



**An Industry Outlook on
Adoption, Readiness,
and the Operational Future of
Architecture & Engineering**

The State of AI in A&E

2026

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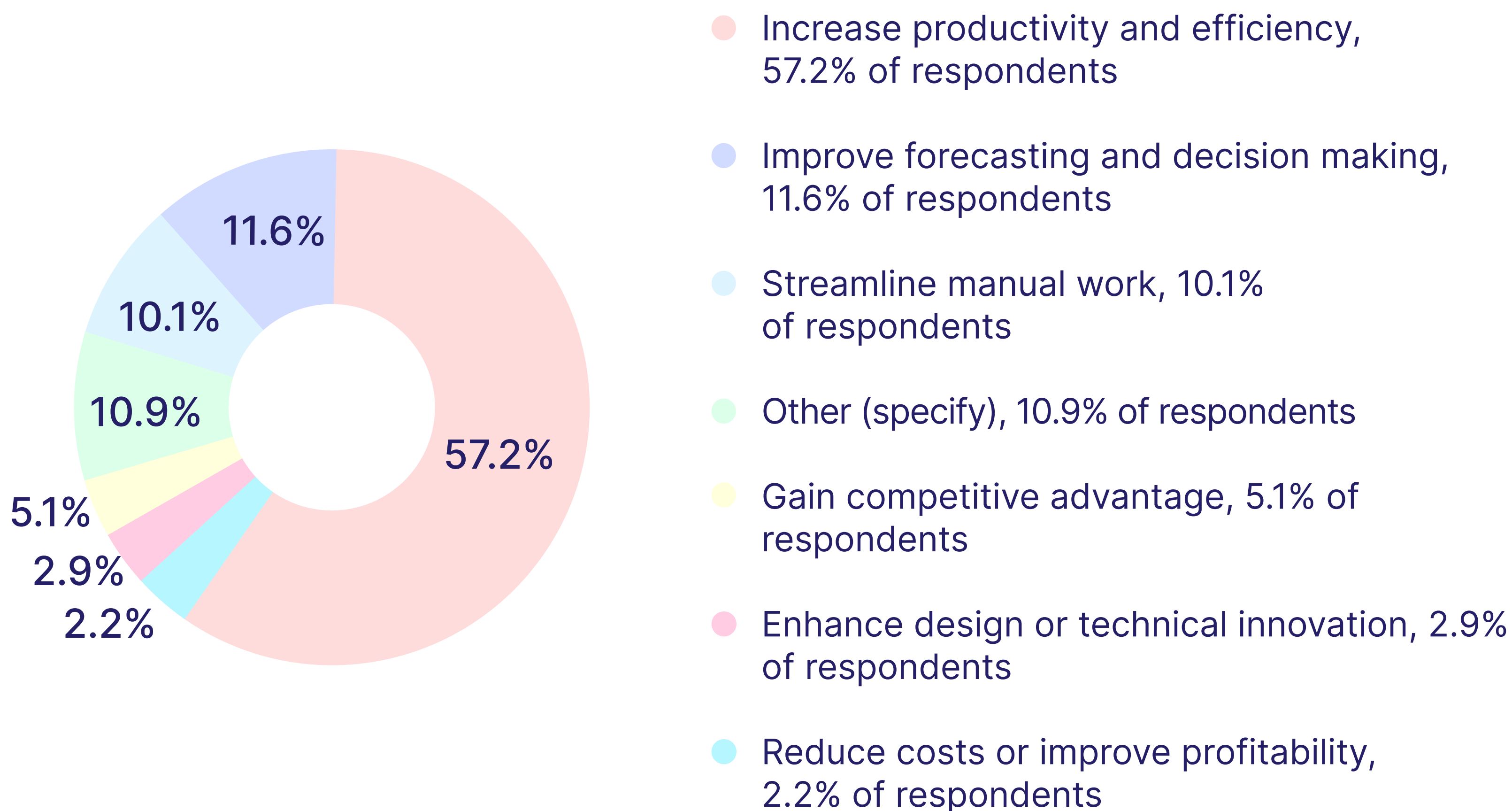
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Learning 1

Primary objective for exploring or adopting AI

To understand the state of AI adoption in A&E, Mosaic ran a survey and series of interviews about the opportunities and challenges driving firms to move beyond the status quo.

Question 1: What's your firm's primary objective for exploring or adopting AI?



The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

Why Firms Are Turning to AI

AEC firms are adopting AI to be more efficient. Improving productivity is the #1 motivation of leaders, while improving forecasting and other goals are of secondary importance.



The main goal of AI adoption in 2026 is increasing productivity and efficiency. AI is being adopted to streamline processes that make projects less profitable and slow down teams.

Respondents are signaling that AI must do at least one of three things to matter in the near term:



Improve work quality without adding complexity.



Speed up execution of project deliverables.



Make project delivery outcomes more predictable.

Organizations with AI initiatives in other domains, for example accounting, are only making those investments when they are seen as critical to present-day operations.

Pulse check

“Automating mundane or repetitive tasks. Things like workload management, proposal writing, contract reviews.”

Technology Leader, 200–499 Person A&E

“Helping reduce manual tasks that will allow teams to be more efficient in their other tasks. Also, will reduce the human error when doing repetitive tasks.”

Operations Leader, 500–999 Person A&E

What this means for firms

AI adoption is being driven by business outcomes.

