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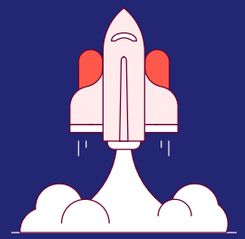

Scaling AI in 2025: The IT trends that separate AI Scalers from Nonscalers

What leading organizations are doing differently—
and what's next for enterprise AI.

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Executive Summary

The AI divide isn't about experimentation anymore—it's about transformation

In 2024, IT leaders were worried they were moving too slowly in adopting AI. GenAI had leapfrogged from buzzword to boardroom priority seemingly overnight—and many IT leaders were left scrambling to catch up. Most (78%) admitted they regretted not experimenting with AI more. And many faced immense pressure to help their organizations deploy AI—even without a clear strategy for scaling. Exploration was celebrated. Hesitation looked like failure.

But in 2025, the landscape has shifted. The 2024 rush to deploy AI has given rise to a sobering reality. Now, more than one-third (35%) of IT leaders who invested in AI solutions in 2024 say they're either pulling back or replacing them with better alternatives. Regrets about moving too slowly are easing. Regrets about investing too quickly in AI are rising.

The new mandate? Scaling. The expectation is no longer experimentation—it's enterprise-wide transformation. IT leaders are now being held accountable not just for testing AI in isolated pilots, but for driving organization-wide adoption that delivers real, scaled business value.

% of IT leaders reporting regret in past 6 months

Regret type	2024	2025	Change in 2025
Investing in AI too quickly	25%	27%	+7%
Not experimenting enough	68%	62%	-10%
Making too many software investments	45%	41%	-10%
Hiring too quickly	40%	32%	-25%
Making too many hardware investments	39%	31%	-26%

While experimentation still matters—and IT leaders still regret not experimenting enough—a new divide is emerging: not between early AI adopters and laggards, but between those successfully scaling AI and those stuck in pilot mode.

Our latest research, based on a survey of 3,182 knowledge workers in the U.S. and U.K., including 560 IT professionals, shows that two distinct types of organizations have emerged:

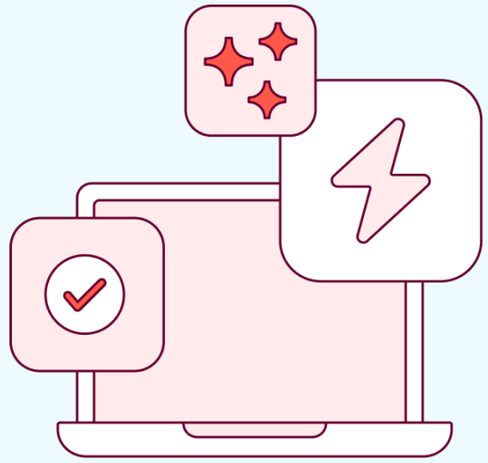
- **AI Scalers:**
  Organizations that deploy AI across multiple business functions, integrate it into core workflows, and establish measurement systems to continuously evaluate and improve performance.
- **Nonscalers:**
  Organizations stuck in pilot mode, unable to scale AI beyond a select few work processes

Two-thirds of organizations (67%) fall into the latter group. They've adopted AI—but haven't scaled it. Meanwhile, AI Scalers are pulling ahead.

Compared to Nonscalers, AI Scalers are:

What sets AI Scalers apart is how they approach AI. They don't just sprinkle AI on top of old workflows—they rethink how work gets done. They bake AI into the foundation, redesigning processes from the ground up.

Their approach isn't just a blueprint for scaling. It's a wake-up call. And it's what real competitive advantage will look like going forward.



Six trends defining the next phase of enterprise AI

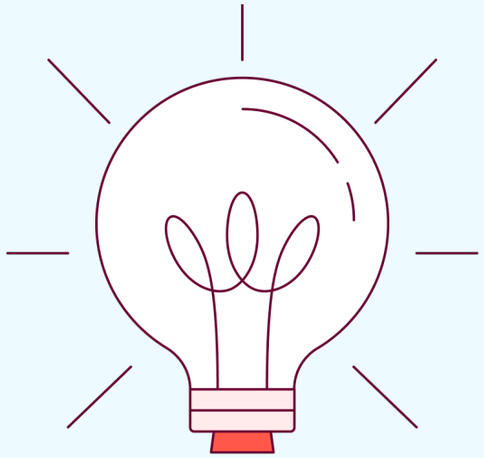
What AI Scalers do differently

1	AI shifts from pilots to platform thinking	AI Scalers are **1.4x more likely** than Nonscalers to have dedicated budgets for AI tools and licenses. They invest in long-term infrastructure—not one-off experiments.
2	Scaling AI requires alignment beyond IT	AI Scalers are **1.7x more likely** to have a dedicated AI council or committee primarily responsible for AI strategy. Scaling isn't just an IT initiative—it's an enterprise mandate.
3	Governance shifts from bottleneck to enabler	AI Scalers are **2.2x more likely** to have centralized governance structures that provide guardrails without creating gridlock—making it easier (and safer) for employees to adopt AI.
4	AI integrates into the tools people already use	AI Scalers are **2.2x more likely** to embed AI into existing tools and workflows—integrating it seamlessly, not bolting it on as an afterthought.
5	AI success metrics expand beyond efficiency to human-centered ROI	AI Scalers are **2.4x more likely** to have formal processes for tracking ROI—not just in efficiency gains, but in human-centered outcomes like employee experience and user adoption.
6	Agent readiness becomes a competitive differentiator	AI Scalers are **3.7x more likely** to maintain a centralized library of pre-built AI agents—complete with documentation, governance rules, and usage guidelines. It's not just about building agents. It's about making them usable at scale.

IT still leads—but can't scale alone

IT leaders remain at the helm of AI strategy—78% say they're responsible for driving AI within their organizations (virtually unchanged from 77% in 2024). But in 2025, technical leadership isn't enough. More than ever, scaling AI demands cross-functional coordination and shared ownership across the business.

This report outlines six trends that define what successful AI scaling looks like in 2025. The gap between AI Scalers and Nonscalers isn't just growing—it's becoming the fault line that separates the future-ready from the falling behind.

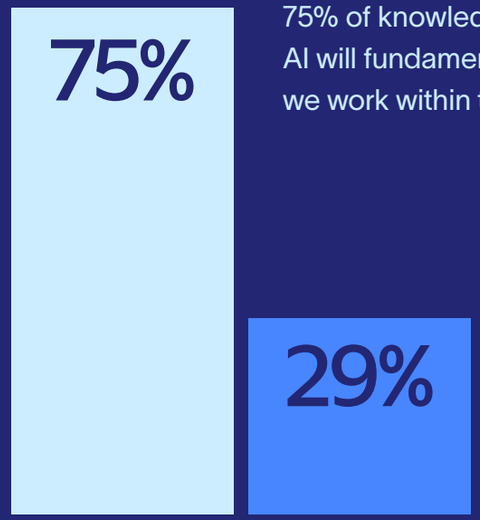


78% of IT leaders say they're responsible for leading AI transformation within their organization

Trend 1

AI shifts from pilots to platform thinking

AI was supposed to reinvent how work gets done. But in too many organizations, that promise has been buried under a pile of pilots, proof-of-concepts, and half-baked strategies that overpromised and underdelivered.



75% of knowledge workers expect AI will fundamentally change how we work within the next two years.

Yet only 29% say their organization has moved beyond the pilot phase.

The gap is even bigger for AI agents—autonomous systems capable of executing complex tasks with minimal human input. Only 18% of employees say their organization has moved past the pilot stage with AI agents.

The reality? Most companies are still dabbling in AI. They're treating it like a project, not a platform. They're testing in silos instead of building the infrastructure to support it at scale.

Platform thinking is what separates AI Scalers from Nonscalers

AI Scalers take a different approach. They bake AI into the core of how work happens—across teams, tools, and workflows.

The six defining characteristics of AI platform thinking

1. **AI as a strategic priority:** Organizations allocate real budget and resources, not leftovers from the innovation slush fund, to ensure AI drives measurable impact
2. **Deep integration with the tech stack:** AI isn't bolted on. It's embedded into the systems people already use.
3. **Centralized implementation strategy:** A unified approach keeps deployments consistent, scalable, and aligned with real business goals.
4. **Employee enablement:** Organizations invest in hands-on training and support so AI isn't just available—it's actually usable.
5. **Clear usage guidelines:** Policies define how AI should be used, what's allowed, and who's responsible. No guesswork.
6. **Proactive monitoring:** AI use is monitored to optimize performance, manage risks, and improve results.

And the impact is significant. What's most striking is that AI Scalers aren't just improving isolated KPIs. They're strengthening some of the hardest-to-move capabilities in the business—the metrics that usually resist change. They're building a sustainable AI foundation that delivers real, repeatable value across the organization.

