Unlocking the Value of GenAI in Document Management

The Digital Vision Leaders' view

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Contents

Executive summary

Generative AI has become a key area of focus for business leaders across the world seeking to understand how they can unlock value from the technology by increasing productivity among their employees.

Adobe, a company with a rich history of facilitating communication and collaboration within organisations, commissioned London Research to carry out a business survey to better understand perceptions around the benefits and challenges associated with GenAI when deployed for document management and related areas within the workforce.

We found that organisations are approaching the technology's adoption with caution, but the people most likely to be making the decisions about its use are overwhelmingly excited about its potential to drive productivity at both an individual and organisational level.

This whitepaper explores what 'digital vision leaders' – Chief Information Officers (CIOs), Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) and Chief Digital Officers (CDOs) – think about the role of AI in knowledge-based work.

More than four out of five (83%) said their organisations were either 'very' or 'somewhat' cautious about embracing AI, but almost all (90%) said they themselves were either very or somewhat positive.

The research also found that:

- The highest-priority objectives for organisations are security (81%) and digital transformation (80%). Around two-thirds are looking to improve their use of technology in order to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

- AI is a key element of this drive. Half of respondents (50%) strongly agree their organisation is committed to harnessing the technology to improve employee productivity.

- Other perceived benefits from the utilisation of AI are freeing employees to focus on more value-adding tasks, accelerating time to knowledge, and the ability to scale production of content and assets.

- However, the majority of businesses surveyed are either not yet using AI (24%), or only experimenting with it (31%). Just 19% say it's part of business-as-usual.

- The main barriers to AI adoption are concerns around security, fears around ethics and legalities, lack of training, lack of awareness, and lack of budget.

Methodology
This report is the first in a series of three reports looking at attitudes to the use of GenAI in content creation and management, each from a different part of the organisation. It's based on a survey of 450 C-level executives, senior managers and directors/heads of department, carried out in the spring of 2024. The respondents were spread evenly across the United Kingdom, France and Germany. This report examines the perspective of 'digital vision leaders', a group made up of CIOs/CTOs, Chief Digital Officers, and digital strategists.

Section 1

Introduction

"Many leaders are bracing for a rough economic ride. In addition to geopolitical instability, volatile commodity markets, and rising inflation, they anticipate continued waves of global health crises, more frequent and severe climate hazards, and major shifts in consumer and industrial demand. These developments, they feel, could put long-term pressure on their business models — thus heightening the need for resilience."

This was the warning issued in an article by consultants McKinsey & Company at the end of 2022. The events of the two years since have only affirmed this view. But what impact will this 'bracing' have on information workers? And what role does digital technology — and artificial intelligence in particular — have to play?

