How AI is Redefining the Future of Corporate Real Estate & Workplace

Jeff Gagnon | Linus Grasel

allegro analytics

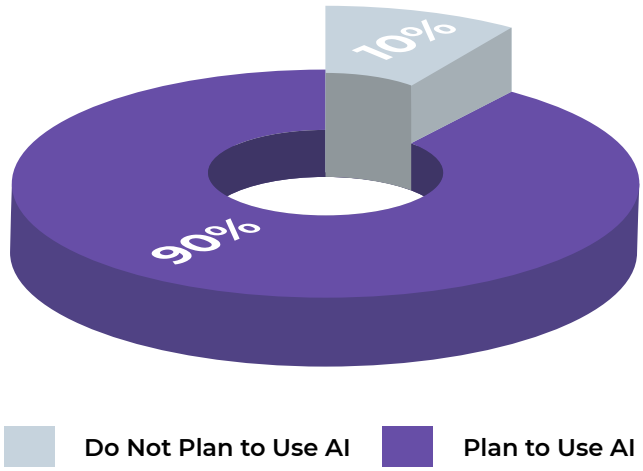
occuspace

As AI rapidly evolves from novelty to necessity, corporate real estate (CRE) leaders face a pivotal challenge: **adapt or fall behind**.

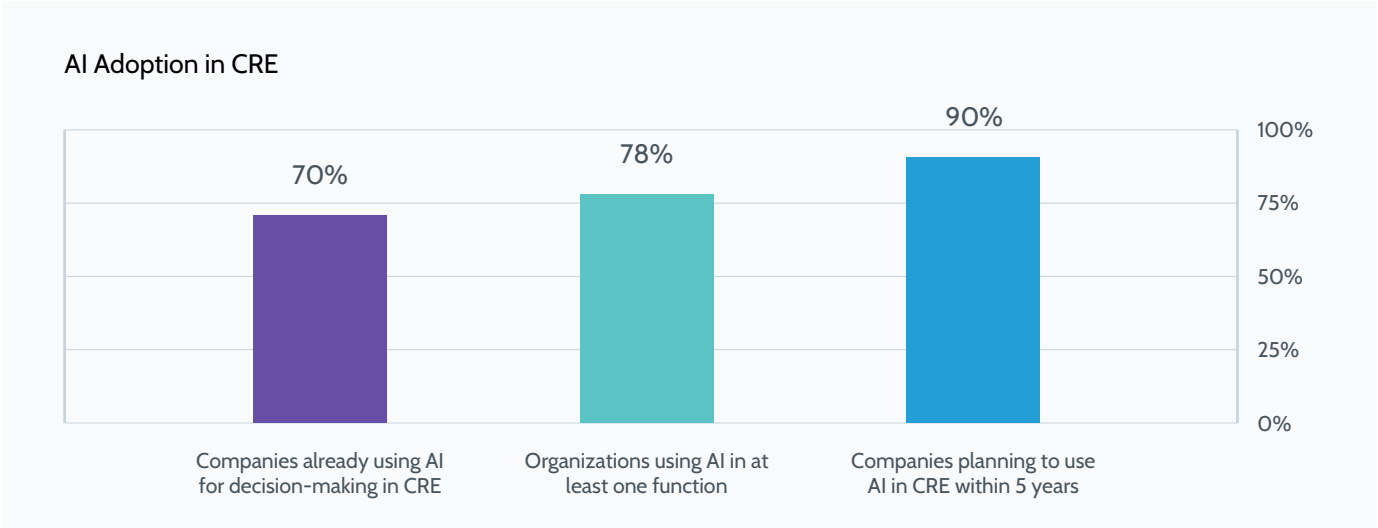
Over the past few years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has moved from an emerging technology to a top-level business priority shaped by C-suite agendas. Today, it is being adopted across business functions like finance, sales, HR, and marketing. Increasingly, it is gaining traction in Corporate Real Estate (CRE) and Workplace teams as well.

According to a recent McKinsey survey, 78% of organizations are already using AI in at least one business function. In real estate specifically, JLL reports that 90% of companies plan to use AI to support decision-making within the next five years (JLL Report).