83%

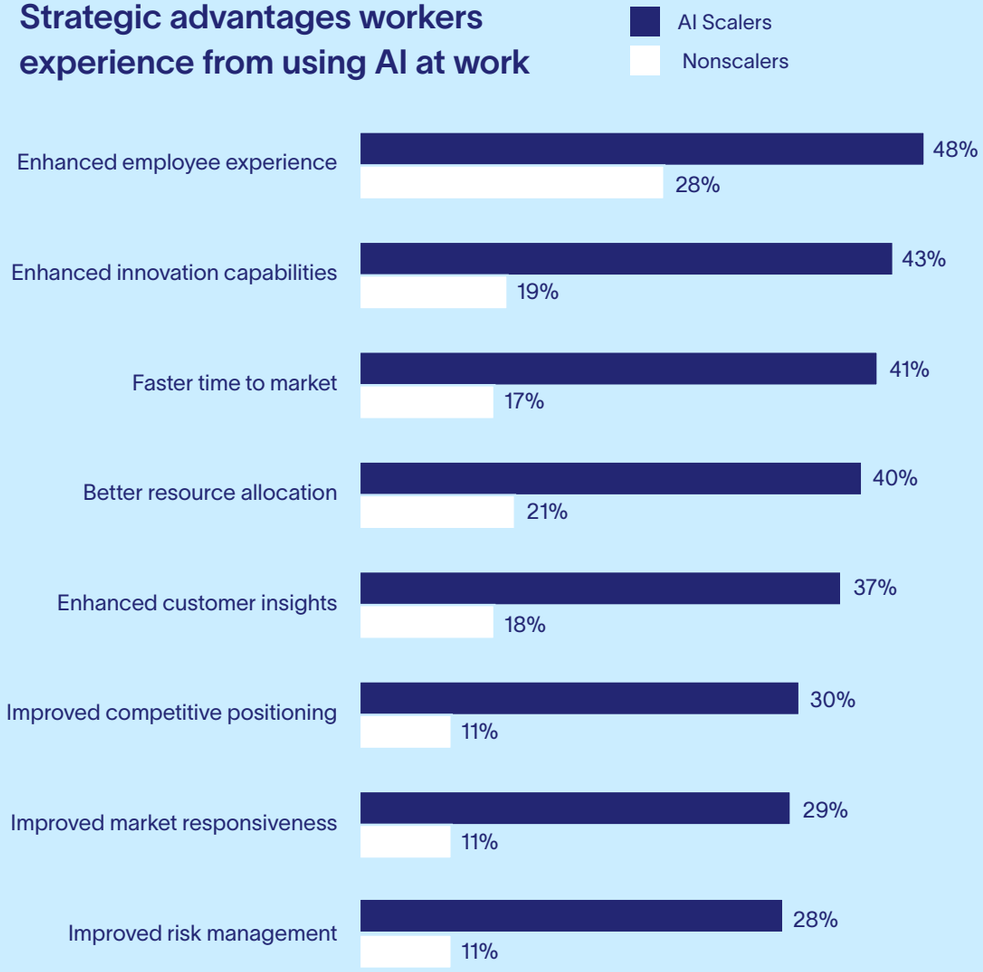
of employees at AI Scalers report productivity gains from using AI at work—compared to just 63% for Nonscalers.

How employees at AI Scalers say their organizations are benefitting from using AI:

- 88% say productivity has improved (40% more likely than Nonscalers)
- 85% report higher-quality work (52% more likely than Nonscalers)
- 75% say higher quality decisions are made (79% more likely than Nonscalers)
- 65% report stronger cross-team collaboration (97% more likely than Nonscalers)

From faster innovation cycles to sharper decisions, AI Scalers are turning AI into a structural advantage—the kind that Nonscalers will struggle to catch up to.

Strategic advantages workers experience from using AI at work



Every quarter spent in pilot mode is a quarter of lost momentum. The gap between AI Scalers and Nonscalers isn't narrowing—it's widening.

What it takes to scale AI: Build for infrastructure, not isolated use cases

To get beyond the pilot phase, organizations need more than momentum—they need a mindset shift. AI Scalers aren't scaling by accident. They're building the systems, roles, and resources required to turn early wins into repeatable, enterprise-wide impact.

Here's how they do it differently:

1

Fund it like a platform—not a project

AI Scalers don't chase quick wins. They invest in a foundation built to last. They're 136% more likely to have dedicated budgets for AI tools and licenses—fueling consistent progress, not one-off experiments. That investment pays off. It lets them compound success over time instead of starting from scratch after every pilot.

2

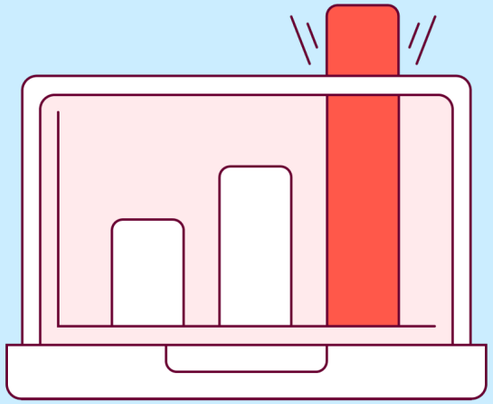
Scale AI intentionally, not organically

AI Scalers don't leave AI adoption to individual teams experimenting in isolation. They're 154% more likely to follow a centralized deployment model with clear guidelines. They don't sit around waiting for good use cases to surface—they identify, codify, and scale them on purpose.

3

Build for flexibility, not lock-in

AI Scalers know agility isn't optional. They're 88% more likely to choose tools that support multiple large language models from various providers like OpenAI and Anthropic. That flexibility lets them stay nimble as the tech evolves—and avoid getting boxed in by a single provider.



The bottom line

Pilots prove AI works. But they don't prove it scales. The organizations pulling ahead aren't just running smarter projects—they're building smarter systems. They're investing in infrastructure, creating accountability, and transforming early momentum into lasting impact.

And we'll see in Trend #2, scaling AI doesn't just mean changing tools. It means changing how the whole organization works.

"Scaling AI isn't just about deploying new technology—it's about redesigning how work gets done. The organizations pulling ahead are the ones treating AI as infrastructure, investing in their people, and putting real governance in place. That's what unlocks AI's transformative potential—and turns it into a lasting competitive advantage."

Dr. Rebecca Hinds
Head of the Asana Work Innovation Lab

Trend 2

Scaling AI requires alignment beyond IT

There's a growing disconnect between how IT leaders are embracing AI—and how the rest of the organization is experiencing it.

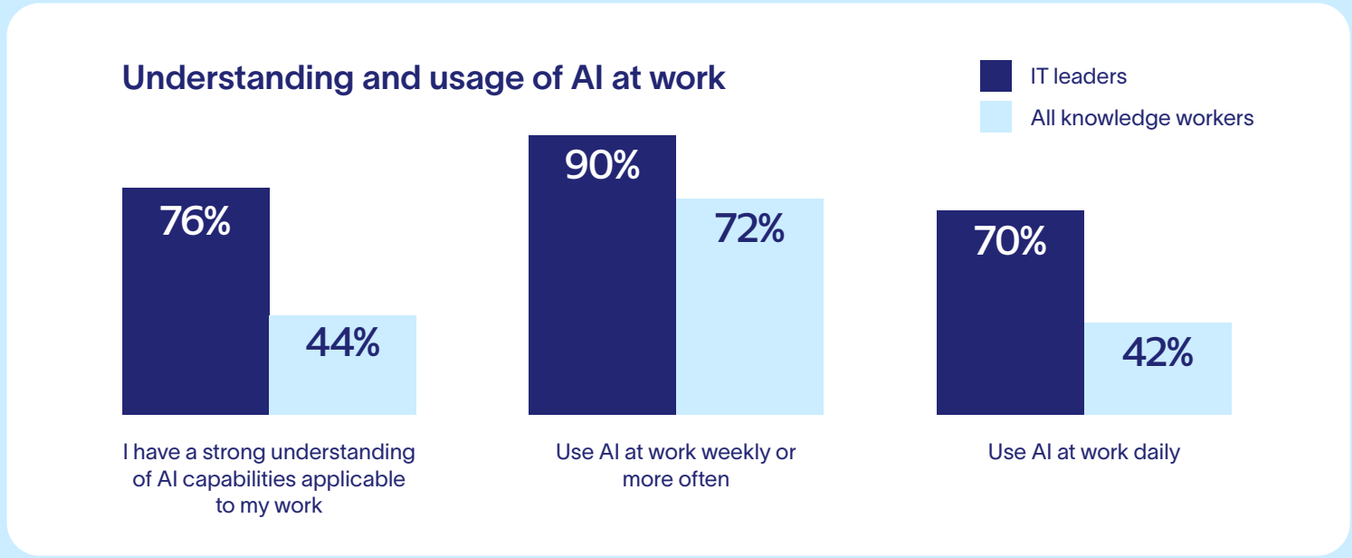
Most companies have an AI adoption problem. Workers don't see AI in their daily workflows, don't understand how it works, don't use the tools being rolled out—and often don't believe the benefits are real.

