

CORSEARCH

2026

State of Trademarks Report

Balancing AI Automation and Human Expertise
in Trademark Management



Executive Summary

Early adoption and experimentation with AI and automation tools and software continue across the trademark management industry in 2026. Cautions remain, reflected in the fragmented use and perceptions within the sector, but confidence appears to be growing.

To continue our research into the adoption of AI technology in trademarks, Corsearch commissioned a survey of 231 leading trademark practitioners as a follow up to our [2025 State of Trademarks Report](#). There was an almost even split of respondents based in-house and at law firms, located mostly across North America and the EMEA region. Our research reveals the current state of transition around AI and automation in the trademarks profession.

This report outlines how in-house legal teams and law firms are embracing technological change primarily within the pharmaceutical, technology, fashion and cosmetics, legal, media and entertainment, and consumer goods industries. The report compares how attitudes and processes have changed and also assesses what the future holds for trademark practitioners. The key findings indicate that a blend of AI automation and expert oversight will likely continue to be the commonly adopted approach in trademarks.

Key takeaways from the survey:

78%

of respondents prefer a balanced mix of automation and human oversight.

Human expertise remains essential in trademark management despite AI advantages, with interest in hybrid models increasing slightly compared to 2025.

51%

are exploring AI's potential

Exploration and experimentation with AI have grown by 10% from 2025 as more legal teams try to harness its potential power.

64%

spend most of their resources on enforcement and dispute management.

This has overtaken trademark clearance and search from last year as the primary focus area.

57%

say managing enforcement complexities across jurisdictions is their top challenge.

Greater resources are being applied to tackle this top challenge in trademark protection.

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Key trends and sectoral shifts

Combining AI with human expertise: Hybrid but hesitant

A hybrid system, bringing together AI and human oversight, remains the preferred approach to trademark management - 78% of respondents (up from 76% in 2025) believe a balanced mix of automation and human oversight is ideal. However, real-world adoption isn't quite keeping pace with this ideology. Only 59% said they currently implement a balanced mix of automation and human expertise, mainly to help streamline workflows and cut costs where possible.

The switch to a more balanced approach is still ongoing. It can take time to understand, identify the best tools, and adopt new technology in a way that improves processes and efficiencies for trademark management.

It's a similar story for those who wish to remain manual. Just a fifth of respondents support a primarily human-driven operation with minimal AI use, yet 30% say their current approach to trademark protection is primarily manual, with some automation. And 7% of respondents are still using a fully manual approach.

Desires for a fully automated approach are slim, as concerns around accuracy and overreliance on AI persist. Just 2% utilize a primarily automated approach, and the same percentage operate with a fully automated model for trademark management.

Preferred balance between AI and Human Expertise

(Source: 2026 Trademark Survey)

- **78%**
Balanced mix of automation and human oversight
- **20%**
Primarily human-driven, minimal AI
- **2%**
Primarily automated, minimal human involvement

