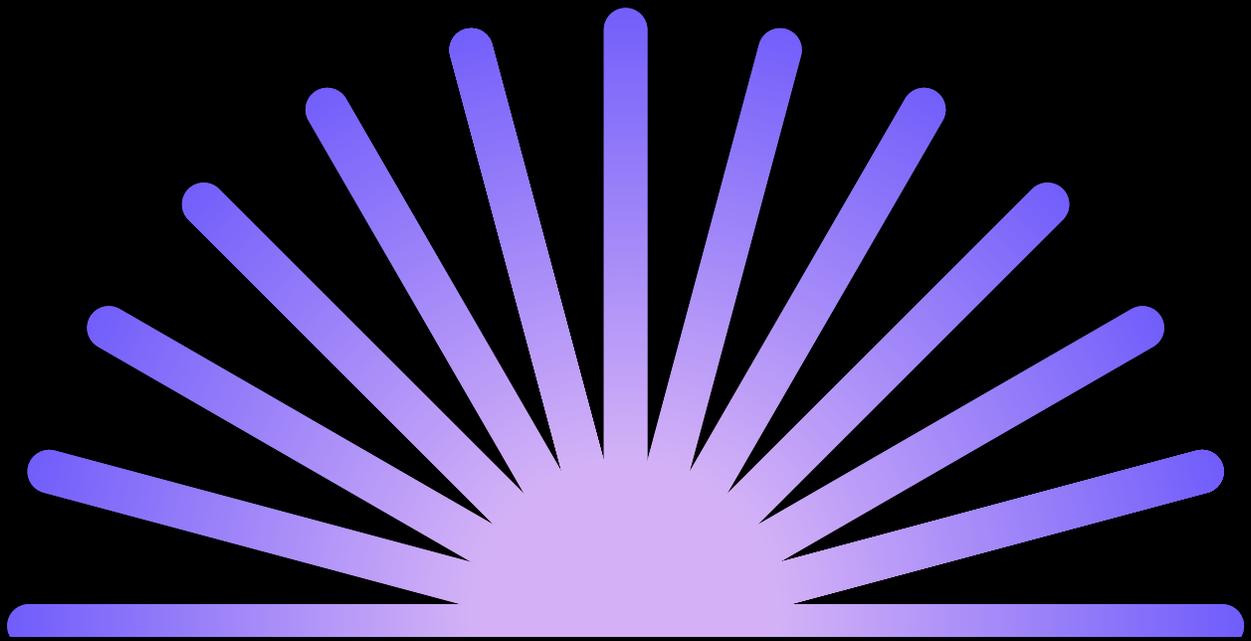


THE 2025 WRITER AI SURVEY

Generative AI adoption in the enterprise

How to break down silos, navigate tension, and activate
champions to unlock the transformative potential of AI at work



WRITER

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Enterprise AI at a crossroads

For the last four years at Writer, we've worked alongside some of the world's biggest companies, like Accenture, L'Oreal, Mars, and Vanguard, helping them figure out what it really takes to make AI work at scale.

The companies pulling ahead aren't just using AI to do the same work, faster. They're using it to unlock new value and empower their employees to push boundaries, think bigger, and work in entirely new ways. This people-first approach isn't just a differentiator. It's the defining factor in whether enterprises successfully navigate the transition to become AI-first.

But most enterprises aren't there yet. Change at this scale is hard, especially in organizations with thousands, even tens of thousands, of employees. Instead of transformation, they're seeing tension. And the gap between AI's promise and what's actually happening on the ground is only widening.

The themes explored in this report surface the very real challenges we see every day as organizations undergo this wholesale shift: misalignment, power struggles, and stalled ROI. Leaders are making big bets, but the payoff is slow. AI tools are rolling out, but employees aren't equipped, aligned, or sometimes even willing to use them. Power struggles over who owns decisions are creating friction instead of momentum.

And yet, the energy is there. People want AI to work. They want it to drive something bigger in their roles. It's not enthusiasm that's stalling adoption, it's the lack of a real strategy, the right tools to empower teams, and a partner that can actually make it work at scale.

The ones getting it right aren't just pushing AI from the top down, they're making AI a shared initiative. They're taking all this excitement, all this optimism, and pulling people into the process instead of leaving them behind.

They're breaking AI out of silos and putting it in the hands of the people who know their work best, encouraging them to rethink their biggest, most mission-critical challenges.

At Writer, we see this shift happening every day. We've helped hundreds of enterprises move from experimentation to full-scale transformation and real ROI, with AI-first enterprises now coming into view.

What waits on the other side of the AI transformation is a better way of working – one that's more creative, more inspired, and full of potential for organizations and the people who power them.

May Habib

May Habib

CEO & Co-Founder

WRITER



Voices of AI adopters

To better understand the opportunities and barriers to AI adoption in the enterprise, Writer partnered with research group Workplace Intelligence to survey a diverse group of 1,600 knowledge workers across the U.S., including 800 C-suite executives and 800 employees.

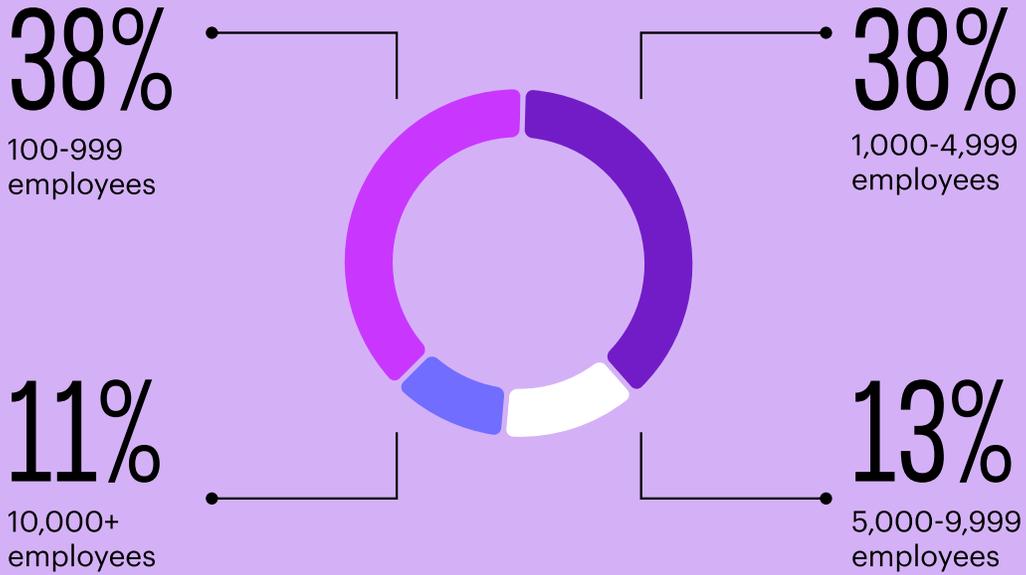
While most research has taken a broad view of generative AI, all of the respondents we surveyed were actively using AI. Specifically, employee respondents were required to be using generative AI tools at work, and C-suite respondents were required to be working at a company that permits the use of these tools. By focusing on those who have already adopted generative AI, we were able to more acutely understand the experiences, attitudes, and beliefs shaping AI transformation in the workplace.

