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Getting employees on board for the AI revolution

Companies are racing to operationalize gen AI, but many haven't addressed how AI-driven disruption will impact employees — who are torn between AI optimism and anxiety.

Part of Ivanti's Digital Employee Experience series

Do your employees view gen AI as friend or foe?

There's plenty of excitement about the promise of AI to boost productivity, drive growth and improve customer relationships. But what about the impact of AI on your employees — and especially IT talent?
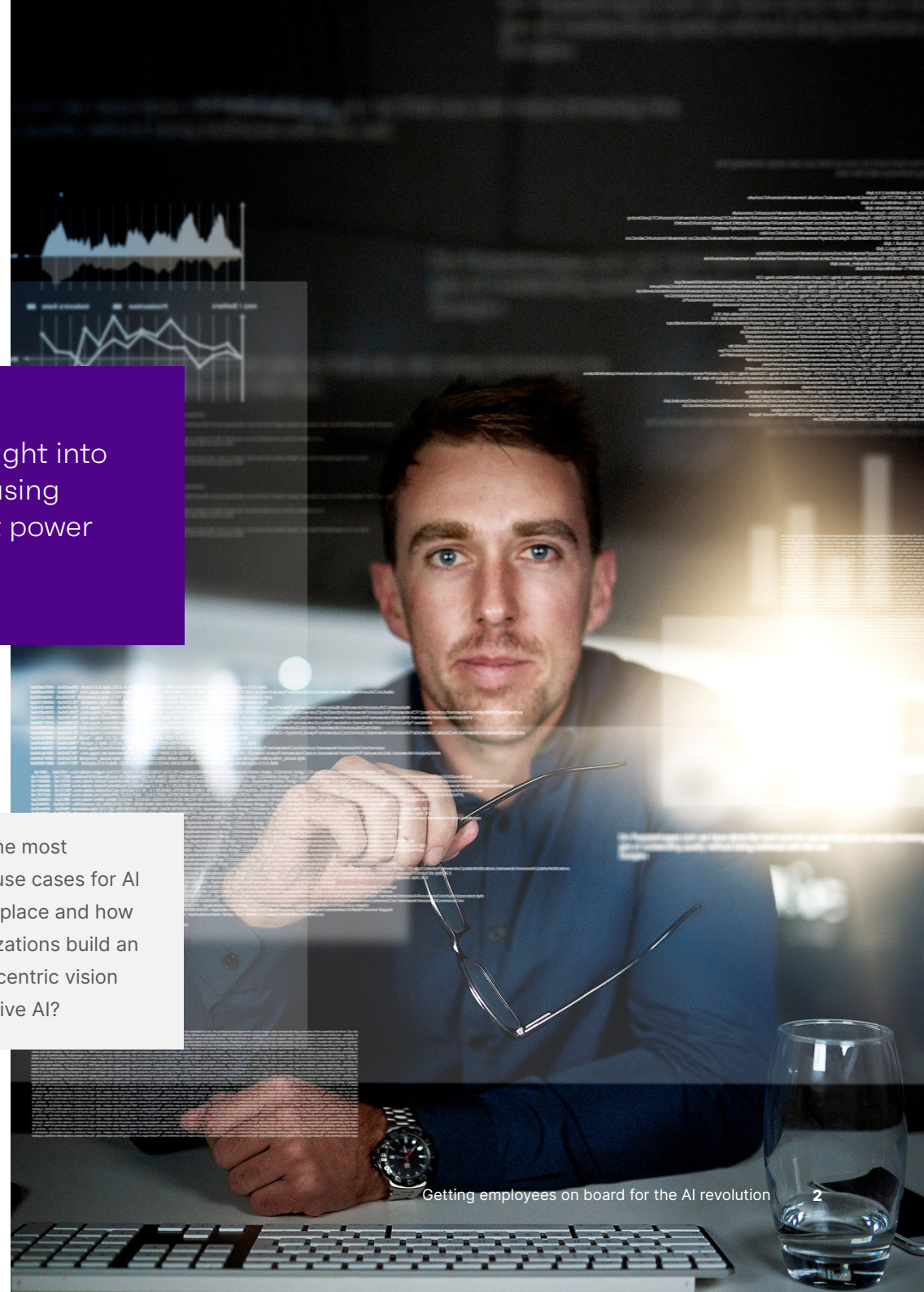
Ivanti's research shows knowledge workers aren't fully bought into the promise of advanced AI, despite its promise of decreasing workloads for many professionals. Yet organizations can't power the AI revolution without employees on board as allies.

Ivanti surveyed over 8,000 office workers, IT professionals and organizational leaders across the globe to uncover:

What do employees think about AI, both positive and negative?
Are negative attitudes a hindrance to adoption?

Are tech workers — who are on the frontlines of AI disruption — fully invested in the power and promise of AI?

What are the most promising use cases for AI in the workplace and how can organizations build an employee-centric vision for generative AI?

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Inside:

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Methodology

This report is based on two surveys conducted by Ivanti in the first half of 2023: Elevating the Future of Everywhere Work and New Imperatives for Digital Employee Experience. In total, these two studies surveyed 16,200 executive leaders, IT professionals and office workers. For more information about each study, visit ivanti.com/research

