



80% of Individual Contributors Say Their Manager's Approach to AI is Hands-Off, FranklinCovey Research Finds

May 21, 2026

New data show that the real barrier to AI adoption isn't technology. It's human.

FranklinCovey launches two solutions to help leaders and teams close the AI adoption gap.

SALT LAKE CITY--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 21, 2026-- As organizations race to capture the benefits of artificial intelligence, research from [FranklinCovey](#) Institute reveals a critical obstacle: most employees feel they are navigating AI alone, without meaningful support or guidance. Eighty percent of individual contributors describe their manager's approach to AI as "hands-off," which underscores a widening gap between AI's potential and how it's actually used at work.

FranklinCovey's 2025 AI General Attitudes Survey and 2025 Global Leadership Survey found additional warning signs:

- 14% of workers report having received any AI training.
- 40% say their manager doesn't know how or whether they are using AI in their work at all.
- 70% of workers say AI and technology are advancing faster than their culture can adapt.

These statistics highlight a human adoption curve that's keeping most organizations from achieving expected gains in productivity and business performance. Many organizations have not begun to deploy or integrate AI enterprise-wide, and among those that have, usage is inconsistent and scattered.

"AI adoption isn't just an IT problem. It's a human problem," said [Paul Walker, FranklinCovey CEO](#). "The organizations winning with AI are pairing human judgment, creativity, and accountability with AI's speed and scale, and they're investing in the leaders and teams who make that pairing work. When you close the human readiness gap, adoption follows."

FranklinCovey is partnering with clients, including some of the world's largest technology firms, to improve AI results through two targeted, customizable solutions. Leaders and teams develop specific behaviors that drive AI adoption: effective mindsets for experimentation, clear organizational AI expectations, high-value AI use cases, and coaching team members through resistance and uncertainty.

- [Leading AI Adoption: Accelerate AI Impact Through Empathy and Action](#) equips leaders with the skills to build AI momentum on their teams, rooted in empathy and action. Leaders clarify the game plan, spot high-value AI opportunities, and celebrate wins with their teams in everyday work. The result is a team that partners with AI and each other to think, decide, create, and communicate more effectively, delivering the outcomes that matter.
- [Working with AI: Essentials for Working Smarter Together](#) equips leaders and teams to confidently integrate AI into daily work by recognizing that AI is amplified when paired with human capabilities. Using a practical hybrid intelligence framework, learners discover how to combine AI with their own judgment, creativity, and experience to multiply performance and results.

Early adopters of these solutions report greater confidence in leading their teams in AI adoption, measurable capability gains in how leaders and teams use AI, and increased daily use of AI in meaningful, business-critical work.

FranklinCovey's research also identified three common leadership patterns that undermine AI adoption:

- Encouraging AI use without guidance or guardrails, leaving teams to improvise in ways that breed inconsistency.
- Framing AI primarily as a cost-reduction lever, which creates anxiety rather than engagement.
- Moving so cautiously that informal, unguided experimentation fills the vacuum.

Each pattern leads to versions of the same outcome. AI projects that stall and create costs in under-utilized tools, slowed innovation, and eroded trust between employees and leaders. Effective adoption requires movement on two fronts: equipping individual contributors to innovate with AI and helping leaders establish the clarity that makes AI adoption productive, not chaotic. Leaders must model confident AI use, establish boundaries, and coach their teams through the discomfort of change.

"There's no viable 'AI czar' model," said Walker. "Centralizing AI ownership creates bottlenecks, stalls innovation, and alienates the very people who need to adopt it. Ownership is distributed, which means every leader owns it. And FranklinCovey aims to help our clients translate that ownership into sustained performance gains."

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](https://www.franklincovey.com) and explore leadership insights on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

View source version on [businesswire.com](https://www.businesswire.com): <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260521485285/en/>

Media Contact:

Franklin Covey

Debra Lund

801-817-6440

Debra.Lund@franklincovey.com

Source: FranklinCovey