Guidance Facilitating the Acceptance of Generative Artificial Intelligence: Insights from Digital Leaders

Daria Höhener
University of St.Gallen
daria.hoehener@unisg.ch

Abstract

The hype of generative AI (genAI) is omnipresent, and the characteristics of AI – autonomy, learning, and inscrutability – are well-known. Nonetheless, due to the uniqueness of genAI in producing outputs almost indistinguishable from those of humans and the associated uncertainties, companies struggle to address the challenge of human agent acceptance for the successful adoption of genAI. Based on identified challenges, this paper provides a selection of practices focusing on operational formats and organizational approaches to enhance genAI acceptance. The outcome offers practitioners specific examples to drive acceptance by increasing the usage and impact intensity potential of genAI use cases.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence, Technology Acceptance, Digital Transformation, Digital Leaders, Interview Study.

Introductory Comments

Generative artificial intelligence (genAI) impresses with the technology's rapid integration into everyday life (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Ooi et al., 2023). As one interviewee noted: "*You probably know the Jira effect from Confluence. It's there, and there's no longer a discussion of whether or not, but only how*" (IP7). Currently, organizations are interested in identifying, prioritizing, and integrating meaningful and value-adding use cases into their existing structures. This process, however, does not always proceed as smoothly as desired.

What distinguishes genAI from other technologies is its "content generation, generalization ability, and reinforcement learning based on human feedback" (Nah et al., 2023), which renders the dynamics of genAI acceptance a new phenomenon (Prasad Agrawal, 2023). This change introduces implications not only for the user but also for our society. With genAI, the user becomes a human agent, as human-machine interaction driven by prompts positions the human as an active participant. Thus, the dynamics of human agency change and the corresponding delegation intensities increase (Baird & Maruping, 2021). The shift involves direct interaction between non-experts and the technology through dialogue. The democratization of access offers opportunities, yet outputs nearly indistinguishable from those of humans raise evident ethical and legal challenges such as transparency. Ultimately, opinions oscillate between dramatic scenarios and utopian visions (Sabherwal & Grover, 2024), which affect the acceptance of technology by human agents. Accordingly, understanding how to foster human agent acceptance of genAI is crucial in this discourse. Addressing these factors can lead to an improved adoption rate of the technology.

Despite these implications, it remains unclear which organizational conditions increase human agents' acceptance of genAI. This is surprising, as practical examples illustrate the necessity of creating organizational settings that facilitate acceptance: Salesforce found that 70% of individuals not using genAI would do so if they knew more about the technology (Salesforce, 2024). Furthermore, MIT Technology Review Insights notes that in 2023, only 9% of companies have moved beyond experimentation with genAI, indicating low adoption rates (2024), with the acceptance of human agents being one of the relevant factors contributing to adoption success. After all, there are numerous examples of established companies that possess the technology but whose employees do not utilize it to its fullest potential.

Accordingly, this practitioner-focused interview study with experienced digital leaders (see appendix) aims to consolidate their insights regarding acceptance-fostering organizational conditions and provide inductively elaborated practices. These serve as a basis for future case studies to explore acceptance-promoting settings further. Interviews are particularly suitable as they are grounded in the experiences of recognized experts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This research investigated operational formats that increase genAI acceptance among employees, organizational approaches that can be identified to enhance genAI acceptance among employees, and lastly, establishing a prioritization matrix for genAI use cases based on their acceptance potential. The distinction between organizational approaches and

URI: https://hdl.handle.net/10125/109599
978-0-9981331-8-8

operational formats is based on their different time horizons. While organizational approaches address orientation, operational formats are actionable in the short term.

