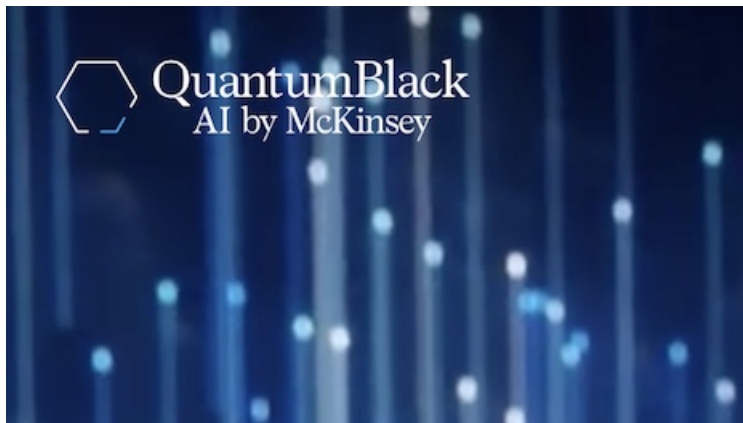


SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

## AI integration creates tech role surge amidst diversity woes: McKinsey

January 26, 2023



*McKinsey's latest report details the rise of AI roles amidst a talent drought, furthering the diversity crisis in tech. Image credit: McKinsey*

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

As artificial intelligence (AI) changes the landscape of varying industries, team diversity has yet to catch up to the hype, per the results of a new survey.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Consulting firm McKinsey & Company is out with the latest edition of [Global Survey on AI](#), detailing an industry five years in review. Data paints an interesting picture – while many entities are putting greater resources behind the technology, with roughly one of every two companies integrating AI into at least one function, hiring and upskilling could use improvement, to the benefit of overall business performance.

"As I look at these results on talent, I see both how far we've come with AI and how much work is still to be done in some areas," said Helen Mayhew, partner at QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey and partner at [McKinsey & Company](#), in a statement.

"Five or so years ago, software engineering would not have been classified as the highest-priority AI role because many organizations focused on simply building discrete models as they experimented with the technology," Ms. Mayhew said. "But as the business value became clear, organizations realized the need for insights from AI to be delivered into a front end where people can consume and apply them for impact.

"The hiring of machine learning (ML) engineers similarly shows the maturation of AI. Businesses need this role now because they're working to embed ML into systems regularly and reliably."

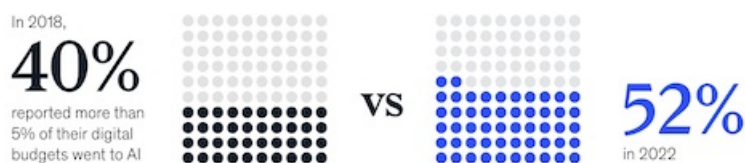
For the report, McKinsey fielded an online survey from May 3 to May 27, 2022, and from Aug. 15 to Aug. 17, 2022, asking a total of 1,492 participants questions about their organizations' AI use, garnering responses from 1,492 participants representing a full range of regions, industries, company sizes, functional specialties and tenures. The firm adjusted for differences in response rates by weighing the data by the contribution of each respondent's nation to global GDP.

AI takeover

Of all survey 1,492 survey respondents, 744 said their organizations had adopted AI in at least one function.

As the demand for AI continues to build, new jobs are created annually, though not at an outpaced rate. In fact, AI usage began to plateau in 2022, as has been the case with other technological innovations.

McKinsey's survey pinpoints a pipeline issue as the primary reason why – in this case, companies are reporting a lack of qualified candidates available to fill AI-related roles.



*Companies are putting more money behind AI capabilities year-over-year. Image credit: McKinsey*

McKinsey's Global Survey on AI found that as companies come to the realization that AI integration requires further role creation and organization, many are backing out, despite the demand.

Results suggest that many companies simply do not have the infrastructure to support implementation, having not invested in the proper resources needed ahead of time. The average team requires a data engineer, data scientist, product manager, machine-learning engineer and designer at the very least, each highly versed in AI, according to McKinsey.

"Every time a new major technology comes out, we all wonder if this is the end of the world we know, the beginning of the new world, or simply an evolution," said Mathieu Champigny, CEO of **Industrial Color**, New York.

"AI is changing, and will forever change the game for many tech roles, from developers to designers to writers, but with that said, it is not the end of the tech jobs," Mr. Champigny said. "It means tech professionals will need to adapt faster and differentiate their skillset earlier and faster.

"AI will make it easier for more people to become techies and will promote a broader access to technology, in general, by removing what used to be strict technical hurdles."

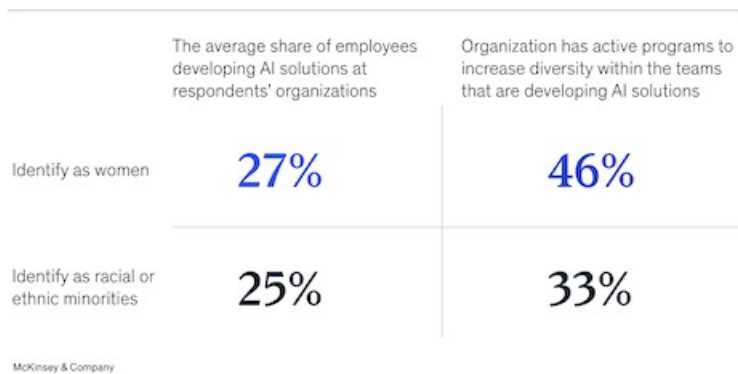
#### Diversity dearth

Considering corporate accounts of a talent shortage per McKinsey's survey, companies attempting to fill these newly-created roles are resorting to creative recruitment methods. Bootcamps, academic institutions and smaller tech firms are among the channels that larger organizations are tapping to fill these gaps.

In the process, though, diversity appears to be falling by the wayside as companies scramble to establish new sourcing methods and find people that are qualified to fill the new roles.

Only 27 percent of AI employees surveyed identify as women, with a quarter identifying as racial minorities. Whether it be due to lack of bandwidth or pipeline problems, few seem to be taking steps to fix this dearth of diversity.

However, companies that are engaging in other tech innovations are working to alleviate this issue.



*McKinsey's survey showcases diversity statistics for AI teams. Image credit: McKinsey*

One recent event spotlighting solutions was this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) showcase, at which brands presented innovations in sustainability and inclusivity, highlighting the ways that diversity has the potential to shape consumer-facing industries for the better ([see story](#)).

In the luxury space specifically, some companies are working to provide employees with the skills needed to contribute to state-of-the-art developments. Supplementation and professional development on this front allow for in-house hiring on the part of the companies, advancing the knowledge base of diverse employees already present ([see story](#)).

Moves such as this help to sidestep the issue of needing to search externally for those who may or may not have the skill set to support AI functions. The internal investment could work to encourage employees to grow into these transformational roles.

"While diversity has improved in tech companies over the past 10 years, there is still a gap in women and ethnic minorities representation in tech and AI companies," Mr. Champigny said.

"While the talent pool is still limited in the AI industry, the tech and innovation leaders tend to identify internal talent and promote from within," he said. "This allows to reward high performers with a more exciting career path and helps promote diversity in a very tight space.

"Let's not forget that the most innovative AI tools must still learn at some point, and having a diverse team is the best way to make sure innovation serves progress for all."