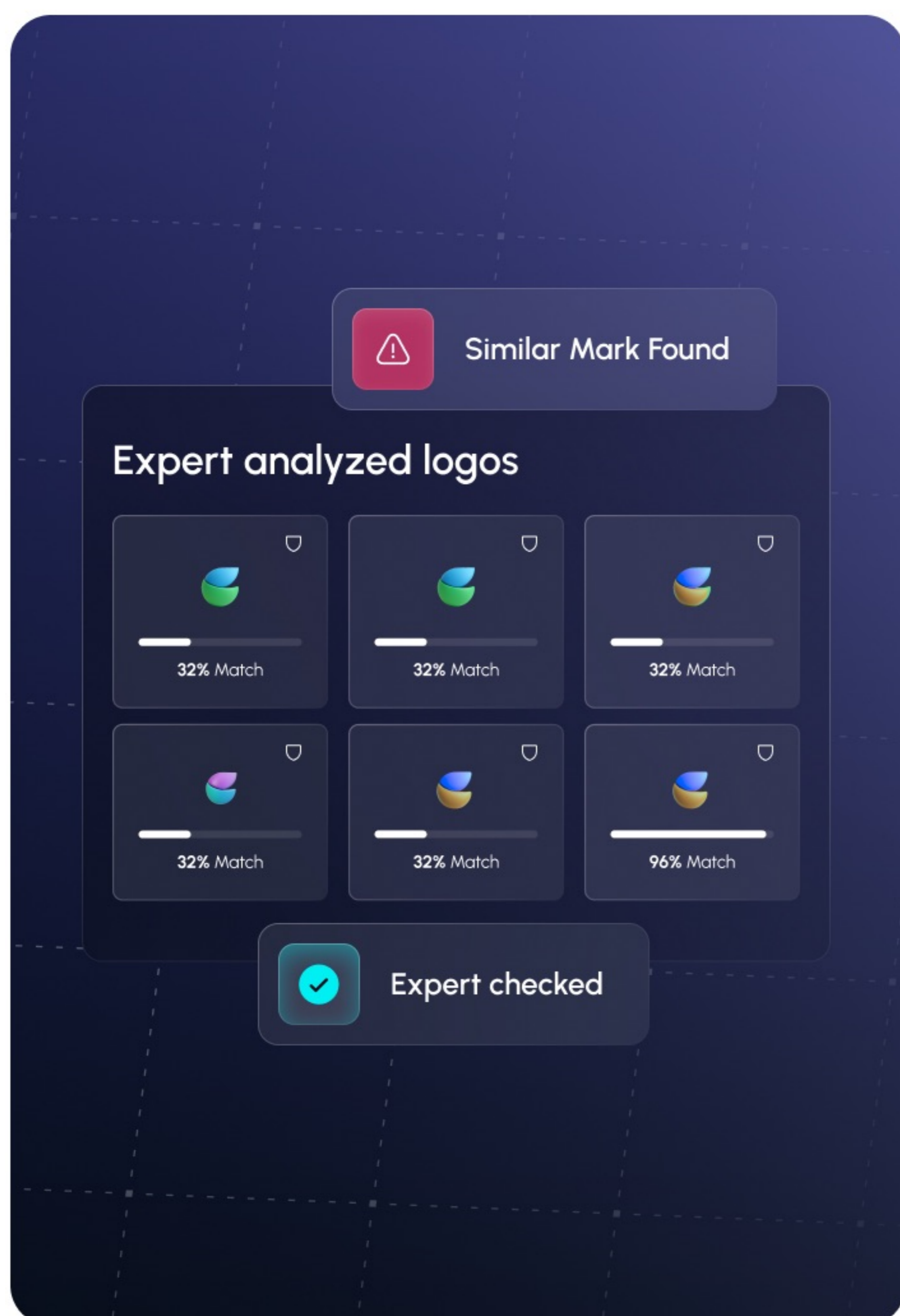
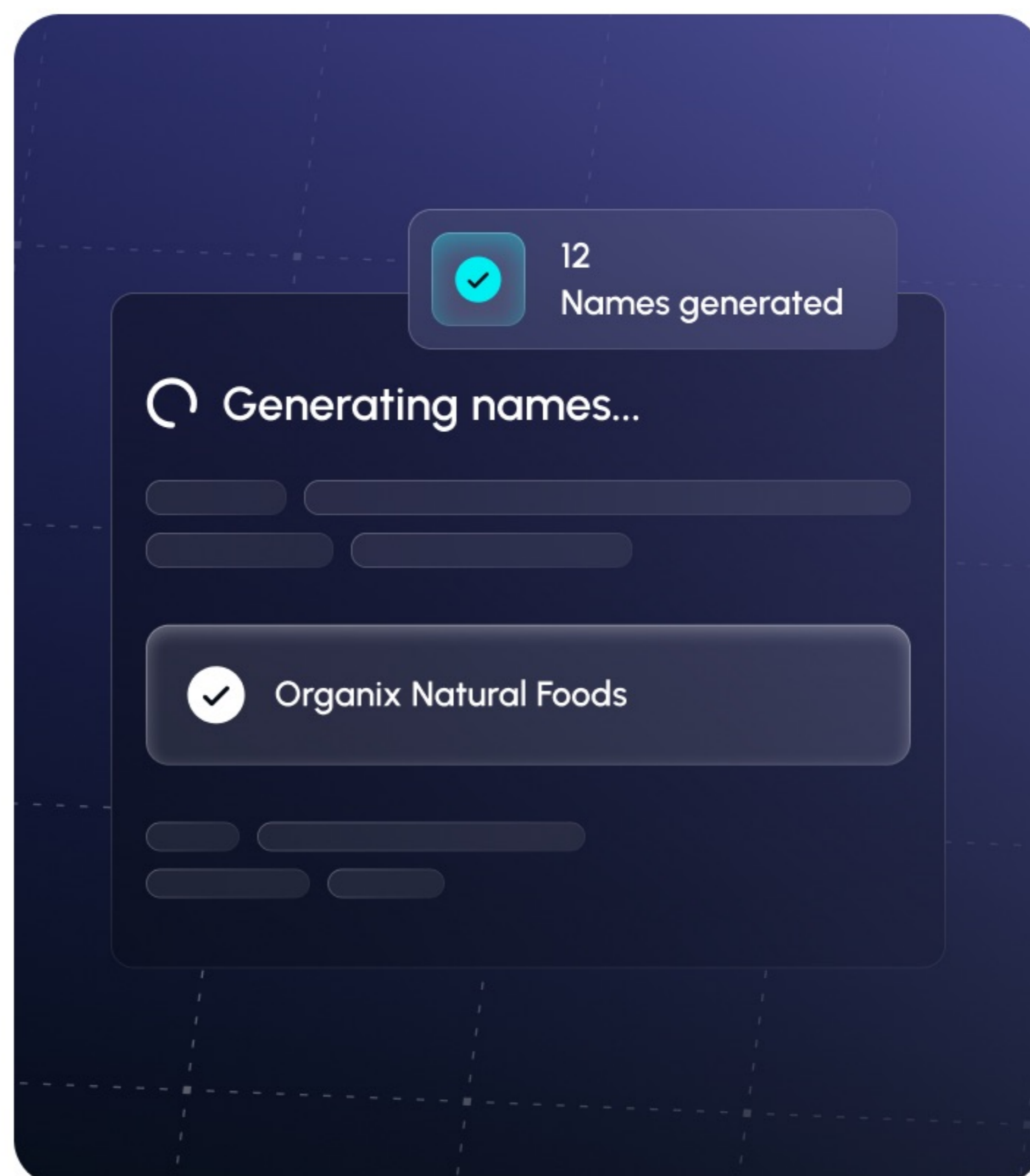


Consistent Concerns

A crowded naming landscape remains the biggest trend impacting trademark management across industries, followed by digital brand infringements. These were both increasing concerns in 2025, and they continue to be seen as risks. A sign of how competitive the trademark landscape has become.

It's therefore little surprise that our survey shows enforcement and dispute management (64%), and trademark clearance and search (59%) as the two trademarking activities where respondents spend most of their resources.

These consistent concerns show how trademark risk is shifting in various ways from a static to a dynamic issue. It's no longer just local concerns; global risks apply, with previously human-driven risks amplified by the expanding use and implementation of AI across industries.



Growing interest in trademark protection tools and tech investment

Trademark tech continues to generate interest in 2026, with 15% of survey respondents saying they plan to increase their investment in trademark protection tools or services over the next 12 months - an increase from 10% last year. Just over half are still unsure, while a third have no plans for investment, but that's down from 42% in 2025. This indicates investment in tech, automation, and AI for trademark management is slowly growing.

When it comes to AI and automation in trademark management specifically, more than half of respondents (51%) said they're exploring its potential use (up from 41% in 2025). Less than a quarter (23%) aren't using AI and automation at all, down from 27% the previous year, showing a slight increase in the prominence of AI in the sector.

Legal teams in law firms are most interested in adopting AI-driven monitoring and enforcement, with 37% of respondents saying they plan to do so in the next 12 months. Just over a fifth of law firms aim to adopt machine learning for portfolio management, while 18% are looking towards advanced visualization tools for legal strategies, and 13% are considering predictive analytics for infringement risks.

Enforcement challenges and strategic approaches

Human expertise remains essential to navigate global enforcement

Managing enforcement complexities across jurisdictions remains a key challenge for trademark protection, with more than half of all respondents (57%) citing it among their concerns.

