

# Harnessing AI and Emotional Intelligence to Shape the Future of Work



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# Executive Summary

The business world is experiencing tremendous uncertainty. Through a global survey of internal communicators and HR professionals, we examined three contributing areas – economic, workplace, and AI – to understand what is having the greatest impact on today's workforce. Our findings reveal considerable concern around economic and workplace uncertainty, but a heightened optimism around AI.

We also learned that while communicators and HR professionals recognize AI's business value in the areas of innovation and productivity, they believe emotional intelligence will be critical for future success in areas that drive company culture - like engagement and collaboration.

However, organizations still have work to do if they want to capitalize on this optimism. Those that invest in AI training, focus on change management, and build emotional intelligence will be in the best position to drive future success.

Our survey revealed how today's workforce views AI, the critical factors for its adoption and the skills that matter for future success in the workplace:

### 01 AI SENTIMENT

**There is heightened optimism around AI.**

Internal communicators report economic and workplace uncertainties as having the greatest impact on employees. Internal communicators are optimistic about AI's impact on their role and use it at least once per week.

### 02 BUSINESS IMPACT OF AI

**AI is recognized for its business value, but interpersonal skills remain critical to driving company culture.**

While AI is seen as having a positive effect on innovation and productivity, it is perceived as having less of an impact on areas driven by interpersonal skills, like engagement and collaboration.

### 03 FACTORS IMPACTING AI ADOPTION

**Training and change management are key for successful AI adoption.**

Training and change management stand out as drivers of successful AI adoption and outcomes. Dissatisfaction with training correlates with a negative sentiment toward AI and effective change management around AI adoption is lacking.

### 04 THE HUMAN ELEMENT

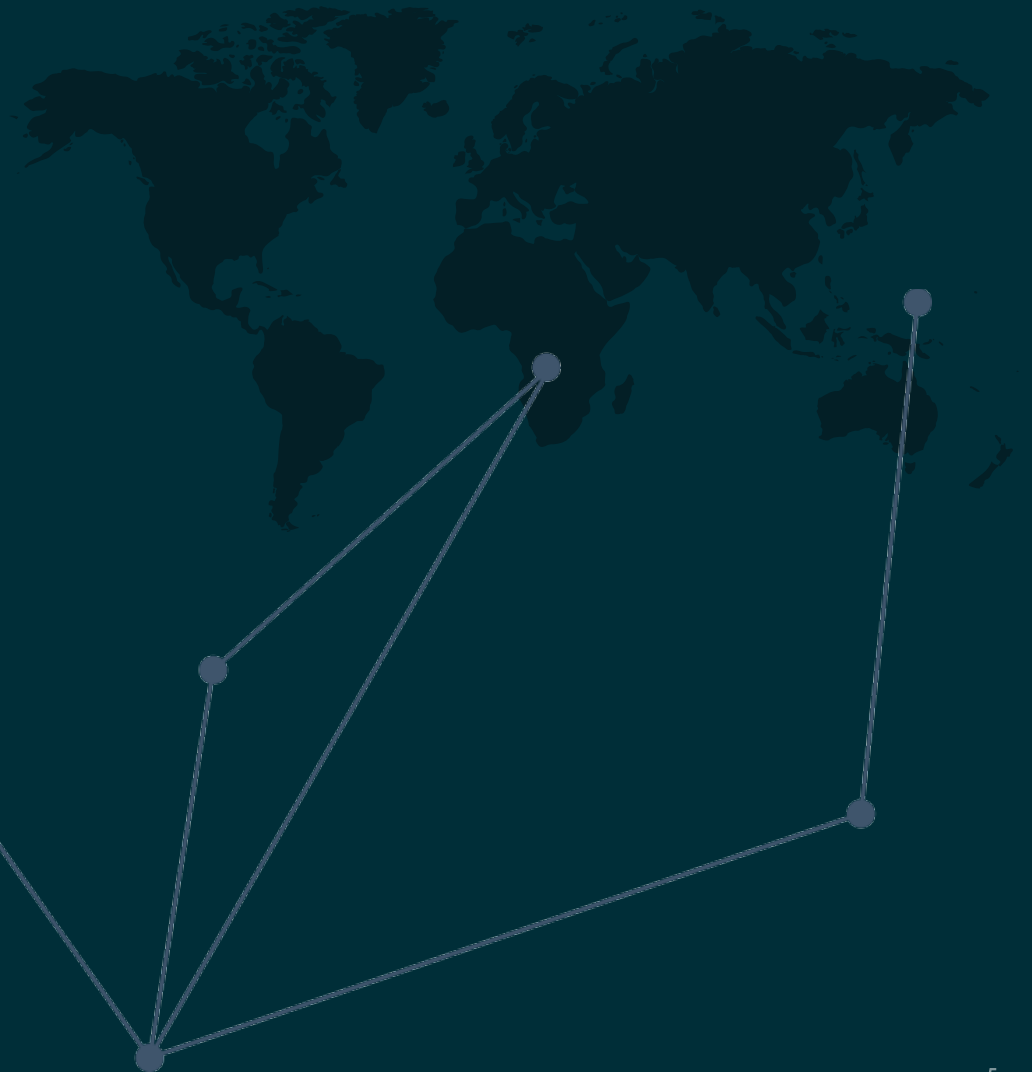
**Emotional intelligence is perceived as more important than technical expertise for future success.**

