

Technology Trust Ethics

Leadership, governance, and
workforce decision-making about
ethical AI: C-suite perspectives

August 2024



About the Survey

OBJECTIVE

Gather C-level executive insights about governance related to the ethical use of AI, exploring leaders' decision-making priorities, ethical guidelines, and the ethical implications of applying systematic governance in this arena.

METHODOLOGY

Deloitte's study, "Leadership, governance and workforce decision-making about ethical AI," was conducted as an online pulse survey of 100 corporate executives by an independent research company between June 20 and 26 2024.

Respondents represented C-level, president, board member, and partner/owner roles at companies in the U.S. Company size ranged from under US \$100 million to over US \$10 billion in annual revenue.

ABOUT DELOITTE'S TECHNOLOGY TRUST ETHICS

Deloitte's [Technology Trust Ethics](#) (TTE) practice is part of the U.S. Purpose and DEI Office. This and other technology trust ethics initiatives are part of Deloitte's purpose-driven mission of making an impact that matters by creating trust and confidence in a more equitable society. To learn more about Deloitte's purpose and commitments, visit www.deloitte.com/us/purpose.

Key Survey Findings

Executives surveyed are confident their workforce is equipped to make ethical AI decisions (77%) – but decisions about AI use sits more often with leadership, especially at smaller organizations.

Less than one-quarter (24%) of respondents said professionals are enabled to make decisions independently about how AI is used in the organization. This rises to 52% at companies earning \$1 billion or more in annual revenues, whereas companies earning less than \$1 billion primarily defer to top-down leadership directives.

Training leads the way for respondents' governance structures related to ethical AI – ahead of risk-management frameworks or compliance standards.

Over three-quarters (76%) of respondents indicate their organization conducts ethical AI trainings for the workforce, and 63% say that they conduct ethical AI trainings for their organization's board of directors.

When it comes to AI development and deployment, balancing innovation and regulation emerged as a top priority.

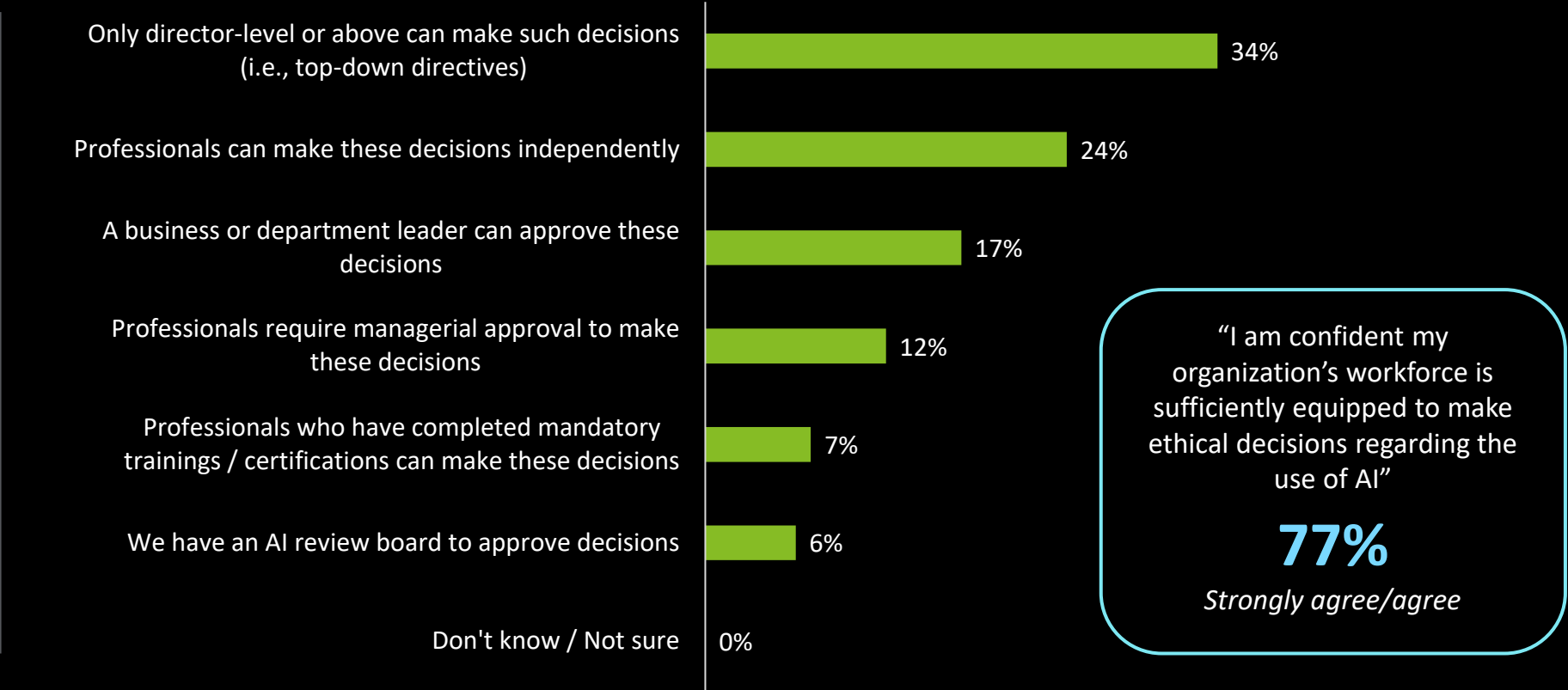
Balancing innovation with regulation emerged as the top priority (62%) among respondents regarding ethical issues in AI development and use, followed by ensuring transparency in data collection and use (59%) and addressing user and data privacy concerns (56%).

