



From AI User to AI Leader

How your organization truly unlocks the value of artificial intelligence

A whitepaper by Laurens Vandebergh, newTera
Business Development Manager AI and Project Manager
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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) is high on the agenda of virtually every organization. Yet structural impact in practice continues to fall short. Not because the technology is failing, but because organizations are not yet ready to work with it effectively.

This whitepaper shows how things can be different. Not by focusing on tools or hype, but by investing in what truly makes the difference: the skills, the structure, and the culture needed to genuinely leverage AI. We call this AI Fluency.

In this document, we explore three questions every organization should be asking:

- Do our people know when and how to use AI, and equally when not to?
- Do we have the governance and structure to use AI responsibly?
- Where do we stand today, and what is the next step?

It's not so much about AI. It's about us, as people and as an organization. We need to learn to think with AI, not just about AI.

The central message of this whitepaper: AI success starts with people, not technology. Organizations that understand this build a lasting competitive advantage.

The Problem: AI Hype Without Impact

According to McKinsey research from 2024, more than 70% of large organizations now have active AI initiatives. Yet only a minority report that these initiatives are generating structural business value. How can that be?

Three Common Pitfalls

- **Isolated tools, no coherence:** employees experiment individually, but no shared approach emerges.
- **Underestimating the human side:** technology is implemented without attention to skills or behavioral change.
- **No clear accountability:** who owns AI output? Who monitors quality and ethics?

The result is a gap between the promise of AI and operational reality. Employees aren't sure what they can delegate to AI, how to communicate with it effectively, or how to assess the quality of its output. That is not a technology problem, it's a competency problem.

What Is AI Fluency?

AI Fluency is the ability to collaborate with AI in a way that is effective, efficient, ethical, and safe. It is not a one-time training, but a set of practical skills, insights, and values that reinforce each other and grow alongside the technology.

Three Ways of Working with AI

Not every interaction with AI is the same. There are three fundamentally different ways in which people and organizations engage with AI:

AUTOMATION	AUGMENTATION	AGENCY
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AI performs a task on your instruction	You and AI work together as thinking partners	AI acts autonomously on behalf of your organization
<i>Ask AI to generate a report</i>	<i>Develop a strategy together</i>	<i>AI agent processes incoming emails</i>

Most organizations start at Automation. The real value, creative breakthroughs and scalable processes, lies in Augmentation and Agency. That requires more than a tool: it requires an approach.

The 4D Framework: Four Core Competencies

Effective collaboration with AI rests on four competencies. Together they form a practical framework that can be applied regardless of which AI system you use, and that remains relevant as the technology continues to evolve.

Delegation	Description	Discernment	Diligence
<i>What do you handle yourself, and what do you give to AI?</i>	<i>How does your organization communicate effectively with AI?</i>	<i>How do you critically evaluate AI output?</i>	<i>How do you use AI responsibly and transparently?</i>

Delegation: Knowing What to Hand Over to AI

Effective delegation does not start with AI. It starts with a clear understanding of your own goals and the nature of the work. Only once you know what you want to achieve can you decide which tasks to handle yourself, which to tackle in collaboration with AI, and which to hand over to AI entirely.

The most effective AI users are first experts in their own field, and only then skilled at delegating to AI, not the other way around.

Description: Communicating Effectively with AI

AI cannot read minds. The quality of what you get back is directly tied to how well you describe what you want. This goes beyond a clever prompt (an instruction to the AI): it is about context, expectations, and approach.

Level 1 — Output	Level 2 — Approach	Level 3 — Behavior
What do you want as the end result? (format, audience, style)	How should the AI approach the task? (step by step, priorities)	How should the AI behave? (tone, level of detail, proactive or reserved)

Discernment: Critically Evaluating AI Output

AI makes mistakes, sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious. Discernment is the ability to evaluate what AI produces, how it arrived at that output, and whether the answer truly meets your needs. This requires domain expertise as well as an understanding of how AI systems work.

A well-known risk is hallucination: AI models that present factually incorrect information with great confidence. Large Language Models (LLMs) generate text based on probability patterns, not on genuine understanding. Human judgment remains indispensable.

Diligence: Using AI Responsibly

Anyone who uses AI carries responsibility: for the quality of the output, for transparency toward colleagues and clients, and for the broader impact of those choices. This applies to individual employees as much as to the organization as a whole.

