

The Adoption Advantage: Why GenAI's True Value Lies in Everyone's Hands



Amara's Chief People Officer wants to create a mandate for how to use GenAI. Amara knows that the real value emerges when employees themselves identify and shape the use cases.



Business

**Artificial Intelligence.
Real Wisdom.**

Orange has successfully rolled out GenAI across the company and aims to have half of all its employees fully trained on the technology by the end of 2025.



By contrast, McKinsey claims that most companies “aren’t yet implementing the adoption and scaling practices that create value,” and that only 1 percent of company executives describe their GenAI rollouts as ‘mature’¹. This Executive Briefing distills some of the most valuable lessons from our two-year GenAI journey—offering practical insights and proven strategies to help Orange Business and our customers unlock real value and accelerate their own GenAI transformation.

McKinsey described 2023 as GenAI’s ‘breakout year’ in a report issued in August of that year². Chat GPT had launched eight months earlier and already expectations for GenAI’s impact were high: the same report found that three-quarters of all respondents expected GenAI to ‘**cause significant or disruptive change in the nature of their industry’s competition in the next three years**’.

At around the same time, Orange was preparing to launch its own internal GenAI tool, which is now available to the market as Live Intelligence. The goal was to ensure our employees could discover the potential of LLMs for enhancing their working experience. Already, it was clear we needed to avoid our employees using Chat GPT with company data, which raised the risk of ‘shadow AI’ and introduced security vulnerabilities, resulting in potential breach of confidentiality or compliance issues. Instead, we wanted to provide them with access to GenAI tools, but with the governance guardrails that ensured their safe use.

Even in its early days, it was obvious to us that the greatest likely impact of GenAI lay in three areas – enhancing customer interactions in our call centers, automating aspects of our network operations, and providing productivity tools for our office-based workers. So, rather than limiting usage to a small group of experts, we opened up Live Intelligence to our entire workforce of more than 100,000 people in September 2023: we pointed them in the direction of these use cases, and encouraged them to identify the individual workflows where GenAI would be most useful.

Two years later, Live Intelligence typically has between 12,000 and 15,000 daily users and between 44,000 and 48,000 monthly users. This has resulted in the users creating more than 20,000 personal AI agents, of which around 300 have been industrialized by central resources to become ‘official’ AI agents. These are typically saving our employees two hours every week.

In addition, our frontline employees are creating multiple AI agents for use by, for example, field engineers. Already, 50,000 all Orange Business employees are fully trained to use the technology. Just as importantly, this widespread adoption has created a platform for the introduction of agentic AI, which is the next – and very exciting – stage in our GenAI journey.

Unfortunately, all the statistics suggest that our success is the exception rather than the rule. A recent MIT study found that, despite \$30–40 billion in enterprise investment into GenAI, 95% of organizations have failed to realize any measurable impact. It also concluded that the problem is ‘not driven by model quality or regulation, but seems to be determined by approach’³. All of this suggests that there might be some merit in sharing our experiences from our internal rollout of Live Intelligence and highlighting the wider implications of these for other organizations.

Tales from the frontline:

Richard (Customer Insights - Orange Group)

“ By rolling out Live Intelligence internally, I believe Orange Business is projecting an image of responsibility by offering a secure environment for experimentation. My message to my colleagues and to people generally is simply to try it – it will become essential, so it’s best to start building your skills now. I would say that Live Intelligence is a good entry point to learn about GenAI – with some practice on prompting, the results will quickly surprise you. ”

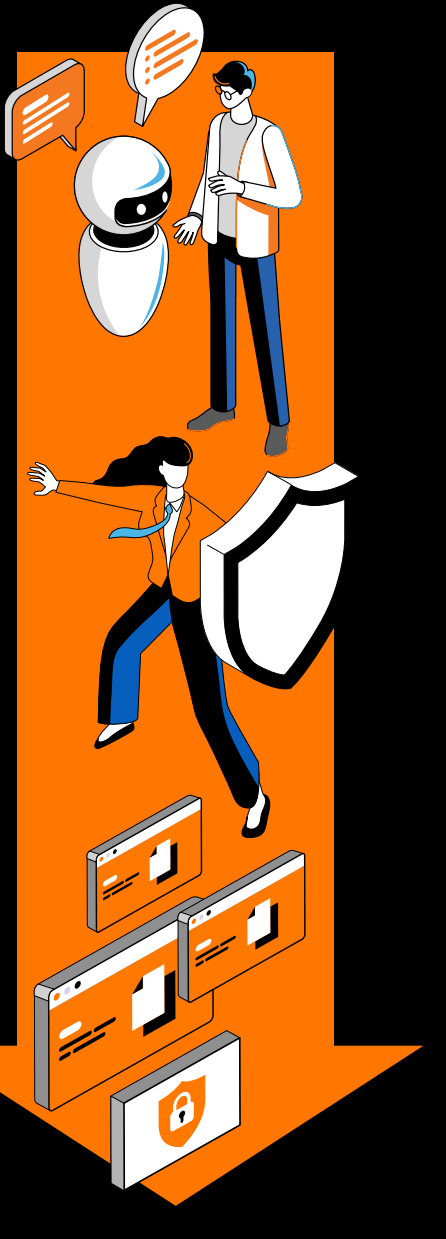
Top down...

