2025 AI READINESS REPORT

Presented by Climb Channel Solutions

CLIMB® CHANNEL SOLUTIONS

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Executive Summary and Introduction

As an IT distributor, we know the demand for AI is real, immediate, and growing. But where exactly are organisations on their AI journey? Does readiness vary between regions? And most importantly, where can partners make the biggest impact in supporting customers?

To find out, we ran an independent AI Readiness Survey of 600 AI and IT decision makers in large enterprises across the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, and Germany. Our goal was to get a clear, data-driven view of how prepared organisations really are for AI adoption. The survey looked at maturity, barriers, investment, and the role of AI in cybersecurity and sustainability success.

The findings are eye-opening. More than half the workforce is already using AI tools, often without leadership visibility. Over 54% of respondents admitted entering confidential business or customer data into AI platforms, while 43% said their organisation has no clear definition of what's safe to use. Adoption is racing ahead of governance, and that's where partners can step in to help customers put the right frameworks in place.

But there are encouraging signals too. A majority of organisations (56.2%) believe that AI will help them meet their ESG goals, and more than half (54.7%) plan to increase investment in AI-driven sustainability initiatives over the next three years. Across all three regions, productivity (33.8%), cost savings (33.5%), and revenue growth (31.8%) are the top AI adoption drivers – showing that AI is firmly tied to business outcomes and not just experimentation.

It's not enough to just talk about AI. At Climb, we want to understand how AI is really being used, where the gaps are, and what support partners need to close them. With 62% of organisations across the UK, Ireland, and Germany already harnessing AI, adoption is well underway – but governance and security are still catching up, and use is not yet universal.

That's why we're putting data in the hands of our partners: to help them have important conversations, build stronger frameworks, guide customers through risk, and ensure AI investments translate into real business outcomes. That's what success looks like in this next wave of adoption.

Roberta McCrossan
EMEA Marketing Director, Climb

Methodology and The Respondents

This report is based on an independent survey conducted by Censuswide on behalf of Climb Channel Solutions in July/August 2025. The research was carried out with 600 enterprise respondents across the UK, Ireland, and Germany.

The survey explored the full spectrum of AI readiness, from maturity to governance, security, sustainability, and cultural attitudes. Respondents were asked not only how they are deploying AI today, but also what barriers they face, how employees are being supported, and what role they expect AI to play in their organisations over the coming years. The full set of questions is provided in the appendix at the end of this report.

Findings were analysed at both a regional and overall level to highlight common patterns as well as country-specific contrasts. The result is a data-driven picture of how organisations are approaching AI adoption in practice, and where the most significant gaps – and opportunities – remain.

Who we spoke to

Company size:

- UK and Germany – enterprises with over 500 employees
- Ireland – enterprises with over 250 employees
- Over 80% of respondents are from organisations with 1000+ employees

Roles and seniority:

- C-level IT leadership (CIOs, CTOs, CISOs) make up over a third of respondents.
- A further 21% hold heads of security and technical roles (head of security ops, head of AI, head of cyber threat intelligence, head of IT security solutions/architecture)
- Specialist expertise is also represented: machine learning engineers and AI architects – representing the depth of technical capability within the respondent base.

Industry sectors:

- The dataset is IT-heavy – 40% of respondents are from IT and telecoms, influencing the technical depth of use cases.
- Other represented sectors include finance (12%), healthcare (9.5%), and manufacturing and utilities (7.5%).

Key Findings

1 Many organisations are using AI without realising its benefits.

53.5% place themselves in the "AI Gap" where tools are in use, but value is not being delivered. Nearly half lack the policies, strategies, or frameworks to turn AI adoption into measurable outcomes.

2 Ireland reports stronger impact than the UK or Germany.

45% of Irish respondents say AI has already improved their organisation, compared with 33.5% in the UK and 25.5% in Germany. Adoption is widespread, but the gains are not evenly distributed.

3 Large enterprises expect quick returns but face slow delivery.

In Ireland, 40% of organisations expect ROI within 1-6 months. In the UK it's 27% and in Germany 28.5%.

4 Training has not reached the majority of employees.

49.2% of organisations have trained fewer than half of their staff, and only 7.2% have trained more than 80%.

5 Compliance with the EU AI Act is far from assured.

Only 51.3% believe their strategy is compliant. 45% admit that they do not know their organisation's compliance requirements.

6 Barriers are as much cultural as they are technical.

Technology readiness (22.5%) and cost (22.3%) are leading obstacles to AI adoption, but leadership hesitation (16.8%), lack of alignment (16.3%), and resistance to change (16.2%) are also significant. Skills and systems alone will not close the AI Gap.

7 Partnerships are underused in scaling AI.

55% of organisations plan to expand AI initiatives and 52% expect to increase investment, yet 47% are not engaging with resellers or vendors. Additionally, 56% reveal there is increasing demand among customers for more AI solutions/services. This leaves a major opportunity for the channel to provide solutions and support.

8 Security concerns are spread across multiple fronts.

Respondents cited data privacy (36.2%), compliance (33%), bias (29.8%), data theft (28.5%), insider threats (28.3%), and deepfakes (28.3%) as their biggest security concerns when it comes to AI usage. No single risk stands out, suggesting that organisations must treat AI security as a multi-dimensional challenge.

