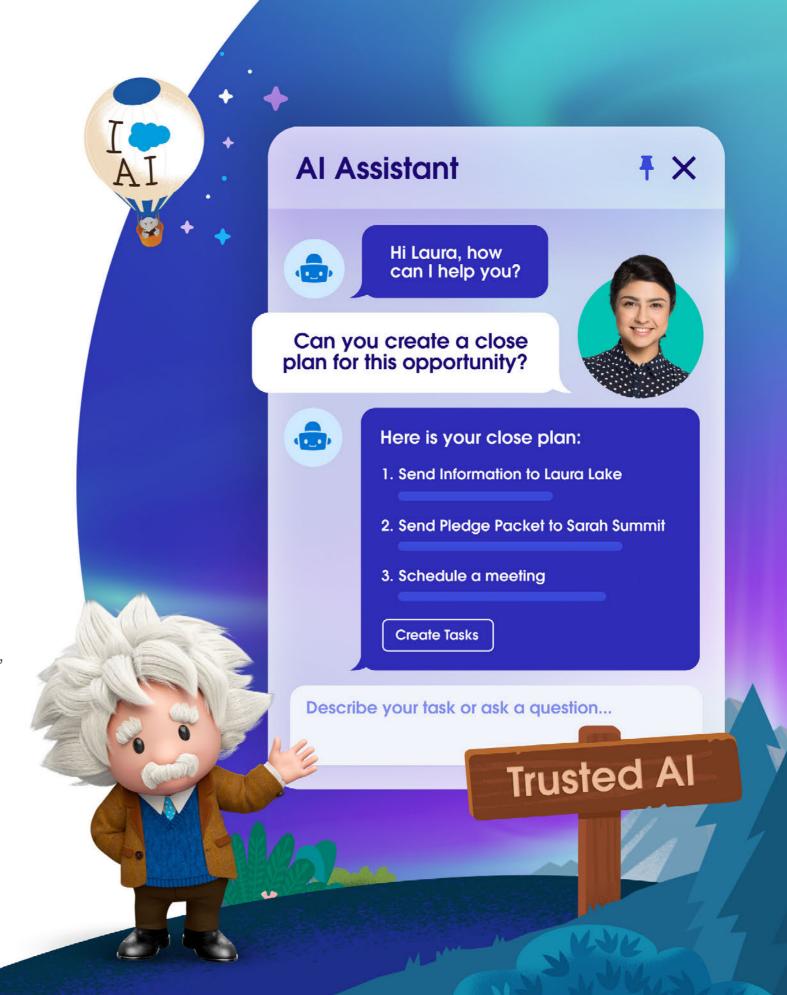


Trends in Al for CRM

AI Insights from consumers, business decision-makers, and technical decision-makers worldwide.



A Letter from Salesforce's AI CEO



Clara Shih
CEO, Salesforce AI

The generative AI revolution has arrived with limitless opportunities to streamline tasks, improve performance, and deliver excellent customer experiences. We've seen early successes with code generation, customer service automation, sales summaries, and more – yet we're just getting started.

Key success drivers of enterprise AI are emerging led by trust, including data security, data privacy, and safety and ethical guardrails. Next is the need to focus on the highest-impact use cases that address bottlenecks, pain points, and performance improvement opportunities. Turnkey AI use cases are the fastest, lowest-risk path to accelerate time to value, test, and validate initial automation opportunities.

Data is the backbone of every AI strategy and key to unlocking the full potential of enterprise AI. Much of this data already exists in a company's CRM. As companies look to achieve more mature use cases, they can pivot from using CRM data to unlocking trapped data across the enterprise. That's when it becomes imperative to enact a strategy that federates and harmonizes data across applications, as many customers are now doing with Salesforce's Data Cloud.

Finally, the unprecedented pace of change in AI requires companies to upskill their entire workforce. This is not a "one-and-done" exercise, but rather a continuous cycle of learning as AI evolves. At Salesforce, we are committed to helping companies empower their teams to stay ahead of the curve with our AI courses and certifications on the Trailhead learning platform.

Looking ahead, we are on the cusp of an even bigger step change. We are quickly moving beyond generation, summarization, and analysis capabilities toward agentic AI, which will perform higher-order planning, reasoning, and orchestration with greater autonomy. We also see the emerging promise of smaller, domain-specific models that balance accuracy with cost and compute power.

In this report, you will find the latest insights on how businesses are approaching AI and moving up the enterprise AI maturity curve to unlock transformational results.



About This Report

Each year, Salesforce conducts studies to help professionals across roles, industries, and geographies understand the trends most relevant to them. This special report aggregates data from multiple double-anonymous Salesforce surveys conducted between February 2023 and April 2024.

