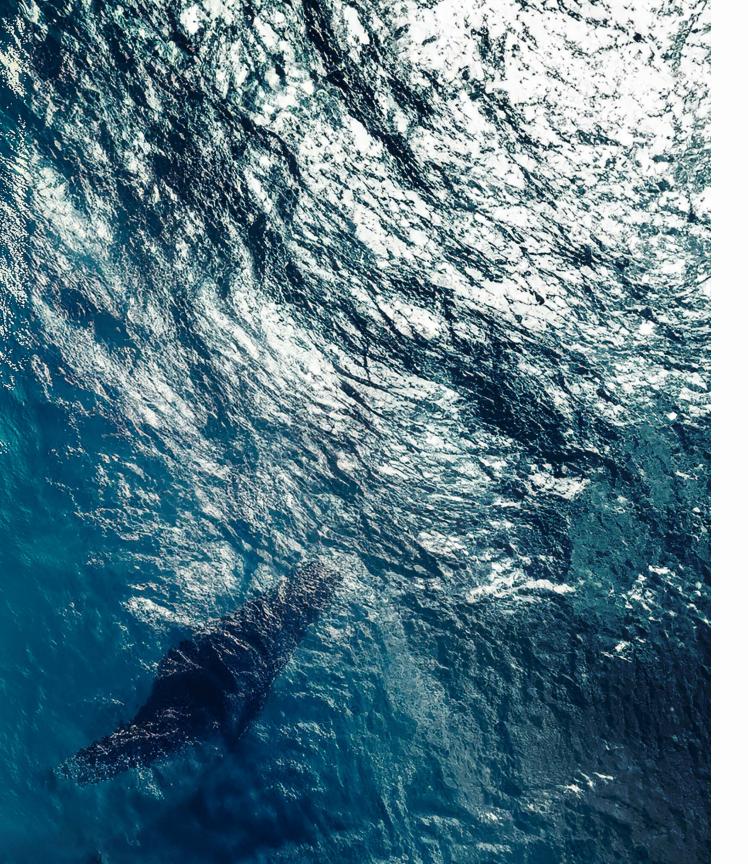


# Going for growth

Navigating the great value migration in the age of AI





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## Introduction

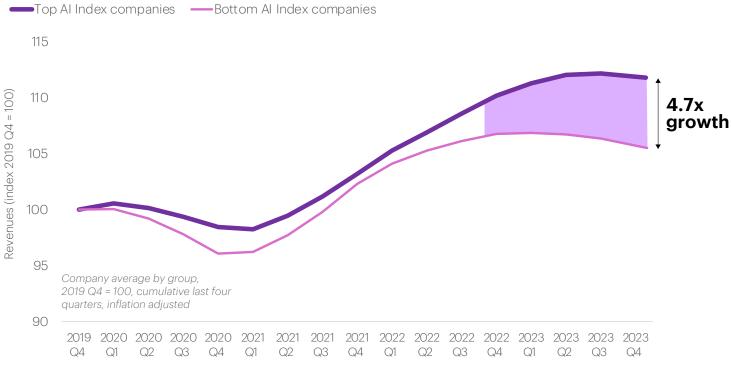
The buzz surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI is at an all-time high. The S&P 500 Information Technology Index, which includes tech leaders in AI innovation, boasts a staggering 46% year-over-year growth rate and year-to-date returns nearing 32%.<sup>1</sup> This surge is disproportionately driven by the early successes and future growth expectations of a handful of companies.

The growth potential for companies delivering AI-based solutions and services to corporate buyers is clear. But where is the opportunity and return for the great majority of other companies that make up the Forbes Global 2000?

The success to date of top-performing AI adopters serves as an indicator of the potential growth opportunities available from AI and gen AI for everyone else. Accenture analysis reveals that, since 2022, companies with the greatest AI maturity have been growing 3 percentage points more (or 4.7x) year over year than companies with the least maturity. For the average G2000 company with revenues of \$6 billion USD, this translates into a cumulative revenue differential of \$260 million, or \$360 million since 2019 (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Companies with greater AI maturity outperform their peers over time<sup>2</sup>

#### G2000 companies with the highest AI maturity see 4.7x higher growth over a one-year period



#### Source: Accenture analysis

Note: Al maturity evaluated using Accenture's Al Index. The index incorporates more than 30 individual metrics sourced from more than 10 diverse data sets, encompassing a broad spectrum of industries, and spanning more than 2000 large companies worldwide. See endnote for more information.

