



 **CORNERSTONE**  
**TALENT 20**  
**INSIGHTS 26**

**TALENT**  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
**PURPOSE**

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# CORNERSTONE TALENT 20 INSIGHTS 26

## Why did we define this Talent – Technology – Purpose framework?

Because it addresses a real tension organizations are experiencing, consistently reflected across all the data we collected:

**Technology** is evolving faster than most organizations can effectively adopt it.

**Talent is willing and engaged**, but fatigued and facing capability gaps.

### Purpose emerges as the only element that:

- Gives meaning to change
- Reduces organizational fatigue
- Enables adoption
- Connects human and technological decisions

Without purpose, talent and technology create motion, **but not real transformation.**

# Introduction

**Cornerstone Talent Insights 2026 highlights an ongoing evolution in the role of Human Resources**, as organizations increasingly connect talent, technology, and purpose to navigate complexity and change. 2025 was a year of sustained pressure: organizational restructuring, accelerated technological adoption, and an environment marked by uncertainty. In that context, HR played a critical role in stabilizing the systems supporting leaders, navigating change, absorbing tension, and protecting operational continuity.

What emerges in 2026 is not a rupture, but a shift in emphasis: from containing the impact of change to intentionally designing the conditions that allow organizations to execute, adapt, and grow.

This year's findings converge around five structural priorities:

## Pillar 1.

**Designing the organizational architecture the business needs.** From reactive adjustments to intentional structures that support execution, productivity, and decision-making.

## Pillar 2.

**Culture as the infrastructure of change** Culture moves beyond narrative and becomes a system of clear rules, rituals, and expectations that reduce friction and sustain performance.

## Pillar 3.

**Willing Leadership, Capabilities in Development** Leadership intent is strong, but critical human capabilities especially change leadership and emotional intelligence remain unevenly developed.

## Pillar 4.

**Reskilling as a system, not a program** Learning shifts from isolated initiatives to a continuous, embedded capability aligned with business rhythm and role evolution.

## Pillar 5.

**AI in Human Resources: from experimentation to impact** AI adoption accelerates in operational efficiency, but its strategic value depends on data maturity, integration, and governance.

Together, these insights reinforce a central idea: **without purpose, talent and technology generate movement but not meaningful transformation.**

# Cornerstone Talent Insight

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# 1.1 Designing the organizational architecture the business needs

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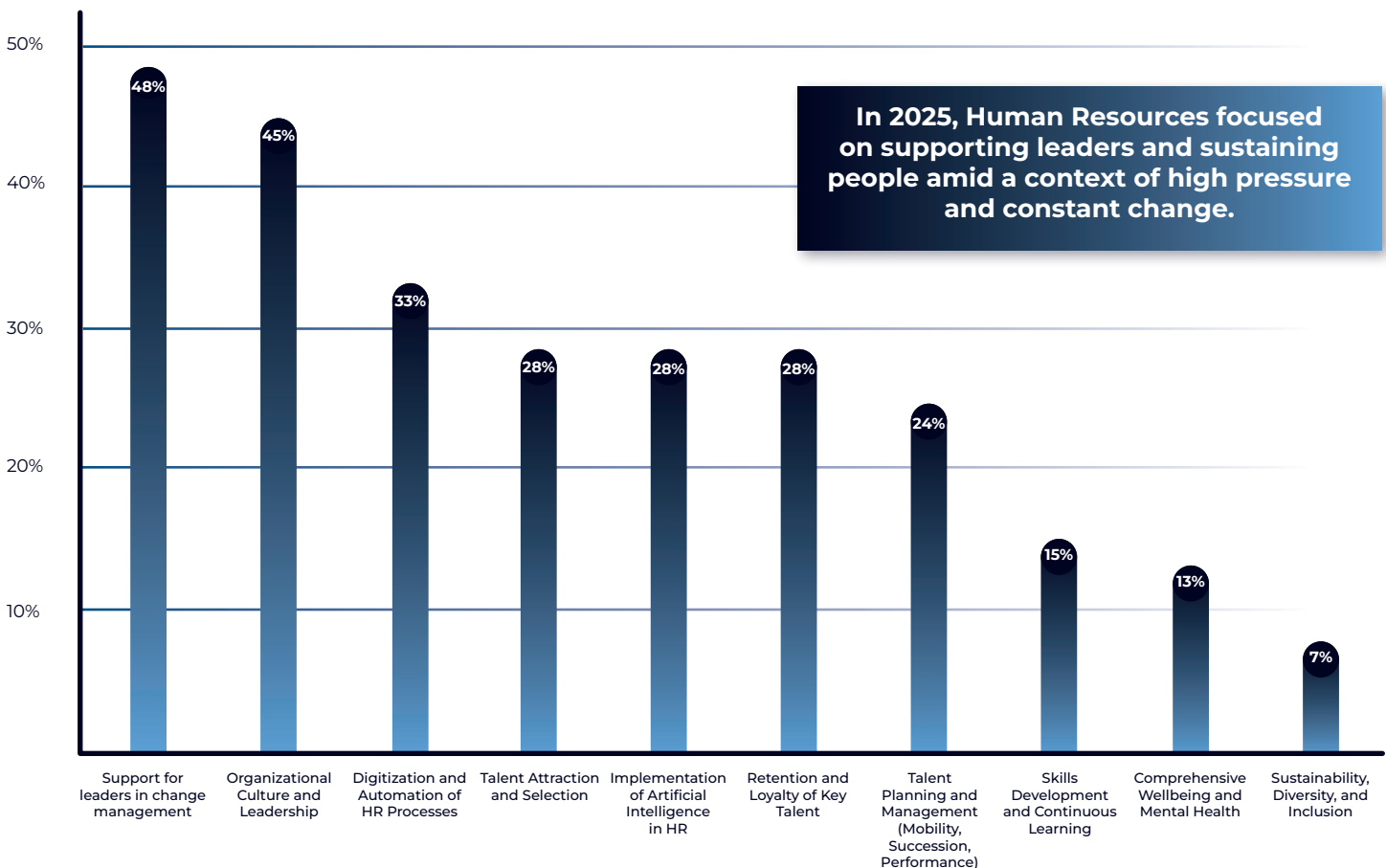
What the data from **Cornerstone Talent Insights 2026** shows is not a break from the past, but a natural evolution of the role Human Resources has been assuming over recent years.

**2025 was a particularly demanding year for Human Resources.** In a context marked by restructuring, sustained efficiency pressure, and accelerated technology adoption, the focus was on maintaining operational stability, supporting leaders, and containing the friction generated by continuous change.

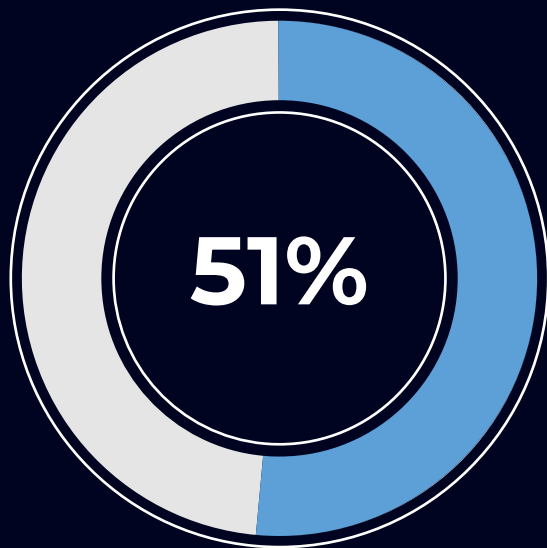
**The data confirms it:** supporting leaders through change (48%) and working on culture and leadership (45%) ranked among the top challenges of 2025.

### **Challenges shaped the agenda; obstacles explain the friction.**

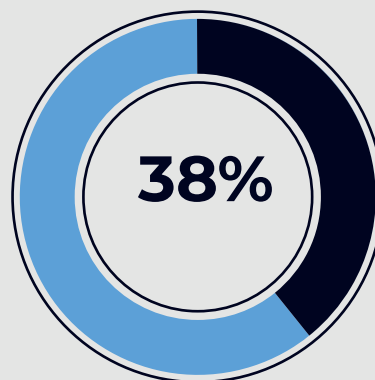
Which of the following do you believe represented the greatest challenge in implementing Human Resources strategies in 2025?



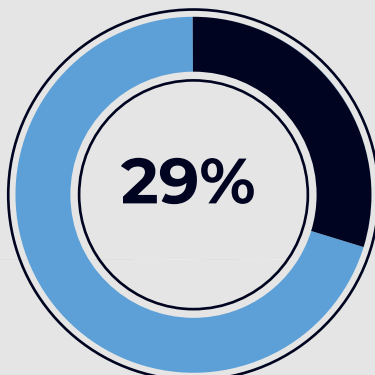
# Top 5 Obstacles to Achieving Results in 2025



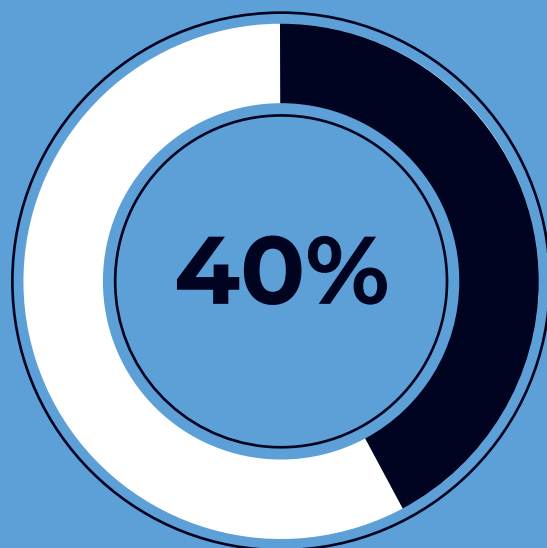
Resistance to change



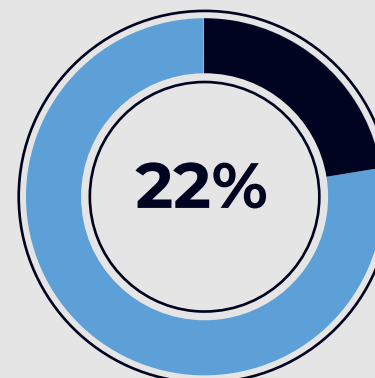
Budget constraints



Lack of effective communication



Technological complexity and poorly integrated systems



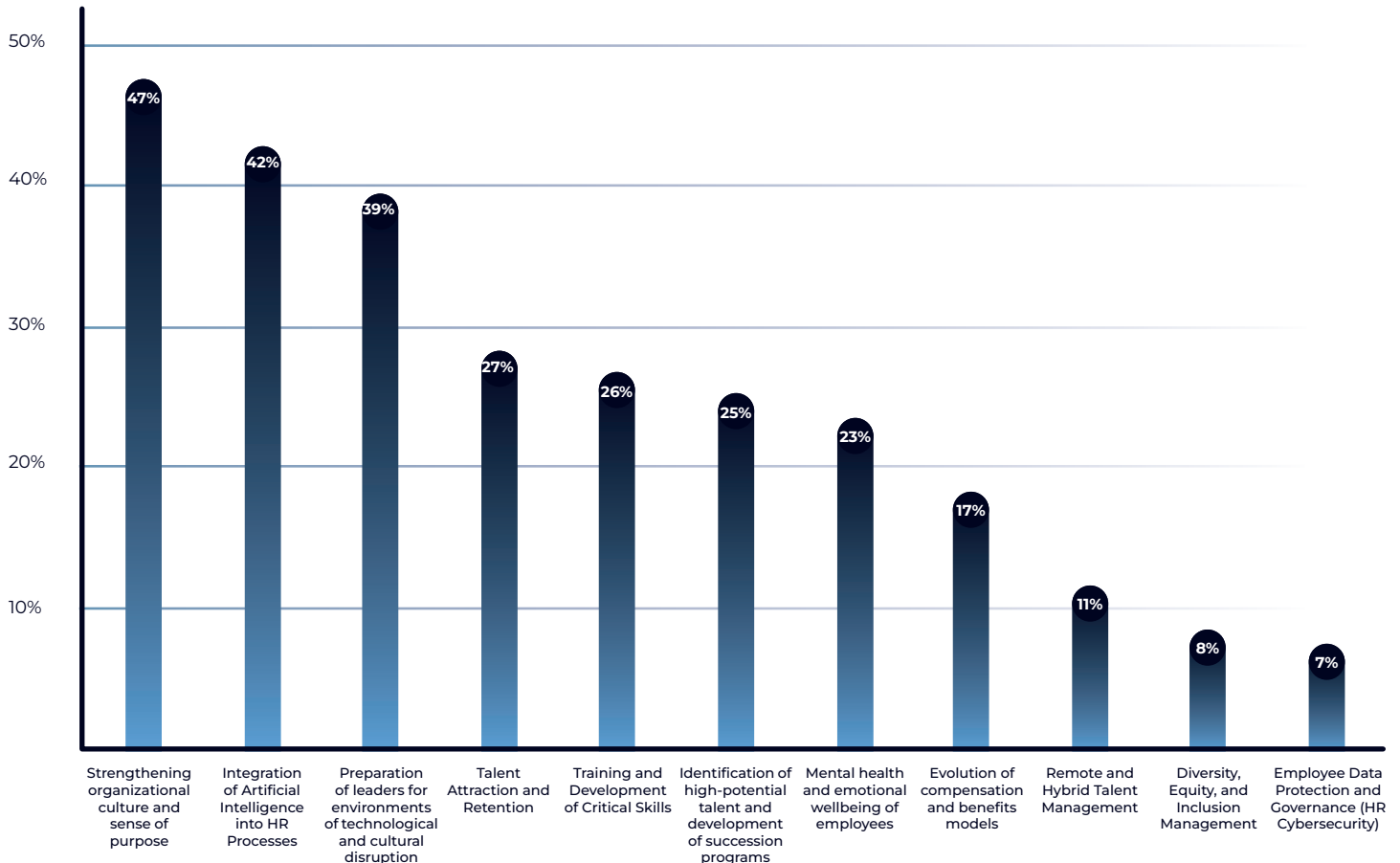
Limited commitment from senior leadership

**Insight:** The main barriers were not a lack of intent or effort, but structural friction change fatigue, system complexity, and constrained resources that limited execution.

