Devolutions

BENCHMARK REPORT - 2026

From adoption to maturity

What actually changes as organizations become more mature in their use of AI — a benchmark built on 616 responses from IT environments worldwide.

616	3	5	92%
RESPONDENTS	MATURITY GROUPS	KEY INSIGHTS	ALREADY USING AI

CONTENTS

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Every insight follows the same shape: the quantitative pattern across the three maturity groups, what respondents said in their own words, and one practical takeaway. Association is not causation — this report identifies behaviors associated with different levels of self-reported maturity, not practices that cause it.

COLOUR KEY — MATURITY GROUPS

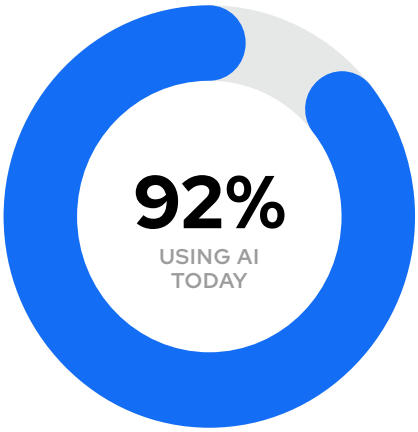
Early-stage
0–40

AI Adopters
41–60

Advanced
61–100

From adoption to maturity

Artificial intelligence has quickly become part of the day-to-day reality of organizations. In our survey, only **8%** of respondents said their organization is not currently using AI.



For everyone else, AI is already being used across a broad range of activities, from content creation and software development to data analysis, IT operations, cybersecurity, documentation, and end-user support.

> **But using AI is not the same as using it in a mature, structured way.**

An organization can experiment with multiple AI tools without having a clear strategy, the right skills in place, meaningful integration into its operations, or a reliable way to measure the value those tools are delivering.

That distinction is at the heart of the 2026 AI Maturity Benchmark Survey. The goal of this report is therefore not simply to understand who is using AI. It is to understand what changes as organizations become more mature in the way they **adopt, manage, integrate, and expand** their use of AI.

WHERE AI IS ALREADY BEING USED

- **Content creation**
- **Software development**
- **Data analysis**
- **IT operations**
- **Cybersecurity**
- **Documentation**
- **End-user support**

Who participated in the survey?

A total of **616 respondents completed the survey**, representing a broad range of IT environments across different roles, company sizes, IT team sizes, industries, and geographies.

Their responses provide insight into multiple dimensions of organizational AI maturity, including current use, governance, training, leadership, ownership of AI initiatives, benefits measurement, barriers to automation, and the emergence of AI agents.

Together, these perspectives provide a broad operational context for the benchmark, reflecting organizations with very different levels of resources, team capacity, complexity, and exposure to AI.

DIMENSIONS COVERED BY THE SURVEY

- Current use of AI
- Governance
- Training
- Leadership
- Ownership of AI initiatives
- Benefits measurement
- Barriers to automation
- Emergence of AI agents

Respondent profile

A snapshot of the **616 respondents** in the 2026 AI Maturity Benchmark Survey — across roles, company sizes, IT team sizes, and geographies.

Respondent role

63%
Technical IT roles

37%
IT management / leadership

- IT Professional, DevOps, Technical Support, Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst
- Executive / VP, IT Director / Manager, Security Director / Manager, CISO

Organization size

1–20	15%
21–100	26%
101–500	26%
501–1,000	11%
1,000+	21%

Share of respondents (%)

Headquarters

United States	43%
Canada	15%
Germany	13%
United Kingdom	4%
Netherlands	3%
Other	19%

Five largest country groups; all others grouped as Other.

IT team size

1–5	31%
6–20	35%
21–50	14%
50+	18%

Share of respondents (%)

Organization size and IT team size exclude respondents who preferred not to answer.

How we measure AI maturity

Organizations were grouped according to their response to the survey's AI maturity self-assessment — "Where do you stand on AI?" — which uses a 0–100 scale. Responses were organized into three maturity groups that serve as the foundation for all comparisons in this report.

The maturity scale, 0 to 100

Early-stage

AI Bystanders + AI Explorers

SCORE	RESPONDENTS
0–40	267 (43%)

AI Adopters

AI Adopters

SCORE	RESPONDENTS
41–60	255 (41%)

Advanced

AI Practitioners + AI Vanguards

SCORE	RESPONDENTS
61–100	94 (15%)

Why the midpoint matters

These groups allow us to compare how behaviors, practices, challenges, and outcomes change as organizations report higher levels of AI maturity. The contrast between Early-stage and Advanced organizations helps surface the strongest differences across the maturity curve. But those two ends alone cannot tell us whether a pattern develops gradually.

That is why AI Adopters are especially important. As the midpoint benchmark, they help show whether a difference between Early-stage and Advanced organizations reflects a steady progression — or whether the relationship is more complex.

IN OTHER WORDS:

EARLY-STAGE VS. ADVANCED
shows us the contrast

AI ADOPTERS
show us the progression

What we wanted to understand

Our objective was not simply to identify the five largest percentage differences in the survey. A large statistical gap can be interesting without necessarily telling us much about how maturity evolves. Instead, we looked for patterns that combined several things:

A meaningful contrast between **Early-stage and Advanced** organizations

A clear progression or revealing shift through the **AI Adopter benchmark**

Supporting data from other questions

A **practical implication** for organizations trying to move forward

That led us to one central question:

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What actually changes as organizations become more mature in their use of AI?

Five particularly strong patterns emerged. Together, they trace how the organizational relationship with AI evolves as maturity increases.

What changes as organizations become more mature with AI?

Each insight below marks a distinct shift in how organizations relate to AI.

1

DIRECTION

Leadership becomes more engaged.

2

OWNERSHIP

AI becomes owned and accountable across the organization.

3

SCALE

Challenges shift from getting started to integration and scale.

4

VALUE

Benefits become more visible and measurable.

5

AUTONOMY

AI begins to take on a more active role in operations.

Quantitative data provides the foundation for each insight. Open-ended responses add context by giving a voice to the organizations behind the percentages and showing how these challenges, benefits, and concerns are experienced in practice.

One distinction is important throughout the report: **association is not causation**. This report identifies behaviors and characteristics associated with different levels of self-reported AI maturity. It does not suggest that any one practice alone causes an organization to become more mature.

The five insights that follow explore that progression in practice — showing how leadership, ownership, scale, value, and autonomy evolve as organizations move along the AI maturity curve.

01

INSIGHT 1 - LEADERSHIP

AI maturity strengthens leadership support

Leadership can set the direction for AI. But maturity changes how actively leaders support the organization in moving that direction forward.

AI does not necessarily need leadership to get started. An employee can experiment with a new tool. A developer can introduce an AI assistant into their workflow. An IT team can find a promising use case and begin testing it. But moving beyond isolated experimentation requires something different: **organizational direction.**

Once responses are segmented by our three maturity groups, a clear progression emerges: active leadership support rises sharply with AI maturity.

Leadership support increases with maturity

To what extent does leadership in your organization promote and invest in AI initiatives?

% selecting "Leadership actively promotes and invests in AI initiatives"

WITHIN EACH MATURITY GROUP

% of organizations in each group

Early-stage

14%

n = 267

AI Adopters

49%

n = 255

Advanced

91%

n = 94

Active leadership support is **6.5× higher** among **Advanced** organizations than among **Early-stage** organizations.

Important to note: these percentages show how common active leadership support is within each maturity group, not how the overall 40% is divided.

The gap is striking: only **14%** of Early-stage organizations report that leadership actively promotes and invests in AI, compared with **49%** of AI Adopters and **91%** of Advanced organizations — active leadership support that is **6.5× higher** at the most mature end of the curve.

> The progression is not simply from less AI to more AI. It is from AI being something people pursue to something the organization increasingly enables.

What maturity reveals

The numbers show that leadership support rises with maturity. Respondents show that the kind of support they need changes too.

For some Early-stage organizations, the challenge begins with uncertainty. Leaders may want employees to learn about AI, but that support does not always match the reality of their teams.

