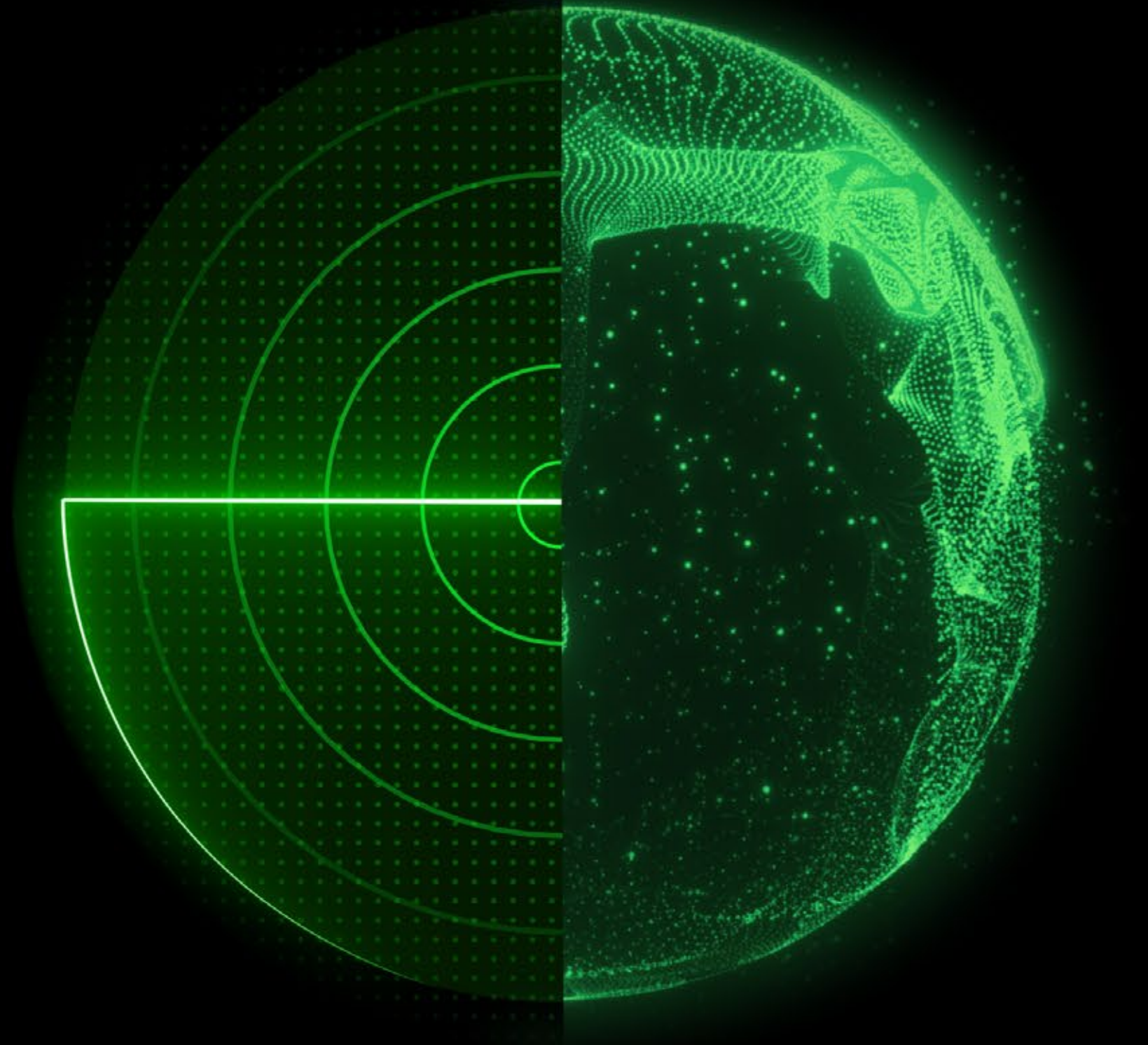


BCG AI RADAR 2026

# As AI Investments Surge, CEOs Take the Lead

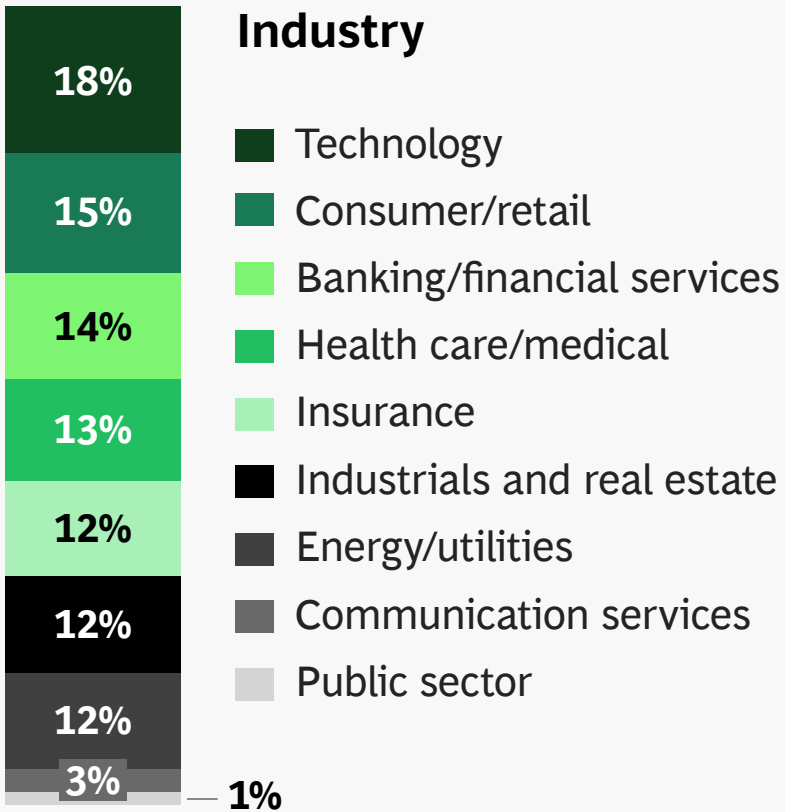
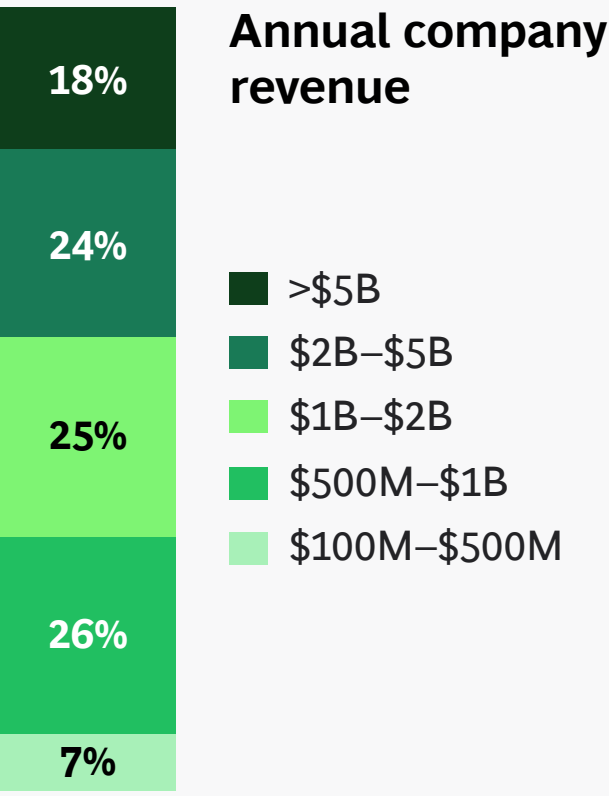
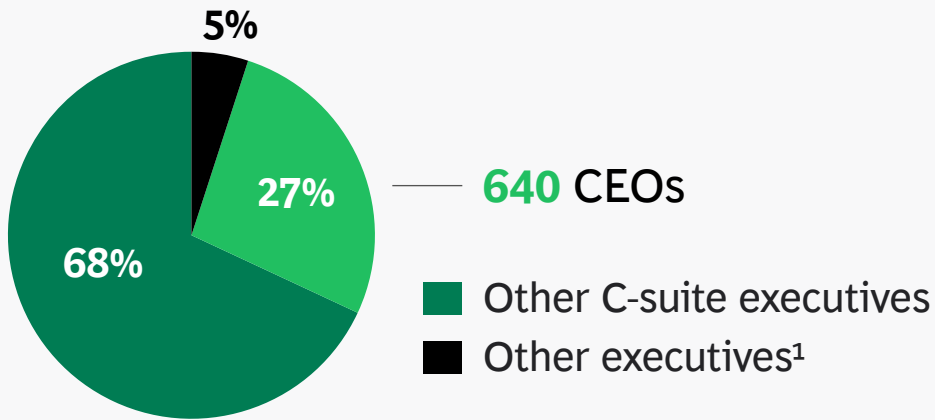
JANUARY 2026



