

[Open in app](#)

★ Member-only story

The best strategies for an AI business

Help companies implement AI. And make very good money doing it.

8 min read · Just now



Gunnar Östberg

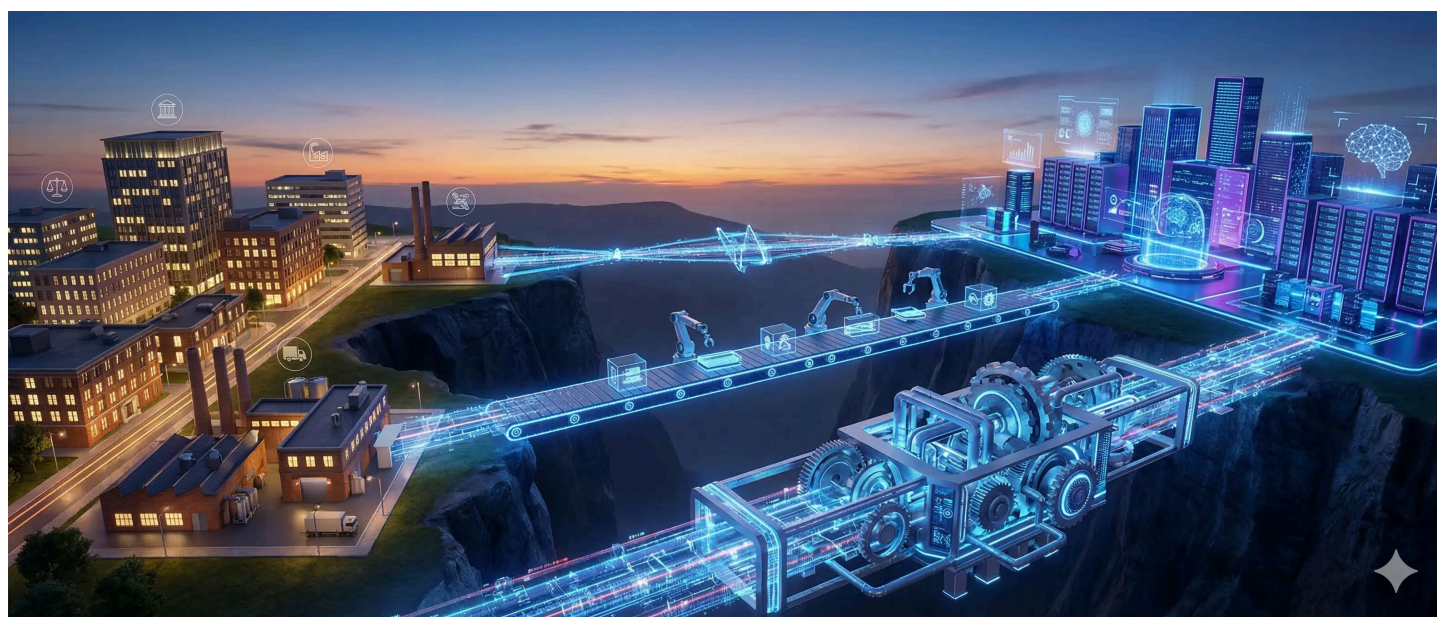


Listen



Share

... More



Profiting from implementing AI. Image generated by using Gemini.

If you're well-versed in AI developments and have a knack for business, you can build a successful AI business without being one of the world's top AI experts.

