

THE AI READINESS REPORT

Construction leaders are moving from curiosity to confidence—without yet having the operating model to match.

2026 CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FINDINGS

39 valid organizational submissions | 33 survey questions | respondent-level analysis

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Paul Theisen****Founder & CEO, TAG CXO**

Paul Theisen is Founder and CEO of TAG CXO, an executive stewardship firm helping middle-market companies turn C-suite leadership into a structural advantage. A former three-time CIO, he brings 28 years of corporate leadership experience across commercial construction and global manufacturing. Paul founded TAG CXO to give growing organizations access to battle-tested fractional and interim executives who bring clarity, judgment, and operating discipline to complex challenges. He is also the author of the forthcoming *Outmaneuvering Goliath*.

**Eric Sanderson****President, Red Rocks Advisors**

Eric Sanderson is Founder and President of Red Rocks Advisors, where he advises engineering, construction, and infrastructure organizations on strategy, management, project partnering, and execution. With more than 25 years of industry experience, Eric combines a broad view of business strategy with practical knowledge of field and operating realities. His work is concentrated in utility and infrastructure environments, including water and wastewater projects. An IPI Certified Master Level Partnering Facilitator, Eric has led more than 325 professional facilitations.

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Construction leaders are pragmatic. New technology earns its place by improving the work, not by creating another layer of administration. AI is already present in the work, investment is expected to grow, and competitive relevance is no longer theoretical. Yet enterprise readiness trails adoption: today's use is concentrated in personal productivity while ownership, training, dedicated funding, and value measurement remain uneven. The next opportunity is closer to the work itself—in estimating, contracts, project controls, document intelligence, scheduling, and risk.

That gap is a stewardship issue before it is a technology issue. AI is an exponential amplifier: connected to disciplined processes, trusted information, sound judgment, and clear accountability, it creates leverage. Connected to ambiguity, weak controls, or shared accountability, it accelerates confusion. Concerns about confidential data, intellectual property, accuracy, and workforce readiness are not reasons to wait; they are reasons to proceed deliberately, with a named owner, defined workflow, human review, and a measure of improved performance.

The practical mandate is straightforward: begin with a real operating problem, involve the people who own the work, define what good looks like, and establish useful and dependable guardrails before selecting a tool. Then build adoption around a few measurable workflows. Implementation is money spent; adoption is money made. The firms that outmaneuver competitors will not chase the most tools. They will align human judgment, operating discipline, and AI-enabled capacity, sufficient to purpose.

Paul Theisen & Eric Sanderson

TAG CXO | Red Rocks Advisors

AI adoption is outrunning AI readiness

The industry has moved beyond awareness. The next constraint is disciplined execution.

69%

use AI daily or more

Habit is established before organizational deployment.

18%

are deployed organization-wide

Most firms remain in exploration, pilots or experiments.

33%

have a designated AI champion

Executive ownership is still the exception.

13%

have a dedicated AI budget

Spending occurs, but investment discipline is immature.

0%

report ROI optimization

Measurement has not caught up with adoption.

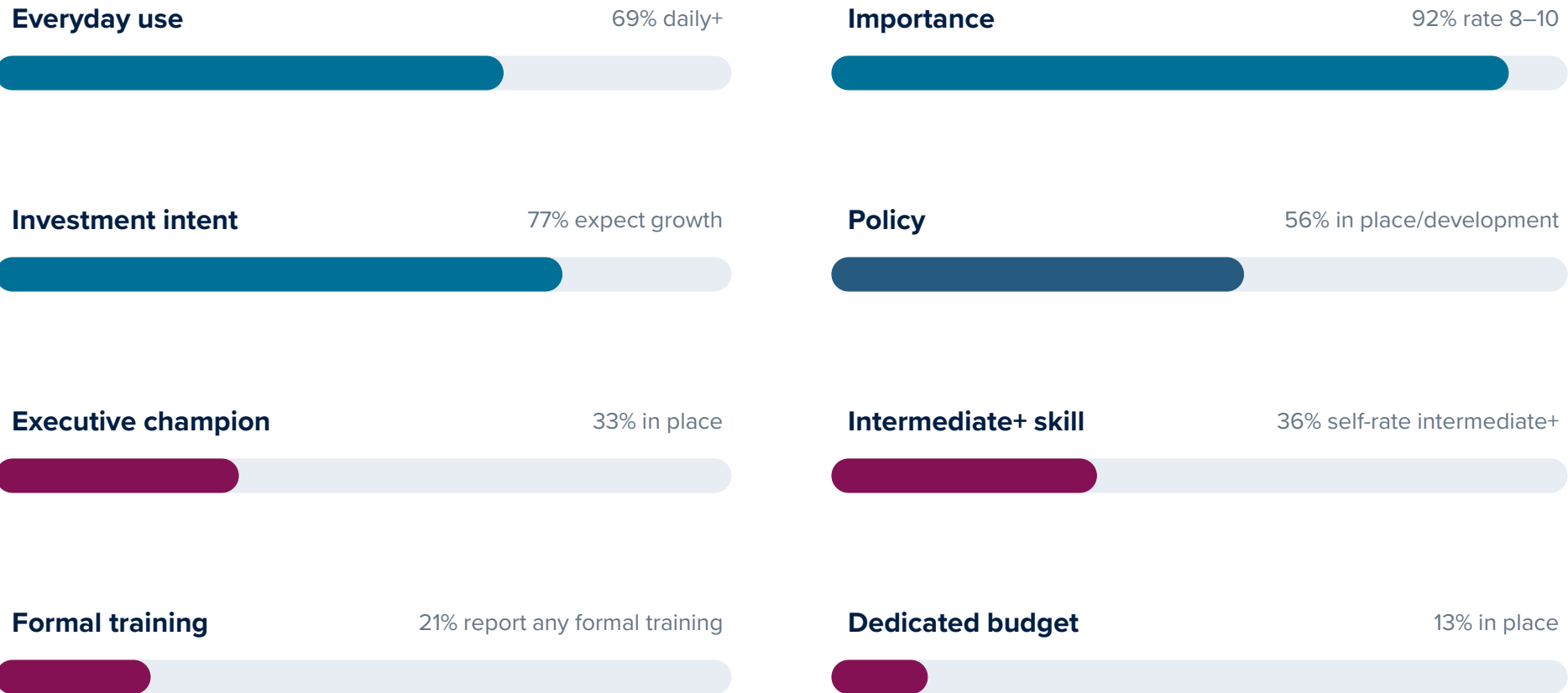
BOARD PRIORITY

Turn experimentation into an operating system.

Ownership • governance • workflows • capability • value measurement

The readiness gap is visible across the operating model

Strong intent and everyday use are not yet matched by governance, skills or funding.



Executive interpretation The opportunity is not to create more enthusiasm - it is to convert enthusiasm into controlled, measurable enterprise capability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 **Respondent Profile**
Pages 8–14

03 **Platforms, Licensing & Access**
Pages 19–23

05 **Governance, Security & Barriers**
Pages 33–38

07 **Investment & Competitive Outlook**
Pages 43–48

02 **Adoption & Maturity**
Pages 15–18

04 **Current Use & Future Value**
Pages 24–32

06 **Workforce Capability & Training**
Pages 39–42

08 **Construction Technology &
Executive Voice**
Pages 49–52

Executive implications and action agenda

Methodology and interpretation

The survey is a directional executive pulse - not a statistically representative industry census.

39

valid organizational submissions

Consultants could submit separately for distinct client companies; each record remains a valid company-level response.

33

questions analyzed

Closed questions were reconciled to SurveyMonkey aggregates; open text was preserved and coded into executive themes.

27/27

closed questions reconciled

Respondent-level counts match the aggregate workbook exactly across every closed analytical question.

38/39

respondent IDs mapped

One anonymous respondent completed closed questions but did not provide identifying or open-text fields.

Confidentiality

Names and company identities are excluded from the public report. Small subgroup comparisons are descriptive and should not be interpreted as causal.

01

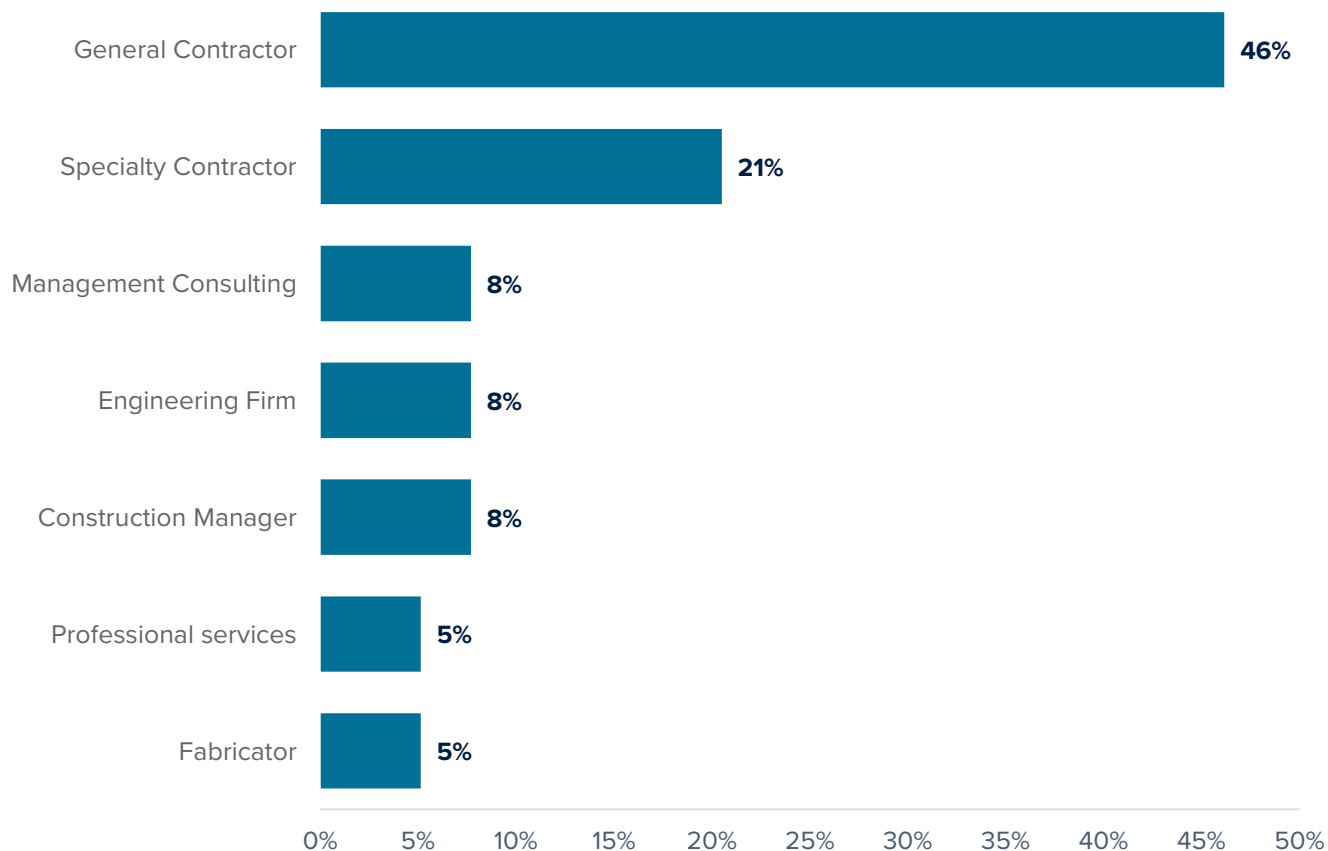
Respondent Profile

A contractor-led sample spanning small firms to billion-dollar enterprises.



Who participated in the survey?

What best describes your organization?



KEY TAKEAWAY

46%

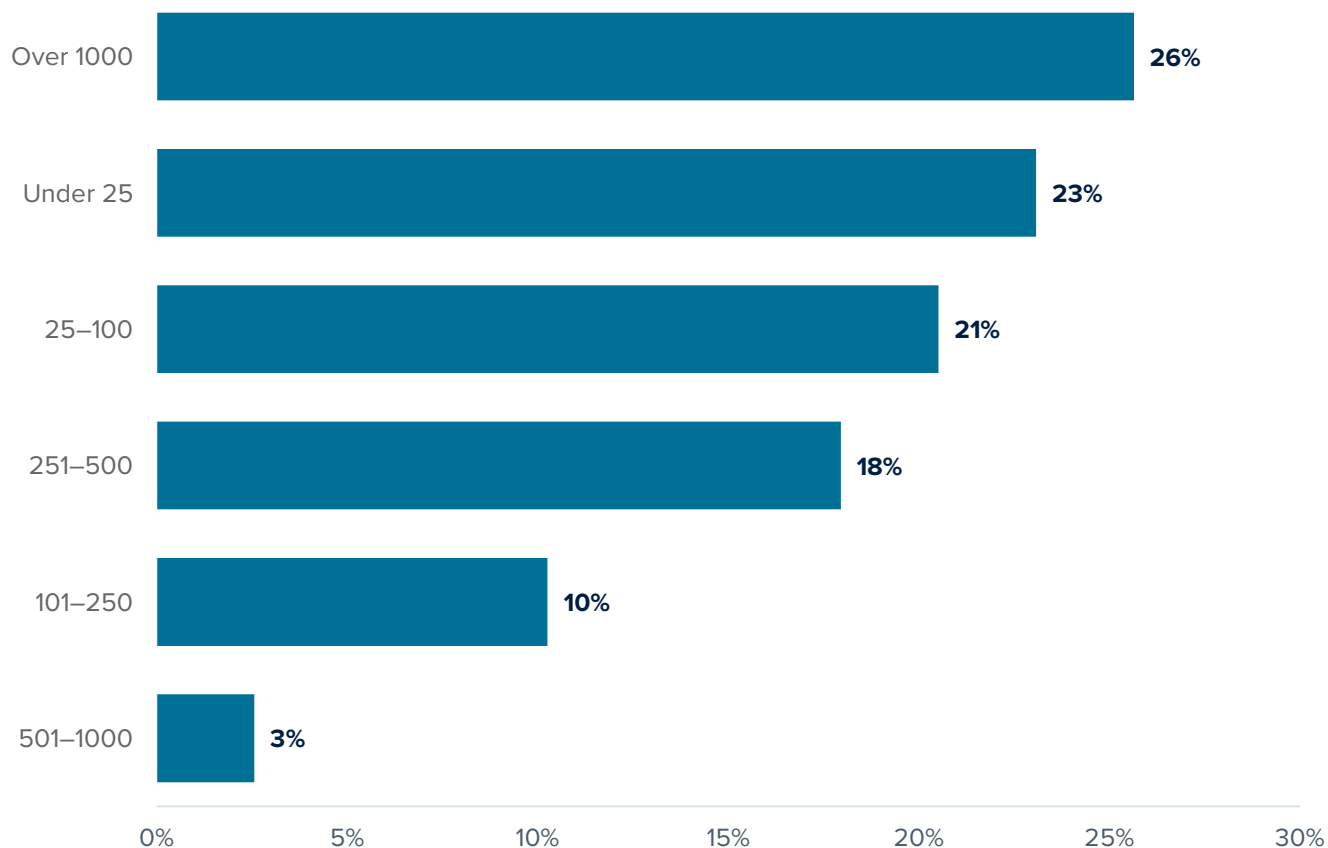
General Contractor

The sample is contractor-led: general and specialty contractors represent two-thirds of submissions, with the balance spanning construction management, engineering, consulting, fabrication and professional services.

BASE n=39

How large are the participating organizations?

How many employees?



KEY TAKEAWAY

26%

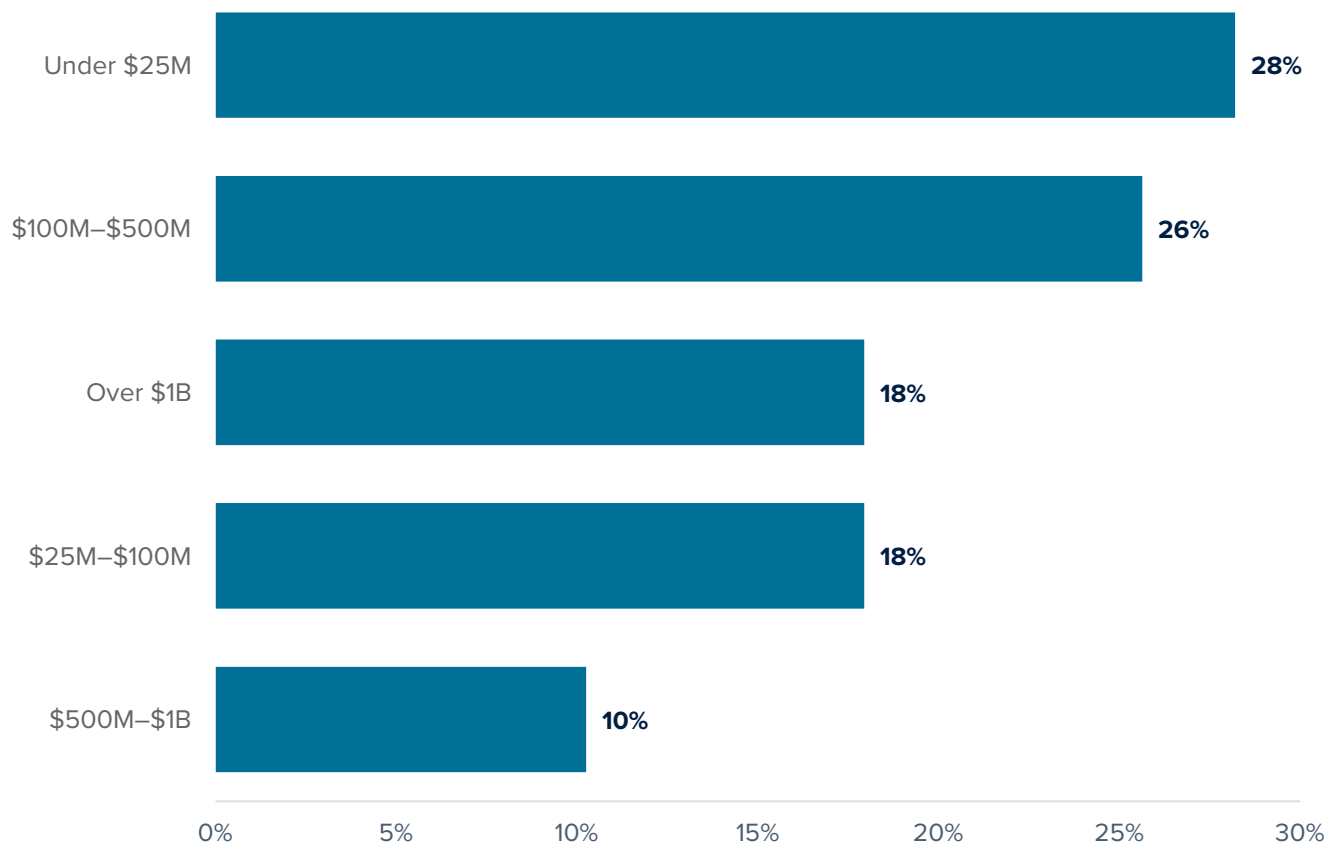
Over 1000

The sample spans the market: 44% have 100 or fewer employees, while 28% have more than 500.

