

Lenovo Work Reborn Research Series 2026

Leading your workforce to AI triumph.

Your game plan for uniting and empowering your team to win the enterprise AI race.

Smarter
technology
for all

Lenovo

Take the lead in the AI race.

Leaders see AI as the engine of transformation, but many employees still lack the tools, training and guidance to apply it in their work.

We believe natural language will become the primary interface to enterprise systems, changing how people interact with technology at work. As this shift accelerates, gaps in how organizations govern and enable AI will become harder to manage. Many are already struggling today, with employees adopting AI faster than enterprises can manage, enable or align.

IT and business leaders have a clear vision for AI. But many employees don't. A two-tier workforce is emerging and it's already shaping how work gets done across the organization.

On one side are employees equipped with IT-managed tools, training and oversight.

On the other are those moving ahead independently. Without clear, comprehensive guidance from IT, they're taking their own path, and using AI outside of the company's control.

This rise in 'shadow AI' signals growing risk. It exposes sensitive data, weakens governance and widens the gap between AI investment and realized value.

The longer this gap persists, the harder it becomes to close. Workflows fragment, outcomes become inconsistent and trust in AI tools begins to erode.

Leaders need to keep employees engaged and confident in using enterprise AI, while ensuring adoption supports business goals.

This is no longer just a question of productivity. It's about readiness for the future of work.

Previous Work Reborn reports examined AI transformation from the IT leader perspective. This report focuses on the employee. Based on a global survey of 6,000 workers, we explore how AI is being used today and how employees view the future AI-enabled workplace.

Our findings give enterprise leaders a clear view of the risks of inaction, and practical guidance on how to align their workforce and turn AI ambition into sustained business value.

Hope you enjoy the report.

Rakshit



Rakshit Ghura

Vice President & General Manager
Lenovo Digital Workplace Solutions

The AI transformation playbook.

Our latest global research reveals how employees use AI today, and what leaders must do to guide adoption and funnel it into high-value transformation.

Click to jump to section:

Bring the whole workforce onto the same team by aligning employee AI readiness and adoption with leadership ambition.



Empower employees to work at their best with trustworthy tools plus clear, comprehensive and consistent training.



Embed a core vision for your AI-enhanced digital workplace across the workforce.



Your next steps for winning the AI race.



1. Unite

Bring the whole workforce onto the same team by aligning employee AI readiness and adoption with leadership ambition.



Unite

AI is the game everyone must win.

Enterprise transformation depends on employees embracing AI while adhering to the control and governance of the enterprise.

It's clear that AI is now seen by IT and business leaders as the primary lever for enterprise transformation and competitive advantage.



#1 CIO priority for 2026 is enhancing, innovating and reinventing the business with AI.

CIO Playbook
The Race for Enterprise AI, Lenovo & IDC

Organizations are looking beyond productivity gains to explore how AI can support innovation, differentiation and faster decision-making. It's become an operating layer for the enterprise, reshaping decision-making, workflows and business models.

But when adoption progresses unevenly, execution does too. Teams move at different speeds, workflows fragment, and governance gaps stop being isolated IT concerns and start surfacing as business volatility. At this stage, AI adoption is no longer just an innovation challenge—it is an operating risk that leaders must actively manage.

“AI is no longer just an IT mandate; the business is taking a keen interest too. Businesses are trying to take advantage of this opportunity and apply AI into other areas: differentiation, innovation, improving speed to market.”

Rakshit Ghura

Vice President & General Manager
Lenovo Digital Workplace Solutions



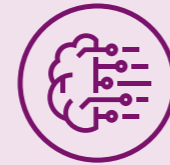
Lenovo



Unite

Turn AI ambition into results.

By embedding AI into workflows, leaders enable employees to scale AI from pilot to company-wide deployment.



Effective human-AI collaboration for optimized workflows

is a key factor in successful enterprise AI implementation.

CIO Playbook 2026
The Race for Enterprise AI, Lenovo & IDC

With the workplace having become the de facto environment in which to experiment with AI and then scale it throughout the enterprise, the human-AI interaction layer is where real value is created.

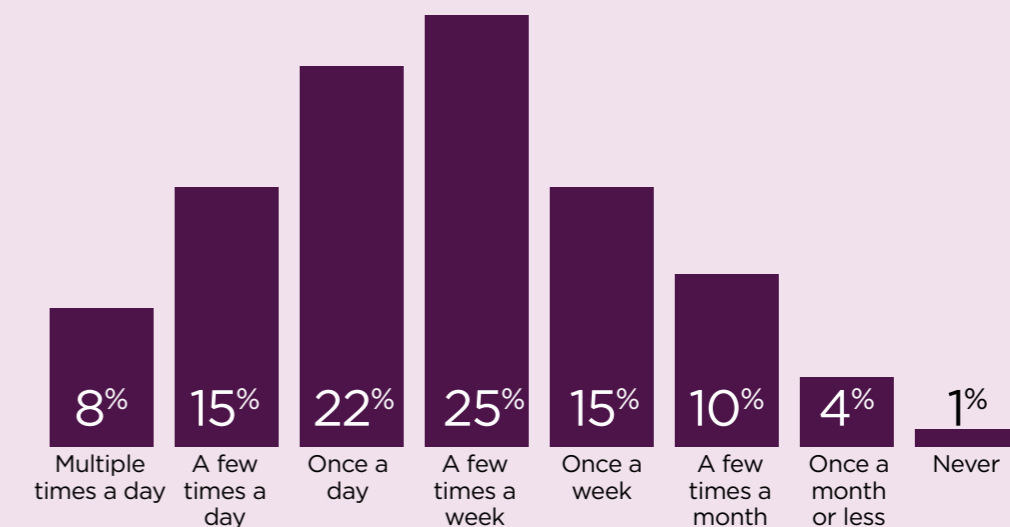
For AI-led transformation to succeed, employees need the right encouragement to adopt AI and embed it into their everyday workflows.

It's your people who provide the expertise, context and business knowledge that enable AI systems to deliver meaningful outcomes.

The good news is that employees are already experimenting with AI tools and integrating them into their daily work. Seven out of ten use them at least a few times a week.

The current use of AI in the workplace

How often do you use any kind of AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Midjourney, etc.) to help you in your work?



