

Name
Title

The Work Trend Index Annual Report

2025: The Year the Frontier Firm Is Born



Work Trend Index 2025

We surveyed **31,000 people** across **31 countries**, analyzed labor and hiring trends from LinkedIn, studied Microsoft 365 productivity patterns globally—and interviewed AI startups, economists, and academics shaping the future of work.





The Frontier Firm

Journey to the Frontier Firm

Phase 1

Human with assistant



Every employee has an AI assistant that helps them work better and faster

Phase 2

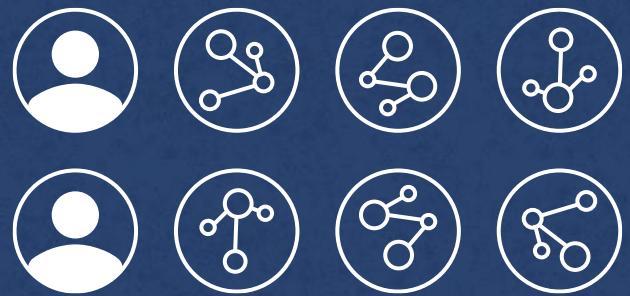
Human-led agents



Agents join teams as “digital colleagues,” taking on specific tasks at human direction

Phase 3

Human-led, agent-operated



Humans set direction and agents run entire business processes and workflows, checking in as needed

The Emerging Frontier Firm

1

You can buy
intelligence on tap

2

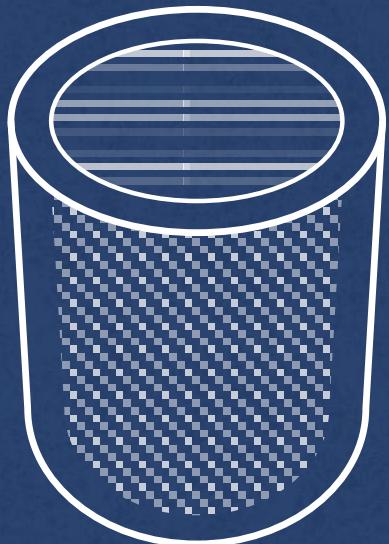
Human-agent teams will
upend the org chart

3

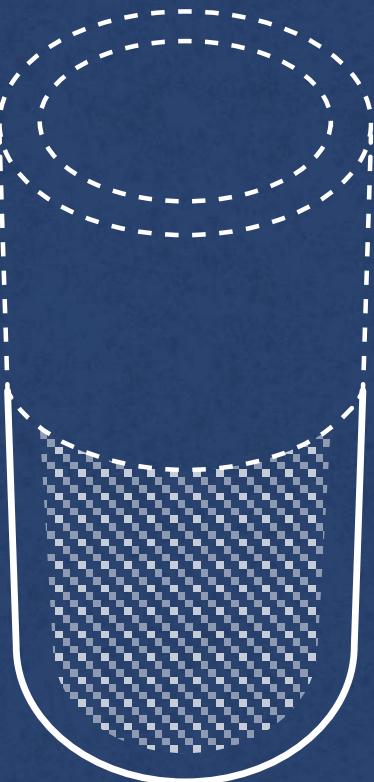
Every employee
becomes an agent boss

Intelligence on tap will fill the Capacity Gap

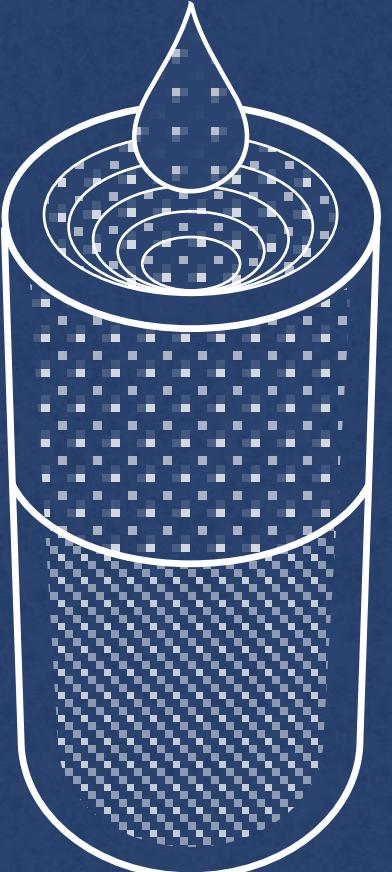
Employees are
at capacity...



