

The AI Reality Check

# The State of Digital Adoption 2026

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# Introduction

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I've spent the past year talking to CEOs, CIOs, and technology leaders at some of the largest enterprises in the world. The conversation has changed. A year ago, everyone wanted to know how to deploy AI. Now they want to know why it's not working.

Let's be honest. Enterprise AI budgets nearly doubled last year. AI takes 35 cents of every technology dollar. And most employees use it to rewrite an email or run a quick summary, then go back to doing things the old way. That's not adoption. That's the most expensive spell checker ever built.

For this report, we studied 3,750 executives and workers at the same organizations, alongside behavioral data from millions of real interactions on the WalkMe platform. These two groups describe completely different realities. Executives believe the tools are working. Workers have already found ways around them.

The data shows why. AI works for simple, isolated tasks. But enterprise work is not simple or isolated. A task starts in an email, moves to a CRM, requires approval in another system, finishes somewhere else. AI helps with one step, then loses the thread. When context breaks, the employee fills the gap manually.

That's the execution gap. Nearly 40% of technology spend underperformed last year because people couldn't or didn't use what they were given. When the tools fall short, people work around them entirely, often outside what their organization approved, creating risks that leadership can't see.

We've seen this pattern before. We built WalkMe because enterprise technology has always had an adoption problem. For six years, this report has tracked it. What's different now is the scale, the speed, and the cost of getting it wrong.

But here's what the data also shows: the organizations that get execution right are pulling away. They're not spending more. They're not running more advanced AI. They're making the tools they already have work for the people who use them. This report shows exactly what they do differently, where the rest are falling behind, and the specific steps you can take to close the gap.

You have the budget. You have the AI. This report will show you how to make it work.



**Dan Adika**

CEO and Co-Founder, WalkMe

# Methodology

This report examines **how AI is being used in day-to-day enterprise work**. It combines global survey research with proprietary behavioral data from the WalkMe Digital Adoption Platform, allowing us to look at both perception and execution: what people report about AI use and what actually happens inside enterprise systems.

1,700

Senior leaders responsible for enterprise technology strategy and decisions

2,050

Office and hybrid employees across roles



The study includes responses from **3,750 participants worldwide**, all employed at organizations with 1,000 or more employees. This group includes **2,050 office and hybrid employees** across roles, departments, and industries, as well as **1,700 senior leaders** responsible for enterprise technology strategy, digital transformation, governance, and budget decisions, including AI investment and deployment.

**In parallel, WalkMe analyzed real-world user interactions** across thousands of enterprise applications. This behavioral dataset provides visibility into how work flows across systems and where it breaks down. It highlights points where AI assistance is interrupted or bypassed, where users revert to manual steps, and where friction accumulates across tasks and applications.

Surveys were conducted online through an independent research agency and included questionnaire design, validation, fielding, data cleaning, and analysis. WalkMe worked closely with the agency to support methodological rigor, respondent quality, and global representation. Together, the survey data and platform analytics describe how AI is currently used inside enterprise workflows and where execution breaks down.

## Distribution of survey respondents

by region

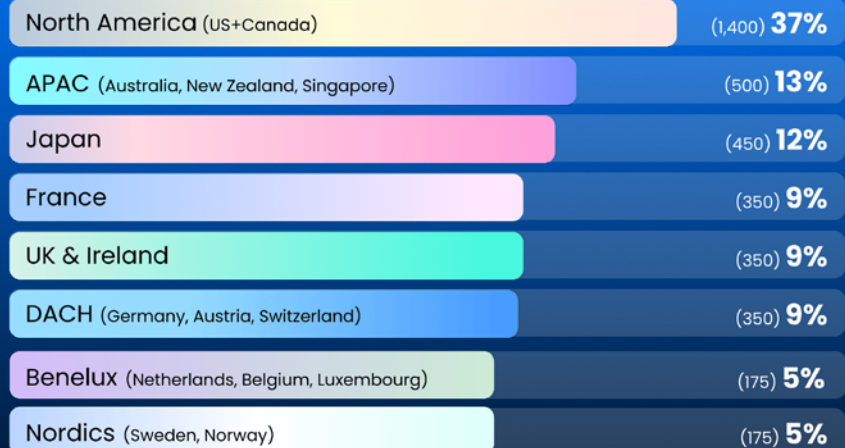


Figure 1: Distribution of survey respondents by region, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe



ACT 1

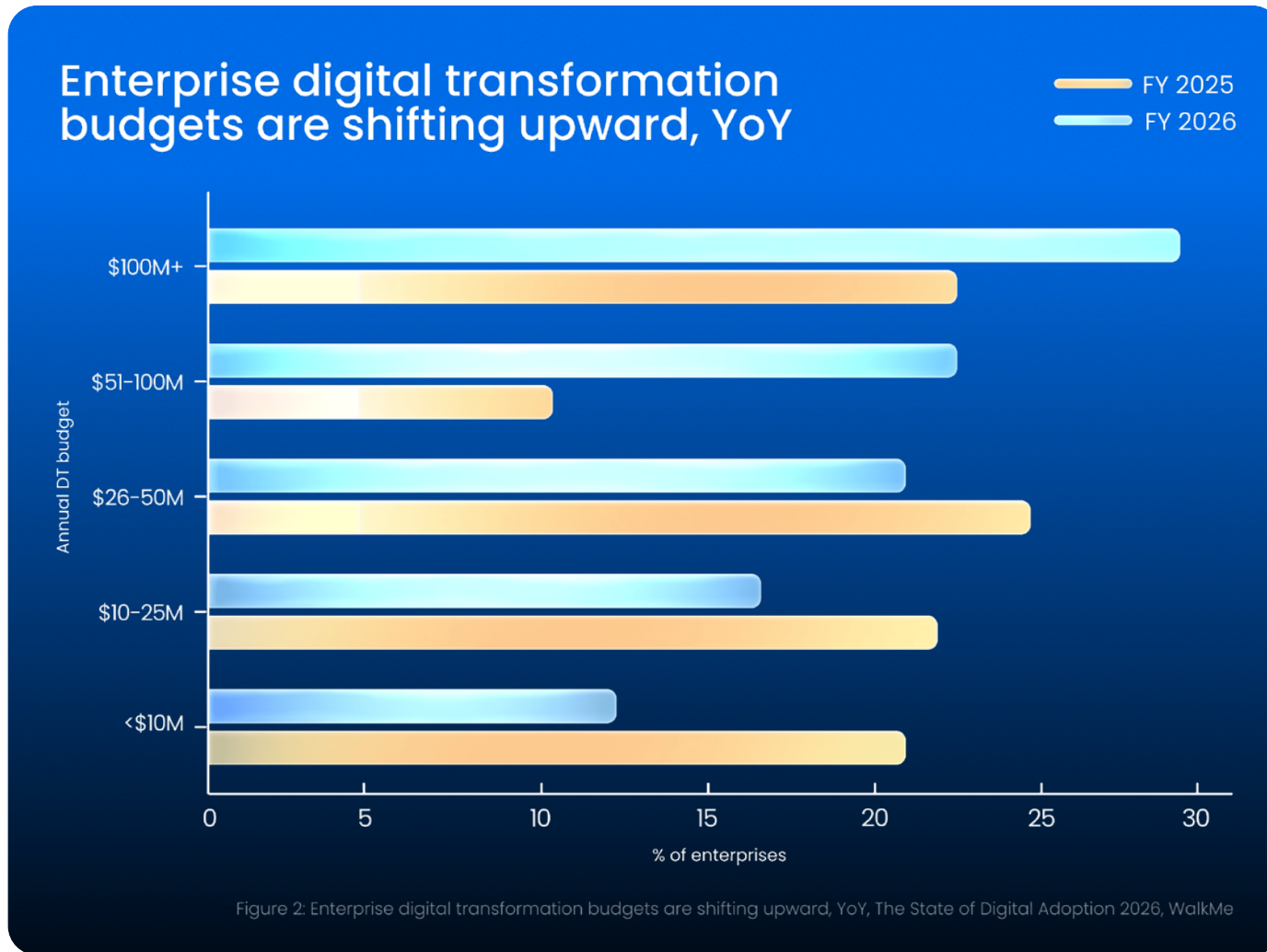
# The execution gap

# In 2026, AI has moved from pilot to process

It's no longer experimental; it's deployed, embedded, and funded at a scale organizations have never attempted before. Workers have access to the newest AI tools, complete with all the bells and whistles organizations paid for, and yet proving AI's value keeps falling short. The returns aren't moving as fast as the money.

This is the Execution Gap: the distance between "we bought it" and "it's working." It's what happens when massive investment meets a wall that technology alone can't break through. The tools are in place, the work isn't getting done any faster, and the gap between what organizations paid for and what they're getting back is widening.

# Tech investments are moving faster than we can adapt



Digital transformation budgets are shifting.

**\$54M**

was the average digital transformation budget in 2025. 52% of organizations are now spending above this threshold, up from 35% the year before.

**\$100M**

is now being spent on digital transformation by 23% of enterprises, up from just 11% the year before.

# The investment is there, the impact isn't

Average digital transformation spend rose from \$39.4 million to \$54.2 million in a single year, with 59% of budgets going to AI-related priorities: 35% to AI tools directly and 24% to the governance and trust framework built around them.\*

The problem isn't under-investment. It's that money is moving faster than behavior can change. The challenge isn't getting AI into the organization. It's getting AI to actually improve the work once it's there.

When deployment fails to become adoption, the budgets soar but the work doesn't follow.

# 40%

of digital transformation spend underperforms because of user adoption challenges.

The technology does what it's supposed to do. The adoption execution around it doesn't.