Despite these positive signals, most companies have yet to see the commercial impact. They are understandably in search of where the AI growth opportunity is for them and when they might share in the Al wealth. Our answer: Soon.

Accenture found that companies successfully pursuing AI-fueled reinvention have delivered topline performance that outperforms their peers by 15%. By 2026, this revenue growth gap is expected to more than double to 37%. Additional Accenture analysis indicates that companies with differentiated Al strategies operationalized for value experienced a 3x increase in total return to shareholders over a 5-year period.<sup>3</sup>

While cost optimization and efficiency have been Al's early business headliners, AI is proving its potential to elevate competitiveness, expand markets, and deliver exponential growth for companies. Companies that effectively adopt AI will find and capture new growth opportunities across three

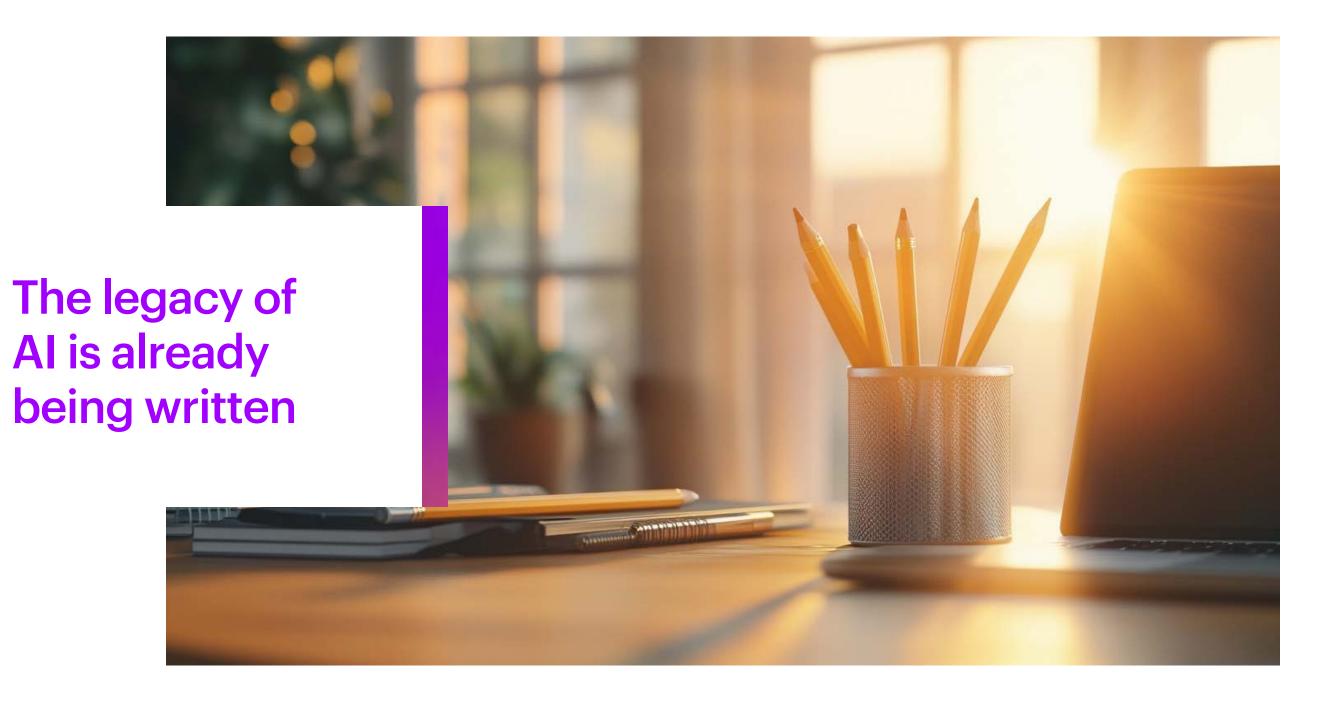
Companies that successfully pursue AI-fueled reinvention outperform their peers in top-line performance by 15%—a gap that is expected to more than double by 2026.

