



Achieving quick wins with AI

Unlock measurable value fast by adopting AI incrementally — not all at once. Here's why that makes sense and how to get started.

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Introduction: Generative AI has rocketed from curiosity to board-level mandate

The stakes are enormous. PwC research shows that industries most exposed to AI have seen productivity growth nearly quadruple — rising from 7% to 27% — with revenue per employee growing three times faster than in less AI-exposed industries.¹ These gains underscore the scale of opportunity when AI moves beyond experimentation and into core operations.

Yet the execution gap remains significant. Despite growing investment and interest, many organizations struggle to translate AI ambition into production-ready outcomes. Lenovo's CIO Playbook 2025 found that only 12 percent of AI proofs of concept ever reach production, highlighting a persistent “pilot paradox” where promising initiatives stall before delivering real value.² This is where many AI strategies falter — but it doesn't have to be your story.

¹ PwC, [“AI linked to a fourfold increase in productivity growth”](#), 2025

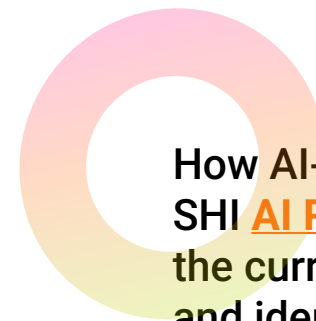
² Lenovo, [“CIO Playbook 2025: It's Time for AI-nomic Value”](#), 2025

Quick-win prototypes close that gap by targeting a single pain-point, using data you already control, and measuring outcomes in weeks or months – not quarters. They deliver four outcomes:

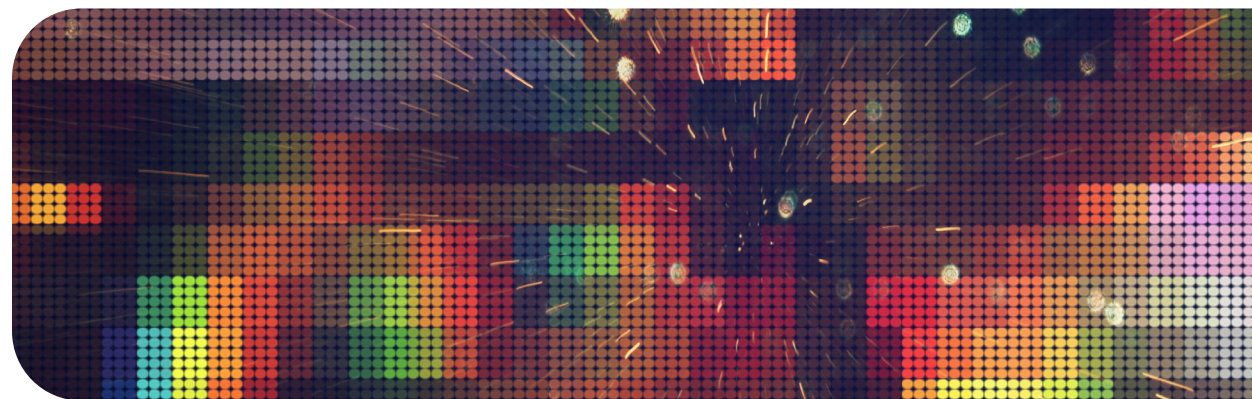
- **Raise enterprise AI literacy:** Employees experience AI as a collaborator, not a threat, and quickly level-up prompt-craft skills.
- **Re-engineer one workflow step at a time:** Teams slot AI into a single task along a workflow, targeting the most easily solved task first. For example, try using AI to triage support tickets and summarize meeting notes, learning and iterating rapidly.
- **Expose hidden obstacles safely:** Governance gaps, data-quality issues, or workflow bottlenecks surface while the stakes are low, so you can address them proactively and still find ways to deliver value early in the learning process.
- **Deliver ROI early:** Management and finance leaders see real savings in process improvement, operational efficiency and revenue lift, translating AI experimentation into tangible business impact.

