



2024 Global AI Workplace Report

Workplace AI: The race to embrace

How workplace AI is delivering productivity gains and unlocking higher-value work for employees





Less than two years since generative AI exploded into the marketplace, organizations are discovering some of its transformative potential: Instead of automating away jobs, AI is showing how it is boosting job performance for knowledge workers in every major function of business.

That's one of the key findings from Freshworks' Global AI Workplace Report, which shows how various workplace departments are using AI on the job. The global survey of 7,000+ full-time employees, collected from March 9 to April 4, 2024, revealed how AI is providing new capabilities for knowledge workers: More than half (55%) of surveyed employees said they are currently using software applications enhanced with AI at work.

Equally revealing is the level of trust that employees are placing in AI despite ongoing questions and concerns about the technology. Nearly three in four workers surveyed (72%) trust AI to bring value to their work processes; even more (81%) trust AI because they believe its quality of work is good or it makes their team more productive.

The report confirms that AI is no longer an experimental pilot tool, but rather an active driver of substantial efficiency and productivity gains across operations and industries.



This report exemplifies that AI is delivering tremendous productivity gains at enterprise scale. Knowledge workers are also seeing strong productivity gains at work, which in turn is sparking strong employee interest in mastering AI skills. Make no mistake, the AI era is firmly delivering on its promise to free up employees for higher-level work and showcasing compelling returns on AI.

Prakash Ramamurthy

Chief Product Officer at Freshworks

The adoption race

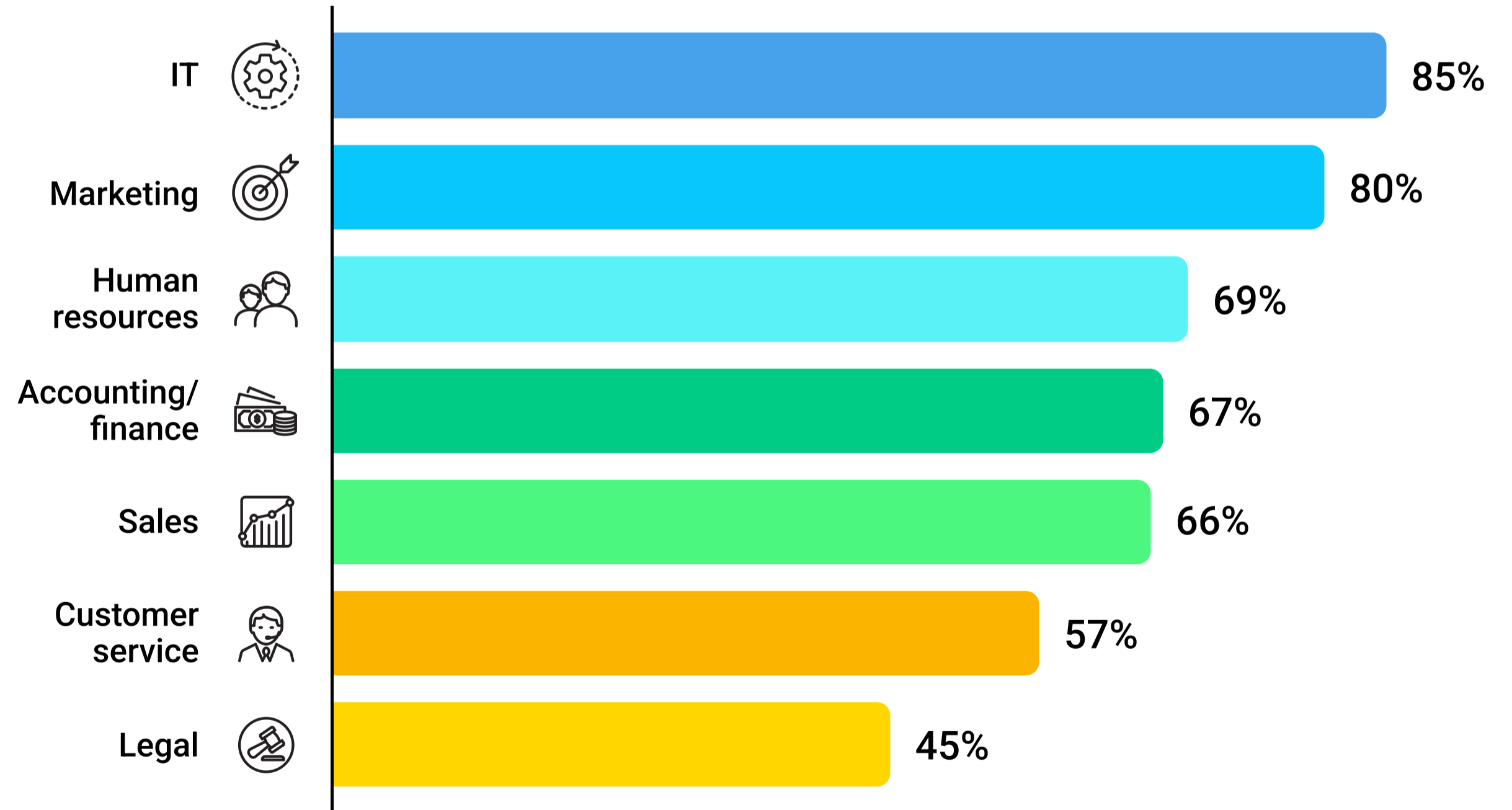
AI power users are emerging in many departments outside of IT