"AI adoption has not been made at all. In fact, it confuses our leadership on how to provide training to our internal staff. So far our leaders have been providing training on AI engineer materials even though most of our IT staff are not data engineers."

IT Professional
IT Services / Managed Services (MSP) · United States · 21–100 employees

By the AI Adopter stage, that uncertainty can take a different form. AI has leadership attention and momentum — but the destination is not always clear.

"Leadership pushes for AI but they have almost no idea on how or what the deliverables/outcomes should be."

DevOps Engineer
Finance, Banking & Insurance · United States · More than 1,000 employees

At the Advanced stage, support becomes more tangible. Leadership is no longer just encouraging AI from a distance: it is helping employees learn how to use it and build confidence in their own abilities.

"Our organization hasn't done any layoffs related to AI. They've facilitated the learning and use of AI and actively promoting it. And it definitely has helped with my knowledge gaps."

Technical Support Engineer
Hospitality · United States · More than 1,000 employees

That is an important step forward: AI no longer has to fight for attention. The challenge becomes turning enthusiasm into useful direction.

The progression is not about leadership suddenly having all the answers. It is about support becoming clearer, more useful, and more closely connected to what employees need to move forward.

MATURITY INSIGHT

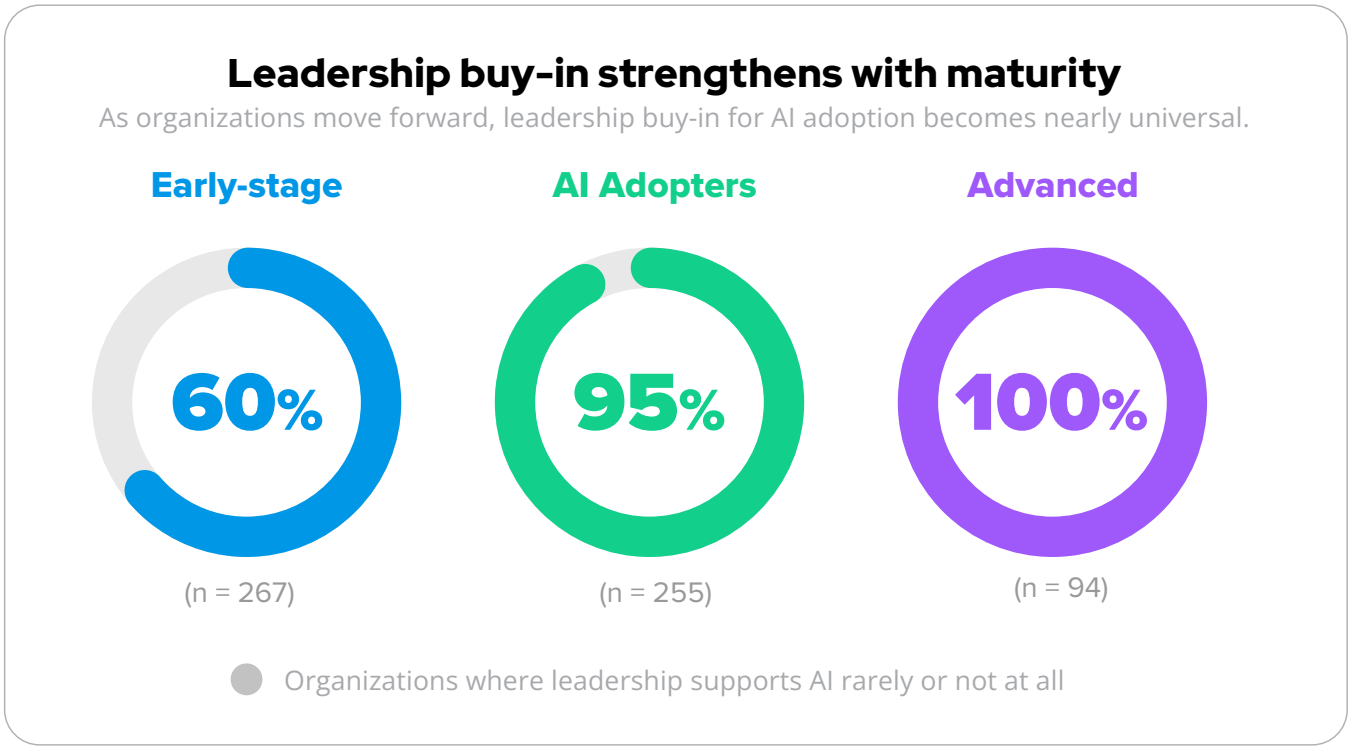
Leadership strengthens early

Maturity is not only reflected in stronger leadership support. It is also visible in how quickly leadership buy-in becomes the norm.

The visual above measured active support — leadership that actively promotes and invests. If we lower the bar to any level of support at all, a second pattern appears: basic buy-in becomes nearly universal well before organizations reach the most advanced stage.

Around **60% of Early-stage organizations** report at least some leadership support for AI. That rises to about **95% among AI Adopters** and reaches **100% among Advanced organizations.**

Leadership engagement appears to become a baseline condition well before organizations reach the most advanced stage of AI maturity.



Key takeaway

Leadership does not need to have every answer. But as AI adoption matures, support needs to become more than encouragement. It needs to give people the confidence and room to learn, experiment, and move forward with purpose.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

"You cannot tell people to innovate and then make them afraid to try new things. With AI, we chose to encourage experimentation, give people space to learn, and figure out together where it creates real value."

David Hervieux
CEO, Devolutions

"It's not only available, but encouraged. It has become an expectation. We expect people to use AI, invest time in learning how to use these tools, and rethink the way they work."

Simon Chalifoux
CIO, Devolutions

02

INSIGHT 2 - OWNERSHIP

AI maturity gives ownership a home

Leadership can give AI direction. But direction alone does not determine who is responsible for turning it into action.

As organizations mature, AI also begins to find a clearer organizational home. That shift is visible in one of the survey's most revealing questions.

Across the full survey, responsibility takes many forms. In some organizations, no one is specifically responsible. In others, employees adopt tools on their own, IT manages AI informally, IT leadership takes the lead, or a dedicated AI role or team has been created. But when those answers are viewed through the maturity lens, the pattern becomes much clearer.

Who is primarily responsible for AI initiatives in your organization?

% of respondents within each maturity group · n = 616

PRIMARY MODEL OF AI OWNERSHIP	Early-stage (n = 267)	AI Adopters (n = 255)	Advanced (n = 94)
No clear owner / individual adoption	50%	11%	2%
IT manages AI informally	22%	34%	7%
IT leadership drives AI initiatives	16%	38%	34%
Dedicated AI role or team	5%	15%	55%

Organizations where IT leadership drives AI or a dedicated AI role or team is in place:

21% Early-stage 53% AI Adopters 89% Advanced

Dedicated AI ownership alone: 5% > 15% > 55%

Displayed categories exclude "I do not know / I prefer not to answer." Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Total n = 616.

> The pattern is clear: as AI maturity increases, responsibility becomes less diffuse and more deliberate.

What maturity reveals

Respondents show what the transition to clearer ownership looks like from the inside. At first, AI may already be happening across an organization without anyone having the time, authority, or responsibility to pull those efforts together.

For one Early-stage respondent, that absence of ownership is already creating fragmentation.

"The main barriers are a lack of strategic ownership, limited internal engagement, and insufficient use of the AI expertise already available within the company. AI has not yet been treated as a strategic capability with clear responsibilities, priorities, and measurable objectives. As a result, we are falling behind, while many initiatives remain fragmented or are driven by employees who are still at the beginning of their AI journey."

DevOps Engineer
Manufacturing & Industrial · Germany · 101–500 employees · IT team: 6–20

The same respondent is equally clear about what would help.

"To overcome these barriers, we would need: experienced internal AI practitioners to lead or co-lead the initiative, dedicated time, budget, and responsibilities rather than treating AI as an additional side project, measurable pilot projects that demonstrate tangible benefits and build confidence across the organization."

