



DATAIKU/HARRIS POLL SURVEY

Global AI Confessions Report: Data Leaders Edition

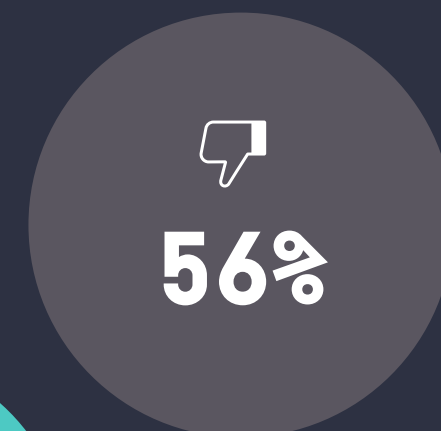
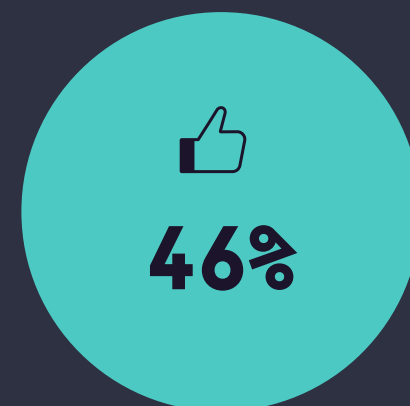
Executive Summary

The Global AI Confessions Report: Data Leaders Edition from Dataiku, based on a Harris Poll survey of 800 data leaders worldwide, reinforces a key notion: AI agents are no longer experimental. A staggering 86% say their organizations now rely on agents in daily operations, with nearly half (42%) embedding them so deeply that dozens of core processes depend on them.

Yet beneath this rapid adoption lies a revealing tension: Leaders admit significant gaps in trust, explainability, and readiness that combine to inhibit AI performance and impede rollouts at scale.

KEY FINDINGS

And the stakes are personal: CIOs and CDOs are most likely to be credited for gains when AI delivers (46%) and even more likely to be blamed when it fails (56%).



Agents in Action, Trust in Question

Two-thirds of data leaders (64%) say their company's AI agents are better at automating operational tasks than at making analytical, higher-order business judgements. This reveals a serious lag in operationalizing AI for critical business decisions. Why? Data leaders admit to a pervasive lack of confidence in explainability and accuracy of answers generated by their AI systems and apps, because they either don't require or simply cannot explain how their AI generated its outputs.

Only one in five (a mere 19%) always requires agents to "show their work," and the vast majority, 95%, shockingly admit they could not fully trace AI decisions end-to-end if they were asked to provide this reasoning to regulators.

In fact, just 11% would consider AI agents for any business function, including sensitive, high-stakes functions like hiring, compliance, or ethical decisions. That disconnect highlights the core issue: While AI is fast becoming the default for automating repetitive work, leaders lack the conviction it can be trusted with critical business decisions where the technology can become truly transformative.

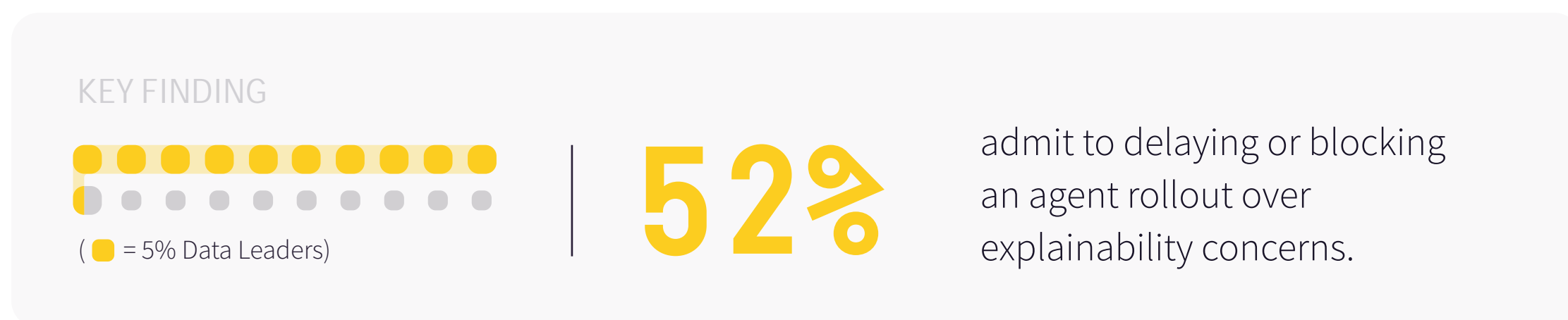
Trust Is on Trial

The most telling signal comes from a single stat: **75%** of data leaders say trust in their AI agent deployments is a concern.



That worry runs parallel to a growing reliance on the technology. Nearly 70% of leaders acknowledge that AI-generated business suggestions carry more weight than those provided by human employees, even as they question the accuracy of those same outputs.

In fact, **82%** of data leaders believe AI can provide more accurate analysis than their own boss, even as doubts about explainability persist. Yet, reluctance to trust hasn't slowed deployment. Even though **52%** admit to delaying or blocking an agent rollout over explainability concerns, many data leaders feel they can't afford to wait for perfect accuracy. With competitors racing ahead, the urgency to stay ahead often outweighs hesitation about reliability.



Performance Bottlenecks

Are AI agents stalling out? **Half of data leaders say fewer than half of their agents make it beyond POC**, a fragility echoed by MIT research showing 95% of GenAI pilots fail to deliver ROI. The problem isn't the models, it's the strategy. Three in four data leaders (75%) admit their AI efforts are driven by tech ambition, not business outcomes. Until pilots are designed with real business impact in mind, deployment will remain fragile and enterprise-scale value out of reach.

What Comes Next

This report surfaces a candid truth: Data leaders are pushing AI into the heart of daily business, but they're doing so with limited control and shaky confidence. And that risk is far from hypothetical: **59%** of data leaders have already faced a business issue or crisis stemming from AI hallucinations or inaccuracies in just the past year.



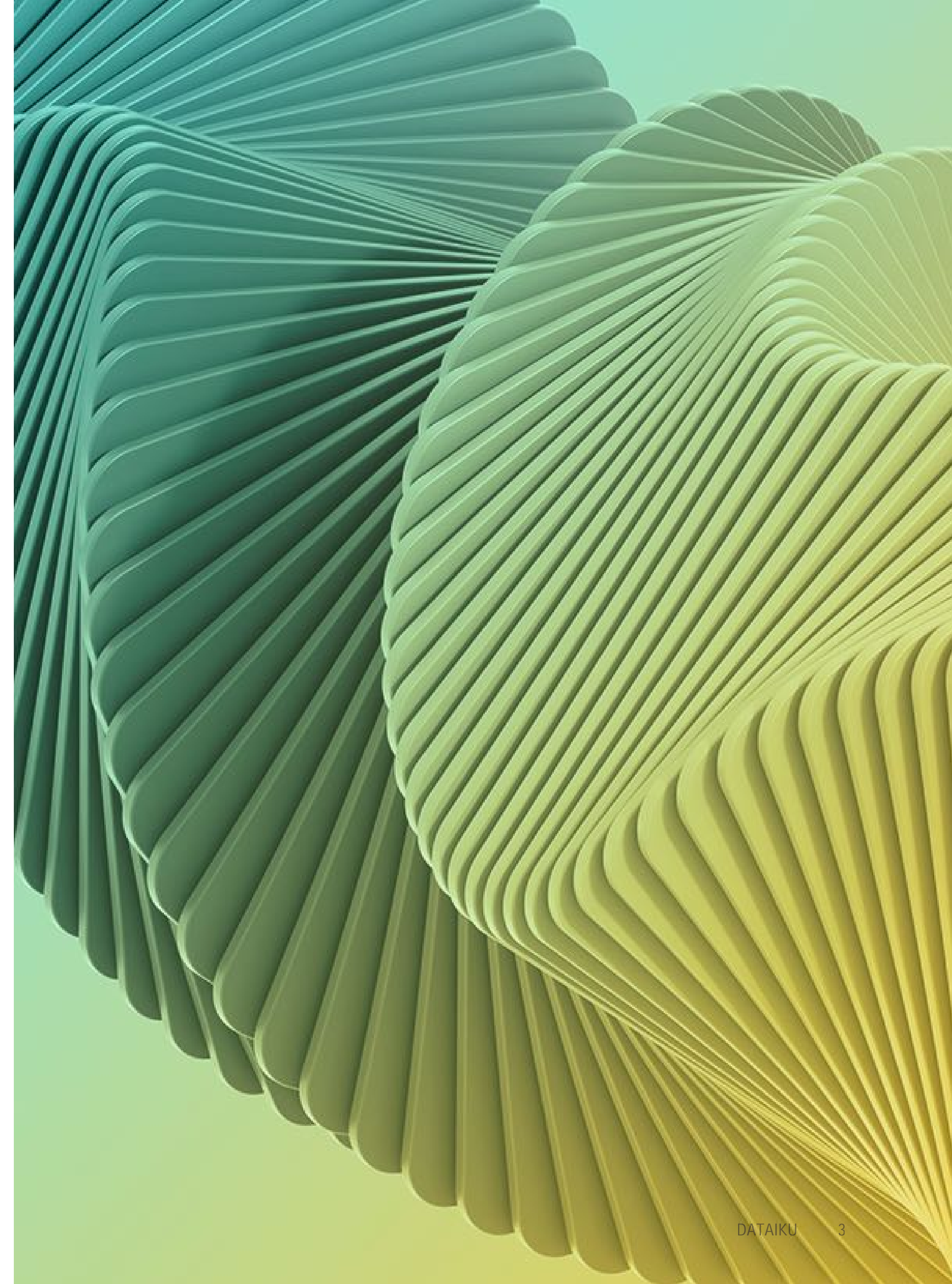
Without transparency into how AI makes decisions, and the control to guide those outcomes, organizations will never unlock its full impact. The pressure is mounting: **77%** of data leaders already believe a competitor has deployed a stronger AI strategy than their own company. The data leader mandate is clear: Reinforce trust, sharpen explainability, and ensure AI agents don't just work fast, but work right.

Diving Into Data Leaders' Global AI Confessions

This report captures unfiltered admissions from the people on the front lines of AI execution: data leaders themselves. Their confessions reveal what's really driving (or derailing) enterprise AI: performance gaps, hidden risks, and the uneasy truth about trust, reliability, and explainability of AI agents. From shadow AI and governance blind spots to what's working at scale, these findings are as surprising as they are urgent.

We also connect these findings back to our [Global AI Confessions Report: CEO Edition](#), released in March 2025, to highlight where executives and data leaders align and where their perspectives diverge. Finally, we break down regional results across the U.S., U.K., Germany, France, the United Arab Emirates, APAC, and Japan, revealing the unique pressures and opportunities shaping agentic AI adoption in each market.

The deeper you go into this report, the clearer the picture becomes: Data leaders are responsible and most accountable for both driving AI forward and confronting the practical barriers that will define whether AI in 2026 is a story of trust and control or one of blind spots and missed potential. Ultimately, the winners and losers will be determined very publicly on the world stage, impacting markets and companies as much as careers for those responsible.



I MUST CONFESS...

I Let AI Agents Make Critical Business Decisions, Even Though I Don't Fully Trust Them

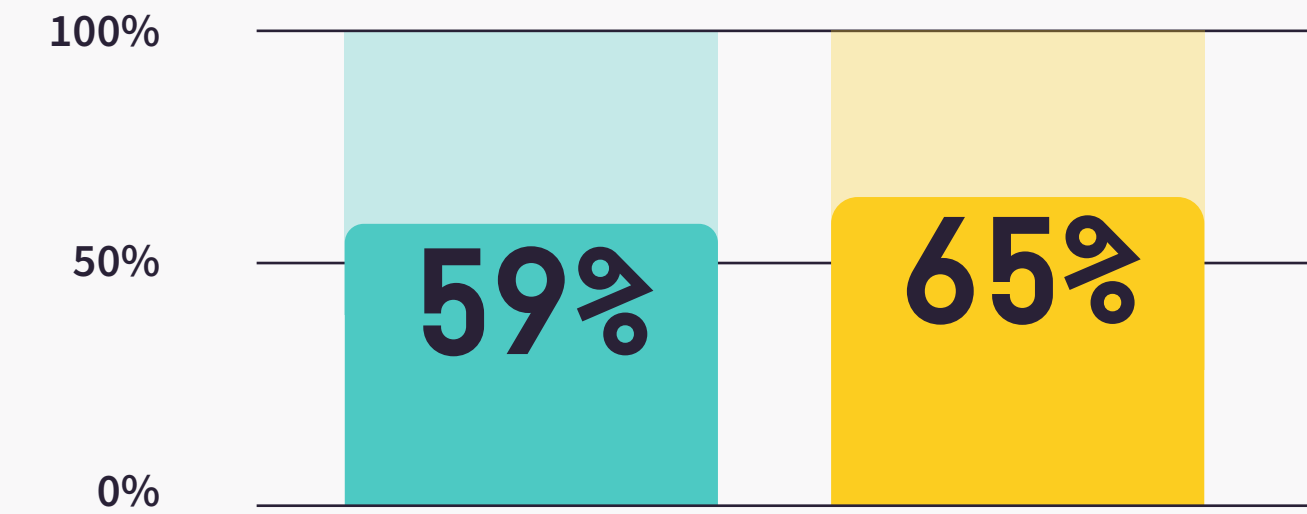
KEY FINDING



Leaders know the risks. Four in five (80%) admit that an accurate but unexplainable AI decision is more dangerous to their organization than a wrong but traceable one.