UK 16%

Germany 16%

France 16%

US 20%

Japan 16%

Australia 16%
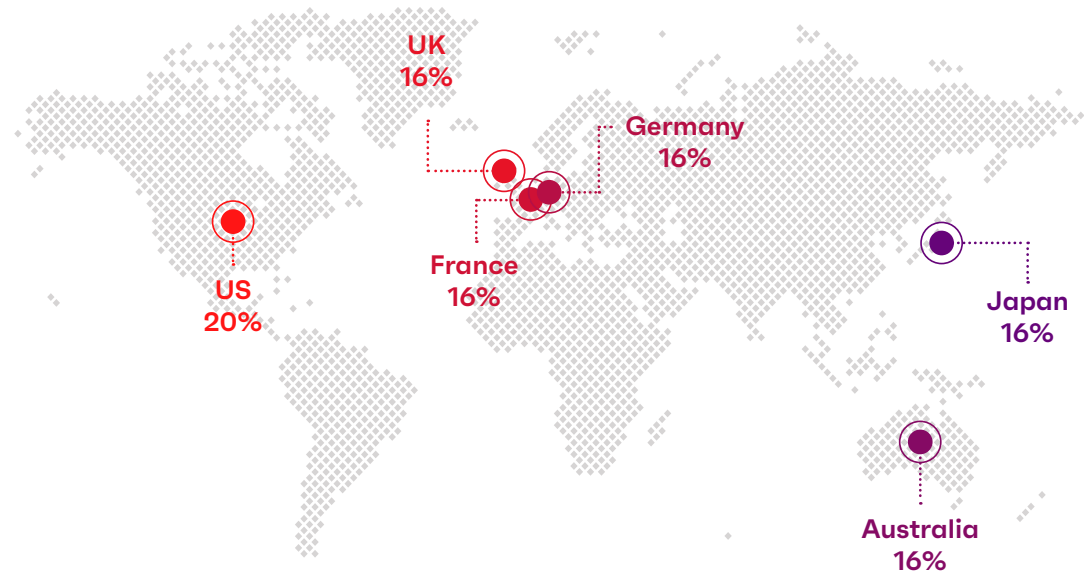
Office Workers **12,600**

IT Professionals **2,400**

Leadership Executives **1,200**

The divided views on AI

Organizations are racing to adopt new use cases for AI, but their employees are divided about what it all means for their work and careers.

⚠ Problem Today

Advanced AI is now being used successfully for a wide range of enterprise applications — from helpdesk chatbots that provide ready answers to employee questions, to dynamic threat detection for security teams. Yet Ivanti's research clearly shows employees are unsure about AI's promise and potential. Our study found just 1 in 10 knowledge workers say AI will deliver "high improvement" in productivity. And the less-than-positive outlook doesn't stop there.

Workers also believe that generative AI is more likely to benefit employers than employees. And can you blame them? A report from Morgan Stanley found that two-thirds of current jobs are vulnerable to inroads from AI automation and that generative AI could replace up to one-fourth of current work.[1]

1 Global Economics Analyst The Potentially Large Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Economic Growth (Briggs/Kodnani) (key4biz.it)

Knowledge workers are 6x more likely to say AI benefits employers, not employees.

Q: Do you think AI tools will primarily benefit employers or employees in the future?

	Benefit employers	Benefit employers and employees equally	Benefit employees	Unsure
IT Workers	56%	30%	7%	7%
Office workers	48%	25%	8%	19%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- ■ Benefit employers
- ■ Benefit employers and employees equally
- ■ Benefit employees
- ■ Unsure

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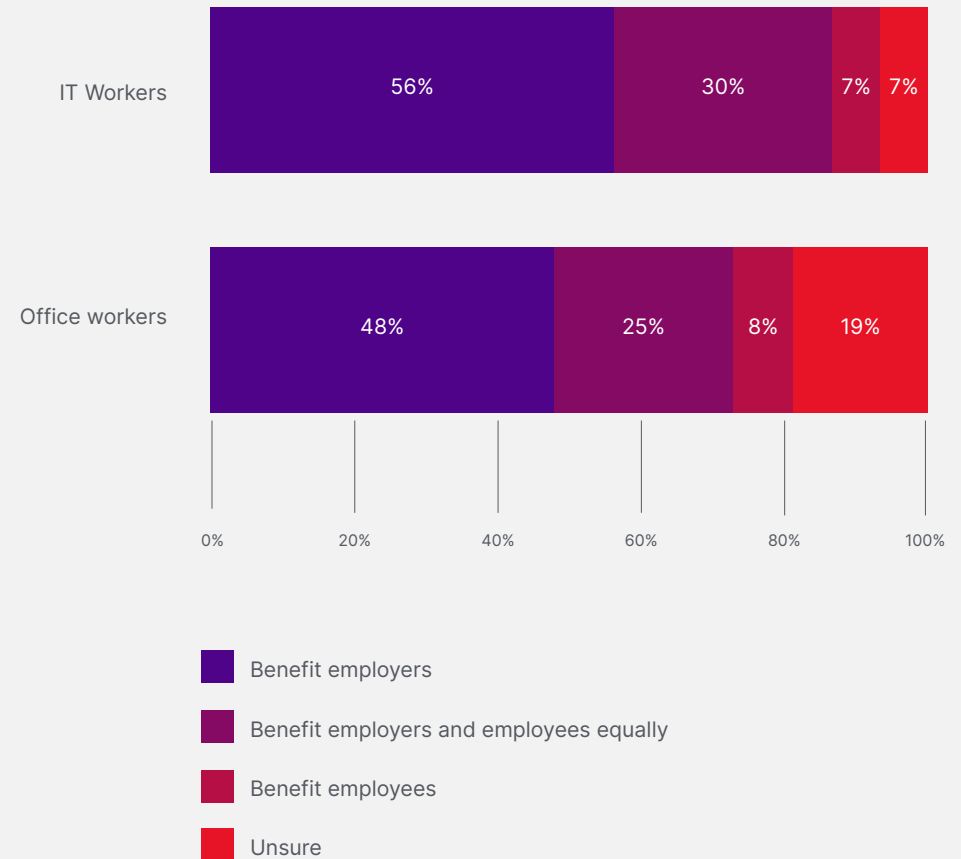
💡 Why It Matters

Organizations are depending on these AI-affected employees to reshape their day-to-day work, streamline operations and drive revenue.

In other words, people are still the lynchpin to AI's success. That's why knowledge workers' reluctance about AI should be a warning bell for employers.

Research from McKinsey predicts that few so-called knowledge jobs will be eliminated as a result of AI, but despite this assurance, it's too early to gauge the true impact.[2] Even if AI doesn't replace many knowledge workers, it may still put downward pressure on wages.

Morgan Stanley estimates that up to 300 million full-time jobs are in some way exposed to automation.[3]

2 The state of AI in 2023: Generative AI's breakout year | McKinsey
3 Global Economics Analyst The Potentially Large Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Economic Growth (Briggs/Kodnani) (key4biz.it)

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"There's a lot of excitement about the value generative AI could deliver to organizations, but our research clearly shows that employees are questioning who will benefit most. Organizations shouldn't shy away from this topic. We believe employers need to be transparent about their AI strategy in the short- and long-term and how future plans may alter employee experiences/productivity and their career progression."

