MOOOVE

AI READINESS DIAGNOSTIC · 2026

Where businesses really stand on AI

What 259 leaders and teams told us about their relationship with AI, where they are today, and what they need next.

RESPONDENTS **259 leaders** FIELDED **2026** QUESTIONS **18 · 3 phases**

Company size: 1-10 employees: 96 · 11-50 employees: 73 · 51-250 employees: 37 · 251+ employees: 53. Leading industries: Technology & Software (61), Professional Services (26), Retail & E-commerce (22), Hospitality & Tourism (20), Banking & Financial Services (19).

WHAT THE DIAGNOSTIC REVEALS

Almost everyone has started using AI. Very few have made it part of how their business actually runs. **88%** of leaders use AI at least sometimes, yet **44%** say they have not brought it into their work, and **52%** still track their business on Excel. The appetite is not the problem: **90%** plan to train their teams in 2026. The missing piece is knowing how to move from personal use to operational value.

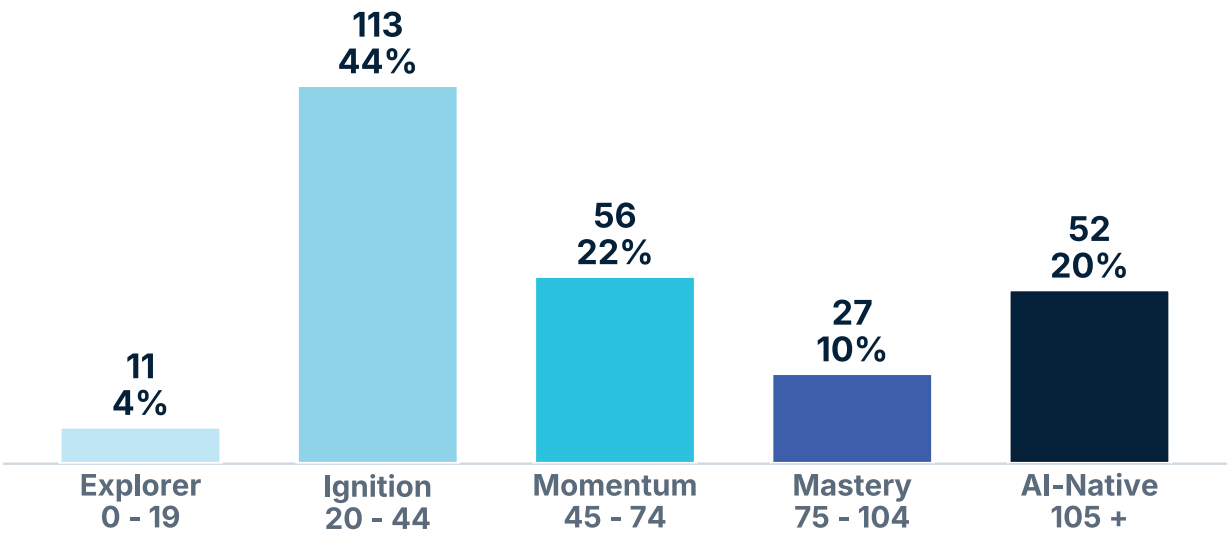
88%
use AI at least sometimes

44%
have not yet brought AI into their actual work

90%
plan to train their teams on AI in 2026

01 The readiness landscape

Every respondent receives an AI readiness score, placed on the 2026 diagnostic's five-tier framework. The cohort concentrates near the start of the curve: **Ignition** is by far the largest tier (**44%**), and almost half of all organisations, **48%**, sit in the two lowest tiers (Explorer and Ignition), the diagnostic's high-vulnerability zone. Just over half, **52%**, have reached Momentum or above, where AI is genuinely operational.

