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Your AI Roadmap:

Where vision meets execution

A guide to confident implementation, from strategy to action and beyond.

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AI Roadmap

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Building Trust in Your AI Journey

As an IT leader or business change-maker in Aotearoa New Zealand, you'll understand that AI isn't just the next wave of technology - it's reshaping how organisations operate, compete and grow.

Yet for many organisations still early in their AI journey, familiar challenges remain:

- Building trustworthy data foundations and trust in your data.
- Simplifying tool selection and integration across multi-cloud environments.
- Tackling legacy complexity to enable migration at speed and with confidence.
- AI Governance to meet ethical and compliance needs.

At Venn, we understand that every organisation, sector and data ecosystem is unique, and that the volume of information and choice can be overwhelming. It can be hard to move forward with clarity and confidence.

That's where this resource comes in.

This roadmap outlines the practical steps involved in building trust in your data and AI capability. Each phase builds the foundations for the next; uncovering business needs, define strategy, design solutions, scale for impact and embed a continuous evolution.

Wherever you are in your AI journey we're here to help build trust in data, systems and your long-term strategy.

Stewart Lomax
Director – Venn Consulting Limited

01 Uncovering business needs

Before diving into tools or technical solutions, it's essential to understand your organisation's priorities, needs and pain points.

Goals of this phase:

- → Find your high-priority, high-return business use cases.
- → Obtain business buy-in.
- → Put foundational governance and ethical frameworks in place early.

Understand your organisational drivers:

Before jumping into AI tools and solutions, get clear picture on why your organisation is exploring AI - and what's at stake if you don't act.

Consider:

- → What's really driving the change - efficiencies, innovation, compliance, or top-down pressure to "do something"?
- → What 'bad thing' happens if you do nothing?
- → Does the business have a desire for change?

Secure strategic alignment and leadership commitment:

AI adoption thrives on backing from leadership. This phase is about assessing organisational appetite and securing champions who can drive momentum.

You'll need:

- → A C-suite sponsor who can champion change and remove roadblocks.
- → A clear and compelling reason for transformation that drives tangible business value.
- → Governance awareness - a shared understanding of the guardrails and ethical principles guiding AI adoption.

Build risk and compliance foundations:

Strong foundations ensure your AI initiatives are responsible, secure and sustainable. We recommend embedding these principles early:

- → **Privacy by design:** Integrate privacy and ethical standards from the outset.
- → **Access controls:** Operate under the principle of least access required.
- → **Human oversight:** Keep a human-in-the-loop for all significant decisions.
- → **Transparent policies:** Demonstrate accountability - don't just mitigate risk, show how you've mitigated it through organisation-wide policies.
- → **Consistent governance:** Extend oversight beyond obvious tools (like ChatGPT) to include embedded AI systems (such as Copilot).

Tip: *Be cautious when adopting international AI frameworks. Global models often fail to account for New Zealand's unique cultural context - including Te Reo Māori, local idioms and regulatory nuances.*

Understand your tech landscape:

Once you've answered the questions above, you can look at the tech. There are countless AI platforms out there - we recommend you start by mapping your current stack and outlining a basic functional architecture.

> ***A successful AI journey begins with a clear destination—your 'why'. The technology is the path you can't pick until you know where you're going.***
>
> — Alan Lee, Data Science Practice Lead

02 Scoping opportunities

Scope and define where AI can deliver the greatest value across the organisation in more detail.

Refine your business needs

- Run targeted workshops across various teams to pinpoint core business problems and their impact.
- Ask the hard question: is AI truly the best solution? If a simpler or non-AI fix exists, start there.
- Find a framework to evaluate and prioritise your ideas by value, feasibility and alignment with strategic business goals.
- Narrow your shortlist to high-impact, high-return projects.
- List all measurable outcomes (e.g., "reduce average customer service call time by 15%").

From here you can start to build out your formal business case - a narrative and financial justification that secures stakeholder buy-in.

