



ENDPOINT SOLUTIONS

# AI Readiness — Delivery Report



**Client:** Halstead & Meyer CPAs

**Date:** 2026-06-26

**Prepared by:** Michael-Paul Hart, Endpoint Solutions

Confidential — prepared for Halstead & Meyer CPAs leadership. Not for distribution.

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## OVERALL MATURITY

# 57

## Developing

Combined maturity across the assessed stages.

## ENGAGEMENT

**Industry:** CPA / accounting firm

**Primary sponsor:** Dana Halstead, Managing Partner

## Executive summary

Halstead & Meyer's profile is the mirror image of most SMBs: data and governance are relatively strong — a compliance-first, client-confidentiality culture shows — while use-case execution and people skills lag. Client data is well-organized in cloud accounting and tax systems, security is solid, and accountability is assigned, but AI is still owned by IT rather than the practice and nothing has moved past exploration. The opportunity is to convert a strong, safe foundation into measured wins in document extraction, tax research, and client communications — with confidentiality built in, and especially valuable through busy season.

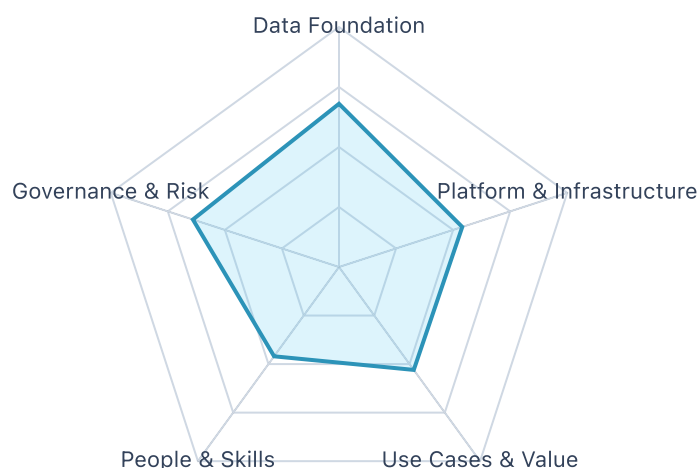
## Current-state overview

The firm runs cloud-first on tax and accounting platforms holding well-structured, sensitive client data under defined governance, with M365/Copilot licensed. Because client financial data and confidentiality are paramount, an AI acceptable-use policy is being finalized, security is strong, and accountability is assigned — ahead of peers. Staff see clear uses — pulling data off documents, tax research, and drafting client communications — but usage is exploratory, value loosely defined, and ownership sits with IT rather than the partners driving the work.

## Maturity scorecard

| STAGE                        | SCORE | INTERPRETATION |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 01 Data Foundation           | 68%   | Advancing      |
| 02 Platform & Infrastructure | 54%   | Developing     |
| 03 Use Cases & Value         | 53%   | Developing     |
| 04 People & Skills           | 46%   | Developing     |
| 05 Governance & Risk         | 64%   | Advancing      |

## Maturity profile



## Top findings & business implications

- 1. Strong data and governance are ahead of peers — a real advantage** — Organized client data and a security-first culture mean the firm can adopt AI safely and defensibly, moving faster than competitors because the guardrails already exist.
- 2. The highest-value uses map straight to busy-season pain** — AI document/data extraction, tax research, and client-communication drafting attack exactly the work that overwhelms the firm at deadline — but nothing is in production.
- 3. AI is owned by IT, not the practice** — Use cases stall in exploration because preparers and partners aren't driving them; value will only appear when the practice owns the outcomes.

## Domain observations

### 01 · DATA FOUNDATION — 68%

Largely centralized, well-governed client data in the tax/accounting stack — a strong dimension, with some access friction for cross-system questions. Quality is good and sensitivity is high, which the firm rightly respects.

### 02 · PLATFORM & INFRASTRUCTURE — 54%

Cloud-first with Copilot available and strong security; integration across tax, accounting, and document systems is partial, and there is no model/prompt management — acceptable today since nothing is in production.

### 03 · USE CASES & VALUE — 53%

A sensible shortlist — document/data extraction from source documents, tax research, and client-communication drafting — but exploration only, value loosely defined, and ownership sitting with IT rather than the practice.

### 04 · PEOPLE & SKILLS — 46%

Literacy is emerging and skills are limited; training is planned but not yet delivered, and change is informal. Preparer trust and a confidentiality-safe workflow will drive adoption, especially seasonally.

### 05 · GOVERNANCE & RISK — 64%

The firm's strength: the AI policy is nearly final, security is strong, shadow AI is limited, and accountability is assigned. The task is to keep the rigor while enabling — not blocking — practical use.

## Risk register

| RISK                                                         | AREA                      | SEVERITY | OWNER            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Confidential client financial data used in unvetted AI tools | Governance & Risk         | High     | Managing Partner |
| AI use cases stalled in IT ownership — no practice adoption  | Use Cases & Value         | High     | Managing Partner |
| Training planned but not delivered ahead of busy season      | People & Skills           | Medium   | Operations       |
| Partial integration limits AI's view across client systems   | Platform & Infrastructure | Medium   | IT               |

## Recommended priorities

### 03 · USE CASES & VALUE

#### **Move AI ownership to the practice and pilot document extraction**

Give preparers/partners ownership of a confidentiality-safe pilot — pulling data off source documents — with clear, measured value before busy season.

