Data & AI Strategy

The Ultimate Guide To Data & AI Strategy

(Spoiler: They need each other)

Oakland

Everything Data°

Learn how to unlock investment and put data and AI at the heart of your organisation's future. Not separate threads but woven beautifully together.

Contents

Introduction

Interest, innovation, and investment in data and AI have surged in recent years. Every company wants to be data-driven. Every CEO wants to know what AI can do for them. Everyone wants to disrupt their industry and build a future around AI.

And the tech advances are truly impressive. But the data and AI industry is good at gloss. The reality for most companies is very different. The gap between hype and reality has never been wider.

Many businesses still grapple with the basics. How do I bring data together? Can I trust it? How can I be sure what I build will not let me down? Why do we never have the data and skills we need?

You probably know what happens when expectations are inflated. Or when investments are made without stopping to think why. It does not take long for excitement to give way to frustration.

The reality is simple. Ambition without direction is rudderless. POCs without purpose mean you will not get a return on your investment unless you are clear about what you want to achieve, why, and how. That is why you need a Data and AI Strategy.

Why Now?

AI is here to stay, and the window to secure a competitive advantage is narrowing. Organisations that get this right will pull ahead. Those who do not will find it hard to catch up.

- Gartner predicts that over 40% of agentic AI projects will be cancelled by 2027.
- Research suggests that 95% of AI proofs of concept never make it to production.
- 60% of AI projects unsupported by AI-ready data will be abandoned by 2026.
- IBM 2025: only 26% of CDOs trust their data to support AI.

These are not technology failures. They are strategy failures. Organisations treating data and AI as powerful tools and realising AI's critical dependence on data to re-engineer business models for value are seeing real returns. In 2024, an IDC report sponsored by Microsoft found that for every $1 a company invested in generative AI, it returned $3.7.

Who Is This Guide For?

This guide is for CDOs, CIOs, and business leaders who want to cut through the noise. If you have been burned by strategies that gathered dust, you are in the right place. If you are frustrated by pilots that never scaled, keep reading. If you are sceptical of vendors promising silver bullets, we understand.

Every organisation is different. Some are just starting their data and AI journey. Others have mature capabilities but struggle to extract value. This guide meets you where you are. The principles apply whatever your starting point.

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Principal Consultant
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Remind Me, What is a Data and AI Strategy?

With data and AI, most organisations don't struggle because they lack data, tools or ideas. They struggle because effort is scattered. Without a clear strategy, initiatives compete, platforms underperform, and teams lose focus. Activity increases, but impact doesn't.

When it comes to data and AI, we're talking about orchestrating complex technologies with people and process to achieve lasting value. That's not going to happen by chance or through off the cuff improvisation. You need a clear vision and plan. In a nutshell, **a data and AI strategy sets out how an organisation will use data and AI to achieve its wider business objectives**. Rather than focusing on specific technologies or isolated initiatives, a data and AI strategy should create a clear overall purpose and direction for data and AI in your organisation. It explains how data and AI will deliver critical advantages such as improved decision-making, better experiences, and stronger performance. Think of it as a living document that captures your vision, case for change, 'big bets' and the pragmatic plan that makes it all happen.

Why do we need one?

We live in a time of rapid technological change. Data and AI technologies are advancing quickly, expectations are high, and the pressure to act is real. But real success is not just a case of 'plug and play'. Without a clear strategy, businesses risk fragmented investment, disconnected use cases, and limited return on effort. The result will be a whole heap of frustration and friction, but not much to celebrate.

A strong data and AI strategy cuts through the noise. It creates alignment around what matters, focuses investment on the opportunities that count, and provides a framework for delivering value now while building for the future.

In short, it ensures data and AI are not pursued for their own sake, but used deliberately to deliver measurable, sustainable business value.

Done properly, it will help you:

- Build a unified vision of the future and the value you want to unlock.
- Creates a compelling case for change and to secure investment.
- Aligns stakeholders behind a clear, shared direction.
- Connect data and AI activity directly to valuable business outcomes.
- Brings connection and focus to your data and AI initiatives.
- Create a clear plan and roadmap to guide successful implementation.
- Builds trust, shared language, and confidence in data-driven decision-making.

Above all, a data and AI strategy will give you a compelling story one that explains not just what you want to change, but why it matters and how value will be realised.

Signs You Need A Strategy

How do you know if you need a data and AI strategy? Or if your current one needs a refresh?

Here are the warning signs we see most often.

Value Narrative

- You cannot articulate the ROI of your data investments.
- Projects are funded on faith rather than business cases.
- Stakeholders question whether data and AI spending is worth it.

Strategic Disconnect

- Data and AI initiatives are not linked to business priorities.
- The board asks about AI but nobody can explain the plan.
- Different teams have conflicting data and AI roadmaps.

Delivery Problems

- Proof of concepts never make it to production.
- Huge gap between expectations and delivery reality.
- Projects take too long and cost too much.
- Teams are stretched across too many initiatives.

Foundation Gaps

- Data quality issues block progress on use cases.
- Nobody knows where the data is or who owns it.
- Lack of technology infrastructure and technology limitations.

If these sound familiar, you need a strategy. Or the one you have is not working. But not all strategies are created equal. Having a strategy is not the same as having the right one; there are pitfalls.

Self-Assessment

Use these questions to evaluate your current position.

Be honest. The answers will help you prioritise.

Strategy and Alignment

- Can you articulate how data and AI support your top three business priorities?
- Is there a single agreed data and AI strategy across the organisation?
- Do business leaders understand and own the data and AI agenda?

Value and Outcomes

- Can you quantify the value delivered by data and AI in the last 12 months?
- Do your use cases have clear business cases with measurable outcomes?
- Are stakeholders satisfied with the return on data and AI investment?

Capabilities and Foundations

- Do you trust your data enough to make critical business decisions?
- Is data governance embedded in how people work, not just documented?
- Do you have the skills and capacity to deliver on your data and AI ambitions?

Delivery and Execution

- Do proofs of concepts regularly make it to production?
- Are projects delivered on time and within budget?
- Is there a healthy balance between quick wins and long-term foundations?

Culture and Adoption

- Do people across the business use data to inform decisions?
- Is there enthusiasm for data and AI, or resistance and scepticism?
- Are data and AI seen as enablers or as IT projects?

Implementation Readiness

- Do you have a clear understanding of your current state?
- Have you identified your most pressing business pains?
- Do you have a roadmap for data and AI delivery?
- Are the right resources in place to execute?
- Is there a clear implementation plan with owners and timelines?

If you answered no to more than half, your strategy needs attention.
We can help.

The Five Pitfalls

We've seen many data and AI strategies fall flat. Organisations create vision documents yet struggle to turn them into action or delivery quickly runs out of steam. The same patterns tend to emerge and recognising them early can save considerable pain.

