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WHERE TALENT AND TECHNOLOGY COLLIDE.

How AI is shaping the future of healthcare, life sciences and pharma.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Drawing on insights from the Adecco Group's Global Workforce of the Future and Business Leaders research, this report offers a unique perspective on how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the healthcare, life sciences and pharmaceutical sectors.

For the first time, it captures the views of both employees and senior leaders, highlighting the urgent need for workforce strategies to keep pace with technological change.

The message is clear: organizations that fail to embrace AI risk losing the agility advantage - the ability to bring people and technology together to elevate potential, accelerate growth and build workforces ready for what's next - and their capacity to remain truly patient-focused.

Success demands more than adopting new tools - it requires putting humanity at work, with people at the center.

The research highlights two critical gaps: between the recognition of AI's potential and the readiness to embed it into talent strategies, and between employee enthusiasm and the support they receive to harness AI effectively. Organizations are also facing growing challenges around workforce trust, leadership capability and organizational readiness for AI-enabled transformation.

Closing these gaps is the defining leadership challenge of the moment and demands a dual focus on technology and talent.

Thriving in the AI era means redefining roles, rethinking skills and investing in workforce development. It also requires transparent leadership, genuine collaboration with employees to build trust and establish new ways of working and a mindset that sees AI not only as a tool for clinical and operational efficiency - from R&D to diagnostics - but as a catalyst for human capability. Empowered employees, equipped with the right tools and a clear sense of purpose, are key to delivering more personalized, patient-focused care.

Organizations that close these gaps - those we define as future-ready - will be best positioned to lead in the years ahead

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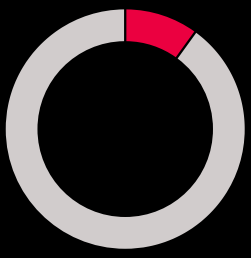
KEY FINDINGS

Leaders recognize the importance of AI but do not fully understand the risks and opportunities of adopting it.

Industry executives cite AI agents, and economic and business uncertainty as the top trends reshaping business models over the

5 years



Only a small proportion (13%) demonstrate the workforce agility, leadership capability and adaptability associated with future-ready organizations

Only 44% of leadership have taken part in a tailored AI training program in the last year

Workers are enthusiastic about AI but are not getting the support or sense of purpose they need to reap its benefits.

86%
of workers are flexible and willing to adjust to the rise of AI in the workplace

42%
of organizations don't have an AI policy

32%
of workers feel actively involved in how their work is being reshaped by AI

37%
of employees can confidently measure the impact of their work

Leaders recognize the importance of data and AI to improve talent strategies, but they are not doing enough to integrate it. From surveyed organizations:

30%
are strengthening workforce planning and forecasting capabilities

32%
are prioritizing digital and data capability across the workforce

37%
are focusing on improving employee trust, engagement & organizational transparency

The time to act is now: Companies that fail to transform how people work, and to show employees how they fit within that transformation, risk losing their best talent and their agility advantage.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

In healthcare, life sciences and pharma, AI will touch every part of the value chain - from accelerating time to market and streamlining R&D, to making manufacturing more efficient, improving clinical trial design and enabling more personalized healthcare delivery.

At its best, AI makes the industry more patient-centric, allowing employees to focus on what they do best - the human touch - without being held back by repetitive, process-heavy tasks.

“Ultimately, the sector is about treating people. So, the key is to embrace technology as an enabler in the human-to-human interface, not as a replacement for it. AI should enhance human capability while keeping people - patients and professionals alike - at the center,” says Baptiste Courcoux, Vice President of Global Accounts, Life Sciences, at Adecco.

A MORE CONNECTED WORKFORCE

To get there, the workforce needs to be future-ready. Some jobs may shift, others may be automated or replicated by AI. For example, simplifying complex workflows with AI agents or automation will reduce the number of people required, and improve speed and efficiency.

But the story doesn’t end there. The more profound change lies in how roles will evolve and new ones emerge. “Organizations are increasingly redesigning work around collaboration between people and AI systems” Courcoux says. “That’s the real evolution of the workforce.”

This shift will also change the type of skills needed. “We’ll need hybrid roles. Digital fluency, adaptability and cross-functional workforce capabilities are becoming increasingly important.,” Courcoux says.

