VISION TO VALUE

CLOSING THE AI EXECUTION GAP

Condensed Global Market Summary

Based on the Vision to Value • Closing the AI Execution Gap: A Global AI Study 2026, surveying 2,496 ICT decision-makers across 22 countries.

INTRODUCTION:
Recognition without results

Artificial Intelligence has become a universal priority for business leaders worldwide. Nearly all organizations now recognize that AI will fundamentally reshape their industries, operating models and competitive dynamics. Yet recognition has not translated into results.

AI execution gap in 2026

65%

of executives cannot build a clear business case for AI initiatives

AI is widely discussed at board level, but execution is still lagging.

The gap between ambition and outcomes defines today's AI challenge.

Source: DXC AdvisoryX Global AI Study 2026

Organizations know AI matters, but many remain unable to translate intent into measurable enterprise value. As a result, AI delivery remains fragmented, technology-led and disconnected from strategic objectives — creating a growing divide between recognition and results.

The global AI execution gap

The data highlights a stark global contradiction. While AI ambition is high, execution capability lags far behind.

Globally, 79% of leaders believe AI will fundamentally change their business and 77% describe AI as a board-level strategic priority, yet 94% report implementation challenges and only 37% have reached high AI maturity.

94%
AMBITION

37%
REALITY

The technical trap

73%

of leaders believe AI adoption should be led primarily by technical teams.

When AI is owned in isolation by IT, it shifts from a business P&L lever to a technical experiment — optimizing for model performance rather than commercial outcomes.

AI maturity by market

AI maturity varies by geography, shaped by regulatory environments, infrastructure readiness, workforce availability and leadership models. These differences influence how quickly organizations move from experimentation to scaled value creation.

The United States leads globally, with 44% of organizations achieving high AI maturity, driven by strong venture capital ecosystems, advanced digital infrastructure and a bias toward speed and scale.

Europe aligns with the global average at 37%, progressing through more deliberate, governance-driven approaches. Asia-Pacific shows greater variability, with advanced markets outpacing emerging economies, resulting in an overall maturity level of 32%.

MARKET PERSPECTIVES: UKI, United States, Europe and APJME

United States organizations benefit from early-mover momentum and aggressive scaling, but face increasing pressure to industrialize governance as AI systems become more autonomous.

Europe demonstrates disciplined progress, embedding AI within regulatory frameworks focused on trust, explainability and ethics. Execution slows where AI remains technology-led rather than anchored to business ownership.

APJME shows the widest variation in maturity. Advanced markets progress rapidly where data readiness, skills and partnerships align, while emerging ecosystems remain constrained by infrastructure, data quality and workforce capability.

AI-READY DATA:
The context crisis

A critical and often underestimated barrier to AI execution is data readiness. While organizations invest heavily in models and platforms, 30% of leaders identify data availability and quality as a primary bottleneck.

The challenge is not data volume, but business context. AI systems trained on incomplete or poorly contextualized data produce technically accurate outputs that fail to support strategic decisions.

Leaders, laggards and the maturity divide

The study reveals that organizations achieving high AI maturity do not possess superior technology or larger budgets. They outperform through execution discipline. These leaders treat AI as an executive strategy, align business and technical leadership, and measure success through tangible business outcomes such as growth, innovation speed and risk reduction.

In contrast, lagging organizations remain trapped in prolonged experimentation. They delegate AI ownership to technical teams, struggle to articulate clear business cases, deploy technology without redesigning workflows and measure progress through technical activity rather than enterprise impact. Over time, this gap compounds as leaders accumulate proprietary data, trained workforces and organizational learning that cannot be replicated easily.

High-maturity organizations outperform through execution discipline, not superior technology.

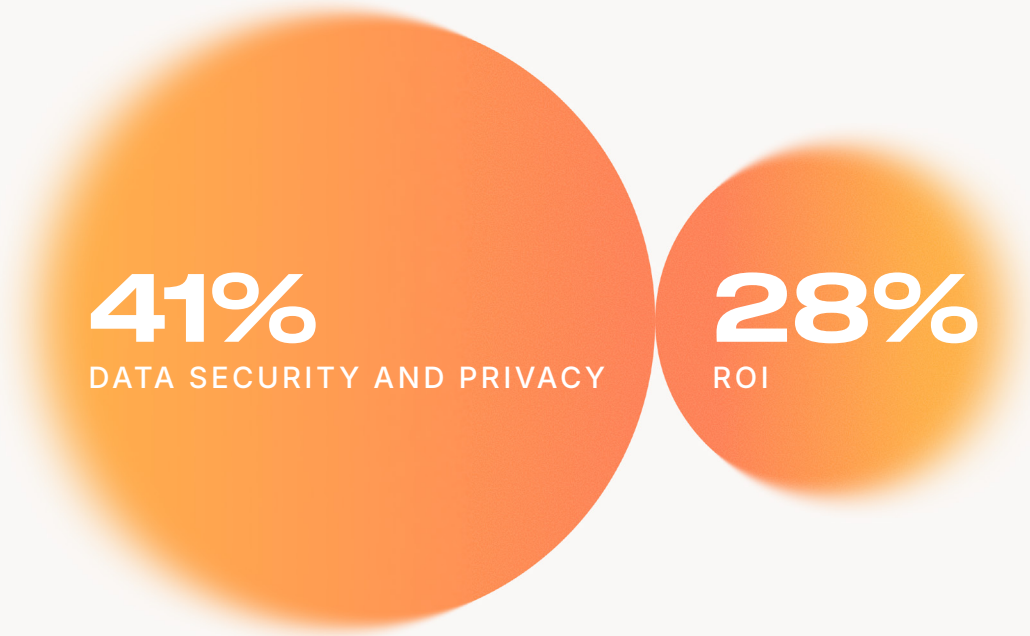
Lagging organizations fall into sophisticated waste — building technically impressive AI models that fail to solve strategic business problems, producing commercially irrelevant outputs.