76%

of IT leaders have a strong understanding of applicable AI capabilities, while only 44% of all knowledge workers say the same.

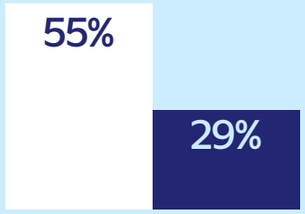
90%

of IT leaders use AI weekly, compared to 72% of all knowledge workers.

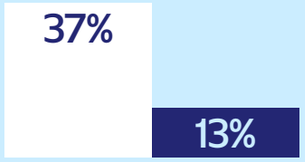


IT can't roll out AI alone

When IT rolls out AI without full business buy-in, the tools may launch—but they often struggle to land. Training is inconsistent. Context is missing. And employees on the frontlines are left unsure what's actually supposed to change.



While 55% of IT leaders say AI is fully deployed across their organization, only 29% of employees agree.

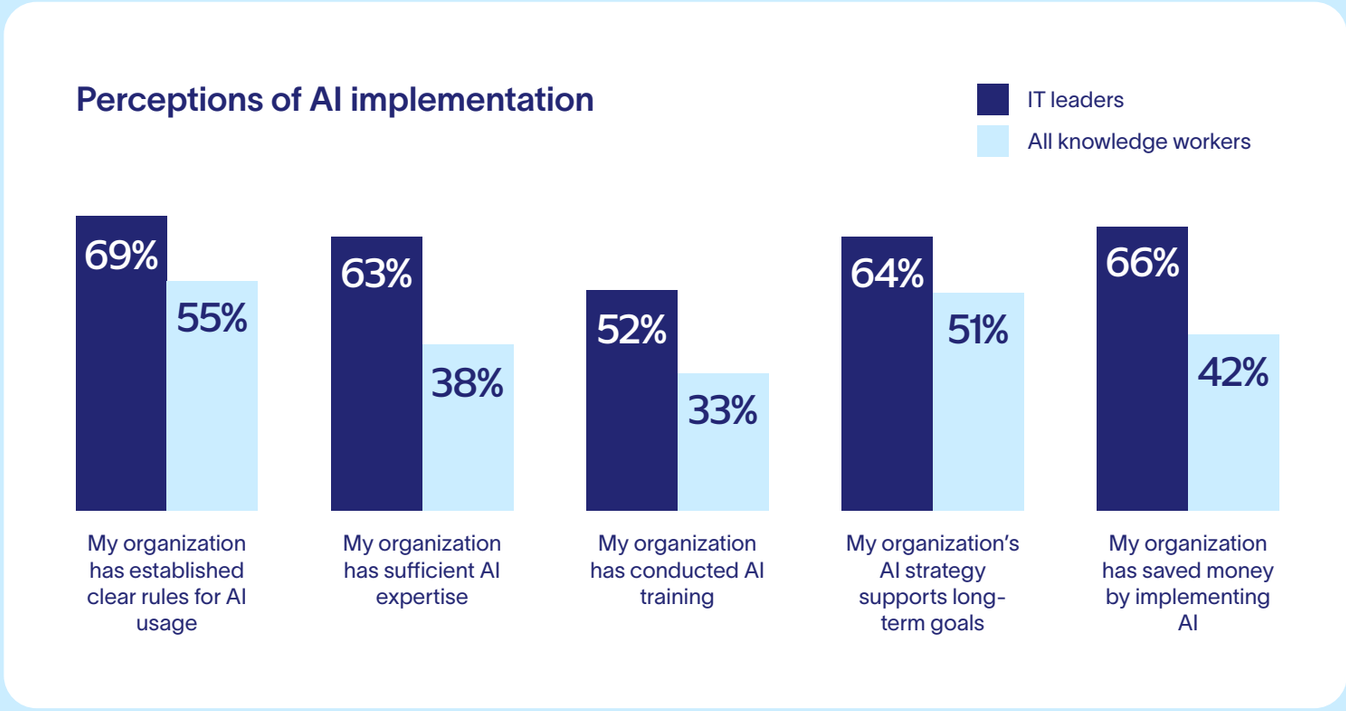


37% of workers say there's no clear owner of AI strategy—compared to just 13% of IT leaders.

Without clear leadership, AI can stall out—caught between departments, priorities, and expectations. It remains a promising capability that doesn't scale organization-wide.

37%

of workers report no clear owner for AI strategy, compared to just 13% of IT leaders.



The reality gap: Different worlds, same

Across nearly every dimension—tools, training, ownership—the people building AI and the people expected to use it are operating in different realities.

And the cost is real.

When employees don't understand the strategy, don't see the value, and don't feel supported, even the most advanced AI solutions fall flat.

IT leaders are increasingly aware of the risks:

- 54% of IT leaders say they regret not training employees before rolling out AI solutions
- 36% say their organization has missed out on real business value due to a lack of training

This is what misalignment looks like: powerful tools that don't gain traction, because employees weren't ready—or able—to use them.

54%

of IT leaders regret not training employees before implementing AI solutions.

What it takes to scale AI: Aligning it with business strategy

For CIOs and other IT leaders, the next frontier of AI isn't deployment—it's integration. Scaling AI requires more than tools. It requires a shift in mindset, structure, and accountability. AI has to move out of IT and into the business.

Here are four moves AI Scalers make to align AI with business strategy—and unlock real impact:

1 Assign clear ownership of AI strategy

AI Scalers are 51% more likely to have a clear, visible owner for AI—and 167% more likely to have a dedicated AI council leading the charge. That ownership aligns stakeholders, removes ambiguity, and keeps AI from disappearing into a backlog of tech projects.

2 Build cross-functional governance teams

AI Scalers treat governance as a shared responsibility—not a siloed IT function.

They bring legal, compliance, product, operations, and HR to the table to shape AI policies that are not only technically sound, but also practical, ethical, and adopted by those who use them. And it works: Scalers are 50% more likely to say AI has improved collaboration between technical and non-technical teams.

3 Ensure strategic alignment with business objectives

AI Scalers don't just align AI strategy with business goals in theory—they operationalize it.

Employees at AI Scalers are:

- 83% more likely to say their organization's AI strategy aligns with its long-term business goals
- 81% more likely to believe their organization's AI strategy will allow it to achieve future business objectives

4 Demonstrate AI's business value

AI Scalers go beyond adoption—they connect AI to outcomes. They clearly show how it improves performance, builds resilience, and strengthens their competitive edge.

The payoff?

- They're 52% more likely to say AI will make their organization resilient to future disruptions.
- And 28% less likely to express concern about their ability to prove AI's business value.

AI Scalers don't just talk about AI—they make it usable for the rest of the business. They show—not just tell—how AI helps. That means live demos tied to real use cases, success stories from actual teams, and centralized hubs where employees can easily find the AI tools that matter to their work. This practical, grounded approach builds trust, accelerates adoption, and makes the value of AI tangible.

The bottom line

Without alignment between IT and the business, AI doesn't scale—it stalls.

You get technology without context.
Training without application.
Implementation without accountability.

The tools show up—but the impact doesn't.

But when IT and business leaders align around a shared vision—with clear ownership, shared goals, and real enablement—AI moves from isolated wins to organization-wide transformation.

Scaling AI requires alignment beyond IT

Trend 3

Governance shifts from bottleneck to enabler

Security is the number one concern organizations face when implementing AI. Both employees and IT leaders rank it as the top barrier, with 42% naming it their biggest concern.

But here's the problem: many organizations still haven't built the governance structures to manage AI risk. And when they do, they often default to rigid, top-down policies that end up slowing AI down instead of scaling it up.

DEFINITION:

Centralized AI governance structure

A coordinated framework of policies, standards, and risk protocols that provides consistent guidance for AI usage across the enterprise, ensuring responsible and effective use of AI technologies.

Right now, that structure is missing in most organizations. Only 32% of IT leaders and 15% of workers say their organization has such a structure in place.

Without centralized governance, teams face inconsistent rules, unclear accountability, and uneven risk standards. The result? A lose-lose scenario: risk isn't mitigated—and innovation slows to a crawl.

Only **32%** of IT leaders and 15% of workers say their organization has created a centralized AI governance structure.

The governance paradox: Rules can accelerate innovation

Our research reveals a counterintuitive truth: the right guardrails don't hinder innovation—they unlock it.
Without governance, most organizations fall into one of two traps—and neither leads to meaningful progress:

- Innovation gridlock, where fear of security risks leads to inaction
- Shadow AI, where employees use unapproved tools in ways that create risk

Research has long shown that well-designed constraints create clarity, reduce friction, and empower teams to move faster—because they know where the lines are.

