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Evolving together

Flourishing in the
AI workforce



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Foreword



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The world of work is changing, shaped by demographic shifts bringing growing age diversity, economic forces introducing new industries and roles, and new attitudes and expectations of when, how and where work is done. Perhaps the most significant shift is one that is already underway; the artificial intelligence (AI) transformation.

Already, 76% of business leaders across our international survey¹ say that if businesses do not invest in AI tools they will be at a competitive disadvantage. At the same time, 81% are actively investing in AI and 91% say their business will in the next five years. But if AI is an unstoppable juggernaut, we still have the opportunity to respond to what it can offer and ensure it can become a force for good for individuals, the organizations they work for, and society as a whole. In particular, where we know AI may shape how companies recruit staff, manage performance, train employees and more, it is vital that we explore both the opportunities and how to manage the implications of turning to these tools.

BSI's research, shows us that there are a number of areas to consider. In this paper we discuss each one in turn, with the intention of encouraging a conversation about how to ensure we all benefit from AI in the future of work.

¹ Yonder surveyed 932 business leaders (manager level or equivalent and above) in nine countries and eight sectors in March 2024.

This report follows the publication of BSI's Evolving Together: Flourishing in the age-diverse workforce, which explored how demographic changes will shape the future of work and how business leaders can act now to respond.

Shaping the future workplace

The first area to consider is how AI will impact the workplace – which jobs, functions or industries will be most affected. 83% of leaders globally said they expect some manual roles to change, and 72% expect some manual roles to be replaced, a figure that rises to 76% in retail and transport. The figures are similar but marginally higher for knowledge-based roles, with 89% expecting some roles to change and 77% expecting some to be replaced by AI.

In reality, almost all roles are likely to change to at least some degree as AI permeates the workplace. For manual roles AI alone will not replace jobs, but AI paired with robotics or other technology may have a sizeable impact in the long term, potentially reducing reliance on people for repetitive, labour intensive and often risky tasks on construction sites, in factories and warehouses or even restaurants. For example, a fully automated asparagus harvester is being developed², while retailers like UK-based Ocado use robots to pick items for online orders³.

Using technology for these labour-intensive activities, especially where both skills shortages and demographic challenges are having tangible impacts, could significantly benefit economic growth. In this context, AI powered robots would be filling skills gaps rather than taking jobs. In other areas, technology could augment roles, with human roles evolving to work with technology.

² UK based Autopickr introduces Gus, an asparagus harvester, Future Farming, May 2024

³ Our Technology, Ocado Group, accessed July 2024



In the knowledge and service economies, AI is already having an impact in some professions, including content writers, paralegals and customer service agents, with AI taking on repetitive, mundane, or routine tasks. In healthcare, AI is being trained to help doctors and other professionals review medical data such as X-rays and scans to speed up diagnosis. Again, in these sectors, AI is unlikely to 'take jobs', but rather to shift what tasks people take on. Importantly, research⁴ shows that humans still want – and need – human interactions.

The business leaders surveyed for our research anticipate operations and marketing to be the key functions impacted by AI usage (56% and 54%), with just 35% saying procurement and just a fifth saying legal (20%) – despite those being areas with a great deal of information to absorb and obvious efficiencies for AI.

There will still be a key role for human creativity, ingenuity, critical thinking and collaboration, so whilst the work may evolve, the human will still be essential. Additionally many of these tools, especially robotics, are unlikely to be sufficiently low cost to justify investment for many businesses in the short-term, so uptake is likely to be slow depending on the country or the size of business.

⁴ Two fifths say AI making customer service worse and more than one in three say there are no benefits to these tools, BSI, March 2024