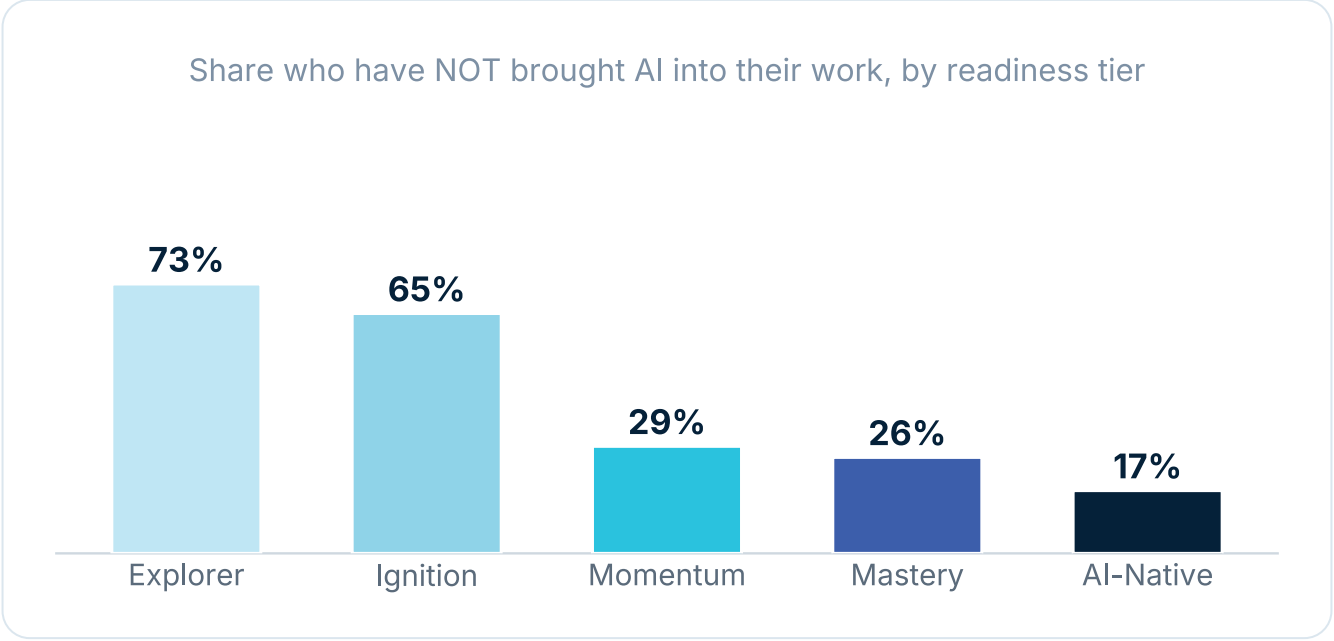


Distribution across the five readiness tiers (n=259).

Explorer	0 - 19	**The Hesitant**	No clear stance on AI: negative signals such as manual work, blocked budgets and decision overload outweigh the adoption signals.
Ignition	20 - 44	**The Igniter**	Awareness is there and AI is in early use, but practice is still ad-hoc and unstructured.
Momentum	45 - 74	**The Practical Implementer**	Tools are live and training is on the agenda; value is uneven but visible.
Mastery	75 - 104	**The Strategic Architect**	AI is embedded, KPIs are tracked live and training is planned; focus shifts to governance and edge.

AI-Native	105 +	**The AI-Native**	AI is woven into the core: products, workflows and decisions run on it. The organisation competes on AI capability, not on catching up.

Explorer (4%), the Hesitant: no clear stance on AI, with negative signals outweighing adoption. **Ignition** (44%), the Igniter: aware and experimenting, but ad-hoc and unstructured, this is where most of the market lives. **Momentum** (22%), the Practical Implementer: tools are live and training is on the agenda. **Mastery** (10%), the Strategic Architect: AI is embedded and KPIs tracked live. **AI-Native** (20%), where products, workflows and decisions run on AI. The tiers behave like a genuine ladder: the share who have not brought AI into their work falls from **73%** at Explorer to **17%** at AI-Native.

