

# From Vision to Impact: Pragmatic AI Adoption Insights for Leaders in CEMA



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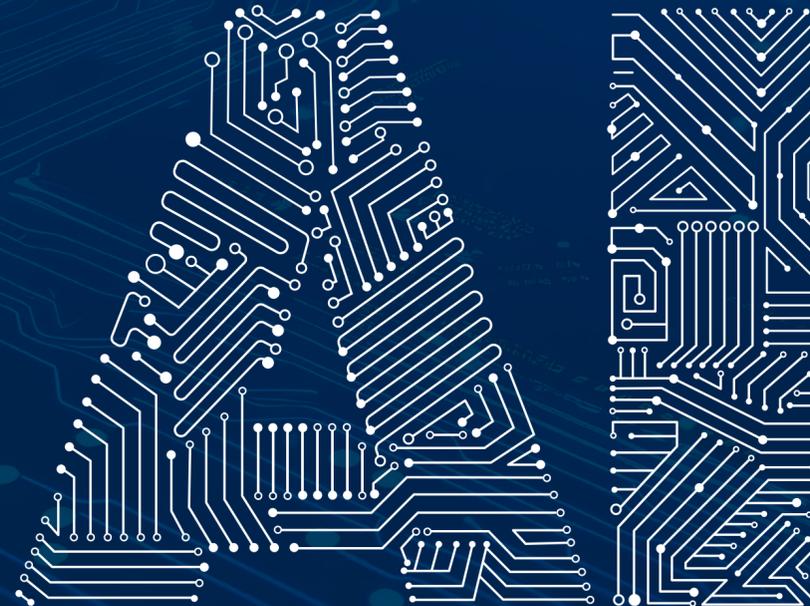
# In This InfoBrief

With intelligence increasingly a primary source of value creation across industries, we are on the verge of the “Intelligence Revolution,” in which artificial intelligence (AI) and automation-oriented technology have become the main accelerators of business change. Against this background, generative AI (GenAI) is emerging as a potentially transformative force.

It is critical for each decision maker in Central and Southeast Europe, Middle East, and Africa (CEMA) to remember, though, that although GenAI has created a huge new wave of interest in AI from individuals, businesses, governments, and third-sector organizations, AI use is in fact already widespread.

According to IDC’s *Worldwide Artificial Intelligence Systems Spending Guide*, which tracks AI software, hardware, and services across industries and use cases, organizations in the CEMA region will invest more than \$8.4 billion in AI solutions in 2024.

This InfoBrief explores how organizations in **CEMA** are using AI today, how they plan to extend the use of AI, the benefits they are achieving, and the challenges they have overcome along the way.



IDC conducted a primary research survey of more than 300 business and IT leaders and decision makers from CEMA organizations who are responsible for AI transformation within their organizations.

All organizations are currently using AI technology or are planning to use AI in the next 12 months.

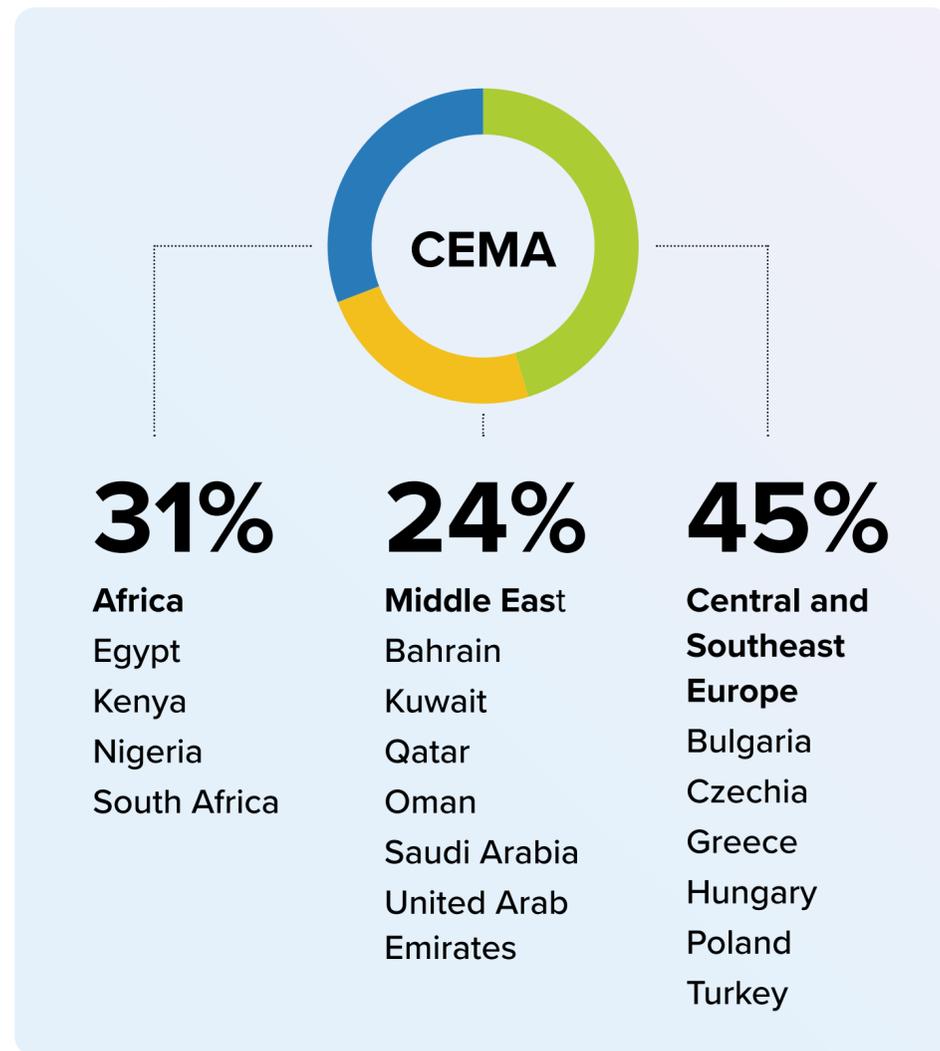
IDC also interviewed four enterprises about their AI strategies and use of AI within their businesses in the CEMA region.

**This research provides unique insight into the how organizations across CEMA are working to extract business value from AI.**

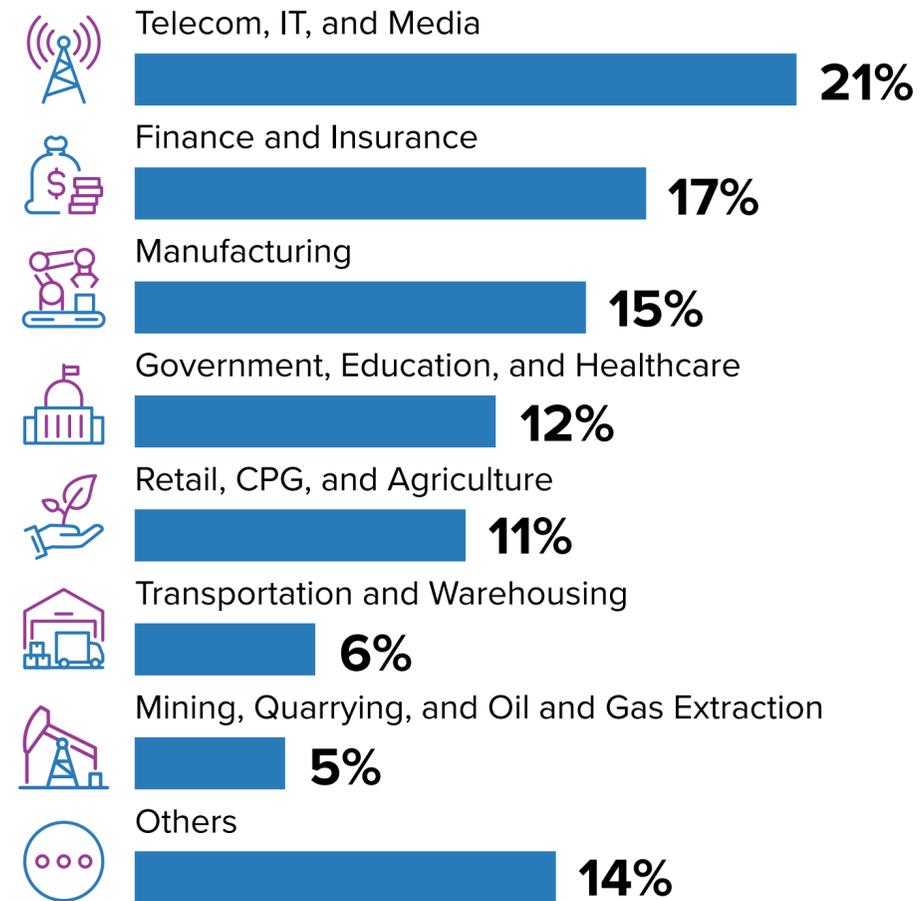
# About the IDC Survey

This IDC InfoBrief is based on new and existing primary research in three regions and in 16 countries. IDC conducted primary research among 320 business leaders and decision makers from several countries in CEMA. All respondents are responsible for AI transformation within their organizations. The surveyed companies have 100 or more employees.

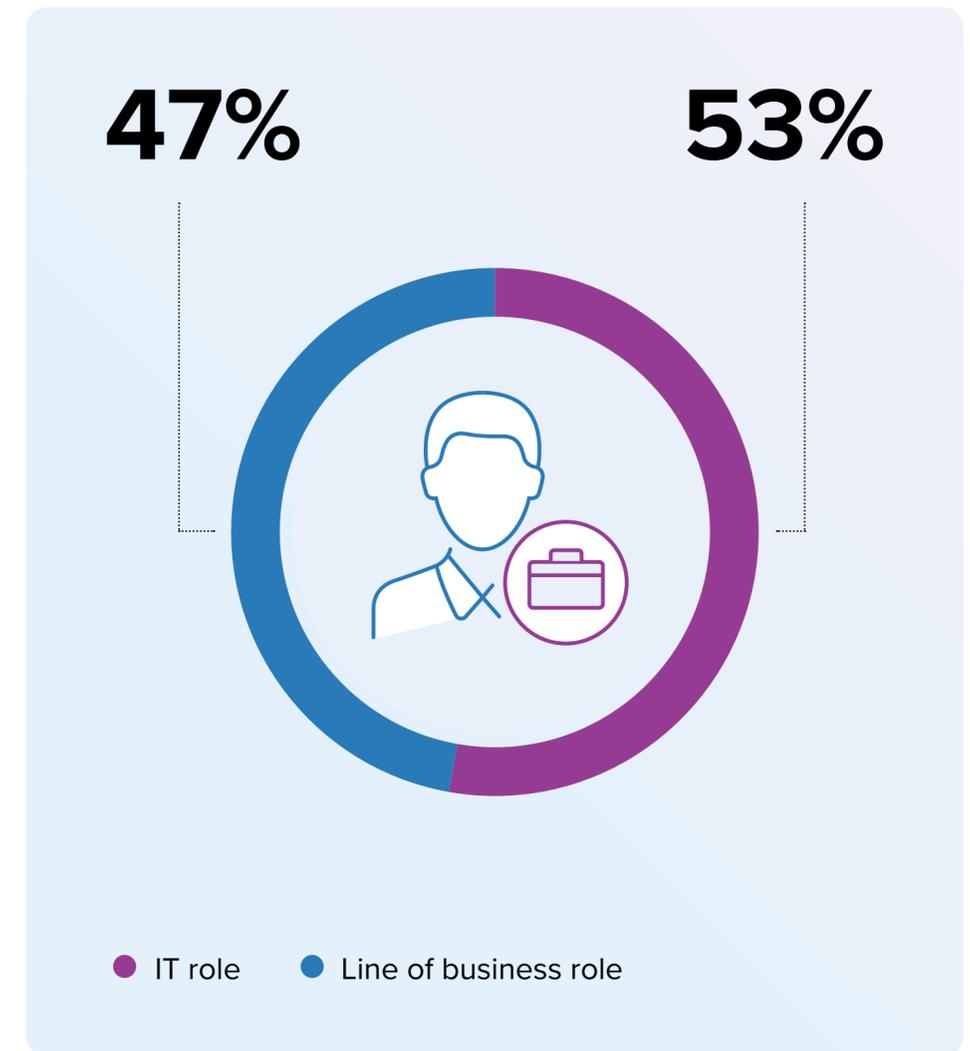
## Regions & Countries



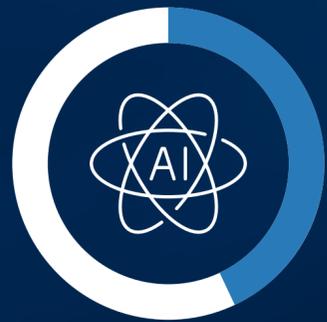
## Industries



## Job Roles



# Key Findings in the CEMA Region



**43%**

of respondents say their companies are already using AI.



**38%**

of respondents have an AI strategy that is linked to business objectives, and it includes a measurement strategy to evaluate success.



**47%**

of companies realize a return on their AI investments within less than 12 months.



**83%**

of companies realize for every \$1 invested in AI an average return of \$3 or more.

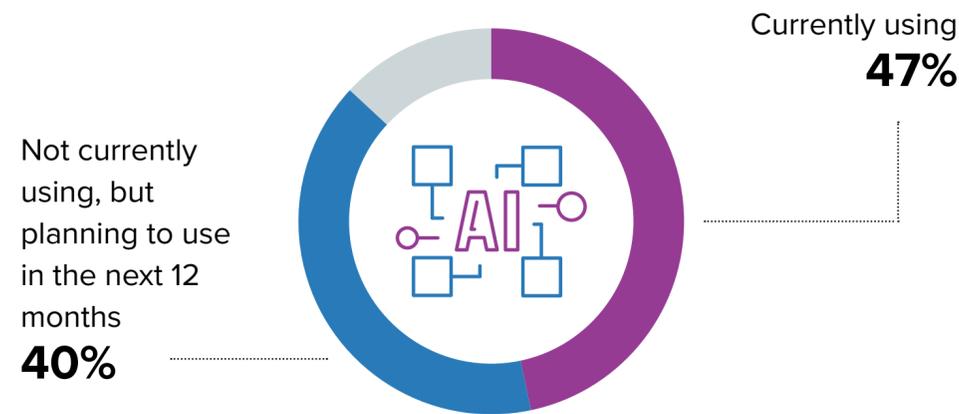


**47%**

of respondents are very or extremely prepared to take full advantage of AI capabilities, including generative AI, in the next 24 months.