## What Begins to Shift in 2026

Without abandoning its role as a stabilizing force, Human Resources takes an additional step in 2026: moving from responding to external pressures to intentionally designing the capabilities organizations need to navigate them more effectively. The agenda shifts toward culture, leadership, readiness for disruption, and the strategic use of data and artificial intelligence.

Which do you believe will be the main Human Resources challenges in 2026?



The 2026 agenda prioritizes culture, leadership, preparedness for disruption, and the strategic adoption of AI.



**Beyond the explicit options, a cross-cutting concern emerges: the need to rethink workforce sizing and optimize organizational structures. This insight, recurring in open-ended responses, points to a structural tension that is beginning to surface.**



**Organizational  
architecture is not  
just about structure.  
It is about clarifying  
accountabilities,  
decision rights,  
support mechanisms,  
and how technology  
and AI enable  
effective execution  
across the  
organization.**

# Assessment of the Human Resources Agenda: From Expansion to Precision



Today, the focus moves away from rapid structural growth toward more effective operations.



## Global Perspectives

### 1. From expansion to consolidation

At a global level, organizations are rebalancing their structures to prioritize efficiency, focus, and productivity. Growth is no longer measured by adding layers or complexity, but by simplifying decision-making, optimizing spans of control, and strengthening accountability.

Source: Resume.org, Layoff & Workforce Outlook Survey, 2025 (1,000 Corporate leaders in the United States)

### 2. Organizational design with intention: not about cutting, about rethinking

Organizational redesign is no longer about reducing headcount or flattening structures at all costs. It is about redefining roles, capabilities, and operating models beyond the org chart.

Source: Gartner, Workforce Planning & Strategic Workforce Management, 2025-2026

### 3. Planned hybrid work, not improvised

The transition to hybrid work has moved from an emergency response to a deliberate design choice. Leading organizations are redefining roles, workflows, and performance expectations to ensure hybrid models drive results, not fragmentation.

Source: Gartner, Future of Work Trends, 2025

### 4. AI as a precision enabler

Artificial intelligence is increasingly used to inform decisions, optimize processes, and reduce operational friction. Its value lies not in automation alone, but in enabling greater focus, better prioritization, and higher-quality execution.

Source: Resume.org, Layoff & Workforce Outlook Survey, 2025 (1,000 Business leaders in the United States)



**The global trend is not to reduce structures, but to design them with greater focus, precision, and sustainability.**

## 2.2 Culture as the Infrastructure of Change

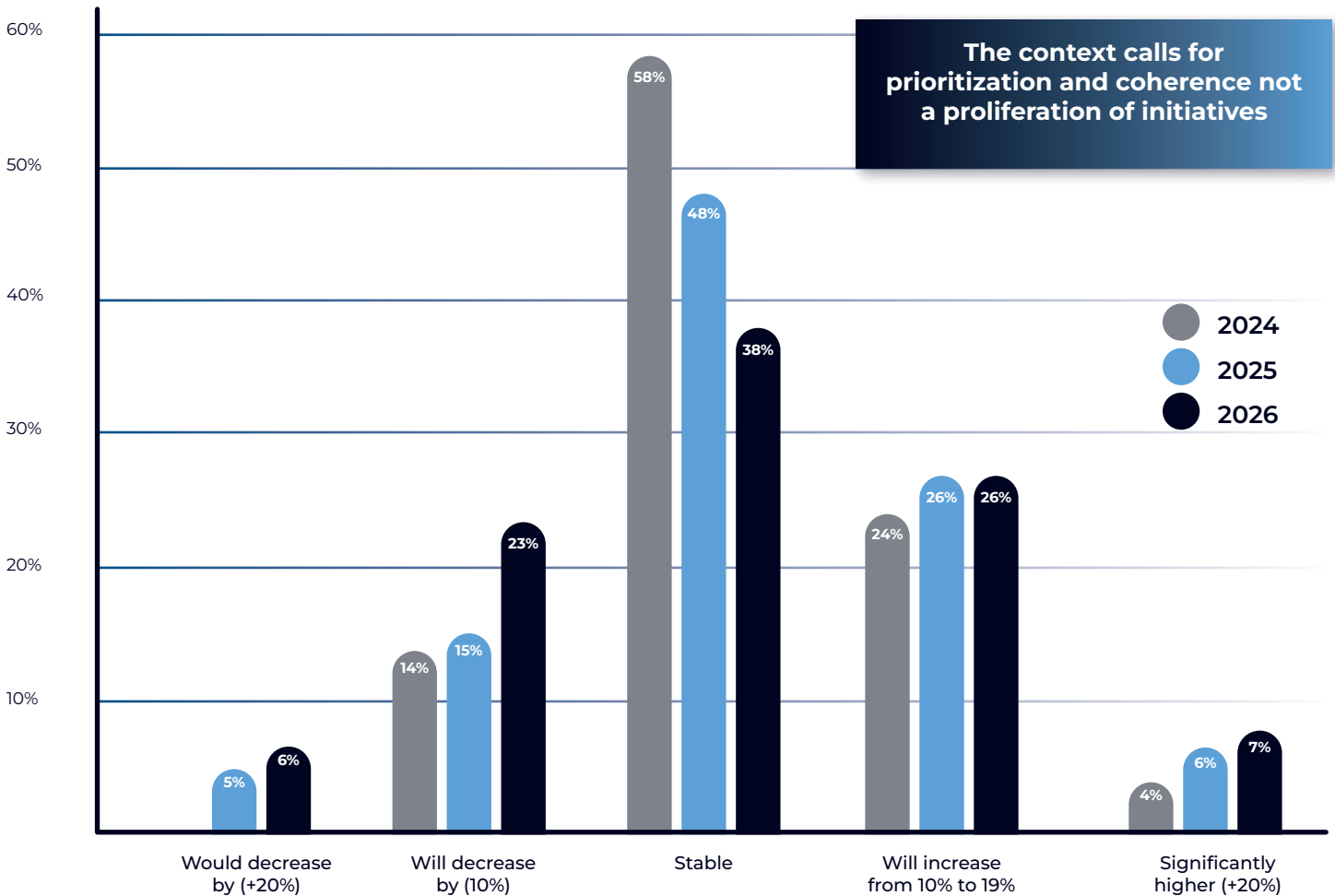
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## What Begins to Shift in 2026

The data from **Cornerstone Talent Insights** does not suggest that culture is “emerging” as a new topic. Rather, it shows a shift in how culture is understood and put into practice. In a context of structural change, uncertainty, and sustained pressure, culture moves beyond aspirational language and becomes a critical mechanism for stability and execution.

As budgets tighten (2026 budget projections) and change becomes constant, **culture becomes essential to sustaining execution without eroding the organization itself.**

How do you expect the Human Resources budget to change next year?



## 2025 Sent a Clear Signal

Culture is expressed through rituals, unwritten rules, and most importantly the consistency between what is said and what is done. It is what enables people to anticipate decisions and act with clarity in environments of ongoing change.

## Why Does Culture Become the Operational Infrastructure for Change?

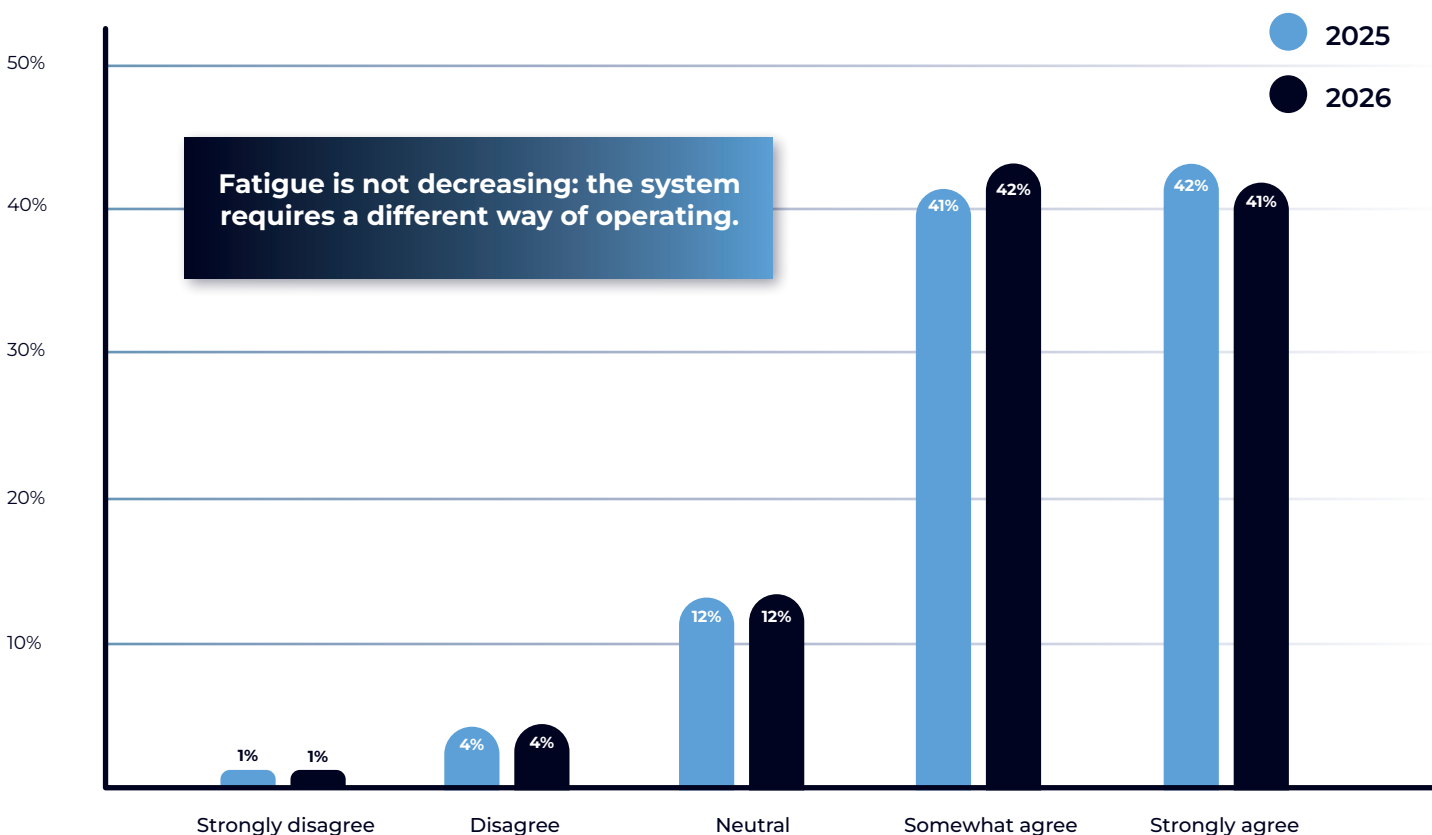
# 50%

Identify strengthening culture and purpose as the **top priority** for 2026.

# +80%

Of Human Resources leaders report **employee fatigue driven by constant organizational change** (stable vs. 2025), indicating that fatigue is **not situational** it is **structural**.

