November 30, 2021

RADIANCE ON THE ROAD
LONDON

Are RPA and AI Living Up to the Hype?

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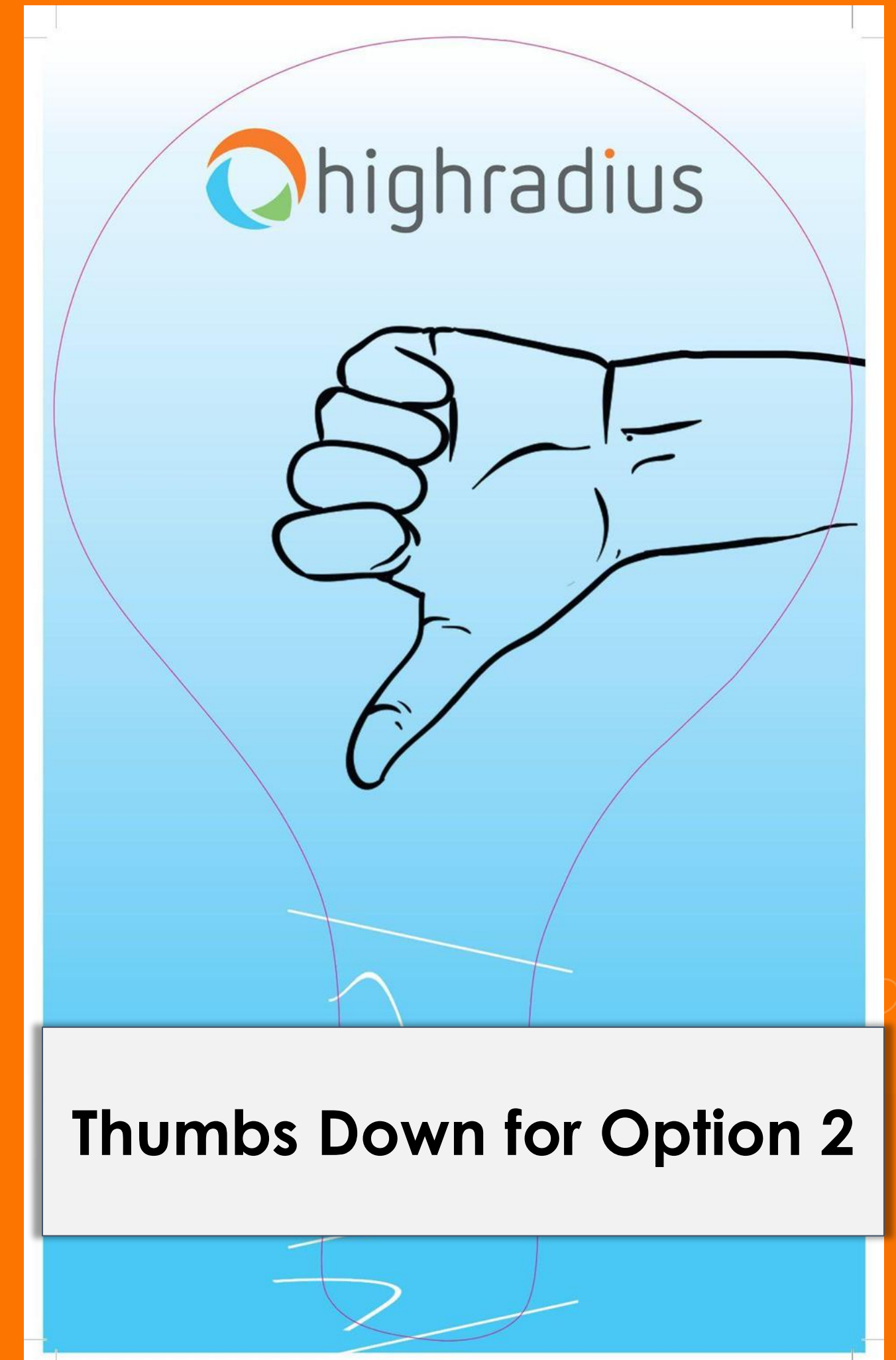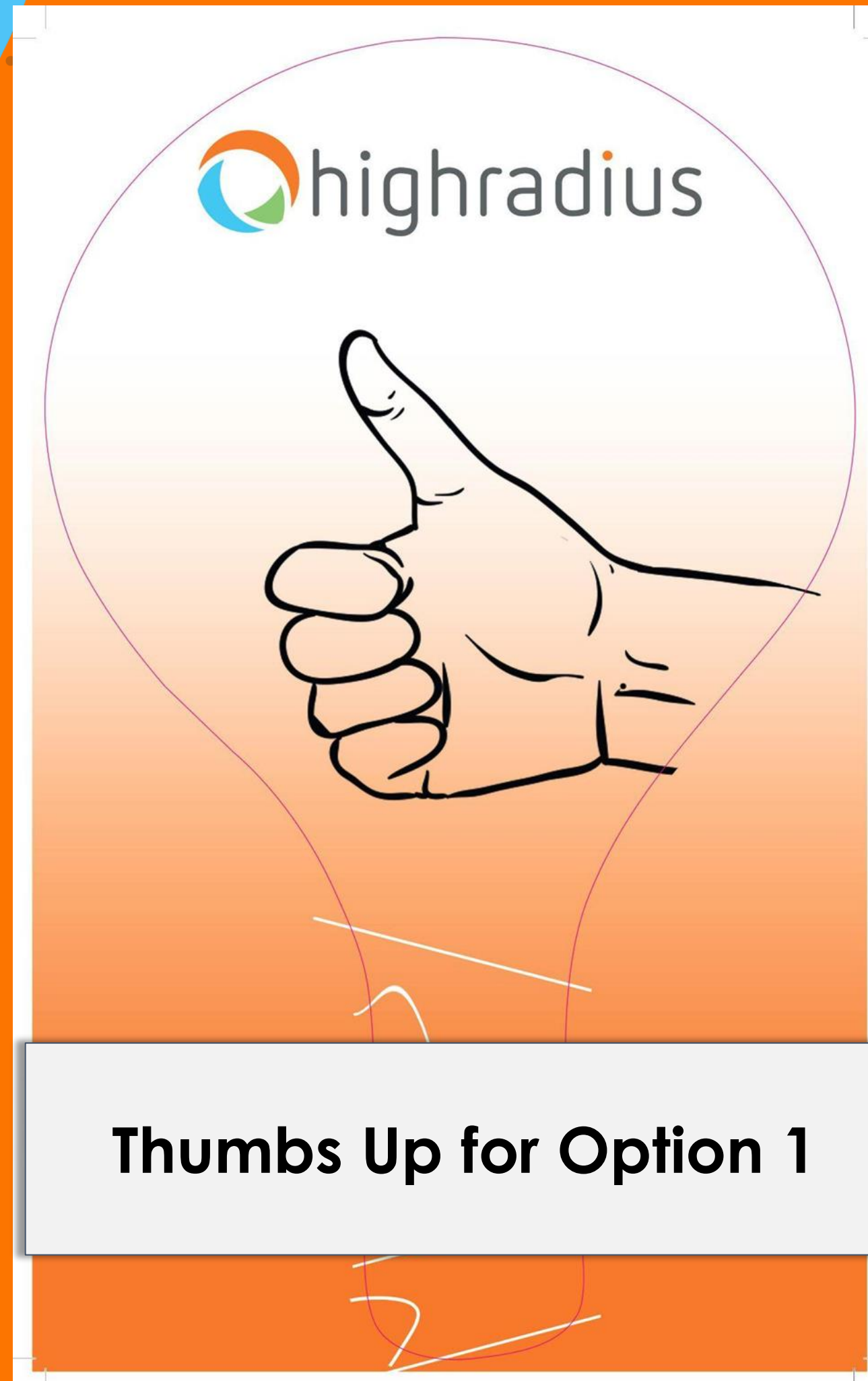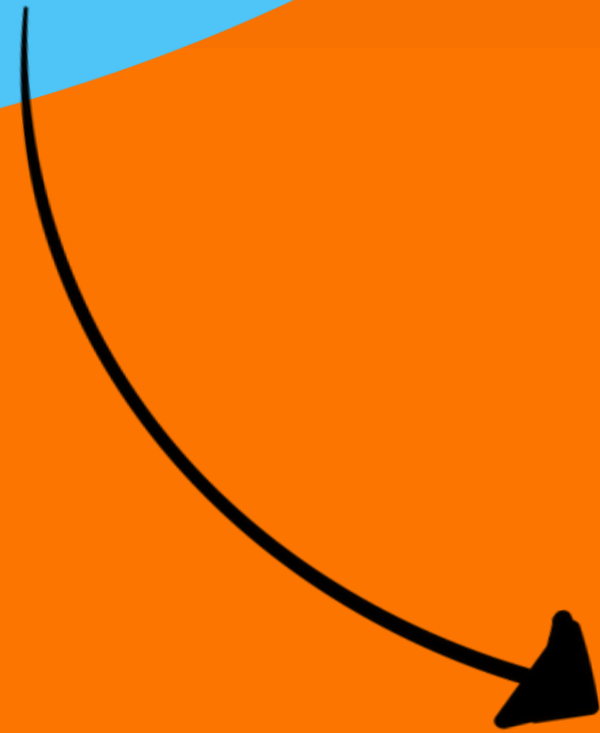pwc