The strategic imperatives for closing the gap

Three imperatives consistently separate successful organizations from the rest. First, AI must be treated as an executive-level strategy with clear C-suite ownership and business leadership. Second, organizations must design explicitly for human-AI collaboration, investing in reskilling, workflow redesign, and new roles that enable AI to augment rather than displace human judgment. Third, strategic partnerships must be used to build internal capability, accelerate maturity, and reduce risk rather than creating long-term dependency.

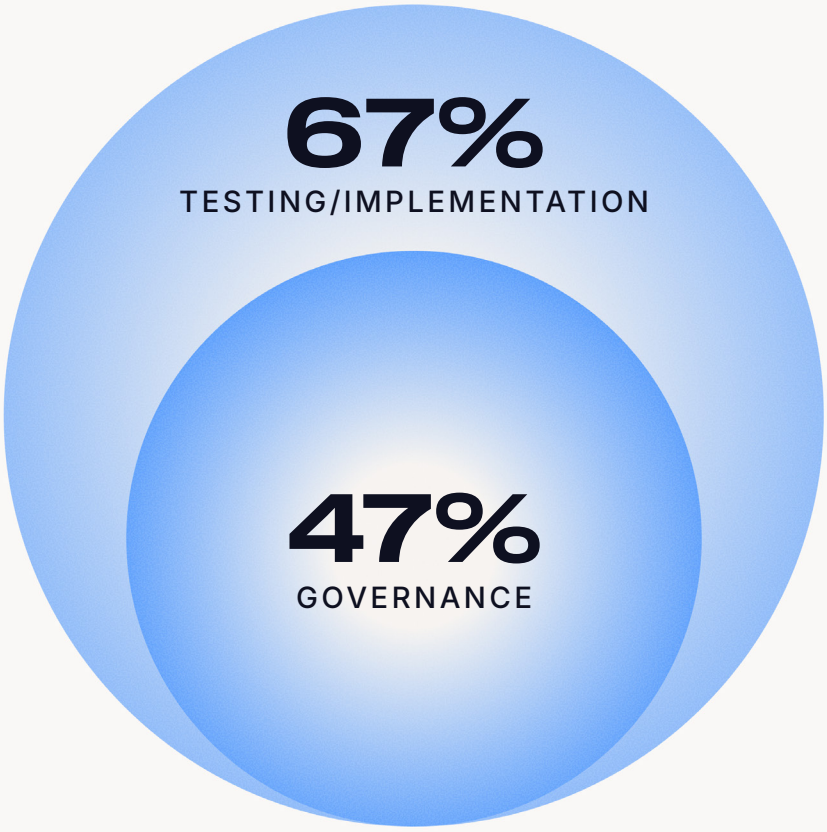
AI leaders align three imperatives: **executive ownership, human-AI collaboration and strategic partnerships.**

Trust precedes ROI. **Data security and privacy (41%)** rank higher than **ROI (28%).** If organizations cannot trust AI systems, they cannot scale them.



Execution excellence now depends on integrating these imperatives into a single operating model where governance enables innovation; workforce transformation drives adoption and partnerships accelerate scale.

AGENTIC AI:
The next frontier — and the governance gap



Agentic AI represents the next frontier, with 67% of organizations already testing or implementing it. Yet only 47% have integrated appropriate governance frameworks, creating a growing governance gap and enterprise risk.

CONCLUSION:
From insight to impact

The AI execution gap is no longer a theoretical concern; it is the defining factor shaping competitive advantage across markets. Recognition of AI's importance is universal, but execution remains uneven. The competitive window is narrowing as AI-native organizations and disciplined incumbents scale faster, learn faster and compound advantages over time.

The question facing leaders is no longer whether to invest in AI, but how quickly they can move from pilots to production while scaling responsibly. Organizations that act decisively on strategy, workforce and partnerships will define their industries over the next decade. Those that fail to close the execution gap risk long-term irrelevance.

THE AI EXECUTION GAP NOW DEFINES COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

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