but leaders need
to deliver more...



and plan to use agents
to meet the demand



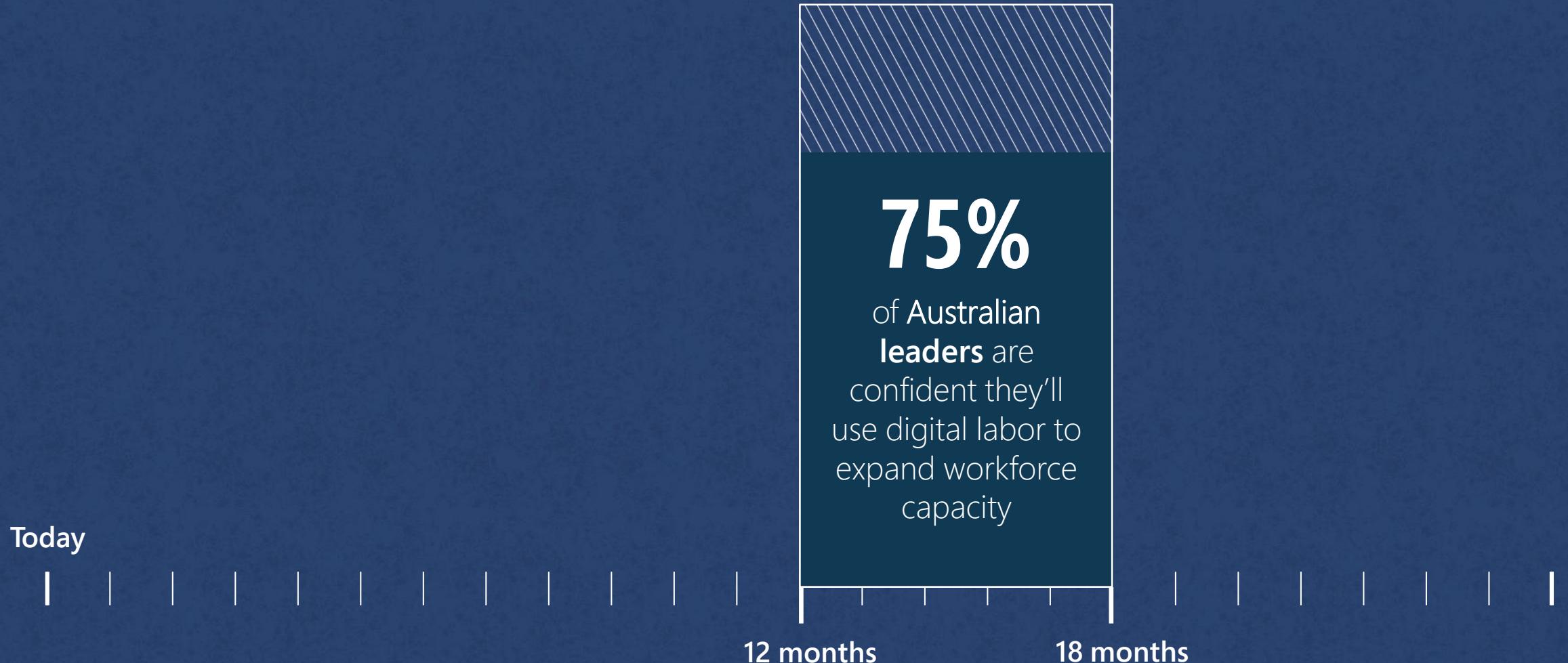
Human labor is reaching its limits

Capacity Gap

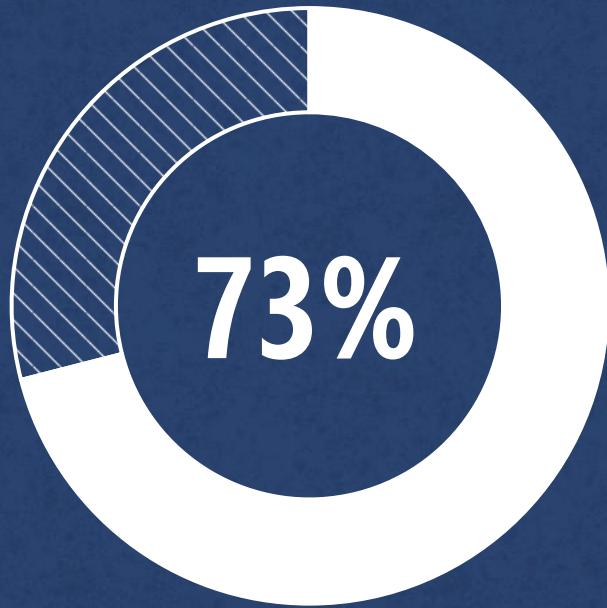


**Employees are interrupted
every 2 minutes**

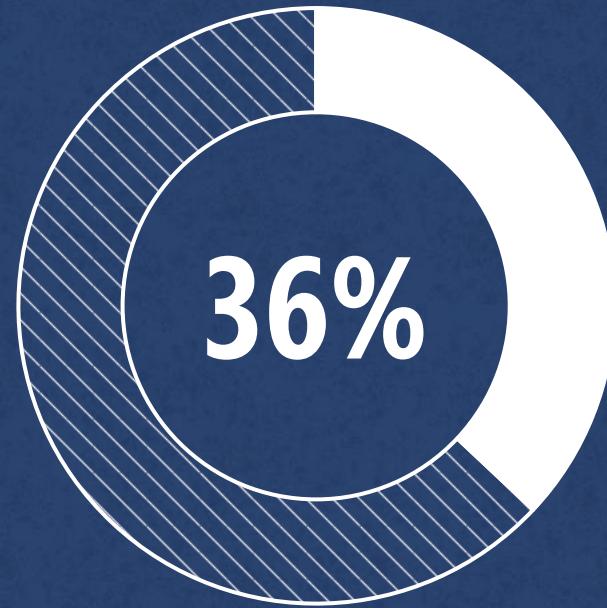
Most leaders see agents as the way to scale



Employees at Frontier Firms across APAC are twice as likely to say their company is thriving



