KrambergAI

STRATEGY BRIEFING FOR MANAGING DIRECTORS

The cost logic & business value of AI in mid-sized companies

A structured view of investment, value and decision — so that AI is judged as a measurable business case, not as a piece of software to play with.

01 INVESTMENT LOGIC

AI is not a tool purchase — it's an investment decision

Business value comes from better processes, not from AI licenses.

- AI costs look small as long as you only look at licenses.
- The real business case lies in time saved, quality, cycle time and scalability.
- Evaluate AI like process automation — not like a piece of software to play with.

Cost–benefit trade-off

Investment	Value contribution
License costs	Time saved
Integration	Quality
Data	Revenue opportunity
Training	Relief for staff
Governance	

The value outweighs the cost

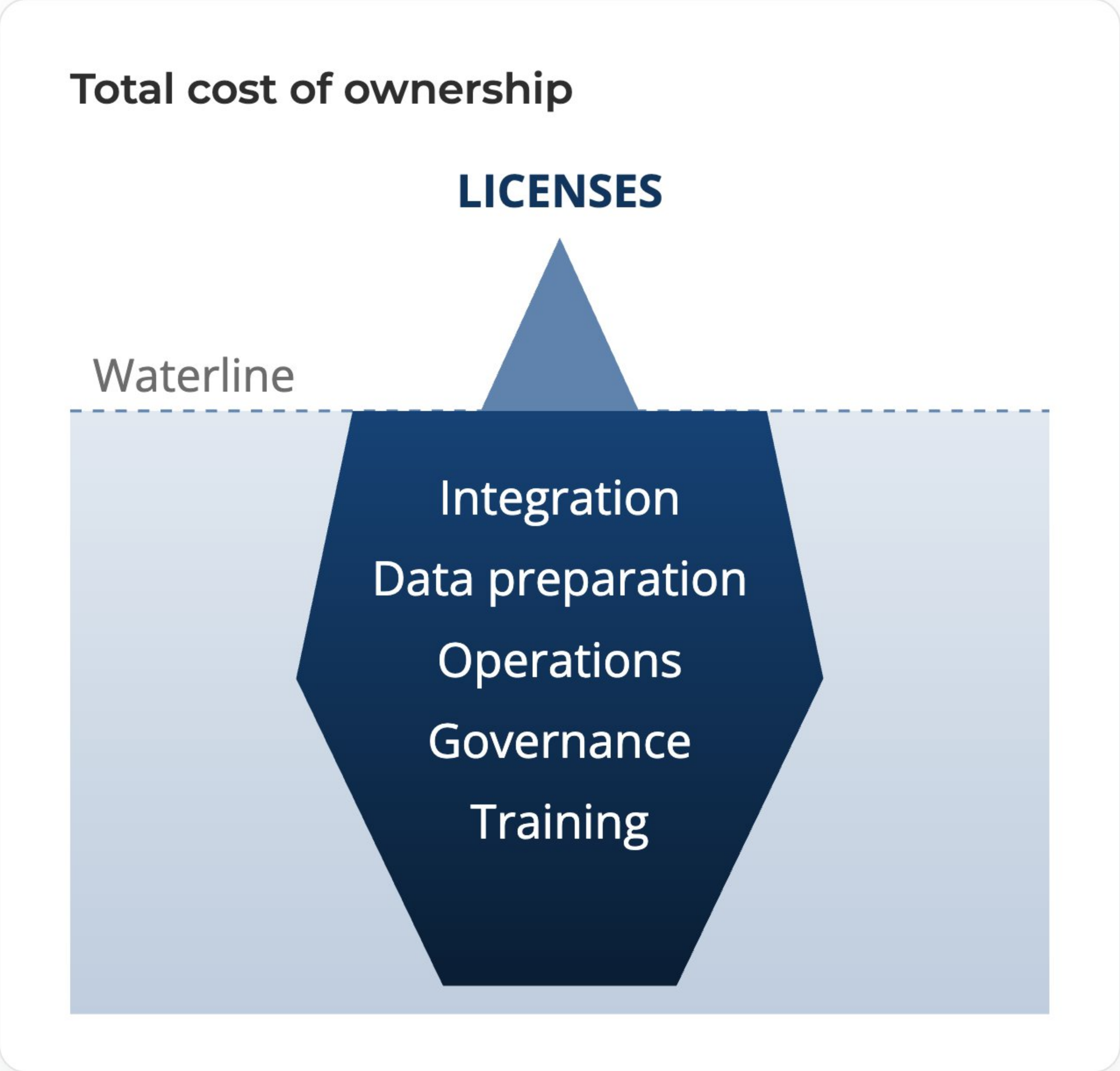
Source: In 2025, **26%** of companies in Germany already use AI — among medium-sized companies (50–249 employees) the figure is **36%**.