Check what data you share with external AI services. Be transparent about the role of AI in your work. Verify facts before distributing AI output. Establish internal guidelines that give employees clear direction.

Why This Matters for Your Organization Right Now

AI is no longer a future prospect. Major platforms such as Microsoft 365 Copilot, SAP Joule, and Google Workspace AI are already available in the tools organizations use every day. The question is no longer whether you will encounter AI, but whether your organization is ready for it.

The Gap Is Growing

Organizations that invest in AI Fluency now are building an advantage that is difficult to close. Not because they have better tools, but because their people know better how to use those tools. Research by the World Economic Forum (2023) shows that AI and automation will bring significant changes to the task profiles of more than 40% of workers over the next five years. Organizations that anticipate this now will be in a stronger position going forward.

The risk of waiting is greater than the risk of starting. The question is not whether AI will transform your sector, but whether you will be ready for it.

What Does AI Fluency Require from an Organization?

AI Fluency is not developed overnight. It requires deliberate attention at three levels:

People and Skills

Employees at all levels benefit from a basic understanding of AI: what it can do, what it cannot do, and how to work with it effectively. That calls for targeted development, not a single workshop, but a structural learning approach.

Processes and Governance

Who is allowed to do what with AI? Which data may be shared? How do you verify AI output before it goes external? Organizations that get this right prevent risks and build trust with both employees and clients.

Culture and Leadership

AI adoption succeeds or fails on the work floor. Leaders who lead by example, who experiment, ask questions, and are willing to make mistakes, make the difference. Psychological safety is not a soft value; it is a hard success factor.

How Mature Is Your Organization?

Not every organization starts from the same point. The model below helps determine where you stand and what the logical next step is.

LEVEL	WHAT YOU SEE IN THE ORGANIZATION
Exploratory	Isolated experiments, no policy, enthusiastic individuals

Developing	Pilot projects, early successes, but no scale
Operating	Structural applications in processes, some governance
Scalable	AI embedded in strategy, roles and responsibilities are clear

Most organizations we speak with are somewhere between the Exploratory and Developing levels. There are successful experiments, but they don't scale. Moving to an Operating level requires a clear baseline: knowing where you stand in order to determine where you want to go.

How to Get Started: Step by Step

The most successful AI journeys do not start big, they start smart. Not a big bang, but a phased approach in three stages:

- **Phase 1 — Measure:** Assess the current state of AI maturity. Where do people, processes, and governance stand?
- **Phase 2 — Focus:** Deliberately select 2 to 3 high-impact, low-barrier use cases. Build from there.
- **Phase 3 — Embed:** Anchor progress in policy, roles, and a learning approach. Scale what works.

An AI Readiness Assessment is the natural starting point. It provides a clear picture of the current situation, identifies opportunities, and forms the basis for a tailored growth plan for your organization.

Conclusion

AI is changing how we work, communicate, and make decisions. But technology alone does not make an organization more successful. What makes the difference are people who know how to collaborate with AI: effectively, critically, and responsibly.

AI Fluency is not a luxury, it is a foundational competency for the future. Organizations that invest in it now are laying the groundwork for sustainable growth. The first step is simple: know where you stand.

Are you ready to get started?

Take newITera's AI Readiness Assessment and discover where your organization stands, what opportunities exist, and what the next concrete step is.

Contact us at laurens.vandebergh@newitera.nl or visit www.newitera.nl

About newITera & Laurens Vandebergh

newITera is a Dutch IT consultancy based in Beuningen, Gelderland. Founded in 2011, initially as a specialized SAP firm, newITera has grown into a broad digital transformation partner. Today, newITera combines deep SAP expertise with services in data analytics, AI, cloud strategy, and low-code platforms. With a team of more than a hundred consultants, newITera serves leading enterprises and multinationals across their full digital transformation journey. What sets newITera apart is its combination of early adoption and deep specialization, as an independent partner that values human connection just as highly as technical excellence.

Laurens Vandebergh is Business Development Manager AI and Project Manager at newITera. With a broad background in technology and organizational change, he guides organizations in defining their AI strategy, conducting an AI Readiness Assessment, and realizing concrete use cases.

Contact: laurens.vandebergh@newitera.nl | www.newitera.nl