

# AI FOR BUSINESS

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EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

# AI anxiety: how firms can ease employee fears

AI promises exciting opportunities for businesses, but many employees fear the impact on their jobs and wellbeing. How can firms allay their concerns?

Sally Whittle

**A** here's a rising tide of evidence that the arrival of AI in the workplace makes employees anxious. It's not just the fear that we'll be replaced by AI tools – new research has found that employees are also concerned about the impact of AI on work/life balance and the risk of burnout.

A survey from ResumeNow found that 63% of workers admit feeling worried about AI and nearly half of women (49%) believe it could negatively impact their work/life balance. While 78% of respondents are positive about using AI in the workplace, 87% of younger workers think they might face AI-related burnout.

Such fears are caused in part by the rapid pace of change in AI technologies, says Mansoor Soomro, a lecturer in the Future of Work unit at Teesside University Business School. "Many people only saw ChatGPT at the start of this year and we're now talking about AI making music, videos, even podcasts based on text source material," he says. "It's hardly surprising that people wonder if they're fit for the future and what the impact of this rapid change will be on their ability to do their job."

At Grey London, a creative agency and part of the WPP advertising group, conversations about AI are a

daily occurrence, even if the technology isn't officially being used within the company today, says Karan Tattersfield, the company's European chief people officer.

While Grey London hasn't yet deployed any corporate AI projects, the company is aware that individuals are already using online AI tools to support their jobs, as well as worrying about the future in an industry that could face huge upheaval as AI becomes more mainstream.

"There's always a conversation about how AI will change people's jobs, but the issue for us is that we aren't using AI in any corporate sense yet. We're still in the very early stages of learning about it," she says.

But some employees are still concerned about the implementation of AI in the near term, including those at Casumo, an online gambling firm. That's according to Martin Schillig, the company's chief HR officer. "Many employees are afraid that AI will eventually automate their jobs, making their current skills obsolete. But history has seen similar concerns with other techno-

**“It's important for people to understand we're investing in their future, as well as the future of the company**

logical advances like personal computers and robotics," he says. "The reality is that new technologies create new jobs and even industries, providing employees are adaptable and willing to learn."

When employees are worried about AI's impact on their jobs, it can impact their psychological safety, says Schillig. "This results in lower productivity and performance and potentially anxiety and burnout," he says. "HR teams need to support businesses and employees to maintain a healthy level of psychological safety during times of rapid and significant change."

How can firms allay employees' fears when even decision-makers are in the early stages of understanding AI? "It's not easy if you aren't in a position yet to have an AI strategy, but you can start to develop things like ethical AI policies and simple 'red, amber, green' tools that indicate which tools people can use safely or not," says Soomro.

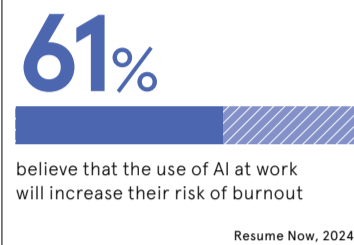
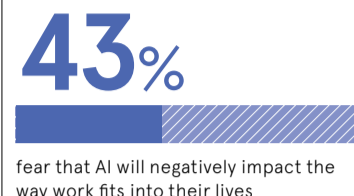
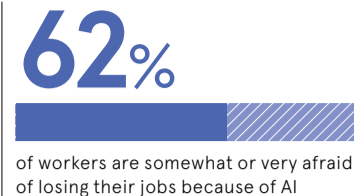
Grey London has created a set of AI guidelines for employees who are using tools in their jobs. Tattersfield explains, along with online education programmes that help people to learn the basics about AI technology. "Like any new technology, if you exclude employees from the process, they're going to be resistant and potentially undermine or sabotage the benefits that you're trying to achieve," she says. "It's critical to involve people as early as possible in our AI journey, to understand how it can help them."

Swag Drop makes branded merchandise for corporate clients; the company uses AI in several parts of its business, including supply chain management. "We have a nifty AI system that crunches data to predict demand and optimise our inventory," says Anna Petosa, Swag Drop's people operations executive. "Our procurement folks have more time to focus on building relationships and negotiating deals. It makes their roles more rewarding."

Communicating these benefits to the workforce is an essential part of the company's AI strategy, says Petosa. Swag Drop holds regular town hall events where people can ask questions to experts about the introduction of the technology.

Petosa describes a recent meeting where a customer-service representative asked whether AI chatbots would make her role redundant. "We were able to explain that AI would free up time for her team to focus on more complex, human-centric aspects of customer service. That person left the meeting feeling excited about the possibilities," says Petosa. "That's the shift in perspective we're aiming for."

Alongside open communication, Swag Drop has focused on education and reskilling. "AI is transforming people's roles. We want our team to feel empowered rather than threatened," says Petosa. The company has introduced training sessions and workshops that show how AI can be an ally rather than an adversary and help people to gain the skills they'll need to adapt. "It's important for people to understand we're investing in their future, as well as the future of Swag Drop."



### Top takeaways to reduce employees' AI concerns

- Be transparent and communicate the goals and benefits of AI initiatives, ensuring employees understand how AI will be used.
- Avoid technical jargon. AI is new to everyone, so make sure you use language that employees understand.
- Involve employees in the AI implementation process to foster a sense of impact and belonging.
- Develop and implement clear guidelines and policies for the use of AI.
- Provide ongoing training and development to help staff adapt to new AI technologies.
- Offer career counselling services to help employees understand how AI may impact their roles and identify future opportunities.

Continuous upskilling and education help workers feel less unsure about AI, adds Soomro. "It's basic human psychology: if you've been doing a job for 10 or 20 years and you see this rapid pace of change like we've seen in AI, you'll wonder if you're fit for the future or will be able to do your job well enough," he says.

