The State of AI at Work

THE **WORK INNOVATION** LAB

BY asana

AI is transforming the way we work

AI is rapidly transforming our world, reshaping the very fabric of our workplaces and lives. We're on the brink of a new era, filled with both exciting opportunities and significant challenges. This isn't a trend to observe from the sidelines, it's an arena where the rules are still being written. The choices we make now aren't just shaping next quarter's profits, they're laying the groundwork for an AI-driven future that redefines how we work.

We set out to discover how knowledge workers—individual contributors, middle and senior managers, and executives—are not only adapting to AI but actively shaping their future with it. In surveying 4,546 employees across the U.S. and U.K., our findings reveal the potential AI can unlock, pitfalls to be wary of, the ways it's already augmenting human intelligence, and concerns that have yet to be addressed. This report, The State of AI at Work, summarizes these insights to guide companies on their AI journeys to smarter ways of working.

OPPORTUNITIES

As we delve into the landscape of AI adoption, a complex picture emerges. AI adoption is widespread, but there are few daily power users:

36%
of employees use AI weekly

BUT

Only **4%**
use AI multiple times daily

PITFALLS

There's a crisis in AI transparency

Only **32%**
of employees feel their company has been transparent about its use of AI. This number is highest for executives.

44% — **Executives**

38% — **Managers**

25% — **Individual contributors**

Despite concerns, optimism for AI is strong

52% of employees believe using AI will help their company hit its objectives more effectively than not using AI, with executives most confident.

61% **Executives**

46% **Individual contributors**

To work smarter with AI, organizations can leverage three key strategies:

1. Establish AI policies:

Create clear AI policies that outline acceptable uses of AI, as well as clear guidance on best practices for how employees should use AI at work.

- Only 30% of U.S. knowledge workers say that their company has established policies or guidance around AI usage at work.
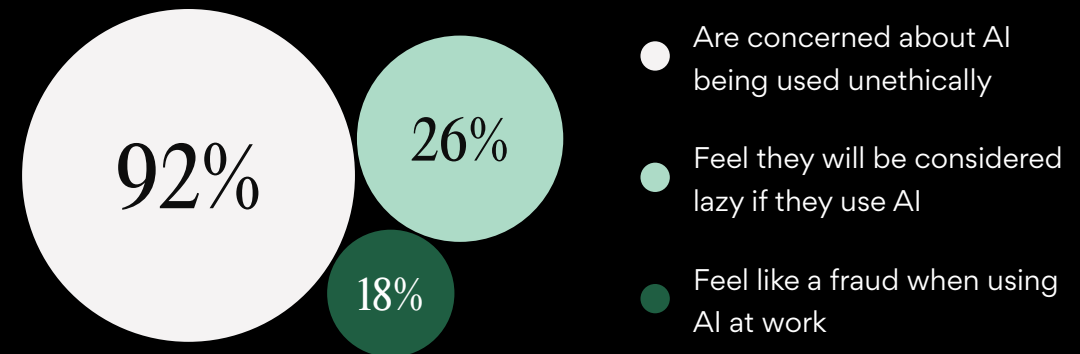- For U.K. knowledge workers, this figure drops to 20%.

2. Define AI principles:

Define core principles that guide your AI initiatives, ensuring alignment with company values.

3. Share your AI roadmap:

Regularly update your team on your AI roadmap and how you plan to invest in AI in the coming months and years. Emphasize how new tools will enhance employees' roles and help your company achieve its goals.

More training, policies, and guidelines on the use of AI are needed

92% — Are concerned about AI being used unethically

26% — Feel they will be considered lazy if they use AI

18% — Feel like a fraud when using AI at work

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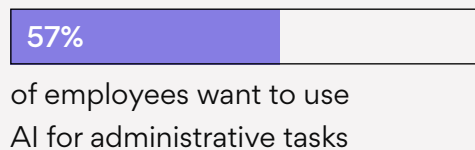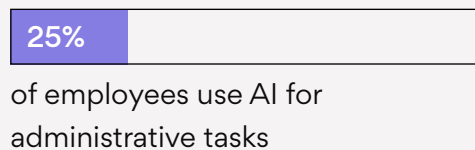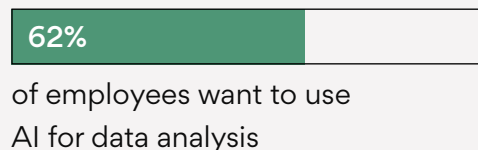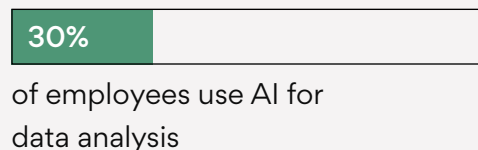*We are moving into a new phase of AI's role in our workplaces,*

