

# How HR leaders are using AI today

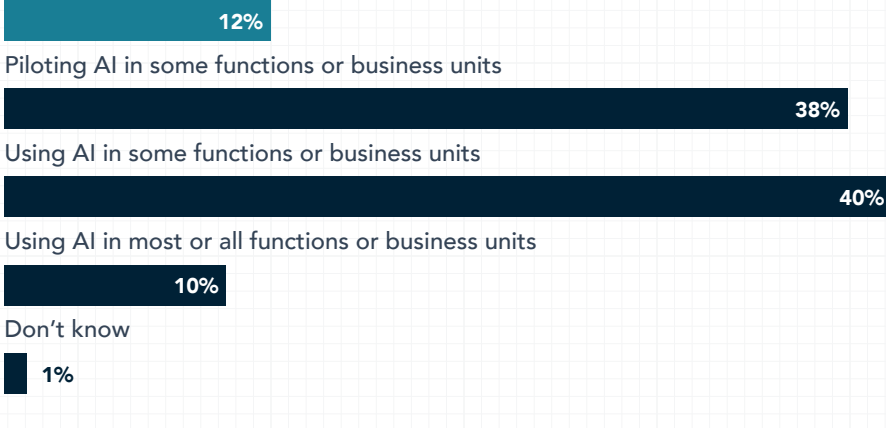
Our second annual survey of leaders in HR about their use of AI shows that **they expect usage to dramatically increase over the next two years**—and even so, more than half say their organization is adopting AI too slowly. They expect the biggest increases in use to come from workplace planning and total rewards.



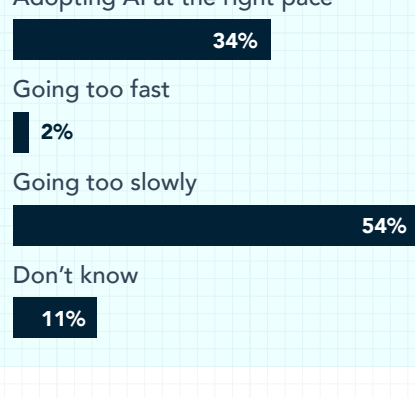
Separate surveys explored the perspectives of chief marketing officers; chief legal officers; chief sales officers; chief strategy officers; chief supply chain and operating officers; chief digital, technology, or information officers; and chief AI officers. Other survey reports and other insights on leadership and AI can be found on [heidrick.com](https://heidrick.com).

## Usage is widespread—but most leaders want to move even faster

Only 12% of HR leaders say their companies are not yet using AI—though almost as many say their company is using it across most or all of the organization, the highest share across functions, and tied with marketing leaders.

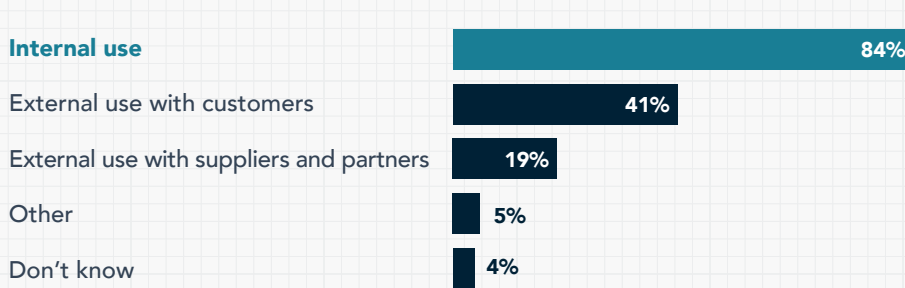


More than half of HR leaders say their companies are adopting AI too slowly, which is similar to what most of their C-suite peers say.



