



BRENNAN
People first - secure always



BRENNAN LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLES

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

As hosts of three recent Executive Roundtables, it was a genuine pleasure to hear from and connect with over 40 CIO's and senior technology leads in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

From the structured discussions to the spontaneous conversations, the events spanned a wide range of topics, generating a wealth of keen insights and analysis.

We've distilled them down to the three key themes every attendee returned to.



1

AI got all the airtime.

IN A NUTSHELL:

Be it the anchor discussions or the sidebar conversations, AI is (still) the dominant topic, by far.

With company Boards and the C-Suite keen to be first movers in hitching AI's potential to business ambitions – all in the quest to drive their competitive edge – the adoption appetite is largely being driven from the top-down.

And as the 'shock-and-awe' novelty wanes, and the leading AI vendors double down on education, conversations on AI are beginning to mature. IT leads are now focussing on the foundational works needed to bring AI to life.

TAKEAWAY:

Cascading up - starting with infrastructure and data (the migration, the organisation, the permissions), through to the implementation and training (and with every step wrapped in security) – it's become increasingly clear AI needs to be considered in the whole, rather than a silo.

Unique opportunities.

Although every participant is agreed on AI's potential, what form that takes is different for all. For some, it's the Large Language Models. For others, it's machine learning. For others still, it's automation. Rather than viewing AI as the fix-all, those framing AI's potential as another tool (albeit a big one) to support specific, targeted business goals are seeing early wins.

Infrastructure. Ready.

Most people in most organisations report their infrastructure layer as being ready to deliver on AI. And those able to deliver on automation are finding themselves better placed to deal with infrastructure constraints.

Data difficulties.

With any AI project standing or falling on the quality, availability, and security of data, a renewed focus on the fundamentals is increasingly seen as the first hurdle to clear. How is it collected? How is stored? How is it governed? How is it secured? Nailing down the answers is proving to be thorny for some. Others, viewing data through a 'search-ready' lens, are reporting to be well progressed.



2

Not if, but when?

IN A NUTSHELL:

As the frequency, intensity, and damage caused by cybersecurity breaches climbs, the question most (if not all) business leads are now asking is, “Not if, but when?”.

TAKEAWAY:

Running in parallel with and in addition to AI initiatives, a growing portion of overall technology spend (more of which in Takeaway 3) is now being directed to security.

One of two key areas is preparedness: Are we ready? Do we have a response plan? What does day-0, day-1, day-5, or day-10 look like? These are the common refrains.

The second is the doubling down on education. With broad acceptance that the weakest link in the cybersecurity kill chain is user error, organisations are upping spending and focus on cyber awareness and training.



Helpful reading: MSPs vs. MSSPs: The tussle over security.

3

No budging on budgets.

IN A NUTSHELL:

Set against a challenging economic backdrop, it was no surprise to hear IT teams are sitting on largely static budgets.

TAKEAWAY:

With Board and C-Suite emphasis on AI opportunities and security concerns intensifying, IT leads are having to become increasingly canny in optimising costs, and more strategic in the technology bets they place.

Pointed questions on how to rationalise and extract more value from infrastructure are increasingly being posed through the prism of AI. And savvy leads that have started incorporating AI outcomes across infrastructure, data, and governance are reporting early wins.