Knowing the danger isn't stopping leaders from rolling the dice: Nearly 3 in 4 (72%) leaders would allow an AI agent to make a critical business decision **without explanation** of how the result was reached, and 81% say they'd stake their jobs on those calls.

KEY FINDINGS



But that trust is fragile. In practice, well over half (59%) of leaders have overridden a decision or answer from an AI agent because it lacked a clear explanation, and two in three (65%) have questioned an agent's decision outright.

KEY FINDING



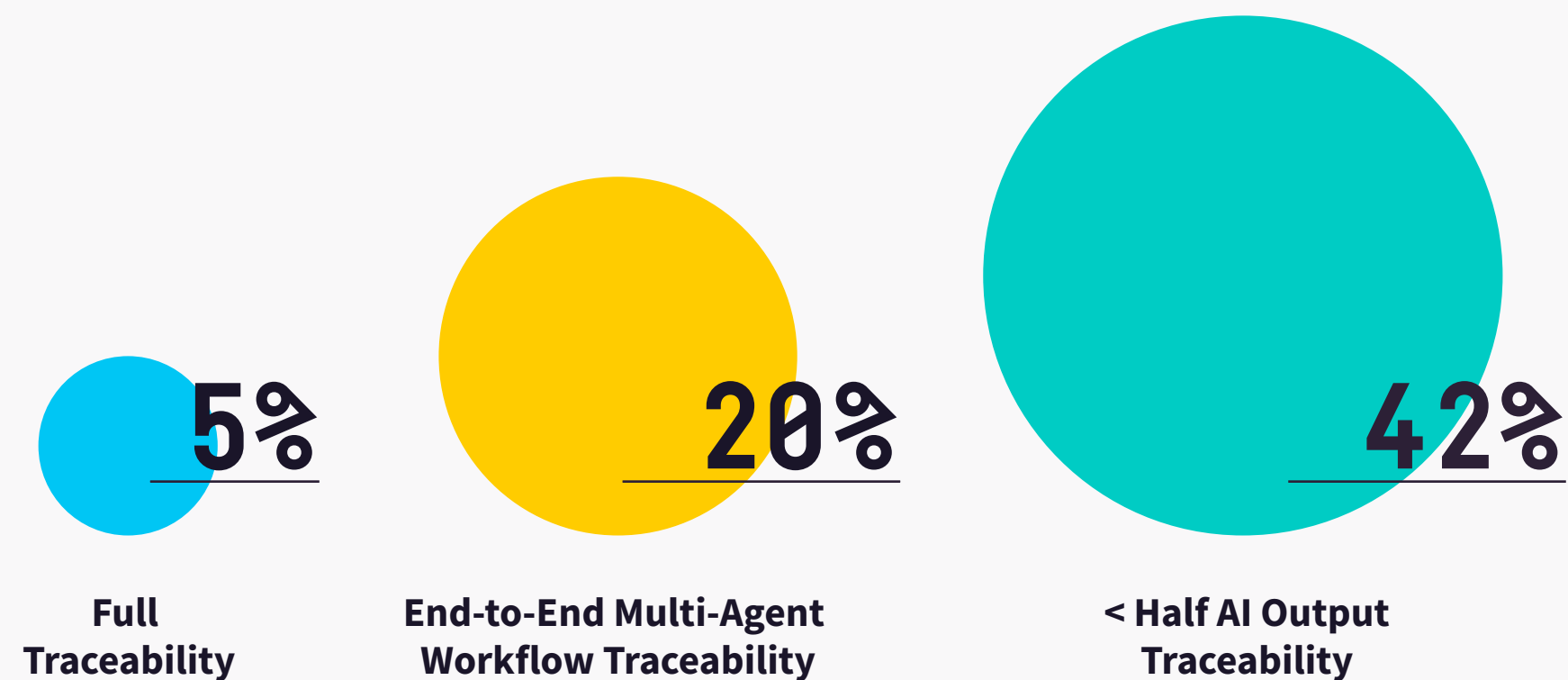
Very few organizations (just 5%) require a human in the loop for their existing AI agents, so answer accuracy often becomes the sole safety net.

That paradox explains why 75% still flag trust in AI agent deployment as a concern. Data leaders may lean on AI for speed and scale, but without explainability, oversight, or guardrails, every decision carries hidden risks that can derail their AI success as much as their company's performance.

I MUST CONFESS...

My AI Agents Don't Always Show Their Work and I'm Not Sure They Could Pass an Audit

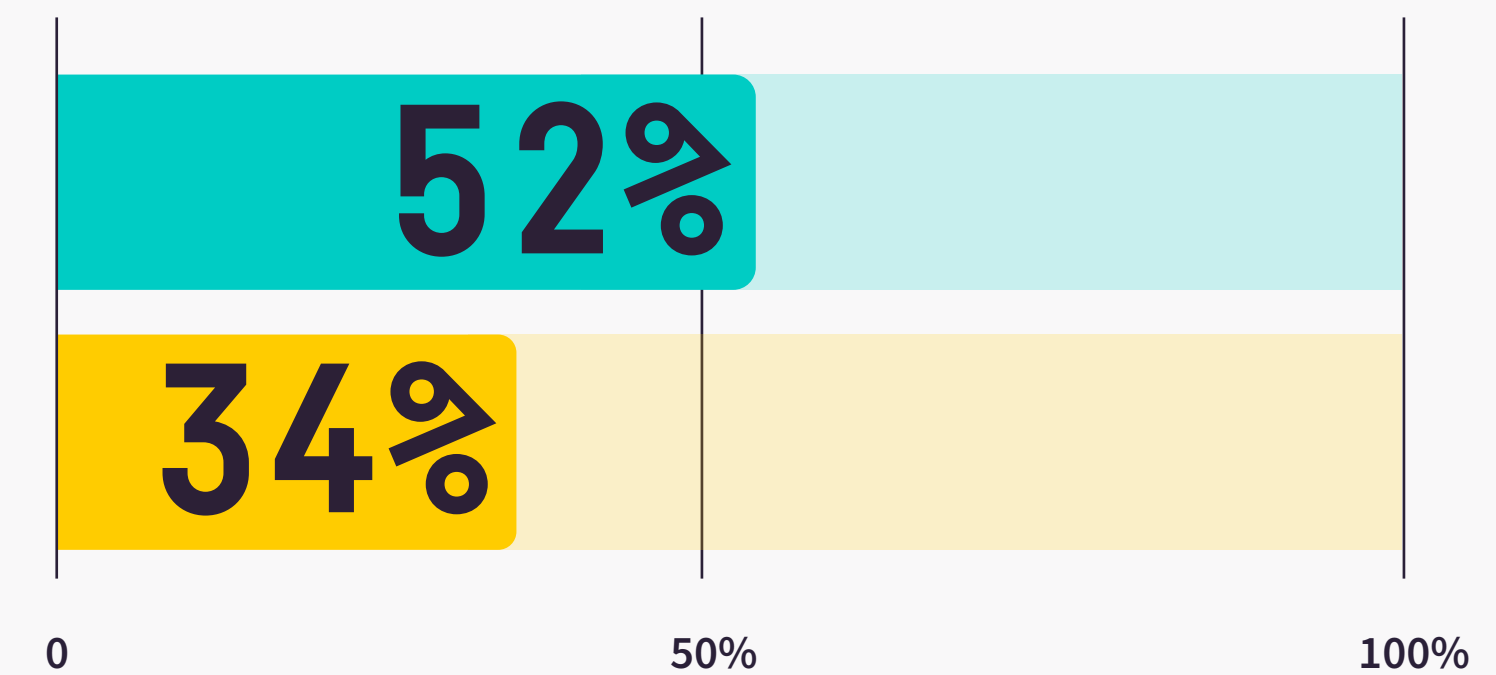
KEY FINDING



Explainability remains a glaring weakness. Only **5%** of data leaders say their AI output is traceable 100% of the time, while **42%** admit less than half of their organization's AI output includes a decision path. Just one in five (**20%**) say their multi-agent workflows are always traceable end to end.

Governance practices are inconsistent: Only half (47%) of data leaders require AI systems to “show their work” frequently and just 19% mandate explainable reasoning every time before approving for production.

KEY FINDINGS

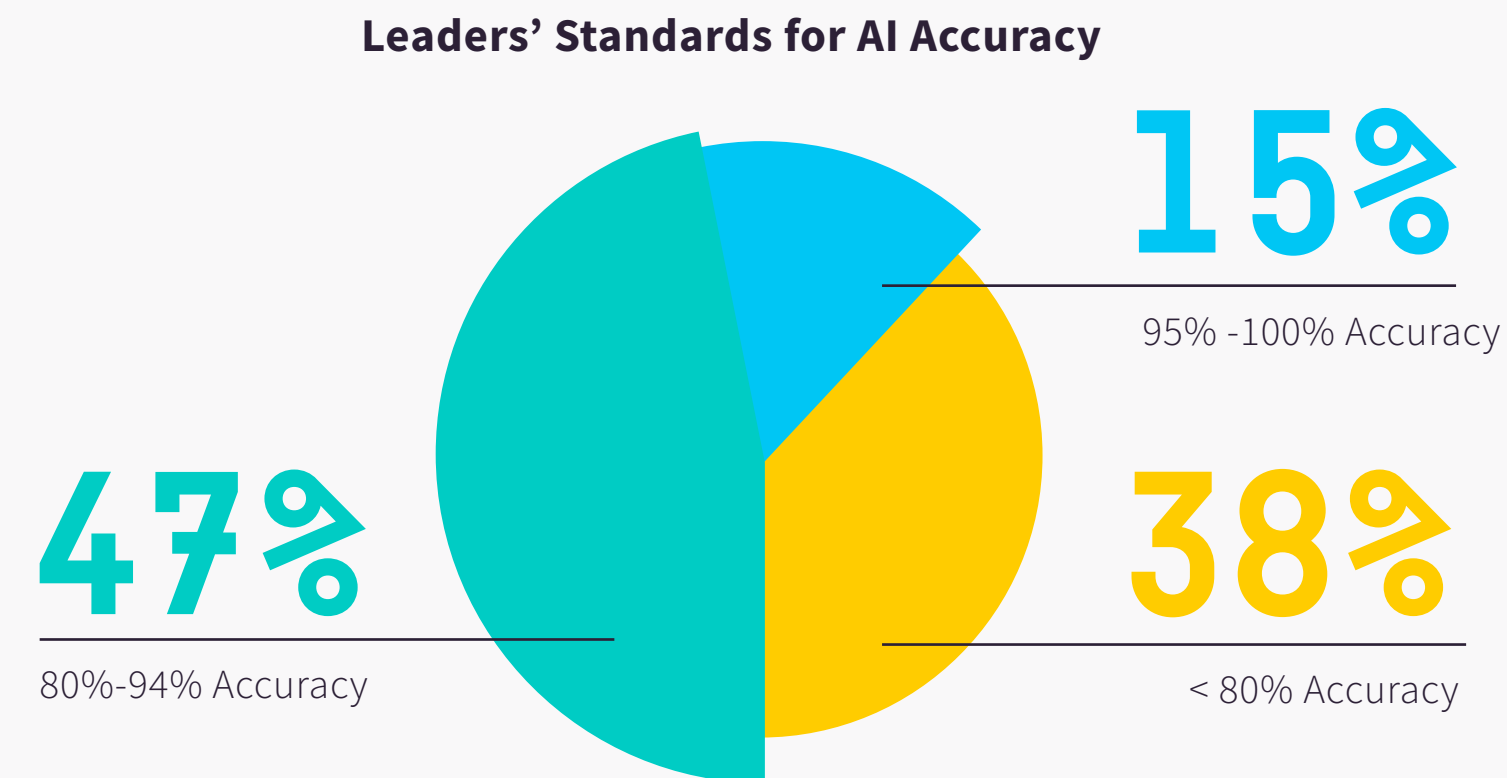


The consequences are real: More than half (**52%**) have delayed or blocked an agent deployment because it lacked explainability, and only **34%** are very confident their agents could pass even a basic decision audit today.

I MUST CONFESS...

I Say Accuracy Matters Most, but I Don't Always Hold AI to a Human Standard

KEY FINDING



When it comes to trusting AI in business decisions, leaders set the bar high, but not impossibly so. Nearly half (47%) expect high accuracy in the 80%–94% range before allowing AI-driven decisions, while just 15% demand near-perfection at 95%–100%. Surprisingly, over one-third (38%) admit they accept less than 80% accuracy or explainability before green-lighting AI-driven decision-making.

It's a telling gap: Most leaders don't expect machines to be flawless, even as they often hold people to higher standards. The willingness to compromise reflects a trade-off between speed, scale, and certainty.

KEY FINDING



But when AI disappoints, patience wears thin. In the past year alone, nearly half (45%) of data leaders have abandoned an off-the-shelf agent they invested in because it failed to meet performance or deliver value.

KEY FINDING



Accuracy ultimately trumps all else. Over half (52%) say they would prioritize accurate responses over lower costs or faster outputs.

The confession is clear: AI doesn't have to be perfect, but it must perform better than "good enough" to earn trust and prove its value.

