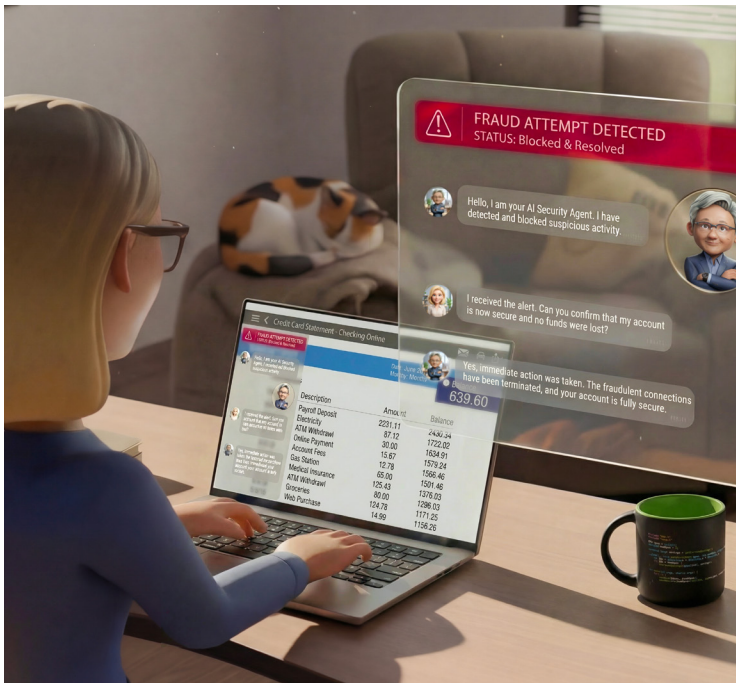
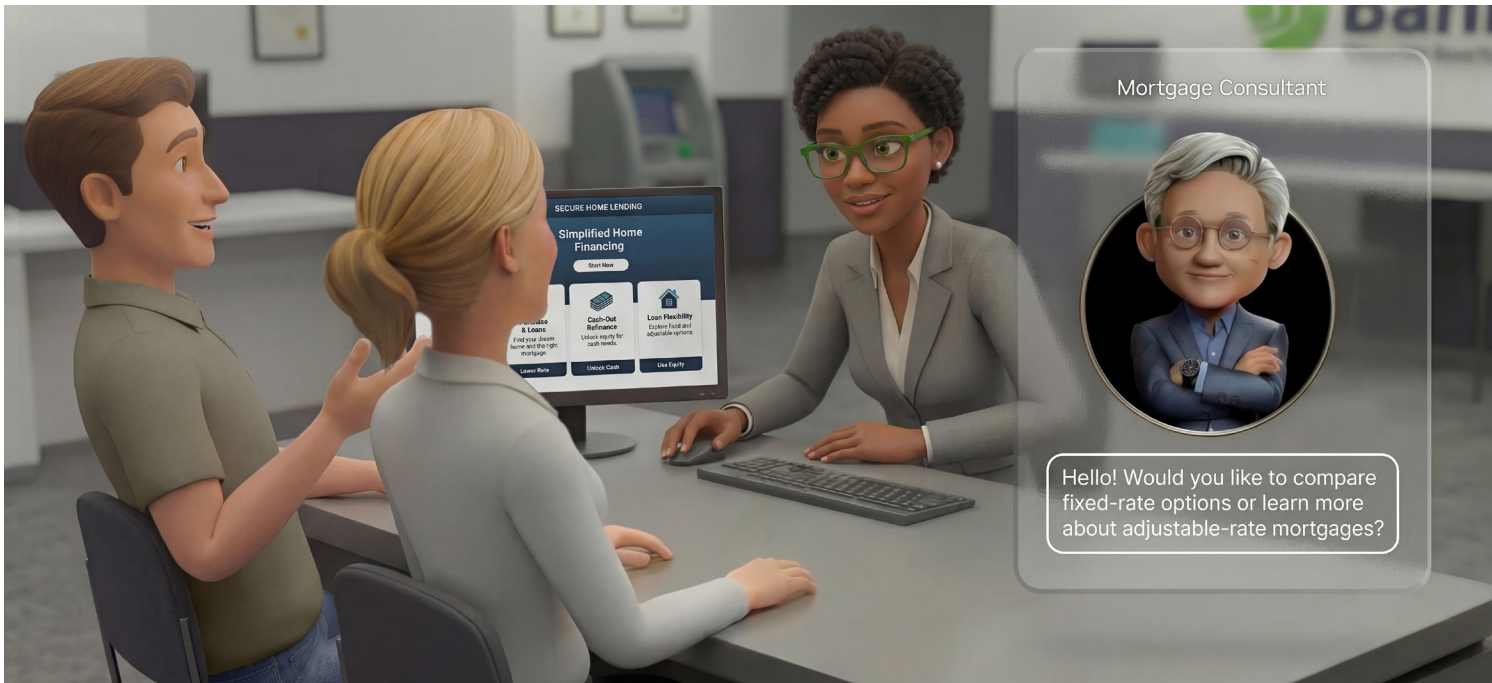
Survey Report

State of AI in Financial Services: 2026 Trends







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Survey Overview

AI in Financial Services: Key Trends for Industry Leaders

The AI revolution has just begun, but it's already had a profound impact on financial institutions. From transforming algorithmic trading to accelerating document processing and analysis, from reimagining fraud detection with transformer-based payments foundation models to modernizing legacy code with coding agents, AI has been a major boon to the industry, providing new avenues for growth, productivity, and cost management.

In the sixth annual *State of AI in Financial Services* report, NVIDIA examines the impact of AI on the industry, how it's changing the way the sector operates, and how organizations big and small are beginning to scale new AI capabilities.