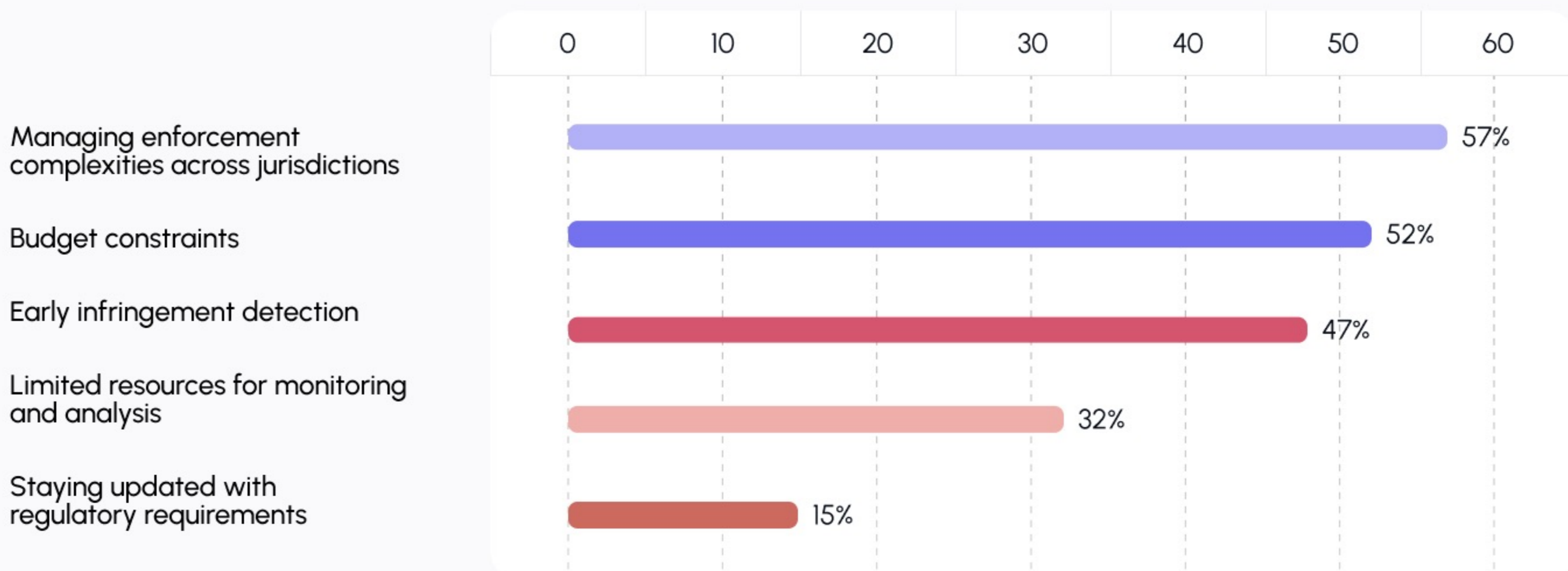
This challenge has seen a marked growth from 44% in 2025, as the impact of world events and global politics trickles down.

Despite the rising use of AI assistance and automation in search and detecting early infringements, jurisdictional expertise remains essential for navigating enforcement complexities. It, therefore, makes sense that the largest share of resources is being spent tackling enforcement and dispute management.

Budget constraints are another top challenge, with more than half of respondents (52%) saying they face this problem. Meanwhile, 47% cite early infringement detection as a significant challenge (falling from 56% in 2025), and there has been a marked increase in respondents struggling with limited monitoring resources, rising from 23% in 2025 to 32% this year.

Top Challenges in Trademark Protection

(Source: 2026 Trademark Survey)



Industry Breakdown

Pharmaceuticals

Pharma teams face the biggest challenge of managing enforcement complexities across jurisdictions (according to 72% of respondents in the industry).

Survey responses showed that pharma teams are most impacted by crowded naming landscapes, with 67% citing this as a key challenge. This has taken the top spot from regulatory changes.



Technology/Consumer Goods

Technology remains a potential hotspot for AI use, with more than half of respondents (55%) saying they're currently exploring the use of these tools.

This is driven by an appetite for faster infringement detection, with early detection among the top challenges in the sector (52%), alongside managing enforcement complexities across jurisdictions and budget constraints.

Other key benefits those in technology identify with AI-driven trademark solutions include improved decision-making with data insights, cost savings, and streamlined workflows.



Fashion & Beauty

Fashion brands see value in AI adoption for faster detection and streamlining workflows.

The fashion and beauty industry highlighted protection of brand identity as its top priority, with AI-generated infringement impacting more than two-thirds of survey respondents in the sector. They believe adopting automation to enable faster infringement detection is the main benefit of AI-driven trademark solutions.

However, all respondents in the fashion and beauty industry highlight budget constraints as one of their top challenges, so adopting automation for cost-cutting is also key.



Industry Breakdown

Legal

The legal sector is one of the most advanced for hybrid AI adoption, with 62% of respondents saying their current approach is a balanced mix of automation and human expertise, and a further 29% using some automation.

Their biggest challenges include crowded naming landscapes and international trademarks. Those working in the legal sector cite streamlined workflows (70%) and cost savings (66%) as the biggest benefits of AI in their operations, while their biggest fear is a lack of accuracy from the tools (78%).



Media and Entertainment

Legal teams in media and entertainment say their biggest trademark management focus is on enforcement and dispute management (86% of respondents), but AI still has to make a significant impact to the sector.

Media and entertainment shows slower growth in the use of AI, with 29% of respondents saying their approach is still fully manual and 43% primarily manual. Perceived concerns around AI-driven solutions include a lack of accuracy (86%) and difficulty integrating with their existing systems (29%).



Consumer Goods

Consumer goods is emerging as a hotspot sector for AI adoption, with 64% of respondents saying their current approach is made up of a balanced mix of automation and human expertise.

Respondents in this sector value AI's ability to enable streamlined workflows (60%) and its cost-saving potential (65%), along with the enabling of faster infringement detection (53%).



Corporate vs. law firm perspectives

Corporate legal teams and law firms face different priorities and workflows that shape their views on using AI, automation, and tools for trademark management. But the adoption gap between the two is closing.