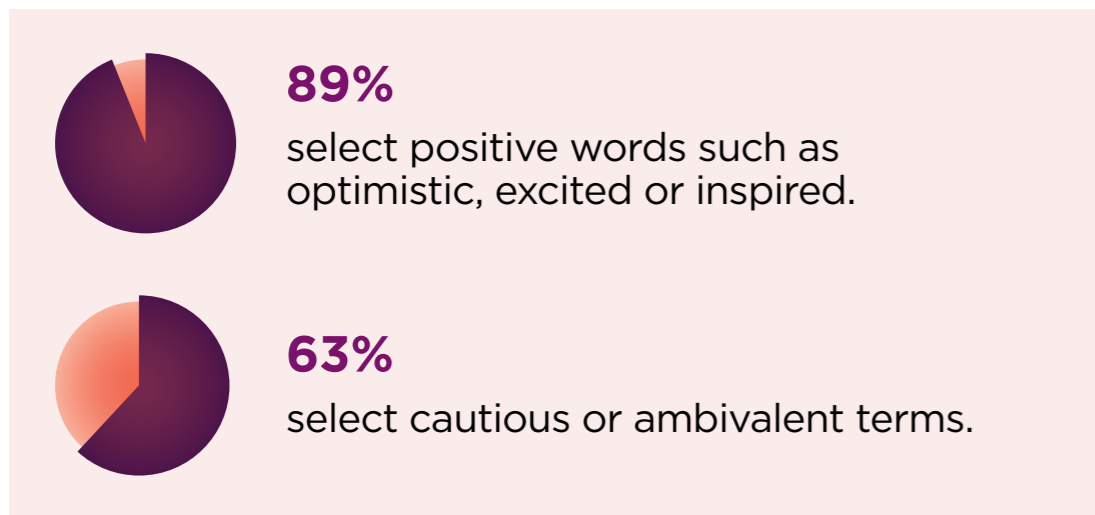
Unite

Team momentum is building but must translate into value.

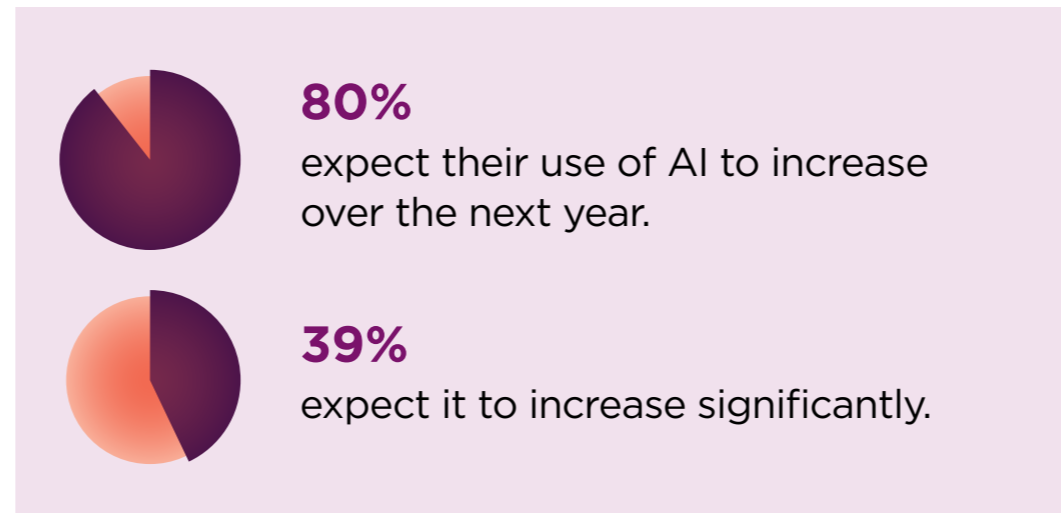
Employees are already getting results from AI. Many report it is improving productivity, creativity and the quality of their work.



Sentiment towards AI in the workplace is broadly positive, with most employees optimistic about its potential impact.



This enthusiasm shows that employees already play an active role in enterprise AI transformation—and want to do more.



The challenge for organizations is not whether workers are willing to use AI, but whether employers are enabling them to do so safely and effectively.



Lenovo



Unite

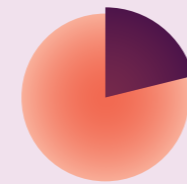
The emergence of a two-tier squad.

Workers may be keen AI users, but many of them are not being supported by their employers.



31%

of AI users say their employer does not provide training on how to use AI in their work.



22%

say their employer does not provide AI tools for them to use at work.

This reveals that businesses are operating with a two-tier workforce: those who are empowered by IT to use AI and those who do so outside IT oversight.



of workers use AI outside the influence and governance of the IT function.

This poses significant threats to the enterprise.

First, in bypassing compliance controls, 'shadow AI' increases the risk that intellectual property or sensitive data are processed outside governed environments, undermining both security posture and return on AI investment.

Second, and just as important, a two-tier AI workforce leads to operational weaknesses. If some employees use IT-managed AI tools and others do not, workflows become fragmented, teams become siloed and productivity gains are unevenly distributed.

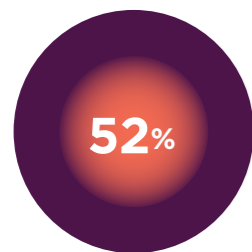
Unite

United we stand, divided we fall.

Workforce fragmentation creates a flywheel of execution risk for the enterprise:



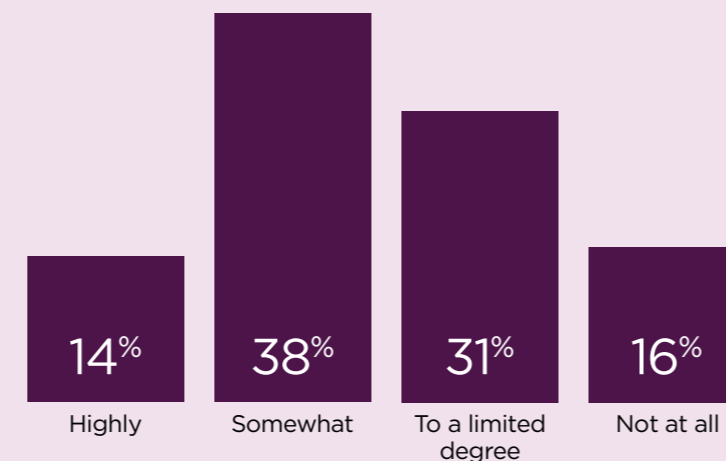
Over time, this compounds operational, security and credibility risks across the enterprise. And it undermines employees' sense of security.



of employees are concerned about the impact of AI on their future employment within their organization.

Employee concerns over job security

To what extent are you concerned about the impact of AI on your future employment within your current employer?



Employee concerns about job security underline the need for clear communication about how AI will reshape roles and responsibilities within the organization.

For AI enthusiasm to translate into enterprise advantage, leaders must bring the whole team together around the right tools, training and direction.

“Transparency is very important. Business and IT leaders need to educate employees that AI is not about workforce reduction; it is about workforce evolution.”

Rakshit Ghura

Vice President & General Manager
Lenovo Digital Workplace Solutions



Lenovo

Unite

Unify your team around one goal.

Strategy

Enterprise AI transformation is a team sport. Acknowledge the role that every employee plays and empower them to make a difference.

Tactic 1: Recognize employees as the execution layer of AI

AI only delivers value when employees apply it in their day-to-day work.

- AI value depends on employees applying business context and judgment, not just on tools being deployed.
- Leaders should treat employees as active contributors to AI outcomes, not passive recipients of technology.

Tactic 2: Enable innovation within governance guardrails

Innovation scales when employees can experiment confidently within defined boundaries.

- Leaders should encourage experimentation, but make guardrails explicit, visible and enforceable.
- Bring unsanctioned use into the open, rather than forcing it underground.