# Africa — High Investments with a Strong Business Focus

**87%** of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

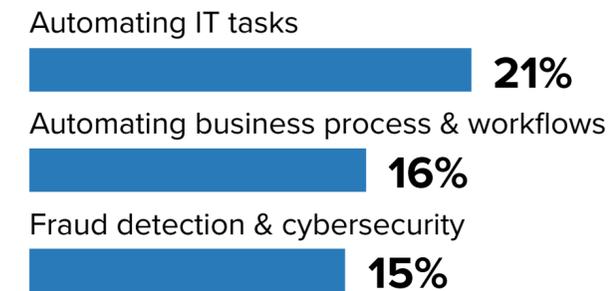


**30%** of companies expect **4X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**22%** of companies see a return on investment (ROI) from AI projects in less than six months.

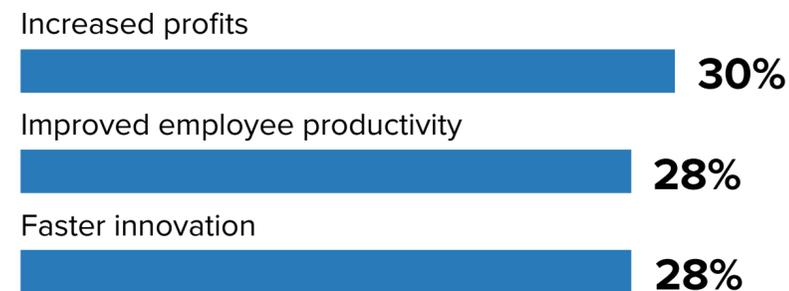
## Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

### Heavy focus on automating operations

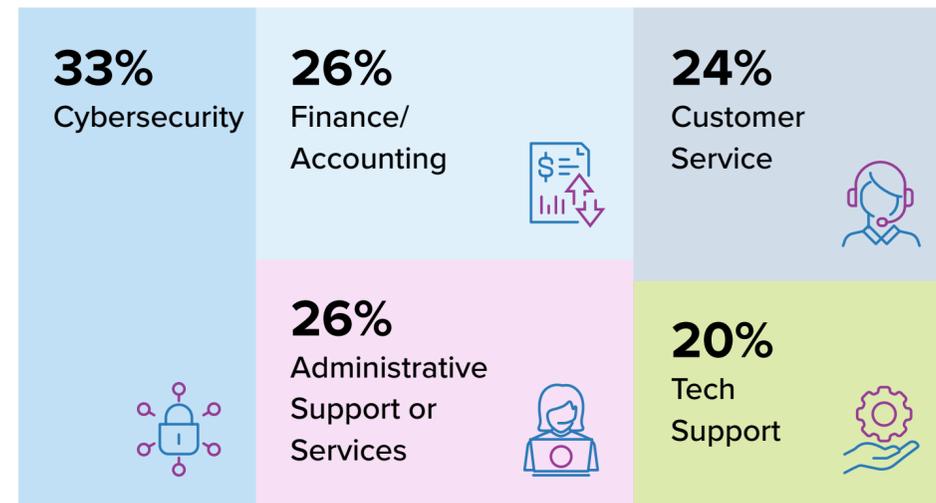


## Top 3 Business Outcomes:

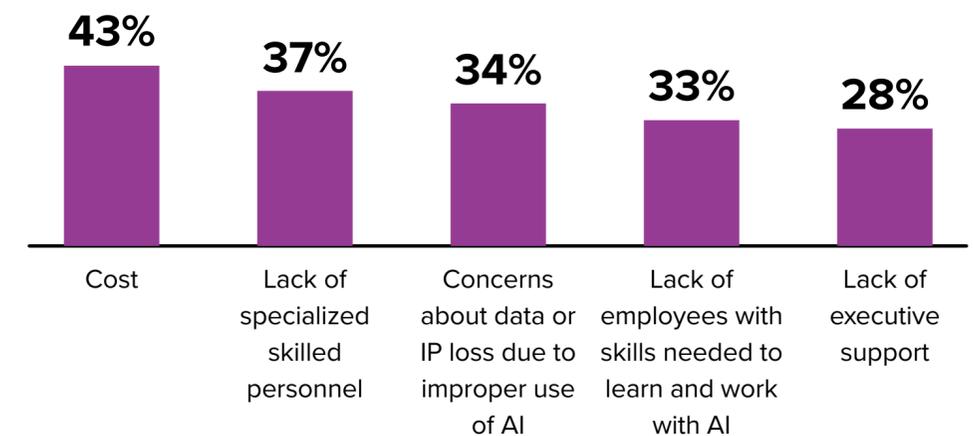
### Achieving business goals through improved efficiency and innovation



## Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

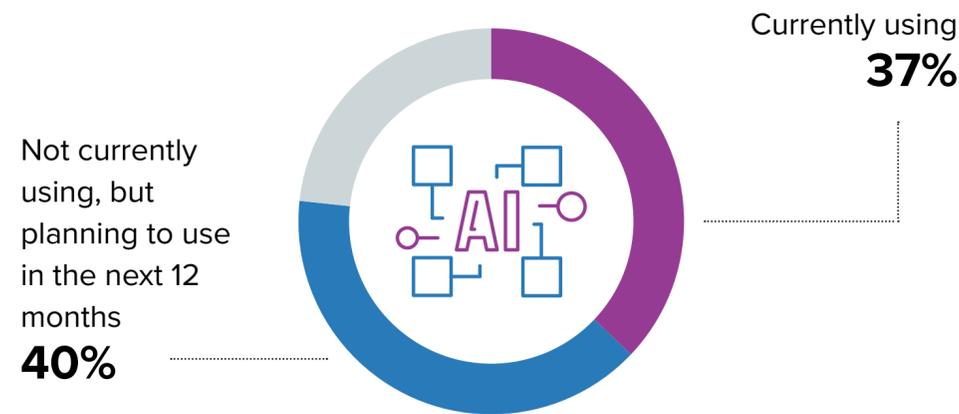


## To successfully deploy and run AI projects in Africa, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# Central and Southeast Europe – Achieving Business Goals with AI Investments

**77%** of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

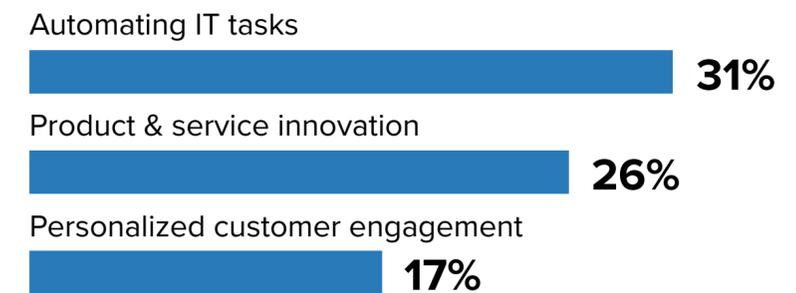


**41%** of companies expect **3X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**38%** of companies see a return on investment (ROI) from AI projects in 6-12 months.

## Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

**Strong customer focus to drive business**

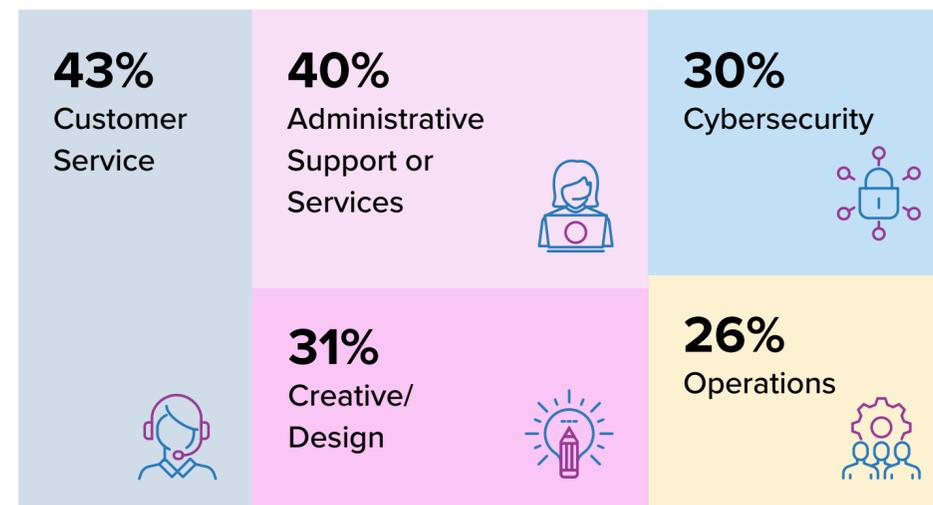


## Top 3 Business Outcomes:

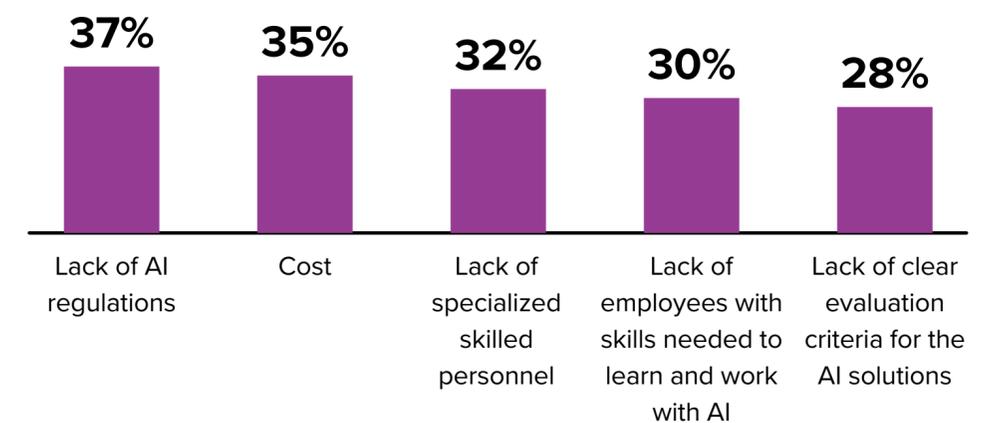
**Improved business with better CX and optimized costs**



## Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

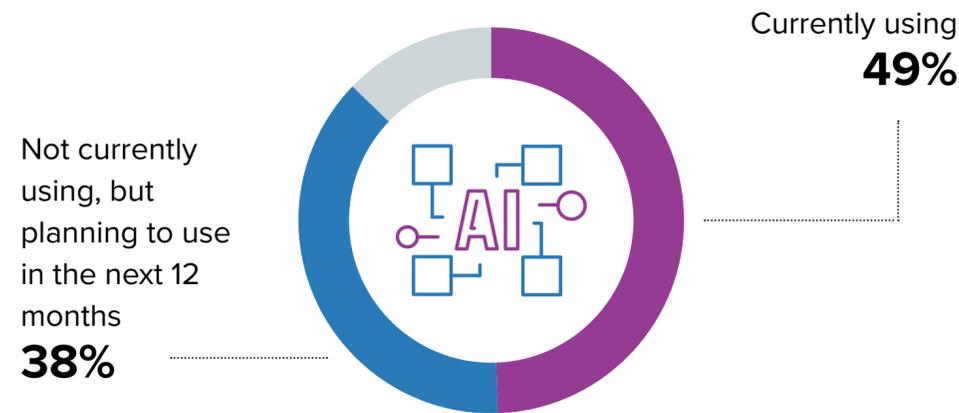


**To successfully deploy and run AI projects in Central and Southeast Europe, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:**



# Middle East — Balancing Optimization with Innovation in AI Adoption

**87%** of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

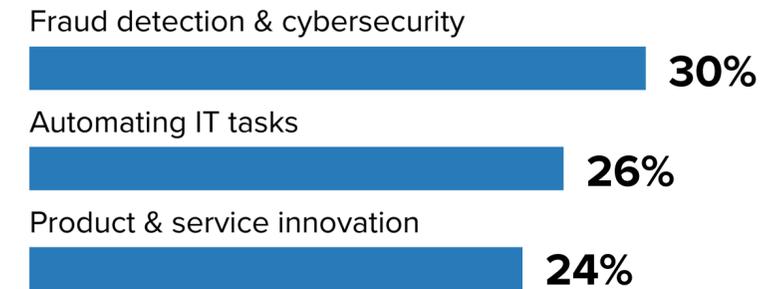


**39%** of companies expect **3X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**38%** of companies see a return on investment (ROI) from AI projects in 12 months.

## Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

**Finding balance between resiliency, optimization and innovation**

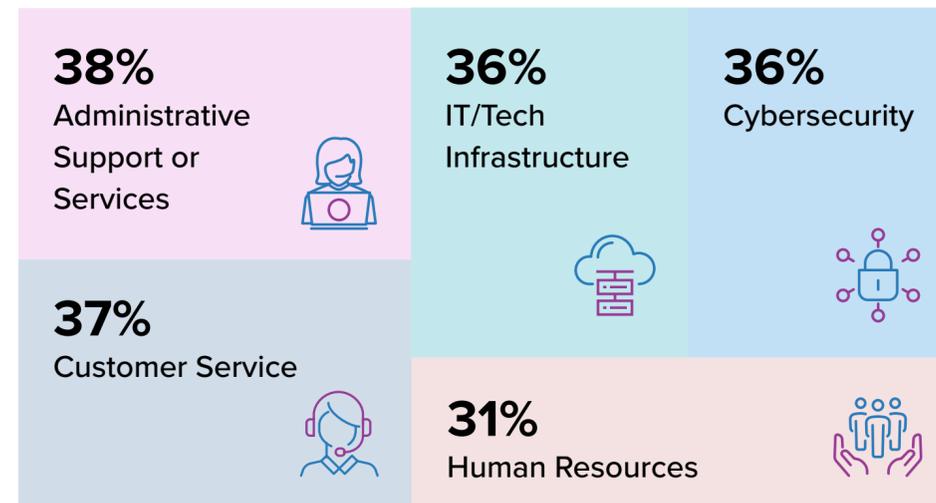


## Top 3 Business Outcomes:

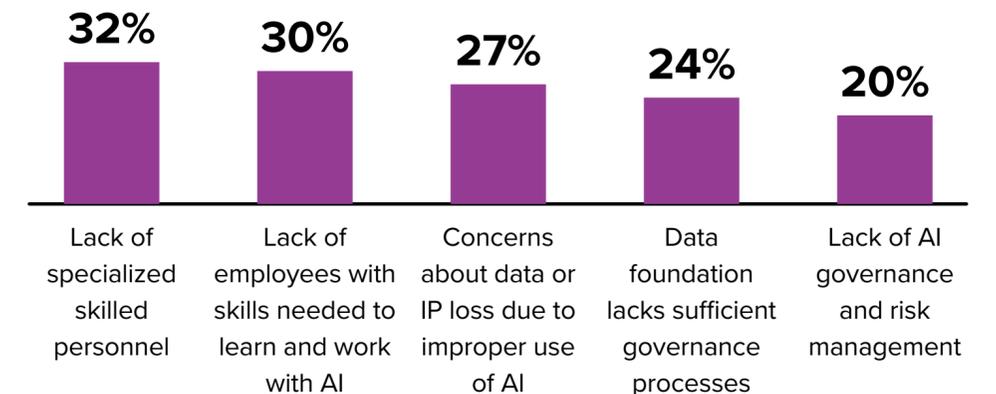
**Strong efficiency focus with sustainability playing a key role**



## Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

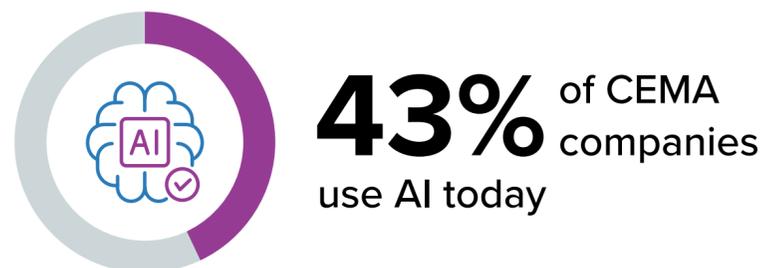


## To successfully deploy and run AI projects in the Middle East, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# Driven by Four Forces, AI Is Playing a Pivotal Role in How Organizations Transform

- AI powers actionable insights derived from vast datasets, enabling managers and executives to make more informed strategic choices.
- AI empowers organizations to streamline processes, reduce costs, and gain a competitive edge by helping automate routine tasks and enhancing predictive analytics.
- AI is powering new experiences for customers, partners, and suppliers, automating content creation and powering new ways of managing knowledge.

