

2025 L&D

RESEARCH STUDY

KEY TRENDS IN UK
MEMBER EDUCATION:

HOW AI AND NEW
TECHNOLOGIES ARE RESHAPING
WHAT ORGANISATIONS CAN
OFFER THEIR MEMBERS



Here's a remarkable statistic to start us off

93%

OF L&D LEADERS CITED
"CONTENT
DIGITISATION" AS THEIR
NO. 1 IMPROVEMENT
PRIORITY IN THE NEXT
12 MONTHS



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Executive Summary

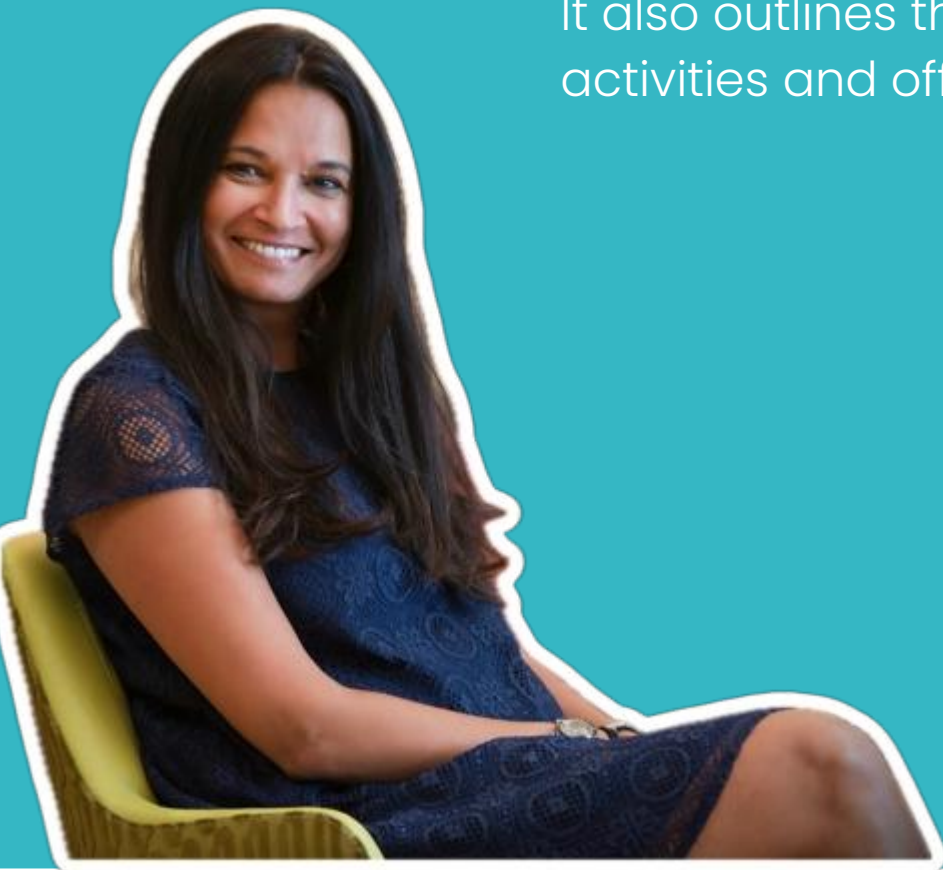
This research study explores the current state of educational strategy, digital learning maturity, and technology adoption – including AI – within UK professional membership bodies. The findings reveal a sector under increasing pressure to modernise, yet constrained by legacy systems, limited budgets, and a lack of digital and AI-related expertise.

While demand for digital learning is growing, many organisations are still early in their transformation journeys. AI is beginning to feature in strategic conversations, with organisations showing interest in its potential in areas such as administrative automation, learning personalisation, and analytics. However, very few organisations feel ready to adopt it.

The study highlights significant gaps in digital readiness and a strong appetite for external support, guidance, and low-risk implementation pathways.

It also outlines the key challenges faced by these organisations in modernising their education-related activities and offers insights into the steps that can be taken to address these challenges.

Glenda Parker and Allen Reid
Learning Directors at GetSavi



Introduction

UK professional membership bodies are facing increasing pressure to evolve their educational models in response to shifting learner expectations, technological disruption, and post-pandemic changes to how professionals access continuing education.

In parallel, emerging technologies – particularly AI – are introducing both new capabilities and new complexities to an already transforming sector.

The rise of digital learning tools and the increasing demands of a modern, tech-savvy membership base have led many of these organisations to rethink how they deliver educational content.

The purpose of this study was to assess the current digital learning landscape for UK membership bodies, uncover challenges and opportunities for development, and evaluate readiness not only for learning management systems (LMSs), but also for adjacent innovations like Artificial Intelligence.

The study aims to explore how organisations are responding to the pressures of digital transformation, the challenges they face, and the opportunities that digital education can offer.

The study's findings, trends and recommendations are drawn from interviews and surveys with over 100 UK-based membership organisations, offering deep insight into their future vision, strategic intent, and operational capability.



Methodology

This research draws on a mixed-methods approach to explore the current state of digital learning, platform use, and AI readiness within UK professional membership bodies.

In total, the combined dataset reflects the perspectives of approximately **100 individuals** working within the UK membership sector.

Qualitative interviews

We conducted in-depth, Zoom-based interviews with 20 UK-based professional membership organisations across a range of sectors. These interviews explored key themes including digital strategy, educational delivery tools, technology platforms (such as LMSs), content digitisation, and emerging topics such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Participants included L&D leaders and decision-makers responsible for learning, strategy, and digital services. All organisations were anonymised to protect confidentiality and to allow for open dialogue.

Quantitative survey data

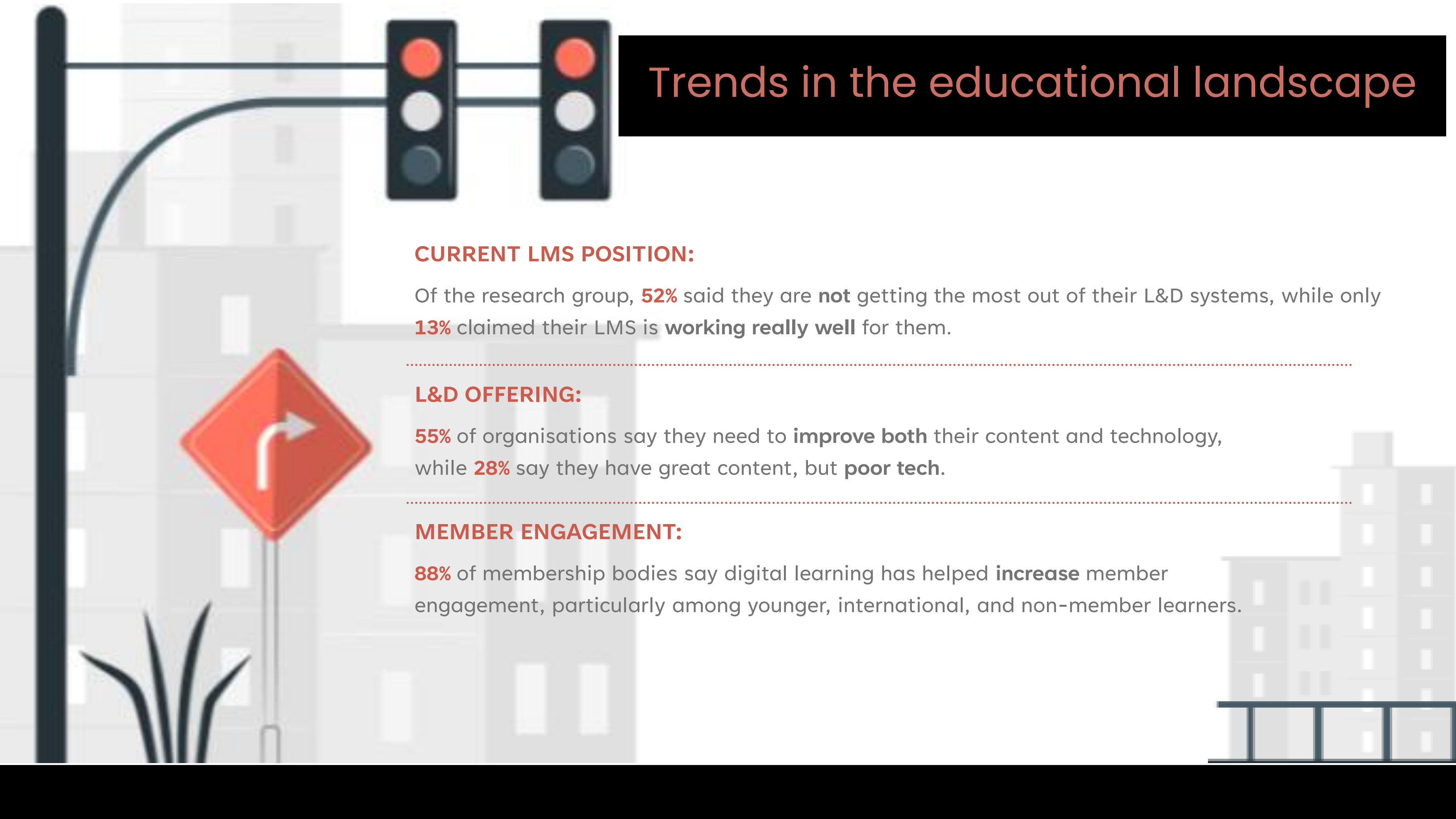
To supplement the qualitative insights, we also gathered quantitative data via a series of live polls and surveys delivered through webinars hosted between January and June 2025. These events attracted a broad cross-section of professionals with responsibility for learning and education, providing additional context to the themes discussed during interviews.

This blended methodology allows us to present both depth and breadth – capturing nuanced strategic challenges as well as broader trends in demand, awareness, and readiness across the sector.



TRENDS IN THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE





Trends in the educational landscape

CURRENT LMS POSITION:

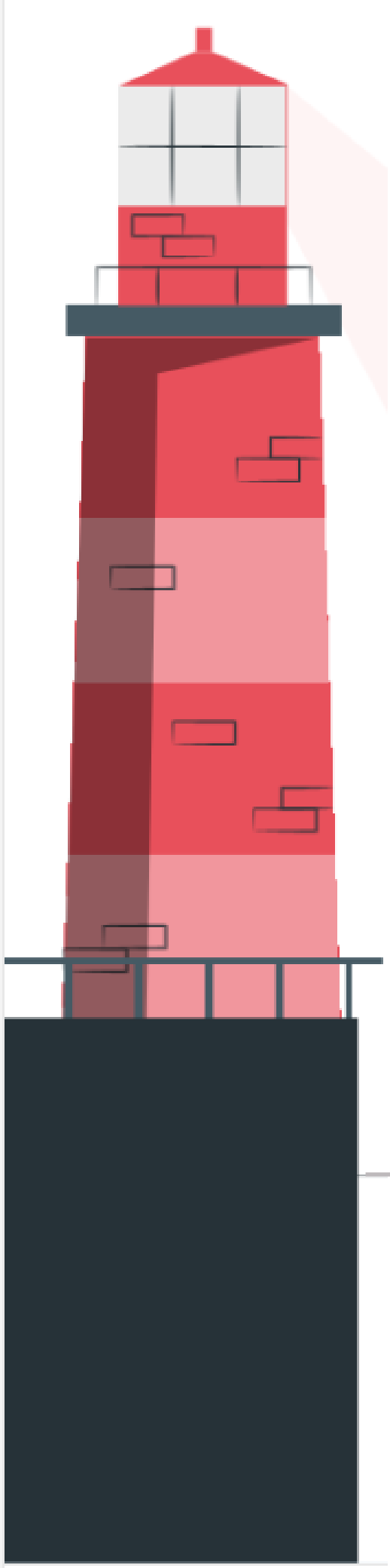
Of the research group, **52%** said they are **not** getting the most out of their L&D systems, while only **13%** claimed their LMS is **working really well** for them.

L&D OFFERING:

55% of organisations say they need to **improve both** their content and technology, while **28%** say they have great content, but **poor tech**.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:

88% of membership bodies say digital learning has helped **increase** member engagement, particularly among younger, international, and non-member learners.



Trends in the educational landscape (cont.)

EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS:

78% of membership bodies are starting to recognise that digital education tools should not simply replicate in-person experiences but should instead offer **unique advantages**, such as self-paced learning, interactive modules, and access to global experts.

AI ENTERS THE CONVERSATION:

80% of organisations claim that **AI is emerging** as a discussion point in strategic meetings, though most are only in the “awareness” or “early exploration” stages.

NEED FOR AI POLICIES:

90% of organisations recognised the need for formal AI usage and **data policies**, though none had implemented one yet.



