



2025 Generative AI in Professional Services Report

Ready for the next step of strategic applications

Executive summary

It's been more than two years since the public introduction of ChatGPT, and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is a secret no longer. Microsoft has integrated Copilot into all facets of its Office 365 suite, Google provides Gemini results at the top of most searches, and technology giants from Amazon to Meta are exploring where GenAI fits into their suite of solutions.

With all of this change, the rest of the business world — and the professional services market — is following close behind. About half of all professionals in the legal; tax, accounting & audit; corporate risk & fraud; and government industries use GenAI in some fashion, according to the survey results that underpin this latest iteration of our annual *Generative AI in Professional Services Report*.¹ Indeed, many of those professionals said they are using ChatGPT or other free tools for limited tasks, but increasingly, they also are using paid tools (such as Copilot) for business purposes, or industry-specific GenAI technologies that feature content and use cases catered to professionals' specific sectors.

More and more, these specialized GenAI tools are being baked into professional workflows, and a vast majority of survey respondents said they expect it to be a central part of their daily workflow within the next five years. There remains some hesitation about GenAI's technical limitations, of course, particularly around accuracy of the tool. But overall, most professionals remain positive about its applications. They believe it can and should be used for key work, and given their experience, more feel excited and hopeful about the future of GenAI than ever before. At the organizational level, many even anticipate major shifts in budgets and job roles due to AI's rise.

To truly extract value from GenAI tools, any GenAI plan needs to tie into the larger strategic objectives of an organization.

At the same time, however, initial adoption does not necessarily equal true integration into organizations' strategy at large. Professionals are *using* GenAI, but they aren't *capitalizing* on GenAI's potential value. More than half of professionals said their organizations are not measuring return-on-investment (ROI) for GenAI tools, calling into question how GenAI success is actually defined within professional services. In fact, the majority of corporate respondents who work with outside firms said they want their firms to be using GenAI, but at the same time, did not know whether those firms were actually using GenAI. Similarly, more than half of firm respondents said they had no GenAI guidance from their clients. And while most believe GenAI is imminently becoming a part of their daily workflow, only about one-third reported having a GenAI policy or receiving any kind of GenAI training at their organization.

Clearly, in the time since GenAI's introduction, professional services organizations have taken the first step: They know *what* GenAI is — now, these organizations will need to determine *why* it matters. GenAI is pervasive, with a number of different applications and use cases across the organization; but to truly extract value from GenAI tools, any GenAI plan needs to tie into the larger strategic objectives of an organization. While many professionals are now familiar with where GenAI fits into their own lives, their organizations have not yet fully embraced where GenAI fits into broader future organizational planning.

It is in taking this next step into the GenAI frontier that many organizations will have to contend with going forward.

¹ The survey for this report was done via an online survey with 1,702 respondents from the legal; tax, accounting & audit; corporate risk & fraud; and government professions. The survey was conducted in January and February 2025. (For a fuller breakdown of the survey demographics, see the Methodology section at the end of this report.)

Key findings

- **Steady usage increases** — A large proportion (41%) of respondents said they personally use publicly-available tools such as ChatGPT, and 17% said they personally use industry-specific GenAI tools. On an organization-wide level, meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who said their organizations were actively using GenAI nearly *doubled* over the past year, to 22% in 2025, compared to 12% in 2024. An additional 50% of respondents said their organizations are either creating plans to use GenAI or deciding whether or not to do so.
- **Soon to be central to workflow** — While GenAI adoption has been steady thus far, many respondents said they expect its use to increase quickly. Just 13% say GenAI is central to their organization's workflow currently, but an additional 29% believe it will be central within the next year. Further, 95% of all respondents believe it will be central to their organization's workflow within the next five years.
- **Maintaining positivity** — More than half (55%) of all respondents categorize their sentiment towards GenAI in their profession as *excited* or *hopeful*. Meanwhile, the proportion who said they were hesitant, *concerned* or *fearful* fell 12 percentage points over the past year. More than 60% also said GenAI actively *should* be used for work in their industry, and 89% said they believe they can see GenAI use cases in their own work.
- **Business questions remain** — Even with these strong usage increases, however, few are yet realizing the business impact of GenAI. Only 20% of respondents said they knew their organizations were measuring ROI of GenAI, and many firm respondents remain unsure about its impact on rates or client costs. For their part, a majority (57%) of clients want their firms to be using GenAI — but 71% of law firm clients and 59% of tax firm clients said they did not know whether their outside firms were doing so or not.
- **Policies & training still needed** — The rise in general GenAI usage also has not translated to widespread guardrails around its use. More than half of respondents (52%) said they believed their organizations had no policies around GenAI at work, whether a standalone policy or as part of a larger technology policy. Nearly two-thirds (64%), meanwhile, said they had received no GenAI training at work.

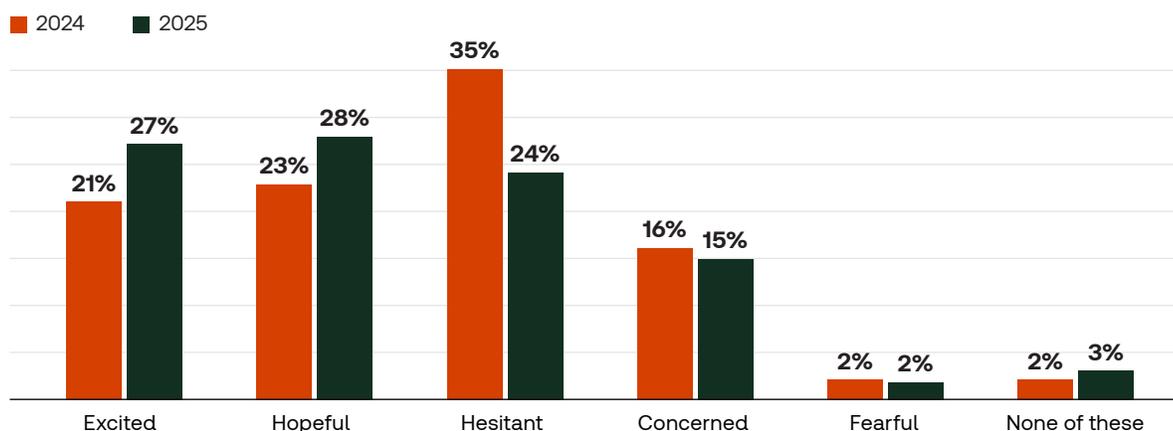
Perceptions of GenAI

As members of professional services organizations have become more familiar with GenAI, their hesitance and fear of the technology has begun to fade. Unlike 2024, where more survey respondents reported feeling hesitant compared to any other emotion, now more professionals report being *excited* and *hopeful* over GenAI's future in their industries. Many already envision a future in which GenAI not only can be used in their daily work, but actively *should* be central to how they operate.

With this in mind, it is clear that GenAI is not simply a top-down directive from the heads of organizations, corporate departments or firms. Even in industries that are often seen as resistance to change, GenAI has been embraced by professionals throughout many organizations.

Indeed, when asked how they view the future of GenAI in the workplace, more than half (55%) of respondents said they were excited or hopeful about the technology. That represents a combined increase of 11 percentage points compared to 2024.

FIGURE 1:
Sentiment on the future of GenAI



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Meanwhile, there was also an 11-percentage point drop in the proportion of respondents who said they were hesitant about the technology. Respondents noted that the more time they have had to explore and experiment with the technology, the more some of those initial hesitancies faded away.

“It’s like any other tool, you simply need to master it,” said one Australian tax firm accountant. “I don’t think it replaces the person, but [rather it] requires the person to perform the rigorous thinking to what is being produced by AI.”

This sentiment was reflected by a number of respondents: the growing realization that GenAI technology is not intended to *replace* professionals, but to *augment* the work that they already perform. When asked why they view GenAI’s impact positively, many respondents pointed to the possibility to make their work more productive and save time. And from a business perspective, these time savings are not only helpful, but could be crucial to keeping up with an increasingly fast-paced and competitive business world.

FIGURE 2:

Top 5 reasons respondents chose *Excited*

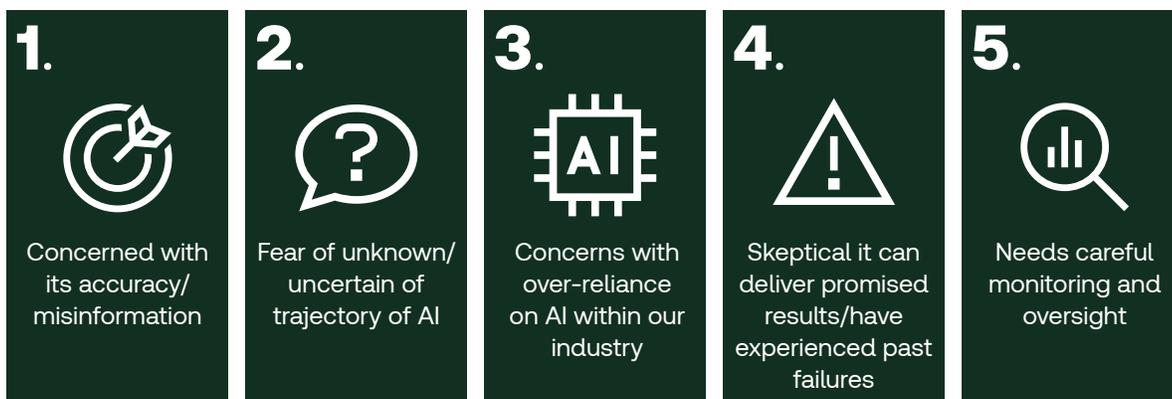
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

“We need a shift in the industry as talent has become expensive, there are capacity limitations, and clients are demanding greater value for less,” said one US tax firm director. “The industry is also shifting in capacity in what people are willing to work as work vs. life expectations shift. So, we are losing capacity within the existing work force and entering less people into the profession. AI as a productivity boost is critical to our sustainability.”

“I chose ‘excited’ because I see generative AI as a game-changer in our industry,” added a US corporate tax manager. “It has the potential to streamline complex processes, improve efficiency, and unlock innovative solutions that were previously unimaginable. From automating repetitive tasks to enhancing decision-making with data-driven insights, the opportunities are endless. The prospect of leveraging this technology to not only save time but also add strategic value makes the future feel full of possibilities.”

Those respondents who voiced more negative sentiments towards the future of technology, on the other hand, said they desire a more finished product before jumping into GenAI. Some anticipate technological issues — a greater percentage cited concerns around accuracy and misinformation than did in 2024. Others see more logistical concerns, such as the need to train wide swaths of the workforce not only on how to use the tools, but also to check for hallucinations and potential biases within the tools.

FIGURE 3:

Top 5 reasons respondents chose *Hesitant*

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

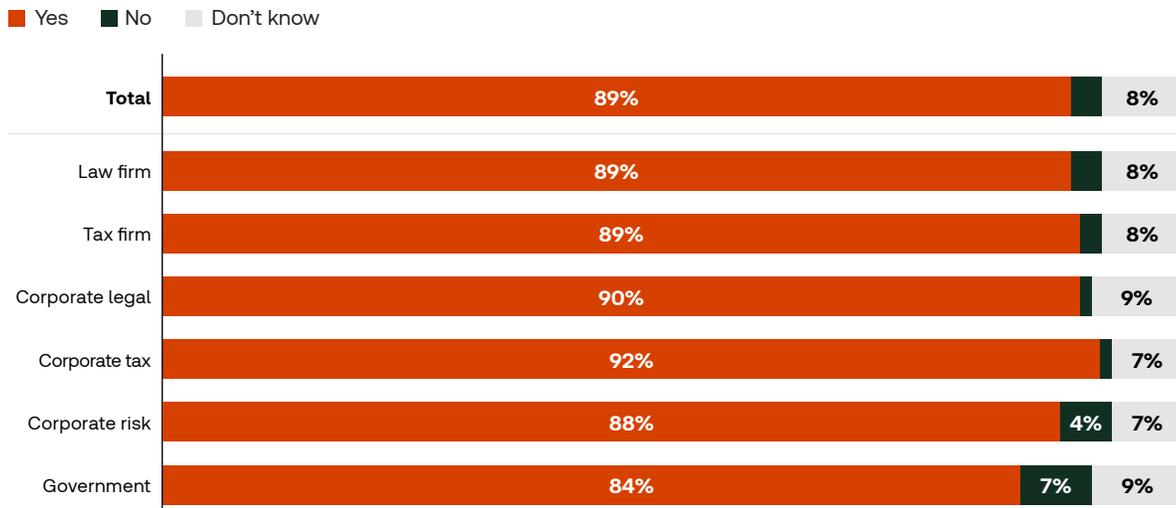
“If I could be 100% positive that what is produced by AI was in all aspects correct (i.e., up to date with legislation, case law, etc.) then I’d be over the moon,” said one UK law firm attorney. “I do worry about lay clients using it, as I’ve already had to redraft many documents which were produced by ChatGPT for the purposes of lay clients who have no idea what to ask, what to include, or what is potentially incorrect in what has been generated. There is a blind faith that ChatGPT is always correct, and it isn’t. People need to understand that they will still need a legally trained human brain to assess documents, etc.”

