From “What If” to “What Works at Scale”

Bridging the Gap Between AI Pilots to Production

AI Adoption is Rising, but Production Deployment Remains Uneven

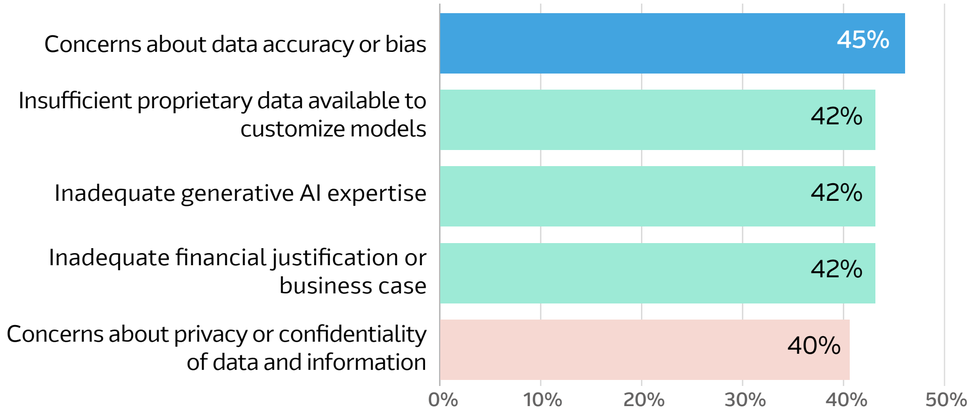
AI is widely tested, but dependable use in everyday operations and customer-facing products remains difficult. Pilots are typically built in controlled conditions with limited users, narrow data sets, and informal oversight. Production introduces real constraints: privacy and confidentiality, governance and oversight, integration with existing systems, and predictable cost as usage grows. The result is a common pattern, broad experimentation followed by quiet rejection when real operating requirements appear.

95% of enterprise generative AI pilots fail to show measurable financial returns, despite massive investment, due to poor integration, brittle workflows, and misalignment with operations, not the AI models themselves.

*Source: The GenAI Divide, State of AI in Business 2025, MIT

The Five Biggest AI Adoption Challenges for 2025

IBM identified five obstacles that commonly prevent organizations from making headway:



*Source: IBM

Where Friction Happens

For OEMs and ISVs: Product teams feel the friction at the customer boundary. Once AI becomes part of an offering, customers expect stable behavior, defined support paths, predictable updates, and governance built into the product. Without a repeatable delivery model, adoption may start strong but degrade under real usage and real support obligations.

For Enterprise Teams: If AI cannot be integrated into existing workflows, governed consistently, and supported with audit-ready documentation, deployment slows or remains limited to non-critical use. Cost management becomes a constraint as usage grows, especially when operational ownership is unclear.

The Requirements That Determine Whether AI Can Scale

Production AI must be planned as a system that can be operated over time. “Works in a demo” is no longer the benchmark. If users must switch contexts, duplicate work, or bypass existing processes to use AI, adoption will drop the moment the pilot ends. Production AI must operate safely across on-premises, device, and cloud environments, wherever the business runs.

Production Requirement	Impact on Adoption and Scale
Workflow Fit and Minimal Disruption	– AI must operate inside existing tools, processes, and approval flows. If users must switch contexts, duplicate work, or bypass controls, adoption drops even when pilot results look strong.
Clear Data Boundaries and Privacy Controls	– Sensitive and proprietary data must be clearly separated, protected, and auditable across environments. Well-defined data boundaries enable faster approvals, safer rollout, and confident expansion.
Repeatable Quality and Governance	– AI outputs must be evaluated consistently over time using defined acceptance criteria. Governance should be built into the system and not depend on a few experts or manual reviews.
Integration into Existing Systems and Scalable Platforms	– AI must integrate cleanly with existing systems and operate reliably across on-premises, edge, and cloud environments using repeatable integration patterns.
Operations, Ownership, and Cost Control	– Production AI needs a defined operating model with clear ownership for support, updates, change control, and cost management as usage scales.

How Arrow and IBM watsonx Address These Requirements

Arrow IBM watsonx

Arrow collaborates with IBM to simplify AI deployments and reduce the friction that slows production adoption. IBM watsonx provides the AI platform, while Arrow helps turn it into a deployable, supportable system that fits real operating environments. Together, we help teams move beyond pilots by aligning AI models, infrastructure, integration, and operations from the start.

