

Report Highlights How 81% of SMBs Believe in AI's Potential But Only 27% Make It a Company-Wide Priority

A new report finds that AI success is 2.5 times more likely when businesses bring in external advisors.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Small and mid-sized businesses see AI as a breakthrough technology — but most aren't acting on it. A new global survey of more than 600 business leaders reveals that while 81% believe AI can help achieve business goals, only 27% say AI is discussed regularly at the company-wide level.



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Cheryl Baldwin, Director of Marketing & Communications,
WSI

WSI's 2025 AI Business Insights Report reveals a growing execution gap that could leave late adopters at risk. However, the data also shows that companies working with external consultants are 2.5 times more likely to successfully implement AI strategies than those going it alone.

The Key to Execution: External Expertise
Insights from the report reveal:

- Confidence vs. Action Gap: 81% believe AI can help achieve business goals—but only 27% say it's discussed regularly at a company-wide level.
- Familiarity vs. Training Gap: 59% of respondents are familiar with AI, yet 52% have had no formal training.

□ Uneven Adoption Across Departments: AI adoption is expanding beyond marketing and leadership into sales (+10%), IT (+7%), and operations (+9%)—but still lags in HR (9%) and Finance (9%).

□ Leadership vs. Execution Divide: 83% of executives are confident about AI, yet many aren't

using it in daily operations. Instead, managers and employees are carrying most of the hands-on adoption work.

"SMBs often underestimate the complexity of rolling out AI company-wide," says Cheryl Baldwin, Director of Marketing & Communications at WSI. "External advisors help cut through the noise, giving teams the confidence and clarity they need to execute successfully."

The Role of External Advisors

The report identifies external advisors as a critical catalyst for AI success. Internal teams often face time and skill shortages, which can create silos and hinder progress. Consultants help bridge the gap—guiding businesses in selecting tools, building adoption roadmaps, and ensuring company-wide alignment.

Why it Matters Now

The data reveals a clear urgency: businesses that wait risk falling behind. With AI investment accelerating globally and governments rolling out new AI policies, SMBs that fail to prioritize execution risk being locked out of emerging opportunities, while early adopters are already streamlining their operations, investing in training, and integrating AI into their strategies. For those without clear plans, the gap between confidence and execution will only widen.

"Our data shows optimism is high, but execution is lagging," says Valerie Brown-Dufour, President of WSI. "What separates success from stalled experiments is structure — training, alignment, and often external guidance to keep AI from becoming another underused tool."

The full report is available for download at marketing.wsiworld.com/ai-report.

About WSI

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2025 WSI AI Business Insights Report

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