ARKONIS INNOVATION
Artificial Intelligence Research Consultancies

WP-2026-007

WHITEPAPER · JULY 2026 · HOTEL AI READINESS

The 90-day hotel AI readiness assessment.

A practical assessment model for hotel leaders who want a clear AI roadmap before they fund pilots or vendor tools.

Raghavendra Datta Palleti
Founder & Principal Consultant

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

00

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ninety days is enough to diagnose readiness, score use cases, define controls, and design the first pilot.

A hotel cannot become fully AI-ready in 90 days. It can, however, learn whether it is ready to fund the first controlled AI workflow.

The useful 90-day output is a diagnostic: system and data map, governance gaps, ranked use cases, pilot economics, and an operating cadence for the first build.

This paper translates NIST, ISO, McKinsey, BCG, PwC Middle East, Deloitte, Amadeus, and hotel examples into a practical assessment model for owners and general managers.

91%

MIDDLE EAST HOSPITALITY LEADERS PILOTING OR USING AI, ACCORDING TO PWC

3%

ENTERPRISE-WIDE AI DEPLOYMENT IN THE SAME PWC RESEARCH

85%

CITING LEGACY-SYSTEM INTEGRATION BARRIERS IN PWC'S REPORT

4

NIST AI RMF FUNCTIONS: GOVERN, MAP, MEASURE, MANAGE

Sources are listed on the public insight page and in the references section.

01

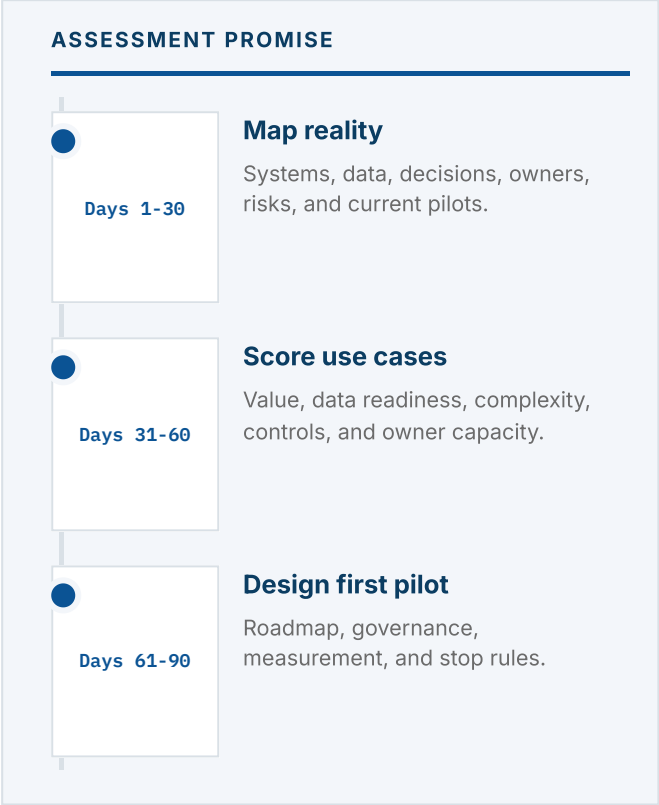
THESIS

Ninety days is enough to assess readiness, not to finish transformation.

The first promise must be honest. A hotel group cannot complete enterprise AI transformation in 90 days.

It can map systems, identify data gaps, score use cases, define controls, and decide which pilot deserves funding.

This is the right first move because it lowers risk before capital, vendor contracts, and team effort are committed.



02

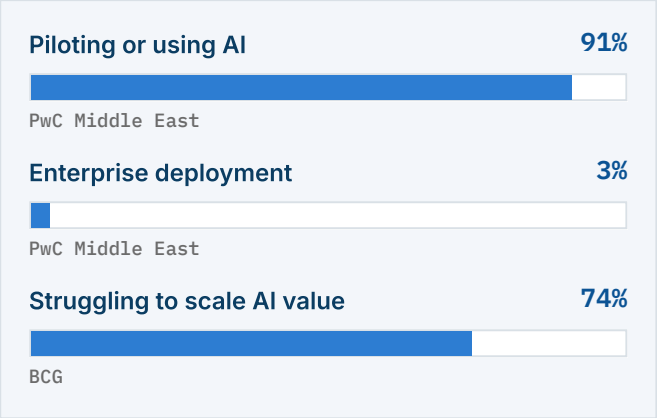
FINDING

The adoption gap is an operating gap.

PwC Middle East reports that 91 percent of regional tourism and hospitality leaders are piloting or using AI, while only 3 percent report enterprise-wide deployment.[1]

BCG reports that 74 percent of companies struggle to achieve and scale AI value.[2]

The pattern is clear: AI adoption is easier than AI operating value.



