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Orchestrating AI-Driven Process Transformation in SAP-Centric Enterprises

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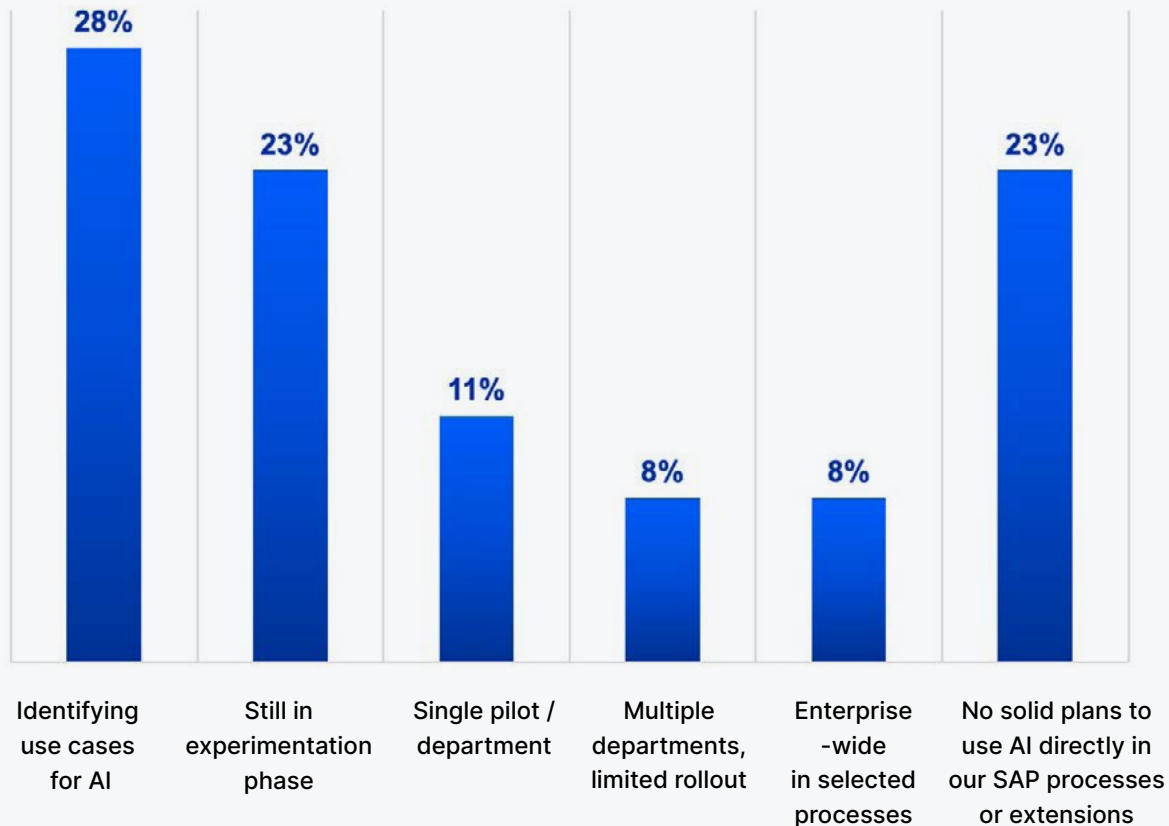
Executive Summary

The use of AI in the enterprise has increased rapidly over the past two years. While there was significant AI adoption prior to the release of generative AI, particularly with iterative AI and machine learning, the recent acceleration has drastically altered the way organizations think about doing business. However, even with this rapid acceleration, AI adoption within the SAP ecosystem remains relatively early. Even with SAP's recent announcements around the SAP Business AI Platform and SAP Autonomous Suite, only a small proportion of SAP customers are using AI in SAP use cases in multiple departments or in enterprise-wide processes.

In this study, conducted during April and May 2026, nearly three quarters (74%) of those surveyed by SAPinsider report that the scale of AI-enabled SAP use cases in their organizations remains in its early phases (**Figure 1**). For example, 28% report that their organization is identifying use cases for AI, 23% note that their AI adoption for SAP use cases is in the experimentation phase, and 23% say that they currently have no solid plans to use AI directly in SAP processes or extensions. This relatively conservative adoption is consistent with research conducted by SAPinsider in late 2025 and with remarks made by SAP CEO Christian Klein during the company's Q1 2026 earnings call.

