Your Employees are Hiding Their AI Use From You – 7 Steps to Make the Most of Their Untapped AI Skills

Insights

5.10.24

A new report released this week revealed that three out of four knowledge workers use AI for work purposes – but more than half are hiding it from their leaders because they fear it makes them look replaceable. The May 8 report from LinkedIn and Microsoft reveals that you most likely have massive untapped potential right under your nose, and just need some help unlocking a whole next level of productivity, efficiency, and creativity. Here are the five biggest findings from this eye-opening report, and seven steps you can take to capitalize on the hidden resources already in your organization. *We'll discuss this issue and more at AI IMPACT – an FP Conference for Business Leaders this June 26-28 in Washington, D.C. Learn more and register here.*

5 Biggest Findings From Report

The full report is chock-full of interesting data, but here are the five biggest findings:

1. *Your Workers are Jumping on the AI Bandwagon*

75% of knowledge workers are using AI at work – and 46% of those users started using it less than six months ago.

2. *All Sorts of Workers are Using AI*

All generations of knowledge workers are using their own AI tools at work in massive numbers.

- 73% of Boomers (ages 58+)

- 76% of GenX (ages 44-57)

- 78% of Millennials (ages 29-43)

- 85% of Gen Z (ages 18-28)

3. *People Love Using AI for All Sorts of Tasks*

People love using AI – 90% say it saves them time, 85% say it helps them focus on important work, 84% say it helps them be creative, and 83% enjoy their work more. In fact, a little more than half (52%) say they use it on even their most important tasks.

4. *Workers are Hiding Their AI Use*

But here's where things turn worrisome. 53% of workers said they haven't revealed their AI use to leadership out of fear it could signal they're replaceable.

5. *Corporate Leaders are Worried*

And the blame isn't all on the employee side. Executive leadership can do better when it comes to AI use and training. 79% of leaders believe their company needs to adopt AI to stay competitive, and 66% of leaders said they wouldn't hire someone without AI skills. Yet only 25% of employers are planning to provide generative AI training in 2024, and 45% of leaders are not currently investing in AI tools or products for their workers. So despite leadership beginning to recognize how vital AI is to their future, they are not keeping up and providing the resources for their own workers to make use of it. Meanwhile, 59% of leaders are worried they aren't effectively quantifying productivity gains from AI, and 60% of leaders worry their corporate AI plans are insufficient.

7 Steps You Can Take To Get The Most of Your Workers' AI Use

So what can you do to eliminate the stigma of AI use and harness the hidden skills at your organization? Consider this seven-step plan.

1. Foster an AI-Inclusive Culture

This is a big-picture goal but one that you can start developing today with some simple steps. You should create a culture where the use of AI tools is openly encouraged and recognized as a value-add rather than a threat. This can involve clear communication about the role of AI in supporting employees rather than replacing them.

Action Steps:

- Be clear about what is and what isn't allowed in the workplace. Adopt an express policy about AI usage (you can download a free template here).
- Ask your managers to hold regular discussions about AI use in their team meetings.
- Share success stories where AI has boosted your company's capabilities.
- Publicly reward teams that innovate using AI – consider holding a friendly "competition" where different teams highlight the ways that they are now using AI.

2. Promote Transparency

AI use shouldn't be hidden – whether by workers or by leadership. Part of your culture transformation should include a drive towards transparency.

Action Steps:

- At the very least encourage your employees to share their use of AI. This can help you better understand where AI tools are most effective and where additional support or guardrails might be needed.

- You might even consider implementing a system where employees can log their AI usage, including what tools they use and for what purposes. This can be part of a monthly report or an AI usage dashboard.

3. Formalize AI Skill Development

The survey made it clear that employers have a ways to go when it comes to training their workers on how best to use AI. Your employees might be toying around with ChatGPT and other tools – but are they getting the most out of them?

Action Steps:

- Address the skills gap by implementing formal training programs that equip employees with up-to-date AI skills. This not only enhances productivity but will also go a long way to alleviate any fear of obsolescence.

- Your AI training curriculum might include hands-on workshops, online courses, and certification programs.

- Encourage participation by offering incentives or making certain courses mandatory.

- Check out our 7-step guide to upskilling your workforce for the AI era for a more detailed plan.

4. Invest in AI Tools and Infrastructure

If you want to be an AI leader, you'll need to put your money where your mouth is. Invest in new AI tools to help streamline your work. Consider enterprise-grade AI tools that can integrate with existing systems (making sure you take security and legal compliance into consideration).

Action Steps:

- Evaluate and deploy AI tools that align with your business objectives.

- Consider forming a task force to assess the best AI tools available that meet the specific needs of different departments.

- Conduct due diligence on the vendor(s) and AI tool(s) before deployment.

5. Measure and Showcase AI Impact

Once you start enjoying success, don't keep it hidden! You can track your wins and showcase them to your workforce, organizational stakeholders, and members of the general public.

Action Steps:

- Figure out a way to quantify the impact that AI is having on your productivity and efficiency. This will further demonstrate its value – and encourage wider adoption.

- Share these metrics regularly with your teams to highlight AI's positive outcomes.

6. Leverage AI for Talent Acquisition and Management

Once you have started to gain momentum, you can build upon your successes even further by seeking out and recruiting AI-forward candidates who will want to be part of the wave. You can build a self-sustaining structure by hiring new workers who are already on the AI bandwagon to continue the cycle and put you on a long-term path for success.

Action Steps:

- Make sure your job postings and other promotional materials discuss your commitment to AI in order to encourage enthusiastic applicants.

- Coordinate with your recruiting leaders to ensure they are seeking out candidates with interest and experience in AI.

- Emphasize with your managers that they should ask about AI use during the interview process.

7. Address Ethical Concerns and Ensure Compliance

As AI becomes more integrated into workplace processes, you will need to address ethical concerns and legal compliance head-on. Compliance and data security should be a top priority. You don't want to be known as the company that wields AI power irresponsibly.

Action Steps:

- Develop guidelines for ethical AI use that complies with industry standards and legal requirements, including proper security training around AI.

- Err on the side of transparency when it comes to revealing your internal AI use.

- Regularly review and update these policies in collaboration with legal and tech experts.

Do You Want to Learn More?

If you are interested in learning more, sign up for AI IMPACT – an FP Conference for Business Leaders this June 26-28 in Washington, D.C. Learn more and register here.

Conclusion

We will continue to monitor these developments and provide the most up-to-date information directly to your inbox, so make sure you are subscribed to Fisher Phillips' Insight System. If you have questions, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, or any attorney in our AI, Data, and Analytics Practice Group.

Related People

Amanda M. Blair
Associate
212.899.9989
Email

Anne Yarovoy Khan
Of Counsel
949.798.2162
Email

Richard R. Meneghello
Chief Content Officer
503.205.8044
Email

Service Focus

AI, Data, and Analytics

Counseling and Advice