Figure 1: AI's impact on manual roles

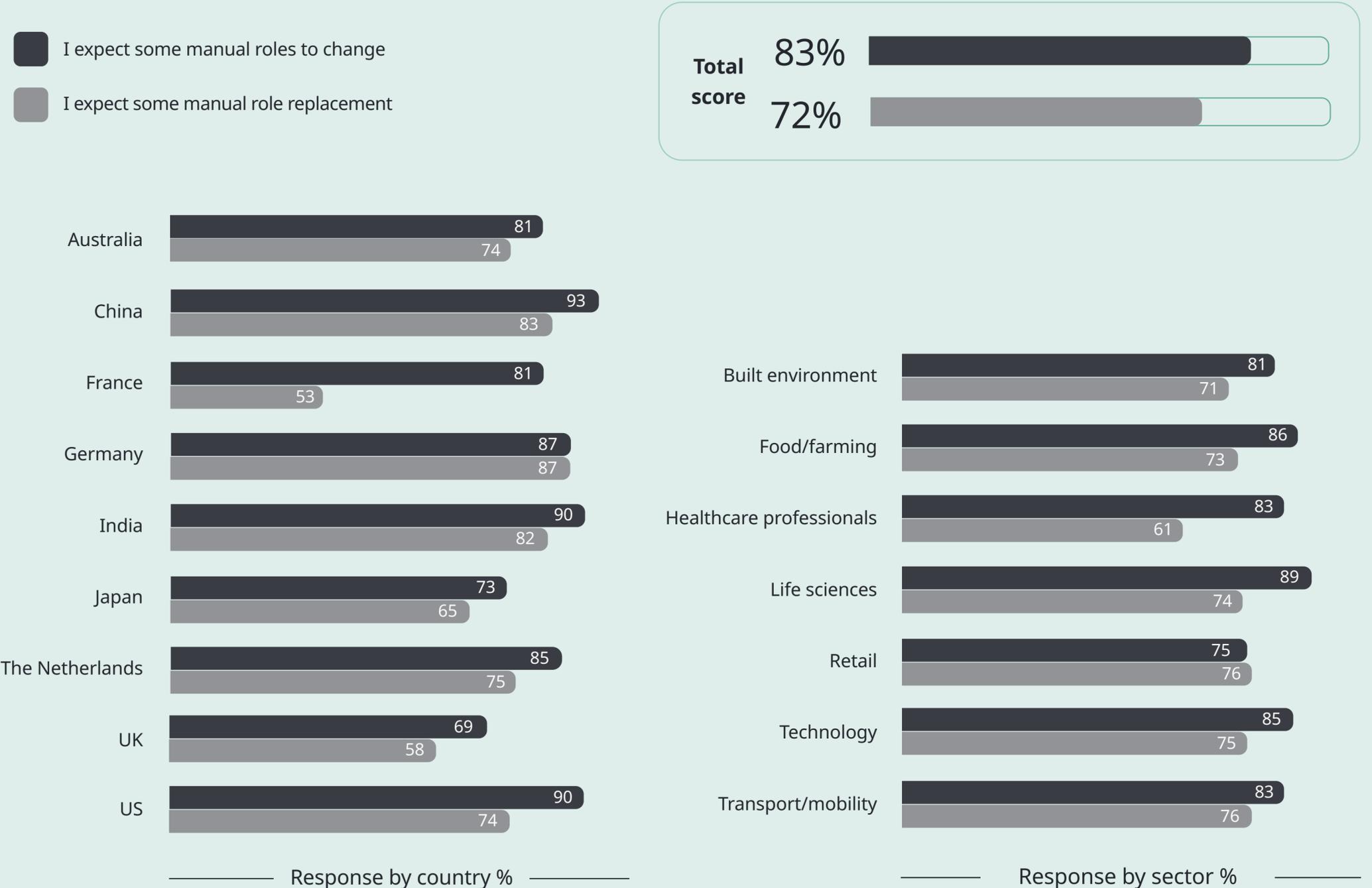
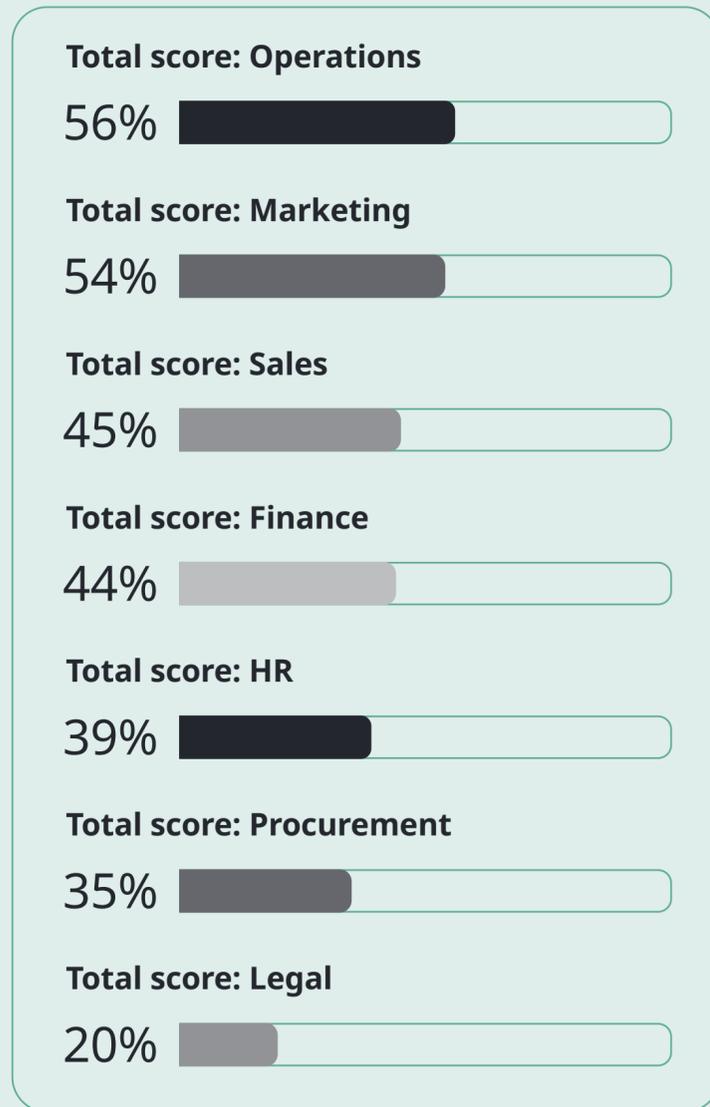