The use of generative AI in financial services has grown every year since its introduction to the market in 2022, with 61 percent of survey respondents saying they're using or assessing it in 2025. This evolution continues as interest shifts toward specific business use cases with clear return on investment, such as agentic AI.

The reason for this rapid adoption and investment in AI is clear: Executives of leading institutions have publicly acknowledged the significant ROI, especially in the realms of operational efficiency and employee productivity. It's no surprise then that nearly 100 percent of respondents confirm that their AI spending will increase or stay the same in 2026, with 44 percent saying it'll rise by more than 10 percent.

The 2026 *State of AI in Financial Services* report had the highest number of respondents in the survey's history. It explores the growing adoption of AI in the field, top AI use cases, goals and challenges of financial organizations, plans for investment in solutions and infrastructure, impact and return on investment, infrastructure and development trends, and, in a new section this year, adoption and use of AI agents.

Executive Summary

The moment to invest in AI in financial services is now, with 73 percent of respondents in leadership roles believing that AI is important to their company's future success. Why? Because AI creates intelligence from data, and no industry is better at—or more dependent on—monetizing intelligence than financial services.

Here are some of the other top highlights from this year's report.

73%

of respondents in leadership roles believe that AI is important to their company's future success.

AI Has Moved From Pilot to Prevalence

65%

said their organization is actively using AI, up from 45% in 2024.

42%

said their organization is actively using or assessing agentic AI.

AI combines the power of big data with advanced machine learning techniques—from deep learning and reinforcement learning to generative and predictive models—to drive a wide variety of use cases across the financial services industry. More organizations are actively using AI than ever, with about 90 percent of respondents saying their organizations are either actively using or assessing AI solutions or pilot projects. Agentic AI is the next frontier, with 42 percent of organizations saying they're already using or assessing AI agents in their operational workflows.

The Importance of Open Source

Enterprise-grade AI requires models tuned for specialized use cases that managed services and generalized large language models (LLMs) can't handle. Because of this, organizations have been turning to open source models to build solutions that are fine-tuned toward specific use cases. Overall, 84 percent of respondents rated open-source software from moderately to extremely important, including nearly half (48 percent) of respondents in management roles saying that open source is very to extremely important.

84%

reported open-source software as moderately to extremely important to their organization's AI strategy.

Large organizations like banks and other financial firms are moving from managed services to open-source foundation models for their most important AI use cases. As reasoning models grow more advanced and cost-per-token pricing continues to rise, the economic pressure to reduce ongoing costs by owning models rather than relying on third parties has intensified. This approach not only delivers more accurate and useful outcomes at a lower total cost but also ensures that proprietary data remains secure and that enterprise value isn't shared externally.

AI's ROI Is Clear

89%

said AI is helping to both increase annual revenue and reduce annual costs.

52%

cited operational efficiency as one of the top ways AI has improved their business in the last year.

AI is impacting organizations' top and bottom lines. Eighty-three percent of respondents reported seeing a return on investment in AI use cases, highlighted by solutions in document processing, document management, and customer experience. Additionally, 89 percent of respondents reported that AI both increased annual revenue and decreased annual costs. More than half of respondents at 52 percent cited operational efficiency as one of the top ways AI has improved their business in the last year. AI has also boosted employee productivity, with 48 percent saying it's been one of the biggest benefits to their business, up from 22 percent last year.

Data Analytics Is the Workhorse of AI

68%

of respondents said that data analytics was their organization's top AI workload, up 11 points from 2024.

61%

cited generative AI among their top AI workloads, up from 52% in 2024.

The importance of data analytics spans the full spectrum of financial services, from financial technology (fintech) and capital markets to consumer finance. Data analytics supports a range of business processes and use cases, from processing payment transactions for fraud detection to analyzing both structured and unstructured data to support investment research and portfolio management.

The fastest-growing AI workload has been generative AI. Outside of China, generative AI has grown from 50 percent in 2023 to 73 percent this year, cementing the status of foundation models as the key engines driving AI in financial services and business operations worldwide.

A Notable Increase in Hybrid Architecture

A clear trend in the data from the last few surveys is that organizations are increasingly deploying hybrid architecture for their AI workloads, as opposed to solely on premises or in the cloud. The top reason is economic, with hybrid approaches offering the ability to optimize costs by running different workloads in different environments. With data in disparate places, simplifying data science workflows by leveraging a software platform available across all environments is key.

47%

of respondents said their organization uses hybrid architecture, up from 26% in 2024.

An In-Depth Look at the Results

Financial Services Is Embracing the AI-Enabled Future

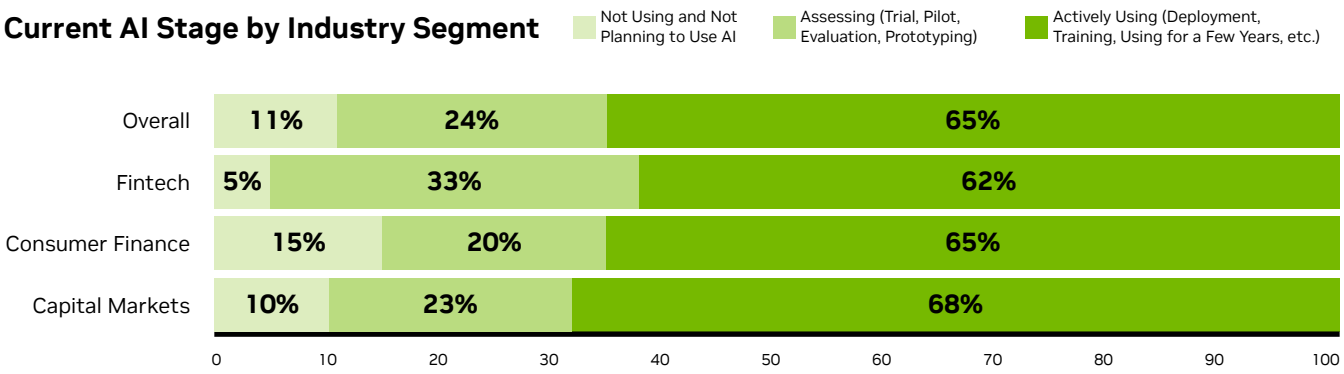
As AI matures across the business ecosystem, companies are moving on from the assessment stage and starting to actively use and scale AI into key business operations. At 65 percent, more than two-thirds of respondents said that their organizations are actively using AI, up from 45 percent in 2024. Companies are actively scaling pilots into production, with 24 percent saying that they're assessing AI pilots this year, down from 50 percent from last year.

