

Think like a People Scientist:

Understanding employee reactions to AI

March 19, 2025



Agenda

1. What we know about humans and change
2. Overview of AI adoption research
3. Introducing the AI transformation profiles
4. Top tips for connecting with different transformation profiles



Our presenters



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What do we know about employees and change today?



Employees are losing patience with change initiatives

+8

increase in number
of planned
enterprise changes
from 2016 to 2022*

43%

of employees are
willing to support
planned enterprise
changes (vs. 74% in
2016)*

75%

of organizations are
adopting a top-
down approach to
change*

...but when it comes to AI, employees that are more **engaged** are **2.6x** as likely to be eager to contribute to the success of AI transformation in their organization.**

*Source: Gartner (2022)

**Source: [The State of AI Change Readiness eBook \(2024\)](#), Microsoft Viva.

Let's hear from you...

Thinking about a time when your organization was introducing a change in technology, systems, processes, or structure, what was the most difficult thing about the change?



Overview of AI readiness research



Study Sample

- Global sample of 1.8k
- Organizations >1k employees

Level:

- C-Level executive = 14.1% (246)
- VP or Director = 16.8% (292)
- Manager = 37.9% (661)
- Individual Contributor = 31.1% (543)

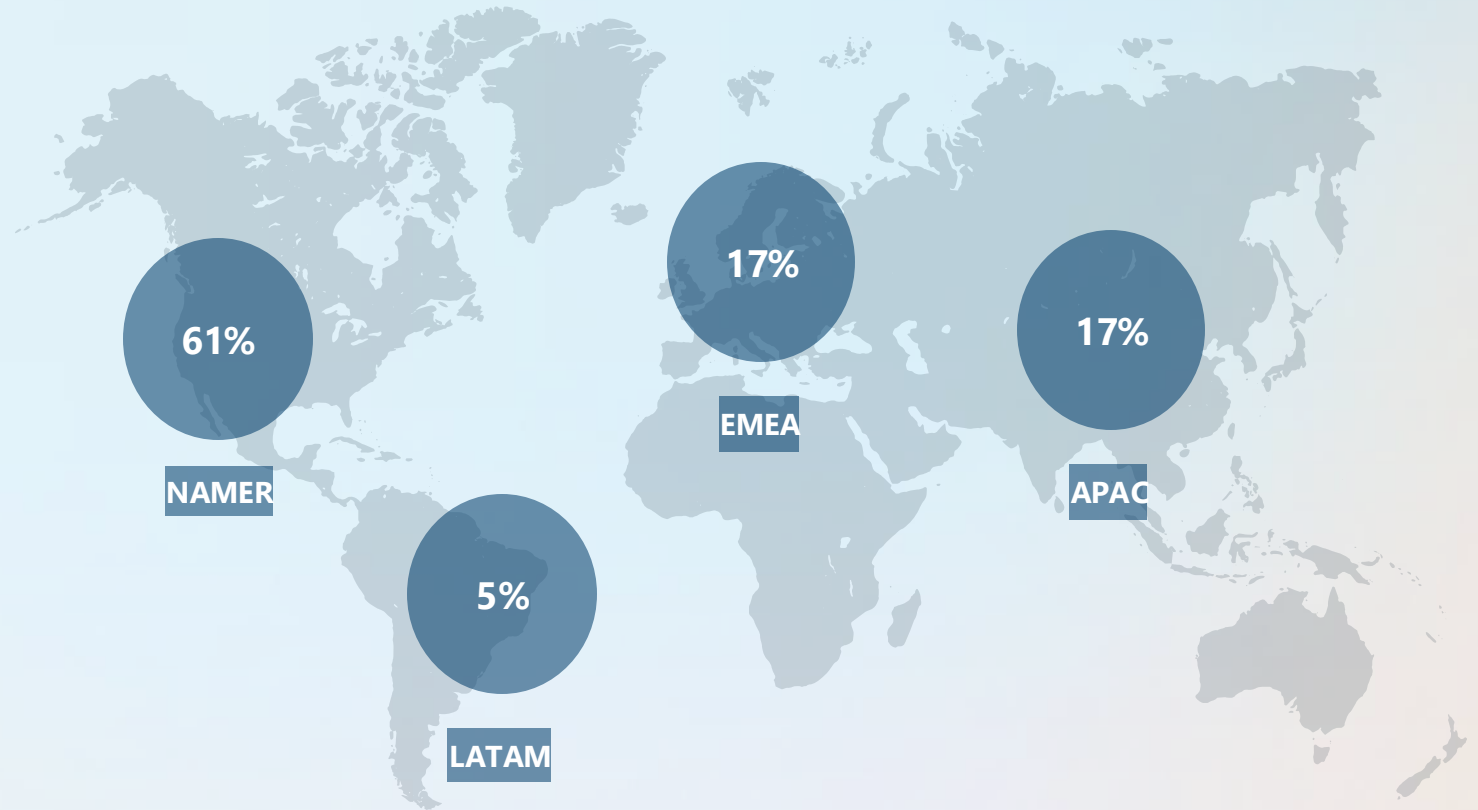
Variety of industries and departments:

- Top Industries: Healthcare (12.4%), Technology (11.9%), Retail (10.6%), Financial Services (9.3%), and Manufacturing (9.0%).

Check out our [State of AI Change Readiness eBook!](#)

1.8K

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES



Employees are not waiting for organizations to provide AI tools before using them in their work

67%

of people are using AI tools not provided by their organization.



More formal rollout and sponsorship can be expected

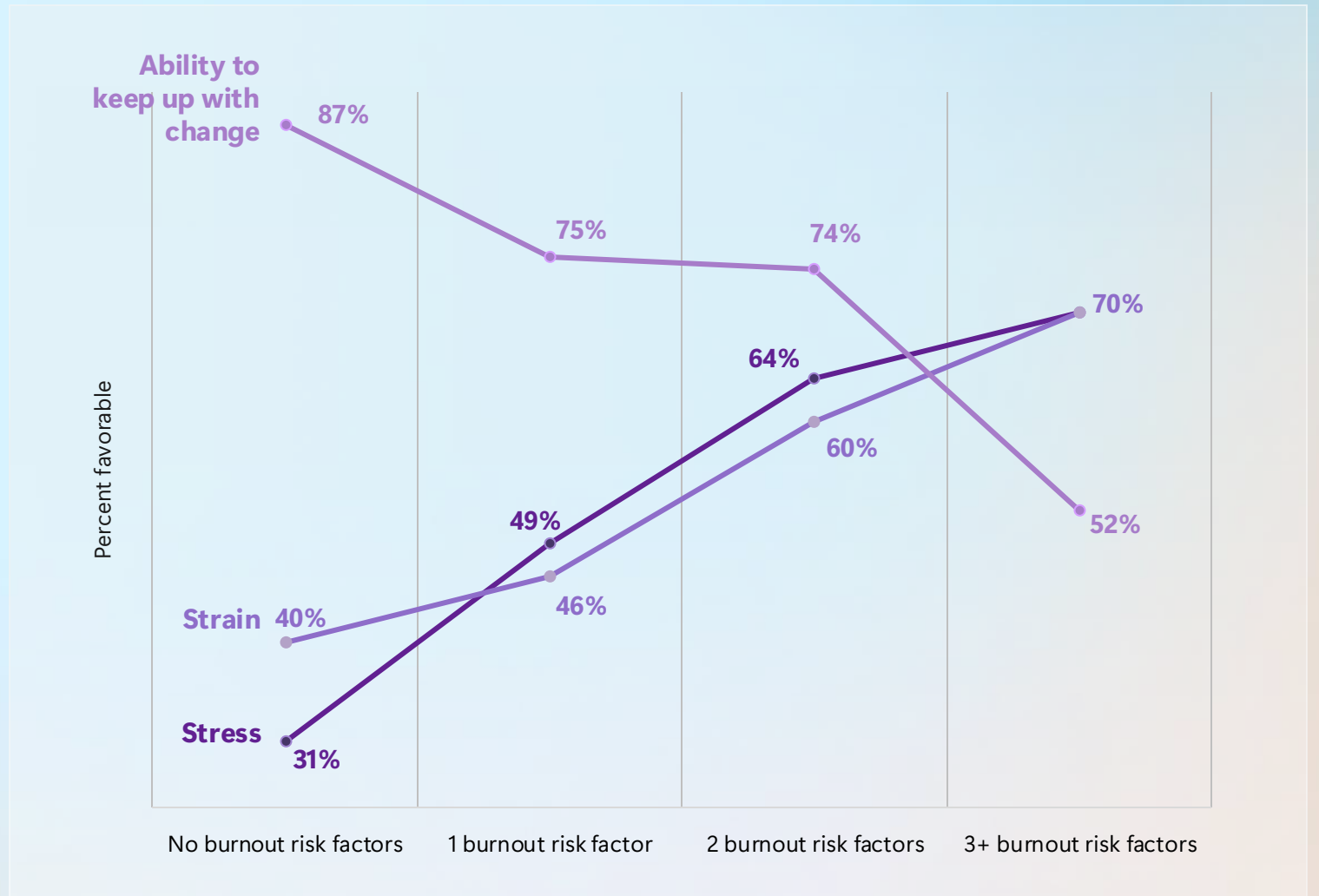
78%

of executives believe that
Gen AI is critical for their
organization to be successful

78%

of executives believe Gen AI is
worth the investment (e.g.,
money, time, and effort)

Organizational change can bring stress & strain – especially for those dealing with burnout



The different AI Transformation Profiles



**Why consider
grouping employees?**



Using data to discover invisible clusters of employees

Latent profile analysis groups respondents by similar response patterns to survey items, enabling data-driven groupings of respondents who share similar beliefs or feelings. This process removes the potential for assumptions or biases to influence groupings.



The composition of our profiles

