



# Transforming Employment Systems in the Age of AI

An Era That Calls for  
Institutional Reform and the  
Capacity for Self-Adaptation



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# 1. Introduction

## Re-examining the Foundations of Employment Amid Accelerating AI Adoption

Since the emergence of ChatGPT at the end of 2022, AI technologies have evolved at remarkable speed. Since the emergence of ChatGPT at the end of 2022, AI technologies have rapidly evolved. Their application domains are continually broadening, from generative AI that responds to human prompts, to agentic AI capable of autonomously executing tasks based on defined goals, and further to physical AI deploying from digital interfaces into the real world. As AI capabilities increasingly approach human cognitive levels, improvements in accuracy, reliability, and natural language interaction have significantly lowered the barriers to adoption. As a result, generative AI has spread widely and is now beginning to permeate core decision-making processes across industries.

While this new generation of AI promises substantial gains in productivity, convenience, and the expansion of human creativity, it also raises a fundamental concern: if AI systems can increasingly substitute for human roles, what will become of employment? In recent years, leading companies at the forefront of AI investment have also accelerated workforce restructuring. Beneath the surface of productivity gains, an unspoken sense of unease about the future of work is beginning to emerge.

Historically, every major wave of technological innovation has sparked intense debate over whether productivity growth can coexist with employment stability. Past industrial revolutions primarily affected blue-collar labor. In contrast, today's advances in cognitively capable AI have the potential to impact workers across virtually all occupations and skill levels. Consequently, the destabilizing effects on existing employment systems may be broader and more profound than ever before.

In this context, governments and organizations alike face a shared challenge: how to promote the adoption of AI while maintaining social and economic stability through employment. At the same time, individuals are increasingly confronted with a more personal question—how to adapt themselves to an AI-driven era in which skills, roles, and expectations are continuously reshaped.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines the transformation of employment systems in the age of AI. By comparing policy responses across major countries and regions, analyzing corporate approaches to AI adoption and workforce reconfiguration, and exploring models of self-adaptation among organizational members, it seeks to derive practical implications for institutions, enterprises, and individuals navigating this transition.

## **2. The Rise of AI-First Companies and the Uncertainty of Talent Strategy**

### **—Expanding AI Adoption and the Reconfiguration of Human Resources—**

Businesses today face a fundamental tension: the world is accelerating, while decision-making structures remain slow. Long-term productivity stagnation, demographic decline, and shortages of skilled labor are weakening human-dependent operating models. At the same time, geopolitical shifts, climate change, and regulatory volatility are reshaping markets in real time. Customers now expect speed, flexibility, and personalization by default. In this environment, traditional digital transformation—focused primarily on analytics and visualization—is no longer sufficient. Companies increasingly look to autonomous AI systems as a new operating foundation capable of sensing, deciding, and acting.

### **The Advancement of Machine Intelligence and the Rise of Digital Labor**

Recent breakthroughs in AI have significantly expanded machine intelligence—from generative AI that produces new content to agentic systems capable of reasoning, planning, and executing multi-step workflows. These systems interact in natural language, operate at scale, and are accessible at relatively low cost.

AI now extends the limits of human cognition, overcoming constraints of time, energy, expertise, and cost. In practice, AI agents function as digital labor: augmenting human roles, and in some cases substituting for them. As physical AI advances beyond the digital domain into real-world operations, its transformative impact on organizations and labor markets may deepen further.

### **The Emergence of AI-First Enterprises**

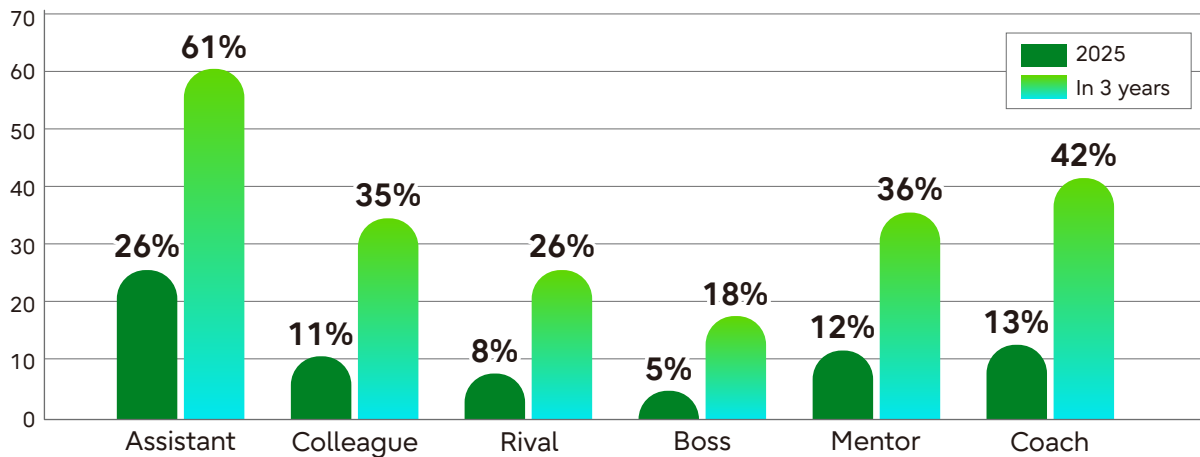
Under mounting competitive pressure, digital labor is no longer viewed as a tool for marginal efficiency gains but as a strategic growth engine.

