



Numbers outpace the narrative for AI in New York

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About the research

Accenture surveyed 500 C-suite leaders across 20 industries at organizations with revenues greater than \$50 million and operations in New York City. We conducted the survey between July and August 2026 across all five boroughs. This year's survey gathers executives' perspectives on AI adoption and business value, organizational readiness and leadership, the changing nature of work and the skills workers will need in an AI-enabled economy. It also examines AI talent recruitment and development, partnerships with academic institutions, responsible AI adoption, infrastructure needs and the growing use of AI agents. The findings show how New York City can strengthen its position as a global AI hub while preparing its businesses, workforce and residents for the next phase of AI-enabled growth. The sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.4%. We use generative AI in our research production process. Our research experts review and validate the generative AI outputs with traditional research methods where possible, applying Accenture's Responsible AI standards.

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Executive summary



This is the third annual report from Accenture and Tech:NYC examining the role of New York City (NYC) as a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI). Our findings this year capture a consequential development: AI has reached operational scale at remarkable speed.

Our survey of NYC executives found that 94% are deploying AI within their organizations, with nearly half (46%) scaling tools and use cases with demonstrated value. Across the city, organizations are embedding AI in their work, while executives seek talent for new and evolving roles. Leaders are redesigning work and teams, taking what works and scaling up while treating leadership and talent systems as essential to sustained adoption. That commitment is visible at the top: 88% of executives say senior leaders in their organization use AI in their day-to-day work, and 90% agree that leadership use accelerates adoption across the organization.

Executives remain confident in NYC's broader prospects. Nearly nine in 10 expect AI to benefit

the city, while 88% believe it will strengthen the city's long-term competitiveness as a global business hub. That confidence rests on a combination of deep talent, strong institutions and the diverse industries across the city.

AI has not triggered the wave of job elimination many feared. Much the opposite, as numbers repeatedly outpaced our narratives. NYC continues to grow and add jobs: nearly 96,000 year over year, according to the NYC Economic Development Corporation. Only 9% of executives identify job elimination as a leading business challenge from AI, down 27 percentage points from last year. At the same time, 96% said they plan to continue recruiting workers with AI expertise, and nearly four in five expect AI to increase entry-level hiring or keep it broadly stable while changing the profiles employers seek.

It turns out that jobs are changing more than they are disappearing. AI roles and skills are growing their footprint in the labor market at a rapid rate. In the first half of 2026, the number of NYC job postings requesting machine learning (ML) or other AI skills reached more than 55,000, a 2.7-fold increase from the same point in 2025.

94%

of executives said their companies are testing, piloting or scaling AI tools.

46%

are scaling AI tools and use cases that have demonstrated measurable value.

AI and ML skills now appear in nearly 14% of city job postings, 2.3 times the share nationwide. Employers increasingly need people who can effectively combine technical fluency with communication skills, critical thinking, leadership, judgment and the ability to integrate AI into decisions and workflows.

This year's report is supplemented by research from CB Insights examining the companies that make NYC a powerful AI hub. They found the city home to more than 2,000 venture-backed AI companies across a deep and diverse range of industries and applications. Together, these companies have raised \$78.5 billion and employ roughly 187,000 people. NYC also contains 74 AI unicorns, privately held startup companies valued at \$1 billion or more. This is second only to San Francisco among major US hubs.

CB Insights also assembled the "NYC Emerging AI 50," a curated list of high-momentum AI companies prepared exclusively for this report. The list is intended to show where AI value is being created, which industries are most active and what that means for economic growth across the city.

Executives are realizing AI's benefits in a growing range of areas. Productivity remains the most frequently cited benefit (52%), as it was last year, but executives also point to better employee experiences and outcomes (49%), innovation and differentiation (44%), new revenue streams (39%) and improved customer outcomes (35%). Challenges persist. Implementation costs rank highest (60%), followed by data privacy and security (54%) and workforce transformation (42%). More than a third of executives (36%) also cite poor AI experiences as a top business challenge, up more than 10 percentage points from last year.

This year, even more so than in years past, New York City is emerging as a model for how cities translate AI innovation into economic growth, workforce opportunity and long-term competitive advantage.

2.3x

the share of roles seeking AI/ML skills in NYC compared to US overall.

Realizing and building on the benefits of AI, while confronting the challenges it raises, requires active and engaged leadership across industries and in both the private and public spheres. Drawing on this year's findings, we identified three priorities for leaders as AI continues to integrate and scale across the economy:

- **Step forward and shape what's next for AI.** Actively participate in the cross-sector conversations shaping AI's future in New York, bringing industry knowledge and practical experience to collaborative efforts across government, academia and business.
- **Prepare skills for convergence, going beyond silos.** Prepare for the boundaries between technical and nontechnical AI work to blur. Look to combine technical skills, domain expertise and human strengths together.
- **Treat governance as a discipline and source of value.** Apply the frameworks, oversight and organizational discipline that keep data, decisions and AI systems trustworthy. Practice governance as a source of value that allows innovation to scale faster and more reliably.

New York City has earned its place at the forefront of global AI leadership through its prescient moves in planning, partnerships and growth guidance. It became the largest tech talent hub in North America this year, according to CBRE Research, with a remarkable portion concentrating in AI. Its leaders have consistently been first movers in matters of governance, and its diverse base of industries and institutions is putting AI to work in ways no other city can match.

This year, even more so than in years past, New York City is emerging as a model for how cities translate AI innovation into economic growth, workforce opportunity and long-term competitive advantage.

Introduction

New York City is scaling AI and expanding opportunity

The old narrative of an AI wave that would eliminate jobs has receded sharply. Some of the largest companies in the US are now reversing course and ramping up hiring.¹

AI may instead be illustrating a well-known economic paradox: As the cost of knowledge work falls, demand for it rises. The result can be a stable or even growing number of roles, even as automation increases.²

In our survey of 500 NYC C-suite leaders, only 9% now identify job elimination as a top business challenge from AI, 27 percentage points fewer than last year. That shift reflects what leaders increasingly see across the city: AI is changing jobs, skills and business models while creating new sources of demand and growth.

These movements come amid an ongoing, dynamic and public discussion about the future of AI in our lives and economy. Debates about the speed of transformation or how to integrate technology responsibly are vital, and businesses must have a seat at the table. This report contributes to that conversation by following the data and what it's showing us about AI in

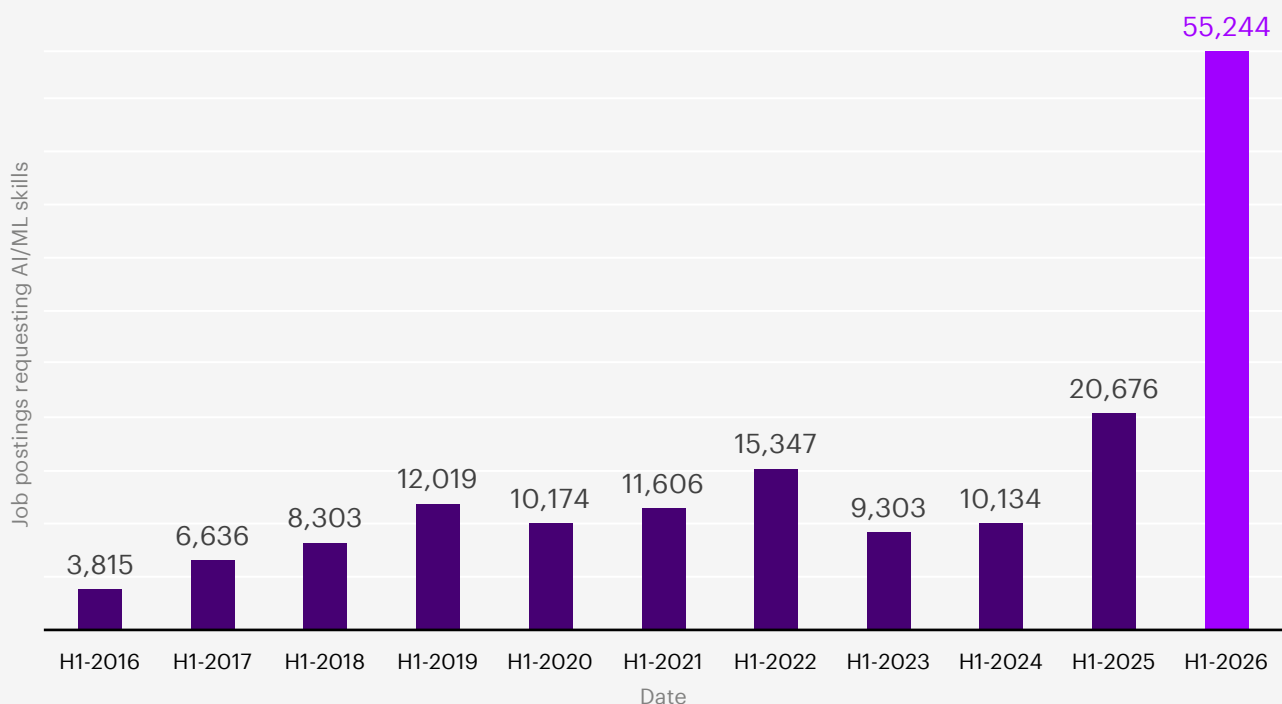
New York City. What we found, again and again, is that the data is telling a positive story.

The labor market, for instance, shows healthy signs, even amidst diverging projections about AI's impact on jobs. The city continues to grow, having added 96,000 jobs year over year, according to the NYC Economic Development Corporation.³ That's more than any other metro area in the country.

Between the first half of 2025 and the first half of 2026, the number of NYC job postings requesting ML or other AI skills increased 2.7-fold, to more than 55,000 from approximately 20,600 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Demand grows for AI/ML skills

Between the first half of 2025 and the first half of 2026, the number of NYC job postings requesting machine learning or other AI skills increased 2.7-fold.



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

2.7-fold

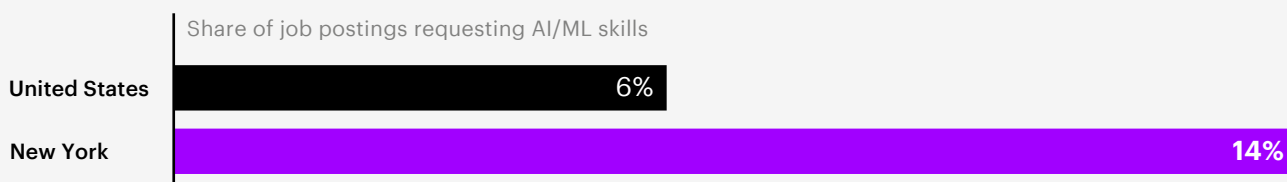
increase in NYC job postings seeking AI/ML skills between first half of 2025 and first half of 2026.

9%

of executives identify job elimination as a leading business challenge from AI—down 27 percentage points from last year.

Figure 2: NYC outpaces US on share of job postings requesting AI/ML skills

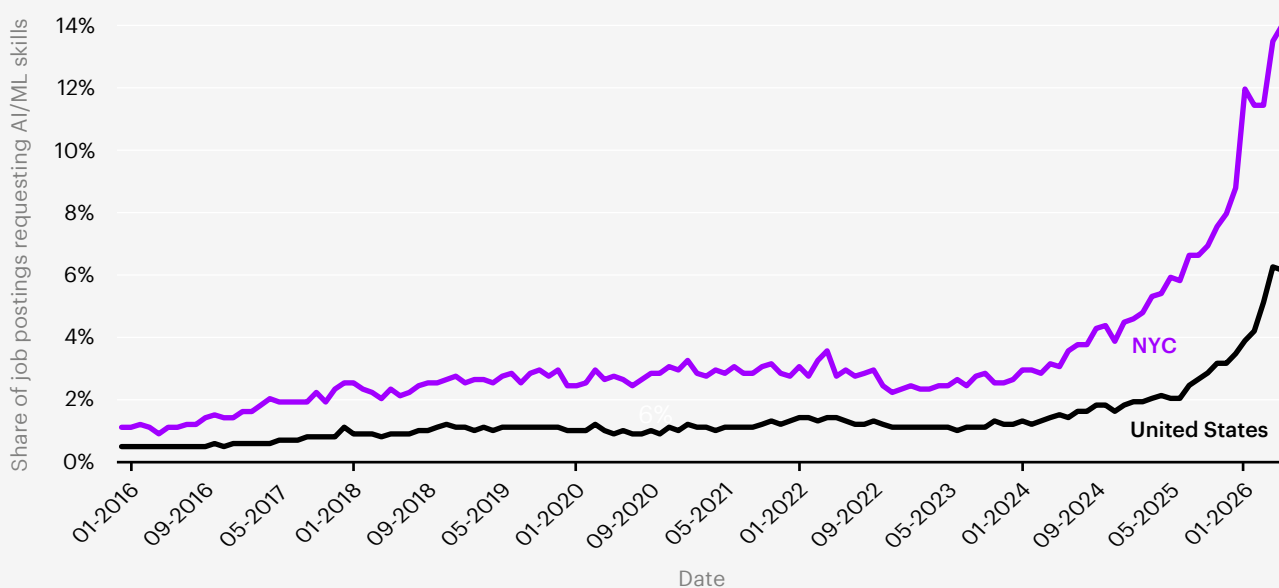
AI/ML job postings in NYC make up 2.3 times the share of job postings compared to the US overall.



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

Figure 3: AI/ML skills appear in growing share of job postings

In 2026, the share of NYC job postings requesting AI/ML skills reached 14%, up from just 1% in 2016.



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

Such postings now represent 2.3 times the share of all jobs in New York City than they do nationally (Figure 2). In 2026, the share of city job postings seeking AI skills reached 14%, up from just 1% in 2016 (Figure 3). Over the past five years, the number of distinct AI-specific occupations has increased ten-fold. These roles now span AI products, engineering, training and organizational leadership, creating a new occupational market in which AI skills increasingly define demand.

Demand for talent remains equally strong. Ninety-six percent of executives plan to continue recruiting workers with AI expertise

over the next one to two years, little changed from 99% last year. Seventy-nine percent expect AI to increase entry-level hiring or keep it broadly stable while changing the profiles employers seek.

New York's broader talent position reinforces this momentum. This year saw NYC become the largest tech talent market in North America. After adding 30,640 tech workers since 2022, its workforce reached 394,300, surpassing San Francisco.⁴ This tech talent is exceptional, containing a 17% concentration of AI-specialty skills, among the highest rates in the country.