## Annual average transformation budgets

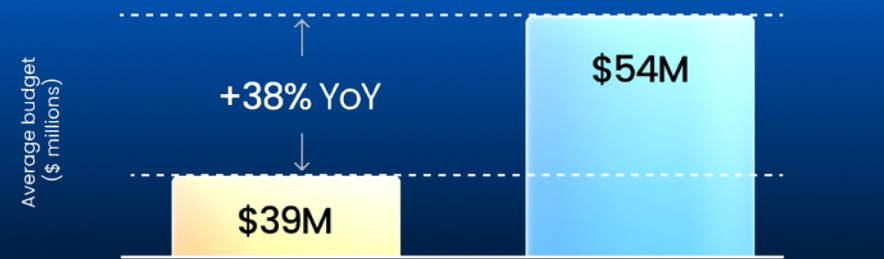


Figure 3: Annual average transformation budgets, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## Underperformance by organization size

Share of digital transformation spend lost to adoption challenges

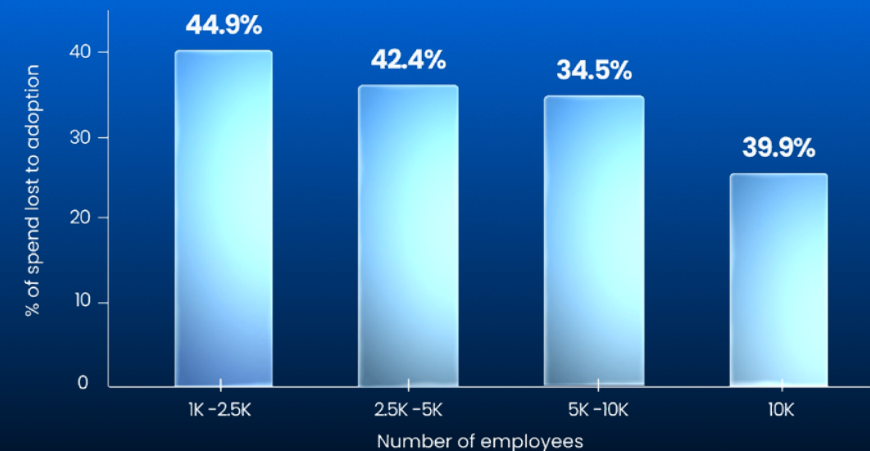


Figure 4: Underperformance by organization size, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

\*Average budget figures are estimated from survey band midpoints. Figures are directional estimates, not precise averages.

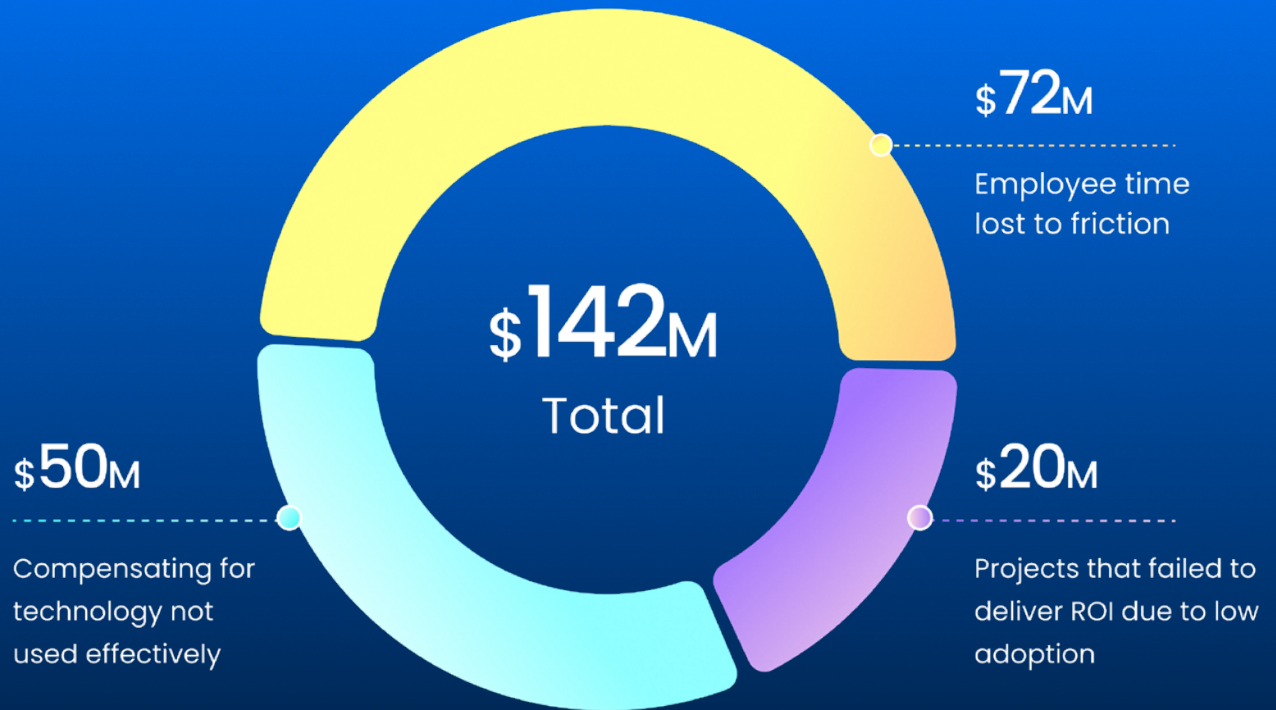
## The cost of that gap is measurable.

The trajectory tells the story better than any single number. The total cost of digital inefficiency climbed from \$97 million in 2022 to a high of \$142 million in 2025. But the most telling moment isn't the peak. It's the dip. In 2024, when organizations invested meaningfully in adoption, the total fell to \$104 million. Then AI arrived at scale, investment shifted to deployment, and costs spiked back up. That dip and reversal is the thesis of this report in a single data point.

The breakdown tells the rest of the story. Employee time lost to friction climbed from \$50 million to \$72 million, the single largest driver. Investment in projects that failed to deliver ROI due to low adoption fell from \$26 million to \$11 million during the adoption investment period, then reversed to \$20 million when that investment stopped. Additional spend to compensate for technology that wasn't used effectively rose from \$43 million to \$50 million.

## Total cost of digital inefficiency 2025

Per company / Per year



Enterprise figures apply to organizations with 5,000+ employees. Figures are conservative estimates based on consistent assumptions applied across the 2024/25 and 2026 datasets.

Figure 5: Total cost of digital inefficiency, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# The adoption problem isn't getting smaller

It's getting more expensive, and the biggest driver is worker time that should be spent on work. Nearly half of AI investment is delivering no measurable return.

**On average, executives estimate they're capturing only about half the potential value from their AI tools and enterprise software.**

Organizations are experiencing more friction from AI than from overall software, yet rating its value realization higher, and that gap between perceived value and actual productivity is exactly where the execution problem hides.

The bigger the organization, the worse the problem. More apps, more handoffs, more coordination required, and more places where things fall apart. In any given month, more than half of workers abandon their enterprise tools at least once and do the work manually instead.



Only  
**55%**  
of AI value is being realized, and broader enterprise software isn't far behind at 52%. The rest is going uncaptured.

## The visibility gap

Apps

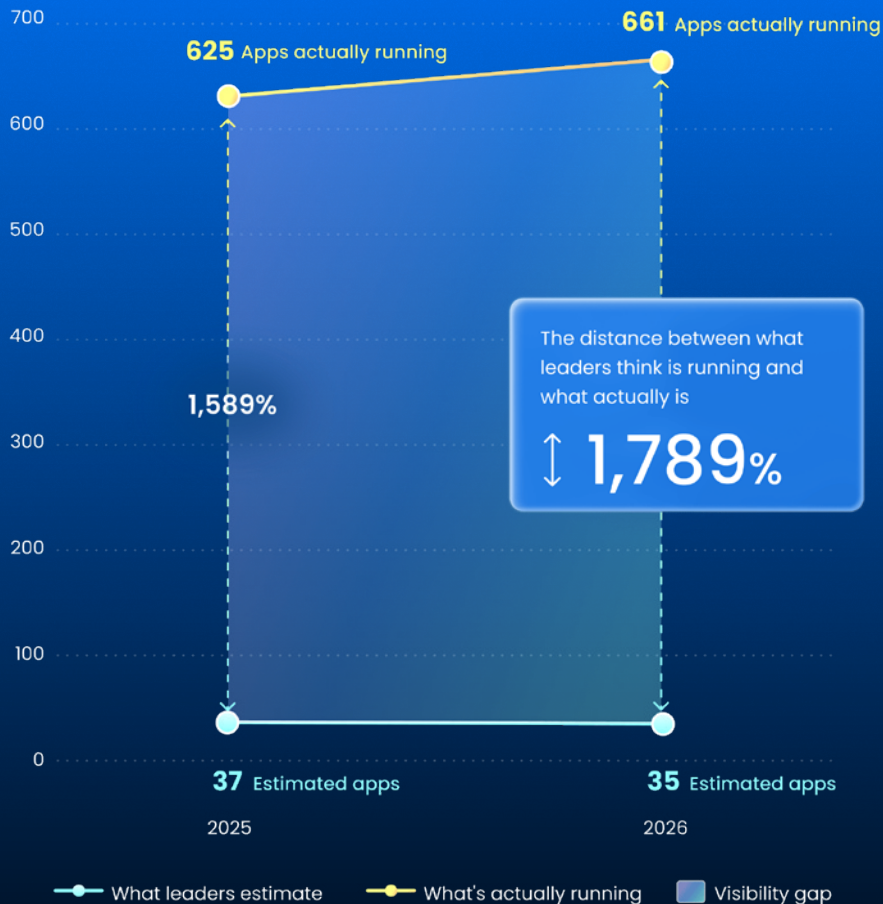


Figure 6: The visibility gap, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# Leaders can't fix what they can't see

61% of executives admit their stack works as isolated platforms, not a fully integrated system, and that's just what they can see.

When executives were asked how many applications their organizations use, the average response was 35. The actual number is 661, with executives estimating 21 AI-powered tools against an actual count of 80.\* That's a 1,789% visibility gap, and it has been widening every year. In 2024, executives estimated 21 applications against an actual count of 211. In 2025, that grew to 37 estimated against 625 actual. Now the real number has reached 661 while the executive estimate has actually fallen. They are seeing less of the stack every year, while the stack itself keeps growing.