As AI becomes ubiquitous in the workplace, innately human skills are perceived as most critical for future success.

# Research Methodology

Ruder Finn's global center of excellence for strategic internal communications, **rf.engage**, and its analytics and emerging technology incubator, **RF Tech Lab**, conducted quantitative survey research in Q3 2025.

In this global survey we asked 21 questions of those who oversee and directly work in internal communications or Human Resources. We received a total of 225 responses from levels ranging from junior to senior levels.



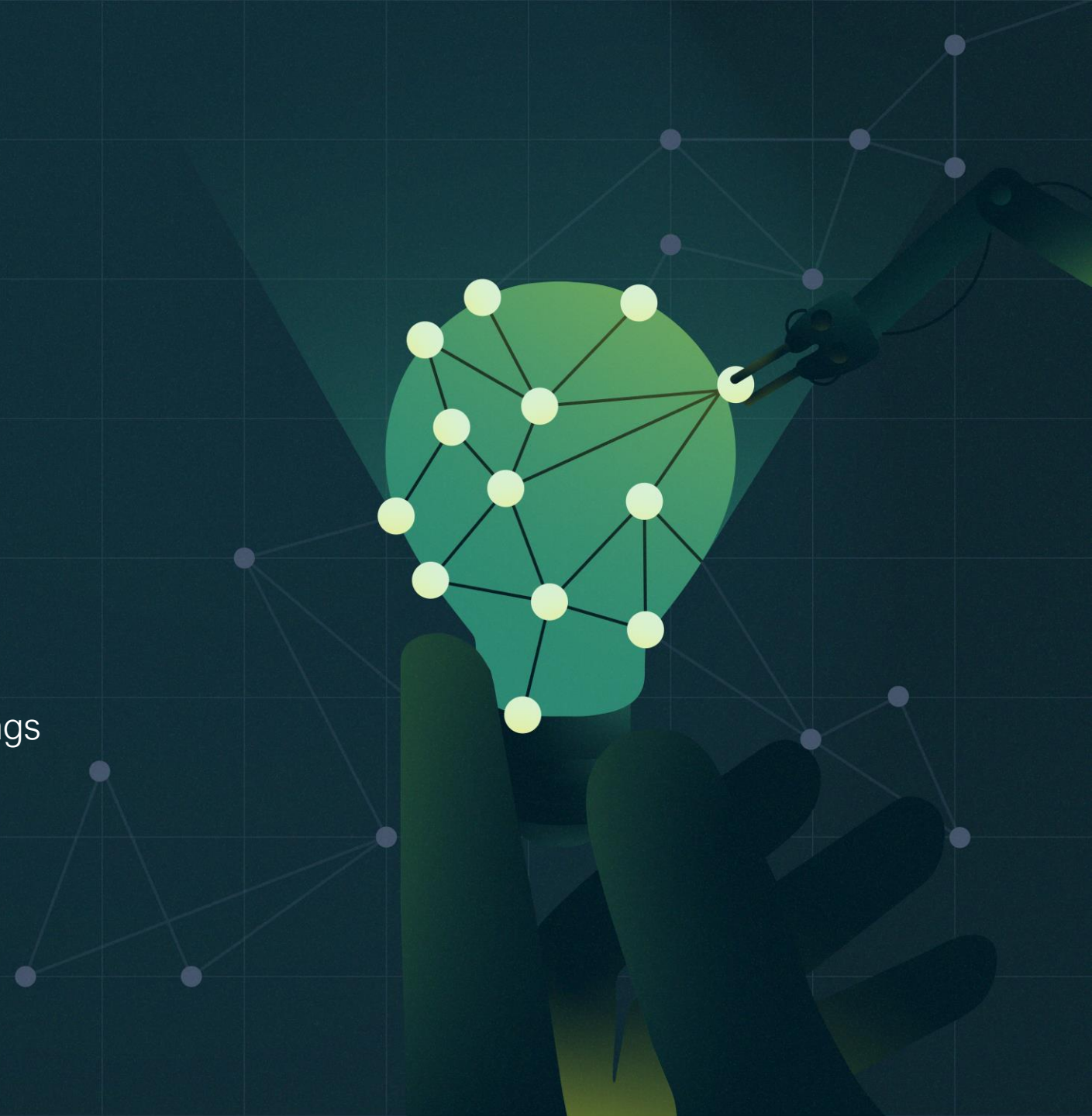
# Key Findings



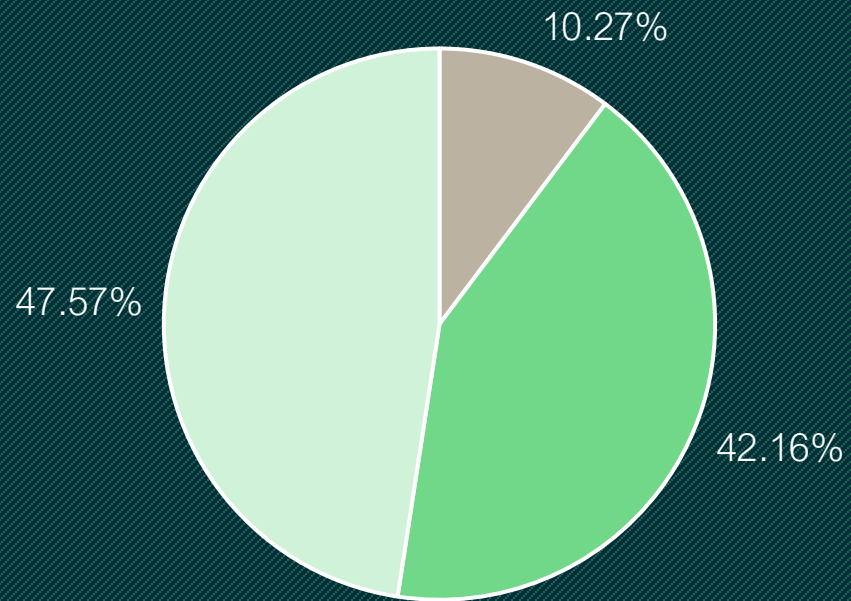
CHAPTER 1

# AI Sentiment

While there is considerable concern around economic and workplace uncertainty, our findings reveal a heightened optimism around AI.



# CHAPTER 1: AI SENTIMENT



Which of the following has the highest impact on your workforce?

- AI Uncertainty
- Economic Uncertainty
- Workplace Uncertainty (e.g., job security, restructuring and leadership shifts)

N=185

Only **10%** of respondents report **AI uncertainty** is having the biggest impact on their workforce.

Nearly **90%** of participants indicate **economic** and **workplace uncertainties** are having the **greatest impact** on their workforce.

