

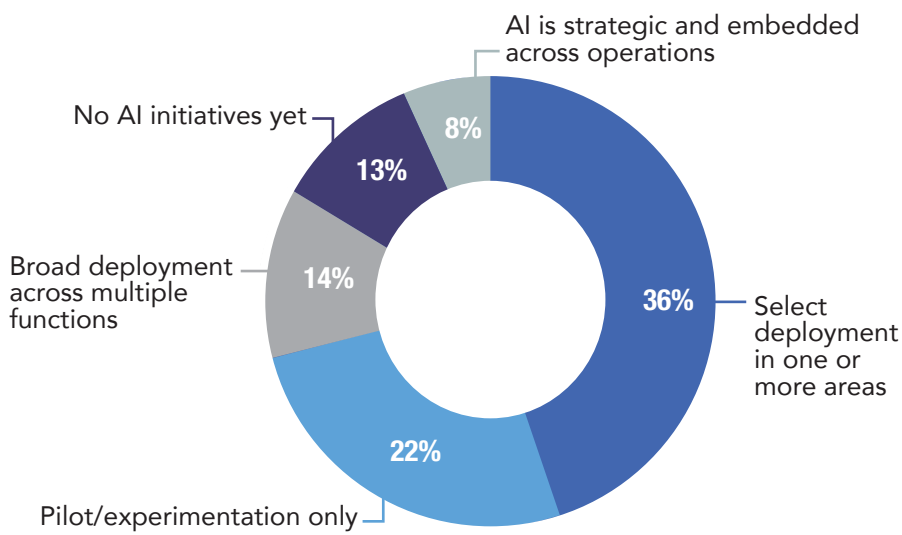
Infographic

The first annual study identified corporate AI adoption with real, not theoretical, AI Adoption Stages™, AI objectives, challenges, impacts, along with a first-ever AI Budget Index™. Following are Key Takeaways:

2026 Corporate AI Adoption to-date

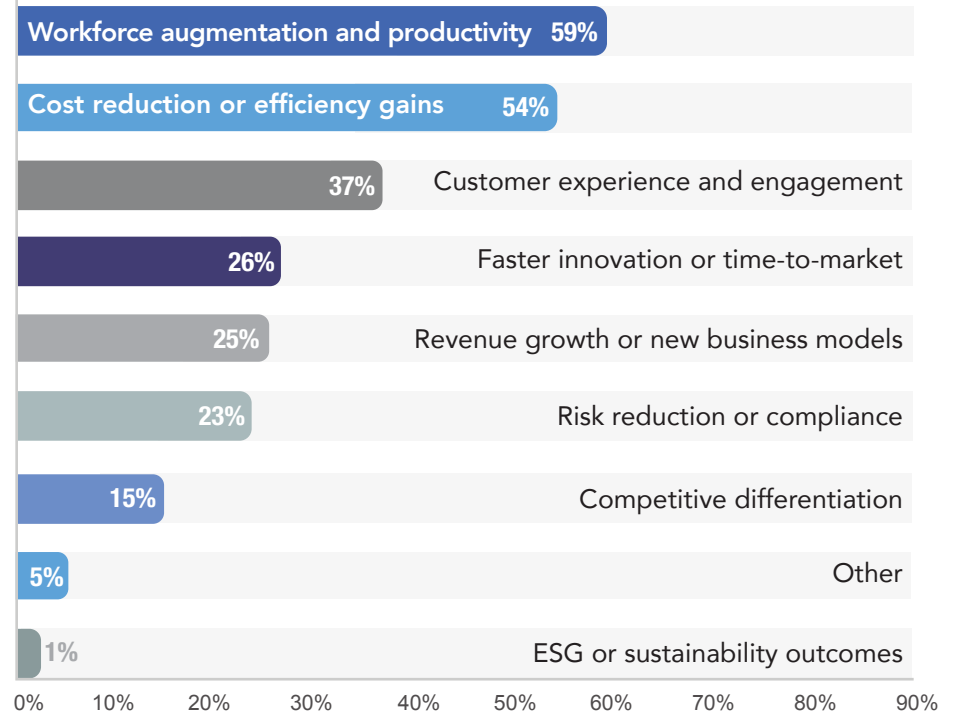
To help organizations benchmark AI progress and understand different levels of AI, the AI Leaders Council grouped survey responses into 4 adoption stages:

- **Absent (13%):** No AI initiatives currently underway
- **Exploratory (22%):** Pilot programs and experimentation only
- **Operational (50%):** AI deployed in production across one or more business functions
- **Embedded (8%):** AI integrated strategically across enterprise operations



