Beyond AI Readiness

Measuring Intent Coherence Before Automation

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Abstract

Traditional AI readiness frameworks often focus on data availability, technical infrastructure, talent, and use-case identification. This paper argues that such frameworks are insufficient unless they include intent coherence, contradiction load, incentive alignment, and decision traceability.

Keywords: AI readiness, intent coherence, diagnostics, automation, governance

1 The Readiness Problem

AI readiness has become a fashionable organizational category. It usually asks whether the organization has data, infrastructure, talent, leadership support, and candidate use cases. These are necessary conditions, but they are not sufficient.

An organization can be technically ready and strategically confused. It can possess data but lack truth. It can have leadership support but no decision discipline. It can implement AI use cases while preserving the exact dysfunction it hoped to solve.

2 Intent-Readiness

Intent-readiness asks whether the organization understands the purpose, constraints, risks, and desired outcomes of AI deployment before automation begins. It asks whether the system is coherent enough to be accelerated.

The guiding proposition is that AI should not be deployed into an unexamined system at scale. Automation increases the velocity of whatever system behavior already exists. If the system is coherent, AI may amplify coherence. If the system is contradictory, AI may amplify contradiction.

3 A Diagnostic Model

A stronger readiness model should include at least six dimensions: intent clarity, data integrity, workflow coherence, governance maturity, decision traceability, and intervention capacity.

Intent clarity evaluates whether the organization can state what it wants AI to accomplish. Data integrity evaluates whether the information environment is trustworthy. Workflow coherence evaluates whether the process itself makes sense. Governance maturity evaluates accountability. Decision traceability evaluates whether choices can be reconstructed. Intervention capacity evaluates whether the organization can act on findings.

4 From Use Cases to System Cases

Organizations often begin with use cases because use cases are concrete. But the more important unit may be the system case: the broader organizational context in which use cases

live. A chatbot for procurement, for example, cannot be evaluated apart from procurement policy, vendor governance, budget authority, audit obligations, and historical patterns of delay.

This shift from use case to system case prevents shallow automation. It forces the organization to diagnose the operating environment before placing AI inside it.

5 Conclusion

AI readiness should be replaced, or at least expanded, by intent-readiness. The question is not whether the organization can deploy AI. The question is whether the organization is coherent enough for AI to make anything better.

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