterprises use legacy apps in their operations for years, if not decades. And although they're built with outdated technology, they're often deeply embedded in organizational systems and are core to critical business functions, harnessing large amounts of crucial company data.

AI PCs are a boon to user productivity

Legacy applications hold much of the data organizations like yours rely on. That data is also important for modern software but accessing it through legacy apps isn't easy.

With all this in mind, can your organization even consider transitioning legacy applications to leverage the power of AI devices? Absolutely. The evolution of AI PCs, along with the neural processing units (NPUs) and graphics processing units (GPUs) that power them, will significantly impact end-user productivity applications.

AI tools such as Microsoft 365 Copilot and generative AI solutions like ChatGPT and Perplexity can automate routine, previously manual tasks. This saves time, reduces the need for deep technical expertise, and makes technology more accessible to a broader range of employees.

The key to success lies in the proper integration of these new-age AI tools, platforms, and devices with your old, legacy applications. By creatively utilizing the abundant historical data your legacy apps carry, you can gain a competitive edge.

Can AI-powered devices address technical debt?

A key challenge that comes with technical debt is the effort needed to maintain and upgrade outdated systems that are deeply embedded into your operations. As technical debt accumulates, it can make it difficult to integrate AI into your workplace or begin refreshing your technology stack.

Yet AI can be crucial for addressing technical debt.

By modernizing legacy applications with AI capabilities, you can reduce your maintenance burden and improve system performance. AI algorithms can detect and prevent potential issues, ensuring streamlined and secure operations. You may also utilize generative AI tools for shortening development processes, improving compatibility, and unleashing business intelligence from old data. This helps you become more proactive, effective, and innovative.

Moreover, devices with hardware-level AI facilitate the integration of legacy applications with modern systems. This interoperability helps create a cohesive IT environment where data flows seamlessly across different platforms.

By bridging the gap between old and new technologies, AI PCs enable organizations to leverage embedded applications while embracing innovation.

Considerations when adapting your legacy apps for AI

The transition to AI PCs isn't just about upgrading technology; it's about moving enterprises forward.

AI PCs can future-proof organizations and drive dramatic performance growth by enabling innovation, improving efficiency, and enhancing customer experiences. And as AI becomes more prevalent, it'll become an integral part of the fabric of business operations.

This underscores the importance of a strategic approach to transitioning legacy applications. Like most IT initiatives, integrating AI-powered devices into your ecosystem isn't as simple as plugging them into an outlet and pressing the power button. We recommend you:

- Perform a critical analysis of your current systems.
- Identify use cases and roles for which AI can add genuine value.
- Develop a roadmap for modernization, taking into consideration potential risks.

During this process, make sure IT and business leaders collaborate to better align technology investments with organizational goals.

Explore, test, and deploy with SHI's Next-Gen Device Lab

Your legacy applications may be old enough to drive, vote, or drink, but that shouldn't stop you from driving your organization forward with innovative new technologies. By addressing technical debt and integrating AI capabilities, you can transform legacy systems into powerful tools for innovation and growth.

That's where SHI comes in.

Leverage our Next-Gen Device Lab to see the latest AI-powered devices for yourself. Test their performance and compatibility in a secure environment so you can make an informed decision on which end-user device works best within your existing ecosystem.

Our lab helps you:

- Experience and evaluate AI devices, including PCs, smartphones, tablets, VR headsets, and more.
- Validate your use cases.
- Prototype and develop proofs of concept (POCs).
- Train users, drive adoption, and properly support and maintain your new devices.
- And more!

Don't let your legacy applications go the way of the Discman. Discover how new innovative technologies function alongside your critical applications with our Next-Gen Device Lab.

How to turn device refresh chaos into strategic wins with smart data

Make smarter device refresh decisions by validating hardware against your real-world use cases.

By Tom Olivo, Adam Reiser, Zack Donnenberg

IT leaders face pressure to show real results from every hardware investment. With AI PCs reshaping workforce productivity, device selection is no longer a tactical choice. It can make or break your users' workflows.

Choosing the right AI-powered devices requires trustworthy data. While performance claims are everywhere, evidence of real-world impact is scarce. Without solid data and testing, you risk overprovisioning, budget overrun, or inadvertently slowing people down.