Our study shows that more employees are now embracing AI at work. Employees see the potential of AI to save time and help them focus on more strategic tasks. However, there are clear obstacles, with some employees harboring concerns about how their AI use could be perceived by peers and managers. Employees can't navigate this AI shift alone. They need clear guidelines to understand AI's role in their functions, along with tailored training and accessible technologies to fully harness AI's capabilities. Organizations that get this right will leverage AI in a way that unlocks new levels of human ingenuity."

SAKET SRIVASTAVA,
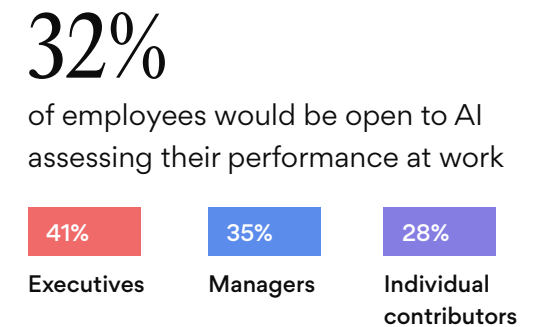CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER AT ASANA

Where AI unleashes potential—today and tomorrow

From crunching data to drafting content, AI's use cases are versatile and expanding rapidly. Employees and companies are already using AI to work smarter and boost productivity. 55% of executives anticipate their company will leverage AI for goal-setting, while 61% believe that AI will help their company reach goals more effectively than traditional methods.

Employees are ready for AI to take on both routine and logic-based tasks but there's a desire for more

30%
of employees use AI for data analysis

62%
of employees want to use AI for data analysis

25%
of employees use AI for administrative tasks

57%
of employees want to use AI for administrative tasks

Is creativity AI's new frontier?

37% of employees want to use AI for brainstorming
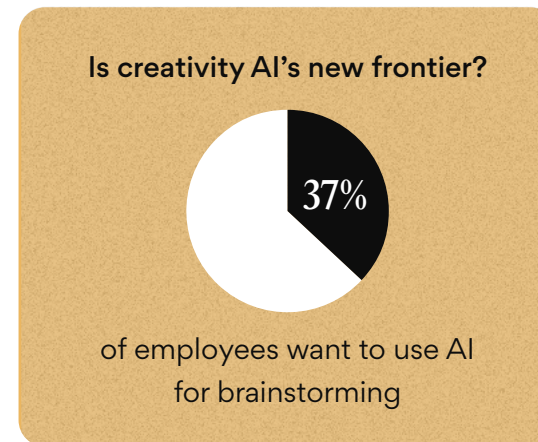
A new take on performance reviews?

32% of employees would be open to AI assessing their performance at work

41% Executives

35% Managers

28% Individual contributors

Employees say that, on average, nearly one-third (29%) of their tasks are replaceable by AI.

For the other two-thirds, leaders need to position employees as essential "humans-in-the-loop" and harness AI to help employees increase productivity, creativity, and innovation in their roles.

Ready to report to a soulless robot? *Think again.*

Some employees seem to be warming to the idea of AI as a boss, attracted by the potential for more impartial, consistent decision-making, with fewer human biases. But while AI might be more impartial, it lacks the compassion, understanding, and motivation that define great leaders. AI will work best when it's a complement to great human leadership, not a replacement.

1 in 6
U.S. employees are open to an AI being their boss

15%
of U.S. employees would be open to an AI being their boss, almost double the proportion (8%) in the U.K.

How companies can build and evolve their AI strategy

Harnessing AI's potential to maximize employee impact, drive clarity and accountability, and scale the technology in secure and reliable ways is more than a technological challenge; it's a strategic imperative for companies. But the path to integrating AI into the workplace is multifaceted, with adoption only one part of the picture. Employees are increasingly deciding where to work based on employers' approaches to AI.