Do you think the constant changes in organizations are leading to employee fatigue?



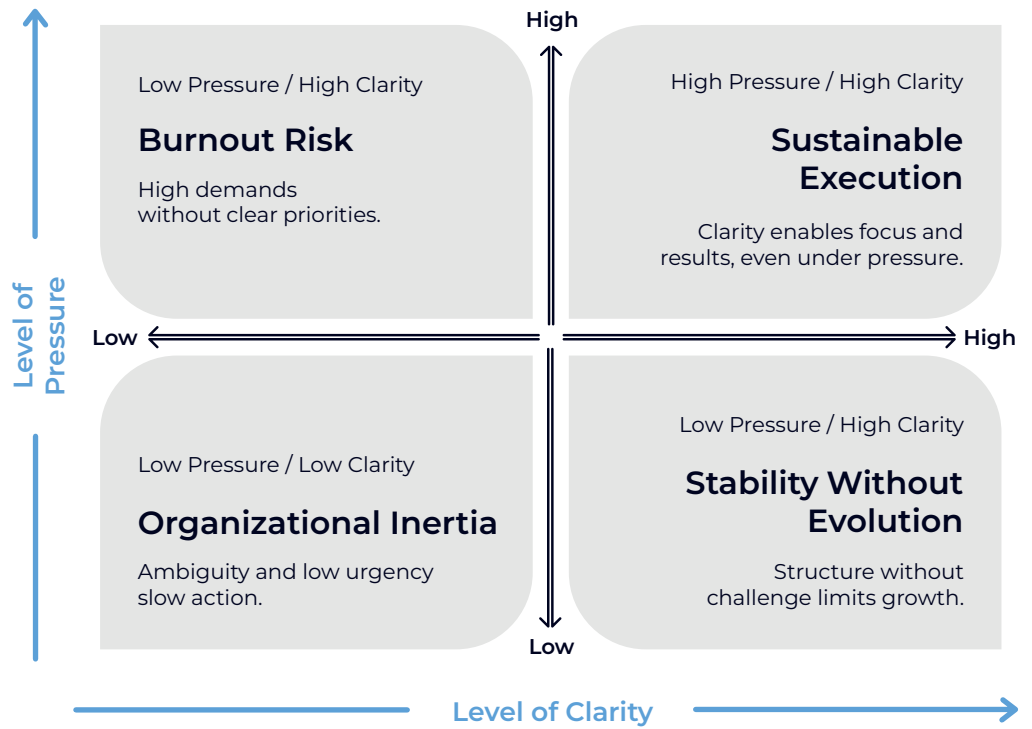
### Cross validation with People Trends 2026

The cross analysis with People Trends 2026 shows that fatigue is not driven solely by workload or performance pressure. It is largely explained by a **lack of clarity in how decisions are made, priorities are set, and actions are executed**. Clear rules of the game do not eliminate strain, but they significantly reduce friction and allow organizations to move through change without paralysis.



## Organizational Tensions in Contexts of Constant Change

### The Matrix - Executive Interpretation Axes

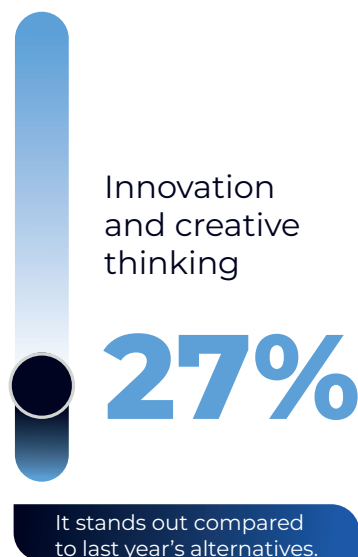
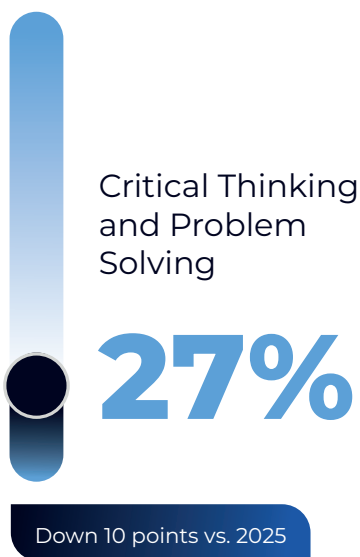
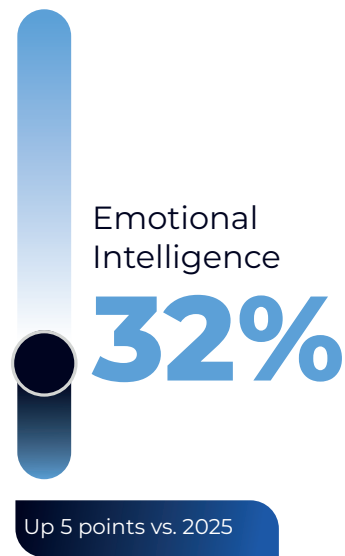
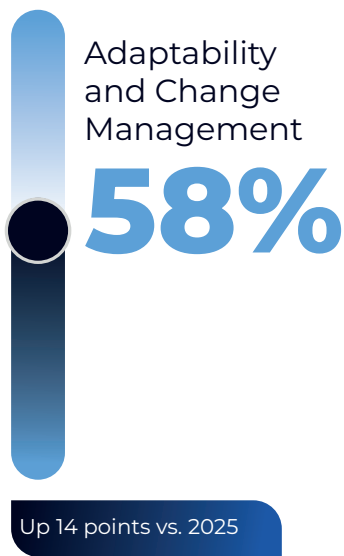


**Change wears people down; ambiguity can stall. Culture is what moves them forward**

| What clarity enables  | Without clarity |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Clear priorities      | Confusion       |
| Explicit rules        | Overload        |
| Focused execution     | Exhaustion      |
| Shared accountability | Disengagement   |
| Sustainable results   | Paralysis       |



**These findings are directly reflected in the most valued leadership capabilities for 2026:**



These capabilities reflect **change execution skills**: sustaining performance, making decisions under pressure, and leading teams in contexts of ambiguity.

The conversation shifts from “what culture do we want?” to “what behaviors does the system need in order to work?”

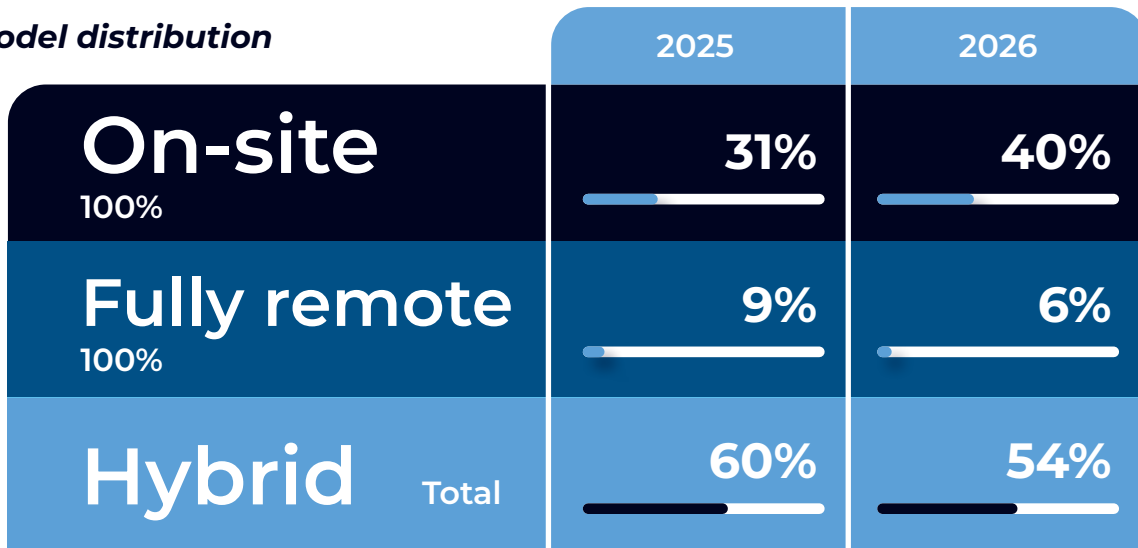
## The hybrid model remains - but becomes more intentional

The hybrid model continues to be the **dominant work arrangement (54%)**, although its internal configuration is evolving. Organizations are moving toward **models with more intentional in-person touchpoints**, particularly **3x2 formats (+10 pp)**, while models with lower in-person presence (2x3 and 1x4) are declining.



This shift represents a gradual return to in-person work. It reflects the need to **strengthen rituals, coordination mechanisms, and explicit rules** that sustain productivity and cohesion in contexts of constant change.

### Work model distribution

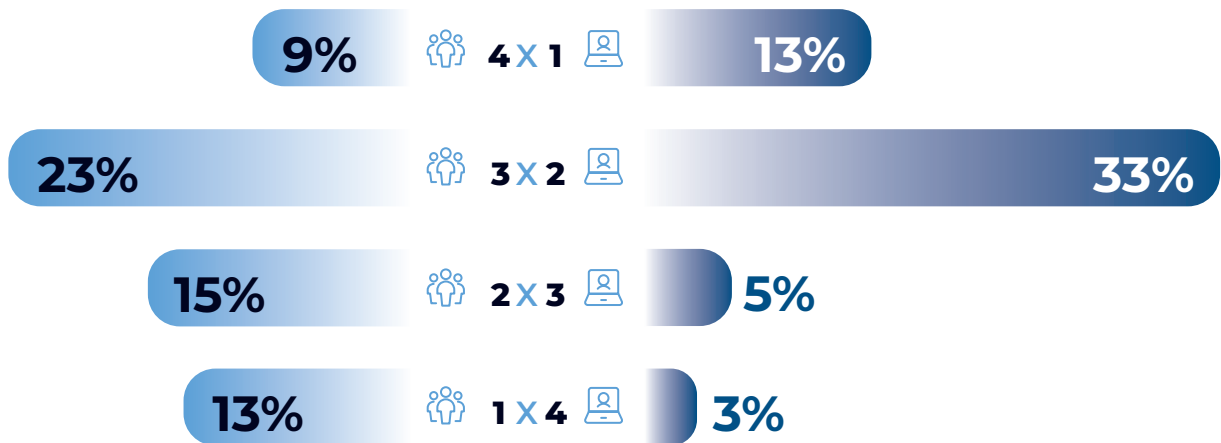


### HYBRID MODEL CONFIGURATIONS

2025

IN-PERSON DAYS VS REMOTE DAYS

2026



**Conclusion:** In an environment of permanent change, in-person presence reemerges as a cultural asset not to ensure survival, but to build shared agreements, rituals, and meaning that enable execution without friction.



## Global Perspectives

### 1. From organizational well being to organizational capacity

Leading organizations are reframing culture not as a “soft” topic, but as a **critical capability** to navigate pressure, uncertainty, and constant change.

Source: McKinsey, Why Transformations Fail, 2023-2024

### 2. Organizational fatigue linked to ambiguity, not workload

Fatigue is no longer explained by effort alone. It increasingly stems from **unclear rules, shifting priorities, and constant change without direction**, which erode focus and decision quality.

Source: Gallup, State of the Global Workplace, 2025

### 3. Culture as an enabler of decision making and execution

In environments shaped by technology, restructuring, and complexity, culture becomes the **mechanism that enables consistent decisions, alignment, and execution**, rather than a symbolic aspiration.

Source: Gartner, Future of Work Trends, 2025

### 4. Hybrid work evolves toward greater structure

Hybrid work does not disappear, but it requires **stronger agreements, clearer coordination, and more intentional in-person moments**. The trend is not less flexibility, but **greater precision in how work is designed and executed**.