Jeff Abbott
Chief Executive Officer at Ivanti
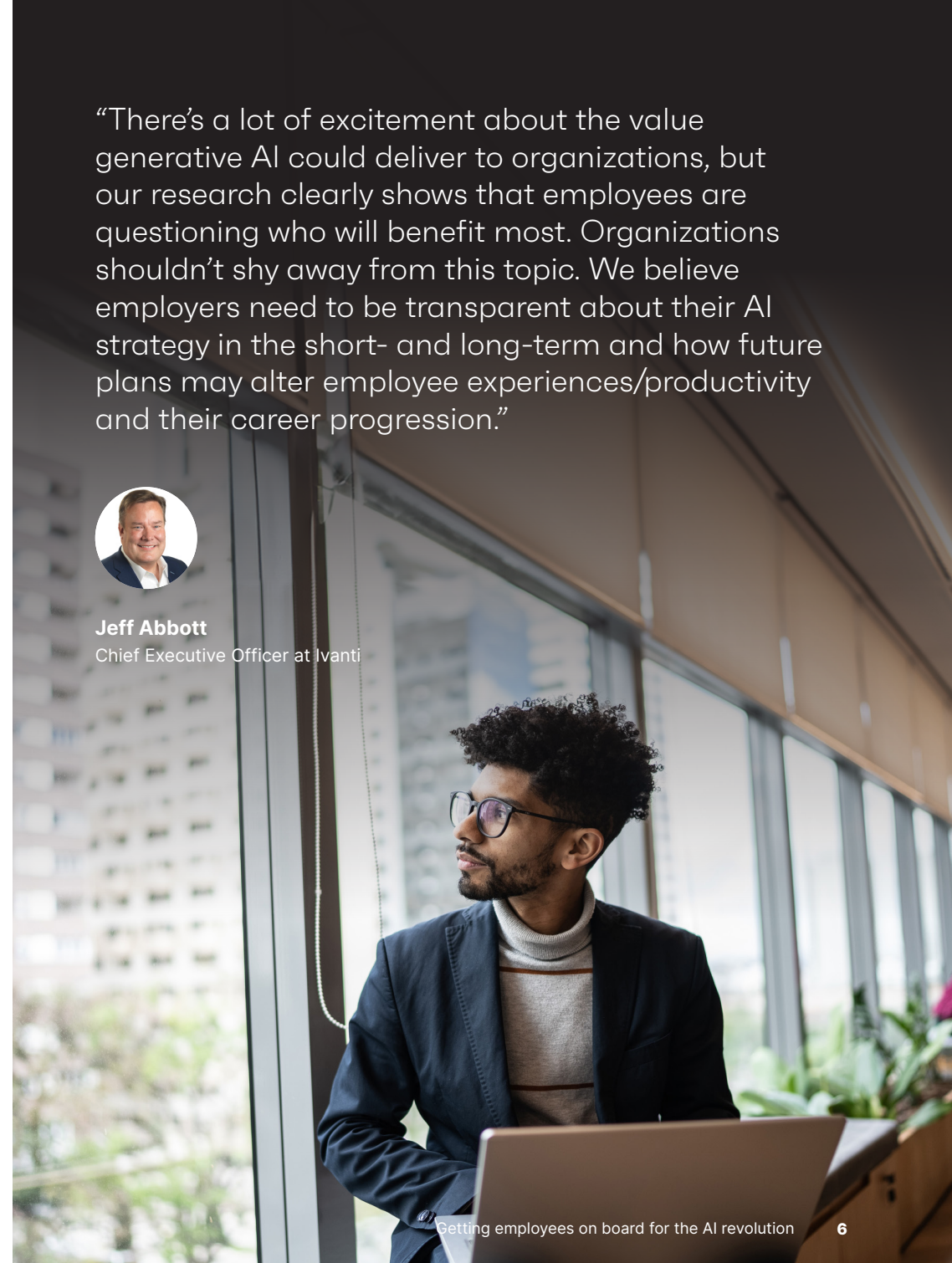
Talk to employees about AI workplace impacts

Explain how your organization will leverage advanced AI tools and how these plans may impact employees. Offer them choices for learning and advancement.

Reskilling: some employees whose jobs are highly affected by AI may want to develop new skills and pivot to a less affected role.

AI upskilling: others, especially your IT talent, may want to sharpen AI-specific skills and make AI tools a co-pilot in their day-to-day work.

Tech-enabled growth: not all AI-inspired job changes require upskilling. For example, AI tools can allow a wider range of employees to perform programming tasks that previously required specialized knowledge.

The underlying message for employees should be this: "AI may change how you do your job, but we want to support and involve you along the way."

How to address your employees' fears about AI

Employers should craft a unifying vision for AI — one that includes employees' interests in the mix.

Pay special attention to your tech employees, many of whom are doubtful that AI will have a positive impact on their careers. Explain that gen AI will free them up to do more interesting work, such as addressing complex threats.

Present retraining as an opportunity for employees to learn new skills, accelerate their careers and/or pivot into new fields.

