

The Next Wave

How AI is Changing the Digital Agency Model
in Building Websites For Both Humans
and Machines





Executive Summary

AI is changing the landscape for digital agencies, requiring them to face the question of how they will build an intelligent digital experience for both humans and machines. We surveyed 214 professionals at digital agencies, primarily in the United States and Canada, and found that major shifts are underway.

The first indicates how widespread AI adoption has been among agencies, and how many of them see themselves as leading the pack. They've taken tangible actions to build AI into their workflows, and they've also shifted how they think about building for the web strategically. This confirms the hypothesis that most agencies are now building for the dual audience of humans and machines.

Under the surface, there's a divide between agencies with advanced AI skills and those still at the beginner stage. This divide is evident when we examine who initiates AI

conversations with clients, who designs new AI services, and even the level of impact an agency has on client projects.

Beyond this, there's also a significant difference in the AI challenges they're focused on solving. In this report, we dive deep into these shifts and more, exploring the nuanced changes that are building on one another to reshape the digital agency model.

Industry-Wide Adoption

Two-thirds of digital agency professionals see their firms as early adopters of AI, and nearly all agencies have taken steps to prepare for and leverage AI. This widespread early adoption and leadership perspective shows just how critical the industry views this technology.

Internally, digital agencies are adapting their workflows, services, and design approaches to align with how AI is changing the digital terrain. Many have already integrated AI into a significant portion of their workflows, and this is having a profound impact on how professionals approach web development and design.

Results show:

63% are investing in AI tools and platforms

60% are upskilling staff on AI

52% have developed AI usage policies

34% are creating new AI-driven client offerings



72%

of agencies have adjusted development and design practices.

Optimizing for Machines

Seventy-two percent of agencies have adjusted their web development and design practices to better serve AI systems (AI tools, search algorithms, etc.), while a similar share have incorporated AI features into user-facing design.

Tactics include adding content summaries and FAQ sections for AI visibility as well as deploying AI-driven personalization and chatbots to enhance user experiences. This optimization introduces a new dual focus for agency professionals as they work to design websites for both people and machines.

Leaders vs. Laggards

Twenty-six percent of agencies self-identify as AI "Leaders" (advanced/expert) versus 15% as "Laggards" (beginners). Leaders integrate AI more deeply. They are almost three times as likely to offer AI-based client services (49% vs 18%) and almost twice as likely as laggards to have formal AI guidelines (64% vs 36%).

Leaders also report greater client gains from AI in areas like site efficiency and user engagement. In contrast, laggards seem stuck in experimentation mode and risk falling behind as AI becomes mainstream.

Overcoming Challenges

This progress with AI hasn't been smooth, though, for any of the agencies in our survey, as 96% of agency professionals identified significant challenges related to the transition.

Overall, the rapid pace of change is top of mind for almost half of the professionals surveyed, and with only 11% citing resource constraints, it appears that agencies are ready and willing to invest to get or stay ahead with the new technology.

- **Rapid pace of change (41%)** – keeping up with fast-evolving AI technology
- **Limited client demand (17%)** – clients not yet asking for AI
- **Skills gap (15%)** – lack of in-house AI expertise
- **Uncertain ROI (12%)** – unclear returns on AI investments
- **Resource constraints (11%)** – limited budget and time

Despite these challenges, the AI revolution is unfolding even faster than the previous decade's mobile-first wave and is widely seen as an equally transformative shift. Firms that proactively embrace AI and intelligently navigate these challenges will lead in innovation and client value, gaining a competitive edge, and likely winning the decade.



41%

of agencies cite rapid pace of change as biggest AI challenge.





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Introduction

Who This Report Is For

This report is designed for leadership teams at digital agencies who want to ensure their agency is staying ahead of the curve on AI. Specifically, this is for those web development and design groups that know AI is impacting the work, but want concrete evidence on exactly how.

We define digital agencies as professional service firms that offer digital services to other companies. We loosely bucket these into three main categories: Development, Design, and Marketing, but in practice, there is a significant amount of overlap. To rectify this, we define digital agencies as professional service firms that offer at least some mix of these services:



Development

- Digital strategy
- Web development
- Software development
- Mobile app development
- IT consulting
- AI development/implementation
- Staff augmentation
- Ecommerce development



Design

- Branding/identity design
- UX/UI
- Web design
- Mobile app design
- Graphic design
- AR/VR design
- Video and animation



Marketing

- Marketing strategy
- Social media
- Content
- Search engine optimization
- Paid media (PPC)
- Email marketing
- Video
- Analytics
- Ecommerce marketing








Embracing AI

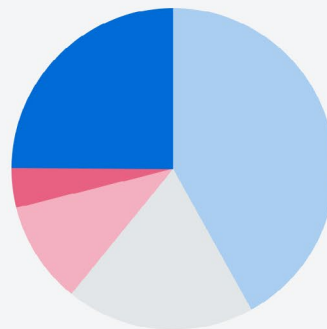
AI Adoption

Two-thirds of agency professionals consider their firms to be early adopters or leaders in embracing new web development and design trends, such as AI, ahead of industry peers. This drive to keep up with technological advancements suggests that agency professionals believe staying ahead with AI is a key part of their agency's value.

Despite this broad optimism and nearly universal adoption of AI, agency leaders are hyper aware of how quickly the landscape is changing. Keeping up with the pace of change is the top cited challenge (41% of respondents), indicating that even as agencies believe they're ahead of the curve now, they worry about maintaining that lead.

How well do you agree with "Our agency is a leader in adopting new web development/design trends ahead of others in the industry."

Strongly agree	25%	
Somewhat agree	42%	
Neutral or unsure	19%	
Somewhat disagree	11%	
Strongly disagree	4%	

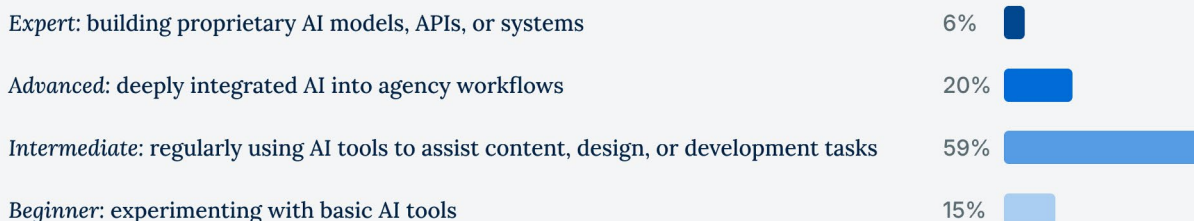


Leaders vs. Laggards

A quarter of the respondents in our survey see their agency as Advanced or Experts in using AI for web development or design. Fifty-nine percent view their agency as Intermediate, and 15% indicated that their agency is in the beginning stages and still experimenting with basic AI tools.