In particular, large companies with over 1,000 employees are actively using AI, according to 76 percent of respondents from those organizations. Adoption is fairly even across different segments within financial services, with over 60 percent of respondents from fintech, consumer finance, and capital markets saying their organizations are actively using AI.

76%

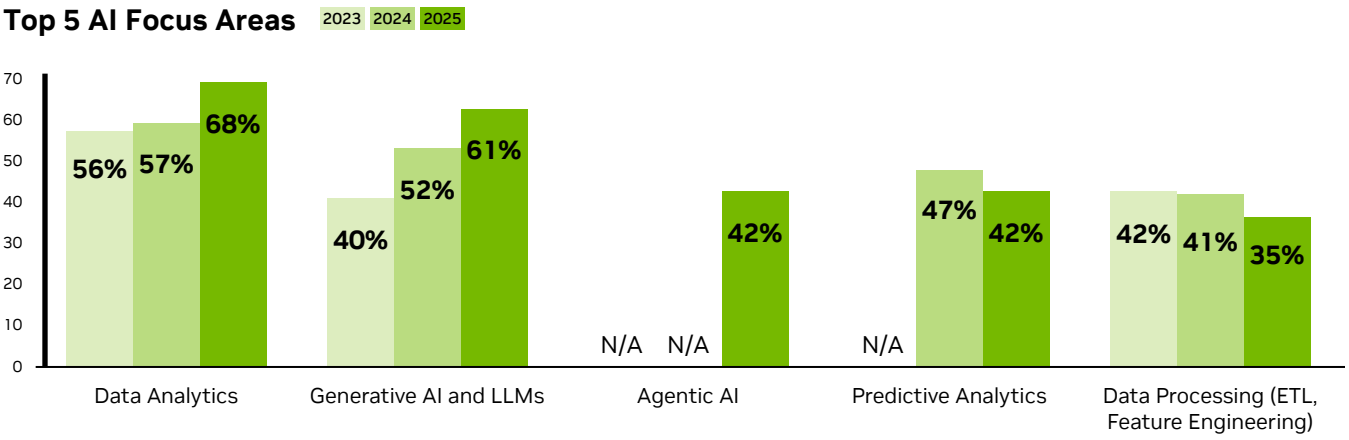
of large companies (1,000+ employees) are actively using AI.

Current AI Stage by Industry Segment

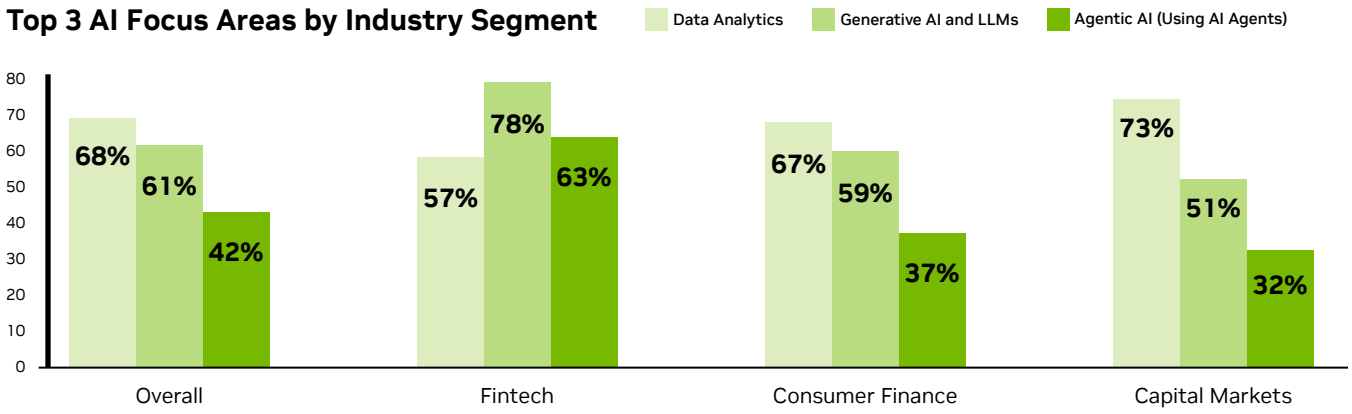


In terms of overall usage, data analytics was the top area that financial services institutions are using or assessing, according to 68 percent of respondents. Generative AI was second at 61 percent, followed by agentic AI and predictive analytics, each at 42 percent. Data processing, such as feature engineering and extract, transform, and load (ETL) operations, came in at 35 percent.