Source: Gartner, Hybrid Work Maturity Model, 2024-2025



## **2.3** Willing Leadership, Capabilities in Development

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## Leaders Are Not Holding Back Change and Are Building the Momentum Ahead

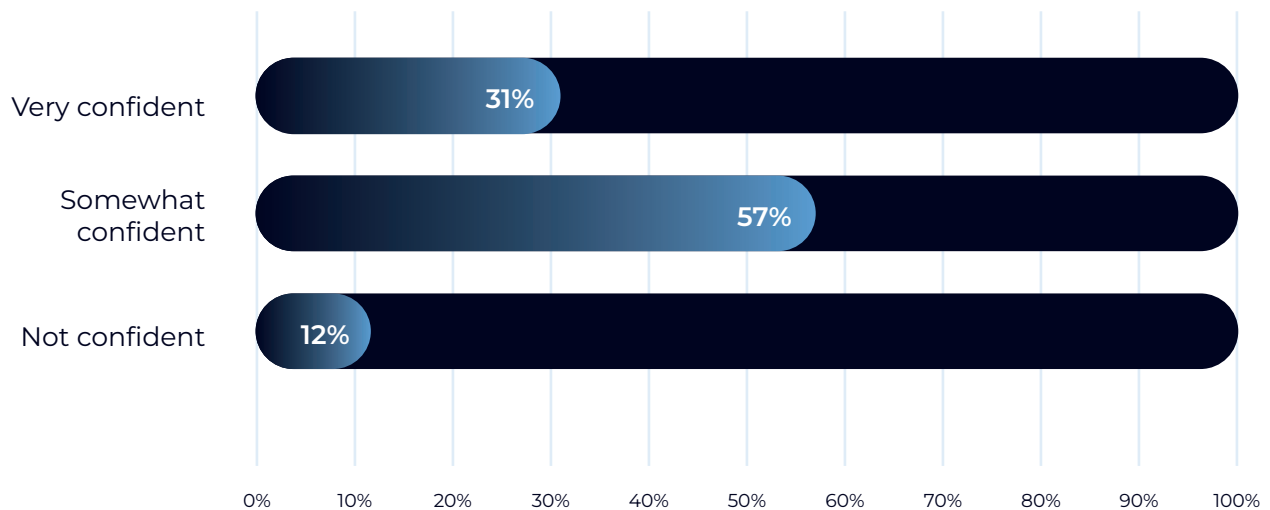
The findings from **Cornerstone Talent Insights 2026** show leadership teams that are **open, aware, and committed to change**. While not all capabilities are yet fully developed across the system, leaders demonstrate strong readiness to navigate increasingly complex and disruptive environments.

From the perspective of Human Resources, **confidence in leadership is high: 88%** feel confident or very confident in their leadership teams' ability to drive organizational change. Only **12%** report lower levels of confidence.

This reflects a critical distinction: **readiness and intent are already in place**. The opportunity ahead lies in **strengthening and scaling the capabilities** that allow leaders to convert that intent into sustained execution.



How confident are you in your leadership team's ability to drive organizational change in response to future challenges?



**These results capture leaders' readiness, confidence, and willingness to lead change highlighting a strong foundation on which to build.**

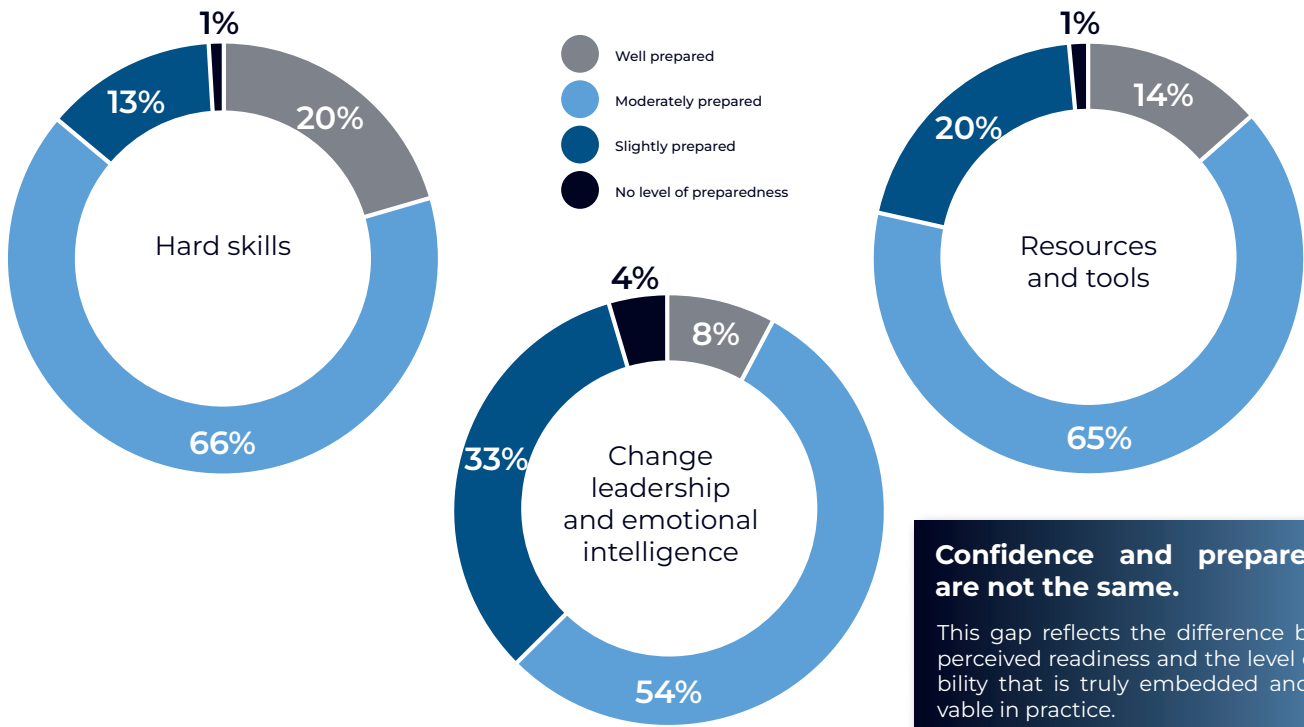


## From Perception to Real Capabilities: A More Nuanced Reading

However, when moving from **perceived readiness** to **actual, installed capabilities**, the picture becomes more nuanced. In preparing for 2026, teams perceive themselves as relatively solid in **technical skills** (66% somewhat prepared and 20% fully prepared) and in **resources and tools** (65% somewhat prepared). That strength, however, **does not translate with the same intensity** into the **human capabilities that sustain change**.

In **change management and emotional intelligence**, only **8%** feel fully prepared, while **33%** report being poorly prepared and **54%** only somewhat prepared.

To what extent do you believe your teams are prepared to face the challenges of 2026 in the following areas?



### Confidence and preparedness are not the same.

This gap reflects the difference between perceived readiness and the level of capability that is truly embedded and observable in practice.

### The takeaway is clear

In 2026, leadership does not start from resistance, but from **readiness**. The gap is **not attitudinal**, but lies in the **depth of capabilities installed** to lead change in a consistent, human, and strategic way.

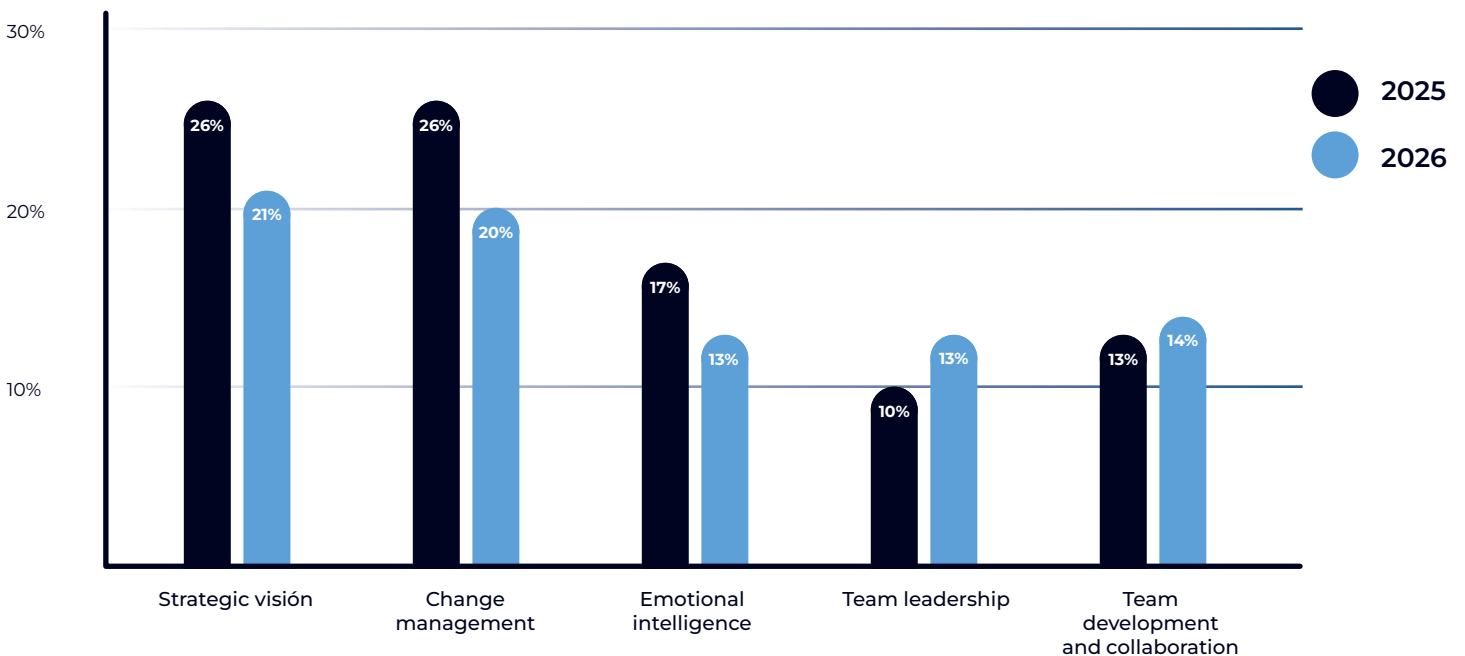
For Human Resources, the challenge is no longer to convince leaders, but to **support their transition from intent to mastery**, closing the distance between confidence, preparation, and real execution.



## The Gap Is Confirmed in Core Leadership Capabilities

In 2026, the largest capability gaps remain **strategic vision (21%)** and **change management (20%)** the same areas that led in 2025 (26% and 26%). Although **emotional intelligence** shows a slight improvement (from 17% to 13%), it continues to be perceived as a **fragile capability** given the level of environmental pressure leaders face.

What do you perceive as the biggest skills gap?



### Despite sustained investment in development

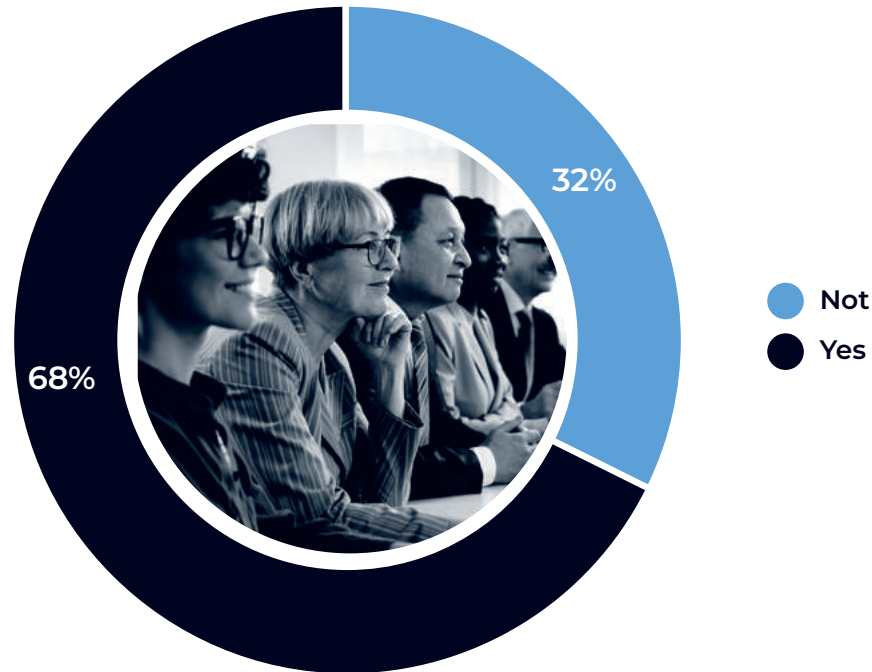
This pattern persists **despite continued investment in leadership development: 68% of leaders** across organizations participated in leadership development programs over the past year, a figure even higher than in 2025 (65%).

Still, the **perception that senior leadership is fully prepared does not increase** declining slightly from **35% in 2025 to 31% in 2026**.

### Investment alone is not closing the gap.

The challenge lies not in participation, but in how effectively development efforts translate into capabilities that hold under real complexity.

## Executive Participation in Leadership Development Programs (Last 12 Months)



### *The takeaway is clear:*

The gap persists **not because development is absent**, but because it is **not yet fully translating into the capabilities the context now demands**.

In an environment defined by **accelerating technology, sustained pressure, and constant change**, the challenge for leadership development is no longer intent or engagement. It is **closing the distance between confidence, preparation, and real execution** supporting leaders in the transition from **intention to mastery**.