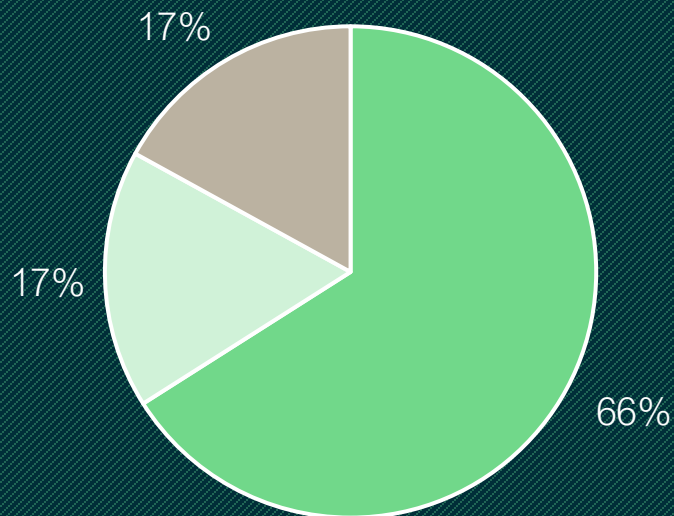
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Inflation, slow market growth, and job security are the top concerns.

# CHAPTER 1: AI SENTIMENT

# 66%

of those surveyed were **optimistic** about AI's impact on their role.



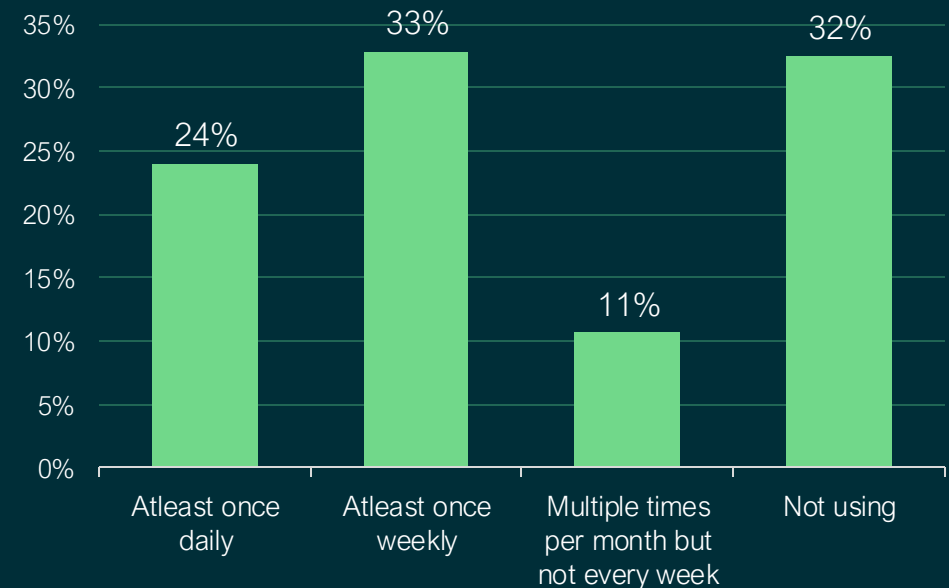
How do you currently feel about AI's impact on your role?

■ Optimistic / Partially Optimistic ■ Worried ■ Neutral

N=225

# 57%

of respondents **use AI** for internal comms and HR initiatives **at least once per week**.