FIGURE 1

Scale of Deployed AI-Enabled SAP Use Cases



Although SAP made significant announcements around AI during the Sapphire 2026 event, these are yet to have any significant impact on the SAP community. If anything, the move to the Autonomous Suite is likely to be a multi-phase journey that will be conducted over the next two to three years. This will start with the co-development process that SAP currently has underway with a handful of customers, will extend to a larger customer group during 2027, and may not be generally available to all customers for another 18 months. At the same time, customers will need to take steps to prepare for their eventual use of Autonomous Enterprise by consolidating to the SAP Business AI Platform, improving data readiness, creating a semantic data fabric, and implementing change management as a continuous capability.

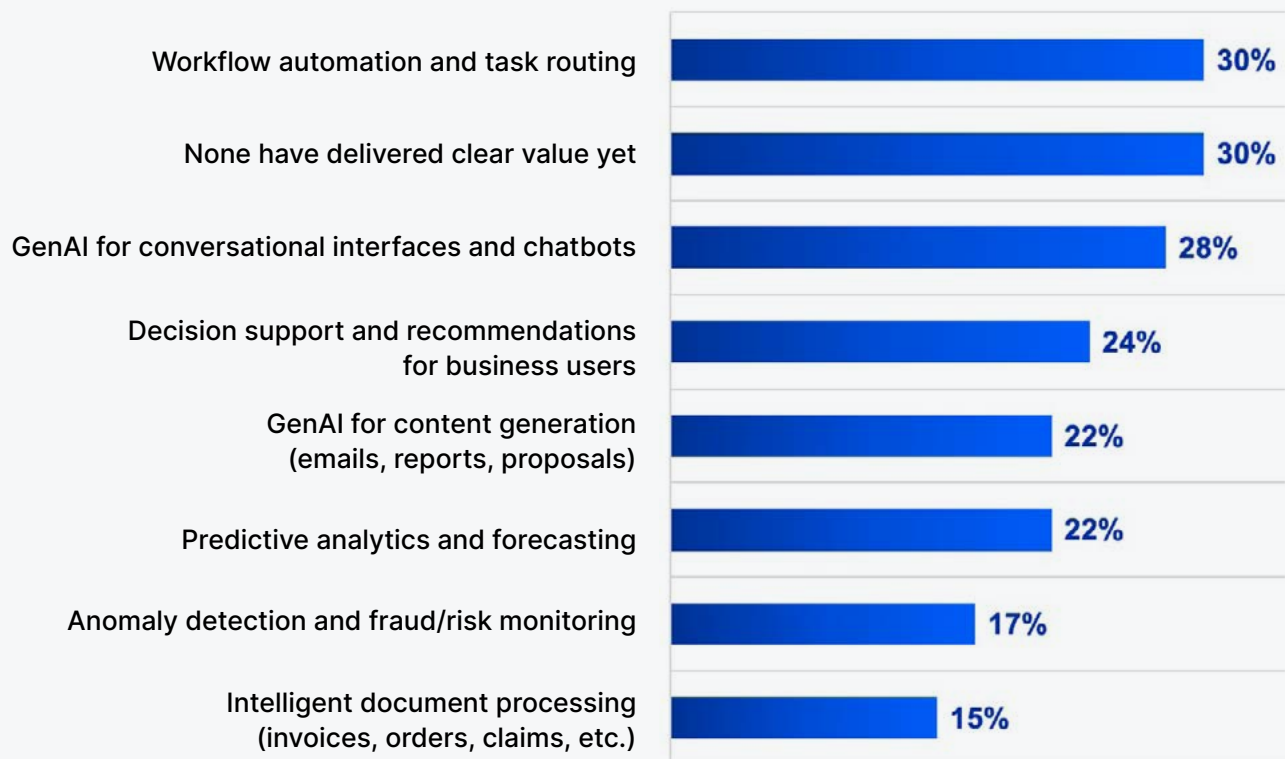
Despite the relatively small number of respondents reporting that their organizations are actively moving forward with AI projects, there is some significant progress being made by those groups. Just over one in ten (11%) have AI pilots rolled out to a single department, another 8% have use cases that cover multiple departments, and the final 8% are running enterprise-wide use cases in selected processes. This demonstrates that there are use cases that are resonating when it comes to AI which will help organizations with the eventual broader adoption of AI within SAP use cases.

