



The SME's largest

AI-

challenges

-and how journalists
can cover them

FELLOWSHIP REPORT ON:

The largest AI-challenges for Danish

SMEs - and how journalists can cover them

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic technology reserved for large, international corporations. It is an accessible and transformative force that can redefine the competitive landscape for an important part of the Danish economy: the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

But for smaller businesses, it can be a huge challenge to navigate and implement the new tools. 26 % of SMEs state that they lack the insight, the skills and the time to deal with the new possibilities that AI creates¹.

It requires manpower and training to get to know new tools - and efficient working practices to start experimenting with them. One of the difficult tasks is to prioritize both innovation and everyday operations.

In short, AI represents both a giant opportunity and a complex challenge for the SMEs. How do they grab the opportunity whilst also dealing with the built in challenge - and what part does the media play in the transformation?

That is what our project examines. We are the first 3 so-called *AI Explorers* at the Constructive Institute, and we have worked together from August 2025 - January 2026. Therefore, this paper was produced collaboratively.

Our report is based on in-depth interviews with a range of SMEs across industries such as construction, transport, manufacturing, and tourism. It presents a picture of the current landscape: It is a qualitative examination of how far 14 Danish SMEs have come with implementing AI in their production, their workflow and also in their corporate culture.

¹ Analysis from Danish Chamber of Commerce, April 2024

We wanted to make a reality check from the trenches at the very forefront of Danish businesses contributing to Denmark's growing GDP. A talk face-to-face with the people

who get up every morning and go to work in an SME about their experience with AI and their reflections on the digital revolution we have heard so much about.

Is AI actually a big thing when you get out there, far from AI experts and media outlets, and talk to the people on the floor?

Our thesis is that success in using AI in SMEs is not about a technological revolution happening overnight. Rather, it is about a gradual, human-centred transformation that is firmly anchored in leadership. AI is not a new machine that you can simply plug in and then just sit back and wait for the wonderful results. AI is a way of treating enormous amounts of data, and every enterprise has to make its own choices regarding the use of it.

Besides talking to the SMEs about their own use of AI, we also asked them what they think of the Danish media coverage of AI? Do they feel that anything is being left out, and do they have any good advice for us and all other people working in the media business? Since we are journalists and our project is based at Constructive Institute, an independent centre at the heart of the global constructive journalism movement, the role of the media is essential to include.

SOURCES

We started our work by looking at the already existing literature on the subject. One of the main sources is a report from Dansk Erhverv (Danish Chamber of Commerce) that details how many small and medium-sized enterprises are using artificial intelligence.

The report was published in September 2025 and is based on data from the members of Dansk Erhverv. It involves the big companies as well as the smaller ones - and it also details the use of artificial intelligence amongst the population - both on and off work.