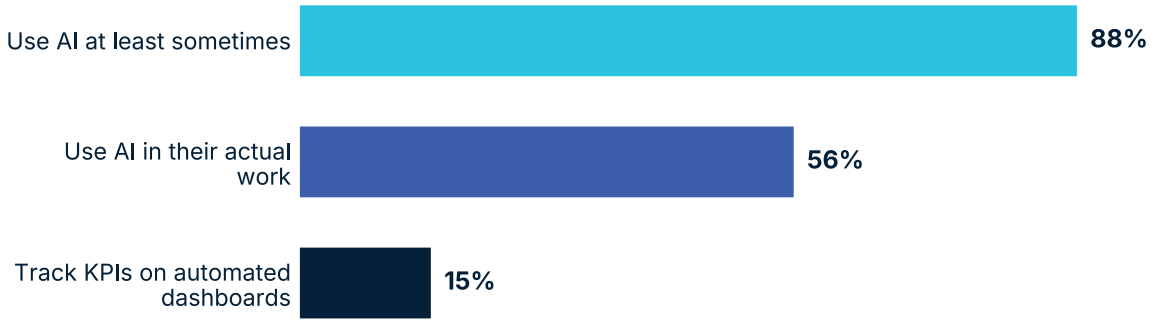


THE TAKEAWAY

The centre of gravity is Ignition: ambition is real, but practice is still ad-hoc. Moving this group from experimenting to operating is the single biggest opportunity in the cohort.

02 Adoption without operationalisation

83% call themselves AI-literate and **88%** use AI at least sometimes. But usage is mostly personal. In their own answers, the single most selected response to "what do you use AI for" is **"I don't use AI for work yet"** (**44%**). Reporting tells the same story: **52%** still run KPIs on Excel spreadsheets and only **15%** have automated live dashboards. The tools are in people's hands; the value is still on the table.



From personal use to operational value: the drop-off.

THE TAKEAWAY

The gap is not adoption. It is the distance between using AI as an individual and running the business with it. Closing that distance is what moves an organisation from Ignition to Momentum and beyond.

03 They can already see what AI should fix

Leaders name concrete, AI-addressable problems. The top business challenges are finding and keeping staff (**38%**), moving too slowly against competitors (**24%**), too much manual "copy-paste" work (**21%**), and teams not working well together (**20%**). **88%** cited at least one such challenge, they are losing time or money today. The hardest decisions to make, strategic expansion (**34%**), budgeting and forecasting (**33%**) and resource allocation (**31%**), are precisely the ones better data and AI could support. And yet half the market still decides on spreadsheets.

Intent is high but method is thin. **87%** have considered AI as a solution, but when asked how they proceeded, **61%** simply "investigated the topic" on their own; only **21%** brought in outside expertise and **18%** actually trained their teams.