The importance of data-driven AI device refreshes

Not all AI-powered devices are created equal. Performance, compatibility, and total cost of ownership (TCO) fluctuate across models and manufacturers. Make the wrong choice and your hardware could bottleneck innovation, expose your environment to risk, or waste IT spend.

Avoiding this requires validation, no matter the size of your rollout. As AI workloads become the norm, you need to align your refresh not just with today's requirements, but also tomorrow's opportunities.

However, our device experts have uncovered a critical problem. When you use devices in real-world conditions, they often fail to deliver on their AI promises. Compatibility issues and inconsistent performance lead to missed expectations and wasted spend.

When marketing claims and real-world experiences exist in separate realities, how can you get the information you need to make data-driven decisions that avoid buyer's remorse?

Measure AI workload metrics with BenchSmart by SHI

Smarter device selection starts with smarter measurement. BenchSmart, our industry-leading benchmarking suite, empowers you to focus on how devices handle your AI workloads.

Across OEMs and silicon platforms, BenchSmart evaluates CPU, GPU, and NPU performance under actual AI tasks, including voice transcription, image generation, and chat response. It tracks metrics like tokens per second, power draw, and battery degradation to

ensure your device refresh is grounded in operational reality.

Your environment is unique, as are the metrics you prioritize. BenchSmart helps identify the best-fit devices for your use cases, rather than relying on generic benchmarks or vendor claims. This fosters greater productivity, reduced downtime, and a procurement process that's defensible and data-backed.

Unlock flexibility across multiple OEMs

One size rarely fits all, especially as you demand greater flexibility and choice from your AI-powered devices. BenchSmart enables side-by-side comparisons of devices with identical specs from different OEMs. Our tool reveals performance variances that affect AI workloads, security stack compatibility, and heat management. With BenchSmart, you can find the right mix for your unique workloads and user profiles, rather than boxing yourself in with a single vendor's device specs.

Make the most of your next device refresh

When the success of your AI workloads is at stake, you need to ensure the devices you select won't crumble under pressure. With BenchSmart by SHI, you can validate AI-powered devices across OEMs and silicon platforms, confirming that your next device fleet can handle your workloads, security tools, and mobility needs without bottlenecks.

By leveraging our data-driven processes and benchmarking tools, you can move forward with confidence knowing every procurement decision is informed, defensible, and primed to unlock the productivity gains their organizations need.



