

# Navigating The AI Landscape:

Strategic Insights for Small  
and Medium-Sized Businesses



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# INTRODUCTION

## The Evolution of AI & Its Transformative Impact on Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

AI is no longer just the buzz at boardroom tables—it's becoming a practical conversation in day-to-day business. And yet, one thing is clear: while confidence in AI is climbing, many small and mid-sized businesses are still figuring out how to turn that confidence into action.

This year's **WSI AI Business Insights Report** is built on input from over 600 business leaders worldwide, the majority (90.2%) of whom are small and medium-sized businesses (500 employees or less) like yours. Conducted in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, this global survey offers a grounded, global view of how AI is (*and isn't!*) being used, along with candid insights into leaders' strategies, wins, and challenges.

What we've learned is the following: AI awareness is higher than ever, and more teams outside of leadership and marketing are starting to explore its value. However, across the majority of businesses, formal trainings are rarely happening, adoption across departments remains inconsistent, and budget commitments are progressing more slowly than the technology itself.

If you're feeling the pressure to “catch up on AI” but aren't sure where to start, you're not alone. And this report is your shortcut to clarity.

For growth-focused business owners and marketing leaders, this report offers practical insights and tactics. We don't just talk about AI trends. This report connects the dots between strategy and execution, spotlighting where businesses are gaining traction, where they're getting stuck, and what practical next steps you can take to help you close the gap between AI potential and application.

At WSI, we believe AI should serve your strategy—**not distract from it.**

So let's dive in!



**Why now?** *Because customer expectations are rising. Today's buyers expect fast, personalized experiences—and AI offers the speed and scale to meet them without overloading your team.*

# AI Confidence is Growing: But Action Plans (and Budgets) Haven't Caught Up

While the survey reveals notable enthusiasm among business leaders for leveraging AI, with **81% of respondents believing AI can help achieve business goals (up from 72% in 2024)**, this confidence isn't turning into consistent implementation.

Despite growing recognition of AI's potential, only **27% of businesses report that AI is a frequent topic of formal conversations across their company**. That's up from 20% in 2024, but it still signals a persistent disconnect between the recognition of AI's value and its integration in strategic discussions.

Perhaps most telling is that **35% of respondents still cite a lack of time to evaluate AI's pros and cons**, a figure unchanged from 2024. This stagnation reflects persistent hesitation in allocating dedicated AI budgets and reveals an underlying reluctance regarding AI-related investments.

**Why now?** Competitive pressure is intensifying. Early adopters are already streamlining processes and reallocating budget toward AI-powered growth, creating a widening gap for those waiting on the sidelines.



# 81%

of respondents believe AI can help achieve business goals

## Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

This widening gap between confidence in AI's potential and actual implementation reveals a critical insight: businesses recognize AI's value but struggle to transform this recognition into actionable strategies. This contradiction suggests that while leaders understand AI's importance, they haven't yet adjusted their plans or budgets to match.



This disconnect is exactly why WSI's approach of "Embrace Digital. Stay Human." is so crucial. While businesses need to adopt AI technologies to remain competitive, the human element—strategic planning, thoughtful implementation, and expert guidance—is what transforms AI from a buzzword into a business driver. By balancing digital innovation with human expertise, you can avoid the trap of adopting technology for its own sake and instead focus on AI solutions that create measurable, meaningful growth.

Here's how to take the first steps towards addressing these obstacles:



**Establish AI as a Strategic Priority:** To bridge the confidence-execution gap, businesses should elevate AI discussions to regular strategic planning sessions. By formalizing AI's place in business strategy conversations, organizations can ensure it receives appropriate attention and resources.



**Start Small with Dedicated Resources:** Even a modest budget allocated for AI evaluation and pilot projects can help overcome the inertia. Begin with focused applications that address clear business challenges and demonstrate measurable ROI.



**Leverage Expert Guidance:** Working with consultants (like your local WSI AI Consultant) can accelerate the evaluation process, helping businesses identify the most promising AI applications without overwhelming internal resources.



**Move Beyond the “Do More with Less” Trap:** Competitors prioritizing AI implementation may discover efficiencies and growth opportunities that widen the gap between you and them. Breaking free from this cycle requires a strategic shift from viewing AI as an extra project that requires additional resources to seeing it as a tool that can help optimize existing operations and unlock new revenue streams.

By addressing these barriers to execution, businesses can begin to align their AI confidence with concrete implementation strategies. Your WSI Consultant can help you move from *insight* to *action* by helping you develop an AI Adoption Roadmap that identifies your highest-impact AI opportunities and creates a clear path to implementation. This personalized assessment cuts through the noise, surfaces high-impact opportunities, and gives you the clarity—and *confidence*—to act.

# Familiarity with AI is Growing Fast: But Formal Training Still Lags Behind

The survey reveals a significant increase in AI familiarity among business professionals, with **59% of respondents now reporting they are very or moderately familiar with AI**, up from just 38% in 2024. This 21-percentage-point increase demonstrates the rapid growth in awareness of AI technologies and their business applications.

However, this rising familiarity has yet to translate into structured learning. **52% of those who consider themselves very or moderately familiar with AI have not completed any formalized AI training.** That's an improvement from 2024, when 69% lacked formal training, but most AI familiarity today still comes from self-guided learning rather than structured training.

Looking ahead, there are modest signs of progress: **48% of respondents say they plan to invest in AI training for their employees**—up slightly from 46% in 2024. **Yet 36% remain undecided**, a figure unchanged from the previous year, suggesting a persistent hesitation among a significant portion of businesses when it comes to AI training investments.



# 59%

of business professionals say they are moderately or very familiar with AI



# 52%

of professionals familiar with AI have no formal training

## Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

The data points to an emerging trend: the rise of the self-taught AI professional. As AI tools become more accessible and user-friendly, many business professionals are learning independently through experimentation, online resources, and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, rather than relying on formal training programs. While this demonstrates commendable initiative, it also raises questions about the depth and consistency of AI knowledge across organizations.

This disconnect between growing AI familiarity and structured learning

represents the core tension that WSI's "Embrace Digital. Stay Human." philosophy addresses. While digital tools like AI become more accessible, the human elements of knowledge transfer, contextual understanding, and strategic application remain essential and therefore irreplaceable. Self-teaching may provide a foundation, but it's the collaborative human exchange—mentorship, guided practice, and shared experiences—that transforms surface-level tool familiarity into strategic advantage. By investing in formal training that balances technological capability with human judgment, businesses create an environment where AI serves as an extension of human expertise rather than a replacement for it.

Here's how to take the first steps towards addressing these obstacles:



**Develop Structured Learning Paths:** Organizations should create clear AI learning pathways tailored to different roles and skill levels. This approach ensures that self-taught knowledge is supplemented with structured education addressing potential knowledge gaps.



**Why now?** As AI tools become increasingly user-friendly, accessible AI requires businesses to have teams that are not only aware but also skilled, to capitalize fully.



**Implement Learning-by-Doing Programs:** Combine formal training with hands-on projects that allow employees to immediately apply new AI skills to real business challenges, reinforcing learning while delivering tangible value.



**Encourage Knowledge Sharing:** Set up internal communities of practice where teams can swap insights and examples. Not only does this tap into existing expertise, but it also reduces redundancy and accelerates the adoption of real-world solutions.



**Bridge the Confidence-Competence Gap:** While self-directed learning is valuable, structured education provides the foundation and confidence needed for effective AI implementation across all departments. Invest in targeted training programs and collaborate with experienced AI consultants to transform tentative AI familiarity into actionable expertise, enabling leaders to make decisions with greater confidence and achieve measurable results.

By addressing these barriers, your business can move beyond surface-level AI familiarity to develop true AI competency and skills across your organization. WSI offers custom AI Adoption Roadmaps that combine fundamental AI concepts with practical, hands-on applications specific to your industry and business challenges. Unlike generic strategies, these AI Adoption Roadmaps are tailored to your business, offer context-specific training and knowledge, and can transform your team's tentative AI knowledge into confident execution, with measurable business results to match.





