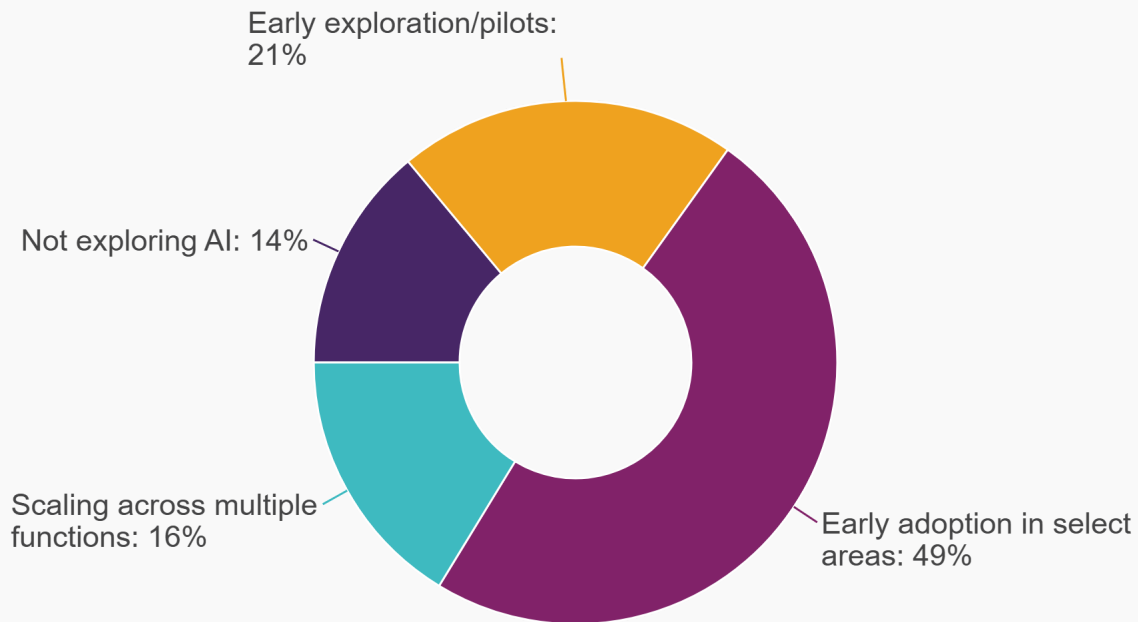


The Role of AI in the Workplace in 2026

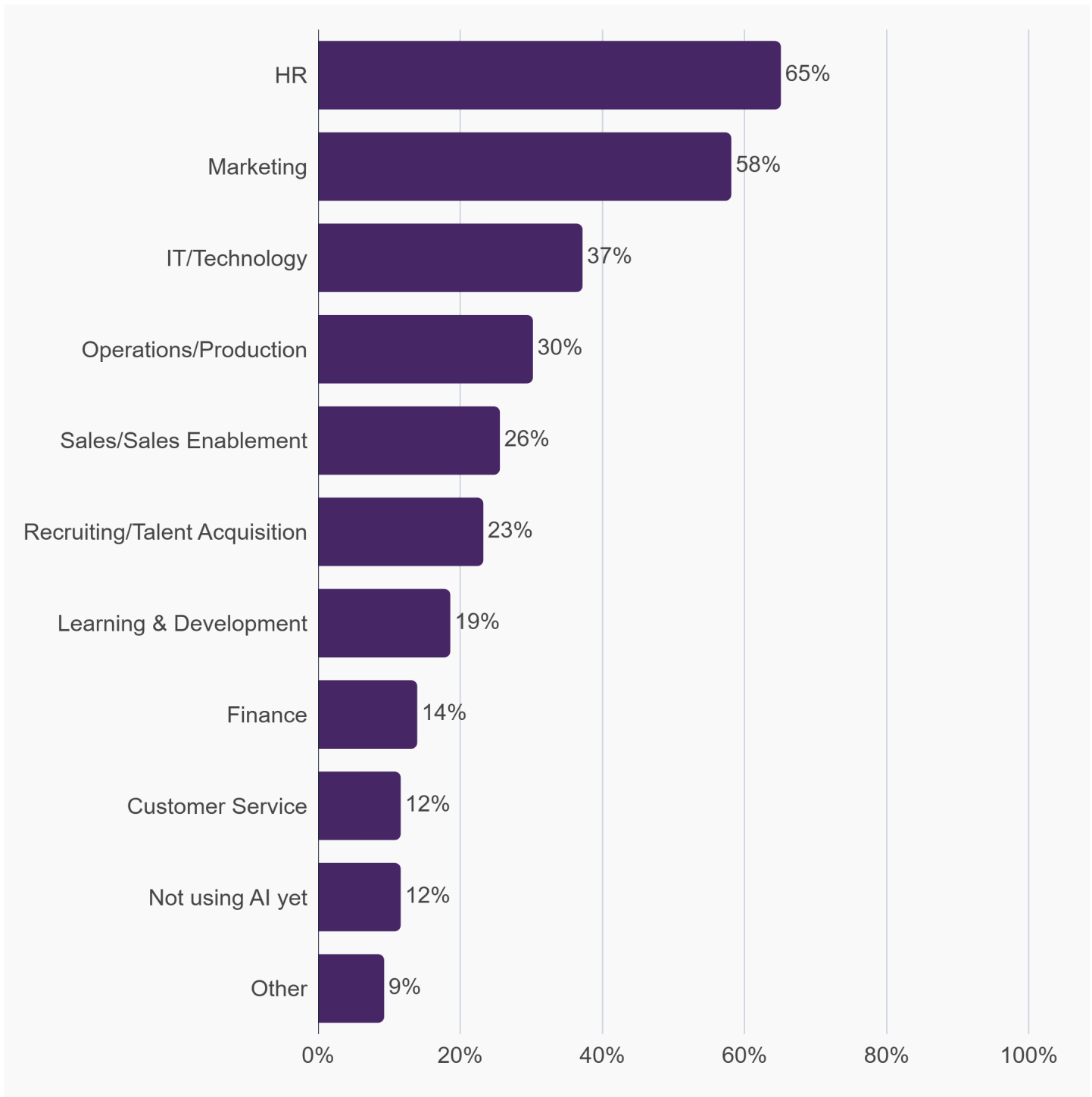


FIGURE 1 | What stage best describes your organization's AI adoption?