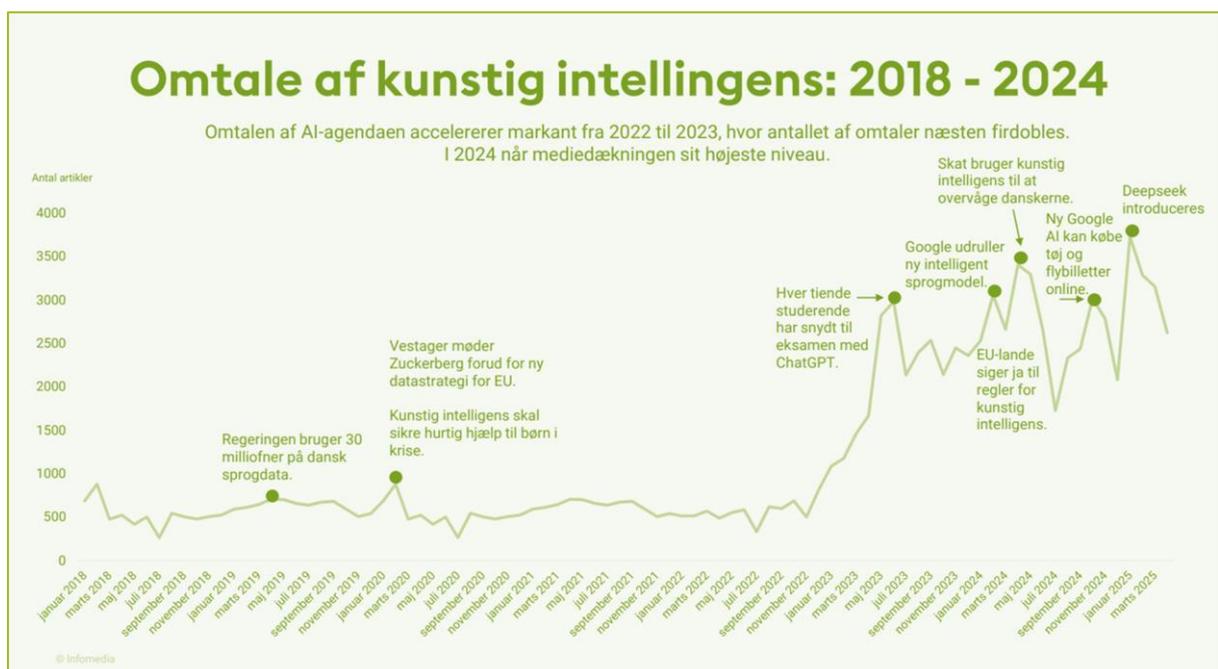
Amongst the big companies (over 250 employees) 96 % use AI actively in everyday operation. The main tool is ChatGPT and other large language models (LLMs), which is used by 61 % of the companies followed by AI-content, which includes both photographs, video or text, and 33 % of the companies use AI for this purpose.

AI adoption remains less widespread among small and medium-sized enterprises, although usage among companies with 10 to 49 employees has increased significantly, rising from 48% last year to 68% today.

This is not the only area where the use of AI has become more common.

The report also states that 55 % of the population has tried Chat GPT or similar LLMS. The number is more than double that of 2023 which was 21 %. The development has mostly been driven by young people from the ages 18-29 where 84 % have tried the tools. In comparison only 27% of the people over the age of 60 have tried it.

Our written sources also include a report from Trygfonden called "AI/Kunstig Intelligens - Baseret på redaktionel mediedækning i 2024". This report shows that the mention of AI in the written media has increased significantly from 2018-2024.



But how is it covered?

The report concludes that the positive media coverage of AI mainly takes place in industry specific publications, while the national and regional mainstream newspapers are more likely to mention the negative consequences of AI.

We found this very interesting, since traditional newspapers have a larger audience than industry publications and the effect might be that some of the more positive aspects of AI are presented to people who already have a positive interest in the subject while the broader public is confirmed in its more cautious approach to the technology.

With all numbers showing a development in the use of AI, we wanted to investigate how the SMEs use it, and what they think of it.

We have interviewed 14 companies about their use and reflections regarding AI. The companies are from different industries and have a varying number of employees.

The 14 companies:



Midtgaard Farver, Herning
Number of employees: 17
Industry: Paint



HV Transport, Herning
Number of employees: 80
Industry: Transport



Bravo Tours, Herning
Number of employees: 117
Industry: Travel



Dilling, Herning
Number of employees: 327 (164 annual work units)
Industry: Textile



Cubo Arkitekter, Aarhus
Number of employees: 40
Industry: Architecture



DK Roof, Aulum
Number of employees: 108
Industry: Roofer



Niebuhr Gears, Ikast

Number of employees: 142

Industry: Gears



Bepa, Aarhus

Number of employees: 25

Industry: Engineering



Kjellerup Group, Silkeborg

Number of employees: 42

Industry: Plumbing



SGS Doors, Ikast

Number of employees: 65

Industry: Kitchen shelves/doors



Kastbergs Gourmet-is, Herning

Number of employees: 14

Industry: Ice cream



HTM Component, Herning

Number of employees: 26

Industry: Doors



JDH Byg, Aarhus

Number of employees: 64

Industry: Construction



Dolphin Hotel Herning

Number of employees: 40

Industry: Tourism

Expert interview

After visiting the companies, we interviewed Kristina Risom Jespersen, who is an associate professor at the Institute of Economics at Aarhus Universitet. She has done a lot of projects on digitalization and technology adaptation in Danish companies, and she is currently doing a research project on the adaptation of AI specifically.