CBRE adds that AI is already enhancing how organizations make portfolio, planning, and operations decisions (CBRE Report). For CRE and Workplace teams, this presents an inflection point. AI is no longer a nice-to-have. It is becoming core to future strategy.



So what does it take to be ready for this shift?



Building a Foundation for AI Readiness

For AI to truly add value, it must be built on a foundation of clean data, connected systems, and cross-functional collaboration. That sounds simple, but it is where many organizations get stuck.

While real estate teams often have years of data about space usage, headcount, and building performance, that information is frequently stored in different systems, formatted inconsistently, or not updated regularly. Deloitte's research emphasizes that data silos and poor governance are still major blockers to AI success in real estate and beyond.

A strong AI foundation includes:

- Clear data ownership and standardization
- Integration between enterprise platforms and function specific tools
- Training to interact with, interpret and act on AI insghts
- Coordination across IT, HR, Finance, and CRE

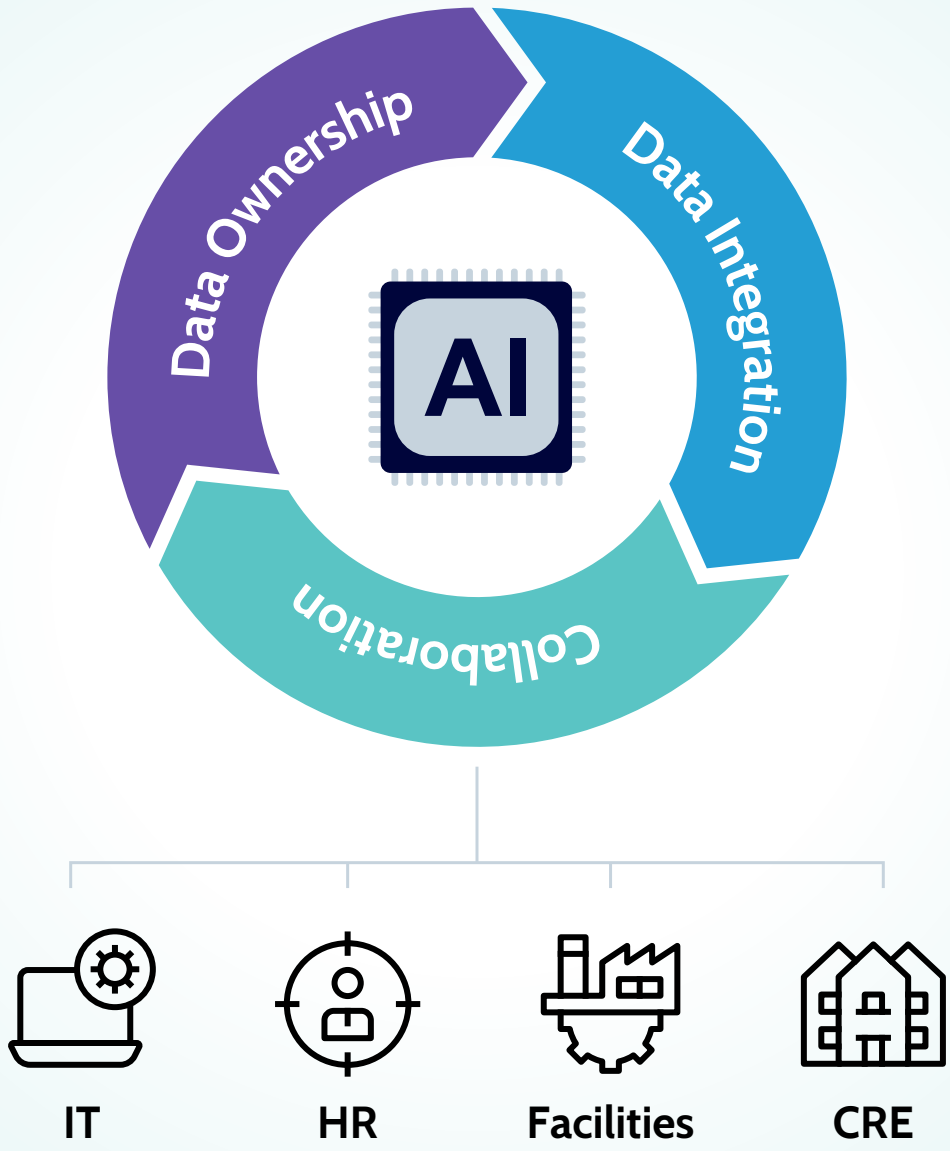
Organizations that approach AI as a collaborative effort, rather than a tech-led initiative, are the ones most likely to see results.