You can't optimize workflows you can't see, govern AI tools you don't know exist, or measure productivity when your instrumentation covers a fraction of where work actually happens.

\*WalkMe platform data, 60+ enterprise organizations, 12-month period. AI-powered is defined as tools that either self-identify as AI or have AI as a core function. (edited)

# Why workers skip AI

This isn't a one-off. It's recurring behavior.

In any given month, more than half of workers abandon their enterprise tools and do the work manually instead. For a third of them, it's a recurring pattern. What looks like friction is actually rejection.

The cause is consistent: fragmentation. Workers aren't just moving between tools throughout their day, they're switching systems every time they try to complete a single piece of work. The average is 2.88 applications per task. More than a third say that switching harms their work, and 37% skip AI entirely because using it means breaking their workflow and manually moving data between systems.

When the friction gets bad enough, they abandon AI and do it themselves. The work still gets done, just slowly, inconsistently, and outside the tools organizations spent millions deploying.

# 37%

of workers skip AI entirely because it breaks their workflow and requires moving data manually

## Workers switch systems to complete a single task

Average task spans ~3 applications

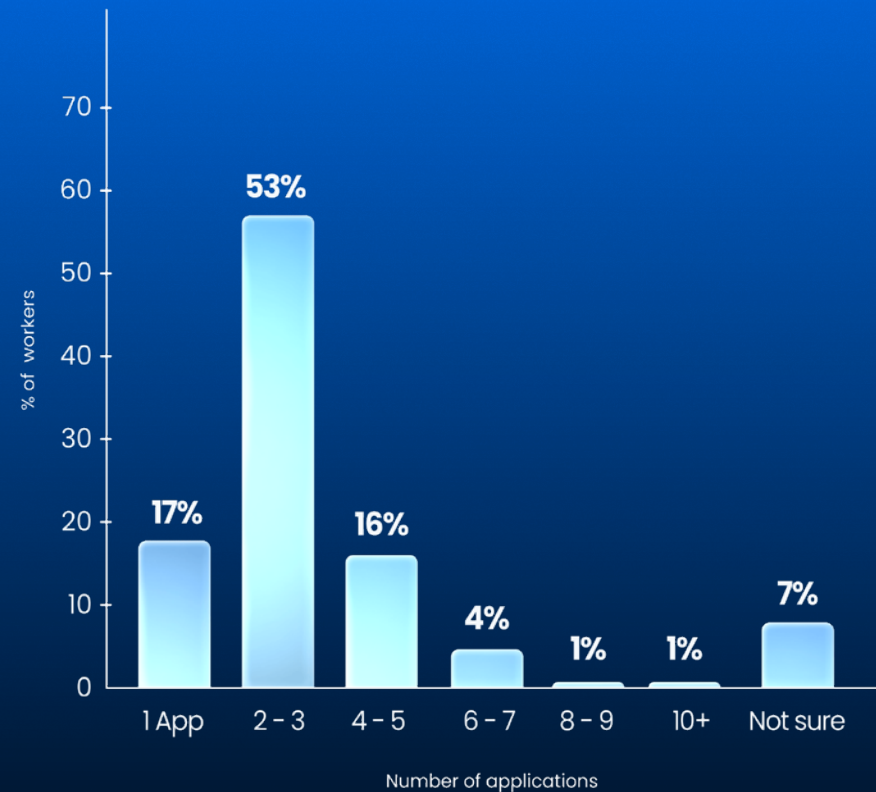


Figure 7: Workers switch systems to complete a single task, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# Decision latency

The AI abandonment isn't just about tools that don't work. It's about everything workers have to think about before they can use them.

Is this answer accurate? Is it compliant? Does it conflict with what another tool just told me? Can I trust it enough to act on it?

That pause is where productivity takes a hit, and it happens dozens of times a day. When AI can't carry the full context of the work, the rules, the security requirements, the workflow state, workers do what responsible workers do: they slow down, verify everything, and only use AI when they're certain it won't create more problems than it solves. The technology works, but the trust layer doesn't.

## Why workers hesitate to use AI

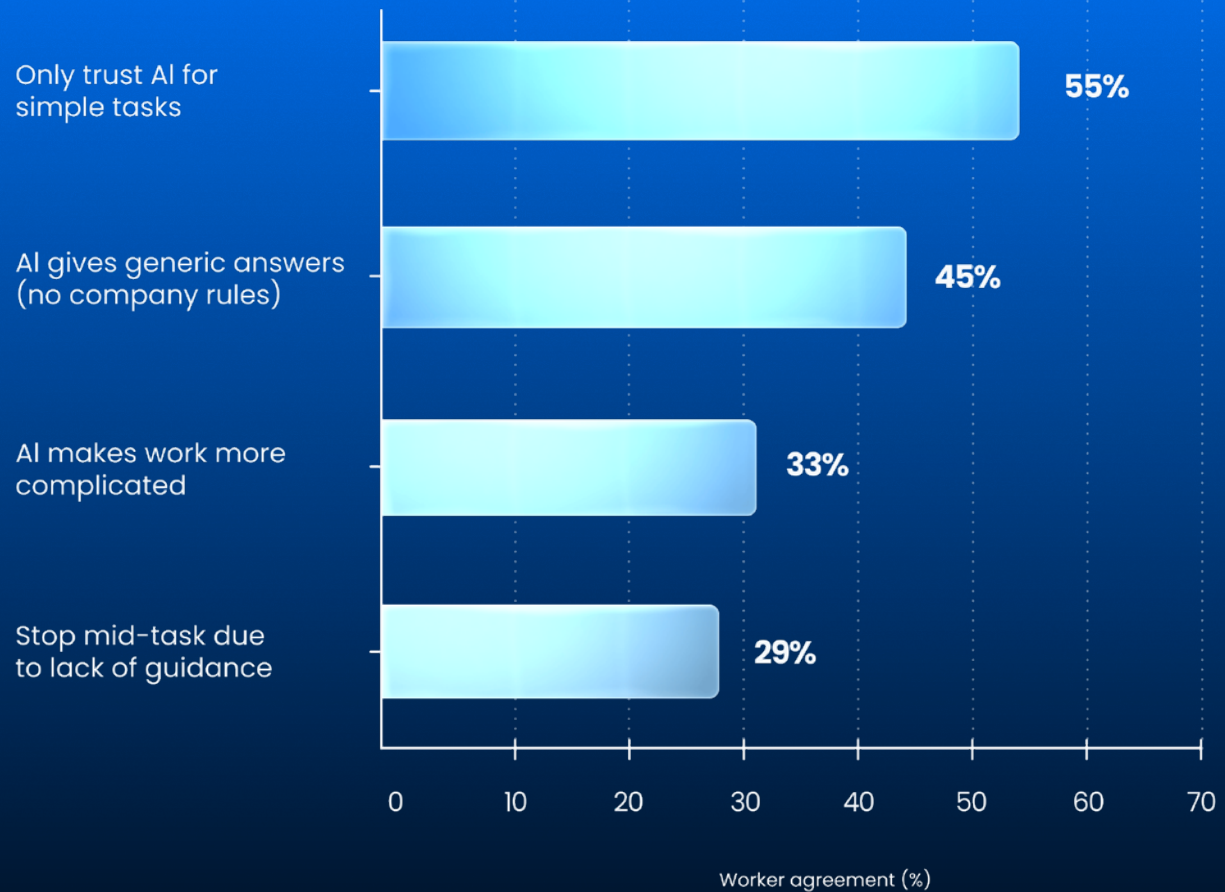


Figure 8: Why workers hesitate to use AI, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# The cost of friction

## Employees are losing one full working day every week to friction.

Employees are losing one full working day every week to friction, not to actual work, but to managing the tools that are supposed to help them work. That's 7.9 hours per week, 51 working days per year, and the breakdown points to three distinct problems.

1

### Cross-app fragmentation

Workers spend 1.34 hours re-entering the same information across applications and another hour finding workarounds when tools don't connect. That's 2.34 hours a week lost to cross-app continuity failures.

2

### Missing guidance

Workers lose 3.69 hours per week to confusion: spending longer on tasks because they don't understand the software costs 0.97 hours, decoding unclear instructions costs 1.03 hours, asking colleagues for help costs 0.76 hours, and helping colleagues instead of doing their own work costs another 0.93 hours. That's a guidance and enablement failure.

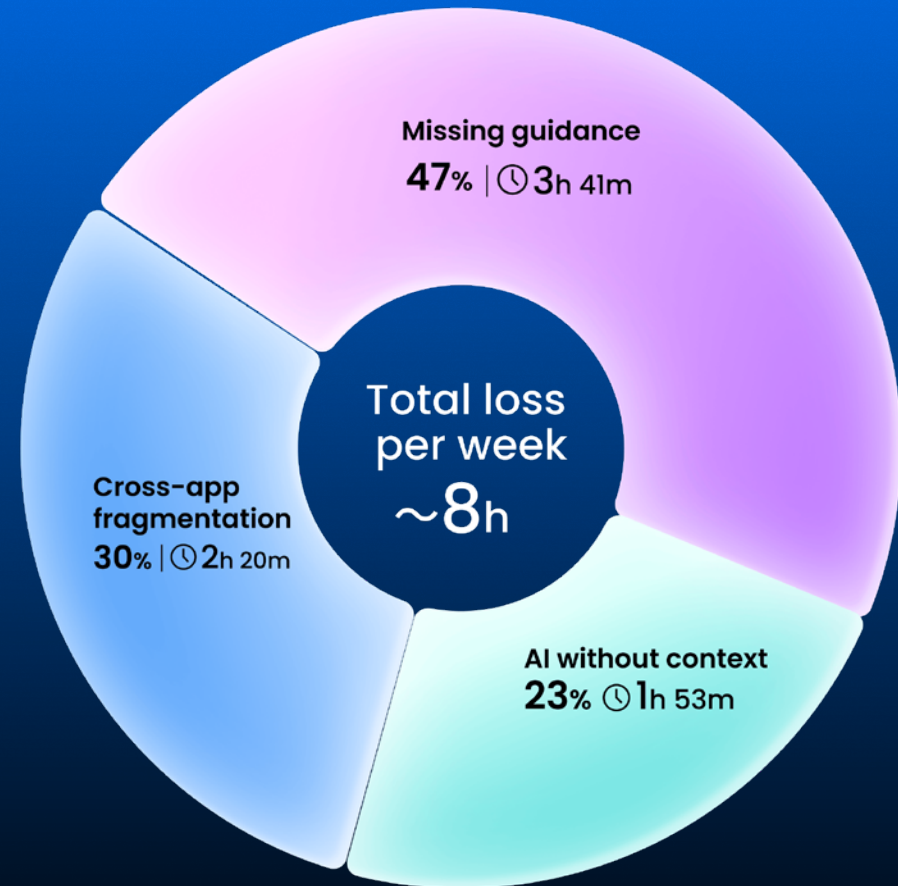
3

### AI operating without context

Workers spend 0.81 hours reworking AI prompts because the outputs didn't help, and 1.07 hours waiting for support to resolve tool issues. That's 1.88 hours a week lost to AI that can't carry the context of the work.

