

INSIGHT REPORT FROM THE MAIN STAGE

27 - 29 April 2026

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AI Innovation Summit 2026

From Experimentation to Enterprise-Scale AI Impact.

AI Innovation, Dallas (April 27–29), brought together senior leaders at a moment where curiosity is no longer enough. Conversations reflected a shared reality – most organizations have explored AI, but far fewer have embedded it in ways that deliver consistent value. **Build, Prove, Scale** emerged as the underlying signal across the event.

Leaders spoke candidly about the tension between ambition and execution, from gaps in infrastructure and data to the challenge of

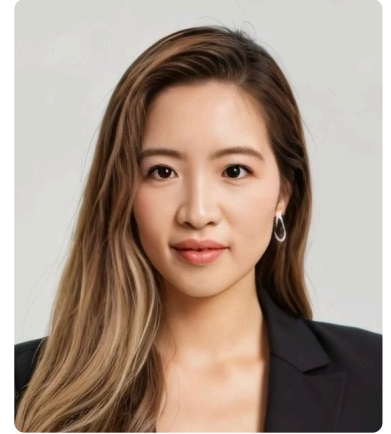
aligning teams around real outcomes. The tone was pragmatic rather than optimistic.

If the past two years were about possibility, this summit focused on what it actually takes to make AI work – at scale, under pressure, and with accountability. The sessions that follow reflect how that shift is being approached.

Define Your Future: Rewire Business Strategy with GenAI

Queena Cheung reframed generative AI as a structural shift in how businesses operate, rather than a technology layer to adopt. She emphasized that organizations must actively define their future state instead of reacting to market momentum.

While adoption is widespread, enterprise-level impact remains limited due to gaps in capability, fluency, and strategic clarity. Cheung argued that competitive advantage will come from integrating AI across strategy, talent, and operating models — with a clear vision guiding execution. The challenge is no longer access to AI, but the ability to use it meaningfully.



with Queena Cheung
Chief Strategy and Digital
Officer
Marsh Risk

Key Takeaways

1

Adoption does not equal value

Widespread use of AI has not yet translated into consistent enterprise outcomes.

2

Strategy must be future-led

Organizations need a defined vision rather than incremental improvements.

3

Fluency is the real barrier

The gap lies in how effectively people and organizations use AI, not in access to tools.

“You want to stay ahead. You have to be able to define your future and not let that future push you into it.”

Queena Cheung, Chief Strategy and Digital Officer, Marsh Risk

The Innovation Journey – From Ideas to Scaling Initiatives

Sandra Powell-Elliott grounded the discussion in the realities of implementing innovation within complex, regulated environments. Her central message was clear: innovation does not fail due to lack of ideas, but due to friction between those ideas and existing organizational structures.

She emphasized that scaling requires deliberate alignment across leadership, frontline teams, and incentives. Culture, not technology, determines whether initiatives move beyond pilot phases. By embedding clinicians and operational stakeholders early, organizations can shift innovation from isolated experimentation to sustained, system-level change.



with **Sandra Powell-Elliott**
Chief Innovation &
Commercialization Officer
Hackensack Meridian
Health

Key Takeaways



Innovation meets resistance at scale

Most initiatives stall where new ideas collide with existing processes, governance, and workflows.



Frontline engagement defines success

Embedding those closest to operations ensures solutions are usable, not theoretical.



Culture determines momentum

Sustainable innovation requires aligning incentives, communication, and organizational goals.

"Every organization has its own immunity system, how it wants to really kind of fight off that change."

Sandra Powell-Elliott, Chief Innovation & Commercialization Officer, Hackensack Meridian Health

CIO Redefined: The Human-Agent Enterprise through Adaptive Leadership

Gurpreet Kaur positioned the CIO role as undergoing a structural shift – from technology operator to orchestrator of human and agentic collaboration. She highlighted that agentic AI introduces a new operating model where systems do not just automate tasks but actively reason and act.

This demands leadership that balances efficiency with human impact. Her perspective emphasized governance, workforce upskilling, and deliberate prioritization of high-value use cases. Organizations that succeed will not be those with the most pilots, but those that align AI investments with measurable outcomes and embed them into core workflows.



with **Gurpreet Kaur**

CIO: Global Services & Supply Chain, Mfg & Engineering
GE Healthcare

Key Takeaways

1

The CIO role is becoming orchestration-led

Leadership now requires managing hybrid human-agent systems, not just infrastructure.

2

Governance is the turning point for scale

Centralized oversight ensures AI initiatives are aligned, secure, and measurable.

3

Value must be intentional, not assumed

AI investments must clearly link to cost reduction, revenue growth, or workforce capability.

"There's a lot of chaos, but I can assure you that through this chaos, we're all going to be able to navigate and figure it out."