One US government senior policy analyst also voiced concerns about the technology’s impact, saying: “There are so many opportunities and new innovations that come with generative AI. That is exciting; however, I am concerned about the large, rapid technological shift and the challenges that brings. Existing workforces need to be retrained about how to use, how to challenge, and how to recognize the use of generative AI, and there are also serious ethical and privacy concerns, particularly when working in the legal field. I have not seen many organizations plan for or handle this shift well.”

Regardless of their prevailing sentiment towards GenAI, however, there was an overwhelming sense that its use in professional services will be inevitable regardless. Another year of GenAI experimentation and adoption has further reinforced the belief that GenAI not only can be used for professional services work, but it actively *should* play a part in professionals’ daily lives.

FIGURE 4:

Can GenAI be applied to industry work?

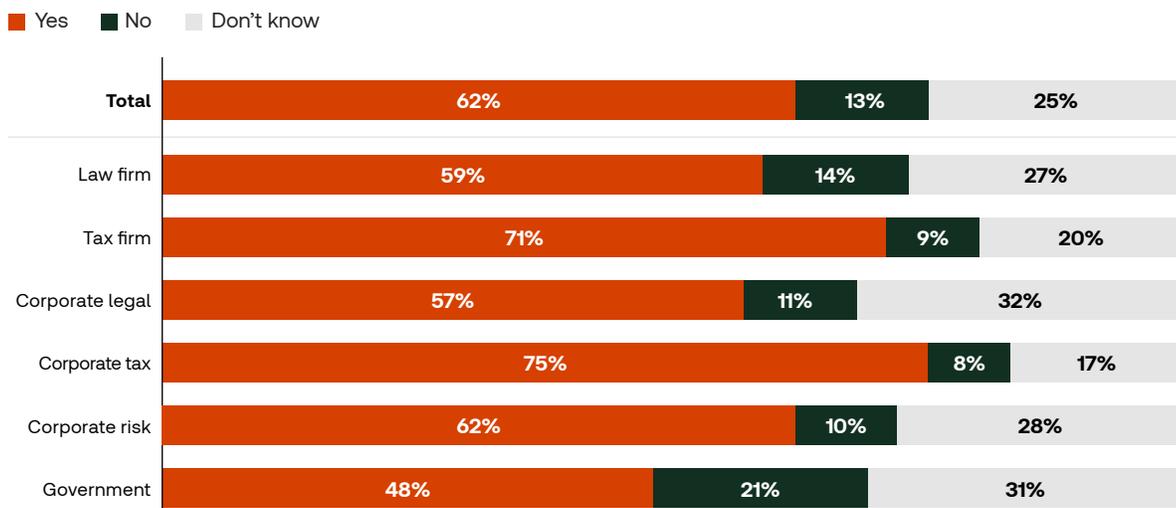


Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Regardless of in which industry they work, a vast majority of today’s professionals (89%) say they see a use case for GenAI within their own work. This represents a slight increase over 2024, when 81% of respondents said they believed GenAI could be applied to their work. While there are a number of potential reasons for this shift, the public availability of advanced GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, Google’s Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot has certainly played a role in getting professionals comfortable with the potential use cases for more industry-centric use of these type of tools.

When asked whether GenAI not only can be used in the professional context, but *should* be used in the professional context, respondents were more non-committal — only slightly, however. The majority of respondents (62%) across all represented industries said they still believe that GenAI actively *should* be used for their own work purposes.

FIGURE 5:
Should GenAI be applied to industry work?



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Notably, those who did not answer yes did not necessarily say *no*. More than two years removed from the public release of ChatGPT, there are still one-quarter of professionals who have not formed a strong opinion as to whether GenAI should be used in the workplace. This is particularly prevalent in the legal space, in which more than one-quarter responded that they did not know whether or not GenAI was safe to use.

The TR Institute's View:

Professional services industries are not known for innovating quickly. To date, some legal and tax organizations still have conversations about whether to adopt cloud computing, despite most large businesses having that particular technology more than a decade ago. Thus, it's not too surprising that conversations around GenAI adoption have continued into 2025. Particularly for a technology as potentially pervasive as GenAI, risk mitigation and proper implementation is both understandable and a sound strategy to pursue.

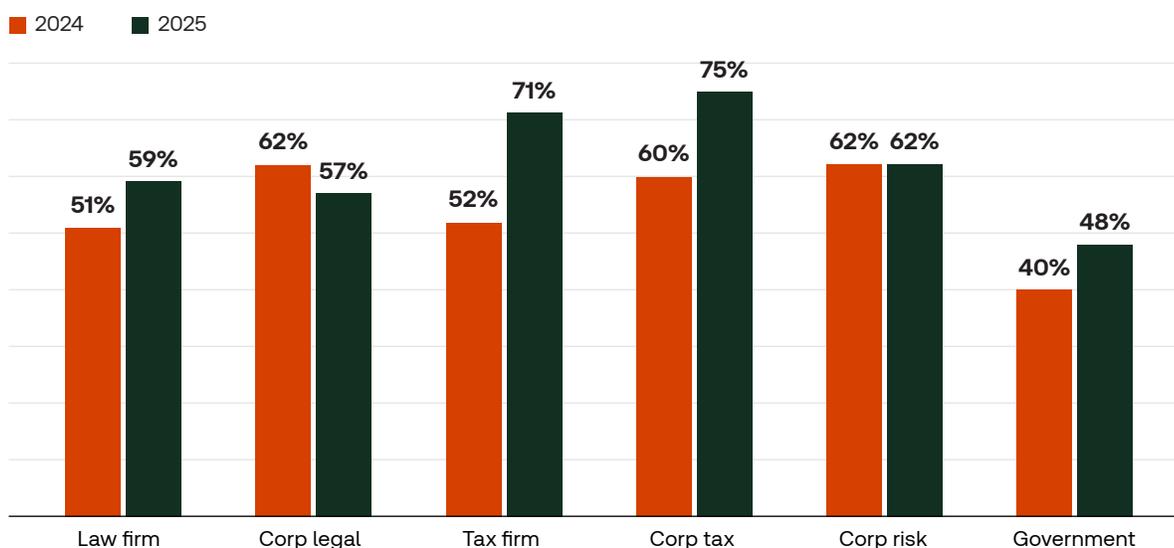
That said, some organizations have mistaken inaction for caution. Wanting to fully vet GenAI technology before adoption is understandable; however, avoiding the conversation about whether GenAI would be a worthwhile addition is *not*. Particularly given that a majority of professionals said they believe that GenAI *can* and *should* be used in their daily work lives, ignorance of both the possibilities and the risks cannot be a viable option.

Organizational leaders need to familiarize themselves with GenAI — but that is just a first step, and a necessary one. Leaders should have a conversation with a colleague, a trusted partner, or someone in their sphere about GenAI's applications in their own industry and workplace. Because inevitably the question will arise from a client or elsewhere, and it's always better to have a thoughtful answer ready.

When comparing the year-over-year increase of those respondents who said they believe GenAI should be applied to daily work, one industry stands out: tax, accounting & audit. In 2024, the tax, accounting & audit industry was behind its legal and corporate risk & fraud peers, particularly among those respondents who worked at outside tax firms, where only about half (52%) said they believed GenAI should be applied to tax work. One year later, that figure has risen nearly 20 percentage points to 71% of respondents at tax firms and 75% of those at corporate tax departments who said they believe GenAI should be used for tax work.

FIGURE 6:

GenAI should be applied to industry work, year-over-year by industry



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Even beyond the tax practice, however, support for GenAI is becoming a part of daily life and has largely risen across the board, regardless of industry. Only among corporate legal respondents did this belief fall, and that only slightly.

The reasons why respondents said they believe GenAI should be applied to work have largely not changed over the past year. Professionals are largely looking to GenAI for routine and low-level tasks, automating work that would then free them up for more higher-value tasks. Time savings and cost reduction are also top of mind for many professionals.

“I think there will be parallels with the introduction of automation,” said one Australian corporate risk manager. “AI has the potential to transform roles by decreasing the portion of low value-added tasks. I see AI continuing to compress the time from identifying a problem or an opportunity to the delivery of value.”

FIGURE 7:

Top reasons why GenAI *should* be applied to work



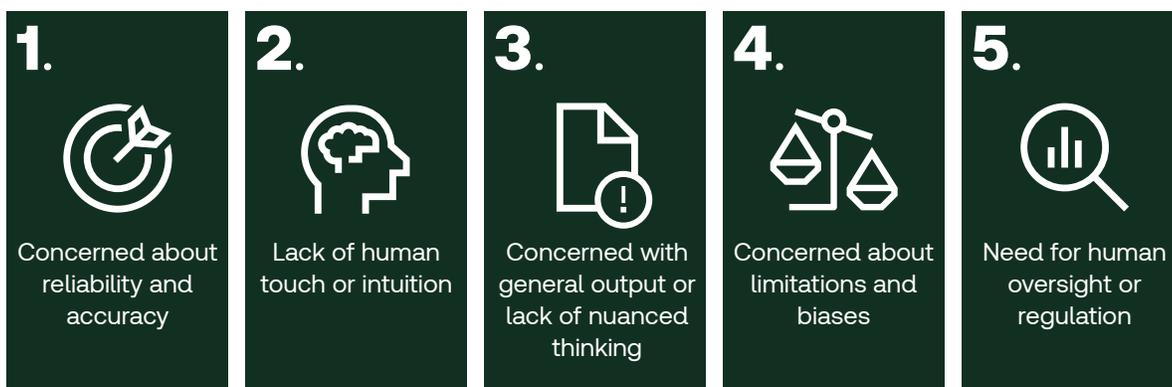
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Those who said they believe GenAI *should not* be used for their daily work, meanwhile, are primarily concerned by reliability and accuracy. GenAI by its nature cannot be 100% accurate in all scenarios, and there are some who will not accept anything less than full accuracy. But even among those who would accept a lower level of accuracy, there is a feeling that GenAI has not reached their preferred threshold quite yet.

“I think there is certainly an opportunity to create efficiencies and maximize productivity and output in legal workplaces through the use of GenAI. My concern is in relation to the accuracy, reliability, and safety of using this technology,” said one Australian government attorney. “Given it is fairly unregulated at this point in time, I think there needs to be more ‘scaffolding’ for its use in a legal setting before it can be safely adopted and used more broadly.”