Kristina Risom Jespersen helped us gain an insight into the more theoretical strategic decisions that a company must make when working with new technologies such as AI. Furthermore, we asked her to give the companies advice on how they can begin the task of implementing AI - one that might seem challenging or confusing, but according to her is a matter of mindset.

APPROACH

Since it was quite easy to find some comprehensive quantitative studies on the use of AI in SMEs, we decided to take a different approach doing in-depth qualitative interviews with a select group of SMEs from different business sectors.

The group of businesses (see page 4) were selected from either random research or by prior knowledge of their existence and conduct with regards to AI. One criterion was proximity to Aarhus, since we wanted to conduct the interviews in person and had limited time resources to do so. Other criteria were that the companies had to be members of Danish Industry, Danish Chamber of Commerce or similar organisations since we wanted to focus on that particular segment of Danish businesses.

All the interviews were conducted in person by either one, some or all of us with either people from the management in the companies or the people who are responsible for working with AI in the companies. The idea was to interview people who actually have the power to decide anything in the companies and those who work with it on a daily basis - and therefore also must be the ones with the knowledge about it.

The questions for the companies have been these:

- Does your company use AI today?
 - If yes, for what and how much?
- What is your company's approach/attitude to AI?
- Has your company experienced any challenges or barriers in working with AI?
 - And if yes: What kind of challenges?
- Has your company received or sought any help regarding AI?
- Do you expect your company to use AI more or less in the future?
 - And for what?
- Where do you get information about AI?
- Do you think that media outlets could play a part in conveying information about AI?

We recorded each interview instead of taking notes so as not to miss or forget key insights and information. The audio files with a duration of between 20 minutes and one hour were then uploaded to Notebook LM which we used to accurately transcribe the interviews.

In addition to our own perception of the findings in each interview, we used Notebook LM to summarise and pinpoint similarities and differences between the different companies' experiences and choices with regards to their use of AI. The AI models' conclusions were very similar to our own findings.

ANALYSIS

To structure our analysis of the qualitative interviews we have divided the 14 interviews into groups according to our findings. The enterprises are very different in their approach to the use of AI. Some of them have come a long way in implementing AI into their workflow, some are just dipping their toes into the water and others are not even considering using it.

We have divided them into three groups: We call them the *first mover* enterprises, the *curious* enterprises and the *hesitating* enterprises.

The first mover enterprises

The *first mover* enterprises are:

HV Transport, JDH Byg, CUBO Arkitekter & Kastberg Is.

The common theme for these enterprises is that they are already actively and consciously using artificial intelligence in everyday operations. All the companies have used AI to perform time-consuming tasks and thereby saving time.

An example of that is ***HV Transport*** who uses AI for analysing text heavy material - for example tender material or law documents.



- One of the things we have used AI for is for example regarding winter road protection services. This is something that the state outsources and to submit the tender we must understand the material. This might be 55 pages of text. Normally we would have paid a lawyer to help us find out what to have in mind when submitting the tender. With AI we could have it summarised to one page. This took only 5 or 10 minutes - and then we could have the lawyer just do the final check, which was much cheaper, says Simon Jørgensen, COO of HV Transport.

HV Transport also used AI to formulate the tenders for submission. This meant that the company won three of the tenders - and the only other company that won the contracts was the much bigger company DSV.

Cubo Arkitekter uses AI for visualization. When making visual material in prospectuses for clients and partners, they use tools such as Midjourney or Adobe Firefly making the process much faster and giving them several options regarding the visual expression, architect Kristian Brandsen (pictured) explains. E.g. several different types of lakes to choose from rather than spending a lot of time designing just the one lake that ends up being not quite right. For quick summaries of complex texts, the company uses Notebook LM.



This is also one of the ways that **JDH Byg** uses AI - for generating climate impact reports.

