The Moment of Truth Report

# AI and the future of women in the workplace

NINEby9

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# Foreword

AI adoption is rapidly accelerating, bringing both immense potential and significant considerations and responsibilities. As AI transforms industries and work at an unprecedented pace, we must prioritise supporting our workforce through this period of critical change, posing the question, are we adequately equipping all workers to thrive in an AI-driven future?

This report, focused on the impact on the female career, highlights clear risks if inclusion is overlooked in the rush to embed AI usage; women are more likely to miss out on opportunities or face career setbacks.

When organisations plan carefully, build skills and create space for women to participate, AI can strengthen both equity and performance. Companies that act now with clear intent and collaboration between business, technology and people leaders, not only close participation gaps but also unlock stronger team dynamics, innovation and long-term sustainability.

Aside from critical insights, this report includes a NINEby9 action framework serving as a clear, practical guide to help organisations, managers, and individuals to assess, plan, and progress.

# About **NINEby9**

**NINEby9 began in 2021** with a clear mission: to drive gender equality across Asia through impactful research and data-driven advocacy. Founded as a Singapore-based not-for-profit organisation, NINEby9 develops evidence-based insights that illuminate both the barriers and enablers to gender equality, providing businesses with a solid foundation for meaningful action toward diverse and equitable workplaces.

Over the past four years, NINEby9 has built a body of research that reflects the evolving challenges facing women in the workforce. The journey began with foundational research on Gender Parity in Asia, followed by an examination of The Imperative of Inclusion in the Green Economy Workforce recognising early that emerging industries would shape future opportunities for women.

Now, as artificial intelligence fundamentally reshapes how we work, NINEby9 is addressing perhaps its most critical question yet: how can we ensure that AI-driven transformation strengthens gender equity across all industries and creates opportunities for women in the workforce of tomorrow?

NINEby9's strength lies in its three pillar approach: research, advocacy, and community building. The organisation has cultivated strong relationships with leading corporations and academic institutions across Asia Pacific, creating a network of leaders who understand that diversity drives innovation, attracts top talent, and delivers stronger business outcomes. By bringing together voices from different sectors and perspectives, NINEby9 creates research that resonates across industries while capturing the unique cultural nuances of Asia Pacific markets.

**JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING WORKPLACES.**

**NINEby9 invites your support for our groundbreaking research and advocacy programmes.**

***Partner with us *Join our community *Sponsor our research**

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- **April Swando Hu** — NINEby9, Cofounder
- **Ineet Narula** — Bain & Company, Leadership & Talent Lead APAC
- **Jane Morgan** — NINEby9, Communications Advisor
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- **Shaggy Herur** — Stewardship Asia Centre, Assistant Vice President, Digital Strategy
- **Aparna Kadan** — Google, New Products lead - APAC SMB
- **Andrew So** — NINEby9, Intern

# Executive summary

AI is already reshaping how value is created, how decisions are made and who gains influence in the future. If we get it right, AI can help to create an equitable workforce of the future. But if it is deployed without attention to equity, its benefits may fall mainly on those already at an advantage.

By 2030, AI is projected to contribute up to US$15.7 trillion to the global economy, making it one of the most significant drivers of growth in modern history (PwC, 2025). The Asia Pacific region will be influential in shaping this future with AI investments to reach $110 billion by 2028 (IDC, 2024)

The gender gap, however, remains daunting. At the current pace, achieving global gender parity will take 123 years and progress across Asia Pacific remains slower still, particularly in economic participation and leadership (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2025). As AI reshapes industries, and with 78 million jobs projected to be created by 2030, progressive companies are recognising the need for ethical and equitable adoption to ensure this gap does not widen further (WEF, 2025a).

Our research spans focus groups and in-depth interviews with regional business, technology and HR leaders in Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and Indonesia, along with LinkedIn workforce metrics across Asia Pacific and a broad review of current academic research and articles.

While the data shows that artificial intelligence is displacing some jobs, augmenting others and creating entirely new roles, the impact is uneven. Women across Asia Pacific are already experiencing career regression, as highlighted in the nine truths uncovered in this research. The challenge lies in the gap between business ambition, technological progress and human capital priorities.

In addition to the research, we capture best-in-class AI inclusion methods from organisations in Asia Pacific. We outline a practical action framework to help organisations, managers and individuals build a more equitable, AI-enabled workforce. If these actions are taken with intent, AI has the power not only to transform how we work, but also to expand opportunity, strengthen inclusion and contribute to a fairer future of work for all.

# 9 truths.

## from our research

**Truth 01.**

**AI is reshaping work unevenly**

AI is not a single transformation. It displaces some jobs, augments others, and creates new ones. But women and men are experiencing this shift in different ways.

**Truth 02.**

**An AI participation gap already exists and the regression has begun**

Women face double exposure: they are underrepresented in the roles AI is creating and adapting, while overrepresented in the roles AI is disrupting.

**Truth 03.**

**Women's measured approach to AI is a strength — but recognition often favours the bold**

Women are ready and motivated, but they approach AI adoption thoughtfully, seeking clarity, fairness and competence. Meanwhile, recognition flows to those who experiment publicly and move fast.

**Truth 04.**

**Companies are building while flying**

AI is transforming organisations faster than their people systems can adapt.

**Truth 05.**

**External hiring Is outpacing internal growth**

Organisations are paying premiums to buy scarce AI talent instead of developing their own.

**Truth 06.**

**Self-driven upskilling models underserve women**

AI learning is often optional and self-directed - a model that leaves many women behind.

**Truth 07.**

**Gen Z women face the greatest disruption**

The next generation faces a broken career ladder before they even begin the climb.

**Truth 08.**

**HR Is optimistic about AI but often underequipped to lead transformation**

Human capital leaders want AI to succeed but need new capabilities to align technology, people and purpose.

**Truth 09.**

**Technology and human capital need new systems of collaboration**

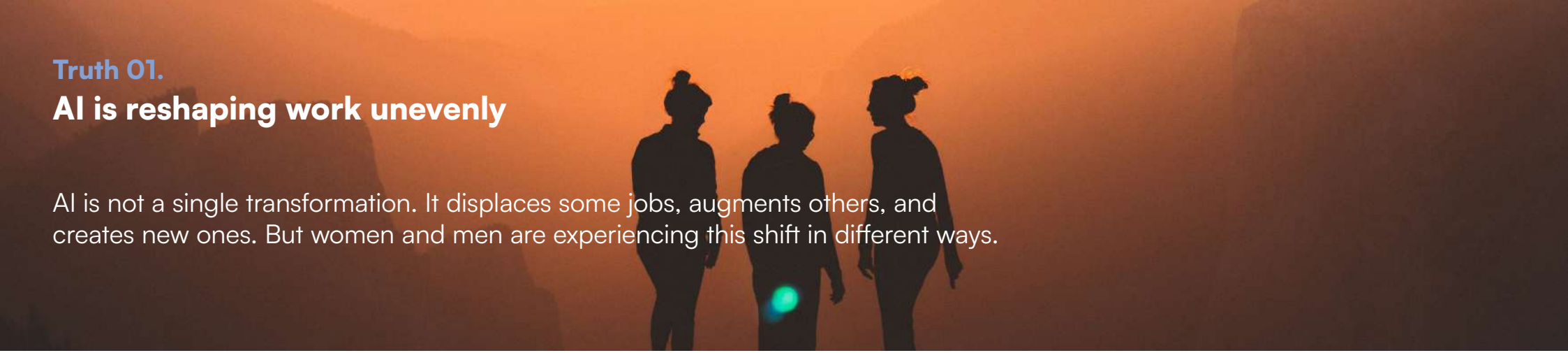
AI is both a technology and a workforce transformation, but true progress requires integrated, accountable co-leadership.

The Nine Truths:

# AI IS RESHAPING WORK UNEVENLY

Truth

01.



Truth 01.

# AI is reshaping work unevenly

AI is not a single transformation. It displaces some jobs, augments others, and creates new ones. But women and men are experiencing this shift in different ways.

**AI is transforming the world of work, replacing administrative and back-office tasks, enhancing decision making, and creating entirely new roles.**

Yet the impact is uneven, differing by role, gender, and generation, leaving some groups more vulnerable than others.

**Women hold**

**29%**

of AI-related roles worldwide (Randstad, 2024)

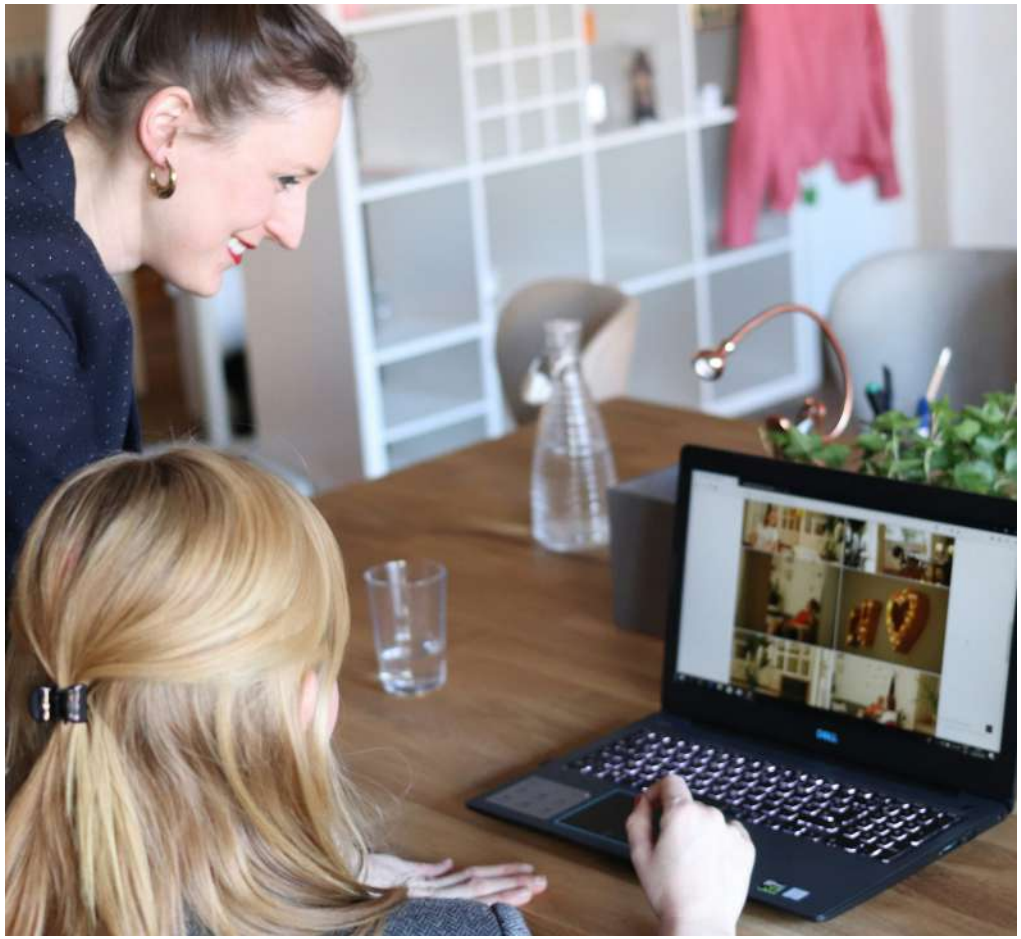
High growth careers where AI is creating and enhancing opportunities from AI engineering and data science to product management, are expanding rapidly. Yet women remain significantly underrepresented in these roles. At the same time, administrative, clerical, and support jobs, where women remain concentrated, are among the most exposed to disruption where AI-driven automation is replacing tasks (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2025).

Truth 01.

## AI is reshaping work unevenly

# This structural transformation of work is measurable.

Latest employer and labour market analyses indicate that about one quarter of skills in existing roles can be substituted with automation, and as technology continues to evolve, this pattern could increase (LinkedIn, 2025). It is projected that close to **40%** of core skills required by workers will change by 2030 as AI tools expand and skills become outdated (WEF, 2025a).



**Employers expect close to**

**40%**

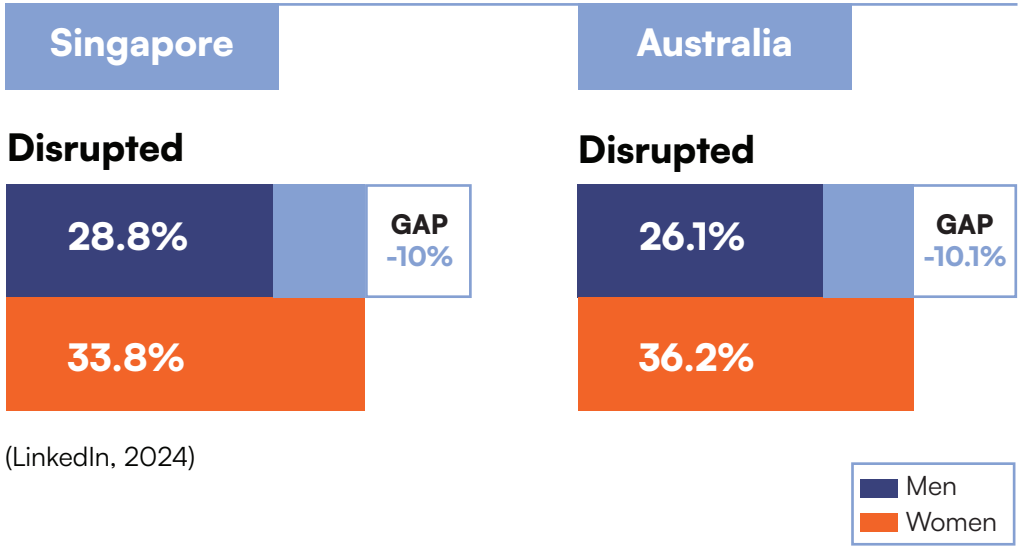
of skills to change by 2030, highlighting urgent reskilling needs (WEF, 2025a)

Truth 01.