According to BCG, CEOs plan to significantly increase AI investment by 2026, with overall spending nearly doubling as a share of corporate budgets.\*<sup>1</sup> More than 30% of this investment is expected to target agentic AI. Among leading firms—the top 15%—AI may account for up to 60% of technology budgets. These companies are moving beyond chatbots toward autonomous systems capable of executing complex tasks.

AI agents are no longer limited to assistant roles. They are increasingly perceived as collaborators, competitors, supervisors, and even mentors within teams—reflecting the rapid normalization of machine intelligence inside organizations (See Figure 1).

\*1 BCG (January 2026) "[BCG AI RADAR 2026: As AI Investments Surge, CEOs Take the Lead](#)"

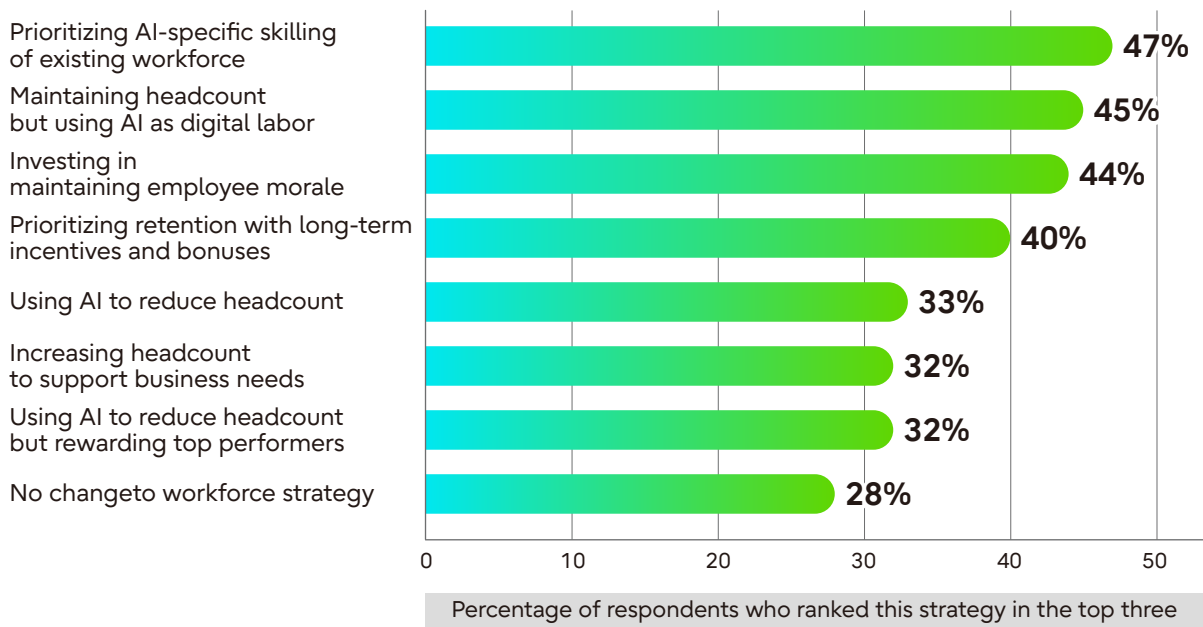
**Figure 1 The role of Agent AI in organizations (2025 survey, response rate %)**



Source: Created by the author based on BCG (January 2026)

Microsoft describes a new organizational model: the “Frontier Firm.”<sup>\*2</sup> These firms combine on-demand intelligence, hybrid human-agent teams, and a new role—the “agent boss”—responsible for managing AI systems. Work is decomposed into tasks, which are dynamically assigned to humans, digital workers, or hybrid teams. In Microsoft’s survey of over 9,000 business leaders, 78% reported plans to hire for AI-specific roles, rising to 95% among frontier firms. Moreover, 82% expect to expand workforce capacity through digital labor within the next 12–18 months. AI skill development, the creation of new roles, digital worker deployment, and workforce restructuring are now central elements of corporate talent strategy (See Figure 2).<sup>\*3</sup>

**Figure 2 Priorities for corporate human resource strategies in the AI era**



Source: Compiled by the author based on Microsoft (April 2025)

\*2 Microsoft (April 23, 2025) “2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born”

\*3 Top ten roles in consideration include AI Trainer, AI Data Specialist, AI Security Specialist, AI Agent Specialist, AI ROI Analyst, AI Media & Content Manager, AI Finance Strategist, AI Customer Success Lead, AI Business Process Consultant, and Chief AI Officer.

# From Functional Hierarchies to Work-Chart Organizations

Traditionally, organizations have been structured by function—allocating tasks based on human specialization. In the AI era, a shift is emerging toward “work-chart” models organized around value creation flows rather than reporting hierarchies.\*4

Conventional org charts define who reports to whom. Work charts define what needs to be accomplished (See Table 1). Tasks and outcomes become the organizing principle, with humans and AI dynamically connected to deliver value. Teams, including digital workers, become flatter, faster, and more fluid. AI may also help reduce long-standing organizational silos.\*5

**Table 1 Functional Structure vs. Work-Chart-Based Structure**

Perspective	Functional Structure	Work-Chart-Based Structure
Starting Point of Organization	People and specialized expertise	Work and desired outcomes
Structure	Fixed and hierarchical	Fluid and reconfigurable
Primary Actors	Humans	Humans + AI
Decision-Making	Concentrated at upper levels	Distributed at the work-unit level
Information Flow	Vertical (top-down)	Horizontal and diagonal (cross-functional)
Flexibility	Low (fixed departments)	High (project-based configuration)
Role of AI	A “tool” within departments	An organizational member (digital team member)
Employment Assumption	Long-term and stable	Continuous role renewal and reallocation

Source: Author

In this model, individuals are evaluated less by job title and more by their contribution to work. Talent is no longer simply “assigned” but continuously reconnected to evolving tasks. Employees, current and future—must adapt to this rewritten logic of competition or risk marginalization.