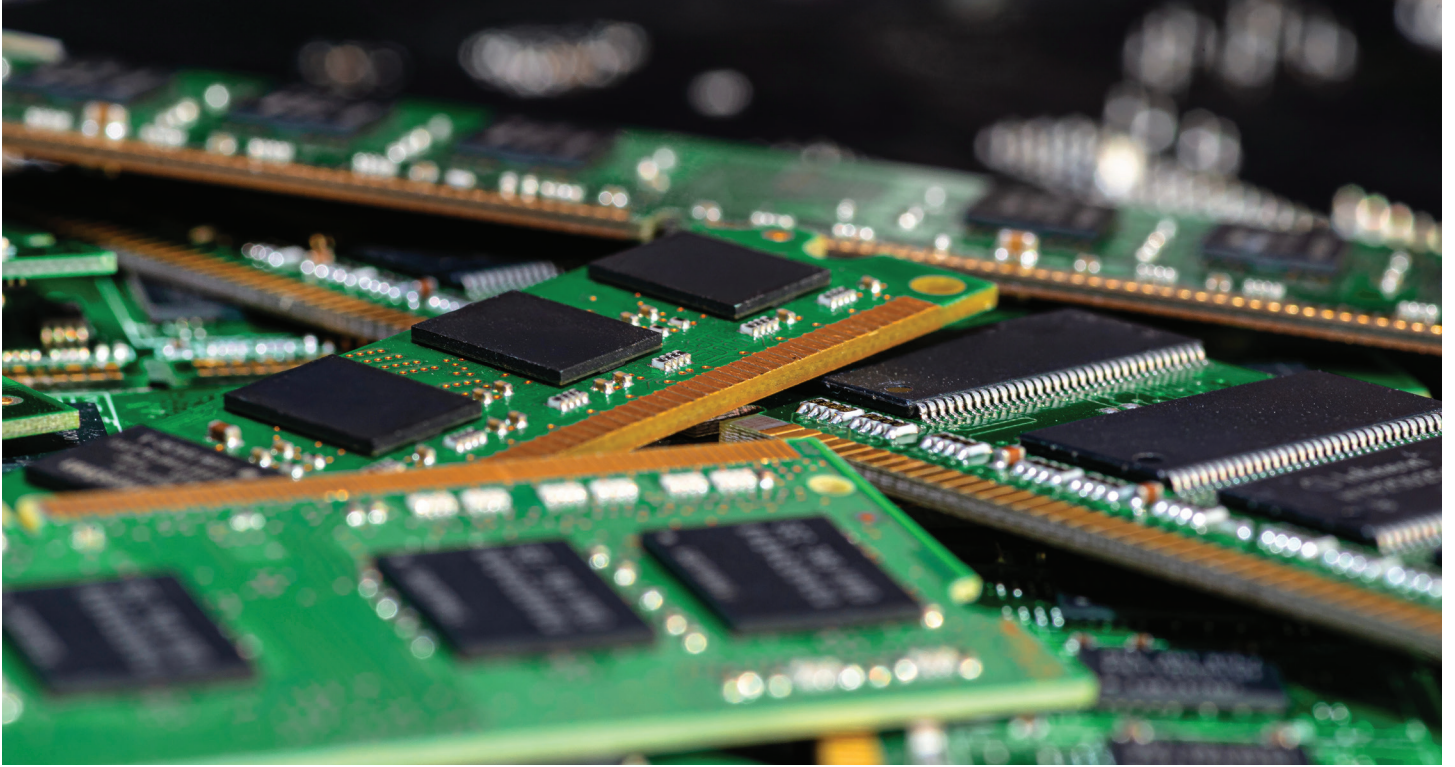
SERVICES CORNER

Build a smarter, more secure workplace

SHI's comprehensive end-user computing (EUC) solutions empower organizations to build secure, flexible, and highly productive modern workplaces. From global device lifecycle management and modern management services to automation and digital employee experience (DEX) optimization, SHI helps IT teams deliver the right technology to every user, wherever work happens.

Our data-driven approach enables organizations to right-size device fleets, reduce costs, and ensure users always have the optimal hardware for performance, security, and productivity. Organizations can also test and evaluate market-leading AI-powered end-user technologies at SHI's **Next-Gen Device Lab**.

Backed by deep OEM and platform partnerships, SHI's modern workplace services simplify IT operations, strengthen security posture, and create frictionless employee experiences that drive measurable business results.



What's driving the global RAM shortage? And why is it so expensive?

By Adam Reiser, Ryan Hotchkin, Phalgun Saraf

The global memory market has entered a period of tight supply and elevated pricing – one that many believe will ripple through PCs, servers, storage, and mobile devices well into 2026 and beyond.

Unlike past memory cycles, this global memory shortage is being driven by a reallocation of manufacturing capacity toward higher-margin AI infrastructure memory (like HBM), limiting supply for conventional DRAM (DDR4/DDR5/LPDDR) and NAND drives used across mainstream devices.

For IT and procurement leaders, the takeaway is clear: waiting for prices to normalize is not a viable strategy – it's a risky gamble.

What's happening? Memory is getting scarcer – and more expensive

Industry watchers are reporting sharp increases in DRAM pricing and continued volatility. ¹One market report says DRAM prices have surged 171% YoY, with DDR5 spot prices quadrupling since

September 2025 – a dramatic shift for a component that typically becomes cheaper over time.²

IDC similarly warns that the industry is experiencing an unprecedented memory chip shortage with effects that could persist well into 2027 and beyond.³

Why is this happening?

1. AI infrastructure is consuming a huge amount of the memory supply.

AI servers and enterprise AI environments require significantly more memory per system than typical consumer devices, drawing a growing share of global DRAM and NAND capacity into data centers supporting AI initiatives.

As AI demand accelerates, suppliers increasingly select the most profitable segments. This is leading a shift of manufacturing resources away from conventional DRAM (used in PCs, tablets, and phones) toward HBM (High-Bandwidth Memory) used in AI accelerators.

HBM consumes almost three times the wafer capacity of DDR5, which worsens scarcity.