FIGURE 8:

Top reasons why GenAI *should not* be applied to work



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

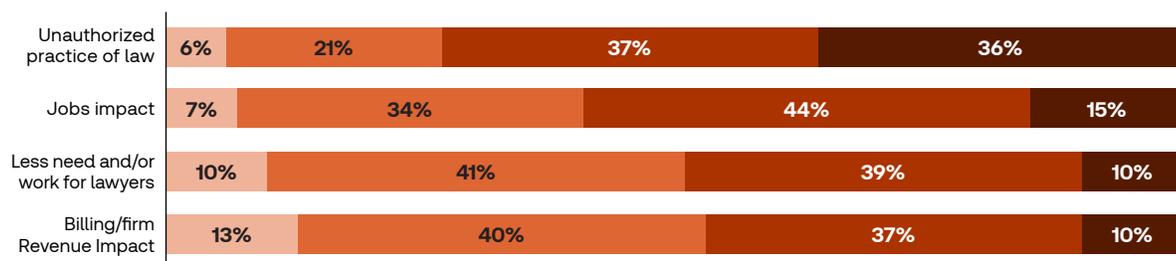
Still, some said they have more existential concerns surrounding GenAI technology. Since its release, many have speculated on whether GenAI will cause job loss, impact the bottom lines of companies or firms, or cause the demise of professional services altogether. In actuality, however, few professionals actually said they believe that GenAI is a major threat in each of these areas — fewer than 20% of legal professionals and fewer than 10% of tax, accounting & audit professionals said they see GenAI as coming for their jobs or bottom lines.

Where the impact may be more felt, however, is in some of the more *existential* parts of the profession. For instance, many respondents said they believe there will be a major impact on the unauthorized practice of law — the ability of non-lawyers or technology to perform the work of lawyers. In 2007, the UK liberalized its legal services market through the Legal Services Act, which permitted alternative business structures. Some US states, notably Utah and Arizona, have followed suit in a more limited fashion. Many respondents said they believe GenAI may accelerate this timeline.

FIGURE 9:
GenAI’s threat potential to industry

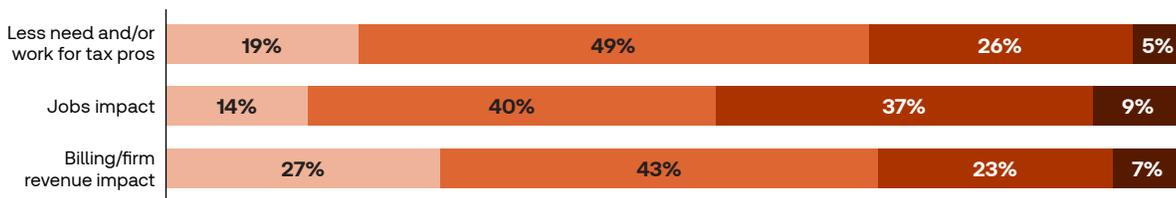
Is generative AI a threat to the legal industry?

1 = no threat at all 2 = minimal threat 3 = somewhat of a threat 4 = major threat



Is generative AI a threat to the tax industry?

1 = no threat at all 2 = minimal threat 3 = somewhat of a threat 4 = major threat



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Even with these questions still looming, however, respondents generally said they believe that GenAI will work out many of its early issues and become a crucial part of their work moving forward. No matter the reasons — whether a full embrace of the technology or an understanding that it is a necessity to keep up — there is overall an acceptance that GenAI is here to stay.

The TR Institute's View:

For all of the media coverage and guidance released involving GenAI, it's important to remember that the sentiment around this technology is still developing. Less than three years with a new technology of this possible magnitude is not a long enough time for many practitioners to have developed a concrete opinion, especially in the grand scheme of professional services industries. After all, in the legal industry for example, the American Bar Association was still releasing guidance around how to handle *reply all* emails as recently as November 2022.

The true answer about how GenAI may impact jobs, revenue, or the profession at large may be years — if not decades — away.

That said, of course, establishing hands-on experience with GenAI tools is the best way to move these opinions from theoretical to informed. For instance, consternation about whether GenAI will take jobs can be more easily placated when professionals better understand what tasks these tools can and cannot do. Similarly, concerns about accuracy and reliability will be better understood when users understand *why* hallucinations and other mistakes occur.

It's critical for organizational leaders to remember — only through hands-on experimentation will both evangelists and skeptics be able to find common ground in the tech-enabled future.

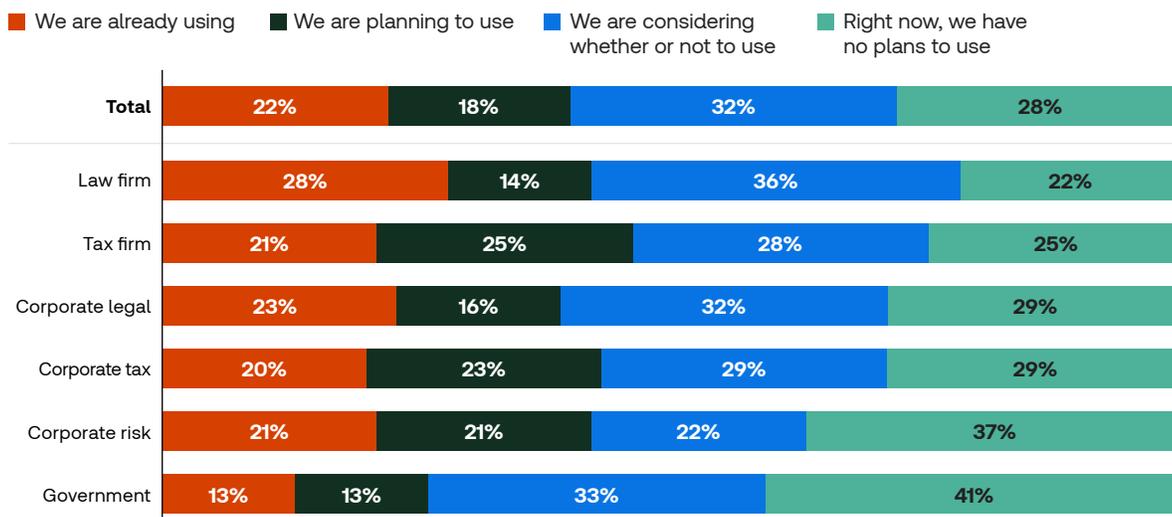
Usage and integration

In the previous version of this report, we wrote that many professionals in 2024 “still consider their workplaces to be in the *consideration phase*” of AI adoption. Respondents at that time had said their workplaces had begun experimenting with the technology’s use cases and strategic possibilities but had not yet rolled it out for more widescale use and integration within their organizations’ processes and procedures.

Over the past year, that roll-out has truly begun in earnest. The portion of professionals saying their workplaces are already using GenAI throughout the organization has nearly doubled within the past year. In this year’s report, we see that more than 40% of professionals said they already are using publicly available tools such as ChatGPT, and the use of industry-specific tools is expected to rise within the next few years. And they also believe that GenAI will be a central part of professional services organizations’ workflow within the next five years, if not sooner.

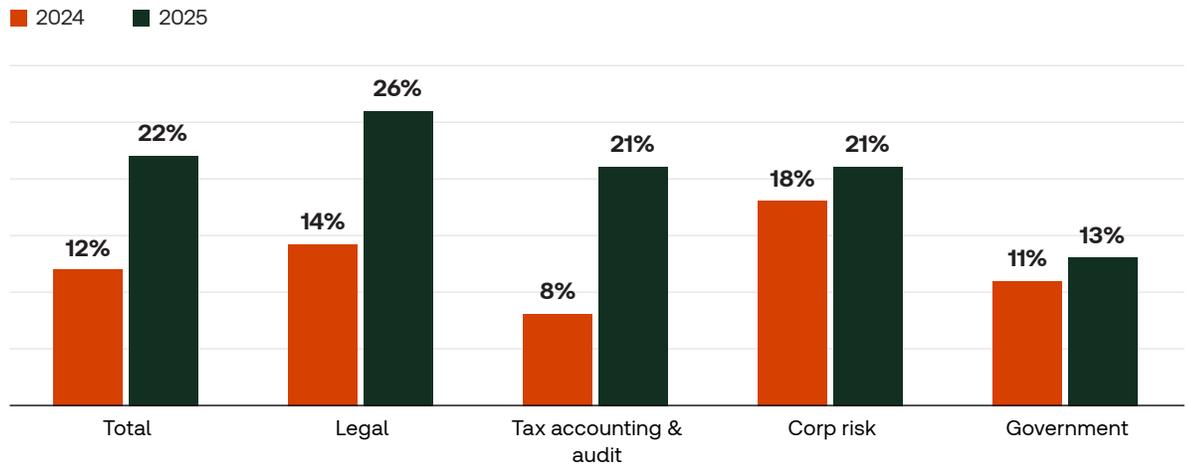
Overall, not only has organization-wide GenAI usage grown over the past year, but the proportion of organizations with no plans to use GenAI has shrunk at the same time. Those respondents saying their organizations are already active users of GenAI increased to 22% in 2025, compared to 12% in 2024. At the same time, the proportion who said their organizations have *no plans* to use GenAI dropped to just over one-quarter (28%) in 2025, from almost half (45%) in 2024.

FIGURE 10:
Organizational use of GenAI technology



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

FIGURE 11:

Already using GenAI technology, year-over-year

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

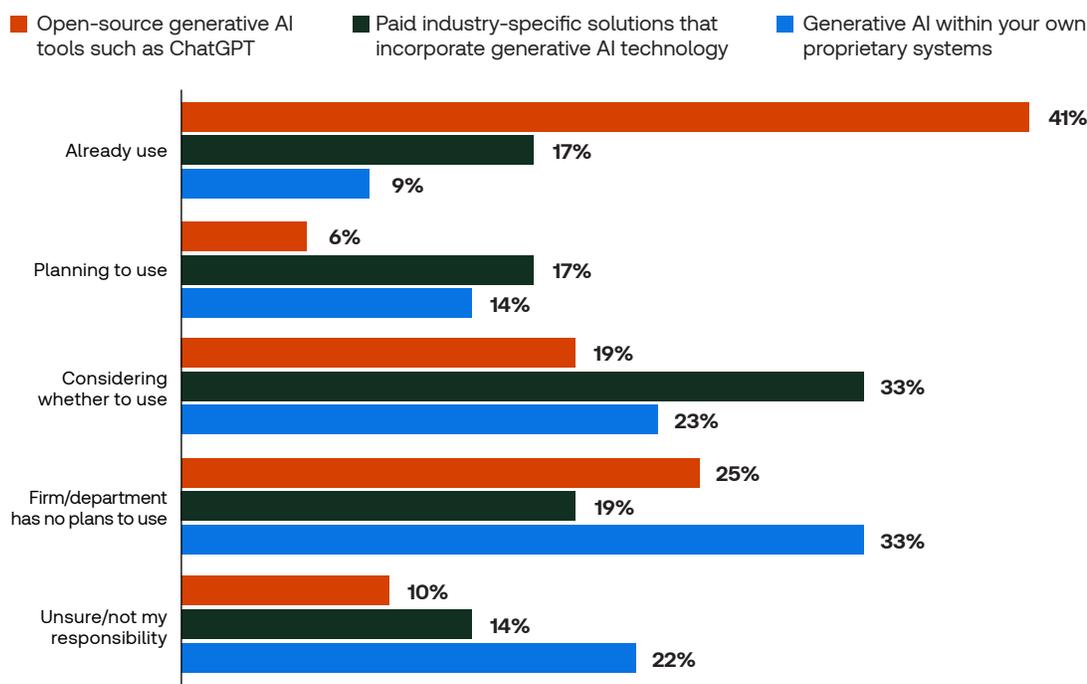
Notably, this usage growth occurred in all surveyed areas, with some industries (such as tax, accounting & audit) seeing particularly stark increases over the past year. Even some areas known for higher levels of skepticism, such as government legal departments and courts, have begun to acknowledge that GenAI will be difficult to ignore. In fact, the proportion of government respondents who said that they have *no plans* to use GenAI technology dropped to just 41% in 2025, compared to 60% in 2024.

“Overall, I think the GenAI’s integration into all areas of professional life is inevitable,” said one US-based senior law clerk. “Courts have an opportunity to embrace the technology where it can be used, but I know that many judges will take convincing before adopting the technology.”

Part of this recognition comes with the increased personal use of GenAI tools. Even less than three years after ChatGPT’s first release, already more than 40% of professionals said they have used publicly available GenAI tools for work. Fewer have cited using paid industry-specific GenAI solutions, but many expect this usage to increase dramatically within the coming years.

FIGURE 12:

Personal GenAI use by type of tool



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

“Current and emerging generations of GenAI tools could be transformative,” said one US director of tax. “For example, deep research capabilities, software application development, and using GenAI to help with business storytelling would have significant impacts on the future of professional work.”