These surveys generated thousands of responses from business decision-makers, technical decision-makers, and the general population worldwide. See page 31 for further information. Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report equal 100%. All comparison calculations are made from total numbers (not rounded numbers).



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Executive Summary

Introduction: Businesses Race to Harness AI's Growing Potential

The role of AI across industries – and society as a whole – is forecasted to grow exponentially in just a few short years.

IDC estimates that companies invested \$16B in generative AI solutions in 2023, and that they'll invest \$140B in 2027 – a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 70%.

Trust Is Job Number One as Customers Evaluate AI

Consumers are increasingly making AI part of their everyday lives, but are approaching the technology with mixed emotions that call for a foundation of trust and transparency. Seventy-four percent of the general population is concerned about the unethical use of AI, and 63% is concerned about its biases.

02 Businesses Evaluate Their Data Foundations

AI needs great data to meet its potential. The technology's rise is prompting companies to evaluate the quality, timeliness, and security of their data. **Eighty-six percent of technical decision-makers agree that AI's outputs are only as good as its data inputs.**

AI Use Cases Take Shape Across the Enterprise

Whether generating content and communications or optimizing processes, teams are discovering the best ways to incorporate AI in the flow of their work as investments ramp up. No fewer than 92% of sales, service, marketing, or commerce teams are at least considering AI investments.

Workplace Skills and Policies Are Evolving for the AI Era

Employees recognize the transformative impact of AI on their careers, but their employers are largely falling behind on empowering them for success. Fifty-six percent of desk workers believe generative AI will transform their roles, but only 21% say their company has provided clear policies around its use.



Introduction

Businesses Race to Harness Al's Growing Potential



Digital Natives Lead AI Adoption

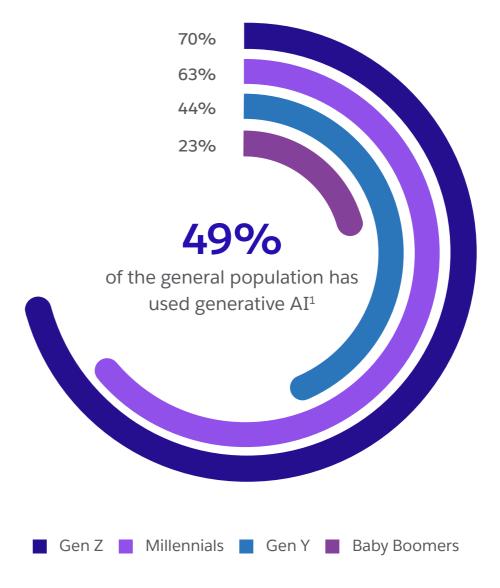
Since the introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022, society has been captivated by the power of generative AI and much discussion has been made of its impacts on business and everyday life.

As of late 2023, roughly half of the general population – every company's end customers or user base – has at least tried generative AI, with a plurality considering themselves regular users.

As is often the case with new technology, younger generations are more likely to embrace AI. A whopping seven in 10 Gen Zers use generative AI, and over six in 10 millennials (63%).

52% of generative AI users say they're use of the technology is increasing.¹

Younger Generations Are Embracing AI



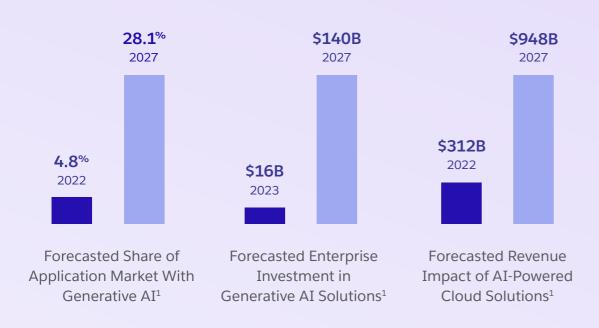


AI's Impact Is Only Beginning

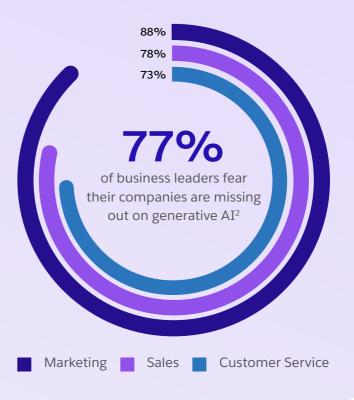
AI is a tectonic shift that is already having a major impact on business, which will only grow by orders of magnitude over the coming years. IDC forecasts that the revenue impact of AI-powered cloud solutions will have a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20% between 2022 and 2027, and that investment by companies in generative AI solutions will have a 70% CAGR between 2023 and 2028.¹

Such technological upheavals come swiftly and can very easily leave those that don't keep pace at a competitive disadvantage. Like those that came before them and failed to adapt to the Internet Age or the cloud computing revolution, many business leaders are already worried that they could be missing out.

