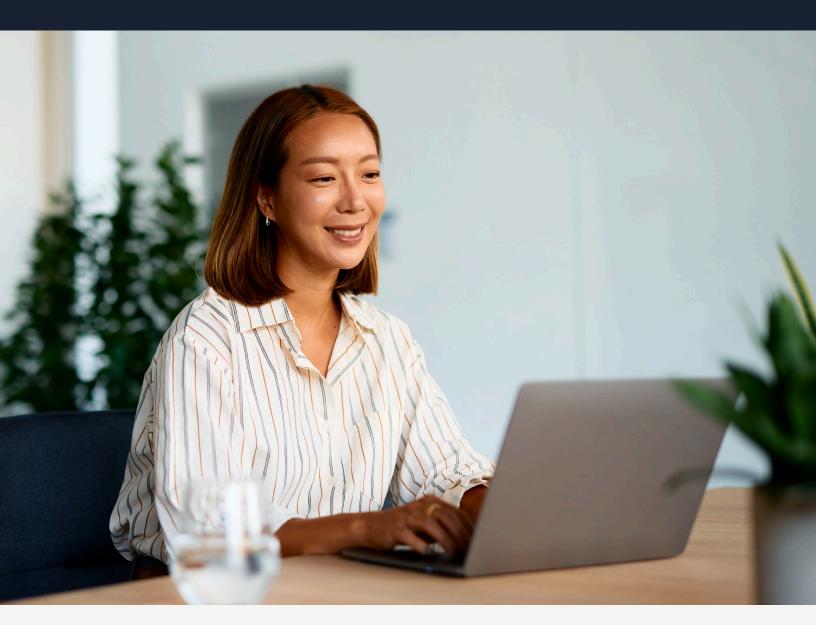
2025

WHITEPAPER

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Your Al Playbook for Accounting:
A Step-by-Step Guide to
Transforming Your Workflows





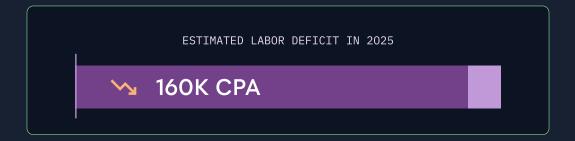
Intro

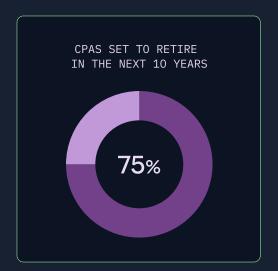
Why Accounting Needs to Evolve

The accounting field is at a crossroads. According to the American Institute of CPAs, there is a projected 160,000 CPA labor deficit by 2025, and 75% of current CPAs are set to retire in the next decade¹. The way we work must evolve — and fast.

For many accounting leaders, tough questions like "How are you addressing the talent gap?" or "How can you reduce days to close?" are becoming impossible to ignore. The good news? Al offers a powerful solution to these challenges, enabling organizations to streamline workflows, reduce errors, and free up teams to focus on strategic initiatives.

This playbook is your tactical, step-by-step guide to creating an AI strategy that not only works but scales with your organization. From identifying high-impact opportunities that are ripe for automation, to implementing sustainable change (that scales with your organization), this guide will help you assess and act on the right AI tools in a structured, impactful way.







As determined based on an internal analysis of data provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), BLS, and DOL CPA

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Define the Vision for AI in Accounting

Every successful Al initiative starts with a clear vision. It's one thing to decide you need Al in your processes; it's another to make sure that Al tool is pulling its weight. What do you want Al to achieve for your organization? Setting ambitious yet measurable goals will allow you to ensure your efforts make sense strategically. Plus, you can rally your team around a shared purpose.

Key Goals to Consider:

BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Automate repetitive tasks to free up your team for higher-value work.

IMPROVE ACCURACY

Reduce errors and enhance the reliability of your data for better decision–making.

SHORTEN CLOSE CYCLES

Accelerate month-end and year-end processes to provide faster insights.

Aligning Stakeholders

Al isn't just a finance initiative — it's a cross-functional effort. Aligning goals across finance, audit, and IT teams is essential to ensure collaboration and buy-in from all stakeholders. Each team will have its own priorities, so highlight what they care about most.

For example:

- \rightarrow Finance cares about cost optimization, ROI, and predictive analytics for budgeting.
- $\, o\,$ Audit focuses on transparency, compliance, and risk mitigation.
- → IT demands scalability, security, and integration with existing systems.