**Frontier Firm
workers**



**Region-wide
workers**

The Emerging Frontier Firm

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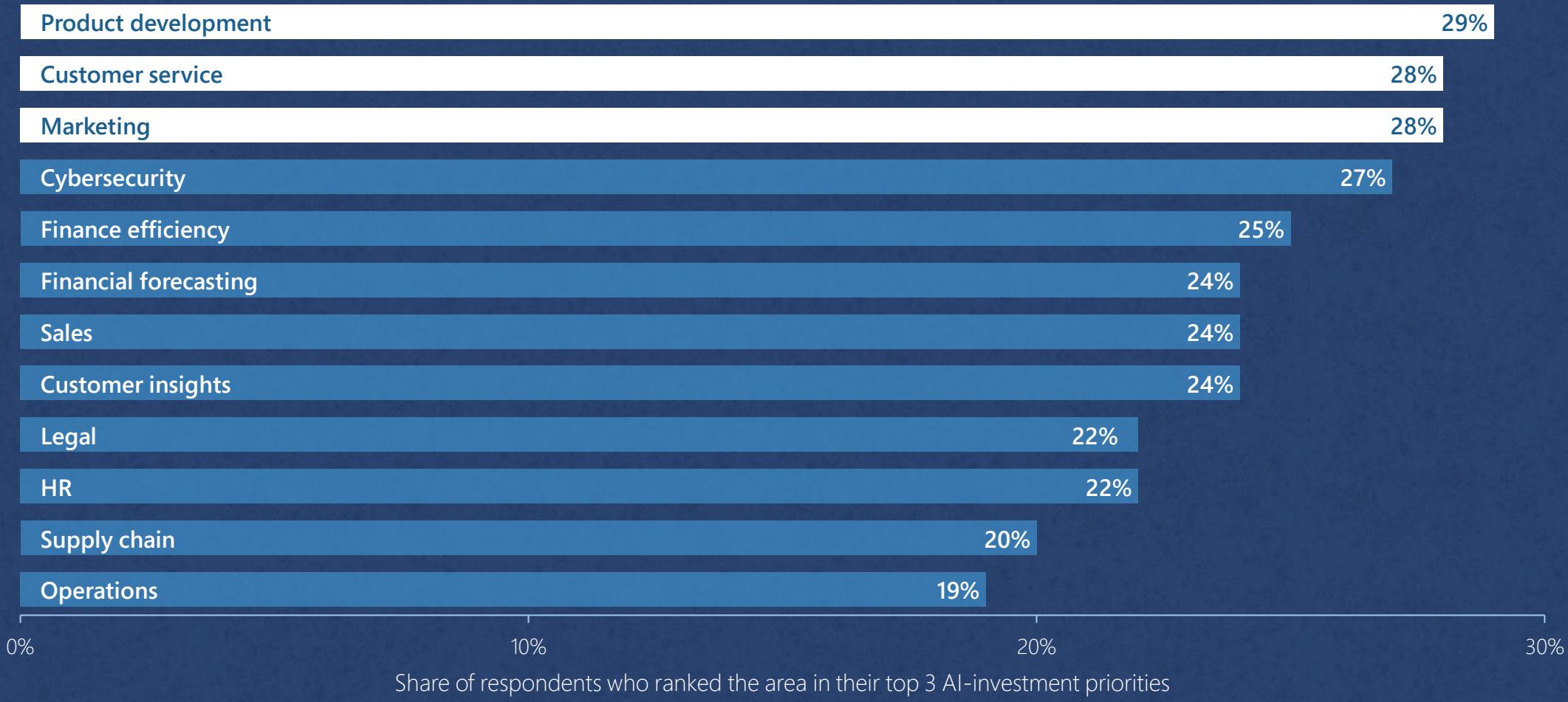
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Areas of accelerated AI investment

Over the next 6-12 months



A new metric: The human-agent ratio

Optimal balance



Employees turn to AI for its unique strengths

Primary reason chosen by Australians

39% 24/7 availability

29% Machine speed and quality

25% Endless stream of ideas on demand

Digital colleagues aren't just tools – they're teammates

When asked how they see AI...