Firms that connect AI adoption directly to KPIs, such as cycle time, rework, utilization, and profit per project, will see better outcomes than firms without specific goals and KPIs tied to adoption.



Learning 2

What AI Is Being Used For Today

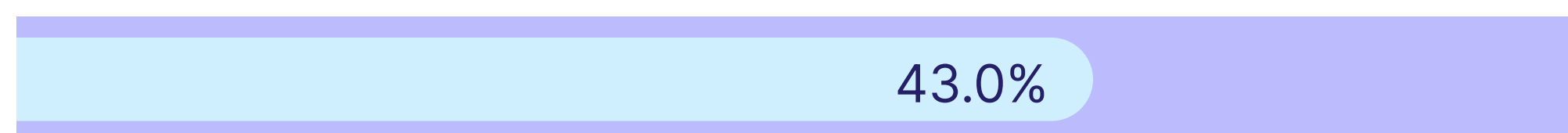
Employees are moving faster than their organizations when it comes to adopting productivity-boosting AI tools.

Which of these AI tools are currently in use at your firm?

 Adoption Rate (% of Firms)

 Share of Total Tool Use (% of Selections)

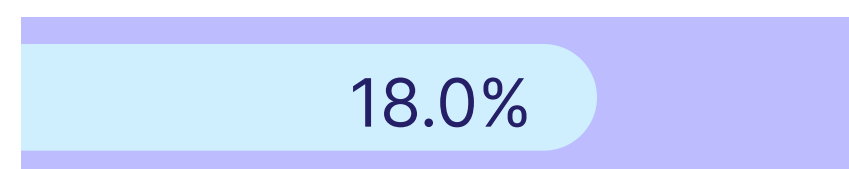
Chatbots or Copilots 62.3% of respondents



Generative design or content creation 30.4% of respondents



None yet, still exploring, 26.1% of respondents



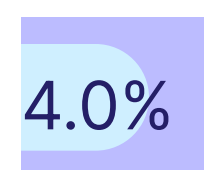
AI dashboards or data visualization, 11.6% of respondents



Scheduling or workload automation, 8.7% of respondents



Forecasting or demand prediction, 5.8% of respondents



The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

While a majority of people are using Chatbots or Copilots at work, AI is not yet being used to make business processes more efficient, which is the #1 priority of survey respondents.



62.3% of respondents use Chatbots or Copilots, but org-wide initiatives are much less common

↳ 26.1% of respondents have no firm-wide AI use case.

↳ <6% of firms are forecasting workload or demand with AI.

The next wave of adoption is embedding AI into operational workflows.

Pulse check

“Automating mundane or repetitive tasks. Things like workload management, proposal writing, contract reviews.”

Technology Leader, 200–499 Person, A&E

“The biggest opportunity is workload forecasting and resource management.”

Project Manager, 500–999 Person, A&E

What this means for firms

In 2026, firms that focus on improving workflows that drive profit and utilization will be ahead of the curve. These workflows include planning, allocation, forecasting, and scenario analysis.

