Steering the AI Revolution

The Future of
Human+AI Leadership

GPStrategies®

Steering the AI Revolution

The Future of Human+AI Leadership

Generative AI's remarkable ability to accelerate tasks and enhance efficiency has captured widespread attention, but it is the technology's knack for handling complex problems and its application to a wide range of scenarios that are repositioning AI from a mere tool to a truly transformational force. The big question is: **how can businesses harness the transformative power of AI while leveraging the talents of their team?**

Employees are excited and curious about AI, so it is the right moment to be asking this question. Organizations and leaders can take advantage of this organic enthusiasm, but only if they can demonstrate that they know how to steer effective AI initiatives.

To uncover employees' perceptions of AI and the role of leadership in AI implementation, we surveyed over 500 individual contributors and leaders from across the globe. The goal of this research was to gauge readiness for the implementation of generative AI strategies. Our main discoveries are:

Having and communicating a comprehensive AI strategy is critical to navigating this new technological terrain.

AI brings constant uncertainty and change, and leaders and individual contributors alike are finding it difficult to get their footing.

Leaders can capture the hearts and minds of AI skeptics and enthusiasts alike if they deploy the right leadership strategies and stay connected to their teams.

The road ahead may be unclear, but now is the time for leaders to move forward boldly—and bring their teams along—into the human+AI world.

Contents

# AI Is Transforming the World, and People Are Embracing It

The integration of AI is no longer a distant, futuristic concept—it's here. And it is ubiquitous. Many individuals are likely already using some embedded aspect of AI in the tech tools they use in their personal lives, even if they haven't adopted it in their professional lives.

The rapid rise of generative AI (AI that can produce various types of content based on algorithms and patterns) has brought this technology into sharper focus. The explosion of ChatGPT and similar platforms has revealed its remarkable ability to perform complex tasks with incredible speed.

For many, this has led to a profound realization: AI is and will continue to transform the nature of work as we know it. If that sounds like hyperbole—it's not. **66% of individual contributors and 72% of leaders say AI will dramatically or significantly change their organizations.**

While the technology may still feel mysterious to some, it's increasingly being demystified as more employees adopt it in their daily tasks and organizations incorporate it into broader workflows. In fact, **88% of employees are embracing AI at work—not just dabbling in it for personal benefit but incorporating it into their day-to-day.**

Individual Contributors and Leaders Are Using AI in Day-to-Day Work
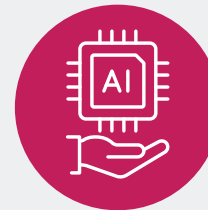
88% of employees are **accepting or embracing AI at work.**
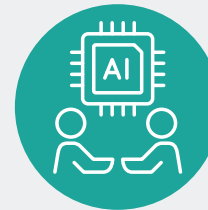
66% of individual contributors and **72%** of leaders say **AI will dramatically or significantly change their organizations.**

Leading Applications of AI in L&D and the Workplace

The potential of AI to enhance work lives is significant, with nearly all respondents, both individual contributors and leaders, recognizing its capacity to boost productivity and efficiency.

Many of our respondents are using AI to **automate repetitive tasks,** allowing them to focus on more complex responsibilities. Smart application of AI not only streamlines workflows but also supports the **creation of content,** whether in writing or through video production, providing a valuable starting point for new projects. As a result, individuals can dedicate more time to refining and perfecting their final outputs.

Respondents to our survey also highlight AI's ability to **deliver data-driven insights and personalized learning experiences.** From handling basic inquiries to performing complex data analyses in mere moments, AI's support in decision-making is becoming increasingly evident. These tools offer a range of perspectives, validate work, and pinpoint potential flaws, enhancing overall quality.
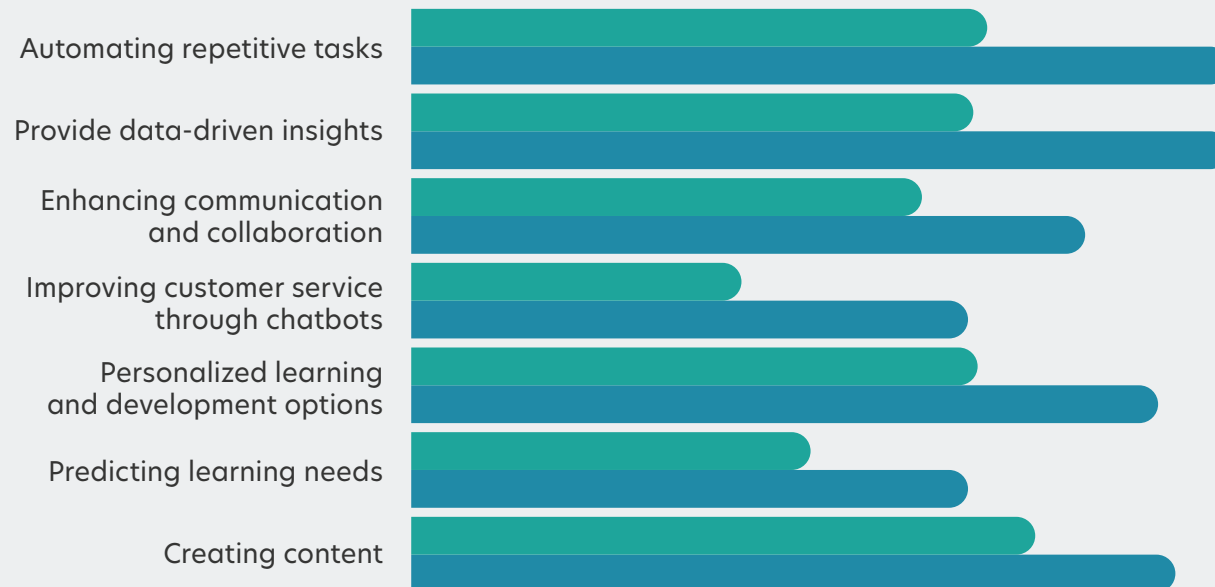
AI's capacity to provide **tailored learning paths** reflects its adaptability, as it learns from each interaction to create personalized experiences suited to individuals' specific needs. This evolution underscores AI's role as a vital partner in fostering productivity and continuous learning in the workplace.

Both individual contributors and leaders were less positive about AI's role in **enhancing customer service through chatbots,** although leaders were more positive about this potential than others. Perhaps this reflects personal experiences with the technology or an acknowledgment that customer service can be a more complicated, human-centered effort.

While AI can analyze customer data and deliver personalized experiences, complex requests require the emotional intelligence that humans offer. When challenges arise, genuine empathy and understanding can transform difficult conversations. While AI can improve customer experience, true customer loyalty hinges on strong relationships fostered by individuals who recognize their value.

How can AI be leveraged to enhance productivity and efficiency?

● Individual Contributors
● Leaders

Automating repetitive tasks
Provide data-driven insights
Enhancing communication and collaboration
Improving customer service through chatbots
Personalized learning and development options
Predicting learning needs
Creating content

KEY TAKEAWAY
A significant portion of individual contributors and leaders are using AI and are excited about its ability to transform the workplace dramatically. The most common uses of AI include automating tasks, providing data driven insights, personalizing learning and development needs, and creating content.

Excitement and Ethical Concerns Are Both on the Rise

Using technology and truly embracing it are two distinct concepts, and our survey respondents are increasingly shifting toward the **embrace** side of the spectrum. This growing enthusiasm indicates a readiness to not just utilize technology but to fully integrate it into their work and culture.
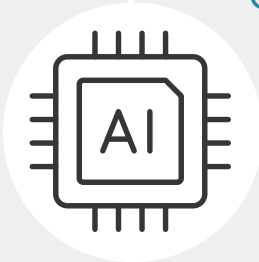
General sentiments toward AI were favorable, with employees and leaders alike suggesting an increasing optimism and openness to viewing AI in a positive light. **Over 80% of employees and leaders agree that AI will positively transform the workforce.** Each day, AI is emerging as a powerful tool designed to be harnessed by humans to enhance our capabilities and improve the way we work.

