

AI maturity in US organizations

Is your organization ready to harness the power of AI and unstructured data

Jill B. Shoup
Research Director

Grace Gibson
Senior Marketing Manager



Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing industries by enabling organizations to unlock the full potential of their data, driving innovation, efficiency, and competitive advantage. While structured data has long been the backbone of analysis, the true power of AI lies in its ability to process and derive insights from unstructured data – vast, untapped resources like text, images, videos, and audio. As AI technologies advance, unstructured data is becoming a critical asset, helping businesses make smarter decisions and uncover new opportunities in a data-driven world.

It's important that organizations understand current adoption trends and how to optimize their usage. This summary dives into organizations in the US and their use of AI and unstructured data. It will investigate how this resource is currently used, what organizations in the US can do to accelerate use, and what the next steps are.

Findings are based on research conducted by Iron Mountain alongside independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne. Data in this report is based on 400 IT and data decision-makers at organizations in the US, who have knowledge or involvement in their AI strategy. You can read the global report [here](#).

Three key takeaways:



The US focuses more on AI for customer service than the global trend



There are more AI-mature organizations in the US than the global average, with many reporting more complex future priorities such as multi-modal AI



US organizations routinely use AI to leverage unstructured data, unboxing a range of benefits for organizations including innovation

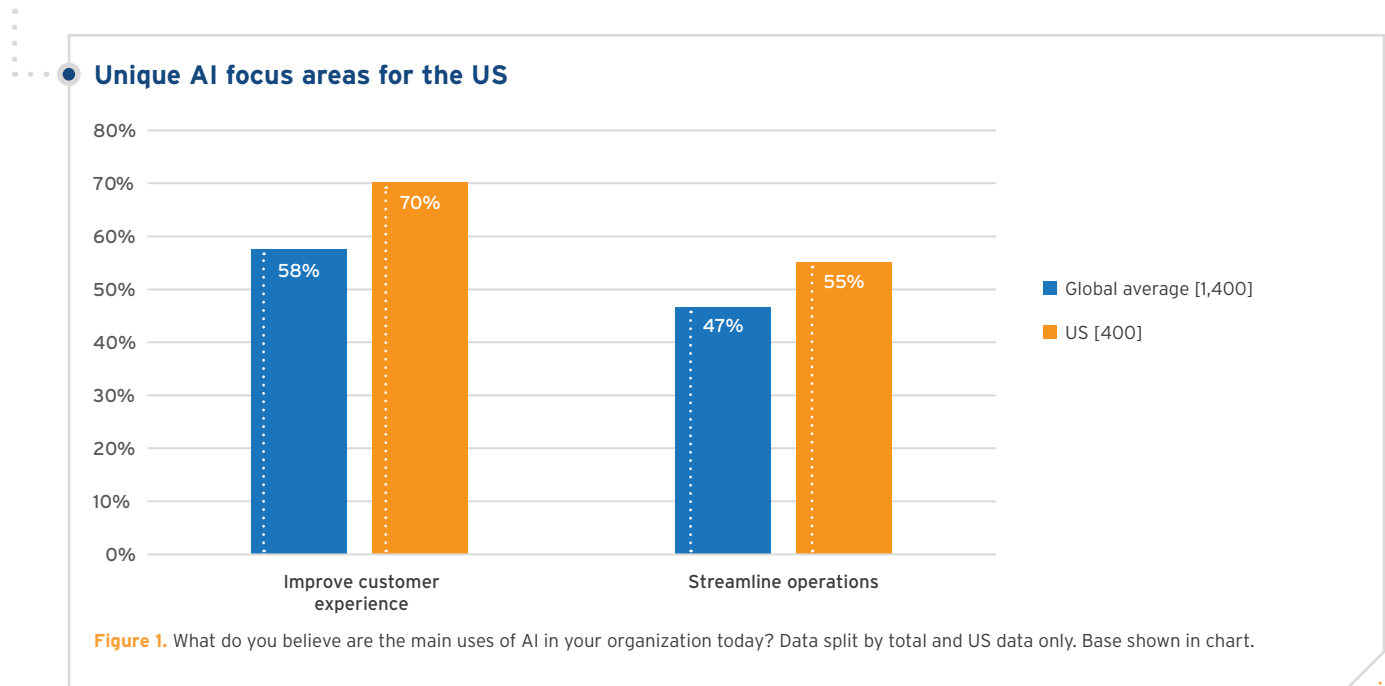


US organizations are effective at integrating AI with unstructured data, with most having accessible, trustworthy and well-managed unstructured data

Current AI adoption

The rapid growth of AI in the US is reshaping industries, enhancing decision-making, and driving efficiency across sectors. From streamlining operations to enabling breakthrough innovations, AI has become a critical tool for organizations striving to stay competitive in an increasingly data-driven world.