Gauging AI Readiness

Before launching targeted pilots, it's important to assess the current state. The following checkpoints provide a structured approach to identifying gaps and aligning cross-functional priorities. These questions are designed to prompt meaningful dialogue, surface obstacles, and ensure clarity on what success looks like, before moving into implementation. Working through them with stakeholders will help shape a more focused and effective roadmap.

#	Question	Why it matters	First step if the answer is "Not yet"
1	Which business problem are we solving, and how will we measure success?	A clearly defined, outcome-based problem statement ensures pilot efforts stay focused and measurable.	Draft one north-star KPI (e.g., cost per visit) and validate it with Finance, HR, and other key stakeholders.
2	Is our CRE data accurate, governed, and connected across IT, HRIS, and Finance?	Poor or siloed data remains a top barrier to AI. Models trained on bad inputs produce bad results.	Map key data sets (e.g., space, utilization, lease, headcount, energy), including owners, formats, refresh cycles, and any validation gaps.
3	Which two or three high-value use cases can deliver quick wins?	Early wins create momentum and strengthen the case for funding approval.	Evaluate potential use cases across Workplace, Real Estate, and Operations by effort and impact. Prioritize one pilot per area.
4	What guardrails do we have for ethics, privacy, and risk?	Governance and accountability are critical for building trust and securing funding.	Align with Legal, Security, and HR on policies related to data retention, bias checks, and oversight procedures.
5	Do we have the skills and governance model to avoid "pilot purgatory"?	Scaling requires strong cross-functional ownership and leadership sponsorship.	Form a small AI working group with a clearly defined charter and timeline, and assign an executive sponsor.

These questions aren't just a readiness check. They are a way to surface blind spots, clarify ownership, and focus efforts. When teams take the time to align on these fundamentals, they are far more likely to move quickly and effectively when it is time to take action.



Before diving into use cases, there's one more foundational piece to address: people. Even the best systems won't deliver results if teams aren't equipped to interpret and act on AI insights.

Workforce Readiness: Upskilling for an AI-Driven Future

Clean data and connected systems unlock AI's potential, but it's up-skilling the workforce that ultimately makes it real. As organizations modernize their tools and integrate AI into real estate workflows, a critical question emerges: are teams equipped to work with AI, not just around it?

Upskilling isn't a one-size-fits-all effort. Some teams will require technical training, while others may only need greater confidence in interpreting AI-driven outputs. What's clear is that workforce readiness across roles and functions has emerged as a major variable in whether organizations can truly capture AI's value. Research consistently highlights this as a critical success factor, especially when moving beyond pilots.

