

Thomson Reuters

# Future of Professionals Report 2025

Strategic AI Adoption:  
Unlocking Innovation  
and Maximizing Returns

# Foreword

By Thomson Reuters President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Hasker

*Generative AI will transform the legal, risk, compliance, tax, accounting, and audit professions, along with global trade over the next three years. Already, professionals report increased efficiency, productivity, and cost savings as the most significant benefits, making AI a crucial tool for organizations navigating a rapidly evolving set of business challenges.*



Now in its third year, our *Future of Professionals* report highlights AI's impact on professional work, helping individuals navigate uncertainty with confidence. It includes year-over-year comparisons and key insights from Thomson Reuters, which we hope will help shape the decisions our customers will make over the next three to five years.

Organizations must constantly consider how to maintain their competitive edge, but the efficiency gains offered by AI are particularly significant in today's evolving business landscape. Now, as AI adoption reaches a pivotal stage, it's clear that a widening competitive gap is emerging. Firms that reinvent and automate entire business processes using AI will prevail with superior customer experiences and lower costs compared to those organizations that move slowly.

Consider this: Based on the current predicted pace of AI adoption, our report shows that the legal professionals we surveyed expect to free up nearly 240 hours per year, up from 200 in 2024. This unlocks an average annual value of \$19,000 per professional. In the US, this contributes to a \$32 billion combined annual impact for the legal and tax & accounting sectors. As the leaders in the AI adoption race reap these savings and provide greater value to their clients, the value gap continues to widen.

## Key findings

This year's report highlights a new divide among organizations: Those that adopt an AI strategy and those that do not. Our research shows that organizations with visible AI strategies are twice as likely to experience revenue growth as a direct or indirect result of AI adoption compared to those with more informal or ad-hoc adoption approaches. That puts those organizations that haven't developed an AI strategy at risk of being left behind within a matter of years.

***"The future isn't just about whether organizations should be adopting AI – it's about how they can do so strategically to get the most benefit from advanced technology."***

Our report highlights the significant variance in AI adoption, even within the same organization. By creating a strategy to drive AI adoption and redeploy productivity gains, organizations will achieve sustained innovation, operational excellence, and revenue growth while empowering professionals to stay productive and relevant.

While organizations must evolve and adapt, the responsibility doesn't stop there. Those professionals who fail to develop their individual AI proficiency risk falling behind in critical skills, creating a competitive gap that could limit their career growth. As I have said previously, AI will not replace professionals, but AI-powered professionals will. AI-enabled professionals will gain a competitive edge, boosting both their personal impact and their organization's long-term value.

Finally, the report highlights that while concerns about the responsible and ethical use of AI have eased slightly, professionals may have new perspectives on the potential negative consequences of AI. However, there were slight upticks in concerns about privacy, confidentiality, and transparency, as well as data security implications — a trend worth watching.

One of the areas I am most proud of is the controls we have put into our AI development here at Thomson Reuters — these ensure that our customers' confidential information will not become output for a third party.

We're no longer predicting AI's impact — we're quantifying it. Organizations with clear, aligned strategies are unlocking real ROI: reclaiming time, cutting costs, and gaining ground. Professionals who are embracing AI are not just more productive — they're staying relevant.

This is the dividing line. Those who act with intention will lead. Those who wait will fall behind. The future isn't just about adopting AI — it's about doing so strategically.



# The *Future of Professionals* highlights the key concerns shaping the professional landscape today

Today's knowledge workers across legal, risk, compliance, tax, accounting, audit, and trade professions face unprecedented challenges that include geopolitical turbulence and a complex web of regulatory and legislative changes that demand constant vigilance. Further, many organizations are simultaneously grappling with exponential growth in data volumes while adapting to fundamental shifts in workforce dynamics and expectations.

Against this backdrop, however, artificial intelligence has emerged not merely as a technological advancement, but as a strategic ally. In Thomson Reuters third annual *Future of Professionals* survey report, we examine how this transformative technology empowers professionals to navigate uncertainty with greater confidence and precision.

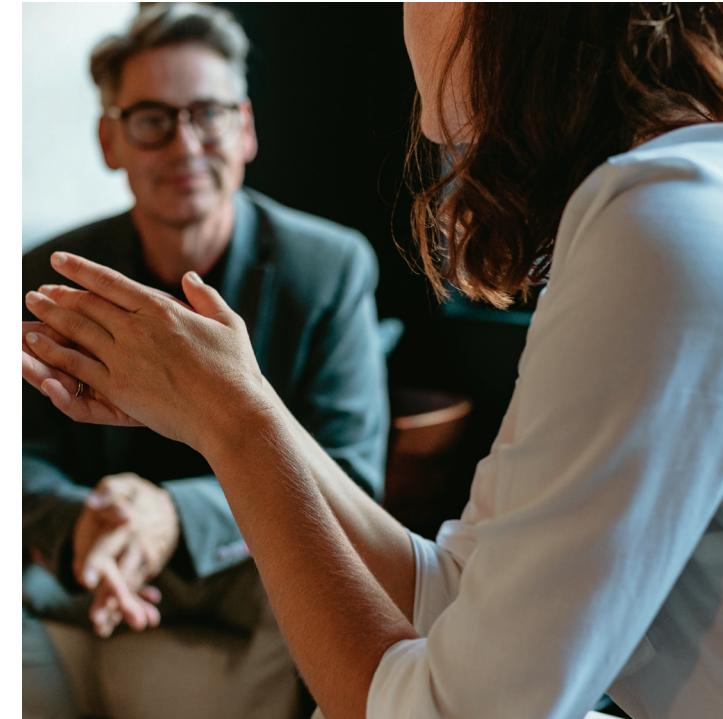
Most significantly, our research reveals a new and growing divide between organizations that adopt an AI strategy and those that do not. We found that organizations with visible AI strategies are twice as likely to experience revenue growth, whether directly

or indirectly, as a result of AI adoption compared to those with more informal or ad-hoc adoption approaches. That puts organizations that haven't developed an AI strategy at risk of getting left behind within a matter of years.

The *Future of Professionals* report also highlights the remarkable opportunities AI presents, and points up a crucial perspective: Technology must serve as an enabler of broader organizational objectives, not an end in itself.

The most successful organizations are those deploying AI within a coherent strategic framework — one that acknowledges today's challenges while building resilience for tomorrow's competitive landscape.

**Note:** In this report, organization is the generic term used to describe: *i*) the firm, for those in private practice; *ii*) the corporation, for corporate C-Suite; and *iii*) the in-house department, for corporate and government professionals.