Exciting, potential, curious, and **interesting** were the words most frequently chosen to express how individuals feel about AI. Leaders also noted excitement around AI but emphasized **efficiency** and **time savings** alongside the other attributes. Employees and leaders are excited about the payoffs and possibilities of AI.
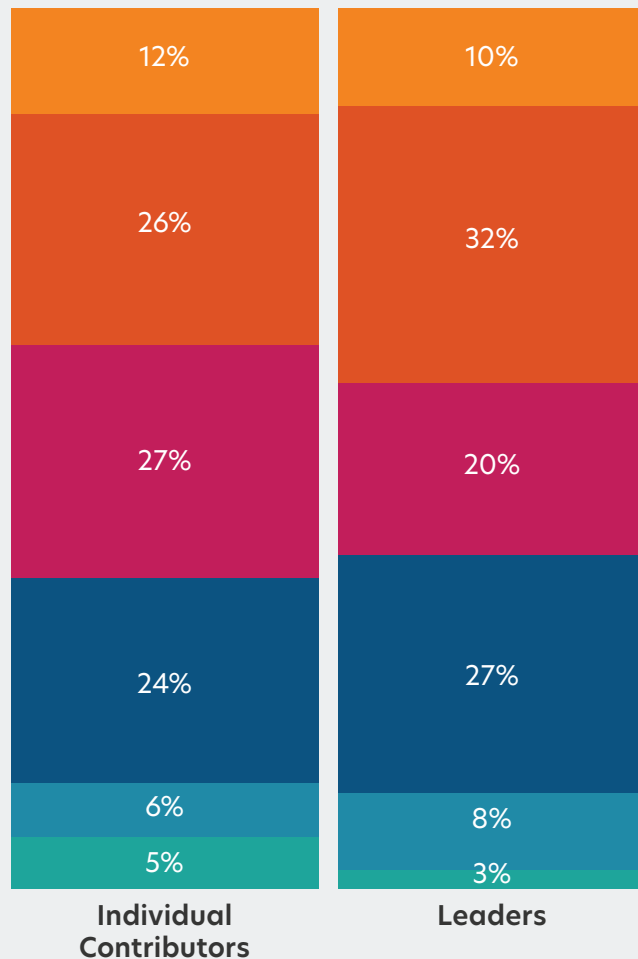
Over **80%** of employees and leaders agree that AI will positively transform the workforce.

What is one word or phrase that describes your feelings about AI in the workplace?

Individual Contributors	Leaders
Good Curiosity Future	Amazing Save Time Work
Growing Tool Opportunity	Thrilled Need Curious
Revolutionary Intrigued	Intrigued Revolutionary
New Potential Unsure	Opportunity Time
Curious Cautious	Exciting Efficient
Exciting Easy	Efficiency
Interesting	Valuable Potential
Useful Helpful Support	Uncertain Interesting
Great Excitement Work	Productivity Innovative
Amazing Possibilities	Inevitable
Improve	

Are you fearful about AI-related job loss?

Legend:
- Unsure
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Individual Contributors
- 12% (Strongly Agree)
- 26% (Agree)
- 27% (Neutral)
- 24% (Disagree)
- 6% (Strongly Disagree)
- 5% (Unsure)

Leaders
- 10% (Strongly Agree)
- 32% (Agree)
- 20% (Neutral)
- 27% (Disagree)
- 8% (Strongly Disagree)
- 3% (Unsure)
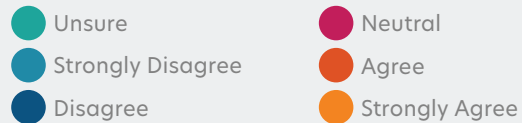
Despite growing excitement, AI anxiety is far from eliminated. Big-picture concerns about the ethical considerations of AI and its impact on jobs still exist. However, a shift toward a more positive yet cautious mindset is emerging. Whether due to increased comfort or competing distractions, only 10% of individual contributors report feeling daily anxiety about AI. Leaders report similarly low levels of anxiety.

The fact that individual contributors and leaders aren't worried about AI on a daily basis is a good sign that AI anxiety is not getting in the way of productivity and positivity. However, as we drilled down into the data, several concerns emerged.

While expressing optimism for AI's ability to positively transform work, some employees and leaders also expressed worry regarding job security. 38% of employees and 42% of leaders strongly agree or agree it will lead to job obsolescence—27% of employees and 20% of leaders are neutral on this point.

Leaders in many organizations have broader and earlier access to AI tools and are more informed about the organization's AI plans. This greater knowledge may account for their lower levels of anxiety and higher confidence about potential job impacts due to AI as employees don't have the same level of access to information.
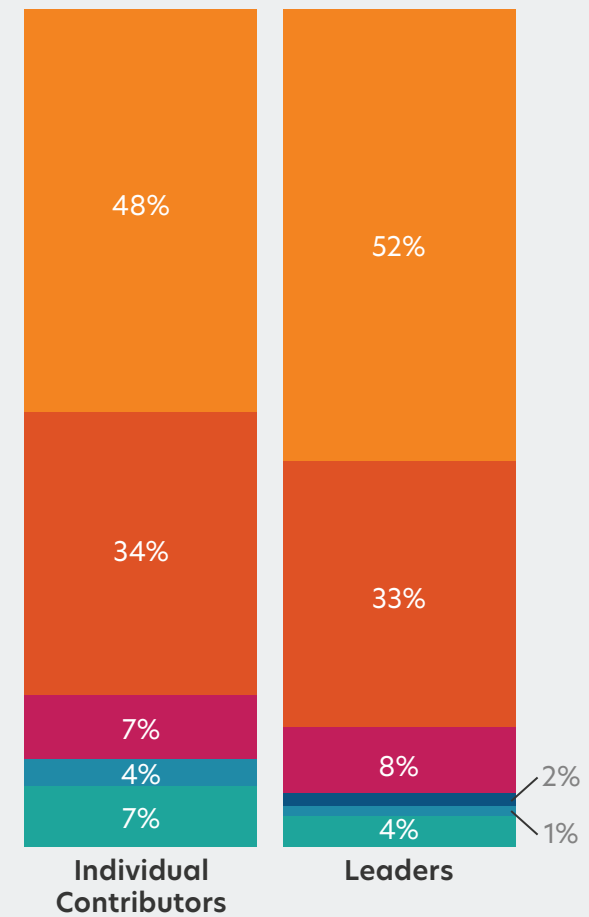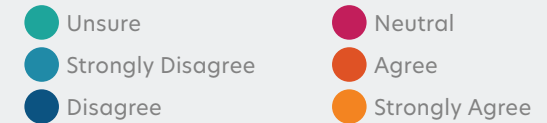
This advantage can create division within the organization if it's not managed properly. To maintain a strong AI strategy, it's important for organizations to ensure equity and transparency around who has access to AI tools and information. Care and consideration need to be given to those who have access to prevent disparities, foster a collaborative environment, and keep enthusiasm going.

Ethical AI Use Concerns

There is no doubt that AI will introduce new ethical challenges—a point on which both individual contributors and leaders agree. Leaders we've spoken with recognize the role they play in managing these risks, but—as is the case with much of AI—they aren't entirely sure how to do that. While organizational governance can provide guardrails, it is up to leaders to implement policies and model good behavior. Even still, when it comes to AI ethics, what good looks like is murky.

Excitement and Ethical Concerns Are Both on the Rise

Will AI introduce new ethical challenges?

