



Private Equity Benchmark on AI Adoption

Pulse Survey Results | March 2026

Insights may be shared with attribution.

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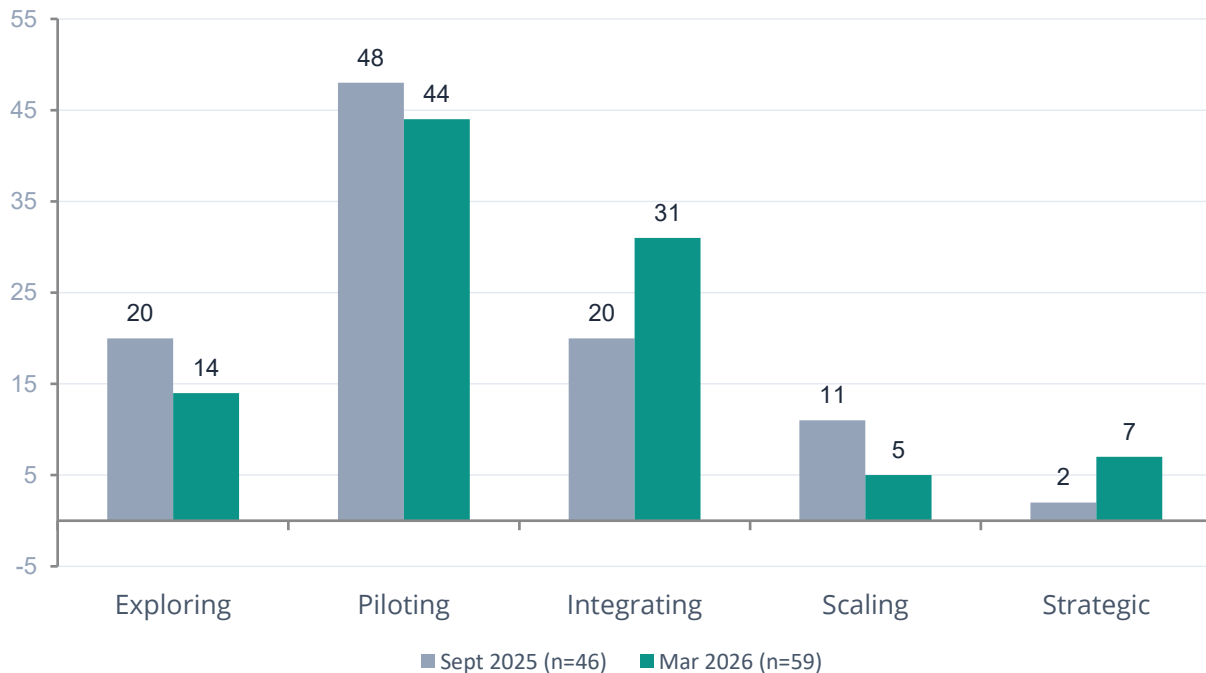
About This Survey

Survey Context

- This pulse survey was fielded in late February 2026 across the AI Pathfinder PE network with 59 respondents
- It builds on the September 2025 benchmark, enabling some period-on-period comparisons on maturity and perception.
- New questions explore readiness sentiment, agentic AI expectations, and practitioner tool adoption.
- Respondent mix: Value Creation (31%), Investment/Diligence (29%), AI Operators (15%), Origination (8%), Fund Ops (5%), Other (12%).