# AI is Expanding Beyond Leadership: But Silos Are Slowing Real Progress

The data reveals that AI adoption is gradually expanding beyond its traditional strongholds, though significant disparities between departments persist. **Management (54%) and Marketing/Communications (43%) continue to lead AI implementation**, with Marketing/Communications adoption remaining consistent, while Management shows a slight decrease from 58% in 2024.

Encouragingly, **Sales adoption has risen to 33%** (up from 23% in 2024), **IT to 26%** (from 19%), and **Operations to 24%** (from 15%). These substantial year-over-year increases suggest that AI is starting to penetrate operational departments, which can lead to significant efficiency gains and process improvements.

However, adoption remains limited in critical customer-facing and administrative functions, with **HR (9%), Finance/Accounting (9%), and Customer Service and Frontline Staff (19%)** departments all lagging behind. While these departments show slight growth since 2024, their significantly lower adoption rates reveal a concerning pattern that limits AI's transformative potential across the entire business ecosystem.



# 33%

of businesses are using AI in Sales



# 26%

of businesses are using AI in IT



# 24%

of businesses are using AI in Operations

## Turning Insights into Actions: Your Strategic AI Next Steps

The uneven distribution of AI adoption creates "AI silos" within organizations—pockets of innovation surrounded by areas of limited technological advancement. This fragmentation prevents businesses from achieving the seamless, end-to-end transformation that maximizes the true potential of AI. When departments operate at different levels of AI adoption, data sharing becomes more difficult, processes remain disconnected, and the full potential of cross-functional AI applications remains unrealized.

The data suggests that different departments face unique barriers to AI adoption:



### Customer Service and Frontline Staff (19%)

Adoption remains low as these teams work to balance automation with maintaining a human touch, especially in high-empathy interactions. Teams still face friction integrating AI into fast-paced workflows, but the opportunity is clear: well-implemented AI can enhance service consistency, response time, and customer satisfaction without sacrificing personalization.



### Finance/Accounting (9%)

Security, compliance, and accuracy standards make AI adoption in this area especially rigorous. These teams demand high-precision tools and ironclad data governance—non-negotiables in financial environments. That said, AI-driven automation in tasks such as forecasting and reconciliation is beginning to prove its value, yielding measurable time and cost savings.



### Human Resources (9%)

Ethical considerations and measurement challenges have kept AI adoption in HR cautious. However, interest is rising as AI tools for recruiting, onboarding, and employee engagement start to show real ROI. For HR leaders, the key is choosing solutions that enhance human judgment, not replace it, while ensuring fairness, transparency, and clear business value.

This is where WSI's consultant-led, collaborative approach comes in. We help organizations break down silos and align departments around a unified AI strategy. WSI's philosophy is that the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts," which applies perfectly to cross-departmental AI integration.

By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise from across your organization, just as WSI does across our global network, you can create the conditions for transformative, holistic AI implementation rather than isolated pockets of innovation. We've seen that businesses unlock exponential growth—*not just incremental gains*—when they align diverse departments under a single, unified AI strategy.

Here's how to take the first steps towards addressing these obstacles:



**Create Cross-Functional AI Working Groups:** Establish teams with representatives from high-adoption and low-adoption departments to share knowledge, identify cross-departmental opportunities, and accelerate adoption across the organization.



**Develop Department-Specific Value Propositions:** Tailor AI implementation strategies to address the unique challenges and opportunities in each department, highlighting specific use cases and ROI potential.



**Implement Phased Adoption Plans:** Design graduated implementation strategies that build on early successes, starting with simpler applications in low-adoption departments before progressing to more complex solutions.



**Avoid the “Partial Transformation” Trap and Create a Unified AI Adoption Roadmap:** Some organizations find that AI-powered improvements in certain departments create bottlenecks elsewhere, resulting in the business becoming only as strong as its least AI-enabled department.

