

UK PLC underskilled to join AI revolution say seven in 10 British leaders

UK businesses risk falling behind due to AI skills shortages

BIRMINGHAM, WEST MIDLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM, November 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than a third of British businesses that have tried to implement AI solutions in the past 12 months have seen these projects fail. New research published today reveals a lack of proper skills and experience is the top reason behind failure.

The study, conducted in September 2024, indicated that a lack of AI-specific skills and experience is holding businesses back. A significant majority (85%) of leaders recognised the benefits that properly implemented AI solutions can bring, although less than a third (28%) felt that their workforce currently had sufficient skills to enable the effective, safe use of AI.

Just over half (52%) of UK businesses have attempted to integrate AI into their daily practices and a third (36%) of business leaders said that their organisations' efforts to integrate AI have failed. Some sectors have had better success, such as the IT industry where the failure rate was reported as 16%, however, for many, the rate of failure is far higher. A third (30%) of GPs and 29% of finance businesses report AI project failures, while in sectors like education, the appetite to explore AI has lagged behind the general market: 65% of education professionals said they had not considered AI, against the average for all industries of 48% who have yet to consider AI in their businesses.

The results are revealed in the ninth [OneAdvanced](#) 2024/5 Annual Trends Report, which combines more than 6,000 senior executive voices from a cross-section of British businesses.

A quarter (26%) of leaders said that their organisation had not yet developed an AI strategy, while 30% said they did not have the in-house expertise to move forward with AI plans.



Digital upgrades are on the cards for many organisations, with two thirds (66%) reporting plans to upgrade their systems. However, AI adoption is sporadic among businesses, with only 14% reporting that it is actively integrated into processes following comprehensive planning and preparation. Most leaders reported a partial uptake of AI in their business, often noting that different departments or functions are forging ahead in siloes from the rest of the organisation.

The report also found that almost half of leaders believe that more should be done to prepare the future workforce for AI, with 23% supporting Government investment in schools and colleges to develop AI-specific training programmes. A further 20% stated that Government and businesses alike should invest more in training and reskilling the existing workforce.

Commenting on the findings, Simon Walsh, CEO of UK-headquartered software provider OneAdvanced, said: “Leaders of British businesses have shared that the single biggest challenge they face is finding the right talent to take their businesses forward. Productivity in the UK is at an all-time low, with leaders’ inability to skill up and embrace AI risking them lagging behind their global counterparts.

“If growth is truly the top goal for British businesses, then cohesive technological strategies that include AI adoption will need to be a priority in the coming period. Businesses are being held back by a lack of expertise, which often leads to a gold-rush for certain skills to be hired or third parties to supplement the gaps. Collectively, we simply cannot afford to wait for the right people to become available, or the country risks losing significant ground against the global competition,” he added.

Dr Roger Barker, Director of Policy at the Institute of Directors, added: “AI has huge potential when it comes to boosting the growth and productivity of British businesses, yet these findings indicate that mainstream business leaders have yet to exploit its full potential. The global pace of AI development and adoption is accelerating and challenger businesses from all over the world are making substantial headway by making use of all the new technologies available to them. UK business leaders should be encouraged to invest in the digital infrastructure and human capital that will enable their growth.”

The OneAdvanced 2024 Trends Report, <https://trends.oneadvanced.com> .

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Methodology

The research was carried out online by Research Without Barriers – RWB, on behalf of OneAdvanced, with all surveys conducted between 23rd August 2024 and 13th September 2024. The sample comprised 6,005 UK senior decision makers (from organisations with 100+ employees). All research conducted adheres to the UK Market Research Society (MRS) code of conduct (2023).

Research Without Barriers (RWB) is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (2018). The full 2024 Trends Report can be downloaded from <https://trends.oneadvanced.com/>.

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About OneAdvanced

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Customers trust OneAdvanced to deliver digitalisation through innovative technology, addressing business problems through intelligent insight. Our years of sector knowledge means we are a strategic partner to our customers, who use technology that touches the lives of millions of people every day. From caring for patients in the NHS and social care to meeting tenants' housing needs; supporting learners in education and apprenticeships to navigating complex legal matters; and making sure goods get to their destination on time managing complex supply chains.

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