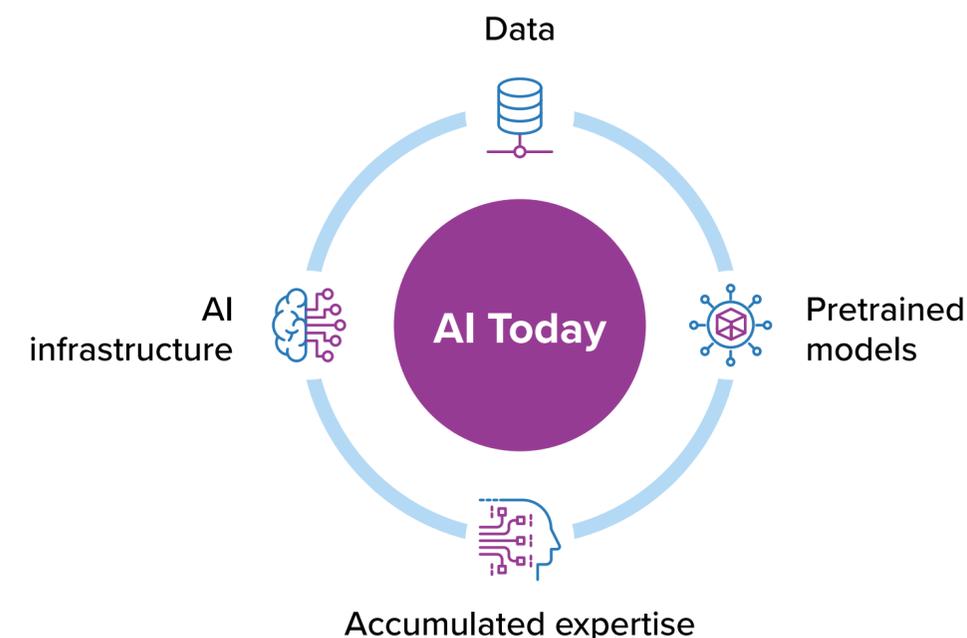


“A strong data foundation and high data quality are critical for successful AI adoption, ensuring that our AI solutions deliver accurate and valuable insights.”

Mariusz Bukowski, AI Director of Nest Bank

The growth of AI in business is underpinned by **the confluence of four forces**.

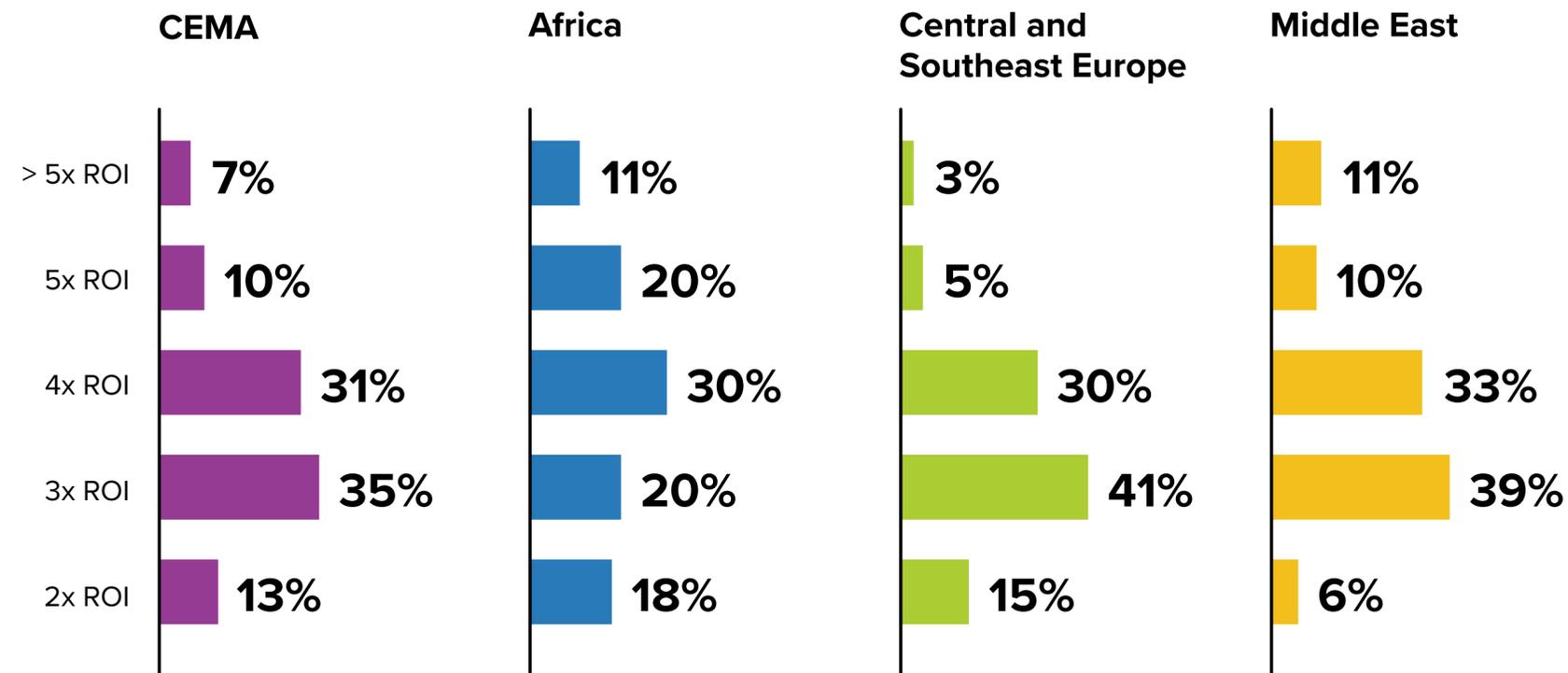
- 1 DATA:** In the digital age, abundant data fuels AI algorithms, enabling them to extract insights swiftly. Organizations primed to leverage this data stand poised for success.
- 2 PRETRAINED MODELS:** These models expedite AI solution development, saving time and resources while reducing risks. They can be customized for specific organizations and a wide variety of use cases.
- 3 AI INFRASTRUCTURE:** Cloud computing offers vast computing power without hefty upfront costs. Providers now offer tailored infrastructure for AI workloads, allowing seamless integration of AI into existing workflows.
- 4 ACCUMULATED EXPERIENCE:** Leveraging collective AI deployment experiences, organizations can access valuable insights and partnerships, unlocking AI’s vast potential across industries.



# AI Impacts Both the Top and Bottom Lines

Organizations in CEMA are deriving significant monetary value from their AI investments, with an average of \$3.50 return for every \$1 invested in AI.

**What would you estimate your organization's return on investment is for every \$1 spent on AI projects or initiatives?**



“ Our focus on AI isn’t just about innovation; it’s about delivering real value. By leveraging AI to enhance user experiences and operational efficiencies, we empower our customers to unlock new revenue streams and drive business growth.

Niels Berglund, Software Architect of Derivco

In **Africa**, while the overall ROI figures are lower than in other regions, 20% of projects still achieve 5x ROI levels. This suggests a growing recognition of the value proposition offered by AI technologies in addressing unique challenges and driving sustainable development across the African continent.

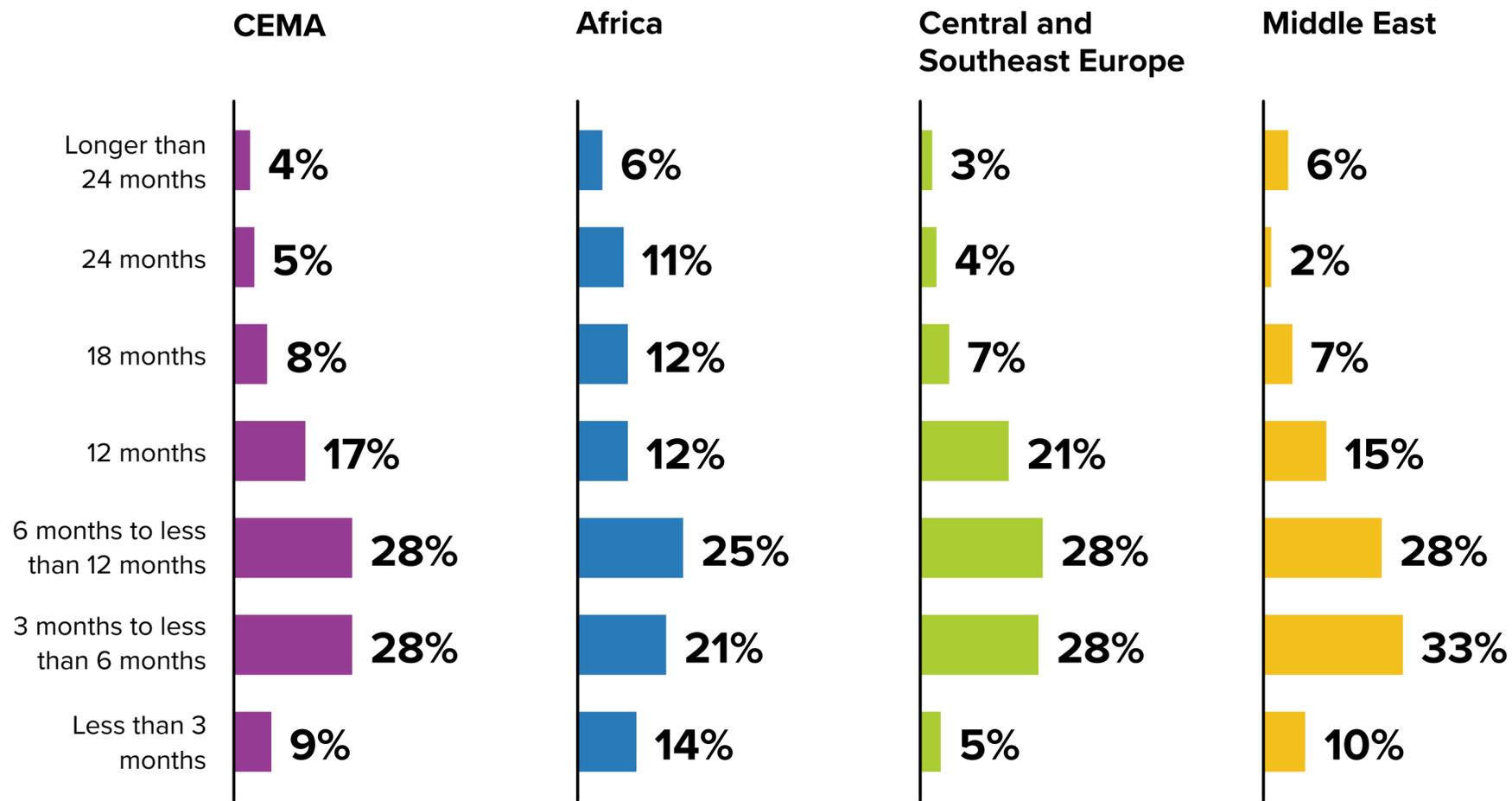
**Central and Southeast Europe** emerges as particularly fertile grounds for AI projects, boasting impressive ROI figures across the board. With a substantial 41% of projects yielding 3x ROI, and 30% achieving 4x ROI, the region demonstrates a robust commitment to AI implementation and reaps the rewards with consistently high returns. These statistics underscore the strategic importance of AI in driving economic growth and innovation within the European context.

In the **Middle East**, only a small group achieves 2x ROI (6%). A significant proportion attains higher returns, particularly at 3x (39%) and 4x (33%) ROI levels. This indicates a considerable appetite for AI initiatives and a propensity for substantial returns on investment within the region.

# AI Can Be Implemented Quickly

82% of AI deployments take 12 months or less, while 37% of organizations had implementation times of less than 6 months.

## What is the typical timeline your organization has experienced in implementing AI solutions?



**Africa** stands out for its diverse timelines, with 35% rapidly adopting in under 6 months, while 23% require between 18 to 24 months, potentially due to infrastructural, regulatory and financial challenges. The continent's unique market dynamics, entrepreneurial spirit, and increasing investment in digital infrastructure drive notable AI advancements at varied paces.

