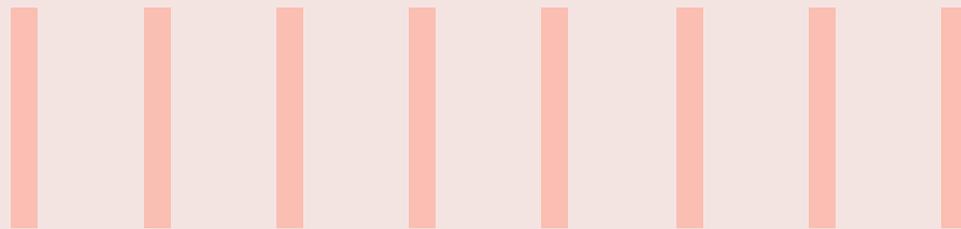




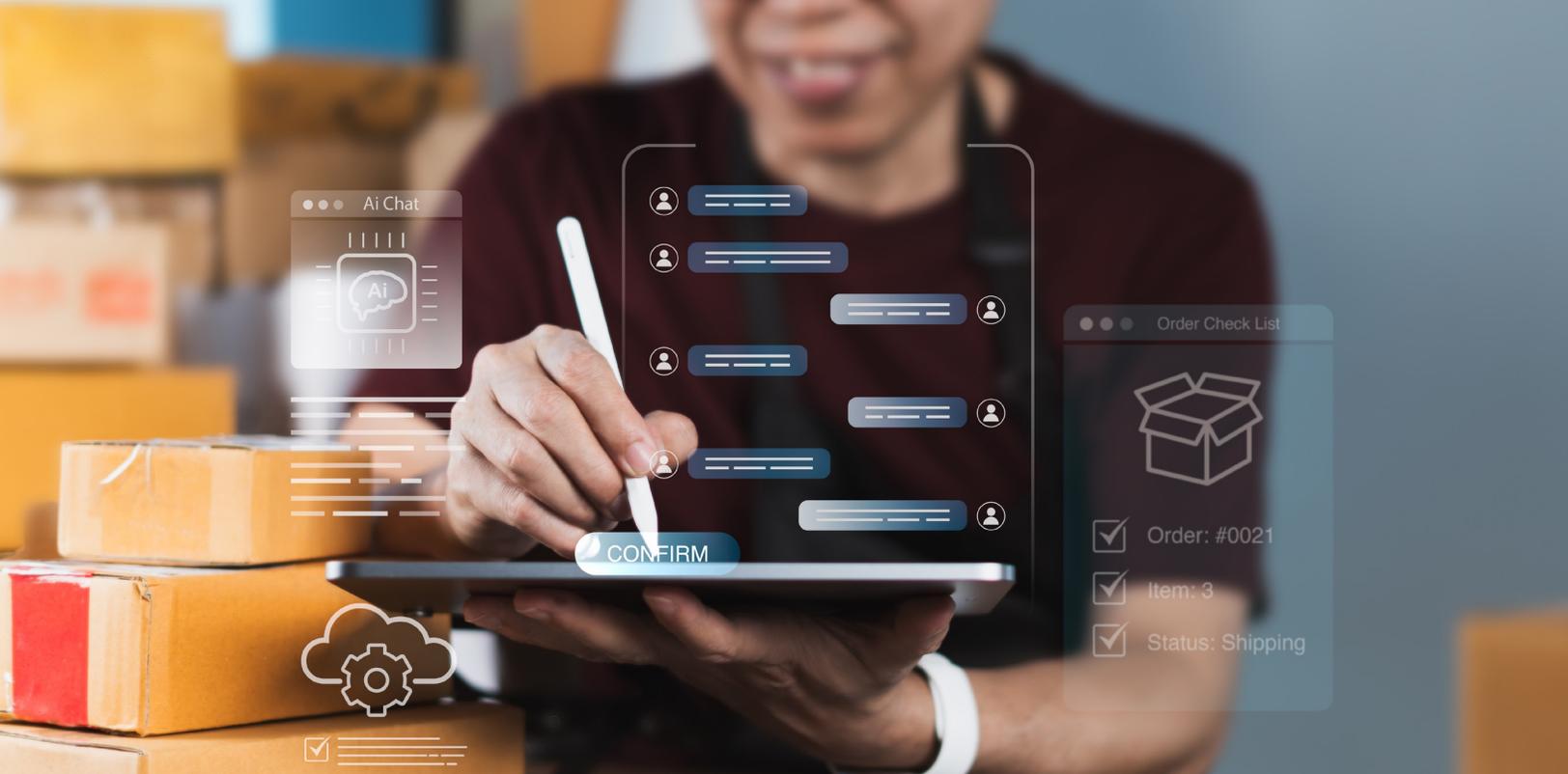
REWIRING RETAIL WITH AI

How a major European food retailer is driving AI adoption across its business units



Abstract

As Jacob Reeves, Head of IT (Automation and AI), and Daniel Morris, Technical Architect at a major European food retailer, contemplated how to accelerate AI across the enterprise, they arrived at the idea of an automation playbook. Partnering with Infosys BPM, they created an AI playbook, an automation COE, and an RPA delivery pod. After deploying 3 RPA use cases and identifying 30 new opportunities, the retailer is estimated to achieve a 10–20% growth in efficiency, productivity, revenue, and customer satisfaction.



The silo problem

Jacob Reeves was passionate about emerging technology, making him an ideal fit for his role as the Head of IT, Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) at a leading European retail and wholesale organisation. The organisation was a 150-year-old, family-owned business that employed over 41,000 individuals in more than 1,000 locations, generating annual sales of €5 billion.

The retail and wholesale market was a highly competitive one that required efficiency, regulatory compliance, the ability to make decisions quickly, and offer superb customer experiences. Now, AI had the potential to help, a fact that Jacob and other leaders openly acknowledged.

Local teams across various locations had begun proactively experimenting with and adopting AI solutions tailored to their specific needs. And while these initiatives were promising, Jacob was keen to pursue an AI strategy that was structured, responsible, and scalable. He also wanted to align the strategy with organisational values, regulatory requirements, and long-term business strategy. But how was this to be accomplished across the enterprise?

To find the right answers, Jacob consulted with Daniel Morris, a Technology Architect on his team. With an upcoming budget meeting serving as a catalyst, Jacob and Daniel began brainstorming ideas on how to expand the use of automation and AI.

As AI adoption emerged organically across the organisation, the absence of a unified, enterprise-wide vision became a key challenge. At the same time, technology adoption was largely driven by individual business teams, reflecting a decentralised and entrepreneurial culture. However, there was an opportunity to introduce a more formal prioritisation mechanism to ensure consistent delivery and reuse of capabilities. Jacob and Daniel realised that they needed a delivery model to reliably move use cases from ideation to production with clear ownership, service transition, and support.

The European Union's (EU) AI Act introduced additional complexity, reinforcing the need for a robust and embedded governance framework.

Rather than treating compliance as an afterthought, the organisation needed to establish a governance framework