## AI is reshaping work unevenly

These skills change how value is created. Labour markets are being re-built around digital, analytical and technology leadership skills, which are areas where women have historically had less access to due to occupational patterns and lower participation in STEM and AI pathways (OECD, 2024). In fact, globally, women hold just 29% of AI-related roles (Randstad, 2024).

**Women hold a greater share of disrupted roles**




(LinkedIn, 2024)

> ***AI will impact administrative and support functions first; the challenge is to ensure these workers are not left behind in the transition.***

— **CHRO**, Singapore

Truth 01.

# AI is reshaping work unevenly

## Implications

**For organisations, this is not simply a diversity issue; it is a talent pipeline and productivity risk. An AI strategy that leaves half the workforce, women behind means lost potential for innovation and growth.**

Fair access to AI's benefits is essential to achieving gender parity and unlocking the performance gains that diverse teams deliver.

## Leader Takeaway

1. Map where jobs are being replaced by AI and where they're being enhanced or supported by it and assess the gender impact.

2. Invest in equal access to skills; set clear, measurable goals for women's participation in AI-related training, mobility, and new role development.

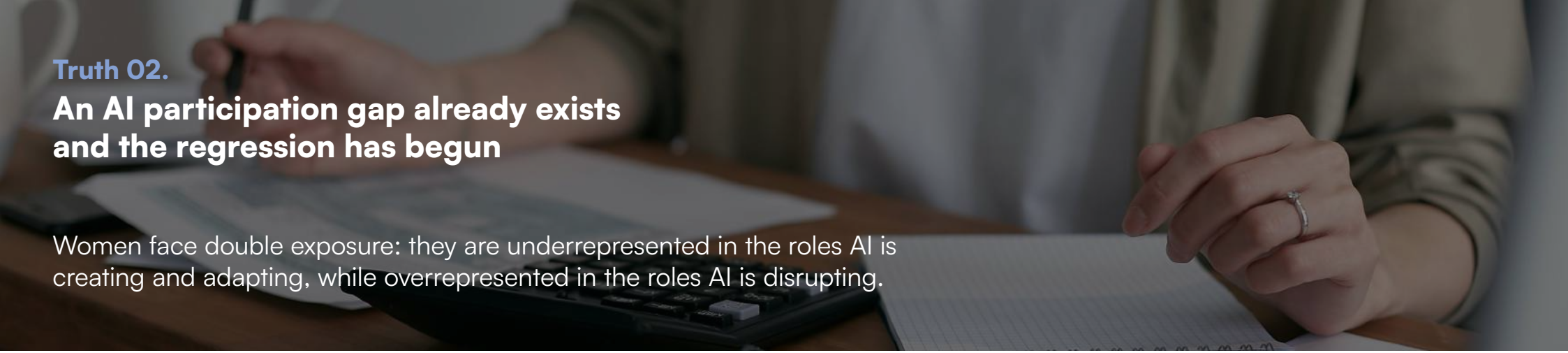
3. Make inclusion a core part of the business case. Monitor progress using the same discipline applied to financial and technology metrics, so transformation drives performance and equity in tandem.

The Nine Truths

# AN AI PARTICIPATION GAP ALREADY EXISTS AND THE REGRESSION HAS BEGUN

Truth

# 02.



## Truth 02.

# An AI participation gap already exists and the regression has begun

Women face double exposure: they are underrepresented in the roles AI is creating and adapting, while overrepresented in the roles AI is disrupting.

**AI adoption is accelerating across every industry, yet women are not equally advantaged.**

Men dominate functions where AI is built and scaled while women remain concentrated in operational areas most exposed to displacement and significant change (LinkedIn, 2024).

The result is a **widening participation gap**, a double exposure that often leaves women left out of the roles where AI is advancing careers and stuck in jobs more at risk of replacement.

Truth 02.

# An AI participation gap already exists and the regression has begun

## The regression is most visible in leadership.

With less women coming through the STEM workforce, few transition into technology leadership roles. In 2024, women held **24.4%** of managerial positions globally and a mere **12.2%** of C-suite positions in STEM-related areas such as technology and digital transformation (WEF, 2025b).

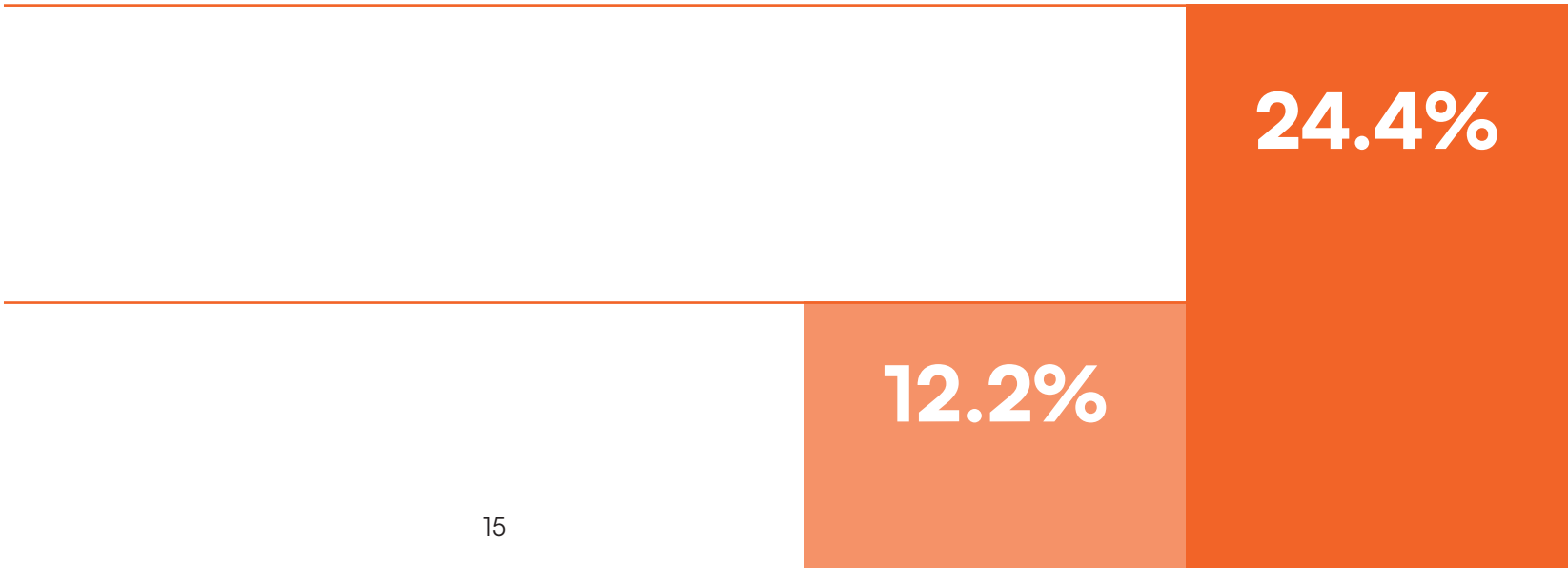
Of concern, the data also shows stagnation or decline in the percentage of women making it through to leadership including in many APAC countries (LinkedIn, 2025a).

Previous research highlights that this gap of women in leadership often begins at the earliest stages of career, with fewer women moving from individual contributor roles into managerial positions, a phenomenon often referred to as the "broken rung" in the career ladder (McKinsey, 2019).

This historical barrier is now colliding with the transformation of the workplace by AI, which presents a new and troubling pattern: women are less likely than men to move to the high potential positions that are enhanced by AI (LinkedIn, 2025a).

**In 2024, women held 24.4% of managerial positions globally in STEM-related areas such as technology and digital transformation.**

**At the C-suite level, representation drops to 12.2%**



Truth 02.

## An AI participation gap already exists and the regression has begun

**AI-augmented occupations provide pathways for career success as they leverage skills complemented by AI, are less likely to be disrupted, and offer significant professional advantages.**

Women are losing ground accessing AI augmented roles, which are concentrated in industries where wages grow **2x faster** compared to less AI exposed industries (PwC, 2025a).

Alarmingly, the trend concerning engagement with high opportunity AI-powered roles is heading in the wrong direction for women.

Women are slower to enter AI - augmented roles, which are concentrated in industries where wages grow

**2X faster**

> ***Our technology teams lead on AI; HR and inclusion come in later to address representation. By then, the train has left the station.***
>
> — **Technology Executive**, Australia

Truth 02.

# An AI participation gap already exists and the regression has begun

## Implications

Women's share of emerging AI roles is shrinking just as these positions become gateways to future leadership. If we don't act, this gap hardens into inequality with men designing the AI future and women sidelined in vulnerable roles with no way up. Ultimately, systemic barriers, not a lack of ambition or capability, hinder women's advancement.

Organisations must now treat gender representation in AI as a strategic performance issue. Tracking who participates in AI projects and reskilling programmes, while developing leadership pathways for women and offering flexibility is essential. When representation and sponsorship are built from the start, AI transformation becomes both fairer and stronger.

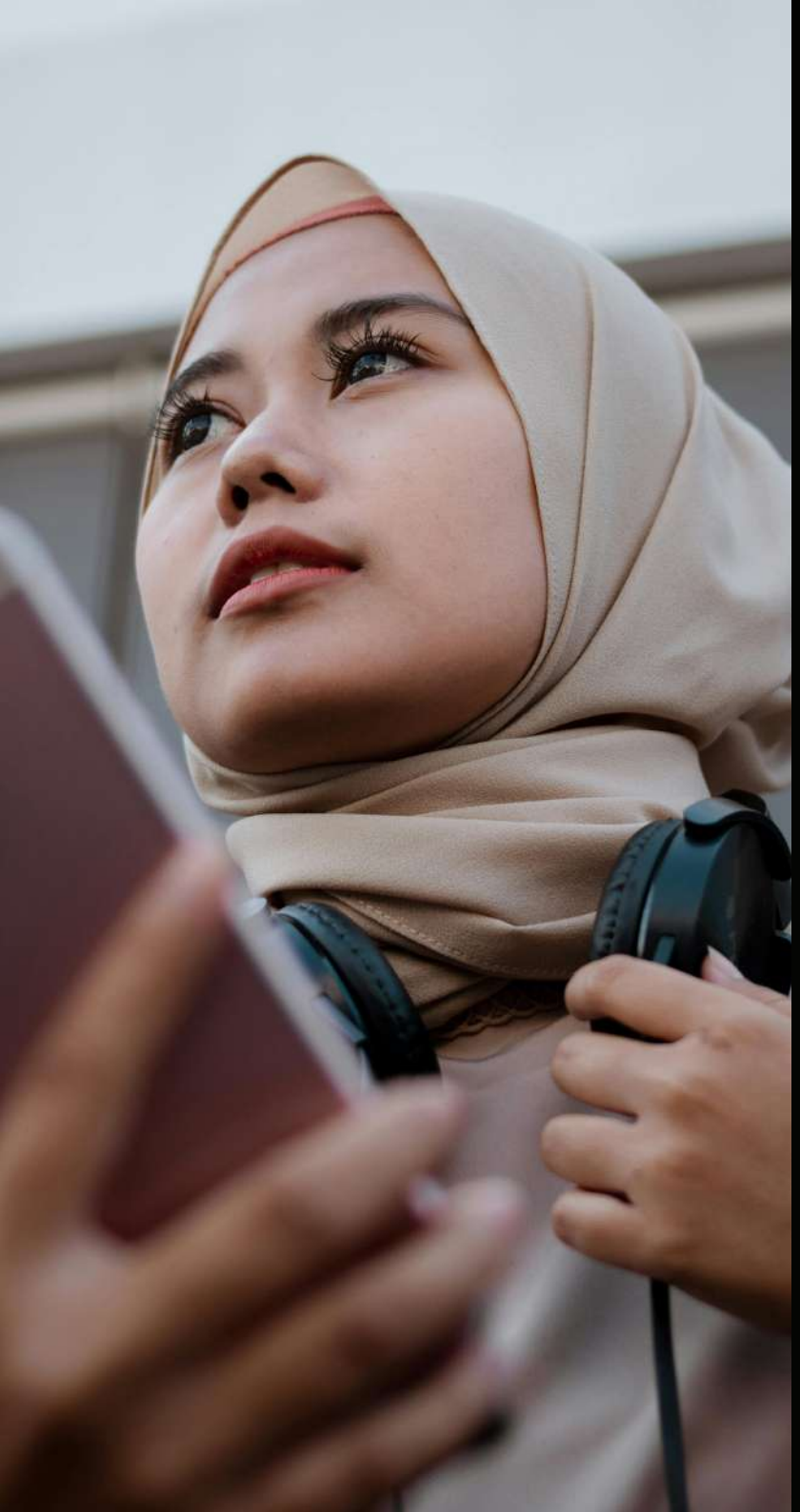
## Leader Takeaway

1. Set clear gender-balanced targets for AI hiring, leadership programs and governance roles and review them regularly at executive level.

