The Three Wave Strategy of AI Implementation

By following this strategy, mid-size and large organizations can systematically implement AI, starting with simpler tasks and progressing to more complex, enterprise-wide solutions. This approach allows for gradual adaptation, learning, and optimization throughout the AI implementation journey.

AI implementation is more than just a technological or training issue. It requires a strategy and leadership to successfully integrate AI into an organization's operations. Remember, AI is not going to implement itself. And not all workflows will be automated.

First Wave: **Low-Hanging Fruit**. This initial phase targets self-evident quality tasks within single-person controlled workflows. By utilizing ready-made AI tools, organizations can achieve quick wins in areas such as student advising, resume review, or policy drafting. This wave builds confidence in AI capabilities and sets the stage for broader adoption.

Checklist for the First Wave workflow candidates:

a. Single-user workflow: The task is primarily controlled or performed by one person.
b. Self-evident quality: The output quality can be easily assessed without complex metrics.
c. Ready-made AI tools: Existing AI solutions are available for this type of task.
d. High frequency: The task is performed regularly, offering opportunities for significant time savings.
e. Low risk: Errors in the task have minimal negative consequences for the organization.

Second Wave: **Tackling Costly Workflows**. The second wave focuses on labor-intensive, frequent processes that have a broader organizational impact. This phase provides an opportunity to review and streamline existing workflows. Implementation at this stage requires more planning and coordination than the first wave but offers significant efficiency gains.

Third Wave: **Enterprise-Level Solutions**. The final wave involves radically redefining core operations. This phase requires deep AI understanding, a clear vision, and robust infrastructure with specialized tools. It often involves complex, multi-user workflows and has the potential to transform the entire organization.

Implementation Principles

1. Align with Organizational Priorities
2. Workflow Analysis
3. Gradual Implementation
4. Leadership and Change Management
5. Employee buy-in: Signal employees that their job will not disappear, but will become more fulfilling with AI

July 26, 2024. **Please note**: all NIAIS recommendations are living documents. We improve them as we receive feedback from users. Save the link, not the document.