The Freshworks survey shows in detail how AI adoption is growing across organizations. While IT workers lead all departments in AI usage, with 85% using it weekly, marketing teams are catching up quickly: 80% are using AI at least once per week, significantly more than any other non-technical group of workers.

Legal departments, perhaps not surprisingly, ranked last in AI adoption among surveyed departments. Even so, nearly half (45%) of legal employees report that they are using the new tools on a weekly basis—a surprising leap of faith for a business function devoted to managing risk.

The new departments of AI

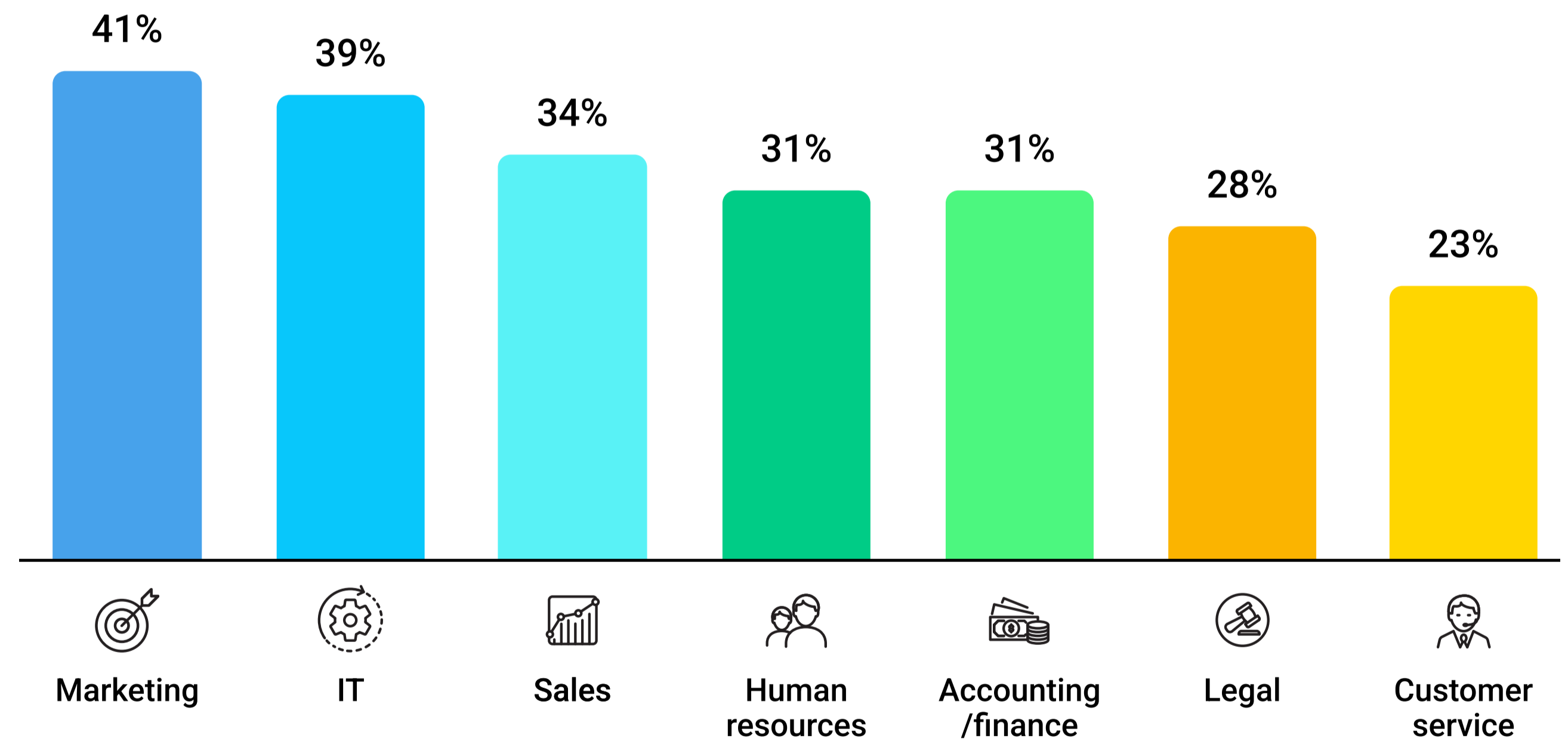
Teams that use AI at least once per week