2. Supply growth isn't keeping pace

IDC expects 2026 supply growth below historical norms — about 16% year-over-year (YoY) for DRAM and 17% YoY for NAND — despite rising demand.⁴ Manufacturers are reallocating capacity toward higher-margin AI memory, which limits how much conventional DRAM and NAND can reach the market in the near term. TrendForce adds that inventories are tightening and shipment growth is increasingly reliant on wafer output increases, amplifying price pressure.⁵ Bear in mind that three manufacturers control approximately 95% of global DRAM production, creating systemic vulnerability when supply tightens or priorities shift.

3. Geopolitics and trade fragmentation add friction

Export controls, tariffs, and retaliation targeting critical and/or rare earth materials can accelerate friendshoring, a trade practice in which supply chain leaders focus on political and economic allies and shift away from rivals. This practice complicates global supply chains, introducing additional uncertainty beyond supply-and-demand economics.

What's the business impact of the global memory shortage?

Global RAM constraints create knock-on effects across budgeting, timelines, and operational resilience. The most common impact areas include:

1. End-user computing (laptops/desktops)

Higher device costs resulting from memory price increases can force compromises between performance standards and fleet affordability. But even standard configurations may become increasingly difficult to maintain, especially when preferred memory tiers (e.g., 16GB/32GB/64GB) and storage capacity experience availability gaps.

Refresh cycles can be disrupted, leading to increased reliance on break/fix support, extended warranties, and device reuse programs.

2. Data center and server environments

Project timelines can be delayed when memory becomes the primary component for server builds, expansions, or upgrades. Capacity planning becomes more uncertain, with

longer lead times increasing the risk of under-provisioning. Lack of memory availability can also reduce architectural flexibility for scaling RAM-intensive workloads, including VDI, databases, analytics, and AI inferencing.

3. Procurement, budgets, and forecasting

Budget volatility increases as pricing and availability shift between order and delivery. Memory sourcing becomes more complex, requiring alternates and substitutions. This isn't just a timing dilemma. With high prices and severe availability constraints, even buying early offers no guarantees. IT leaders must shift from "buy now or wait" to "what's essential, and how do we secure it?"

4. Business continuity and operational risk

IT downtime risk increases if replacement parts and spare systems aren't available when needed. This leaves critical business initiatives vulnerable (refresh programs, office moves, new site openings, security-driven upgrades). IT teams spend more time navigating this, rather than on transformation or strategic work.

How SHI can help you mitigate risk

The most effective mitigation strategies focus on planning earlier, reducing variability, and securing supply for what matters most. And that's where SHI shines.

We'll work with you to ensure price spikes and lead-time surprises don't derail your roadmap. Some of our recommendations — and available services — include:

1. Make memory-dependent hardware part of your advanced inventory

Identify projects where memory availability could delay delivery, such as refresh waves, server builds, or storage expansions. Shift procurement timelines up for critical projects rather than waiting until deployment windows are available. Prioritize deployments by segmenting users and workloads (e.g., frontline, knowledge worker, power user) to protect higher-memory configurations for roles and systems where performance is business-critical.

With SHI's ITAM, SAM, and FinOps capabilities, you can uncover cost-reduction opportunities, rationalize applications, right-size licensing, and free budget to counteract memory-driven price increases. These services help you navigate shortages by maximizing existing investments, eliminating waste, and improving financial resilience.

2. Standardize configurations and build flexibility into sourcing

Limit the number of approved memory configurations across your fleet and server estate. Identify some acceptable alternatives (capacity tiers, module types, and approved OEM options) before shortages force last-minute changes.

Avoid single points of failure by considering alternative suppliers, approved equivalents, or secondary distribution channels where feasible.

SHI can help you review plans, design flexible solutions, and support forecasting for continuity. At the Next-Gen Device Lab, our engineers can help you test the latest devices and experiment with their specifications using our proprietary BenchSmart tool. You can also run targeted AI-relevant workload tests so you can make data-driven decisions about your current and future device fleets.

3. Maintain smart buffer stock and tighten governance

Keep a stock of high-failure or high-urgency components (spares, high-turn SKUs). Focus on coverage for critical services and peak deployment periods rather than overstocking everything.

Create a shared view of refresh timelines, supply risks, and budget triggers, and draft a runbook to decide what to accelerate, what to delay, and what to standardize when the situation demands.

At SHI, our strategic partnerships with top manufacturers position us to secure inventory and minimize delays for you.



Careful planning reduces risk

It's not the price spikes that catch organizations off guard — it's the sudden drop in availability. Treating procurement as a transactional function leaves teams exposed when supply tightens.