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Transformation Director
BT WHOLESALE

How Do I Cast My Vote During the Presentation?
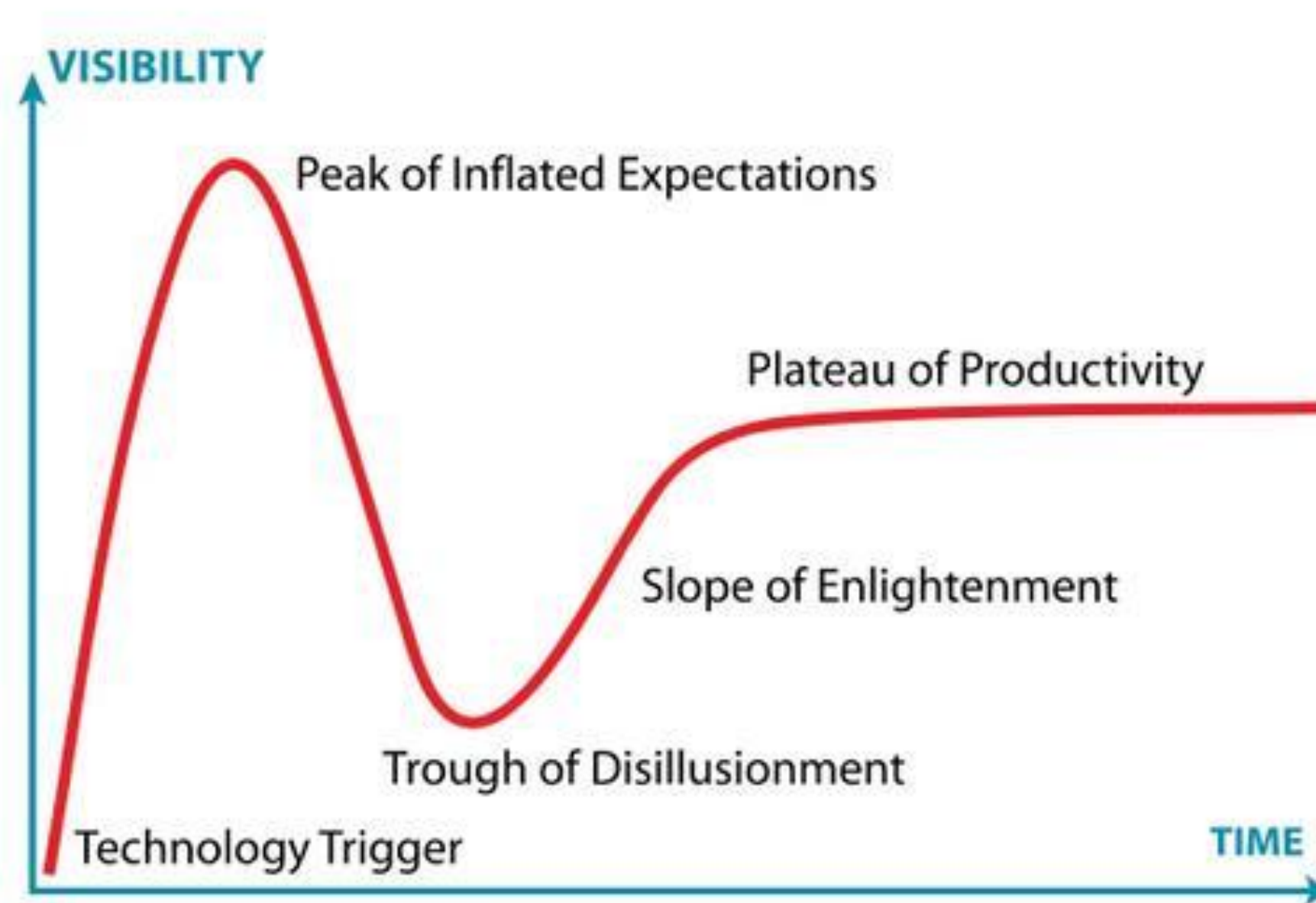

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Thumbs Up for Option 1

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Thumbs Down for Option 2

RPA and AI have promised great things, but are they living up to the hype?

Gartner Hype Cycle

VISIBILITY

Peak of Inflated Expectations

Plateau of Productivity

Slope of Enlightenment

Trough of Disillusionment

Technology Trigger

TIME

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Who was surveyed?