ChatGPT and other generative-AI-based search and image creation tools are the most common AI tools used on the job. One in three (33%) workers say they use ChatGPT at work, rising to two in five (41%) marketing professionals and 39% of IT employees.

ChatGPT power users

Teams using the generative AI tool the most



'Surprise AI'

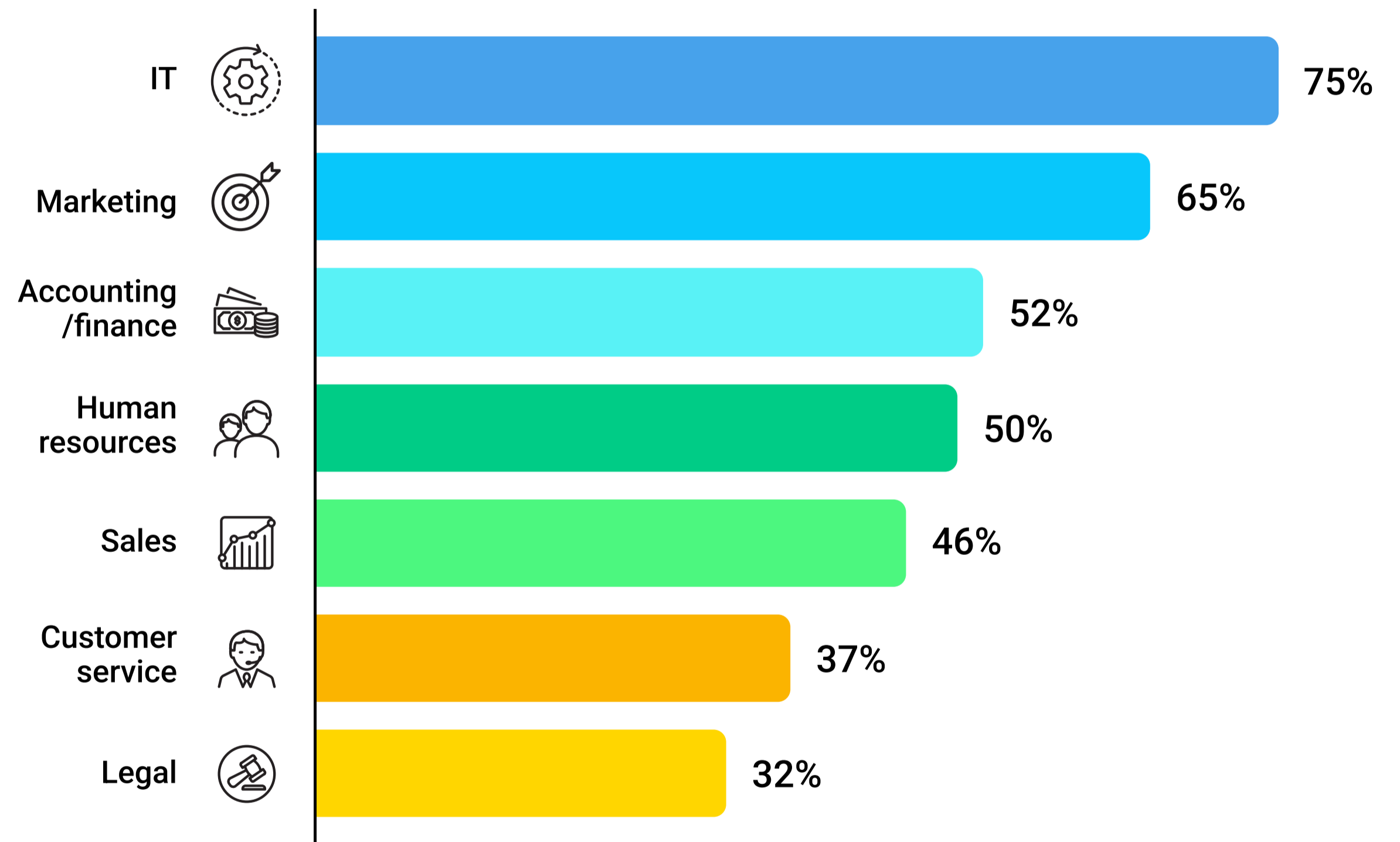
Despite lingering concerns about trust in AI held by consumers, the Freshworks report suggests that in the workplace, employees are using—and benefiting from—AI more than they realize. Four in 10 surveyed employees assume they use AI at work but report that they don't know to what extent or how. For instance, AI is often embedded into existing popular software to enable email autocomplete, suggested meeting times, or notes from meetings.