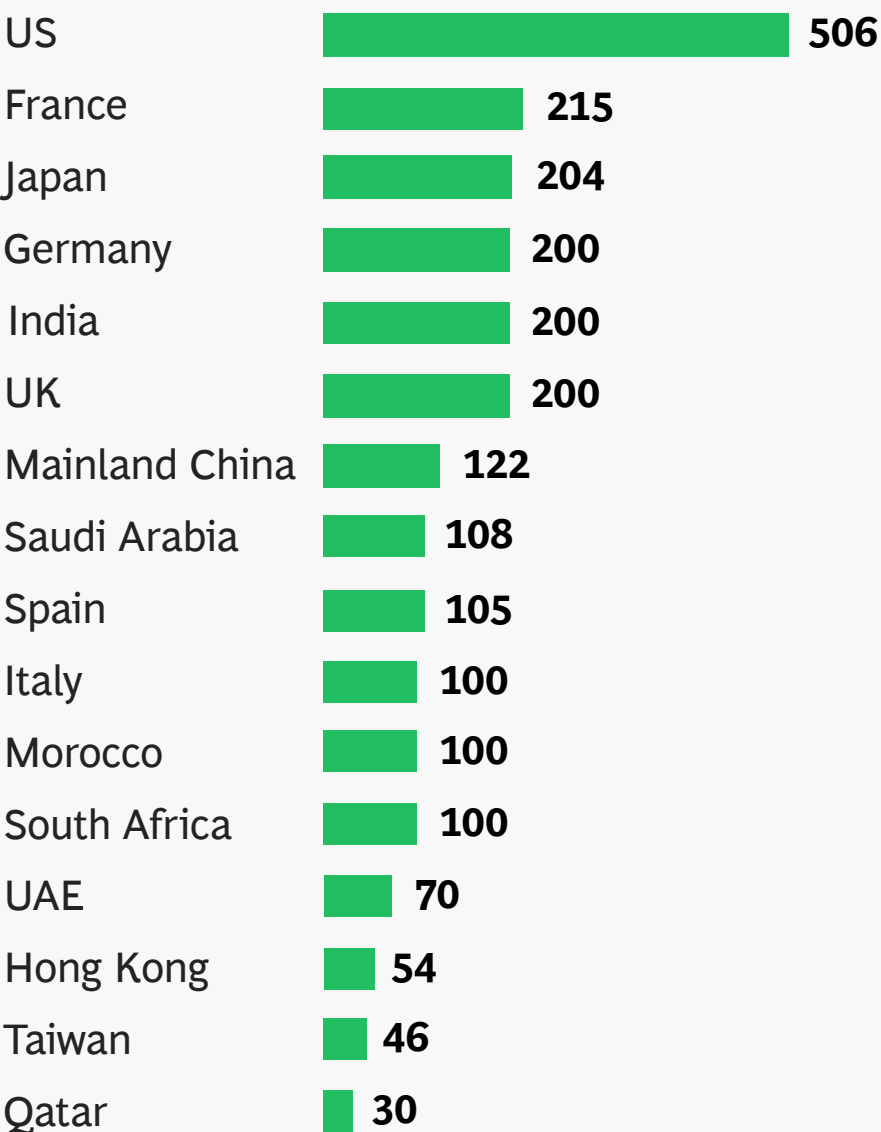
# Survey methodology

2,360

respondents



## Markets (number of respondents)



Sources: BCG AI Radar Survey 2026 (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.  
<sup>1</sup>Executives who directly report to C-suite (EVP, SVP, VP, etc.).

# Key takeaways

1

Corporate investments in AI have doubled since last year and are here to stay

94%

of CEOs say they will continue to invest even if it does not pay off in 2026

2

AI corporate transformation is moving from a CIO-led to a CEO-led initiative

72%

of CEOs say they are the main decision maker on AI in their organization

3

Three CEO archetypes emerge with Trailblazer CEOs leading end-to-end AI transformation

60%

of Trailblazers' AI budget will be spent on agentic AI

# Takeaway 1

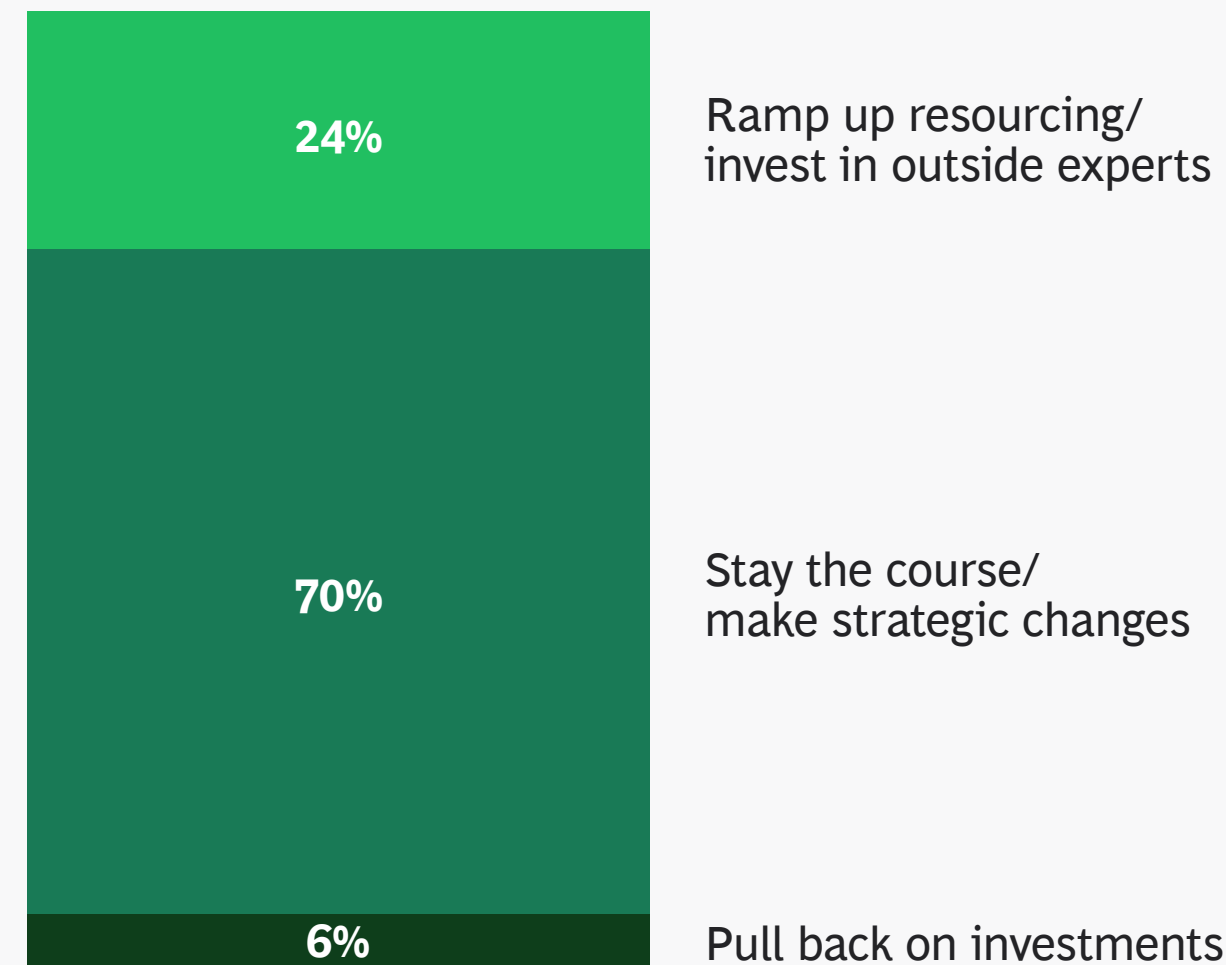
**Corporate investments in AI have doubled since last year and are here to stay**

# 94%

of organizations  
will continue their  
investments even  
if they do not pay  
off in 2026