Currently, few professional services organizations have invested in developing their own proprietary systems, with most instead relying on outside technology providers for their GenAI needs, according to respondents. While some larger firms or companies have the capital to begin developing these types of systems — and some have even productized their work — it remains a small portion of the population. For some, the lack of customization or ability to develop technology to assist with specific needs may be holding back broader adoption.

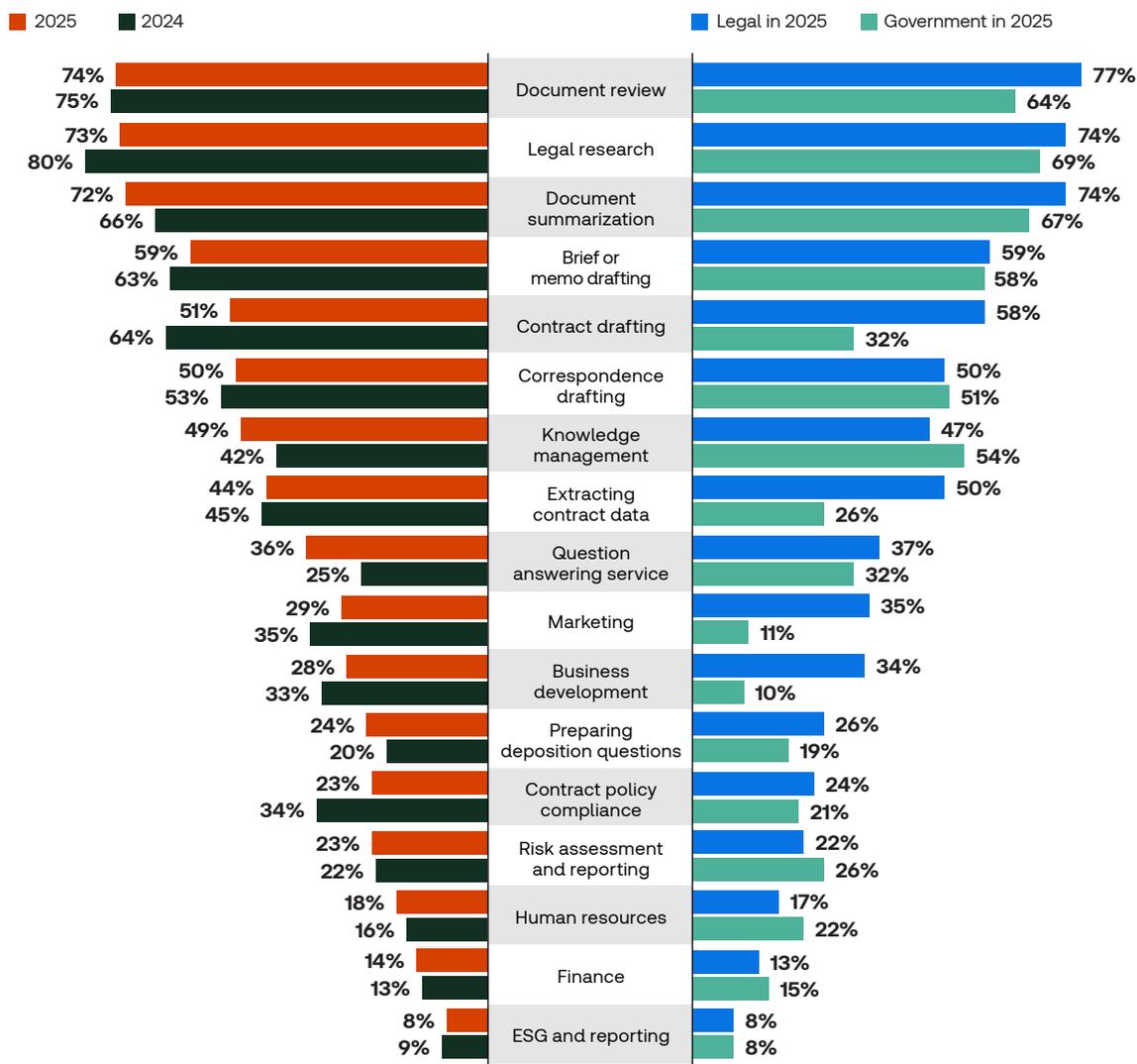
As one US public defender noted: “I see great potential with GenAI, but I personally believe that the technology, data protection, and baked-in biases are still lagging the overall idea of GenAI. Small scale implementation has begun in my organization, which is a good start, but we lack the expertise and funding to push forward a proprietary system, which means we’re at the mercy of whichever models are free or affordable for us.”

Among those respondents who said their organizations are using GenAI tools, use cases have not changed significantly within the past 12 months. For respondents from law firms, corporate law departments, government legal departments, and court systems, document review and legal research still lead the way. Using GenAI tools as a question-answering service or for knowledge management purposes has slightly risen over the past year, while usage for contract drafting purposes has slightly decreased. (Although that can partially be attributed to a higher proportion of government users in the sample, for whom contract drafting is not a regular use case.)

Notably, six separate use cases were cited by 50% or more of legal industry users. This means that if somebody is using GenAI, they likely are using it in several different ways.

FIGURE 13:

Top legal and government GenAI use cases

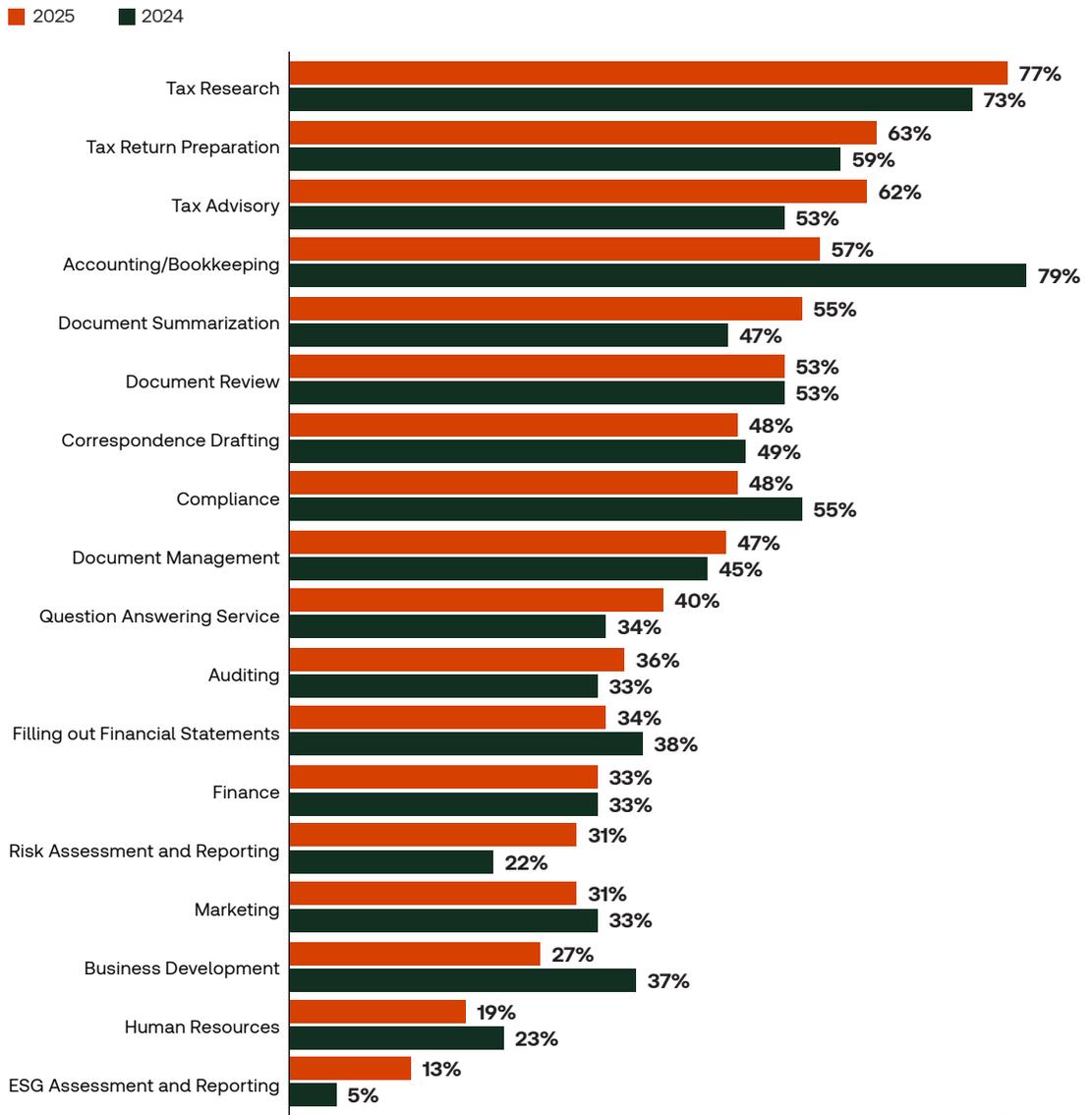


Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

That trend also holds for tax, accounting & audit respondents, among which six different use cases were cited by at least 50% of active GenAI users. Within the tax, accounting & audit space, tax research and tax return preparation remained the most common use cases cited, which is understandable given that these are exactly the type of repeatable tasks that professionals point to as a benefit of GenAI. Notably, the proportion citing accounting and bookkeeping fell to 57% in 2025, from 79% in 2024 (when it was the top use case). Tax advisory, meanwhile, rose nine percentage points to become the third-most cited use case in 2025.

FIGURE 14:

Top tax, accounting & audit GenAI use cases

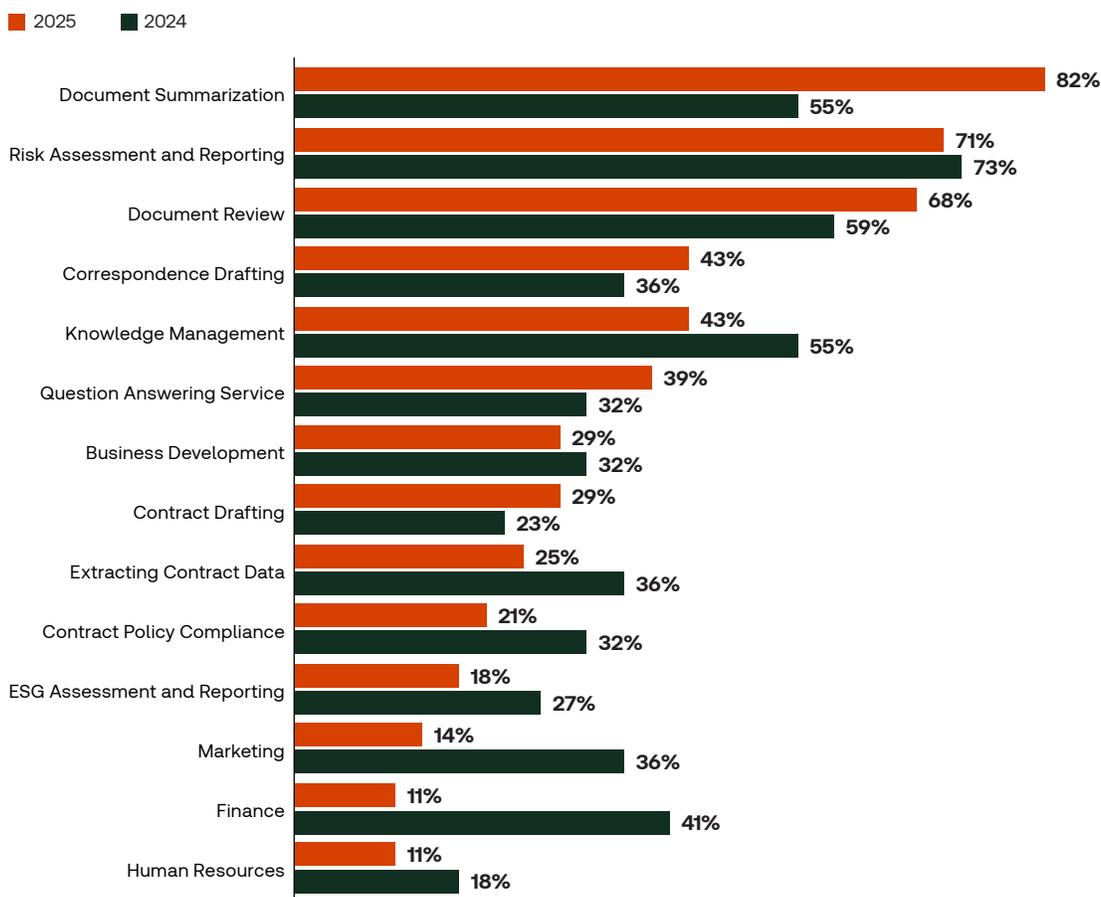


Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

In the risk & fraud space, document summarization jumped 27 percentage points in the past year to become the top use case. This is perhaps unsurprising, particularly given both the general success of GenAI as a summarization tool, as well as the need among US risk management professionals to synthesize large amounts of new rules and regulations emerging from a change in presidential administration. Following summarization, risk assessment & reporting and document review were also cited by more than two-thirds of active GenAI users.