Reflecting on Distinct Characteristics of genAI

genAI can be understood as a part of the evolving AI frontier. Its capabilities differ from previous information technologies in three key aspects: autonomy, learning, and inscrutability. (Berente et al., 2021) To better understand these facets, subsequent specification is provided. First, **autonomy** describes the ability to act without human intervention. It can range on a continuum from simple, discrete tasks to complex responsibilities for outcomes (Baird & Maruping, 2021). A positive example is Mastercard's genAI model, which autonomously detects new fraud patterns and reportedly increases the speed of identifying fraudulent merchants by 300% (Mastercard, 2024). However, this autonomy can also present challenges, as evidenced by Snapchat's AI chatbot *MyAI*, which advised minors on lying to their parents (Murphy Kelly, 2023). Second, **learning** ability encompasses the capacity to improve through experience and large datasets, enabled over time by deep learning and reinforcement learning (Gupta et al., 2024). For a sophisticated personalized experience, Adobe's product *Sensei*, integrated into the existing *Experience Cloud*, offers a way to create content, automate campaigns, and gain insights into the performances. The model learns to recognize patterns from hundreds of millions of images and generates new content based on these patterns. (Adobe, 2024) Nevertheless, assembling large datasets for training purposes can also lead to copyright and ownership issues. For instance, The New York Times sued OpenAI and Microsoft over copyright infringements, claiming that vast amounts of published articles were used to train chatbots without permission (Grynbaum & Mac, 2023). Third, **inscrutability** can be examined along a continuum encompassing opacity, transparency, explainability, and interpretability – generally, there is a tendency for outputs to be partially or entirely incomprehensible to certain audiences. (Berente et al., 2021) High traceability presents opportunities, such as in medical imaging, where Siemens Healthineers addresses the issue of incomplete patient records by consolidating patient data and directly querying additional information like comorbidities, thus saving time on manual searches (Healthineers, 2023). Conversely, pronounced opacity poses risks such as misinformation, exemplified by the simplified creation of deepfakes through genAI. A notable incident occurred with the engineering firm Arup, where a fraudulent video conference led to authorizing a $25 million transaction by deploying a cloned digital version of a senior manager in the meeting (Leng & Ho-him, 2024). All in all, these examples illustrate how twofold autonomy, learning ability, and inscrutability can be.

Regarding genAI, three perspectives can be distinguished – the model, system, and application views. The **model level** encompasses the underlying architecture. genAI includes Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPT) (Gupta et al., 2024). These machine learning algorithms are trained on large datasets and can be fine-tuned for specific tasks, leveraging a transformer based on neural network architecture (Nah et al., 2023; Ooi et al., 2023). Further, Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN) belong to genAI, leveraging two transformers, a generator, and a discriminator (Nah et al., 2023). Accordingly, genAI encompasses GPT/GAN models such as DALL-E and GPT-4omni. The **system level** involves embedding these functionalities into interfaces, exemplified by ChatGPT as one prominent example of a large language model (LLM), Midjourney, and GitHub Copilot. Finally, the **application level** describes the concrete possibilities for addressing specific needs, such as code synthesis, music generation, or content creation, thereby implicitly addressing the needs of stakeholders. (Feuerriegel et al., 2024)

Subsequently, the focus on the aspects of the application level is relevant for the scope of this elaboration. This level is human agent-facing, embodies the actual benefits of the technology, and thus, the implications for acceptance are observable. Fundamentally, a distinction can be made between a style-based and a knowledge-based conception, as well as between transactional or agentic modes of interaction. From these distinctions, four patterns emerge that can be recognized: the use of genAI applications as **creative assistants, knowledge advisors, social companions, or task agents**. (Riemer & Peter, 2024). These possibilities were not feasible with the various technologies deployed before genAI, and they are transforming human-machine interaction.

While genAI applications initially found their primary use in writing and image creation, their impact has now extended to multiple industries (Thormundsson, 2024). Sectors such as marketing, healthcare, human resources, education, banking, retailing, manufacturing, and sustainability management are all witnessing significant potential benefits and are adopting genAI (Ooi, 2023). It is anticipated that "nearly all areas of the economy" will be influenced by genAI, affecting enterprises and employees (Thormundsson, 2024).

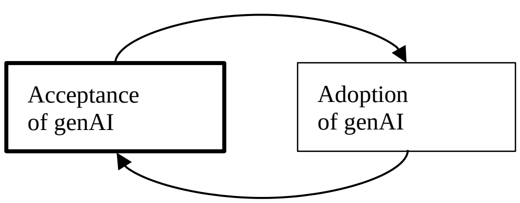
Symbiosis of genAI Acceptance and Adoption

Assessing the expected benefits and drawbacks of genAI usage significantly influences its acceptance. The concerns surrounding genAI are multifaceted, as they can lead to significant anxiety. Examples range from disregarding human rights (Kaya et al., 2024) to hallucinations (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). Such negative attitudes diminish trust (Kaya et al., 2024), highlighting the urgent need for responsible and explainable genAI. This need is reinforced by the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between authentic and synthetic output (Banh & Strobel, 2023), which leads to uncertainty and weakens trust. Yet, acceptance must be at the forefront of every genAI use case to increase the intensity of its usage. (Höhener & Lösser, 2024). Further, by employing use cases with a measurable positive impact, acceptance of the human agents can be achieved.

The widespread influence of genAI is evident in the rapid growth of the global genAI market, which is projected to grow from 5.67 billion U.S. dollars in 2020 to 206.95 billion U.S. dollars by 2030 (Statista, 2024). However, the adoption of genAI applications like ChatGPT involves complex considerations. These include organizational readiness factors such as strategic alignment, resources, knowledge, culture, and data, which are crucial for successful adoption (Jöhnk et al., 2021). Moreover, Gupta et al. (2024) point out that "adoption to LLM applications is not simple", highlighting the challenges in bridging the gap between humans and machines through conversational-like interactions (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The dynamic interplay between genAI acceptance and genAI adoption illustrates a bidirectional relationship (Figure 1):

Figure 1. The interplay of genAI Acceptance and genAI Adoption.