## Only 6% of companies plan to pull back AI investments if current initiatives fall short

SHARE OF  
RESPONDENTS



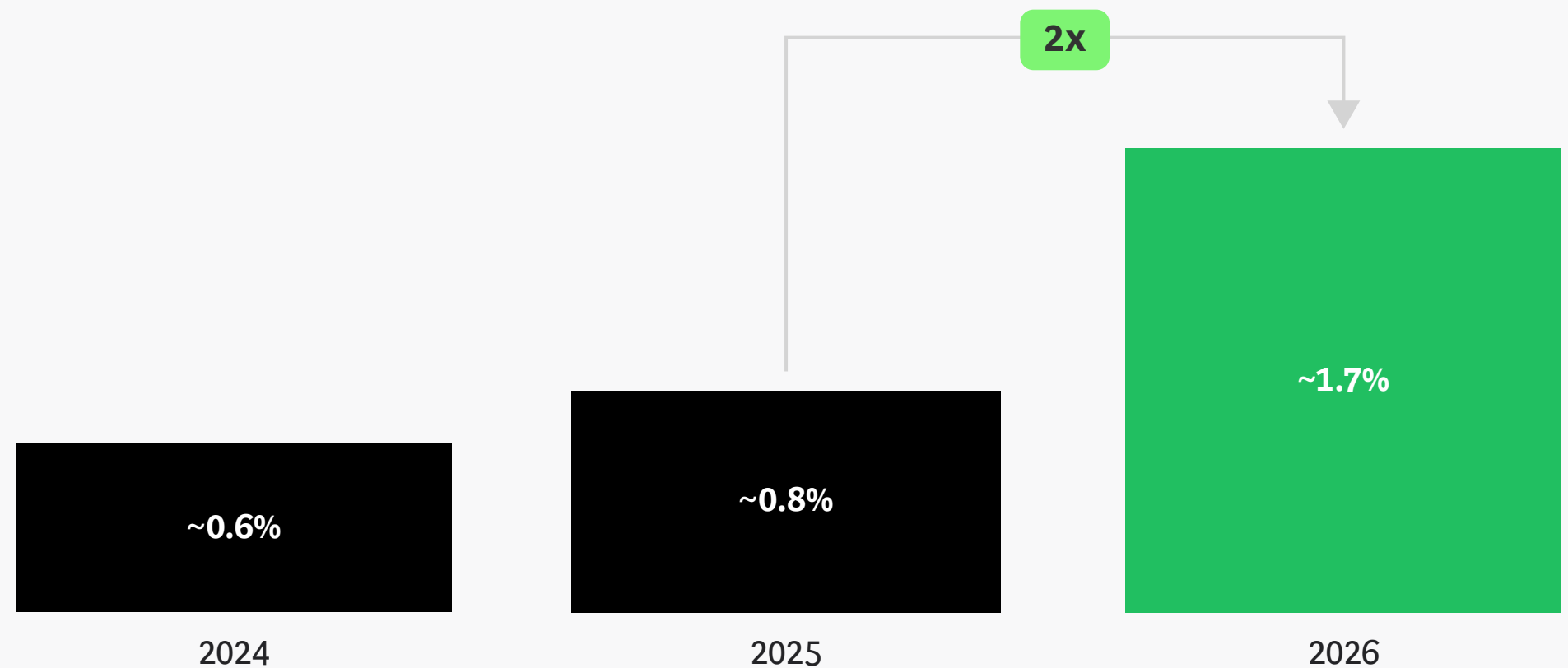
**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.

**Note:** AI investments refer to all investments needed to realize the benefits from AI including but not limited to technology and infrastructure, data and architecture enablement, talent and upskilling, external partners, etc.

**Question:** "What is the plan if your organization's AI investments do not produce the desired financial impact in the next 12 months?"

Investments in  
AI is projected to  
double in 2026

## Investment in AI as share of an organization's revenue (%)<sup>1</sup>



**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG AI Radar 2025 Survey (n = 1,803); BCG AI Radar 2024 Survey (n = 1,406); BCG analysis.

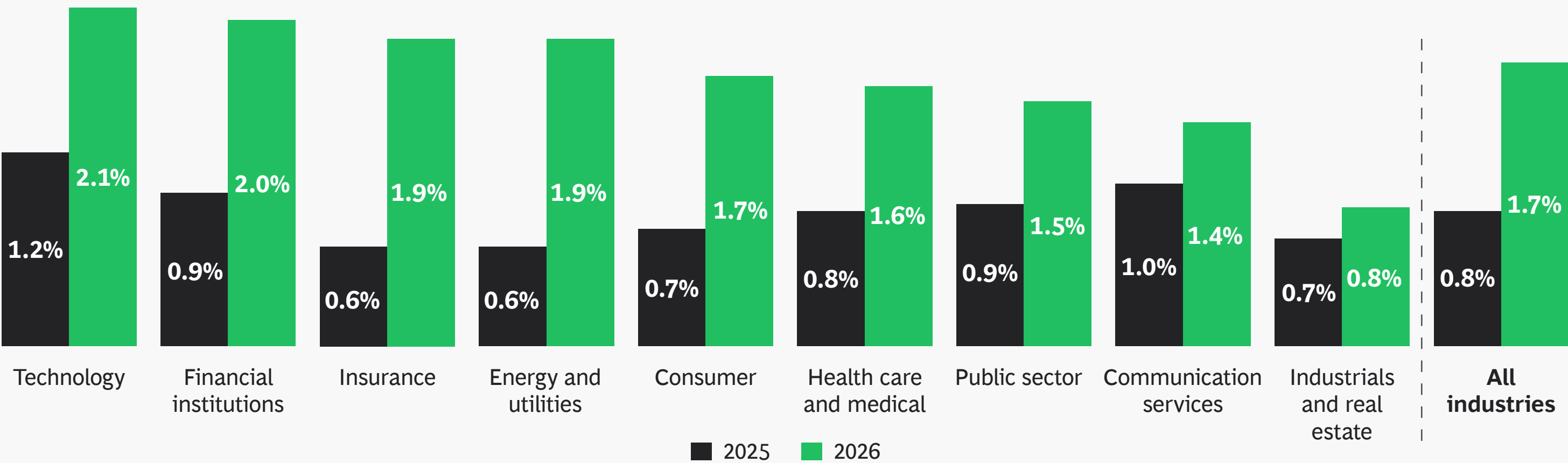
**Note:** AI investments refer to all investments needed to realize the benefits from AI including but not limited to technology and infrastructure, data and architecture enablement, talent and upskilling, external partners, etc.

**Questions:** “How much do you expect your organization to invest in AI in 2026?”, “What is the annual revenue range of your company or organization globally?”

<sup>1</sup>The average base revenue of the underlying companies has remained almost the same.

# All industries plan to increase their AI investments in 2026

INVESTMENT IN AI AS SHARE OF ANNUAL REVENUE



**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,308 due to exclusion of “I don’t know” and blank responses); BCG analysis.  
**Note:** Consumer combines consumer/retail and travel/tourism industries. Public sector combines government/public sector and education industries. Communication services combines advertising/marketing, media, and telecom industries. Industrials and real estate combines manufacturing, industrial goods, automotive, transportation, agriculture, and real estate industries.  
**Question:** “How much do you expect your organization to invest in AI in 2026?”



Data privacy and cybersecurity remain the primary concern

Top three AI concerns remain the same, but their share is declining

|                                                  | Share of respondents | Change vs. 2025 |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Data privacy and cybersecurity risks             | 53%                  | -12pp           |
| Lack of control or understanding of AI decisions | 41%                  | -7pp            |
| Regulatory or compliance challenges              | 39%                  | -5pp            |

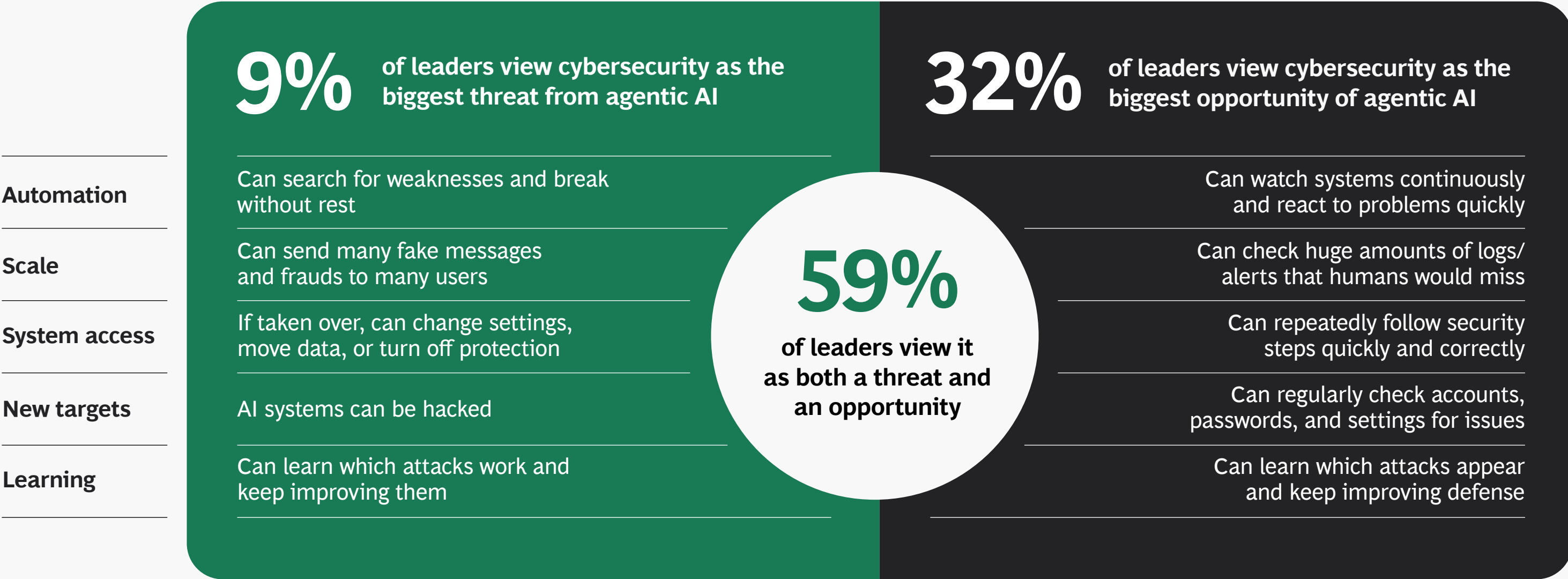
And a few other concerns have become more prominent

|                            |     |       |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Technological failure      | 38% | +6pp  |
| Environmental impact of AI | 17% | +10pp |
| Geopolitical instability   | 13% | +8pp  |

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360), BCG AI Radar 2025 Survey (n = 1,803); BCG analysis.  
Question: “What are the top three risks you are most concerned about when it comes to AI?”