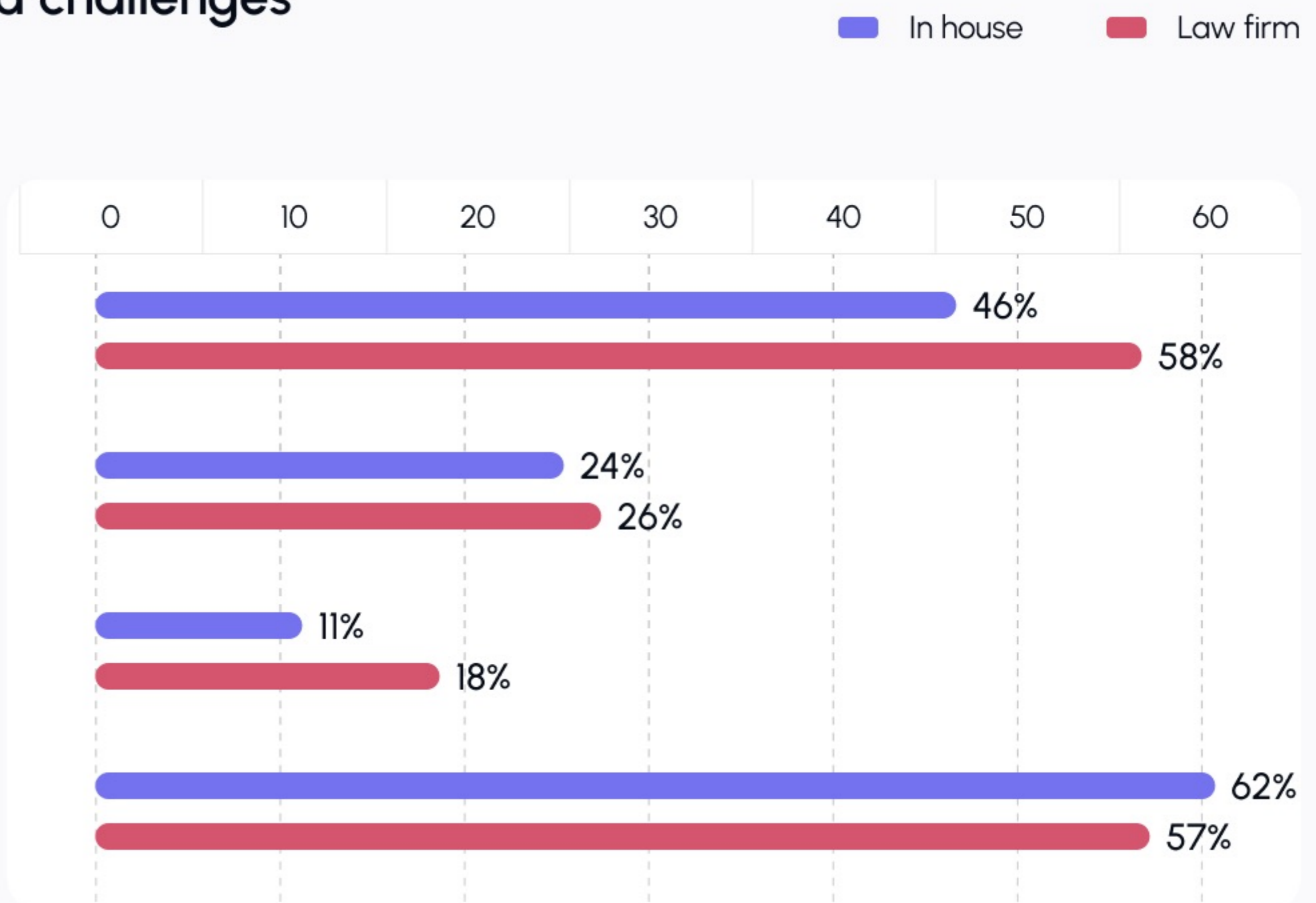
We surveyed an almost even split of respondents working in law firms (55%) and in-house (45%), enabling a clear comparison of their attitudes and implementation around AI and automation.

Both corporate teams and law firms spend most of their resources on trademark clearance, as well as enforcement and dispute management. As a result, managing enforcement complexities across jurisdictions is the top challenge for both, followed by budget constraints.

Both groups acknowledge cost savings and streamlined workflows as key benefits of AI-driven trademark solutions. However, their different goals, challenges, and ways of working lead to slight differences in AI adoption.

Operational goals and challenges

(Source: 2026 Trademark Survey)

