



From Pilots to Performance: Building a Mature AI Ecosystem for Agencies and Advertisers

An ABG x Ipsos Survey
June 2025

Before Disruption Comes Discovery

Grounding AI in a Deep Understanding of Today's Advertising Landscape

1

The voice & perspective of everyone in the industry

2

Capturing Needs & Gaps

3

Identifying & Maximizing Impact



Who we spoke to? Profile of respondents

Number of interviews

112 (B2B)

Survey period

May-June 2026

Countries

United Arab

Emirates & Saudi

Arabia

Methodology

Online



47% 53%



18-24 5%
25-34 44%
35-44 41%
45+ 10%



Locals & Arabs 60%
Expats - Westerners 13%
Expats - Asians 27%



Executive / C-Level 21%
Senior-Level 48%
Mid-Level 30%
Entry Level 2%

Industry


Media Agency	45%
Brand/Advertiser (Client-side Marketing)	15%
Advertising Agency	13%
Market Research & Analytics	12%
Publishing & Content Creation	5%
Tech companies	5%
E-commerce & Digital Marketing	3%
Other	2%

Function in organization

Managerial / Account Director, Brand Manager ...	29%
Executive / Leadership / CMO ...	21%
Media Planning	13%
Data & Analytics / Data Scientist, Automation ...	12%
Specialist / Media Strategist, Performance, Programmatic	12%
Digital, Social	7%
Measurement / Research, Insights	5%
Other (Media Trading, Finance, Procurement ...)	2%

What areas did we cover ?

1 AWARENESS & USAGE OF AI TOOLS AT WORK



"AI adoption is growing, but targeted enablement will unlock the next wave"

2 ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS AI



"Scaling AI requires shifting from experimentation to enterprise impact"

3 AI ETHICS & REGULATIONS



"Trust, Ethics, and Governance are the missing links in long-term adoption"

4 AI LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



"Upskilling and Access must be democratized across roles and functions"

AWARENESS & USAGE OF AI TOOLS AT WORK

AI Fluency Is Rising, But Targeted Enablement is Key to Unlock Mass Adoption

While 26% are fluent and use AI regularly, the majority - though capable - remain occasional or rare users. Driving practical integration and relevance will be critical to move the middle 57% into regular usage.



17%

Know the basics but rarely use AI



57%

Have a good understanding of AI and use it sometimes



26%

Are experts and use AI regularly



AI Fluency Is Rising, But Targeted Enablement is Key to Unlock Mass Adoption

While 26% are fluent and use AI regularly, the majority - though capable - remain occasional or rare users. Driving practical integration and relevance will be critical to move the middle 57% into regular usage.



17%

Know the basics but rarely use AI



57%

Have a good understanding of AI and use it sometimes



26%

Are experts and use AI regularly



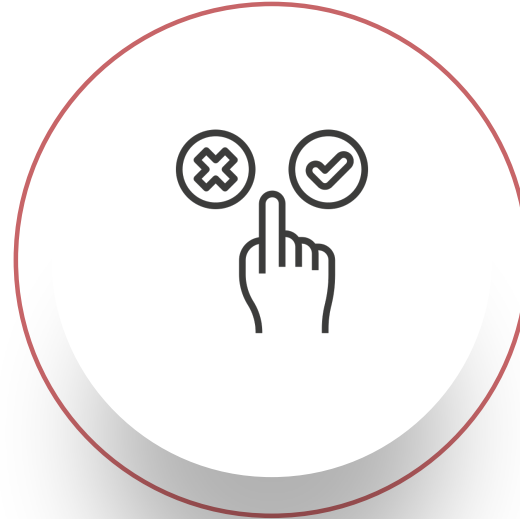
AI Adoption Is Advancing. Now's the Time to Scale Beyond Experimentation

With 73% of companies actively embedding AI into workflows, the imperative is clear: equip the remaining 27% to transition from trials to tangible impact.