This sentiment was confirmed by 47% of IT respondents, who agreed that employees are using software that incorporates AI but don't realize it. Those findings suggest an opportunity for enterprise leaders to invest more in AI training.

Despite their lack of awareness of how or where AI is surfacing in their work, employees nonetheless express confidence in their ability to use the new technology. In the survey, IT workers report being the most confident and comfortable using AI, with 75% identifying as knowledgeable or an expert, followed by marketing (65%) and finance (52%).

Everybody's an expert

Percentage of workers who already consider themselves knowledgeable or an expert with AI



The ROI of AI

AI is delivering productivity gains while unlocking higher-value work for employees

As organizations shift from experimentation to execution with AI tools and initiatives, they're evaluating which performance metrics are most relevant to understand the impact and ROI. Not surprisingly, productivity has been a primary focus.

Workers are already seeing significant productivity gains from using AI at work. Surveyed employees in the Freshworks report estimate that AI is already cutting their workloads by three hours and 47 minutes in a typical workweek by summarizing reports, suggesting next steps, handling

repetitive tasks, and other efficiencies. By freeing up nearly 24 business days—or just over one month of work per year—employees can take on higher-value work that delivers greater engagement.

Organizations are similarly developing AI performance metrics: Nearly all (95%) senior leaders (managers and above) say their departments are measuring the business impact AI brings to their organization, namely looking at productivity improvements (52%), quality of work (47%), and customer engagement (34%).

Top five performance metrics for workplace AI:



52%

Productivity increases



47%

Better quality of work



34%

Improved customer engagement



33%

Revenue increases



32%

Employee satisfaction improvement

With productivity as the dominant KPI on that list, companies—managers especially—still have a lot of work to do to get on top of measurement: Over one-third (37%) of employees admit they still don't have good metrics for how to measure productivity of AI in their organization. Even in cases where productivity is quantifiable, nearly half (48%) of senior leaders say they aren't yet considering productivity as a metric for AI's business impact.

Those leaders nonetheless believe that the best is yet to come, with 80% saying AI software will provide enough business impact to prove its worth within two years. When respondents were asked about the value of generative AI, open-ended comments included improving internal and external communication, eliminating redundant email threads, and speeding creation of technical reports.



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Leaders across industries perceive AI as a transformative technology capable of delivering significant business impact from enhanced decision-making and increased operational efficiencies to personalized customer experiences and innovative product development.

Prakash Ramamurthy

Chief Product Officer at Freshworks

Balancing trust and opportunity

Most workers are trusting AI to improve performance—and their careers

Much is made of the AI “trust gap” for consumers as well as employees, who share varying levels of concern over a range of complicated issues, from job replacement to AI governance, regulation, and ethics. According to the latest research by Edelman, consumer trust in AI in the United States over the last five years has dropped from 50% to 35%.

The Freshworks report sheds light on how workers are balancing some of those concerns while recognizing the critical need for AI in their organizations as well as in their careers. More than two in three workers (70%) say they’re looking for ways to develop their AI skill set to stay as marketable as possible. Similarly, more than a third of workers (37%) say their companies are adopting AI software due to a fear of missing out on the next big thing or on innovations that AI could give their competition.

Here are several other factors driving workplace AI adoption:

- 1 Profitability**
Nearly two-thirds (62%) of workers say boosting profitability or staying competitive are the main reasons to adopt software applications enhanced with AI.
- 2 Competitive FOMO**
More than a third (37%) of workers say organizations adopt AI software due to a fear of missing out on competitive innovations. Similarly, more than half (53%) of workers say they are pushing AI software in their organization to avoid falling behind competitors. And 46% of workers say any company not using AI is already behind and likely to fail in the future.
- 3 Industry leadership**
65% of workers consider companies that use AI more likely to be industry leaders.