The C-suite audience included C-level executives such as CEOs, CFOs, CTOs, and CIOs. The employee audience included individual contributors as well as managers and team leads. Employees were required to be working in the finance, HR, legal, marketing, sales, or customer support functions at their organization.

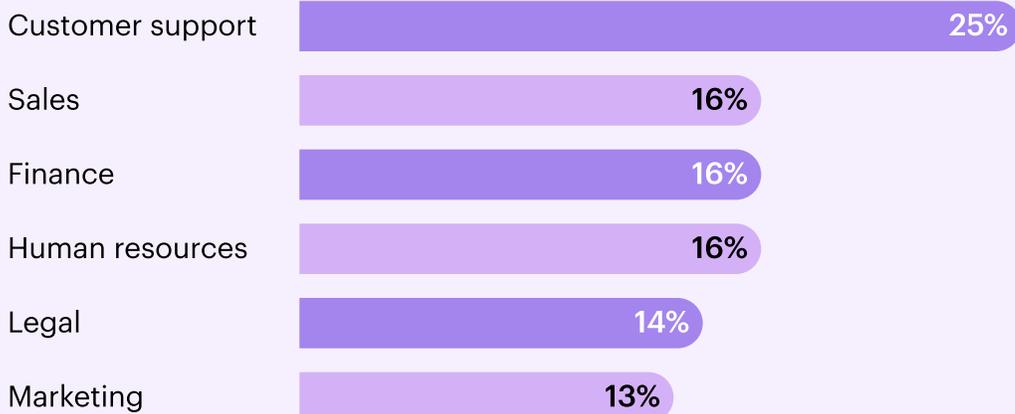
The companies involved in the survey were enterprise organizations having between 100 to over 10,000 employees. These companies spanned industries including: technology, financial services, retail and consumer goods, and healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and life sciences. This wide-ranging participation provides a comprehensive perspective on the state of generative AI adoption today. Research findings are based on a survey conducted in December 2024.

WHO WE SURVEYED

Company size

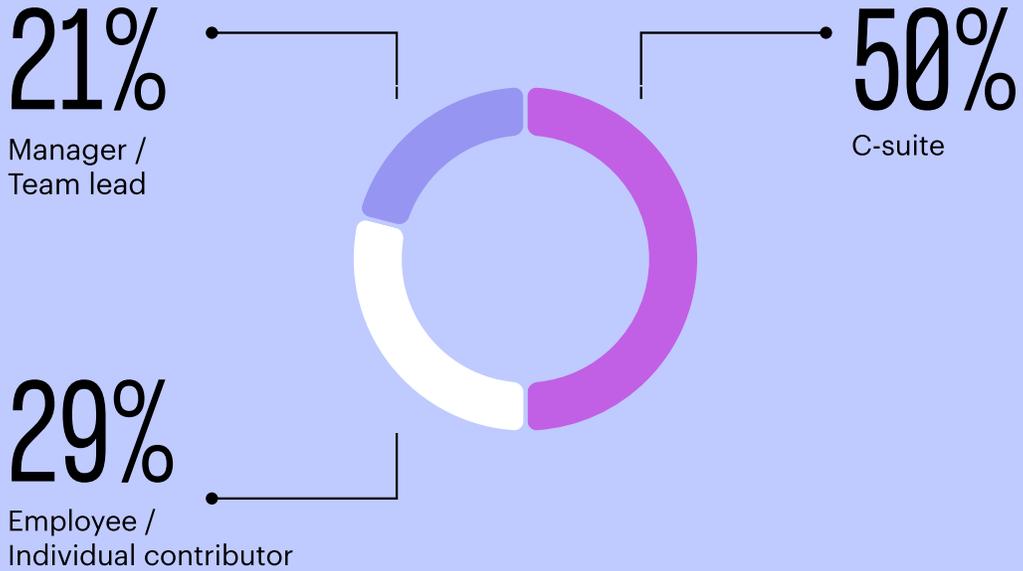


Department / function (employees only)

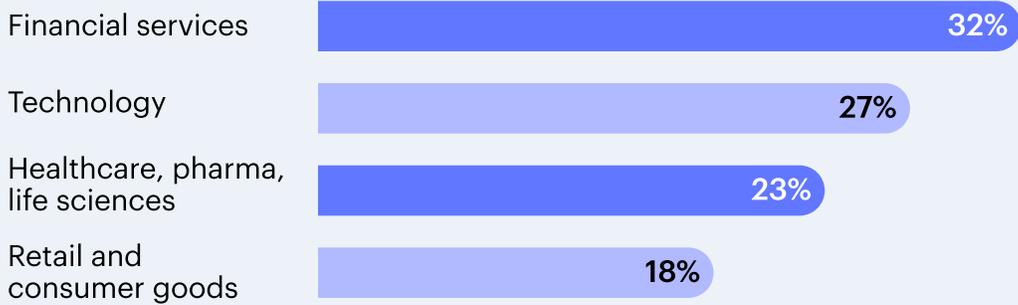


WHO WE SURVEYED

Seniority

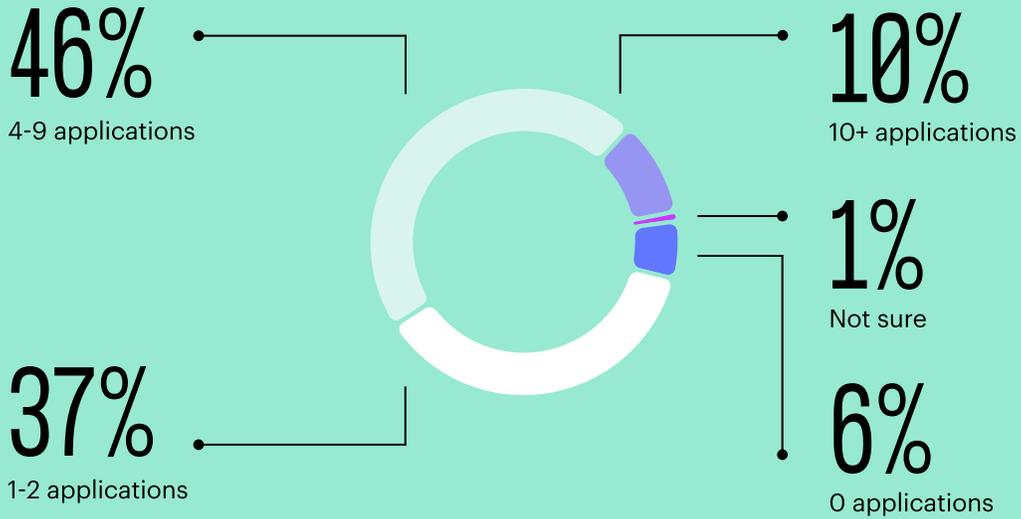


Industry

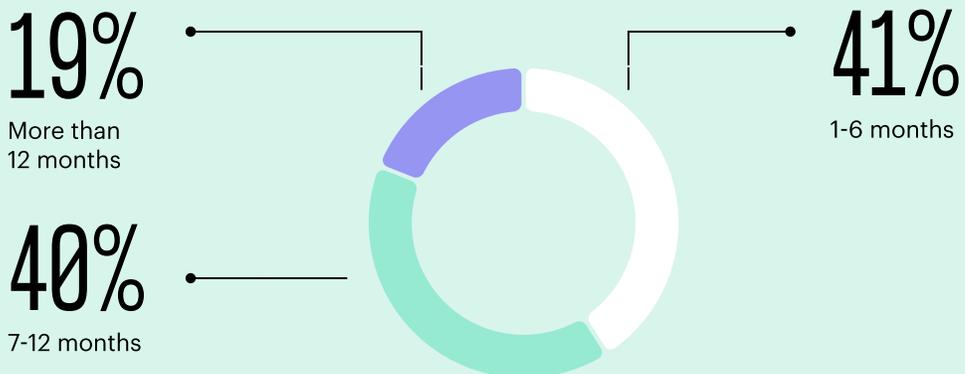


WHO WE SURVEYED

Number of in-house generative AI applications company has developed and deployed at scale (C-suite only)



Length of time using generative AI tools at work (employees only)



Key findings

1

Widespread AI optimism

88% of employees and 97% of executives say they've benefited from generative AI, and both groups are leveraging these tools for a wide range of use cases.

