The biggest barrier to AI adoption isn't AI. It's people.

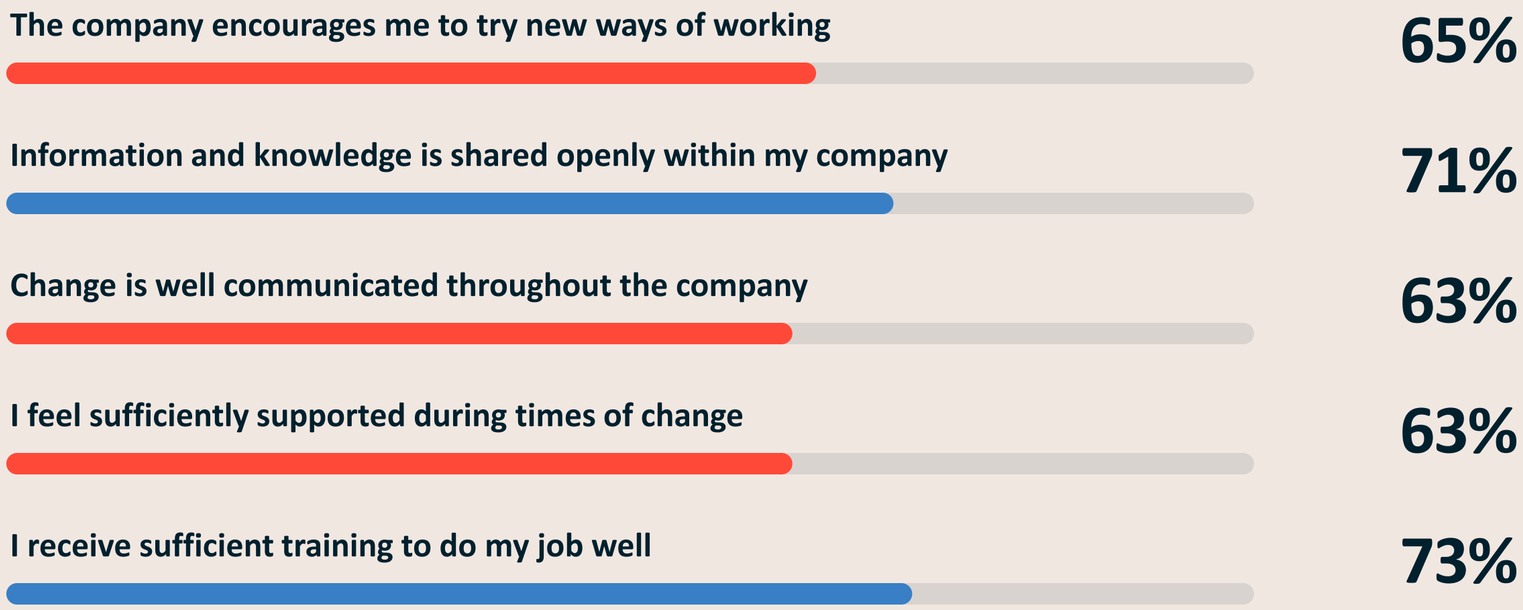
Technology can be implemented quickly. Human adaptation cannot – and that is where most transformation programmes quietly succeed or stall.

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AI asks people to adapt – from a foundation less stable than leaders realise.

ETS benchmark · favourable responses

The weakest scores – change support, communication and innovation culture – are the very conditions AI transformation depends on. Even training, though stronger, leaves more than one in four employees unconvinced.



03 – WHAT WE SEE

Three patterns stall adoption – long before the technology does.

01

Uncertainty fills the gap

Employees know AI is here – not what it means for them. The silence fills with anxiety, speculation and resistance, and those assumptions are rarely positive.

02

Managers become the bottleneck

They are expected to explain change, coach new behaviours and reduce anxiety – often unequipped to do so. Implementation happens; adoption stalls.

03

Readiness goes unmeasured

Boards can tell you what the technology costs and the gains expected. Far fewer can answer how ready their people are to work differently.

The biggest gains come from investing in adoption, not just technology.

Technology creates potential. People create value.

01

Leadership confidence

Leaders explain clearly why AI matters and what it means for people.

02

Manager capability

Managers translate uncertainty into understanding for their teams.

03

Employee voice

Questions and ideas are encouraged; psychological safety becomes an advantage.

04

Learning culture

People are supported to experiment and adapt. Learning is part of work.

05

Measurement

Progress is tracked by adoption, capability and behaviour change – not milestones.

05 – PROOF

The conditions that enable adoption already have a track record.

GATEHOUSE BANK

70 - 80%

Up from 30–50%

Manager readiness for new ways of working

Capability-building can materially shift a workforce's readiness to adopt new ways of working.

GATEHOUSE BANK

100%

of competencies improved in repeat 360° reviews

Several rose by up to +13 % points – behavioural and leadership development creates measurable adoption capacity.

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None of this was achieved through technology alone

Questions for your executive team

01 Do our employees understand why AI matters?

02 Do our managers have the confidence to lead AI-enabled change?

03 Do employees feel safe asking questions and challenging decisions?

04 How quickly does our workforce adapt to new ways of working?

05 Are we measuring workforce readiness as rigorously as technology readiness?

Do you want to measure your AI readiness?

Organisations that succeed with AI will not have the best technology they will have the workforce most capable of adapting. Have you measured how ready your people are to embrace AI? ETS delivers business psychology-informed diagnostics and development interventions for change such as AI, and more. Get in touch to discuss how we can help your people be more ready to deliver what is needed of them in the future workplace.

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