Data Note: No respondents indicated that their organization's AI adoption was “Fully integrated into operations.”

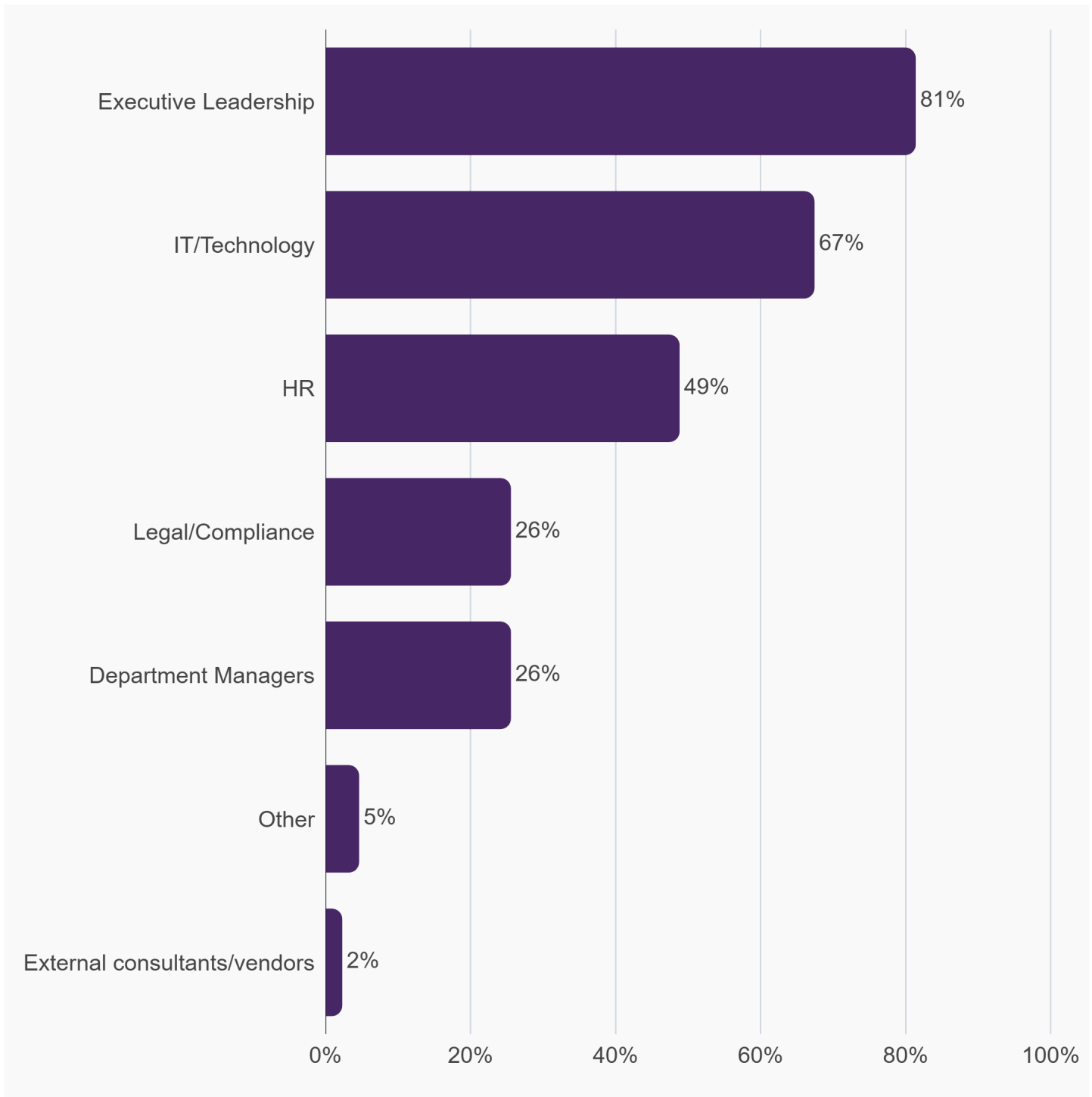
FIGURE 2 | Where is your organization currently using AI?



“Other” organizational areas cited include:

- Back office administrative support
- Law
- Revenue Cycle processes

FIGURE 3 | Which groups are involved in AI decision making?



“Other” groups cited include:

- Operations
- HQ

FIGURE 4 | Does your organization have an AI policy?