## Nearly half of lost time comes from missing guidance, not broken tools

Figure 9: Nearly half of lost time comes from missing guidance, not broken tools, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe



## It's accelerating.

In 2024, employees lost 43 workdays to tech friction.

In 2025, that dropped to 36 as organizations invested more in adoption. In 2026, the trend reversed, and workers now lose 51 workdays per year, a 42% increase and the highest level in three years.\* Workers report spending more time on AI-related friction: reworking prompts, verifying outputs, and moving context between systems that don't talk to each other.

# 51

workdays are lost by workers per year, a 42% increase and the highest level in three years.

\*Workday totals are calculated by converting weekly hours lost to annual working days based on a standard workweek.

## Annual workdays lost to software & AI friction, per employee

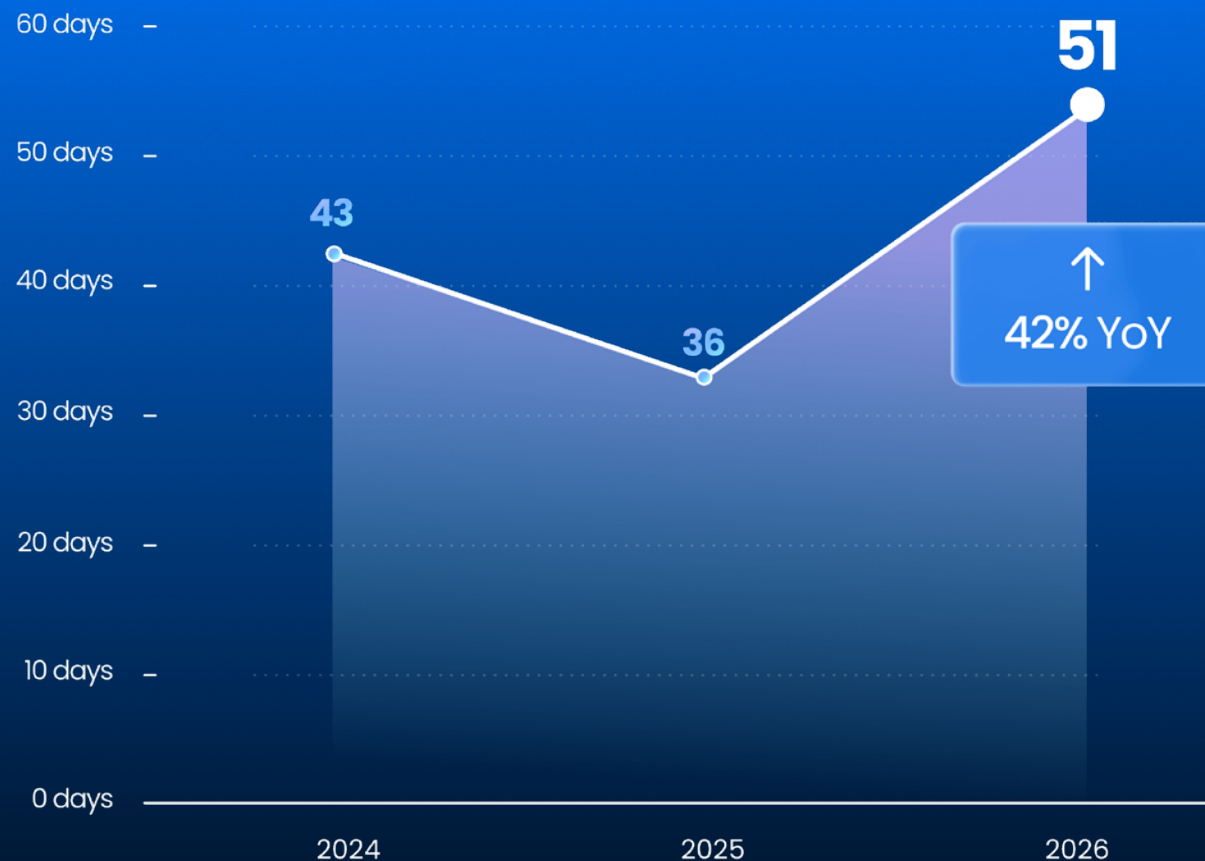



Figure 10: Annual workdays lost to software & AI friction, per employee, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe


# Where execution breaks

Executives and workers don't agree on where things stand, and that disagreement is the story. On workflow continuity, on training, on integration, executives are roughly twice as confident as workers on every dimension. They are not describing friction in the same company. They are describing two different companies entirely.

## 3 failure points show up consistently

 AI lacks the context of the work

 Guidance isn't available inside the flow of work

 AI can't act across systems

These aren't edge cases. They show up consistently, across organizations, across roles. The technology works. The execution doesn't.



# What workers actually want

When asked what would make AI work better, workers said:

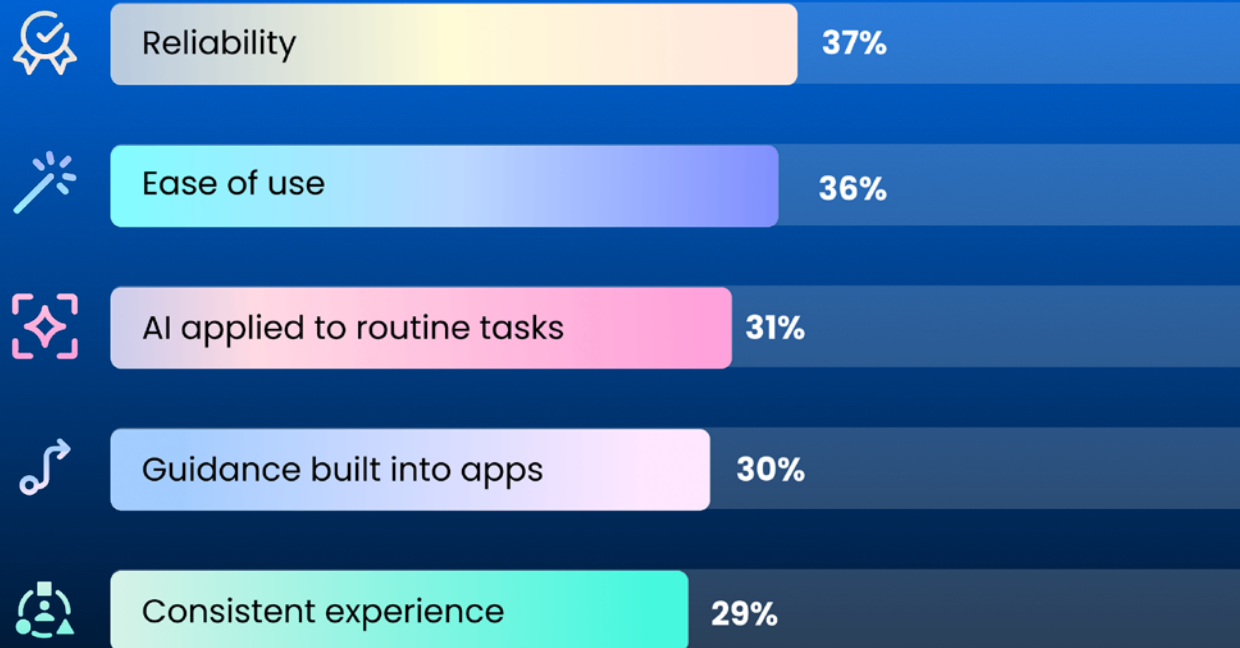


Figure 11: When asked what would make AI work better, workers said; The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

When workers describe what would make AI work better, the answers are consistent.

Notice what isn't on either list. More tools. More features. More investment.

**Workers aren't asking for more AI. They're asking for the AI they already have to actually work. That's a different problem entirely.**

# What leaders can see

## AI adoption challenges from execution gaps



Figure 12: AI adoption challenges from execution gaps, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe



ACT 2

Why work breaks:

# The missing context

# The money is being spent and the tools are deployed, so why isn't work getting better?

Enterprise work doesn't fail because AI lacks capability. It fails because AI can't access the context it needs to actually help. Workers know what they're trying to accomplish, what happened before, what rules apply, and which systems are involved. AI doesn't. And without that shared understanding, it can't meaningfully support the work. It just responds to whatever it's given in isolation.



## Where context disappears

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Think about a sales rep trying to close a deal. They're working across email, their CRM, and a CPQ. At every step, AI starts from scratch. It can't see the email thread, the call notes, or what was agreed in the last meeting. It doesn't know what discount the rep is authorized to offer or what compliance rules apply. And it can't anticipate what the next person in the process needs, so the rep has to manually pull everything together themselves.