# • What are the forces impacting professions over the next five years?

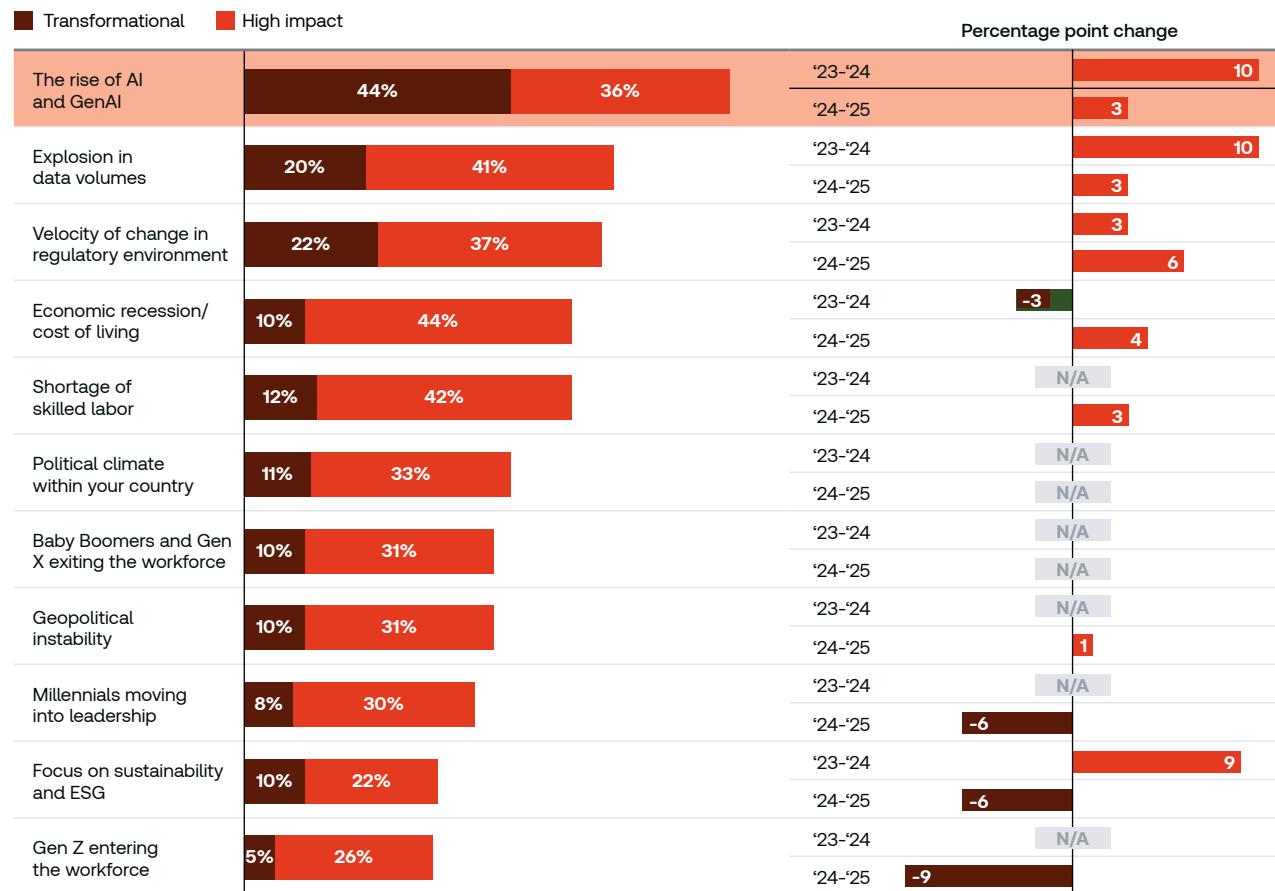
It's a question we've asked over each iteration of this report, and we can clearly see that the impact of AI and GenAI continues to occupy critical space in professionals' minds over the years. Today, 8 of 10 professionals predict AI will have a transformational or high impact on their work in the coming five years. Indeed, the percentage of survey respondents citing AI's impact as a transformational force was twice the percentage of any other category.

Still, other forces are growing in concern as well, many linked to current macro-economic or geopolitical pressures, such as the rapid pace of regulatory change or fears of recession.

Interestingly, while concerns over finding enough skilled labor increased in professionals' minds, worries about both Millennials moving into management positions and Gen Zers entering the workforce dropped off significantly.

**AI and GenAI continue to occupy critical space in professionals' minds over the years.**

## Forces with high/transformational impact



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025



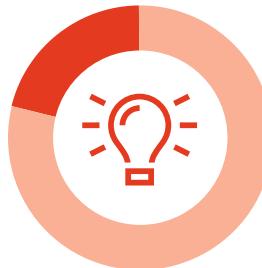
Bridging the  
gap between  
tech today and  
business tomorrow

# • Are professionals on track to realize the future they envisioned?

Clearly some professionals are taking the necessary steps toward realizing the AI-driven future they said they imagined in 2024. Others are not, pointing to a disconnect between the current pace of change and what they had envisioned.

For example, while 80% of respondents said they see AI as having a high or transformative impact on their profession over the next five years, only about one-third of professionals (38%) said they expect that change to happen this year — and 3 out of 10 said their organizations are moving too slowly in AI adoption.

## Disconnect between future aspiration and current pace



**80%**  
believe that AI will have a high or even transformational impact on their profession within 5 years, but...



Only **38%** expect to see transformational or high levels of change in their firm this year.



**53%**  
believe their firm is already experiencing at least one type of benefit from AI adoption, but...



**30%**  
believe their firm is moving too slowly in AI adoption.

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# More than half of organizations are already seeing ROI because of AI adoption

Most importantly, if AI is going to have longevity among organizations, they have to be able to show a viable return on investment (ROI) as a direct result of their investment in AI. The survey shows that more than half (53%) of professionals said their organizations are already seeing ROI directly or indirectly tied to their AI investment. This ROI is showing itself in many different forms, most often as improved efficiency and productivity, as well as improved response times and a reduction in errors.

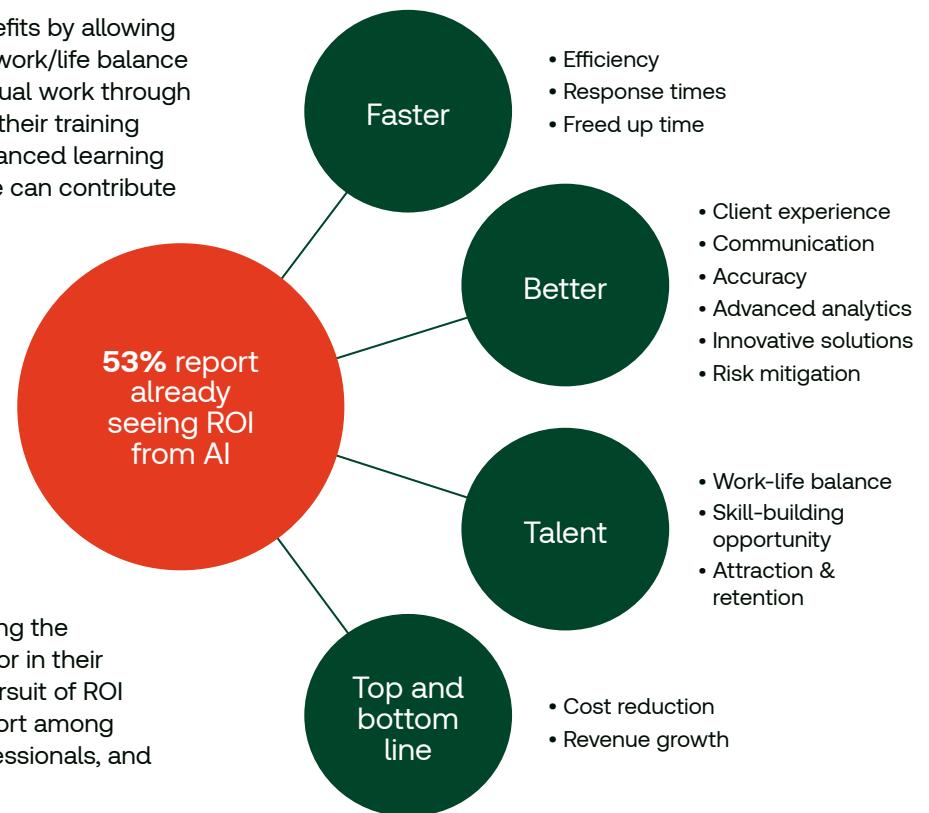
When GenAI burst upon the public scene just 2½ years ago, many professionals initially thought about ROI just in terms of *efficiency*, most commonly measured in time and cost saved. Not surprisingly, that is still where we're seeing many organizations chalk up their early ROI victories.

However, the more advanced organizations now are starting to also see wider ROI opportunities, even as they still reap the benefits of AI-driven automation that's pushing their work processes faster. Now, however, many forward-looking organizations are starting to leverage AI to work in new ways and produce better quality outputs — and many are already seeing quantifiable financial gains.

For example, in the area of talent — which only has increased in importance for many organizations —

AI has shown measurable benefits by allowing professionals to improve their work/life balance by removing burdensome manual work through automation, and to accelerate their training and skills-building with AI-enhanced learning programs. And all of this AI use can contribute to an organization's ability to attract and retain high-quality professionals because many individuals are seeking out those organizations which encourage advanced technology use in the workplace.