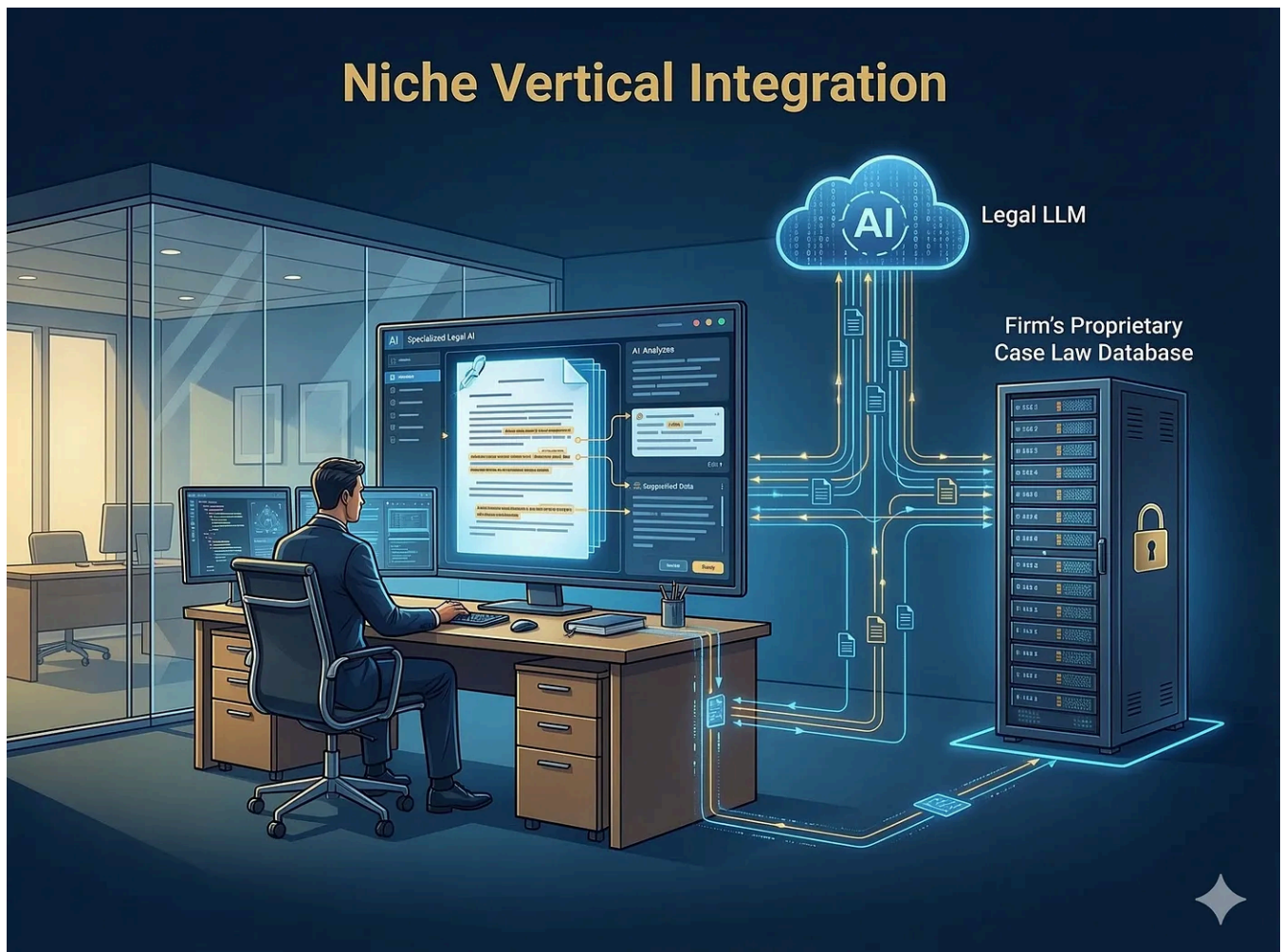
Most people in society don't use AI. Not even most companies. Barely at all, or at least not effectively. And today's AI is very powerful, so there's a huge gap to profit from.

Right now, in 2026, the situation is somewhat similar to the web in 1998. People understand that the technology is powerful, but don't quite know how to make it work effectively for themselves and their businesses.

If you want to help with AI implementation and accelerate the pace, while also making a lot of money from the gap between the front line and reality, what's the best way to do it?

The three most promising strategies

To profit from the gap between cutting-edge technology and practical business use, three strategies stand out.



1. Niche vertical integration

Many companies do not purchase general-purpose AI tools because they require too much customization. By building or packaging solutions for industries such as legal, manufacturing, or logistics, you address a particular business problem. Pricing can

then be based on the value created for the customer rather than on the licensing cost of the underlying technology. The narrower the niche, the less competition and the higher the margins. You need expertise in that niche.

Identify high-friction, high-value processes

Success requires avoiding general problems (such as “writing emails”) and instead focusing on processes with high cognitive load but low strategic variability.