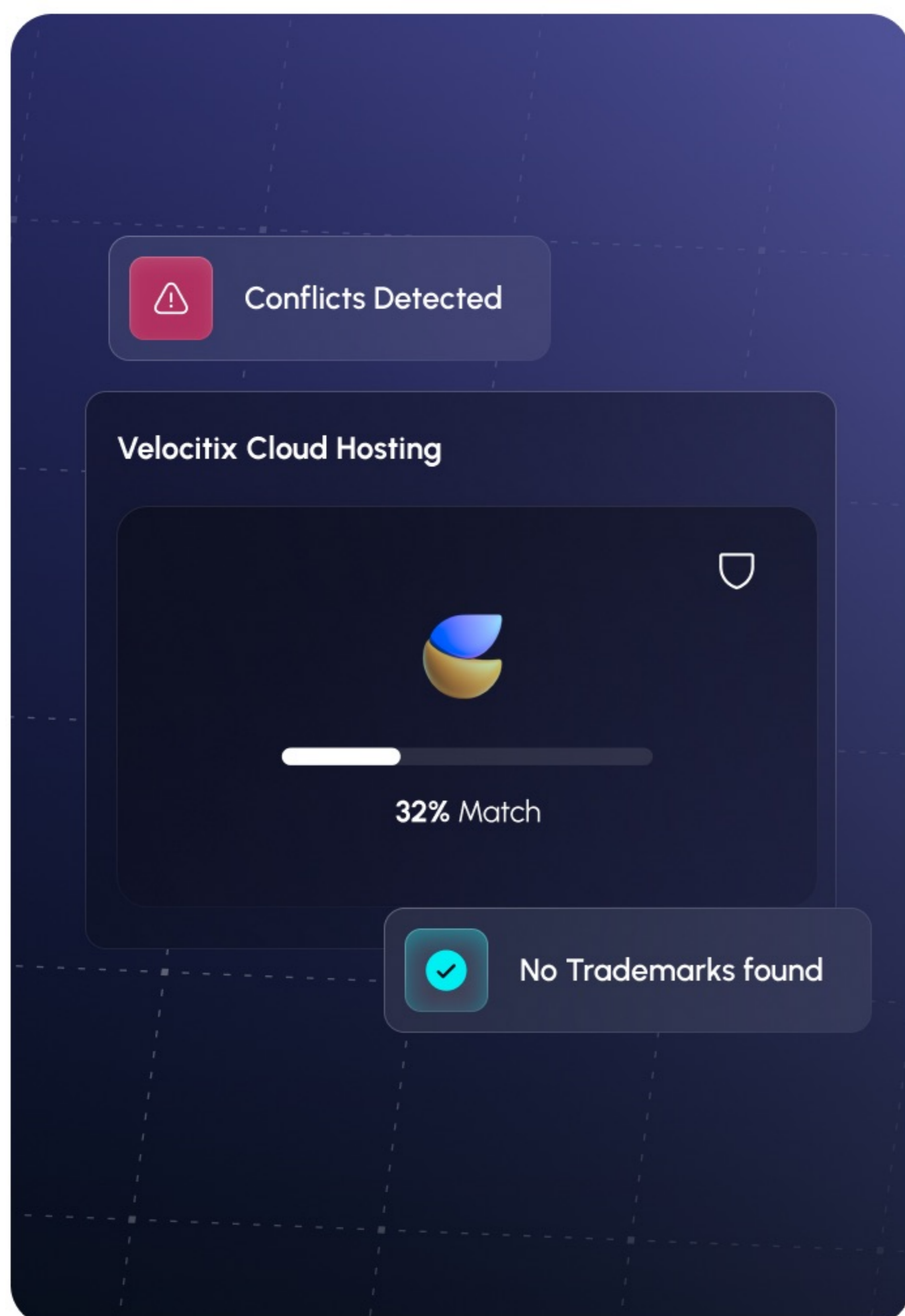
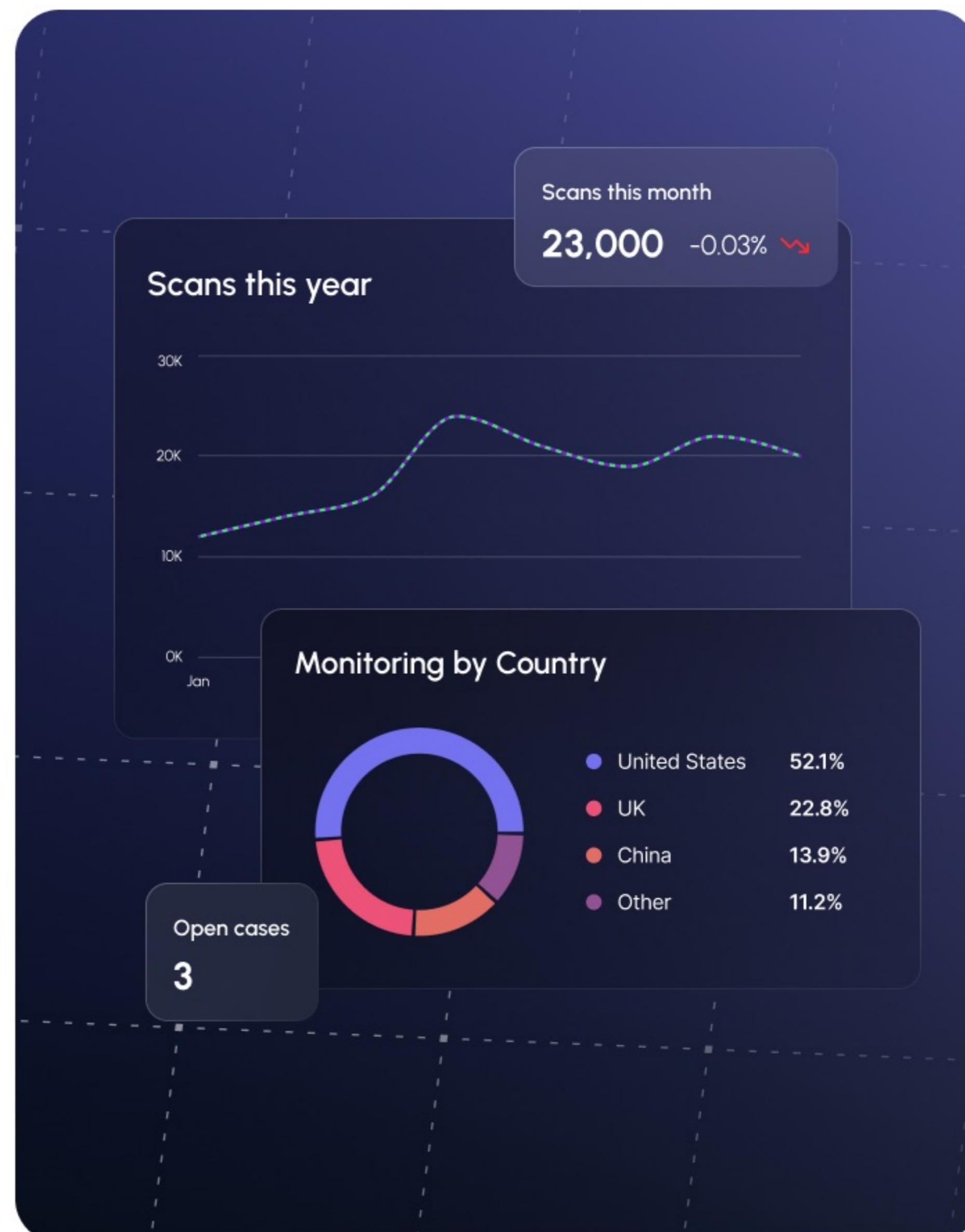


Corporate legal teams (in-house)

In-house teams are now far more likely to invest in trademark protection tools and services than a year ago. While 2025 saw just 5% of respondents saying they planned to do so in the coming 12 months, the appetite has climbed significantly in 2026, with 11% saying they plan to boost spending in this area.

Use of AI is growing in the corporate world, too, as 62% say their approach now comprises a balanced mix of automation and human expertise, up from 52% last year.

Skepticism remains around the adoption of AI-driven solutions, with 65% of respondents raising concerns about a lack of accuracy. Difficulty integrating AI with existing systems is also a greater worry in-house. However, 9% claim to have no concerns about AI adoption, indicating a rise in trust and a slow movement from experimentation to implementation within corporate teams.



Law firms

Law firms are quickly growing their understanding of the benefits of AI tools and expanding their use across a number of key activities as a result.

More than half of respondents from law firms (58%) said they are somewhat familiar with AI, a significant jump from just 38% a year ago. Additionally, 18% plan to increase investment in trademark protection tools or services over the next year, up from 14% the year before. Much of this is intended to be spent across AI-driven monitoring and enforcement, machine learning for portfolio management, and advanced visualization tools for legal strategies.

The active use of AI for processes in law firms continues to grow (up from 24% in 2025 to 26% this year), slightly ahead of in-house teams despite greater caution and integration concerns, costs, and budget constraints.

Some level of skepticism is present among those working in law firms, too. Only 2% say they have no concerns about adopting AI-driven solutions. Accuracy of AI and automation remains the main concern, but the cost of implementation is also more of a challenge for law firms than corporate respondents.

How Legal team Use AI today

There's lots of talk about how AI could change the future of trademarks. But the reality is that it's already here and having an impact on the industry. Our survey reveals where trademark professionals are adopting AI and automation within their daily workflows to improve processes.

Fewer than a quarter (23%) of respondents still aren't using or adopting AI, while just over a quarter already use it for some processes, and the other half are actively exploring its potential use in their operations. Among those who are experimenting, appetite is strong for using AI to support, rather than replace, manual tasks and work. Much of this desire aims to improve efficiencies so firms can shift their focus to higher-value strategic work.

Based on open-text responses and categorical data, here are the top five ways legal teams are using AI in 2026.



01

Trademark search & clearance

- Rapid knockout and clearance searching using AI-enabled platforms like [Corsearch](#) and [TrademarkNow](#).
- Search and clearance continue to emerge as the primary operational use cases for AI in trademark management.



