

THE HEART OF ARIZONA INNOVATION

SILICON OASIS™

MAGAZINE

BREAKTHRU MEDICINE
SECURES \$60M SERIES A



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BREAKTHRU
MEDICINE

● **REVOLUTIONIZING
CANCER THERAPIES**

**INSIDE THEIR
PATH TO SUCCESS**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Editor	page 4
Vision and Impact	page 5
Silicon Oasis Community	page 6
Venture Capital	page 14
Funding Rounds	page 16
Economic Dev.	page 27
Founder Spotlights	page 31
Ambassadors	page 38
Our Team	page 40



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EDITOR



Kyle Macdonald
Editor-in-Chief,
Silicon Oasis

As **Silicon Oasis** moves into 2026, the focus is less on what's emerging and more on what's holding.

This issue reflects an ecosystem that's beginning to show its shape. Student builders are staying with problems for years, not semesters. Founders are making quieter decisions around execution, pricing, and systems rather than chasing visibility. Capital is moving more deliberately, toward technologies that operate inside real constraints: hospitals, buildings, regulatory environments—rather than around them.

Across **Arizona**, the pattern is consistent. Growth isn't coming from a single corridor or moment. It's distributed, steady, and tied to people who are willing to do the unglamorous work: iterating, validating, fixing what breaks, and showing up again.

Phoenix's rise isn't presented here as a victory lap. It's context. What matters more is how builders are responding as conditions tighten and expectations rise. The stories in this issue point to an ecosystem learning how to function under pressure—not perfectly, but honestly.

Kyle MacDonald
Co-Founder, Silicon Oasis



VISION & IMPACT

Transforming Arizona into a global tech hub led by local founders, built for the future.

Silicon Oasis is a nonprofit dedicated to uniting Arizona's tech ecosystem. Our mission is to strengthen the local innovation economy by bringing together founders, investors, and entrepreneurs—and by creating spaces where collaboration can thrive.

We do this in three key ways:

- Centralizing the Ecosystem through startup-focused events and practical workshops led by experienced builders and funders.
- Cultivating Community by fostering authentic, expectation-free connections that go beyond traditional networking.
- Spotlighting Talent with dynamic video podcasts and media that highlight Arizona's most promising innovators.



AZ'S DEFENSE TECH MOMENT

Inside Manifest West and the moment Arizona's defense-tech ecosystem moved from conversation to fieldwork.

In early February 2026, Phoenix hosted Manifest West 2026, a two-day convening designed to bring together founders, investors, government leaders, and mission-driven technologists focused on rebuilding America's industrial and national security capabilities. Held February 3–4 and timed alongside the Waste Management Phoenix Open, the event created a unique environment where serious conversations about defense technology could move beyond theory and into tangible demonstrations.

Manifest West was built with a clear objective: accelerate the development and deployment of technologies that serve both defense and commercial markets. Rather than focusing solely on networking or panel discussions, the event emphasized practical outcomes—unlocking capital for emerging companies, aligning private-sector innovation with government mission needs, and shortening the traditional timelines between technology development and operational deployment. The result was a format that felt far closer to a field exercise than a traditional technology conference.



A. Day one focused heavily on counter-UAS (counter-drone) technology, one of the fastest-growing areas in defense innovation. Attendees witnessed live demonstrations of drone threats and the technologies designed to neutralize them, including kinetic solutions and defensive systems tested in real-world conditions. Several of these demonstrations were hosted at facilities operated by Dillon Aero, giving participants direct exposure to systems and operational environments rarely seen outside of defense programs.

For many participants, the hands-on nature of the experience was a defining feature. Instead of simply watching presentations, attendees interacted with technologies and operators in environments designed to replicate real-world mission constraints.

Silicon Oasis Community

Some participants even traveled by Blackhawk helicopter to observe and participate in counter-drone exercises—an experience that underscored how serious the event’s organizers were about moving beyond slide decks and into operational understanding. This practical format carried into the event’s broader “Tech Rodeo” concept—live capability demonstrations designed to allow investors, government stakeholders, and operators to evaluate technologies based on real performance rather than theoretical potential.

Supporting partners such as Persistent Systems provided networking infrastructure that powered several of the demonstrations, highlighting how emerging technologies are increasingly integrated into complex operational environments.

Beyond the demonstrations, Manifest West also featured strategic conversations, including a fireside chat with Sierra Nevada Corporation CEO Fatih Ozmen, interviewed by Jack Selby, and a capital-focused panel with leaders from Founders Fund, In-Q-Tel, and Anduril Industries.

For Arizona’s tech ecosystem, the event signals real momentum. By convening roughly 350 founders, investors, and government leaders, Manifest West demonstrated that Arizona is becoming a serious hub for defense-tech innovation.



Stay tuned for more from Silicon Oasis as we continue highlighting the people, companies, and events shaping Arizona’s innovation economy. From major convenings like Manifest West to upcoming ecosystem initiatives and founder spotlights, the momentum is only growing. Visit thesiliconoasis.org to explore the community, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Our new Chief of Staff, Brenda Bechara.

The Silicon Oasis team is pleased to welcome Brenda Bechara as our new Chief of Staff, supporting the continued growth of Arizona’s innovation community and helping expand the organization’s programming and partnerships.

Brenda brings a multidisciplinary background spanning product design, user experience research, and ecosystem building within early-stage technology environments. She has worked across both startups and emerging innovation initiatives, helping teams translate complex ideas into accessible products, clear systems, and scalable programs.

Most recently, she has been deeply involved in Arizona’s growing technology ecosystem—contributing to founder events, startup storytelling, and strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the visibility and connectivity of the region’s builders, investors, and operators.

Her community infrastructure and product development experience aligns closely with Silicon Oasis’s mission to build a stronger, more collaborative innovation hub for Arizona.



Continuing her work in Product Design

In addition to her role with Silicon Oasis, Brenda is a product designer at MedServeRX — a health-tech company focused on modernizing how medications are tracked, stored, and managed inside healthcare environments.

A Note From Brenda:

“Arizona is at a fascinating moment right now. Incredible companies are being built here quietly; engineers solving difficult problems, founders building businesses, investors backing ideas.

What excites me about joining Silicon Oasis is the opportunity to help bring more of those stories to the surface and create more moments where the community can actually connect.

Events, programming, and storytelling matter more than people sometimes realize. They're how founders meet their first investors, how operators find their next company, and how entire ecosystems start to recognize their own momentum.

My goal as Program Manager is to build the kind of environments where those connections happen naturally. Thoughtful events. Strong partnerships. Spaces where serious conversations about building and scaling companies can take place.