Figure 2: Expected impact of AI on different business functions

 Click the buttons at the top to see results by market or sector



Response by country %

Response by sector %



Continue to AI in performance

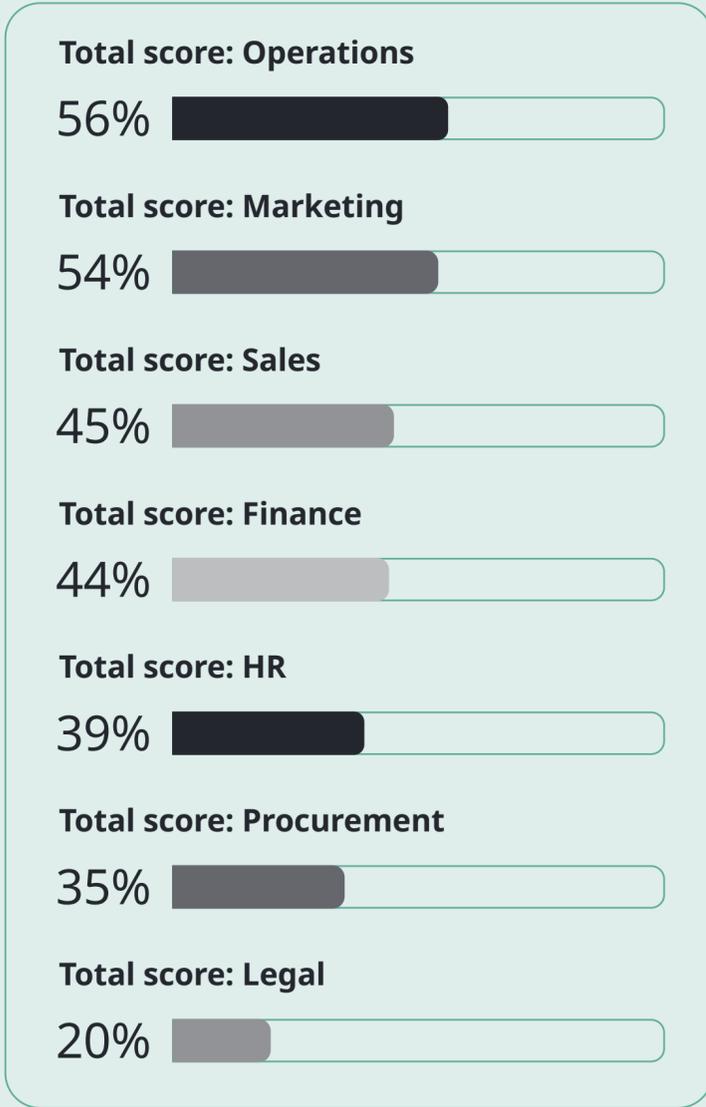


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Continue to AI in performance



AI in performance management

At present, just a third of business leaders globally who are investing in AI expect it to be used for performance management. This means we are some way off from this replacing traditional forms of review and appraisal. Yet at the same time 71% are aware of some aspects of performance management being supported by AI in their organization.

There is a clear opportunity for AI to add value here, for example around collating and analyzing colleague feedback on an ongoing basis, something organizations may struggle with or colleagues may not prioritize. More visible and instantaneous feedback could drive a step change in culture, helping to introduce real-time changes to performance rather than just at annual reviews.

AI can speedily aggregate information from emails, instant messaging tools, regular check-ins, and even social media interactions to create a comprehensive view of an employee's performance and ensure everything is accounted for. This could help those who are less inclined to solicit feedback, or who struggle to present their achievements at an annual review. Equally, for smaller businesses without HR functions, these tools could help enhance professionalism and embed robust performance management processes.



The potential benefits of that are clear, but there are considerations. Firstly, around transparency: employees need to know what platforms are being monitored and how things like email tone or frequency of sending messages will be considered. Equally, there could be negative implications for organizational culture and employee well-being, given the excess pressure that could arise if every word and every message is being analyzed. Most workers will have

the occasional off day, or send an unadvisable email, but not every slip requires escalation, and context is key. With neurodivergent workers, they may not be using language in the same way, while workers using a non-native language may be at a disadvantage. How will an AI system take such things into account, especially if it is being trained based on specific demographic profiles?

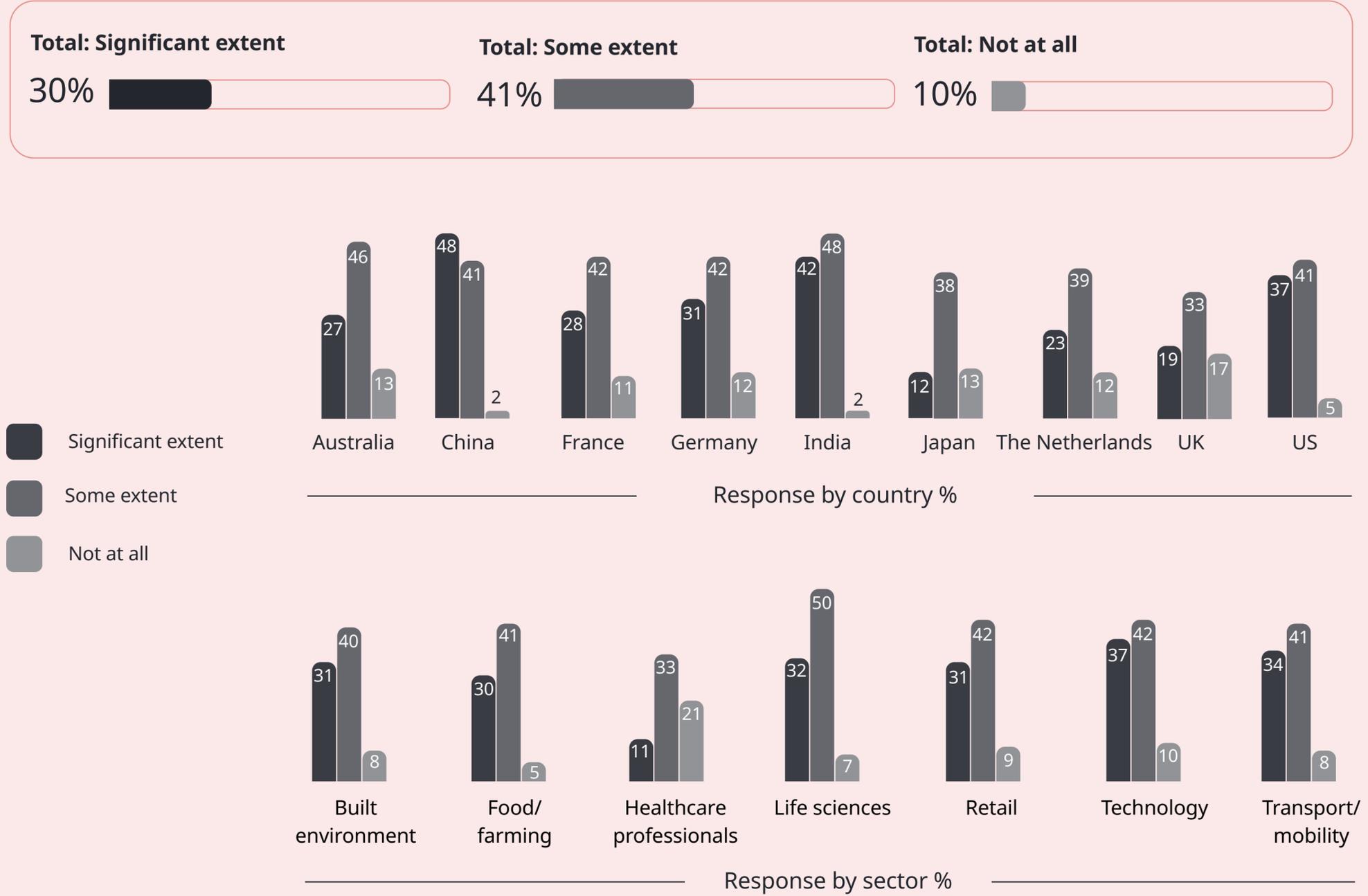
Considering this will be crucial to ensure diversity and inclusion is not set back, and that worker well-being, particularly mental health, is supported. Employee interactions with the system also need to be considered; if the AI searches for keywords, employees may use those words out of context; this is something that has been seen with AI in recruitment⁵. This may mean the integrity of these approaches may be in question.