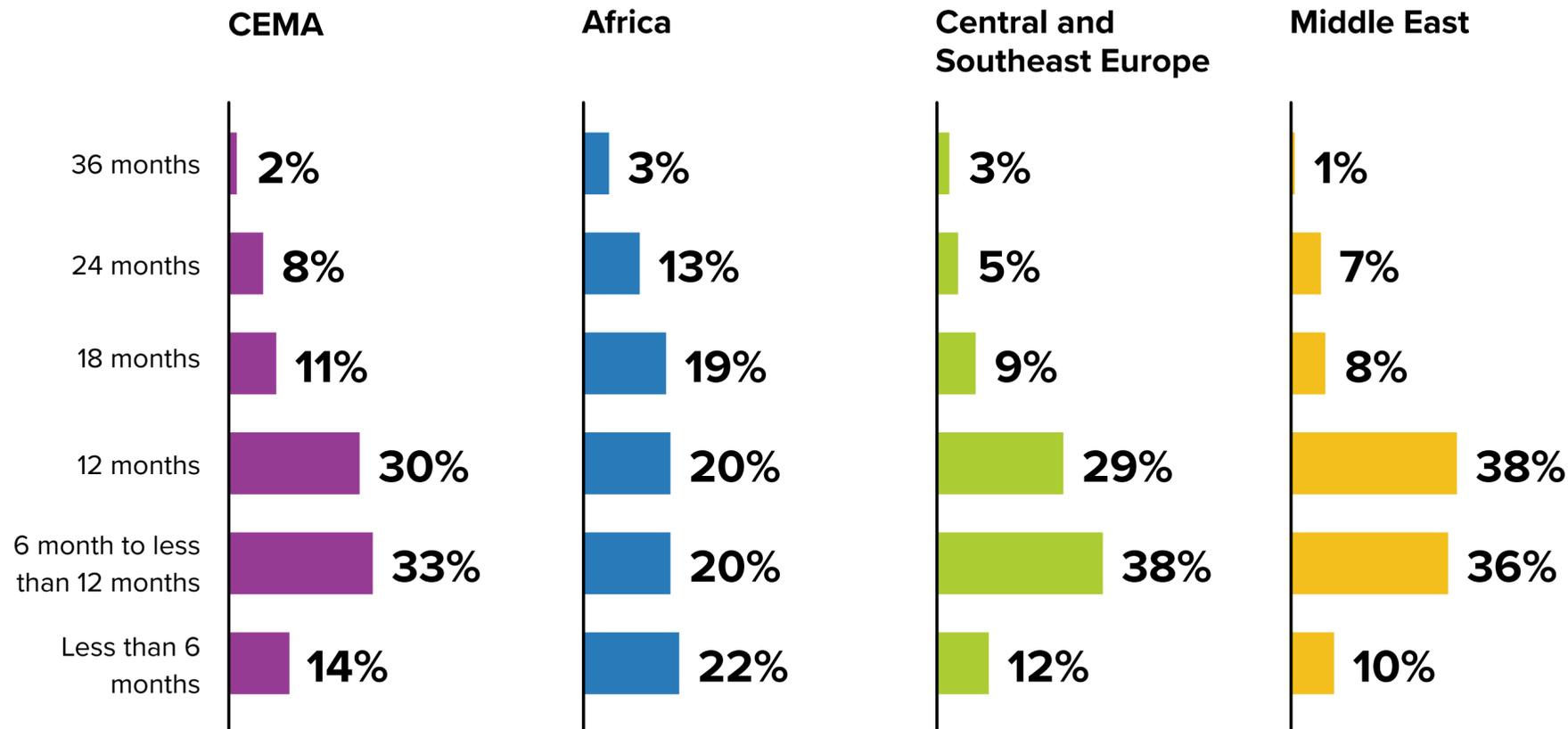
**Central and Southeast Europe's** AI adoption is mostly moderate (50% in 6 to 12 months), reflecting commitment to thorough planning for effective delivery. Rapid deployments (33% in less than 6 months) are driven by EU funding and tech hubs, while 14% take 18 to over 24 months due to regulatory challenges, skills gaps, and economic disparities.

In the **Middle East**, a notable emphasis on quick results is evident, with 43% of projects completing in under 6 months, suggesting a preference for rapid deployment and ROI realization, aligning with the region's strong government initiatives and significant tech investment.

# AI Also Delivers Value Quickly

47% of all companies realize a return on their AI investments within less than 12 months.

**What is the typical timeline your organization has experienced before seeing an ROI from AI projects or initiatives?**



“ In AI, time is critical, and G42’s customers often need help to accelerate their projects. Recognizing the importance of speed, we assist customers in swiftly executing AI initiatives to ensure they don’t miss out on opportunities and maintain a competitive edge.

Andrew Jackson, EVP, Chief AI Officer of G42

**Africa** exhibits a more gradual pace of ROI realization, with a higher proportion extending beyond 12 months. Although 62% achieve ROI within the first year, 35% take over 1.5 years, suggesting a nuanced approach driven by long-term sustainability considerations and navigating socioeconomic challenges.

**Central and Southeast Europe** demonstrates a commitment to expeditious ROI, with 79% of projects yielding returns within the first year, aligning with the dynamic business environment’s need for agility.

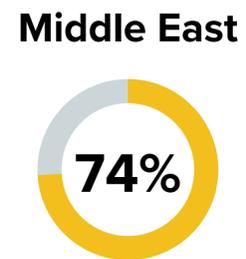
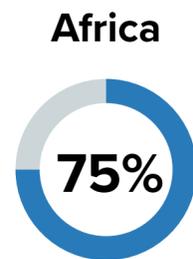
In the **Middle East**, there’s a focus on quick ROI realization, with 84% of projects achieving ROI within the first year, reflecting a proactive approach to leveraging AI for immediate gains and capitalizing on opportunities swiftly.

# Organizations' AI investments Target a Wide Variety of Business Outcomes and Differ Across Regions

In this era of AI, businesses must embrace advanced technologies that align with their goals, emphasizing the importance of a clear AI strategy. This not only ensures improved processes, but it also creates value through innovative solutions.

“**At Nest Bank, client-centricity is paramount, and aligning our AI strategy with our overarching business goals is essential to enhance the customer experience.**”  
 Karolina Mitraszewska, COO of Nest Bank

## Percentage of companies with an AI strategy linked to business objectives



## Which of the following are the three most important business outcomes that your organization is trying to achieve from AI initiatives? [Choose up to 3]



In Africa, the primary focus is on leveraging AI to drive profitability and workforce productivity. Additionally, fostering faster innovation and enhancing sustainability efforts are prioritized, indicating a forward-looking approach that balances economic growth with environmental consciousness.



The data highlights a strategic focus on leveraging AI to boost profitability and achieve cost savings. Increasing profits emerges as the primary objective, followed closely by realizing cost efficiencies. Simultaneously, enhancing the customer experience and expanding market share are also prioritized, reflecting a balanced approach.



AI adoption in the Middle East is poised to drive operational optimization, workforce productivity, sustainability efforts, and profitability. Notably, improving the customer experience remains a priority alongside these core business objectives, underscoring a well-rounded strategy aimed at harnessing AI's potential across multiple fronts.

# AI Is Versatile and Widespread

AI has proven to be a flexible and game-changing asset, with relevant applications in every aspect of business operations, be it enhancing executive decision-making or streamlining day-to-day tasks. Numerous enterprises have already integrated AI seamlessly into various business functions.

**Successful companies adopt diverse perspectives** to assess AI’s potential value, strategically pinpointing opportunities for its deployment and tailoring its implementation **to suit the distinct objectives and requirements of each business unit within the organization.**

“The integration of AI into our operations is reshaping how we protect digital landscapes. By automating complex processes and enhancing decision-making with AI, we’re not only accelerating response times but also freeing our clients to focus on what truly matters to them — running their businesses without the fear of cyber disruptions.

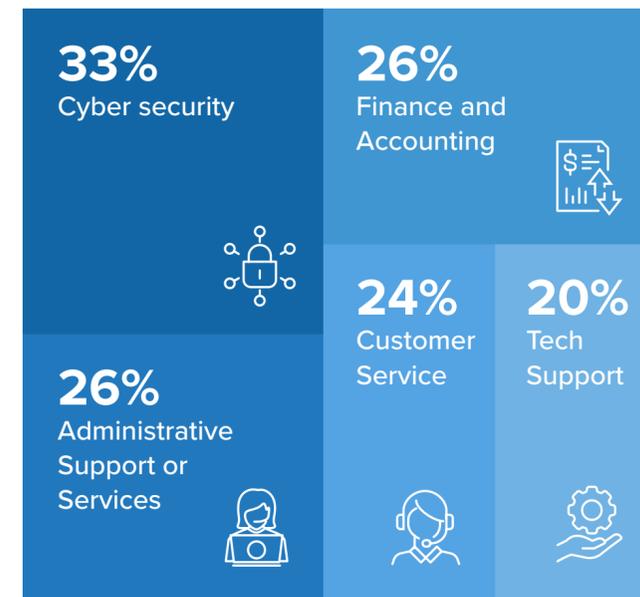
Danny Karpati, VP of AI Technologies, Check Point

## Four business value lenses for AI use cases

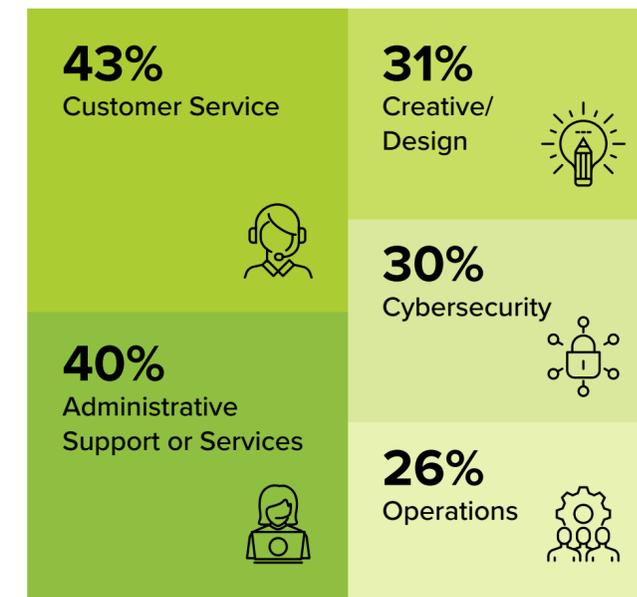
- Automation:** Streamlining routine tasks to free up human resources for strategic activities.
- Optimization:** Enhancing efficiency and reducing costs through AI’s data-driven insights.
- Modernization:** Revitalizing legacy systems with AI to ensure agility and relevance.
- Innovation:** Acting as a catalyst for creative problem-solving and product development.

## Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI

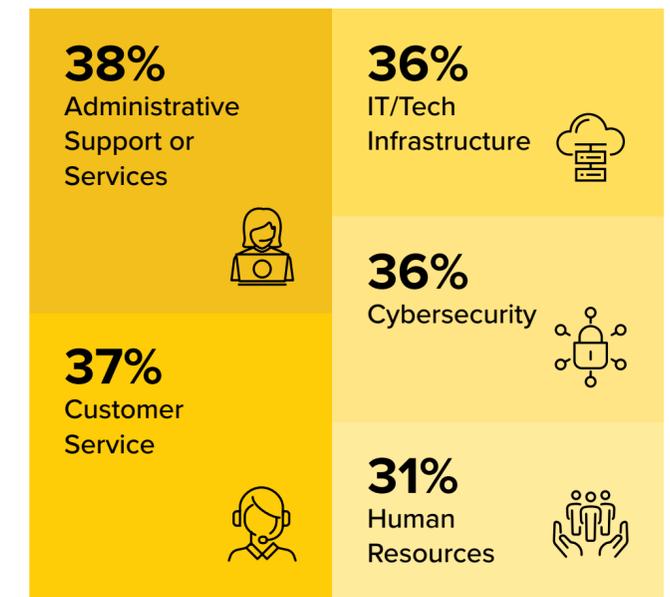
### Africa



### Central and Southeast Europe

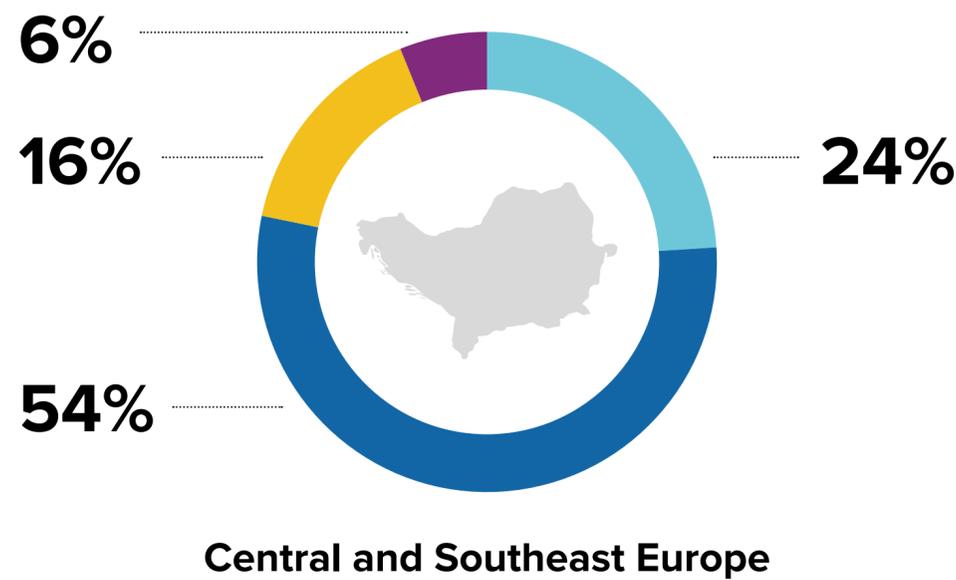
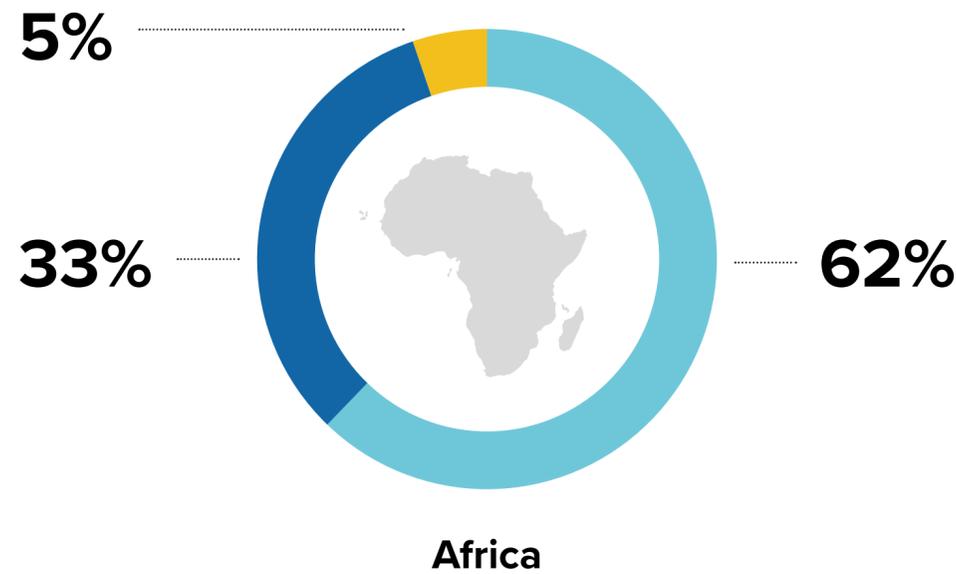
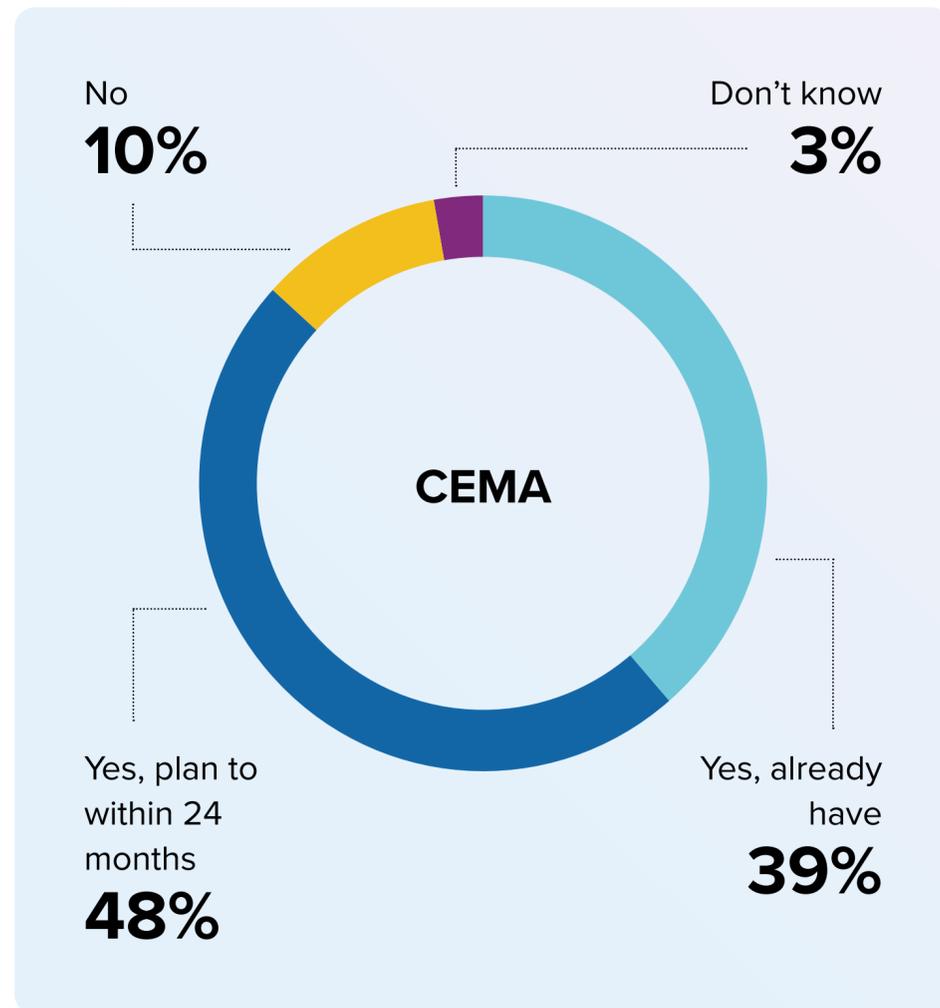


### Middle East

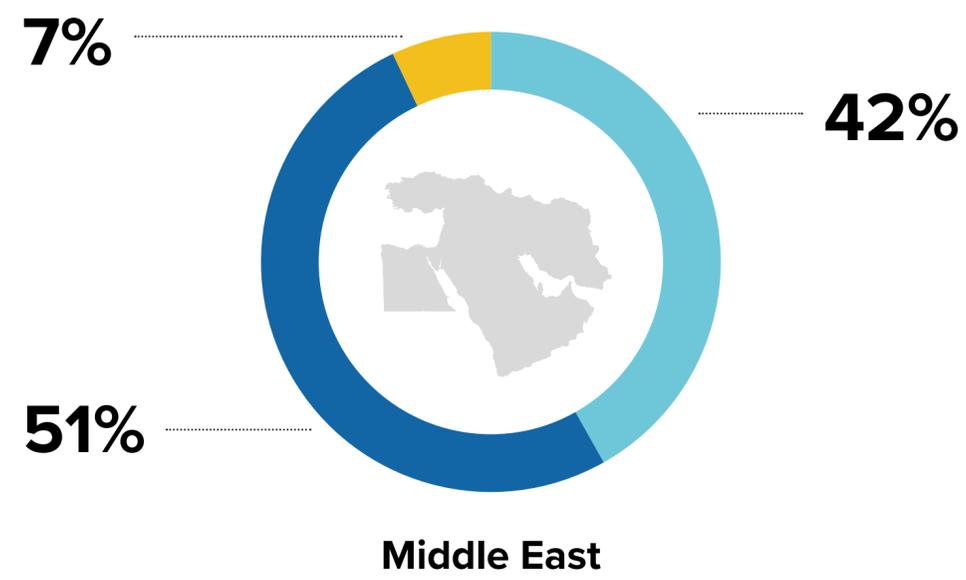


# CEMA Organizations Prioritize AI Investments

Has your organization already reduced spending in certain areas/for certain AI projects or will it do so within 24 months, reallocating the spending to AI projects or initiatives?

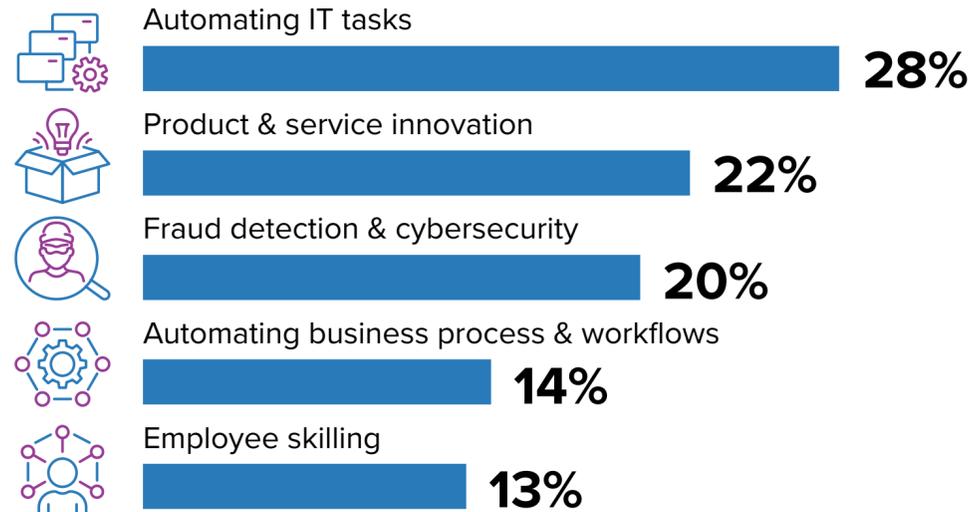


CEMA companies prioritize AI investment by reducing spending in other IT areas. Nearly 50% of organizations plan to reallocate resources within the next two years, and a substantial portion have already implemented this strategy, reflecting a strategic shift towards harnessing the transformative potential of AI technologies within organizational budgets.

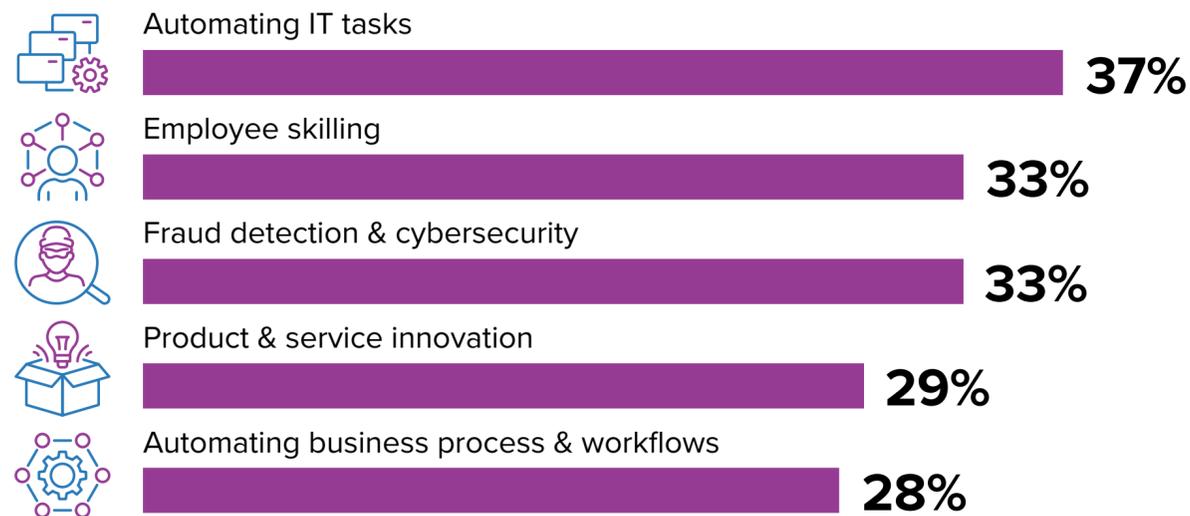


# Primary AI Use Cases in the CEMA Region

## Top 5 AI tasks and use cases organizations are currently monetizing



## Top 5 AI tasks and use cases organizations plan to monetize within 24 months



**The breadth of AI applications showcased in the data presents companies' aspirations to harness AI across multiple domains.**

For **Africa**, automating IT tasks and leveraging AI for fraud detection and cybersecurity are key priorities, indicating a focus on technological enhancement and risk mitigation. Predictive analytics, forecasting, and employee skilling applications highlight a data-driven approach to decision-making and workforce development. Notably, AI is also being explored for copywriting tasks, showcasing the diversity of use cases. The priorities reflect a combination of operational efficiency, security, and capacity-building initiatives.

For **Central and Southeast Europe**, the emphasis lies on automating IT tasks, likely to optimize infrastructure. Product and service innovation through AI is prioritized to meet customer demands. Personalized customer engagement initiatives highlight the focus on tailored experiences. Predictive analytics, forecasting, and automating business processes underscore the drive for data-driven decision-making and operational efficiency. Overall, the applications reflect a strategic blend of streamlining operations, fostering innovation, and enhancing customer interactions.

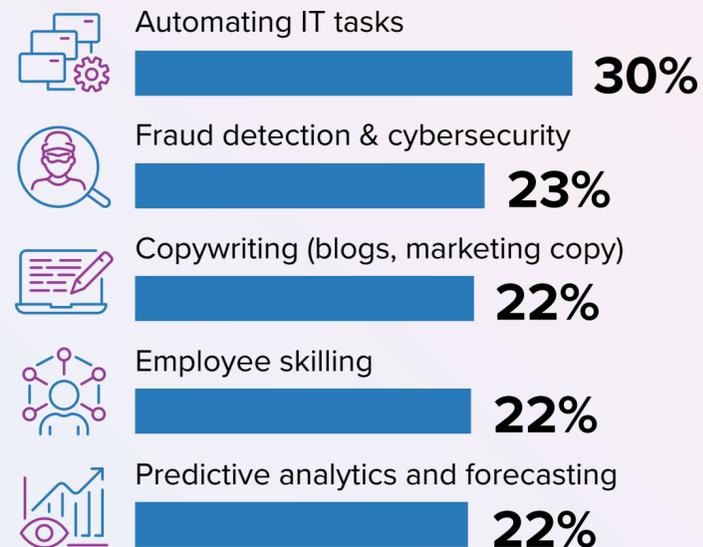
Companies in the **Middle East** are currently prioritizing the monetization of AI for fraud detection and cybersecurity applications. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on automating IT tasks and leveraging AI to drive product and service innovation. Automating business processes and workflows, as well as art and image generation, are also areas where AI is being actively monetized, reflecting a diverse range of use cases across various industries and domains.

# IT Automation, Cybersecurity, and Fraud Detection Are Prioritized in All Subregions

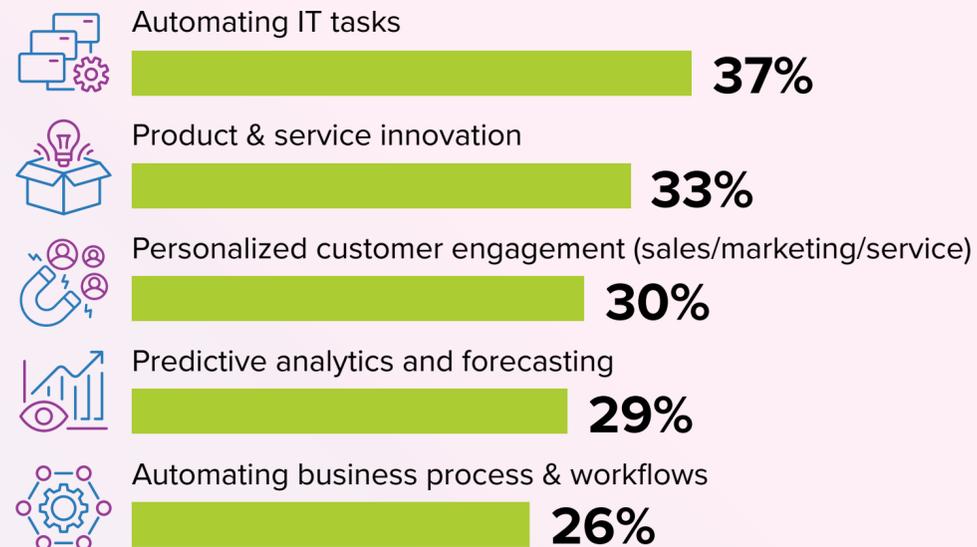
“ Our success in AI adoption lies not just in the sophistication of our technology, but also in our ability to translate complex models into real-world solutions. It’s about understanding the business problem first and foremost, then leveraging AI to address it effectively.