Watch out for:

- ⚠ Selecting a low-value or ill-defined problem that doesn't require AI.
- ⚠ Over-promising results or setting unrealistic expectations with leadership.
- ⚠ Failing to align success measures with actual business outcomes.

> ***This stage is what opens the door to opportunity - but it only works if a business case is grounded in reality. More projects fail from over promises, than under delivery.***
>
> — Alan Lee, Data Science Practice Lead

03a Design & proof of value

This is where strategy becomes reality, as your first operational pilot launches. This Proof of Value ('PoV') is all about proving tangible value, building confidence and preparing your people for change within a clear governance framework.

Business integration:

AI success depends on how seamlessly it fits into existing systems and workflows:

- **Enable connectivity:** Make sure your AI tool links to all necessary data sources, systems, and applications to deliver a smooth user experience.
- **Designed for ease of use:** Engage UI/UX specialists early to ensure the solution is intuitive and genuinely useful for those using it.

Tactical data and security

Data security and privacy frameworks established in Phase 1 must now be fully applied. Address the following early in PoC implementation:

- **Data location:** Consider where your data will be stored and AI models hosted. What geographic regions can data transit through?
- **Data exposure:** What information can be safely exposed (masked or unmasked) to AI models?
- **Model restrictions:** Use only LLMs that do not retain or store customer or business information.
- **Local sovereignty:** Take advantage of the new AWS Auckland Region, enabling New Zealand-based data storage and compliance.

What does success look like?

Clearly define how success will be measured and reported. Establishing performance metrics, testing protocols, and feedback loops up-front ensures everyone shares the same definition of success and prevents costly misalignment later.

- **Business impact metrics:** How will you measure operational improvements such as efficiency gains, and response times? How will this impact better decision-making outcomes in future?
- **Test, test and test again:** How will you track performance, accuracy and reliability in real time?

Why AWS?

The new AWS Auckland region allows data to stay onshore, helping New Zealand-based organisations meet local compliance requirements, reduce latency and maintain tighter control over sensitive information.

Other benefits:

- **Built for growth:** AWS provides the reliability and flexibility organisations need as their data demands expand.
- **Seamless integration across platforms:** AWS works natively with common technology suites (such as Informatica and Salesforce), creating smooth, connected data workflows.
- **Simplifies complex environments:** Streamlines hybrid and multi-cloud setups with AWS-native tools for easier management and faster performance.

03b Design & proof of value

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Key questions to consider:

Compliance / risk testing:

- Is it legal and compliant? Is data stored in approved regions (as above)?
- Is personally identifiable information (PII) masked appropriately?
- Are access controls and activity logging in place?

User experience testing:

- Does it make work easier for your user groups?
- Does it solve the problems you identified in earlier phases?
- Does it integrate cleanly into daily workflows?

Technical validation:

- Is the model performing to the required standard?
- Are outputs consistent, explainable and reliable?

Which technology platform?

Now is the right time to start thinking about which AI platform you'll use.

Be selective - there are a large number of options on the market, and not all will suit your organisation's needs. Choosing the right platform could fill an article on its own, but here are a few key questions to guide you:

- **Integration:** How easily does the platform connect with existing data sources, cloud environment and core business applications?
- **Personas and skills:** Who will be the main users? Does the platform need to support both technical teams and low-code analysts?
- **Scalability and governance:** Can the platform grow with us - from a single pilot to hundreds of production models, while maintaining control and compliance?
- **Flexibility and openness:** Does it lock us into a specific vendor ecosystem, or does it support open standards and interoperability?

> ***We've seen time and again that success comes when staff are part of the process. Invite input early, test ideas openly and celebrate small wins - it's what builds genuine engagement and lasting change.***
>
> — Alan Lee, Data Science Practice Lead

04 From prototype to production

In this phase, your initial proof of concept evolves into a fully operational system - integrated, monitored, and ready to scale in the future. It's also a model for how you'll roll out future AI use cases across the business.

'MLOps' or Machine Learning Operations, is the practice of managing, automating, and continuously improving the end-to-end lifecycle of machine learning (ML) models once they move beyond PoC. This ensures your AI solution is stable and well-governed, with a framework that can be used again.

