Assess Your Firm's AI Readiness

Lightning Course Assessment Workbook

This is a first-pass assessment. The goal is not to audit your business. The goal is to identify where AI could improve the way your business creates value, then determine whether you are ready enough to investigate the opportunity responsibly.

How the assessment works

1. How your business creates value	Find where revenue, margin, capacity, quality, or customer value is created.
2. Where friction exists	Identify delays, repetition, rework, information bottlenecks, or missed opportunities.
3. Where AI might help	Choose one practical opportunity worth investigating.
4. Readiness check	Assess process, data, people, risk, and technology for that opportunity.
5. Next action	Capture what you know, what you do not know, and what should happen next.

For readiness questions, use: Yes / Partly / No / Don't Know. Use **Don't Know** freely. An unanswered question is useful information.

Organization

____

Participant / Role

____

Assessment Date

____

1. How Does Your Business Create Value?

Businesses create revenue and value through a small number of recurring business functions. Use this page to identify where your business is strong, where friction exists, and where AI may be worth exploring.

Business Function	What to Look For	Opportunity?
Find customers	Visibility, lead generation, outreach, market research	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure
Win business	Qualification, sales conversations, proposals, estimates, pricing, follow-up	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure
Deliver product / service	Operations, scheduling, production, fulfillment, quality, service delivery	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure
Keep and grow customers	Customer service, account management, retention, upsell, customer insight	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure
Run the business	Finance, administration, HR, leadership, compliance, IT, knowledge management	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure
Improve and expand	New products, new services, process improvement, innovation, new markets, capacity	[ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ] Strong [ ] Unsure

Which business function appears most worth investigating?

____

What friction, delay, cost, rework, or missed opportunity exists there today?

____

____

What better business outcome would matter?

____

____

[ ] Save time
[ ] Increase capacity
[ ] Reduce risk
[ ] Improve quality
[ ] Create growth
[ ] Improve customer experience

What specifically should change or improve? Describe the result you want to see.

____

____

How would you know it improved? What would be different or measurable?

____

____

2. How Is AI Being Used in Your Business Today?

Capture what you know about how AI is being used today, including whether the underlying work is documented. Individual use can be useful, informal, or experimental; it does not by itself indicate that the business has adopted AI in a deliberate way.

Current AI Use	Who Uses It?	Benefit	Problem / Rework	Sensitive Data?	Process Documented?

Current Business AI Posture

[ ] Avoiding
[ ] Experimenting
[ ] Exploring
[ ] Piloting
[ ] Operationalizing

Individual AI use does not define the business posture. Employees may be experimenting with AI even when the business has no shared objectives, approved approach, governance, or operating model. Business AI posture describes how deliberately the organization itself is engaging with AI. It is also separate from readiness for a specific opportunity.

3. Define the Opportunity You Want to Assess

Turn the opportunity from page 2 into one focused statement. Describe the business change first; AI is the possible means, not the goal.

Opportunity statement: Improve this business function / process...

____

...by making this specific change...

____

...so that we can see this measurable or observable result...

____

Where AI might help

____

Who would use or benefit from it? / Who owns the outcome?

____

4. Readiness Pulse - Process and Data

Opportunity Being Assessed

____

Complete every readiness question for the named opportunity above. If you find yourself answering generally about the business, return to the opportunity and reassess. The question is not “Is our whole company AI ready?” It is “Are we ready enough to investigate this opportunity?”

Process readiness is about how clearly the work is understood and repeatable. A process may exist only in one person's head, may be performed differently by several people, may be formally documented and consistent, or may not be defined at all. Most businesses have a mix. For this opportunity, ask whether the work is understood well enough to explain how it is performed, what a good result looks like, and where judgment or exceptions occur.