BASE n=39

What is their annual revenue?

Approximate annual revenue?



KEY TAKEAWAY

28%

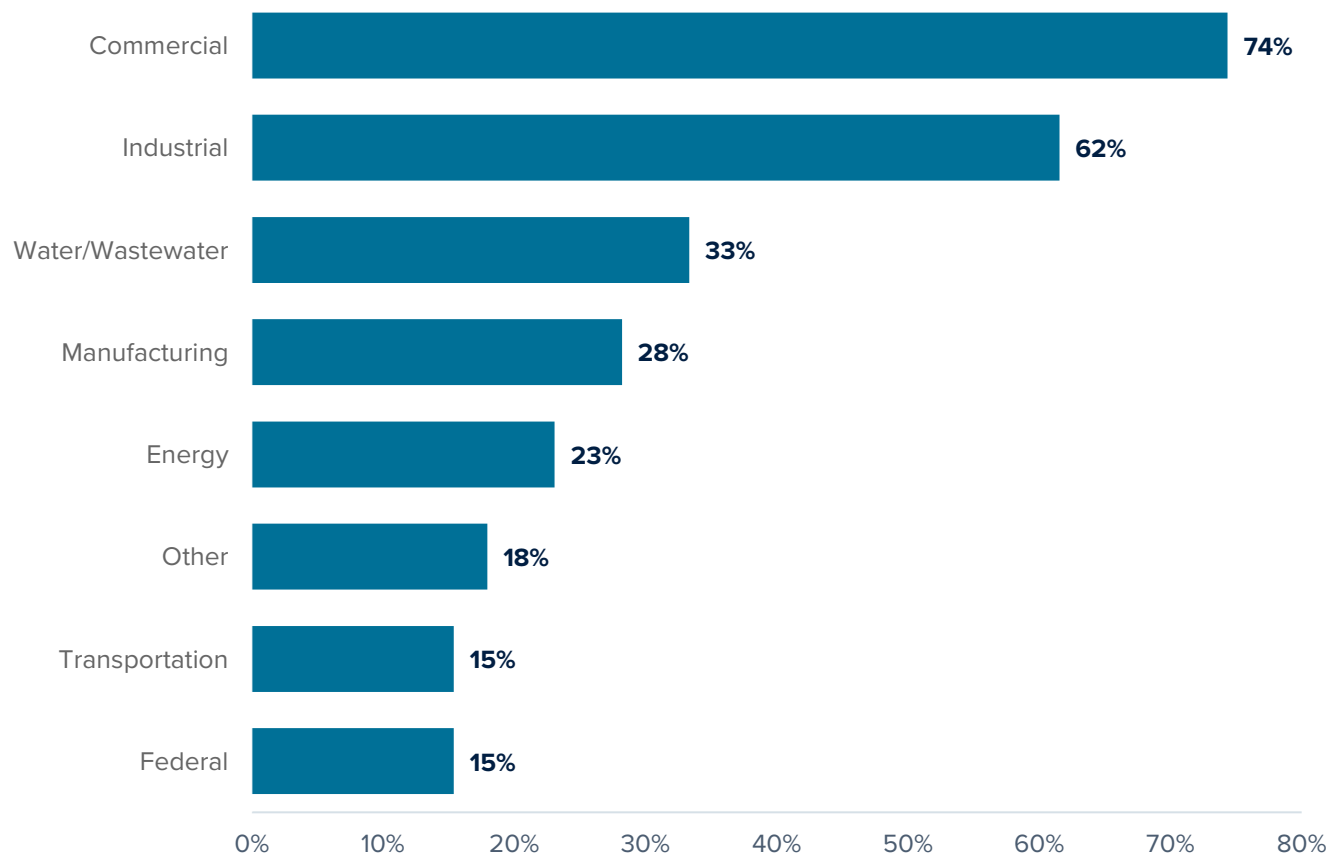
Under \$25M

Nearly half report less than \$100M in annual revenue, while 18% exceed \$1B—providing a useful cross-section of the industry.

BASE n=39

Which construction markets do they serve?

Primary markets served?



KEY TAKEAWAY

74%

Commercial

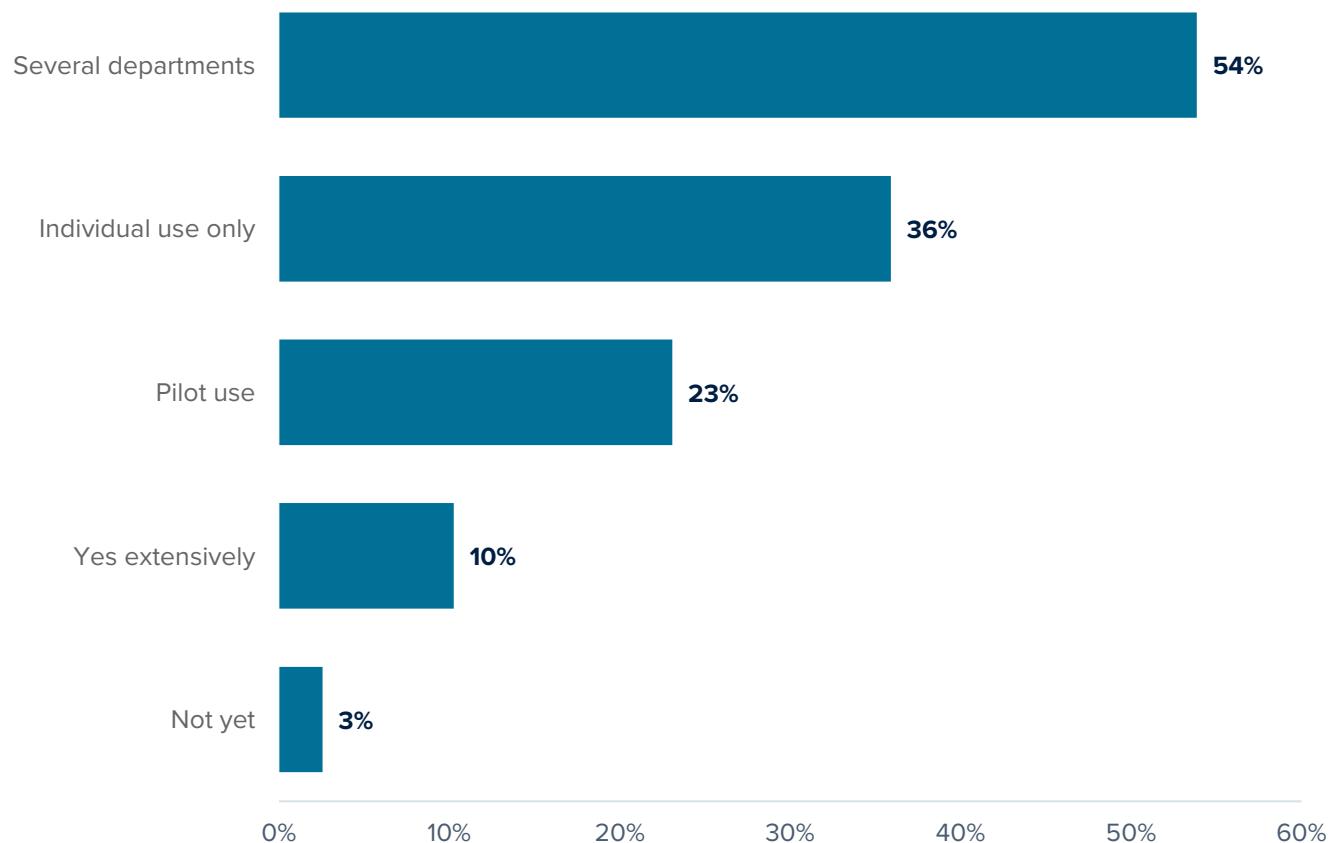
Commercial and industrial work dominate, with meaningful representation from water/wastewater, manufacturing and energy.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

How broadly is AI already being used?

Does your organization currently use AI?



KEY TAKEAWAY

54%

Several departments

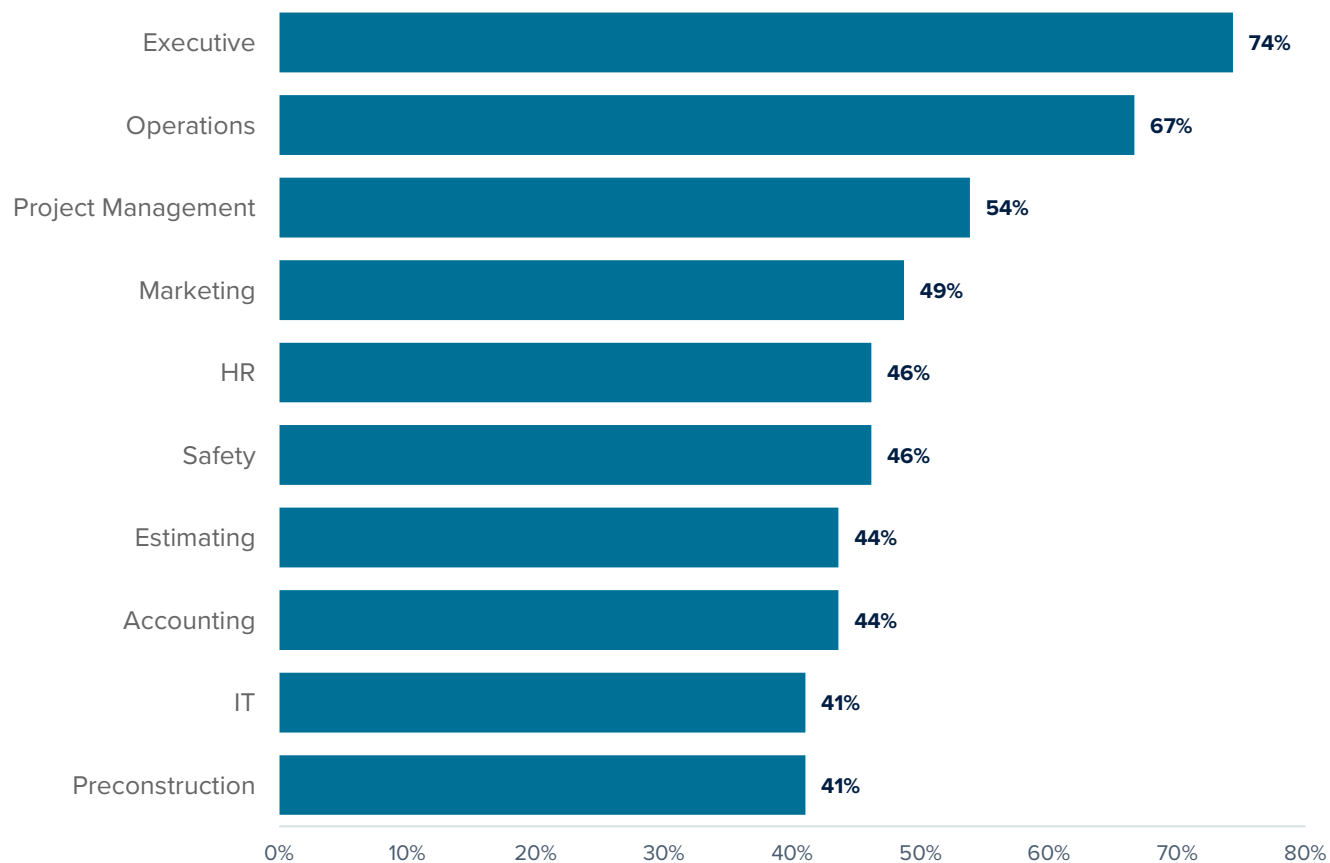
Adoption is uneven and overlapping: AI may be active in several departments while still depending on pilots or individual initiative.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Where inside the organization is AI being used?

Departments using AI?



KEY TAKEAWAY

74%

Executive

AI is concentrated in leadership and office functions; only 10% report field use, revealing a large last-mile opportunity.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%. Chart shows the leading responses; complete selections are available in the analysis workbook.

02

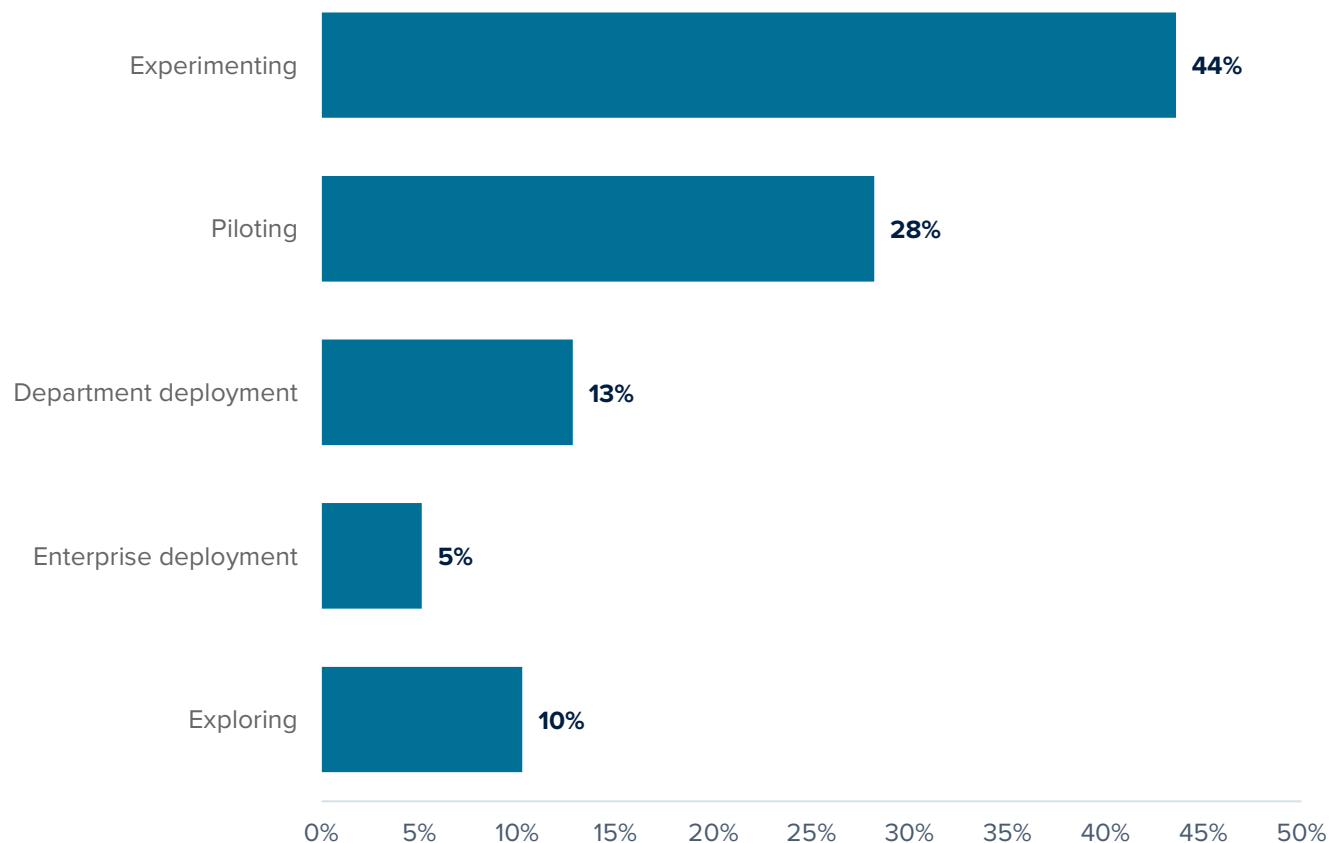
Adoption & Maturity

AI is already habitual, but enterprise deployment remains early.



How mature is organizational AI adoption?

Current AI maturity?