2

Challenges with adoption

Despite the clear benefits of generative AI tools, 72% of the C-suite say their company has faced at least one challenge on their journey to AI adoption, and 42% say the process of adopting generative AI is tearing their company apart.

3

Power struggles

Organizations are especially struggling with internal alignment. 71% of the C-suite say AI applications are being created in a silo, and around two-thirds say the adoption process has created tension or division within their organization.

4

Disconnects between workers and employers

Employees and executives aren't seeing eye-to-eye regarding AI implementation. For example, just 45% of employees — versus 75% of the C-suite — feel their company has been very successful in adopting and using generative AI over the past 12 months.

5

Employee retaliation

41% of Millennial and Gen Z employees admit they're sabotaging their company's AI strategy, for example by refusing to use AI tools or outputs. The reasons for this range from fears about AI taking over their job to concerns about the quality of AI tools, pointing to the need for a better change management process.

6

Poor quality AI tools

Employees are so unhappy with their employer's tools that 35% are paying out-of-pocket for the generative AI tools they use at work. This is a significant cost burden to employees, and it could also be creating a security risk for organizations.

7

Higher investment yields greater ROI

When it comes to successfully adopting generative AI, there's a 40 percentage-point gap between companies who invest the most and those who invest the least. Companies making large, strategic investments are outperforming peers.

8

AI champions: an untapped resource

Among employees using AI, 77% are AI champions or have the potential to become AI champions within their organization. These workers are taking steps that can support a better implementation process for their entire organization.

9

From AI champions to AI builders

Not only are AI champions eager to be advocates, but many also want to play an active role in building solutions. Nearly all (98%) AI champions have already helped create AI tools for their company or would like to do so.

10

Companies want partners, not just vendors

According to 98% of the C-suite, vendors should help set the vision for AI at work. Yet most vendors are letting companies down, with 94% of executives reporting that they're not completely satisfied.

In this report, we'll explore our survey findings and describe how organizations can overcome obstacles they might encounter when implementing AI. We'll also describe how vendors should be supporting the adoption process for employers.

Widespread AI optimism

Executives cite several factors that have led their organizations to adopt generative AI, including opportunities for revenue as well as employee interest. In fact, both audiences report an overwhelmingly high level of

excitement about AI. At least 9 out of 10 employees (90%) and C-suite leaders (93%) say they're optimistic about their company's approach to generative AI.

What are the primary factors driving generative AI adoption at your company?



9/10

respondents are optimistic about their company's approach to generative AI.

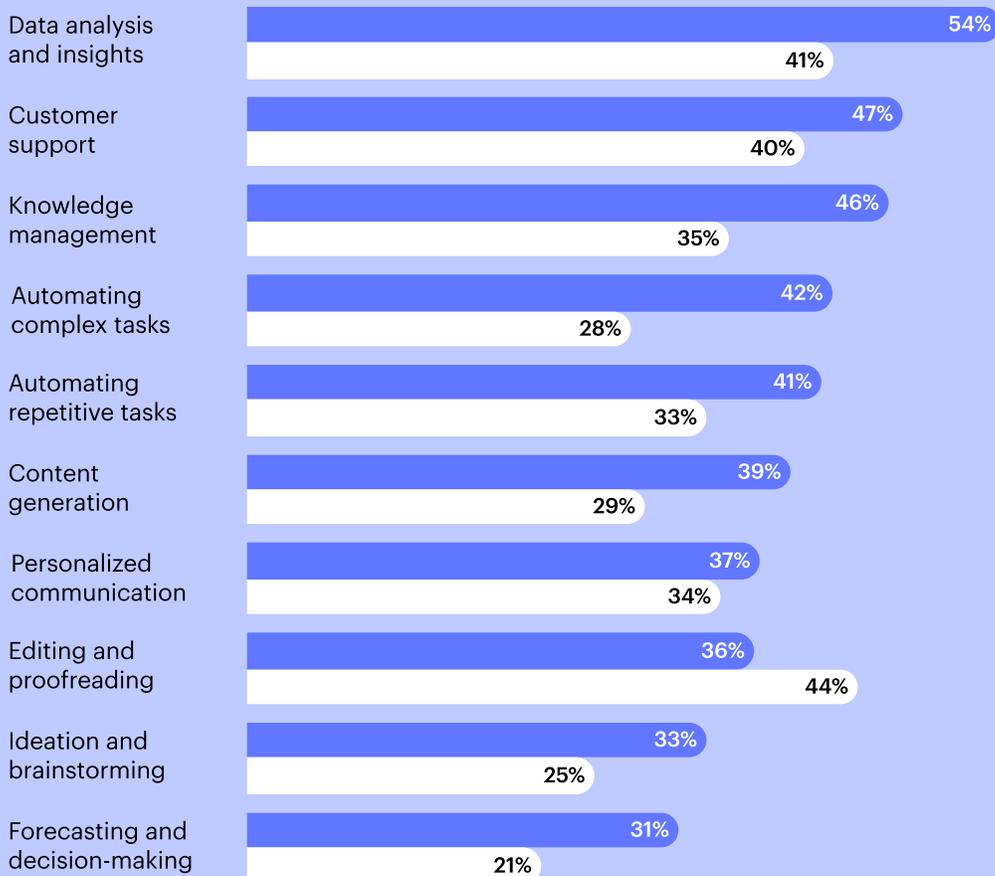
Generative AI use cases

Both employees and executives are leveraging generative AI for a wide variety of use cases. However, the C-suite is more likely to be using generative AI for these purposes. In addition, 60% of employees and 89%

of the C-suite say at least a quarter of their job has already been impacted or enhanced by generative AI, revealing that leaders are leaning on AI tools for support more than workers.

Are you currently using generative AI to support you at work in any of the following ways?