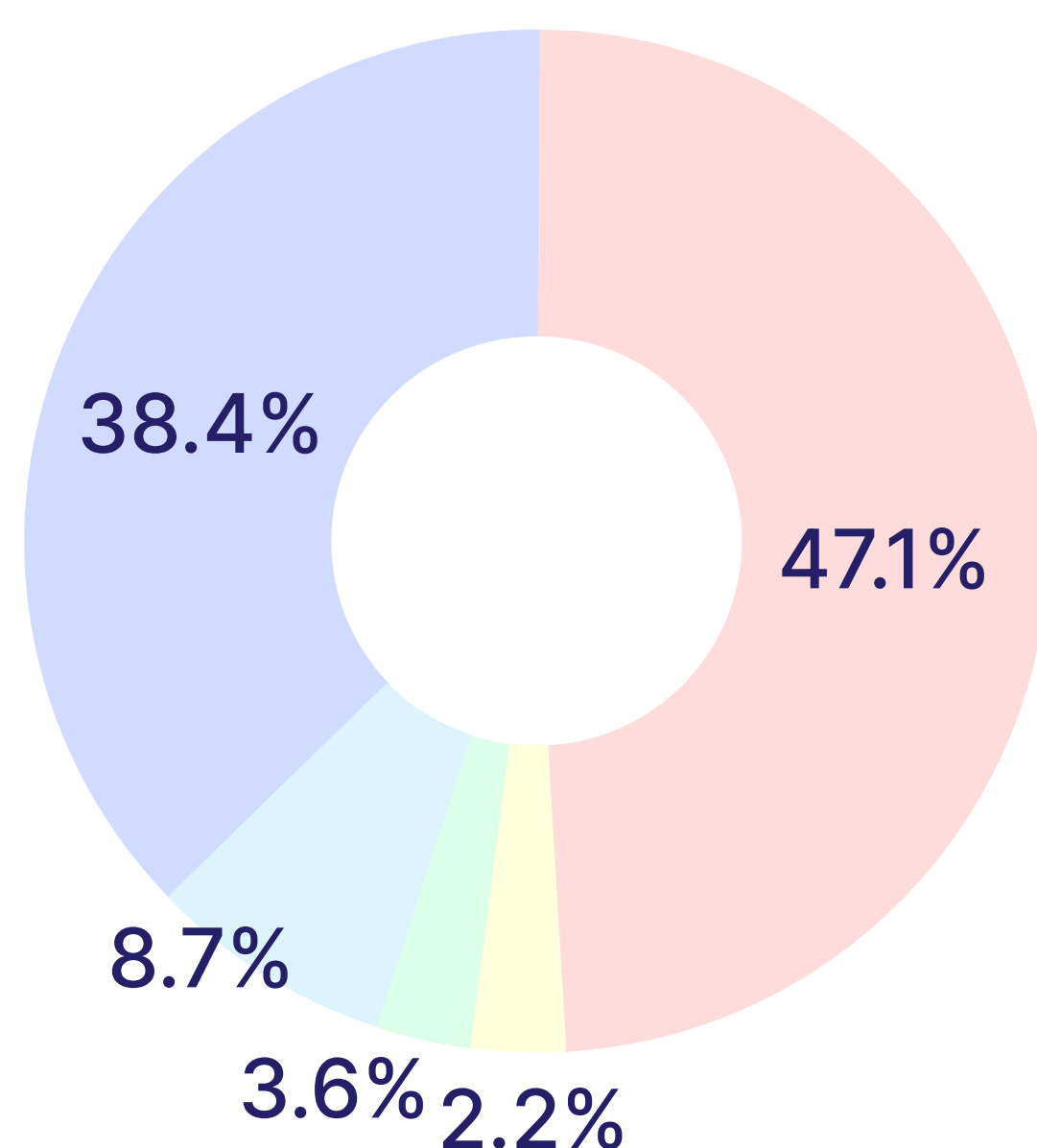


Learning 3

AI Use Is Widespread, But Fragmented

Most firms are either exploring AI or in early experimentation, while structured pilots and AI embedded in operations remain rare.

What is your firm's current AI strategy?



- Early experimentation in select workflows, 47.1% of respondents
- No formal AI strategy, just exploring possibilities, 38.4% of respondents
- Structured pilots with measurable outcomes, 8.7% of respondents
- Established tools embedded in operations, 3.6% of respondents
- AI is a strategic pillar across the business, 2.2% of respondents

The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

The small share of structured pilots indicates that many firms have not translated AI curiosity into practical approaches for making decisions regarding what tools and workflows to adopt.



85.5% of survey respondents are either exploring possibilities or in early experimentation in select workflows.

Survey respondents indicated that various headwinds caused this disjointed pattern of use, including:

- ↳ Tool sprawl across teams
- ↳ Uneven adoption that depends on individual enthusiasm
- ↳ No shared measure of ROI
- ↳ AI value isolated to a few individuals or pockets within the firm

There is a significant disconnect between firm-level AI strategy and adoption, and individual contributors' use of Chatbots or Copilots. 47.1% of people use Chatbots or Copilots, but only 8.7% of firms have structured pilots of AI tools. This indicates that individual contributors are ahead of their organizations in adopting new tools to work more efficiently.

Pulse check

"I have AI creating some lisp routines, saves me time when they work."

Individual Contributor, 50–199 Person A&E

"Unknown at this time, we are a very specific profession and I doubt there will be major improvements for some time."

Executive/Principal, 50–199 Person, A&E

What this means for firms

Individual tool use is not expected to be the primary driver of increased efficiency and productivity, new and improved processes are. Firms need the leadership to enable this level of change.



Learning 4

Where do you expect the most AI investment in the next 12 months?

Where AI Investment Is Heading Next

Leaders are planning to invest where costs are concentrated. The focus is on project delivery automation first, with forecasting and design automation close behind.

■ Firm Priority (% of Firms)
■ Share of Total Investment Focus (% of Selections)

Project automation (scheduling, reporting), 40.6% of respondents



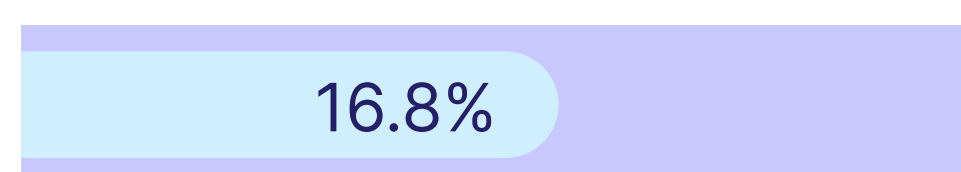
Staff training and AI literacy, 31.9% of respondents



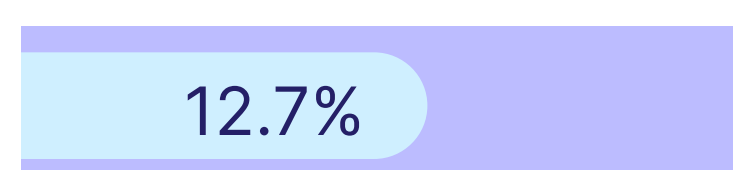
Forecasting and analytics, 30.4% of respondents



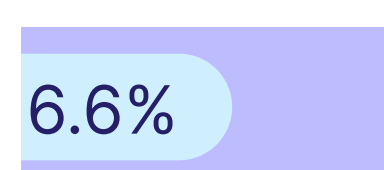
Design and modeling workflows, 29.7% of respondents