The AI Revolution Is Only Beginning



Businesses Have AI FOMO





¹IDC White Paper, sponsored by Salesforce, The Salesforce Economy: Fueled by AI-powered Cloud Solutions, Doc #US51404923, Dec 2023.

² Salesforce State of Data & Analytics, November 2023.

Workers Foresee Transformative Effects

Seventy-two percent of generative AI users are employed – a significantly larger portion than the U.S. labor participation rate of 62%. Thus, the implications for businesses across sectors are hard to understate.

56% of desk workers believe generative AI will transform their roles.²

AI is well on its way to being a hallmark of workflows. As of January 2024, one in four desk workers said they've tried AI tools at work – a 24% acceleration over the one in five who said the same just four months earlier. Eighty percent of those who used AI at work said it improved their productivity, a significant accomplishment given that desk workers spend an estimated 41% of their time on low-value, repetitive tasks that lack meaningful contribution to their core jobs.³

Generative AI Yields Productivity Improvements



Estimated work time spent on repetitive or low-impact tasks³



Workplace AI users who report productivity gains³

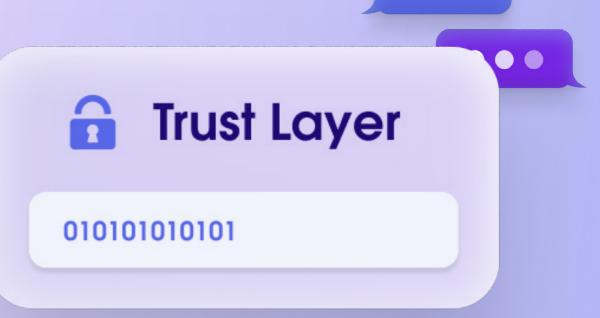


Desk workers who believe generative AI will allow focus on strategic work²

¹Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2024 Employment Situation Report. ²Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Series: Workforce Skills, July 2023. ³Slack Workforce Lab survey, January 2024.

01

Trust Is Job Number One as Customers Evaluate Al



Society Enters the AI Era with Mixed Emotions

Curiosity underpins the general population's view of generative AI, with younger generations, in particular, feeling generally excited and hopeful about the technology.

However, all generations – particularly Baby boomers and Gen X – feel at least a tinge of suspicion and anxiety. Baby boomers even cite fear as a top emotion around the rise of AI.

There's no shortage of warnings from experts and observers alike on how the AI revolution could bring about negative consequences. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, remarked in congressional testimony that "If this technology goes wrong, it can go quite wrong." At the same time, there is much discussion about how AI could help make progress on daunting societal challenges like disease, hunger, and climate change, leading to an unsettled attitude around how the technology's impact will unfold.

88% of the general population is unclear on how generative AI will impact their lives.²

Generative AI Evokes Curiosity Above All

Top 5 Sentiments About Generative AI by Age Group¹

	Baby boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
1	Curiosity	Curiosity	Curiosity	Curiosity
2	Suspicion	Suspicion	Excitement	Excitement
3	Anxiety	Hope	Норе	Норе
4	Норе	Anxiety	Suspicion	Suspicion
5	Fear	Excitement	Anxiety	Anxiety



² Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Series: The AI Divide, September 2023.

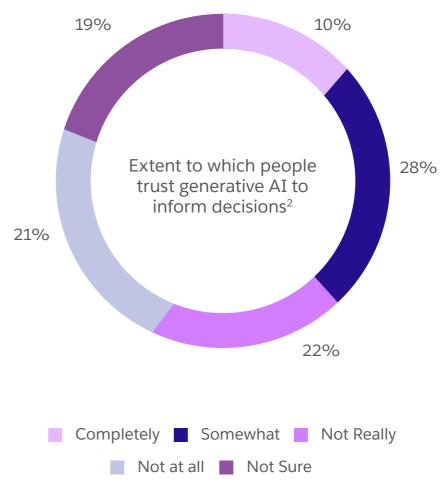
The Rise of AI Raises Questions of Trust

Businesses were already facing a crisis of trust before generative AI tools reached the mass market, and their rollout makes the pursuit of customer trust all the more urgent.

68% of the general population believes advances in AI make a company's trustworthiness more important.¹

Take, for example, that 74% of the general population is concerned about the unethical use of AI, and 63% are concerned about its biases. Whatsmore, generative AI's usefulness is still unproven among the general public – a mere 10% fully trust it to help them make informed decisions.