North America
34%

South America
4%

Europe
49%

Middle East and Africa
3%

Asia
10%

C-Level (CEO, CIO, CFO) — **9**%

Head of Shared Services/GBS — **18**%

Head of Process (such as P2P, O2C, R2R, Process Owner) — **25**%

Managerial Role (AR Manager or AP Manager) — **23**%

Operational role (AR Analyst or AP Analyst or Process Specialist) — **8**%

Other (Please Specify) — **17**%

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How mainstream are RPA and AI tools?

RPA is 'mainstream' at 54%

AI is still an emerging technology at 35%

Excel spreadsheets	Our ERP(s)	RPA bots	In-house, custom-built technology	AI- and Machine Learning-based software	Cloud-based Order-to-Cash Software
95%	76%	54%	52%	35%	22%

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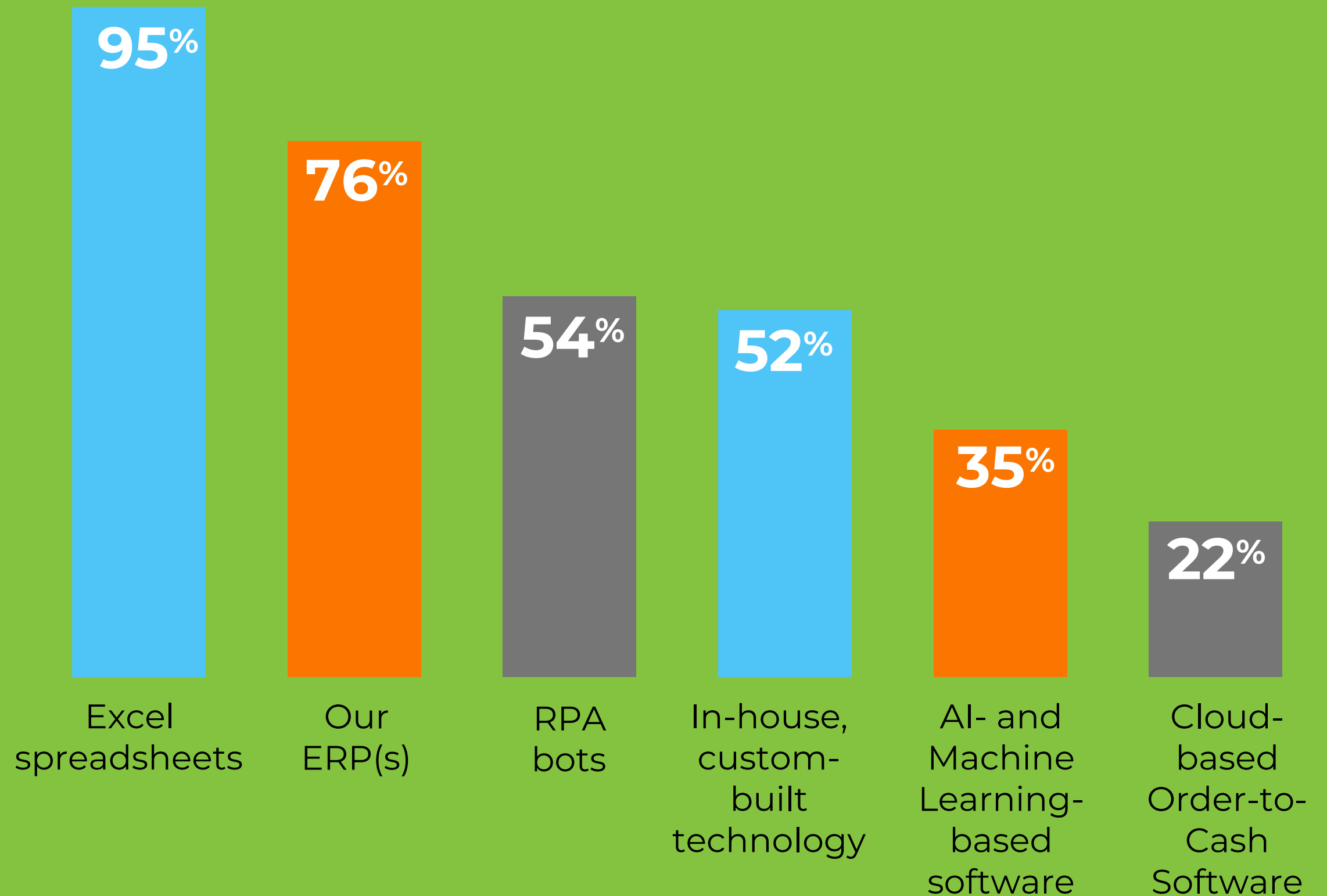
What are RPA and AI being used for today?