This is reflected in the fact that there are already multiple areas in which AI is being embedded into existing SAP-related processes today. However, 43% of respondents report that their organization is not yet using AI at all in SAP-related processes. That correlates with respondents reporting that they have no solid plans to use AI directly in SAP and those who are identifying AI uses cases or who are in the experimentation phase. Additionally, AI is being used in areas like customer service and support, IT operations and SAP Basis administration, as well as in finance-related processes such as order-to-cash, procure-to-pay, and more general finance areas such as forecasting and cash management.

However, there are areas where AI use cases are already delivering value for those that have moved beyond the exploration phase. This includes areas such as workflow automation and task routing (30%), conversational interfaces and chatbots (28%), decision support and recommendations for business users (24%), content generation (22%), and predictive analytics and forecasting (22%) as seen in **Figure 2**.

FIGURE 2

Types of AI Use Cases Delivering the Most Value



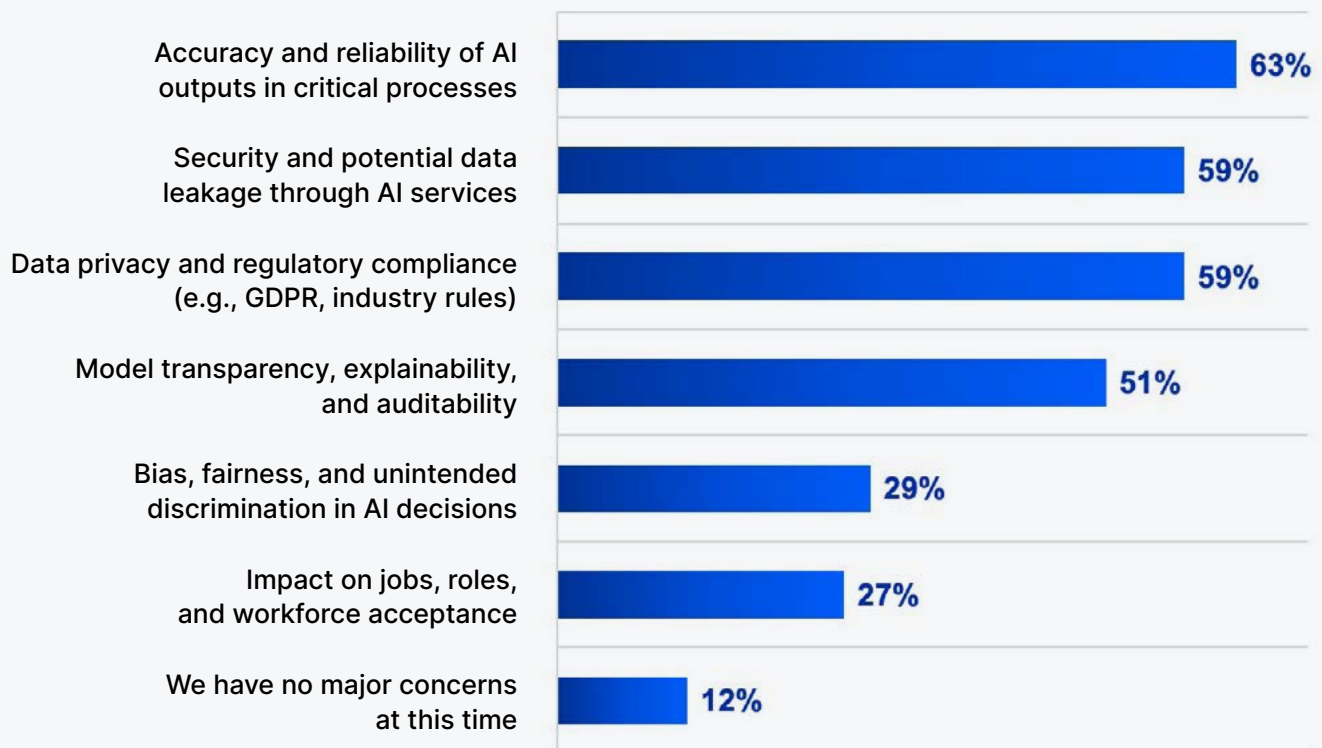
The fact that AI is already delivering value in these areas and starting to be used across SAP enterprises suggests that organizations are faced with the challenge of finding a use case that delivers value, since AI is expensive to run, rather than just identifying use cases. This makes it vital for organizations to effectively manage the cost of their AI investments in addition to implementing governance standards to protect data and ensure responses are accurate.