We made it a priority to integrate ethical principles and responsible AI practices into our strategy from the beginning—not just to meet compliance standards, but to drive long-term business success. Recent scientific research (INRIA, 2024) underscores the fact that responsible AI is key to building trust, ensuring fairness, and gaining societal acceptance, all of which are essential for sustainable adoption and creating real business value.

Successful AI implementation also demands ongoing monitoring and reduction of bias (George et al., 2025). At Orange, we proactively conduct systematic bias reviews, regular fairness audits, and maintain open communication with stakeholders. Orange Business's governance model, including its Data and AI Ethics Council (the Comité d'éthique de l'IA) and dedicated multidisciplinary teams, ensures that AI deployment aligns with ethical standards, legal compliance, and societal values—fostering trust and long-term value. These steps help us

ensure our AI systems deliver equitable outcomes for all users and support our broader business objectives.

A related concern with GenAI was with data protection. This is not only important for the employer but also for users. The first questions people asked in 2023 when we started testing M365 Copilot and rolling out Live Intelligence were invariably, 'Where is my data going?' and 'What data can I use?' Our response to these questions was two-fold.



Firstly, we created the technical and legal context in which no data sent to an LLM is retained or reused – it is only processed for the purpose of producing an answer to a prompt. We have repeated this exercise with each LLM editor we have included as part of Live Intelligence. We also committed to hosting all our data in Europe, and when we introduced web search as part of the tool, we ensured that the search engine we were using complied with the same rules.

Secondly, we issued a Responsible AI charter that set out the general principles on AI use applicable within Orange. This contract described the risks and opportunities of the technology, defined the governance tools we had put in place and stated how we were protecting personal data, and described the terms and conditions for its use. (For instance, we would never use AI-generated images as part of our public-facing promotion material.)

We also educated our employees on the ethical and compliant use of data; for example, we made it clear that we cannot use GenAI to rank the CVs of applicants against a particular job vacancy. By clearly setting out how our employees should – and should not – use GenAI, we created a framework that allows them to use GenAI in a manner that is secure, compliant, and responsible.

With these guardrails in place, we were able to make the decision that anyone who wanted to create and share an AI assistant could do so – without central validation. This empowered users to use their assistants immediately and meant they didn't have to try to explain their value to a central authority with no understanding of the context in which they are being used. This is how we were able to create the 20,000 personal assistants mentioned previously.

To further mitigate the risks of this democratized access to Live Intelligence, we have a library of official assistants that sits alongside the list of shared personal assistants – these are optimized for company-wide use, minimize emissions and costs, and are promoted to the wider company. We are also going through a post-publication curation exercise, which involves such actions as removing unused or duplicate agents and verifying their compliance with the charter. This completes the cycle with responsibility for use case development moving from the center to the business lines and back again.



Secure by design

Much has been written about the security team's role as an enabler of GenAI. Often, they can be thought of as 'blockers', whom people often try to work around.

This is a very dangerous approach with something as powerful as GenAI. You cannot avoid risk, but you can avoid unacceptable risks, so we recommend that security teams be brought in from the start to evaluate the dangers and set out strategies for ameliorating them. If a GenAI use case carries unacceptable risk, then far better to pull the plug at the Proof-of-Concept (PoC) stage than after you have invested tens of thousands – or more – in operationalizing it. (To better understand how to secure GenAI applications, look at our blog, 'People, Process and Technology – the Three Pillars of GenAI Security Success'.)

There is also an important balance to be found between security and ease of access. If users have to jump through too many hoops to use a corporately-sanctioned GenAI tool, you risk incentivizing them to use the 'shadow AI' that your own solution was created to avoid. We therefore worked very hard to provide Live Intelligence with an easy-to-use interface and ensured that it was accessible via our existing Single Sign On solution, with no need to create an account or generate a new password. Ensuring frictionless access to Live intelligence was critical to its widespread adoption.