As organizations seek higher levels of return on investment (ROI), having a strategic plan for AI adoption and implementation is becoming the single most distinguishing factor in their future success. Further, this pursuit of ROI needs to be a collaborative effort among organizational leadership, professionals, and operational support staff.



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# • How to achieve ROI from AI

Our research shows that organizations are more likely to achieve stronger benefits from their AI if they successfully engage four layers in an AI strategy roadmap:

**Strategy** — Organizations with a visible AI strategy were almost four times more likely to already be experiencing benefits compared to firms without any significant plans for AI adoption.

**Leadership** — Organizations with leaders who lead by example when introducing change, have added new roles to their governance and are actively investing in AI are seeing more benefits than those organizations that don't.

**Operational** — Although it may look different for different types of organizations, those that are making changes to how they deliver their work in terms of resourcing and pricing models, adapting workflow and processes, and adding new roles and skills to support will see more success.

**Individual** — When individual professionals understand AI and feel empowerment, ownership, and accountability, organizations will see results not only in terms of adoption but in ultimate ROI.

The AI Success Pyramid



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# Layer 1: Having a clear AI strategy is strongest lever for success



Organizations that craft a strategic plan for their AI adoption and implementation are 3.5-times more likely to experience critical AI benefits compared to those that do not.

Further, those organizations with a strategic AI plan are almost twice (1.9-times) as likely to already be experiencing revenue growth as a result of their AI investment than those organizations that are adopting AI informally.

This applies not only to firms but also to in-house departments within corporations and government agencies. Departments that have their own AI strategies are also seeing more ROI than those without a strategy or those that are simply following their organization's overall AI strategy.

## AI adoption strategies

### Level 1: Lagging behind

31%

Have no significant plans for firm AI adoption

23%

Already experiencing ROI from AI

### Level 2: Unstructured experimentation

43%

Adopting AI without a strategy

64%

Already experiencing ROI from AI

### Level 3: Tailored strategy

22%

Have a visible AI strategy

81%

Already experiencing ROI from AI

Those with a visible AI strategy are **3.5x** more likely to be experiencing at least one form of ROI compared to those without any significant plans for AI adoption.

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

## • Layer 2: Strong leaders lead by example in times of change

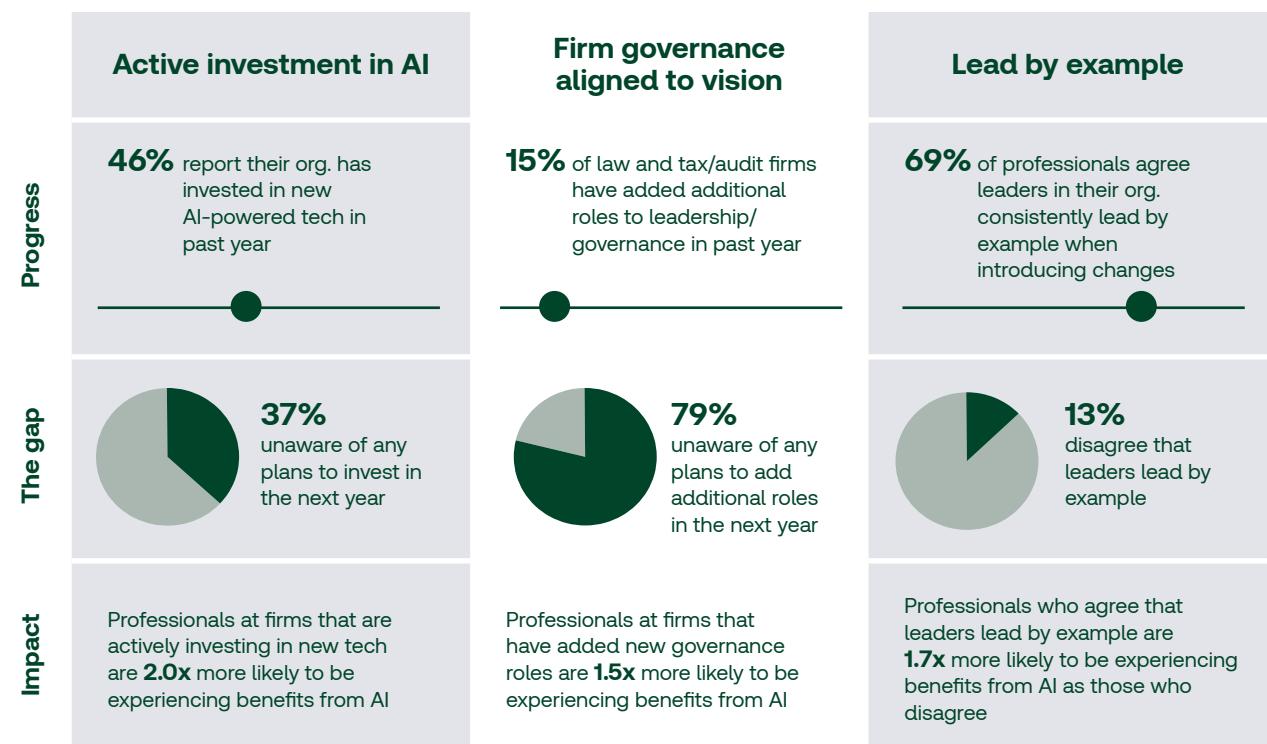


The strongest leaders, according to our survey, are those who most consistently lead by example, especially when introducing new changes.

In fact, those respondents who said their leaders were leading by example, were 1.7-times more likely to see the benefits of AI compared to those professionals who said their leaders were not leading by example.

Our research shows that forward-looking firms are examining whether their current governance aligns with their projected future, for example moving away from lawyer-only Executive Committees and adding new roles such as Chief Operations Officers and Chief Transformation Officers to their highest levels of decision-making.

### Leadership levers for success



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# • Layer 3: Adjusting operations can gain the most benefits from AI



Organizations and their operational support staff will need to adjust their models and work processes to thrive in the future, taking into consideration not just the rise of

AI, but the impact of other pressures as well. These changes will involve how talent is deployed, how work is done, and what and how services are offered, as well as how they're priced. While these changes are likely to be iterative over the next few years, the most progressive organizations are already making changes and reaping the benefits.

Organizations making these changes are seeing more ROI gains than those that have yet to begin their operational transformation.

## Operational levers for success

<b>Roles and skills:</b> <i>To fulfill future vision</i>	<b>Processes &amp; workflows:</b> <i>To maximize efficiency</i>	<b>Services offered:</b> <i>Meeting needs of orgs. of the future</i>	<b>Delivery models:</b> <i>To make best use of clients' finite budgets</i>	<b>Pricing models:</b> <i>That accurately reflect value of work to client</i>
<p>Around a <b>quarter to a third</b> have recruited new roles, appointed external consultants and/or increased the number of existing roles. <b>10-15%</b> anticipate these changes coming in the next year.</p> <p>Only around <b>one in ten</b> have begun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decreasing the number of existing types of roles (including reducing annual intake of juniors)</li> <li>- Moving roles to lower cost geographies</li> <li>- Redefinition of existing roles</li> </ul>	<p>Just <b>under a third</b> have experienced changes to their team's workflows and processes in the past 12 months, with a <b>further quarter</b> anticipating changes in the next 12 months.</p>	<p><b>26%</b> of firms have started offering new advisory or consultancy services in the last 12 months and <b>30%</b> of in-house corporate and government professionals have started purchasing these types of services.</p> <p>AI-powered services: only <b>13%</b> of firms have started offering AI-powered services – although <b>23%</b> of in-house professionals report having purchased these services.</p>	<p><b>1/5</b> in-house departments has significantly altered the proportion of work that is carried out in-house. Slightly fewer have changed their outsourced work allocation.</p> <p>Few firms have started including individuals with non-traditional qualifications or in lower cost locations in their client teams, or outsourcing/partnering with third parties.</p>	<p><b>Third</b> of firms increasing the proportion of work billed other than by hourly rates.</p> <p><b>Quarter</b> of in-house professionals have increased work with firms because of fee arrangements offered. A similar proportion have dropped a firm for lack of flexibility fee arrangements.</p>

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# Layer 4: Proactive professionals find ways to leverage AI



It will require a strong foundation in basic AI operations to establish an understanding and culture that encourages change among individual professionals. Yet, those organizations that offer individuals room to improve, a depth of organizational AI understanding, regular AI utilization, and personal goal setting will be the ones that move their professionals into the forefront of skill development and improved productivity.