TOP 10 KEY FINDINGS



High demand for digital education

01

100% reported growing interest in online and hybrid learning formats

Younger generations demand modern, flexible, and digital learning options.

Many organisations also noted that this demand surged during the COVID-19 pandemic as they shifted to remote learning.



In-Person Learning

Hybrid Learning

Online Learning

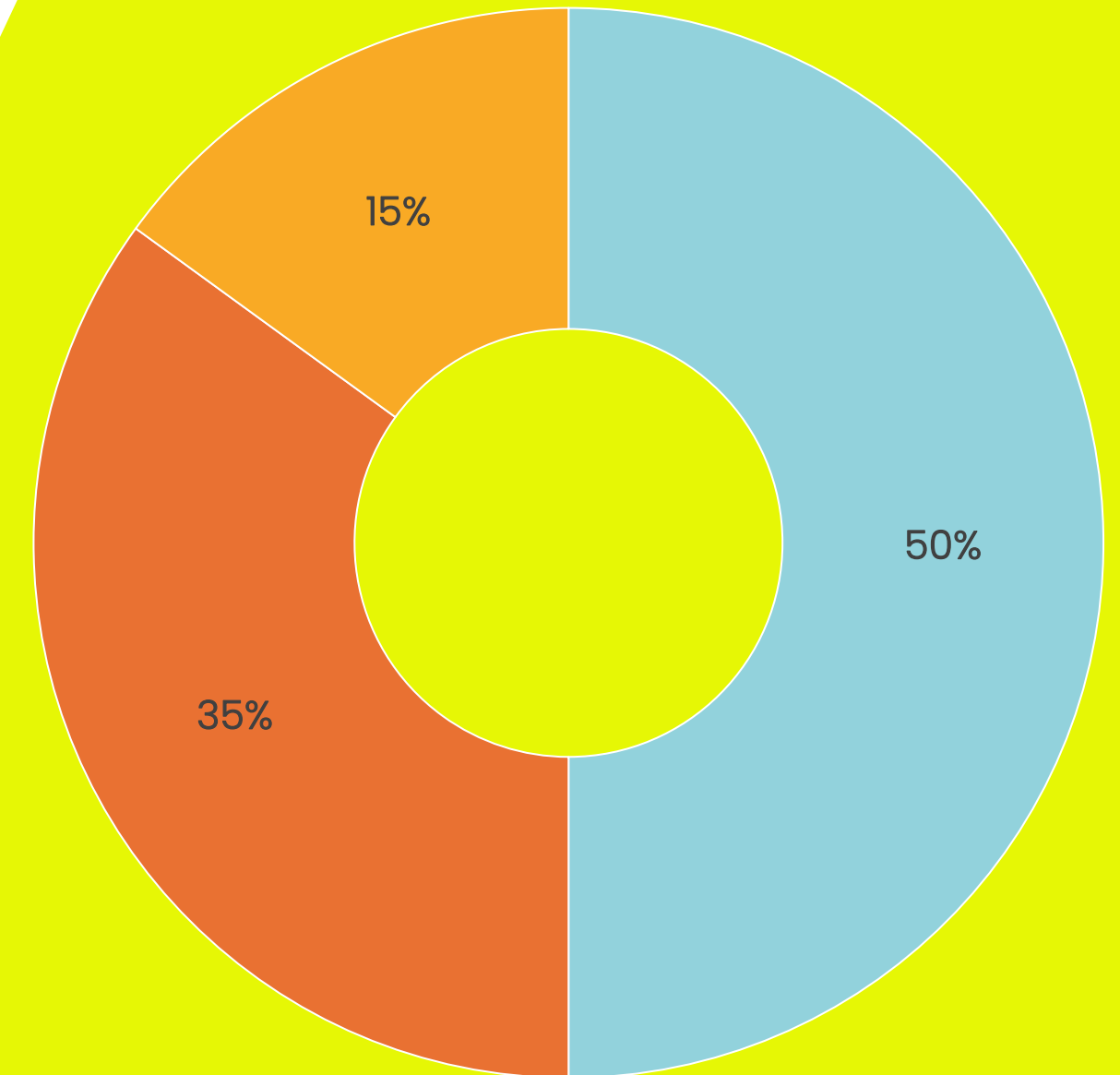
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Low digital maturity



02

Most organisations were in early stages of digital transformation, with limited LMS use and ad hoc digitisation efforts.



- Basic (ad hoc tools, limited strategy)
- Developing (some platform use, informal strategy)
- Established (integrated systems, clear strategy)

03

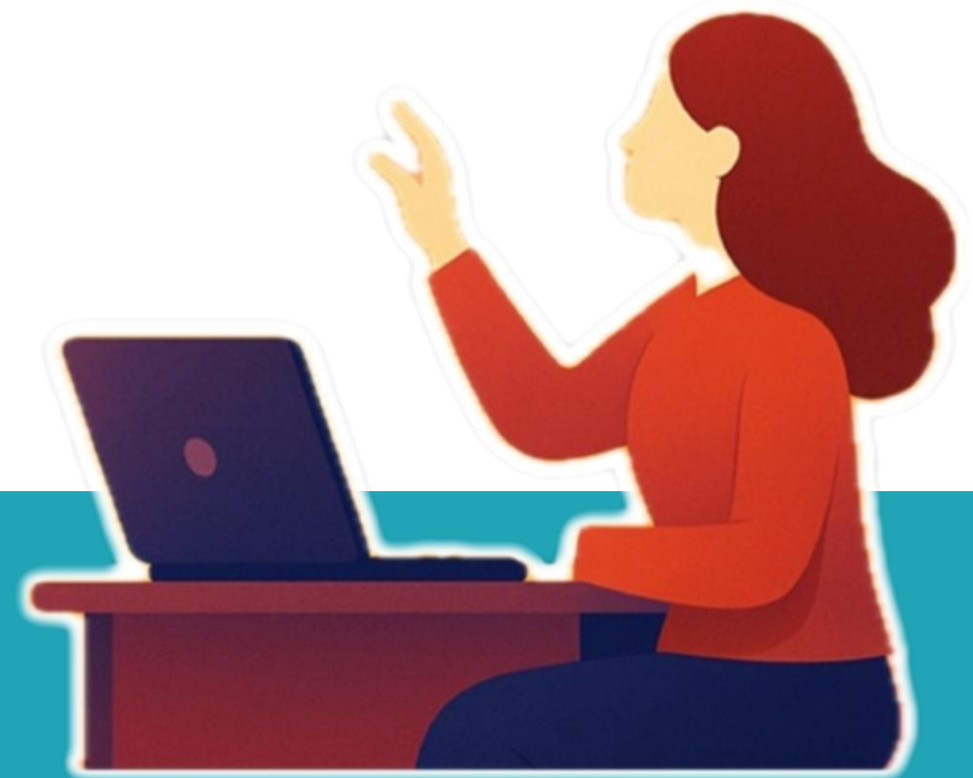


Lack of internal capacity

Skills shortages, lack of strategic digital leadership, and difficulty in hiring top talent were common issues raised by participants



Modernisation is necessary but challenging



04



A common theme was the recognition that modernisation is no longer optional.

Membership bodies need to modernise their educational offerings to remain relevant, attract new members, and meet the expectations of younger professionals.

However, the process of modernising educational programmes has proven to be challenging due to resource constraints, lack of technical expertise, and a need for strategic guidance.