Getting these stakeholders involved early in the process will ensure their input is considered during the planning phase. This fosters a sense of ownership and can reduce resistance later. It also allows each team to decide what metrics determine success and come up with the best ways to track progress.

By defining a clear vision, you'll set the foundation for your Al strategy and create a shared understanding of what success looks like. With this clarity, you're ready to move on to the next step: mapping your current-state processes.

Tips to Get Buy-In Across Departments

- Identify Change Champions: Recruit influential team members from each department to act as advocates for the Al initiative.

 These champions can help communicate the benefits, address concerns, and build excitement within their teams.
- ◆ Speak Their Language: Tailor your messaging to each department's priorities. For example, emphasize cost savings and ROI for finance, compliance and risk reduction for audit, and seamless integration for IT.
- Show Quick Wins: Demonstrate the value of AI early by starting with small, impactful projects that deliver measurable results.

 This builds confidence and momentum for larger initiatives.
- Provide Training and Support: Equip teams with the knowledge and tools they need to feel confident about the changes AI will bring.

Map Your Current-State Processes

Before you can improve the way your company does its work, you need to understand where it is today. Mapping your current processes helps uncover inefficiencies and identify opportunities for Al adoption.

Start by identifying high-manual-effort processes. Come up with 4-5 processes that are repetitive, time-consuming, and ripe for automation (e.g., accruals, payroll, reconciliations). Quantify the pain points by evaluating processes. Take a look at:

Time Investment

How many hours are spent on this process each month?

Break down the time spent by your team on each process. For example, if invoice processing takes 500 hours a month, that's a clear indicator of inefficiency.



Why It Matters: Investing a lot of time into a process signals an opportunity for AI to save hours and improve productivity.

Frequency

How often is the process performed (daily, weekly, monthly)?

Consider how frequently the task occurs. A daily task like reconciliations or a monthly task like financial close can both benefit from automation, but frequent tasks often deliver the highest ROI.



Why It Matters: The more often a process is performed, the greater the potential impact of automation.

Error Rates

How prone is the process to mistakes?

Identify processes where errors are common, such as manual data entry or complex calculations. These mistakes can lead to compliance risks, financial losses, or reputational damage.



Why It Matters: All can significantly reduce errors, improving accuracy and reliability in critical processes.

Resource Allocation

How many team members are involved?

Assess how many people are tied up in the process and whether it requires significant effort or expertise. For example, if a task requires multiple team members to manually reconcile accounts, it would be a strong candidate for automation.



Why It Matters: Processes that consume a lot of resources or require high effort can be streamlined with AI, allowing your team to focus on more strategic initiatives.

Effort Level

What is the complexity and effort required to complete this process?

Evaluate whether the process is straightforward or requires significant manual intervention, such as cross-referencing multiple data sources or following complex workflows. Simpler, rule-based processes are easier to automate, while highly complex tasks may require additional customization.



Why It Matters: High-effort processes can drain your team's energy and time. Automating these tasks not only reduces workload but also ensures consistency and scalability.

→ By systematically assessing your processes with these questions, you can identify where AI can have the biggest impact while also building a data-driven case for change. This approach ensures you're targeting the right areas for automation and setting the stage for measurable success.

Conduct an AI Fit Assessment

While you identified manual processes in the last step, keep in mind that **not every process is a good candidate for AI**. Identifying time-consuming manual processes is a great start, but now it's time to narrow it down to the best fits for automation.

CRITERIA FOR AI READINESS:

Process Complexity

Simpler, rule-based processes are easier to automate.

Processes like accruals, payroll, and reconciliations often follow consistent, well-defined rules. Al excels at automating these types of tasks, reducing the need for manual intervention and minimizing errors.



Why It Matters: If a process requires a lot of judgment or decision-making, it may not be a good fit for AI. Start with tasks that follow clear "if this, then that" logic.

Task Predictability

Repetitive, consistent tasks are ideal for Al.

Tasks that follow the same steps every time, like generating invoices or reconciling accounts, are perfect for automation because they don't require much variation.



Why It Matters: Al thrives on patterns. If a task changes frequently or has too many variables, it can confuse the system and lead to errors.

Task Volume

High-volume tasks are better candidates for Al.

Automating a process that happens 5,000 times a month will deliver far more value than automating one that happens only 5 times. Choose options that will have the most impact.



Why It Matters: The more often a task is performed, the greater the time and cost savings from automation. Low-volume tasks may not justify the investment in AI.

Data Availability

Clean, structured data is essential for AI to function effectively.