AI Has Yet to Earn Users' Trust









Responsible and Transparent AI Earns Customer Trust

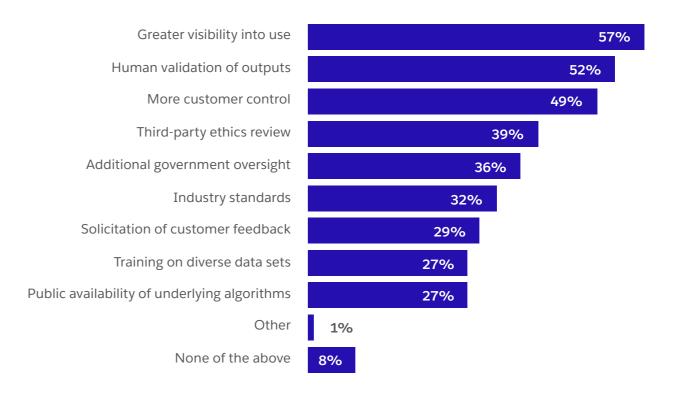
Companies looking to implement AI in their operations will be well-served by being transparent in their use of AI, its benefits, and the data sets used to train it.

Other significant drivers of customer trust in AI include validating outputs prior to releasing them for broader consumption and providing customers more control over how and to what extent they interact with the technology.

Companies also have the onus of demonstrating how the data underpinning their AI models is safeguarded: Sixty-four percent of the general population would try generative AI – or use it more often – if they believed it were more secure.²

Companies Have Levers to Pull to Increase Trust in AI

Factors That Would Deepen Customer Trust in AI¹





¹ Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.

² Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Series: The AI Divide, September 2023.



Spotlight: Expert Perspective on Ethics

What ethical concerns are you hearing when it comes to generative AI?

As an enterprise AI company, the risks we focus on are accuracy, bias, toxicity, safety, and privacy. And we're not alone with these ethical concerns – the public, our customers, and regulators are paying very close attention as AI technologies rapidly progress.

What risks specific to customer data do you foresee coming from generative AI?

At Salesforce, we take a three-pronged approach to mitigating these risks. First, by ensuring model safety and privacy. Second, we build trusted feature designs and architecture. And finally, implementing policy and use case safeguards. This includes carefully choosing what data we use to train our AI, red-teaming and assessing bias and toxicity before they impact customers, and building risk mitigations directly into our generative AI technologies. We're designing our AI systems with guardrails and protections that empower humans at the helm of AI, including confidence scores, prompt engineering, safety filters, citations and explanations.



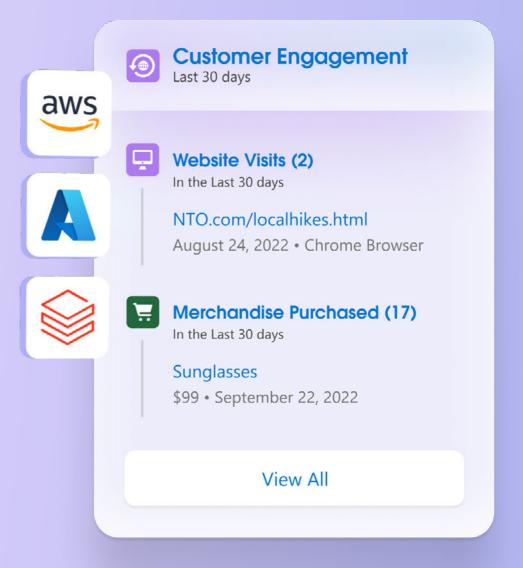
What can companies to do prepare?

It's always been important to collect quality data and ensure transparency and consent in the collection process. But it's not just about taking data in. It's also about what happens to that data once we have it. We protect the people whose information enables our AI models by ensuring their data is never left in a repository that can be easily breached or misused. The Einstein Trust Layer safeguards your company data, in addition to our internal policies and external agreements, so that companies can reap the benefits of AI with none of the risks. Companies may need data as much as ever, but the best thing they can do to protect customers is to build methodologies that prioritize keeping that data – and their customers' trust – safe.



02

Businesses Evaluate Their Data Foundations



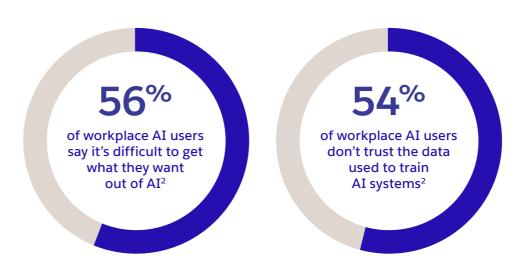
AI Exposes Enterprise Data's Shortcomings

"Garbage in, garbage out" has been a longstanding mantra among data and analytics practitioners, but it's never been more true than now in the age of large language models (LLMs).

