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Enhancing Decision-Making Through Better Information: The Strategic Role of AI

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for Your Enterprise

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• Experimentation is not the same as integration. Testing an AI tool is only the first step; real business value emerges when AI is embedded into and supports a core business process.
• Start with a measurable business decision. Focus on a high-impact, recurring use case and track outcomes against clearly defined performance indicators.
• Data and AI alone are not enough. Human judgment remains essential to validate insights, provide context, and ultimately make sound business decisions.

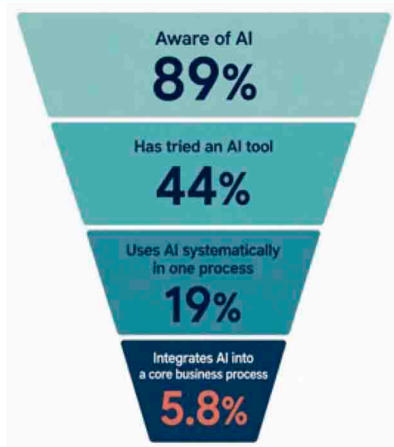
AI adoption among Mexican SMEs is gaining momentum, yet meaningful business integration remains limited. The real opportunity lies not simply in experimenting with AI tools, but in connecting data and AI to support everyday business decisions that can enhance sales, pricing strategies, inventory management, and customer relationships.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence

Mexican SMEs do not need to wait until they have access to a large-scale technology platform to benefit from data and artificial intelligence. The opportunity begins much earlier: by **learning how to turn the information they already generate every day into more timely and informed decisions regarding customers, pricing, inventory, and collections.**

The challenge is not a lack of interest. An estimate based on several surveys published this year by the "Agente Digitalizado" platform on AI adoption among Mexican SMEs illustrates a funnel-like pattern: 44% of companies have already experimented with at least one AI tool, yet only 19% use AI systematically in at least one business process, and just 5.8% have integrated it into core business operations.[1] These findings highlight a fundamental reality: **experimenting with AI tools—many of which have proliferated rapidly in recent years—is not the same as embedding AI into day-to-day business operations and using it consistently to make better decisions based on timely, strategic information.**

AI Adoption Funnel Among Mexican SMEs



Source: Competimex, S.C., based on data from Alfonso Espinosa, "Artificial Intelligence Adoption among Mexican SMEs in 2026: Reality vs. Narrative," Agente Digitalizado, April 19, 2026.

The Digital Divide Remains a Management Divide

Context matters. According to Mexico's 2024 Economic Census, only 25.3% of the country's economic establishments used computer equipment, while 26.2% used the internet as part of their business activities. The gap by company size is particularly revealing: while 86.2% of small, 92.8% of medium-sized, and 94.5% of large businesses used computer equipment, the figure among microenterprises was only 22.3%. **This helps explain why AI adoption may still feel distant for many businesses: before companies can automate, they first need to digitize, organize, and structure their operations and information.**

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that only large companies can benefit from data. Every SME already generates valuable information, including sales by product, average transaction values, issued and cancelled electronic invoices (CFDIs), inventory levels, overdue receivables, returns, quotations, and customer histories. This information can be complemented with public and readily available sources, including data from INEGI, Banco de México, ANTAD, and CANACO on inflation, exchange rates, seasonality, input costs, and competitive market signals.

The value does not lie in simply accumulating information from multiple sources, but in integrating and analyzing it effectively to address specific business and operational questions. In the case of manufacturing SMEs, an analysis of INEGI's 2024 Economic Census conducted by Centro México Digital[2] found that, for every additional 10 percentage points of AI adoption within an industry, gross output per economic establishment increases by 18.8%, wages by 5.4%, and employment by 3.3%. **Technology does not simply replace labor; when effectively deployed, it can complement human capabilities and contribute to higher-value, better-paid work.**

The False Solution: Simply Buying a Tool

AI, by itself, cannot solve incomplete data, inefficient processes, or decision-making structures with unclear accountability. When applied to fragmented or poorly organized information, it can automate complexity rather than eliminate it.

The distinction between adoption and integration is therefore critical. Using an AI application to draft an email, create a social media post, or generate an initial document can certainly save time. **True AI integration, however, means embedding it within a business process that has a clearly defined decision, a measurable outcome, and an accountable owner.**

International experience reinforces this point. McKinsey has noted that companies generating meaningful value from AI do not simply deploy general-purpose tools; they redesign end-to-end business workflows by connecting data, decision rules, human judgment, and concrete actions.[3]

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For this reason, the first question should not be, “Which AI tool should we buy?” but rather, **“Which recurring business decision are we currently making with incomplete, delayed, or intuition-based information?”**

Four Decisions to Start With

An SME can begin with one or two high-impact decisions and measure the results.

• Who should we sell to? Combine historical sales, quotations, customer activity, and external signals to prioritize prospects, identify inactive customers, and uncover repurchase opportunities.
• What should we produce or purchase? Connect inventory turnover, seasonality, orders, lead times, and input costs to reduce stockouts, excess inventory, and emergency purchases.
• At what price should we quote? Use historical discounts, costs, margins, order size, and customer conditions to establish defensible pricing ranges rather than rigid price points. McKinsey documented a B2B case in which optimizing transaction-level pricing and discounts increased profits by 10%.[3]
• When should we collect or intervene? Combine accounts receivable aging, payment behavior, purchase volumes, and changes in the commercial relationship to anticipate credit risk and take action before the issue escalates.

Artificial intelligence can support the process by searching and summarizing information, identifying patterns, and recommending next actions. However, **decision-making should remain under human oversight: someone must validate exceptions, interpret the broader context, and safeguard the customer relationship.**

How to Get Started

Progress does not require a large-scale transformation initiative. A practical starting point could include:

1. Organize the data related to one priority decision.
2. Define a clear financial metric, such as margin, inventory turnover, or receivables recovery.
3. Incorporate an external data source that helps provide context.
4. Test a simple AI-enabled tool over a defined period.
5. Compare results, refine the process, and scale only what proves effective.

Competitive advantage will increasingly belong to companies that can turn information into an everyday decision-making capability. Technology can analyze, prepare, and recommend; human judgment remains essential to convert those insights into better business decisions.

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At Competimex, S.C., we bring more than 25 years of experience supporting companies in their administrative and financial management. Our approach combines comprehensive impact analysis, cost-structure optimization, and the appropriate alignment of accounting, tax, and financial practices, enabling organizations to adapt to changing business and economic conditions in a structured, efficient, and sustainable manner.

[1] Alfonso Espinosa, "Artificial Intelligence Adoption Among Mexican SMEs in 2026: Reality vs. Narrative," Agente Digitalizado, April 19, 2026.
[2] Centro México Digital, Intelligent Mexico: Manufacturing and the Opportunity That Cannot Wait. First Sectoral Analysis of AI Adoption Based on Data from the 2024 Economic Census, June 2026.
[3] McKinsey & Company, "Getting Big Impact from Big Data" (2015) and "The Future of B2B Sales: How Growth Champions Rewire Their Playbooks with AI" (2026).

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