horizons that involve expanding the core, activating growth in adjacent areas, and establishing new revenue lines. These forwardthinking leaders are embracing the paradigm shift that AI represents. Rather than waiting and monitoring the risk of disruption, they are taking proactive steps to find new growth and outmaneuver their competition.

And with good reason: Accenture estimates that more than US\$10.3 trillion in additional economic value can be unlocked by 2038 just by companies adopting gen AI alone and at scale.

Others should follow their example because the number of AI initiatives focused on driving business growth is expected to increase six-fold by 2025. And by 2029, growth and expansion will be the dominant goal of AI at 67% of companies.<sup>4</sup>

#### Exponential growth opportunities are around the corner.



The persistent state of flux in which businesses now operate has become the new normal. Recent Accenture research found that the rate of change affecting businesses has soared 183% in the past five years—and by 33% in just the past year. Geopolitical tensions and trade skirmishes, inflation, and the speed of technological advances are just a few of the factors with which CEOs need to contend.

On top of all this is the uncertainty and debate surrounding Al's ultimate impact on business performance. Many experts and economists are quite bullish on AI's potential. They believe Al is here to stay, representing a fundamental shift in how businesses operate, innovate and compete. Some of these experts boldly predict, for example, that AI will produce a 6.1% GDP uplift in the United States by 2034.<sup>5</sup>

Business leaders and investors are also expressing confidence in the enduring nature of AI. Mentions of AI in corporate earnings calls have soared by 370% since late 2022.<sup>6</sup> We found that 75% of companies are prioritizing investments in data and AI (up from 56% in early 2023).<sup>7</sup> And evidence abounds in how venture capitalists are placing their strategic bets, in the rapid rise of AI-related corporate technology spending, and in the expanding talent market for Al-related jobs:

- VC funding flowing into AI-related fields tripled in the past decade and now represents 14% of total corporate VC deals.<sup>8</sup>
- 91% of executives believe their organizations will be ready to scale up generative AI technologies by the end of 2024.9
- Al-related job postings have more than doubled since 2019.10

The excitement around AI is largely driven by rapidly evolving consumer preferences and behaviors (which often outpace businesses' ability to respond), and heightenend expectations for what AI will mean for them. Consumers, already enjoying AI benefits through interactions with chatbots or receiving hyper-personalized offers from companies, now expect their businesses to use AI to anticipate their needs and help them make confident, straightforward purchasing decisionssomething 75% of consumers now struggle with.<sup>11</sup> It's no surprise that some business leaders are rushing to use AI to deliver more engaging and relevant products, services, and experiences, reducing consumers' decisionmaking stress. They believe customer loyalty will depend on it. And revenue growth will follow.

# Beyond the growing pains



For every industry expert, analyst and CEO that champions AI for growth, an equal number are skeptical. A recent headline from The Economist contributed to this sentiment by asking "What happened to the artificial intelligence revolution?" as its writers observed the limited economic impact from the technology thus far.<sup>12</sup>

There are also observations that only 5% of businesses consistently use AI and despite its potential productivity per employee in developed nations has remained flat. Additionally, share prices of non-tech companies that have the greatest potential to benefit from AI adoption have, in fact, underperformed the broader stock market.<sup>13</sup> Given these arguments, it's understandable that some leaders are may question when AI will deliver the anticipated value they seek.

But it's remarkable to observe, little more than a year since the release of Chat GPT-4, the meteoric rise in investment in, consideration of and activity with generative AI and AI more broadly. The market activity suggests something far surpassing a gradual multiyear trend and companies would be wise to get off the sidelines. While Al's overall value to businesses continues to be debated, savvy business leaders are turning to AI to help them assess markets, anticipate

change, and find and deliver new value opportunities that were previously hidden. For them, AI is more than a response to current market conditions. It is a proactive strategy to gain the foresight needed to navigate today's uncertainties and activate entirely new growth models.