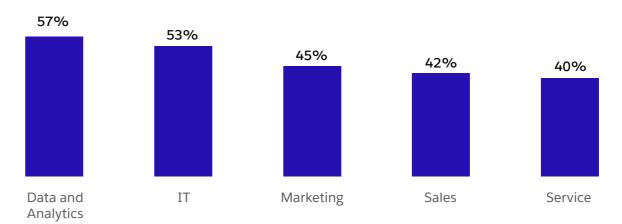
86% of analytics and IT leaders agree AI's outputs are only as good as its data inputs, and 87% agree AI's rise makes data management a higher priority.¹

A lack of trusted data within organizations is posing a significant hurdle for those seeking to use AI, even as their employees embrace it. In fact, over half of workplace AI users say it's difficult to get what they need out of the technology, and nearly as many say they don't trust the data that underpins it in the first place. A related study found that these sentiments are more common among line-of-business leaders than their technical counterparts.¹

Data Woes Hold Back AI's Potential



Respondents With Complete Confidence in Data Accuracy¹





¹ Salesforce State of Data & Analytics, November 2023.

² Salesforce Your Data, Your AI Research; April 2024.

Data Strategies Remain Rare as Complexity – and Scrutiny – Intensifies

Workers cite data accuracy (82%), data security (82%), and data completeness (78%) as critical for building their trust in AI, and most say the same for AI trained on their company's unique and relevant insights.

53% of workers say training AI on comprehensive customer/company data builds their trust in the technology.

But powering AI with comprehensive, high-quality company or customer data is easier said than done given the state of enterprise data. Fifty-nine percent of organizations lack a unified data strategy.¹

The task is not getting simpler. Firms expect the volume of their data to increase by 23% annually,¹ on average, spread across an average of 991 apps.²

95% of IT leaders say integration issues impede their AI adoption.²





Data Maturity Signals AI Preparedness

Data maturity is a building block of successful AI adoption, with high-maturity organizations citing superior infrastructure, strategy, and alignment compared to low-data-maturity organizations.*

Differences between high- and lowmaturity companies are stark when it comes to data quality, completeness, and overall strategy.

High-maturity respondents are 2x more likely than low-maturity respondents to have the high-quality data needed to use AI effectively.¹

High-Maturity Organizations Are Better Prepared to Harness AI

Analytics and IT Leaders Who Assess the Following as Excellent at Their Company¹

	Low Data Maturity	Moderate Data Maturity	High Data Maturity
Data quality	30%	39%	59%
Technology infrastructure	36%	40%	57%
Artificial intelligence strategy	32%	36%	56%
Technical talent/skills	33%	36%	56%
Business stakeholders alignment	34%	36%	55%
Security/compliance capabilities	32%	39%	55%



^{*}Low-data-maturity organizations are defined as respondents who report nonexistent or below industry standard data maturity. High-data-maturity organizations are defined as respondents with self-reported best-in-class data maturity.



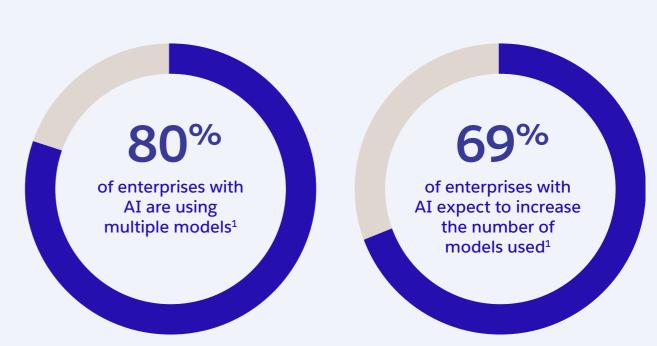
Spotlight: AI Models, Data, and the Build-Vs-Buy Conundrum

Companies, especially large enterprises, are increasingly taking an "all of the above" approach to selecting AI models. Four out of five enterprise IT leaders with AI say they're already using multiple models, and nearly seven in 10 (69%) expect to increase the number of models they use over coming years. As companies move to deploy generative AI, they need to choose LLMs that best fit their use cases.

LLMs come in two primary flavors: Pre-trained versions like OpenAI's GPT and Google's Gemini, which are used "off-the-shelf," and open-source versions like Meta's LLaMA, which users can customize to suit specific needs. Each version has its pros and cons regarding cost, supported modalities, technical expertise needed, data security, and other factors.