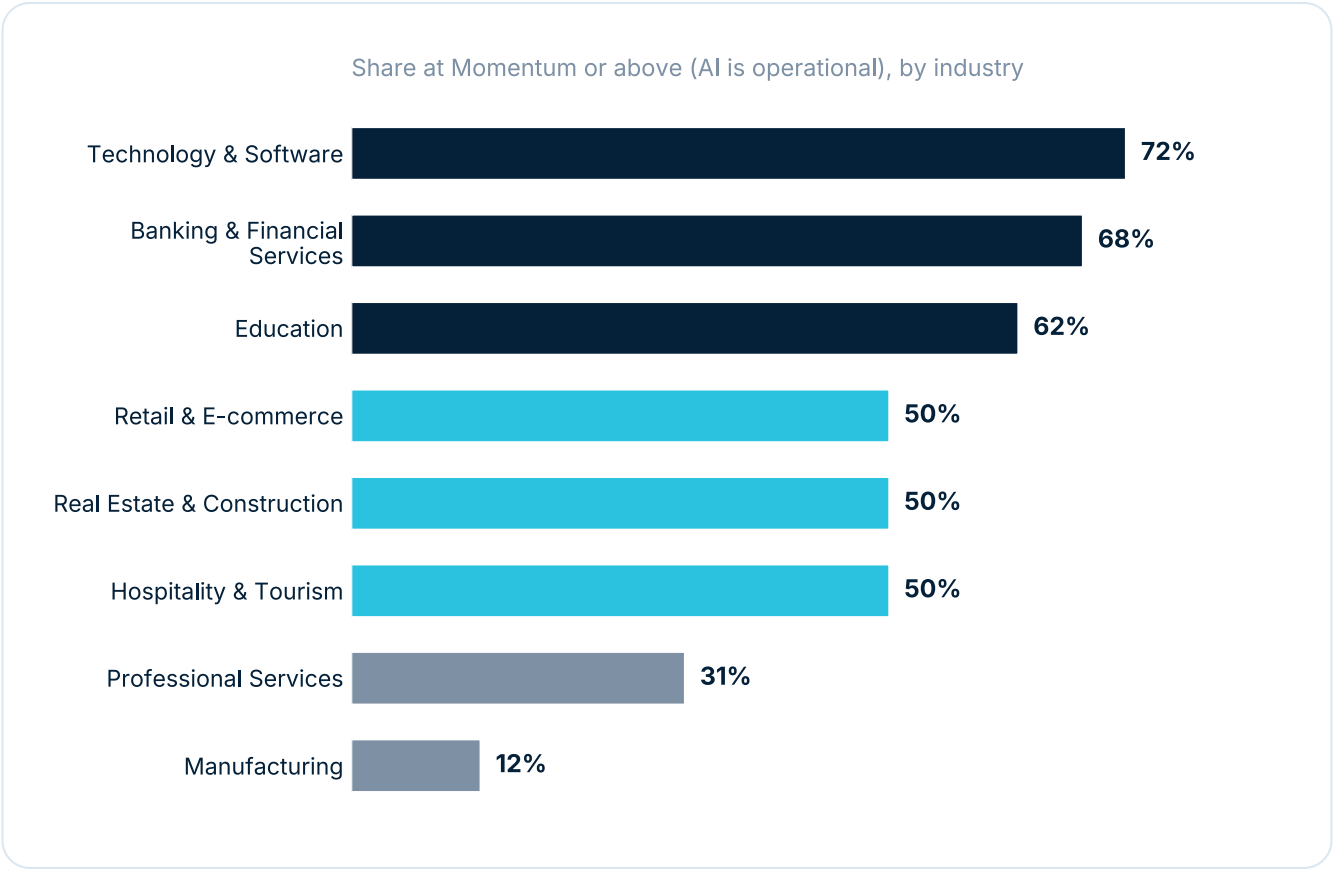
04 The barrier is readiness and guidance, not willingness

Among those who have not adopted AI, the blockers are not scepticism: they are **business readiness** (**51%**) and **lack of guidance** (**45%**). This is a market that wants to be shown the way. **90%** plan to train their teams in 2026, and what they ask for is unambiguous: **hands-on practice** (**59%**) and **real-world, industry-specific examples** (**34%**), not theory. The capability most in demand is AI foundations for the whole team (**48%**), followed by automating repetitive work and building custom "AI employees" for specific departments.

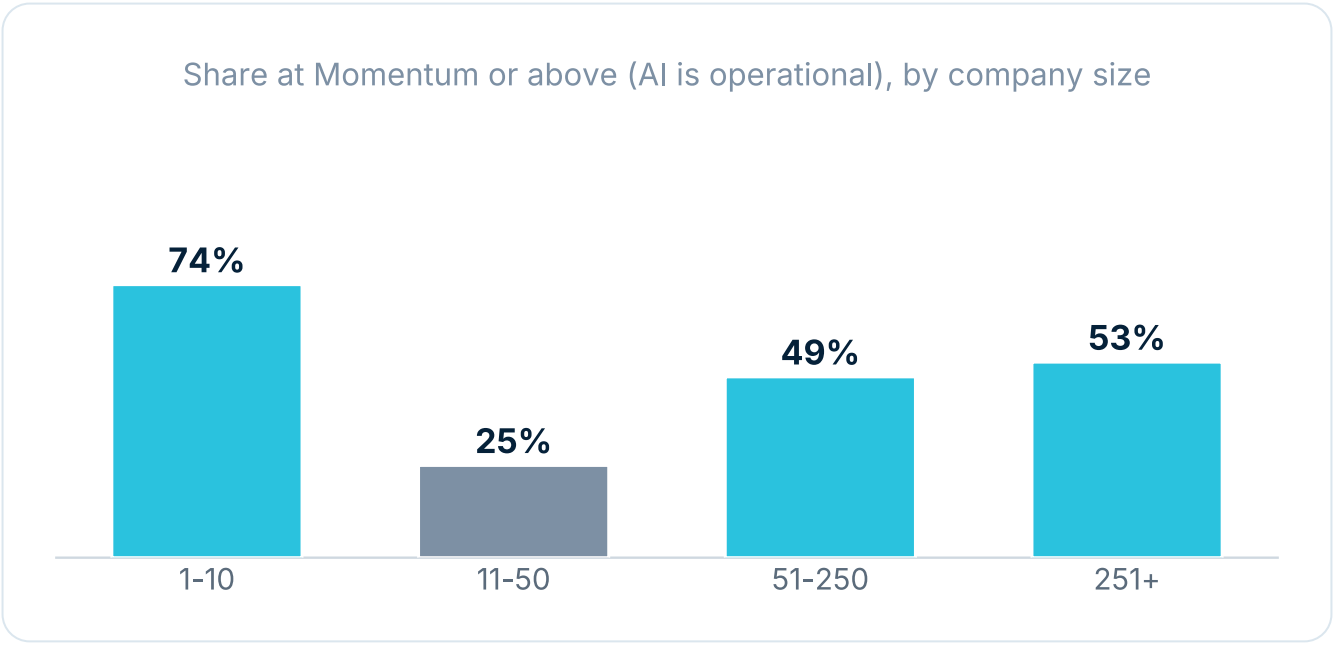
> THE TAKEAWAY
>
> Position the offer as an AI foundations workshop. Lead with quick-win automation and data hygiene, show how to pick the first AI bets, and keep it hands-on. That is exactly what the audience is asking for.