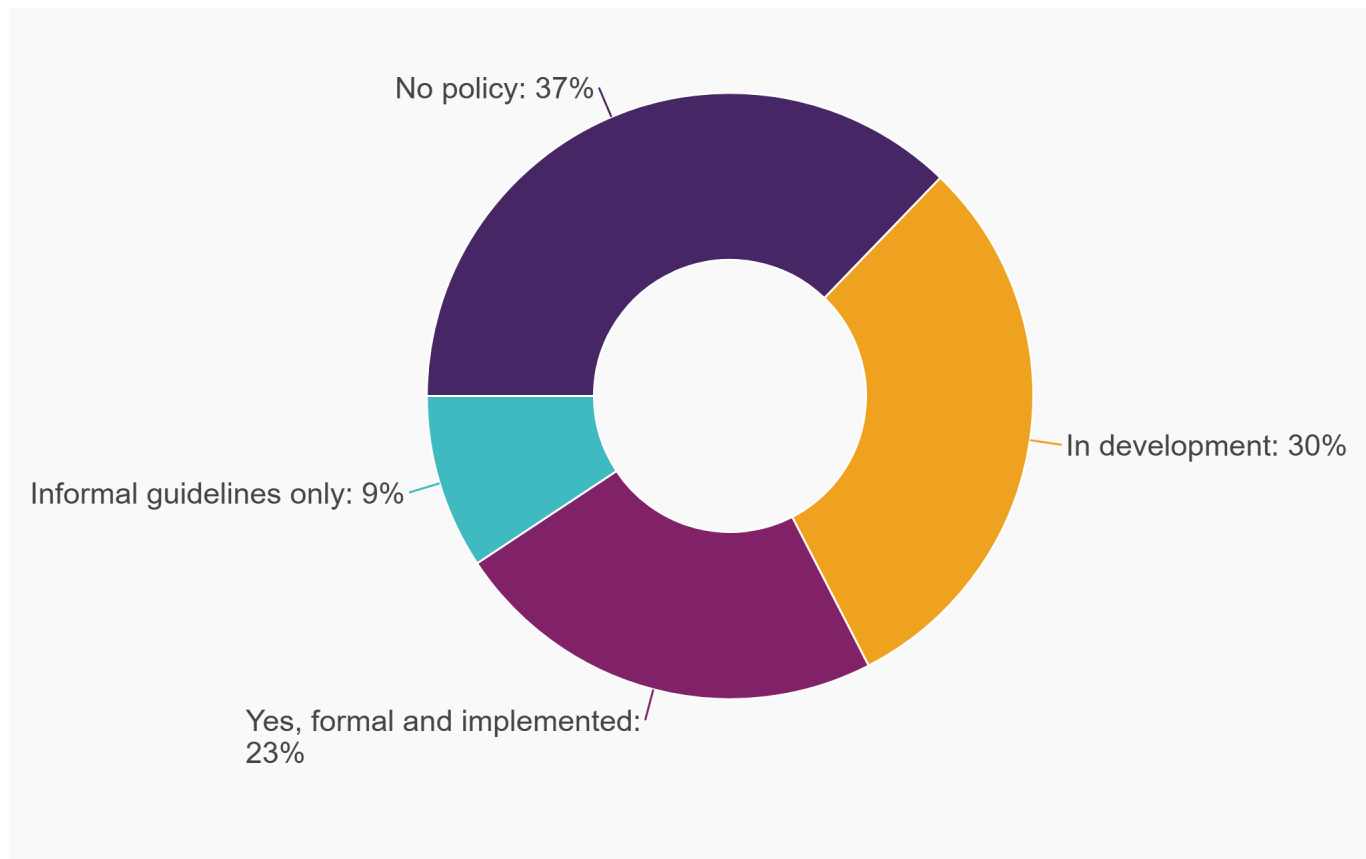
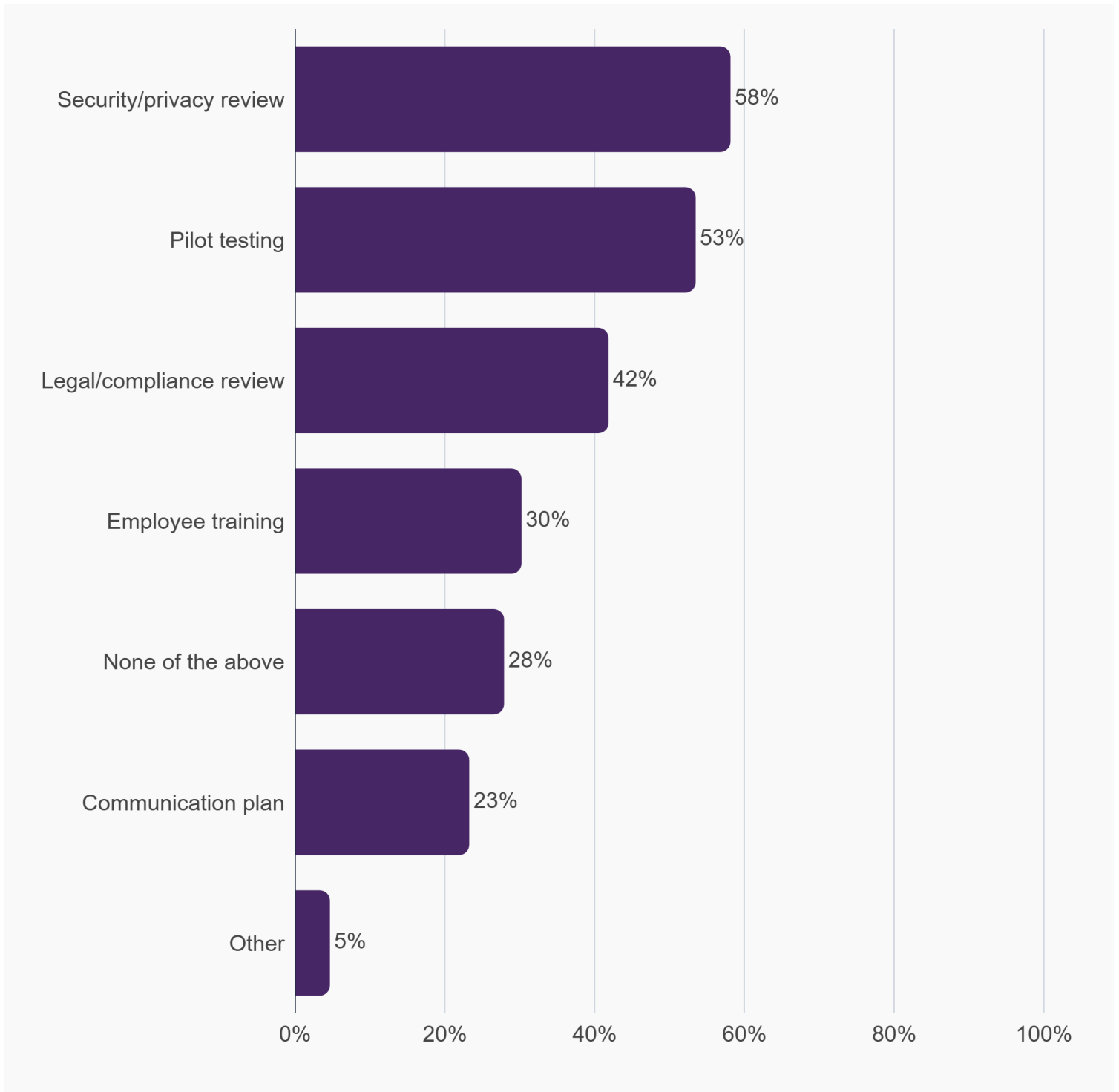