The big opportunity this brings lies in the connection between disciplines like digital, R&D, data science, manufacturing and quality assurance. Organizations that use workforce analytics and AI-enabled decision making, will further strengthen these connections and improve agility.

AI AS THE BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY

There is no doubt that AI can be a powerful bridge to opportunity, opening doors, removing barriers and giving more people the tools and support they need to thrive. But it also comes with risks - from bias to hallucinations - that are directly in conflict with the scientific rigor, integrity and data-driven approach that defines the sector.

For this reason, healthcare, life sciences and pharma organizations need to chart their own path forward, one that is necessarily more cautious than some other sectors. This means developing AI-enabled workforce strategies that build on their legacy systems, values and regulatory realities rather than trying to copy and paste models from other industries. But above all, they will need to adopt a human-centric strategy - one that supports real people, in real roles, through real transitions. Workforce trust, responsible AI governance and transparent leadership will become increasingly important as organizations scale AI adoption.

The biggest opportunity lies in finding a balance between innovation and integrity by using AI to empower people and accelerate progress, without compromising the foundations that the industry is built on.

WHAT EMPLOYEES REALLY THINK

How do employees see the future of work and their place in it, as AI reshapes the landscape? Are they really scared AI will replace them?

Our research reveals two clear sentiments: **optimism tempered by realism.**

Workers are eager to embrace AI and its potential, but are not convinced their employers are giving them the support, training or clarity they need to thrive.

Key highlights from the Adecco Group's Global Workforce of the Future Research include:

Employees believe generative AI will have a major influence on their working life

86%
are willing to be flexible and adapt to using AI in the workplace

21%
have seen or anticipate AI taking over their work or tasks

73%
believe AI is creating more jobs

61%
say it's evolving existing roles

We can already see that evolution in action with entirely new career pathways emerging. Today, marketers must be able to blend creative skills with data science. Bench scientists are increasingly working alongside AI-driven simulation tools, and new roles such as 'clinical data scientist' are taking shape - all requiring professionals who can bridge the gap between technology and scientific expertise.

Adaptability, digital fluency and human capabilities are becoming increasingly important across the future workforce.

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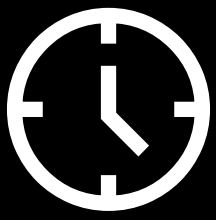
A NEW WAY OF WORKING

However, the positive impacts of AI could be enhanced if employees felt they were more deeply involved in how it is being implemented.



Workers report saving an average of just over 2 hours per day by using AI. This is giving them space for more strategic thinking (37%) and training and upskilling (31%)

50% expect their employer to integrate AI agents into their workflow in the next 12 months

Many need more training: 72% say their knowledge of AI already exceeds the training available from their employer (in line with the 71% global average)

Only a third (32%) feel actively involved in how their work is being reshaped by AI - although those who are tend to feel a stronger sense of purpose

Employee trust in employers' use of AI remains relatively low, scoring 4.0/10 versus the 4.5 global average

Only around two in five employees (37%) can confidently measure the impact of their work

BUILDING TRUST

To build trust and confidence in AI, employees need to understand why AI is being introduced, how it affects their jobs and what guardrails are in place. Employees need to trust that AI is there to assist, not replace them.

At the same time, they need to understand that AI isn't perfect - especially in industries like healthcare, life sciences and pharma, which demand the highest levels of accuracy. Organizations need to be clear: AI will make some mistakes. It's a tool, not the truth, and humans must always stay in control.

THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

Like employees, employers in healthcare, life sciences and pharma recognize that generative AI will have a major impact on the sector.

The Adecco Group's Business Leaders Research found that technology megatrends dominate the C-suite, with AI agents, digitization and automation ranked among the most impactful technologies by sector leaders.

Yet workforce strategies are lagging behind. Today, only 13% of healthcare, life sciences and pharma organizations can be considered as 'future-ready'.

Key characteristics of future-ready organizations include:

- **A resilient workforce**
- **Intentional skills development**
- **AI-driven agility**
- **Strategic talent cultivation**

THE TRAINING GAP

While 43% of industry leaders expect employees to adapt and upskill for the AI era, they are failing to provide the support, mobility pathways or leadership development to make it happen.

A significant proportion (42%) of organizations lack an AI policy and leave it to employees to decide how to use the technology at work. This is against a backdrop of rising demand for AI and machine learning across the sector, from drug discovery to diagnostics and clinical development.

