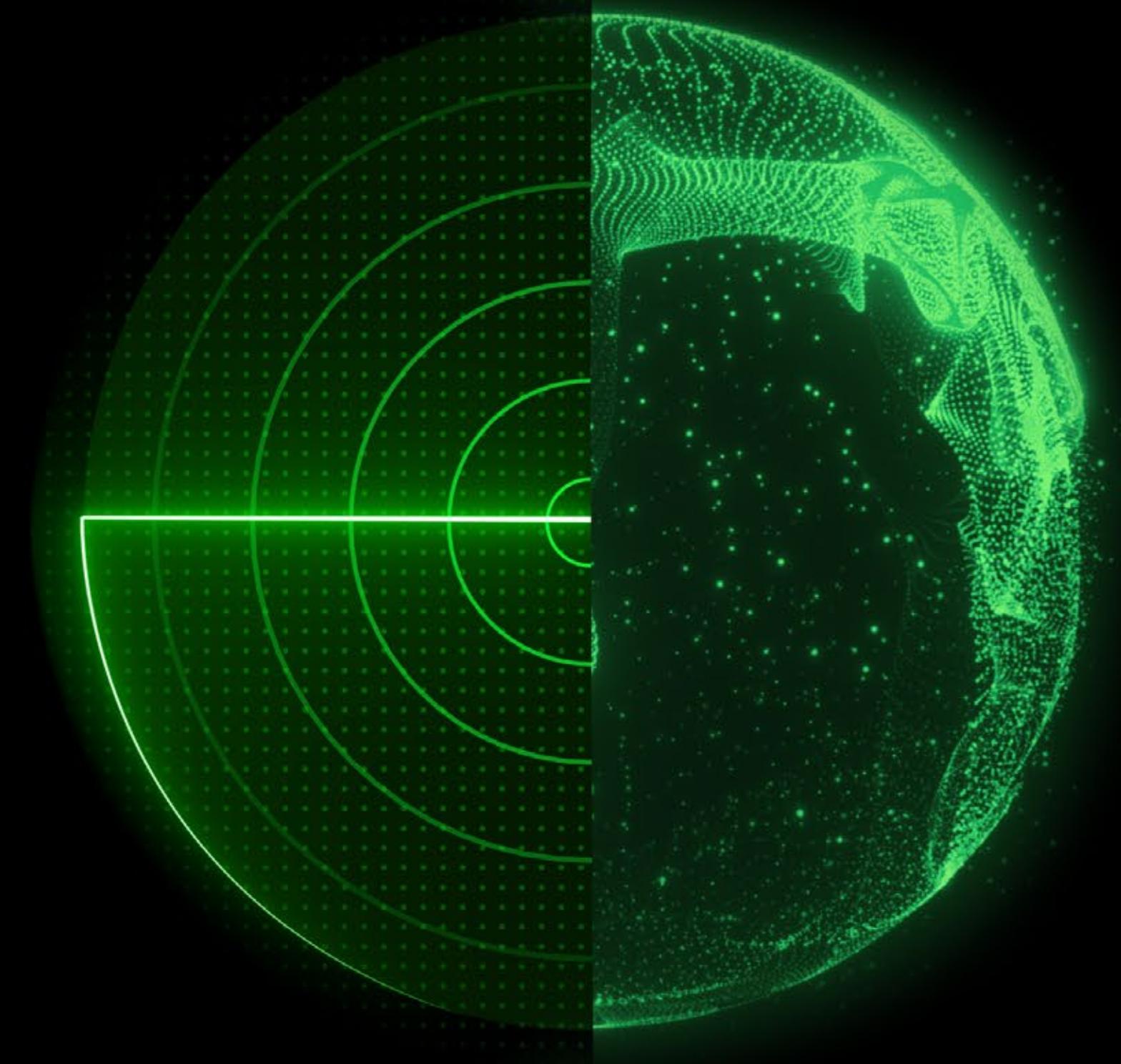


BCG AI RADAR 2026

As AI Investments Surge, CEOs Take the Lead

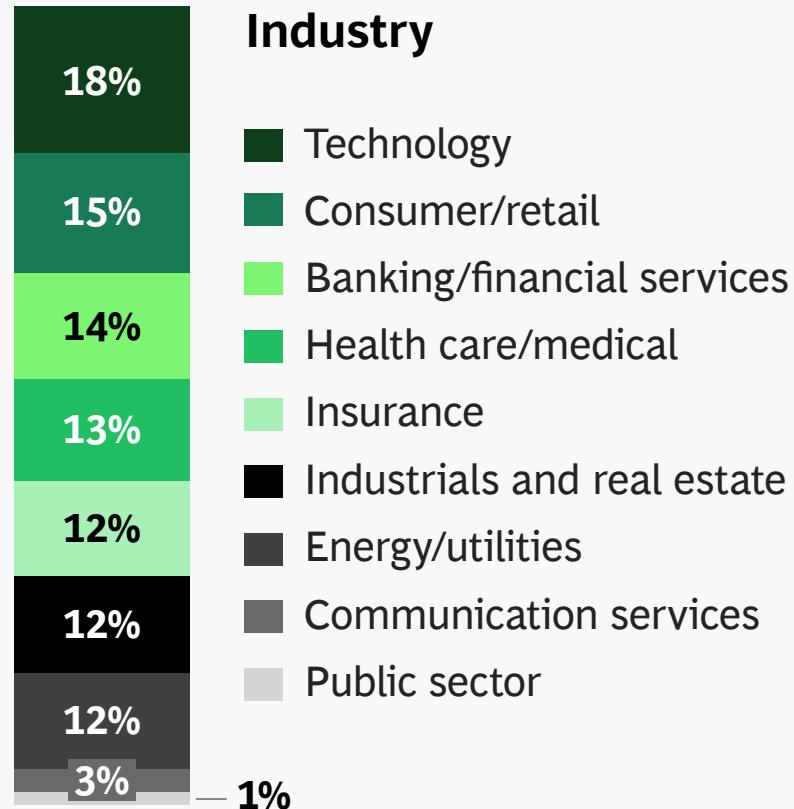
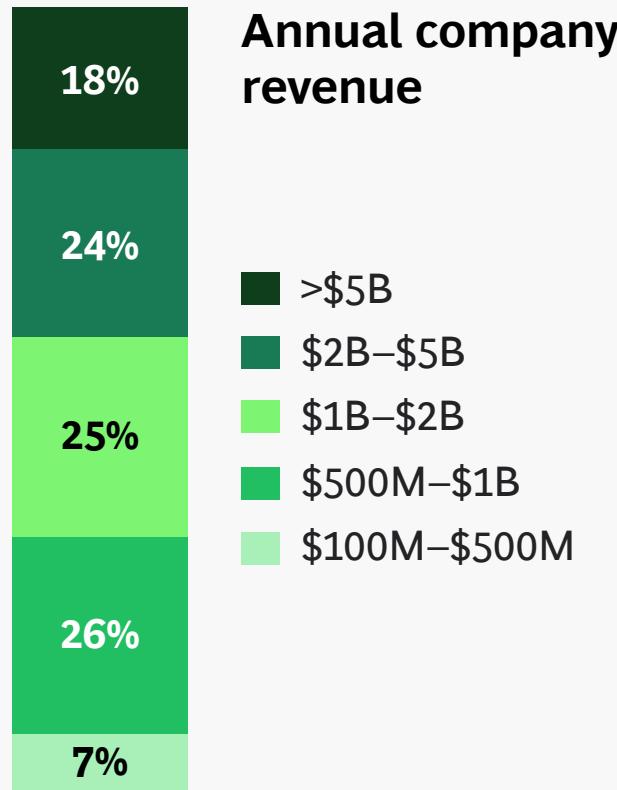
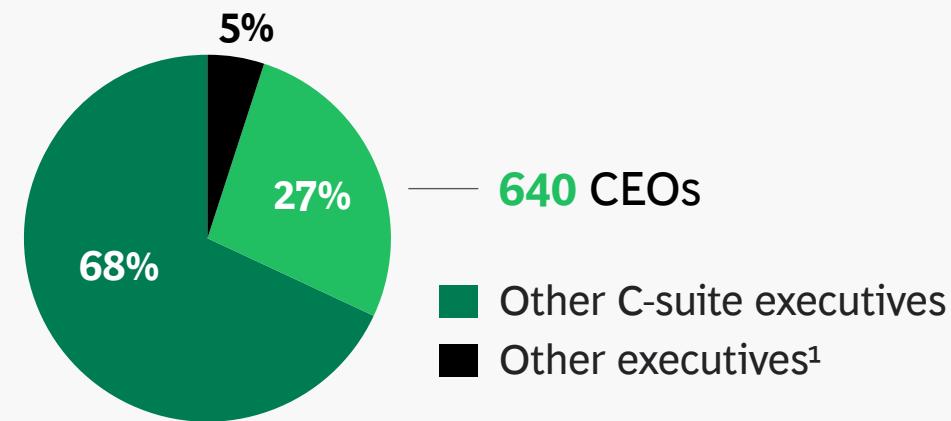
JANUARY 2026