Arizona's tech community already has the talent and ambition. What we're building now is the infrastructure that helps it grow faster.

Intersection of Tech and Healthcare

Alongside my work with Silicon Oasis, I recently joined MedServe, a health-technology company focused on modernizing how medications are tracked, stored, and managed inside healthcare environments.

MedServe develops smart medication cabinets and software systems that help hospitals and care facilities manage medications more securely and efficiently. It's a space where technology directly impacts patient safety, clinical workflows, and operational reliability. My role there focuses on product design and user experience, helping improve how medical staff interact with these



systems—from cabinet hardware to the digital software that powers them. Healthcare environments are fast, high-stakes places.

Tools used in those environments have to be intuitive, reliable, and thoughtfully designed. That challenge is exactly the work that motivates me.

Looking Ahead

Between Silicon Oasis and MedServe, I'm fortunate to be working in two spaces that are both pushing forward in meaningful ways. One is helping build the infrastructure of Arizona's technology ecosystem. The other is helping build technology that improves healthcare operations. Outside of work, you can find me pampering my dog Teddy with fashionable accessories (pictured).

Arizona has long been a place where builders show up and figure things out. What we're seeing now is the next phase: an ecosystem that is becoming more connected, more visible, and more ambitious.

I'm excited to be a contribution to this story.”

PITCH NIGHT RETURNS

January 28 Gathering Unites Founders, Investors, and Leaders for Real Talk and Real Opportunities

Arizona's proptech ecosystem was on full display at the recent Groundbreakers Mixer, hosted by Silicon Oasis pillar AZ PropTech Collective, where founders, investors, and industry leaders gathered at the nectarflow® Innovation & AI Lab in Scottsdale for an evening focused on the future of real estate technology.

The event highlighted the rapidly growing intersection between traditional real estate, venture capital, and emerging technology across the Phoenix metro area. What began as a networking session quickly evolved into deeper conversations as entrepreneurs, operators, and investors exchanged ideas about how technology is reshaping everything from property operations to construction workflows.

One of the evening's highlights was a discussion led by Ted Best, founder of nectarflow, who spoke about the growing role of artificial intelligence in real estate operations and innovation. Best shared insights into how AI-driven tools are helping owners, operators, and developers better manage assets, analyze data, and unlock efficiencies across the built environment.



The program also featured insights from Ville Houttu, founder of Privv, who discussed building and scaling a proptech company in Arizona. Houttu highlighted the advantages of launching technology ventures in the Phoenix market, including access to industry expertise, a supportive startup community, and proximity to one of the fastest-growing real estate markets in the United States.

Joining the conversation was Aryash, founder of Binsr Inspect, who offered a founder's perspective on building solutions that address real operational challenges within the real estate ecosystem. His insights emphasized the importance of creating technology that directly serves the needs of developers, investors, and property operators.

Silicon Oasis Community

Throughout the evening, attendees moved between conversations, panels, and informal discussions inside the innovation lab environment, creating a collaborative atmosphere where ideas could move quickly from concept to opportunity.

The message from the Groundbreakers Mixer was clear: Arizona isn't just building cities—it's building the technologies that will shape how those cities are designed, operated, and experienced.

Events like this highlight how Arizona's real estate sector is increasingly intersecting with software, data, and artificial intelligence. As founders continue to launch new solutions and investors look for the next generation of real estate technology, Phoenix is becoming a natural testing ground for innovation in the built environment. With rapid population growth, active development, and a collaborative startup culture, the region offers a unique opportunity for proptech companies to build, pilot, and scale new ideas.

As Silicon Oasis continues to bring together leaders across sectors, events like the Groundbreakers Mixer demonstrate the growing strength of Arizona's proptech community and its role in the state's broader innovation economy.



By connecting founders, operators, and investors in spaces designed for collaboration, the ecosystem is laying the groundwork for the next wave of real estate innovation emerging from the desert.



STORY BEHIND THE SILICON OASIS NAME

A shared identity for Arizona's growing community of builders.

By Kyle Macdonald and Josue Romero

Co-Founders of the Silicon Oasis Initiative Inc. and Builders of Arizona's Founder-Led Innovation Ecosystem

We didn't choose the name Silicon Oasis to escape the desert.

We chose it to celebrate it.

Phoenix is a beautiful desert city. Its landscape is part of its identity — expansive skies, rugged mountains, and a kind of clarity that makes everything feel possible. People don't live here despite the desert.

They live here because of it. The desert teaches resilience, creativity, and intentional growth. Nothing thrives here by accident. That idea sits at the heart of the Silicon Oasis name.

Yes, Silicon Oasis is the name of our nonprofit organization. But it's also something bigger: a shared brand for the ecosystem we're building together.



An oasis isn't separate from the desert. It is the desert at its best — a gathering place where resources converge, communities form, and momentum becomes visible.

That is exactly what we want Arizona's innovation ecosystem to represent.

An oasis has always been a symbol of connection. Historically, it's where travelers met, trade routes crossed, and cultures exchanged ideas. It wasn't just a stop along the journey. It was a destination. People planned routes around it. They trusted it. They built around it.

We believe Arizona is becoming that kind of place for founders, investors, and creators.

Silicon Oasis Community

For too long, the conversation around tech ecosystems has centered on a handful of coastal cities. The assumption has been that innovation happens elsewhere, and everyone else is catching up. Silicon Oasis rejects that framing. We're not trying to replicate another region.

We're building a model rooted in our own geography, culture, and values. Phoenix itself is proof of what intentional design can achieve. A major global city rising from the desert is not an accident. It's a result of infrastructure, collaboration, and long-term thinking. Silicon Oasis extends that same mindset into entrepreneurship. We're building systems that help people connect, share resources, and amplify each other's work.

An oasis is sustained by cooperation. Water is protected. Access is shared. Everyone has a stake in keeping it alive. That metaphor matters. A healthy ecosystem isn't controlled by one organization or one leader. It thrives when many groups contribute to the same environment. Silicon Oasis exists to strengthen that environment.

Through media, we tell Arizona's stories so the world sees what's happening here. Through events, we create spaces where real relationships form. Through partnerships, we reduce fragmentation and help organizations work in alignment instead of isolation. The goal isn't ownership. It's irrigation — creating flow so ideas, capital,



and talent move more freely across the ecosystem.

The name is intentionally aspirational. It reminds us what we're working toward: an ecosystem where founders feel supported, investors feel confident, and newcomers immediately sense momentum. When someone hears "Silicon Oasis," we want them to picture a place where innovation grows naturally because the environment supports it.

