Strategic Knowledge Management in the Age of AI

How European organisations are boosting productivity and empowering the next-gen workforce.

N Notion

Contents

Introduction: How AI is redefining knowledge management

As organisations grow, knowledge becomes harder to manage. AI is reshaping how teams access, share and use information, turning complexity into clarity.

There's a rule of business that's so simple, it's rarely spoken about: An organisation's success is dependent on its ability to tap into collective knowledge. This shared intelligence fuels virtually every artery of the business: strategic decision-making, planning, communication, and productivity.

Naturally as companies grow, so does their collective knowledge—turning what was once a manageable volume of documents and data into knowledge chaos. In an effort to get things under control, teams begin to add even more tools to their business' technology stack. This solution, while well-intentioned, has an unintended consequence: it breaks knowledge down into fragments that scatter across the business, making it nearly impossible for employees to find the information they need.

AI is changing this picture by **redefining how organisations manage and leverage knowledge**. And for a new generation of workers who expect fast, intuitive, AI-powered tools, effective knowledge management is no longer a nice-to-have—it's essential.
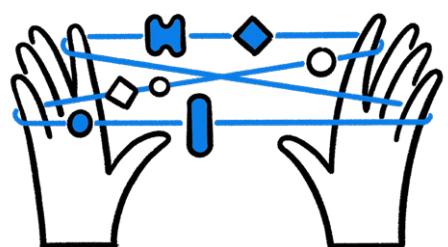
While many European businesses have begun incorporating AI into their knowledge management processes, there's enormous potential to go further. Real value emerges when AI becomes integrated into daily workflows, allowing people to harness their organisation's collective knowledge in powerful ways.
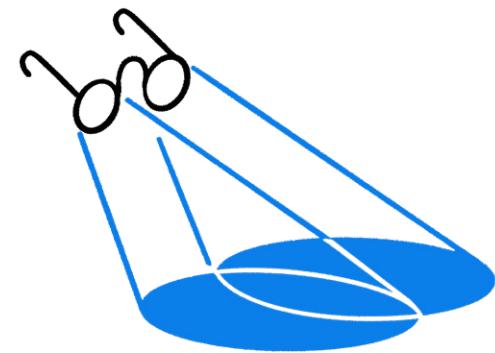
To understand how **European organisations** manage their knowledge today, we spoke to 650 decision makers and executives within IT, Engineering, Product and Design across the **UK; France; Germany; Austria; Switzerland; Italy; Netherlands; Spain; Sweden; Denmark; Norway;** and **Finland**.

Throughout this report, we will explore:

→ The business cost of inefficient knowledge management

→ How AI drives productivity gains and delivers cost benefits

→ The future of knowledge management in the AI era

The opportunity is clear: with the right systems, behaviours, and technologies in place, organisations can collaborate more effectively, make faster decisions, and gain a competitive edge.

Key findings

Most teams know knowledge matters, but managing it is still a challenge. We explore the true cost of inefficiency, how AI is transforming productivity, and what smarter, more connected knowledge actually looks like.

Organisations recognise knowledge as a strategic asset

97%

say that effective knowledge management is a **key driver for competitive advantage**

92%

believe access to up-to-date, reliable knowledge **unlocks significant value** for their business

But the reality tells a different story

81%

of business leaders admit their current knowledge management processes need **significant improvement**

28%

have a **structured, centralised approach to managing knowledge**

Current processes drain productivity

Respondents report they use an average of
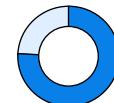
4 different tools

for work and knowledge management

Using more than one tool results in **nearly**

5 working weeks

lost a year per employee compared to using just one[1]

76%

say that **knowledge is separate from other digital tools** used in daily work

AI boosts productivity and cuts costs

Expected business outcomes from AI include:

56%

Increased productivity

48%

Less repetitive work

46%

Faster decision-making

Organisations using AI for knowledge management are

4 times

more likely to see significant cost savings than those without AI

How organisations are evolving to gain tomorrow's competitive edge

Over the next 12 months, businesses are focusing on:
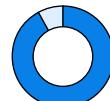
48%
Easier search and retrieval of information

46%
Integrating AI

40%
Fostering a knowledge-sharing culture

90%

say Gen Z is driving this change, demanding **greater simplicity and transparency** in their knowledge systems

22%

of organisations say **integrating AI is a top priority** over the next 12 months, but

20%
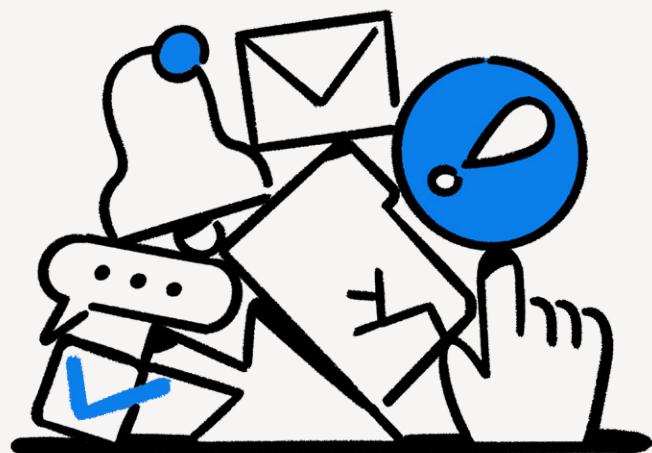
also see it as the most difficult change to implement

Section 01

The hidden cost of siloed knowledge

Siloed systems, tool overload and poor visibility are quietly eroding productivity and making fast, confident decision-making harder than it should be.

Siloed knowledge is a risk leaders can no longer ignore

When knowledge lives in silos, collaboration breaks down, decisions slow and valuable time is lost. These inefficiencies are costing businesses more than they realise, both in productivity and performance.

While knowledge is one of a business' most valuable and unique assets, most organisations struggle to fully unlock its value. Today, only **28% of European organisations report having a structured, centralised approach to knowledge management**. This means over seven in ten businesses are navigating siloed systems and scattered information, which undermines productivity and slows decision-making.

Siloed knowledge isn't just inefficient—it's a missed opportunity and a business risk that directly impacts the bottom line.