Acceptance drives adoption, and increased adoption leads to improved acceptance. This mutual dependency emphasizes the importance of enhancing both aspects strategically and operationally to maximize the benefits of genAI. In this elaboration, a focus is placed on formats and approaches that promote acceptance (Kelly et al., 2023), which ultimately leads to adoption (Jöhnk et al., 2021).

Operational Formats as Practices for Enhancing Usage Intensity Potential

During the interviews, current challenges in dealing with genAI were collected, which can be addressed through operational formats as practices mentioned by the interviewees to increase usage intensity. Table 1 summarizes the short- to medium-term initiatives gathered, which can help improve the acceptance of genAI among employees. The respective analysis focuses on the organizational possibilities.

Table 1. Actionable Operational Formats to Increase Usage Intensity Potential.

Challenges	Operational formats as solutions	Explanation
- Skills gap - Fast-pacing environment - Uncertainty in utilization - Need for informal experimentation and interactive training	Prompta-thons	Collaborative/ competitive workshops to develop prompting skills
- Need for enhanced data management understanding - Lack of extensive in-house knowledge - Budget restrictions	Rent the data scientist	Temporary borrowing of internally available data science expertise for specific tasks
- Innovation fatigue - Missing interdisciplinary collaboration - Complexity in socio-technical systems	genAI champions as multipliers	Empowering tech-enthusiastic employees to act as multipliers within the organization
- Overwhelm - Diminished trust - Resistance to change - Job redefinition anxiety - Loss of human touch	Events for psycholo-gical safety	Various event formats to foster a culture of openness regarding genAI

Promptathons. The primary interaction with genAI in conversational settings as an innovation in human-technology collaboration makes it essential to learn effective techniques to generate precise and contextually relevant outputs. Specialized skills in writing requirements are thus emphasized to exploit the capabilities offered fully.

The pull effect of using genAI in everyday work is vital, and people lack relevant expertise regarding the accelerated advancements of genAI. Due to rapid developments, some employees are unsure how to craft meaningful prompts to maximize the benefits of interacting with primarily internal GPTs. It can be assumed that intrinsically motivated employees are already proactively engaging with such applications. In contrast, another group of employees needs guidance: *"The rest tend to have an aversion and fall behind, leading to resistance to adopting the technology because they already have an aversion to all changes. So, I need to take the entire organization and offer training."* (IP8)

The highlighted companies emphasize addressing the skills gap in effective prompting. Thus, bottom-up training is necessary to provide an informal environment for experimentation, fostering learning curves and encouraging a playful approach. This ease of approach to prompting seems beneficial for human agents. Voluntariness instead of compulsion encourages use and enables employees to feel capable of using GPTs meaningfully in their tasks: *"Give people the opportunity to try things out without them having to. In other words, enable a playful approach to the topic."* (IP4)

The interviewee from one organization specified that they have institutionalized half-day promptathon formats in place, where a university trains employees on writing prompts. This training in usage is also being pursued and offered by other industries to refine internal use cases through external stimulation. Such formats can be competitive, similar to hackathons, or collaborative workshops to achieve a collective skill-up: *"Seeing is believing, or better said, doing is believing."* (IP4) In addition to the interactive workshop format, some companies provide a promptathon guideline afterward. A reference work composed of training material and examples is then offered to assist participants further. Such comprehensive documentation, whether self-developed or provided by major software providers, illustrates the possibilities for usage. The effectiveness of such formats is widely confirmed in practice. For instance, a study by Salesforce illustrates how early adopters initially engage with genAI in a fun context before expanding its application to workplace environments (Salesforce, 2024).

Rent the Data Scientist. The outputs from genAI are only as good as the underlying data quality, which, despite its crucial importance, is often lacking. With an increased focus on small language models (SML) featuring significantly fewer parameters, there is a reduced need for extensive resources. However, this heightened focus on a narrower scope makes the necessity for high-quality, relevant data even more critical.

Many legacy systems and a lack of clean structure in source systems hinder scalability. The challenge is reflected in the inadequacy of data quality. This issue is also widely discussed in the literature, highlighting the correlation between the correctness of model outputs and the quality of training data (Feuerriegel et al., 2024) as given. Its understanding is also recognized in practice: *"The quality of the output, of course, also depends on the quality of the input data."* (IP2) However, the difficulty often lies in the lack of in-house specialists. The skills gap, intensified by the ongoing shortage of skilled professionals, is expected to widen. Not only is the lack of knowledge a challenge, but budget restrictions also pose difficulties. Specifically, enhancing in-house data quality requires a long-term perspective and financial commitment, with effects likely only visible in the future.