KEY TAKEAWAY

44%

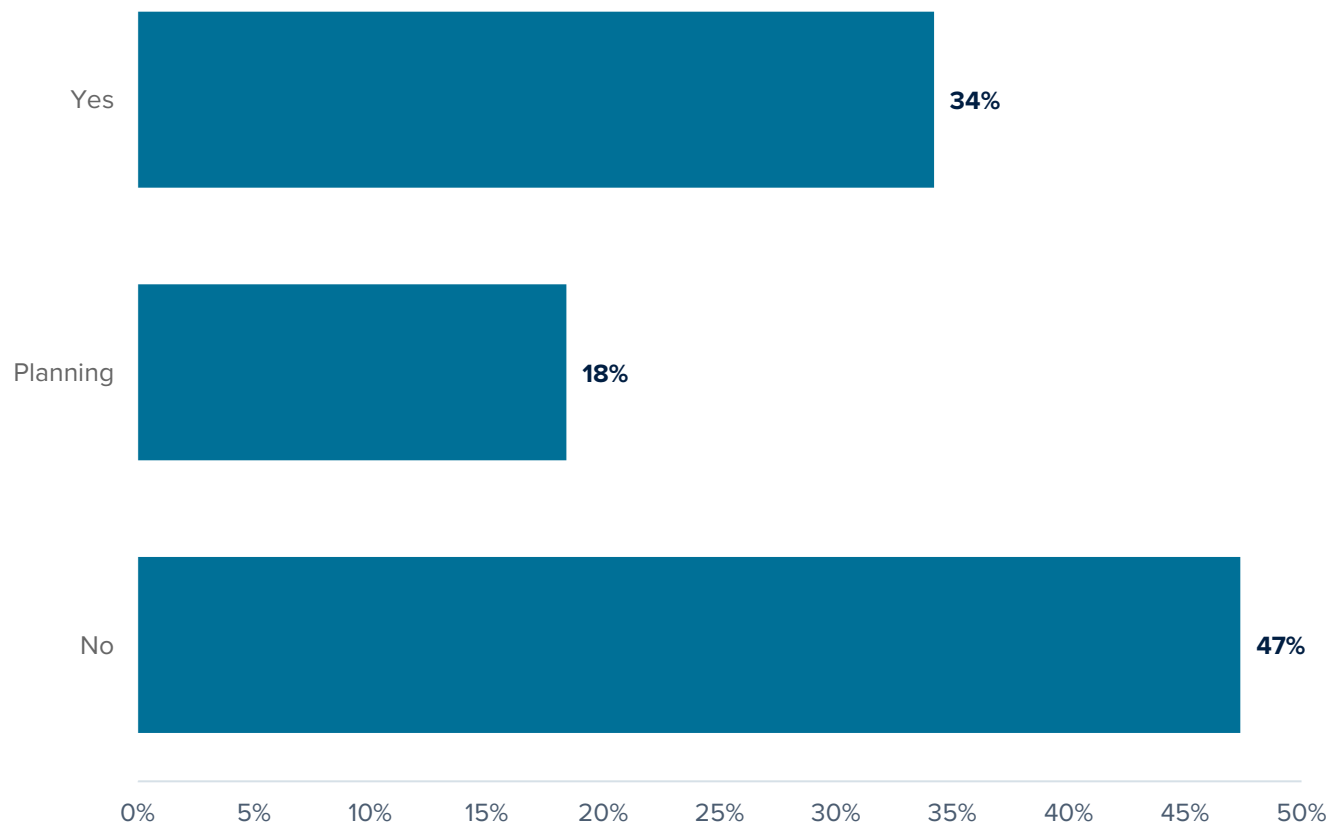
Experimenting

Eighty-two percent remain in exploration, experimentation or pilots; only 18% report departmental or enterprise deployment, and none report optimizing ROI.

BASE n=39

Is anyone formally leading AI?

Do you have an AI champion or committee?



KEY TAKEAWAY

47%

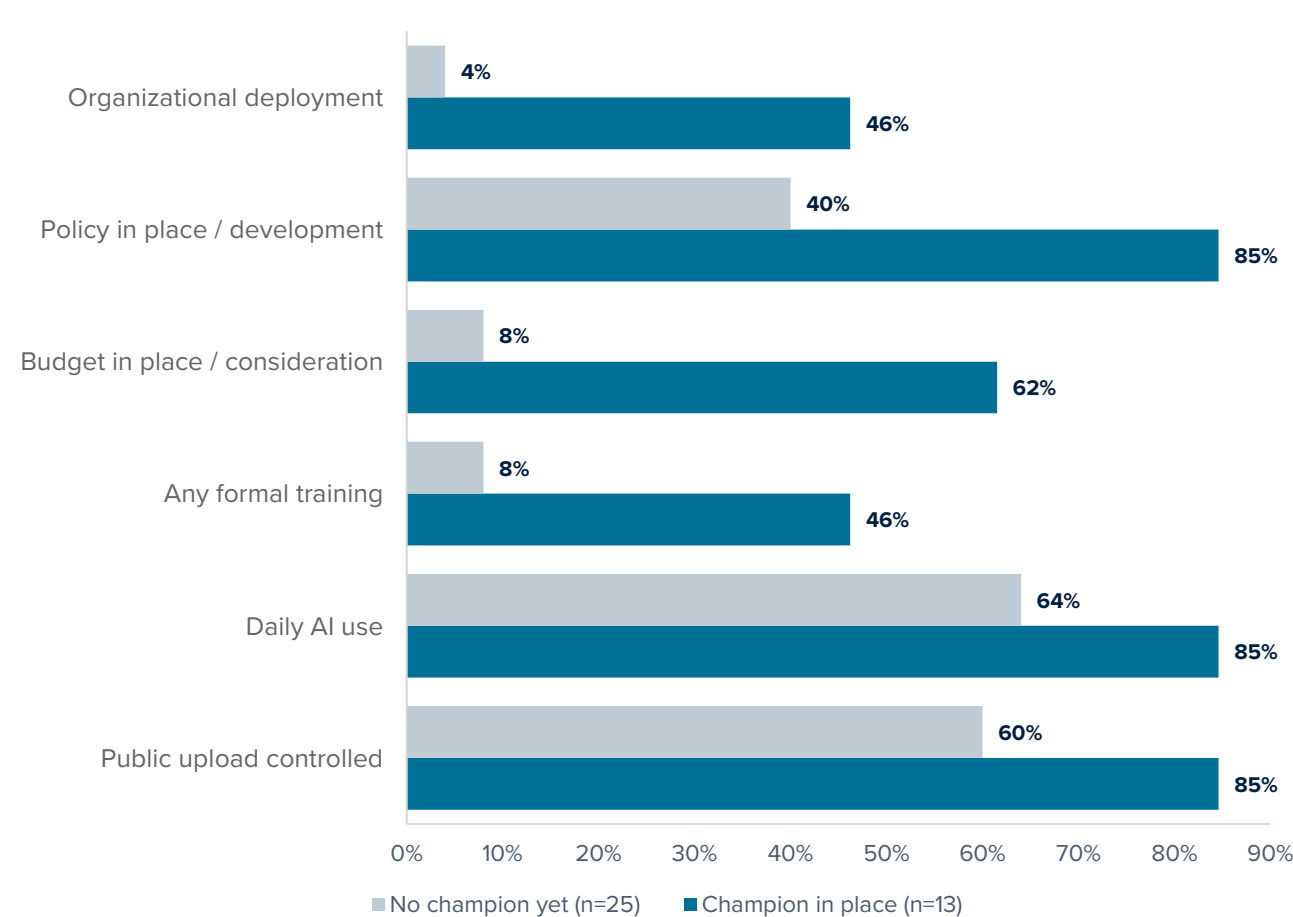
No

Only one-third have an AI champion today. Nearly half have no formal leader, leaving adoption without clear ownership.

BASE n=38

Executive ownership is the clearest readiness separator

Companies with an AI champion report stronger governance, funding, training and deployment.



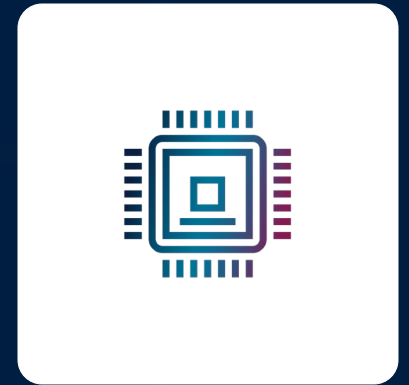
12×

higher deployment
rate

The data are descriptive, not causal. Even so, the pattern is consistent: named ownership tends to travel with the operating disciplines required to scale.

03

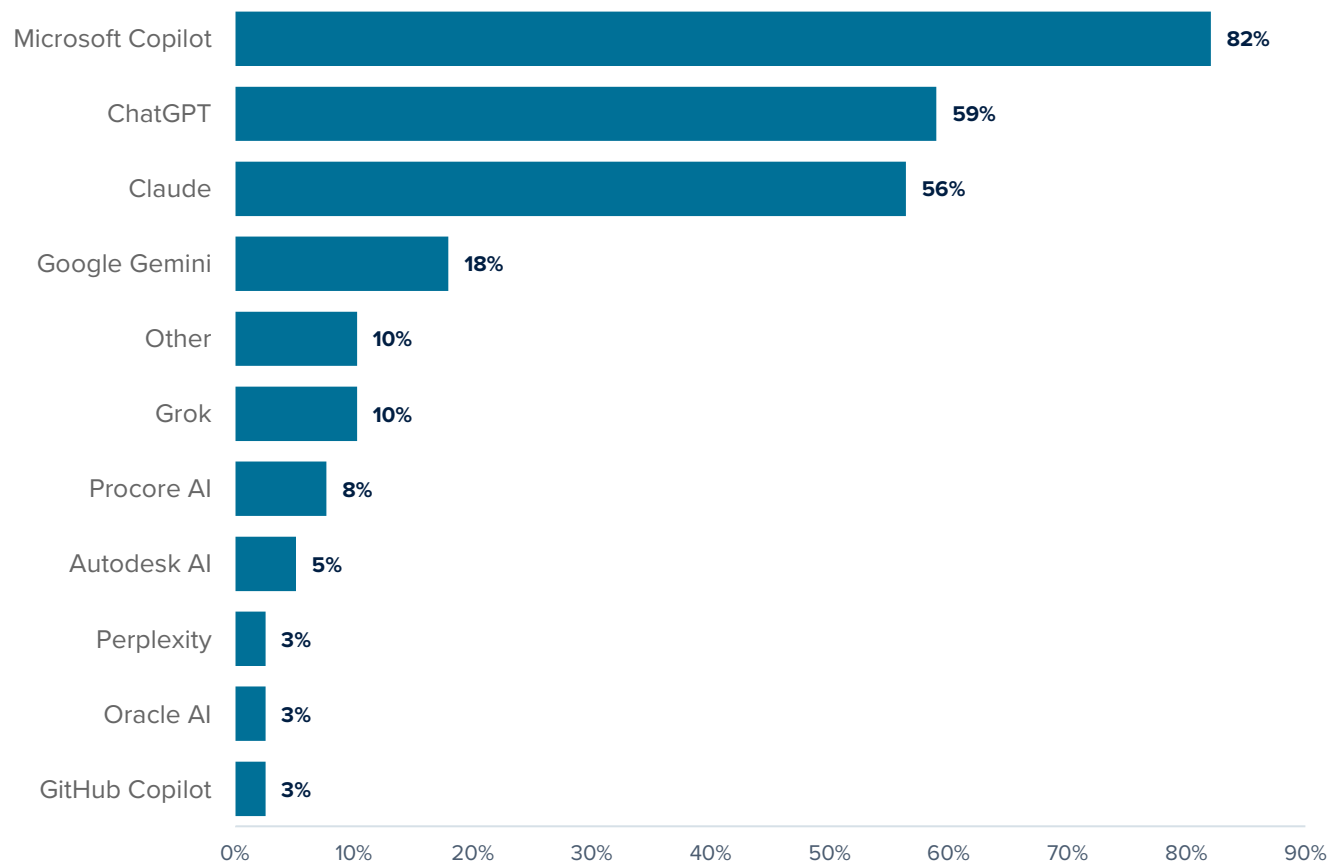
Platforms, Licensing & Access



Paid tools are common; portfolio discipline and visibility are not.

Which AI platforms are in use?

AI platforms used?



KEY TAKEAWAY

82%

Microsoft Copilot

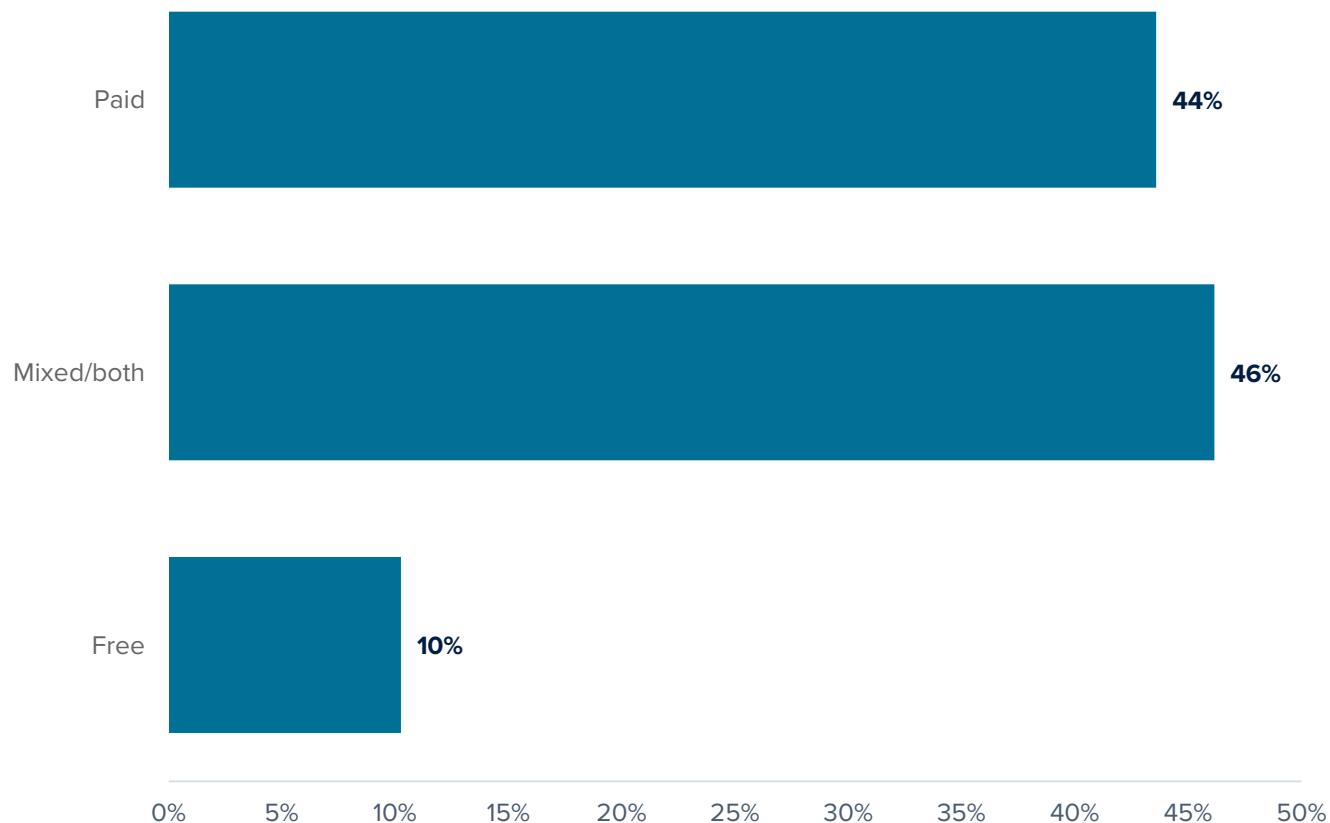
The market is already multi-model: Copilot leads, while ChatGPT and Claude each have substantial adoption.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Are users on free or paid plans?

Free or paid versions?



KEY TAKEAWAY

46%

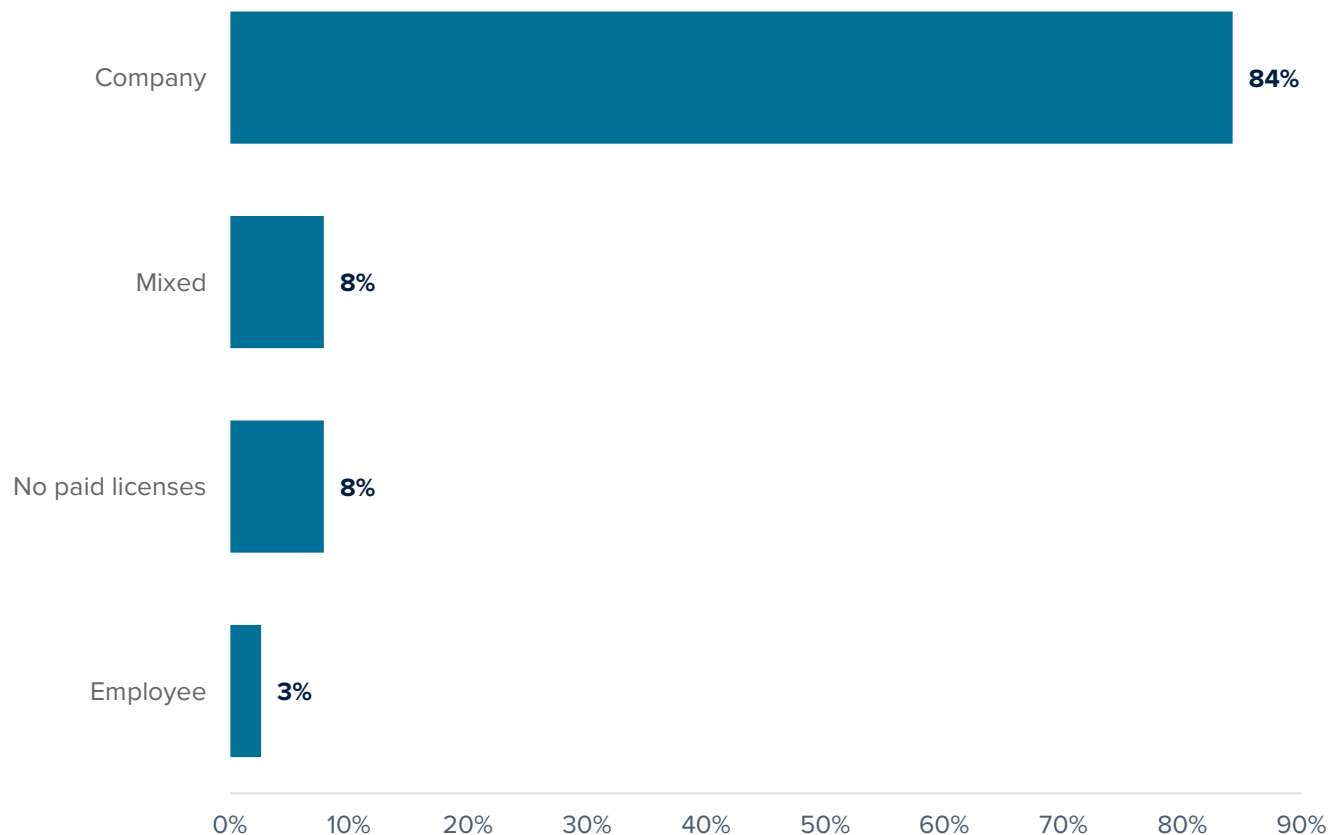
Mixed/both

Ninety percent use paid or mixed plans, showing that AI has already moved beyond free experimentation for most organizations.