A Microsoft-sponsored IDC study found that organizations investing in generative AI are seeing substantial returns – averaging 3.7 times the value for every dollar spent.³

³ Microsoft, "[Generative AI delivering substantial ROI to businesses integrating the technology across operations](#)", 2025



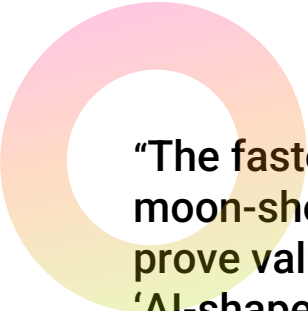
How AI-ready is your organization? Use the SHI **AI Readiness Workshop** to help evaluate the current level of AI skills and education and identify your first quick wins.



Why quick wins matter

We all want to land knockout punches, but your first AI moves should be defensive. Incoming challenges hit fast: A sales rep pastes customer Personally Identifiable Information (PII) into a public chatbot; marketing ships AI-supported copy that they didn't realize plagiarizes its sources; an analyst deploys an unvetted model that trips compliance alarms.

These potential risks make it clear that you need to first lock down sensitive data, create a secure environment, and teach best practices such as human-in-loop review before you chase bigger ideas. As these fundamentals become muscle memory, your organization gains a safe space for experimentation.



“The fastest-growing AI programs don't start with moon-shots. They begin with disciplined pilots that prove value and teach the business how to think in ‘AI-shaped’ ways.”

— **John Moran,**
Director of Product Management

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Establish a beachhead, not a moon base

Start small and tackle “million-dollar” problems, not billion-dollar impossibilities. A good quick-win prototype creates a visible, low-risk success that proves value, builds confidence, and grants the wider business permission to keep exploring. Treat each sprint as a learning investment. The most important payoff is the literacy and momentum that it sparks.



Work in 90-day sprints

Keep each prototype within a single calendar quarter — long enough to capture evidence, short enough to learn fast and accelerate success. End every sprint with a short retrospective: Publish the numbers, decide to scale, shelve, or retool, then reset for the next round.



Choose a use case that overlays AI onto an existing process that has defined success metrics. This enables you to assess performance (KPIs) before and after the AI prototype, and determine if there was a delta. Without existing metrics, proving AI's business impact and justifying further investment becomes nearly impossible.

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This rhythm prevents resources from getting trapped in year-long roadmaps while models, pricing, and regulations continue to shift. Without regular feedback loops and clear KPI dashboards, many gen-AI initiatives stall after early momentum and fail to scale. To avoid this, you need to:

- **Defend while you develop.** Use a locked-down environment, logging AI inputs and outputs. Work with security and legal across each sprint to harden policies before brand risk escalates.
- **Build organizational reflexes.** Repetition — dozens of prompt tweaks, safe redactions, and human reviews — turns guidelines into muscle memory.
- **Fund the next round.** Even modest efficiencies (e.g., thousands of staff-hours reclaimed from call-note summarization) win C-suite sponsorship for phase-two ambitions.

SHI has the expertise to help you navigate the uncharted path of leveraging AI safely and efficiently. Our 2-year journey implementing AI across 6000+ employees worldwide gives us practical insights other solutions providers simply don't have. From briefings and [AI Readiness Workshops](#) to [labs](#) and [implementation services](#), our services can successfully identify, prioritize, and execute your top generative AI use cases, so you can deliver meaningful value back to your organization.

Start your AI journey here

What counts as a quick win?

While every business is different, field studies uncover a repeatable pattern. The best early prototypes are small in scope, big in reach, and light on data prep.



Focus your firepower

AI high-performers concentrate more than 80% of their AI budget on just a handful of use cases — and they out-learn peers while doubling their ROI⁴.



Choose sharply defined tasks

Drafting prospect e-mails, summarizing service tickets, or triaging inbound support cases.