Ultimately, the human factor will be key – AI may be a useful helping hand to collate information, but human insight, emotional intelligence, compassion and genuine understanding of and, familiarity with the person whose performance is being managed will be critical – none of which can be done by AI.

⁵ ChatGPT: How generative AI could change hiring as we know it, BBC, April 2023



Figure 3: To what extent are you aware of your business using AI to support any aspect of performance management



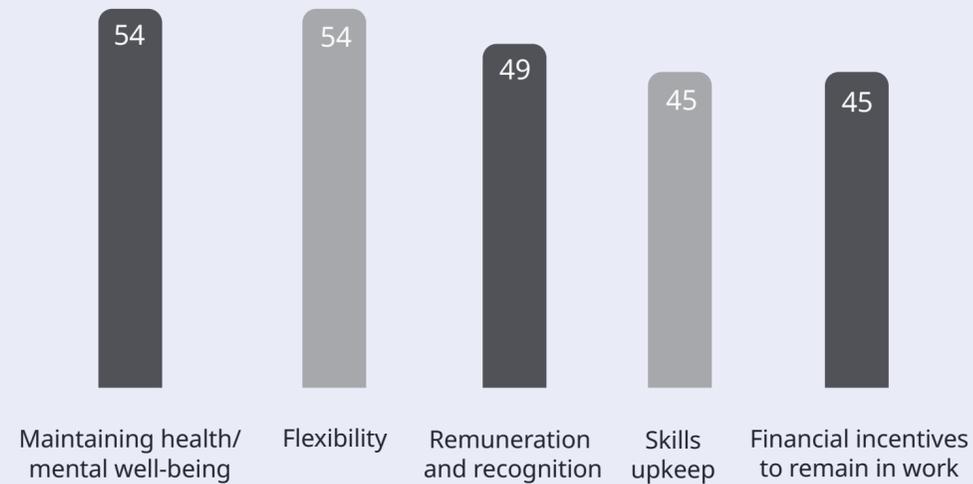
Job design

BSI's recent [Evolving Together: Flourishing in the age-diverse workforce](#) research found that business leaders saw flexibility as the key priority for success in the future-age diverse workforce. AI could play an instrumental role in enabling the design of a truly flexible workplace and the redesign of roles away from the traditional 9-5 or in person nature.

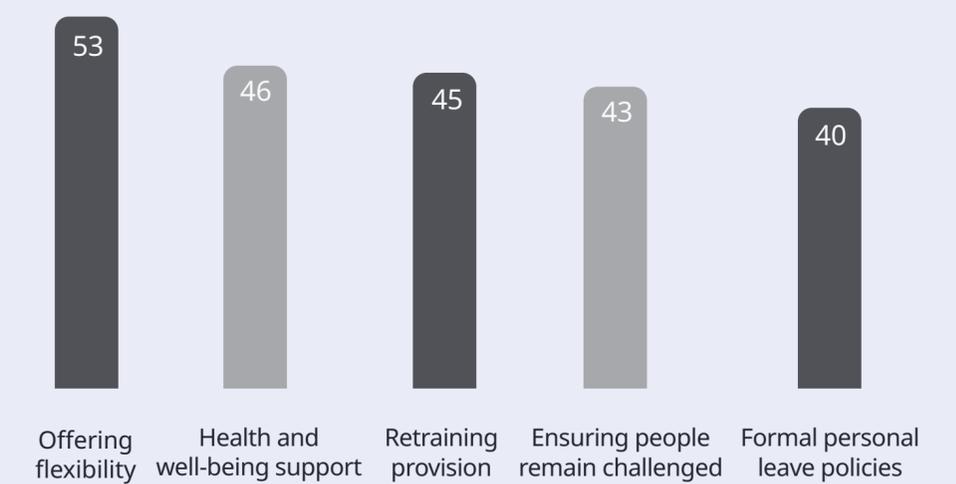
This goes beyond writing accurate and informative job descriptions, although AI could be beneficial here, to thinking about how jobs are performed and if there are better ways to achieve those tasks. There may be ways to streamline roles, or better link up different business functions like marketing, customer service and sales so they more effectively share information rather than starting from scratch each time.