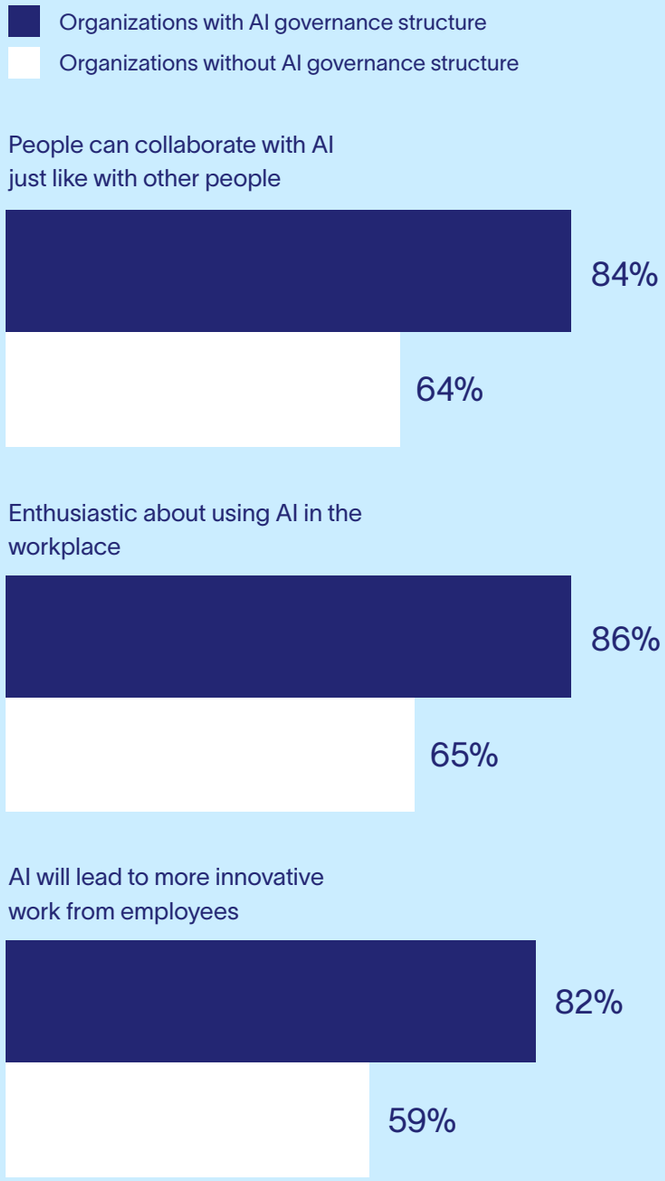
Trap 1: Innovation gridlock

When governance is murky—or missing—employees freeze. They don't know what's allowed, so they play it safe or don't engage at all. Innovation dies in the uncertainty.

The impact is clear:

- **Collaboration:** 84% of workers at organizations with structured governance say people can collaborate effectively with AI—vs. just 64% at organizations without it.
- **Enthusiasm:** 86% of workers with structured governance are enthusiastic about using AI—vs. just 65% without it.
- **Innovation mindset:** 82% of workers with structured governance believe AI will lead to more innovative work—vs. only 59% without it.

Differences in AI mindset



39%

Workers at organizations with clear governance structures are 39% more likely to believe AI will lead to more innovative work.

When employees know what's allowed, they're more likely to engage—and to experiment. Clarity creates confidence.

Trap 2: Shadow AI

Sometimes, governance gaps don't prevent AI use—they just push it underground. Employees turn to tools that aren't approved or monitored, creating significant risk.

When governance is missing, AI adoption becomes invisible, unmanaged, and unsafe.

51% of IT leaders report employees are using AI solutions that don't comply with their organization's AI usage policy.

Governance alone isn't enough

Governance is necessary—but it only needs to be paired with enablement.

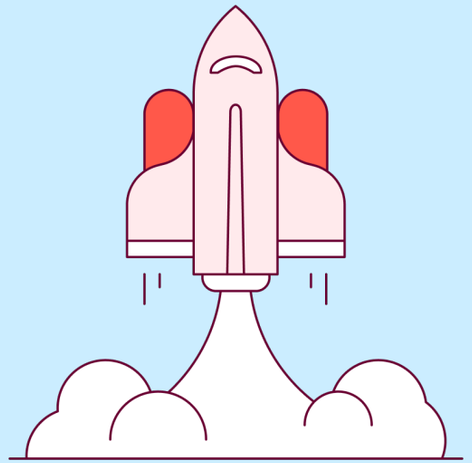
AI Scalers get this. They don't just write policies—they teach people how to work within them. They combine structure with support: training, documentation, and hands-on guidance that help employees use AI responsibly and confidently. And the results speak for themselves. Organizations that implement both governance and training outperform those that rely on just one—or neither.

Employees in these organizations are:

- **51% more likely** to feel enthusiastic about using AI compared to those in organizations with no governance or training.
- **55% more likely** to use AI on a weekly basis.
- **260% more likely** to report productivity gains from AI.

AI governance, AI training, or both?

	Feel enthusiastic about using AI at work	Use AI at work on a weekly basis	Experience improved employee productivity from using AI at work
No AI governance structure and no training employees on how to use AI	59%	62%	25%
AI governance structure without training employees	81%	84%	80%
Training employees without AI governance structure	78%	86%	83%
AI governance structure **AND** training employees on how to use AI	**89%**	**96%**	**90%**



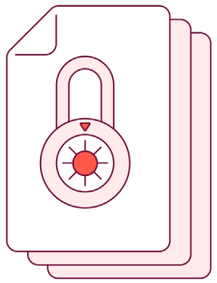
When organizations invest in both governance and training, the impact compounds. Employees don't just know the rules—they know how to apply them. Governance becomes a launchpad—not a barrier.

What it takes to scale AI: Building governance that empowers, not restricts

To scale AI, organizations need to rethink what governance is for.

It's not about locking things down. It's about building systems that enable safe, confident, and widespread use—without slowing teams to a crawl.

Here's how AI Scalers are doing it:



1 Make AI usable, not just secure

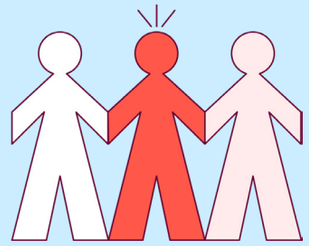
Governance alone doesn't drive adoption. It has to be paired with education.

AI Scalers are **4.3x more likely** to implement both a centralized governance structure and employee education programs.

Why does that matter?

- Governance provides the rules.
- Training gives people the skills to follow them.

Together, they create an environment where employees feel confident—not cautious—and innovation can move faster without increasing risk.



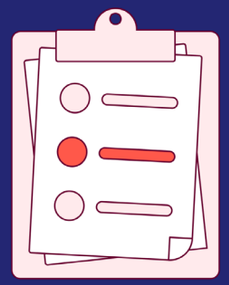
2 Create tiered governance—don't default to blanket rules

When every use case is treated the same, governance backfires. It either slows everything down or misses real risks.

AI Scalers don't make that mistake. They're 222% more likely to have centralized governance—but they go further, with tiered frameworks that match oversight to risk level:

- **High-risk use cases**—like financial decisions or customer-facing content—require formal review and approval.
- **Low-risk use cases**—like summarizing internal documents—follow self-service guidelines.

This approach protects what matters most, while keeping experimentation fast and frictionless. The result? Fewer bottlenecks. More innovation. Guardrails that actually get used.



3 Make AI governance clear, not confusing

When rules are fuzzy, people stall—not out of resistance, but uncertainty.

AI Scalers avoid this by writing it all down. They're **111% more likely** to have well-documented AI governance policies.

Clear documentation turns ambiguity into action.

Teams know what's allowed, where to go with questions, and how to stay compliant while experimenting.

No guesswork. No waiting on approvals. Just forward momentum.

4 Remain vigilant

AI Scalers don't compromise on security to scale faster. They manage the tension head-on.

Interestingly, employees at scaled AI organizations are:

- **13% more likely** to feel stress about securing data and systems
- **13% more likely** to feel stress from ensuring data compliance

Why? Because they're actually engaged in managing these risks—not ignoring them.

Effective governance doesn't eliminate concern. It channels it. It gives people the tools to move fast and stay responsible.

The Bottom Line

Smart governance doesn't slow down AI—it accelerates it.

When rules are clear, tools are trusted, and teams are trained, governance becomes a multiplier—not a bottleneck. It unlocks safe experimentation, builds trust across the organization, and turns AI into a scalable, sustainable advantage.