Automating simple, repetitive user-actions — RPA 63%, AI 8%

Document processing — RPA 50%, AI 22%

Data aggregation from various applications — RPA 30%, AI 9%

Scraping data from websites and portals — RPA 29%, AI 7%

Support analysts with day to day decisions — RPA 24%, AI 21%

Converting unstructured data — RPA 14%, AI 16%

Predictive analytics — RPA 7%, AI 21%

■ RPA   ■ AI

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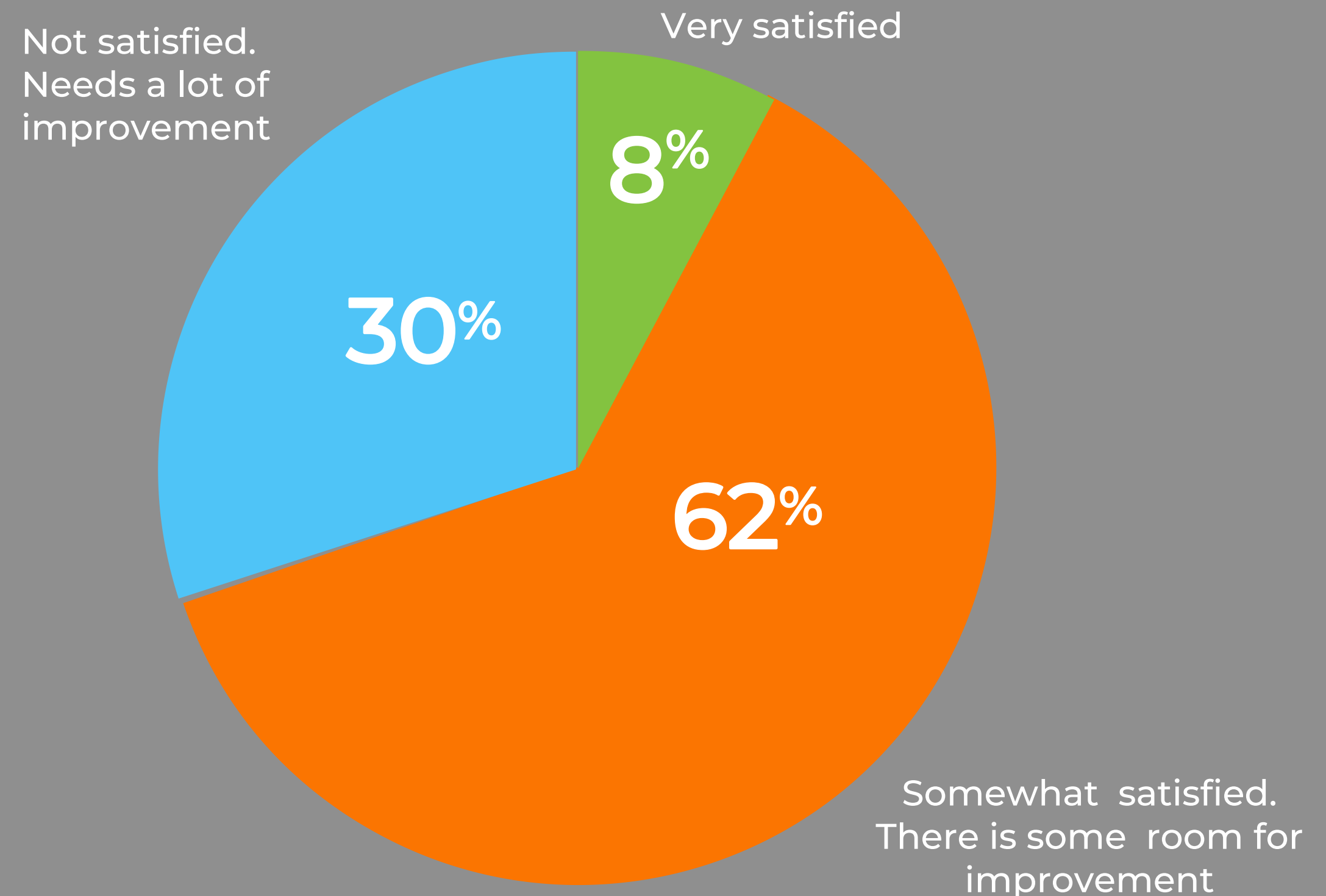
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92% could be happier with their level of automation

92% see room for improvement when it comes to automation with only 8% "very satisfied".

In addition, 69% said they are spending too much time on manual tasks.
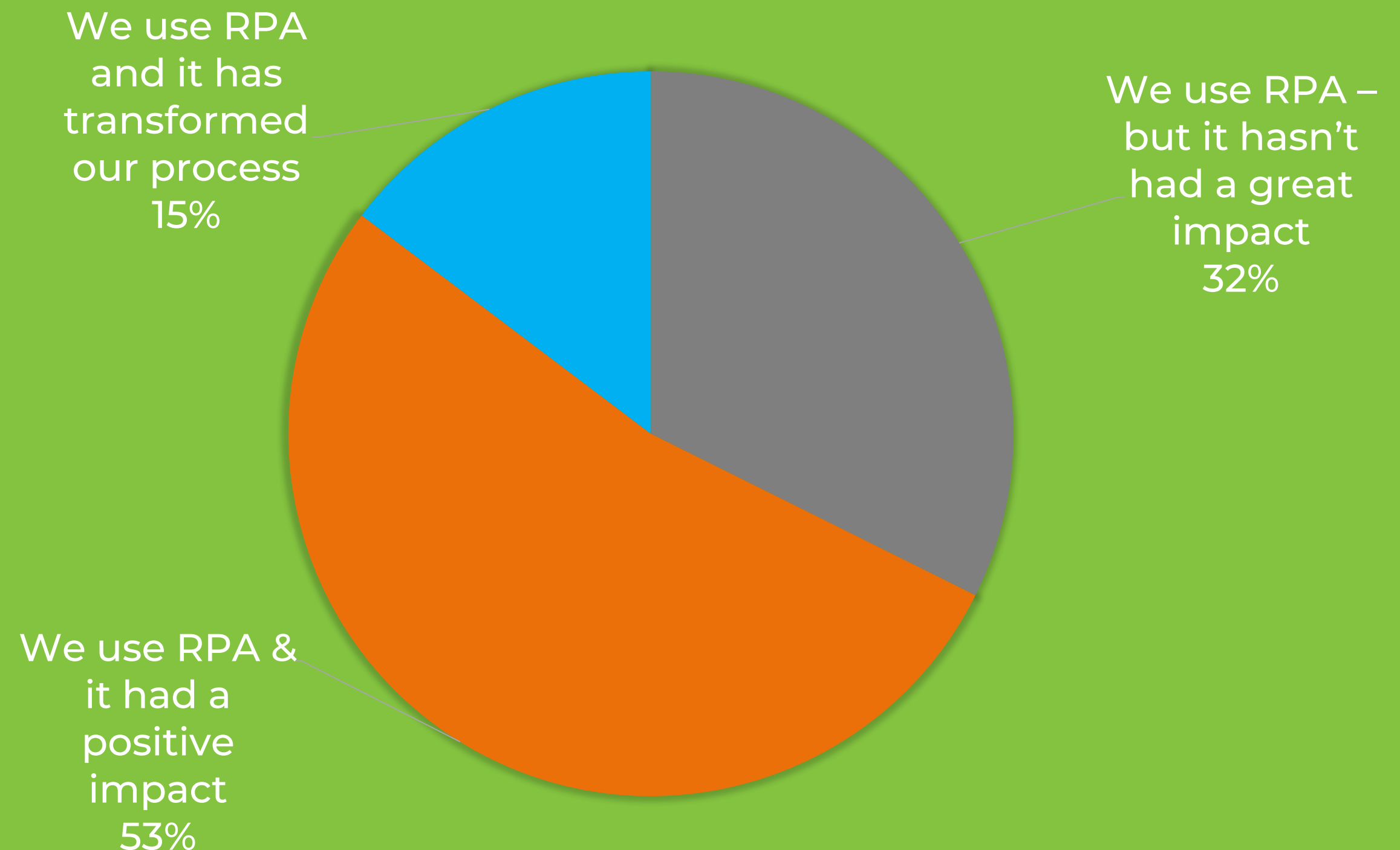
A modest 17% say data drives their decision making.

