AIQ BENCHMARK 2026

The 2026 AIQ Benchmark

What 539 senior enterprise data and AI decision-makers told us about where they are investing, what they are buying and when.

539
decision-makers surveyed

81%
help choose AI vendors

58%
have significant AI budgets

75%
are buying this year



KEY FINDINGS

The people we surveyed control real AI budgets, choose the vendors and plan to buy this year.

81%
help choose the AI vendors their organizations buy from

58%
have a significant or major AI budget

75%
are buying AI and data solutions this year

88%
call AI core or strategic to the business

75%
already have LLM applications in production

No. 1
AI use case: agentic systems, ranked first of nine (26%)

01 · AI PRIORITIES

88%

say AI is core or strategic, with agentic systems at the top of their list.

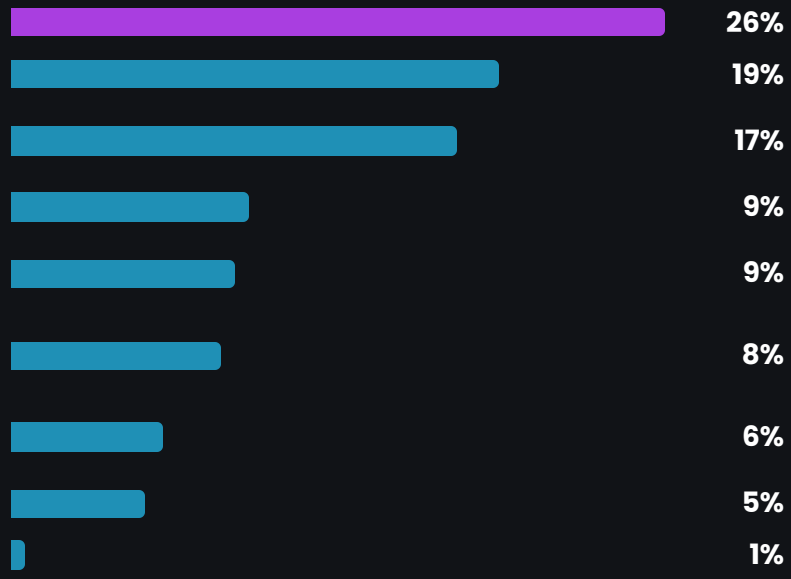
49% call AI core to long-term innovation and operations. Agentic systems are the No. 1 priority use case at 26%, ahead of process automation (19%) and GenAI copilots and summarization (17%).

Importance of AI to business strategy, next 12 to 24 months



Core to long-term innovation and operations	49%
Strategic focus with defined initiatives	40%
Moderate interest, limited investment	11%
Not a priority	1%

