



IPSOS & ABG PRESENT: AI Transformation Pulse

ABG, the Advertising Business Group, is an industry body that represents Advertisers, Agencies, Tech Platforms, and Media Owners.

We are dedicated to uniting the industry around a common purpose and higher standard, building capability by sharing best practices, delivering local insights, and providing a platform for discussion.

AI Transformation Pulse

A Snapshot of How Agencies & Advertisers Are Moving from Pilots to Performance



EXPAND
NORTH STAR

OCTOBER
2025

What We'll Cover

- 1** AI Fluency Levels : Understanding where users stand today
- 2** Adoption Patterns : How professionals are using AI across seniority levels
- 3** Core Applications : The primary ways AI is being leveraged in the workplace
- 4** Attitudes & Concerns : Balancing efficiency gains with ethical considerations
- 5** Governance & Trust : The current state of AI policies and trust levels
- 6** Learning & Development : Training gaps and future outlook
- 7** Strategic Imperatives : Four key priorities for building mature AI ecosystems

Survey Scope

Respondents: 112 B2B interviews across advertising, media, and marketing professionals in the **United Arab Emirates** and **Saudi Arabia**.

Gender: 53% Female, 47% Male

Age Concentration: 85% between 25–44 years
25–34 years: 44% / 35–44 years: 41%

50%

Senior & Executive Roles

Decision-makers, shaping strategy

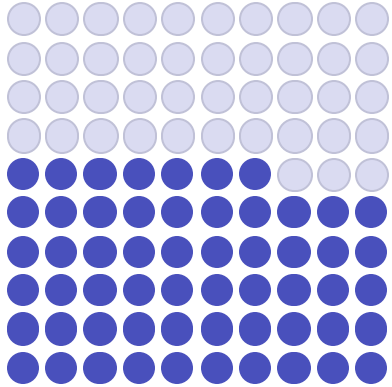
45%

Media Agencies

Largest industry segment represented in the survey

The Capability Gap

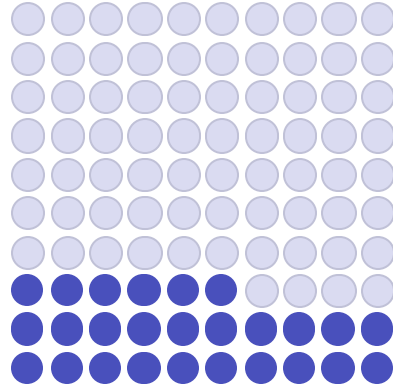
Moving the Majority from Occasional to Regular Use



57%

The Enablement Target

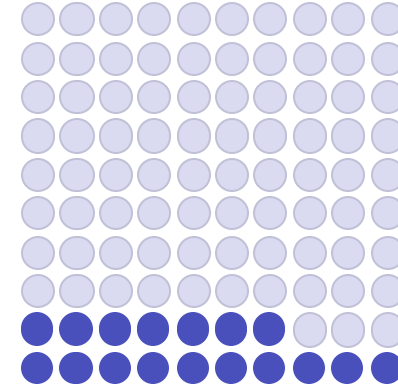
Have good understanding but use AI only sometimes