We segmented respondents by their self-reported AI skill level: "AI Leaders" rating themselves Advanced or Expert in internal AI skills (55 responses). "AI Laggards" rated themselves as a Beginner in AI skills (33 responses). Respondents who selected Intermediate (126 responses) are included in the overall totals but excluded from direct comparisons between Leaders and Laggards. This segmentation lets us directly compare what the most AI-savvy agencies do versus those just starting out.

How would you describe your agency's current AI skill level when it comes to web development and design?



-0—
-0—
-0—

73%

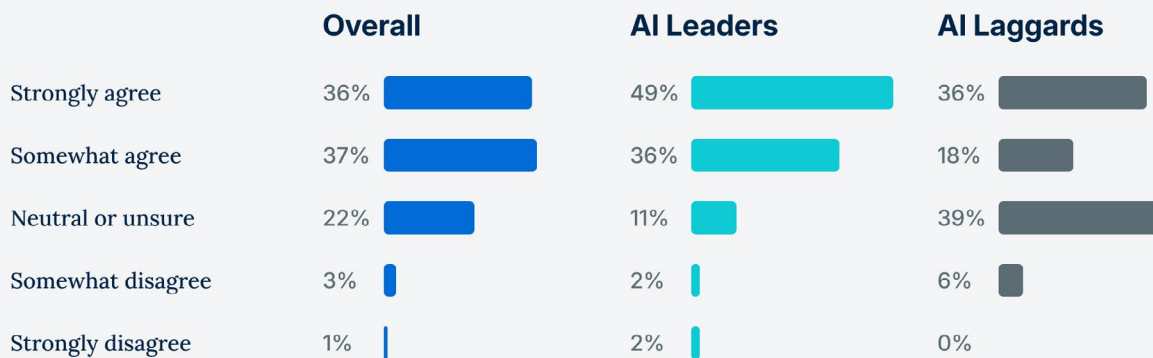
of agencies see optimizing for AI as pivotal for clients as moving to responsive design.

The Next Mobile

Seventy-three percent of agency professionals agree (36% strongly) that "optimizing websites for AI" will be as pivotal for client success as the earlier shift to mobile-responsive design. Agencies that are leaders in AI are significantly more likely to agree with this sentiment, while the Laggards are more unsure.

This broad consensus suggests AI is the next major shift in digital services. Like the agencies that mastered mobile-responsive design early in the 2010s, those investing in AI capabilities now are likely to lead the pack in the coming years.

Agreement with the statement that optimizing websites for AI will be as important for client success as the shift to mobile-responsive design.



Building AI Capabilities & Infrastructure

According to our survey, just about every respondent has taken action to invest in AI. Agency professionals are working to rapidly build the skills and infrastructure needed to make AI work for them and their clients.



Investing in Tools: Sixty-three percent of agencies have invested in new AI software, tools, or platforms for internal use. Whether it's integrating AI-driven design assistants, content generation tools, or automation platforms, agencies are upgrading their tech stacks. This investment signals a commitment to infrastructure that can keep pace with innovation and handle the demands of AI-enhanced development.



Upskilling the Team: Sixty percent of agencies are training their existing staff on AI tools and best practices, ensuring designers, developers, and marketers can all leverage AI in their work. Interestingly, a slightly higher share of the beginner group is training staff (perhaps because those behind are focusing on catching up through education), whereas many AI Leaders may feel their teams are already fairly skilled.



Establishing AI Policies: Fifty-two percent of agencies have developed internal policies or guidelines for AI use. Agency professionals are proactively addressing questions of when and how AI should be used in client projects, ethical guidelines, and quality control for AI-generated content. As teams experiment and incorporate AI use, these policies help maintain consistency and build trust, both internally and with clients.



New AI Offerings: Thirty-four percent of digital agencies are creating new AI-based offerings for clients, which are reshaping the standard agency value proposition. We have seen everything from structuring client data and using it in custom-trained large language models to simple AI chatbots. There are numerous ways agencies can create value with AI, and we believe most of the industry is currently only scratching the surface of what’s possible.

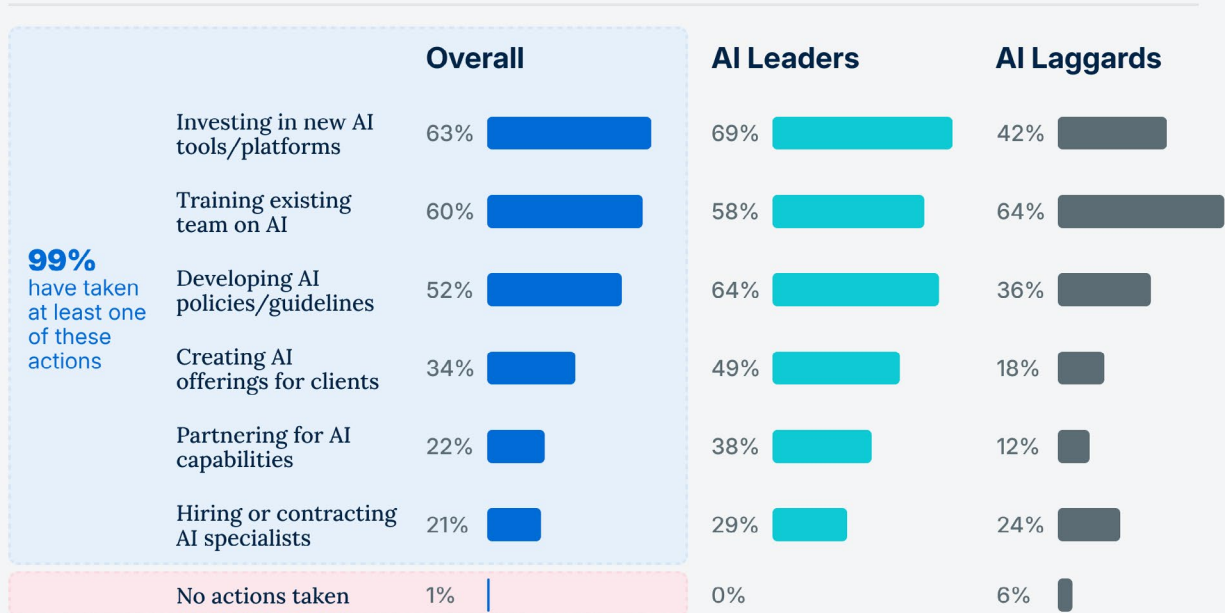


Partnerships and Specialist Talent: Twenty-one percent have hired or contracted AI specialists to bolster their expertise, and a similar proportion (22%) are partnering with outside firms or vendors to access AI capabilities they lack in-house. These steps, though taken by a minority, indicate that certain agencies are willing to invest in specialized skills or collaborations to accelerate their AI journey.