Tactic 3: Reinforce employees' role in the future

Adoption improves when employees understand how AI supports their role, not replaces it.

- Clearly communicate how AI will evolve roles rather than replace them.
- Link AI adoption to opportunity, skill growth and long-term relevance.

Lenovo's view from the sidelines

Across enterprises, we see AI initiatives start to break down when governance and enablement fail to keep pace with employee adoption, allowing fragmentation to emerge long before leaders realize control has eroded.

2. Coach

Empower employees to work at their best with trustworthy tools plus clear, comprehensive and consistent training.



Coach

Prepare everyone to perform.

AI-led enterprise transformation depends on equipping employees with trusted tools and effective training so they can use AI confidently, responsibly and at scale.

Employees want AI to eliminate routine work and improve their productivity. But trust gaps, governance immaturity and weak integration prevent many organizations from meeting that demand.

Employees are yet to feel the real impact they're hoping AI can deliver in the workplace. In particular, they want AI to alleviate the drudgery of admin.

This gap between potential and practice suggests that AI tools are not yet deeply embedded in the workflows and systems employees use every day.

At scale, these gaps do not just affect individual productivity—they translate into inconsistent execution, fragmented processes and reduced enterprise agility.

79%

of employees say they would enjoy their work more if they could focus on work that matters to the business rather than routine administrative tasks.

Only 24%

of AI users say they use AI every day to automate administrative tasks.

But, in most organizations, AI tools fail to remove the everyday friction employees care about most.

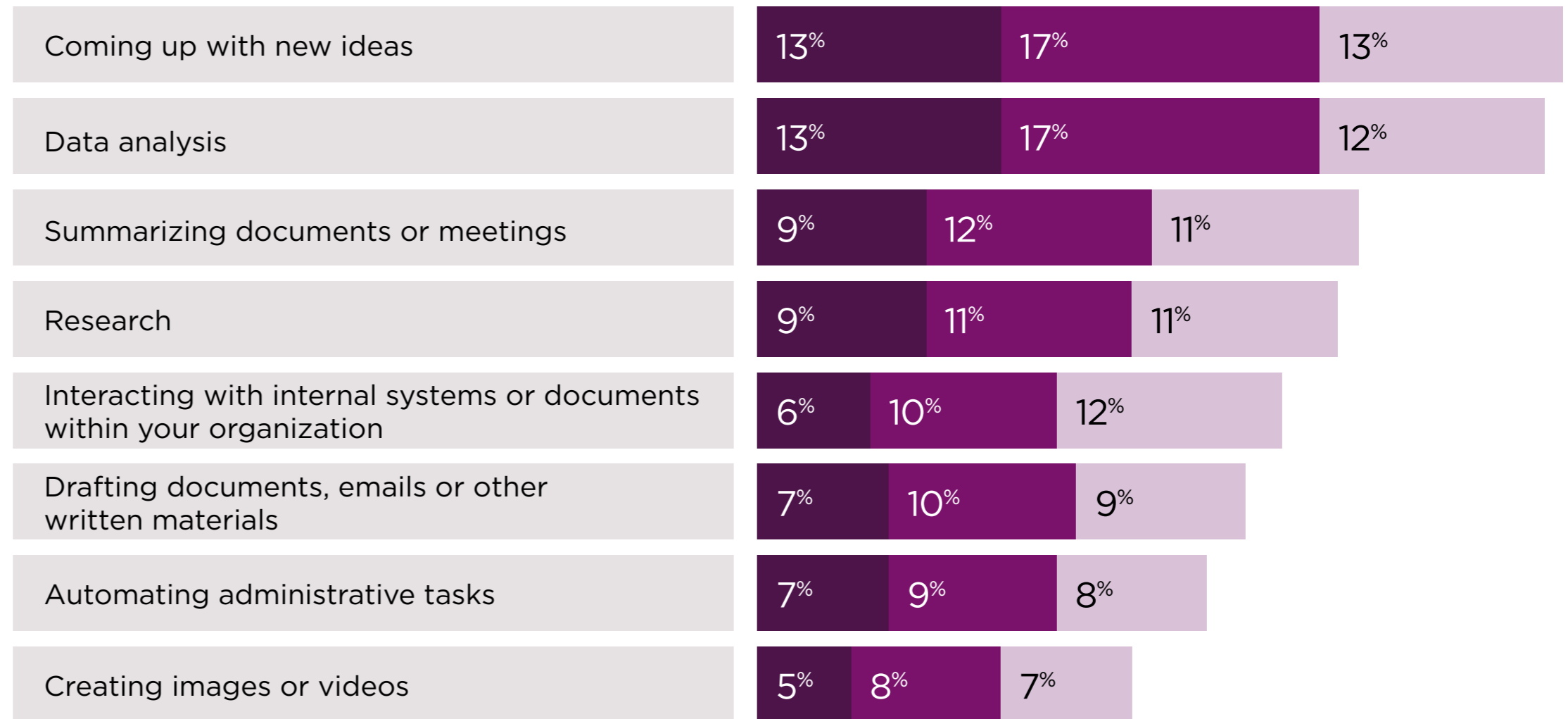




Employees frequently use AI for new ideas and data analysis, but few use it to automate administrative tasks on a daily basis.

How often do you use AI for any of the following functions?

- Multiple times a day
- A few times a day
- Once a day

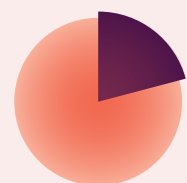


Coach

Build confidence in the coach's playbook.

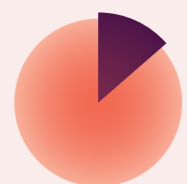
Many employees do not fully trust the AI tools provided by their employer. With concerns around reliability, data security and privacy limiting confidence in workplace systems, employees are less likely to use AI consistently in their day-to-day work.

Leaders must focus on building trust in enterprise AI through reliable tools, clear governance and transparent practices.



23%

of employees disagree that the information produced by employer-provided AI tools is always reliable.



17%

disagree that their privacy and personal data are safe when using the AI tool provided by their employer.

These concerns dampen enthusiasm for enterprise AI tools, significantly limiting the extent and evenness of adoption.

This unmanaged AI adoption within a fragmented workforce creates islands of productivity, amplifying performance gaps and undermining the organization's ability to scale value uniformly.

Adoption failure is often governance failure. And simply attempting to ban 'shadow AI' is more likely to drive usage underground than to actually stop it.

The right tools implemented in the right way are essential for ensuring that employees' AI use aligns with enterprise priorities.

Failure to deliver means slowing innovation and increasing technical debt, undermining the return on AI investments and jeopardizing enterprise renewal.

"It's very important for an enterprise to make sure that AI is properly governed, because that's how trust develops."