> We need to establish clear boundaries to mitigate security and compliance risks, but we can't afford to stifle innovation in the process. The key is to implement governance models that provide necessary oversight for high-risk applications while empowering teams to experiment responsibly with lower-risk AI use cases. It's about enabling progress, not policing it.

Saket Srivastava
CIO at Asana

Trend 4

AI integrates into the tools people already use

AI delivers the most value when it's embedded—not bolted on. But most organizations still treat AI as a standalone layer: an add-on, not an upgrade.

The result? Incremental gains—not transformation at scale.

Only **8%** of workers and 12% of IT leaders say most AI solutions in their organization are fully integrated into existing systems.

When AI lives outside the tools employees rely on, adoption stalls. Context disappears. Friction builds. AI becomes just another tab to manage—one more thing to log into.

Workers are encountering significant technical barriers when trying to implement AI within their organizations:

- 27% cite overall technical complexity as a major obstacle
- 24% struggle to integrate AI with existing legacy systems

Instead of embedding AI into day-to-day workflows, most companies deploy it in silos—out of context, out of sync, and often out of sight. The result: fragmented tools, disjointed experiences, and limited impact.

AI Scalers, on the other hand, take a different approach. They prioritize integration from the start. That's why they're 43% more likely to rely on a balanced mix of internal development and external vendors or partners—leveraging internal expertise and external capabilities to build AI into the systems people already use.

Organizations that fully integrate AI report far fewer implementation headaches. Compared to those with limited or no integration, they're:

- 35% less likely to struggle with unclear implementation objectives
- 31% less likely to face data standardization issues
- 29% less likely to hit legacy system integration roadblocks
- 20% less likely to be held back by AI expertise gaps
- 20% less likely to deal with data trapped in silos
- 15% less likely to get stuck choosing the right AI tools

Integration doesn't just improve AI performance. It reduces friction across the entire implementation process.

Integration improves the employee experience

When AI is built into the flow of work, employees don't have to stop what they're doing to use it—it's already there. Helping them move faster, simplifying decisions, and reducing digital drag.

- 83% of workers at organizations with integrated AI say it has reduced time spent on administrative tasks (vs. 59% at organizations without integration)
- 71% say AI has improved collaboration between technical and non-technical teams (vs. 46% without integration)
- 59% report reduced digital exhaustion (vs. just 28% without integration)

AI doesn't transform work when it's off to the side. It transforms work when it's part of the flow.

Integration improves the employee experience

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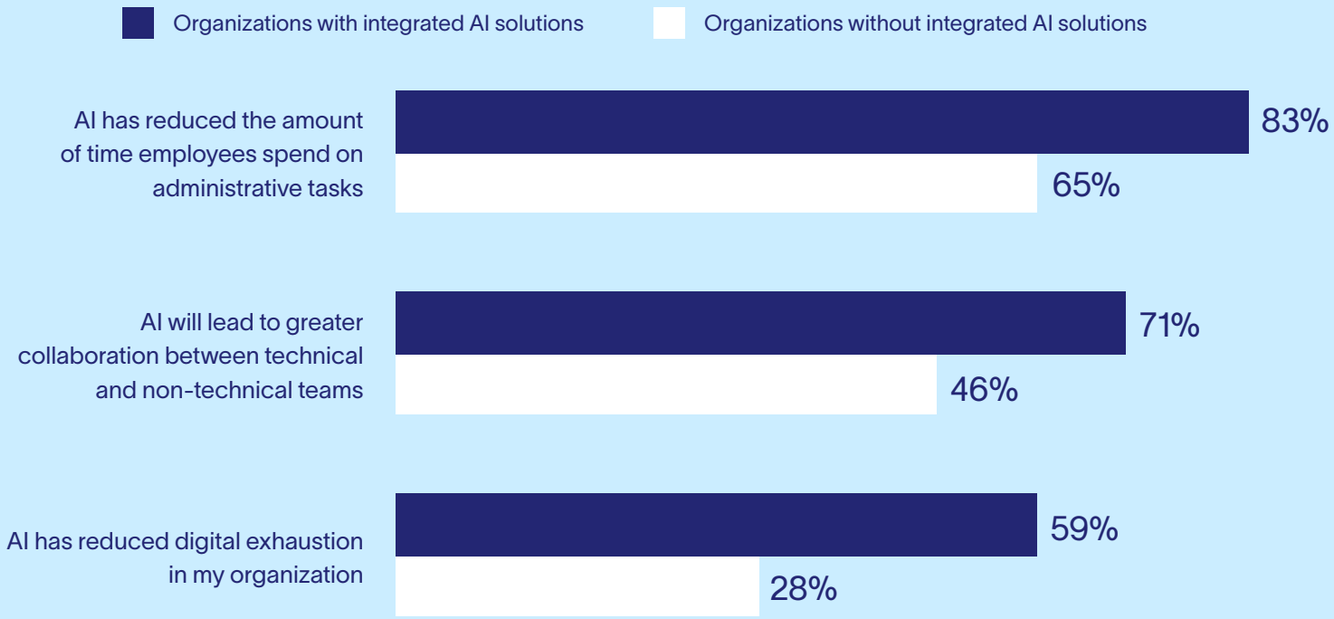
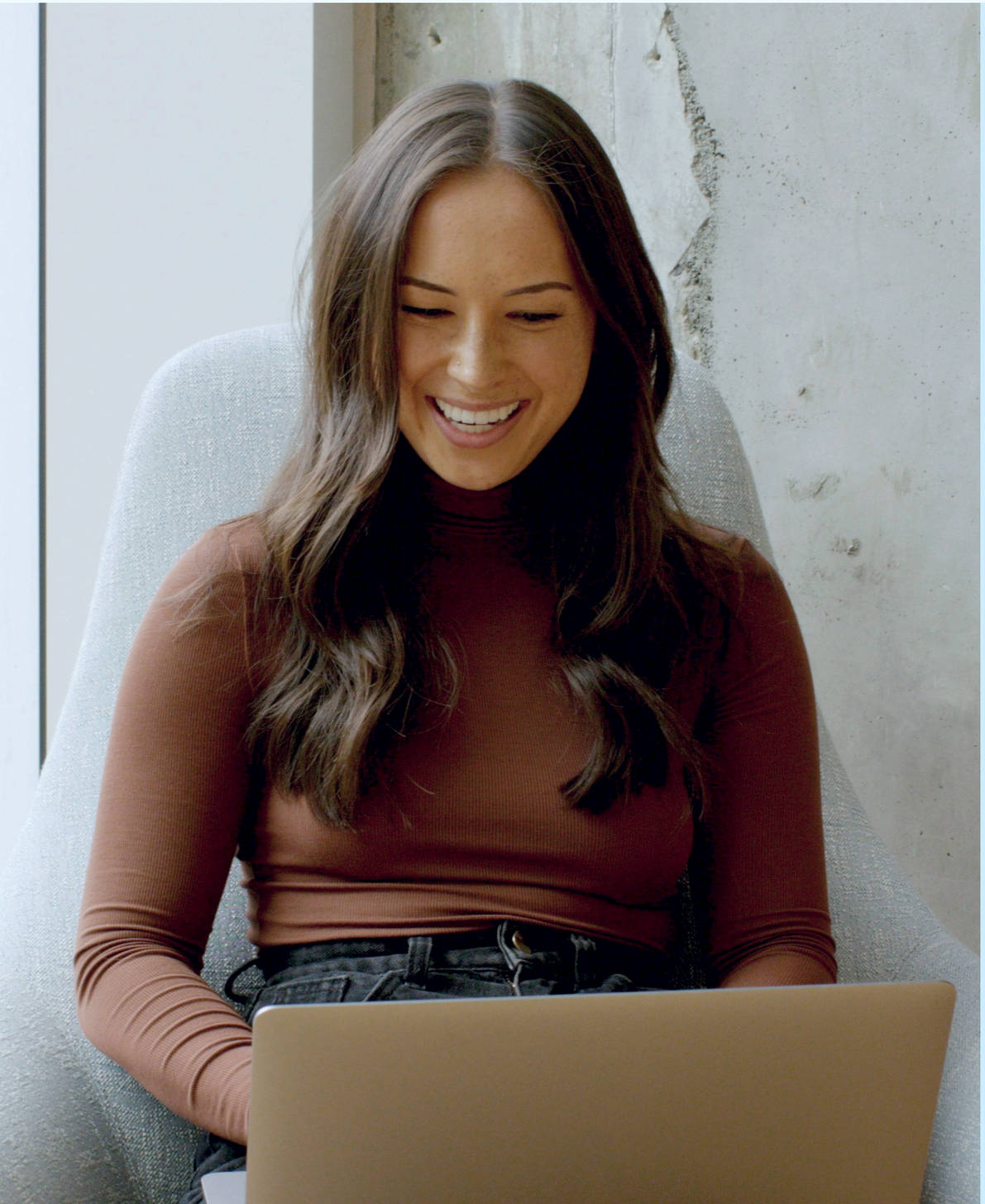
AI doesn't transform work when it's off to the side. It transforms work when it's part of the flow.

