# UK businesses show strong AI confidence amid talent and security challenges, Expleo survey reveals



Expleo’s latest AI Pulse sentiment tracker has revealed a notably positive outlook among UK business leaders towards artificial intelligence as of August, with an overall confidence score of 73 on a scale where 100 indicates very high confidence. The tracker, commissioned by Expleo—a global engineering, technology, and consultancy services provider—reflects a growing enthusiasm for AI’s potential benefits amid the UK’s evolving technological landscape.

With participation from over 200 UK business leaders, the survey found that more than half (52%) were excited about the opportunities AI brings to their organisations, while a strong 80% expressed confidence in their company’s ability to successfully implement AI initiatives. Furthermore, ethical use of AI remains a key trust factor, with 84% of respondents affirming their belief in responsible deployment of AI technologies. Despite this prevailing optimism, some caution remains: over a third of participants (36%) admitted to concerns about how AI might transform their business, although 44% reported having no worries at all.

Jeff Hoyle, EVP and Managing Director for the UK and North America at Expleo, noted the dual nature of this positive sentiment. Speaking about the findings, he said, “August’s largely positive picture suggests that many organisations are excitedly racing towards the promise of AI and focused on realising greater productivity, more precise decision-making and enhanced client experience.” However, Hoyle highlighted hurdles that organisations are starting to encounter, including difficulties with scaling AI solutions to the enterprise level, integration challenges with legacy systems, budgetary constraints, and a shortage of internal expertise. These barriers are affecting many businesses’ ability to secure a return on their AI investments.

The report also touched on the critical and timely issue of AI in cybersecurity—a domain where sentiment remains deeply divided. Respondents were almost equally split, with 56% expressing concerns about AI’s potential risks in this area, while 42% said they had no worries. Hoyle underscored the paradoxical nature of AI in cybersecurity: “Discord around AI’s impact on cybersecurity may reflect the double-edged nature of the technology, which can be used for good to anticipate and prevent cyber-attacks before they happen, or exploited by bad actors who use AI to circumvent security measures.”

This emerging landscape aligns with broader UK business trends captured in recent surveys. Data from Accenture and S&P Global from July indicate sustained optimism in UK business growth, with many companies planning to boost investment in technologies such as AI as part of their strategy to counter inflationary pressures and rising interest rates. Significantly, nearly 30% of UK firms intend to increase their AI investments, up from just 18% in early 2022, underscoring AI’s central role in future business transformation.

Yet, talent shortages continue to temper some of this enthusiasm. Expleo’s Business Transformation Index 2023 revealed that 49% of UK organisations are experiencing challenges in their digital transformation programmes due to a scarcity of skilled technology professionals and rising salary expectations. Nearly 80% of businesses expressed concerns about a lack of talent in emerging technologies, including generative AI, with many struggling to retain staff due to affordability issues. Angus Panton, head of banking and financial services at Expleo, emphasised that this skills gap is a significant impediment to fully leveraging AI technologies.

Despite these challenges, the momentum for AI adoption remains strong. In a broader European survey covering the UK, Germany, France, and Ireland, 98% of business leaders anticipate that AI will transform their industries within the next three years. Currently, 24% have already deployed AI tools, and an additional 72% expect to implement them within the next 12 months. This wave of adoption signals a rapid integration of AI across sectors, bolstered by growing confidence in the technology’s ability to drive business innovation.

Moreover, AI is also seen as a catalyst for workforce development in the UK. A survey by Experis found that more than half of British employers expect AI to have a positive impact on their staff headcount over the next two years. Additionally, a strong majority anticipate that AI will enhance upskilling and reskilling efforts (69%), as well as improve employee engagement (67%), signalling AI’s potential to support not only operational efficiencies but also workforce growth and development.

