

# How AI can Help you Make Smarter Decisions

*AI-assisted decision making isn't about replacing human judgment; it's about strengthening the systems and people responsible for making complex, high-impact choices every day. As organizations face growing volumes of data, increasing complexity, and heightened expectations for transparency, leaders have an opportunity to step back, reassess how decisions are made, and build smarter, more connected foundations that support clarity and confidence.*

Inspired by our own experiences and observations, this article will explore what AI-assisted decision making really means, its benefits and tradeoffs, and how to approach it thoughtfully and responsibly.

## Overview

Across industries, organizations are under increasing pressure to make faster, more accurate decisions. Whether in public sector agencies, healthcare systems, financial management offices, or education departments, decision-makers are navigating expanding datasets, regulatory requirements, and rising public expectations.

Many existing decision-making processes were thoughtfully designed years ago, relying on staff's personal institutional knowledge, manual reviews, and established workflows. Over time, incremental changes, growing data volumes, and evolving demands have introduced fragmentation and inconsistency. Agencies and staff are realizing the processes that once worked in the past, are rigid and unscalable; they can no longer facilitate the level of change agencies are facing today.

Instead of being empowered by information, staff can become overwhelmed by it. Critical insights may be buried in thousands of documents, siloed systems, or unstructured notes. Manual reviews become time-consuming. Variability between individuals increases based on staff knowledge and seniority. Decisions that carry significant consequences may lack consistent, evidence-based grounding, leaving individuals to make decisions rooted in bias and interpretation.

So, what are agencies left to do?

This is where AI-assisted decision making enters the conversation. At its core, it offers an opportunity to transform vast amounts of data into structured, actionable insight, while keeping humans firmly in control.

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*In the sections that follow, we'll break down what AI-assisted decision making really means, explore its potential benefits and tradeoffs, outline how organizations can determine whether it's the right path, and how to begin intentionally and responsibly.*

## What is AI-Assisted Decision Making?

AI-assisted decision-making is not a replacement to making choices. It does not remove human oversight or replace professional expertise. Instead, it enhances human judgment by surfacing relevant information, identifying patterns, and providing structured guidance drawn from large datasets. These are things that could otherwise be missed, or even worse, lost in processes that rely on manual review.

In practice, it often begins with an introspection into existing processes:

- Identifying where decisions rely heavily on manual data review
- Mapping how information flows across systems
- Evaluating inconsistencies or bias in current processes
- Determining where automation or augmentation (when appropriate) could reduce friction

AI systems can then be designed to:

- Analyze structured data
- Extract relevant indicators
- Provide summarized insights
- Highlight correlations or trends
- Surface supporting source material

When implemented responsibly, AI becomes an intelligent research assistant, analytical engine, or pattern recognition layer empowering professionals to make better-informed decisions without surrendering any human authority.

## How We've Used AI Assisted Decision Making

Most organizations operate in environments filled with complexity. Multiple departments, stakeholders, systems, and regulatory frameworks can create information overload, fragmented data, and difficulty interpreting anything holistically.

**AI can help bridge that gap.**

### DFM

We've seen this firsthand in government environments managing document-heavy repositories and sensitive case files. In a client engagement with the Idaho Division of Financial Management (DFM), approximately **25,000 administrative rules** were publicly available, but navigating them required **manual searching** and **interpretation of complex legal language**.

To modernize access, we created an **AI-powered chatbot** that was implemented within the Admin Rules website. Built on Microsoft Azure, the solution uses semantic and vector search to translate natural-language questions into intelligent document retrieval. Rather than offering legal advice, the system **functions as an AI research guide**, helping users find relevant rules, understand processes, and reference authoritative documents.

### Key Results

**25,000+ Documents Integrated**

**AI Powered Regulatory Search**

**Improved Public Access**

The result is a more accessible and intuitive experience for navigating Idaho's administrative code. By transforming static regulatory content into an interactive, conversational interface, DFM has improved public access to information while reducing the manual support burden on agency staff

## DHW

In another of our client engagements, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) faced a far more sensitive challenge: validating **52 evidence-based determinants** linked to successful child reunification outcomes. DHW's current system lacked evidence-based guidance for case workers, leaving them to rely on their personal biases, and interpretation to understand a case. Determining whether children who have been separated from their parents can safely and successfully return home is a decision that shapes the future of families and must be made with compassion, evidence, and deep care, not personal bias and interpretation.

Manually reviewing two years of case files, **over 2,000 cases**, would have required years of staff effort and exposed reviewers to emotionally distressing material. However, without analyzing this full dataset, DHW couldn't confidently validate the 52 determinants or use them to guide statewide reunification decisions. DHW needed a way to process massive amounts of unstructured data quickly, safely, and objectively.