Impact of AI implementation



75%

Work continues to grow increasingly distracting—our research shows that **75% of employees experience digital exhaustion**, and that number has surged 17% in the past year. Workers at organizations with fully integrated AI solutions are 111% more likely to report that AI has reduced digital exhaustion at their organization—rather than increased it.



Integration improves the employee experience

At AI Scalers, AI becomes the first step—not the last resort. It fades into the background, quietly automating repetitive tasks, surfacing relevant insights, and making the next move obvious.

It works the way people work—no tab switching, no tool hunting, no added mental load.

It becomes the go-to tool because it's faster than the alternative and smarter than a blank page. It earns trust by consistently reducing friction and delivering value—without demanding extra clicks or context switching.

Meanwhile, at Nonscalers, where AI is bolted on instead of built in, it doesn't enhance focus—it competes for it. It's just another app, another login, another distraction.

The result? Slower uptake. More friction. Less impact.

59% At organizations with integrated AI solutions, 59% of workers turn to AI first to get their work done—compared to just 28% where AI is not integrated.

What it takes to scale AI: Make integration the default

To move beyond siloed pilots and into scaled impact, AI needs to be embedded, not adjacent. Here's how AI Scalers make that happen:

1. Make integration a requirement—not an afterthought

AI Scalers are 2.2x more likely to have fully integrated AI solutions. Why? Because they treat integration as a requirement—not an afterthought.

They embed AI into the tools people already use—CRMs, collaboration platforms, work management systems—so AI fits into existing workflows, not against them.

When integration is built in from day one, adoption becomes automatic.

2. Prioritize platforms over point solutions

Standalone tools often add friction instead of removing it.

AI Scalers know that AI works best inside the systems people already trust. They're 28% more likely to prioritize interoperability when selecting solutions—choosing tools that plug in seamlessly to the existing tech stack.

3. Clean up the data before turning on the AI

Most integration issues don't start with AI—they start with messy data.

AI Scalers know this, so they fix the foundation first. That means:

- Aligning key identifiers (e.g., customer IDs, SKUs)
- Eliminating duplicates and misaligned taxonomies
- Ensuring systems pull from a single source of truth
- Assigning clear ownership for ongoing data quality

And it works: Organizations with integrated AI are 31% less likely to hit data standardization issues.

4. Establish enterprise-wide technical standards.

AI Scalers don't let every team invent their own AI plumbing.

They create a shared playbook for how AI connects to core systems—covering APIs, pipelines, security protocols, and error handling.

This unified approach pays off. AI Scalers are 41% less likely to run into integration issues with legacy systems—and each new deployment gets faster and smoother than the last.

The Bottom Line

AI doesn't transform work when it sits off to the side. It transforms work when it's part of the flow.

When AI is embedded into the tools people already use, it stops feeling like "extra software"—and starts becoming part of how work gets done.

It cuts manual effort. It improves collaboration. It makes workflows more intuitive.

Integration doesn't just make AI easier to use—it makes work easier to do.

Trend 5

AI success metrics expand beyond efficiency to human-centered ROI

Most organizations say AI is a strategic priority. But when it comes to measuring impact, they default to the basics: cost savings, time reductions, task speed.

That's not wrong—but it's not enough.

DEFINITION:

Human-centered ROI

A more complete measure of AI's impact—one that includes employee productivity, satisfaction, and adoption alongside traditional efficiency metrics like cost and time savings.

The organizations scaling AI most effectively are redefining what success looks like. They go beyond "Did we save money?" and ask a better question:

"Is AI actually making work better for the people using it?"

Scaled AI implementations with scaled AI implementations measure 3.4 ROI metrics on average, compared to just 1.6 metrics among Nonscalers.

That broader view leads to better results—not just from the technology, but from the people using it.

“

The human element is critical to AI success. We’ve found that measuring human-centered ROI—focusing on employee experience, adoption, and productivity—is just as important, if not more, than traditional efficiency metrics. AI’s true value is realized when it empowers and enhances the way people work.

”

Anna James

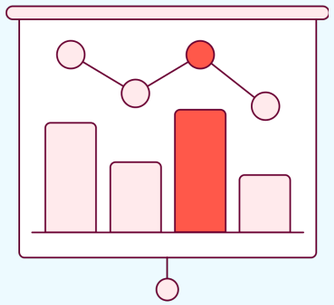
Work Innovation Analytics Lead
at the Asana Work Innovation Lab

While 59% of workers say their company is measuring AI ROI in some way, only 11% are tracking user adoption rates.

When asked which specific metrics their organizations track, knowledge workers reported:

What is being measured?

	% of workers who say their organization measures each item
Cost savings	35%
Productivity improvements	34%
Time saved	33%
Customer satisfaction	26%
Increased revenue	26%
Employee satisfaction	23%
Error reduction	20%
User adoption rates	11%



Only

11%

of organizations track user adoption of AI—one of the clearest indicators of whether AI is actually being used and delivering value.

Efficiency-first ROI vs. Human-centered ROI

These represent two fundamentally different mindsets about how to measure AI success:

Efficiency-first metrics focus on operational improvements and cost reduction:

- Cost savings from using AI (35% of organizations measure this)
- Time savings from using AI (33% of organizations measure this)
- Error reduction rates from using AI (20% of organizations measure this)

These numbers capture short-term, tangible benefits—but they miss the bigger picture. They don't show whether AI is fundamentally changing how people work: how it shapes decisions, drives collaboration, or improves the flow of work.

And that shift is essential. Without it, AI stays stuck at the task level. With it, AI becomes a true enabler of productivity, creativity, and long-term business impact.

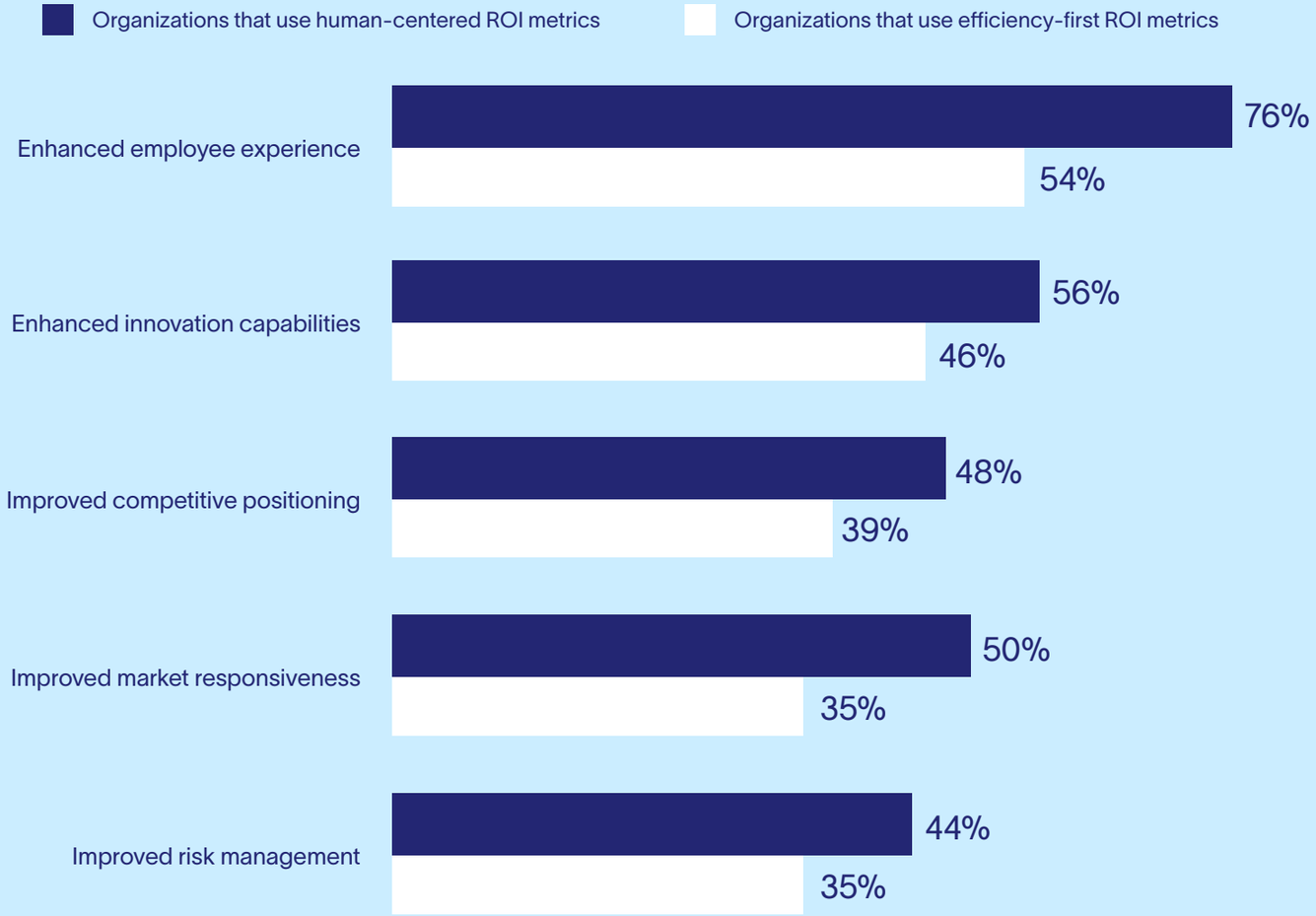
AI success metrics expand beyond efficiency to human-centered ROI

Human-centered metrics focus on people's experiences and engagement:

- Productivity improvements from using AI (34% of organizations measure this)
- Employee satisfaction with AI solutions (23% of organizations measure this)
- User AI adoption rates (11% of organizations measure this)

Organizations that track both types of metrics gain a more complete picture of AI's impact—not just on operations, but on the people using the technology. And it pays off.