What's more, many leaders feel unprepared to guide this shift: less than half (44%) have taken part in a tailored training program in the last year, and just 37% of employees are confident their leadership has sufficient AI skills and knowledge to understand the risks and opportunities of the technology.

Without leaders setting the tone, employees face inconsistent guidance and lower confidence in digital transformation strategies.

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WHERE AI IS ALREADY AFFECTING WORK IN PHARMA

MEDICAL AFFAIRS

What's changing: AI can draft slide decks, FAQs and literature summaries based on approved sources, quickly synthesizing large volumes of data that teams would otherwise have to sift through manually.

What it means for people: Medical writers and field teams can focus on validating AI-generated content, tailoring messages to specific audiences and communicating science in a more personalized, impactful way - rather than starting every asset from scratch.

CLINICAL TRIAL RECRUITMENT

What's changing: AI can scan electronic health records and clinician notes to identify patients who match complex eligibility criteria, a task that normally requires hours of manual review.

What it means for people: Clinicians and study coordinators spend less time sifting through records and more time engaging with patients, while eligible participants are identified earlier and offered access to trials they might otherwise not hear about.

MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

What's changing: Virtual assistants powered by agentic AI can help operators quickly find the right SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), monitor line performance in real time and flag equipment issues before they cause downtime.

What it means for people: Line leaders and technicians spend less time searching for information or reacting to failures and more time supervising operations, planning interventions and improving overall equipment effectiveness. These changes are accelerating the redesign of jobs, workflows and workforce capabilities across the sector.

THE MOBILITY CHALLENGE

The research shows that career mobility is also a key issue for the sector.

43% of organizations say employees will need to update skills, roles and responsibilities to adapt to AI compared to 81% of future-ready healthcare, life sciences and pharma organizations

Less than half (43%) are actively encouraging internal mobility, compared to 100% of future-ready organizations

Only 39% offer alternative career pathways beyond traditional hierarchies (compared to 69% of future-ready organizations), limiting agility in fast-changing environments

Organizations are increasingly prioritizing workforce planning, workforce analytics and capability development as part of broader transformation strategies.

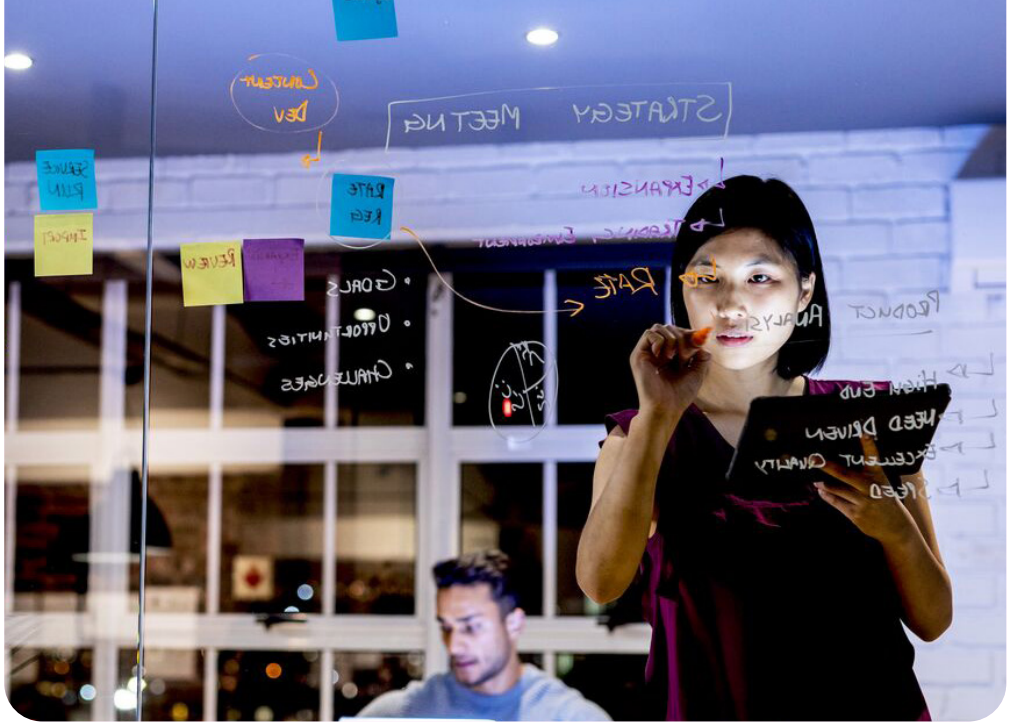
In line with the global average, organizations in this sector are placing more focus on building robust data foundations to address these issues.