Universal Action: Ninety-nine percent of agencies reported taking specific actions on AI. Even those who haven’t hired new staff or built custom AI solutions are doing something to prepare. The overwhelming message is that agency teams are actively preparing their organizations for an AI-driven future. Even the slow-adopters are experimenting to some degree.

Steps taken within the agency to prepare for and leverage AI (e.g., training staff, investing in tools, policy development, etc.).



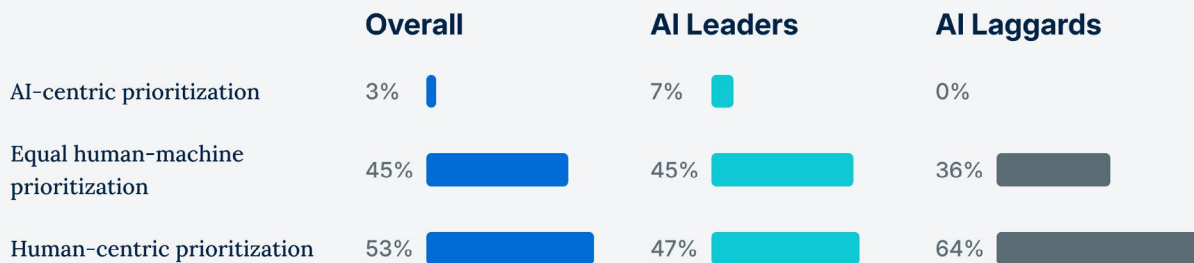


Evolving Agency Focus

Designing for Humans and Machines

One of the most intriguing strategic challenges for digital agencies in the AI era is balancing the needs of human users with the demands of machine algorithms. Websites today must appeal not only to the people who read and interact with them, but also to the AI systems that crawl, index, summarize, and answer questions about them. Our research shows that most agencies are acutely aware of this dual audience, and more AI Leaders are striving to optimize for both.

Human vs. machine web development and design prioritization.

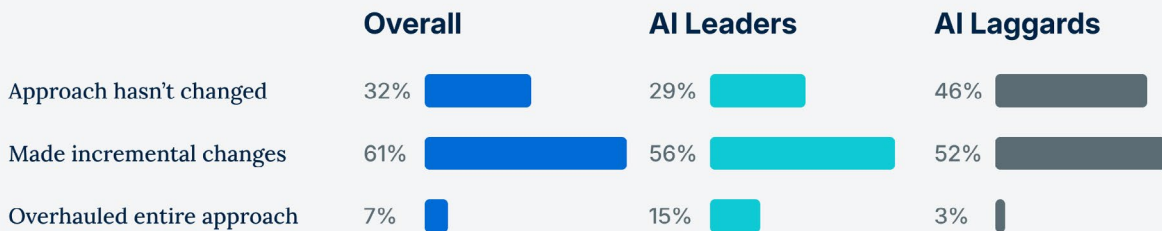


Agency professionals still view the human user experience as paramount, yet many are actively incorporating AI-friendly elements into web projects. They recognize that websites must perform in an AI-driven world while remaining relevant to humans.

Enhancing Human Experiences

Agencies are experimenting with ways to enhance human user experiences using AI, making sites more intuitive, personalized, and “smart.” When we asked how agencies’ approach to designing for human users has changed due to AI advancements, two-thirds have at least made some incremental changes, with the AI leaders much more likely (2x more common than average and 5x the laggards) to have overhauled their entire approach.

How agencies have changed their approach to designing for human end-users due to AI advancements.



Agencies are enhancing the human experience in four key ways:



Smarter Personalization and Adaptivity:

Thirty percent of agencies reported that they are building experiences that adapt to user content and intent in smarter ways. This means using AI to dynamically personalize site content or layout based on what is known about a user or their behavior, with the goal of a more tailored, responsive experience for each human visitor.

30% building intent-driven personalization experiences

29% seeking AI-assistive CMS workflows

25% creating conversation-first interfaces

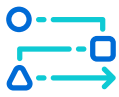
21% using AI and smart suggestions for faster tasks



AI-Integrated Content Management: Twenty-nine percent of agencies are rethinking their content management systems (CMS) to be more AI-assistive. They're building sites that integrate well with AI copilots and automations to make life easier for humans interacting with the site through AI-augmented tools and workflows.



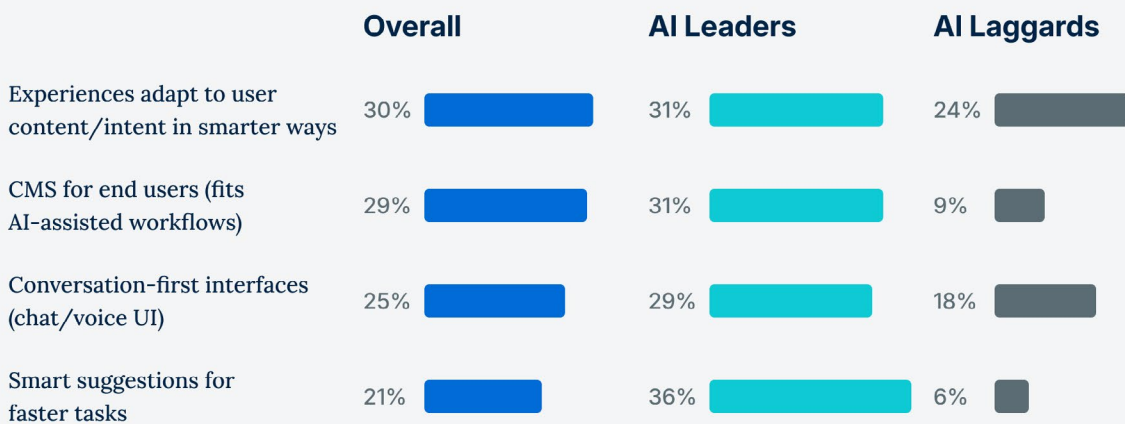
Conversational and Interactive Interfaces: Twenty-five percent are leveraging smarter interactive elements, such as conversation-first UIs through chatbots or voice interfaces. These agencies are incorporating AI-driven chat on websites for customer support or sales, and adding voice search or voice navigation capabilities.



Faster User Journeys: Twenty-one percent of agencies are focused on helping visitors complete tasks faster using AI. This includes features like smart search suggestions, form auto-completion, and AI-driven content summaries that let users find answers without digging.