DevOps Engineer
Manufacturing & Industrial · Germany · 101–500 employees · IT team: 6–20

The problem here is not that nobody is experimenting. It is that experimentation has nowhere to land. AI remains something people pursue alongside their existing responsibilities rather than something the organization deliberately manages.

By the AI Adopter stage, that fragmentation starts to resolve, but responsibility is still being worked out, not yet settled.

"AI adoption is progressing, but broader adoption requires clear governance, security and IP protection, employee training, and integration with existing development and IT workflows. Teams also need clear policies on when AI tools can be used and how AI-generated output should be reviewed for accuracy, quality, and compliance. Addressing these areas would help increase confidence and enable wider adoption."

DevOps Engineer
Manufacturing & Industrial · United States · More than 1,000 employees · IT team 50+

Each of these — governance, policies, review — is really a question of who decides.
This respondent isn't asking for someone to start owning AI. They're describing what it takes to make ownership stick.

At the Advanced stage, clearer ownership does not mean centralizing every AI initiative. Once ownership is clear, it can afford to let go.

"Number of people already doing "sideline" AI projects to streamline their individual work processes."

IT Director / IT Manager
Finance, Banking & Insurance · United States · More than 1,000 employees · IT team: 21–50

This respondent's organization has a dedicated AI role or team, yet employees keep starting their own initiatives anyway. At the fragmentation stage, that same pattern would look like a problem. Here, it looks like confidence: the organization trusts people to experiment because it knows where that experimentation will land.

MATURITY INSIGHT

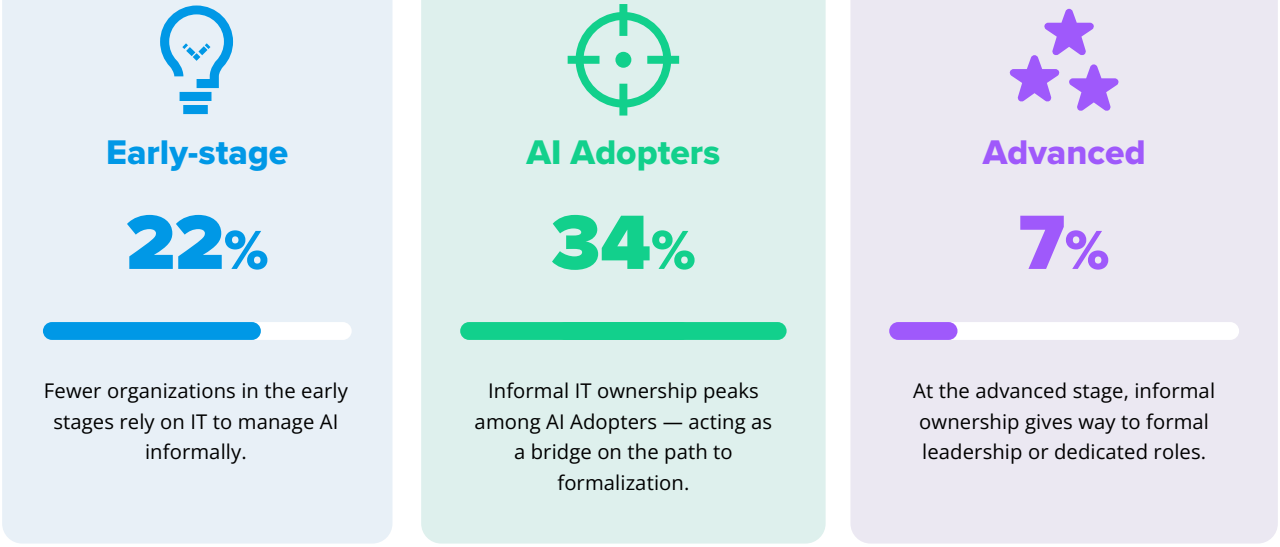
Where informal ownership concentrates

Informal IT ownership peaks in the middle

Survey question

Who is primarily responsible for AI initiatives in your organization?

Looking closer by maturity level reveals an interesting pattern.



Share of organizations where the IT team manages AI informally · n = 267 / 255 / 94

The **AI Adopter** stage reveals an important transition in ownership.

Informal IT ownership appears to act as a **bridge in the maturity journey.** AI has moved beyond scattered individual experimentation and is beginning to find a clearer home, but responsibility has not yet fully shifted to formal leadership or dedicated AI roles.

Ownership often becomes clearer before it becomes fully formalized.

Key takeaway

As AI maturity increases, responsibility becomes less scattered and more intentional. AI increasingly gains a clear organizational home — first through existing teams and leaders, and, in many Advanced organizations, through dedicated roles.

That progression does not require creating an AI department from day one. It does, however, require clear responsibility for moving AI forward.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

"Clear ownership is not about centralizing AI. It is about giving experimentation a place to land — someone who can connect the right people, share what works, and help get good ideas past the pilot stage and into real, everyday use."

Stéphane Lacasse
AI Enablement Team Lead, Devolutions

"Some initiatives come from the ground up, through our AI champion network, where people identify opportunities and bring them forward. Strategic initiatives, on the other hand, come from the leadership team."

Simon Chalifoux
CIO, Devolutions

03

INSIGHT 3 - SCALE

AI maturity redefines what scaling requires

Leadership can give AI direction, and clearer ownership can give it a home. But as AI spreads across more workflows and systems, organizations face a different test: making it work reliably at scale.

As AI's footprint expands, maturity is reflected less in how many places AI appears than in an organization's ability to support those uses reliably.

The survey first asked respondents:

"Which IT tasks would you like to automate with AI, but currently can't?"

> Across responses, the most frequently cited areas were IT operations and monitoring, security and threat detection, and service desk and end-user support.
>
> Respondents who had identified tasks they wanted to automate were then asked why that automation had not happened yet:

"What is the primary reason these tasks haven't been automated yet?"

That gap becomes clearer in the reasons respondents give for why the automation they want has not yet happened.

What maturity reveals

Breaking those barriers down by maturity reveals a different challenge at each stage.

SURVEY QUESTION

What is the primary reason these tasks haven't been automated yet?

% of respondents within each maturity group

	Early-stage (n = 219)	AI Adopters (n = 226)	Advanced (n = 72)
Lack of time or resources	27%	18%	35%
Security or compliance concerns	19%	16%	18%
Lack of internal expertise	16%	19%	4%
Too complex or context-dependent	5%	12%	10%
Lack of budget	11%	8%	6%
Integration challenges with existing systems	3%	5%	8%
Other	20%	23%	19%

The six most-cited reasons are shown individually. Remaining responses — each selected by a small share of respondents — are grouped under "Other."

These percentages are based on the 517 respondents who gave a reason for why their desired automation hasn't happened yet — a subset of the full 616-respondent sample. That is why the group sizes here (219 / 226 / 72) differ from those used elsewhere in the report (267 / 255 / 94).

In their own words

For Early-stage organizations, the constraint is still largely about building the capability to act. One respondent describes a combination of limited expertise and limited time to develop it.

"The biggest obstacles for us right now are the lack of specialized expertise, concerns about data privacy, and simply not having enough time in our day-to-day operations to learn how to use new tools."

IT Professional
Finance, Banking & Insurance · Germany · 501–1,000 employees

The challenge changes as organizations move into the AI Adopter stage: the question is increasingly not whether AI can be used, but how it fits into systems and processes already in place.

"Integration with legacy systems requires significant manual work and security validation, which slows deployment. Clear data governance, better API support, and dedicated implementation resources would help us expand automation safely."

IT Director / IT Manager
IT Services / Managed Services (MSP) · United States · 101–500 employees

By the Advanced stage, integration itself becomes a broader operational challenge. One respondent put the distinction plainly.

"Our biggest challenge is not the AI models themselves, but integrating them into a secure, unified enterprise platform. Today we rely on multiple AI tools and custom integrations, which increases complexity, creates inconsistent user experiences, and makes governance more difficult. We would like a single platform that securely connects with our ITSM, monitoring, documentation, source code, and infrastructure while providing centralized identity, permissions, auditing, and policy management. Wider adoption will depend on more mature enterprise integrations, stronger governance, and reliable human oversight for high-impact actions."