Leading by example



The role of a company's leaders in embedding GenAI is frequently underappreciated. In fact, a recent McKinsey report found that fewer than **30% of CEOs sponsor their AI agenda directly**; but, among those that do, **27% bring ideas to market in three months or less**—far ahead of the average three to six months seen elsewhere⁴.

At Orange Business, we created a specific education track for senior leaders and personalized training for members of the Executive Committee. Our CEO, Alette Mousnier-Lompré, was present at all critical meetings and publicly shared her own use of Live Intelligence —making it clear that GenAI was a strategic asset for the business rather than just another IT tool. Our experience supports the findings of a BCG study, which showed that the share of employees who feel positive about GenAI rises from 15% to 55% with strong leadership support.

We also chose deliberately to align GenAI rollout with our core business strategy, outlining the impact we expected the technology to have on our network operations, contact center interactions, and the productivity of office staff. By making these objectives explicit, the program fostered trust and buy-in, reassuring employees that the initiative was not about job reduction but about equipping them for future success.

Again, this approach is endorsed by McKinsey, which said, “Leaders must clearly define where value lies, how AI will drive this value, and how risk will be mitigated. These actions can enhance collaboration among business, technology, and risk teams. Although challenging, aligning leadership is a crucial step to ensure that AI projects are not disparate, avoid liability, and deliver transformative business outcomes⁵.”

When it comes to upholding responsible AI practices, we are also determined to lead by example. We are actively pursuing recognized certifications such as Positive AI and GEEIS, and conducting thorough internal assessments. This commitment—alongside our focus on sustainable ‘Green AI’ principles—ensures that the implementation of GenAI generates measurable business benefits while meeting wider demands for ethical and environmentally conscious technology. Initiatives like Live Intelligence and our eco-design standards highlight our integrated strategy to build trust and drive value through responsible innovation.

Orange's Commitment to AI's Environmental Responsibility

Despite AI's vast potential, there are concerns about the energy-intensive nature of the technology and its environmental impact— and transparency around the carbon footprint of generative AI models remains inadequate. Many consider that the current disclosures from industry leaders like Google and Mistral fall short of what is needed for robust monitoring.

At Orange Business, environmental stewardship is at the heart of our AI strategy. We are firmly committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and we are working alongside our customers to help them reach their own net zero ambitions. In terms of GenAI, we prioritize the development of AI systems that not only deliver value, but also minimize environmental harm. To this end, we have a dedicated task force overseeing responsible AI practices, ensuring that we comply with the AI Act through region- and business unit-specific teams.

We are actively developing key performance indicators (KPIs) to empower operational teams with clearer insights into the carbon

footprint associated with embedding AI in our products and services. Our goal is to help teams balance financial outcomes with environmental considerations.

Finally, we continually assess the size of our AI models, recognizing that smaller models typically have a lighter environmental impact. This involves carefully weighing performance, cost, and sustainability to ensure responsible innovation.

...and bottom up



Considering the risks involved, it is natural for organizations to seek to exert control over their GenAI initiatives via a rigid, top-down approach. However, our experience suggests that responsibility for GenAI use case generation should move from the decision makers to the lines of business and back: we therefore recommend that companies combine a top-down approach to governance with democratized access to GenAI tools to promote AI-driven innovation.

With the right guardrails in place, it is the workers themselves, close to individual workflows, who are best placed to identify the most useful applications of GenAI. So, we did not try to identify an elite group of power users that would be trained to use the technology or try to micro-manage the uses to which our employees would put it. Instead, we worked with the lines of business – HR, finance, marketing, etc. – to uncover the areas where GenAI was most likely to add value. (This process is now available to our customers via the Future Firestarter program, which helps organizations to define the use cases that are most relevant to them.)

People really want to use GenAI at work, and if they are given a clear, easy-to-use, and secure tool, then adoption will quickly accelerate. But what we've learned is that transparency is vital to enable the collaboration that will build on this early enthusiasm. Live Intelligence not only enables employees to create and share AI assistants, but all the settings and the prompt system are visible to anyone. This has been critical for education, inspiration, and the sustained adoption of the tool. The fact that our employees genuinely like Live Intelligence (it

has a Net Promoter Score of 66) has led many early adopters to engage their colleagues in the technology through spontaneous and local initiatives such as Live Intelligence cafés or team hackathons.