This diversity of tactics suggests there’s no single formula and that agencies are innovating on multiple fronts to find what best serves their clients’ audiences.

Which new user experience tactics or design strategies have agencies adopted for human users in response to AI?



Optimizing for Machines

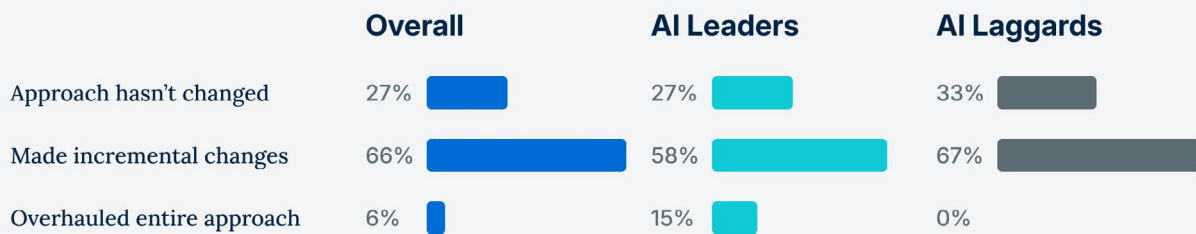
Agencies are adjusting their practices to better serve “machine” users (AI tools, search engine algorithms, AI chatbots, voice assistants, and other automated systems) that consume web content. Ensuring a website is machine-friendly can mean better visibility in these results, inclusion in AI-generated answers (like voice assistant responses or chat assistant outputs), and overall digital prominence for clients. Our data shows a high level of activity in this area as well, with 72% of all agencies having changed their approach in some way, with 6% of them overhauling their entire approach.



15%

of agency AI Leaders have completely overhauled their agentic optimization approach.

How much agencies have changed their approach to designing for machine-based consumers of content (AI tools, search algorithms, etc.) due to AI advancements.



The top ways that agencies are using to design for AI and algorithmic consumption include:



Content Summaries and FAQ Sections: The most common adjustment, adopted by 37% of agencies that have updated their approach, is providing summaries up front and Q&A-style sections on webpages. Many agencies are adding FAQ sections, short answer blurbs, and concise summaries of key points at the top of pages. This caters to AI-driven answer engines and human readers alike by surfacing the important facts immediately.



Structured Data: Thirty-two percent of agencies are spending more time getting the data-layer right. This includes activities like crafting page titles, meta descriptions, and schema markup (structured data) in plain language that AI tools can easily parse. By feeding clear, machine-readable context to search engines and AI systems, agencies increase the chances that their clients' information will be correctly interpreted and featured by those systems.



Consistency of Business Information: Thirty-one percent are ensuring that sharable business info is consistent and easily findable across platforms. This involves maintaining consistency for details like business hours, locations, pricing, and product information so that if an AI or knowledge graph pulls data about the client, it gets accurate, up-to-date info. It's a digital hygiene practice that has grown in importance with AI as inconsistent or hidden info might mean an AI gives a wrong answer about a client's offerings or directs users incorrectly. Agencies have recognized this and are further emphasizing data consistency in web projects.

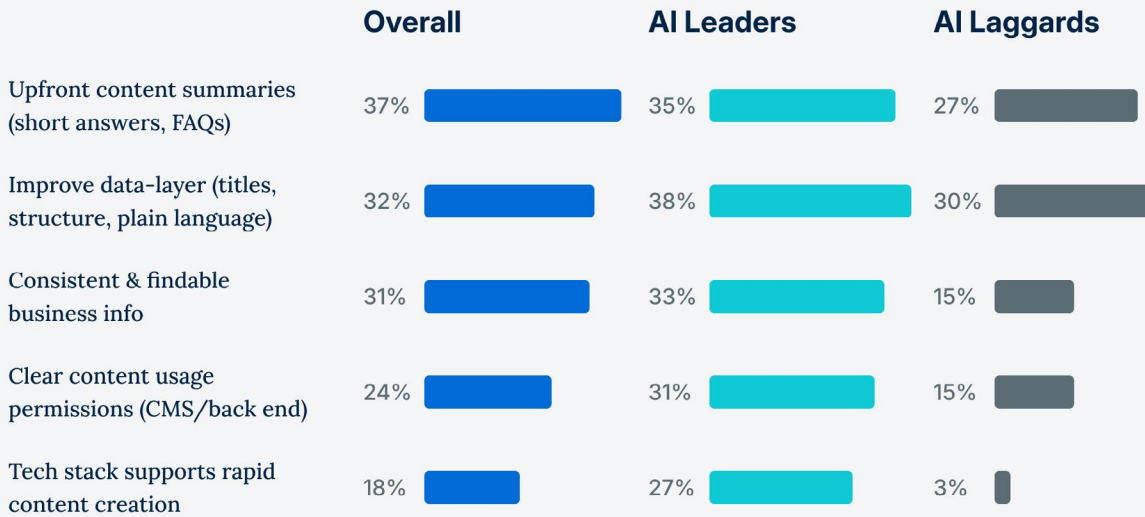


Content Permissions and Credit: Twenty-four percent of agencies are taking steps to clarify content usage rights and attribution in site back-ends. They want to ensure that anything their teams create is accessible to AI crawlers with proper permissions and that original content receives due credit.

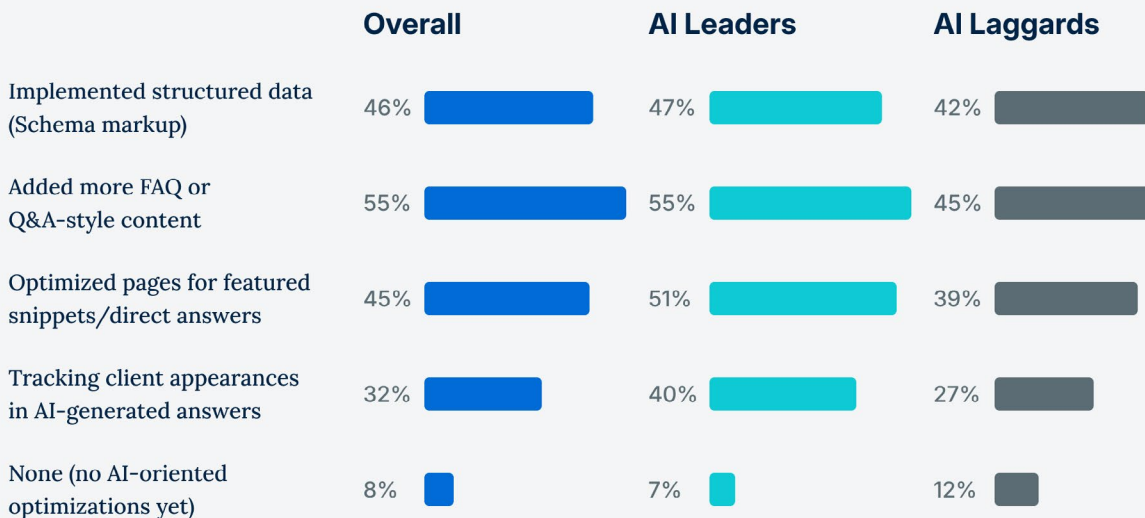


Upgrading Tech Infrastructure for AI: Eighteen percent of agencies report that they have adjusted their tech stack to support rapid content creation needs related to AI. This could mean adopting headless CMS architectures, using cloud platforms that allow quick deployment of AI services, or ensuring sites are technically equipped for new features (like integrating with AI APIs).

