

AI ROI GUIDE

The AI Impact ROI Guide for Consulting Firms

.TrackImpact



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What ROI Means for Consulting Firms

Time saved is the leading indicator — but for consulting firms, the compounding value shows up in higher utilization without burning out staff, stronger realization on fixed-fee engagements, and the ability to shift junior time from deck assembly toward the analysis and judgment clients actually pay premium rates for.



Revenue & Capacity

AI-assisted research synthesis and first-draft deliverables are already helping firms take on more engagements and staff them leaner — freeing capacity to pursue new business during the exact weeks when analyst and consultant time is scarcest.

Profitability & Margin

Firms using AI for research, slide production, and proposal drafting report sharp reductions in non-billable prep time — directly improving realization on fixed-fee and staffing-heavy engagements.

Talent

By automating repetitive research and deck-building work, AI lets consultants and analysts spend more time on client-facing analysis and judgment calls — the parts of the job tied to retention in an industry with notoriously high junior attrition.

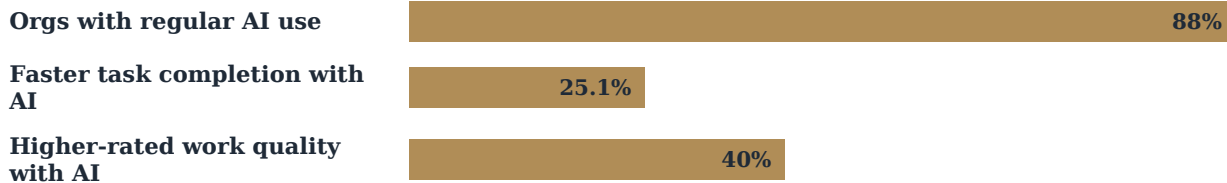
Why ROI for AI Adoption Matters Now



Consulting firms are navigating a familiar squeeze: clients pushing back on fees while expecting faster turnaround, utilization targets that keep junior staff buried in research and deck work, and a talent market where the best analysts have options if the job is all grunt work and no judgment.

AI adoption in professional services has moved well past the pilot phase. 88% of organizations now report regular AI use in at least one business function, according to McKinsey's 2025 State of AI survey.

Source: McKinsey, "The State of AI" Global Survey, 2025



In a controlled study run with researchers from Harvard Business School, MIT, and Wharton, consultants using AI on a real client-style business task were 12.2% more productive, completed the task 25.1% faster, and produced work rated 40% higher quality than consultants working without it.

Source: Dell'Acqua et al., "Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier," Harvard Business School / BCG / MIT / Wharton, 2023

At the firm level, BCG rolled out ChatGPT Enterprise firm-wide in October 2023; consultants have since built more than 18,000 custom GPT agents to automate research, slide

production, and reporting, and BCG estimates 70% of the hours saved are reinvested into higher-value client work.

Source: *Forbes* (Bernard Marr), "How BCG Is Revolutionizing Consulting With AI: A Case Study," July 2024

Where AI Actually Delivers

✓ Efficiency	✓ Accuracy	✓ Time Back
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Where It Still Needs a Human

✗ Relationships	✗ Human Judgment
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Proven ROI Levers for Consulting Firms

Core levers consulting firms are using today to connect AI adoption to measurable business outcomes — ordered by priority and grounded in publicly reported, sourced examples from across the industry.

Business Outcome	Example Lever	Real-World Example
Revenue Won / Retained	Faster proposal & scoping turnaround	BCG estimates 70% of hours saved through Deckster and other internal AI agents are reinvested into higher-value client work rather than banked as slack.
Utilization Improvement	Faster research synthesis	McKinsey's internal AI platform Lilli reclaims roughly 30% of the time consultants spend gathering and synthesizing research.
Quality & Speed of Deliverables	AI-assisted first-draft work	In the Harvard/BCG/MIT/Wharton study, consultants using AI completed a real business task 25.1% faster and produced 40% higher-quality output.
Margin Improvement	Deck & analysis production time	BCG consultants have built more than 18,000 custom GPT agents since 2023 to automate research, slide production, and internal reporting.
Talent Recruitment & Retention	Time shifted from grunt work to judgment work	Consultants using AI were 12.2% more productive on a standardized business task in the same Harvard/BCG/MIT/Wharton study.
Firm-Wide Adoption	Platform rollout depth	72–75% of McKinsey's roughly 45,000 employees actively use the firm's internal AI tool, Lilli, on a regular basis.