Rakshit Ghura

Vice President & General Manager
Lenovo Digital Workplace Solutions

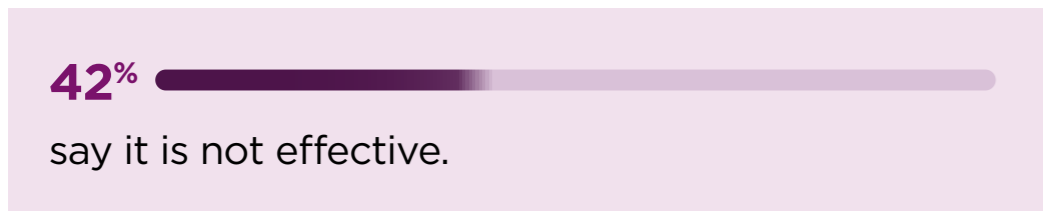
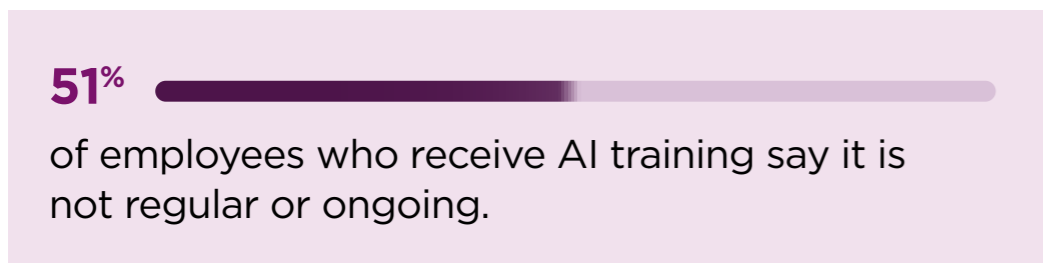
Coach

Gaps on the training field.

Ongoing training plays a critical role in enabling employees to use AI effectively and confidently. Even when organizations provide effective AI tools, many employees are not receiving the training they need to use them productively.



And not all training is equal. Among employees who do receive training, many say it is not effective or continuous.



Without continuous, effective training, organizations risk widening digital dexterity gaps within the workforce. And static training models struggle to keep pace with the rapid evolution of AI technologies. At today's pace of AI change, insufficient training doesn't just slow adoption, it also increases risk and widens the AI divide in the workforce.

Employees who benefit most from AI are far more likely to report easy-to-use, role-relevant tools and clear, tailored training.

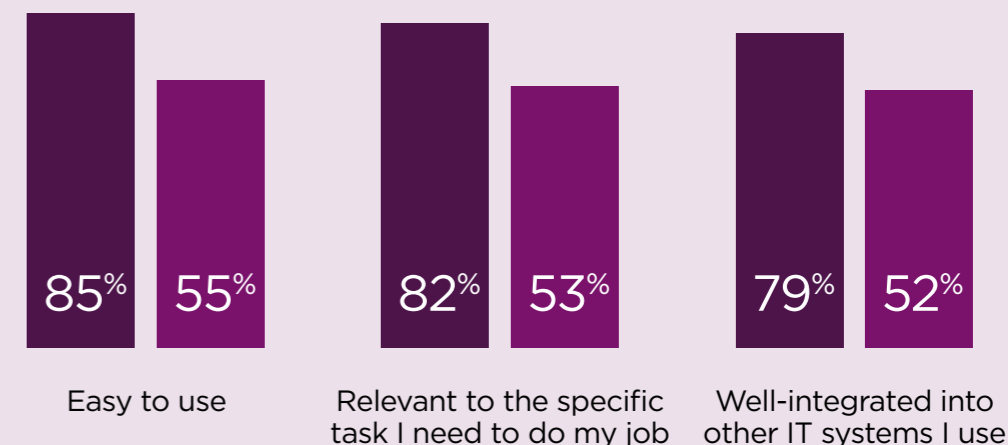
Our research points to productivity inequality and increased cultural friction between employees who are empowered to use AI and those who are not. As we've seen, this fracture in the workforce will translate to operational fragmentation and reduced enterprise agility.

Employees who get the most out of AI receive usable tools and relevant training.

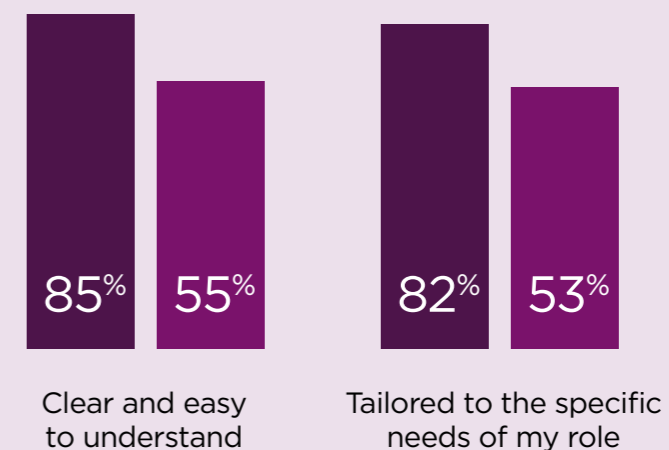
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

■ Employees who say AI has 'significantly' improved their work
■ Employees who say AI has 'worsened' their work

The AI tools that my employer provides me are:



The AI training my employer provides is:



Drills to help your players deliver.

Strategy

Employees drive transformation. Equip them with trusted tools and continuous training that evolves with the technology.

Tactic 1: Build trust through visible governance

Trust develops when employees experience reliability, accountability and oversight in everyday use.

- Make governance practical and observable, not just policy documents.
- Maintain human-oversight so employees review and validate AI outputs.

Tactic 2: Remove everyday friction first

AI adoption accelerates fastest when it eliminates routine effort.

- Prioritize use cases that free time, not just improve content creation.
- Embed AI directly into familiar workflows rather than adding new tools.

Tactic 3: Make training continuous and contextual

One-off training cannot keep pace with AI evolution.

- Shift from periodic instruction to ongoing, role-relevant learning.
- Reinforce learning at the moment of use or risk.

Lenovo's view from the sidelines

In our experience, organizations often underestimate how quickly trust, training effectiveness and tool reliability determine whether AI usage scales consistently or fragments unevenly across teams.

3. Build

Embed a core vision for your AI-enhanced digital workplace across the workforce.



Build

Create a winning vision.

To enable adoption while maintaining control, IT leaders must define a clear model for how AI is used.

Employees have high expectations of how AI can improve the digital workplace experience. For IT leaders, managing and meeting these expectations—while retaining control and driving adoption—means defining and communicating how AI will shape everyday work.

One of the clearest examples of AI-enhanced workplaces in action is the emergence of invisible IT, where AI anticipates and resolves technical issues before they disrupt work. For a deep dive into how to achieve this hyper-personalized and proactively predictive IT support, see our [Work Reborn report: Achieving invisible IT](#).

By reducing digital friction and allowing employees to focus on higher-value tasks, invisible IT not only improves experience, but it also restores trust. Employees see clear value in this approach, while employers enable IT to maintain control.