The city's diverse economy is also helping AI skills spread across industries and roles. Demand is growing in knowledge-intensive sectors and in industries less traditionally associated with advanced technology. Executives increasingly view this reach as a defining advantage. Seventy-one percent cited the spread of AI across industries as one of the city's most distinctive traits, more than 20 percentage points higher than last year. They also pointed to New York's strong education and research institutions, cross-sector use of AI and access to local talent. These strengths help explain why 84% expressed high confidence in recruiting AI talent from NYC.

In this context, organizations are moving swiftly: 94% of executives said their organizations are actively experimenting with, piloting or scaling

AI tools. Nearly half, 46%, are scaling AI tools and use cases that have demonstrated measurable value, while another 48% are running selected pilots or actively experimenting.

These moves aren't isolated by industry. Information still leads, with 4.7 AI/ML postings for every 10 non-AI postings in 2026, but other industries are catching up quickly: 2.5 in Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, 2.2 in Finance & Insurance, 2.0 in Real Estate and 1.9 in Manufacturing.

Since 2024, AI intensity has roughly doubled or tripled across many of these industries, pointing to both the speed and breadth of AI scaling across NYC.



Executives remain positive about putting AI into practice. More than eight in 10 said they feel confident, empowered or excited about implementing AI in their businesses, at 84%, 83% and 82%, respectively (Figure 4).

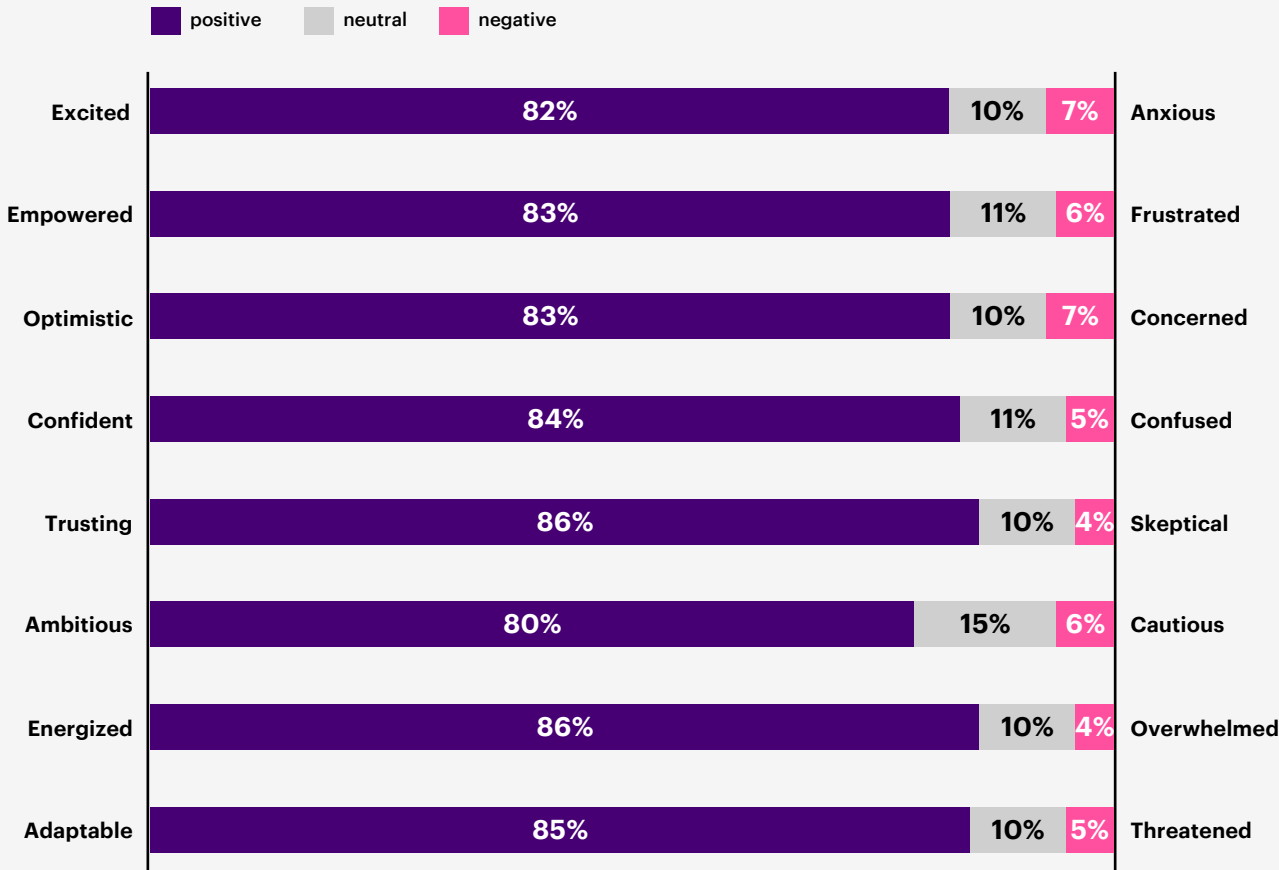
What's more, senior leaders are participating directly. Eighty-eight percent of executives said their senior leaders use AI in day-to-day work, and 90% agreed that leadership use accelerates adoption across the organization. Last year, we

highlighted AI pioneer JPMorganChase's internal AI platform, LLM Suite, and its use by company leaders. This year, 89% of executives said AI literacy is an essential leadership competency.

The capabilities employers seek are changing as well. AI job postings increasingly combine technical fluency with leadership, decision-making and workflow management, while demand for several traditional programming and data-mining skills has declined.

Figure 4: Executives remain positive about AI implementation

How executives feel about the implementation of AI throughout their organization.



Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.
Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

90%

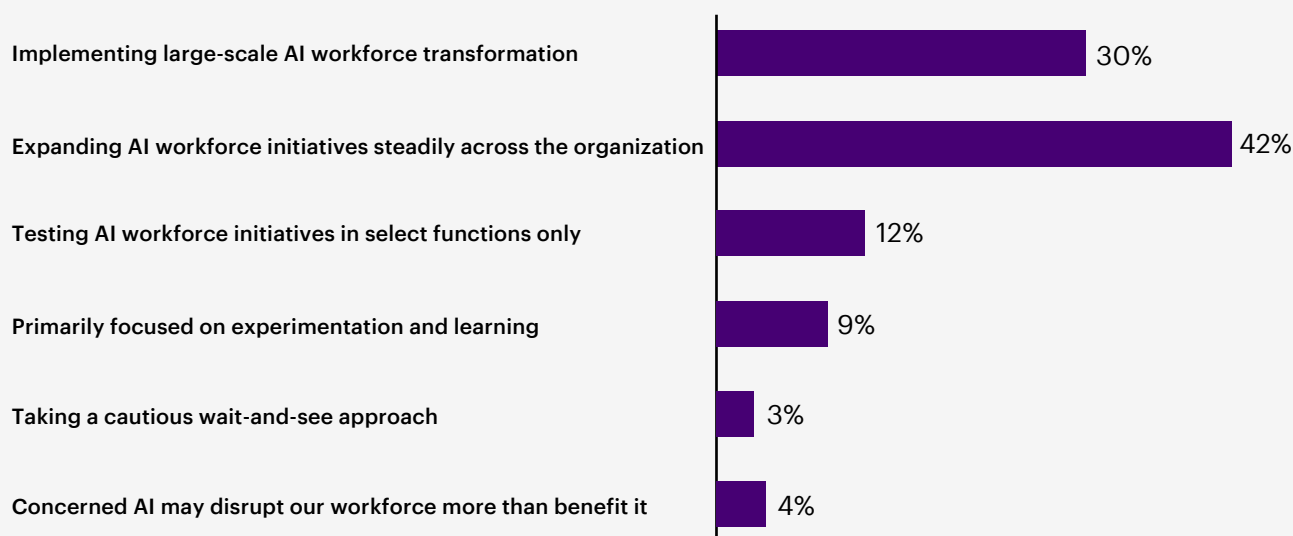
agreed that leadership use accelerates adoption across the organization.

89%

of executives said AI literacy is an essential leadership competency.

Figure 5: 30% of executives are implementing large-scale AI workforce transformation

Question: Which of the following best describes your current approach to integrating AI into your workforce development strategy?



Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

The pattern suggests that employers need even more people who can integrate AI into decisions and workflows, beyond just building the technology.

Employers are redesigning jobs as a result. Thirty percent of executives are implementing large-scale AI workforce transformation, and another 42% are expanding such initiatives across their organizations (Figure 5).

AI may also be fueling a new wave of business creation and growth. In NYC, new business applications reached nearly 160,000 in 2025, up more than 40% from a decade earlier. New York State set another record in July 2026, with more than 31,000 new business applications, up from 24,700 this time last year. These findings expand New York's story beyond enterprise adoption and workforce demand to entrepreneurship and new sources of economic value.

Executives' optimism extends to NYC's broader prospects. Nearly nine in 10, 89%, expect AI to benefit New York City, while 88% believe it will strengthen the city's long-term competitiveness as a global business hub.

Employers need more people who can integrate AI into decisions and workflows, beyond just building the technology.

In the first half of 2026, AI firms leased over 2.2 million square feet of office space in the city, more than double their 2025 total.⁵ Major companies continue to expand their presence in NYC. Anthropic leased a 16-story office building in lower Manhattan and said it would double its work force in the city to 1,000 people this year. Legora, an agentic operating system for legal work, is establishing nearly 100,000 square feet of office space in Manhattan, alongside a commitment to create 550 new jobs.^{6,7} Sierra, Synthesia and Altana are also among the companies expanding their footprints in the city.



Scale brings a more exacting set of operating questions. As organizations expand deployment, leaders are gaining a clearer view of what successful execution requires. Sixty percent cited implementation costs as a leading challenge, up nine percentage points from last year. Forty-two percent pointed to the demands of redesigning work, while 36% cited poor AI experiences, an increase of 11 points. Data privacy and security also remain central

concerns. These findings reflect a maturing market in which leaders understand both AI's potential and the capabilities required to capture it.

New York's next test, and the key to its continued AI leadership, is to convert this exceptional momentum into enduring advantage.

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Section 1

NYC's workforce is evolving to meet new demand



AI is changing how New Yorkers do their jobs and, in some cases, the jobs they do.

Employers, workers and the institutions that support them are adjusting to an economy in which AI is part of everyday work, rather than specialized technology used only by technical teams.

Our conversations with executives and analysis of the city's jobs and skills data reveal two dominant stories. First, the sky isn't falling when it comes to jobs and AI. Quite the opposite: Leaders are resoundingly optimistic about hiring and AI's effect on employment. As NYC's Apollo Global Management economist Torsten Slok noted earlier this year, we could be seeing a "Jevons employment effect" that as the cost of professional work falls, the addressable market expands and supports more roles.

Second, the composition of AI roles, and the definition of an "AI job," continues to evolve and broaden, placing greater weight on distinctly human skills. Employers increasingly need people who can pair technical fluency with communication, critical thinking, judgment, leadership and the ability to integrate AI into decisions and workflows.

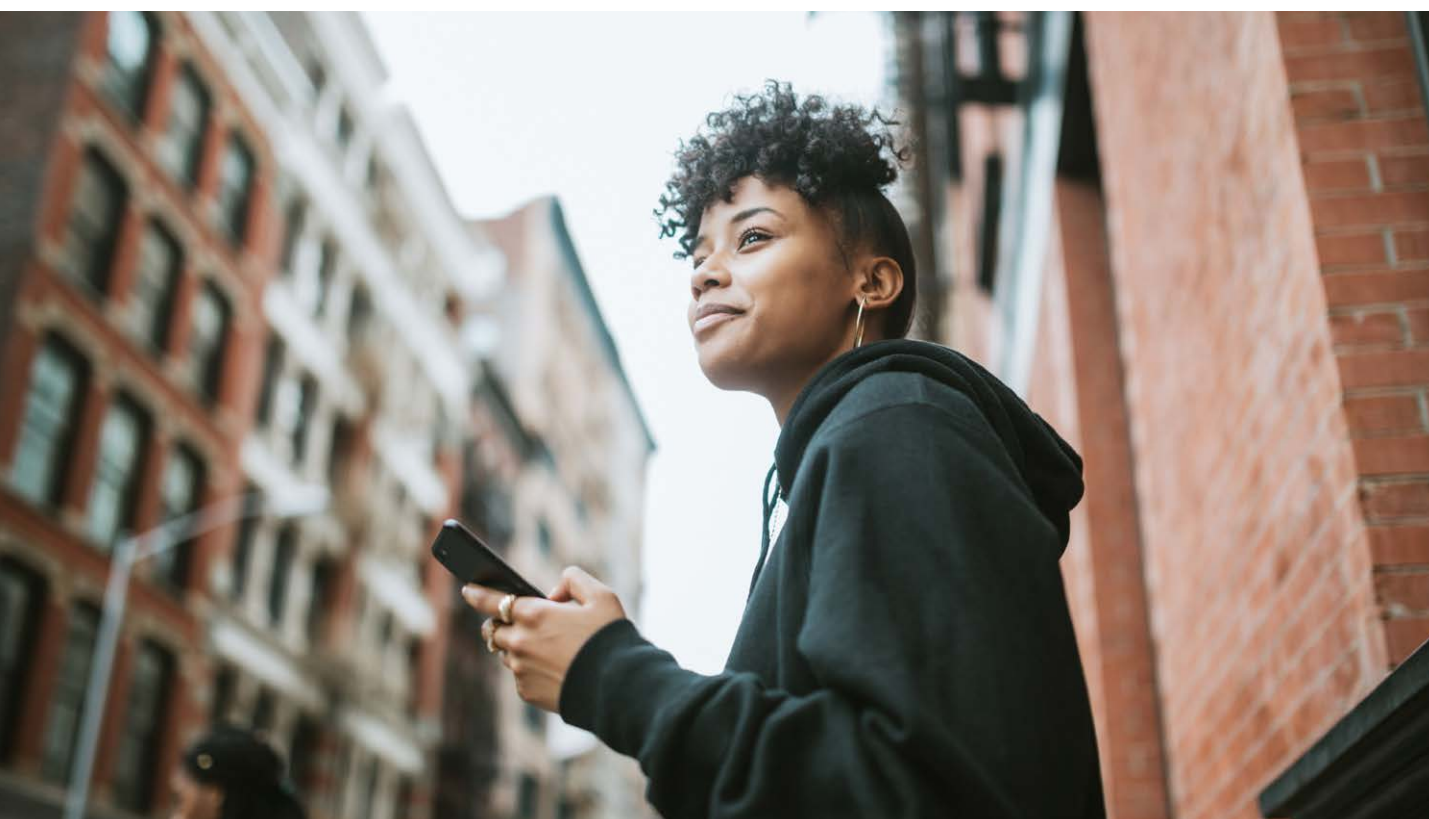
The challenge for leaders is to meet several needs at once: securing skilled workers today, building the talent pipelines required for tomorrow and ensuring that people remain central to productivity and innovation. Doing so will require more than training people to use

new tools. It will require redesigning work and creating broader, more adaptable routes into and through the workforce as roles change.