## A focus on internal use and productivity gains

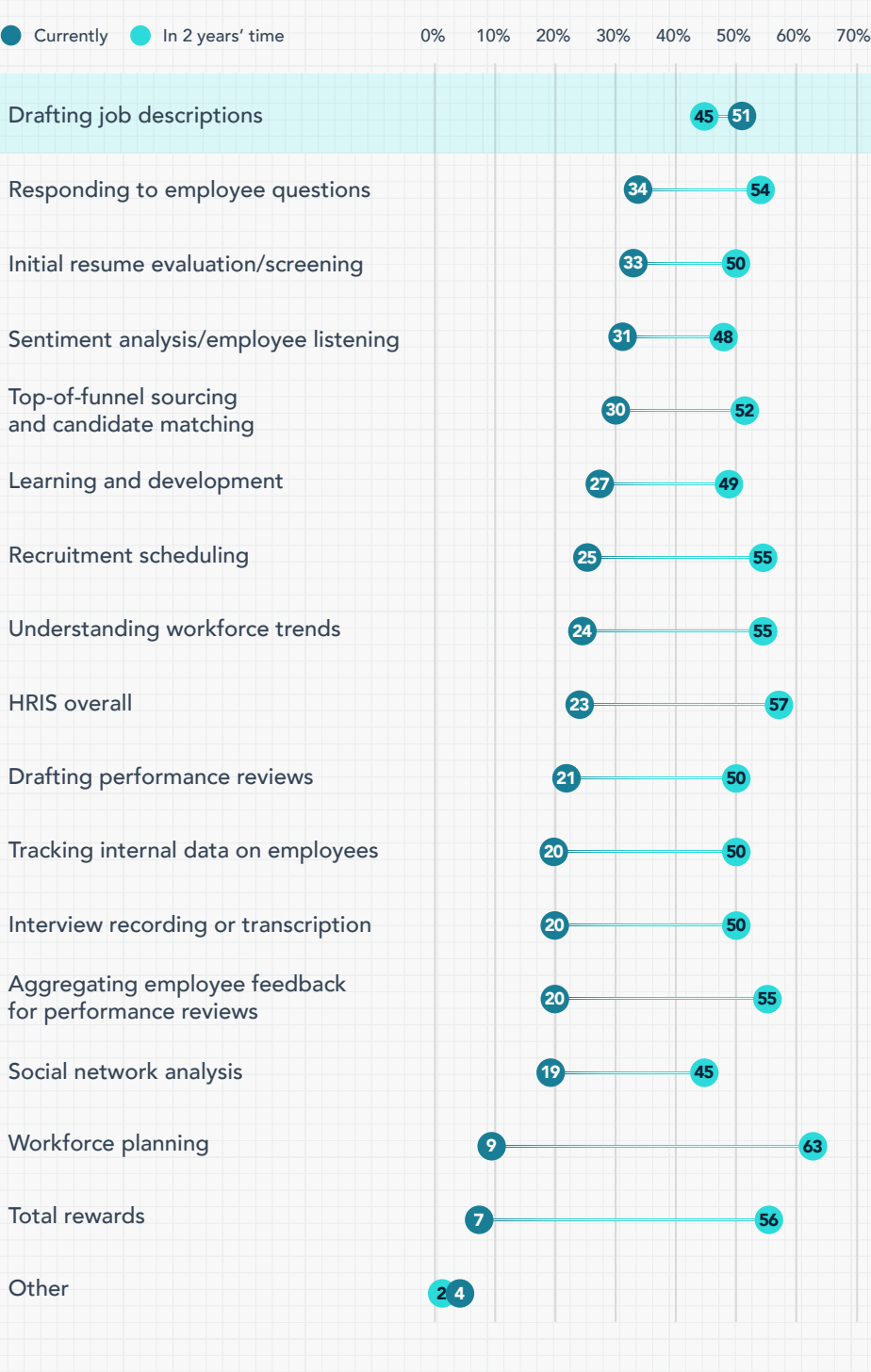
A strong majority of HR leaders say they are focused on AI for internal use...



...with more than half saying they are using it in drafting job descriptions, and slightly more than a third saying they use it to respond to employee questions.

Looking even just two years ahead, the shares of HR leaders who expect to be using AI for all tasks are notably higher, with the biggest jumps in workforce planning and total rewards. More than half of HR leaders say they will be using AI in a majority of the function's tasks.