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Overcoming AI anxiety

AI anxiety is highest among IT workers —
those hard-to-hire professionals who are tasked
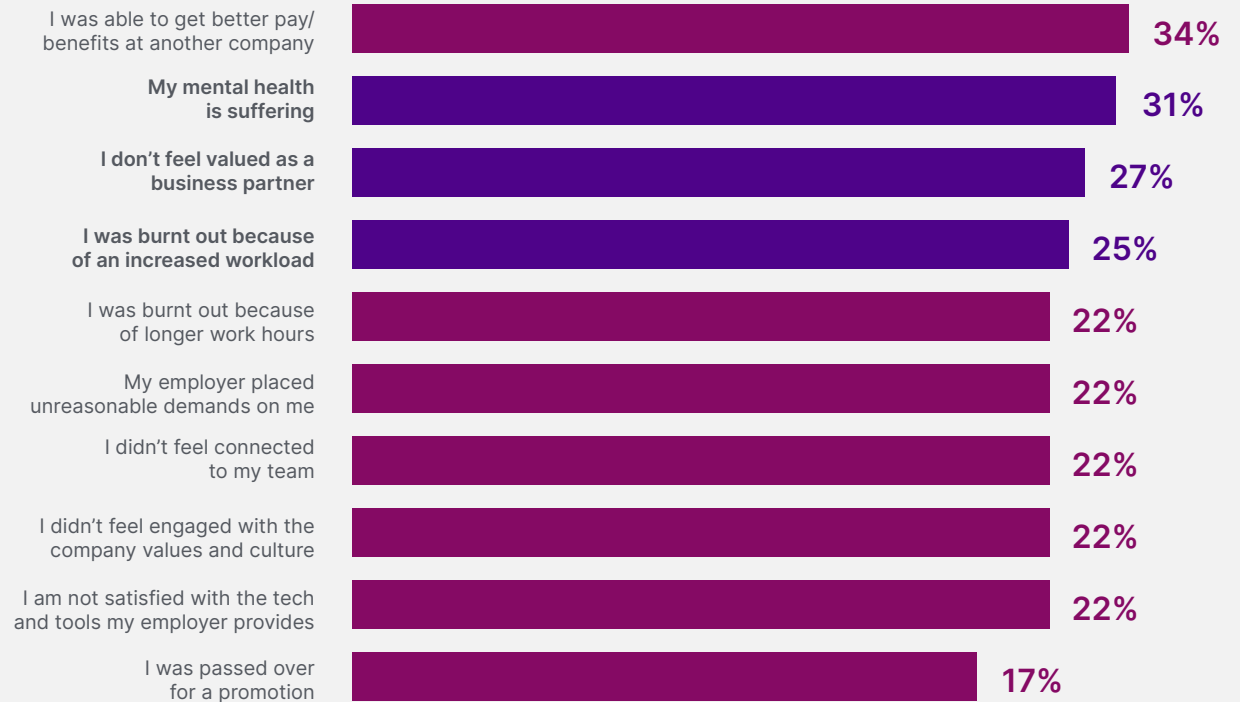with deploying AI across the organization.

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Problem Today

Ivanti's research shows tech workers are experiencing high rates of burnout: nearly 1 in 3 IT professionals (31%) say at least one colleague has quit due to burnout and 1 in 4 are considering leaving their current job within six months.

When tech workers do decide to quit, it's not primarily because they're lured to a higher paying job elsewhere. Ivanti's research shows issues like burnout, workload and deteriorating mental health are the most powerful drivers of disengagement and turnover.

IT workers say burnout, workload and deteriorating mental health are the top three reasons they search for new jobs.

Q: Why did you switch jobs in the last year? (Select all that apply.)

Reason	Percentage
I was able to get better pay/benefits at another company	34%
My mental health is suffering	31%
I don't feel valued as a business partner	27%
I was burnt out because of an increased workload	25%
I was burnt out because of longer work hours	22%
My employer placed unreasonable demands on me	22%
I didn't feel connected to my team	22%
I didn't feel engaged with the company values and culture	22%
I am not satisfied with the tech and tools my employer provides	22%
I was passed over for a promotion	17%

The divided views on AI   Overcoming AI anxiety   IT and leadership misalignment   Build your generative AI roadmap

⚠ Problem Today

AI is supposed to remedy some of these stressors by reducing workload and improving productivity, but our research shows anxiety about generative AI may inadvertently add to IT workplace stress, not lower it.
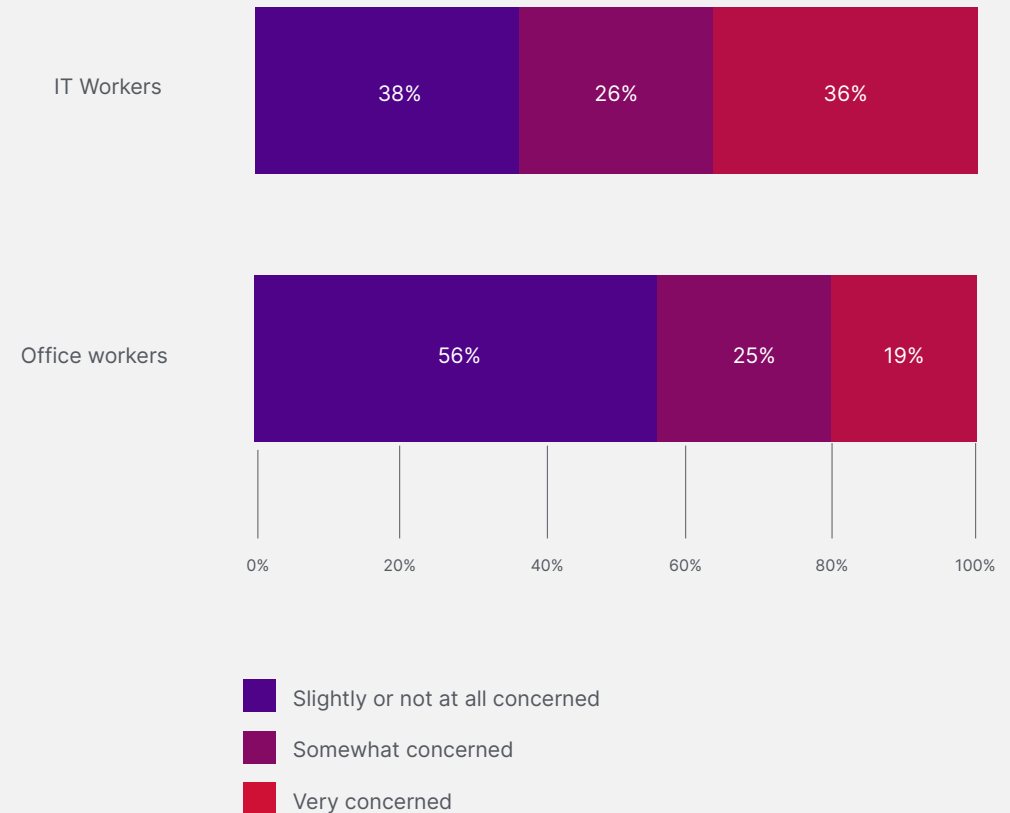
Is generative AI adding to IT workers' stress?