TURNING INSPIRATION TO ADOPTION

Turning Inspiration to Adoption

Real ROI comes from moving beyond broad enthusiasm to focused execution. Firms seeing the strongest results narrow in on a set of high-impact workflows where AI materially changes how work gets delivered — not just makes individual tasks faster.

A client engagement is a clear example. From scoping through reporting, AI can reduce friction across the full lifecycle of a project — accelerating research, first-draft deliverables, and QA, and freeing consultants for the analysis and facilitation that actually differentiates a firm.



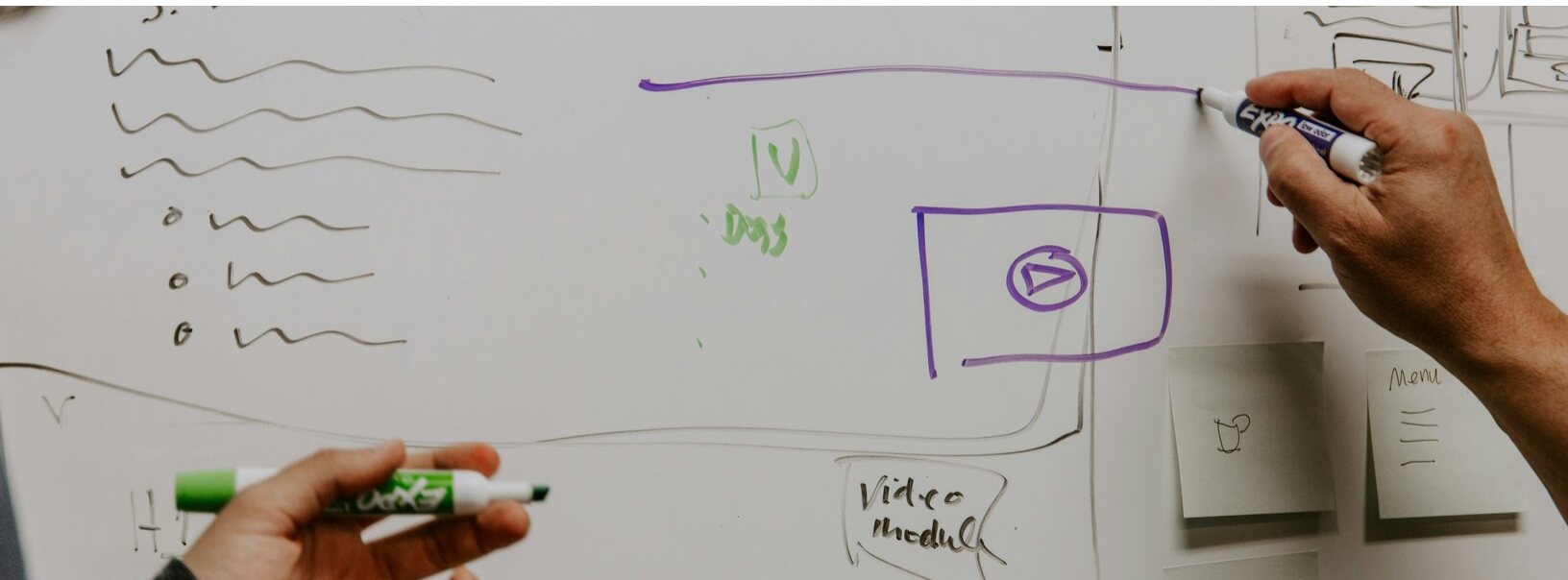
Managing a Client Engagement From Scoping to Reporting