## Individual levers for success

	Learning <i>How to get the most out of AI</i>	Empowerment <i>Explore new ways of working</i>	Ownership <i>Helping shape AI policy</i>	Accountability <i>Personal goals linked to AI</i>	Usage <i>AI as a starting point/to edit</i>
Progress	<b>96%</b> have at least a basic awareness of AI capabilities	<b>80%</b> encouraged to try new ways of working <b>74%</b> empowered to make changes	<b>54%</b> feel they have sufficient input into how organization plans to use AI	<b>39%</b> have personal goals linked to AI adoption	<b>81%</b> have now tried using AI tech
The gap	<b>71%</b> feel they do not have a good understanding of practical applications of AI. Baby Boomers less likely to have good understanding	<b>6%</b> do not feel encouraged to explore new ways of working, <b>8%</b> not empowered to make changes. GenZ feel less encouraged/empowered	<b>17%</b> do not feel they have sufficient input Millennials and GenZ least likely to feel they have input	<b>61%</b> of professionals do not have personal goals linked to AI adoption	<b>70%</b> of professionals not yet using AI tools regularly
More impact	Professionals with good/expert AI knowledge are <b>2.8x</b> more likely as those with basic or no knowledge to be seeing organizational benefits from AI	Professionals who feel encouraged to explore new ways of working are <b>1.9x</b> more likely to be seeing benefits, those encouraged to make changes <b>1.6x</b> as likely	Professionals who feel they have sufficient input are <b>1.7x</b> more likely to be seeing benefits from AI, compared to those who feel they have no input	<b>21%</b> of professionals with AI goals using AI at least once a week Professionals who have AI adoption goals are <b>1.8x</b> more likely to be seeing organizational benefits	Regular users of AI tools are <b>2.4x</b> more likely to be seeing organizational benefits from AI, compared to non-regular users

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

## Examining the disconnect: The danger of a mismatch between strategic and individual goals

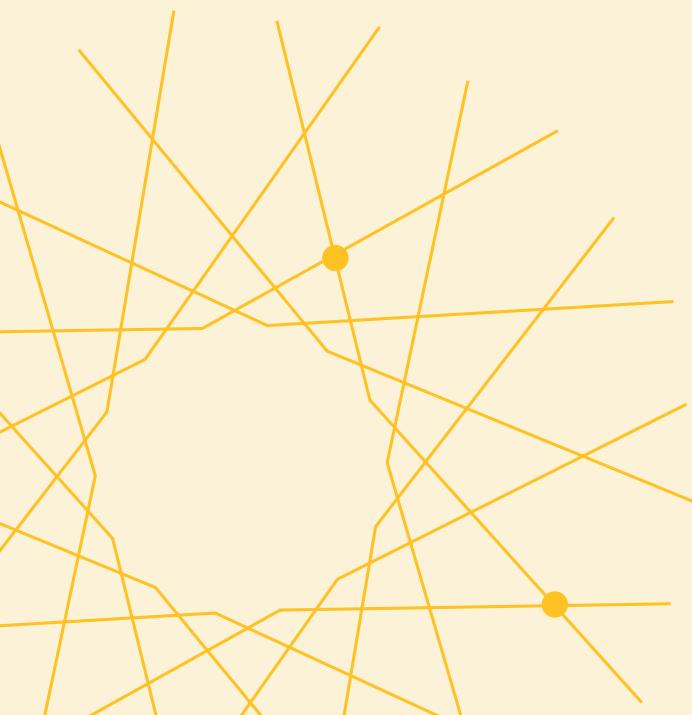
Two thirds (65%) of respondents who said they have their own personal goals for AI adoption also said they aren't aware of their organization having an AI strategy. This means they're being asked to adopt new technology without critical guidance as to what they are trying to achieve for their organization by doing so. This disconnect makes it highly likely that such individual AI adoption will be inconsistent and inefficient.

Conversely, more than one-third (38%) with an AI strategy also reported that they don't have any personal goals for AI adoption. This, too, increases the risk that the organization's AI strategy cannot be effectively implemented if there is a lack of accountability and communication at all levels.



# Organizations that reinvent will prevail

Organizations without an AI strategy risk falling behind as others harness AI to transform operations. Success requires not just adoption, but a clear plan to reinvest productivity gains—driving innovation, efficiency, and growth in an increasingly competitive landscape.



Organizations without significant AI adoption plans are already experiencing a widening competitive gap by missing efficiency opportunities and facing declining employee engagement as top talent seeks more innovative environments.

AI adoption in many organizations resembles a corporate gold rush — individuals and teams prospecting independently with their own tools and methods. While some find valuable nuggets (such as efficiency gains), they lack the infrastructure, coordination, and expertise to develop sustainable mines (transformative value). Meanwhile, those organizations using a more strategic approach are building comprehensive mining operations with railroads, refineries, and supply chains that create enduring value ecosystems.

Like prospectors who might find initial success but ultimately get outcompeted by organized mining companies, those functions within organizations that are implementing AI tools without full organizational alignment may see some short-term wins, but that heightened experience will quickly plateau, resulting in missed opportunities for cross-functional synergies and transformative outcomes.

Our research shows organizations with visible AI strategies are already experiencing a broader spectrum of benefits. For example, those

organizations with visible AI strategies are twice as likely to be experiencing revenue growth as a direct or indirect result of AI adoption compared to those with ad-hoc or informal adoption approaches.

Indeed, effective AI strategies must be integrated into the overall organizational vision rather than existing as standalone technology initiatives. The process begins with identifying strategic positioning in the evolving landscape, then determining how AI capabilities can best enable that vision.

As our research clearly underscores, an AI strategy remains essential regardless of where an organization positions itself on the adoption curve. A deliberately measured approach aligned with organizational goals constitutes a valid strategy.

However, the flip side of this assertion is alarming. Our data shows that those organizations that fail to develop an AI strategy this year risk falling behind within three years as peers and competitors leverage their own AI investment to transform their operations and service delivery. Shockingly, according to our data, this could put almost one-third of organizations on the path to failure.

A close-up photograph of a man with dark hair, a well-groomed beard, and mustache. He is wearing dark-framed glasses and a blue button-down shirt. His right hand is resting against his chin, with his fingers interlocked, suggesting deep thought or contemplation. The background is dark and out of focus.

# The jagged edge of AI adoption

## • Organizations follow different paths toward AI adoption

Our survey clearly underscores that for many organizations adoption of AI is not easy. Sometimes even within the same organization, there can be great disparity in how AI adoption and usage are carried out. Even in this jagged edge of AI adoption, one clear factor has shone through: Organizations that articulate and execute an AI adoption plan will see a return on their AI investments, and organizations that fail to do so will see their ability to sustain AI-driven value hindered.

In our research, we measure the overall pace of AI adoption on two dimensions: organizational and individual. Forty-six percent of professionals reported that their organization has invested in new AI-powered technologies in the past 12 months. At an individual level, 30% say they are now regularly using AI-powered tools to provide a starting point on tasks and/or to edit text they have drafted.

On the following page, we examine the extreme variation in AI adoption trajectories.

