

New Workday Global Research: AI Agents Are Here—But Don't Call Them Boss

Research Reveals 75% of Employees Are Ready to Work with AI, But Not for It

Realizing the Full Power of AI Agents Hinges on Transparency and Prioritizing Human Empowerment

PLEASANTON, Calif., Aug. 12, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Workday, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: WDAY), the AI platform for managing [people](#), [money](#), and [agents](#), today released new global research that shows that while AI agents are gaining ground in the workplace, employees still want clear boundaries. According to the report "[AI Agents Are Here—But Don't Call Them Boss](#)," 75% of workers are comfortable teaming up with AI agents—but only 30% say they are comfortable being managed by one. This signals a key challenge for businesses: how to embrace the power of AI without losing the human touch.

The research underscores that while widespread optimism is driving the rapid adoption of AI agents – 82% of organizations are expanding their use of agents – employees are clearly drawing a line between how they are and are not willing to work with AI.

"We're entering a new era of work where AI can be an incredible partner, and a complement to human judgement, leadership, and empathy," said Kathy Pham, vice president, AI, Workday. "Building trust means being intentional in how AI is used and keeping people at the center of every decision."

Key findings from the report include:

- **AI as Co-Pilot, Not Commander:** Three out of four employees are highly comfortable with AI agents working alongside them and recommending new skills—but only 30% are comfortable with an AI agent managing them. A mere 24% are comfortable with AI agents operating in the background without human knowledge. Establishing clear boundaries for AI is key to building employee trust and driving greater adoption.
- **Exposure to AI Agents Drives Trust** While more than one-quarter of respondents still believe agents are overhyped, trust in agents rises dramatically with increased use. For instance, only 36% of those exploring AI agents trust their organization to use them responsibly, but that number jumps to 95% among those further along. Direct experience with AI agents builds confidence.
- **The Double-Edged Sword of AI Productivity:** Nearly 90% of employees believe AI agents will help them get more done, but many are also concerned that these productivity gains will lead to increased pressure (48%), a decline in critical thinking (48%) and less human interaction (36%). This underscores the need for thoughtful implementation that prioritizes employee well-being.
- **Distinct Roles for Agents and Humans:** Most see agents as important teammates, but not full members of the workforce. Trust in AI also depends on the task; it's highest for IT support and skills development and lowest for sensitive areas like hiring, finance, and legal matters, underscoring the need for human oversight and accountability.
- **Finance Sees Big Potential:** With the industry facing a shortage of CPAs and finance professionals, 76% of finance workers believe AI agents will help close the gap and only 12% are worried about job loss. The top uses for AI agents in Finance include forecasting and budgeting (32%), financial reporting (32%), and fraud detection (30%).

This research underscores a crucial path forward: to harness the potential of AI, organizations must focus on building trust through transparency and empowering their people. This isn't just about deploying new technology. It's about thoughtfully designing a future where AI agents enhance human capabilities, enabling a more productive and fulfilling work experience for all.

For additional information

- Read the full report, "[AI Agents Are Here—But Don't Call Them Boss](#)."
- Discover more about the implications of AI agents on the global workforce, [The Secret to AI Optimism and Adoption is Setting Boundaries](#)."
- Hear more about the evolving mindset of the Chief Work Officer, [The Chief Work Officer: Leading the Human-AI Frontier](#)."

About The Report

Our findings are based on a global survey of 2,950 full-time decision-makers and software implementation leaders across three key regions: North America (n=706), APAC (n=1,031), and EMEA (n=1,213). Data collection was conducted by Hanover Research in May and June 2025, commissioned by Workday.

About Workday

[Workday](#) is the AI platform for managing [people](#), [money](#), and [agents](#). The Workday platform is built with AI at the core to help customers elevate people, supercharge work, and move their business forever forward. Workday is used by more than 11,000 organizations around the world and across industries – from medium-sized businesses to more than 60% of the Fortune 500.

For more information about Workday, visit [workday.com](https://www.workday.com).

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