FIGURE 5 | What steps are taken before introducing an AI tool?



“Other” steps cited include:

- HQ IT approval

FIGURE 6 | What are your organization's top concerns about AI?

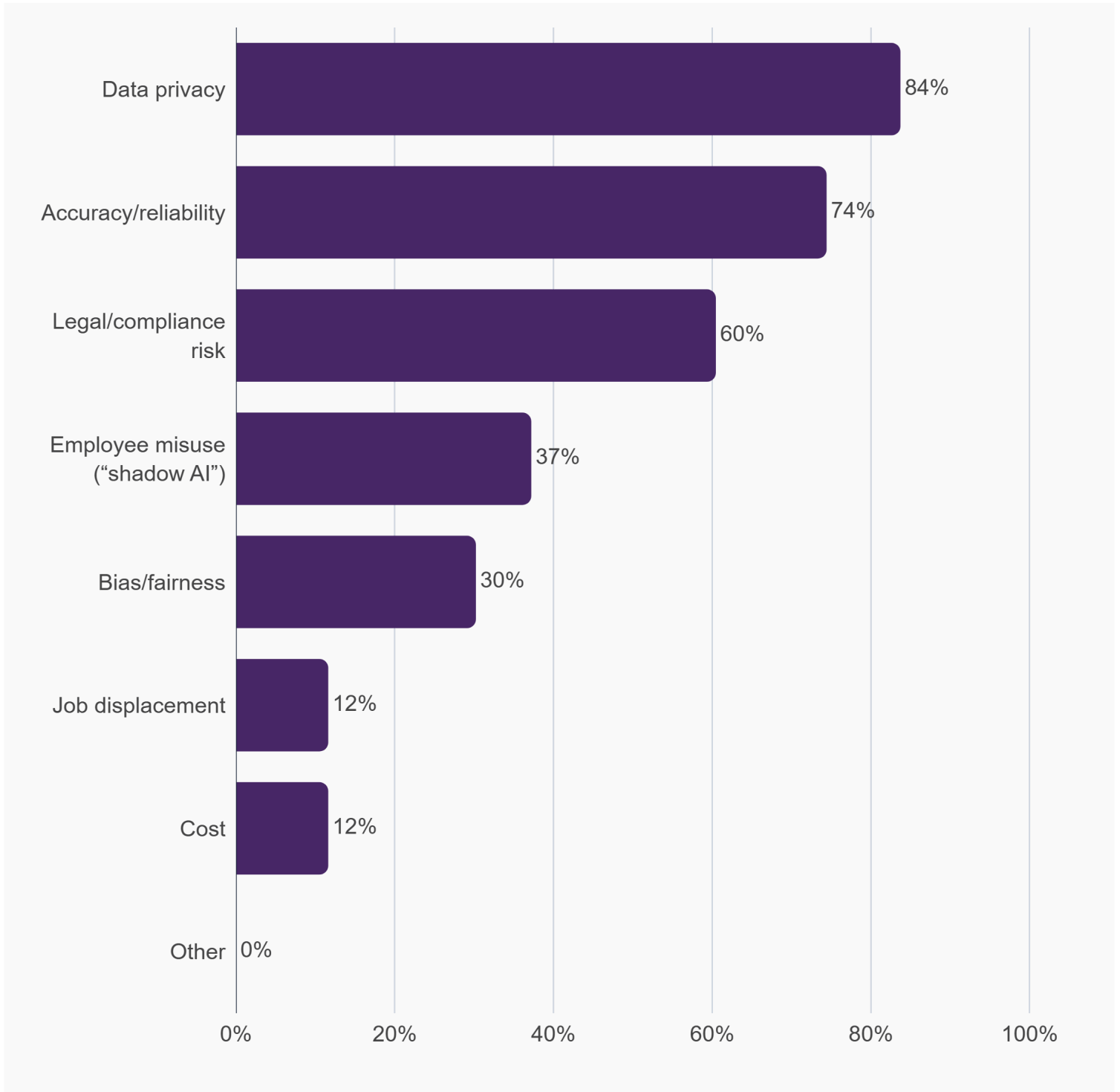
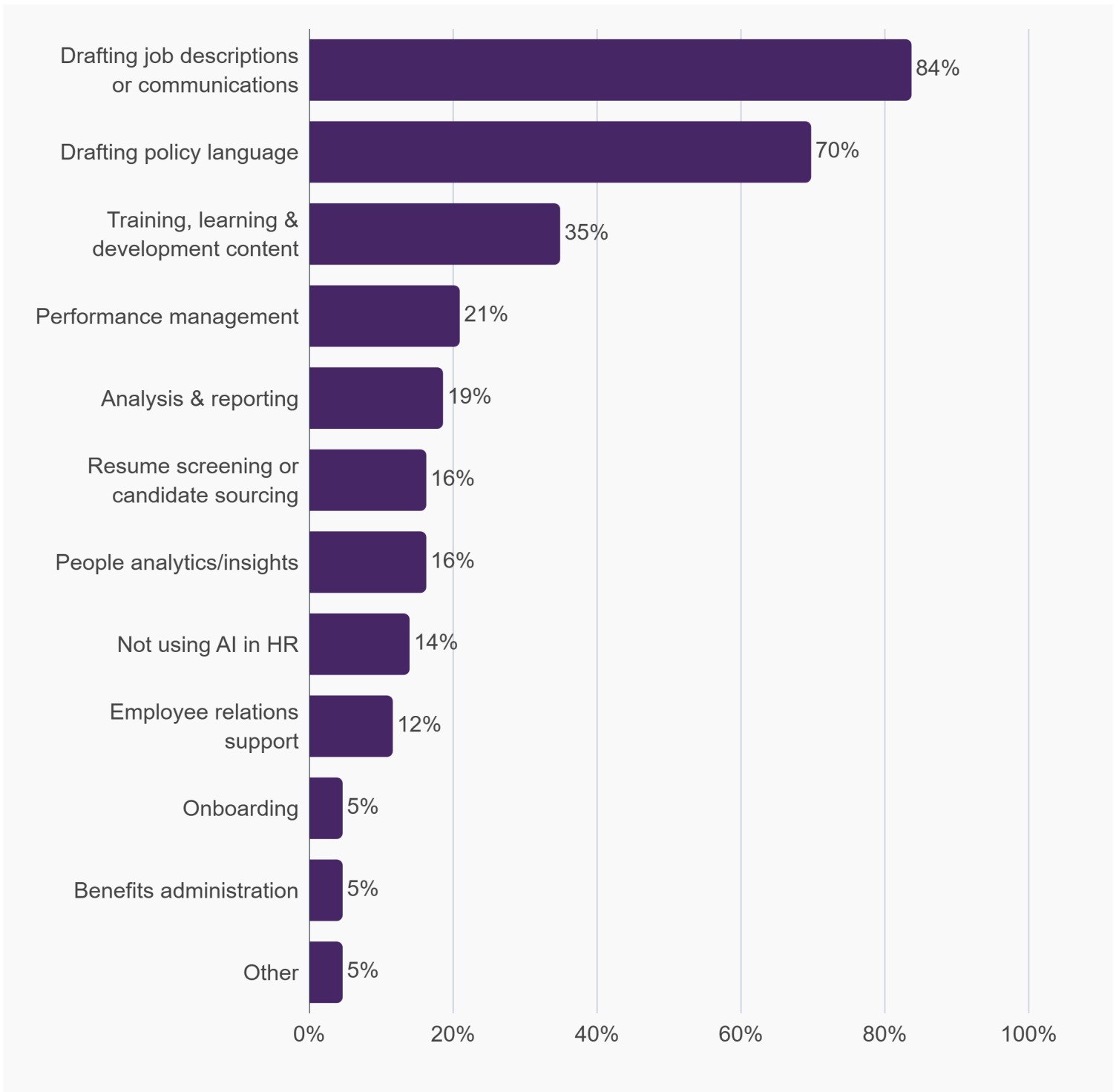


FIGURE 7 | How is your HR team currently using AI?



“Other” AI use cases within HR include:

- Marketing materials and sales correspondence
- Have an HR AI Agent linked to our handbook and benefit information

FIGURE 8 | How is your organization addressing potential AI risks?