Executive / Vice President
IT Services / Managed Services (MSP) · Ukraine · 1–20 employees

What changes with maturity is not the presence of friction, but where that friction sits. As AI becomes more embedded in the organization, the work shifts increasingly toward the surrounding environment: systems, workflows, controls, and the operational effort required to make everything function together.

> **Scaling AI does not remove the hard parts. It relocates them.**

MATURITY INSIGHT

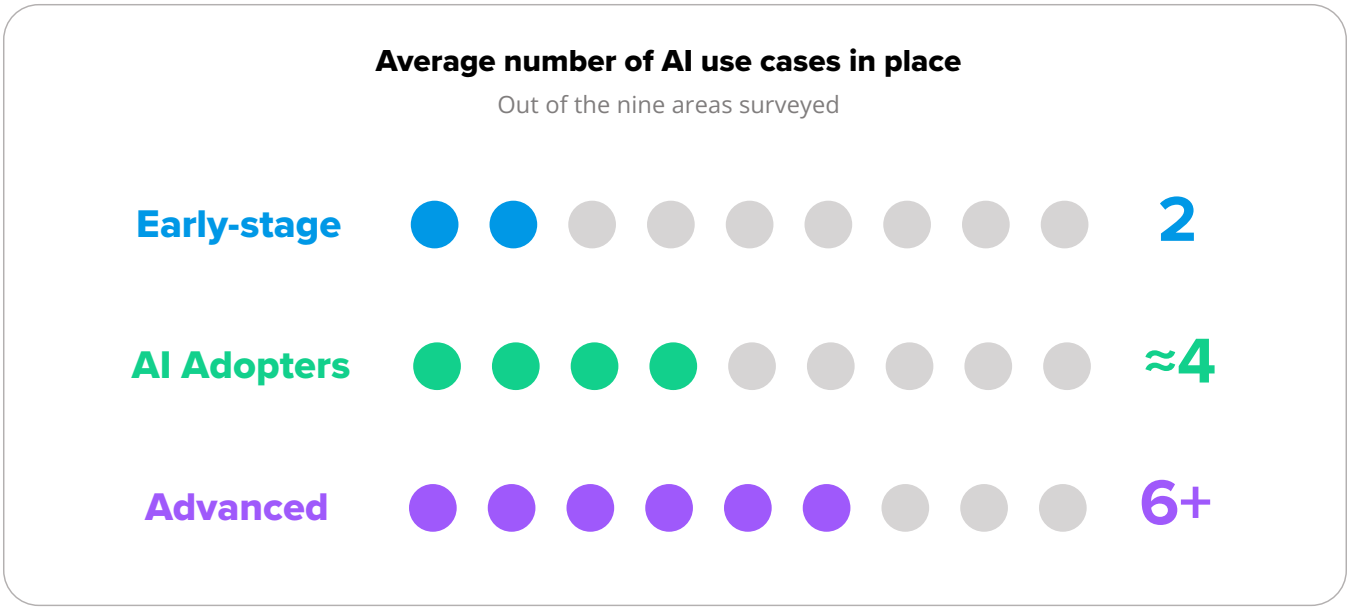
AI's footprint expands with maturity

That growing operational burden makes more sense when we look at how broadly AI is already being used — and how that breadth grows with maturity.

AI USE CASES BY ORGANIZATION MATURITY	Early-stage (n = 267)	AI Adopters (n = 255)	Advanced (n = 94)
Generative AI for content, writing, communication	48%	70%	83%
AI-powered cybersecurity	22%	42%	62%
AI in IT operations & monitoring	23%	49%	73%
AI in software development & deployment	38%	57%	88%
AI for data analysis or business reporting	26%	49%	87%
AI for documentation or knowledge management	28%	44%	84%
AI for service desk & end-user support	14%	32%	66%
AI for identity & access management	3%	20%	29%
AI for compliance & auditing	3%	20%	46%

Percentages represent the proportion of respondents in each maturity group that selected the use case.

These use cases are led by content creation, software development, and data analysis — and each becomes markedly more common as maturity rises: content creation climbs from **48%** among Early-stage organizations to **83%** among Advanced ones.



On average, that translates into roughly **2** of these 9 areas for Early-stage organizations, rising to nearly **4** among AI Adopters and over **6** among Advanced organizations — steady growth in breadth at every step of the maturity curve.

It's not only which use cases — it's how many at once. As maturity increases, organizations are not necessarily discovering entirely new categories of AI use. They are extending AI across more of these areas at the same time.

Key takeaway

Scaling AI is not simply about doing more with it. It is about being ready for what each new use adds. Before expanding into the next workflow, identify what that use will depend on — the systems it must connect to, the context it needs, and the operational resources required to support it.

Scaling becomes easier to sustain when those dependencies are designed in, rather than discovered after deployment.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

That need for a single, secure platform isn't unique to the organizations in this survey — it's exactly what we ran into as our own AI use expanded. The bottleneck was never the AI itself. It was making sure access, oversight, and integration could scale at the same pace.

Stéphane Lacasse
AI Enablement Team Lead, Devolutions

With AI, it becomes a lot easier to build teams that are centered around the whole value chain, where deep knowledge becomes available to a lot more people than it was before.

Simon Chalifoux
CIO, Devolutions

04

INSIGHT 4 - VALUE

AI maturity makes value more visible

Leadership gives AI direction, ownership gives it a home, and scale expands its operational demands. But eventually, organizations have to answer a more fundamental question: is AI actually delivering value?

That question is not always easy to answer. AI benefits can be visible long before they are formally measured: a task takes less time, documentation improves, incidents are resolved faster, or teams feel more productive.

The survey asked respondents:

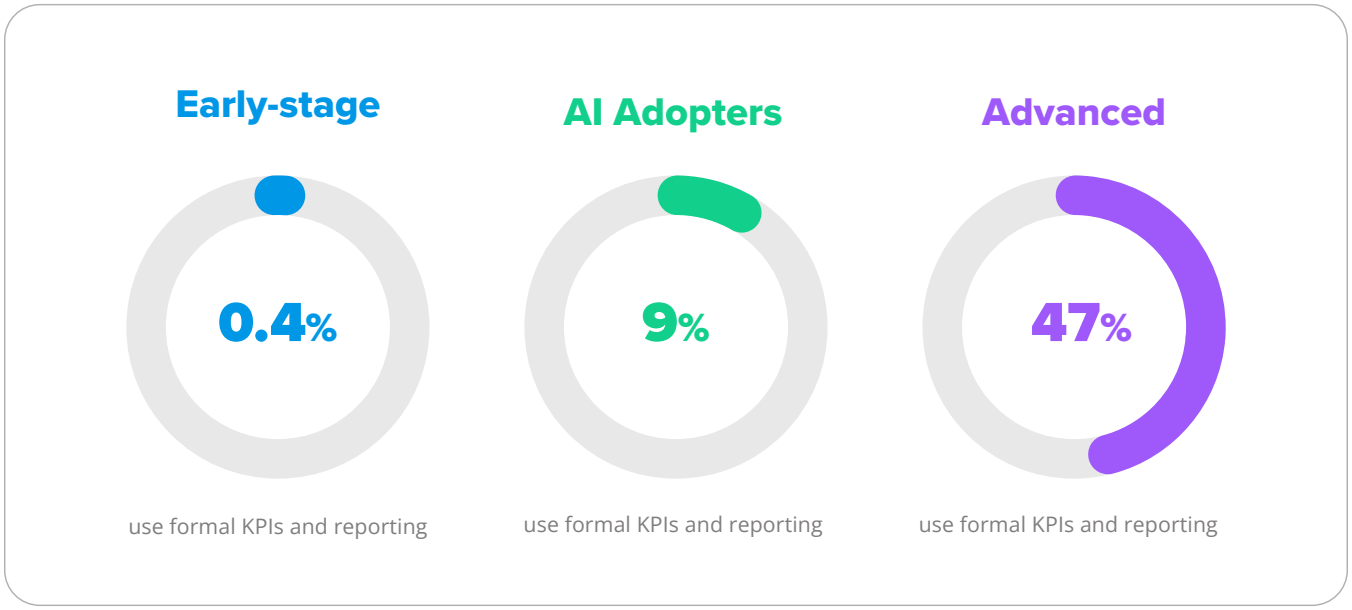
“Does your organization formally track the benefits of AI initiatives?”