Legend:
- Unsure
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Individual Contributors
- Strongly Agree: 48%
- Agree: 34%
- Neutral: 7%
- Disagree: 4%
- Unsure: 7%

Leaders
- Strongly Agree: 52%
- Agree: 33%
- Neutral: 8%
- Strongly Disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 1%
- Unsure: 4%

Concerns About Ethical Implications

● Individual Contributors
● Leaders

Potential for misuse/abuse

Privacy and data security

Bias and fairness in AI algorithms

Accountability and responsibility of AI decisions

Human toll (psychological impact on people)

Lack of transparency in decision-making
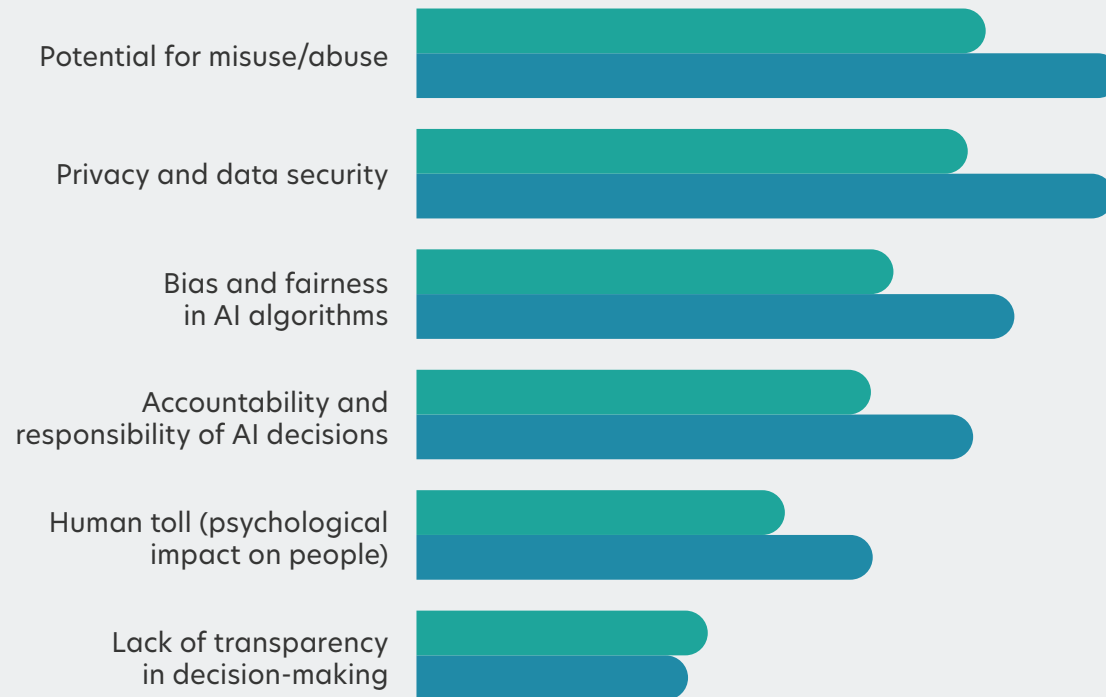
The individual contributors we surveyed share their leaders' concerns about the potential misuse or abuse of AI. Employees also have concerns about privacy and data security, bias and fairness in AI algorithms, and accountability and responsibility for AI decisions. Of less concern, but still present, are the worries about the psychological impact of AI and the lack of transparency in AI-related decision-making.

This tension between excitement for innovation and ongoing concerns underscores the need for organizations to prioritize transparent communication and ethical frameworks as they implement AI in the workplace. Individual contributors and leaders understand the incredible power of AI and its potential for any number of ethical challenges. Awareness is the first step for mitigating and guarding against bias issues.

KEY TAKEAWAY
In terms of AI, excitement and concerns coexist. Individual contributors understand AI's ethical implications, making it essential for leaders to acknowledge their concerns while empowering them to embrace AI.

The Confidence Gap: The Perception of Leaders' Ability to Steer AI Initiatives

Readiness At The Top

AI has become a strategic priority for many organizations, with leaders at the highest levels acknowledging its powerful role in reshaping industries. Despite this surge of attention, many employees lack confidence in their **senior** leadership's understanding of AI. **Less than half (41%) feel that the senior leadership team is very or somewhat ready to successfully lead AI initiatives** at their organization. In comparison, **38% believe they are not ready** (or somewhat not ready), and **22% remain uncertain.**

Leadership Team Readiness to Lead Successful AI Initiatives

41% of individual contributors
AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE

42% of leaders
AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE

Leadership Team Readiness to Guide AI Transformation Ahead of the Competition

21% of individual contributors
AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE

20% of leaders
AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE

This lack of confidence becomes even more pronounced when employees are asked whether they believe their leadership can effectively guide the organization in leveraging AI to **stay ahead of competitors.** Only 21% agree with this sentiment, while 33% disagree, and 46% are unsure. Leaders themselves indicate a similar lack of confidence on both dimensions. At the top, there is work to do.

Uncertainty around AI is inevitable. Although foundational AI tools have gained widespread adoption, many organizations are still working to determine which AI investments will deliver smart, sustainable results. The rapid pace of AI development adds complexity to strategy formation and creates challenges in understanding competitors' approaches.

Additionally, there's often a disconnect in communicating AI strategies within organizations. While leaders may put significant effort into their AI plans, employees do not fully understand them if communication isn't effective. Our research found that even leaders close to senior teams questioned the confidence of those above them in driving successful AI initiatives. This either indicates uncertainty about leadership readiness or simply reflects the broader ambiguity surrounding what successful AI implementation really looks like.

Despite the promise of a tech-enabled future, the path forward remains unclear, and both employees and mid-level leaders are looking to their senior leaders for guidance and confidence on this transformative journey.
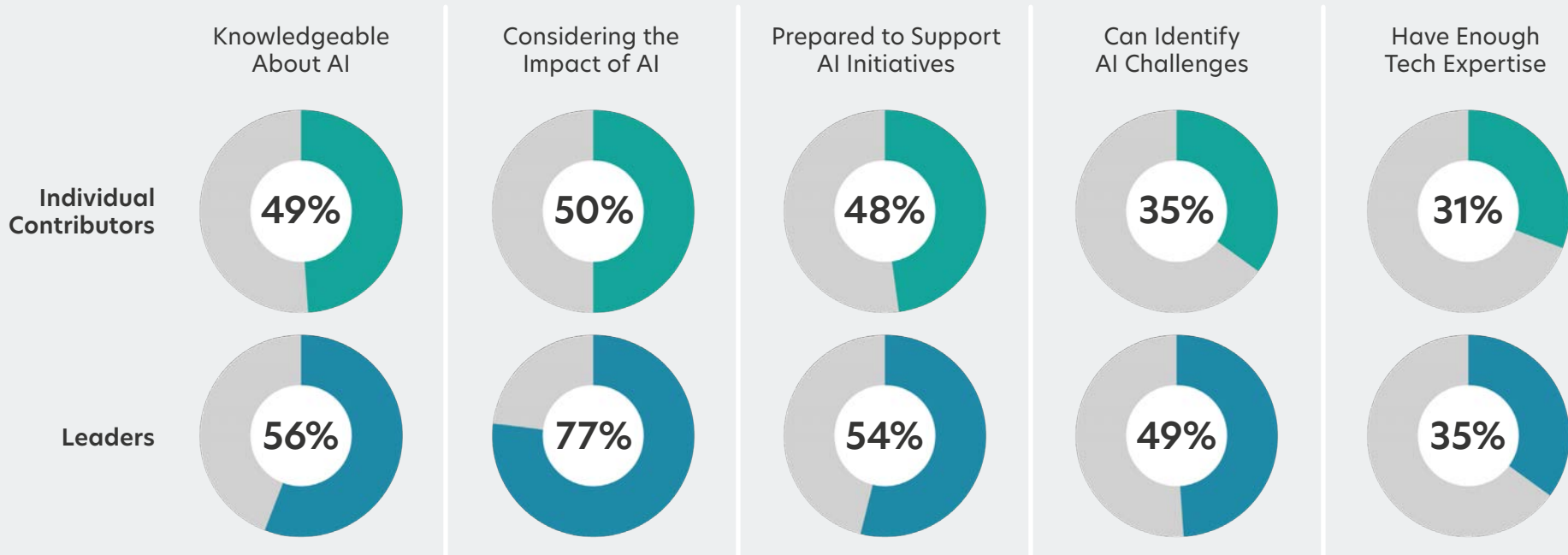
The Challenge for Leaders

While there is work to do in gaining confidence around AI strategy, senior-level leaders are making plans to support widespread AI implementation. But the truth is that the responsibility for implementing those plans rests on the shoulders of frontline leaders and leaders-of-leaders. In fact, 76% of employees and **83%** of leaders believe that **effective leadership is crucial** for successfully implementing AI initiatives. However, only a part of both groups feel their direct leaders are prepared to take on this responsibility. While just over half (54%) of leaders report feeling ready **to support AI initiatives,** less than half (48%) of employees feel the same way about their leaders.