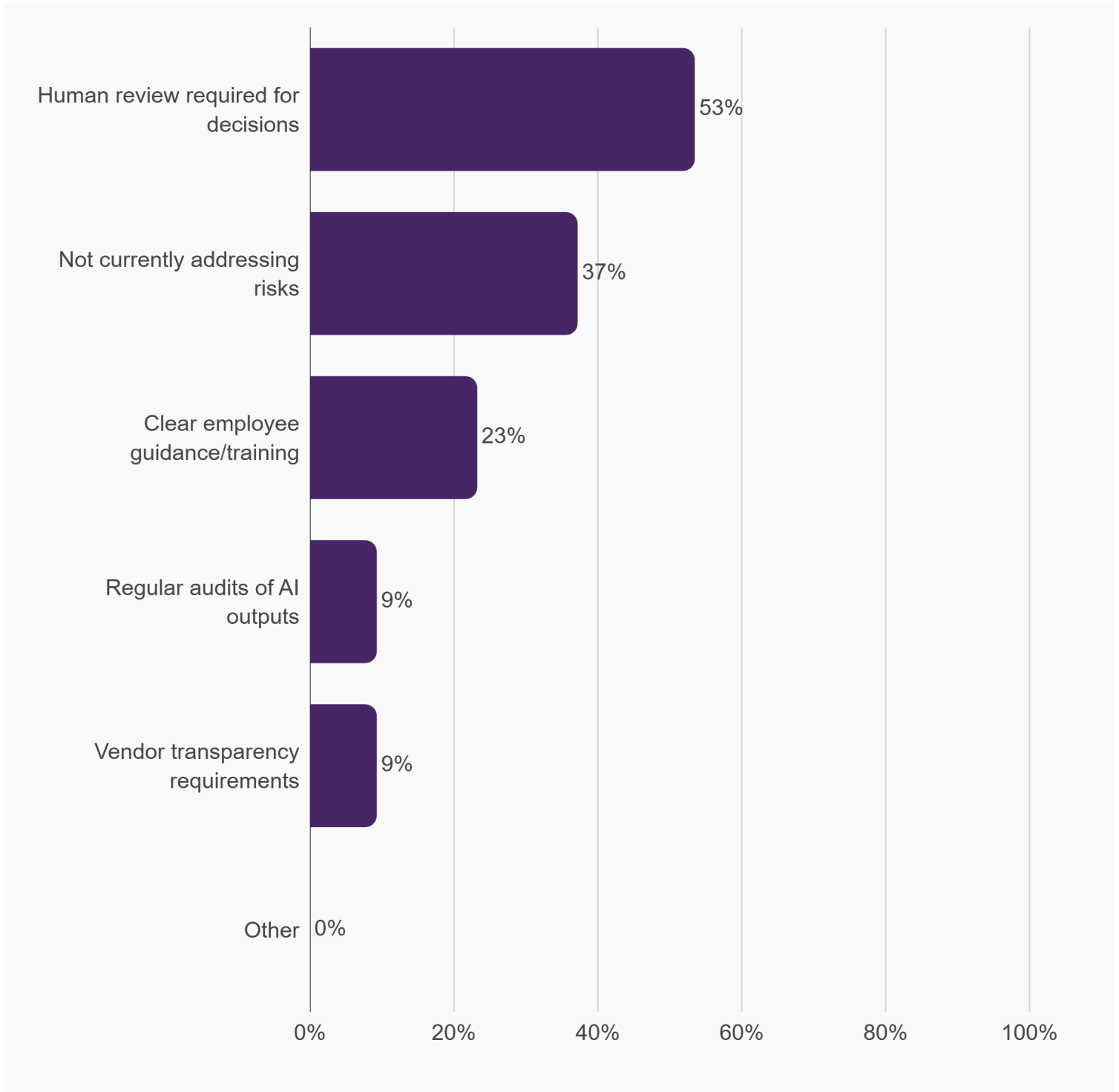
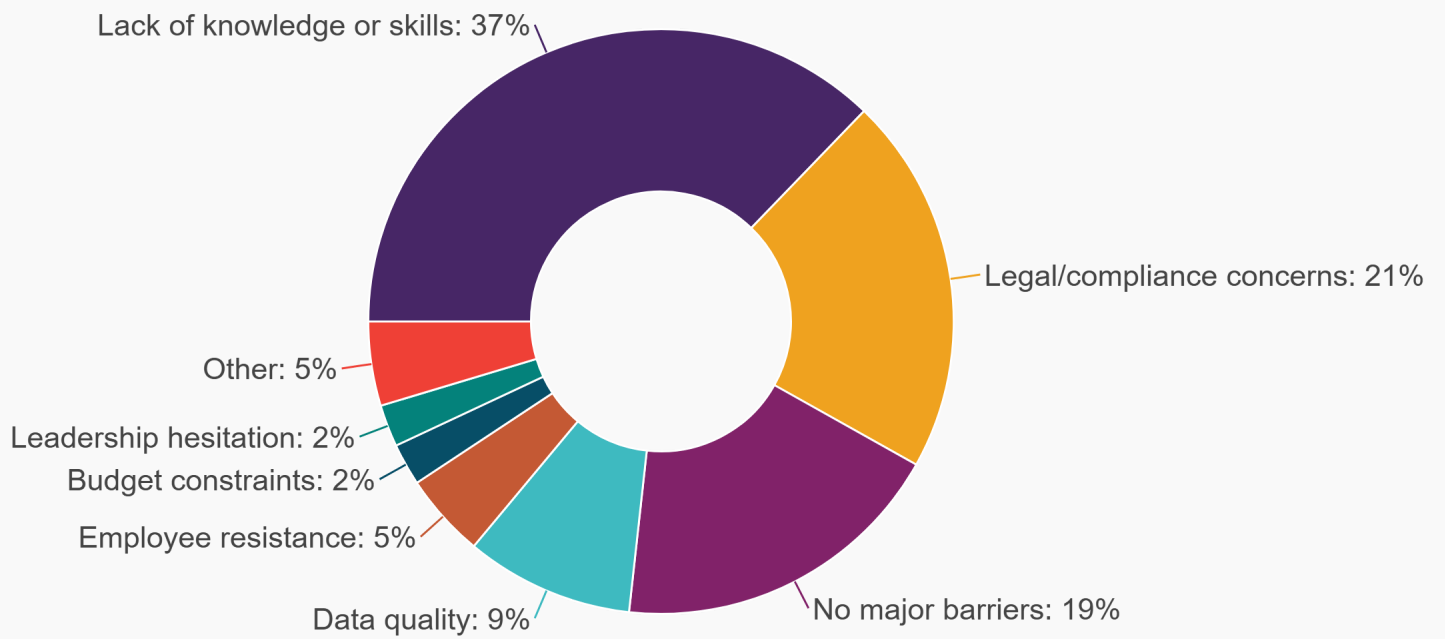