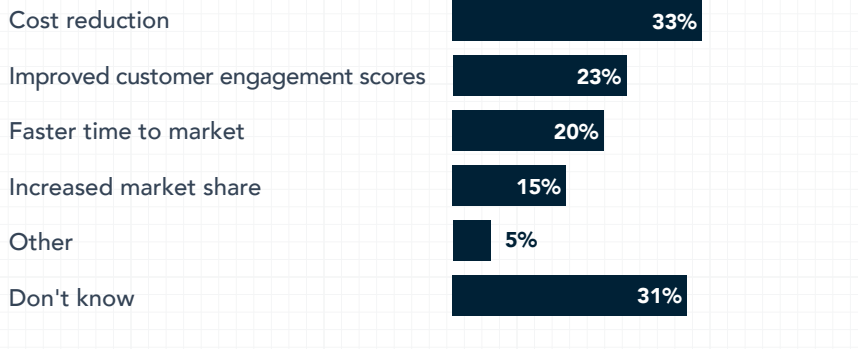
Two years from now, the top tasks HR leaders most often expect to be using AI for workforce planning, HRIS overall, total rewards, aggregating employee feedback for performance reviews, recruitment scheduling, and understanding workforce trends.



## Measuring ROI

Despite the hype about AI and how quickly companies are adopting it, HR leaders, as well as most of their peers across functions, indicate that their companies aren't investing just to keep up with peers: **they are measuring success based on their goals, as they would any other investment.**

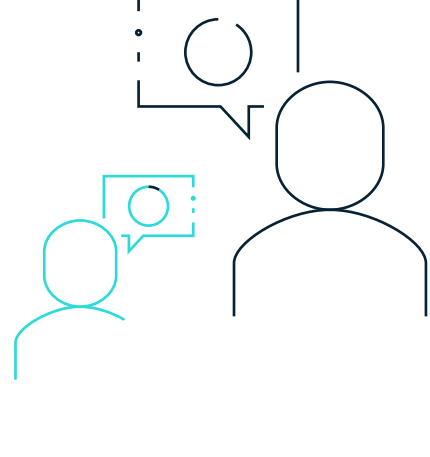
However, the share of HR leaders was the highest in any function who said they did not know how ROI was being measured.



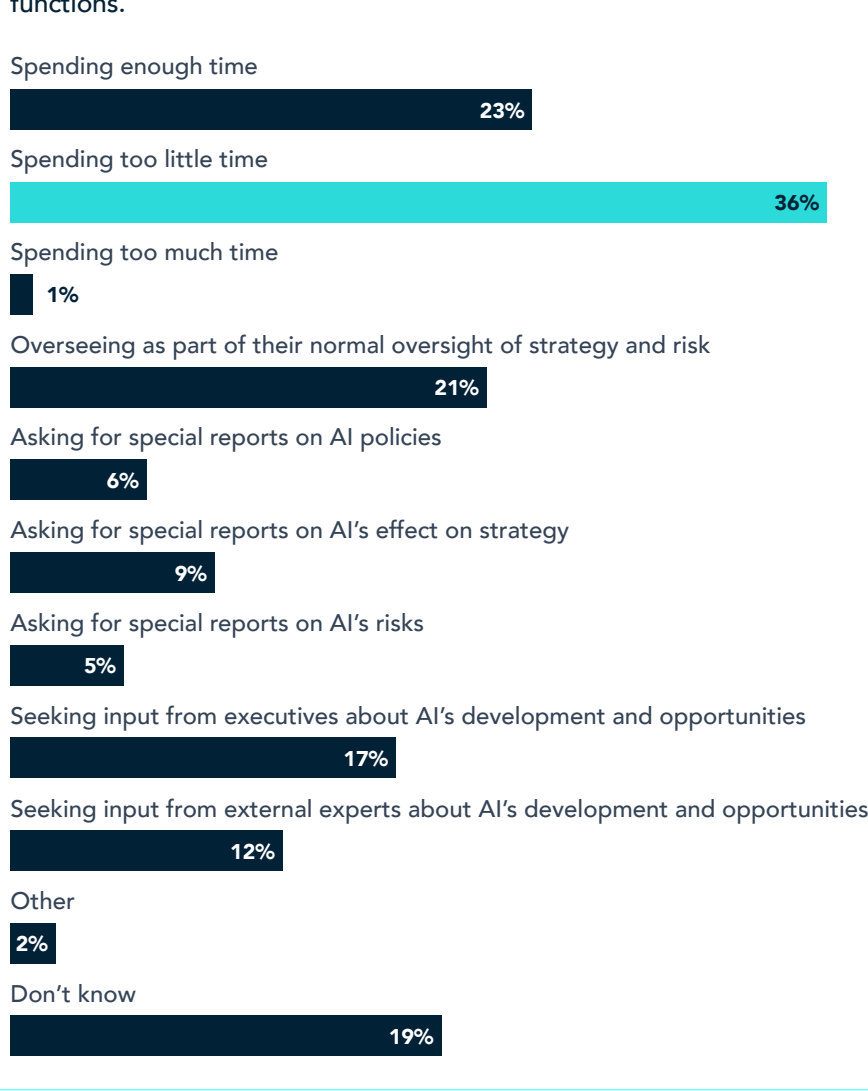
## Who's taking the lead?