By addressing these departmental gaps, your business can unlock the full potential of AI, not just in isolated teams, but across your entire organization. WSI's AI Adoption Roadmap brings together leadership, frontline teams, and back-office departments into one cohesive strategy. This collaborative approach helps you break down silos, identify cross-functional AI opportunities, and build an integrated plan that ensures every part of your business moves forward—together.



**Why now?** External consultants (like the team at WSI) can be catalysts for businesses, helping bridge internal communication gaps, breaking down departmental silos, and fostering strong company-wide alignment and cross-functional AI adoption.

Ultimately, the most recent WSI AI Business Insights Survey provides a critical lens through which to view the evolution of AI among small and medium-sized businesses. The results reflect how, despite the growth of confidence in AI, we still see lagging execution and formalized training, as well as uneven departmental adoption. As the data shows, businesses need to:



### **Make AI Strategy Cross-Departmental**

Align leadership, operations, and customer-facing teams with shared goals and training around AI.



### **Invest in Structured AI Education**

Move beyond ad-hoc, one-size-fits-all learning to more formalized, industry- or job-specific training programs that are geared towards your business's objectives and industry challenges.



### **Remove Departmental Bottlenecks**

Allocate department-level AI budgets to unlock business-wide impact and avoid isolated gains.

These results make it clear that as AI continues to evolve, only those businesses that unlock AI's potential for their business will gain a competitive edge. And with the right guidance, training, and cross-functional alignment, AI can stop being a boardroom buzzword—and start being your business advantage.





# Educate Your Team & Transform Your Business with WSI's AI Resources



Knowledge is power—and in today's competitive ecosystem, WSI is here to help you unlock the power of AI. Learn more about GPTs, LLMs, and prompts with our 60+ page ***Prompt Mastery: Strategies to Craft AI Prompts That Will Transform Your Business ebook.*** Identify gaps in your business strategy with our ***AI Readiness Assessment.*** Everything you need to learn about AI and how to leverage it in your business is at your fingertips. Don't miss out on this transformational business journey with AI and WSI!

[Download Your AI Resources](#)

# From Potential to Progress: 2025 Breakthrough Insights on AI's Strategic Impact

The 2025 WSI AI Business Insights Survey reveals an important shift: small and medium-sized businesses are no longer just exploring AI—they're starting to build real strategies around it. While the numbers show that many still struggle with full AI transformation, with inconsistent execution, uneven adoption, and training imbalances persisting, there is also some clear movement toward more deliberate, organization-wide planning.

Compared to the tentative, siloed approaches we saw in 2024, this year's data points to slowly growing confidence, expanding use cases, and an increasing recognition that AI is a business priority, not a tech experiment. It's not that the transformation is complete—or that it's moving nearly as fast as required or with budgets to match—but the initial groundwork is being laid.

These breakthrough insights highlight the industries and behaviors leading the way. As small and medium-sized businesses increasingly close the capability gap with larger organizations, we're seeing AI level the playing field, reshaping competitive dynamics across industries for years to come. And by examining how digitally mature businesses are turning strategy into motion—and spotlighting where others can follow—this section captures the early signs of a broader AI evolution already underway.



## More Businesses Are Planning for AI: But Strategy is Still Catching Up

In 2024, our survey revealed that 55% of businesses had either not discussed AI formally or had only held informal conversations about it. The 2025 data show encouraging progress: that number has dropped to 37%, indicating that more organizations are beginning to incorporate AI into structured planning conversations.

And yet, planning doesn't always equal action. Budget allocation has only slightly improved, and just 27% say AI is regularly discussed across the company. These numbers signal that while AI is starting to show up in boardrooms, it hasn't fully landed in business plans.

What we're seeing is the early formation of strategy—a shift from “*should we?*” to “*how might we?*” It's a positive signal of intent, but businesses still need structured guidance and planning tools (like WSI's AI Adoption Roadmap), as well as internal alignment to turn that intent into measurable outcomes.





