Navigating The AI Landscape:

Strategic Insights for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

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Survey Demographics

Regional Representation

64% 🇺🇸

6.3% 🇨🇦

4.4% 🇫🇷

3.3% 🇬🇧

2.4% 🇲🇽

2.4% 🇧🇷
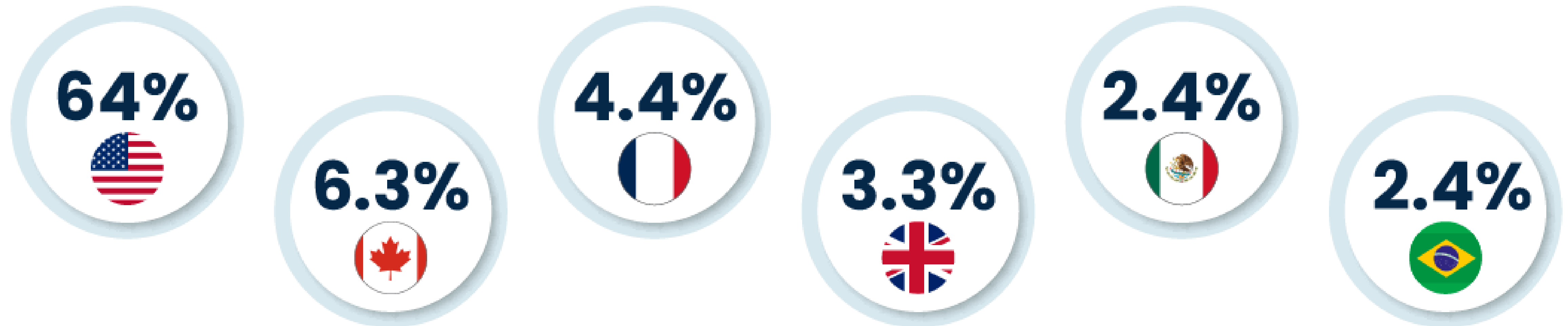
Survey Demographics

Built on input from over 600 business leaders worldwide

90.2%

Majority of respondents are small and medium-sized businesses

(500 employees or less)

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Survey Demographics

Role

Business Owner / Founder	**44.4%**
Manager / Supervisor	**19.6%**
Individual Contributor/Employee	**14.5%**
Director / VP	**10.9%**
C-Suite Executive	**8.5%**
Other (specified)	**2.1%**

Industry

Professional Services - Business	**15.8%**
Media & Advertising	**9.5%**
Technology & Telecommunications	**9.3%**
Finance & Insurance	**7.7%**
Health & Wellness	**6.0%**
Manufacturing & Industrial Sales	**4.4%**

Company Size
(employees)

Small Enterprises	**71.0%**
Medium Enterprises	**19.2%**
Large Enterprises	**9.8%**

Small Enterprises (1-50 employees)
Medium Enterprises (51-500 employees)
Large Enterprises (501 employees and above)

AI Confidence is Growing: But Action Plans (and Budgets) Haven't Caught Up

81%

of respondents believe AI can help achieve business goals

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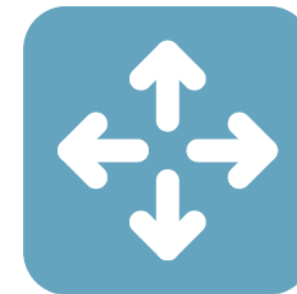# Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

Establish AI as a Strategic Priority

Start Small with Dedicated Resources

Leverage Expert Guidance

Move Beyond the "Do More with Less" Trap

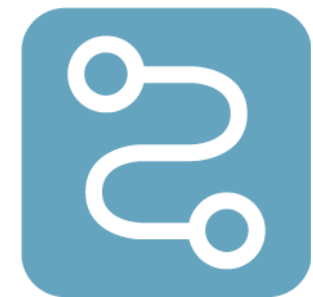# Familiarity with AI is Growing Fast: But Formal Training Still Lags Behind

59%
of business professionals say they are moderately or very familiar with AI

52%
of professionals familiar with AI have no formal training

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Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

Develop Structured Learning Paths

Encourage Knowledge Sharing

Implement Learning-by-Doing Programs

Bridge the Confidence-Competence Gap.