\*4 Microsoft (April 23, 2025) “[2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born](#)”  
 Inkeep Team (September 19, 2025) “[AI Agents in the org chart: how support teams are restructuring for 2026](#)”  
 \*5 Fabrizio Dell’Acqua et al. (April 1, 2025)  
 “[The Cybernetic Teammate: A Field Experiment on Generative AI Reshaping Teamwork and Expertise](#)”

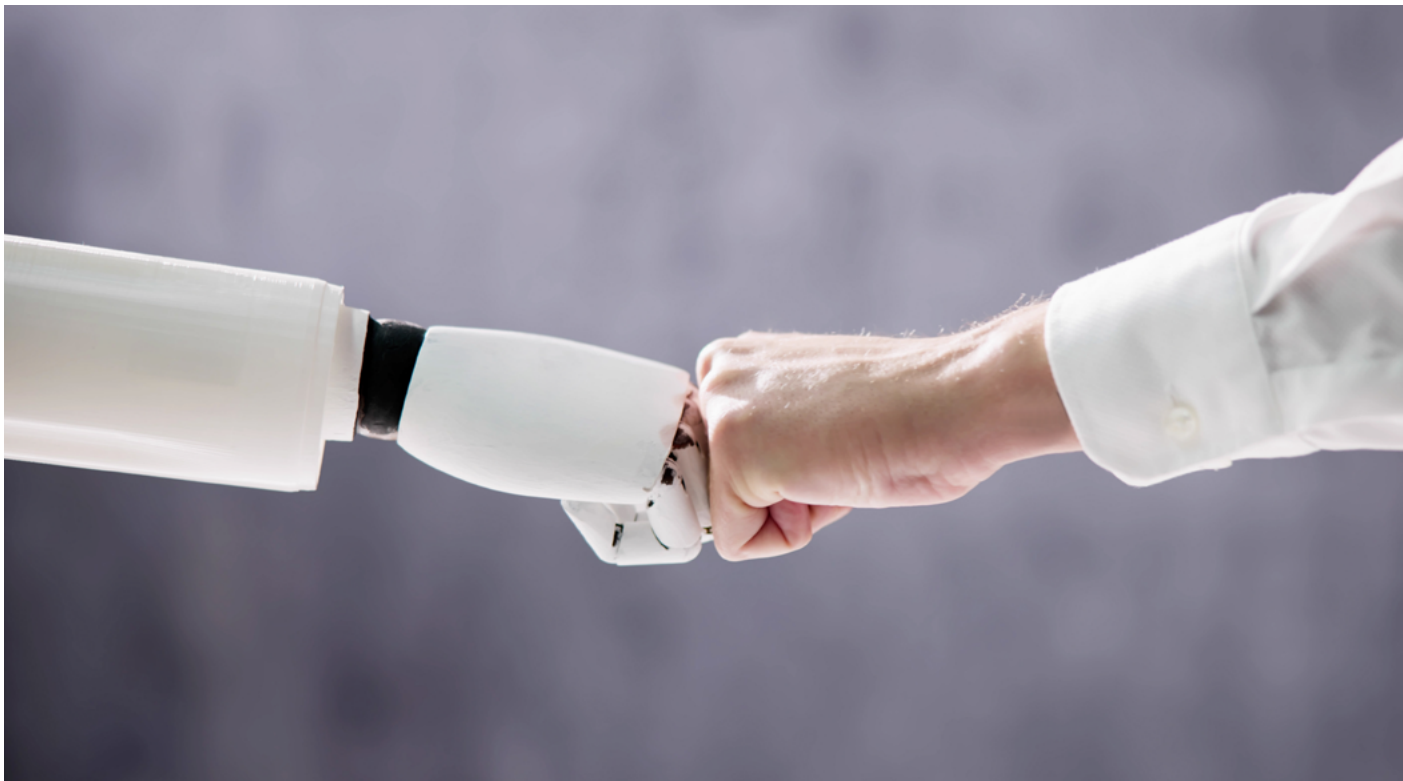
## Digital Workers and Workforce Restructuring

Some leading firms have already operationalized digital labor.

BNY Mellon has deployed AI agents as registered “digital workers,” formally integrated into HR systems and tracked for performance metrics such as accuracy and processing speed.<sup>\*6</sup> These agents execute compliance-sensitive tasks and code reviews, operating as recognized team members rather than background automation tools.<sup>\*7</sup> MUFG has embedded AI as “AI Employees” within its HR model, deploying them across 20 functions through hiring, training, and placement processes. By institutionalizing AI, the bank is moving toward an AI-first organization.<sup>\*8</sup>

Cosentino, a Spanish building materials company, has introduced AI agents into customer service and credit management functions.<sup>\*9</sup> Tasks previously handled by multiple employees are now managed by AI, allowing human staff to focus on higher-value activities. Continuous monitoring and retraining ensure performance stability.