Highest-priority AI use case

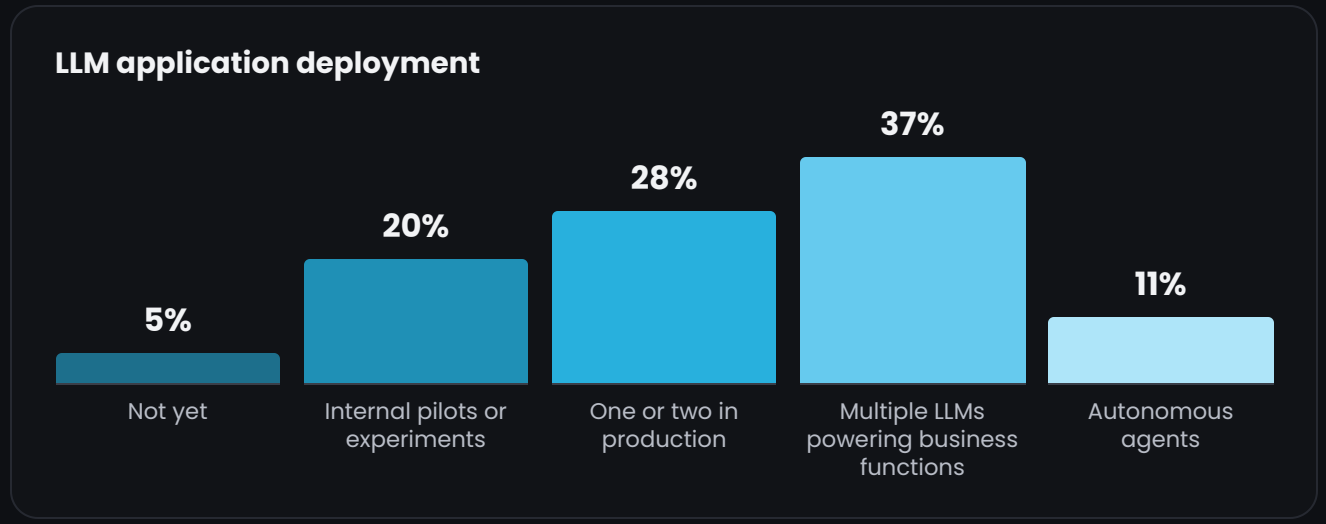


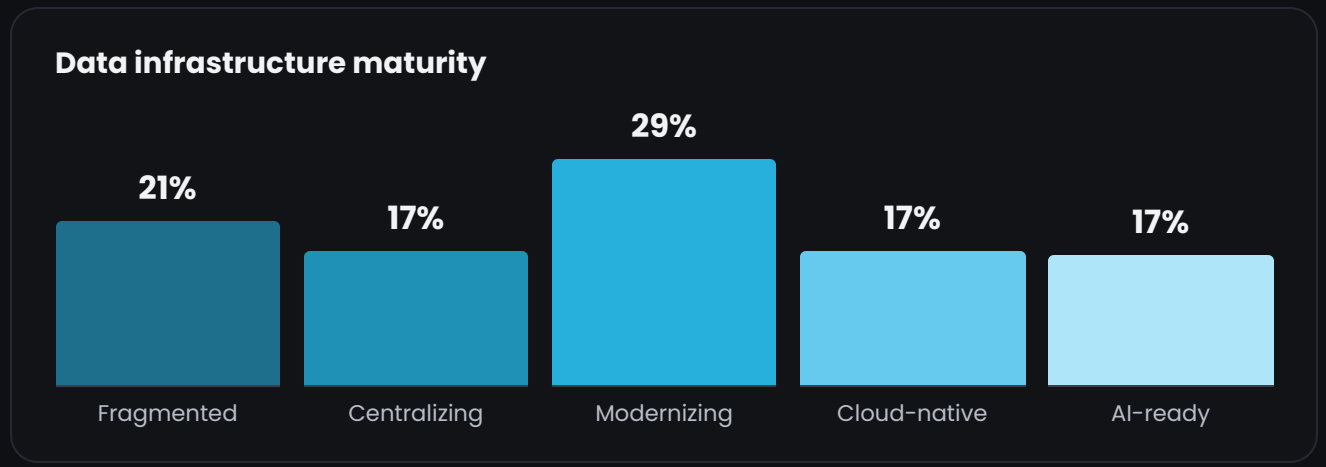
02 · READINESS

75%

have LLM apps in production, and most are still investing in their data foundation.

11% already run autonomous agents and 77% have a growing or full-stack AI/ML team. Data is the next investment: only 17% describe their data infrastructure as AI-ready.