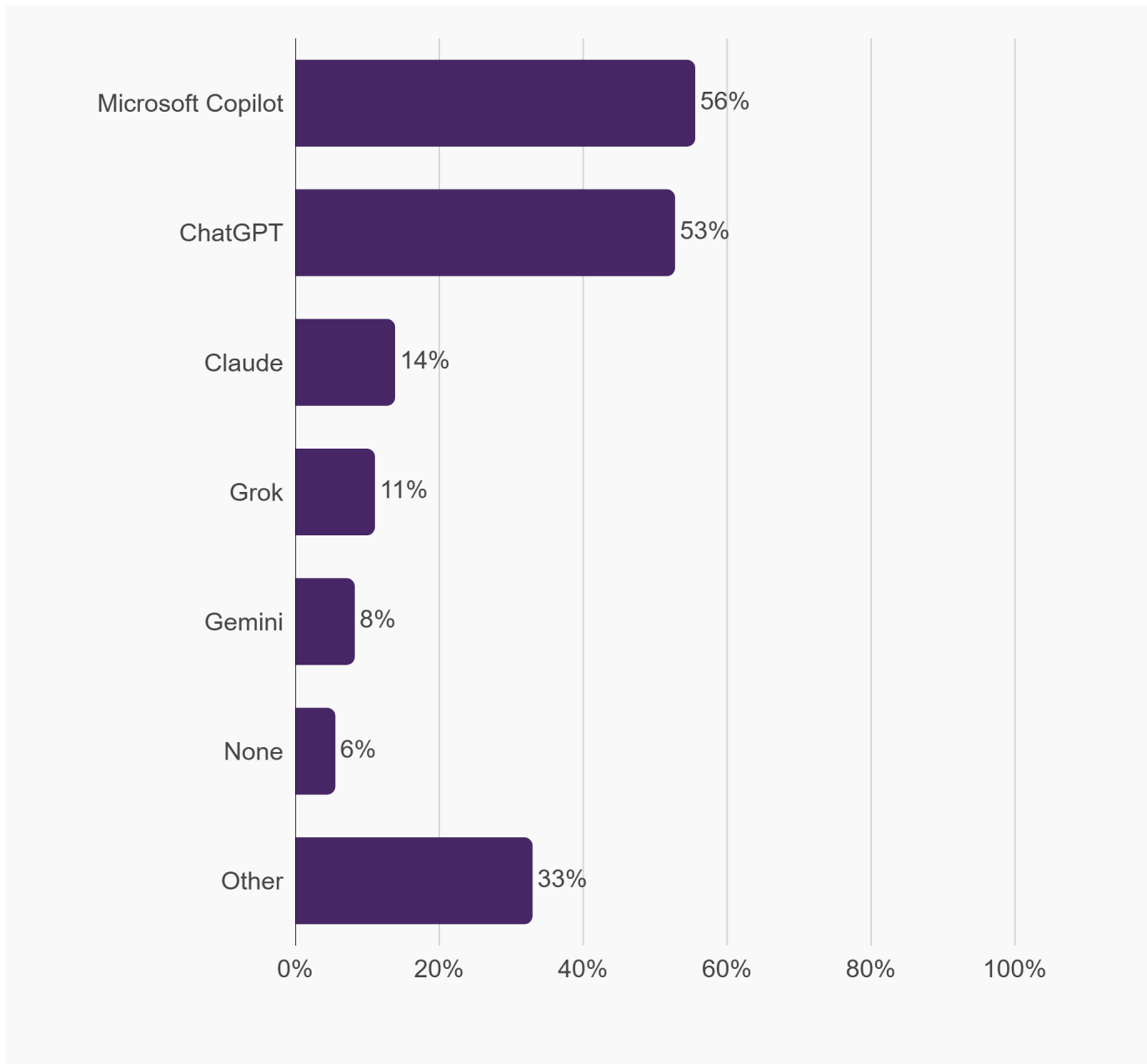
FIGURE 9 | What is the biggest barrier to expanding AI use?



“Other” AI use barriers include:

- not interested in using AI
- Time constraints on doing it right

FIGURE 10 | What AI tools, platforms, or systems are you using?



“Other” AI tools, platforms, or systems include:

- Perplexity
- Free Willy
- Order-taking AI tools
- Rev Cycle AI systems
- Communications AI systems
- Paycor ATS
- PeopleGPT
- Harvey
- Canva
- Monday.com (AI features)
- Chatbots (generic)
- Custom-developed (AWS + Claude)

FIGURE 11 | What advice would you give other HR leaders beginning their AI journey?

The following themes emerged from a review of the open ended responses provided to the question above. Specific details about the changes are listed thematically below.

- **Start Small, Experiment, & Learn by Doing**
- **Maintain the Human Element**
- **Be Curious, Open-Minded, & Embrace Change**
- **Protect Data & Manage Risk**
- **Transparency & Communication**
- **Partner With IT & Bring in Expertise**

Start Small, Experiment, & Learn-by-Doing

- You have to test the waters, start slow and learn what you need to ask, then continue to drill down when asking questions.
- Start small. Use it to help you polish emails or policy wording, and load documents into it for it to check gaps. Get slowly comfortable with it. It is just another tool to help you, not replace you!
- Experiment - a lot! To get my first agent to the point where it was useful I had to tweak it and retry it for hours and hours, but once it got to where I needed it, it's helped me save a ton of time!
- Focus on how this tool can save time.