36%

say they're very concerned that gen AI tools like ChatGPT will take their jobs in the next five years, 17 points higher than other office workers.

56%

believe the AI revolution will benefit employers more than employees; just 7% say it will benefit employees.

AI anxiety is higher among IT talent

Q: How concerned are you about gen AI tools like ChatGPT, Bard and Bing Chat taking your job in the next five years?

IT Workers	38%	26%	36%

Office workers	56%	25%	19%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Slightly or not at all concerned

■ Somewhat concerned

■ Very concerned

Knowledge management

Use details from support tickets to automatically generate knowledge base articles, providing guidance on future issue resolution.

Risk reduction & mitigation

Leverage early security threat detection and analytics to accelerate security incident response times and improve mean time to repair (MTTR). Generate scripts to make the change in the environment — or even automate the mitigation as it gets rolled out.

Anomaly/threat detection

Continuously collect, process and synthesize data to detect nascent threats. AI-powered systems can gather and process massive data sets from multiple sources — from internal, structured data to external, unstructured data — to help in threat detection, prioritization and remediation.

Employee empowerment

Use AI to analyze individual, team and organization-wide skill sets. Develop targeted recommendations for personalized learning paths, increased digital dexterity and independence.

How IT will benefit from AI

There are dozens of use cases for AI in IT and security. Here are some of the most promising applications:

Self-service

Let users answer questions themselves with articles/tutorials from your knowledge base or in the form of conversational, contextually relevant responses in your user's native language.

Predictive IT maintenance

Use contextual insights and historical data for informed, proactive decision making. For example, proactively review performance data and adjust parameters to define optimal maintenance schedules, or optimize hardware refresh cycles.

Accelerated resolutions

Equip service desk analysts with tools to quantify the impact severity of detected issues, better classify tickets and perform root cause analysis. All of these improve first-call resolution rates and reduce costly escalations.
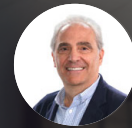
Employee sentiment analysis:

Analyze survey-based employee feedback, ticket insights and telemetry data. Pinpoint attitudes about existing tech/apps, new tech deployments, service quality and satisfaction.

Why It Matters

AI and automation can augment humans' work output — much like a highly informed and efficient co-pilot — and free up workers to do more thinking work and less doing work.

This turnabout is particularly valuable for IT teams, which have been overtaxed for years as they have evolved to support the Everywhere Work movement. Yet Ivanti's research clearly shows IT workers struggle to see and realize the benefits.

"With so many more connected devices and employees working in far-flung locations, the IT workload has skyrocketed over the last five years. Gen AI and automation are both very real antidotes to the problem of IT overwork. Not only do they bring much-needed relief to IT teams, who are chasing their tails trying to keep up with the volume and diversity of issues; they also deliver excellent digital employee experiences — a win-win."

Bob Grazioli,
Chief Information Officer at Ivanti
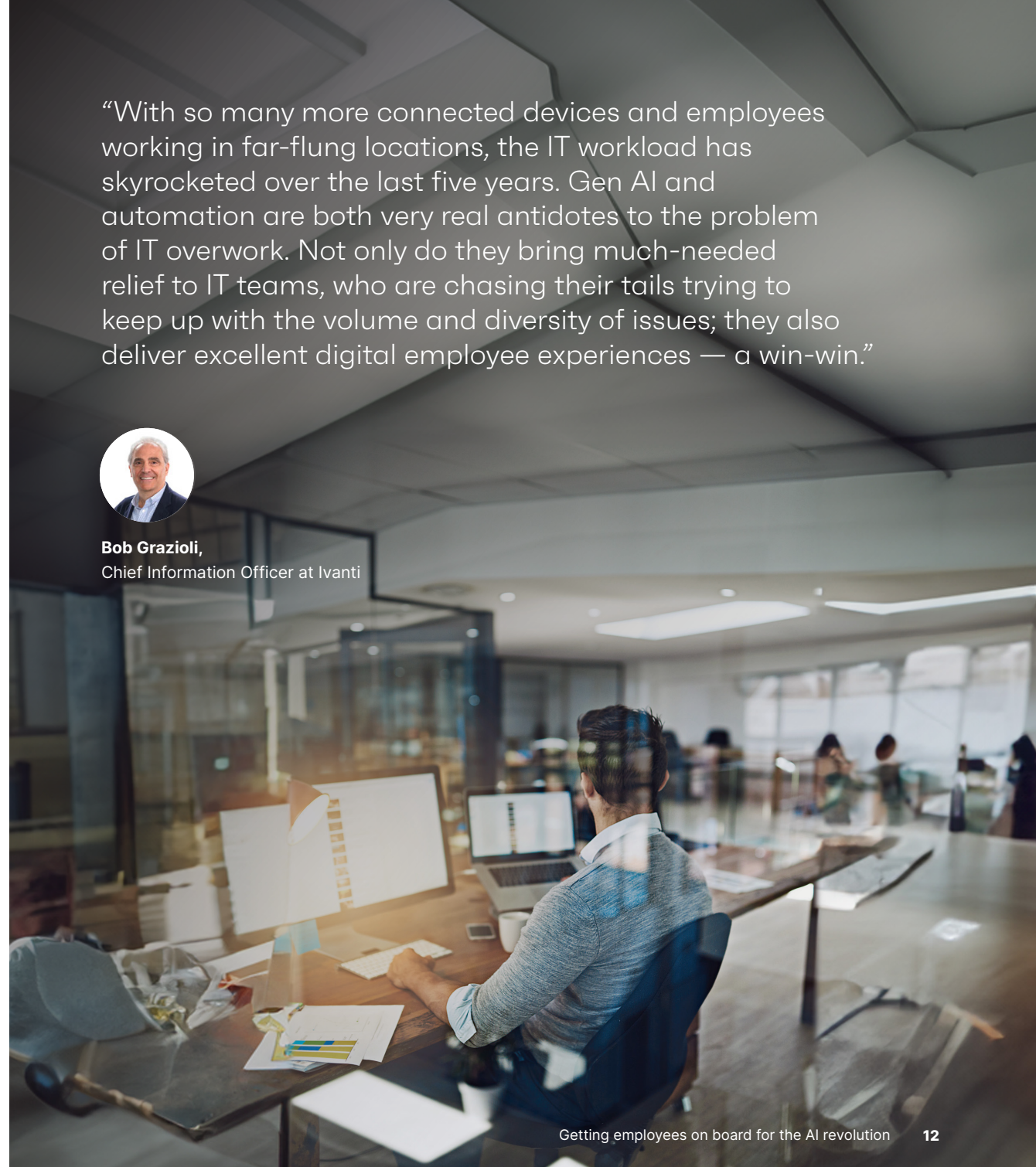
Not only that, tech workers report their organizations are not yet prioritizing AI and automation at the operational level. In a list of strategic IT priorities going into 2023, AI and automation were ranked dead last. Just 11% say they're prioritizing AI and machine learning, and 8% are prioritizing automation.[4]