## CHAPTER 2

# Business Impact

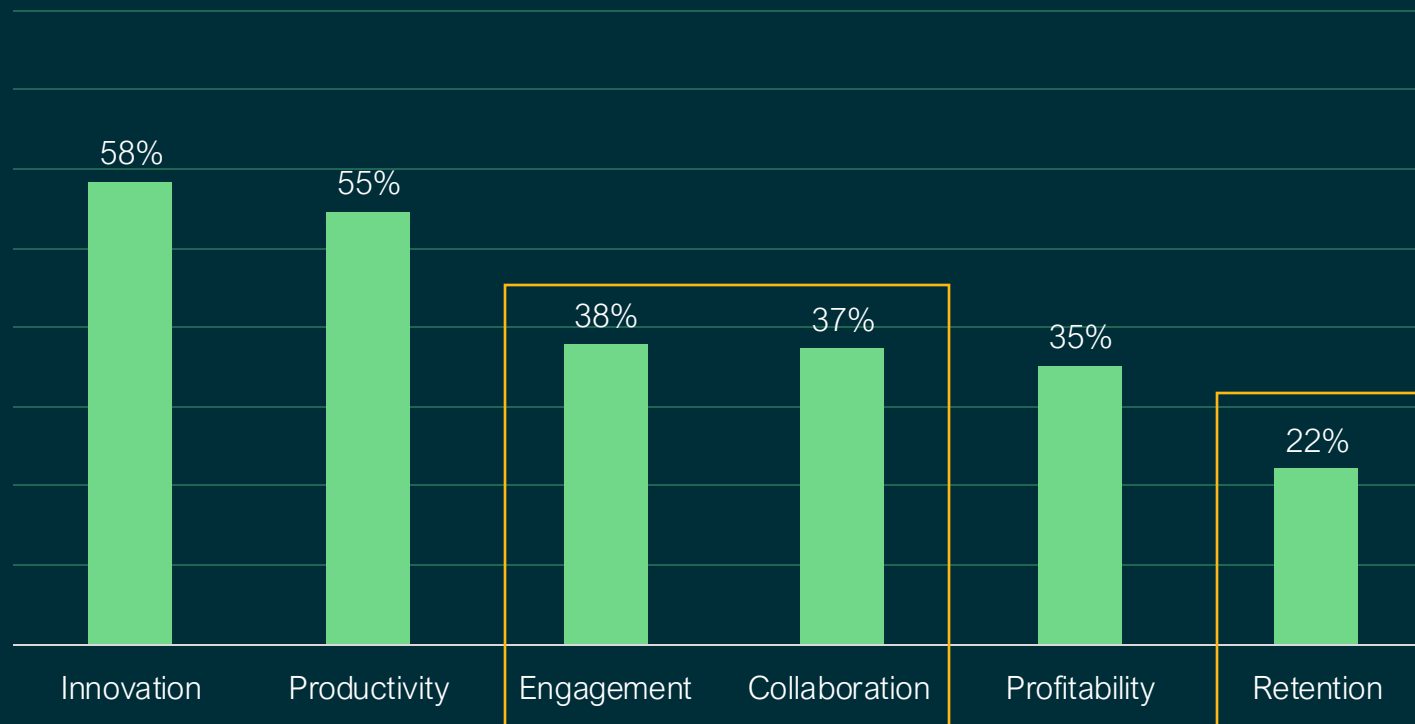
AI is seen as having a positive effect on business performance drivers. By comparison, it is perceived as having less of an impact on human-centric outcomes.



## CHAPTER 2: BUSINESS IMPACT

While AI is seen as having a **positive effect** on **innovation** and **productivity**, it is perceived as having far **less of an impact** on **workplace culture**.

To what degree is AI having a positive effect on the following?



N=185

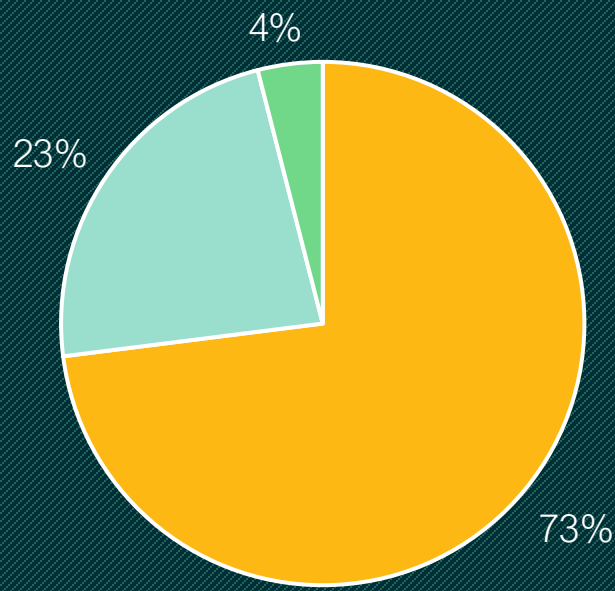
## CHAPTER 3

# Factors Impacting AI Adoption

Training and change management stand out as key factors in successful AI adoption.



# CHAPTER 3: FACTORS IMPACTING AI ADOPTION



73%

of respondents indicated their organization is **not particularly effective at managing change around AI adoption**

How effective is your organization at managing change around AI adoption?