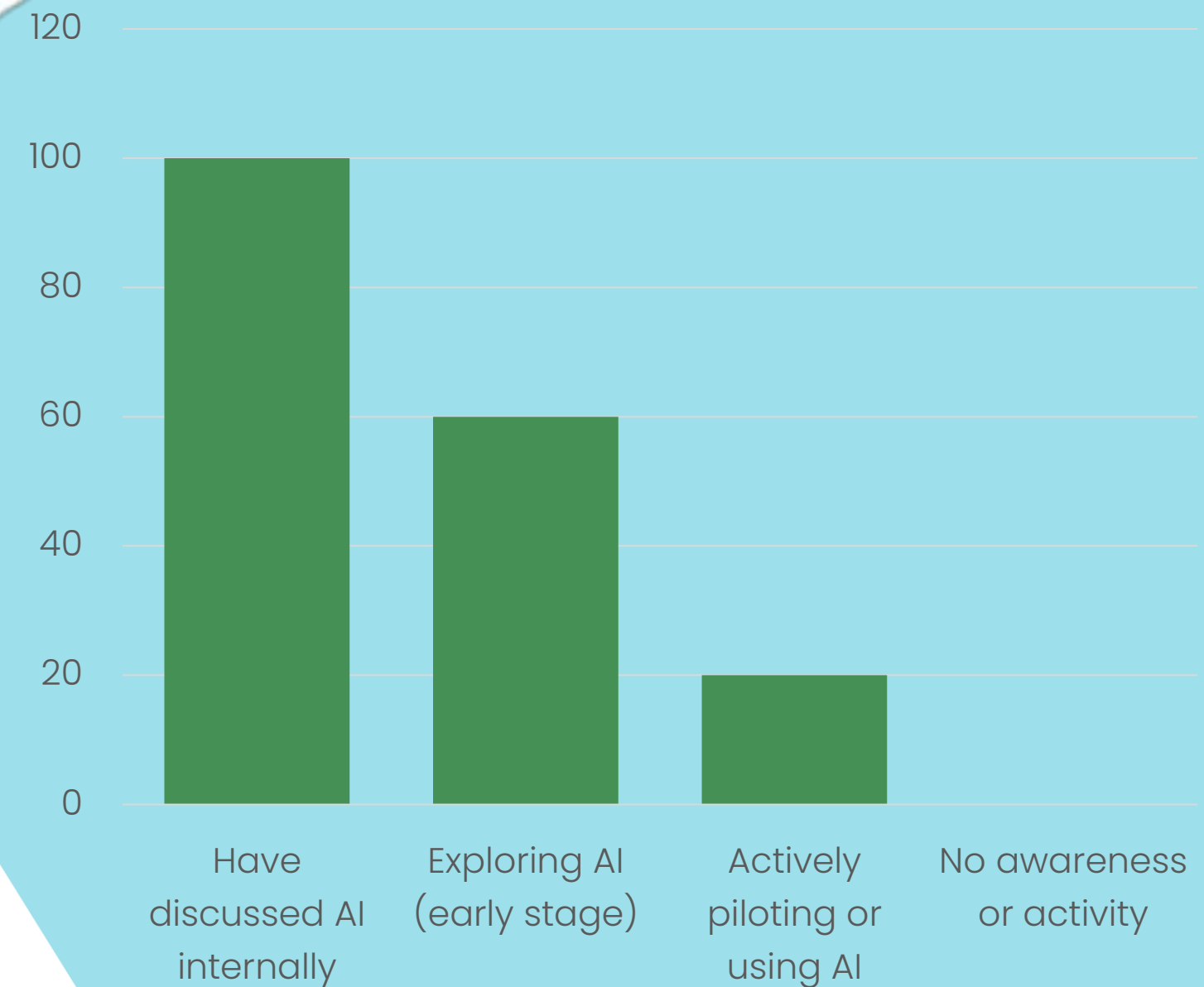
AI awareness growing but action limited

05

**100% of organisations had
discussed AI internally**

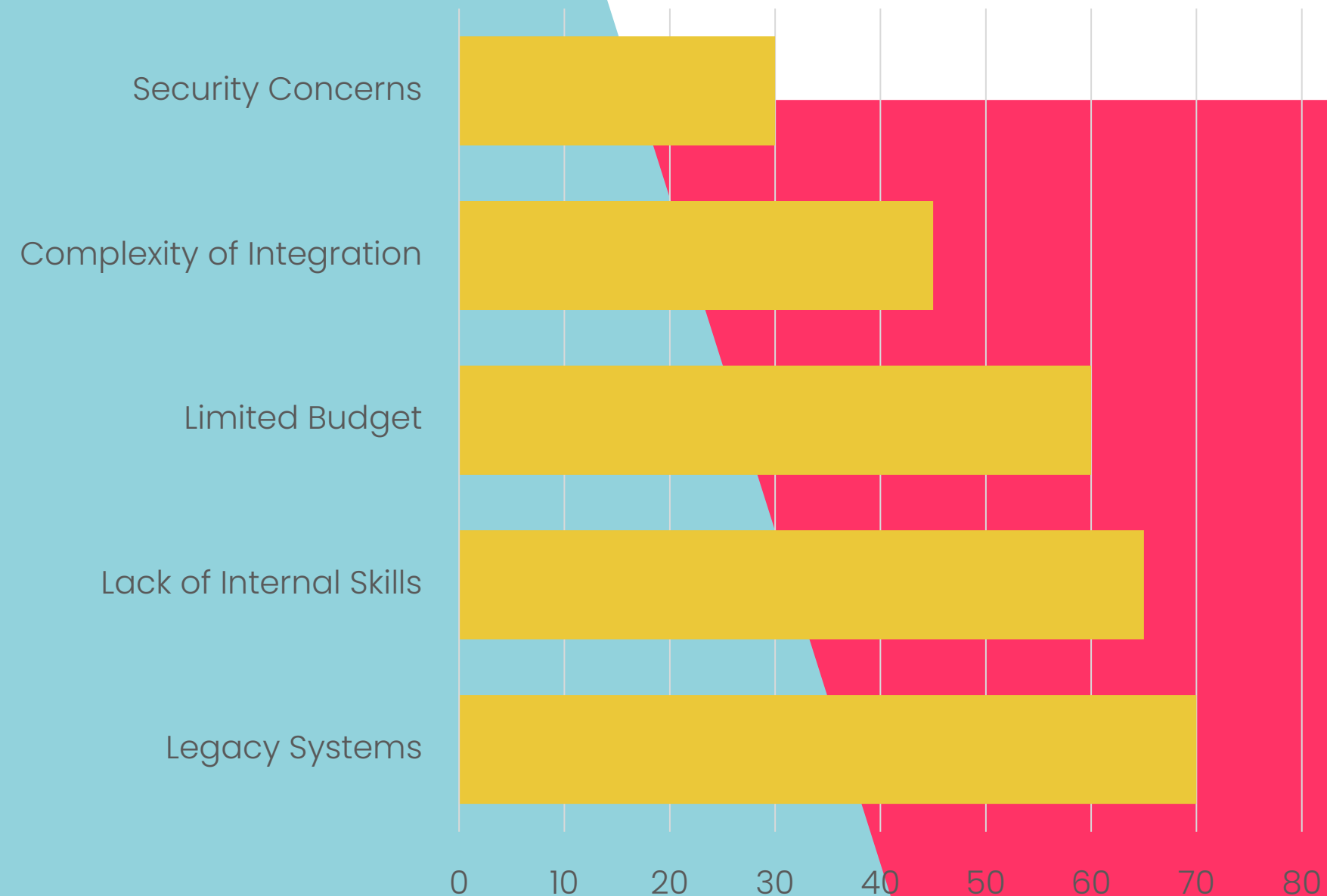
While all organisations surveyed had at least discussed AI internally, only 20% had used it.

Many acknowledged its long-term potential but felt underprepared to implement it.



06

Technological barriers



Many organisations report having limited knowledge of available digital learning tools. While some have started digitising content, most lack a cohesive strategy or system (such as a Learning Management System or Virtual Learning Environment) to manage and deliver their content effectively.

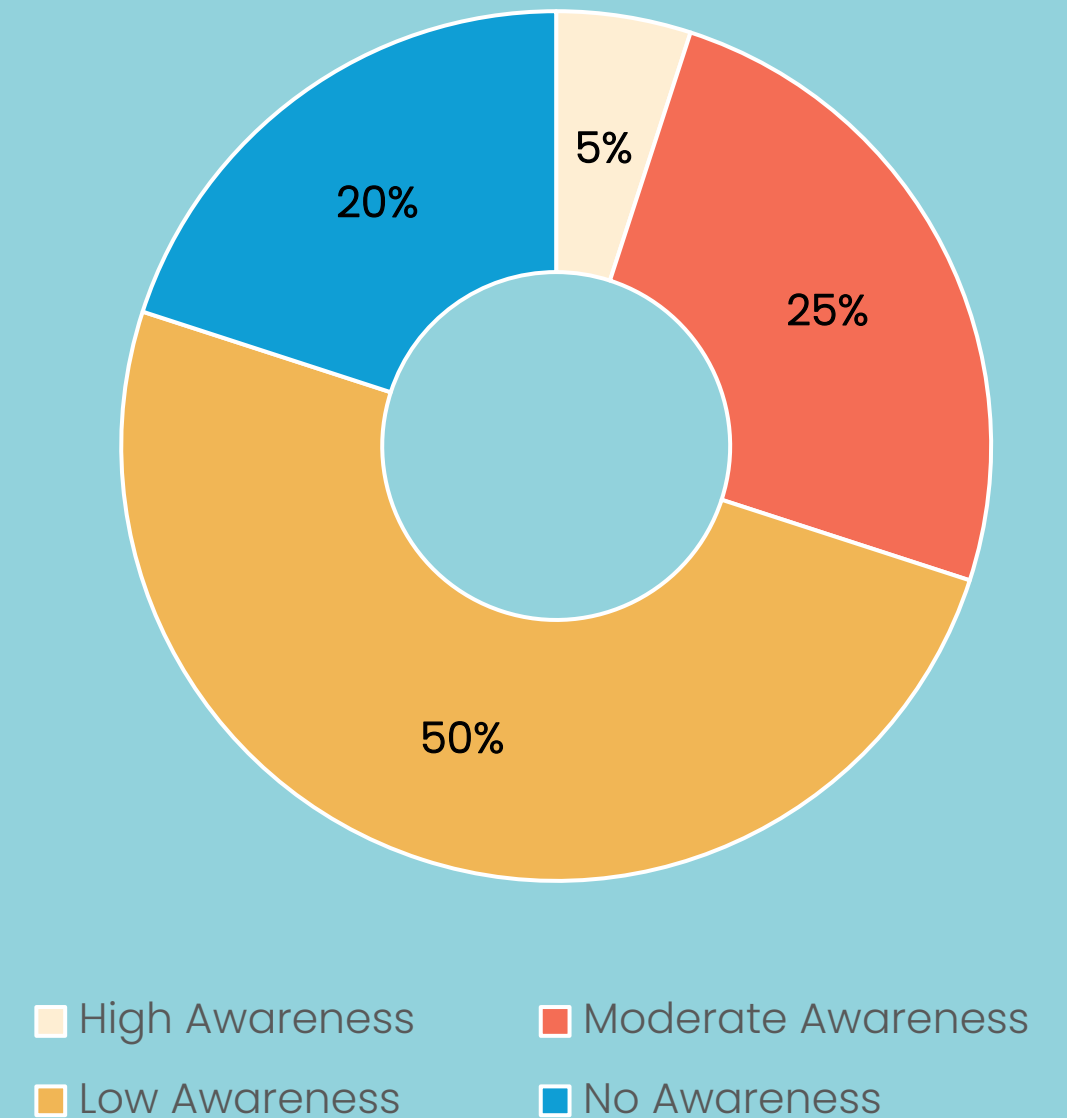
There is a significant opportunity for technological advancement in the sector, but the road to implementation is viewed as daunting.

07

Lack of awareness of potential suppliers

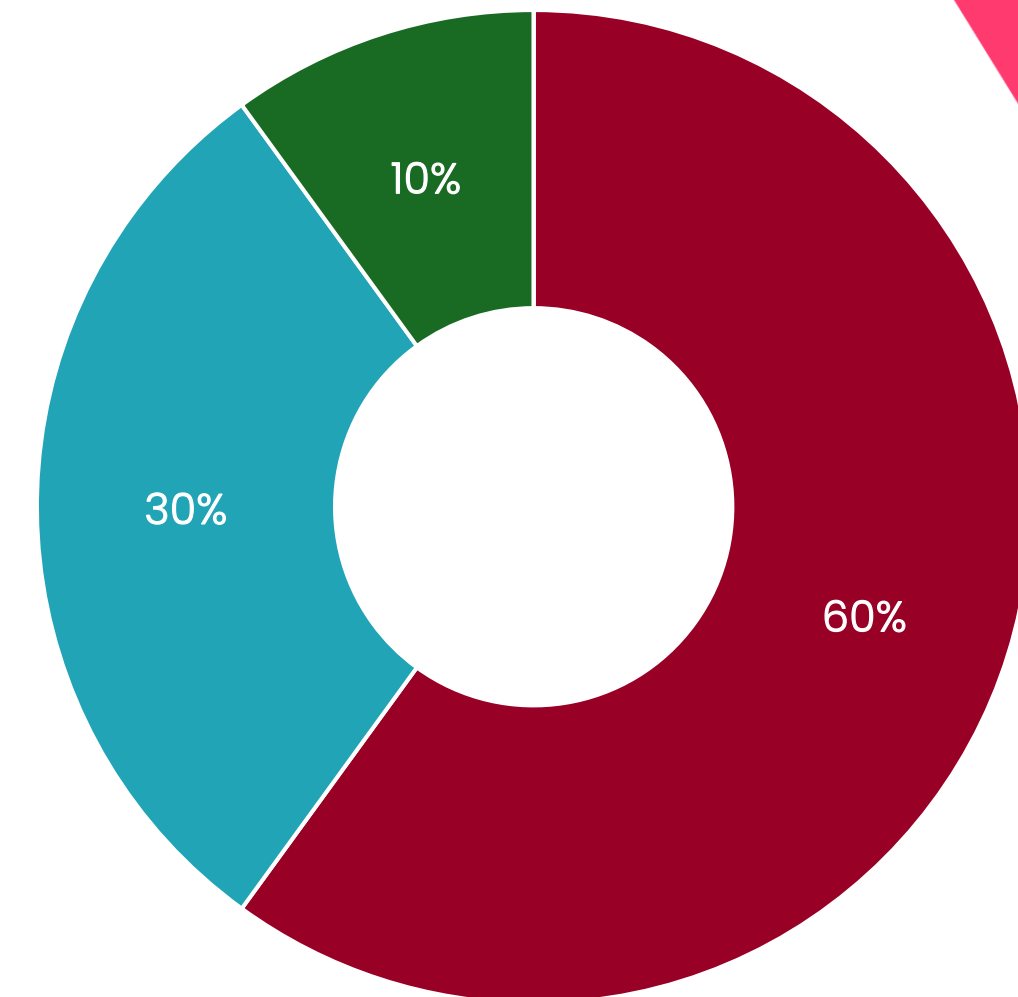
A major challenge identified by the interviewees is the lack of awareness regarding potential suppliers who could help with the digital transformation of education.

Many professional bodies do not know where to start when it comes to finding technology providers, educational consultants, or digital learning specialists.



08

Need for strategic advice and consultancy



■ Strong Need ■ Moderate Need ■ Little Need

70% of organisations indicated a need for strategic advice on modern digital learning

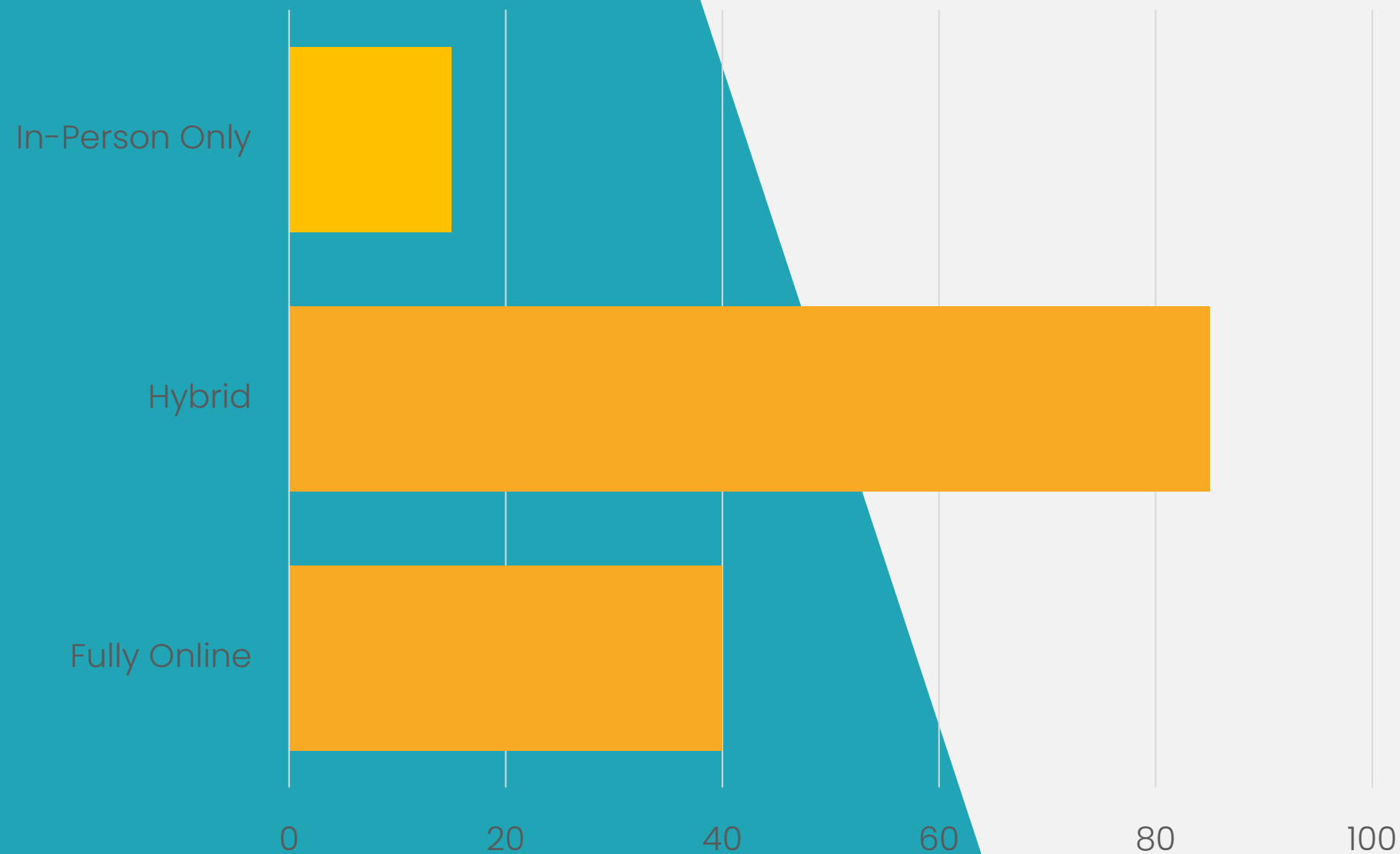
There is a strong desire for strategic advice and consultancy services to guide membership bodies through the process of digitising their educational content.

