

Employee Centricity in an AI World

New insights from August 2025 survey
of ~1,400 employees and leaders

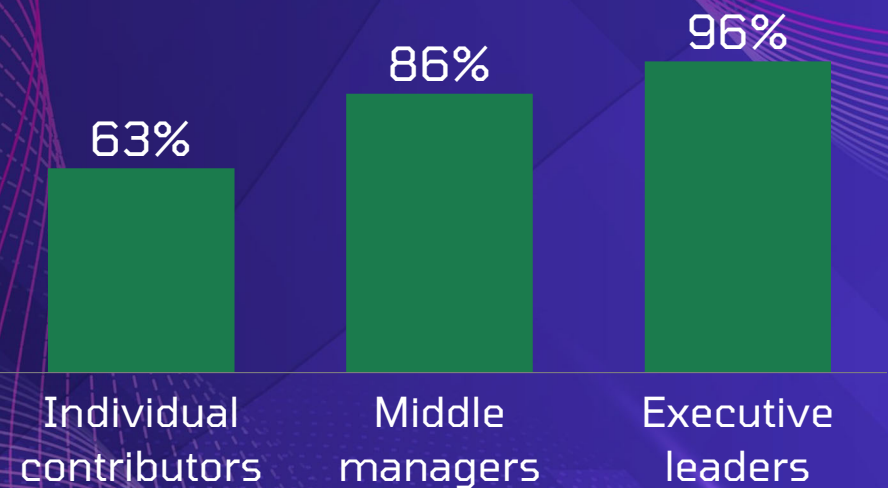


Columbia Business School
AI in Business Initiative

Respondents have mixed emotions when it comes to AI at work

Empowerment
Excitement
Curiosity
Anxiety Resistance
Distrust Hope Indifference
Openness Fear of Job Loss

Mentions of positive emotions increase with seniority in organization

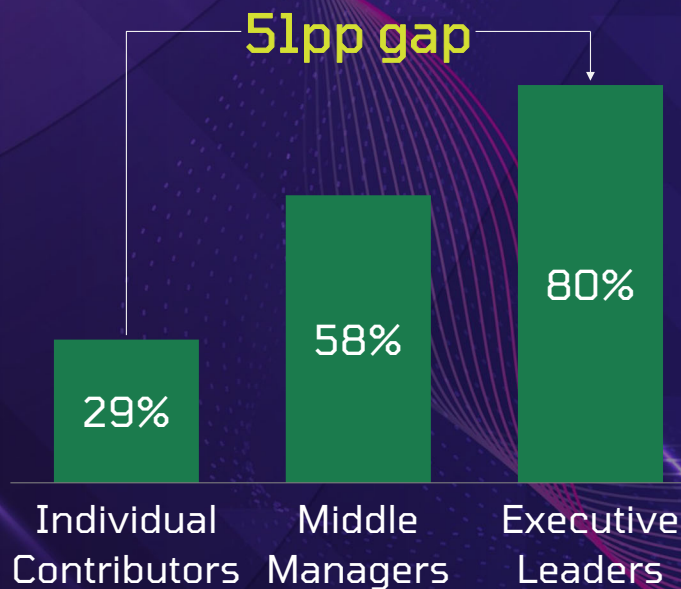


Notes: [Q]: Which of the following emotions best describe how you personally feel about your organization's integration of AI? (Please choose only the top 3). Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

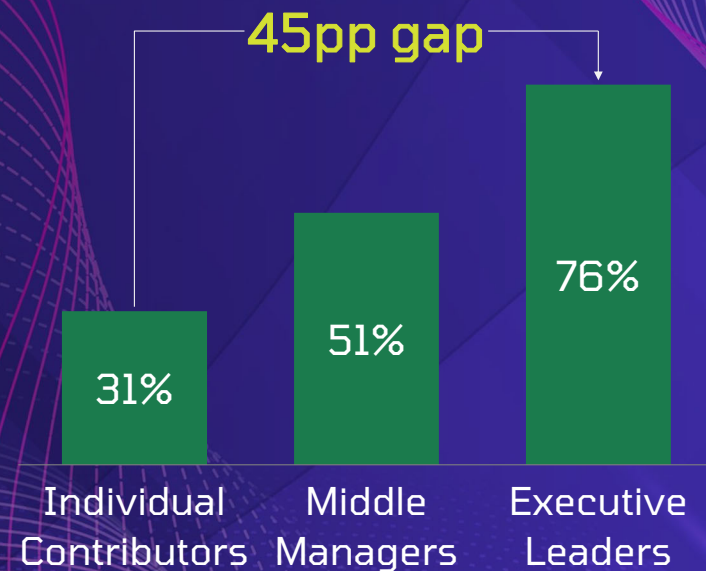
The more senior you are in your organization, the more likely you are to overestimate...