The good news? Most organisations (81%) recognise the need to improve how they manage knowledge, giving a strong signal that change is a priority. Yet many teams still struggle with knowledge silos, knowledge drain (when information is lost as employees leave), and integration issues across the many tools meant to solve these very challenges. On top of this, there is often unclear ownership and lack of strategy—which 88% acknowledge they need to improve for effective knowledge management.

81%

admit their current knowledge management processes need significant improvement

7 in 10

businesses are navigating siloed systems and scattered information

The real productivity challenge is not a lack of tools, it's having too many

More tools don't mean more productivity. In fact, tool overload is creating confusion, duplication and wasted time.

When organisations struggle with productivity or collaboration, their first instinct is often to add software to help. However, the data shows that poor knowledge management isn't caused by having too few tools—it's caused by too many.

European business leaders report their organisations use an average of four different digital tools for work and knowledge management. While each tool may address a specific need, the overall result is software sprawl—leaving businesses struggling to manage an excessive number of apps. This scattered software ecosystem makes finding and accessing information difficult: employees spend **over two hours per day** searching for information, on average. **That's more than a quarter of the standard working day lost to inefficiency**—which adds up, fast. **Employees using multiple tools lose up to 4.8 working weeks a year** just trying to find what they need to do their jobs, compared to those who use one tool.
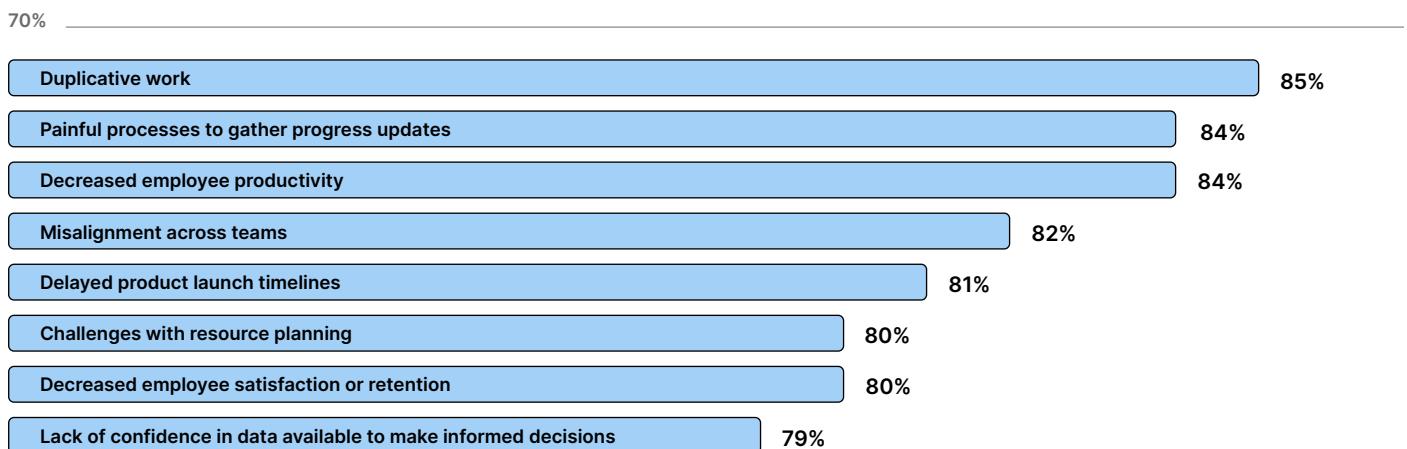
"People are overwhelmed by the number of tools, the different things you can do, and the number of things you need to know."

Meri Williams, CTO, Pleo
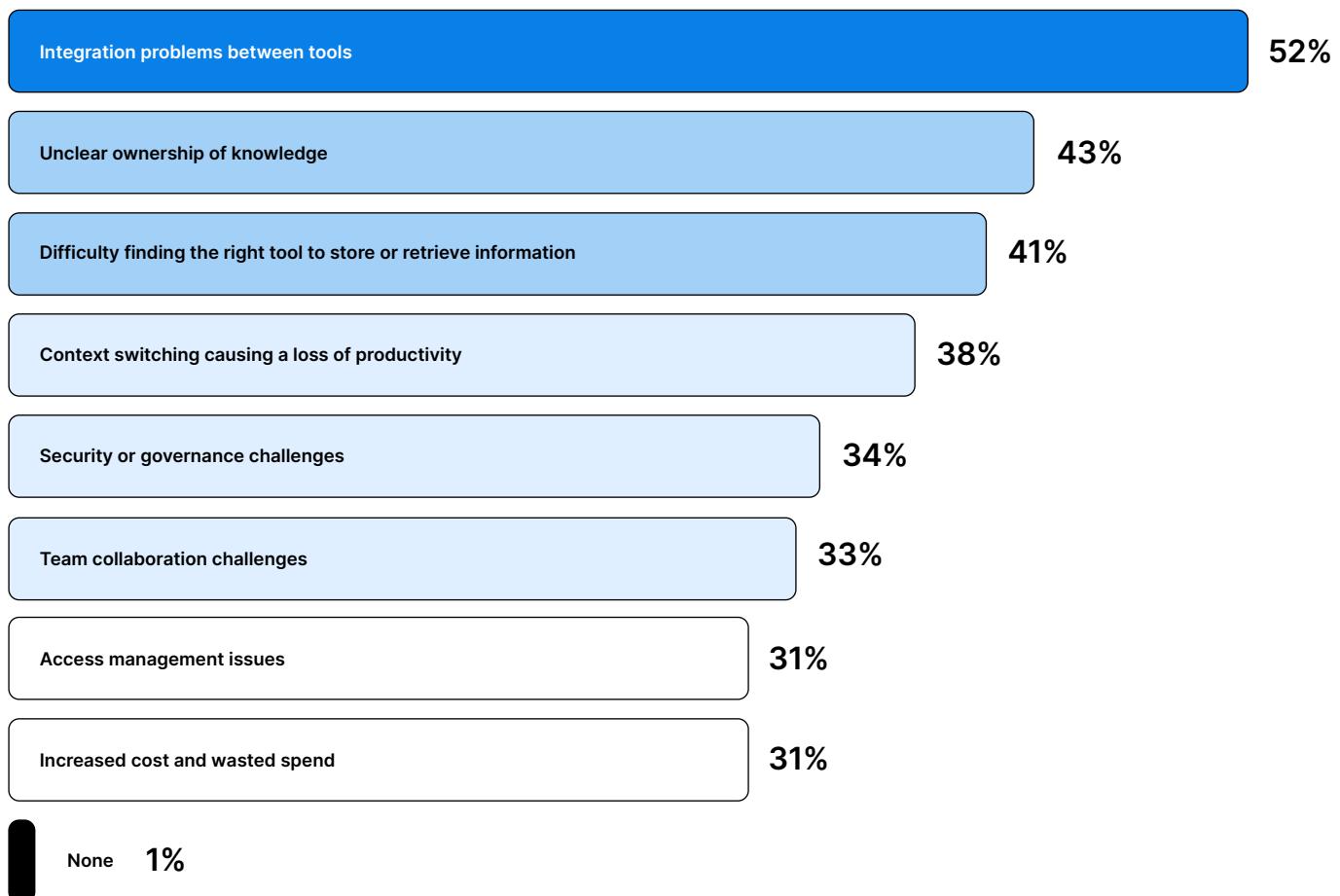
Inefficient knowledge management is holding technical teams back

