U.S. and Canada converge on control as agentic AI scales

U.S. and Canadian enterprises exhibit a growing appetite for agentic AI, but differences in governance, sourcing, and operational priorities shape how they scale.



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Agentic AI has become deeply embedded across North American enterprises. That's according to a new study by OutSystems and KPMG, based on responses from 858 executives globally, including 410 in the U.S. and Canada. Across the region, 76% were using agentic AI in risk, compliance, and security operations; 68% in customer service; and 64% in finance and accounting.

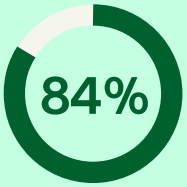
North American markets diverge on adoption, reliability, and scale

Where North American companies stood out most compared with their counterparts in Europe and Asia was in centralization, especially as costs rose amid a broader shift toward more complex reasoning models. Forty-five percent of respondents said they expected rising AI costs to drive centralized purchasing and strategy, substantially higher than the 31% in Europe or the 28% in Asia-Pacific.

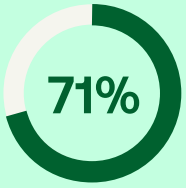
Beneath that regional snapshot, the U.S. and Canada differed more notably in where agentic AI was being applied. For instance, 84% of Canadian respondents said they were using agentic AI in risk, compliance and security operations, compared with 71% in the U.S. The difference was also evident in the outcomes executives reported: 64% of Canadian companies said agents had helped accelerate or enhance these workflows, compared with 55% in the U.S.

However, that greater effect didn't appear to translate into greater concern about agent reliability. Just 32% of Canadian respondents cited reliability and unexpected agent behavior as a scaling challenge, compared with 46% in the U.S. That difference appeared to reflect greater confidence among Canadian enterprises, rather than an obvious gap in maturity: 22% of Canadian respondents described themselves as "very well prepared" to detect and resolve agent conflicts, compared with 15% in the U.S.

Respondents reported using agentic AI in risk, compliance and security operations:



in Canada



in the U.S.

Governance and business value emerge as the next priorities

Both countries were closely aligned on what controls were needed to scale agentic AI safely. Eighty-three percent of U.S. respondents and 79% of Canadian respondents rated the consistent application of security, compliance, and governance policies as “very” or “extremely” important, while 81% and 74% respectively said the same about testing and validating agent behavior. Despite that, fully operationalized control remained uncommon, with just 2% of North American respondents, and 3% of Europe-based respondents, reporting having automated controls, audit trails and human review points, compared with 14% in Asia.

Ultimately, stronger operational control is exactly what makes it easier to demonstrate where agentic AI delivers real business value. In this respect, Canadian companies were more revenue-focused, with 52% using revenue growth to measure the effect of agentic AI, compared with 38% in the U.S. However, both heavily tracked error reduction (60% each), while about half tracked customer satisfaction to measure the effect.

Across North America, it’s clear that the next phase of agentic AI transformation will be less about adoption for its own sake and more about proving value under stronger operational control.

Respondents reported having automated controls, audit trails and human review points in place:

2%
in North America

3%
in Europe

14%
in Asia

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