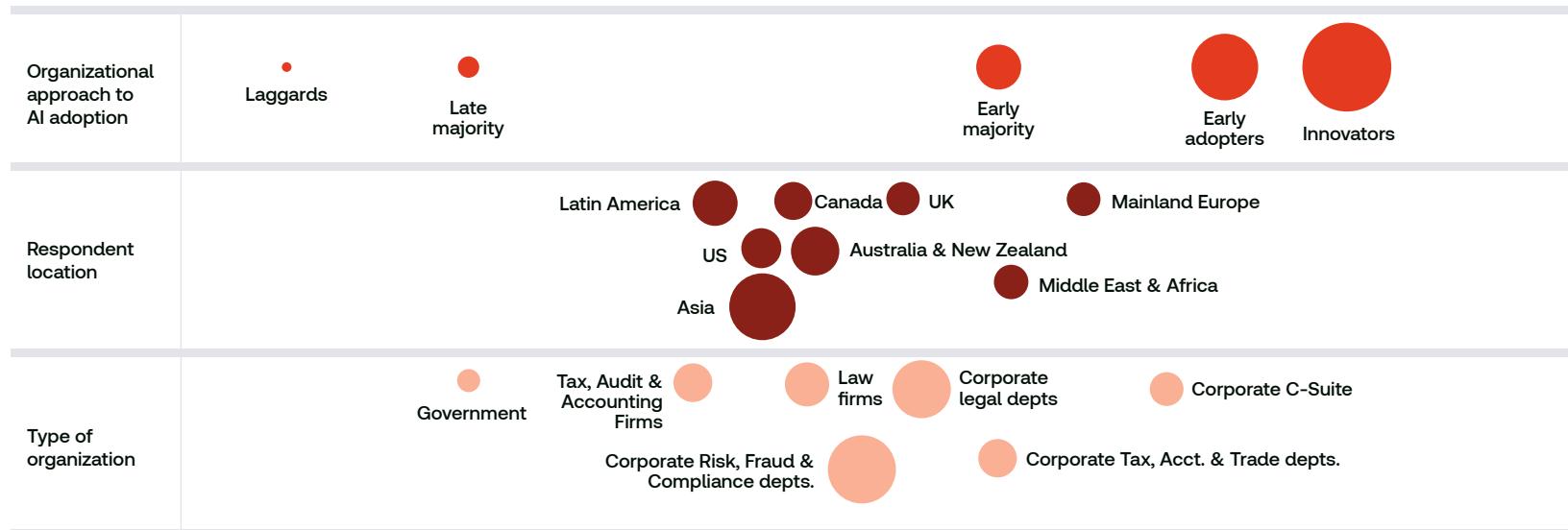


## Varied pace of AI adoption

Size of bubble indicates average % of individuals using AI regularly



Increasing percentage of respondents reporting organizational AI investment



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Respondents reported their perceptions of their organization's approach to AI adoption. Unsurprisingly, innovator organizations – those striving to lead and identify new opportunities for AI – are ahead in both investment and individual adoption. Notably, even among the 'early majority' – organizations using new technologies once proven by others – most have already started investing in AI. The 'late majority,' who wait until technologies are mainstream, should note that AI adoption is accelerating faster than they may realize.

Misalignment between individual and organizational adoption can cause issues:

- Low investment but high individual use increases risk, as employees may use public tools without safeguards.
- High investment but low individual use suggests poor change management and wasted investment.
- Low awareness and low use indicate missed opportunities with AI.

Typically, organizations in Mainland Europe, the Middle East and Africa are more likely to fall into the 'wasted investment' category, with many organizations investing in AI but few individuals regularly using the technology. In Asia and Latin America, high individual use but limited investment exposes organizations to risk. Corporate legal departments show high investment and usage, while government agencies have low levels on both fronts, missing opportunities to benefit from AI.

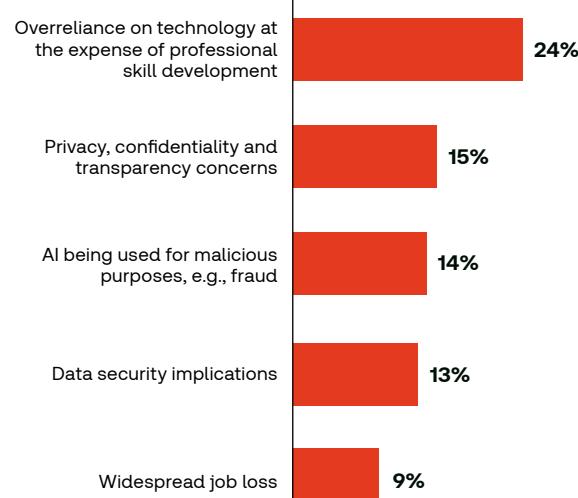
Individual adoption rates also vary by demographic: Millennials are adopting AI at nearly twice the rate of Baby Boomers.

# • What are the biggest barriers to more robust AI adoption?

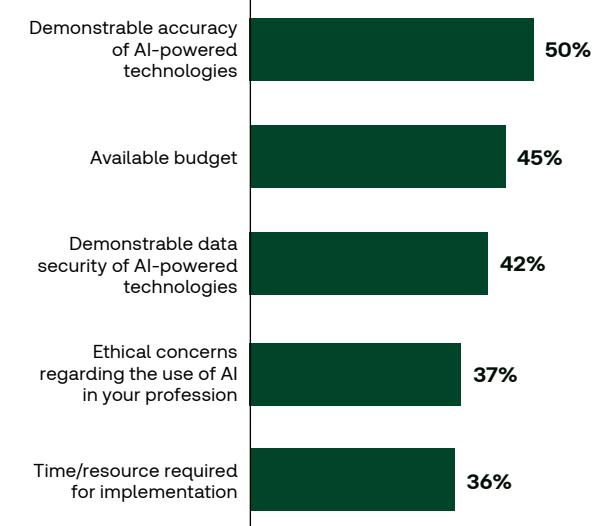
Potentially hindering AI adoption further are concerns, both individually and organizationally, over how this technology will be used and aspects of the technology itself. Interestingly, we've seen a shift from the worries of the early days of AI, such as fears of widespread job loss or AI being used for malicious purposes. And while these still register as concerns, they've largely given way to a more nuanced fear that almost one-quarter of professionals expressed: The successful use of AI itself could lead to an overreliance on the technology that would crimp professional development.

## Accuracy, budget & security perceived barriers to investment

### Negative consequences of most concern



### Barriers to investment



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

## What standard of accuracy is acceptable?

Accuracy concerns are the number one barrier to increased AI investment, but what standard of accuracy is deemed acceptable?

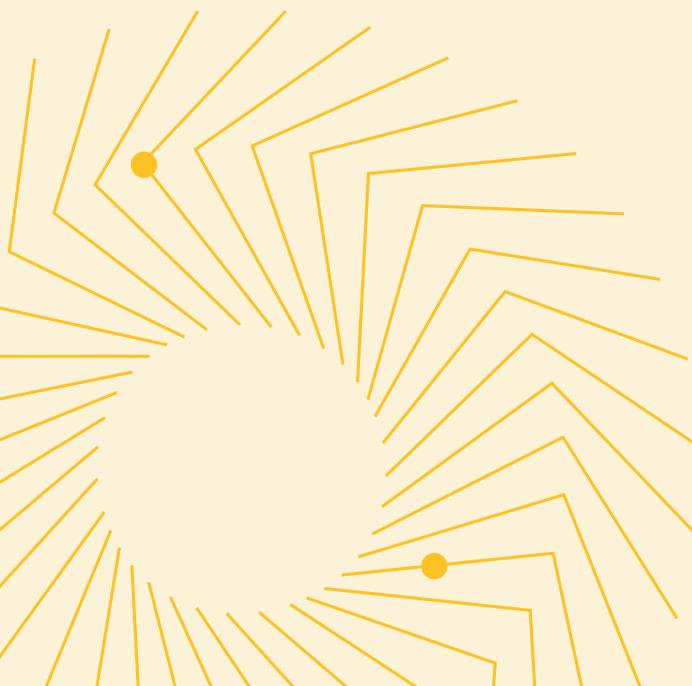
The answer set a very high bar: A full 91% of professionals said they believe computers should be held to higher standards of accuracy than humans, including 41% who said that AI outputs would need to be 100% accurate before they could be used without human review, meaning that it's still critical that humans continue to review AI-generated outputs.

Our research shows that those professionals who fail to develop a personal strategy for AI proficiency will struggle to remain relevant and effective in their roles. And, as the demand for tech-savvy, adaptable and interdisciplinary collaboration continues to grow, those professionals not honing their skills in this way may find themselves adrift.