Survey methodology

2,360

respondents



Sources: BCG AI Radar Survey 2026 (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.

¹Executives who directly report to C-suite (EVP, SVP, VP, etc.).

Markets (number of respondents)



Key takeaways

1

Corporate investments in AI have doubled since last year and are here to stay

94%

of CEOs say they will continue to invest even if it does not pay off in 2026

2

AI corporate transformation is moving from a CIO-led to a CEO-led initiative

72%

of CEOs say they are the main decision maker on AI in their organization

3

Three CEO archetypes emerge with Trailblazer CEOs leading end-to-end AI transformation

60%

of Trailblazers' AI budget will be spent on agentic AI

Takeaway 1

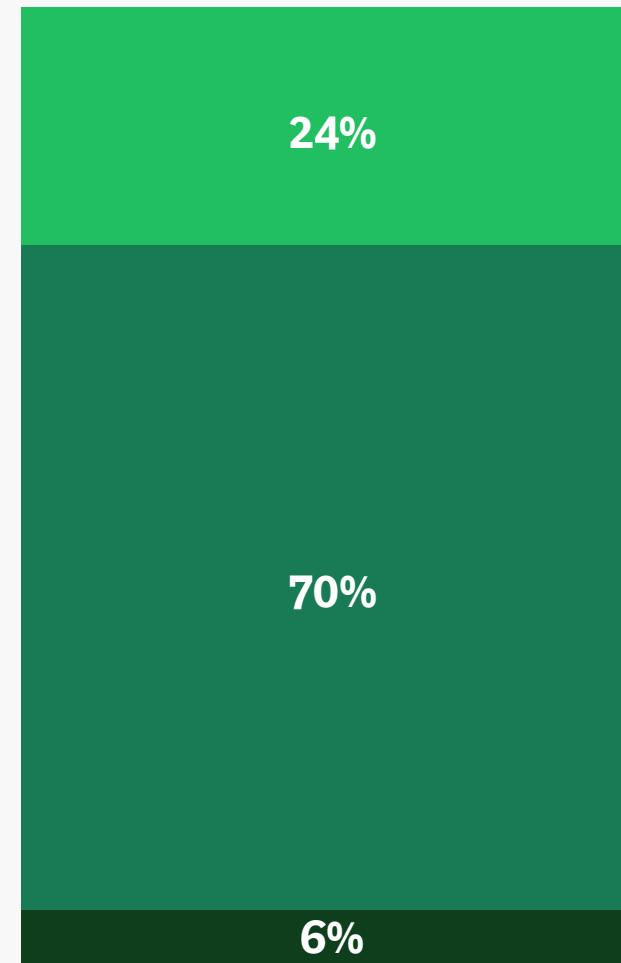
**Corporate investments in
AI have doubled since last
year and are here to stay**

94%

of organizations
will continue their
investments even
if they do not pay
off in 2026

Only 6% of companies plan to pull back AI investments if current initiatives fall short

SHARE OF
RESPONDENTS



Ramp up resourcing/
invest in outside experts

Stay the course/
make strategic changes

Pull back on investments

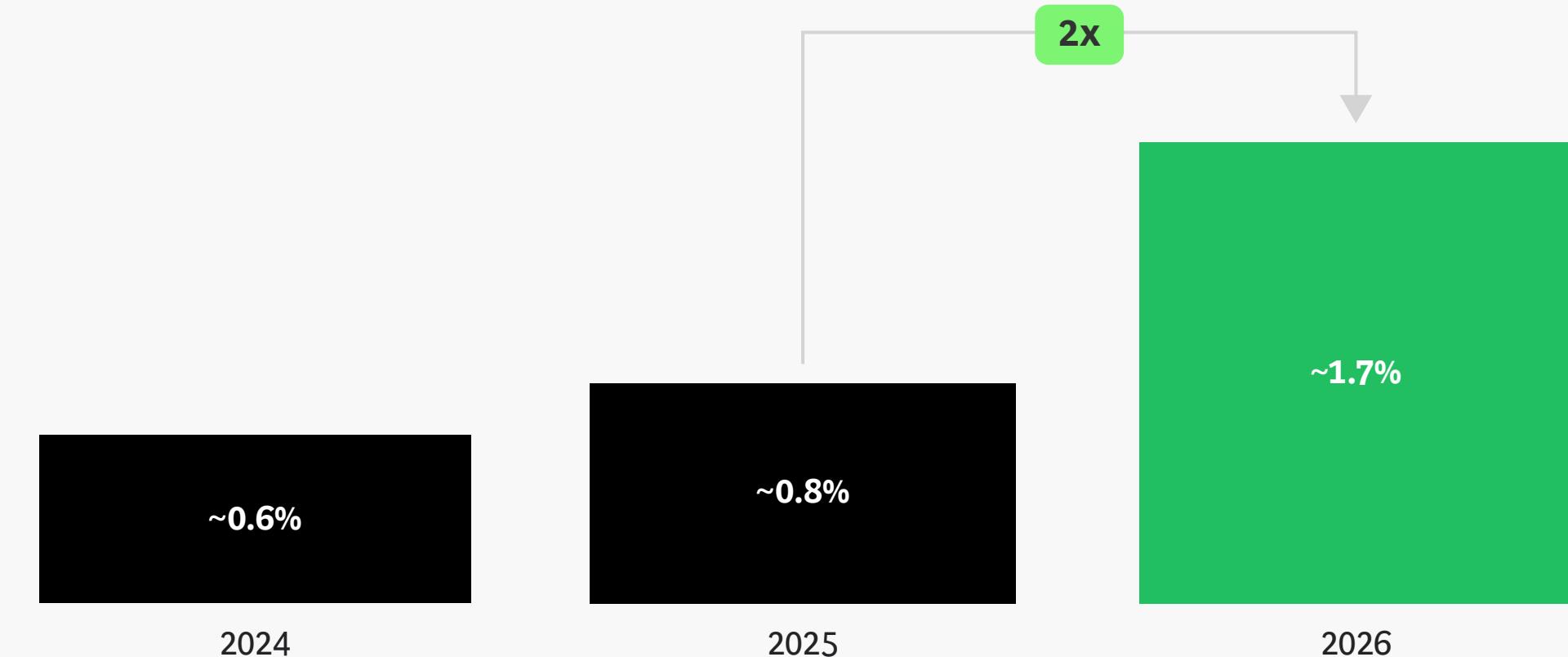
Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.

Note: AI investments refer to all investments needed to realize the benefits from AI including but not limited to technology and infrastructure, data and architecture enablement, talent and upskilling, external partners, etc.

Question: "What is the plan if your organization's AI investments do not produce the desired financial impact in the next 12 months?"

Investment in AI as share of an organization's revenue (%)¹

Investments in AI is projected to double in 2026



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG AI Radar 2025 Survey (n = 1,803); BCG AI Radar 2024 Survey (n = 1,406); BCG analysis.

