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.

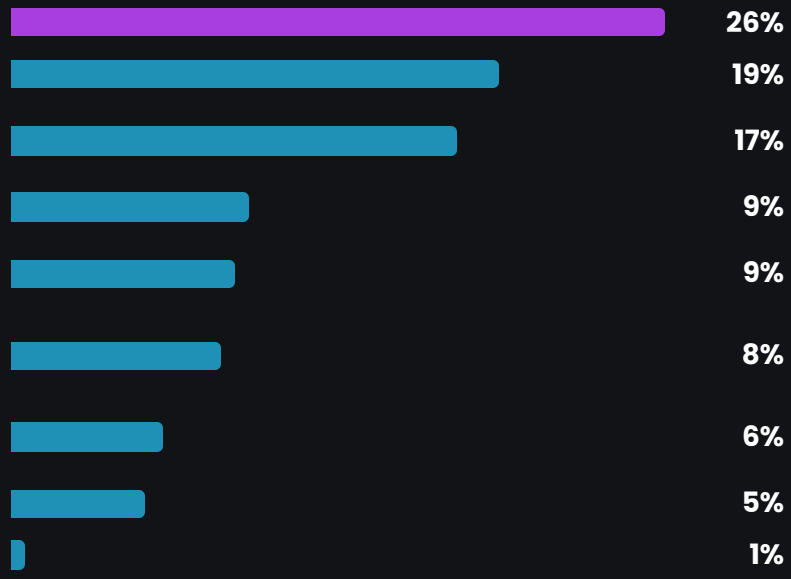
49% call AI core to long-term innovation and operations. Agentic systems are the No. 1 priority use case at 26%, ahead of process automation (19%) and GenAI copilots and summarization (17%).