AI Maturity at Firm Level

September 2025 vs March 2026 | A shift from piloting toward integration



Key Shifts

Exploring

20% → 14% ▼

Piloting

48% → 44% ▼

Integrating

20% → 31% ▲

Scaling

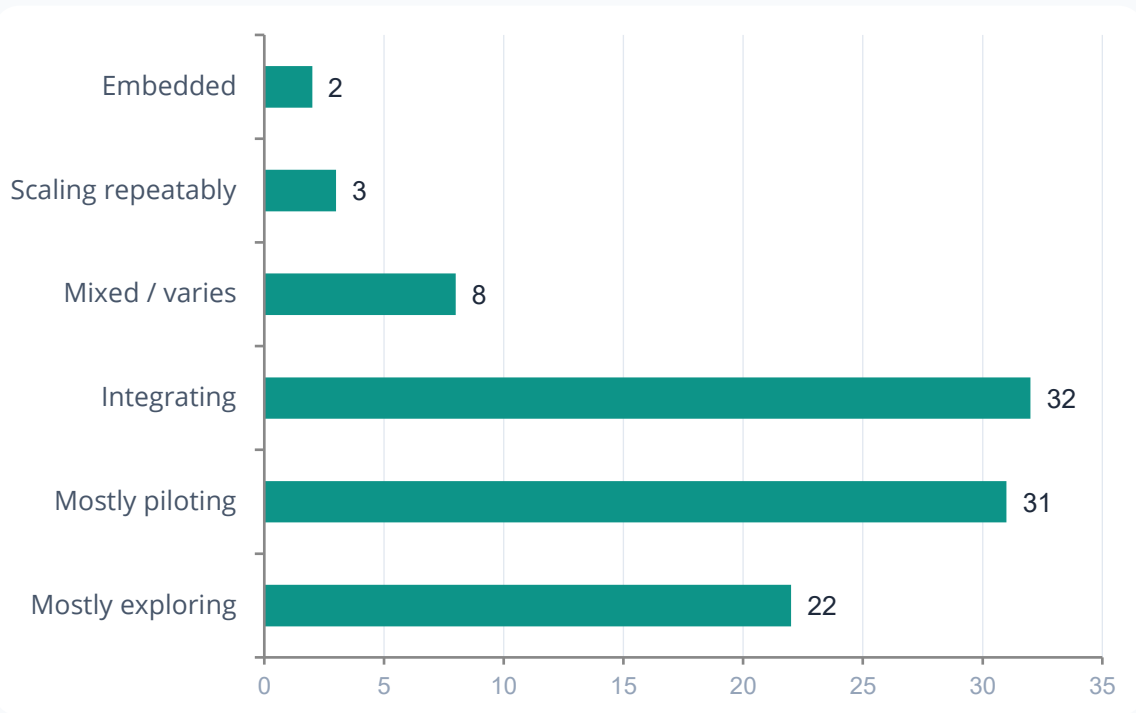
11% → 5% ▼

Strategic

2% → 7% ▲

Portfolio AI Maturity

How respondents rate the AI maturity of portfolio companies they are closest to (n=59)



