Innovation Report:

How AI will transform use of research, data & insights

Industry survey and business guide

Foreword

Applying AI technology to market and consumer insights has the potential to reimagine the journey that knowledge takes through a business. While this presents new opportunities, it also raises a vast range of questions about how best to direct and manage this change.

In conducting this survey with the support of Insight Platforms, we wanted to gauge how individuals in insights and business stakeholder groups feel about generative AI. In parallel, we wanted to outline emerging organizational models that will ensure successful AI adoption.

By unifying access to knowledge through AI, we anticipate dramatic shifts in how stakeholders, such as marketers and product strategists, will interact with insights. Democratization of insights at this scale will allow companies to more quickly translate insights to action. Equally, as a community of insights, technology, and business leaders, we have accountability for deploying these solutions responsibly.

We hope this report adds valuable perspectives to this ongoing conversation, while inspiring leaders to trace the next frontier of insights in the age of AI-enabled business.

- Market Logic Software

Chapters

MARKETLOGIC

1

Introduction

MARKETLOGIC

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a foundational technology that is permeating all aspects of digital products and services across consumer and business-to-business domains — including the market and consumer insights space. AI drives product recommendations, assists consumers in finding answers to search queries, and is used to generate various forms of media output including images, videos, audio, content, and music.

The introduction of ChatGPT in late 2022 sparked a surge of innovation and has led to intense competition among the largest technology companies. Large Language Models (LLMs) have become significantly more capable, and recent advancements in multi-model capabilities incorporating image and video will further enhance their potential and stimulate new waves of innovation.

AI is also embedded in the research and insights industry. Generative AI may grab the headlines, but machine learning has been established for several years in capabilities such as text analytics, video analysis, image recognition, and social media listening.

The development of LLMs in particular, presents a transformative opportunity for research and insights professionals across the entire ecosystem — spanning in-house teams, agencies, and technology suppliers. Increasingly accessible AI capabilities include instant, accurate transcription; summarizing vast swathes of unstructured, qualitative data; the use of synthetic data for predictive insights; conversational interfaces for knowledge search; automatic drafting of report outputs; and many more.

But in this race for innovation with AI, how are organizations adapting to these new possibilities? What steps should they take to navigate this new, AI-powered insights world?

This report explores the usage of and attitudes toward AI for research and insights in large organizations. Based on a comprehensive survey and in-depth interviews, it aims to provide a clear snapshot of the current state of AI in the industry and prediction trends.

Questionnaire

Based on industry data, it answers the following questions:

- **How do insights teams and business stakeholders feel about the impact of AI?**
- **Where is AI being adopted today in organizations, and where might it be used in the future?**
- **How will AI affect the roles and skills for insights professionals?**
- **What practical actions can insights leaders take to best prepare for the AI-powered future?**

Data & methodology

This report is based on the results of a survey of enterprise companies with more than 1,000 employees. The sample comprises two groups:

- 125 managers and leaders of insights functions
- 102 business users and stakeholders for research and insights.

Qualitative depth interviews were also conducted with senior insight leaders at five global organizations.

The research was conducted in September and October 2023. Surveys were completed in English with participants from North America and Europe across a representative spread of industry sectors.

Definitions

Insights teams: The department responsible for their organization's market research, consumer insights, and in many cases data analytics relating to customer or marketing data.

Stakeholders: Business users in marketing, operations, sales, strategy, product management or other roles who make frequent use of research and insights data.

Research, insights, and data: This incorporates primary market research surveys and qualitative research; social listening analysis and behavioral analysis of data sources from within and outside an organization; desk research and competitor intelligence; and secondary data/subscriptions to syndicated market data and reports.

AI: For the purposes of this report, AI is limited in scope to applications for research, data, and insights. This includes analysis of numeric, or text or visual data using established technologies and methods such as NLP, Emotion AI, and visual analytics; as well as more recent developments in generative AI and new applications grounded in LLMs.

2

Key insights

MARKETLOGIC

Enthusiasm for AI is strong amongst insights teams and stakeholders. 64% of insights teams and 74% of stakeholders are 'positive' or 'very positive' about the impact of AI on research and insights. The most beneficial impacts are the ability to spot new trends and uncover new insights; increase the productivity of insights teams, and manage existing knowledge better.

But a cautious core is skeptical. 25% of insights teams are 'cautious' or 'very cautious' about AI. Fewer than half as many stakeholders (12%) feel the same way. Both groups are concerned about data privacy and confidentiality, but insights teams are particularly concerned about the accuracy of AI outputs and maintaining quality standards for research and insights.

More than three quarters of insights teams and two-thirds of stakeholders have already used AI for at least one type of research and insights activity. The most common uses of AI are for analysis of survey data, analysis of qualitative research, and searching existing knowledge.

AI will increase the efficiency of conducting research and generating insights. 4 out of 5 insights teams predict that AI will improve their department's overall productivity, and more than two-thirds say that AI will lead to time savings on core activities including analyzing survey data, searching for knowledge and interpreting qualitative research.

AI is likely to spur increased demand for research and insights. 74% of stakeholders believe that AI will increase their organization's overall demand for research and insights. Much like new highway capacity attracts more traffic, AI's cost and time efficiencies are predicted to drive growth in usage. However, this confidence is much less apparent amongst insights teams, where only 53% believe that AI will spur growth in demand.

Increased access to research and insights through AI will drive both growth in self-service and demand for help from insights experts. Almost all stakeholders currently undertake some aspects of research and insights work on a self-service basis, and AI is likely to strengthen this drive to democratization. However, it will simultaneously increase the need for interpretation of data and advice from insights departments. Across almost all types of insights activity, at least 50% of stakeholders say they will need more expert help as a result of AI.

Insights teams believe that AI will create pressure to reduce headcount. Nearly 40% of insights teams predict that AI will lead to a reduction in the size of their team; just 20% expect their team to grow as a result of AI. However, stakeholders see AI leading to greater demand, with over half (55%) forecasting that AI will increase their reliance on their insights department.

Insights teams expect AI to drive a change in team roles, with a reduction in basic analysis activities and an increase in advisory skills. Between 60% and 70% expect that AI will reduce time spent on survey / qualitative analysis, searching existing knowledge, and conducting desk research. Advisory tasks including communicating insights, storytelling, and helping business users interpret data are most likely to require more time with the adoption of AI.