02

Drafting correspondence

- AI is being used to assist with communications tasks, with firms increasingly writing emails, letters, agreements, and opposition drafts using tools like ChatGPT and internal LLMs.



03

Workflow support

- Automating processes like summarizing large amounts of data.
- Creating standard operating procedures and other internal tasks.



04

Exploration and early-stage experimentation

- Experimenting with the use of AI for the future.



05

Enforcement

- Enforcement tasks including infringement detection and image recognition and comparison.



06

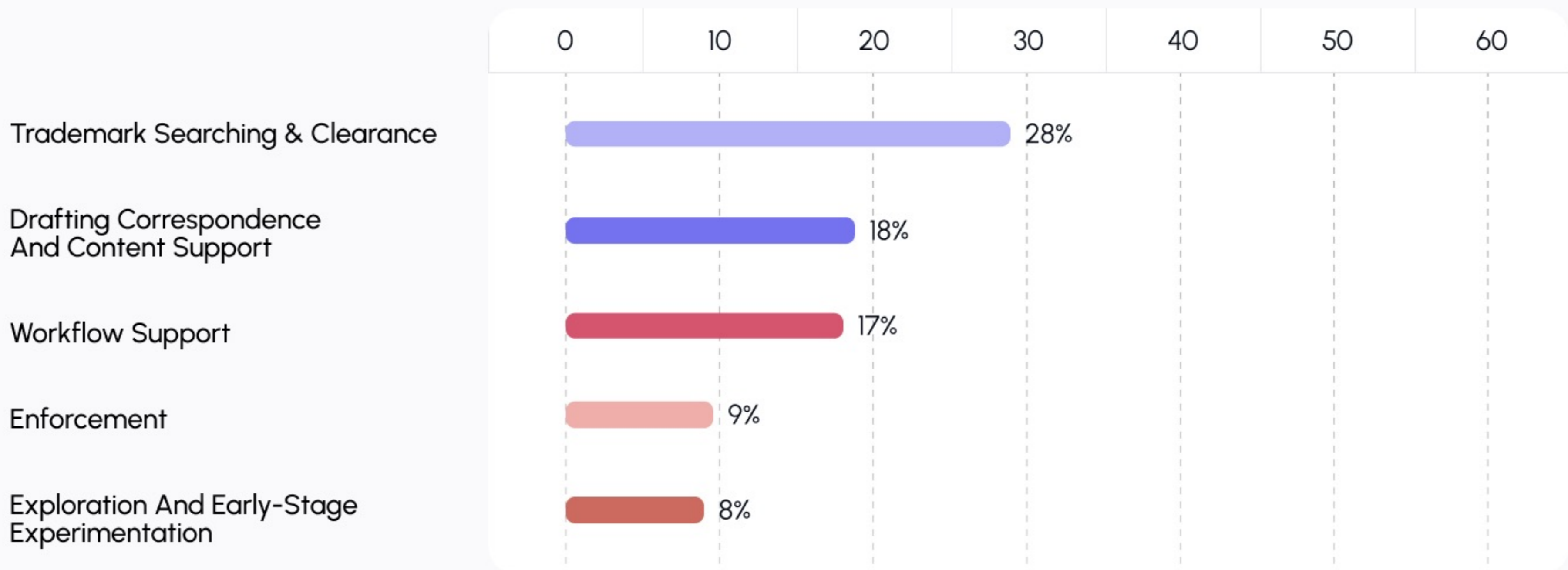
Additional use cases mentioned

- Translation — reduces the reliance on third-party translators.
- Understanding phrases.

Responses indicate that AI adoption is currently used for tactical purposes by legal teams, while strategic work, such as risk analysis, still requires human expertise.

Top 5 ways legal teams use AI

(Source: 2026 Trademark Survey)



"Assistance with all aspects of prosecution work, text enhancement, comparison of goods, translation, sparring re legal framework, understanding phrases, internet searches, common law rights, case law summary."



Scanning for Appearance Matches

Review Matches (32)

Analyzing Similar Trademarks

87% Match

ZOOM

- XOOM 70% Match
- XUME 55% Match
- XEWM 38% Match

Action

Scanning for Sound Matches

Review Matches (4)

Trademark maturity and future direction

AI adoption is growing in trademark management, but it's still largely in the exploratory stage and not yet mature.

Our 2026 survey shows a small shift towards greater AI adoption among organizations. Results indicate that 59% operate in a mixed model that balances automation with human expertise, 3% higher than in 2025. However, still very few are nearing full automation, with just 2% primarily automated, and only 2% fully automated.

Many firms remain passive adopters of AI, using it indirectly or as part of their use of other tools. Active adoption is accelerating, but hesitation and a lack of understanding mean integration isn't yet at a rapid pace.

Where AI Helps the Most



Streamlined workflows



Cost savings



Faster infringement detection

Yet there are still barriers to further adoption of AI due to its perceived lack of accuracy (71%), over-reliance on automation (52%), and implementation costs (42%).

What's next?

"The future of trademark management will be shaped by automation, AI, blockchain for security, global harmonization, data analytics, and enhanced enforcement. These advancements will streamline processes, improve protection, and adapt to new digital spaces like NFTs and virtual goods."

Our survey looked at where AI is headed next in trademark management. Responses included:



Increased integration of AI into early-stage monitoring for infringement detection.



AI-driven enforcement tools to provide support with manual tasks.



Greater comprehension - only 7% have an advanced understanding of AI.

Respondents are seeing greater potential for AI to become part of their workflow, with one saying they



"can see integration of most/if not all trademark offices data into docketing systems[.] can envision AI agents being able to create draft applications based on existing descriptions of goods and services, suggesting tailored versions based on clearance description."

Another added: "I imagine we will be using AI on a day to day basis to assist us in clearance, enforcement and portfolio management."



Efficiency and implementation opportunities

AI offers a raft of opportunities in trademark management. Some of the most popular include cost efficiency and improved integration with tools and services, with 59% and 44% citing these, respectively.

As 63% cite cost savings as a major benefit of AI-driven trademark solutions, a shift towards automation and AI adoption makes sense. Its ability to streamline workflows and improve decision-making assists in boosting efficiency and productivity.

