

GOODMAN
—MASSON

Adapting to Intelligence

How AI is Reshaping Work
for Employers and Employees



Contents

Executive Summary	03
Report Overview & Methodology	04
AI in the Workplace Today	05
Employer Attitudes	06
Employee Perspectives	08
Organisational Readiness	09
Recruitment and Workforce Implications	10
From Awareness to Action	11
Our View to the Future	12
About Goodman Masson	13



Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence has entered a new phase. It has moved from emerging technology to everyday tool. Many organisations are moving beyond experimentation and starting to embed AI into everyday workflows. Based on employer and employee survey data across a cross-functional and cross-sector workforce, this report explores how AI is impacting the workplace today.

Employers widely recognise AI's potential to enhance productivity, decision-making, and cost-effectiveness. However, adoption remains uneven. Most organisations are still in exploration or pilot phases, hindered by internal skill gaps, unclear strategies, and cultural resistance.

Employees, meanwhile, show strong appetite for upskilling but lack structured support. While many are optimistic about AI's potential, fears of job displacement and lack of clarity from leadership are holding back confidence.

This report presents a unified view of these insights to provide a clear picture of today workforce and their current relationship with AI.

89%

Of employers say their AI strategy is either 'in development' or 'under discussion'

Yet only a small fraction are scaling across departments.

19%

Just 19% of employers say recruiting for AI skills is a current team-level priority

A surprising talent gap, even as AI impacts every role.

47%

Of employees describe themselves as 'somewhat confident' using AI tools

They're open, but still early on the learning curve.

56%

Of professionals say their employer provided no training or guidance on AI

A missed opportunity to build internal readiness.

84%

Of employees say learning AI/digital skills is 'important' or 'very important' when choosing a new employer

AI readiness is now a key factor in employer attractiveness.

Report Overview

No matter the profession, industry or market, AI is beginning to influence operations, decision-making, and service delivery. But while media headlines often focus on automation and disruption, the reality within organisations is more nuanced.

This report examines AI adoption from both employer and employee perspectives, highlighting the real-world progress, perceptions, and pain points emerging across the workforce.

By surveying professionals across sectors and seniority levels, Goodman Masson offers a dual-lens view of AI in practice; not just in the C-suite or IT function, but throughout the organisation.

Our aim is to illuminate:

- The current state of AI awareness, usage, and planning in organisations
- Confidence and preparedness levels among employers and employees
- Shared challenges around adoption, training, and communication
- Practical recommendation for talent and workforce planning

Here at Goodman Masson, our stance is that AI transformation is a human transformation. Organisations that fail to align recruitment, training, and communication with AI adoption will fall behind.

Methodology

This report is based on survey responses collected from over 1,000 employers and professionals across a range of sectors and functional roles. Conducted by Goodman Masson in 2025, the surveys explored attitudes, preparedness, and expectations around AI in the workplace. Responses were analysed holistically to identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the future of work, recruitment, and workforce strategy.



AI in the Workplace Today

High Awareness. Low Integration. Growing Pressure.

Artificial Intelligence has decisively entered the workplace conversation. The challenge for organisations is no longer about awareness, it's about action.