3

Perceptions of AI for research & insights

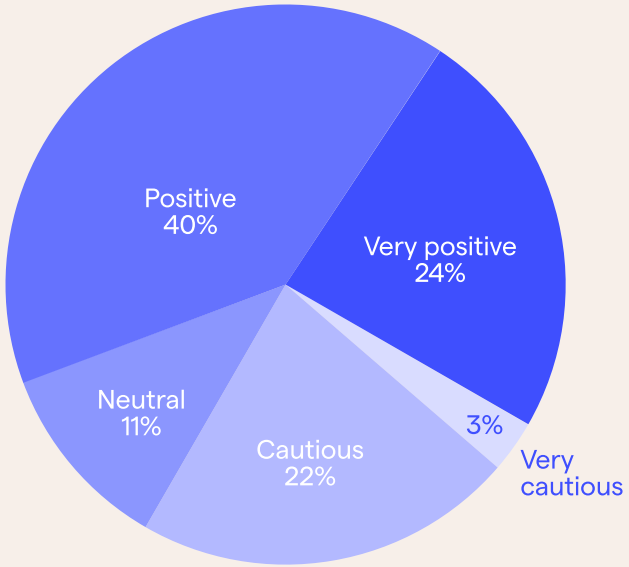
MARKETLOGIC

Overall attitudes towards AI

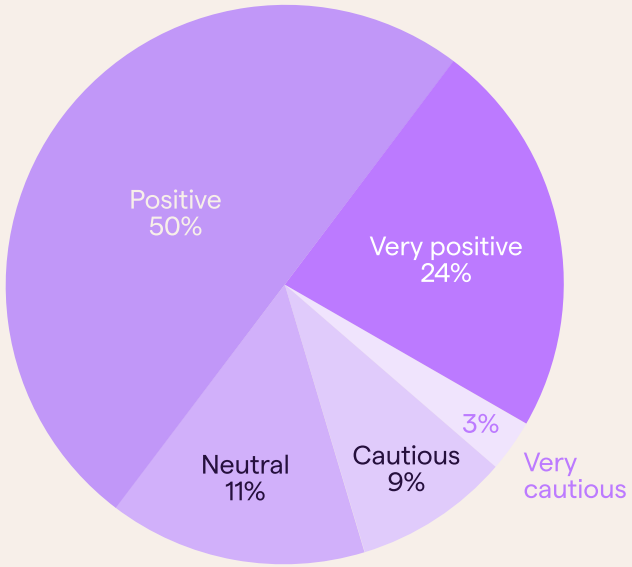
AI is generally seen as a positive development by both stakeholders and insights teams. However, both groups have a cautious minority — and this group is twice as large amongst insights teams.

Overall how do you feel about the potential impact of AI on research and Insights for our organization?

Insights Team



Stakeholders



64% of insights teams and 75% of stakeholders describe themselves as positive or very positive about AI and its impact on research and insights. The main drivers of this are the ability to spot new trends; workflow productivity improvements; and better access to existing knowledge.

But in both groups, a sizeable minority is 'cautious' or 'very cautious'. Amongst stakeholders, this is around 12% of the total; amongst insights teams, it is twice the size at 25%.

Concerns about compliance and data privacy risks are significant for both audiences; additionally, insights teams worry that the accuracy and quality of research outputs may be compromised.

Positive impacts of AI

Stakeholders and insight teams are closely aligned on the biggest benefits arising from AI: Spotting new trends, increasing productivity, managing existing knowledge and integrating insights into other business systems and progress.

Spotting new trends

AI's ability to synthesize data from multiple sources and formats such as primary research, published reports, and commercial data, opens up new opportunities to generate insights.

"AI-powered tools can analyze massive amounts of data quickly and effectively spot patterns, anomalies, and trends that might go unnoticed by human analysts."

Insights Team, Financial Services

Increasing insights productivity

Amongst insights teams, the hope is that AI will automate repetitive and mundane tasks to free up time for more strategic work.

> ***"It will make our people more efficient. [I] also expect that richer analytics will be easier for all and more accessible. Researchers should also be able to add more consultative value because they have more time for helping decisions get made rather than doing research administration."***
>
> Insights Team, Software & Technology

> ***"We will automate many of the housekeeping duties and allow us to focus on the interpretation and application of the insights."***
>
> Insights Team, Software & Technology

> ***"Hopefully it will take away some of the 'drudgery' of reading through long documents and helping to synthesize summaries of docs."***
>
> Insights Team, Financial Services

Better management of knowledge

Improved access to existing data and knowledge is also a key benefit for both insights teams and stakeholders.

> ***"It will broaden our ability to interpret, probe, analyze, present and archive our knowledge ... I can't imagine a part of research that won't be affected."***
>
> Insights Team, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

> ***"It will allow us to close knowledge gaps, connect the dots, and go deeper in the analysis of legacy and actual information within an organization."***
>
> Insights Team, Consumer Packaged Goods

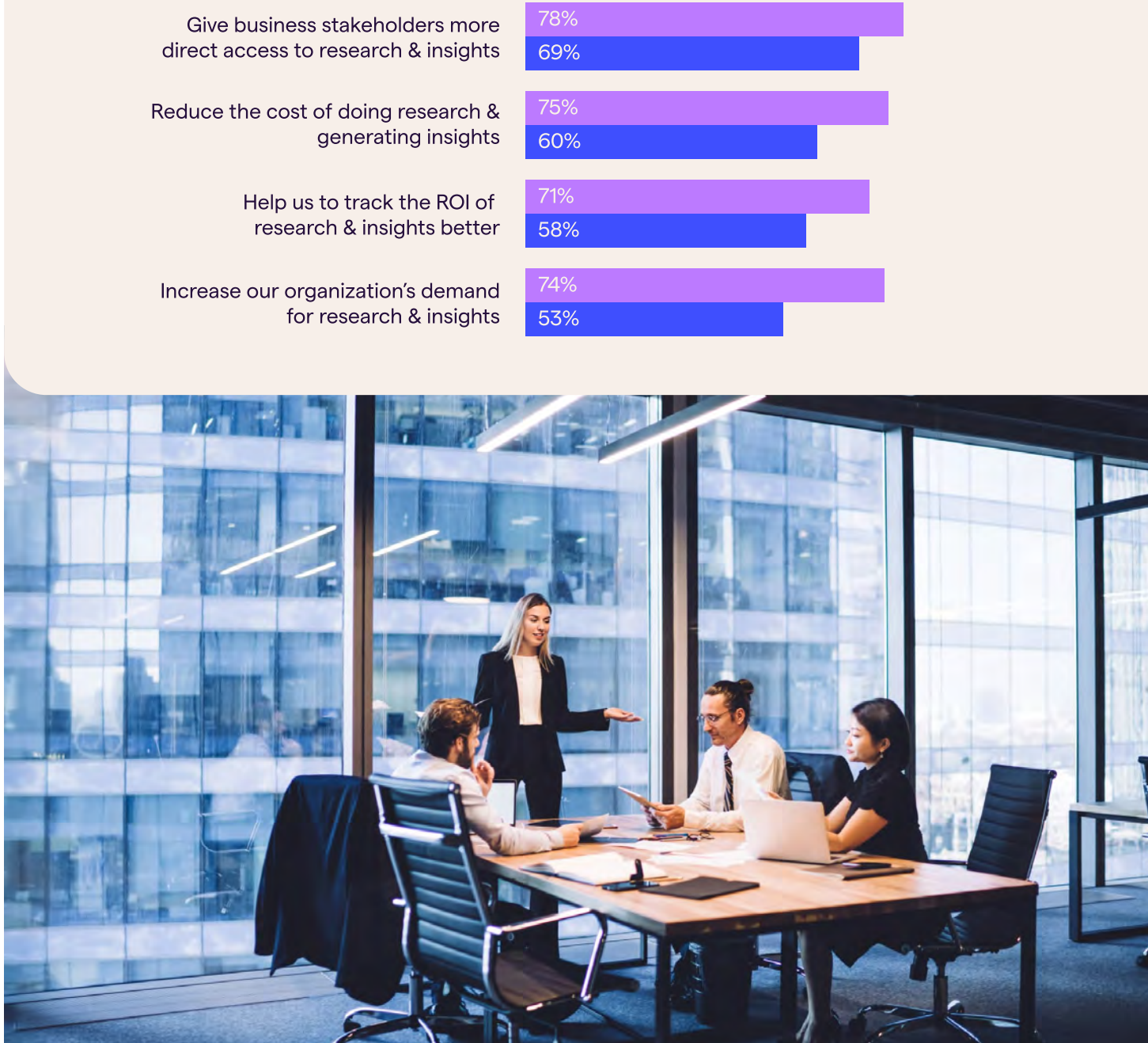
However on a range of other potential impacts from AI, stakeholders and insights team diverge significantly on their views of the future: Stakeholders are far more likely to agree that AI will increase demand for insights, reduce the cost of research and grant access to research & insights.