In the United States—where AI adoption is most advanced<sup>\*10</sup>—organizational restructuring and layoffs linked to AI have already begun (See Table 2). In 2025 alone, approximately 55,000 layoffs were attributed to AI-driven restructuring, representing around 4.6% of announced workforce reductions.<sup>\*11</sup> While large technology firms lead this shift, adoption is spreading across finance, healthcare, logistics, retail, and manufacturing.



\*6 WSJ (June 30, 2025) [“Digital Workers Have Arrived in Banking”](#);

babul-prasad (July 15, 2025) [“BNY Mellon Leads the Way: The Rise of Credentialed AI Digital Employees in Banking”](#)

\*7 Ryan Stevens (November 5, 2024) [“Cosentino leverages AI to optimize global operations and drive efficiency”](#)

\*8 Nikkei Shimbun (January 26, 2026) [“Mitsubishi UFJ introduces AI bank employees in 20 roles, including speechwriting”](#)

\*9 Ryan Stevens (November 5, 2024) [“Cosentino leverages AI to optimize global operations and drive efficiency”](#)

\*10 WEF (January 16, 2026) [“Chief Economists’ Outlook: January 2026”](#)

\*11 Challenger, Gray & Christmas (January 8, 2026) [“Challenger Report December 2025”](#)

**Table 2 Actual layoffs and restructuring strategies of top companies reported in 2025**

Company	Summary of restructuring and layoffs
<b>Amazon</b>	In October 2025, Amazon cut about 14,000 corporate roles. It is reducing layers and headcount to move faster and shift investment toward AI and other “big bets,” with fewer people in some jobs and more in new AI related roles.
<b>Microsoft</b>	By 2025, Microsoft will have cut about 15,000 jobs, including 9,000 in July. It is reorganizing its workforce to pivot from a “software factory” to an AI driven “intelligence engine.”
<b>Salesforce</b>	In September 2025, Salesforce cut about 4,000 customer support roles, reducing headcount from 9,000 to 5,000. Up to 50% of the work is now done by AI, moving support to a lean, AI first model.
<b>IBM</b>	IBM has used AI chatbots to replace a few hundred HR roles and announced a further 1% global cut (about 3,000 jobs) in November. At the same time, it is hiring more in software engineering, sales, and marketing, shifting talent to higher skill roles.
<b>CrowdStrike</b>	In May 2025, CrowdStrike laid off 5% of its workforce, or around 500 employees. AI lets it flatten hiring needs and speed innovation, enabling a smaller, more efficient team across the business.
<b>Workday</b>	In February 2025, Workday cut 8.5% of its staff, about 1,750 jobs. The layoffs free up resources for AI investment and shift spending toward AI capabilities in its HR platform.

Source: Compiled by the author based on CNBC reports<sup>\*12</sup>

At the same time, AI also generates employment. The ITIF estimates that in 2024, approximately 120,000 jobs were created through AI development, deployment, and data center expansion—far exceeding the roughly 13,000 jobs displaced.<sup>\*13</sup> Nvidia’s CEO has similarly suggested that while AI may reduce certain white-collar desk roles, it could increase demand for infrastructure and technical field jobs.<sup>\*14</sup>

However, transitions are rarely frictionless. Construction-related employment may be temporary, and shifts from white-collar to blue-collar roles require reskilling and time. Gartner projects that the tipping point—where AI-driven job creation surpasses displacement—may not occur until around 2029. It further estimates that over 32 million jobs per year (Global jobs excluding China and India) will undergo significant transformation.<sup>\*15</sup>

Ensuring a smooth transition will require coordinated adaptation across policy frameworks, corporate strategy, and individual capability development.

The question is not limited to companies alone. How will nations and societies respond to this structural transformation?

\*12 CNBC (December 21, 2025) [“AI was behind over 50,000 layoffs in 2025 — here are the top firms to cite it for job cuts”](#)  
 \*13 Meghan Ostertag (December 18, 2025) [“AI’s Job Impact: Gains Outpace Losses”](#)  
 \*14 Eric Revell (January 23, 2026) [“Nvidia CEO says AI boom will create ‘six-figure’ construction jobs”](#)  
 \*15 Gartner (October 31, 2025) [“AI’s Impact on Jobs Is Decoupling Headcount From Revenue \(and Value Creation\)”](#)



### **3. Can the Productivity Revolution Coexist with Employment Stability?**

**—Four Strategic Choices Across the U.S., Japan, China, and the EU—**

For business leaders, the question is no longer whether AI will transform productivity. It already is. The real strategic issue is whether productivity gains can be achieved without destabilizing the workforce—and how firms should position themselves within different institutional environments. AI-driven transformation requires not only technology investment, but also continuous redesign of skills, roles, and organizational structures. The critical variable is this: who absorbs the cost of workforce transition?

Different economies have chosen different answers. Understanding these models is essential for corporate strategy.

#### **United States: Compete Through Mobility**

In the United States, labor markets move first. Formal classifications lag behind practice. Roles such as Prompt Engineer or AI Ethics Specialist became mainstream through hiring demand long before formal recognition.