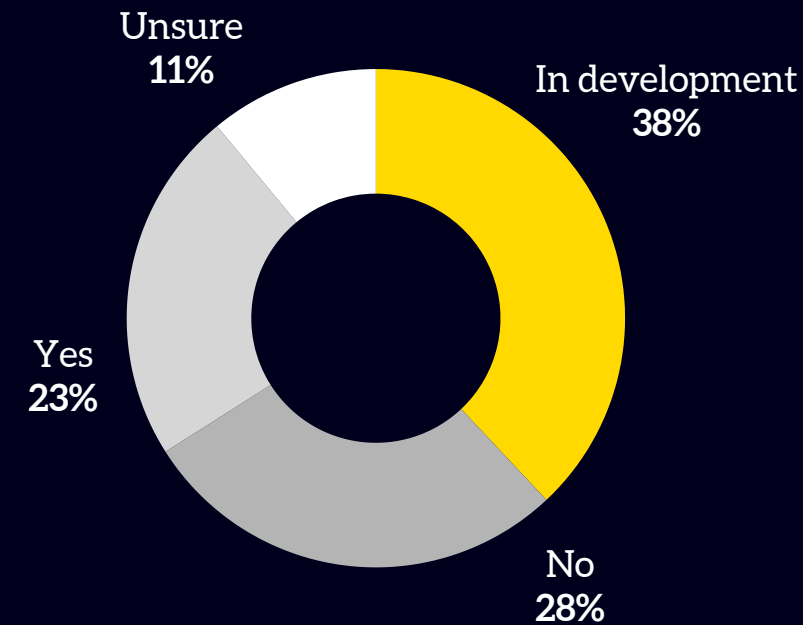
For most, AI is in a trial phase. Over half (52%) of the employers surveyed reported piloting AI in some functions, and 27% described their approach as experimental or ad hoc, reflecting a growing interest in practical application combined with cautious, case-by-case exploration.

Clear strategies are a work in progress. Just one in four (23%) organisations have a formal AI strategy in place. Similarly, 23% have established ethical frameworks; and half (49%) of organisations are still developing policies or are unsure where they stand. A lack of formal direction is complicated by the absence of alignment at the top: only a small fraction (7%) of organisations have a leadership team fully aligned on AI adoption.

Organisations are intrigued by AI, and many are testing its potential. But most remain far from full integration. Strategy, leadership alignment, and employee enablement are still catching up to ambition.

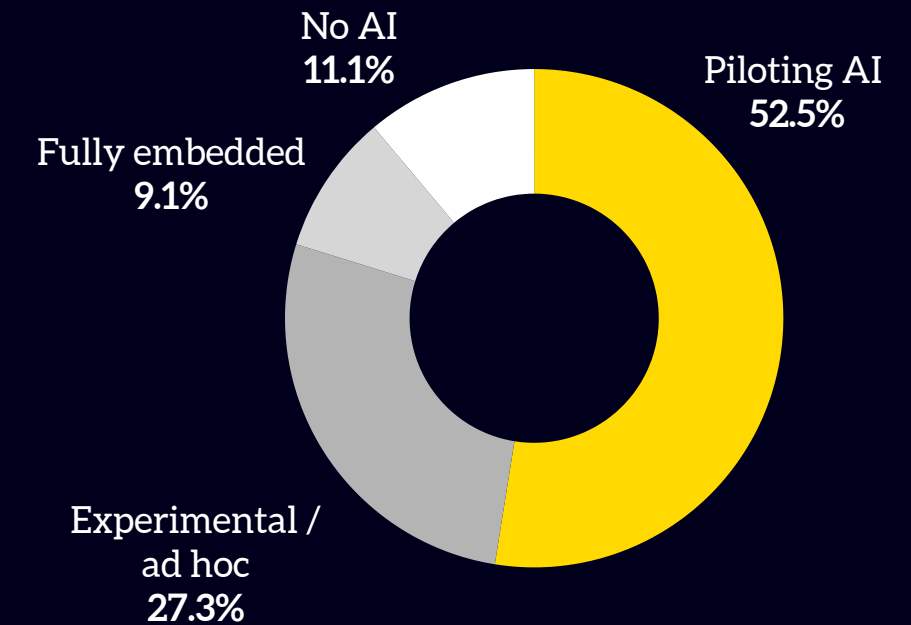
Organisations are slow at adopting formal AI strategies

(Q: Does your organisation currently have a formal AI strategy?)



Approaches to AI are still in development

(Q: Which best describes your organisation's approach to AI?)



Organisations recognise that ethical AI adoption is important

(Q: Does your organisation have a responsible AI framework or ethical guidelines?)



Employer Attitudes

Strategy, Hope and Hesitation

Most organisations acknowledge AI's potential, but many are held back by barriers that go well beyond tools or platforms. Internal skill gaps, lack of cross-functional communication, and resistance to change are all cited as top obstacles. Nearly all those indicating hesitancy around AI pointed not to the technology itself, but to concerns about whether their people were ready.

