

RECORDLY NEWSLETTER

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Who owns the value in your AI initiatives?

Recordly's quarterly newsletter

🇺🇸 *Uutiskirjeen suomenkielinen (alkuperäinen) versio on saatavilla [täältä](#).*

Most organizations can tell you how much they're spending on AI. Far fewer can clearly explain what that investment is actually delivering.

In this newsletter, we look at one key question: who pays for AI initiatives, who benefits from them, and why these are so often not the same.

When ownership and value drift apart, it's easy to end up with projects that get delivered but still fail to change the business.

👋 Greetings from the founders - Tuomas

Data and AI are no longer IT projects

If I asked you how much your organization is spending this year on data management, related development, and AI, you could probably dig up a number. Depending on your operating model, the answer might even come quickly. But if I ask **how much value these investments are producing**, would the answer come just as fast? Is it a concrete, measurable figure or a rough assumption?



Tuomas Melin
Data Architect & Co-founder

Most organizations still account for data and AI initiatives under the IT budget. The invoices go there, licenses are allocated from there, project managers report there. **But the value is usually created somewhere else entirely:** in sales, customer experience, and day-to-day work. Where and how decisions are actually made. The gap that has long existed between **budget and outcomes** continues to shape how data and AI initiatives are prioritized, procured, and measured. And both time and practical needs have already outgrown this model.

As a consultant, I encounter this same pattern in almost every client organization. In this newsletter, we'll address these issues. If the topic resonates, I recommend joining our webinar on May 13 - [you can register here](#).

The misalignment between budget and value

When one team pays and another benefits, organizations start optimizing the wrong thing. Cost discussions take up a lot of space. In procurement, one of the most significant factors in comparing vendors is still the hourly rate. At the same time, business impact, the very reason the initiative exists, is often quickly brushed aside. The assumption is that **value will emerge once the solution is built**.

Unfortunately, in many cases, it doesn't. The project is completed, reports can be opened, the model goes into production. And still, **no one can say whether it has made any difference in business metrics**. Not because the work was done poorly, but because the metrics for measuring change were never properly defined in the first place.

Why AI makes this harder, not easier

It would be tempting to think this is an old, familiar problem from data and analytics projects, one that AI somehow solves. In reality, the opposite has happened. AI doesn't simplify the budget, it complicates it. Today, we're no longer just buying software licenses and people's time to use them. We now also need tokens, inference capacity, agent runs, vector storage, and evaluation capacity. Each of these is a **new parameter of value creation** that can be optimized in entirely new ways. But that optimization requires both an understanding of the technical mechanism and the business process those tokens are serving.

When cost sits with IT and process understanding sits with the business, **neither can see these new optimization opportunities alone**. What used to be a reporting problem becomes a day-to-day decision-making problem. At the same time, the delivery model itself is changing. Much of the technical work that previously justified large project teams is becoming cheaper, faster, and automated. What's becoming more difficult, and more valuable, is understanding how the work is actually done and how it can be reimaged.

Agents make this especially visible. To be useful, an agent needs **continuous business context**, not a one-time requirements document, but a living understanding of how work progresses, what the exceptions are, and where decision-making cannot be reduced to rules. This context doesn't live in architecture diagrams. It lives in processes, customer interactions, and **the tacit knowledge of people doing the work**. Collecting and maintaining it is a shared responsibility. IT can't do it alone, and neither can the business.



In other words, the same misalignment that previously caused problems in measuring initiatives is now causing problems in executing them. That's why solving it is no longer about fine-tuning organizational charts. It's a question of competitiveness.

What a working model looks like

The most effective data and AI teams are not the ones with the most capabilities or the latest technologies. Their effectiveness comes from other things. Typically, a few patterns repeat:

Shared ownership. A named business owner works alongside a technical lead, and both are accountable for outcomes, not just delivery. This sounds obvious, but in practice responsibility is often assigned to "the business" in general, which usually means no one owns it.

Real dialogue between functions. Someone in the initiative can **translate business goals into something the technical team can build** and vice versa. This person is rarely hired specifically for this role. More often, they grow into it, and replacing them later is much harder than most are willing to admit.

Procurement driven by value, not appearance. The cheapest delivery model is **not always the most cost-efficient**, especially if it results in building the wrong thing or creates dependency on a vendor. Value-driven procurement doesn't mean price doesn't matter, it means price is evaluated in relation to where value is expected to emerge and whose bottom line it should impact.

These three characteristics are tied together by a single question: who owns the value before any money is spent? Many organizations try to answer this only after the initiative is already well underway. At that point, course correction is always more expensive and more uncomfortable than addressing it from the start.

What you can do right away

If you recognize your organization in this text, it's not too late. **Identifying the problem is the first step** toward improvement. When the misalignment between ownership and benefits is acknowledged and addressed, the guiding question usually changes. Instead of asking, "How do we deliver data and AI initiatives more efficiently?", we start asking: where should we place these initiatives so they can generate the most value, and who owns that value when it starts to materialize?

Ask in your next steering group: **"If this initiative succeeds, where will it show up in business metrics three months from now?"** If the answer doesn't come quickly and concretely, defining value is a good place to start.

- Tuomas

Expert corner

AI is not just an IT matter – why the consultant of the future moves across boundaries

Most of the problems in data and AI initiatives don't come from technology. They come from the fact that business and IT still operate separately.

Mikko Myllykangas and **Tuomas Heroja** highlight a fundamental shift: AI is not just a new tool, it forces us to rethink how work is organized. If AI is simply layered on top of existing processes, the result is often doing the wrong things more efficiently.

The challenge is not about capability, but about ownership and metrics. When IT is measured by cost and business by results, no one is optimizing the whole. That's when projects emerge that look good but change nothing.

At the same time, the most valuable work often remains invisible: asking the right questions, connecting the right people, and correcting direction early enough.

In the future, the decisive role will be played by those who can move between these worlds, not just building solutions, but ensuring that the right things are being built.



Tuomas Heroja, Data Transformation Coach, and **Mikko Myllykangas**, Business Data Principal

[Read the article](#)



3 signs your AI initiative is on the wrong track – Santeri

Santeri Salonen, AI Architect at Recordly, outlines three signs that your AI initiative is set up for the wrong outcomes.

1. The project is delivered on time but is meaningless from a business perspective

A project can succeed by all traditional metrics: on schedule, within budget, the vendor delivers what was agreed, and still be worthless.

This happens when ownership is built around delivery, not outcomes. The budget comes from IT, the results are expected in the business, but no one owns what happens in between. The initiative doesn't fail. It just doesn't matter.

2. You're solving the problem of adopting AI, not the actual problem

"How do we implement AI?" is the wrong question. It leads to proof-of-concepts, pilots, and rollout projects that solve the problem of introducing technology, but not any real business problem. The result is efficiently producing something unnecessary. The right question is: "Which process, decision, or task should work differently and why?" Only then should you consider whether AI is the right tool.

3. AI is treated as a procurement, not a learning process

When AI is packaged as a fixed-price purchase, what you're really buying is the illusion of certainty. No one knows in advance exactly what needs to be built, the field is still too immature for that. A procurement model that doesn't allow for changing direction results in a project that gets delivered but doesn't evolve. Value comes from an organization's ability to learn and adjust course, not from getting the first guess right.



Santeri Salonen, AI Architect

WHO OWNS THE VALUE IN YOUR AI INITIATIVES?

IF THAT'S NOT CLEAR, IT'S A GOOD PLACE TO START.

LET'S FIX IT - CONTACT US



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