Organizations report primarily looking to employee upskilling to fill new AI-related roles, followed by recruiting experienced hires.

Over half of respondents indicate that their organization had hired or is planning to hire AI researcher (59%) and policy analyst (53%) roles related to ethical decision-making for AI, and they're sourcing through internal training (63%) over experienced hire and academic pipelines.

While more than three-quarters (77%) of C-level executive respondents are confident their organization’s workforce is sufficiently equipped to make ethical decisions regarding the use of AI, just under one-quarter (24%) say professionals can make AI decisions independently at their organizations.

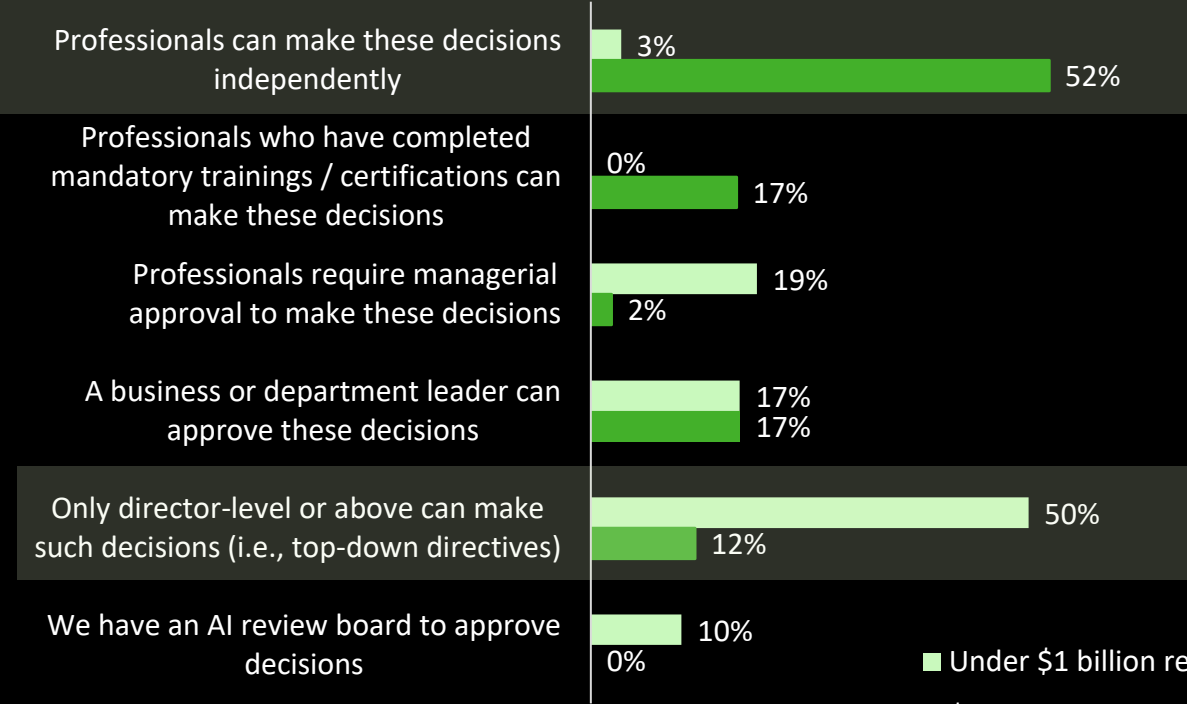
Who is enabled to make decisions about how AI is used* within your organization?