01

Unclear Value

Many strategies paint an ambitious picture but leave the value case vague. The slides look impressive, yet no one can explain the commercial difference they will make. Without that clarity, the strategy struggles to win support beyond the team that wrote it. It becomes shelfware rather than a catalyst for change. Strategic use cases are key to a successful strategy as they are the bridge between users, value and foundational investment.

Data and AI is no different to any other investment. It needs to deliver value.

02

Fragmented Strategies

Too often, data and AI strategies exist in isolation from IT, digital, and business strategy. Everyone has a plan, but they all pull in different directions. Data sits in one silo, AI in another, and digital in a third. None of them connect to what the business actually needs. Data and AI strategies are most effective when they position AI and especially data as strategic unifiers that underpin multiple aspects of a companies strategy.

Data is not a parallel work stream. It is the foundation for wider technology change. Digital, AI, and business transformation all depend on it.

03 Partial Answers

Vision alone is not a strategy. Organisations often describe a future state without defining how it will be delivered. Without the supporting detail such as a roadmap, operating model or clear business case teams lose direction. People and process are left behind, momentum fades, and delivery becomes fragmented. When progress can't demonstrate value, confidence drops and investments stall.

An effective strategy to deliver sustainable value requires a full picture across people, process, and technology.

04 Technology Biased

Too many data and AI strategies read more like a tech shopping list than a coherent plan to deliver commercial value. The strategy focuses on technologies, not people and processes. Organisations lead with technical solutions and treat data as a by-product. They under-invest in people and process. Implementation fails to show ROI. Technology investments are stranded. Nobody thought about adoption, skills, or ways of working.

Capability requires orchestrating people, processes, and technology. Not just buying tools.

05 Jam Tomorrow

Some roadmaps promise transformation but ask stakeholders to wait years for tangible value. Momentum fades, patience runs out, and projects get cancelled. In the fast-moving world of AI, no organisation can afford to wait, and few will. Strategic use cases are critical for delivering early value and building confidence, but they shouldn't be positioned in opposition to foundational work. The strongest strategies recognise that use cases create focus and momentum for the foundations, while strong foundations enable increasingly impactful use cases. Progress comes from learning by doing, not from choosing between false dichotomies.

Balance matters. Deliver value now while building foundations for the long term.

A Different Perspective

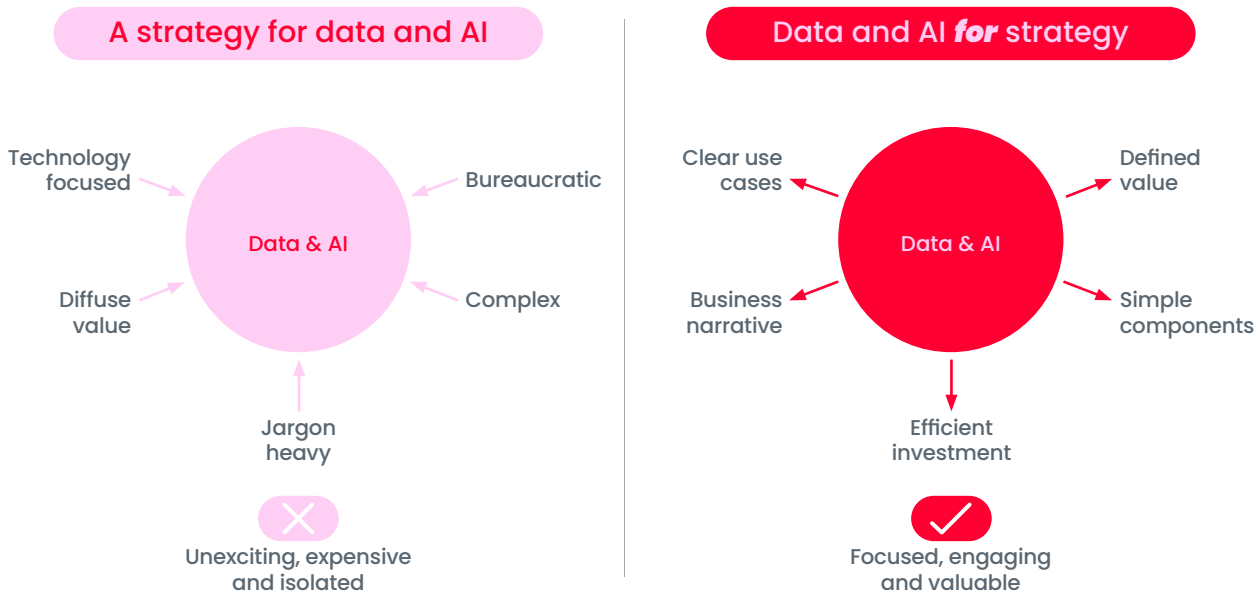
There's a common thread running through all these pitfalls. It's about approaching the problem from the wrong direction.

Too many data and AI strategies focus on what the organisation should do for data and AI. Not what data and AI can do for the organisation. They read more like a shopping list for the data team than a blueprint for driving commercial advantage.

You need to flip your mindset and look outwards. It sounds strange, but a data and AI strategy shouldn't be a strategy for data and AI. It's data and AI ***for*** strategy.

It's Data And AI ***For*** Strategy, Not Strategy For Data and AI

Isolated, technology focused strategies are doomed to fail. You must look outwards and towards value.