While it's encouraging to see that many recognize the importance of strong leadership in driving AI initiatives, the low confidence levels among both leaders and employees highlight that significant work is needed to address the AI confidence gap.

Confidence in Direct Leaders' AI Readiness

	Knowledgeable About AI	Considering the Impact of AI	Prepared to Support AI Initiatives	Can Identify AI Challenges	Have Enough Tech Expertise
Individual Contributors	49%	50%	48%	35%	31%
Leaders	56%	77%	54%	49%	35%

76% of individual contributors and **83%** of leaders AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE that leaders are important to AI success.
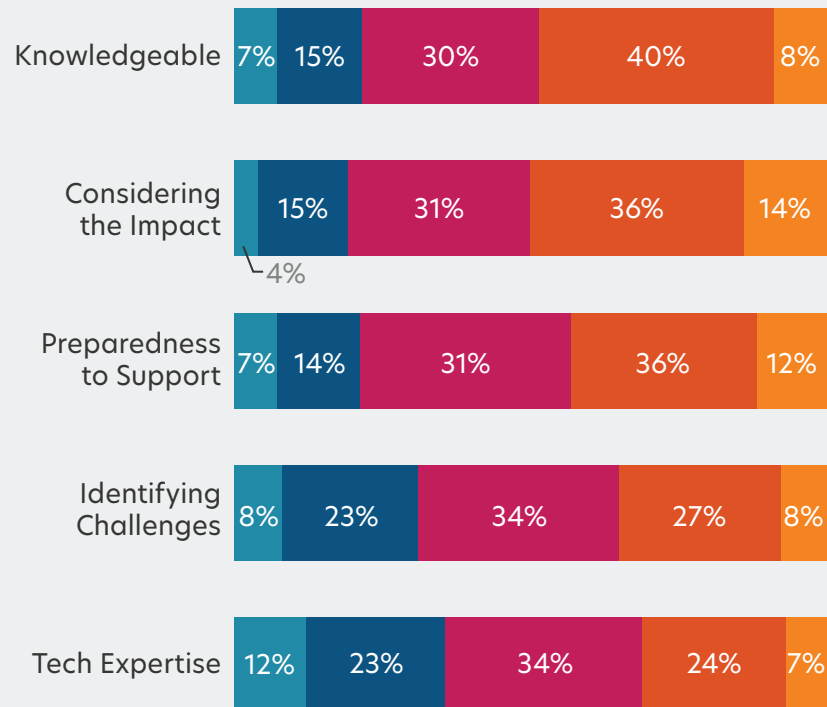
While many industries have adopted and integrated AI tools for years, it is the explosion of generative AI that is prompting a new look at leader readiness. Our findings indicate that while employees perceive their leaders as having foundational knowledge of AI and an understanding of its potential impact, there is less confidence in leaders' technical expertise and ability to identify AI challenges. Across all dimensions, leaders are more optimistic about their readiness to lead a successful AI transformation than employees are. However, leaders share some of the same concerns as individual contributors regarding confidence in their AI leadership capabilities.
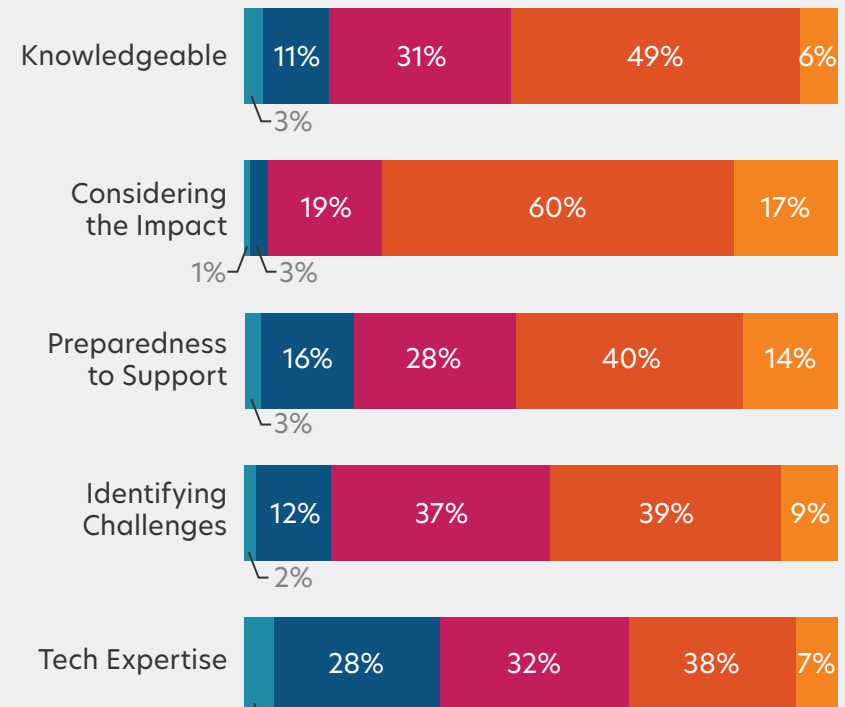
Addressing Neutrality Around Leader Readiness

A close look at the data highlights a significant portion of the population is neutral in their confidence around leader readiness. The number of employees who responded neutrally suggests they are reserving judgment and adopting a "wait-and-see" approach.

Perception of Leader Readiness

Legend: ● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral ● Agree ● Strongly Agree

Individual Contributors

Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Knowledgeable	7%	15%	30%	40%	8%
Considering the Impact	4%	15%	31%	36%	14%
Preparedness to Support	7%	14%	31%	36%	12%
Identifying Challenges	8%	23%	34%	27%	8%
Tech Expertise	12%	23%	34%	24%	7%

Leaders

Category	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Knowledgeable	3%	11%	31%	49%	6%
Considering the Impact	1%	3%	19%	60%	17%
Preparedness to Support	3%	16%	28%	40%	14%
Identifying Challenges	2%	12%	37%	39%	9%
Tech Expertise	5%	28%	32%	38%	7%

But why so neutral? The significant portion of employees uncertain about their leaders' preparedness could indicate that AI is evolving so quickly that assessing someone's readiness feels like an impossible puzzle. It may also reflect the reality that being ready today doesn't guarantee readiness tomorrow. Leaders eager to learn can struggle to keep pace with the rapid changes in technology. Someone who is **knowledgeable** one day can find themselves out of the loop the next as the landscape shifts.

While leaders are **considering the impact of AI,** they often lack clarity on the specifics. They recognize that AI will transform everything, but what those changes will look like remains uncertain. This combination of certainty without clarity contributes to a general sense of neutrality among employees.