**When executives are asked what causes lost productivity, the answers all point back to the same problem: systems that don't integrate with how people work, tools siloed from workflows, and too many applications with no clear connection between them.**

# Where trust breaks down

AI has crossed the regular use threshold. Over half of workers use AI at least weekly, with one in four using it daily. By frequency alone, AI is no longer an experiment. It's a daily work tool.

But trust hasn't followed. Only 12% of workers are fully confident that AI tools understand the specific context of their work. The rest are hedging, and the behavior reflects it: among workers who abandoned approved tools, 30% said the tool didn't understand their task and 29% said they lacked the guidance to use it effectively. 40% report that different tools give conflicting advice.

AI is being used broadly but shallowly. 55% say they only trust AI for simple, non-critical tasks. Only 9% trust AI enough to use it for high-impact work.

Leadership sees it differently. 61% of executives trust AI for complex work, a 52 percentage point gap between confidence and lived experience.

## Workers use AI. They don't trust it.

This graph excludes respondents who selected "neither agree nor disagree."

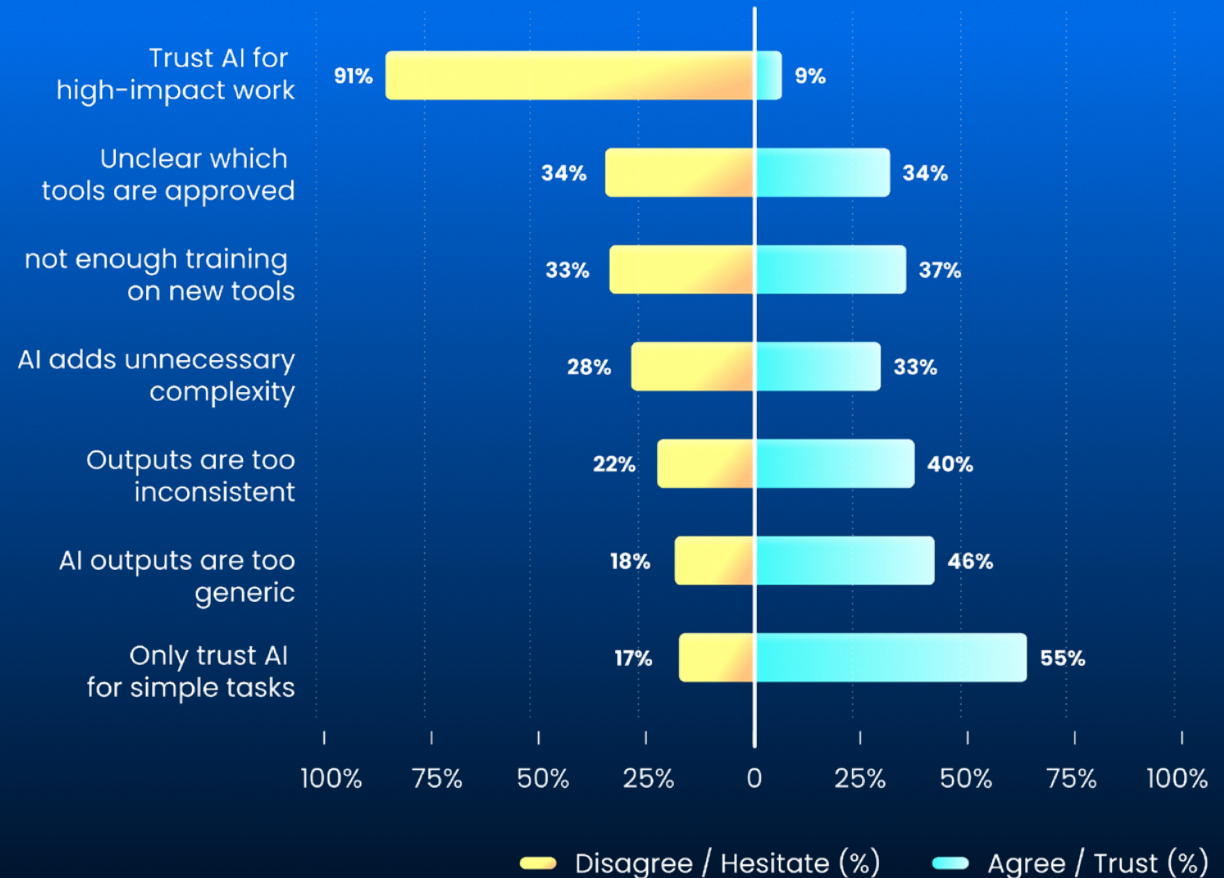


Figure 13: How workers trust vs. hesitate to use AI across 7 dimensions, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## AI task & workflow abandonment

scaled by app complexity

- Low Complexity (2-3 Apps)
- High Complexity (8+ Apps)

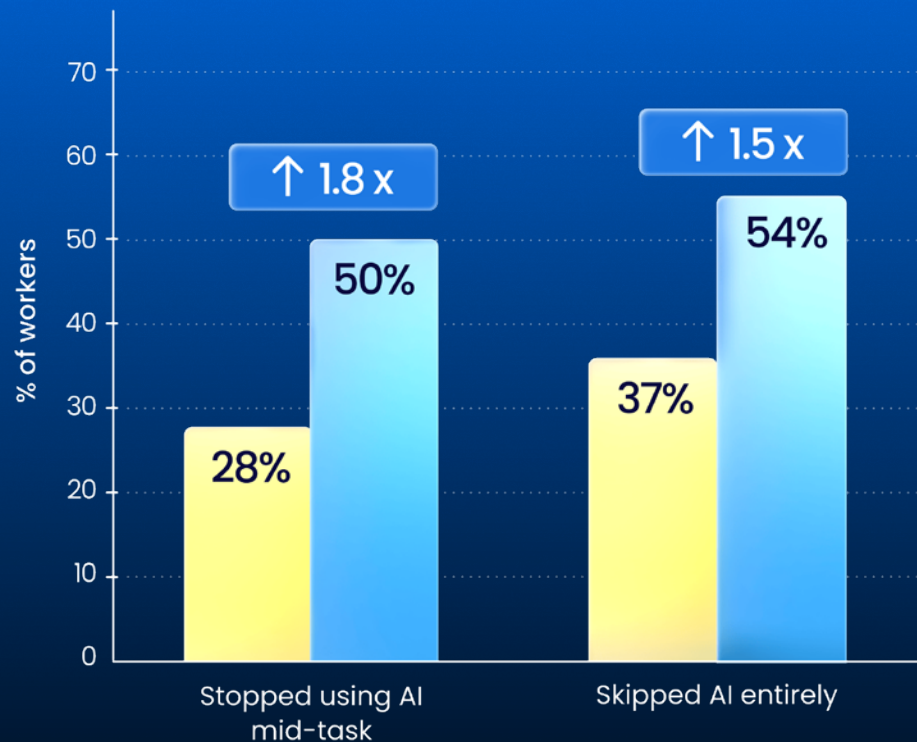


Figure 14: AI task & workflow abandonment scaled by app complexity, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## What that gap looks like in practice

The perception gap is wider than it looks, because workers don't abandon AI dramatically. They quietly work around it. 28% stop using AI mid-task when it loses the thread of what they're doing, and 37% skip it altogether because switching to AI means breaking their workflow, re-entering information, and losing more time than they'd save. As tasks span more applications, abandonment compounds: among workers juggling eight or more apps, 50% stop mid-task and 54% completed the task manually without software or AI at all. From the outside, AI looks like it's being used. From the inside, it's being avoided.

# 49%

of workers have used AI to explain how to use other workplace software. Workers are turning to one AI tool to compensate for the failure of another. **AI has become the unofficial help desk.**

## When workers solve the problem themselves.

45% of workers used unapproved AI tools in the past 30 days. 36% used them with confidential company, customer, or employee data. **This isn't a rogue behavior problem. It's a structural one.** Shadow AI isn't a few people using ChatGPT on the side. It's what happens when the gap between approved tools and useful tools becomes wide enough that workers stop trying to bridge it. And workers are clear about what would keep them inside the system: 26% say built-in guardrails that ensure AI follows company rules and policies would be among the capabilities that most improve how they work. They're not asking to go rogue. They're asking for approved tools that actually work within the rules they're supposed to follow.

## Shadow AI is already here

45%



of workers used unapproved AI tools

36%



did so with confidential company, customer, or employee data

## Workers aren't asking to go rogue. They're asking for guardrails.

29%



want built-in guardrails that keep AI aligned with company rules

26%



say guardrails would make the biggest difference

Figure 15: Shadow AI is already here, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

Only

21%

of workers have ever been warned about AI policies and that's because leadership can't agree on whether the problem is too much unsanctioned AI or too little AI adoption.

78% of executives say they need to discipline employees for shadow AI use. 62% believe the risk is overstated compared to the risk of not taking enough advantage of AI. Workers are caught in the middle, operating without rules anyone bothered to communicate. A third don't even know which AI applications their employer allows.

Shadow AI is the predictable outcome when working inside approved systems is harder than working outside them. It's not a compliance failure. It's a governance failure.