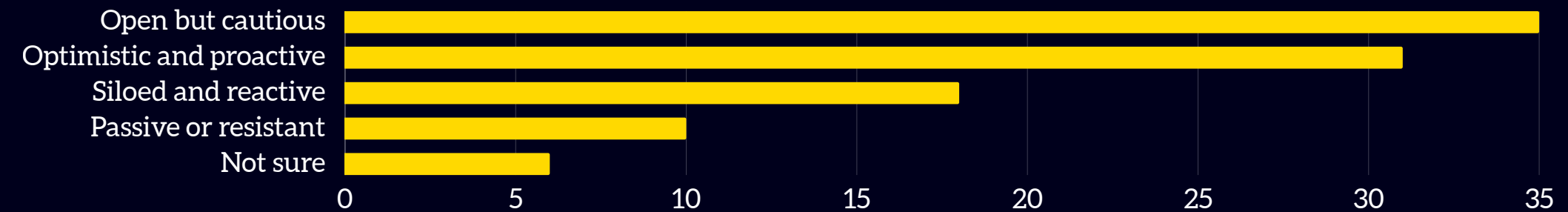
Leaders support AI in principle, but in practice, many are still grappling with what it means for their business model, workforce, and operating structure. Only 13% rate their organisation as fully prepared for AI.

When asked to describe their organisation's mindset toward AI, most responses fell into the "curious but cautious" category. Common concerns include the loss of human judgment, ethical misuse, job displacement, AI inaccuracies, and data security risks.

**Multiple answers permitted*

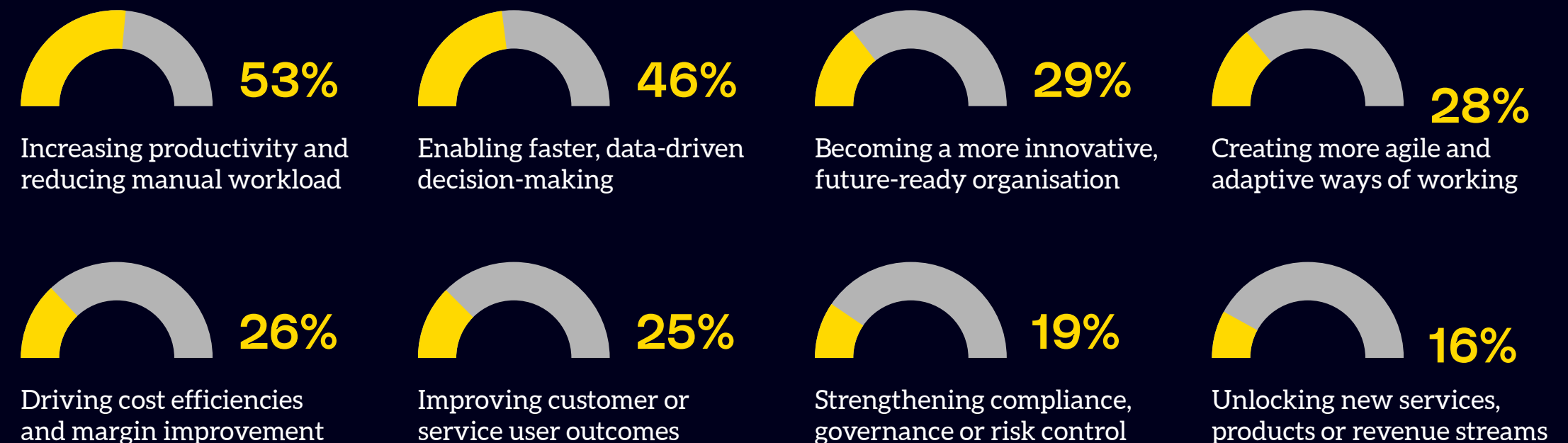
Cultural mindset in organisations is positive overall, but reluctance still exists

(Q: How would you describe your organisation's cultural mindset toward AI?)