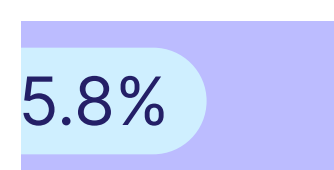
Resource or capacity planning, 22.5% of respondents



Client service or experience, 11.6% of respondents



Other write ins, 10.1% of respondents

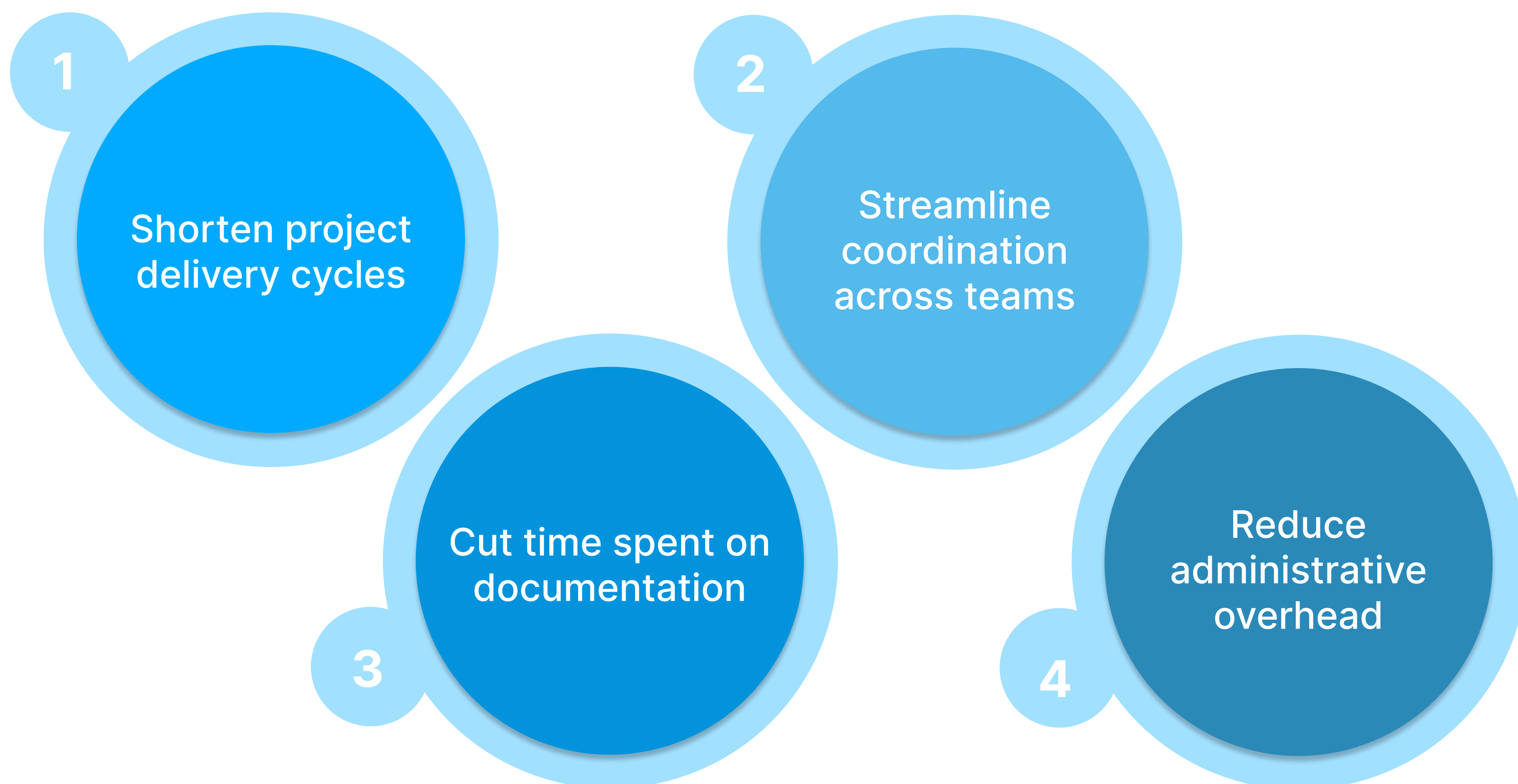


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Survey of 138 respondents

Automation sits at the top for a reason. The A&E delivery engine includes a large volume of repeatable work that is necessary but not differentiating, and those tasks often absorb highly paid people.



Firms are looking to AI to:



As areas of investment, forecasting, design automation, and staff training are nearly tied for second place after automation. This indicates a market that intends to leverage AI to improve everything across the firm.

Pulse check

“We have seen significant savings in time and effort, allowing us to increase production while also maintaining quality results.”

Designer, 50–199 Person A&E

“Our main goal is automation of scheduling and communications.”

Project Manager, 50–199 Person A&E

What this means for firms

The winners in 2026 and 2027 will be firms that embed AI into workflows in order to increase throughput and make their operations more predictable.