Engagement: Their current employee engagement levels

Change Experience: Individual-level experiences with past change initiatives at their organization

*Assessed at three dimensions: vision (i.e., feeling ownership and clarity over the change vision), communication (i.e., seeking and sharing information on the change), and competence (i.e., proactively upskilling and advocating for the change).

AI Sentiment: How optimistic and ready they are for AI at work

Let's hear from you...

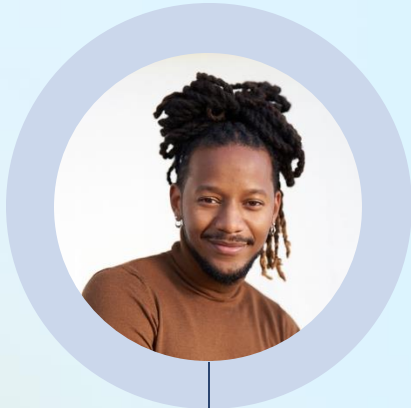
What data do you have available to group employees in your organization?

What other factors would you consider including?



AI Transformation Profiles: Employee Personas Generated by Survey Scores

Multipliers



Advocates
*Engaged
High Change Exp
High AI Sentiment*

44% of sample.

Persuadables



AI Skeptics
*Engaged
High Change Exp
Low AI Sentiment*

6% of sample.

Change Pessimists



Multipliers
*Very Engaged
Very High Change Exp
Very High AI Sentiment*

28% of sample.

Persuadables
*Slightly Engaged
Medium Change Exp
Medium AI Sentiment*

18% of sample.

AI Skeptics



Change Pessimists
*Very Disengaged
Low Change Exp
Low AI Sentiment*

4% of sample.