Not satisfied. Needs a lot of improvement

Very satisfied

8%

30%

62%

Somewhat satisfied. There is some room for improvement

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Let's look specifically at RPA Adoption

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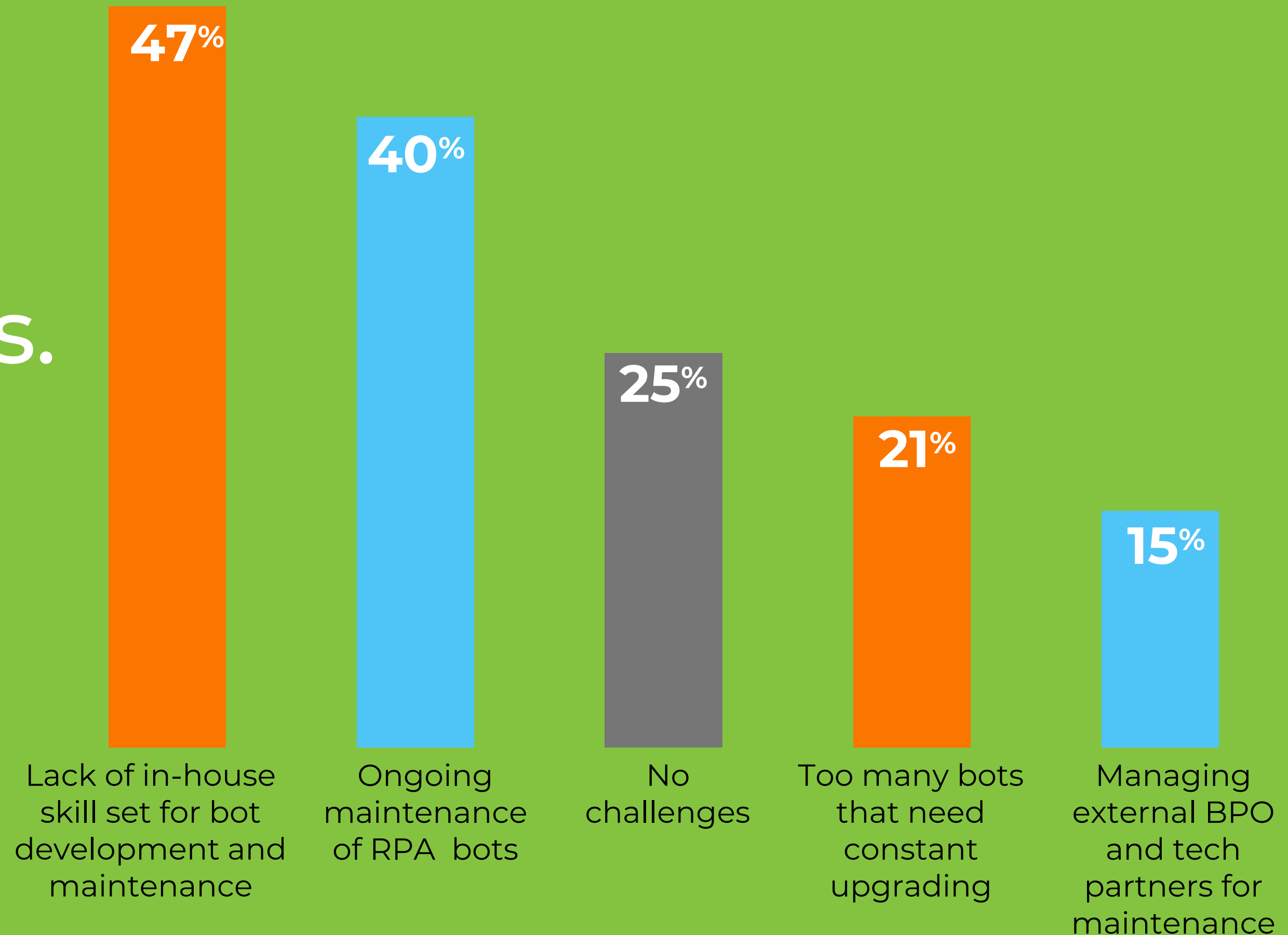
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Of the 54% that use RPA in Finance today...

Two-thirds are generally happy as the impact has been positive (albeit not transformative in a wide scale).

We use RPA and it has transformed our process
15%

We use RPA – but it hasn't had a great impact
32%

We use RPA & it had a positive impact
53%

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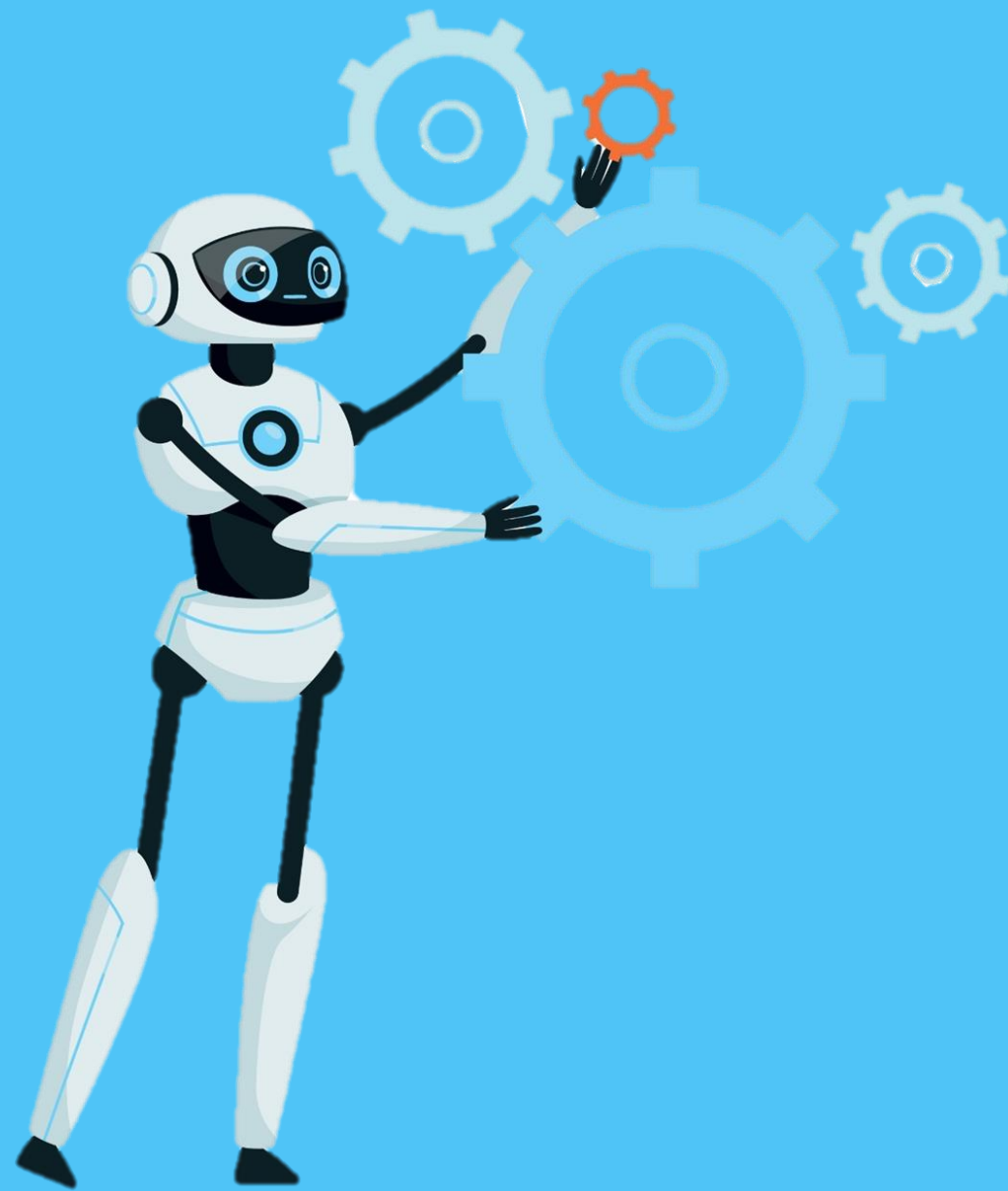
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Implementing RPA is not without its issues. Just under half are faced with a skills gap.

