

Unlocking the Future of Data Intelligence and AI

Insights from Actian's Executive Customer Advisory Board

The Actian Executive Customer Advisory Board (CAB) held its December 2024 meeting, gathering industry leaders and Actian customers to discuss the evolving challenges and opportunities in data governance, intelligence, and AI-driven business transformation. The meeting served as a platform to learn about trends and explore the critical role of data in enabling future success.

CAB attendees included:

- **Dusty Alexander**, Chief Executive Officer, Global Shop Solutions
- **John Barron**, Chief Information Officer, Irish Revenue
- **Terri Bergman**, Senior Vice President, Citi
- **Gemma Chapman**, Head of Technology, The Romo Group
- **Brad Childers**, Chief Executive Officer, Archrock
- **Tony Feminis**, Director of IT, Miniatic Holdings LLC
- **Ranjit Gill**, Chief Information Officer, McKesson UK
- **Joe Jones**, Chief Information Officer, Aeriz
- **Eric Mountain**, Vice President of Operations, Ebix Health
- **Rajeev Nair**, Chief Information Officer, J. Knipper and Company
- **Christian Pelanconi**, Chief Executive Officer, Eidosmedia
- **Anthony Randall**, Senior Director Data Science Strategy, Innovation and AI, Northwestern Mutual Life
- **Daniel Stöckel**, Global Head of Data and AI Product Portfolio, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany
- **Gordon Stuart**, Vice President, Product, Sage Software
- **Stefan Wahle**, Vice President and General Manager, Wolters Kluwer
- **Dr. Thomas Wittmann**, Managing Director, Lufthansa Systems

The Foundation of Data and AI Readiness

Throughout the discussions, a clear theme emerged: the importance of data quality as the bedrock of any successful AI strategy. Clean, structured, accessible and volume of data is critical for leveraging advanced analytics and AI effectively.

One CAB attendee shared their year-long effort to clean, transform, and centralize data using Actian's products to create a data lake that is now an asset for their organization. "Building strong data foundations isn't a switch you can flip," they noted. "It's a process that requires investment, strategy, and the right tools." Another attendee likened their own data ecosystem to "lakes, ponds, and streams," emphasizing the need for rigorous organization and governance to drive value.

These challenges resonated broadly, reflecting a shared recognition that data readiness is not just about technology—it's about creating a strategy that aligns with organizational goals and capabilities.

What does data intelligence mean to you? Write 3 words that describe data intelligence **in your organization**.



Action's Portfolio and Metadata Innovation

The CAB meeting was an opportunity for Actian to share updates on its evolving product portfolio, including the integration of new technologies designed to address customer needs.

Action's recent acquisition of the Zeenea metadata management platform was a focal point, underscoring its commitment to help organizations enhance data governance and data intelligence. By introducing advanced metadata capabilities, Actian aims to empower organizations to better understand, manage, and trust their data ecosystems. Such vendor-agnostic capabilities allow integration across diverse data environments—a feature that attendees highlighted as important for their operations.

The update sparked a discussion about the broader challenges of using metadata to unlock actionable insights. CAB attendees expressed interest in Actian's roadmap and how these tools could further address their challenges, particularly in reducing data quality issues, and enhancing data usability.



AI in Action: Insights from Ray Wang

The highlight of the CAB meeting was a presentation on "Modern Business in the Age of AI," delivered by Ray Wang, Principal Analyst and Founder, Constellation Research. The talk explored how organizations can use AI to achieve "decision velocity," enabling faster, more precise decision-making while reducing operational costs and improving customer experiences.

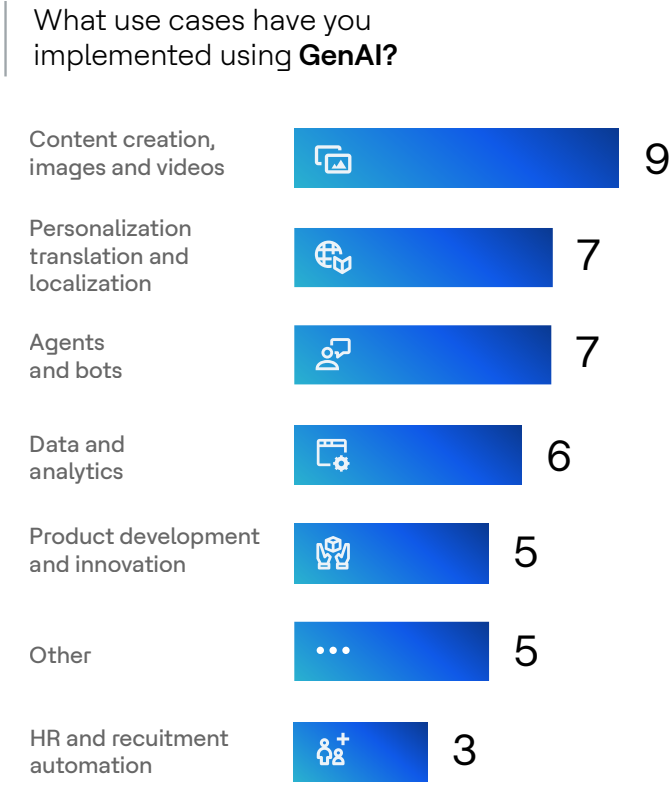
A key takeaway was the concept of balancing automation with human expertise. AI is less so a replacement for human input, and more so a tool to enhance efficiency by removing repetitive tasks.

One example discussed was a major retailer's use of AI to eliminate 100 million tasks, allowing employees to focus on more meaningful customer interactions. This shift not only improved operational efficiency but also enhanced the overall customer experience.

The session also touched on the ethical considerations of AI adoption, including the need for robust governance frameworks. With global regulations varying significantly, attendees recognized the importance of clear policies that balance innovation with ethical responsibility.

Practical Applications and Success Stories

The meeting also offered the opportunity for CAB attendees to share how they are utilizing GenAI today, as seen in the figure below.



The discussion evolved into sharing real-world examples of how CAB attendees are looking to use AI to solve complex challenges:

- A healthcare organization leveraging AI to interpret user intent and reduce errors in its data systems, improving the overall user experience.
- A rapidly growing industry automating financial processes to address regulatory risks and streamline operations, demonstrating the transformative potential of AI in high-compliance sectors.

These success stories illustrate the practical value of combining data strategy with AI to drive business outcomes.

Shaping the Future Together

The Actian CAB meeting reinforced the importance of collaboration in navigating the complex landscape of data and AI. By sharing challenges, successes, and forward-thinking strategies, attendees gained actionable insights to guide their organizations into the future.

About the Actian Executive Customer Advisory Board

The Actian Executive Customer Advisory Board (CAB) is a partnership with our strategic customers that provides a unique opportunity to directly influence Actian's strategy and technology roadmap. Our objective is to deepen our understanding of your business challenges so that we can optimize our customer experience and maximize your business value working with Actian. The Executive Customer Advisory Board fosters peer discussions among CAB attendees and with Actian senior executive leadership. To learn more, please visit: [Actian.com/customers/CAB](https://actian.com/customers/CAB) or contact Becky Staker, VP of Customer Experience at Becky.Staker@actian.com

About Actian

Actian makes data easy. We deliver cloud, hybrid cloud, and on-premises data solutions that simplify how people connect, manage, and analyze data. We transform business by enabling customers to make confident, data-driven decisions that accelerate their organization's growth. Our data platform integrates seamlessly, performs reliably, and delivers at industry-leading speeds. Learn more about Actian, a division of HCLSoftware: www.actian.com.