# Intentional AI adoption leads to higher ROI

Organizations that align AI adoption with functional needs and overarching goals—while coordinating implementation across all levels—will achieve greater transformation, efficiency, and value than those with an undirected approach.



Our research unveils a complex, jagged-edged landscape of AI adoption, marked by significant disparities across and within organizations. While law firms and corporate tax departments, for example, may embark on distinct AI trajectories, this variance is even more pronounced at the individual level, at which professionals within the same organization follow vastly divergent paths in adopting AI technologies. This divergence, however, is not surprising, and, in fact, can be beneficial if managed strategically.

The varied pace and scope of AI adoption should be a reflection of strategic differentiation rather than a patchwork of ad hoc decisions. Different functions within an organization have unique requirements. For example, those areas with standardized, repeatable tasks can benefit from rapid AI integration, while those areas that require tasks be approached with nuanced judgment and non-standardized analysis may need a more measured approach.

The key, of course, is ensuring that these differences arise from deliberate, strategic choices that are aligned with the organization's overarching goals.

Without such strategic alignment, AI adoption risks becoming driven by individual preferences

or technological comfort levels rather than organizational objectives. This lack of coordination can lead to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for the organization, as potential cross-functional synergies and transformative outcomes remain untapped, as well as for the professional within, as skills and technological prowess diminish.

Those organizations that achieve the highest returns on their AI investments will be those that synchronize their adoption patterns with their strategic priorities. This alignment ensures AI tools are deployed where they deliver the greatest value and are tailored to the needs of specific professional functions. By doing this, organizations can accelerate their collective transformation.

To intentionally shape the jagged edge of AI adoption, organizations must ensure that AI initiatives are not only aligned with strategic objectives but also executed with precision across all levels. This approach not only maximizes the value derived from AI technologies but also fosters a cohesive, forward-thinking culture that embraces innovation while respecting the distinct needs of each function and each team within the organization.

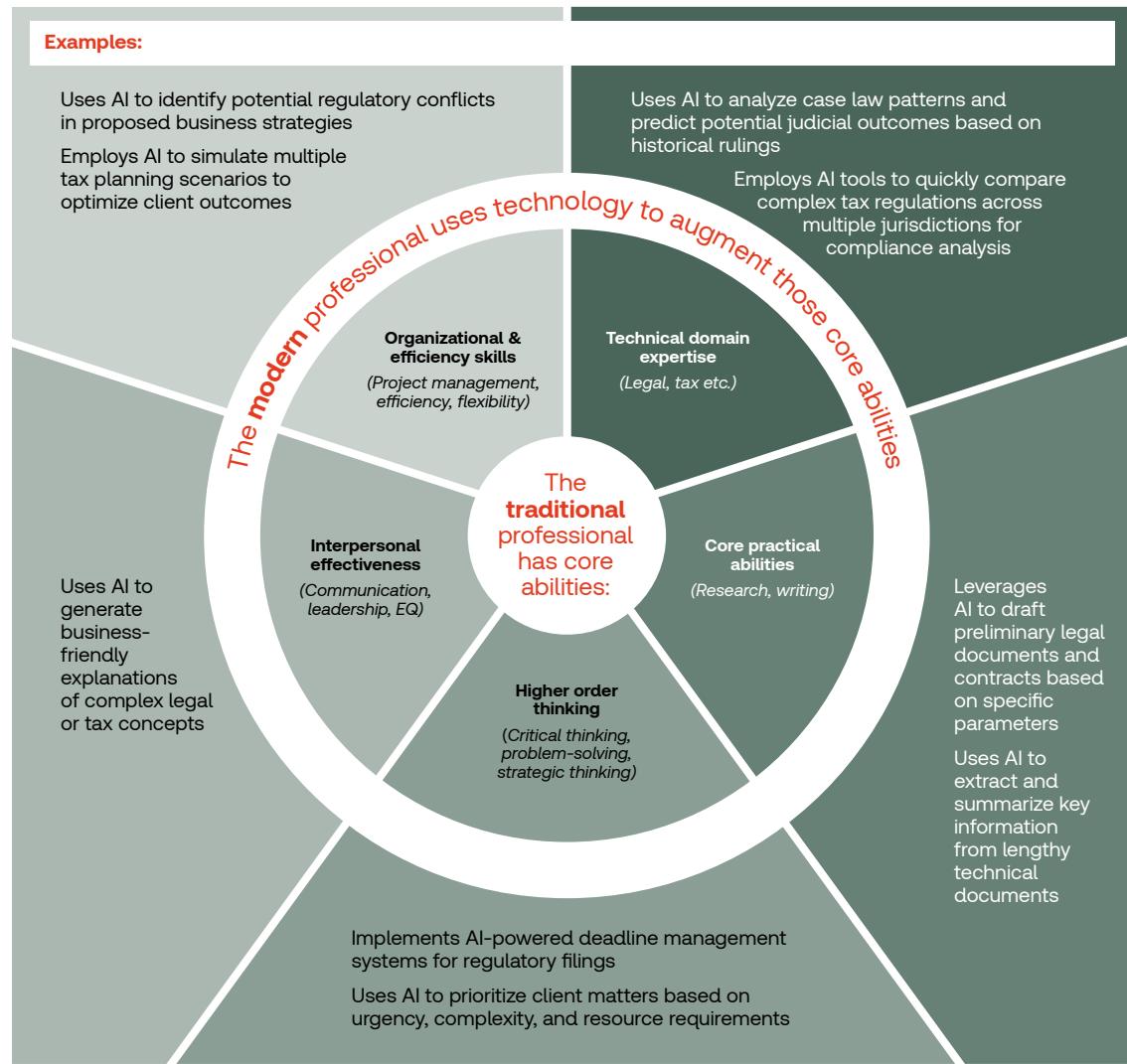
# The modern professional



# • What makes a modern professional?

Clearly, the skills needed to thrive in many service professions have dramatically changed over the years and will very likely continue to change. Today, a new modern professional is emerging, and while the core professional abilities remain the same, the modern professional uses tech and AI to augment their abilities. In fact, more than half (55%) of professionals said they've experienced significant changes in their day-to-day role over the past 12 months or are expecting to within the next 12 months.

Interestingly, almost all (88%) of the respondents surveyed said they favor having a profession-specific AI assistant. However, opinions are divided on whether this will become an expected element for competitiveness (meaning the respondent believes that almost every professional will have an AI assistant over the next five years) or a *differentiator* (meaning respondents believe not all professionals will have an AI assistant over the next five years, but those who do will have a marked advantage over their competition). Other respondents believe that having an AI assistant will simply be a benefit.



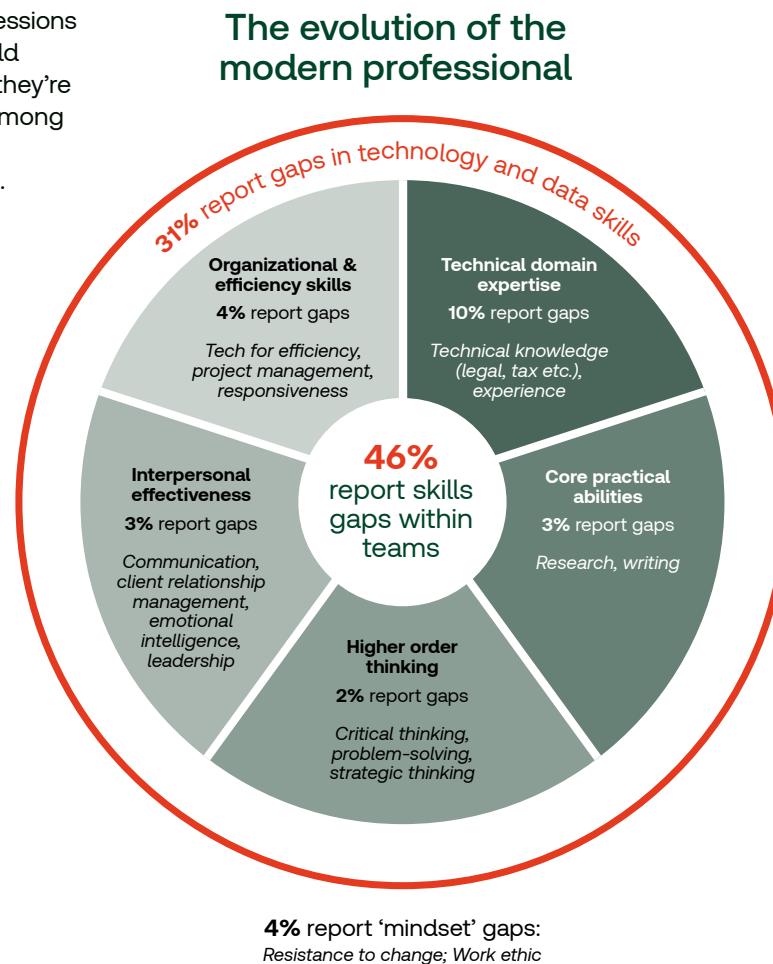
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# Addressing the skills gap among modern professionals