# Agentic AI introduces both opportunity and risk in cybersecurity



**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,286 due to exclusion of executives who answered “I don’t know.”); BCG analysis.  
**Question:** “When it comes to your organization’s cybersecurity, do AI agents present an opportunity or are they a threat?”

## **Takeaway 2**

**AI corporate transformation  
is moving from a CIO-led to a  
CEO-led initiative**

# 72%

**of CEOs say they are the  
main decision maker on AI  
in their organization**

**2x last year**

**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

**Question:** “What is your level of involvement in decision making related to AI in your company?”

# 82%

**are more optimistic about  
AI’s potential for ROI this  
year than last year**

**Question:** “Are you more optimistic or less optimistic about AI’s overall ability to deliver value than you were 12 months ago?”

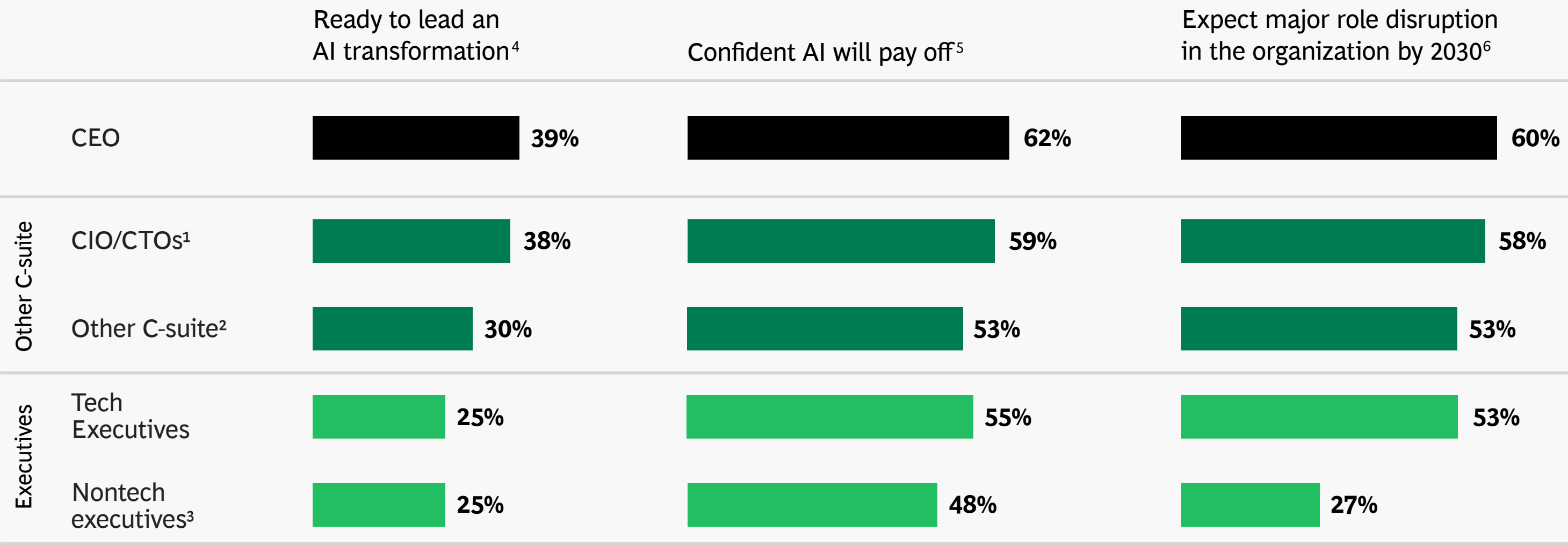
**Half of CEOs surveyed  
believe their job stability  
depends on getting AI  
strategy right**



**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

**Question:** “Do you believe your job stability depends on getting AI investments and strategy right by 2026?”

# CEOs show stronger conviction in AI than their executive counterparts



**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 2,360); BCG analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Includes Chief Data Officer, Chief Digital Officer, Chief AI Officer, and Chief Analytics Officer. <sup>2</sup>Includes Chief Financial Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, and other C-suite roles who report to the CEO. <sup>3</sup>Includes VP-level roles reporting into CXOs.

<sup>4</sup>“How confident are you in your ability to lead your organization through an AI transformation that will deliver a positive return on investment?”, Replies for “Very confident.” <sup>5</sup>“Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?”, Replies for “Confident AI will pay off.” <sup>6</sup>“To what extent do you agree with the following: By 2030, more than half the roles in your organization, including the C-suite, will be gone or transformed by AI.”

# CEOs in the East are more confident AI will pay off

**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.  
**Question:** “Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?”, Replies “Confident that AI will pay off.”  
<sup>1</sup>Greater China includes mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. <sup>2</sup>Middle East and Africa includes Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the UAE. <sup>3</sup>Europe includes France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

