

# the big picture

## LEVERAGING AI TO TRANSFORM SPEND ANALYTICS



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## DRIVING INSIGHT AND ACTIONS

Data leads to information which, in turn, becomes insight that can inform the actions leaders should take. But following this path is much easier said than done.

A recent survey found 71% of chief data officers spend more than one-quarter of their time preparing data for reporting and decision-making. Some 78% want to leverage proprietary data to differentiate their organisation, but they face issues – only 26% are confident they can use unstructured data in a way that delivers business value.

Data leaders believe that AI is the answer. For procurement professionals inundated with data, can AI help transform this information in a way that drives both insights and actions? 📌

📌 **SOURCE** 📖  
Data Integrity Trends and Insights report, IBM, 2025



# 4%

The proportion of decisions made by the average procurement function using data and analytics

Source: Gartner

## MOVING BEYOND AD-HOC ANALYTICS

Considering the amount of investment in tech, data platforms and people, analytics are not yet translating into consistent and repeatable business outcomes.

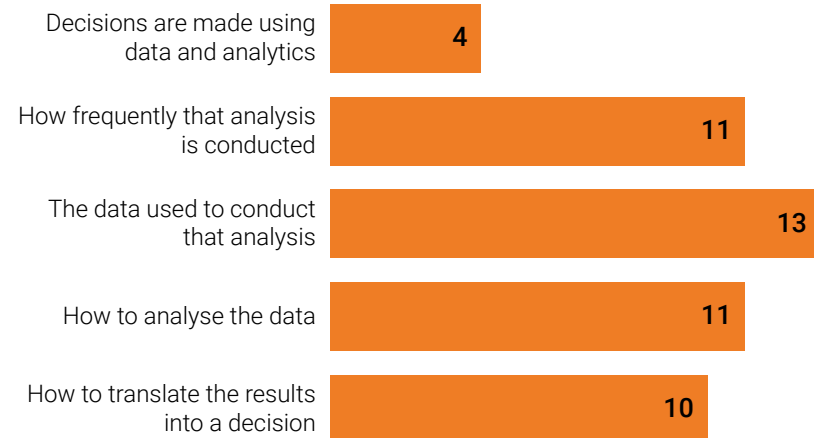
Procurement teams are inconsistent in deciding what information they rely on to make decisions (see *Figure 1, right*). Very few have a defined cadence on using analytics: how and when and using what data? How do buyers translate findings into actions and outcomes?

The use of analytics is ad-hoc; often based on adoption by individuals rather than across the function. Dashboards provide information, but that requires further translation. ●

### ● SOURCE

Source: Procurement Data and Analytics Survey, Gartner, 2024

**FIG 1:** EXTENT TO WHICH PROCUREMENT TEAMS ARE CONSISTENT IN THEIR USE OF ANALYTICS (% OF RESPONDENTS)



**“Procurement needs to make analytics a part of the workflow and embedded in business operations. So, how can agentic AI make it actionable?”**

Alex Zhong, senior director, global head of product marketing, GEP

**“I think that dashboards today are already kind of dead... we are so reactive and there’s so much noise in our data... I think natural language queries will be the norm in the future”**

Digital procurement lead, technology company

# 57%

The percentage of procurement professionals that says integration difficulties are a barrier to data quality

*Source: Delivering data to drive AI-powered procurement, Procurement Leaders, 2025*

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO DELIVERING AUTONOMOUS ANALYTICS

The multiple barriers to driving AI in the analytics space (see *Figure 2, right*) are analogous to the issues faced in leveraging other types of technology: from lack of quality (or 'clean') data, as well as integration issues, through to sponsorship and change management.

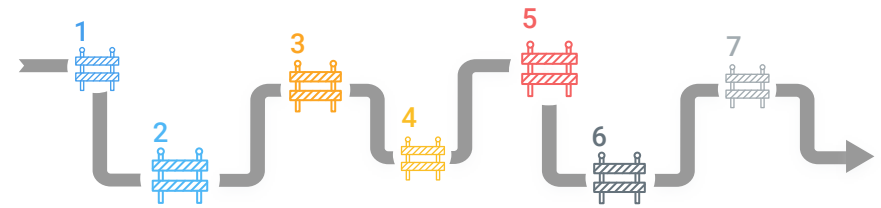
But the different ways in which procurement organisations can improve their spend analytics are also multiple. Moving from small data to big data will help identify spending patterns. Predictive analytics will spot problems such as commodity prices spikes before they hit your budget. Automation will replace manual refresh cycles, spreadsheet cleanups and pipelines.