57%

AU respondents see AI as a
command-based tool

40%

AU respondents see AI as a
thought partner

The Emerging Frontier Firm

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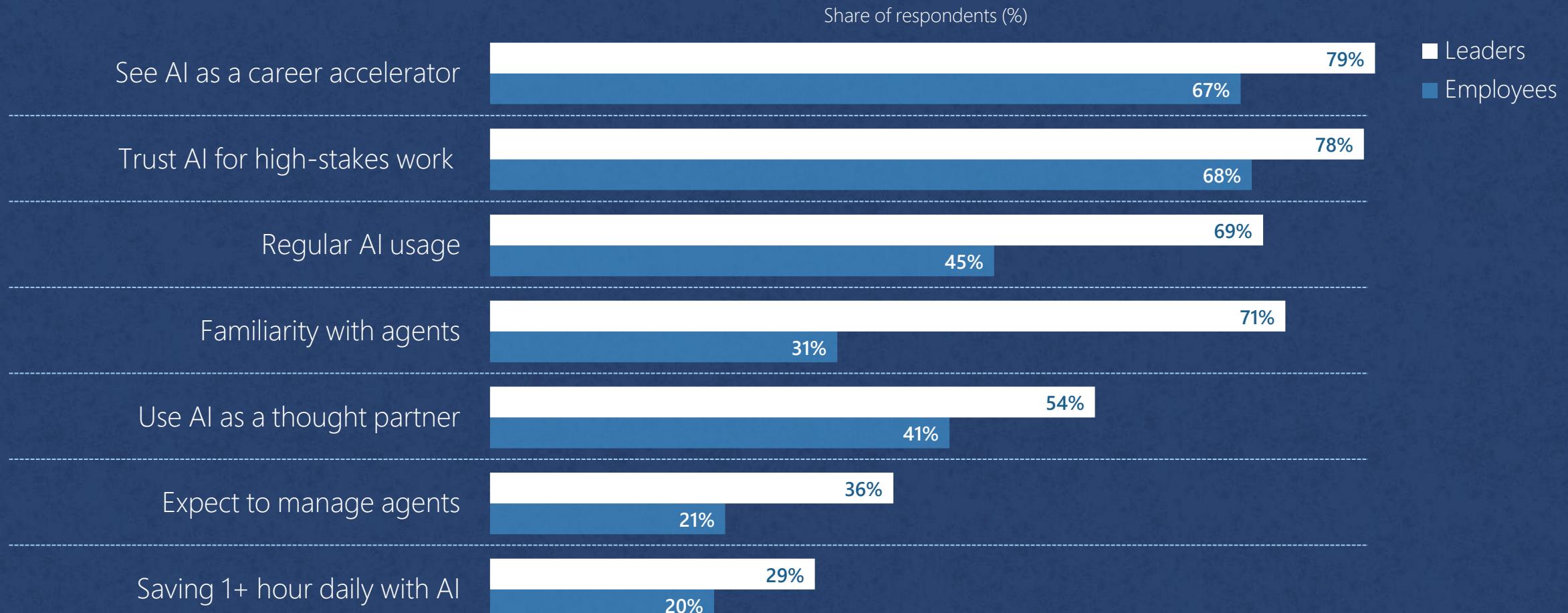