- *It's really a bit of both. We started on a small scale, simply experimenting with ChatGPT. Later, we hired a controller who was already working closely with ChatGPT at the time. We began feeding data into it and asking: where are we missing reports, and how can we automate the flow of data from one system to another, so it's sent out automatically? We've been producing a climate report for three years, and it used to be a completely manual process where we had to extract everything ourselves. We*



decided that this needed to be auto-generated instead. That's when we started integrating carbon data, BVO data, and letting the system effectively 'dig into' the information and assess what's relevant where. The result is that we've been able to eliminate a lot of the heavy, boring manual workflows, says Peter Bjerre, CEO of JDH Byg (pictured).

For Kastberg Is, AI is used as a digital assistant for marketing, which involves SEO optimisation of blog posts and translations, while CEO Jes Nordentoft plans to implement it into more business processes.

- "I believe it will apply all across our business. When we talk about this in a sales context, we won't get away from the need for human relationships between us and our customers. That said, much of the support traditionally provided by sales support functions - where an on-the-road salesperson is backed up by a team at the office - can be handled digitally to a large extent. We can run coordinated campaigns using digital tools to prepare and prioritize the market, and then follow up through a human interface, where personal contact still plays a key role.", says Jes Nordentoft.

Even though there are similarities, there are also clear differences in the way the companies use AI.

They use AI for a wide range of purposes, reflecting the unique challenges of their respective industries.

- **JDH Byg** stands out by using AI as a key component of its green profile.
- **HV Transport** uses AI to gain direct competitive advantages by winning tenders through rapid tender analysis, GEO-optimization, and to save up to 30 % on fuel costs through route optimization.
- **Cubo Arkitekter** primarily uses AI as a creative assistant and sparring partner, capable of visualizing ideas or summarizing complex building programs.
- **Kastberg Is** focuses on AI as a digital marketing assistant that helps create more in-depth content and improve SEO performance.

The *curious* enterprises

The *curious* enterprises are:

Dilling, Bravo Tours, Niebuhr Gears, Dolphin Hotel Herring, DK Roof and HTM Component. All the curious enterprises are starting to dive into using AI. The common theme is trying to implement it into some of the heavier administrative tasks.

While the first movers have already integrated AI into their core business, these companies are at a stage where curiosity is high, but implementation is often limited to specific areas or individual experimentation.

An example of this is **Dilling**. The company has a chatbot for their customer support that can quickly handle a lot of the contact with customers - freeing the employees to answer the more complicated inquiries.

- *For example, over the weekend we came in on Monday to around 800 emails. At the same time, we could see that our chatbot had handled more than 8,000 conversations during the weekend. So, in reality those 800 emails only represented about 10% of all customer communication that Monday. Without the chatbot, it's very likely we wouldn't have received 8,000 emails - many customers might simply not have contacted us at all or would have called instead. But the chatbot relieves an enormous amount of pressure. It's absolutely fantastic, says CEO Morten Dilling.*

The company could almost sound like a first mover, but it is not, which is a conscious strategic decision.

- *"Why not be a first mover? To be honest, I've never really felt the need to. That probably says something about our approach to change, but it's the same way we've looked at things like e-commerce. I don't feel the need to make all the mistakes that come with being first. Instead, I prefer to watch, learn from what others have already tried, and then apply those learnings ourselves", Morten Dilling explains.*

We also find travel company **Bravo Tours** on the border between being a first mover and a curious enterprise. CEO Peder Hornshøj says that maybe the company has not been quick or decisive enough to be first movers in the industry, but Bravo Tours still uses AI a fair bit today. For instance, the company uses it to find activities on their destination while also experimenting with using technology to set travel prices based on demand.

Another company that has started experimenting with AI in different contexts is **Niebuhr Gears**. In the company it is especially lean manager Lykke Mathiasen who drives the AI development, but for now the company does not have a strategy for AI - instead, management is leaving it up to the individual employee to try different things. This is also

the case with DK Roof and HTM Component - both companies are still taking a wait-and-see approach while trying a little bit with LLMs - mostly Chat GPT.