Savvy business leaders are turning to AI to help them assess markets, anticipate change, and find and deliver new value opportunities that were previously hidden.

## Navigating the great value migration



The historical value that came from refining business models and optimizing ways of working pales in comparison to the value available to organizations that use AI wisely. In the age of AI, business growth is no longer solely a function of how well companies can continually strengthen their core business capabilities or operating models. While it is true that AI can accelerate those critical activities. it does so much more. It adds more certainty to the bets that leaders place. It lowers barriers to market entry. And it allows businesses to extend traditional markets and unlock thousands of new revenuegenerating opportunities. In short, it is radically changing where value is found. And how it is pursued.

Nearly half (45%) of executives are using AI extensively to explore new product and service ideas, identify new markets, scale innovation and improve their strategic decision making.

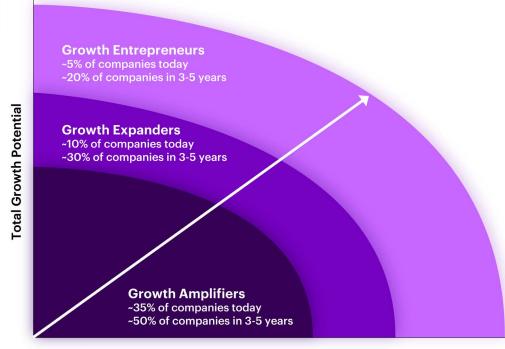
Early-movers can innovate to address unmet needs and expand into new and adjacent markets—and do so with increased organizational velocity. Companies with the AI maturity to shape and activate their growth strategies can free themselves from endless offering development and testing cycles. This means they can deliver business outcomes faster. For example, generative AI is accelerating the time to market for early adopters in consumer goods by 25-50%.

In fact, Accenture's latest research reveals that nearly 45% of executives say they are using AI extensively for new product and service ideas, to identify new markets, to scale innovation across multiple enterprise systems and for other strategyrelated decision making. These leaders are giving reason for others to believe in the power of AI. More importantly, they are providing a path to follow, beyond the hype, to deliver value and find new growth.

Companies that make strategic investments in AI such as these are able to pursue growth opportunities in three critical ways: by amplifying and accelerating core business capabilities and assets; by expanding reach into adjacent growth areas; and by activating new and entrepreneurial revenue models.

All of these pursuits are under way today, often simultaneously within individual companies. Each is underpinned by a strong digital core (see sidebar). Where these opportunity areas differ is in the scale of benefits they can deliver and the time horizon over which full value is realized. Each horizon promises to unlock exponentially more top-line value than the one prior (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Companies using AI to pursue growth across three horizons are best positioned to reap the exponential rewards AI and gen AI offer.



Time To Benefit

#### **Growth Entrepreneurs**

Al initiatives focused on launching entirely new offerings and revenue models, reshaping industry value chains and delivering disproportionate growth

#### **Growth Expanders**

Al initiatives focused on the pursuit of adjacencies and of finding new ways to reach new customers

#### **Growth Amplifiers**

Al initiatives focused on enhancing the core business and generating incremental revenue now from existing customers

### Creating a digital core that powers growth

As Al ushers in a new era of growth, companies need to take three actions to ensure their digital core is reinvention ready.

Build an industry-leading digital core. Companies that achieve "industry-leading" levels of digital prowess in platforms, cloud, data, AI and other capabilities can expect to achieve a 20% acceleration of revenue growth and a 30% boost in profitability.

Boost investments in innovation. Digital leaders continuously increase the proportion of their IT budgets dedicated to strategic innovation (in areas such as generative AI). Shifting just 6% in spending from maintenance to innovation is a recipe for success.

Balance tech debt with investments. Al has become a leading contributor to technical debt. To manage this debt, leading companies allocate 15% of their IT budget toward debt remediation, which allows them "pay down debt" without sacrificing their strategic investments.

