

Abandonment isn't the verdict. It's the bill.

A 2025 survey found the share of businesses scrapping most of their AI initiatives jumped to **42%**, up from **17%** the year before. The more honest number is smaller: the average organization scraps **46%** of its AI proof-of-concepts before they ever reach production. A proof of concept proves the model. It was never built to prove the operation around it.

THE HEADLINE NUMBERS S&P Global · 2025 wave



S&P Global Market Intelligence, "Voice of the Enterprise: AI & Machine Learning." More than 1,000 respondents, North America and Europe. Top obstacles cited: cost, data privacy, and security risk.

WHERE THE DEATHS ORIGINATE five layers, two do the killing



A proof of concept survives fine without a named approver and without an owner after launch. A production system cannot. That is exactly where these projects die.

THE THREE OBSTACLES none of them are the model

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Cost
The bill for real volume, not demo volume.
 - Nobody priced what the system costs to run past the pilot.
- 2

Data privacy
Where the data actually goes.
 - Nobody in the privacy function signed off before launch.
- 3

Security risk
What happens when it's wrong.
 - No review, no rollback plan, no named owner.

Monday morning YOUR FIRST MOVE

Before you approve the next proof of concept, write down the answers to three questions you would otherwise only face after it already works: **who owns this once it graduates**, **what does it cost at real volume**, and **who signs off** on cost, data privacy, or security.

Self-check: if you cannot answer those three before the green light, the pilot isn't derisking anything. It's just delaying the moment the questions get asked.

OPERATOR INSIGHT · EPISODE 3

"A proof of concept proves the model. It never proves the operation - and the operation is what you are actually buying."

"Your AI maturity will never exceed your operational maturity."

Free **Score your own pipeline** - the AI-Ready Operations Assessment runs it against your own systems.
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