AI is Expanding Beyond Leadership: But Silos Are Slowing Real Progress

33%
of businesses are using AI in Sales

26%
of businesses are using AI in IT

24%
of businesses are using AI in Operations

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The data suggests that different departments face unique barriers to AI adoption:

19%
Customer Service and Frontline Staff

9%
Finance/Accounting

9%
Human Resources

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Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

Create Cross-Functional AI Working Groups

Implement Phased Adoption Plans

Develop Department-Specific Value Propositions

Avoid the "Partial Transformation" Trap and Create a Unified AI Adoption Roadmaps

From Potential to Progress: 2025 Breakthrough Insights on AI's Strategic Impact

The **2025 WSI AI Business Insights Survey reveals an important shift**: small and medium-sized businesses are no longer just exploring AI—they're starting to build real strategies around it. While the numbers show that many still struggle with full AI transformation, with inconsistent execution, uneven adoption, and training imbalances persisting, there is also some clear movement toward more deliberate, organization-wide planning.

More Businesses Are Planning for AI: But Strategy is Still Catching Up

What we're seeing is the early formation of strategy—a shift from *"should we?"* to *"how might we?"* It's a positive signal of intent, but businesses still need structured guidance and planning tools (like WSI's AI Adoption Roadmap), as well as internal alignment to turn that intent into measurable outcomes.

Leaders are Excited About AI: But Middle Managers Are Doing the Heavy Lifting

83%
of business owners and founders say they're confident in AI's potential

77%
of employees report using AI tools

AI Adoption Varies Widely by Industry:
Some Are Racing Ahead, Others Are Stuck

85%

of SMBs (11+ employees)
report using AI

# AI Is Reshaping Jobs: But the Impact Depends on Your Industry

67%

of businesses expect AI to impact jobs

AI Isn't a Solo Sport: External Partners Are Key to Moving Faster and Smarter

The data reveals that **organizations with successful AI implementations are 2.5x more likely to combine internal capability building (through training and talent development) with strategic external support.** The result? A hybrid approach that combines outside perspective with internal alignment creating faster momentum and more sustainable transformation
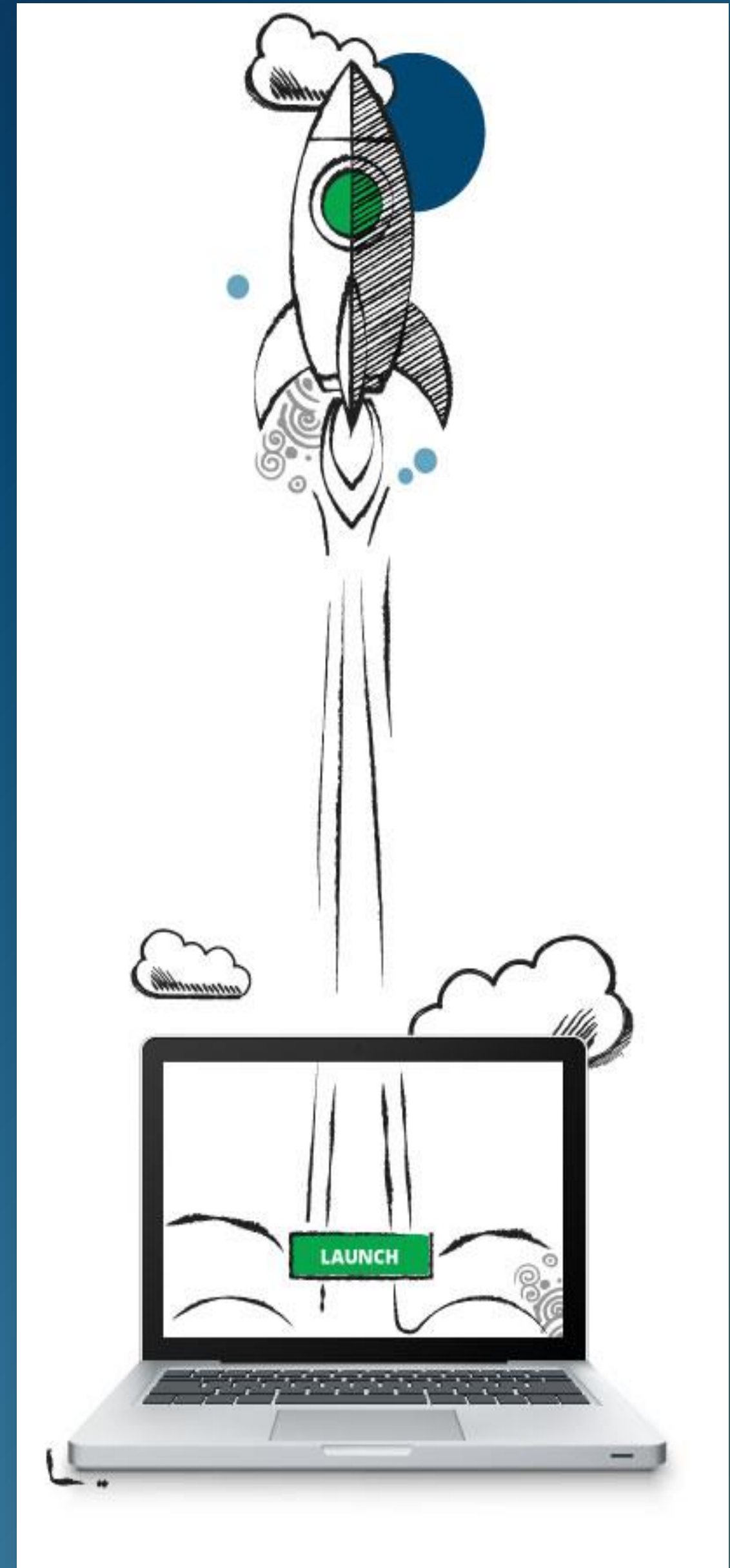
Turning Strategy Into Motion: Practical AI Action Steps