Gurpreet Kaur, CIO: Global Services & Supply Chain, Mfg & Engineering, GE Healthcare

Meeting You Where You Are: Real Talk About AI Transformation

This session surfaced a more candid view of AI transformation — most organizations are earlier in their journey than assumed. Walker and Wisdom highlighted that the primary barriers are not technical, but human and organizational.

Fear, lack of clarity, and misaligned expectations are slowing adoption. Leaders are often balancing top-down urgency with bottom-up hesitation.

The discussion emphasized the importance of psychological safety, realistic timelines, and honest conversations about capability gaps. Transformation requires meeting teams where they are, not where leadership assumes them to be.

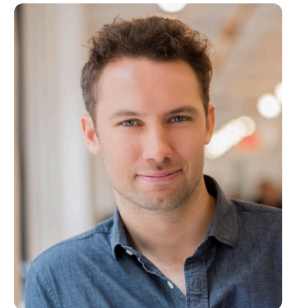
Bailee Walker

Global Value Advisory
Leader
Miro



Jason Wisdom

Partner
Design Gym



Key Takeaways



Perceived progress often masks reality

Many organizations overestimate their maturity in AI adoption.



Adoption is driven by trust, not tools

Psychological safety and open dialogue are critical for meaningful uptake.



Execution requires alignment across levels

Disconnects between leadership ambition and operational readiness create friction.

"I have yet to talk to a person who doesn't feel like their organization is behind everyone else's."

Bailee Walker, Global Value Advisory Leader, Miro

Your Next Hire Is AI: Closing the Customer Experience Gap with Enterprise-Grade Agentic AI

George Downey IV focused on the widening gap between cGeorge Downey IV framed AI not as a future capability, but as a response to a widening gap between modern customer expectations and outdated service models.

Drawing on real-world deployment experience, he argued that customer expectations are now shaped by seamless, AI-driven consumer experiences - creating a "jarring" disconnect when enterprise service fails to match that standard. He defined agentic AI as systems that can listen, reason, act, and respond autonomously, but emphasized that success depends on enterprise-grade design. The focus was not just capability, but control - combining automation with governance to deliver reliable, scalable outcomes across customer interactions.



George Downey IV
Sr AI Sales Consultant
NICE

Key Takeaways

1

Customer expectations have permanently shifted

AI-driven consumer experiences have reset the baseline for speed, personalization, and convenience in service interactions.

2

Enterprise AI requires control, not just capability

Successful deployments balance agentic flexibility with deterministic guardrails to ensure accuracy and compliance.

3

Value comes from practical deployment, not ambition

Starting with high-volume, structured use cases creates measurable impact and builds momentum for broader transformation.

“Once customers experience natural, intelligent, frictionless interactions with AI, there is no going back.”

George Downey IV, Sr AI Sales Consultant, NICE

AI Innovation – Optimized Architecture & Cybersecurity

Deepak Sachdeva delivered a systems-level perspective on AI infrastructure, emphasizing that scaling AI requires rethinking architecture, data strategy, and security models. He highlighted the increasing complexity of managing decentralized systems, rising data volumes, and the need for real-time decision-making.

Organizations must move beyond cost-focused thinking and invest in resilient, scalable infrastructure. His argument was clear – AI is no longer optional, and infrastructure readiness will determine how effectively organizations can respond to rapid technological change.



Deepak Sachdeva
Chief Information Officer
United States Air Force

Key Takeaways



Infrastructure is the bottleneck to scale

Many organizations are not yet equipped to support enterprise AI demands.



Decentralization increases resilience

Distributed architectures reduce risk and improve operational continuity.



Speed of change requires new thinking

Technology cycles are accelerating beyond traditional planning models.

"The rate of change of technology is just accelerated... every two or three months it's something new."

Deepak Sachdeva, Chief Information Officer, United States Air Force

ERP Software is Dead. Agentic AI ERP is Here and It Changes Everything

Eric Helmer challenged conventional enterprise architecture by arguing that traditional ERP systems are no longer fit for purpose in an AI-driven environment. He described a shift from monolithic systems of record to modular, agentic systems of action.

The value of ERP now lies in its data, not its structure. By decoupling systems and layering AI-driven orchestration on top, organizations can accelerate innovation while reducing cost and complexity. The future enterprise will be defined by flexibility, not standardization.



Eric Helmer
SVP and Chief
Technology Officer
Rimini Street

Key Takeaways

1

ERP is shifting from record to action

Systems must evolve to support real-time decision-making and automation.

2

Modularity enables agility

Best-fit solutions outperform monolithic platforms in a fast-moving environment.