## Growth Amplifiers

### Opportunity to accelerate the core business with AI.

The most immediate and obvious growth horizon involves using AI to amplify and accelerate the core business. Companies pursuing these opportunities are growing their top-line revenues by reaching underserved market segments and better anticipating the needs of existing buyers. For companies that use Al to strengthen consumer engagement, it is a vital part of the connected front-office team, putting formerly hidden or ignored information to work with interactions that are more personalized, engaging, profitable and ultimately more human.

Take the example of food service giant Sysco. The company is using generative AI to boost revenues by not only optimizing its merchandising and product assortment capabilities, but also providing shopping recommendations.<sup>14</sup> Then there's Best Buy, which is improving satisfaction and loyalty by using AI to transcribe and summarize contact center calls, equip call center agents with all the resources they need to address customers' needs, and even automate personalized follow-ups.<sup>15</sup>

#### Where it's working

### **Banking on happy customers**

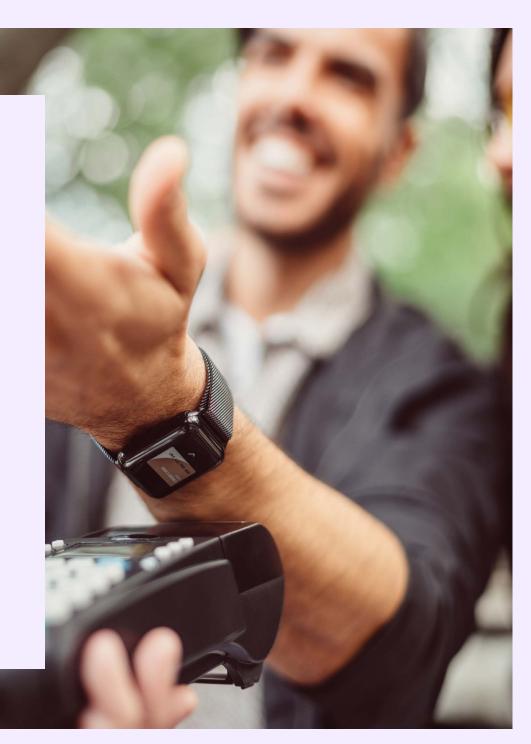
Global financial services group BBVA has made wise and targeted investments in AI, cloud and data to create a data-driven, engaging and differentiated customer experience. Its decision to use digital technologies to reach people in new ways resulted in a staggering 117% growth in new customers in the last few years and a profit of more than €8 billion (\$8.6 billion) in 2023, the highest earnings in the bank's history.

These results would not have been possible had the bank not consistently invested in its digital core, harnessing the power of cloud, data and Al to facilitate the rapid development of new capabilities and insights. For example, bankwide data, predictive analytics and business intelligence deliver a holistic view of the current and lifetime profitability-and likely behavior-of every customer.

By combining first-party data with new data sources to deliver a step-by-step view of the customer journey, BBVA's new digital sales model helps the bank prioritize sales initiatives for new customers and cross-sell to existing customers. Their strategy and investments have had massive, positive impact including acquiring more than 11 million new customers in 2023 and experiencing a 100% growth in digital sales over the last four years.

### "Providing a differentiated, better experience was like discovering a pot of gold."

 David Puente, Global Head of Client Solutions, BBVA



## Growth **Expanders**

### **Opportunity to pursue adjacencies with AI.**

The second growth horizon for AI offers businesses the opportunity to expand into new markets and/or pursue industry-adjacent value. Here, AI helps companies activate, reposition and extend their existing intellectual property, assets and services in more market-relevant ways or develop new, connected, service-rich and outcome-based solutions.