...how informed and enthusiastic employees are about AI

"Employees feel well-informed about our organization's AI strategy and tools"



"Employees feel enthusiastic and optimistic about AI adoption in our organization"



Strongly & Moderately agree

Notes: [Q]: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement about employees' attitudes and readiness for AI adoption in your organization: (1) Employees feel enthusiastic and optimistic about AI adoption in our organization; (2) Employees feel well-informed about organization's AI strategy and tools. Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

The more senior you are in your organization, the more likely you are to overestimate...

...how employee-centric your organization is

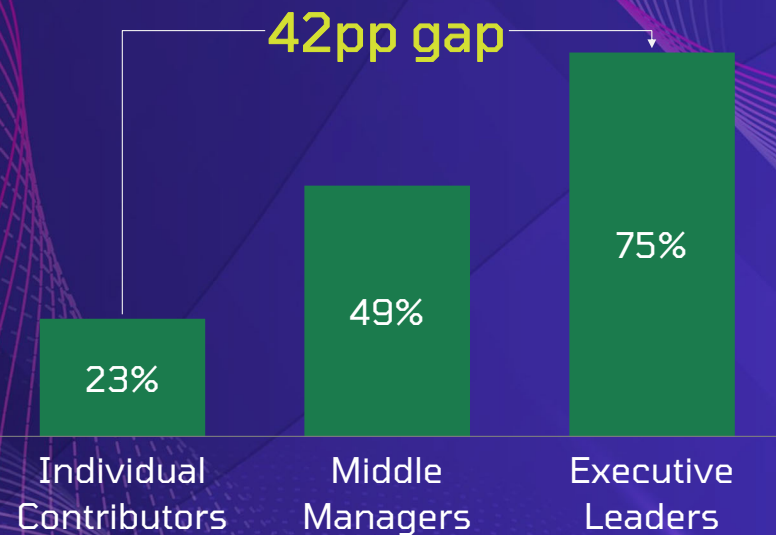
Defining employee centrality:
Employees are prioritized to same
extent as customers and shareholders

My organization:

- Listens to employees and acts on feedback
- Provides clear, fair, and accessible opportunities for promotion & advancement
- Treats employees with respect
- Supports professionally and personally
- Supports flexible work

*Answers to these statements and similar questions
informed our Employee Centricity Index*

Percent of respondents rating their organization
as mature on employee centrality



Notes: Analysis run using Employee Centricity Index (ECI) Index scores; Mature employee-centric organizations are defined as those with ECI scores of 85% or higher. Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

Employee centricity and AI maturity vary...