The case of Dolphin Hotel Herning is a little different. The company owns multiple hotels, but it does not really use AI yet. However, it is striving to do so and is making an effort to get a lot of new knowledge on the subject.

- *We've launched a project because we're fully aware that we need to invest much more in using artificial intelligence than we do today. As part of that, we're currently developing a module at the Asnæs & Vangstrup Knowledge Centre within the experience economy. The module focuses on how AI can be used in experience-based industries - how it can help maintain high guest satisfaction and create real experiential value, while at the same time ensuring that simple, repetitive inquiries don't require a human to respond. If someone writes to ask whether there's a hairdryer in the room, that should be answered automatically. Speed matters today, and AI allows us to respond quickly without compromising the quality of the guest experience, says CEO Julie Vermø.*

The *hesitating* enterprises

The *hesitating* enterprises are:

SGS Doors, Midtgaard Farver, Kjellerup Group & BEPA A/S.

The common theme for the *hesitating* enterprises is that their use of AI in everyday operations is limited.

An example of this is **SGS Doors**, where the CEO Leif Pedersen (pictured) knows nothing about it, while two of the employees have been on a one-day course in the use of AI.

- *We don't really use it in our production, but we've experimented a bit with it in sales. For example, when preparing to reach out to new customers, we've used it to create scripts and generate suggestions. If someone is visiting potential clients in England, it can help suggest who to talk to and how to approach them,* says John Axelsen, Production Technician, and one of the employees on the course.



The use is even more limited at **Midtgaard Farver**, where AI is not used at all in the management - and as far as they know not really by the employees either.

Some of the hesitating enterprises are a bit further forward - for example Bepa A/S who use the technology as a sparring partner.

For **Kjellerup Group** the use of AI has been accelerating a little in the last couple of months - before then it was almost considered as cheating if you used AI.

- *It has started to play a bigger role, and that's really only been the case over the past few months. I've used it a lot myself, but other teams have also begun using it more because it simply makes things faster. When they're reviewing a tender, checking whether anything is missing in a spreadsheet, or dealing with formulas they can't immediately resolve, it can quickly help identify where the issue might be. Overall, it's very much about speeding up everyday tasks,* says Rikke Larsen, administrative assistant.

Barriers

There is a big difference in the use of AI amongst the 14 companies. From just getting started to already using it in a strategic manner. But all of them experience some barriers for using it more.

With AI evolving so quickly and offering so many possibilities, many companies struggle to navigate the unclear landscape and choose the right approach. One of them is **JDH Byg**.

- *I think it really comes down to understanding and making it more relatable. Right now, AI feels completely intangible and overwhelming to many people. That's why it's important to dive into it - but I don't think many actually do,* says CEO Peter Bjerre.

His experience is seconded by Julie Vermø from **Dolphin Hotel Herning** who has considered implementing a chatbot - but the management has so far shied away from it out of fear of choosing a wrong solution.

- *For us, the main barriers are knowledge and knowing where to turn for help. Most people know a bookkeeper or an accountant, but I don't know an AI expert who can explain this to me - it's simply so new,* says the CEO.

Generally, a big barrier for the companies is also the lack of knowledge about AI. They do not really know enough about the technology which makes it harder to make the decisions. Most of them don't know that there is plenty of knowledge available from their unions such as Dansk Erhverv or Dansk Industri.

- *I honestly have no real idea of what it's actually capable of - and I don't think many of us do. But I believe it can do a great deal,* says CEO of **HTM Component** Casper Bjørnholdt Bjerg.

It requires significant resources to fully understand and engage with AI, which can be challenging for SMEs, as allocating staff to this area represents a major investment.

Kastbergs is a good example of this. They are contemplating developing software to be able to forecast the demand on the different types of ice cream from the customers. But the company can also spend their time attending different trade fairs.

- *In our specific situation, it really comes down to priorities. I could end up in a situation where we need to invest a significant amount - say 250,000 kroner - in developing this. Or we could spend that money on attending trade fairs in Austria. And when I do the math, I can see that going to trade fairs in Austria would likely deliver a better return of interest - and therefore this is often our priority number one,* says CEO Jes Nordentoft.