Which technical/SEO-oriented practices agencies have adopted to make websites more accessible and relevant to AI tools and bots.



Beyond these, agencies are also adapting traditional SEO practices for the AI age:



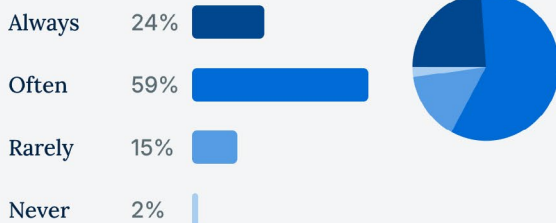
These proactive 'Generative Engine Optimization' efforts show that agencies are treating AI platforms as a new category of search engine to optimize for.

Discussing Innovation

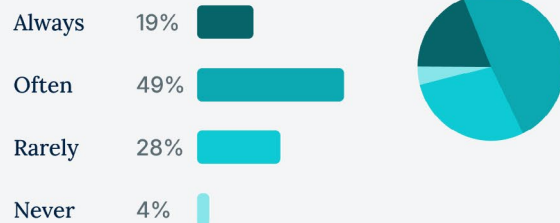
As agencies embrace AI in their strategy and execution, client relationships are evolving in tandem. The survey results reveal a dialogue between agencies and their clients about AI, with agencies initiating the conversation more often than clients. This could indicate that agencies are leading the charge on commercializing AI, or it might mean agencies are pushing AI services even if client demand isn't there yet (about one in six agencies say their clients aren't interested in AI).

Agency vs. client-initiated conversations with prospects and clients.

Agency-initiated



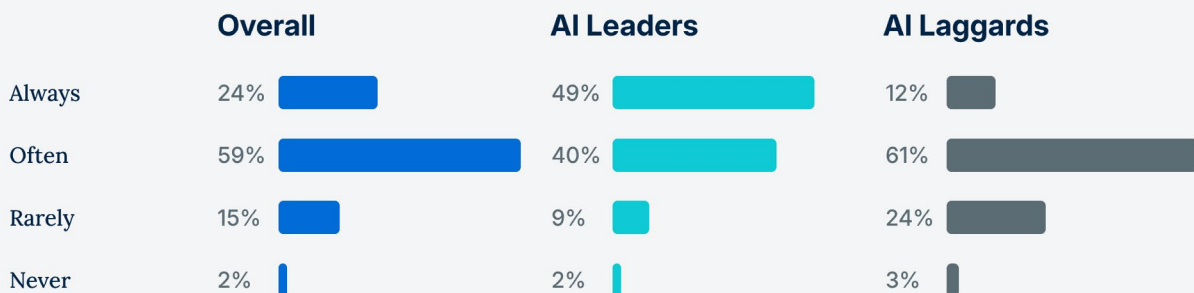
Client-initiated



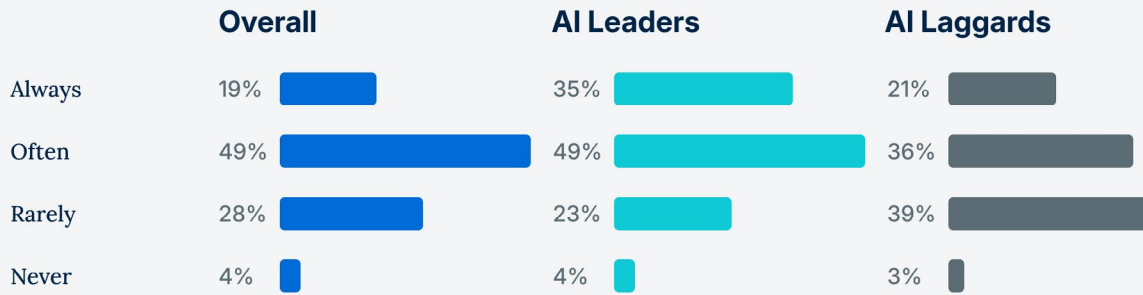
AI Leaders are having client conversations (both agency-initiated and client-initiated) more often than the Laggards, indicating that even when the agency isn't the one reaching out, they've positioned themselves so that clients are coming to them with AI inquiries.

Agency AI Leaders are **4x more likely** to always initiate AI conversations with clients.

Agency-initiated leader/lagger conversations with prospects and clients.



Client-initiated leader/lagger conversations with prospects and clients.



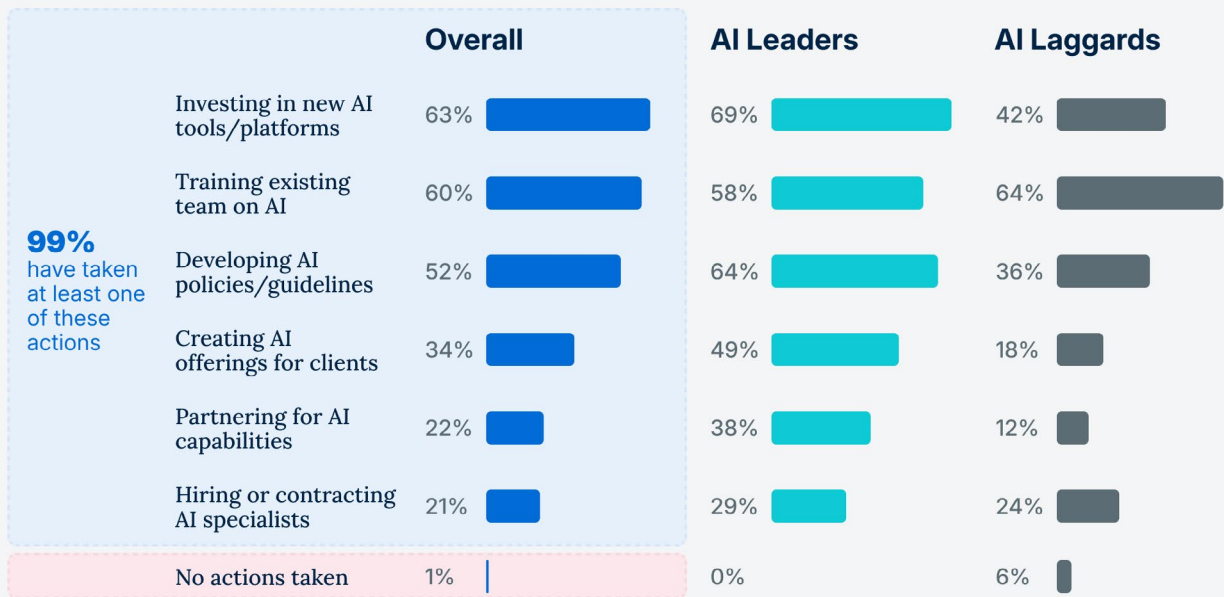
These findings align nicely with how the industry has traditionally served as the translation layer between new technological capabilities and commercial value.