Employers are aware of the potential benefits of AI for future readiness

(Q: What is the ultimate goal of AI and digital transformation in your organisation?*)



Quotes:

Top Employer Concerns About AI Integration

1. Loss of Human Judgment and Individuality

Worries that automation may replace nuance, creativity, or personalised decision-making.

- "Blanket use which removes all individuality from the application in addition to tools to make multiple applications at once, diluting the quality."
- "Loss of creativity and spontaneous innovation/discovery. AI is good at automating rote tasks, but relying on it reduces uniqueness and differentiation."

2. Ethical Risks, Data Security, and Misuse

Concerns about inappropriate or unchecked use of AI tools.

- "The use of AI in fraud; ensuring we understand emerging trends and can implement proper controls."
- "That it will be implemented in an ad-hoc basis, meaning gains won't be consistent across or within organisations."

3. Job Displacement, Talent Retention, and Morale

Anxiety that roles, especially in junior roles, may be automated and fear that skilled staff may disengage without adequate support.

- "Large-scale workforce replacement and obsolescence of skillsets may increase competition for remaining roles."
- "Graduates and existing professionals may struggle to keep up, risking employability."
- "Impact of AI on junior roles (which are eventually the feeder stock for more senior roles)."

4. AI Inaccuracy and Hallucination

Fears that tools may generate misleading or incorrect outputs.

- "Incorrect outcomes from poor data, inadequate model training, or poorly structured prompts."
- "Lack of understanding of risks and benefits could lead to unrealistic expectations or misinformation."



Employee Perspectives: Eagerness vs Anxiety

Employees are ready to embrace AI, but many feel they've been left to figure it out on their own. Nearly half (47%) of professionals feel somewhat confident using AI, but just 25% feel very confident, suggesting that most are still early in their learning journey. That leaves many unprepared for tools that are increasingly influencing their day-to-day roles. Despite this, there is real eagerness to grow: 84% said that learning AI-related skills is either important or very important when considering a new employer.

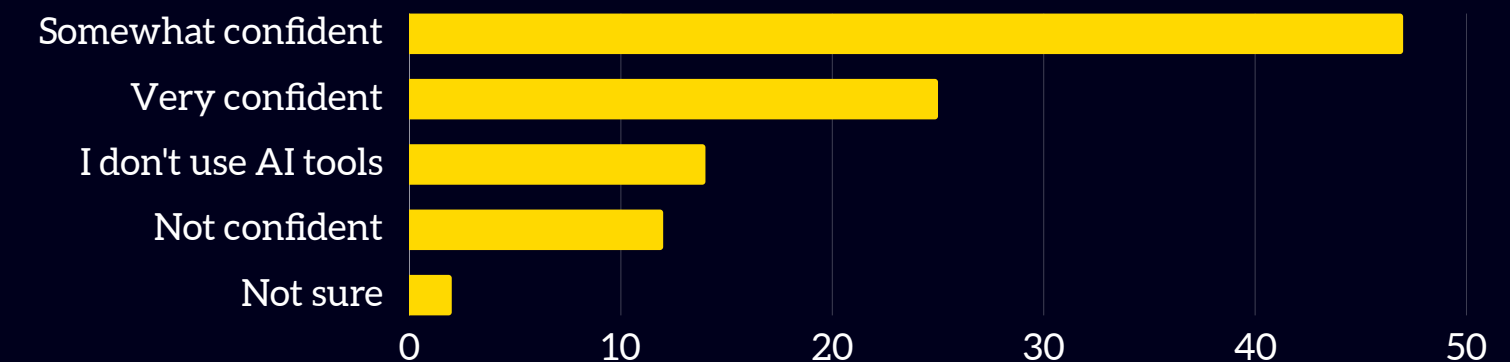
However, the support structures needed to foster that growth are often missing. A majority (56%) reported receiving no training or guidance on AI from their employer. For those who have, the most common support comes in the form of informal resources or self-guided learning. Structured, employer-led development is the exception, not the norm.