#	Stage	How Firms Use AI	Process
1	Proposal & Scoping	AI-assisted scoping drafts	AI helps assemble first-draft proposals and scoping documents from past engagement templates and client inputs, replacing manual boilerplate assembly.
2	Research & Analysis	Automated research synthesis	Internal AI tools pull and synthesize research across a firm's knowledge base — McKinsey's Lilli reclaims roughly 30% of the time consultants spend on this stage.
3	Deliverable Drafting	AI-generated first-draft decks & analysis	Custom AI agents draft slides, summaries, and analysis frameworks from structured inputs — BCG consultants have built 18,000+ of these internal tools since 2023.
4	Client Workshops	Reclaimed time redirected to facilitation	Time saved earlier in the engagement is redirected into sharper workshop prep and facilitation — the consultative work clients are actually paying for.
5	Reporting & QA	AI-assisted quality review	AI flags inconsistencies and gaps in draft deliverables before senior review, catching issues earlier and reducing rework cycles.

Real-World Examples

Two publicly reported, independently sourced examples of AI adoption inside major consulting firms — included to show what realistic ROI looks like today, cited from their own reporting and independent research.

Reinvesting Hours Saved Into Higher-Value Work



Boston Consulting Group rolled out ChatGPT Enterprise to every employee in October 2023, then built internal tools — including an agent nicknamed Deckster — to automate research, slide production, and other repetitive workflows on top of it.

Key Outcomes

- Consultants have built more than 18,000 custom GPT agents since the firm-wide rollout
- BCG estimates 70% of the hours saved through Deckster and similar agents are reinvested into higher-value client work
- In a controlled study with Harvard, MIT, and Wharton researchers, consultants using AI on a real business task were 12.2% more productive and completed it 25.1% faster
- The same study found AI-assisted work was rated 40% higher quality than work produced without AI

Source: *Forbes* (Bernard Marr), "How BCG Is Revolutionizing Consulting With AI: A Case Study," July 2024; Dell'Acqua et al., "Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier," 2023

Reclaiming 30% of Research Time Firm-Wide



McKinsey & Company built Lilli, an internal generative AI platform, and rolled it out firm-wide starting in 2023 to help consultants search the firm's knowledge base, synthesize research, and draft first-pass analysis.

Key Outcomes

- 72–75% of McKinsey's roughly 45,000 employees actively use Lilli on a regular basis
- The tool reclaims an estimated 30% of the time consultants spend gathering and synthesizing research
- Adoption scaled from initial rollout to firm-wide daily use within about a year
- Reclaimed research time is redirected toward client-facing analysis and advisory work

Source: VentureBeat, "Consulting Giant McKinsey Unveils Its Own Generative AI Tool for Employees: Lilli"; CIO Dive, reporting on Lilli adoption growth through 2025

Time Saved → Business Value

A 6-person consulting team saves 20 hours/month per person using AI-assisted research and drafting workflows — a conservative slice of the ~30% research-time reclaim McKinsey reports firm-wide with Lilli.

Assuming a conservative 50% of that reclaimed time converts to billable client work, here's what that's worth against the cost of TrackImpact's own tracking layer.

Reallocated Hours

hrs/mo	20 hours saved per person, per month	× 6 people
	× 50% reallocated to billable work	
=	Total reallocated billable hours per month	60 hours

Billable Value

value	60 billable hours	× \$225 blended rate
=	Billable value created per month	\$13,500

Cost to Track & Prove It

cost	6 seats	× \$19/seat/month (TrackImpact Team)
=	TrackImpact cost per month	\$114

That's roughly a 118x return — not on the AI tools doing the work, but on the cost of proving what they're worth.

\$225/hr reflects a typical blended chargeable rate for a small-to-mid-size consulting team across analyst, consultant, and engagement-manager levels (\$150–\$350/hr range). This calculator separates two different costs: the AI tools generating the time savings and TrackImpact's own cost to track and prove that value.

TRACKIMPACT — TRACK & SCORE

Turn Everyday AI Use Into Evidence

Once a task is worth doing, TrackImpact is where it gets logged — the tool, the task, the time saved. Every entry is automatically scored for automation-readiness, and the highest-scoring tasks are flagged as candidates to become a standing loop: a process that runs on a trigger, takes a bounded action, and gets better from its own results.

Track, score, and step back — the whole loop, live today. That's how scattered AI usage becomes the evidence the next budget conversation runs on.

