What Comes Next for AI

Observations from the LinkedIn discussion between **Satya Nadella and Rishi Sunak**

One of the many aspects that caught my attention from what Microsoft's CEO and the UK's former Prime Minister covered, is that the discussion repeatedly returned to a statement: **AI's impact will be determined by diffusion, not discovery.**

After years working across **data architecture, product ownership, and PMO-led transformation**, I have seen the same pattern repeat itself. Organisations rarely fail because the technology is weak. They fail because they lack a **repeatable way to turn capability into outcomes**.

Nadella and Sunak's Core Message

1. Corporate AI implementation is a diffusion challenge, not an intelligence race

The discussion moved away from "who has the best model" and towards **who can deploy AI at scale, safely, and consistently**.

Most organisations already have access to powerful models. What they lack is:

- Clear ownership of decisions
- Defined risk boundaries
- Operational workflows that assume probabilistic output
- A way to measure value beyond demos

This is not a research challenge. It is a **delivery challenge**.

2. Leadership and execution matter more than geography

The point made about countries and companies winning through leadership, not location, reflects what happens inside organisations.

AI programmes fail when:

- No one owns the outcome end-to-end
- Delivery is separated from risk and governance
- Teams do not know when to stop
- Success metrics and exit criteria are undefined

Strong leadership means **clear accountability and fast decision-making**.

This is classic transformation territory.

3. AI literacy will outperform AI ambition

AI literacy, in practice, means:

- Understanding where automation is appropriate and where it is not
- Designing processes that anticipate variance, not expect perfection
- Knowing how to decompose work into tasks that can be automated, tasks augmented with AI, or the ones retained by humans

This is where many AI initiatives quietly fail: they aim for results before understanding the **process**.

Why methodology is the missing layer

What was mentioned by **Satya Nadella** as the thing he hopes to see is **"some form of a methodology that is getting industrialised, on how every company can use AI to bend the productivity curve and to really drive economic growth"**.

But no one fully address this:

Organisations are trying to deploy AI projects without an AI delivery methodology.

They have cloud strategies, the data strategies, but rarely have an **AI implementation method** that links:

- Data architecture
- Product decisions
- Risk management
- Delivery cadence
- Governance and audit
- Kill-or-scale decision points

Data architecture, product ownership, and governance, are the drivers for AI initiatives to succeed:

- Translating business intent into data and process flows
- Defining the decision strategies before automation
- Structuring AI agents as execution units, not autonomous decision makers

- Embedding cost, business goal, and risk management from day one
- Designing programmes that can stop as confidently as they can scale

This is not theoretical. It is applied delivery.

Managing AI agents is still management

One subtle but important idea discussed was that more people will increasingly manage **AI agents**.

Agents behave like any execution unit, as they need:

- Scope
- Controls
- Escalation paths
- Performance measures

The mistake is treating them as "intelligent" rather than **delegated** agents (The "agents' hype" I discussed in my previous article).

The advantage will not be the ability to build agents, but the ability to structure the environment they operate in so that:

- Risk is contained
- Behaviour is reproducible
- Decisions are auditable
- Value is measurable

Risk management is another missing layer in most AI strategies

One of the most important contributions of the Nadella - Sunak discussion is the reframing of sovereignty and risk.

- Not everything needs to be sovereign.
- Not everything should be centralised.
- Not every workload deserves the same controls.

This is portfolio risk management applied to AI.

Yet many organisations still approach AI with binary thinking:

- Cloud or no cloud
- Regulate or don't regulate
- Automate or don't automate

In delivery, these types of binary selections usually fail.

Effective AI programmes distribute the risks in the following questions:

- Which decisions can be automated?
- Which must remain human-approved?
- Which require audit trails?
- Which can tolerate probabilistic output?

These are **not technical**; they are **governance and accountability questions**.

And they are exactly where PMO capability adds value.

General skills on software products

In the discussion the point that stood out the most, was the implicit advantage of generalist capability in software products, rather than deep specialisation in a single technical layer. The emphasis was not on knowing one model, language, or platform in depth, but on understanding how products come together, data flows, user needs, infrastructure constraints, and operating risk.

In an environment where tools change faster than roles or organisational structures, generalists with **product instincts become the stabilising force**, translating fast-moving technology into coherent, usable systems that can scale across an organisation.

What comes next

Success will come from organisations that:

- Tie each initiative to one business outcome
- Define stop conditions upfront
- Invest in AI literacy across delivery and leadership
- Build narrow, well-governed AI capabilities
- Treat AI as a transformational change, not a technology upgrade

This is the methodology I am refining and applying, not because AI needs more ambition, but because it needs **better execution**.

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