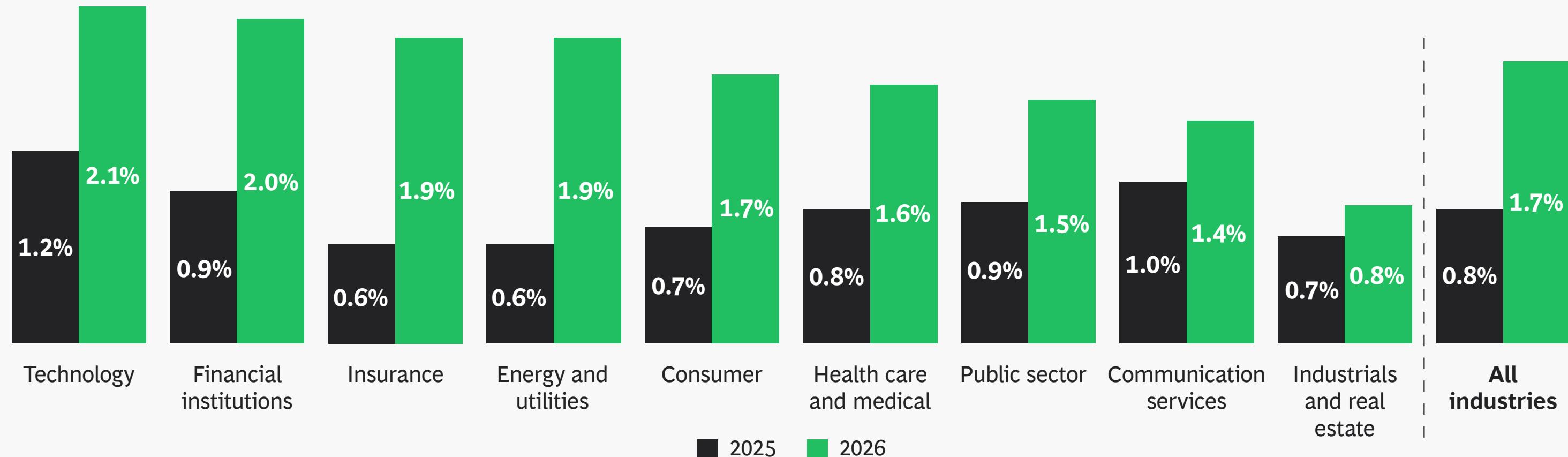
Note: AI investments refer to all investments needed to realize the benefits from AI including but not limited to technology and infrastructure, data and architecture enablement, talent and upskilling, external partners, etc.

Questions: "How much do you expect your organization to invest in AI in 2026?", "What is the annual revenue range of your company or organization globally?"

¹The average base revenue of the underlying companies has remained almost the same.

All industries plan to increase their AI investments in 2026

INVESTMENT IN AI AS SHARE OF ANNUAL REVENUE



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,308 due to exclusion of “I don’t know” and blank responses); BCG analysis.

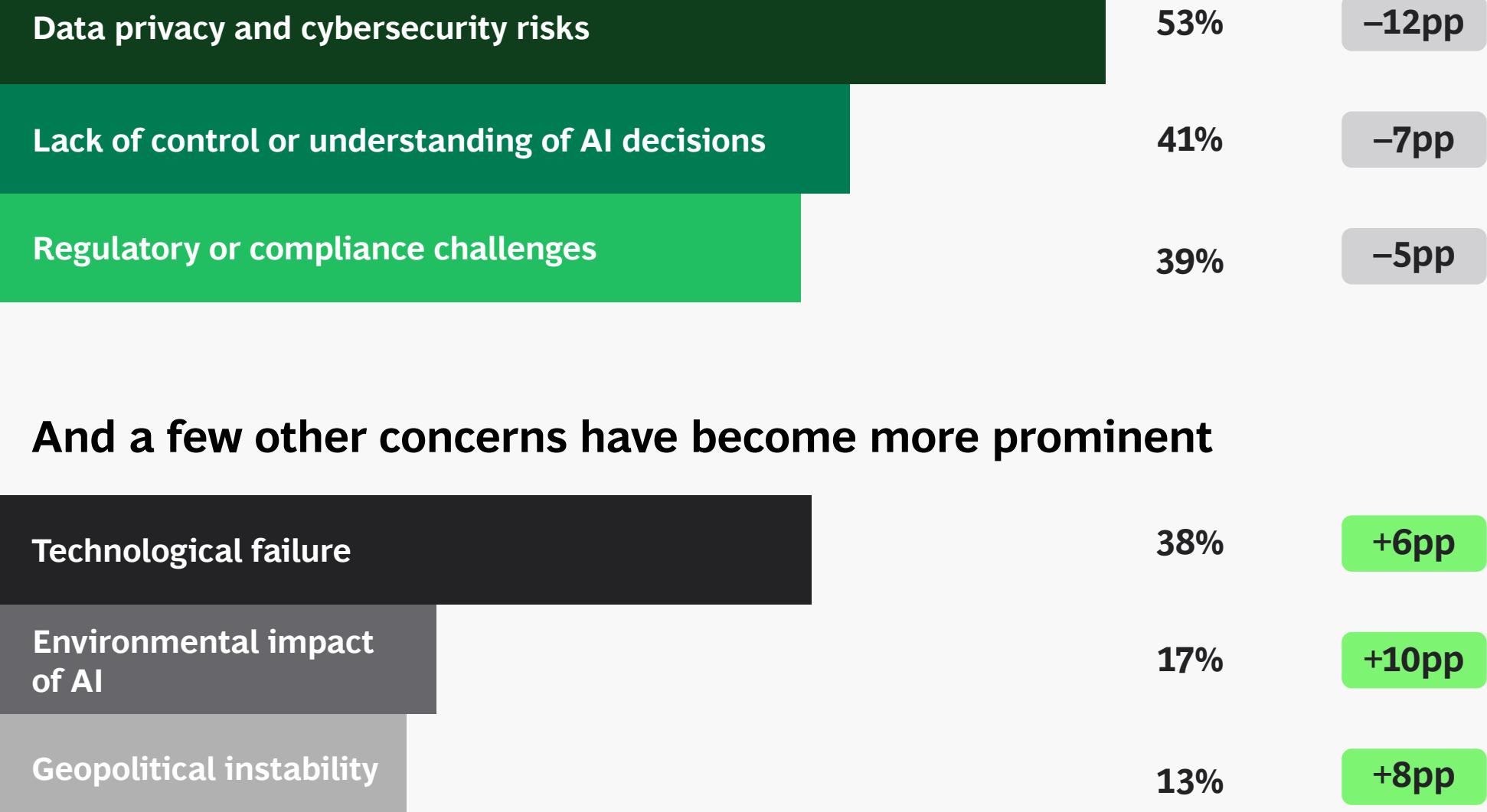
Note: Consumer combines consumer/retail and travel/tourism industries. Public sector combines government/public sector and education industries. Communication services combines advertising/marketing, media, and telecom industries.

Industrials and real estate combines manufacturing, industrial goods, automotive, transportation, agriculture, and real estate industries.

Question: “How much do you expect your organization to invest in AI in 2026?”

Data privacy and cybersecurity remain the primary concern

Top three AI concerns remain the same, but their share is declining



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360), BCG AI Radar 2025 Survey (n = 1,803); BCG analysis.
Question: "What are the top three risks you are most concerned about when it comes to AI?"