*'How AI is used' refers to any interactions with AI being performed in your organization, including formal and informal use of AI-powered tools (e.g., chatbots) ranging to developing AI tools themselves.

Organizations with an annual revenue of \$1 billion or more are significantly more likely to allow their professionals to make decisions independently about how AI is used compared to organizations with an annual revenue under \$1 billion, according to survey responses.

Who is enabled to make decisions about how AI is used* within your organization?



Professionals can make decisions (\$1 billion and above revenue) = 79%

Approval required or leadership decision (Under \$1 billion revenue) = 86%

*'How AI is used' refers to any interactions with AI being performed in your organization, including formal and informal use of AI-powered tools (e.g., chatbots) ranging to developing AI tools themselves.

Over three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents indicate their organization conducts ethical AI trainings for their workforce, and 63% say they conduct ethical AI trainings for their organization’s board of directors.

Does your organization currently have any of the following governance structures?

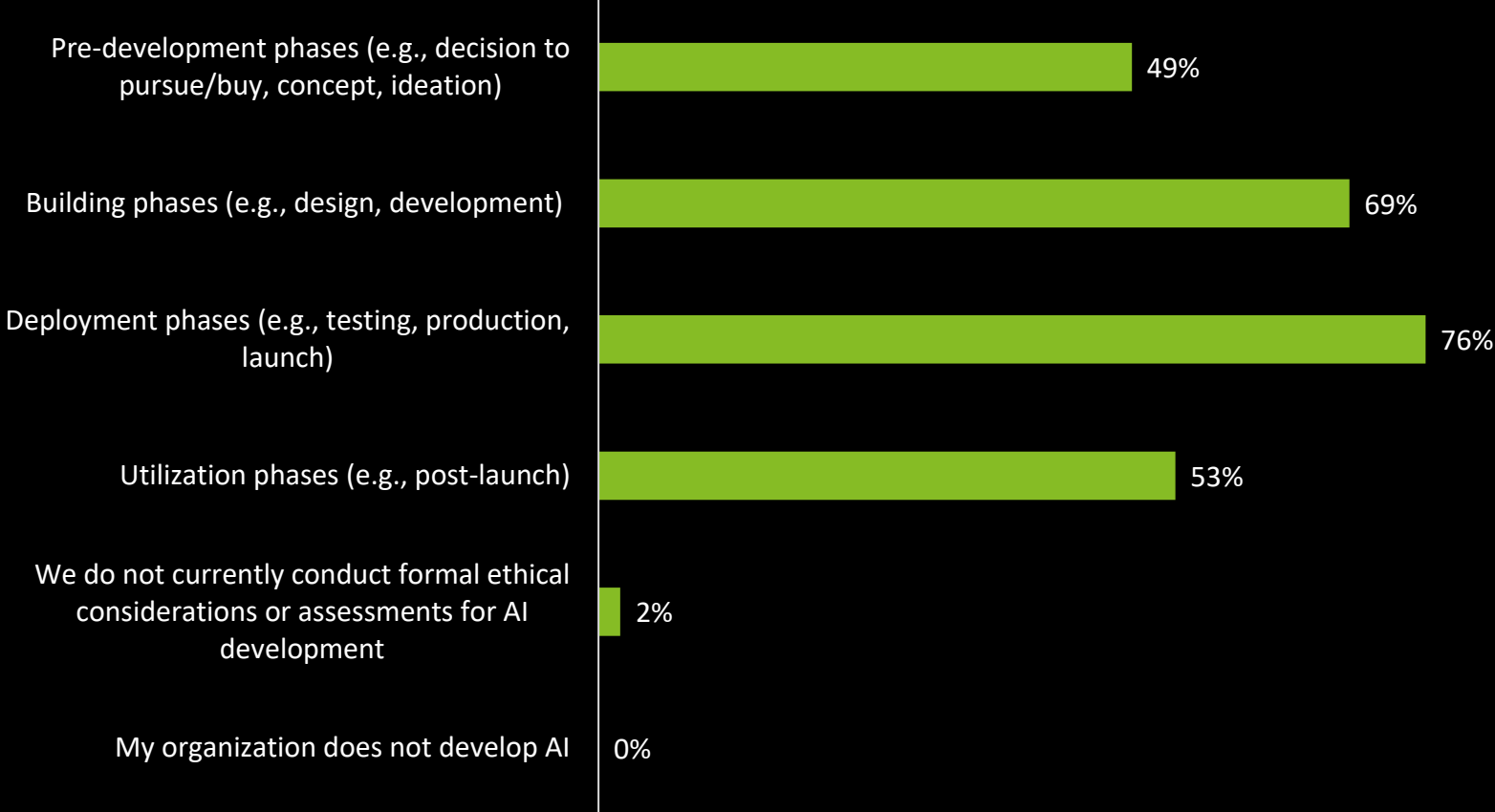


More than three-quarters of respondents said their organization conducts ethical considerations, assessments, or processes during deployment phases, while fewer conduct them in earlier phases, such as building phases (69%) and pre-development phases (49%).

At which stage(s) of AI development does your organization conduct ethical considerations, assessments, or processes?



Nearly all (98%) surveyed organizations conduct an ethical assessment during one or more phases of development.



Balancing innovation with regulation emerged as the top priority (62%) among survey respondents regarding ethical issues in AI development and use, followed by ensuring transparency in data collection and use (59%) and addressing user and data privacy concerns (56%).

What ethical issues does your organization prioritize in AI development and deployment?



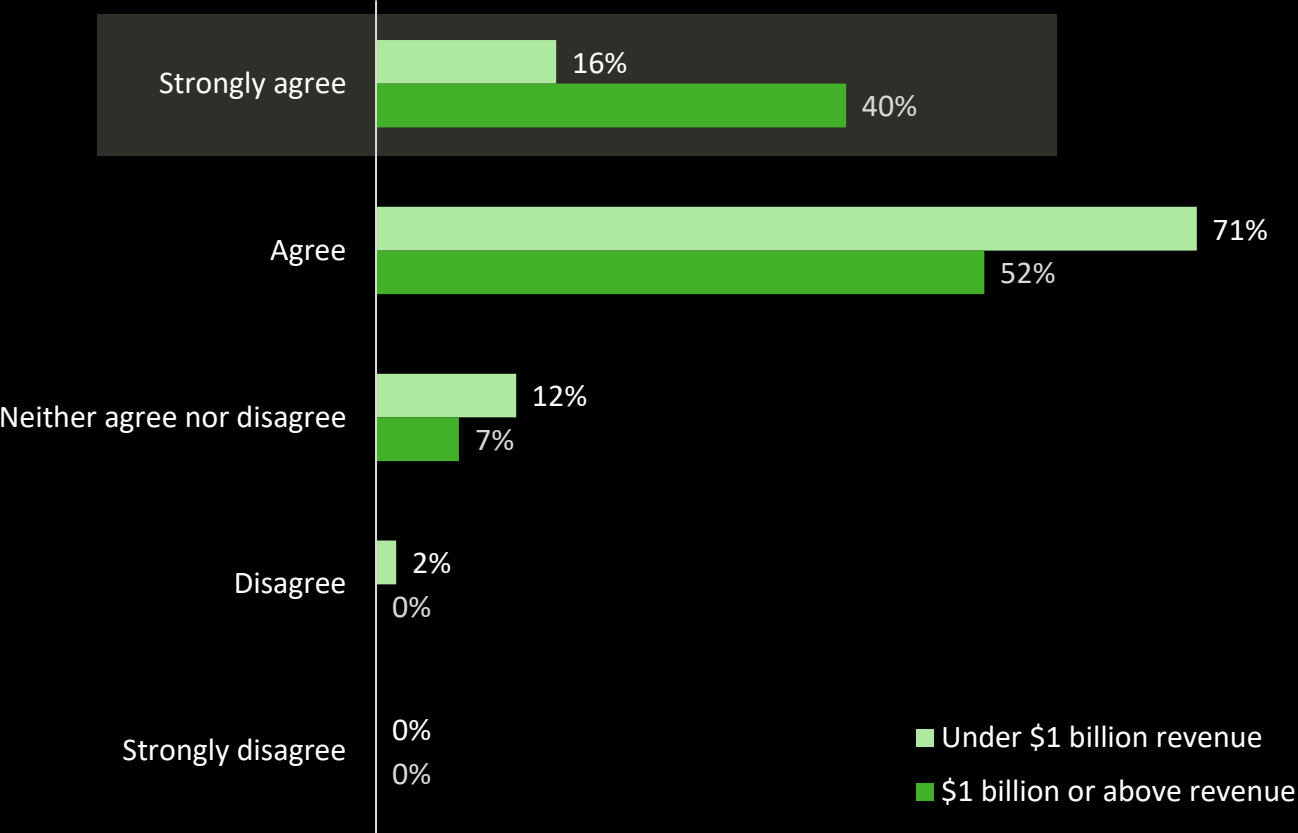
Survey respondents from organizations with annual revenues of \$1 billion or higher were more than two times more likely than organizations with revenues under \$1 billion to strongly agree their ethical frameworks and governance structures encourage technological innovation.