Another struggle for small and medium sized enterprises is finding the balance between running the business and developing the business. This is something that **Niebuhr Gears** experience.

- *That's exactly the challenge of day-to-day operations. When you're focused on running the business, it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. We can send someone on a short course - that's relatively easy - but committing to having a person work on this full-time is a very different decision. And we're simply not there yet; as an organization, we're not mature enough for that step,* says CEO Rasmus Niebuhr.

He is backed up by Jonas B. Christensen from **Bepa**.

- *We're a business, and ultimately, we must make money. We do that by invoicing our customers - and there's no one who will pay us for sitting at home experimenting. That's simply not something you can bill a customer for,"* says the CEO.

Some of the SMEs also experience that it can be hard using AI because their production typically is small batches and niche products - which means that it can be hard to see the benefits of automating procedures for example.

- *It's not that automation is too advanced or too expensive for us - the real challenge is integrating robots into our production. We produce many different things, often in very small batches. We work with small series and sometimes even one-off items, all made to order for specific customers. That level of variation makes automation extremely difficult,* says Leif Pedersen, CEO of **SGS Doors**.

Some companies simply don't think that AI can contribute to their production - even though it might be useful in administrative tasks. For example **Kjellerup Group** who are plumbers.

- *It's not possible to set up a toilet using AI,* states Rikke Larsen, administrative assistant.

The final barrier for the Danish SMEs is that the process often has to be driven by key personnel in the company. Some companies do not have the people with the technical capabilities or the interest in the subject - and they don't really get any exterior help, which means that nothing or almost nothing happens. Some of them are quite successful, but that has required a lot of work from management or other key employees.

One example of this is **HVTransport** who has developed a lot since hiring a shop foreman called Lars Abildstrup.

- *We've actually just hired Lars, and for many of the same reasons. He's strong at working with new technologies, automation, and maintaining an overall overview of complex processes, which has helped us a great deal, says COO Simon Jørgensen.* Prior to the hiring of Lars Abildstrup, the development was also driven by individuals - mainly Simon Jørgensen himself.
- "I think it very much depends on the people involved. In our case, it's something we - and probably in large parts myself - largely drive ourselves. But if anything is going to succeed in a company, you need people who genuinely care about it. Too often, responsibilities like ESG or digitalization are simply assigned rather than driven by passion - and that rarely works as well. That's why my advice to peers in companies our size is simple: if you don't personally care about ESG or digitalization, you should hire someone who does.", says Simon Jørgensen.

Advice for companies

The challenges for the SMEs are natural but also possible to deal with according to Kristina Risom Jespersen, who is an associate professor at the Institute for Economics at Aarhus Universitet. The first thing that the companies need to do is to change their mindset. Some of them view AI as a machine that you can plug in - but that is not true, says the professor.

- "AI is fundamentally about data, and every company either has or processes data. That's why there is potential to use artificial intelligence in any industry.", she says.

Another important change to make is in the narrative. Much of the public debate has centred around the threat of robots coming to take our job. But as management it is important to actually highlight the way AI can help the employees and make their job both more enjoyable and easier.

- *No one really wants to sit and deal with repetitive, redundant tasks, so of course automation makes sense. If we can avoid that, by all means, we should. But what people don't talk about enough is what I call the 'Super Mario effect' - like when Mario eats the mushroom and becomes bigger and stronger. That's what we mean by augmented AI: it's not about replacing people, it's about upgrading and upskilling our employees,* explains Kristina Risom Jespersen.

The professor also states that if you have not begun using AI yet, there are still a lot of possibilities, and you do not need to redesign your entire organisation to implement it.

- *You can start by using some of the free tools that are available - experimenting with what's free to figure out what actually works for you, instead of making large upfront investments. From there, you can gradually build on it. It's about getting started and 'playing around' with the technology in a practical way. And once you know what you want and need, it becomes much easier to justify upgrading to paid solutions with subscriptions, greater stability, or more advanced features, because the value and return on the investment are much clearer,* says Kristina Risom Jespersen.