The critical step needed to deliver value from this innovation is to monitor this activity and operationalize those services that have broad-based utility. Live Intelligence holds no personally identifiable information (this was one of the commitments we made to employees in the charter), but it does allow us to monitor usage (a crucial measure of adoption) and the number and nature of the AI assistants created by employees.

The central dashboard described above is one of the key features of Live Intelligence: this not only provides a high level of visibility over AI activity but also allows organizations to monitor costs and carbon emissions. We have found that our employees appreciate being able to select the most suitable LLM for their queries, allowing them to manage both the costs and carbon footprint associated with their use of Live Intelligence. This choice empowers them to act responsibly, especially regarding environmental impact.

Tales from the frontline: Anne (Agile Transformation Coach – Orange France)

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I need to stay informed about current practices that might help our agile development teams, and we were already testing ChatGPT, but our IT Director recommended using Live Intelligence as an internal, secure, and officially sanctioned solution. It's very simple and intuitive – you get the hang of it immediately. To build skills, I also co-led a practice community for a year with colleagues: sharing tips, feedback, and comparing different language models. With regular meetings over the course of a year, we built a wonderful, shared skills base.

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Supporting change

Democratizing access to GenAI tools is only effective when giving employees the support they need to use them effectively. A poorly trained user may take several attempts to write a decent prompt, slowing productivity, increasing frustration – and racking up costs and emissions.

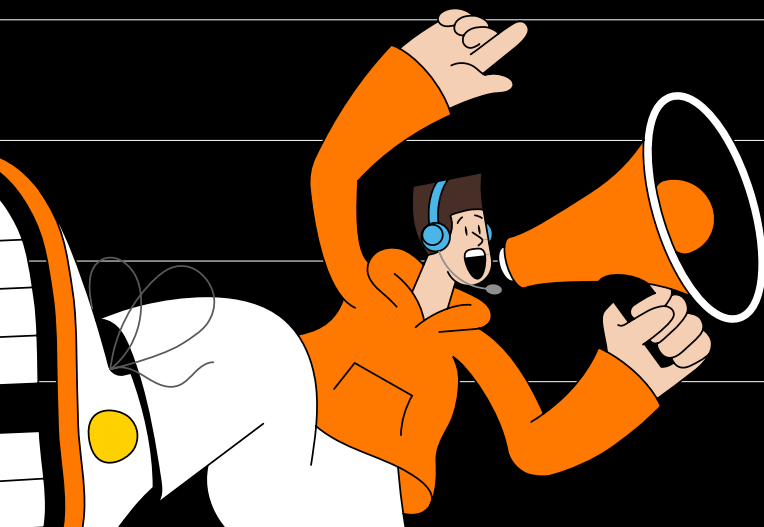
However, this is an area that is too frequently overlooked by organizations rolling out their GenAI initiatives. A McKinsey survey found that only 29% of employees felt fully supported in their use of AI tools. A separate 'Jobs for the Future' report found that only 31% of workers said their employer provided AI training, and a BCG survey found that barely more than a third (36%) of employees felt properly trained on GenAI. A separate McKinsey survey found that 48% of employees agreed that formal training would make them more likely to increase day-to-day usage of GenAI tools.

At Orange Business, GenAI training was offered to (but not mandated for) everyone in the company and took the form of webinars, formal classwork, and mentoring. BCG found that at least five hours of training was required to give people sufficient confidence to use the tool properly, and we would broadly agree with that figure. With over 50,000 employees trained across 28 countries, our experience supports the view that nurturing an

AI-literate workforce is an essential foundation for any company wishing to generate value from the technology.

Initially, we started with just a few trainers, but we now have hundreds of people who can instruct their colleagues in GenAI. This is a significant investment on our part as we will have carried out thousands of hours of education across the company. However, creating this critical mass was vital to building momentum: with more people on the platform, resources could be focused on refining and enhancing the toolset—driving a virtuous cycle of adoption and innovation.

The training that Orange Business offers its customers is delivered via a mix of remote (webinars) and face-to-face training. It also includes model training and user training on how to effectively utilize and integrate GenAI tools within an organization and focuses not only on technical skills but also on ethical considerations, bias awareness, and responsible use.



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Talking about a revolution

We also recommend leveraging the skills and enthusiasm of early adopters. This group became key volunteers in the informal communities that sprang up around the use of our internal GenAI tool.