New tactics like retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), in which a vector database with institutional data is securely paired with a foundational LLM, are emerging to help companies make better use of both structured and unstructured data to power AI. A recent 451 Research study found that 87% of IT leaders view this strategy positively.²

Enterprise AI Is Increasingly a Multiple Model Endeavor

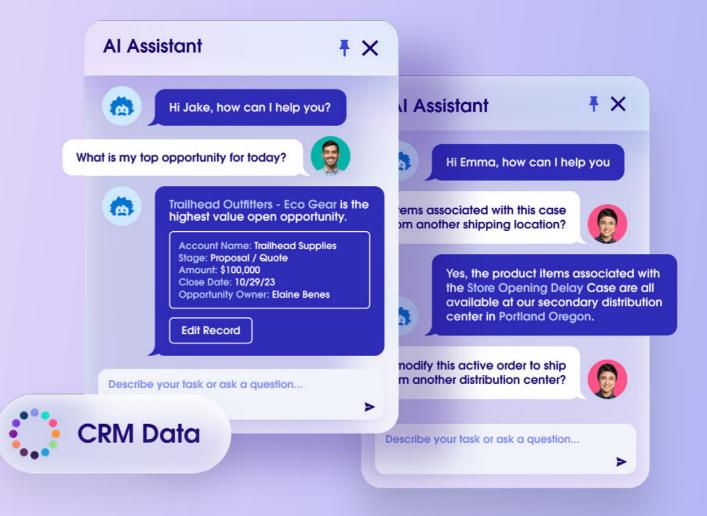






03

Al Use Cases Take Shape Across the Enterprise

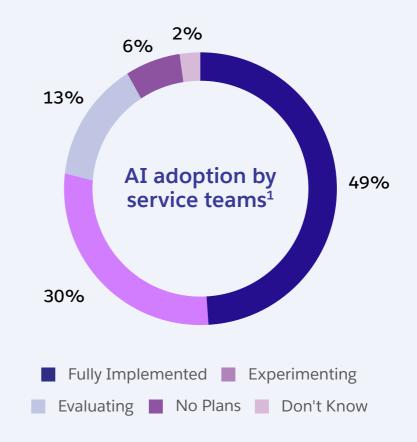


AI in Customer Service

Service teams are at the forefront of AI enterprise AI adoption, having for years implemented solutions such as chatbots and call routing. Yet agents still spend an average of 39% of their time working with customers, with the balance of working hours spent on administrative duties and other rote tasks, signaling that the technology's role will continue to grow.¹

84% of service teams expect increased AI investment over the next year.¹

Like other departments, service teams are concerned about security risks that AI may introduce, but are also particularly concerned about a the contextual knowledge many LLMs may lack about their business and customers. Service teams are also aware of the risk of dehumanization from AI – a testament to the importance of keeping actual humans at the forefront of customer relationships.



Top AI Use Cases Among Service Teams²

Automating service communications
 Writing service content
 Analyzing service data

Top AI Concerns Among Service Teams²

Lack of contextual knowledge

 Lack of human creativity

 Security risk



¹Salesforce State of Service, April 2024.

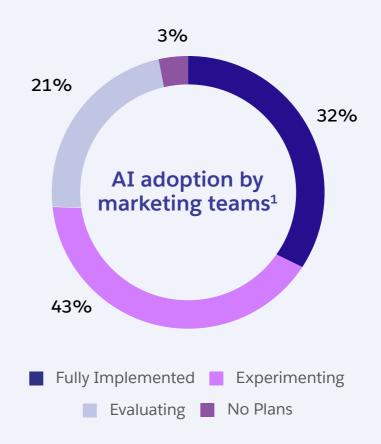
²Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Research Series, May-June 2023.

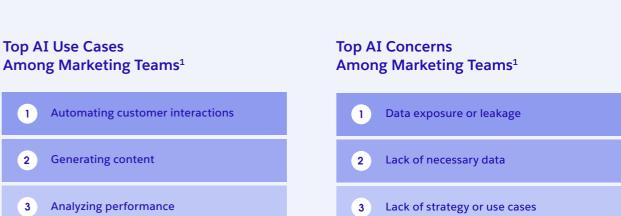
AI in Marketing

Nearly one in three marketing teams have fully implemented AI, and nearly two in three (65%) are evaluating or experimenting with it. With compelling use cases spanning customer engagement, content generation, and analytics, getting AI in the hands of staff is the top priority for marketing leaders, but it's not without its downsides.

Marketers rank AI implementation as their No.1 priority and their No.1 challenge.¹

Given enhanced scrutiny from consumers and regulators on how marketers leverage customer data, marketers are especially concerned about data exposure or leakage concerns as they explore AI, and the availability of quality data required to benefit from AI in the first place.