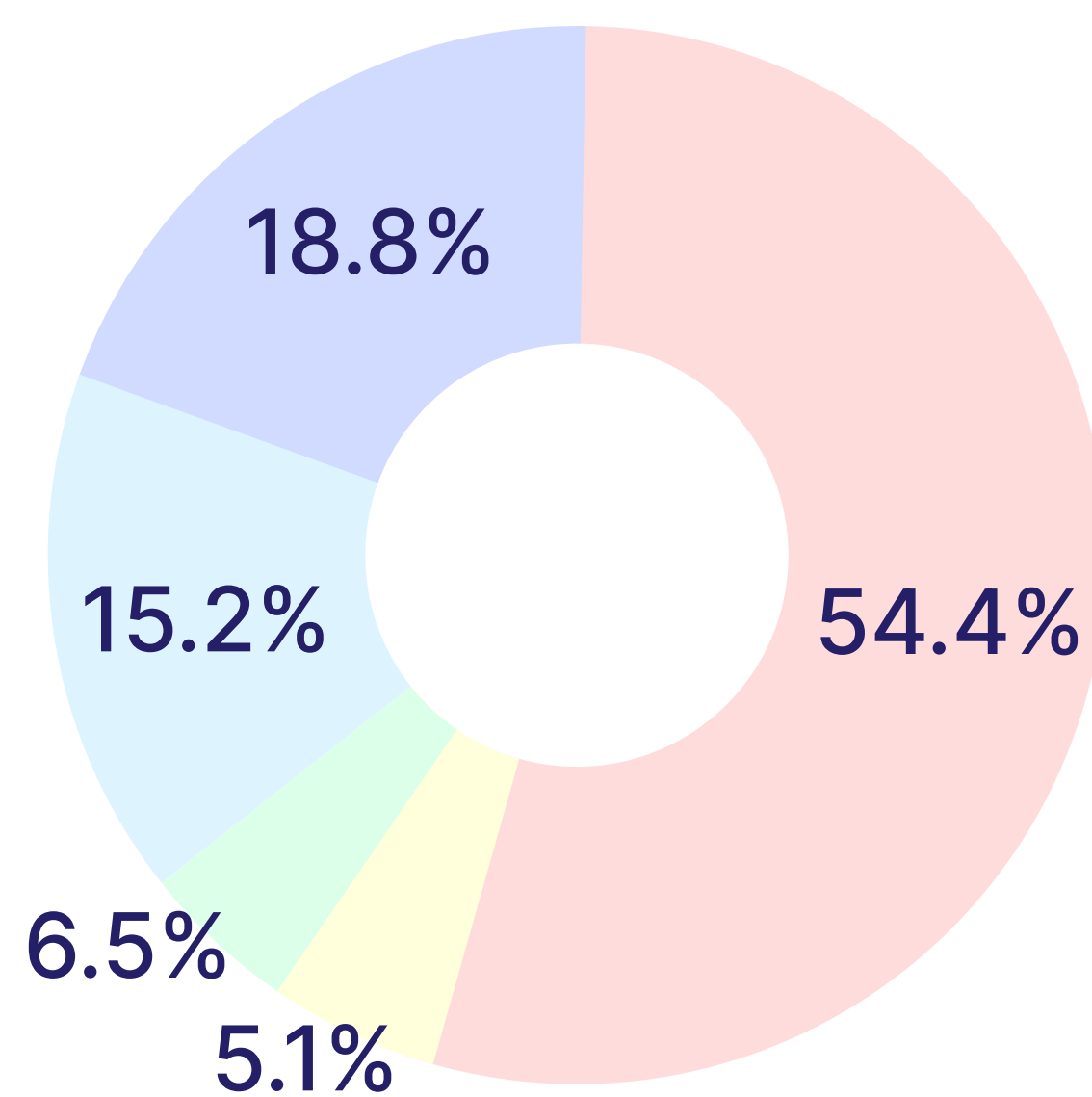


Learning 5

Firms Expect AI to Make Them Money

Most respondents expect AI to materially improve performance.

What kind of impact do you expect AI to have on the success of your firm in 2–3 years?



- Moderate positive impact, 54.4% of respondents
- Significant positive impact, 18.8% of respondents
- Minimal impact, 15.2% of respondents
- Negative impact, 6.5% of respondents
- No impact, 5.1% of respondents

The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

73.2% of respondents expect positive impact this year

Leaders are generally very optimistic that AI will make the firm more successful on short time horizons.



Skeptics understand the need for change

Respondents expecting minimal or negative impact voiced skepticism rooted in:



Quality & compliance concerns



Unclear ownership of errors



Fatigue from past tool promises



Uncertainty about client acceptance

Even respondents who voiced reservations understand that they will need to adopt novel technologies to stay competitive.

Pulse check

“The biggest opportunity isn’t just automation, it’s amplification. AI can turn professional services from reactive problem solving to proactive, data enhanced partnership.”

Executive, 1,000–4,999 Person, Engineering Firm

“Helping reduce manual tasks that will allow teams to be more efficient in their other tasks. Also, will reduce the human error when doing repetitive tasks.”