73%

AI is actively used
in my company



27%

AI use is limited or experimental
in my company



96% Have used AI apps or tools at work

AI Adoption Rises with Seniority - Executives Lead with Strategic Integration, While Junior Roles Balance Use with Familiarity.

AI is becoming indispensable at the top. Executives are embedding it into daily decision-making, while entry-level employees remain in a mixed-use phase, highlighting the need for tailored enablement across hierarchies.

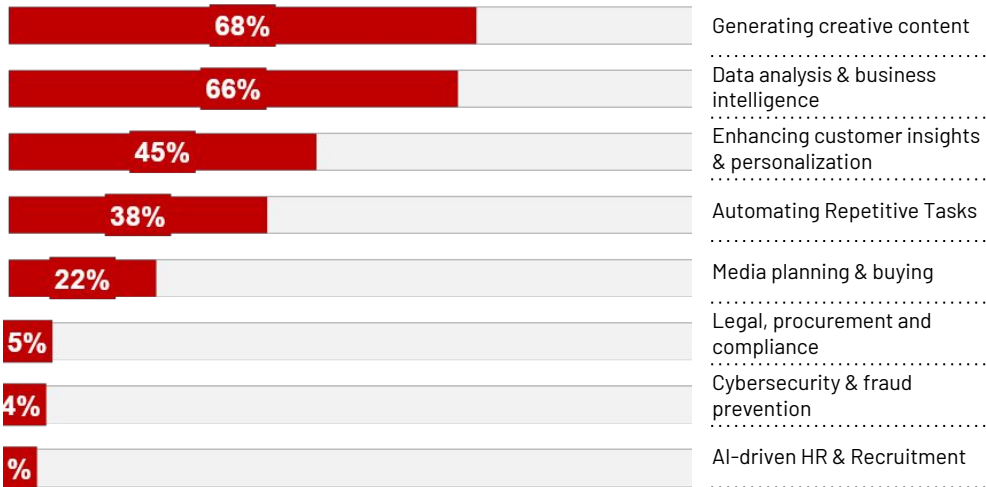
Usage Frequency	Total	Entry Level	Mid Level	Senior Level	Executive
Daily	53%	50%	55%	43%	74%
Several times a week	25%	50%	30%	26%	13%
Several times a month	11%	-	3%	17%	9%
Rarely	11%	-	12%	13%	4%



96% Are likely to use or continue using AI tools and applications in your work within the next year

(T2B: Very likely + somewhat likely)

Purpose of using AI at work



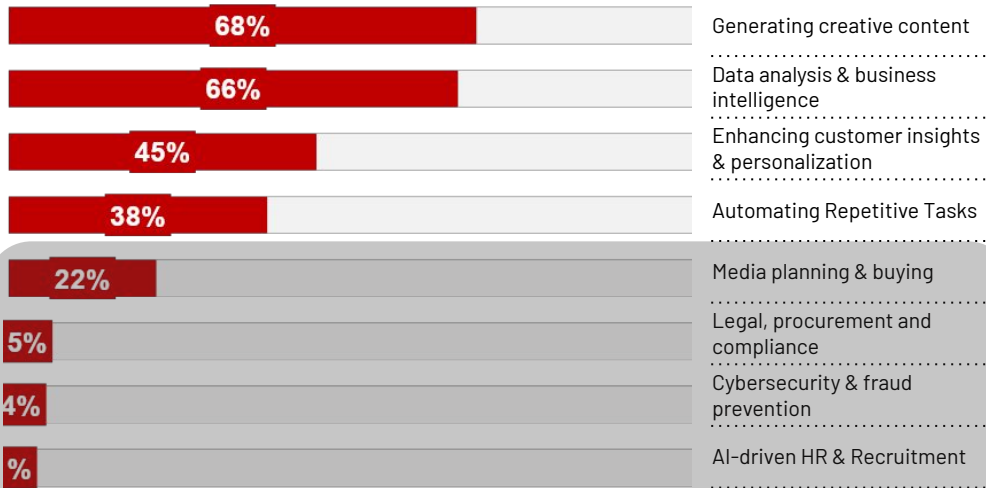
AI Is Evolving from Automation to Impact: Powering Content, Intelligence, and Strategic Decision-Making.