At the macro level, it's clear there's tremendous support for AI, but our research shows it simply hasn't trickled down to the people who are responsible for implementing this tech revolution. And the longer an organization delays, the farther they lag their industry peers.

4 Note: Since the survey was fielded in January 2023 shortly after the launch of ChatGPT, we expect AI prioritization has increased since that time.

IT priorities for 2023

Investments in automation and AI – solutions that could reduce the workload for IT – rank last on the priority list.

47%	Cybersecurity
42%	IT infrastructure
30%	Cloud
27%	Simplification of the IT landscape
25%	IT cost optimization
23%	Digital customer experience
22%	Remote work/collaboration
21%	Digital employee experience
14%	Recruiting / retaining IT talent
11%	AI/ML tools
8%	Automating repetitive tasks

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IT and leadership misalignment

Leaders and IT professionals are not aligned about
how (and whether) AI will reshape the workplace.
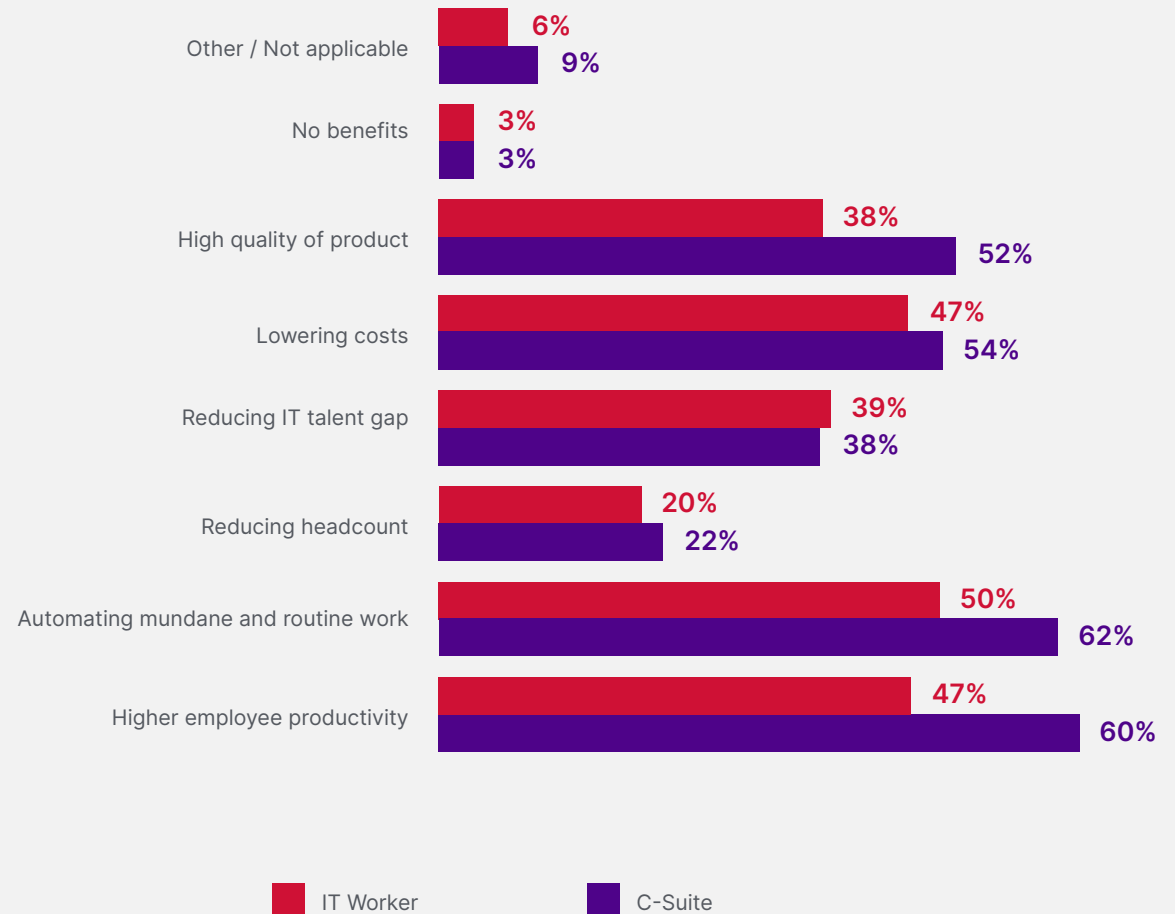Without buy-in from IT, the AI agenda may be at risk.

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⚠ Problem Today

Enterprise leaders and tech workers aren't aligned about the specifics of how AI will benefit the organization. Leaders are *significantly* more likely than tech workers to say AI will drive productivity and automate mundane tasks. In other words, they're much more optimistic about the promise of AI.

Why aren't tech professionals as enthusiastic? For all the reasons we've laid out in this report: high levels of stress, a fear that AI will poach their jobs and concerns that generative AI will increase the bottom line at their expense.

CEOs can evangelize all the benefits of AI, but without IT support, they will be slow to realize the gains.

Q: What are the benefits of AI tools for your organization?