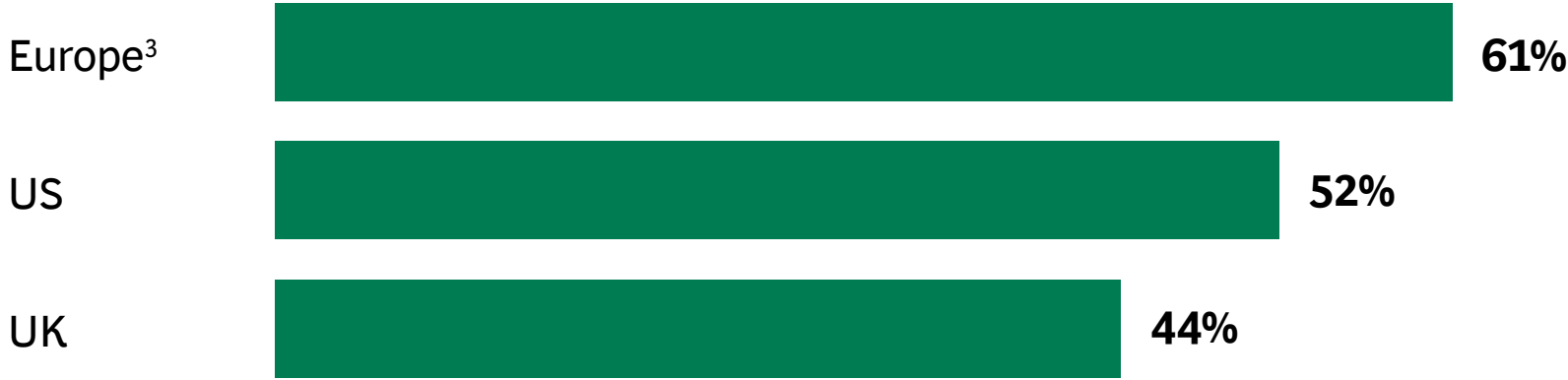
## Global East

SHARE OF CEOS CONFIDENT THAT AI WILL PAY OFF

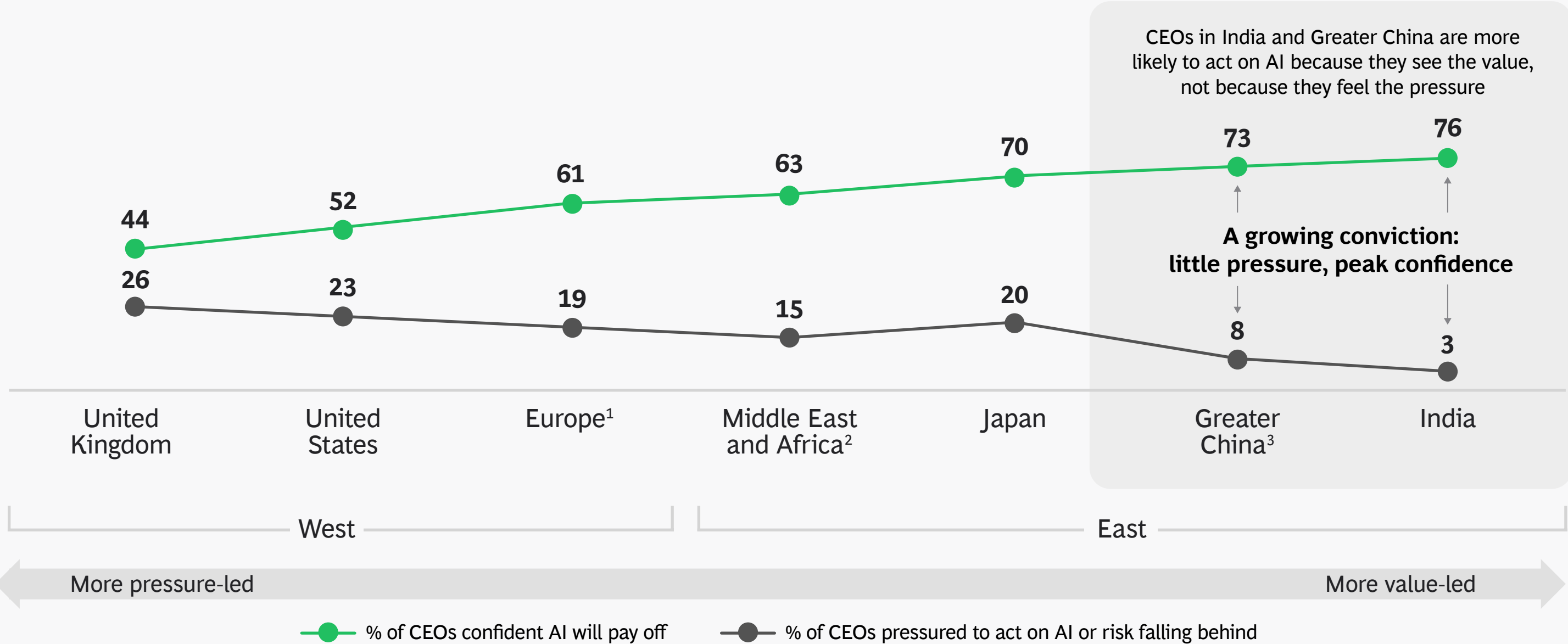


## Global West

SHARE OF CEOS CONFIDENT THAT AI WILL PAY OFF



# CEOs in Asia express confidence, while those in the West feel pressure



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.  
Question: “Which of the following best reflects how you feel about investing in AI?”, Replies “Confident that AI will pay off” and “Pressured to act or risk falling behind.”  
<sup>1</sup>Europe includes France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. <sup>2</sup>Middle East and Africa includes Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the UAE. <sup>3</sup>Greater China includes mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.



**CEOs are excited about AI agents**

**~90%**

**of CEOs believe AI agents will  
enable their organizations to  
report measurable ROI in 2026**

**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

**Question:** “To what extent do you agree with the following: AI agents will finally enable my organization to see measurable ROI from AI in 2026.”, Replies for “Strongly agree” and “Somewhat agree”.

**CEOs have committed**

**>30%**

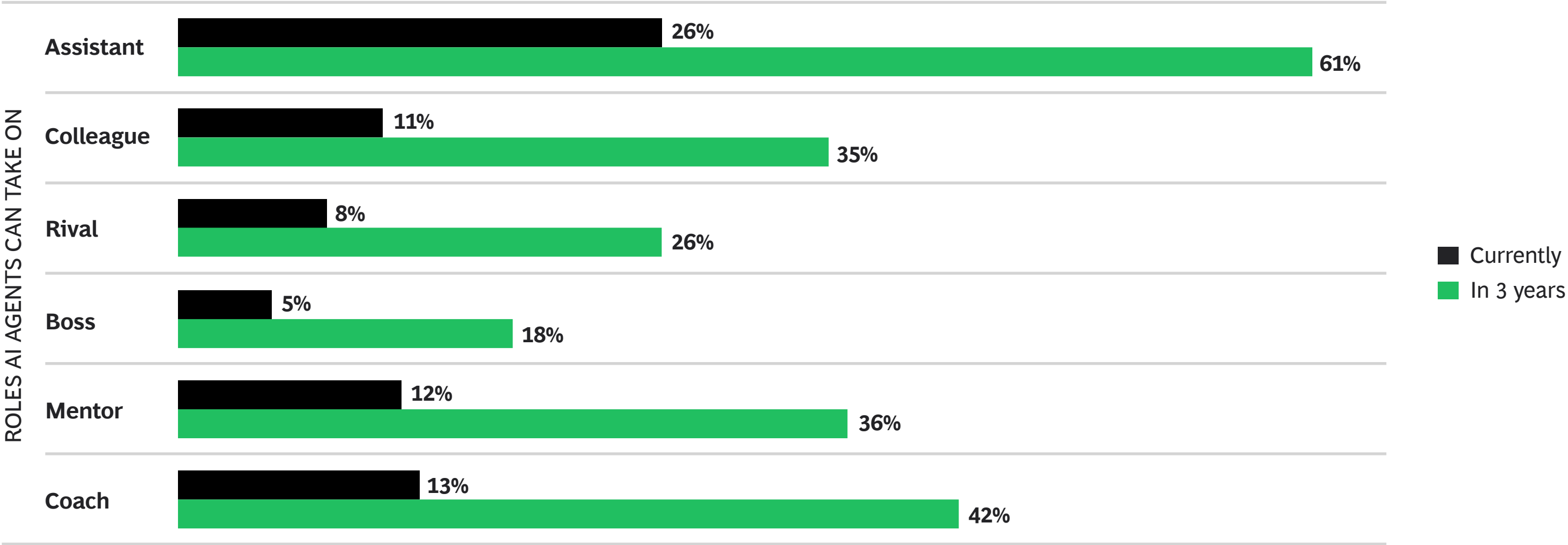
**of their organization’s  
AI investment for 2026 to  
agentic AI**

**Question:** “Approximately what percent of your organization’s AI investment for 2026 is in AI agents?”, average of responses.

# Agentic AI is taking on multiple roles, changing how companies organize work

“To what extent do AI applications occupy the following roles for people in your functional area?”

SHARE OF ORGANIZATIONS



Sources: BCG-MIT Sloan Management Review report, 2025 (n = 2,102); BCG analysis.

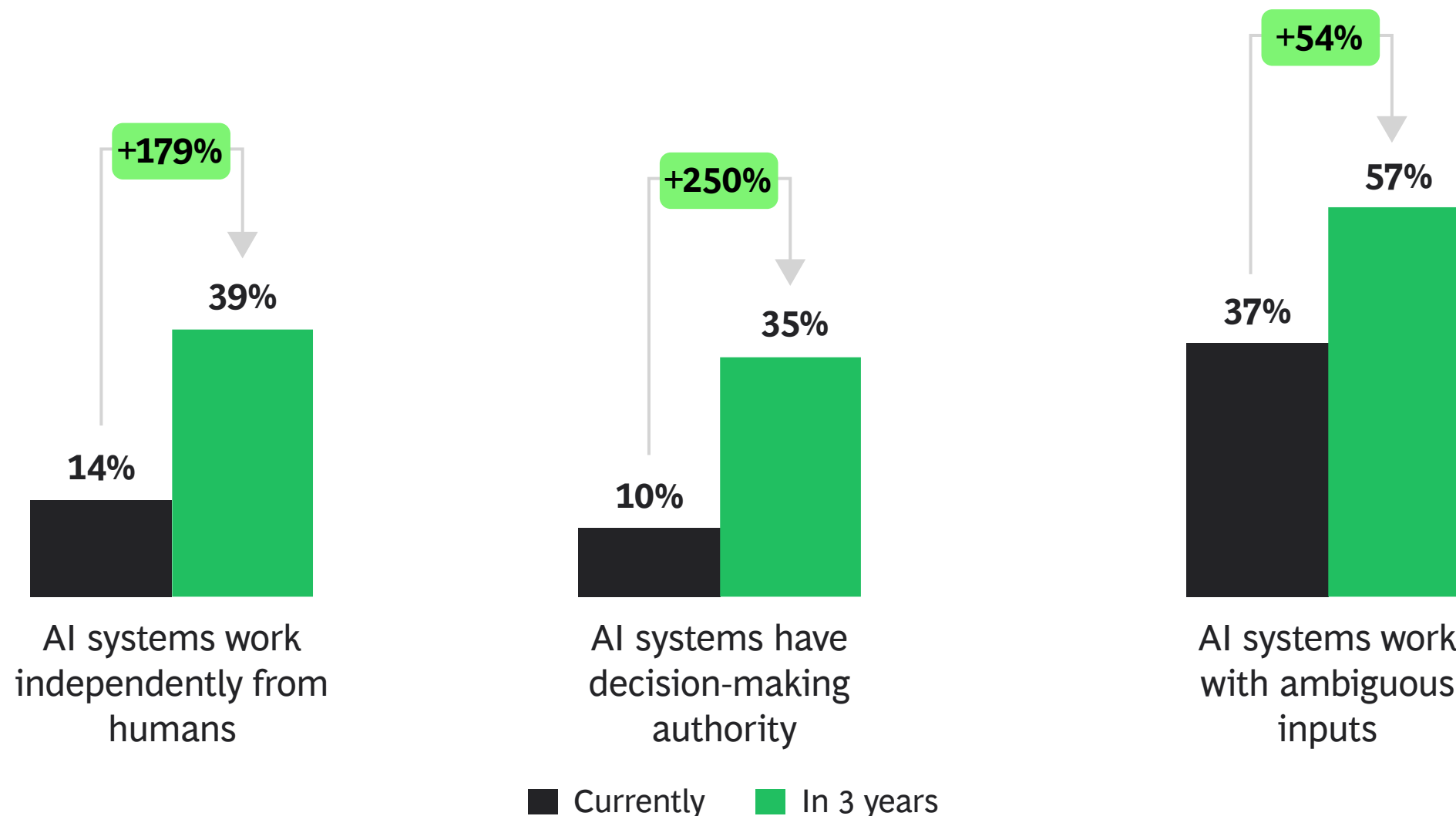
Note: Respondents who answered “strongly agree” or “agree” to the question.