## Global Perspectives

### 1. High intent, limited preparation for complexity

More than **70% of leaders** report being committed to driving change. However, only **52%** believe their organizations have the **simultaneous capabilities** technological, organizational, and human required to do so effectively.

Source: Accenture, Leading Through Uncertainty, 2025

### 2. Leadership is not a barrier, but not yet the accelerator

**67% of leaders** say they are actively leading transformation, yet many still struggle to **redefine priorities, align authority, and translate decisions into consistent execution.**

Source: KPMG, Global CEO Outlook – Leadership Edition, 2025

### 3. Emotional intelligence remains a fragile capability

Only **30% of leaders** demonstrate consistent capabilities in managing emotions, conflict, and change under pressure highlighting a critical gap in complex, high-stress environments.

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value, The Enterprise Reinvented, 2025

### 4. Perceived readiness exceeds installed capability

While the majority of organizations report **sustained investment in leadership development**, fewer than **35%** translate that investment into observable behavior change revealing a gap between **training, capability transfer, and execution.**

Source: Gartner, Hybrid Work Maturity Model, 2024–2025

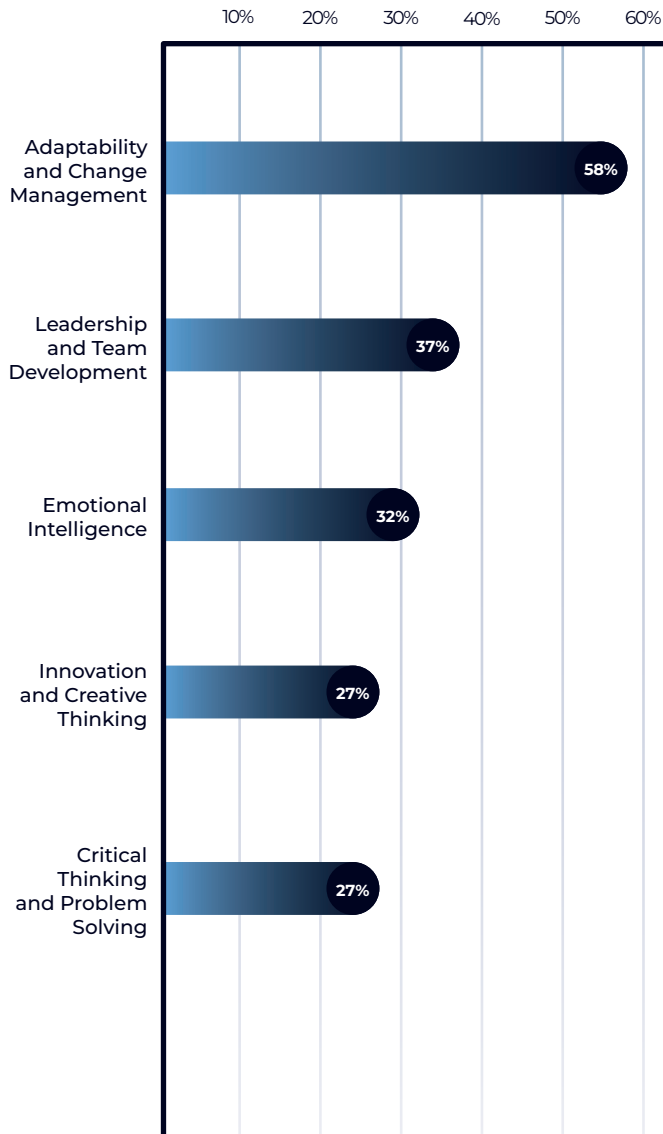
## 2.4 Reskilling as a System, not a Program

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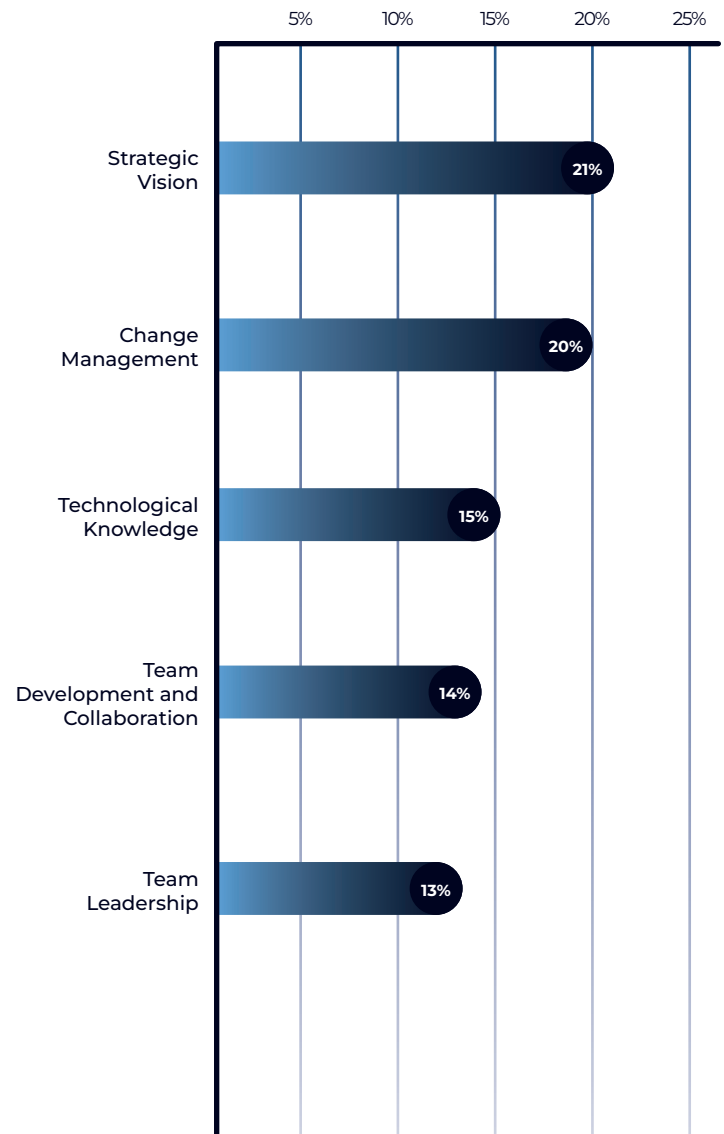
In 2026, the challenge is less about defining critical capabilities and more about **building the organizational capacity to develop them at speed.**

The growing gap between aspiration and execution makes it increasingly difficult to rely on fragmented efforts or short-term solutions. Reskilling and upskilling therefore evolve from training priorities into **core structural choices**, tightly connected to productivity, role clarity, and sustainable performance over time.

Which competencies do you consider will be the most valued in leaders in 2026?



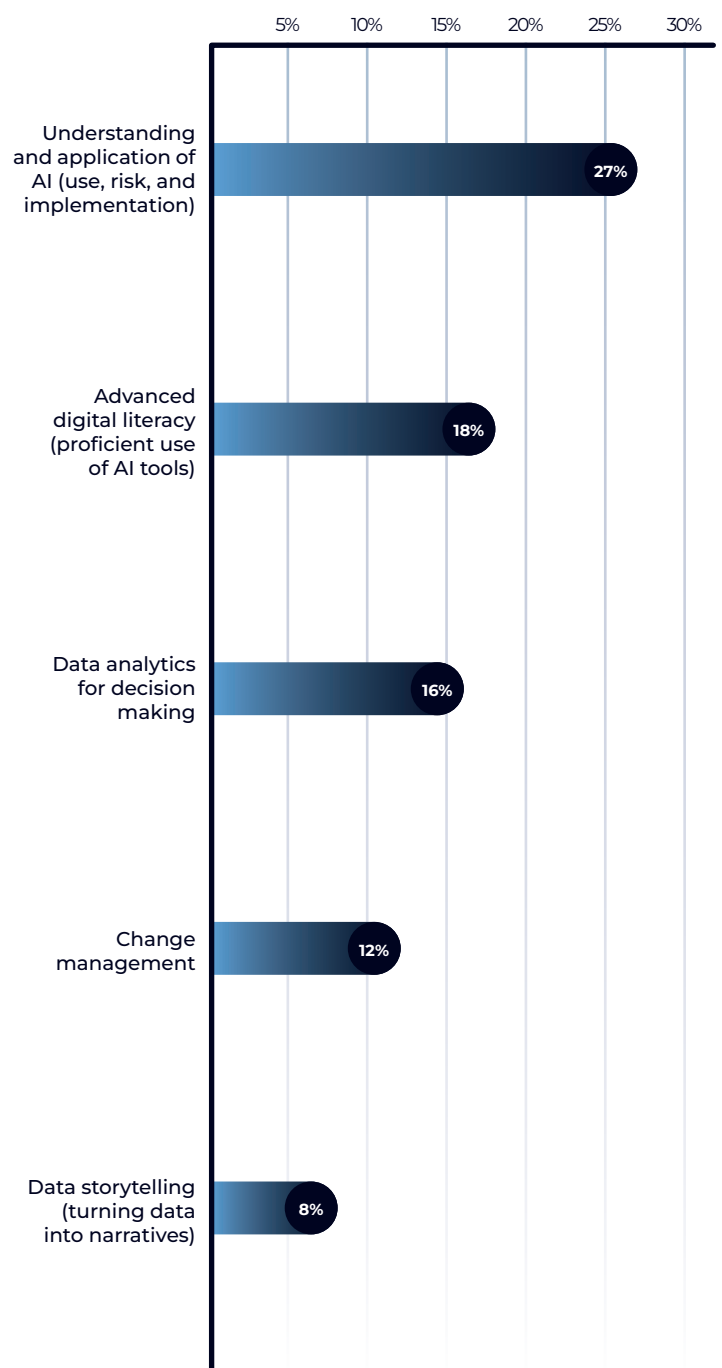
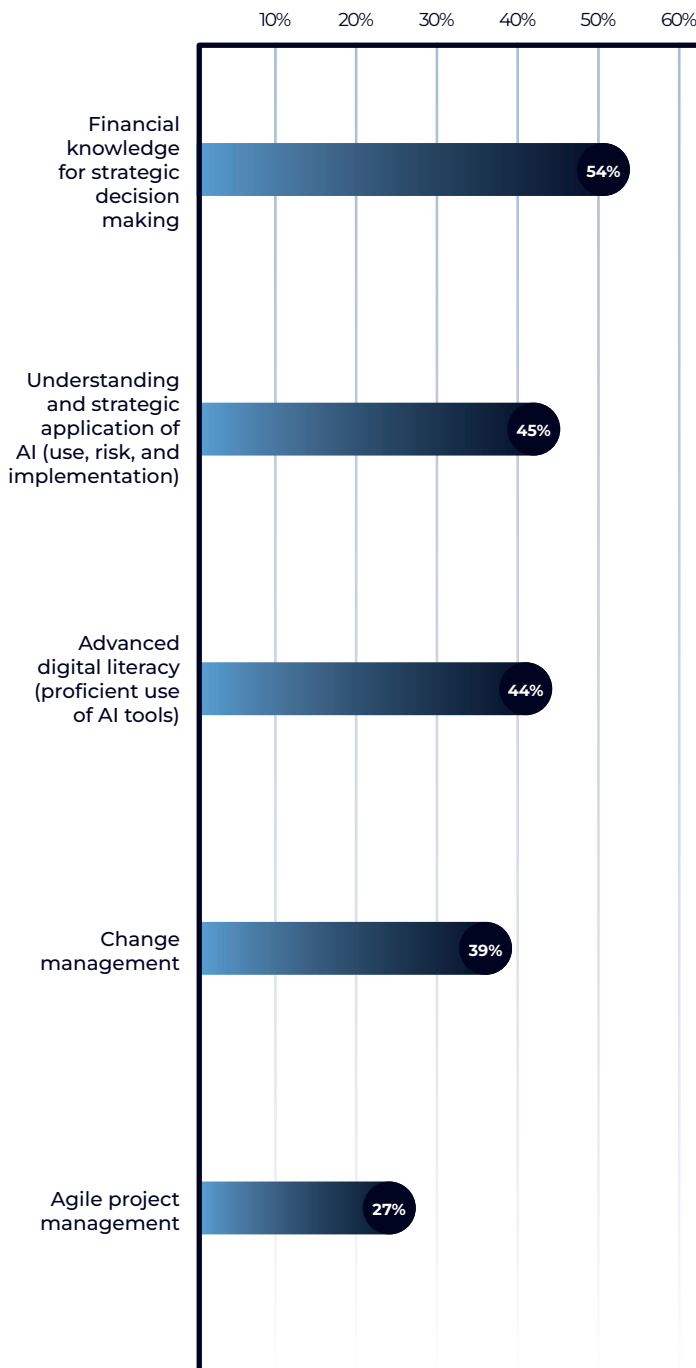
Which do you perceive as the greatest skills or competency gap in your leadership team for the future?