Al relies on data to make decisions. If your data is incomplete, inconsistent, or unstructured, the Al may struggle to deliver accurate results.



Why It Matters: Think of AI as a chef — it can only create a great dish if it has the right ingredients. Clean, organized data is the foundation for successful AI implementation.

Exception Frequency

Fewer exceptions make a process more suitable for automation.

Processes with frequent exceptions or unique cases require human intervention, which can limit the effectiveness of AI.



Why It Matters: Al works best when it can follow a standard process. If exceptions occur too often, the Al may need constant adjustments, reducing its efficiency.

Assign an "Agent-Readiness Score" to each process to prioritize your efforts. By focusing on the top 1–2 candidates, you can maximize impact while minimizing risk.

See next page for Agent-Readiness Score Guide →

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Agent-Readiness Score

Look at the list on the previous page and assign a score on a scale from 1-5 for each of the assessment criteria. Give a 5 to the processes that would be a great fit for automation and a 1 to those that would not be.

For example: Let's evaluate whether AI is a good fit for automating the accruals process using a specific example below. Imagine a mid-sized organization that processes monthly accruals for vendor invoices received after the accounting period closes.

Real-World Example: Accruals Process

*** * * * ***

Process Complexity: 5

Reason: The accrual process for this organization is straightforward. For example, if an invoice for office supplies is received after the month-end close but pertains to the prior month, the system needs to accrue the expense based on predefined rules like "if invoice date < month-end, accrue expense." These clear, rule-based steps make it easy for Al to automate.



Data Availability: 4

Reason: The organization has structured data available in its ERP system, including invoice dates, amounts, and purchase order details. For example, Vendor A's invoice for \$5,000 dated July 28 but received on August 3 can be easily identified and accrued. However, occasional data inconsistencies, like missing purchase order numbers, may require some manual cleanup.



Task Predictability: 5

Reason: The accrual process is highly predictable. Each month, the finance team reviews invoices received after the close, matches them to purchase orders, and applies the same logic to determine accrual amounts. For instance, if Vendor A consistently sends invoices late, Al can learn this pattern and automate the accrual without manual intervention.



Exception Frequency: 3

Reason: While most accruals follow standard rules, there are occasional exceptions. For instance, a one-time vendor agreement might require manual review to ensure the accrual is accurate. These exceptions occur in about 10% of cases, meaning the majority of the process is still suitable for automation.

+ + + + +

Task Volume: 4

Reason: The organization processes accruals for approximately 1,000 invoices each month across multiple departments. While not as high-volume as daily tasks like payroll, this is still a significant workload that can benefit from automation.

4-5 Best fit for AI

Processes that are highly suitable for automation. They are rule-based, predictable, and supported by structured data, allowing AI to handle them efficiently with minimal manual effort. 2-3

Moderate fit for Al

These processes have potential for automation but may require adjustments, such as managing exceptions or improving data quality. Al can assist but may not fully automate them.

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Low fit for Al

Processes that are not well-suited for automation due to high complexity, unpredictability, or lack of structured data.

Al Fit Assessment Matrix

Leverage this matrix to determine which of your identified processes are ideal candidates for AI automation. As a reference, we've pre-filled the first column with the accruals process example from the previous page.



Understanding the Agent-Readiness Scores

When we add the accrual example together, we get an **Agent Readiness Score** of 21 — a great match for AI. You will have to decide what score makes sense for AI investment, as this can vary from organization to organization. However, you can start with the chart above.

Companies with a larger AI budget may choose to include moderate fit processes, especially as familiarity with the AI and its capabilities improves. As long as you can make a good business case, this score is just a starting point.

Build the Business Case

You've worked with multiple teams to identify automatable tasks and found the best matches for Al. However, is leadership confident in the same future you are? To secure buy-in, you need to quantify the benefits of Al adoption. A strong business case demonstrates how Al aligns with your organization's strategic goals.

KEY AREAS OF IMPACT:



FTE Savings

Estimate how many hours or full-time equivalents can be reallocated to higher-value work.

Example: A mid-sized company spends 500 hours per month on manual invoice processing. By implementing an Al-powered accounts payable solution, the company automates 80% of this process, saving 400 hours monthly. This equates to reallocating the equivalent of 2.5 full-time employees to higher-value tasks like vendor relationship management or strategic financial planning.



Team Empowerment

Emphasize how AI elevates your team by freeing them from repetitive tasks.