The challenge for leaders is to meet several needs at once: securing skilled workers today, building the talent pipelines required for tomorrow and ensuring that people remain central to productivity and innovation.

The data on AI and jobs is positive, defying early predictions

Many early predictions around AI focused on mass automation, the disappearance of entry-level work and the erosion of creativity and human judgement. The evidence presents a decidedly more positive, if complex, picture. Recent analysis from NYC's own Ramp and Revelio Labs, for example, found that firms making the largest AI investments grew headcount by



roughly 10% in the two years after adopting and raised the entry-level share of their hiring relative to firms that had not adopted at all.⁸ Yet tech and finance sectors, strong industries for AI adoption and automation, saw some accelerating payroll declines this year, with some within the industries attributing the drop to AI.⁹

occupational skill evolution. These differences suggest that national labor-market findings cannot necessarily be extrapolated to NYC.

This is a more nuanced picture that resists an easy headline, and it demands leaders who engage closely with the technology and adapt dynamically as workforce needs change.

New York executives see the potential: 86% believe AI will create more economic opportunities in the city than it eliminates. What's more, 66% identified greater employment opportunities as a leading way AI could improve New Yorkers' lives, up 11 percentage points from last year.

79%
of executives expect entry-level hiring to increase or remain similar with different role profiles.

Federal statistical agencies, meanwhile, are still working the nuances of measurement out. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has begun incorporating AI effects into its occupational projections through case-by-case study rather than a single economy-wide adjustment, an acknowledgment that the effects are uneven and occupation-specific.¹⁰

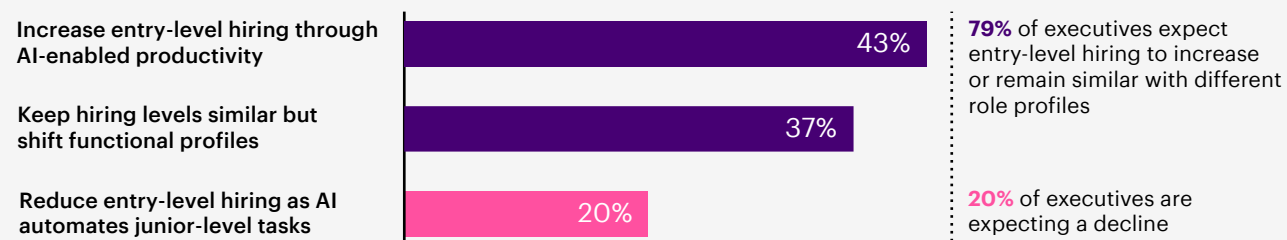
That optimism extends to entry level work. We found that 43% expect AI-enabled productivity to increase entry-level hiring, while another 37% expect hiring to remain broadly stable but shift toward different role profiles (Figure 6). Still, one in five executives anticipates an overall decline—a notable minority that suggests some concerns remain.

The research represents this specific point in time and may not be the final outcome. Yet across these findings, the emerging picture is less one of work disappearing on a grand scale than one of AI restructuring jobs and labor demand across industries. National findings may not fully align with NYC's distinctive labor market: Throughout our analysis, we identified differences between NYC and the US overall in both demand for AI/ML skills and the pace of

The scale and speed of AI adoption are visible in New York's job market. Between the first half of 2022 and the first half of 2026, the number of city job postings requesting machine learning or other AI skills increased 3.6-fold. Much of that growth came in the past year. In the first half of 2025, the total stood at about 20,600. By June 2026, AI skills appeared in nearly 14% of city job postings, more than twice the national share of about 6%.

Figure 6: 43% expect AI-enabled productivity to increase entry-level hiring

Question: How do you expect AI to affect entry-level roles in your New York City workforce over the next 1-2 years?



Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

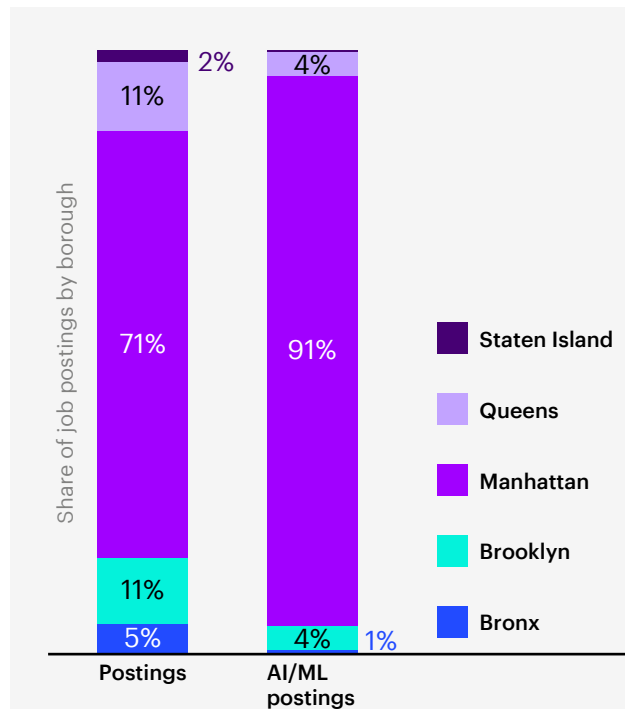
Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

AI is becoming an operating and leadership capability as well as a technical one.

Demand remains highly concentrated in New York City's knowledge economy. Manhattan accounts for approximately 71% of all city job postings and 91% of those requesting AI skills (Figure 7). Yet AI intensity is rising across almost every industry and occupational group. We identified about 20 distinct AI-specific occupations, up from just two in 2021. They now span specialist technical roles, AI product management, engineering leadership, training, organizational ownership and the integration of generative and agentic systems. AI is becoming an operating and leadership capability as well as a technical one.

Figure 7: Manhattan leads in AI/ML skills demand

Manhattan accounts for approximately 71% of all city job postings and 91% of those requesting AI skills.



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.



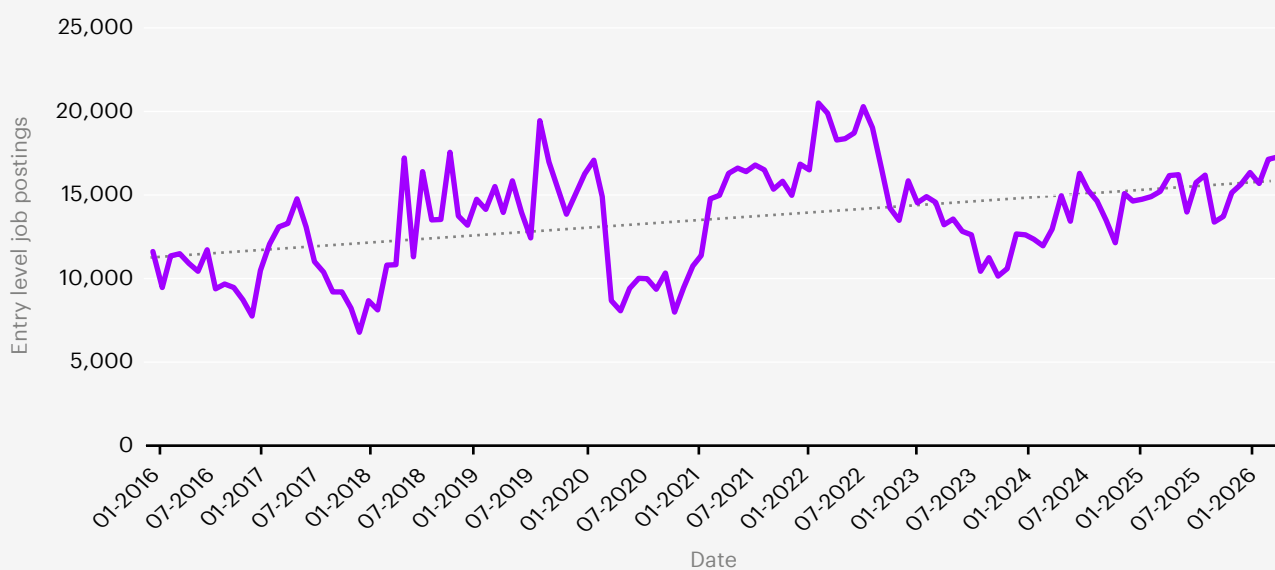
Although demand remains concentrated in some parts of the economy, the skills employers seek are becoming relevant far more broadly.

Entry-level opportunity has continued to grow, but its shape is changing. The number of entry-level postings in NYC has risen over the past

decade, even as it corrects from a Covid-era high (Figure 8). Yet education requirements are becoming more polarized. The share of roles requiring either a high school diploma or an advanced degree has increased, while the share requiring a bachelor's degree has declined (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Entry level job postings continue to climb

The number of entry-level postings in NYC has risen over the past decade, even as it corrects from a Covid-era high.



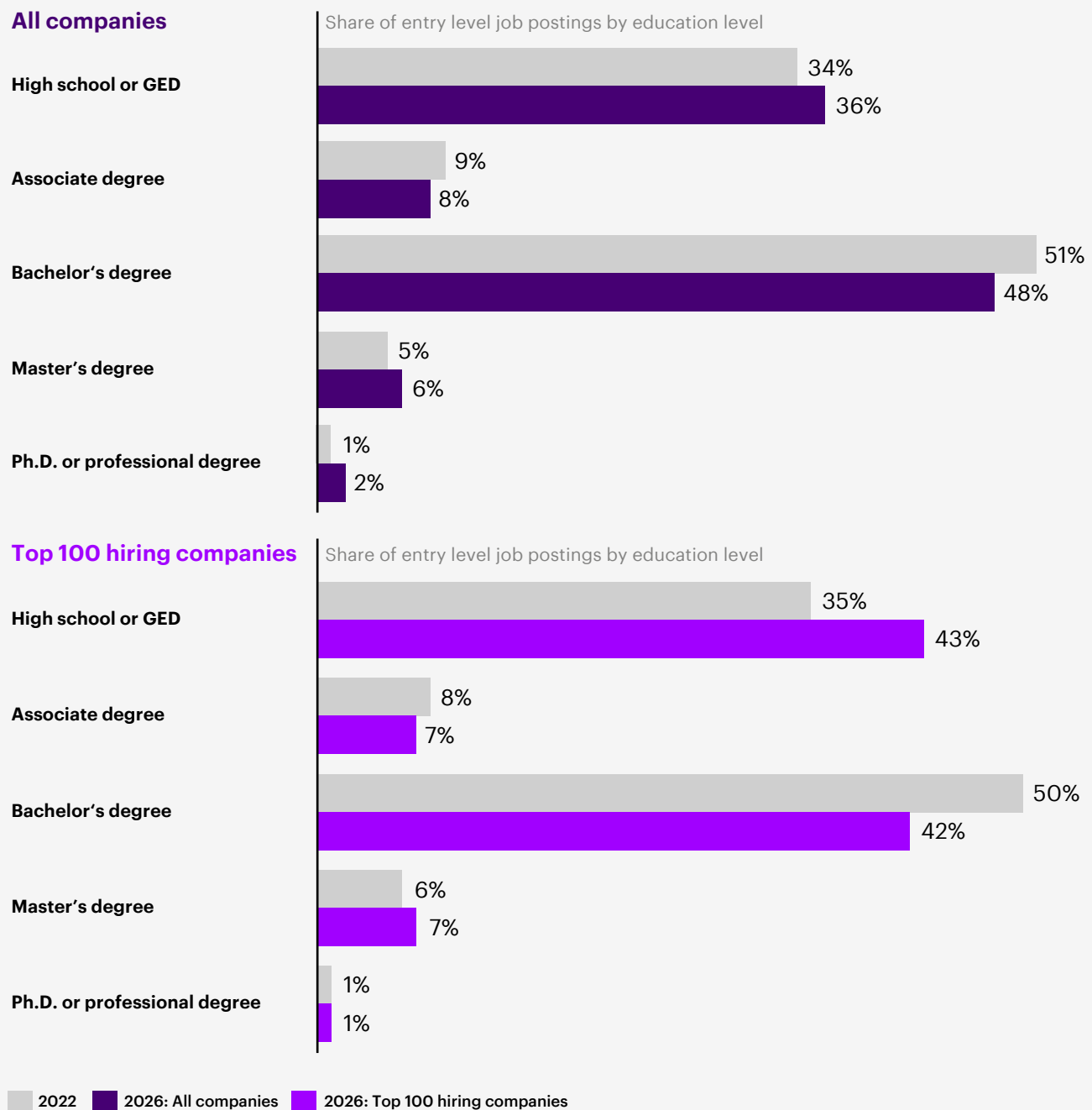
Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

“That fears of AI-driven job elimination have receded and higher education (especially at the graduate level) is very much still valued is quite compelling. Graduate students are often pushed to the frontiers of knowledge through research, internships, entrepreneurship and service-based learning. At Stony Brook, we are aiming to push even more undergraduate students to this frontier, so the experiential learning experiences can further develop their courage, curiosity and critical thinking.”

Dr. Lav Varshney, Infinity Professor and AI Innovation Institute Director at SUNY Stony Brook

Figure 9: Education requirements in NYC are becoming more polarized, particularly for top hiring companies

Share of job postings requesting each education level for entry level roles 2022-2026



Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

Among the city's top hiring companies, growth has been particularly pronounced in entry-level postings open to workers with only a high school diploma: Today's share is 43%, up from 35% in 2022. Those requiring a bachelor's or associate degree declined from 59% to 50% over that time.

These findings suggest employers are moving in different directions. Some are widening routes into work by emphasizing skills and demonstrated capability over credentials. Others are changing what credentials are acquired: AI made up around 16% of all certificates awarded last year, up from just

over 1% in 2022, and short-term AI training programs now make up nearly a third of the credential market.¹¹

NYC's talent and talent strategy must respond to the full range of demand. Both businesses and workers are broadening their scopes to fill the roles created around AI.