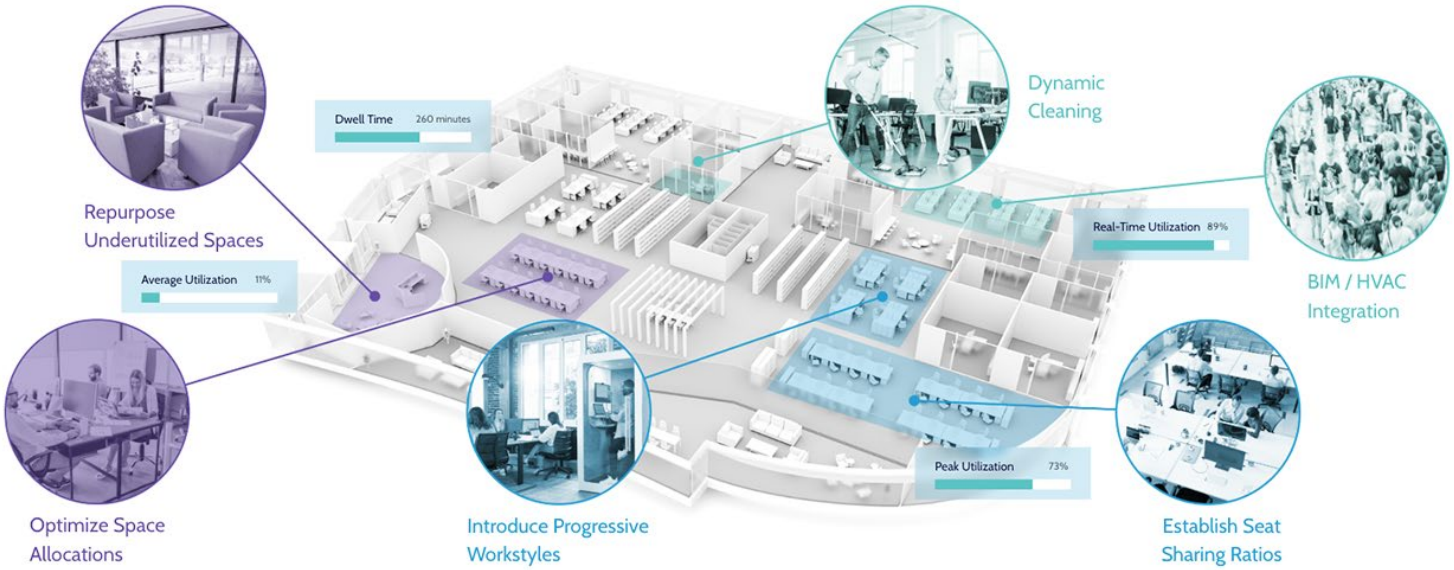
With the workforce foundations in place, the next step is to turn readiness into results.

"AI is no longer a nice-to-have—it's becoming a strategic imperative in corporate real estate. A recent McKinsey survey found that 78% of companies already use AI in at least one business function, while JLL reports 90% plan to leverage AI for decision-making within five years."

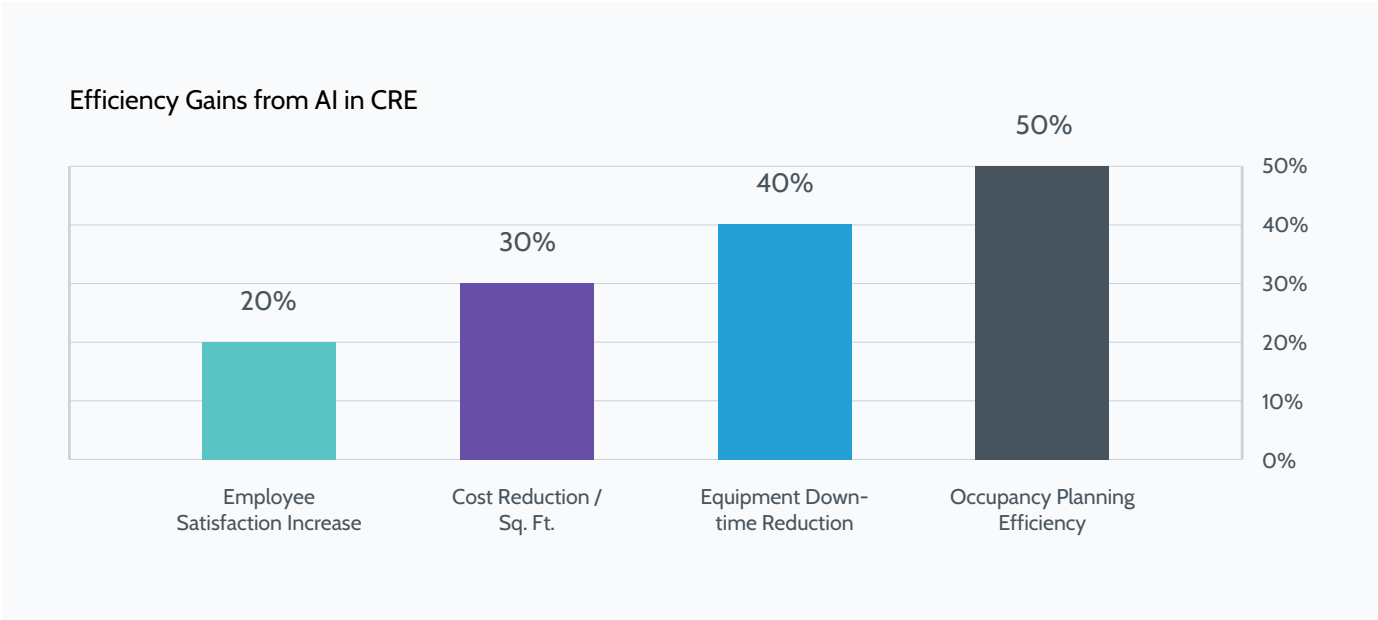
McKinsey Global Survey on AI Adoption, 2023