Workforce transition is supported under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA),<sup>\*16</sup> while firms and states execute training. Technology companies, including OpenAI—have effectively become parallel education providers.<sup>\*17</sup>

\*16 U.S. Department of Labor (July 22, 2014) "[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)"

\*17 scale.jobs (August 29, 2025) "[Retraining Programs for AI Job Loss](#)"

**Table 3 Overview of representative AI skills training programs in the United States**

Initiative	Provider	Target Group	Scale / Progress
<b>Google Cloud Certification</b> <sup>*18</sup>	Private + government partnership	Public and private sectors (U.S. and others)	Large scale; over 35,000 program completers in the U.S.
<b>AWS AI Ready</b> <sup>*19</sup> + <b>White House-led AI education initiative</b> <sup>*20</sup>	Private (Amazon)	Employees, working professionals, and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 425,000 people certified in the U.S. by 2025.</li> <li>• Goal of 4 million learners by 2028 under the White House AI education initiative.</li> </ul>
<b>OpenAI Academy</b> <sup>*21</sup>	Private (OpenAI)	U.S. workforce in general	Target of 10 million certified learners in the U.S. by 2030.
<b>Walmart x OpenAI Free AI Certification Courses</b> <sup>*22</sup>	Private (Walmart, OpenAI)	All Walmart employees in the U.S.	Approximately 2 million employees to be certified by 2026.
<b>State of Virginia x Google AI Certification Program</b> <sup>*23</sup>	Private + state government	Job seekers	Community-based program for about 10,000 local residents.

Source: Author summary

## Strategic implications:

U.S. firms operate in a high-mobility environment. Competitive advantage depends on speed—rapid hiring, upskilling and rapid restructuring. However, firms must actively manage turnover risk and internal inequality. Talent fluidity is both an asset and a vulnerability.

## Japan: Stability Through Internal Adjustment

Japan's 2025 AI基本計画 (AI Basic Plan)<sup>\*24</sup> signals strong policy commitment to AI-driven transformation. Yet in practice, workforce adjustment remains largely internal. Reskilling occurs within companies, and mobility across firms remains limited.

Lifetime employment norms and labor shortages reduce immediate displacement pressure. As a result, transformation often takes the form of gradual internal reassignment rather than disruptive restructuring.

\*18 Indeed Team (November 26, 2025) "[6 Google certifications that can advance your career](#)"

\*19 AWS (October 23, 2025)

"[Future Ready 2030: Amazon expands skills training goal, invests \\$2.5 billion to prepare 50 million people for the future of work](#)"

\*20 Emma Thompson (September 5, 2025) "[White House gathers big tech giants to back AI education with funding, training, and tools](#)"

\*21 OpenAI (September 4, 2025) "[Expanding economic opportunity with AI](#)"

\*22 FlexOX (September 12, 2025) "[Walmart + OpenAI = AI Training at Scale](#)"

\*23 Shirleen Guerra (July 15, 2025) "[Youngkin, Google launch statewide AI training hub](#)"

\*24 Japanese Government (December 23, 2025) "[ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BASIC PLAN](#)"

## Strategic implications:

Japanese firms benefit from workforce stability and accumulated firm-specific knowledge. However, slow external mobility can delay structural renewal. The strategic challenge is to avoid incremental adaptation and instead pursue proactive skill reallocation before competitive gaps widen.

## China: Scale Through State Coordination

Since the 2017 新世代人工知能發展計畫 (New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan),<sup>\*25</sup> China has integrated industrial expansion with occupational redesign. Emerging AI-related roles are formally incorporated into national occupational classifications, aligned with education and industrial policy.<sup>\*26</sup>

In this system, the state actively orchestrates workforce transition and absorbs part of the adjustment cost.

## Strategic implications:

Chinese firms benefit from coordinated large-scale talent pipelines and policy alignment. However, regulatory direction can also reshape competitive conditions quickly. Corporate strategy must remain aligned with state priorities to sustain advantage.

## European Union: Trust as a Competitive Asset

The EU has prioritized institutional trust and regulatory clarity. The 2024 AI Act establishes risk-based governance to balance innovation and social stability.

The 2025 Union of Skills<sup>\*27</sup> strengthens foundational and digital capabilities across member states. The EU treats skills as long-term public infrastructure rather than short-term market signals.

## Strategic implications:

European firms compete in an environment where compliance, transparency, and workforce protection are integral to competitive positioning. Trust and regulatory alignment become strategic assets—but agility may be constrained in fast-moving AI segments.

## Executive Insight: The Real Competitive Variable

Across these four models, the central difference is not technological sophistication. It is how the cost of skill renewal is distributed:

- In the United States, markets absorb the shock.
- In Japan, corporations buffer internally.
- In the EU, institutions stabilize and regulate.
- In China, the state coordinates and reallocates.

<sup>\*25</sup> State Council (July 8, 2017) "[A New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan](#)"

<sup>\*26</sup> Xinhua (February 4, 2026) "[AI reshapes China's workforce via new professions, constant learning, one-person startups](#)", etc.