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

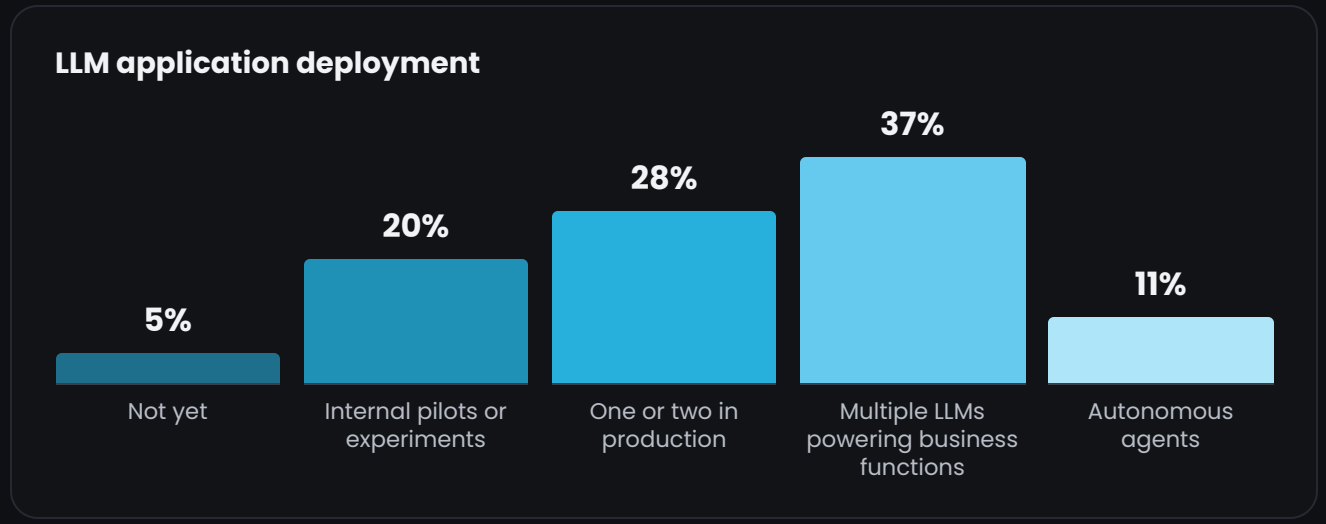


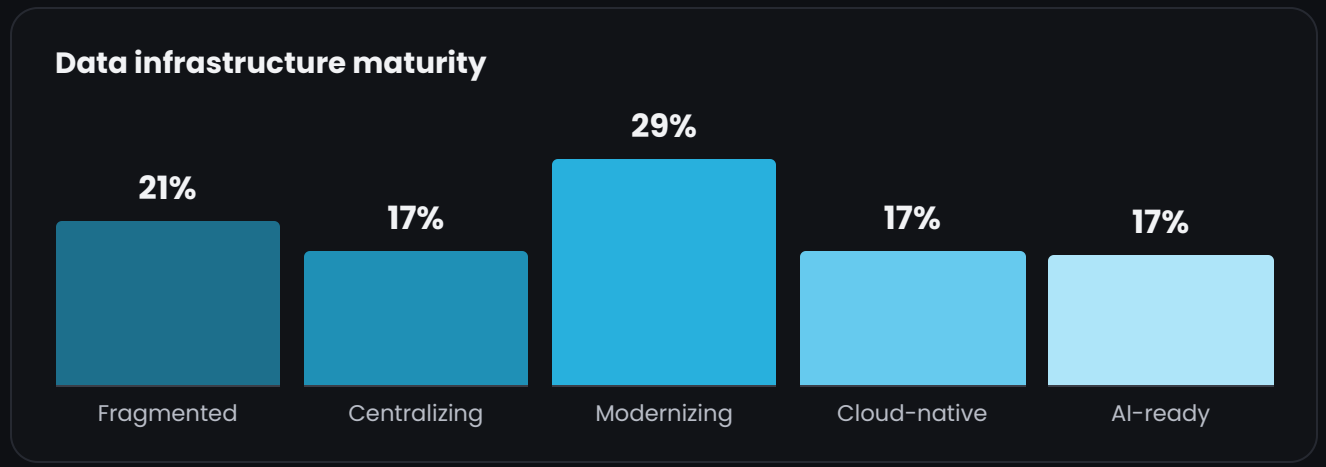
02 · READINESS

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.





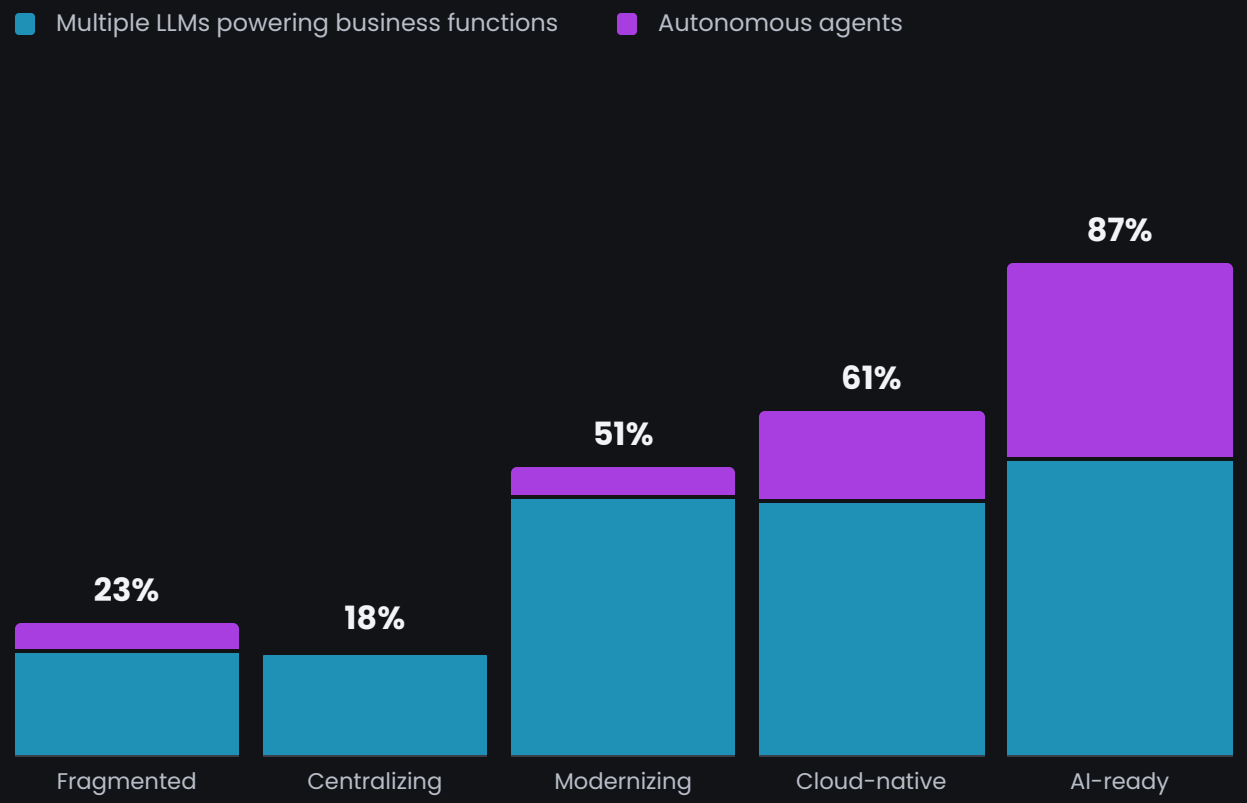
03 · DATA FOUNDATION

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.