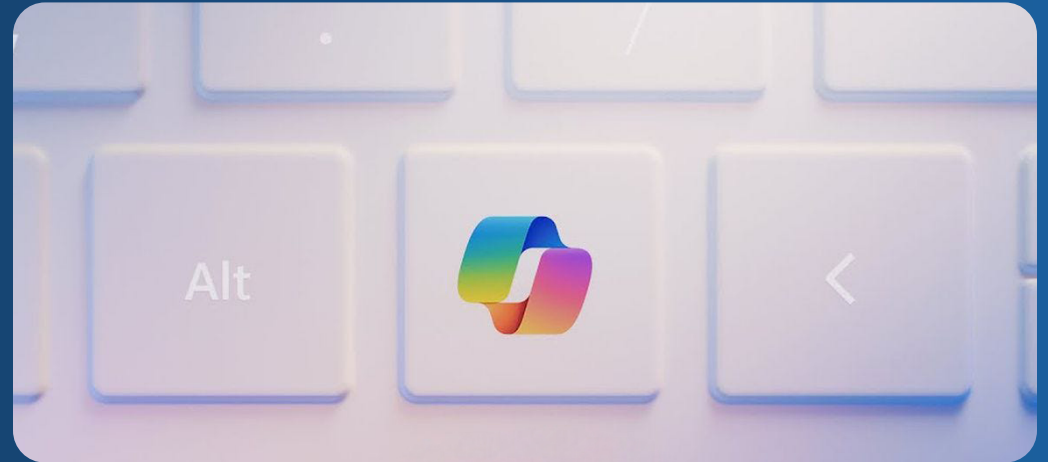
Touch many users

Ten minutes saved per task multiplied across hundreds of employees crushes niche automation ROI.



Use existing, well-understood data

Prototypes that rely on SharePoint files or CRM fields side-step months of “data-lake cleanup.”



Microsoft’s 2025 Work Trend Index found that 53% of leaders say productivity must increase while 80% of employees already feel maxed out — driving organizations to adopt AI as a way to expand capacity and deliver measurable business impact faster.⁵

⁴BCG, [“From Potential to Profit: Closing the AI Impact Gap.”](#) Jan 15 2025.

⁵Microsoft, [“2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born”](#), 2025.

Case study of a quick-win prototype

Picture a 500-person sales organization drowning in post-call admin. Reps spend 15 minutes per meeting turning raw notes into summaries, action items, and CRM updates. Working with SHI, they implemented a **“call closing co-pilot”** — a secure agent — that took over these time-consuming tasks:

1. Ingesting Teams or Zoom transcripts.
2. Generating concise summaries, pulling out follow-ups, and drafting the thank-you e-mail in branded language.
3. Pushing structured opportunity data straight into the CRM via secure API.

Within four weeks, average admin time fell from 15 minutes to 3, reclaiming 400,000 staff-hours in 2024 and boosting pipeline hygiene. That single win funded the next three AI initiatives.

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Common missteps – and how to avoid them

Pitfall	Reality-check quote	Better alternative
“ChatGPT-for-Everything” vision	<p><i>“A black-box assistant feels magical – and stays magical. People never learn why it works or when it breaks.”</i></p> <p>– John Moran, Director - Product Management, SHI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start with a simple, general AI work environment plus role-specific agents.• Teach users how to prompt.• Add features incrementally.
Trying to clean all your data before starting with AI	<p><i>“Let the data lead the use case, not the use case lead the data.”</i></p> <p>– John Moran, Director - Product Management, SHI</p>	<p>Choose good data that you already have.</p>
Underestimating change management	<p><i>“If a frontline manager isn’t using the tool, adoption stalls at the team level.”</i></p> <p>– Erica Moore, Enterprise Sales Enablement Consultant, SHI</p>	<p>Pair every prototype with peer-led training and executive demos.</p>

Get support so you don’t stumble into these pitfalls. SHI offers advanced AI labs that empower you to explore the latest AI solutions, validate your use cases, and confidently deploy new technologies. With help from our experts, you can easily accelerate innovation.

Bring your AI strategy to life

Five real-life quick wins achieved by businesses like yours

Early prototypes that stick share three ingredients: a stubborn pain-point, data already on hand, and a stopwatch to verify impact. Recent examples:

- **Outbound email generator:** A software firm blended public-web intel with CRM context; personalized emails lifted reply rates 22 percent in six weeks.
- **Trouble-ticket triage:** A manufacturer slashed mean-time-to-first-response 42 percent after an agent pre-classified one-fifth of inbound tickets and suggested fixes.
- **Email analysis:** Notes from one company's field engineers once languished in shared drives; clustering now surfaces issues within hours, giving product teams near-real-time insight.
- **Unit-test scaffolding:** A software developer created prompt templates that generate boilerplate tests in seconds, doubling coverage while preserving human review.

Small but impressive and highly visible wins like these seed confidence and supply the metrics that build internal capital for the next experiment.

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Measuring momentum

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Raw enthusiasm fades; instrumentation endures. Organizations that embed real-time metrics into AI prototypes scale significantly faster.

