

# FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO EXECUTION

The State of AI in Product Information  
Management (Q1 2025)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI is reshaping product information management (PIM)—but how it's being used, what it's used for, and its effectiveness vary widely across organizations.

To better understand AI adoption and use in PIM, Inriver surveyed 317 global C-suite leaders in marketing, product, and technology across industries, regions, and company sizes. The goal: to uncover how organizations integrate AI into their workflows, the benefits and challenges they're experiencing, and what separates high-performing adopters from the rest.

The self-reported data tells a clear story. AI has moved from *experimentation* to *execution*. **Nearly all companies surveyed—97%—have advanced beyond basic experimentation, and 83% report that AI is now embedded across multiple systems and workflows.** What once was a test-and-learn initiative has become an operational cornerstone for how companies manage, optimize, and syndicate product content. It is important to keep in mind, however, that AI itself is still in the early stages of true widespread deployment. As AI technology is rapidly changing, we expect adoption and value creation to simultaneously evolve.

**Despite different approaches, early outcomes for most respondents appear promising—over 80% of companies report moderate to significant revenue gains from AI, and 87% report customer trust in product information has increased.**

Notably, this trust is growing even though 90% of organizations still experience occasional AI-related content accuracy issues, signaling that companies are learning to embrace AI's benefits while managing its imperfections.

It is important to note that these usage patterns are self-reported and don't always align with observational data in the general market. It is possible that the respondents, all executive-level, may not see the hands-on oversight and management involved in what they are calling "autonomous AI." This is an important topic for future research, as the *optimism* of the executive perspective on AI might be misaligned with the *pragmatism* of the hands-on practitioners.

What *might* separate leading companies from laggards is not **how much AI they use, but how thoughtfully they deploy it and train their teams on the technology.**

**It is clear that not all companies are adopting AI in the same way. Our research reveals four distinct self-reported approaches:**

- Strong reliance on human oversight across AI workflows.
- Targeted testing of nearly autonomous AI.
- Selective implementation of AI, balancing automation with oversight, particularly in situations with greater risk.
- Isolated experimentation with AI.

# THE CURRENT STATE OF AI ADOPTION IN PIM

## The Reality Behind the Hype

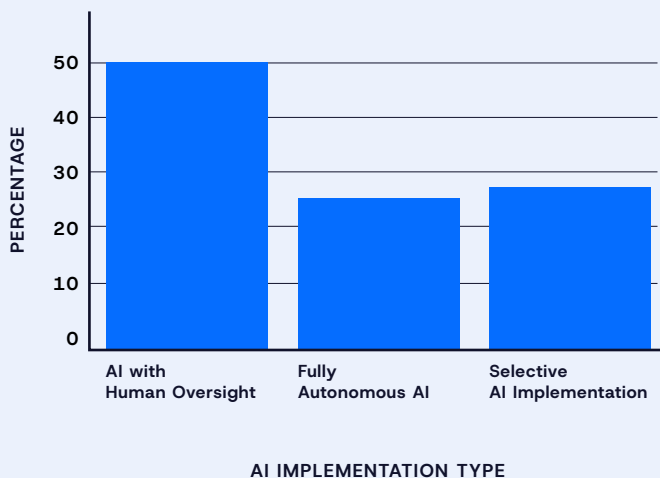
As AI adoption accelerates across PIM, organizations are approaching it with varying levels of trust and oversight. While few companies reject AI outright, most apply it in ways that reflect their existing tolerance for risk and commitment to control.

These patterns fall into three distinct groups (with a very small minority reporting isolated experimentation):

### 1 AI with Human Oversight (50%)

Half of the companies using AI in their product content workflows continue to rely on direct human oversight. These organizations recognize AI's potential but are not yet ready to let it operate independently. Manual review and approval processes remain a core part of their strategy. This group represents today's mainstream approach: taking advantage of AI-driven efficiency while minimizing the risk of errors, compliance failures, or off-brand messaging.

Overall AI Adoption for Product Information



### 2 Fully Autonomous AI (24%)

Just under a quarter of respondents report implementing fully autonomous AI systems in their product information workflows. But this number warrants scrutiny. In most cases, companies are not handing over full control of content creation, validation, or publishing. Instead, they're deploying advanced AI, such as machine learning models, for targeted, high-efficiency tasks with minimal oversight needs. Our respondents were also primarily executives who may not see the underlying complexity of the AI deployments inside their companies.