### 04 · PEOPLE & SKILLS

#### **Deliver the planned training with confidentiality built in**

Turn planned training into delivered, role-specific enablement so preparers can use AI confidently within the finalized policy.

## AI readiness roadmap

### 0–30 days

| ACTION                                                                                                                                                                                        | OWNER            | PRIORITY | EFFORT |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
| Finalize and publish the AI acceptable-use policy; confirm a business sponsor from the practice<br>Outcome: Practice-driven, compliant adoption · Vendor: Endpoint · Depends on: Final review | Managing Partner | High     | Low    |
| Define 2–3 value metrics (hours saved on extraction/research) and map the policy to real workflows<br>Outcome: ROI visibility; preparers can act safely                                       | Operations       | High     | Low    |

### 31–90 days

| ACTION                                                                                                                                                                          | OWNER            | PRIORITY | EFFORT |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
| Pilot AI document/data extraction from source documents with a confidentiality-safe tool<br>Outcome: Preparer time back, measured · Vendor: Endpoint · Depends on: Policy final | Business Sponsor | High     | Medium |
| Deliver role-specific AI training for preparers and partners before busy season<br>Outcome: Confident, compliant usage · Vendor: Endpoint                                       | Operations       | High     | Medium |

### 91–180 days

| ACTION                                                                                                                                        | OWNER | PRIORITY | EFFORT |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|--------|
| Add tax-research assistance and improve integration across tax/accounting/doc systems<br>Outcome: Richer, safer AI context · Vendor: Endpoint | IT    | Medium   | Medium |

### 181–365 days

| ACTION                                                                                                                                             | OWNER            | PRIORITY | EFFORT |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
| Expand to client-communication drafting with review + confidentiality gates<br>Outcome: Better client service at scale · Depends on: Pilot results | Business Sponsor | Medium   | Medium |

## AI tools & vendor ecosystem

| VENDOR                       | ROLE / COVERAGE                      | RENEWAL / NOTES  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Tax preparation platform     | Returns, workpapers, e-file          | Annual — 11/2026 |
| Cloud accounting / ledger    | Client books, close, reporting       | Annual — 05/2027 |
| Microsoft 365 / Copilot      | Productivity + licensed AI assistant | Annual — 03/2027 |
| Document management / portal | Source docs + secure client exchange | Annual — 09/2026 |

**Documentation reviewed:** Data inventory / catalog — what data exists and where it lives · Data governance, quality & ownership documentation · Security, privacy & compliance policies (data handling) · AI use-case list or backlog / ideas under consideration · Existing AI or acceptable-use / data policies · Team & skills overview — who could build and own AI · Vendor & platform contracts relevant to data or AI · Known risks, constraints, or regulatory requirements

**Evidence notes:** Compliance documentation is strong: AI policy (near-final), data governance, and security/privacy materials all provided. Value metrics are loosely defined; MLOps/tooling documentation is minimal since nothing is in production.

## Renewal & contract calendar

| RENEWAL          | VENDOR                       | ROLE / COVERAGE                      |
|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Annual — 09/2026 | Document management / portal | Source docs + secure client exchange |
| Annual — 11/2026 | Tax preparation platform     | Returns, workpapers, e-file          |
| Annual — 03/2027 | Microsoft 365 / Copilot      | Productivity + licensed AI assistant |
| Annual — 05/2027 | Cloud accounting / ledger    | Client books, close, reporting       |

## Next steps

1. Review this report with leadership and confirm the priorities.
2. Assign owners and target dates to the roadmap actions.
3. Decide where ongoing technology advisory support is appropriate.

## Appendix — discovery responses

### 01 • Data Foundation

|                                                 |                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| How centralized is your business data?          | Largely centralized                  |
| Confidence in data quality / consistency        | Good                                 |
| Data governance in place?                       | Defined                              |
| How easily can teams access the data they need? | Some friction                        |
| Data types you want AI to use                   | Structured/DB, Documents, Email/Chat |

### 02 • Platform & Infrastructure

|                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Primary environment for workloads | Cloud-first  |
| AI / automation tooling in use    | Copilot/M365 |
| Path from pilot to production     | None         |
| How integrated are core systems?  | Some         |

### 03 • Use Cases & Value

|                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Have you identified AI use cases? | A shortlist |
| Are success metrics defined?      | Vaguely     |
| AI pilots underway?               | Exploring   |
| Who drives AI use cases?          | IT only     |

### 04 • People & Skills

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| General AI literacy across the org | Emerging |
| In-house AI / ML skills            | Limited  |
| AI training / enablement offered?  | Planned  |
| Change management for AI adoption  | Informal |

### 05 • Governance & Risk

|                                         |          |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|
| AI acceptable-use policy?               | Drafting |
| Ungoverned (shadow) AI usage            | Some     |
| Data security / privacy controls for AI | Strong   |

## How scoring works

Each answer maps to a 0–100 maturity value based on what it signals. Stage scores are the average of the answered, scored questions in that stage; the overall score is the average of assessed stages. Some questions are informational context and are not scored. Bands: AI-Ready 80+ · Advancing 60+ · Developing 40+ · Emerging 20+ · Unprepared 0+.

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