Branding is culture in shorthand. It's a declaration of identity. Silicon Oasis declares that Arizona is not defined by limitations. It is defined by what can flourish here when people build with purpose. The desert is not something to overcome. It's a foundation that shapes our character — resilient, creative, and collaborative.

We are building an ecosystem people don't just pass through. We're building one they choose to stay in, invest in, and grow with. An oasis doesn't replace the desert. It reveals its potential.

And that is what Silicon Oasis is meant to do.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR COPPER SKY CAPITAL

AZ-VC rebrands as Copper Sky Capital, expanding vision for investing in emerging startups.

Arizona's venture capital landscape is entering a new phase with the rebranding of AZ-VC to Copper Sky Capital, signaling a broader vision for investing in high-growth technology startups across North America. Founded in 2021, the firm has quickly become one of the most prominent venture investors in the region, raising more than \$115 million for its inaugural fund and backing a growing portfolio of early-stage software companies.

Led by managing partners Jason Pressman, a former partner at Shasta Ventures, and Jack Selby, a PayPal alumnus and experienced investor, Copper Sky Capital focuses primarily on Seed and Series A investments in companies demonstrating early product-market fit and strong growth potential.

The rebrand reflects the firm's expanding mandate: supporting founders in regions often overlooked by traditional venture capital hubs like Silicon Valley, New York, and Boston. While these coastal markets attract the majority of venture funding, Copper Sky believes many of the most promising startups are emerging in other parts of the country where talent, innovation, and university ecosystems are rapidly developing.



Copper Sky Capital remains sector-agnostic, with a particular interest in AI-powered software and scalable digital technologies. Beyond capital, the firm has assembled a network of experienced operating partners who work alongside founders to help build durable companies and navigate the challenges of scaling.

For Arizona's startup ecosystem, the rebrand represents more than a name change. It signals a growing ambition: positioning the state—and other rising innovation markets—as meaningful players in the future of venture capital.

As Arizona's technology sector continues to grow, the presence of active venture firms like Copper Sky Capital plays an increasingly important role in supporting founders at the earliest stages of company building. Access to local capital, mentorship, and strategic guidance can be the difference between a startup relocating to a coastal tech hub or scaling its operations within Arizona.

Venture Capital

The firm's evolution also reflects a broader shift happening across the national venture landscape. While Silicon Valley and other traditional centers still dominate funding headlines, emerging innovation markets are producing a growing number of high-quality startups. Cities like Phoenix, Austin, Miami, and Denver are attracting talent, capital, and entrepreneurs seeking strong ecosystems paired with lower operating costs and a higher quality of life.

By expanding its identity and investment mandate under the Copper Sky Capital name, the firm is positioning itself to participate in this next era of venture capital—one where world-class companies can be built far beyond the traditional coastal corridors.

This shift is particularly visible in Arizona, where the startup ecosystem has matured rapidly over the past decade. Anchored by institutions like Arizona State University, a growing base of experienced founders, and an influx of talent relocating from larger coastal markets, the region has become an increasingly attractive place to launch and scale technology companies.

As this momentum continues, venture firms such as Copper Sky Capital are helping bridge an important gap in the local funding landscape. Early-stage founders often struggle to access institutional capital close to home, which historically pushed many startups to relocate to traditional venture hubs.



By building a firm rooted in Arizona while investing across North America, Copper Sky Capital aims to ensure founders can access capital, mentorship, and strategic guidance while remaining connected to emerging innovation ecosystems like Phoenix.

Early-stage founders building software, AI, and scalable technology companies—particularly those approaching Seed or Series A—are encouraged to connect with the team at Copper Sky Capital. Startups with strong product-market traction and ambitious growth plans can learn more or reach out through copperskycapital.com. The Silicon Oasis community also extends its appreciation to Copper Sky Capital for their continued commitment to supporting founders and helping strengthen Arizona's rapidly growing startup ecosystem.

BREAKTHRU MEDICINE'S \$60M SERIES A ROUND

Phoenix health-tech startup advancing next-gen therapeutics designed to improve treatment of complex diseases.

Phoenix's life sciences ecosystem

continues to gather momentum. The latest signal comes from Breakthru Medicine, a fast-growing biotechnology company that recently announced a \$60 million Series A financing round, positioning the company to accelerate clinical development and expand its therapeutic platform.

The funding marks one of the more notable biotech raises in the region in recent months, reinforcing a broader trend: Arizona is quietly becoming a serious environment for biomedical innovation.

Breakthru Medicine operates at the intersection of advanced therapeutics, clinical translation, and next-generation treatment development. The company is focused on creating therapies designed to address diseases that traditional approaches have struggled to treat effectively.

Rather than pursuing incremental improvements, the team is working on technologies that rethink how treatments are delivered, how therapies interact with



the company's platform centers on building precision therapeutic solutions—approaches designed to more accurately target disease mechanisms while minimizing unintended side effects that often accompany conventional treatments.

For physicians and patients, the implications are significant: more precise therapies could mean better treatment outcomes, fewer complications, and improved quality of life for individuals navigating serious medical conditions.

Funding Rounds

A Team Around Translational Medicine

Behind Breakthru Medicine is a team that blends biomedical research, clinical expertise, and startup execution.

The company was founded by experienced leaders in biotechnology and clinical innovation who have spent years working at the intersection of academic research and real-world patient care.

Many of the individuals involved in the company's development bring backgrounds in drug development, translational medicine, molecular biology, and health-technology commercialization. That combination matters.

Scientific discovery alone rarely brings therapies to patients. The real challenge lies in moving breakthroughs from laboratory experiments into scalable treatments that can be manufactured, regulated, and delivered safely inside clinical settings.

Breakthru Medicine leadership team includes scientists, physicians, and operators who understand the complexity of moving therapies through clinical trials, regulatory pathways, and commercialization strategies.

Their collective experience spans major research institutions, venture-backed biotech companies, and pharmaceutical development programs.



Steve Potts, PhD, MBA
Chief Executive Officer



Mark Mulvihill, PhD
Chief Science Officer



Brian Barnett, MD
Chief Medical Officer

It's the kind of multidisciplinary team increasingly required to move modern medicine forward.

Translating Research Into Real Therapies

Breakthru Medicine's approach focuses on advancing a pipeline of therapies designed to address difficult-to-treat conditions through precision biological mechanisms and novel delivery strategies.

In simple terms, the company is working to build treatments that interact with the body in more targeted ways—reducing systemic side effects while improving therapeutic effectiveness. This category of innovation sits at the heart of modern biotechnology.

Instead of relying solely on traditional pharmaceuticals, researchers are increasingly developing biologically engineered therapies, targeted molecules, and advanced treatment platforms that can more precisely intervene in disease processes.