AI as a Service

The value that agencies deliver is changing. Building on the recent trend of agencies moving from execution to strategic work, AI is opening a new service line for them. This is evident in both their stated service mix (19% of the agencies in the survey offer AI development or implementation) and especially in the steps they've taken to prepare for and leverage AI.

Agency AI Leaders are **over 2.5x** more likely to be creating AI offerings for clients.

Steps taken within the agency to prepare for and leverage AI (e.g., training staff, investing in tools, policy development, etc.).



Of those steps, three stood out that were significantly more common for AI Leaders to implement vs. the AI Laggards:

- Creating AI offerings for clients
31-point difference
- Developing AI policies/guidelines
28-point difference
- Partnering for AI capabilities
26-point difference

Agency professionals who were more likely to enact these activities were also significantly more likely to proactively discuss AI-related web innovations with clients or prospects. Agencies that developed new AI-driven offerings were 14 percentage points more likely to frequently discuss AI in client meetings, and those that partnered for AI capabilities were 9 points more likely to do so. This suggests that the most impactful internal actions are those that directly translate into client-facing value and that the leading agencies are also developing internal policies and guidelines to facilitate this.

These shifts in the value that agencies provide are also accompanied by pricing and packaging changes. Rather than viewing AI purely as a behind-the-scenes tool, many see it as an

opportunity to create new client value and revenue streams. This evolution in services is happening along multiple paths:

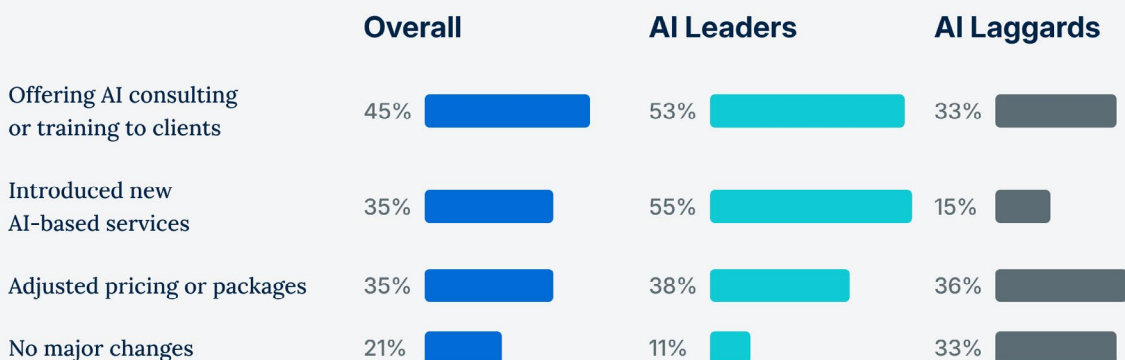
Consulting and Training for Clients: The most common service tweak, noted by 45% of digital agency professionals, is offering consulting or training on AI to clients. Many agency owners have realized their clients are overwhelmed by AI hype and unsure how to proceed. In response, agencies are leveraging their growing expertise to guide clients on how AI can impact the client’s business. This positions the agency as a trusted advisor in the AI era, which aligns with the general push towards agencies positioning themselves as strategic partners.

New AI-Based Services: Over a third of agencies (35%) have introduced brand-new services centered on AI. These new AI-centered services can range from augmenting traditional agency services with AI, to brand new AI services, and not all are billed strictly as ‘AI development’ in service menus.

Adjusting Pricing and Packages: Thirty-five percent of agencies have modified how they price or package their services in light of AI.

Holding Steady: Twenty-one percent report no major changes to services or pricing.

Actions taken to modify service offerings or pricing models in response to AI advancements.



These service innovations are being driven mainly by the AI Leaders. Among them, over half have rolled out new AI-based services, whereas only 15% of Laggards have. Conversely, more than a third of Laggards admit they've made no changes to their services or packages. This divide suggests that lagging firms risk falling further behind in market positioning.

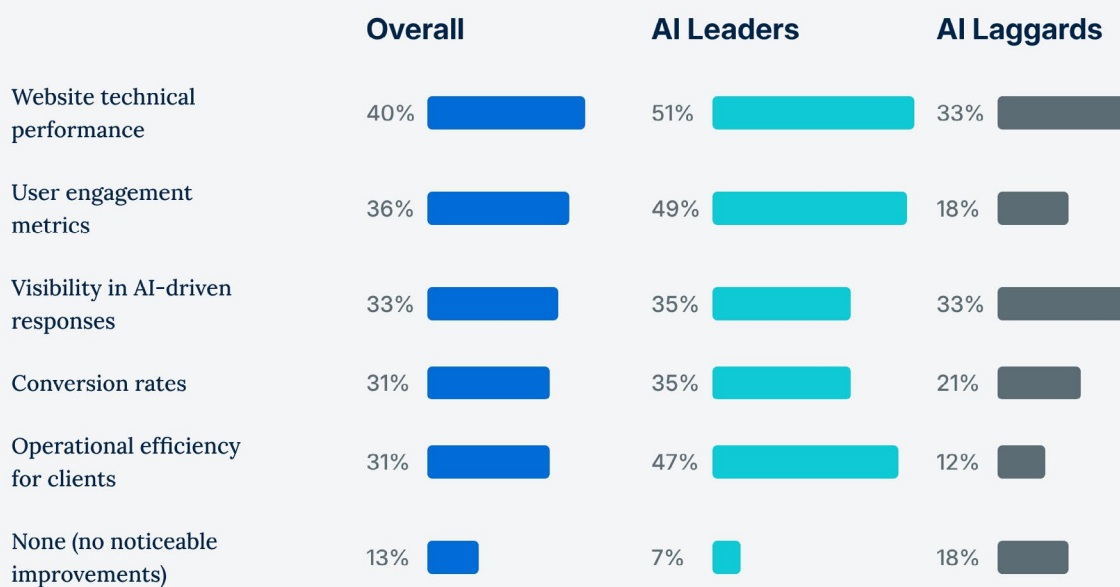
Beyond new services, we also see a trend in core offerings where a minority of agencies are starting to include AI development or implementation as a formal service. In our sample, roughly 1 in 5 agencies (19%) list "Artificial intelligence development/implementation" among their service offerings. This is significant for what is essentially an emergent field and indicates that AI development is quickly joining the roster of services alongside traditional offerings like web development or design.