Without consistent, reliable data, it's difficult to identify where specific expertise sits across teams or to support employees in developing and moving into new roles. Organizations are increasingly focused on building adaptable workforces through skills development, AI-enabled learning and redesigned career pathways.

BECOMING FUTURE-READY

The research identified a small segment of companies that are adapting more effectively to the realities of AI than most. These future-ready organizations are committed to putting people at the center of digital transformation. Our research shows that workforce trust, adaptability and leadership capability are becoming increasingly important differentiators for long-term success.

"Future-ready companies think differently. They don't just respond to AI - they lead with it, using AI to change how their business runs, how their people grow and how decisions get made. Because they invest in developing their leaders, they have the skills and strategy needed to use technology to stay ahead of the curve," says Christophe Catoir, President, Adecco.



Healthcare, life sciences and pharma organizations seeking to match the world's most future-ready companies need to close the gap between leaders' AI ambitions and employees' ability to act on them.

THIS BEGINS WITH FIVE ESSENTIAL STEPS:

1 BUILD TRUST WITH EMPLOYEES

Employees who feel their concerns are being taken seriously and who are genuinely involved in how AI is shaping their work are far more likely to play an active role in helping their employers unlock AI's full potential.

- Explain why AI is being introduced, how it affects roles and what safeguards are in place
- Involve employees directly in job-redesign discussions and clearly communicate the roles that both humans and AI agents are expected to play and how this will bring value for both the individual and the company
- Take employee concerns seriously and educate the workforce about the frameworks and guardrails in place to protect personal data and uphold ethical standards
- Strengthen transparency around AI governance, workforce decisions and ethical implementation.

Think about: Holding a short demo and anonymous Q&A before you launch a new AI tool so employees can flag concerns and vote on which tasks feel appropriate to automate. Then share a brief summary of what was asked and how people's input shaped the rollout.

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2 BUILD DIGITAL FLUENCY FROM THE TOP DOWN

While top-down mandates alone won't work, leaders must model AI literacy and future-ready skills before expecting them from their teams.

- Invest in leadership development
- Equip leaders with AI capabilities
- Measure upskilling efforts and tie them to leadership incentive programs
- Build leadership capability and digital fluency across management teams.

Think about: Requiring senior leaders to complete a short, hands-on AI bootcamp - for example, using generative AI to draft a protocol summary or analyze a mock dataset - before asking their teams to upskill.

3 SUPPORT TALENT TO UPSKILL AND ADAPT

Organizations that encourage experimentation and back it up with comprehensive upskilling cultivate employees who are willing to embrace change and are equipped with the tools to make it happen.

- Guide employees to develop new, value-adding capabilities through targeted upskilling and career development
- Promote the idea that upskilling and career mobility go hand in hand
- Provide transparent guidance on the skills necessary for next career steps and promote non-linear career paths for all workers
- Promote continuous learning and workforce adaptability as core organizational capabilities.

Think about: Setting up a small internal 'AI training hub' for teams most affected by new tools - for example, giving regulatory or manufacturing staff access to clear, step by step courses and hands on practice sessions.

4 STRENGTHEN DATA FOUNDATIONS

AI can help organizations unlock the full value of existing talent data by making recruitment more targeted, personalizing training and strengthening mobility strategies.

- Establish strong data foundations to make sure AI outputs are reliable, trusted and connected to business outcomes
- Use AI tools to create tailored experiences for employees, identifying career paths, training and opportunities
- Balance your talent strategy's use of AI for agility with a commitment to human-centricity for sustainability and inclusion
- Use workforce analytics and AI-enabled insights to support workforce planning and organizational agility.