Roles are shifting, and so are the skills they require

Some of the most significant changes are occurring within jobs. Between 2022 and 2026, NYC's occupational skill profiles changed about 50% faster than those of the US overall (Figure 10).¹² To understand AI's effect on jobs and wages, it is often more useful to examine how skill requirements are changing within roles. Automation typically reshapes the tasks within a job rather than eliminate the job itself.¹³

Core skills, the 15 most frequently requested skills in job postings for a given occupation, evolved nearly twice as much in NYC as in the US overall. Supplementary skills, which appear

less consistently in job postings and add breadth to a role's skill profile, changed even more. These scores highlight the exceptional dynamism of NYC's workforce and underscore the growing importance of adaptability for both workers and organizations.

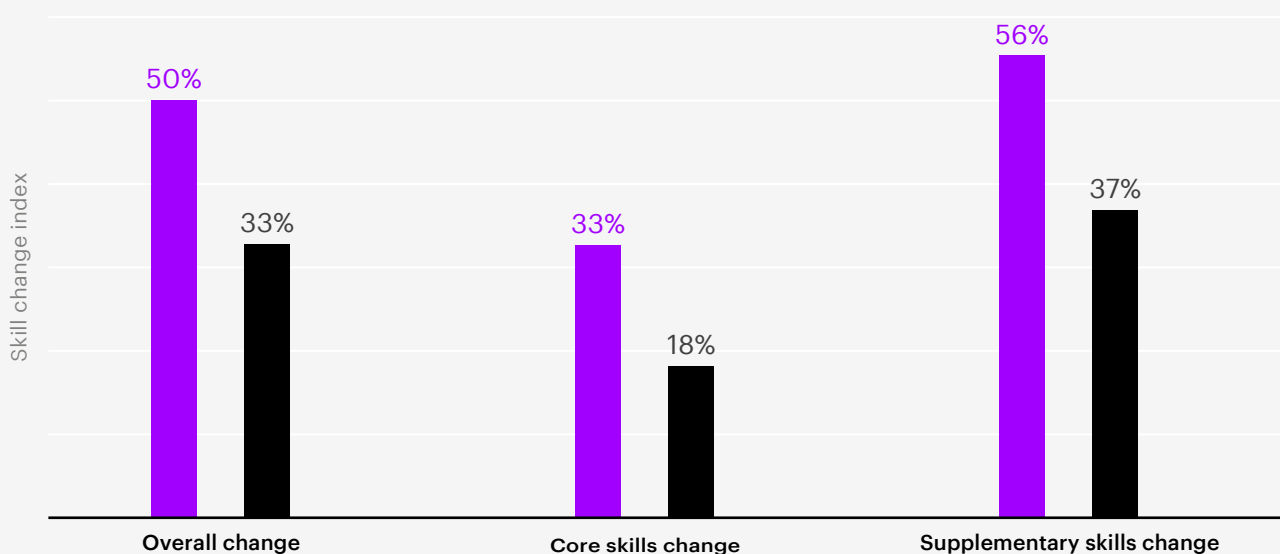
~ 50%

**faster skill profile change in NYC
than the US overall, 2022–2026.**



Figure 10: NYC skills shifting faster than national pace

Between 2022 and 2026, NYC's occupational skill profiles changed about 50% faster than those of the US overall.



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

NYC United States

We can see how these changes are playing out within AI-specific job postings as well. These roles increasingly pair technical fluency with leadership, decision-making and workflow management, while demand for several traditional programming languages and data-mining skills has declined (Figure 11). Communication and collaboration lead the human skills in demand, followed by critical thinking, problem-solving and judgement. Their growing prominence reflects the complexity and human facets of using these technologies across tasks, teams and projects.

In this context, educational and civic institutions must make efforts to prepare talent for the skills employers will need. This is particularly relevant in NYC, where AI skills are becoming much more important for entry-level roles. The share of entry-level job postings requiring AI skills has increased by more than 2.3 times since 2022, reaching around 5% in the first half of 2026, compared with just 1.8% across the US overall (Figure 12). Governor Kathy Hochul launched Empire AI, the public-private research consortium, in 2024 to expand access to AI resources and develop

talent. The initiative reflected New York's early effort to align universities to prepare students and researchers for an AI-enabled economy.

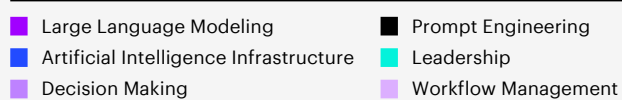
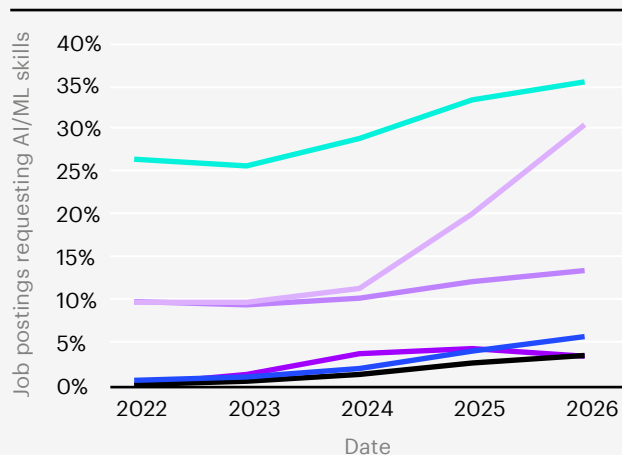
Today's students may become the first generation of "AI natives," much as earlier generations became digital natives. They will need both the technical and human skills required for the technologies and roles of the future. Restrictions or moratoriums on the use of AI in education, such as the recently announced one-year pause in NYC for children in 2-K through eighth grade, highlight a difficult balance.¹⁴



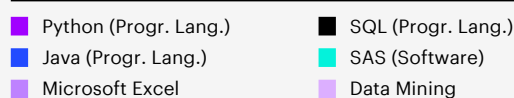
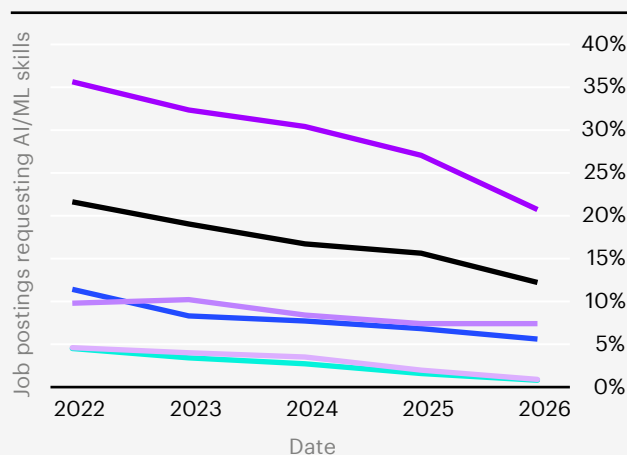
Figure 11: Human skills gain share in job postings requesting AI/ML skills

AI/ML postings in NYC increasingly pair technical fluency with leadership, decision-making, innovation and workflow management, while relative demand for several traditional programming languages and data-mining skills has declined.

Complementary skills



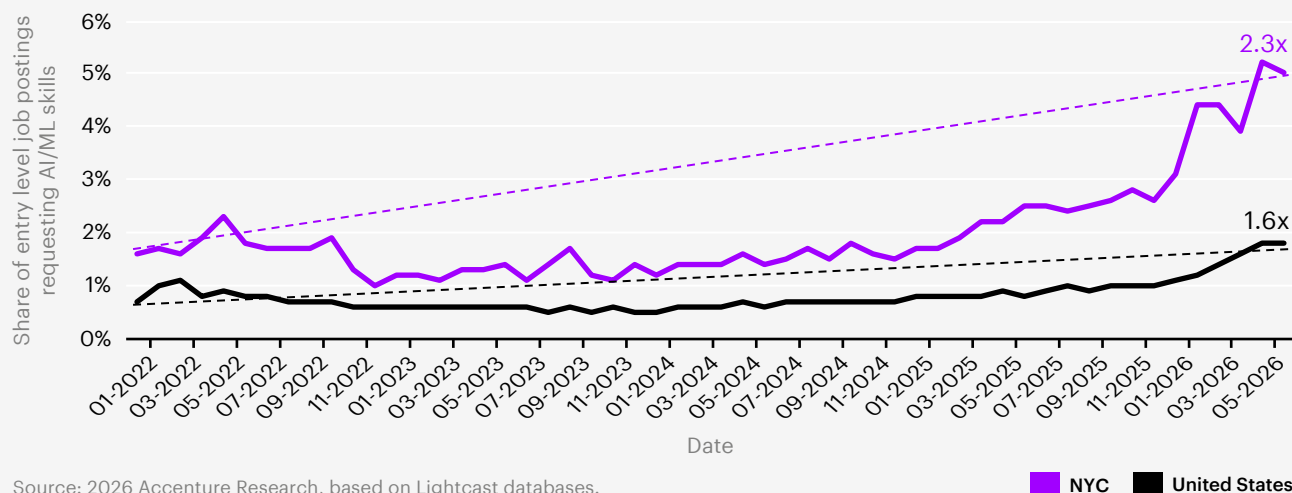
Substitute skills



Source: 2026 Accenture Research, based on Lightcast databases.

Figure 12: Uptick in NYC entry-level job postings requesting AI/ML skills

The share of entry-level job postings requesting AI/ML skills in NYC has increased by more than 2.3 times since 2022.



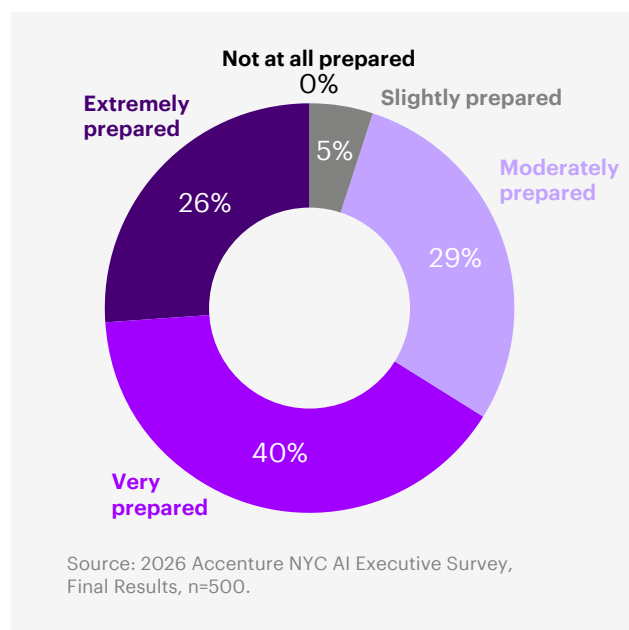
Leaders are weighing the desire for confidence in emerging technologies against the possibility that students could miss opportunities to develop skills that future jobs may require.

Even so, NYC executives told us that the city's K-12 system is well prepared for the demands of an AI-enabled workforce (Figure 13). Maintaining and building on that foundation, however, will require continued collaboration among educators, policymakers and employers. Preparing today's students for tomorrow's workforce will require an education system that develops AI literacy and teaches responsible use, particularly as entry level opportunities expand for those with a high school education.

combine it with context, communication and judgement. Employers and workers expecting fixed job descriptions and conventional recruitment cycles will struggle to keep pace as skill requirements evolve.

Figure 13: Executives say NYC's K-12 system well prepared for demands of an AI-enabled workforce

Question: How prepared is New York's K-12 education system to equip students with AI literacy, responsible-use practices, and the human capabilities needed for an AI-enabled workforce?



Workers need to know when and how to use AI, how to evaluate its output and how to combine it with context, communication and judgement.

The evidence points to a clear conclusion about current business needs: Technical capability remains important, but it is not sufficient. Workers need to know when and how to use AI, how to evaluate its output and how to

Section 2

Business is moving from AI adoption to scaled advantage



Over the past few years, the questions New York leaders face about AI have changed dramatically. In 2024, many applications remained theoretical, and leaders were asking whether and how the technology could be deployed successfully.

By 2025, organizations were moving into implementation, but uncertainty persisted about where AI would create meaningful value and whether early investments would produce measurable returns.

This year's data suggests that organizations are moving from expectation to evidence.

Last year, 92% of executives expected companies investing in AI to gain a measurable competitive advantage within three to five years. This year, nearly half of executives (46%) say their organizations are scaling AI tools and use cases that have already demonstrated measurable value. Another 48% are actively experimenting or running pilots, while only 6% are conducting limited experimentation or pausing to reassess their initiatives (Figure 14).

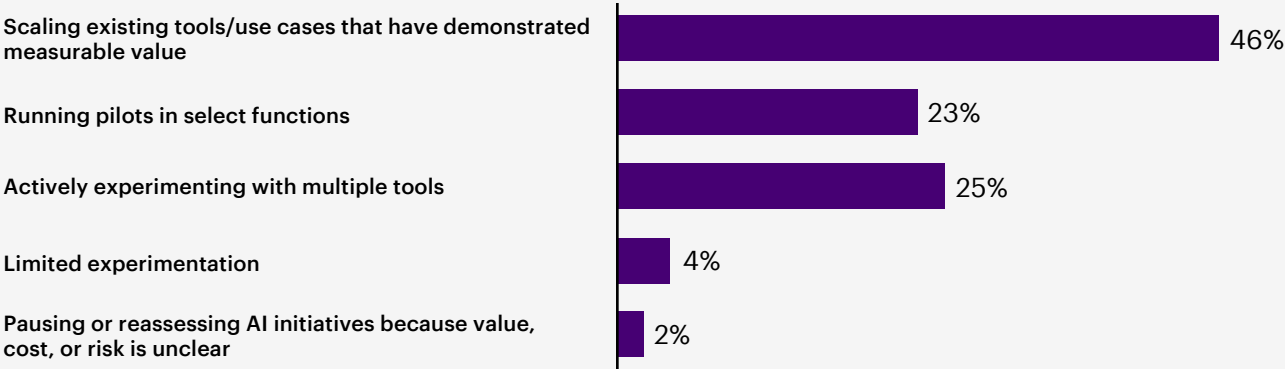
As organizations scale AI, leaders are adopting the technology themselves. Eighty-nine percent of executives say AI literacy is an essential leadership competency, and 88% report that senior leaders use AI in their day-to-day work. Just as important, executives overwhelmingly

agree that leadership use accelerates adoption across the organization (Figure 15). Leaders now face a more exacting set of questions: which applications create value, which deserve further investment and what will it take to deploy them effectively and scale them across the enterprise?

