

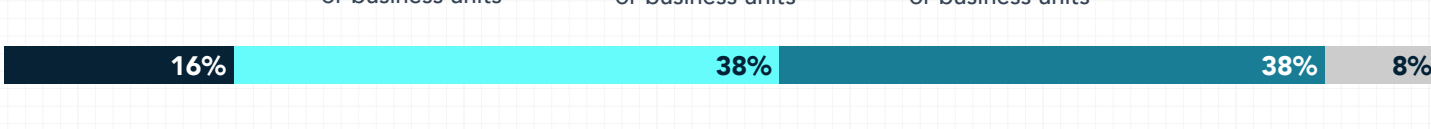
# How strategy leaders are using AI today

Our survey of strategy leaders about their use of AI shows that nearly 20% say their companies are not yet using AI—and nearly 60% think that their companies are adopting AI too slowly.

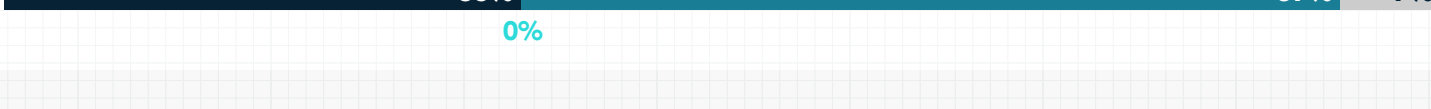
Separate surveys explored the perspectives of chief people officers; chief marketing officers; chief legal officers; chief sales officers; chief supply chain and operating officers; chief digital, technology, or information officers; and chief AI officers. Other survey reports and other insights on leadership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

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

The majority of strategy leaders say their companies are using AI in at least some capacity, consistent with their peers across functions.

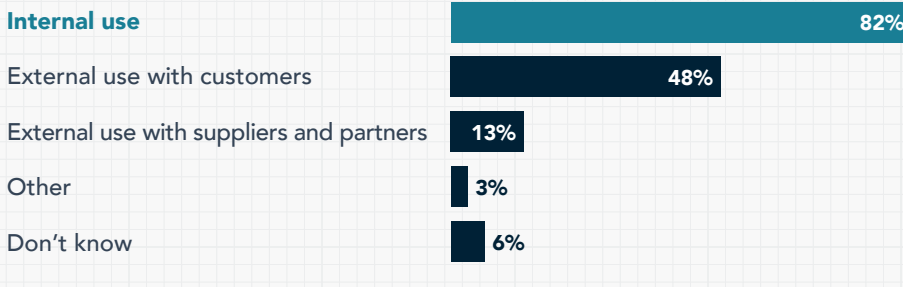


Nearly 60% of strategy leaders say their companies are adopting AI too slowly, which is similar to, though a bit higher than, what most of their C-suite peers say. It's notable that none thought they were moving too fast.



## A focus on internal use and productivity gains

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



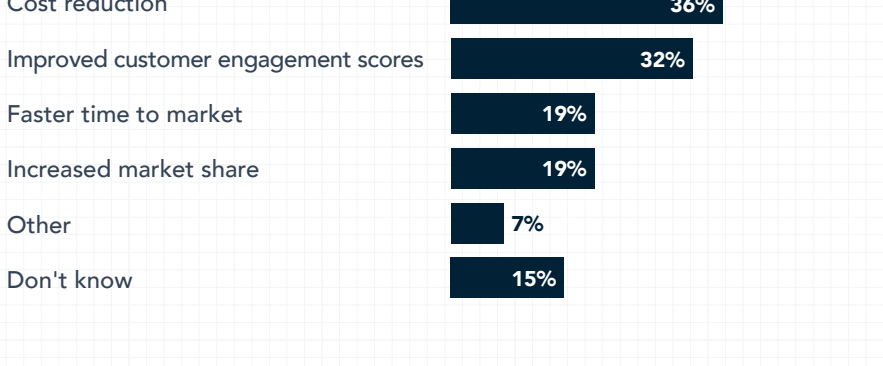
...with 60% seeking opportunities to support their internal functions. Across marketing, sales, and strategy officers, content creation was also a frequently indicated use for AI.

Looking two years ahead, a notable share of strategy leaders expect the biggest increases in the use of AI will be in revenue planning, HR operations and recruitment, and customer value analysis.



## Measuring ROI

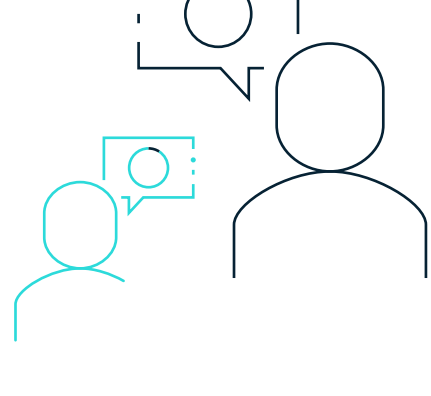
Despite the hype about AI and how quickly companies are adopting it, strategy leaders, as well as most of their peers across functions, indicate that their companies aren't investing just to keep up with peers: they are measuring success based on their goals, as they would any other investment.