BASE n=39

Who funds AI licenses?

Who pays for licenses?



KEY TAKEAWAY

84%

Company

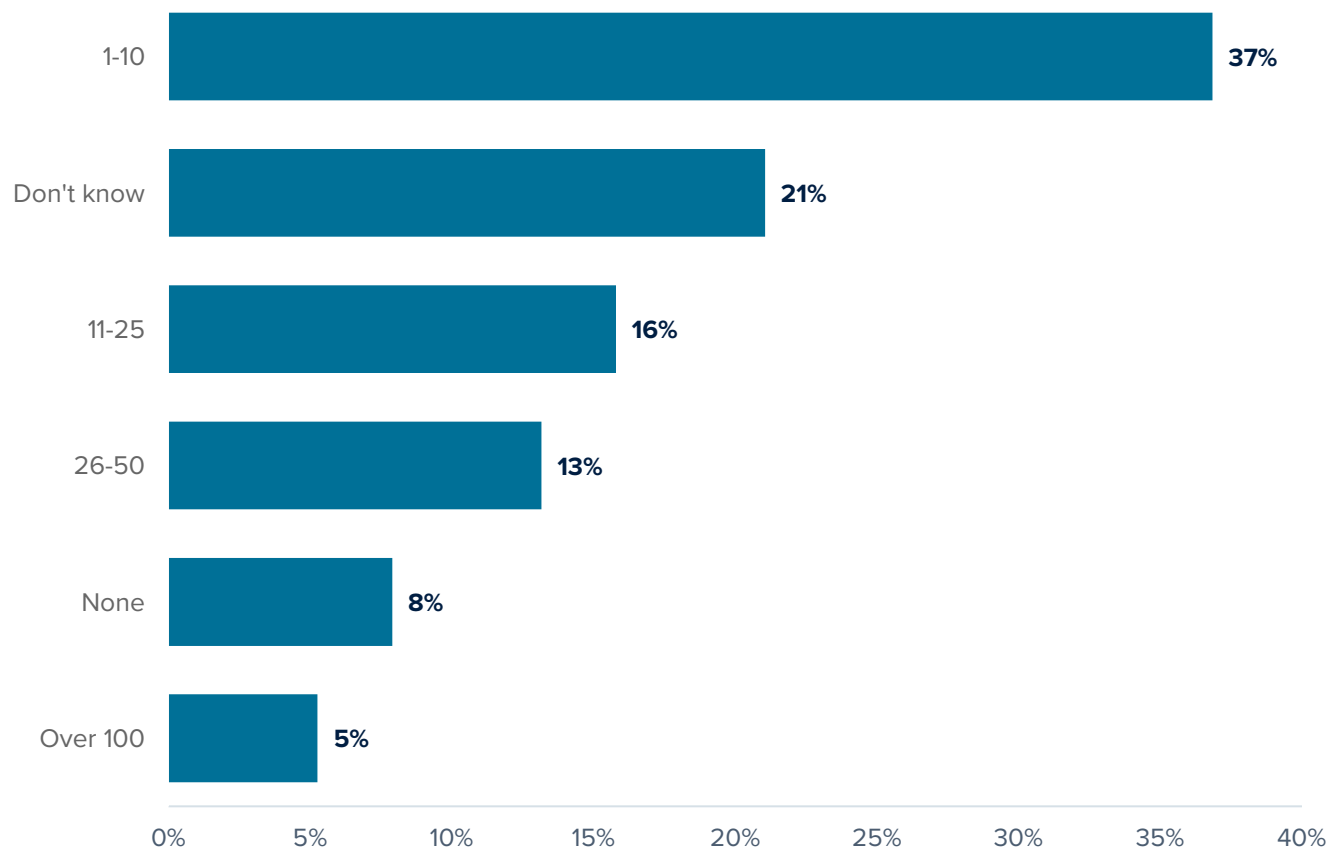
The company funds AI licenses in 84% of answered submissions—centralized spending is arriving faster than centralized governance.

BASE n=38

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

How many paid AI licenses are deployed?

Number of paid AI licenses?



KEY TAKEAWAY

37%

1-10

Seat deployment remains modest and poorly understood: 21% do not know how many paid licenses exist, and only 5% report more than 100.

BASE n=38

04

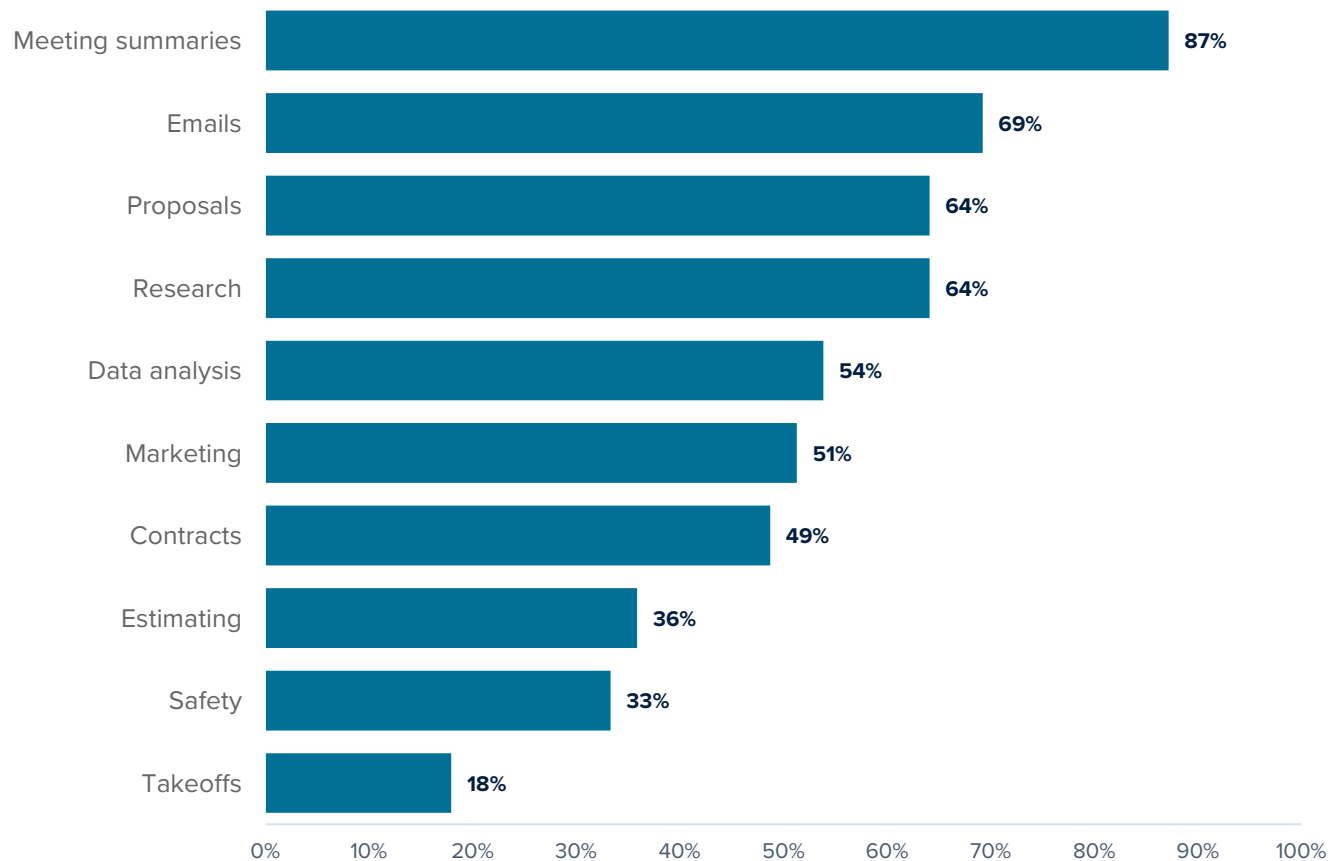
Current Use & Future Value



The value agenda is moving from office productivity to project economics.

What are organizations using AI for today?

How are you currently using AI?



KEY TAKEAWAY

87%

Meeting summaries

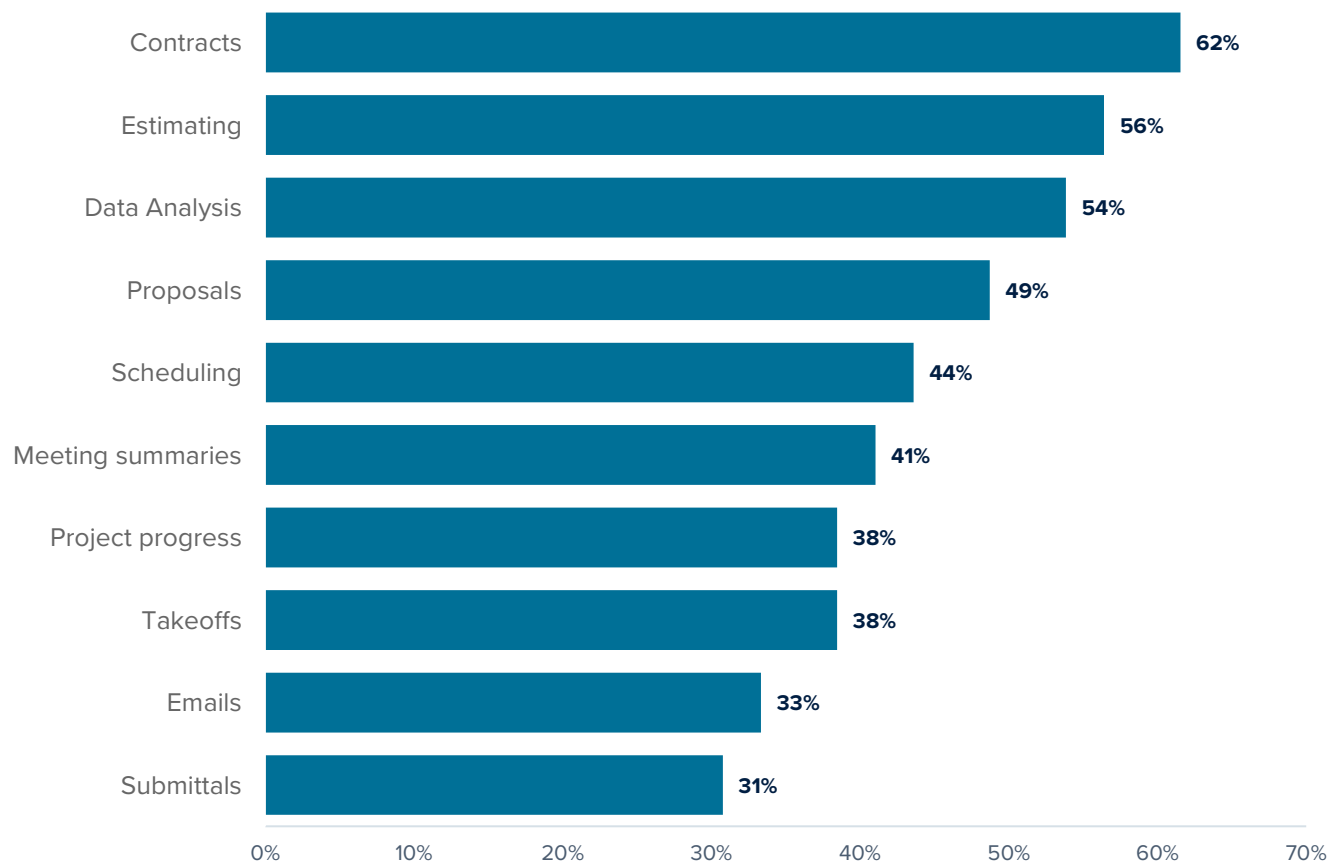
Current use is productivity-first: meeting summaries, email, proposals, research and marketing dominate the use-case portfolio.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%. Chart shows the leading responses; complete selections are available in the analysis workbook.

Where do leaders want AI to create greater value?

How would you like to use AI for greatest value?



KEY TAKEAWAY

62%

Contracts

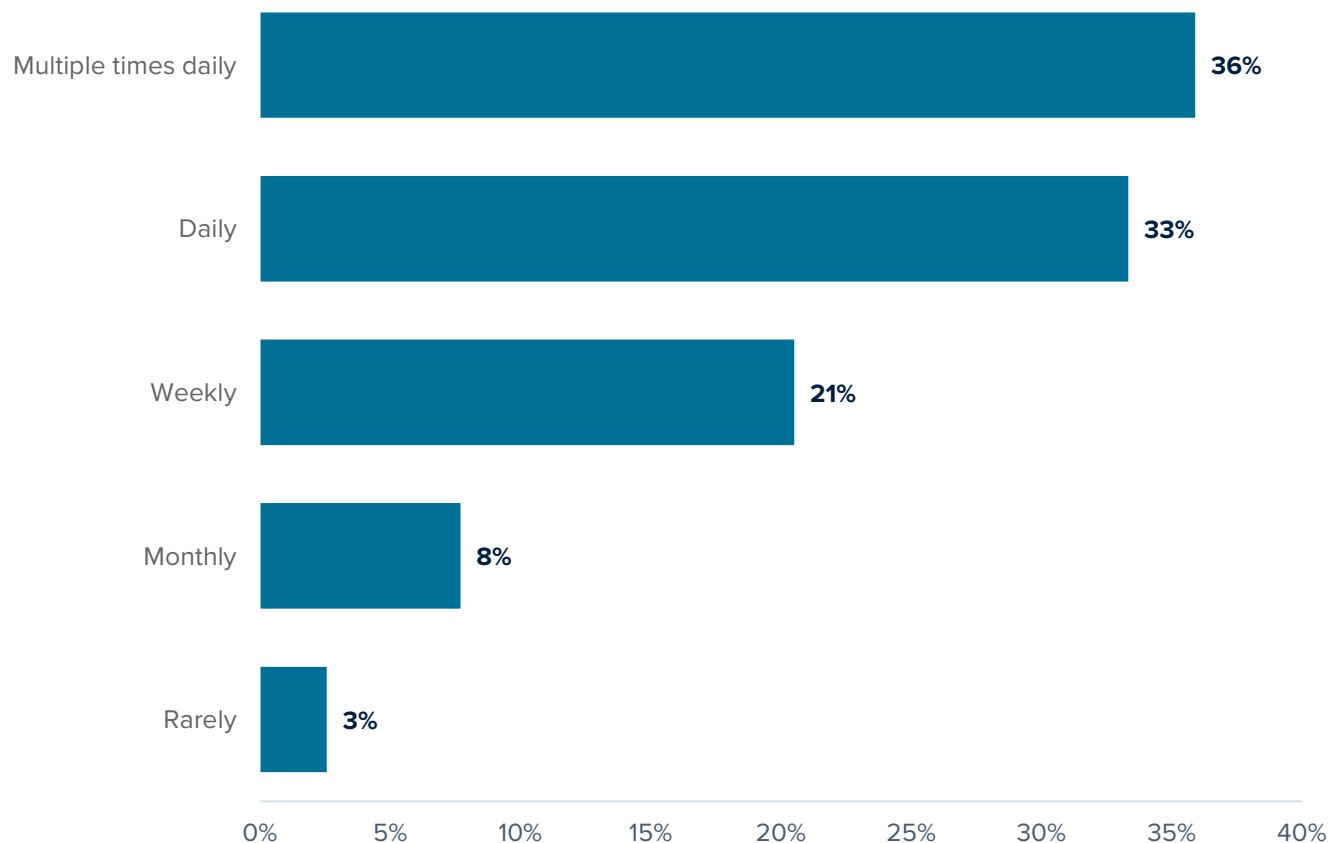
Desired value shifts toward core workflows—contracts, estimating, data analysis, scheduling, takeoffs and project progress.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%. Chart shows the leading responses; complete selections are available in the analysis workbook.

How frequently do respondents personally use AI?

How often do you personally use AI?