It's also tough to determine how **technically savvy** leaders need to be to use AI effectively. Is it enough to write a decent prompt, or is a deeper understanding of algorithms necessary? The good news is that there's an opportunity for leaders to boost their confidence and embrace the unknown, continually learning and adapting as things evolve.

Such a strong neutral population presents an opportunity for leaders and organizations to capture the hearts and minds of their employees, guiding them confidently toward a future in which humans and AI work in tandem. Leaders who thoughtfully consider the impact of AI should be transparent, openly sharing their plans and the steps they're taking to prepare. Beyond merely communicating, they must actively engage in open dialogue—listening to employees' concerns, addressing questions, and fostering a culture of trust and adaptability. By supporting and involving their teams, leaders can empower employees to embrace the future with confidence and resilience.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Leaders play an important role in implementing a successful AI strategy. However, leaders and individual contributors are not abundantly confident that leaders have enough AI knowledge and expertise to do so. While a segment of the population is confident, a significant cross-section isn't there yet.

The Strategic AI Imperative: Moving the Middle

The possibilities with AI feel endless right now, and it's up to individual contributors and leaders to establish the right guardrails. While the perception of leader readiness is a challenge, the people who believe leaders are not properly prepared to lead AI strategy can be swayed into full confidence with the right leadership strategies.

To harness AI's full potential and the confidence of individual contributors, leaders must adopt a human-centric approach that prioritizes personal connection. AI can handle repetitive tasks quickly and efficiently, which gives leaders more time to engage and connect on a human level.

Top Future Leadership Skills Are Human-Centric

Even in an AI-driven world, technology skills aren't the only essential skills leaders need to be successful. Alongside technical skills respondents highlighted the value of uniquely human skills to interpret and use AI-driven insights effectively. For leaders and individual contributors alike, cognitive skills such as critical thinking were top priorities, emphasizing the importance of flexible thinking and adaptability in an AI landscape.

At the same time, communication and interpersonal skills are also ranked highly for leaders. Respondents recognized the ongoing need for relational, human-centered abilities. In short, balancing human intellect and connection with AI knowledge is seen as the key to thriving in an AI-enhanced workplace.
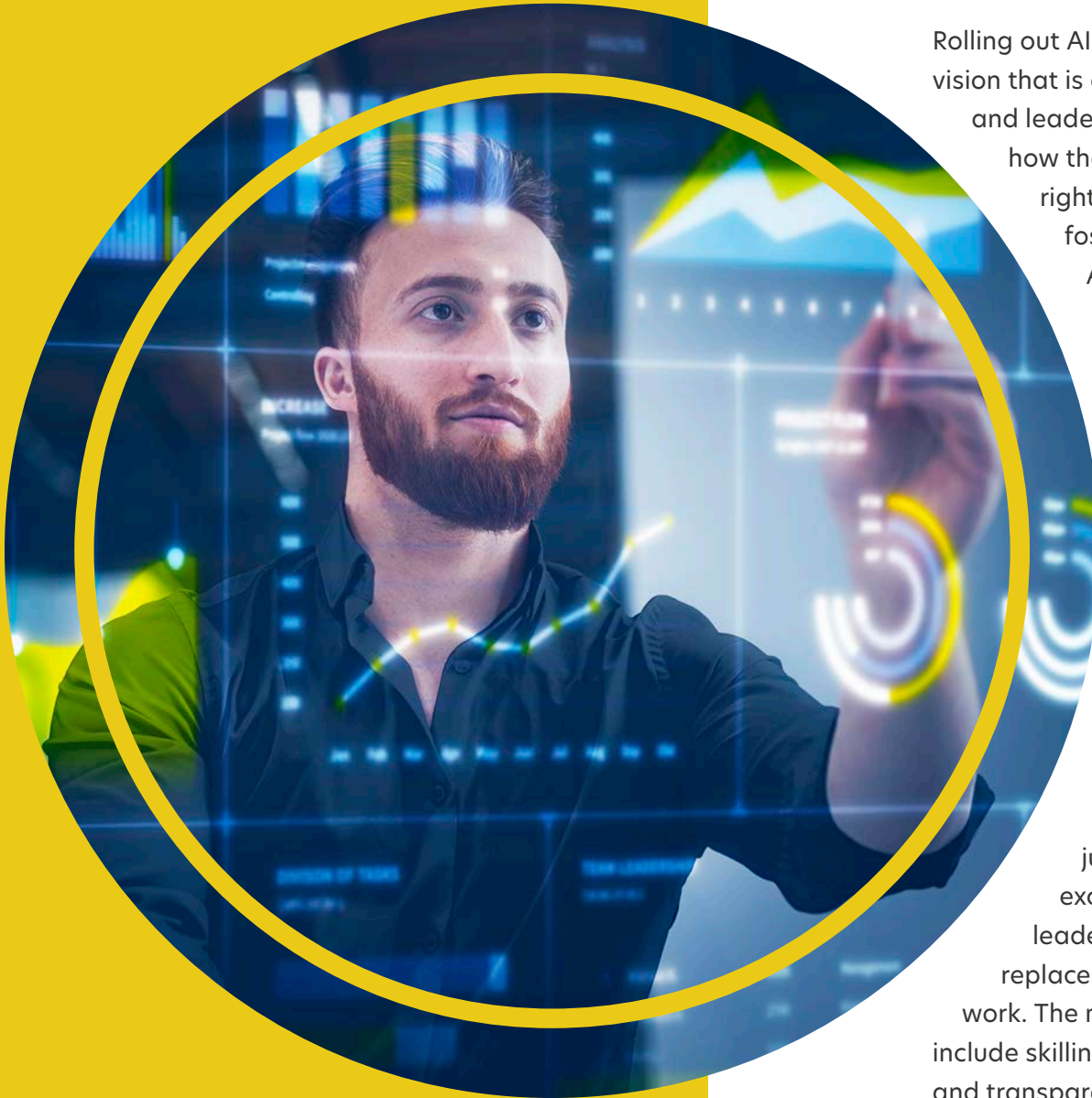
Technical skills

Cognitive skills

Communication skills

Interpersonal skills

Rolling out AI broadly requires a thoughtful strategy and vision that is consistently communicated. Organizations and leaders should also be intentional about when and how they use AI technology. It's all about finding the right balance between encouraging adoption and fostering innovation without rushing into it aimlessly. And it's about creating a culture of curious experimentation and psychological safety so that people feel emboldened to embrace AI.

The significant number of employees who are neutral on AI and aren't sure their leaders are ready—those in the middle—are movable to a place of increased enthusiasm about AI's positive impact. But only if leaders can find ways to connect with them and inspire confidence.

As confidence in AI grows, leaders and teams will feel more secure when they know the right tools are used for the right tasks, rather than just jumping on the latest tech trend because it seems exciting. By being deliberate in their approach, leaders can ensure that AI enhances—rather than replaces—the vital human connections that drive our work. The most powerful tools at the leader's disposal include skilling efforts, experimentation with AI, and transparent communication.

Upskill and Reskill

A great chance to boost employee confidence in a successful AI strategy is through upskilling (enhancing current skills to meet the demands of the ever-changing job market) and reskilling (learning new skills or training in a new career path).

Both individual contributors and leaders rated their readiness in this area low. This might be because they either don't fully understand what upskilling and reskilling mean or do not know how skilling relates to AI. It could also be that they don't have a clear strategy.

Leaders and employees alike lack confidence in leaders' readiness to tackle upskilling and reskilling. Predicting the skills of the future amid rapid technological advancement is complicated. Leaders and organizations are still trying to figure out the full impact of AI the skills required to be successful in their industries and organizations right now.

But leaders and organizations who need to establish reskilling and upskilling plans may not have the tools yet to help them figure out how to do the necessary skill mapping. Budget and resource constraints combined with an overwhelming number of training options can make it difficult to settle on an approach. Cultural and engagement concerns are also ever-present—how can leaders calm fears and maintain enthusiasm about AI while simultaneously addressing the need for new or refined skills? It is certainly a balancing act that will need to be finessed over the coming years as organizations adapt their plans to keep up with new technology and employee needs.