This report looks at the attitudes of CIOs, CTOs and CDOs around how businesses need to change to embrace this changing landscape. According to the research (*Figure 1*), CIOs and CTOs are most likely to be decision-makers when their organisations are looking to use AI to make the workforce more efficient (cited by 59% of respondents). They're also almost certain to be key influencers on such decisions where they're not the decision-makers. Chief Digital Officers were cited as decision-makers by 45%; the same percentage said they'd be key influencers.
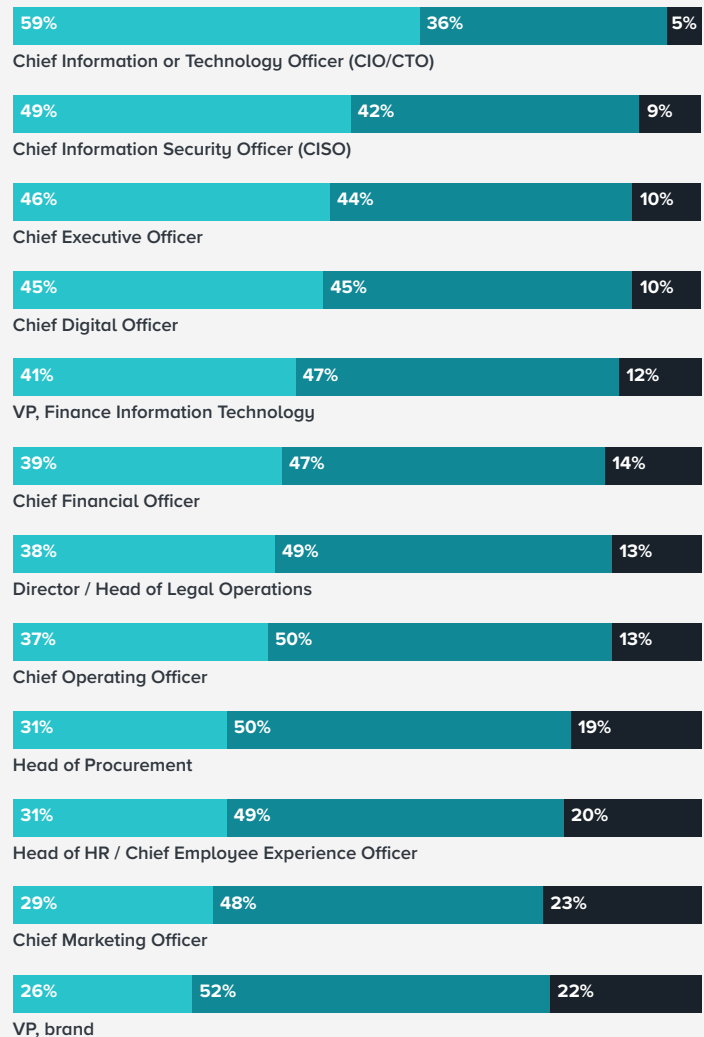
Qualitative research prior to the survey suggested the main business priorities of people in digital vision leader roles included:

- Maximising long-term investments while minimising time to ROI across departments;
- Improving the customer experience;
- Improving the employee experience;
- Embracing new technology (in particular AI) with clear purpose/business case.

FIGURE 1

Who are the key decision-makers in your organisation when it comes to making decisions about use of AI technology for a more effective workforce?

- ● Decision maker
- ● Influencer
- ● Not involved

59%	36%	5%

Chief Information or Technology Officer (CIO/CTO)

49%	42%	9%

Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

46%	44%	10%

Chief Executive Officer

45%	45%	10%

Chief Digital Officer

41%	47%	12%

VP, Finance Information Technology

39%	47%	14%

Chief Financial Officer

38%	49%	13%

Director / Head of Legal Operations

37%	50%	13%

Chief Operating Officer

31%	50%	19%

Head of Procurement

31%	49%	20%

Head of HR / Chief Employee Experience Officer

29%	48%	23%

Chief Marketing Officer

26%	52%	22%

VP, brand

The research confirmed the importance of most of these aims in 2024 (*Figure 2*). It also revealed how that importance has changed in the past 12 months (*Figure 3*). In 2024, the two top priorities for our respondents are security (chosen as a high priority by 81%) and digital transformation (80%).

The focus on security is no surprise, nor is the fact that it's the area that has seen the greatest increase in emphasis. This is partly due to the increasing cost of a data breach; according to IBM, the global average rose 15% in the three years to 2023, to $4.45m. This includes the costs of detection, post-breach response, and notification of customers and regulators. It also includes lost business costs, from business disruptions and revenue losses to the cost of lost customers and of acquiring new ones, as well as loss of reputation and diminished goodwill.

But the increased focus on security is also the result of technological development. Businesses are increasingly relying on cloud-based software (*Figure 4*), but the same IBM report found that 82% of 2023's data breaches involved data stored in the cloud. Indeed, our research found more than a third of respondents (36%) felt concerns about the security of the cloud was a major barrier to AI adoption (see *Section 3*).

And, of course, businesses are not the only ones adopting AI. Cyber attacks will only become more sophisticated as criminals increasingly use AI in their activities.

71%

The percentage of digital vision leaders who say that security has become a higher priority in the last year.

FIGURE 2

How much of a priority are the following areas for your organisation in 2024?