Many respondents see maintenance and upgrading bots as an ongoing issue.

47% — Lack of in-house skill set for bot development and maintenance

40% — Ongoing maintenance of RPA bots

25% — No challenges

21% — Too many bots that need constant upgrading

15% — Managing external BPO and tech partners for maintenance

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RPA is prevalent, but there are challenges and limitations

- A third of companies using RPA feel that it hasn't had a great impact

- RPA is mainly leveraged for automating routine tasks, not for more analytical functions or processes

- Almost half of the respondents say the lack of in-house skill set is a major challenge for their RPA implementation

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Now turning to AI Adoption

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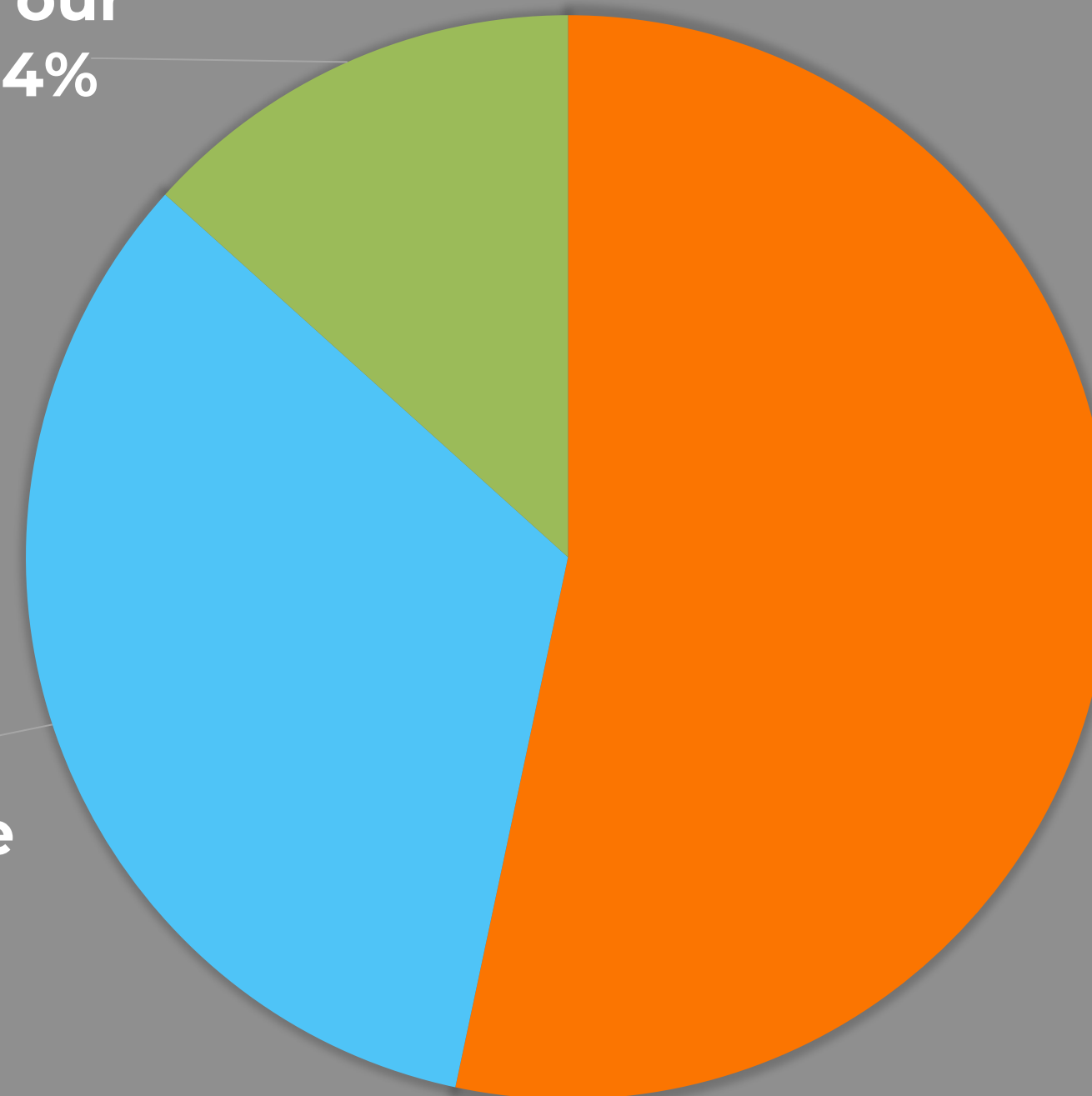
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Zeroing in on the 35% of respondents that have deployed AI tools...

Just under half have had a positive experience with AI so far.