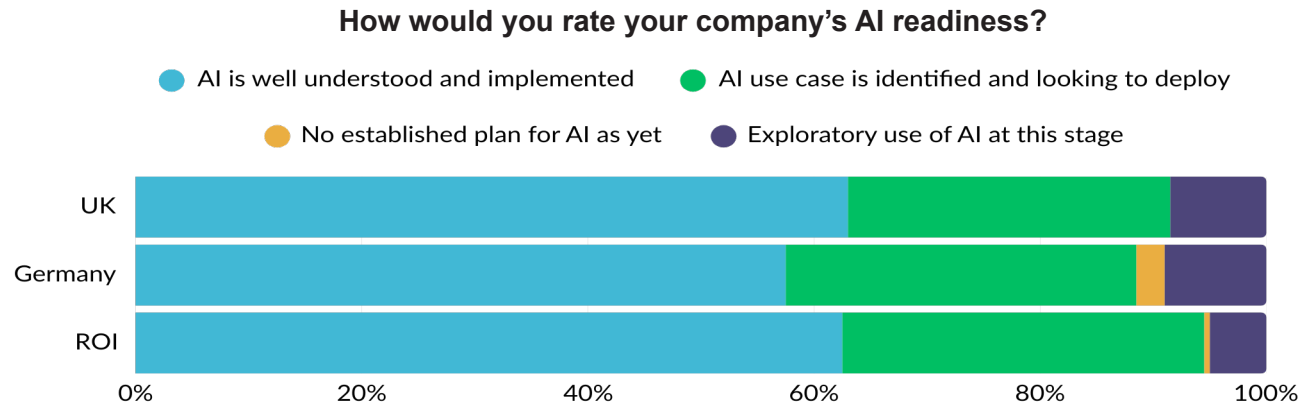
9 AI is being integrated into sustainability strategies.

56.2% say AI will help them meet ESG goals, 52.67% already measure the environmental output/input of AI solutions, and 56.7% believe that the sustainability opportunities provided by AI outweigh the associated risks.

10 People will decide AI's success.

Cultural attitudes towards AI are divided: 26.1% say AI is being deployed too quickly in their organisation, 22.7% say too slow. On jobs, 28.8% expect AI to create new roles while 22.8% fear job losses. Future AI success will require leadership alignment, clear cross-organisational communication, and improved employee confidence.

AI Adoption and Readiness



Where enterprises are today

AI adoption is widespread across EMEA, but maturity is uneven. 61% of organisations describe AI as "well understood and implemented", yet this figure disguises the fact that 30.5% are still identifying use cases and 7.5% remain exploratory. Only 1% report no AI plans at all, which shows that AI has passed the "if" stage, but the "how" is very much still in play.

The national breakdown reflects the same picture. In the UK, 63% of organisations say AI is implemented, with 28.5% still identifying use cases and 8.5% exploratory. In Ireland, 62.5% are implemented, 32% are identifying, and 5% exploratory. In Germany, 57.5% are implemented, 31% identifying, and 9% exploratory.

Readiness is fragmented

Q7 paints a more nuanced picture of operational maturity, showing that while adoption is happening, the foundations to scale and sustain value are often missing. 53.5% of organisations admit they are in the "AI Gap" – using AI, but not to its full potential. Meanwhile, 47.5% report that there are no clear guidelines or policies for AI use, 47.3% report no structured strategy or roadmap, and 48% either do not have, or are unsure if they have, formal structures to derive value from generative AI.

Climb Comment: This points to incomplete maturity. Adoption is happening, but without clear policies, strategies, and oversight, organisations risk scaling AI without the controls needed to deliver value or manage risk.

Organisation scale and timelines

The size of the organisations surveyed helps explain why adoption often looks ambitious but plays out slowly. 83% of respondents are from organisations with 1000+ employees, suggesting that many operate in complex or regulated environments where rolling out AI projects requires multi-stakeholder alignment.

Larger organisations report longer deployment times: 33% expect deployment in 1-6 months, 31.8% in 7-11 months, and 16% in 1-2 years (Q10). By contrast, organisations in the 200-1000 employee range skew toward faster deployment bands, suggesting that scale could act as a brake on speed.

Climb Comment: In larger organisations, is ambition colliding with bureaucracy? The intent is strong, but delivery can be slowed by multi-stakeholder processes. This creates an opportunity, however, for distributors and reseller partners to package solutions that accelerate AI adoption safely within complex environments.

How AI is being used

Adoption is not uniform. What organisations prioritise says more about their maturity than adoption rates alone. Organisations are deploying AI across a range of workloads (Q12): product development (20.5%), automation of repetitive tasks (20.2%), project scheduling (20.2%), finance and forecasting (19.9%), cybersecurity detection (18.9%), video creation (18.9%), image processing (17.5%), and data analysis (17.2%).

There are regional differences: German organisations over-index on automation (22.6%). In Ireland, 23.2% of organisations use AI to automate repetitive tasks, but spreads usage more broadly across project scheduling and creative tasks. The UK leads on image processing (22.2%) and is also above in cybersecurity detection.