Survey data supports this more nuanced reality: companies in this group report the greatest AI-driven impact in data onboarding and validation (31.5%) and product performance analytics (24.6%). The most common applications include data categorization and enrichment (65%), with personalization and copy generation close behind. These are functional, focused uses of AI—**not broad automation**—designed to increase speed and accuracy while keeping guardrails in place.

### 3 Selective Implementation (26%)

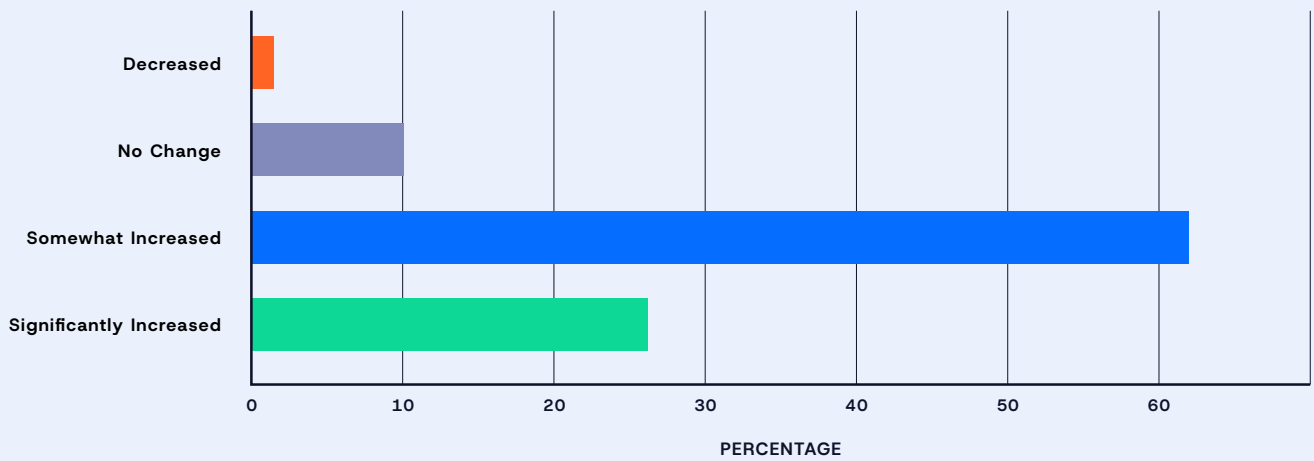
Roughly one in four companies are pursuing hybrid approaches, blending automation with oversight at specific risk points. These organizations use AI to streamline tasks such as content generation and validation, but introduce checkpoints—either human or intelligent agentic review—where accuracy and compliance matter most. This group reflects a growing recognition that trust in AI must be deliberately built into workflows, not assumed.

**Key Takeaway:** Confidence in AI is growing, but not unconditional. Even among leading adopters, the prevailing approach is deliberate and cautious, not “all-in.” Organizations continue to build significant guardrails through people or intelligent systems to scale responsibly and maintain control.

# THE AI TRUST PARADOX

## Increased Trust Despite Occasional Errors

Customer Trust Change



### Positive Impacts—Flaws and All

Despite ongoing concerns about AI-generated content and its potential for error, most companies report that AI positively affects how customers perceive their brand. **87% of organizations say customer trust in product information has somewhat or significantly increased since adopting AI into their product content workflows.** Only 2% observed a decline in trust, suggesting that responsible AI use is safe and beneficial to customer relationships. Brands also see clear business gains (65% report improved employee productivity and 63% report enhanced product data accuracy); companies are learning to embrace AI's value even while acknowledging its imperfections.

When it comes to specific concerns, data privacy and governance clearly dominate. Forty-one percent of respondents cite it as their top challenge, far outweighing traditional worries like misrepresenting product capabilities (11.4%) or inconsistent brand voice (8.5%). The data suggests that companies are less concerned with AI's ability to mimic tone or messaging and more focused on safeguarding the integrity and security of their information.

### Measuring Quality & Trust

Still, few companies have developed robust systems to directly measure the quality of AI-generated content—especially in comparison to human-created outputs. Instead, 68% rely on indirect indicators like CSAT scores to gauge customer trust. This highlights an emerging gap: **most organizations lack clear side-by-side benchmarks to evaluate how AI-driven content performs relative to traditional methods.** As AI becomes more central to product information strategies, developing outcome-based metrics that compare effectiveness across sources will be essential to sustaining and quantifying customer trust.