We use AI and it transformed our processes, 14%

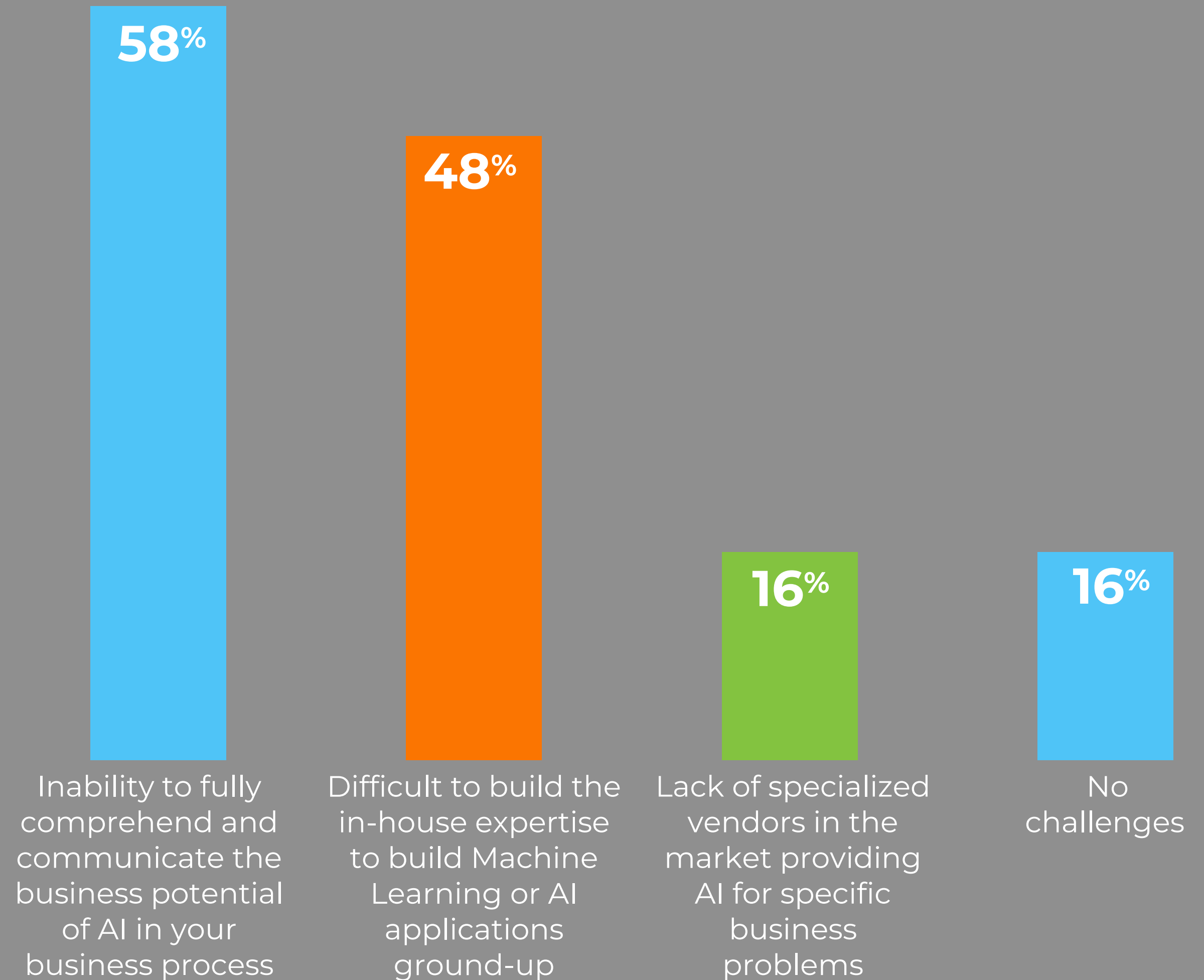**We use AI, but it hasn't had a great impact, 53%**

We use AI and it has had a positive impact, 33%

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Integrated Receivables
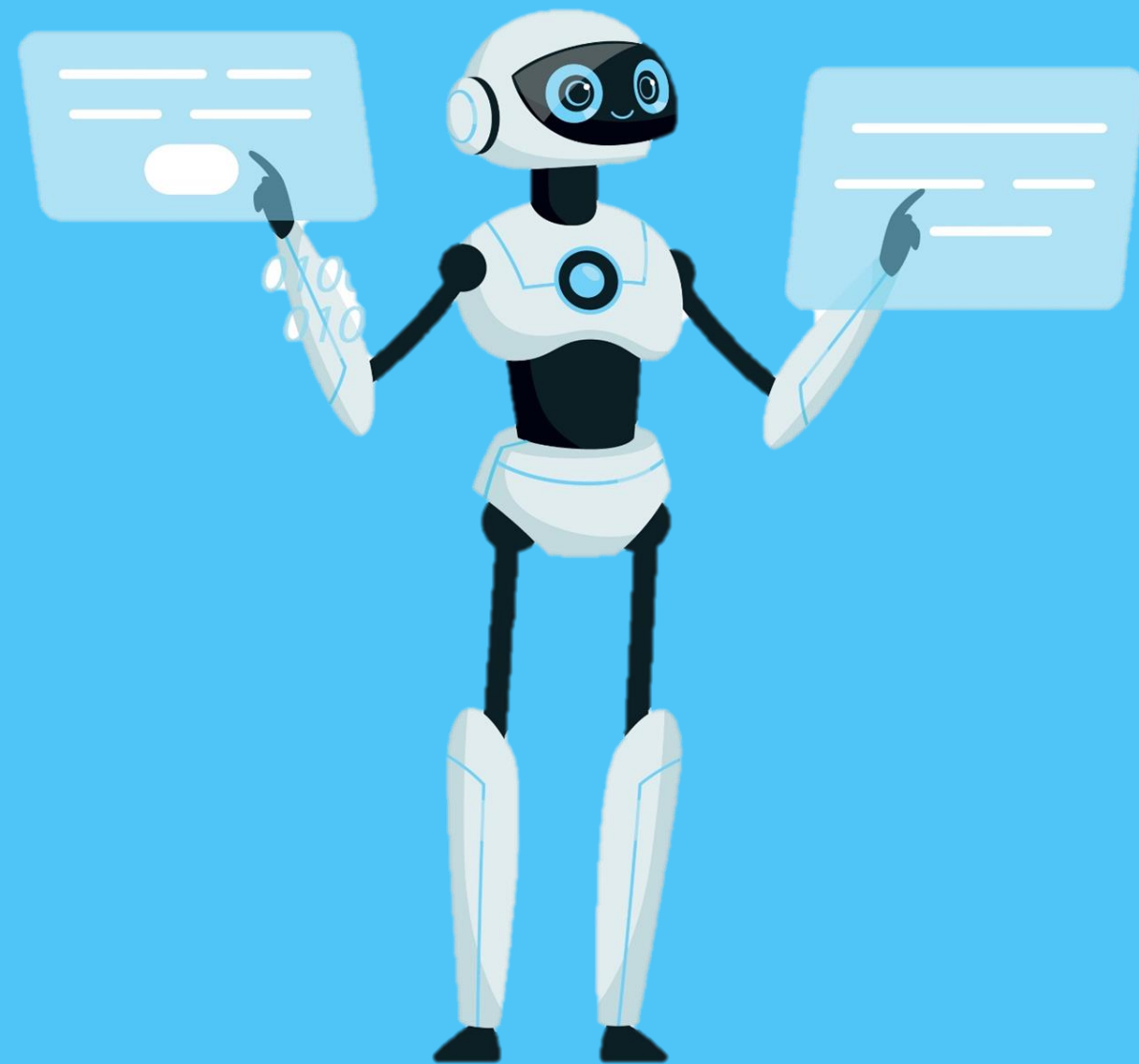
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Skill gaps continue to be an issue with 48% of respondents lacking expertise.

Users struggle understand and communicate the value that AI can deliver.

All this is symptomatic of working with an emerging technology.

58% Inability to fully comprehend and communicate the business potential of AI in your business process

48% Difficult to build the in-house expertise to build Machine Learning or AI applications ground-up

16% Lack of specialized vendors in the market providing AI for specific business problems

16% No challenges

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AI is not widely adopted and has yet to show its true potential

- The main challenge we see is the inability to communicate the full potential of AI in transforming your business processes

- A lack of skill sets is still a major challenge

- When it is used, it is used for more analytical and decision support functions

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Some of the problems

Insight on AI

RPA and AI are best used together

"We had a tricky start... 'automation' already in place, which needed to be undone before it could be redone (which significantly affects ROI)"

Too rigid a "cost-benefit" policy was established, controlled by people not involved in the details of the tasks being requested for RPA.