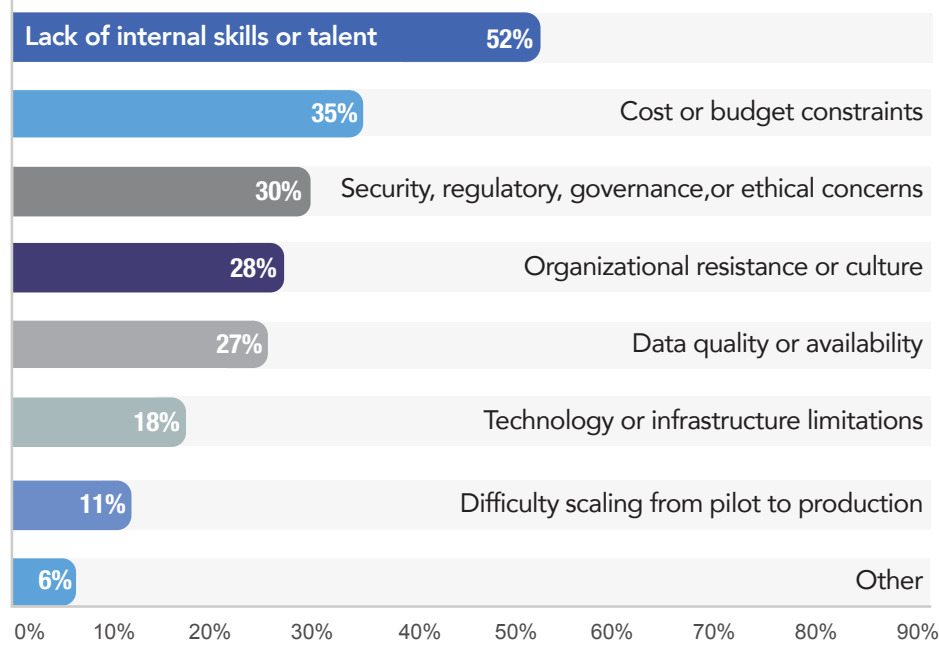
Workforce productivity and efficiency anchor AI strategy.

The most common objectives for AI in 2026 focus on augmenting the workforce, reducing costs, and improving operational efficiency.



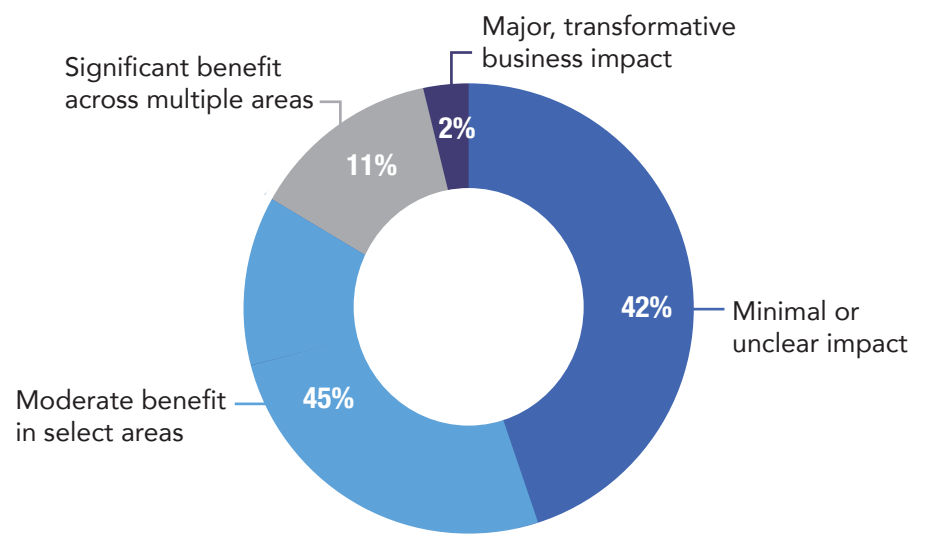
People and adoption challenges outweigh technology constraints.

Top challenges to AI adoption include talent and skill gaps, cost or budget constraints, security and governance concerns, and organizational resistance.



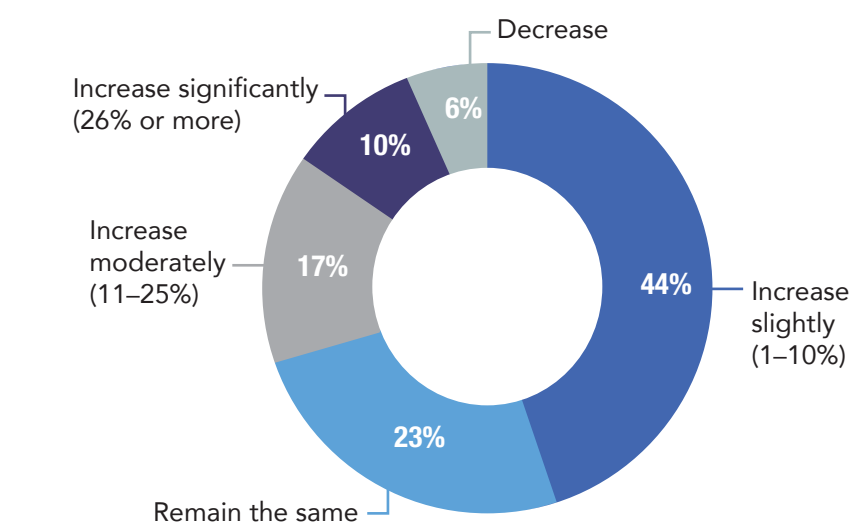
Measurable Impact of AI initiatives?

45% achieved moderate business impact, followed by 42% with minimal or unclear impact. 11% report significant impacts across multiple areas, while only 2% achieved major, transformative business impact. Numbers sure to grow as AI adoption gains momentum.



2026 AI Budget Index™ (AIBI™)

A majority 71% expect AI budgets and spending to increase, compared to only 6% decreasing for an impressive AI Budget Index of 165% including 10% increasing investment by 26% or more, and 17% increasing spend by 11-25%.



How will AI adoption evolve in the next year?

A clear majority expect continued expansion, either through additional pilots or broader deployment across functions. A smaller but meaningful group anticipates enterprise-wide expansion or AI becoming a strategic core capability.