The knowledge management challenges engineering, product and design leaders report are impacting their organisation

70%

Duplicative work	85%
Painful processes to gather progress updates	84%
Decreased employee productivity	84%
Misalignment across teams	82%
Delayed product launch timelines	81%
Challenges with resource planning	80%
Decreased employee satisfaction or retention	80%
Lack of confidence in data available to make informed decisions	79%

The challenges of using too many tools

The top challenges reported by organisations using multiple work and knowledge management tools

Challenge	Percentage
Integration problems between tools	**52%**
Unclear ownership of knowledge	**43%**
Difficulty finding the right tool to store or retrieve information	**41%**
Context switching causing a loss of productivity	**38%**
Security or governance challenges	**34%**
Team collaboration challenges	**33%**
Access management issues	**31%**
Increased cost and wasted spend	**31%**
None	**1%**

2 hours

on average are spent each day by employees searching for the information they need to work

1/4

of the working day lost to inefficiency caused by scattered, hard-to-find knowledge

4.8

working weeks lost each year by employees using multiple tools to hunt down information

The compounding effect of poor knowledge management

Small inefficiencies stack up. When knowledge is fragmented, the cost to collaboration and productivity snowballs fast.

When information is siloed or lost, the impact ripples across the organisation. Fragmented knowledge leads to disjointed thinking: decision-making slows and work is duplicated, creating friction for teams who are trying to collaborate effectively. Over time, these issues compound—projects take longer, and frustration builds.

While the solution is becoming more clear, it has yet to reach reality. **Most European business leaders (97%) agree that having a single, customisable tool connecting work and knowledge would boost productivity.** Yet, 76% say knowledge remains separate from their other digital systems and tools, making it difficult to access and use effectively. Too often, valuable information remains inaccessible or leaves with departing employees.
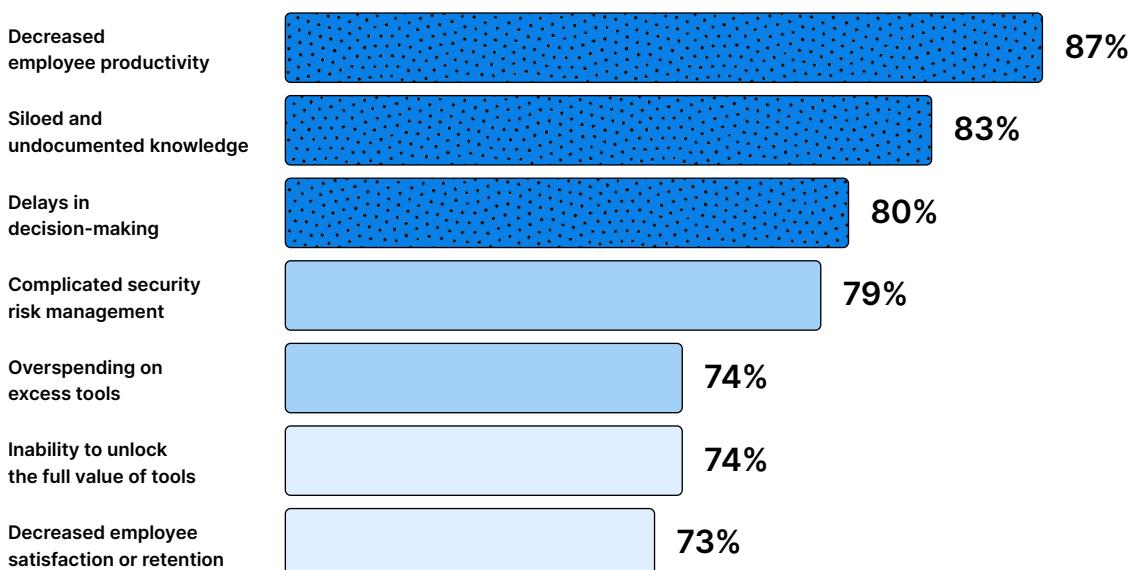
This challenge extends beyond software— it requires building a culture that treats knowledge as a shared, strategic asset. That means aligning leadership, empowering champions, and achieving early wins that embed knowledge into daily workflows.

"There's power in a single platform where you can do all your work."