Executive/Principal, <50 Person, Consulting / Advisory

What this means for firms

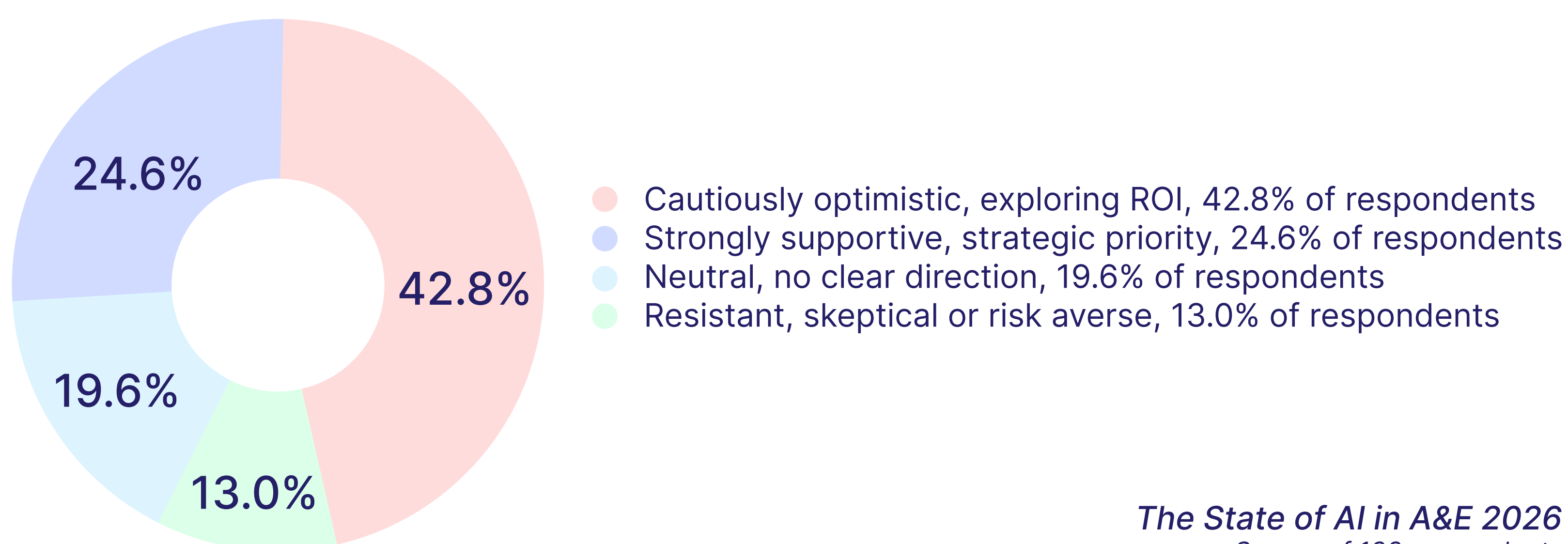
Skepticism is understandable, especially after years of tools that promised more than they delivered. But uncertainty is not a plan. Skepticism is healthy. Stalling is not.



Learning 6

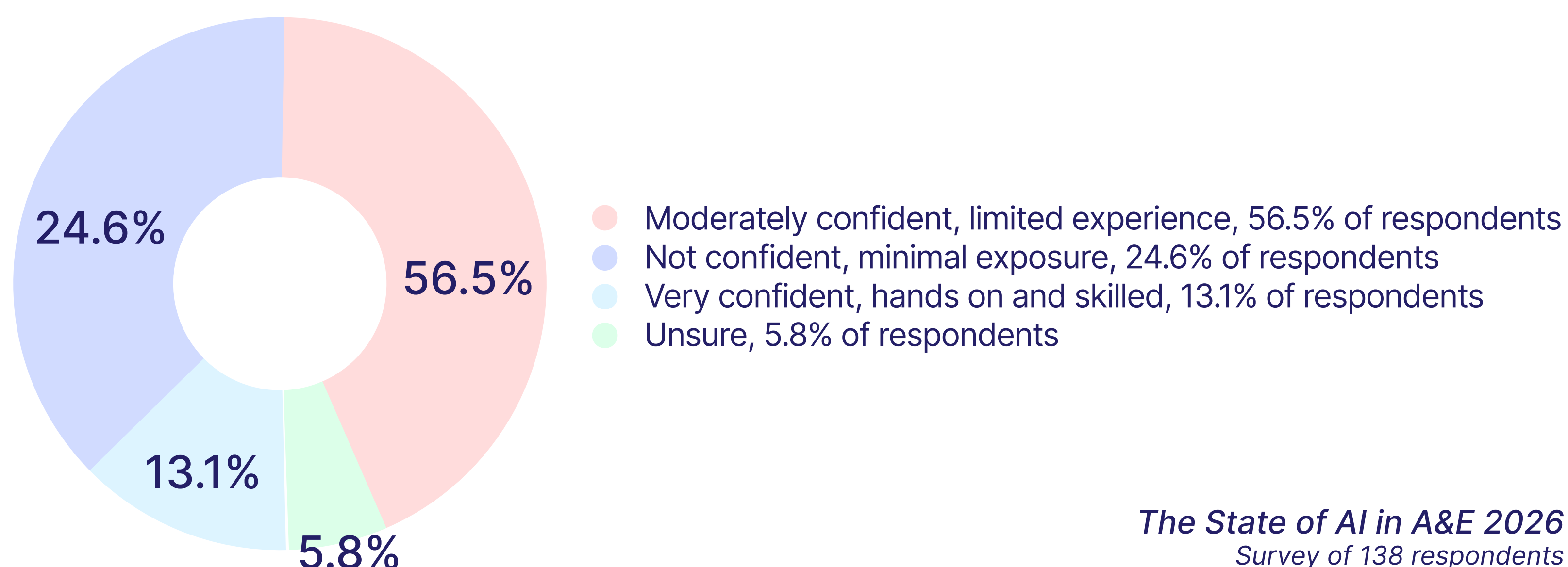
Leadership Support For AI Is Stronger Than Team Readiness To Adopt AI

What is your leadership's attitude toward AI?