● C-suite ● Employees



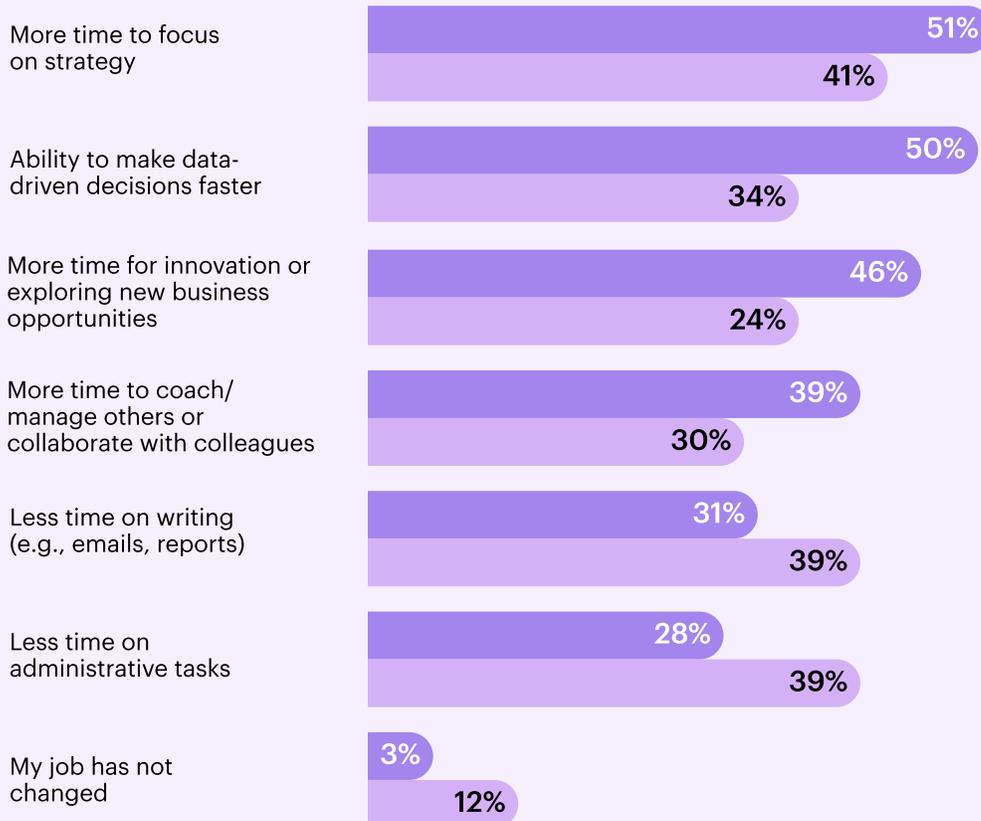
Generative AI benefits

The vast majority of both audiences — 88% of employees and 97% of executives — say they’ve benefited from generative AI tools in at least one

way, noting that these tools have given them more time to focus on strategy, innovation, and relationship-building at work.

Has your job changed in any of the following ways as a result of generative AI tools?

● C-suite ● Employees



88% of employees and 97% of the C-suite have benefited from using generative AI tools.

Role in talent attraction

The advantages of generative AI go well beyond the on-the-job applications of these tools. In fact, offering best-in-class tools can play an important role in retaining and recruiting talent — even at the top levels of the organization.

The majority of employees (81%) and the C-suite (97%) say if they were looking for a new job, it would be important to work for a company that's leading and innovating in generative AI. 84% of employees and

96% of executives expect a potential employer to provide generative AI training opportunities.

What's more, 45% of employees and 59% of executives say they wouldn't even consider working for a company that isn't using generative AI. Perhaps most notably, 35% of employees and 59% of the C-suite report that they're actively looking for a new job with a company that's more innovative with generative AI than their current employer.

The Writer advantage

Among employees who use Writer, 77% feel their company is ahead of its competitors when it comes to leading and innovating in generative AI. Among those who don't use Writer, that number is just 56%.

59%

of the C-suite reports that they're actively looking for a new job with a company that's more innovative with generative AI.

Generative AI adoption challenges

Despite overall positive perceptions, 72% of the C-suite say their company has faced at least one challenge on their journey to generative AI adoption. In the remainder of this

report, we'll shed light on some of these challenges and explore steps organizations can take to enable a smoother and more successful adoption process.

72%

of organizations have faced challenges during the generative AI adoption process, including:

- 1 Lack of generative AI skills / knowledge
- 2 Tension between IT teams and users
- 3 Employee retaliation and lack of trust
- 4 Security issues
- 5 In-house development challenges
- 6 Unrealistic expectations
- 7 Poor quality tools

Tension point 1: Power struggles

While executives are overwhelmingly optimistic about the future business impact of AI, the majority are facing challenges with organizational alignment and adoption. Around two-thirds of the C-suite say generative AI has created tension or division between IT teams and other lines of business (68%) as well as between executives and employees (63%). 42% say adopting generative AI is tearing their company apart and has created power struggles and disruption at their organization.

Adopting AI requires a different set of requirements and skills than technologies of the past. In the most successful organizations, IT is

collaborating across the business to drive value. However, some executives are disappointed with the role this department is playing in driving adoption, noting that IT leaders aren't working with employees (41%) or other lines of business (36%) to adopt generative AI.

Over a third (36%) of the C-suite say IT teams aren't delivering real value when it comes to generative AI, and 49% say employees have been left to figure generative AI out on their own. Perhaps most tellingly, 71% say generative AI applications are being created in a silo at their organization.

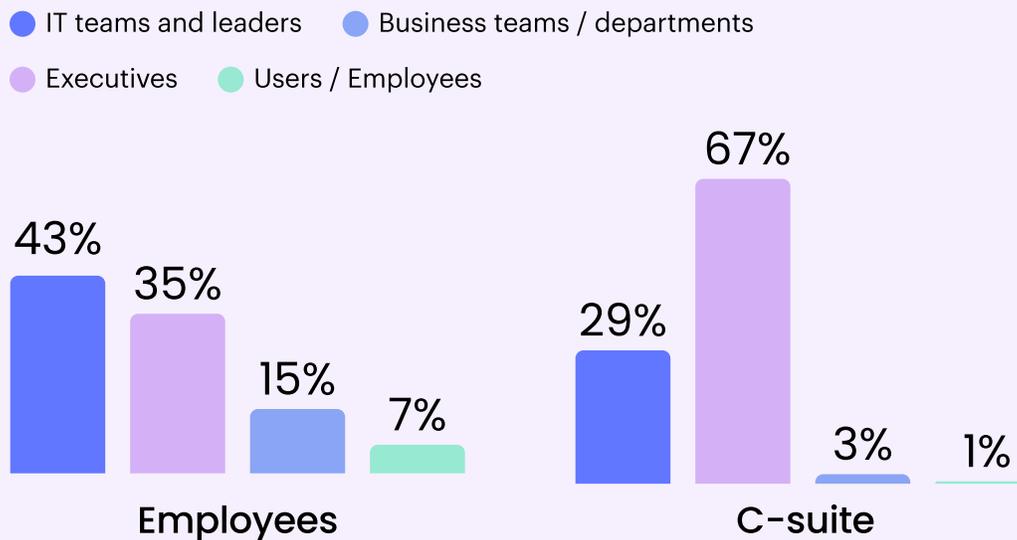
71%

of the C-suite say generative AI applications are being created in a silo at their company.

In addition, workers and leaders aren't on the same page regarding who owns the generative AI strategy at their company and holds the power in AI-related decisions. While 67% of the C-suite believe executives are in charge, just 35% of employees agree.

Nor do they agree on who should be in control of AI decision-making. 44% of employees maintain that IT leaders and teams should hold this power, but the C-suite still largely favors executives (53%).

Who owns the generative AI strategy at your company and holds the power in AI-related decisions?