My organization's existing ethical frameworks and governance structures encourage and support technological innovation in my organization.



Overall*, **89%** of all respondents strongly agree or agree with the above statement.

**Derived from combined responses of organizations under and above \$1 billion annual revenues.*



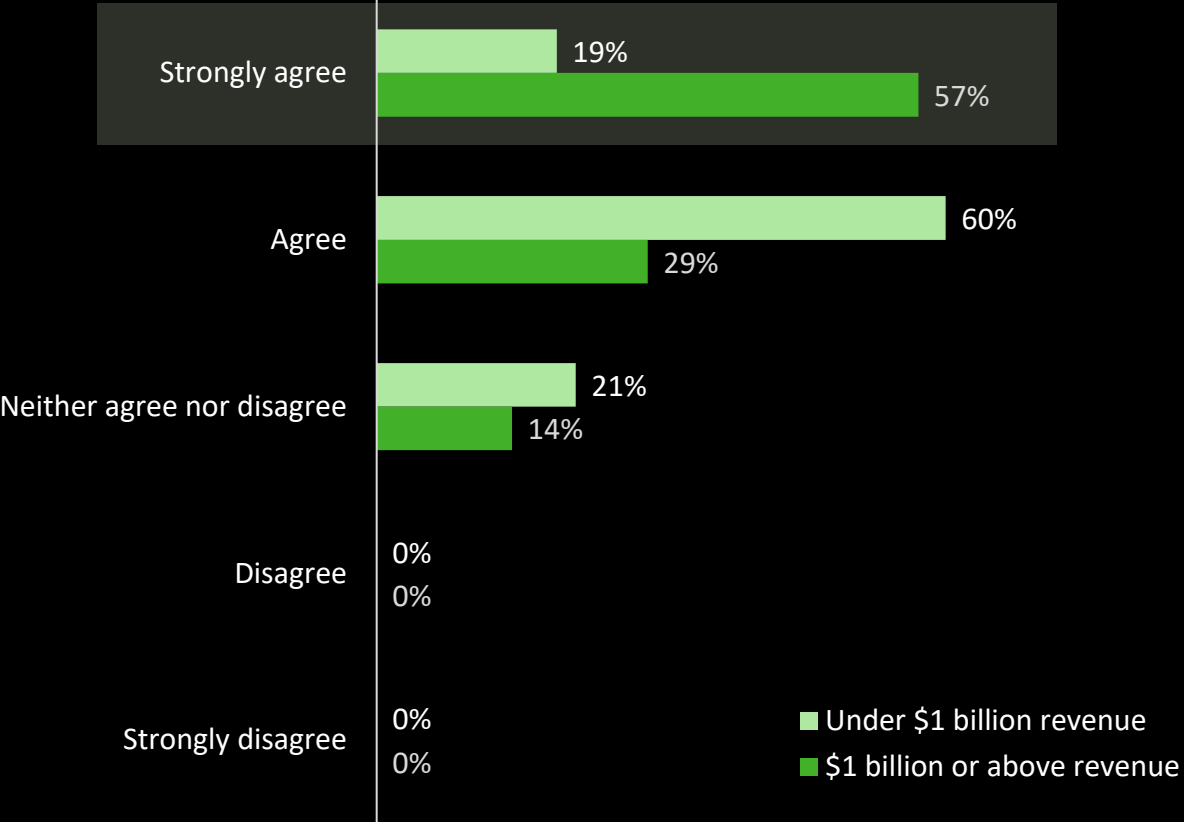
C-level executives surveyed from companies with revenues \$1 billion and higher are three times more likely than organizations with revenues under \$1 billion to strongly agree their organization's ethical frameworks and governance structures will prepare them for future AI regulations.