2. Check who's in the room. Review your AI projects, strategy and governance groups to ensure women are a visible part of the decision-making process.

3. Create sponsorship and pathways that connect women to AI-focused opportunities, mentors and senior sponsors.

4. Track progress the same way you track financial and technology performance because who participates in AI will determine who benefits from it.

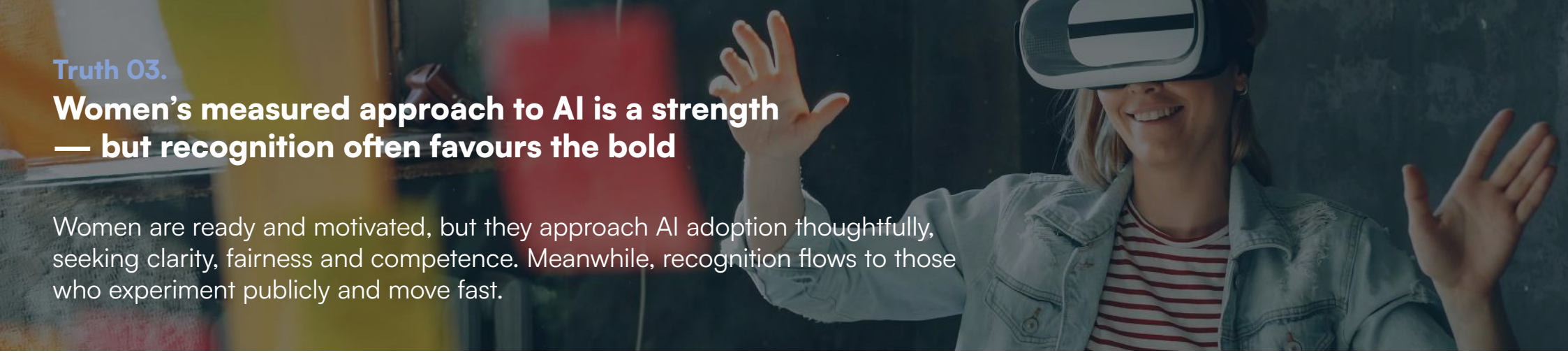


The Nine Truths

# WOMEN'S MEASURED APPROACH TO AI IS A STRENGTH — BUT RECOGNITION OFTEN FAVOURS THE BOLD

Truth

# 03.



Truth 03.

# Women's measured approach to AI is a strength — but recognition often favours the bold

Women are ready and motivated, but they approach AI adoption thoughtfully, seeking clarity, fairness and competence. Meanwhile, recognition flows to those who experiment publicly and move fast.

AI adoption is accelerating across every industry, but participation is skewed. Men report higher adoption, while women appear to move more cautiously. At first glance this looks like women are falling behind.

**Many are simply approaching AI differently, with deliberate learning, a focus on accuracy and attention to business outcomes rather than experimentation.**

This reflects thoughtful adoption, not hesitation.

**59%**

**of women report waiting for clear AI policies from their employers before adopting AI tools**

(Coursera, 2025)

Truth 03.

## Women's measured approach to AI is a strength — but recognition often favours the bold

In our interviews with HR and technology leaders, they described how women often engage with AI once confident in its accuracy, oversight and relevance. This measured, evidence-based style usually reflects high self-efficacy; confidence built through preparation and mastery rather than assumption (OECD, 2024; Coursera, 2025).

Regional research shows that even when women demonstrate technical competence, they tend to emphasise their soft skills (UN Women & LinkedIn, 2025). Our interviews revealed that this comes down to culture not capability, driven by assumptions that women lean into people-focused skills like communication and collaboration.

While a measured approach often leads to stronger implementation of AI and fewer compliance issues, it can be undervalued when workplace dynamics see innovation primarily as speed. Our interviews framed this as visibility bias. Leaders told us that many organisations celebrate visible AI wins and quick deployment, crediting early adopters sometimes at the expense of proven, sustained impact.

**37%**

**of APAC companies have yet to implement dedicated monitoring for responsible AI risks, making it difficult to detect bias, security vulnerabilities and unintended consequences.** (Accenture, 2025)

> ***The people who get noticed are those who experiment first, not those who are the most accurate.***
>
> — **Technology Executive**, Malaysia

Truth 03.

# Women's measured approach to AI is a strength — but recognition often favours the bold

## Implications

Organisations that prioritise fast, visible AI implementation undervalue the behaviours that ensure responsible, high-impact AI use. Women with adoption styles built on diligence and accuracy often go unrecognised. This reinforces the visibility gap and stalls career advancement.

**For gender inclusive digital transformation, organisations need to redefine what innovation leadership looks like.**

Performance indicators must value accuracy and collaboration, and track commercial outcomes.

## Leader Takeaway

1. Broaden recognition. Reward those who deliver positive measurable outcomes from AI, not just those who adopt first.

2. Redesign performance metrics. Include quality, accuracy and ethical use as part of innovation and leadership assessments.

3. Foster safe, structured learning spaces. Build peer-based communities and hackathons where women can test ideas, learn and gain visibility.

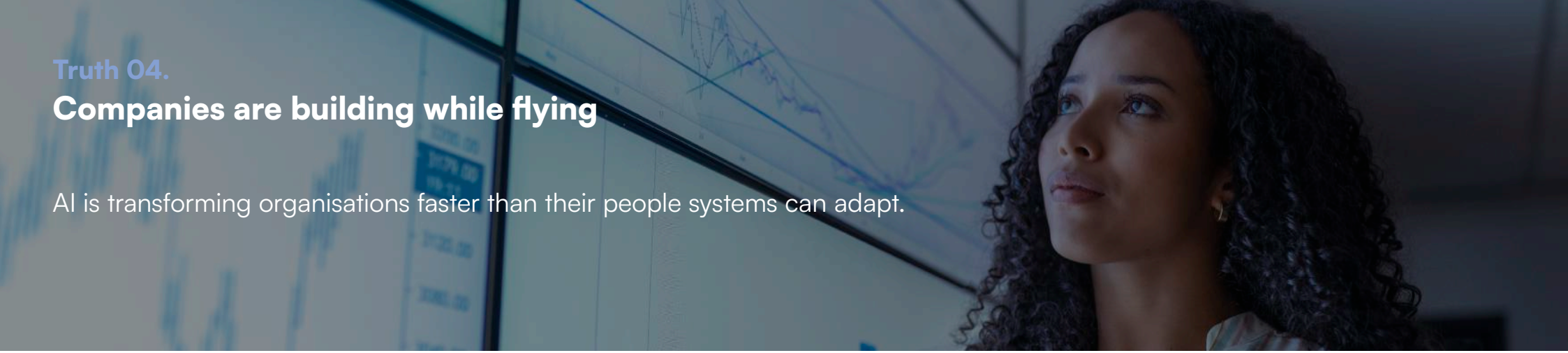
4. Highlight sustainable innovation. Create sponsorship and mentorship channels that showcase women translating AI capability into business value.

The Nine Truths

# COMPANIES ARE BUILDING WHILE FLYING

Truth

# 04.



Truth 04.

# Companies are building while flying

AI is transforming organisations faster than their people systems can adapt.

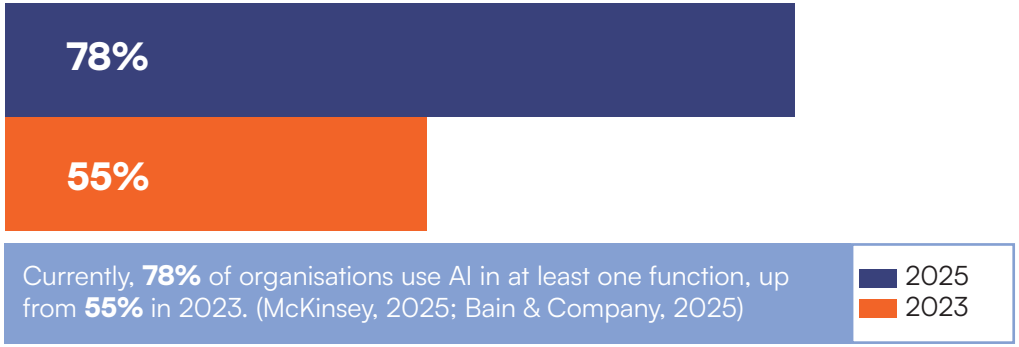
**Companies in APAC are racing to integrate AI into their operations at breakneck speed.**

**85%**

of C-Suite leaders planned to increase AI investment in 2025, betting on productivity gains and competitiveness. (Accenture, 2025a).

Yet the rapid adoption of AI often sees organisations neglect the necessary operational and human capital preparation (Accenture, 2025b). Gender equity considerations are rarely part of the plan.

**More organisations are using AI**



## Truth 04.

# Companies are building while flying

Leaders under pressure to move fast, automate and deliver measurable outcomes drive investment in technology and AI pilots before consideration of workforce impact.

**How roles evolve, which jobs are redesigned, and what new skills are required are often addressed late in the design cycle, rather than being built in from the start.**

Neglecting workforce readiness is a strategic oversight which disproportionately impacts women.

When AI's efficiency gains outpace governance, HR is left to retrofit workforce design systems and reskilling once technology is already embedded (Accenture, 2025). Several leaders described post-launch "course correction" to address unintended gender imbalances as a costly fix compared to building workforce planning and equity frameworks from the start.

Truth 04.

## Companies are building while flying

When technology and HR operate in silos, workforce design suffers and AI adoption stumbles. A recent BCG survey found that **48%** of APAC companies reported that IT primarily controls AI adoption (Boston Consulting Group [BCG], 2025).

**The risk? Technology teams fund and drive AI projects while HR scrambles separately to address workforce impacts like inclusion, reskilling and job transitions.**

> ***AI is moving faster than our talent processes. Success now depends on whether leaders can align skills, ethics, and systems at the same speed.***
>
> — **CHRO**, Australia

**Only**

# 13%

of HR teams are leading key AI-related decisions (Bain and Company, 2025).

Truth 04.

# Companies are building while flying

## Implications

AI transformation can deliver attractive productivity gains but when workforce planning lags, the benefits are uneven. When job redesign, upskilling, and inclusion planning are bolted on after the fact, **HR leaders are left to re-engineer workforce systems**, reclassify tasks, revise performance frameworks and design reskilling initiatives to close emerging gaps. This can hold back the adoption of AI, **increase costs and heighten the risk of inequity in the workforce.**

Beyond equity concerns, the absence of **upfront workforce planning** erodes trust. Employees facing unclear communication or job redesign report lower morale and higher resistance to change (Accenture, 2024). Employees want to be able to trust that AI will protect and support their careers, not harm them. Giving HR a lead role in AI implementation ensures the organisation focus on managing change with people at the centre of the equation.

Companies that plan workforce transitions openly and include their people in the process tend to see higher engagement and a quicker return to productivity (WEF, 2025a).

## Leader Takeaway

1. Bring HR, technology, and business leaders together from the start.

2. Embed workforce impact planning into every phase of AI development and implementation

3. Design roles, skills, and communication plans early, and make workforce impact a standing item in every AI governance forum.

4. Track people outcomes — reskilling reach, redeployment rates and employee sentiment.

The Nine Truths

# EXTERNAL HIRING IS OUTPACING INTERNAL GROWTH

Truth

05.

Truth 05.

# External hiring is outpacing internal growth

Organisations are paying premiums to buy scarce AI talent instead of developing their own.

Demand for AI-capable talent continues to outstrip supply. Organisations across APAC are offering steep premiums to secure candidates with established AI skills.

Research shows that employees **with AI expertise now earn wage premiums over 50%** (PwC, 2025a). Job postings requiring AI experience have tripled since 2020 with internal moves into these positions less than 15% (LinkedIn, 2025b). This suggests that most organisations are "buying" rather than "building" capability.

**Employees with AI expertise earn over**

**50%**

wage premiums (PwC, 2025a)


**Companies are still "buying" rather than "building"**

**x3**

Job postings requiring AI experience have risen 3x since 2020 (Harvard Business School, 2025).

**<15%**

yet internal mobility remains below 15% (LinkedIn, 2025).

Truth 05.

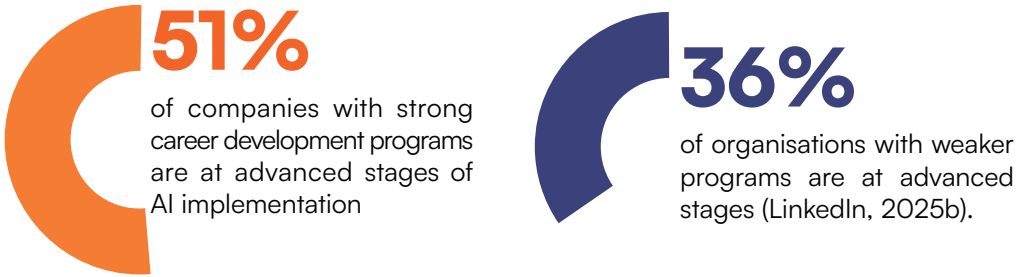
## External hiring is outpacing internal growth

# Hiring externally can fast track AI progress, but it's not the complete solution.

External recruitment is expensive, comes with lengthy onboarding, and leaders often overlook other valuable approaches such as internal redeployment, reskilling existing talent, or partnerships that may be more effective in filling skills gaps (McKinsey, 2025a).

