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When Six-Month Plans Meet Six-Second Solutions

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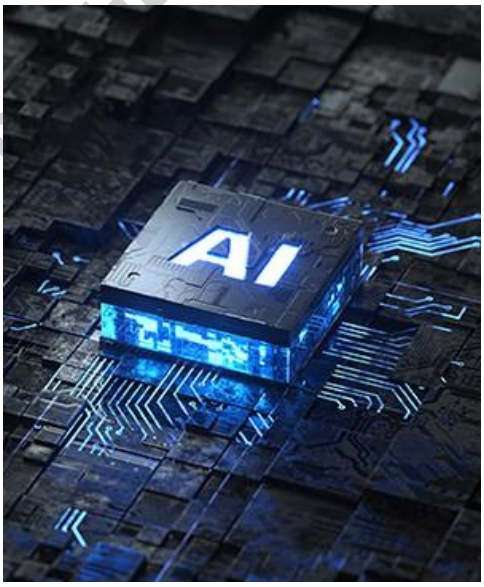

In 2023, a new AI foundation model was released every 2.4 days.

Let that sink in for a moment. While your leadership team was scheduling quarterly strategy reviews, the fundamental building blocks of artificial intelligence were evolving faster than most companies could update their software.

I've been watching companies get steamrolled by their own planning processes for twenty years, but 2024 was different. That relentless pace—**149 foundation models in a single year**—created something I'd never seen before: six-month strategies becoming obsolete before the ink dried.

Case in point: A Fortune 500 client (I can't name them, but let's just say they make things that go beep in hospitals) called me in January with what they thought was a sophisticated AI strategy—six months in development. Beautiful presentation—probably cost them $200K in consulting fees alone.

The problem? By the time they finished planning, the AI landscape had fundamentally shifted. Their masterpiece was built on assumptions about capabilities that were already two generations behind. I had the uncomfortable job of telling the CEO that their "cutting-edge" strategy was based on AI models that were basically ancient history.

Here's what that breakneck release schedule means: planning cycles designed for predictable change are colliding with exponential innovation. While committees debate governance frameworks, **the computational power needed to create these models has been doubling every six months**. We're talking about capabilities that would have seemed like science fiction becoming commercially available before most companies can evaluate them.

The bottleneck isn't technology anymore. It's organizational speed. And honestly? Most executives still don't understand what they're up against.

This reminds me of Almon Strowger, the undertaker who got tired of being screwed over by biased telephone operators in 1891. Instead of filing complaints or forming committees (sound familiar?), he built an automatic switching system from a collar box and straight pins in his workshop. Crude? Absolutely. Effective? It launched the entire modern phone network.

Strowger understood something most executives miss: speed beats perfection. His janky prototype proved you can compress learning cycles from months to minutes if you're willing to act.

We're in another Strowger moment. Except this time, the acceleration is so intense that AI benchmarks designed to measure progress are becoming "saturated". Systems are scoring so high that they render the tests useless. The question isn't whether your industry will be transformed. It's whether you'll be leading the transformation or reading about it in case studies.

What This Velocity Actually Means

Let me translate that lightning-fast model release pace into business reality—and I'll be honest, some of this still surprises me.

Every time a new foundation model drops, it potentially rewrites what's possible in your organization. Last month, I watched a marketing director at a mid-size SaaS company transform her entire content operation by telling Claude: "Analyze these competitor campaigns and draft our Q4 strategy with messaging framework, channel mix, and budget allocation."

Thirty minutes later, she had what used to take her team weeks to produce. I'm still not entirely sure how the AI parsed all that competitive intelligence so quickly, but the output was solid. That's category-shifting acceleration happening in real-time.

The deeper transformation is that these models understand and generate structured business logic, not just marketing copy. I've seen product managers say, "Build me a customer churn prediction model that integrates with Salesforce," and get working code in response. No development team is required. Now, I'm not a coder—never
was, probably never will be—but watching that happen was genuinely unsettling. In a good way, I think.

English is becoming the new programming language. When breakthrough capabilities arrive almost weekly, organizations that can articulate their needs clearly and iterate quickly will leave everyone else behind. **Google's Gemini Ultra cost $192 million just to train**—and that model is already being superseded. But here's the twist that keeps me up at night: 92 percent of companies plan to increase AI investments, yet only 1 percent consider themselves mature in deployment. Everyone knows they need to move, but almost nobody knows how to do it at the pace the technology demands.

The Next Decade (Where This Really Gets Interesting)

That relentless innovation pace is just the warm-up act. The real disruption comes when these individual models start working together—though I'll admit, predicting exactly how this plays out gets murky fast. Two years out, every business application will have AI embedded natively. **Deloitte predicts that in 2025, over 30 percent of smartphones will ship with generative AI capabilities**, though Apple's well-documented challenges with their iPhone AI deployment might bring that number down. When Cupertino struggles to keep pace, you know the transformation is moving faster than even the tech giants anticipated.