Breakthru Medicine is positioning itself within that next wave. The company's technology platform allows scientists to design therapies that better interact with the body's own biological systems, opening potential pathways for treating diseases that previously had limited therapeutic options.

Funding Rounds



For patients, the promise is straightforward: smarter treatments that work more effectively and more safely. For the healthcare system, it represents a shift toward therapies that address root causes rather than simply managing symptoms.

Role of Phoenix in Biotech's Next Chapter

While biotechnology hubs like Boston and San Diego often dominate headlines, Phoenix has been steadily building its own life sciences foundation.

Institutions such as Arizona State University, the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen), Mayo Clinic Arizona, and Banner Health have helped anchor a growing research and clinical infrastructure in the region.

A new generation of biotech startups. Breakthru Medicine is one of the latest examples of how Arizona's research

environment, clinical networks, and entrepreneurial culture are starting to converge.

Startups in this space require more than laboratory innovation. They need access to clinical partners, research facilities, regulatory expertise, and investment capital capable of supporting long development cycles. Phoenix is increasingly providing all of those ingredients.

A \$60 Million Step Forward

The newly announced \$60 million Series A funding round provides Breakthru Medicine with the capital required to accelerate its next phase of development. The investment will support several key priorities for the company.

First, the team plans to advance its lead therapeutic programs through the next stages of clinical development, generating the data required for regulatory progress and eventual patient use. Second, the company intends to expand its scientific and operational team, bringing in additional expertise across research, clinical development, and regulatory strategy.

Third, the funding enables continued investment in the company's underlying technology platform, ensuring that Breakthru Medicine can expand its pipeline beyond a single therapeutic candidate.

Series A rounds of this size are particularly meaningful in biotechnology, where bringing a therapy to market often requires sustained investment across multiple stages of development. The financing signals strong investor confidence not only in the company's technology, but also in the leadership team guiding its strategy.

HELIA CARE RAISES \$3M TO MODERNIZE PROCUREMENT

Scottsdale-based startup Helia Care is gaining momentum in the healthcare technology sector after raising \$3 million in new funding, led by In Revenue Capital with participation from Habanero Ventures. The company is tackling one of healthcare’s most persistent operational challenges: the complex and inefficient process hospitals use to purchase high-cost medical devices during procedures.

Helia Care’s platform focuses on “bill-only” transactions—purchases made during or after surgeries when hospitals acquire devices such as implants or specialized tools from suppliers rather than pulling them from inventory. These transactions represent a major portion of hospital spending, accounting for roughly 50% of supply chain expenses and 60% of net patient revenue across many health systems.

To solve this problem, Helia Care built a cloud-based procurement network that connects hospitals, suppliers, and distributors through a unified digital workflow. The platform aligns clinical ordering with pre-negotiated supplier contracts, helping prevent pricing errors



off-contract purchases, and administrative delays that can lead to waste or fraud.

The company’s technology functions as a real-time transaction network, allowing providers and suppliers to structure and confirm purchasing details before procedures begin. This streamlined “digital handshake” replaces the manual paperwork traditionally associated with bill-only transactions and allows hospitals to execute procurement with the simplicity of a one-click digital transaction.

Helia says the results are significant. Hospitals using the platform report average savings of about \$1.85 million per location, while suppliers benefit from faster payments and improved cash flow.

The startup has also seen strong growth. Revenue increased 130% in 2025, and the company expects to onboard 60 to 100 additional hospitals as adoption accelerates nationwide.

Funding Rounds

Building on this momentum, Helia Care plans to use the newly raised capital to expand its technology platform, scale its hospital network, and deepen integrations across the healthcare supply chain. A key focus will be accelerating adoption among hospital systems and strengthening partnerships with medical device manufacturers and distributors.

By creating a centralized transaction network, Helia Care aims to simplify the traditionally fragmented communication between surgeons, hospital procurement teams, and suppliers. Instead of relying on manual paperwork, emails, and post-procedure reconciliation, the platform enables stakeholders to align on pricing, contracts, and product details before procedures take place. This shift not only reduces administrative burden but also improves transparency and compliance across the procurement process.

For hospitals facing mounting financial pressure, solutions like Helia Care's can play a meaningful role in improving margins without compromising patient care.

By ensuring purchases occur within approved contracts and eliminating pricing discrepancies, healthcare providers can reduce unnecessary spending while maintaining operational efficiency.



As the healthcare industry continues to digitize its infrastructure, companies focused on workflow modernization and financial transparency are becoming increasingly valuable. With strong early traction and a growing network of providers and suppliers, Helia Care is positioning itself to become a foundational platform for how hospitals manage high-value medical device transactions in the years ahead.

Silicon Oasis is proud to spotlight Helia Care as part of Arizona's growing innovation ecosystem. Startups like Helia Care represent the kind of meaningful technology being built in the state—solving real-world problems in critical industries like healthcare. Their progress reflects the momentum and talent driving Arizona's expanding startup and technology community.

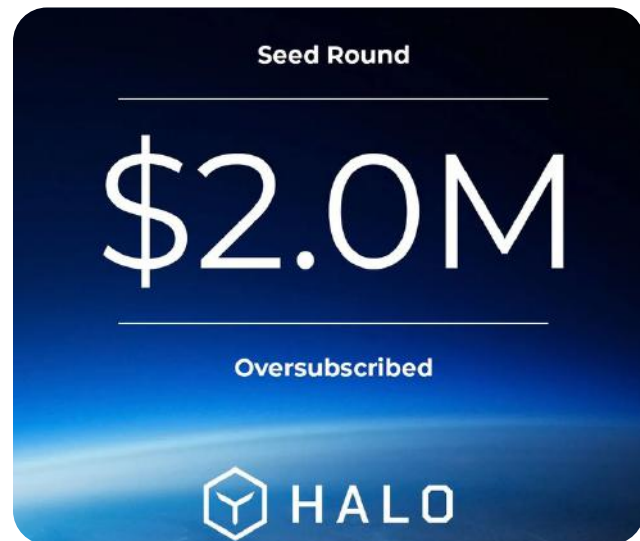
CLARITY AT ENTERPRISE SCALE

HALO Secures \$2M to Build the AI Decision Platform Turning Operational Chaos Into Confident Action

Picture this: an executive team at a fast-growing company opens their laptop on a Monday morning and instantly sees every strategic question answered — market shifts, operational bottlenecks, financial signals, and competitive threats — all distilled into clear, confident recommendations without waiting on analyst cycles or cross-department alignment. That's the future HALO is building, and it's taking shape right here in Arizona's innovation corridor.