With ongoing structural memory constraints, the imperative now is to rethink architectures, refresh strategies, and sourcing models so future shortages have far less impact.

While new devices cost more, the same market forces have increased the value of your existing fleet, making asset recovery an important lever for offsetting procurement costs. Organizations that take a comprehensive view of both acquisition and recovery will be better positioned to weather this shortage and maintain budget flexibility for innovation.

¹Hwang, MS, and Ivan Lam. "Advanced Memory Prices Likely to Double as DRAM Crunch Spreads on NVIDIA Pivot, Structural Factors." Counterpoint Research, November 19, 2025. <https://counterpointresearch.com/en/insights/advanced-memory-prices-likely-to-double-as-dram-crunch-spreads-on-nvidia-pivot-structural-factors>

²Fattahi, Aryamehr. "Global RAM Shortage and Price Hikes: Causes, Consequences, and Outlook." Bloomsbury Intelligence & Security Institute, January 5, 2026. <https://bisi.org.uk/reports/global-ram-shortage-and-price-hikes-causes-consequences-and-market-outlook>

³Jeronimo, Francisco, Tom Mainelli, Bryan Ma, Ran Reith, and Jeff Janukowicz. "Global Memory Shortage Crisis: Market Analysis and the Potential Impact on the Smartphone and PC Markets in 2026." IDC, December 18, 2025. <https://www.idc.com/resource-center/blog/global-memory-shortage-crisis-market-analysis-and-the-potential-impact-on-the-smartphone-and-pc-markets-in-2026/>

⁴Ibid.

⁵TrendForce. "Memory Makers Prioritize Server Applications, Driving Across-the-Board Price Increases in 1Q26, Says TrendForce." Press release, January 5, 2026. <https://www.trendforce.com/presscenter/news/20260105-12860.html>

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U.S. Open champion Allisen Corpuz on managing tournament pressure and her dad's expectations

What a major winner learned about parent-child dynamics on the path to Pebble Beach



At 10 years and three months old, Allisen Corpuz beat Michelle Wie's record as the youngest qualifier in U.S. Women's Amateur Public Links tournament history.

In 2023, she became the first U.S. Women's Open Champion with an MBA, winning at Pebble Beach in her second season as a professional.

Four months before that historic victory, SHI International named Corpuz as a brand ambassador for the company's "Solve what's next" campaign.

But before Corpuz was solving what's next at the professional level, she had to figure out how to tell her golf-obsessed dad to stop doing something that drove her crazy during junior tournaments.

Sound familiar?

In a recent episode of the Tiger Dads podcast, Corpuz sat down with hosts Jason Sklar and Bo Bass, two fathers navigating the challenges of raising competitive young golfers. The conversation touched on tournament pressure, parent-child communication, and what it really takes to support a kid chasing big dreams without getting in their way.

Here's what Corpuz shared about her journey from junior golf in Hawaii to winning at Pebble Beach, and the lessons her relationship with her dad taught her along the way.

Adapted from Corpuz's appearance on the Tiger Dads podcast, Episode 15

On getting started in golf

Corpuz's dad is a dentist and a serious golfer. He plays nine holes four times a week in Hawaii and lives on the seventh hole of a golf course. Weekends meant trips to the range with Corpuz and her older brother.

"I think me and my brother have always been very competitive. He's now, unfortunately, the really smart one of the family. So yeah, I covered the athletic side," Corpuz says.

Her brother went on to become a medical resident. But back then, the sibling rivalry fueled her golf development. She started playing junior golf tournaments in Hawaii and eventually the AJGA circuit before heading to USC for five years.

On her dad knowing when to step back

Corpuz credits her dad with making a crucial decision early. He never tried to be her coach.

"I think I've been very lucky. It's never been too bad. My brother probably got the brunt of it, and then once he was like, nope, I want to play high school and study really hard, I think my dad realized, okay, we are here to just enjoy the game and see how far it takes you," Corpuz says. *"So, he's always been relatively easy to work with, and I think he learned early on not to be my coach. I think he never took that personally. Got me signed up for lessons pretty early."*

There were still difficult conversations. Her dad sometimes had to push her to work harder. But knowing he always had her best interests in mind kept their relationship strong, especially as she got older.