Top 5 AI Focus Areas



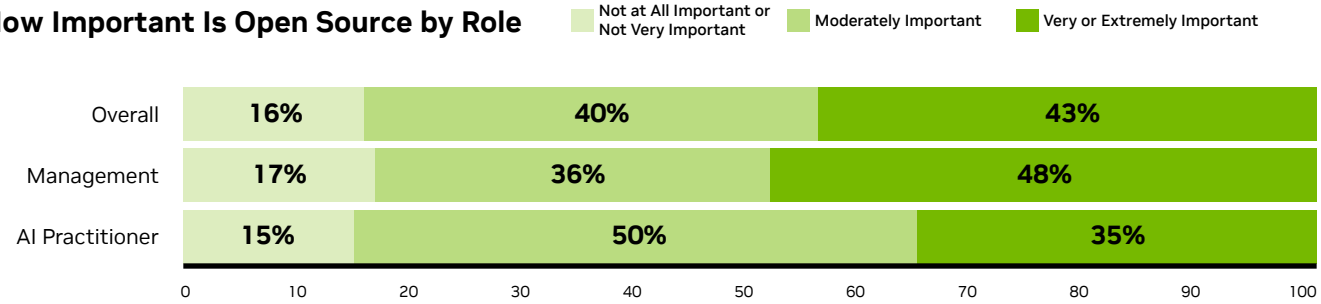
Top 3 AI Focus Areas by Industry Segment



The Industry Is Embracing Open Source

As AI use cases and their requirements become more specific to an organization's needs, the tools and development of AI solutions become more focused. For instance, open-source models and software are often best suited for building specific AI applications. Respondents agreed, with 40 percent saying that open-source software is moderately important to their organization's strategy and 43 percent saying it's very or extremely important.

How Important Is Open Source by Role

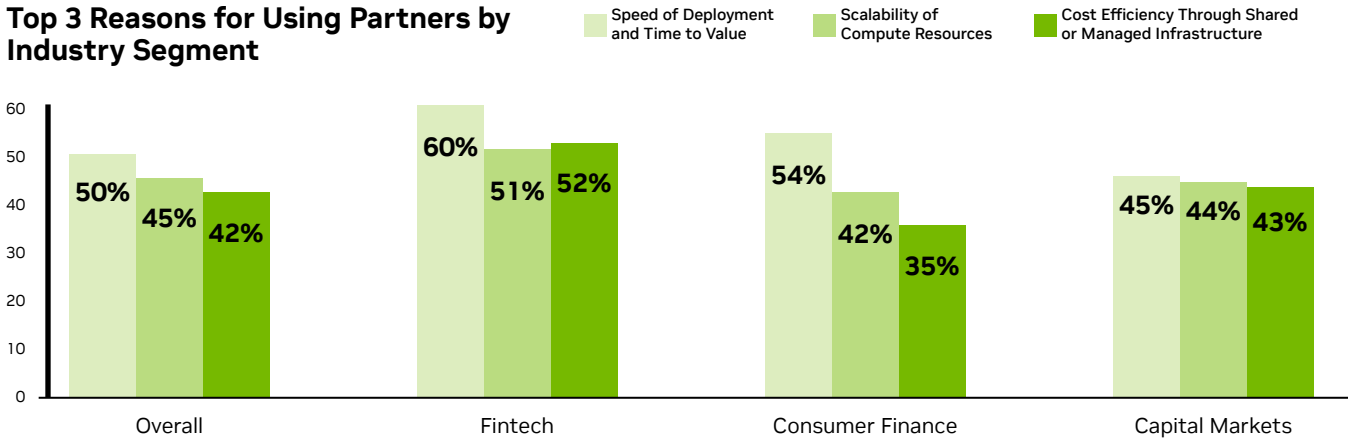


To build AI solutions and support compute infrastructure, financial institutions rely on third-party partners. Overall, 44 percent of respondents said that they engage third parties as needed for specific projects, and another 31 percent said they rely heavily on third parties for AI infrastructure.

The most common third-party partners are cloud service providers, according to 75 percent of respondents. Independent software vendors were next at 31 percent, followed by original equipment manufacturers at 25 percent. Rounding out the top five were managed service providers at 19 percent and global systems integrators at 18 percent.

Speed of deployment and optimizing time to value was the top reason for engaging third parties, according to 50 percent of respondents. These were followed by scalability of computer resources at 45 percent and cost efficiency through shared or managed infrastructure at 42 percent.

Top 3 Reasons for Using Partners by Industry Segment



AI Agents Off to a Solid Start in Financial Services

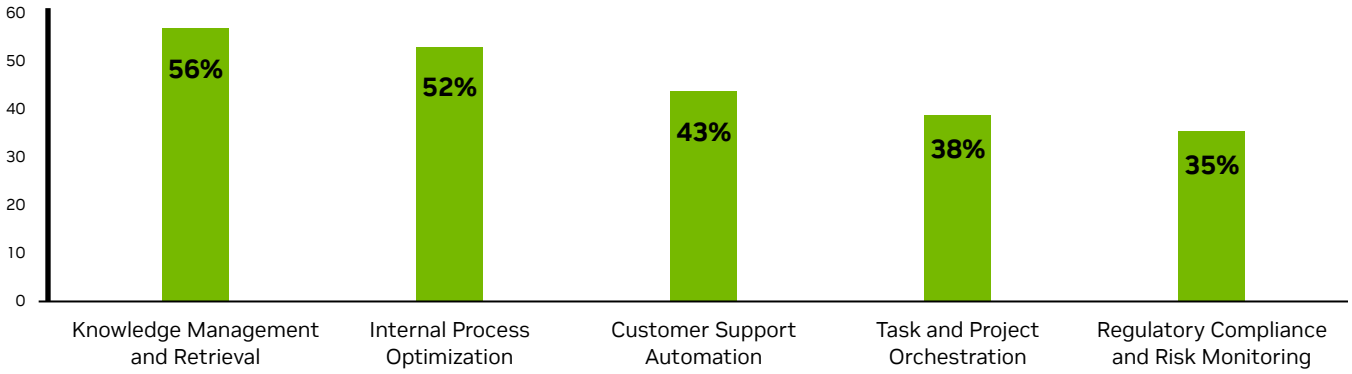
A new question in the *2026 NVIDIA State of AI* survey concerns the use of agentic AI in organizational operations. AI agents are advanced AI systems designed to autonomously reason, plan, and execute complex tasks based on high-level goals.