Notable

53%

of portfolios are still mostly exploring or piloting

32%

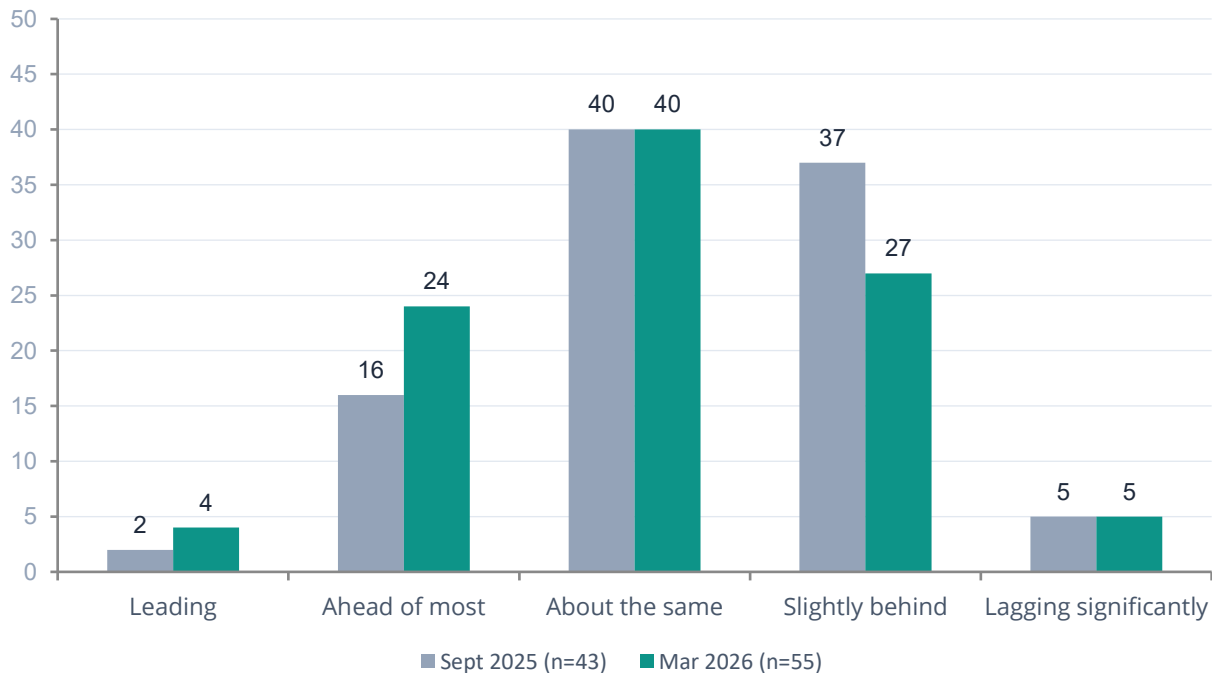
are integrating AI into operations

5%

are scaling or embedded

Perception vs Peers

September 2025 vs March 2026 | Growing confidence relative to peers



Key Shifts

Ahead of most

16% → 24% ▲

About the same

40% → 40% ●

Slightly behind

37% → 27% ▼

Readiness Pulse

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement (n=55)

We expect portcos to scale AI beyond pilots within 12 months



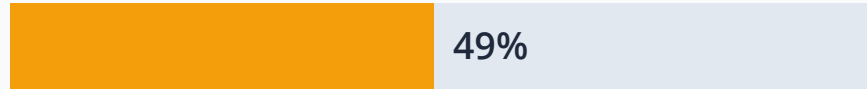
Clear ownership & accountability to scale AI in the next 6 months



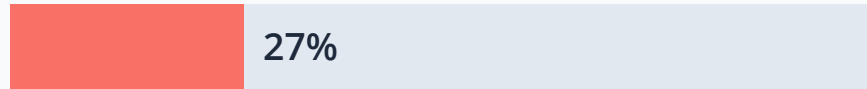
We can articulate a credible ROI case for priority AI initiatives