# THE EMERGING PATTERNS OF SUCCESS

## What Separates AI Leaders from Laggards

As AI becomes embedded in PIM, one thing is clear: **success isn't defined by how aggressively a company uses AI but by how strategically it uses the technology.** Organizations seeing the strongest business outcomes share common patterns, regardless of where they fall on the AI maturity curve mentioned in Section 1:

### They have clear governance

Companies reporting increased customer trust tend to implement structured oversight through human review or agentic AI (64% of respondents). It's not about reviewing everything but knowing what to verify and when.

### They're outcome-driven

Instead of measuring success by AI error rates, high-performing organizations focus on performance metrics like CSAT, revenue impact, and time-to-market (94%). The goal isn't perfection; the continuous optimization of AI translates into real business value.

### They balance speed with safeguards

The most effective teams automate where AI excels, like data enrichment or performance analytics (69%), and apply oversight where brand risk or compliance demands it. This flexible approach accelerates delivery without compromising trust.

### They accept that trust must be earned

Even as they scale AI, leaders acknowledge its limitations (68% say trust must be earned). **Ninety percent of companies still report occasional content accuracy issues**, but the most mature organizations see these as learning opportunities, not failures.

### Validation Approaches for AI-Generated Content

94%

Organizations who focus on performance metrics

90%

Companies that still report content accuracy issues

69%

Teams that automate where AI excels

68%

Leaders who say trust must be earned

64%

Respondents who implement structured oversight

**Key Takeaway:** The companies pulling ahead aren't necessarily the boldest. They're building systems that can scale responsibly, adapt quickly, and keep trust at the center of every product content decision.

# REGIONAL AND INDUSTRY PATTERNS: SPEED VS. SCRUTINY

While the overall trends show broad adoption of AI across product information workflows, a closer look at the data reveals important differences in how organizations use it—differences often shaped by geography, industry sector, and company size.

These variations provide a valuable opportunity for benchmarking by helping product leaders evaluate their strategies compared to peers facing similar challenges and constraints.

Geography plays a major role in shaping AI strategies. **U.S.-based companies are more likely to report using autonomous systems and comprehensive AI strategies, reflecting a higher risk tolerance and a focus on speed and operational efficiency.** On the other hand, European companies are more likely to adopt integrated AI with human oversight or remain in the selective implementation phase. This cautious approach is likely influenced by stricter regulatory environments and a stronger emphasis on data governance.

Regional priorities also differ when it comes to AI impact areas. U.S. respondents cite data onboarding, validation, and performance analytics as seeing the greatest returns. E.U. respondents see more impact in content creation and enrichment, underscoring a focus on brand integrity and consumer-facing content.

## AI Strategies and Priorities by Region

EU	More Likely to Report Using Autonomous Systems and Comprehensive AI Strategies	US
EU	Higher Risk Tolerance and Focus on Speed and Operational Efficiency	US
EU	More Likely to Adopt Integrated AI with Human Oversight	US
EU	More Likely to Remain in Selective Implementation Phase	US
EU	More Likely Influenced by Stricter Regulatory Environments and a Strong Emphasis on Data Governance	US
EU	Cites Data Onboarding, Validation, and Performance Analytics as Seeing the Greatest Returns	US
EU	Sees More Impact in Content Creation and Enrichment, Focusing on Brand Integrity and Consumer-facing Content	US

## AI maturity also tracks closely with industry-specific needs. Manufacturing and companies with their primary reported business as eCommerce are likely to report full integration or automation.

AI is a natural fit for these sectors, where large data volumes and structured processes are commonplace. (Note, of course, that many companies use eCommerce but may not describe their primary business as such.) Retail and wholesale/distribution organizations are more likely to still be in experimental phases, likely due to the complexity of omnichannel environments and heavier brand or compliance constraints. **CPG and eCommerce report stronger AI impact on customer-facing experiences and content enrichment.**

Even the revenue band plays a role in how AI is deployed. In Europe, adoption is concentrated in mid-market leaders (\$1B–\$5B), suggesting that scale and resources still influence the ability to invest in these technologies, especially in highly regulated markets. While EU adoption is more concentrated in the mid-market segment specifically, the overall distribution across all revenue bands shows slightly less variance than in the United States. It will be interesting to see how this evolves over time.

**Key Takeaway:** AI success isn't just about the technology; it's about where and how it's deployed. **The companies getting the most out of AI are tailoring their approach to fit their market realities.**

- For E.U. brands, that means governance, transparency, and smart oversight.
- For U.S. teams, it's about speed, automation, and streamlining operations.
- For customer-facing industries, AI is a tool for engagement.
- For back-end driven sectors, it's a lever for simplification and efficiency.