Nick Erdenberger, GTM, OpenAI

For IT leaders, knowledge silos are driving risk, waste and frustration
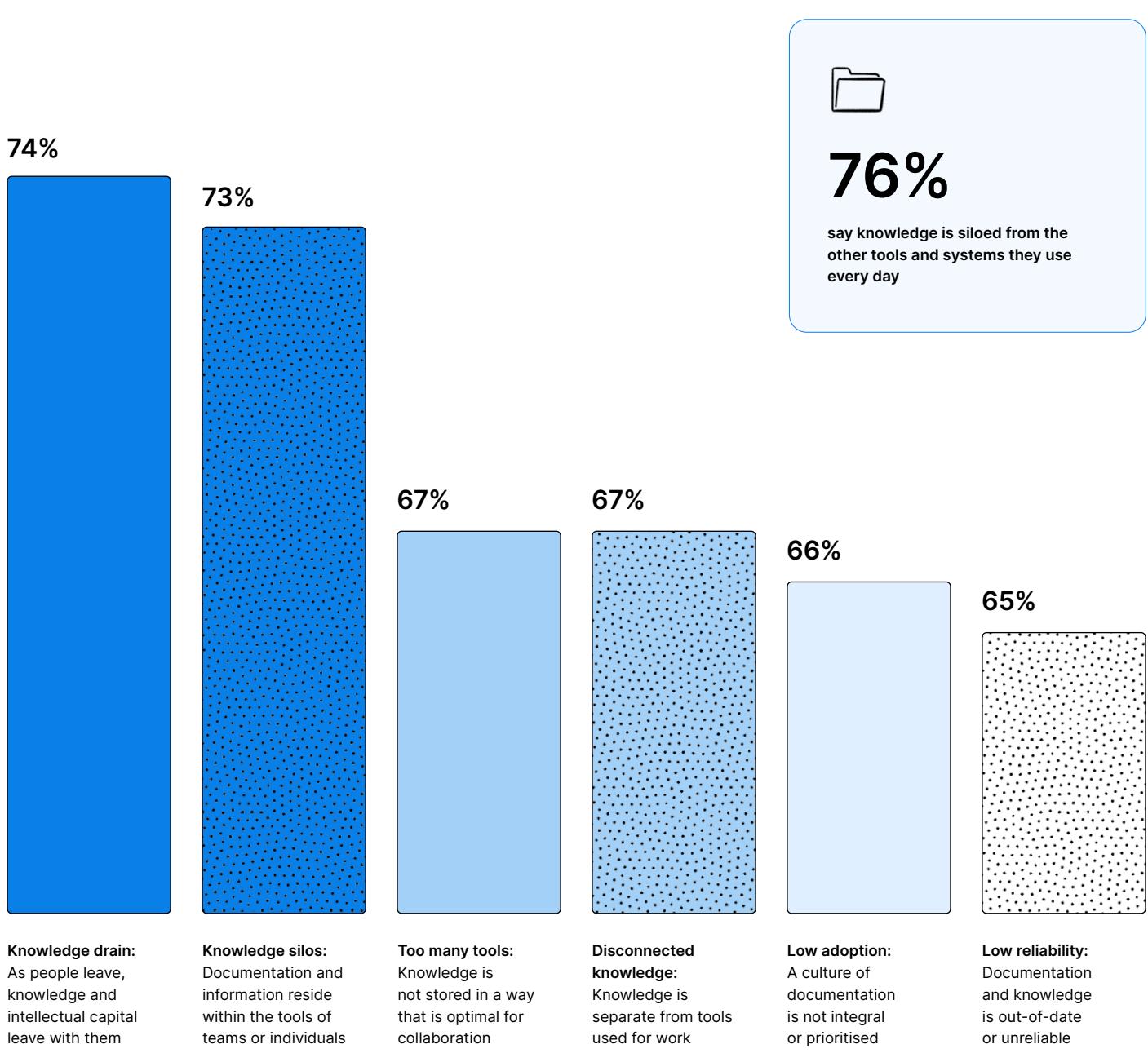
The knowledge management challenges IT leaders report are impacting their organisation

Decreased employee productivity	87%
Siloed and undocumented knowledge	83%
Delays in decision-making	80%
Complicated security risk management	79%
Overspending on excess tools	74%
Inability to unlock the full value of tools	74%
Decreased employee satisfaction or retention	73%

Knowledge is leaving the business or getting lost inside it

The top knowledge management struggles organisations are facing

76%

say knowledge is siloed from the other tools and systems they use every day

74%

73%

67%

67%

66%

65%

Knowledge drain:
As people leave, knowledge and intellectual capital leave with them

Knowledge silos:
Documentation and information reside within the tools of teams or individuals

Too many tools:
Knowledge is not stored in a way that is optimal for collaboration

Disconnected knowledge:
Knowledge is separate from tools used for work

Low adoption:
A culture of documentation is not integral or prioritised

Low reliability:
Documentation and knowledge is out-of-date or unreliable

Section 02

Unlocking productivity, time and cost savings with AI

AI is rapidly transforming how businesses across Europe manage and extract value from their knowledge. Today, 56% of organisations use AI for knowledge management— a dramatic leap from just 3% cited by the Harvard Business Review[2] in May 2024[3]. Another 29% are piloting AI initiatives, and 10% are exploring its potential.

AI-augmented knowledge creates competitive edge

When knowledge is easier to access, teams move faster, collaborate better and deliver higher-impact work. AI is turning this into a reality.

AI-powered knowledge management is rapidly becoming a competitive advantage. When information is easier to find and repetitive work is reduced, organisations enjoy faster decision-making, stronger cross-department collaboration, and higher-quality output. These improvements cascade across the organisation: quicker decisions allow teams to move with speed, seamless collaboration improves information flow, faster product launches strengthen market position, and improved customer experiences build loyalty and differentiation. As these benefits build on each other, business agility, productivity, and innovation compound—helping organisations stay ahead.
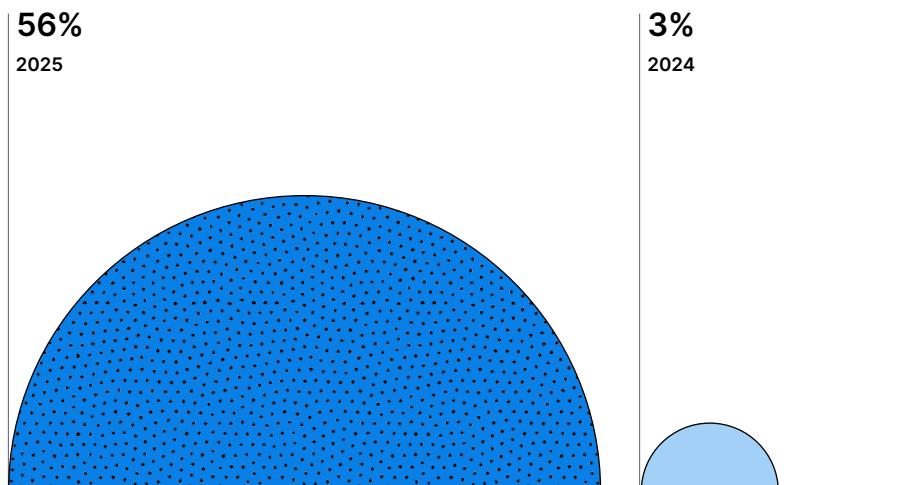
Perhaps most telling of AI's strategic impact: organisations that consider their knowledge management 'outstanding' are more likely to use AI compared to those who rate themselves as 'good' (76% vs. 55%). This underscores how AI is becoming the key to unlocking the full potential of organisational knowledge.