Climb Comment: Germany appears to focus AI on operational efficiency and predictability. The UK shows growth in security and creative workloads, while Ireland's spread across multiple categories suggests a more exploratory AI ecosystem. For the channel, this points to opportunities for geography-specific enablement – automation accelerators in Germany, security and creative support in the UK, and broader PoV programmes in Ireland.

Sentiment vs action

While adoption is high, optimism isn't universal (Q8). In Ireland, 45% of respondents feel AI improves their workplace impact. In the UK, that figure falls to 33.5%, and in Germany, just 25.5%. Neutral and negative sentiment combined outnumber positives in both the UK and Germany, perhaps hinting at early AI fatigue. Are tools being implemented faster than they can deliver tangible value? Ireland is the exception, where positivity is far higher, raising the question of what's driving enthusiasm in this region.

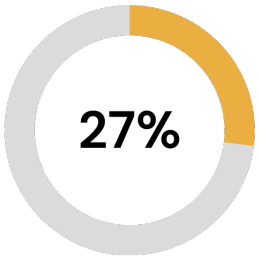
By role, AI specialists are more optimistic (33.5%) than IT leaders (30.6%), perhaps reflecting their direct experience of capability gains. By contrast, Heads of Cyber Threat Intelligence are the least positive, likely due to concerns over data loss and AI-enabled attack risks.

Climb Comment: Ireland stands out here for its enthusiasm, while Germany is more sceptical and risk conscious. These divides matter: enthusiasm fuels adoption, while caution signals where governance and assurance may need to be stronger.

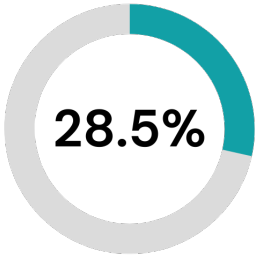
ROI expectations and market readiness

Organisations across Europe expect AI to deliver results quickly, but the timelines vary by country, and Ireland stands out. Nearly a third of all respondents (32%) believe their organisation will see ROI within 1-6 months. That confidence climbs even higher in Ireland, where 40% expect to move from pilot to payback in 1-6 months, compared with 27% in the UK, and 28.5% in Germany.

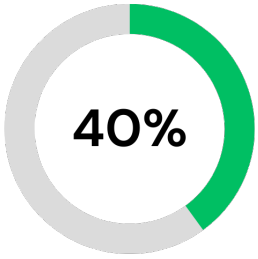
How long do you estimate it takes for AI deployment to deliver a return on investment (ROI)?



UK
Expect ROI in 1-6 months



Germany
Expect ROI in 1-6 months



Ireland
Expect ROI in 1-6 months

This accelerated timeline aligns with Ireland's national AI strategy and wider innovation ecosystem. With strong government backing, links to EU supercomputing hubs, and a strong startup community, Irish organisations appear to view rapid ROI as not only achievable but strategically necessary.

The UK and Germany present a different picture. While fewer organisations in these markets expect broad 1-6 month returns, 16.5% of UK organisations and 21% in Germany expect ROI in under three weeks. This may suggest a more mature or specialised form of adoption – slower to spread across the business but delivering sharp gains in specific use cases.

Together, these results show two faces of AI readiness in Europe. Ireland reflects optimism and urgency, betting on short-cycle payback to secure competitive advantage. The UK and Germany reflect steadier, more selective progress, with pockets of rapid return but a more cautious overall pace.

And while ROI optimism is high everywhere, there are still structural factors that could slow the pace of ROI realisation. Only 54% of organisations say they have provided AI training, putting pressure on workforce readiness. In Ireland, 61.9% of respondents say they lack structure to capture value from generative AI, pointing to governance immaturity. And across EMEA, one in five organisations cite data privacy (19.5%) and security risks (19%) as barriers to adoption.

Gary Morris
Pre-Sales Director, Climb

Ireland's bold six-month ROI targets signal a market intent on leading. The UK and Germany show that even in mature organisations, ROI often comes first from targeted deployments. For the channel, ROI stories need to be told differently in each market – whether that's about scale and speed in Ireland, and Proof of Value and depth in the UK and Germany.

Partnership potential in a scaling market

The adoption story is not just about technology. It's also about who organisations chose to work with. Nearly half (47%) of organisations are not currently working with a reseller, and 44% are not collaborating with technology vendors.

Over half (55%) of organisations plan to scale their AI initiatives, 51.7% are investing more in AI this year than last, and 55.8% report rising customer demand for AI solutions (Q6, Q7). These figures underscore that while AI adoption is growing inside organisations, many still lack the partners who can help them scale with speed and confidence.

Brian Davis
VP of Sales UK & Ireland, Climb

A sizeable segment of the market remains untapped for partnership and guidance. The opportunity here is to deepen support for organisations already collaborating with resellers and vendors, and open conversations with the large minority who are still navigating AI adoption alone.

Governance, Policy, Training

61% of respondents describe AI as "well understood and implemented" in their organisation. But deeper signals in later questions tell a different story: AI is live in many organisations, but often without the structures, skills, and leadership alignment to deploy it effectively or safely.

Training and workforce readiness

For all the headlines about AI adoption, the numbers suggest that employees are still learning the ropes without much guidance. Just over half of organisations (54%) say they have provided AI training (Q7). Even among AI and IT decision-makers, training is far from universal: 52.9% of AI leaders and 60% of IT leaders have had training. That means a significant share of those setting direction are still trying to catch up.