TOOL	TASK	TIME SAVED	SCORE
ChatGPT	Draft first-pass client email	15 min	82 — Loop candidate
Otter.ai	Transcribe client call	20 min	65
Excel Copilot	Reconcile month-end entries	35 min	40



↳ Recorded outcome feeds the next run

Get started → trackimpact.io

ROI Is a Change Management Process

AI doesn't create ROI on its own — proving it requires a structured approach to adoption, and a system for turning scattered usage into evidence leadership can act on.



Start With a Targeted Pilot

AI doesn't create ROI on its own — proving it requires more than picking a workflow and hoping. The strongest pilots follow three steps: **track** the real, granular tasks inside the workflow — not "deliverable drafting" but "draft this slide from this week's research notes"; **score** each logged task for automation-readiness — does it need a person's judgment, is it a good AI+human candidate, or could it run with minimal oversight; then **step back** and ask which high-scoring tasks could become a standing loop — something that runs on a trigger, takes a bounded action, and gets better from its own results — instead of a one-off AI-assisted task repeated by hand.

What Strong Pilots Include

#1

A logged, high-volume workflow

A repetitive task tracked at the task level — research synthesis, first-draft slide production, proposal drafting.

#2

A clear KPI to track against

Hours per deliverable, research turnaround time, or utilization rate.

#3

A defined pre-/post-benchmark

Measured before rollout begins, so the pilot has something real to compare against.

#4

A small, engaged group

A handful of staff across levels — not just the most tech-forward analyst.

TRACKIMPACT — SEARCH PROFILES

Not Sure Where to Start? Search Your Job Title.

TrackImpact's marketplace covers thousands of O*NET job titles, and every profile breaks the role down into its real, recurring tasks — not "use AI for marketing," but the actual activities someone in that seat does every week — each matched to a concrete AI approach and an automation-readiness read.

Instead of guessing which tasks are worth automating, search the job title and see the answers already mapped out.

SEARCH

"Senior Financial Analyst"

TASKS MAPPED

38 recurring tasks found

→ SAMPLE TASK MATCH

"Reconcile the variance report against last month, flag anything outside a 5% band."

HITL SCORE: MEDIUM — AI DRAFTS, YOU REVIEW

Search your job → www.trackimpact.io/search/

From Proven ROI to Firm-Wide Impact



AI is already helping consulting firms deliver real ROI — not just in hours saved, but in higher utilization without burnout, stronger realization on fixed-fee work, and a more sustainable path for junior staff who'd rather do analysis than assemble decks.

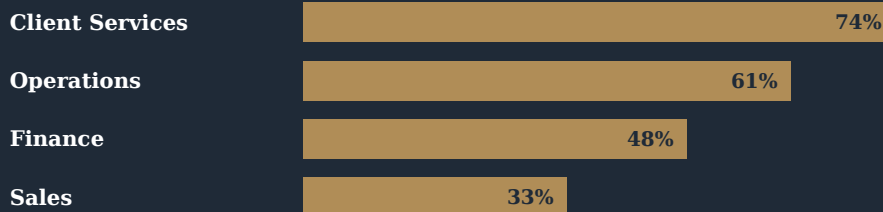
Outcomes will vary by practice mix and how deeply a firm integrates AI into its workflows. But the firms seeing the strongest returns are the ones treating adoption deliberately — tracking who's using what, for which tasks, and what it's worth — instead of guessing at review time.

TRACKIMPACT — TEAMS

See Impact Across the Whole Organization

Teams brings every individual's tracked and scored activity together at the organizational level — so leadership can see adoption and value by department, site, or role, and compare who's driving results.

It's the difference between a handful of enthusiastic early adopters and a rollout that can actually be managed and reported on.



See how it works → trackimpact.io

Start Scoping ROI for Your Firm

This section is the input TrackImpact uses to help you scope, track, and prove AI's impact on your firm — here's how the pieces fit together, and what to work out with your team before you roll anything out.

Questions to Answer Before You Scale

These are the questions that shape how your firm rolls out and tracks AI adoption — work through them with your team before committing to a rollout.