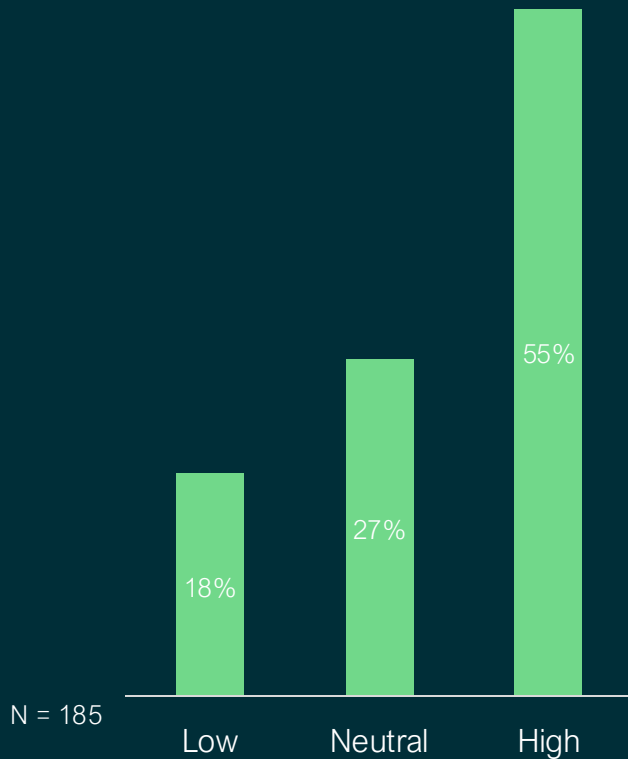
- Somewhat / Not Effective
- Effective
- Very Effective

N=225

# CHAPTER 3: FACTORS IMPACTING AI ADOPTION

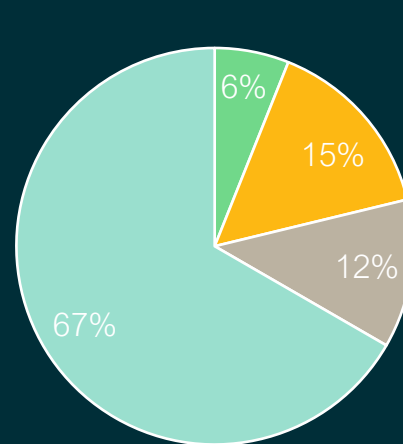
Training satisfaction correlates with AI use.