Consequently, expanding knowledge by strategically involving dedicated experts is advisable, thereby enabling generalists through specialists. This approach is particularly applicable when planning to implement retrieval augmented generation (RAG) models in organizations. These models are characterized by integrating in-house organizational knowledge databases to produce informative and precise outputs tailored to the organization's specific context (Lewis et al., 2020).

One investigated company exemplifies a possible practical format. With the rent the data scientist concept, internal know-how can be utilized for specific, clearly defined requests by temporarily borrowing experts: *"Then they can get someone for a few hours who really knows what they're doing. Someone who can help them a bit."* (IP5) This availability incentivizes departments to be as proactive as possible, knowing they can access specific technical expertise when needed. Internal, agile reallocation provides a lean way to leverage existing deep knowledge about the company's data structure across departments without relying heavily on external consulting firms. Such bundling of internal expertise and ad-hoc utilization is meaningful when the initiative is widely known and requests to the data scientists are profitably prioritized, channeling scarce resources to maximize value. Additionally, this approach facilitates skill-up and knowledge transfer within the organization.

genAI Champions as Multipliers. Adopting technologies, particularly genAI, heavily relies on employees' motivation to integrate available applications into their daily work routines. Such accessibility is especially pertinent for genAI, as the altered human-machine interaction renders the technology highly accessible and intuitively usable for non-experts, offering numerous use case possibilities.

However, there is a certain innovation fatigue among some professionals, who react with a sense of frustration to the continuous infusion of new technological advances in various fields. This fatigue impacts their willingness to use new technologies, even though they could potentially benefit from using them. Currently, inter-organizational collaboration is often insufficiently developed. In the case of genAI, it is vital to merge various disciplines, such as data management, ethics, and domain-specific knowledge, to enhance cooperation and explore innovative application areas by incorporating diverse perspectives and expertise. The landscape of socio-technical systems, with genAI as an entity, emphasizes the interaction between humans and technology with implications for society and the economy (Banh & Strobel, 2023). The effects of intensified integration are growing and present challenges concerning ethical concerns and inequalities.

Enthusiasts of genAI within organizations can help act as motivators among various stakeholder groups affected by these implications while also connecting the dots between disciplines to influence the areas impacted by socio-technical systems positively.

A potential solution to these challenges is the development of internal influencers as critical individuals. These personalities are referred to by various terms, such as champions, coaches, digital natives, or thought leaders: *"These are the ones who are extremely intrinsically motivated. We enable them to serve as multipliers within the organization."* (IP4) These influencers can build bridges within existing structures, drive innovation, and serve as internal communication channels: *"There are also digital coaches, […] they are our communicators to the respective business units, embedding the innovative topics we want to convey into the business units."* (IP5) By establishing communities of practice, these digital champions can act as motivators for specific topics, gathering and establishing practices that can be adopted organization-wide, which implicitly leads to higher adoption rates: *"Bringing this closer to people through existing structures means informing them broadly and then capturing details through champs."* (IP1) Consequently, these individuals also act as change agents, promoting digital thinking and readiness for innovation, thereby supporting genAI adoption.

Events for Psychological Safety. Creating psychological safety is necessary in the context of genAI, as human-like outputs challenge our value creation, at least partially for routine tasks. Successfully establishing confidence enables a willingness to experiment and promotes innovation – two critical pillars in the face of technological disruption.

The rapid pace of genAI can be overwhelming and cause discomfort among employees. A primary reason for this discomfort is the lack of understanding of genAI's concrete functionality and its black-box elements, which can diminish trust: *"When I ask a professional, the answer is that we are talking about stochastic models, of course. But the average person doesn't understand that."* (IP1) Furthermore, legitimate concerns regarding data privacy and ethical usage are also present. Given these aspects, compounded by resistance to change – partly due to job redefinition anxiety – the challenges to increased genAI usage intensity are multifaceted. Many employees in the studied companies are concerned about being made redundant, such as by reducing human elements in customer service (Nah et al., 2023).

Considering these challenges, communication is a crucial aspect. By providing explanations, understanding can be fostered, enhancing trust and, thus, acceptance.