A Milestone Moment for Arizona's Enterprise Tech Scene

In early 2026, HALO announced the close of its \$2 million seed round, a major step forward for the Phoenix-based startup redefining how complex organizations make decisions. The raise brings together a coalition of operators, founders, and early-stage investors who see what HALO's customers do: enterprise decision-making is broken, slow, and expensive — and the companies that fix it will shape the next decade of business performance. For HALO, the funding isn't just capital — it's fuel for a category-defining platform built in Arizona and now scaling nationally.



The Executive Decision Platform at the Core

HALO's product is not another dashboard, analytics tool, or AI chatbot. It's an Executive Decision Platform — a system that ingests a company's data, understands its goals, and delivers strategic clarity without the noise. Instead of leaders spending weeks gathering reports or reconciling conflicting metrics, HALO gives them a unified, real-time view of what matters most. The platform blends proprietary AI models with deep operational logic, surfacing insights that help executives move faster and with higher conviction. Early customers report dramatic reductions in decision latency, improved cross-team alignment, and a measurable lift in execution speed.

Funding Rounds

Built by Operators, Backed by Builders

Founded by Arizona operators who have lived the pain of slow, fragmented decision-making, HALO was designed from day one to solve real enterprise problems — not theoretical ones. The team’s background in multi-location operations, data architecture, and executive leadership shaped a product that feels less like software and more like a strategic partner.

The seed round accelerates hiring across engineering, data science, and customer success, with HALO planning to deepen its footprint in Phoenix while expanding nationally. Investors point to the team’s operator DNA and the platform’s early traction as key reasons they believe HALO is positioned to lead a new category in enterprise tech.

Why Arizona?

HALO’s decision to build in Arizona is no accident. The state has become a magnet for enterprise operators, multi-location brands, and fast-scaling companies that need better visibility across their organizations. With proximity to talent, a thriving founder community, and a growing base of enterprise customers, Phoenix offers the perfect environment for a company focused on operational excellence. As Arizona continues to attract high-growth companies and technical talent, platforms like HALO strengthen the state’s reputation as a place where serious business technology is built — not just tested.



A Signal of What’s Coming

HALO’s raise is more than a funding announcement. It’s a sign that Arizona’s tech ecosystem is producing companies capable of reshaping how industries operate. As enterprises face increasing pressure to move faster, make smarter decisions, and navigate complexity at scale, HALO’s platform arrives at exactly the right moment. For executives tired of drowning in data or making decisions with partial visibility, HALO offers something rare: clarity backed by real operational intelligence. With this seed round closed and momentum building, HALO’s rise is another unmistakable signal that the future of executive decision-making is being built in the desert.

THE NEW OPERATING SYSTEM FOR THE PHYSICAL WORLD

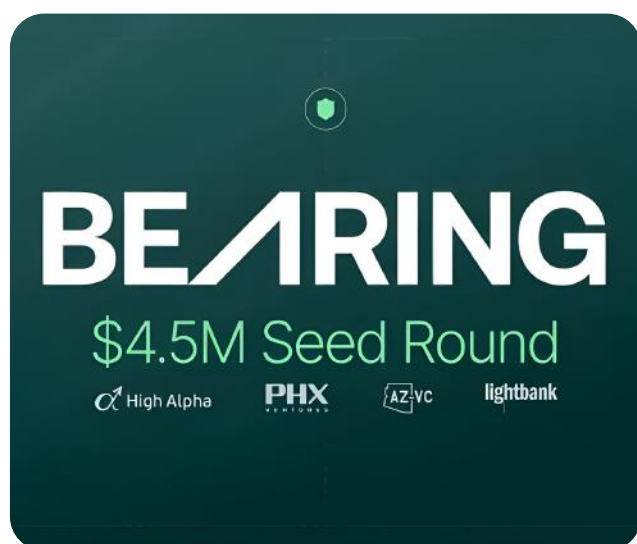
Bearing's \$4.5M Raise Signals a Shift Toward AI-Enabled, End-to-End Visibility in Modern Security Operations

Physical security has grown exponentially more demanding. Enterprises now oversee vast campuses, countless connected devices, and a constant stream of alerts — all while teams juggle outdated tools that create gaps, delays, and unnecessary risk. Most organizations are still operating with fragmented systems built for a different era. Bearing steps into that reality with a modern, AI-driven platform designed to bring order, coordination, and real-time clarity to a part of the enterprise long overdue for reinvention.

A Turning Point for Physical Security

In early 2026, Bearing closed a \$4.5 million seed round, a moment that signals something bigger than a startup milestone. Physical security teams are still expected to protect people and property with tools built for another era, even as cyber teams operate with modern automation and AI-driven workflows.

The round was led by AZ-VC with support from High Alpha, PHX Ventures, and Lightbank.



A New Operating System for the Physical World

Bearing isn't trying to bolt AI onto old tools or patch together legacy systems. It's building a true operating layer for physical security — one that centralizes incidents, assets, alerts, guard activity, and response workflows into a single, intelligent environment. By building directly on the ServiceNow AI ecosystem, Bearing plugs into the same backbone enterprises already use to run their digital operations.

Early adopters are already reporting faster response times, fewer operational gaps, and a level of visibility that simply didn't exist before.

Funding Rounds

Built for the People Who Keep Organizations Safe

Bearing's founders didn't come at this problem from the outside. They spent years inside large, complex organizations watching security teams fight uphill battles with tools that weren't built for the scale or speed of modern operations. They saw the friction, the manual work, the constant pressure to do more with less — and they built a platform that respects the weight of that responsibility.

Their approach is pragmatic: meet teams where they already work, integrate with the systems they already rely on, and give them automation that actually reduces workload instead of adding more dashboards to check.

Arizona's Role in the Next Security Wave

Arizona has quietly become a proving ground for companies tackling operationally heavy, mission-critical problems. With a deep bench of enterprise operators, a fast-growing tech workforce, and a culture that rewards practical innovation, the state offers fertile ground for a company like Bearing.

Local leaders see the company as part of a broader shift: Arizona isn't just attracting high-growth startups — it's producing companies capable of reshaping how industries function at scale. Bearing's rise reinforces that momentum, positioning the region as a hub for the next generation of security and risk technology.



Modular Magic for Seamless Adoption

Bearing's \$4.5M raise comes as enterprises struggle to unify digital and physical security across growing footprints and increasingly connected environments. The gap between what security teams need and what their tools deliver is widening fast.

Bearing closes that gap with a platform built for speed, clarity, and coordinated response — and the new capital positions the company to scale that impact far beyond Arizona.

As the industry shifts toward a unified physical security operating system, it's becoming clear that the next wave of security innovation is being built in the desert.