We partnered with Idaho DHW to create an **AI Agent capable of analyzing the 2 year's worth of case notes**. A model was built that could interpret unstructured documentation, extract meaningful data, and map each case against the 52 determinants linked to reunification outcomes

The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the determinants and successful reunification outcomes. Case workers, judges, and supervisors were trained on the determinants, giving them clear guidance on what to look for during home visits, interviews, and document reviews. They gained a framework that removes ambiguity, reduces emotional bias, and highlights exactly where families need support.

**Importantly, the AI did not replace human judgment.**

Instead, it:

- Validated evidence-based indicators
- Reduced emotional bias
- Provided structured guidance
- Improved alignment between case workers and judges

## Key Results

**2,000+ Cases to Analyze**

**Analysis Done in 15 Hours**

**52 Determinants Validated**

**Reduced Time and Improved Outcomes**

These examples illustrate how AI can transform overwhelming volumes of data into actionable insights **without, removing humans at the center of the decision.**

## Why Consider AI-Assisted Decision Making?

AI-assisted decision making offers meaningful benefits, but like any major initiative, it requires thoughtful consideration. Below are some of the most common advantages organizations can evaluate.

## 1. Consistency Across Teams and Stakeholders

When individuals interpret information differently, inconsistencies can emerge. Over time, this variability can lead to inequitable outcomes or misaligned expectations.

AI can help ensure that:

- Indicators are applied uniformly
- Data is evaluated against consistent criteria
- Source material is traceable
- Insights are grounded in evidence

Greater consistency promotes fairness, transparency, and trust, both internally and externally.

## 2. Operational Efficiency

Manual review of thousands of documents or datasets can consume significant staff time. This often requires:

- Repetitive data extraction
- Cross-referencing multiple systems
- Reconciling inconsistencies
- Interpreting unstructured notes

AI systems can dramatically reduce this burden by:

- Processing large datasets rapidly
- Extracting relevant indicators automatically
- Summarizing complex content
- Highlighting key correlations

The result is a workforce that can focus more on critical thinking, high priority tasks, and human engagement; And less on manual data processing.

## 3. Reduced Bias and Increased Objectivity

Human decision-making is inherently influenced by experience, emotional context, and cognitive bias. While expertise is invaluable, inconsistency can occur when processes lack structured guidance.

AI models, when designed responsibly and validated carefully, can:

- Apply consistent criteria across cases
- Highlight overlooked patterns
- Surface supporting evidence
- Provide explainable outputs with source citation mapping

This shifts decisions from instinct-based to evidence-informed, without removing professional discretion.

## 4. Data-Informed Strategy and Policy

When insights remain buried in disconnected systems, leadership operates reactively.

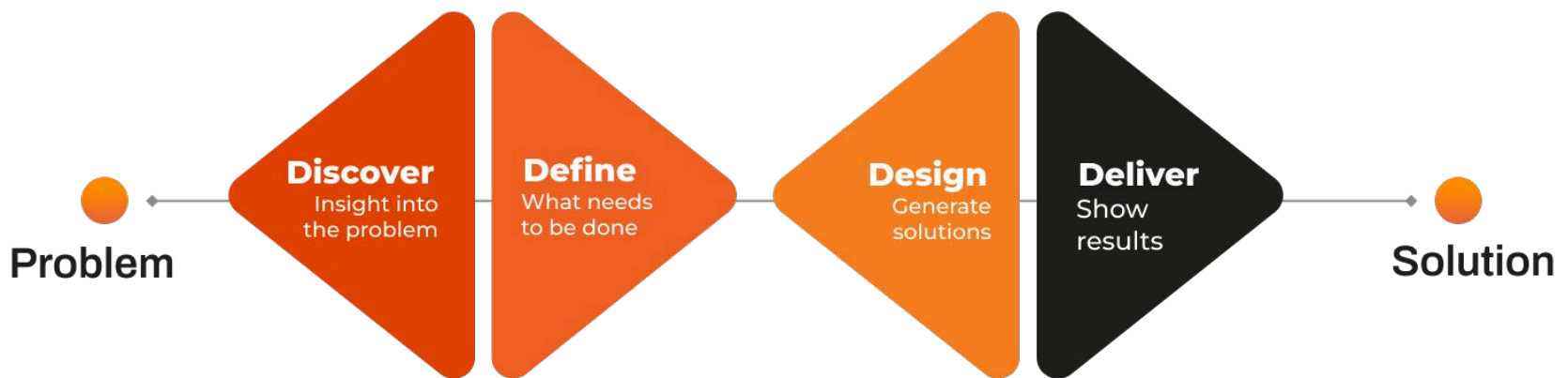
AI-assisted analytics can enable:

- Large-scale trend analysis
- Forecasting and scenario modeling
- Cross-department reporting
- Evidence-based resource allocation

This empowers leaders to move from anecdotal understanding to a data-backed strategy.