**The priority (change and leadership) is clear, but the bottleneck is already being felt at the structural level: strategic vision and technological capability.**

Which technical skills do you consider will be the most valued in 2026?

Which do you perceive as the greatest technical knowledge gap in your leadership team for the future?



**The context calls for prioritization and coherence, not a multiplication of initiatives.**

The benefits of AI are already visible in efficiency and productivity, but its strategic impact remains uneven. While AI frees up operational capacity and accelerates decision-making, it also exposes gaps in data, integration, and internal capabilities. This reinforces a key insight: AI's value depends not only on technology, but on the organizational system that supports it.

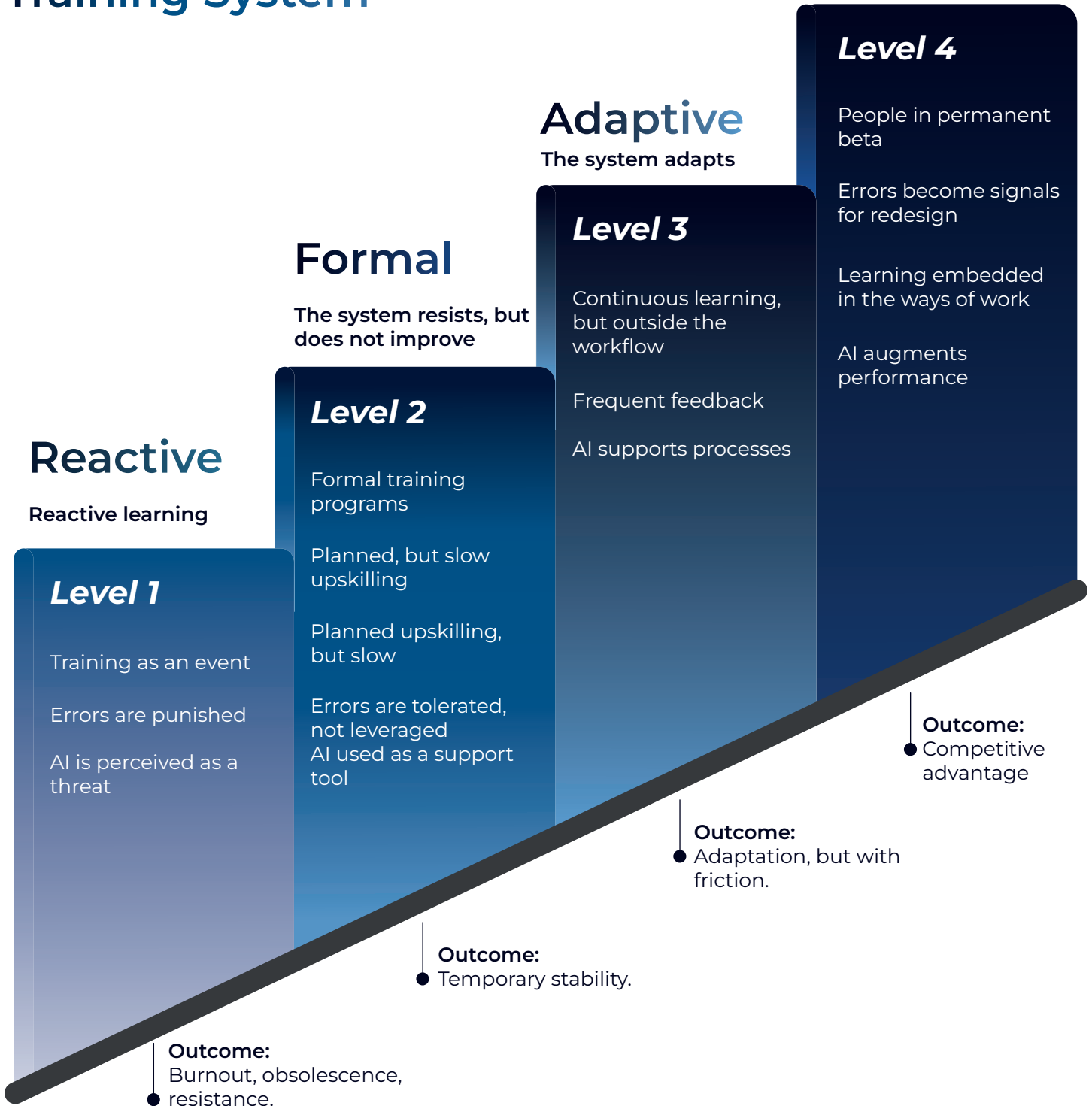
**In 2026, the Capability Gap Becomes Structural**

The value of new capabilities is growing faster than organizations' real ability to develop them.

# From the Traditional Training System

## System

The system improves through change



Learning stops being a one-off event and becomes a permanent organizational capability.

Reskilling is no longer about closing isolated skill gaps, but about keeping pace with the speed of business change.

Learning is no longer about “preparing for the future”; it’s about operating better today.



***From programs to systems: what truly changes***

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## ***What makes it a system ?***

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### **Permanent beta mindset**

Being competent today does not guarantee relevance tomorrow.

### **Learning embedded in the flow of work**

Skills are built by solving real problems, not only in classrooms.

### **Direct connection to strategy**

Learning is driven by what the business needs to execute, not by trends or isolated interests.

### **Human-technology balance**

AI literacy combined with deep role expertise and professional judgment.

### **Continuous reinforcement**

Feedback, practice, and impact measurement - beyond training hours alone.

Move from designing programs to designing learning ecosystems.

Enable cultures where learning is part of the role, not an extra burden.

Turn reskilling into an invisible but critical business infrastructure.



## ***The Role of Human Resources in 2026***

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*In the AI era,  
advantage comes  
not from knowing  
more, but from  
learning faster.*



## Other sources that support our findings:

### 1. The pace of change outpaces traditional learning

More than 80% of leaders recognize that traditional training models no longer keep up with the speed at which capabilities need to be developed.

Source: Gartner, Skills Development Needs Surge Due to AI, 2024–2025

### 2. Adoption is accelerating faster than readiness

While more than 60% of organizations already use AI, only 1 in 10 has fully embedded it into a strategic skills development agenda.

Source: Gartner, HR Skills Confidence Survey, 2025

### 3. The biggest risk is not technical, but organizational

Organizations that fail to redesign roles and capabilities when introducing AI face productivity losses and growing fatigue across teams.

Source: Accenture, Work, Workforce & Skills in the Age of AI, 2025

### 4. Learning becomes a system capability, not an individual initiative

The most advanced organizations integrate learning directly into work, using technology to accelerate skill development in real time as conditions change.

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value, The Enterprise Reinvented, 2025

# 5. AI in Human Resources: From Experimentation to Impact

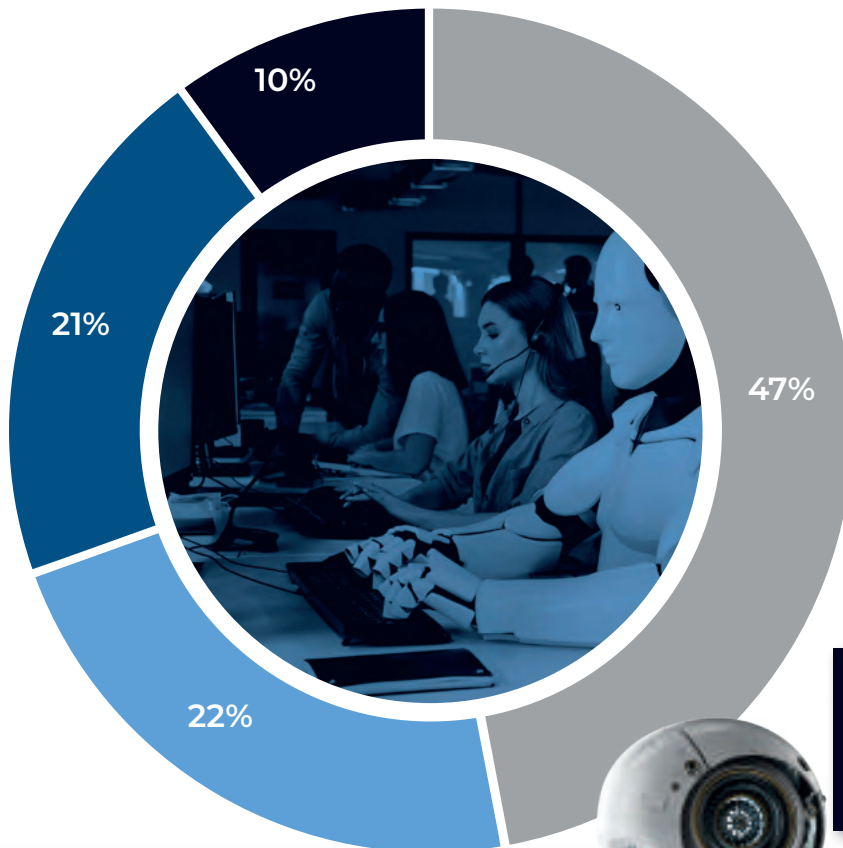
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## AI Is Becoming a Real Productivity Lever in Human Resources

The conversation around AI in Human Resources is becoming more precise and more operational. The data shows a clear shift: **AI is moving from experimentation to concrete use cases, with visible impact on efficiency, decision-making, and work execution.**

However, adoption remains uneven. While some organizations are already integrating AI into core HR processes, others are still operating with isolated initiatives or exploratory pilots.

Today, together with tools, a new capability emerges: the ability to translate information into insight and insight into better decisions across Human Resources.



Do you currently have any technology tools in place that support strategic decision-making in Human Resources?

- Yes, we use a specific tool
- We are in the process of implementation
- No, but we are considering it
- No, and we have no plans to implement it

**At the same time, AI adoption in HR remains fragmented, reflecting different levels of maturity, clarity of use cases, and organizational readiness.**

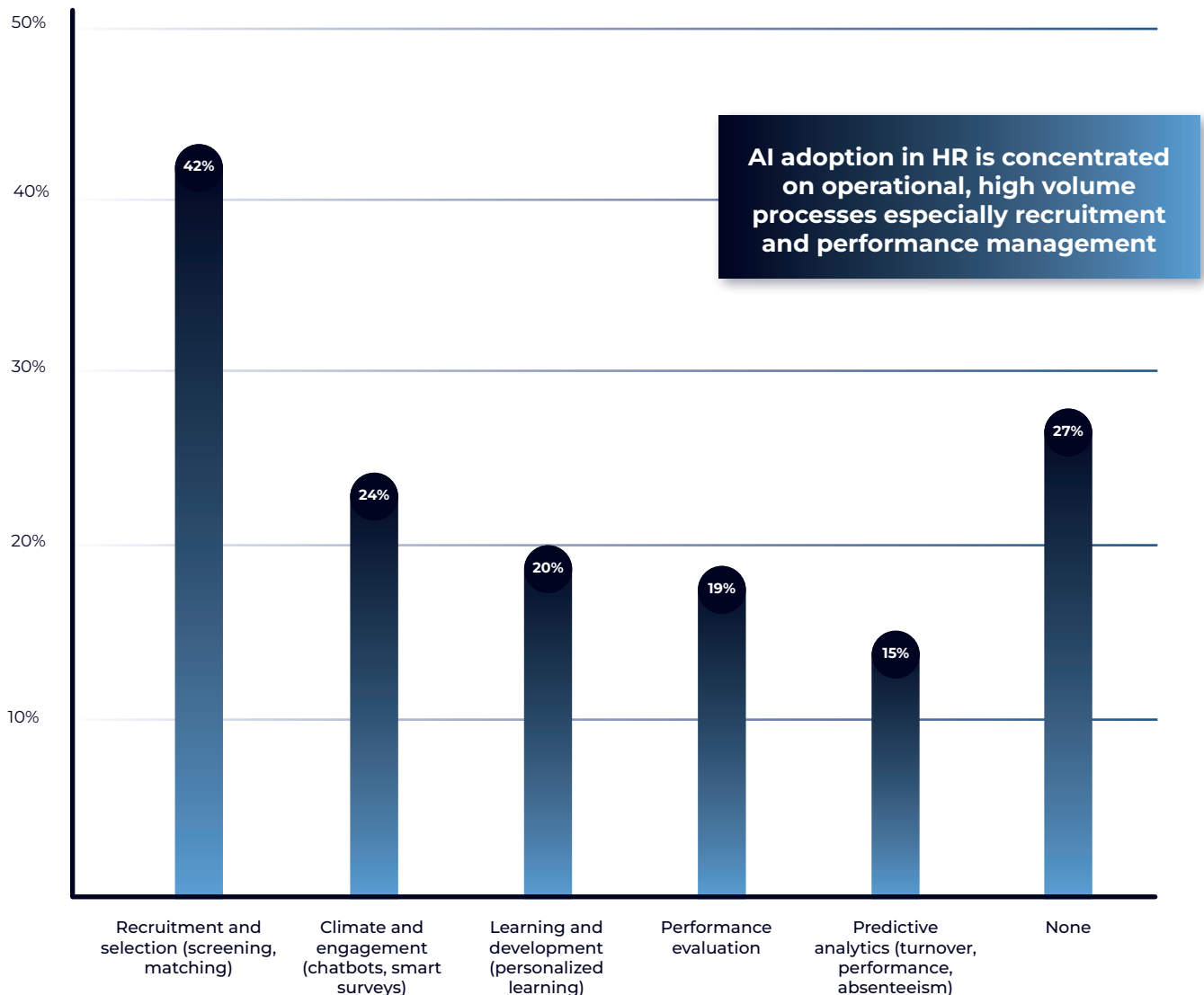




## AI adoption in Human Resources remains focused on productivity and volume

AI adoption in Human Resources is currently concentrated on operational and high volume processes particularly recruitment and performance management. The data shows that while there is growing interest in applying AI to more strategic areas, its use is still primarily transactional and efficiency driven.