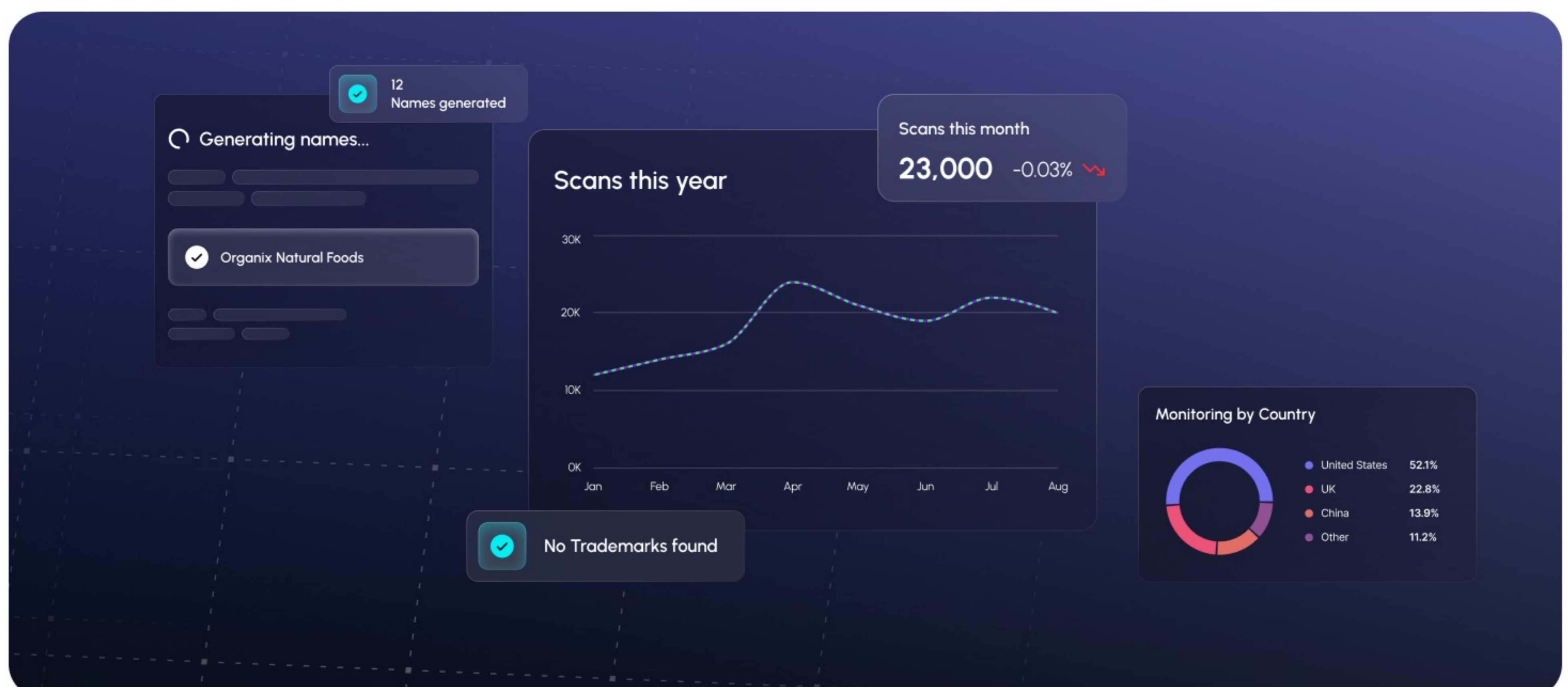
However, 42% have concerns about the cost of implementation, and 38% believe there's difficulty integrating AI with existing systems. One respondent brought this problem to life, saying:



I wish there was a way to have all the different programs we use for the different aspects of our business communicate better" while another highlighted the need for seamless systems that include "all in costs from outside vendors instead of a la carte pricing for each service offered."



These may explain some of the hesitancy around wider integration of AI.



Final takeaways: Ongoing integration of AI and human expertise

Legal teams want support through AI and automation adoption to streamline workflows and reduce the complexity and costs of trademark management.

They want the best of both worlds, where automation and human experts work together to deliver results. The hybrid model of technology and human collaboration remains the perceived best way forward - in both the current approach of legal teams and the ideal future operating model. One respondent reiterated the need for automation and humans to work together, saying: *"IT systems will only partly [replace] humans and always require supervision with regard to accuracy."*

Curiosity is the driving force behind AI interest and adoption, rather than capability or confidence in how to use it effectively. Just over half of respondents are somewhat familiar with, but not confident in, the application of AI, so the future of trademark management looks toward greater understanding before integration.

Experimentation to implementation

Our survey shows that the trademark industry is still in the early adoption and experimentation stage. There are clear common use cases of AI for trademark search and clearance, drafting correspondence, and monitoring support. Yet adoption is fragmented industry-wide, with a clear split between those actively experimenting and non-users who are completely disengaged.

Common use cases show AI is slowly being embraced as a productivity assistant to enhance the efficiency of individual tasks. But it's not yet completely transforming full workflows or the trademark industry. This fits in well with the hybrid model that's most desired and used across the sector.

AI adoption concerns and barriers

A lack of accuracy is the primary concern about adopting AI-driven solutions for trademark management for 71% of respondents. But that's fallen from 76% in 2025, perhaps indicating a growing level of trust for automation. More than half are also worried that its introduction will lead to an over-reliance on automation, which could remove or limit essential human oversight and expertise.

Budget constraints are a common challenge, so it makes sense that the cost of implementation is also a concern for 42% of respondents (despite 63% associating AI-driven trademark solutions with cost savings).

Only 5% of respondents say they have no concerns over AI adoption. A lack of trust and reliability remains the biggest barrier to the wider implementation of AI across trademark management.

Cautious approach to hybrid adoption

Despite the perceived benefits, there remains hesitation over investment and increased adoption of AI, signaling market uncertainty. As the technology continues to grow, 15% of respondents are planning to increase investment in trademark protection tools or services in the next 12 months, while 33% have no plans to boost investment. This suggests some appetite for AI among the majority of respondents.