05 Who is ahead, and who is stuck

Readiness is uneven by sector. Technology (**72%**), banking and financial services (**68%**) and education (**62%**) lead on operational AI, the share at Momentum or above. Manufacturing (**12%**) and professional services (**31%**) lag well behind.



Company size reveals a striking mid-market dip. Micro-firms of 1 to 10 people are the most operational (**74%** at Momentum or above), likely because founders adopt hands-on and fast. Larger organisations of 251+ recover on the back of resources (**53%**). But the 11 to 50 band is stuck: only **25%** have reached Momentum or above, caught between the loss of founder-led agility and the capability of a larger firm.



06 Outlook: the next one to three years

- **The Ignition-to-Momentum gap becomes the competitive divide.** Organisations that operationalise AI into workflows and reporting will compound their advantage; those that keep it personal will plateau in the vulnerability zone, regardless of how AI-literate their people are.
- **Spreadsheet-bound reporting caps decision speed.** With half the market on Excel, the hardest decisions (expansion, forecasting, allocation) stay slow. Automated reporting is the most immediate, highest-leverage first move.
- **2026 is a training window that will not stay open.** Demand is unusually high and specific right now. Whoever provides guided, applied, ROI-proven training captures it; generic or theory-first programmes will not convert.
- **Beware pilot purgatory.** Without guidance and proof of ROI, "investigating the topic" turns into stalled pilots. The named blockers, readiness and guidance, are solvable with method, not more tools.

07 Recommendations

Short term (this quarter)

- **Turn intent into method.** Pick one or two high-ROI use cases, automating reporting off Excel, and cutting manual copy-paste, and run guided, hands-on training on those real workflows.
- **Align leaders and teams.** Set a shared direction and a lightweight, practical AI policy covering data security and acceptable use.
- **Standardise the assistant.** Choose a primary tool and a small set of proven prompts; measure time saved so value is visible from week one.
- **Start where they asked.** Foundations for the whole team, then automation, delivered with industry examples, not theory.

Long term (the ladder)

- **Move from tools to systems.** Progress from personal use to automated dashboards, workflows and agents. That shift is what carries an organisation from Ignition through Momentum to Mastery and AI-Native.
- **Build internal capability.** Develop prompt and workflow design in-house, and custom "AI employees" for specific departments, rather than relying on one-off consulting.
- **Instrument ROI.** Track hours saved and decisions accelerated; make the business case self-evident to sustain investment.
- **Close the mid-market gap deliberately.** The 11 to 50 band needs structured programmes most, and is least likely to reach it unaided.

