



21 July 2025

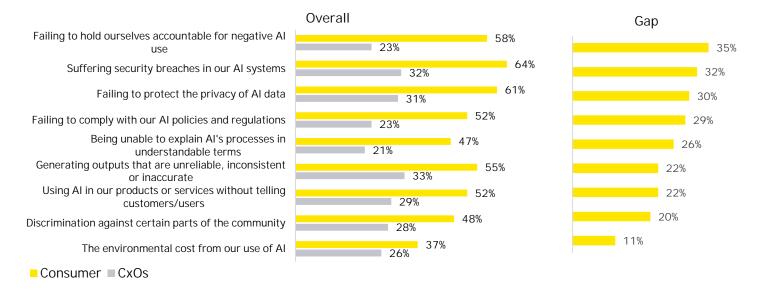
In March and April 2025, the global EY organization conducted research to better understand C-suite views around responsible AI. We surveyed 975 C-suite leaders across seven roles including chief executive officers (CEOs), chief financial officers (CFOs), chief human resource officers (CHROs), chief information officers (CIOs), chief technology officers (CTOs), chief marketing officers (CMOs) and chief risk officers (CROs). All respondents had some level of responsibility for AI within their organization.

In brief:

- Many C-suite leaders overestimate how aligned they are with consumer concerns about AI.
- Clear communication of responsible AI practices can boost adoption by helping consumers feel more informed and reassured.
- CEOs are leading on responsible AI, but broader C-suite alignment is needed.

I. CxOs are poorly aligned with consumers on responsible Al

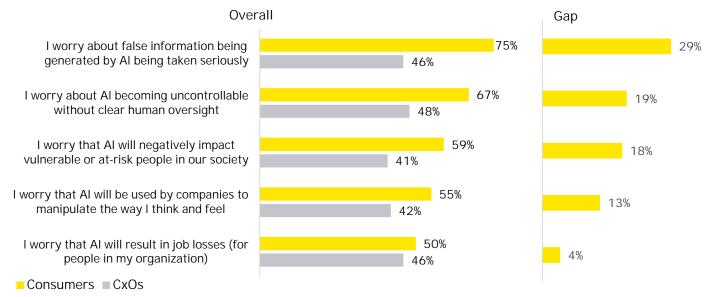
Nearly two in three CxOs (63%) think they are well aligned with consumers on their perceptions and use of Al. Yet, when compared with data from the EY Al Sentiment Index study, it becomes clear this confidence is misplaced.



Note: Consumer data from EY AI Sentiment Study

Chart 1: Percent citing each responsible Al principle as a major or large concern

Across a range of responsible AI principles, consumers consistently express greater concern than CxOs. In fact, they are mostly twice as likely to worry that companies will fail to uphold these principles.



Note: Consumer data from EY AI Sentiment Study

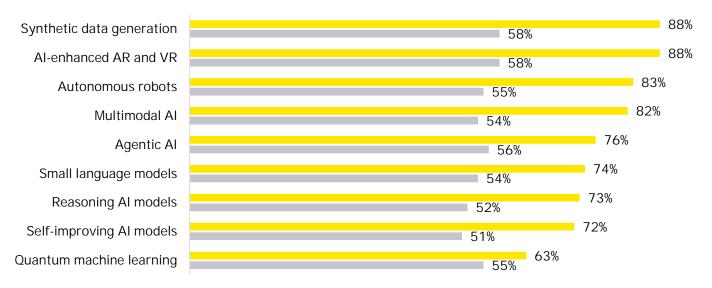
Chart 2: Percent agreeing with each statement

CxO respondents are also less concerned than consumers about a range of potential AI-related societal harms. Instead, consumers are more worried – significantly more so than CxOs – about issues such as AI-generated misinformation, the use of AI to manipulate individuals and AI's impact on vulnerable segments of society.

This misalignment may also be due to organizations under-communicating the maturity of their Al governance, their approach to managing risks or the safeguards they've already put in place. Strengthening transparency around Al risk profiles and responsible innovation practices could help close this gap – helping consumers to feel more informed and reassured.