She also explains that from a management standpoint it is important to create quick and meaningful successes - this can boost morale and get employees to take the new tools in more easily. One of the ways of doing this is by turning to the younger employees and supporting them in the innovation of AI-processes in the company. When asked how she would approach the task if she was the CEO of a SME beginning from scratch with AI - this was her answer:

- *I'd bet that some of their younger employees already know a great deal about this and may even be using it quietly, because management isn't fully convinced it's a good idea yet. There's a lot of shadow systems and shadow technologies being used - especially by younger generations - simply because they expect these tools to be part of how they work. So, if I were advising a company that's unsure about AI but employs younger staff, my advice would be simple: ask them. Ask them to come up with suggestions for how AI could be used to make some of the things you do smarter, so you can free up time for the work that's actually more enjoyable,* explains Kristina Risom Jespersen.

Here are some of the areas that could be a great starting point based on our interviews with both the companies and Kristina Risom Jespersen.

- Administrative tasks: Reviewing contracts, automating reporting, and translating texts are obvious areas where AI can quickly deliver measurable results.
- Customer service: Handling standard inquiries through chatbots can free up significant resources and ensure faster response times, which are an important competitive factor.
- Operational optimization: Small but impactful initiatives such as route optimization (where HV-Transport points to a potential 30% fuel saving) or faster spare-parts identification through image recognition can deliver immediate impact.

CONCLUSION

One of the main challenges for companies, who want to implement AI, is that the new technology can seem overwhelming and to some degree confusing.

For many, AI appears as an unpredictable and intangible field. The rapid development and multitude of possibilities can feel paralyzing, making it difficult to identify a concrete starting point.

Another challenge is that many SMEs do not have the time nor the resources that are needed to implement AI solutions in their production. Many SMEs struggle to balance daily operations with long-term strategy. Committing scarce time and money to AI competes directly with the resources needed to keep the business running today.

Furthermore, an important finding of this report is that when a company succeeds in implementing an AI solution, it is often because of a specific employee's interest in AI on a personal level. In other words, the development is largely driven by individuals, who inspire the rest of the colleagues to "jump on the AI train". And if you as a leader in an SME do not have any personal interest in AI - and you do not have any employees who do either - the incentive for implementing the new technology can be hard to find.

On top of that, many of the companies do not know where to look for knowledge about AI. Many of the leaders we spoke with had no idea that their union has a wealth of knowledge and good advice about AI available on its website.

The path forward

The journey towards successful integration of artificial intelligence in Danish SMEs is less a technological challenge and more a strategic and cultural transformation. The analysis clearly shows that the greatest barriers are not a lack of advanced software, but rather knowledge gaps, resource constraints, and an organizational culture that hesitates to embrace change.

At the same time, the potential is undeniable. Companies that manage to look beyond the immediate barriers are already reaping significant benefits in the form of increased efficiency, enhanced creativity, and new competitive advantages.

The companies that will thrive in the new era are those that understand that AI is not a solution you simply buy, but a mindset you cultivate. It is about starting small, celebrating early successes, empowering and listening to employees, and embracing a culture defined by curiosity and continuous learning. Artificial intelligence is not a train you must desperately catch; it is a new destination you reach one well-considered step at a time.

PERSPECTIVE

The media still has a lot to accomplish when it comes to accurately relaying the advantages and disadvantages of using AI in Danish SMEs. This is clear to us as journalists after having done research, talked to experts and interviewed 14 different companies operating in very different business fields.

One of the CEOs requests a broader journalistic approach to the coverage, effectively outing the media as narrow-minded and, according to him, primarily focused on the use of LLMs like ChatGPT and the political chatter surrounding the figures owning and operating them.

- *It's too focused on cheating in schools, fraud or children's misuse. Why not focus on the potential for the builders and carpenters out there? It's huge, it could liberate us from so much administrative work freeing up time for the jobs we actually yearn to do - woodworking, says JDH Byg's CEO Peter Bjerre.*

While the overall coverage of AI has a positive bias, it is the trade journals and tech-focused niche media that are the most positive in their coverage of AI². Mainstream media plays a bigger role in the creation of a narrative focusing on robots, fraud and layoffs. This in turn induces fear of contact and thereby contributing to a psychological onboarding barrier.

There is a need for improved media coverage

If SMEs are to see AI as useful in their operations, expert Kristina Risom Jespersen says the media must shift gears and become "guides" that convey concrete, local success stories and demystify the technology as a tool rather than a threat.

- *Every time AI is depicted in the media, you also see a robot. It has become very robotized. But it is data. AI is data, and that is a fundamental misunderstanding in the media that damages the narrative towards companies.*
- *The focus is on efficiency, cost reduction, laying off employees... You have to talk about it as positive and constructive. We are upgrading, we are extending, we are giving you new opportunities, the associate professor of business economics says.*

² *Kunstig intelligens / AI: Baseret på redaktionel mediedækning i 2024 – analyse til Trygfonden, p. 6, Infomedias 2025*

Several of the leaders long for more extensive coverage of successful use-cases which might inspire them to do something similar in their own business.

- *What I think is important is that I can relate to what we can use it for. Give me stories about things that have succeeded and that actually work,* says travel company Bravo Tours' CEO Peder Hornshøj.

At a roofing company, the CEO of DK Roof, Bettina Vorsøe Elkjær, agrees that down-to-earth journalism about concrete use-cases is missing from the coverage today.

- *It's more about that [success stories] than current trends or the technology of today. You don't really understand that anyway. It's easier to relate to the fact that someone has done this and that. And then you think, 'Damn, that's really smart. I could use that too.' Instead of it being something like, 'they developed something in the USA, and now it can do this or that.' It really needs to be put into a perspective that the rest of us can relate to,* Bettina Vorsøe Elkjær explains.

JDH Byg's CEO Peter Bjerre also calls for more 'AI for dummies'-journalism since the entry point of knowledge in his relatively conservative line of business, construction, is quite low for the average woodworker.

Advice for journalists

To summarise, the key role for media to play in SMEs defeating the challenges linked to Aladaptation, which are primarily lack of knowledge, manpower and misconceptions, could very well be to convey unbiased, constructive news-pieces on down-to-earth and easily usable AI-implementations in regular companies and businesses.

In order for us as media to do so, companies should be more actively seeking out the media when they develop these solutions successfully. Otherwise, the stories might never be told. Keeping the good examples to themselves may benefit the individual company but having the whole country's best economic interest in mind they would be better shared.

While covering these stories, journalists must of course always keep both eyes open, meaning that the many benefits of the AI-revolution also come with drawbacks. But taking a nuanced stance also means viewing those drawbacks such as layoffs in a historical perspective. In that case - and assuming it will play out like all other technological revolutions - such drawbacks are indeed temporary.

Honesty is another thing that should be carefully guarded according to some of the sources in this report. Since the (especially social) media is overflowing with fraudulent material, fake images, AI-slop and worse, legacy media should uphold a high morale and transparency with regards to their own use of AI.

- *One can get quite scared that there is so much being created out there that isn't real. If trust is first lost and people think 'okay, now AI is everywhere' or 'this image is AI-generated', then I believe trust in the media as an institution will disappear, Julie Vermø, CEO of Dolphin Hotel Herning, predicts.*

In short, journalists should be solution oriented, cover the subject in an honest, nuanced manner, and try to draw in use-cases experienced business owners and key industry frontrunners.

We hope this is helpful advice and look forward to following the further work of the next team of AI-explorers.

5 Tips for Responsible AI Journalism



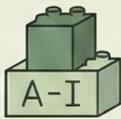
Showcase Positive Examples

Highlight specific instances where AI is being put to good use and creating value.



Focus on Value, Not Fear

Shift the narrative from "the robots are coming" to how the technology can be beneficial.



Explain the Basics Simply

Demystify AI by explaining its features and how to get started with it.



Be Radically Transparent

Be open and honest about your own newsroom's use of AI in your reporting.



Remember the Nuances

Balance enthusiasm for the technology with a healthy, critical skepticism.

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*This graphic is AI-generated, but not its worded content.