26%

Expert Users

AI experts using tools regularly in daily workflow



17%

Basic Knowledge

Know the basics but rarely use AI applications

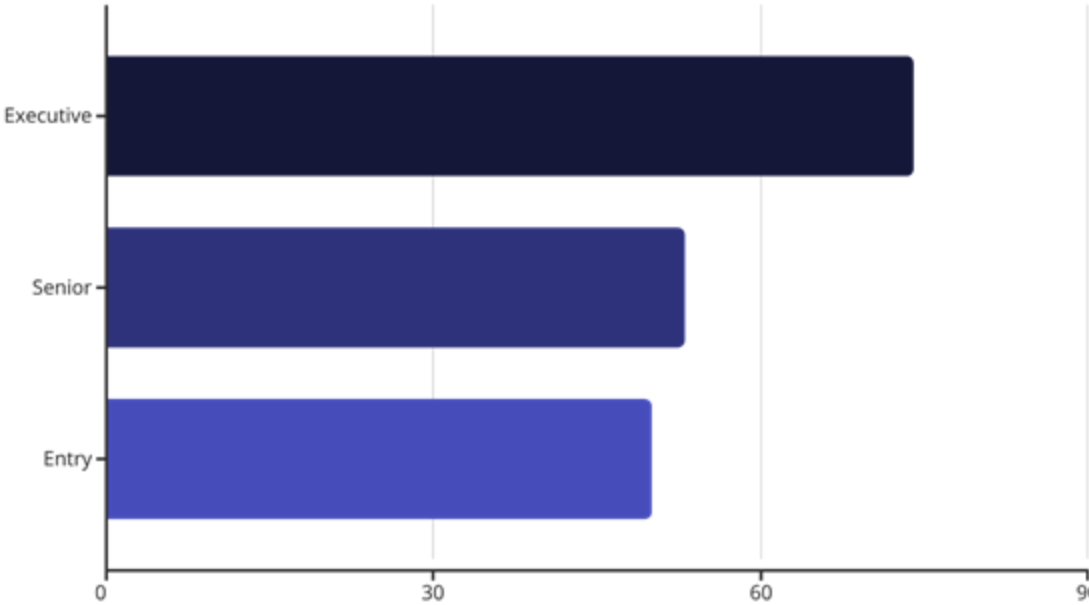


Critical Insight: Whilst AI fluency is rising across the region, the majority remain occasional users. Driving practical integration through targeted enablement will be critical to move the middle 57% into regular, value-generating usage patterns.

Adoption Patterns & Usage



Seniority Drives Daily Use



AI usage frequency correlates strongly with professional seniority, with executives leading adoption at 74% daily use.

Beyond Experimentation



Active Embedding

AI actively used and integrated into workflows



Continued Use

Likely to continue using AI in the next year

The imperative is clear: equip the remaining 27% to transition from trials to tangible business impact.



How Professionals Use AI

Core Value Drivers in the Workplace



Content Generation

68% use AI for creating marketing materials, copy, and creative assets



Business Intelligence

66% leverage AI for data analysis and strategic insights



Customer Insights

45% enhance audience understanding and personalisation



Task Automation

38% automate repetitive operational tasks

AI adoption centres on tangible productivity gains: content creation and data analysis lead usage patterns. However, **significant opportunities remain in under-utilised areas such as legal and compliance (5%) and HR and recruitment (1%)**, highlighting clear targets for future enablement programmes.

Attitudes: Efficiency vs. Ethics

Top Agreements



Enhanced Efficiency

75% believe AI will help them be more efficient in their roles



Better Targeting

61% see improvements in audience targeting and personalisation



Data-Driven Decisions

59% expect better insights to improve decision-making

Key Concerns

Data Privacy

57% concerned about privacy and security challenges

Role Displacement

47% worry AI will replace certain industry roles

Job Creation

Only 16% believe AI will create new opportunities

Professionals recognise AI's productivity benefits whilst simultaneously expressing significant concerns about privacy, security, and workforce implications. This duality underscores the urgent need for transparent governance frameworks.

The Governance & Trust Challenge

Strict Policies

27% have well-defined AI governance

Evolving Policies

43% have guidelines still in development

Policy Uncertainty

16% unsure if policies exist

What Policies Address

Top Coverage Areas:

- Ethical AI usage: **62%**
- Data privacy & confidentiality: **60%**
- Intellectual property: **52%**

Critical Gaps:

- Decision transparency: **30%**
- AI accountability: **25%**
- Bias and fairness: **22%**



Trust Deficit: Only 8% trust AI-generated insights as accurate and reliable. Just 9% believe AI models are free from bias. Human oversight (78% agreement) and disclosure requirements (61% agreement) are seen as non-negotiable safeguards.



Learning, Development & Future Outlook



Training Gap

Only **35%** receive regular AI training sessions, whilst **67%** lack consistent development opportunities



Learning Appetite

80% want to explore more about AI in the workplace; **77%** are curious about industry impact



Optimistic Future

89% see AI's impact as positive; **74%** believe it will enhance productivity and efficiency

Future Consensus

- **66%** believe AI will revolutionise the industry with significant innovation
- **67%** recognise adoption will require time for full implementation
- **54%** interested in AI certification or structured learning programmes

Ongoing Concern

- **64%** worry AI will automate tasks, leading to workforce reductions
- **32%** fear AI will replace creative and strategic human roles over time

Four Strategic Imperatives

Building a Mature AI Ecosystem



From Occasional to Consistent Use

Whilst fluency is rising, the majority remain occasional users. Investment in role-specific training and seamless tool integration is essential to unlock the next wave of adoption and move the middle 57% into regular, value-generating use.



Prioritise Trust & Ethics

Professionals demand transparency and human oversight, yet most organisations lack mature AI policies. Closing this governance gap—particularly around accountability, bias mitigation, and decision transparency—is essential for long-term, confident adoption.



Scale Beyond Pilots

With active embedding already at 73%, the challenge shifts from experimentation to enterprise-wide maturity. This requires establishing clear governance structures, accountability frameworks, and performance metrics that drive measurable business outcomes.



Democratise Upskilling

Training is currently uneven and often absent, particularly for junior roles. Organisations must expand access to hands-on learning, continuous AI literacy programmes, and certification pathways across all functions and seniority levels to build sustainable capability.

The path forward is clear: Focus on enablement, ethics, and enterprise scale to harness AI's full potential. By addressing the capability gap, establishing robust governance, and democratising access to learning, organisations can transform occasional experimentation into sustained competitive advantage.



Contact us for more information



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