Events that ensure psychological safety can help address these concerns. These include fireside chats, roundtable discussions, or brown bag lunches. Regardless of what they are called, these formats serve as essential communicative support tools: *"We have formats like the so-called digital morning, where these digital topics are communicated to the company once a month, and the departments themselves explain and talk about them. It's important not only for the experts to say what good things they've done but also for those who have benefited from it to say it worked well. We've also discussed what didn't go so well, which is a part of it."* (IP6) This openness builds trust in meaningful and beneficial use cases of genAI, as ultimately, it is about integrating genAI into daily tasks: *"And right now, it's more living the playbook to grow and put it in place."* (IP9) Communicative support ensures that the implications are discussed transparently and the usage benefits are visible: *"Bring things up repeatedly, even if it's been clear to you for a long time. I think that's important. And to show people, transparently, again and again, what the benefits are, what the impact on us is; what the advantage is for them when they use it."* (IP10)

Organizational Approaches as Practices for Boosting Impact Potential

Three additional medium- to long-term practices emerged from the interviews, addressing the organization-specific challenges highlighted by the digital leaders to increase genAI use cases' impact potential. These enabling approaches promote a positive impact and can be categorized into organizational vision, setup, and design. Ultimately, it is evident that the higher the positive effect and impact of genAI use cases, the higher the adoption enthusiasm, reinforcing the correlation with genAI acceptance. Table 2 summarizes these factors, with the following sections providing detailed insights into each focus area.

Table 2. Actionable Organizational Approaches to Increase Impact Potential.

Challenges	Organi-zational approaches as solutions	Explanation
- Different genAI intentions regarding adoption speed - Uncertainty in differentiating between using external applications and building in-house models	Organi-zational vision	Embedding the genAI organi-zational vision in a strategic roadmap
- Fragmented bottom-up initiatives - Decentralized genAI scale-up directions - Missing business case in many intentions - Lack of oversight for operationalization according to a specific direction	genAI factory for operalization	Continuous development/ deployment of genAI solutions tailored to business needs
- Complication of existing processes - Missing guardrails - Reluctance in usage - Perception of the human agents towards genAI - Adaptability to changing needs	Acceptance-centered designs	Solutions centered on the acceptance of human agents

It is essential to highlight the understanding of positive impact in various forms, whether from economic, operational, social, or environmental perspectives.

Organizational Vision. The dynamic adaptability of organizations, which has significantly accelerated with the adoption of genAI, is fundamental. Nonetheless, a long-term northstar goal is necessary to align resources in accordance with long-term objectives and values. This is particularly crucial given that the impact of genAI on various business sectors entails profound changes. In the alignment process, different sectors should thus be involved in defining a broadly supported, viable, implementable, and simultaneously ambitious set of objectives.

Different departments may demand varying levels of urgency in adopting genAI, whether to gain competitive advantages or to anticipate potential efficiency improvements. Such variability can lead to differing perspectives on the speed of adoption, although one of the interviewees noted: *"Quickly is the one thing, on average, we don't do."* (IP9) Additionally, there is often ambiguity about whether to exclusively use external genAI applications and configure them for specific contexts or to develop in-house models. Factors such as cost, control, and particular requirements play a role in this decision-making process.

Clear strategic guidelines, whether to pursue a first-mover or smart-follower approach or another strategy, provide employees with a reference point to determine the expected pace for proactive action according to the defined strategy. Two of the interviewees have positioned themselves clearly: *"We have more of a smart-follower strategy, or we generally aren't the first to move towards innovation."* (IP11) and *"We have also discussed in the management team that we don't need to be the first-mover in the whole game."* (IP7)

Communicating this deliberate organizational vision, often illustrated on a visionary roadmap, can ensure a shared understanding. Such clarity is an effective possibility for setting priorities correctly and allocating resources appropriately, ensuring that critical initiatives are pursued in alignment with the company's vision. Clear differentiation between using external applications or developing internal models is also necessary, and this strategic direction should be broadly communicated. Conducting the interviews, the following was observed: *"We actually strive to stay as close to the standard as possible, simply because of future maintainability."* (IP13) and *"That is a bit too big for us, which is why I always say: let's take something off-the-shelf, let someone else worry about it, and we'll adapt."* (IP8) Typically, technology-driven industries with substantial data availability are more inclined to develop their own LLMs, whereas others tend to use applications provided by software vendors. These strategic decisions and their documentation facilitate the pursuit of long-term milestones and enable the alignment of actions with the overarching vision.

genAI Factory. Gaining an overview of various genAI proof of concepts and implemented use cases across the organization can be meaningful. Such efforts can lead to the standardization of procedures and governance guidelines, which manifests in reducing redundancies.

Some interviewees noted that fragmented bottom-up initiatives, which are decentralized, uncoordinated, and varied in their directions, prevail. This arises from the need to discover the technology's value across different application areas: *"Because the technology alone doesn't inherently provide value."* (IP7) Often forgotten is the missing business case in many intentions, which can make it difficult to justify investments: *"It is still in the phase where people start with the tool rather than the business problem. So, they are riding the hype wave, and I often have to step in and insist on understanding the business model behind it first."* (IP8). Furthermore, an unsystematic approach to genAI projects can result in poor adherence to standards and guidelines, which is critical for genAI, especially considering the implications of the EU AI Act.