The vast majority (85%) of employees say they have AI-related considerations when joining a new company, the most important one being whether their prospective company is transparent about its use of AI.

To realize the full opportunity of AI, companies need to assuage concerns, unite teams around an AI vision, and ensure the right guardrails are in place for AI and teams to flourish together.
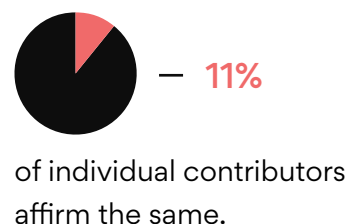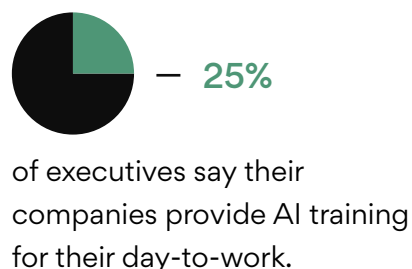
Employees at every level must grasp how AI is being implemented within their roles and workflows. This requires more comprehensive and tailored training.

Transparency and access build employee trust in AI

59% of employees consider a company's transparency about its use of AI as a key factor when joining a new company.

80% of employees say it's important for them to understand how AI recommendations are made (like why AI recommended a specific headline or customer segmentation strategy).

60% of employees say it's important for AI access to be democratized within their organizations.

— **25%** of executives say their companies provide AI training for their day-to-work.

— **11%** of individual contributors affirm the same.

AI safeguards are needed to protect companies and employees

84%

of employees say it's important to them to use AI built with safeguards that ensure the outputs are unbiased.
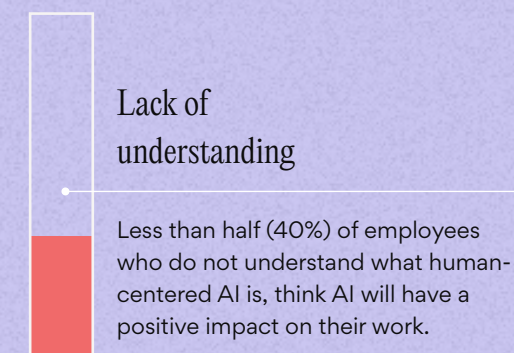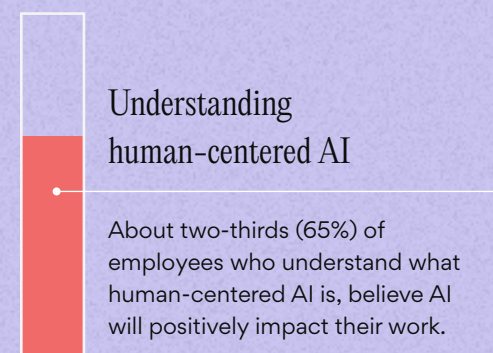
89%

of employees (and 93% of executives) say that it's important that AI tools are created with accurate underlying data.

What is human-centered AI?

Human-centered AI is the integration of artificial intelligence with human values and needs. It emphasizes the enhancement of human abilities and collaboration, rather than replacement by machines. This approach seeks to create AI systems that work in harmony with people, **guided by principles** that prioritize employee empowerment and ethical considerations. It's a vision of technology as a partner, enriching our work rather than controlling it.

46% currently understand what human-centered AI is. Those who do understand the concept are significantly more likely to say AI will have a positive impact on their work.

Understanding human-centered AI

About two-thirds (65%) of employees who understand what human-centered AI is, believe AI will positively impact their work.

Lack of understanding

Less than half (40%) of employees who do not understand what human-centered AI is, think AI will have a positive impact on their work.

A human-centered AI approach is key to attracting new hires

44%

of employees say that a human-centered AI approach is a key consideration when joining a new company.

39%
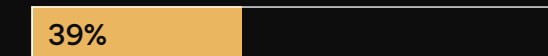
of employees say that training on AI is a key consideration when joining a new company.

AI in the workplace: a call to action

The clock is ticking. The future is here, and the time to embrace AI is now. AI is being implemented across companies, already demonstrating tangible benefits in decision-making, data analysis, and efficiency. Yet organizations are faced with many challenges.

