

Same 13%. Three years of spending didn't move it.

Cisco's AI Readiness Index, three years running: **13%** of companies qualify as Pacesetters, genuinely ready to get value from AI. Same number as the two years before, despite three years of rising AI spend across every market the study covers.

THE HEADLINE NUMBER Cisco AI Readiness Index · Oct 2025

13%
of companies qualify as Pacesetters, genuinely AI-ready

4x
more likely for Pacesetters to move a pilot into production

Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025, "Realizing the Value of AI." Global survey of 8,000+ business and AI leaders, 30 markets, 26 industries. The 13% figure has stayed essentially static for three years running.

READ AS
~~Needs more time, or more budget.~~

ACTUALLY
The operation underneath it was never built.

THREE FINDINGS – THE STUDY'S OWN none of them are budget problems

- 1**

The production gap
Pacesetters ship 4x more often.
– Same starting budget, same working pilot. The difference is what happens after it works.
- 2**

The infrastructure gap
54% say their network can't scale.
– Not a strategy gap. A physical one – current AI workloads outgrew the network under them.
- 3**

The outcome gap
90% of Pacesetters report real gains.
– Versus roughly 60% of everyone else, on profitability, productivity and innovation.

THE FOUNDATION five layers, one framework

1 GOVERNANCE

2 CLEAN DATA

3 STANDARDIZED PROCESSES

4 CONTROLS

5 OPERATING MODEL

You build these. You don't buy them, no matter how big the check.

Monday morning **YOUR FIRST MOVE**

Before you ask for next year's AI budget, ask the question a flat 13% suggests almost nobody asks: **if this budget doubled tomorrow, which of our actual constraints would that money remove?**

Walk your operation against the five layers, honestly. Self-check: wherever more money wouldn't touch it, that's the reason spending alone never moved you into the 13%.

OPERATOR INSIGHT · SEASON 2, EPISODE 4

"Three years of spending moved the number by nothing. Readiness was never a budget problem."

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

Free

Score your own operation – the AI-Ready Operations Assessment runs the same five layers against your systems. [vihrenlabs.gumroad.com/l/rmkje](https://vihrenlabs.com/l/rmkje)