"I believe AI will help us store, organise and retrieve knowledge in a way that gives us deeper understanding and wisdom in what we do. This would go a long way to boost productivity, improve decision-making and enrich the employee working experience."

C-Suite/Executive, IT, technology & telecoms, UK

The past 12 months have seen a surge in AI-powered knowledge management

Percentage of organisations using AI for knowledge management

56%
2025

3%
2024

Source for 2024 figure: HBR, 2024

76%
of organisations with 'outstanding' knowledge management use AI in some capacity, compared to just 55% of those with 'good' knowledge management

4x
more likely to see cost savings — organisations using AI report stronger financial returns than non-adopters

Financial gains follow where AI leads

Organisations using AI for knowledge management are seeing major cost savings, driven by greater efficiency and faster decision-making.

Eighty-nine percent of European organisations have or expect to see cost savings from using AI to manage knowledge. Even better, those **already adopting AI are over four times more likely** to report significant cost savings than those that aren't (44% vs. 9%).
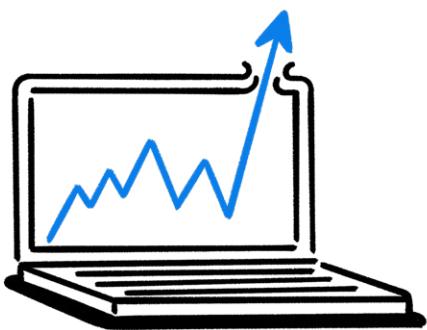
These cost benefits are largely attributed to AI-driven productivity gains. Analysis of the survey data against average wage figures finds that organisations in the UK[4], France[5], and Germany[6] currently lose between €10,448 to over €16,000 per employee annually on time spent searching for information. With AI reporting to cut search time by 45%, these costs could be nearly halved—while also freeing time for more meaningful work.

AI can enhance knowledge management and reduce inefficiencies in other ways—such as minimising context switching between applications, which studies* show can take up to 25 minutes to refocus after each tool change[7].

AI also accelerates onboarding new hires by making information easier to find—fast-tracking new employees' time-to-productivity. Additional cost savings can be achieved through AI-powered workflow consolidation and process optimisation, cutting costs on redundant tools and unused licenses.

Ultimately, AI is transforming how organisations unlock and use their collective knowledge—making them more efficient, innovative, and ready for the future.

89%
of European business leaders have seen or expect to see moderate to significant cost savings from using AI to manage knowledge
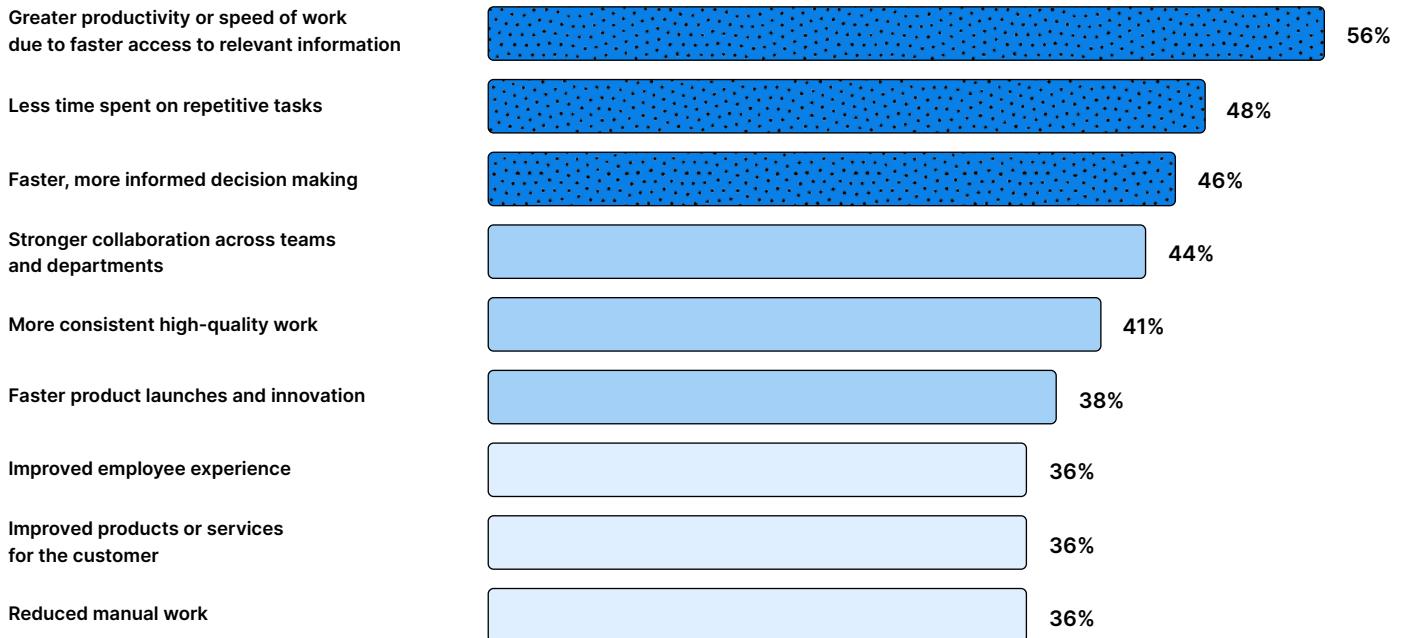
45%
reduction in search time is predicted as AI streamlines information access

Business leaders predict productivity gains with AI

Business outcomes that could be achieved by using AI to manage organisational knowledge

Greater productivity or speed of work due to faster access to relevant information	56%
Less time spent on repetitive tasks	48%
Faster, more informed decision making	46%
Stronger collaboration across teams and departments	44%
More consistent high-quality work	41%
Faster product launches and innovation	38%
Improved employee experience	36%
Improved products or services for the customer	36%
Reduced manual work	36%