On the consistency of showing up

Her dad emphasized one principle above all else. If you want to be good at something, you have to do it every day. It's the same discipline he applied to his own education and career. *"He's a dentist, so it was like, I went to college for four years and then I went to dental school for another four years. Anything that you*

want in life is gonna take the work," Corpuz says. *"That was something that he always instilled in me and my brother, whether it was golf or school or anything else that we did."*

Now that she's a professional, her dad comes to tournaments just to enjoy himself. The pressure is off. He's hands off. It's become a lot of fun.

On the thing her dad did that drove her crazy

Even the best golf dads make mistakes. For Corpuz, it was watching her dad take practice swings from the side of the fairway after she hit a bad shot.

"I remember the one thing I hated so much was my dad would spectate and I would hit a bad shot, and I would see him taking swings on the side. He's rehearsing the swings," Corpuz says. *"He would watch all my lessons growing up. He would hear what I was working on. And, so, I would duck hook a tee shot, and he would be there kind of taking his own practice swing. And I hated it so much."*

She finally told him to stop. It took a few conversations, but he listened. That communication made all the difference.

"I was like, 'Dad, I know you're not trying to make me mad when you're spectating, but please don't do that. I know I hit a bad shot,'" she says. *"As I get older, especially, and as he's kind of just like, okay, I understand, you know what you're doing at this point, it's definitely gotten a lot better."*

On staying calm under pressure

Corpuz looked remarkably composed winning the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. The truth? She wasn't calm at all. But she's learned to manage what shows on the outside, even when everything feels chaotic internally.

"I would definitely say I think I've always had that outward appearance. I was definitely not calm or anything at Pebble," she says. *"I feel like I get that a lot from people, that I looked really calm on TV. It's definitely something that I've worked hard at. And I just think I've always looked calm on the outside, even if I'm not."*

"I think me and my brother have always been very competitive. He's now, unfortunately, the really smart one of the family. So yeah, I covered the athletic side."

At the U.S. Open, she and her sports psychologist focused heavily on breathing. The other key was staying present and enjoying the moment. She and her caddy kept reminding each other that Pebble Beach was even more impressive in person than in photos.

"It sounds so cliché, staying in the moment, but that was definitely a big focus of the week," she says. "And I've always been fairly emotionally level, so I never get super mad on the course. I feel like I've always been pretty good at just kind of letting things go."

On having a life outside of golf

Corpuz wasn't practicing two hours before school and three hours after. She went to regular school in Hawaii, practiced after classes, and played junior tournaments on weekends. Her parents made sure she had balance.

"I think it's important to have a life outside of golf. I've always, I think my parents have always thought that's important, and I think that's important as well," she says.

If she had her way, she'd practice all day long. But her dad was right to push her to play more tournaments. Course management skills develop through competition. You learn to make par putts under pressure. You see more putts go in. Every shot counts differently in a tournament.

Now as a pro, she takes Tuesdays off to run errands, do laundry, and clean the house. Then it's back to the same routine from her junior days. Hit some balls, putt a few, chip a few. The consistency continues.

On watching others pave the way

Growing up in Hawaii, Corpuz would see Michelle Wie practicing on weekends at one of the courses she used. Watching Wie's work ethic left a lasting impact.

"I would see Michelle practicing on the weekends at one of the courses that I practiced at. So just to be able to see her work ethic, I think, was really inspiring. But it was also like, wow, I can't imagine being out here for eight to 10 hours on a weekend," she says. "You just kind of see what's around you. I saw a lot of girls going to college golf, and that was always a big goal of mine."

At USC, she had five seniors on the team her freshman year. Four of them went to Q school. She got to see the transition from college to professional golf up close.

"I think I've been really lucky in that the people around me have kind of given me the blueprint a bit, and I've been able to see them go through it," she says.

The lesson for golf parents

The Tiger Dads hosts admitted they've both blown up at tournaments. They've said things they regret. They've felt crushing disappointment when their daughters didn't succeed. They're working on it.

Corpuz's story offers a simple reminder. Kids know when their parents care. They feel the investment. But they also need space to fail, learn, and figure things out on their own terms. The best support often looks like stepping back, listening when they ask you to change something, and showing up just to enjoy watching them play.

Her dad figured that out. And Corpuz became a U.S. Open champion who still loves the game enough to keep grinding every day.



Fail fast. Win faster.

Imagine. Experiment. Adopt.

SHI.com/AI