Agentic AI introduces both opportunity and risk in cybersecurity

Automation

9%

of leaders view cybersecurity as the biggest threat from agentic AI

Can search for weaknesses and break without rest

Scale

Can send many fake messages and frauds to many users

System access

If taken over, can change settings, move data, or turn off protection

New targets

AI systems can be hacked

Learning

Can learn which attacks work and keep improving them

32%

of leaders view cybersecurity as the biggest opportunity of agentic AI

Can watch systems continuously and react to problems quickly

Can check huge amounts of logs/alerts that humans would miss

Can repeatedly follow security steps quickly and correctly

Can regularly check accounts, passwords, and settings for issues

Can learn which attacks appear and keep improving defense

59%

of leaders view it as both a threat and an opportunity

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,286 due to exclusion of executives who answered “I don’t know.”); BCG analysis.
Question: “When it comes to your organization’s cybersecurity, do AI agents present an opportunity or are they a threat?”

Takeaway 2

AI corporate transformation
is moving from a CIO-led to a
CEO-led initiative

72%

of CEOs say they are the main decision maker on AI in their organization

2x last year

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Question: "What is your level of involvement in decision making related to AI in your company?"

82%

are more optimistic about AI's potential for ROI this year than last year

Question: "Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about AI's overall ability to deliver value than you were 12 months ago?"

**Half of CEOs surveyed
believe their job stability
depends on getting AI
strategy right**

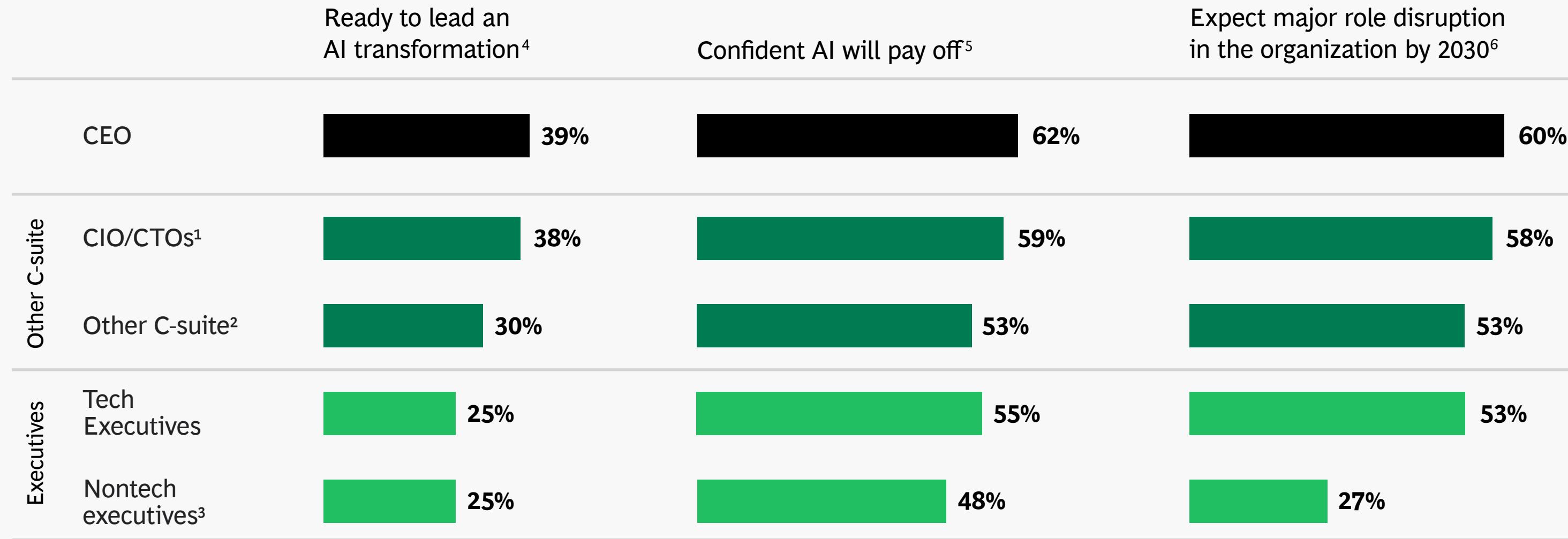


50%

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Question: “Do you believe your job stability depends on getting AI investments and strategy right by 2026?”

CEOs show stronger conviction in AI than their executive counterparts



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.

¹Includes Chief Data Officer, Chief Digital Officer, Chief AI Officer, and Chief Analytics Officer. ²Includes Chief Financial Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, and other C-suite roles who report to the CEO. ³Includes VP-level roles reporting into CXOs.

⁴“How confident are you in your ability to lead your organization through an AI transformation that will deliver a positive return on investment?”, Replies for “Very confident.” ⁵“Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?”, Replies for “Confident AI will pay off.” ⁶“To what extent do you agree with the following: By 2030, more than half the roles in your organization, including the C-suite, will be gone or transformed by AI.”

CEOs in the East are more confident AI will pay off

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Question: “Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?”, Replies “Confident that AI will pay off.”

¹Greater China includes mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. ²Middle East and Africa includes Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the UAE. ³Europe includes France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Global East

SHARE OF CEOS CONFIDENT THAT AI WILL PAY OFF



Global West

SHARE OF CEOS CONFIDENT THAT AI WILL PAY OFF



CEOs in Asia express confidence, while those in the West feel pressure



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Question: "Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?", Replies "Confident that AI will pay off" and "Pressured to act or risk falling behind."

¹Europe includes France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. ²Middle East and Africa includes Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the UAE. ³Greater China includes mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

CEOs are excited about AI agents

~90%

of CEOs believe AI agents will enable their organizations to report measurable ROI in 2026

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Question: “To what extent do you agree with the following: AI agents will finally enable my organization to see measurable ROI from AI in 2026.”, Replies for “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree”.

CEOs have committed

>30%

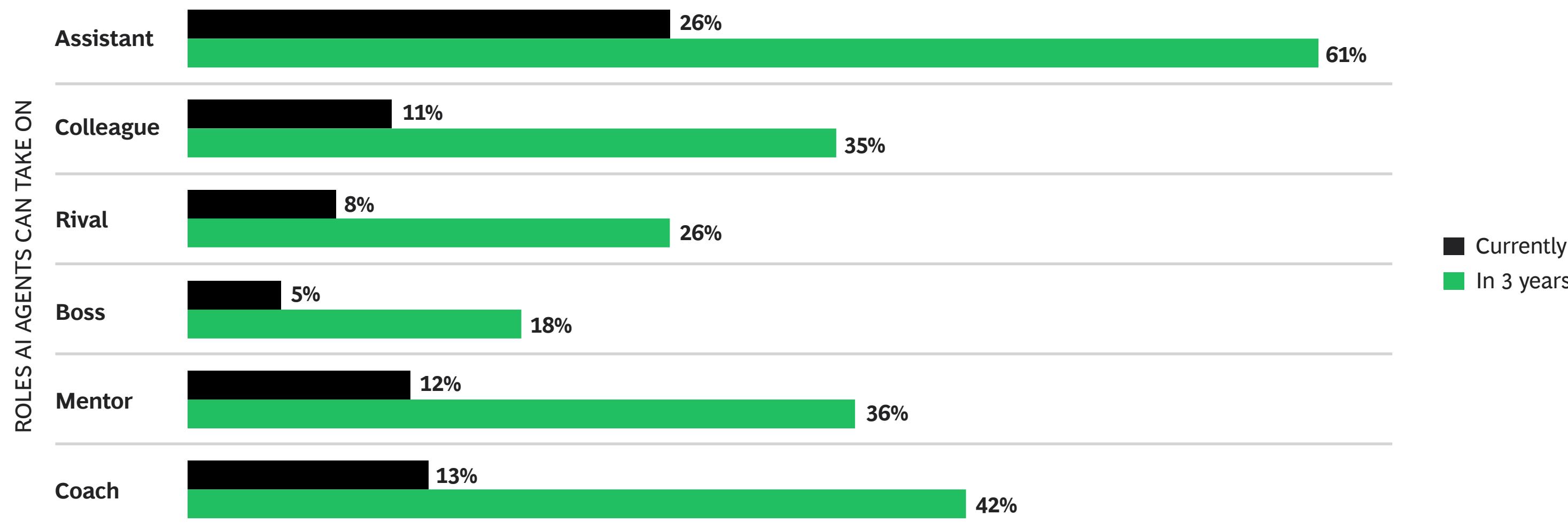
of their organization’s AI investment for 2026 to agentic AI

Question: “Approximately what percent of your organization’s AI investment for 2026 is in AI agents?”, average of responses.