One of SAP's focus areas around the SAP Business AI Platform and the SAP Autonomous Suite is that of AI governance, something the company has been focused on since first introducing embedded AI within applications. The approach that SAP took involved ensuring that any AI which is available in SAP applications was reliable, reliable, and responsible. While this worked to ensure that AI would be well governed, there is a difference between having AI in deployed business applications and being able to demonstrate the value of that investment.

The concern for users may well be the way that AI is managed and governed. For example, two thirds (63%) of respondents report that they have concerns around the accuracy and reliability of AI outputs in critical processes (**Figure 3**). This is the point that was mentioned multiple times during the Sapphire 2026 keynote where 80% accuracy simply isn't good enough for enterprise data, particularly for systems of record. Solving the accuracy and reliability challenge, and removing any possibility of AI hallucination, is crucial to the success of any AI use case within SAP solutions.

FIGURE 3

Concerns Around Governance, Risk, and Compliance When Using AI With Operational ERP Data



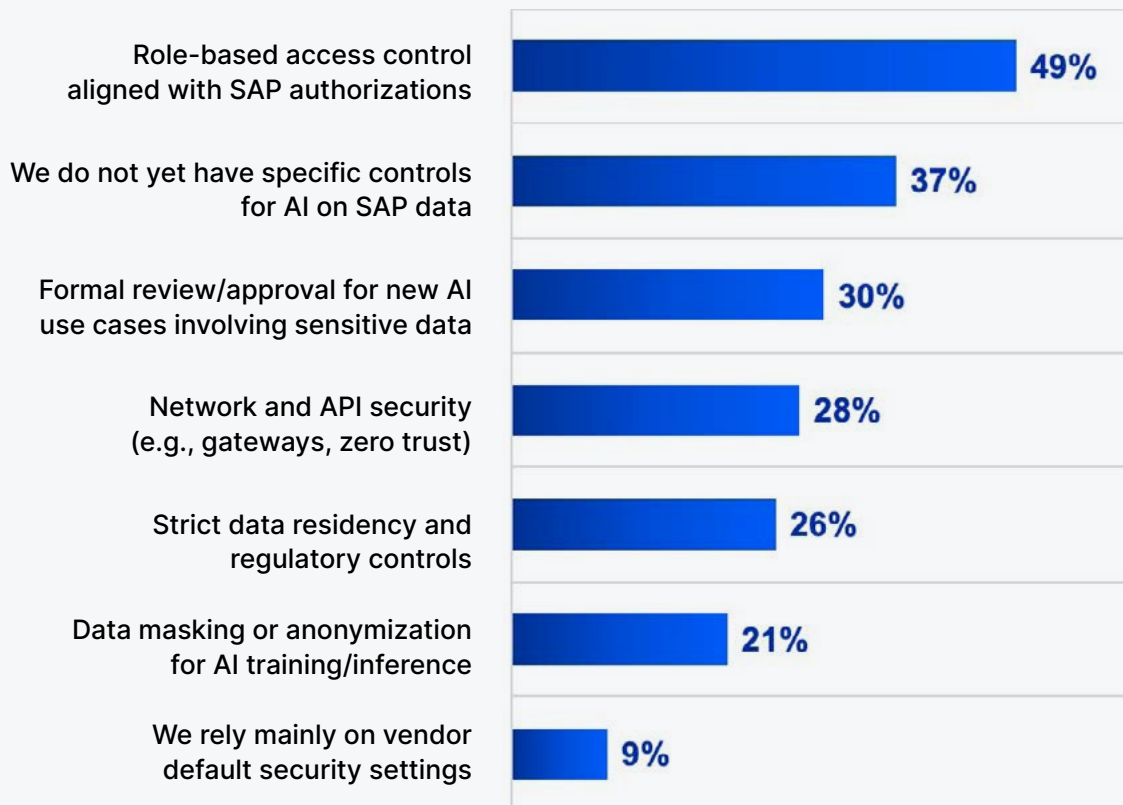
Beyond the initial accuracy concern, almost as many respondents have concerns about potential data leakage through AI services (59%) and data privacy and regulatory compliance when using AI (59%). Both these areas are challenges that those implementing AI use cases need to address if they are to be successful. While the tools that SAP is providing will help organizations to track and manage AI agents running in their landscapes, not all AI use cases necessarily involve agents. However, all do need an appropriate execution layer that ensures the AI is effectively governed and managed from a cost, data protection and accuracy standpoint.