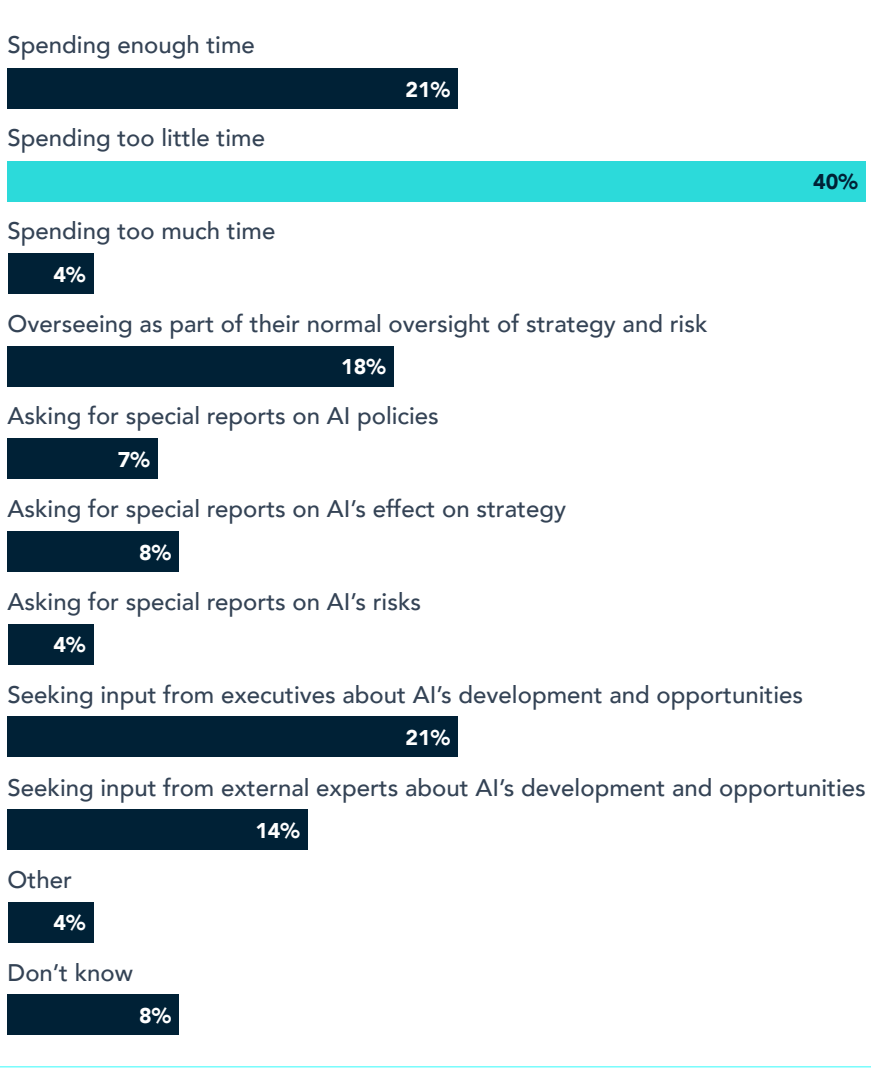
## Who's taking the lead?

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 officers are cited more often than most other leaders by leaders across functions.

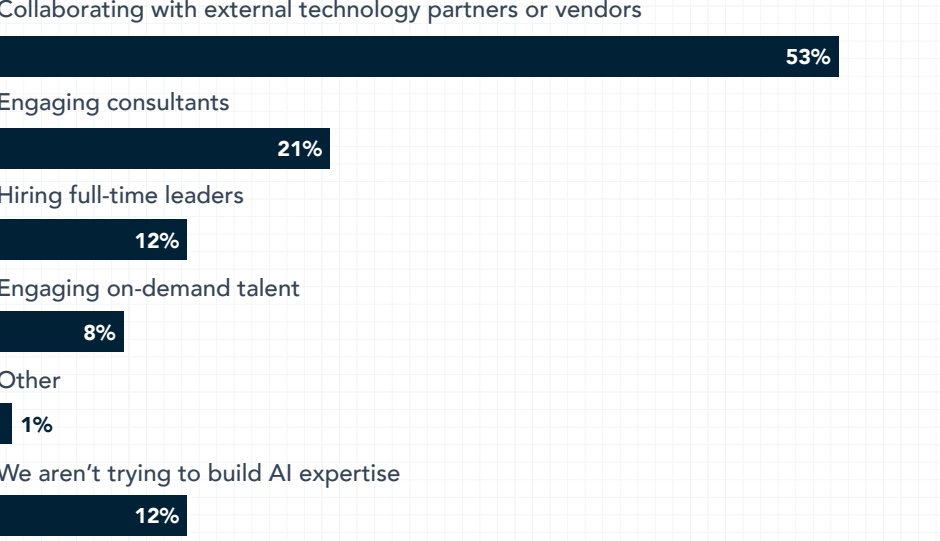


As for the board, 40% of strategy leaders do not think the board is spending enough time on AI. This share is similar across most functions.