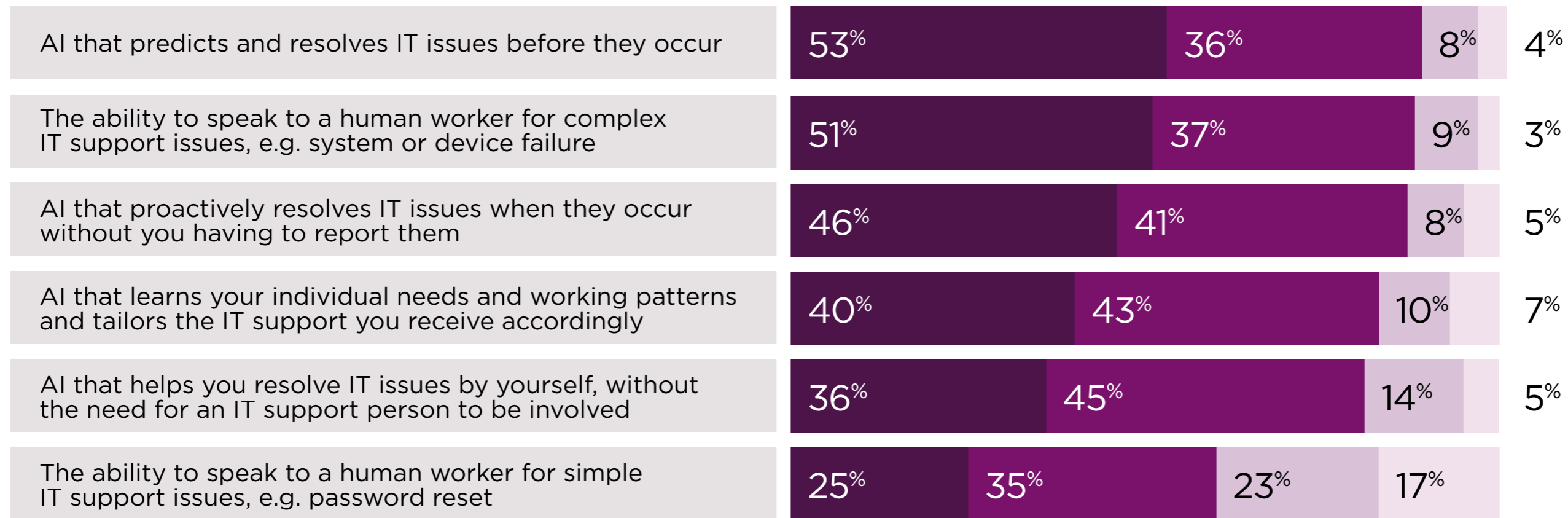
say AI that predicts and resolves IT issues before they occur would be highly valuable.





Employees would value a combination of ‘invisible’ IT support and the ability to speak to a human colleague for complex issues.*

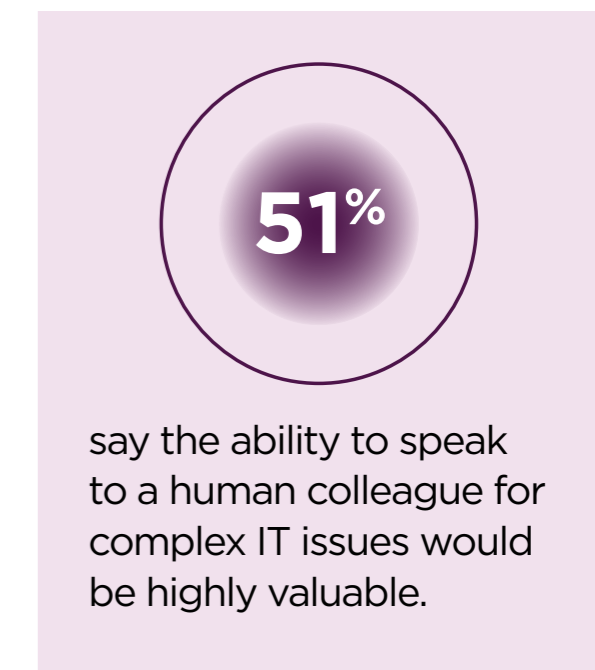
How valuable would each of the following be to you?



Highly valuable
 Somewhat valuable
 Limited value
 Not at all valuable

*Figures may not total 100% due to rounding

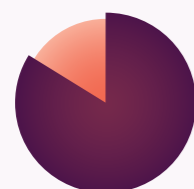
Even as they embrace automation, employees still want the option to speak with a human colleague for complex issues.



Build

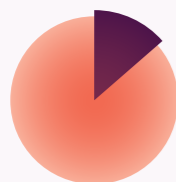
Invisible IT shows how match-ready your AI really is.

It's no surprise that the most effective invisible IT combines AI-driven automation with human expertise. But many organizations are still far from delivering this support.



83%

of IT leaders believe predictive and proactive issue resolution is key to invisible IT support.



Fewer than 21%

have achieved it.

Work Reborn report: Achieving invisible IT.

There's a clear take-out for IT leaders here. Invisible IT—delivered through proactive, AI-led, labor-light support—has become a visible test of AI maturity. If IT can't deliver it at pace, employees will question their ability to govern AI more broadly. It's a credibility test you can't afford to fail.

For executive leadership, invisible IT has become a proxy for AI maturity: if employees do not experience proactive, reliable AI-enabled support, confidence in the organization's ability to govern AI more broadly erodes.



Lenovo



Build

Gameday anxiety.


Employees recognize that AI introduces new cybersecurity risks. Threats include not just malicious attacks but, as importantly, accidental data leaks.




of employees are highly concerned about criminals using AI to develop cyber attacks against their company, as well as themselves or a colleague leaking sensitive data through public AI systems.

These concerns mirror the views of IT leaders.

61%


of IT leaders say AI is increasing cybersecurity risks.


Only 31%


are confident in their ability to address those risks.

Work Reborn report: Reinforcing the modern workplace.

But employees may underestimate the risks to AI systems themselves.

Only 23%


of employees are highly concerned about criminals attacking their company's AI systems.