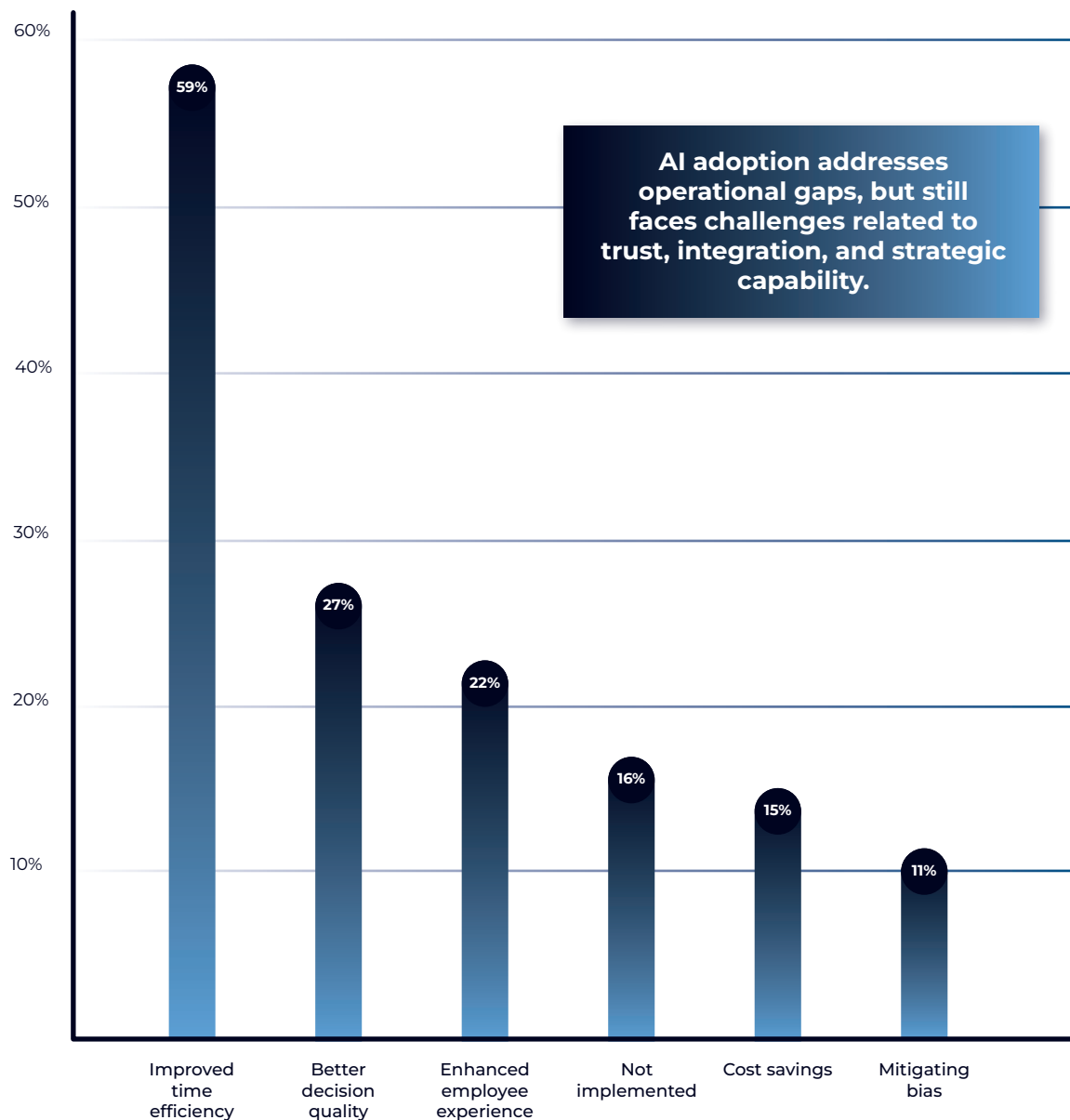
In which HR processes have you already implemented AI tools?



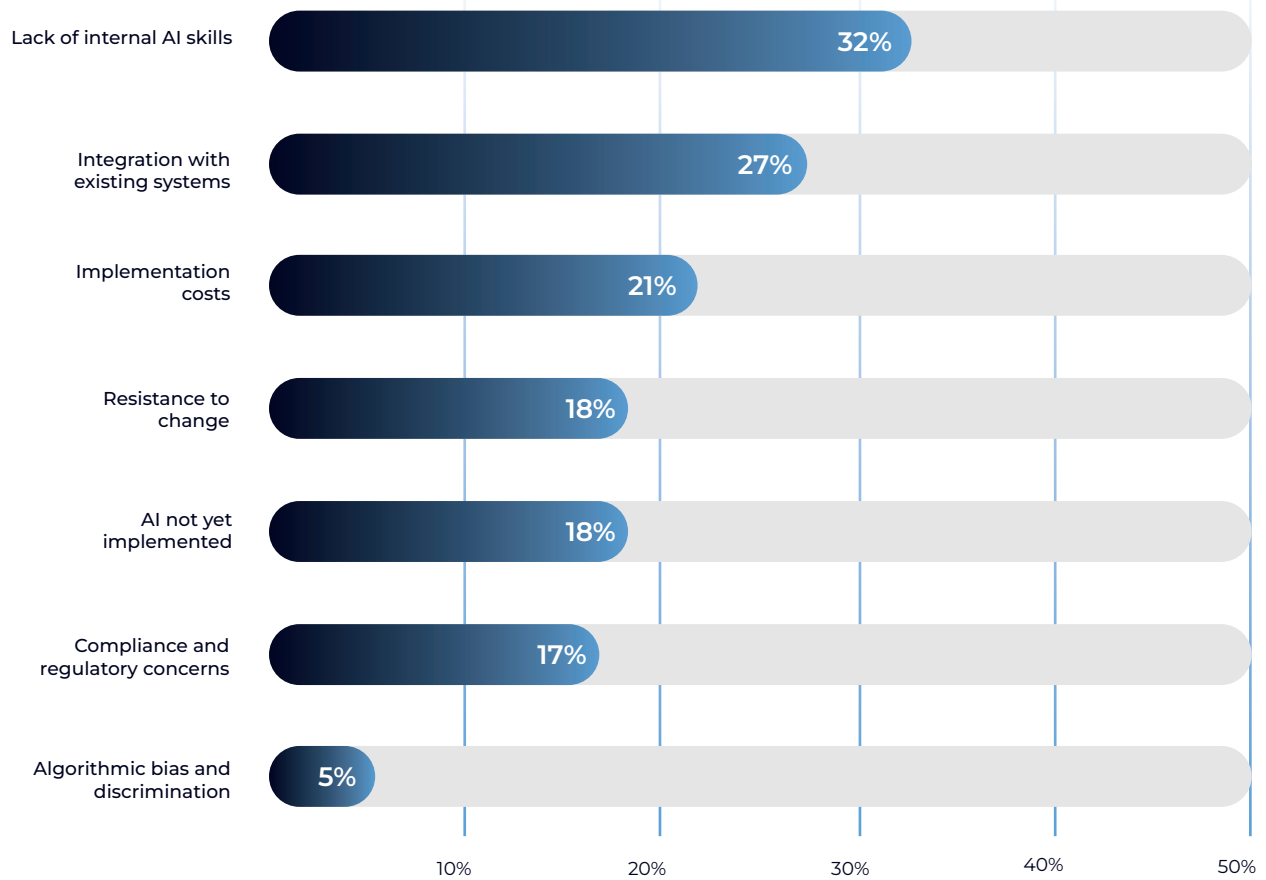
## Benefits and Risks Perceived by Human Resources

AI in Human Resources is beginning to move beyond efficiency gains and productivity improvements, gradually entering more strategic areas of HR decision-making.

Which is the greatest perceived benefit of implementing AI tools in HR?



What has been the biggest challenge or risk in implementing AI in Human Resources?



## What do these data really tell us about AI in Human Resources?

### CURRENT VALUE

**59%**

Efficiency improvements are the primary benefit. AI still operates mostly at the margins of HR. Its real impact on transformation remains limited.

### MAIN BARRIERS

**32%**

Lack of internal skills.

**27%**

Integration with existing systems.

The biggest obstacles are not technological, but structural and capability based.

### WHAT'S NEXT

**15%**

Ethical risks

**17%**

Compliance

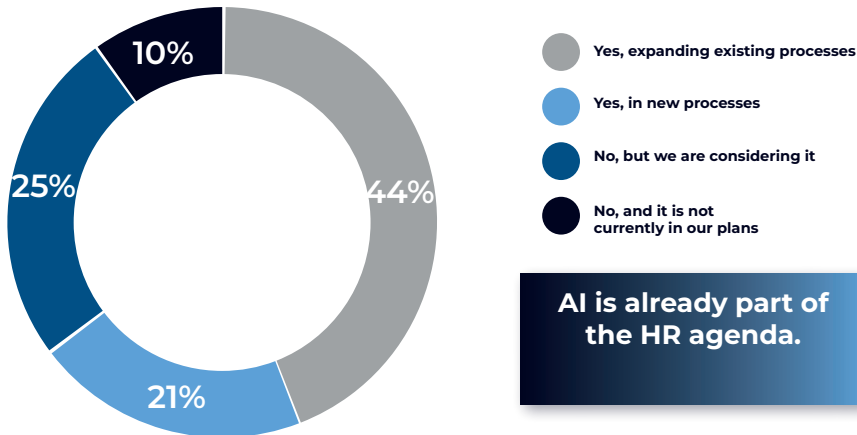
As AI adoption expands, governance and trust become critical to scaling its impact.



**The question is no longer whether HR will move forward with AI, but how far and how fast.**

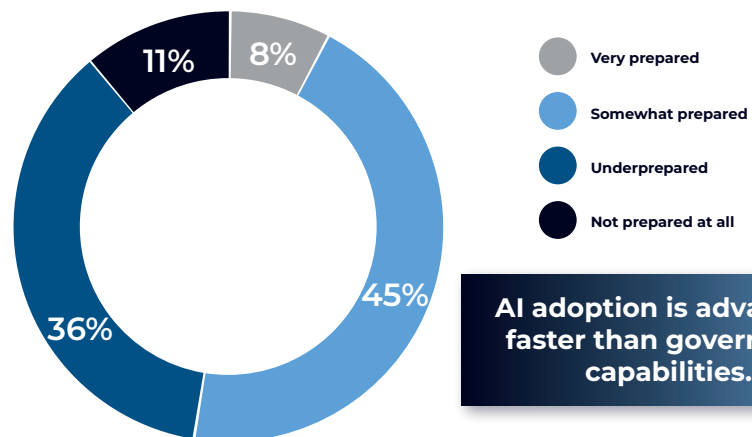
## Intent and Roadmap

Do you have a defined AI roadmap within HR over the next 12 months?



## Governance Capability

Do you have the necessary capabilities to govern AI responsibly within your organization?



### Key takeaway

**The 2026 challenge is not accelerating AI adoption, but building the capability to govern it.**



## Other sources that support our findings:

# 1.

### Broad adoption, but still partial implementation

By 2025, approximately **43% of organizations** are already using AI in HR. Of these, only **26% use it in a fully integrated way**, while the majority are still in an experimental phase or applying it in isolated use cases.