To create a more flexible workplace, AI could be used to facilitate job shares, including via determining the best way to carve up and allocate tasks, catching colleagues up after they have had time off, or ensuring a smooth handover.

Priorities for individual career development (%)



Priorities for businesses to enable people to flourish (%)



Priorities for policymakers to enable people to flourish (%)



Whereas people may not always have the capacity or mindset to step back and think differently, AI has the potential to digest information speedily in order to make determinations about how to design jobs for the employees and working context in question.

Equally, it will be important to consider worker well-being within the deployment of AI. While AI could take on mundane or menial tasks, the corollary of that could be that people are left with the most challenging components and find their workload intensified rather than reduced. To support worker well-being and avoid burnout or work-related stress, it will be vital to think in the round about how AI can make the whole job better and design a future workplace in which all can thrive.



Diversity, inclusion and recruitment

30% of business leaders whose firms are investing in AI anticipate that the technology will be used to manage job applications and recruitment. Equally 67% say they already have some awareness of their business using AI tools to support any stage of the candidate recruitment process. There are obvious areas AI could add value, from creating the job profile and advert, and sifting through CVs to screen out those without the relevant experience, to using AI to determine suitability or eligibility.

Beyond that, the question is how organizations can use AI to plug the diversity gap by attracting and recruiting a more diverse group of candidates, and ultimately enhance innovation within the business as a result (given that research shows that diversity enhances innovation⁶).

This could be gender or cultural diversity, age-diversity as the candidate pool shrinks in the context of an ageing population, or cognitive diversity. AI could be used to review applications on a skills and competence basis, without information on educational achievements, gender or name – eliminating conscious or unconscious bias from the recruitment process.

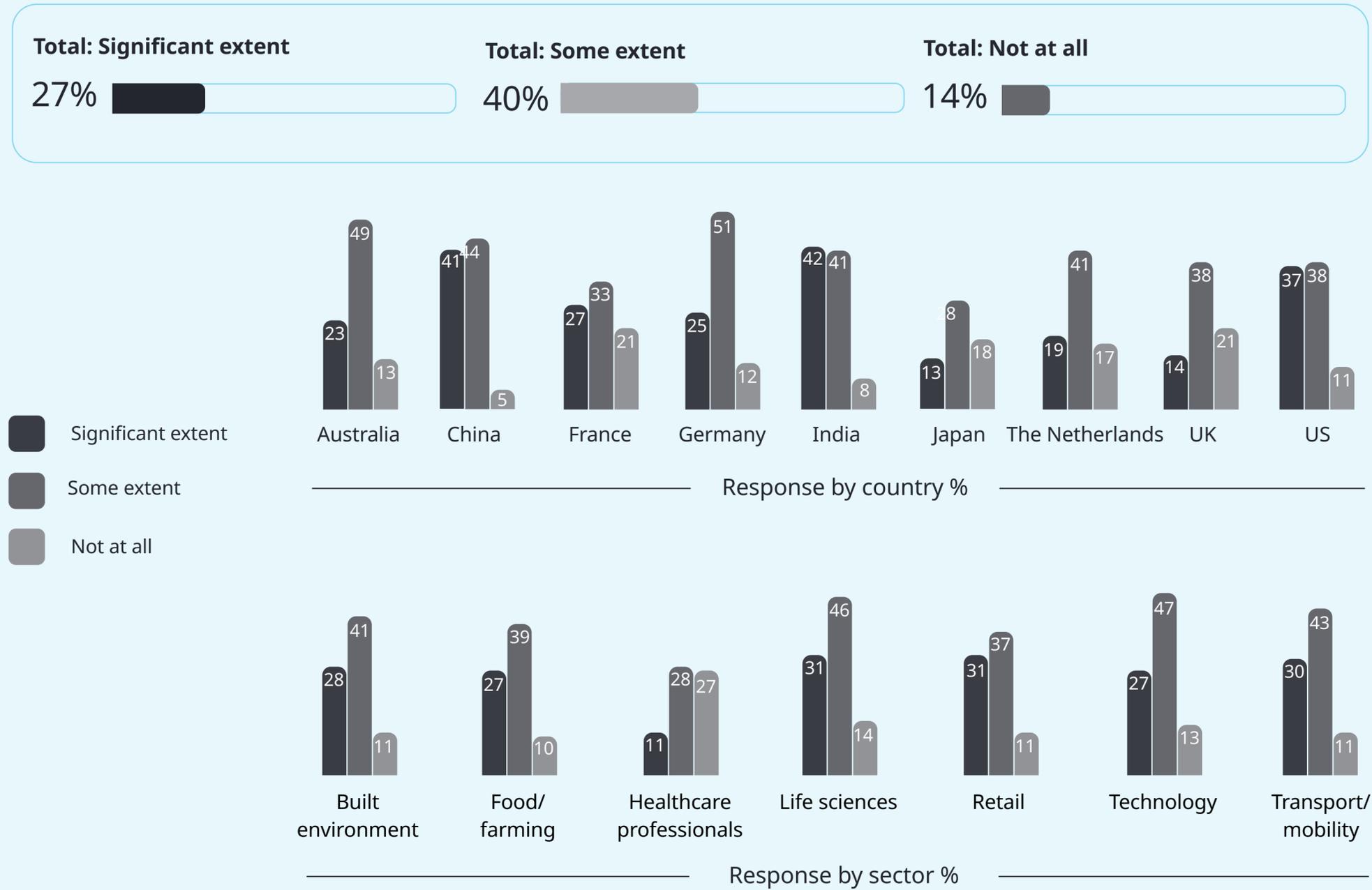


⁶ [Diversity Confirmed To Boost Innovation And Financial Results](#), Forbes, Jan 2020

