PEOPLE
READINESS
REPORT

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Beyond AI Adoption

The Future of Work Depends on Trust

2026

Artificial intelligence has long carried the promise of greater efficiency, faster decisions, lower costs, and more time for people to focus on higher-value work.

And organizations have invested accordingly. Today, 58% of leaders say AI is either central to how they compete or a driver of competitive advantage.

The Kyndryl People Readiness Report, based on a survey of 1,100 business and technology leaders across eight countries, suggests organizations are embracing AI faster than they are adapting their people, governance, and operating models to support it.

But realizing that promise requires more than deploying technology.

Many leaders envision a future where people and AI work side by side, sharing decisions, accelerating insight, and freeing employees to focus on more strategic work. Yet as AI takes on greater responsibility, questions around trust, governance, and workforce readiness remain unresolved.

The next phase of AI transformation may depend as much on people as it does on technology.

77%

have scaled generative AI across their enterprises

Yet only
23%

say their workforces are completely ready for AI — **down 6 points from 2025**

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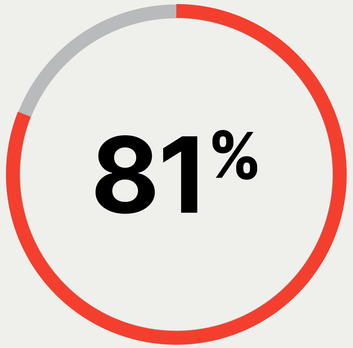
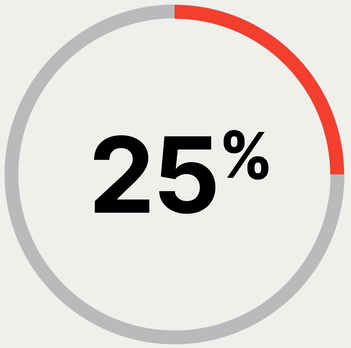
The Trust Gap

AI is becoming a bigger part of how decisions get made, but confidence in those systems has yet to catch up.



expect autonomous AI agents to make decisions with material business impact within the next year.



completely trust AI systems operating without human oversight.

The Path Forward

Pacesetters are the 9% of organizations that have done three things: they have redesigned roles around AI, formally implemented change management programs to support AI adoption, and built a workforce that is completely ready to leverage AI.

1.5x more likely to report revenue growth

1.6x more likely to report increased innovation for new products and services

Pacesetters were significantly more likely to have achieved high-value outcomes from AI, more than twice as likely to completely trust AI in autonomous and customer-facing situations, and roughly twice as likely to have fully implemented every governance dimension we measured.