II. Newer Al models signal greater governance challenges

Many companies are still grappling with implementing responsible AI principles for generative AI (GenAI) and large language models (LLMs). Over half (51%) agree that it is challenging for their organization to develop governance frameworks for current AI technologies and the outlook for emerging AI technologies is even more concerning. Half of CxOs say their organization's approach to technology-related risks is insufficient to address new challenges associated with the next wave of AI.



■currently using or plan to use this technology in next year
■moderately/extremely familiar with risks

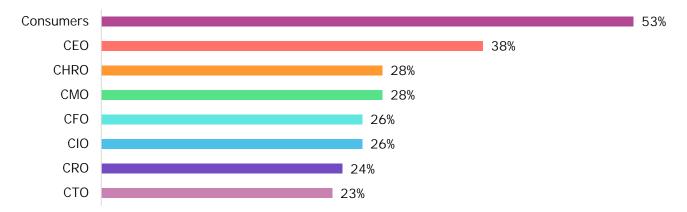
Chart 3: A significant portion of companies are on the cusp of adopting newer Al models, but aren't familiar with the risks they raise

In fact, a significant segment of companies that are using or plan to begin using these technologies within the next year do not have even a moderate level of familiarity with the risks these technologies raise. Companies need to close this awareness gap now, to encourage greater confidence and adoption.

III. CEOs are leading the way

CEOs are a bright spot in the data as they stand apart from other C-suite leaders in their awareness of responsible Al issues and alignment with consumers. Among the seven roles surveyed – including CFOs, CHROs, CIOs, CTOs, CMOs and CROs – CEOs are:

- Best aligned with consumers on responsible Al concerns
- Least likely to overstate the strength of their controls
- Among the most familiar with emerging technologies and their risks (second only to CIOs and CTOs)



Note: Average percent of respondents concerned across nine responsible Al principles. Consumer data from EY Al Sentiment Study.

Chart 4: Average percent citing each Responsible Al principle as a major or large concern

This likely reflects their broader mandate – everything rolls up to the CEO – including AI. 50% of CEOs say they have primary responsibility for AI, more than any other role except for the CTO and CIO. CEOs are also more customer-facing than the other C-suite officers surveyed, with the possible exception of CMOs, making them better aligned with consumer concerns.

IV. Three actions for CxOs: Listen, act, communicate

What can CxOs do to act on these findings? We suggest three key actions:

1.Listen: Expose the entire C-suite to the voice of the customer

Consumers have sizeable concerns about the responsible use of AI and companies' adherence to these principles. Leaders across the C-suite need to develop a better awareness of the concerns and preferences of their customers. Critically, this includes not just leaders with defined market-facing roles, such as the CEO or CMO, but also those that have traditionally functioned in more of a back-office capacity, such as CTOs and CIOs.

2.Act: Integrate responsible AI throughout the development process:

Responsible AI needs to be part of the entire AI development and innovation process. From early ideation to deployment, it's important to understand how these emerging models will create new risks and AI governance challenges and start identifying ways to address them now. Moreover, CxOs should continually upskill yourself and your teams – through internal training, attending industry conferences, or engaging with external experts – to stay ahead of emerging and heighted risks as these technologies continue to advance.

3. Communicate: Showcase your responsible AI practices:

Responsible AI is more than a risk management or compliance exercise. The data suggests it can be a competitive differentiator. Consumers have real worries about AI, and if they don't trust your systems, they won't use them – ultimately hurting companies' revenues if not addressed. By taking the lead on responsible AI and making it a centerpiece of your brand and messaging, you can stand out in the eyes of your current and potential customers and position yourself ahead of the competition.

Summary

To gain a competitive edge, CxOs must prioritize customer concerns, embed responsible AI across the development cycle and communicate how AI risks are mitigated. Understanding consumer views and integrating responsible AI at every stage of innovation is key. This approach will help businesses build confidence in their AI applications, ensuring they align with consumer expectations and mitigate risks associated with emerging AI technologies. By doing so, organizations can position themselves as leaders in responsible AI while creating long-term value.

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