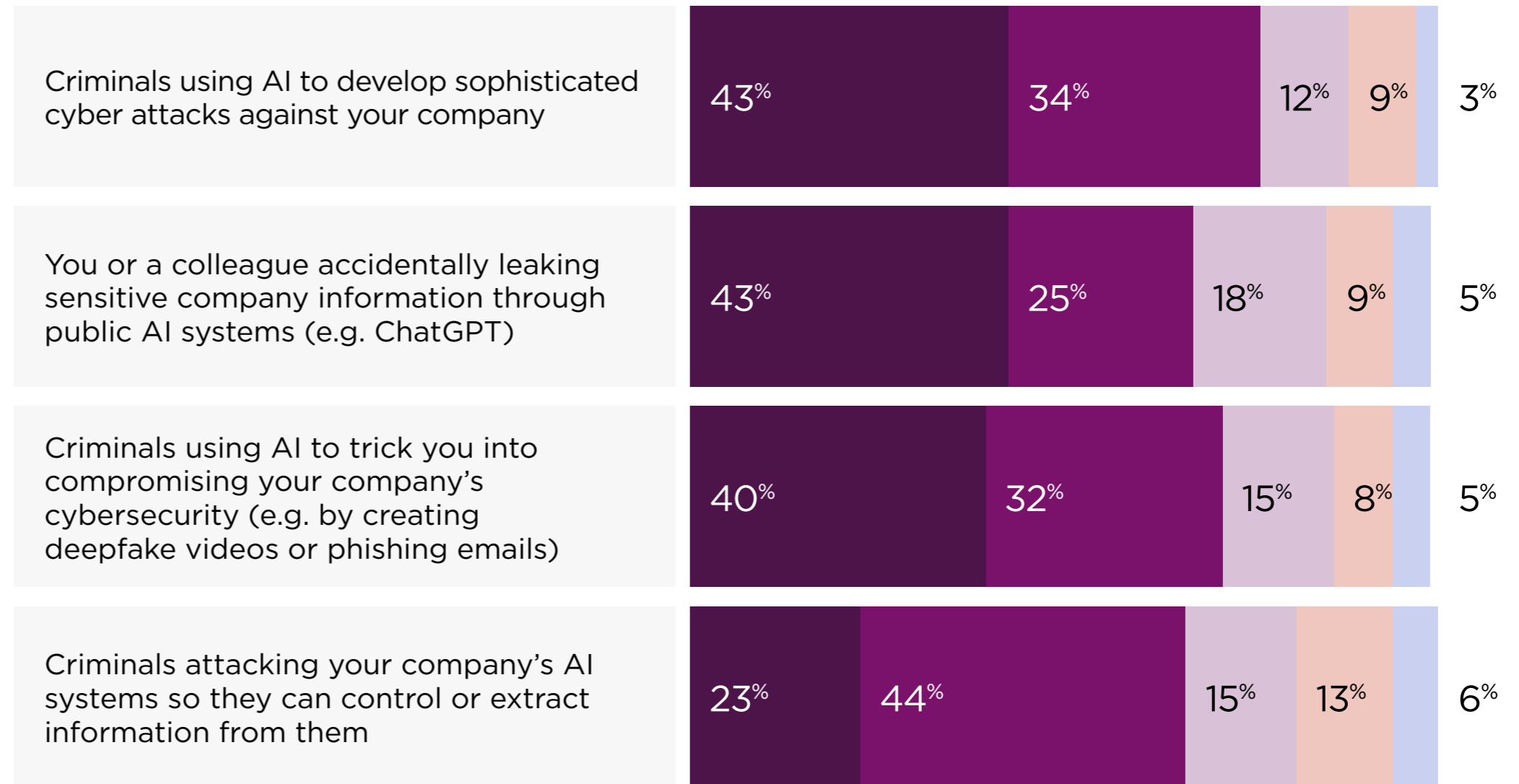
As organizations deploy AI agents and internal AI systems, securing those systems will be critical.

For employees, having faith in the company's security posture is a key driver in their willingness to adopt sanctioned IT. Again, it's a question of confidence and one that leaders must address.



Employees are rightly aware of AI-related cybersecurity risks.*

How concerned are you about the following AI-related cybersecurity threats?



Highly concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Neither concerned nor unconcerned
 Limited concern
 Not at all concerned

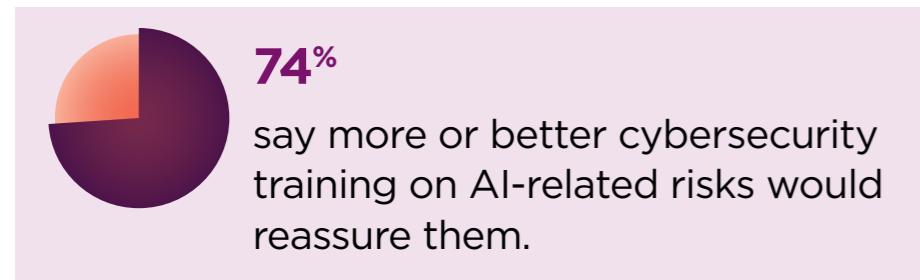
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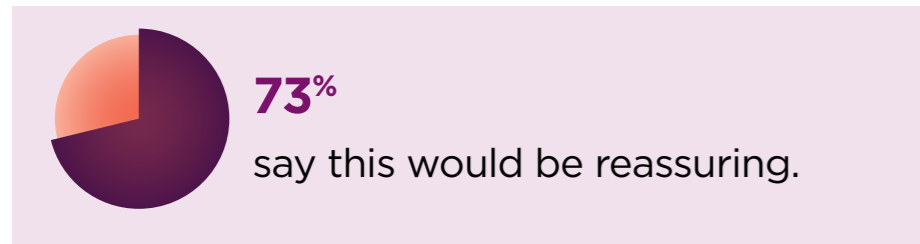
Rebuilding player confidence.

With employees recognizing the dangers of AI-related risks, clear security measures and training can help build confidence in AI adoption.

Strengthening cybersecurity awareness around AI-related threats is a key step in reassuring employees.

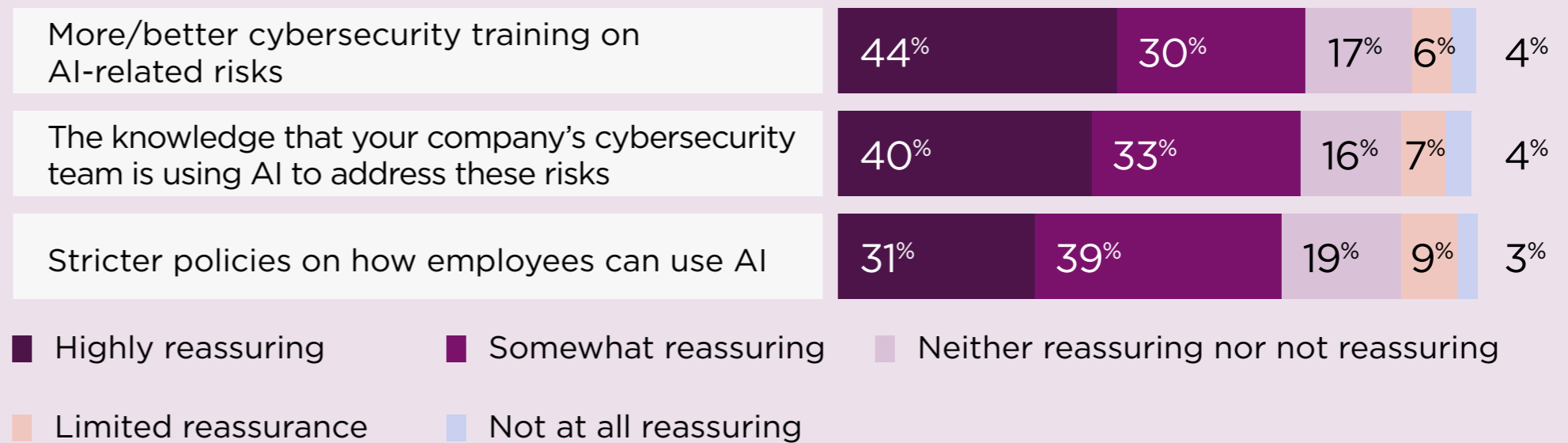


Employees would also be reassured to know that cybersecurity teams are using AI to combat AI-enabled threats.