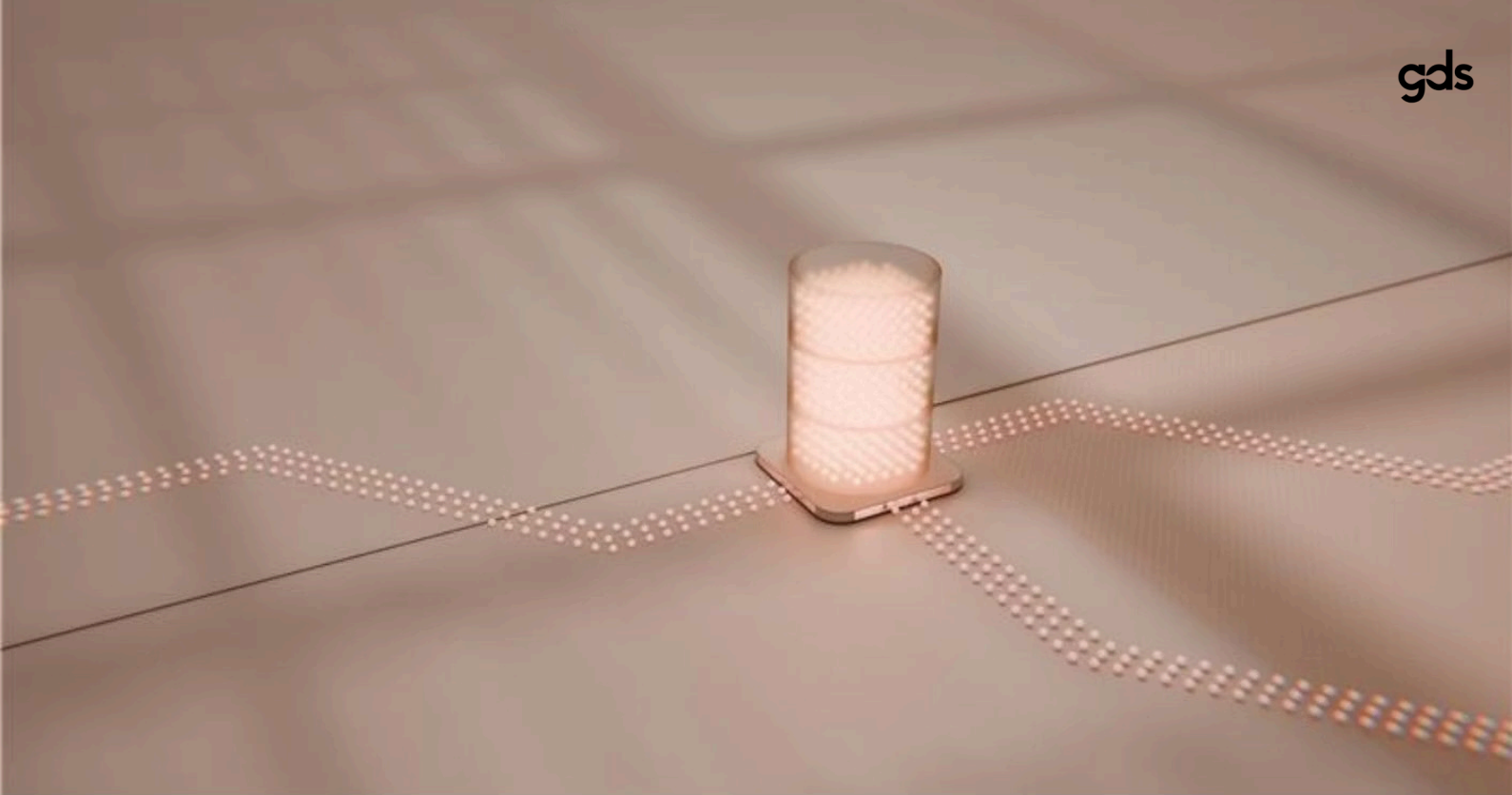
3

Data is the core asset

The true value of ERP lies in the data it holds, not the system itself.

“The ERP is no longer the center of the universe... the data is the value.”

Eric Helmer, SVP and Chief Technology Officer, Rimini Street



From pressure to progress – making AI work where it matters

What stood out across the summit was not a lack of ambition, but a growing honesty about what it takes to follow through. AI is no longer a future conversation. It is already shaping expectations, decisions, and outcomes – whether organizations feel ready or not.

The **people lesson** is that progress depends on confidence as much as capability. Teams need clarity, space to learn, and leadership that understands both the opportunity and the pressure they are under.

The **process lesson** is that discipline creates momentum. Clear priorities, governance, and measurable outcomes are what turn scattered activity into sustained impact.

The **technology lesson** is that capability alone is not enough. Systems must be designed to scale, integrate, and adapt – not just perform in isolation.

The next phase of AI will not be defined by who experiments the most, but by who commits, focuses, and follows through.

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gds AI Summit

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