Executives and senior leaders developing AI strategies will need to express humility and seek guidance from a cross-section of individuals within their organizations. They also need to craft an AI strategy that is specific enough to provide clear direction but flexible enough to account for the unknown. It isn't about having a perfect plan—it's about showing that you recognize there are issues, engaging in conversations about them, and letting everyone know that you're committed to tackling them as an organization.

Leader Readiness to Upskill and Reskill

AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE Leaders are prepared to address **upskilling**

42% Individual Contributors
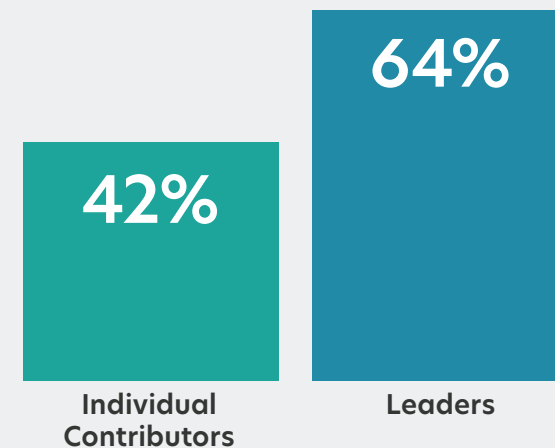
64% Leaders

AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE Leaders are prepared to address **reskilling**

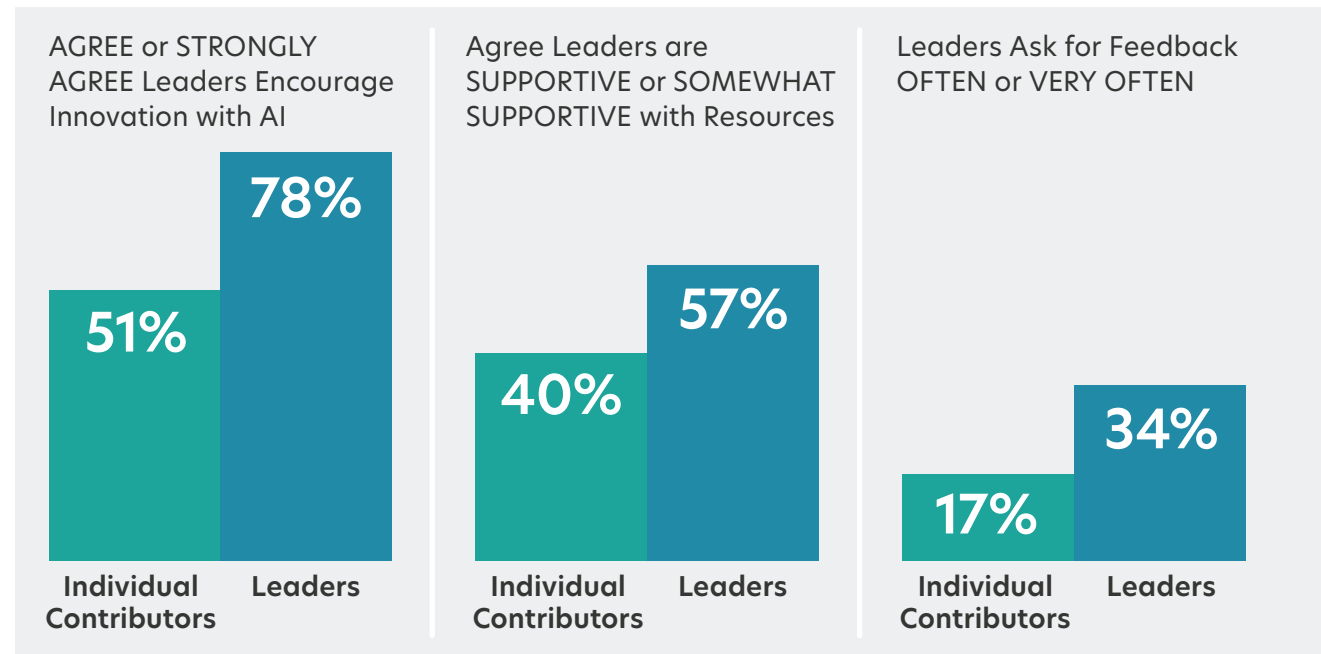**34%** Individual Contributors
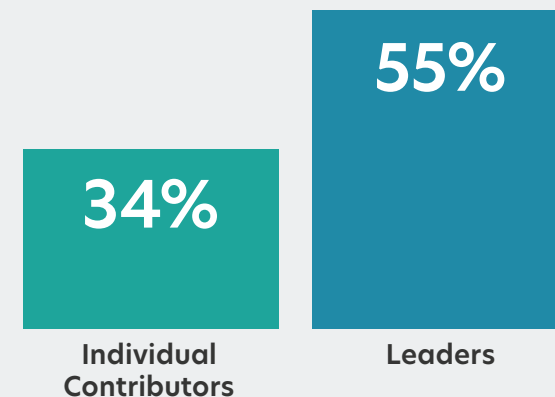
55% Leaders

Encourage AI Use and Innovation

Nothing compares to firsthand experience with AI to truly appreciate its potential impact. When employees and leaders engage directly with AI, its power becomes real and tangible. Seeing AI in action crystallizes understanding around its speed and accuracy, especially when analyzing vast amounts of data, creating captivating learning content, or developing personalized learning paths. A true understanding of AI's impact can only be realized when leaders and employees feel empowered to experiment with the technology.

The widespread adoption of AI will likely follow initial experiments, but this hinges on proactive support from leaders. Currently, that support appears to be lacking. While 78% of leaders say they encourage innovation with AI, only 51% of individual contributors agree. Leaders

also give themselves higher marks on providing supporting resources. 57% of leaders give themselves credit for providing those resources but only 40% of employees say the same."

Additionally, there's a noticeable gap in seeking feedback on AI initiatives. Only 34% of leaders indicate they are asking for AI feedback, while a mere 17% of individual contributors agree.

AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE Leaders Encourage Innovation with AI		Agree Leaders are SUPPORTIVE or SOMEWHAT SUPPORTIVE with Resources		Leaders Ask for Feedback OFTEN or VERY OFTEN	
51%	78%	40%	57%	17%	34%
Individual Contributors	**Leaders**	**Individual Contributors**	**Leaders**	**Individual Contributors**	**Leaders**

This gap presents a significant opportunity for leaders to enhance their AI approach. Sustaining enthusiasm for AI hinges on employees feeling empowered in its usage and discussions regarding its implications. Without adequate opportunities to explore AI's potential benefits and drawbacks, achieving successful adoption will be more challenging and take longer. Using AI is critical, but talking about it is the real way to unlock its potential.