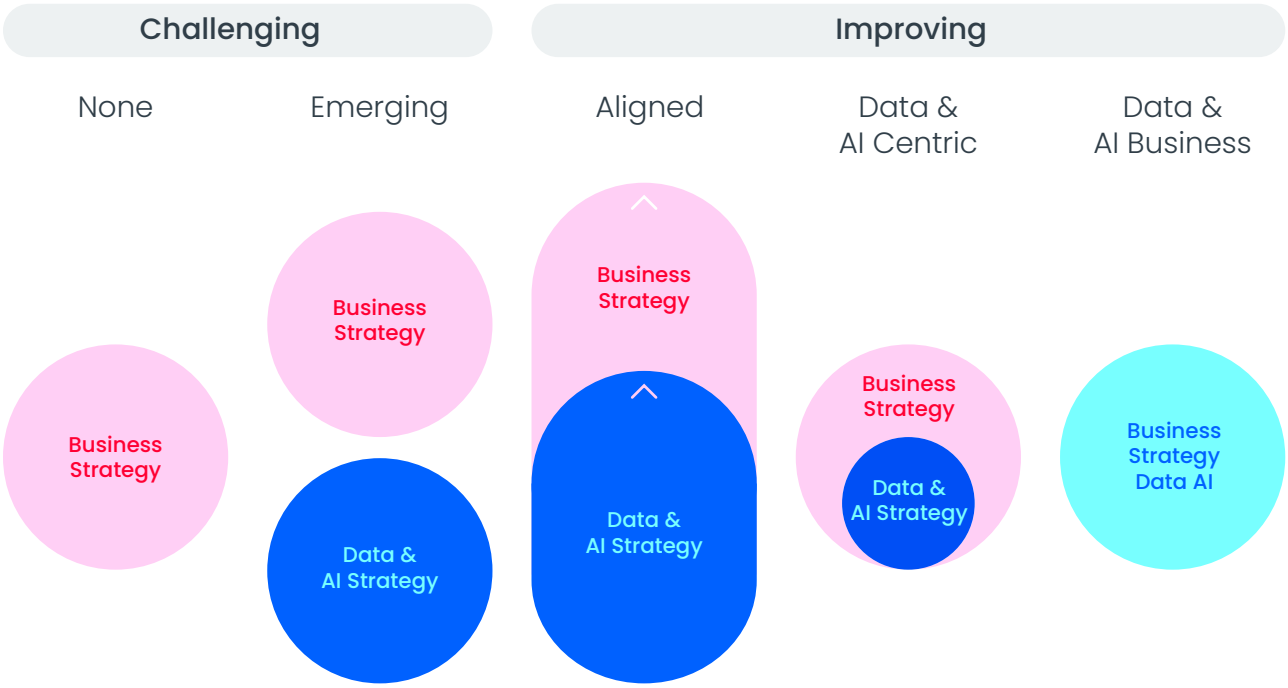


The difference matters. Strategies that look inward become technology-focused, bureaucratic, and jargon-heavy. They offer scattered value and leave stakeholders cold. Strategies that look outward start with clear use cases and a business narrative. They define value, simplify components, and drive efficient investment.

So, borrowing from JFK, "ask not what your business can do for data and AI – ask what data and AI can do for your business."

Value: Putting Data and AI As A Core Part Of Your Organisational Strategy

It's best to think of your organisational strategy driving towards a common purpose and goals. It's a data and AI strategy, not an isolated or parallel document.



Nothing will change until you put the organisation first. Data needs to be a means to meet organisational needs, not an end in itself.

And simply aligning objectives isn't enough anymore. Data and AI need to sit at the core of organisational strategy. Think of them as a key chapter in the overall business plan, not an appendix. Data and AI should be woven into every part of what you do. This is how you maximise the value.

Many organisations struggle with this shift. Even when the mindset changes, you can easily get stuck. Every data strategy must be custom-shaped to your organisation. You can't cut corners with cookie-cutter blueprints. Well, you can, but it won't end well.

However, you can apply a structured process to help your team discover, design, and deploy a compelling data and AI strategy. One that creates a path from where you are today to a data-driven future. Sadly, most data and AI strategies fail to create that path. If you follow your hard-earned wisdom, yours will.

> **"A business-aligned roadmap is crucial. Without it, data and AI initiatives become disconnected projects rather than strategic capabilities."**
>
> - Andy Crossley, CTO

Where Are We Aiming?

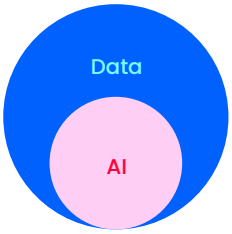
Organisations approach data and AI strategy in different ways, shaped by their context, maturity, and priorities. Understanding your current position is essential to planning what comes next.

In our work with customers, we see four common strategic postures. These are not maturity stages, but different ways organisations choose to relate data and AI.

AI has attracted increased attention in recent years, prompting many organisations to reconsider how they approach it strategically and how it connects to their data foundations. In some cases, AI builds on existing data capabilities; in others, it exposes gaps that need addressing.

There are no right or wrong answers. What matters is having a clear, deliberate position on both data and AI, and a shared understanding of how they relate to each other.

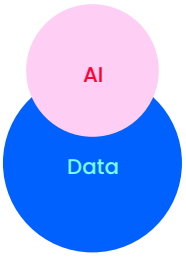
Chapter



Our data strategy includes a chapter on AI

Data and AI is a distinct chapter within the business strategy. It has clear links to business objectives. Value is articulated. But it remains separate from other strategic workstreams. This is a good starting point, but it limits integration.

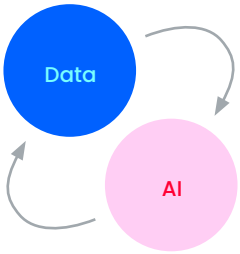
Extension



Our AI strategy builds on our existing data strategy

Data and AI extend existing strategies. It is an enabler of digital, IT, or transformation programmes. This creates momentum but risks treating data as secondary. AI becomes a feature, not a strategic capability.

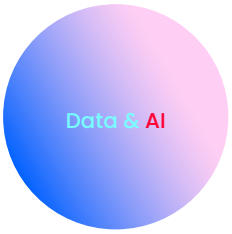
Peer



We have separate data and AI strategies

Data and AI strategy sits as a peer to other strategies. It has equal standing with digital, IT, and business strategies. Governance connects them. This is more mature but can still create silos and competing priorities when they are considered truly independent.

Union



We have a single data and AI strategy

Data and AI is fully integrated into the organisational strategy. It is not a separate document but woven through business planning. Data and AI considerations shape decisions at every level. This is the target state.

There is no right answer, but you need to be clear where you are heading.

Five Guiding Principles

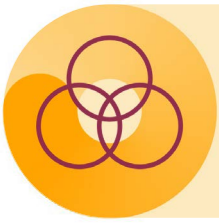
This can feel like a lot to take in, and it isn't always easy. But over decades of hands-on experience helping organisations succeed with data and AI, we've seen clear patterns emerge.

While every organisation is different, the most successful transformations share common approaches. These are the principles we've seen work time and time again and the foundations behind our approach to delivering lasting value from data and AI. You can read more about each of these five principles on the pages to follow.

Value First and Value Fast

Data is business, and it's all about outcomes.

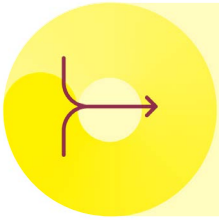
The core challenge for any data and AI strategy is to unlock organisational value, and to enable the delivery of business objectives.



Build Capabilities

Quick fixes don't last - true success comes from building capabilities.

We build strategies that unite the people, processes, and technology to sustain data and AI value for the long-term.



Integrated Transformation

An effective strategy recognises that data, AI, digital and automation are intertwined.

They are all, at heart, interactions with organisational data. Their value depends on strong data foundations.

A Balanced Approach

A balanced approach ensures immediate impact and lasting solutions.