# 58%

of leading organizations expect a change in governance and decision rights due to AI

## As AI systems increasingly gain autonomy, leaders must develop adaptable governance structures

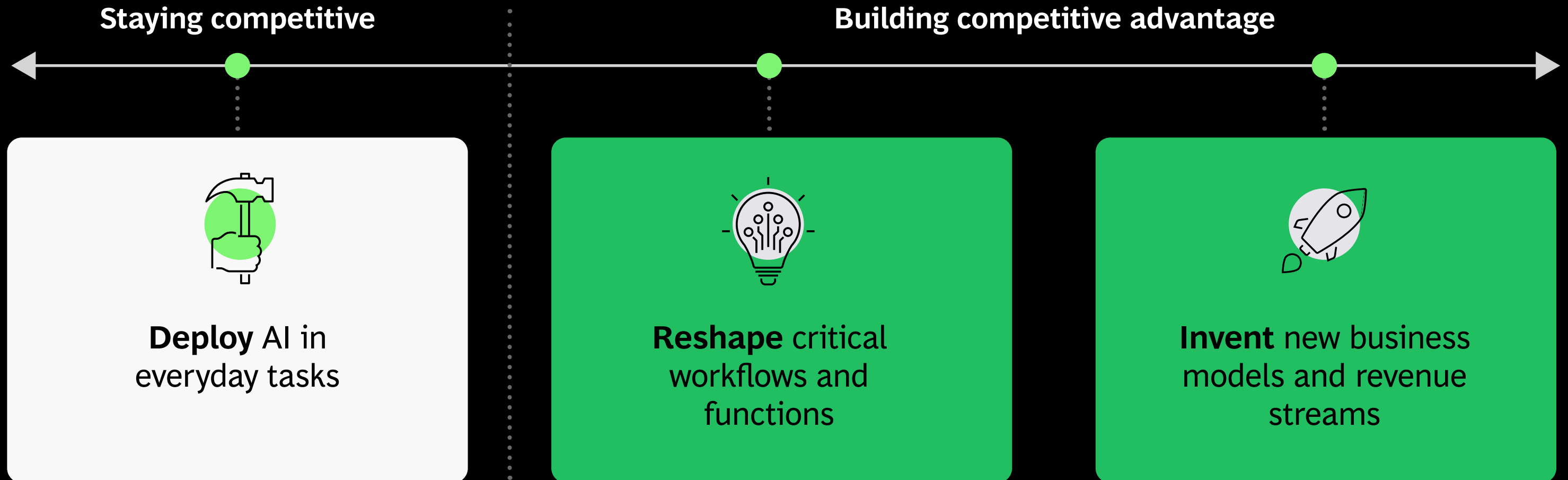
“To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your organization?”



Sources: BCG-MIT Sloan Management Review report, 2025 (n = 2,102); BCG analysis.

Note: Respondents who answered “a great extent” or “a lot” to the question.

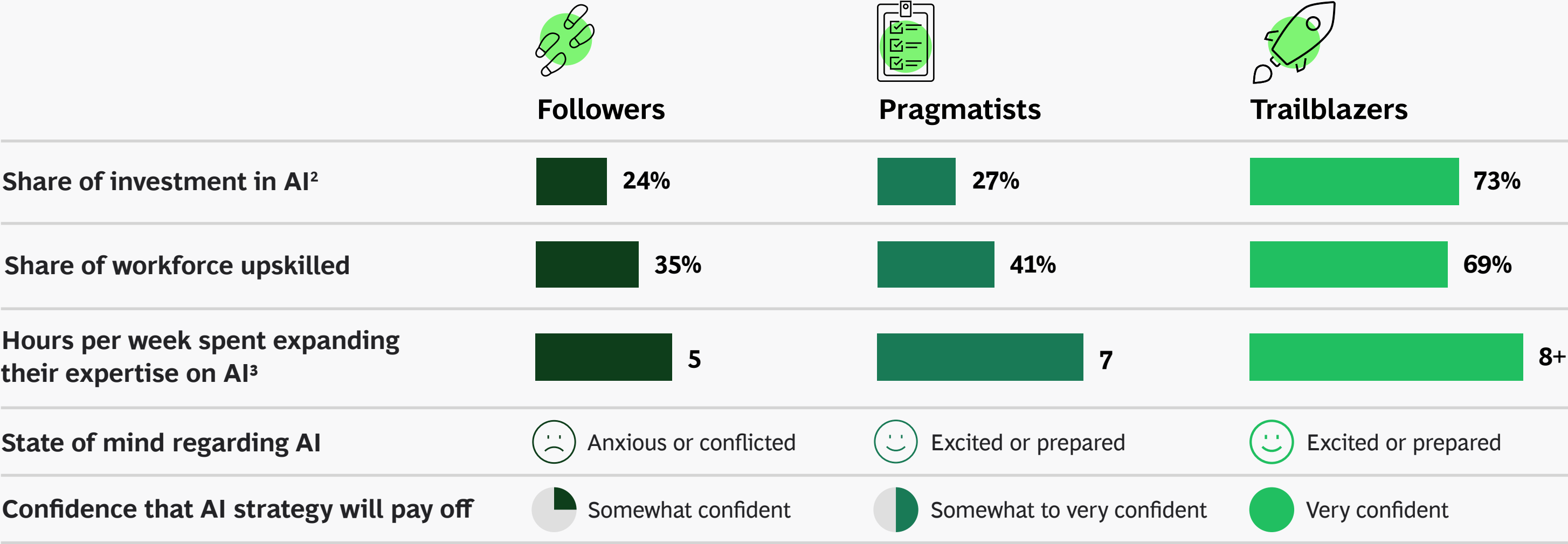
# 90% of CEOs believe that by 2028 AI will significantly transform what success looks like



## **Takeaway 3**

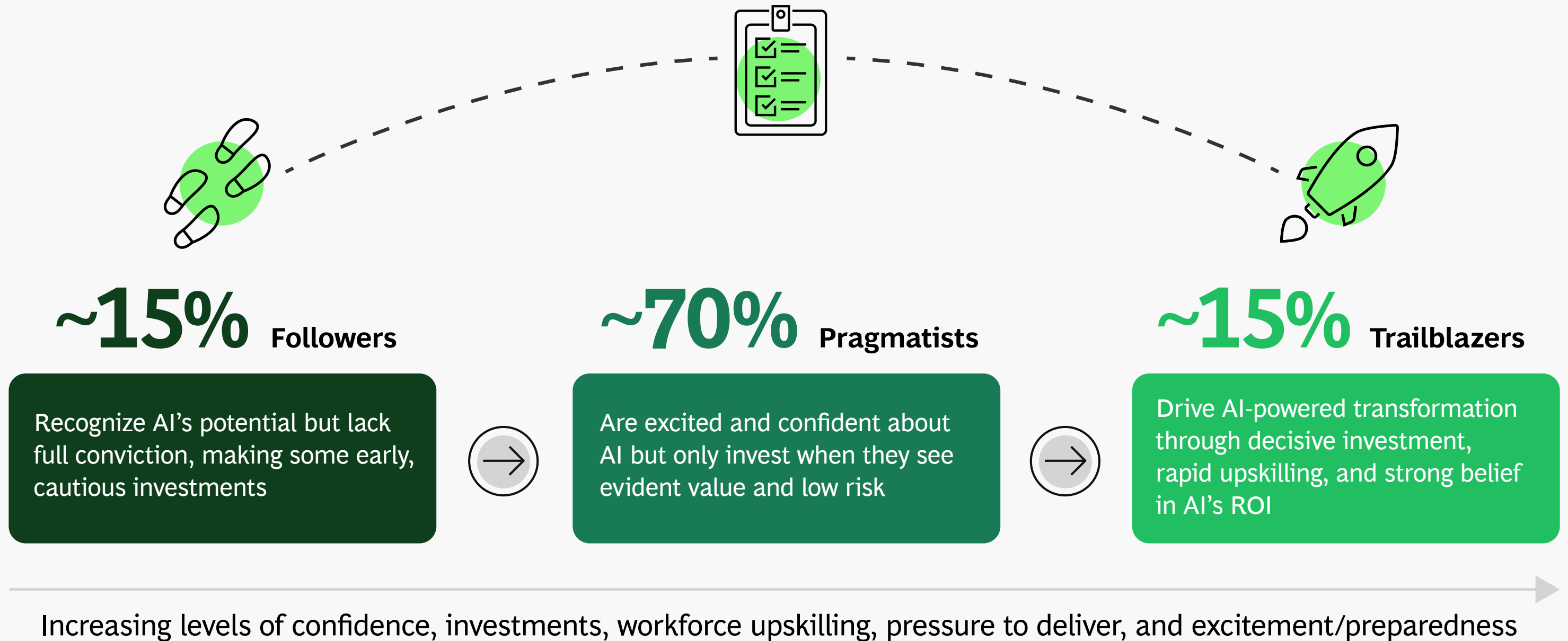
**Three CEO archetypes emerge  
with Trailblazer CEOs leading  
end-to-end AI transformation**

