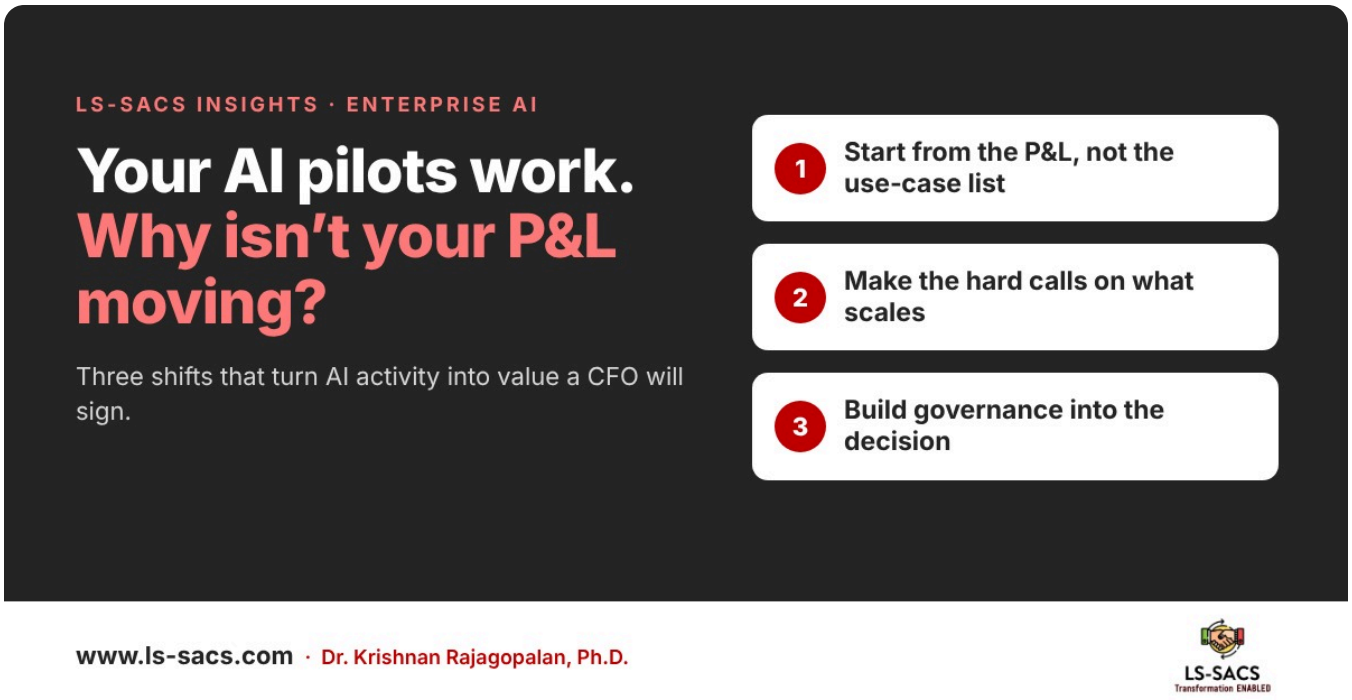
LS-SACS INSIGHTS · ENTERPRISE AI

Your AI Pilots Work. Why Isn't Your P&L Moving?

By Dr. Krishnan Rajagopalan, Ph.D., President, LS-SACS · 4-minute read



Most life sciences companies don't have an AI problem. They have a P&L problem.

The pilots work. The demos impress. Teams are energized. And twelve months later, the CFO asks the same question: what did we actually get for it?

The pattern is not unique to our industry. MIT NANDA's 2025 study of enterprise generative AI found that only about 5% of pilots achieve rapid revenue acceleration; most stall with little or no measurable P&L impact.[1] In life sciences, where validation, data privacy and regulatory scrutiny add weight to every step, the gap is often wider.

Why pilots stall before they reach the P&L

Having run a global P&L and built a Life Sciences practice from a few hundred people to several thousand, I see the same three gaps again and again:

- **Strategy without ownership.** AI priorities are set at the top, but no one owns turning each one into a business result.
- **Value measured too late.** The value case is written after the pilot, if at all, rather than before it is funded.
- **Governance that arrives at the wrong moment.** GxP validation, privacy and EU AI Act questions surface just as a pilot is ready to scale, and momentum dies.

None of these is a technology problem. Better models will not fix them.

Three shifts that change the outcome

1 Start from the P&L, not the use-case list

Most AI portfolios grow bottom-up: a promising idea, a willing sponsor, a pilot. The companies that see results reverse the order. Every initiative has to earn its place against a line the CFO already tracks.

2 Make the hard calls

Not every pilot deserves to scale. Some need a specific blocker removed. Some are worth keeping, but only at minimal cost. And some should stop, so their budget and people can go to the initiatives that matter. Few organizations make these calls explicitly, and the portfolio grows wider instead of deeper.

3 Build governance into the decision, not after it

In life sciences, the questions that stop an AI initiative from scaling are usually predictable. Asking them at the start turns governance from a brake into a steering wheel.

What changes when you get this right

Leaders who make these shifts tend to end up with:

- A clear, defensible call on every AI initiative
- A value case their finance team will sign, expressed in terms the board recognizes
- A short list of blockers, each with an owner
- A realistic plan for scaling the few initiatives that matter most

A focused way to start

I've built this thinking into a focused, 4-week engagement for life sciences leaders: the **Pilots-to-P&L Sprint**. It works with your own data and your finance team's baselines, asks only a few hours of your team's time each week, and ends with a decision rather than a report.

Where does your AI portfolio stand?

If you have more pilots than results, I would welcome a 30-minute conversation.

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About the author. Dr. Krishnan Rajagopalan built and led a $1B+ TCV Life Sciences practice with 4,000 staff and is a Harvard NCI Fellow. He advises life sciences leaders on turning AI and transformation into measurable P&L impact.

1. MIT NANDA, *The GenAI Divide: State of AI in Business 2025*, as reported in "MIT report: 95% of generative AI pilots at companies are failing," Fortune, August 18, 2025.

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