Time spent searching is a major yearly expense

The average wage cost of searching for information, per year, per employee
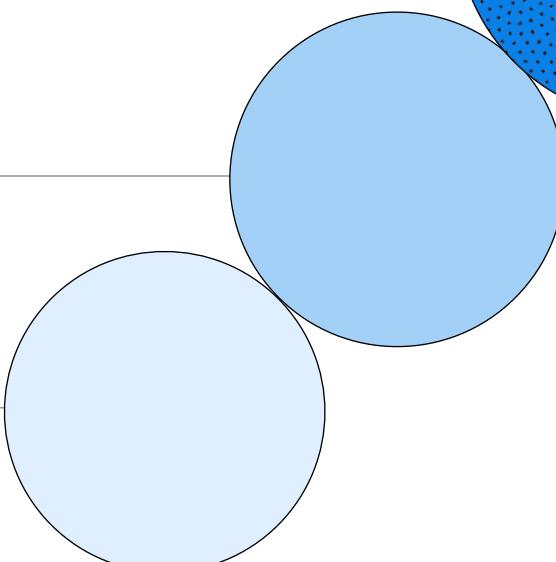
€16,170.40

Germany
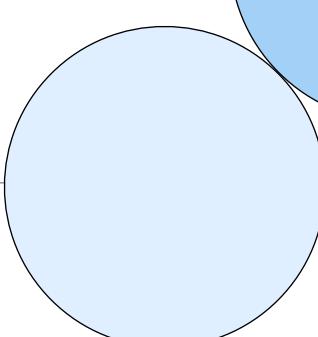
€11,388.00

France

€10,448.00

UK
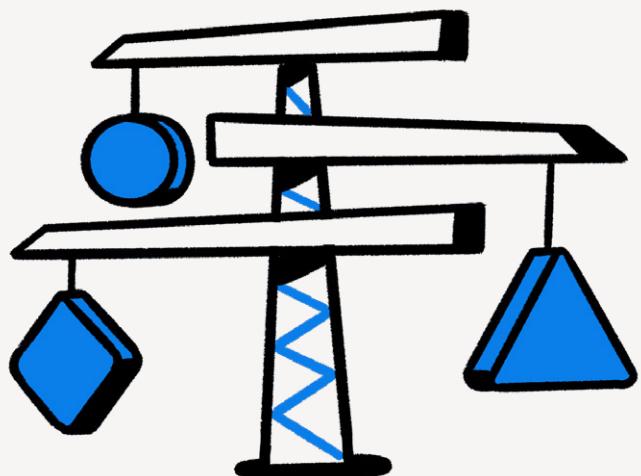
Section 03

A watershed moment for knowledge management has arrived

European businesses are reaching a turning point. As AI adoption grows and workforce expectations evolve, the focus is shifting to simpler, smarter ways to connect people with the knowledge they need every day.

The next era of knowledge is powered by search, access, and AI

The priority is clear: AI-powered tools that make knowledge searchable, accessible, and usable across the business.

Knowledge management has reached a turning point. Not being able to find relevant information has been a drain on resources, time, and money for too long—posing a challenge to sustainable growth. European business leaders are taking action and have identified several priorities for the year ahead, including: making it easier to search, access, and retrieve internal knowledge (48%), integrating AI tools and functionality (46%), and fostering a stronger culture of documentation and knowledge sharing (40%).

While the value of AI for managing knowledge is clear, a notable challenge still remains. Integrating AI tools and functionality is a top priority over the next 12 months, but it's also seen as the most difficult to implement—signalling a gap between intent and execution.

What does 'future-ready' knowledge management look like?

European decision makers envision a platform that's easy to use, access, and integrate with their organisation's existing applications. Key features they're looking for include seamless searching across multiple tools, AI capabilities, and integration with current systems. Simply put: European business leaders want tools that let them access and use knowledge effortlessly and intuitively in their daily work.

40%
of businesses are prioritising a stronger culture of documentation and knowledge sharing over the next 12 months
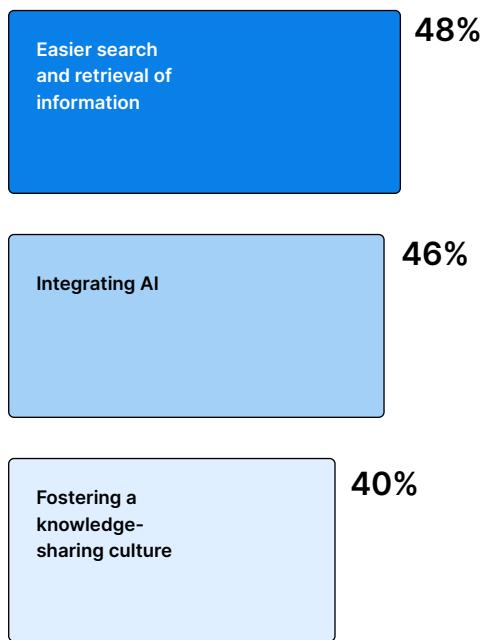
40%
**say their ideal knowledge management platform would allow users to search across multiple tools with ease**
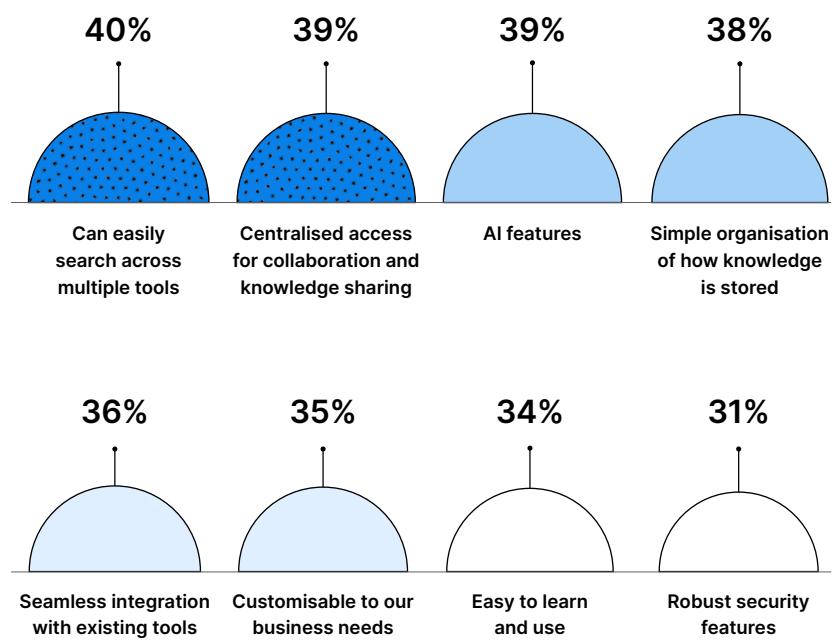
The new knowledge management priorities: Search, AI and culture

Over the next 12 months, European businesses are focusing on...