● Low priority ● Medium priority ● High priority

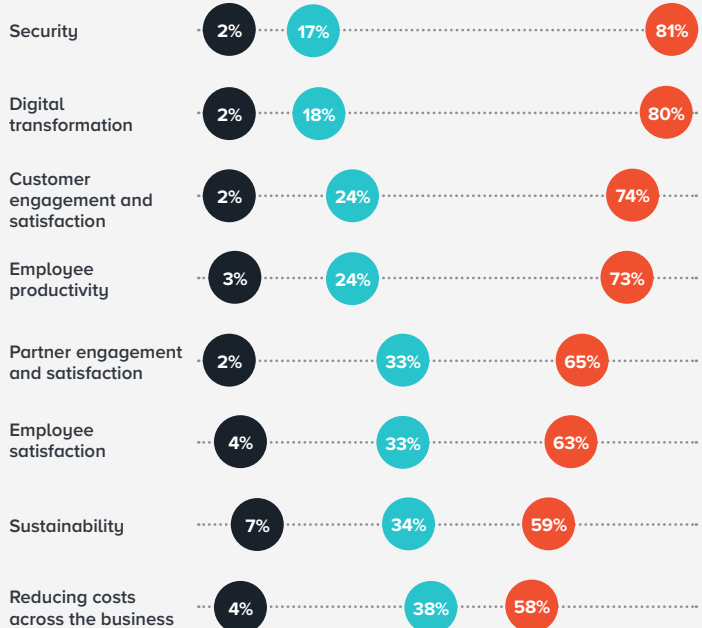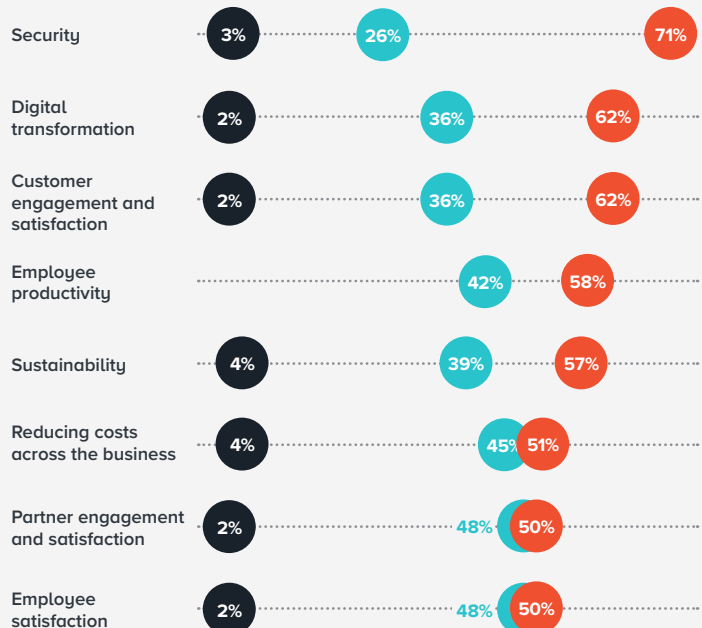| Area	Low	Medium	High
Security	2%	17%	81%
Digital transformation	2%	18%	80%
Customer engagement and satisfaction	2%	24%	74%
Employee productivity	3%	24%	73%
Partner engagement and satisfaction	2%	33%	65%
Employee satisfaction	4%	33%	63%
Sustainability	7%	34%	59%
Reducing costs across the business	4%	38%	58%

FIGURE 3

Are these objectives more or less important to your organisation than they were a year ago?

● Less important ● The same ● More important

Area	Less important	The same	More important
Security	3%	26%	71%
Digital transformation	2%	36%	62%
Customer engagement and satisfaction	2%	36%	62%
Employee productivity		42%	58%
Sustainability	4%	39%	57%
Reducing costs across the business	4%	45%	51%
Partner engagement and satisfaction	2%	48%	50%
Employee satisfaction	2%	48%	50%

Digital transformation never ends

The high – and increased – priority given to digital transformation is trickier to unpick. It could be as simple as late adopters realising they need to accelerate their digital journey. But there's a growing body of opinion that digital transformation in effect never ends. Businesses must continue to develop their digital capabilities in order to be able to respond to interlinked changes in technology, customer behaviour and market conditions. For example, any 'digital transformation' under way now has to include consideration of AI, which it wouldn't have even a few years ago.