Leaders need to lay the foundation for an AI-powered future where understanding, trust, and employee empowerment are central. The time is now to ensure a future where technology amplifies human potential.
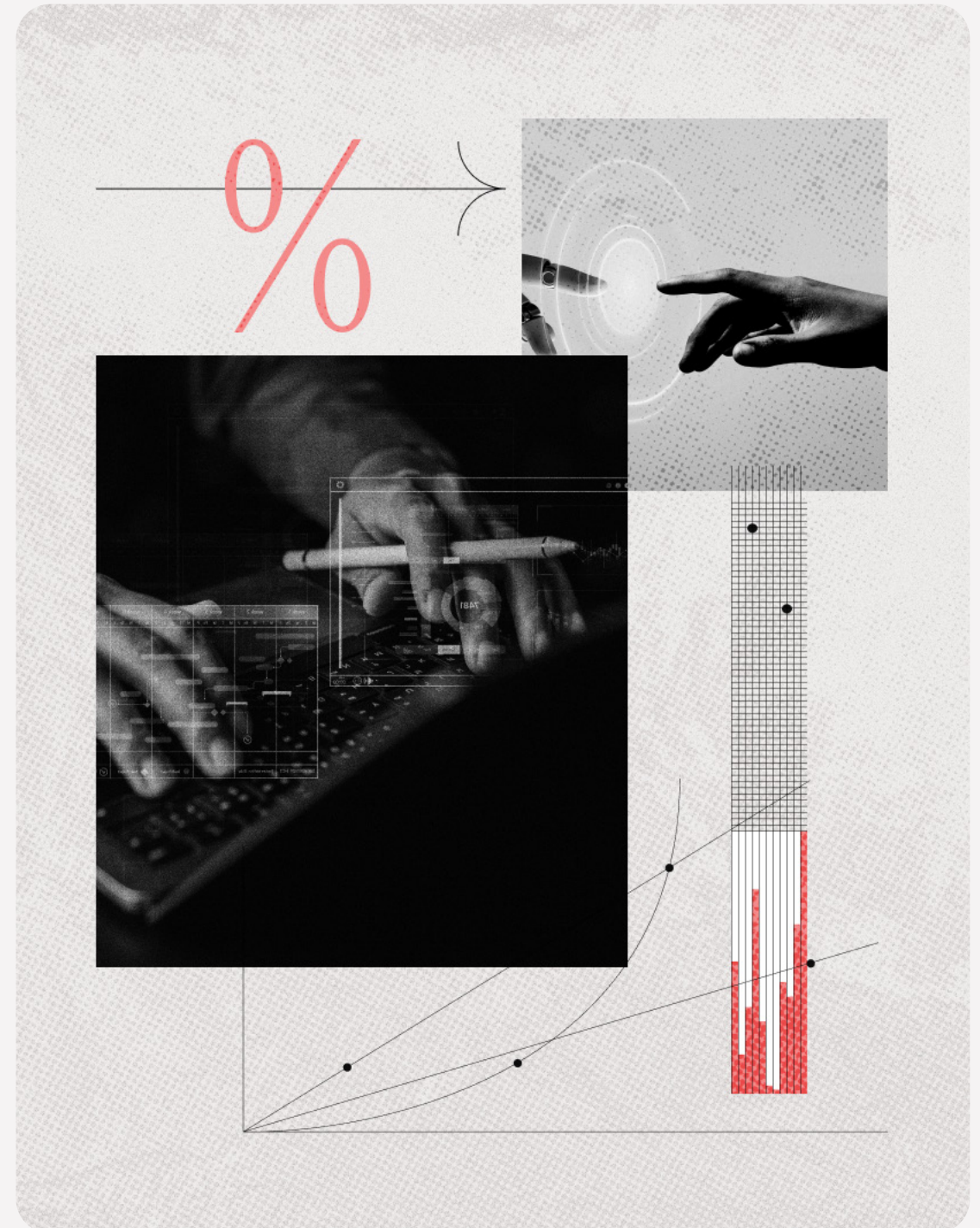
Methodology

This research from Asana's Work Innovation Lab surveyed
4,546 knowledge workers in the United States and United
Kingdom in July 2023. The survey was administered via
Qualtrics and data collection was conducted by Prolific
and did not target Asana customers or employees.

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