While the skills needed in today's modern professions include a level of technical expertise that would allow a professional to maximize the benefits they're gaining from AI use, the existing gap in skills among different individuals across professions is a significant problem, according to our research.

Further, some saw gaps in team members on critical so-called soft skills, such as responsiveness, efficiency, and interpersonal communications.

**More than 40% of professionals reported skills gaps on their teams in areas of technology & data knowledge and technical domain expertise.**



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

## Does the generation gap exist?

Our survey shows that Gen Z professionals are twice as likely as Baby Boomers to identify insufficient digital literacy among their colleagues, and some mention frustration around their teams' ability to effectively use technology to drive further efficiency.

However, Gen X professionals, comprising nearly half of the workforce, demonstrate stronger technological engagement than commonly assumed, according to our research, and participate in AI training at rates that exceed those of their younger colleagues. And while Baby Boomers do self-report lower AI proficiency and engage less in AI-focused learning, that may be somewhat understandable — though not entirely desirable — given their advanced career stage.

NOTE: respondents were asked directly if they saw any skills gaps in their team (yes/no). Those who did report gaps were then asked specific types of skills that are lacking as an open question with no prompted response list.

# How can professionals supercharge their AI literacy?

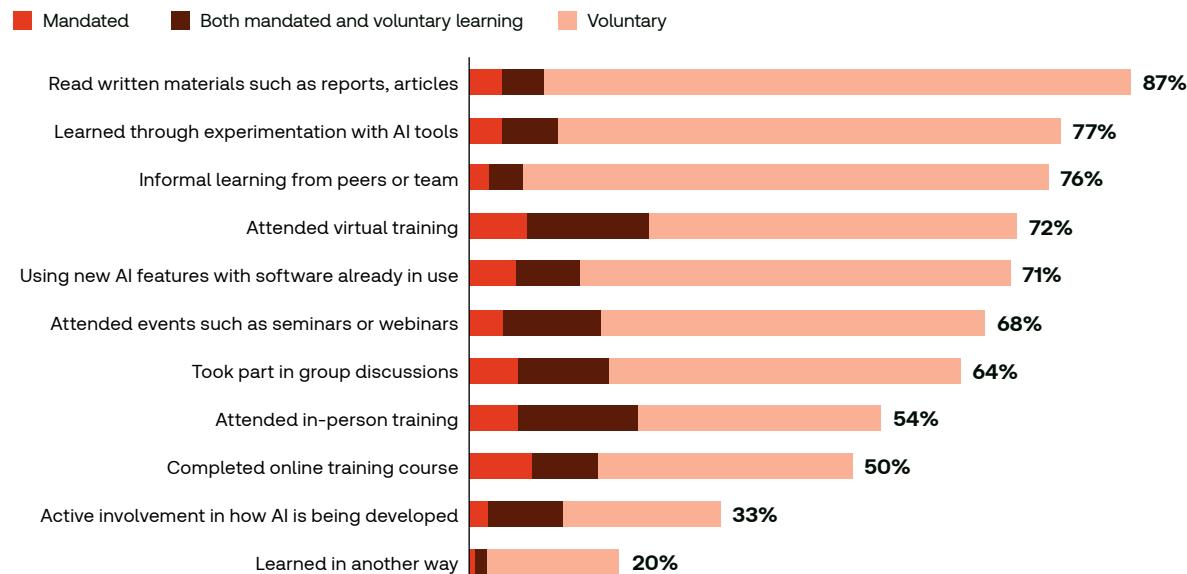
Over the three years of our survey, professionals have made tremendous gains in evaluating and improving their own critical AI skills. Now, almost all (96%) have at least a basic awareness of AI capabilities, although they also recognize their understanding still has room to develop. In fact, the majority said they don't yet consider themselves to have a good understanding of how to apply AI in their daily work.

So, how can professionals supercharge their AI literacy? Many respondents said they were improving their AI literacy in myriad ways, both through voluntary methods, such as reading, and those arranged and mandated by their organization, such as attending virtual training.

Not surprisingly, those professionals who have had active involvement in how AI is being developed and used within their organization have shown themselves to be the most AI proficient. Of course, this may be more the case that those professionals most interested in new tech are also most likely to seek involvement with it.

Beyond this, the methods of learning most associated with higher levels of AI knowledge are active training, both in-person and online.

## How professionals have been learning about the latest forms of AI



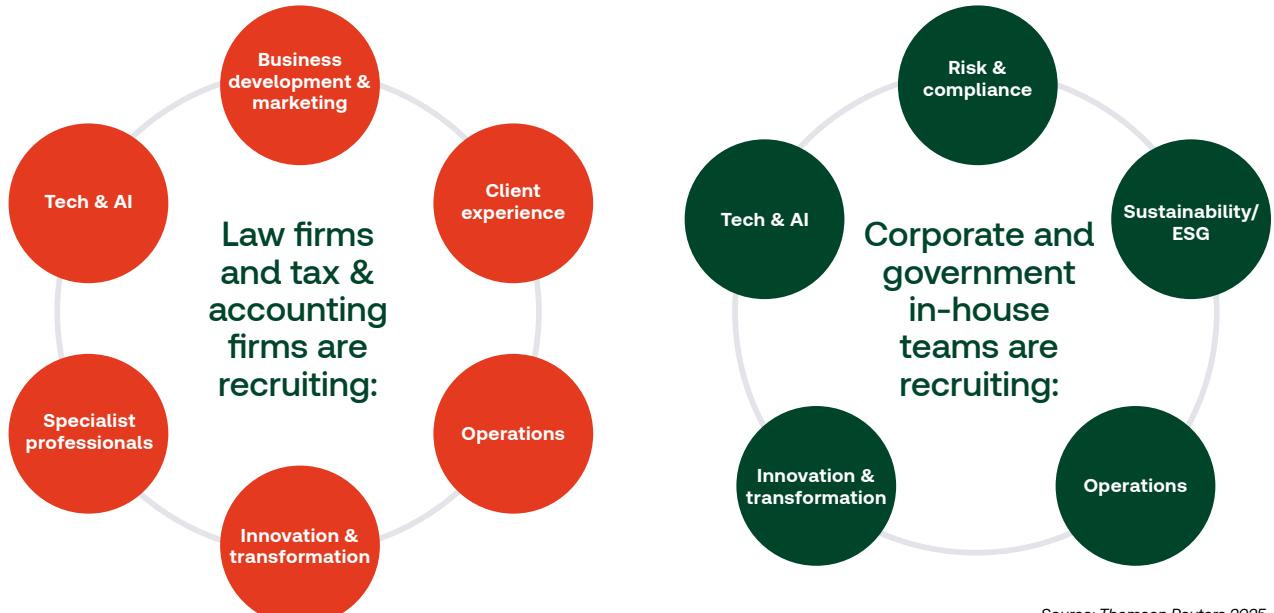
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

*The biggest predictor of AI proficiency is engaging in a wide variety of learning methods, both on an organizational and personal level.*

# • How can organizations craft modern teams?

As organizations across all industries confront a more AI-driven future, how their leaders choose to reconfigure their workforce around this new technology may indicate a lot about future success.