Across responses, the picture is less about whether organizations see AI benefits, and more about how consistently they are able to track them. Many organizations are already observing positive outcomes, but formal measurement remains a different level of discipline.

What maturity reveals

Viewed through the maturity lens, formal measurement becomes far more common as AI maturity increases. Among Early-stage organizations, KPI tracking is almost nonexistent. It becomes more visible among AI Adopters, and by the Advanced stage, nearly one in two organizations formally track AI benefits through KPIs and reporting.

Formal KPI tracking rises sharply with maturity



From noticing benefits to measuring them

What respondents say about the value AI delivers changes markedly along the maturity curve.

For some Early-stage organizations, however, the challenge begins even before measurement. AI may already be present, but its use is still too informal to create a clear picture of its impact.

"AI is still unproven in our field. There is a lot of friction to overcome."

IT Director / IT Manager
Energy / Public Services · Estonia · 101–500 employees · IT team: 6–20

At this stage, the question is less about tracking AI's return consistently than about generating enough evidence to know where it can deliver meaningful value.

By the AI Adopter stage, value can become more specific. One respondent describes a gap between the return expected and the one that became most visible.

"Cost savings were lower than expected, but time savings were much higher."

IT Professional
IT Services / Managed Services (MSP) · Germany · 101–500 employees · IT team: 6–20

The expected return was financial. The more visible return was time.

One Advanced respondent, whose organization formally tracks AI benefits through KPIs and reporting, points to an important part of that process: the most valuable use cases are not always found where organizations first expect them.

"We often find teams outside of development find the best use cases."

IT Director / IT Manager
Finance, Banking & Insurance · United States · More than 1,000 employees · IT team: 21–50

Other Advanced respondents describe that value in concrete operational terms.

"AI has allowed us to make better use of time. Problem investigation/resolution is much more efficient."

IT Professional
Government & Public Sector · United States · More than 1,000 employees · IT team: More than 50

By the Advanced stage, organizations can begin to build a more complete picture of where AI is producing meaningful results — and which uses are worth pursuing.

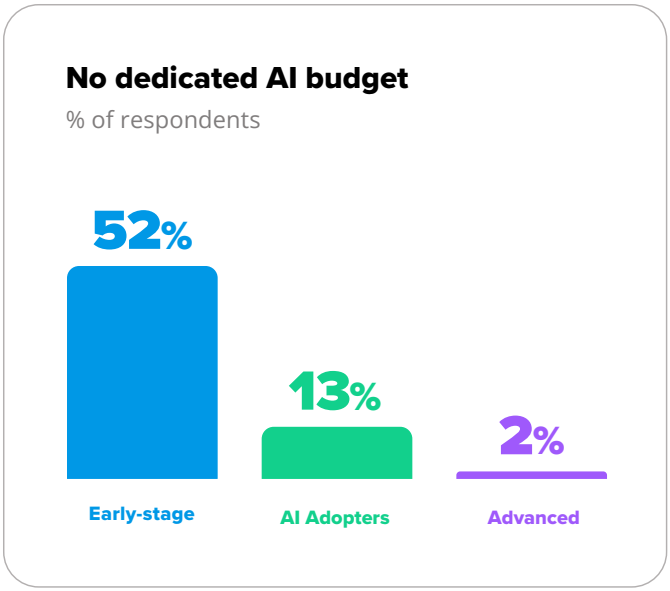
Across these responses, the progression is not from no value to value. It is from noticing benefits, to identifying where they appear, to measuring them more deliberately.

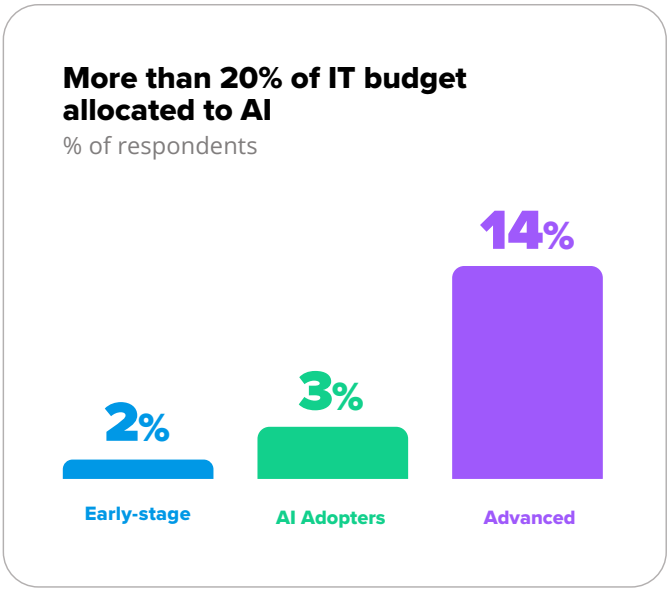
As value becomes easier to identify, another question comes into view: how deliberately are organizations willing to fund it?

MATURITY INSIGHT

AI maturity is associated with greater budget commitment

As organizations become more mature in their use of AI, dedicated investment becomes more common. Early-stage organizations are much more likely to operate without a dedicated AI budget, while Advanced organizations are far more likely to commit a larger share of their IT budget to AI initiatives.





Operational efficiency remains the leading motivation throughout the maturity curve. But **competitiveness** becomes increasingly prominent as organizations mature, suggesting that AI is gradually shifting from an internal productivity initiative to a broader strategic consideration.

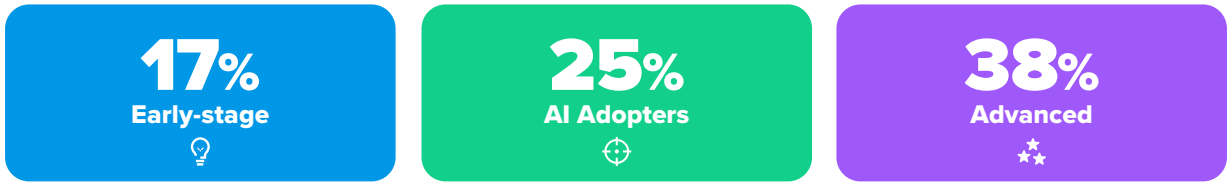
Why organizations invest in AI

Top three primary drivers across the full sample · n = 616

1	Improving operational efficiency	39%
2	Staying competitive in the market	24%
3	Reducing costs	8%

A closer look at "staying competitive in the market"

Share selecting competitiveness as their primary driver



The pattern does not establish causation. But it shows that clearer measurement, greater budget commitment, and more strategic investment priorities increasingly appear together as maturity rises.

Key takeaway

Before increasing AI investment, make its value visible. A clearer view of where AI is producing meaningful results gives organizations a stronger basis for deciding what deserves continued attention and funding.

Start with the use cases that matter most. Define the outcomes that would make them worthwhile, measure those outcomes consistently, and let the evidence guide where additional budget and resources go.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

[AI makes me] more efficient, more productive. I can give some tasks to AI and focus on something that has more value to the enterprise: are we creating a new capability? Are we doing something we weren't able to do before? Are we serving our customers faster? Are we building a more resilient, more robust product with fewer bugs? Are we shipping features faster? Or are we creating a better work environment for employees, with fewer repetitive tasks and more time to think and create value?

Simon Chalifoux
CIO, Devolutions

05

INSIGHT 5 - AUTONOMY

AI maturity reshapes the path to autonomy

Leadership gives AI direction, ownership gives it a home, scale tests the organization around it, and measurement makes its value more visible. The next question is how much work organizations are prepared to let AI do on their behalf.

That question is becoming increasingly relevant as AI moves beyond tools that generate, summarize, or assist, toward agents that can take action across tasks and workflows with varying degrees of autonomy.

The survey asked respondents:

“Where does your organization currently stand with AI agents?”