FIGURE 15:

Top risk & fraud GenAI use cases



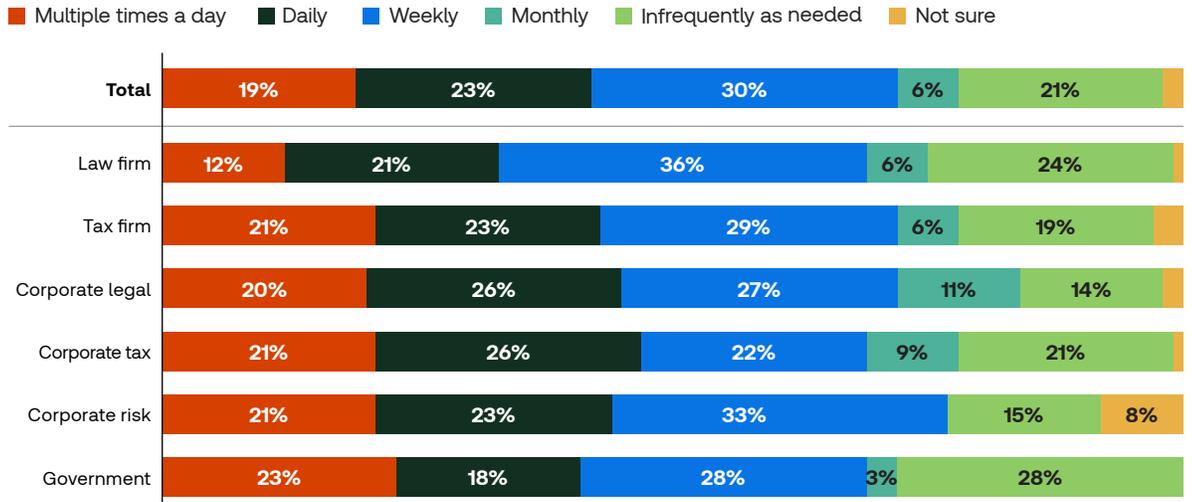
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Overall, it’s clear that GenAI is being treated by professional services organizations as a tool that can be easily transferable across various areas of the business. Some use cases, such as document summarization and research, are universal across all industries. Other uses may be more distinct to outside service firms and consultancies, such as marketing and business development needs. Corporate professionals, meanwhile, are more likely to use GenAI for compliance and reporting purposes.

With all of these use cases available across organizations, it’s perhaps no surprise that active GenAI users also tend to be using these tools frequently. More than 40% of active users said they use GenAI at least daily, while just under three-quarters use GenAI at least weekly.

FIGURE 16:

Frequency of GenAI use among current users



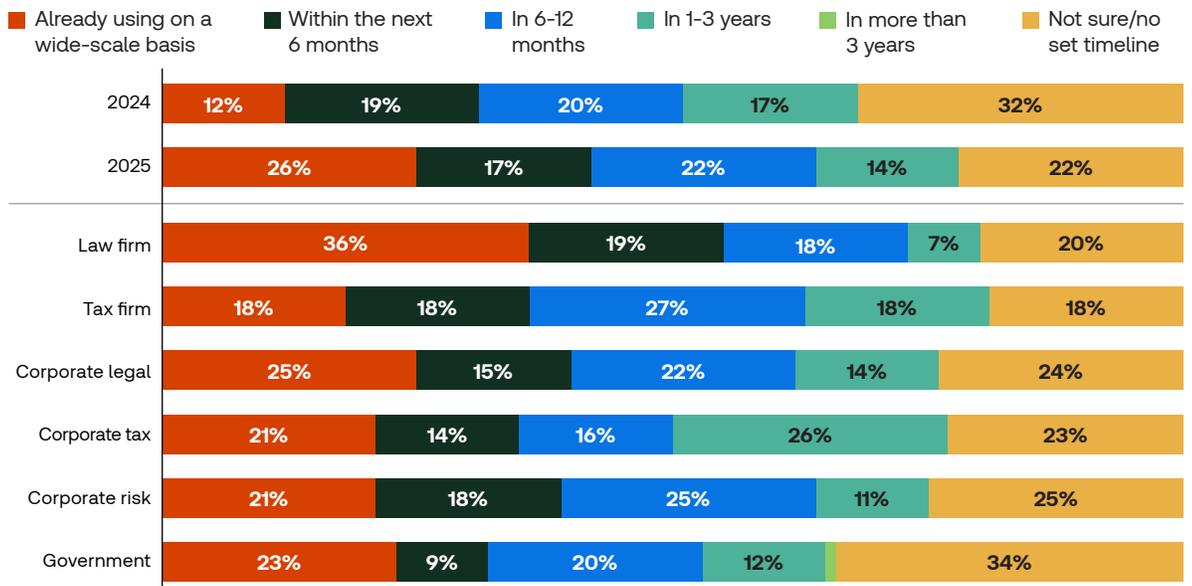
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Law firm respondents lag slightly behind other populations among active users, although even in that case, 69% still said they use GenAI tools at least weekly. This frequency of use, some said, can turn into a direct benefit for clients. One Canadian law firm associate noted: “I think it can assist lawyers conducting research, enabling lawyers to bill more files daily, as a result of spending less time on tasks.”

With GenAI being used and integrated so widely already among current users, it’s unsurprising that many professional services organizations are now beginning to formalize that process enterprise-wide. More than 60% of respondents said their organizations have already begun a wide-scale GenAI roll-out or are planning to do so within the next year.

FIGURE 17:

Time frame to roll out GenAI usage on a wide-scale basis



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Interestingly, this also indicates that while there is strong appetite for GenAI usage, enterprise-wide roll-out may take longer than some professionals anticipated. In 2024, just 12% of respondents said their organizations had conducted a wide-scale roll-out of GenAI, although an additional 39% said their organizations planned to do so within the next 12 months. Fast forward to 2025, and now 26% reported using GenAI on a wide-scale basis — a 14-percentage-point increase, but not near the proportion of respondents who had predicted being at that point. Clearly, enterprise-wide roll-out of GenAI is a much more complex proposition than individual adoption and usage.

The TR Institute's View:

The adage that *people + technology gets the best results* isn't only true for the use of GenAI tools, it's true for implementing them as well. Although many professionals agree that GenAI will become a part of their daily lives, actually adjusting how they work on a daily basis to accommodate it is easier said than done.

For organizational leaders, this makes focusing on cultural change just as important as focusing on technological change for any GenAI implementation. Leaders need to understand where GenAI fits in a practical manner into their professionals' daily lives and truly hear both the optimism and concerns around the technology. Only then can they determine all the ways that GenAI can be additive rather than fully disruptive to pre-existing workflows.

One good way to get reticent professionals on board with GenAI is to ask: "What is it you do best?" For most, the answer has to do with complex reasoning, understanding of clients or subject matter, or leveraging soft skills such as empathy or compassion. None of these are replaceable by GenAI tools, which are designed to tackle non-complex, repeatable, fact-based work.

To stress this, leaders should amplify the fact that not only is the work that professionals do best not currently replaceable by AI, but in many cases GenAI targets the work they actively do not want to do. If leaders can highlight this mindset, they can help lead their organizations down the path to true change management and successful tech adoption.

Impact on business and client relationships

Clearly, many professionals have taken a step forward with regards to GenAI adoption and use; however, those steps often do not extend to GenAI’s impact on the business at large. Many organizations are not measuring success metrics or ROI around their use of GenAI tools, and few firms and corporate clients have had conversations around GenAI’s impact on the business relationship. In fact, in many cases, corporate clients don’t know whether their outside firms are using GenAI at all.

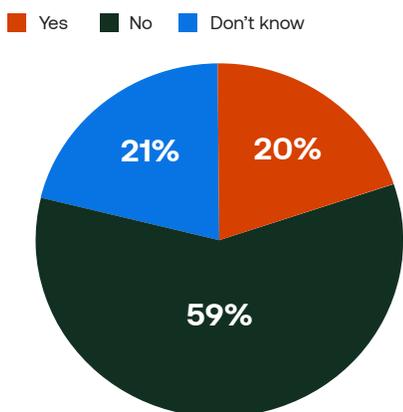
Until these conversations occur, GenAI cannot reach its full potential within professional services organizations. It’s one thing to use GenAI for simple automation of back-office tasks, but it’s another step to directly apply GenAI to the firm–client relationship. And unfortunately, many professionals remain reluctant to begin that conversation with their clients without being actively prompted to do so.

Indeed, there may be reasons for this reluctance. First, despite jumping fully into GenAI adoption, many organizations have not taken stock of the value that those tools actually bring to their business. In fact, just 20% of respondents said their organizations were measuring the ROI of GenAI tools, while more than half (59%) said their organizations were not measuring ROI, while the remainder did not know.

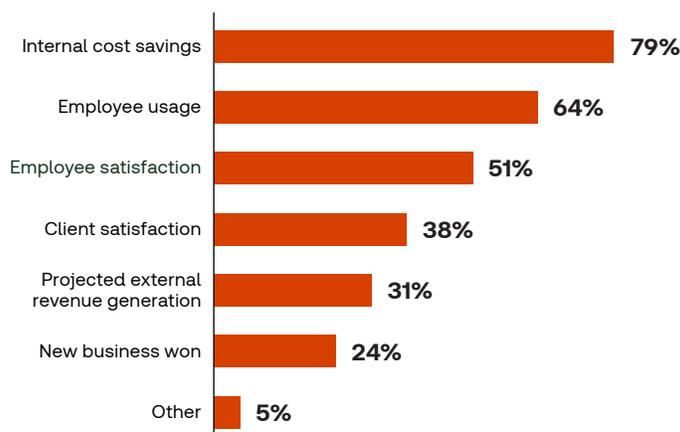
FIGURE 18:

Organizational return-on-investment measurements

Is your organization measuring the return-on-investment (ROI) of GenAI tools?



What metrics are you using to measure ROI?