Governance & controls in place to deploy AI safely



Data foundations good enough for scaled AI adoption

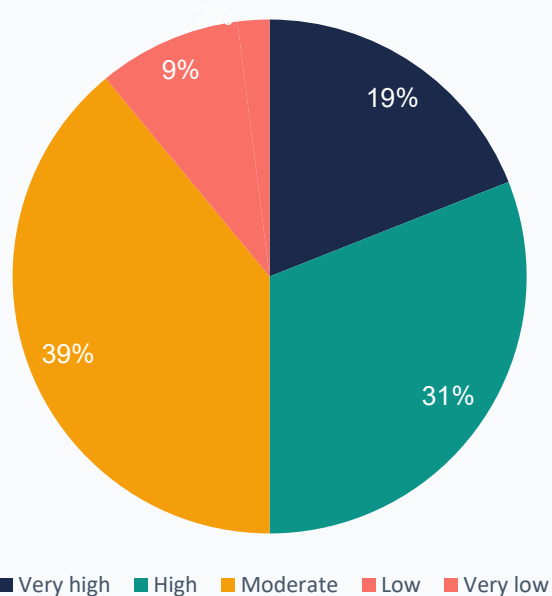


60%+ 40-59% <40%

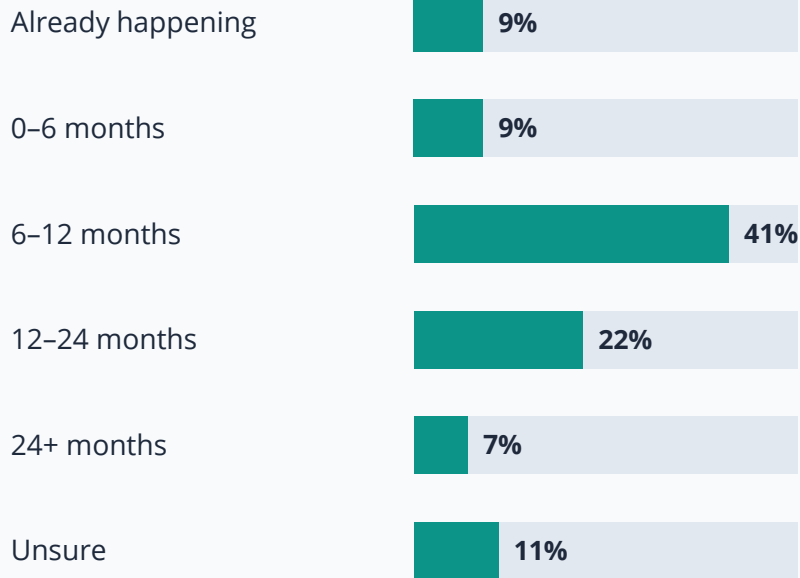
Agentic AI: Confidence & Timeline

How confident are respondents in their understanding, and when do they expect impact? (n=54)

Understanding of Agentic AI



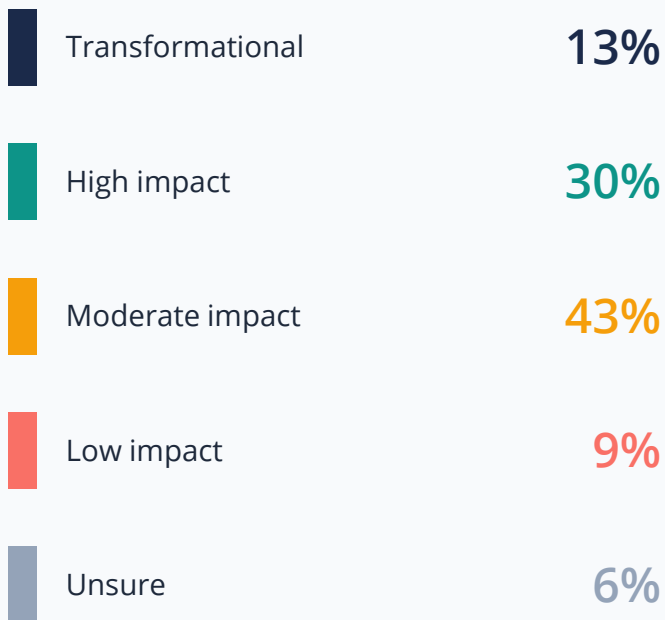
Expected Timeline for Impact



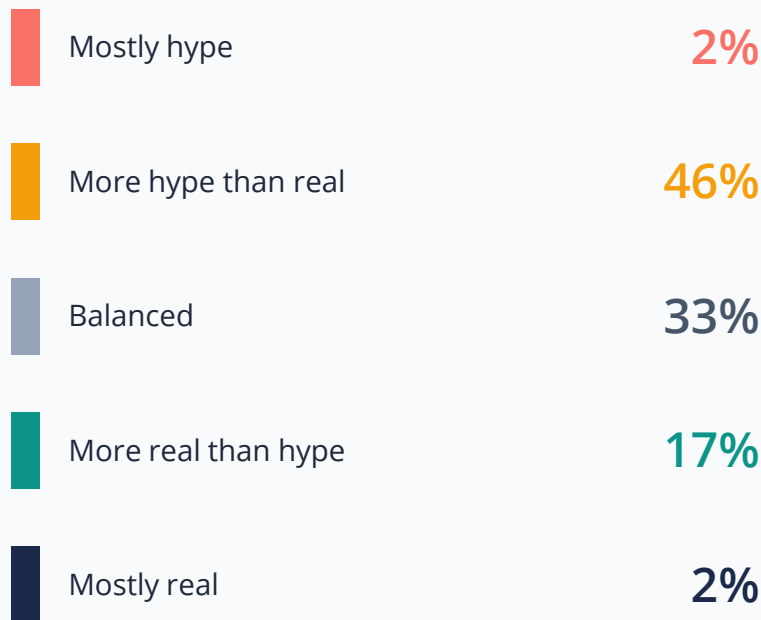
Agentic AI: Significance & Perception

Expected significance as a value lever, and current sentiment (n=54)

