

AI AND THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW · A FACT SHEET FOR MANAGERS

The cost of waiting on AI is now **measurable**.

Adoption is no longer the differentiator. The gap that shows up in productivity, wages, and careers is between managers who redesign work around AI and equip their teams to use it, and those still waiting to be told. *September 2026 · All figures sourced at foot of page*

1 The cost of not adopting *If you are not in production, you are already behind, and the gap compounds yearly.*

327%

growth in multi-agent workflows in four months, yet only **19%** of organizations run agents at scale.

Databricks, 2026 State of AI Agents (20,000+ orgs)

47%

of mid-level managers report AI-related strain, vs. **31%** of executives. The pressure lands in the middle.

McKinsey, State of AI, Aug 2026

163%

labor-productivity growth at the top 20% most AI-exposed firms. AI-exposed sectors: **34%** vs. **24%** for the least exposed.

PwC 2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

62%

wage premium for AI skills. AI-exposed entry-level jobs **+35%** since 2019; other entry-level jobs **-10%**.

PwC 2026

6%

of organizations are AI "high performers." Three in four of them redesigned workflows; only **25%** of everyone else did.

McKinsey, State of AI, Aug 2026

It is not a tool-spend problem. 44% of organizations now scale AI enterprise-wide, and 80% of users report higher productivity, yet only 37% see any EBIT impact, and just one in five say operating cost limits AI use. Worker access to sanctioned AI tools jumped from under 40% to about 60% in one year, while only 30% of organizations redesigned key processes. The binding constraints are workflow redesign and team skills, not licenses. That is a manager's job, and it is the job that gets rewarded. (McKinsey Aug 2026; Deloitte Jan 2026)

2 The two benefits that pay for everything else

★ Employee empowerment

Every employee gets an expert on call. No code, just a question.

- **Field and shop floor:** "Line 3 keeps tripping fault E-217 on restart. Likely causes, and what do I check first?" Or: a bilingual pre-shift checklist, in seconds.
- **Maintenance and reliability:** ask the maintenance-history agent which assets are due this month, with run hours and open work orders.
- **Customer and account teams:** "This account had two unplanned stoppages this month. What should I recommend before I call?"

Evidence: 80% of AI users report higher productivity, 50% better decisions, and about half say AI helped them build new skills (McKinsey 2026). In a field experiment with 758 BCG consultants, AI users finished tasks 25% faster, completed 12% more, and scored 40% higher on quality (Harvard/MIT/Wharton).

Operational excellence through agentic automation

Agents carry the paperwork. People carry the judgment.

A Reads → **B Predicts / matches** → **C Plans** → **D Executes** → **E Learns, feeds back**

- **Automate fully** where error cost is low, and data is explicit: order confirmations, load matching, records lookups, status calls. Zero staff hours.
- **AI drafts, expert signs** where error cost is high: estimates, reviews, compliance. The human prices the delta, not the whole job.
- **Build instead of buy:** 32% of organizations skipped a software purchase because they built it with agentic coding tools (McKinsey 2026).

Proof point: Banner Health uses AI to predict unused OR blocks a month ahead and auto-fill them: **+2.1 cases per OR per month, 359 block-hours freed monthly**, break-even in **2 months**. Top agent use cases in production today: market intelligence, predictive maintenance, customer experience (Databricks 2026).

3 How successful organizations ★ empower employees in the world of AI

On-demand learning platforms

An internal knowledge hub and standardized training that demystify generative AI for every role.

Structured, task-based training

Programs that put AI tools inside real workflows, task by task. A separate track for senior leaders on strategic implications.

Cross-functional collaboration

Success workshops and knowledge transfer so what works in one team spreads to the next.

Mentorship and peer learning

Pair fluent employees with less experienced ones. Adoption spreads person to person.

Incentivized learning

Reward systems, recognition programs, and certifications that make fluency visible and valued.

And treat freed time as capital. Gen AI cuts task time by 40% or more, but a third of managers let the windfall dissolve into busywork (HBR, 2025). Put a number and a named owner on recovered hours before the tool ships.

4 The tools for the workforce of tomorrow *Seats run about \$20–150 per user per month by tier, a small fraction of a loaded employee cost.*

MUST HAVE

Everyday productivity AI

Microsoft 365 Copilot · Gemini in Google Workspace

MUST HAVE

Agentic coding & build

Claude Code · Cursor · OpenAI Codex · GitHub Copilot coding agent

32% of organizations skipped a software purchase and built it with these instead.

MUST HAVE

Conversational AI platforms

ChatGPT Enterprise · Claude Team / Enterprise · Gemini Enterprise

EMERGING

Custom & vertical agents

Databricks Agent Bricks · Microsoft Copilot Studio · Salesforce Agentforce

Sources. Databricks, 2026 State of AI Agents (Jan 27, 2026; 20,000+ organizations) · McKinsey & Company, The State of AI global survey (Aug 25, 2026; 1,719 respondents, fielded May 4–June 8, 2026) · PwC, 2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer (June 15, 2026; 18+ job ads, 27 countries) · Deloitte, State of AI in the Enterprise 2026 (Jan 21, 2026; 3,235 leaders, fielded Aug–Sept 2025) · Dell'Acqua et al., "Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier," HBS Working Paper 24-013 (2023) · HBR, "How Is Your Team Spending the Time Saved by Gen AI?" (Mar–Apr 2025) · Banner Health OR-scheduling results and the Agent A–E pattern from the Generative AI Leadership Accelerator playbook (Aug 2026).