As stated above, 42 percent of survey respondents said that their organizations are currently using or assessing agentic AI. Within that number, nearly half (49 percent, or 21 percent of the total survey respondents) said that agents have already been deployed within their organizations. Another 41 percent (18 percent of the total survey) said that AI agents would be deployed within the next year.

Fifty-six percent of those using or assessing agentic AI cite knowledge management and retrieval as the top overall use cases for AI agents. This is followed by internal process optimization at 52 percent and customer support automation at 43 percent.

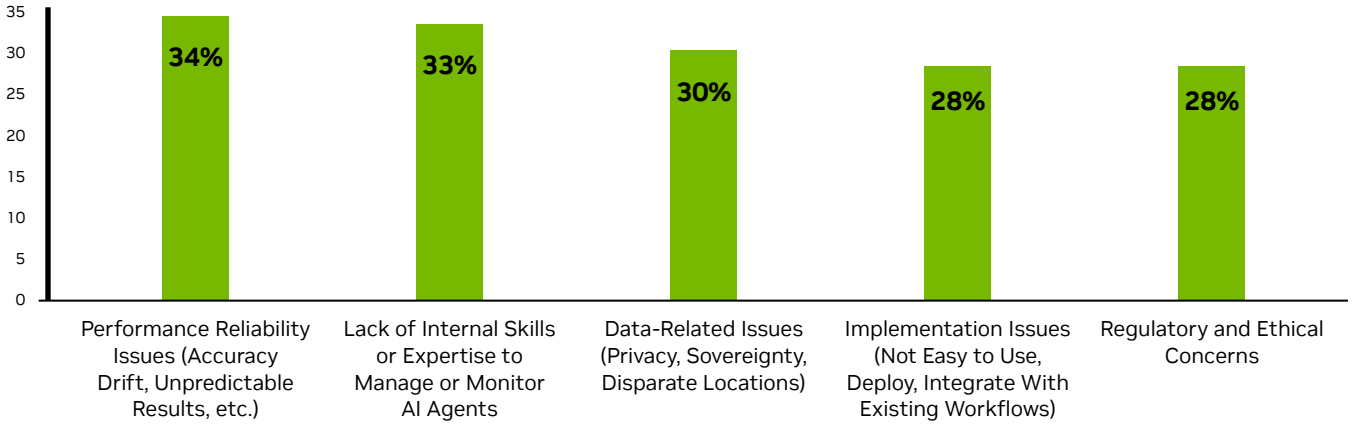
Knowledge management and retrieval are the top use cases for those using or assessing agentic AI.

Top 5 Workflows Using AI Agents



Agentic AI is still in its early stages of enterprise deployment, and its challenges reflect the same spectrum of challenges that most new technologies face when they're introduced. Performance and reliability issues were the top answers in the survey, chosen by 34 percent of respondents. These were followed by a lack of internal skills or expertise to manage and monitor AI agents at 33 percent, data-related issues at 30 percent, and implementation issues at 28 percent.