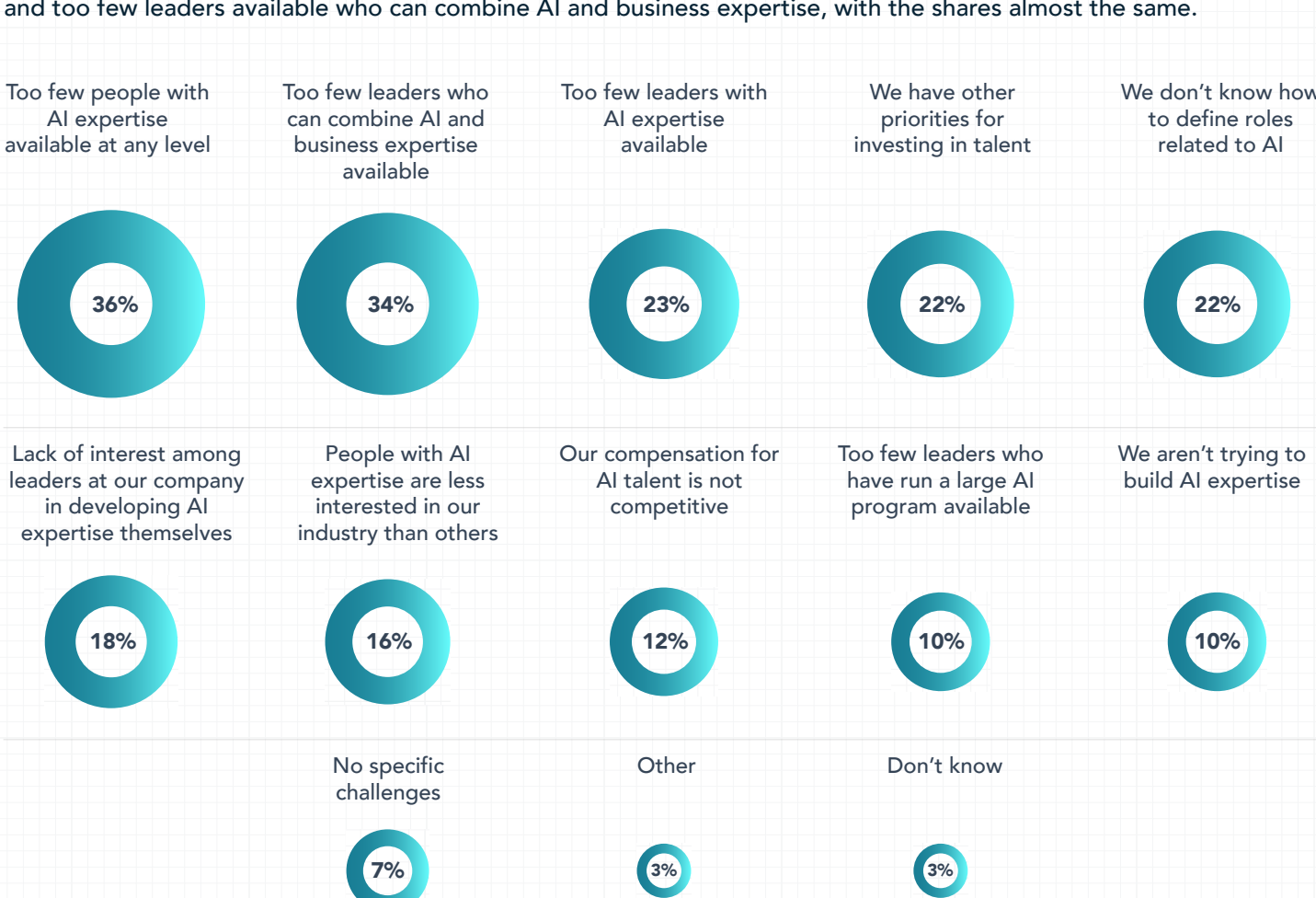


## Finding AI expertise for the strategy function

Sixty percent of strategy leaders say they are building AI expertise for the function by developing it internally, and more than half also say they are collaborating with external partners or vendors. Hiring remains less frequent, mostly because expertise remains hard to find. Most functional peers' views are similar.

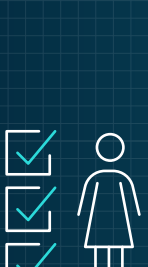


The top two talent challenges strategy leaders cited were too few people with AI expertise available at any level and too few leaders who can combine AI and business expertise available.



## 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; 90 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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