Category	IT Worker	C-Suite
Other / Not applicable	6%	9%
No benefits	3%	3%
High quality of product	38%	52%
Lowering costs	47%	54%
Reducing IT talent gap	39%	38%
Reducing headcount	20%	22%
Automating mundane and routine work	50%	62%
Higher employee productivity	47%	60%

■ IT Worker ■ C-Suite

Why It Matters

The average office worker learned about generative AI for the first time in early 2023, but just months later, companies were already in a fierce battle to invest, deploy and generate value.

IT professionals, who are doing the day-in and day-out work to operationalize AI and automation, have valuable insights about how these advanced tools can be used in the workplace. They also understand better than most the challenges an organization will face when deploying them. IT's insights are based on hard-won personal experience — both positive and negative.

Given all this, IT should have an active role setting the agenda for how organizations will use AI — especially where it impacts IT operations and security preparedness.

ChatGPT acquired 100 million users in just two months; compare that to Instagram, which took 2.5 years to do the same.

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Three ways IT directly benefits from AI-driven tools

Self-service solutions decrease ticket volume and time to resolution, and free up the IT team to handle higher-order tasks.

Self-healing solutions use remote monitoring and AI-driven bots to resolve problems proactively. (Why wait for a user to complain about a performance issue like application crashes when bots are ready to flag and automatically fix/self-heal those difficulties for you?) Best of all, automatic resolutions are tracked and added to IT's performance metrics and satisfaction scores.

By analyzing wide swathes of data that were previously too siloed or unwieldy, AI can help **detect patterns and correlations** among IT events and incidents, analyze their probable causes and predict the risk of any changes to the environment.

Without IT's point of view on AI, leaders are setting an AI agenda with only part of the picture. Even worse, they run the risk of choosing the wrong areas to focus on.

Use cases for AI-powered DEX
Some of the most exciting AI implementations involve rethinking and redesigning the employee experience.

Use cases for IT professionals:

Apply AI's massive data-processing capabilities to help your IT team pinpoint where to invest attention and resources, such as UX improvements, automation opportunities or even testing new tech environments.

Use cases for employees:

Craft personalized digital experiences for employees, such as using a virtual assistant to answer IT questions or initiate a survey, a self-service app to locate individualized employee benefits, or a learning roadmap that recommends highly personalized development opportunities.

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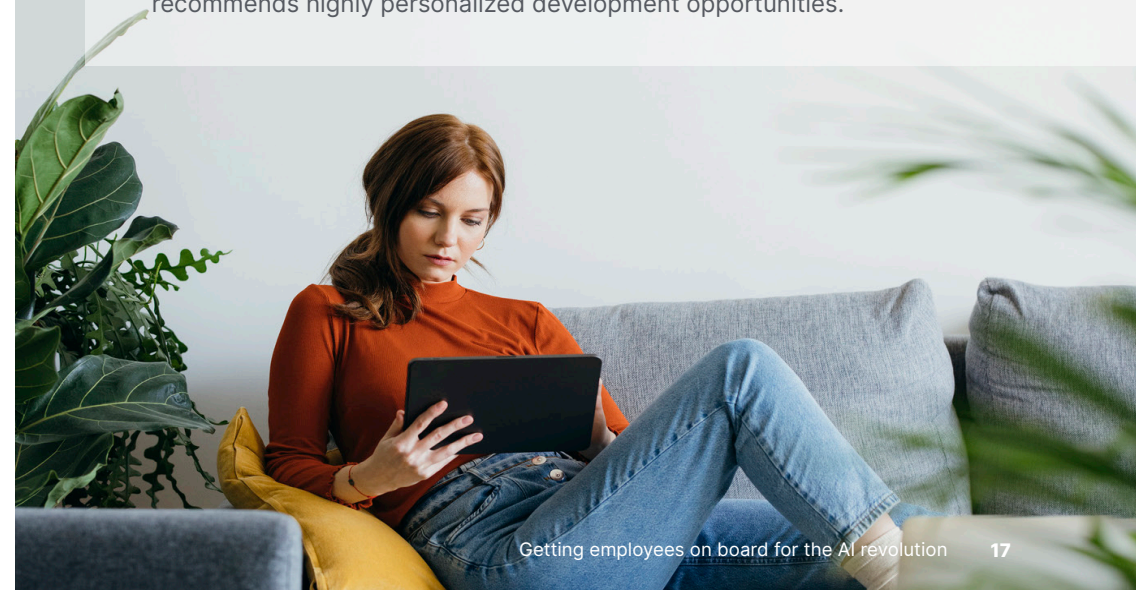
Build your generative AI roadmap

It's time to get serious about how your organization will leverage gen AI. Get started by enlisting IT to lead your AI revolution.

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1 Enlist IT to help define your AI vision and agenda

Your IT employees are on the frontlines of AI deployment; it stands to reason they should be key collaborators — and even be among the first employees to experience the benefits of AI.

To that end, take inventory of all the diverse ways your organization plans to use AI and make sure IT ops gets high priority on a list of new AI investments (*How IT will benefit from generative AI*). This is the team you'll need to champion your AI efforts!

Just as important, invite IT leaders to have an active role in the AI conversation; for example:

Adopting a detailed methodology to evaluate new AI tech investments.

Defining a governance structure to evaluate AI risks, including regulatory risk.

Advising about AI algorithms (i.e., ensuring they are reliable and trustworthy).

## 2   Document your AI and automation strategy

Outline how AI and workplace automation can support your organization's strategic priorities, as well as which use cases you will embrace first. Designate a "tiger team" to lead these efforts and develop 12- and 24-month plans. Move quickly to secure early wins by deploying simpler/straightforward applications. Don't force the use of automation and AI where it doesn't make sense.

> Host "town hall" meetings to talk about your organization's gen AI strategy and get employees involved in shaping the agenda.

Employees understand and support automation

Q: Do you think automation is necessary to be efficient at your job?