AI in Sales

Sales teams are quickly embracing AI, over 40% already reporting full implementation and many more on their way.

79% of sales organizations expect AI implementation over the next year.¹

Generating sales communications – like email drafts for customers based on their account activity – is the most common use case, but teams are also leveraging the technology to aid forecasting, reporting, and other tasks.



Top AI Use Cases Among Sales Teams²

1 Writing sales communications
2 Sales forecasting
3 Sales reporting

Top AI Concerns Among Sales Teams¹

1 Security concerns
2 Insufficient training for employees
3 Customer distrust of the technology



² Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Research Series, May-June 2023

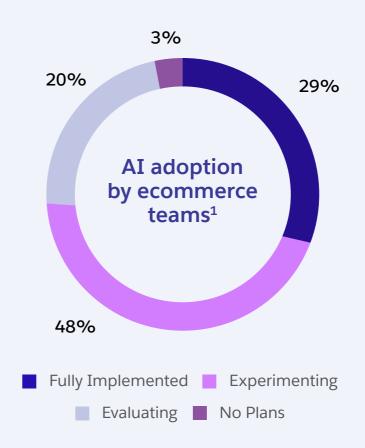


AI in Ecommerce

AI is not new to ecommerce, with many retailers having implemented predictive features like price optimization and personalized offers. For Example: AI influenced 17% of ecommerce orders on Salesforce Commerce Cloud in Q3 2023.¹

Now, ecommerce teams are adding generative AI use cases to their toolkits, such as helping to write product descriptions.

Commerce professionals rank AI implementation as their No.1 priority.¹





Writing product descriptions
 Optimize merchandising
 Optimize channel strategy

Top AI Concerns Among Ecommerce Teams¹

1 Security/trust concerns
2 Insufficient employee skill sets
3 Lack defined AI strategy



IT Grapples With AI's Surging Demand and Rapid Evolution

IT teams see generative AI, in particular, as a paradigm shift for the organizations they support.

86% of IT leaders believe generative AI will soon have a prominent role in their organizations.¹

IT sees no shortage of interest and usefulness in AI. In fact, 78% of IT leaders believe the role of AI is already well-defined in their organizations. But this wave of interest has its pitfalls, including exacerbating a longstanding bandwidth issue among IT teams.

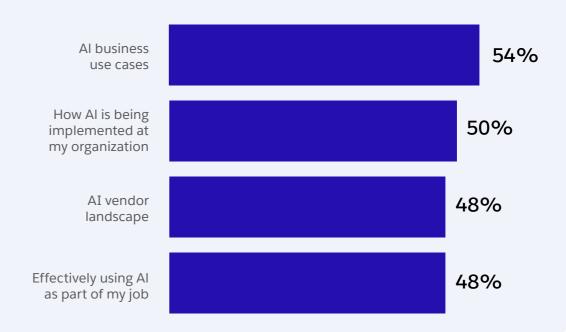
Only 12% of IT leaders say their teams can support all AI-related requests they receive.²

Furthermore, with AI evolving at a feverish pace and demand surging from lines of business, many IT professionals are struggling to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, and some are concerned about its implications on their own value.

62% of IT leaders are concerned about the impact of AI on their careers.¹

IT's AI Expertise Lags Its Uptake

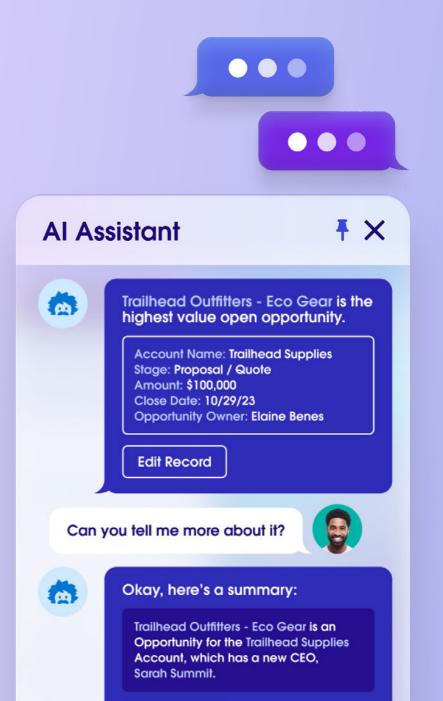
IT Leaders Who Feel They Have Expertise in the Following²





04

Workplace Skills and Policies Are Evolving for the Al Era



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Training and Re-skilling Enter the Spotlight

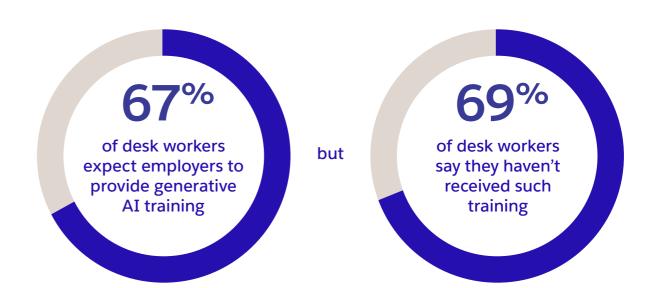
Despite understandable concern about negative impacts from AI on employment, a model from IDC projects a significant increase in jobs from AI over the coming years.