Significance Over Next 18 Months

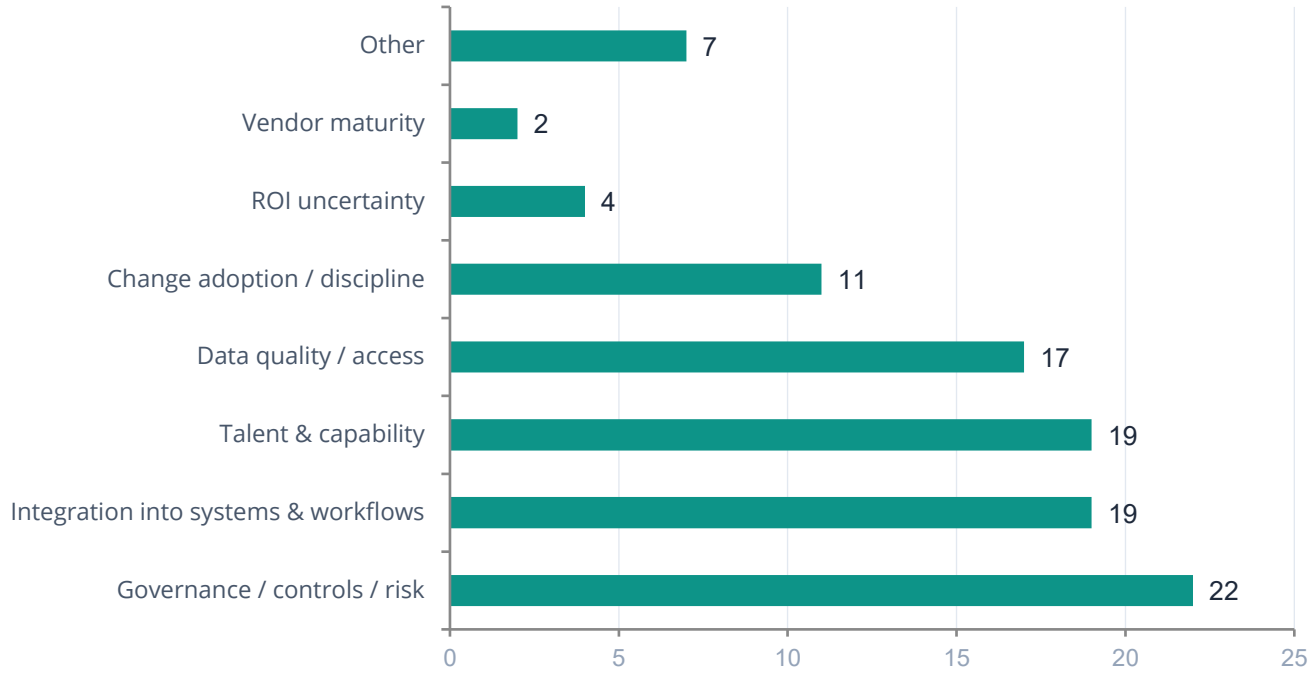


Right Now, Agentic AI Is...



Agentic AI: #1 Barrier to Adoption at Scale

Single-choice: respondents selected their top barrier (n=54)