- **Weekly Active Users (WAU):** Is the agent habit-forming?
- **Minutes saved per task:** Link usage to productivity with a stopwatch.
- **User-created agents per 100 employees:** Signals grassroots ingenuity.
- **Leadership usage rate:** When executives model new workflows, adoption spreads; McKinsey's 2025 survey shows 53 percent of C-suite leaders use Gen-AI daily vs 44 percent of managers⁹.
- **AI-invented KPIs:** Firms that let models suggest new metrics report triple the financial upside and predictive accuracy, with 90 percent judging their KPIs improved¹⁰.

Publish the dashboard early and convert anecdotes into budget ammunition for your next AI initiatives.

⁶McKinsey & Company, [The State of AI: How Organizations Are Rewiring to Capture Value](#), Mar 12 2025.

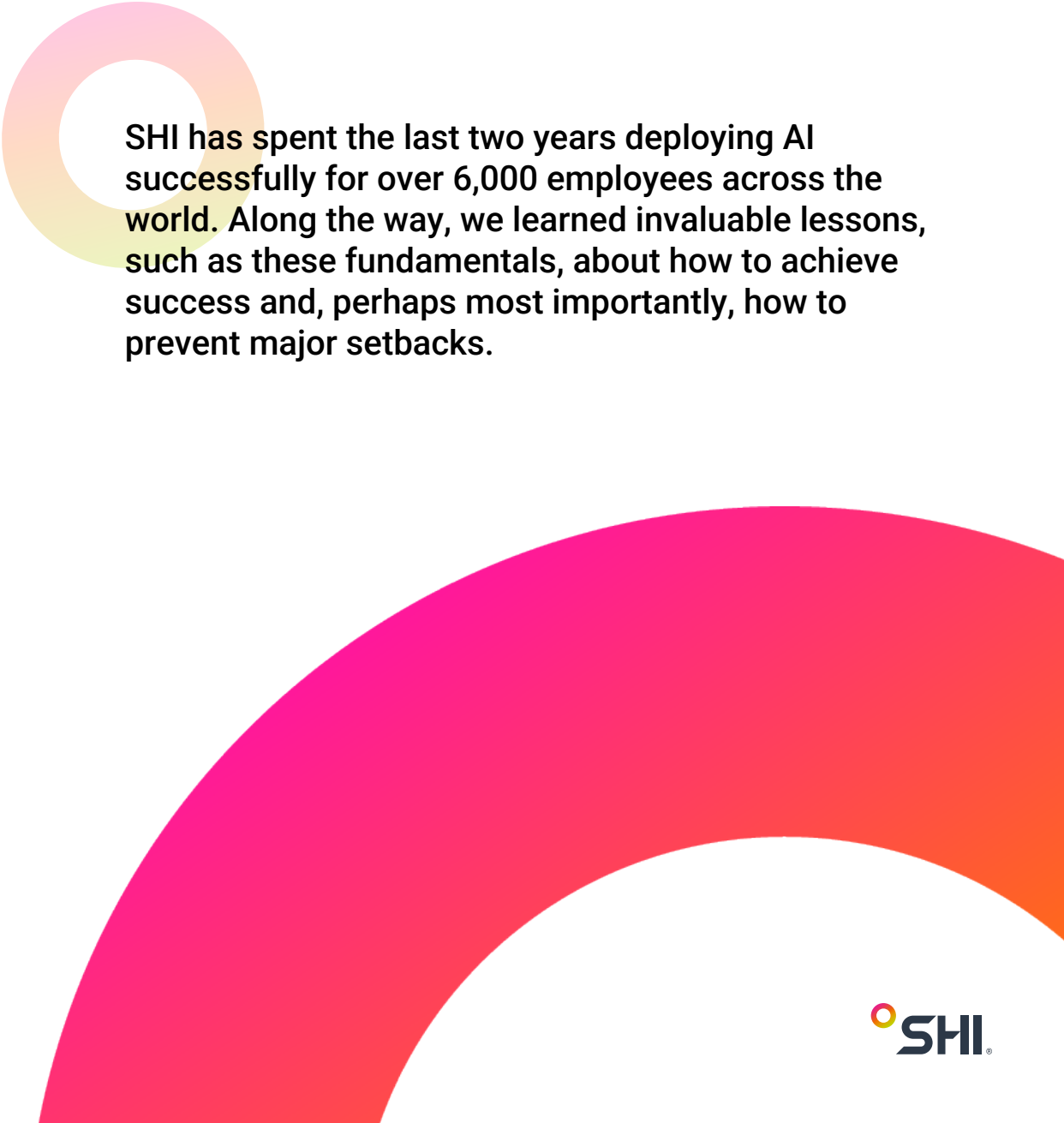
⁷MIT Sloan Management Review & BCG, [The Future of Strategic Measurement: Enhancing KPIs with AI](#), Feb 2024.