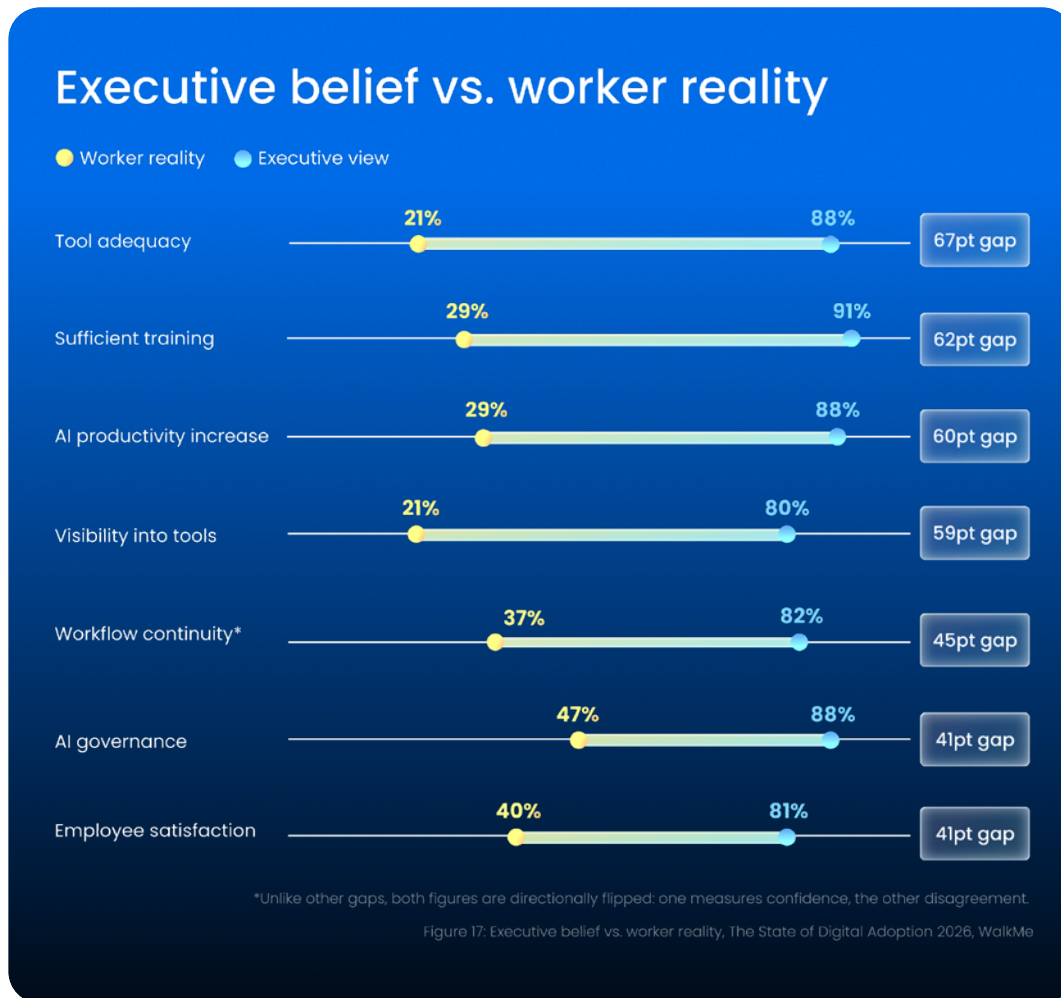
And it's not the only place where executives and workers are describing completely different realities.

## Executive view on Shadow AI: Control vs. adoption



Figure 16: Executive view on Shadow AI: Control vs. adoption, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# Executives and employees are describing different companies



In 2025, this gap came down to a single comparison: 79% of executives were confident in their AI programs, while only 28% of employees felt adequately trained. In 2026, it spans seven measurable dimensions. In every one, executives rate their organization's readiness significantly higher than workers rate their actual experience.

**88% of leaders believe employees have adequate tools. Only 21% of employees fully agree. That 67-point chasm isn't a disagreement about degree. It means leadership is managing a reality it can't see.**

When that contradiction goes unmeasured, budgets go to problems leadership thinks are solved. The real problems keep growing. The gap doesn't just persist. It gets funded.

# Context is the constraint

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Every worker navigating a multi-application workflow faces the same impossible choice: stop to verify everything and lose time, trust output they're not certain about and risk mistakes, or find tools outside the approved stack that actually get the job done.

None of those options are good. All of them are happening, at scale, every day.

When that choice plays out across thousands of workflows simultaneously, the cost isn't just individual friction. It's compounding structural failure that's invisible to the measurement systems that should be catching it, and funded by the budgets that should be fixing it.

The question isn't whether this is solvable. The data already shows what solving it looks like.



ACT 3

How people, systems, and AI

work better  
together



# The diagnosis is clear

The root causes are documented. But the same data that maps the problem also maps the way through it. The organizations that have already started moving aren't waiting on the rest of the industry to catch up. They're pulling ahead, with measurable results to show for it.

The execution gap is real. So is the way through it.

# A new definition of winning

For years the enterprise technology conversation was about buying and deploying. In 2026, it's shifted. 77% of executives say their primary challenge isn't buying new tools. It's ensuring the ones they have are actually adopted and used effectively.

This isn't a small adjustment. It's a different theory of winning. The organizations pulling ahead aren't running more advanced AI. They're making the tools they already have work for the people who use them.

# 80%

of executives say the biggest winners won't be the first to deploy something new. They'll be the ones who make what they already have work reliably, across systems, people, and AI.

## What executives say their organizations need most



Figure 18: What executives say their organizations need most, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## What workers want from AI integration

59%

of workers say seamless integration between AI and their tools is essential



56%

of workers say the best AI tools work invisibly, without adding steps or interruptions.



Figure 19: What workers want from AI integration, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## The direction is the same from every angle

Executives have been clear about what their organizations need. So have workers. 59% of workers say seamless integration between AI and their tools is essential for doing their job well. 56% say the best AI tools are the ones that work invisibly, without adding steps or interruptions. That's a design brief, not a capability gap.

70%

of enterprises will consolidate to orchestration platforms by 2030, up from 5% today.

Source: Gartner, Magic Quadrant for Business Orchestration, 2025

Leadership, workers, and independent analysis are all pointing to the same thing: systems that hold together, AI that functions inside the work rather than around it, and support that shows up at the moment people actually need it. The organizations already doing it are seeing the difference.

## Where workers aren't receiving support

38%



feel well-trained on all the software and AI tools they use

40%



say employer provides strong support for new tools

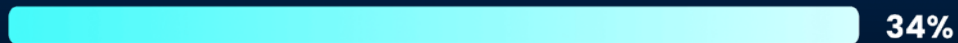
46%



receive guidance in the moment, while doing their work

## What workers say would close this gap

Training before they're expected to use the tool



Ease of use and natural workflow fit

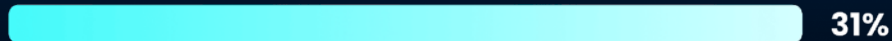


Figure 20: Where workers aren't receiving support, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

## What happens when the gap closes

### Workers already know what they need. Most aren't getting it.

Only 38% feel well-trained on the software and AI tools they're expected to use. Only 46% receive guidance while they're actually doing their work. And just 40% say their employer provides strong support when introducing new tools.

The fix isn't complicated. 34% say receiving training before they're expected to use a tool is the single biggest factor in how quickly they can get up to speed. 31% say ease of use and natural workflow fit matters just as much. When organizations actually meet those conditions, the results are hard to ignore.

# Why traditional training can't keep up

Training teaches features. It can't be in the room when someone is mid-task, unsure of the next step, questioning whether the AI output in front of them is right. That moment is where confidence is made or lost. And training isn't there.

Workers who receive in-flow contextual support – guidance that shows up inside the workflow at the exact moment they need it – are 1.9x to 3.7x more likely to report complete confidence across every measured dimension, compared to those without it. 79% say it helps them complete their work more easily.

Same tools. Different support.  
Completely different outcome.

## Worker confidence with and without in-flow support

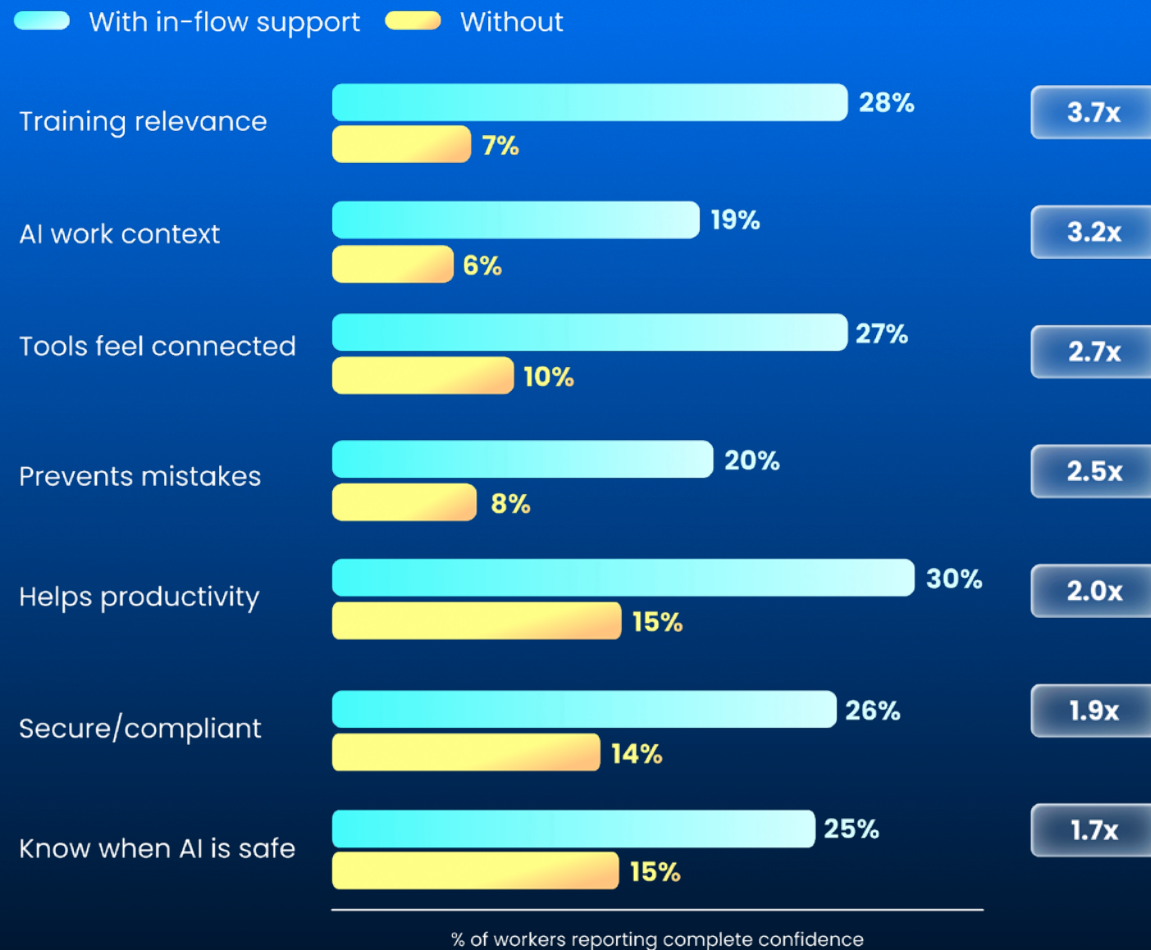


Figure 21: Worker confidence with and without in-flow support, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# Think about what that means in practice

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The worker who would have stopped to verify an AI output doesn't stop, because the verification is already there. The one who wasn't sure what to do next keeps moving, because the guidance is in the step. The one who had been avoiding a tool because it felt too uncertain to trust now uses it. The hesitation doesn't get trained away. It just doesn't have anywhere to land.