Retailers, for example, have developed new, high-margin revenue streams with their retail media networks. They are using AI to bring together first-party data, attribution models, digital and in-store media platforms, and strong brand relationships to target and reach shoppers in new ways. Target has already turned such media platforms into a billion-dollar business, with other retailers on track to quickly pass this milestone as well.<sup>16</sup> And infrastructure company Equinix has partnered with Nvidia to offer secure "Private AI" to allow for on-premise AI compute as a managed service.<sup>17</sup>

#### Where it's working

## **Tapping into new opportunities**

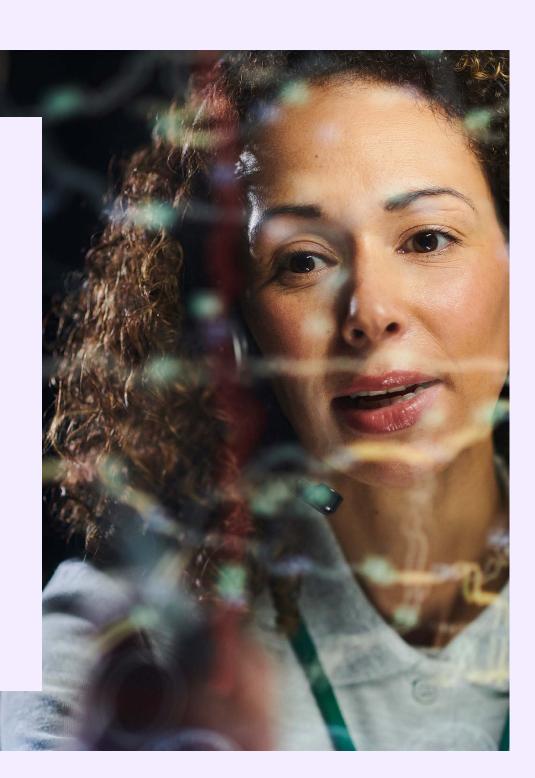
Ecolab, a global leader in water, hygiene and energy technologies, has shifted from selling traditionally discrete products such as detergents and water-treatment chemicals to connected digital solutions in multiple areas-from water management and predictive maintenance to remote monitoring of systems and processes.

AI has played a big role in supporting Ecolab's digital reinvention, as well as its efforts to extend its reach and accelerate growth. Al-enabled market analysis tools have, for example, helped the company create a new market-relevant customer value proposition for digital services that is currently being rolled out in the market. Equally important, AI is making it possible for sales teams and engineers to tap 100 years of expertise to better meet and anticipate customer needs and to tailor programs for distinct customers.<sup>18</sup>

Integrating AI into customer outreach, advisory and briefing processes enables Ecolab to extend its reach with existing customers and accelerate growth.

"AI has enabled the Field to make decisions and it ensures their on-the-ground insights are not lost within the organization. We've seen [that translate into] hundreds of millions of dollars of value creation and value potential."

 Kevin Doyle, Chief Digital Officer, Ecolab



### Growth **Entrepreneurs**

### Opportunity to activate new revenue models with AI.

Horizon three encompasses the most profound growth opportunities for companies. Companies making their moves in this space employ AI to activate new and entrepreneurial revenue models at unprecedented speed. These are the opportunities that have the greatest potential to reshape industry value chains and deliver disproportionate growth over time. As just one example, consider the potential for life sciences companies to reinvent healthcare. Johnson & Johnson (J&J) MedTech is aggressively pursuing new AI capabilities in general surgery. Working with Nvidia, the company is already scaling AI solutions that accelerate access to real-time insights, enable open innovation, and improve decision-making, education and collaboration across the connected operating room.<sup>19</sup>

The truth is that companies in virtually all industries are already starting to explore how they might use AI to activate new revenue models and innovations. Long development cycles previously made such models and innovations impractical. AI makes them not only practical, but also critical enablers and accelerators of new and sustainable growth.

## Revolutionizing beauty, creativity and growth

L'Oréal, the world's leading beauty company, is using advanced science, data, AI and generative AI to connect more personally with customers and deliver transformative beauty innovations that answer its customers' unmet needs. By integrating advanced technologies into its products and services, the company has activated a shift from "beauty for all" to "beauty for each."