AZ STARTUP TL;DR PRESEED

TL;DR clipping the future of live streaming, raised \$750k pre-seed round.

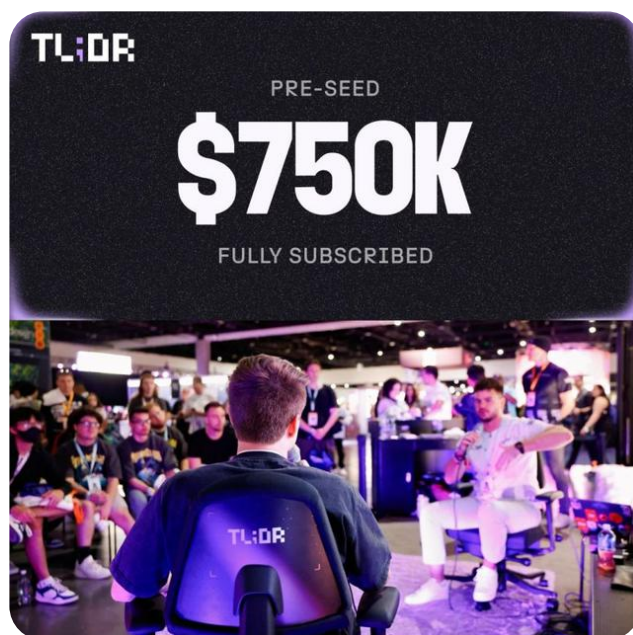
TL;DR is gaining traction in the creator economy with AI-powered tools that turn livestream moments into instant shareable content.

Live streaming has become one of the fastest-growing formats in digital media, powering everything from gaming broadcasts and product launches to live events and creator communities.

Yet for most streamers, one challenge persists: the best moments often disappear into hours of footage once a stream ends. A Tempe-based startup believes it has a solution.

TL;DR, a livestreaming technology company founded in Arizona, is building software designed to capture those moments in real time. The platform automatically identifies and clips highlights during live broadcasts, allowing creators and audiences to instantly replay and share the most exciting segments of a stream.

The company recently announced a \$750,000 pre-seed funding round, an



early milestone that will help accelerate development of the platform and expand its growing team.

For Arizona's technology ecosystem, the announcement represents another signal that the Valley's startup scene is expanding into new corners of the digital media economy.

A Platform Built for the Speed of Culture

The idea behind TL;DR is straightforward but powerful. Modern audiences consume content quickly. Short clips and highlight moments often travel farther online than full-length broadcasts. Yet for most streamers, finding those moments requires reviewing hours of video after the stream ends. TL;DR removes that friction.

Funding Rounds

The company's AI-powered platform automatically generates highlight clips as the stream happens, surfacing the best moments instantly and displaying them directly alongside the broadcast.

For creators, that means less time editing and more time engaging with audiences. For viewers, it offers an easier way to jump into the action without scrolling through long recordings.

The concept has resonated strongly within gaming and streaming communities, where live interaction and viral moments often define the success of a broadcast.

The team describes the technology as “instant replay for livestreaming”—a tool designed to capture and distribute the moments that make digital culture move.

A Team Built Around Creator Economy

Leading the company is Ben Dixon, founder and CEO of TL;DR. Dixon has spent years working in digital media and content communities, observing how livestreaming has evolved into one of the internet's most dynamic formats.

His experience in the creator economy helped shape the vision for TL;DR: tools that help streamers grow their audiences without adding more work to their already demanding schedules.



Around him is a small but multidisciplinary team bringing together expertise in product design, engineering, community engagement, and creator partnerships.

The company's leadership includes:

- Madi Mains, Marketing Director and Operations lead
- Neel Sarode, Creative Director
- Jonah Elias, Community Manager
- Alysha Bush, Head of Social Media
- Parker Lackey, Lead Engineer
- Jonathan Concepcion, Front-End Developer

Advisors and collaborators across technology and branding help guide the company as it continues to build out its platform.

Together, the team reflects a common pattern in modern creator-economy startups: small, agile groups that combine engineering talent with a deep understanding of online communities.

TL;DR's early traction suggests that Arizona may play a role in shaping the next generation of tools powering online creators.

AZ TECH WEEK GOES GLOBAL

Arizona's tech ecosystem steps onto global stage.

A photo from Egypt might not be where you'd expect to see Arizona Tech Week — but that's exactly the point.

As Katie Sieker recently shared while standing in front of the pyramids, Arizona's innovation story is no longer just local. It's global. After nearly two years of collaboration, planning, and ecosystem building, Arizona Tech Week is launching as a statewide platform designed to showcase the founders, investors, operators, and organizations shaping the future of the region.

Arizona Tech Week isn't a single conference or centralized gathering. Instead, it is a decentralized calendar of events that reflects the diversity and momentum of Arizona's growing technology ecosystem. Throughout the week, hundreds of gatherings will take place across the state — including founder meetups, pitch competitions, workshops, networking events, product demos, and community celebrations.

This year's Arizona Tech Week will feature more than 300 events, bringing together entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, engineers, policymakers, and students from across the state and beyond. The format allows organizations, startups, and ecosystem partners to host their own events while contributing to a shared statewide moment focused on innovation and collaboration.



The initiative is supported by partners including the Arizona Commerce Authority, local startup organizations, venture capital firms, universities, and community leaders who have worked together to elevate Arizona's growing reputation as a technology hub.

Arizona's rise as a destination for innovation has accelerated in recent years. Major semiconductor investments, a rapidly expanding startup community, and strong talent pipelines from institutions like Arizona State University are helping position the state as a place where companies can launch, scale, and build long-term impact.

Events like Arizona Tech Week provide an opportunity to bring these communities together while also telling a broader story about Arizona's future. The goal is not just to host events, but to connect the builders, amplify the ecosystem, and showcase Arizona's voice on the world stage.

Economic Development

Arizona's innovation economy has been building momentum for years, driven by a growing network of founders, venture capital firms, universities, and corporate partners. What makes Arizona Tech Week particularly powerful is its ability to bring these groups into the same conversation, even if they operate in different industries or parts of the state. By creating a shared moment of activity, the week allows the ecosystem to see itself more clearly — not as isolated pockets of innovation, but as a connected and rapidly maturing technology community.

The decentralized nature of Arizona Tech Week also reflects how modern innovation ecosystems actually grow. Breakthrough companies are often built at the intersection of different sectors — software, aerospace, AI, semiconductors, health technology, and advanced manufacturing. Arizona is increasingly becoming a place where those industries overlap, creating opportunities for collaboration that didn't exist a decade ago.