Niche verticalization involves developing AI solutions that are deeply tailored to a specific industry or professional role. Instead of offering a broad, general-purpose service, it solves a narrow but critical problem that general, horizontal AI models (such as GPT-4 or Claude) often fall short on. A vertical solution is deeply integrated into a unique business process and solves “the last mile” for a specific industry.

Here are the key success factors for niche verticalization:

Choice of niche, micro-verticals

To minimize competition from large platforms, the focus should be on micro-verticals, that is, specific subcategories within an industry. This could involve AI support for architects in building permit applications, automated review of customs documents for logistics companies, or analysis of technical specifications in the manufacturing industry. The higher the requirements for precision and industry-specific terminology, the stronger the business case.

Creating a data moat

A vertical solution derives much of its strength from using non-public data that general-purpose models do not have access to.

Proprietary data. By building systems that can securely handle and learn from a company’s internal documentation, historical decisions, and policies, value is created that a general-purpose AI cannot replicate.

RAG, Retrieval-Augmented Generation. This technology connects the AI model to niche-specific databases in real time, reducing the risk of hallucinations and increasing response accuracy.

Seamless integration into the workflow

One of the biggest barriers to AI adoption is that the technology exists outside the systems where the work is actually performed.

Embedded AI. Successful vertical solutions reside within existing CRM, ERP, or project management tools. The user shouldn't have to "go to an AI". Instead, the AI should present insights directly within the daily interface.

Automation of the last mile. This involves moving from simply generating text to actually performing an action, such as sending a finished document for signing or updating a status in a business system.

Value-based business model

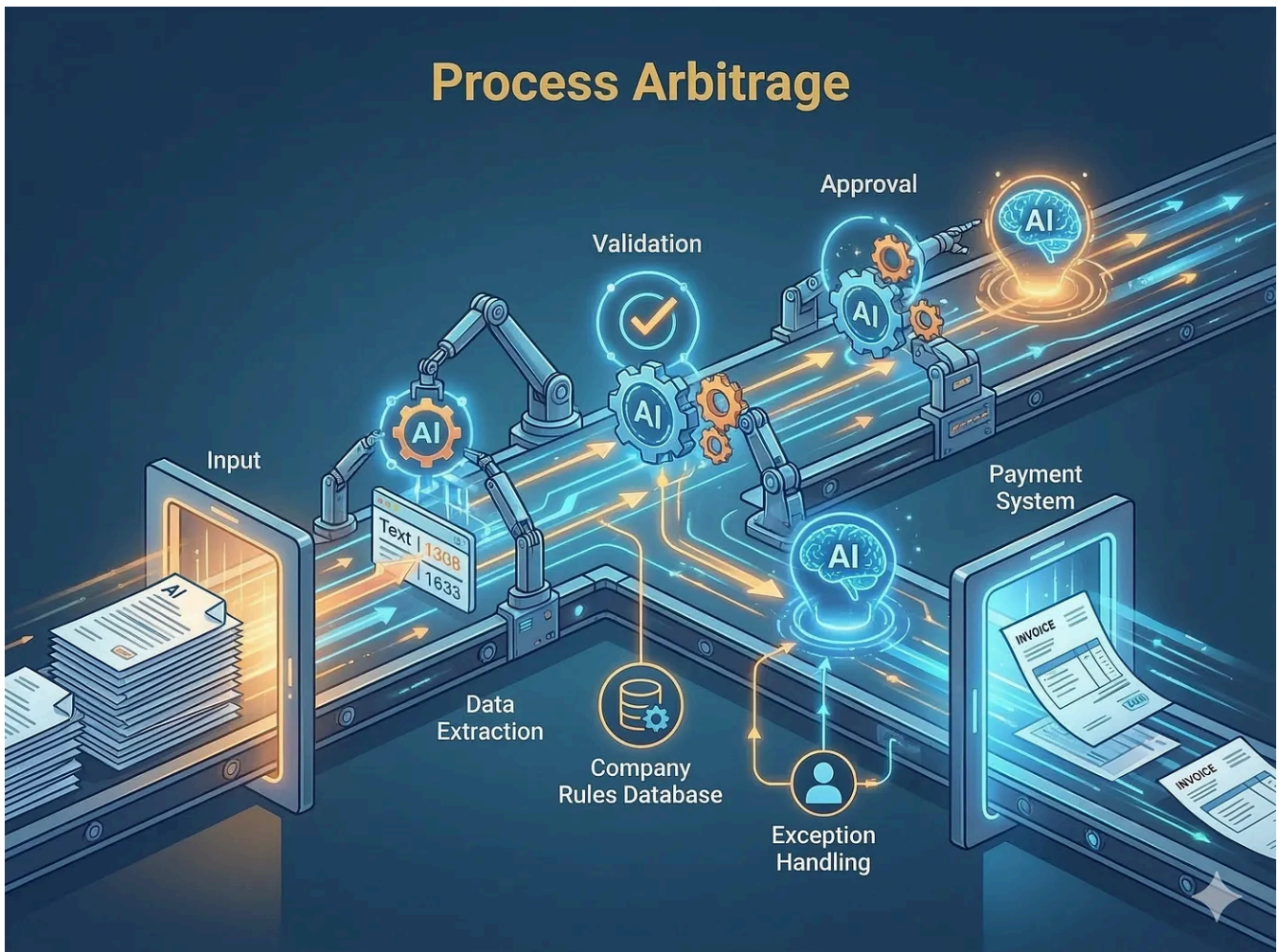
In a niche environment, it is often more profitable to move away from traditional per-user pricing and instead focus on delivered results.

