

AI CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

7 Case Studies of How Leading Organizations Have Accelerated AI Value Across the Enterprise



THE RISE OF AI CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

AI Centers of Excellence are rapidly emerging as one of the most effective models for scaling AI across the enterprise. Serving as dedicated hubs for strategy, governance, expertise, capability-building, and support, they help organizations move beyond fragmented pilots to more coordinated and scalable value creation. Their strong results are driving growing adoption across industries.

This mini-report shares seven case studies of leading organizations that have used AI Centers of Excellence to accelerate AI value across the enterprise. It highlights why this model has proven so effective, how different organizations have structured it, and the practical lessons leaders can apply in shaping their own approach.



WALMART

The world's largest retailer, operating over 11,000 stores globally.

CoE: AI Center of Excellence

Structure

Centralized unit established in 2017, with direct executive sponsorship from the CEO.

Cross-functional across supply chain, store operations, customer experience and marketing. Embedded within the technology organization rather than a separate innovation function.

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Distinctive features

- The CoE runs a GenAI Playground, a structured internal space where store associates experiment with AI models, building grassroots literacy as a deliberate CoE function.
- Ethical governance is built into the mandate. All customer-facing applications pass through compliance review before deployment, making responsible AI a standard workflow step.

Lessons Learned

If your CoE launched post-2022, you are already years behind on governance maturity. Start building institutional knowledge now, not after the next wave of tools arrives.





BOSCH

German engineering conglomerate spanning automotive, industrial technology and consumer products.

CoE: Bosch Center for Artificial Intelligence (BCAI)

Structure

Established in 2017. Multi-site model with hubs in Germany, USA, India, China and Israel.

Teams blend domain experts, data scientists and engineers, operating from Bosch Research locations alongside product engineering teams.

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Distinctive features

- **Formal annual portfolio reviews** serve as a governance mechanism. In 2024, 14 activities closed and 11 opened, with a deliberate CoE-level pivot toward GenAI and Foundation Models to prevent strategic drift.
- **Academic partnerships are structurally embedded.** The University of Amsterdam Delta Lab, SIRIUS and Cyber Valley give BCAI persistent access to frontier research as a designed feature.

Lessons Learned

Schedule an annual CoE portfolio review as a hard governance event.

Retire what is not delivering and reallocate deliberately rather than letting the portfolio accumulate by default.





AIRBUS

European aerospace leader manufacturing commercial aircraft, helicopters and defense systems.

CoE: AI and Digital Engineering Program (embedded CoE model)

Structure

Deliberately distributed, with AI capability sitting within engineering and operations rather than a standalone unit. Executive-sponsored with a Chief AI Officer.

Partners with external AI specialists for capabilities beyond internal scope.

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Distinctive features

- The CoE **explicitly rejects centralization**. Embedding AI inside engineering functions means adoption is governed by the teams doing the work, removing the disconnect between a CoE and the people it serves.
- Living inside engineering budgets rather than a separate line makes the CoE structurally **resistant to defunding** across cost cycles.

Lessons Learned

If adoption is stalling, ask whether your CoE sits above the work or inside it. Proximity to delivery teams drives uptake more reliably than any governance framework.





SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

A French multinational energy management and automation company operating in over 100 countries.

CoE: Global AI Hub

Structure

Centralized AI Hub governing adoption across industrial, buildings and energy management divisions using hub-and-spoke.

The Hub sets standards and owns governance; domain teams embedded in business units provide operational context.