As adoption matures, benchmarking against peers, by region, industry, and size, will be critical to shaping the right automation roadmap.

# IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## What This Means for PIM Leaders

AI is no longer a pilot—it delivers meaningful results for companies around the globe. The most successful users of AI are not necessarily the fastest adopters, but those who apply AI strategically. They balance automation with oversight and prioritize both speed and trust. They are seeing **more accurate data and overall improved performance analytics**.

There is no one-size-fits-all model. Whether an organization is cautious, bold, or somewhere in between, success depends on aligning AI to business goals. The focus should not be on perfection but on maximizing value where it matters most.

At the same time, leaders must prioritize governance. As AI becomes integrated into more workflows, trust, privacy, and accuracy must be addressed proactively and built into every step of the process.

## Strategic Guidance for PIM Leaders

To guide successful AI implementation in PIM, consider the following:

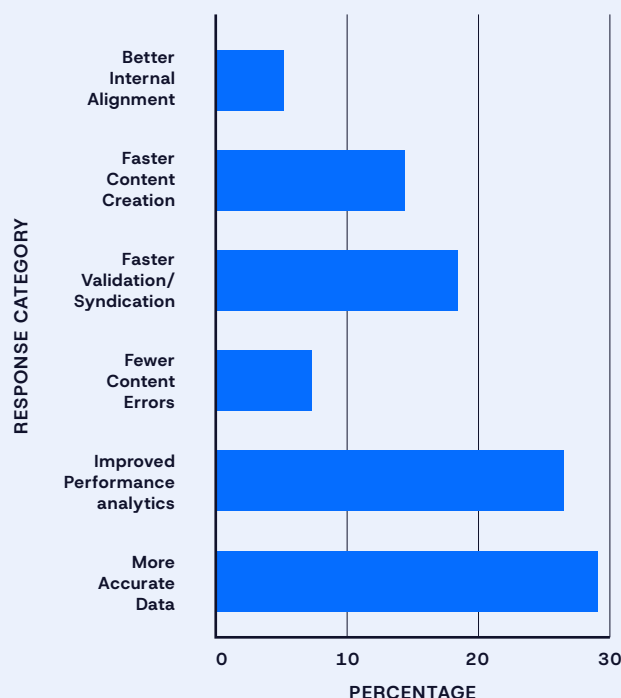
- Where does human or agentic oversight add value—and where does it create bottlenecks?
- How can we measure content trustworthiness beyond CSAT or traditional QA metrics?
- In which areas are we willing to prioritize speed over accuracy, and vice versa?

## The Path Forward: Balance Risk & Reward

The PIM industry is in a transitional phase regarding AI. Organizations are shifting from isolated AI tests to cross-functional deployment. **Winning will be about balancing risk and reward, designing integrated AI systems that manage risks intelligently, building customer trust, and achieving scale effectively and efficiently.**

This is the moment for PIM leaders to move beyond the AI “if” question and lean into the “how.” The organizations that thrive will be those that embed AI into workflows with accountability, adaptability, and a clear view of what success looks like.

How Companies are Benefitting From AI



# METHODOLOGY

This white paper is based on proprietary research conducted by Inriver in collaboration with Silicon Valley Research Group ([siliconvalleyrg.com](https://siliconvalleyrg.com)).

Between February and March 2025, 317 global product content leaders were surveyed across industries, including retail, manufacturing, consumer goods, and distribution.

This survey included a high proportion of senior decision-makers in the PIM industry: the majority of respondents held VP or C-suite roles across product, marketing, eCommerce, and IT functions. This elevated level of input offers a strategic view into how AI is shaping PIM from the top down.

The research aimed to uncover how companies use AI in their PIM workflows, the results they see, the risks they manage, and the governance models they adopt. Findings were self-reported and analyzed to identify key patterns, maturity trends, and success factors shaping the future of AI in product content operations. All percentages are based upon respondents who replied to specific questions.

## ABOUT INRIVER

Inriver is the Product Information Management (PIM) solution that empowers brands, manufacturers, and retailers to take control of the product data current and turn complexity into competitive advantage. Its AI-powered, scalable platform connects seamlessly to upstream systems and downstream channels, enabling continuous optimization of product experiences across every touchpoint. Trusted by more than 600 global brands, Inriver accelerates time-to-market, enhances customer experience, and fuels profitable growth.

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