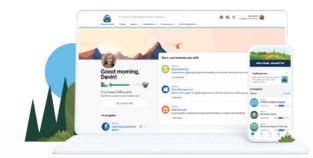
A net gain of 11.6M jobs from AI-powered cloud solutions is expected between 2022 and 2028.¹

Yet much like when computers replaced typewriters in the previous century, transitioning workforce skills to the AI age will take effort from employees and employers alike. Today, 62% of desk workers don't believe they have the skills to effectively and safely use generative AI, and 53% say they don't know how to extract the most value from it.³

41% say they'd consider overstating their AI skills to secure an opportunity.³

Employers Are Largely Failing to Equip Employees for the AI Era





Salesforce provides learning about 32 Al topics to anyone, regardless of whether they're a customer, through its free online learning platform, Trailhead.

Go to Trailhead





¹IDC White Paper, sponsored by Salesforce, The Salesforce Economy: Fueled by AI-powered Cloud Solutions, Doc #US51404923, Dec 2023.
²Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Series: Workforce Skills, July 2023.
³Salesforce Generative AI Snapshot Series: The Promises and Pitfalls of AI at Work, November 2023.

Employees Go Rogue in the Absence of **Policies**

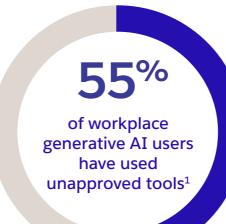
SALESFORCE

It's unsurprising that AI training is falling behind adoption, given the majority of companies haven't articulated to employees whether or how AI can be used in the first place.

Desk workers rank companyapproved tools/programs as the top factor for effective and safe use of generative AI, but only 21% say their company has provided such policies.1

Workers aren't waiting for their employers to define protocols around the use of generative AI. Instead, many are diving right in, despite the absence of policies and approved tools, introducing a new wave of shadow IT that introduces data security and ethical questions.

Workers Aren't Waiting for Permission to Use AI









Spotlight: Expert Perspective on AI Guidelines for Employees

Is "should we use AI" the right question for leaders to ask at this point?

The truth is, employees are likely going to use AI in some fashion, regardless of whether or not they have permission. A more relevant question is whether businesses are fostering an innovative culture where employees are empowered and encouraged to safely explore within clear boundaries. As you integrate AI into your workplace as a productivity tool, consider and reconsider (as the tools evolve) guidelines and guardrails that promote creative experimentation, while mitigating known or developing risks.

How should enterprises approach creating guidelines for AI usage for employees?

Don't let your employees wander unprotected through the forest of pop-up AI tools. Build out your internal AI protocols to safely supply

employees with AI tools and limit usage of third-party tools by implementing restrictions to ensure data privacy and security. It's also important to emphasize the instances where AI should absolutely not be utilized - such as for giving legal, financial, or medical advice.

How will leaders know if their policies are working?

Given the rapid evolution of the landscape, enterprises should view their policies as living documents and plan to review and update them regularly. Empower leaders with robust reporting mechanisms to enable transparency and swift issue resolution of AI-related concerns as well as corrective iteration where things go awry. Using an AI tool can be a great first step, but AI is not a substitute for human judgment. Create a culture that encourages employees to critically evaluate and refine outputs to ensure AI augments rather than shortcuts human judgment.



Additional Resources



Associated Research Reports

In addition to other sources cited in this report, data comes from these recent original research studies from Salesforce.

See each report to learn more about methodologies, respondents, and geographic coverage.



















Want More?



Salesforce AI Overview

Discover AI that knows your business – and helps it grow. Take a look at our solutions.

Learn more



Salesforce AI Demos

Watch demos of Einstein Copilot and Prompt Builder, Salesforce's latest AI innovations.

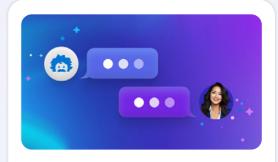
Learn more



Get Started With AI

Learn the basics of AI and the tech behind its amazing capabilities.

Learn more



Talk to an Expert

Reach out with your AI needs and get in touch with an expert.

Learn more







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