"AI has been more transformative than RPA.

"AI is not used at all, but it probably should be. Bots replace manual effort but RPA does not extend, enhance, or improve the process. My constant challenge to developers is 'OK, but what else can it do?'"

"Reduced SG&A from $18 billion to $4 billion. 50% increase in productivity over the past 18 months, 97% of transactions frictionless commerce. $6.5 billion of incremental value created in finance using predictive analytics over the past 12 months"

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Survey Key Findings

- Most aren't satisfied with their level of automation, and their data isn't helping power decision making

- A majority are using RPA to some extent. Most have a positive experience and are using it to reduce manual tasks

- A minority are using AI, and they seem to be split between a positive and neutral to a negative experience. When it is used, it is to empower analytics

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So...have RPA and AI lived up to the hype?
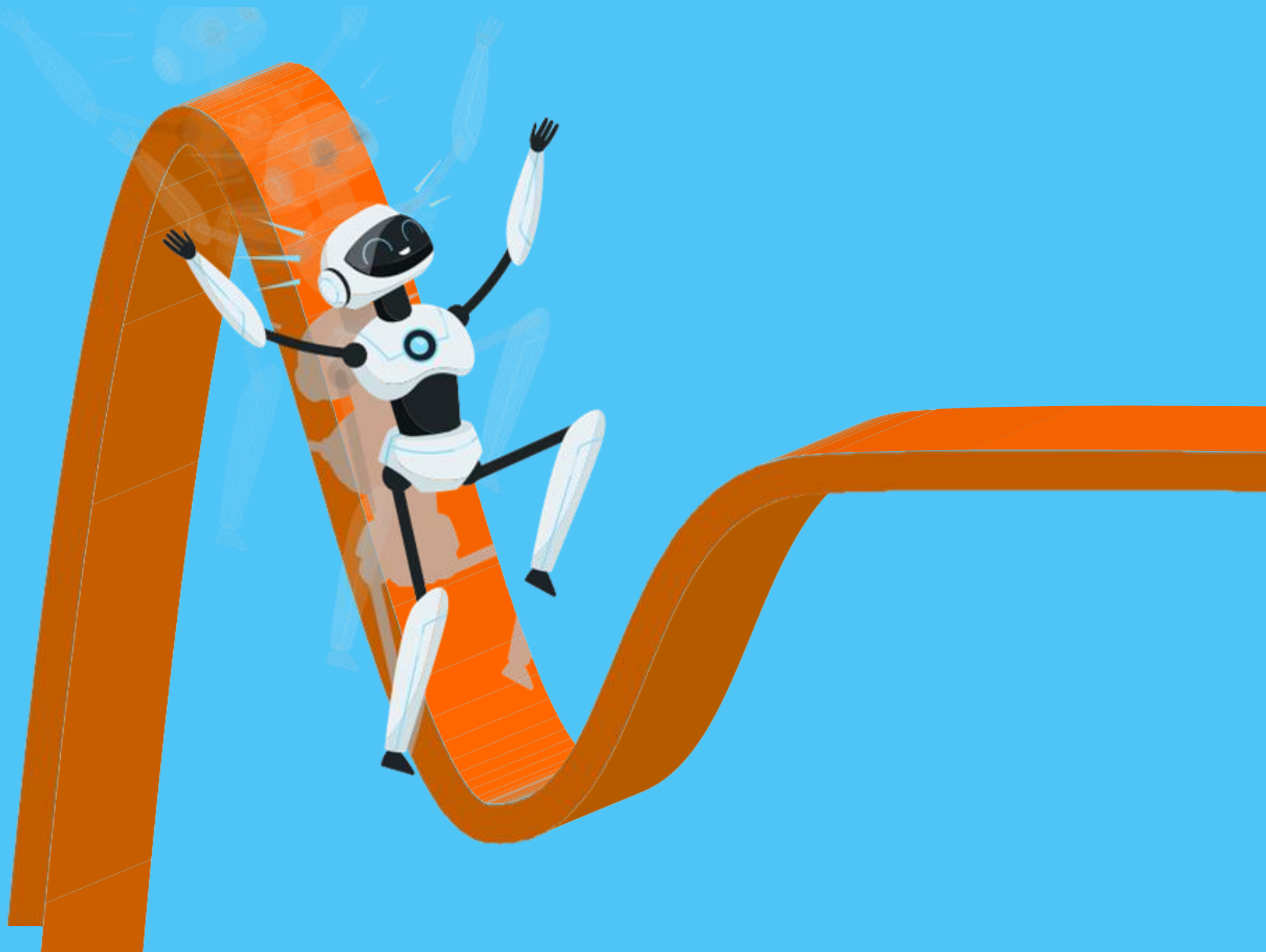
No. Not yet

These tools are not silver bullets. The robots haven't taken over!

RPA is mainstream but limited to automating manual tasks. The skills gap needs to be closed, and the maintenance of bots needs to be addressed

AI is emerging. As the market has more access to use-cases and becomes more informed, this solution will flourish

A/R Legacy Systems - Should you solely rely on them to run your operations in today's date?

Poll Question

01 **Are you currently using any third-party automation solutions for your order to cash?**

A. Yes

B. No

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Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Solutions - Key things to know before implementing them

Artificial Intelligence (AI) -
Is it better than RPA?

Poll Question

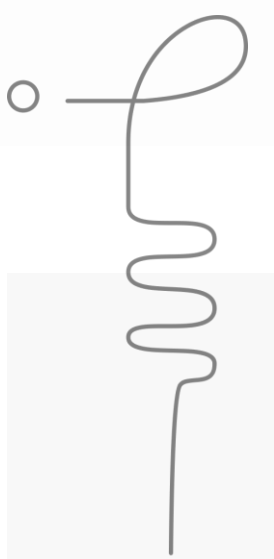**02**   **Does your future plan include implementing RPA or a combination of RPA and AI?**

A. RPA

B. RPA+AI

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AI or RPA
Which one should you bet on?

Hybrid-Tech Stack for A/R
Are you missing out on these tech?

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Food For Thought

- Is there a situation where you would say an organisation does not need AI, and must settle for working with just RPA? Can you give an example?

- What are some of the concerns that you have about Artificial Intelligence? What's the positive factor that makes you think AI-adoption in finance will rise despite your mentioned concerns?

- Is a hybrid tech stack going to be cost-effective? How should one create a business case for it?

- From the survey, 92% organisations said they could be more happy with their automation capabilities. Cost of automation still being a restraining factor, is digital adoption in the future going to increase, or remain the same?

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NEXT SESSION

PageGroup

Speaking Session

Elevate Your Order to Cash to The Front Office: Tips and Strategies from The Page Group

Roeland Smets, PageGroup

14:50 GMT