Easier search and retrieval of information — 48%

Integrating AI — 46%

Fostering a knowledge-sharing culture — 40%
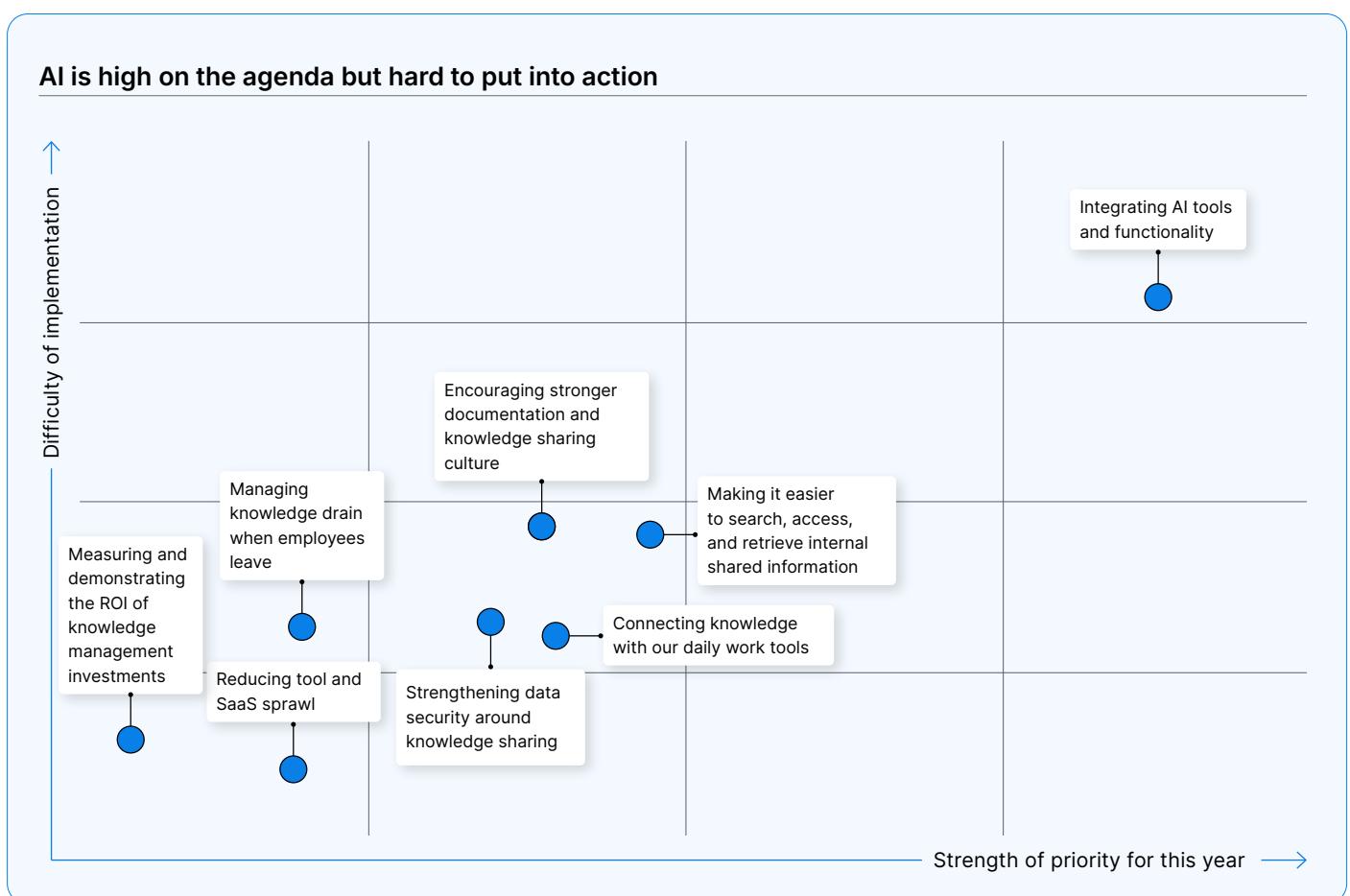
The future of knowledge management is searchable, centralised and AI-powered

What does an ideal knowledge management platform include?

40% Can easily search across multiple tools

39% Centralised access for collaboration and knowledge sharing

39% AI features

38% Simple organisation of how knowledge is stored

36% Seamless integration with existing tools

35% Customisable to our business needs

34% Easy to learn and use

31% Robust security features

AI is high on the agenda but hard to put into action

Difficulty of implementation →

- Integrating AI tools and functionality
- Encouraging stronger documentation and knowledge sharing culture
- Making it easier to search, access, and retrieve internal shared information
- Managing knowledge drain when employees leave
- Connecting knowledge with our daily work tools
- Measuring and demonstrating the ROI of knowledge management investments
- Reducing tool and SaaS sprawl
- Strengthening data security around knowledge sharing

Strength of priority for this year →

Showing responses ranked first

Gen Z are calling for simplicity, transparency, and the latest tools

With high expectations and digital fluency, Gen Z is accelerating the shift toward simpler, smarter ways of working.