Agentic AI is taking on multiple roles, changing how companies organize work

“To what extent do AI applications occupy the following roles for people in your functional area?”

SHARE OF ORGANIZATIONS



Sources: BCG-MIT Sloan Management Review report, 2025 (n = 2,102); BCG analysis.

Note: Respondents who answered “strongly agree” or “agree” to the question.

58%

of leading organizations expect a change in governance and decision rights due to AI

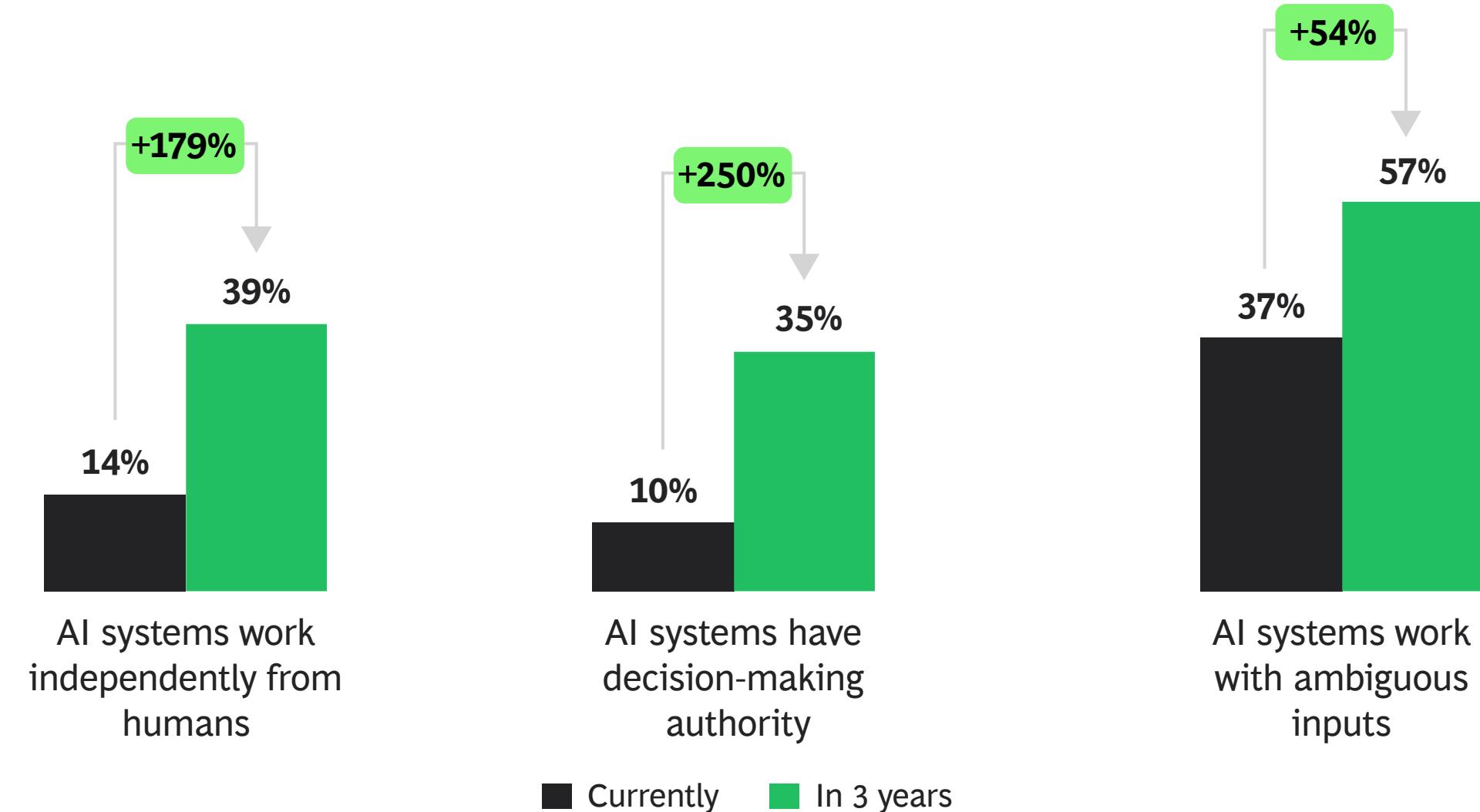
Sources: BCG-MIT Sloan Management Review report, 2025

(n = 2,102); BCG analysis.

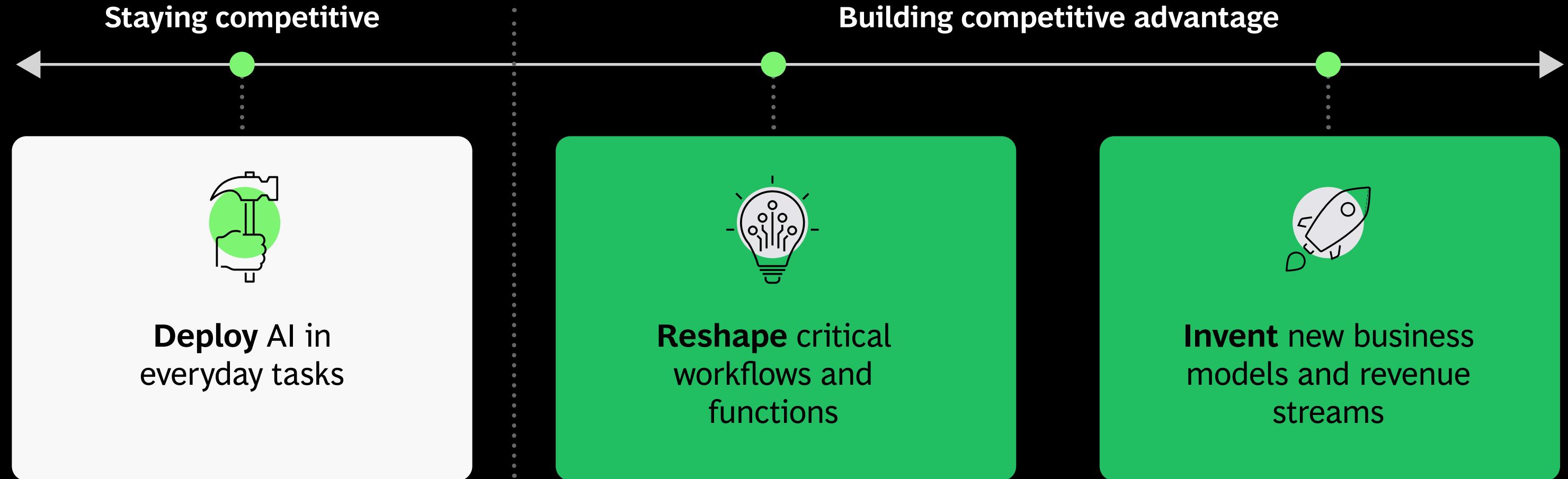
Note: Respondents who answered “a great extent” or “a lot” to the question.

As AI systems increasingly gain autonomy, leaders must develop adaptable governance structures

“To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your organization?”