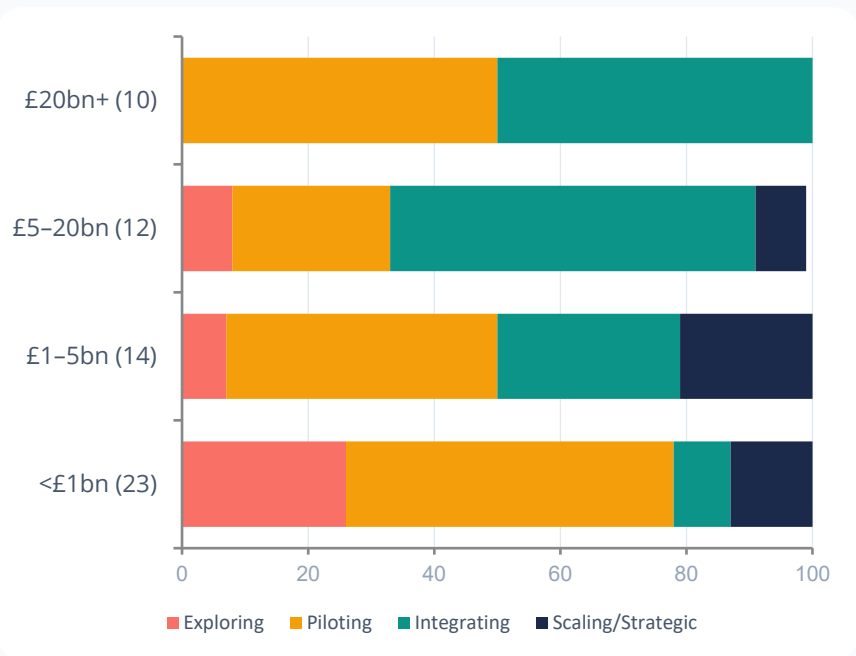
Barriers are distributed

No single barrier dominates. Governance, integration, talent, and data each command 17–22% of responses, suggesting firms face a cluster of interconnected challenges.

Cross-Analysis: Who Is Furthest Along?