This move has not only enabled ultra personalized customer experiences, but also allowed the company to develop and monetize a host of augmented products, smart devices, mobile apps, online platforms and digital services. From new AI-powered assistants and diagnostic tools to handheld devices that enable people to enjoy salon-quality hair color at home, L'Oréal is re-imagining beauty in the AI age. And by leveraging science and technology, it is developing new innovations and pursuing new opportunities that will enable growth and a sustainable competitive edge.<sup>20, 21</sup>

"L'Oréal is no longer simply a company selling cosmetics products, but products and services."

 Béatrice Dautzenberg, Global Director of Beauty Tech Services, L'Oréal<sup>22</sup>





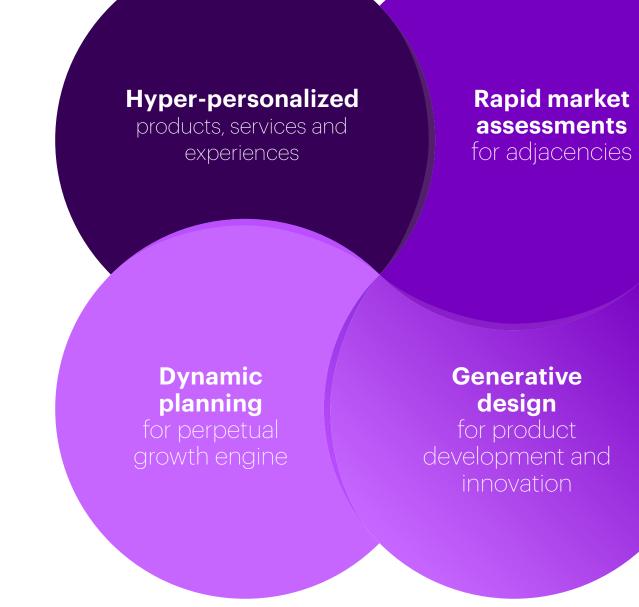
## Going for growth across all horizons





Unprecedented business uncertainty, market disruptions and technological advances are forcing business leaders to rethink their legacy revenue models and their approaches to strategic business planning. AI and Gen AI, employed in the right ways, offer a promising path forward. Leaders can anticipate market movements and quickly connect with stakeholders in new ways. They can identify emerging growth opportunities, value pools and even risks with greater certainty. And they can quickly activate new programs to drive exponential and sustainable growth.

To take advantage of Al's growth potential across all horizons, we recommend leaders take action in four key opportunity areas today:



## 01 Generate hyper-personalized experiences to expand the core

One of the most effective ways to strengthen a business's core revenue-generating activities involves developing hyper-personalized products, services and experiences that cater to unique preferences and needs. By maximizing the relevance of their existing offerings, business leaders can increase customer satisfaction and lifetime value, achieve higher margins and enjoy better market positioning.

Generative AI is a critical enabler for amplifying and accelerating the core business. It provides the tools needed to analyze vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and create personalized campaigns, recommendations and solutions that resonate with target audiences.

- Build a strong data foundation that aggregates and analyzes data and enables generative AI to gain a deeper, real-time understanding of stakeholder needs, preferences and value drivers.
- Integrate generative AI into various touchpoints to help customers throughout their journey, from early in their decision-making to follow-ups that build lifetime loyalty.
- Continually monitor and optimize the performance of AI-driven personalization initiatives and use data-driven insights to refine them based on changing market dynamics.

## **O2 Generate rapid market assessments to find adjacencies** and extend reach

Leaders must also identify growth opportunities in adjacent areas or among untapped market segments. Using existing assets and new outcome-based solutions are two important ways companies can extend their reach beyond their core businesses.

Once again, generative AI can be invaluable to leaders looking to capitalize on such industry-adjacent growth opportunities. By leveraging advanced AI capabilities, business leaders can generate rapid market assessments to quickly analyze emerging trends, determine market potential and discover new market segments, even in areas with limited data or insights. The technology excels at processing vast amounts of data-from market reports to social media trends to economic indicators-to identify patterns and correlations that may not be immediately apparent. Such insights pave the way for leaders to set up and test new offerings, pricing structures or routes to market.