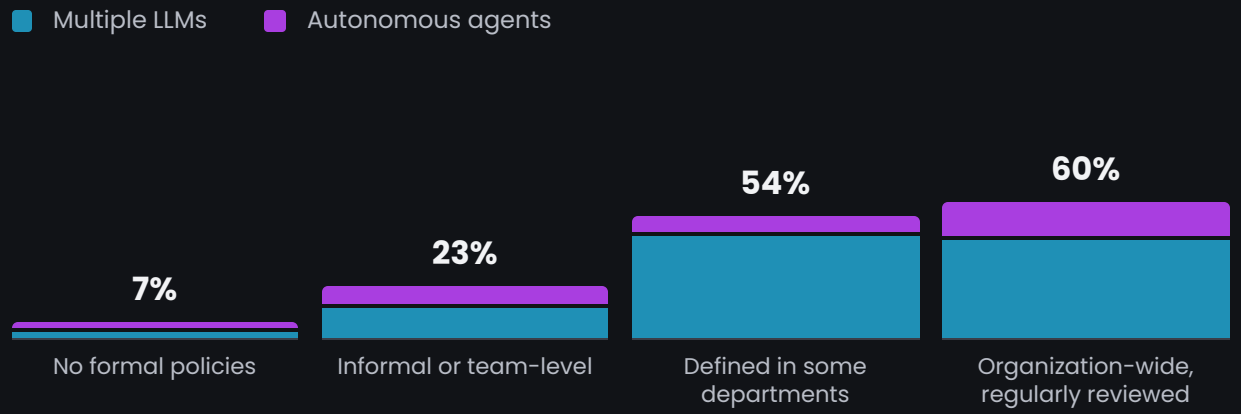
60% of organizations with organization-wide AI policies run multiple LLMs or agents, compared with 7% of those without formal policies.

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



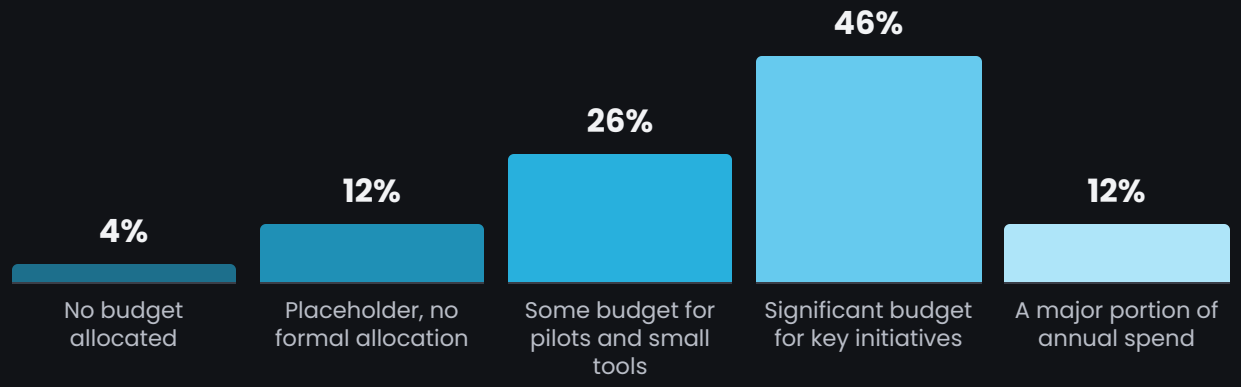
05 · BUDGETS AND TIMING

58%

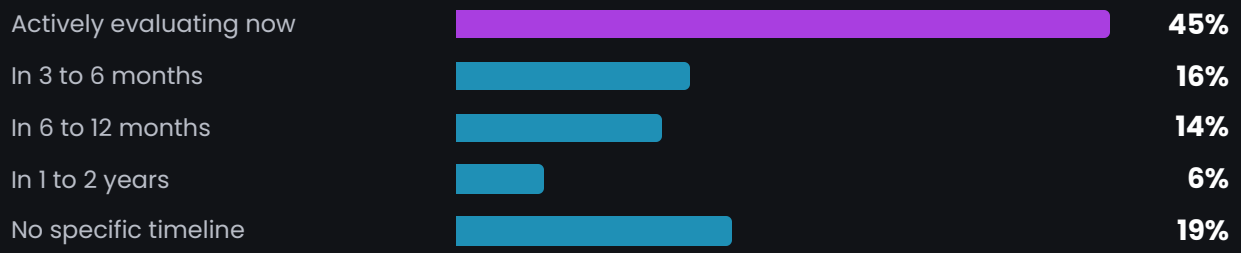
have a significant AI budget, 75% are buying this year and almost half are evaluating solutions right now.

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.

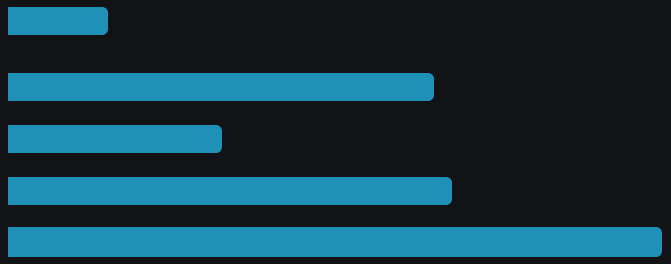
They are actively in the market: 60% evaluate new AI tools several times a year or continuously. 83% of them say finding the right vendors is a moderate or significant challenge, and 59% are open to a resource that matches them with the right AI tools and vendors.

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) · ALIGN AI Executive Summit, New York City 2026

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

Nasim Khoshkhou
SVP, Analytics and Data, Synchrony · ALIGN AI Executive Summit, New York City 2026

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

Elena Garvey
IT Director, Enterprise Data Intelligence, Motorola Solutions · ALIGN AI Executive Summit, Chicago 2026

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

Rajkamal Gopinath
Director, Data Software Engineering, R&D, Abbott · ALIGN AI Executive Summit, Chicago 2026

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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