Increasing market research demand

The variance between stakeholders and insights teams on this issue is striking: 74% of stakeholders believe that AI will increase demand for research and insights; while this is true for only 53% of insights teams.

"It will increase market research demand by processing the information quickly and efficiently – it will be able to make better predictions and examine the data in a multitude of ways we can't do at the moment."

Strategy Stakeholder,
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals



Direct access for stakeholders

For many stakeholders, improved and faster access to insights is a key benefit of AI.

> ***"AI can help automate a lot of market research and consumer insights tasks at our organization and help develop tools to fast-track the overall process."***
>
> Marketing Stakeholder, Consumer Packaged Goods

For insights teams, this is a more polarizing issue. For some, it is an opportunity to be embraced:

> ***"Make surveys and analysis automated, so that stakeholders can self-serve data rather than asking the research team. This will give the research team more headspace to enhance their consulting skills."***
>
> Insights Team, Retail

For others, this represents a challenge:

> ***"You need to know what you're putting into the AI to validate the results. Stakeholders are used to traditional insight reports delivered with a commentary. If they have to self-serve, there will be a lot of training and onboarding required, along with the need to answer a lot of ongoing questions."***
>
> Insights Team, Retail

Concerns about AI

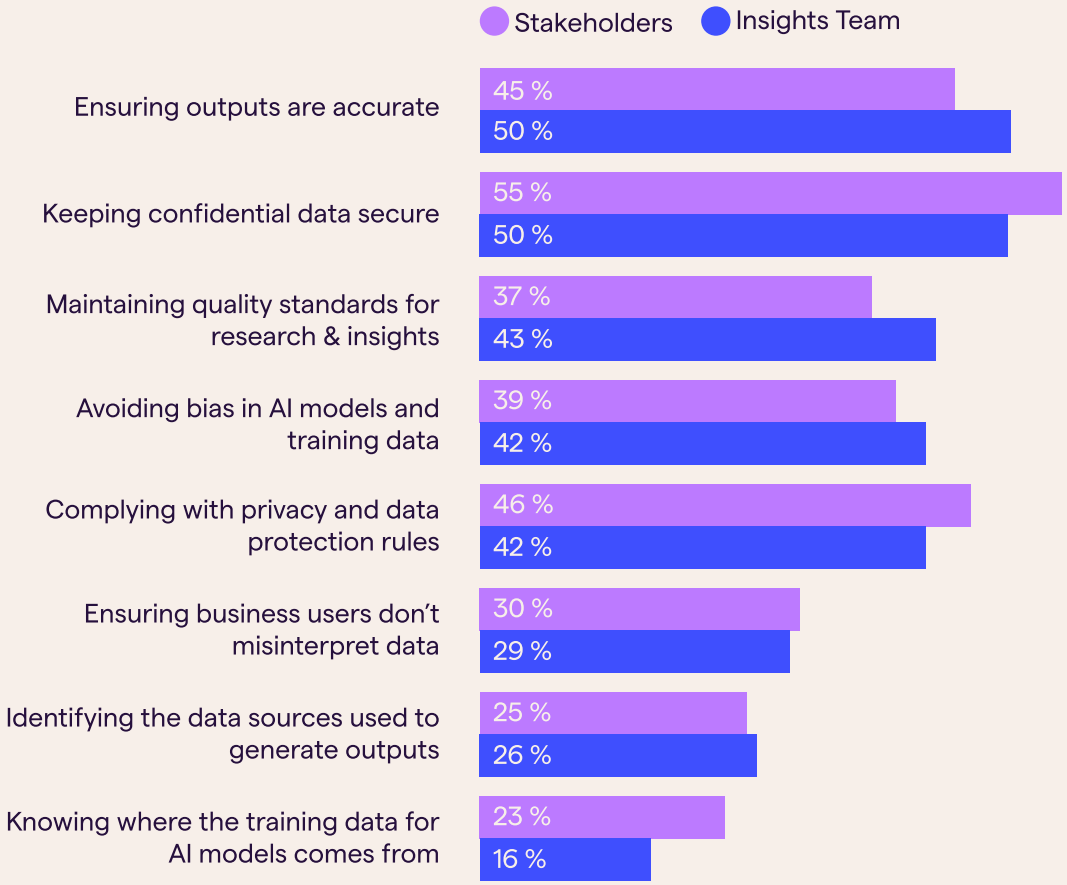
Securing confidential data and complying with privacy regulations are primary concerns for both audiences; output accuracy and quality of insights are particular risks for insights teams.

When asked about the major concerns relating to AI and its impact on research and insights, the hierarchy of concerns is broadly similar between stakeholders insights teams:

- Stakeholders are slightly more worried by compliance and security risks
- Insights teams fear that outputs from AI may not be accurate, and quality standards for research design and data analysis will be compromised.

Of relatively less importance for both groups are issues relating to the transparency of algorithms and the data sources used for training AI models.

From the list below, please choose your three most important concerns about AI's impact on research & insights



"I think, as with any new technology, it's impossible to estimate now what the future impact on our industry and the organization I work in will be. At this time, it's all hype and speculation. And as a researcher, I'm not a fan."