There are several reasons respondents are hesitant over the adoption of AI, with one saying:

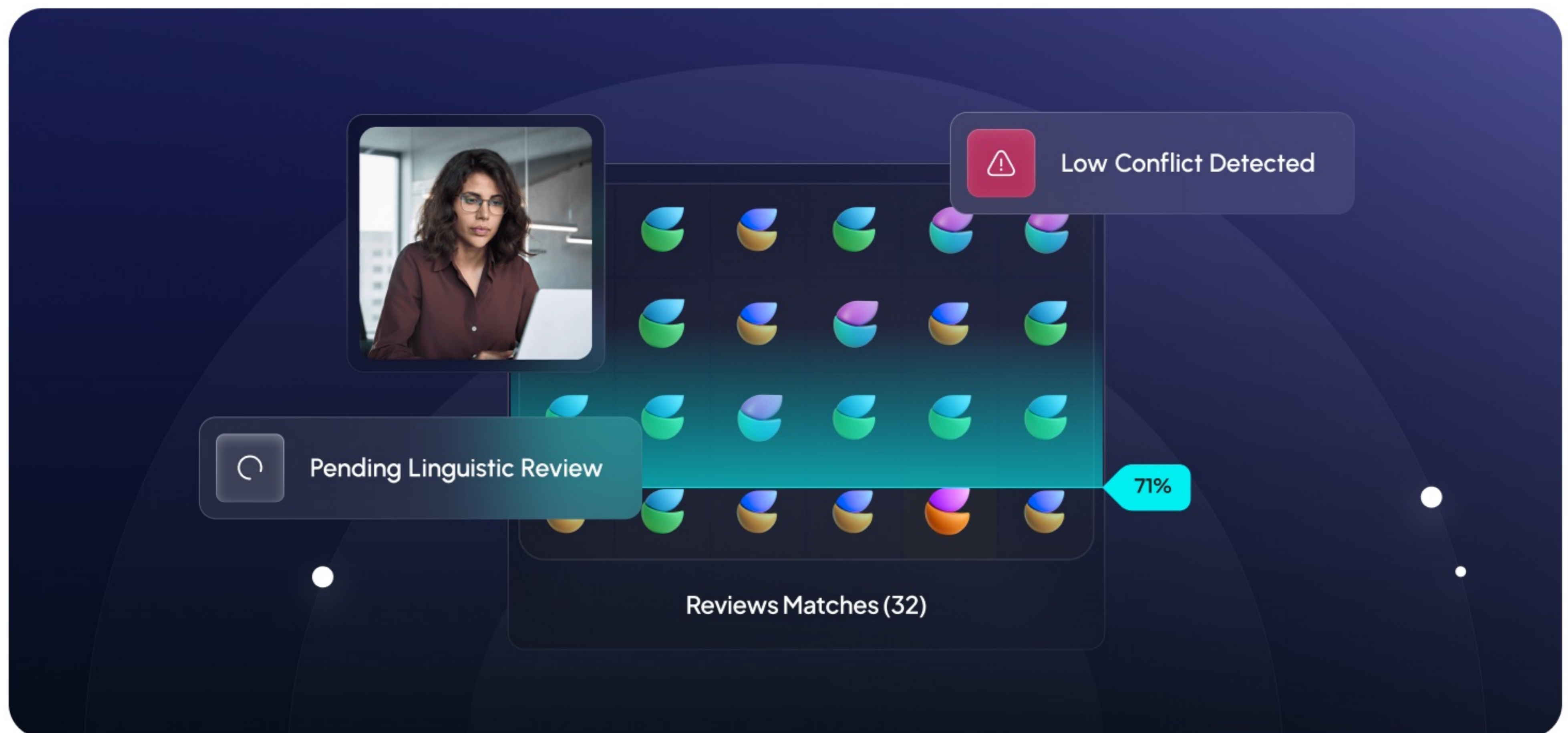


I fear that it will become so fully automated that the human nuance will get lost,



highlighting the need for a balanced approach.

There remains clear caution within the industry around over-reliance on AI and worries about its accuracy, coupled with an awareness of its benefits to improve efficiency and save costs. When weighing up potential benefits and concerns of AI, it's clear that in the modern world of trademark management, balance is key. At Corsearch, we've shaped our services around that principle, supporting expertise rather than replacing it.



Case study spotlight: Linklaters AI expansion

Legal firms continue to expand their AI offering to support a collaborative approach between automation and human expertise. This evolution is highlighted by organizations like Linklaters, which, in 2025, announced the implementation of Legora, a specialist AI tool for the legal profession, across its 30 offices.

By giving teams access to this leading generative AI platform, Linklaters aims to simplify and streamline a variety of tasks, such as searches, research, and document drafting, as well as supporting the strategic advice its teams give to clients across the globe.

This move is not the first time Linklaters has dived into the world of AI, but rather a further step towards a hybrid future. In 2023, the company made headlines when it launched its in-house chatbot, Laila, using Microsoft Azure OpenAI. By 2024, the tool, designed to help teams with summarizing documents and drafting while being a safer option than public platforms, was reported to be handling 60,000 prompts per week.

Preparing for the next chapter

Our survey results are clear; the future of trademark management is collaboration. As AI grows in prominence, it will work alongside legal teams' human expertise to tackle common and consistent challenges. Success will come from effectively integrating AI and tools into existing processes to support rather than replace human oversight.

Trademark protection and law continue to become more global and data-driven with expanding demands. Efficiently harnessing the power of AI and automation with existing expertise can help legal firms and in-house teams navigate the changing environment.

Adoption and uptake are slowly moving forward, but experimenting more and implementing more automated systems and tools could help trademark practitioners get ahead.

AI may still be at a relatively early stage, but it's clear the appetite for it is growing. While some concerns remain, there's a growing belief that supporting human expertise with AI efficiency is the future of the industry, with many benefits on the horizon for those who embrace that new age of collaboration.

Moving AI adoption forward means

- Investing in experimentation around AI and automation
- Automating processes while relying on human expertise and decision making
- Finding platforms that integrate into existing workflows rather than creating new ones
- Building trust and gaining buy-in for AI tools that make a difference

How Corsearch can help you

Operating in a rapidly expanding trademark landscape and utilizing an ever-growing tech stack, in-house legal teams and law firms need a partner they can trust to simplify and enhance their workflows.

Corsearch blends cutting-edge AI with human expertise to offer unparalleled support to IP professionals at every stage of the trademark lifecycle.

Our trademark solutions are powered by Corsearch TrademarkNow. This next-generation platform offers the most reliable and mature AI-powered capabilities in the market, trusted by IP professionals for over a decade.

Talk to one of our experts to learn how Corsearch helps you

[Talk to an Expert](#)

Our Solutions



Screen a Trademark

Powerful AI solutions and expert analysts enable you to generate potential names and screen at scale.

[Explore](#)



Clear a Trademark

Full clearance tools provide a complete check on the viability of your new brand in preparation for registration.

[Explore](#)



Watch a Trademark

Bulk and expert-supported watches make it easier than ever to protect marks from infringing and confusingly similar registrations.

[Explore](#)

Our AI first, expert always approach

We believe in the power of hybrid intelligence.

While our AI learns from our expert trademark teams, we understand the irreplaceable role of IP professionals. Together, we delve into trends and risks, with AI augmenting our collaboration by spotlighting pivotal insights and actions.

With threats and opportunities in a constant state of flux, ongoing learning is paramount. That's why we've invested in an in-house team of AI experts, ensuring our solutions adapt and evolve. This proactive approach anticipates future challenges before they impact your business.