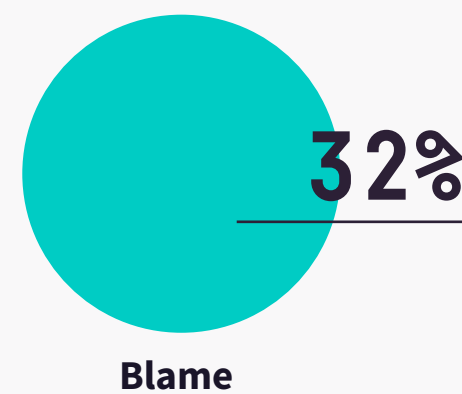
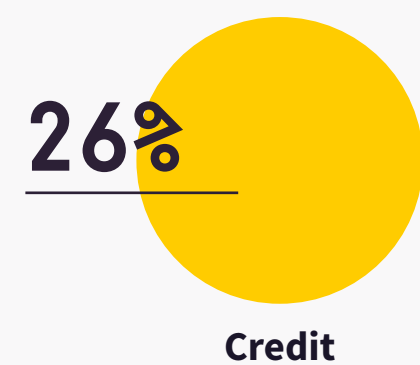
I MUST CONFESS...

The CIO Gets More Blame Than Acclaim for the Impact of AI

If an AI decision (such as from an AI agent) delivers a business gain, data leaders are clear about who will be celebrated: 45% say the CIO or CDO will get the credit, with CIOs alone taking nearly a quarter (26%) of the recognition. Business unit leaders (10%) and IT (12%) barely register as likely winners.

But when things go wrong, the burden grows heavier. One in three (32%) say the CIO would be blamed for a failed AI decision, and when combined with CDOs (24%), over half (56%) believe the accountability would rest squarely on the shoulders of those two data officers.

KEY FINDINGS



In short: CIOs may get **a quarter** of the credit if it goes right, but **a third** of the blame if it goes bad.

This uneven balance of praise and punishment reflects a broader misalignment inside the C-suite. More than two-thirds (68%) of data leaders say executives overestimate the accuracy of their AI systems, and nearly three-quarters (73%) admit the C-suite underestimates how long it takes to achieve production-ready reliability. The result? Unrealistic expectations and pressure on AI leaders to deliver more, faster, and with fewer safety nets.

Yet the story isn't all about misperceptions and blame. Data leaders overwhelmingly believe that involving business subject matter experts (SME) accelerates and strengthens AI outcomes versus those without SME involvement (91%), and the vast majority (94%) say their AI systems enhance expert knowledge rather than replace it.

The takeaway is clear: The more AI is opened up to business experts, the stronger the outcomes, leading to projects that hit a level of performance worthy of scaling. Broadening access ensures that AI isn't just a technical project, but deeply rooted in the business itself.

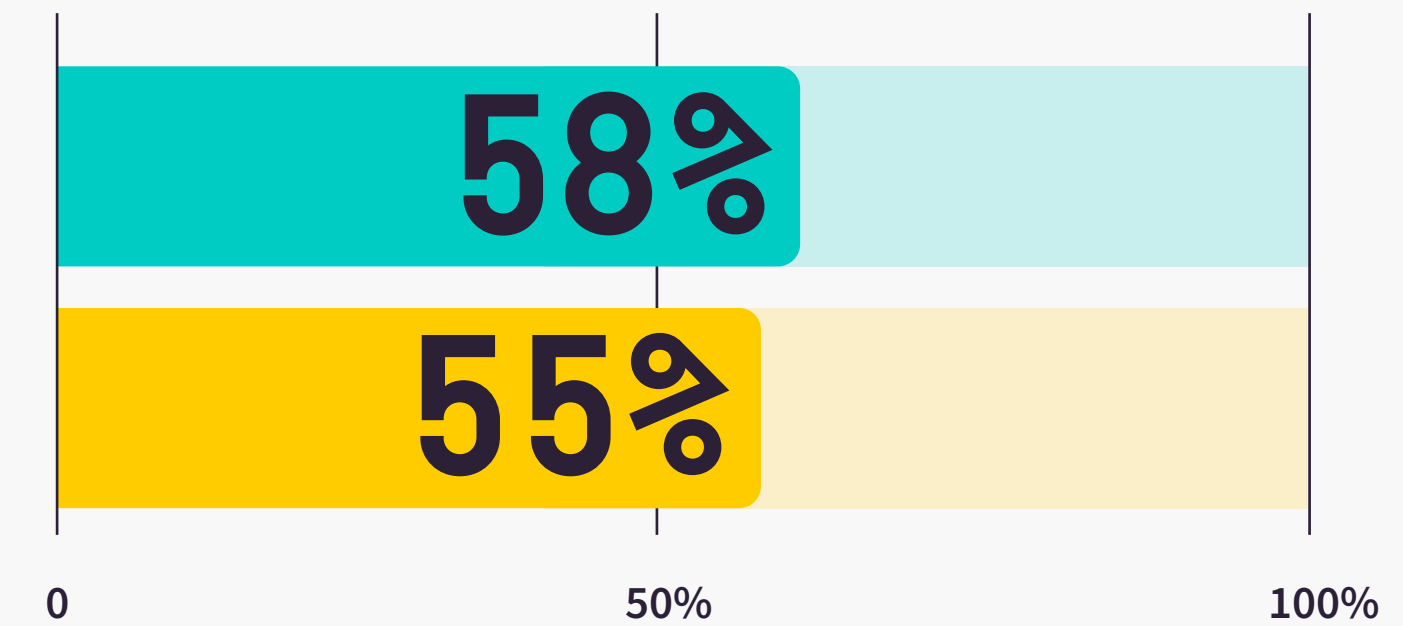
Perhaps the most revealing admission: When it comes to business insight, data leaders often put more faith in AI than in their human bosses. **Data leaders often trust AI agents more than their own leadership teams for some of the most critical operational functions.** Further, 82% of data leaders believe AI can provide **more accurate business analysis than their boss.** In short, AI isn't just supporting decisions anymore, it's reshaping who (or what) leaders trust most to make them.

I MUST CONFESS...

I'm Not Ready to Defend Our AI to Regulators (or Protect It From Itself)

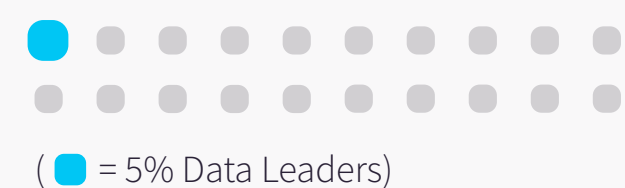
Accountability on paper rarely matches reality. **Just 5%** of data leaders say their teams could trace AI decisions for regulators 100% of the time. For an era where explainability is increasingly required by law, that's a glaring compliance gap.

KEY FINDINGS



The risks don't stop there. More than half of leaders worry their organizations are sitting on a ticking time bomb: **58%** believe AI-generated code creates hidden security vulnerabilities, while **55%** fear AI agents could expose sensitive data to unauthorized parties.

KEY FINDING



5%

of data leaders say their teams could trace AI decisions for regulators 100% of the time.

KEY FINDING



These concerns aren't hypothetical: **59%** have already experienced a business issue or crisis stemming from AI hallucinations or inaccuracies in the past year.

Confessions in Contrast

How Do Data Leaders Confessions Stack Up Against CEO Confessions?

[The Global AI Confessions Report: CEO Edition](#)

exposed how top executives view AI as both a make-or-break opportunity and a looming risk. But when compared with data leaders, the people actually implementing and operating AI, some striking differences emerge.

COMPETITOR REALITY CHECK

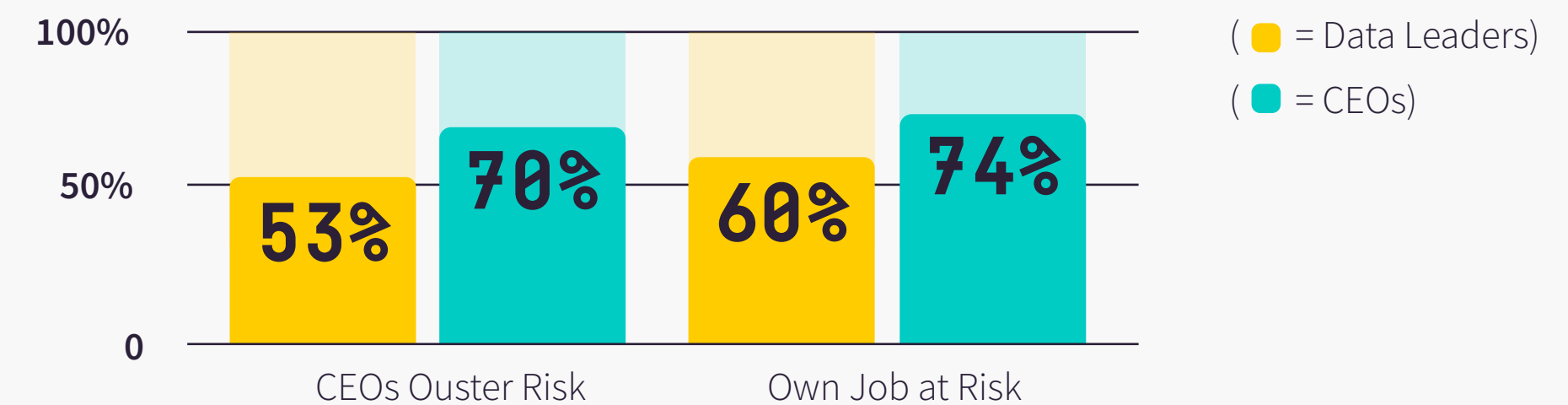
KEY FINDINGS



Data leaders are far more likely than CEOs to feel they're already behind. The majority (**77%**) say at least one competitor has deployed a superior AI strategy, compared to just **54%** of CEOs. From the ground level, the competitive gap is real and growing.

BLAME AND THE FIRING LINE

KEY FINDINGS



The specter of career risk looms large in both groups, but with nuance. Over half of data leaders (**53%**) believe a CEO will be ousted in the next year for a failed AI strategy or crisis caused by an AI malfunction, compared to the **70%** of CEOs who fear the same.

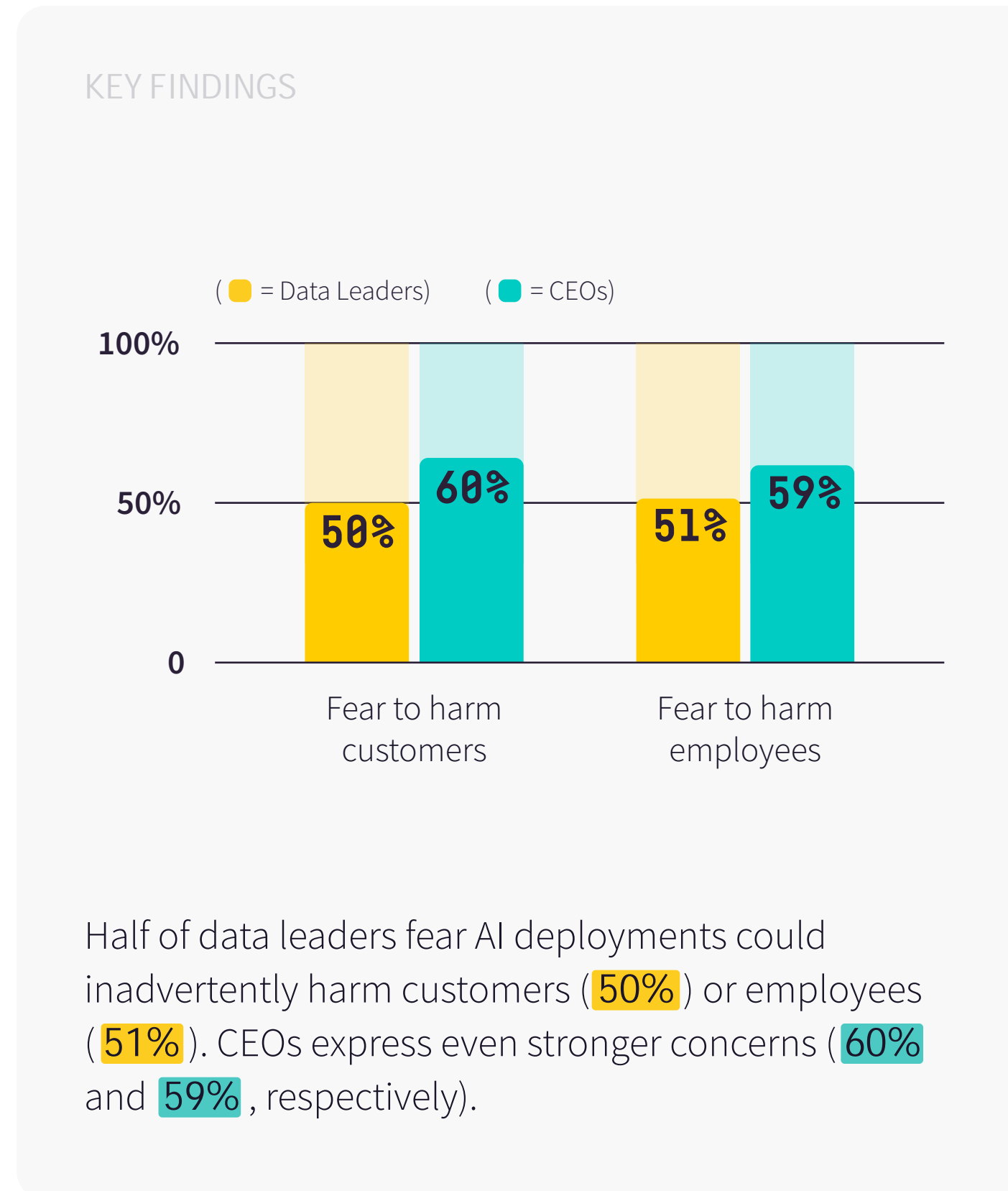
And while **60%** of data leaders say their own jobs are at risk if AI doesn't deliver measurable business gains in the next two years, that's still below the **74%** of CEOs who see themselves on the chopping block. The difference underscores a tension: CEOs shoulder ultimate accountability, but data leaders carry the hands-on responsibility for outcomes.