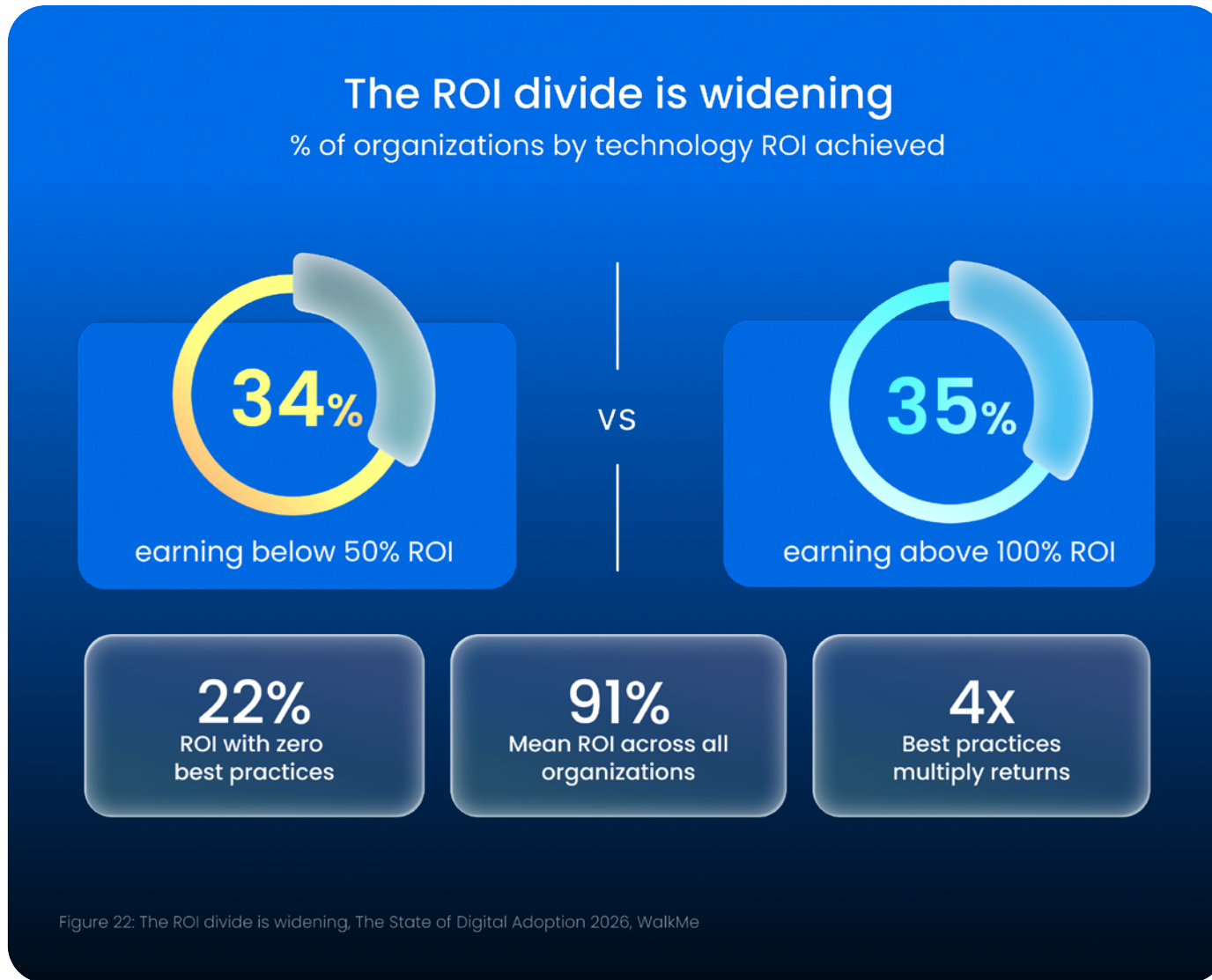
**Trust builds. Not because anyone told workers to trust AI, but because the experience kept earning it.**

When guidance is present in the flow of work, training feels relevant and useful rather than something people struggled to remember from weeks ago. AI output feels trustworthy because workers understand the context it's operating in. Tools feel connected because the gaps between them are being bridged. Work completes with fewer retries because the next step is clear.

The worker who would have stopped to verify doesn't stop. The one who would have abandoned the task completes it. When support is in the work, the friction just doesn't have anywhere to land.



# The returns compound too



Organizations following digital adoption best practices report a mean ROI of 91% on technology investment. But that number hides more than it reveals.

The distribution tells the real story. 34% of organizations are earning below 50% ROI. 35% are earning above 100%. The middle ground between them is shrinking, and the distance between the two groups keeps growing. That's because best practices don't add returns linearly. Each one multiplies the effect of the last.

The longer organizations wait to act, the harder that gap becomes to close.

# This is what the winning side is building

The companies closing the execution gap aren't waiting for a better moment. They're running coordinated adoption programs now, and the returns are showing up across every dimension that matters, for executives and workers alike.

How? They're capturing the value everyone else is leaving behind.

## What companies gain when they help employees use their tools

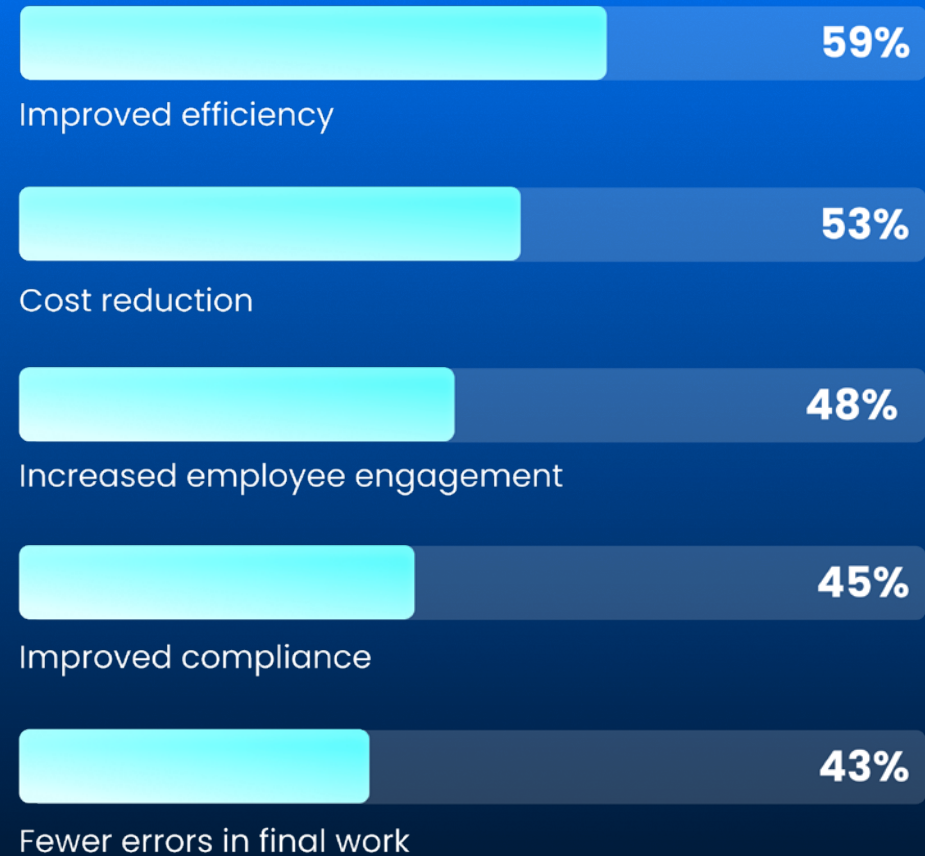


Figure 23: What companies gain when they help employees use their tools, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe

# The investment is already moving

**For the first time, the money is following the evidence.**

Executives are prioritizing streamlining IT complexity at 41% and increasing trust in existing AI at 33%. When asked what capabilities matter most for their three-year digital goals, live contextual training for employees comes out on top at 38%, followed by a unified orchestration layer and a coordinated approach to managing multiple AI tools.

Those aren't arbitrary strategic bets. They're direct responses to exactly what the data in this report has been showing.

The signal is clear. Whether execution delivers on it is what the next 12 to 24 months will prove.

## Executive priorities: 2026 focus vs. three-year goals

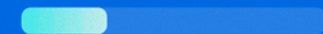
Top strategic priorities for 2026

41%



Streamline & reduce  
IT complexity

33%



AI trust & utilization

Top priority for three-year digital goals

38%

Live contextual training



Figure 24: Executive priorities: 2026 focus vs. three-year goals, The State of Digital Adoption 2026, WalkMe



## The next wave hasn't started yet.

The organizations that act now won't just close the gap. They'll own the next one.

