# Workforce unprepared as AI adoption surges across enterprises



Artificial intelligence has moved from future promise to enterprise mainstay, streamlining operations, enhancing customer engagement and driving growth. Yet while 95% of business leaders report active AI deployment, a new report from IT infrastructure giant Kyndryl suggests a major shortfall in workforce preparedness threatens to undermine these gains.

Kyndryl’s People Readiness Report, based on insights from more than 1,000 senior executives across 25 industries and eight regions, finds that 71% of leaders believe their employees are not ready to fully leverage AI’s potential. More than half cite a lack of skilled talent, while 45% of CEOs report active employee resistance. The report underscores that AI’s biggest challenges are not technological but cultural and human.

A marked divergence in leadership perspectives compounds the issue. CEOs often see their companies as early in the AI journey and favour hiring externally to close skills gaps. By contrast, CIOs and CTOs are more likely to advocate for internal up-skilling. This misalignment reflects deeper organisational tensions that can slow or derail AI integration.

The report identifies a high-performing cohort dubbed “AI Pacesetters”—roughly 14% of surveyed companies—who combine technology adoption with targeted workforce strategies. These organisations are three times more likely to have implemented AI-focused change management plans and 67% more likely to report no skills shortages. This preparedness allows them to embed AI throughout operations and create new products and services, translating innovation into growth.

Industry readiness varies sharply. Financial services lead in workforce preparedness, likely due to longstanding experience with complex systems. Healthcare, however, lags behind, pointing to sector-specific hurdles in preparing staff for AI transformation.

Kyndryl itself has taken a strategic approach, revamping its people systems early and launching tiered education programmes, employee enablement schemes and an AI governance board. The company has also rolled out AI tools such as Microsoft Copilot to staff. “Preparing your workforce for the era of AI is easy to say, hard to do and an urgent imperative for business leaders,” said Maryjo Charbonnier, Chief Human Resources Officer at Kyndryl.

Beyond the Kyndryl study, broader research reinforces the point: sustainable AI integration depends on collaboration between government, industry and education to build AI literacy and adaptable skillsets. While the technology advances rapidly, the human element remains pivotal.

The survey also highlights a trend of rapid AI adoption in mission-critical systems: 86% of firms are now modernising infrastructure such as mainframes, often with external support. This shift raises the stakes for workforce readiness, as foundational technologies are reshaped by AI.

Kyndryl’s findings deliver a clear message. The gap between deploying AI and succeeding with it lies in aligning innovation with human capability. As the UK aims to lead in ethical, inclusive and sustainable AI, investing in workforce readiness is not optional; it is essential.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://insurance-canada.ca/2025/07/25/kyndryl-not-yet-winning-with-ai/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://investors.kyndryl.com/news-releases/news-release-details/kyndryl-report-why-most-businesses-are-not-yet-winning-ai> - Kyndryl's global study reveals that 95% of businesses have invested in AI, yet 71% of leaders believe their workforces are unprepared to leverage it effectively. The survey highlights a significant gap between AI investment and workforce readiness, with 51% of leaders citing a lack of skilled talent and 45% noting employee resistance to AI. The report underscores the need for organizations to align workforce strategies with AI adoption to achieve positive returns on investment.
3. <https://www.kyndryl.com/us/en/about-us/news/2025/05/is-your-workforce-ready-for-ai> - Kyndryl's inaugural People Readiness Report explores how executives are preparing their workforces for an AI-driven future. The report highlights that while AI is widely adopted, many business leaders feel their teams are not ready to fully benefit from it. It identifies a small group of 'AI Pacesetters'—14% of companies—that have successfully aligned their workforce, technology, and growth goals, leading to measurable business growth.
4. <https://www.kyndryl.com/au/en/about-us/news/2025/05/ai-workforce-impact-report> - Kyndryl's global study reveals that 95% of businesses have invested in AI, yet 71% of leaders believe their workforces are unprepared to leverage it effectively. The survey highlights a significant gap between AI investment and workforce readiness, with 51% of leaders citing a lack of skilled talent and 45% noting employee resistance to AI. The report underscores the need for organizations to align workforce strategies with AI adoption to achieve positive returns on investment.
5. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ai-readiness-report-kyndryl-2025-key-takeaways-editor-tim-king-hxr8e> - Executive Editor Tim King provides key takeaways from the Kyndryl AI Readiness Report 2025, highlighting that while 95% of organizations have invested in AI technologies, only 29% of leaders feel their systems are prepared to manage future risks. The report also reveals that 71% of executives report their teams are not ready to leverage AI effectively, and 51% cite a lack of skilled talent as a primary challenge.
6. <https://investors.kyndryl.com/news-releases/news-release-details/kyndryl-survey-reveals-86-enterprises-are-moving-fast-adopt-ai> - Kyndryl's survey indicates that 86% of enterprises are rapidly adopting AI to accelerate mainframe modernization. The survey also highlights that 77% of organizations are using external providers to deliver mainframe modernization projects, underscoring the critical role of AI in transforming complex, mission-critical systems.
7. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2503.09613> - This study examines the rapid integration of AI into the workplace and its implications for workforce education and training. It emphasizes the need for coordinated action from government, industry, and educational institutions to ensure workers can adapt to accelerating technological change, highlighting the importance of AI literacy across disciplines.