Outcome-as-a-Service. Pricing is based on the number of hours saved, reduced error rates, or completed transactions. This makes the investment easier to justify to management because ROI (Return on Investment) becomes directly measurable.

Reduced churn. A solution deeply integrated with a company's unique processes and data is significantly harder to replace than a general-purpose chat tool.

Regulatory compliance and security as a product advantage

In many niches, such as law, medicine, or the public sector, legal requirements are the biggest barrier to AI. By building a solution that addresses local legislation, data sovereignty, and security standards, such as GDPR or industry-specific certifications, from the ground up, security itself becomes one of the primary selling points.



2. Process arbitrage

Process arbitrage involves taking over an entire business process, Business Process Outsourcing, that is traditionally labor-intensive. By using autonomous agent flows and AI automation, the work can be performed at a fraction of the cost of human labor. The customer is billed a price just below their current cost, but the difference resulting from the efficiency gains is retained.

A business model for process arbitrage in AI is based on decoupling revenue from personnel costs by automating entire workflows rather than simply providing tools.

Identify high-volume, rule-based processes

The focus should be on high-volume, rule-based tasks or flows that currently require human intervention but do not require physical presence.

Examples include:

- **First-line customer support and complaint handling.** Customer service chatbots and analysis and management of support emails: automatically categorize, prioritize, and respond to inquiries.

- **Day-to-day bookkeeping and invoice approval.**
- **Reviewing contracts** against standard templates.
- **Market analysis.** Identify trends and customer behavior.
- **Competitive analysis.** Monitor competitors' prices, product ranges, and communications.
- **Forecasting and planning.** Demand, inventory, and resource planning.
- **Qualifying sales leads** via email and LinkedIn.
- **Content production.** Generate and tailor texts and campaigns to target audiences.
- **SEO.** Keyword research and content optimization.
- **Dubbing and voice-over.** AI voices and translation of film and video.
- **Document management.** Summarize, extract, and sort information from contracts and reports.
- **Internal knowledge search.** Let employees ask the company's own systems questions about documents and information.
- **Recruitment and HR.** Screen resumes, match candidates, and automate onboarding.

Agent-driven flows

Instead of having a person use AI, you build agentic systems of autonomous agents that work together. One agent ingests data, another performs the analysis, a third checks the results against legal requirements or internal rules, and a fourth executes the action in the customer's business system, via API or RPA. Human intervention occurs only in the event of deviations, human in the loop.

Implementation, scaling, and pricing

By acting as an external service provider, BPO, Business Process Outsourcing, rather than a software vendor, you avoid the customer's internal IT priorities and lengthy software sales cycles. You're selling a ready-made solution to a problem, not a tool they have to learn how to use themselves. The key to high profitability is to avoid hourly rates or licensing fees. Pricing should be based on the value delivered or on a per-transaction basis.

