

Ten Key Points of the Wild, Wild West Paper



- Companies are in a generative AI gold rush, with \$37 billion spent in 2025 alone, a 3.2x jump over the prior year, yet most of this activity is not translating into real business value.
- Roughly 95% of enterprise AI pilots fail to deliver measurable outcomes, not because the technology is flawed, but because of disorganized, bottom-up deployments that create isolated “AI islands.”
- Generative AI’s adoption speed is historically unprecedented, ChatGPT reached 1 million users in 5 days and 100 million in 2 months, highlighting that velocity of adoption now far outpaces organizations’ ability to absorb and use new technology strategically.
- Enterprise usage of generative AI has exploded (weekly use jumping from 37% to 82% of organizations between 2023 and 2025), yet this “tsunami” masks the fact that only about 5% of AI solutions ever make it into production.
- The economic cost of failed AI efforts is massive, with examples like Zillow’s \$500M home-buying algorithm failure and an estimated \$644B in total losses from unsuccessful AI initiatives in 2025 alone.
- The core pattern of failure is consistent: heavy investment in AI tools and infrastructure without integrating them into real workflows, aligning them to business objectives, or adapting them to how people actually work.
- Bottom-up, tool-first AI experimentation fragments data and processes, multiplying complexity and creating AI islands that make true enterprise-wide intelligence and transformation harder, not easier, to achieve.
- The paper advocates an outcome-driven model: start with clearly defined, bold outcome statements and measurable goals, then design end-to-end workflows, and only then specify where generative AI agents should augment or automate work.
- This top-down, outcome-led approach enables global optimization, stronger ROI, better governance, cross-functional collaboration, and the deliberate design of an “agentic workforce” where AI and humans are aligned on shared business goals.
- Leaders face a strategic choice: continue chasing every shiny AI object and join the 95% who fail, or step back, define success, prioritize outcomes, and use generative AI as a disciplined lever for true business transformation.