KEY TAKEAWAY

36%

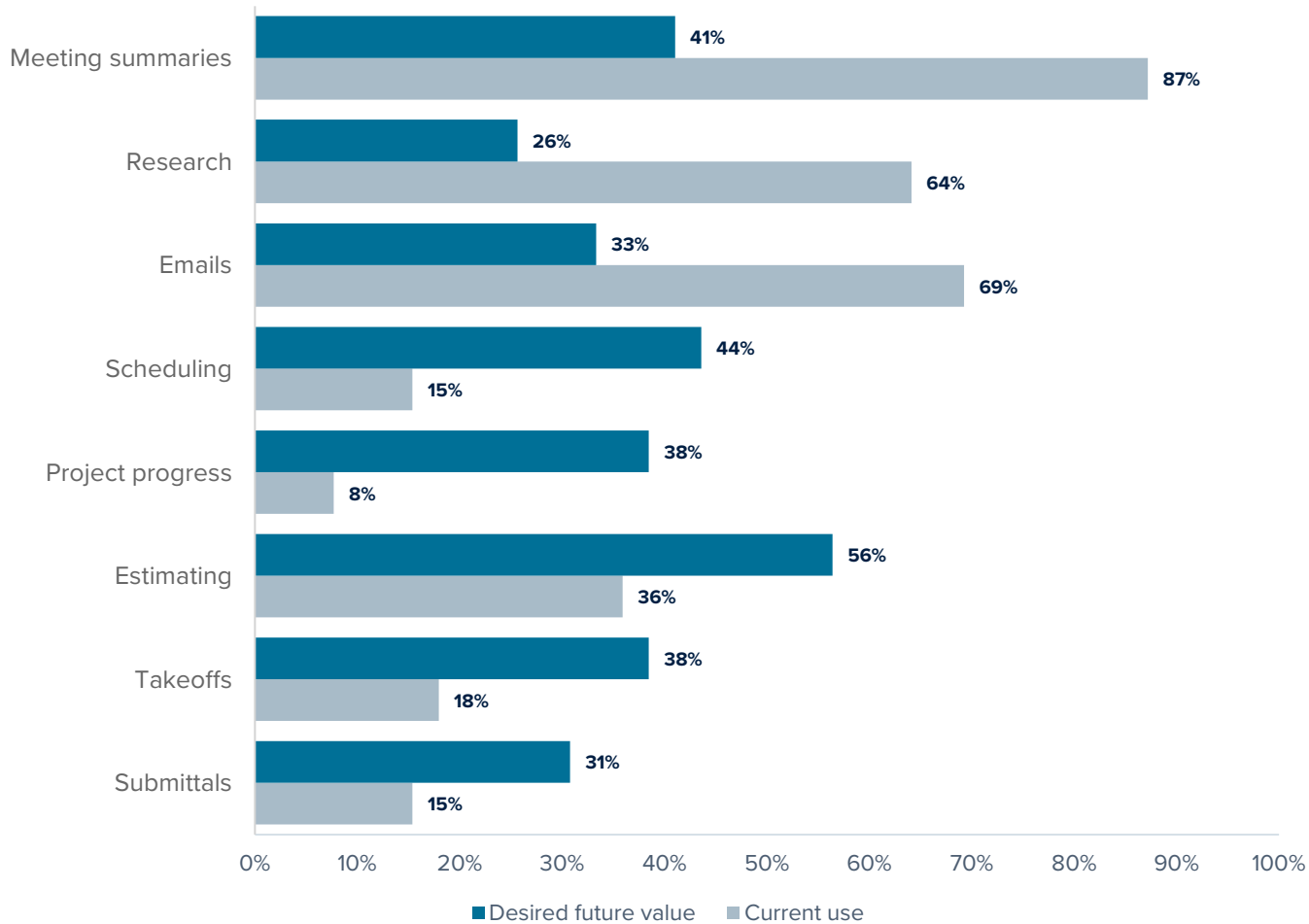
Multiple times daily

AI is already habitual for respondents: 69% use it at least daily and 90% use it at least weekly.

BASE n=39

The value agenda shifts from personal productivity to project workflows

What people use today is not the same as where leaders see the greatest future value.



PORTFOLIO SHIFT

67% → 36%

personal-productivity basket

22% → 42%

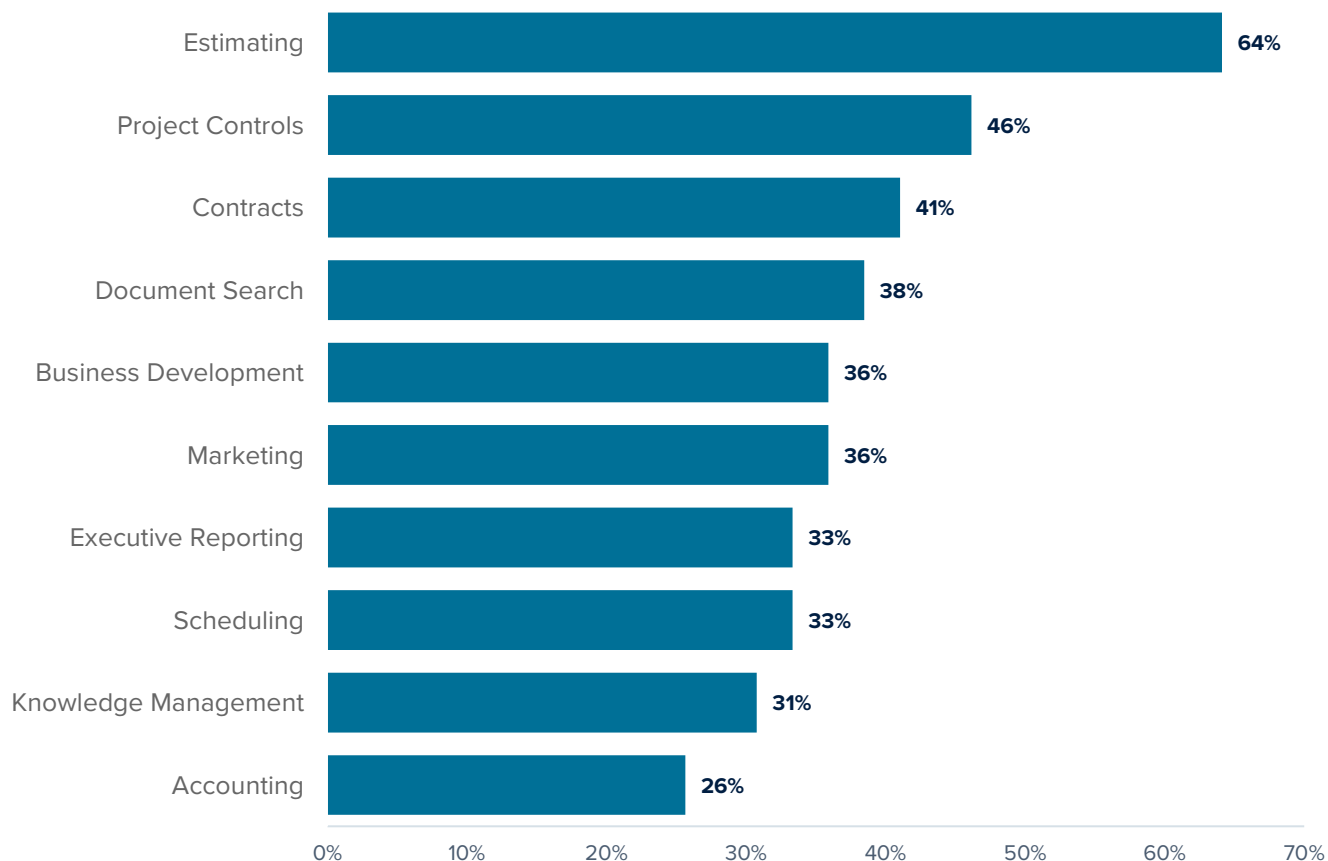
core-workflow basket

The next wave of value sits closer to schedule, progress, takeoff, estimating and project-control economics.

Basket figures are average selection rates across included use cases.

Where could AI create the greatest organizational value?

Where would AI create greatest value to the organization?



KEY TAKEAWAY

64%

Estimating

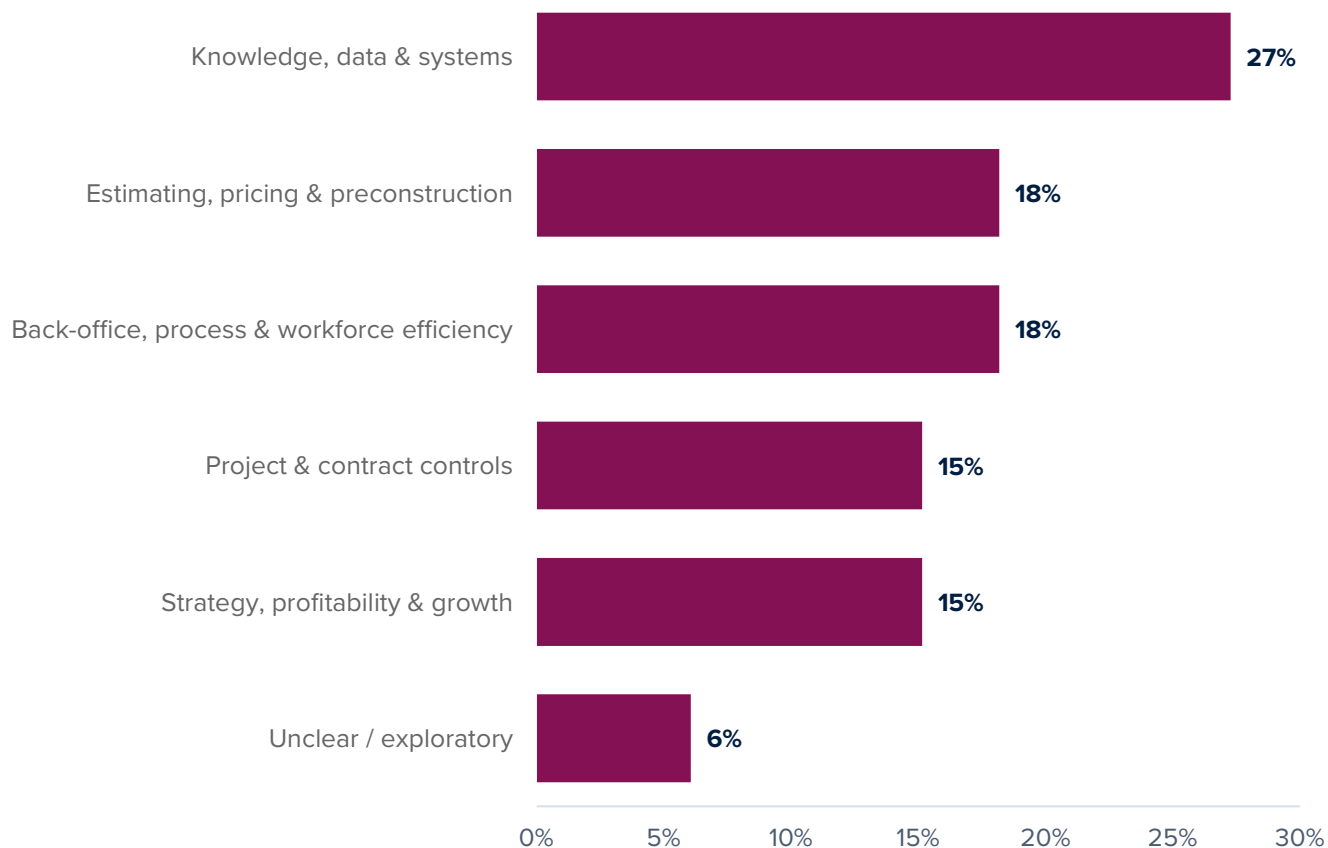
Leaders place the greatest value in estimating, project controls, contracts and document search—the economic core of project delivery.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%. Chart shows the leading responses; complete selections are available in the analysis workbook. Respondent-level base is n=39; the aggregate summary labeled this question n=38 despite matching the respondent counts.

What problem would leaders solve first if AI worked perfectly?

If AI worked perfectly, what business problem would you solve first?



KEY TAKEAWAY

27%

Knowledge, data & systems

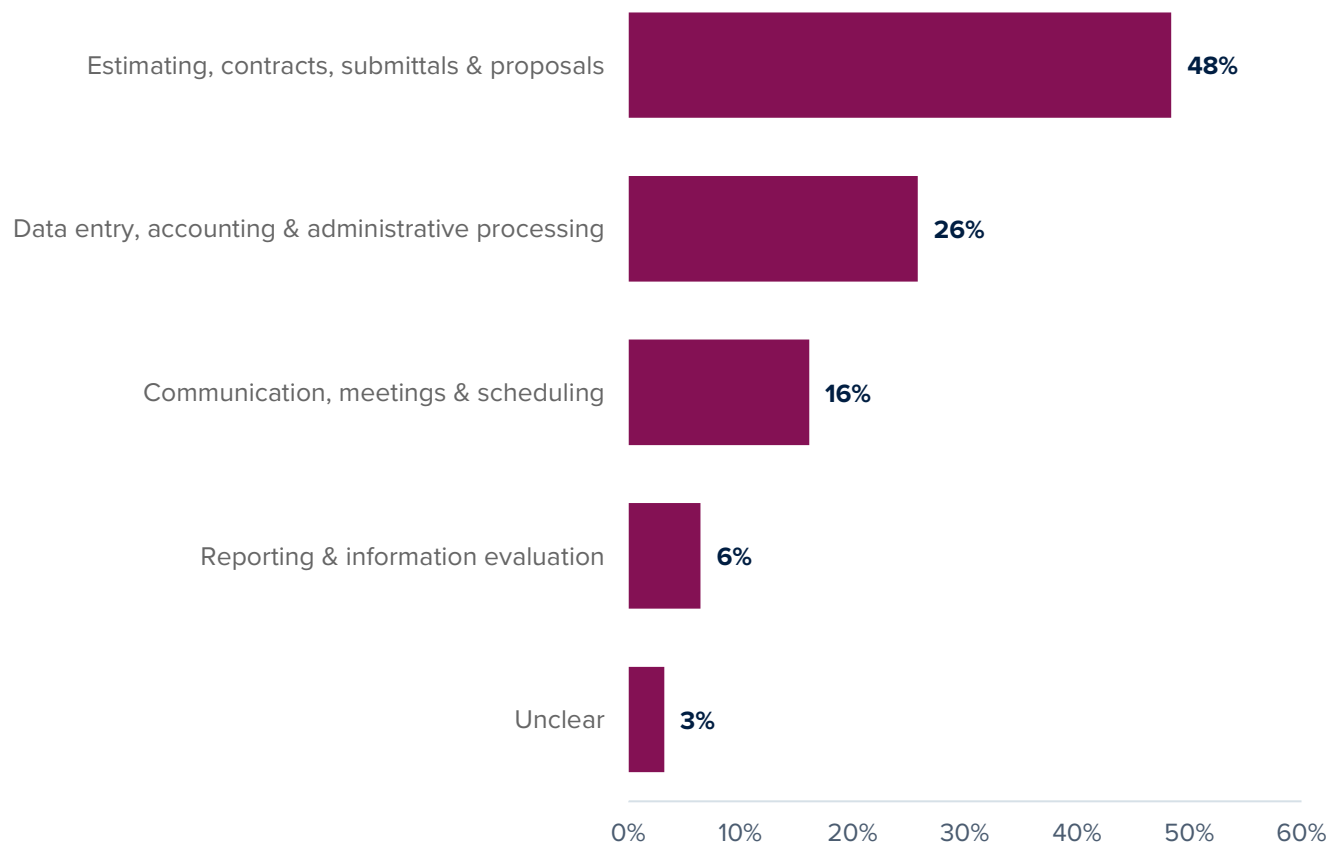
Open responses cluster around knowledge and data integration, estimating, administrative efficiency, and stronger project or contract control.

BASE n=33

Open responses coded by primary theme; categories are analyst-derived.

Which repetitive tasks consume the most time?

What repetitive tasks consume the most time?



KEY TAKEAWAY

48%

**Estimating, contracts,
submittals & proposals**

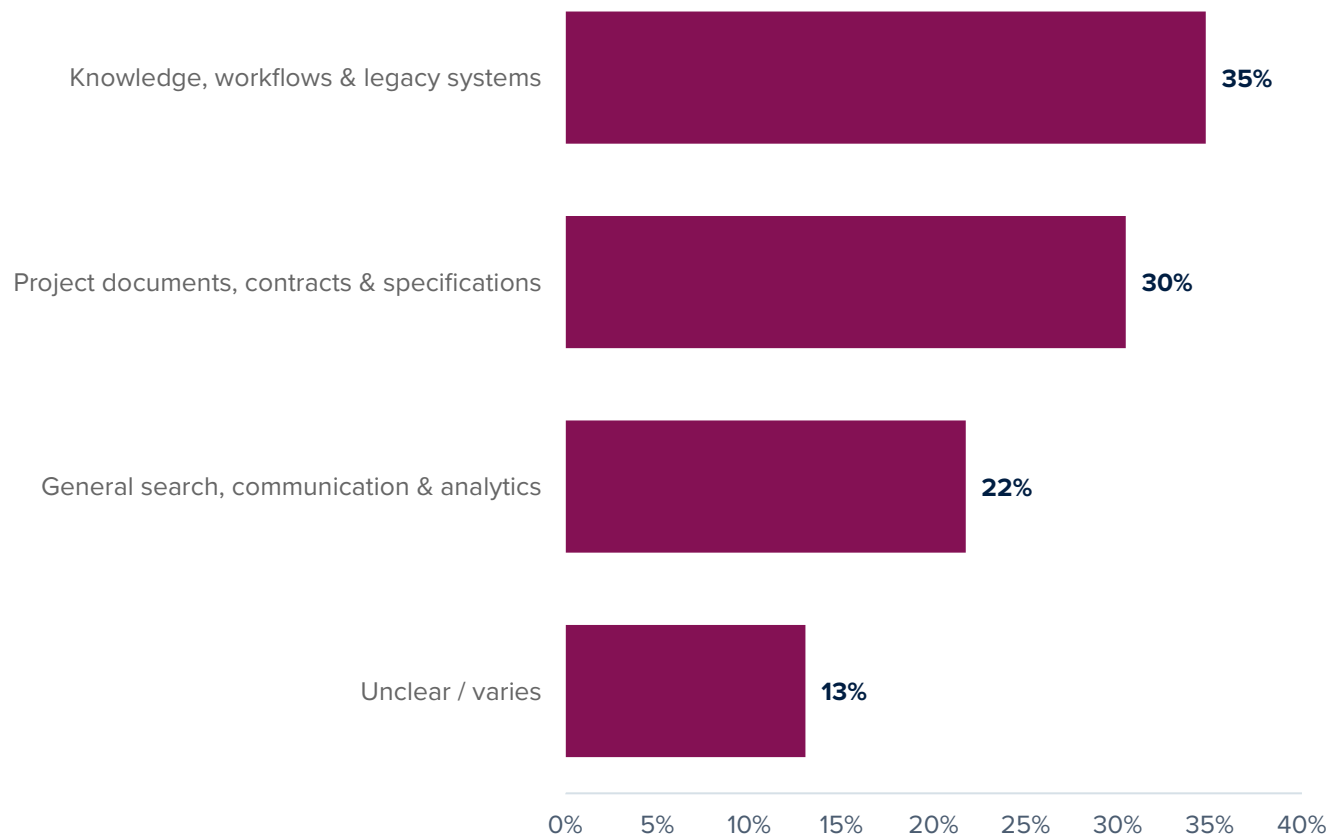
Nearly half of repetitive-work comments point to estimating, contracts, submittals or proposals; back-office processing is the second major burden.

BASE n=31

Open responses coded by primary theme; categories are analyst-derived.

Where is information hardest to find?

Where do employees spend too much time searching for information?