At first, these were very loosely structured groups, but, as the lines of business gained clarity on what they wanted to achieve, we identified 'GenAI Transformers' who are so critical to the broad adoption of GenAI: we wanted to valorize this transverse activity, so we worked with their line managers to formalize this role as a part of their day-to-day activities.

As our GenAI capabilities matured, informal leadership of

learning communities was woven into job descriptions, and reporting structures were put in place so senior leadership could understand and track developments in the lines of business. We were careful to balance the disruption taking place in the lines of business with responsibility, maintaining constant dialogue with employees and business units to ensure that changes were meaningful and sustainable.

Tales from the frontline: H  l  ne (Facilitator, Managerial Development, Human Resources - Orange France)



I used GenAI to co-create a full-day training session with a dragon theme—in just a few hours! I worked with Live Intelligence to come up with five unique dragon characters, each reflecting a different facilitator style. Together, we created character descriptions, figurines, card games, and even a personality quiz. It's a complete, innovative activity that always gets great feedback, and I reuse it regularly. Without AI's help, this project would've easily taken two weeks, or I'd have had to hire an outside provider, so it saved me a lot of time and money. Plus, it gave me access to skills like psychological profiling, which I don't have, and really ramped up my creativity.



The base of the pyramid

The end result of this GenAI-based innovation is a net time saving of typically two hours per employee per week. These are not the massive productivity savings often claimed for the technology, but we believe the investment to be worthwhile, if not critical, for two reasons.

Firstly, GenAI has had a measurable impact on employee engagement. The GenAI assistants our employees have created automate a lot of time-consuming (and often tiresome) tasks – creating meeting minutes, programming spreadsheets, finding information – that eliminate a lot of stress and ease their mental load. These enhancements to the employee experience are important to recruiting and retaining our people

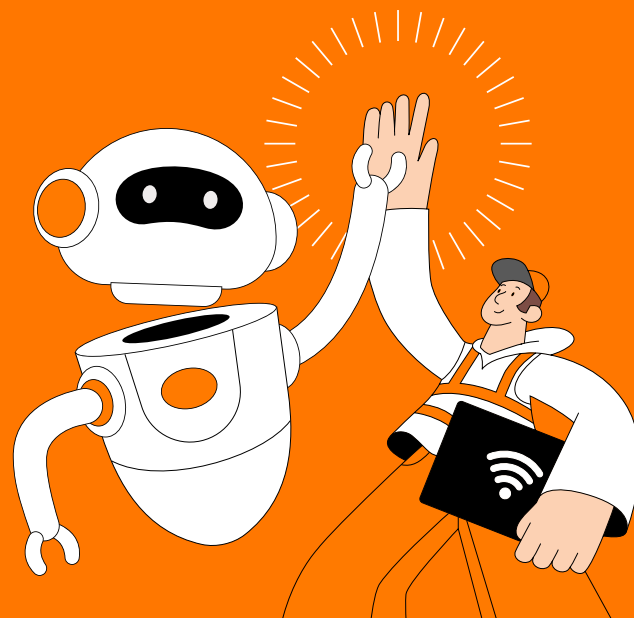
Just as importantly, we believe that embedding GenAI across our organization has created a foundational layer of GenAI capability. This is the base of a three-tier use case pyramid and is a necessary precursor to the Agentic AI-driven productivity layer that sits above it. This, in turn, supports the top, transformational tier. (To learn more about our Use Case Pyramid, please read our White Paper, [‘A Blueprint for Value: How the three-tiered Use Case Pyramid guides the way to successful GenAI Services’](#)

So, this process not only delivers value in the form of employee satisfaction but also unlocks the 10x productivity gains available through the successful implementation of Agentic AI. We believe that this is a fundamental enabler for our ability to deliver on the transformation potential of GenAI and to generate real value from it.

The fruits of our labors

Scaling AI responsibly has involved rigorous pilot evaluations, ongoing bias assessments, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to governance frameworks—practices embedded in our proven methodology for GenAI implementation. Our focus on responsible use of the technology has not only embedded GenAI at the heart of our company but has enhanced Orange’s reputation as a leader in ethical innovation, fostering the customer trust and social acceptance that are key drivers of long-term business success.

While this success may owe as much to our heritage as our strategy, the combination of top-down governance with democratized access to GenAI tools that characterized our approach to implementing GenAI has proven to be exactly the right thing to do. By harnessing the collective ingenuity of our workforce and providing pathways to operationalize the best ideas, we have been able to unleash a grassroots movement of AI-driven innovation achieved by empowering people to experiment, learn, and contribute to the company’s transformation.



Sources

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