We build effective roadmaps that combine iterative delivery, and foundational capabilities without sacrificing short-term results.

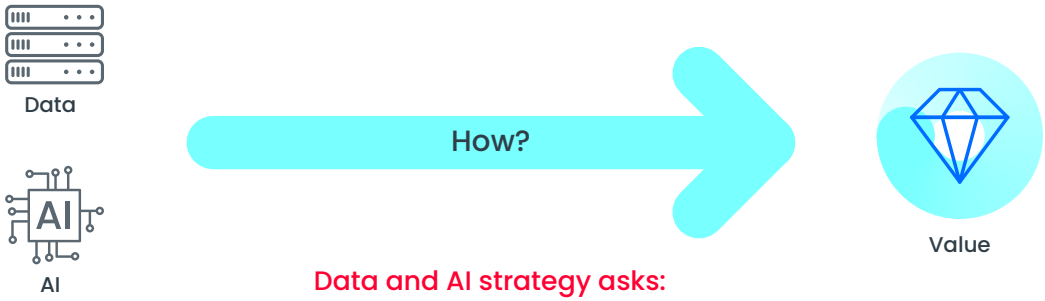
Stories, Not Sermons

People are at the heart of effective data and AI transformation.

Effective storytelling is vital to unlocking enthusiasm and buy-in for the strategy. It requires a concise, focused narrative.

01 Value First and Value Fast

This needs to be your constant north star when you are thinking about your strategy'. It means thinking hard about use cases, routes to value and what truly matters to your organisation'. Everything you create needs to be subordinate to this aim.



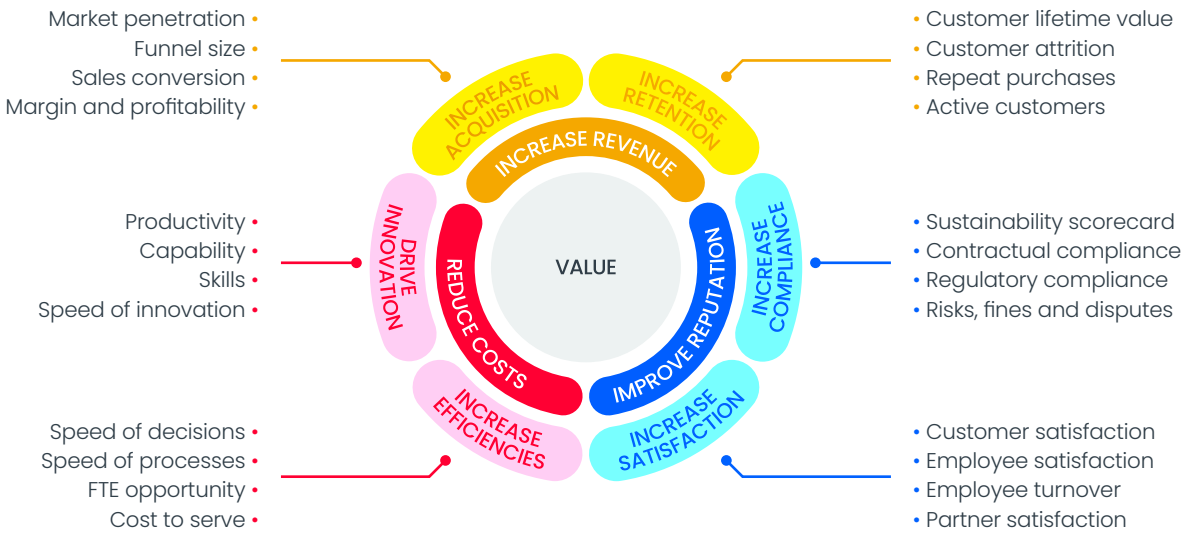
Data and AI strategy asks:

How can we use or invest in these technologies and skills to create value from organisational data?

Oakland's Value Framework

Value comes in many forms. Increased revenue. Reduced costs. Improved compliance. Better customer experience. Operational efficiency. You must define your value drivers. Define where you will create value through strategic use cases. Without this clarity, you are building castles in the air.

Our value framework helps you identify where the opportunities lie. Identifying areas of value opportunity from data.



The Value Framework

Before you can deliver value, you need to define it. Where will data and AI make a difference? What outcomes matter most?

Value is not abstract. It falls into clear categories. Understanding these helps you identify opportunities and build compelling business cases.

Seven Value Drivers

Every use case should map to one or more of these drivers. If it does not, question whether it belongs in your strategy.

How to Quantify Value

This can be when it gets hard, but there are a few things you can do to help you size value quickly. Although your might need some help from your friends in other departments.

The next three approaches help you to quantify opportunity.

1 Existing Benefit Cases

Start with what you know. Review past projects and pilots. What value did they deliver? What could similar initiatives achieve at scale? This grounds your estimates in reality.

2 Sensitivity Analysis

Model the range of outcomes. What if we improve conversion by 1%? By 5%? What if we reduce churn by 0.5 percentage points? Minor improvements in big numbers create compelling cases.

3 Sector Benchmarks

Look outside your organisation. What have peers achieved? What do analysts report as typical returns? Benchmarks provide credibility and context for your estimates.

Combine all three for robust business cases. Triangulate your estimates. Be honest about assumptions. Stakeholders respect rigour.

02

Build Capabilities

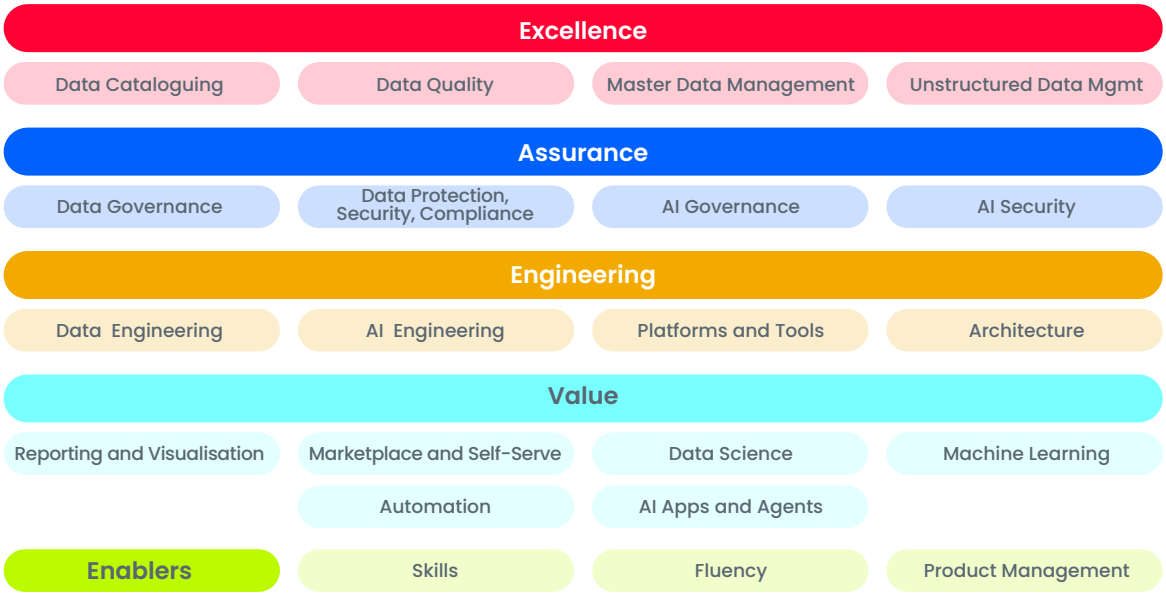
Quick fixes do not last. True success comes from building capabilities. These sustain the value of data and AI for the long term.