Then, agentic AI will not only be able to analyse and recommend actions – it will take them. For example, seeing that freight costs are above budget; analysing the cost drivers and undertaking basic sourcing. Finally, multiple AI agents will work together like a 'procurement taskforce'; one updating cost forecasts; the next benchmarking internal and external rates; the third identifying sourcing options; and the fourth triggering a sourcing pipeline. ●

### ● SOURCE

*AI for Spend Analytics: Unlocking Smarter Forecasting, Budgeting, and Benchmarking, Procurement Leaders, GEP, 2025*

**FIG 2:** THE BARRIERS TO AUTONOMOUS ANALYTICS



1. Data quality and availability
2. Lack of domain knowledge and talent
3. Integration and legacy systems
4. Governance, risk and trust concerns
5. Technology limitations (current AI models)
6. Fragmented efforts and sponsorship
7. Cultural and change management issues

**“Analytics is not merely a tool; it must become an integral part of the business function – where insight converges with process and workflow”**

Alex Zhong, senior director, global head of product marketing, GEP

**“Once you have standardised data, the number of use cases and the speed at which you can move increases significantly”**

Procurement data lead,  
consumer goods company

# 42%

The share of value gained from workflow-embedded data and analytics – more than any other aspect of data and analytics

*Source: Procurement Data and Analytics Survey, Gartner, 2024*

## RETHINKING ROLES TO MAXIMISE THE ROI OF AGENTIC AI

To benefit from agentic AI, procurement must rethink how work is designed and managed. It's not just about using smarter tools, it's about reshaping decision-making and how value is delivered. Many organisations are beginning to explore this shift, but most still lack the foundational elements required to support agentic systems.

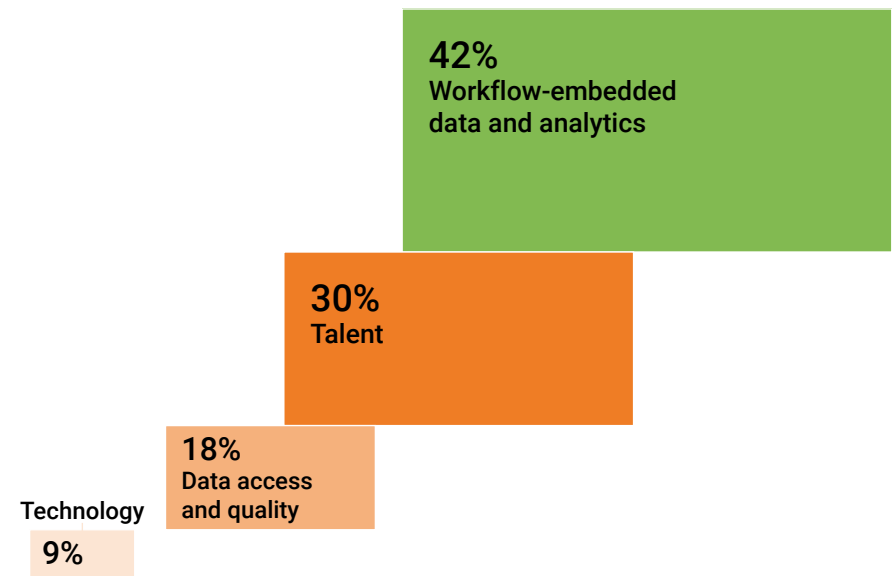
Agentic AI does not eliminate the need for humans: it shifts their role from doing the work to managing how it gets done. Procurement teams will need new skills to work with autonomous systems. These include reviewing AI-generated actions, setting escalation thresholds, and continuously aligning AI behaviour with business priorities and risk exposure. ●

### ● SOURCE

*Procurement Data and Analytics Survey, Gartner, 2024*

*From chaos to clarity: delivering data to drive AI-powered procurement, Procurement Leaders, 2025*

**FIG 3:** VALUE CAPTURED FROM DATA AND ANALYTICS



**“It is increasingly clear analytics cannot remain siloed; it must be embedded directly into operational workflows. Technology alone accounts for only a small share of the value – approximately 9%. The real impact comes from talent applying domain expertise and using analytics within workflows, where it can be fully embedded to drive meaningful outcomes”**

Alex Zhong, senior director, global head of product marketing, GEP

**“AI is bigger than the internet in terms of change for our profession. CPOs have an amazing opportunity to elevate their job, their function, and their people now”**

Ninian Wilson, group procurement director and CEO, Vodafone Procurement Company

## ACTIONS / OPERATIONALISING ANALYTICS FOR SUSTAINABLE VALUE

### FOCUS ON FEASIBLE USE CASES

Don't try and 'fix' everything. Find use cases with a clear ROI; build trust and progress to bigger projects.

### TRACK AND COMMUNICATE VALUE EARLY

It's important to tell stories. If value is invisible, then you lose the right to scale.

### TACKLING INTEGRATION AND DATA

Be honest about data readiness. If data is fragmented, you need to create an orchestration layer to seamlessly drive information back to AI agents.

### ADOPT A HUMAN-CENTRIC ROLLOUT TO EASE CONCERNS OVER AI

Don't aim for fully autonomous today. Instead, look to create some initial value; augment human capabilities and then look for ways to increase autonomy.

### DON'T AUTOMATE TASKS, REDESIGN PROCESSES

AI driven analytics is more than just a tool, it's something that needs to be in your daily workspace. The only way in which analytics becomes a habit is by delivering sustained value.

### GOVERNANCE AND GUARDRAILS

The cost of one bad decision can outweigh 10 good ones. Make sure decision thresholds are governed appropriately through escalation protocols and audit trails.

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## FURTHER RESOURCES

### FOR PROCUREMENT LEADERS MEMBERS

- Report: *AI-powered procurement: Decode, deploy, deliver*
- Report: *From chaos to clarity: delivering data to drive AI-powered procurement*
- Case study: Syngenta's agile approach to data helps unlock 37,000 hours in productivity benefits

### GEP RESOURCE

- Webinar: *AI for Spend Analytics: Unlocking Smarter Forecasting, Budgeting, and Benchmarking*

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