AI'S STRATEGIC SEAT AT THE TABLE



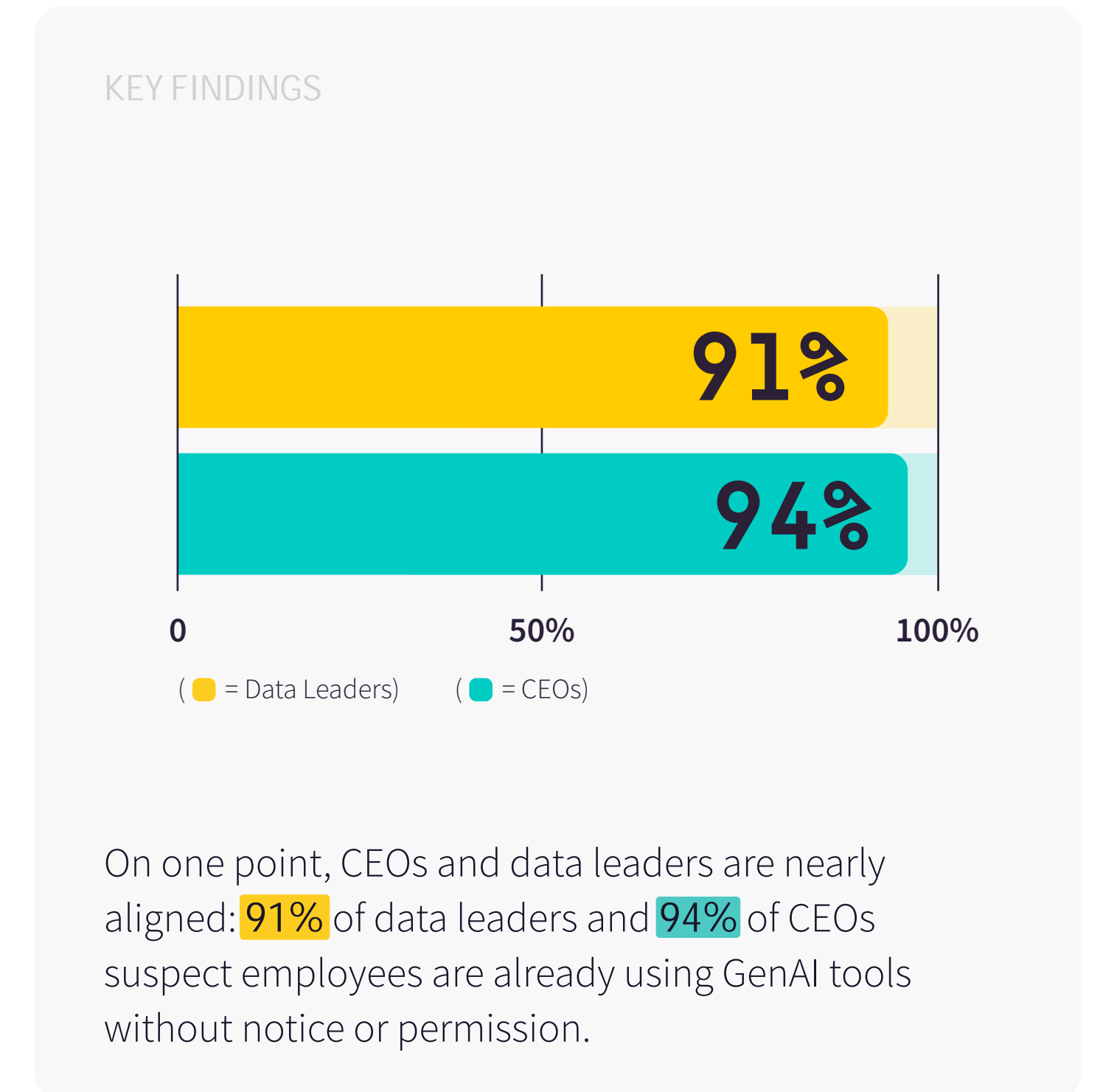
Whether that signals more grounded expectations or stronger faith in human leadership, the delta reveals that data leaders may still place higher value on human judgment than their bosses.

GUARDRAILS AND RISKS



The gap doesn't erase the risk, as both groups see real potential for harm, underscoring the need for stronger governance

SHADOW AI IS UNIVERSAL



Shadow AI is no longer a hidden phenomenon, it's a shared concern at every level.



REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From U.S. Data Leaders

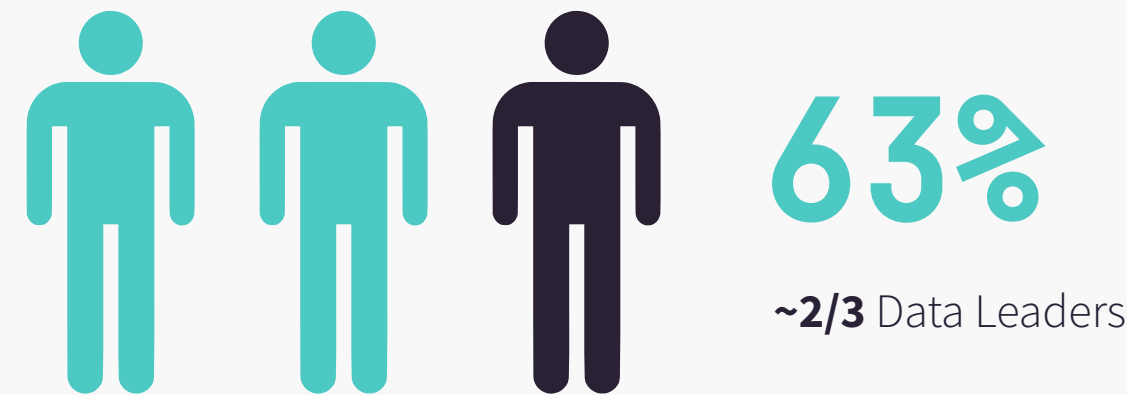
Here's how U.S. data leaders' confessions stack up against CEOs and peers abroad.

While executives chase optics and strategy, U.S. data leaders sound alarms about fragile guardrails, warning of catastrophic data leaks, insisting on accuracy above speed, and flagging unexplained AI decisions as the biggest risk of all.

U.S. data leaders admit to urgent frontline risks:

DATA EXPOSURE RISKS

KEY FINDING



Nearly two-thirds (63%) of U.S. data leaders say agents exposing sensitive data is a “disaster waiting to happen,” topping their list of concerns versus issues like runaway costs or hallucinations.

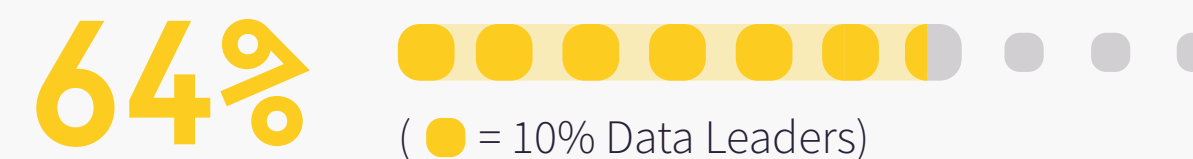
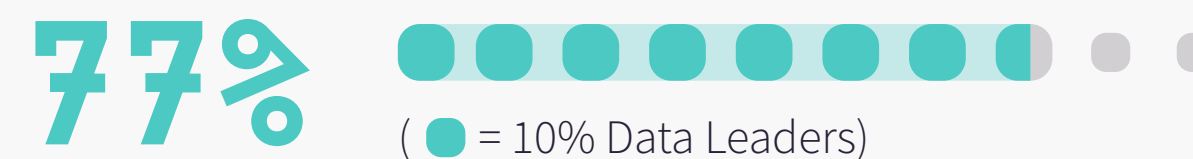
That anxiety runs especially deep around intellectual property: 84% express high concern about giving AI agents access to proprietary business data, only exceeded by the U.K. (90%) and Japan (87%).

ACCURACY VS. EXPLAINABILITY

A striking 85% of U.S. data leaders believe an accurate but unexplained AI decision is riskier than a wrong but traceable one, underscoring their demand for transparency.

In practice, only a quarter (25%) always require agents to “show their work,” though U.S. leaders are slightly more rigorous than the global average (19%). Even so, 58% have delayed or blocked deployments over explainability concerns.

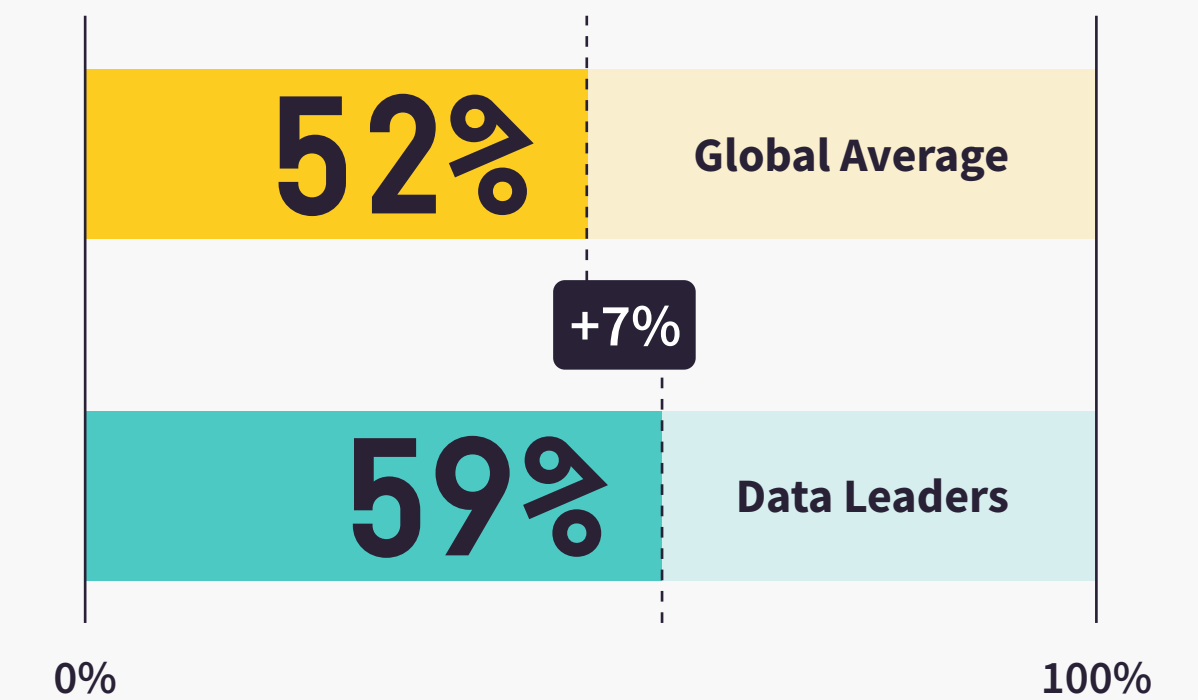
KEY FINDINGS



The scrutiny doesn’t stop there: American data leaders are the most critical of AI outputs globally, with 77% questioning and 64% overriding agent decisions in the past year.

ACCURACY FIRST

KEY FINDINGS



When it comes to performance, U.S. leaders are pragmatic: 59% prioritize accuracy above speed or cost when deploying agents (above the 52% global average).

This insistence on accuracy reflects a “performance-first” mindset, a willingness to move fast with AI, but not at the expense of reliability.

Confessions in Contrast: U.S. Data Leaders vs. CEOs

This section compares findings from U.S. respondents of this Data Leaders Edition of Dataiku's Global AI Confessions Report to the CEO Edition (published March 2025).

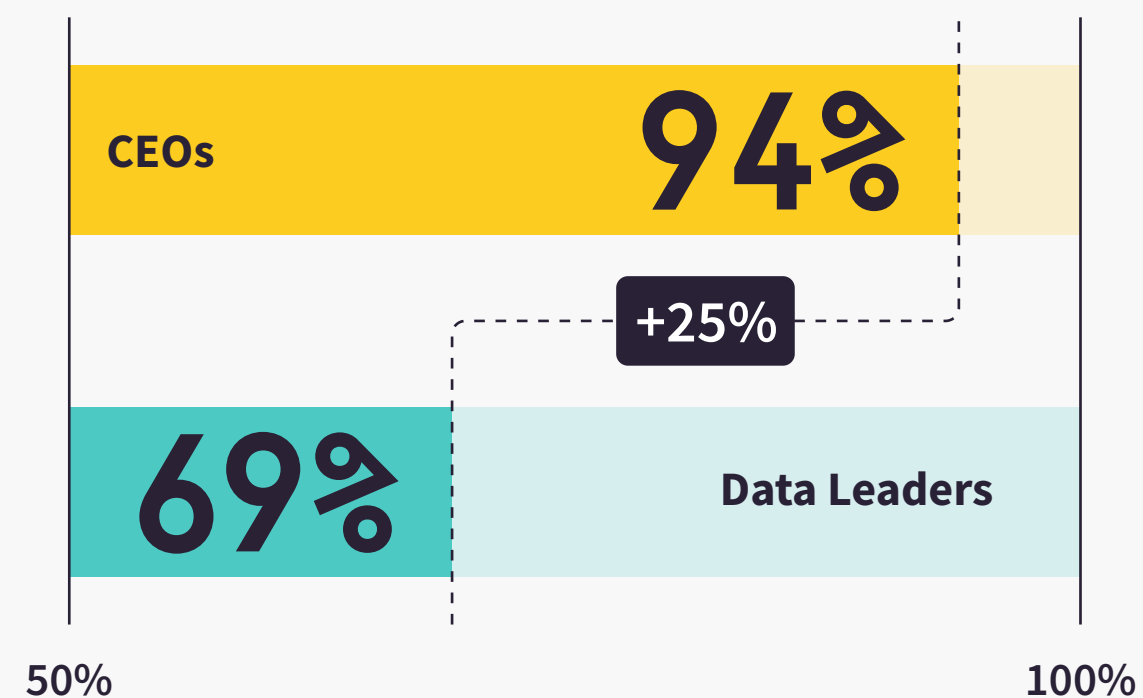
CAREER RISK & ACCOUNTABILITY

64% of U.S. data leaders believe a CEO will be ousted within the next year due to failed AI, compared to 74% of U.S. CEOs who expect this.