One positive, as seen in SAPinsider's previous research on AI adoption in the SAP ecosystem, is that organizations are likely to be ahead in implementing governance policies than they are with AI adoption itself. This demonstrates that organizations are taking AI governance seriously and understand that having effective governance is vital to delivering the value of AI use cases. The one piece that goes beyond implementing a governance strategy is that of a reliable execution layer. Having the right execution layer can make all the difference between use cases that do or do not show value.

When implementing the governance layer, the most important requirement is for role-based access control that is aligned with SAP authorizations (49%) as seen in Figure 4. This need is crucial, even for AI, because access control is one of the most important parts of SAP systems. Users, or agents, should not have access to data for which they're not authorized. This is even more important when considering the execution layer for AI agents.

FIGURE4

Primary Security and Data Protection Controls for AI Using SAP



Beyond this need is that of a formal review process for new AI use cases involving sensitive data (30%), network and API security (28%), and strict data residency and regulatory controls (26%). While many organizations are putting in place capabilities to better manage AI agents, like the SAP AI Agent Hub, these requirements impact all AI capabilities and not just agents that may be part of long-term plans for organizations. This is where the execution layer can make a difference, particularly if the use case that leverages AI is part of a connected application or for orchestrating AI capabilities.

Respondents are using low-code/no-code application development platforms as an approach to ensure that this execution layer is in place. One in ten respondents see the role played by low-code/no-code tools as core to turning AI outputs into business applications and most of their AI-enabled applications are built or orchestrated with low-code/no-code tools. Another third (29%) see the role played by low-code/no-code platforms as important as they are used for many AI-related front ends and work-flows. Another quarter (26%) are mainly using low-code/no-code platforms for prototypes or small, departmental applications. This shows the importance these platforms are playing in making AI use cases successful.

For organizations that are still considering how they will use AI within their SAP-related processes, the biggest need is to ensure that any use case delivers value. However, achieving this goal is not possible without an effective and efficient execution layer, which ensures that any AI-based applications created are well governed, deployed business applications. Low-code/no-code platforms can be the layer that makes this possible and allows organizations that are more cautious about AI adoption to move safely from AI pilots to production scenarios.

Our survey also revealed the following trends:

- Although nearly half the respondents to the survey (43%) reported that they are not yet using AI in SAP-related processes, only half that many (20%) reported not having a defined AI strategy. Half have a formal AI strategy with 15% fully funding that strategy with roadmaps and dedicated delivery teams, while 35% report that the execution of the strategy is mostly limited to pilots or PoCs.
- The most likely methodology for connecting AI services or agents to SAP back-end systems is using direct API calls (33%). This is followed by using AI Core or AI Foundation in SAP Business Technology Platform (22%), using vendor-delivered AI embedded in SAP applications (20%), or via data replication into a data warehouse or data lake (17%). Those using direct API calls need to ensure that they are following SAP's new API guidelines closely to ensure that they do not run into issues in the future.
- Employee productivity and experience, for example time saved or satisfaction, is the most likely method for measuring the impact of AI-enabled applications on process and business outcomes (38%). Other methods for measuring the impact of AI-enabled applications are customer outcomes (28%) or process KPIs (28%).