For the US, most use cases focus on improving customer experience, automating processes, reducing costs and increasing innovation. However, the US is unique in its growing attention to using AI in areas such as customer experience and general streamlining of operations, which are prioritized more in the US than the global trend (see [figure 1](#)).



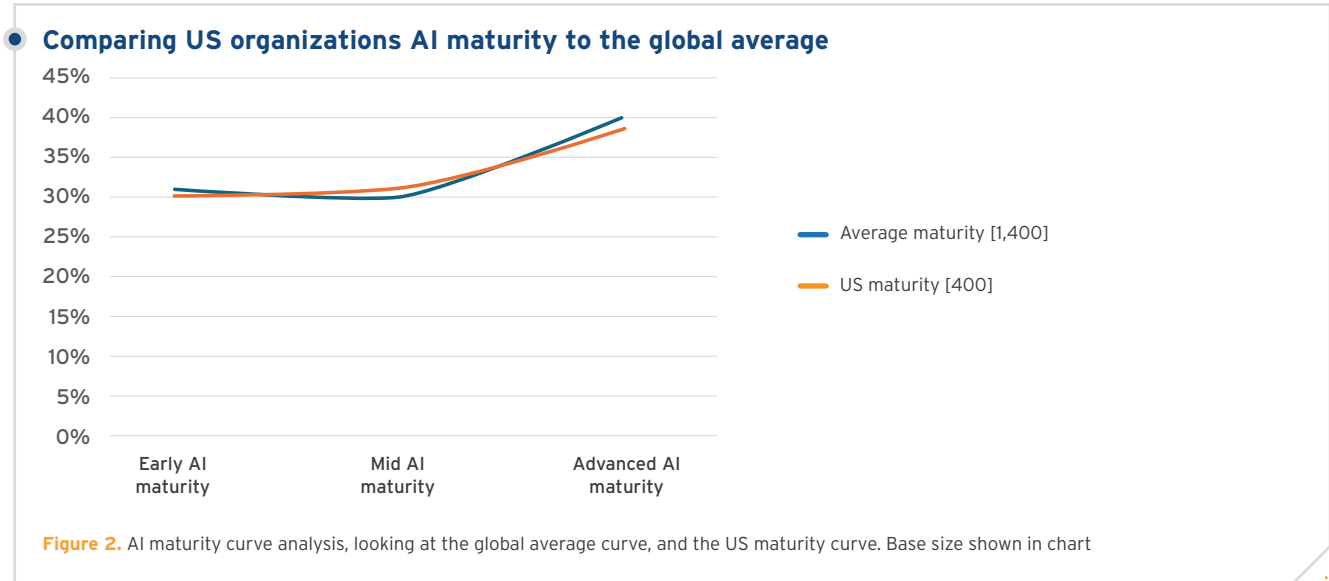
The US places a stronger emphasis on streamlining operations compared to the global average (55% vs 47%). This increased focus may be driven by the need to optimize productivity and minimize inefficiencies as organizations scale and integrate new technologies. [In fact, the US economy grew by 2.8% in 2024](#), surpassing many other economies - an achievement that highlights the potentially critical role of effective technology implementation in driving sustained economic growth and operational success.

The US also has an increased focus on customer service - likely due to the prevalence of [tech-savvy consumers in the US](#). The US is renowned for their innovative and customer-centric operations, with growing demands for the buying journey. Customers are expecting personalized experiences throughout the journey, with many businesses prioritizing omni-channel engagement. The emphasis on AI for customer service demonstrates how US organizations are not only meeting but shaping consumer expectations in a hyper-competitive market. By leveraging AI to deliver seamless, personalized, and omnichannel experiences, businesses are positioning themselves as leaders in customer satisfaction, ultimately driving loyalty and long-term revenue growth. A combination of techniques that would have been devastatingly time-consuming without the use of AI.

What's more, US organizations also report a stronger focus on implementing AI across customer service touchpoints than the average (63% vs 53%), further highlighting their dedication to unique customer experiences. However, customer service isn't the only area where AI is implemented. In fact, similar to the global trend, the most common use for AI in the US is in IT and security areas.