An oversight entity is thus necessary *"to truly empower the organization to experiment with the technology, use it, and think about use cases."* (IP11) Such an organizational setup allows for the consolidation of initiatives and alignment with the strategic vision. Centralized operationalization also ensures supervision within the organization, enabling the development of solutions tailored to business needs.

A dedicated genAI factory, genAI bakery, or whatever it may be called, is crucial for engaging concretely with genAI and can be a tangible solution to address the challenges mentioned: *"So the hype cycle, the super overhyped expectation, found out that for real benefits, you need to work."* (IP9) This entity not only drives proof of concepts and proof of values but also takes the lead in scaling: *"We have our own factory where we develop and operationalize our projects."* (IP6); The focus of the genAI factory as a center of competence is thus key for developing and implementing genAI use cases with high impact potential. Particularly in the proof-of-concept phase, it is meaningful to evaluate these uniformly: *"Ultimately, the use cases are standardized and established throughout the organization in order to evaluate them, initially qualitatively and increasingly quantitatively, and to provide feedback on the findings."* (IP2) Nonetheless, local enabling must not be neglected to foster innovation enthusiasm and the effectiveness of individual business units. Thus, an enabling role is assigned to the genAI factory.

Acceptance-Centered Designs. genAI enhances human agency and places the human agent at the core of the focus on usability. It is crucial to design applications in a way that promotes long-term acceptance.

Overall, it becomes apparent that complicating existing processes through poor integration of genAI can impair usability and cause confusion. Furthermore, neglecting guardrails concerning ethical, qualitative, and regulatory aspects can harm the acceptance of applications, as one interviewee states: *"Suddenly, an accident occurs in the design process, which is a huge issue."* (IP2) In this context, design refers to the setup of genAI applications centered on the human agent. If not executed carefully to ensure reliability and effective use of solutions, reluctance in usage becomes apparent, and the perception of genAI is negatively impacted. Another challenge emerges in the need for adaptability of acceptance-promoting designs, as the requirements of human agents and organizations may change in a rapidly evolving dynamic.

The perception of the human agents depends on acceptance, which must be ensured so that when scaling applications, the solutions are centered on it. Overall, several focus areas have been identified that constitute acceptance-centered designs for genAI applications in line with other research (Höhener & Lösser, 2024):

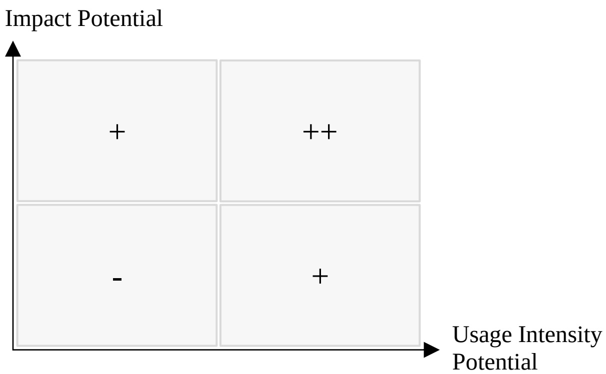
Trust in the outputs must be addressed to foster acceptance by increasing impact. Further, solutions that seamlessly integrate into existing systems have a positive influence as one interviewee noted: *"Convenience is a huge issue for us. The technology is just a means to an end; it has to be easy for the customer and also for the employee."* (IP7) Encouraging voluntary exploration and ensuring a positive user experience by fostering hedonic motivation: *"... playfully so that they hopefully use it."* (IP3) drives further centering on acceptance. Furthermore, feedback mechanisms can increase acceptance by conveying a feeling of being able to participate actively in the refinement of genAI applications. Designs should enable efficiency and effectiveness for the human agent, adding value by meeting their needs: *"I'm much more willing to accept new things, including genAI, if it solves a problem for me and doesn't create more work. That's automatically the expectation for the development team… not to think about the technically best solution but the simplest one that helps the customer… It has to be easy; it has to be understandable; it has to be usable without any issues."* (IP12) These focus areas help ensure that genAI applications are designed with user acceptance at the forefront, leading to successful integration within the organization.

Prioritization of genAI Use Cases

When numerous high-level ideas for application areas and initial proofs of concept are finalized, it can also be beneficial to prioritize use cases based on their acceptance potential. This prioritization should be done alongside the apparent focus on directly measurable quality improvements and financial benefits in terms of efficiency gains and actual feasibility.

Drawing on insights from the interviews, it is evident that both the usage intensity potential and impact potential of a genAI use case are relevant when predicting the acceptance of human agents. This observation emerges as acceptance is linked to an increased adoption rate. From this understanding, a matrix with four quadrants (Figure 2) is derived to prioritize genAI use cases based on acceptance potential and, consequently, potential adoption success. Allocating use cases into these four segments allows focusing on those centered on potential higher acceptance of human agents and thus the once which have a higher probability of being actively adopted.