Companies that take the long view on talent development, investing in their existing workforce, reap rewards that go far beyond cost savings. Those with strong career development programs outperform others across key metrics, including profitability, talent attraction, and retention. Additionally, they are better positioned for AI adoption, with **51%** at advanced stages of AI implementation compared to just **36%** of organisations with weaker programs (LinkedIn, 2025b).

**AI implementation maturity correlates with strength of career development program**




> ***We can hire AI capability overnight, but workplace culture, confidence and skills have to be built from within.***
>
> — **CCO**, Singapore

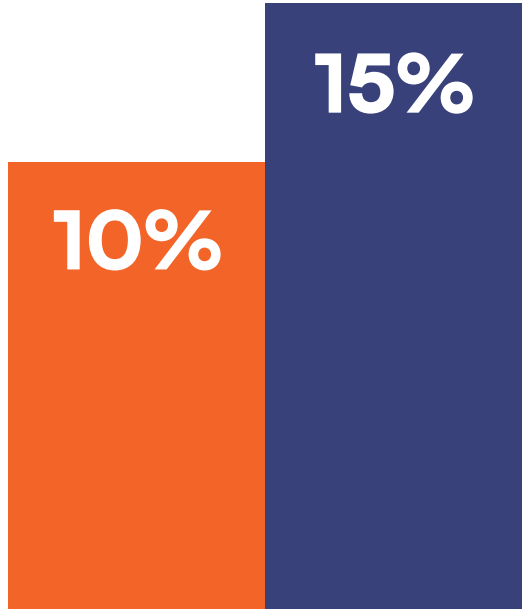
Truth 05.

# External hiring is outpacing internal growth

Despite these positives, internal training and development are often underinvested. Even though **94%** of workers are willing to learn new AI skills, just **5%** of companies globally have launched large-scale reskilling initiatives (Accenture, 2024), forcing most employees to manage the transition alone.

Self-paced learning, as discussed in the next section, disadvantages women who are less likely to have access and bandwidth for training, and more likely to be excluded from AI-adjacent career paths (AVPN, 2025). This highlights the importance of targeted efforts to ensure equitable access to high-quality AI upskilling and training.

Only **15%** of employees indicate that they have had managerial support to develop a career plan in the past six months, compared to **10%** last year (LinkedIn, 2025b)



Truth 05.

# External hiring is outpacing internal growth

## Implications

If external hiring continues to dominate AI capability building, **organisations risk creating two divergent workforces - one 'AI-fluent but bought-in' and the other 'left behind'.**

The urgency of AI transformation is driving many companies to recruit externally because they lack time to develop talent from within. While this may accelerate immediate capability, it deepens inequality. Women are less likely to be in rapid external hiring waves because they are underrepresented in the AI talent pool. The result is a widening opportunity gap at the time when demand for digital talent is accelerating.

Providing inclusive and flexible training options is essential for broadening talent pipelines and mitigating AI's unequal impacts (OECD, 2024a). **An internal-first mindset builds sustainable capability, narrows gender gaps, and strengthens long-term return on talent.**

## Leader Takeaway

1. Prioritise building internal AI capability from within before turning to external markets.

2. Build inclusive talent development and transition pathways for women in disrupted roles to move into AI-related opportunities.

3. Track internal mobility into AI roles by gender and function, and set clear, transparent targets.

4. Align talent acquisition and development goals so external hiring complements rather than replaces internal capability building.

The Nine Truths

# SELF-DRIVEN UPSKILLING MODELS UNDERSERVE WOMEN

Truth

06.

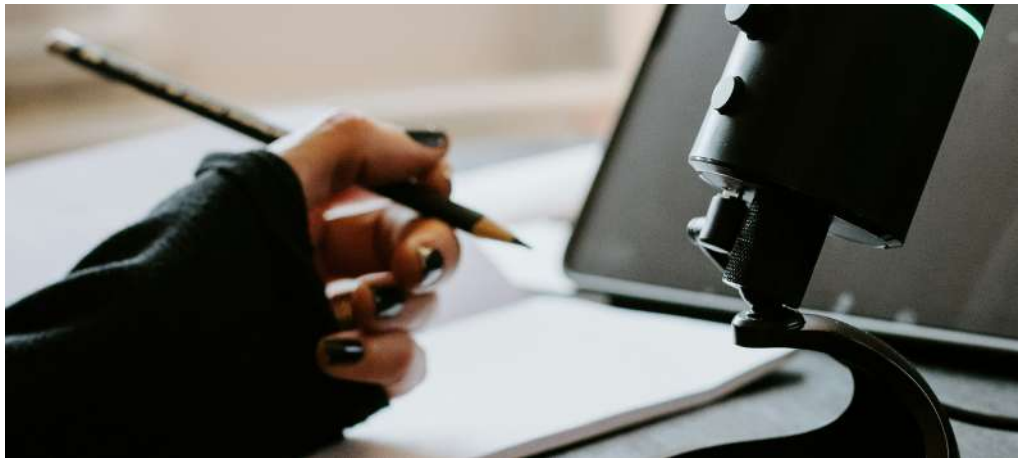
Truth 06.

# Self-driven upskilling models underserve women

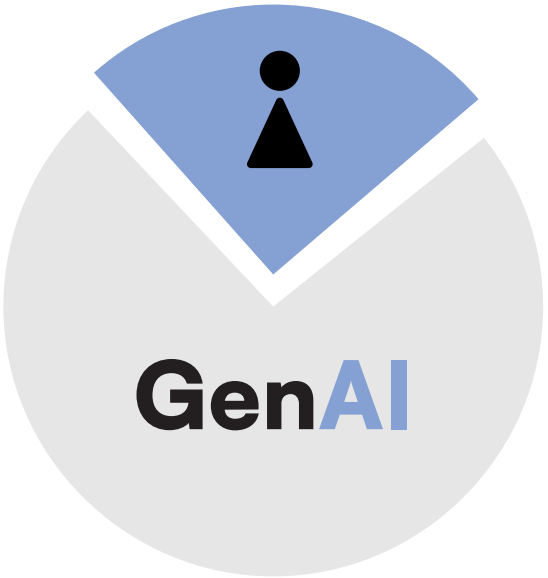
AI learning is often optional and self-directed - a model that leaves many women behind.

The race to build AI capability is well underway. Yet as companies roll out new learning platforms and digital academies, many are discovering an uncomfortable truth: access doesn't always mean equal opportunity (Coursera, 2025).

Most organisations still rely on optional, self-directed online courses to build AI and digital skills. (LinkedIn, 2025b) The assumption is that employees will take ownership of their own upskilling, learning on their own time and at their own pace. But research tells a different story. **Women balancing demanding jobs and caregiving responsibilities, are significantly less able to take advantage of these self-service models** (WEF, 2024). Emerging evidence shows that women engage with work-related AI learning and tools at lower rates than men.



**Women lag in GenAI course enrolment**




**Women represent only about one third of GenAI enrolments on Coursera in 2025 (32%) and are 6x more likely to enrol in beginner than intermediate courses(Coursera, 2025).**

Truth 06.

## Self-driven upskilling models underserve women

This reinforces the need for structured, supported routes into AI skills. When learning is self-serve, participation is shaped by time, sponsorship, and manager support...not motivation. (Coursera, 2025)

**Women adopt AI tools at**

# 25%

lower rates than men (HBS, 2025).

The data shows that women are adopting AI tools at lower rates than men, and if companies do not **redesign learning** with a goal of inclusion, **risk is amplified** (Harvard Business School [HBS], 2025).
Our focus group participants from across the region described optional digital learning platforms as “democratised in name only”, available to everyone but easier for some to access than others. They emphasised that flexibility and structured learning time is essential to balance upskilling with work and caregiving.

Truth 06.

## Self-driven upskilling models underserve women

# Implications

Optional, after-hours AI learning may sound empowering, but it unintentionally impacts women negatively. When organisations treat learning as an individual responsibility rather than a shared one, they reward those with the most time and access and exclude those with the least.

Unstructured, self-driven upskilling models can create missed opportunities to tap existing female talent and build diverse, future-ready AI capability. Structured, supported approaches significantly improve participation, retention and success (Coursera, 2025).

**Successful programs show what works: combining mentoring, skills development and certification, internships and hackathons to help women enter and progress in AI-related fields.** They prove that when learning is designed for equity with structure, resources, and sustained organisational commitment, female participation and advancement follow.

# Leader Takeaway

1. Make AI learning an intentional, protected part of the workday rather than after hours pursuit.

2. Build structured, cohort-based programmes that include sponsorship and ensure equitable access for women.

3. Fund participation in hackathons, mentorships and applied AI projects.

4. Embed continuous learning and curriculum renewal into organisational practice; training cannot end once a course is completed.

5. Foster a safe environment through learning communities. Track participation, completion and skill progression by gender to ensure equitable readiness.

The Nine Truths

# GEN Z WOMEN FACE THE GREATEST DISRUPTION

Truth

07.

Truth 07.

## Gen Z women face the greatest disruption

The next generation faces a broken career ladder before they even begin the climb.

The youngest generation of women entering the workforce is facing the sharpest structural disruption in decades (IMF, 2024).

AI adoption is **advancing fastest in the places where early careers often start**, in administrative support, customer service, operations and coordination roles.

**Junior roles have already been reduced by**

**39%**

due to AI efficiencies, with more cuts expected (British Standards Institution, 2025)

Truth 07.

# Gen Z women face the greatest disruption

In several Southeast Asian markets, young women are clustered in roles with strong exposure to AI-driven displacement (ILO, 2025). In Australia, the patterns are similar: clerical and administrative work is about **72%** female, making the first roles many young women traditionally enter at risk. The data already indicates a slide. These occupation groups saw weaker entry-level demand over 2018—2024, underscoring the risk that traditional **"first rung"** roles thin out as AI scales (Australian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2025).

## Australia

**Clerical and administrative work, the first roles many young women enter, is about**

**72%**

**female**

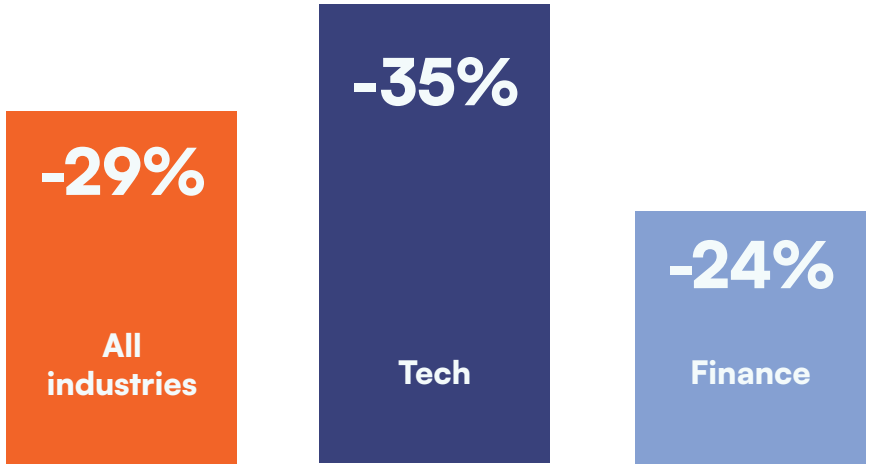
Truth 07.

## Gen Z women face the greatest disruption

As AI automates routine tasks, like preparing reports or analysing simple data sets, many jobs will disappear or transform threatening the traditional "learning runways" and safety net of basic skills development that builds confidence, networks and capability. Without these foundations, **young women risk losing the stepping stones to mid-level and leadership positions** (Harvard Business Review [HBR], 2025).

### Job postings for entry level roles are falling

Since Jan 2024, global job postings for entry level roles (0—2 years of experience) are down **29%**. Entry roles are also falling in high-growth sectors since 2024. For example, junior tech roles are down **35%**, while finance roles are down **24%** (Randstad, 2025).




One HR director observed:

> ***Automation is removing the early career runway where women typically learn, connect, and get noticed. Without redesign, we'll see a silent skills recession for women before careers even start.***[10]

— **Regional CHRO** based in Australia.

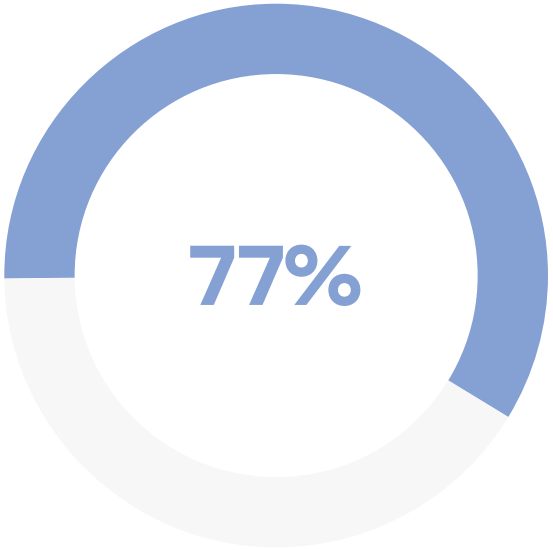
Truth 07.