<sup>\*27</sup> EU (March 5, 2025) "[A Union of Skills to equip people for a competitive Europe](#)"

**Table 4 Comparison of job system reforms in the AI era (four models)**

Perspective	U.S. (Full Market-Adaptation Model)	Japan (In-Company Adaptation Model)	EU (Public Design Model)	China (Private Testing × Public Qualification Model)
<b>Basic concept</b>	Optimization through market competition	In-company adaptation based on stable employment	Balancing technological progress and employment protection	Pursuing transformation while maintaining social stability
<b>Main driver</b>	Private companies and markets	Companies (mainly for their own employees)	EU / national governments as designers; companies as partners	Private sector for experimentation → state for institutionalization
<b>Role of occupations / qualifications</b>	Few national qualifications; focus on skill badges	Public AI qualifications not yet in place; emphasis on in-house training rather than formal credentials	Cautious introduction of national qualifications; emphasis on skill frameworks	Frequent creation of new occupations and national qualifications
<b>Nature of skill development</b>	Highly practical and immediately applicable	OJT and in-company reskilling	Educational, foundational; STEM plus cross-cutting skills	Ultra practice-oriented (e.g., AI trainers)
<b>Capacity for updating / change</b>	Very high (constant updating)	Low (slow to update)	Medium (institutional change is cautious)	High (the system itself is repeatedly updated)
<b>Mechanism for employment stability</b>	Individual self-adaptation	Long-term employment and internal reassignment	Legal frameworks, retraining, and social dialogue	State absorbs transitions and reallocations
<b>Potential risks</b>	Growing inequality and unstable employment	Slow adaptation and loss of competitiveness	Misalignment between institutions and markets; reduced competitiveness	Bureaucratization and inefficient transitions

Source: Author summary

For business leaders, this means AI competitiveness depends less on algorithms and more on organizational adaptability within institutional constraints.

Three strategic questions emerge:

- (1) How rapidly can your organization redeploy skills?
- (2) Who bears the cost of reskilling—your firm, employees, or public systems?
- (3) Is your workforce model aligned with your country's institutional logic—or working against it?

In the AI era, sustained productivity gains will belong not to firms with the best models alone, but to those with the most resilient skill renewal systems.

## 4. From “Protected Talent” to “Continuously Upgrading Talent”

### —Self-Adaptation Required of Organizational Members—

In industries that effectively leverage AI, revenue per employee has been shown to grow at up to three times the rate of other industries.\*<sup>28</sup> If a typical 5% growth rate expands to 15%, this is not merely incremental efficiency improvement. It signals that the upper bound of value creation itself is being raised.

This shift is not a temporary wave of technological innovation; it represents a structural transformation of the competitive landscape. AI adoption is no longer optional—it is becoming a baseline condition for participation. As a consequence, organizational design will be updated, employment systems restructured, and the way income is determined will inevitably change. The real question is no longer whether AI has been introduced. The question is whether individuals can redefine their roles on the assumption that AI is embedded in the workplace—and whether they can continuously renew their skills.

In the AI era, stability of organization, employment, and income will no longer be passively protected. Stability will be sustained only through continuous upgrading. What organizations need is not “protected talent,” but “continuously upgrading talent.”

### Signals of Skill Shifts in the Global Job Market

PwC’s 2025 analysis of nearly one billion job postings worldwide, combined with financial data from thousands of companies, shows that AI significantly boosts worker productivity and corporate value creation. Moreover, workers with AI-related capabilities—such as prompt engineering—command a 56% wage premium.\*<sup>29</sup> Adaptation to the AI era is already translating into income gains.

More importantly, the research reveals the scale of “skill disruption.” In AI-exposed occupations, the rate of skill change accelerated dramatically—from 25% to 66% within a year. The more susceptible a field is to automation, the faster the core nature of work is being redefined.

The study also finds a broad decline in employer demand for formal degrees across occupations, particularly in AI-related roles. As skills evolve rapidly and knowledge cycles shorten, traditional credentials risk becoming outdated more quickly.

The emerging demand can be divided into two categories:

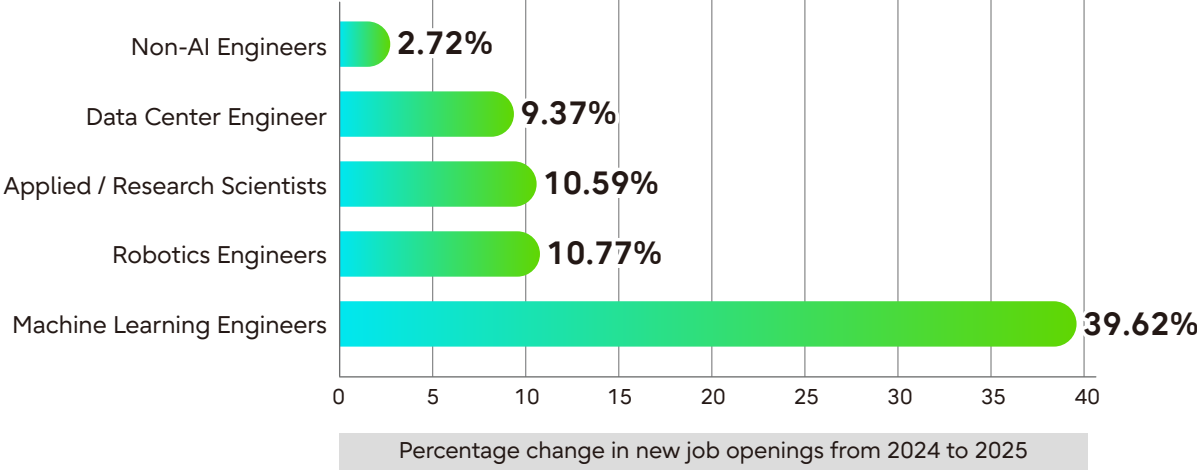
1. **AI-native technical skills** — capabilities directly linked to AI technology stacks and engineering functions.
2. **AI-integrative value-creation skills** — the ability to apply AI to improve productivity, expand revenue, and integrate AI into existing business models. These include human-centric capabilities such as strategic thinking, creativity, collaboration, and ethical judgment.