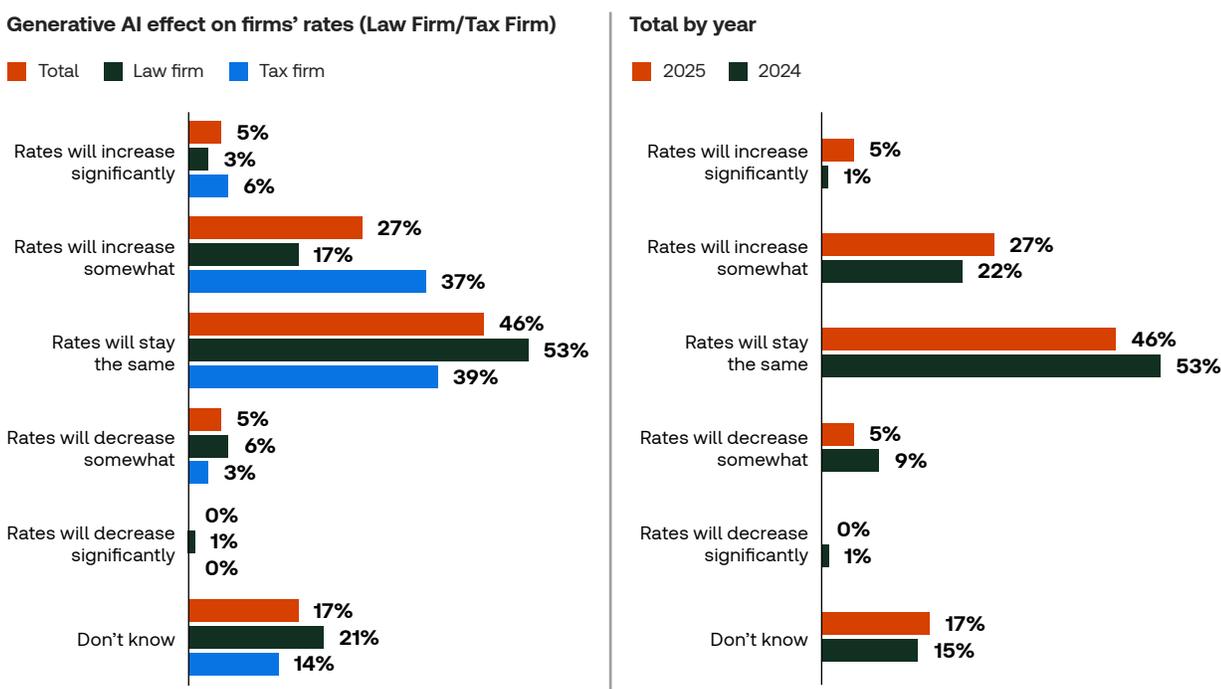
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Without these measurements, organizations may have a difficult time determining the value of GenAI that’s integrated into their work product, which is particularly true as organizations continue moving GenAI into direct client work. Curiously, organizations may not even know whether clients are actually be satisfied with their work involving GenAI because, of the small percentage of respondents that measure ROI, only 38% of those are actively measuring *client satisfaction* as well.

Even without these firm ROI figures, law firms and tax, accounting & audit firms need to set rates for their clients regardless. And at this time, about half (46%) of respondents in those firms said they believe GenAI will not have an impact on their rates. Notably, however, this represents a 7 percentage point drop from 2024, indicating that some firms may be expecting a greater impact on rates the more they integrate GenAI tools.

FIGURE 19:

Firms’ projected impact on client rates



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Perhaps more than any other, this is an area in which law firms and tax, accounting & audit firms differ. Historically, law firms have focused on the billable hour, centering their business around maximizing the amount of time they work for clients and the rates they are able to charge for each hour. (And law firms also have been very successful in doing so, with average rates continuing to rise into 2025, according to the *2025 Report on the State of the US Legal Market*,² published by the Thomson Reuters Institute and the Center on Ethics and the Legal Profession at Georgetown Law.)

As a result, while there is some recognition that new technologies may impact the mix of hourly work versus flat fees or other sorts of pricing arrangements — in fact, 40% of respondents said they expect the use of alternative fee arrangements to increase as a result of GenAI — many law firm practitioners expect the status quo to continue.

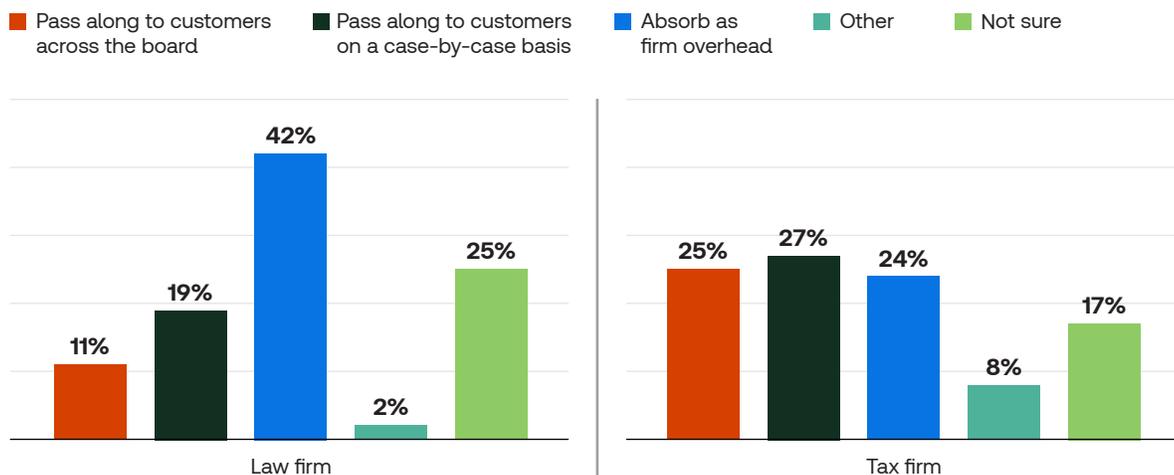
2 *2025 Report on the State of the US Legal Market*, Thomson Reuters Institute and the Center on Ethics and the Legal Profession at Georgetown Law (January 2025); available at: <https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/state-of-the-us-legal-market-2025>.

Corporate legal clients also play a role in these calculations, with the potential for keeping more work in-house than before. Some law firm respondents, however, said they were not worried for their own practices, believing this sort of in-sourcing would not be uniform. One UK solicitor noted that change as a result of new technologies is “likely to have the greatest negative impact in mid-tier firms whose clients have the capacity to use GenAI themselves in an effective manner. In larger firms, Gen AI will be used effectively but may not lead to the sorts of costs savings that firms and clients expect, due to the need to verify AI-generated material.”

On the other hand, tax, accounting & audit firm respondents seemed much more likely to believe that rates will *increase* as a result of GenAI. In fact, more respondents said they believe rates will increase, whether significantly (6%) or slightly (37%) compared to those who said they believe rates will stay the same (39%). One US tax firm shareholder noted that the opposite may occur — some clients will force lower rates on firms that *don't* adopt GenAI or other new technologies. “I’ve already heard of reduced sales pricing for firms that haven’t adopted digital workpapers and streamlined processes,” the shareholder explained. “GenAI will help everyone move forward to provide better results for our clients. At this point, I have no fear of my skills being replaced. I see the tech coming out as adding tools to my tool chest.”

FIGURE 20:

Impact of firm GenAI costs on clients



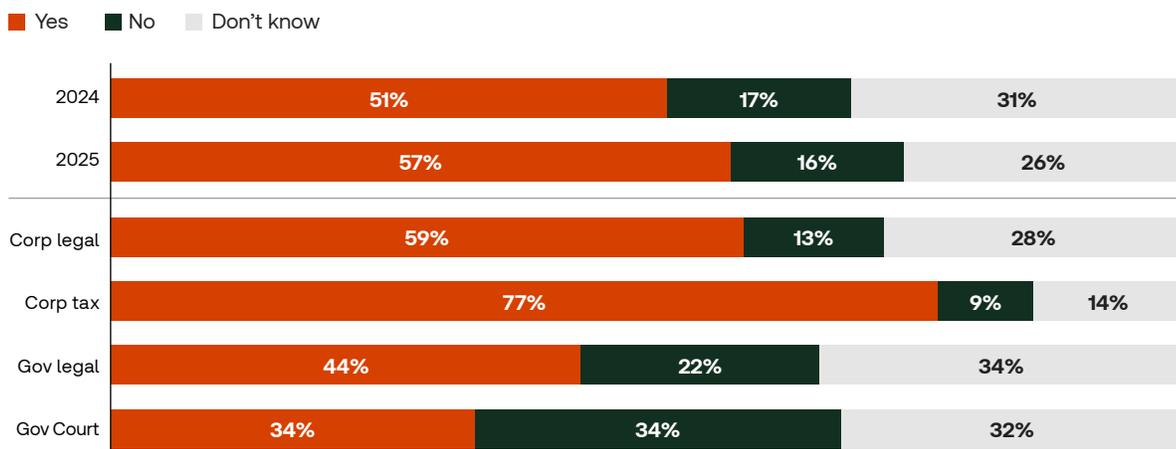
Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Some of the increase in rates may be a direct result of how tax firms in particular plan to handle costs. Many law firm respondents indicated that they expect to absorb GenAI costs as overhead, perhaps because client expectations set by past technological innovations have cemented the expectation that law firms would not bill for these sorts of costs. Tax firms, however, are much more apt to bill for GenAI costs, with one-quarter of respondents noting that they plan to pass through GenAI costs across the board, and another quarter saying they plan to pass through costs on a case-by-case basis.

There may be one issue to these cost structures that may be getting overlooked. Many respondents may be assuming that their firms and their outside clients are actually having conversations around GenAI value. In fact, many are not even having conversations around GenAI *usage*, let alone *value*. Again, large proportions of law firm clients (71%), and tax firm clients (almost 60%), said they have no idea whether their outside firms were using GenAI or not.

FIGURE 21:

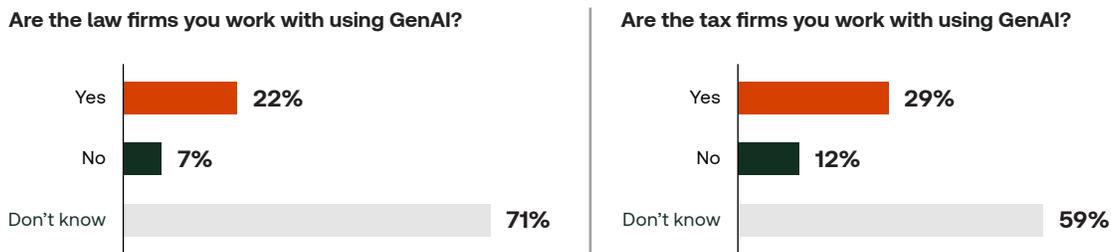
Client desire for outside firm GenAI usage



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

FIGURE 22:

Client awareness of outside firm GenAI usage



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

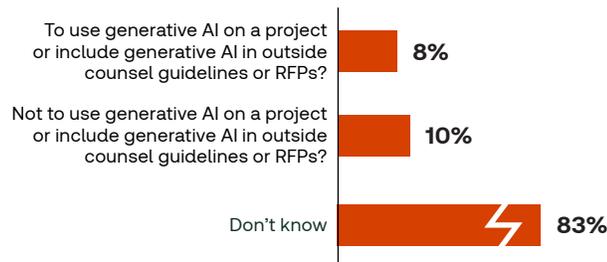
Without this information, there cannot even be a conversation around rates or value. Indeed, there first needs to be more underlying conversations around actual GenAI usage and the work product delivered. One New Zealand corporate attorney noted: “It’s the next technology leap for practitioners, with potential to improve productivity and space for creative, strategic thinking. Yet it requires tangible benefits including, ideally, law firms considering how to offer more competitive fees, taking into account the use of technology (rather than people) in aspects of practice.”

However, this is also a two-way street. While firms need to be thinking about better ways to provide value for clients, those clients should also be thinking through exactly what they *require* from their outside firms. In fact, while 77% of respondents from corporate tax departments and 59% of those from corporate law departments said they believe that GenAI *should* be used for client work, very few have actually included such provisions in RFPs or other guidelines for outside firms.

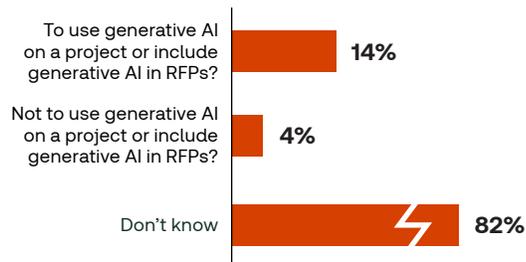
FIGURE 23:

Client policies for firm GenAI usage

Have you instructed your law firms:



Have you instructed your tax firms:



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Taken together, this means that both firms and their clients should work on meeting in the middle. The next step for both sides is to determine not only how GenAI can fit in an enterprise-wide setting, but how both sides can mutually realize value from the potential efficiencies and cost savings that GenAI can bring.