Coverage across the wider workforce is thinner still. Almost half of organisations (49.2%) admit that fewer than half of their staff have received training (Q5b). Only 7.2% have trained more than 80% of employees. In practice, most companies are asking staff to use new systems without showing them how.

When asked what kind of training would help their organisation become more AI-mature, respondents did not limit their answers to technical skills. Among those who identified training as necessary, 37.9% pointed to strategy and readiness, 34.6% to technical development, 34.1% to everyday usage, 33.5% to interaction techniques, and 31.3% to security. Nearly a quarter (24.2%) also emphasised regulation and ethics (Q5a). In other words, the demand for enablement stretches well beyond tool proficiency: employees are looking for structured guidance on how to use AI safely, responsibly, and in line with organisational goals.

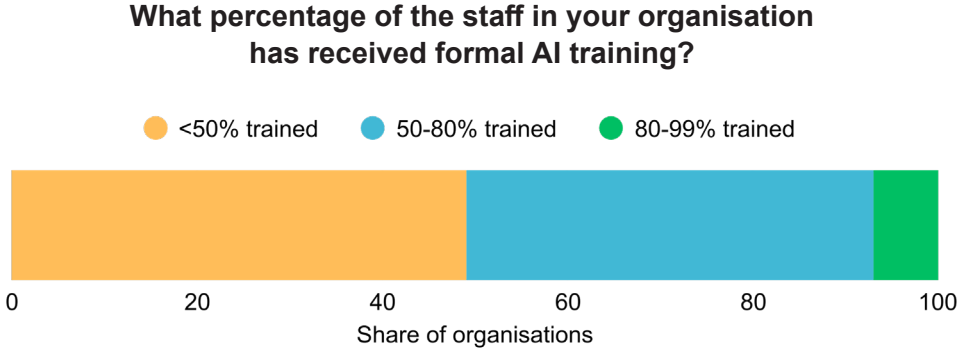
Culture plays its part too. Just over half of employees feel comfortable with generative AI (53.2%) and say they are encouraged to experiment (53.7%) (Q6). The rest remain wary, holding back from the very practices that would build confidence and capability.

Ronnie Hamilton
Pre-Sales Director, Climb

Rolling out AI without scaling training will likely lead to stalled progress. Some people will adapt quickly, but most will muddle through – and that introduces security risks. Until training is widespread, comprehensive, and structured, organisations across the UK and Europe may not see the value from AI that they're paying for.

Leadership visibility

If training highlights the skills gap, leadership visibility highlights the alignment gap. On the surface, leaders are signalling support: 51.7% of organisations are investing



more in AI this year, and 50.8% of respondents say that current investment is sufficient (Q7). But those numbers are hardly decisive. Half of enterprises are still under-investing in the eyes of their employees.

More telling is the perception of understanding. A small majority (54%) believe leadership has a good grasp of how AI is being used day-to-day. Yet almost four in ten disagree (Q7). In practice, that means many leaders are writing the cheques without seeing how tools are being applied in workflows.

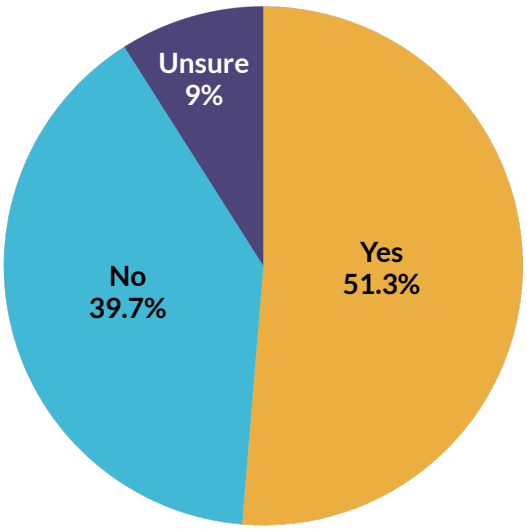
The survey's barriers data reinforces the cost of that gap. When asked to identify the top obstacles to AI adoption, respondents pointed to culture and mindset (19.8%), leadership hesitation (16.3%), lack of alignment (16.3%), and resistance to change (16.2%) (Q13).

Climb Comment: Unless leadership gets a deeper understanding of how AI is really being used across their organisations, adoption will remain uneven, and employees will fill the gaps with their own workarounds.

Governance and policy

Just over half of organisations in our survey have introduced formal AI oversight mechanisms: 54.3% say they have an approved list of AI tools for employees, and 52.3% report having a named person or council in place to oversee AI use.

A similar proportion — 52.5% — report clear day-to-day guidelines for using AI at work, and just over half say they train staff on responsible use (55.5%) or have a safe-use policy (55.7%) (Q14).



Do you think your organisation's AI strategy will be compliant with the EU AI Act?

That leaves nearly half of enterprises running AI projects without formal guardrails. Employees are making daily decisions about compliance, data security, and value without clear boundaries.

The EU AI Act raises the stakes. Only 51.3% believe their AI strategy will be compliant, while 39.7% say no and 9% are unsure (Q14). Awareness is slightly better (54.8% say they are aware of AI compliance requirements), but the figures reveal that organisations are still bracing for regulation rather than preparing proactively.