Advocates



The Multiplier

Who they are: Highly engaged employees who have had strong, positive experiences with change and are very optimistic about AI

How can I sign up to be an AI champion? I'm so excited to experiment with AI in my workflow and connect with others who are doing the same. I want to be the first to know what new features we have access to!



The Advocate

Who they are: Engaged employees who have had positive experiences with change and are optimistic about AI

AI seems cool! I think I could be even more productive at work by integrating AI tools into my day-to-day. I'm interested in learning more and being involved with this transformation.



The Persuadable

Who they are: Slightly engaged employees who have had okay experiences with change and are moderately optimistic about AI

I can see how AI would be a game-changer. I'm a little uncertain whether we have the infrastructure to transform our workflows while still supporting our employees. I need to learn more about our strategy for this.



The AI Skeptic

Who they are: Engaged employees who have had positive experiences with change but are not optimistic about AI

I trust my organization to keep me informed, have a compelling vision, and provide trainings when necessary. However, I have concerns about AI technology. Am I going to lose my job? How will be data be protected?



The Change Pessimist

Who they are: Very disengaged employees with negative experiences with change and low optimism about AI

The last time we went through a change at this organization it didn't go so well. I don't feel supported and am overwhelmed by the idea of being pressured to adapt to another new thing, especially something as new as AI.



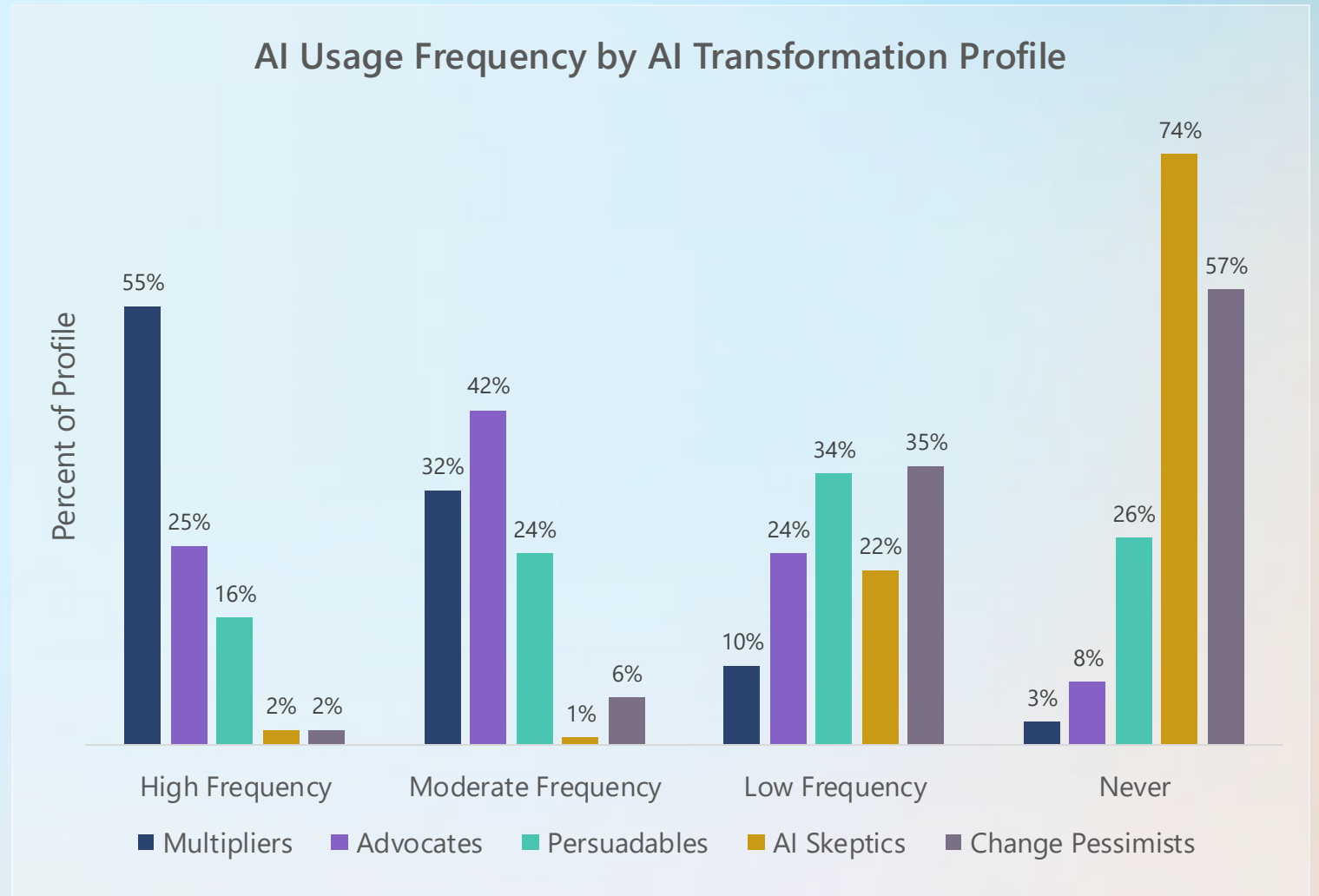
Let's hear from you...