Many organisations over-invest in technology. They neglect culture, governance, and process. A better approach is through the lens of capabilities. What does your business need to do with its data? This impact goes beyond AI to add value across the organisation.

Buying technology is transactional and narrow. Creating capability requires orchestrating people, processes, and technology. It opens a wider perspective and avoids the pitfalls of scattergun hiring or chasing technology for its own sake.

The Capability Framework

Capabilities are the building blocks of data and AI success. They span five layers. Each layer must work for the others to deliver value.



Excellence

The foundation of trusted data. Cataloguing, quality standards, master data management. Consistent definitions. Processes to drive out errors.

Assurance

Governance and protection. Compliance, security, and controls for AI and data. Protection against bias and reputational damage.

Engineering

The technology backbone. Platforms for processing and serving data at speed. Sustainable architecture for long-term value.

Value

Where the return is realised. Reporting, self-serve analytics, data science, AI applications, and automation.

Enablers

The people dimension. Skills and fluency. Confidence in using data and AI securely and effectively.

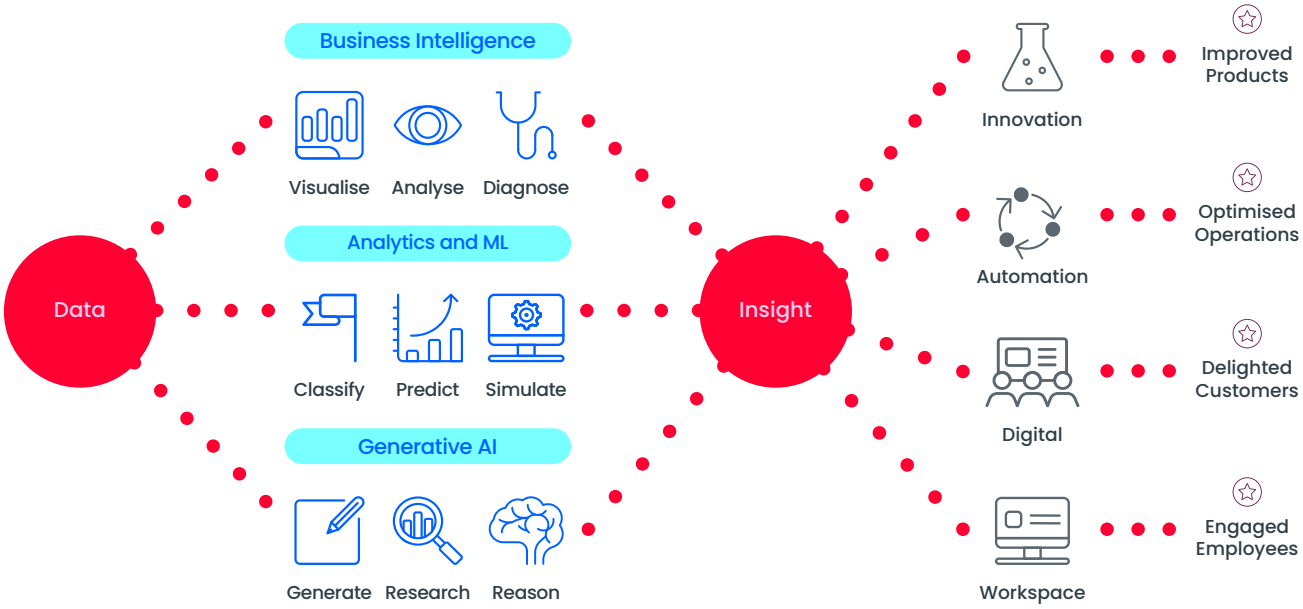
A good strategy addresses all five layers. Weakness in one will limit the others.

03 Integrated Transformation

An effective strategy recognises that data, AI, digital, and automation are intertwined. They are all interactions with organisational data. Their value depends on a strong data foundation.

Data Is The Fuel of Technological Transformation

At heart, almost all aspects of modern transformation are based on interaction with data.



Many companies struggle with fragmented efforts. Data, analytics, digital, AI, and IT all have separate plans. They pull in different directions.

A good strategy positions data as a unifier. It underpins technological transformation across data, digital, AI, and IT, and connects to customer and employee experience. It avoids internal friction and fragmentation.

04 A Balanced Approach

A balanced approach ensures immediate impact and lasting solutions. Effective roadmaps combine iterative delivery with foundational capabilities. They do not sacrifice short-term results.

Two common failure modes sit at opposite ends of the effort spectrum. The first is "death by POC", which we cover in our AI guide. Often led by technology, teams hunt for quick wins. Early momentum fades, and value is never sustained. The second is "the big delivery". Heavy investment, slow or no value, the business loses patience. Projects get cancelled.

The balanced approach avoids both traps. It runs use-case delivery and foundation-building in parallel. Use cases build momentum and prove value quickly. Foundational work ensures that value can scale.

The trick is seeing these as complementary. Not opposed. Use cases tell you about the capabilities you need. Foundational capabilities enable use case delivery. For sustainable transformation, these must be interconnected.

Across the IT landscape, data and AI can no longer be bolted on later. Every business transformation decision either opens or closes future options. Build data thinking in from the start, and you position yourself to act when opportunities arise.

This is not just a technical challenge. It is about skills, literacy, and ways of working too. The aim is to build maturity incrementally across people, processes, and technology.

Making It Happen

Focus Is A Superpower

We have helped many organisations on their data and AI journey. What have we learned? Winners are not the ones with fifty proof-of-concept. Nor are they launching five-year mega programmes.

The winners picked their battles and executed well. They balance delivering now with building long-term capability.