These two areas are just two of the ways the US has implemented AI into its operations. On average, a US organization uses AI across five areas, aligning with the global average and reflecting their understanding of AI's value and a refined approach to its application.

Furthermore, maturity analysis at the end of data collection first revealed a clear trend: As organizations advance to AI maturity, they focus their efforts on areas where AI delivers the greatest impact. This trend is clearly demonstrated in US organizations, where decision-makers indicate they have realized the value of AI and have refined their use accordingly. In addition, when looking at the overall maturity of US organizations we found that they're relatively in line with the global average, with slightly fewer sitting in the mid-level maturity stages (see [figure 2](#)).



This even spread of organizations across the maturity journey is unsurprising given the widespread funding and the large tech giants based within the US, resulting in AI advancement. For instance, it's expected that the country would be more advanced than the UK, which is hindered by more regulations (the UK has 25% AI advanced organizations, and the US 38%), but this doesn't mean the US isn't facing barriers with AI. In fact, one of the most desired changes over the next year is to improve organizations' ability to scale IT capabilities to better manage and process large volumes of data; 61% highlighting this need in the US, compared to a global average of 52%. Interestingly, the US aligns with the global trend of having scalable data centers—80% report that most or all their data centers can scale—revealing a potential contradiction. Organizations may technically have the infrastructure to scale, but they appear to struggle with scaling effectively. Considering the growing focus of AI use, particularly with unstructured data, this challenge will be essential for organizations to overcome.

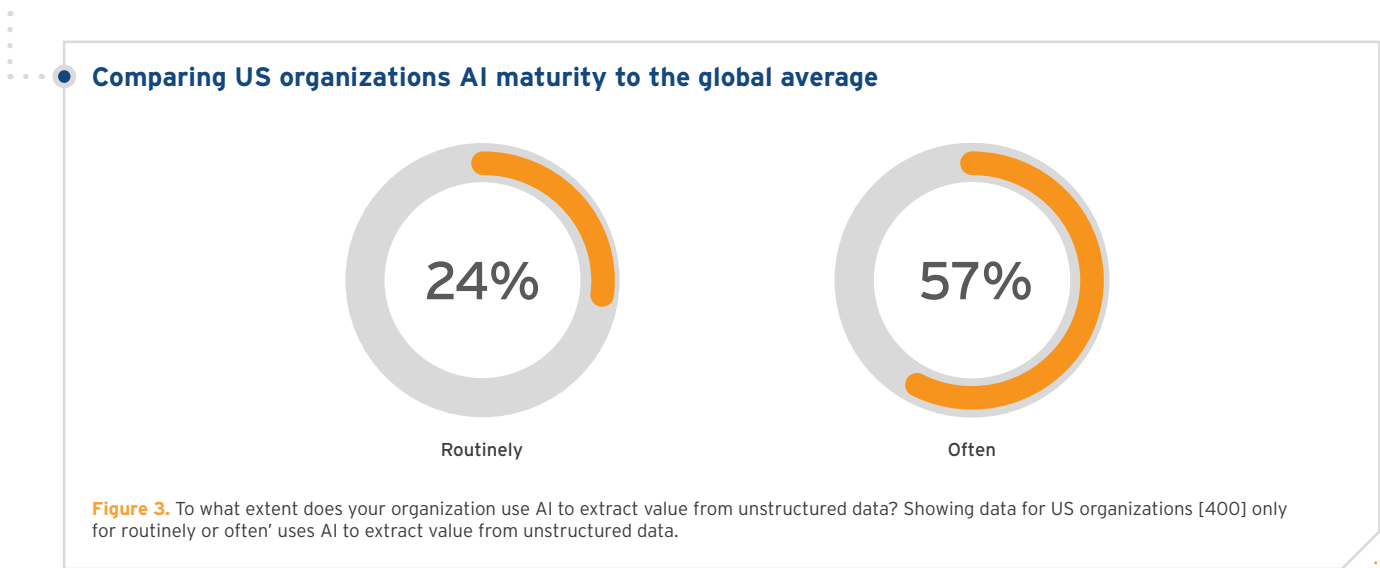
Looking ahead at the AI technologies that will change the most in priority for organizations in the US, AI-driven automation becomes less important (dropping from 17% to 13% ranking as most important), and multimodal AI grows in importance (from 10% to 16%) over the next couple of years. This makes sense as organizations become more mature, gain confidence, and move towards more complex use cases for AI. Organizations will no longer focus on AI for operational gains such as automation, productivity or streamlining processes. Instead, they will move more towards integrating multiple data types through AI (such as text, images etc.).