All these shifts point to a realignment of the agency value proposition as teams integrate AI into the core of what they sell and how they work.

Client Results

As with any new technology, clients will ultimately judge AI by its impact on their business. The most commonly cited metric that agencies see improve from AI work is website technical performance (faster page load times, better Core Web Vitals, and improved accessibility), with 40% of agency professionals seeing benefits here.

Which client performance metrics have shown improvement as a result of agencies' AI-related web development and design initiatives?



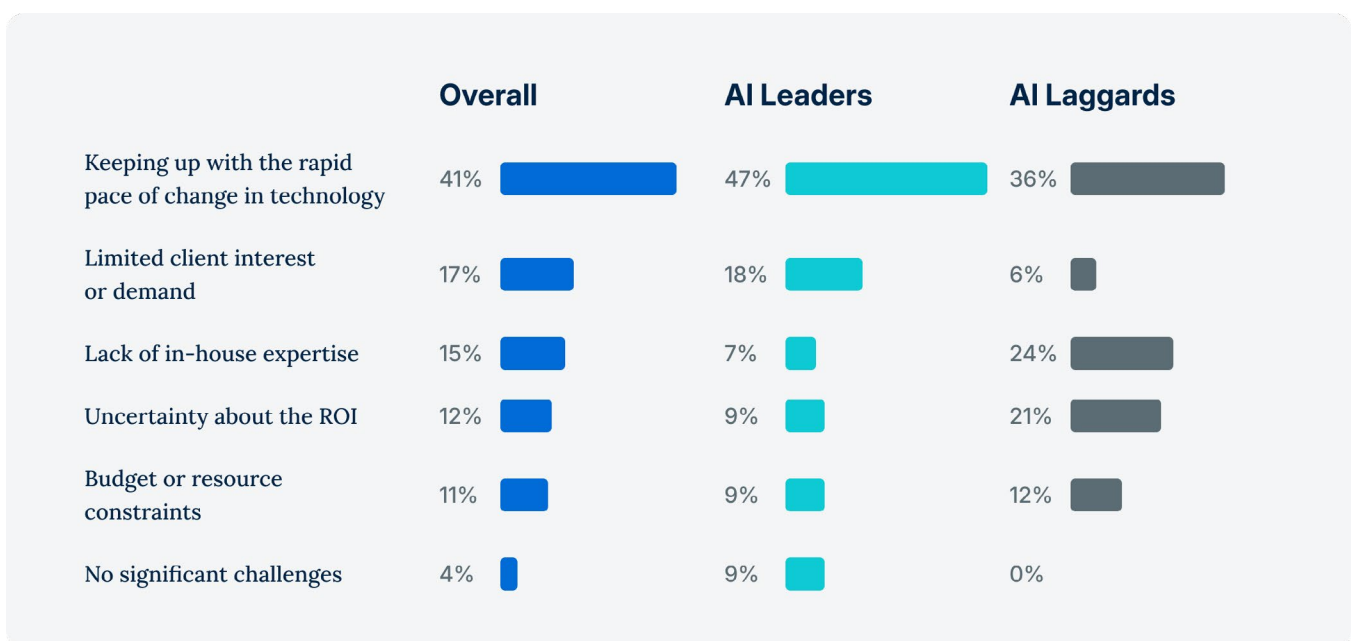
When we evaluate improvements between AI Leaders and Laggards, we find that AI Leaders are significantly better at improving three key metrics: client operational efficiency, user engagement, and site technical performance.

It's telling that only about 13% of agencies said they've seen no noticeable improvements to client metrics from their AI work. In other words, almost 9 out of 10 agencies can point to at

least one positive outcome from their AI work for clients. This high success rate is critical for maintaining client buy-in as long as agencies are able to effectively communicate the benefits. The challenge lies in attribution and tying improvements in metrics to quantifiable ROI. If agencies are able to successfully make this connection, it's likely that clients will continue to invest in them.

Adaptation Challenges

Despite the general optimism around AI, the technology isn't without its challenges. Many agencies are eager to leverage AI but struggle to keep up with how fast it's evolving. We asked respondents to select the single biggest challenge their agency faces in adapting to new AI-driven web development approaches. The challenges, in order of prevalence, were:



The Pace of Change: Forty-one percent of agencies cited keeping up with the rapid pace of change as the most pressing challenge. It was by far the most frequently cited challenge for both the AI Leaders and Laggards. In an environment where new AI tools, frameworks, and best practices seem to emerge every month, agency professionals struggle to stay current. Even more than a lack of resources or expertise, agencies fear falling behind in an environment that is evolving so quickly. This highlights a key strategic imperative for agencies to build a culture of continuous learning and flexibility.

Client Demand Uncertainty: The second most common challenge, cited by 17% of agencies, is “limited client interest or demand” for AI-driven solutions. Despite the broad trend of clients showing interest, as discussed earlier, not every client base is there yet. Some agency owners serve industries or markets where AI hasn’t become a priority, making it hard to justify heavy investment in AI skills or offerings. Others might have clients who are interested in AI but are slow to commit budget to unproven approaches. This challenge highlights a potential lag between industry interest and client willingness to act.

Talent Gaps: Close behind client issues, 15% of agencies see “lack of in-house expertise” as their biggest hurdle. This aligns with what we’ve seen: while many agencies label themselves intermediate in AI, truly expert talent is scarce, and the majority of it currently resides within large product companies. Smaller and mid-sized agencies, in particular, may not be able to afford a full-time AI engineer or data scientist, yet they find that some AI projects require those advanced skills. Even training existing team members can only go so far, given how steep the learning curve is. As a result, some agencies may feel constrained in the complexity or scope

of AI solutions that they can offer. Some have considered solutions, such as partnering with other firms to acquire specific AI capabilities to get around this hurdle. As AI becomes standard in digital work, we can expect more widespread expertise, but right now, talent is a bottleneck for many.