The TR Institute's View:

For many firm leaders, beginning the conversation with clients about how and when to use GenAI can be difficult. In some cases, outside firms may not want their clients to *know* they are using AI, particularly in the case of law firms wanting to curb client expectations of significant cuts to billable hours. Some firms have also taken the tactic of not broadly applying GenAI until it is explicitly asked for by clients and instead focusing any early uses on internal efficiencies rather than anything that could impact client work.

The problem is, however, that by the time those firms initiate a conversation with clients, it may already be too late. As noted above, there is a disconnect between clients *wanting* their firms to use GenAI and *demanding* it within explicit directions in RFPs and other guidelines. Or, to put it another way, clients may not actually *communicate* their desires to their outside firms — they'll simply curtail the work.

With this in mind, it's clearly time for firm leaders to have these difficult conversations with clients about GenAI policies and procedures. Perhaps that will mean immediate AI adoption, or perhaps it might not. Regardless, professionals within outside firms will be able to rest easier knowing they have more insight into what their clients most value and desire.

The future of work

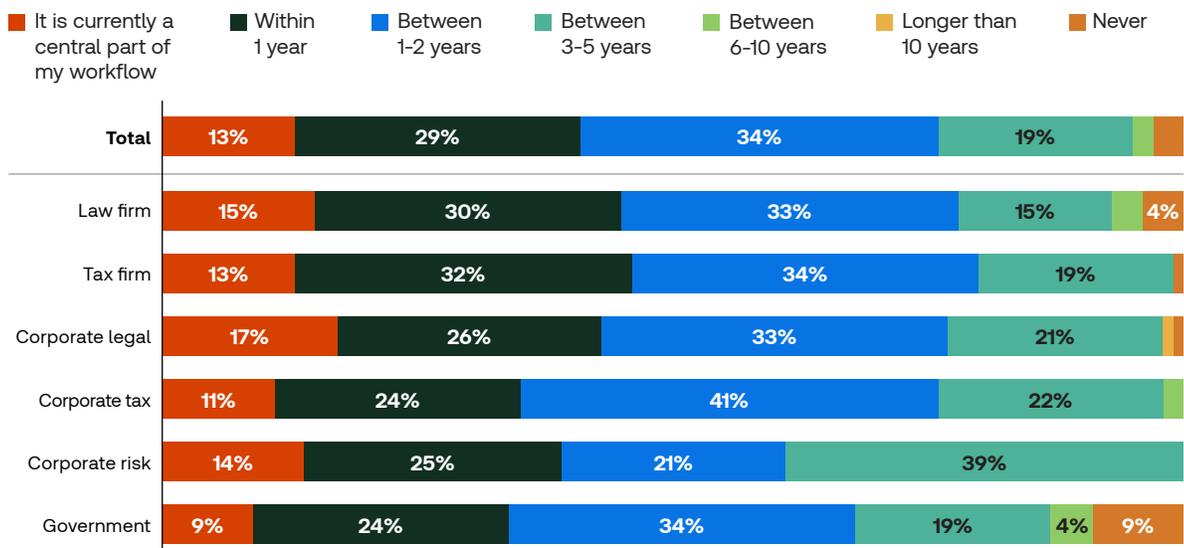
Embracing GenAI means changing how individuals work on a daily basis, how enterprises construct their larger internal workflows, and how firms and their external clients interact in future engagements. Given this broad scope, it's clear that planning for GenAI is not limited to simply its initial adoption but instead necessitates a flexible long-term plan that can shift with new technological innovation and changing market tastes.

To that end, professional services organizations have indeed begun to envision a future with GenAI as a central part of their strategy. Across all industries, there is an uptick in policies governing AI use, training for new technologies, and plans to fully make AI a central piece of an organization's workflow. At the same time, however, these plans are nowhere near universal, or even common. For many organizations, training, hiring practices, and governance plans will still need to adjust to accommodate new ways of working brought on by GenAI.

When asked how quickly they expect GenAI to become a central part of their organizations' workflow, respondents were unequivocal: GenAI is set to take center stage quickly, if it's not already there.

FIGURE 24:

When will GenAI be a central part of your organization's workflow?



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

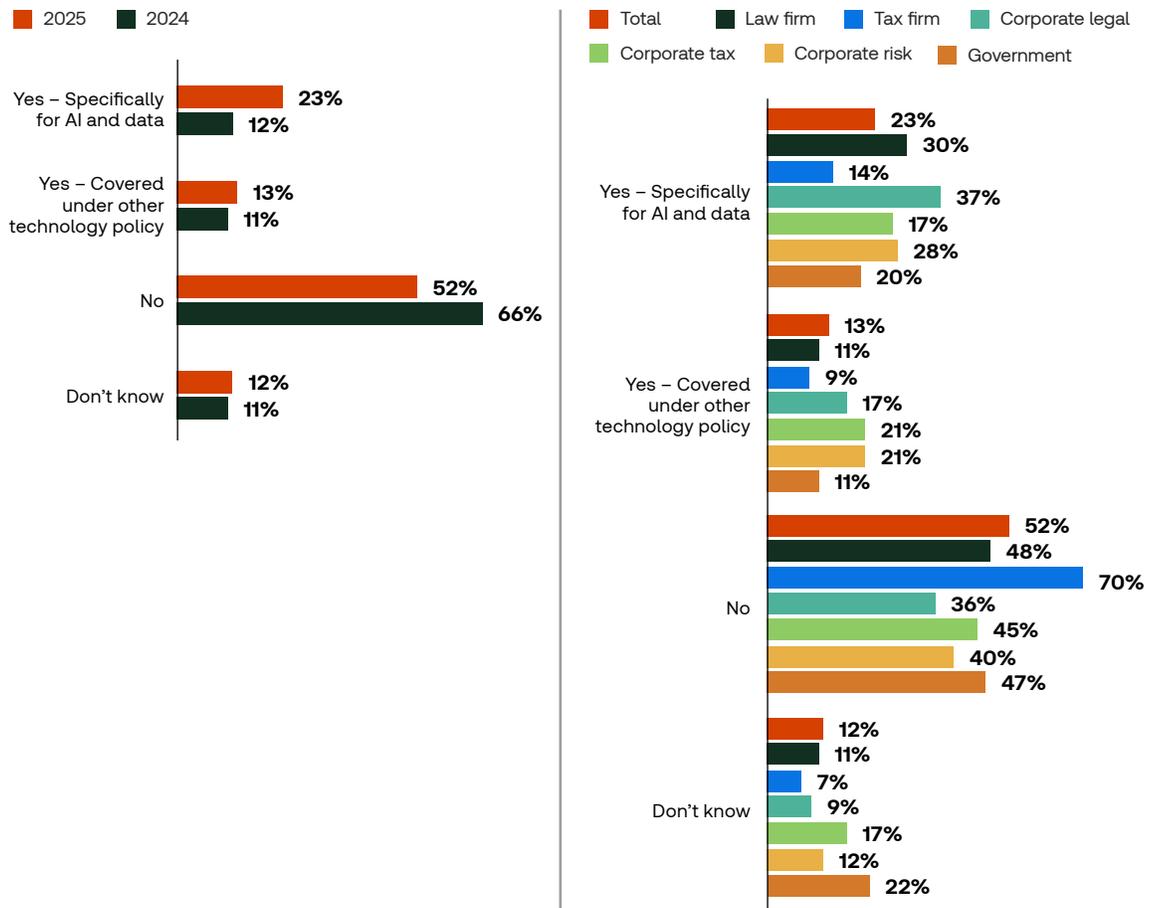
Across all industries surveyed, at least one-third of respondents said they believe GenAI is either already a central part of their organization's workflow or is set to be so within the next 12 months. Additionally, more than one-third (34%) of all respondents said they believe that will happen within one to two years. Taken together, this means 95% of all professionals believe that GenAI will be a central part of their organization's workflow within the next five years, while just 3% believe it will never happen.

Surveying the current landscape, many respondents noted that they only see it as a matter of time before professional services organizations of all types and sizes are using GenAI regularly. An Australian corporate tax controller called it "inevitable that [GenAI] will form a greater and greater part of professional services as it is trained and refined. Companies seeking to advantage themselves will more and more develop the capabilities, which should improve outcomes in longer term."

This feeling even extended to GenAI’s skeptics, such as one US judicial law clerk who noted: “I think GenAI is an inevitability, and it makes me nervous. I think it can be a useful tool, but the possibility of abuse is far too high. I think getting ahead of it, and having an implementation plan is probably the best way to avoid disastrous results.”

Indeed, the need for policies and training were a common sentiment throughout survey responses. Even with a prevailing feeling that proper governance and training must occur, however, many organizations have not yet taken the steps necessary to put them in place.

FIGURE 25:
Policies guiding the use of GenAI at work



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Take GenAI use policies, for instance. The number of organizations without these policies did drop 14 percentage points in the last year alone; however, this still means that more than half of all organizations are without these policies. And it’s even higher in some specific areas, such as among tax firms, where 70% of respondents said their organizations did not have any sort of policy governing the use of GenAI.

There are indications, however, that this may soon change as many organizations exit the trial phase and enter more enterprise-wide adoption. “GenAI has the potential to provide great efficiency and value-adds for our clients,” said one US tax firm partner. “Our firm is actively working to implement a

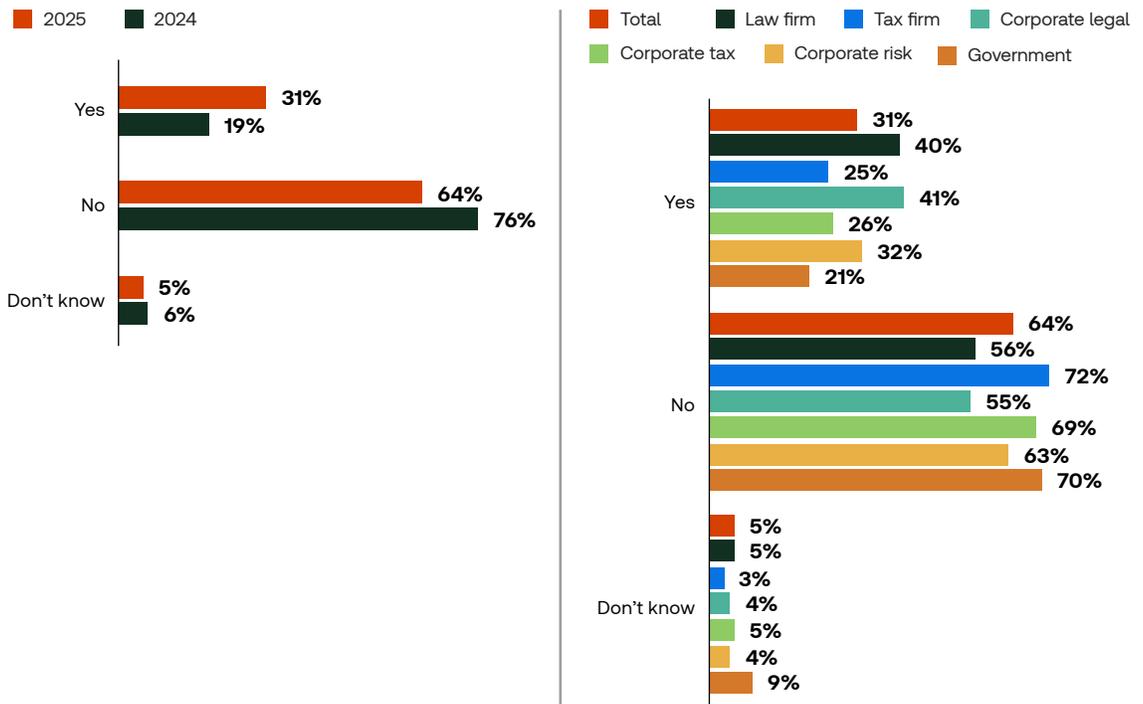
GenAI policy that places appropriate guard rails in place to ensure ethical use of GenAI and prevent sensitive client data from being accessed or compromised by AI learning models.”

One UK CEO agreed, noting: “Professional work is going to change dramatically as higher-level skills are now able to be automated. However, GenAI by definition is not actually creative and there will need to be significant guard rails built in.”