I have confidence that my organization's existing ethical frameworks and governance structures will prepare the organization for future regulations around AI.



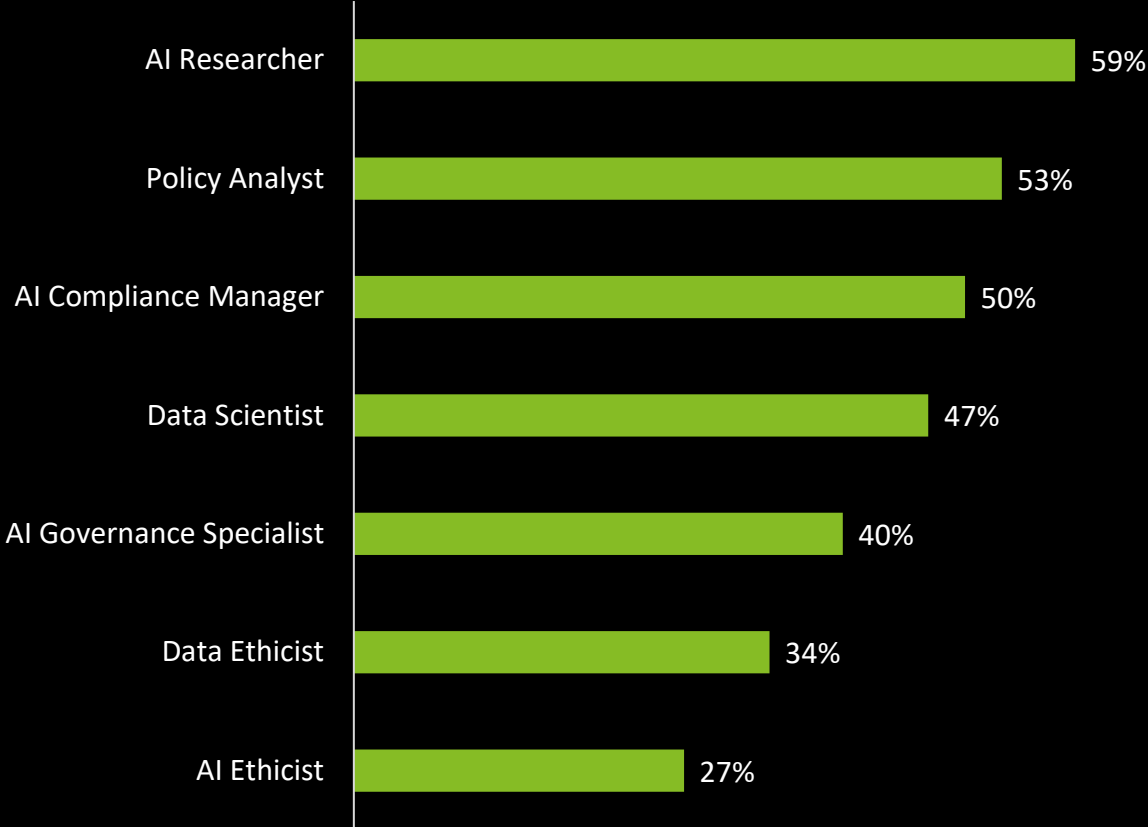
Overall*, **82%** of all respondents strongly agree or agree with the above statement.