# Gen Z women face the greatest disruption

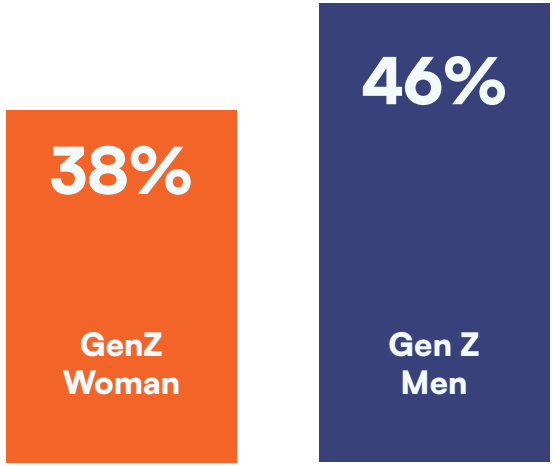
Roles that use AI to enhance work in data, analytics, and digital functions are growing fast. Yet, **women only make up about one third of those entering these new positions**, showing a persistent gap right where the growth is happening (LinkedIn, 2024).

Leaders we spoke with expressed concern about disappearing entry-level positions. Junior roles have already been reduced by **39%** across markets due to AI efficiencies, with more cuts expected (British Standards Institution, 2025). This disproportionately affects young women who rely on these entry-level roles to build experience and launch their careers.

**77% of Gen Z's agree that AI sets higher expectations for early-level roles despite the lack of on-the-job training**
(Deloitte, 2024)




Gen Z women are less likely to have received AI training than their male counterparts (Gen Z women: **38%** vs. Gen Z men: **46%**) (Randstad, 2025).



Truth 07.

# Gen Z women face the greatest disruption

## Implications

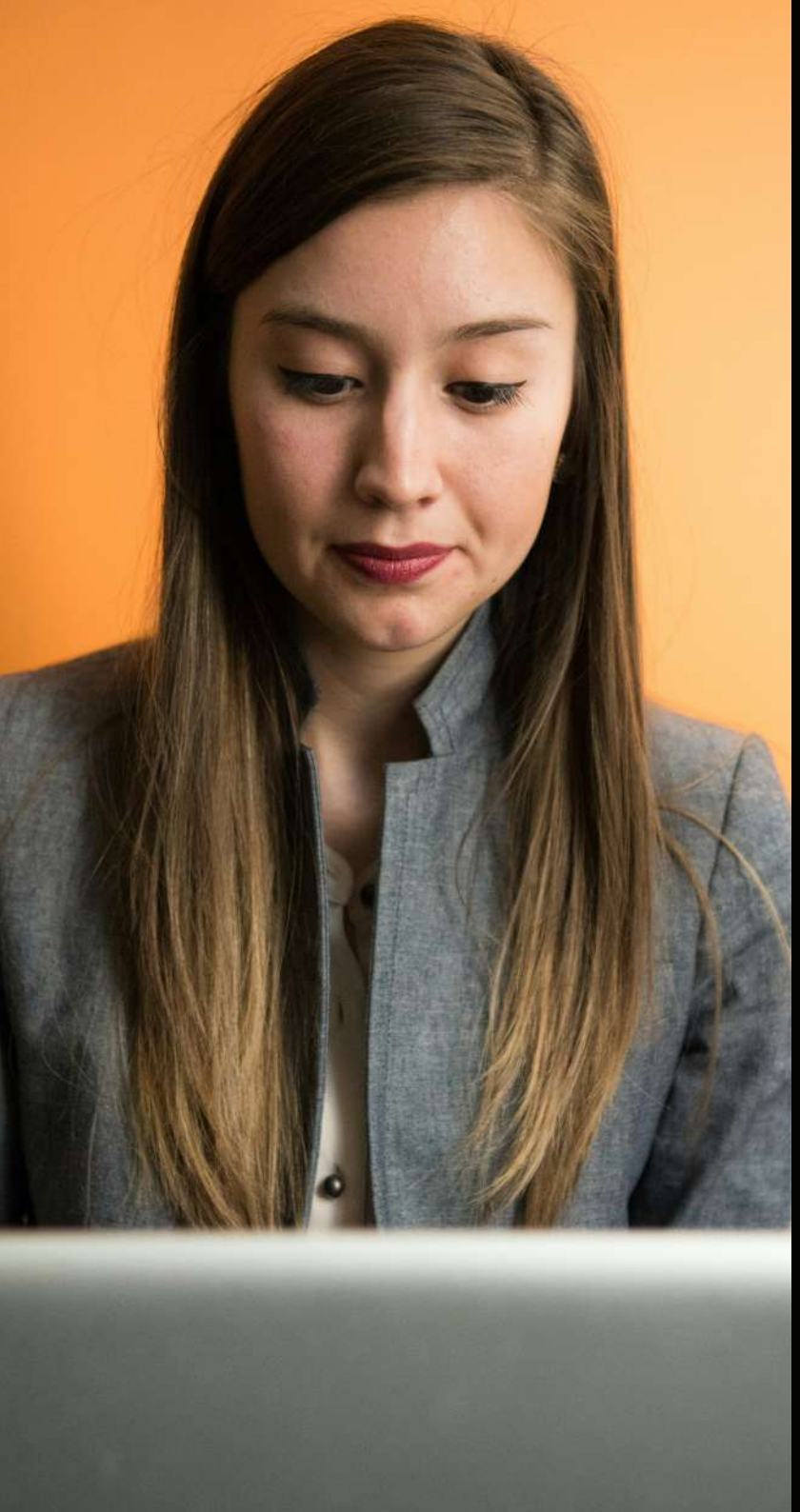
The disappearance of entry-level roles **threatens early career progression and risks hollowing out the female talent pipeline**. Fewer women at the start means fewer in leadership later. This loss is both strategic and social; **diverse early career cohorts drive stronger innovation and long-term workforce resilience**. (HBR, 2025)

This trend will fundamentally reshape entry-level jobs. Gen Z workers will enter with greater responsibilities and expected tech fluency, rather than learning on the job as previous generations did (EY, 2024) Companies must design new pathways that embed digital, analytical, and AI exposure from the start and connect female hires to sponsorship networks.

These signals point to a structural break in the talent pipeline that, if unaddressed, risks long-term consequences for women's advancement.

## Leader Takeaway

1. Redesign entry-level roles to integrate digital and analytical exposure, ensuring women build AI fluency early.
2. Establish structured sponsorship and mentorship frameworks for new female employees.
3. Protect and evolve early career programmes, cohort-based onboarding, rotational assignments and apprenticeship-style placements within AI projects to sustain a continuous, inclusive talent pipeline.
4. Embed AI literacy and rotation models into graduate programmes to future-proof talent pipelines.
5. Foster entry level learning communities, skills and belonging in AI fields.

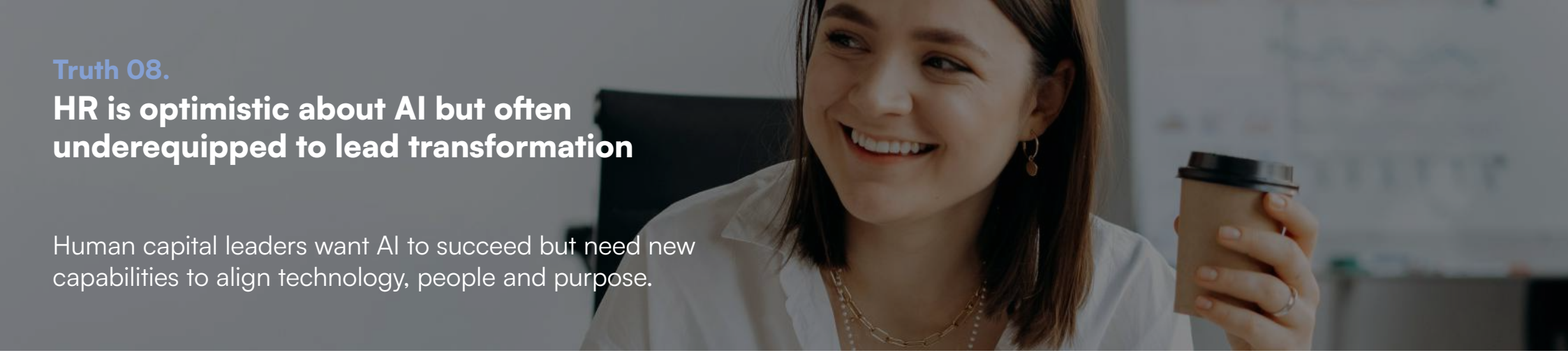


The Nine Truths

# HR IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT AI BUT OFTEN UNDER-EQUIPPED TO LEAD TRANSFORMATION

**Truth**

# 08.



Truth 08.

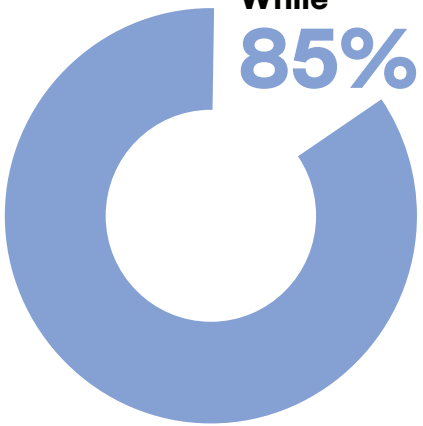
# HR is optimistic about AI but often underequipped to lead transformation

Human capital leaders want AI to succeed but need new capabilities to align technology, people and purpose.

HR leaders across the region believe in AI's potential, yet few feel fully ready to guide how it reshapes work. Recent reports find that while **85%** of HR executives think AI will improve productivity and employee experience, only **29%** say they have sufficient technical depth to help design and implement AI systems (People Matters, 2025). This emerged as a theme in our interviews with leaders; **most HR teams are uncertain about forecasting which tasks will be automated, replaced or supported by AI and what new skills will be required.**

While ready to adapt to the changing business environment, many HR leaders feel unprepared to integrate AI into talent processes, citing their lack of resources and technical capability as key challenges. Gender equity and inclusion are largely missing from HR leaders' AI workforce planning, a critical gap in ensuring women aren't left behind.

## HR EXECUTIVE'PERCEPTION VS READINESS ON AI



**While**

**85%**

of HR executives think AI will improve productivity and employee experience

**Only**

**29%**

say they have sufficient technical depth to help design and implement AI systems (People Matters, 2025)

Truth 08.

# HR is optimistic about AI but often underequipped to lead transformation

HR leaders we spoke to are optimistic but under-resourced when it comes to AI implementation. While **50%** of CEO's see the integration of AI into business processes and workflows as their biggest priority over the next three years (PwC, 2025a), our interviews indicated that HR often lacks the tools, data visibility and cross-functional governance to shape that transformation.

In a recent HBR survey, **52%** of HR respondents cited insufficient AI expertise within their function as the top challenge preventing HR from playing a role in AI strategy. Only **8%** of HR employees feel fully equipped with the necessary digital skills (HBR, 2025a).

**The Ambition-Execution gap:**

**86%** of HR teams feel generally change-ready


but only

**29%**

are AI-ready
(People Matters, 2025)

Truth 08.

## HR is optimistic about AI but often underequipped to lead transformation

The AI readiness gap, along with HR's frequent positioning as a support function, means many HR teams are not included in transformation cycles until after AI use cases are already underway (People Matters, 2025; BCG 2024). This forces workforce redesign and reskilling to become retrofit activities addressed only after systems are live, and gender equity gets left behind in the process.

> ***We're expected to manage AI's people impact, but we're rarely part of the design conversation,one HR director explained.***
>
> — **HR Director,** Indonesia

**HR involvement in strategic AI decisions**

**49% is hardly involved, if at all.** (HBR, 2025a)

49%

21%

**Only 21% of HR leaders are closely involved in decisions about their organisation's AI strategy.**

Truth 08.

## HR is optimistic about AI but often underequipped to lead transformation

# Implications

**AI success depends as much on people leadership as on technology execution.** Yet HR's ability to act as a strategic co-lead is limited as the function builds the analytical and technological fluency required for this new mandate. Without the capability to interpret automation and skill shifts, HR risks underestimating workforce and gender equity impact or missing opportunities to embed reskilling and inclusion into AI business cases.

The evidence is clear. Few organisations have **formal frameworks linking HR, technology and business leadership.**

The result? Fragmented decision making, where technology drives deployment, and workforce strategy lags, leaving ethical, gender and cultural implications unaddressed.

As AI transforms the workplace, HR must expand its focus to ensure innovation benefits everyone. HR now goes beyond managing change. It must partner with the business to build tomorrow's workforce. **This partnership can deliberately embed gender equity and inclusion into AI transformation strategies, ensuring the future of work is equitable by design**.