Given the challenging business environment described by McKinsey above, it's also striking that reducing costs across the business is a high priority for fewer than two-thirds of our respondents (58%), and that only half say its importance has increased in the past 12 months.

Cutting costs and increasing productivity are the big business trends for 2024
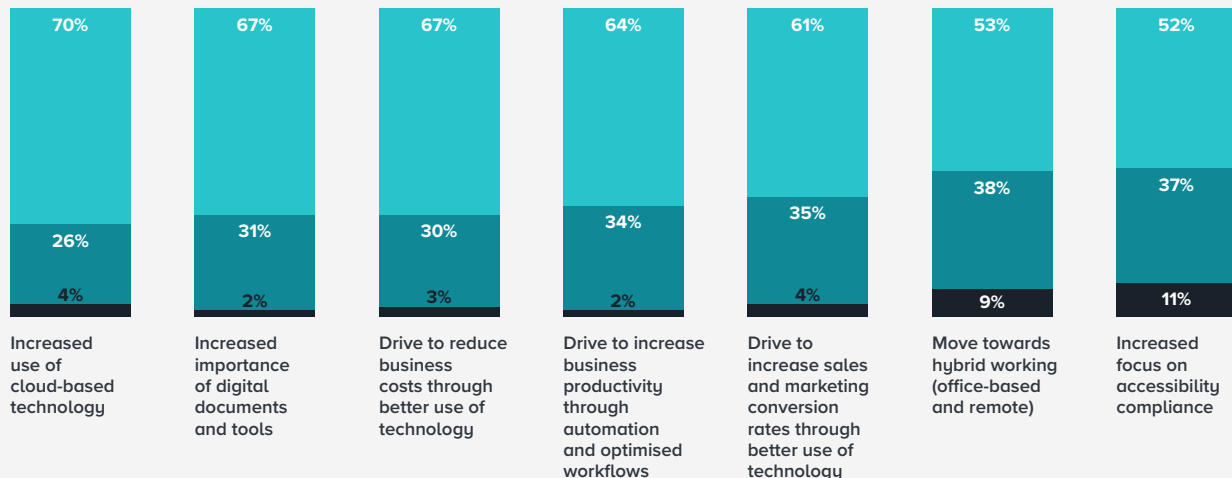
The data shown in *Figure 4* gives us a more complete picture of the attitudes of those looking to drive efficiencies across their businesses.

It shows the trend to reduce costs through better use of technology has had a major impact on their business. So has the drive to increase productivity through automation and optimised workflows. This is clearly at least part of the reason behind the increased prioritisation of digital transformation seen in *Figure 3*. This also manifests itself in the increased use of cloud-based technology and of digital documents and tools.

FIGURE 4

How would you describe the impact of the following business trends on your organisation?

- Major impact
- Minor impact
- No impact

	Increased use of cloud-based technology	Increased importance of digital documents and tools	Drive to reduce business costs through better use of technology	Drive to increase business productivity through automation and optimised workflows	Drive to increase sales and marketing conversion rates through better use of technology	Move towards hybrid working (office-based and remote)	Increased focus on accessibility compliance
Major impact	70%	67%	67%	64%	61%	53%	52%
Minor impact	26%	31%	30%	34%	35%	38%	37%
No impact	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	9%	11%