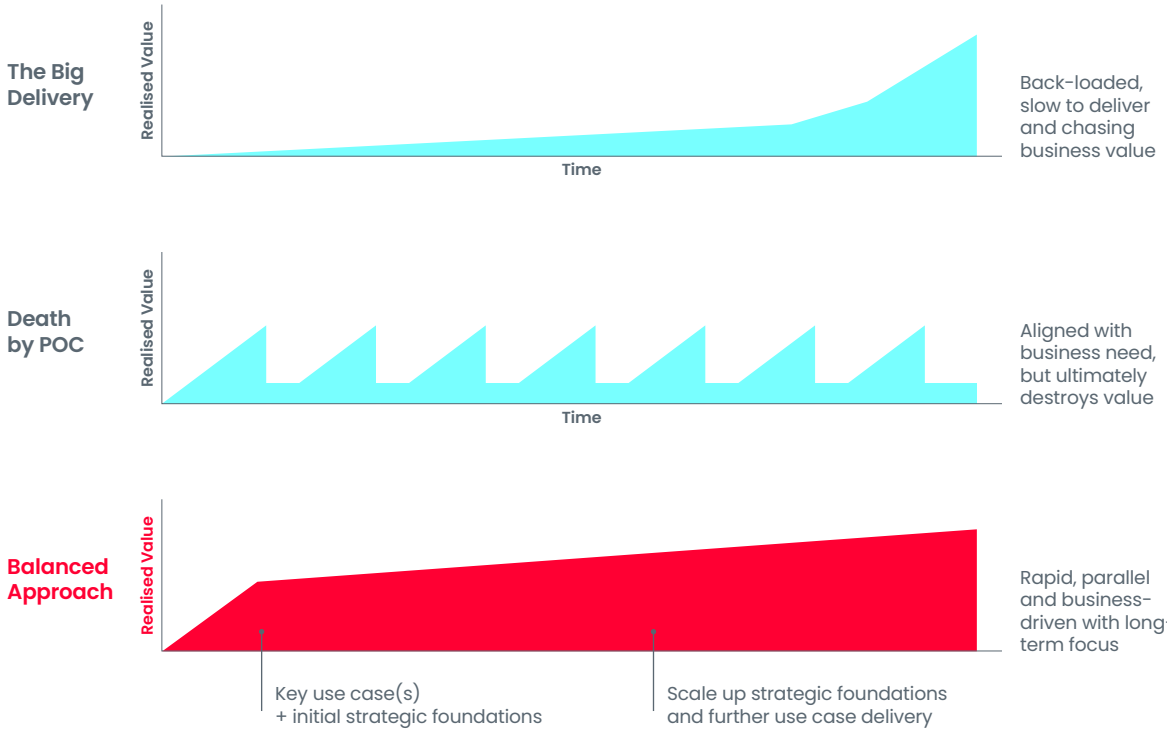
What Does Not Work

- **The Big Delivery:** Back-loaded, slow, and chasing business value. Nobody waits five years for a strategy to deliver.
- **Death by POC:** Twenty half-finished projects. Teams stretched thin. Budget scattered. Everyone frustrated.

What Does Work

- **A Balanced Approach:** Rapid, parallel, and business-driven with long-term focus.
- Use cases inform foundational needs. Foundations set the cadence for use case delivery.
- They are the same effort, not opposed.

Traditional approaches to data and AI transformation often fall short

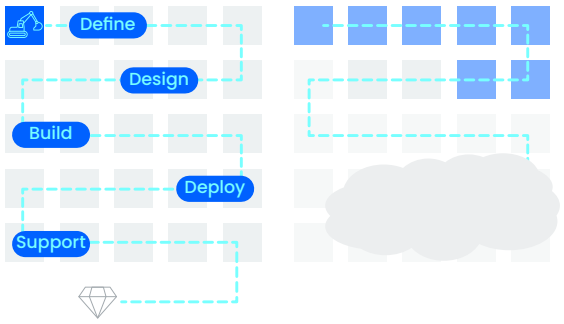


The Lighthouse Approach

Many strategy implementations start wide. They chart ambitious, multi-phase efforts to realise eventual value. But scope creep and internal complexity undermine the project. Many are cancelled or lose their way before value is delivered.

We prefer deep and narrow. Using a Minimum Valuable Product, a Lighthouse Project rapidly unlocks a value slice. Initial delivery creates momentum. It shows a way of extending value iteratively.

Traditional Data & AI Transformation



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Many strategy implementations 'start wide'. They chart ambitious, multi-phase efforts to realise eventual value.

2

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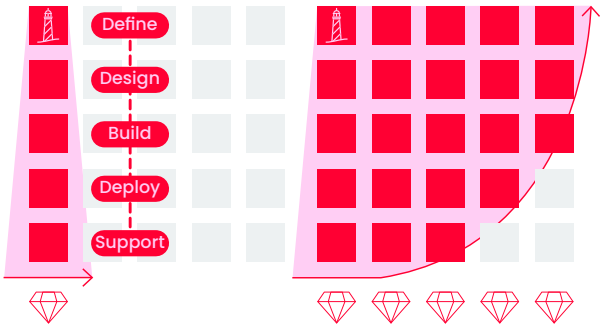
Oakland Lighthouse Approach



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We prefer 'deep and narrow'. A Lighthouse Project powered by a **Minimum Valuable Product** rapidly unlocks a value slice.

2

Then, initial value delivery creates momentum and shows the way to iteratively extend value delivery.

Your first **Lighthouse Projects** do more than solve specific problems. They build belief. They create advocates. They develop capability. They teach you what data and AI can do for your business.

Selecting Your Lighthouse

Not every use case makes a good Lighthouse. Look for a clear value that stakeholders understand and care about. It should be achievable in 8 to 12 weeks with available resources. Choose something that builds capabilities transferable to other use cases. You need an engaged sponsor who will champion success. And the data must be accessible or made so quickly.

Perfect is the enemy of good. Start narrow. Go deep. Build something real. The rest will follow.

05

Stories, Not Sermons

Customer-Centric

Starts with pains, ends with benefits.

Concise

Short, focussed and easily consumable.

Creative

Visual representation of complex concepts.

Contextual

Grounded in organisational reality, not the textbook.

Commercial

Focus on tangible value, not complex methods.

Concrete

Practical examples in accessible language.

Conversational

Stories emerge from dialogue with stakeholders.

Data and AI strategy is more than anything a storytelling challenge. Too many strategies are long, technical and leave audiences cold. Nobody wants a fifty-slide presentation about data mesh. Not many people live their day-to-day life in data and AI land, they won't all be evangelists like you. So if they can't see the value and case for change, they won't back it. A strong narrative is non-negotiable!

The Path To Success

So...Do you feel ready to go?
Here's how we tackle it at Oakland.

Our five phases lead to a strategy ready for implementation:

Discover

Capability review, goals, and vision. Assess the current state. Define the desired future state. Discover strategic objectives, vision, and use cases.