Taken together, these insights portray a UK business environment that is enthusiastic and forward-looking about AI, embracing its transformative potential while remaining pragmatically aware of integration, security, and talent challenges. The combination of high trust in ethical AI use and a keen interest in leveraging AI for competitive advantage suggests the UK is positioning itself as a leader in responsible AI innovation. However, as businesses push forward, addressing skills shortages and cybersecurity risks will be essential to converting AI’s promise into sustained, productive outcomes.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.i40today.com/expleos-august-ai-sentiment-tracker-reveals-uk-business-is-confident-about-its-benefits/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://engineering-update.co.uk/2025/09/18/expleos-august-ai-sentiment-tracker-reveals-uk-business-is-confident-about-its-benefits/> - Expleo's AI Pulse sentiment tracker reveals a positive outlook among UK business leaders towards AI in August, with an overall score of 73, indicating high confidence in the benefits of AI programmes. The index captures levels of worry, excitement, trust, and confidence in AI-led technology, offering business leaders unique insights into collective attitudes towards AI to inform decision-making. In August, more than 200 respondents participated, with over half excited about the opportunities AI brings to their organisation (52%), eight out of ten confident in their company’s ability to successfully use AI (80%), and similar numbers trusting that AI will be used ethically (84%). When asked about concerns regarding AI's impact on their business, opinions were divided, with just over a third expressing some fears (36%), while four in ten had no worries at all (44%). Jeff Hoyle, EVP and MD UK & NA at Expleo, noted that while the positivity is great for UK innovation and tech adoption, challenges around scaling to enterprise level, integration with legacy systems, budget constraints, and lack of internal expertise are affecting organisations' ability to realise a return on their investment. Regarding AI in cybersecurity, opinions were deeply divided, with 56% expressing concern and 42% having no worries at all. Hoyle added that this discord may reflect the dual nature of the technology, which can be used to anticipate and prevent cyber-attacks or exploited by bad actors to circumvent security measures.
3. <https://newsroom.accenture.co.uk/english-uk/news/2023/uk-business-outlook-july-23> - The Accenture/S&P Global UK Business Outlook survey reveals that UK businesses remain confident about future growth, with a net balance of +40% of firms expecting activity to increase over the next 12 months. This optimism is supported by plans to increase investment, including in AI, to offset concerns about high inflation and rising interest rates. Notably, 29% of UK companies plan to invest in artificial intelligence, up from 18% in early 2022, indicating a growing interest in leveraging AI for business transformation. The survey also highlights that inflation expectations remain high, with 51% of firms anticipating wage pressures, but businesses are proactively addressing these challenges through strategic investments.
4. <https://www.business-money.com/announcements/technology-skills-gaps-having-an-impact-on-transformation-programmes/> - Expleo's Business Transformation Index 2023 highlights that 49% of UK organisations are facing challenges in their transformation programmes due to a talent shortage and heightened salary expectations. The survey indicates that 79% of businesses are concerned about a scarcity of skills in emerging technologies, and 71% struggle to retain technology talent due to unaffordable salaries. Angus Panton, head of banking and financial services at Expleo, emphasised that the acute shortage of digital skills is hindering organisations from harnessing the power of new technologies like generative AI.
5. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/expleo-research-finds-74-of-businesses-will-deploy-ai-tools-in-the-next-12-months-302174111.html> - Expleo's report, 'Integrating AI: Navigating the next wave of business transformation', reveals that 98% of business leaders believe AI will have transformed their industry within the next three years. In response, 24% have already deployed AI tools, and a further 72% expect to deploy AI tools in the next 12 months. The survey, comprising insights from 803 key decision-makers at large- and mid-size businesses in France, Germany, the UK, and Ireland, provides a strategic overview of AI adoption and the challenges organisations face when deploying AI.
6. <https://www.adsadvance.co.uk/expleo-finds-72-of-businesses-to-deploy-ai-tools-in-next-12-months.html> - Expleo's research indicates that 98% of business leaders believe AI will have transformed their industry within the next three years. In response, 24% have already deployed AI tools, and a further 72% expect to deploy AI tools in the next 12 months. The report, 'Integrating AI: Navigating the next wave of business transformation', comprises insights from 803 key decision-makers at large- and mid-size businesses in France, Germany, the UK, and Ireland, providing a strategic overview of AI adoption and the challenges organisations face when deploying AI.
7. <https://www.experis.co.uk/blog/2023/06/b_ai-to-boost-staff-headcount-according-to-half-of-britains-employers> - A survey by Experis, a leader in IT recruitment, reveals that more than half (54%) of Britain's employers expect Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to have a positive impact on their staff headcount over the next two years. The survey also finds that 69% of businesses expect AI tools and technologies to positively impact upskilling and reskilling, and 67% anticipate a positive impact on employee engagement. These findings suggest that employers are optimistic about AI's potential to enhance recruitment, retention, and overall workforce development.