Section 2

Attitudes to AI

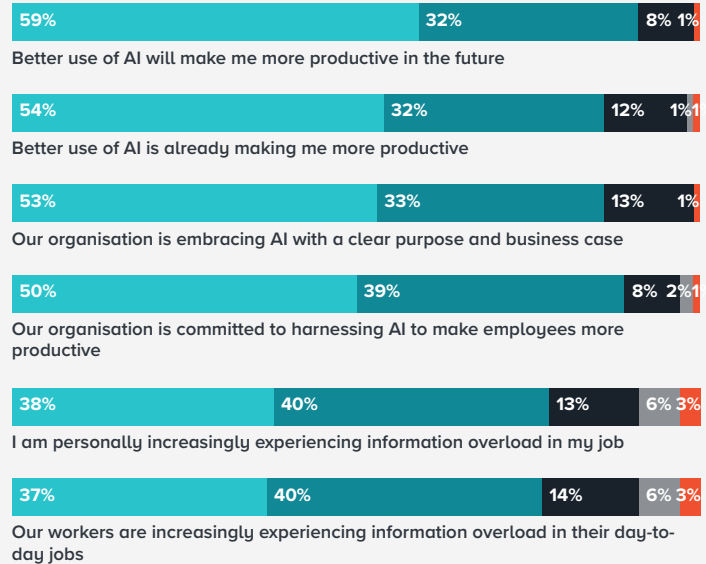One of the biggest barriers to greater efficiency among knowledge workers is information overload. Four out of five knowledge workers globally report this as a problem. In addition, the average knowledge worker spends 8.2 hours each week looking for information and expertise, and recreating and resharing information. This explains the emphasis digital vision leaders place on improving employee productivity. Three-quarters (73%) say it's a high priority, with 58% saying it's a higher priority than it was a year ago (*Figures 2 & 3*).

Figure 5 confirms both the problem and the desire for a solution. Over a third (37%) of respondents strongly agree their workers are increasingly experiencing information overload in their day-to-day jobs, while another 40% somewhat agree. Similar percentages agree that they are struggling with the same problem themselves. But almost all (89%) agree their organisation is committed to harnessing AI to make its employees more productive, and more than half (54%) strongly agree that better use of AI is already doing so.

FIGURE 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to your own organisation?

- 🔵 Strongly agree
- 🔵 Somewhat agree
- ⚫ Neither agree nor disagree
- ⚫ Somewhat disagree
- 🔴 Strongly disagree

59%	32%	8%	1%

Better use of AI will make me more productive in the future

54%	32%	12%	1%1%

Better use of AI is already making me more productive

53%	33%	13%	1%

Our organisation is embracing AI with a clear purpose and business case

50%	39%	8%	2%1%

Our organisation is committed to harnessing AI to make employees more productive

38%	40%	13%	6% 3%

I am personally increasingly experiencing information overload in my job

37%	40%	14%	6% 3%

Our workers are increasingly experiencing information overload in their day-to-day jobs

89%

The proportion of organisations committed to harnessing AI to make their employees more productive.

(Almost) everyone's getting involved

So how widespread is this harnessing of AI? At the highest level, one respondent in five (19%) said their use of AI is very much business-as-usual (*Figure 6*). A further quarter (26%) said AI has been operationalised into their day-to-day activities. Just under a third (31%) are experimenting but haven't developed many proofs of concept, and another quarter (24%) say they're aware of AI's potential, but haven't started using it yet.

In other words, less than half of the businesses surveyed (45%) are using AI on a daily basis, despite the near-universal commitment to the technology.

Part of the reason for this is the nervousness that still exists around AI adoption (*Figure 7*). More than four out of five respondents (83%) say their company culture is either 'very' or 'somewhat' cautious in the context of AI usage for content-related activities.

FIGURE 6

How would you describe your organisation's approach to the use of AI in the context of content-related activities?

31%

We are experimenting but haven't developed many proofs of concept

26%

AI has been operationalised into our day-to-day activities

24%

We are aware of the potential but have not used AI capabilities

19%

AI is very much business as usual in the context of our day-to-day activities

83%

The proportion of respondents who say their organisations are cautious about embracing AI for content.

FIGURE 7

How would you describe your organisational culture in the context of embracing AI for content-related activities?

Very cautious
24%

Somewhat cautious
59%

Not very cautious
13%

Not at all cautious
4%
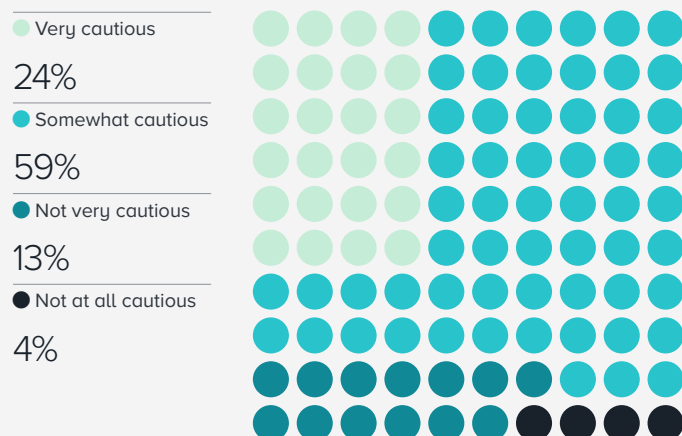
At an individual level, however, this audience is overwhelmingly enthusiastic about AI (*Figure 8*). Nine respondents out of 10 said they were either 'very' or 'somewhat' positive about its impact on their working life.

