acdm SYMPOSIUM 2025

# SESSION SUMMARY

## Overcoming AI Hype for Realised ROI

### Taking a Problem-Centred Approach to Enterprise Transformation

Presenter: Jason Housley, Senior Director,
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# Overcoming AI Hype for Realised ROI

## Taking a Problem-Centred Approach to Enterprise Transformation

**At the recent ACDM Symposium, Jason Housley delivered a thought-provoking and pragmatic session that explored the persistent gap between industry enthusiasm for innovation and the actual impact on operational performance in clinical trials. With over 25 years in life sciences, Jason brought deep experience and candid insight to a discussion on how organisations can better navigate the current wave of AI-driven transformation by shifting away from solution-centric hype and towards problem-oriented, ROI-focused strategies.**

## The Industry's Innovation Stalemate

Jason began by highlighting an uncomfortable truth – despite decades of technological advancement, the timelines for key clinical trial milestones have remained frustratingly static. Database builds still average around eight weeks, database lock and statistical reporting follow at similar intervals, and the broader clinical development cycle remains beset by inefficiencies. This is particularly concerning given the dramatic increase in data volume and complexity over recent years, and the persistent failure rate of novel compounds.

He contended that much of the stagnation stems from a form of "next-gen paralysis", where enthusiasm for breakthrough technologies – from blockchain to wearables and now AI – often eclipses critical thinking about their actual value. Too often, organisations launch "transformation" projects anchored in buzzwords, culminating in symbolic celebrations (coffee and cakes included) that mark technology deployment rather than achieved outcomes. Without clarity on the real business problems these technologies are intended to solve, such initiatives risk becoming expensive distractions.

## AI Adoption: Trends and Pitfalls

Through recent industry survey data, Jason illustrated AI's current position as the top strategic priority for life sciences organisations, with a majority of respondents citing it as the trend most likely to influence trial efficiency and outcomes. Yet, this enthusiasm has not necessarily translated into meaningful integration. While more than half of organisations are at least exploring AI applications, fewer have implemented it across multiple workflows.

The most common AI use cases being trialled or implemented include data transformation, optimising trial design, anomaly detection, and predictive modelling for patient recruitment. However, Jason cautioned that without robust metrics, such efforts may fail to demonstrate value. He walked the audience through examples showing that tools like suggestive AI for protocol specification, while impressive on paper, may have negligible impact on timelines or cost if not embedded within a wider strategy.

## Realising ROI: The Case for Context-Driven Adoption

The presentation then shifted to practical strategies for achieving meaningful return on investment. Jason underscored that the effectiveness of AI tools is highly dependent on the baseline maturity of the organisation. For example, a company with an existing metadata store and code library will likely see minimal critical path acceleration from NLP-driven specification tools, whereas one without such infrastructure might realise significant efficiency gains – but only if properly scaled. He presented a case study showing how a large biometrics group with an annual operations cost of $14 million could theoretically save up to $8 million per year through targeted transformation. However, Jason emphasised that such results depend on numerous contextual factors: the scale of operations, degree of outsourcing, geographical cost variability, licensing costs, onboarding speed, and overall strategy.

Three operational scenarios were outlined, each reflecting different ROI potentials:

- Type A: High ROI, typically found in large-scale, in-house or hybrid setups with a strategic transformation plan and robust FTE optimisation.
- Type B: Medium ROI, where moderate consolidation and efficiency gains are achievable.
- Type C: Low ROI, common in narrowly scoped, SAAS-only purchases or minimal change environments.

## Metrics, Vision, and the Golden Rules

A recurring theme in Jason's talk was the critical need for metrics. Without them, organisations cannot demonstrate progress, detect early warnings, or capitalise on opportunities. He advocated for concise, focused, and regularly reviewed metrics aligned with operational and strategic goals.

To conclude, Jason offered his "Golden Rules" for effective enterprise transformation:

- Build realistic and right-sized visions.
- Focus on solving actual problems rather than chasing trendy solutions.
- Ensure alignment across stakeholders and initiatives.
- Maintain ruthless prioritisation and clarity of purpose.
- Measure continuously and adjust based on outcomes.

## Conclusion

This session resonated strongly with delegates looking to cut through the noise around AI and other digital tools. Jason's message was clear – transformation in clinical trials is possible, but only when driven by clearly defined problems, supported by data, and approached with discipline and transparency.

For those seeking to make meaningful change, this session served as both a caution against blind enthusiasm and a guide to sustainable innovation.