# Three CEO archetypes emerge from the survey data<sup>1</sup>

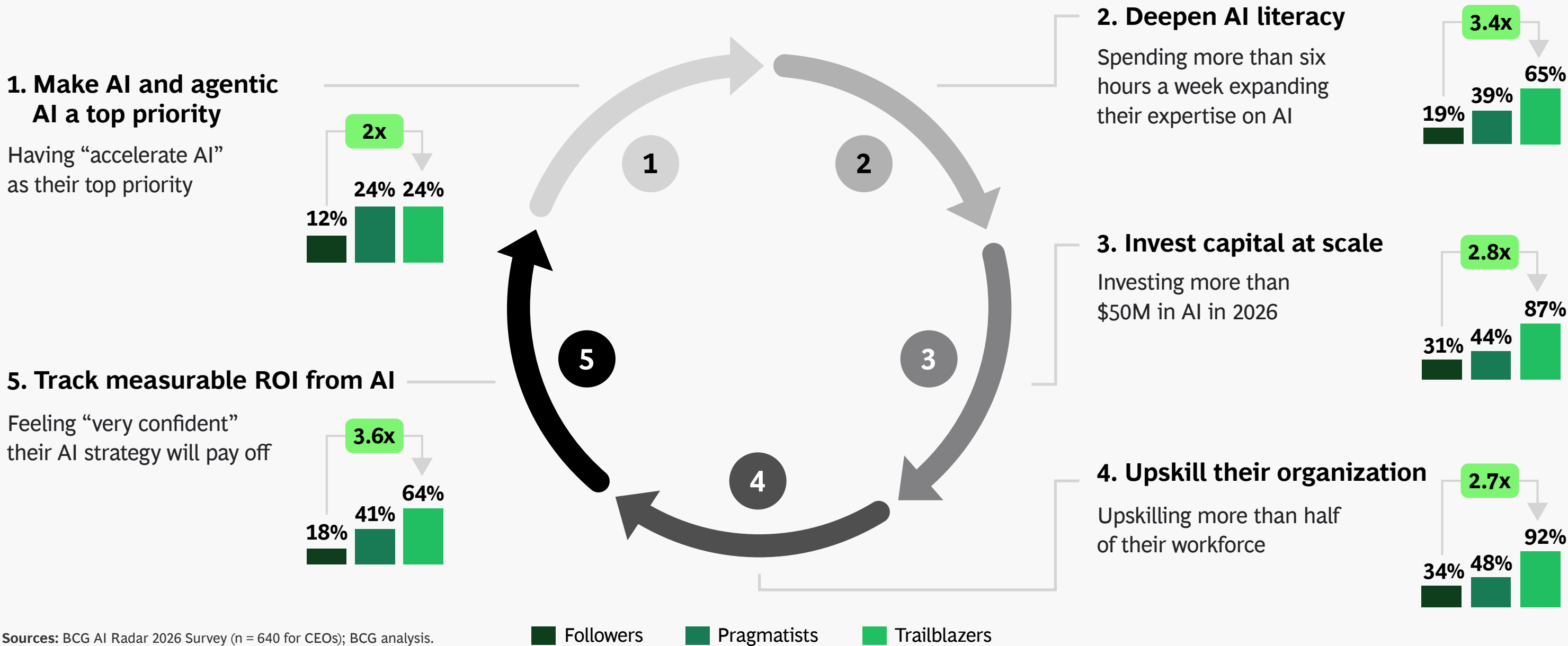


Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.  
<sup>1</sup>K-means clustering analysis reveals the five key variables that differentiate CEOs. These variables are used to define the three CEO archetypes. <sup>2</sup>Investments in AI as a part of the organization’s transformational budget in 2026. <sup>3</sup>Includes all forms of engagement, not just formal training but also discussions, briefings, demos, and direct exploration of tools.

# Trailblazers emerge, but nearly all CEOs are focused on AI

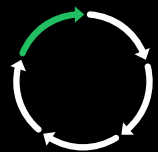


# Trailblazer CEOs create a positive flywheel by prioritizing, investing, and upskilling the organization in AI



Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.



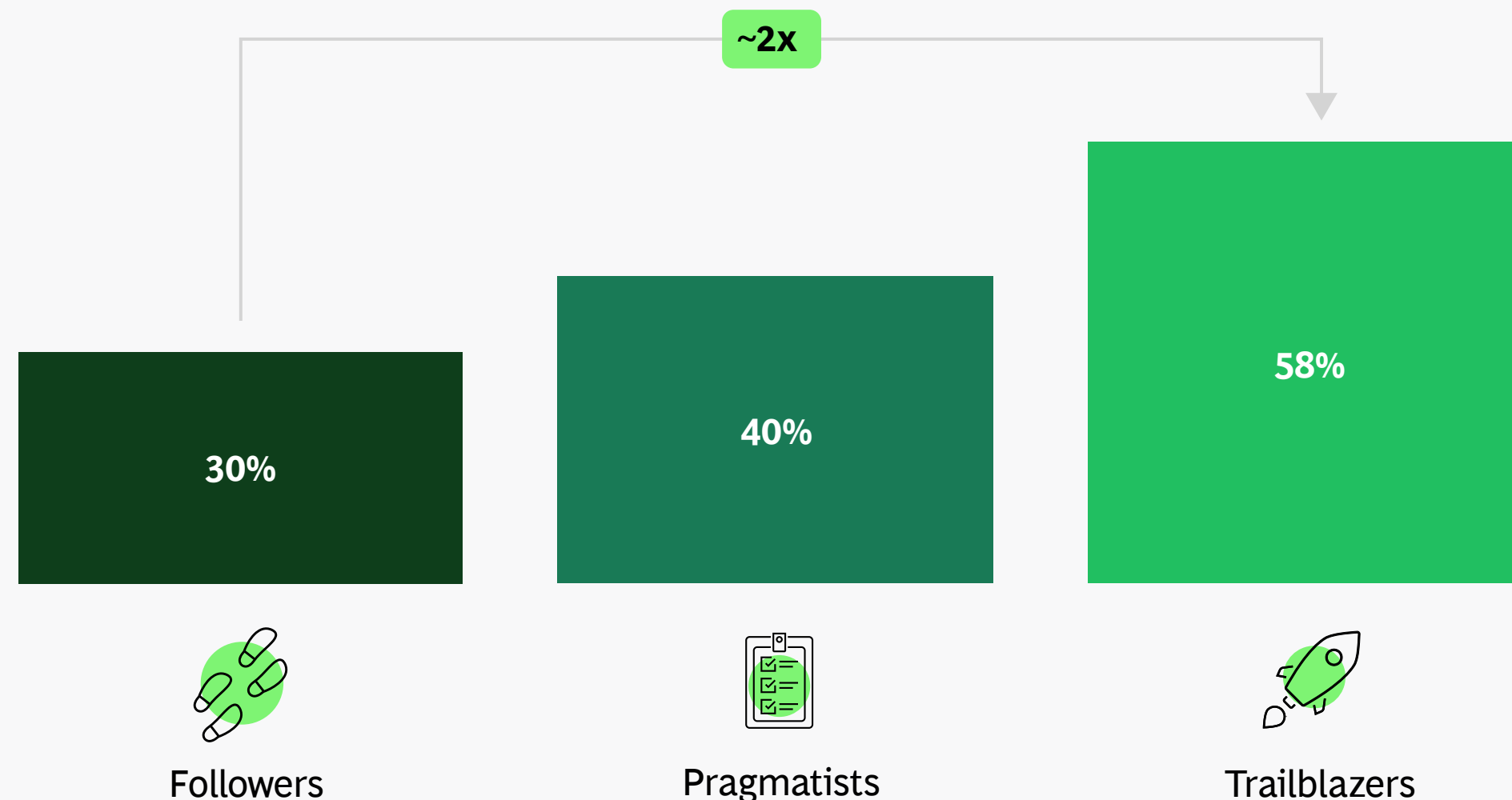


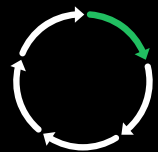
## 1. MAKE AI AND AGENTIC AI A TOP PRIORITY

**Trailblazer CEOs  
are twice as likely  
to apply agentic AI  
end-to-end**

**“End-to-end AI transformation is one of our greatest opportunities to  
succeed with AI agents in the next 12 months”**