Maintain the Human Element

- AI cannot replace a human because you still have to use your brain to input intelligent information to get the best output - so don't be afraid of using it.
- AI is a wonderful tool, but it should not replace the human element of HR at any time.
- Answers are only as good as the data given

Be Curious, Open-Minded, & Embrace Change

- I don't know enough about it to give advice but I think we all need to be willing to explore and embrace the technology
- Be curious and careful.
- Get on board!
- Do it! If you aren't using it, you are missing out.

FIGURE 11 cont. | What advice would you give other HR leaders beginning their AI journey?

Protect Data & Manage Risk

- Do your research, try out different platforms, never put sensitive information into AI
- proceed with caution and reach out to your legal team before adopting any procedure or full utilization.
- Embrace the change and work to mitigate risk to the company.

Transparency & Communication

- Transparency is key in terms of what your intentions are. Give ongoing factual updates on progress. Be deliberate and patient rolling solutions out.

Partner With IT & Bring in Expertise

- Don't be afraid to lean on your IT department when you get stuck... open an IT ticket and lean on them until it's resolved. If they can't help you, escalate it.
- We have been utilizing a 3rd party to help us with AI items that our internal IT team is too busy or doesn't have the knowledge to handle.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In total, 43 Northeast Ohio employers participated in the poll. See a breakdown of their demographics below.

FIGURE 12 | Which category best describes your organization's industry?

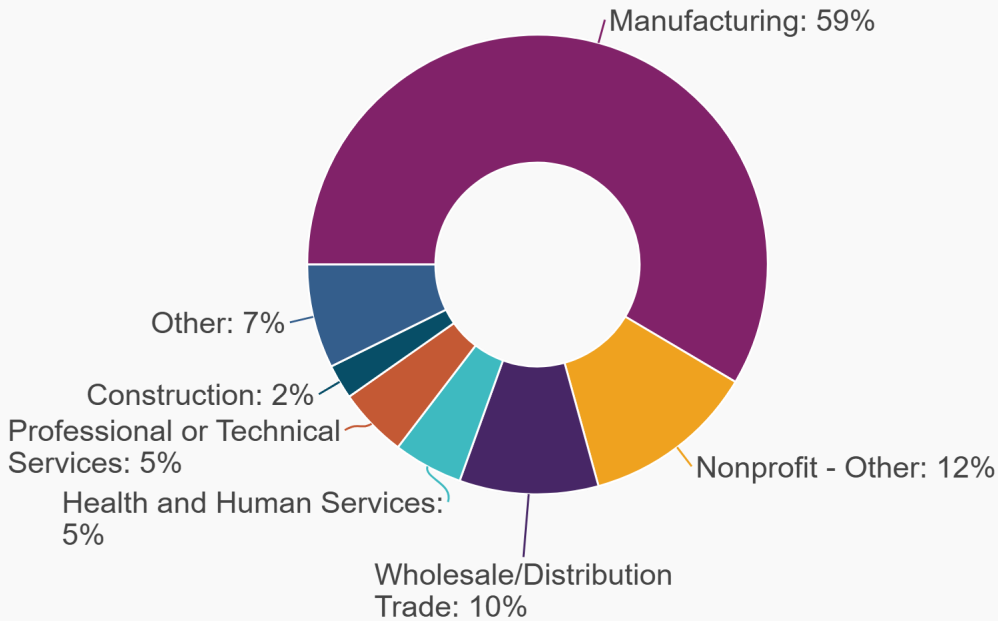
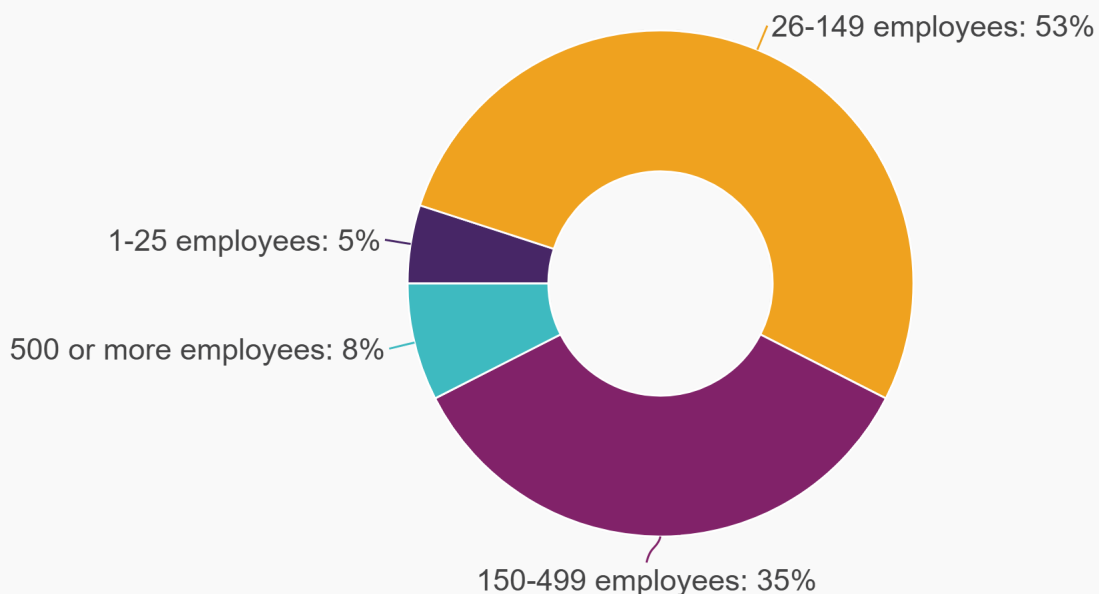


FIGURE 13 | How many employees does your organization have?



ERC Member Poll Results

**The Role of AI in the
Workplace in 2026**

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