Insights Team, Retail

Data privacy & security

Keeping confidential data secure and complying with privacy and data protection rules are the biggest concerns for stakeholders.

> ***"The use of public AI vs. Enterprise AI. For example, we would not want a research brief analyzed by an agency in a public AI."***
>
> Insights Team, Software & Technology

> ***"The increasing connectivity of devices and systems has led to a growing concern about cybersecurity."***
>
> Marketing Stakeholder, Software & Technology

Accuracy & reliability

This is the primary concern for insights teams: that AI may provide incorrect or inaccurate insights.

> ***"Some incorrect conclusions may be drawn without correct oversight ... Unless there is some oversight by maybe a [Quality Assurance] QA or [Quality Control] QC team/member, then the AI may not be powerful enough to be accurate at all times."***
>
> Insights Team, Education

> ***"Gen AI is not a mature tool yet, so at the moment AI work require manual checks... that require people to do this well."***
>
> Insights Team, Software & Technology

> ***"Having to double-check something that AI gives us. [It] may take more time if we feel that something isn't right. And if we don't catch something wrong and then share it with others, that makes us look bad."***
>
> Insights Team, Media & Entertainment

> ***[The] expectation [is] that research can be turned around instantly and of zero cost, dashboards should be used for everything, and why even conduct real research when you now have synthetic data? The expectation will be that all projects can be run by an online AI software tool, which does all the heavy lifting, removes the need to actually speak with any humans, and can produce the same results as an insight team at the fraction of the current cost.***
>
> Insights Team, Publishing

4

Adoption of AI for research & insights

MARKETLOGIC

In this section, we analyze the current workloads for research and insights; explore where within organizations AI is being used today; and forecast where it might play a role in the future.

Current research & insights activities

Research and insights workloads are diverse and increasingly democratized with a large share of stakeholders conducting activities on a self-service DIY basis.

Insights teams

Insights teams were asked to estimate the share of people in their department who currently undertake a range of common research and insights tasks.

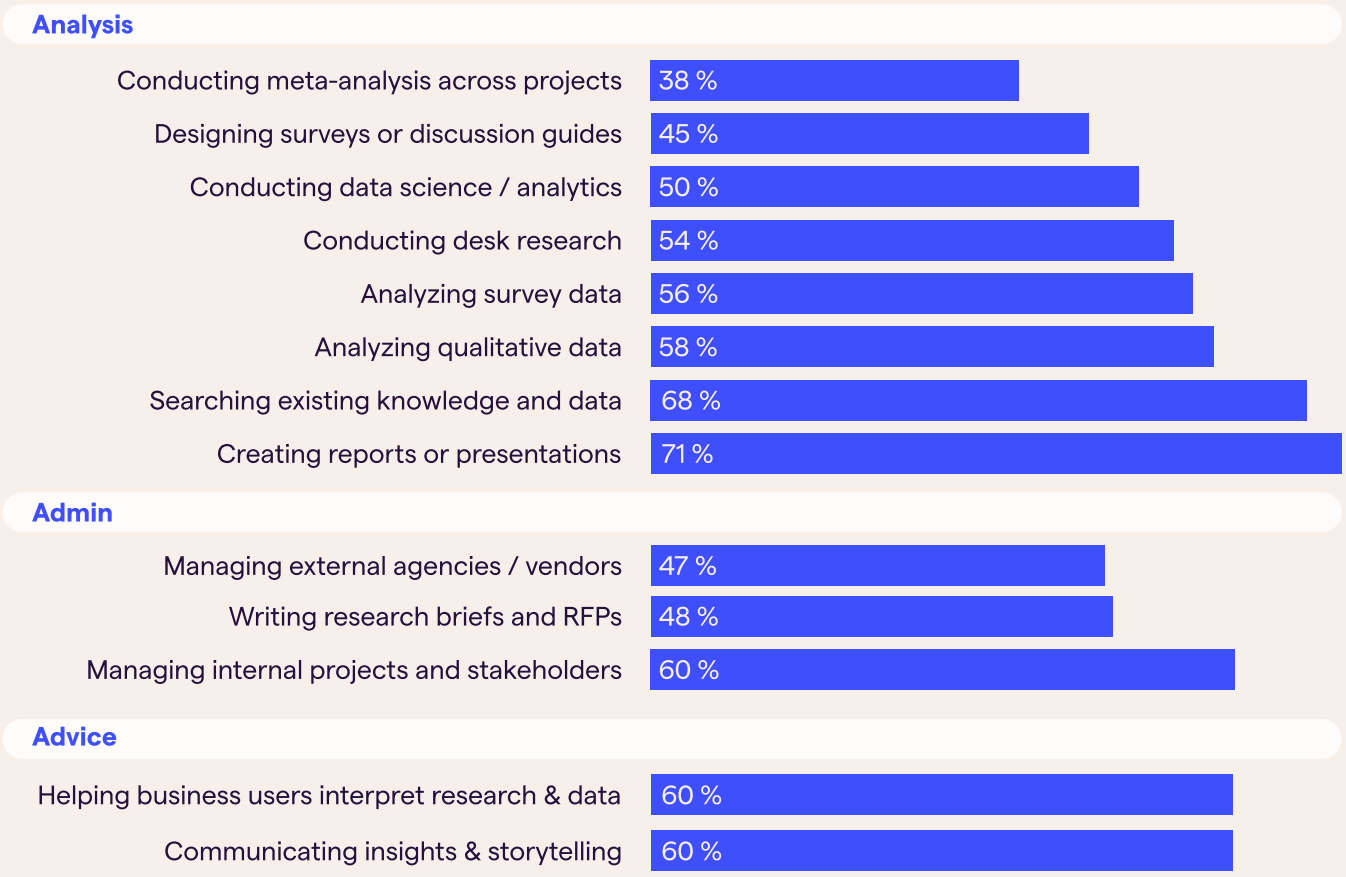
The most common activities are creating reports and searching existing knowledge, as shown in the following chart:

These activities can be grouped into broad categories under a '3 As framework' of analysis, advice and admin:

1. **Analysis and design activities:** Searching existing knowledge, conducting surveys, qualitative research and data science projects.
2. **Advice and consultancy:** Reporting, storytelling and helping business users interpret data.
3. **Admin and planning**: Managing internal projects, briefing and managing agencies and vendors.

The potential impact of AI varies across each of these three activity groups.