Example: An audit team spends 60% of its time manually reviewing transactions for anomalies. With Al-powered anomaly detection, the team can focus on investigating flagged items rather than sifting through data. This shift allows auditors to spend more time on strategic risk assessments, increasing job satisfaction and reducing burnout.



Faster Close Cycles

Highlight how AI can accelerate financial close processes.

Example: A global organization takes 10 days to complete its monthly financial close due to manual reconciliations and data consolidation. With Al automating reconciliations and generating real-time reports, the close cycle is reduced to 5 days. This faster turnaround allows leadership to make timely decisions based on up-to-date financial data.



Lower Compliance Risk

Highlight how Al-driven processes can enhance both accuracy and auditability.

Example: A financial services firm faces regulatory scrutiny due to inconsistent compliance reporting. By implementing Al to automate compliance checks and generate audit trails, the firm ensures 100% adherence to regulations. This reduces the risk of fines and enhances the company's reputation with regulators and clients.



Error Reduction

Quantify the cost savings from fewer errors and improved accuracy.

Example: A retail company experiences frequent errors in payroll processing, leading to overpayments and compliance penalties costing \$50,000 annually. By adopting an Al-driven payroll system, errors are reduced by 95%, saving \$47,500 per year and improving employee trust in the payroll process.



Scalability and Flexibility

Demonstrate how AI enables your processes to handle increased workloads.

Example: A growing e-commerce company processes 10,000 transactions monthly but expects this to double during the holiday season. With AI handling transaction reconciliations, the company scales effortlessly to meet the increased workload without hiring additional staff, ensuring smooth operations during peak periods.

A compelling business case is essential for gaining stakeholder support and securing the resources needed to move forward.

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Evaluate AI Providers

You have buy-in and you have processes to automate. So, what AI solution do you select? Choosing the right AI partner is critical to your success. **Here's what to look for**:



SCALABILITY

Ensure the solution can grow with your organization.

- IF NOT, your AI might work fine now, but it could buckle under the weight of future growth, leaving your team scrambling for alternatives.
- Question to Ask: How does your solution handle increased data volumes or expanded use cases as our organization grows?



SEAMLESS INTEGRATION

Look for technology that works with your existing systems.

- IF NOT, your team could end up spending more time fixing integration issues than reaping the benefits of Al.
- Question to Ask: Can your solution integrate with our existing tools and systems, such as ERP or accounting software?



EASE OF USE

The solution should be intuitive for accountants, not just IT teams.

- IF NOT, your team might avoid using it altogether, turning your investment into an expensive, unused program.
- Question to Ask: What steps have you taken to ensure the platform is user-friendly for non-technical teams?



SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

Prioritize providers with strong data protection measures.

X IF NOT, your organization could face data vulnerabilities, compliance headaches, and a lot of uncomfortable conversations with auditors.

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Question to Ask: What certifications or compliance standards does your solution meet (e.g., SOC 2, GDPR, ISO 42001)?



Robust onboarding and ongoing support are essential for success.

- IF NOT, your team might feel left in the dark, struggling to unlock the full potential of the tool.
- Question to Ask: What kind of training and ongoing support do you provide to ensure successful adoption?



HUMAN-IN-THE-LOOP

Your team should be able to check your chosen AI tool's output to ensure accuracy.

- IF NOT, your AI could make decisions that don't align with your business needs, creating more problems than it solves.
- Question to Ask: How does your solution allow for human oversight and adjustments to Al-generated outputs?



AUDITABILITY

Knowing exactly where your data came from is crucial. Make sure you have visibility into what your AI model is doing and how it's processing data.

- IF NOT, your org could face issues if you can't explain how decisions were made or results were generated.
- Question to Ask: How does your solution show decision making, and can you demonstrate how outputs were generated?

By evaluating providers against these criteria, you can select a partner that aligns with your needs and goals.



Develop a Strategic Pilot Plan

It's easy to get excited about all the potential an AI tool can provide. However, don't try to do too much too quickly. Start small, test in a controlled environment, and set the stage for scalable success. A strategic pilot allows you to validate the value of AI, address potential challenges, and build momentum for broader adoption.

Steps to Launch Your Pilot:

01: SELECT HIGH-IMPACT PROCESSES

Focus on 1–2 processes identified as top candidates for AI. These should be processes that are repetitive, time-consuming, and have clear potential for improvement.

→ Example: A mid-sized retail company selects invoice processing and expense report reconciliation as pilot processes. Both are high-volume, rule-based tasks that currently consume significant manual effort.