The results suggest that AI agents are no longer a distant concept: most respondents are already somewhere between active exploration and production deployment, although relatively few have reached production today.

What maturity reveals

Among Early-stage organizations, about **seven in ten** have not moved beyond exploration. AI agents are still largely something to understand, assess, and experiment with rather than deploy operationally.

AI Adopters mark the transition point. Exploration remains common, but pilots become much more visible as organizations begin testing where agents can fit into real workflows.

Where does your organization currently stand with AI agents (by maturity group)

Early-stage (0-40) n = 225		**AI Adopters** (41–60) n = 254		**Advanced** (61–100) n = 94	
Actively exploring AI agents	36%	Actively exploring AI agents	52%	Already deployed in production	49%
Aware but no plans to explore	32%	Piloting AI agents	29%	Piloting AI agents	35%
Piloting AI agents	12%	Already deployed in production	8%	Actively exploring AI agents	14%
Not familiar with AI agents	11%	Aware but no plans to explore	8%	Aware but no plans to explore	1%
Already deployed in production	2%	Not familiar with AI agents	1%	Not familiar with AI agents	0%
Don't know / prefer not to answer	6%	Don't know / prefer not to answer	2%	Don't know / prefer not to answer	1%

These percentages are based on the 573 respondents who answered this question, out of the full 616-respondent sample. Group sizes are 225 / 254 / 94.

By the Advanced stage, the picture is almost reversed. **More than four in five** organizations are already piloting agents or using them in production, while only a small minority remain at the exploration stage.

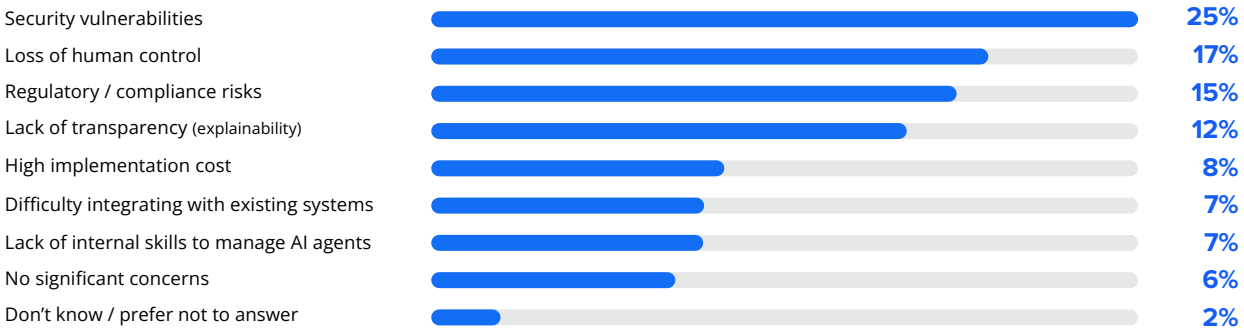
But moving agents closer to production introduces another question: how much autonomy should they actually have?

MATURITY INSIGHT

Experience builds confidence without removing concern

Security remains the leading concern around AI agents across the maturity curve. But Advanced organizations also show signs of greater confidence: they are much more likely to report no significant concerns, and less likely to point to a lack of transparency in how agents make decisions.

What is your primary concern about AI agents?
Single-choice question · n = 454



Primary concern about AI agents, by maturity group

Early-stage (0-40) n = 128		AI Adopters (41–60) n = 233		Advanced (61–100) n = 93	
Security vulnerabilities	26%	Security vulnerabilities	26%	Security vulnerabilities	19%
Loss of human control	17%	Loss of human control	17%	Loss of human control	15%
Regulatory / compliance risks	13%	Regulatory / compliance risks	16%	Regulatory / compliance risks	16%
Lack of transparency (explainability)	17%	Lack of transparency (explainability)	11%	Lack of transparency (explainability)	9%
High implementation cost	3%	High implementation cost	10%	High implementation cost	9%
Difficulty integrating with existing systems	9%	Difficulty integrating with existing systems	6%	Difficulty integrating with existing systems	8%
Lack of internal skills to manage AI agents	9%	Lack of internal skills to manage AI agents	6%	Lack of internal skills to manage AI agents	8%
No significant concerns	5%	No significant concerns	4%	No significant concerns	15%
Don't know / prefer not to answer	2%	Don't know / prefer not to answer	3%	Don't know / prefer not to answer	2%

These percentages are based on the 454 respondents who identified a primary concern about AI agents — fewer than the 616-respondent total, as this question was left unanswered by respondents who did not report a specific concern. Group sizes here are 128 / 233 / 93.

Responses are to a single-choice question.

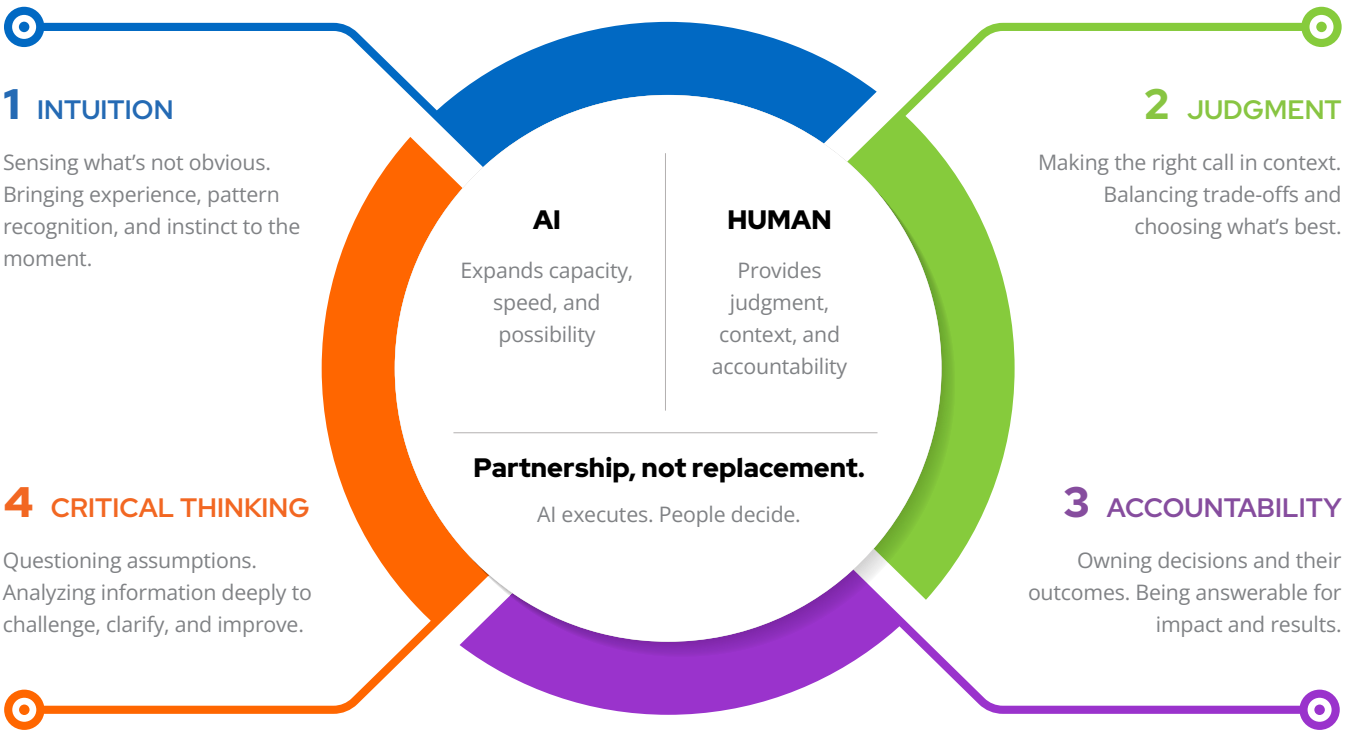
Greater maturity does not appear to eliminate caution. Instead, it seems to change **which risks feel most pressing.**

And yet one concern remains particularly revealing. **Loss of human control** remains one of the top concerns across every maturity group and ranks second overall.