Across functions, the person who is most often cited as owning AI strategy is the chief information, technology, or digital officer. About 10% say it's the CEO. And just over 10% say no one.<sup>1</sup>

**Forty percent say the CEO is involved in setting AI policies, and just over 60% say the digital leader is involved.** There's little consistency among survey respondents in who else is involved, though general counsels and chief information security officers are cited more often than most other leaders by leaders across functions.

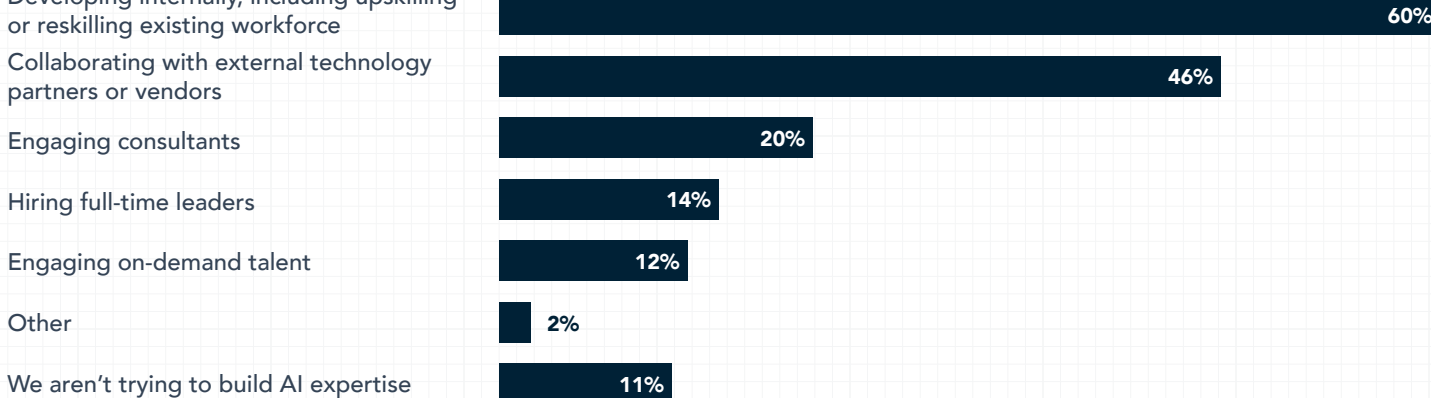


As for the board, **36% of HR leaders do not think the board is spending enough time on AI.** This share is similar across most functions.