Similarly, 64% of U.S. data leaders fear their own roles are at risk without measurable AI results, trailing U.S. CEOs at 79%.

STRATEGIC CONFIDENCE

KEY FINDINGS



Only two in three (69%) of U.S. data leaders think AI can create a better strategic plan than a human executive, far below the vast majority of U.S. CEOs at 94%.

GUARDRAILS & RISKS

KEY FINDINGS



54% of U.S. data leaders worry AI could harm customers and 52% fear harm to employees, noticeably lower than U.S. CEOs (60% and 62%).

SHADOW AI

88% of U.S. data leaders suspect shadow AI use in their organizations, compared to a striking 98% of U.S. CEOs.



REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From U.K. Data Leaders

Here's how U.K. data leaders' confessions stack up against CEOs and peers abroad.

While executives focus on governance optics and strategic positioning, U.K. data leaders highlight pragmatic risks, from data exposure and explainability gaps to political and economic uncertainty shaping provider choices.

U.K. data leaders admit to sharp, context-driven risks:

JOB STAKING TRUST, WITH BOUNDARIES

KEY FINDING

85%



A striking **85%** of U.K. data leaders, **the highest globally**, would let AI agents make strategic business decisions they'd personally stake their jobs on, showing unusually high confidence.

That trust even extends to day-to-day oversight, with 63% saying they trust AI more than leadership to monitor performance metrics.

But there are limits: Roughly half (48%) would never recommend AI for final hiring or firing decisions, one of the highest caution rates globally.

FEW DEPLOYMENT DELAYS

At 43%, U.K. data leaders are **the least likely globally** to have delayed or blocked AI agent deployments in the past year. This bias for action sets them apart from more cautious peers.

Yet 78% say their executives underestimate the difficulty of achieving reliable AI, exposing a gap between data leaders' day-to-day reality and boardroom perception.

DATA EXPOSURE

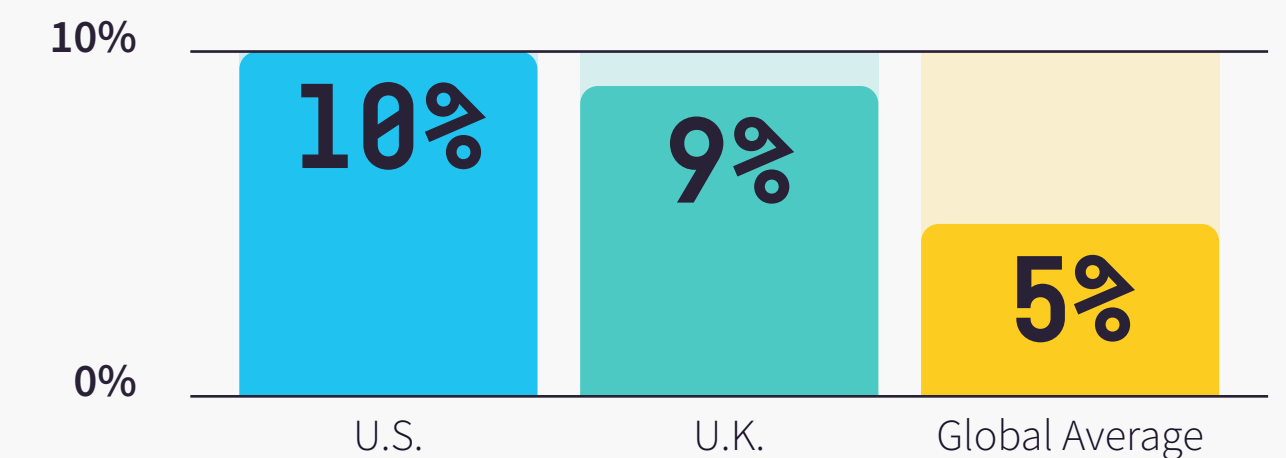
68% of U.K. data leaders call agents exposing sensitive data a "disaster waiting to happen," making it a top concern over others such as hallucinations or runaway agent costs.

Beyond that, 90% cite integration challenges or proprietary data access as top concerns, **the highest globally**.

EXPLAINABILITY RISKS

85% of U.K. data leaders believe an accurate but unexplained AI decision is riskier than a wrong but traceable one.

KEY FINDINGS



U.K. leaders are also slightly ahead of peers on audit readiness, with **9%** confident they could fully trace AI decisions for regulators 100% of the time (vs. **5%** global and second only to the U.S. at **10%**).

POLITICAL & ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

69% of U.K. data leaders admit their choice of AI provider is heavily swayed by the current political or economic climate, the second highest globally just after Germany.

Confessions in Contrast: U.K. Data Leaders vs. CEOs

This section compares findings from U.K. respondents of this Data Leaders Edition of Dataiku's Global AI Confessions Report to the CEO Edition (published March 2025).

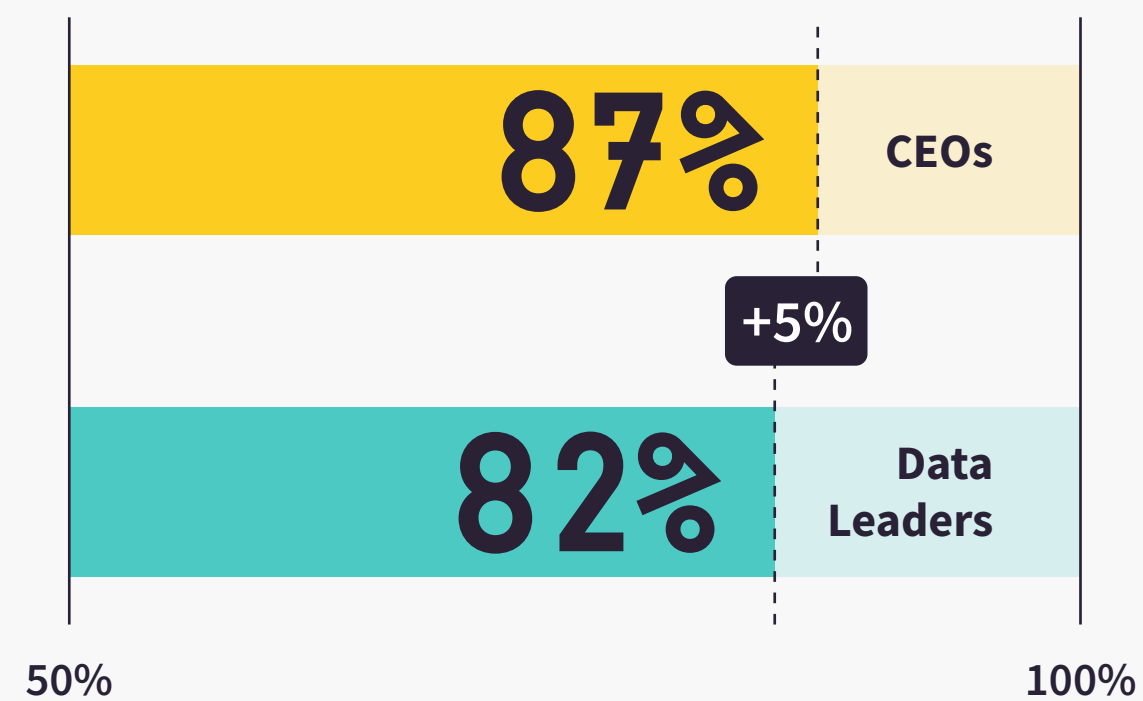
CAREER RISK & ACCOUNTABILITY

63% of U.K. data leaders expect a CEO will be ousted in the next year due to failed AI, slightly below 68% of U.K. CEOs.

Meanwhile, 63% of U.K. data leaders fear their own roles are at risk without measurable AI results, just below U.K. CEOs at 68%.

STRATEGIC CONFIDENCE

KEY FINDINGS



82% of U.K. data leaders believe AI can craft a better strategic plan than a company executive leader, just under U.K. CEOs at 87%.

GUARDRAILS & RISKS

KEY FINDINGS



63% of U.K. data leaders fear AI could harm both customers and employees, a revelation that is higher than U.K. CEOs (59% and 57%, respectively).

SHADOW AI

96% of U.K. data leaders suspect unsanctioned shadow AI use in their organizations, above 88% of U.K. CEOs.



REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From French Data Leaders

Here's how French data leaders' confessions stack up against CEOs and peers abroad.

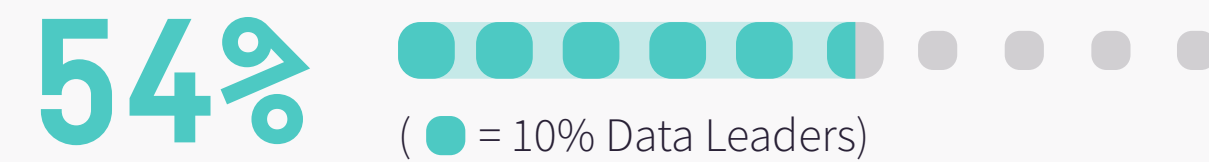
While CEOs highlight AI's promise in strategy and competitiveness, data leaders reveal the cracks, from limited traceability and weak audit readiness to strategies guided more by technological ambition than business outcomes.

French data leaders admit to unique vulnerabilities:

TRACEABILITY GAPS

Only one in five (22%) say their AI output is traceable at least 75% of the time, among the lowest across all regions.

KEY FINDING

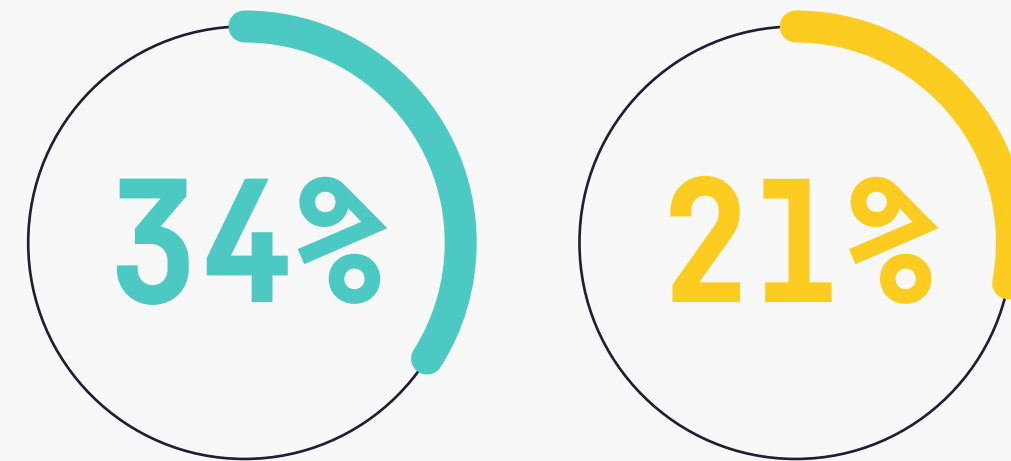


Surprisingly, more than half (54%) admit to approving AI outputs without fully understanding them, underscoring the plight of weak explainability and tied with the U.S. as the highest globally.

Finally, 10% rarely or never require AI systems to “show their work,” and 12% admit to not requiring end-to-end traceability of AI-generated answers in multi-agent workflows.

AUDIT FRAGILITY

KEY FINDINGS



Over a third (34%) confess their teams could trace AI decisions for regulators less than half the time, while 21% admit they’re not confident their agents could pass even a basic decision audit.

TECH LED STRATEGIES

A striking 82% of French data leaders agree their company’s AI strategy is driven more by technological ambition than by business outcomes.

This disconnect extends to leadership: One in five (20%) French data leaders outright disagree their C-Suite understands how AI works.

COST OVER ACCURACY

KEY FINDINGS



One quarter (25%) are willing to prioritize the costs of deploying agents over accuracy of responses and speed of performance, highlighting a tradeoff that could undermine reliability at scale.

Some are even more permissive, with 15% open to delegating any business function to AI, the highest globally.

