Companies Are Investing Billions in AI Without ROI. New Research From FranklinCovey Finds That Leadership Can Close the Gap.

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FranklinCovey Institute's global survey finds the five top behaviors employees want from their leaders.

The #1 behavior is honesty about how AI will change their work. Only 36% receive that honesty.

SALT LAKE CITY--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 10, 2026-- Organizations have poured unprecedented capital into artificial intelligence, yet a growing number are discovering an uncomfortable truth: providing access to AI isn't the same as creating enterprise value with AI. According to new research from FranklinCovey Institute, the gap that determines whether those investments pay off often has more to do with leadership than with technology.

In a June 2026 global survey of workers spanning a broad cross-section of industries and regions, FranklinCovey (NYSE: FC) asked what leadership behaviors employees want most from their leaders in a successful AI transformation. The findings point less to technical training and more to human leadership (full study is forthcoming). release in Fall 2026). When it comes to AI transformation, there is a gap between what employees want from their leaders and what they're receiving. Here's where leaders are falling short:

What employees want most from their leaders (top 5, ranked)	% who say they receive this from their leader
#1 My leader is honest about how AI will change our work	36%
#2 My leader provides access to learning opportunities to build AI skills	46%
#3 My leader creates a safe space for experimentation and learning	59%
#4 My leader helps the team connect AI to our specific work and workflows	41%
#5 My leader communicates a clear and compelling vision	46%

The takeaway for the C-Suite and leaders throughout organizations is that many of the most critical barriers to AI value are behavioral, not technological, and that responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of leaders.

Paul Walker, FranklinCovey CEO, said, "The gap between AI access and adoption is human, not technical. AI investments are at risk from uneven integration and no path to scale due to leaders who lack the skills to bring their teams along. The organizations that win with AI won't win with technology alone. They'll win with leaders who lead differently."

FranklinCovey's research suggests that when leaders leave employees to figure AI out on their own, adoption stalls, anxiety rises, and expensive tools are underused, or in some cases overused without results, leading to the growing phenomenon of "slop grenades" that slow teams down. When leaders instead guide their teams through adoption, the same tools begin to accelerate performance rather than simply increase activity.

"To close the AI adoption gap and make AI investments profitable, organizations must close their leadership gap," Walker said. "Leaders and teams must be equipped with the mindsets, habits, and skills that turn AI access into AI impact. Without the right behaviors, AI accelerates activity. With them, it accelerates performance. Leadership decides AI's ROI."

The shift FranklinCovey's research identifies is one many organizations are only beginning to make:

- From AI tools that are deployed but unused to AI that is adopted and impacting how people work
- From leaders who leave people to navigate change alone to leaders who guide through it confidently
- From using AI for simple tasks to uncovering higher value agentic opportunities in processes and workflows

FranklinCovey's AI readiness solution, *AI Realized: From Disruption to Advantage*™ is helping organizations close the AI leadership gap.

FranklinCovey has partnered with organizations, including some of the world's largest tech companies, to help them realize value from their AI investment. Its AI readiness solution, *AI Realized: From Disruption to Advantage*™, which includes its new leader and team experience, *Gain AI Traction*, builds behaviors that drive adoption at scale. The approach develops the behaviors that determine whether people and AI work better together: confidence, consistency, capability, and adaptability. Disruption is framed as an opportunity, helping leaders move their teams from resistance to transformation. The result is higher decision quality, greater productivity, and ROI on AI investments.

"The AI approach that FranklinCovey takes is not a technical approach; it is a human being approach," said the chief of workforce development at a logistics organization. "People were able to connect to that and not get caught up in the tools. It's really about the principles and concepts that apply to any platform. That type of knowledge and flexibility helped to provide clarity, reduce anxiety, and increase usage."

Learn more here, call 1-888-868-1776, or visit www.franklincovey.com.

About FranklinCovey

FranklinCovey (NYSE: FC) is a global leadership and organizational performance partner that gives strategy the human edge. It helps organizations achieve the breakthrough results that matter most. Using proven, principle-centered frameworks and practices, it builds high-trust leaders, teams and

cultures and helps clients translate strategy into consistent execution. For more than 40 years, it has tested this approach with thousands of clients from Fortune 100 companies to educational and government institutions, providing professional services across 160 countries. Visit FranklinCovey.com and explore leadership insights on **LinkedIn**, **Facebook**, **X**, **Instagram**, and **YouTube**.

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