Required Actions

Based on the survey responses, the data points to three steps that should be addressed in sequence. AI adoption is still early for most organizations although

Anchor AI strategy on value-proven use case categories, not on a use case search.

With most customers still identifying or experimenting with use cases, or currently having no plans for AI, it is important not to treat AI adoption as a discovery exercise. Use cases such as workflow automation and task routing, conversational interfaces, decision support, content generation, and predictive analytics are already demonstrating value. SAPinsiders should select two or three of these categories that map to their existing SAP processes and concentrate funding there rather than creating a large, undefined pilot portfolio that risks not delivering value. AI is expensive to run, and the organizations that show value first will be those that provide runway for the scenarios that demonstrate genuine value.

Implement governance controls before any production scale-up.

Two thirds of respondents cite the accuracy and reliability of AI outputs as a top governance concern, and almost as many are concerned about data leakage and data privacy compliance. This makes it crucial to treat the governance stack as a precondition for moving any pilot into production. Organizations cannot rely on anything but 100% accuracy for systems or record, and that is the standard that should govern moving any application from pilot to production, regardless of whether the use case involves agents or simpler AI services.

Treat the execution layer as the most important architectural decision and evaluate low-code/no-code platforms as primary candidates to fill that role.

SAPinsiders should explicitly evaluate execution-layer candidates against three criteria from this research: Their ability to enforce SAP-aligned role-based access control at the application level; their fit with the dominant integration patterns used to reach SAP back-ends; and the capacity to make AI applications observable enough to measure against the productivity, customer-outcomes, and process-KPI metrics being tracked. A significant proportion of respondents already see low-code/no-code platforms as an important step to turning AI outputs into effectively governed business applications. Whether or not this is the approach taken, without an execution layer both governance and use case selection will struggle to move beyond the pilot phase.

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The model was never the hard part

This report describes a market that is long on AI use cases and short on AI value. More than half of organizations are still identifying or experimenting, and the single use case most often named as delivering value is matched, point for point, by the share that say nothing has delivered clear value yet. It is tempting to read that as a maturity curve that time will flatten on its own. The data points to something more specific: an execution gap.

Look at where value actually shows up in the findings. The use cases that pay off are the ones that get deployed and run as part of a real process, with workflow automation and task routing leading the list. The ones that stall share a quieter trait. AI produces an output, and then there is no safe, native path to turn that output into something the business can run inside SAP. The experiment ends as a demo. Where AI runs determines whether it is both safe and useful. The top concerns in this report are not abstract. They are accuracy and reliability, data leakage, and regulatory compliance, and more than a third of organizations admit they have no AI-specific controls for SAP data in place yet. Most approaches answer this by moving data out of SAP, working on it elsewhere, and rebuilding governance around it. That adds latency, cost, and a new surface to secure.

Neptune takes the opposite approach. Its SAP-Native Execution Core means applications and agents execute inside SAP, against the customer's own data and business logic, and carry the existing role and authorization model with them. Governance is not bolted on after the fact. It is inherited from the system of record. This report shows the market is moving in that direction: 39% of respondents already call low-code and no-code platforms a core or important part of turning AI output into governed business applications. What matters as much as the build layer is where the output actually runs.

This becomes more pressing as organizations move from pilots toward agents acting on operational ERP data. An agent that plans and executes a multi-step process inside SAP needs the customer's real context, not a copy of it sitting in a separate store. The execution layer is where the value case and the governance case are won together. Organizations that decide where their AI runs before they scale it will be the ones that move from interesting pilots to operations they can trust.

About Neptune Software

Neptune Software helps enterprises build, deploy, and govern AI-enabled applications natively inside SAP. Its no-code, low-code, and developer-ready platform spans user experience, workflow automation, and data orchestration, with enterprise-grade governance built in from the ground up.

Built to run natively inside SAP ECC and S/4HANA and extendable to any enterprise system, Neptune DXP delivers clean-core compliance and full SAP-native integration without middleware. Certified to ISO/IEC 42001:2023 certification, the international standard for AI Management Systems, covering AI development, integration, deployment, and governance across our platform. Founded in Oslo in 2011, Neptune supports more than 850 customers and over 4 million licensed users worldwide, with more than 100 certified partners. Recognized by Gartner and G2.

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