Martin Bichler
Country Manager, DACH Region, Climb

Half-measures won't be enough under the EU AI Act. Policies, councils, and audit trails are the evidence regulators will demand. Organisations that invest in governance now will save themselves far more disruption later.

Regional contrasts are clear. Ireland leads on both investment and governance – 55.5% of Irish organisations are increasing AI spend this year, and 58% report having approved tool lists. Germany is more cautious, with 52.5% increasing spending and only 48.5% having approved lists, perhaps reflecting lower confidence in regulatory compliance. The UK shows faster adoption of tools (56.5% report approved lists) but the lowest increase in spending, at just 47%, suggesting investment is not keeping pace with usage.

Climb Comment: The AI gap is where organisations will see wasted cost and missed opportunity. Licences are paid for but underused, projects are launched but never scaled into production, and risk grows without proper oversight. Closing that gap requires progress on three fronts at once: equipping the workforce, aligning leadership, and embedding governance.

The AI Gap

Perhaps the clearest measure of maturity is the one that organisations are willing to admit. 53.5% say they fall into the AI gap – using AI, but not to its full potential (Q7). That figure rises to 57% in Germany and 56.5% in Ireland, while the UK is lower at 47%.

The reasons behind this admission are captured in the Q13 barriers data, which asked respondents to identify the top obstacles to AI adoption. The leading issues cut across both technical and organisational domains: technology readiness (22.5%), implementation costs (22.3%), security concerns (21.7%), and data privacy (20.2%) sit alongside cultural and leadership blockers such as culture and mindset (19.8%), leadership hesitation (16.3%), lack of leadership alignment (16.3%), and resistance to change (16.2%). These are not minor teething problems; they are systemic inhibitors that slow progress across entire organisations.

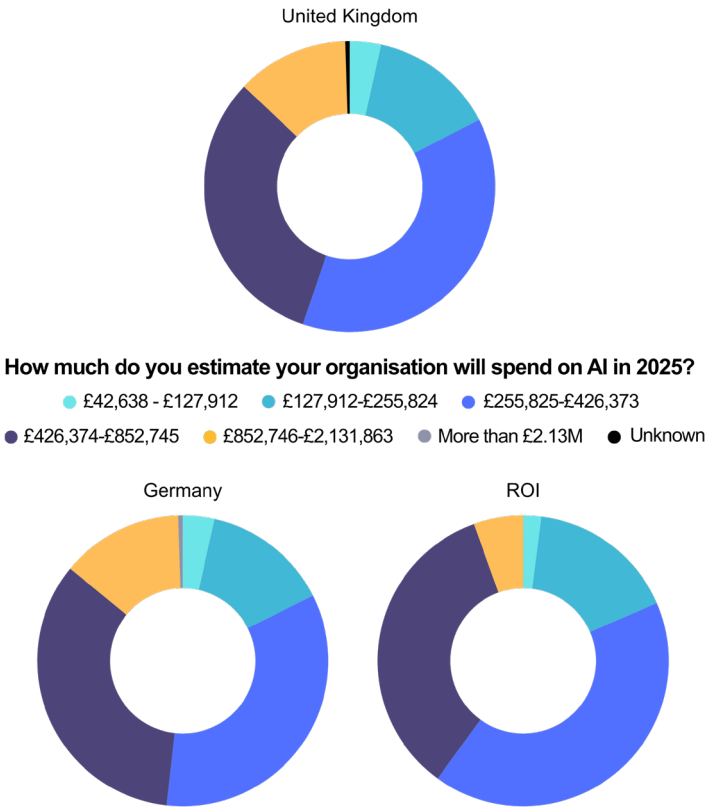
Business Drivers and Barriers

Investment position: momentum building

The money is following the intent. Just over half of organisations (51.7%) are increasing their AI investment this year compared with last (Q7). Regionally, momentum is strongest in Ireland (55.5%) and Germany (52.5%), while the UK lags at 47%.

Planned budgets reinforce this trend. Most cluster in the £255,825–£426,373 range, with a sizeable minority planning to spend above £426k (Q9). Very few intend to cross the £2.13M threshold, suggesting spending is being phased carefully. Crucially, no organisation reported zero spend. The absence of a "no budget" group shows that AI has crossed a psychological threshold: it is essential.

Climb Comment: Taken together, these figures point to a change in tone. Organisations are funding meaningful programmes designed for phased benefits and careful oversight, with budgets sized to show results quickly, build internal confidence, and expand in measured increments.



What's driving adoption? Shared priorities, local differences

When asked why they are adopting AI, organisations converge on familiar business imperatives – productivity, cost efficiency, and revenue growth – but the balance shifts by country (Q12).

United Kingdom: Productivity (36.5%), cost savings (36%) and revenue growth (35.5%) dominate. Risk management (31.5%) and security (31%) also rank high, suggesting that UK organisations are pursuing outcomes but with one eye on exposure.

Germany: Drivers skew towards process and cost discipline. Cost reduction (33.5%) edges out productivity (32%) and efficiency (31%), with revenue, risk management and product development all close behind at 29.5%. The German profile reflects a measured, industrial logic: efficiency and structured returns over quick wins.