Professionals are increasingly leveraging AI for content creation and business intelligence, with growing adoption in personalization, planning, and strategic insight development

96% Are likely to use or continue using AI tools and applications in your work within the next year

(T2B: Very likely + somewhat likely)

Purpose of using AI at work



AI Is Evolving from Automation to Impact: Powering Content, Intelligence, and Strategic Decision-Making.

Professionals are increasingly leveraging AI for content creation and business intelligence, with growing adoption in personalization, planning, and strategic insight development

Opportunities that need to be unlocked

Q: How likely are you to start using AI tools and applications in your work within the next year?

Q: For what purposes do you use AI?

AI Is Gaining Ground Through Everyday Tools, With Chatbots Leading the Change

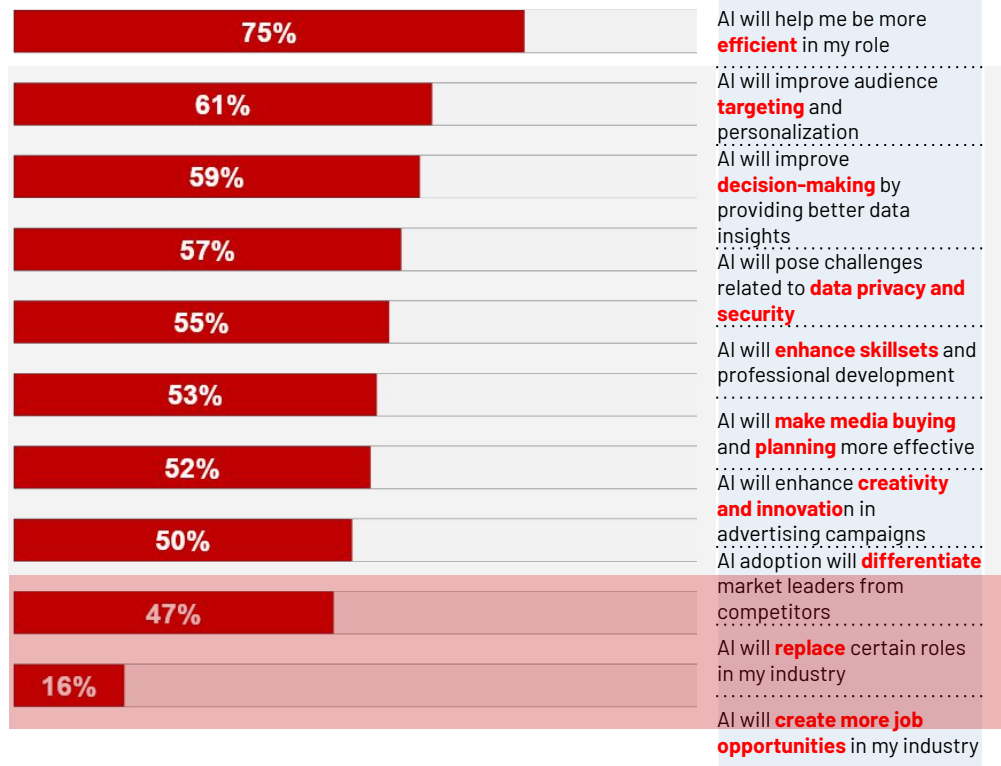
Adoption is highest where AI delivers quick wins: virtual assistance, content creation, and marketing support. More complex use cases are emerging but still gaining traction.

Tools and apps used at work



ATTITUDES & PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS AI

Attitudes towards AI at workplace (Top 3 Box)



AI Is Seen as an Efficiency Enhancer, But Caution Remains Around Privacy and Job Security.