Tension point 2: Disconnects

Employees and leaders aren't seeing eye-to-eye regarding several factors, including how well their company is implementing generative AI. What's more, some employees aren't aware

that their company has a generative AI strategy in place, revealing a concerning lack of top-down communication.

Approach to generative AI



Employees



C-suite

Feel their company's approach to generative AI is completely well-controlled, coordinated, and highly strategic.

Success with generative AI



Employees



C-suite

Think their company has been very successful in adopting and actively using generative AI over the past 12 months.

Awareness of AI strategy



Employees



C-suite

Say their company has a generative AI strategy in place

Organizational AI literacy



Employees



C-suite

Believe their organization as a whole has a high level of AI literacy and comprehension.

Tension point 3: Lack of ROI

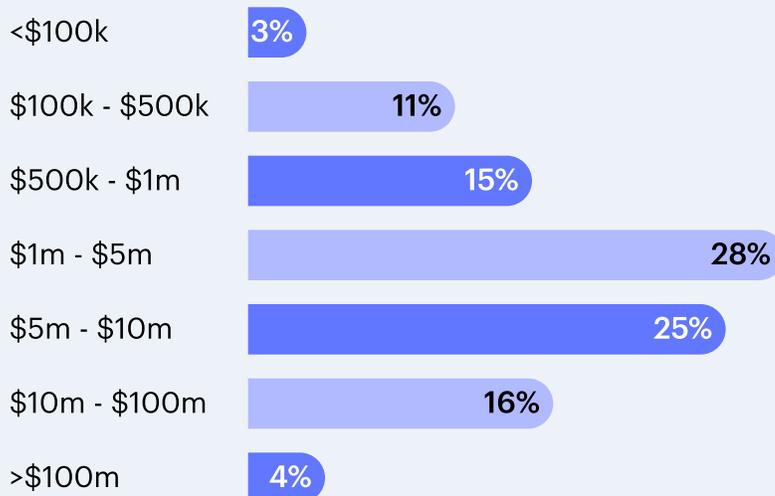
One thing both audiences agree on is that companies aren't achieving the high level of ROI that they've promised. 43% of employees and 44% of leaders say executives at their company talk a big game about generative AI but can't deliver.

Proving this point, only around a third of the C-suite say they've seen a significant ROI with respect to employee productivity (36%), cost savings for their organization (36%), and revenue (32%).

That's in spite of the fact that 73% of companies are investing at least \$1 million each year in these technologies.

What's more, 62% of executives think it will take at least three years for their company to see a return on investment from generative AI. And perhaps most tellingly, 34% of the C-suite admit that generative AI adoption at their company has been a massive disappointment.

How much does your company invest in generative AI technology annually?



73%

of companies are investing at least \$1 million each year in generative AI technology, but just one third have seen significant ROI.

Tension point 4: Employee retaliation

Companies that aren't putting in the effort to overcome AI adoption challenges may be paying a steep price — and one they may not even be aware of. That's because 31% of employees say they're sabotaging their company's generative AI strategy. That number jumps to 41% for Millennial and Gen Z employees.

In addition, 1 out of 10 workers say they're tampering with performance metrics to make it appear AI is underperforming, intentionally generating low-quality outputs, refusing to use generative AI tools or outputs, or refusing to take generative AI training.

The top ways workers are retaliating

27%

have entered company information into a non-approved generative AI tool.

20%

are using generative AI tools that aren't permitted by their employer.

16%

have been aware of an AI security leak but haven't reported it.

41%

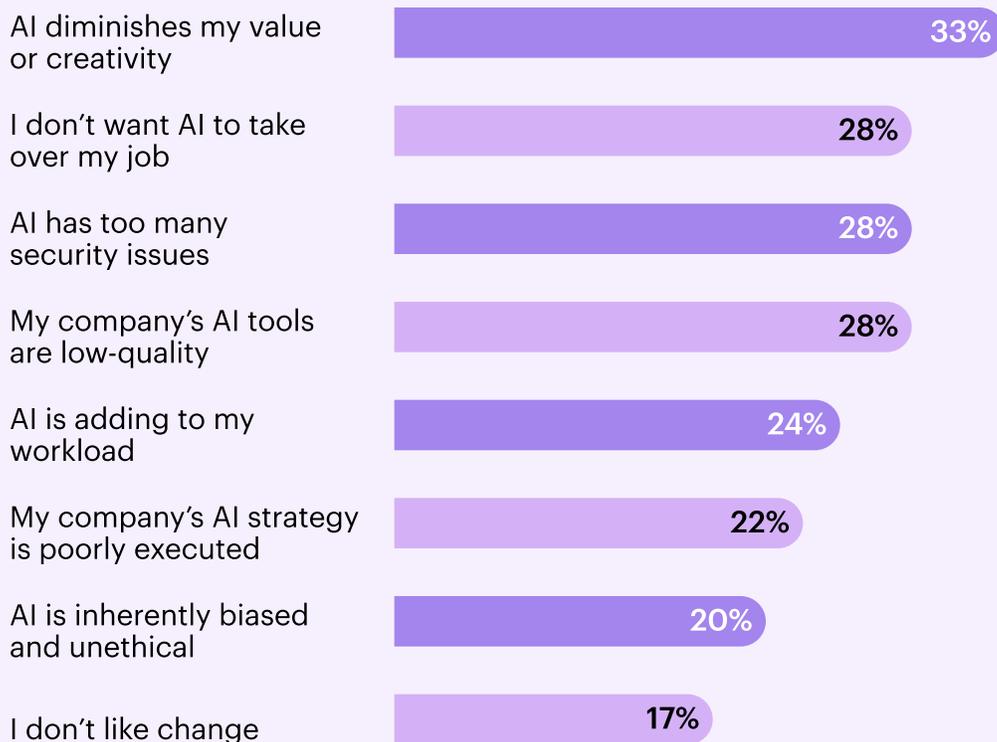
of Gen Z employees are sabotaging their company's generative AI strategy

Among employees who are sabotaging their company's strategy, some report that this is because they're dissatisfied with their company's AI tools. Others note broader fears around AI replacing them or diminishing their value.

Organizations can address a few of these concerns simply by using

better-quality AI tools. However, many of these issues indicate a poor change management process. Including employees in adoption and implementation initiatives and being transparent with them about the intended use cases for generative AI can help lessen their concerns about AI taking over their job.

What are the main reasons you're working against your company's generative AI strategy?



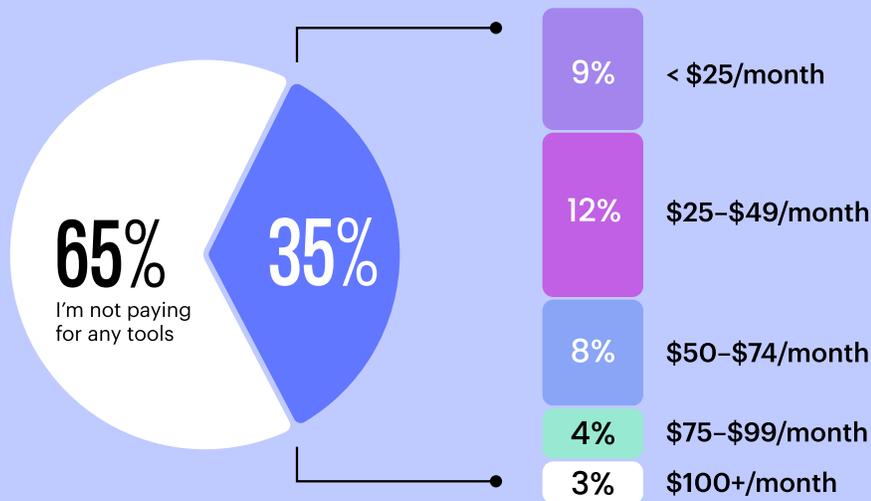
Tension point 5: Poor-quality tools

Employees' dissatisfaction is also highlighted by the fact that 35% are paying out-of-pocket for the generative AI tools they use at work because their employer doesn't provide the ones they want. Over a quarter (27%) report that they pay at

least \$25 a month, which adds up to \$300 (or more) a year.