On top of that, nearly two-thirds (61%) also said they were excited about the technology, nearly half (47%) said they were content about it, and a similar percentage (44%) described themselves as happy (*Figure 9*). Negative emotions were much less pronounced; the strongest was anxiety, felt by just 16%.

FIGURE 8

How would you describe your own feelings about the impact of AI on your work life?

- Very positive
49%
- Somewhat positive
41%
- Neutral
8%
- Somewhat negative
1%
- Very negative
1%
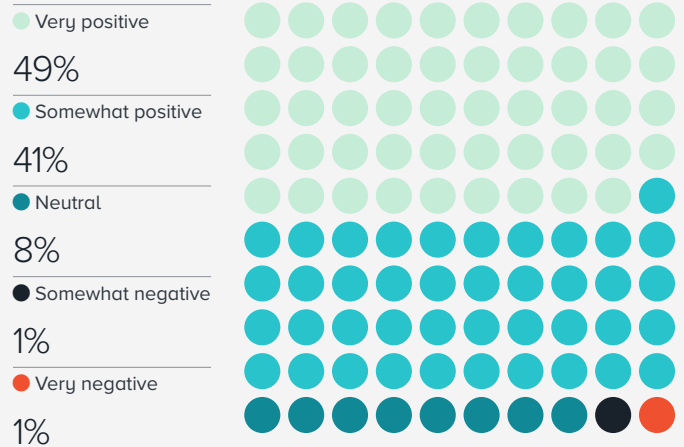
61%

The percentage of digital vision leaders who are excited about greater use of AI in their job role.

FIGURE 9

Which emotions best describe your feelings about greater use of AI in your job role?

Emotion	Percentage
Excitement	61%
Contentment	47%
Happiness	44%
Anxiety	16%
Fear	9%
Confusion	9%
Sadness	7%
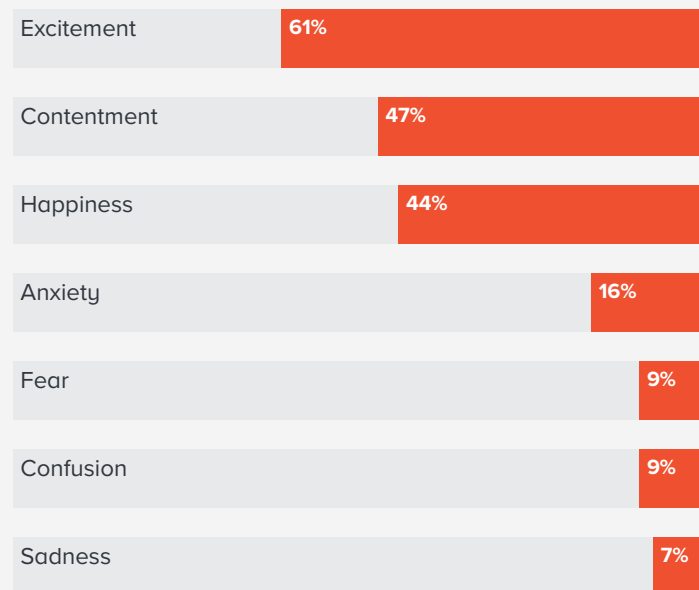
Section 3

Benefits and barriers

Apart from an expected enthusiasm for all things digital, why are our digital vision leaders so bullish about AI in their workplaces?