## Designing the Right AI Approach

AI implementation is not a one-time simple decision; it's a series of strategic choices. We start every design process with our discovery phase so we can clearly identify the needs of our clients, stakeholders, and users.



## Governance and Oversight

One of the first considerations is defining how AI outputs will be used.

? Will AI provide recommendations only?

? Will humans retain final approval authority?

? How will transparency and explainability be ensured?

Clear governance structures prevent overreliance and ensure AI remains a support tool, not an unchecked authority or a replacement for human workers.

## Technology Strategy: Platform and Architecture

Organizations must determine whether to build custom AI models tailored to their workflows or leverage existing AI platforms and cloud services.

Custom-built solutions allow precise alignment with regulatory and operational requirements but require deeper governance and maintenance of investment.

Platform-based solutions (such as Azure AI services) can accelerate deployment and offer enterprise-grade security but may require thoughtful configuration to align with complex policy environments.

Often, a blended approach provides the best balance of speed, flexibility, and sustainability.

## Data Readiness

AI is only as strong as the data it processes. Before implementation, organizations should assess:

- Data quality and completeness
- Privacy and compliance requirements
- Security architecture
- Migration and integration complexity

Cleaning, structuring, and validating data is as critical as building the AI model itself.

## Change Management

AI introduces new workflows and expectations. Training, transparency, and communication are essential.

Staff must understand:

- What the AI does
- What it does not do
- How outputs are generated
- Where human judgment applies

When people trust the system and understand its role, adoption becomes far smoother.

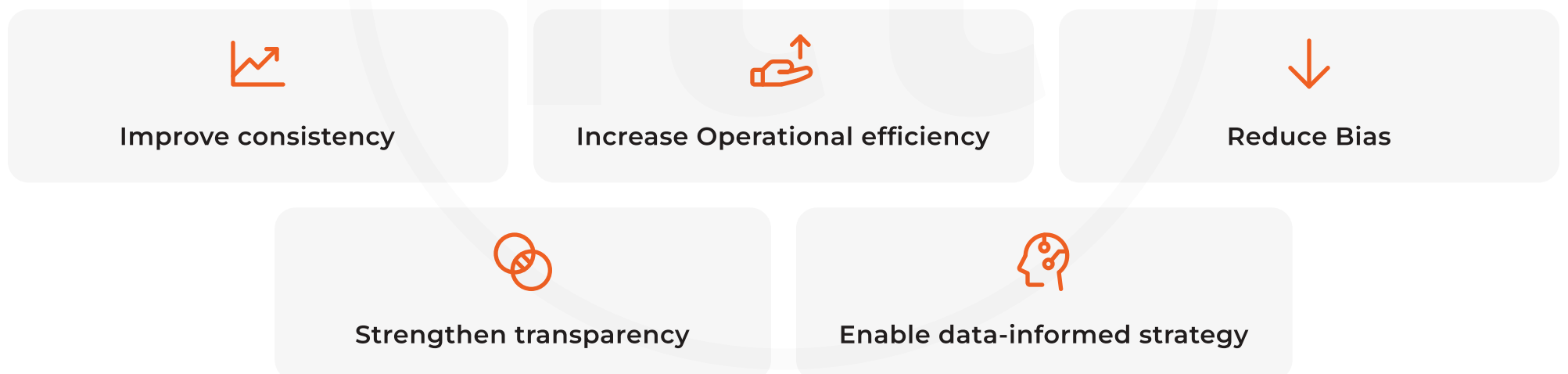
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## Summary

AI-assisted decision making is not about automation for automation's sake. It is about strengthening human judgment in environments where data volume, complexity, and expectations have outpaced traditional processes.

As seen in our engagements with the Idaho Division of Financial Management and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, AI can transform document-heavy systems and emotionally complex case reviews into structured, evidence-informed guidance, removing frustration and confusion from staff, and constituents, so they can focus on what matters.

When approached thoughtfully, AI can:



Designing the right approach requires deliberate governance, careful technology selection, secure data practices, and proactive change management. The goal is not to replace human expertise, but to amplify it. When implemented responsibly and collaboratively, AI-assisted decision making can create smarter, more connected systems that empower professionals to serve citizens, stakeholders, and communities with greater clarity and confidence.

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Whether you're ready to begin exploring AI-assisted decision making, have questions about where it could add value, or simply want to better understand what's possible, we're here to provide the insight you need to move forward intentionally and responsibly. Schedule a free discovery call and let us start building you a stronger foundation for smarter decision making, together.