Figure 2. Prioritizing genAI Use Cases According to Their Acceptance Potential.



The ++ *quadrant* corresponds to use cases with high impact potential and high usage intensity potential. These use cases are promising because they can generate significant impact and intensified usage. In contrast, both + *quadrants* have a lower potential for one of the two dimensions. Use cases that lack high impact potential and high usage intensity potential, - *quadrant*, should be deprioritized.

Recommendations for Digital Leaders to Drive genAI Acceptance

Based on the interviews and subsequent data analysis, the following two recommendations are proposed.

Promote intrinsic usage intensity of genAI use cases. Valuable genAI use cases are those that are implemented in practice, not just stored away. The challenge is to involve employees in the rapid changes and introductions of new applications, integrating them into the processes. Ensuring that the applications serve a practical benefit is relevant for successful integration. Enabling formats can help increase usage intensity, as the interviewed digital leaders have highlighted. Overall, it appears that collective efforts toward achieving meaningful outcomes are promising. When knowledge transfer is ensured across the organization, employees are enabled to enhance their activities continuously with technology as a supporting instrument.

Focus on creating a positive impact with genAI use cases. genAI inevitably impacts the work of many knowledge workers. Therefore, it is critical to focus on those use cases that bring a positive impact, aiming to identify, embed, and utilize sustainable, long-term applications that align with the company's unique differentiation from its competitors. Organizational approaches can serve as guidance to manifest this positive impact.

Concluding Remarks

Derived from the challenges faced by the interviewees when adopting genAI, practices are identified through interviews with thirteen highly experienced digital leaders. The relationship between operational formats, which enhance usage intensity potential, and organizational approaches influencing impact potential is evident in their varying temporal dimensions. The insights from these interviews are structured into four actionable operational formats (promptathons, rent the data scientist, digital champions as multipliers, events for psychological safety) and three organizational approaches (organizational vision, genAI factory for operationalization, acceptance-centered designs). These findings serve as a collection of practices, providing actionable recommendations for practitioners to foster acceptance of genAI among human agents.

These insights are preliminary findings from the initial data collection with thirteen highly experienced digital leaders and corresponding analysis. It has been shown that, given the unique generative properties and conversational-like interactions with the technology, promptathons are an effective format to enhance employee acceptance through enabling. It would be interesting to create design criteria for successful promptathons by examining both successful and unsuccessful executions in organizations. Preliminary observations also indicate that acceptance-centered designs must be a long-term focus to achieve lasting impact. Ultimately, no matter how well developed, no added value can be generated if human agents do not utilize the applications. Engaging with multiple informants over an extended period could help define changes in requirements for acceptance-promoting genAI use cases as guidelines for faster adoption.

Appendix: Methodology

As research on genAI is a developing field, an exploratory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was adopted in early 2024 to gather insights from practitioners. This approach is based on recognizing that there is a disconnect between research and practice, with the industry often leading the way. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, engaging experienced digital leaders. Table 3 provides a descriptive overview of the interview partners (IP) as subject matter experts. Large companies range from 20,000 to 95,000 employees, medium-sized companies employ 6,000 to 16,000 employees, and small companies consist of up to 1,000 employees.

Questions addressed the challenges organizations face when using genAI, how the functionality and benefits of genAI are communicated to involved stakeholders, and which practices have promoted the acceptance of genAI.

As some of the interviews were conducted in languages other than English, the quotes from the interviewees have been translated verbatim.

Table 3. Overview of the interview participants.

IP	Interviewees Role	Industry	Company Size
1	Chief Digital Officer	Security	Medium
2	Vice President & Head Center of Excellence Artificial Intelligence	Technology	Large
3	Chief Commercial & Digital Officer	Technology	Medium
4	Chief Digital Officer	Energy	Small
5	Chief Digital Officer	Automotive	Medium
6	Head of Advanced Analytics & Robotics	Insurance	Medium
7	Group Chief Digital Officer	Retail	Large
8	Director Data & Insights	Energy	Small
9	Chief Digital Officer	Pharma	Large
10	Chief Digital Officer	Fashion	Small
11	Director Digital Business	Banking	Medium
12	Chief Digital Officer	Banking	Small
13	Chief Digital Officer	Construction	Medium

In analyzing the transcribed interview data, they were systematically coded rigorously following the data structuring recommendations by Gioia et al. (2013). This process yielded 467 open codes and 108 first-order concepts, then organized into 72 second-order themes and ultimately consolidated into eight aggregated dimensions. These dimensions correspond to the formats and approaches proposed in this paper.

References

Adobe. (2024). Adobe Sensei GenAI. https://business.adobe.com/products/sensei/adobe-sensei-genai.html.