Approximately a third of the enterprise workforce hasn't engaged with AI tools at all. They're not resisting. They haven't been reached. As AI becomes embedded in mainstream applications, this group will encounter AI-driven changes they weren't prepared for. The organizations that reach them now will have a significant advantage over those that don't.

84%

of executives already plan to invest in in-flow coaching and digital adoption capabilities. The deploy-then-train model is being replaced by something that supports and measures work while it's actually happening.

**The window to act is open. It won't stay that way.**

# The layer that changes everything

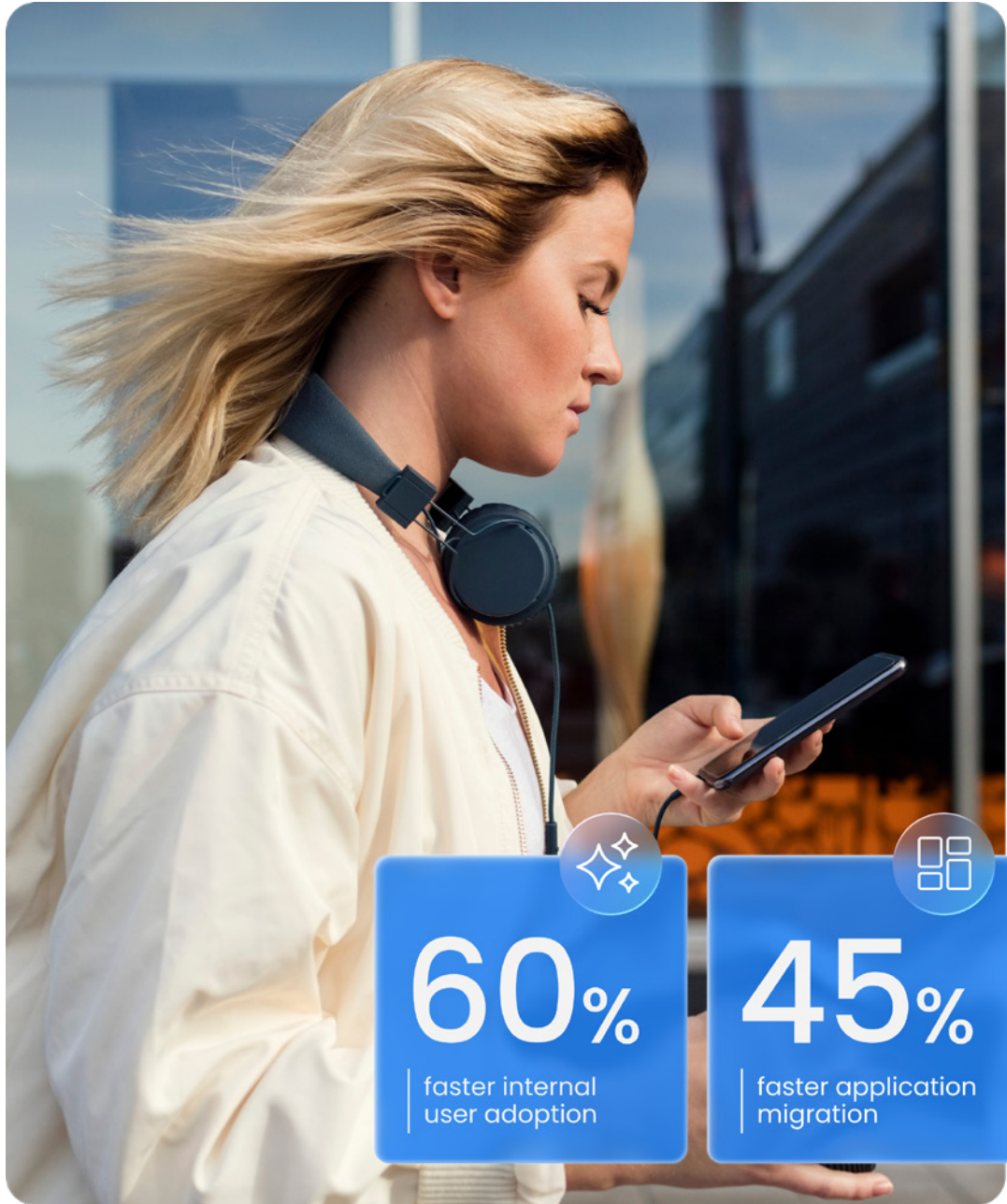
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The organizations closing the execution gap aren't doing anything radical. They're connecting what they already have: context that travels with the task, guidance at the moment of need, and visibility into where work actually slows down. The AI they already have just needs to understand where people are and what comes next.

**The money is there. The AI is deployed. The tools exist. The only thing missing is the layer that connects them to people in the moment work actually happens.**

The organizations building that layer now aren't catching up to the leaders. They are the leaders.





Source: IDC Business Value of WalkMe

# About WalkMe

WalkMe, an SAP company, is the critical layer that makes enterprise AI work. Copilots and AI agents are powerful, but incomplete. They can't see what's on an employee's screen, move across applications, or act where work actually happens. WalkMe can. Built on over a decade of experience in enterprise deployments, WalkMe gives AI the real-time context, cross-application reach, and workflow execution it needs to deliver results. WalkMe helps organizations adapt faster, make better decisions, and build a workforce that learns continuously. Trusted by global leaders including IBM, Nestlé, ThermoFisher Scientific, and the U.S. federal government, WalkMe turns AI investments into business outcomes. Visit [www.walkme.com](http://www.walkme.com).

Request a demo

Great companies use WalkMe.



## Appendix A:

# Research methodology

## Survey demographics

The research encompasses two surveys conducted in Q1 2026:

- 1,700 senior enterprise leaders: C-level executives, VPs, directors, and heads of function responsible for enterprise technology strategy, digital transformation, governance, and AI investment decisions
- 2,050 office and hybrid workers: employees across roles, departments, and industries at organizations with 1,000 or more employees

## Enterprise classification

Organizational size is classified as:

- Small (1,000–4,999 employees): 48% of respondents
- Medium (5,000–9,999 employees): 23% of respondents
- Large (10,000+ employees): 27% of respondents

## Proprietary data analysis

WalkMe analyzed real-world user interactions across thousands of enterprise applications to supplement survey findings.

- WalkMe platform data drawn from 60+ enterprise organizations over a 12-month period
- A “tool” is defined as any distinct application accessed by employees during the measurement period

## Appendix B:

# Data collection procedures

## Survey implementation

- Online surveys conducted Q1 2026
- Multi-language support across all 14 countries

- Respondents screened to confirm employment at organizations with 1,000 or more employees

## Appendix C:

# Industry and geographic distribution

## Survey respondents by industry

- Financial Services: 14%
- Manufacturing & Industrial: 14%
- IT / Tech / Software: 13%
- Retail / Wholesale: 13%
- Healthcare & Life Sciences: 11%
- Public Sector: 9%
- Built Environment (AEC): 6%
- Education: 5%
- Logistics / Distribution: 4%
- Hospitality & Tourism: 2%
- Utilities: 2%
- Insurance: 2%
- Marketing / Communications: 1%
- Legal: 1%
- Other: 3%

## Geographic distribution

- North America: 37%
- APAC: 13%
- Japan: 12%
- France: 9%
- UK & Ireland: 9%
- DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland): 9%
- Benelux (Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg): 5%
- Nordics (Sweden, Norway): 5%

[Appendix D:](#)

## Definitions

### Technical terms

#### Execution Gap

The distance between technology deployment and measurable value realization. Occurs when tools are in place but adoption falls short, causing digital transformation spend to underperform relative to investment.

#### Shadow AI

Use of unapproved AI tools, or approved tools with unauthorized data. Treated in this report as a structural outcome of adoption failure, not a compliance or behavioral issue.

#### Decision latency

Productivity loss from workers pausing mid-task to verify whether an AI output is accurate, compliant, or safe to act on. Occurs when AI cannot carry the full context of the work: the rules, the security requirements, and the workflow state.

#### Fragmentation

The condition in which enterprise technology operates as a collection of isolated platforms rather than an integrated system. Workers switch between an average of 2.88 applications per task, manually bridging gaps the tools themselves cannot close.

#### In-flow guidance

Contextual support delivered inside the application and workflow at the moment of need, distinct from training delivered before or after tool use.

#### Orchestration layer

Infrastructure that connects people, AI, and enterprise applications so context travels with the task across systems. Distinct from single-tool AI features.

#### Digital Adoption Platform (DAP)

A software layer deployed across enterprise applications that delivers in-flow guidance, automates workflows, and provides behavioral analytics on tool usage. WalkMe is the platform underlying this report's proprietary data.

## Metrics definitions

#### Visibility gap

Percentage difference between executive-reported application counts and platform-observed counts over a 12-month period. The 1,789% figure reflects the gap between executive-reported averages (35 total, 21 AI-powered) and platform-observed averages (661 total, 80 AI-powered) across 60+ enterprise organizations.

#### Total cost of digital inefficiency

Annual estimate based on three self-reported components from organizations with 5,000+ employees: employee time lost to friction, compensating spend for underused technology, and investment in low-adoption projects that failed to deliver ROI. Figures are directional estimates from survey band midpoints, not precise averages.

#### Workdays lost to friction

Weekly hours lost to friction converted to annual working days based on a standard 40-hour workweek. The 51-workday figure reflects 7.9 hours per week annualized.

#### Perception gap (point gap)

Perception gaps are expressed in percentage points, calculated by subtracting the worker agreement percentage from the executive confidence percentage for the same dimension. For example, if 88% of executives believe employees have adequate tools and 21% of workers agree, the perception gap is 67 percentage points.

#### Perception gap methodology note

The seven-dimension comparison in this report compares executive confidence against employee agreement. All dimensions share the same directional convention except workflow continuity, where the executive figure measures confidence in continuity and the employee figure measures disagreement with disruption. These are directionally flipped and should not be compared arithmetically with other gap figures in the same chart.

[Appendix E:](#)

## References

Gartner, "Emerging Tech Impact Radar: Generative AI," press release, July 2, 2025.  
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