*Having heard more about each of the profiles, let us know **in the chat:***

Which profile do you think is more prevalent in your team?



Adoption looks different across AI transformation profiles



Chi-squared test of independence test indicated a significant relationship between profile membership and gen AI usage ($p < .001$), with a large effect size (Cramer's $V = .37$).
Source: Microsoft Viva People Science AI Transformation Readiness Study, April 2024. $n = 1389$ global employees.

How can we encourage and support the different profiles?

	Multipliers	Advocates	Persuadables	AI Skeptics	Change Pessimists
Encourage this profile to contribute to AI transformation by...	volunteering as SMEs or for AI leadership positions that allow them to share their excitement for AI with peers.	sharing strong use cases and value generation examples to bolster the excitement from Multipliers with practical AI applications.	offering a balanced perspective of what visions and expectations are realistic and enticing when it comes to AI use at your organization.	sharing their concerns around the use of AI and identify the 'dark side' impact or potential risks to ensure responsible AI deployment.	providing feedback on where previous change initiatives have failed and how AI change initiatives can avoid those previous pitfalls.

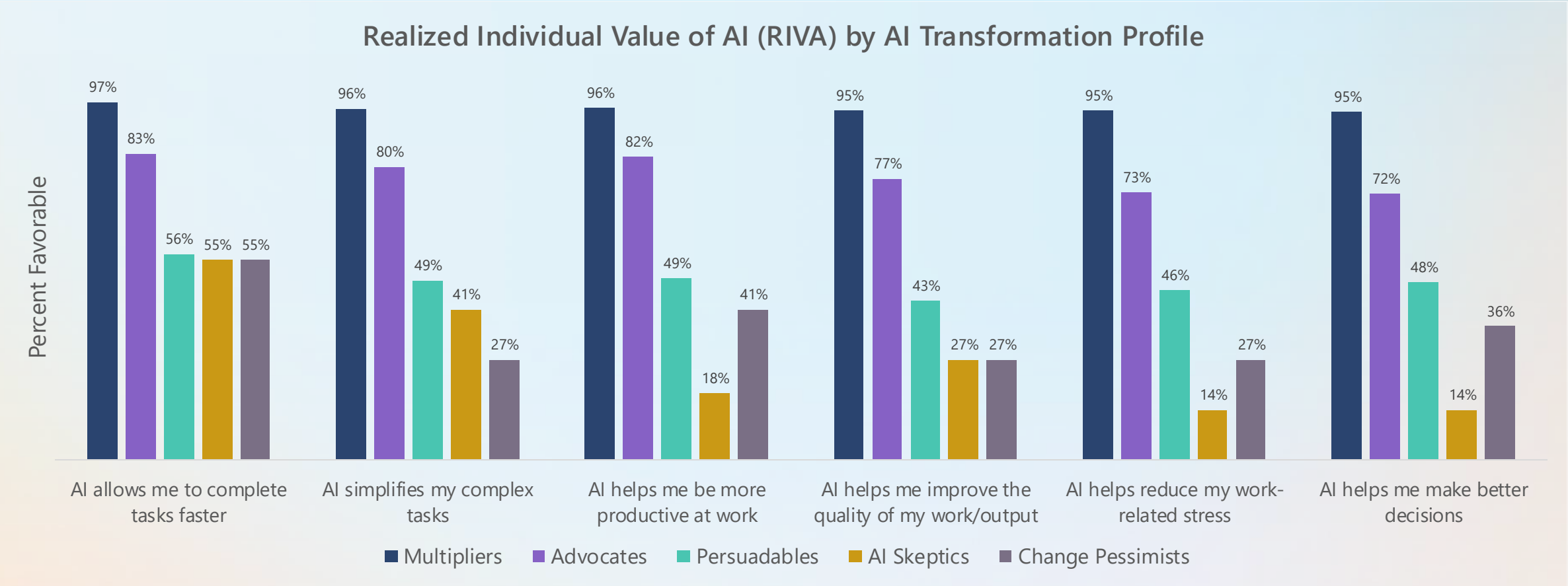
How can we encourage and support the different profiles?