Prerequisites for success

It's worth applying these fundamentals to every prototype:

- **Governance environment.** Restrict model list and data scope; log every prompt-response pair.
- **Visible executive use.** A leader working live with the tool does more for adoption than any all-hands memo.
- **Peer-led enablement.** "Prompt Fridays" and short demo videos turn early adopters into coaches.
- **Early, explicit KPIs.** Clear metrics correlate with the strongest EBIT lift¹¹.
- **Executive sponsor.** Executive accountability shows the tightest correlation with bottom-line impact¹².

Skip one, and you usually trade speed for future firefighting.



SHI has spent the last two years deploying AI successfully for over 6,000 employees across the world. Along the way, we learned invaluable lessons, such as these fundamentals, about how to achieve success and, perhaps most importantly, how to prevent major setbacks.

^{11,12} McKinsey & Company, ["The state of AI: How organizations are rewiring to capture value."](#) 2025

From beachhead to expansion

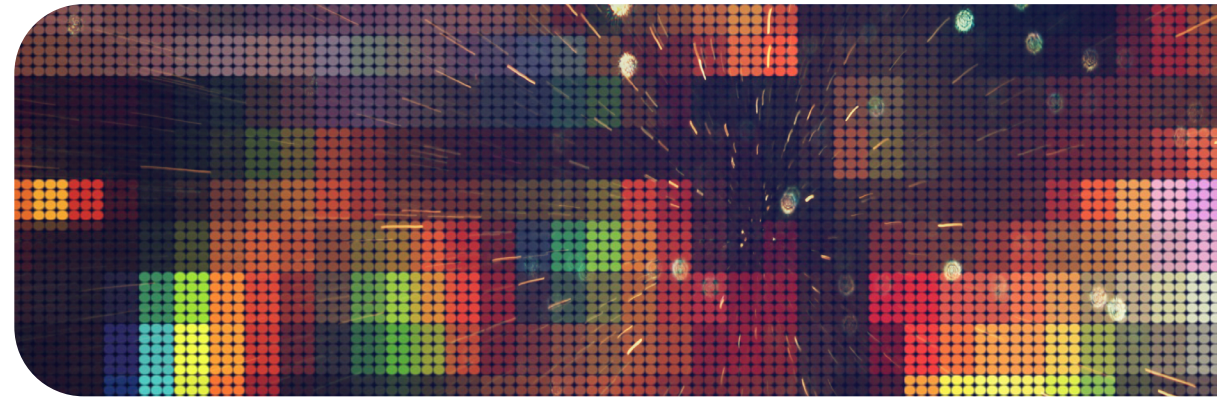
A quick-win prototype is less a trophy than a forward operating base. The moment a call-summary bot or ticket-triage agent proves its worth, three self-reinforcing assets appear:

- **First, data quality improves:** The sprint exposes dirty fields and flaky APIs worth fixing, and every subsequent initiative benefits.
- **Second, cultural pull emerges:** When teams watch an hour of drudgery evaporate, they begin pitching their own automation ideas, turning curiosity into a pipeline of vetted use cases.
- **Third, economics crystallize:** Finance leaders now hold real utilization and efficiency numbers instead of slide-deck projections, so the next proposal clears the investment committee with less friction.

As Camilo Cuervo, SHI's Strategic Marketing Lead for AI & Data Center Services, explains:

"Early AI wins aren't about scale — they're about proof. Small, repeatable successes build credibility, and that credibility is what ultimately enables organizations to scale."

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That mindset helps organizations focus on establishing a clear beachhead: prove value in a targeted use case, share measurable results, and expand deliberately into adjacent initiatives — each step grounded in evidence, not ambition alone.