As autonomy grows, the human role moves

Loss of human control does not necessarily mean respondents expect humans to disappear from the process. When asked what AI will never replace in an IT professional's work, they instead describe the human role as moving toward experience, judgment, review, and accountability.

Four human strengths that keep us in control.



The takeaway

AI can accelerate what we do. Humans determine what matters, what's trusted, and what's next.

In their own words

When asked what AI will never replace, respondents describe experience, judgment, review, and accountability.

For some, judgment starts with intuition built through experience — shaped not only by knowledge, but by having lived through success, failure, and their consequences.

"Experience-based intuition. AI has knowledge from nearly infinite resources, but it hasn't experienced the feeling of failing in a meaningful way that is emotional or exhilarating or crushing. [...] AI admits to mistakes only when we point them out or explain what it got wrong, but human experience and intuition remain necessary."

IT Director / IT Manager
Manufacturing & Industrial · USA · 101–500 employees

That experience becomes especially important when AI moves from producing answers to influencing real decisions. Another respondent drew the line around judgment and ownership.

"Human judgment with accountability. AI can analyse, code, troubleshoot, and recommend solutions, but an IT professional must understand the business context, make trade-offs, communicate with people, and take responsibility when a decision affects customers, security, cost, or trust. The most valuable IT professionals will not compete with AI on speed — they will use AI while owning the final decision."

Software Developer
Retail & E-commerce · India · 501–1,000 employees · IT team: 50+

For others, the human role becomes a control layer around AI actions. One respondent compared AI-driven changes to code that still requires review before going live.

"In theory it could replace all skills but I would caution that just like developers need pull requests before pushing changes live — AI based changes should always be reviewed as well. So this reviewal process should always be done by one or more humans with deep organisational knowledge and coding skills."

Software Developer
Finance, Banking & Insurance · South Africa · 21–100 employees · IT team: 6–20

And once those decisions reach production environments, accountability becomes even harder to delegate.

"AI will not replace professional accountability and engineering judgment. IT professionals must make decisions under uncertainty, balance technical, business, security, and operational risks, and take responsibility for the outcome. AI can accelerate analysis and generate recommendations, but it cannot own the consequences of production decisions or replace human accountability."

Executive / Vice President
IT Services / Managed Services (MSP) · Ukraine · 1–20 employees · IT team: 6–20

These responses suggest that greater autonomy does not remove the human from the chain. It changes the human contribution within it. As AI becomes more capable of analysing, recommending, and acting, the human role increasingly shifts toward **judgment, context, and accountability.**

Key takeaway

As AI takes on more of the execution, define where human judgment still needs to remain. Clear boundaries around review and accountability help determine what can be delegated safely.

Keep people focused on the decisions that matter most. Let AI handle more of the analysis and routine execution, while humans retain context, oversight, and responsibility for the outcome.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

AI should make people better at what they do. Technology can help with the work, but when a decision really matters, there still needs to be someone who understands the situation and is ready to own that decision.

David Hervieux
CEO, Devolutions

As AI takes on more of the execution, I see the human role shifting toward continually improving those processes rather than simply carrying them out.

Simon Chalifoux
CIO, Devolutions

CONCLUSION

AI maturity is becoming an organizational capability

Across the five insights in this report, one idea stands out: AI maturity is not simply about using more AI. It is about becoming better equipped to use it deliberately.

The organizations further along the maturity curve do not appear to have eliminated uncertainty, friction, or risk. Instead, they appear better equipped to decide **how those challenges should be managed** — and who should manage them.

That distinction matters. Respondents repeatedly described AI adoption not as a technology project with a defined endpoint, but as an organizational capability that has to be built over time.

> **Experimentation can start almost anywhere. Maturity requires the organization around it to catch up.**

THIS IS VISIBLE IN THE PROGRESSION EXPLORED THROUGHOUT THE REPORT

- **Leadership** moves from encouragement toward enablement.
- **Ownership** moves from individuals and informal IT activity toward clearer responsibility.
- **Scaling** moves beyond access to challenges around integration, security, expertise, and resources.
- **Benefits** move from being noticed to being measured.
- **Autonomy** introduces a new boundary to manage: not whether humans remain involved, but where their judgment matters most.

The bigger picture

The wider survey shows how quickly that operating reality is expanding — but the way organizations build around AI is still evolving.

1 What AI tools are organizations using?

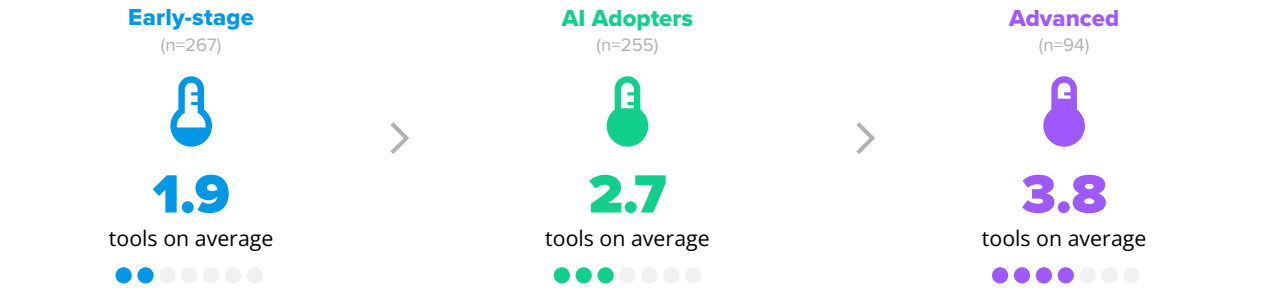
% of respondents using each tool · multiple selections allowed

AI TOOL	Early-stage (n=267)	AI Adopters (n=255)	Advanced (n=94)	OVERALL (n=616)
Microsoft Copilot	48%	58%	78%	60%
ChatGPT	49%	61%	65%	60%
Claude	36%	50%	70%	50%
Google Gemini	33%	39%	38%	38%
GitHub Copilot	14%	40%	65%	34%
Built / customized internally	13%	17%	47%	21%
Cursor	0%	6%	18%	6%

Microsoft Copilot (60%) and **ChatGPT** (60%) are the most widely used AI tools overall.

2 AI maturity comes with a broader toolset

Average number of AI tools used, out of 7 tools analyzed



Advanced organizations use 100% more AI tools on average compared to Early-stage organizations.

3 Advanced organizations are far more likely to build AI around their own needs

% of organizations using AI tools built or customized internally

Early-stage (n=267)	AI Adopters (n=255)	Advanced (n=94)
13%	17%	47%
build or customize AI tools internally	build or customize AI tools internally	build or customize AI tools internally

Nearly half (47%) of Advanced organizations are building or customizing AI tools to fit their specific needs.

4 AI is already delivering measurable impact

% of organizations reporting measurable benefits from AI adoption

50%	47%	38%	37%	26%
Improved do cumentation or report quality	Less time spent on repetitive tasks	Improved decision-making through data analysis	Faster incident resolution	Better threat detection and response

AI is driving value today — helping organizations save time, improve quality, and respond faster to risks.

The bigger picture is one of expanding capability. Organizations are using a wider range of AI tools, more mature organizations are increasingly adapting AI to their own needs, and measurable benefits are already appearing in everyday work.

What we believe comes next

For IT teams, the next stage of AI adoption will probably not be defined by access to another model or another tool. The differentiator will increasingly be the organization's ability to turn those tools into dependable ways of working.

The next challenge is therefore less about finding places to use AI and more about turning promising uses into sustainable ways of working. Organizations will need to decide which experiments deserve to become repeatable practices, what needs to be standardized, where additional investment is justified, and where human oversight must remain non-negotiable.

Respondents also gave us an important reminder about what should remain on the other side of those boundaries. When asked what AI would never replace, they repeatedly returned to **judgment, context, accountability, critical thinking, intuition, and human connection**. One respondent described the role of the IT professional particularly well: AI can analyse and recommend, but people still have to understand context, make trade-offs, and own the decision. Other respondents similarly emphasized critical thinking, strategic judgment, relationships, and accountability.