Sources: PwC Middle East; BCG AI Adoption in 2024.

03

FINDING

Readiness has four jobs: govern, map, measure, manage.

NIST's AI Risk Management Framework is a useful structure because it treats AI risk as a management system.[3]

Hotels can translate the four functions into practical leadership questions: who owns AI, what use case is mapped, how risk and value are measured, and how the workflow is managed after launch?

This keeps readiness grounded in operations, not slogans.

NIST TRANSLATED FOR HOTELS

01

Govern

Owners, policies, permissions, and review rights.

02

Map

Use cases, data, systems, users, and context.

03

Measure

Value, accuracy, risk, trust, and adoption.

04

Manage

Pilot plan, controls, monitoring, and stop rules.

04

FINDING

Start with use cases, then test the data.

Deloitte's AI data-readiness guidance is useful because it ties data quality to use cases, not abstract cleanliness.[4]

A hotel should test data against the decisions AI is meant to improve. Demand forecasting, guest recovery, staffing, and purchasing each need different data quality rules.

The assessment should reveal which use cases are ready, which need data work, and which should wait.

USE CASE	DATA NEEDED	READINESS SIGNAL
Demand forecast	PMS, channel, events, pace	Variance tracked and trusted
Guest recovery	Complaints, profile, stay value	Consent and service history clear
Staff planning	Arrivals, service levels, roster	Operational owners aligned
Purchasing alert	Occupancy, consumption, supplier	Baseline and exception rule exist

05

FINDING

Hospitality data risk is not theoretical.

Hotels hold guest identity, stay history, payment context, preferences, employee workflows, and vendor integrations.

The FTC's Marriott / Starwood order is a reminder that hospitality data issues can become regulatory and trust events.[5]

Readiness should therefore include retention, access, vendor handling, security ownership, and audit logging before automation expands.

RISK	READINESS QUESTION	OWNER
Guest data	Do we have purpose and consent boundaries?	Commercial and legal
Vendor access	Who can use which data and why?	IT and finance
Automation	What needs human review?	Operations
Security	How are incidents logged and escalated?	Executive sponsor

Source: FTC Marriott / Starwood order; NIST and ISO governance logic.

06

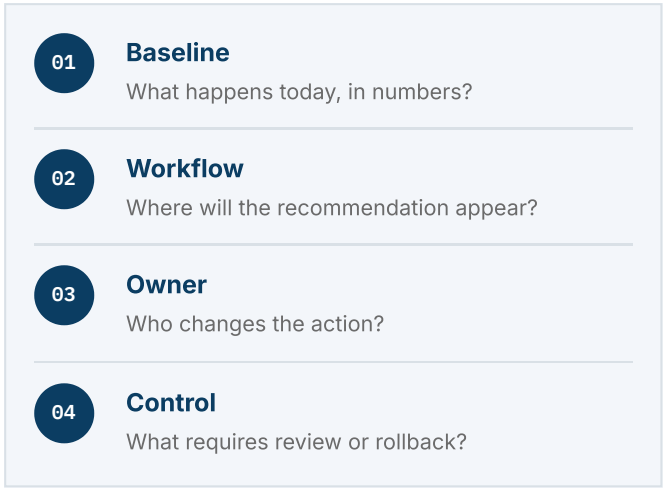
FINDING

The best first AI use case is not always guest-facing.

Many leaders look first for visible AI features. The better first pilot is often an internal workflow with a clear baseline and owner.

Accor's food-waste program is a useful example because it connects baseline measurement, hotel reporting, and workflow change before claiming AI value.[6]

A strong first pilot should have a measurable baseline, a narrow workflow, and a manager who can act on the output.



Example logic: Accor operational AI and readiness sequencing.

07

FINDING

Score use cases like investment decisions.

A readiness assessment should help leadership decide where to invest. That requires a scoring model.

Use cases should be compared across value, data readiness, workflow fit, risk, owner capacity, and time to prove.

This prevents AI funding from following the loudest idea or the most persuasive vendor demo.

CRITERION	HIGH SCORE	LOW SCORE
Value	Revenue, cost, risk, or time impact is clear	Benefit is vague
Data	Trusted source and quality rules exist	Data is disputed
Workflow	The output changes a named action	No operating home
Risk	Controls and review are defined	Guest or staff impact unclear

08

FINDING

The assessment must include people and cadence.

McKinsey and BCG both point away from tool-only AI adoption. High performers have senior ownership, workflow redesign, and management practices around adoption.[7]

For hotels, the same point becomes practical: one executive sponsor, one use-case owner, one review forum, and one adoption measure.

AI readiness without cadence becomes a slide deck.

OWNERSHIP LOOP

01 **Sponsor**
Sets priority and removes blockers.