Better training and AI-powered defenses would reassure employees.*

To what extent would the following provide reassurance that you and your organization are protected against AI-related cybersecurity risks?



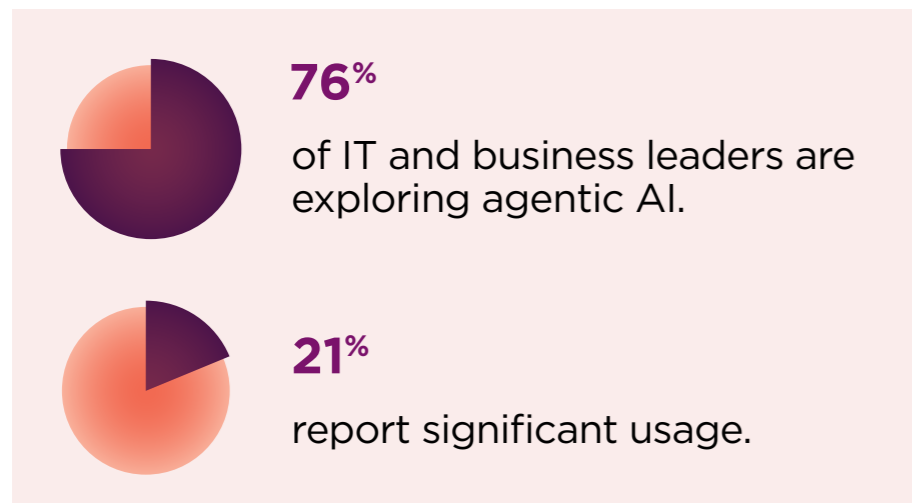
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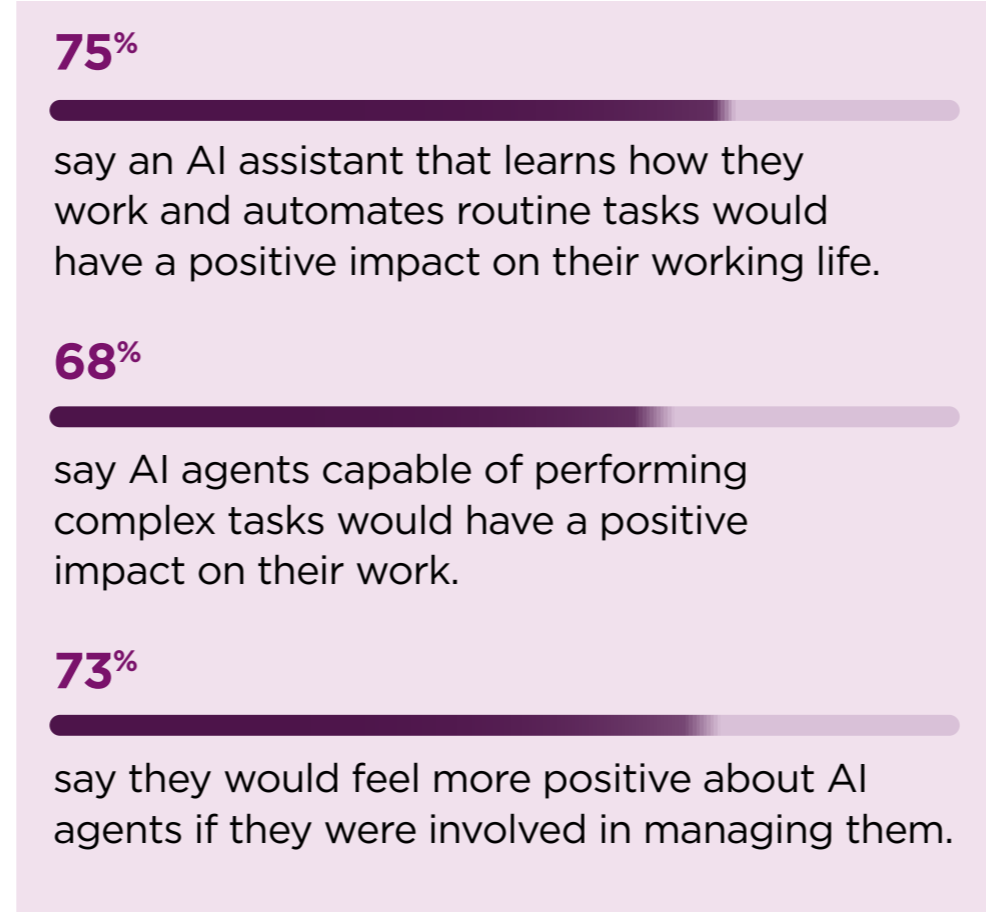
Integrating your new AI teammates.

With enterprise adoption of agentic AI already accelerating, AI agents and assistants are set to become a major feature of the digital workplace.

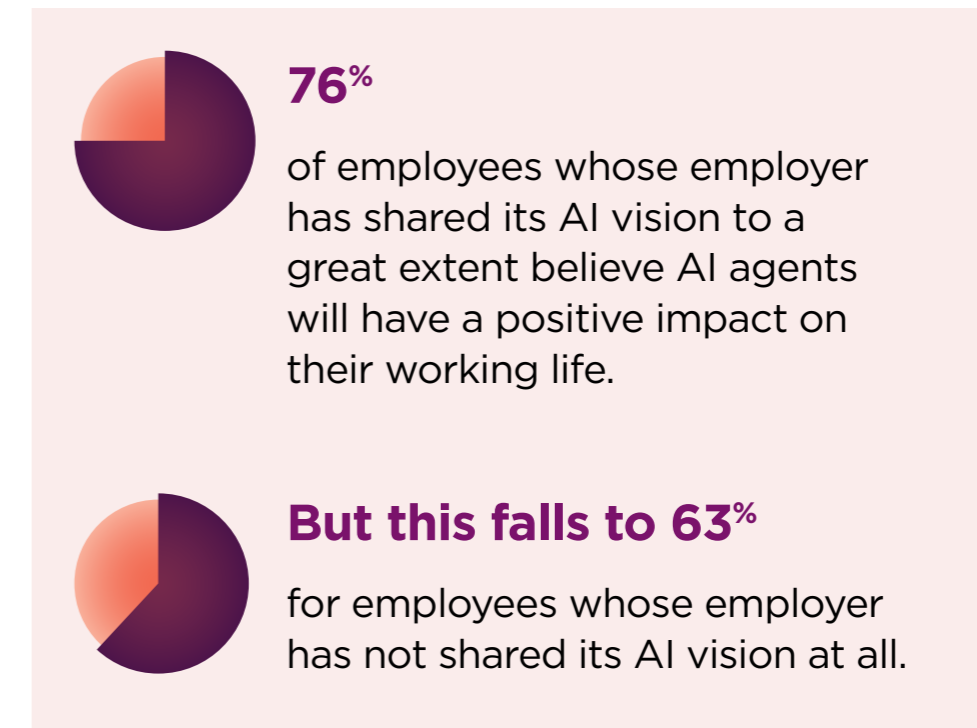


CIO Playbook 2026, The Race for Enterprise AI, Lenovo & IDC.