For many founders and operators, the week also serves as an opportunity to meet peers who are facing the same challenges of building companies in a fast-moving technological landscape. Conversations that begin at a small meetup or workshop often turn into partnerships, investments, or long-term friendships that strengthen the entire community.



As the ecosystem continues to mature, initiatives like Arizona Tech Week help reinforce a simple but powerful idea: Arizona is no longer just an emerging tech market — it is becoming a place where innovation is actively shaped, companies scale, and the next generation of builders come to create lasting impact.

Events throughout the week provide founders and operators with opportunities to exchange ideas, showcase their work, and build relationships that extend well beyond a single gathering. Investors gain deeper visibility into the talent and opportunities emerging across the state, while community organizations and universities help bridge the gap between research, entrepreneurship, and real-world application.

Most importantly, Arizona Tech Week reflects a shared belief across the ecosystem: when founders, investors, and community leaders collaborate, the entire region becomes stronger. By continuing to support initiatives like this, Arizona is positioning itself not just as a participant in the global innovation economy, but as a place where meaningful ideas can grow into companies that shape industries and define the future.

UPCOMING COHOST EVENT PRODUCTCAMP PHX 2026

Silicon Oasis and ProductPHX will cohost this year's ProductCamp 2026

Building better products, together.

Silicon Oasis and ProductPHX will co-host ProductCamp 2026, bringing Arizona's growing product community together for a day of collaborative learning during Arizona Tech Week.

In every successful tech ecosystem, there's a quiet but essential group of people behind the scenes: the builders who translate ideas into real products.

Product managers, designers, engineers, founders, and operators all share the same challenge—turning concepts into something customers actually use.

This spring, Arizona's product community will gather to tackle that challenge together. Silicon Oasis and ProductPHX have announced plans to co-host ProductCamp 2026, a community-driven event designed to bring together product professionals from across the Valley as part of Arizona Tech Week.

Unlike traditional conferences built around



keynote speakers and preset tracks, ProductCamp follows a different model: **the agenda is created by the attendees themselves.**

Sessions are proposed by participants, voted on by the community, and led by practitioners who are actively building products every day.

The result is a day focused less on theory and more on real conversations about product strategy, design decisions, market challenges, and lessons learned in the field.

Events

The Community Behind ProductPHX

At the center of the event is ProductPHX, a grassroots organization dedicated to strengthening Phoenix's growing product community.

Over the past several years, ProductPHX has built an active network of product managers, designers, engineers, and founders across the Valley.

Through regular meetups and collaborative events, the group creates space for professionals to exchange ideas about product strategy, user experience, and the realities of building technology.

Their flagship gathering, ProductCamp, reflects that same spirit. The event follows a participant-driven "unconference" format, where attendees propose and lead sessions based on real challenges they're facing in their work.

A Day Designed for Builders

ProductCamp 2026 will bring together professionals working across the full product lifecycle.

Product managers shaping strategy. UX designers refining user experiences. Engineers translating concepts into code. Founders navigating the realities of building companies.

The event is open to students, startups, and established companies alike,



reflecting the broad mix of talent shaping Arizona's technology ecosystem.

Throughout the day, participants will organize sessions around topics that matter most to them.

That might include discussions on:

- launching new products in competitive markets
- balancing user experience with business goals
- scaling product teams
- integrating AI into product development
- or navigating the realities of startup growth

Because the agenda is set collaboratively, the conversations tend to reflect the actual challenges product teams are facing right now.

And that's where much of the event's value comes from. Instead of hearing only from industry celebrities, attendees learn directly from peers working through similar problems.

BLUETAIL BRINGS AVIATION LOGBOOKS INTO THE AI ERA

Turning aircraft paper archives into searchable data

Aviation runs on documentation. Every inspection, repair, component change, and compliance check lives inside logbooks that determine an aircraft's value, safety, and airworthiness. Yet for decades, those records have been scattered across paper binders, scanned PDFs, and disconnected systems that make searching, verifying, and auditing slow and error-prone. Bluetail has spent years modernizing that world — and now the Scottsdale-based company is taking its biggest leap forward with the launch of aviation's first AI-powered logbook platform.

A breakthrough for an industry built on precision

Bluetail's new system can read, classify, and structure decades of aircraft records, turning hours of manual review into seconds of intelligent search. For operators, brokers, and maintenance teams, this isn't just a workflow improvement — it's a shift in how aviation manages trust, compliance, and operational readiness. A single missing entry can delay a sale or ground an aircraft; Bluetail's AI reduces that risk by making every record instantly accessible and verifiable.



A breakthrough for an industry built on precision

The platform goes far beyond digitization. Bluetail's AI understands aviation documentation: it identifies components, tracks time-limited parts, surfaces AD/SB compliance, and connects maintenance events across years of logs. Operators gain:

- Instant search across entire aircraft histories
- Automated component and lifecycle tracking
- Structured data for audits, pre-buys, and maintenance planning
- AI-generated summaries of complex maintenance records

This transforms logbooks from static archives into a living, searchable system of record.

Built for the realities of aviation

Aircraft records are legal documents, safety artifacts, and financial assets. Bluetail’s models are trained specifically on aviation documentation — not generic OCR or general-purpose AI — enabling accurate interpretation of handwritten entries, legacy formats, and decades-old maintenance logs. The result is a platform that speaks the language of aviation and respects the precision the industry demands.

Arizona’s growing aviation tech footprint

Arizona’s aviation ecosystem has been quietly building momentum for years, and Bluetail’s breakthrough adds another anchor to that trajectory. The state sits at the intersection of aerospace heritage, modern software talent, and a rapidly expanding network of operators who manage some of the country’s most active air fleets. From MRO hubs to flight schools to corporate aviation centers, Arizona has become a proving ground for companies tackling the operational and compliance challenges that define the industry. Bluetail’s rise reinforces that identity — showing that the next generation of aviation infrastructure isn’t just being adopted in Arizona, it’s being invented here.

A signal of what’s ahead

Aviation is entering a decade defined by data: aging aircraft, expanding fleets, tighter regulatory expectations, and a global push toward digital continuity.



The industry can no longer afford paper-bound processes or fragmented recordkeeping that slows audits, complicates pre-buys, or introduces avoidable risk. Bluetail’s AI-powered logbooks arrive at exactly the moment operators are demanding systems that are faster, more accurate, and built for the realities of modern aviation. By turning decades of documentation into structured, searchable intelligence, Bluetail isn’t just solving today’s pain points — it’s laying the groundwork for a future where aircraft records move as seamlessly as the aircraft themselves.