This includes help with defining educational strategies, understanding the business case for digital investment, and selecting the right partners and technologies.

Organisations preferred to engage external providers on specific tasks – like digitising content or platform selection – rather than outsourcing full programme delivery.

Hybrid learning models

09

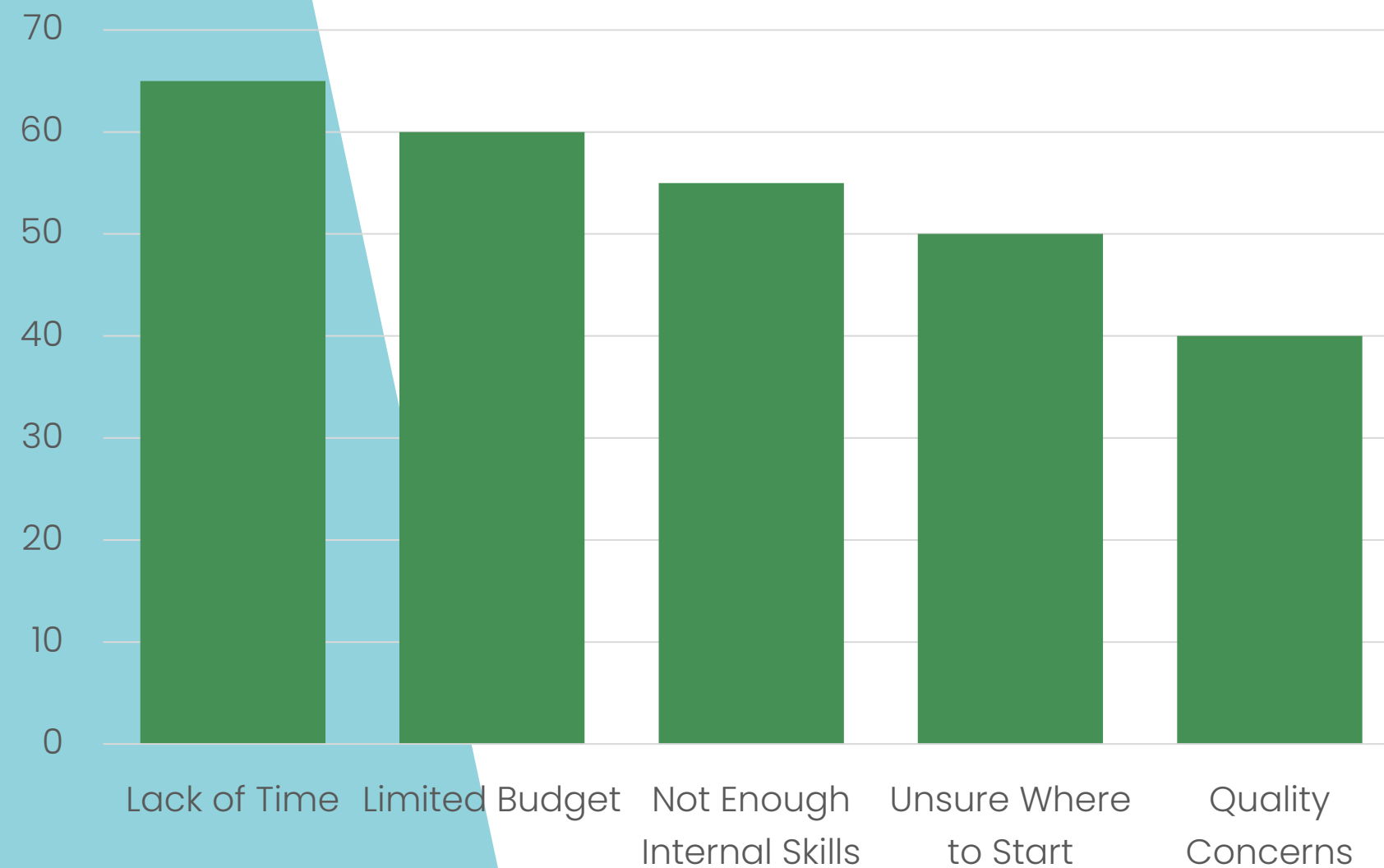


While many organisations began their digital journey with fully remote or virtual events during the pandemic, there is a growing recognition that a blended learning model (combining in-person and online elements) may be the most sustainable approach in the future.

This model allows organisations to offer flexibility while maintaining a personal connection with learners.

10

Challenges in **content digitisation**



The majority of interviewees expressed confidence in the quality of their educational content but cited significant difficulties in digitising this content for online delivery.

The challenge lies in turning traditionally in-person formats, such as workshops or seminars, into scalable digital formats that maintain the integrity and value of the learning experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Create a **Business Case** for investment

Build strong business cases for investing in digital learning tools, focusing on Return On Investment (ROI) through increased member engagement, recruitment, retention, and satisfaction.

Provide education for decision-makers on what AI is, how it works, and where it fits—addressing misconceptions and risk concerns early.



Develop a digital learning **roadmap**

Focus on developing a strategic approach to digital education, which includes defining objectives, identifying technological requirements, and selecting the right partners.



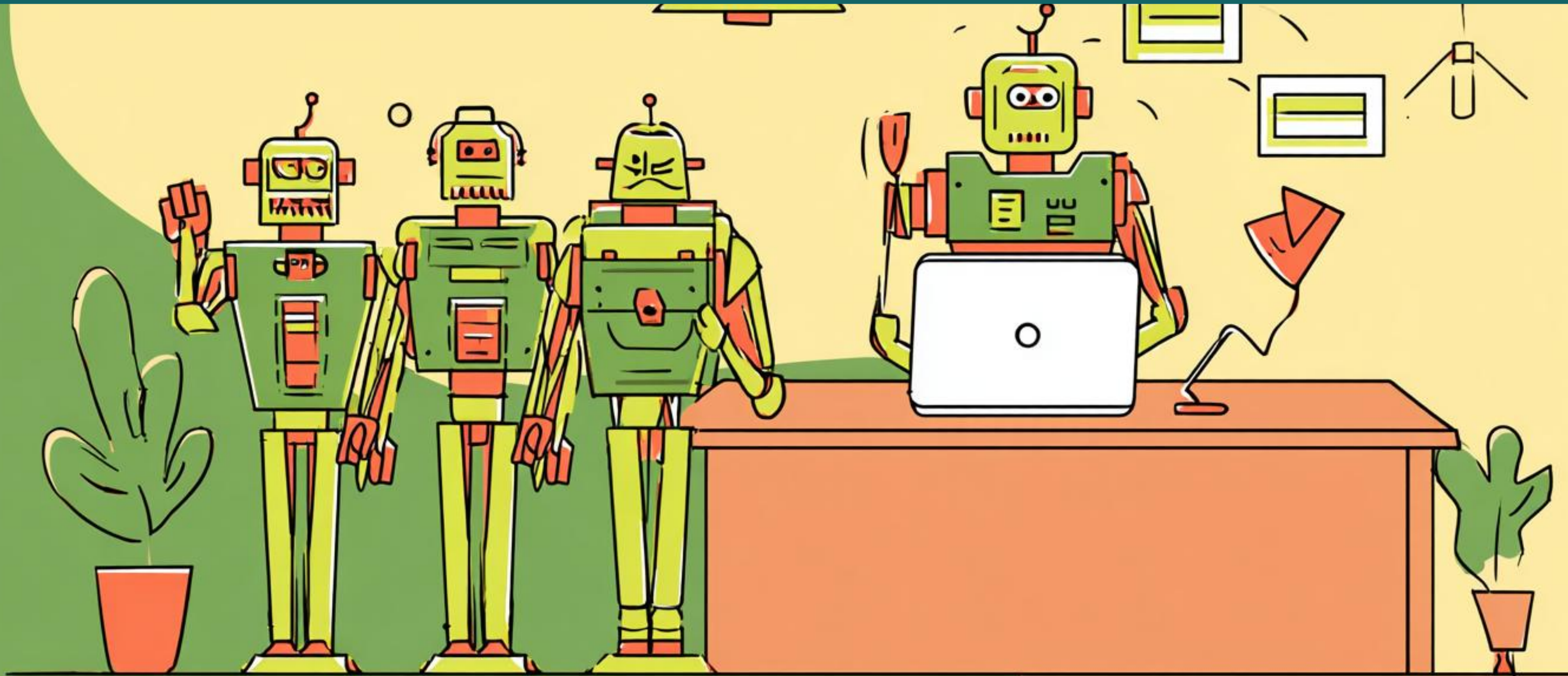
Invest in **content** and **digital** learning design

Look into developing or partnering with providers that specialise in learning design and content digitisation.

This will help ensure the quality and scalability of online education offerings.



Develop sector-specific AI governance models



Build fit-for-purpose AI policies covering usage, data ethics, and transparency.

Build long-term **capability**

Prioritise partnerships that focus not just on technology, but on upskilling internal teams and creating sustainable delivery models.



We are 100% platform-independent L&D specialists

With 30+ years' experience of providing guidance and consultancy services to the membership sector

As a fully independent and vendor-agnostic business, we are not tied to any specific suppliers or technology providers, allowing us to recommend solutions that are best suited to our clients' unique needs.

This approach ensures that our recommendations are driven solely by the project requirements and long-term success, allowing us to focus on delivering the most effective, objective, and future-proof recommendations for technology implementation.



Get in touch with us at GetSavi

Here are the services we offer:

Low-cost membership-focused LMS solution

We provide fixed-price packages to help you salvage your existing LMS, replace it, or implement a new one.

Our projects are typically delivered within 3 months, and range from £20,000-£35,000.

Content digitisation services

We provide fixed-price packages to help you migrate and digitise your existing content.

Our India-based team delivers leading edge digital and design services at affordable prices

Independent L&D consultancy services

We provide consultancy services to help you through your entire project journey – from developing your L&D strategy and business case for investment, all the way through to implementation, ongoing support and business improvement.