# Leaders are Excited About AI: But Middle Managers Are Doing the Heavy Lifting

Our 2025 survey shows that while optimism about AI is sky-high across leadership, it isn't always matched by personal engagement. Business owners and founders are the most confident in AI's potential (83%), yet 24% aren't using it in daily operations, and only 40% have received any formal AI training.

Meanwhile, managers and individual contributors in the middle are taking the lead in hands-on adoption: 78% of managers and 77% of employees report using AI tools, with over half participating in training.

This disconnect between executive belief and operational action creates friction that can slow down adoption. And that's where support from experts (like your team at WSI) can be the link between top-level ambition and day-to-day execution. Because without clear sponsorship and participation from the top, AI initiatives risk becoming isolated or underfunded, lacking the strategic guidance to scale across the business.

Leadership's role isn't just to authorize investment; it's to model the behaviors and priorities that embed AI into the company's operating system.

Closing this gap is crucial. Leaders don't need to become AI specialists—but they do need to champion use cases, model commitment, and guide organizational priorities. Leaders who engage directly with AI through tools, training, or strategic use cases are better positioned to drive company-wide adoption, secure internal alignment, and turn AI from a theoretical advantage into a competitive one.

AI success is no longer just a technical initiative; it's a leadership imperative. And leadership, like any capability, must be practiced to have impact.



## 83%

of business owners and founders say they're confident in AI's potential



## 77%

of employees report using AI tools



**Why now?** Because leadership modeling matters. When executives use and understand AI, it signals company-wide commitment, accelerating cultural adoption and investment alignment.



# AI Adoption Varies Widely by Industry: Some Are Racing Ahead, Others Are Stuck

The 2025 survey reveals a widening gap between AI early adopters and those still finding their footing. More digitally mature firms and larger organizations are moving faster and more decisively, turning AI from a strategic possibility into a competitive edge.

65% of microbusinesses (1–10 employees) report using AI, compared to 85% usage among businesses with 11+ employees. Industry patterns follow suit: Technology & Telecommunications (95%), Education & Training (89%), and Construction & Infrastructure (86%) show the highest confidence in AI's business value. Meanwhile, sectors like Non-Profit (55%), Personal Services (63%), and Travel & Hospitality (69%) show a little more hesitation.

AI implementation and adoption numbers mirror these confidence levels. Real Estate (91%), eCommerce (83%), and Legal Services (82%) lead in full AI deployment. At the other end, Food & Beverage and Personal Services trail behind, with just half reporting any operational AI use.

What separates these “AI Leaders” isn't just budget—it's mindset. The most advanced firms are integrating AI into their core business operations, not just piloting isolated tools. They treat AI as a lever for efficiency, personalization, and growth, not a tech experiment waiting for bandwidth.

For businesses in slower-moving sectors, this insight is a wake-up call: the AI advantage compounds over time. Falling behind today makes it harder to catch up tomorrow. But it's not too late, and even if your business is just getting started with AI, progress doesn't have to wait. WSI's AI Adoption Roadmap is designed to help you prioritize practical, high-impact use cases—so you can make meaningful strides without overextending resources. Your WSI Consultant will work with you to identify early wins, build momentum, and shape a scalable AI strategy tailored to your team's size, budget, and goals.

Because with the right roadmap and a few focused wins, even resource-constrained teams can start building momentum.



# 85%

of SMBs (11+ employees)  
report using AI

# AI Is Reshaping Jobs: But the Impact Depends on Your Industry

The 2025 survey reveals diverse perspectives on how AI is expected to transform jobs across different sectors. Most digitally mature industries, like Technology & Telecommunications (46%), Automotive (50%), and Media & Advertising (40%), anticipate significant workforce changes.

Meanwhile, more traditional sectors, such as Retail (25%), Construction (23%), and Food & Beverage (33%), seem to anticipate a more incremental impact. Some industries, particularly Finance & Insurance (35%) and Manufacturing (21%), show even greater uncertainty, suggesting a slower, more cautious approach to AI adoption or unclear expectations.