By industry

High AI Maturity



High Employee Centricity

By department

High AI Maturity

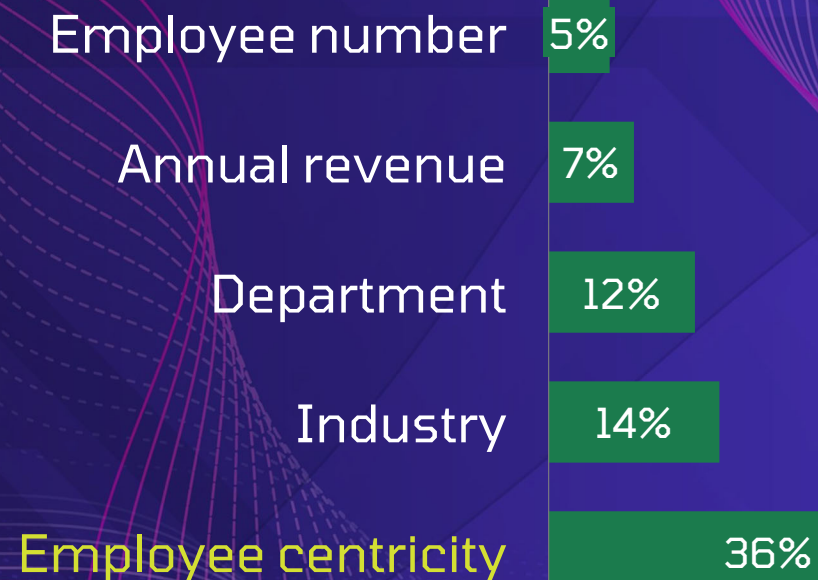


High Employee Centricity

Notes: [Q]: What industry does your organization operate in? [Q]: Which of the following best describes your department or current functional role where you work? All industries and departments with less than 6% of responses are not shown in the graph; Analysis run using Employee Centricity Index (ECI) and AI Maturity Index scores. Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

The primary driver of AI maturity is employee centrality

Explaining variance in an organization's AI maturity:



Notes: [Q]: What industry does your organization operate in? [Q]: Which of the following best describes your department or current functional role where you work? [Q]: Which of the following best represents your organization's annual revenue (\$USD) / number of employees? Analysis run using Employee Centrality Index (ECI) and AI Maturity Index scores.
Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centrality and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

Said another way...

The primary
driver of AI
maturity is
employee
centricity

Employee-centric organizations are:



more likely to be AI mature
compared to orgs who are
beginning / emerging in
employee centricity

Notes: AI mature organizations are defined as those with AI Maturity Index scores of 85% or higher; Employee-centric organizations are defined as those with Employee Centricity Index (ECI) scores of mature (85% or higher) or progressing (75% to 85%) compared to emerging (65% to 75%) and beginner (less than 65%). Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

Employee centricity impacts AI in several ways

Employees at employee-centric organizations are:



More likely to feel **enthusiastic and optimistic** about AI adoption in their organization



More likely to feel **well-informed** about their organization's AI strategy and tools

More likely to hold emotions such as **empowerment, excitement, and hope** around AI integration compared to **anxiety, distrust, and curiosity**



More likely to rate their organization's **speed of tech adoption** (especially AI) **faster** compared to competitors

Than employees at organizations that are NOT employee-centric

Notes: Comparing organizations with mature ECI scores to organizations with beginner ECI scores. [Q]: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement about employees' attitudes and readiness for AI adoption in your organization: (1) Employees feel enthusiastic and optimistic about AI adoption in our organization (2) Employees feel well-informed about organization's AI strategy and tools; [Q]: Which of the following emotions best describe how you personally feel about your organization's integration of AI? [Q]: How would you rate your organization's performance compared to its primary competitors in each of the following dimensions? (1) Speed of technology adoption (especially AI); Analysis run using Employee Centricity Index (ECI) Index scores. Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

Employee centricity has other benefits...

Employees at employee-centric organizations are:



More likely to be frequently **motivated** to give their best at work



More likely to see themselves **working at the organization** one year from now



More likely to rate their organization's **employee morale and motivation higher** compared to competitors



More likely to rate their organization's overall **financial performance higher** compared to competitors

Than employees at organizations that are NOT employee-centric

Notes: Comparing organizations with mature ECI scores to organizations with beginner ECI scores. [Q]: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your work experience? (1) I frequently feel motivated to give my best work (2) I see myself working at this company one year from now; [Q]: How would you rate your organization's performance compared to its primary competitors in each of the following dimensions? (1) Employee morale & motivation (2) Overall financial performance. Analysis run using Employee Centricity Index (ECI) Index scores. Source: BHI x CBS Employee Centricity and AI Adoption Survey, conducted in August 2025 (n=1399); BCG x CBS analyses

What to remember



Employee centricity matters... especially if you want your organization to adopt AI



The higher the seniority, the greater the risk is of being overly optimistic on how well your organization is delivering for employees—or how prepared it really is to embrace AI

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