But it's not just about setting up a few online training courses, Schillig adds. He recommends regular company-wide meetings, anonymous surveys and one-to-one discussions to understand what issues are concerning employees and how they can be addressed. "That said, words aren't enough. Employees need to see and feel that they're supported," he says. "Invest in training and development programmes to equip people with the skills required to work with AI, along with ongoing career counselling."

# Five ways Intel's AI-powered solutions can revolutionise the IT workforce

With Intel Core Ultra, the age of accessible AI-powered PCs has arrived. Learn how Intel can help enhance IT productivity, cybersecurity and device management for today's workforce



## 1 Hardware that fully supports the new AI ecosystem

A challenge for any IT team is to ensure the technology you're buying into the organisation can handle everything the modern workforce demands – both now and in the future. Hardware that can support the rapid rise in applications that make use of AI and ML features is essential. Intel's Core Ultra processors can run over 500 different AI models, giving teams the flexibility to pull in the particular model they need, without creating

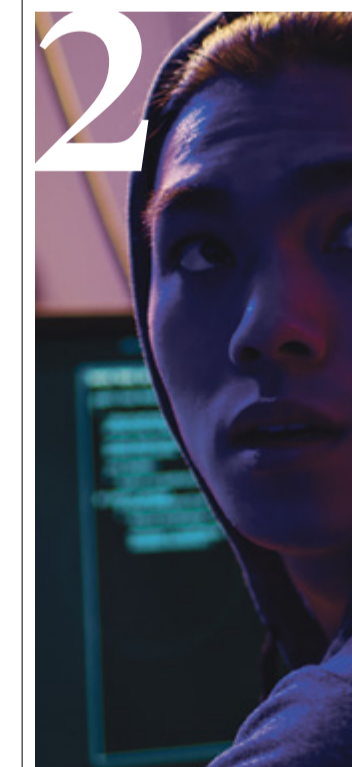
extra work to integrate something new and untested.

Bradley Jenkins, Intel's EMEA AI PC lead at Intel, points to the benefits of hardware that's optimised for such a range of functionality: "Businesses need both a rich selection of applications to choose from and to provide a good experience using them. We're making it easier for software developers to take advantage of our AI compute engines at scale."

## 2 Improved hardware-based security with AI PCs

Cybersecurity threats are an unfortunate fact of life for any organisation. It feels like barely a week goes by without a new cyberattack hitting the headlines. For a business' IT department, that can introduce major day-to-day overheads in terms of managing hardware and software to keep it secure, as well as lost time to dealing with incidents if and when security is breached.

Intel Core Ultra processors that support Intel vPro provide a more secure baseline for modern computing. AI can reduce the burden on IT departments, helping to detect deep fakes and phishing attempts as well as malware and ransomware. Intel's Threat Detection Technology (Intel TDT) uses algorithms powered with decades worth of telemetry data (the data automatically collected from remote sources for analysis) to detect threats faster. In tests it identified over 97% of known and unknown attacks, and organisations using Intel saw a 26% lower risk of major security events. IT teams responsible for device security saw 17% efficiency gains.



## 3 Easier device fleet management in an increasingly remote world

Managing disparate hardware and software across geographically-dispersed organisations is a challenge, but Intel technology introduces a variety of solutions. Whereas a 'blue screen of death' style hardware crash might once have required a support engineer to physically get to the device to diagnose the issue, Intel vPro allows remote support at a level beneath the operating system. So, even complex technical issues can be resolved quickly, as if the entire business was still based in a single office.

AI-powered security that takes advantage of Intel AI compute engines can also come into play in terms of the security and privacy challenges of



supporting users remotely. For example, enabling communication software that allows the user to get the help they need without sharing identifiable information, enabling better support in situations where it may previously have been limited by GDPR and other privacy regulations.



## 4 Computing without compromise

Multitasking is hardly a new concept in computing, but today's users are asking more from their computers than they may realise. It is now taken for granted that many modern workers will spend a significant chunk of

their days in online meetings on Zoom, Teams, or similar tools.

More commonly, that software now has built in AI and machine learning features – from noise cancellation and background blurring to automatic eye gaze correction. During online meetings users are also switching between productivity apps and office software that are increasingly integrating their own AI features, not to mention the apps in the background allowing access to corporate VPNs.

In a traditional PC, demand on the CPU quickly ramps up, whereas an Intel AI PC processes these workloads across the CPU, GPU and NPU (the Neural Processing Unit, dedicated to AI tasks). This can give a 58% faster AI performance than traditional processing architecture, and means that IT departments can give their organisations' workforce the power to use the tools they need, when they need them – even as those tools rapidly evolve to integrate new features unlocked by today's technology.

## 5 Long-term, long-time computing

A key advantage of the NPU in the new Intel architecture is that it uses far less energy than a CPU would for the same tasks. Combined with the huge efficiency improvements in the latest Intel Core Ultra processors that reduce power consumption by as much as 40%, this means that laptops with this technology can run on battery for as long as 20 hours. Not only does this improve what IT departments can offer their users, but reduced energy consumption can drive both cost savings and help to meet sustainability goals for the business as a whole.

Tech that supports such a wide range of emergent, AI-powered features as the workforce demands them, also has the added benefit of extending the device lifecycle. As Jenkins adds: "It's more important than ever for business IT to consider the impact of AI within software: making the wrong decision could be costly, shortening device life cycles and increasing hardware costs."

A few years ago, AI was barely on the radar for most organisations. Now, every aspect of a business is conscious of its impact. For IT leaders, as new



technology like Intel Core Ultra comes along with new possibilities, they must ensure their teams are empowered by the latest tech capabilities.

To find out more, please visit [intel.co.uk/AIPC](https://intel.co.uk/AIPC)