Leveraging unstructured data with AI for innovation

The US is typically at the forefront of technological innovation, and leveraging unstructured data such as text, audio, video, or images will open new opportunities for organizations in how they operate and innovate.

Globally, the US are seen as [market leaders in using AI](#) for more complex uses such as leveraging unstructured data. In fact, our research found US organizations are more likely to report that the use of unstructured data is very important to their business' success over the next two years (60%) than the average (56%). The US is also the most likely to feel strongly that unstructured data is critical to the success of their AI strategy.

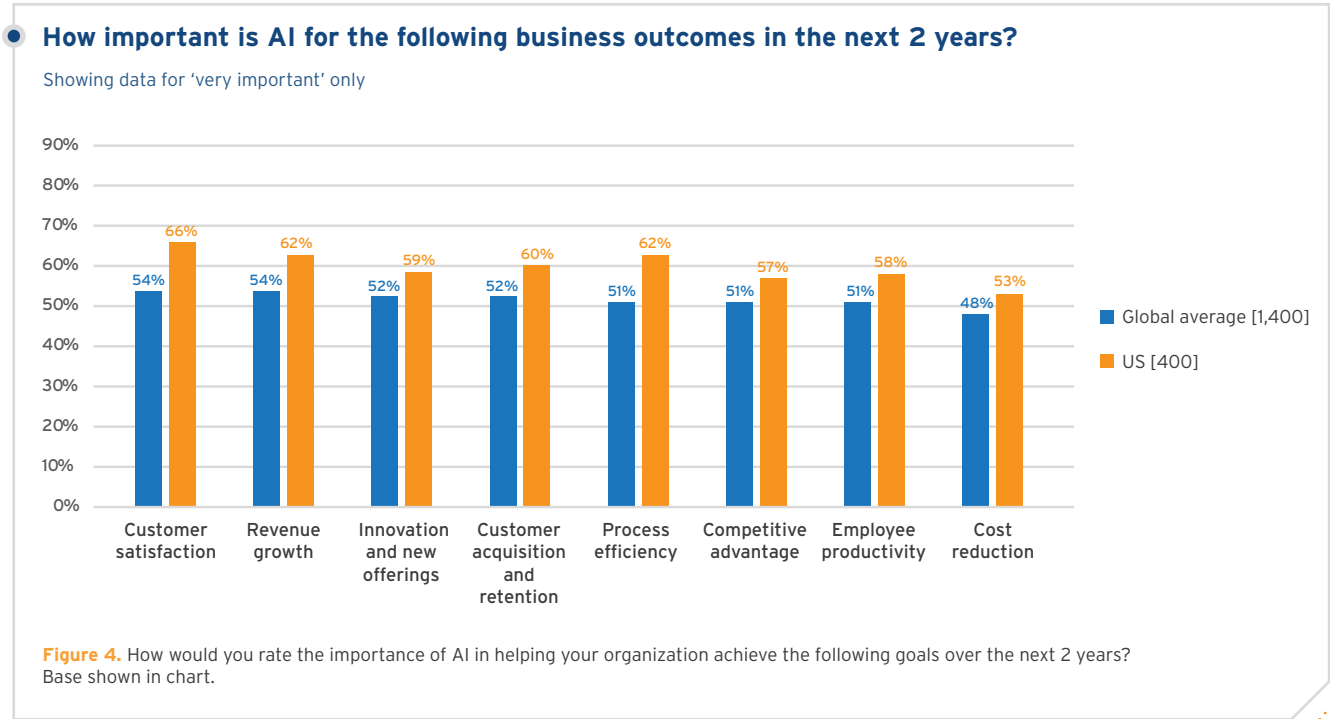
In fact, just under a quarter (24%) of US respondents routinely use AI to extract value from unstructured data, and the majority (57%) say they use it often. This means the US is storming ahead of other markets, as they're more likely than others to be leveraging AI to extract value from unstructured data.