This year-over-year shift is notable. In 2024, only 32% of businesses expected AI to change job roles, while 47% believed it would not. In 2025, that number has more than doubled—**67% of businesses now expect AI to impact at least some roles, with 36% predicting significant transformation in job roles and another 31% anticipating at least a few roles will be affected. Only 5% believe AI will have no impact on job functions.**

These evolving expectations underscore a new imperative: workforce planning must move in *tandem* with AI strategy, reiterating that AI is an opportunity for upskilling, not replacement. The most forward-thinking organizations are already leveraging thoughtful, ethical AI planning (through reskilling programs, role redesign, and smarter hiring models) to help teams evolve with AI, rather than being displaced by it.



# 67%

of businesses expect AI  
to impact jobs



**Why now?** Because waiting is no longer neutral—it's a strategic risk. If you knew a tsunami was coming, would you head for higher ground or stay where it's comfortable? The warning signs are clear: AI is accelerating, and workforce change is already in motion. What you do with that knowledge is what sets you apart. So you must act now to guide the wave—or risk being overtaken by it.

# AI Isn't a Solo Sport: External Partners Are Key to Moving Faster and Smarter

Back in 2024, most businesses (63%) turned to external resources for AI support in a reactive, ad hoc way—bringing in tools or consultants only when needed. Now, in 2025, that relationship is evolving into something more strategic. Businesses are moving beyond improvised solutions and increasingly viewing external AI consultants as strategic partners.

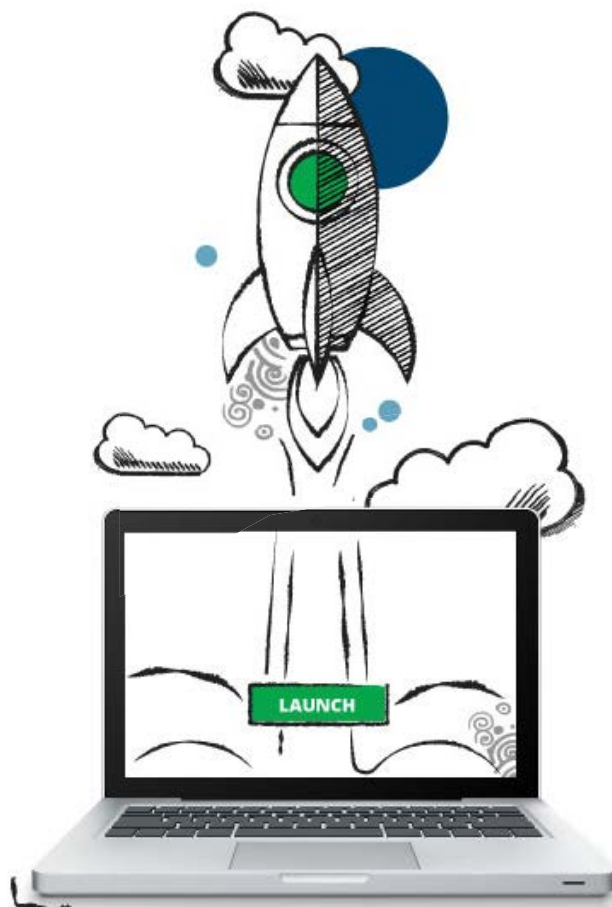
This evolution is driven by a hard truth: internal teams are still short on time and specialized skills. To bridge that gap, more organizations are leaning on trusted advisors—like WSI Consultants—not just for tool selection, but for co-developing use cases, building adoption plans, and guiding implementation end-to-end.

The data reveals that **organizations with successful AI implementations are 2.5x more likely to combine internal capability building (through training and talent development) with strategic external support.** The result? A hybrid approach that combines outside perspective with internal alignment creating faster momentum and more sustainable transformation.

This evolving relationship with external experts reflects businesses' growing sophistication in managing AI transformation, recognizing that sustainable AI success requires both outside perspective and internal ownership.

The takeaway is clear: external AI consultants aren't just deployment helpers anymore. The most effective ones are evolving into growth partners, guiding business leaders through not just technical implementation but also change management, cultural adoption, and long-term strategy. And that shift is what turns one-off wins into enterprise-wide progress.