by Michael Chui

Moving from Insight to Action



Much of the early hype around AI in real estate focused on IoT, using sensors to control lights and HVAC in real time. That is still valuable. But we are now seeing broader applications of AI across workplace operations, particularly when real-time occupancy data is combined with strong analytics, systems integration, and visualization tools.



Promising use cases include:

These kinds of use cases are exactly where we see value emerging from partnerships that combine real-time sensing platforms with analytics and visualization tools that help people understand and act on what the data reveals.

Occupancy Planning

When real-time data from sensing platforms is connected to forecasting models, AI can identify how space needs are evolving. This enables more responsive planning and policy changes.

Portfolio Strategy

Integrating occupancy insights with headcount forecasts allows organizations to right-size space and prioritize leases with confidence.

Facilities Management

When sensor data is layered with equipment usage and maintenance logs, AI can help teams move from scheduled service to true predictive maintenance.

Workplace Services

In areas like transportation, security, and culinary operations, AI is being used to better align supply with demand, adjusting resources dynamically to reflect real-time needs.

Employee Experience

Occupancy sensing data, visualized through intuitive dashboards, can show employees the best time to visit the office, avoid crowding, or book resources more efficiently.

How AI Accelerates Workplace Decisions

Democratizing Analytics:

AI bridges the gap between raw data of multiple sources and meaningful insights, so less technical teams can easily uncover trends. Instantly identify peak usage across your entire portfolio and adjust space and operations in real time.

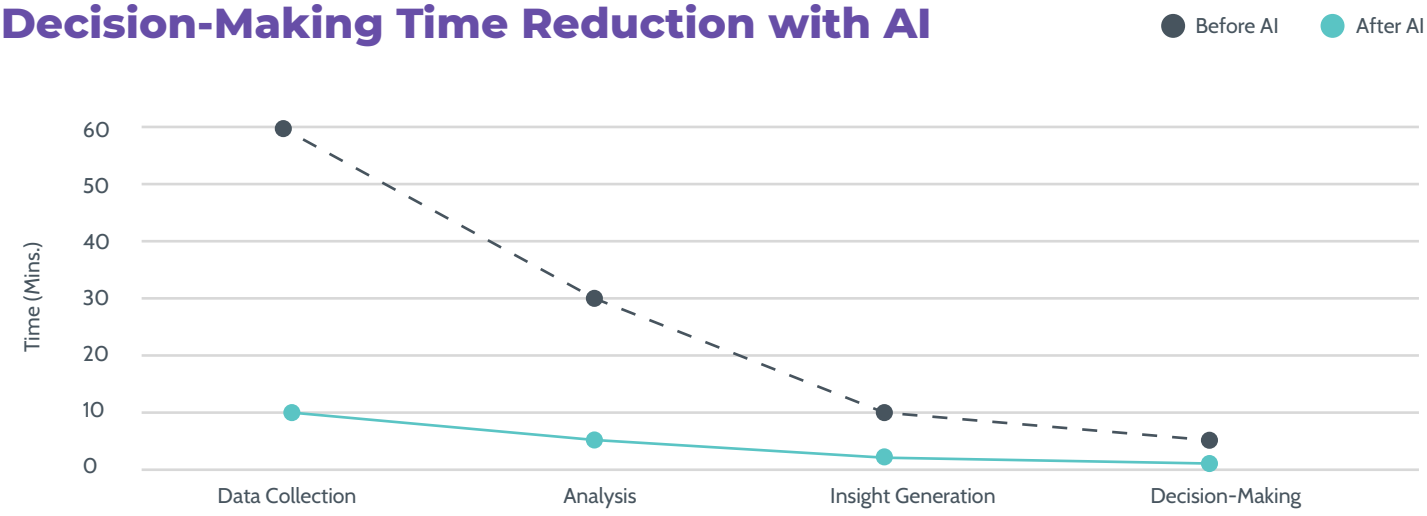
Turning Insights into Action:

AI-powered recommendations help you move from insight to impact. Whether you're reallocating space or fine-tuning layouts to improve productivity, occupancy data acts as a baseline for comparing other data sources and prioritizing the changes that matter most.

Shrinking Time from Data to Decision:

Analysis paralysis is a thing of the past. What once required weeks of manual work now takes minutes - aggregating all your occupancy data into ready-to-use reports so leaders can swiftly optimize layouts, manage capacity, and align spaces with employee needs.

Decision-Making Time Reduction with AI



Making the Case for Value

With all the buzz around AI, it is crucial to focus on tangible business outcomes rather than just technology. One effective way to start is by identifying high-impact, measurable use cases. For instance, improving meeting room utilization through predictive booking models or reducing energy consumption with AI-driven HVAC controls. These early successes not only demonstrate the value of AI but also help build internal support for broader adoption.

To effectively demonstrate the impact, it is essential to define success metrics from the outset. This might include:

- Lower costs per square foot
- Reduced equipment downtime
- Higher employee satisfaction
- Better alignment of space supply and demand

Establishing clear benchmarks helps teams track progress and make evidence-based decisions. With the right platforms, what once took weeks of analysis now happens in minutes, unlocking faster and more confident decision-making. To achieve this, deploying AI-enabled technologies and building an analytics framework and dashboards aligned with business goals can transform raw data into actionable insights. This approach not only improves efficiency but also empowers workplace and real estate teams to make informed choices grounded in real-time behavior.

The Opportunity Ahead

AI adoption in real estate is still in its early days. But momentum is growing fast. CRE and Workplace teams have a unique opportunity to lead, not just by implementing new technologies, but by redefining how the organization uses space, supports employees, and plans for the future.

That will take time, investment, and intentional change management. But it is work worth doing. The teams that start preparing now by building strong data practices, testing AI use cases, and aligning with broader business goals will be the ones best positioned to thrive in the next era of workplace strategy.

Quick Start Guide

First Steps for Implementing AI in Corporate Real Estate & Workplace

AI is no longer optional for CRE and Workplace teams—it's a necessity for future strategy.

To succeed, focus on these key areas:

1. Build a Strong Data Foundation

- Clean & Connected Data: Ensure your data (space usage, headcount, building performance) is accurate, consistently formatted, and regularly updated. Break down data silos.
- System Integration: Connect your enterprise platforms (IT, HRIS, Finance) with function-specific real estate tools.
- Clear Ownership: Assign clear ownership for data sets and establish strong data governance.

2. Assess Your Readiness – Ask These 5 Questions:

Before you begin, align with stakeholders by asking:

- 1. **What business problem are we solving?** Define a clear, outcome-based KPI (e.g., "reduce cost per visit by 15%").
- 2. **Is our CRE data ready?** Verify accuracy, governance, and connectivity across IT, HRIS, and Finance.
- 3. **Which high-value use cases offer quick wins?** Identify 2-3 pilot projects with high impact and low effort (e.g., improving meeting room utilization).
- 4. **What guardrails are in place?** Align with Legal, Security, and HR on ethics, privacy, and risk policies.
- 5. **Do we have the skills and governance?** Form an AI working group with an executive sponsor to ensure owner ship and avoid "pilot purgatory."