Ireland: Productivity (33%) and customer experience (33%) lead, followed by cost reduction (31%) and revenue growth (30.5%). Risk management (29%) and efficiency (29%) sit lower. Ireland's picture is more outward-facing: AI is framed to enhance customer value and people-centric gains, not just efficiency.

Across all three markets, the headline is that productivity (33.8%) and cost savings (33.5%) are the most cited aims overall, with revenue growth (31.8%) close behind. But the regional emphasis matters. The UK tempers ambition with caution, Germany prizes discipline, and Ireland leans towards customers and employees.

Drivers vs timelines

The business case for AI is rooted in pragmatism, but the timelines show a striking confidence. According to Q10, 76.6% of organisations expect to move from exploration to full operational process implementation within 12 months. Q11 shows that 47.2% anticipate ROI within 0-6 months, with 32% anticipating it between 1-6 months.

This compressed timeframe suggests that enterprises view AI as capable of delivering near-term benefits — from productivity and cost savings to revenue growth — rather than being confined to long-term R&D. It also signals that leadership is under pressure to show measurable returns quickly, reinforcing why budgets are being phased for visible impact rather than big-bang transformation (Q9).

The risk, of course, is that timelines overtake capability. Barriers such as technology readiness (22.5%) and implementation costs (22.3%) (Q13) remind us that integration and scaling are not instant. Yet optimism itself is a meaningful signal. Expectations of fast ROI show that AI has already crossed a cultural threshold: organisations no longer ask if it will add value, but how soon.

Security and Risk Management

Innovation vs risk: a divided market

AI is viewed across Europe with a mix of confidence and caution. Just over half of respondents (53.3%) believe its innovation potential outweighs its security concerns, but the balance differs by country (Q14). The UK (55%) and Ireland (55%) lean towards optimism, seeing AI as a route to faster value creation. Germany (49.5%), with its deep-rooted data protection culture, is more hesitant, reflecting a security-first mindset.

This divergence also shows in attitudes to the tools themselves. Across all respondents, 54% are concerned about the security of AI platforms, but again Ireland stands out at 60%, signalling higher anxiety even as investment grows. Germany is lowest at 47.5%, which may reflect stronger baseline confidence in existing controls. A majority across markets (56.2%) believe AI adoption makes their organisation more vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

This is one of the clearest signs in the survey that, for many organisations, AI is not just a business enabler but a new attack surface – whether through prompt leakage, generative phishing campaigns, or adversarial misuse.

Brian Davis
VP of Sales UK & Ireland, Climb

Our vendor ecosystem is already working on this tension by building AI tools that deliver innovation but with cybersecurity at the core. For partners, the opportunity is to bridge that gap: showing customers they don't need to pick between fast adoption and safe adoption, because the right technologies and services can support both.

What organisations fear the most

When asked about the biggest risks AI brings, organisations didn't single out one headline threat, they named many. Data privacy and security (36.2%) and regulatory compliance (33.0%) sit at the top (Q15), but close behind is bias and discrimination (29.8%), data theft (28.5%), malicious insiders (28.3%) and deepfakes (28.3%). The spread is almost flat. That tells us organisations see AI as a multi-front security challenge. There isn't one "killer risk".

The patterns differ by country. Germany is the most defensive, with 41.5% naming privacy as their top concern. UK organisations are more likely to flag compliance (36%) and bias (31%), perhaps pointing to heavy governance pressure and the reputational damage of "getting AI wrong" in a public way. Ireland shows slightly lower percentages across the board, consistent with a market more willing to experiment – but that also means gaps in formal controls are more exposed when risks materialise.

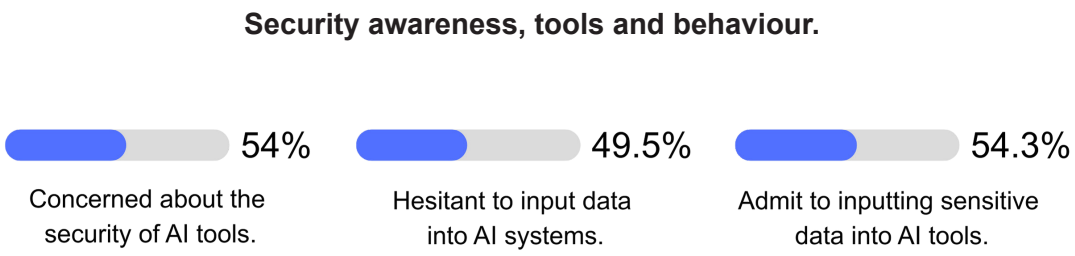
AI is widening the attack surface in every direction.

Climb Comment: This is where partners can add real value. Our vendors are already developing tools that secure data flows, detect anomalies and protect against insider misuse. But technology alone won't solve it. Customers need guidance on how to apply those controls in practice; aligning security strategy with the reality of how AI is being used on the ground.

Organisations are worried about classic problems – data theft, insider misuse – at the same time as new threats like adversarial content, disinformation and manipulated outputs. Security leaders aren't just asking "how do we stop breaches?" but "how do we trust the information itself?" That's a step forward in the security conversation.