Methodology: 259 valid responses, from 260 raw records after removing one test submission. All contact details (email, name, phone) were removed before analysis. Responses came from two questionnaire versions, whose differing labels were harmonised (company size, industry, and some option wording). Any answer option below 1% of its question base is grouped or omitted. Multiple-choice questions were parsed by known-option matching because several options contain internal commas. Readiness follows the official 2026 diagnostic scoring: each answer carries points, and the total places a respondent in one of five tiers, Explorer (0 to 19), Ignition (20 to 44), Momentum (45 to 74), Mastery (75 to 104) and AI-Native (105 and above).

The live diagnostic dashboard reports 256 respondents after additional de-duplication of repeat submissions; the tier shape and every headline figure are consistent within rounding. Question 17 (reasons for not training) has a low base (n=19) and is reported qualitatively only.

DETAILED VIEW

One question, one chart

Every question in the diagnostic, restored below and grouped by phase. Options below 1% of a question's base are grouped or omitted; multiple-choice questions allow more than one answer, so shares can exceed 100%.

RELATIONSHIP WITH AI

Q1 — SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

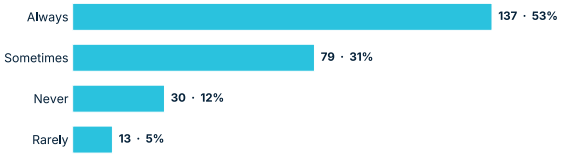
Are you AI literate?



Most selected: “Yes”, 216 (83% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q2 — SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

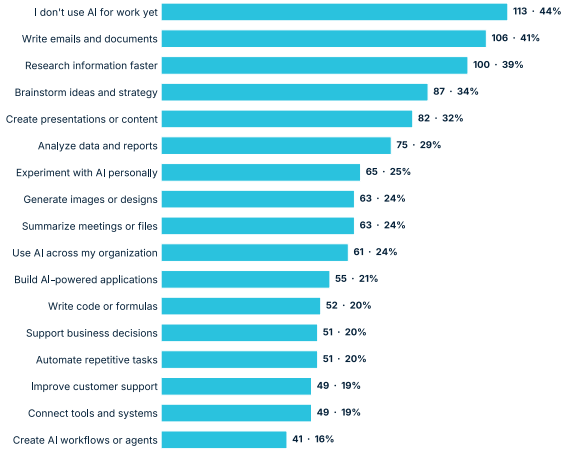
How often do you use AI?



Most selected: “Always”, 137 (53% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q3 — MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=259

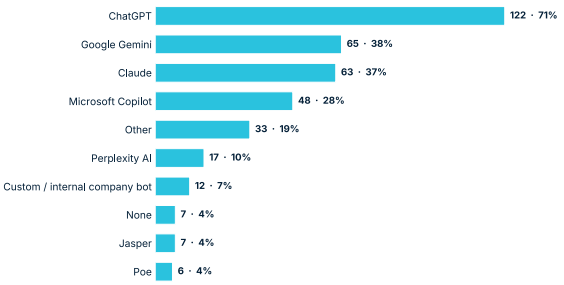
What do you use AI for?



Most selected: “I don't use AI for work yet”, 113 (44% of respondents). Base n = 259.

Q4 — MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=171

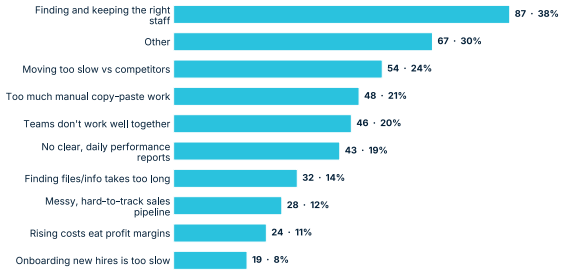
Which conversational AI tools do you use?



Most selected: “ChatGPT”, 122 (71% of respondents). Base n = 171. Base: those who use conversational AI.

Q7 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=227

Current business challenges



Most selected: “Finding and keeping the right staff”, 87 (38% of respondents). Base n = 227.

Q8 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

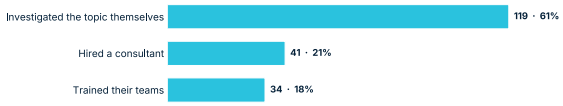
Have you considered AI as a solution?