**Derived from combined responses of organizations under and above \$1 billion annual revenues.*



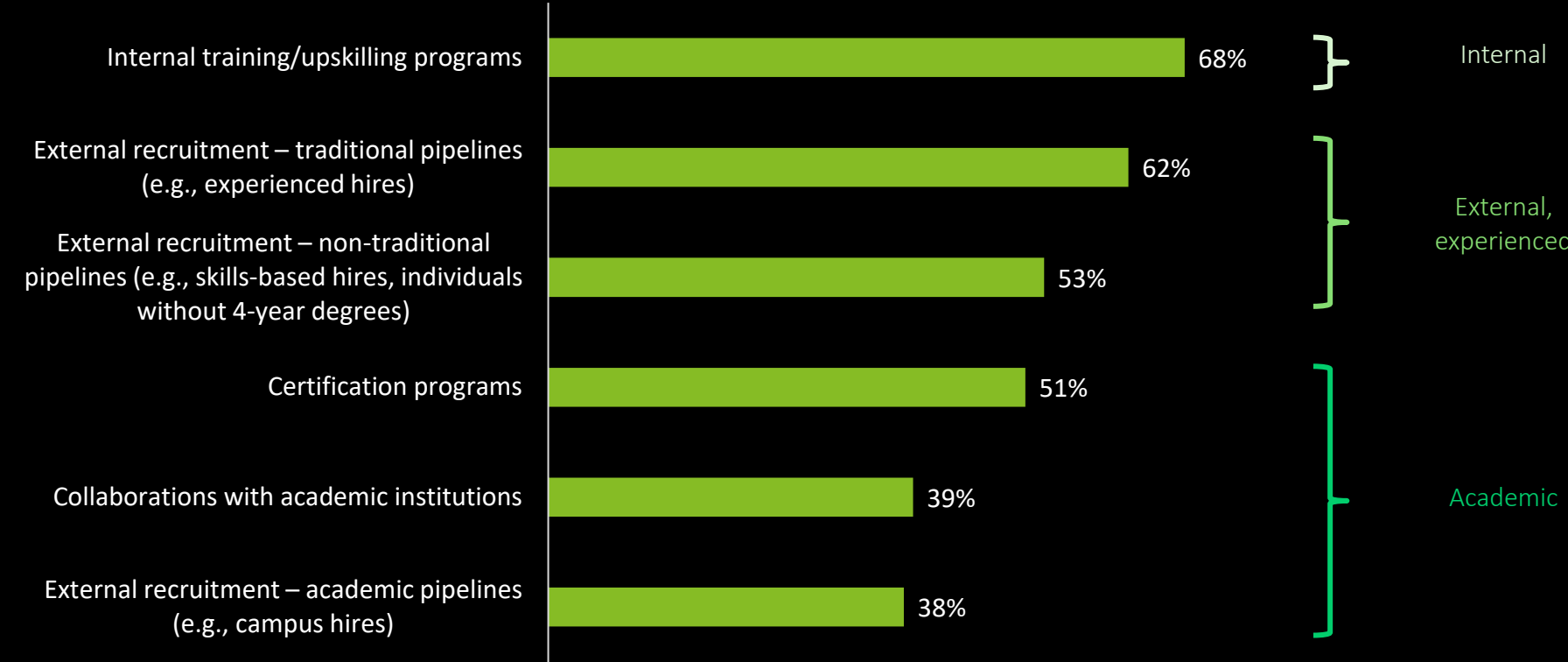
AI Researchers (59%) and Policy Analysts (53%) are the two most sought-after roles related to ethical decision-making for AI, according to responses.

Which of the following specialist roles related to ethical decision-making for AI has your organization hired or is planning to hire?



Organizations surveyed are primarily turning to internal training/upskilling programs (68%) to find, attract, and train the professionals for new roles – like AI researchers and policy analysts – ahead of external recruitment and academic pipelines.

How does your organization plan to find, attract, and train these professionals?*



*Respondents were asked this question after the question: *Which of the following specialist roles related to ethical decision-making for AI has your organization hired or is planning to hire?*

C-level executives surveyed are most likely to believe AI will help improve retention (82%), followed by worker well-being (77%), and accessibility to professional education (77%).

Do you believe AI will have a positive impact for any of the following imperatives for your organization's workforce?

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement.



Survey respondents cite supply chain responsibility (77%) , brand reputation (75%), and revenue growth (73%) as the top three operational areas that AI could positively impact in their organization.

Do you believe AI will have a positive impact for any of the following imperatives for your organization’s operations?

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement.