Data security awareness and trust

Employees are not blindly trusting AI. Quite the opposite: they are cautious, and often unsure of the rules. 54% are concerned about the security of AI tools, and 49.5% say they are reluctant to input data into them (Q14).



Yet this caution is inconsistent. When asked about their own behaviour, just over half admitted to inputting confidential or sensitive data into AI tools (Q14). In other words, even employees who are wary of the risks are still using these systems in ways that could expose the business. The contradiction points to a lack of clear guardrails: staff know there are dangers, but without guidance they improvise anyway.

This combination of concern, risky behaviour, and optimism makes trust fragile. A single breach could validate the sceptics and stall adoption overnight. But with clear oversight, transparent policies, and visible accountability, organisations can show that safe AI use is possible, while giving employees the confidence to keep exploring the benefits.

Sustainability and Responsible AI

AI's environmental footprint is often portrayed as a problem. Yet the survey suggests businesses across the UK, Germany, and Ireland are starting to treat it as part of the solution. Far from being deterred by headlines about energy consumption, many organisations are experimenting with how AI can support ESG goals.

A majority (56.2%) believe AI will help their organisation meet ESG requirements, with confidence higher in Germany and Ireland (58.5% each) than in the UK (51.5%) (Q16). More than half (56.7%) also say the opportunities AI creates for sustainability outweigh its risks. 54.7% intend to increase spend on AI-driven sustainability initiatives over the next three years.

Progress is already visible. Just over half (52.7%) of organisations say they currently measure the environmental impact of their AI solutions, with the UK ahead at 62% compared with 47% in Germany and 48.5% in Ireland. Nearly as many (48.7%) already monitor and evaluate AI's sustainability impact.

Awareness of risk is rising too. 52.8% have identified sustainability risks linked to AI use, while 55% believe AI improves sustainability-related decision-making. More than half see AI as an important contributor to sustainable computing (53.7%), and 52% have considered or adopted it to support energy consumption goals.

Climb Comment: AI's sustainability story is often told through the lens of risk. These findings show a fresh, and more positive angle: organisations are already building AI into their ESG strategies. For partners, the opportunity is to support that momentum by bringing solutions that improve measurement, help reduce footprints, and make sustainability gains as tangible as business outcomes.

52.8% have identified sustainability risks linked to AI use.

53.7% see AI helping to drive sustainability in computing.

55% believe AI aids their organisation's decision-making when it comes to sustainability.

52% believe AI can improve sustainable energy consumption goals for organisations.

Culture and Attitudes - People Will Decide AI's Success

Technology alone does not decide the success of AI. Culture, mindset, and organisational alignment are proving just as critical. Across EMEA, the survey reveals a workforce that is cautiously optimistic, leadership teams moving at uneven speeds, and a gap between vision and execution.

Sentiment is more positive than negative. 34.7% of respondents feel AI will have a positive impact on their organisation, compared with 15.7% who see it negatively (Q8). But this optimism is tempered by ambivalence about pace. 26.1% believe their organisation is deploying AI too quickly, while 22.7% say it is moving too slowly. Almost identical proportions pulling in opposite directions is a clear sign of cultural misalignment: employees and leaders are not aligned on what "the right speed" looks like.

Attitudes towards jobs are equally divided. 28.8% believe AI will create roles, while 22.8% fear it will remove them (Q8). Neither view dominates, which perhaps suggests that workforces are weighing opportunity against threat in real time. For leadership, this is a communication challenge as much as a technical one, shaping the narrative so employees see AI as a tool that enhances, not undermines, their future.

Execution tells its own story. While 26.5% say AI use cases have already been implemented, 21.3% admit they have been identified but not implemented (Q8). That stall point is as much cultural as it is technical: organisations know where AI could add value, but hesitation, misalignment, or lack of confidence is stopping them from pushing forward.

The overall picture is of organisations still building the culture that AI needs. Optimism is present, but uneven. Speed is contested. Jobs are viewed with both hope and fear. And execution falters when confidence lags.

Gerard Brophy
Chief Revenue Officer, Climb

AI adoption is a people story before it is a technology story. Culture and mindset will make or break the investment. Part of the challenge is how organisations bring their people with them: not just through training, but through clear communication, visible leadership, and space to experiment without fear of failure. Employees want to see where AI fits into their roles, how it affects their future, and why it matters to the business.

How Climb Can Help

AI adoption is moving quickly, but Climb's survey makes clear that governance, security, and practical application are still catching up. These are the gaps where partners can have the biggest impact – and where Climb is investing to support them.

Through our Skyward Project, we've built a clear, six-step pathway to help channel partners bring AI to customers with confidence. This includes the Climb AI Academy, providing hands-on training across five core modules; our curated AI solutions portfolio, focused on technologies that solve real customer challenges; and the AI Business User Group, a peer-led community where partners share experience and insight.

These initiatives are designed to work together: education, solutions, and collaboration, all aligned to accelerate safe and results-driven AI adoption. For partners, it means being able to demonstrate expertise, build trust, and deliver outcomes at a time when organisations are pressing ahead with AI, but still looking for guidance.

At Climb, we see our role as more than distribution. We're here to help our vendors and reseller partners take AI to market fast, safer, and with measurable results. That means clear governance frameworks, access to proven solutions, and a partner-first approach. It's all part of #TheClimbWay – supporting the channel with the tools and insight to deliver real outcomes from AI.