Define

Detailed strategy component design. Design core pillars and future state. Include strategy components and future architecture.

Plan

Transition states and road mapping. Develop a coherent plan and business case. Identify KPIs and success measures.

Execute

Begin implementation. Mobilise projects and resources. Start with foundational capabilities and strategic use cases.

Embed

Incremental deployment. Progress through implementation. Adapt approach and roadmap as needed. Transition carefully to BAU. Iterate as lessons emerge.

Typical timescales

The Discover, Define, and Plan phases typically take 6-8 weeks for strategy development. Lighthouse implementations then run 8-12 weeks to demonstrate value.

Case Studies

Our approach works.

Here are examples of organisations that have transformed their data and AI capabilities with Oakland.

SIMPLIFY

Sector

Professional Services / Conveyancing

Challenge

As the UK's market-leading conveyancing business, Simplify had bold ambitions to support customers across the complete home-moving journey. However, their data was fragmented, difficult to access, and largely underutilised. Analysts were spending up to 90% of their time wrangling data rather than generating insight. Their digital vision for AI and automation was blocked by weak data foundations.

Approach

Oakland used the Discover, Define, Plan, Execute methodology to design a data strategy and implement a modern data platform using the Oakland Modular Platform. We developed the Azure data platform, linked key case systems, and delivered a case prediction model in 12 weeks.

Value Delivered

Reporting time reduced from months to days. Estimated annual saving of over £200,000 in resource time. AI-ready platform enabling advanced analytics across the business.

> **"The Oakland team did a great job in analysing and defining the data definitions, quality rules, and governance for this use case. Their professional approach in collaborating with both the business and data teams has reinforced the importance of using our data in a more controlled and trustworthy manner."**

- Mike Brace,
Director of Data Operations & Strategy

Client stories

YorkshireWater

Sector

Utilities

Challenge

Yorkshire Water faced challenges including legacy systems, regulatory and stakeholder scrutiny, and cost pressures. Data was inaccessible and not trusted, with heavy reliance on manual processes creating inefficiency and risk. They needed to increase data accuracy and accessibility, provide assured data to underpin automation, and empower staff through self-serve tools.

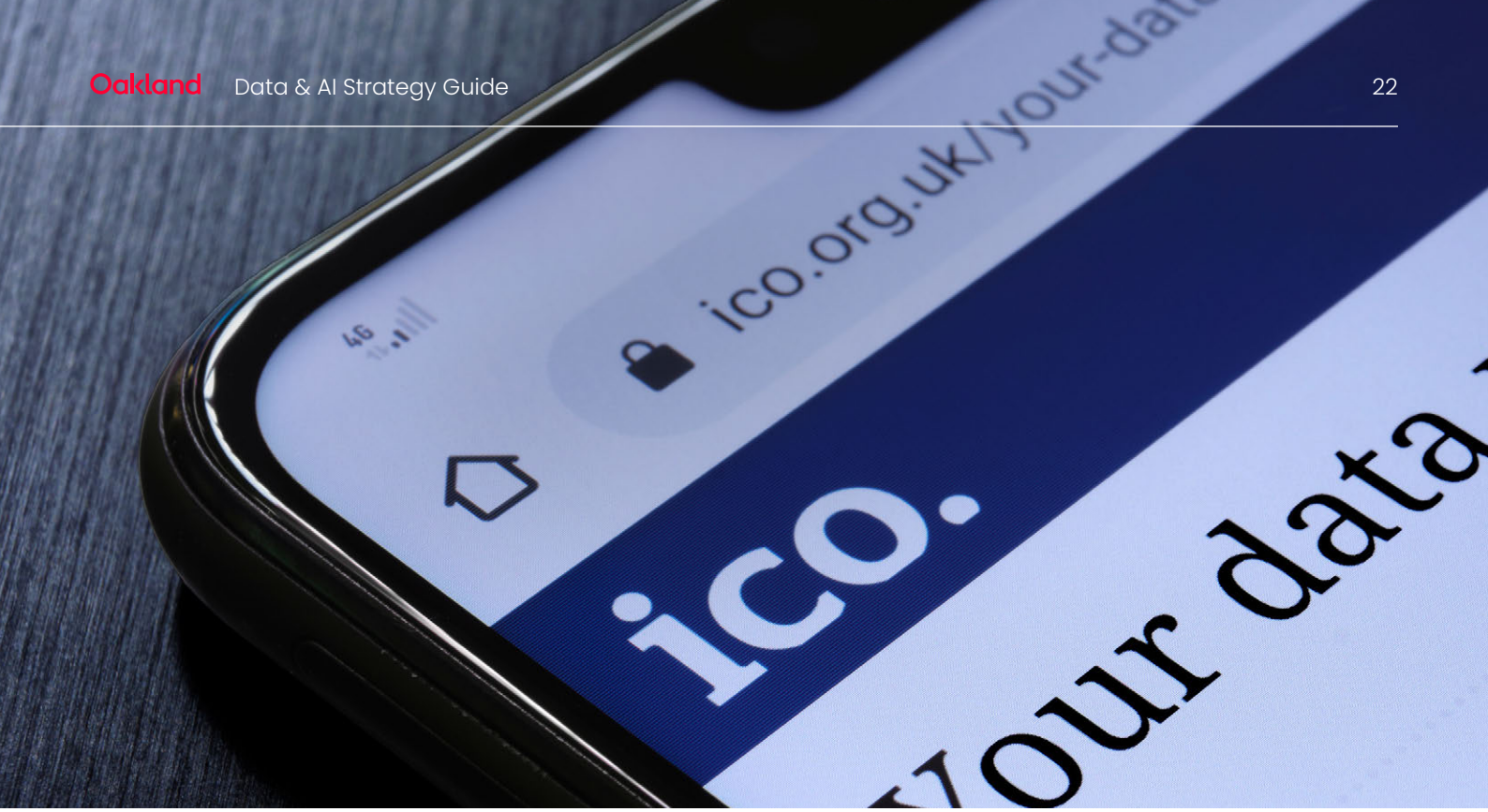
Approach

Oakland delivered an enterprise-wide data strategy and transformation programme in four phases:

- Data maturity assessment involving 50 stakeholders
- Strategy definition detailing the target state
- Roadmap setting out how to implement and measure success
- Execution delivering data architecture, data platform, target operating model, and strategic data products.

Value Delivered

Increased data accessibility, ownership, accuracy, and governance. Built trust in data for decision-making. Operational efficiencies and innovation benefits delivered over a five-year transformation programme.



ico.
Information Commissioner's Office

Sector

Public Sector / Regulator

Challenge

The ICO is the UK's independent regulator for data privacy. As the body enforcing GDPR and the Data Protection Act, it had a unique opportunity to set the standard for responsible data use. Their ambitious ICO25 business strategy needed to be underpinned by a tailored data strategy. However, assessed data maturity was low, requiring a shift from risk aversion to curiosity and experimentation.