Not only is this a significant cost burden to employees, but the use of non-approved tools creates a clear security risk for organizations.

Are you paying out-of-pocket for any of the generative AI tools you use at work, because your employer doesn't provide the tools you want?



Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

35%

of employees are paying out-of-pocket for the generative AI tools they use at work.

Strategies to maximize the potential of generative AI

Overall, our survey data points to widespread struggles with AI adoption, with 95% of executives reporting that their company could use more support to improve this

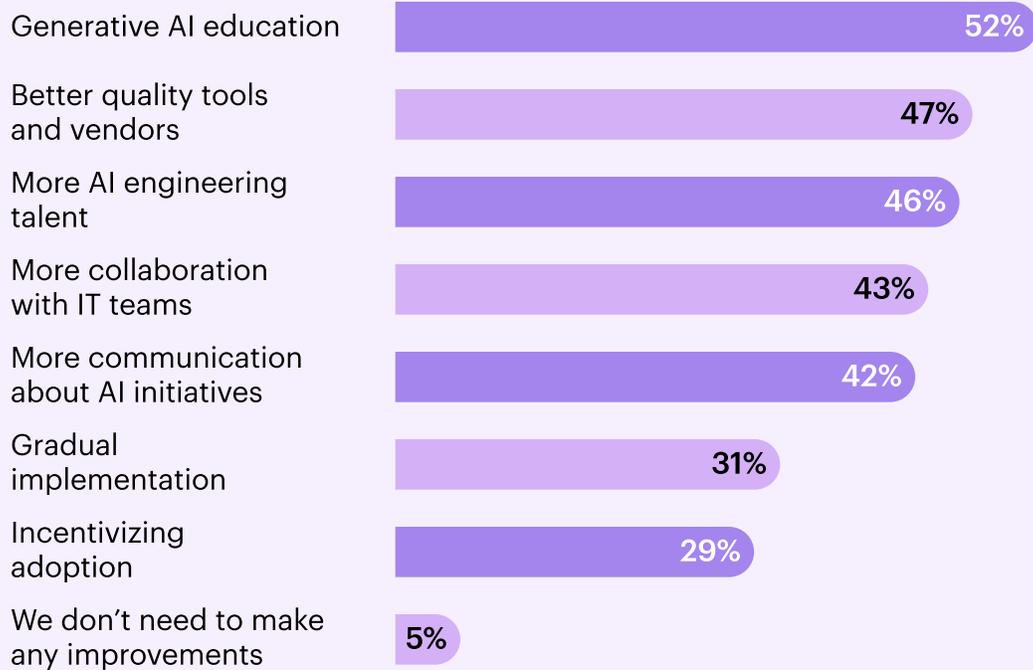
process. In the remainder of this report, we'll examine some of the steps organizations can take to turn things around.

95%

of the C-suite admit their company needs to improve the generative AI adoption process.

MAXIMIZE THE POTENTIAL

Would any of the following help improve the process of generative AI adoption for your company?



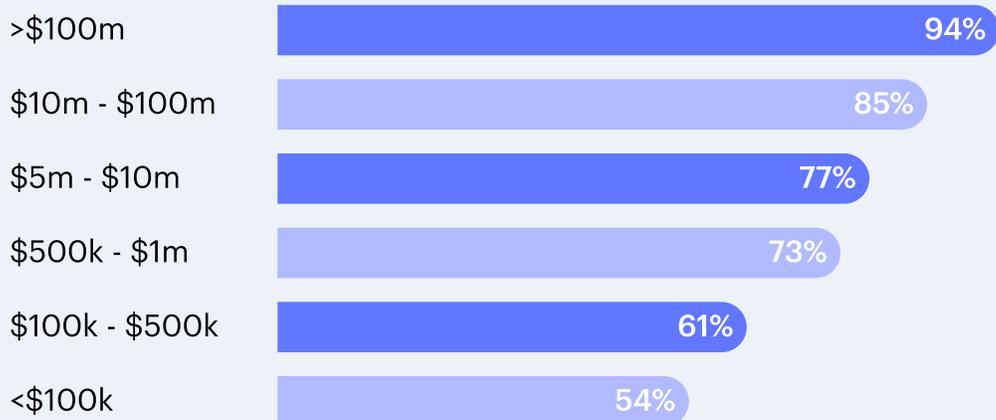
Strategy 1: Formalize and invest in your generative AI plan

One of the most important steps an organization can take is simply putting a generative AI strategy in place. At companies that do not have a formal AI strategy, just 37% of the C-suite say they've been very successful at adopting and implementing AI, versus 80% at companies that do have a strategy.

As shown in the chart below, there's also a clear link between increased annual investment and success in adopting and using generative AI tools. While not every organization will be able to invest millions into generative AI, it's worth considering whether your company is investing enough to produce the ROI you're hoping to achieve.

How successful has your company been in adopting and actively using generative AI over the past 12 months?

% who said "very" successful, by annual investment



40
pp gap

When it comes to successfully adopting generative AI, there's a 40 percentage-point gap between companies who invest the most and those who invest the least.

Strategy 2: Nurture your company's AI champions

Another way employers can move the needle on generative AI adoption is by supporting AI champions — those who have fully embraced generative AI and advocate for it at their

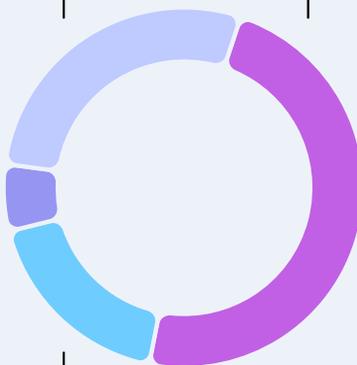
company. Among employees using AI, over three-quarters (77%) say this term either “completely” or “somewhat” describes them.

How well does the term “AI champion” describe you?

28%
Completely

6%
Not at all

18%
Very little



48%
Somewhat

The Writer advantage

Employees who use Writer are nearly 2X more likely to be AI champions, compared to those who do not use Writer.

77%

of employees are either already AI champions or have the potential to become AI champions within their organization.