The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

How confident are you that your team can use AI effectively?



The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

67.4% of leaders are optimistic or strongly support AI adoption, but only 13.1% of respondents are very confident their teams can use AI effectively. This suggests tools are being tried, but not yet mastered or standardized.



Pulse check

“We think it works well to promote creative ideas, but we do not want to use it in place of a person, more for exploring and broadening our creative edge.”

Operations Leader, <50 Person, A&E

“AI can be used for some tasks that add value, but overall the obsession with AI has to stop. I think people using it for tasks that they could do themselves is unsustainable and irresponsible.”

Project Manager, <50 Person, A&E

What this means for firms

Firms need to invest deeply in training and enablement. AI training, role based use case playbooks, and clear guardrails will separate firms that successfully implement AI from those that stall.



Learning 7

Firms' Data And IT Are Disconnected

AI adoption is blocked by disconnected data systems. Only a small minority of firms are ready for large-scale.

Biggest barriers to effective AI adoption

 Firm-Reported Barrier (% of Firms)

 Share of Total Barriers (% of Selections)

Lack of expertise or training, 43.5% of respondents

25.4%

Integration with legacy systems, 35.5% of respondents

20.8%

Disorganized or siloed data, 27.5% of respondents

16.1%

Cultural resistance to change, 26.1% of respondents

15.2%

Unclear ROI or business case, 26.1% of respondents

15.2%

Limited leadership support, 12.3% of respondents

7.3%

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The headwinds firms should focus on addressing are:

Training people so that they know what to do with AI when tools become available.

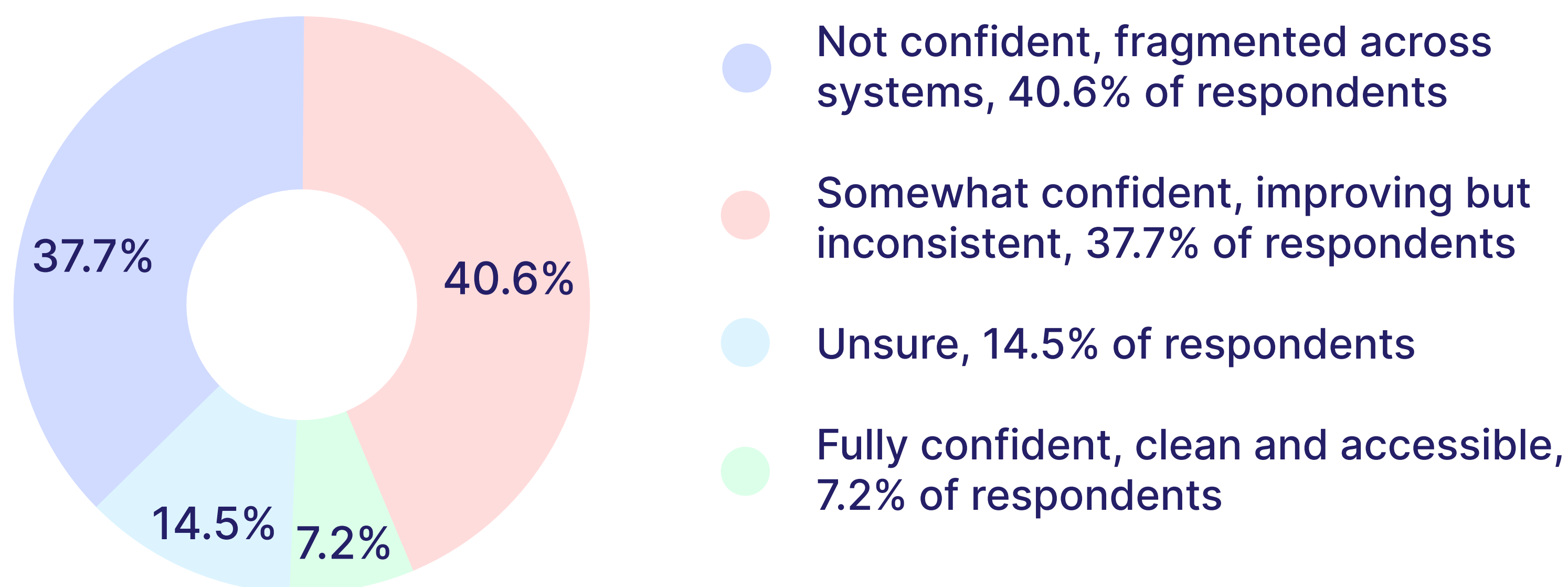
Identifying critical integrations and evaluating AI vendors based on their integrations strategy.

Overcoming cultural resistance about changing how things have always been done.



Leading Firms Are Clearing The Way For AI

How Confident Are You That Your Data Is Ready to Support AI?



The State of AI in A&E 2026
Survey of 138 respondents

Pulse check

"A full scale dump of all our data into an AI model could help identify efficiencies or engineering issues, and improve many aspects of our firm."

Project Manager, 50 – 199 Person, A&E

"Being able to adopt an AI solution internally using our own data to create functionality and analyze multiple data sources efficiently."

Technology Leader, 500–999 Person, A&E

What this means for firms

AI implementation is a large change management project with technological, cultural, and economic dimensions. Strong ROI requires setting clear goals and aligning operations to the shifting technology landscape.