Foster Transparency and Communication

Effective communication with employees is paramount, especially when introducing transformative change. However, from establishing a strategic vision to maintaining ongoing conversations, communication in all facets presents a significant opportunity for improvement.
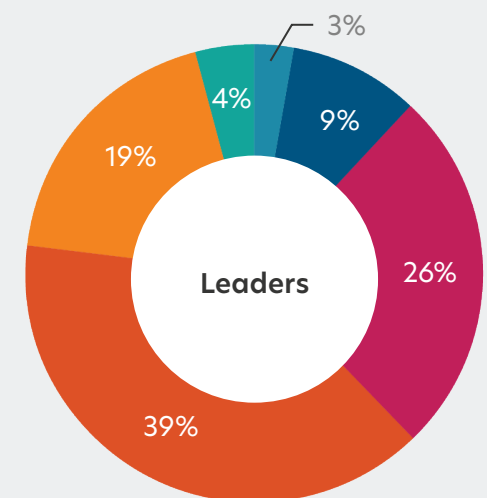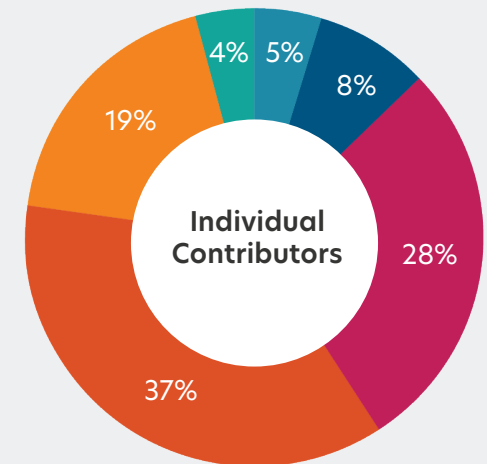
A successful AI strategy starts at the top, with leaders communicating their vision and organizational objectives, connecting the thoughtful use of AI to those objectives, and encouraging team members to share insights and collaborate. This requires a growth mindset and psychological safety so that people feel comfortable speaking up and taking risks. If AI is going to move from mysterious to mainstay, using it and talking about how best to use it are non-negotiables.

But here's the tricky part: many leaders don't have a vision because their organizations are still figuring it out,
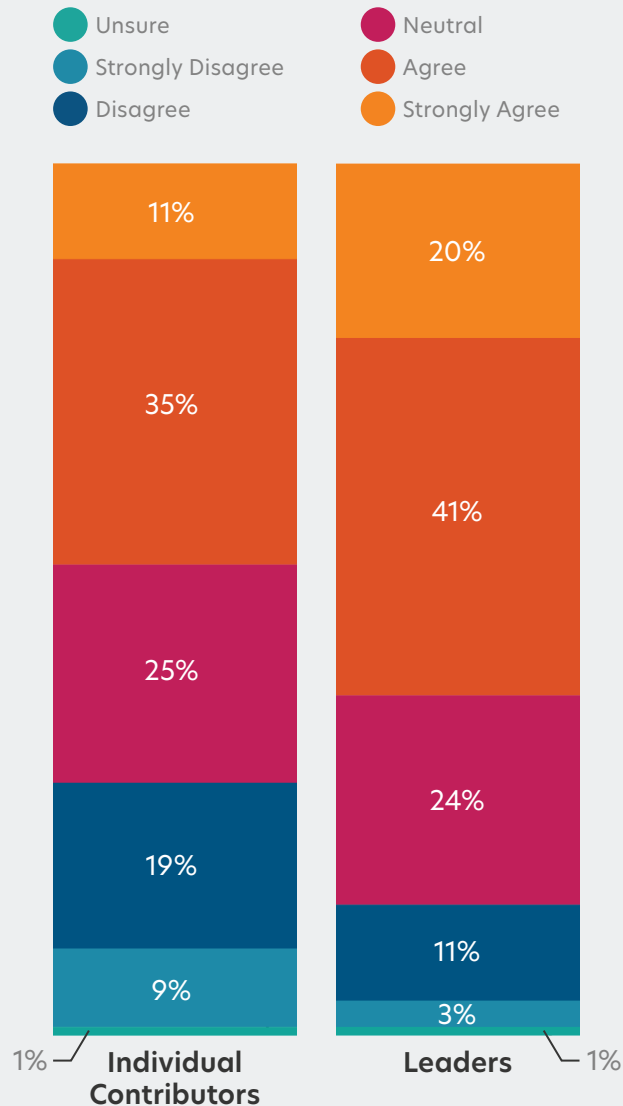
and they feel lost when crafting an AI strategy. It's tempting to blame rapid tech advancements for not having a plan, but a smarter approach is to start building that strategy, even if it's still a work in progress and likely to change.

More than half of individual contributors and a similar percentage of leaders feel that communication about AI is transparent. However, a significant portion either disagrees or remains neutral, indicating that not everyone feels they are fully informed or engaged in discussions about AI. Leaders need to communicate what they know when they know it, even if their plans are incomplete. Employees welcome discussions about AI—85% of those we surveyed feel comfortable sharing their thoughts about it. Leaders who share what they know increase transparency, which is a critical element building trust.

My leader's communication is transparent.

Legend:
- Unsure
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Individual Contributors
- 4% Unsure
- 5% Strongly Disagree
- 8% Disagree
- 28% Neutral
- 37% Agree
- 19% Strongly Agree

Leaders
- 4% Unsure
- 3% Strongly Disagree
- 9% Disagree
- 26% Neutral
- 39% Agree
- 19% Strongly Agree

My leader and I spend time talking about AI.

Legend:
- Unsure
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Individual Contributors:
- 11% (Strongly Agree)
- 35% (Agree)
- 25% (Neutral)
- 19% (Disagree)
- 9% (Strongly Disagree)
- 1% (Unsure)

Leaders:
- 20% (Strongly Agree)
- 41% (Agree)
- 24% (Neutral)
- 11% (Disagree)
- 3% (Strongly Disagree)
- 1% (Unsure)

Many leaders hold back from discussing AI due to their lack of confidence. With the expectation to champion this technology, some leaders do not have a comprehensive plan to guide them through which tools to adopt or how to implement them. Leaders might also fear that admitting they do not have all the answers could exacerbate anxieties. Leaders must move beyond the urge to avoid conversations when they're uncertain of something because, with AI, that's simply not possible. Instead, leaders should embrace this uncertainty and cultivate curiosity by turning these conversations into opportunities to engage in open dialogue and collaboratively navigate the complexities of AI with their teams.

While 61% of leaders we spoke with report having conversations about AI with their senior leadership, only 46% of individual contributors say the same about their direct managers. Both populations want these conversations to happen more often: **71% of leaders and 60% of employees desire more frequent discussions on AI.**

While AI discussions are happening at senior levels, they may not be filtering down through the organization. Many companies are still figuring out how to integrate AI, and most are approaching this with a focus on risk mitigation and control rather than a "let's explore the possibilities" mindset. Shifting this mindset and broadening conversations about AI can help illuminate the path forward. While it's valuable for senior leaders to thoughtfully consider AI's role and impact, these conversations need to reach all levels. Otherwise, employees may feel left in the dark.

There is significant room for improvement in both the quality and frequency of AI-related communications between leaders and employees. For leaders to truly harness the value of a human+AI workforce, they must not only utilize the technology but also actively involve their team in its application. This entails providing necessary resources, soliciting feedback, and being aware of the cultural factors influencing successful AI implementation.

Individual contributors and leaders who AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE they are spending time talking about AI.

Individual Contributors 46%

Leaders 61%

Individual contributors and leaders who AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE they want to spend MORE time talking about AI.

Individual Contributors 59%

Leaders 71%

KEY TAKEAWAY
A human-centric approach to AI means putting AI tools in the hands of employees and encouraging frequent use and discussion. Confidence in leaders' AI readiness depends on their transparency about AI plans and their ability to foster cautious curiosity in exploring AI.

Leaders Will Define the AI-Driven Future

In a world increasingly shaped by technology, it's human cognition and relational skills that will truly define the future. AI is already here, energizing industries. There's no doubt it will transform almost everything, but we have little certainty and clarity about what's next. How leaders show up in this uncertain moment determines whether curiosity drives innovation or leaves teams stuck in a cycle of fight, flight, or freeze.

As we navigate the early stages of widespread AI implementation, the specifics of what a supportive environment looks like are still taking shape. This uncertainty is reflected in the feedback from both individual contributors and leaders, with **only about 25% feeling that their culture is supportive, while a similar percentage believes it is not. Notably, 45% of individual contributors and 51% of leaders remain unsure.**

The real opportunity lies in how leaders can actively cultivate a culture that promotes AI adoption and responsible, equitable usage. A supportive culture is fundamentally human-centered. Amid the excitement surrounding AI technology, it's essential to remember that a robust AI culture transcends algorithms and prompts. Leaders must align AI initiatives with the broader organizational mission and establish clear objectives for AI utilization.