Maturity by AUM and by role | % at each stage

By AUM



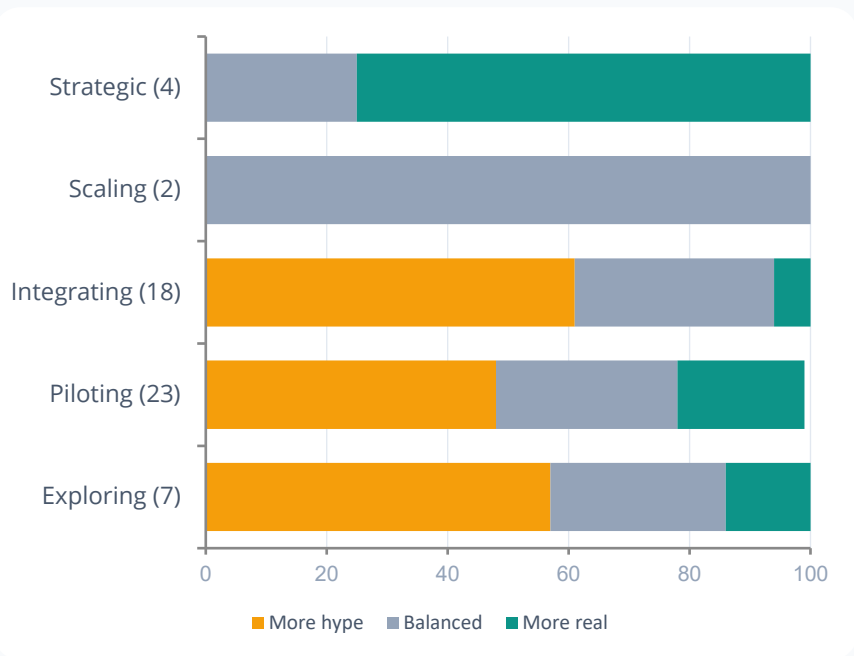
By Role



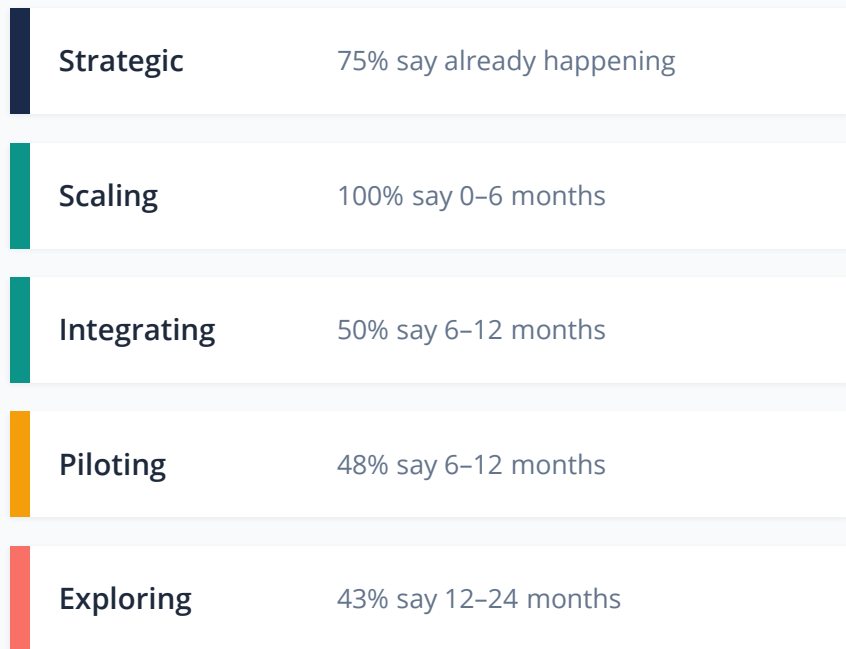
Maturity Shapes the Agentic AI Outlook

How maturity correlates with views on agentic AI and expected timeline

Agentic AI Perception by Maturity



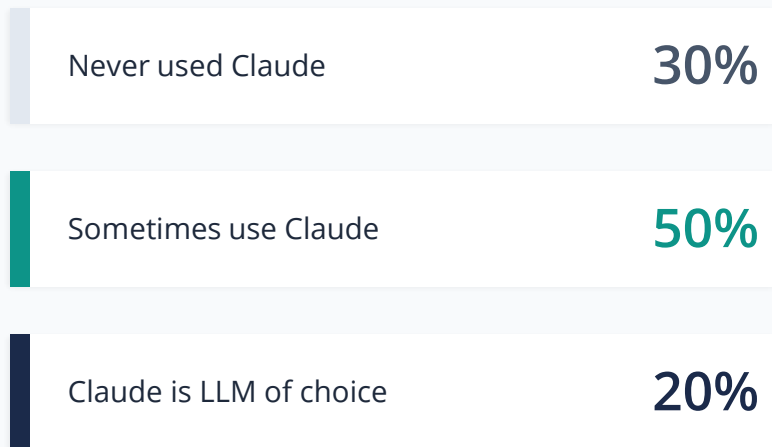
Expected Timeline by Maturity



Claude Adoption

Self-reported Anthropic Claude proficiency across respondents.

Claude (Chat)



Claude Code



Note: Claude proficiency was a check-all-that-apply question. Percentages reflect share of respondents who selected each option.

Key Themes

Maturity is shifting from piloting to integrating

The share of firms at the integrating stage rose from 20% to 31%, while exploring and piloting both declined. Mid-size firms (£5–20bn) lead with 58% integrating. AI Operators report the highest maturity across roles.

Data remains the weakest link

Only 27% agree their data foundations support scaled AI — the lowest readiness score. This holds across all AUM bands, reinforcing September 2025 findings where 80%+ rated data as adequate or worse.

Confidence is rising, but perception of agentic AI is cautious

Firms feeling "ahead of most" rose from 16% to 24%. Yet 48% view agentic AI as more hype than real. Strategic-maturity firms are the exception: 75% see it as more real than hype.

Barriers to agentic AI are distributed, not concentrated

Governance, integration, talent, and data each sit between 17–22%. This suggests a systemic readiness challenge rather than one isolated blocker to address.

Questions to Consider

Based on these results, some prompts for reflection across your firm and portfolio.

Maturity

Where are we on the maturity curve and is that where we expected to be by now?

Ownership

Who owns AI adoption at our firm and do they have the mandate to scale it?

Data

Do we have the data foundations to move beyond pilots, or are we building on sand?

Portfolio

Are we equipping portfolio companies, or leaving them to figure it out alone?

ROI

Can we articulate a credible ROI case for our top AI initiatives today?

Agentic AI

What is our view on agentic AI and are we preparing for it regardless?



Thank You

Thank you to all participants who contributed to this benchmark. Your input helps the network gauge collective progress and identify where the sector is heading.

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