This mismatch is generating unease. While many respondents are curious or optimistic about AI's potential, others raised concerns about job security, unclear expectations, and the pace of change. 88% of workers expect their role or profession to change significantly in the next 3–5 years and more than a quarter are preparing for that shift without clear direction.

**1 in 10 professionals
express concern that AI
could displace their job.**

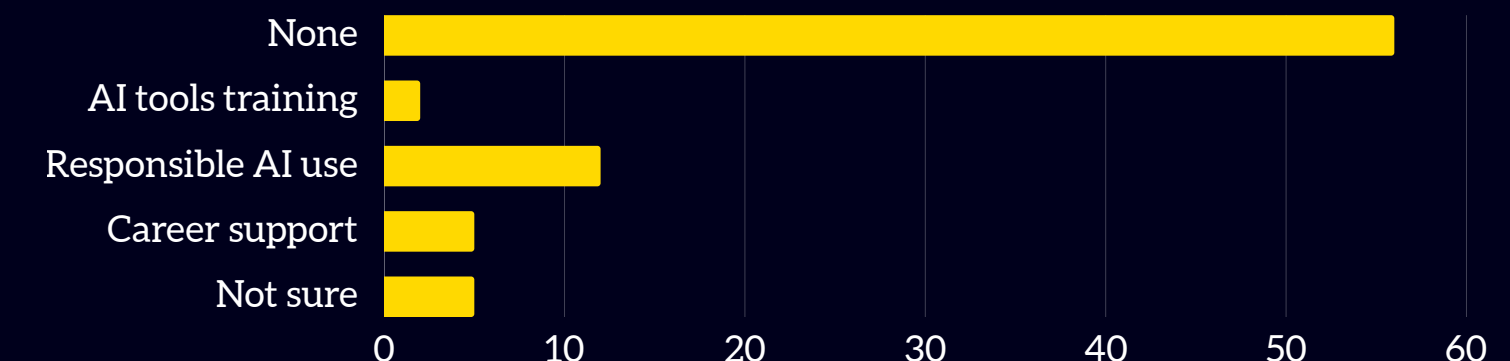
Employees overall feel confident in using AI tools in their work...

(Q: How confident do you feel using AI-powered tools in your day-to-day work?)



...Yet, most are not receiving training nor guidance from their employer

(Q: Has your employer provided any training or guidance on AI?)



Organisational Readiness

Our data reveals that many employers are being slowed not by technical limitations, but by deeper systemic issues related to culture, leadership, and communication. When asked to identify the biggest barriers to AI adoption, employers overwhelmingly pointed to internal skill gaps, fragmented communication, and organisational resistance to change. These issues far outweighed concerns about data infrastructure or vendor selection.

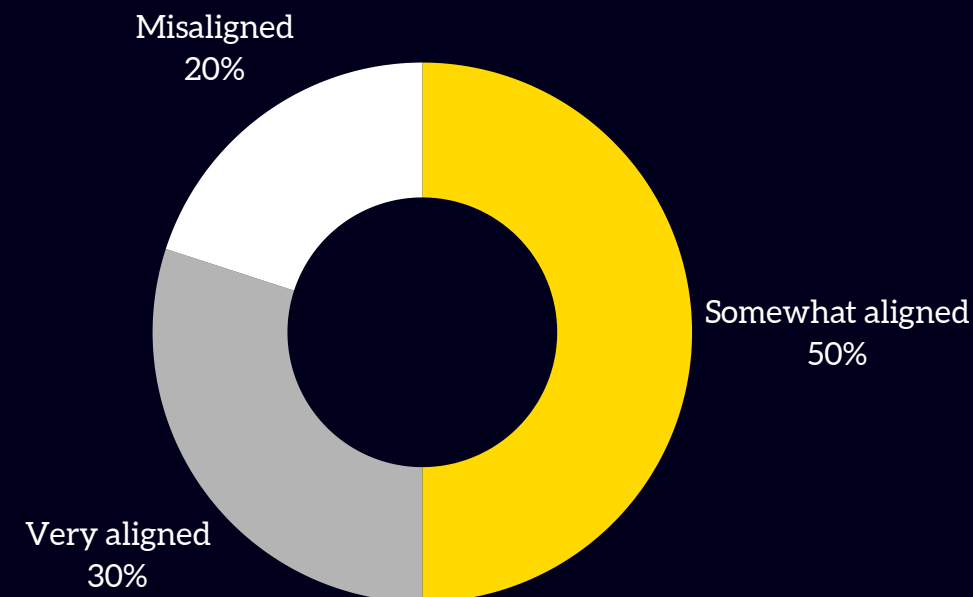
Over half of respondents saw a lack of in-house skills as a major obstacle, the most frequently cited barrier across the entire survey. This was closely followed by a lack of cross-functional collaboration, and cultural resistance, including fears about change and unclear internal messaging around AI's purpose.