	Multipliers	Advocates	Persuadables	AI Skeptics	Change Pessimists
Support this profile through AI transformation by...	ensuring there are plenty of opportunities to experiment with AI tools and that their efforts align with the organizational vision for AI transformation.	clear expectations and direction, this may take the form of a Multiplier AI change buddy to share new ways of using AI.	providing feedback outlets throughout the change and a clear vision that brings the value of AI to life, helping them to build more AI change confidence.	giving information on benefits of AI to their work and how the organization is creating safeguards to minimize negative impact.	doubling down on change support, specifically related to time and resources for AI training and a compelling vision for the changes.

How can we encourage and support the different profiles?

	[Profile]	[Profile]	[Profile]	[Profile]	[Profile]
Encourage this profile to contribute to AI transformation by...					
Support this profile through AI transformation by...					

Closing the gap on transformational benefits of AI



Categorical logistic regression results indicated significant differences in the six perceived RIVA outcomes by profile membership ($p < .001$).
Source: Microsoft Viva People Science AI Transformation Readiness Study, April 2024. $n = 1155$ global employees who use AI.

Consider the examples in the [Microsoft Copilot Scenario Library](#) to explore a variety of AI use-cases across functional areas.

Comparing notes



Let's hear from you...

*Pick ONE thing that you think would be the **biggest** barrier to driving AI change from an employee perspective.*

What could you put in place to help overcome these barriers for employees?



Key Takeaways

1

Profile membership is not static

2

Meet people where they are, without judgement

3

Focus on critical EX moments and change management fundamentals

Special invite: Join Viva People Science in Denver for the 2025 SIOP Conference on April 2!

Discuss AI-powered strategies to transform people analytics and employee listening for better people and business outcomes. We'll feature a speaker from Microsoft's HR Business Insight's team to share how the team is using data to navigate Copilot transformation within the employee experience from a people-centric perspective. Join us to learn how to mature your own practices to better support your people and organization through this accelerated pace of AI change.

5:00 - 6:00 - Welcome, networking, drinks, and appetizers

6:00 - 6:30 - Hear from Microsoft's HR Business Intelligence team

6:30 - 6:45 - Open Q&A and discussion

6:45 - 7:00 - Close out

Spots are limited so **please RSVP** by March 26th. We hope to see you in Denver!

<https://forms.office.com/r/mvTZA3Rij7>

Thank you!



Read our [Research Drop on AI Transformation Profiles](#)



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Register for our **next** ['Think like a People Scientist' webinar](#) on April 9



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