### Training Satisfaction

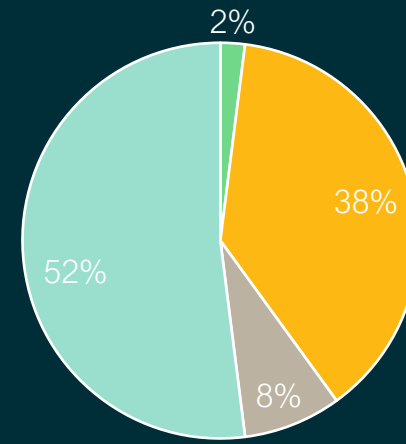


### AI Use

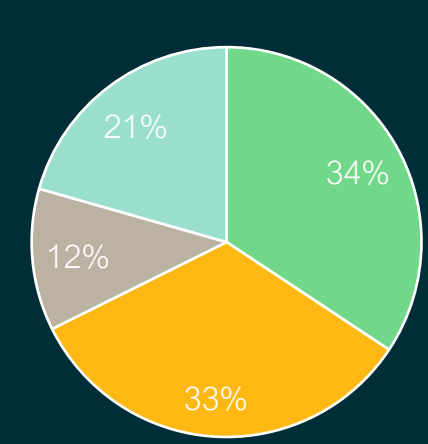
#### Low Training Satisfaction



#### Neutral Training Satisfaction



#### High Training Satisfaction

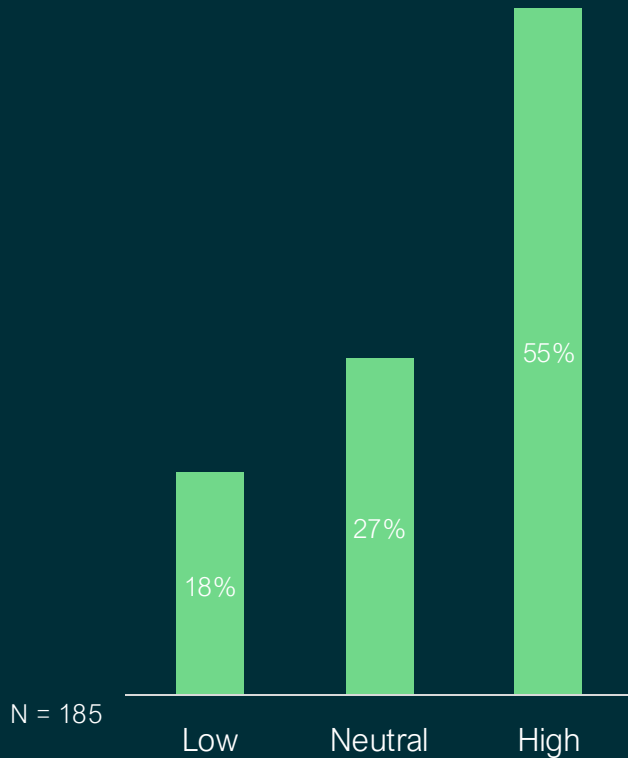


- At least daily
- At least weekly but not daily
- At least monthly but not every week
- Not using AI

# CHAPTER 3: FACTORS IMPACTING AI ADOPTION

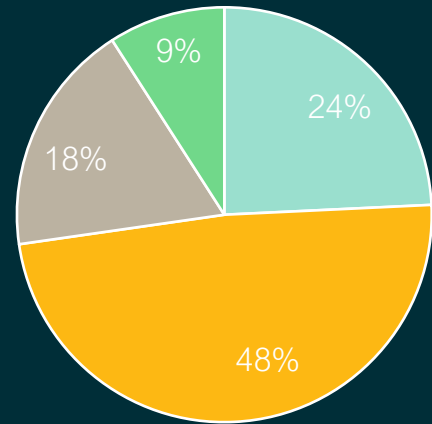
Training satisfaction correlates with AI optimism.

### Training Satisfaction

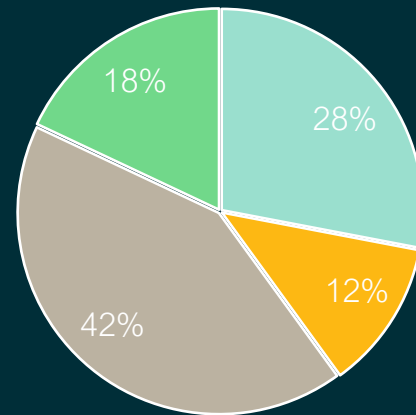


### AI Optimism

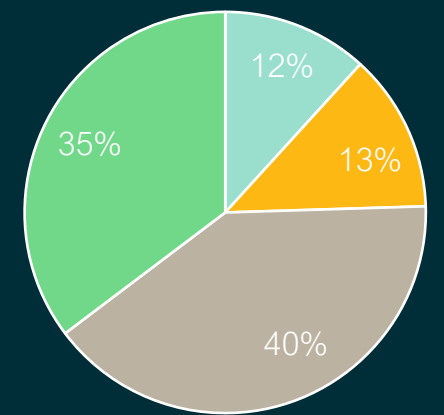
#### Low Training Satisfaction



#### Neutral Training Satisfaction



#### High Training Satisfaction



- Neutral
- More worried than optimistic
- Equally optimistic and worried
- More optimistic than worried

- Neutral
- More worried than optimistic
- Equally optimistic and worried
- More optimistic than worried

- Neutral
- More worried than optimistic
- Equally optimistic and worried
- More optimistic than worried

## CHAPTER 4

# The Human Element

While AI is becoming ubiquitous in the workplace, innately human skills are perceived as most critical for future success.

