Abstract Template

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Lessons learned in deploying enterprise AI that delivers Return on Investment (ROI).

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A mayonnaise development cycle compressed from 1.8 years to four months at 10 percent lower cost. 52 master sausage recipes consolidated to four. A $20M innovation pipeline enabled, with $5M delivered. These came out of six years of deploying AI at scale in food and beverage, with customers including Kraft Heinz, Unilever, Tesco, Herdez, and Kalsec.

What separated the deployments that reached those numbers quickly from the ones that took far longer was not the technology. It was decisions about ownership and ways of working, not about the science. Food and beverage innovation is still largely traditional, running on spreadsheets and trial and error, so putting AI into that environment means changing how teams work. That work starts before the first experiment.

Our hardest lesson was organizational. The programs that moved fastest had an owner with real decision-making authority and a clear internal approval path. Where that was missing, conversations ran for a long time before anything was tested, regardless of how enthusiastic the team was about the technology. Company cultures differ, and the pace followed the clarity of ownership more closely than the appetite for AI.

We will also address the myths that stall these programs: that AI in innovation is an IT initiative, that you need perfect data before you start, and that scientists will not adopt it. Each one changes what a realistic timeline looks like.

Finally, we will show the trajectory of AI's evolution from searching to acting, and what that means for the future role of your people in the innovation process.