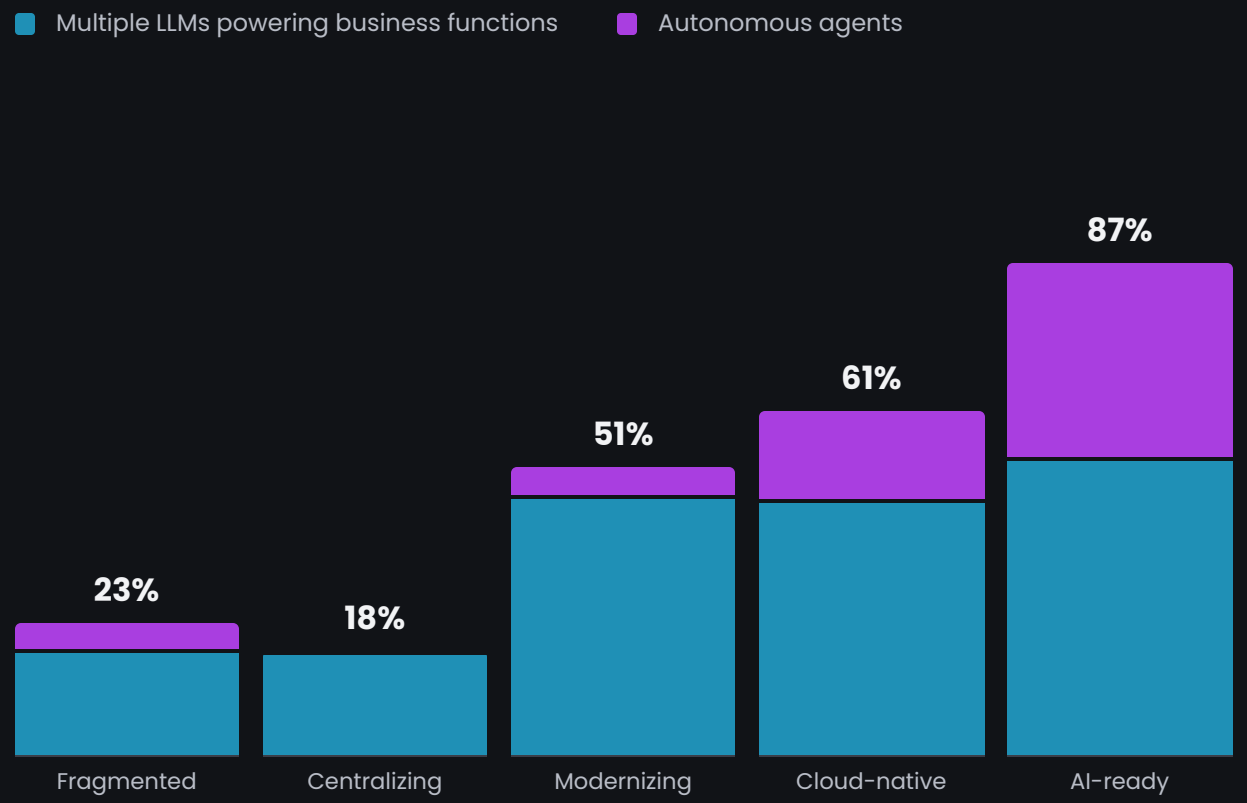
03 · DATA FOUNDATION

87% vs 23%

AI-ready data is where AI scales.

87% of organizations with AI-ready data run multiple LLMs or autonomous agents, compared with 23% of those with fragmented data. 35% of AI-ready organizations already run autonomous agents.

Share running multiple LLMs or autonomous agents, by data infrastructure maturity



04 · GOVERNANCE

40%

have organization-wide AI governance, and those organizations are scaling AI the fastest.

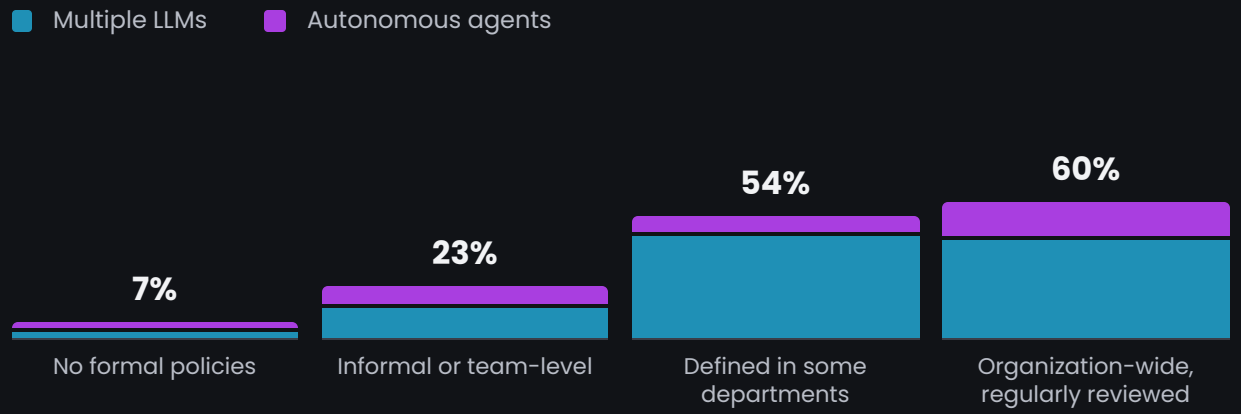
60% of organizations with organization-wide AI policies run multiple LLMs or agents, compared with 7% of those without formal policies.

AI governance maturity



Organization-wide, regularly reviewed	40%
Defined in some departments	33%
Informal or team-level	21%
No formal policies	6%