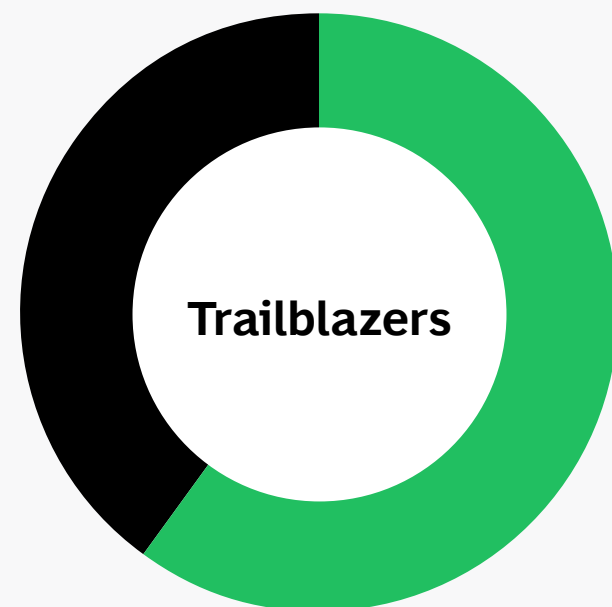
SHARE OF RESPONSES FROM CEOS THAT AGREE





## 2. INVEST CAPITAL AT SCALE

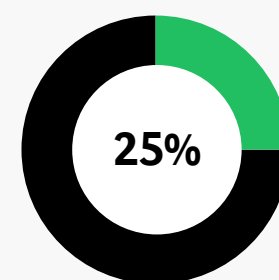
**Trailblazer CEOs  
see value in AI  
agents and invest  
significantly**



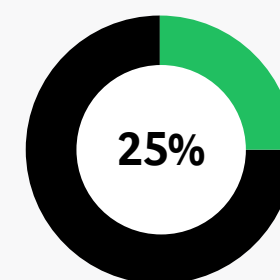
**~60%**

of their AI budget is currently  
being spent on agentic AI

vs



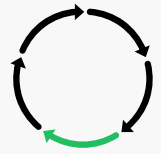
Pragmatists



Followers

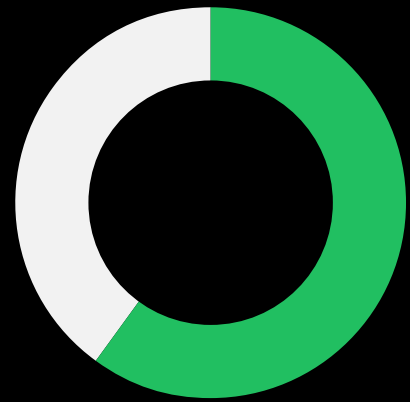
■ % of AI spending on agentic AI

**Sources:** BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.  
**Question:** “Approximately what percent of your organization’s AI investment for 2026 is in AI agents?”



#### 4. UPSKILL THEIR ORGANIZATION

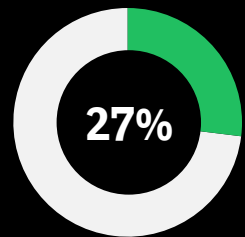
## Trailblazers invest twice as much in upskilling their workforce



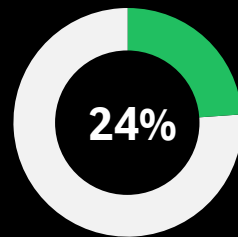
**~60%**

of their organization's AI budget is allocated to upskilling and retraining current workforce on AI<sup>1</sup>

VS



Pragmatists



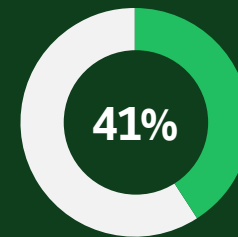
Followers



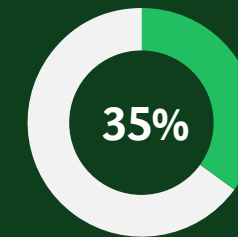
**~70%**

of their workforce has been upskilled/reskilled on AI<sup>2</sup>

VS



Pragmatists

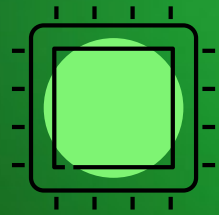


Followers

Sources: BCG AI Radar 2026 Survey (n = 640 for CEOs); BCG analysis.

<sup>1</sup>“Approximately what percent of your overall AI budget is being allocated to upskill and retrain your current workforce on AI?” <sup>2</sup>“What share of your workforce has been upskilled/reskilled for AI?”

# Trailblazers see significant impact and returns from their investments in AI



## Foxconn

Over \$400M targeted savings identified from a scalable AI operating model and AI platform deployed across more than 200 factories



## Reckitt

Quality output doubled through an end-to-end AI-driven workflow **reinvention** in marketing, cutting routine activities by up to 90%

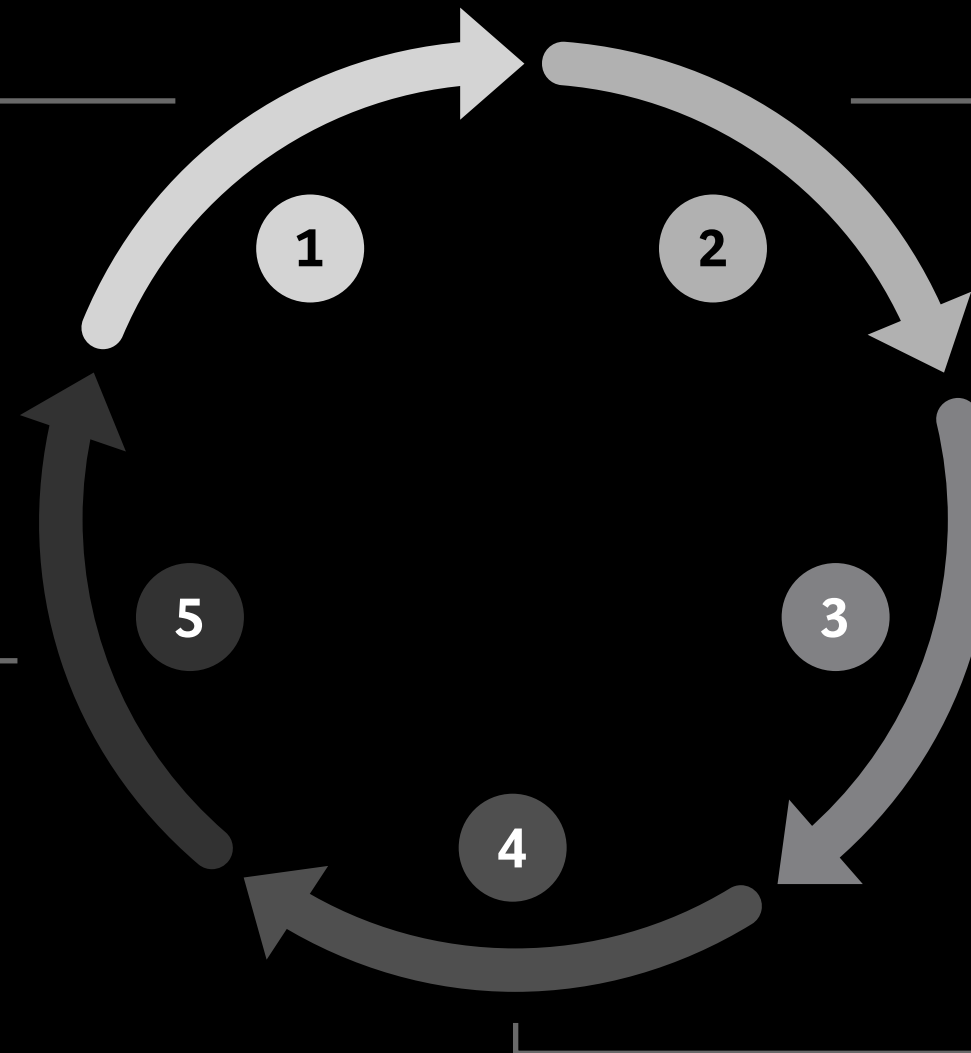
# CEOs must act decisively to execute their AI agenda

## 1. Make AI your key priority

Position the organization to be the disruptor, not the disrupted.

## 5. Track measurable ROI from AI

Track AI's impact to drive sustainable ROI over time.



## 2. Deepen AI literacy

Expand individual AI fluency to effectively lead transformations.

## 3. Commit investments at scale

Invest decisively across end-to-end business functions.

## 4. Upskill the organization

Upskill the workforce to optimize productivity, creativity, and judgment.

## In summary

Corporate investment in AI is here to stay...

**94%**

will continue to invest  
even if it does not pay off  
in 2026

**1.7%**

of an organization's  
revenue is dedicated to  
AI investment

**2x**

increase in projected  
AI investments from  
2025

AI transformation is moving from a CIO-led initiative to a CEO-led strategy...

**72%**

of CEOs say they are the  
main decision maker on AI,  
2x last year

**50%**

of CEOs believe their  
job depends on getting  
AI right

**90%**

of CEOs believe AI agents will  
enable their companies to see  
measurable ROI this year