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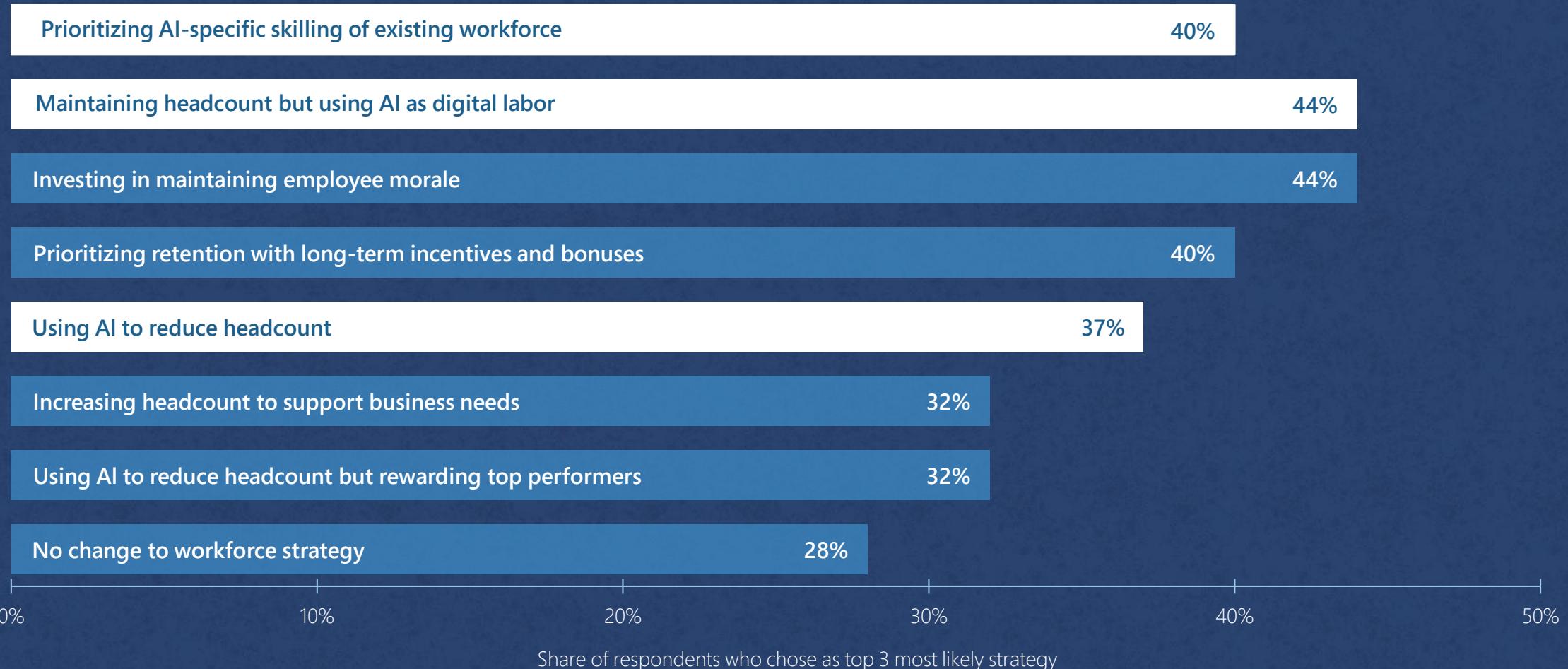
Every employee
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Leaders are becoming agent bosses, but everyone needs to shift