Business can go beyond using AI to enhance diversity at the recruitment stage. To keep a diverse workforce and create an environment where the individuals can flourish, it's critical to develop the underlying culture of the organization to support this, so that other known diversity barriers such as pay and career progression do not prevent individuals from achieving their potential.

For recruiters, it will be key to be intelligent customers in using AI tools, upskilling themselves on understanding how the systems work and ensuring questions are asked about what biases might have been brought into the data that AI uses, and the limitations, as well as the benefits, of such tools.

Figure 5: To what extent are you aware of your business using AI tools to support any stage of the candidate recruitment process?



Training

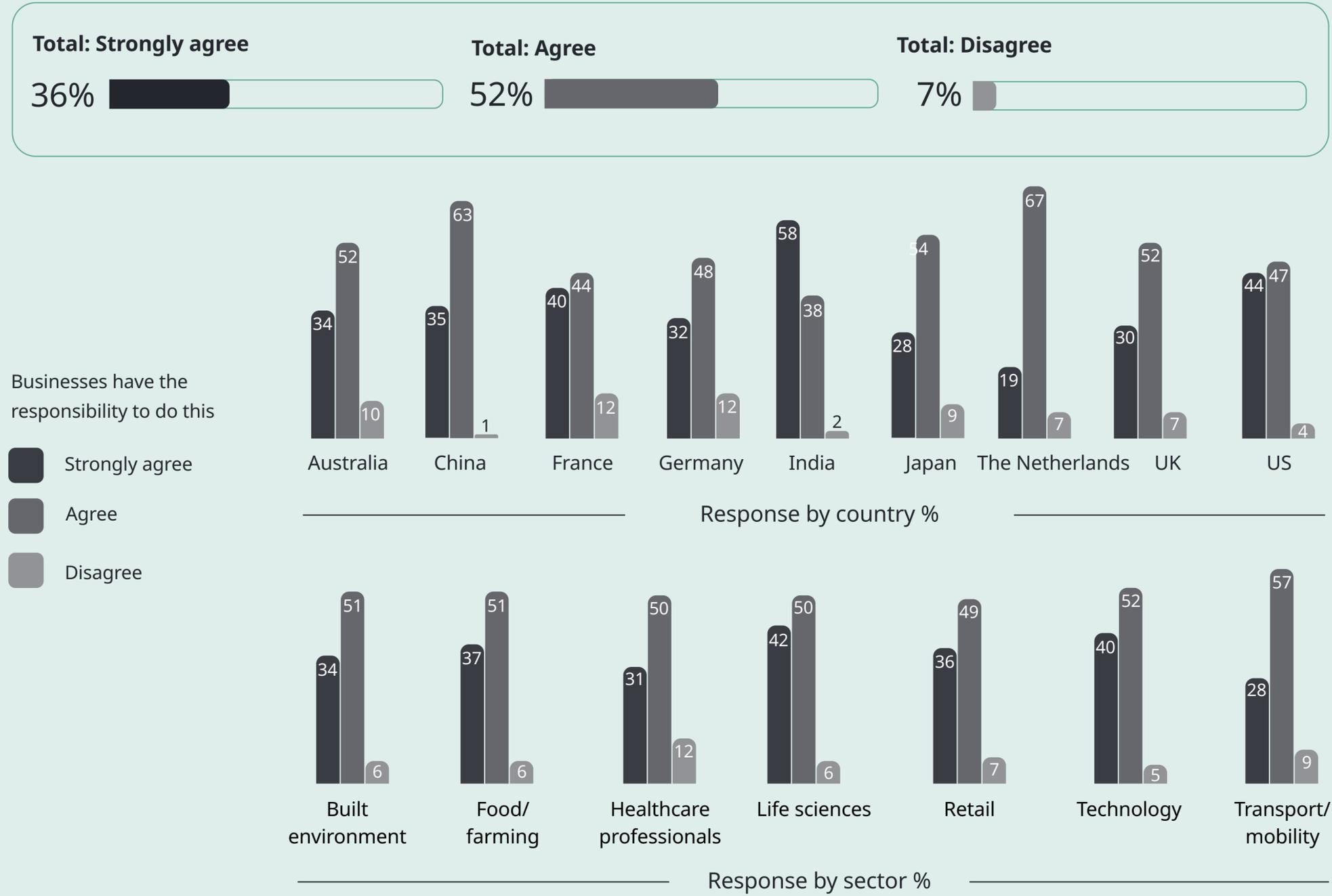
At present, just two fifths of business leaders say their organization has in place a learning and development programme to ensure successful delivery of AI training. Only a third say they are aware of a significant amount of formal or informal training being offered by their firm to guide employees in how to use AI tools safely, ethically and effectively guide employees to use AI tools safely and manage risk.. However 87% say businesses have the responsibility to train teams to utilize AI tools in order to protect jobs.