02 COST STRUCTURE

The visible costs are only the smaller part

The license is rarely the biggest cost driver.

- **Direct costs:** user licenses, API usage, model costs, hosting.
- **Project costs:** consulting, integration, interfaces, testing, documentation.
- **Operating costs:** monitoring, support, adjustments, data protection, quality assurance.



03 USE-CASE ASSESSMENT

Value has to be calculated per use case

“AI in the company” is too broad. AI only pays off through concrete use cases.

- **Strong use cases:** high repetition, clear data, measurable process costs.
- **Weak use cases:** rare, unclear, politically sensitive or hard to standardize.
- Priority goes to processes with a lot of searching, writing, checking and handover work.

04 VALUE LEVERS

Typical AI value levers in mid-sized companies

AI pays off where it reduces bottlenecks.

A Customer communication

Structure inquiries, prepare callbacks, cut response times.

B Knowledge

Internal search, quote preparation, technical documentation.

C Administration

Minutes, emails, reports, form and contract preparation.

D Sales

Lead qualification, quoting logic, follow-up processes.

05 VALUE CREATION

ROI rarely comes from the pilot — it comes from scaled operation

A pilot proves feasibility — business value only emerges through everyday use.

- Many companies never get beyond experiments.
- Value emerges when workflows are adapted and employees are actively involved.
- Standalone chatbot tests without process change rarely deliver reliable effects.

Maturity & business value

1 Experiment **2** Pilot **3** Process integration
4 Scaling **5** Measurable value

Source: McKinsey (2025) — a persistent gap remains between AI usage and scaled economic value; success factors: strategy, operating model, technology, data, adoption.

06 BUSINESS CASE

The key formula: time saved × frequency × value per hour

The simplest business case starts with working time and process costs.

- Then assess: which hours are genuinely freed up or used more productively?
- What matters is not the gross saving, but the effect you can actually use.

ROI FORMULA

Value = cases × time saved × hourly rate × realization factor

ROI = value − total cost

Sample calculation

8 min × 1,000 cases / month

133

hours / month

07 VALUE DIMENSIONS

Not every benefit shows up immediately as a saving

AI can be economical even when no position is eliminated.

77% of AI-using companies report an improved competitive position.
Source: Bitkom, 2026

Reduce costs

Less idle time on quotes.

Add capacity

Better availability without more staff.

Improve quality

Higher quality in documentation and handovers.

Increase revenue opportunities

Faster response to customer inquiries.

08 COST DRIVERS

Costs rise when data and processes are disordered

Poor data quality makes AI projects expensive.

- Scattered documents, unclear responsibilities and stale data slow implementation.
- AI needs accessible, current and properly authorized information sources.
- Before large AI projects, a small data and process check often pays off.

Structured data
Clearly stored, current, authorized — ready for AI.

Scattered documents
Knowledge exists, but is stored inconsistently.

Unclear sources
Duplicates, missing permissions, outdated records.

Source: IBM — data quality, data access, governance, data protection and security as central hurdles for enterprise AI.

09 ARCHITECTURE

Buy, integrate or build custom?

The right architecture strongly determines cost and risk.

Approach	Cost	Practical value & use
Standard tool	Low cost	Quick to start, but limited customization.
Integration	Medium	High practical value with clear processes and existing systems.
Custom build	High	Only where there's a strong differentiation advantage or sensitive data.

10 DECISION

A decision template for managing directors

Steer AI investment through a clear portfolio — not through one big platform.

1. Start with **3–5 use cases**, not with one large AI platform.
2. Per use case, assess **effort, value, risk and data readiness**.
3. After **90 days**, decide:

stop | scale | re-prioritize

NEXT STEP

KrambergAI AI ROI Check

Derive prioritized use cases with a solid cost–benefit logic — structured, GDPR-compliant and tailored to your operation.

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