CHALLENGES



Resource limitations

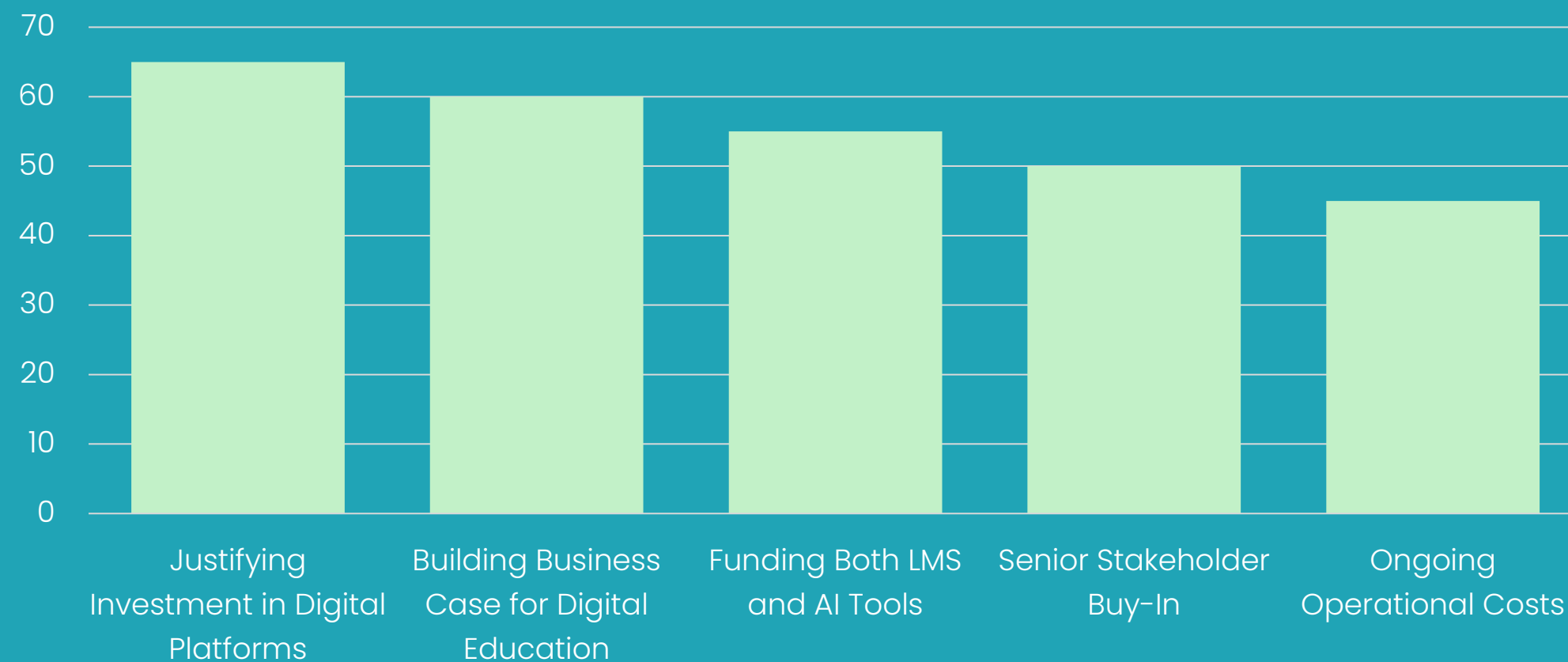
Many membership bodies cited a lack of internal resources (e.g. staffing, technical expertise) as a key barrier to modernising their education offerings. Some organisations are considering partnerships or outsourcing to address these gaps.



In particular, 70% of organisations said they lacked the internal skills to explore or adopt AI meaningfully

Budget constraints

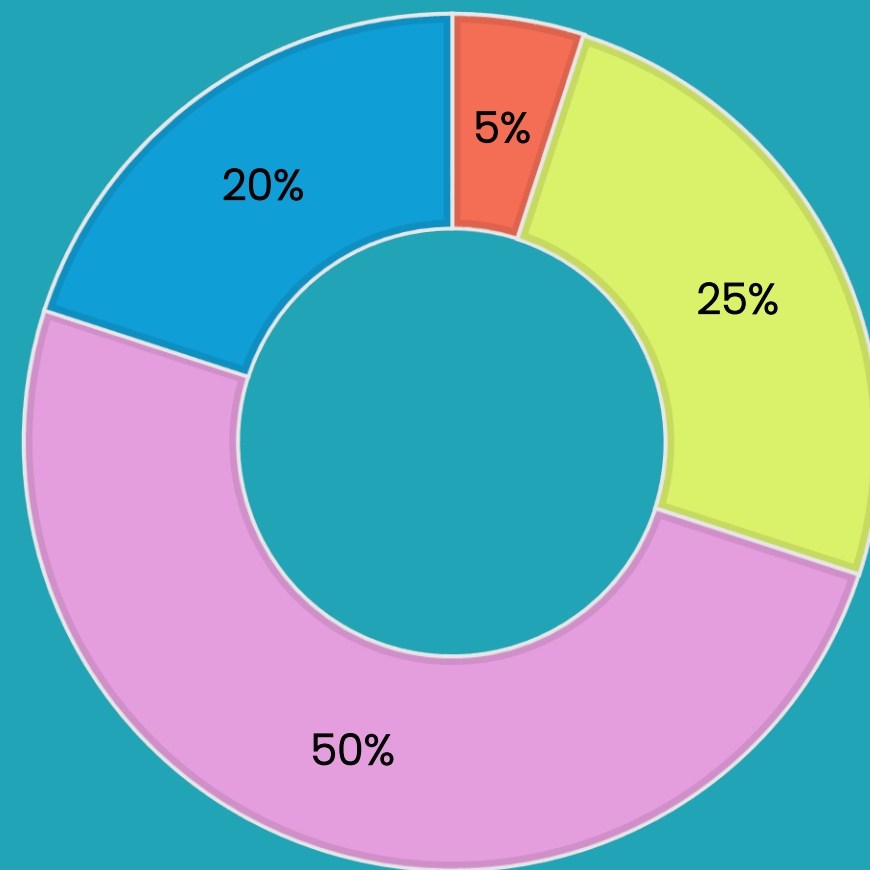
Despite the growing demand for digital learning, many organisations are struggling to justify the investment in new technologies and digital platforms. The challenge lies in creating a compelling business case for digital education that resonates with senior stakeholders.



With constrained funding, many struggle to invest in both foundational digital systems and experimental AI tools

Navigating the **complex supplier market**

Professional bodies reported feeling overwhelmed by the variety of digital learning tools and suppliers available in the market. There is a strong need for guidance in choosing the right technology and education **partners**.

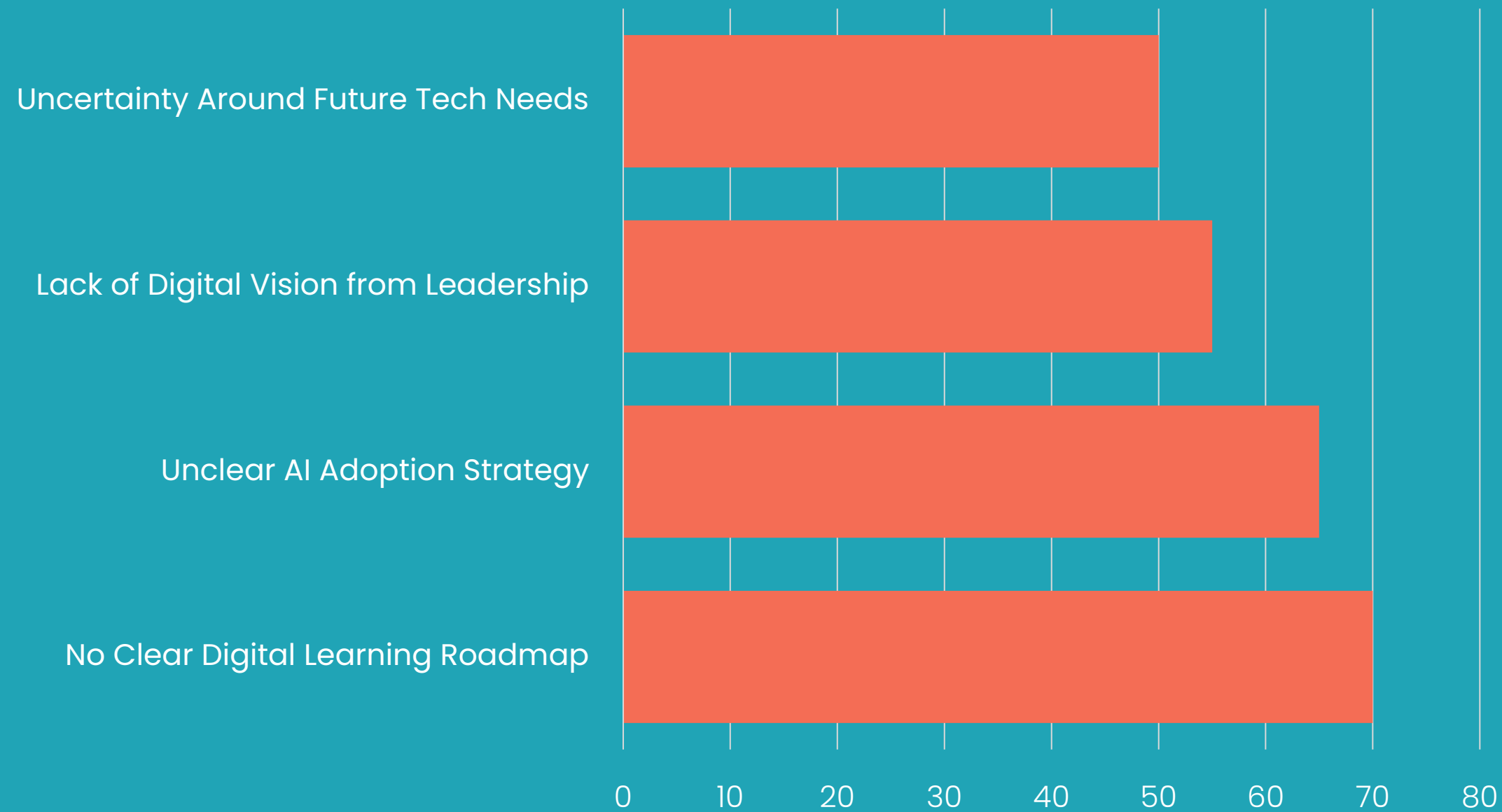


■ High Awareness ■ Moderate Awareness ■ Low Awareness ■ No Awareness

Technical gaps: organisations reported low confidence in choosing the right platforms or understanding how to evaluate AI solutions.

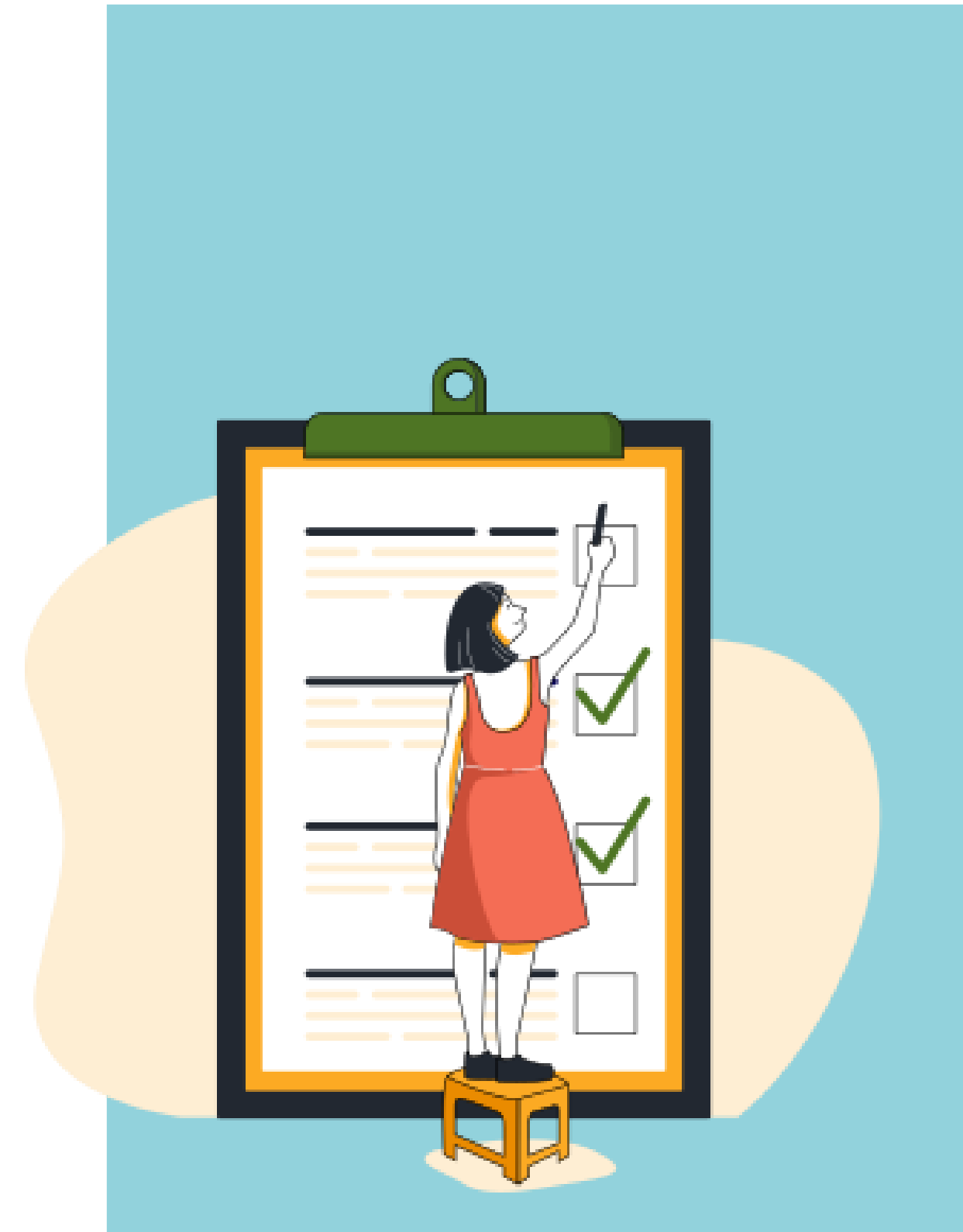
Strategic **uncertainty**

Many organisations lacked a clear roadmap for digital learning or AI adoption.