90% of CEOs believe that by 2028 AI will significantly transform what success looks like

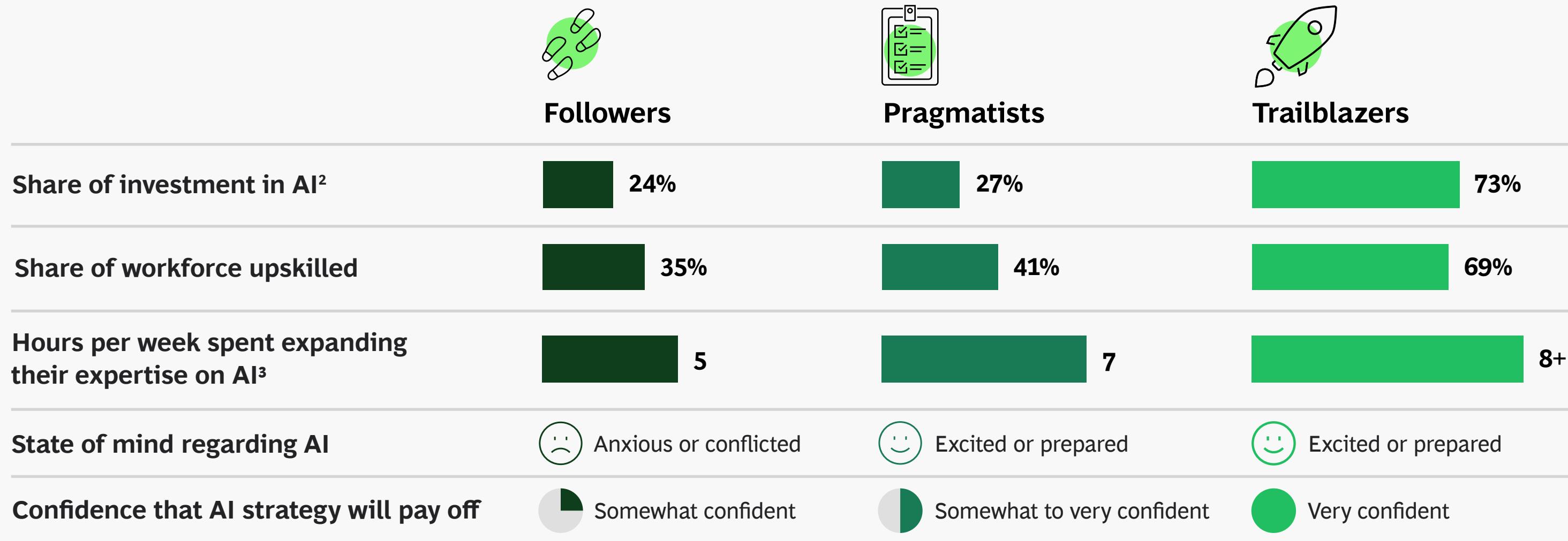


Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Takeaway 3

Three CEO archetypes emerge
with Trailblazer CEOs leading
end-to-end AI transformation

Three CEO archetypes emerge from the survey data¹



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

¹K-means clustering analysis reveals the five key variables that differentiate CEOs. These variables are used to define the three CEO archetypes. ²Investments in AI as a part of the organization's transformational budget in 2026. ³Includes all forms of engagement, not just formal training but also discussions, briefings, demos, and direct exploration of tools.

Trailblazers emerge, but nearly all CEOs are focused on AI



~15% Followers

Recognize AI's potential but lack full conviction, making some early, cautious investments



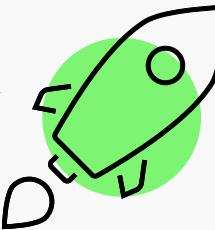
~70% Pragmatists

Are excited and confident about AI but only invest when they see evident value and low risk



~15% Trailblazers

Drive AI-powered transformation through decisive investment, rapid upskilling, and strong belief in AI's ROI

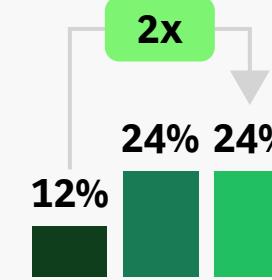


Increasing levels of confidence, investments, workforce upskilling, pressure to deliver, and excitement/preparedness

Trailblazer CEOs create a positive flywheel by prioritizing, investing, and upskilling the organization in AI

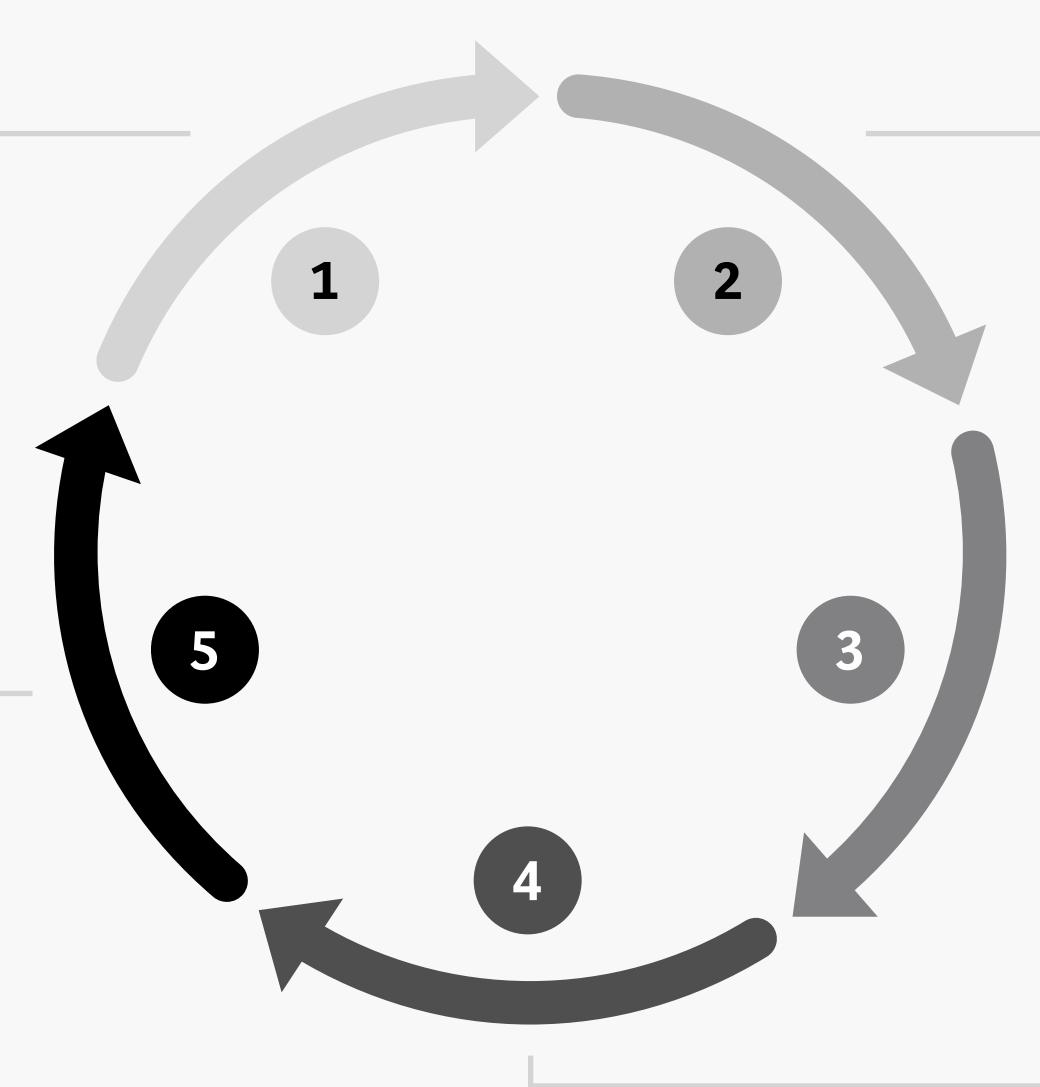
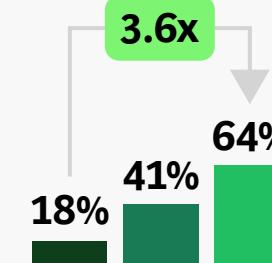
1. Make AI and agentic AI a top priority