Proving ROI: For 12% of agencies, “uncertainty about the ROI” of AI initiatives is the top concern. Agency clients are practical people. They need to justify investments in new capabilities and want to ensure that if they purchase AI solutions they will deliver results. The emerging state of many AI applications makes ROI calculation difficult. This ambiguity can slow decision-making and make agencies cautious in pitching bold AI projects. Agencies facing this challenge are seeking ways to measure and communicate value, for example, by establishing clear metrics for AI features or by gathering case studies that quantify benefits.

Resource Constraints: Finally, 11% of agencies flagged “budget or resource constraints” as their main challenge in adapting to AI. This can affect agencies of all sizes as small agencies may lack funds to invest in expensive AI tools or training, where larger ones might be constrained by legacy systems or bureaucratic budgeting processes that don’t move at AI’s speed. In either case, making room in the budget (and in workloads) for AI innovation is not trivial. Agencies are approaching this by reallocating existing resources (maybe pausing other R&D to focus on AI), taking advantage of free or low-cost AI tools when possible, and, in some instances, convincing key clients to co-fund an AI pilot that benefits both the agency and the client.

Only 4% of agency professionals reported facing “no significant challenges” in adapting to these new approaches. The vast majority do face hurdles, whether primarily internal (skills,

pace, resources) or external (client buy-in). The presence of challenges is not surprising during a new technological shift, but this one is different in how quickly the landscape is changing.

Compared to the mobile/responsive shift of the 2010s, agencies are finding it significantly more challenging to keep up with the technology. While this has many concerned, the overall picture from this research is a proactive transition toward embracing a new technology.

Responsible AI Use

As AI takes on a more prominent role in agency workflows and client deliverables, agency leaders are beginning to confront the ethical and legal dimensions of this technology. Although only 52%

of agencies in the survey report having formal AI policies or guidelines, those that do are taking steps to ensure their use of AI aligns with their values and protects their clients.

These guidelines typically cover content attribution, permissioned use of data, transparency about AI-generated content, and adherence to emerging copyright norms. As agencies expand their AI-driven offerings, incorporating ethical guardrails will be crucial not only for compliance but for maintaining trust with clients. These ethical guardrails also work in concert with operational guardrails and can help ensure that quality standards are met.

Looking Ahead

Agency professionals overwhelmingly agree that AI is changing the game for web development and design. This consensus cements this as a new era akin to the mobile/responsive era of the 2010s. The firms that build their AI capabilities early are poised to lead the industry, much as the early adopters of mobile-first design led the last one. At the same time, agency professionals are entering the era with a healthy dose of skepticism and an awareness of the challenges ahead.

The rapid pace of change, cited as the number-one issue, highlights the need for continual learning and flexibility in agency cultures. In other words, staying static is not an option. The craft of web development will continue to evolve with AI advancements, and agencies will need to keep pace. Luckily, many are already well-positioned to succeed here, as their relatively small size and limited bureaucracy keep them nimble, allowing them to adjust as needed. It's encouraging to see that so many shops are already making adjustments to their strategies, services, and operations.

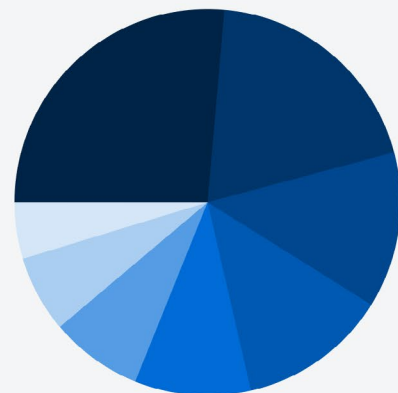
Methodology & Demographics

This report presents findings from the Future of Web Development Survey 2025, which examined how digital agencies are adapting their web development and design practices in the era of artificial intelligence (AI). A total of 214 web agency professionals participated in an online survey fielded in late October to mid-November 2025. Respondents were primarily based in North America (69% in the U.S. and 27% in Canada), with a small representation from other regions. The survey covered agency demographics, AI maturity levels, and a range of topics, including design strategies for human vs. AI audiences, client interactions around AI, observed results from AI initiatives, and organizational responses to AI-driven changes. All statistics in this report are based on the full sample of 214 agencies unless otherwise noted.

Demographics: Roles and Agency Size

The survey captured perspectives from a mix of agency roles, with a substantial share of decision-makers. Over one-quarter of respondents (27%) identified as Founders/Owners/Partners, 5% as CEOs or Presidents, while another 7% identified as “Other C-level roles.” Management was also well represented, with 20% of the respondents identifying as Managers and 13% as Directors/VPs. The remaining respondents were individual contributors specializing in design (13%), development (10%), or marketing (7%). This distribution indicates that the insights come from both leadership and practitioner perspectives within agencies.

Role	Count	Percent of Respondents
Founder / Owner / Partner	57	26.6%
Manager	42	19.6%
Individual Contributor, Designer	28	13.1%
Director / Vice President	27	12.6%
Individual Contributor, Developer	21	9.8%
Other C-level role	15	7.0%
Individual Contributor, Marketer	14	6.5%
CEO / President	10	4.7%



Most participating agencies are small to mid-sized. About 27% have 25–49 employees, and another 27% have 50–249 employees. Nearly 24% are in the 10–24 employee range, while 14% are very small (fewer than 10 employees). Only a minority (8%) represent large agencies with 250+ staff. Thus, the data largely reflects the experience of boutique and mid-tier digital agencies.

Demographics: Agency Services Offered

Agencies reported offering a broad range of digital services, underscoring that web development is often part of a multi-disciplinary offering. The most common services were web design (83% of agencies) and web development (50%). Many

agencies also engage in digital strategy (38%), marketing strategy (34%), and creative services like graphic design (29%). Traditional digital marketing offerings such as social media, content marketing, SEO, and branding were offered by roughly 17–28% of agencies. Notably, 19% offer AI development or implementation services, indicating that some agencies are already positioning themselves in AI solutions. A very small segment (4%) does AR/VR development. Overall, these agencies have diverse portfolios, but core web design/development remains a central pillar of their service mix.





About The Author

Nicholas Petroski is the founder of [Promethean Research](#).

Since 2015, he has helped over 100 digital agency owners better understand their industry and chart more effective paths to success.

Before co-founding Promethean, Nick worked as an equity analyst at a Wall Street firm covering the enterprise software and semiconductor industries.

You can find him backpacking around the Midwest or making ~~elaborate firewood~~ fine furniture in his woodshop when he's not in the office. He posts new agency research on [LinkedIn](#).

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