02: DEFINE SUCCESS METRICS

Establish clear goals to measure the pilot's success for all involved stakeholders. Depending on each team's needs, metrics might include time savings, error reduction, or cost savings.

- → Example: The company sets the following success metrics:
- Reduce invoice processing time by 50% (from 10 minutes per invoice to 5 minutes).
- Decrease error rates in expense report reconciliation by 80%.
- Save 200 manual hours per month across both processes.

03: PREPARE YOUR DATA

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Ensure your data is accurate, structured, and accessible. Al relies on clean data to deliver reliable results.

→ Example: The company works with its IT team to clean and organize historical invoice and expense data. They ensure all data is in a consistent format and stored in a centralized system that the AI tool can access.

04: TEST AND OPTIMIZE

Use the pilot phase to gather feedback, identify issues, and refine the solution. This is your opportunity to fine-tune the Al system before scaling.

→ Example: During the pilot, the company discovers that the Al struggles with invoices from certain vendors due to inconsistent formatting. They work with the Al provider to adjust the system's algorithms and improve its ability to handle these exceptions.

A well-executed pilot builds confidence in the technology and creates a roadmap for scaling Al across your organization.

It allows you to:

- Validate the Al's effectiveness and fine-tune the process.
- → Identify and address challenges before full-scale implementation.
- Demonstrate measurable results to stakeholders, building buy-in for broader adoption.

By starting small and refining the solution during the pilot phase, you set the stage for scalable success and ensure your Al initiative delivers long-term value.

Operationalize Sustainable Change

By this step, you will have a tool in place and see some incredible results. However, AI isn't a one-and-done project — it's a continuous journey. Here's how to embed AI into your operations for long-term success:

Phased Rollout

A phased rollout allows your organization to implement AI gradually, ensuring smoother adoption, fewer disruptions, and better outcomes.

- → What to Do: Start with one department or process, like automating invoice processing in finance, before expanding to other areas. Use this phase to gather feedback and refine the system.
- → Example: A company automates invoice processing for one region, reduces processing time by 50%, resolves integration issues, and then scales the solution organization-wide.
- → Why it Matters: This approach minimizes risk, builds confidence in the AI, and provides insights for smoother future rollouts.

Here's why it's critical:

- Controlled Testing and Learning: Rolling out AI in phases lets you test the solution in a controlled environment, identify potential issues, and refine the system before scaling. This minimizes the risk of widespread errors and ensures the AI is tailored to your organization's needs.
- **Employee Adjustment:** Gradual implementation gives employees time to adapt to new workflows and build confidence in the technology. This reduces resistance to change and ensures teams are fully trained and comfortable with the tool.
- ◆ Iterative Improvements: A phased approach allows for regular feedback and updates. You can monitor performance, address challenges, and make incremental improvements, ensuring the AI continues to deliver value.
- Resource Management: Implementing AI across the entire organization simultaneously can overwhelm IT teams, employees, and leadership. A phased rollout ensures resources are allocated effectively and prevents burnout.

Continuous Evolution

Treat AI as an evolving initiative that grows with your business. Review performance regularly, gather feedback, and make updates to ensure the technology continues to meet your needs.

- → What to Do: Schedule quarterly reviews to assess Al's impact, identify areas for optimization, and explore new use cases.
- → Example: If your AI tool excels at invoice processing, consider expanding its use to vendor management or fraud detection.
- → Why it Matters: Al is not static continuous improvement ensures it remains relevant and valuable as your business evolves.

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Team Empowerment

Equip your team with the tools and knowledge they need to work effectively alongside AI.

- → What to Do: Provide user-friendly training sessions, create clear documentation, and offer ongoing support. Focus on helping employees understand how AI complements their work rather than replacing it.
- → Example: Host a workshop to show accountants how AI can handle repetitive tasks like reconciliations, freeing them to focus on strategic analysis.
- → Why it Matters: Empowered teams are more likely to embrace AI, leading to higher adoption rates and better outcomes.

Dangers of Launching Too Much Too Soon:

Launching AI initiatives too quickly or on too large a scale can lead to significant challenges, including:



INCREASED ERRORS

Without proper testing, Al systems may produce inaccurate results, leading to costly mistakes in critical processes like payroll.



MISSED PROCESSES

Rushing implementation can result in overlooking key workflows or failing to fully integrate Al into existing systems.



OVERWHELMED EMPLOYEES

Sudden changes may overwhelm employees, leading to resistance, confusion, and decreased productivity.



LACK OF OPTIMIZATION

A rushed rollout leaves little time for fine-tuning the Al system, which can lead to inefficiencies and missed improvements.