3. Upskill Your Workforce

- Train Your Teams: Equip staff to interact with, interpret, and act on AI insights. Training needs will vary, from technical skills to confidence in interpreting outputs.
- Foster Collaboration: Emphasize that AI success is a collaborative effort across roles and functions, not just a tech initiative.

4. Focus on High-Impact Use Cases

Move beyond basic IoT to leverage AI for:

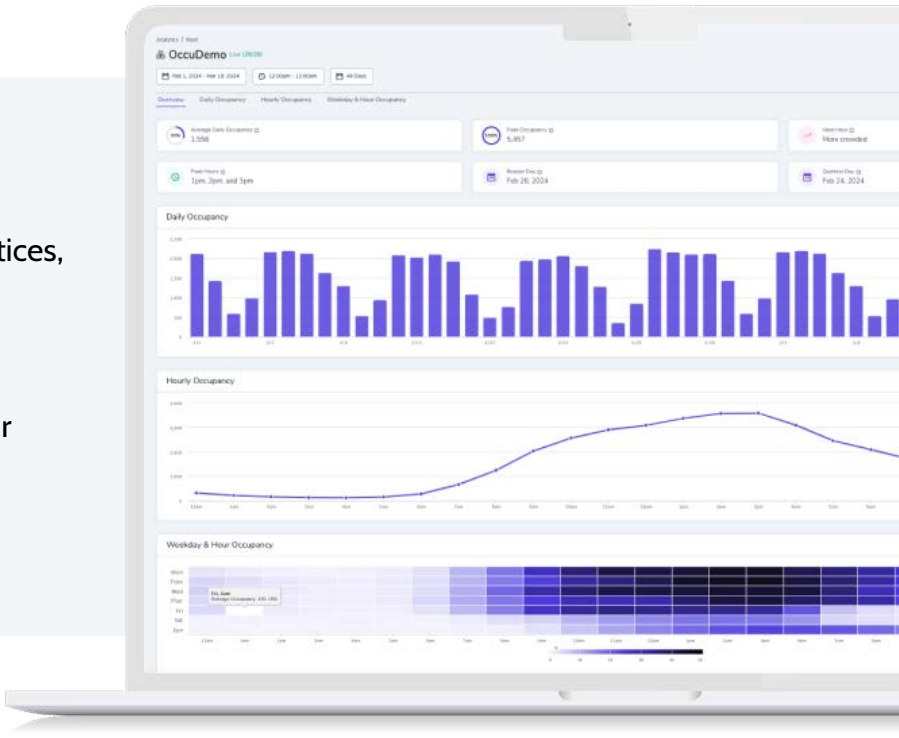
- Occupancy Planning: Use real-time data to forecast evolving space needs and inform planning.
- Portfolio Strategy: Right-size space and prioritize leases by combining occupancy insights with headcount forecasts.
- Facilities Management: Implement predictive maintenance based on sensor and equipment data.
- Workplace Services: Dynamically adjust resources (transportation, security, culinary) to match real-time demand.
- Employee Experience: Provide data-driven insights (e.g., best times to visit, avoid crowding) through dashboards.

5. Demonstrate Value & Drive Action

- Define Success Metrics: Clearly outline how you'll measure AI's impact from the outset (e.g., lower costs per square foot, increased employee satisfaction).
- Democratize Analytics: Use AI-enabled platforms to turn raw data into actionable insights for less technical teams.
- Accelerate Decisions: Leverage AI to shrink the time from data analysis to confident decision-making, transforming weeks of work into minutes.

The Opportunity:

By preparing now with strong data practices, testing AI use cases, and aligning with broader business goals, your CRE and Workplace teams can redefine how your organization uses space and supports employees in the AI-driven future.



About the Authors

Jeff Gagnon

Head of Workplace Technology at Allegro Analytics, a trusted partner for workplace and real estate teams seeking to unlock the full value of their data. Allegro combines technology optimization, advanced analytics, and intuitive reporting to surface hidden opportunities and drive better decisions.

Linus Grasel

Cofounder and CIO at Occuspace, the fastest and easiest-to-deploy, AI-enabled occupancy sensing platform. Occuspace distills complex data into concise, actionable insights in minutes, helping workplace teams move from data to decision faster than ever before.