KEY TAKEAWAY

35%

Knowledge, workflows & legacy systems

Information friction is split between project documents and organizational knowledge—two problems that require different solutions.

BASE n=23

Open responses coded by primary theme; categories are analyst-derived.

05

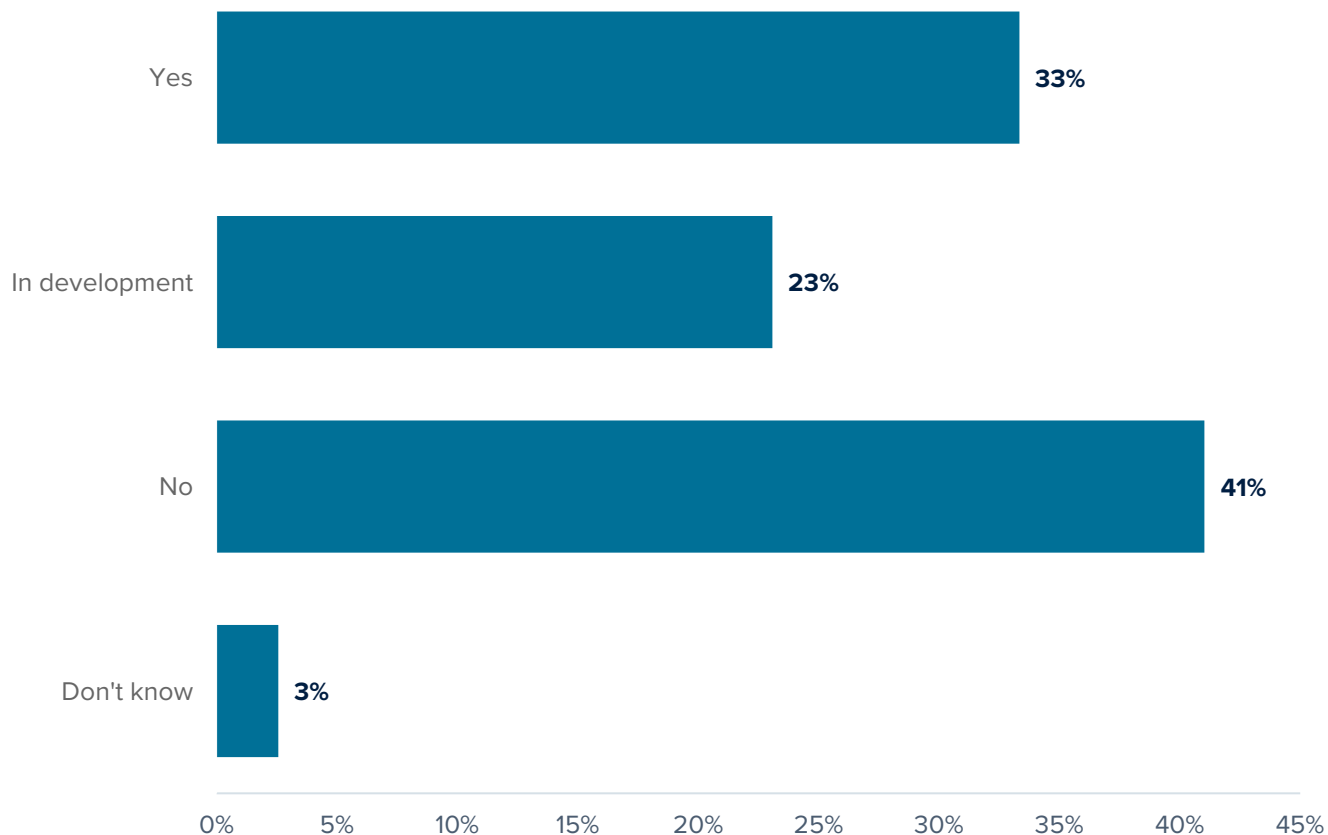
Governance, Security & Barriers



Risk awareness is high, while policy, strategy and control are inconsistent.

Is there a written AI policy?

Do you have a written AI policy?



KEY TAKEAWAY

41%

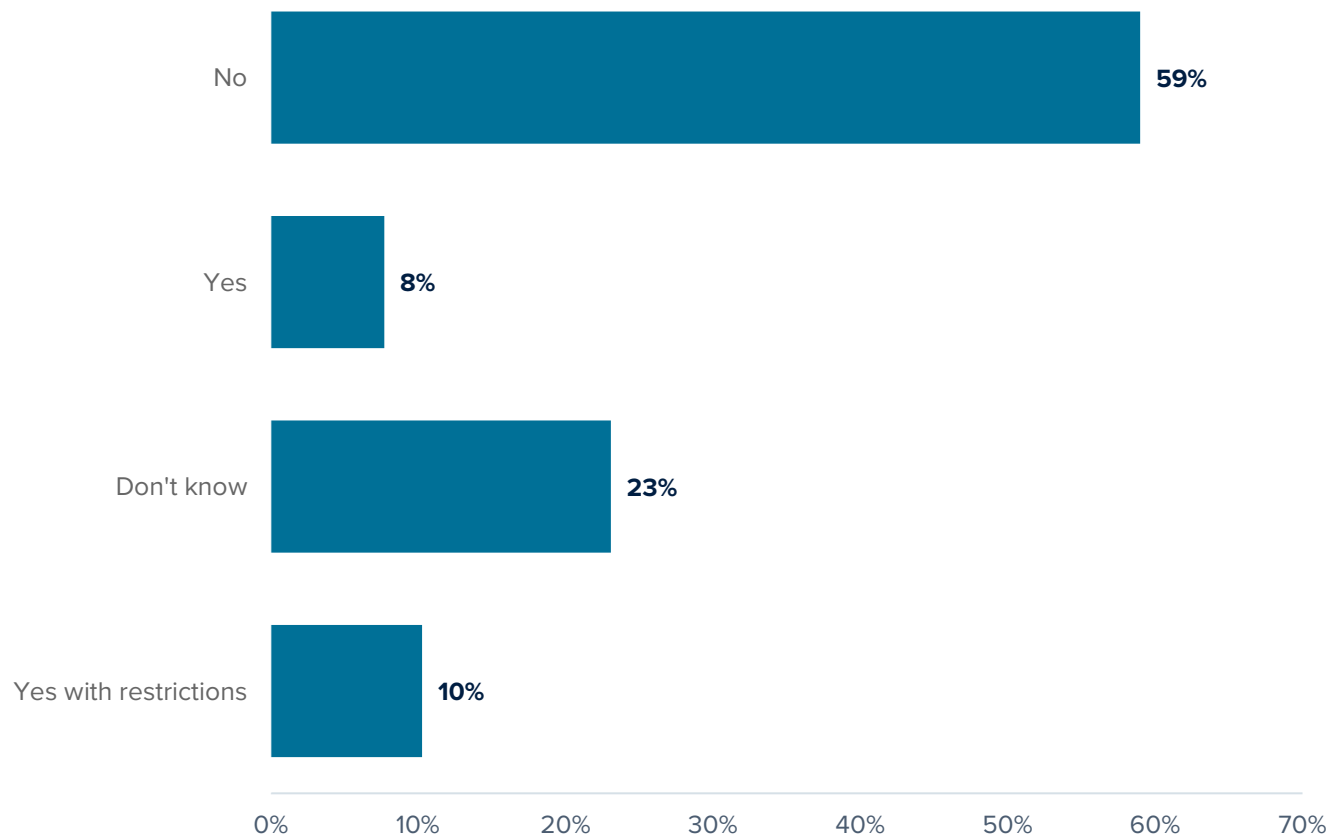
No

Governance is catching up: 33% have a written policy, 23% are developing one and 41% still have no policy.

BASE n=39

Can company information be entered into public AI tools?

May employees upload company information to public AI?



KEY TAKEAWAY

59%

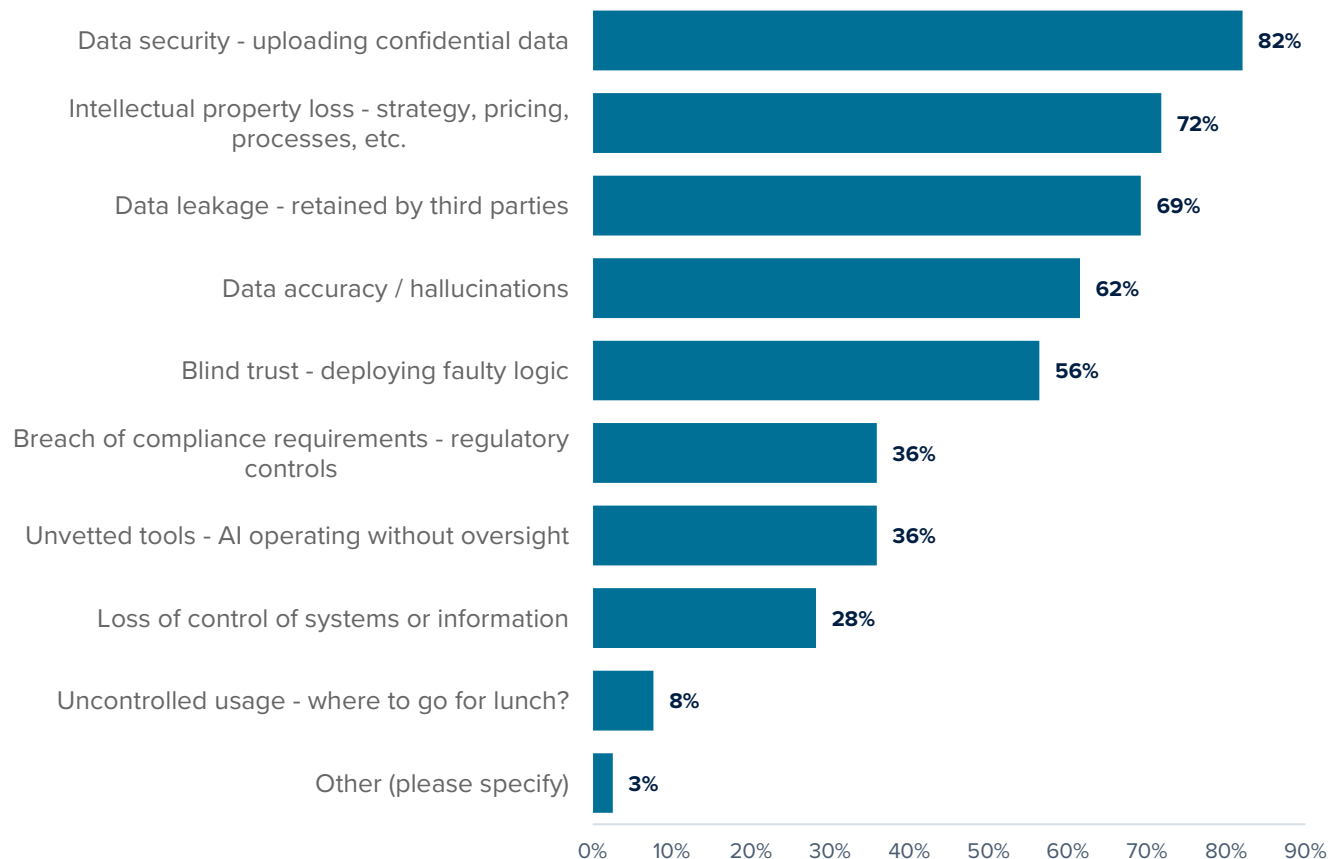
No

Most firms restrict public AI uploads, but 31% either allow them or do not know the rule—an executive control gap.

BASE n=39

Which AI risks concern leaders most?

What are your biggest concerns related to security?



KEY TAKEAWAY

82%

Data security - uploading confidential data

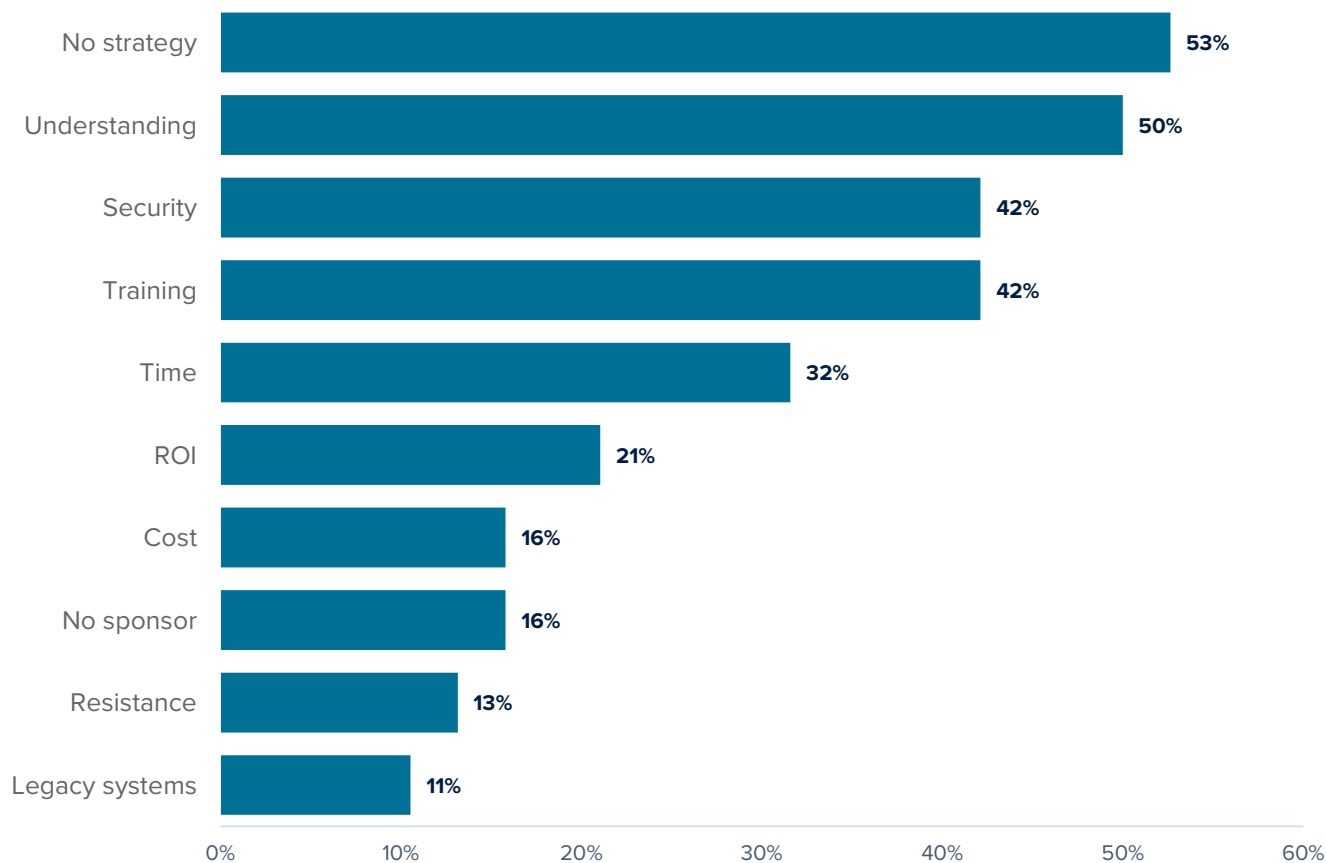
Leaders see risk as multidimensional: confidential data, IP loss, third-party leakage and accuracy all concern majorities.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

What is preventing broader adoption?

Barriers to broader adoption?



KEY TAKEAWAY

53%

No strategy

The leading barriers are managerial, not technical: strategy, understanding, security and training outrank cost and ROI.

BASE n=38

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%. Chart shows the leading responses; complete selections are available in the analysis workbook.

The core finding: activity is ahead of institutional readiness

Construction firms are using AI. Far fewer have created the conditions to scale it safely and economically.



Board implication

Treat AI as an operating-model transformation - not a collection of licenses.

06

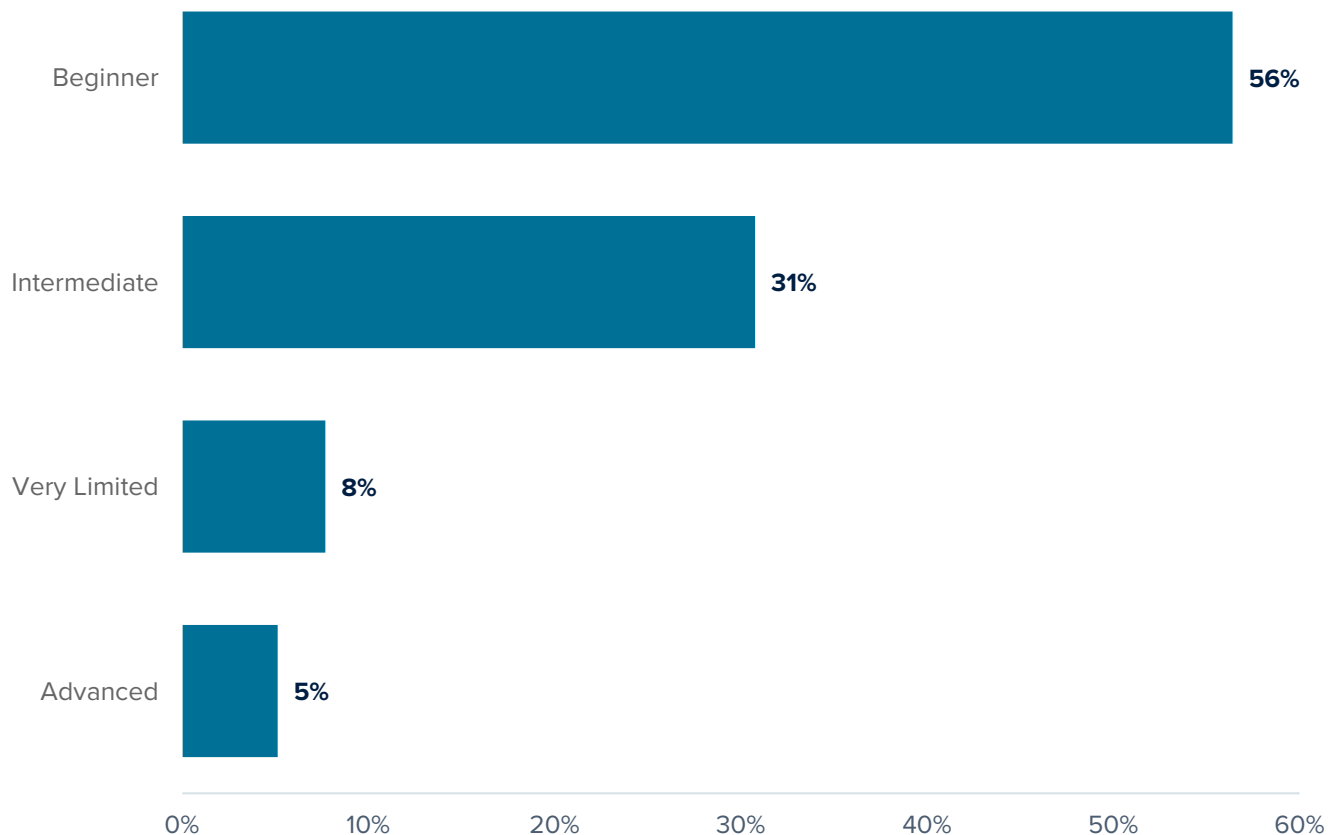
Workforce Capability & Training

Most capability is self-taught; role-based enablement is the next step.