Andrew Jackson, EVP, Chief AI Officer of G42

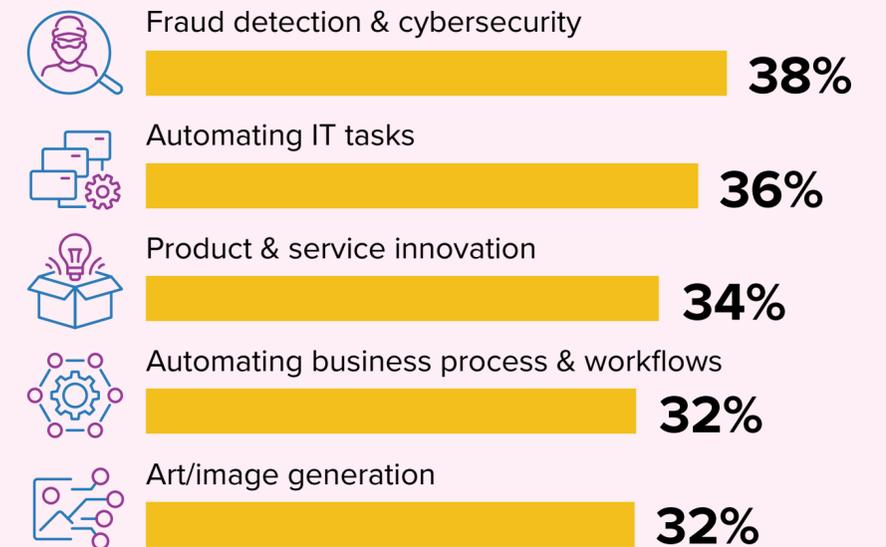
## Top 5 AI tasks and use cases organizations are currently monetizing



Africa



Central and Southeast Europe



Middle East

# What Holds Organizations Back?

Even with the excitement and hope for what AI can bring, it is not easy to implement and scale AI technologies.

**What challenges have you experienced/do you expect to experience when implementing AI technology in your organization? [Choose all that apply]**

**(Top 7 presented)**

Lack of specialized skilled personnel (prompt engineers, data scientists, data engineers or AI modelers)



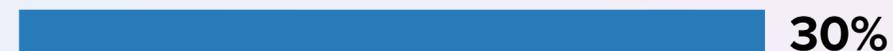
Cost



Lack of employees with skills needed to learn and work with AI



Lack of AI regulations



Concerns about data or IP loss due to improper use of AI



Lack of clear evaluation criteria for the AI solutions



Data foundation lacks sufficient governance processes (e.g., security, provenance)



**“ Mastering integration skills is crucial at Derivco. It’s not just about knowing AI; it’s about seamlessly blending AI into our systems to create practical solutions that enhance our offerings.**

Darryl Purnell, Executive Group Head of Derivco



### Africa:

- 43% Cost
- 37% Lack of specialized skilled personnel
- 34% Concerns about data or IP loss due to improper use of AI



### Central and Southeast Europe:

- 37% Lack of AI regulations
- 35% Cost
- 32% Lack of specialized skilled personnel



### Middle East:

- 32% Lack of specialized skilled personnel
- 30% Lack of employees with skills needed to learn and work with AI
- 27% Concerns about data or IP loss due to improper use of AI

Several obstacles hinder AI adoption within CEMA companies, including insufficient data security and provenance governance, which raise concerns over data and IP loss. The lack of clear evaluation criteria for AI solutions, absence of regulations, and shortage of skilled personnel further exacerbate challenges. High implementation costs also pose a significant barrier. Addressing these hurdles necessitates strategies focusing on data governance, regulatory clarity, skill development, and cost-effective approaches to drive successful AI integration.

# Security Breaches and Exposed Consumer Data Are Top Concerns for Organizations in CEMA

“ At Check Point, we see AI not just as a tool but as a transformational force. It’s about making our cybersecurity products smarter and inherently proactive. AI allows us to anticipate and neutralize threats before they materialize, ensuring that our defenses are as dynamic and forward-thinking as the threats they encounter.

Danny Karpati, VP of AI Technologies, Check Point



42%

Security breach



36%

Customer data exposed



29%

Regulatory risk



28%

Damage to brand reputation



27%

Revenue loss



26%

Hidden costs



23%

Compromised trust



22%

Technical debt



18%

Liability concerns



17%

Criminal investigation

Safeguarding sensitive data and systems integrity against cyberthreats is critical, with security breaches often being cited as a primary apprehension. This reflects the increasing awareness of cybersecurity as a pivotal aspect of responsible AI governance, given the potential ramifications of breaches on both organizational operations and customer trust.

Concerns about damage to brand reputation and revenue loss stresses the close relationship between trust, financial stability, and corporate image in the AI-driven landscape.

# C-Suite Leaders Are Critical to Sustainable Success with AI

## Top 5 Corporate Values of Today



- Trustworthiness
- Flexibility
- Respect
- Growth mindset
- Innovation

Build on a foundation of trust and accountability to foster courage to change and experiment

## Top 5 Corporate Values of Tomorrow



- Speed of execution
- Trustworthiness
- Courage
- Experimentation
- Innovation

**C-suite leaders must embrace new values — without letting go of current ones!**

### Cultivate trust and accountability

To foster courage and experimentation, companies must prioritize transparency and open communication. Clear feedback channels empower employees to voice ideas and concerns, nurturing trust and respect within the organization. Leaders should exemplify transparency in decision-making, encouraging a culture where trust thrives, enabling teams to embrace change confidently.

### Balancing values for growth

Maintaining current values while embracing new ones necessitates a balanced approach. C-suite leaders must champion adaptability while preserving core values like trustworthiness and respect. By fostering a culture of continuous innovation and growth, companies can navigate change effectively while staying true to their foundational principles.

### Empowering leadership for change

Investing in leadership development is crucial for realizing future values like speed, courage, and experimentation. Equipped with the right skills and mindset, C-suite executives can drive change and empower teams to innovate. By fostering a culture of courage and experimentation, companies can accelerate decision-making and adapt swiftly to market shifts, supporting sustainable growth while upholding core values.

# Check Point: Exploring the Leading Edge of AI Innovation in Security Solutions

Check Point is a leading cybersecurity company that has strategically integrated AI and GenAI into its operations and product offerings. This integration aims to enhance internal processes and enrich the products provided to customers, helping maintain their competitive edge in the rapidly evolving tech landscape.



## AI in strategic projects:

Check Point leverages AI in various strategic projects, primarily focusing on security operations and threat prevention. AI technologies help summarize tickets in security operations centers (SOCs), providing better understanding and learning from security incidents. This AI application extends to other departments, such as sales and HR, enhancing operational efficiency and decision-making processes. Check Point's product strategy incorporates AI to shape human experiences, boost threat prevention capabilities, embed AI across all products and services, and explore new opportunities created by AI technologies.



## Training on technology and security:

A cornerstone of Check Point's AI strategy is its heavy emphasis on training and ensuring security. The company has conducted extensive training programs, including general AI training, department-specific sessions, and developers' courses. Developers received technical training to ensure they are proficient in AI technologies. This robust training regime is designed to equip employees with the necessary skills to leverage AI effectively. Alongside training, Check Point enforces strict security measures to protect intellectual property. Employees are required to adhere to comprehensive AI use policies, including regular updates to guidelines reflecting the latest security challenges. Private ChatGPT usage is prohibited for work involving sensitive information, mandating the use of enterprise versions to safeguard data integrity and confidentiality.



## Driving in-house innovation:

Check Point's strategy to drive in-house innovation is built on four key pillars. The first pillar is shaping the next wave of human experience. GenAI plays a crucial role here, as it enables the development of new applications that redefine how users interact with technology. The second pillar focuses on unparalleled threat prevention through advanced security engines. By harnessing GenAI, these engines achieve unprecedented scale, speed, and efficiency. The third pillar emphasizes embedding AI into all products and services with a data-first approach. This involves a shift in mindset where product managers and architects prioritize data collection and pipeline creation to maximize AI potential. The fourth pillar highlights new product and service opportunities, recognizing that AI technology not only offers innovative solutions but also introduces new security challenges.

Keys to success:  
**Business and AI strategy alignment with heavy focus on training and security**



A strong **focus on comprehensive training** ensures employees are well-equipped to utilize AI technologies. The establishment of dedicated structures like the AI Excellence Center fosters **a data-driven approach to track and measure AI initiatives**. Encouraging **in-house innovation** keeps the momentum alive. Clear AI policies and guidelines, including stringent IP protection measures and specific tool recommendations, ensure the responsible and effective use of AI across the organization. These factors collectively enable Check Point to harness AI's full potential, driving innovation and maintaining its leadership in cybersecurity.

IDC Interview with  
**Danny Karpati**  
VP of AI Technologies, Check Point

# Core42: Empowering AI Adoption, Balancing Speed and Strategy for Success

G42, a company that stands at the forefront of AI innovation, has seamlessly integrated AI into its core strategy. Leveraging the capabilities of Microsoft’s Azure Cloud, G42 not only builds and utilizes AI solutions but also resells these cutting-edge technologies. This complex engagement with AI underscores its centrality to G42’s operations and ambitions, enabling the company to stand out in a highly competitive tech landscape. Core42 is a G42 company and leading provider of sovereign cloud, cybersecurity, and AI infrastructure and services.



## Core42’s AI ecosystem:

At the heart of Core42’s AI ecosystem is the development of large language models (LLMs) that operate on Microsoft Cloud. This partnership allows G42 to create and deploy AI solutions with remarkable efficiency and scale. The company has launched a unique AI model named JAIS, which is tailored to handle complex interactions and build services on Microsoft Azure. This model exemplifies Core42’s dual role as both a creator and consumer of AI, showcasing their capability to innovate and implement AI-driven products within their operations and for external markets.



## Challenges in AI adoption:

Despite the central role of AI in Core42’s strategy, the company faces challenges related to AI adoption among customers. An initial issue is the lack of understanding about AI among potential users. Many customers are intrigued by the potential of AI but do not have appropriate use cases defined up front. This knowledge gap often necessitates educational efforts from G42, involving direct engagement with senior management teams to identify the right use cases to work on. This lengthy process from conceptualizing AI solutions to market readiness poses a challenge for deploying use cases.



## Strategic responses to market needs:

To overcome these hurdles, Core42 adopts a pragmatic approach advising customers to buy existing appropriate AI products where feasible, and only building custom solutions when there is a clear, unmet need and potential for competitive advantage. This strategy minimizes development time and costs, ensuring that Core42 remains agile and responsive to market dynamics. Moreover, Core42’s focus on prototyping and iterative development helps in refining AI solutions that precisely meet customer needs, thereby reducing the uncertainty and time associated with traditional development cycles.

Keys to success:  
**Pragmatic approach to AI sourcing coupled with supporting customers in aligning AI with business outcomes**



The success of Core42’s AI initiatives hinges on several critical factors. Firstly, their **robust collaboration with partners like Microsoft** provides the necessary computational power and intellectual support. Secondly, Core42’s **investment in human capital**, assembling a talented team of AI experts, drives innovation and implementation excellence. Finally, Core42’s commitment to educating the market and **aligning AI solutions with real business needs** ensures that their products are both relevant and effective. These elements, combined with a strategic approach to AI deployment, position Core42 to not only navigate but thrive in the rapidly evolving AI landscape.

IDC Interview with  
**Andrew Jackson**  
 EVP, Chief AI Officer, G42



# Derivco: Integrating AI to Lead the Future of Gaming Technology

Derivco is a globally recognized leader in iGaming technology and software development, with a robust presence across multiple international locations. Central to their success is the strategic integration of AI into their operations, enabling them to deliver cutting-edge software platforms that enhance iGaming experiences for customers worldwide.



## AI-enabled products focused on customer needs:

A central aspect of Derivco's strategy is the development of AI-enabled products tailored to meet customer needs. Rather than adopting AI for its own sake, Derivco focuses on leveraging AI to enhance the functionality and value of its software platforms. By embedding AI into their products, they create intelligent solutions that improve customer experiences and enable business success. This product-driven approach ensures that every AI application serves a clear purpose, whether it is personalizing user interactions, or promoting responsible iGaming practices. This ensures their platforms are not only engaging but also ethical, reflecting Derivco's commitment to responsible gaming.



## Data foundation and the role of cloud in AI:

Derivco's success with AI is built on a solid data foundation and the strategic use of cloud technology. Recognizing early on that quality data is essential for effective AI, Derivco leveraged Databricks to establish a robust data lake, ensuring reliable, comprehensive data sources for their AI models. This foundation supports a wide range of machine learning (ML) applications, enabling precise pattern recognition and predictive analytics. Additionally, the cloud plays a crucial role in Derivco's AI strategy by providing the flexibility, scalability, and resources needed to develop and deploy AI solutions efficiently. Cloud infrastructure allows for rapid experimentation and iteration, significantly reducing time to market for new products and features.



## Navigating the skills challenge:

As Derivco continues to expand its AI capabilities, the company faces significant challenges in sourcing and retaining skilled talent. The competition for AI expertise is intense, driven by a global surge in demand and the hype surrounding AI technologies. Derivco distinguishes itself by attracting smart, curious individuals who are open to new topics and eager to learn. The real challenge lies in integrating advanced GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, into their systems — a skill not widely possessed even among AI professionals. Traditional integration skills are crucial, often more so than deep AI expertise. Derivco's strategy emphasizes a balanced approach, combining innovative thinking with practical integration skills to ensure successful AI adoption across the organization.

Keys to success:  
**Solving business problems with AI, effective data management, and strong leadership and expertise**



Derivco **prioritizes AI initiatives that directly address specific business challenges**, ensuring tangible improvements in efficiency and product quality. Their **robust data foundation, supported by advanced cloud technology**, guarantees reliable data sources and rapid innovation. Additionally, **the strategic vision from the C-suite, combined with the expertise of their data teams**, fosters a culture of continuous learning and innovation, ensuring broad organizational support for AI projects.

IDC Interview with  
**Darryl Purnell**  
Executive Group Head, Derivco

**Niels Berglund**  
Software Architect, Derivco

# Nest Bank: Harnessing AI for a Customer-Centric Banking Experience

Nest Bank, a forward-thinking financial institution, primarily serves entrepreneurs, recognizing their need for seamless processes and time-saving solutions. Central to Nest Bank's overarching strategy is a customer-first approach, which emphasizes enhancing the customer experience through smooth and efficient products and services. This commitment to customer satisfaction drives the bank's innovative efforts and shapes its strategic direction. By leveraging cutting-edge technology, particularly AI, Nest Bank aims to maintain a competitive edge and offer superior solutions tailored to their clients' needs.



## AI integration and competitive advantage:

AI plays a pivotal role in Nest Bank's strategy. The integration of AI in various processes, such as using biometrics during onboarding, exemplifies the bank's commitment to efficiency and security. AI applications are designed to not only streamline operations but also to offer innovative and user-friendly solutions that enhance the customer experience. This strategic alignment ensures that AI initiatives are fully supported by the bank's overarching goals.