While professionals embrace AI's role in boosting efficiency and skills, underlying concerns about ethical risks and workforce disruption persist.



AI Is Perceived as a Creative Force, But Trust and Ethics Still Lag Behind

The dominant perceptions center around AI's potential to drive change, spark creativity, and streamline work



61%
Innovative



59%
Efficient



34%
Game-changing



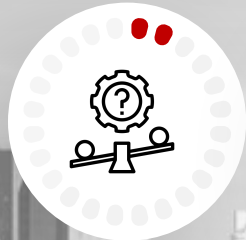
34%
Exciting



27%
Disruptive



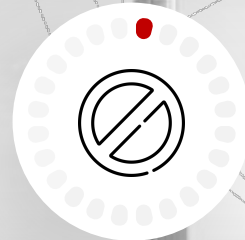
20%
Risky



7%
Biased



2%
Ethical



2%
Untrustworthy

AI ETHICS & REGULATIONS

AI Governance Remains a Work in Progress

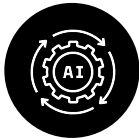
While some organizations have formal policies in place, many are still navigating evolving standards, often without clear guidance.

Current state of AI governance at workplace



Have AI policies, but they are evolving and subject to change

43%



Have strict and well-defined AI policies

27%



Are considering introducing AI policies

8%



Do not have AI policies, and have no plans to introduce them

5%



Unsure whether my company has AI policies

16%



Ethics and Privacy Lead AI Regulations, But Gaps Remain Around Accountability

Most companies focus on responsible use and data protection, yet key areas like bias, ownership, and decision-making transparency remain under-addressed.

Company regulations covered



Transparency and Human Oversight Are Seen As Non-Negotiable

Professionals support disclosure and supervision when using AI, but few fully trust its accuracy, fairness, or uniformity with human-created content.

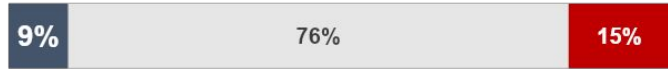
Perceptions on AI-generated content and decisions



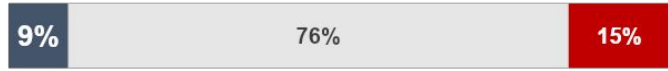
AI should always have **human oversight**



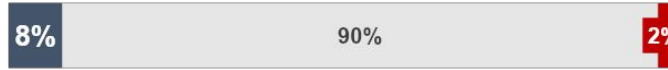
AI should be required to **disclose** when content is AI-generated



AI models are **free from bias** and discrimination



I **trust** AI-generated content as much as human-created content



AI-generated insights are **accurate** and reliable for decision-making

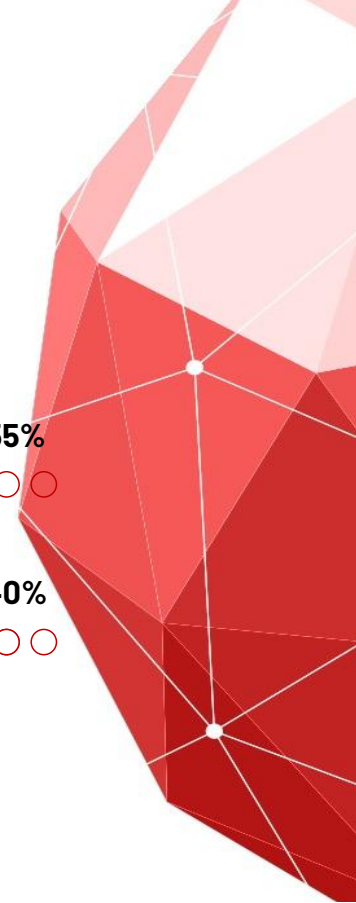
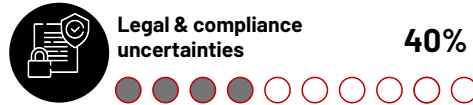
■ Agree (T3B) ■ Neutral ■ Disagree (L3B)

Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about AI-generated content and decisions?