Having “accelerate AI” as their top priority



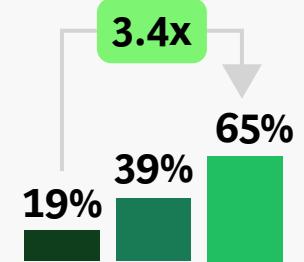
5. Track measurable ROI from AI

Feeling “very confident” their AI strategy will pay off



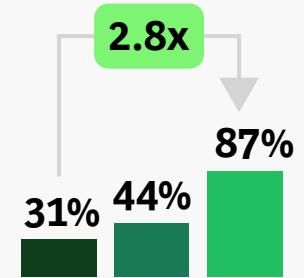
2. Deepen AI literacy

Spending more than six hours a week expanding their expertise on AI



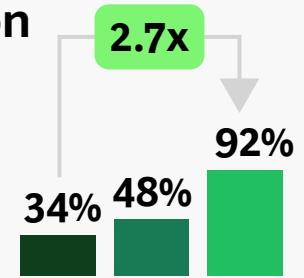
3. Invest capital at scale

Investing more than \$50M in AI in 2026



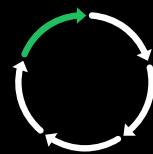
4. Upskill their organization

Upskilling more than half of their workforce



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

Followers Pragmatists Trailblazers

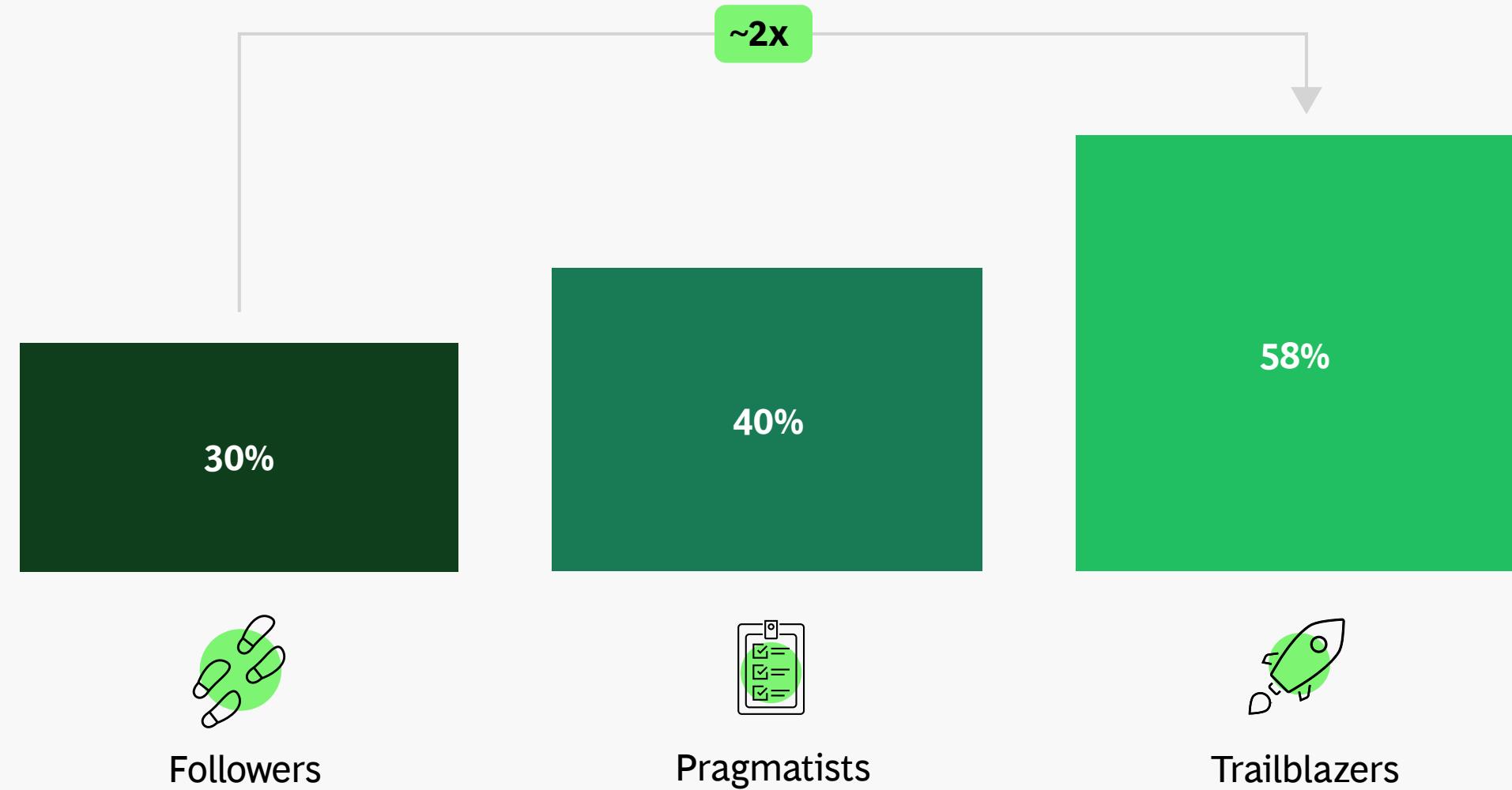


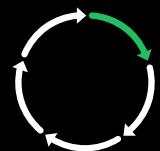
1. MAKE AI AND AGENTIC AI A TOP PRIORITY

**Trailblazer CEOs
are twice as likely
to apply agentic AI
end-to-end**

“End-to-end AI transformation is one of our greatest opportunities to succeed with AI agents in the next 12 months”

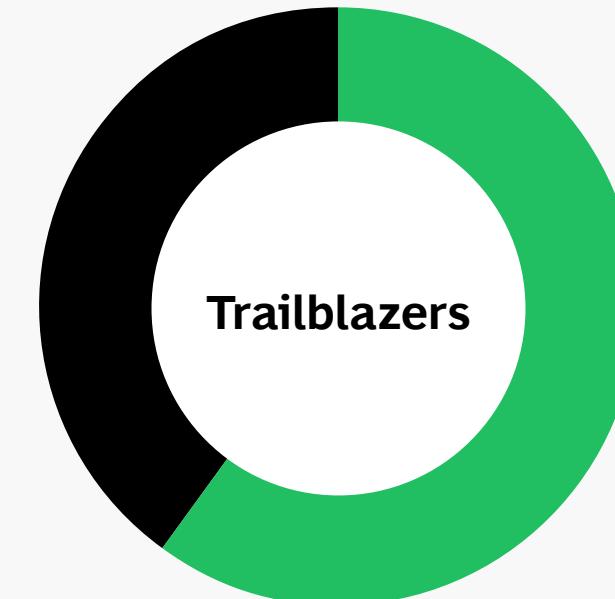
SHARE OF RESPONSES FROM CEOS THAT AGREE





2. INVEST CAPITAL AT SCALE

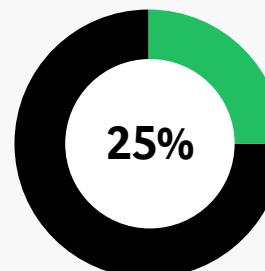
**Trailblazer CEOs
see value in AI
agents and invest
significantly**



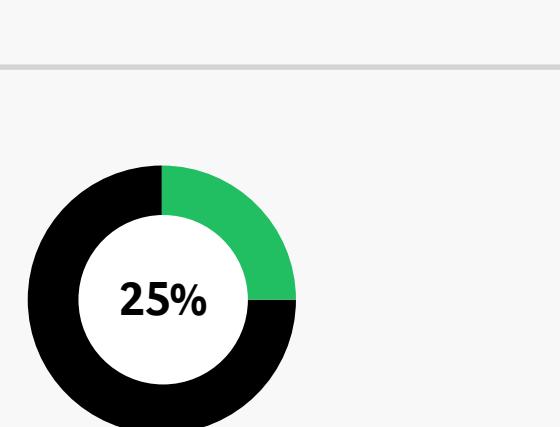
~60%

of their AI budget is currently
being spent on agentic AI

vs



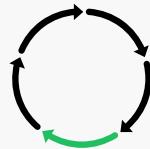
Pragmatists



Followers

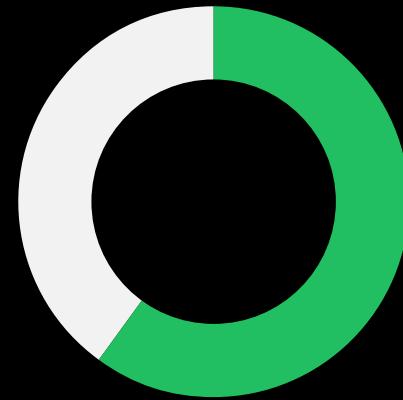
Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.
Question: "Approximately what percent of your organization's AI
investment for 2026 is in AI agents?"