# Leader Takeaway

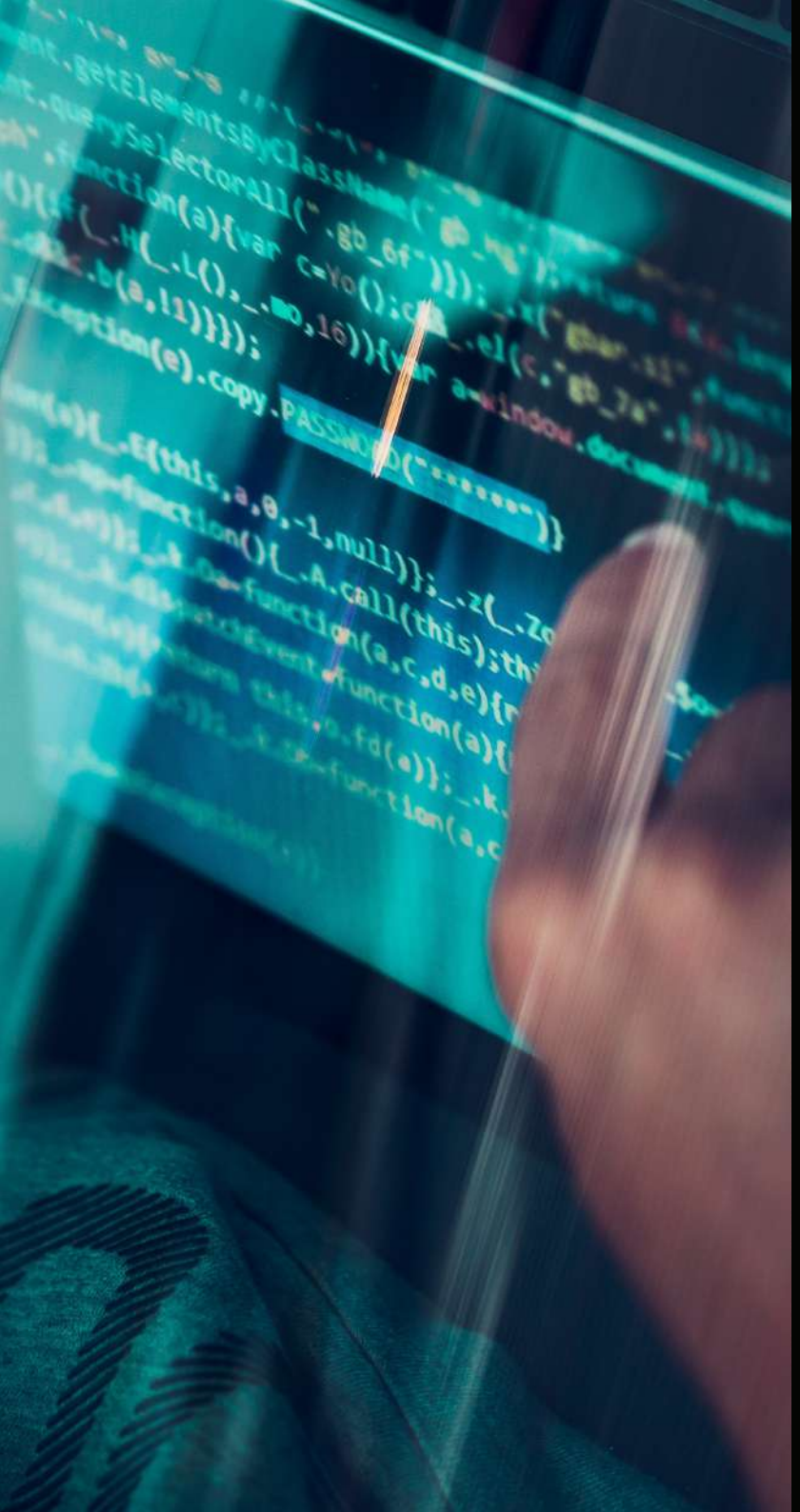
1. Bring HR into AI strategy from planning through deployment.

2. Build the next generation of HR capability: AI and data literacy, skills mapping, role redesign, talent capability and adaptability assessment, organisational design and career pathway design.

3. Establish shared governance frameworks linking HR, IT and business to manage workforce transitions and ethics.

4. Foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning within the HR function, so capability evolves as fast as the technology.

5. Track workforce outcomes including internal mobility, reskilling rates, representation in AI-related roles, and employee engagement.

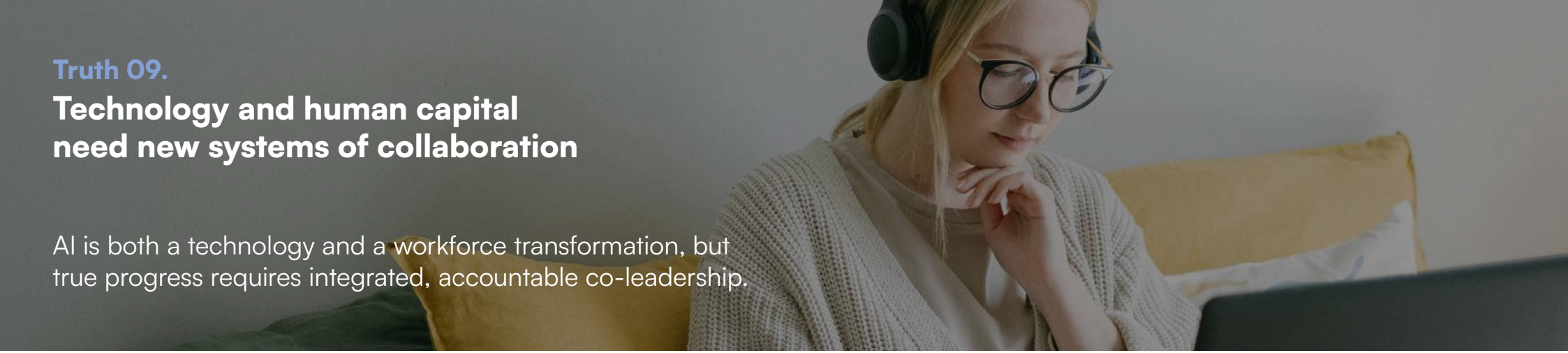


The Nine Truths

# TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN CAPITAL NEED NEW SYSTEMS OF COLLABORATION

Truth

# 09.



Truth 09.

# Technology and human capital need new systems of collaboration

AI is both a technology and a workforce transformation, but true progress requires integrated, accountable co-leadership.

Companies have moved fast to embed AI into products, processes, and customer interfaces but their people systems have not kept pace. Most still treat AI as a technology initiative rather than a joint enterprise transformation involving **workforce design, capability, and culture**. The result is uneven scaling, not from technical limits, but because of **misalignment between technology and human capital functions**.

**51%**

**of organisations identify leadership and strategic misalignment as the primary barrier preventing them from realising value from AI at scale** (Deloitte, 2025).

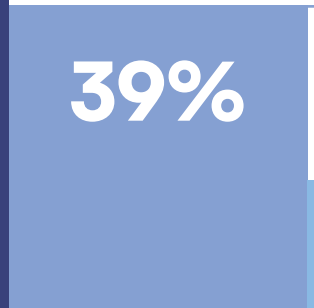
Truth 09.

## Technology and human capital need new systems of collaboration

When HR is fully engaged, AI adoption accelerates. And when it's sidelined, progress stalls. Yet most companies describe their AI progress as **"slow" or "not yet begun" when it comes to workforce and HR transformation** (Bain & Company, 2025).

Across Asia Pacific, this readiness gap threatens to undermine AI investments. Less than **1%** of companies have successfully implemented responsible AI efforts with the systematic, forward-looking approach needed to unlock AI's transformative potential (Accenture, 2025). When technology and people functions work in silos, workforce transformation disproportionately affects women in vulnerable roles without equal access to reskilling. Without intentional cross-functional alignment, companies risk embedding gender inequity at unprecedented scale while failing to capture AI's promised value


**97 % of organisations are piloting or deploying AI** (Bain & Company, 2025)




**IT is leading the redesign of workflows in 39% of organisations** (Deloitte, 2025)


**Only 12% report that HR is leading AI initiatives** (Deloitte, 2025)

Truth 09.

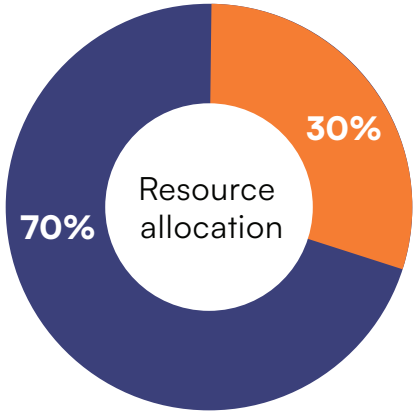
## Technology and human capital need new systems of collaboration

A structural **integration model** is beginning to emerge. In 2024, **Moderna merged its HR and IT departments under a unified Chief People and Digital Technology Officer** to align talent and technology strategy "and unlock the full potential of people, process, and technology" (Wall Street Journal, 2025).

> ***We built the AI strategy in the IT department, but we're now rebuilding the culture through HR. It should have been one conversation from the start.***
>
> **— Regional CIO**

When AI and people strategies evolve separately, implementation falters. True progress requires integrated governance and **shared accountability between technology and human capital leaders**, from design and workforce mapping through to deployment and change management.

**People & processes VS Tech & data**




When leading companies allocate **70%** resources to people and processes, and **30%** to technology and data, they achieve **50% higher revenue growth and 60% greater shareholder returns** (BCG, 2024).

Truth 09.

## Technology and human capital need new systems of collaboration

# Implications

To realise the full value of AI and achieve equitable and inclusive outcomes, **companies must re-engineer how they operate**. For successful integration of AI at enterprise scale, there needs to be **fusion between HR, technology, and business strategy**, not merely collaboration (Accenture, 2025b).

When **technology and people strategy are unified** as part of organisational structure, teams can align digital capability, work design, and inclusion from the outset. This ensures that human capital planning and AI transformation advance together which gives women earlier access to AI-related roles, clearer progression pathways, and a voice in shaping governance.

**Diverse teams design better AI: they identify and eliminate bias, optimise products for broader customer bases, and unlock market opportunities others miss. Value creation follows.**

**Companies embedding gender equity into AI leadership outperform** on productivity, competitiveness, and resilience. They're significantly more likely to implement responsible AI governance that protects value and generates new revenue streams (Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre & Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2025).

**In the AI era, gender equity is a competitive advantage.**

# Leader Takeaway

1. Create executive functions with shared accountability for technology delivery and workforce outcomes, e.g., Chief People & Digital Technology Officer, Chief Transformation Officer, or Chief Work Design Officer.

2. Involve women leaders and technical contributors in governance from the start, ensuring inclusion is built in rather than added later.

3. Embed gender impact reviews into AI workflow and work design processes so women are represented on work architecture teams that define roles, data flows, and capability frameworks.

4. Build reskilling bridges that connect technical fluency with strategic leadership, enabling women to transition into roles across AI-enabled and human-centred work systems.

5. Track and publish gender specific mobility and leadership metrics in AI and digitally enabled functions to maintain visibility and accountability.

# NINEby9 Action framework

Each of the nine truths reveal a challenge in how AI is reshaping who gets seen, skilled, and advances at work. This framework translates those insights into daily practice helping organisations, managers, and individuals respond with tangible shifts in how AI is adopted and led.

Grounded in Asia Pacific realities and informed by NINEby9's research and interviews with regional business, HR and technology leaders, the framework focuses on achievable shifts that embed equity into everyday AI transformation and can be advanced through clear, visible actions. Together, these nine actions form a roadmap for progress that is visible and human-centered.

# NINEby9 action framework

This framework is not just designed for leaders and it doesn't call for massive systemic redesign.
It focuses on embedding inclusion and learning into existing systems. Progress can be tracked through tangible indicators such as the proportion of women in AI-enabled roles, participation in learning initiatives, and sponsorship involvement ensuring inclusion advances alongside
capability.