REPUTATIONAL RISK

If the AI system fails to deliver as promised, it can damage trust in the technology and make future AI initiatives harder to implement.

By operationalizing AI in a sustainable way, you're transforming the way your accounting function operates.

Measure Success

Track the impact of your AI initiatives to demonstrate ROI and identify areas for improvement. Measuring success is not just about proving the value of AI—it's about ensuring continuous optimization and alignment with your organization's goals.

In addition to the metrics provided by your stakeholders and other key teams, here are the key metrics to monitor:

CYCLE TIME REDUCTION

Measure how much faster key processes are completed after AI implementation.



Why It Matters: Faster processes mean quicker decision-making, improved efficiency, and the ability to reallocate resources to higher-value tasks. For example, reducing the financial close process from 10 days to 5 days can free up time for strategic planning.



How to Track: Compare pre- and post-Al process timelines for tasks like reconciliations, payroll, or reporting.

HOURS SAVED

Track the manual hours eliminated by AI automation.



Why It Matters: This metric highlights the tangible time savings that can be redirected toward strategic initiatives. For instance, if Al saves 500 hours per month on invoice processing, those hours can be used for tasks like financial analysis or innovation.



How to Track: Calculate the time previously spent on manual tasks and compare it to the time required for AI oversight.

ACCURACY IMPROVEMENT

Monitor error rates to ensure data reliability.



Why It Matters: Al should reduce costly errors, such as payroll miscalculations or reconciliation discrepancies, which can lead to compliance issues or financial losses.



How to Track: Compare error rates before and after Al implementation, and track the frequency of exceptions or manual corrections.

TITLE?

Evaluate how well AI is being integrated into workflows.



Why It Matters: Even the best AI solution won't deliver value if employees don't use it effectively. High adoption rates indicate that the tool is intuitive, well-supported, and aligned with team needs.



How to Track: Monitor usage metrics, employee feedback, and training participation rates to gauge adoption.

SCALABILITY

Assess the solution's ability to handle increasing volumes of data or transactions without a proportionate increase in cost or processing time.



Why It Matters: A scalable AI solution can grow with your company. It ensures that as your business expands, the AI can handle the larger workload, such as a 20% increase in monthly invoices, without requiring a complete overhaul or significant additional investment.



How to Track: Monitor performance metrics like processing speed and cost per transaction as data volume increases.

INTEGRATION CAPABILITY

Measure how smoothly the AI solution connects with your existing accounting software and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems.



Why It Matters: Seamless integration minimizes disruption and reduces manual data transfers between systems. An Al tool that can easily connect with your existing tech stack, like your ERP or financial reporting tools, ensures a unified workflow and avoids creating new data silos.



How to Track: Evaluate the number of manual workarounds needed, the frequency of data synchronization errors, and the time required for data transfers between systems.

Best Practices for Regular Updates and Monitoring:

To ensure long-term success, establish a process for ongoing evaluation and improvement:

- Set Clear Milestones: Define specific goals for each phase of the rollout and track progress against these benchmarks.
- ◆ Gather Feedback: Regularly collect input from employees and stakeholders to identify pain points and areas for improvement.
- Monitor Key Metrics: Continuously track metrics like cycle time, hours saved, and accuracy to measure the impact of AI and identify trends.
- Schedule Regular Updates: Work with your AI provider to implement software updates, refine algorithms, and address any issues that arise.
- Communicate Progress: Keep stakeholders informed about the AI initiative's success, using data and real-world examples to demonstrate ROI and build confidence.

By taking a phased approach, monitoring key metrics, and proactively addressing challenges, your organization can maximize the value of Al while minimizing risks. This ensures that Al becomes a sustainable, long-term asset for your business.

Lead the Future of Accounting

Al has the power to transform accounting by driving efficiency, accuracy, and strategic impact. But success requires more than just technology — it takes thoughtful planning, team empowerment, and a commitment to continuous improvement. With this playbook, you're well-positioned to lead your organization into the future of accounting.

If you're looking for an accounting AI solution that can automate complex accounting workflows across your close management, compliance, and reporting functions with auditable AI, reach out to FloQast. You can **schedule a personalized demo** to get a deeper dive into FloQast AI Agents to see how they can work for you and your team.

Schedule Demo

Next Steps: Your Roadmap to Al Success

If you're ready to get started with Al implementation and want a quick roadmap to launch, check out our roadmap.

90-Day Roadmap:

How to Implement Al Into Your
Accounting Close Process