Five years out, we're looking at autonomous business agents—specialized systems that plan and execute complex workflows independently. Microsoft predicts that by next year, "you'll have a team of agents working for you." Think of capacity planning agents that monitor infrastructure, detect bottlenecks, run optimization models, coordinate budget approvals, and generate procurement documents automatically.

Let me step back here. I realize I'm making this sound inevitable, but there are real challenges nobody talks about. Data integration is still a nightmare for most companies. I've seen AI implementations fail spectacularly because nobody could get clean data feeds. Technology is advancing faster than most IT departments can adapt.

Ten years out is where I get genuinely excited, though I'm probably wrong about half the details. **IBM committed to fault-tolerant quantum computers by 2029. NTT DOCOMO just demonstrated quantum optimization, cutting network analysis from 27 hours to 40 seconds while improving performance 15 percent.**

Here's where things get genuinely wild: this quantum-AI marriage might be the catalyst that finally brings us Artificial General Intelligence. Quantum computers can calculate every possible permutation of a scenario simultaneously, while AI provides the reasoning framework to interpret, prioritize, and act on those calculations. We're talking about systems that don't just optimize within known parameters but can explore every conceivable solution space and reason through implications in real- time.

That's not just automation—that's approaching superintelligence. A system that can consider every possible outcome, understand consequences, and make optimal decisions faster than human cognition can process the problem. When that happens, we're talking about a fundamental shift in what's possible.

You'll be able to say, "Optimize our entire supply chain for Black Friday demand while hedging against geopolitical risk and commodity volatility," and get a complete strategic plan—with supplier negotiations, logistics coordination, and financial hedging—before your coffee gets cold. Or maybe I'm completely wrong and we hit some unforeseen wall. Kidding!

The Real Competitive Edge

When breakthrough capabilities arrive weekly, competitive advantage shifts from having the best technology to having the fastest learning speed. This is where most companies are screwing up.

Your operations analyst can become an automation specialist tomorrow if she can articulate business logic clearly. Your customer success manager can build predictive models if they understand what patterns matter. The barrier to entry isn't coding knowledge—it's business insight combined with speed to act.

Here's what I've learned from watching dozens of implementations: it's not just about individual capability. It's about organizational reflexes.

How to Actually Win

Strowger didn't try to reinvent telecommunications. He solved one specific problem with whatever materials he had available. That's your playbook in a world where capabilities evolve faster than most companies can deploy them.

Pick something measurable and annoying that happens regularly. Document processing, maybe, or routine analysis that takes hours but shouldn't. Establish baseline metrics, then test AI solutions in parallel with your existing process.

When ChatGPT or Claude cuts your processing time by 40 percent while reducing errors, you've got proof. Scale gradually. Kill what doesn't work quickly—and trust me, some won't work. The key is treating every model upgrade as free horsepower, and in a world of constant breakthroughs, those upgrades are coming whether you're ready or not.

I've watched too many companies get paralyzed by AI governance frameworks, while competitors ship solutions. Perfect is the enemy of progress when progress happens faster than your planning cycles. Start small, measure everything, iterate fast.

Here's my pet peeve: executives who want to "pilot" AI for six months before making real decisions. By the time your pilot is done, the AI landscape will have shifted three times over.

The Culture Shift

The companies winning this transition aren't the ones with the biggest AI budgets. They're organizations where people see each breakthrough as an opportunity rather than a threat.

In 2025, experts already predict a significant shift from individual AI models to systems where multiple AI agents work together—specialized teams tackling complex problems. You need internal AI literacy programs, but more importantly, you need cultural permission to experiment at the pace of innovation. Make it safe to try things and fail fast. Reward smart experiments over perfect plans.

I worked with a financial services firm last year where the culture shift was the hardest part. The technology worked fine, but people were terrified they'd be replaced. It took months of honest conversations about job evolution—not replacement—before productivity improved.

When learning speed becomes your core competency, everything else becomes manageable—even a world where rules change faster than quarterly board meetings.

The Bottom Line

In a world where breakthrough AI capabilities emerge faster than most companies can evaluate them, decision cycles that take quarters are not just inefficient, they're obsolete.

The organizations that dominate the next decade will master this fundamental shift: from competing on what they know to competing on how fast they learn and adapt to capabilities that didn't exist last week.

Some companies are already winning this race. Others are still forming committees to discuss AI strategy while 150+ new models ship around them each year.

The learning gap is widening with every breakthrough. The longer you wait, the harder it becomes to catch up. Time to move.