Together, these breakthrough insights reveal that AI is no longer a future initiative—it's a present-day imperative. Businesses that move beyond isolated use cases and invest in strategic, cross-functional adoption will not only stay competitive but also lead the next era of growth.



# Turning Strategy Into Motion: Practical AI Action Steps

AI is gaining traction, but adoption remains inconsistent. That's why we've outlined four focused action steps to help you move from interest to impact, backed by WSI's expert support.

Below is your guide to navigating AI with purpose, blending smart technology with human insight, and uncovering fresh pathways for sustainable business success.

## Make AI a Core Business Conversation, Not a Side Experiment

This year, just 27% of businesses say AI is a regular topic in strategic discussions, which is far from where it needs to be. Many organizations continue to experiment with AI at the edges, without linking these efforts back to broader business priorities. While this is a common starting point, the next step is to bring AI into regular planning cycles and align it with company-wide goals.

To move beyond fragmented experimentation, businesses need to embed AI into regular planning cycles and assign clear ownership, whether through a designated AI lead or an internal champion. AI application and integration need to be part of the core business strategy conversation—not an afterthought tacked on at the last minute.

WSI Consultants often serve as the external catalyst to help make this change. By bringing deep industry insight and proven frameworks, they help clients define practical use cases, evaluate tools, and connect AI initiatives directly to performance outcomes—such as improving customer satisfaction, reducing lead response times, or lowering campaign costs. With WSI's support, businesses move from dabbling to deliberate, from conceptual to measurable. AI shifts from a novelty to a growth engine when it's aligned with KPIs, measured by outcomes, and integrated into everyday strategy.



**Why now?** Because waiting until AI is “perfectly planned” means a greater likelihood of you falling behind. The cost of inaction—slower response times, missed insights, and higher labor costs—is rising fast.





## Build Targeted AI Fluency That Meets People Where They Are

While 59% of respondents say they're familiar with AI, over half of those still haven't received any formal training. The most common barrier isn't motivation but time. Business leaders and employees alike are eager to learn, but struggle to fit AI into already packed schedules.

Rather than pushing for generic training, the more effective approach is role-based learning. Focused workshops, tailored to sales teams, operations staff, or leadership groups, can transform abstract familiarity into real capability. WSI's AI Adoption Roadmap identifies your potentially most valuable AI opportunities and crafts a clear path for implementation. These sessions meet employees where they are—bringing AI into the flow of their real work instead of asking them to learn in a vacuum.



## Expand Adoption Across All Departments, Not Just the Usual Champions

This year's data shows AI adoption rising in sales, IT, and operations—but HR, finance, and customer-facing teams still lag significantly behind. These internal disparities create silos that prevent AI from delivering business-wide value. If one department is leveraging automation while another is stuck in manual processes, the bottlenecks persist.

The solution isn't to push AI across the board, but to start with the right-fit use cases in low-adoption departments. WSI often works with clients to uncover overlooked opportunities—for example, piloting AI-assisted onboarding in HR, or introducing simple automation in accounting. These small, strategic deployments demonstrate value early and create internal momentum. They also serve as proof points that AI can be safe, relevant, and ROI-positive, even in departments that may be more cautious or compliance-bound.



**Why now?** *Because AI isn't about doing more—it's about working smarter. Companies that treat AI as a performance lever, not a tech add-on, are unlocking faster ROI.*



## Stop Viewing AI as an Extra Task: Start Treating It as a Business Lever

The top-cited barrier in 2025 isn't technology or money— *it's time*. Many still see AI as something that requires additional headcount, hours, or tools, rather than a means to optimize what already exists. This mindset stalls investment and keeps teams circling the planning drain.

To unlock AI's potential, businesses need to reframe the conversation around outcomes. WSI helps clients do exactly that, connecting AI projects to specific business goals, whether it's reducing lead response time, improving customer satisfaction, or lowering campaign costs. By aligning AI with existing KPIs, it becomes easier to justify even modest budgets and, even more so, to prove its value. The goal is not to spend more, it's to spend smarter with guidance that ties AI directly to performance gains.