Think of the continuum: Informal -> Shared but inconsistent -> Defined -> Documented and repeatable

A. Process Readiness

Question	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know
We understand how the work is performed today.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We can describe what a good result looks like.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We understand important exceptions, failure points, or places where judgment is required.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] Ready Enough to Investigate
[ ] Needs Attention
[ ] Significant Concern
[ ] Unknown

Key note: ____

Data readiness includes understanding what information would be shared with AI and whether it is appropriate to share. Information entered into an AI tool may be processed, retained, or handled outside your normal business systems. Do not assume information is protected simply because it is being entered into an AI product. For this opportunity, identify whether customer, employee, financial, confidential, proprietary, regulated, or other restricted information is involved.

B. Data & Information Readiness

Question	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know
We know what information or data AI would need.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We know whether that information is accurate and accessible.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We know what information would be shared with AI and whether it is appropriate and permitted to share it with the tool being considered.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] Ready Enough to Investigate
[ ] Needs Attention
[ ] Significant Concern
[ ] Unknown

Key note: ____

5. Readiness Pulse - People, Risk, and Technology

People readiness is partly about comfort, not just skill. Using AI can feel awkward at first. People may not know what to ask, how much context to provide, when to trust the answer, or how to fit AI into work they already know. For this opportunity, consider willingness to try the new way of working, ability to learn it, and enough subject-matter knowledge to recognize when AI is helping or wrong.

C. People & Training Readiness

Question	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know
The people involved are willing and able to use the AI-supported process.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Someone can judge whether the AI output is correct or incomplete.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We know who remains accountable for the final result.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] Ready Enough to Investigate
[ ] Needs Attention
[ ] Significant Concern
[ ] Unknown

Key note: ____

Risk changes with exposure and traceability. An internal drafting assistant creates a different level of exposure than AI that communicates with customers, employees, vendors, or the public. Consider who sees or relies on the output, where human review is required, what happens if it is wrong, and whether important AI-assisted actions can be reconstructed later.

D. Risk & Security Readiness

Question	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know
We understand what could happen if the AI is wrong and who could be affected.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We know whether the use is internal or external/customer-facing and where human review or approval is needed.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We have acceptable-use expectations and can document important AI-assisted actions, reviews, or decisions.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] Ready Enough to Investigate
[ ] Needs Attention
[ ] Significant Concern
[ ] Unknown

Key note: ____

5. Readiness Pulse - Technology & Vendors (continued)

AI may already be present in your technology stack even if you did not deliberately adopt it. Vendors increasingly add AI features to existing products. You may not know whether a vendor uses AI, what information is sent, how it is retained, or whether it is used to improve models. Consider both the AI tool you are evaluating and every vendor already involved in the process.

E. Technology & Vendor Readiness

Question	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know
We know which vendors and AI-enabled products are involved in this process.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We understand what information those vendors receive and how they use, retain, or share it.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
We understand available settings, permissions, controls, and whether the technology can support the intended process safely and practically.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ] Ready Enough to Investigate

[ ] Needs Attention

[ ] Significant Concern

[ ] Unknown

Key note: ____

Constraints and Special Requirements

Some businesses operate inside legal, regulatory, contractual, professional, or customer-imposed boundaries that may shape or limit how AI can be used. Examples include attorney-client confidentiality, HIPAA and protected health information, financial-services requirements, government or controlled information, employee or customer PII, professional licensing rules, contractual data restrictions, recordkeeping or audit requirements, and intellectual-property or copyright obligations. A constraint is different from a risk: it may already define what you are allowed to do.

For the opportunity being assessed, consider:

- Does this involve regulated, confidential, privileged, or contractually restricted information?
- Are there professional or industry rules that affect how the work must be performed?
- Do customer agreements restrict where or how information can be processed?
- Are there retention, audit, approval, or documentation requirements?
- Do we need legal, compliance, privacy, security, or other specialist review before proceeding?

Known constraints

____

Constraints we need to investigate

____

Who should help confirm them?

