

# **Gartner Research & Development Connect Highlights**

**Key Insights from Top Sessions**

**November 4, 2025**

**Irving, TX**



# Gartner Opening Keynote: Move Beyond Agility– Leading R&D into the Era of AI

R&D is entering a new era, the Era of AI. Unlike past shifts, this era is characterized by a disruptive technology that challenges and changes the whole essence of R&D work. In order to get return from AI investments and other new technologies, R&D needs to get people to adopt new technologies, redesign their processes and reimagine the entire R&D business as part of a broader transformation.

In the 2025 Gartner R&D Connect Opening Keynote, Atul Dighe explored how R&D leaders must reimagine their role, their work and the assumptions they hold to ensure R&D delivers value in the age of AI and leverages technology to help create new products and new ways to market.

**Keep reading to explore takeaways from the expert sessions presented at the 2025 R&D Connect→**

**"The biggest opportunity for companies to benefit from AI is by applying AI to front-end innovation."**



**Atul Dighe**  
VP Analyst  
Gartner for R&D

# Embed Continuous Foresight in R&D's DNA to Stay Ahead



**Charlotte Boliver**  
Sr. Director, Analyst

## Session Summary

The ability to spot and interpret early signals will be a defining factor in the success and longevity of business. However, less than half of R&D leaders have a structured technology and trend scouting process and team in place. This session explored how future-ready organizations are using the A.S.A.P. framework to build lightweight, scalable scouting capabilities to anticipate disruption, identify opportunity spaces, and inform strategic decision-making.

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Continuous foresight is an ongoing, systematic process for monitoring the environment, analyzing trends, and constantly updating strategies to adapt to potential future changes.

## Key Actions for R&D Leaders

- There are four sets of actions R&D leads can take to practice continuous foresight, referred to as ASAP:
  - ACQUIRE: Gain info on emerging trends, disruptions, and other external forces from a broad range of sources.
  - SYNTHESIZE: Assess the impact of these trends and shortlist ones that will have the largest impact on the org.
  - ADVOCATE: Get buy-in and input from the rest of the team and org on possible plans to move forward and actionable steps.
  - PREPARE: Develop a plan of action to exploit the disruption for a preferable future.

## How to Get Started:

- Listen to Gartner expert analysts explore how you can [Use Megatrends to Inform Future Opportunities in Your Organization](#) (complimentary webinar).
- Explore how you can [Build R&D Technology Roadmaps That Drive Stakeholder Engagement](#) (complimentary research)

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# Improve Productivity and Product Development Using AI in R&D



**Wallace Puckett**

Sr. Director Analyst

## Session Summary

AI in various forms is being increasingly adopted by R&D leaders to improve the productivity of their new product development processes and the new products they produce. Generative AI has been the focus of use case adoption in R&D. In the early stages of adoption, R&D leaders should focus on those use cases that are both valuable and feasible.



**97% of enterprises struggle to prove AI business value.**

## Key Actions for R&D Leaders

- Create or renew your strategy and roadmap for AI implementation.
- Upskill staff in prompt engineering to take advantage of your available LLM.
- Learn about agentic AI and its use cases, including but not limited to: idea generation, project prioritization, timeline management, design simulation and design transfer.
- Across the next six months, scale at least one use case, preferably by leveraging an existing vendor.
- Create governance for in-house production of AI agents.

## How to Get Started:

- Review Gartner's [Generative AI Use-Case Comparison for R&D](#) to identify feasible GenAI investments that deliver the right business value for your organization.
- View the full session on [Improving Productivity and Product Development Using AI in R&D](#) (complimentary webinar).



# Client Panel: Foster an Innovation-Driven R&D Culture



**Atul Dighe**  
VP, Analyst

## Panelists:

Venkatesh Jagannath | VP R&D, Schneider Electric  
Lee Ellen Drechsler | SVP Innovation, Procter & Gamble  
Joel Honeyman | VP Global Innovation, Bobcat Company

## Session Summary

R&D leaders have both an opportunity and a responsibility to cultivate an innovation-driven culture within their team. Yet, very few R&D employees perceive their work environment to be truly innovative. In this session, our Gartner expert discussed the current state of innovation culture in R&D with a panel of three R&D executives. They shared how they are fostering innovation culture at the strategy, portfolio and team altitudes.

