



Tech executives double down on AI, talent, and adaptive strategies to lead in the Intelligence Age

Johannesburg, 26 January 2026 — [KPMG's Global tech report 2026](#) reveals that organizations worldwide are moving beyond pilots and seeking to embed AI into core workflows and offerings, striving to scale investments. The new report identifies that while expectations are high and adoption is rapid; scaling can introduce additional complexity and returns vary widely.

- *68 percent of organizations surveyed aim to reach the highest level of AI maturity by the end of 2026, yet only 24 percent are there today.*
- *88 percent are investing in building agentic AI into their systems.*
- *74 percent say their AI use cases are delivering business value, but only 24 percent achieve ROI across multiple use cases.*
- *90 percent plan to grow partnerships and tech ecosystems over the next year, yet 53 percent still lack the talent needed to bring their digital transformation plans to life.*
- *78 percent agree they must take more risks on emerging technologies to stay relevant.*

The report asks: Can ambition match reality, and can organizations keep one eye on the next wave of innovation while delivering on today's agenda?

“The future belongs to leaders who turn intelligence into advantage. Our research shows organizations are pushing past the early phase of ‘AI roulette’, placing scattered bets on multiple technologies, and are now increasingly focused on delivering value. When ambition meets disciplined execution, value compounds. Our 2026 Global tech report provides a synopsis of the critical things that high performers are doing better than most; a checklist for tech leaders looking to improve their organizational performance, emulate the high performers, and deliver higher ROI.

— **Guy Holland, Global Leader, CIO Center of Excellence, KPMG International**

” As Africa enters the Intelligence Age, the differentiator is no longer access to technology, but the ability to build the skills, governance, and operating models required to scale it responsibly. While organizations are accelerating AI adoption to drive productivity and growth, the real determinant of value lies in workforce readiness, executive alignment, and disciplined execution. Those that invest early in digital skills, human-AI collaboration, and adaptive leadership will be best positioned to translate innovation into sustainable commercial and economic impact.” - **Marshal Luusa, Partner - Technology & Innovation Lead, KPMG One Africa**



Key findings from the report

Tech maturity accelerates: Leaders set their sights on the top

Half (50 percent) of global tech leaders surveyed expect to reach the highest level of technology maturity in 2026, compared to only 11 percent today. This surge in optimism is fueled by a move from isolated experiments to integrating AI and advanced technologies into core systems and scaling their impact. High performers, those organizations leading in technology maturity, process maturity and value, are already reaping the rewards, reporting an average ROI of 4.5x, more than double the industry average of 2x. These leading organizations have progressed beyond pilot programs, prioritizing the scaling of innovation and continually adapting to maintain a competitive edge in a fast-evolving environment. Other organizations reporting higher ROI include smaller firms (3.6x), those with fewer cost pressures (2.6x), and transformation-focused organizations (3.2x). The ROI pattern is equally nuanced: rather than a single investment 'sweet spot', clear ROI 'zones' emerge, from early quick wins to accelerating, enterprise-wide value as maturity increases.

The age of agentic: AI adoption surges but innovation drives real business value

AI is now seen as a strategic necessity, not just industry hype. Sixty-eight percent of respondents are aiming for the highest level of AI maturity in their organizations. Eighty-eight percent of companies are already investing in agentic AI — autonomous digital agents transforming operations and decision-making. Seventy-four percent of respondents report that their AI initiatives are creating measurable business value, such as improved efficiency and reduced risk. However, only 24 percent say they are scaling AI and achieving ROI across multiple use cases. This highlights the need for organizations to evolve KPIs beyond traditional financial and productivity metrics and build enterprise-wide alignment to fully realize AI's potential. The shift from AI experimentation to large-scale deployment is underway, with leaders working to embed AI into products, services, and value delivery.

Talent and agility power success: Human potential remains central

Human expertise remains central to digital transformation initiatives. Organizations are making significant investments in upskilling their workforce, building adaptive teams, and fostering cultures that embrace change.

Despite the rapid adoption of agentic AI, organizations still expect 42 percent of their tech workforce to remain permanent human staff by 2027 — only a five-point drop from 2025. High-performing companies plan to retain even more permanent human talent, with 50 percent remaining in place by 2027, revealing the continued importance of human expertise alongside AI. Despite these efforts, 53 percent of organizations report they still lack the talent needed to realize their digital transformation strategies.



Ninety-two percent of organizations surveyed anticipate that managing AI agents will become a critical skill within five years. The most successful organizations prioritize both technological advancements and people, empowering employees to innovate and adapt.

Strategic partnerships fuel growth: Ecosystems expand for the future

To overcome challenges and accelerate learning, 90 percent of organizations plan to grow partnerships and tech ecosystems over the next year. Strategic alliances are enabling access to specialized expertise, rapid innovation, and shared best practices. As agentic AI and other advanced technologies become mainstream, organizations recognize the importance of building robust ecosystems that foster co-creation and continuous improvement. Nearly one-third of tech executives are planning to increase investment in centers of excellence, supporting cross-functional teams and controlled experimentation.

Preparing for tomorrow's breakthroughs: Leaders embrace bold risks

The future is arriving fast, with quantum computing and Artificial Superintelligence (ASI) on the horizon. Leaders are already preparing for these breakthroughs, with 78 percent of organizations agreeing they must take more risks on emerging technologies to stay relevant. The report urges organizations to maintain strategic foresight, invest in ethical frameworks, and build resilient, future-ready workforces. By balancing ambition with rational thinking and disciplined execution, tech executives are positioning their organizations to turn disruption into durable, compounding value.

About the research

The [KPMG Global tech report 2026](#), "Leading in the Intelligence Age: Excelling today, shaping tomorrow," is based on a survey of 2,500 executives from 27 countries and territories):

- 29 percent from Asia Pacific
- 43 percent from Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)
- 28 percent from the Americas

Respondents represent eight industries: automotive, consumer and retail, energy, financial services, government, healthcare and life sciences, industrial manufacturing, and technology and telecommunications. In addition to the survey, the report is enriched by interviews with eight senior corporate leaders and professionals, delivering actionable insights to help organizations excel today while shaping the future.

Download the report [here](#).

ENDS.



About KPMG International

KPMG is a global organization of independent professional services firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. KPMG is the brand under which the member firms of KPMG International Limited ("KPMG International") operate and provide professional services. "KPMG" is used to refer to individual member firms within the KPMG organization or to one or more member firms collectively. KPMG firms operate in 138 countries and territories with more than 276,000 partners and employees working in member firms around the world. Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. Each KPMG member firm is responsible for its own obligations and liabilities.

KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

For more details about our structure, please visit kpmg.com/governance.

About KPMG One Africa

KPMG One Africa refers to the KPMG firms in the Southern, East, and West Africa regions. These are comprised of 13 countries from the 3 regional clusters, i.e. Southern Africa: Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; East Africa: Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda; West Africa: Ghana, and Nigeria, who in 2025 established a formal One Africa Cluster called KPMG One Africa. The KPMG firms in these countries are member firms of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee.