



WORKFORCE READINESS

The AI Readiness Checklist

25 questions to find out if your people are ready, before you scale your rollout.

For CHROs, COOs and transformation leaders running an active AI or digital rollout.

5

dimensions that decide whether your AI rollout lands or stalls.

The thing nobody puts in the rollout plan

You have the tools. You have the budget. You have a rollout plan with dates on it.

What you do not have is a clear answer to the one question your CEO will eventually ask: **are our people actually ready for this?**

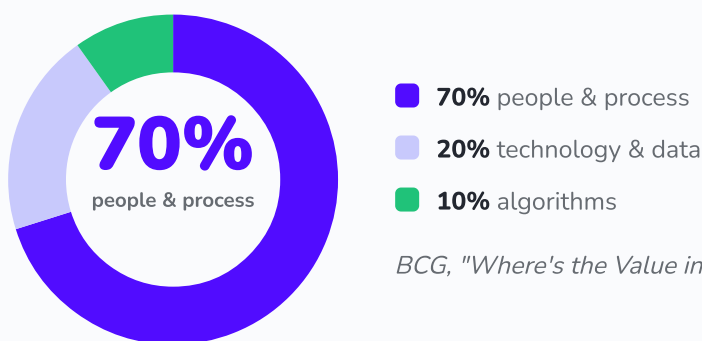
Not "do they have access". Not "did they sit through the training". Ready. Willing to change how they work, confident enough to use the tools, and not so worn down by the last three changes that they quietly wait this one out too.

Knowing how your people *feel* about AI is one thing. Knowing whether your organisation can actually *carry* it is another, and it is the question a rollout plan never measures.

Most AI rollouts are planned as a technology project. They are won or lost as a people project.

Where the value in AI actually comes from

Share of effort in companies that get real value from AI



BCG, "Where's the Value in AI?", 2024

You are probably more in the dark than you think

Here is the uncomfortable part. Leaders are consistently wrong about where their people stand.

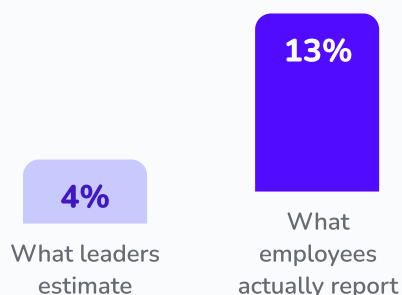
McKinsey found that executives estimate only **4%** of employees use generative AI for at least 30% of their daily work. The real number, from employees themselves, is **13%**: more than three times higher. The same study found leaders are twice as likely to blame employee readiness for slow adoption as they are to look at their own role.

So the gap runs both ways. Sometimes your people are further along than you assume. Sometimes they are quietly resistant and nobody has told you. Either way, you are steering a rollout on a guess.

This checklist replaces the guess with 25 specific questions, across the five things that actually decide whether an AI rollout lands.

The perception gap on AI adoption

Share of employees using generative AI for 30%+ of daily work



**3× higher
than leaders think.**

McKinsey, "Superagency in the Workplace", 2025

How to use this checklist

The checklist has five dimensions. Together they answer the question a project plan usually skips: not whether your people are happy about AI, but whether your organisation can actually carry it.

- 1 Skills and capability.** Can people actually do the work the new way?
- 2 Sentiment toward AI.** How do people feel about it, really?
- 3 Change capacity and fatigue.** Is there room left to absorb another change?
- 4 Communication and rollout readiness.** Does the way you introduce it set people up to succeed?
- 5 Leadership alignment.** Are the people driving this pulling in the same direction?

How to score it

Each dimension has five check-items. For each item, mark one:

2**Yes**

Clear evidence this is true today.

1**Not sure**

You think so, but no evidence.

0**No**

This is not in place.

Be strict with yourself. "We sent an email about it" is not a Yes. Write your dimension totals in the boxes, add them up on page 9, and read your band. **Maximum score: 50.**

1 Skills and capability

Most rollout plans assume that access plus a training session equals capability. It rarely does. The question is not whether people *can* learn the new way of working, it is whether they actually can do it today, under normal workload.

Mark each: ☐ Yes = 2 · ☐ Not sure = 1 · ☐ No = 0

- ☐ **We know which roles and teams are most affected** by this AI rollout, specifically, not "the whole company".

- ☐ **We have a current read on the skill gap** between how people work today and how the rollout expects them to work, based on evidence, not assumption.

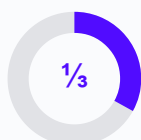
- ☐ **The people most affected have had real hands-on practice**, not just a demo or a recorded webinar.

- ☐ **Managers of affected teams can actually use the tools themselves.** A manager who cannot do the new way cannot coach it.

- ☐ **We have a way to spot people who are falling behind** before it shows up in missed targets.

WHY THIS DIMENSION MATTERS

Capability is the floor, but it is the part leaders most often over-rate, because training completion looks like progress. Only about a third of workers say their employer gives them the training and guidance they actually need to use AI in their jobs. (*Jobs for the Future, 2025*) The completion certificate and real-world readiness are two different things.



Only **1 in 3** workers feel properly equipped to use AI at work. The rest are improvising, whatever the training records say.

Dimension 1 total: _____ / 10

2 Sentiment toward AI

People do not adopt what they quietly fear. Sentiment is the dimension leaders have the least visibility on, because almost nobody tells their manager "I am worried this replaces me". So it stays underground, and shows up later as slow adoption, workarounds, or polite non-compliance.

Mark each: ☐ Yes = 2 · ☐ Not sure = 1 · ☐ No = 0

- ☐ **We actually know how people feel about this AI rollout**, from asking, not from corridor impressions.

- ☐ **People understand what the AI is for**, and specifically what it is not meant to do, for example replace them.

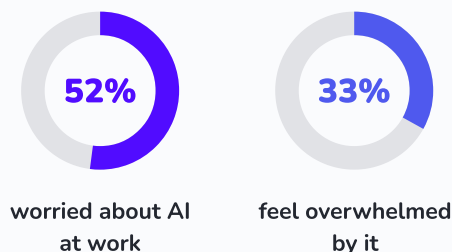
- ☐ **We can tell enthusiasm from compliance**. Some teams are excited; some are nodding along. We know which is which.

- ☐ **People feel safe to say they are struggling** without it counting against them.

- ☐ **We are listening for sentiment continuously**, not just in the one survey we ran at kickoff.

WHY THIS DIMENSION MATTERS

The fear is real and widespread. The people who actually use AI daily report far better outcomes on productivity and job security than those who do not. (PwC, "Global Workforce Hopes and Fears", 2025) The job is to move people from the first group to the second, and you cannot do that if you cannot see how they feel.



Pew Research Center, 2025

Dimension 2 total: _____ / 10

3 Change capacity and fatigue

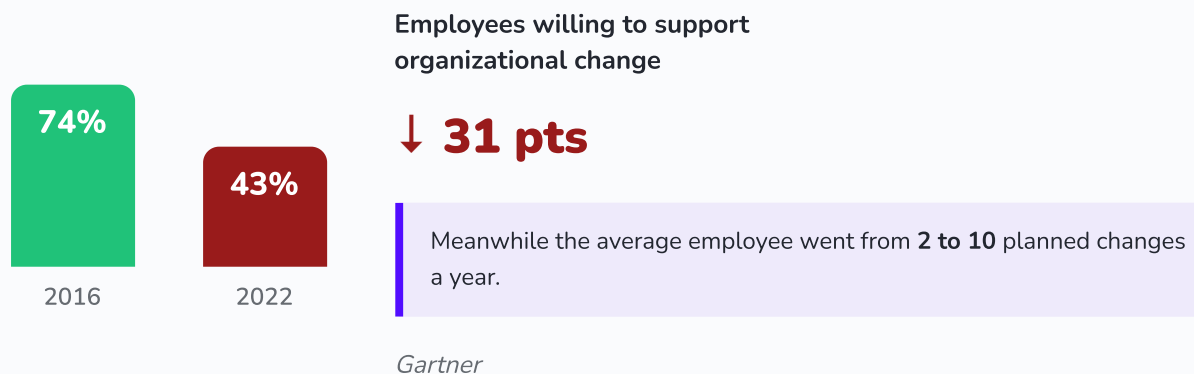
This is the dimension that quietly sinks rollouts that should have worked. Your AI initiative does not land in a vacuum. It lands on top of every other change your people have absorbed this year. If the tank is empty, even a good rollout stalls.

Mark each: ☐ Yes = 2 · ☐ Not sure = 1 · ☐ No = 0

- ☐ We know how many major changes each affected team has been through in the last 12 months.
- ☐ We have identified the teams that are already stretched and at risk of change fatigue before we add this one.
- ☐ We are not stacking this rollout on top of another big change in the same teams at the same time.
- ☐ We watch for early fatigue signals like rising absenteeism or quiet disengagement, instead of waiting for turnover.
- ☐ We can slow down or sequence the rollout for teams that cannot absorb it yet, with the data to justify it.