Leaders now face a more exacting set of questions: which applications create value, which deserve further investment and what will it take to deploy them effectively and scale them across the enterprise?

Figure 14: Nearly half of executives scaling AI tools and use cases with demonstrated measurable value

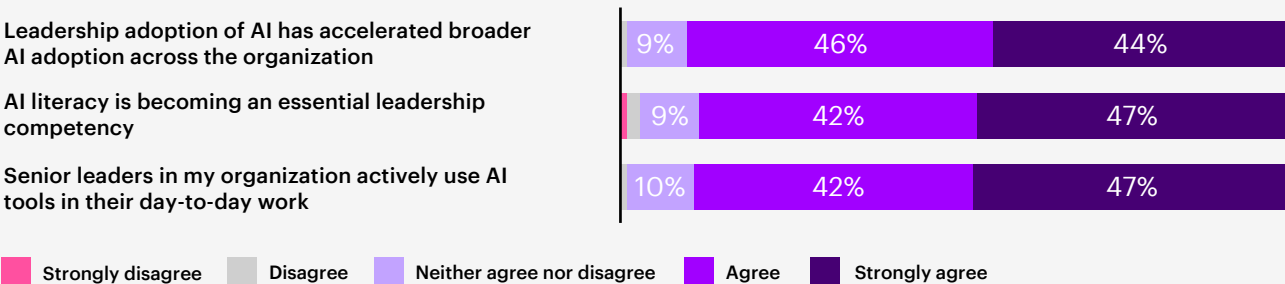
Question: Which of the following best describes your organization’s current approach to evaluating and adopting new AI tools?



Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

Figure 15: Executives overwhelmingly agree leadership use accelerates adoption across the organization

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI and leadership?



Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.
Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

Leaders are finding more ways to create value with AI

Productivity remains the most frequently cited upside of AI in NYC, selected by 52% of executives. But the value extends much further. Nearly half, 49%, cite improved employee experience and talent outcomes; 44% identify innovation and competitive differentiation; 39% point to new revenue streams or business expansion; and 35% cite improved customer or service outcomes. Enhanced decision-making and risk management follow at 30% each (Figure 16).

Cost savings, by contrast, rank last among the listed benefits at 21%. The finding suggests that organizations are associating AI's value less with immediate reductions in operating expense than with greater capacity, better experiences, stronger decisions and new sources of growth.

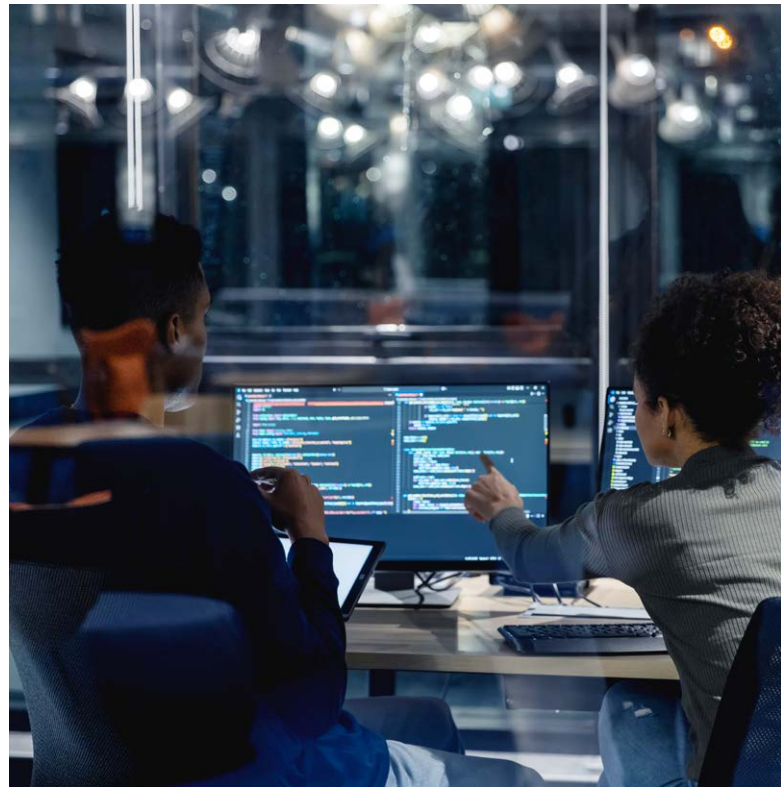
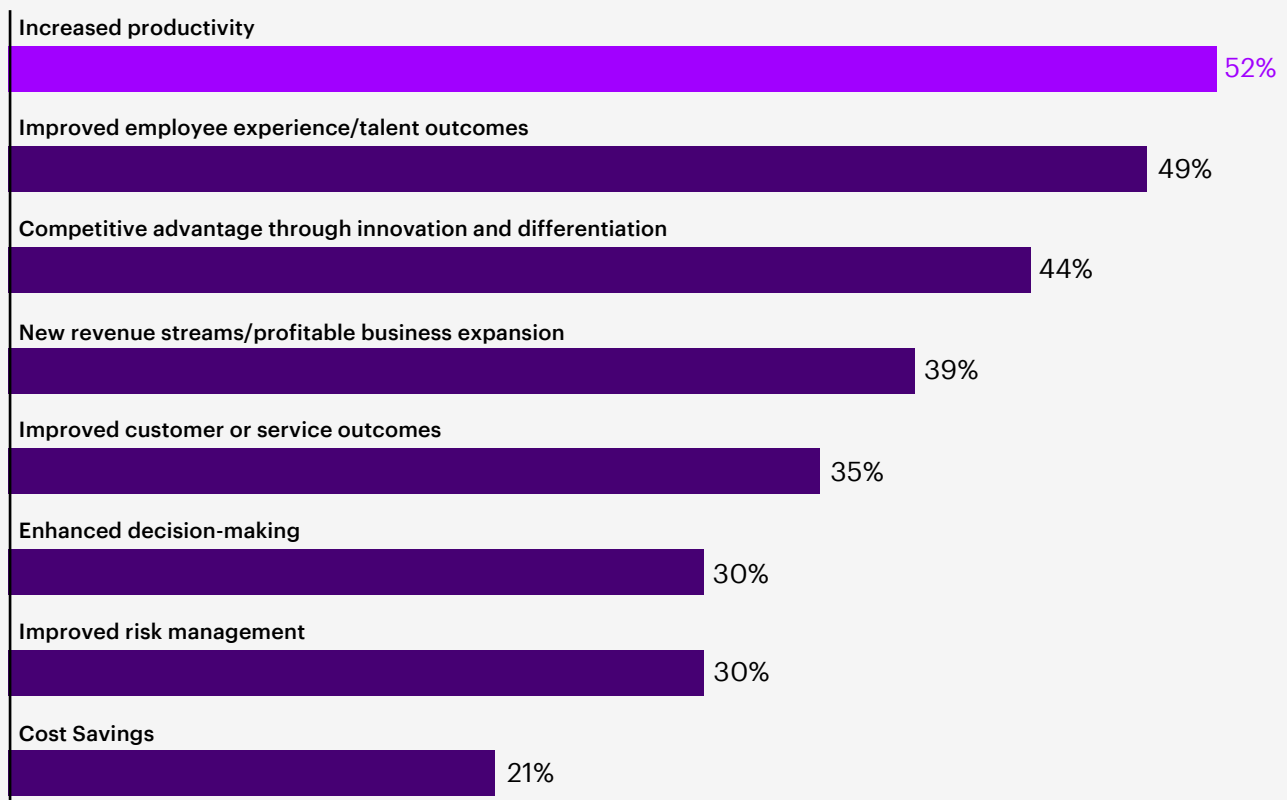


Figure 16: Productivity remains most frequently cited upside of AI in NYC

Question: What do you see as AI's biggest upsides for your business? Select the top three.



Multiple responses permitted; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

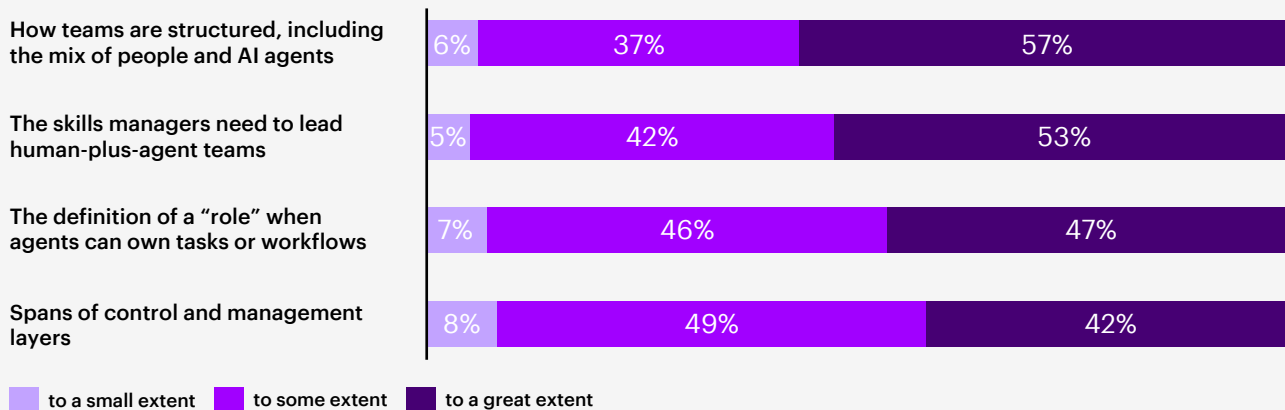
Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

The survey also shows movement from isolated experiments to broader, more ambitious use. Thirty-five percent of executives report extensive use of AI agents, while 27% report limited use and another 29% are piloting or experimenting with them. Large majorities expect agents to change team structures, the skills managers need and the very definitions of roles across the workforce (Figure 17): These changes are raising new questions about human accountability and oversight through increasingly automated processes.

These results are not unique to New York. Google’s AI Agent Trends report found that 52% of executives at organizations using generative AI had agents in production and in use in 2025.¹⁵ Anthropic’s 2026 State of AI Agents report found that 57% of organizations now use agents to handle multi-stage workflows, while NVIDIA’s 2026 State of AI report found that 44% of companies are either deploying or assessing AI agents.^{16,17}

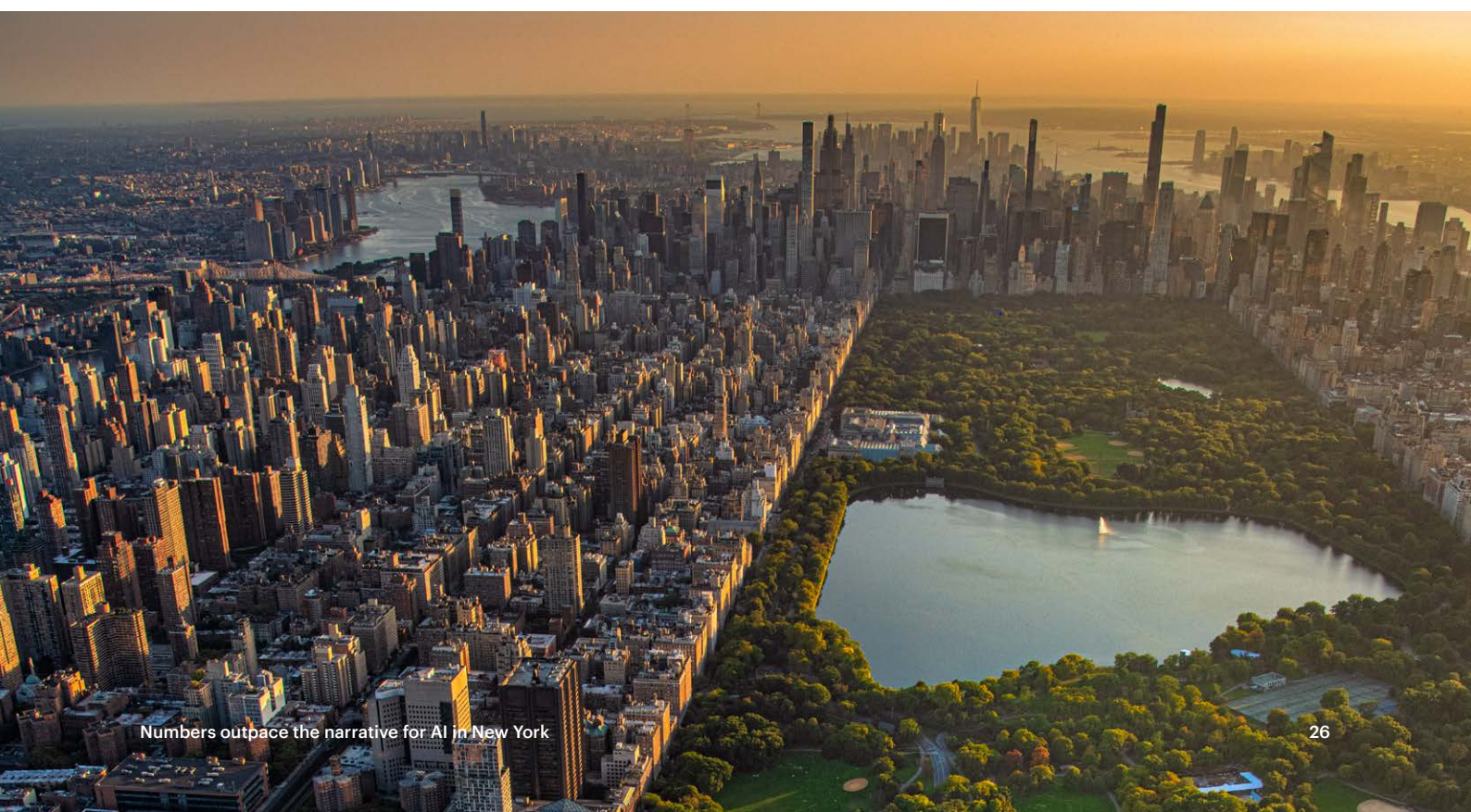
Figure 17: Executives expect AI agents to drive change across organization

Question: To what extent do you expect AI agents to change the following in your organization over the next 1-2 years?



Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, totals may not equal 100%.

Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.