\*<sup>28</sup> PWC (June 3, 2025) “[PwC 2025 Global AI Jobs Barometer](#)”

\*<sup>29</sup> See note 28

Analysis of 180 million job postings further confirms a sharp increase in demand for AI engineering skills, reflecting trends such as enterprise AI deployment, physical AI expansion, and AI infrastructure scaling (See Figure 3).<sup>\*30</sup>

**Figure 3 AI Engineering vs. Non-AI Engineering Jobs: Percentage Change in New Job Openings**



Source: Created by the author based on data from Bloomberry.com (February 12, 2026)

Additional trends include:

- Decline in purely execution-oriented creative roles (due to automation), while strategic creative leadership roles remain strong.
- Higher demand growth for senior leadership (Directors, VPs, C-suite) compared with middle management and individual contributors, as AI augments executive autonomy and replaces routine execution tasks.
- Growing pressure on traditional digital marketing roles amid the rise of “zero-click” ecosystems, alongside increased demand for zero-click marketing expertise.
- Customer service roles have not yet been massively replaced, reflecting ongoing demand for human judgment and empathy.

These developments suggest that alongside technical AI skills, cross-functional capabilities—critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and ethical reasoning—are becoming increasingly valuable.

## Self-Adaptation: What Is Required of Organizational Members

Redefining one’s role in an AI-enabled environment begins with a mindset shift: building trust with AI systems and embracing them as collaborative partners. AI does not simply replace humans; rather, those who can effectively leverage AI will replace those who cannot.

\*30 Henley Wing Chiu/ Bloomberry.com (February 12, 2026) [“What impact is AI having on the job market?”](#)

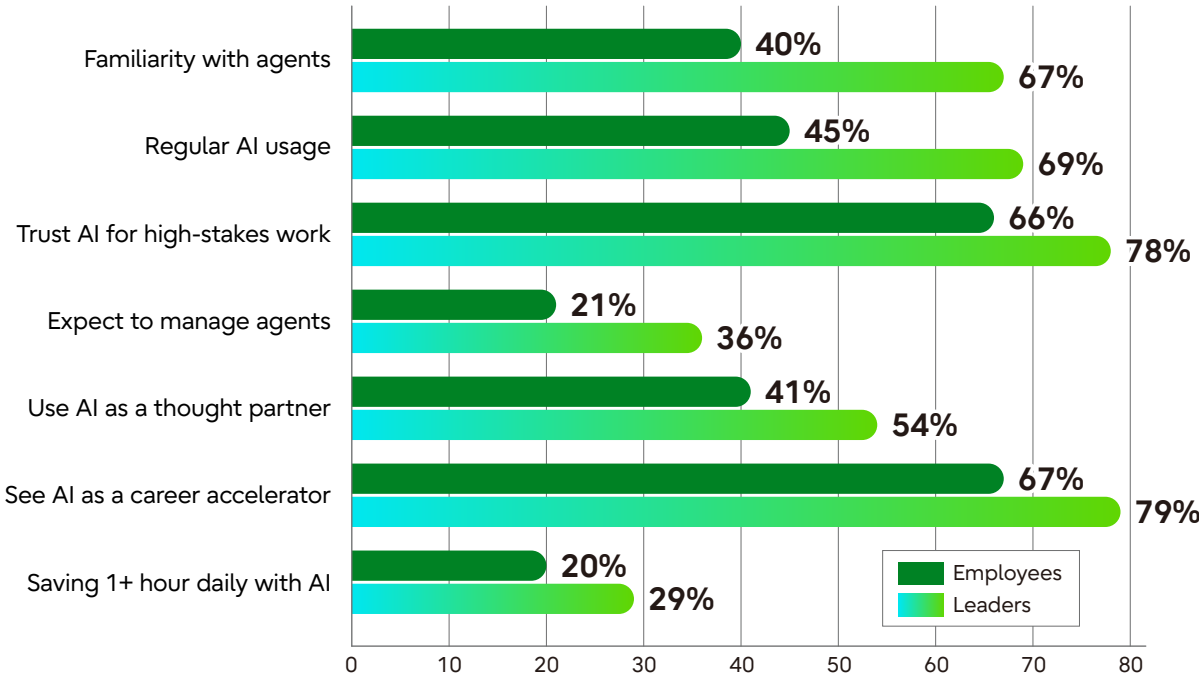
As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, governments, industry bodies, and leading firms have already launched extensive reskilling and upskilling initiatives to support adaptation to new employment systems. Many programs are free or low-cost, making participation largely a matter of individual initiative. Importantly, AI tools themselves serve not only as productivity instruments, but also as powerful learning companions that accelerate skill acquisition.

A particularly promising trend is the rise of the “agent boss” mindset—the ability to orchestrate and manage AI agents. In such a model, even a junior employee can function as a manager of AI systems. Individuals may operate as solopreneurs or build one-person companies powered by AI agent teams. In Silicon Valley, the solopreneur model is increasingly viewed as a viable AI-era startup paradigm.<sup>\*31</sup>

Within organizations, members at every level—from executives to frontline employees—must increasingly think like CEOs of agent-driven startups, designing and directing AI-enabled workflows.