What Changes by Role & Firm Size

Unpacking the Data

Role and firm size were correlated to responses in our survey and interviews.

By role lens

Executives and principals are looking to AI to improve productivity and are more likely to expect significant upside from AI.

Operations leaders are concerned with automation and forecasting, tying AI to predictability and stability.

Project managers and technical roles report active copilot usage, but cite data standardization as a blocker to deeper adoption.

Every role sees AI as aligned to their specific goals within the organization, and they're all right.

A representative view of AI adoption from the field

"We're implementing a lot of things right now. Drafting, calculations, Copilot internal data tools, AI certifications, content, specification editing, workload planning, staffing needs."

Executive/Principal, 50–199 Person, A&E

By Company Size

Firms under 200 employees

These firms' skew toward exploration and early experimentation, often due to worse data and fewer resources for governance.

Firms between 500 & 1000 employees

These firms show a higher likelihood of structured pilots and embedded tools, reflecting stronger operational systems and clearer ownership.

Firms over 1,000 employees

These firms adoption is constrained by legacy technology and complex governance needs.

While smaller firms are limited by poor governance, large firms are limited by legacy software.



The 2026 AI Adoption Outlook

While today's adoption landscape is marked by fragmented experimentation and disconnected data, the path to operational maturity is becoming clear. To bridge the gap between individual enthusiasm and firm-wide consistency—and move from ad-hoc tool usage to skilled, automated delivery—leaders are aligning around four accelerating forces:

What will accelerate

1 Training people to use AI will become a competitive advantage.

AI training and literacy was consistently cited as constraining adoption. Investments in AI upskilling will be differentiating in 2026.

2 Automation will move into the core delivery engine.

Project automation is the number one investment target at 40.4 percent. Expect AI to shift from helping individuals to running repeatable production tasks.

3 Forecasting and scenario modeling are the future.

Forecasting and analytics is a top three investment area at 30.4 percent. Firms are actively looking to improve predictability in staffing, project risk, and delivery outcomes.

4 Everyone needs to be good at working with a Chatbot or Copilot.

With 63.0 percent already using assistants, copilots are moving from novelty to expectation for technical and project staff.



Where friction will persist

1 Company Data Is Not AI Ready

43.9% are not confident in data readiness. Until work, people, and performance data are connected, AI scale will be limited.

2 Legacy software integration

Integration with legacy systems is a leading barrier at 34.8%. Firms want AI that fits into their environment, not around it.

3 AI literacy

37.7% report low confidence using AI, and training is the number one barrier. Adoption will slow without intentional enablement.



A caution worth noting

In 2026, implementing structured pilots of AI tools tied to operational KPIs will become table stakes. Firms that learn how to quickly experiment with and adopt new tools will discover a new source of competitive advantage.

Pulse check

“I think AI will become table stakes. I don't think clients will award contracts just for AI. I see firms shifting away from those services where they aren't as competitive.”

Executive/Principal, 50 – 199 Person, A&E



From Experimentation to Operating Advantage

What AEC Leaders Should Do Next

The results point to a simple conclusion. You need to change to thrive in 2026.

Firms that lead in 2026 will:



Understand how AI impacts roles in the organization

Normalize usage with prompt playbooks, internal champions, and discipline specific training.



Standardize AI into foundation software workflows.

Choose high-volume processes like drafting, scheduling, proposals, and QA. Make AI usage required and measurable.



Start with high-leverage the highest impact tools that.

Start with consistent project structures, role definitions, and historical performance baselines.



Measure AI by delivery and financial performance.

Track on-time project delivery, time variance, utilization, project and organization profitability.



Methodology and Demographics

This report is based on Mosaic's November 2025 survey of 138 respondents.

Your role

- Executive or Principal, 37 (26.8%)
- Project Manager, 30 (21.7%)
- Architect or Engineer, 24 (17.4%)
- Operations Leader, 22 (15.9%)
- Technology Leader, 9 (6.5%)
- Other roles, 16 (11.7%)

Firm size

- Under 50 people, 47 (34.1%)
- 50 to 199 people, 52 (37.7%)
- 200 to 499 people, 8 (5.8%)
- 500 to 999 people, 24 (17.4%)
- 1,000 to 4,999 people, 6 (4.3%)
- 5,000 plus, 1 (0.7%)

Primary region of operation

- North America, 131 (95.1%)
- Europe, 2 (1.4%)
- APAC, 2 (1.4%)
- Latin America, 2 (1.4%)
- Middle East & Africa, 1 (0.7%)

Firm's primary industry

- Architecture or Engineering, 115 (83.3%)
- Consulting or Advisory, 11 (8.0%)
- Technology or Software Development, 6 (4.3%)
- Other professional services, 4 (3.0%)
- Agency / Creative Services, 1 (0.7%)
- Legal / Financial Services, 1 (0.7%)



Closing



A&E is entering a practical AI era. The tools exist and the industry is showing clear signs of rapid improvement. You can consider 2025-2026 the year that AI excels at deep reasoning materially changing the software landscape.

Tools will deliver and leadership must leaning in.

The only open question is which firms operationalize AI first.

2026 will separate firms that experiment with AI from firms that begin to run their operations with AI, and take advantage of a once in a lifetime technology shift.

This report is your benchmark for where the industry stands today, and how to lead from here.



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