Most selected: “Yes”, 226 (87% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q9 SINGLE CHOICE · N=194

How did you proceed with AI?



Most selected: “Investigated the topic themselves”, 119 (61% of answers). Base n = 194.

Q10 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=80

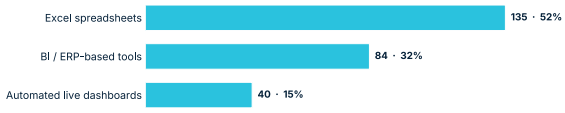
What prevents AI adoption?



Most selected: “Business readiness”, 41 (51% of respondents). Base n = 80.

Q11 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

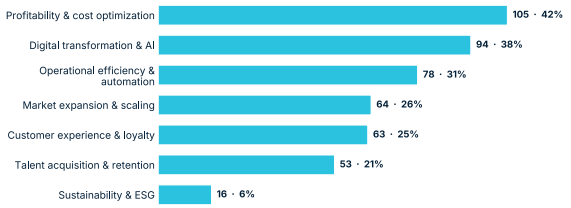
How do you track business KPIs?



Most selected: “Excel spreadsheets”, 135 (52% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q13 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=248

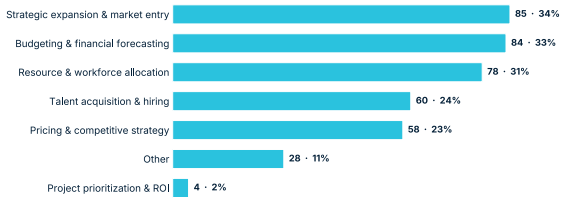
Top business priorities today



Most selected: “Profitability & cost optimization”, 105 (42% of respondents). Base n = 248.

Q14 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=252

Decisions that are hardest to make



Most selected: “Strategic expansion & market entry”, 85 (34% of respondents). Base n = 252.

Q15 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

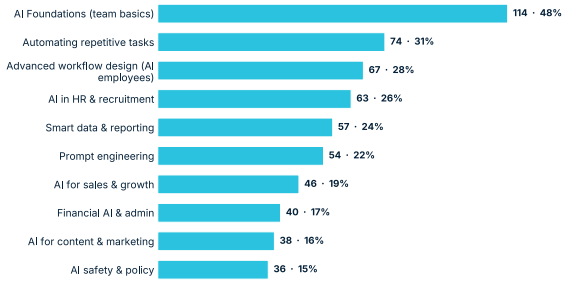
Plan to train your teams on AI in 2026?



Most selected: “Yes”, 234 (90% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q16 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=240

AI capabilities teams want to develop



Most selected: “AI Foundations (team basics)”, 114 (48% of respondents). Base n = 240.

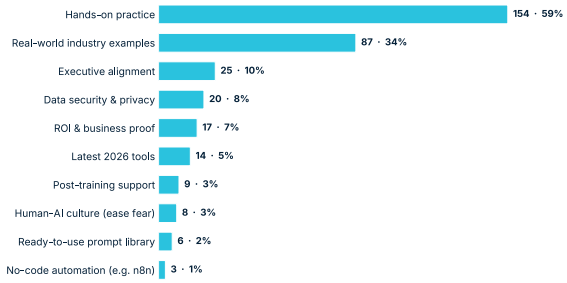
Q17 OPEN TEXT · N=19

Why not training teams on AI?

Low base (n=19). Reasons cluster around budget and timing, group-level compliance or approval, and legacy IT or data not being ready. Too few responses for reliable inference; no chart shown.

Q18 MULTIPLE CHOICE · N=259

Must-haves of a solid AI training

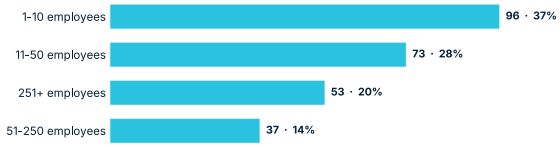


Most selected: “Hands-on practice”, 154 (59% of respondents). Base n = 259.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Q5 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