Confessions in Contrast: French Data Leaders vs. CEOs

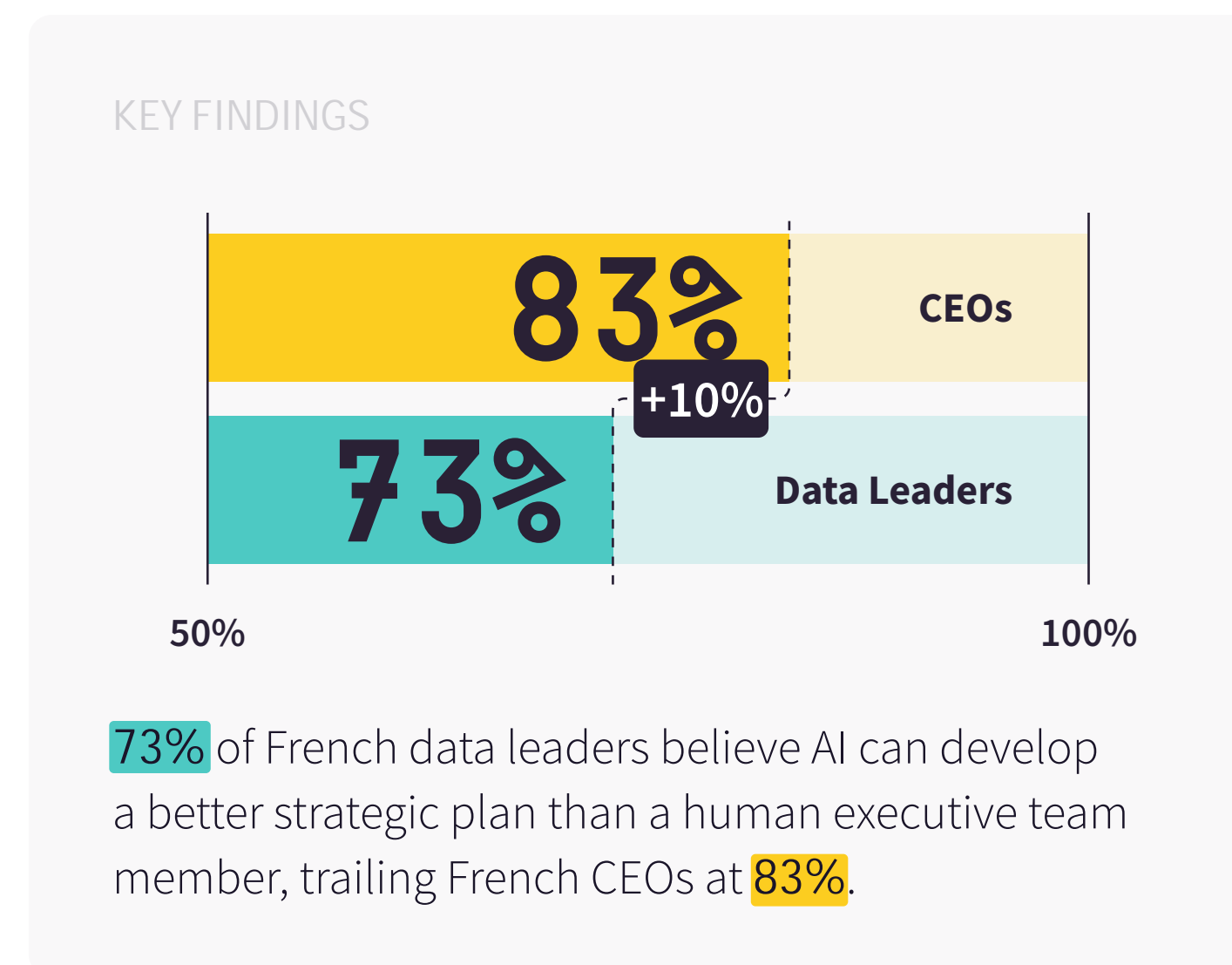
This section compares findings from French respondents of this Data Leaders Edition of Dataiku's Global AI Confessions Report to the CEO Edition (published March 2025).

CAREER RISK & ACCOUNTABILITY

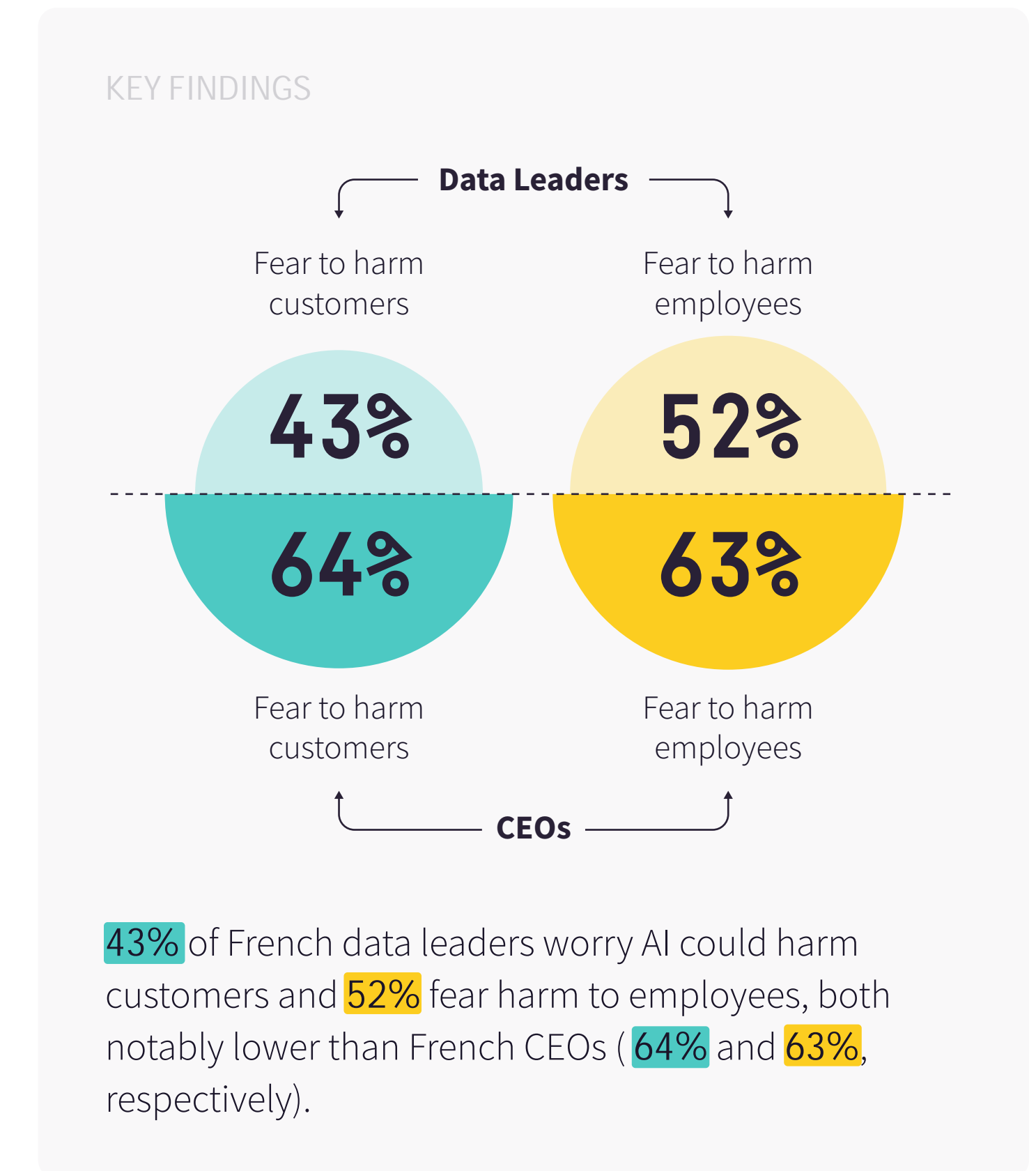
Nearly half of French data leaders (56%) believe a CEO will be ousted within the next year for a failed AI strategy or crisis caused by an AI malfunction, lower than the 70% of French CEOs.

Meanwhile, roughly half (54%) of French data leaders fear their own jobs are at risk if AI doesn't deliver measurable results in up to two years, compared to almost three-quarters (72%) of French CEOs.

STRATEGIC SEAT AT THE TABLE



GUARDRAILS & RISKS



SHADOW AI

Nearly all French data leaders (93%) suspect shadow AI use in their organizations, closely aligned with CEOs (96%).



REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From German Data Leaders

Here's how German data leaders' confessions stack up against CEOs and peers abroad.

While executives emphasize strategy and competitiveness, German practitioners surface deeper fragilities, from weak explainability and traceability of AI outputs to a surprisingly high tolerance for low accuracy and mounting concerns about hallucinations and costs.

German data leaders admit to fragile guardrails and risky tolerances:

EXPLAINABILITY & TRACEABILITY

75% of German data leaders would trust an AI agent to make a critical business decision without explanation, higher even than the global average of 72%.

Only 17% of German data leaders always trace decision paths (vs. 25% in the U.S. and a global average of 20%), while over a third (34%) say their teams could trace AI outputs for regulators less than half the time.

Six in ten (58%) have delayed or blocked deployment due to explainability concerns, showing these weaknesses actively hinder adoption (among the highest globally, just preceded by France and tied with the U.S.).

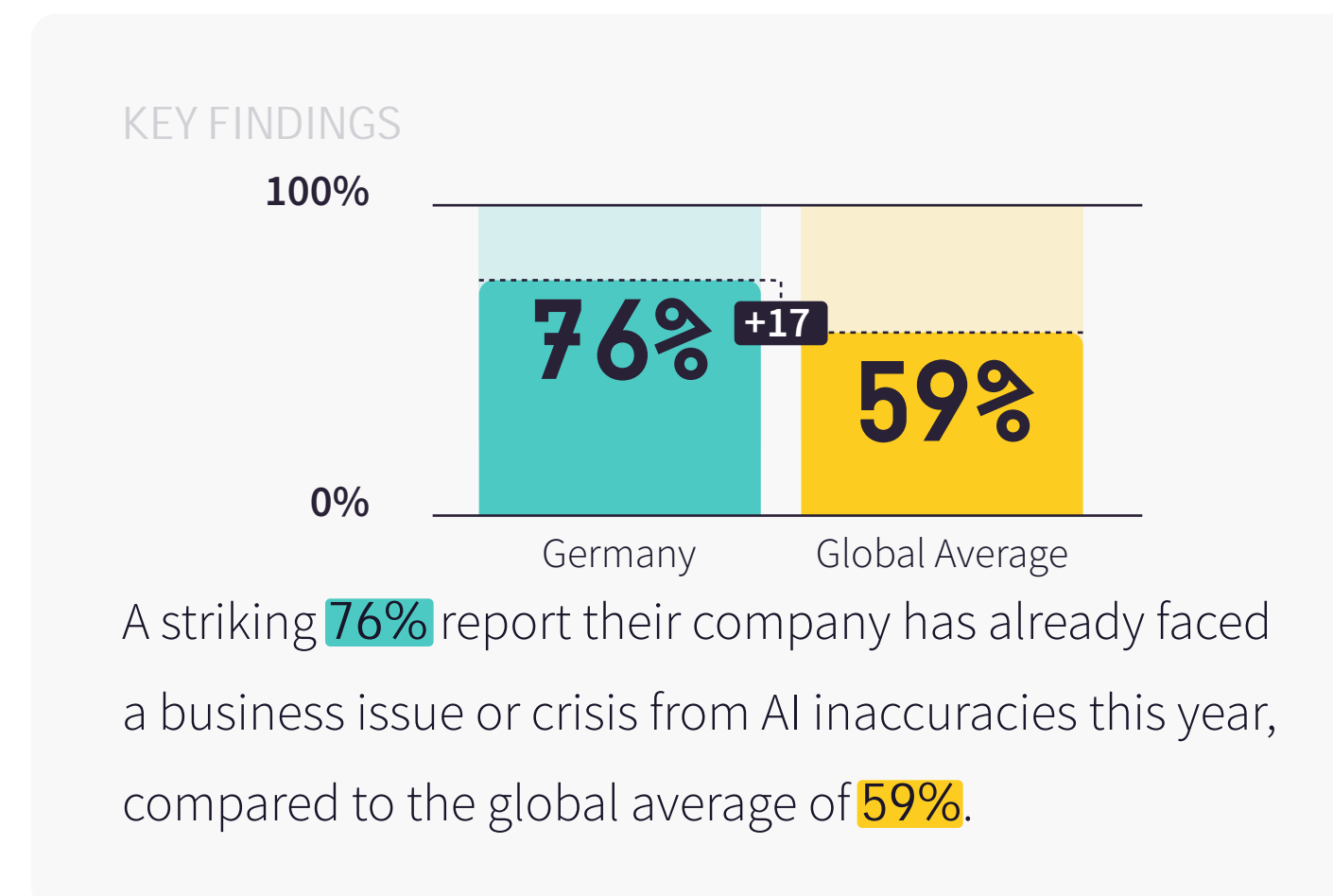
ACCURACY TOLERANCE

Over half (53%) of German data leaders would accept less than 80% accuracy in AI-driven decisions, the most lenient globally with the global average sitting at 38%.

Strikingly, only 4% demand very high accuracy and explainability (vs. 15% global average), the lowest worldwide.

HALLUCINATIONS & COSTS

58% of German data leaders call hallucinations a “disaster waiting to happen” and 59% say runaway costs are a major concern, compared to a global average of 49% and 46%, respectively.



PERFORMANCE FAILURES

56% of German data leaders have abandoned an off-the-shelf AI agent in the past year for failing to deliver value, the highest worldwide and compared to an average of 45% globally.