These gaps in readiness are compounded by uncertainty at the leadership level. Only 37% of respondents said their leadership teams are very aligned on AI adoption, and confidence in those leaders' understanding of AI risks and opportunities was mixed, with most selecting "somewhat confident" or lower.

Even when AI pilots succeed technically, organisations often struggle to scale them, due to poor coordination across departments, low employee engagement, or a lack of structured support. Few employers have established responsible AI frameworks or communication strategies to address ethical concerns, further widening the trust gap.

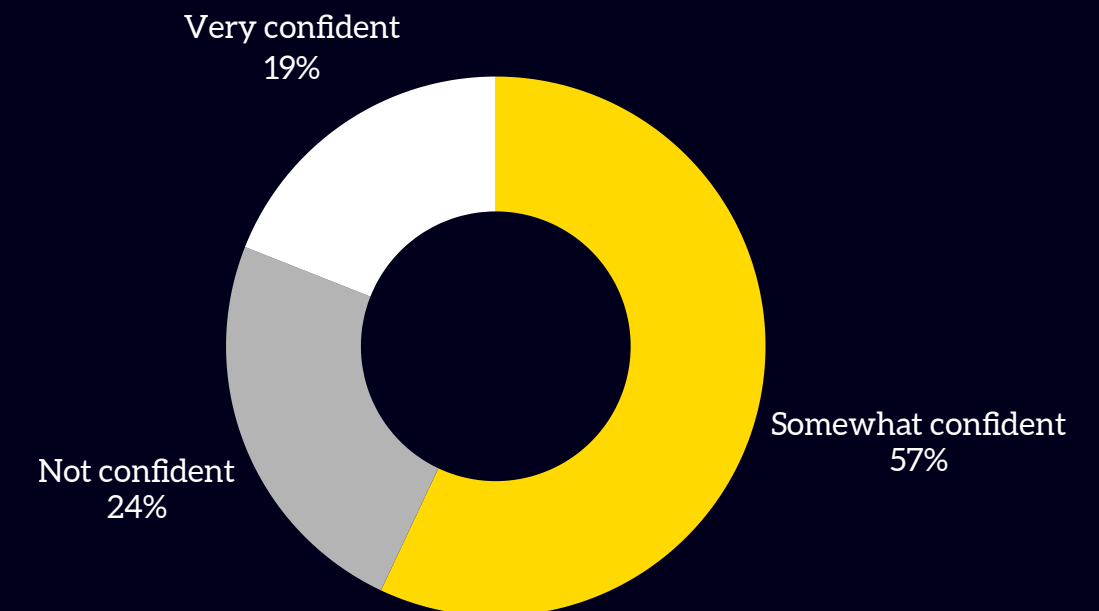
Mixed leadership alignment could hinder AI adoption across organisations...

(Q: How aligned is your leadership team around AI adoption and workforce transformation?)



...Even if employees are confident in their leadership's understanding

(Q: How confident are you in your leadership team's understanding of AI risks and opportunities?)



Top 5 Barriers to AI Adoption

This combines responses from: (Q: What are the biggest operational or strategic barriers to AI adoption in your organisation?) & (Q: What are the biggest talent-related barriers to AI adoption in your organisation?)