Top 5 Challenges With AI Agents

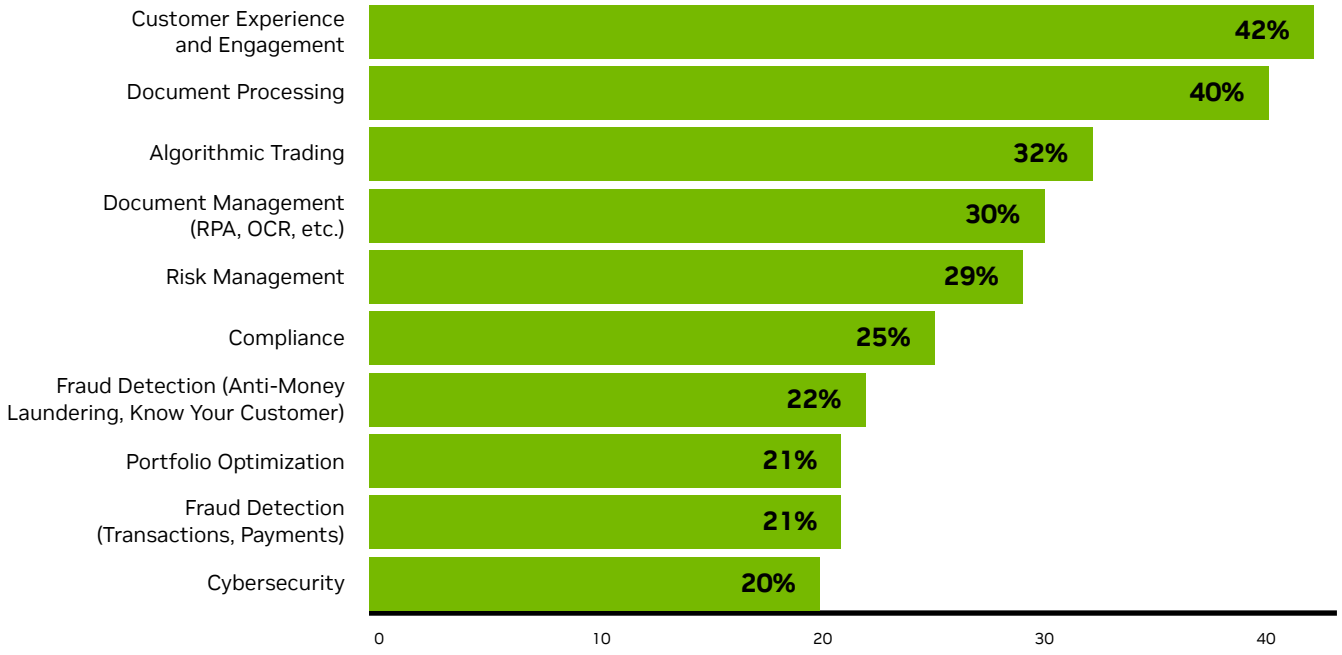


AI Is Seeing Widespread Adoption Across Operations

Financial services is a very language- and numbers-heavy industry, with a strong emphasis on document processing and numerical analysis. These traits make the industry perfectly suited to adopt AI for a wide swath of processes and use cases. The survey results reflect this reality with reported AI use cases spread widely across organizational operations. Overall, the top AI-driven use case for the financial services industry was customer experience and engagement, according to 42 percent of respondents. Document processing was next at 40 percent, followed by algorithmic trading at 32 percent and document management, including robotic process automation (RPA) and optical character recognition (OCR), at 30 percent.

The industry's top AI use case is customer experience and engagement.

Top 10 AI Use Cases in 2025



The top challenge organizations face in using AI is data related—cited by 40 percent of respondents, up from 33 percent in 2024. Key issues include privacy, sovereignty, and data scattered across disparate locations. The second most significant challenge, cited by 35 percent of respondents, is the shortage of AI experts and data scientists.

Issues around data pose the greatest challenge to AI adoption in the industry.

Top 3 AI Challenges for 2025



One significant trend in this year's survey was that financial services institutions seem to have made significant progress in harnessing data for model training and accuracy. Having sufficient data sizes for training and accuracy was no longer among the industry's top challenges, dropping from 49 percent of respondents in 2023 to 31 percent in 2024 and only 16 percent in 2025.

In the last year, institutions have made significant progress in harnessing data for model training.

Operational Efficiency and Employee Productivity Top AI ROI for Financial Services

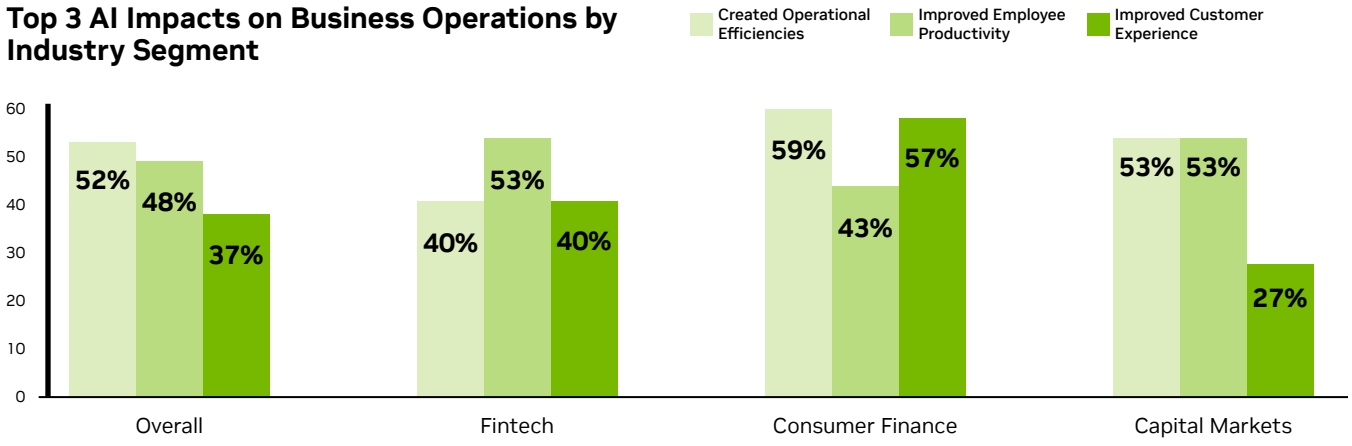
AI is positively impacting the bottom line for financial institutions, with 89 percent of respondents saying that it has helped both increase revenue and reduce annual costs. The impact can be significant, with 64 percent of respondents reporting that AI has helped increase revenue by more than 5 percent. Sixty-one percent said that it has helped reduce costs by the same amount.

The impact is true for small and large companies alike, with 63 percent of large companies agreeing that AI has helped increase revenue by more than 5 percent. In particular, 75 percent of respondents from fintech companies said that AI has helped increase revenue by more than 5 percent.

Both small and large companies across the industry are seeing positive change with AI.

The impact has been felt in multiple areas. When asked how AI has improved their business, 52 percent of overall respondents said that it has helped create operational efficiencies. Improved employee productivity was next at 48 percent, up from 22 percent in last year's survey. Improved customer experience was third, according to 37 percent of respondents, which was especially true in the more customer-facing areas of financial services. Fifty-seven percent of consumer finance respondents reported that AI had helped improve the customer experience, versus 27 percent for the capital markets segment.