AI HYPE > AGENTIC REALITY

Why Enterprises Must Prepare for the Next Shift

By: **Mahesh Vinayagam**

AI excitement is everywhere, including across Arizona's tech hubs. But enterprise AI is fundamentally different from consumer AI. While consumers use chatbots and copilots, enterprises rely on AI to run operations, make decisions, and protect revenue. That requires more than experimentation — it requires preparation.

The Misconception: AI Can't Be Bolted On

Today, many organizations are eager to adopt AI. Business leaders hear competitors talking about automation, generative AI, and autonomous agents, and they feel pressure to act quickly. Their instant reaction would be add AI on top of their current stack. But AI cannot simply be layered on top of existing operations.

Enterprises must first ensure:

- Data is organized and accessible
- Processes are clearly understood and documented
- Workflows are structured and measurable
- Governance principles are well-defined

Without these foundations, AI initiatives often remain stuck in pilot mode, exciting demos that never deliver real business impact.



The Shift: From Automation to Agentic AI

Over the past decade, many organizations began their journey with structured automation using software to perform repetitive, rule-based tasks. This type of rules based approach also called as deterministic automation created enormous value:

- Faster processing
- Reduced manual work
- Improved operational consistency

But it also had limits. Traditional automation required precise rules, clearly defined boundaries, and constant human intervention when exceptions occurred.

Founder Spotlight

The arrival of generative AI changed this equation significantly.

Today's AI systems can:

- Understand context
- Handle ambiguity
- Communicate naturally
- Adapt to changing conditions

What once required human oversight can increasingly be handled by intelligent systems that not only assist but can also act. This is the rise of agentic AI.

The Next Frontier: Autonomy with Control

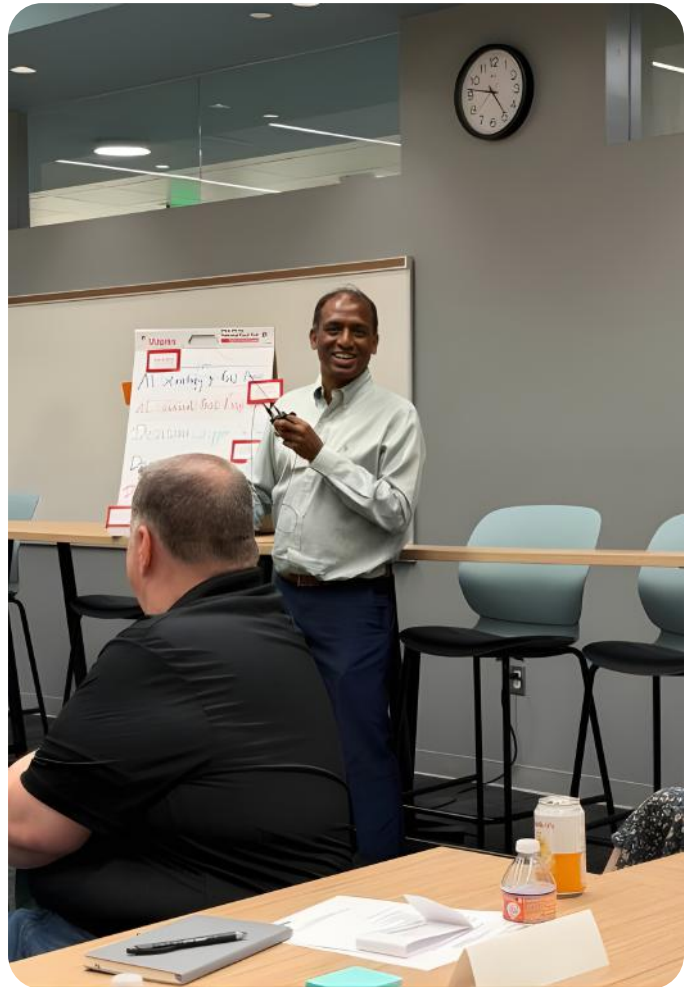
Technologies emerging today from open agent platforms to enterprise orchestration systems, all point toward a future where AI can operate semi-autonomously across workflows. Some even envision AI capable of running entire operational functions. But this future will not be defined by autonomy alone. It will be defined by balanced autonomy.

Enterprises must ensure:

- AI decisions are auditable
- Actions remain governed
- Risks are controlled
- Humans retain strategic oversight

In other words:

The goal is not AI replacing humans but AI amplifying human capability.



A Practical Roadmap

- Prepare data and processes. AI performs best when information is structured and workflows are clear.
- Document how the business works. If teams can't explain a process, AI can't automate it.
- Define human involvement. Judgment-heavy decisions stay human-led.
- Start with rule-based shared services. Finance, HR, Procurement, and IT Support offer quick wins.
- Apply AI to core operations. Use AI to remove repetitive work in service, operations, sales support, and supply chain.
- Introduce autonomy gradually. Let AI recommend, then act, with guardrails.
- Iterate continuously. AI adoption is an ongoing evolution; pace investments and stay flexible.

Founder Spotlight



Why Arizona Is Uniquely Positioned

Arizona's growing tech ecosystem offers a powerful advantage for this transition. Unlike traditional tech hubs, Arizona combines:

- Strong enterprise industries
- Practical innovation culture
- Collaborative communities like Silicon Oasis
- Access to real operational challenges, not just theoretical ones

This environment makes the region an ideal proving ground for responsible, outcome-driven AI adoption.

The Path Forward

The AI conversation is shifting from hype to execution. Winners will be the organizations that prepare well, build strong operational foundations, and balance autonomy with governance.

AI adoption is not a one-time project; it is an ongoing evolution. With innovation accelerating around us, we have only just scratched the surface.

So do not exhaust your budget or your energy in a single wave of enthusiasm. Invest wisely. Build the right foundations. Create room to iterate.

The winners in this next era will not be the loudest about AI but they will be the most disciplined in how they implement it.

About the Author

Mahesh Vinayagam is the Founder and CEO of qBotica, an Arizona-based firm specializing in Agentic AI and intelligent automation for enterprise organizations. With over two decades of experience in business transformation, he helps companies adopt AI responsibly with a strong focus on operational outcomes.

His firm, qBotica has been recognized among the fastest-growing companies by Deloitte Fast 500, the Inc. 5000 and the Phoenix Business Journal reflecting its strong track record in delivering enterprise AI and automation outcomes.

Mahesh is an active contributor to Arizona's technology ecosystem and frequently speaks on the evolving role of AI in enterprise operations.

He serves on advisory boards including Arizona State University and Northern Virginia Community College, and actively mentors entrepreneurs and emerging leaders. He is a two-time Titan 100 award recipient and a frequent speaker on the future of AI, automation, and enterprise innovation.

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