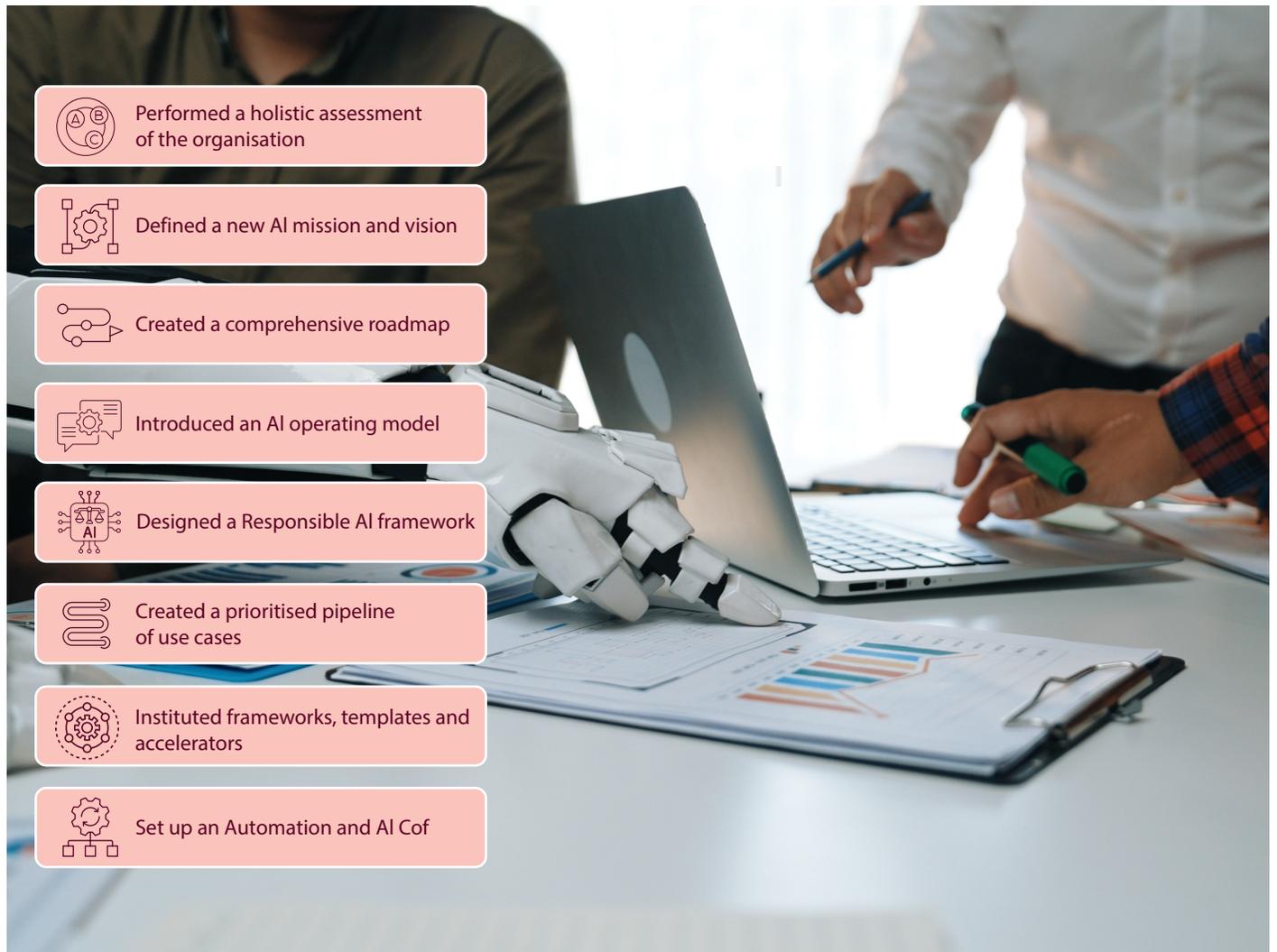
embedded with the principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, and human oversight. The duo recognised that the logical first step was to create an automation and AI playbook that provided clarity in two areas: an AI vision for the organisation and an operating model to drive a safe, governed, and value-driven technology adoption across business units. However, creating this playbook required a level of expertise and dedicated resources that the organisation could not afford to allocate at this stage.

With inputs from Daniel, Jacob created a proposal that, if approved, would allow him to bring in external experts for this crucial first step. The proposal was subsequently approved, and the search for a suitable partner commenced. Among the potential partners Jacob met, the solution presented by Infosys BPM engaged his attention the most. So, after a few rounds of discussion, he brought in a team from Infosys BPM.

Starting over with a better plan

Palak Mehra, a seasoned program manager at Infosys BPM, began the task of bringing clarity and confidence around AI adoption, which would help the organisation become future-ready and drive business growth.

Approach summary



Over a two-month period, Palak and a team of specialists from Infosys BPM worked closely with Jacob, Daniel, and other stakeholders to holistically assess the organisation's AI readiness. They held over 20 structured and interactive workshops with those from IT, Responsible AI, service transition, and key business functions. Palak used a collaborative and iterative approach to ensure that all recommendations were grounded in a real operating context and supported key stakeholders throughout the journey.

