

The global pacesetter: Leading the charge from efficiency to invention



Executive summary

While the rest of the world continues to debate the role of AI in the workplace, India has already made its decision: this is an era of expansion, not just savings. Our data reveals that India is the most aggressive market globally, with 92% of organizations pivoting their strategy from cost-cutting to innovation. This rate far outpaces Western counterparts like the US and Germany. This is not merely optimism; it is execution. India leads the world in appointing Chief AI Officers and is the only region where the majority anticipates AI will create entirely new categories of work. For Indian executives, the age of efficiency is effectively over and the age of invention has begun.

Key narrative themes

The end of “good enough”

India demonstrates an extreme alignment with the global shift from cost savings to growth creation. While Indian businesses initially utilized AI for efficiency, the speed of their strategic pivot is unprecedented. They are no longer looking for marginal gains; they are aiming for exponential revenue uplift. Almost half of respondents (49%) anticipate AI will generate a revenue uplift of more than 15% within the next five years — a level of confidence that suggests they see AI as the primary engine of their future economy.

Structuring for success: The rise of the CAIO

Unlike other regions where AI leadership remains fragmented or buried within IT departments, India is formalizing AI governance at the highest level. Over two-thirds (67%) of Indian firms have appointed a Chief AI Officer (CAIO), compared to a global average of just 52%. Crucially, these are not figurehead roles as 54% of these leaders hold significant P&L responsibility. This indicates that in India, AI is treated as a core business function with direct accountability for the bottom line.

Shattering ceilings, not jobs

Contrary to the global narrative of anxiety regarding employment, India views AI as a massive catalyst for job creation. It is the global leader in using AI to augment talent rather than replace it. The region is unique in its expectation that AI will create entirely new categories of work (8.9%) in the immediate future. The focus here is on “agentic AI,” or autonomous agents that can act and generate. This suggests a workforce preparing to manage sophisticated AI counterparts.

The hurdles of ambition

Despite this momentum, the path forward is not without friction. The sheer speed of adoption has created strategic gaps and 35% of leaders cite a “lack of clear AI strategy” as their biggest barrier to realizing AI’s full potential — the highest rate globally. This suggests a market where the will to innovate is outpacing the roadmap to get there.

The verdict

India is not waiting for a permission slip to lead the global AI revolution. The region has effectively skipped the “experimental” phase and moved directly to strategic integration. For Indian businesses, the greatest risk isn’t moving too fast, it is moving too slow.



Read our full report on
Unlocking AI’s top line growth