How knowledgeable are respondents about AI?

Overall AI knowledge?



KEY TAKEAWAY

56%

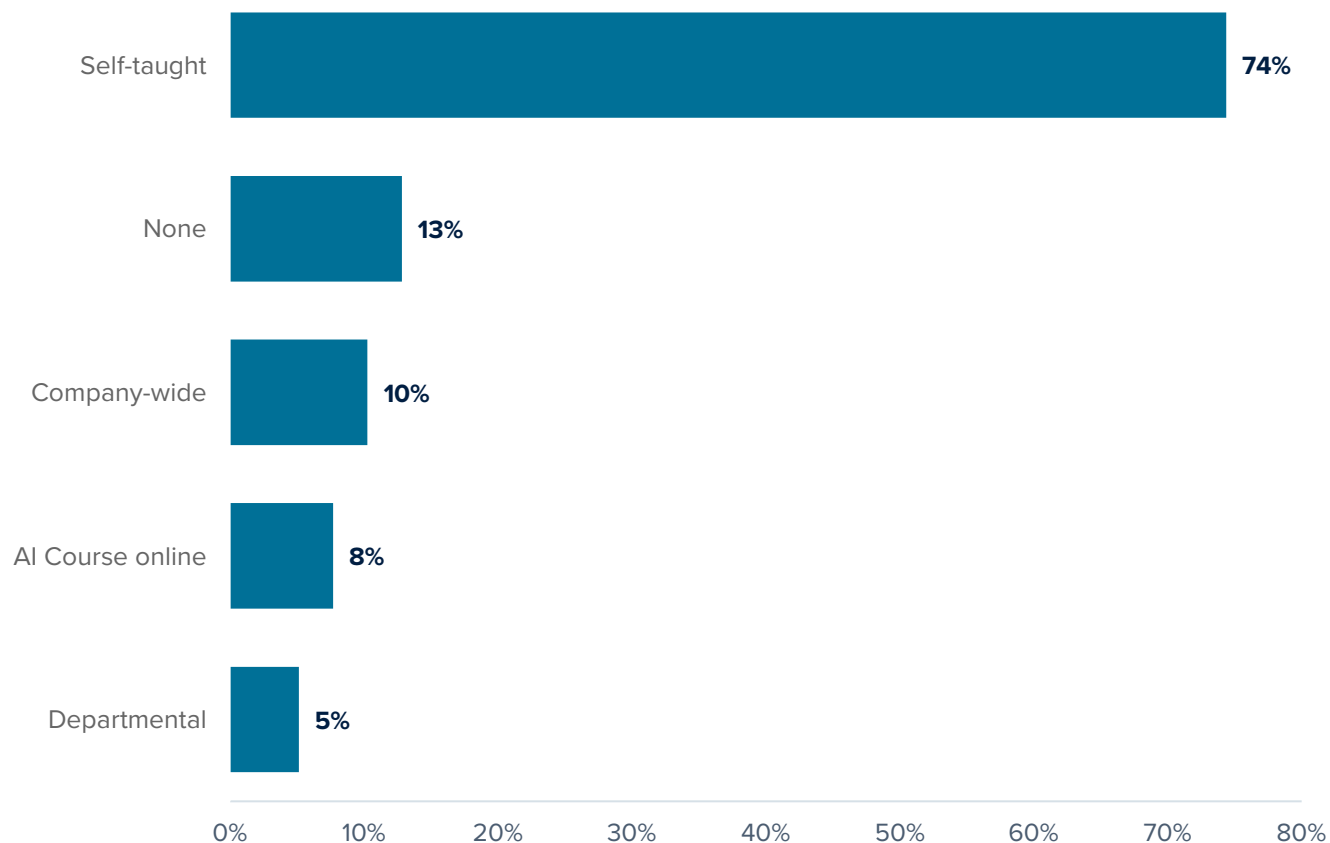
Beginner

Sixty-four percent describe their knowledge as beginner or very limited; no respondent identifies as an expert.

BASE n=39

How have respondents learned to use AI?

Formal AI training?



KEY TAKEAWAY

74%

Self-taught

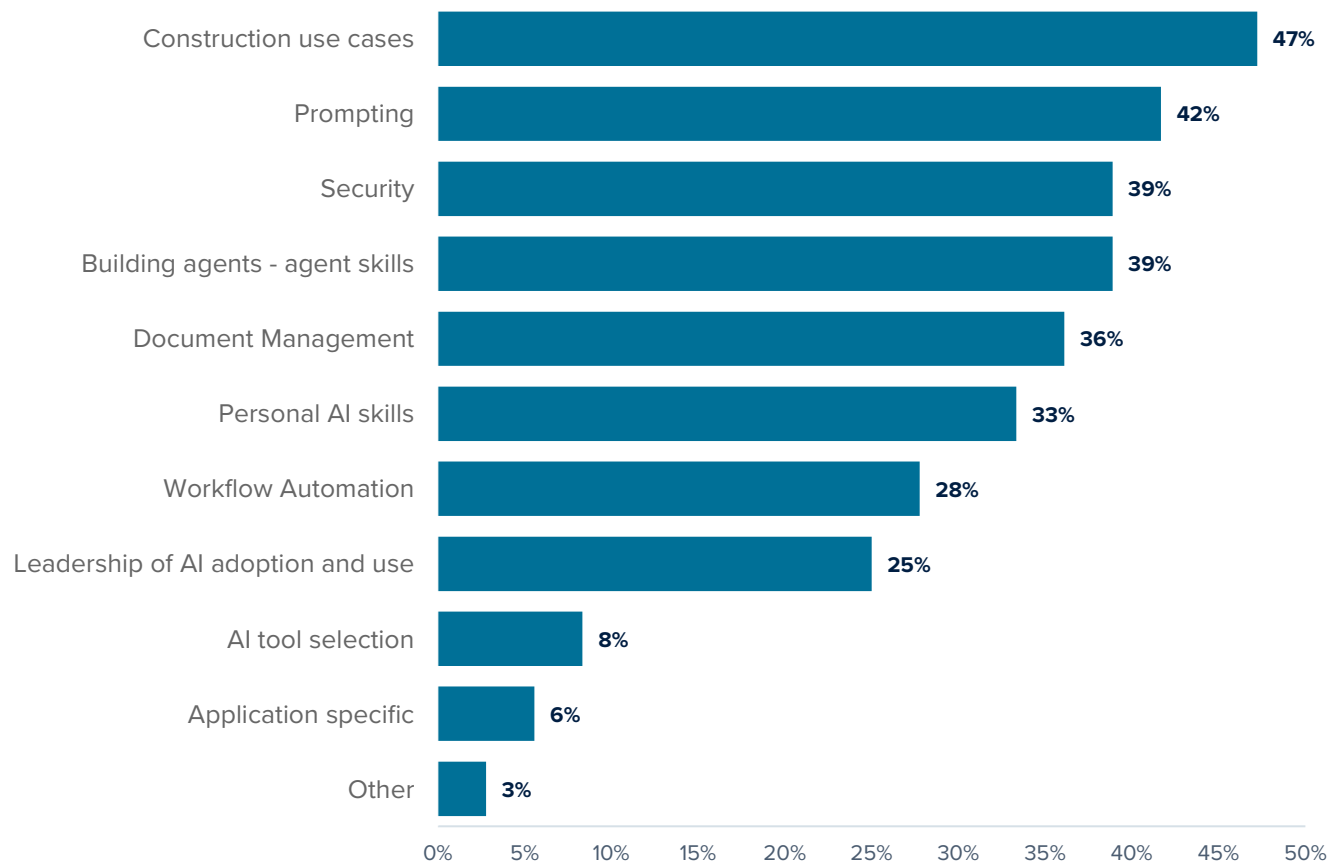
Seventy-four percent are self-taught, while only 21% report any company, departmental or formal online training.

BASE n=39

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

What AI training would be most valuable?

Most valuable training topics?



KEY TAKEAWAY

47%

Construction use cases

Leaders want practical education: construction use cases, prompting, security, agent skills and document management lead the agenda.

BASE n=36

Multiple responses permitted; percentages may sum to more than 100%.

07

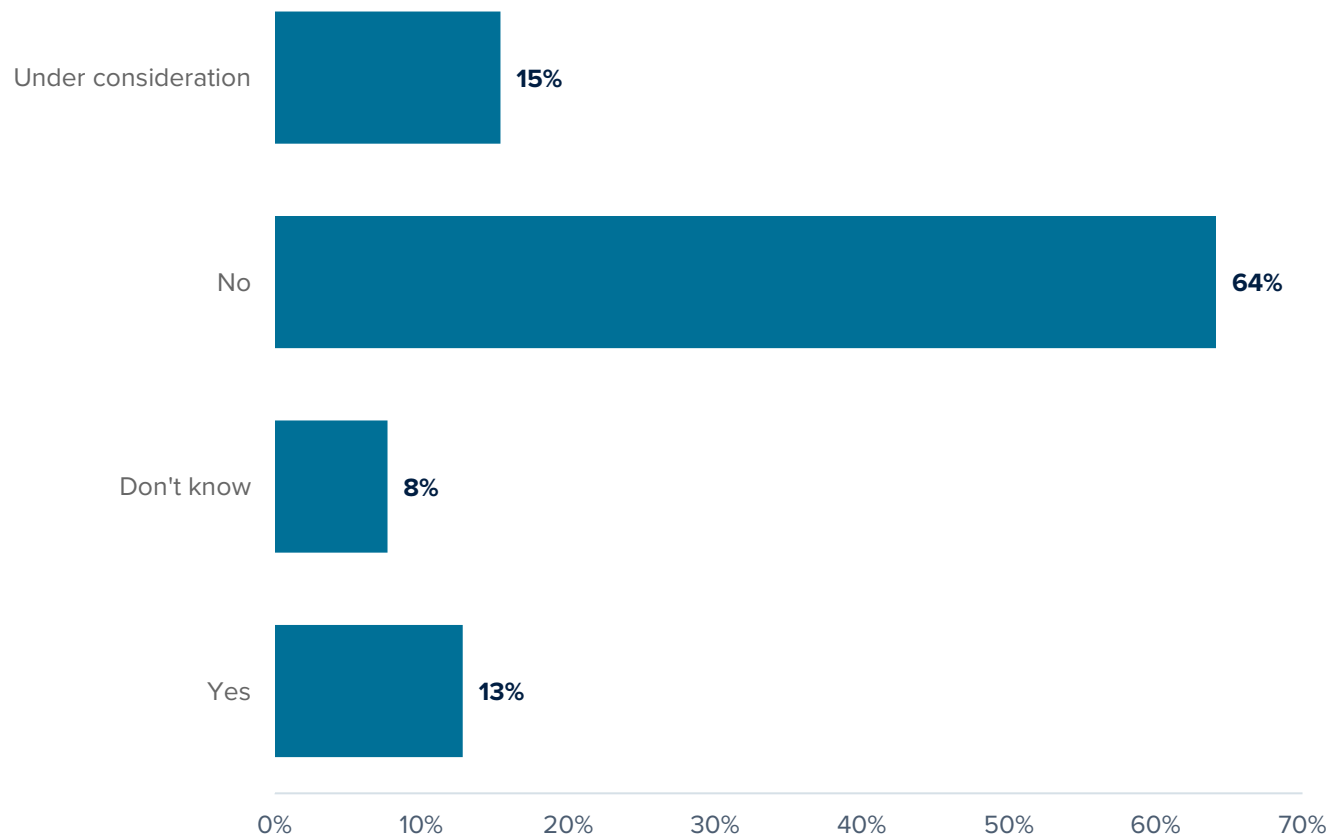
Investment & Competitive Outlook

Leaders expect more spending and see AI as competitively consequential.



Is there a dedicated AI budget?

AI budget established?



KEY TAKEAWAY

64%

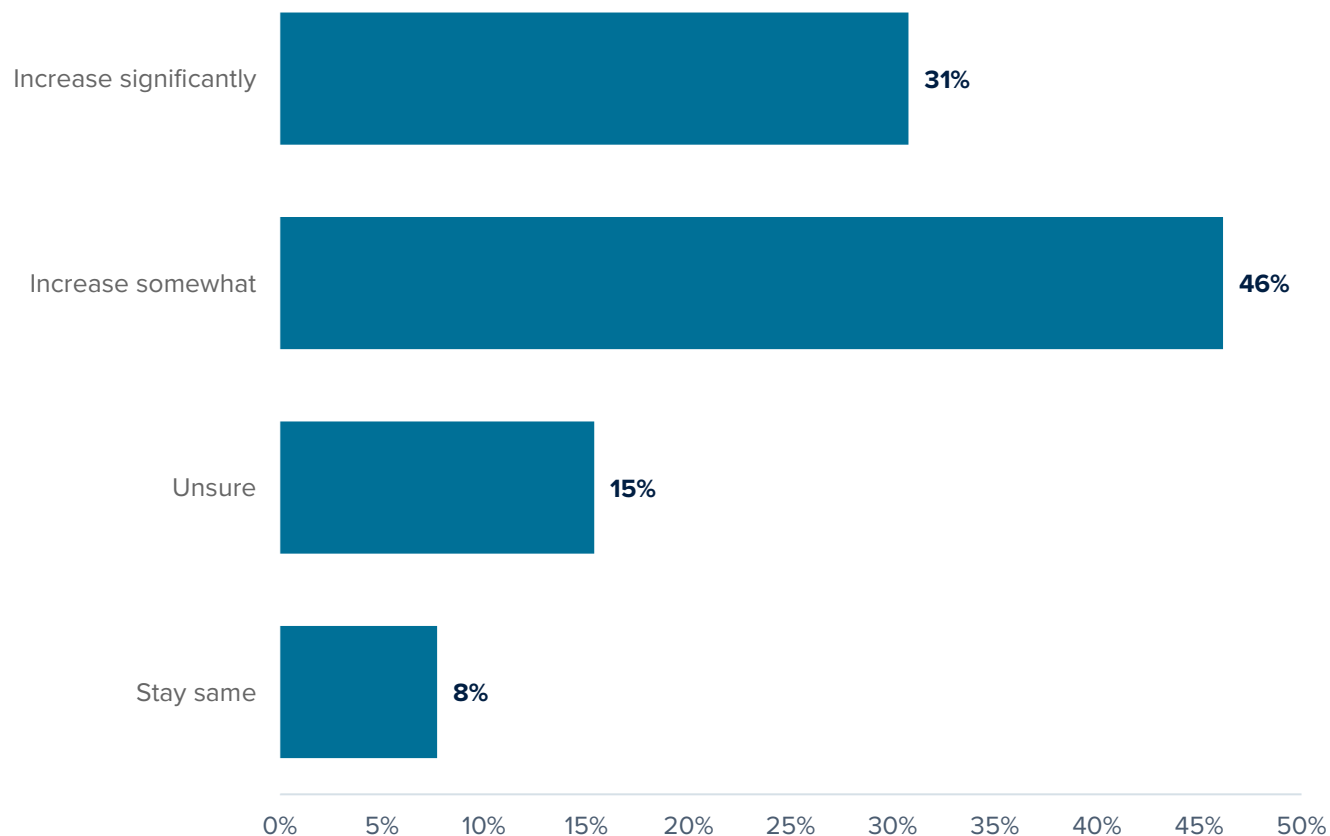
No

Only 13% have an established AI budget. Interest is high, but formal resource allocation remains rare.

BASE n=39

How will AI investment change over the next two years?

AI investment next two years?



KEY TAKEAWAY

46%

Increase somewhat

Seventy-seven percent expect AI investment to rise during the next two years, including 31% who expect a significant increase.

BASE n=39

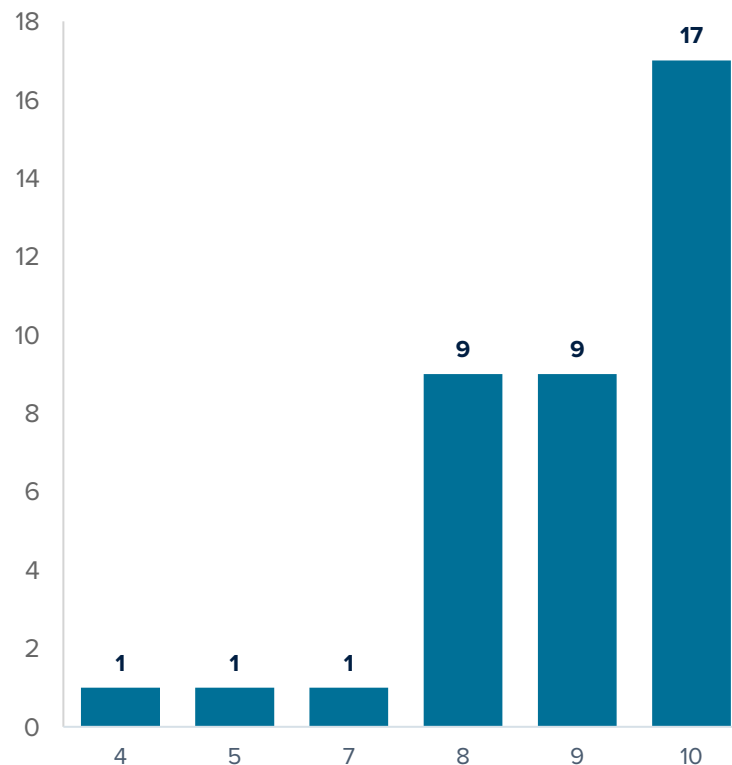
How important will AI be in five years?