Baird, A., & Maruping, L. M. (2021). The Next Generation of Research on IS Use: A Theoretical Framework of Delegation to and from Agentic IS Artifacts. *MIS Quarterly*, *45*(1), 315–341.

Banh, L., & Strobel, G. (2023). Generative artificial intelligence. *Electronic Markets*, *33*(1).

Berente, N., Gu, B., Recker, J., & Santhanam, R. (2021). Managing Artificial Intelligence. *MIS Quarterly*, *45*(3), 1433–1450.

Dwivedi, Y. K. et al. (2023). "So what if ChatGPT wrote it?" Multidisciplinary perspectives on opportunities, challenges and implications of generative conversational AI for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management*, *71*(1).

Feuerriegel, S., Hartmann, J., Janiesch, C., & Zschech, P. (2024). Generative AI. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *66*(1), 111–126.

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G. & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, *16*(1), 15–31.

Grynbaum, M. M., & Mac, R. (2023). The Times Sues OpenAI and Microsoft Over A.I. Use of Copyrighted Work. *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/business/media/new-york-times-open-ai-microsoft-lawsuit.html.

Gupta, R., Nair, K., Mishra, M., Ibrahim, B., & Bhardwaj, S. (2024). Adoption and impacts of generative artificial intelligence: Theoretical underpinnings and research agenda. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, *4*(1).

Healthineers, S. (2023). Envisioning the future of radiology. https://events.siemens-healthineers.com/generative-ai.

Höhener, D., & Lösser, B. (2024). Driving Factors in the Technology Acceptance of Generative Artificial Intelligence – Insights from an Exploratory Interview Study with Digital Leaders. *itAIS 2024 Conference Proceedings*.

Jöhnk, J., Weissert, M., & Wyrtki, K. (2021). Ready or Not, AI Comes – An Interview Study of Organizational AI Readiness Factors. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *63*(1), 5–20.

Kaya, F., Aydin, F., Schepman, A., Rodway, P., Yetisensoy, O., & Demir Kaya, M. (2024). The Roles of Personality Traits, AI Anxiety, and Demographic Factors in Attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *40*(2), 497–514.

Kelly, S., Kaye, S., & Oviedo-Trespalacios, O. (2023). What factors contribute to the acceptance of artificial intelligence? A systematic review *Telematics and Informatics*, *77*(1).

Leng, C., & Ho-him, C. (2024). Arup lost $25mn in Hong Kong deepfake video conference scam. *Financial Times.* https://www.ft.com/content/b977e8d4-664c-4ae4-8a8e-eb93bdf785ea.

Lewis, P., Petroni, F., Karpukhin, V., Goyal, N., Küttler, H., Lewis, M., Yih, W., Rocktäschel, T., Riedel, S., & Kiela, D. (2020). Retrieval-Augmented Generation for Knowledge-Intensive NLP Tasks. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*.

Mastercard. (2024). Mastercard accelerates card fraud detection with generative AI technology. https://www.mastercard.com/news/press/2024/may/mastercard-accelerates-card-fraud-detection-with-generative-ai-technology.

MIT Technology Review Insights. (2024). Generative AI: Differentiating disruptors from the disrupted. https://www.technologyreview.com/2024/02/29/1089152/generative-ai-differentiating-disruptors-from-the-disrupted/.

Murphy Kelly, S. (2023). Snapchat to let parents decide whether their teens can use the app's AI chatbot. https://edition.cnn.com/2023/04/27/tech/snapchat-my-ai-concerns-wellness/index.html.

Nah, F., Cai, J., Zheng, R., & Pang, N. (2023). An Activity System-based Perspective of Generative AI: Challenges and Research Directions. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, *15*(3), 247–267.

Ooi, G. et al. (2023). The Potential of Generative Artificial Intelligence Across Disciplines: Perspectives and Future Directions. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 1–32.

Prasad Agrawal, K. (2023). Towards Adoption of Generative AI in Organizational Settings. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 64(5), 636–651.
Riemer, K., & Peter, S. (2024). Conceptualizing generative AI as style engines: Application archetypes and implications. *International Journal of Information Management*, *79*.
Sabherwal, R., & Grover, V. (2024). The Societal Impacts of Generative Artificial Intelligence: A Balanced Perspective. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *25*(1), 13–22.
Salesforce. (2024). *Top Generative AI Statistics for 2024*. https://www.salesforce.com/news/stories/generative-ai-statistics/.
Statista. (2024). Generative artificial intelligence (AI) market size worldwide from 2020 to 2030 (in billion U.S. dollars). https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1449838/generative-ai-market-size-worldwide
Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
Thormundsson, B. (2024). Generative artificial intelligence (AI) - statistics & facts. https://www.statista.com/topics/10408/generative-artificial-intelligence/.