The assessment began with a detailed documentation of all existing AI and automation initiatives as well as lessons learnt during each implementation. Using an organisational readiness review, the team assessed the skills required and the organisation's delivery capacity. The team also evaluated the data availability, quality, and sensitivity in addition to technology platforms and architectural patterns. A review of the organisation's governance, risk management, and compliance helped measure current practices with

the requirements of the EU AI Act. Palak also had the team review existing delivery models, service transitions, and the mechanisms for tracking benefits.

Soon after the assessments, a comprehensive yet tailored AI playbook was ready. It was a practical guide for immediate adoption and not a mere theoretical strategy. The focus was on three key topics: vision and strategy, a roadmap, and a target operating model.

1. AI Vision and Strategy

Infosys and Client team jointly formulated a new strategy, nicknamed Polaris, to serve as a North Star for the organisation. It positioned AI as a capability that could responsibly augment, accelerate, empower, and enhance the organisation. Besides establishing a clear purpose for AI adoption, the team linked the strategy to business outcomes and aligned the new AI priorities - short, medium, and long - to the organisation's strategic plan. This new strategy provided a common language for leadership, delivery teams, and other business stakeholders. Palak ensured that the strategy maintained a balance between efficiency, growth, and employee well-being.

2. Roadmap and Use Case Prioritisation

Next came the roadmap, which was developed to enable AI adoption in phases, instead of scaling en masse. The recommendation was to start with well-defined, high-value cases that could later be expanded as AI maturity increased. Included within the roadmap was a structured scoring framework to identify use cases, taking into consideration expected business value and efficiency gains, data readiness and quality, risk, compliance and Responsible AI. The parameters also included technical complexity and feasibility. Based on this framework, an initial pipeline of use cases emerged within the Finance business function. The intent behind choosing Finance as the starting point was to enable the organisation to demonstrate early value and showcase responsible

delivery practices, which would help build momentum for wider adoption of AI.

3. Target Operating Model and governance framework

The final and crucial piece of the playbook was a target operating model centred on the idea of an Automation and AI Centre of Enablement (CoE). Control was balanced with speed within the model, enabling a smooth transition from innovation to scale by separating experimentation from delivery and operations.

The way this was to be operationalised was through an AI Labs and factory model. AI Labs to help explore and validate ideas. Once an idea was validated, an AI Factory would help build and deploy production-ready solutions. After the solution went live, a scale and service transition model would provide ongoing business-as-usual (BAU) support, ensuring reliability, compliance and continuous improvement. Overall, the operating model ensured that the AI initiatives delivered sustained business value in a controlled manner.

In addition, Palak and her team defined roles and accountability across business, IT, and delivery teams and defined approval checkpoints for architecture, data protection, and Responsible AI. To establish standards, accelerate learning, and avoid duplication of effort, the team recommended centralising the model in the early stages. The model was also designed to gradually transition to a federated structure, granting more ownership to business units while still requiring adherence to enterprise-wide guardrails as AI adoption scaled.

The playbook also featured a suite of practical frameworks, templates, and accelerators to support repeatable and scalable delivery. These assets were expected to reduce ambiguity, shorten delivery cycles, and empower teams to apply consistent standards across use cases.

The principles of Responsible AI were embedded within the operating model and delivery lifecycle. The governance framework was aligned with the EU AI Act, providing a means to practically apply policies by introducing a risk-based classification of AI use cases. For sensitive cases and decisions with high impact, the team added human-in-the-loop controls. Moreover, all AI outputs were incorporated with transparency controls and explainability. The framework also included mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, review, and escalation.

After the creation of the AI playbook, the Infosys BPM team extended their expertise to operationalise Automation and AI CoE. To gain early acceptance from stakeholders, Joint team started implementing the identified intelligent automation use cases using the delivery pod and in parallel groundwork for AI started with rolling out Copilots.