## AI initiatives and employee support:

Internally, Nest Bank has introduced Eagle Owl, an AI assistant for employees, to streamline processes and improve efficiency. While initial adoption required educating employees on effective use and prompting techniques, the AI assistant ultimately aims to enhance productivity and support staff in their daily tasks. Externally, the hero project is an N!Assistant, an AI assistant for clients that is easy to use and adheres to stringent data privacy requirements, demonstrating the bank's commitment to innovation. This phased rollout, starting with 1,000 Android users, allows Nest Bank to improve the solution before broader deployment.



## Overcoming challenges and building capabilities:

Nest Bank faced significant challenges in scaling its data engineering team, which was essential for supporting its AI ambitions. The scarcity of highly qualified talent prompted the creation of a team dedicated to developing skills in house, complemented by collaborations with external systems integrators. Despite initial hurdles, these efforts underscore the bank's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. Additionally, leveraging cloud technologies and ensuring regulatory compliance have been crucial in enabling the bank to execute its AI strategy effectively.

Keys to success:  
**Support from C-suite, strong data foundation, and regulatory compliance**

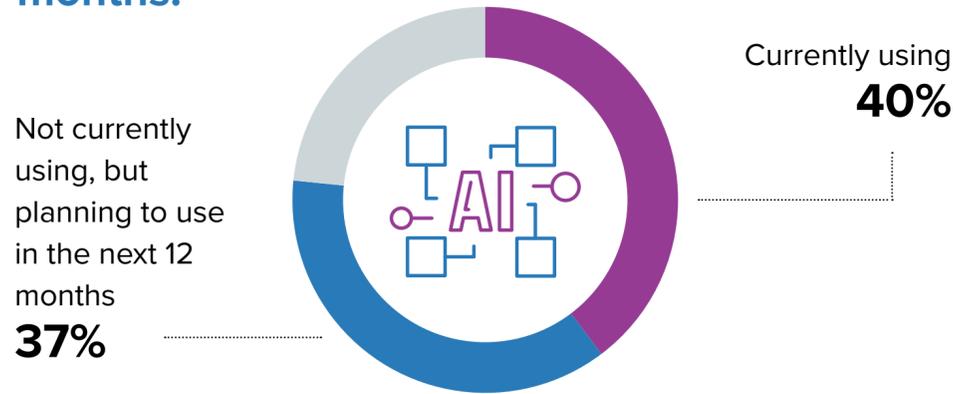


**Strong executive support**, particularly from the C-suite and CEO, has been instrumental in securing the necessary resources and commitment. The strategic partnership with Microsoft, utilizing Azure for AI solutions, and **a multicloud approach** have provided a robust technological foundation. **Ensuring data quality and compliance with financial regulations has been vital**, as these elements build the trust and reliability that are essential in the banking industry. Ultimately, Nest Bank's success hinges on its ability to innovate while maintaining a strong focus on customer satisfaction and regulatory adherence.

IDC Interview with  
**Karolina Mitraszewska**  
COO, Nest Bank  
**Mariusz Bukowski**  
AI Director, Nest Bank

# Poland — Key Findings

The majority of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

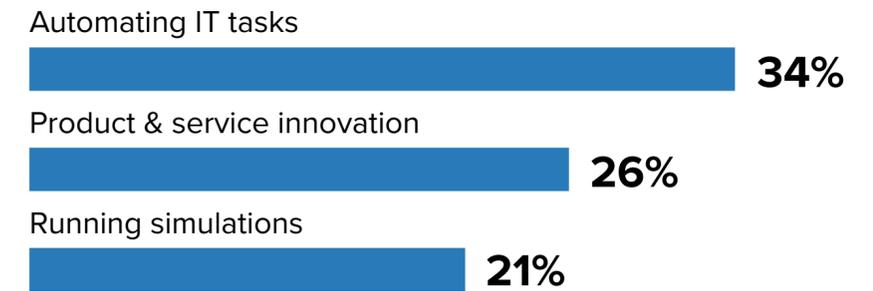


**37%** of companies expect **3X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**82%** of companies see an ROI from AI projects in up to 12 months.

Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

Finding balance between optimization and innovation

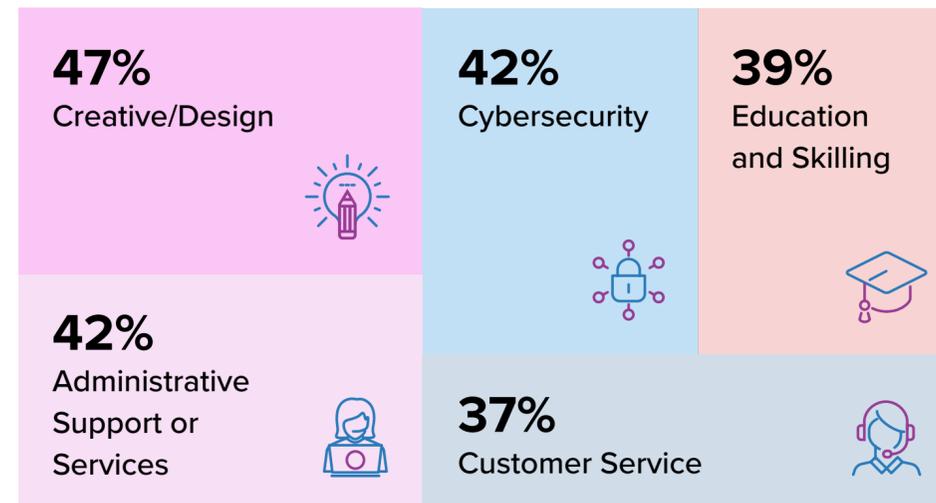


Top 3 Business Outcomes:

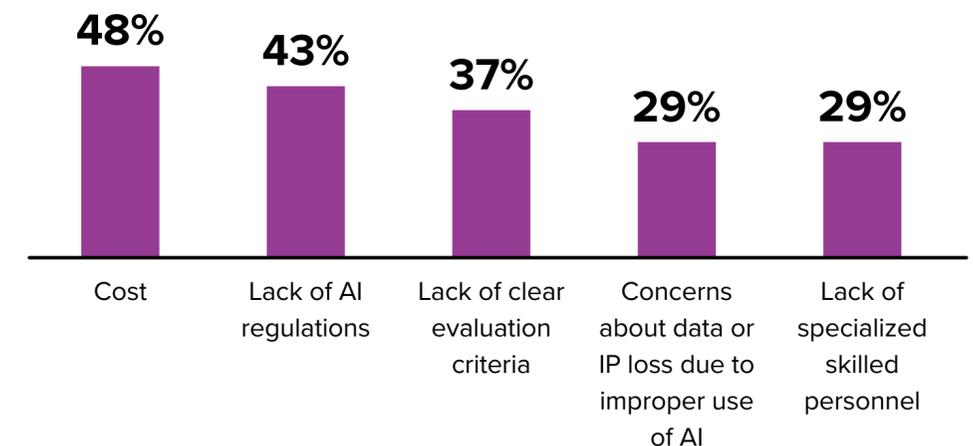
Strong efficiency focus



Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

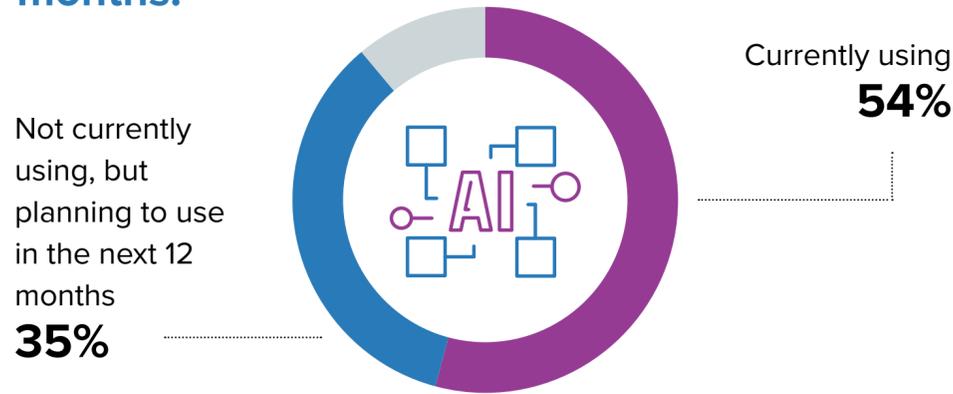


To successfully deploy and run AI projects in Poland, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# Saudi Arabia — Key Findings

The majority of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

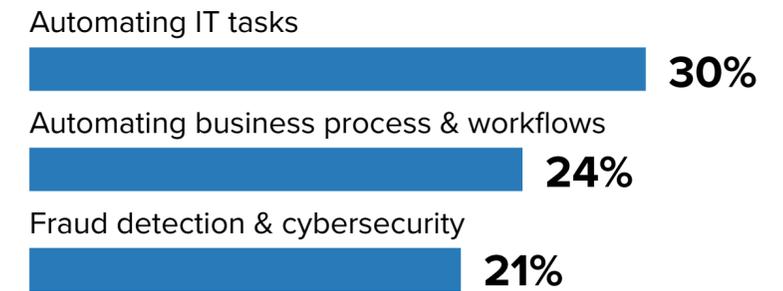


**40%** of companies expect **4X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**82%** of companies see an ROI from AI projects in up to 12 months.

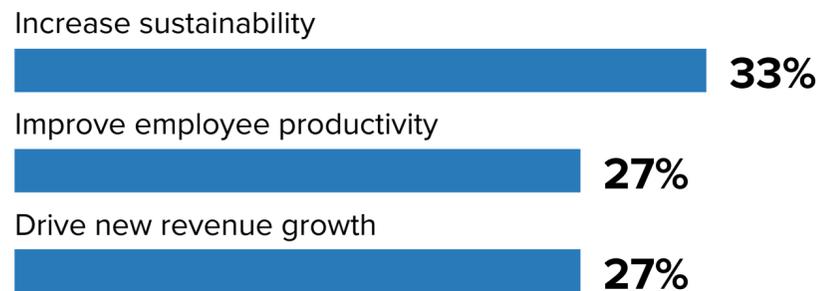
Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

Automating to optimize in a secure manner

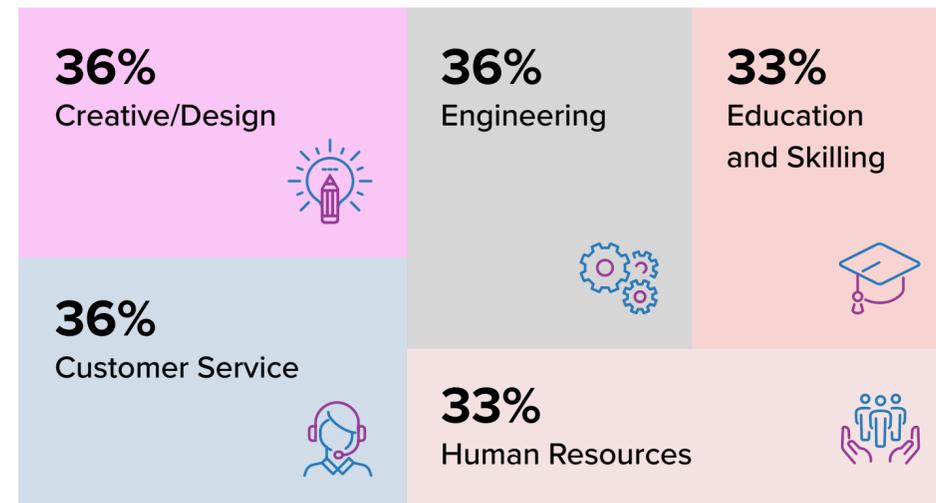


Top 3 Business Outcomes:

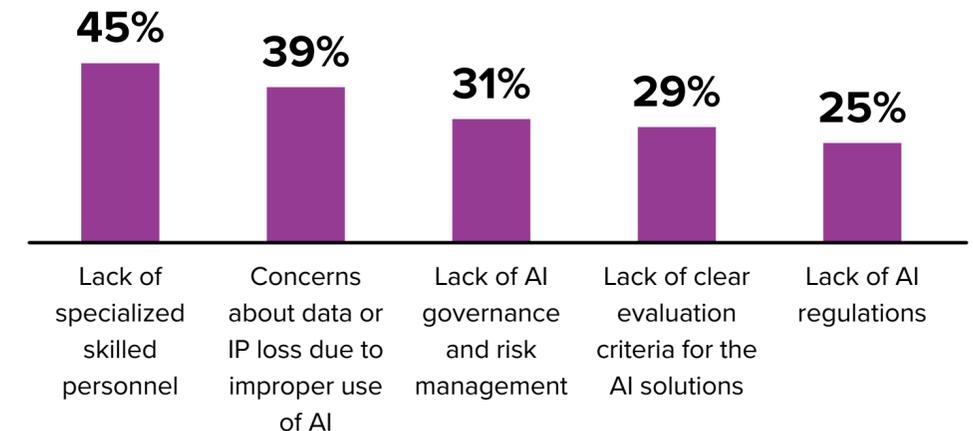
Forward-thinking with sustainability and new revenue streams



Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

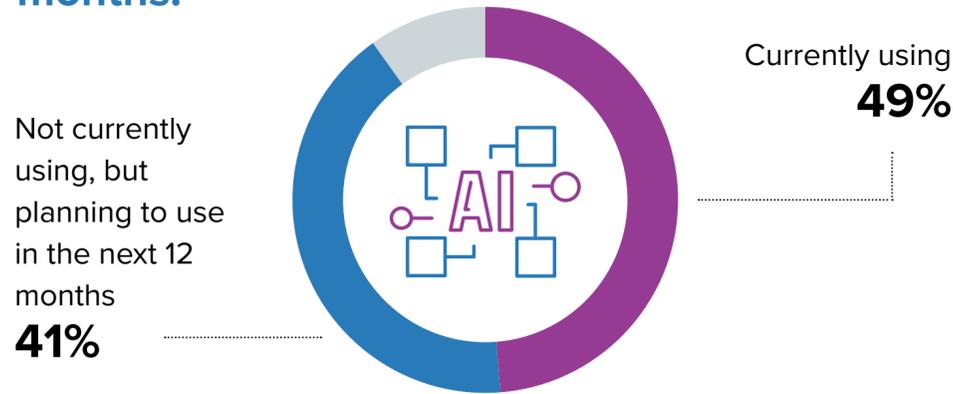


To successfully deploy and run AI projects in Saudi Arabia, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# South Africa — Key Findings

The majority of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

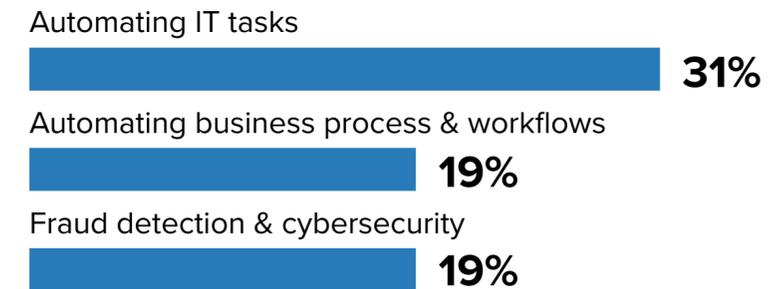


**28%** of companies expect **4X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**64%** of companies see an ROI from AI projects in up to 12 months.