Scalable, trusted foundation models designed for enterprise and regulated environments

Engineered, go-to-market-ready solutions that combine AI, infrastructure, and operational readiness

Speed with responsible AI outcomes that balance time to value with governance and control

Arrow and IBM: AI Solutions Delivered Through Three Services

Embedded AI Services

Engineering AI into products, platforms, and edge environments

Arrow helps organizations embed AI directly into software products, appliances, and systems. These services focus on engineering AI to meet performance, reliability, and operational constraints from the start, ensuring solutions are designed for where they will run.

Solutions Include:

- Agents & Assistants powered by watsonx Orchestrate
- Trusted AI with watsonx.ai and watsonx.gov
- Data for AI enabled by watsonx.data and Guardium data security

What This Enables

These services ensure agents, trusted AI, and AI-ready data are embedded with the right controls, governance, and data access so they can operate reliably inside products and platforms.

Application Automation Services

Operationalizing AI across applications and workflows

AI delivers value only when it runs consistently and efficiently in production. Arrow enables AI-driven automation that improves how applications are built, operated, and optimized, with a focus on reliability, efficiency, and measurable outcomes.

Solutions Include:

- FinOps + Application Observability/Resilience with Cloudability, Apptio, Instana, Turbo, and Concert
- Developer productivity using watsonx Code Assistant
- Infrastructure Automation with Verify, Hashicorp

The Value

Without automation, AI remains fragmented and difficult to manage. Application automation turns AI activity into repeatable operational improvements that can be monitored, optimized, and scaled.

Enterprise Automation Services

Scaling AI with governance, security, and operational control

As AI adoption grows, organizations need consistent oversight, security, and financial accountability. Arrow provides enterprise automation services that help organizations operate AI responsibly and sustainably over the long term.

Solutions Include:

- Securing data and AI with Guardium data security
- IT Financial Management with Apptio

Why It Matters

Enterprise-scale AI requires trust, visibility, and control. Enterprise automation services ensure AI can expand across the organization without increasing operational risk or complexity.

How Arrow Brings It All Together

Turning watsonx into Deployable, Supported Systems (Hardware Included)

Production outcomes depend on delivery discipline including hardware selection and validation, logistics, deployment consistency, and long-term support. Arrow Intelligent Solutions delivers watsonx-based solutions as deployable, supportable systems by integrating the full stack, including the hardware and infrastructure required for AI performance, security, and predictable cost. AIS reduces production risk by delivering a validated, repeatable stack so teams do not have to troubleshoot infrastructure variability site-by-site or customer-by-customer.

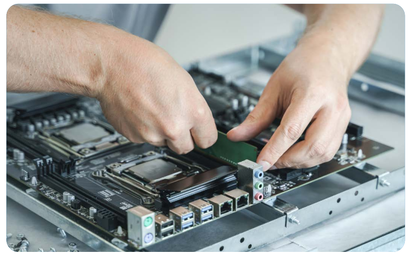
Arrow’s Services Include:

Engineering Design Services

- Designs aligned to data boundaries, performance requirements, and operational constraints
- Infrastructure sizing that supports real usage patterns (throughput, latency, concurrency)
- Lifecycle planning that accounts for hardware refresh cycles, compatibility, and supportability

Ongoing Support and Lifecycle Services

- Structured support model covering the operational stack, not just the AI layer
- Change control for model updates and infrastructure updates
- Cost and usage visibility tied to outcomes (cost per workflow, per user, per transaction)



Hardware + Software Integration and Validation (Core Strength)

- Integration of the hardware platform needed to run AI reliably (compute, storage, networking)
- Validation in controlled environments before rollout, including performance and stability checks
- Readiness checks that reduce downstream risk (configuration consistency, dependency alignment, environment drift)

Deployment and Scaling Support Across Environments

- Repeatable deployment patterns across sites, regions, and customer environments
- Consistent build and configuration to reduce variability and support load
- Staged rollouts with measurable checkpoints tied to business and operational outcomes

Arrow removes the operational burden of production AI by delivering watsonx as a validated, repeatable system, complete with the hardware and lifecycle support required to scale with confidence.

Launch AI with Confidence. Support It at Scale.

Contact Arrow to run a production readiness session and map the workflow, governance, integration, and infrastructure needed to launch with confidence.

Online: Arrow + IBM watsonx | From AI Pilots to Production

Five Years Out

13_01_2026