Impact of AI implementation



Workers at organizations measuring human-centered ROI are 43% more likely to report improved market responsiveness and 41% more likely to report enhanced employee experience from using AI at work, compared to those at organizations focused only on efficiency metrics.

AI success starts with people. When employees adopt the tools, feel supported, and see value in their daily work, operational gains follow. But without that engagement, even the most advanced AI can fall flat.

What it takes to scale AI: Measuring what actually matters

To unlock AI's full value, organizations need to expand their definition of success. Here's how AI Scalers are doing it:

1 Go beyond cost savings—track the human impact

AI Scalers are 2x more likely to measure human-centered ROI metrics.

They don't stop at efficiency gains. They track how AI improves employee experience, enhances productivity, and strengthens collaboration.

These aren't "soft" metrics—they're early indicators of whether AI is being used, delivering value, and driving change.

2 Build a structured, end-to-end measurement system

AI Scalers are 238% more likely to have a formal ROI measurement process.

They define clear KPIs, measure consistently, and tie AI outcomes to strategic goals—like revenue growth, retention, and customer satisfaction.

That structure turns scattered success stories into a system that scales.

3 Monitor real-work usage, not just outcomes

AI Scalers are 163% more likely to track user adoption.

They use that data to pinpoint where adoption is lagging, double down on what's working, and adjust strategies in real time.

Because tracking outcomes alone tells you if AI is performing. Tracking usage tells you if anyone's actually using it.

The Bottom Line

You can't improve what you don't measure—and you can't scale what people won't use.

Organizations that move beyond basic efficiency metrics—and start measuring adoption, satisfaction, and productivity—gain a clearer view of what's really driving impact.

These human-centered metrics don't replace traditional ROI. They complete it.

Together, they give leaders the full picture of AI's value—and a roadmap to scale with confidence.

Trend 6

Agentic AI becomes a competitive differentiator—but for many organizations, the foundation isn't ready yet

Large language models still dominate the AI conversation, but the next wave is already here: AI agents—autonomous systems built to handle complex tasks with minimal human input.

There's plenty of buzz, but much of what's being labeled an "agent" today is misleading. To cut through the noise, organizations need a clear framework. Not all agentic AI is created equal—and understanding the distinctions is key to deploying them effectively.

The matrix below breaks agentic AI into four core categories based on task complexity and autonomy:

	Low autonomy ***Predefined tasks***	**High autonomy** ***Flexible decision-making***
Low complexity / Simple tasks	**Reactive agents** Respond to prompts and execute simple, one-step actions. *Example:* Slackbot that sends reminders when prompted. *e.g., "/remind me at 3PM to review the deck"*	**Autonomous agents** Handle narrow tasks independently, with limited decision-making. *Example:* Clockwise automatically reschedules meetings to protect focus time. *e.g., Moves meetings around based on calendar availability and preferences*
High complexity / Complex tasks	**Rule-based agents** Follow structured workflows to complete multi-step processes. *Example:* Asana workflow that triages incoming tasks. *e.g., Routes requests, assigns owners, sets due dates based on project type*	**General autonomous agents** Make decisions, reason about goals, and adapt to changing inputs. *Example:* AI-powered support agent that handles tickets end-to-end. *e.g., Understands issue, asks follow-ups, provides resolution, or escalates when needed*

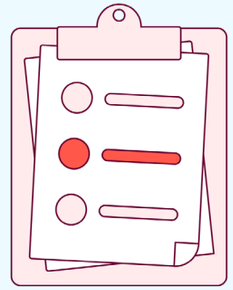
We're not yet at the stage where general autonomous agents can be widely trusted. Deploying them too early—especially on top of messy or undefined processes—can backfire, leading to errors, confusion, and eroded trust. Rule-based agents are the most effective entry point for organizations adopting agentic AI. Built to follow clearly defined workflows, they excel at automating structured, repeatable tasks.

When it comes to agentic AI, only a small minority of organizations have successfully scaled them across multiple business units. Often, rule-based agents are the ones that are effectively scaled because they solve specific, repeatable tasks in a predictable way, which makes them easier to implement, trust, and integrate across different functions.

Here's where organizations stand today on AI agent implementation	
AI agent implementation stage	**% of workers who say their organization has reached each stage**
Stage 1: No implementation or strategies	32%
Stage 2: Some interest, no strategy	18%
Stage 3: Strategic plans but no implementation	10%
Stage 4: Pilot implementations	14%
Stage 5: Scaled implementation & measurement	18%

The power of AI agents: Moving beyond content creation to coordinating work

The real value of AI agents lies not just in content generation but in coordinating work. While generative AI focuses on content creation, agentic AI is designed to automate and manage workflows, handle tasks like scheduling, nudging, and triggering workflows. These are the capabilities that keep the work moving and eliminate the "coordination tax" that often slows teams down.



Only

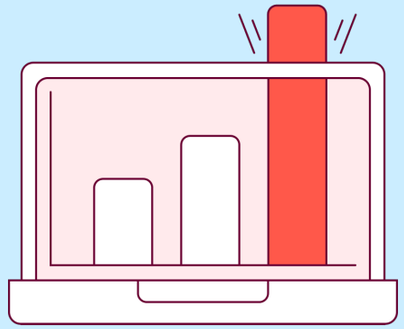
18%

of organizations have successfully scaled AI agents across their organization, while 32% have no current implementation plans or strategies.

Work activities workers would delegate to generative AI vs. AI agents

	% of workers who say they would delegate the following tasks to AI	
	Generative AI	Agentic AI
Content creation tasks		
Drafting emails and communications	56%	34%
Creating presentations	33%	23%
Writing reports	42%	31%
Workflow/process tasks		
Organizing documents	27%	31%
Scheduling meetings	22%	26%
Monitoring project status	16%	20%

Agents don't just help people do the work—they keep the work moving. They schedule. They nudge. They trigger workflows. They eliminate the glue work that slows teams down.



And the impact is significant. Workers at organizations with scaled agentic AI are:

- **33% more likely** to report improved productivity
- **31% more likely** to report faster execution

What's holding organizations back? Three big gaps—and why rule-based agents are the key to closing them:

1 Gap #1: The foundation isn't ready

For agentic AI to truly coordinate work, in many cases, it needs to operate within structured workflows. That's because most organizations don't have the infrastructure, governance, or trust models to hand over complex coordination tasks to fully autonomous agents. Without clear workflows, even the smartest agent gets stuck—lost in ambiguity, or worse, doing the wrong thing confidently.

Agentic AI is powerful, but to be practical and trusted at scale, it often needs structure to lean on.

2 Gap #2: Most employees still don't know what AI agents are

- Only 41% of workers can correctly define AI agents
- 26% confuse them with chatbots
- 15% think "any AI software" qualifies

If teams don't understand what AI agents are, they won't use them—let alone build or trust them.

Only

41%

of workers can correctly define AI agents

- 32% of workers say they've never used—or barely know—what AI agents are
- Only 5% say they've created or configured one

This lack of hands-on experience highlights a critical need: low- and no-code AI solutions that let workers build agentic workflows—without needing advanced technical skills.

3x Organizations with scaled agentic AI are 3x more likely to have a shared library of AI agents.

Only 10% of organizations maintain a formal agent library—a centralized hub where pre-built AI agents are stored with documentation, governance rules, and usage guidelines. Roughly the same number of organizations share AI agents informally as those who do it formally—8% share agents informally through tools like Slack or spreadsheets, without a centralized or standardized system.