02 **Owner**
Runs the workflow and accepts the result.

03 **Team**
Uses the output in daily work.

04 **Forum**
Reviews value, risk, and adoption.

09

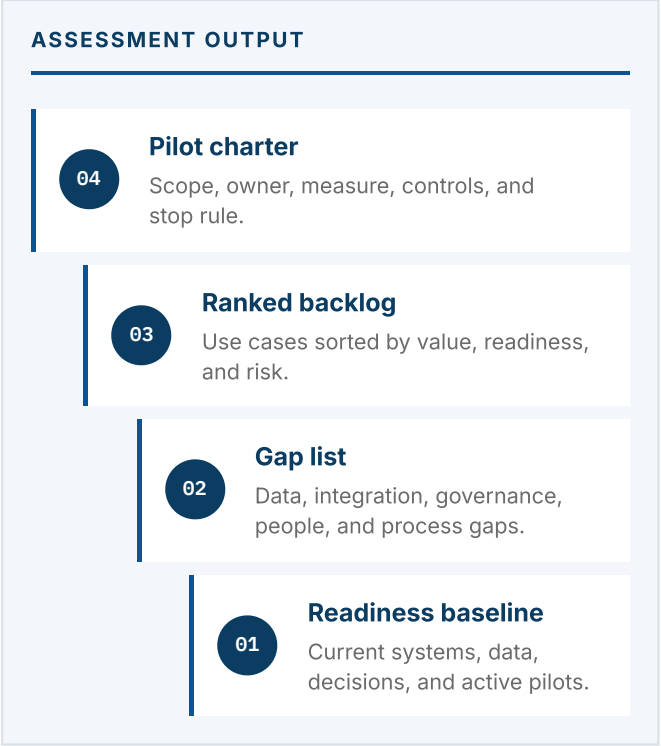
FINDING

The 90-day output is a roadmap leaders can fund.

The end product should be specific enough for a board, owner, or general manager to approve or reject.

It should show the priority use cases, readiness gaps, expected business value, control model, pilot cost, and decision timeline.

The roadmap is valuable because it turns AI from a broad ambition into a set of sequenced management choices.



10

FINDING

The leadership gate protects capital.

Before funding an AI pilot, leadership should ask five questions.

If the hotel cannot answer them, the use case should remain in discovery. If the answers are clear, the pilot can move forward with confidence.

This gate is simple enough for owners and strict enough to stop weak use cases early.

GATE QUESTION	GOOD ANSWER	WEAK ANSWER
Decision	A named decision improves	A generic AI feature launches
Owner	One executive owns the outcome	Ownership sits with a vendor
Data	Trusted source and quality rules exist	Teams debate the source
Control	Human review and audit trail are defined	Automation is vague
Measure	Cycle time, revenue, cost, or service improves	Activity is counted

11

REFERENCES

Sources used for the argument and examples.

SOURCE	REFERENCE	HOW IT IS USED
NIST	AI Risk Management Framework Core	AI risk work is structured around govern, map, measure, and manage.
ISO	AI management systems overview	AI management systems emphasize governance, risk assessment, accountability, privacy, and continual improvement.
McKinsey	The State of AI	AI high performers show senior ownership and practices across operating model, data, adoption, and risk.
BCG	AI Adoption in 2024	Most companies struggle to scale AI value; people and process dominate the effort.
PwC Middle East	AI at the heart of tourism and hospitality	Regional hospitality has high AI experimentation but very low enterprise-wide deployment.
Deloitte	Data preparation for AI	AI data readiness should assess availability, quality, governance, ethics, and use-case fit.
Amadeus	Travel Technology Investment Trends: Hospitality	Hospitality technology leaders cite fragmentation, efficiency, and integrity as data barriers.
FTC	Marriott / Starwood data security order	Hospitality data governance failures can become regulatory and trust events.
Accor	Food waste AI support	Operational AI works best when a baseline is measured before workflow change.

Specific source URLs are listed on the public insight page at arkonis.ai/insights/90-day-hotel-ai-readiness-assessment/.

ARKONIS INNOVATION
Artificial Intelligence Research Consultancies

Turn the paper into a practical leadership conversation.

Arkonis works with hotel owners, general managers, and leadership teams to assess data readiness, build decision systems, and design controlled AI workflows.

Book a 30-minute call

cal.eu/raghav/30min

Email

raghav@arkonis.ai

Assessment

Data, systems, governance, operating model, and 90-day roadmap.

Location

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

ENTITY
Arkonis Innovation Artificial Intelligence Research Consultancies

LICENCE
CN-6372077

PRINCIPAL
Raghavendra Datta Palleti, Founder & Principal Consultant

CONTACT
raghav@arkonis.ai · arkonis.ai

LOCATION
Abu Dhabi, UAE