**Act where you can. Make visible what you do. Bring women forward in the process.**

**"Inclusion doesn't require perfection — it starts with practical choices made every day."**

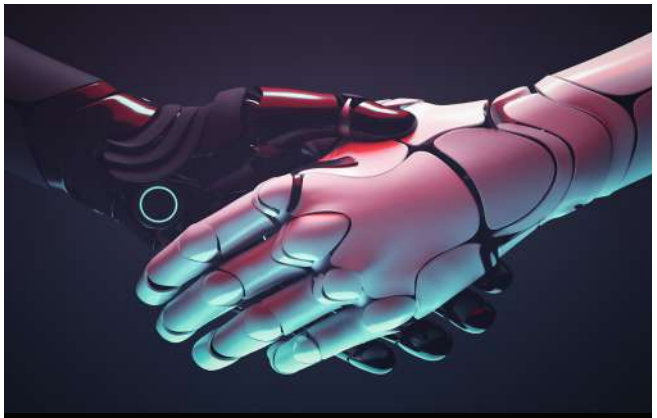
— CHRO, Financial Services, Malaysia

| **Organisation**<br>**Build inclusion into systems and culture** | **Manager**<br>**Lead through a network of role models, sponsors and mentors** | **Individual**<br>**Embrace learning & experimentation. Build community** |
|---|---|---|
| **Build an AI learning culture**<br>Connect continuous learning to the company's AI vision. Make training and upskilling accessible to women through flexible practices. Demonstrate investment in and recognition of inclusive innovation | **Enable access to learning**<br>Make AI learning part of daily work, not an after-hours task. Protect learning time. Connect new skills to real outcomes. | **Pursue learning**<br>Embrace AI growth. Explore new tools, complete courses, and apply new skills in real projects. Share progress to make learning visible and valuable to others |
| **Balance hiring**<br>Adopt an internal-first mindset. Use workforce data with a gender lens to identify at-risk roles, reskill existing talent, and prioritize internal mobility | **Recognise desired behaviours**<br>Redefine success to reward fairness, collaboration and ethical AI use. Embed inclusive outcomes into performance, recognition and leadership outcomes | **Experiment visibly**<br>Start small, test openly, and share both successes and failures. Visible experimentation builds confidence in AI |
| **Align HR and tech**<br>Position HR and technology as co-leads in AI transformation. Build shared understanding of workforce data, AI ethics, and governance. Communicate progress to strengthen trust and accountability | **Sponsor equitably**<br>Entrench sponsorship of women into leadership practice. Support early-career women on AI projects to build visibility and confidence. Share the outcomes to inspire others | **Build Community**<br>Join or create networks that champion AI learning and inclusion. Exchange knowledge with peers and bring learning back to work. |

# What success **looks like**

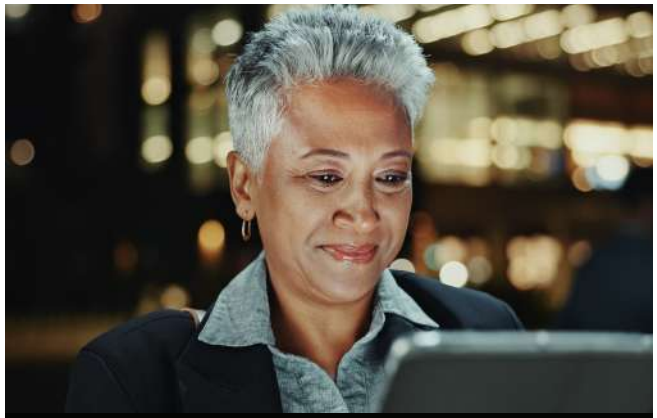
Success means that inclusion becomes embedded at every level;
visible in systems, modelled in leadership and lived through everyday learning.

## ORGANISATION



AI learning and inclusion are visible, accountable elements of every business case.

## MANAGER



Role modelling, sponsorship and mentorship are integral to how teams execute and grow.

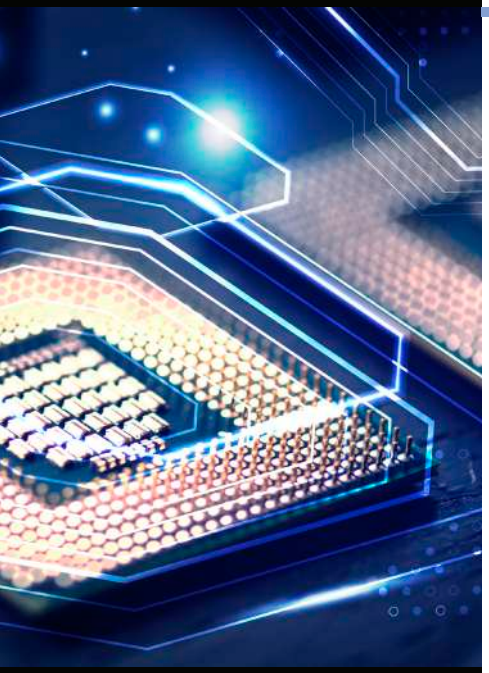
## INDIVIDUAL

Curiosity, experimentation and shared learning shape confident, inclusive AI careers.

## Organisation

# Build inclusion into systems and culture

A strong inclusion culture doesn't happen through policy alone. It grows when leadership makes learning, experimentation and equity part of how work gets done every day.



# 1 Build an AI learning culture

Support continuous development. Integrate learning goals into talent planning so learning isn't an afterthought but an expectation.

Design flexible structures. Protect workplace learning access during office hours. Ensure learning is equitable across roles, levels, and life stages.

Celebrate collective growth. Highlight cross-functional hackathons and peer-learning achievements to make inclusive innovation visible.

**"We discovered that confidence was the first capability gap to close. Once women saw themselves as AI builders, everything else followed."**

— HR Leader, Singapore (2025)

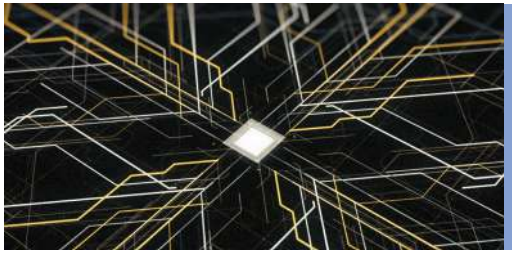
**“Instead of paying a premium for skills we don’t have, we’re investing in the women already here.”**

— HR Leader, Malaysia (2025)

# 2 Balance hiring

**Prioritize internal transitions over external hires for AI roles to strengthen culture and continuity. Apply a gender lens to promotions to ensure balanced advancement.**

**Use workforce data. Identify roles at risk of automation and retrain employees early to minimise displacement.**



**Embed inclusion in redeployment. Ensure redeployment pathways actively include women.**

**Show success visibly. Highlight women and teams who have transitioned into AI roles to reinforce what’s possible.**

# 3 Align HR and Tech

Position HR to co-lead with tech. Empower HR to co-own AI governance alongside technology and ensure ethical deployment.

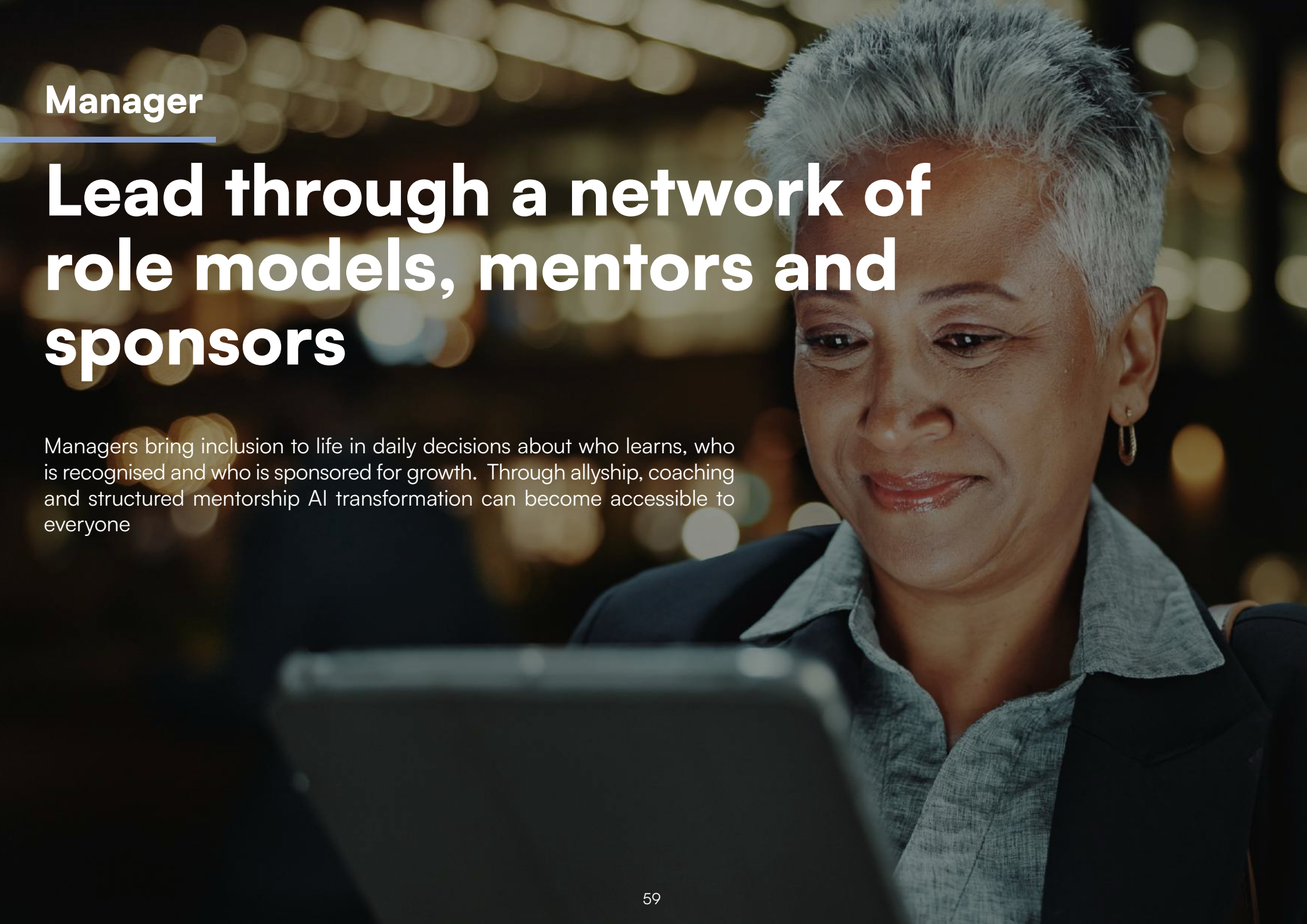
Build HR's data fluency. Equip HR with people analytics and ethical AI understanding  to track workforce impact.

Institutionalise joint AI project reviews. Establish HR—tech councils to monitor inclusion and assess workforce impact, job redesign needs and skill building

Make inclusion transparent. Share outcomes to show how equity is embedded in transformation

**"We learned that the same rigour we apply to financial governance must be applied to workforce equity. That's how transformation stays human."**

— HR Leader, Australia (2025)



## Manager

# Lead through a network of role models, mentors and sponsors

Managers bring inclusion to life in daily decisions about who learns, who is recognised and who is sponsored for growth. Through allyship, coaching and structured mentorship AI transformation can become accessible to everyone

Manager

**“Those two hours a week for AI learning changed everything. It gave me permission to invest in myself.”**

— HR Executive, Malaysia (2025)

# 4 Enable access to learning

**Protect learning time. Designate and defend learning hours as part of weekly planning,so everyone especially women can participate during work hours not after**

**Model curiosity. Visibly engage in AI learning to signal that growth is an expectation.**

**Link learning to impact. Coach teams to apply new AI tools to real business problems, reinforcing purpose and confidence.**

**Encourage peer exchange on AI. Create opportunities for team members to share insights and success**

Manager

**“Recognition used to mean who shouted loudest about their pilot. Now it’s about who used AI to make work smarter and fairer.”**

— Tech Executive, Singapore (2025)

# 5 Recognise desired behaviours

**Redefine success. Recognise responsible,ethical and inclusive AI use alongside innovation speed, as core measures of leadership performance**

**Reward collaboration. Give credit to teams that share learnings, document outcomes and make their process transparent.**

**Include gender inclusion in reviews. Build inclusion and mentorship outcomes into performance conversations.**

**Model allyship daily. Amplify female voices and challenge bias in real time — not just in annual training**

Manager

**“Having a sponsor who pushed me into a data project changed everything.”**

— HR Executive, Indonesia (2025)

# 6 Sponsor equitably

**Institutionalise sponsorship. Build sponsorship into leadership goals so advocacy becomes an expectation, not a favour.**

**Prioritise early-career women. Focus on those most exposed to automation to develop new entry level career pathways.**

**Create visible pairings. Publicise sponsor—sponsee relationships to celebrate support and advocacy of women.**

**Share impact stories. Highlight promotions or role transitions enabled through sponsorship to encourage replication.**

## Individual

# Embrace learning and experimenting. Build community

When women take ownership of their learning and put themselves forward for AI projects, mentoring and professional networks, they make their capability visible as the next generation of AI talent

# 7 Pursue learning

Learn proactively. Take ownership of your growth by exploring AI tools, short courses and certifications that expand your skill base.

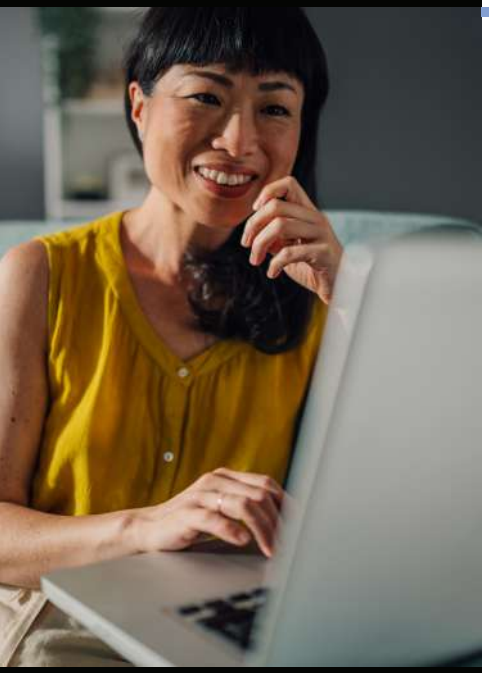
Share your progress. Talk about what you're learning and how it's improving your work. Visibility builds credibility.

Seek partners and mentors. Seek out a mentor and pair up with peers to sustain motivation and accountability.