Undoubtedly, training workers for a tool that they will either be using or interacting with in some way is important. A comprehensive training programme can help ensure AI is introduced in organizations in a positive way that benefits people and the work they do. It is notable that 89% of business leaders say it is important for businesses to train employees about how to deploy AI tools safely, ethically and effectively – a much higher figure than the amount of training actually being delivered. Bridging this gap will be vital to ensure trust (internally and externally) in these digital tools.



What's worth considering, however, is that training does not equal competency. A comprehensive training programme would bring in where AI is being used in the business, and would be offered in different formats to meet different learning styles and accessibility needs. It would also engage employees to ensure their needs are being met. If training is delivered merely to tick a box, the underlying benefits will not be achieved. And given the pace of change with AI, it's key that learning is continuous so there is ability to develop new skills as the tools themselves develop.

Figure 6: Businesses have the responsibility to train teams to utilize AI tools in order to protect jobs

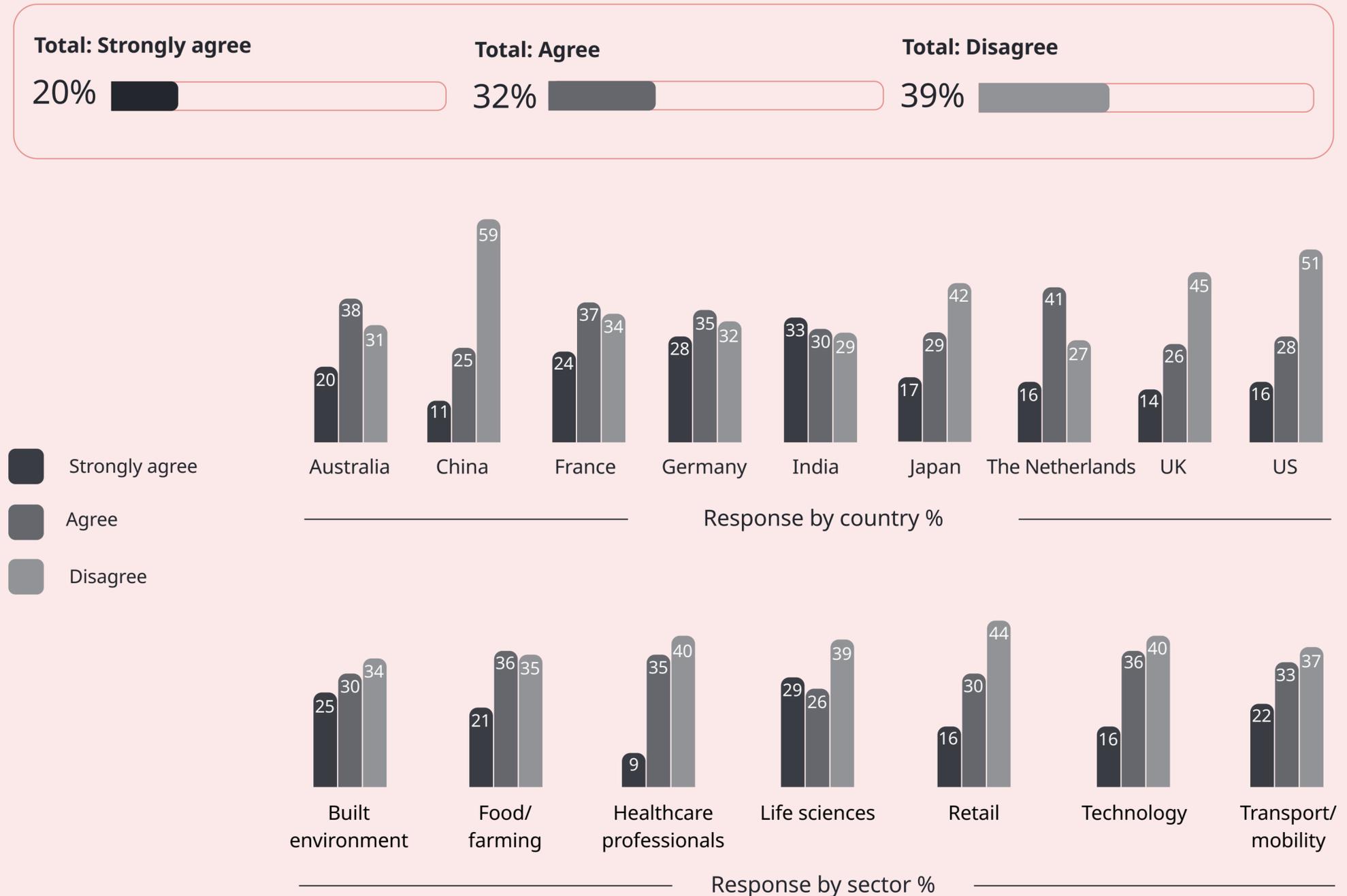


Corporate governance and trust

89% of business leaders say it is important for businesses to train employees on how to deploy AI tools safely, ethically and effectively, but only 54% see this as *very* important, raising the critical role of corporate governance in successful deployment of AI in business. The safe and ethical use of AI should be a priority, not simply a nice to have, raising the question of how organizations will embed this into their corporate governance?

At the same time, more than half of leaders (52%) say they are more worried about the potential use of AI by business than a year ago, with one in five strongly agreeing with this. AI is not a silver bullet, it is a tool like any other, and will require strong oversight and robust management to ensure it benefits all involved and that ethical, moral and legal duties are embedded into its implementation and use.