AI Raises A Few Concerns With Overreliance And Bias Topping The List

As adoption grows, so do anxieties around fairness, decision-making clarity, and accountability, highlighting the need for stronger ethical guidelines.

Concerns about AI ethics and governance



Responsible AI Starts With People Training, Oversight, and Transparency

To build trust and scale adoption, organizations need to double down on education, ethical measurements, and clearer governance across all levels.

Actions for better AI adoption at work	Total <small>(T2B Very Important + Somewhat Important)</small>	Entry Level	Mid Level	Senior Level	Executive
Ensuring human oversight in AI decision-making	91%	100%	88%	91%	96%
Educating employees on responsible AI usage and ethics	91%	100%	91%	91%	91%
Regularly auditing AI models for bias	87%	100%	94%	81%	91%
Clearly defining AI's role in business operations	84%	50%	82%	89%	78%
Better transparency on how AI makes decisions	83%	100%	85%	85%	74%
Enforcing strict AI data security and compliance policies	83%	50%	85%	81%	87%
Clearer AI regulations and guidelines	79%	50%	76%	81%	83%
More control over how AI is integrated into workflows	78%	100%	73%	79%	83%
A stronger focus on reducing AI bias	77%	50%	85%	68%	91%



AI LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Most Professionals Are AI-Ready, but Still Need Practice to Go Further

60% feel confident navigating AI tools, though few feel advanced, highlighting the need for more hands-on exposure and upskilling.



23%

Advanced

I actively use AI and seek advanced techniques



60%

Intermediate

I understand AI but need more hands-on experience



17%

Beginner

I need foundational AI training

The AI Learning Gap in the Workplace

Infrequent and inconsistent training limits adoption, effective enablement requires more than awareness; it demands sustained investment in people.

Workplace offering of AI training



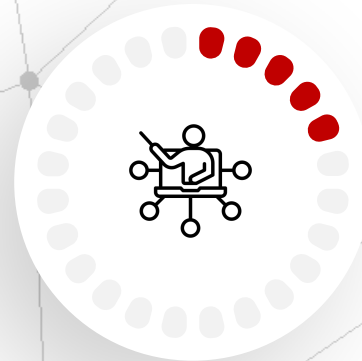
35%

Have **regular** training sessions



41%

Have only **limited** training sessions



26%

Don't have training sessions

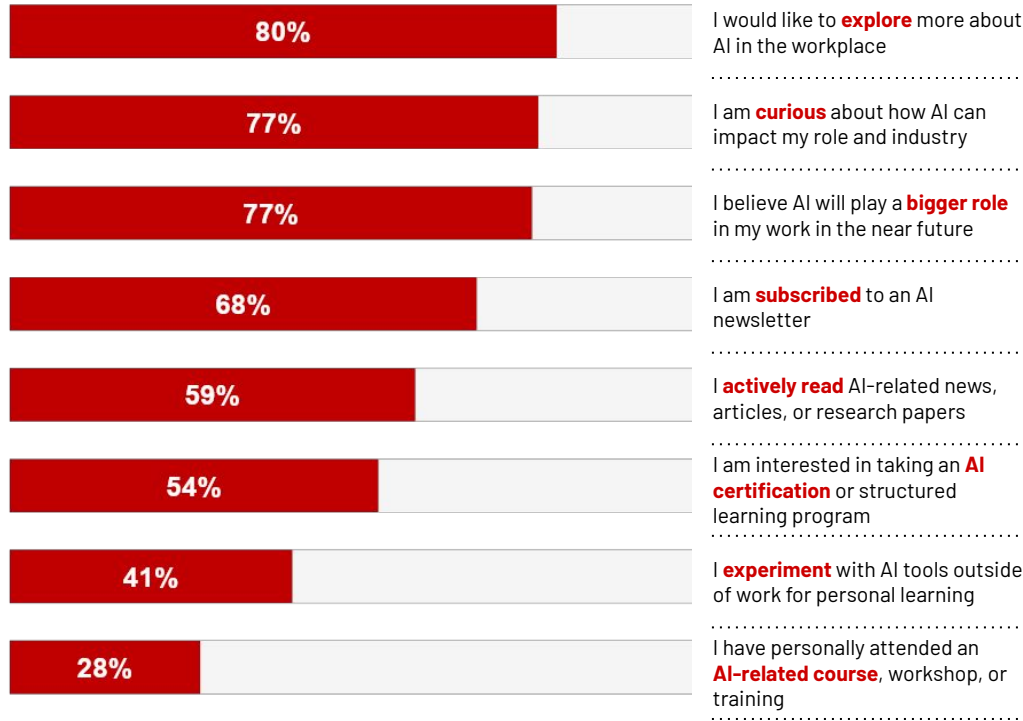
Creative and Marketing Teams Receive the Most AI Training