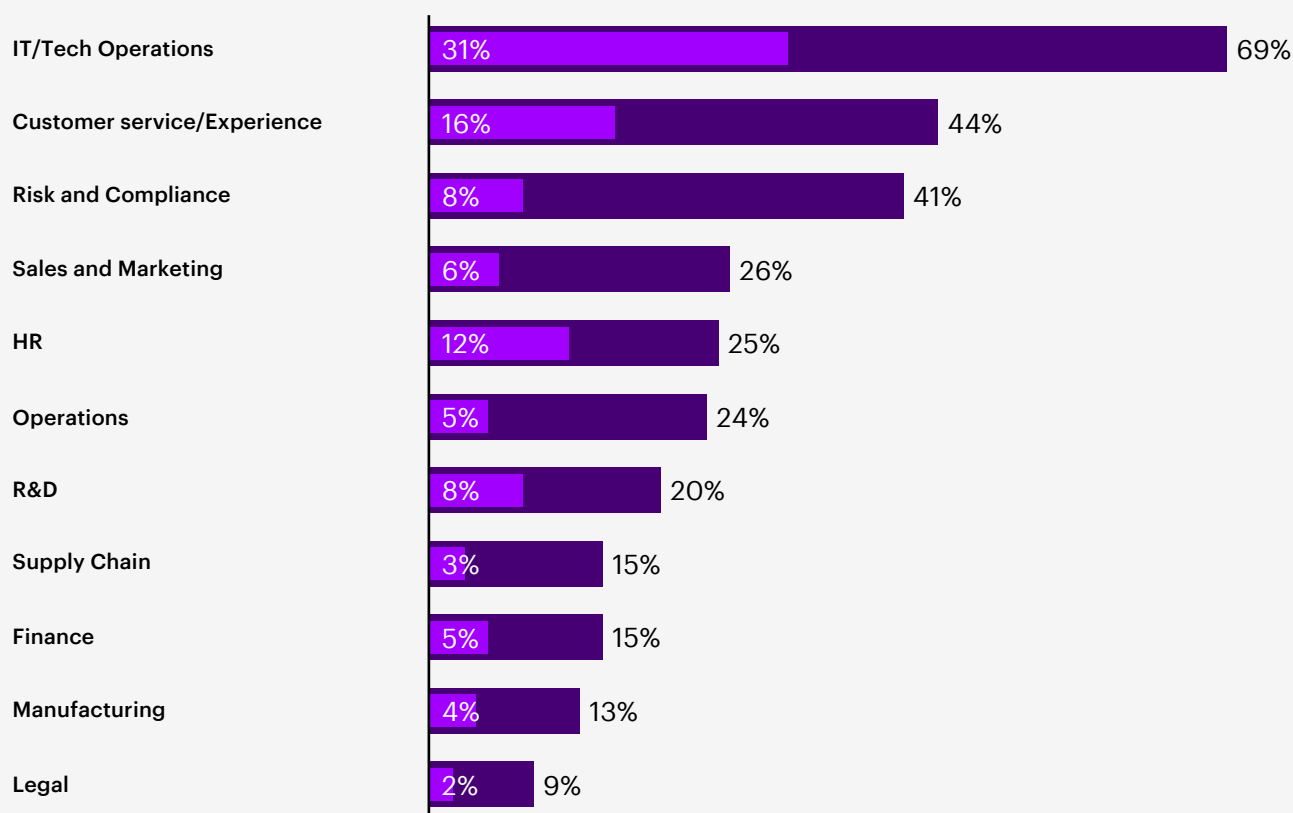
Investment priorities reveal where organizations expect to find scalable value. Sixty-nine percent rank IT and technology operations among their three leading areas for AI investment over the next one to two years. Customer service and experience follows at 44%, and risk and compliance at 41%. Each of these areas, along with human resources, recorded a double-digit percentage-point increase in the share of executives identifying it as a leading near-term investment priority (Figure 18).

This pattern points to growing investment in the foundations and operating functions required for wider deployment. Organizations are directing resources toward the technology, risk and workforce systems through which AI must operate, alongside customer-facing applications and new products.



Figure 18: IT and technology operations among leading areas for AI investment

Question: Which of the following areas of your business are planning to invest or increase investment in AI at scale over the next 1-2 years? Rank the top three, where 1 = primary area of investment.



Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

■ Top 3 area of investment ■ Primary area of investment

Businesses are realigning talent to match strategy and deployment

To see how NYC businesses approached building their AI talent, we conducted an additional, in-depth analysis that examined 520 companies across industries and measured them along two scales. The first, strategic intent, measured whether AI appeared as an explicit priority in the company's publicly stated agenda. The second, technology deployment, measured whether AI tools were actually in use.

We found that nearly two-thirds of companies (65%) showed meaningful signs of AI activity through development, deployment or both. Of all companies analyzed, 15% combined deployed AI tools with a clearly articulated public AI strategy. We classified these organizations as AI leaders. The largest segment, representing 36% of companies, had deployed AI tools but had not communicated a similarly strong AI strategy. We classified these organizations as deployers. Another 14% articulated a clear AI ambition but showed less evidence of deployed tools. We classified them as strategists.

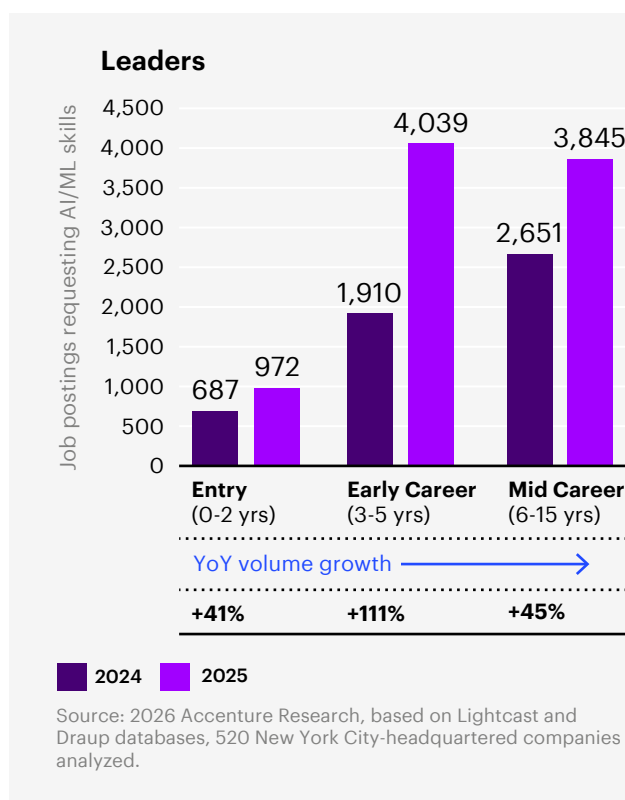
The leaders in our analysis demonstrate the value of pairing strategy with execution. They had the lowest attrition rates (10%) and the strongest year-over-year hiring growth (+15.9 percentage points). They also tended to be larger, more established organizations: 43% of companies with more than 10,000 employees fell into this group, compared with just 3% of companies employing between 100 and 500 people. Strategic ambition, notably, appears across company sizes. The larger divide lies in the infrastructure, procurement, integration and compliance capabilities required to translate intent into operation.

Leaders are also building for the future. Between 2024 and 2025, their volume of job postings for early career (three to five years of experience) AI and machine learning talent grew 111%, far outpacing every other group. They are making a long-term bet on tech talent, hiring today with the expectation that these employees will grow into the senior AI leaders of the next decade (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Leaders target early career AI/ML talent

Between 2024 and 2025, Leaders grew their volume of job postings requesting AI/ML skills for early career (3-5 years of experience) by 111%.



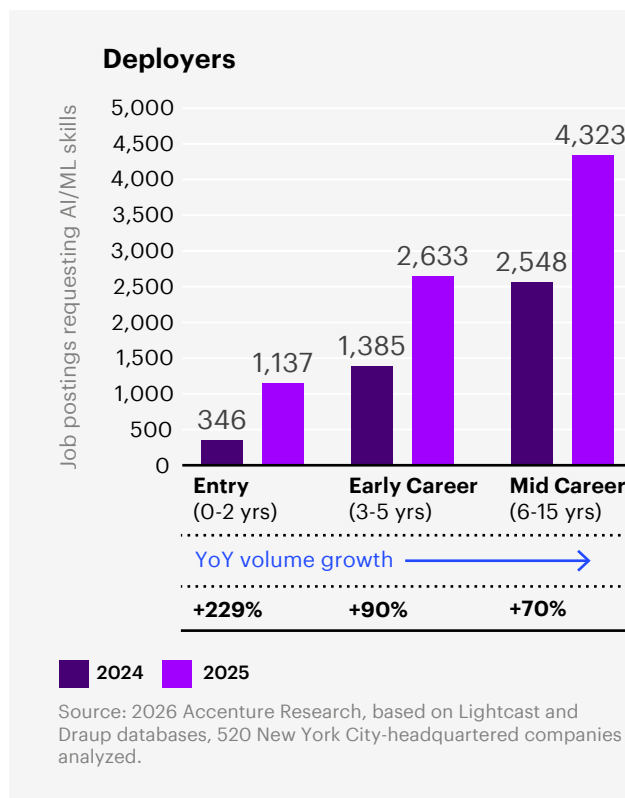
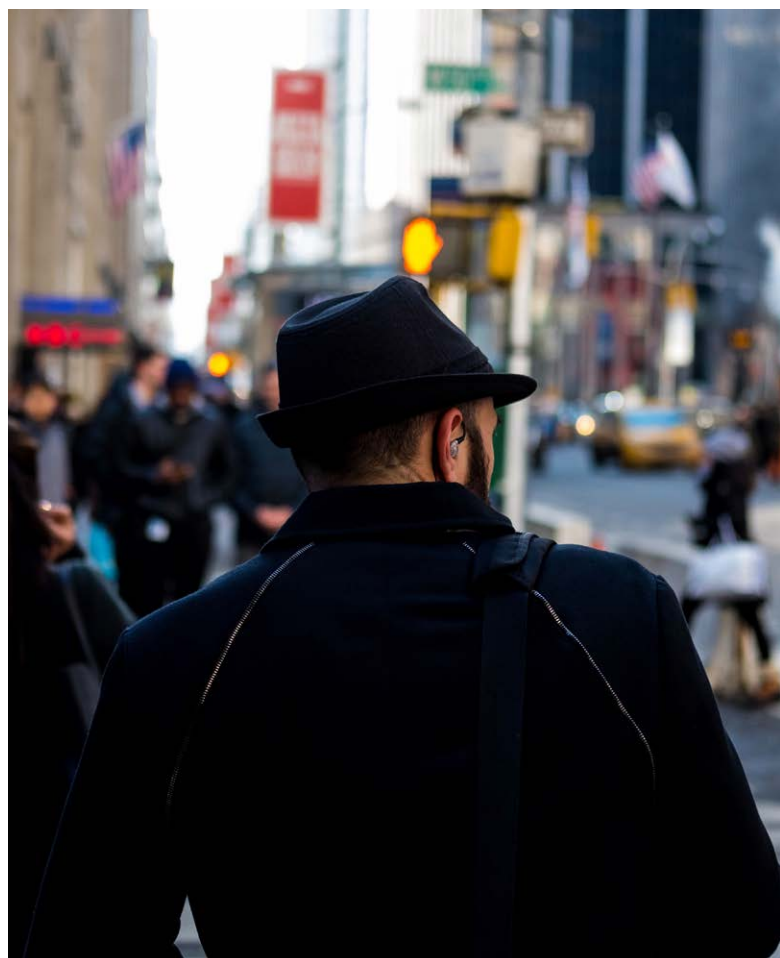
Each of these three groups has a unique hiring focus that reflects its situation. Leaders focus on early career talent for depth and longevity, while strategists aim at attracting mid-career talent to ease speed and execution of company vision. Deployers more than tripled (+229%) their entry-level volume with a likely aim to put deployed infrastructure to work (Figure 20). This supports the broader evidence that suggests that AI's employment effects are not uniform across firms and sectors.

Two other major differentiators emerged from the data. First is in agentic AI: 58% of leaders mention it as part of their strategies, compared to just 2% of deployers. As noted above, NYC executives broadly agree that agentic AI will be a driver for change across workforces and organizations; the companies moving now are likely compounding advantages for the years to come.

The second differentiator separates the two-thirds of companies adopting AI from the remaining third, which we classify as observers. These organizations face serious and growing risks. They are the only group experiencing net hiring contraction, they continue to hire for roles that AI is likely to automate and they are falling further behind in the competition for AI and machine learning talent. Their hiring volume for AI and machine learning roles grew just 3.1%, compared with 70% to 80% among the more active groups.

This is the risk for companies that lack both a vision for scale and a plan for deployment: contraction and the failure to acquire essential talent when it is needed most. By contrast, the first three groups are actively answering the questions that determine AI success, where value is created, which investments merit expansion and how to scale what works.

Figure 20: Deployers more than tripled entry-level volume of job postings requesting AI/ML skills



Section 3

Proactive governance sets a foundation for scale



The pace of AI development is the fastest diffusion of new technology in history, and public and private leaders are working to understand and navigate this dynamic environment.¹⁸ Both New York State and NYC have been prescient in their approaches to these challenges through early actions such as the city's 2023 AI Action Plan, the public-private Empire AI consortium, industry leadership and other early regulations.

Thoughtful efforts towards effective governance at both the civic and industry level are vital, and it is important for executives to involve themselves in these conversations. Governance includes regulations as well as the frameworks and organizational discipline built to keep data, knowledge and AI systems safe, trustworthy and accountable. As organizations entrust AI systems with greater responsibility and AI systems' capabilities continue to grow, the expectations and risks surrounding good governance are vital.

The city's business leaders know trust is a vital requirement. Eighty-four percent of executives agreed that public concern about AI is growing faster than organizations' ability to address it responsibly. We see similar concerns in the ongoing discourses and actions on student-facing AI in NYC schools through eighth grade and on hyperscale data centers. New York's leaders are actively participating in these conversations, with the stated intention to better understand emerging technologies and how to make them work most effectively and fairly for New Yorkers.

City executives are themselves sensitive to these issues. On infrastructure, for example, nine out of 10 respondents agreed that organizations will need to place greater focus on the environmental sustainability of AI infrastructure as AI adoption accelerates, with nearly half (47%) strongly agreeing with the position (Figure 21). This reflects an understanding that while technology sits as a foundation for NYC's economy, AI technologies

are set to raise complex questions around energy, capacity, community impact and more.