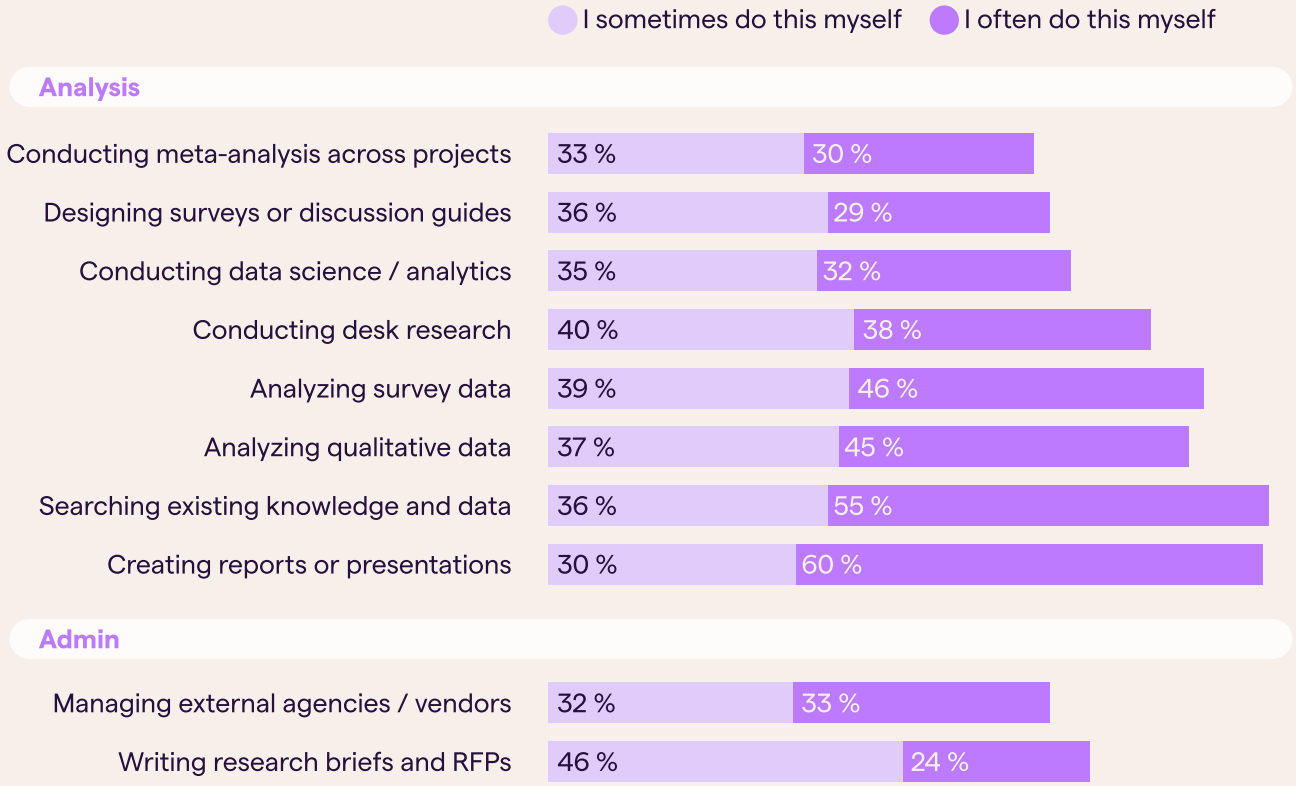
Please estimate the share of people in the research & insights team who do each of these activities:



Stakeholders

Stakeholders conduct many research and insights activities within their own departments. The two most common tasks — searching existing knowledge and creating reports / presentations — are also the most widely undertaken within insights teams.

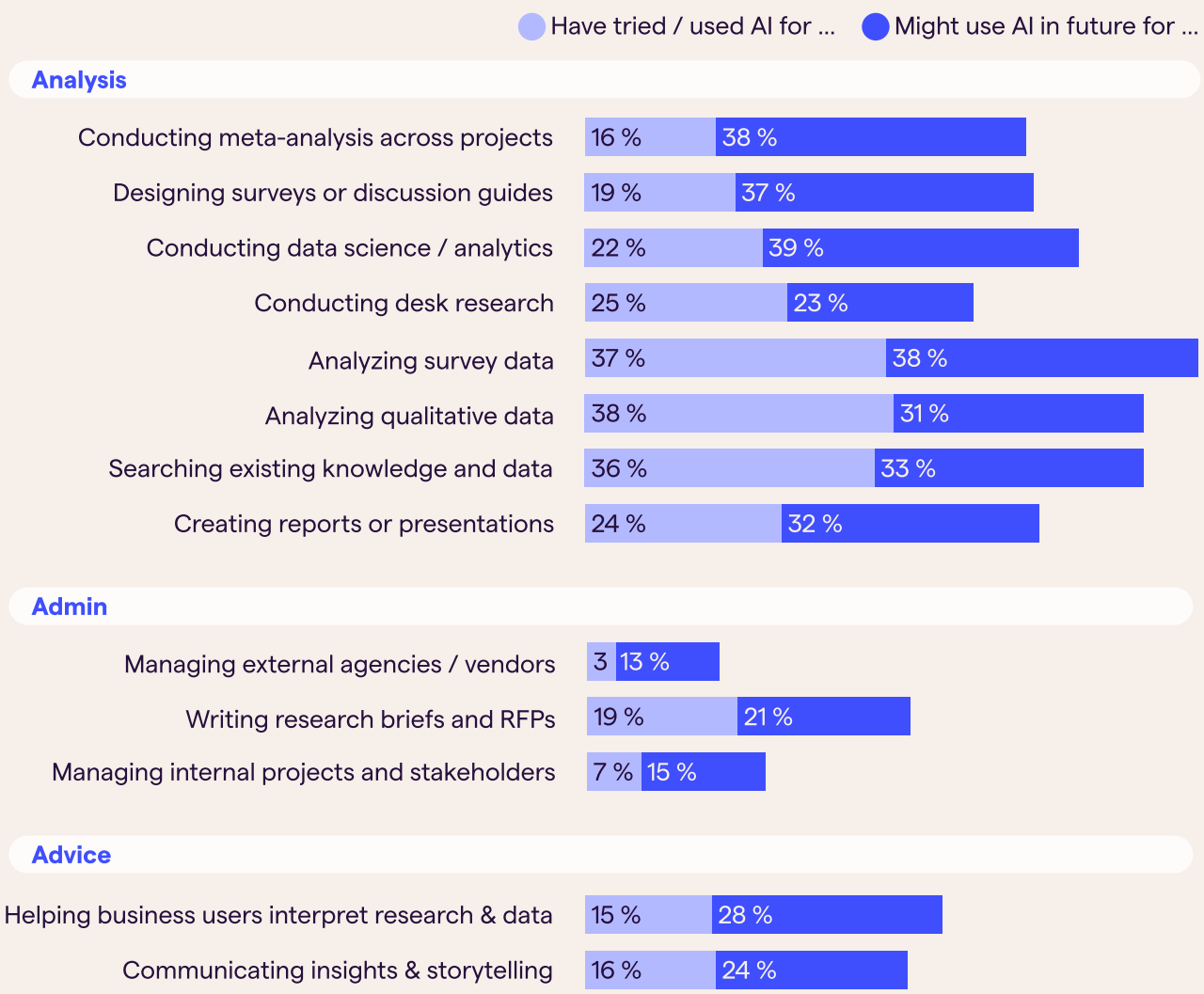
How often do you carry out each of these market research or consumer insights activities?