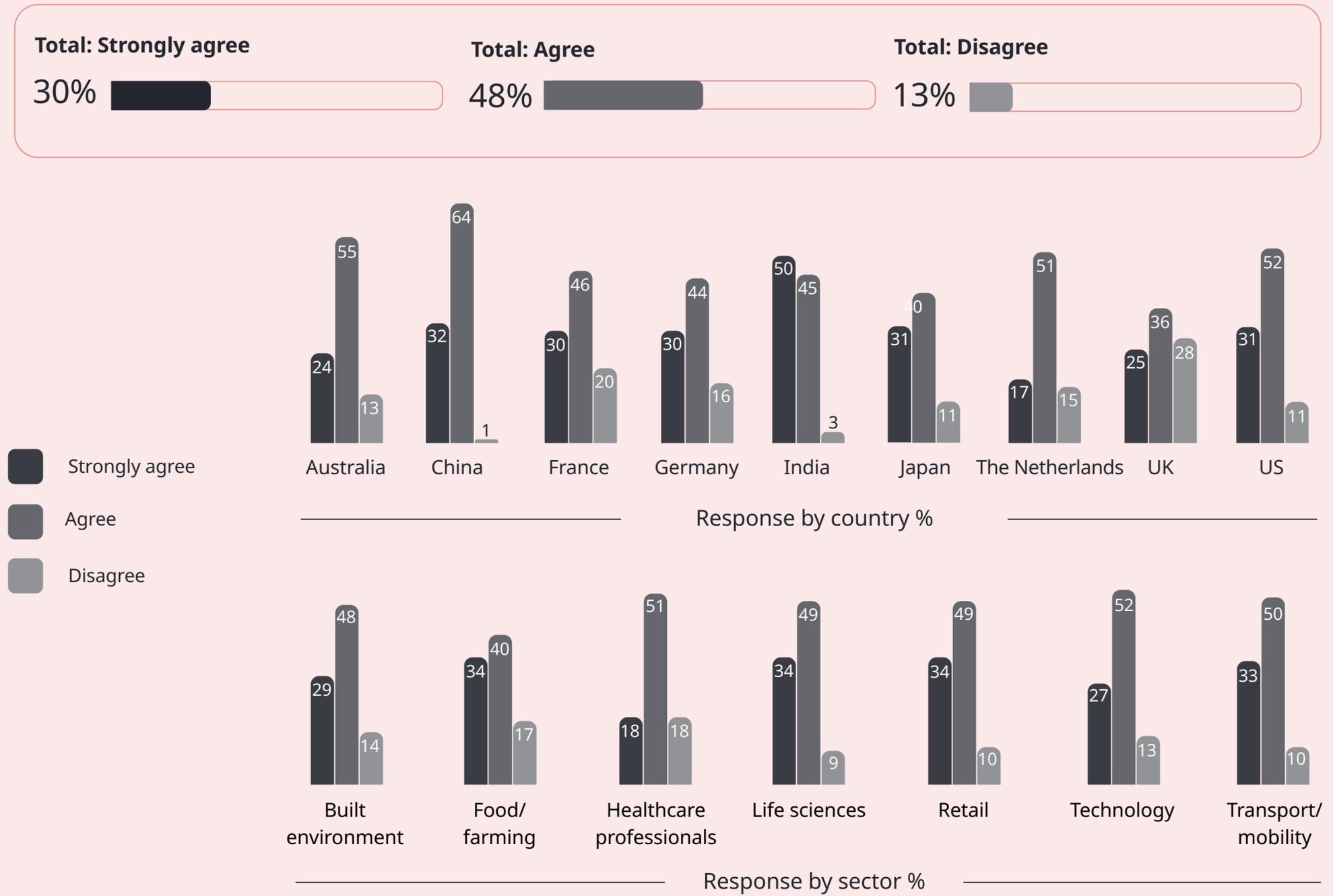
Figure 7: I am more worried about the potential use of AI by business than a year ago



Notably, 78% of leaders say their business should be doing more to build trust in AI amongst employees. With that in mind, business leaders can seek to bring the workforce on the AI journey with them by looking at how the organization is rolling out AI, ensuring this is being communicated effectively, and engaging and consulting employees on key decisions.



Figure 8: I think my business should be doing more to build trust in AI amongst employees



Key takeaways for business leaders

AI in performance management

Use AI to strengthen performance management and boost organizational culture – paired with human insight, emotional intelligence and critical thinking

Diversity, inclusion and recruitment

Leverage AI to recruit a more diverse candidate pool – while ensuring that the underlying culture of the organization also develops to support this

Job design

Consider how AI could help job redesign to enhance flexibility and boost productivity

Training

Prioritize delivery of continuous AI training while recognizing that this alone does not guarantee competency

Corporate governance and trust

Build trust by engaging employees on every step of the AI journey



Shaping AI together

BSI is supporting governments, organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders to ensure the safe, secure and responsible use of AI, for example:

- Publication of the international standard ([BS ISO/IEC 42001](#)) - a first-in-kind AI management system designed to assist organizations in responsibly using AI.
- Working towards designation as a Notified Body for AI-enabled products.
- Working alongside government organizations and international stakeholders to support AI safety and trusted innovation.
- A package of measures including training and certification to ISO/IEC 42001.
- AI strategy and data governance services.
- World first best practice frameworks in diversity and inclusion (ISO 30415 and PAS 1948).
- Certification and training services focussed on workplace safety and worker well-being (ISO 45001 and ISO 45003).

[Explore the detail behind these findings in our full report](#)



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