Governance hesitation

Especially in regulated professions, there was hesitancy around adopting AI without clear policies on data protection, bias, and accountability.



A FOCUS ON AI



Professional membership bodies and their attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in professional learning and education presents both promise and uncertainty for UK professional membership bodies.

Membership bodies acknowledged AI's growing presence in education, operations, and membership engagement with a mix of enthusiasm, caution, and uncertainty.

AI was a key theme during conversations around digital transformation and future learning strategies. While most organisations are not yet actively using AI, many are considering its potential applications, risks, and implementation requirements.

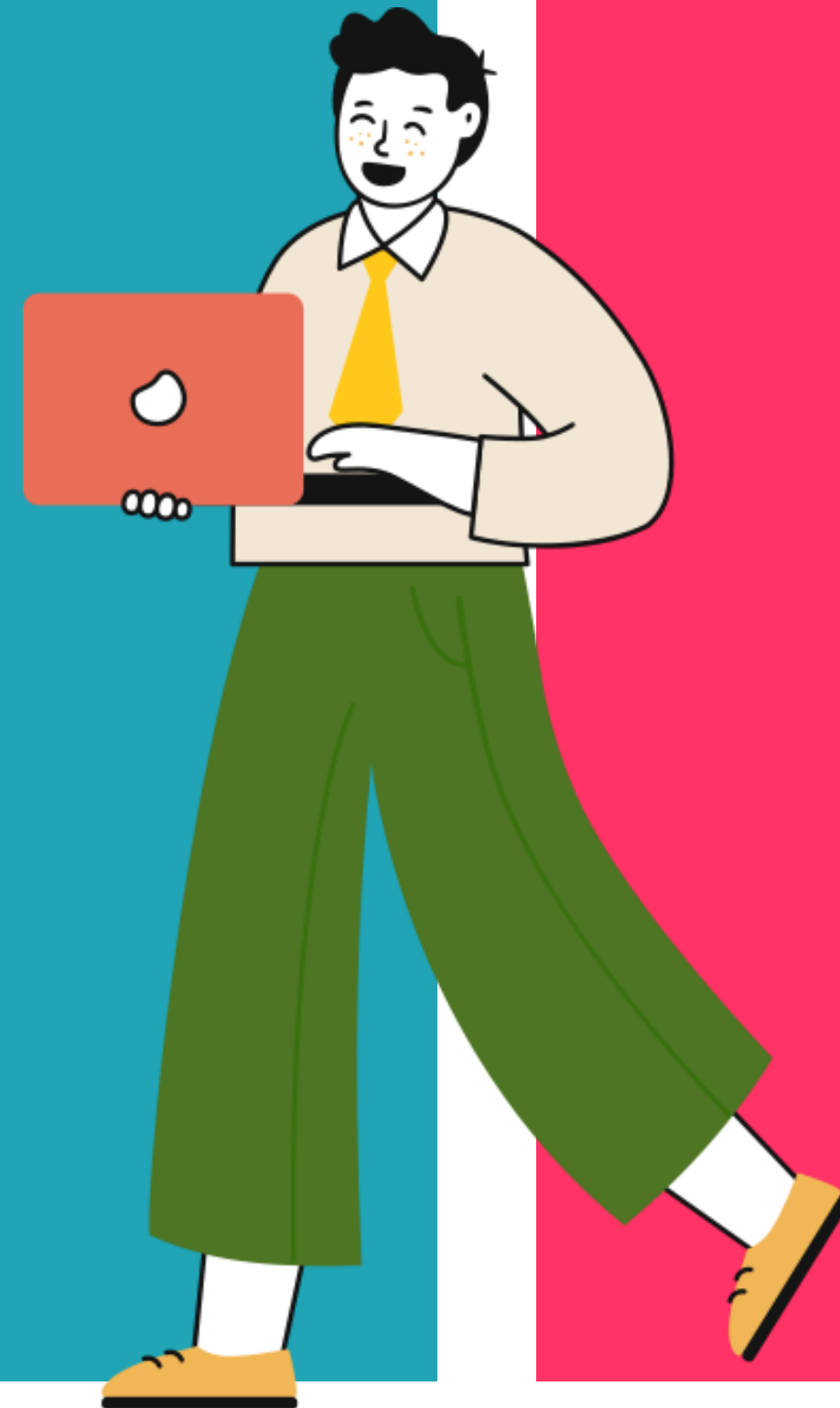
This section explores attitudes, readiness, and organisational capacity through a set of structured questions, each offering insight into how organisations currently view and approach AI. Each insight includes Get Savi's Key Takeaway for readers.



Here's another remarkable statistic

80%

OF L&D LEADERS HAVE
AN "AWARENESS OF
AI", WITH ONLY 20%
HAVING IMPLEMENTED
AI TOOLS IN THEIR
ORGANISATION



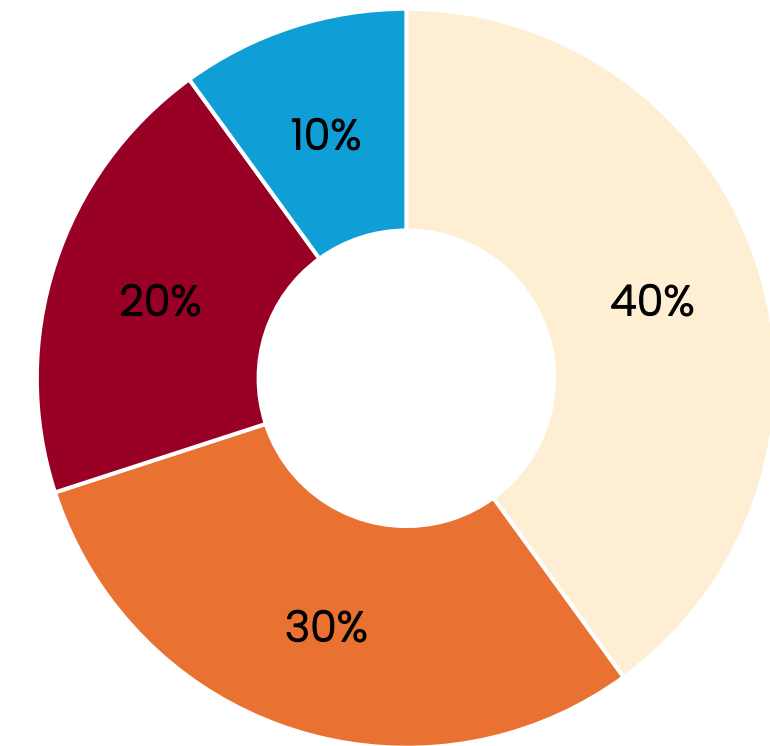
01

How membership bodies feel about AI in education and operations

Reactions to AI were mixed. Many respondents expressed a cautious optimism, viewing AI as useful for task automation, personalisation, and analytics.

However, others are more sceptical, describing ethical concerns, especially regarding content integrity and data privacy.

Key takeaway: Organisations should seek further education to answer their questions about how AI can be safely adopted



- Cautious Optimism (automation, enhancement)
- Ambivalent (potential but unsure fit)
- Sceptical or Concerned
- Actively Exploring AI Positively

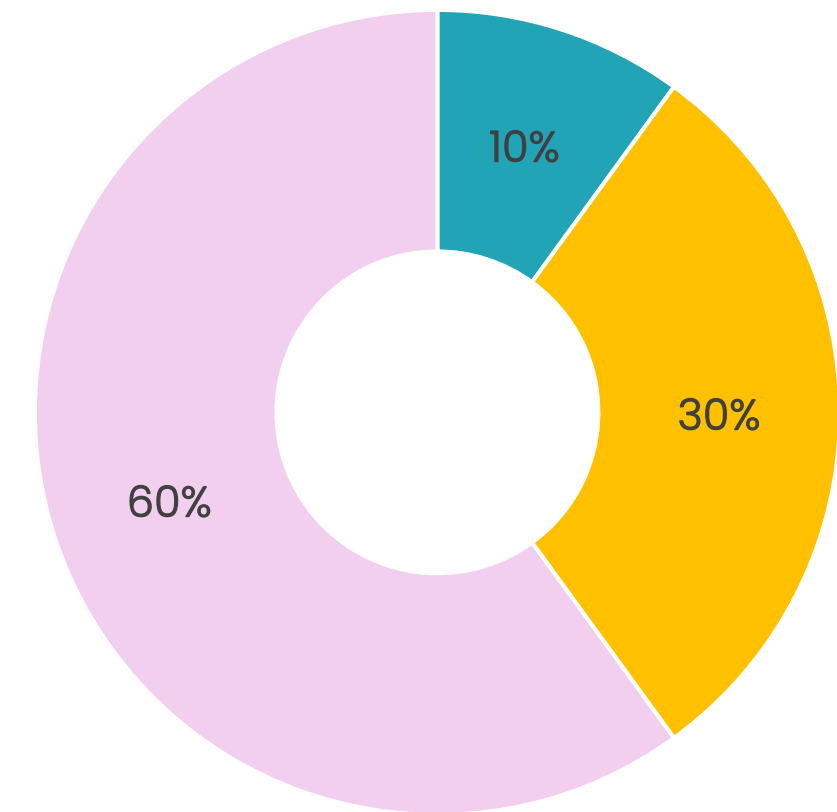
"AI could be transformative for learning delivery, but we need to understand it deeply before adopting anything." – Interviewee, Chartered Institute

02

Are membership bodies equipped to adopt AI tools or systems?

Most organisations said they were not yet equipped to integrate AI meaningfully. Barriers include a lack of in-house technical expertise, limited understanding of use cases, and absence of strategic frameworks to assess AI readiness.

Key Takeaway: Leaders should focus on securing critical expertise to explore initial AI use cases for their organisation



■ Fully Equipped ■ Partially Equipped ■ Not Equipped

"AI is on our radar, but we're still trying to get the basics of digital learning in place." – Interviewee, Professional Guild

03

The greatest organisational concerns about using AI

Key concerns fell into three broad categories, particularly among regulatory bodies and those with compliance-oriented missions:

- Ethical risk: Concerns about AI replacing human interaction or reinforcing bias in educational content and assessments
- Reputational risk: Fear of adopting tools that may not align with professional standards
- Capability risk: Worry that poorly understood or implemented AI could waste resources

Key Takeaway: Organisations should include AI in their strategic risk registers to plan mitigating actions as AI is being introduced



"Our members expect rigour and trust. If AI compromises either, we'll lose credibility." – Interviewee, Industry Body