Approach

Oakland applied the Data Maturity Assessment for Government (DMAG) framework organisation-wide. Using a mix of workshops, interviews, and surveys across 180 responses, we gathered quantitative and qualitative insights. The Define phase built out strategic pillars and recommended actions, while the Plan phase delivered the actionable roadmap based on business priorities and dependencies

Value Delivered

Published data strategy with implementation plan. Quantitative KPIs for tracking maturity progress. Foundation for responsible innovation in data use across the public sector.

> **"The data strategy is a hugely important piece of work that will put our own use of data at the heart of how we operate and transform as a regulator."**

- Rob Holtom,
Executive Director of Digital,
Data and Technology, ICO

Sector

Large UK Professional Services Organisation

Challenge

A rapidly growing, multi-service professional services organisation was scaling through a combination of organic growth and acquisitions. Data was central to its core services, but capability had not kept pace with business ambition. The organisation faced a fragmented data landscape, limited governance, heavy reliance on manual processes, and increasing dependency on data to support CRM implementation, automation and emerging AI initiatives. Leadership needed a clear, business-aligned data strategy to provide direction, consistency and momentum.

Approach

Oakland partnered with the organisation to define and begin executing a practical, business-led data strategy using a structured Discover, Define, Plan, Execute methodology. We assessed data maturity, aligned the strategy to growth priorities and digital programmes, and developed a phased roadmap. Oakland supported early execution by designing a target data platform architecture, recommending a modern cloud analytics platform, selecting an integration solution, and establishing pragmatic data governance foundations including ownership, definitions and operating ways of working.

Value Delivered

A clear, actionable data strategy aligned to growth, CRM and future AI ambitions. Tangible foundations were established, including a scalable data platform architecture, integration approach and early governance capabilities. Improved alignment across teams, clearer ownership of critical data, and stronger foundations for trusted reporting, automation and AI-enabled insight..

Data and AI strategy partner to some of the UK's biggest organisations

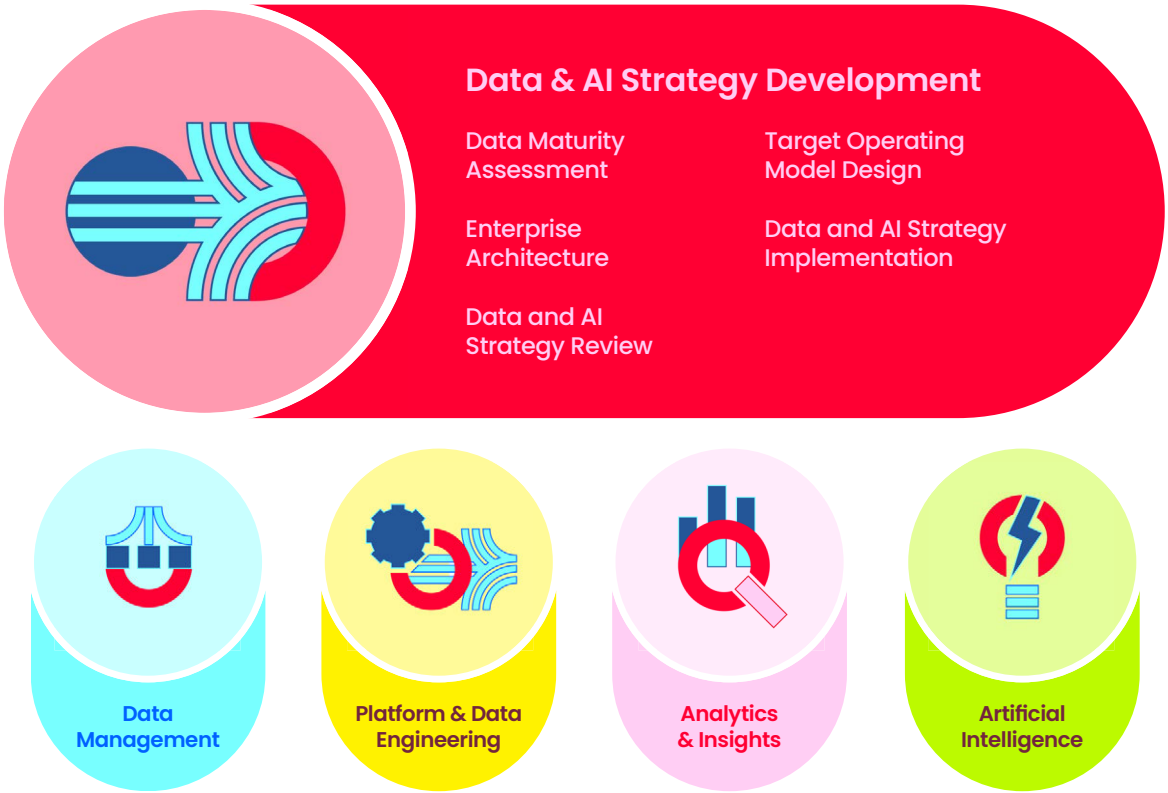
vodafone
Bettys & Taylors Group
A GREAT YORKSHIRE FAMILY BUSINESS
softcat
SIMPLIFY
ico. Information Commissioner's Office
Animalcare GROUP
RAW CHARGING
CONNECTING AMAZING PLACES
Vistry Group
YorkshireWater
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
S&W
University of Southampton
GTR

How Oakland Can Help

Oakland And Softcat: Two Powerhouses, One Purpose

We've spent 40 years helping businesses unlock serious value from their data. Now as part of the Softcat family, we're combining Oakland's deep data expertise with Softcat's unrivalled IT infrastructure and vendor relationships.

We're still the same straight-talking, client-obsessed Oakland team, operating independently with our own voice and values. But backed by one of the UK's most trusted tech partners, we deliver even more firepower for your data and AI challenges.



Why Choose Oakland's Data And AI Strategy Services?

Traditional data and AI strategy consulting falls short. At Oakland we do it differently.

We're strong believers that data and AI strategy consulting should be pragmatic, out-come driven, and built for long-term success - all while delivering immediate value.

Through our 'Everything Data' lens, we ensure your data and AI strategy isn't siloed. We take a holistic approach, aligning your data and AI strategy with that of your overall business.

Our data and AI consultants help you to find the right use cases and unlock value through 'lighthouse projects'. we enable data and AI and technology to drive measurable business outcomes'.

If you'd like to find out more,
please drop us a line

Oakland

Everything Data°

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weareoakland.com