

Exploration to implementation: a look at AI and generative AI trends

98%

of tech decision-makers are piloting, implementing, or upgrading artificial intelligence technologies, according to Foundry's third annual AI Priorities study.

25%

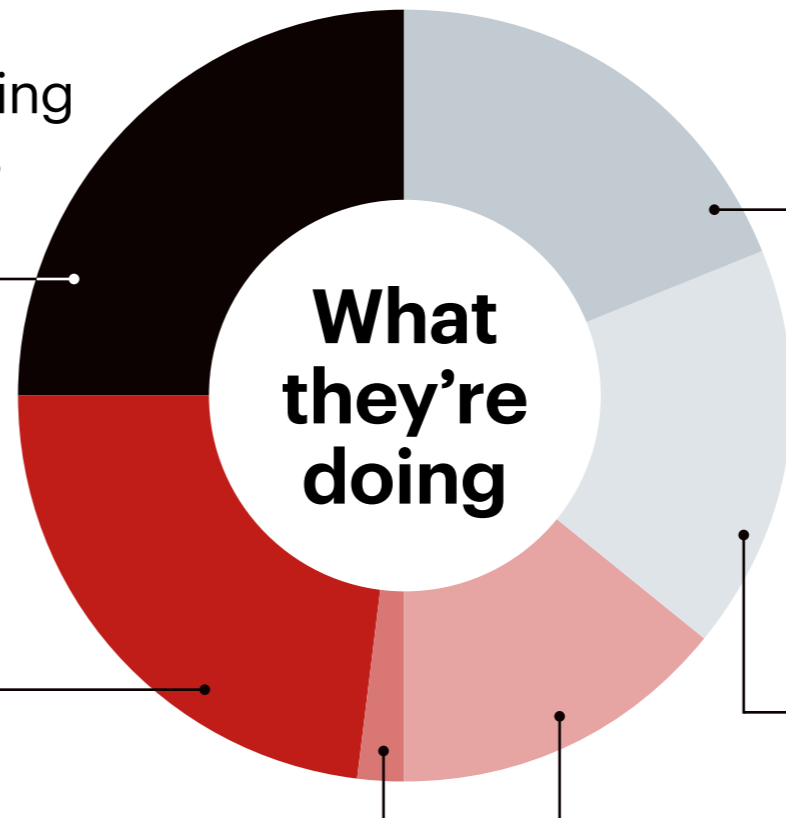
implementing in business unit

23%

piloting

2%

researching



19%

implementing enterprise-wide

17%

have implemented AI technology within multiple business units

14%

upgrading



49% agree that their org is willing to pay a premium for AI-enabled technology solutions that meet their specific needs.



But 47% expect AI enhancements as part of their existing technology solutions without additional charges.

65%

of organizations have a dedicated technology budget for AI projects.

63%

expect 2026 spending to increase.



Business objectives driving AI investments

Improving employee productivity

55%

Strengthen data protection and privacy through AI

45%

Improving customer support or services

44%

Improving speed of development

44%

Enabling innovation/new product development

43%

“We simply cannot afford more AI investments that operate in the dark. Success with AI today depends on discipline, transparency, and the ability to connect every dollar spent to a business result.”

Conal Gallagher, CIO, Flexera

AI initiatives are resulting in positive business impact

Increased employee productivity

48%

Cost savings or efficiency gains

45%

Business/IT process automation

45%

Improved customer experience

42%

What are IT orgs currently using AI applications for?

1. Data analytics
2. Employee productivity
3. Cybersecurity



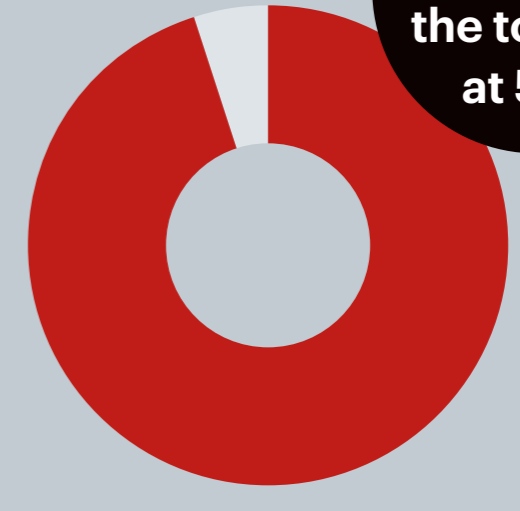
87%

of IT departments report positive ROI from AI—leading all business units.



67%

agree that generative AI-infused products create better business outcomes.



95%

of IT decision-makers use Gen AI assistants during the buying process.

ChatGPT (OpenAI) is the top tool at 50%

“The more you train employees on gen AI, the more they use it—and the more ROI comes in.”

Vagesh Dave, Global VP & CIO, McDermott International

AI areas in which IT decision-makers want to develop expertise

AI and augmented intelligence

52%

Edge AI

51%

Explainable AI

51%

AI in cybersecurity

50%

Generative AI

49%

Top challenges when implementing AI technologies in IT systems and processes

1. IT infrastructure/systems integration
2. High costs associated with implementing into existing tech stack
3. Lack of in-house expertise for design/deployment

“My role as CIO is shifting from running AI experiments to orchestrating and governing outcomes for the enterprise. In 2026, I believe the CIO’s job will be focused on secure information management, coordinating how digital and human workforces function together, and making sure AI delivers measurable business impact at scale.”

Shannon Bell, CIO & CDO, OpenText

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To put your brand at the center of generative AI, explore Foundry's [gen AI sponsorship packages](#) to connect with IT decision-makers across our editorial network and at industry-leading events.

Source: Foundry AI Priorities Study, 2026; CIO articles, “7 challenges IT leaders will face in 2026,” “The AI revolution: Getting culture right for AI success,” “10 AI predictions for 2026”