While most workers (69%) say AI will never be able to completely replace human workers, they harbor concerns about how it could hold back the next generation. Nearly half of the workers surveyed (44%) say AI will replace junior roles and create heavier competition for entry-level roles.

To be clear, workers on the whole agree that AI isn't at a place where it can create a finished product by itself; human touch is needed every step of the way. That's one reason why employees are upskilling in AI to stay competitive in the job market and implementing processes on the job to ensure all AI-produced work is carefully reviewed.



Prioritizing the human factor

Workers agree humans need to be involved at every phase of AI's use to ensure quality products and services.

69% of workers would trust workplace AI software more if human review of its outputs were mandatory.

69% of workers say that AI will never be able to completely replace human workers.

69% of workers say that a human worker needs to be involved every step of the way to ensure AI's quality of work.

51% of workers have processes in place that dictate some form of human review of AI work.

The generational split

Here's how four generational groups see AI influencing their job and career trajectories:

SKILLS

70% of employees say they are looking for ways to grow their AI skill sets to stay as marketable as possible



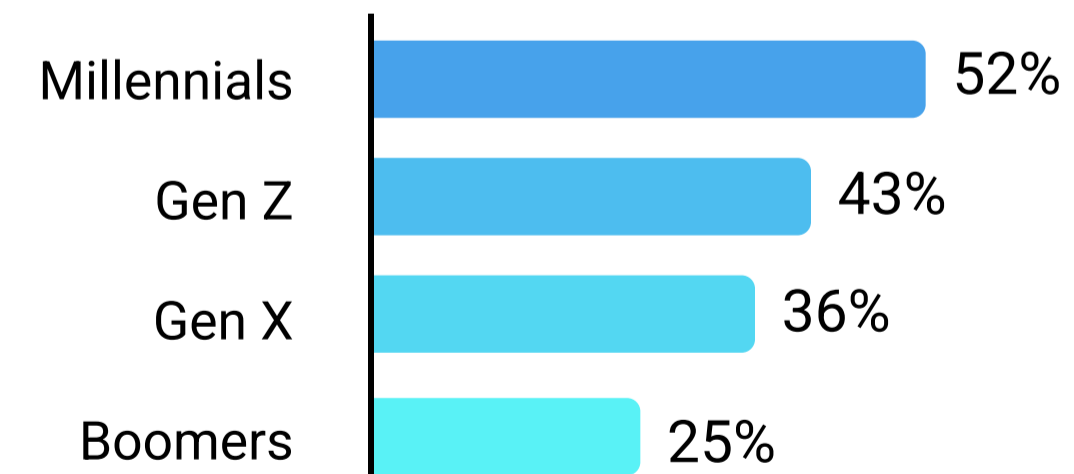
USAGE

63% of workers say employees who use AI have an advantage over employees who don't use AI in their work processes



RECRUITING

45% of workers say nearly every new-hire position within their department is looking for some level of AI experience—led by IT departments (57%) and marketing (49%)



PART 4

Global workplace adoption

The U.S. is a top AI developer—but also ranks last in AI adoption and trust

One other discovery of the Freshworks report is the regional differences in AI development and adoption—with surprising discrepancies with employees located in countries leading in AI development, such as the United States.

Of all surveyed respondents, the U.S. ranks last globally when it comes to AI adoption (50%), trust in workplace AI software bringing value to their work (59%), and comfort in using AI (61%).

By comparison, respondents from India and the United Arab Emirates lead in AI adoption (75%), comfort with AI (88%), and trust in workplace AI software bringing value to their work (86%).

Those regional differences extend to workers' attitudes about hiring. For example, 70% of employees in India and UAE say that nearly every new position within their department is looking for some level of AI experience, while only 33% of U.S. employees and 32% of U.K. workers said the same.



Methodology

Freshworks conducted this research using an online survey prepared by [Method Research](#) and distributed by [PureSpectrum](#) among n=7,000 adults ages 18+ who are full-time salaried employees currently working in a desk job position, with n=1,000 United States, n=1,000 United Kingdom, and n=500 within each of the following countries: Netherlands, Germany, France, Singapore, Australia/New Zealand, India, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil.

Within each country, the sample included employees working in human resources, IT, customer services/support, finance/accounting, sales, marketing, and legal departments, including a sample of manager or above titles within each department. The sample was balanced by gender, age, and company size, with an internationally representative geographic spread of respondents. Data was collected from March 9 to April 4, 2024.

Cover Image Source: AI Generated on MidJourney (Prompt: "In a friendly environment, a group of employees around two letters "AI" with LED lights in a geeky office --ar 1:2 --stylize 500")

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