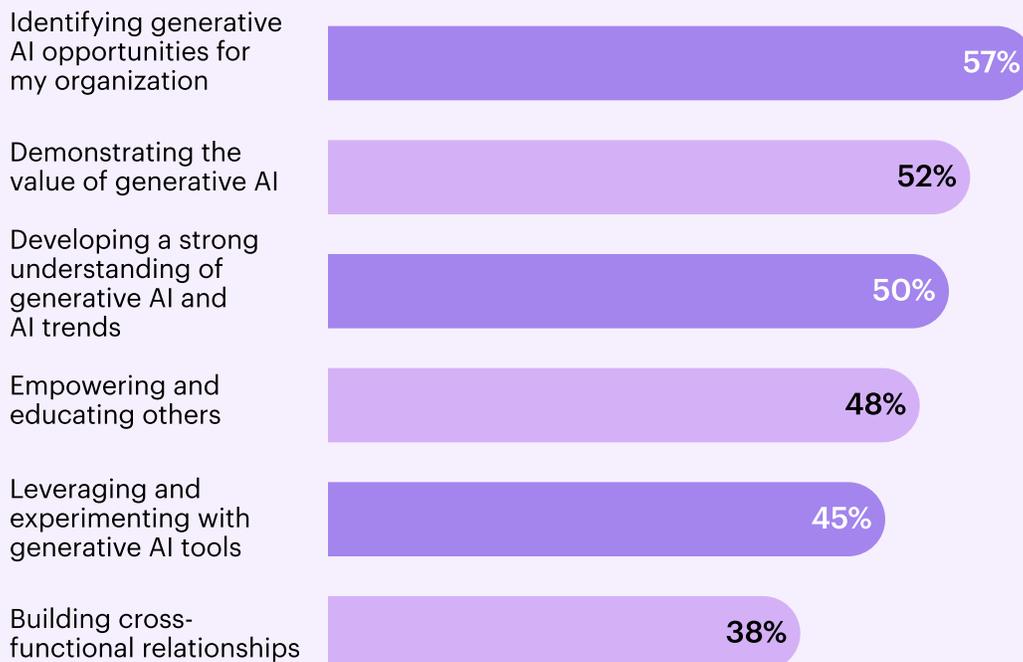
Workers who consider themselves AI champions are taking key steps that can support a better adoption and implementation process for their entire organization, including those shown below.

In addition, nearly all (94%) of the AI champions surveyed say being an AI advocate has benefited their career,

noting that it's given them more job stability (42%), they're more respected at work (37%), and they've gotten promoted more quickly (21%).

Over half (51%) say it's made them more motivated and engaged, an outcome that offers clear benefits to employers as well.

As an AI champion, which of the following steps have you taken?



These champions are not only eager to be advocates, but also want to play an active role in creating AI applications and solutions for their employers. An impressive 98% have already helped build or design AI tools (59%) or would like the opportunity to do so (39%).

Empowering AI champions to become AI builders is an effective way for organizations to increase their overall ROI and success. With these benefits in mind, companies should support these champions and also nurture employees who demonstrate the potential to become AI champions.

As an AI champion, have you had the opportunity to help build/design any generative AI tools for your organization?



98%

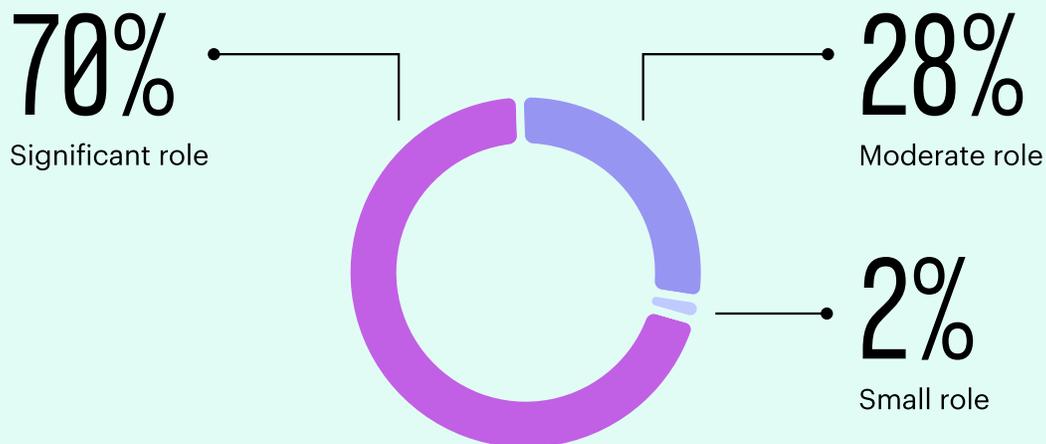
of AI champions have helped build generative AI tools for their company or would like to do so.

Strategy 3: Select the right vendors

Best-in-class generative AI vendors don't just provide tools — they also support change management, provide employee education, and much more. In fact, 98% of executives

believe vendors should play a role in shaping the vision for AI at work, with 70% saying that role should be "significant."

What role should generative AI vendors play in helping shape the vision for AI at work?