Source: SHRM, AI in HR Adoption Trends, 2025 (según SHRM Talent Trends)

# 2.

### Global acceleration of AI in HR

Market analysis indicates that nearly **72% of organizations in Europe and the U.S.** have implemented AI solutions in HR. However, this rapid adoption has not always been accompanied by adequate governance, highlighting a gap between technological adoption and organizational readiness.

Source: HR Tech Revolution: AI Adoption, 2025

# 3.

### Employees interact with AI almost daily

It is projected that by **2025, 70% of employees globally** will interact daily with AI-enabled tools. This underscores that technology adoption is already reshaping work, even as organizations remain unevenly prepared beyond the HR function.

Source: AI in HR Statistics 2025, 2025

# 4.

### AI redefines tasks, not jobs

According to Gartner, AI will automate a significant share of HR tasks, but **less than 5% of strategic and operational HR roles** are expected to be eliminated. The focus will remain on **task redesign and augmentation**, not workforce replacement.

Source: Gartner, AI in HR - Humans Have a Future in HR, 2025

# Market Sample

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# Market Sample

This report consolidates the perspectives of key Human Resources leaders across organizations in Latin America, with strong representation from multinational companies and large-scale organizational structures. The sample, primarily composed of first- and second-level executives, provides a strategic view of how organizations are addressing their priorities, challenges, and opportunities in talent management. The results make it possible to identify clear patterns, actionable trends, and key focus areas that can be translated into competitive advantages in an environment of constant transformation.



**+700**  
**Human**  
**Resources**  
**leaders**



# +20 countries

## ● South America

- Colombia
- Perú
- Bolivia
- Ecuador
- Chile
- Brasil

## ● North America

- United States
- Canadá
- México

## ● Central America

- Panamá
- Guatemala

## ● Europe

- Czech Re
- United Kingdom
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Poland

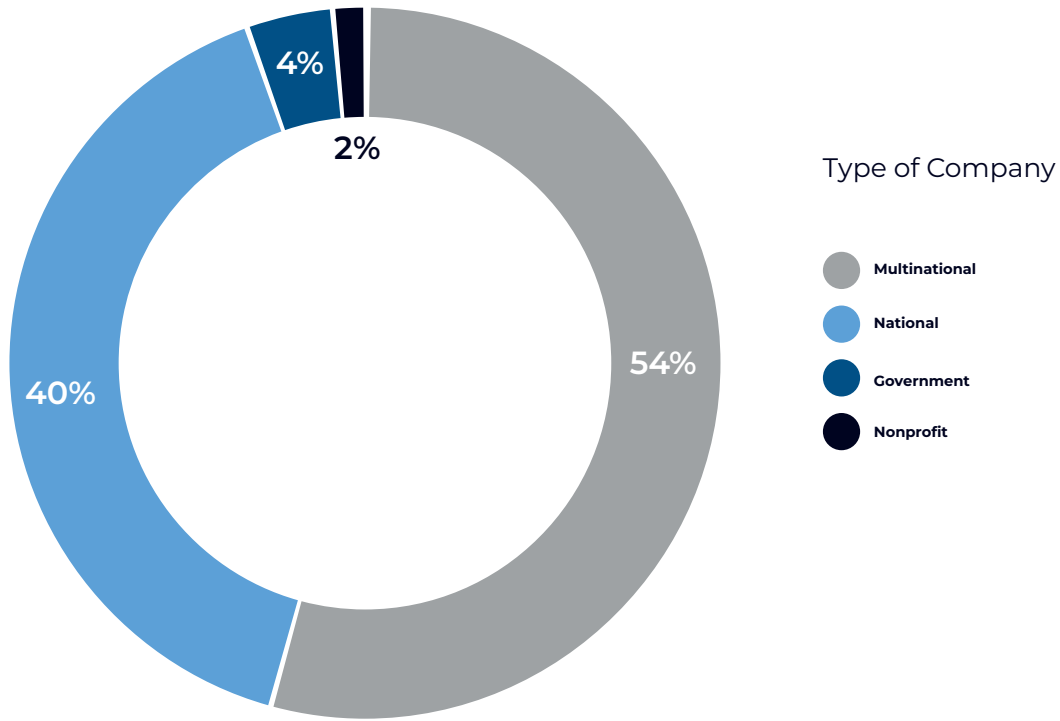
## ● Asia

- China
- India
- United Arab Emirates

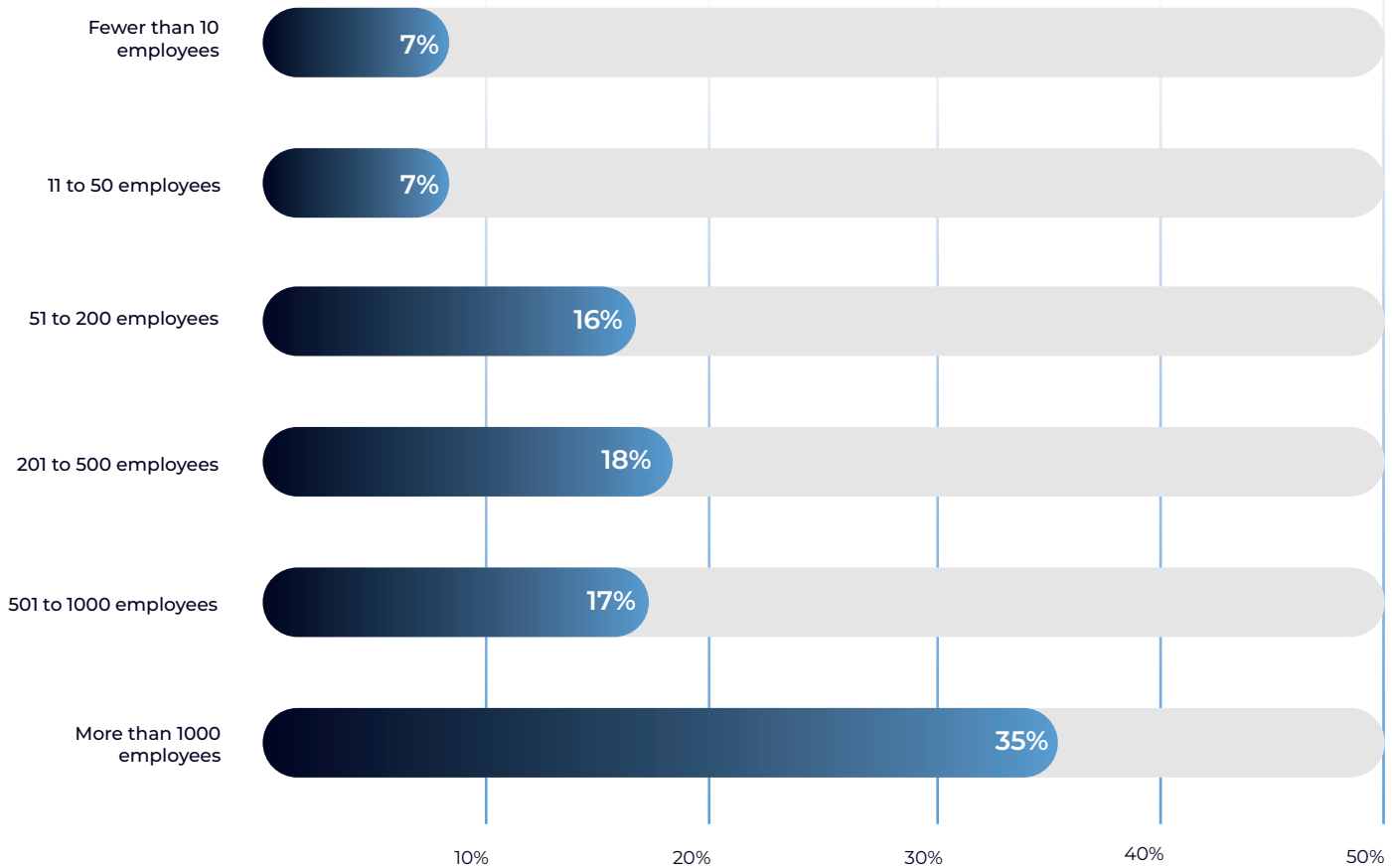
## ● Africa

- South Africa

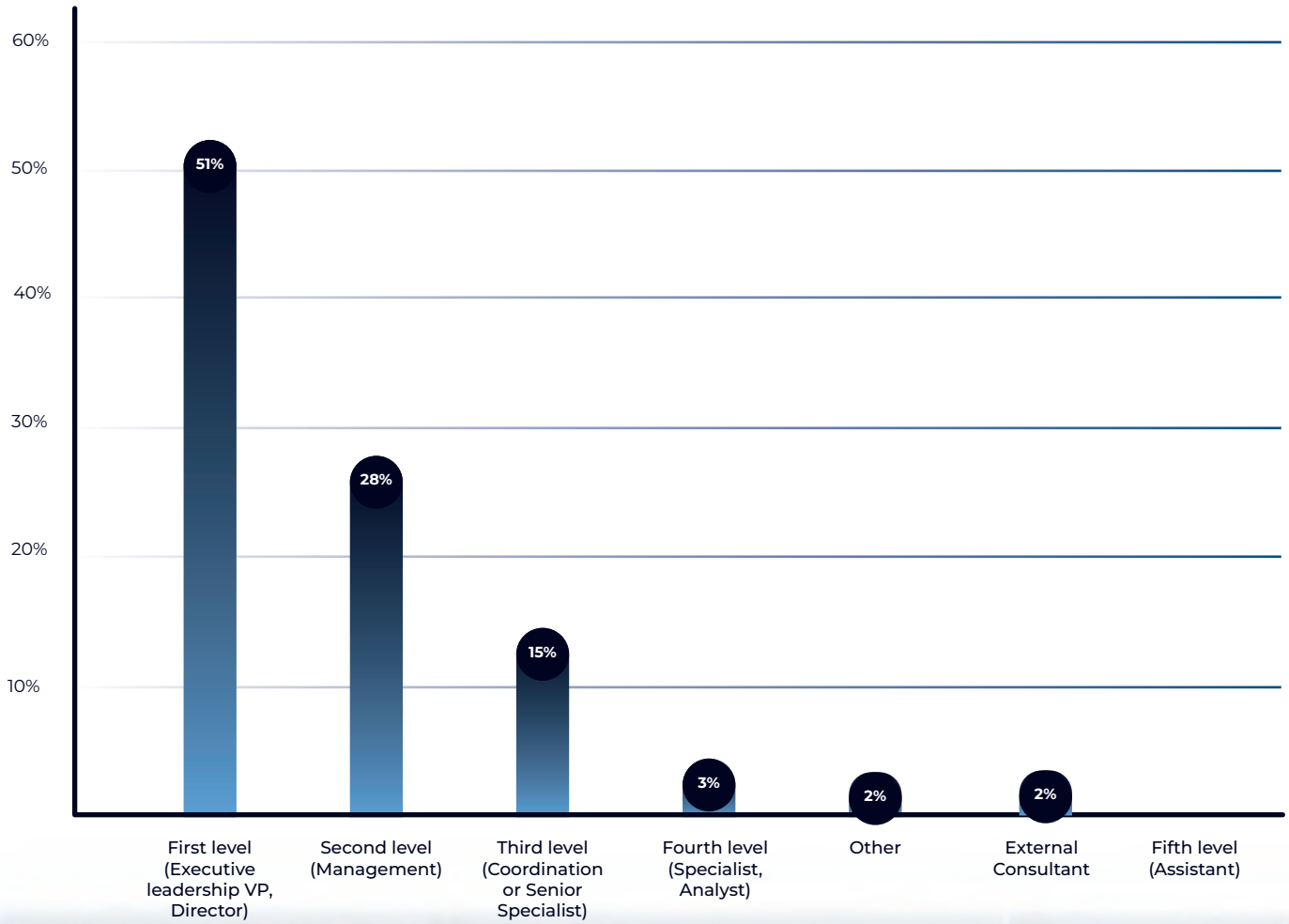
# Regarding businesses



Company Size



### Organizational Level



# Conclusion

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**Cornerstone Talent Insights 2026** confirms that the real challenge organizations face is not choosing between talent or technology, but **aligning both around a shared purpose**. In a context of sustained pressure, organizational fatigue, and accelerated technological change, the role of Human Resources continues to evolve from a functional enabler to a **system level orchestrator that brings coherence to change**.

The **five core insights of this study** converge on a single imperative: designing an organizational architecture that sustains transformation, strengthening belonging and cohesion, developing leadership capable of navigating complexity, embedding continuous learning as a system, and adopting artificial intelligence with judgment and responsibility.

When purpose is clear, **change stops feeling like a burden and becomes a real opportunity**. Human Resources does not merely support transformation it makes it viable, connecting people, decisions, and technology around a shared strategic direction.





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