Current and future use of AI

77% of insights teams and 68% of stakeholders have already used AI for at least one research and insights application. The most common uses are for surveys, searching existing knowledge and qualitative research.

Have you used AI-enabled software to help with any of these tasks? Which other tasks might you use AI-enabled software for in the future?



Insights teams

So far, AI has been most widely used for analysis activities and for searching existing knowledge. These use cases for AI are also forecast to grow strongly in the future:

> ***"It's already sped up and improved (vast volumes of) text analytics. It will almost certainly improve the way we communicate with internal stakeholders by making production of first draft summaries really quick."***
>
> Insights Team, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

At the other end of the spectrum, AI has barely been used for administrative tasks such as managing internal projects or agency relationships. Insights teams also see limited scope for AI to benefit these activities in the future.

Tasks requiring advisory or consultative skills are similarly forecast to have low usage of AI in the future: communicating insights and storytelling and helping business users interpret, research, and data are predicted to use AI by no more than 40% of Insights teams.

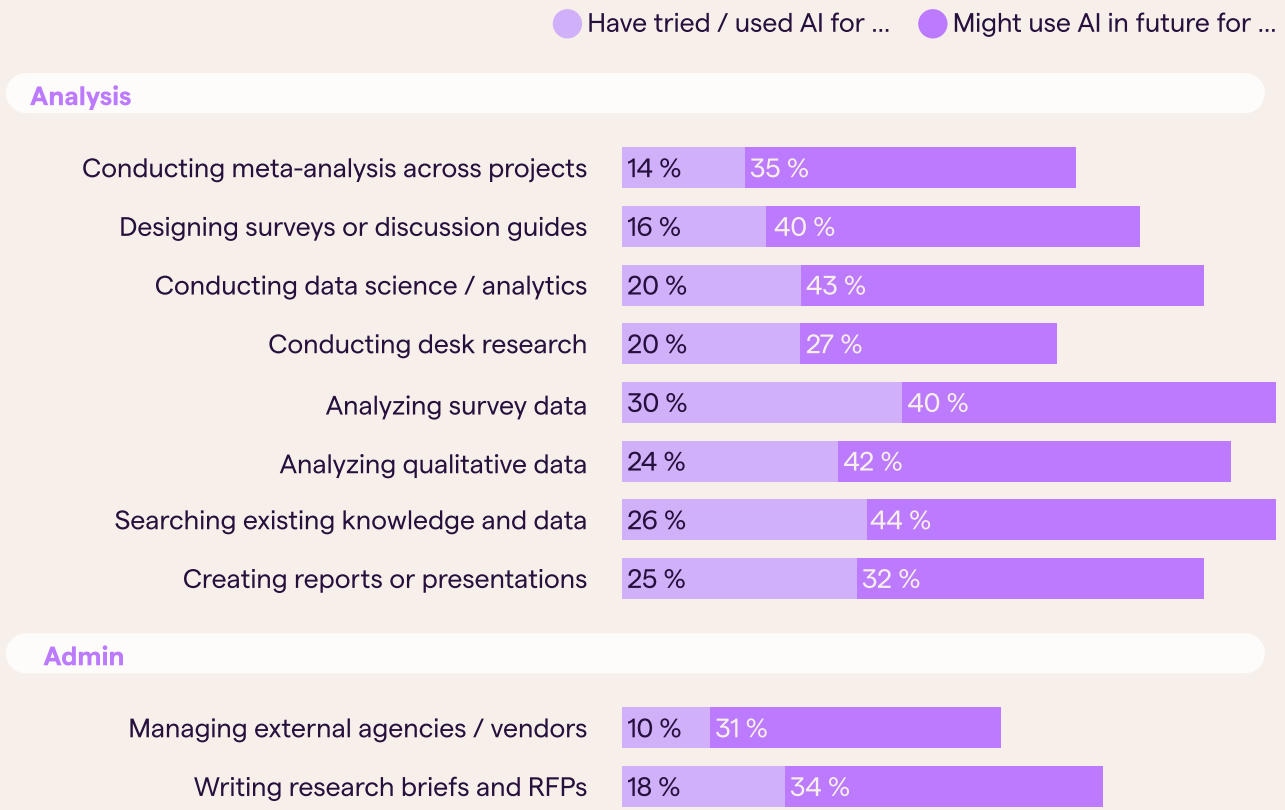
Stakeholder use of AI is likely to grow significantly

Just under 70% of stakeholders have used AI for at least one research and insights activity. The most common are analyzing survey data, qualitative data, and searching for existing knowledge.

Stakeholder use of AI for research and insights tasks follows a similar pattern to the use by insights teams.

There is a strong intent to use AI for a wide range of research and insights tasks in the future.

Have you used AI-enabled software to help with any of these tasks? Which other tasks might you use AI-enabled software for in the future?