MLOps considerations:

- **Automate model lifecycle management:** Implement CI/CD/CT (Continuous Integration, Continuous Delivery, and Continuous Training) pipelines for automated retraining and deployment - using tools such as Amazon SageMaker Pipelines.
- **Monitor performance in real time:** Build scalable dashboards to track model accuracy, data drift, and business KPIs through Amazon CloudWatch or equivalent tools.
- **Codify infrastructure:** Use Infrastructure-as-Code tools (e.g., AWS CloudFormation or Terraform) to create consistent, governed environments that are easy to replicate.

05 Evolve

Success at this stage is marked by a transformative shift, from running AI projects to owning an AI capability. Your organisation no longer just does AI; it has become an AI-enabled enterprise, consistently scaling value, responsibly and at speed.

You'll know you've reached this level of maturity when there's a shared language across the business: your C-suite can discuss the technical implications of AI with confidence, and your technical teams are fully aligned with commercial goals. True AI maturity isn't just a tech milestone, it's a cultural one.

Keep the momentum going

Continuously identify and refine high-value opportunities:

- Revisit your backlog from Phase 2 and prioritise the next 2–3 projects for delivery.
- Explore existing "shadow AI" initiatives, where teams are already experimenting with AI outside formal governance. Bring these into the central framework to manage risk and scale success.

Enterprise-wide AI literacy and adoption:

- Evolve from pilot-group training to organisation-wide AI literacy programmes.
- Identify and empower "citizen data scientists" across business units using low-code tools (e.g., Amazon SageMaker Canvas, Dataiku) within the governed environment.
- Establish an internal AI Champions Network to share success stories, encourage experimentation, and drive cultural adoption from the ground up.

Mature governance and value tracking:

Governance and measurement should now become continuous disciplines.

- Formalise your initial working group into an AI Centre of Enablement (CoE) to sustain capability across teams.
- Develop a mature financial model that tracks total cost of ownership (TCO) and realised return on investment (ROI) for all AI initiatives.
- Conduct half-yearly reviews of your AI strategy to ensure alignment with evolving business priorities, updating the roadmap as needed.

The AI journey is an evolution, not a single project. It's a transformative process that builds from initial understanding, solidifies through execution, and ultimately embeds AI as a core, enterprise-wide capability.

A trusted partnership to build faster and reduce risk

AI success depends on more than vision alone, it requires disciplined implementation, sound governance and the right expertise at your side.

Partnering with experienced data specialists who understand both the technical and business realities at each phase will ensure your AI investments deliver measurable, lasting value.

The Venn difference

Advice you can action

Delivering co-designed systems, not just PowerPoint plans.

Accelerated delivery

Laying the foundations for growth – faster.

Future-proofed data

Delivering data governance, data quality, and data confidence to set you up for transformation.

Cut through the noise

Offering clarity where others just bring options.

Stronger together

Senior experts by your side, building capability not dependency.

Proven impact

Trusted by some of New Zealand's most complex organisations.

Introducing AI Ignite

AI Ignite is a focused, three-week accelerator programme crafted by our Venn experts, designed to jump-start your organisation's AI journey.

Built on proven frameworks and real-world experience with some of New Zealand's most complex organisations, it helps you assess current capability, uncover opportunities and turn AI potential into tangible gains.

Learn more about how Venn together with AWS can help your business. Visit venn.co.nz/aws.

Meet Vennesa, our AI-powered agent

As a Venn partner, you'll be introduced to **Venn**esa, our very own Digital Engagement Services AI Agent.

Vennesa is:

- Trained on Venn's knowledge and frameworks, bringing our collective experience to every engagement.
- An active assistant in discovery, design and proposal work, supporting our consultants and clients.
- Always available - helping accelerate tasks, answer complex questions and giving client teams at all levels confidence and ability to move faster.

Alongside our human experts, Vennesa ensures every client benefits from the best of both worlds: personalised data expertise and smarter automation.

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Trust in your data. Trust in the future.

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