Employees are broadly optimistic about working alongside AI assistants. Many see value in having more autonomous AI agents, but they want to retain a degree of oversight and control.



As agentic AI continues to penetrate the digital workplace, clear communication about the organization's AI vision will play a key role in building employee confidence.





Build

Natural language becomes the new playing surface for work.

Employees are eager for AI to be embedded into the tools and workflows they use today. Nearly half describe this as their ideal experience of using AI at work.



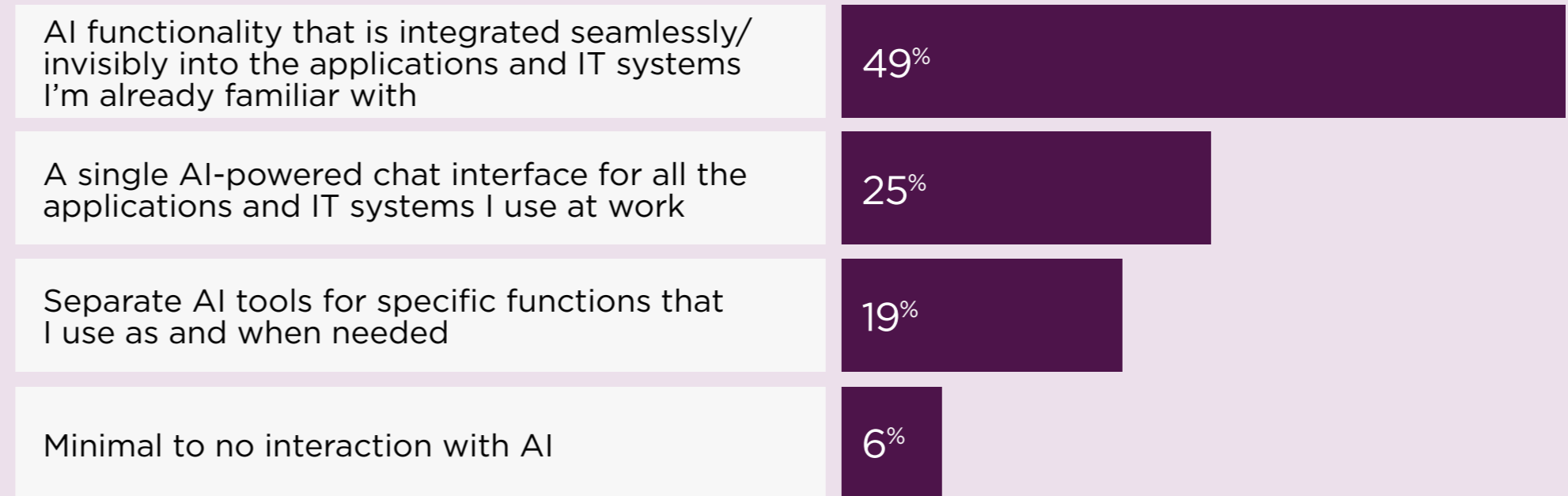
49% of employees say their ideal experience is AI integrated into the applications they are familiar with.



25% say their ideal experience would be a single AI-powered interface for all applications.

Employees want to see AI embedded in the tools they use for work.*

Which of the following best describes your ideal experience of using AI at work?



*Figures may not total 100% due to rounding

Either way, this points to natural language becoming the primary interface for enterprise systems. Some organizations might choose to build a single, standalone chat tool but for most employees, it will be embedded invisibly across the applications they already use.

This requires an architectural shift—changing how systems are accessed and orchestrated—not just a cosmetic change.

And employees need to be ready for and engaged with this new approach to interacting with enterprise systems.

To prepare, organizations should begin laying the groundwork and designing AI platforms that can orchestrate tasks across multiple enterprise systems. If IT leaders don't define their own AI interface, vendors will.

Build

Take the lead and stay there.

Strategy

Lay the foundations for secure, seamless human-AI collaboration.

Tactic 1: Eliminate digital friction at the source

AI should prevent disruption, not just respond to it.

- Anticipate and resolve issues before they disrupt work.
- Increase reliability as a foundation for trust at scale.

Tactic 2: Build security awareness into the flow of work

Cyber readiness must keep pace with AI adoption.

- Shift from reactive training to continuous, in-context learning.
- Reinforce learning through continuous, in-work guidance.

Tactic 3: Standardize how employees interact with systems

Fragmented interfaces amplify inconsistency and risk.

- Design AI to orchestrate work across systems, not within silos.
- Reduce the cognitive cost of switching between tools.

Lenovo's view from the sidelines

We believe organizations that define a clear model for how AI shows up in everyday work—before adoption accelerates further—will be far better positioned to scale innovation without sacrificing control or confidence.

4. Triumph

Your next steps for winning the AI race.





Triumph

The plays that lead to AI triumph.

The research is clear: business transformation via AI depends less on ambition and more on execution.

From unifying the two-tier workforce division to laying the groundwork for natural language AI, leaders must focus on the employee experience to enable enterprise-wide AI adoption and business transformation.

Build governance before scaling AI.

Responsible AI practices, clear accountability and strong security frameworks should be established early in the deployment cycle to ensure AI adoption remains controlled, secure, compliant and aligned with business goals.

Standardize the AI interface across workflows and endpoints.

AI should not operate as a standalone tool or experiment. Organizations should integrate AI into the systems and workflows every employee uses every day, so it becomes part of normal business execution.

Empower employees to be the execution layer of enterprise AI.

AI-led enterprise transformation will only succeed if all employees feel confident, trusted and equipped to use AI effectively. Organizations must rebuild trust by investing in training, support and engagement so employees can adopt AI responsibly and productively.

Ready to win the AI race?

Partner with Lenovo to get the results you want from your AI-driven workplace transformation.

See the highlights of what we can do with an overview of how we're transforming a leading global sports organization [here](#).

The vision is yours.

Get there with Lenovo DWS.



Lenovo



Dive deeper into digital workplace transformation with our Work Reborn research series:

- [Report 1, March 2025: Reinventing workplace productivity.](#)
How to release the power of people with Gen AI and personalization.
- [Report 2, June 2025: Igniting real workplace transformation.](#)
How to refine and implement your vision for digital workplace transformation and Gen AI.
- [Report 3, September 2025: Reinforcing the modern workplace.](#)
How to confidently address and combat AI threats as you transform your digital workplace.
- [Report 4, December 2025: Achieving invisible IT.](#)
How to remove digital barriers and make employee experience effortless.

Lead your team to triumph **Start here**

Methodology

For this study, Lenovo surveyed 6,000 full-time employees at enterprise organizations (1,000 employees plus), in December 2025 and January 2026. The survey sample included respondents from the US (17%), Canada, UK, France, Germany, India, Japan, Singapore, Brazil, Mexico (8% each), Australia (4%), and New Zealand (4%). Respondents included employees from a range of sectors, a mix of functions and seniority, and with an even spread of ages and genders.*