Generation Z **is acting as a catalyst** for AI adoption in knowledge work. Currently representing the youngest members of today's workforce (aged up to 28 years old), by 2035 this group is projected to be the largest generation in the workplace[8]. They expect modern, user-friendly tools—and aren't willing to settle for legacy systems:
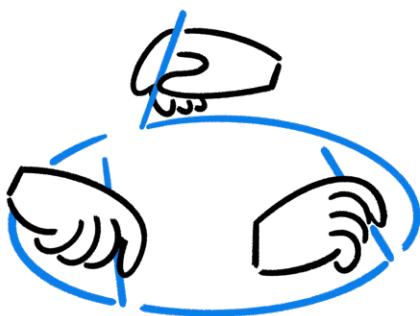
→ 94% of respondents believe Gen Z expects the same level of **ease in their work tools as they do in their personal life**

→ 90% say that Gen Z are more likely to push for **tool consolidation and simplicity of organisational knowledge**

→ 90% report that Gen Z wants **greater transparency across information systems** to build trust with their employers
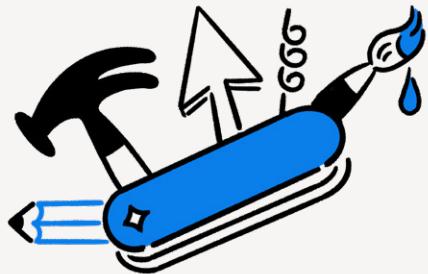
The majority of European business leaders (88%) believe Gen Z employees are driving the demand to use AI for creating and managing knowledge—a belief even more prevalent among organisations already using AI (92% vs. 73%). Similar findings from McKinsey (2025)[9] indicate that more employees are using generative AI than senior leaders expect, with the push coming from increased familiarity across the younger generation of workers.

88%

of European business leaders believe Gen Z employees are driving the demand to use AI to create and manage knowledge

Conclusion

European businesses recognise knowledge as mission critical, but their existing processes and systems often obscure rather than optimise it. Well-intentioned efforts to make knowledge more actionable have had the unintended consequence of forming siloed teams that use an ever-increasing number of tools. This development has had the knock-on effect of slower decision-making, duplicated work, and a costly sprawl of digital tools that bury information within.

Some AI-first companies like Parloa, Ramp, and Vercel are already realising tangible gains in productivity and cost savings. But for the vast majority, true transformation will require embedding AI where work happens, simplifying their tool stack, and fostering a culture that champions the continuous creation, sharing, and refinement of knowledge.

In other words, the evolution of knowledge management will not be defined by technological advances

97%
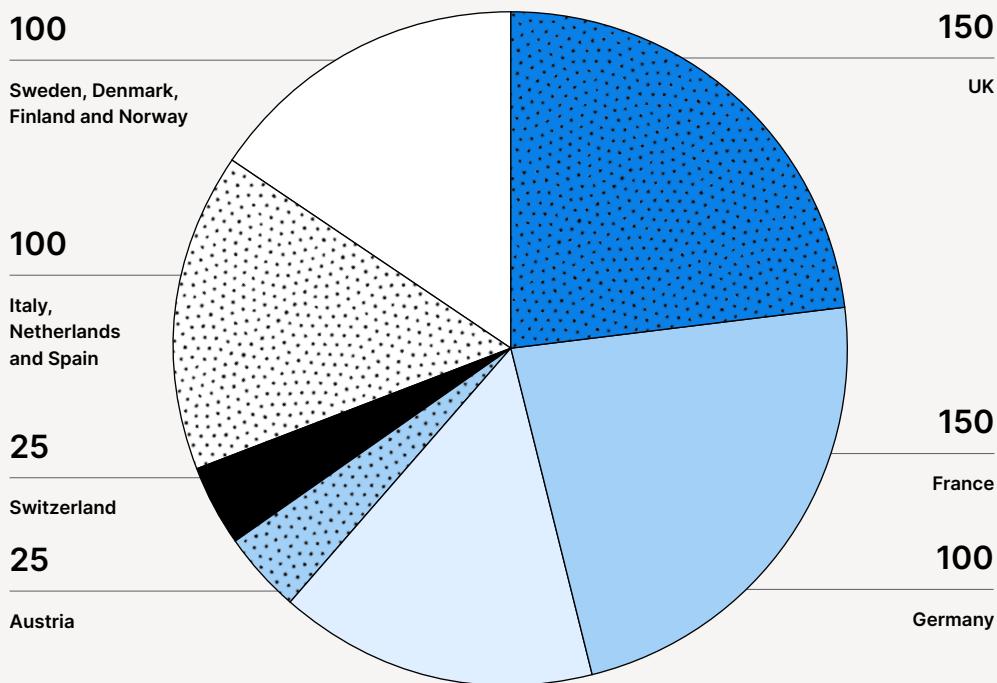
agree that having one customisable tool that connects work and knowledge would boost productivity. This in turn could protect institutional knowledge long-term

alone, but instead by how seamlessly it integrates with the way people work. Organisations are looking for simplicity and connectivity—tools that unify information and make it easily shareable, discoverable, and most importantly, usable across the business. European businesses are poised to unlock unprecedented value from their knowledge—but only if they embrace the right tools to make it happen.

Methodology

The data within this whitepaper is based on 650 responses from decision makers and executives within IT, engineering, product and design functions. These respondents came from organisations with over 100 or more employees, in all private sectors, in European markets as follows:

100

Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway

100

Italy, Netherlands and Spain

25

Switzerland

25

Austria

150

UK

150

France

100

Germany

Notion

Notion helps you build beautiful tools for your life's work. In today's world of endless apps and tabs, Notion provides one place for teams to get everything done, seamlessly connecting docs, notes, projects, calendar, and email—with AI built in to find answers and automate work. Millions of users, from individuals to large organisations like Volvo, Figma, and OpenAI, love Notion for its flexibility and choose it because it helps them save time and money.

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[1] Calculated by using the average amount of time saved using one tool versus multiple when looking and finding information x the average number of working days in EMEA a year (250). This is then divided by the average 40 hour working week, and represents per employee.
E.g., 46 minutes (0.76 hours) x 250 days = 190 hours a year
190 hours a year/ 40 hours = 4.8 weeks

[2] Supercharging Company Knowledge with AI

[3] Please note, the HBR research and the Vanson Bourne research are different surveys and should be compared with caution and used more as indication of how AI use has changed

[4] Employee earnings in the UK - Office for National Statistics

[5] Salary in France in 2025

[6] Minimum wage and average salary in Germany in 2025 | Expatica

[7] How Long It Takes to Get Back on Track After a Distraction | Lifehacker

[8] How is Gen Z changing the workplace? | Zurich

[9] AI in the workplace: A report for 2025 | McKinsey