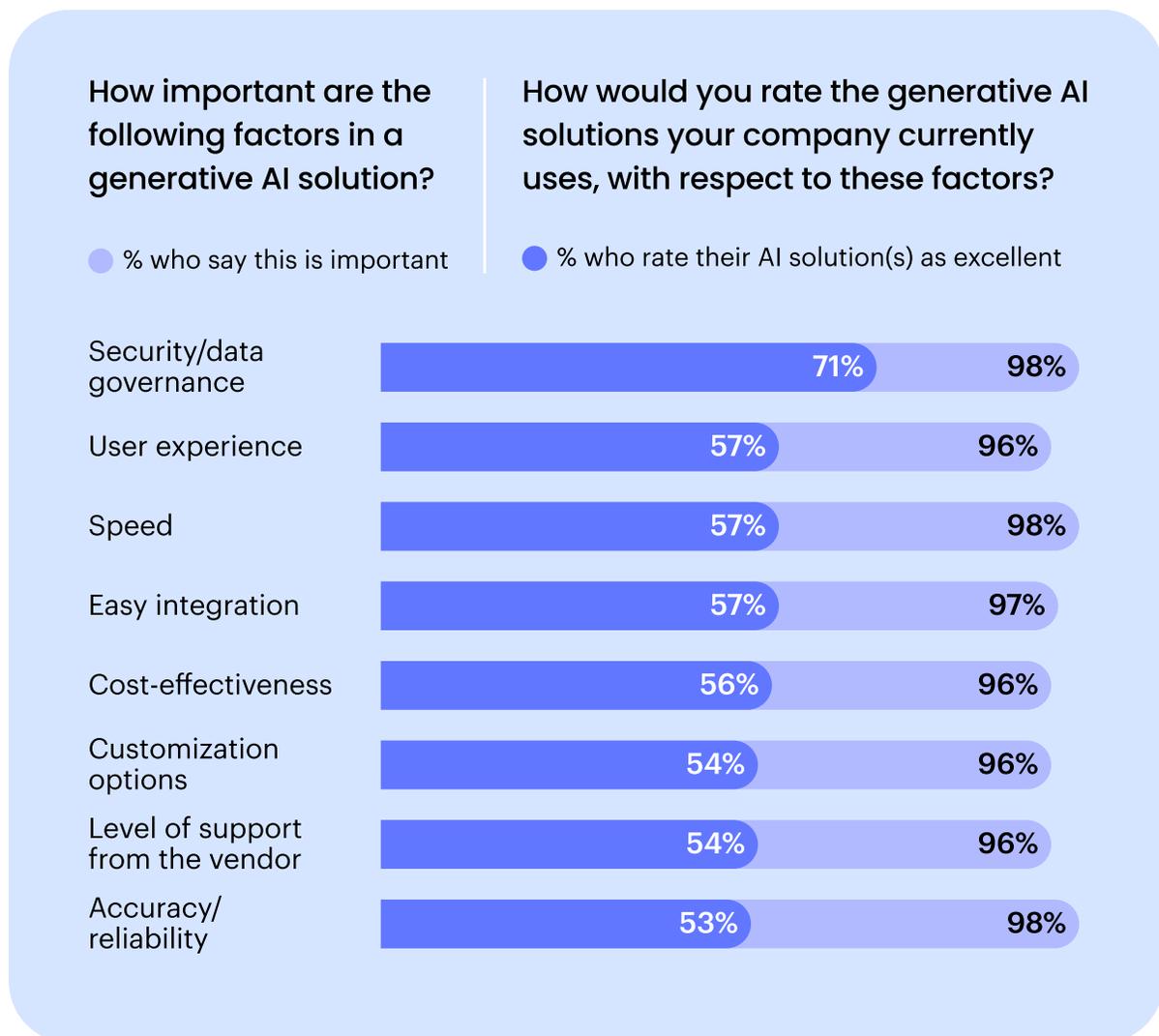


98% of the C-suite think generative AI vendors should play a role in helping shape the vision for AI at work.

Where technology vendors fall short

Unfortunately, most vendors aren't delivering on their role in providing adequate tools or shaping the vision for generative AI. While the vast majority of the C-suite say the factors

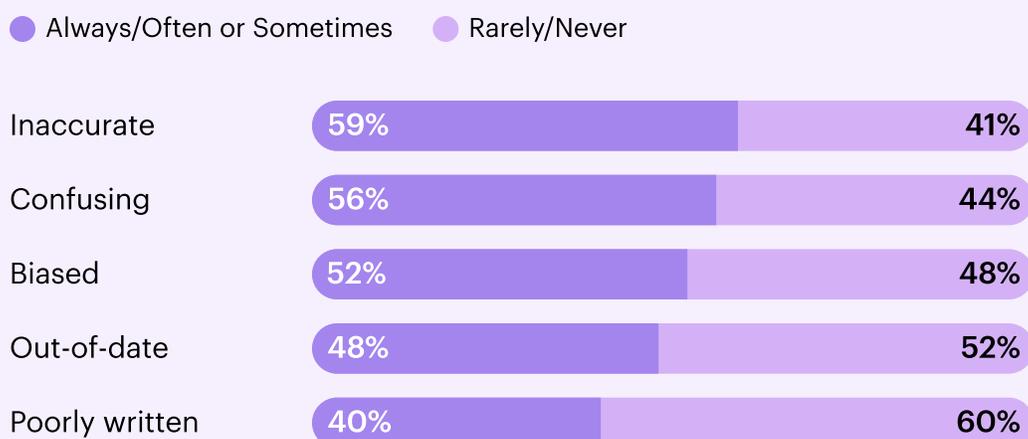
shown in the chart below are either "very" or "somewhat" important, far fewer leaders rated their company's generative AI solutions as "excellent" in these areas.



The most critical factor leaders highlight is security / data governance, with 80% of executives noting that this is “very” important. However, just 37% of employees believe generative AI tools are very secure, revealing that most vendors aren’t delivering on this key attribute.

Employees are also disappointed with the performance of the tools they use, with a significant number reporting that they routinely receive information that’s unsatisfactory.

When using generative AI tools, how often do you receive information that’s unsatisfactory in the following ways?



Over half of employees say the information provided by generative AI tools is regularly **inaccurate, confusing, or biased.**

Traits of supportive technology partners

Vendors play a crucial role in helping companies seamlessly implement and adopt generative AI. Yet nearly all executives (94%) surveyed say they're not entirely satisfied with the

generative AI companies they use, noting a variety of ways in which vendors could improve their offerings and support.

1

Customize AI tools

53% of the C-suite say vendors are letting them down when it comes prioritizing use cases for their business needs. They expect vendors to work closely with them to identify high-value applications for their tools and determine potential proof-of-concept opportunities.

2

Help companies prepare

According to 52% of respondents, vendors should be doing more to help their company define roles and responsibilities, gather necessary data, and address security considerations. The same percentage (52%) say they'd also like vendors to offer training or certification programs for users.

3

Offer a pilot phase

50% of executives want vendors to provide more support for the cultural acceptance of AI at their organization. Experienced vendors know that offering a pilot phase allows employees to experiment with new tools and test their functionality, ensuring a smooth transition.

4

Measure impact

48% of leaders wish vendors would help them measure and communicate the impact of AI tools within the organization. Best-in-class vendors will gather both quantitative and qualitative data to showcase their platform's value and level of adoption.

5

Enable companies to scale up

Scaling and operationalizing the use of generative AI tools across the enterprise is the final (and most exciting) phase of the adoption process. Yet 45% of the C-suite say their vendors could be doing more to support this key step for their organization.

The right vendor partnership can unlock the full potential of generative AI and drive innovation within organizations. But leaders need to carefully assess potential AI vendors to ensure they can meet the unique security, reliability, and flexibility requirements of the enterprise while

also offering hands-on, dedicated support, both of which are essential for a successful generative AI journey. Engaging in thorough discussions with vendors and requesting demonstrations and customer success stories can help with the selection process.

94%

of the C-suite are not completely satisfied with their generative AI vendors.

The path to AI transformation

The days of AI experimentation are over. The future belongs to companies that are actively transforming their organizations by deeply embedding AI into every function and team. These leaders have a clear roadmap that emphasizes trust and alignment, moving AI from isolated pilots to real-world, mission-critical applications. They empower AI champions with easy-to-use technology, ensuring that teams can integrate AI seamlessly into their workflows and have a role in building the AI solutions they need.

Equally important, they choose a true AI partner that understands the complexities of the enterprise, collaborates closely, and remains deeply invested from initial discussions to deployment to adoption at scale.

With a strong strategy, meaningful investment, and the right technology partnership, AI shifts from a source of friction to a force for change, unlocking entirely new possibilities for organizations and the people behind them.

Identify the next steps in your company's AI transformation journey

[Take the AI readiness quiz](#)

Is your organization ready to implement, integrate, and leverage AI?

[Schedule a demo](#)

WRITER



About Writer

Writer is the full-stack generative AI platform trusted by hundreds of enterprises like Accenture, L’Oreal, Qualcomm, and Vanguard to empower people and transform work. Its fully integrated solution makes it easy to build, deploy, and scale powerful AI agents around mission-critical workflows, backed by Writer’s family of secure, enterprise-grade LLMs. With Writer, retail companies are launching products faster, healthcare organizations are improving clinical trials, and financial firms are auditing 100% of reporting data in real-time. Founded in 2020, Writer is backed by world-leading investors, including Premji Invest, Radical Ventures, ICONIQ Growth, Insight Partners, Balderton, B Capital, Salesforce Ventures, Adobe Ventures, Citi Ventures, IBM Ventures, and others.

Learn more at writer.com.

About Workplace Intelligence

Workplace Intelligence is an award-winning thought leadership and research agency focused on the world of work. We help companies, and their executives, tell their workplace story in a meaningful, relevant, and impactful way using primary data, insights, and interviews. For more information go to our [website](#) and subscribe to our Insider [newsletter](#).