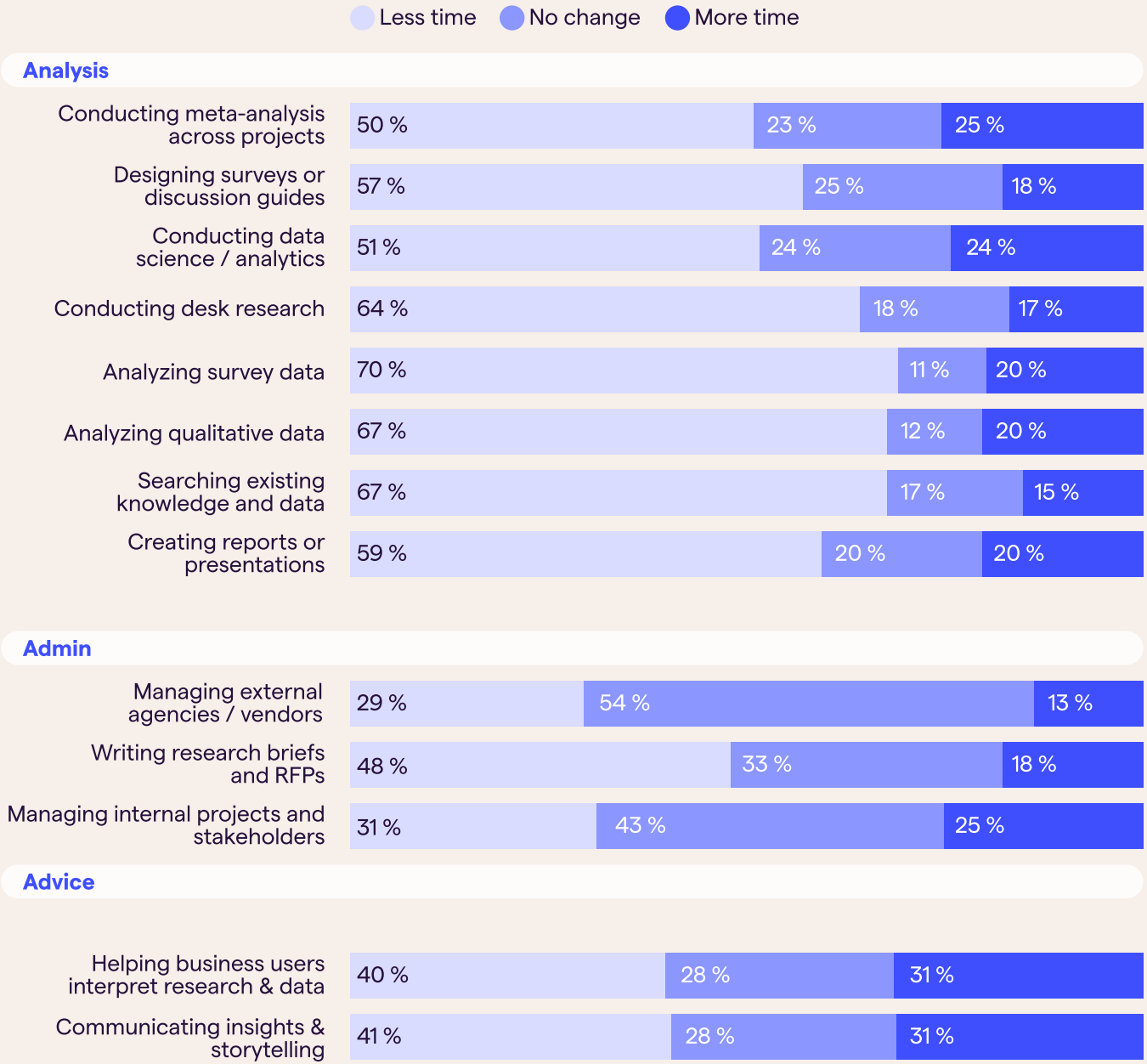
5

The Impact of AI on insights workloads, roles & skills

MARKETLOGIC

AI is forecast to deliver significant time savings, particularly for analytical tasks. Insights teams believe this will ultimately lead to headcount reductions in their department; but stakeholders believe AI will increase their need for expert support from their insights colleagues.

Do you think AI will lead insights team members to spend more or less time on each of these activities?



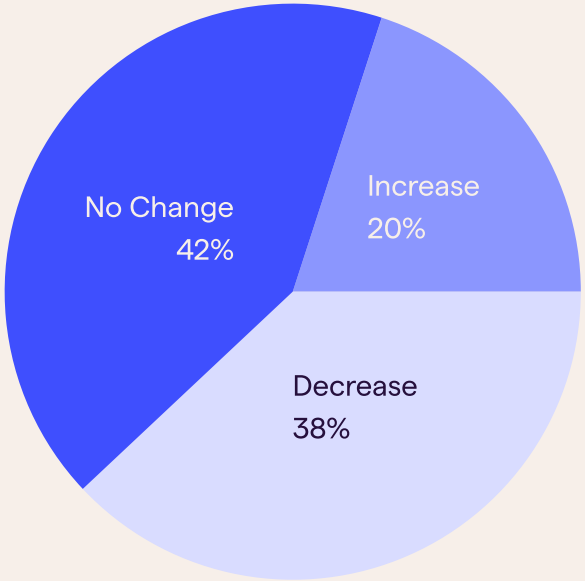
Insights teams

Significant time savings on analytical tasks

Analyzing survey data, searching existing knowledge, analyzing qualitative data, and conducting desk research are all predicted to become more efficient as a result of AI:

However, a sizeable minority (25%) predict that more time will be spent on certain analysis tasks — in particular, conducting data science and meta-analysis across projects. This is likely a consequence of AI releasing time from other activities and allowing team members to spend more time on higher value analysis tasks.

How do you think AI will affect the size of your research & insights team?



> ***"I think it will alter the balance of what we spend our time on somewhat, e.g. less crunching through datasets manually and more interpretation and implementation."***
>
> Insights Team, Consumer Packaged Goods

Administrative tasks are the least likely to benefit from AI. Two-thirds of insights teams say that managing internal projects and managing external agencies will either stay the same as today or require more time in the future.

Advisory tasks are most widely predicted to take up more time as a result of AI. 31% of insights teams predict that communicating insights/storytelling and helping business users interpret data will require more time in the future.

This is likely to be driven by two factors: AI-driven efficiencies within insights teams that will allow more time for advisory work; and the growth of stakeholder self-service using AI-based tools.

On balance, however, insights teams predict that the efficiencies delivered by AI are more likely to reduce the size of their team than to increase it.

> ***"Processes can be automated to free up time for interpretation, stakeholder management, and communication."***
>
> Insights Team, Charity

> ***"Analysis will be more automated so we will need consultancy and journalistic skills to help frame the narrative that we wish to communicate with the business."***
>
> Insights Team, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

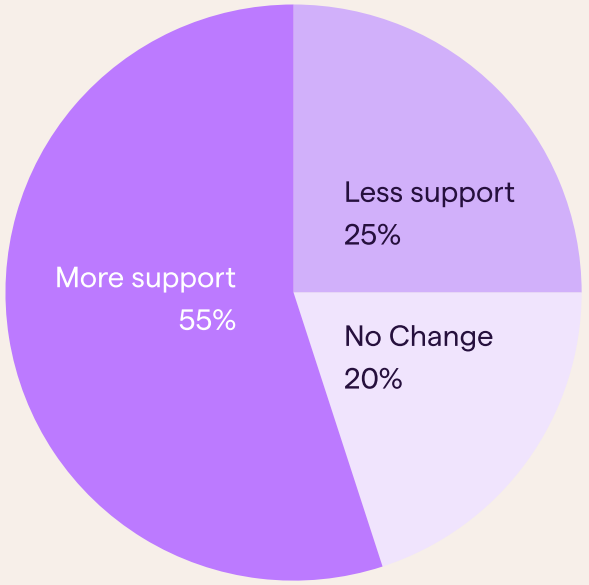
Stakeholders

Reliance on insights teams is likely to increase

Whereas insights teams are more likely to forecast reductions in their department as a consequence of AI, the majority of stakeholders believe they will be more reliant on support from their insights colleagues in the future.

This pattern can be seen across the range of research and insights activities. In almost all cases, at least 50% of stakeholders believe that AI will make them more reliant on support from their insights department.