Importance of AI in five years

8.9

mean importance score

92% rated AI 8–10



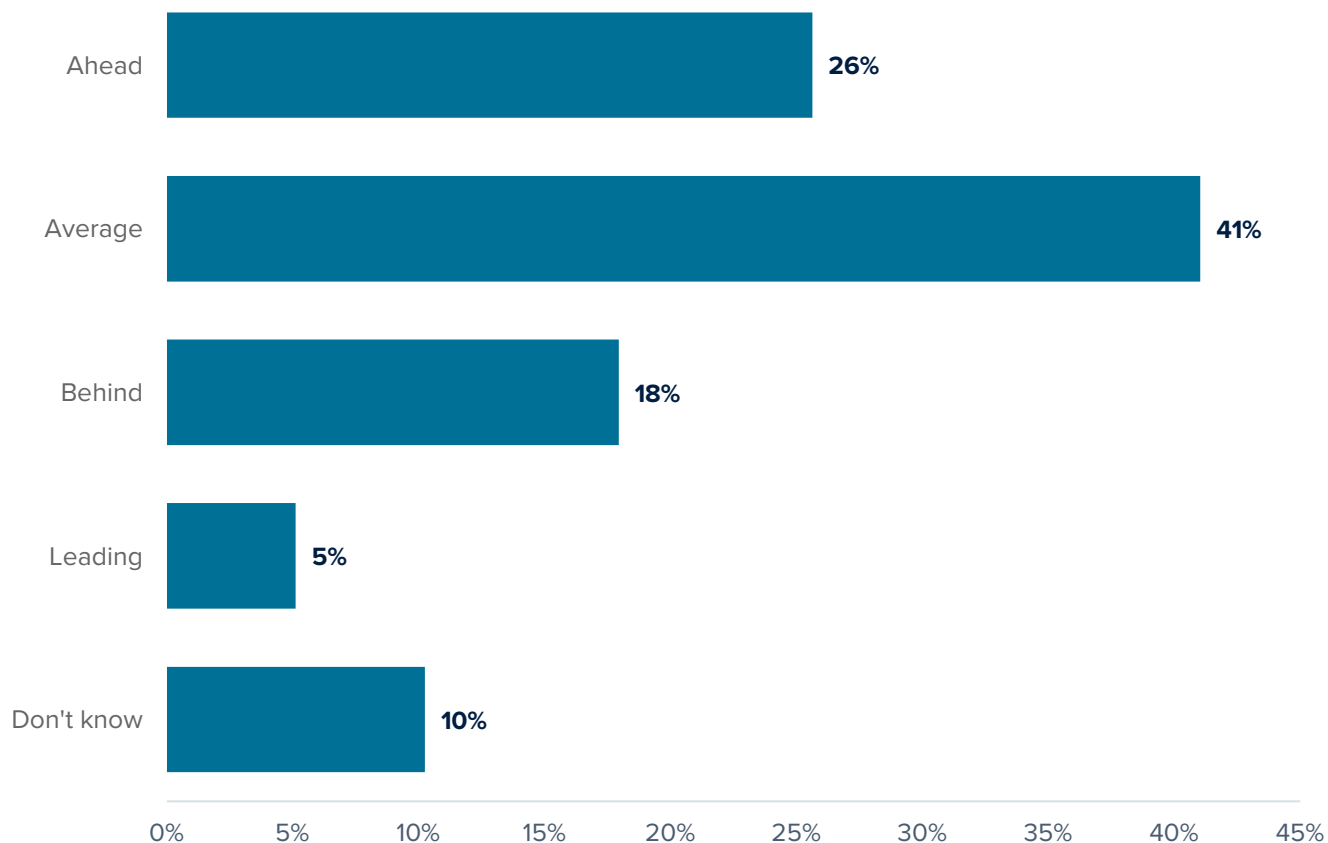
KEY TAKEAWAY

AI is viewed as strategically inevitable: the average importance score is 8.92, and 92% rate it 8–10.

BASE n=38

How do respondents rate their firms against competitors?

Compared with competitors, your company is:



KEY TAKEAWAY

41%

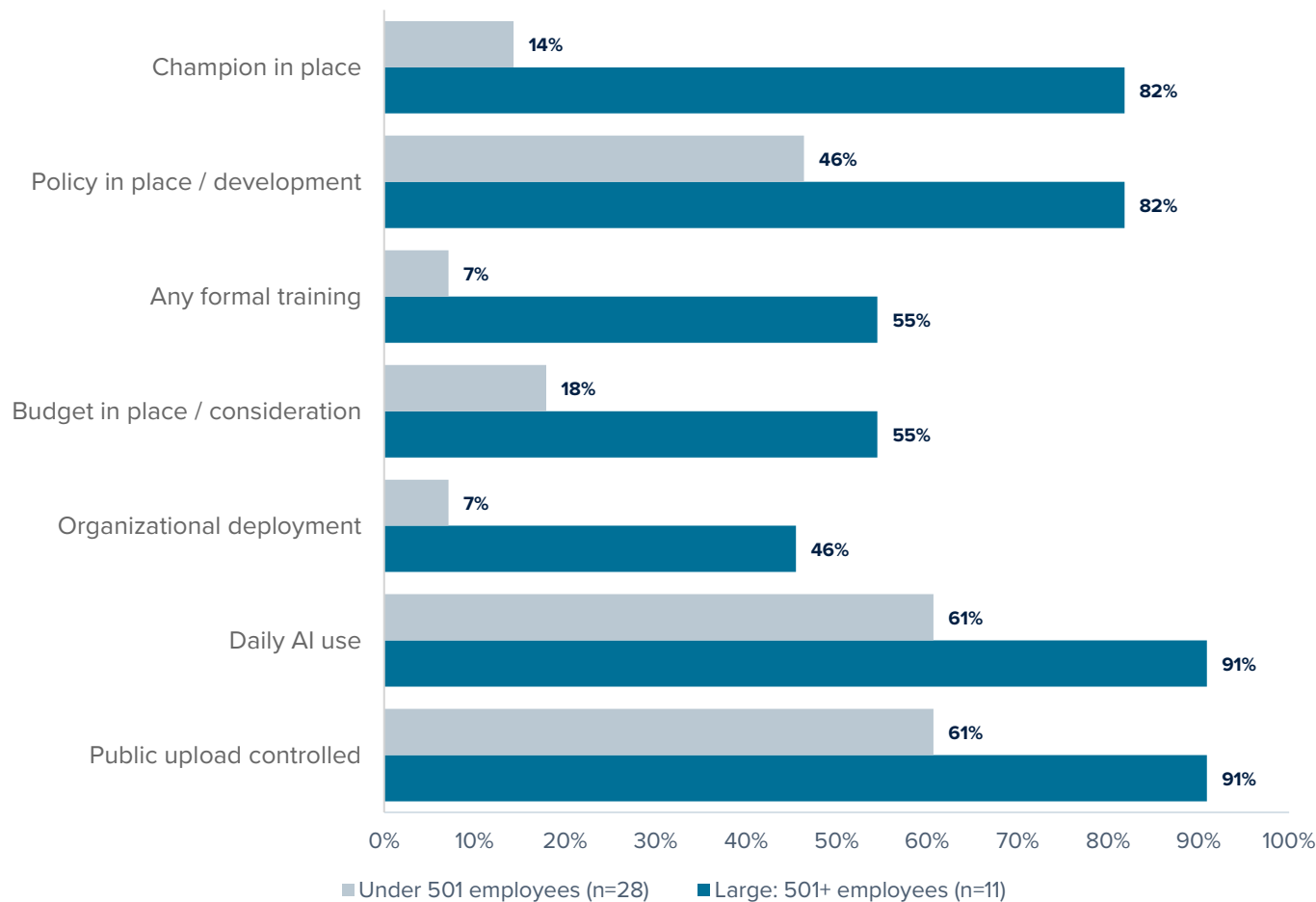
Average

Self-perception is measured rather than euphoric: 31% say leading or ahead, 41% say average and 18% say behind.

BASE n=39

Scale accelerates readiness - but does not guarantee maturity

Large companies are much more likely to have the structures that turn experimentation into enterprise capability.



5.7×

more likely to have a champion

7.7×

more likely to report formal training

Smaller firms need a lighter operating model—not a smaller ambition.

Descriptive subgroup comparison; small bases. Do not infer causation.

08

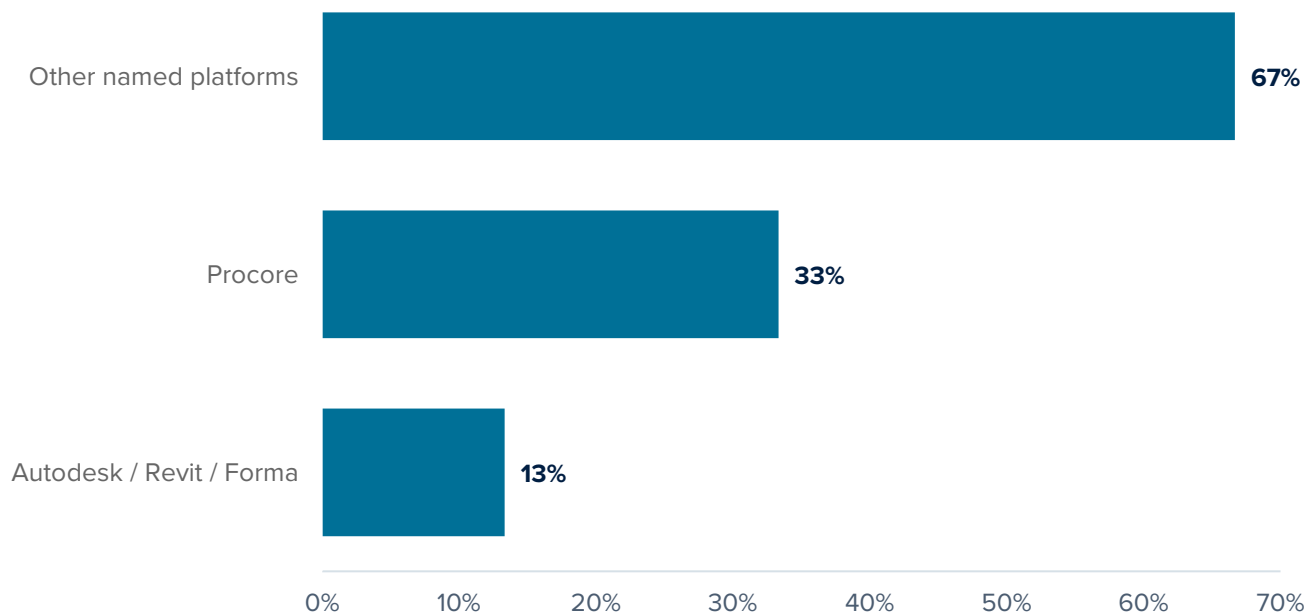
Construction Technology & Executive Voice



The vendor landscape is fragmented—and leaders are asking operating-model questions.

Which construction platforms already have useful AI?

Construction software vendors with useful AI features?



Other named platforms include Acumatica, Criterion, Lift, Service Bridge, OpenSpace, Bridgit Bench, Steel Genie, Document Crunch, DrawerAI, Vista and RiskTalk.

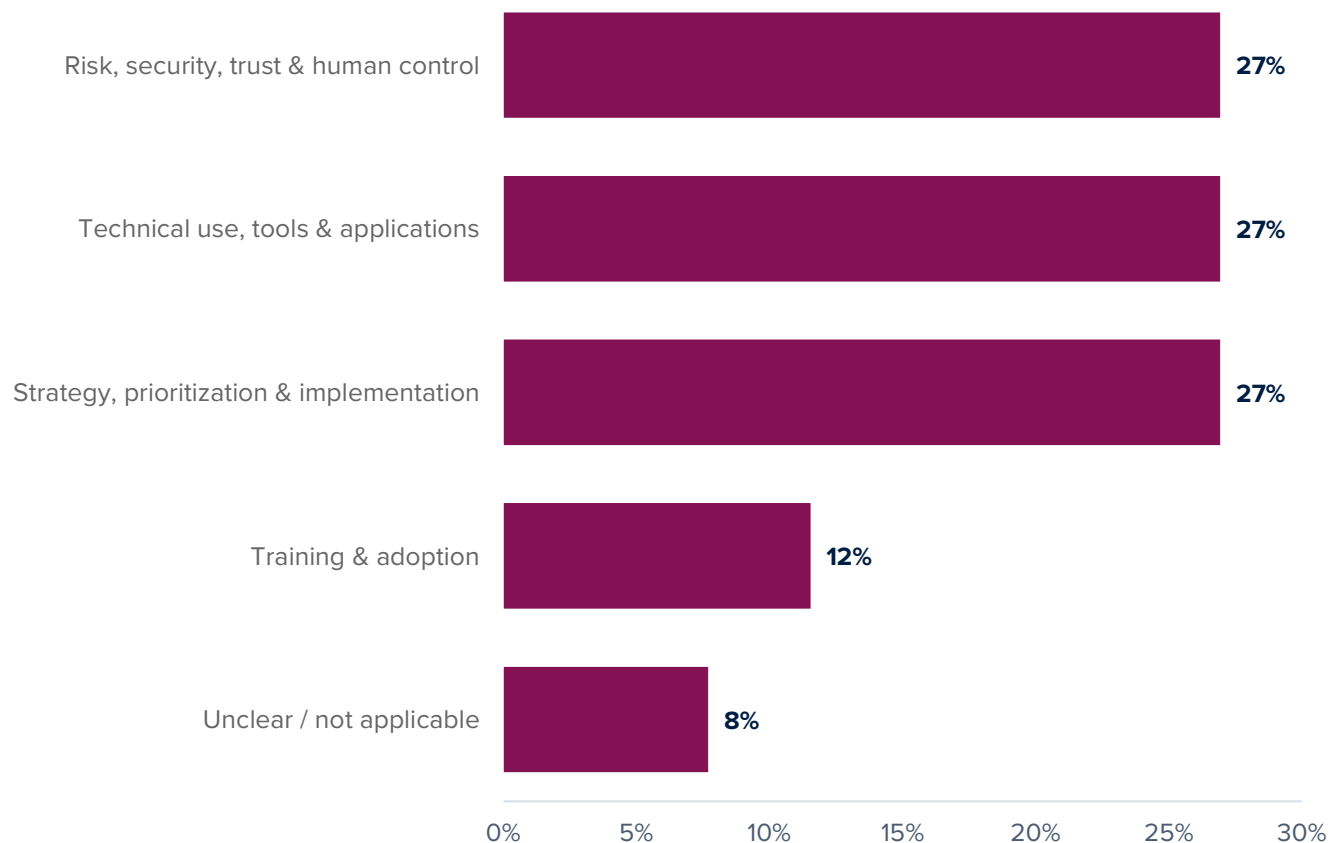
KEY TAKEAWAY

Construction-specific AI remains fragmented. Only 15 respondents named a vendor, and no platform emerged as a dominant industry standard.

BASE n=15

What do leaders most want to ask an AI expert?

If you could ask an AI expert one question, what would it be?



KEY TAKEAWAY

27%

Strategy, prioritization & implementation

Executive questions divide almost evenly among strategy, risk, technical use cases and workforce adoption—evidence that readiness is a system, not a tool choice.

BASE n=26

Open responses coded by primary theme; categories are analyst-derived.

What else do leaders want us to know?

Any other comments related to adopting AI in your business?

Trust must be earned

Accuracy, expertise and human verification remain unresolved.

Standardization matters

Leaders want one shared toolset and repeatable workflows.

Efficiency is the test

Interest is high, but value must show up in day-to-day construction work.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Final comments reinforce the need for standardization, trustworthy outputs, practical workflows and a clear balance between opportunity and risk.

BASE n=14

A five-part agenda to move from activity to enterprise value

The highest-return next steps are organizational, not technological.

1

Name an accountable executive

Give one leader authority over priorities, policy, adoption and value realization.

2

Set minimum control standards

Define approved tools, data-handling rules, human review and exception paths.

3

Prioritize two or three workflows

Select use cases with clear process owners, measurable pain and accessible data.

4

Build role-based capability

Train by job and workflow; combine prompt skills with verification and domain judgment.

5

Measure value and risk

Track adoption, cycle time, quality, rework, cost, realized benefit and control exceptions.

Curiosity created the first wave. Confidence will define the next.

The construction industry does not lack interest in AI. It lacks a repeatable system for turning interest into controlled, scalable and measurable results.

The leaders who win will connect technology to operating discipline: accountable ownership, trusted data, targeted workflows, trained people and transparent value measurement.

Data notes and definitions

Valid response definition

All 39 submissions are treated as valid organizational responses. Some consultants completed separate surveys for different client companies; these are not duplicates.

Percentages

Single-select percentages use the answered base. Multi-select percentages represent the share selecting each option and may sum to more than 100%.

Open-text coding

Themes are analyst-derived primary codes applied to exact SurveyMonkey text. Quotes and examples in the public report are deidentified.

Q22 base

The respondent export contains 39 answers and reproduces every aggregate selection count. The SurveyMonkey summary labeled the base as 38; respondent-level percentages use n=39.

Subgroup analysis

Comparisons by company size, champion status and adoption stage are descriptive. Small bases and self-reported data limit generalization.

Readiness language

'Policy in place/development,' 'budget in place/consideration,' and related composites are explicitly labeled combinations of survey answers.