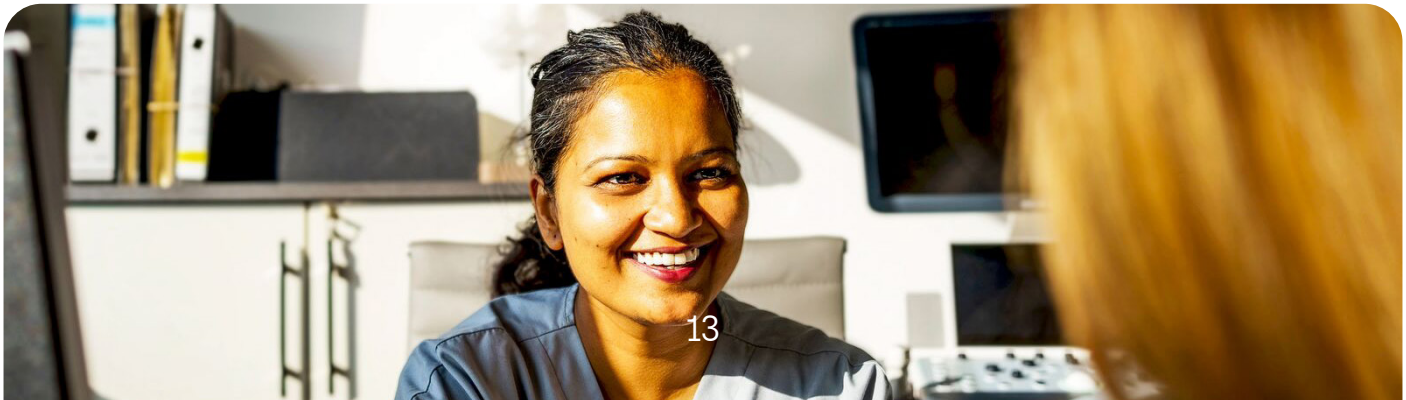
Think about: Starting with a simple talent data clean up project - for example, standardizing job titles, skills data and training records across functions so AI tools can reliably match employees to learning paths or internal opportunities.

5 MEASURE PROGRESS

The only way to understand how AI is impacting employee wellbeing and business performance is through robust, consistent measurement frameworks.

- Establish clear metrics to track AI adoption, employee engagement and skill development across the organization
- Regularly assess the impact of AI initiatives on both business outcomes and employee wellbeing
- Use data-driven insights to refine your AI strategy and ensure alignment with workforce needs
- Measure workforce trust, leadership effectiveness and workforce readiness alongside AI adoption.

Think about: Creating a simple monthly or quarterly AI impact dashboard that tracks a few clear indicators - for example, how often teams are using new AI tools, how much time they're saving and how employees rate their comfort and confidence levels.



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LEADING WITH HUMANITY

As AI continues to transform healthcare, life sciences and pharma, the most agile organizations will be those that put people - both employees and patients - at the heart of their digital transformation, bridging the gap between talent and technology.

When workforces are empowered, supported and aligned behind a shared vision, they are better equipped to innovate, collaborate and ultimately deliver better outcomes for patients. "As technology transforms tasks and roles, it is purpose, value and trust that will keep our workplaces human," says Catoir.

Technology will continue to advance - there's no turning back. But the real differentiator will be humanity - creating organizations where people are inspired and equipped to do their best work in service of patients. Organizations that combine AI-enabled transformation with workforce trust, leadership transparency and continuous learning will be best positioned for long-term success.

"There is no replacement for real human connection. In the end, it is people - not technology - who will build the resilient, adaptable workforces of the future," Catoir concludes. "Our research shows that AI can be the bridge to opportunity for employees and leaders, giving those that embrace it, a clear agility advantage for the future."

GIVING YOU THE AGILITY ADVANTAGE

In a world of work that's changing faster than ever, the Adecco Group creates the agility advantage - bringing people and technology together to elevate potential, accelerate growth and build workforces ready for what's next.

For further information or to continue the conversation, please contact our team at

adecco.globalcommunications@adeccogroup.com

About the research

This report compares findings from employees and business leaders in healthcare, life sciences and pharmaceutical organizations, to give a unique view on how AI is impacting these sectors.

The Adecco Group's Business Leaders Research: 'The human premium: Leadership beyond the algorithm' (May 2026) surveyed 2,000 authenticated C-suite executives across 13 countries and 16 industries.

The Adecco Group's Global Workforce of the Future Research: 'Humanity at work: How to thrive in the AI era' (October 2025) surveyed 37,500 workers across 31 countries and 21 industries, offering a comprehensive view of how employees are adapting to AI and redefining the future of work.

The insights presented throughout the report draw on feedback from healthcare, life sciences and pharmaceutical respondents across both studies.