How will AI change the support you need from your research & insights department?



"I think artificial intelligence will change my work with the research and insights team because they will assist me better in predicting the actions of customers and the direction of the market."

Marketing Stakeholder, Software & Technology

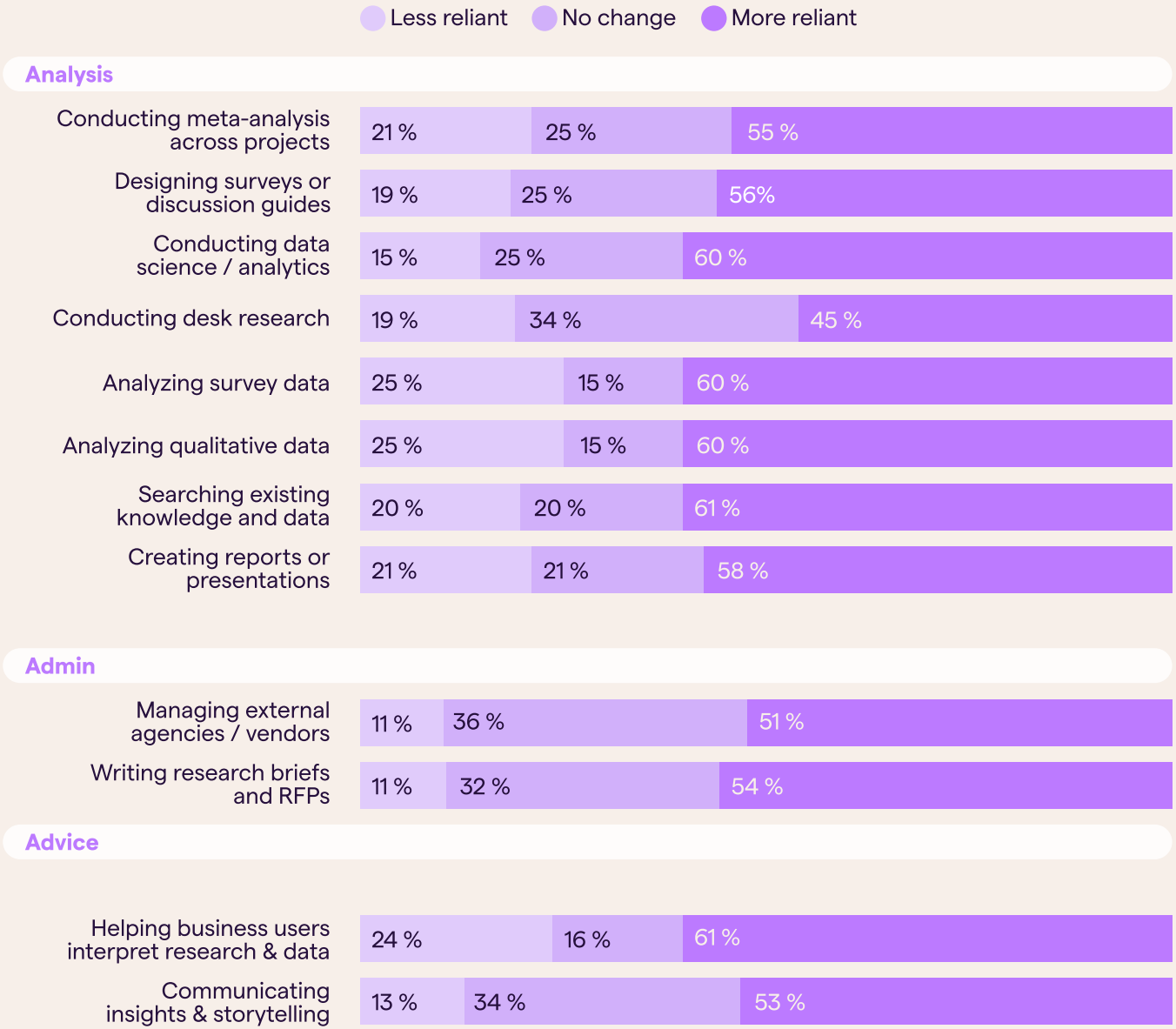
"It will allow us to focus more heavily on the results and putting them into practice."

Operations Stakeholder, Government

"I think that it will make initial findings much easier to understand. It will ease report writing and give the writer more time for analyzing since the AI already will take care of the data collection."

Product Stakeholder, Retail

Will AI increase or decrease how much you rely on your research & insights team for each of these activities?



6

Implications for insights leaders

MARKETLOGIC

The data from this study points to a range of implications for insights leaders as they navigate the transformation opportunities presented by AI:

Maximize alignment and clarify expectations of AI with stakeholder teams. Insights teams and stakeholders diverge on two related issues: whether AI will drive growth in demand for insights; and the level of support that stakeholders will need from insights experts in future. The data suggests that both increased democratization and greater advisory support will result.

Map the likely impacts and efficiencies resulting from AI across team activities. The '3 As framework' is a simple place to start. Team members currently focused on analysis tasks should see considerable efficiencies from the adoption of AI. Those with more of an advisory role may see greater demands for their input from stakeholders. Plan for investment in training and development alongside the adoption of AI tools; in-demand skills will include coaching stakeholders, explaining data, and storytelling.

Build a proactive business case for retaining and growing headcount in insights teams. Don't assume headcount reduction is inevitable: stakeholders expect more help alongside the adoption of AI, and this may require growth in the insights team.

Define standards and guidelines for agencies working with AI. Data privacy and confidentiality are major concerns. Work with compliance and IT security teams to develop appropriate policies. Ensure that agencies have clear AI policies of their own; that they are transparent about their use of AI systems; and that they comply with your processes when using public LLMs.

Start generating and capitalizing on insights using AI. Learn more about how Market Logic can help you become an insights-driven enterprise. Contact us to book a free consultation with a member of our team.

MARKETLOGIC

About Market Logic

Market Logic is a market leading SaaS provider of insights management solutions. Our AI-enabled insights management platform allows insights teams to equip business decisions makers with trusted insights at scale and speed. Since 2006, we've helped hundreds of consumer-focused brands across the globe to transform into insights-driven businesses. Market leaders such as Unilever, Vodafone, Astra Zeneca and Tesco are driving innovation and making smarter market moves with the support of Market Logic.

www.marketlogicsoftware.com
info@marketlogicsoftware.com

Europe

Franklinstrasse 28
10587, Berlin,
Germany

North America

223 W. Jackson
Blvd, Suite 900,
Chicago, IL
60606, USA

insight platforms .com INSIGHT platforms

About Insight Platforms

Insight Platforms is the premier learning resource for insights technology and digital research methods. The site attracts a global audience of over 250,000 insights and data professionals annually.