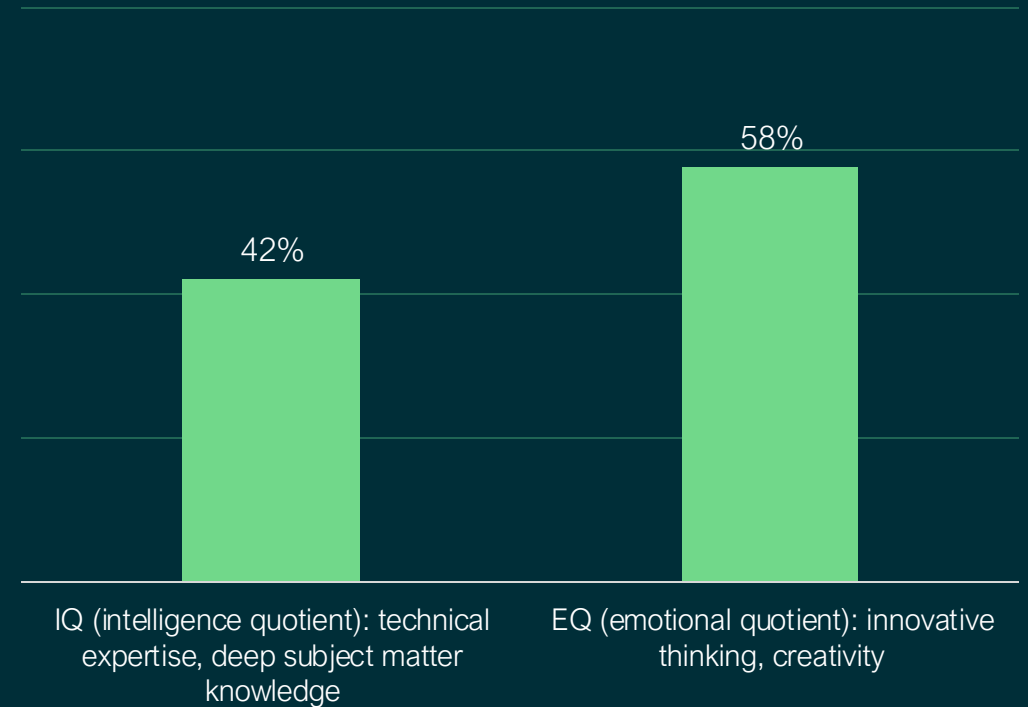


## CHAPTER 4: THE HUMAN ELEMENT

# 58%

of respondents indicate EQ will be more important for future success in their role than technical expertise

Going forward, what skills will be most important to be successful in your role?



N=225

# How organizations can ride this wave of adoption and positivity to fully realize the benefits of AI

## Focus on change management

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Develop a comprehensive change management plan for AI roll out and business integration. Approach it as you would approach other large- scale, business transformation initiatives.

## Invest in ongoing training

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Create a multi-phase AI training roadmap that prioritizes instruction on real-world application of approved tools and continuous learning. Create pathways for highlighting AI in action within the organization and the positive impact it's having on the business.

## Strengthen the skills AI can't replicate

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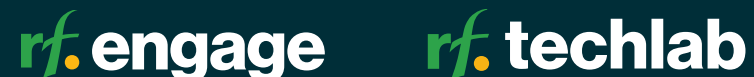
Take a thoughtful and deliberate approach to building employees' emotional intelligence. Establish a professional development plan that focuses on honing the human skills that will enable employees to use AI to its best effect.



## About Ruder Finn

Ruder Finn is one of the world's largest independent global communications and integrated marketing agencies, leading the industry in AI strategy and implementation. Founded in 1948, Ruder Finn has defined and redefined PR for over 75 years, shaping communications that moves industry-defining brands, companies, and leaders from what's now to what's next. Ruder Finn provides clients with bold strategies based on a global perspective and localized market knowledge that redefine leadership, reimagine the marketplace, and rethink customer experiences. The agency is organized around five core areas of expertise—Healthcare, Technology, Consumer Brand, Leadership and Workplace—with innovative tech incubator RF TechLab providing cutting-edge predictive analytics, AI-powered creative hub RF Studio53 offering breakthrough creative, and specialized teams delivering customer-focused digital engagement. Ruder Finn has offices across four continents including the U.S., Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Wholly owned agencies and offerings within Ruder Finn Group include: Ruder Finn Inc., RF Studio53, RF Engage, Touchdown, Peppercomm, RF Comunicad, Mantis, jacobstahl, Flightpath, Ruder Finn Atteline, Pandan Social, RF Bloom, and Big Sky Communications. For more information visit [www.ruderfinn.com](http://www.ruderfinn.com).

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Need help developing an AI change management strategy or training plan?

rf.engage can help – let's connect!

**Please reach out to [rf.engage@ruderfinn.com](mailto:rf.engage@ruderfinn.com)**