

Study: 42% of U.S. Workers Embarrassed to Ask for Help With New Tech—Posing A Risk To AI Adoption

Despite widespread use and high confidence, some employees are navigating AI in silence, creating risk and missed opportunity for organizations

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study from [INTOO](#), [The Hidden Culture Issue Slowing AI Adoption](#), conducted by The Harris Poll, reveals a critical disconnect in workplace AI adoption: while employees are rapidly embracing artificial intelligence and expressing high confidence in their abilities, many are doing so without clear guidance, transparency, or support.

The research, based on a survey of 1,158 U.S. workers (those employed full or part time), shows that 52% of employees consider themselves experts at using AI for work-related tasks, and 63% believe their AI knowledge for work-related tasks makes them more valuable employees. However, beneath that confidence lies a cultural challenge that organizations can no longer afford to ignore.

One in five employees (20%) report they are unclear about what is acceptable when using AI for work-related tasks, and one in four (25%) say they would not feel comfortable telling others within their organization they used AI to complete a work task. This leads to what INTOO identifies as "silent AI usage"—a pattern of informal, unstructured experimentation happening without visibility or shared learning.

"This isn't a technology gap; it's a culture gap," said Mira Greenland, Chief Revenue Officer at INTOO. "Employees are clearly motivated to use AI and see its value, but many don't feel safe being transparent about how they're using it or asking for help. With AI advancing at a rapid pace, organizations can't afford to have employees learning in isolation or falling behind. When adoption happens in the shadows, companies risk inconsistent practices, missed innovation, and a workforce that can't keep pace with the speed of change."

The study highlights several key findings:

- Lack of clarity and transparency with AI: 20% of employees say they are not clear on what is and isn't acceptable at their company when using AI for work-related tasks, while 25% wouldn't feel comfortable telling others within their organization if they used AI to complete a work task.

- Cultural barriers to learning new technology: 42% of workers say it would be embarrassing to ask coworkers for help with new technology, including AI, which could limit collaboration and shared skill-building.
- Generational paradox with young workers: Younger workers (18–34) are more likely to be confident in their AI skills (63%, compared to 39% ages 45+), but also the most likely to feel embarrassed asking coworkers for help using new technology (55% vs. 35% ages 35+).
- Mixed sentiment on job security related to AI: While 34% of workers are worried AI could replace their jobs within two years, the majority (59%) are not concerned, highlighting a complex balance between optimism and fear.

These findings suggest that the primary barrier to effective AI adoption is not technical capability, but organizational culture. Without clear guidelines, open dialogue, and psychological safety, AI use becomes fragmented, inconsistent, and difficult to manage.

INTOO's report emphasizes that organizations must move beyond simply deploying AI tools and instead focus on creating environments where employees can use them openly and collaboratively. Key recommendations include:

- Establishing clear, practical AI guidelines to reduce ambiguity
- Normalizing transparency by encouraging leaders to model AI usage openly
- Fostering psychological safety so employees feel comfortable asking questions and sharing how they work

"AI is already embedded in how work gets done," added Greenland. "The organizations that will lead are the ones that build cultures where people can use these tools openly, learn from each other, and grow together—not quietly on their own."

Survey Methodology:

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of INTOO from March 31 - April 2, 2026 among 1,158 full/part time employed adults ages 18 and older. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 3.6 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact us.media@intoo.com.

About INTOO

With offices around the world, INTOO is the outplacement and career development flagship for Gi Group Holding, a global leader in HR and talent solutions, and is also a founding member of

Career Star Group's global network of outplacement providers. We bring 30+ years of experience delivering high-touch, people-focused programs to more than 25,000 companies worldwide, supporting employees at every stage of change.

Sarina Basch

INTOO

+1 888-879-9357

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/910384138>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.