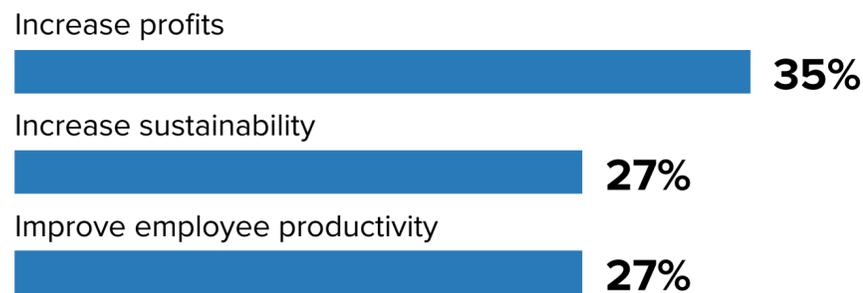
Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

Security and automation leading the way

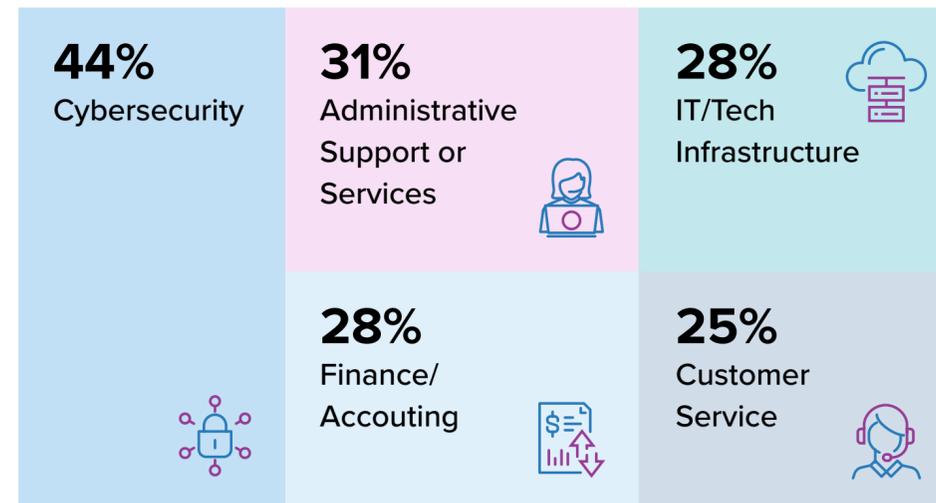


Top 3 Business Outcomes:

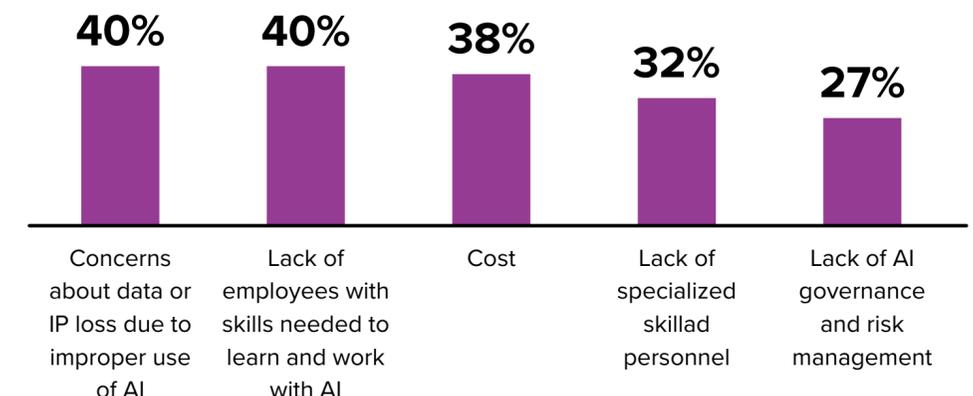
Focus on business value and sustainability



Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:

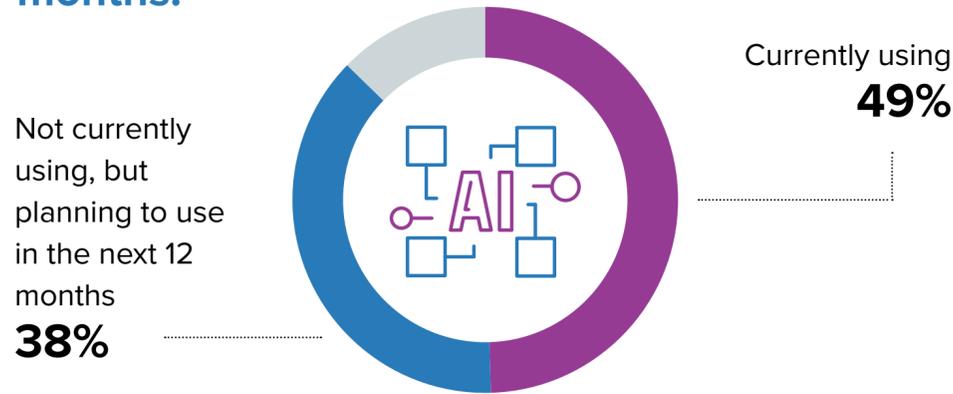


To successfully deploy and run AI projects in South Africa, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# United Arab Emirates — Key Findings

The majority of companies already use or plan to use AI technology in the next 12 months.

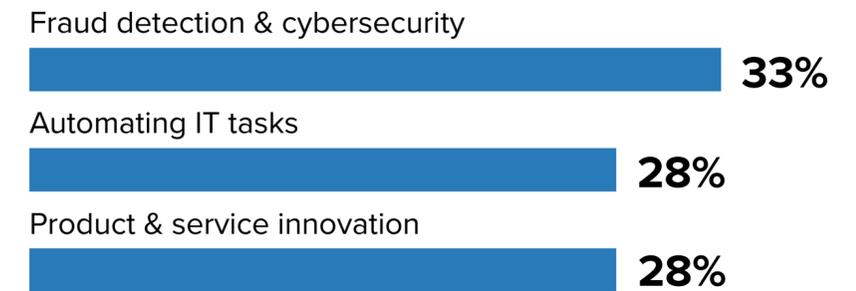


**39%** of companies expect **3X** return from every \$1 spent on AI projects.

**77%** of companies see an ROI from AI projects in up to 12 months.

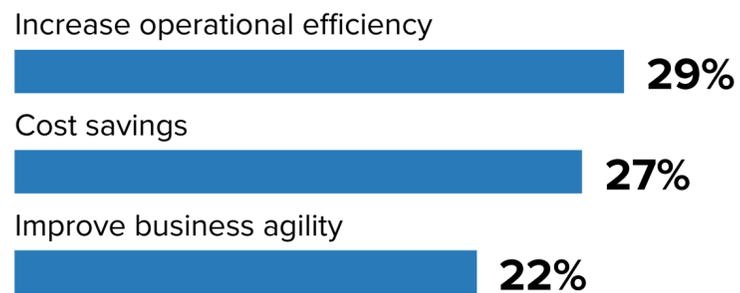
Top 3 Use Cases providing the greatest ROI:

Seeking secure operation and efficiency with innovation in mind

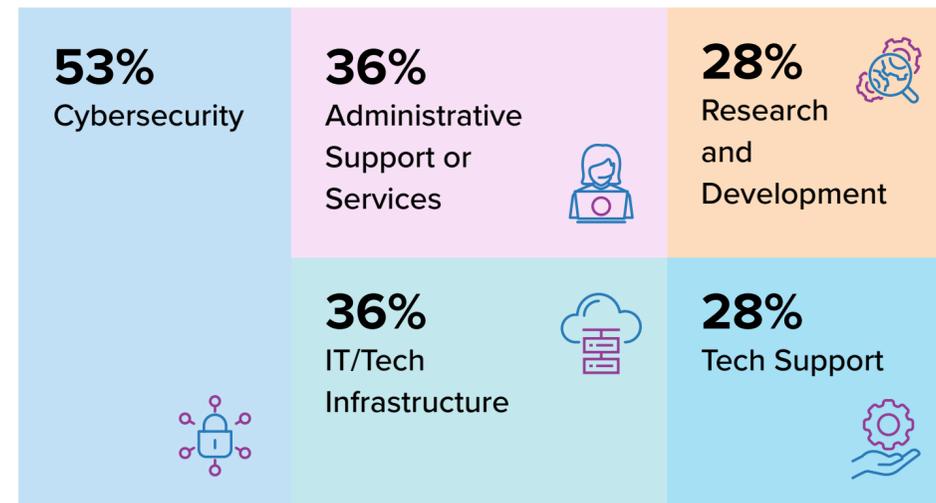


Top 3 Business Outcomes:

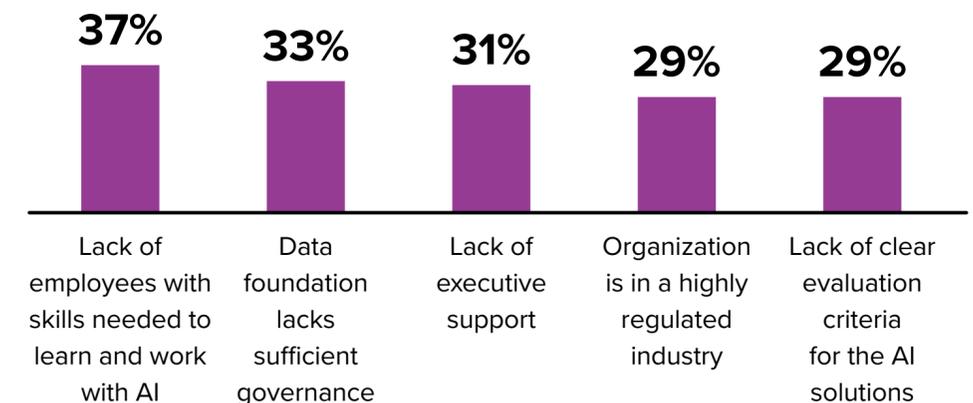
Focus on efficiency and business resilience



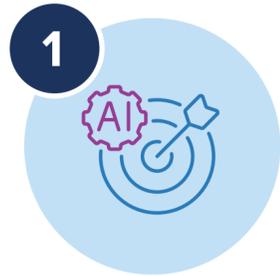
Top 5 business functions currently leveraging AI:



To successfully deploy and run AI projects in UAE, companies need to overcome the following top 5 challenges:



# How to Embrace AI to Increase Business Value



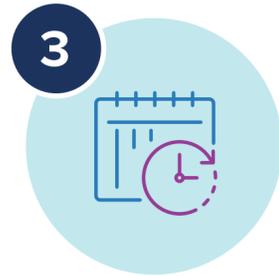
## 1 Align AI Strategy with Business Goals:

Ensure that your AI initiatives are directly aligned with your broader business strategy. Identify areas where AI can create tangible value, whether through cost reduction, revenue generation, or enhancing customer experiences. By integrating AI seamlessly into your business strategy, you can maximize its impact and ensure alignment with overarching organizational objectives.



## 2 Consider Short-Term ROI:

Identify tasks and use cases that offer the potential for quick returns on investment. Focus on low-hanging fruit where AI can deliver immediate value, such as automating repetitive tasks, optimizing processes, or improving efficiency in resource allocation. By prioritizing short-term ROI opportunities, you can build momentum for broader AI adoption while demonstrating the tangible benefits to stakeholders.



## 3 Develop Long-Term Plans:

Identify strategic areas within your business that could benefit from AI over time, even if the immediate ROI is not apparent. Invest in R&D to explore innovative AI applications and anticipate future market trends, positioning your company for sustained growth and competitiveness. Furthermore, do not isolate AI from other technological advancements; integrate AI with other solutions such as business apps, analytical platforms, infrastructure or databases to drive comprehensive business transformation.



## 4 Mitigate AI Risks:

Identify potential risks associated with AI implementation, such as data bias, security vulnerabilities or regulatory compliance issues, and develop strategies to mitigate them proactively. Invest in robust data governance practices to ensure data quality and integrity, implement stringent cybersecurity measures to safeguard against threats, and stay abreast of evolving regulatory requirements to maintain compliance. By addressing risks systematically, you can minimize disruptions and build trust in your AI capabilities.



## 5 Foster a Culture of AI Adoption:

Promote a culture of continuous learning and experimentation to foster AI adoption across your organization. Encourage cross-functional collaboration and provide training opportunities to empower employees with AI skills and knowledge. By fostering a culture that embraces AI innovation and encourages experimentation, you can harness the collective expertise of your workforce to drive business value and stay ahead of your competition in an increasingly AI-driven landscape.

# About the IDC Analysts



## Neil Ward-Dutton

Research Vice President  
Lead Analyst Automation,  
Analytics and AI in Europe, IDC

Neil Ward-Dutton is vice president, automation, analytics, and AI at IDC Europe. In this role, Neil guides IDC's research agendas and helps enterprise and technology vendor clients alike make sense of the opportunities and challenges across these very fast-moving and complicated technology markets. In a 28-year career as a technology industry analyst, Neil Ward-Dutton has researched a wide range of enterprise software technologies, authored hundreds of reports, and regularly appeared on TV and in print media.

[More about Neil Ward-Dutton](#)



## Ewa Zborowska

Research Director  
AI in Europe, IDC

Ewa Zborowska is an experienced technology professional with 25 years of expertise in the European IT industry. Since 2003, she has been a member of the IDC team, based in Warsaw, researching IT services markets.

In 2018, she joined the European team with a specific emphasis on cloud and AI. Ewa is currently the lead analyst for IDC's European Artificial Intelligence Innovations and Strategies CIS. Prior to her role at IDC, Ms. Zborowska worked at Statistics Poland and worked at an IT company.

[More about Ewa Zborowska](#)

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