Share running multiple LLMs or agents, by governance maturity



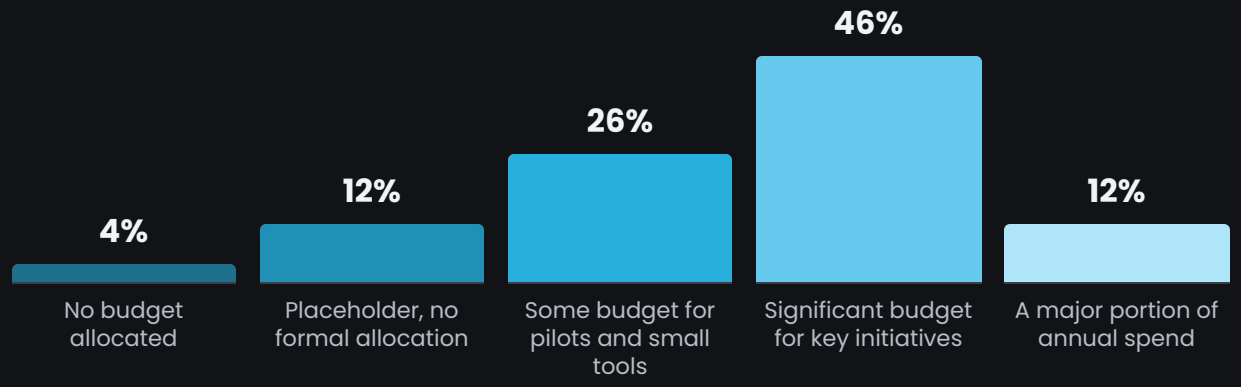
05 · BUDGETS AND TIMING

58%

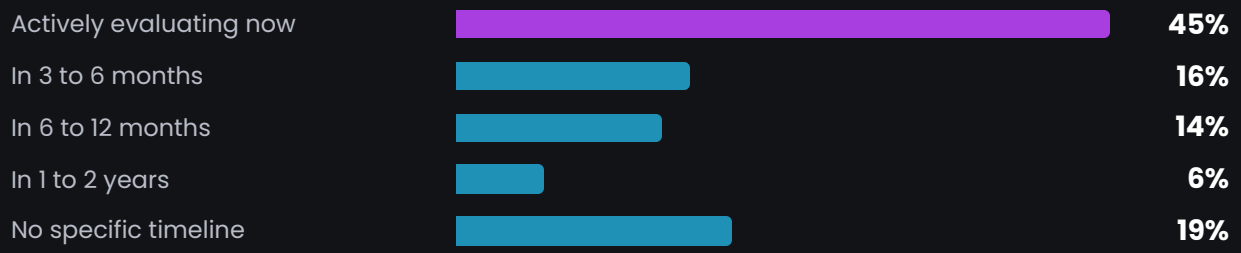
have a significant AI budget, 75% are buying this year and almost half are evaluating solutions right now.

96% have money for AI in this year's budget, and for 12% AI is a major share of annual spend. 45% are actively evaluating AI and data solutions today.

AI in this year's budget



When organizations expect to evaluate or invest



06 · BUYING DECISIONS

81%

help choose the AI vendors their organizations buy from.

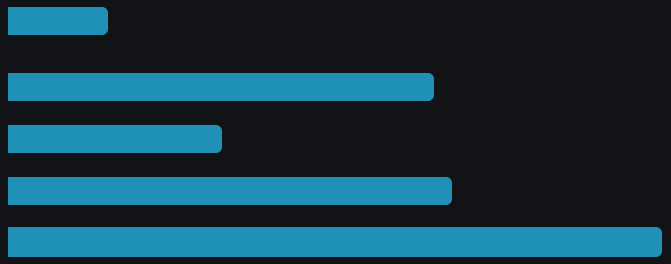
They are actively in the market: 60% evaluate new AI tools several times a year or continuously. 83% of them say finding the right vendors is a moderate or significant challenge, and 59% are open to a resource that matches them with the right AI tools and vendors.

The challenge of finding the right AI vendors



Minor: we have a clear view of the market	14%
Moderate: manageable but time-consuming	48%
Significant: the landscape is hard to navigate	19%
Not involved in vendor selection	19%

How often organizations evaluate new AI tools and vendors



We don't search; vendors come to us	5%
Only when a specific need arises	23%
Once or twice a year	12%
Several times a year	24%
Continuously	36%

IN THEIR WORDS

What enterprise AI leaders are saying

> **“Do not go into agentic architecture if you think that you do not have enough context.”**

Narasimha Bingi
Head of Architecture, Digital, Data and AI, Evernorth Health Services (The Cigna Group)

> **“If you don’t know your own process, how are you going to train AI?”**

Nasim Khoshkhou
SVP, Analytics and Data, Synchrony

> **“If you have five different definitions of revenue, you have zero definition.”**

Elena Garvey
IT Director, Enterprise Data Intelligence, Motorola Solutions

> **“Governance is really not a technology problem.”**

Rajkamal Gopinath
Director, Data Software Engineering, R&D, Abbott

NEXT STEPS

Find the right AI partners for your priorities

matchmAIQer

Answer 15 questions, get your AIQ score and see the AI providers that fit your priorities.

aiconnect.enterprises/marketplace

Interactive report

Every chart and finding, with video and analysis.

aiconnect.enterprises/magazine/aiq-benchmark-2026

Based on a 2026 survey of 539 enterprise data and AI decision-makers. Responses are anonymous and reported in aggregate. Percentages are rounded.

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