A business value realisation study demonstrated the benefits of the automation and AI deployments, which led Jacob to extend the contract with Infosys BPM for another year. The team then began scaling the pods to built domain focussed Gen AI & Automation solutions.

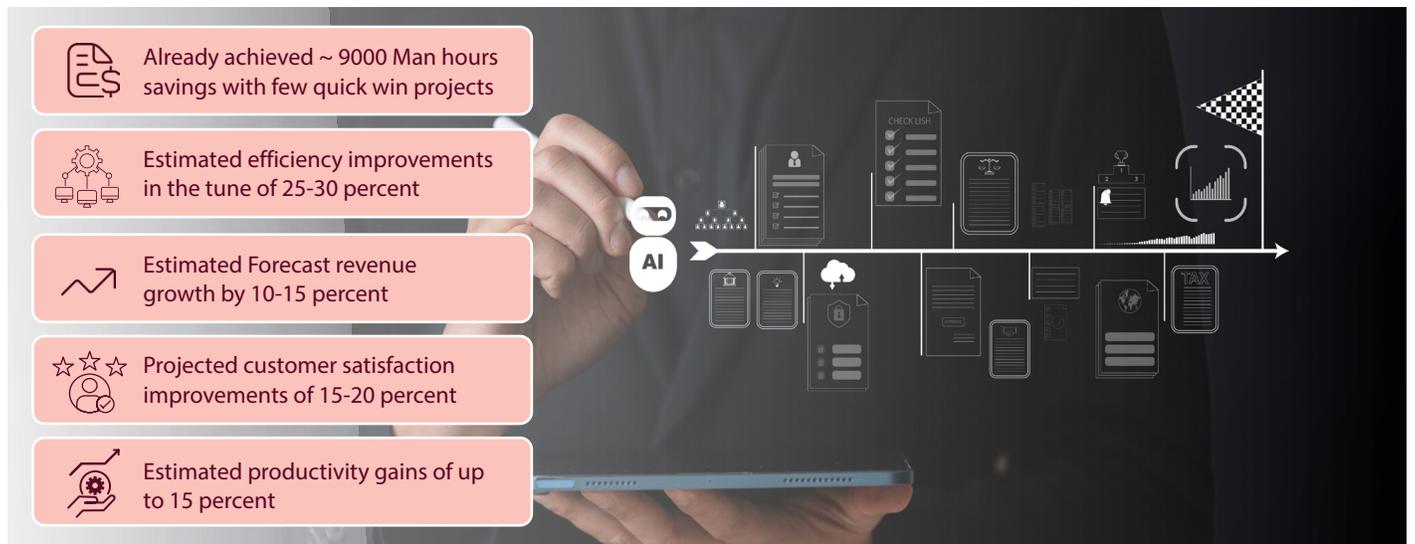
The best is yet to come

The excitement in the room was palpable as Jacob and other stakeholders reviewed the comprehensive playbook with Palak. She explained how the organisation was now empowered to safely transition from a

fragmented landscape to scale AI adoption safely and consistently across business units. As the barriers to AI adoption diminished, the organisation would be

able to access timely and data-driven insights, leading to improved decision-making.

Key benefits with AI & Automation initiatives



Palak then proceeded to present a few early estimates. She explained that as AI adoption grew in the future, the organisation would have more time to focus on high-value tasks. As a result, she expected efficiency to increase by 25–30 percent. Revenue growth typically followed such efficiency gains, allowing the organisation to anticipate a 10–15 percent growth from improved decision-making and optimisation.

She also projected that employee productivity would rise at the same rate with the introduction of enhancements such as colleague enablement copilots. Lastly, the process improvements introduced by her team were expected to positively impact customer satisfaction, which she estimated could increase by 15–20 percent.

In the end, Jacob recognised that the AI playbook marked a significant shift for the organisation, one that allowed it to move from isolated experimentation to a structured, enterprise-ready approach. With a clear vision, robust governance, and a scalable operating model, Jacob knows that his goal of creating a future-ready enterprise is on the right track.

**Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.*

For more information, contact infosysbpm@infosys.com

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