As AI technologies and their supporting infrastructure raise these questions to leaders at all levels, New York's willingness to engage these them early has established it as a first mover in shaping how AI develops and scales. These actions have created a strong foundation for governance. Yet that early engagement becomes an advantage only if leaders remain involved. Executives must bring their practical experience and concerns to these ongoing discussions, working alongside and in dialogue with the diverse institutions.

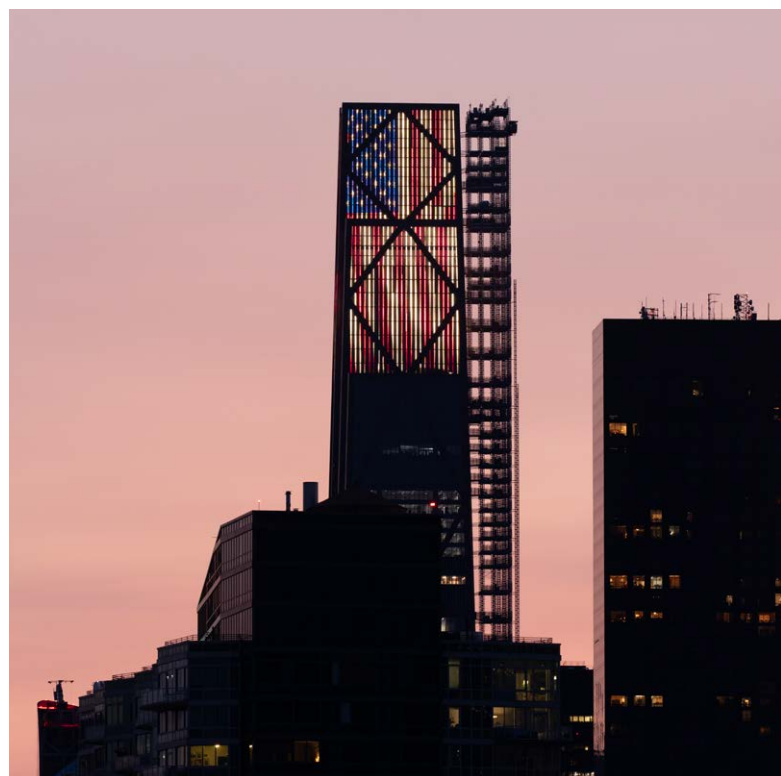
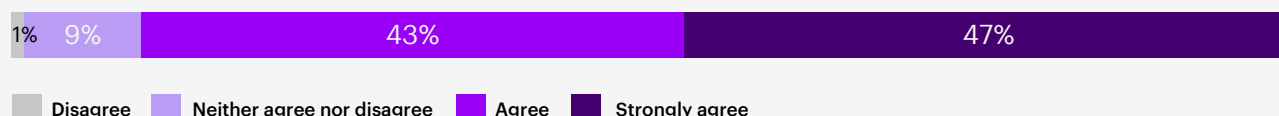


Figure 21: 90% of respondents agreed on need for sustainability in AI infrastructure

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI's impact on business and society?

As AI adoption accelerates, organizations will need to place greater focus on the environmental sustainability of AI infrastructure



Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

AI Highlights from New York's ecosystem

	<p>NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (2022)</p> <p>NYC's existing technology offices were consolidated into the Office of Technology and Innovation to lead a more coordinated, focused effort around the city's use of technology.</p>
	<p>NYC AI Action Plan (2023)</p> <p>A first-of-its-kind plan released by the city for establishing responsible AI use. The plan took combined public and private insights, laying out 37 actions for governance around the city's use of AI. The Office of Technology and Innovation, which published the plan, has initiated or completed 35 out of the 37 action items, according to the city's most recent annual report.¹⁹</p>
	<p>Empire AI Consortium (2024)</p> <p>A first-in-nation \$500 million consortium of New York's public and private research institutions, state government and philanthropic partners, built to provide AI for the public good and create shared AI computing infrastructure. The consortium launched Empire AI Beta in August 2026, a \$40 million NVIDIA-powered supercomputer intended to aid New York researchers. Among its members are the State University of New York (SUNY), the City University of New York (CUNY), Columbia University, New York University (NYU), Cornell University, the University of Rochester, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Flatiron Institute and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.</p>
	<p>New York City Council's AI Oversight Office (2025)</p> <p>The New York City Council's Guaranteeing Unbiased AI Regulation and Disclosure (GUARD) Act created a municipal AI oversight office, the Office of Algorithmic Data Accountability, to oversee and regulate city AI tools.</p>
	<p>NYC AI Nexus (2025)</p> <p>An initiative led by the New York City Economic Development Council for accelerating AI innovation across key sectors and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).</p>
	<p>FutureWorks Commission (2026)</p> <p>A commission composed of advocates, experts and business leaders advising New York's governor on how to encourage broad participation in the benefits of AI technologies. It is intended to produce strategies for monitoring AI impact and identify actions that ensure workers, families and small businesses can gain from AI.</p>
	<p>Office of Digital Innovation, Governance, Integrity and Trust: DIGIT (2026)</p> <p>A state-level body for digital safety and technological governance, coordinating online safety efforts and providing technology governance across the state.</p>

NYC's executives value governance and are investing accordingly

Leaders are increasing investment in risk, compliance and other capabilities that support trustworthy AI. Forty-one percent of executives now rank risk and compliance among their three leading areas for AI investment, up 19 percentage points from last year. This likely reflects growing concern about challenges with direct governance implications. Fifty-four percent of executives cite data privacy and security as a leading business challenge, a concern that has gained prominence as high-profile AI-related cybersecurity incidents make headlines. Another 40% identify regulatory and compliance risks or gaps among their top challenges (Figure 22).

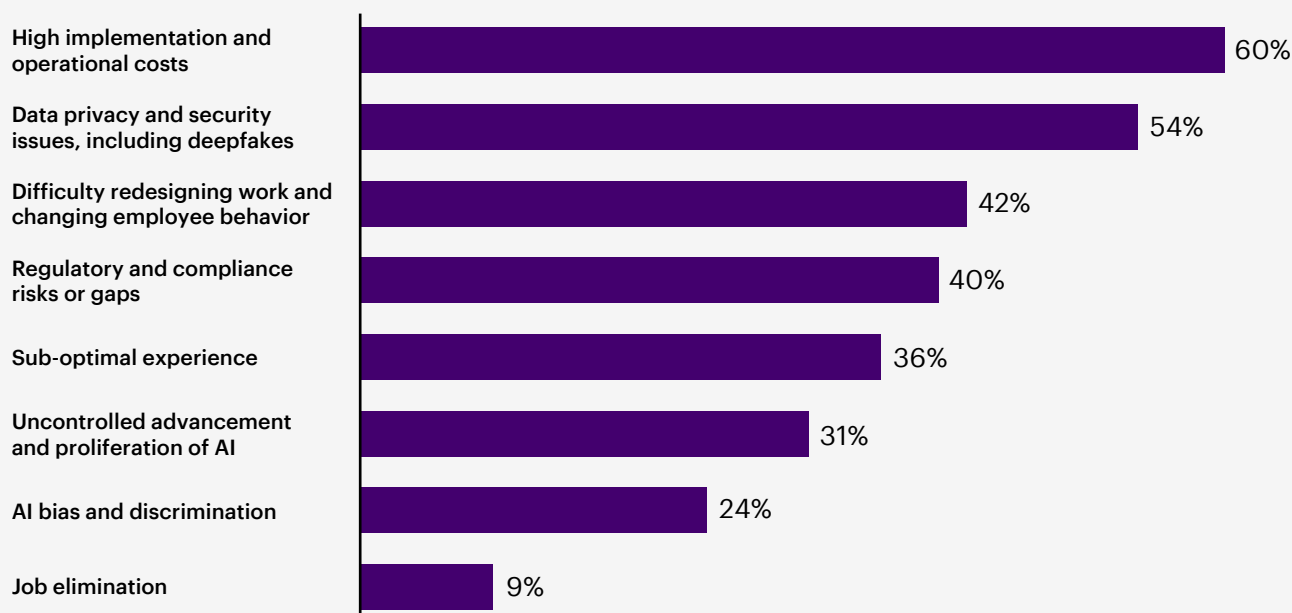
Growing awareness of the effects that poor AI experiences can have may be another driver for this investment. Over a third (36%) of executives

identify these negative experiences as a leading business challenge, up 11 percentage points from last year. The increase suggests leaders are becoming more attuned to the consequences that unreliable or poorly designed systems can have for workers, customers and the public. Systems that produce unreliable outputs, expose sensitive data or create poor experiences can of course do more than fan resentment: they increase risk, stymie adoption, raise remediation costs and limit value.

In this sense, governance is a value accelerator. It reduces uncertainty, enables faster and more reliable decisions and builds confidence among institutions and the public. Strong governance allows innovation and responsible development to reinforce one another. By clarifying accountability and establishing trust, it makes AI easier to deploy and scale across organizations and communities.

Figure 22: Implementation costs, data privacy and security, regulatory and compliance risks among top challenges

Question: What do you see as AI's biggest challenge for your business? Select the top three.



Multiple responses permitted; therefore, totals may not equal 100%. 1% of executives reported 'No downsides observed yet'.

Source: 2026 Accenture NYC AI Executive Survey, Final Results, n=500.

Section 4

Three actions for NYC's business leaders



1

Step forward and shape what's next for AI

Business leaders must take a seat at the table and help shape what comes next with AI. Continuing New York's first-mover advantage requires sustained and deepened engagement, particularly as assumptions around AI are uncertain or evolving. NYC executives should have a place in that conversation alongside city leaders, academic institutions and their industry peers.

Our survey shows the reality: 89% of executives agreed that responsible, safe and equitable AI development was either extremely or very important for New York's approach to AI over the next one to two years. This is not a time for business leaders to go it alone or remain on the sidelines. Efforts like Empire AI and the FutureWorks Commission show the way, with participation and dialogue across the public and private sectors.

2

Prepare skills for convergence, going beyond silos

As AI tools and platforms expand beyond the technology sector, the boundaries between technical and non-technical industries, functions, occupations and skills are blurring. Organizations should reflect this shift by embedding AI across their structures and workflows, expanding on its strengths as a foundational technology capability. The same convergence is reshaping skills, making AI fluency relevant across roles while elevating communication, collaboration and judgment in highly technical work.

The opportunity lies in convergence: bringing technology, domain expertise and human strengths together to create capabilities greater than could be realized in isolation. Business leaders should hire and develop for these blended capabilities, while educators and policymakers should help people build them. The same principle applies to AI literacy and public services, where effective adoption depends on combining technical knowledge with human judgment.

3

Treat governance as a discipline and source of value

As we entrust AI systems with greater responsibility across functions and industries, the organizations best positioned to benefit are those treating governance as a discipline and source of value, rather than a constraint. New York's city and state leaders have set strong early examples, and city executives are already moving in this direction.

Applying governance—the frameworks, oversight and organizational discipline that keep data,

decisions and AI systems trustworthy—both manages risk and builds the institutional and public confidence that allows innovation to scale faster and more reliably. The specifics can vary, but the underlying discipline is consistent: know where AI is making or influencing decisions, build in the oversight and accountability those decisions warrant and design systems where transparency supports resilience. Governance enables confidence and accelerates responsible AI growth.

Conclusion

Across three years of research, New York City's experience with AI has moved from opportunity to application, and now to acceleration and scale. The data shows a city where organizations are capturing value with AI and where leaders are rapidly adjusting to their new reality. Roles and skills are shifting alongside emerging technologies, and leaders are preparing for a future that is already upending expectations.

What's remained consistent, however, are the distinctive strengths that set New York apart: deep talent, diverse industries, strong institutions and an ability and willingness to put new technologies to work. In a turbulent environment, its workforce is adapting, and its public and private leaders have moved to confront the difficult questions of trust, accountability and infrastructure that come with scale.

New York continues to move ahead. The opportunity now is to build on that momentum and turn it into enduring strength, reinforcing New York City's position at the forefront of AI leadership.





CBINSIGHTS

The Emerging AI 50 in NYC

Accenture and Tech:NYC welcomed CB Insights this year as a research partner to study the state of AI enterprises in New York City. Their contribution to this report includes the “NYC Emerging AI 50,” a list of the city’s most promising AI startups. CB Insights created the list exclusively for this report.

AI is creating a new generation of businesses in New York City while changing how its established industries operate. The startups selling into banks, insurers and health systems

offer an early view of what that shift could mean for the city’s economy, from the work being automated to the jobs being created.

The NYC Emerging AI 50 puts 50 of the city’s most promising AI startups in focus.¹ Together, they employ roughly 8,000 people and added approximately 2,450 net jobs over the past year.

Our analysis begins by examining the broader ecosystem around them: where NYC’s venture-backed AI companies are being built, where capital is concentrating and which businesses have reached unicorn scale. We then return to the NYC Emerging AI 50 for a closer look at their sectors, customers and hiring.

¹ CB Insights screened NYC-based AI companies with at least 50 employees and ranked them using its proprietary company scoring, which incorporates signals including financial health, market momentum and commercial traction.

The NYC Emerging AI 50

The most promising NYC-based artificial intelligence startups

CBINSIGHTS + **accenture**

AI infrastructure

CBINSIGHTS + **accenture**

hume Lightning ONYX Pinecone Protege VIAM

Enterprise applications

CBINSIGHTS + **accenture**

Marketing & creative

Agentio Bluefish FLORA

Customer support

REGAL thread

Security

outtake Reality Defender

Software development & coding tools

Superblocks warp

Industry applications

CBINSIGHTS + **accenture**

Financial services

april ARCH BASELANE Carefull
 Casap DALOOPA datarails DualEntry
 Hebbia Order.co Stout Technologies tabs+

Industrials

Adaptive
 COPIA
 Optimal Dynamics

Retail

DATAVATIONS
 Daydream
 Pepper

Insurance

Heron
 Ireserv
 Sixfold

Legal

MANIFEST

Healthcare

adonis Anterior Ascertain AVO Clarium doctronic H1
 healthee inspiren Nitra regard SalvoHealth Tennr

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New York City's AI ecosystem

New York City's five boroughs are home to over 2,000 venture-backed AI companies that have raised a combined \$78.5 billion and employ roughly 187,000 people. That makes NYC the second-largest AI hub in the country, behind San Francisco.