Clearly, the establishment of new roles and a rethinking of old roles is in order, and those organizations that move ahead quickly on this will find themselves in better standing, especially when it comes to hiring the kind of tech-savvy professionals needed to ensure future organizational success.



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

*Those organizations that move quickly to establish new roles and rethink old ones will find themselves better able to hire the kind of versatile, tech-savvy professionals needed to ensure their future success.*

# The modern professional must use AI to maintain relevance

Reskilling at all levels requires a multifaceted approach to AI learning—blending formal training, hands-on experimentation, collaboration, and a mindset of adaptability. AI-enabled professionals will gain a competitive edge, boosting both their personal impact and their organization's long-term value.



Today's modern professional landscape is characterized by rapid technological advancements, evolving business needs, and shifting workforce demographics. To remain competitive, individual professionals must prioritize continuous learning and development, with a particular focus on AI proficiency. Our research shows that those professionals who embrace a multifaceted approach to AI learning and combine formal training with hands-on experimentation and collaboration, will gain a significant advantage over their peers. Indeed, this proactive approach will not only increase their efficiency and effectiveness but also position them as valuable assets within their organizations, where they will be sought after for their ability to leverage AI to drive innovation and achieve strategic goals.

However, it's important to remember that developing AI fluency is not just about learning new tools; it's about integrating AI into the professional's mindset and workflow. This may require a shift in perspective for some professionals, as they need to be moved from viewing AI as a threat (or, conversely, as irrelevant to their specific role) and toward seeing AI as a partner that can augment their abilities and free them from repetitive tasks. This new mindset also requires professionals be willing to experiment, learn from their (and others') mistakes, and continuously adapt to the rapidly evolving AI landscape.

Whether a professional is just beginning to explore AI or is already actively using AI tools, a proactive approach — one, as we've said, that needs to be aligned with organizational goals — is essential. For those professionals new to AI, this means setting clear goals for learning and experimentation, seeking out training opportunities, and collaborating with colleagues who have more experience. For those already using AI, it means continuously seeking new ways to leverage these technologies, sharing what you learn with others, and advocating for the responsible and ethical use of AI within their organization. Overall, today's modern professionals take ownership of their AI journey, driving their own growth and contributing to the collective success of their team and organization.

These modern professionals also will increasingly work alongside other professionals in diverse roles, as well as among differing generational strengths and mindsets. To thrive in this environment, professionals must be actively aware of how their own strengths and those of others can work together in harmony in order to deliver the maximum efficiency and value to their organizations and their clients.

A photograph of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair from a side profile, facing away from the camera towards a city skyline at sunset. The sky is filled with warm orange and yellow hues. In the foreground, the silhouette of a building is visible. The city skyline features several skyscrapers, with one prominent tower on the right. The overall atmosphere is contemplative and forward-looking.

# Looking forward: How to ensure a bright future

# • What are we seeing for 2025 and beyond?

When asked to look ahead to the next year and beyond, a large portion of professionals saw the kind of transformational change driven by AI within their organization and their industry as something that's already happening. And many said they're either already seeing the benefits of their organizations' AI investment in their daily work or are expecting to see those benefits within the next 12 months.

Overall, the strongest point that our research made is the clear principle that those professional services firms, corporate and government departments, and corporations that craft a clear AI strategy linked to their overall goals will be the ones reaping the benefits. To complement this, those professionals that seek to improve their AI proficiency will similarly reap the benefits of this effort.

Meanwhile, those organizations and professionals that choose to move forward without a strategic approach or simply want to wait to see how the whole AI thing plays out will find themselves floundering and ultimately failing to maintain a competitive advantage or deliver value to their businesses or clients.



**53%**

believe their organization is already experiencing at least one type of benefit from AI adoption



**5 hours per week**



**240 hours per year**



Around half expect to have begun **their transformation journey** in next 12 months

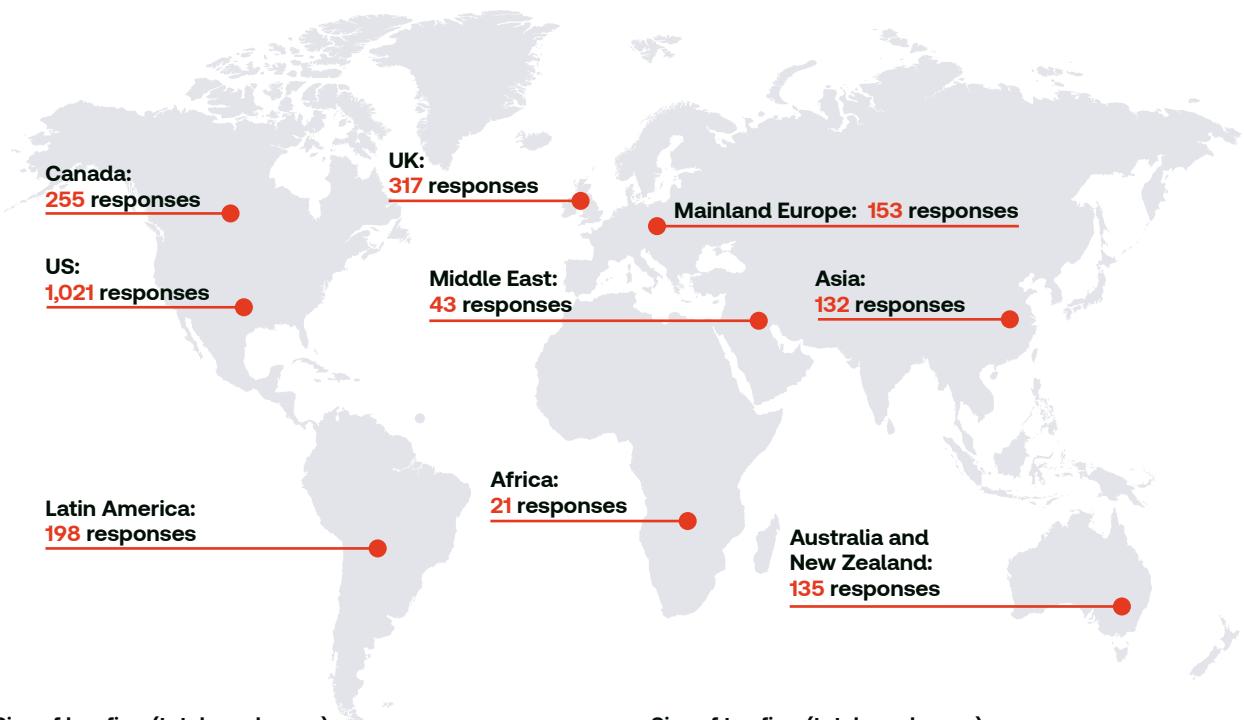


Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

# Methodology

Our third annual *Future of Professionals* report draws on comprehensive research across multiple sectors to provide actionable insights on how professionals can harness technological innovation while keeping sight of the fundamental organizational vision that must guide AI implementation within the organization.

The data was gathered in February and March 2025 from 2,275 responses to a survey sent to professionals in the legal, risk, compliance, tax, accounting, audit, and trade industries, both among outside firms and in-house corporate functions.



	Total	Legal	Tax, audit, trade & accounting	Risk, Fraud & Compliance	Corporate C-Suite
Total	2275	1363	594	61	257
Firm	1447	985	462	—	—
Business/ corporation	617	197	132	41	257
Government	211	191	—	20	—

## Size of law firm (total employees)

■ Up to 100 ■ 101-1000 ■ 1001+



## Size of tax firm (total employees)

■ 1 to 3 ■ 4 to 29 ■ 30 or more



## Corporate revenue (USD)

■ <\$500m ■ \$500m-\$5bn ■ \$5bn+



## Level of government

■ City or Municipal ■ County ■ State ■ Federal ■ Outside US



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025



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