INFLUENCE & WEIGHT

76% of German data leaders say AI business suggestions are taken more seriously than those made by humans, the highest worldwide, and 70% admit their provider choice is heavily swayed by the political and economic climate, once again the highest worldwide and compared to an average of 55% globally.

This gravity extends to leadership, with 68% expecting a CEO to be ousted tied to failed AI strategies, well above the global average of 56%.

RISK PERCEPTION

85% of German data leaders still agree that an accurate but unexplained AI decision is riskier than a wrong but traceable one, showing the paradox between tolerance and concern. This view is especially prevalent in Germany, as well as the U.S. and U.K.

That tension is heightened by skepticism toward leadership, with 78% saying their C-Suite overestimates AI accuracy, the highest globally and well above the 68% global average.

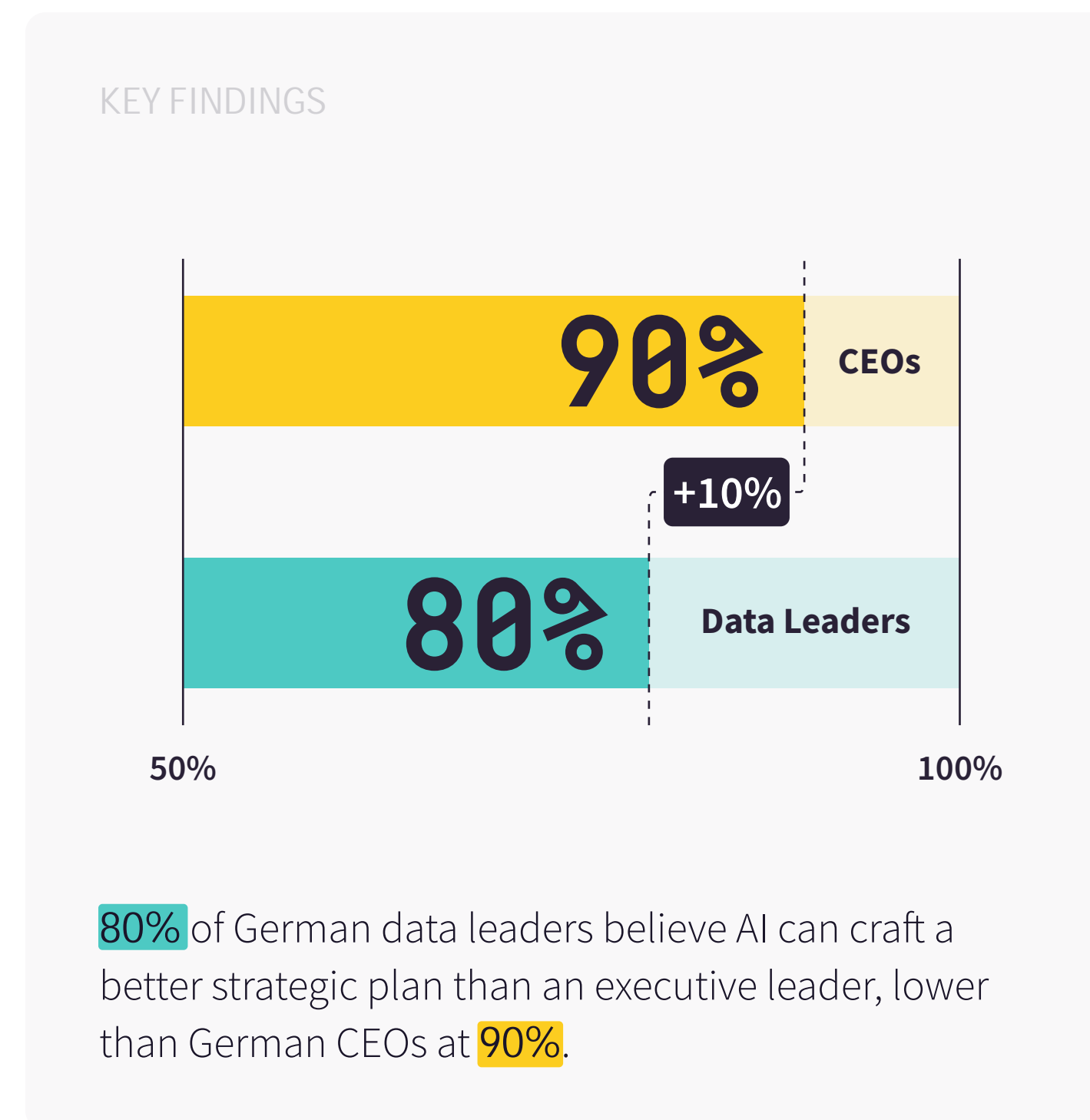
Confessions in Contrast: German Data Leaders vs. CEOs

This section compares findings from German respondents of this Data Leaders Edition of Dataiku's Global AI Confessions Report to the CEO Edition (published March 2025).

CAREER RISK & ACCOUNTABILITY

68% of German data leaders expect a CEO will be ousted due to failed AI in the next year (vs. 69% of German CEOs). 72% of German data leaders feel their own roles are at risk without measurable AI gains, just below German CEOs at 76%.

STRATEGIC CONFIDENCE



GUARDRAILS & RISKS





REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From UAE Data Leaders

Here's how UAE data leaders' confessions stack up against CEOs and peers abroad.

While others struggle with fragile traceability and blurred accountability, UAE leaders show stronger governance foundations, but still reveal an AI role tilted heavily toward operations over strategy.

UAE data leaders admit to unique dynamics around ownership and capability:

TRACEABILITY STRENGTH

77% of UAE data leaders say their multi-agent workflows are frequently or always traceable end to end, **the highest globally and compared to a global average of 66%**, signaling stronger governance foundations. They're also the most likely to hold AI/data science teams responsible for traceability (40% vs. 25% global).

CREDIT FOR GAINS

When AI delivers results, in the UAE the AI/data science team is most likely (42%) to get the credit, ahead of business leaders or IT. This view is popular globally but especially common in the UAE, **the highest worldwide** and compared to a global average of 32%.

SHARED BLAME

If AI outputs cause a business loss, responsibility falls almost evenly between AI/data science teams (33%) and the CIO (32%), reflecting a culture of dual accountability.

This is the exception, as most other data leaders globally cited the CIO as the one to be held responsible (32% as the global average versus just a 21% average globally who cited AI/data science teams).

TRUST IN ANALYSIS, WITH BOUNDARIES

KEY FINDINGS



70% of UAE data leaders trust AI over humans for data analysis and forecasting, **the highest globally**, yet **55%** would never delegate hiring or firing decisions to AI, **the highest globally** and compared to a **43%** global average.

OPERATIONAL TILT

Nearly a third (31%) of UAE data leaders believe their company's AI agents are **much** better at automating operational tasks than making analytical business judgments (**the highest globally and compared to a global average of 24%**) reinforcing the view of AI as an execution engine more than a strategic advisor.

This tolerance extends to error thresholds: One in ten (13%) are willing to allow more than 10% error before reverting to human oversight, higher than global norms.

LEADERSHIP STAKES

Unlike their peers around the world, only 35% of UAE data leaders expect CEOs to be ousted over AI crises, **the lowest globally** and far below the global average of 56%.



REGIONAL EDITION:

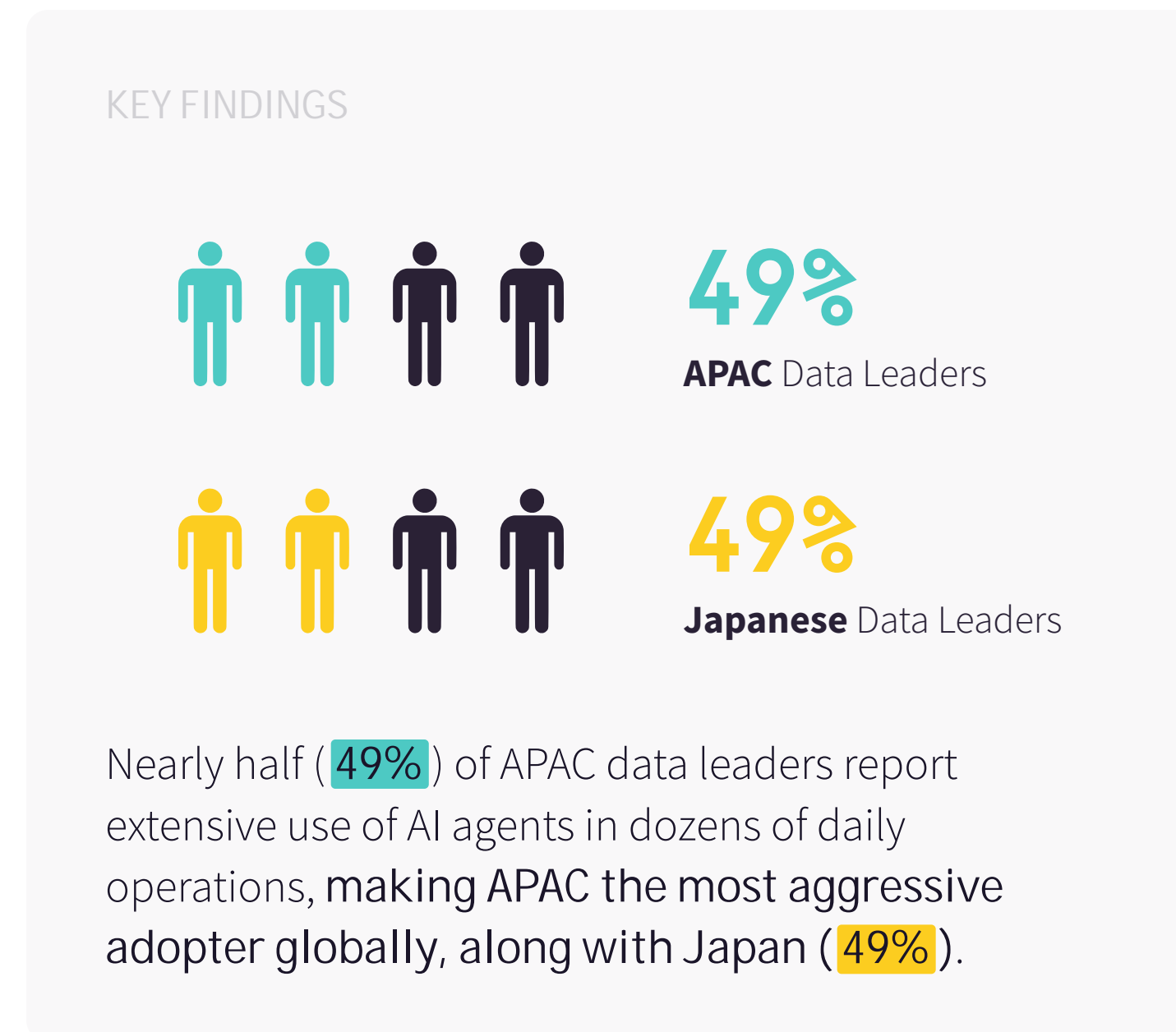
AI Confessions Direct From APAC Data Leaders

Here's how APAC data leaders' confessions stack up against peers abroad.

No region leans harder on AI for daily operations, but beneath the surface, weak explainability, shaky audit readiness, and uneven governance show just how fragile that dependence can be.

APAC data leaders admit to both bold adoption and brittle guardrails:

SCALE OF USE

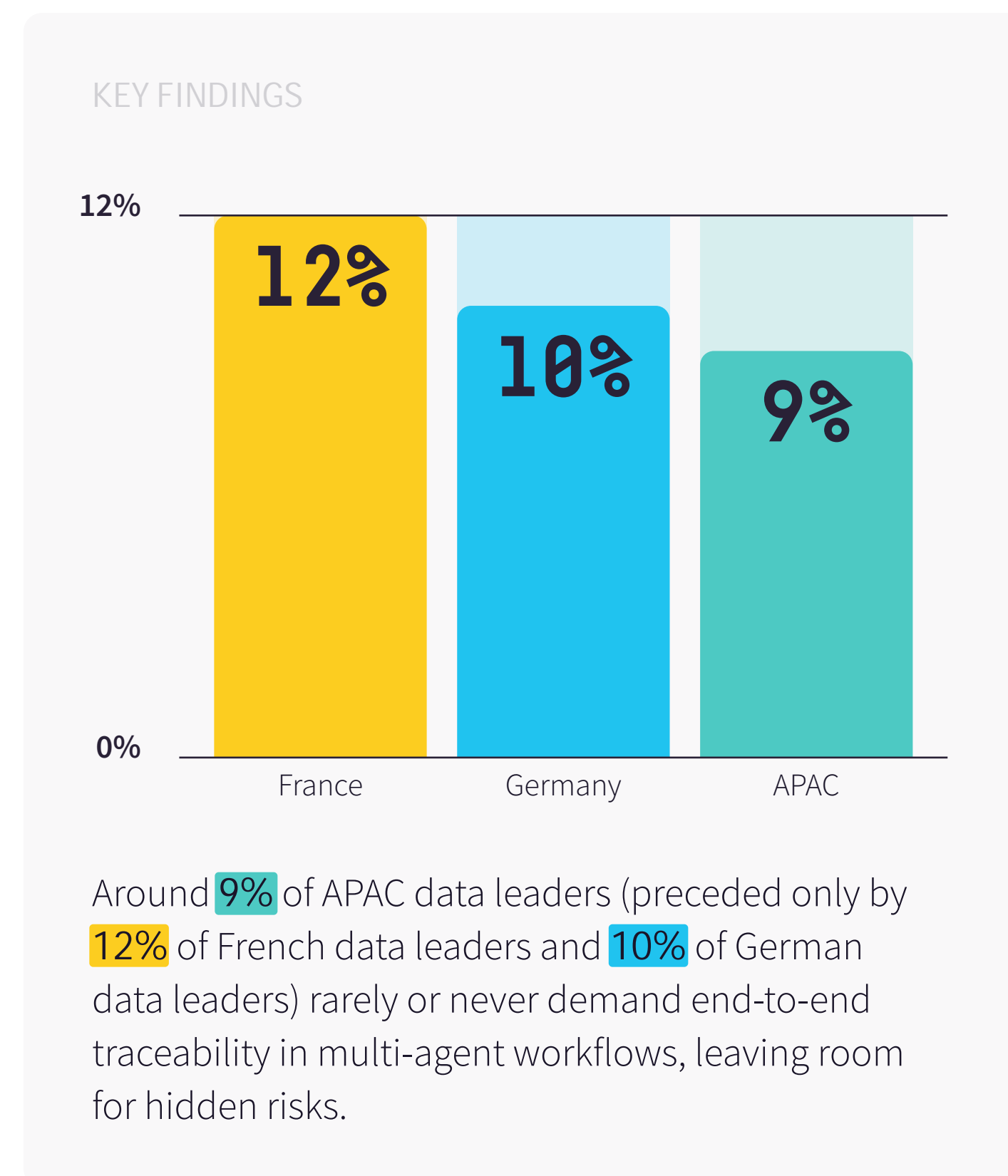


Only preceded by the U.K., APAC data leaders are also the least likely to have delayed or blocked an AI agent in the last year (46%, compared to a 52% global average), showing a clear commitment toward action.