____

6. What Do We Still Need to Learn?

Incomplete information is normal. In large organizations, establishing an accurate current state can take weeks. The purpose here is to create a manageable list, not to answer everything today.

> **Unknown does not mean unready. It means investigation is required before you can make a confident decision.**

Open Questions - What do you need to answer but cannot answer today?

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Assumptions - What are you currently assuming is true but have not verified?

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

Initial Risks - What could realistically go wrong?

Risk	Potential Consequence	Possible Mitigation

AI can help with risk identification. Try: “What could go wrong if a business like mine used AI for this process? What risks might I be overlooking?”

7. AI Readiness Scorecard

The value is in the pattern, not a percentage. Select one status for each area.

Readiness Area	Ready Enough to Investigate	Needs Attention	Significant Concern	Unknown
Process	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Data & Information	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
People & Training	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Risk & Security	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Technology & Vendors	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Most promising AI opportunity

____

Strongest readiness area

____

Largest readiness gap

____

Most important open question

____

Most important risk

____

Recommended Next Steps

Choose the actions that matter most now. You may have more than one. These become the starting backlog for the full-day workshop or for your own follow-through.

[ ] Build basic AI literacy.
[ ] Investigate a specific opportunity.
[ ] Verify important assumptions.
[ ] Assess vendor data handling and AI use.
[ ] Build team capability.
[ ] Prepare a controlled pilot.
[ ] Establish basic AI usage controls.
[ ] Answer key open questions.
[ ] Review legal, regulatory, contractual, or professional constraints.
[ ] Improve process documentation.
[ ] Define human review and documentation requirements.

Priority next step 1

____

Priority next step 2

____

Priority next step 3

____

Primary owner

____

8. Executive AI Readiness Snapshot

This page is designed to be shared with another leader.

Organization

____

Why AI matters to us

____

Priority business function

____

Most promising AI opportunity

____

____

Expected benefit

[ ] Save time
[ ] Increase capacity
[ ] Reduce risk
[ ] Improve quality
[ ] Create growth
[ ] Improve customer experience

Readiness profile

Area	Status
Process	
Data & Information	
People & Training	
Risk & Security	
Technology & Vendors	

Largest readiness gap

____

Most important open question

____

Most important risk

____

Priority next steps

____

____

Keep using this document. The purpose is not to prove that you are ready. It is to create a structured picture of what you know today and a manageable list of what you need to learn next.

Turn One AI Opportunity Into a 90-Day Action Plan

The lightning course helps you find where AI could matter and identify what needs attention. The full-day workshop moves forward from assessment. Each participant brings one opportunity and applies the same decision process to their own business scenario.

Bring one opportunity. Leave with a decision and a plan. The goal is to determine whether the opportunity deserves to become an initiative - and, if it does, design the smallest responsible path forward. A valid outcome may also be to stop or pivot when the evidence does not support the idea.

During the workshop, you will:

Define the business change	Make the problem, desired improvement, business value, and success measures specific.
Map the current process	Understand how the work happens today, including people, handoffs, exceptions, and quality requirements.
Test the AI role	Clarify exactly where AI would help and whether AI is actually the right solution.
Validate data and constraints	Determine what information is required, whether it can be used, and what legal, contractual, or industry boundaries apply.
Build the team plan	Identify users, reviewers, owners, sponsors, capability gaps, and organizational depth.
De-risk the scenario	Work through exposure, human review, traceability, vendor risks, mitigations, and acceptable residual risk.
Design the smallest next test	Create a controlled pilot or investigation with scope, measures, ownership, review, and stop conditions.
Build the 90-day plan	Turn the findings and priority next steps into actions, owners, milestones, and decision points.

You leave with: a clearly defined business opportunity, a proceed / investigate / pivot decision, current-process view, data and constraint findings, team and ownership plan, risk and mitigation plan, pilot or investigation charter, success measures, and a 90-day action plan.

Workshop date / time

____

Registration / next step

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