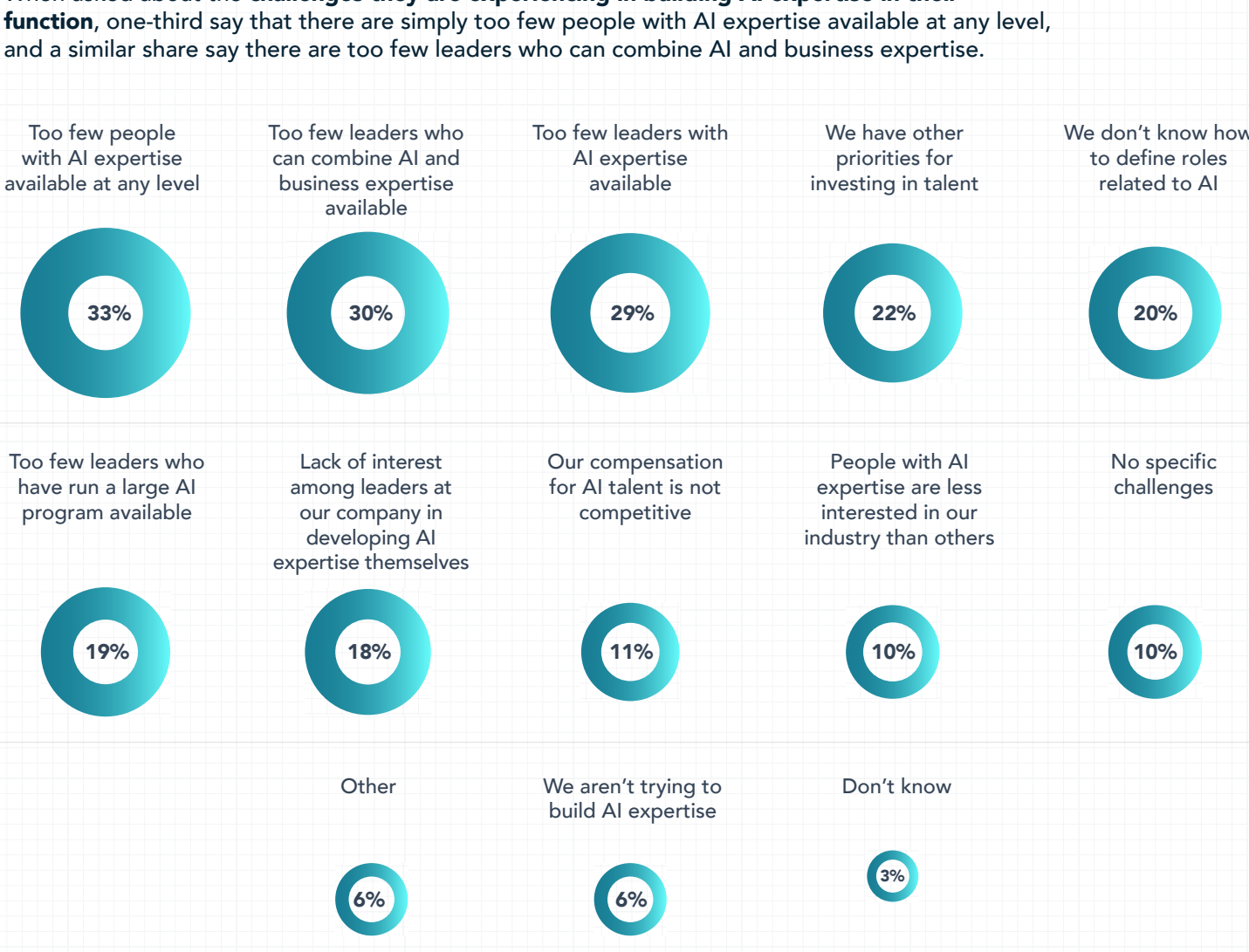


## Finding AI expertise for human resources

**Sixty percent of HR leaders say they are building AI expertise for the function by developing it internally.** Only 14% say they are hiring full-time leaders. Hiring remains less frequent, mostly because expertise remains hard to find.



When asked about the **challenges they are experiencing in building AI expertise in their function**, one-third say that there are simply too few people with AI expertise available at any level, and a similar share say there are too few leaders who can combine AI and business expertise.



## Talent considerations for leaders

Across functions, it's still hard for companies to find the AI talent they need. As leaders seek to use AI for a broadening range of tasks and projects—eventually rewiring business processes across the enterprise—we expect high demand for AI-specific expertise at all levels to continue for three to six years. In the long run, it seems likely demand will follow a pattern similar to that in earlier waves of computing innovation, from personal computing to cloud, in which specific technical expertise was in high demand during the transition, but then declined as the relevant knowledge became a part of every person's role. In other words, we expect that basic working knowledge of AI will be as fundamental an expectation for senior leaders as being digitally savvy is today.



That said, we also expect every enterprise will have a senior leader responsible for the AI strategy and for AI platforms and tools. This executive may or may not have a chief AI officer title.



## About the research

In spring 2024, we surveyed 1,894 executives: 518 executives in finance; 401 executives in human resources; 153 executives in legal; 335 executives in marketing; 93 executives in sales; 190 executives in strategy; and 304 executives in supply chain and operations. This survey had a global reach; respondents represent the full range of industries, company revenue levels, and various company ownership structures.

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