Microsoft has developed seven indicators to assess the presence of this “agent boss” mindset and surveyed both leaders and employees globally (See Figure 4).<sup>\*32</sup> Across all indicators, leaders reported higher adoption levels than employees. Such frameworks provide individuals with practical tools to self-assess their affinity for and collaboration capacity with AI.

**Figure 4 Seven indicators for analyzing the presence or absence of an agent-boss mindset**  
(Share of respondents)



Source: Microsoft (April 23, 2025) “[2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born](#)”

Ultimately, employees must recognize that continuous skill upgrading is no longer optional. As organizational structures and work models evolve, shifting into a proactive self-adaptation mode is an essential condition for sustaining relevance and stability in the AI era.

\*31 TokenRing AI (January 14, 2026) “[The \\$1 Billion Solopreneur: How AI Agents Are Engineering the Era of the One-Person Unicorn](#)”  
 \*32 Microsoft (April 23, 2025) “[2025: The year the Frontier Firm is born](#)”

# 5. What Must Change: Institutions, Companies, and Individuals?

## —Practical Implications for Work in the AI Era—

AI is rapidly approaching the stage of a new productivity revolution. As with any revolution, it reshapes the underlying paradigms of economic systems and working life. The central challenge is not merely technological adoption, but how to reconcile productivity acceleration with employment stability. Adaptation to the AI era cannot be delegated to a single actor. Companies must transform to remain competitive. Individuals must continuously redefine their roles and upgrade their capabilities. Public institutions, in turn, must determine how to support this transition.

Building on the analyses in Chapters 2 through 4, three practical implications emerge.

### **(1) Strengthen Organizational Resilience by Becoming AI-First Enterprises**

To compete in the AI era, companies must transition toward AI-first management. This requires redesigning not only technology strategies, but also core resources—people, data, capital, networks—and the operating architecture of the organization itself. Traditional functional structures will increasingly give way to workflow-based organizational models. Human resource management must evolve toward systems in which humans and AI agents (digital workers) collaborate in optimized combinations.

Companies should actively support reskilling and upskilling so that employees can function as “AI agent bosses,” orchestrating and directing digital systems. Incentive structures must reinforce autonomy and capability development. Performance-linked compensation, skill-based evaluation, profit-sharing mechanisms, and thoughtful talent renewal systems all become critical components of AI-era governance.

Moreover, the focus should shift away from credential-oriented or purely academic STEM education toward reskilling programs directly connected to practical value creation—integrating both technical and human-centric skills.

### **(2) Cultivate Reconnection Capability and Redeployment Resilience**

AI-first enterprises can undergo rapid technological transformation. Human skills, however, cannot be reset overnight. For this reason, organizations should not simply replace people; they must redefine expected roles and establish systems that shift from employment security to renewal security.

At the same time, work itself is being reorganized from job-based structures to task-based configurations. In such an environment, adaptation requires more than continuous technical learning. It requires the ability to reconnect acquired skills and experiences to evolving technologies, markets, and organizational needs.

In the AI era, continuous learning was the engine of adaptation, but reconnection capability is the navigation system. Put differently, reconnection capability × continuous learning capacity defines practical adaptability in the AI age. Individuals must deliberately cultivate both.

### **(3) Redesign Institutions to Prioritize Broad-Based Talent and Practical Application**

From a societal perspective, structural tension exists between the competitive logic of AI-first enterprises and the social objective of employment stability. When organizational restructuring and workforce adjustments become unavoidable within regulatory boundaries, the responsibility for stabilizing employment conditions increasingly shifts to public institutions.

As discussed in Chapter 3, policy responses differ significantly across countries and regions. However, a common challenge persists: many skill policies remain rooted in traditional education- and training-centered models that may not align with the speed of AI-driven change.

Given the rapidly shortening half-life of skills, policy design must move beyond general theoretical education toward practical, market-aligned programs in specific domains. At the same time, advanced talent remains scarce and highly mobile globally. Public support should therefore focus primarily on broad-based workforce segments.

In addition, institutional innovation should promote skill portability frameworks and encourage emerging AI-era work models—such as solopreneur—through appropriate incentives and enabling conditions.



## About the author



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Dr. Jianmin Jin, who integrates expertise in both engineering and social sciences, leads thought leadership initiatives from a global and business-oriented perspective. Focusing on digital economy, digital innovation, and corporate transformation in the age of AI, Dr. Jin provides business leaders with fresh perspectives and actionable insights through research-based publications, media contributions, speaking engagements, and consulting activities.

- [The Rise of Physical AI: From Humanoid Robotics to Industrial Reality](#) (January 2026)
- [The Maritime Industry's Next Frontier: AI Agents Driving Autonomy](#) (November 2025)
- [Generative AI to Agentic AI: The Next Leap in Business Transformation](#) (October 2025)
- [Transforming the Digital Core in the Age of Generative AI —From Modernization to Value Creation—](#) (October 2025)
- [Reimagining Fashion Retail with Generative AI: Toward an AI-Native Integrated Platform Strategy](#) (September 2025)
- [Financial Services DX2.0: A Future Strategy Co-Created with AI Agents —Beyond DX1.0 —Unlocking the Next Stage of Value Creation—](#) (August 2025)
- [AI Agents and the Pathway to Evolving Intelligent Manufacturing](#) (June 2025)
- [Creating a Virtuous Cycle of Transformation and Trust: A Future Strategy Powered by AI and Net Positive Thinking](#) (June 2025)

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