- **Make AI a Core Business Conversation, Not a Side Experiment**

- **Build Targeted AI Fluency That Meets People Where They Are**

- **Expand Adoption Across All Departments, Not Just the Usual Champions**

- **Stop Viewing AI as an Extra Task: Start Treating It as a Business Lever**

Make AI a Core Business Conversation, Not a Side Experiment

27%

of businesses say AI is a regular topic in strategic discussions

Build Targeted AI Fluency That Meets People Where They Are

59%

of respondents say they're familiar with AI, over half of those still haven't received any formal training.

Expand Adoption Across All Departments, Not Just the Usual Champions

This year's data shows AI adoption rising in sales, IT, and operations—but HR, finance, and customer-facing teams still lag significantly behind.

Stop Viewing AI as an Extra Task:
Start Treating It as a Business Lever

The top-cited barrier in 2025 isn't technology or money— it's time. Many still see AI as something that requires additional headcount, hours, or tools, rather than a means to optimize what already exists.
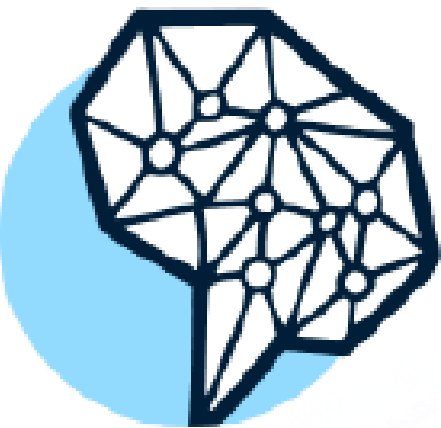
Conclusion

Ready to take the next step? Your local WSI Consultant is here to help you put AI to work—strategically, confidently, and with results that matter.