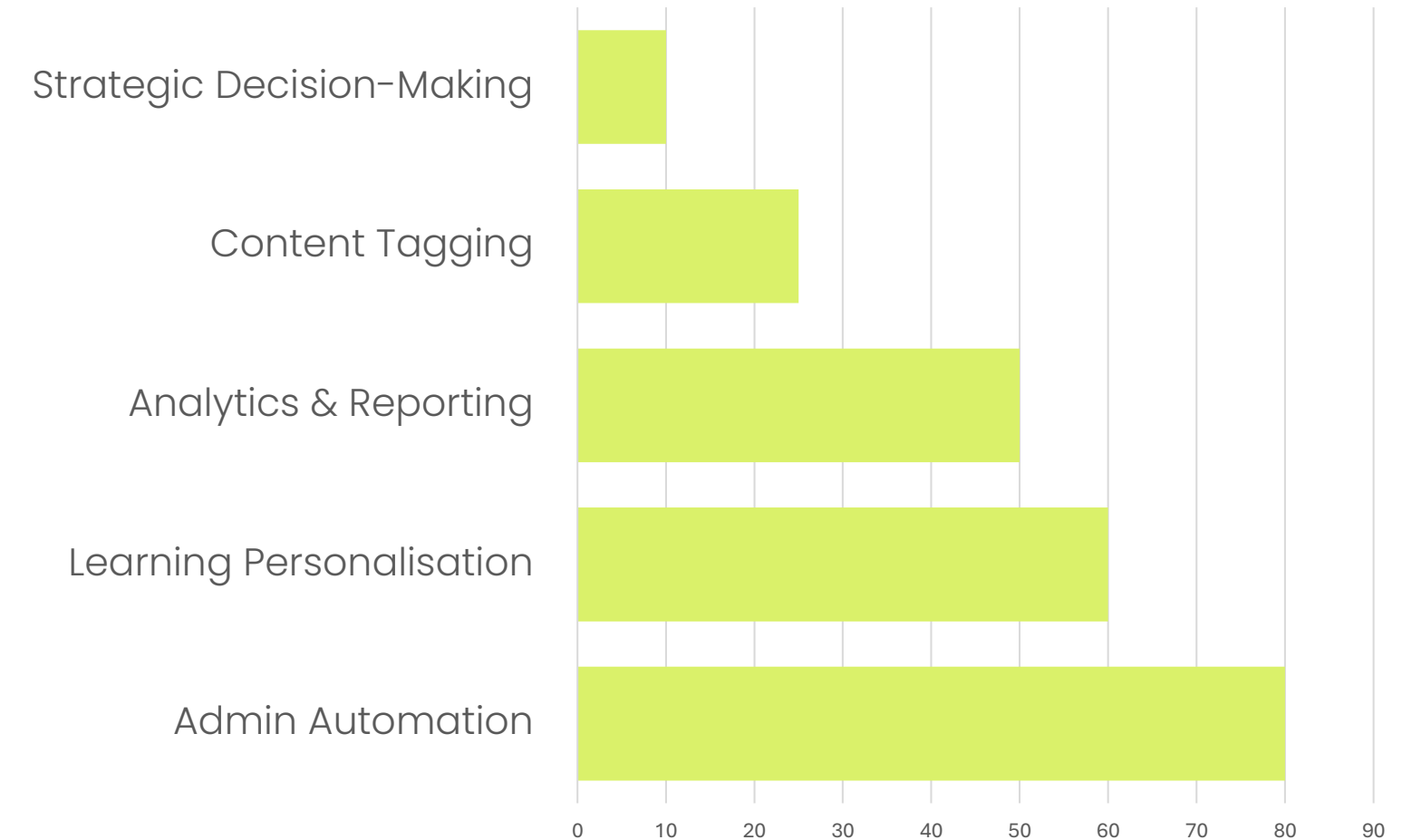
04

Potential for AI in operations

Despite caution, several areas of interest in AI emerged consistently:

- Administrative automation (e.g. course enrolments, email triage)
- Learning personalisation (e.g. tailoring content preferences)
- Analytics & Reporting (e.g. tracking learner progress and feedback)
- Content Tagging (e.g. auto-categorisation of images)

Key Takeaway: Organisations should be building their business case for AI use on the value of its use in operations



"If we could use AI to tailor learning paths, which would be a real step forward." – Interviewee, Membership Network

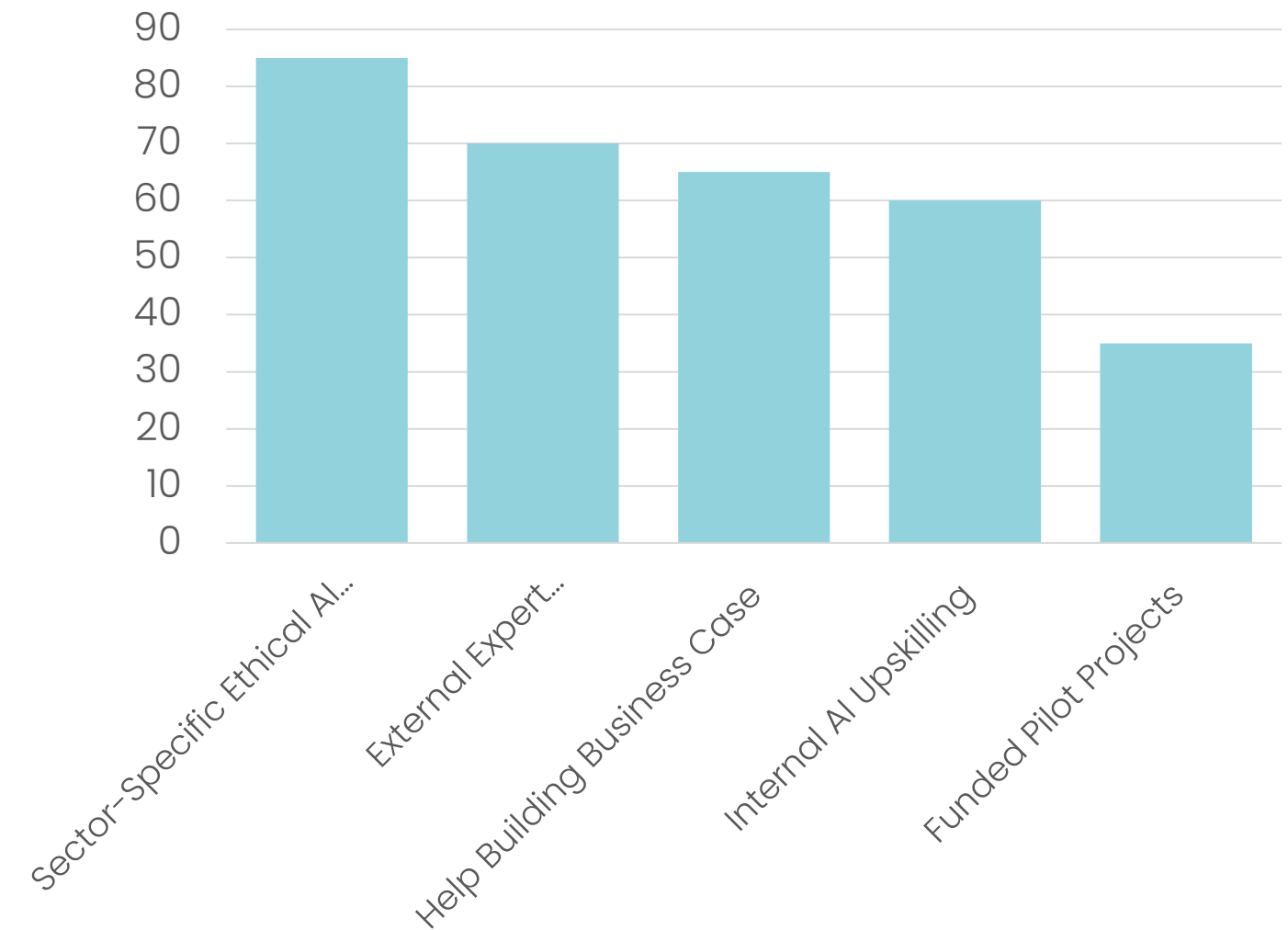
05

Support required to explore or implement AI responsibly

The most cited needs were:

- Sector-specific guidance: Frameworks that reflect the values, standards, and risk profiles of professional bodies
- Trusted partnerships: Suppliers or advisors who understand both AI and the professional membership context
- Proof of concept: Starting small with tightly scoped pilots and measurable outcomes
- Training and upskilling: Education for both staff and board-level decision-makers before any strategic adoption

Key Takeaway: Organisations should build each of these considerations into their upcoming AI implementation plans



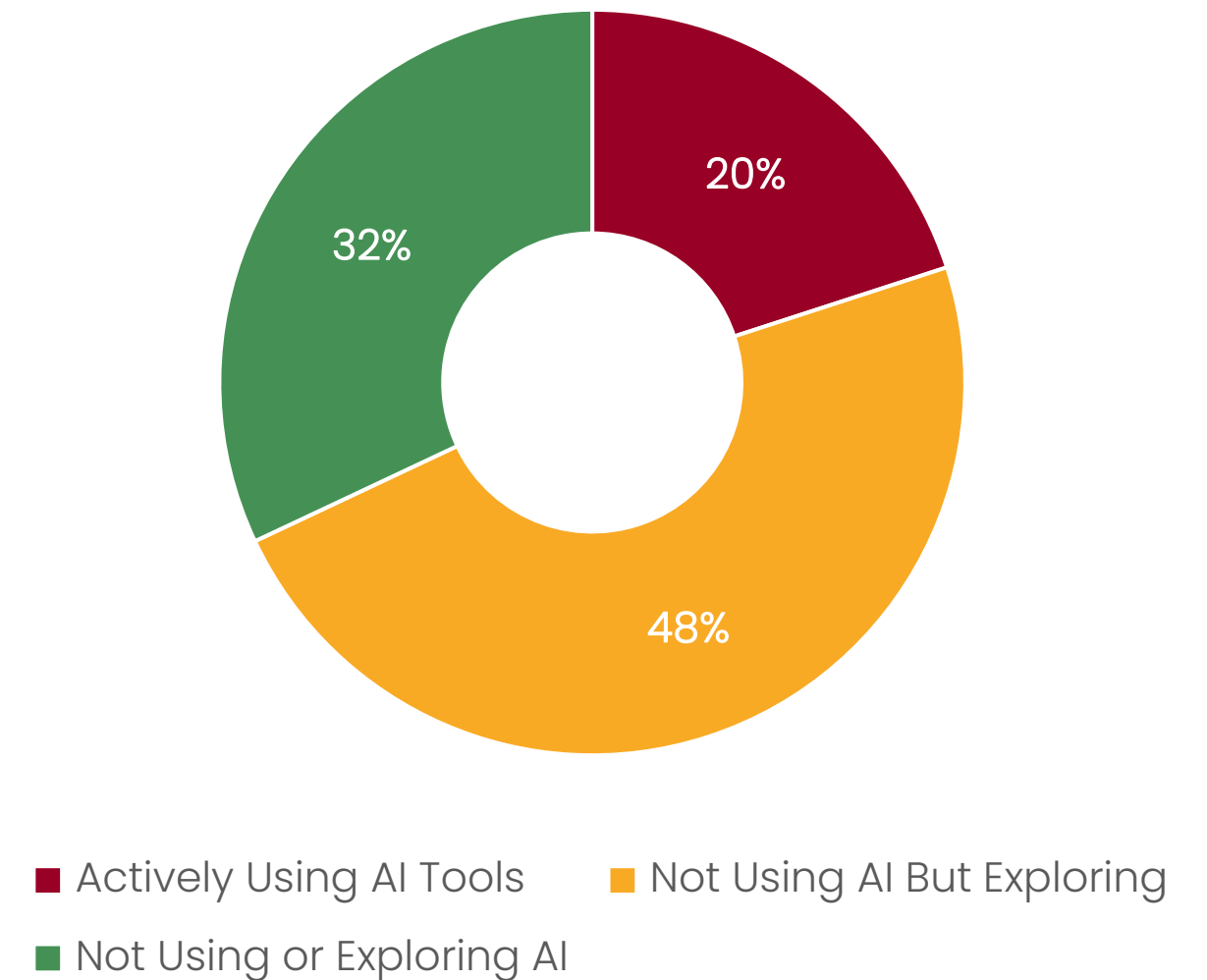
"We need trusted partners who speak both AI and membership language – we can't just Google our way through this." – Interviewee, CPD Lead

06

Membership bodies currently using AI in any capacity

Most membership bodies reported no active use of AI at this time. However, 60% stated they are exploring or discussing AI use cases.

Key Takeaway: Organisations should consider structured pilots or “test and learn” exercises to drive action on AI adoption



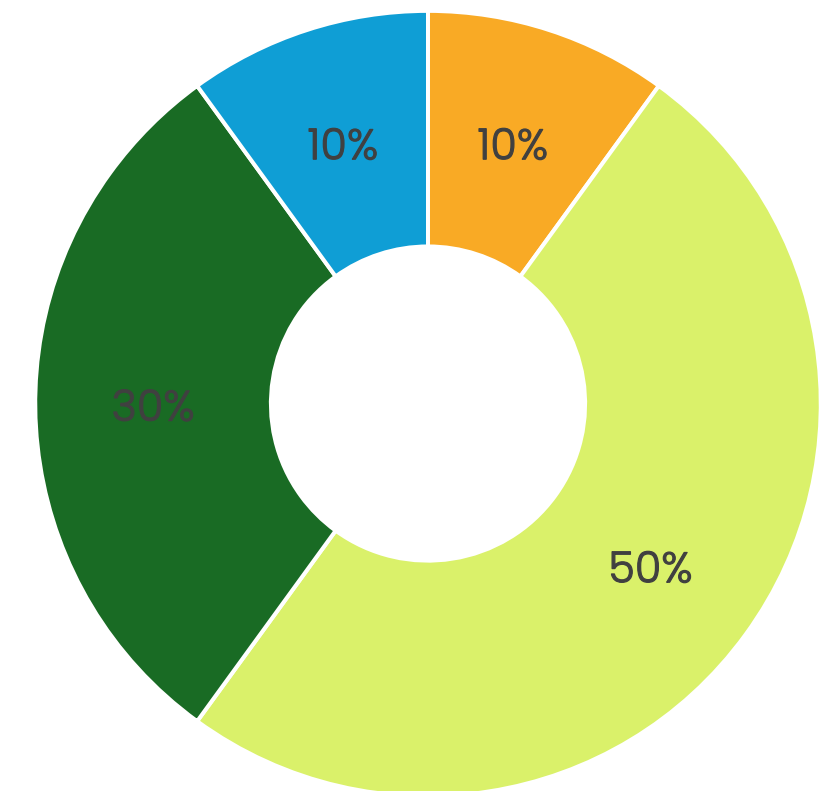
“We’ve started experimenting with AI-powered helpdesk tools, but that’s as far as we’ve gone.” – Interviewee, Training Institute

07

How would you rate your organisation's AI maturity?