The economic leverage in AI-based BPO can be very high in three areas:

- **Personnel costs.** Replace highly specialized case workers with only a minimal monitoring function.
- **Processing time,** from days or weeks to minutes.
- **Scalability,** from new hiring requirements to computing power only.



3. Bridge architecture and integration

The biggest hurdle for established companies is often their existing data and legal requirements. Acting as an intermediary to build the infrastructure needed to securely connect a company's data to modern language models is a highly lucrative consulting and services role. It is less about building new models and more about creating the infrastructure that enables the technology to work within an existing IT environment.

As of now, the greatest economic leverage lies in shifting the focus from chat-based interfaces to autonomous agents that perform actual tasks without human

intervention.

Bridge architecture and integration focus on creating the connective tissue between state-of-the-art AI models and a company's existing infrastructure. This is often the most significant barrier for large organizations and, consequently, a high-margin opportunity for those who can execute it.

To succeed in this area, the following technical and strategic pillars are essential:

Legacy-to-AI interoperability

Most established companies operate on systems of record, ERP, CRM, or proprietary databases that were never designed to handle unstructured data interactions.

The bridge task. Building robust API layers or middleware that can extract data from legacy environments, normalize it, and feed it into an AI context window or a vector database.

The value. You are not selling a new system but making their multi-million-dollar existing investments more intelligent.

Privacy and anonymization layers

Security is the primary reason enterprises hesitate to adopt modern AI tools. Success in bridge architecture requires a security-first gateway.

PII masking. Implementing automated layers that detect and redact Personally Identifiable Information (PII) before data leaves the corporate firewall for a third-party LLM provider.

Data sovereignty. Designing architectures that allow for local RAG, Retrieval-Augmented Generation, where sensitive data stays on-premise or in a private cloud, while only anonymized queries are sent to the model.

Agentic orchestration and tool use

Moving beyond simple chat requires using tools or function calls. The bridge must act as the orchestrator that allows the AI to perform actions, not just generate text.

Action gateways. Creating a controlled environment where an AI agent can trigger specific business logic, such as updating a shipping status or generating an invoice, via predefined and audited API endpoints.

State management. Ensuring the bridge maintains the state of a business process across multiple interactions, preventing the AI from losing track of the workflow.

Custom RAG pipelines

A generic RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) implementation is rarely sufficient for complex enterprise needs.

Semantic search vs. keyword search. Integrating hybrid search architectures that combine traditional database queries with semantic vector search.

Contextual chunking. Developing specialized logic for how a company's unique documents, manuals, contracts, and logs are broken down and indexed, ensuring the AI retrieves the most relevant information without noise.

Monitoring and observability

Enterprises require audit trails for every AI-driven decision.

Evaluation frameworks. Building automated testing pipelines that measure the accuracy and safety of the AI's outputs in real time.

Cost management. Implementing token governance to monitor and optimize API spend across different departments, preventing unexpected costs as usage scales.

Strategic monetization

The bridge is often sold as a combination of high-value architectural consulting, initial setup, followed by a recurring maintenance or platform fee, keeping the bridge operational as models and legacy systems evolve. This model is highly defensible because, once integration is deep, the client's switching costs are exceptionally high.

Conclusion

Of the three, the best choice depends mainly on what you are good at.

If you know a specific industry deeply, niche vertical integration may be the strongest path. If you are stronger in operational redesign and execution, process arbitrage may offer the highest margins. And if you understand enterprise systems, data, security, and integration, bridge architecture may be the most realistic entry point.

In all three cases, the underlying opportunity is the same. AI capability has moved far ahead of ordinary business reality. As long as that gap remains large, there will be money in helping companies cross it.

AI Agent

Agentic Ai

Entrepreneurship

Business Strategy

Small Business



Edit profile

Written by Gunnar Östberg

199 followers · 144 following

CEO Business Clarity. I write enjoyable, rewarding articles that retain their value. Please check my profile to see the various story topics!

No responses yet



Gunnar Östberg

What are your thoughts?

More from Gunnar Östberg