7 indicators to identify who has an agent boss mindset



AI skilling and digital labor are top workforce strategies



Labor market signals

2x

Top AI startups are hiring at
twice the rate of Big Tech

70%

of leaders are considering
hiring for AI-specific roles

New jobs emerging

Agent and
data specialists

AI trainers

ROI analysts

AI strategists
in marketing, finance,
and customer support



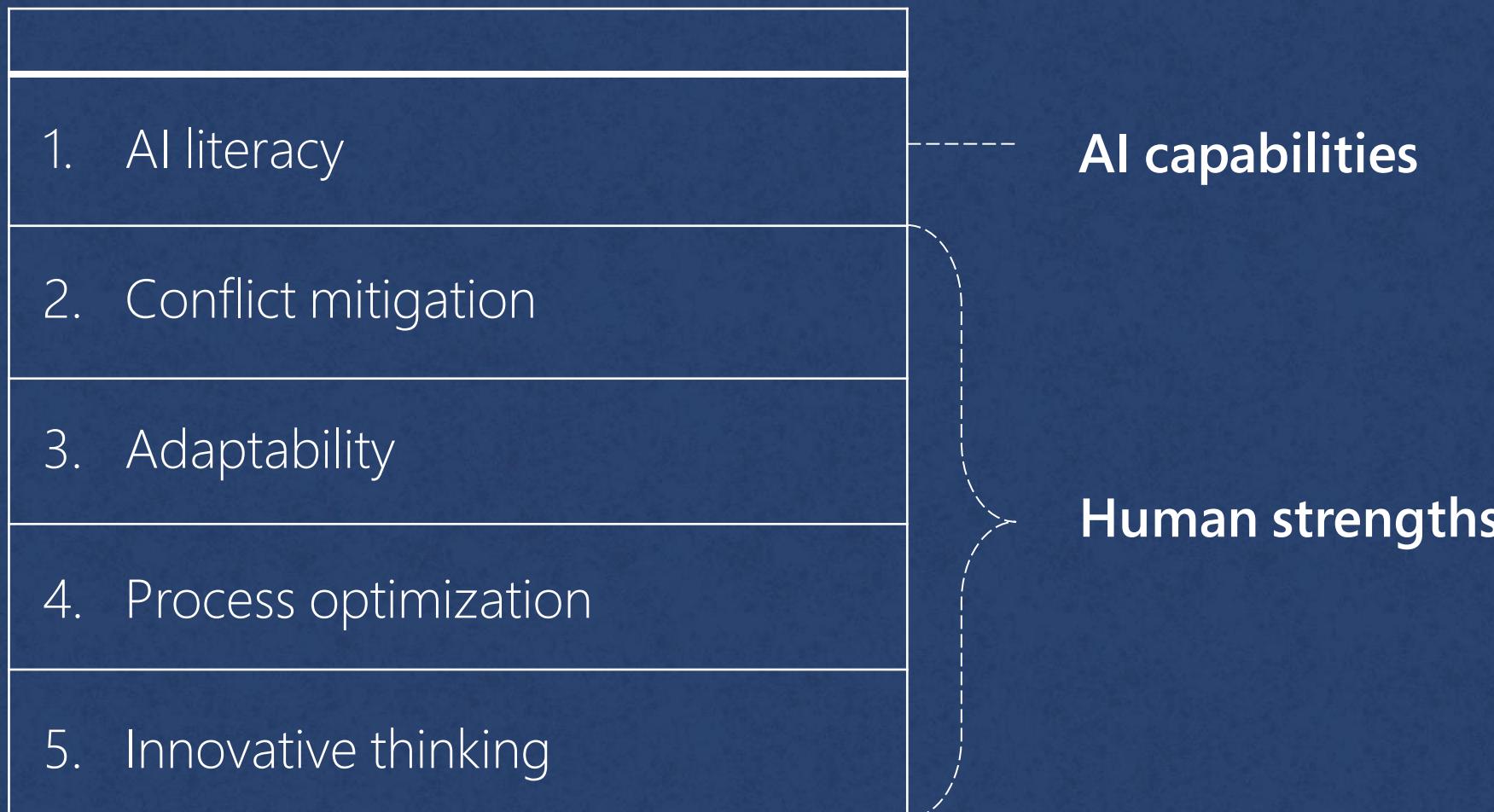
83%

of leaders

believe AI will let
junior employees do
strategic work sooner.

In-demand skills for the new era of work

Top skills for 2025 according to LinkedIn



The path forward

- 1 Hire your first digital employees
- 2 Set your human-agent ratio
- 3 Get to broad scale—fast



How will you adapt?

Thank you

Read the report

<https://aka.ms/2025WorkTrendIndex>

Key Takeaways

You can buy intelligence on tap

Intelligence is becoming abundant, affordable and available on demand with AI and agents.

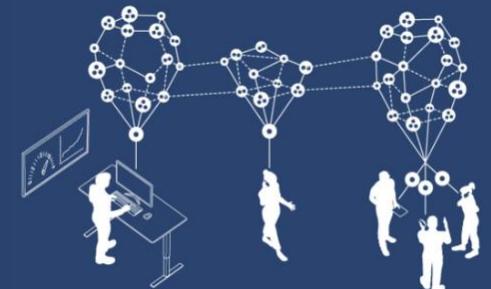
75% of Australian leaders say they'll use agents as digital team members to expand workforce capacity in the next 12-18 months.



Human-agent teams will upend the org chart

The traditional org chart will reshape to a work chart. This is a dynamic, outcome-driven model where human-agent teams assemble around goals, not functions, powered by agents that enable faster, more impactful ways of working

40% of Australian leaders say their organisation is using agents to fully automate workstreams or business processes for entire teams or functions (vs 46% globally)



Every employee becomes an agent boss

Enter the agent boss: someone who builds, delegates to, and manages agents to amplify impact. However there remains a leader/employee disconnect:

71% of Australian leaders are familiar or extremely familiar with agents, compared to just 31% of employees. This is a significantly larger disconnect than the global average (67% vs 40%)