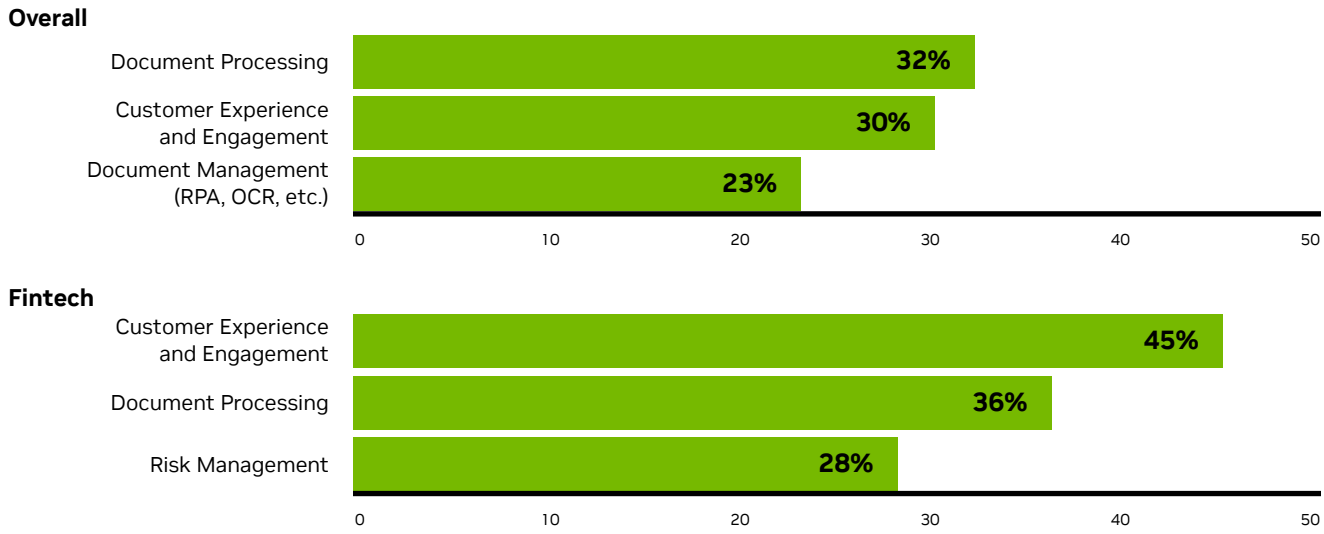
Top 3 AI Impacts on Business Operations by Industry Segment

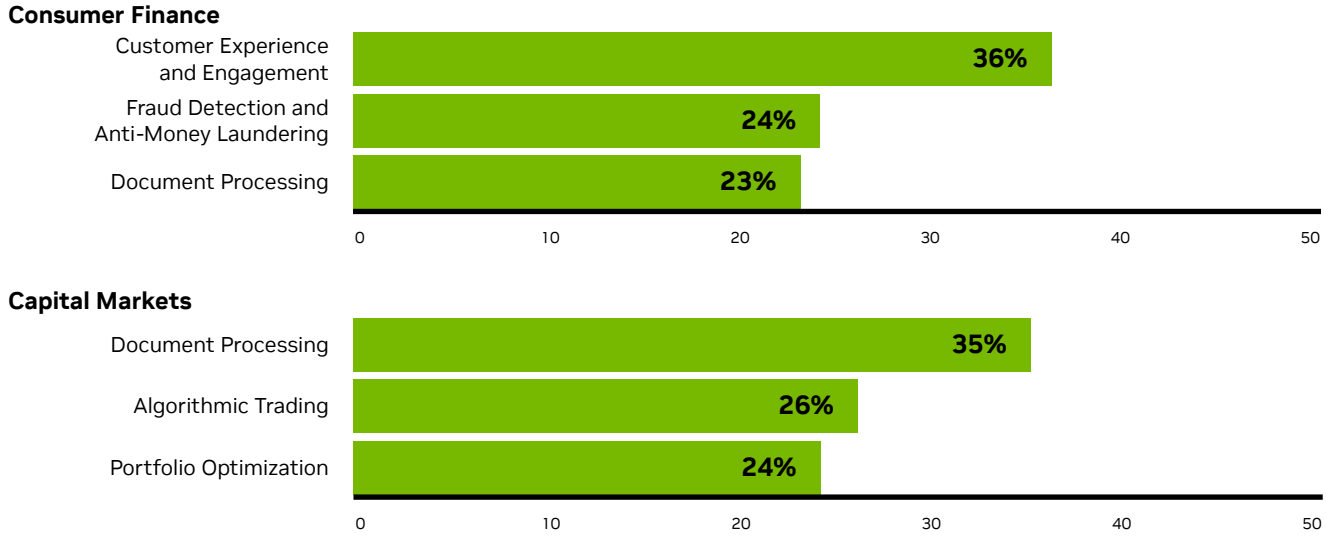


Respondents cited a long list of AI use cases that have returned the greatest ROI. Overall, the top three use cases for ROI were document processing at 32 percent of respondents, followed by customer experience and engagement at 30 percent and document management at 23 percent. The responses to the question showcased the wide benefit of AI across business operations, with 12 different answers garnering at least 10 percent.

Industry segments showed their different priorities as well, with 26 percent of capital markets respondents citing algorithmic trading as among the top ROI use cases. Among fintech organizations, 28 percent cited AI-driven risk management as a top ROI use case. And 24 percent of consumer finance respondents cited fraud detection and anti-money laundering among their top ROI use cases.

Top 3 AI Use Cases With Biggest ROI by Industry Segment





Financial Institutions Planning to Increase AI Investment in 2026

As AI proves impactful to both top and bottom lines, investment in the technology continues to rise. Overall, nearly 100 percent of respondents said that their organization's investment in AI would increase or stay the same in 2026, with 83 percent saying that it would increase. A little less than half of respondents at 44 percent said that their AI budgets would increase substantially, by more than 10 percent in the next year, a 14-point increase from 2024. Large companies also plan to increase their AI budgets next year, with 46 percent of respondents saying that their AI budgets would increase by more than 10 percent.