A big part of the reason is the improvement in productivity they expect it to deliver, both for their teams (*Figure 10*) and themselves (*Figure 11*). Over a third (35%) expect AI to save their average employee two to four hours a week. A similar percentage (34%) expect a saving of between five and eight hours a week. A fifth (21%) are looking for even bigger savings; a day a week or more. While this might seem unlikely, it chimes with the figure of 8.2 hours a week the average knowledge worker spends looking for information and expertise, and recreating and resharing information, discussed in *Section 2*. And our respondents are equally likely to think AI will improve their own efficiency.

FIGURE 10

How many hours per week do you estimate the average employee in your department could save through better use of AI technology?

Less than 1 hour a week
1 hour a week
2-4 hours a week
5-8 hours a week
One day a week
More than one day a week

3%
7%
35%
34%
12%
9%

56%

The percentage of respondents saying they could personally save at least five hours a week through better use of AI technology.
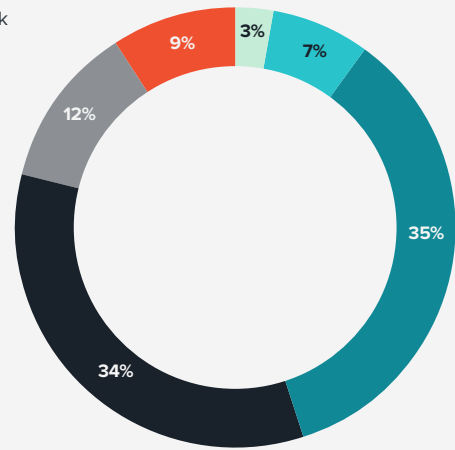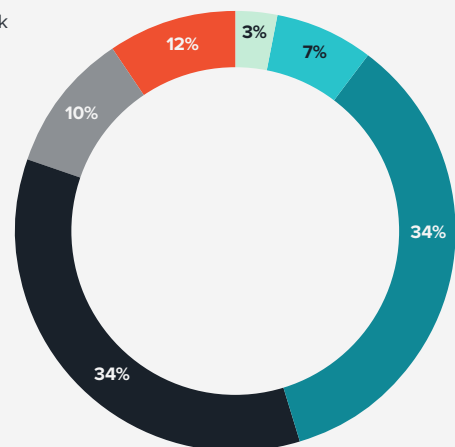
FIGURE 11

How many hours per week do you estimate that you could personally save through better use of AI technology?

Less than 1 hour a week
1 hour a week
2-4 hours a week
5-8 hours a week
One day a week
More than one day a week

3%
7%
34%
34%
10%
12%

Increased productivity is the big reward

Looking at content-related tasks in particular (*Figure 12*), increased productivity in general also comes top of the list of expected benefits (cited by 61%). Two other aspects of productivity also figure prominently. Two out of five (42%) see the ability of staff to focus on more value-adding tasks to be a benefit, while a similar percentage (38%) cite the ability to scale production of content and assets. The flip side of increased efficiency — reduced costs — should also be a benefit, according to more than half of our respondents (56%).

Costing this out, consider a company with 30,000 employees. If even 1% (300 people) saved two hours' work a week, that would be the equivalent of 15 full-time employees.

Intriguingly, only a third (33%) see increased staff morale as a benefit, suggesting an understanding that more junior employees may be less enthusiastic about the impact of the efficiency gains offered by AI than their bosses are.

Barriers to AI adoption

So, what might stop businesses from realising all these benefits? *As Figure 13* shows, digital vision leaders' single biggest worry is security, either of the outputs of an AI-based process, or of the cloud-based technology supporting that process. A slightly smaller percentage (33%) said ethical and legal concerns were a major barrier to their adoption of AI.

A third (33%) also said that lack of awareness of AI was a major barrier, and a quarter (26%) cited a lack of budget for the technology. This latter figure chimes with the 24% who said their organisation was aware of AI's potential, but were not using it yet (*Figure 6*). And this concern around lack of resourcing is also apparent in the 31% of this group who said lack of training in the use of AI was a major barrier to its adoption.

It's worth stressing, however, that none of these factors are seen as major barriers by more than two out of five of our respondents. Enthusiasm for AI seems to significantly outweigh any concerns, at least among this audience.