In organizations with scaled AI agent implementation, the difference is dramatic. Workers are:

- **115% more likely** to regularly use AI agents
- **433% more likely** to create and configure AI agents

In non-scaled organizations, 34% have no plans at all to build a shared agent library. That means even the best agents get stuck in silos, invisible to other teams.

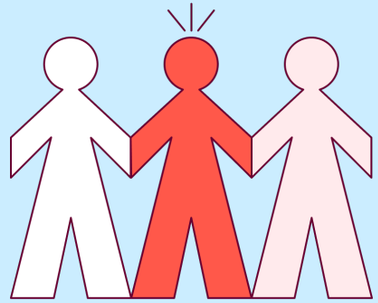
3 Gap #3: The infrastructure still isn't there

Most IT leaders understand the importance of agentic AI. 66% agree that empowering employees to apply AI agents to work processes is critical to long-term success.
But that belief isn't turning into action. In many organizations, the infrastructure to guide, govern, and scale AI agents simply doesn't exist. In many cases, the tools are there. The systems aren't.

- Only 16% of workers are confident their organization has a policy for AI agent use
- Just 13% of workers know whether their organizations have a plan for how AI agents will be introduced
- Only 15% believe their organization has a clear vision for how employees should use AI agents

Meanwhile, the lines of ownership are starting to blur. In 2024, 78% of IT leaders said they were responsible for managing AI agents. In 2025, that number drops to 73%.

It's a subtle decline—but a telling one. As AI becomes more embedded in day-to-day work, it's shifting from a centralized IT asset to a shared business capability.



This evolution creates both opportunity and urgency. To realize the full promise of agentic AI, organizations need more than tools—they need clear governance frameworks and cross-functional ownership. That means empowering product, operations, HR, and other business leaders to actively participate in oversight, training, workflow building, and change management.

> AI agents represent the next frontier of enterprise AI, but organizations must lay the groundwork carefully. This means prioritizing AI literacy, establishing robust governance, and creating centralized resources to ensure these powerful tools are used effectively and responsibly across the organization.

Dr. Mark Hoffman
Collaborative Intelligence Lead at the Asana Work Innovation Lab

The confidence advantage: Why rule-based agents drive momentum

The difference between organizations that scale agentic AI and those that don't isn't just tools—it's trust. Successful organizations don't start with complex, autonomous agents. They begin with rule-based agents that solve specific, repeatable problems like assigning tasks, routing approvals, or managing handoffs.

These agents don't "reason" on their own—they follow structured logic. That makes them easier to understand, test, and trust. Their predictability gives employees a clear sense of what the agent can do and where it stops, especially for non-technical users. As confidence grows, organizations can gradually introduce more advanced capabilities.

And that confidence shows up in the data. At companies that have successfully implemented AI agents at scale, employees are significantly more optimistic, capable, and prepared to work with them:

Worker sentiment towards AI agents

Workers at organizations with scaled AI agent implementations	% more/less likely
Confident in their ability to work with AI agents	+100%
Looking forward to increased productivity from using AI agents	+53%
Excited about the potential of AI agents	+53%
Skeptical of the reliability of AI agents	-50%
Uncertain how to use AI agents effectively	-53%

These shifts reflect more than just exposure—they reflect trust built through experience. Rule-based agents create a foundation for learning, experimentation, and scale

What it takes to scale AI: Laying the foundation for agentic AI

To stay competitive, organizations need more than agent pilots. They need the right conditions—education, infrastructure, and strategy—to help AI agents take root and grow.

1 Demystify what AI agents are

Most employees can't define an AI agent. That's a problem.

AI Scalers are 126% more likely to provide AI training—and they treat agent literacy as a core skill.

They run onboarding programs, host internal demos, and embed agent awareness into every rollout. When people understand what agents can do, they're far more likely to use them.

2 Create a centralized agent library

If employees can't find agents, they won't use them.

AI Scalers are 367% more likely to maintain a formal agent library—a centralized hub where pre-built agents are stored with documentation, governance rules, and usage guidelines. This makes agents reusable, adaptable, and scalable across teams. Instead of reinventing the wheel, teams build on what already works.

3 Start where risk is low and appetite is high

AI Scalers are 111% more likely to have formal policies for agent use. They begin with high-appetite, low-risk workflows, automating repetitive tasks that slow teams down: information gathering for project intake, drafting campaign briefs, organizing documents, or managing routine communications.

By embedding agents into everyday tools, teams don't need to switch apps to access AI. Momentum builds before agents touch sensitive or complex operations.

4 Share the vision with employees

Most employees haven't heard how AI agents will be used in their day-to-day. That's a missed opportunity. AI Scalers are 134% more likely to have a shared, clear vision for agent use—answering the big questions: What's coming? Why now? How will it change the way we work?

Without that roadmap, even the best agents gather dust.

The Bottom Line

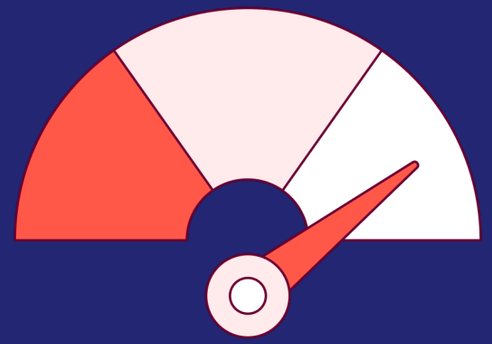
AI agents aren't just another tool. They represent a fundamental shift in how work gets done—moving from content creation to coordination, from isolated tasks to intelligent workflows. But that shift doesn't happen all at once. It starts with focus and structure.

Rule-based agents are the most practical way to build that foundation. They expose broken workflows, build organizational trust, and give teams hands-on experience without unnecessary risk. They're not just a first step—they're a strategic one. When deployed thoughtfully, rule-based agents prepare teams for what comes next: more complex agents with greater autonomy and broader impact.

Conclusion

The time to scale is now

Our latest research confirms a growing divide. While most organizations are still dabbling in pilots and disconnected tools, a rising group of AI Scalers is pulling ahead.



They're not waiting for the perfect roadmap. They're building it—into their infrastructure, workflows, and culture.

And it's paying off:

- Scalers are 43% more likely to report revenue gains
- And 63% more likely to hit their IT goals

The future of work isn't about AI as a side tool. It's about scaling AI until it becomes the backbone of how business gets done.

Your AI scaling checklist

Experimentation is no longer enough. If AI is going to drive real business impact, it has to scale—across tools, teams, and workflows. This checklist outlines the core moves AI Scalers are making to turn pilots into platforms, and hype into measurable results.

1 Move from pilots to platform

- [ ] Fund AI as a platform with dedicated budget allocation, not as individual projects
- [ ] Establish a centralized AI governance structure with clear roles and responsibilities
- [ ] Identify high-impact, repeatable use cases that can be templated for wider adoption
- [ ] Design implementation plans for enterprise-wide scaling from day one

2 Evolve from IT experiments to business transformation

- [ ] Tie AI initiatives directly to company OKRs and strategic business goals
- [ ] Establish a clearly visible owner for AI strategy
- [ ] Implement practical enablement programs focusing on real workflows, not just training
- [ ] Review AI progress alongside other strategic priorities in quarterly business reviews

Your AI scaling checklist

3 Establish governance that enables innovation

- [ ] Create tiered governance frameworks with different oversight levels based on risk
- [ ] Form cross-functional governance teams including both technical and business stakeholders
- [ ] Pair security policies with education and training to make AI both safe and usable
- [ ] Develop clear usage guidelines that give employees confidence to engage with AI

4 Build integrated systems

- [ ] Make integration a non-negotiable requirement for any new AI solution
- [ ] Prioritize embedding AI into platforms employees already use daily
- [ ] Standardize data taxonomies and formats across systems
- [ ] Establish enterprise-wide technical standards for AI implementations

Your AI scaling checklist

5 Measure human-centered ROI

- [ ] Track both efficiency metrics (cost savings) and human-centered metrics (productivity, satisfaction)
- [ ] Implement formal ROI measurement processes with clearly defined KPIs
- [ ] Monitor user adoption rates to identify teams needing support and high-impact use cases
- [ ] Tie AI metrics to business outcomes like revenue growth and employee productivity

6 Transition from assistants to autonomous agents

- [ ] Educate employees on what AI agents are and how they differ from other AI solutions
- [ ] Create a centralized, managed library of AI agents with documentation
- [ ] Start with low-risk, high-demand tasks for initial agent implementations
- [ ] Develop and share a clear roadmap for how agents will be introduced to workflows

Methodology

This research from the Asana Work Innovation Lab surveyed 3,182 knowledge workers in the U.S. and U.K. in March 2025, including 560 IT professionals. Respondents were all employed knowledge workers. IT leaders included in this research are defined as Director role levels and above in the IT function.