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**Only 13% of R&D and science employees perceive their work environment as innovative.**

## Key Actions for R&D Leaders

- Assess your current level of performance across drivers shown to impact R&D environmental performance, such as career development potential, purposeful collaboration and senior R&D leadership vision.
- Set a clear strategy, stressing the importance of innovation and how staff works to support innovation objectives.
- Improve staff's experimental mindset by creating ways for staff to feel secure in exploring novel solutions to problems and incentivizing smart risk taking.
- Actively seek to improve team collaboration by creating helpful processes that break down collaboration silos.

## How to Get Started:

- Take the [Innovation Culture in R&D Assessment](#) to identify areas of improvement for your innovation culture.
- Explore [3 Steps to Boost Your Team's R&D Innovation](#) (*complimentary research*) and create an environment that nurtures innovation.

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# Build a Resilient Innovation Portfolio Amid High Uncertainty



**Charlotte Boliver**  
Sr. Director, Analyst

## Session Summary

R&D leaders need to transition from passive portfolio management to proactive portfolio governance to keep pace with the competitive environment. In this session, a Gartner expert analyst explored case study examples of how high-performing R&D leaders are transitioning to proactive portfolio governance.



Only 42% of R&D leaders feel they have enough high value projects in their portfolio.

## Key Actions for R&D Leaders

- Review your R&D portfolio strategy and ensure you have clear goals and metrics aligned with that strategy (start with 3 goals and 3 metrics).
- Diagnose which of your portfolio management challenges needs to be addressed first.
- Adjust where you can build more optionality into your long-term plans and how you can objectively identify when to pivot.
- Upskill portfolio leaders and project teams on using constraints to drive faster, better decisions.

## How to Get Started:

- Read [How to Improve R&D Portfolio Decision Quality](#) (*complimentary research*) to learn to 5 markers of high-quality portfolio decisions.
- Use the [R&D Portfolio Management Capabilities Self-Assessment Checklist](#) to elevate and evaluate the maturity of your organization's portfolio management practices.

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## Integrated Library

Access insightful research to evaluate new issues and challenges, and quickly understand best practices.



## Tools & Benchmarking

Make informed decisions using benchmarked data on your organization; follow step-by-step guidance to execute on key projects in areas like technology roadmapping and R&D portfolio management



## Events & Webinars

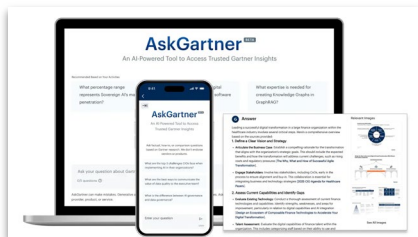
Learn from webinars and on-demand courses; join interactive discussions with analysts and peers, gaining actionable plans to master your most critical priorities.

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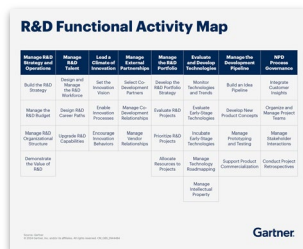
# Navigate Your Top Challenges with Gartner Support



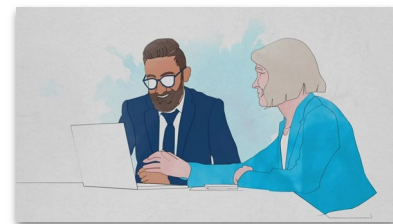
Explore [AskGartner](#), the only AI-powered tool that gives you access to the proprietary Gartner insights trusted by C-Level executives and their teams. Get faster answers and tailored outputs you need to take action.



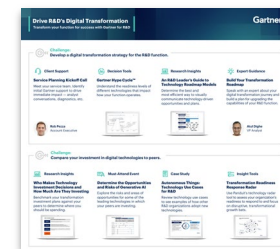
Use the [Gartner R&D Score](#) to measure the maturity of your function, prioritize areas of improvement and plot R&D's path to improvement in 29 activities across six functional objectives.



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