

Leveraging Alternative Data & AI-Driven Insights

AI Finland Meetup Highlights Feb 2026

1. Beyond the Balance Sheet: Alternative Data Sources

To understand if a company is truly "AI-ready" or transforming, we must look beyond traditional financial reports. The group identified several "weak signals" and unconventional datasets that reveal a company's true trajectory:

Human Capital & Roles

Monitoring job listings for AI mentions in non-tech roles (sales, logistics, marketing) and tracking the appointment of "AI Directors."

Ecosystem & Partnerships

Analyzing who companies partner with, their research collaborations, and their "cost line items" for things like LLM token usage.

Intellectual & Strategic Footprint

Tracking patent filings (as a lagging indicator), shifts in strategy documents, and the sentiment of public speeches or LinkedIn thought leadership.

The "Lived" Experience

Utilizing customer/partner comments and tracking "career shifts" —noting who is leaving and where top AI talent is migrating.



This summary outlines the key takeaways from our recent discussion on identifying unconventional data sources to track AI adoption and the broader cultural shifts required to maintain Finland's competitive edge. The discussion was held in February 2026 in connection with the AI Finland Meetup and facilitated by Futurice.

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2. The Finnish Context: Efficiency vs. Innovation

A critical portion of the dialogue focused on the current state of AI in the Finnish business landscape.

The Productivity Trap

Poll data suggests a heavy bias toward efficiency; 60% of companies prioritize AI for productivity, while only a small fraction targets new business value or radical innovation.

Cultural Hurdles

Our conservative approach is often rooted in risk aversion and a leadership pipeline dominated by finance and legal backgrounds rather than entrepreneurial or sales-driven mindsets.

The Safety Net Paradox

Despite a strong social system, the perceived personal risk of business failure remains a barrier to the "brave" experimentation required for AI leadership.

3. The Path Forward: From IT Investment to Transformation

The discussion concluded with a clear consensus: AI is a people challenge, not just a tech stack.

The 1:4 Ratio

Referencing McKinsey's estimate, for every €1 spent on IT, we should aim to spend €4 on change management and upskilling.

Ecosystem Support

We must foster a "Sisu movement" – a narrative of resilience and collective growth where Finnish companies buy from one another to facilitate "learning by doing."

Main takeaway:

To gain an "unfair share" of the global AI market, Finnish organizations must shift focus from cost-cutting to value creation, utilizing alternative data to validate their progress and investing heavily in the human side of transformation