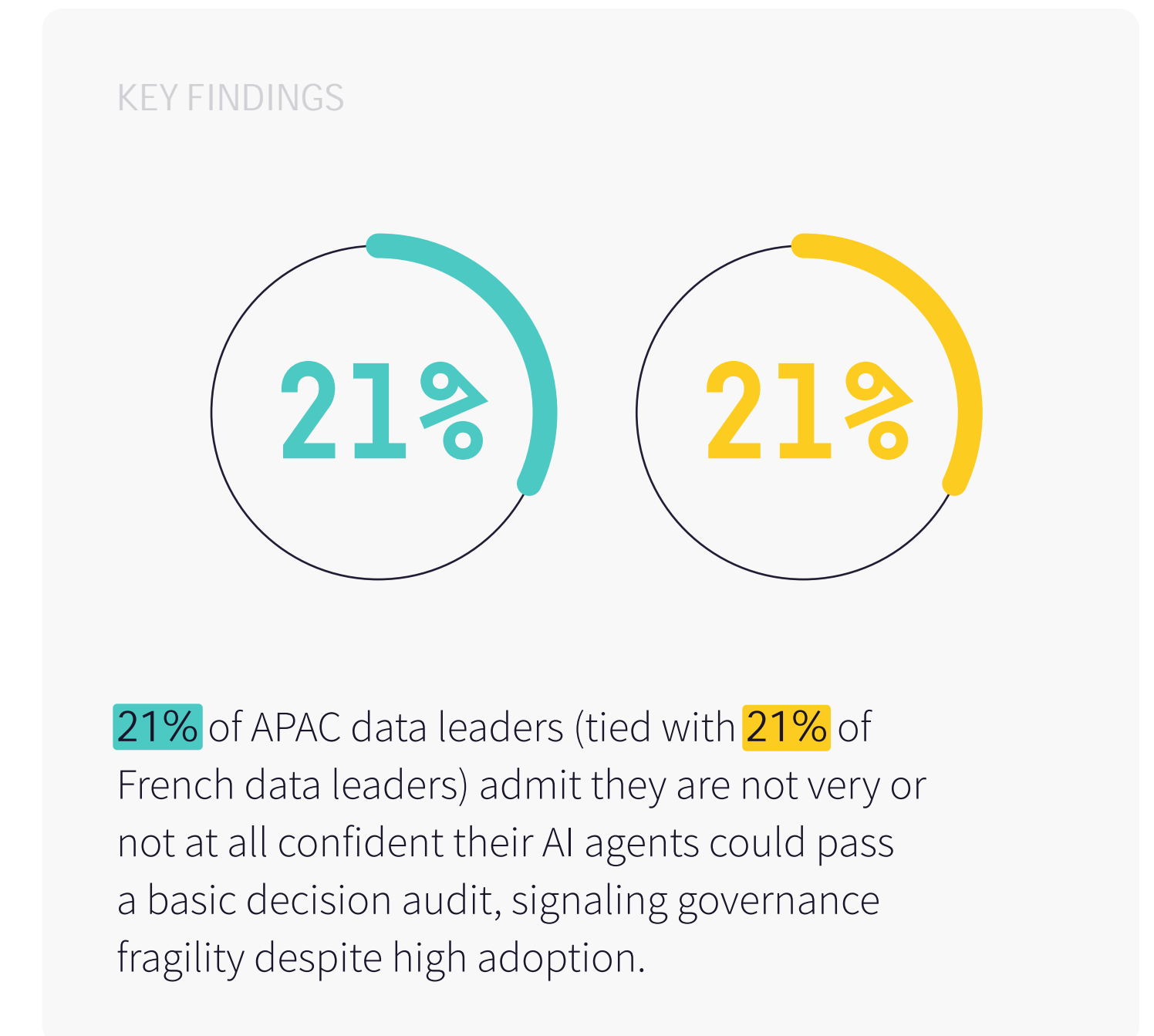
EXPLAINABILITY GAPS

10% of APAC data leaders rarely or never require AI systems to “show their work,” exposing persistent transparency blind spots.

TRACEABILITY WEAKNESS

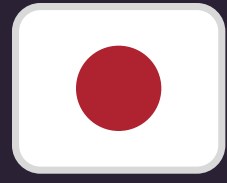


AUDIT CONFIDENCE



Shadow AI is less pervasive in APAC: One in five (22%) suspect less than a quarter of employees are using unauthorized AI tools.

Conversely, 45% of American data leaders and 50% of British data leaders suspect that at least half of all employees are using these tools without notice or permission.



REGIONAL EDITION:

AI Confessions Direct From Japanese Data Leaders

Here's how Japanese data leaders' confessions stack up against peers across APAC and abroad.

Japan pairs heavy AI use with higher skepticism, demanding explainability, keeping humans in the loop, and holding back full trust in critical decisions.

Japanese data leaders admit to both ambitious use and guarded trust:

EXTENSIVE USE

KEY FINDING



Nearly half (**49%**) of Japanese data leaders report extensive use of AI agents in dozens of daily operations, on par with other APAC nations for the highest globally.

TRUST WITH CONDITIONS

A full one-third (33%) of Japanese data leaders say they would not trust an AI agent to make a critical business decision without a clear explanation of how the result was reached, **the highest globally** and compared to a global average of 28%.

EXPLAINABILITY GAPS

Still, 12% of Japanese data leaders rarely or never require AI systems to “show their work,” revealing inconsistency in governance practices. This is the highest globally and closely followed by Germany, France, and the rest of APAC.

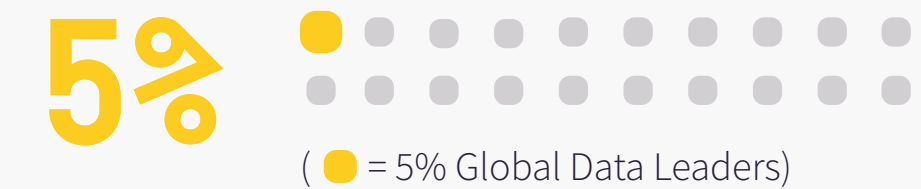
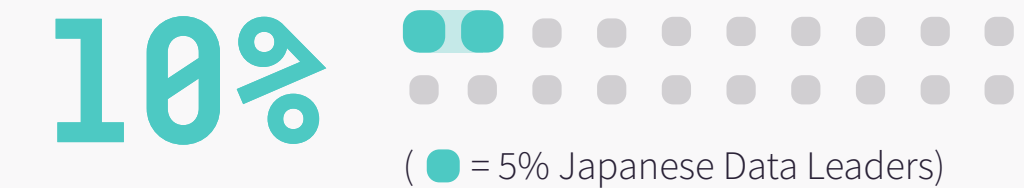
KEY FINDING



That fragility shows up in audit readiness too: Nearly a third (**31%**) admit low confidence their agents could pass a basic audit, **the lowest globally**.

HUMAN IN THE LOOP

KEY FINDINGS

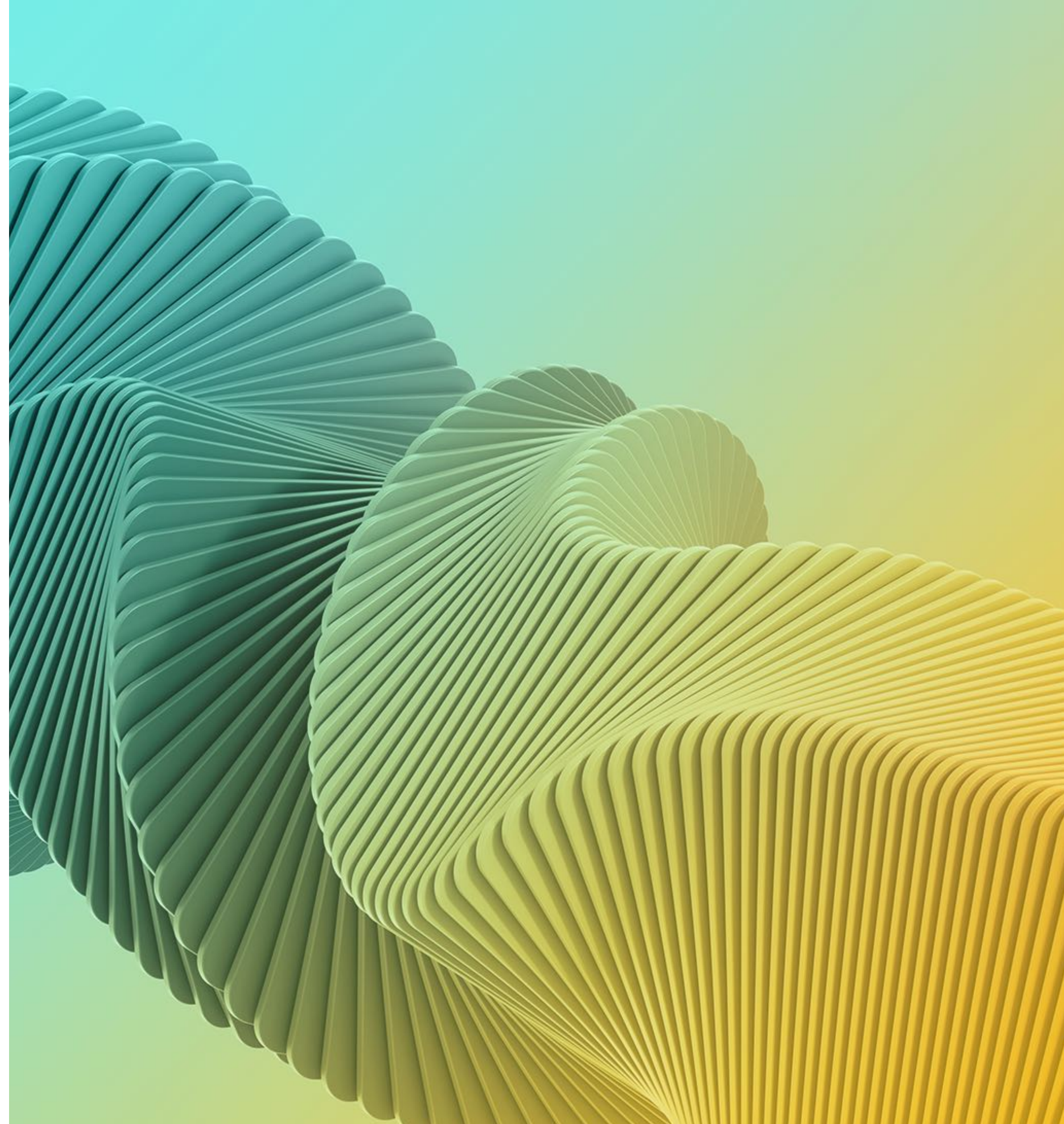


Just **10%** of Japanese data leaders require all AI agents to involve human oversight, showing that while demand for explainability is high, systemic safeguards aren't always enforced. **This is the highest globally** and compared to a global average of **5%**.

Survey Methodology:

The research was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of Dataiku from August 20-29, 2025. The survey was conducted among professionals considered “data leaders” in the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, UAE, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea.

A total of 812 online interviews were conducted (U.S. = 203, U.K. = 102, France = 101, Germany = 103, UAE = 100, Japan = 103, South Korea = 50, Singapore = 50). For the purposes of reporting, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are aggregated into one “APAC” segment (n = 203). Data leaders in the study work for large companies with an annual revenue of more than \$1 billion or regional equivalents and are defined by professional titles ranging from VP, Director, Managing Director, or C-suite.



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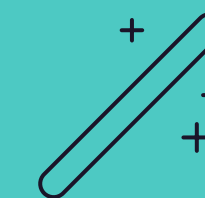
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Put AI agents to work faster and at scale with centralized deployment, smart routing, and built-in performance oversight.



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