



Weekly Brief

June 17, 2026

Strategic Clarity Drives AI Value

Over the past two months, I've noticed a subtle shift in the conversation on AI—from token maxxing to a more balanced discussion that weighs token costs. CEOs and CIOs are evaluating how to focus the use of AI in areas where measurable value can be created.

Constraints are a good thing. They force choices and impose discipline.

This is one of the big takeaways from BCG's [fourth annual AI at Work survey](#) of nearly 12,000 employees in more than a dozen markets. Companies need—and employees expect—strategic clarity.

Clear direction combined with more limited access to AI tools lifts measurable business output by 20 percentage points compared with companies with broad access to tools but limited direction, according to the survey.

In our work with clients, strategic clarity with regards to AI boils down to three elements:

Focus. Develop a strong vision and carefully choose the workflows where AI can do the most good and create (or strengthen) competitive advantage for the company.

Outcomes Over Tasks. Prioritize the value AI creates—speed, cost savings, innovation, for example—over the automation of individual tasks.

Team Effort. Understand the impact of AI at a systemic level; look at how teams work and how work can be redesigned.

The Joy Paradox

Two-thirds of regular AI users say they enjoy their work more since adopting AI, according to the survey. At the same time, 41% report

increased cognitive load. AI is making work better and harder.

Fortunately, this paradox has a resolution. The actions that allow employees to thrive are the same as those that improve business impact.

When AI actions are aligned with messaging from the top, employees are 28 percentage points more likely to enjoy work and 19 percentage points more likely to see improvement in key business metrics. When companies track value from AI, employees are 24 points more likely to be happy and 22 percentage points more likely to see measurable impact. And when companies are actively reshaping business functions and inventing new business models, employees are 23 percentage points more likely to be able to show how AI helps them create value.

The Agents Are Here

Today, 30% of organizations have integrated agents into their workflows, more than double last year's share, according to the survey. Within three years, 61% of employees believe agents could perform at least half their job. And yet only half of employees say their company has provided guidance on managing blended teams of humans and machines.

As agents and agentic workflows continue to grow, so will the need for leaders to:

- Provide strategic clarity as a top priority
- Measure value created, not tokens spent
- Redesign work end to end, not tool by tool
- Bring people along through reskilling, participation in how work gets reshaped, and straight talk about what AI means for employees

Employees are embracing AI, but they understandably want guidance. As always, leadership matters. This will help companies and employees alike.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christoph', written in a cursive style.

Christoph Schweizer
Chief Executive Officer

Further Insights



AI at Work: Strategy Matters More Than Tools

Our fourth annual global survey reveals that AI is changing jobs faster than companies are redesigning operations to keep up—and strategic clarity is crucial to long-term success.

**LEAD WITH
STRATEGY**



[From AI Upskilling to AI Performance: Five Questions Every CEO Should Ask](#)

In AI-driven environments, human capabilities such as problem solving, judgment, collaboration, and relationship building are becoming the next frontier of capability building.

[DRIVE AI PERFORMANCE](#)



[Your AI Change Is Actually a People Change](#)

When AI transformations fail, it's usually because of human factors. Seven principles from behavioral science explain the difference between efforts that succeed and those that don't.

MAKE AI
CHANGE
STICK