- Use generative AI to aggregate and analyze data from diverse sources to capture the voice of the market and uncover underserved or overlooked segments, trends and opportunities that may not be visible through traditional methods.
- Apply generative AI to identify and evaluate adjacent markets that present opportunities for expansion and diversification. Generative AI is particularly well suited to simulate various market scenarios and assess the potential impact of different strategies.
- Establish ongoing AI-driven market assessments to keep track of evolving trends and emerging opportunities. This proactive approach ensures that the business remains agile and can guickly capitalize on new growth areas.

## **O3** Leverage generative design to create new products and services

Sixty percent of executives say it takes their company one year or more to adapt to changing customer needs. In a world in which expectations shift on a month-to-month basis, many initiatives might become obsolete before they are even rolled out. To meet continuously evolving demands, leaders need to develop new revenue models and launch new AI-driven products, services and experiences at breakneck speed.

Generative AI, with its powerful generative design capabilities, makes it possible for leaders to pioneer these new frontiers. For example, generative Al can revolutionize the way companies approach product development and business model innovation. By leveraging advanced algorithms and machine learning, AI can create countless design permutations, optimize for specific parameters, and uncover novel solutions that humans might not easily envision. This capability allows companies to rapidly prototype and iterate new ideas, reduce time to market, and foster a culture of continuous innovation.

Beyond physical products, generative AI can help businesses activate new revenue models—such as subscription services, pay-per-use schemes, or all-digital offerings-tailored to evolving market dynamics and technological advances.

- Examine all possible AI-fueled opportunities to create new revenue models, no matter how ambitious or farfetched they may originally appear. Use AI to analyze market trends and human behaviors, identifying opportunities for new revenue streams, with a clear view of ROI and an actionable plan to scale.
- Cultivate a portfolio of growth opportunities that balances potential returns, feasibility and risk, and investments in talent and resources that will be needed to bring each to fruition.
- Leverage Al's generative design capabilities to explore a wide range of design possibilities, accelerate the development process, rapidly prototype solutions, and refine and optimize products/services for performance, cost and sustainability,

## 04 Introduce dynamic planning to create a perpetual growth engine

Regardless of the growth opportunities business leaders pursue, they must utilize dynamic strategic planning capabilities to navigate complexities and ensure a perpetual growth engine is in place. Static and even "rolling" strategic plans are no longer adequate. The pace of change companies face and the speed with which they must react to (or anticipate) market forces demands an always-on approach.

Enabled by a strong digital core, generative AI is fast becoming indispensable in the creation of the adaptive strategic plans that are now needed. By harnessing vast amounts of historical data and analogues, generative AI helps business leaders understand market forces and relationships in real time. It enables leaders to expand their sphere of understanding to not only identify new value pools, but also model scenarios and launch growth initiatives at speed and scale. Importantly, it also differentiates valuable market signals from noise, helping to ensure that strategic decisions are based on highquality insights rather than extraneous data. The result? Informed decisions that drive success.

- Incorporate generative AI in the strategic planning process to help carry out continuous market assessments, scenario planning and forecasting-and to pressure test the most relevant opportunities. Continually adjust plans to align to shifting macro and market forces.
- Build a culture of adaptation in which people are willing to change and embrace innovation. This involves communicating new insights and strategic scenarios with key stakeholders to encourage leaders to seek new ways to create value.
- Establish a perpetual growth engine with a cross-functional value navigation team that uses generative AI to actively monitor market dynamics, vet strategies, prioritize key initiatives and optimize results.

# Sustainable growth is there for the taking

The unforgiving pace of change in the world today presents a tremendous challenge for CEOs and other C-suite leaders. But it also creates exciting opportunities for companies that can proactively translate those challenges into sustained competitive advantage and new growth. Until now, sustaining value amid constant disruption has been difficult. But AI now makes it possible.

Growth opportunities abound. Those that successfully pursue them will think differently about the growth opportunities before them—and how to find them and pursue them. They will arm their organizations with new innovation capabilities. And they will embrace AI as a key enabler of agility and adaptability across the end-to-end growth lifecycle. Other CEOs should follow their lead.

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