 % of AI spending on agentic AI



4. UPSKILL THEIR ORGANIZATION

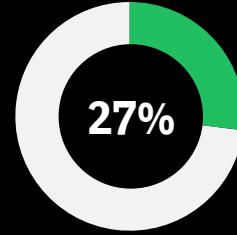
Trailblazers invest twice as much in upskilling their workforce



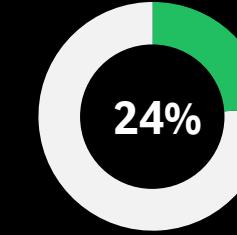
~60%

of their organization's AI budget is allocated to upskilling and retraining current workforce on AI¹

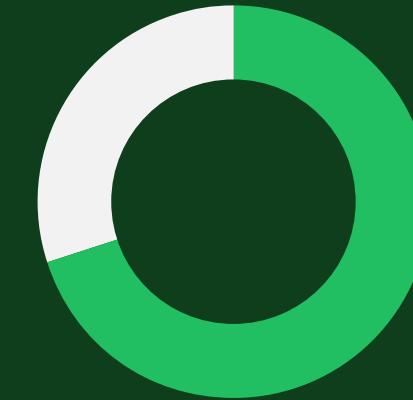
vs



Pragmatists



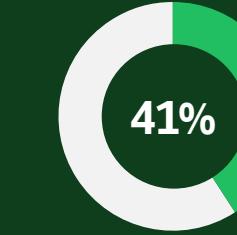
Followers



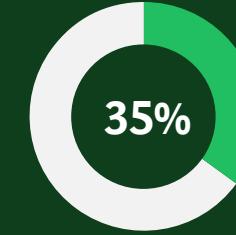
~70%

of their workforce has been upskilled/reskilled on AI²

vs



Pragmatists

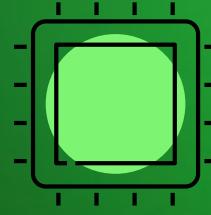


Followers

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

¹“Approximately what percent of your overall AI budget is being allocated to upskill and retrain your current workforce on AI?” ²“What share of your workforce has been upskilled/reskilled for AI?”

Trailblazers see significant impact and returns from their investments in AI



Foxconn

Over \$400M targeted savings identified from a scalable AI operating model and AI platform deployed across more than 200 factories



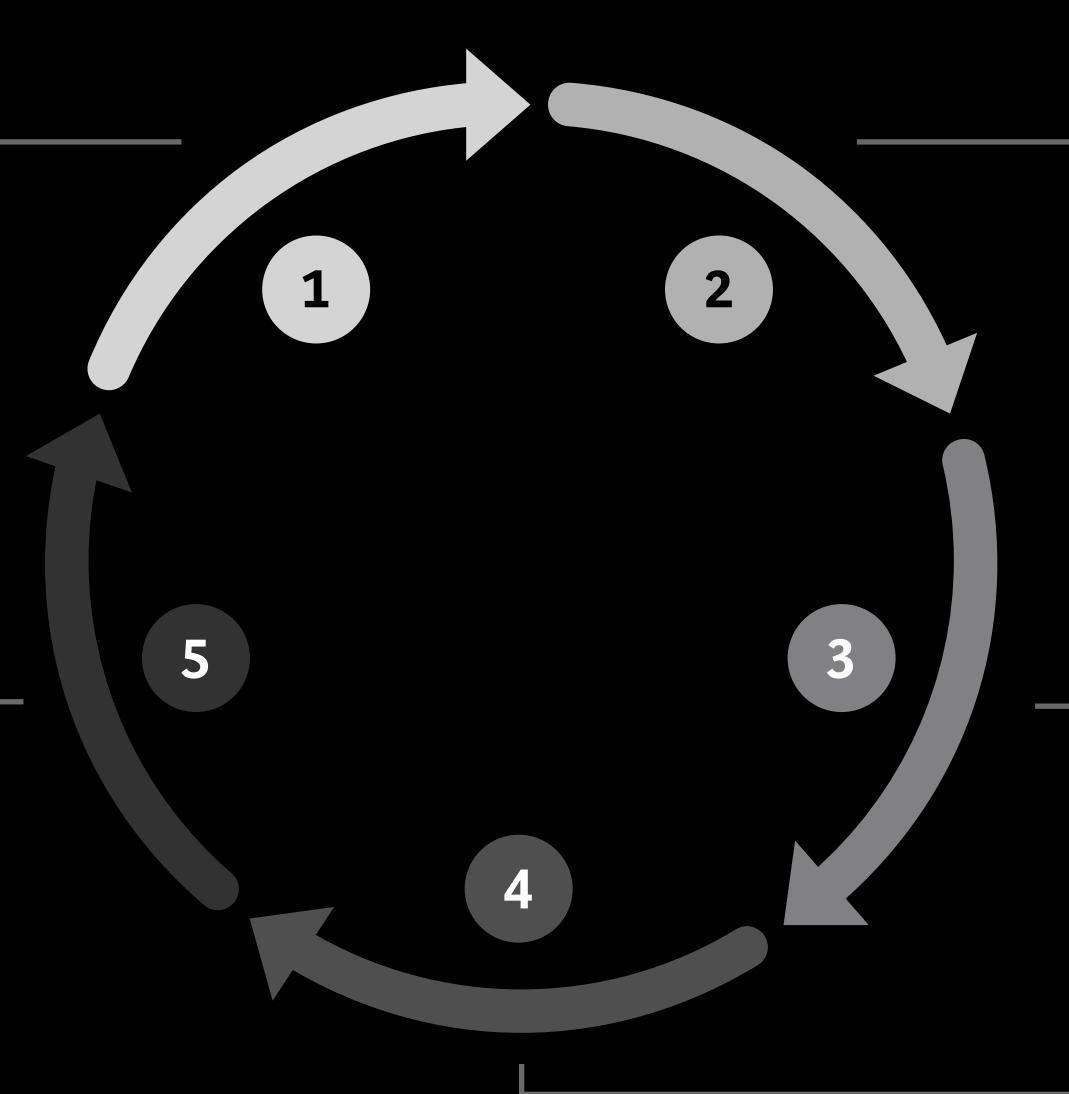
Reckitt

Quality output doubled through an end-to-end AI-driven workflow reinvention in marketing, cutting routine activities by up to 90%

CEOs must act decisively to execute their AI agenda

1. Make AI your key priority

Position the organization to be the disruptor, not the disrupted.



2. Deepen AI literacy

Expand individual AI fluency to effectively lead transformations.

5. Track measurable ROI from AI

Track AI's impact to drive sustainable ROI over time.

3. Commit investments at scale

Invest decisively across end-to-end business functions.

4. Upskill the organization

Upskill the workforce to optimize productivity, creativity, and judgment.

In summary

Corporate investment in AI is here to stay...

94%

will continue to invest
even if it does not pay off
in 2026

1.7%

of an organization's
revenue is dedicated to
AI investment

2x

increase in projected
AI investments from
2025

AI transformation is moving from a CIO-led initiative to a CEO-led strategy...

72%

of CEOs say they are the
main decision maker on AI,
2x last year

50%

of CEOs believe their
job depends on getting
AI right

90%

of CEOs believe AI agents will
enable their companies to see
measurable ROI this year