Half of respondents rated their organisation's maturity at Level 1: Awareness. That is, AI is on the radar, but no active plans to adopt. Others are in the initial stages of exploration or adoption, with some pilots or discussions underway.

Key takeaway: Organisations should seek advice from those further ahead in the maturity curve as part of their AI pilot plans



■ Level 0: Not Engaged ■ Level 1: Awareness
■ Level 2: Early Exploration ■ Level 3: Initial Adoption

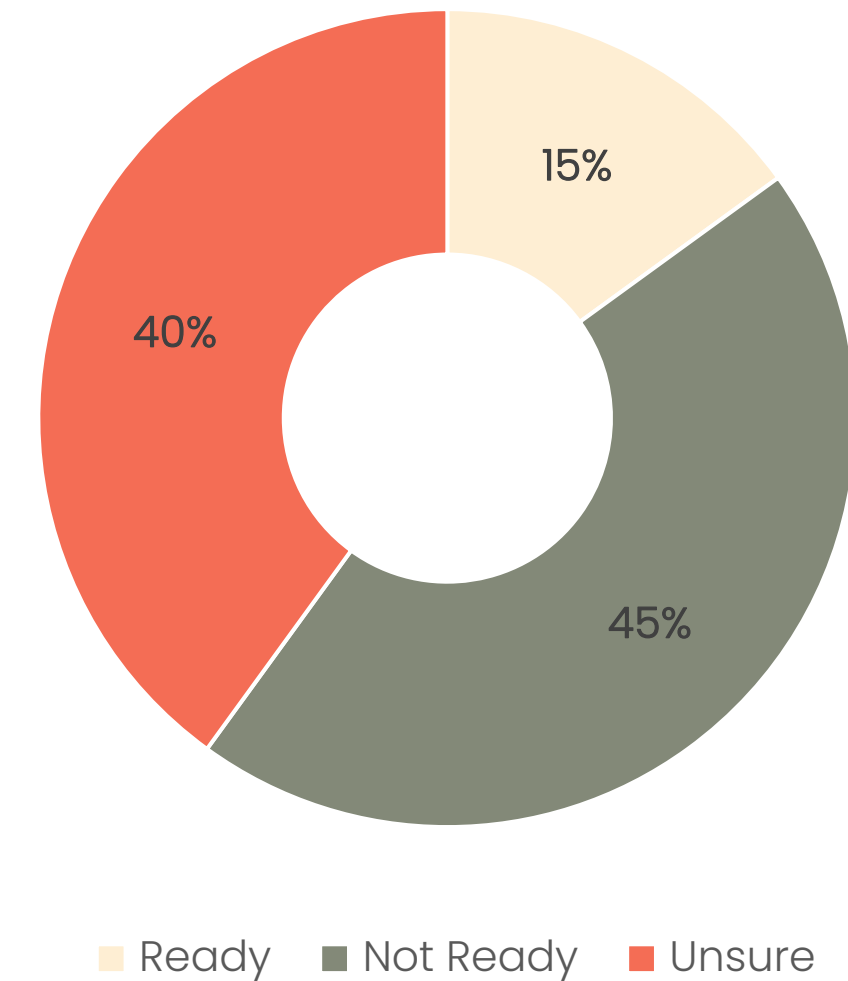
"We don't yet have a framework to assess or improve our AI capability – it's something we'd value." – Interviewee, Strategic Development Lead

08

Are membership bodies ready to adopt AI?

Most organisations said they were not ready to adopt AI, noting skills gaps, cultural resistance, and lack of strategic clarity about AI's uses as the main reasons for delays in AI adoption.

Key Takeaway: Leaders should consider engagement internally and externally to understand barriers to AI adoption which can be factored into the organisation's adoption of AI



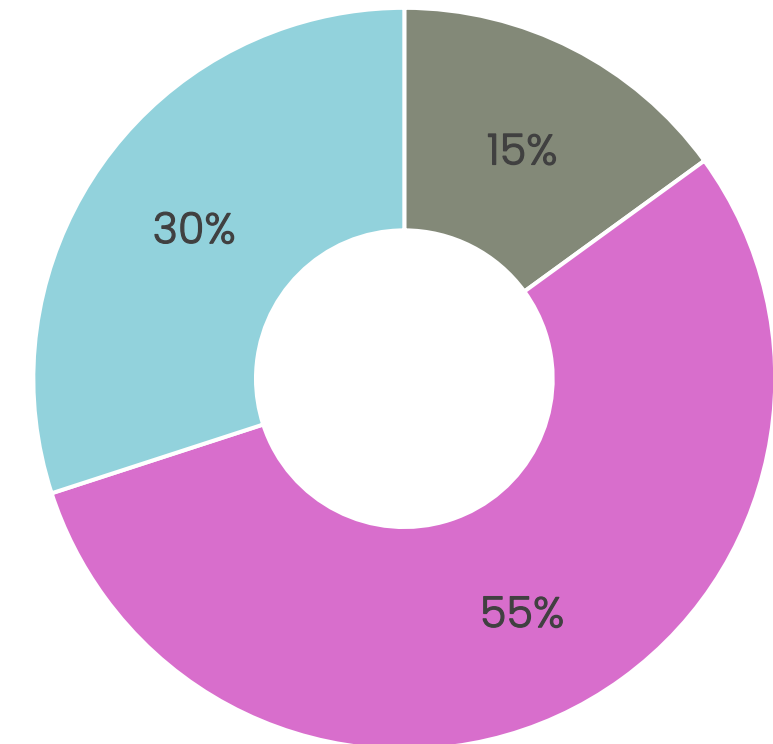
"Readiness depends on who you ask. IT may say yes; education might disagree." – Interviewee, Director of Programmes

09

Do organisations understand AI, its potential, and its benefits?

Most organisations felt their teams had general AI awareness but lacked clarity on how it applies to their specific work or member needs.

Key Takeaway: Leaders should identify and prioritise the internal and member-facing processes that AI will most benefit, reinforcing the value of investment in these areas



- Strong Understanding of AI and Strategy
- Basic Awareness but Unclear Applications
- Limited or No Organisational Understanding

"There's interest, but not a lot of deep understanding. We need to demystify what AI can actually do for us." – Interviewee, Director of Strategy

10

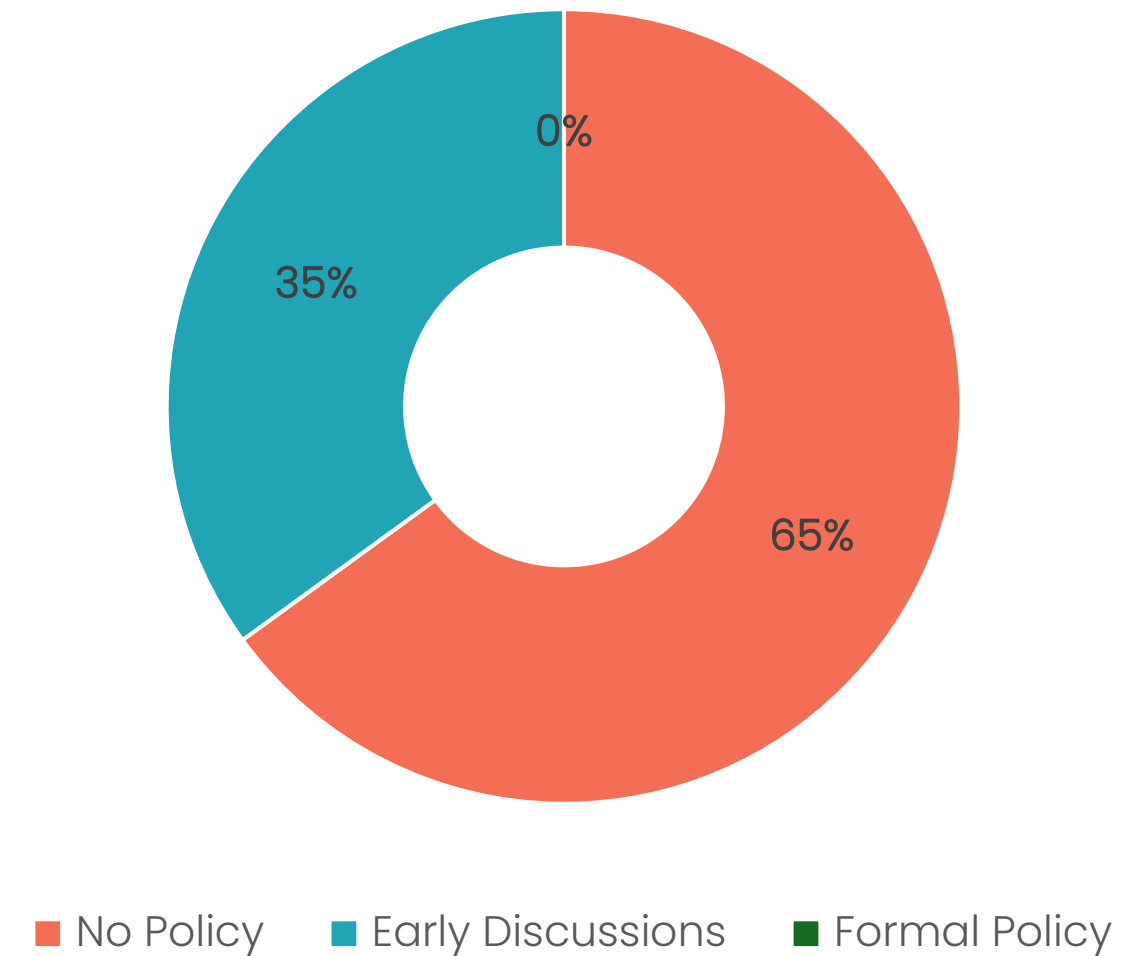
Do organisations need AI policies around usage and data?

Most participants agreed that an internal AI policy would be necessary before adopting any AI tools, particularly for:

- Data handling and member privacy
- Ethical guidelines around automation
- Transparent use of AI-generated content

None had a formal AI policy in place at the time of the interview.

Key Takeaway: Organisations must have an AI policy in place to clarify upfront what is expecting from everyone using it



"If we're going to adopt AI, we need governance in place—especially given our responsibilities around member data." – Interviewee, Head of Compliance

Conclusion

The educational landscape for professional membership bodies is at a **critical juncture**, driven by the increasing demand for digital learning solutions and the growing expectations of members.

The need for **digital transformation** has never been clearer, yet many organisations find themselves grappling with significant challenges, particularly when it comes to **resources**, **technical expertise**, and developing a **strategic approach** to digital learning.

These findings reinforce a consistent pattern: while professional membership bodies are increasingly aware of AI, most are still in the initial stages of understanding, resourcing, and policy development.

There is a clear appetite to learn more, experiment safely, and eventually embed AI where it aligns with mission, member value, and operational efficiency. To move forward, organisations will need tailored guidance, risk-managed pathways, and trusted partnerships to help bridge the knowledge and resource gap.



Final thought...

While membership bodies face significant challenges in adopting digital learning, the growing demand for flexible, accessible, and scalable educational offerings presents an opportunity to innovate and evolve. Those that embrace digital transformation will not only be able to meet member expectations but will also gain a competitive edge, drive engagement, and create long-term value. The path forward is clear: **invest in digital transformation, leverage technology, and put the needs of your members at the forefront of your strategy.**

AI while still new and untested for many, is viewed as a promising tool—if approached with care, clarity, and ethical safeguards.

Those who embrace this transformation with purpose – building skills, policies, and partnerships – stand to lead the sector into a more dynamic, responsive, and inclusive future of professional learning.



Get in touch with us at GetSavi

Here are the services we offer:

Low-cost membership-focused LMS solution

We provide fixed-price packages to help you salvage your existing LMS, replace it, or implement a new one.

Our projects are typically delivered within 3 months, and range from £20,000-£35,000.

Content digitisation services

We provide fixed-price packages to help you migrate and digitise your existing content.

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Independent L&D consultancy services

We provide consultancy services to help you through your entire project journey – from developing your L&D strategy and business case for investment, all the way through to implementation, ongoing support and business improvement.