WHY THIS DIMENSION MATTERS

Change fatigue is measurable, and it has collapsed. You are asking a more tired workforce to absorb more change than ever. Knowing where the tank is empty is not optional. (*Gartner, Workforce Change Survey*)



Dimension 3 total: _____ / 10

4

Communication and rollout readiness

The same AI tool, rolled out two different ways, gets two completely different results. This dimension is about whether the way you introduce the change sets people up to adopt it, or sets it up to be resented.

Mark each: ☐ Yes = 2 · ☐ Not sure = 1 · ☐ No = 0

- ☐ **People know why now.** The reason for the rollout has been explained in terms that matter to them, not just to the business case.

- ☐ **People know what changes for them specifically,** in their own role, not the company-wide version.

- ☐ **There is a clear, visible place to get help** when something does not work, and people know where it is.

- ☐ **We have a feedback channel that actually closes the loop.** People who raise something hear back, so they keep speaking up.

- ☐ **We are communicating on a rhythm,** not with one launch email followed by silence.

WHY THIS DIMENSION MATTERS

Communication is where the perception gap gets fixed or made worse. When people see something change because they spoke up, they keep engaging. When they do not, they go quiet, and quiet looks like adoption right up until it does not. A rollout people understand and can influence is a rollout people carry.

Dimension 4 total: _____ / 10

5 Leadership alignment

A rollout cannot be more aligned than the leaders driving it. If HR, operations and the business owners of the AI initiative are quietly optimizing for different things, your people feel the contradiction long before anyone names it, and they hedge.

Mark each: ☐ Yes = 2 · ☐ Not sure = 1 · ☐ No = 0

- ☐ **There is one clear owner of people readiness** for this rollout, not a gap between IT, HR and the business.

- ☐ **Leadership agrees on what success looks like** in human terms, not just in licenses deployed or tools live.

- ☐ **Managers are equipped and expected to lead the change**, not just forward the announcement.

- ☐ **Leaders are modelling the behaviour** they are asking for, visibly using the tools themselves.

- ☐ **We have agreed how we will know if readiness is slipping**, and who acts on it, before we scale.

WHY THIS DIMENSION MATTERS

Recall the McKinsey finding: leaders are twice as likely to blame employee readiness as their own role. *(McKinsey, 2025)* That reflex is exactly what misalignment looks like from the inside. The most reliable early signal of a rollout in trouble is not a low engagement score, it is a leadership team that has not agreed on what ready means.

Dimension 5 total: _____ / 10

Your score, and what it means

Add up your five dimension totals.

Total readiness score: _____ / 50

0-9
Stop & reset

10-24
Not yet

25-39
Ready in parts

40-50
Ready to scale

40-50	Ready to scale	Your people side is genuinely prepared. Keep measuring as you scale, because readiness erodes the moment the rollout widens to teams you have not checked.
25-39	Ready in parts	The most common result. Some dimensions are solid, others are guesses. The rollout will land in some teams and stall in others. Find your lowest dimension and start there.
10-24	Not yet	You are about to scale on hope. These gaps turn into stalled adoption and wasted budget. Fix the lowest two dimensions and re-score before you push wider.
0-9	Stop & reset	A technology project with no people foundation under it. This is the profile that becomes a "failed AI initiative" story. Treat readiness as the first workstream, not an afterthought.

The more important number is your lowest dimension. A high total can hide one weak dimension that sinks everything. Whatever scored worst, that is where adoption is won or lost.

You just scored a moving target

Here is the catch, and it is worth being straight about. You just scored your readiness once, by hand, based on what you know right now. That is genuinely useful. It will surface blind spots you did not have language for an hour ago.

But readiness is not a fixed number. It moves the week a reorganization is announced, the month a new tool lands, the quarter a team loses three people. The score you just produced is a snapshot of a moving target. Run this checklist again in three months and the answers will have changed, and you will not know exactly when or why.

That is the real gap. Not measuring readiness once. Measuring it continuously, across every affected team, without turning it into a manual project every quarter.

WHERE ELLI FITS

The continuous version of what you just did by hand

elli is a workforce readiness platform. Where most tools measure how people feel, elli measures whether your organisation can actually execute what is coming next. It tracks the same five dimensions you just scored, continuously and automatically, and turns every result into a clear next step. So you never steer a rollout on a guess again.



Readiness, continuously, not once

The five dimensions you just ticked by hand, measured live across every team. You see readiness shift the moment a reorganisation, a new tool or a departure changes it.



Action from the software, not from a consultant

Every result comes with a concrete recommended next step, generated by AI agents inside the product. Not a report you wait weeks for.



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Stop guessing whether your people are ready. Start knowing.

You just scored your readiness once, by hand. elli does it continuously, across every team, and turns each result into a next step. See it in action in a live preview.

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