**"After my first AI course, I stopped waiting for someone to pick me for a project — I started volunteering."**

— Marketing Executive, Indonesia (2025)

Individual



**“I started sharing my AI wins in team meetings — a chatbot prompt, a new workflow. It helped others see AI as something we can all use.”**

— HR Executive, Malaysia (2025)

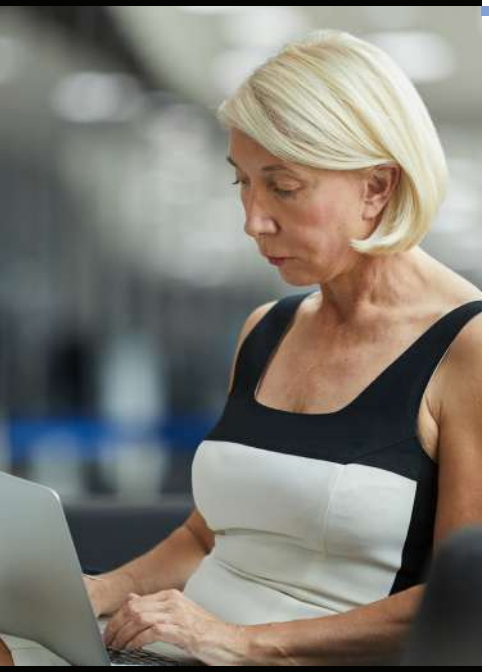
# 8 Experiment visibly

**Start small. Pilot a chatbot, prompt or process improvement to build confidence and relevance.**

**Share experiments openly. Create and leverage “learning showcaseses” to demonstrate learning through iteration.**

**Encourage others. Your visible experimentation also invites peers to participate**

# 9 Build community



**“Our network became a safe space to experiment — we share prompts, failures, and wins. It keeps us moving forward together.”**

— HR Executive, Singapore (2025)

**Join inclusive networks. Participate actively in employee resource groups (ERGs) and external AI communities**

**Seek and offer mentorship. Connect with experienced colleagues and mentors to accelerate learning and pay it forward by supporting junior colleagues. Share challenges as well as wins. Join internal forums and peer discussion to share missteps and learning**

# NINEby9 Action roadmap

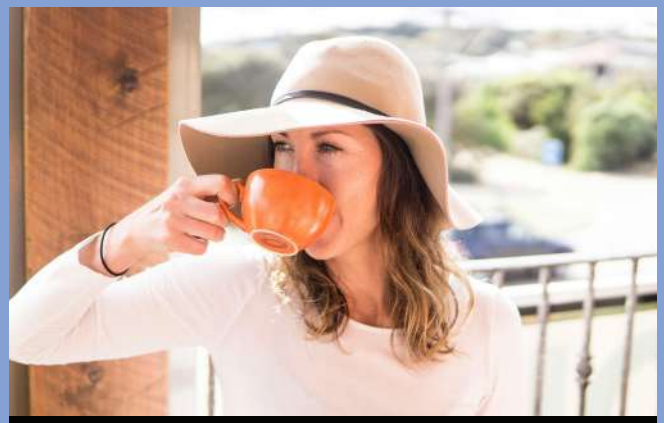
The NINEby9 Action Roadmap builds on the Action Framework, moving from action to accountability. While the framework translates research insights into concrete guidance for organisations, managers, and individuals, the roadmap provides a way to recognise progress and track how AI adoption and workforce transformation are aligning. It serves as a practical reflection tool, enabling leaders to see where inclusion is already being initiated, where momentum is building, and where further focus is needed to embed equity at the core of AI-driven change. By recognising progress already made and identifying gaps, informed steps can be taken at all levels of an organisation toward a more equitable and future-ready workforce.

# NINEby9 Action roadmap

**Inclusion takes all three levels working together:**

**At the organisation level,** we set the systems and signals that make inclusion visible in how we hire, design roles and sustain learning and mobility.

**At the manager level,** we shape culture, through mechanisms that ensure equality in who gets time to learn, who is recognised, and who is sponsored to grow.



**At the individual level,** we take ownership of our learning, experimenting and building networks that support our career growth.

# NINEby9 Action roadmap

**Use this roadmap to:**

When every level moves together, inclusion stops being a program and becomes an integral part of how we lead and execute the next chapter of AI transformation, unlocking stronger innovation, capability and equity.

**Take stock:** Identify where inclusion is already part of your AI transformation.

**Focus energy:** Choose one or two areas to strengthen, rather than trying to fix everything at once.

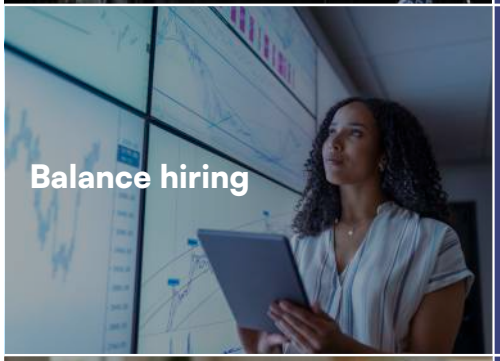
**Model progress:** Make inclusion visible through the way you learn, lead, and share results.

## Organisation:

# Build inclusion into systems and culture

The NINEby9 action roadmap helps us see how inclusion is designed into the organisation through governance, data, and business processes. It's about turning gender equity intent into structure, so that AI transformation offers opportunity for women to participate and progress.

Use it to reflect regularly on progress, to observe what has changed and what still needs attention to drive gender inclusive AI transformation in your workplace.

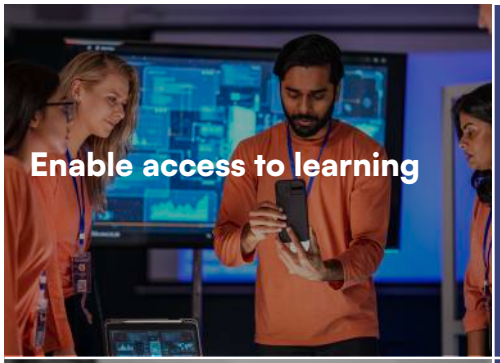
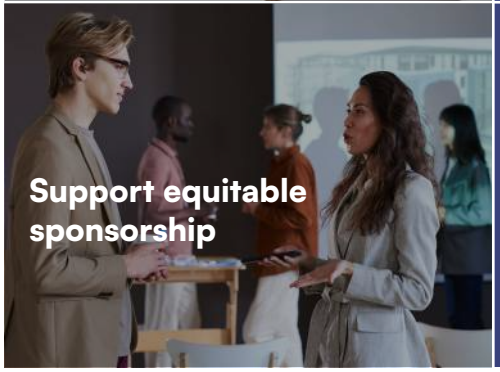
| Lever | Initiated | Emerging | Embedded |
|---|---|---|---|
|  **Build an AI learning culture** | Our organisation has introduced AI learning opportunities but participation is still ad-hoc and depends on individual motivation | We encourage upskilling and experimentation. Learning goals appear in talent and business plans but are applied unevenly. Efforts are underway to make access more inclusive across teams and roles | Continuous learning is visible across the business. Employees have protected learning time, and participation in AI learning and experimentation is inclusive across all levels |
|  **Balance hiring** | We mostly hire externally for digital and AI roles, with limited structured internal pathways for talent. Awareness is growing about the need for more equitable access to new AI opportunities | We identify at-risk roles and in some cases apply reskilling and redeployment strategies with increasing attention to fair access and balanced representation | Internal-first hiring is our preference and we look for gender equitable solutions. Reskilling outcomes and success stories of women in AI roles are visible and celebrated. |
|  **Align HR and Tech** | HR and technology teams collaborate on AI initiatives but with limited visibility into potential workforce and equity impacts. | We have created Joint HR—Tech forums and project panels to coordinate job redesign and inclusion reviews early in the design and testing of AI pilots | HR and technology co-lead AI governance, embedding workforce impact assessment, equity reviews and learning outcomes into every project to ensure workforce implications are addressed before pilots launch. |

## Manager:

# Lead through a network of role models, mentors and sponsors

This roadmap helps me see how my leadership choices shape inclusive culture. It's a reminder to focus on the actions that matter and make inclusion part of how my team learns, delivers and succeeds.

Use it to reflect on your team's progress and how leadership choices can build a more inclusive, AI-enabled workplace.

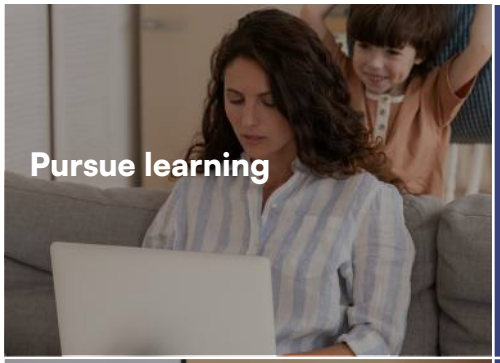
| Lever | Initiated | Emerging | Embedded |
|---|---|---|---|
|  **Enable access to learning** | I create informal opportunities for my team to explore AI, often driven by my personal support and encouragement | I protect learning hours during the working day, share my own upskilling, and connect new skills to business outcomes | Within my team learning is routine for everyone and structured so women can access equally and during work hours. My team applies new skills and shares results. |
|  **Recognise desired behaviours** | I tend to recognise results based on how quickly I see output in AI-related work | I now recognise responsible and ethical AI use, alongside innovation, speed and collaboration as part of performance | Recognition consistently encourages and rewards inclusive innovation and gender equity in experimentation teams. Inclusion is seen as a leadership strength |
|  **Support equitable sponsorship** | Mentoring happens informally and depends on personal relationships | I encourage sponsorship networks and pair early-career women with senior mentors on live projects | Sponsorship is a visible, structured practice across teams. Diverse talent is intentionally matched to AI projects, sponsorship outcomes are tracked, and celebrated |

## Individual:

# Embrace learning, experimenting. Build community

This roadmap helps me embrace learning, experimentation and community-building. It guides me on how I track my learning and development and seek meaningful connections that support my career progression.

Use it to track the pro-active actions you are taking to build new AI skills, gain experience and learn from others.

| Lever | Initiated | Emerging | Embedded |
|---|---|---|---|
|  **Pursue learning** | I show interest and participate in AI learning opportunities when I can find time. I seek learning partners to sustain momentum and accountability | My work now includes AI learning and upskilling through courses and small projects. I share updates with peers | Continuous AI learning is part of my personal development plan. I apply new knowledge confidently and have a mentor who provides advice and guidance. |
|  **Experiment visibly** | I play around informally on my own with AI tools to improve my work and productivity | I participate in team "AI learning showcases", hackathons and cross-functional projects that highlight inclusive innovation. | My AI experiments are noticed by leaders. I share successes and failures with peer learning groups and see improvement in my capabilities. |
|  **Build community** | I share and connect informally with groups exploring AI to exchange ideas and support one another | My network includes mentoring circles, employee resource groups and special interest groups where we exchange ideas and collaborate to learn | I contribute actively, participating in group sessions at work, engaging in cross-industry alliances and affinity groups outside the company. |

# Methodology

This report employed an integrated approach by combining primary qualitative research with quantitative data insights and secondary document analysis; a systematic review of existing research combined with original data collection through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

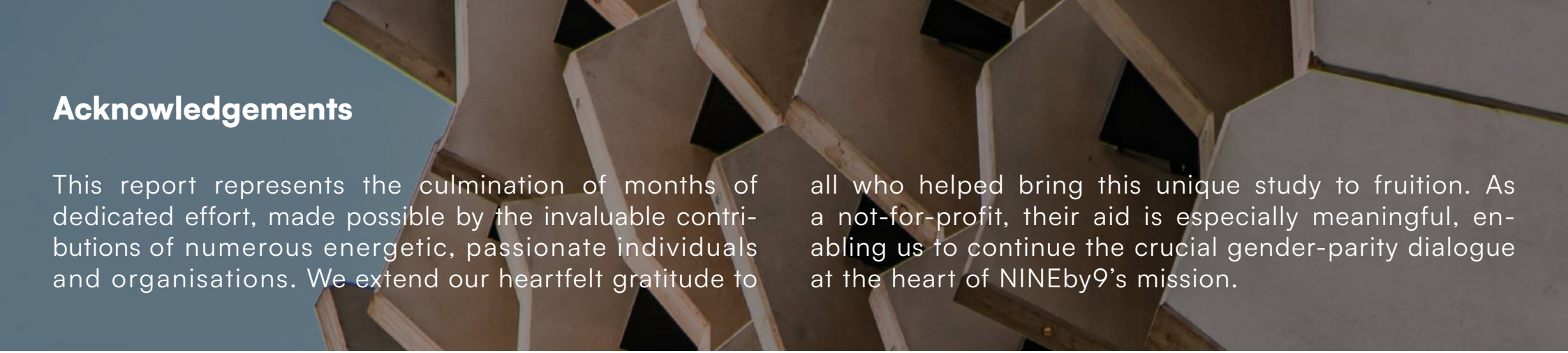
We conducted a comprehensive review of academic articles, industry reports, and organisational databases published between 2022 and 2025. Sources include data from the LinkedIn Economic Graph.

Document selection criteria focused on AI workforce trends, gender disparities, and employment patterns in the Asia Pacific region.

**Primary Data** was gathered through focus groups (35 regional HR and technology leaders), semi-structured interviews (20 HR and technology leaders) across Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and Indonesia, alongside regional leaders with oversight across Asia Pacific.

**Quantitative data** was provided by LinkedIn Economic Graph FY25/Q1 (29 million members from selected Asia Pacific markets), providing quantitative benchmarks on gender representation and employment trends.

**Secondary source data** was analysed using thematic synthesis to identify recurring patterns across reports and primary data underwent a detailed content analysis to identify emergent themes.



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