This is the time for leaders to rise beyond managing AI pilots. Leaders have an opportunity to inspire with bold vision and unwavering confidence. Individual contributors are eager for direction, and they crave clarity about the future. They want to understand how your organization will evolve, and they want a seat at the table. By fostering inclusion and transparency, leaders can empower individuals and teams to align with the organization's vision and prepare them to innovate and move forward together.

About **25%** of individual contributors and leaders feel that their culture is supportive, while a similar percentage believes it is not. Notably, **45%** of individual contributors and **51%** of leaders remain unsure.

Human+AI Integration Guide for Leaders

# Essentials for Effective Leadership in a Human+AI World

AI brings efficiency to any number of tasks, but it makes the role of a leader infinitely more complex. To effectively instill confidence in a leader's capacity to guide a team comprising both humans and AI, leaders must cultivate four essential types of intelligence.

Intellectual intelligence (IQ) is the solid foundation of knowledge and experience that has justified a leader's position. This intellectual expertise allows them to navigate complex situations with strategic insight.

Technological intelligence (TQ) is a high degree of technological know-how that enables leaders to understand and leverage new tools and innovations that enhance team performance.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) refers to qualities like strong self-awareness and empathy that help leaders connect with their team members on a personal level and foster a supportive environment.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is the ability to effectively and compassionately work across different cultural contexts. In today's diverse workplace, this is increasingly significant for navigating individual differences and sensitivities.
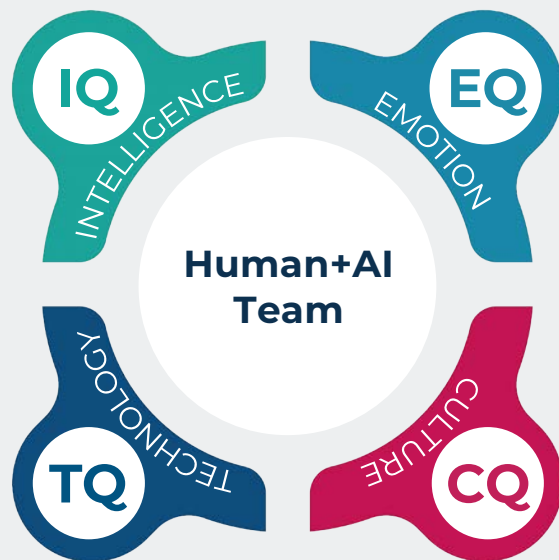
Navigating these four integral areas can indeed be a formidable task, but it is crucial. It's not just about supporting AI adoption—it's about equipping teams with the right tools, increasing education, and, above all, fostering meaningful dialogue. Leaders need to shift their teams **from anxious avoidance to excited curiosity,** empowering them to embrace the future with confidence and engagement.

Here's what leaders can do to prepare themselves and their teams to implement a successful AI strategy.

IQ Intellectual Intelligence

Stay current on industry information: While the data that AI can provide is growing every day, it may not be current on specific industry data. Use what you know about your industry, including your day-to-day experiences, while leveraging AI tools in support.

Bring your experience to AI: The historical knowledge and practical experience leaders possess will continue to be relevant. Output from AI needs to be applied within a specific context that experienced leaders can bring to the table.

Refine cognitive skills: AI can analyze data and provide information quickly. To use AI effectively, leaders need to apply critical thinking and encourage their people to do the same.

Encourage data-driven decision-making: The vast information AI can analyze is useful if leaders know what to do with it. For example, using AI insights to identify trends can help leaders plan more effectively.

Discuss reskilling and upskilling openly: Provide a sense of confidence that you will support your employees as AI reshapes the job market. Acknowledge that, as with other technology, it will not just remove jobs but also add them.

EQ Emotional Intelligence

Share your strategic vision: Share what you know when you know it, even if the vision is murky. In the absence of any vision, people will fill in the missing pieces, often incorrectly.

Increase Dialogue: Encourage regular team discussions focused explicitly on AI topics to enhance engagement. Incorporate AI agenda items into one-on-ones and team discussions.

Solicit Feedback: Regularly ask team members for feedback about your communication and involve them in discussions, responding to their interests and concerns. Give AI homework to team members, and then share and discuss what you learned together.

Empathize: Not everyone is in the same place on the AI adoption curve. Meet team members where they are with empathy for their concerns.

Harness the excitement: Share how you use AI and encourage your employees to do the same. Give them access to specific tools with a purposeful assignment to use them, and then ask them about their experience using them.

Keep creativity and nuance alive: AI can only provide information about what it's been trained on—human beings bring creativity to the situation. Acknowledge and cultivate a spirit of creativity and innovation.

TQ Technological Intelligence

Support AI use: Provide access to tools and training. Proactively seek out opportunities to guide your people toward those tools, encouraging and publicizing their use.

Offer access to resources: Articles, podcasts, and other tools can help educate. Source case studies to help users understand the practical benefits of AI.

Provide guidelines for use: Make sure the guidelines you provide your team align with the organization's values and goals. Don't make them so rigid that they send a mixed message about AI use.

Encourage formal and informal training: Consider organizing workshops or training sessions to better inform your team about AI, its impacts, and its relevance to their work. Q&A forums, panel discussions, lunch-and-learns, and AI speakers can also complement formal training and create space for dialogue.

Share best practices: Give employees and leaders the opportunity to network and talk about AI tools and use. Coaching circles or prompt-a-thons can facilitate this.

Cultural Intelligence

Include strong representation in AI policy: Ensure diverse representation on the AI committees that are involved in creating policy and ethical guidelines and in those who participate in surveys and focus groups. This will empower employees, increase accountability, and demonstrate transparency.

Acknowledge and celebrate AI use: This may feel awkward at first since there are still some reservations about acknowledging AI use. But doing so will empower your team members to champion AI and will diversify the organizational voice.

Lead with curiosity and discuss concerns: Encourage a curious and cautious approach. Provide an environment where people can talk about the possibilities and the ethical challenges they see.

Be willing to uncover the flaws: There is a lot that AI does not get right. Use AI with a critical eye and a sense of humor. Proactively share lessons you've learned with others.

Evaluate progress: Periodically re-assess communication strategies to measure improvement and adapt as necessary. Share that progress frequently and broadly.

Meet the Author

Leah Clark

Leah Clark is a thought leader and author for GP Strategies. She researches, writes, and speaks on the topic of leadership and has written several articles and research reports, including pieces on authentic leadership communication, leading during uncertainty, leadership mindsets, and the impact of introversion and mindfulness on innovation. Leah holds a Master of Arts in Organizational Psychology from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Sociology from Boston College.

GP Strategies conducted the research by applying an online data collection methodology between September 9, 2024 and November 4, 2024. Overall, 506 responses were received. 230 of those respondents identified themselves as individual contributors and 276 identified themselves as people leaders.

132 responses came from the APAC region (26.1%), 168 from EMEA (33.2%), and 206 (40.7%) came from the Americas region.

About GP Strategies

GP Strategies is a global leader in talent transformation, specializing in workforce performance improvement to help organizations meet their goals. With award-winning expertise in learning and development, we create tailored strategies and solutions that deliver measurable success.

Our innovative, technology-enabled learning solutions have supported over 6,000 organizations worldwide in achieving sustainable business outcomes. Backed by a global team of experienced specialists, we combine Human+AI capabilities to design future-ready solutions for today's workforce challenges.

From upskilling talent to adopting cutting-edge technologies or optimizing processes, GP Strategies offers the expertise and partnership to drive meaningful, lasting transformation.

gpstrategies.com   info@gpstrategies.com

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