AI-native companies are making their mark



And Frontier Firms are emerging

Accenture

The professional services company built an agent to help its clients automate and streamline past-due payments—**speeding up collections and boosting the bottom line.**

Bayer

With an agent on the job, researchers on Bayer's Crop Science R&D team each **save up to 6 hours per week, accelerating the development of products** to drive innovation in agriculture.

Holland America Line

A new agent concierge instantly responds to the cruise line's guests with conversational, useful answers. It now **handles thousands of conversations a week.**

The Estée Lauder Companies

The global beauty company created an agent to identify and consolidate consumer insights. Instead of sifting through scattered reports and endless back-and-forths, teams can now **pull up actionable intelligence instantly.**

Dow

Agents ferret out hidden losses and streamline shipping operations. Once the system is fully scaled, Dow expects **increased accuracy** in logistic rates and billing that in the first year will **save millions.**

Wells Fargo

The financial services company built an agent for 35,000 bankers across 4,000 branches to help its employees locate information they need to assist customers. Now, 75% of searches happen through the agent, **cutting query response times from 10 minutes to just 30 seconds.**

New in Microsoft 365 Copilot

- **Microsoft 365 Copilot app** is rebuilt for an agent-first world
- **Create** brings OpenAI's GPT-4o AI image generator to work, unlocking design skills for everyone
- Find information from across your organization with AI-powered **Copilot Search**
- Turn notes, docs, and data into instant insights with **Copilot Notebooks**