## Discover Where AI Can Drive Impact in Your Business

Whether you're just getting started or ready to scale your next AI project, **WSI is your partner in building a smarter, more strategic future.**

**Request your customized AI Business Analysis** and discover where AI can drive the biggest impact in your organisation.

**Find Your Fastest AI Wins Today**



# CONCLUSION



Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope it has helped demystify AI, highlighted where your business stands, and clarified the next steps to take.

No matter where you are in your AI journey—from early exploration to business-wide rollout—WSI is your partner in turning possibilities into performance. With 30 years of digital experience and a global network of expert Consultants, we'll help you align AI with your business goals, train your team with confidence, and build momentum that lasts.

Ready to take the next step? Your local WSI Consultant is here to help you put AI to work—strategically, confidently, and with results that matter.

Let's transform AI from a buzzword into a business advantage—together.

## ABOUT WSI

With 30 years of experience and over 150,000 clients served worldwide, WSI is passionate about helping businesses of all sizes thrive in today's fast-paced, ever-changing digital landscape. Our network of agencies remains at the forefront of industry trends and best practices so that you can remain competitive.

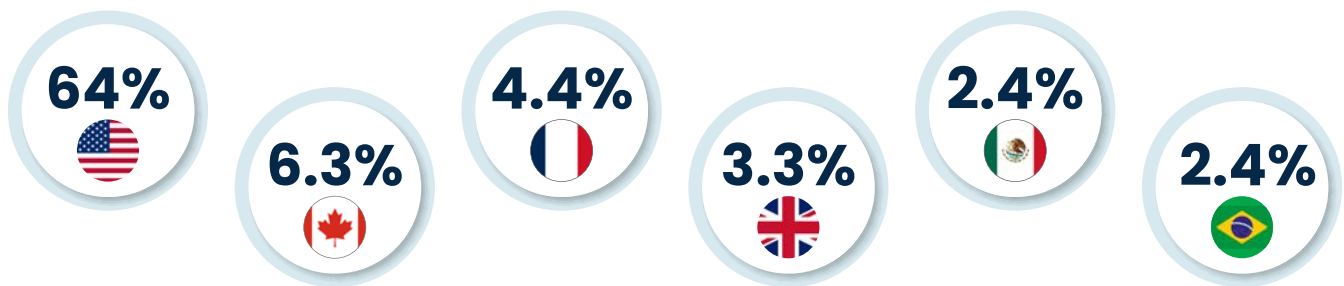
If you're ready to unlock a world of possibility for your business and embrace all that AI and digital marketing have to offer, reach out to our team of experts. We'd be happy to help!

[contact@wsiworld.com](mailto:contact@wsiworld.com)

## Survey Demographics

WSI collected insights from over 600 professionals across multiple regions, company sizes, and roles. To ensure accessibility and relevance, the survey was distributed in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

### Regional Representation



*Statistical Relevance: With a sample size of over 600 responses from a worldwide survey targeting global WSI clients, the data collected provides a robust basis for drawing conclusions and making inferences about the broader population. This sample size enhances the reliability and validity of the findings, ensuring that they accurately reflect the opinions and behaviors of our entire network.*

### Role

Business Owner / Founder	44.4%
Manager / Supervisor	19.6%
Individual Contributor / Employee	14.5%
Director / VP	10.9%
C-Suite Executive	8.5%
Other (specified)	2.1%

### Company Size (employees)

Small Enterprises	71.0%
Medium Enterprises	19.2%
Large Enterprises	9.8%

*Small Enterprises (1-50 employees)  
Medium Enterprises (51-500 employees)  
Large Enterprises (501 employees and above)*

### Industry

Professional Services - Business	15.8%
Media & Advertising	9.5%
Technology & Telecommunications	9.3%
Finance & Insurance	7.7%
Health & Wellness	6.0%
Manufacturing & Industrial Sales	4.4%