Recruitment and Workforce Implications

The Talent Disconnect

AI is already reshaping hiring, but employers and employees aren't fully aligned on what the future workforce needs.

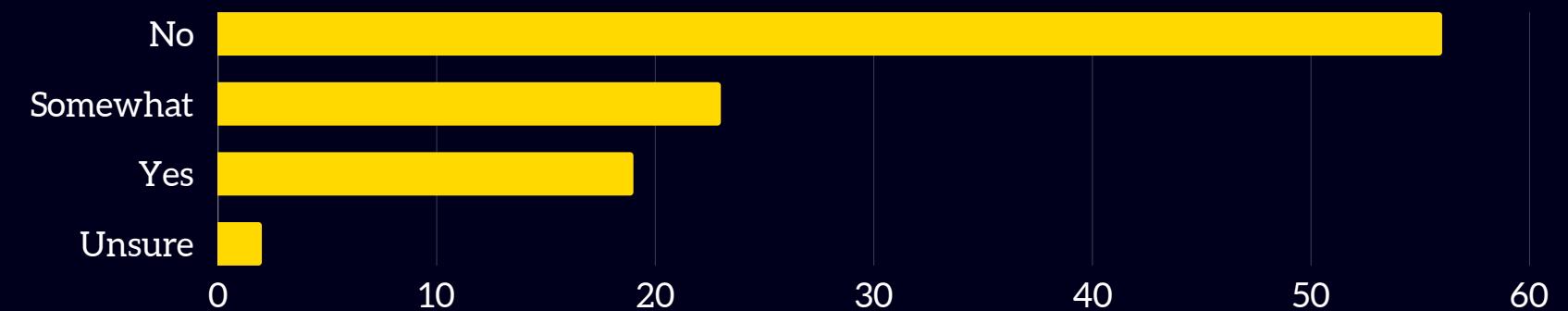
Organisations widely recognise that talent is essential to unlocking the value of AI. Three in four (74%) employers say AI is changing the skills they prioritise in hiring. Yet hiring strategies haven't caught up. Only 22% say that recruiting for AI-related skills is a current priority and just a third (33%) consider it a broader strategic focus. This suggests many are aware that AI matters but have yet to reflect that in their recruitment plans.

Meanwhile, employees are adjusting their expectations. Nearly nine in 10 (87%) professionals say that opportunities to learn AI or digital skills are important or very important when considering a new employer. However, 1 in 4 remain unsure how AI will impact their future career growth. This uncertainty reflects a wider need for clearer guidance and support in navigating the future of work.

In this environment continuous learning is a deciding factor. If employers want to attract and retain talent, they must deliver real investment in skills, clarity, and career development around AI.

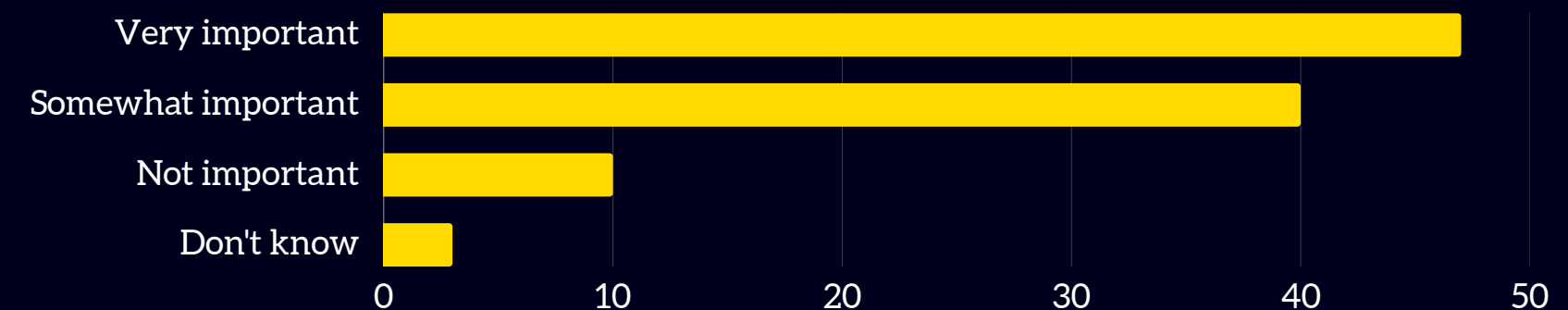
Employers are still not hiring for AI skills

(Q: Is recruiting for AI-related skills a current priority within your department or team?)