What are your top business priorities, and how might AI support them?

e.g. Protecting margin on fixed-fee engagements, winning more strategic (not just staffing) work

Which workflows do you want to focus on first? Why?

e.g. Research synthesis, first-draft deck production, proposal drafting

What would the impact of improvement look like?

e.g. Higher utilization and realization without added headcount

What pain points are slowing your team down today?

e.g. Deck-building time, research synthesis, utilization targets

Who else needs to be involved in evaluating this?

e.g. Managing partner, practice leads, talent/HR

What questions or objections are you anticipating?

e.g. "How is this different from what we already track?" "What about client confidentiality and data security with AI tools?"

Ready to Set Up TrackImpact for Your Firm?

Reach out and we'll get you started — mapping roles, setting up your team, sending onboarding invites to your staff, and walking through how the platform and reporting work.



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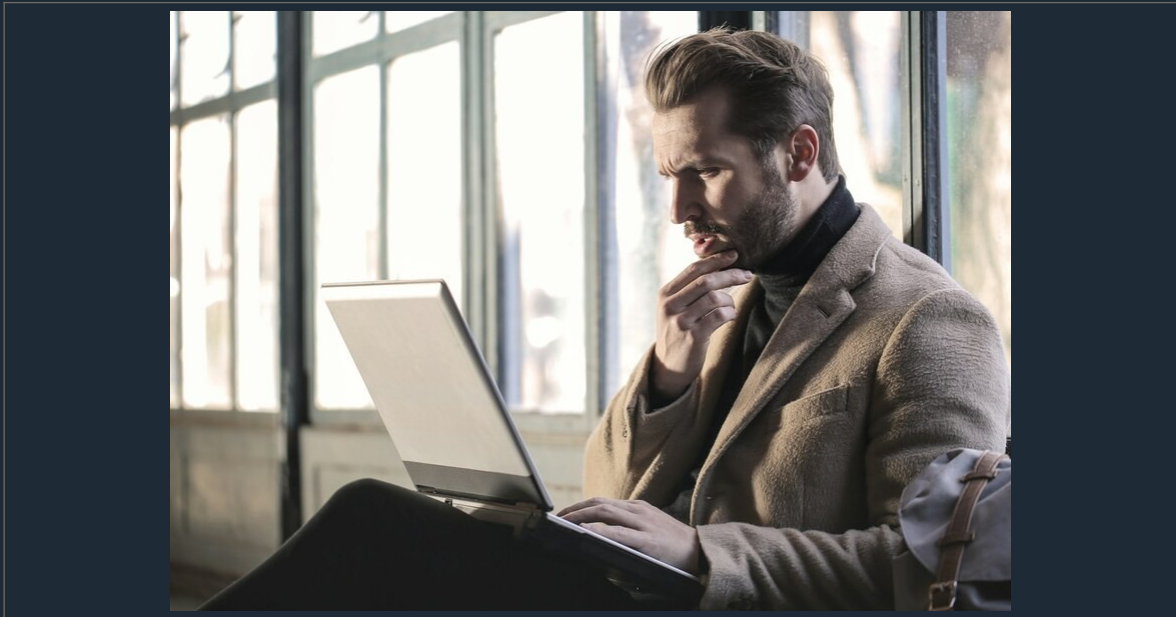
Web: trackimpact.io

READ NEXT

The AI Skills Guide

This guide made the case for AI at the organizational level. The AI Skills Guide takes it to the individual — the specific habits, prompts, and workflows that turn AI from a tool people dabble with into one they rely on daily.

A natural next step for any team lead rolling this out person by person.



Read the AI Skills Guide → www.trackimpact.io/guides/ai-skills-guide/

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- Team collaborating around a computer — Vitaly Gariev / Unsplash (img-consulting-why-roi.jpg)
- Team collaborating around a whiteboard during a meeting — Vitaly Gariev / Unsplash (img-consulting-workflow.jpg)
- Two people drawing on a whiteboard — Kaleidico / Unsplash (img-consulting-case1.jpg)
- Two colleagues reviewing documents together — Vitaly Gariev / Unsplash (img-consulting-case2.jpg)
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