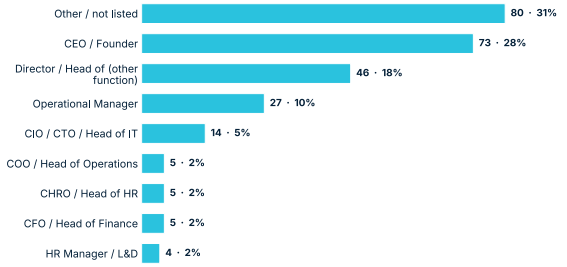
Company size



Most selected: “1-10 employees”, 96 (37% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q6 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

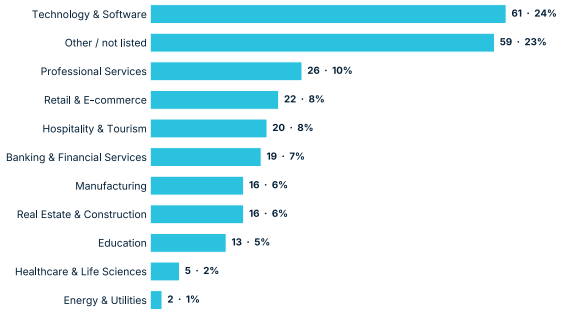
Current job title



Most selected: “CEO / Founder”, 73 (28% of answers). Base n = 259.

Q12 SINGLE CHOICE · N=259

Industry

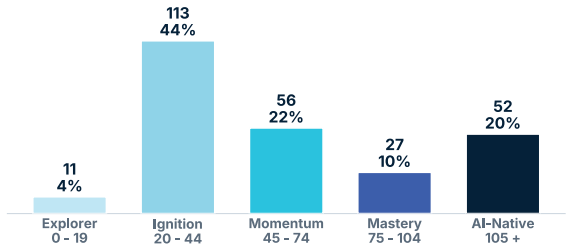


Most selected: “Technology & Software”, 61 (24% of answers). Base n = 259.

READINESS SCORE & CROSS-CUTS

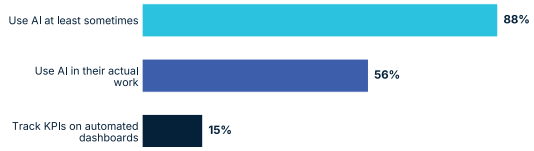
The five-tier framework and the relationships behind the executive summary.

Readiness tiers (2026 framework)



48% sit in the high-vulnerability zone (Explorer or Ignition); 52% have reached Momentum or above.

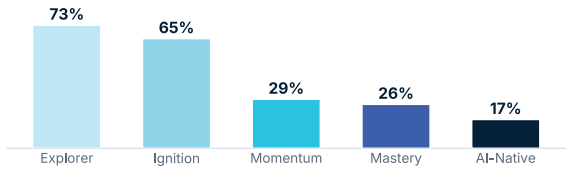
Personal use vs operational value



88% use AI, but far fewer have made it operational.

AI not yet in their work, by tier

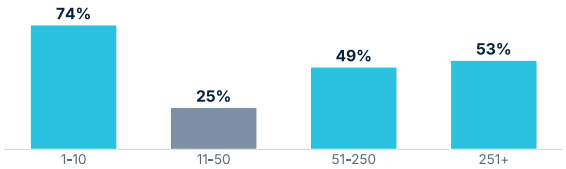
Share who have NOT brought AI into their work, by readiness tier



The tiers form a real ladder from personal to operational use.

Operational (Momentum+), by company size

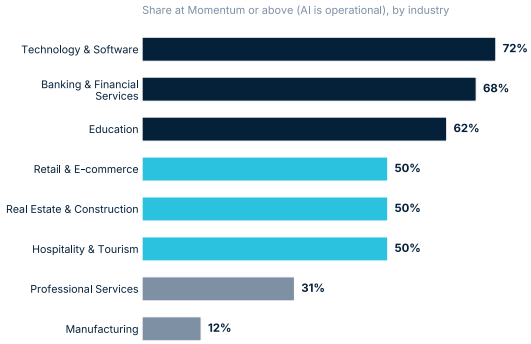
Share at Momentum or above (AI is operational), by company size



The 11 to 50 band is the clear mid-market dip.

Operational (Momentum+), by industry

Share at Momentum or above (AI is operational), by industry



Technology, banking and education lead; manufacturing lags.