These guard rails will also require training on proper GenAI usage — but to that point, few organizations are offering dedicated GenAI training. And, if that training is occurring, it tends to be primarily at the point of implementation rather than part of an ongoing process.

FIGURE 26:

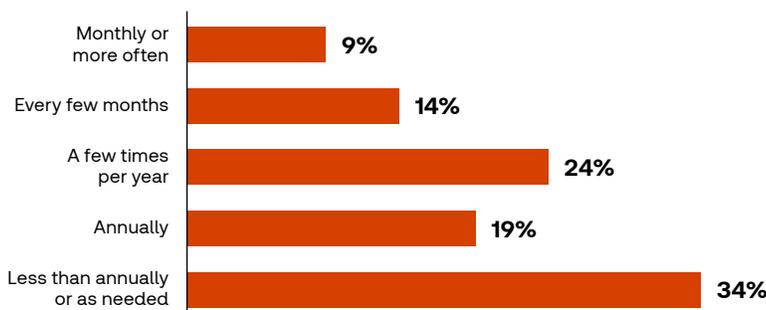
GenAI training availability



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

FIGURE 27:

GenAI training availability



Base: Those who conduct training on GenAI

Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Similar to GenAI governance policies, the proportion of respondents who said their organizations are engaging in some training on GenAI has increased 12 percentage points in the past year alone. That still only means that less than one-third of all respondents said their organizations train on GenAI; and it's particularly lacking in the tax, accounting & audit space. Even legal, which registers a higher training rate than other industries, has less than half of its professionals trained on GenAI tools.

And even those receiving training may not be receiving regular training. One-third of respondents who said they receive training said they receive it less than annually or just as needed. Less than one-quarter of respondents who said they receive training do so every few months (quarterly) or more frequently.

The TR Institute's View:

With some past technological innovations — such as booms in document creation, financial management, or research — users can be trained on a software tool and reasonably expect to be fine. That is not the case with GenAI technology, however, and organizational leaders should be aware of that.

First, there is the pervasive nature of the technology and its wide array of potential use cases, meaning that training someone on one use case will not cover the full extent of what GenAI can do. Second, there is the rapid pace of GenAI advancement, in which just two years out from ChatGPT's public introduction, GenAI tools already work much differently today than they did then. Finally, due to this rapid advancement, GenAI's impact on the ways businesses operate likely will look much different in the months and years ahead.

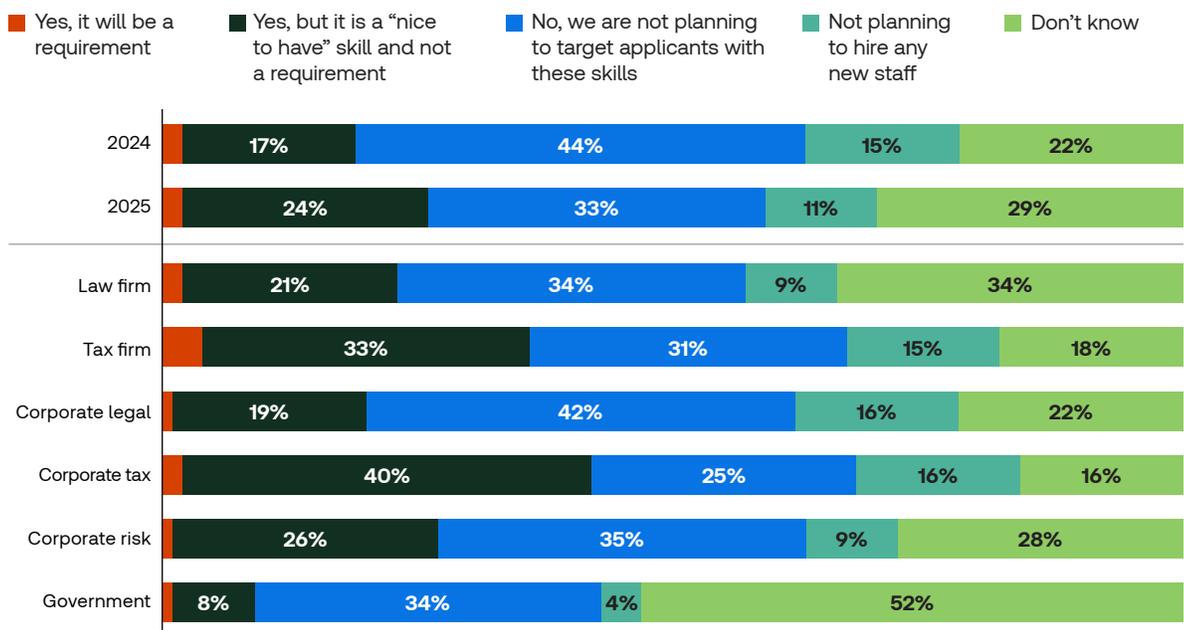
For leaders, providing ongoing training to their professionals is absolutely a must. Indeed, leaders need to view it less as *training*, and more like *ongoing learning* in the style of CLE or CPE. Some successful organizations run their training using committees, in which new and veteran GenAI users alike can congregate to discuss tips and concerns. Others have scheduled regular workshops, in which professionals are continually taught the latest updates and ways of working.

Yet, no matter the strategy, it's clear that some ongoing source of education will be necessary for organizations to safely and ethically navigate the GenAI-enabled world ahead.

If organizations are not training personnel on GenAI skills, could they be acquiring that knowledge in a different way? Perhaps, but according to respondents, few organizations are placing GenAI front and center when hiring new staff. Only 2% of respondents said their organization makes GenAI knowledge a requirement in current hiring practices, although an additional 24% said they believe it is “nice to have” even if not necessary.

FIGURE 28:

Is GenAI a factor in current hiring practices?



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

Most interesting, perhaps, is the large proportion of respondents who said they don't know where GenAI factors into their organization's hiring plans — at 29% now, this total actually rose 7 percentage points over 2024. This could be due in part to a large proportion of government respondents, particularly in the US where the survey was conducted during the introduction of a new presidential administration. Even among law firm respondents, however, about one-third said they were not aware whether their firm was considering GenAI skills or not when evaluating new attorneys or professionals.

Clearly, there is a disconnect between the overall strategic vision and the practical roll-out of GenAI within professional services organizations today. If 95% of professionals believe GenAI will be central to their organizations' workflow within the next five years, presumably, new hires today should be present and engaged when GenAI comes to the fore. However, even setting aside respondents who don't know their organization's hiring plans, a large proportion say their organizations are not targeting applicants with those skills. If these two instances are both true, then some new hires may be set up for failure because they are entering organizations that say they want GenAI to be central to their workflow, but they are not hiring for those skills nor are training to provide those skills.

GenAI is not a standalone technology; it operates best when symbiotically complementing professionals' analytical and relationship-oriented skills. However, by not paying attention to the people factor of GenAI implementation, some organizations may not be able to provide the platform in which that symbiosis can occur.

Conclusion

The GenAI revolution was never really a revolution. GenAI has not broken the ways professionals work or significantly disrupted the interactions between firms and their clients. Instead, for professional services, it has been more of an *evolution*: A steady adoption of both publicly available and industry-specific tools that's led to an increased understanding of GenAI use cases. Meanwhile, progressively positive sentiments towards the future of GenAI within professional services industries continues to grow.

Now that professionals have come to understand GenAI, it's clear that many organizations need to take the next step to make it *useful*. This means measuring GenAI's utility for both internal and external stakeholders, instituting policies and procedures to make sure the new technology is used ethically and responsibly, and training and hiring employees to ensure GenAI runs smoothly far into the future. Crucially, firms and their clients need to have conversations around GenAI, ensuring that both parties understand each other's GenAI preferences and can both experience the value that comes with GenAI's cost savings and efficiencies.

Now that professionals have come to understand GenAI, it's clear that many organizations need to take the next step to make it *useful*.

“The next 24 months will be extremely telling on the impact of GenAI on the legal industry and professional work more broadly,” said one Australian law firm attorney. “As products move out of development [and in]to production, we will be able to see the actual effects of this technology across various sectors. Additionally, as clients become more aware of GenAI and its impact, we will begin to see different demands and restrictions on its use, not just in legal settings but across all professional services.”

This should ring true to many professionals, whether in legal; tax, accounting & audit; corporate risk & fraud; government operations; or elsewhere. Most importantly, planning for this future must begin immediately — especially for those organizations that expect wide-scale rollouts within the next year and hope to have GenAI become central to their workflow within the next five years.

GenAI is here, and now the question becomes how to capitalize on it.

Methodology

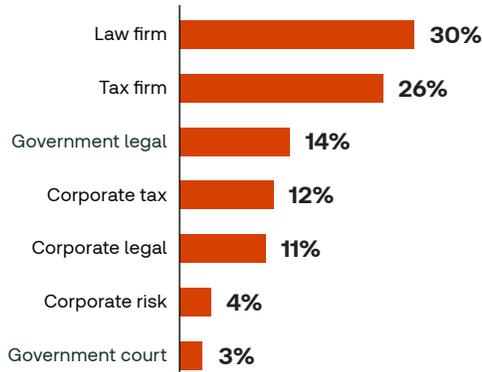
The data for this report was gathered via a survey of members of the legal; tax, accounting & audit; corporate risk & fraud; and government professions about their attitudes towards GenAI and well as their thoughts about its usage at work and the impact it might have going forward.

The survey was done through an online survey with 1,702 respondents, conducted in January and February 2025. The sample was drawn from lists provided by Thomson Reuters, and participants were screened to ensure that they were familiar with GenAI technology. Participants were located in the United States (42% of all respondents), Canada (15%), the United Kingdom (12%), Australia (12%), Brazil (9%), New Zealand (6%), Argentina (5%), and Mexico (less than 1%).

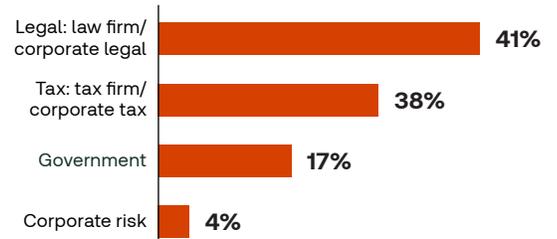
Participants included both those within the legal, tax, and risk departments within corporations, as well as members of outside law firms and tax & accounting firms, and government legal departments and courts.

Respondent Profile

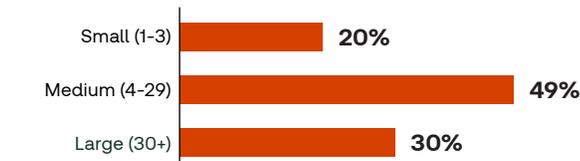
Organization type



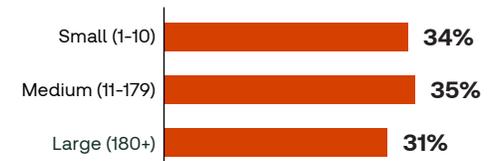
Industry



Tax firm full-time staff

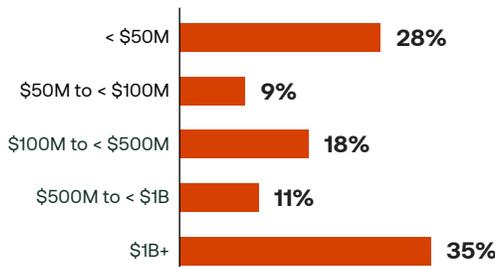


Law firm full-time lawyers

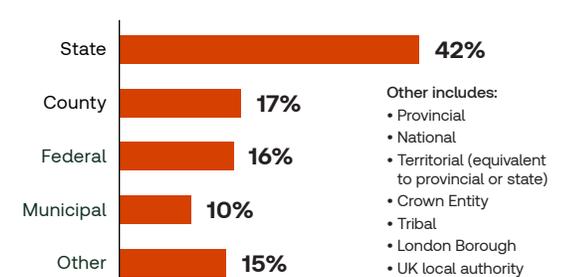


Corporate (legal, tax, risk)

Approximate annual revenue of your business



Government/Court level of government



Source: Thomson Reuters 2025

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