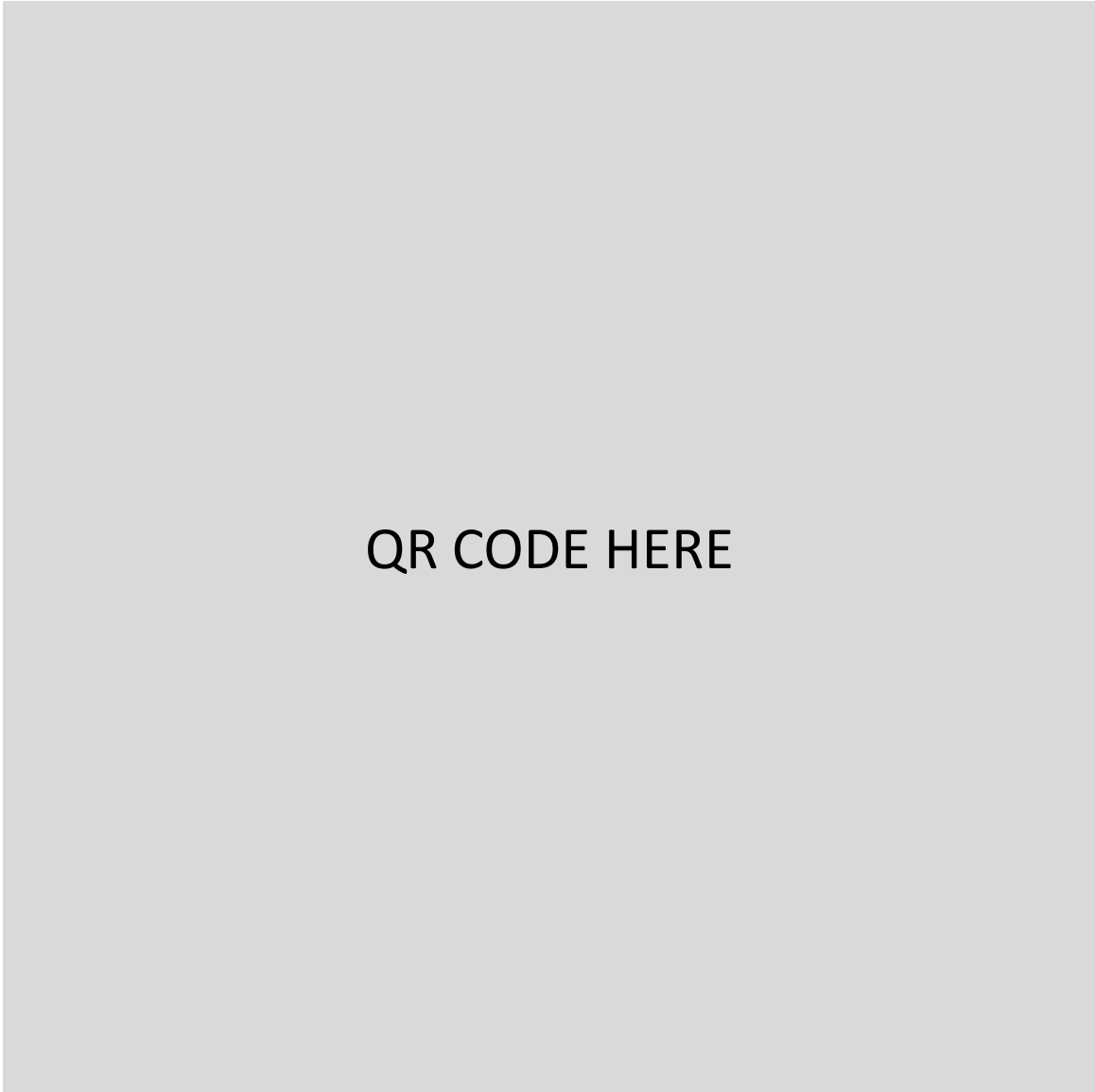**Let's transform AI from a buzzword into a business advantage—together.**

Educate Your Team & Transform Your Business with WSI's AI Resources

Knowledge is power—and in today's competitive ecosystem, WSI is here to help you unlock the power of AI. Learn more about GPTs and prompts with our 100+ page *Unlocking the Potential of ChatGPT & AI* eBook. Identify gaps in your business strategy with our *AI Readiness Assessment*. Everything you need to learn about AI and how to leverage it in your business is at your fingertips. Don't miss out on this transformational business journey with AI and WSI!

2024 WSI AI Business Insights Survey

Navigating the AI Landscape: Strategic Insights for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

Recommendations for businesses looking to leverage AI effectively, from improving customer experiences to streamlining operations.

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