The two hubs are structured differently. San Francisco's capital base is concentrated in a single company: OpenAI accounts for 37% of all Bay Area AI funding. NYC's is distributed. Its largest player, Ramp, represents under 5% of the city's total.

NYC's AI companies also sit at a different layer of the stack. Rather than training frontier models, they sell AI into the banks, insurers, health systems and asset managers that already anchor the city's economy. The city's clearest AI advantage is emerging where the technology meets the expensive, specialized knowledge work its incumbent industries already run on. That pattern holds across the ecosystem, in what gets founded, in what reaches \$1 billion and in who is adding headcount.

The ecosystem is young and broad. The median company was founded in 2021, and nearly two-thirds have been founded since 2020. Most companies are small: The median employs 19 people and has raised \$9 million, sitting beneath a small set of large, established players.

The composition of that base shows where AI is being commercialized. The largest sub-industries are applied and back-office rather than horizontal tooling:

- Business intelligence and analytics: 205 companies
- Accounting and finance: 149 companies
- Healthcare: 144 companies
- Advertising and sales tech: 122 companies
- Monitoring and security: 112 companies
- Application and data integration: 110 companies

Finance sits at the center of that mix. Accounting and finance plus asset and financial management together form one of the largest applied clusters, mirroring the industries that define NYC's economy. It is also where formation most clearly converts into scale: Asset and financial management produces unicorns at more than twice the ecosystem rate, with six unicorns among its 74 companies.

Financial-services AI companies in NYC are more likely than average to break out. Finance is not only the city's largest AI specialization; it is the clearest evidence that its industry density translates into breakout companies.

Investors are organizing around those same verticals, as they mirror the ecosystem's applied tilt on the supply side, with sector-specialist vehicles clustering in NYC's strongest markets:

- Viola FinTech: 40 NYC AI portfolio companies
- Plug and Play: 28 through its fintech accelerator, 22 through insurtech
- Techstars: 69 through its healthcare program, 23 through lifetech

Funding no longer predicts growth

The ecosystem has added an estimated 26,000 net jobs over the past year, but that growth is unevenly distributed. Of roughly 1,900 companies with disclosed headcount, about half grew, a quarter held flat and a quarter shrank, leaving the median company essentially flat. How little that outcome depends on money raised is the notable part. A comparable 26% of companies

contracted whether they had raised under \$5 million or between \$100 million and \$500 million. Raising \$100 million does not make a company meaningfully less likely to be shrinking than raising \$5 million. Funding still marks who has attracted capital, but it says less about which companies are gaining operating momentum, which is why the 50-company cohort below is screened on momentum rather than on capital raised.

Where the capital sits

Capital is far more concentrated than hiring. The 59 largest companies, 3% of the ecosystem, hold roughly half of all money raised by AI companies in NYC. What sets that tier apart is age and maturity. They are older (median founded 2016 versus 2021 ecosystem-wide), later-stage (81% at Series B or beyond versus roughly 13% across the ecosystem) and larger, at a median headcount of 556. Forty-nine of the 59 are already unicorns. The top of the list blends fintech, data infrastructure and generative media.



From a geographic perspective, two names pop up as the hotbed for AI: San Francisco holds more companies and far more capital. NYC's high concentration of the regulated, applied verticals contrasts to San Francisco's concentration in infrastructure and robotics. NYC carries roughly 1.7 times San Francisco's share in accounting and finance, nearly 3 times in asset and financial management and leads in healthcare and real estate; San Francisco nearly doubles NYC's share in application and data integration and leads in robotics. The gap is also narrower than the totals imply. The median NYC AI company has raised more than its San Francisco counterpart, \$9 million versus \$5.5 million.

Largest NYC AI companies by total funding

Company	Funding (\$M)	Valuation (\$M)	Borough	Latest round
Ramp	5,432	60,000	Manhattan	Series F
Cyera	2,300	12,000	Manhattan	Series G
Reflection	2,130	8,000	Brooklyn	Series B
AlphaSense	1,747	7,500	Manhattan	Series G
Optimizely	1,157	1,100	Manhattan	Debt
Dataminr	1,144	4,100	Manhattan	Convertible Note II
Grafana Labs	1,090	6,170	Manhattan	Series E
Ro	1,027	7,000	Manhattan	Series D II
Claroty	882	3,000	Manhattan	Series F
VAST Data	881	30,000	Manhattan	Series F

Borough and latest-round detail as of August 2026.

Share of AI companies by sub-industry: NYC vs. San Francisco

Sub-industry	NYC share	SF share
Finance	10.6%	5.2%
Healthcare	6.9%	5.4%
Real Estate	2.3%	1.2%
Application & Data Integration	5.3%	10.0%
Robotics	0.9%	2.4%
HR & Workforce Management	2.8%	3.7%
Data & Document Management	2.1%	2.9%

The 74 AI unicorns

New York City is now home to 74 AI unicorns, second only to San Francisco (151) among major US hubs and nearly three times Boston's 27. They are 3.5% of the city's AI companies but carry outsized weight: roughly \$39 billion raised, close to half of all capital deployed in the ecosystem, and about 34% of its headcount, some 63,600 employees.

They are also the companies scaling payroll. The median unicorn employs 490 people against an ecosystem median of 19, and 56 of the 74 grew headcount over the past year while the median company across the ecosystem was flat.

Unicorn-scale value concentrates around NYC's core industries, and finance leads. Finance-focused companies have produced 10 of the 74, more than any other industry, alongside a deep bench of scaled players from Ramp and AlphaSense to Addepar and Chainalysis.^{II} The newest of them target the work finance teams do themselves: research, accounting, FP&A, accounts receivable and payable, underwriting and investment analysis.

Beyond finance, the winners cluster in a few data-heavy niches, with monitoring and security producing the most of any single sub-industry (nine) and business intelligence and analytics next (eight).

^{II} Accenture is an investor in AlphaSense.

Largest valuation marks

Company	Valuation (\$M)
Ramp	44,000
VAST Data	30,000
Cyera	12,000
ElevenLabs	11,000
Chainalysis	8,600

NYC AI unicorns by sub-industry

Sub-industry	Unicorns
Finance	10
Monitoring & Security	9
Business Intelligence & Analytics	8
Healthcare	6
Asset & Financial Management & Trading	6
Customer Relationship Management	6

Unicorn creation is accelerating

NYC minted 15 new AI unicorns in 2026 through August, up from seven in all of 2025. Companies founded as recently as 2025, among them Flourish AI (\$2.5 billion) and General Intuition (\$2.3 billion), reached billion-dollar valuations within roughly a year of founding. The path to \$1 billion is compressing more broadly, too: Companies that crossed the mark in 2025–2026 did so a median of five years from founding, against seven for those that reached it before 2023.

A handful of investors consistently beat the field in picking them. Against an ecosystem base rate of 3.5%:

- Tiger Global and Sequoia: roughly 38% of their NYC AI bets each
- Khosla Ventures: 31%
- Lux Capital: 26%
- Bessemer: 21%
- BoxGroup: 11 unicorns from 55 seed-stage bets (20%)

Those rates partly reflect late-stage crossover money piling into companies that had already broken out. BoxGroup's seed-stage record is the clearest case of early conviction in the NYC ecosystem.

The largest unicorns are wiring themselves into NYC's core institutions:

- Ramp: 171 tracked business relationships, including Visa, Microsoft and OpenAI.
- Chainalysis: 176 relationships, including PayPal, Google and Meta.
- Maven Clinic and Spring Health: embedded into employers, insurers and health plans including Amazon, Aetna and Workday.

These companies are not selling to each other. They are embedding into the banks, insurers, payment networks and health systems that anchor the city's economy.

Inside the NYC Emerging AI 50

Collectively, the 50 have raised \$4.3 billion in funding, roughly 5% of the city's AI capital. These companies create value at the application and deployment layer rather than in the underlying model infrastructure, and their customer lists follow the same industry pattern as the tier above them:

- Financial services and legal: Hebbia sells into investment banks and law firms such as Seyfarth Shaw; Arch and Carefull into wealth managers such as Edward Jones; Stuut into payments giant Fiserv.
- Insurance: Sixfold and Reserv sell into carriers including Munich Re and Skyward Specialty.
- Healthcare: Ascertain, Clarium and Tennr sell into health systems including Northwell Health and Community Health Network.
- Enterprise pull is concentrated in one name: deepfake detection startup Reality Defender alone accounts for 11 of the cohort's Fortune 500 relationships, including JPMorgan Chase, IBM, Visa and Microsoft.

Net hires by company-size band

Headcount band	Companies	Net hires added (1-Y)	% of net hires
50–99	26	545	22%
100–199	12	594	24%
200–499	8	678	28%
500+	4	629	26%

The corporate capital behind the 50 is pointed in the same direction:

- Google Ventures is the most active corporate backer: Daydream, DualEntry, Tennr, Hebbia and Warp.
- Insurers Munich Re, Guidewire and Salesforce Ventures back underwriting-AI company Sixfold.
- Health systems and pharma: Novartis, CVS Health Ventures, Kaiser Permanente and Northwell back H1, Clarium and Ascertain.

The deepest strategic benches sit with companies selling into regulated incumbents, a sign that those incumbents are investing where they may also intend to buy.

Sector mix and hiring

The cohort is overwhelmingly industry applications: AI built for a specific sector rather than horizontal tooling. Thirty-five of the 50 fall here, led by healthcare (13 companies) and financial services (12), with smaller clusters in insurance, industrials and retail (three each). The remaining 15 are split between enterprise applications (nine across marketing and creative, customer support, security and coding tools) and AI infrastructure (six).

Industry applications also drive the hiring: they account for 1,788 of the cohort's approximately 2,450 net hires (73%), led by financial services (+855) and healthcare (+559). Enterprise applications grew fastest by rate (median +82%, pulled up by marketing and creative names like FLORA and Bluefish), while AI infrastructure was essentially flat. NYC's AI

activity is concentrated in the regulated, data-rich industries the city already leads.

The cohort employs nearly 8,000 people and added roughly 2,450 net hires over the past year, a 44% increase on prior-year headcount. Among companies with headcount above 100, the fastest growers were FLORA (+390%), Bluefish (+332%) and Lightning AI (+211%); only four companies contracted.

That growth is not a small-startup effect. Net hires are near-identical across every company-size band, so hiring holds as these companies scale.

The direct job creation is measurable, but it is the smaller effect. The larger prize is the productivity gains these companies enable across the finance, healthcare and insurance sectors they serve, which employ a far greater share of the city than the startups themselves.

NYC's advantage is becoming more valuable as AI moves from experimentation into day-to-day business. The city already has the banks, insurers, health systems, asset managers and other large institutions that AI companies want as customers. The NYC Emerging AI 50 shows a group of startups beginning to grow alongside those industries, with hiring spread across companies of very different sizes.

What happens next will matter beyond the startup sector. If these companies continue to move into the core workflows of NYC's largest industries, their economic impact will come from changing how far larger employers operate. The companies on this list are still early, but they offer a first look at where that change is already underway.

About the research

Survey of New York City executives

Accenture surveyed 500 C-suite leaders across 20 industries at organizations with revenues greater than \$50 million and operations in New York City. We conducted the survey between July and August 2026 across all five boroughs. This year's survey gathers executives' perspectives on AI adoption and business value, organizational readiness and leadership, the changing nature of work and the skills workers will need in an

AI-enabled economy. It also examines AI talent recruitment and development, partnerships with academic institutions, responsible AI adoption, infrastructure needs and the growing use of AI agents. The findings show how New York City can strengthen its position as a global AI hub while preparing its businesses, workforce and residents for the next phase of AI-enabled growth. The sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.

New York City roles and skills analysis

Accenture's job postings analysis used Lightcast data, which aggregates and standardizes online job advertisements across the United States and provides structured information on occupations, industries, education, experience, geography and skills. Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) postings are defined as postings explicitly requesting at least one skill within Lightcast's "Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning" skill subcategory. The data was used to assess the share of AI/ML job postings, how skill requirements are evolving and which skills are demanded alongside AI/ML capabilities, with cuts by occupation industry,

geography, education and experience. Entry-level postings are defined as those requiring no more than two years of experience.

The Skill Change Index measures how much the skill profile of an occupation has changed over time. For each role, it compares the share of job postings requesting each skill in 2022 and 2026. A score of 0 indicates no change in the skill profile, while a score of 1 indicates a complete replacement of demanded skills. The higher the score, the more an occupation's demanded skills have shifted.

New York City business AI development and deployment analysis

Accenture's business analysis covers 520 New York City-headquartered companies across financial services, enterprise software, professional services, media, healthcare, retail and other industries. Each company was assessed on two independent dimensions based on Draup data: strategic intent, based on explicit AI priorities in its public agenda (for example, generative AI, agentic AI, large language models, AI strategy), and technology deployment, based on confirmed purchases

of AI tools and platforms (for example, OpenAI, Claude, GitHub, Copilot), providing evidence of actual adoption and spending.

K-means clustering identified four profiles: leaders, with high strategic intent and deployment; strategists, with high intent but limited deployment; deployers, with strong deployment but limited stated intent; and observers, with limited signals on both dimensions.

Appendix

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Learn more about NYC's AI deployment

[Built to lead: New York's momentum toward global leadership in applied AI](#)

Accenture x Tech:NYC

[Decoded Futures](#)

Tech:NYC Initiative

[2025 Annual Report](#)

New York Jobs CEO Council

[Artificial Intelligence Is Already Reshaping New York City](#)

Partnership for New York City

[New York City's AI Advantage: Driving Economic Growth & Technological Transformation](#)

New York City Economic Development Corporation

[Scoring Tech Talent 2026](#)

CBRE Research

[Pulse of Change](#)

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About Accenture

Accenture helps the world's leading enterprises reinvent by building their digital core and unleashing the power of AI to create value at speed for organizations across industries. Our strategy is to be the reinvention partner of choice for our clients and lead in the safe, widespread adoption of AI, and to be the most client-focused, AI-enabled, great place to work in the world. We bring together the talent of our approximately 814,000 people with proprietary assets and platforms, deep process and industry expertise, and leading ecosystem relationships to deliver end-to-end solutions and measurable outcomes at scale. Through our Reinvention Services, we offer broad expertise across Cybersecurity, Digital Core, Finance, Industry and Enterprise, Song, Supply Chain and Engineering, and Talent, with advanced capabilities in AI and Data, Industry and Process, and Technology. We serve approximately 9,000 clients and generated approximately \$74 billion in FY26 revenue.

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