Reach out to the Team

Get in touch with any of our contacts below if you would like to discuss the results of the survey further.

Our Six-Step Route to AI Success with The Skyward Project

1. Trailhead	2. Kit Check	3. Waypoint	4. The Lookout	5. The Safety Line	6. Summit
Build Your AI Foundations	Select the Right Solutions	Identify High-Impact Use Cases	Connect With Like-Minded AI Enthusiasts	Navigate Risk and Compliance	Go to market

Useful links:

Sign up to the Skyward Project
Climb's AI Solutions Portfolio
Climb's AI Academy
Climb's AI Business User Group

Appendix: Survey Questions presented to respondents.

Q1. How would you rate your company's AI readiness? An AI 'use case' refers to a specific challenge, problem or scenario that can be (or may be) solved or improved through the use of AI.
Q2. What use cases are you currently applying AI to in your organisation?
Q3. Who is contributing to your AI strategy and implementation?
Q4. What is needed to make your company AI-mature?
Q5a. What type(s) of AI education/training would benefit your organisation most?
Q5b. What percentage of the staff in your organisation has received formal AI training?
Q6. AI Tools: (Yes/No/Unsure)

- Is your organisation embracing AI in its operations?
- Are you more comfortable using AI in your professional life compared to your personal life?
- Is AI adoption in your organisation increasing?
- Is there increasing demand among customers for more AI solutions/services?
- Are you providing any AI products/services to your customers?
- Could you do your job without AI?
- Have you increased your AI use in the workplace over the past 12 months?
- Do you understand AI more than you did 12 months ago?
- Have you experienced inaccuracy when using AI for work purposes?
- Do you feel comfortable using generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT) in your role?
- Do you feel you have the skills today to make the most of AI in your role?
- Are employees encouraged to experiment with AI tools in your company?
- Would you trust an AI agent to make routine decisions on your behalf at work (e.g. responding to emails, scheduling, financial approvals)?

Q7. AI Strategy (Yes/No/Unsure):

- Has your organisation specified approved AI tools?
- Is your organisation investing more in AI this year compared to last?
- Do you think your company's investment in AI is sufficient?
- Has your organisation provided AI training?
- Do you think your organisation has gotten ROI on your IT investment?
- Are structures and processes in place to drive meaningful value from gen AI in your organisation?
- Does your organisation have anyone employed or a council in place to oversee the usage of AI in your organisation?
- Do you feel leadership at your company understands how employees are using AI day to day?
- Has your company provided clear guidelines or policies on using AI at work?
- Does your organisation have a clear AI strategy or roadmap?
- Do you think your organisation falls into the AI gap (i.e., it is not actually using it to its full potential)?
- Do you believe AI agents will replace middle-management functions (e.g. coordination, reporting, approvals) within the next 5 years?

Q8. AI Impact in the Workplace (Yes/No/Unsure):

Appendix continued:

- AI will create jobs for our company
- My organisation is deploying AI too slowly
- We have identified use cases for AI and implemented them
- I feel positive about the impact of AI on our workplace
- AI will eliminate jobs for our company
- My organisation is deploying AI too quickly
- AI use cases have been identified, but we have yet to implement them
- I feel negative about the impact of AI on our workplace

Q9. How much do you estimate your organisation will spend on AI in 2025?

Q10. Time taken to go from AI exploration to full operational process implementation?

Q11. How long do you estimate it takes for AI deployment to deliver a return on investment (ROI)?

Q12. What, if any, are the aims of AI adoption in your organisation?

Q13. What, if any, are the top barriers to AI adoption in your organisation?

Q14. AI and Security: (Yes/No/Unsure).

- Are you concerned about the security of AI tools?
- Are you aware of the compliance requirements around AI use?
- Are you reluctant to input data into AI tools?
- Do you think your organisation has defined what data is suitable to be input into AI tools?
- Have you ever input confidential business or customer data into AI tools?
- Do you think the innovation potential of AI outweighs the security concerns?
- Does your organisation have a policy in place to promote safe AI use?
- Do you/your company train staff to use AI responsibly/ethically?
- Do you think your organisation's AI strategy will be compliant with the EU Act?
- Do you think organisations that use AI are more vulnerable to cyber-attacks/breaches?
- Do you think AI would prevent burnout when it comes to your in-house security team?
- Do you think AI can help with the skills shortage gap in cyber?

Q15. What, if any, are your biggest security concerns when it comes to AI usage?

Q16. AI and Sustainability:

- Do you think AI can help meet ESG requirements efforts?
- Do you measure environmental output/impact of AI solutions?
- Has your organisation identified any sustainability risks associated with the implementation of AI technologies?
- Do you believe the sustainability opportunities provided by AI outweigh the associated risks?
- Does AI's ability to analyse data help you to predict and manage environmental impacts?
- Does AI aid your organisation in terms of decision-making when it comes to sustainability?
- Does your organisation have mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate the sustainability impact of AI implementations?
- Is your organisation likely to increase investment in AI-driven sustainability initiatives over the next 3 years?
- Has your organisation considered opportunities where AI can enhance sustainability?