These fundamentals provide a strong starting point. Turning early wins into a fully integrated, enterprise-grade AI capability, however, requires deeper assessment and hands-on execution.

SHI works with organizations to move beyond concepts and point solutions, delivering end-to-end advisory and implementation services that connect people, process, technology, and governance. Through structured workshops, technical assessments, and ongoing guidance, SHI helps organizations operationalize AI at scale — aligning strategy to outcomes, managing risk, and accelerating value in a way that is secure, repeatable, and built to evolve.

Outcomes: What quick wins deliver

Organizations that pursue AI through focused and aligned wins achieve measurable results quickly while building operational rigor and momentum with impact. By addressing a single, well-defined pain point and integrating AI into one step of an existing workflow, teams experience AI as a practical collaborator rather than a risky experiment. This hands-on exposure builds confidence in prompting, validation, and human-in-the-loop review, accelerating responsible adoption across business functions.

Quick-win surface hidden constraints, such as data quality gaps, governance needs, or workflow bottlenecks, early and safely, when stakes are low. This enables organizations to strengthen security, compliance, and operating discipline while still delivering near-term ROI.

Business impact: Turning momentum into advantage

More importantly, quick wins translate experimentation into business impact. Small efficiency gains, scaled across large employee populations, reclaim thousands of staff hours and fund the next wave of initiatives. Along the way, organizations develop critical operational reflexes: secure experimentation, executive visibility, peer-led enablement, and disciplined metrics that leaders and finance teams trust. This momentum reduces the risk of stalled prototypes and enables confident, faster scaling.

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Why quick wins matter now

Generative AI is evolving faster than traditional transformation models can accommodate. Long roadmaps delay value. Quick wins establish a beachhead, prove value, build literacy, and create a durable foundation for expansion.

Bottom line

Quick wins transform AI from abstract ambition into repeatable business capability, delivering value now while preparing the organization to scale what works next.

How SHI can help you achieve quick wins

SHI provides comprehensive services to advance your organization's AI readiness and ability to achieve quick wins with AI through a proven, structured approach:



Strategic assessment and planning

- **AI Readiness Workshop:** A baseline evaluation of your organization using frameworks like the Meta AI Literacy Scale to measure current literacy levels, identify knowledge gaps, establish improvement targets, and deliver a prioritized action plan. This initial step typically helps clients pinpoint opportunities for efficiency gains in targeted departments.
- **Executive AI briefings:** Explore focused sessions on the latest AI technologies, frameworks, and solution strategies relevant to your business.
- **AI Use Case Discovery Workshop:** Identify three to five viable high-impact AI use cases that align with your infrastructure and objectives. Our SHI AI experts work with you to define the target business processes, build out the business and technical requirements, and validate ROI.



AI-ready learning environments

- **AI & Cyber Labs:** Fast-track your AI prototypes in our state-of-the-art lab facility.
- **Secure AI:** A controlled environment where organizations can experiment with AI tools safely, with appropriate governance and security measures.
- **RAG implementation:** Connect AI systems to your organization's knowledge repositories through retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), enabling more relevant responses.

Next step: Simplify your generative AI journey

An SHI AI expert will walk your team through the framework and leave you with a quick-win shortlist you can execute this quarter.

[Develop your AI roadmap now](#)

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About SHI's AI Readiness Workshop

SHI's AI Readiness Workshop is a two-hour, expert-led strategic workshop that benchmarks your technical and business readiness. We evaluate your current systems, data, infrastructure, and business alignment across four critical pillars: security, data, infrastructure, and business.

Our AI experts identify gaps, prioritize quick wins, and deliver a tailored strategic roadmap to enterprise AI adoption. We can assist your teams in AI adoption and increase AI literacy based on our own AI journey and hands-on experience.

[Learn more](#)

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About SHI

SHI is not just a global IT solutions provider; we are your AI transformation partner. Our AI Lab infrastructure, in partnership with NVIDIA, is purpose-built for enterprise-grade ideation, experimentation, and adoption. This aligns directly with our strategic approach: Imagine, experiment, adopt, and scale. We empower organizations 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.

SHI brings the technical depth and operational rigor needed to succeed. We help you navigate complexity, reduce risk, and unlock real business value.

Take your AI journey with us.

Connect with an SHI AI expert at AI@SHI.com.

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