These findings underscore the US's leadership in harnessing AI for unstructured data—a critical asset in today's data-driven landscape. With a higher tendency to view unstructured data as vital to their business and AI strategies, US organizations are well-positioned to capitalize on innovative opportunities. Their advanced adoption rates signal a competitive edge, enabling them to drive operational efficiencies, develop more sophisticated AI models, and unlock new growth avenues. For businesses looking to maintain a foothold in the global market, keeping pace with the US's progress in leveraging unstructured data is not just advantageous—it's imperative.

There are many reasons why the US is likely to be leveraging unstructured data. Outside of the fact they're the home for many tech leaders such as Google, Microsoft or Amazon, they also benefit from a data-driven culture. Leaders in the US invest heavily in AI research, particularly in areas such as deep learning and image recognition, which are critical for unstructured data processing. For instance, [Goldman Sachs Research](#) estimates that AI investment could reach \$100 billion in the US alone, and \$200 billion globally by 2025. This data-driven culture also means there's a large volume of unstructured data available to train AI models effectively. What's more, the US also has favorable regulations in place for AI and data use that allow organizations to have the flexibility to experiment and gain confidence, without the potential implications of fines or disciplinary action that perhaps restricts businesses in the UK.

It's also clear the US reports strong business outcomes off the back of AI and unstructured data, specifically increased customer satisfaction, revenue growth, and innovation or new offerings (see **figure 4**).



The widespread use of AI and unstructured data has likely been a result of effective implementation across organizations. Businesses have adapted to the specific needs of technology and equipped themselves to handle unstructured data before embarking on full AI adoption. Evidenced by the fact that ...

- 30%** of organizations feel they're highly effective at protecting and ensuring audit-ready compliance for unstructured data for AI applications (vs **27%** globally)
- 27%** feel they're highly effective at making their data trustworthy (on-par with the global average of **27%**)
- 29%** feel they're highly effective managing their unstructured data at scale (vs **28%** globally)
- 72%** feel they are effectively making unstructured data accessible (on-par with the global average of **72%**)
- 86%** have implemented processes for preparing high-quality data for AI use with at least considerable progress - compared to **80%** global average

AI is evolving rapidly and offers tremendous potential. Companies that excel at overcoming the challenges of using unstructured data at scale and with advanced AI stand to thrive. By prioritizing strategy, ensuring high-quality data, and exploring innovative uses, businesses can fully capitalize on AI to foster growth, improve customer experiences, and achieve lasting success.

Conclusion:

US organizations are setting a strong example of how to harness AI's power for strategic advantage, demonstrating how investment in AI maturity and advanced unstructured data management can secure a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving AI landscape.

As one of the top markets for AI maturity, the US is helping set global benchmarks, particularly with its strength in routinely leveraging unstructured data to drive innovation and operational benefits.

Organizations in the US report frequent success in extracting value from unstructured data. However, there is still room for improvement. To maintain and enhance their leadership position, US organizations must focus on increasing the breadth of AI use cases that leverage unstructured data. Additionally, ensuring comprehensive processes for preparing, processing, managing, and creating trustworthy data is critical, as only a minority consistently excel across all these areas. By addressing these gaps and evolving their practices, US organizations can solidify their role as global leaders in AI, unlocking even greater value and staying ahead of the competition.

? How can Iron Mountain help?

Whether you're at the start of your AI journey or reaching full maturity, Iron Mountain can help you turn your information into insights and further your AI-readiness. Determine what information should be scanned, stored, or defensibly destroyed, by developing a data governance framework. Automate manual processes, enable audit-ready compliance, and make information accessible and useful with [Iron Mountain InSight® Digital Experience Platform \(DXP\)](#). The scalable platform offers comprehensive digital and physical content management, intelligent document processing, workflow automation, and information governance capabilities that seamlessly integrate into your existing environment and support your digital transformation initiatives.



About the Research

Iron Mountain commissioned independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne to conduct this piece of research. The study included surveying 1,400 IT and data decision-makers who have knowledge of or responsibility for AI strategy at their organization. Respondents' organizations had to have 250 employees or more across the following countries: US, UK, France, Germany, India and Australia. Data in this report is only from US decision-makers, which represented 400 of the total completes.

Organizations are from several public and private sectors but there was a strong focus in banking and financial services, insurance, healthcare and life sciences, media and entertainment, the public sector (excluding healthcare) and energy.

About Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne is an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector. Their reputation for robust and credible research-based analysis is founded upon rigorous research principles and their ability to seek the opinions of senior decision-makers across technical and business functions in all business sectors and all major markets. For more information, visit www.vansonbourne.com.



About Iron Mountain

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