Professionals are proactively seeking employers that support AI learning

(Q: How important is the opportunity to learn new digital or AI skills when considering a new employer?)



From Awareness to Action

Across both employer and employee responses there is no shortage of ambition around AI, but execution is falling behind. Leaders recognise the transformative potential of AI. Employees are eager to grow with it. Yet strategies remain vague, training is inconsistent, and recruitment hasn't caught up with the future of work. To close this ambition-execution gap, organisations must move from abstract enthusiasm to concrete action.

AI transformation is not a single initiative. It's an ongoing process of upskilling, communicating, and recalibrating how organisations think about talent, leadership, and change. And it requires a much stronger link between workforce strategy and technological investment.

**Creating Your AI Readiness Plan:
Actions to Take this Quarter**

[Read the Full Article](#)

5 Practical Actions for Leaders

Build a Clear, Shared Strategy

Start with a company-wide AI capability audit to assess current strengths and gaps. Use this to develop a cross-functional AI roadmap that aligns leadership around priorities, timelines, and use cases.

Create Targeted Training Pathways

Establish structured AI training paths for each job family, covering core literacy, ethical awareness, and role-specific applications. Make continuous learning a business norm.

Recruit for Adaptability, Not Just Skillset

Incorporate AI adaptability and learning agility into recruitment criteria. Prioritise the human capabilities that drive transformation. Traits like curiosity, resilience, and collaborative thinking.

Communicate Change Early and Often

Don't wait for disruption to communicate. Be transparent about AI's implications for roles, teams, and strategy. Open, ongoing communication builds trust and empowers people to engage.

Embed Culture into Change

Build a culture of experimentation, feedback, and inclusion. Recognise initiative, reward learning, and involve employees at every stage of the journey.

Goodman Masson's View to the Future

Recruitment Is the Real AI Strategy

Artificial Intelligence will undoubtedly change business models, service delivery, and the pace of innovation. But without the right people in place, even the most advanced technologies will stall. That's why we believe recruitment is the lever that will move AI maturity forward. Organisations that fail to align their talent strategy with their tech ambitions won't just struggle to keep up; they'll fall behind entirely.

At Goodman Masson, we see AI not as a threat to the workforce, but as an opportunity to build a smarter, more adaptive one. As Andrew Michael, CEO, puts it, "AI is already reshaping how we work, replacing some tasks, but more importantly, supporting people to focus on what humans do best: solve problems, collaborate, and drive impact. When applied to the right challenges, AI unlocks better insights, greater efficiency, and stronger business performance. It can also lift company culture, freeing teams from low-value work and creating space for more meaningful contribution."

The future belongs to organisations that empower their people, invest in potential, and hire for what comes next.

"The businesses that thrive will be the ones with a clear AI strategy their people understand, believe in, and can rally behind."

Andrew Michael, CEO, Goodman Masson



**AI transformation
starts with people.
And people
strategy starts with
Goodman Masson.**



About Goodman Masson

Goodman Masson is a specialist recruitment firm with over 30 years of experience; we've earned a reputation for delivering talent solutions that drive real organisational outcomes across finance, technology, change & transformation, housing, property services, tax, treasury, risk, compliance, and impact-led sectors.

Our consultants have supported organisations through periods of disruption, transformation, and growth, helping them align workforce strategy with evolving commercial realities. What sets us apart is our values-led approach that uses data-driven insights that inform hiring strategy to create outcome-focused partnerships that go beyond transactions.

From helping you hire AI-literate leaders, to supporting workforce transformation, Goodman Masson is your trusted advisor across the full spectrum of talent solutions.

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