FIGURE 12

What do you see as the benefits of utilising AI for content-related tasks?
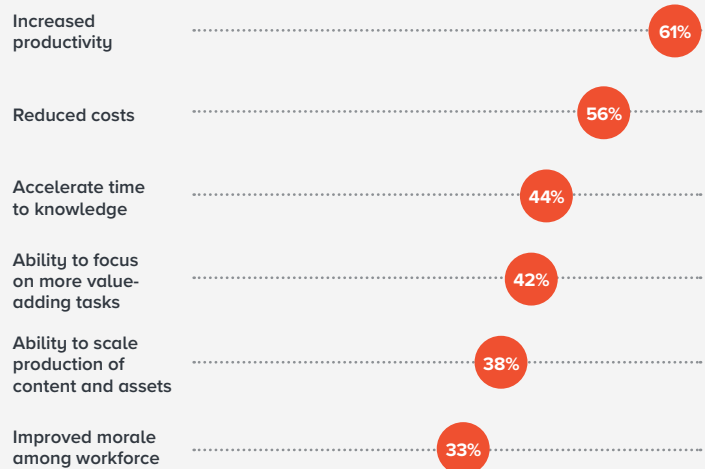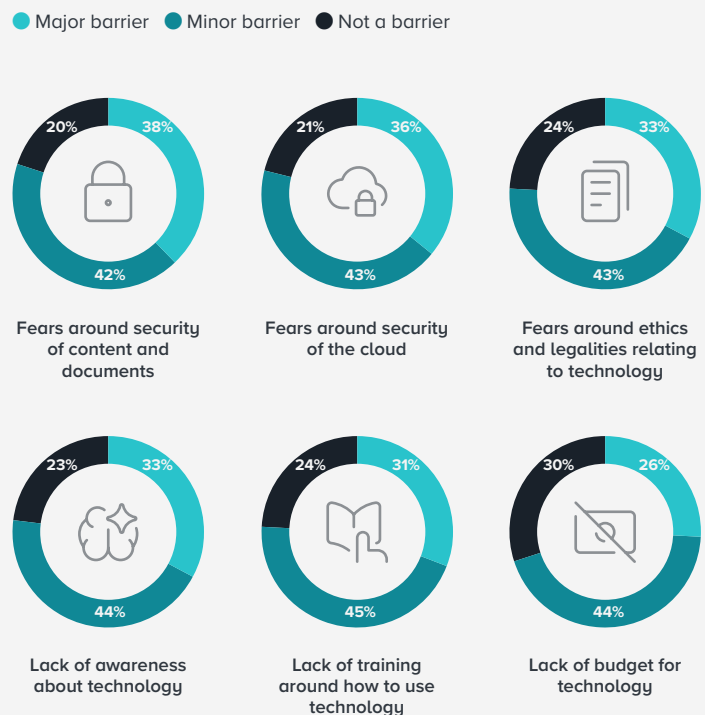

FIGURE 13

Proportion of organisations saying these are 'major barriers' preventing greater uptake of AI-driven technology for content-related tasks and processes

Section 4

Conclusion

The results showcased in this report show that generative AI is very much seen as the next technology that will transform business. And while many of the previous waves of innovation have also increased employee productivity and reduced cost, GenAI stands to be more radical than anything since the birth of the original internet.

The CIOs, CTOs and CDOs who responded to our survey overwhelmingly expect it to help them improve their ability to scale and therefore to deliver the increased personalisation customers demand. They expect AI-powered document management to deliver quicker and deeper insights while reducing time-to-value and time-to-knowledge. And across the organisation they anticipate that AI will improve their ability to respond quickly to changes in market conditions, customer demand and competitor behaviour.

Despite all this, fewer than half our respondents (45%) are using AI in their day-to-day operations. These organisations have addressed their concerns about security, ethics and legality, and have allocated sufficient resources to adopting and embedding AI in their business. They are the ones that are already realising the anticipated benefits. And because the pace of AI development will only grow, they are also best placed to capitalise on whatever further benefits it may bring in the future.

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Intelligent Citations: Adobe's custom attribution engine and proprietary AI generate citations so employees can easily verify the source of AI Assistant's answers.

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