So perhaps the clearest lesson from the 616 organizations in this benchmark is this:

THE CLEAREST LESSON

AI maturity is not about removing people from the work. It is about building an organization in which people and AI can each do more of what they are best equipped to do.

And organizations do not need to solve every part of that equation at once. Maturity is a progression, not a finish line. What matters is knowing what needs to become clearer next.

FROM INSIDE DEVOLUTIONS

There's no final version of this. AI will keep evolving, and so will the way we work with it. What matters is that we keep learning, keep challenging ourselves, and keep finding better ways to use it. We don't need AI to do everything for us. We need to understand where it can help people do better work, where it can make the organization stronger, and where humans continue to bring the judgment and creativity that make the difference.

David Hervieux
CEO, Devolutions

FUTURE OUTLOOK

What AI maturity could look like next

As AI becomes more embedded in everyday work, the next phase is likely to be shaped less by access to AI and more by how organizations adapt around it.

The survey captures organizations at very different stages of AI maturity, but the direction of travel is becoming clearer. As AI becomes more embedded in everyday work, the next phase is likely to be shaped less by access to AI and more by how organizations adapt around it.

The five dimensions explored in this report point to several developments worth watching.

1 Leadership will become more selective

With active leadership support already reaching over 90% among Advanced organizations, the open question is no longer whether leadership will engage with AI — it is where that engagement gets directed as competing use cases multiply. The challenge ahead may be less about generating enthusiasm and more about focusing it.

2 AI ownership will become more distributed

Dedicated AI roles and teams will likely keep growing, following the same trajectory seen among Advanced organizations today. But as that central structure matures, it may increasingly function as a hub that sets standards and coordinates rather than a team that owns every AI decision.

Responsibility may then start extending outward again, shared between AI specialists, IT, security, and the teams closest to the work.

3 The AI stack will become more complex

Organizations are already using multiple AI tools, and the survey shows that Advanced organizations operate with nearly double the toolset of Early-stage organizations.

The next phase may bring more specialized, connected, and internally customized AI environments. Rather than relying on one general-purpose platform, organizations may increasingly combine different models and tools around specific workflows, systems, and business needs.

4 Expectations for proof will rise

AI benefits are already visible in areas such as documentation, repetitive work, decision-making, and incident resolution. Yet formal measurement remains rare today: only about **one in ten** organizations currently track AI benefits with structured KPIs and reporting. As expectations for evidence rise, that gap between visible benefit and structured proof is likely to close, making the ability to connect AI activity to measurable outcomes more important.

5 Autonomy will make oversight more important

AI agents are moving from exploration toward real-world deployment, particularly among more mature organizations. But the survey also shows that greater maturity does not eliminate concern — it changes its shape. Security vulnerabilities remain the leading concern around AI agents even among Advanced organizations, while concerns such as transparency become less prominent. As autonomy grows, the conversation may increasingly shift from whether organizations will use agents to how much authority those agents should have.

The future of AI maturity is therefore unlikely to be defined by a single technology or milestone. It will be shaped by how organizations respond as AI becomes **more widespread, more specialized, more measurable, and more autonomous.**

> That evolution is already underway. The next few years will show which organizational practices evolve with it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Turning AI maturity into practice

AI maturity doesn’t need to mean doing everything at once. It means becoming more deliberate about where AI creates value, how it’s governed, and where human judgment still matters.

Based on this year's findings, here are five priorities organizations should consider as they move forward with AI. To make them concrete, we've paired each one with how we approach it at Devolutions — a roughly 200 to 250-person company where AI now shows up across engineering, legal, marketing, finance, HR, and support.

Think of it as our own answer sheet to the survey: not a finished program, but a practical example of what these priorities can look like in a company our size.

1 Name someone responsible for AI — before adoption outgrows accountability

Across this year's respondents, active leadership support was dramatically more common when a role or team was explicitly accountable for AI: **77%** versus just **8%** when no one was. Ownership doesn't need to mean a large team or a new department. It means someone who can answer, when asked, where AI is being used, why, and under what rules.

HOW WE DO IT AT DEVOLUTIONS

Accountability starts at the top and then gets a home. Our CTO, Marc-André Moreau, has publicly answered community questions on AI security, cost, and culture, and the message internally is consistent: leadership backs AI, but teams still own quality and judgment. Below that, we staffed a small AI enablement team of about five to six people who track projects across the company. When someone asks where AI is being used and under what rules, there's a group that can actually answer — that's the difference between "AI is encouraged" as a slogan and "AI is owned" as a practice.

2 Build enablement around the tools

Access is only the starting point. As AI use expands, organizations also need to build the human capability around it. Invest in training that reflects different roles, give people time to experiment, and create a small group of champions or enablement resources who can help turn ideas into repeatable practices.

HOW WE DO IT AT DEVOLUTIONS

This is exactly why enablement is a team and not a memo. We invest in practical AI training through a third-party firm, Mindstone, with separate tracks for technical and non-technical people — a developer and a marketer don't need the same first day with AI. We also give people dedicated time to build through AI hackathons: a full day to work on a real workflow from their own job, run first with technical teams and then extended to legal, marketing, HR, and other departments that don't live in a codebase. The enablement team is the bridge for anyone who has an idea but no playbook yet.

3 Let teams experiment before standardizing too early

As organizations adopt a broader AI toolset, standardizing too early can limit what they learn. A single mandated tool may simplify procurement, but it can also narrow experimentation. Allow a controlled set of tools, compare what works across different workflows, and use those lessons to establish stronger standards over time.

HOW WE DO IT AT DEVOLUTIONS

We deliberately give people room to try more than one stack — internally you'll hear Claude, ChatGPT, Cursor, and others show up depending on the job. We half-jokingly call it "IT chaos," but it's guided experimentation, not sprawl: people compare approaches, share what works with other teams, and converge on better defaults over time, with the enablement team nearby for support. Locking everyone into one tool too early tends to freeze learning before you've figured out what actually fits each role.

4 Expand what delivers value, not what generates activity

Measure AI by the outcomes it improves, not by licenses purchased, prompts submitted, or tokens consumed. Start with practical indicators such as time saved, quality, resolution speed, throughput, or risk reduction, then use that evidence to guide further investment.

HOW WE DO IT AT DEVOLUTIONS

Our training and hackathons are framed around concrete outcomes, not attendance or activity — a workflow improved, a draft accelerated, a report assembled faster, a review checklist that no longer starts from a blank page. When we split training tracks, we measure outcomes rather than seats filled. The goal we repeat internally is simple: put AI into the work people already do so it saves time instead of sitting unused. That outcome test is also how we decide what's worth scaling to other teams.

5 Make governance scale with autonomy – and keep human judgment growing alongside it

The more authority AI receives, the clearer its boundaries should become — where human approval remains necessary, how outputs are validated, and who is accountable when something goes wrong. At the same time, training should focus not only on how to use AI, but on when to question it, verify it, and intervene. As AI takes on more of the execution, human judgment, context, and accountability become more important, not less.

HOW WE DO IT AT DEVOLUTIONS

Our operating principle is that leadership backs AI, but teams still own quality and judgment — the human stays in the loop for the work that needs relationships, context, and accountability. The AI champions we've named in teams across the company meet monthly with the enablement group to surface what's working and what needs guardrails, which keeps governance a living conversation rather than a one-time policy. As we push AI further over the next few years, that pairing of clear ownership with active human judgment is what lets autonomy grow safely.

DAVID'S CLOSING WORD

You don't need a perfect AI strategy before you start. What you need is a clear way to learn. Give people room to experiment, make sure someone is responsible for how AI is used, and pay attention to what actually improves the work. Some ideas will scale, some won't, and that's part of the process. The important thing is to learn quickly, put structure around what works, and make the rules stronger as the technology takes on more responsibility. That's how AI becomes part of the organization instead of just another tool.

David Hervieux
CEO, Devolutions

2026 AI Maturity Benchmark Survey · 616 respondents across roles, company sizes, industries, and geographies.

Devolutions