1%

6%

45%

47%
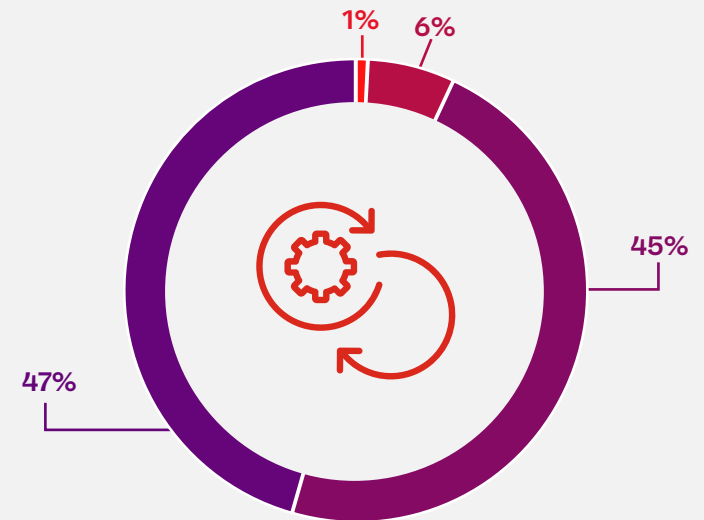
- ■ Very necessary
- ■ Somewhat necessary
- ■ Not very/not at all necessary
- ■ Unsure

3 Design a code of AI ethics

Take inventory of known generative AI risks such as impacts on security, bias, privacy and quality control. Design clear guardrails for how your organization will manage and mitigate these risks. When developing guardrails for AI, everyone should be involved — from executives to entry-level roles.

"Trust and ethics are essential in AI — and for many populations, trust hasn't been earned yet. The tech industry is in a race to build trustworthy AI because of the potential these powerful algorithms have to solve strategic challenges. It is essential for all organizations to take a thoughtful approach to AI and demand accountability. Accountability for the data they use. Accountability for the people using AI. And accountability to ensure that models and algorithms are unbiased, vetted and comprehensive."

Srinivas Mukkamala,
Chief Product Officer at Ivanti

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④ Develop a strong AI-specific talent development program

Identify the roles that will be most affected by AI and the skills gaps that may emerge as the workplace transitions to using generative AI tools more widely. Pay special attention to:

Critical talent groups:

Critical talent are those employees who are directly responsible for your organization's growth, innovation or competitive position. Undertake a study that looks at how these individuals will be affected by gen AI and what teams may need — whether through hiring or skill-building — to ensure they operate at max effectiveness.

Highly affected talent:

Identify the roles in your organization that are highly impacted by gen AI — including employees who are at risk of being replaced by AI. Survey these individuals to understand: are they willing to learn new skills to work effectively with AI? Do they want to be retrained and work in another department? Signal to all employees that you're investing in people alongside the technology.

⑤ Monitor progress

It's critical to keep tabs on how well AI and automation projects are meeting or exceeding expectations. With each implementation, agree in advance on KPIs, project milestones and how quickly you expect to see results. IT leaders should also track metrics across all AI-related projects to understand common hurdles — all with an eye toward continuous improvement as you add more AI and automation tools to your tech stack.
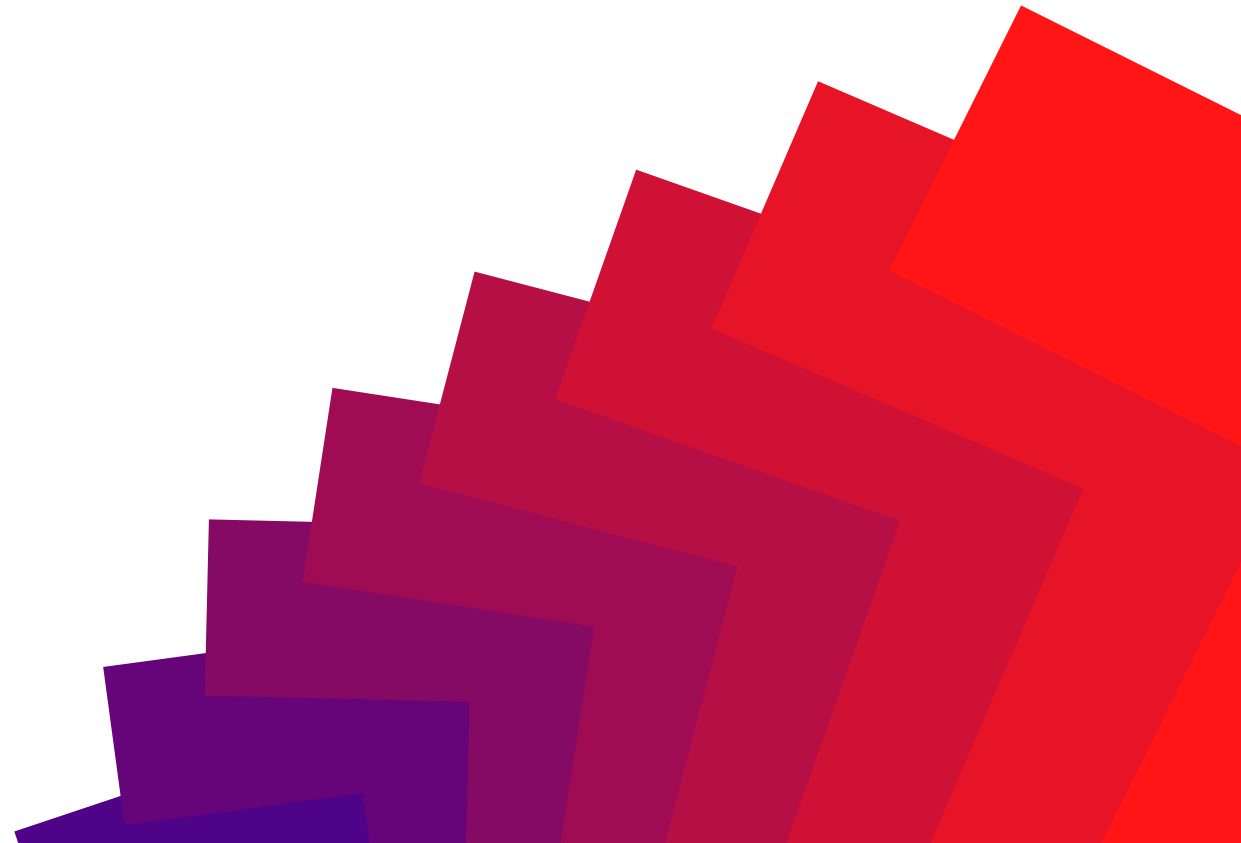
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