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Gartner: only 13% of CIOs see significant value from AI. Finance should help set the stopping rules

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A Gartner survey of 2,002 CIOs, released on 19 October 2026, finds that only 13% say their enterprise has realised significant or transformational value from AI. Only 17% have rules for stopping low-value AI projects already in production. Finance teams can help close that gap.

Global reference

- Source: Gartner, 2027 CIO and Technology Executive Agenda survey
- Sample: 2,002 CIOs and technology executives
- Fieldwork: May to July 2026
- Key date: Released 19 October 2026

The numbers

- 13% have realised significant or transformational value from AI so far.
- One in five: Gartner's estimate of the chance that an AI use case succeeds.
- 31% have guidelines for when a pilot should not move to production. These firms are 2.3 times more likely to be leaders.
- 17% have guidelines for abandoning low-value AI already in production. These firms are 2.6 times more likely to be leaders.
- 58% report more pressure to deliver cost improvement from AI; 51% expect AI to raise total cost of ownership.
- 4% plan to redesign roles for a workforce of people and agents.

Why it matters for finance

- Gartner: "AI costs are probabilistic and determined at run time." A fixed annual budget does not capture that.
- Approving the purchase is not enough. Costs need governing across the whole life of each AI project.
- Gartner says CIOs need business partners who are ready to walk away from low-value investments.

What to do now

- Set stop criteria at the pilot gate and again after go-live, agreed before the project starts.
- Track run-time AI cost per use case each month, not only licence cost.
- Measure one business outcome per use case, such as hours saved or errors avoided, against a baseline.
- Review every AI project in production once a year, and close the ones that miss their targets.

Our take

This is a survey of CIOs, not CFOs, and Gartner sells advice on the topic. But the message suits finance. Value from AI comes from choosing well and stopping early, and that is a finance discipline.

Sources

- Gartner: Gartner Survey Finds Only 13% of CIOs Say Their Enterprise Has Realized Significant or Transformational Value from AI (19 October 2026)

Important. This summary is for general information and is not technology, investment or financial advice. It is based on public Gartner information and may be incomplete or out of date. The official publications prevail; check the official source before acting.

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