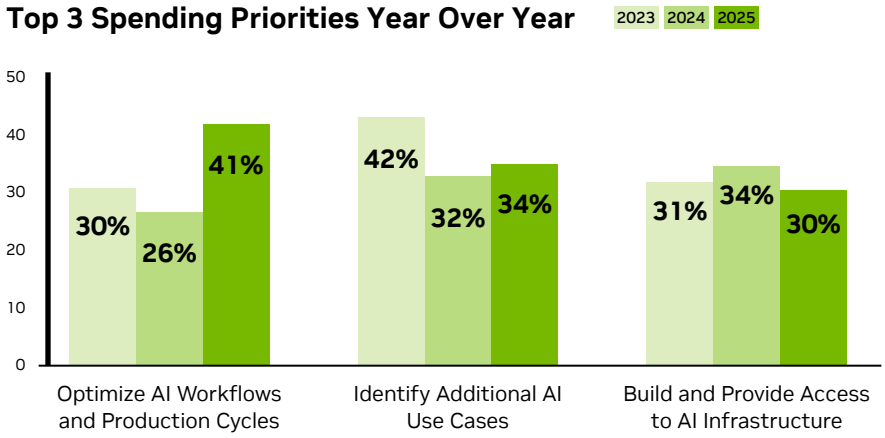
AI investment for financial institutions will go toward optimizing existing workflows and finding new uses for the technology. Overall, 41 percent of respondents said that optimizing AI workflows and production cycles was their top AI spending priority, up from 26 percent in 2024. Essentially, respondents said that they're looking to improve what's already working. The next spending priorities were identifying additional AI use cases at 34 percent and building access to AI infrastructure at 30 percent.

AI is having a positive impact on both the top and bottom lines for financial institutions.

Survey respondents unanimously agreed that investment in AI would increase or stay the same in 2026.

Optimizing AI workflows and production cycles is the top spending priority.

Top 3 Spending Priorities Year Over Year



Financial Services Is Choosing Hybrid Architecture for AI Workloads

AI inference is the process where a trained AI model generates new outputs by reasoning and making predictions on new data—classifying inputs and applying learned knowledge in real time. Essentially, inference is the output of an AI model. Inference differs from model training as it's an ongoing process and cost. Every time a model is queried, inference takes place.

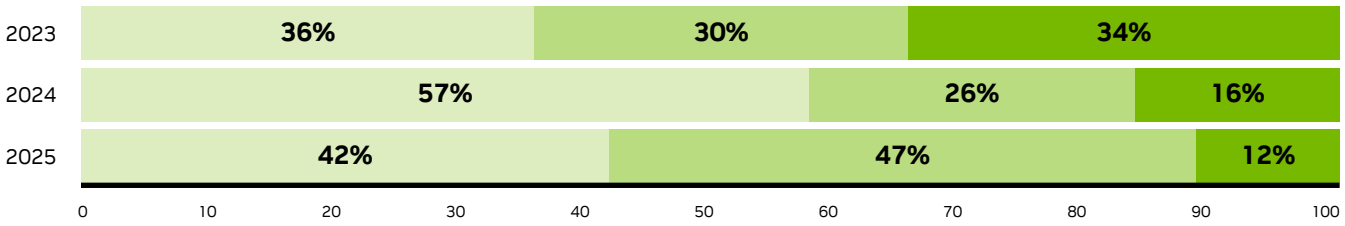
Inference is a multi-faceted aspect of AI, balancing accuracy and speed with model and infrastructure performance, power usage, and the cost efficiency of the entire system. When asked about the most important factors for their organizations when running inference, 37 percent of respondents said that model performance and benchmarking were the most important factors. These were followed by data residency and compliance at 36 percent, optimizing total cost of ownership and cost efficiency at 34 percent, and latency, accuracy, and throughput at 32 percent.

Financial institutions have increasingly turned to hybrid architectures—integrating both cloud and on-premises systems—for AI workloads. Overall, 47 percent of respondents said their organizations use hybrid architecture, up from 26 percent in 2024. The rise of hybrid has correlated to a drop in standalone cloud and on-premises architectures, with cloud dropping from 57 percent in 2024 to 42 percent in 2025. On-premises-only infrastructure dropped from 16 percent in 2024 to 12 percent in 2025.

47%

of companies are now using hybrid architecture—up from 26% in 2024.

Where They Run AI Workloads Today



The top reason for running hybrid architecture, according to 41 percent of respondents, was optimizing costs by running different workloads in different environments.

Looking Forward

Looking into the future, industry leaders are keen to find more areas where AI can make an impact, including fraud detection, algorithmic trading, risk management, compliance, customer engagement, and document processing. AI goals are spread across business functions, with the top goal being to increase operational efficiency, according to 42 percent of respondents. Ranked after that are creating a competitive advantage at 34 percent and improving employee productivity and the customer experience, both at 33 percent.

In the next year, look for financial institutions to scale up use cases that have proven their worth, adopting open-source tools and models and working with expert partners to build specialized solutions. Expect many of these solutions to come in the form of agentic AI, as its capabilities for automating processes become clear and new methods make it easier to build and manage AI agents in the enterprise. All of this will be built on AI factories that manufacture intelligence from data, powering AI applications that support every function and line of business across financial services.

Methodology

Fielded from August to September 2025, the survey garnered responses from 839 respondents. It included a 50/50 split between management (including executives) and AI practitioners, as well as a range of industry segments—asset managers, asset owners, broker-dealers, consultancies, commercial and retail banking, fintech, investment banking, insurance, market data and exchanges, payments, and regulators. Respondents came from companies across a spectrum of sizes, with a third reporting annual revenue of over $250 million and another 40 percent with over 500 employees. The online survey was sourced from NVIDIA's distribution lists and through social media globally and, in China, through a third-party agency.

Ready to Get Started?

To learn more about how leading financial institutions are using AI, visit nvidia.com/finance

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