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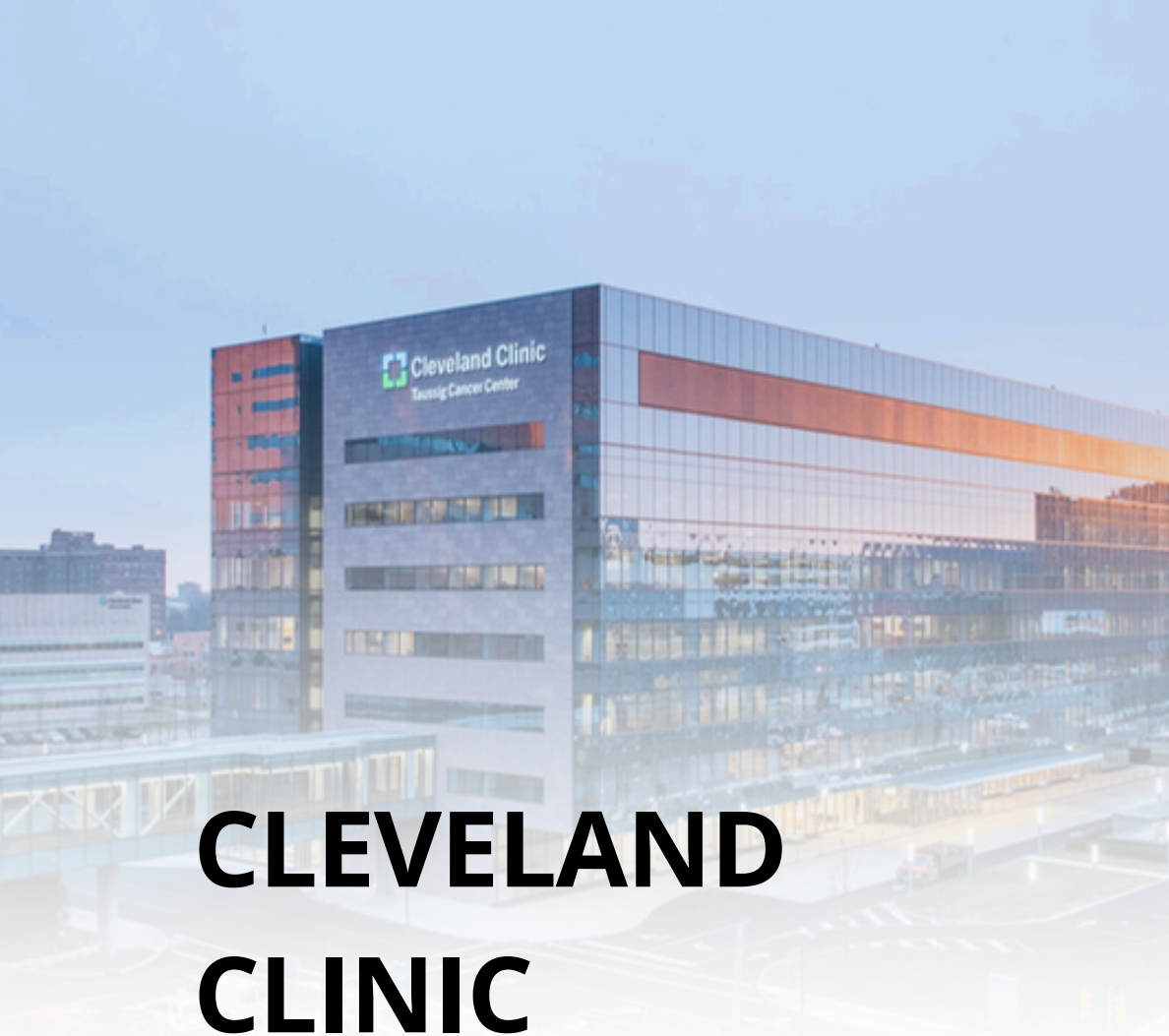
Distinctive features

- The CoE's governance work directly generates revenue. The AI capability the Hub builds powers EcoStruxure, the product Schneider sells to clients, making internal standards and client-facing product quality one deliverable.
- Publishing AI governance standards externally makes responsible AI a differentiator with industrial clients facing energy and emissions regulation.

Lessons Learned

Find a way to make your CoE's governance output visible externally. When responsible AI becomes a client-facing asset, internal stakeholders stop treating it as overhead.





CLEVELAND CLINIC

A US nonprofit academic medical center ranked the world's No. 2 hospital for seven consecutive years.

CoE: Center for Clinical Artificial Intelligence + Center for Cardiovascular Health AI and Digital Innovation

Structure

Dual-center model: a firmwide Center for Clinical AI led by a Chief AI Officer (appointed 2024), plus a domain-specific cardiovascular AI center within the Heart, Vascular and Thoracic Institute.

Governance teams meet monthly.

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Distinctive features

- Monthly cross-functional reviews bring clinical staff, IT, compliance, patient experience and finance together, treating AI oversight as clinical operations management rather than annual audit compliance.
- The dual-center structure separates enterprise governance from domain-specific clinical AI, letting the firmwide CoE set standards while the cardiovascular center moves at specialist pace.

Lessons Learned

Replace annual AI governance reviews with monthly operational checkpoints. The faster the feedback loop, the faster you can identify and fix what is not working.





LLOYDS BANKING GROUP

A UK retail and commercial bank serving 28 million customers across multiple brands.

CoE: AI and Advanced Analytics
Center of Excellence

Structure

Around 200 data scientists and engineers, led by the Group Chief Data and Analytics Officer.

Behavioral science and AI ethics sit inside the CoE, sharing leadership with the deployment team.

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Distinctive features

- The CoE is mandated to democratize AI across the Group, changing how every colleague engages with AI rather than building tools for select teams only.
- Ethics and behavioral science share leadership with the deployment team, making responsible AI a design input rather than a separate review stage.

Lessons Learned

Put your ethics function inside the CoE under the same leader. If responsible AI reports elsewhere, it will consistently arrive too late in the development process..





UNILEVER

A British consumer goods company, owner of 400+ brands used by 3.4 billion people daily.

CoE: Responsible AI Program
(enterprise-wide governance model)

Structure

Governed by an Enterprise Data Executive committee with a data ethics team running a cross-functional AI assurance process.

Every use case passes through three checkpoints: triage, analysis and final mitigation, with a traffic-light risk rating at each stage.

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Distinctive features

- The three-stage assurance process applies to every project. By mid-2024, 150+ projects had passed through it, with half requiring adjustments for bias or transparency.
- A binding rule states that any decision with significant life impact cannot be fully automated, hardwiring human oversight into the operating model.

Lessons Learned

Apply governance to every AI project, not just the high-risk ones.

Universal review builds the institutional muscle needed to catch problems early as deployments scale.



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