Training efforts are focused on content generation and marketing, while areas like cybersecurity and risk management remain under-addressed.

Type of AI training provided at workplace



Attitudes towards personal AI learning & development (Top 3 Box)



AI Curiosity Fuels a Strong Learning Appetite

Professionals are highly motivated to explore AI's potential, with strong interest in hands-on learning, certification programs, and understanding AI's impact on their roles and industries.

FUTURE OF AI IN THE INDUSTRY

AI's role in the future of the industry (Top 3 Box)



AI Is Bound to Redefine the Industry.

From enhancing productivity to driving innovation, professionals recognize AI's disruptive potential, yet acknowledge the need for time, training, and ethical clarity.

AI's role in the future of the industry (Top 3 Box)



AI Is Bound to Redefine the Industry.

From enhancing productivity to driving innovation, professionals recognize AI's disruptive potential, yet acknowledge the need for time, training, and ethical clarity.

The Workforce Sees More Good Than Harm in AI

With nearly 9 in 10 reporting a positive impact, AI is broadly embraced, only a small minority remain uncertain.



89%

Positive impact
(T2B strongly positive + positive)



5%

No impact
(Neutral)



6%

Negative impact
(L2B strongly negative + negative)

KEY LEARNINGS, WAY FORWARD

Key Insights Shaping AI Adoption in the Workplace

1 AI adoption is growing, but targeted enablement will unlock the next wave

- While fluency is rising, the majority remain occasional users.
- Moving from passive familiarity to active, consistent use requires investment in role-specific training, tool integration, and contextual relevance, especially for mid-level and junior professionals.

2 Scaling AI requires shifting from experimentation to enterprise impact

- With 74% of companies embedding AI into workflows, the challenge is no longer awareness, but maturity.
- The strategic priority now is scaling successful pilots into enterprise-wide systems, with clear governance, accountability, and performance metrics.

3 Trust, Ethics, and Governance are the missing links in long-term adoption

- Professionals demand transparency, oversight, and ethical safeguards, but most organizations lack mature AI policies.
- Closing this governance gap is essential to building confidence, mitigating risk, and ensuring responsible AI adoption at scale.

4 Upskilling and Access must be democratized across roles and functions

- Training remains uneven, concentrated in creative and marketing teams, and often absent for junior roles.
- To future-proof the workforce, organizations must expand access to hands-on learning, role-specific enablement, and continuous AI literacy development.

Way Forward

Strategic Activation Begins Here: Creating Targeted Work Directions for Measurable Progress & Highest Impact

1

Develop Tracks of L&D
focused on main gaps

2

Build awareness on Ethics
& Privacy and Develop
Best Practices

3

Raise awareness on AI
applications and tools in
advertising & marketing

4

Develop playbooks for AI
usage across multiple roles
& functions in advertising