Appendix

The background of the slide is a dark, almost black, space filled with a complex network of glowing lines and points. The lines are primarily green and blue, with some orange and purple highlights. They appear to be part of a data visualization or a network diagram, with many lines radiating from a central point or connecting different nodes. The overall effect is that of a high-tech, digital environment.

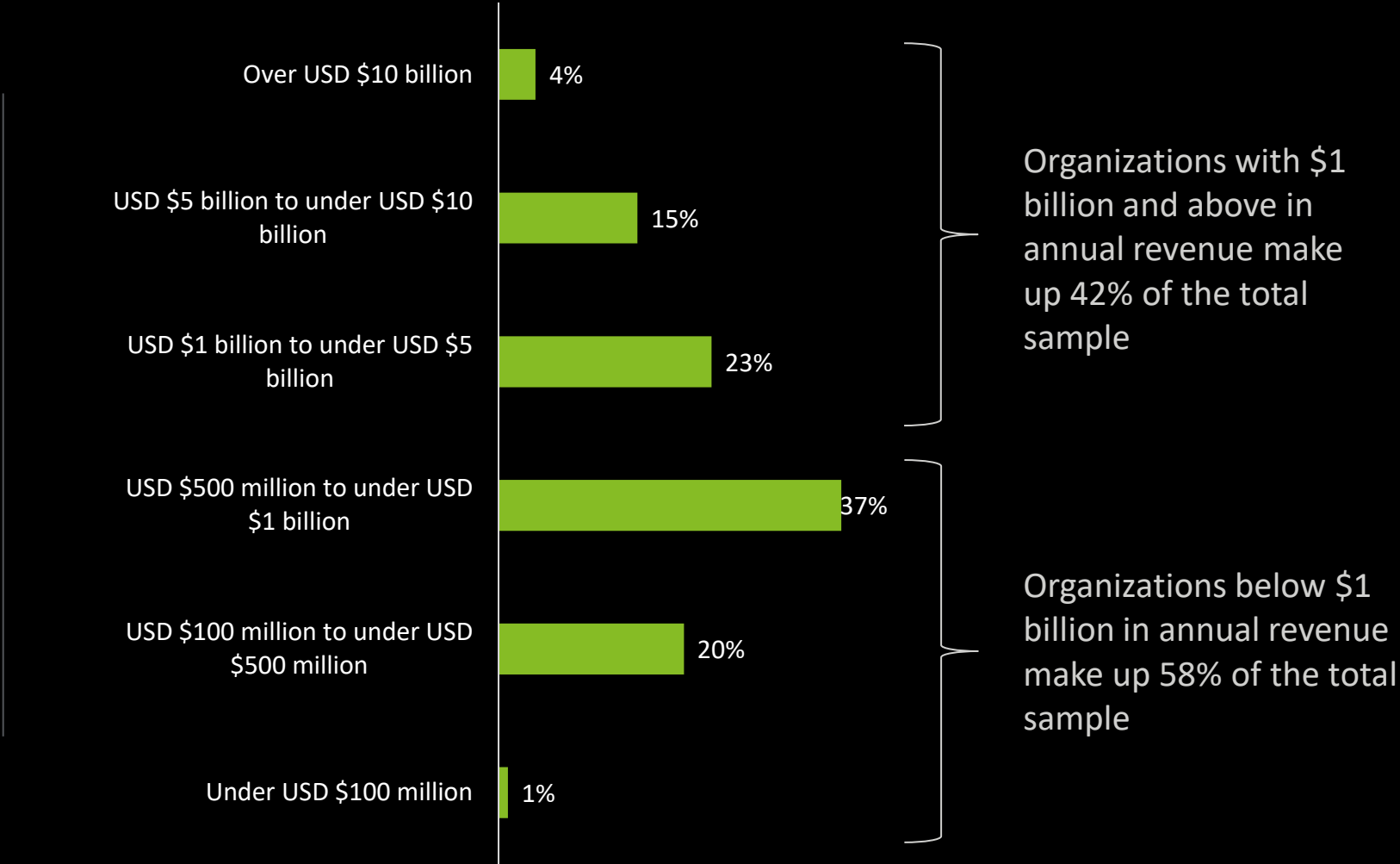
Survey respondents by title/role

Which of the following best describes your title?



Respondents by annual USD revenue

What was your organization's annual revenue last year in USD?





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