



The State of AI in HR: Balancing Efficiency and Strategy

Insights from the 2025 HR Professional Survey regarding adoption, demand, and barriers in China.

HKU Centre for AI, Management, and Organization

China International Association for Promotion of Science and Technology

Zhongguancun Talent Association



From Time Liberation to Strategic Elevation: AI as an Enabler



AI Demand

HR Reporting and **Resume Screening** emerge as the top priorities, revealing clear expectations for AI: automating high-volume administrative tasks.



Time Liberation

AI demand is primarily driven by **Task Time** and mitigated by **Working Satisfaction**



Strategic Pivot

The liberated time can be strategically reinvested into higher-value works such as **workforce planning**, maximizing the impact of HR.

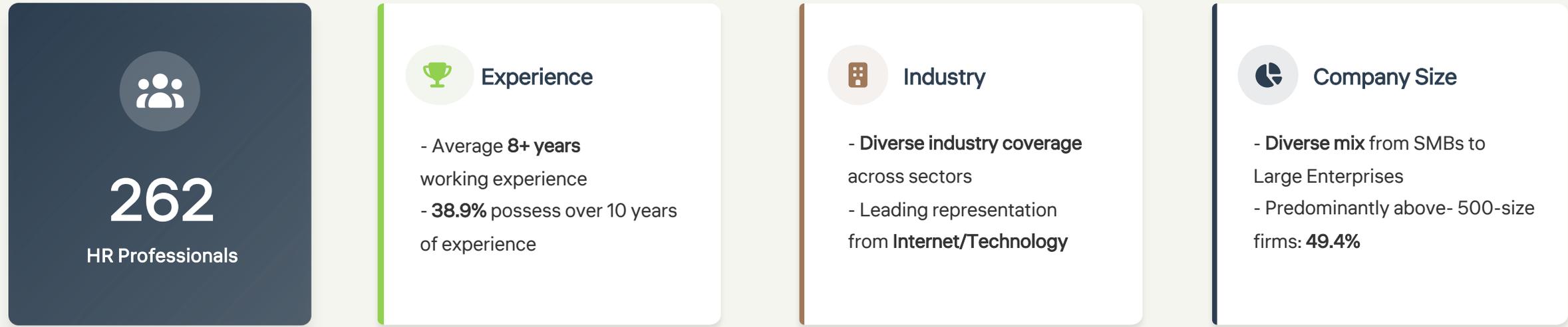


The Barrier

Data security stands as the paramount barrier to adoption, with integration into existing HR systems as a key operational hurdle. These concerns necessitate AI solutions that are not only secure but also seamlessly integrable into current systems.

● Time Liberation ● Strong Demand ● Strategic Pivot ● Security Barrier

Who Took the Survey? Experienced HR Professionals Across Sectors

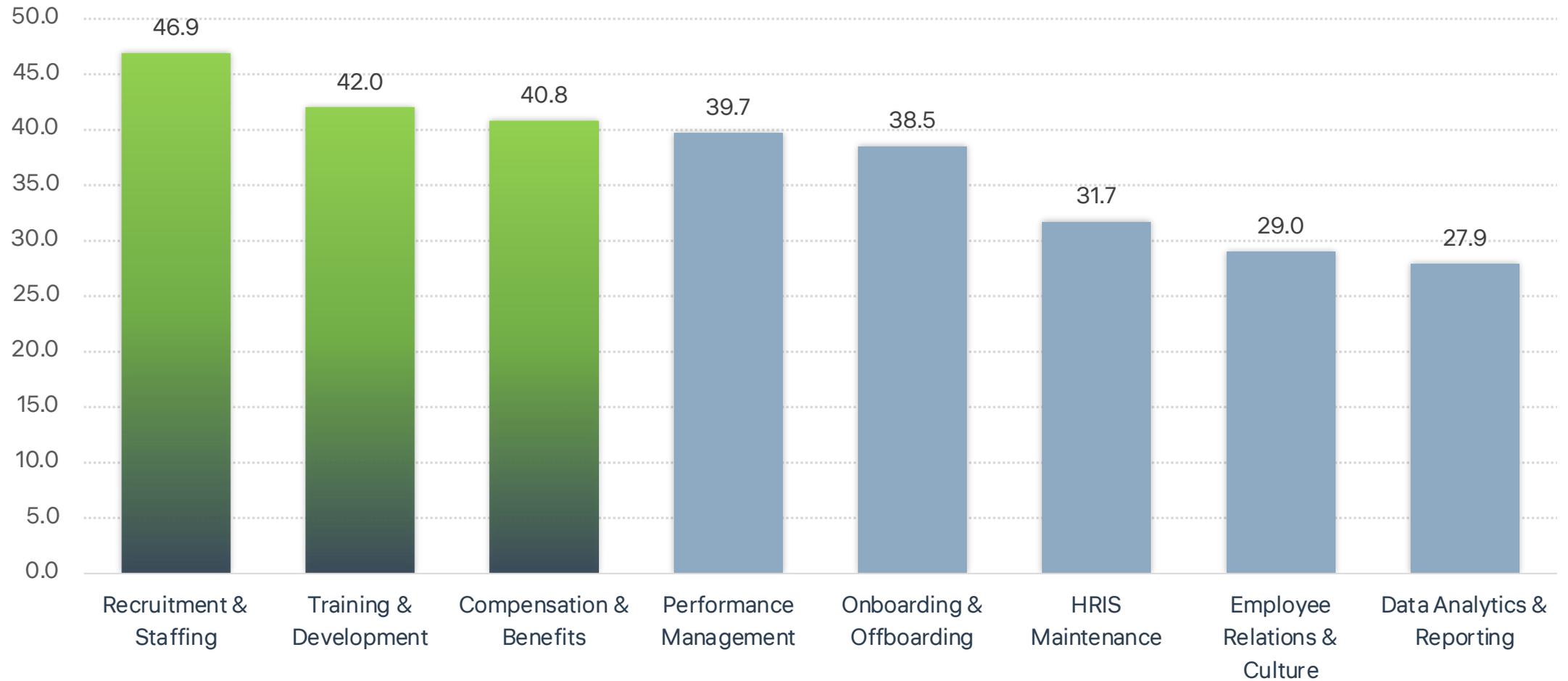


Respondent Profile Overview



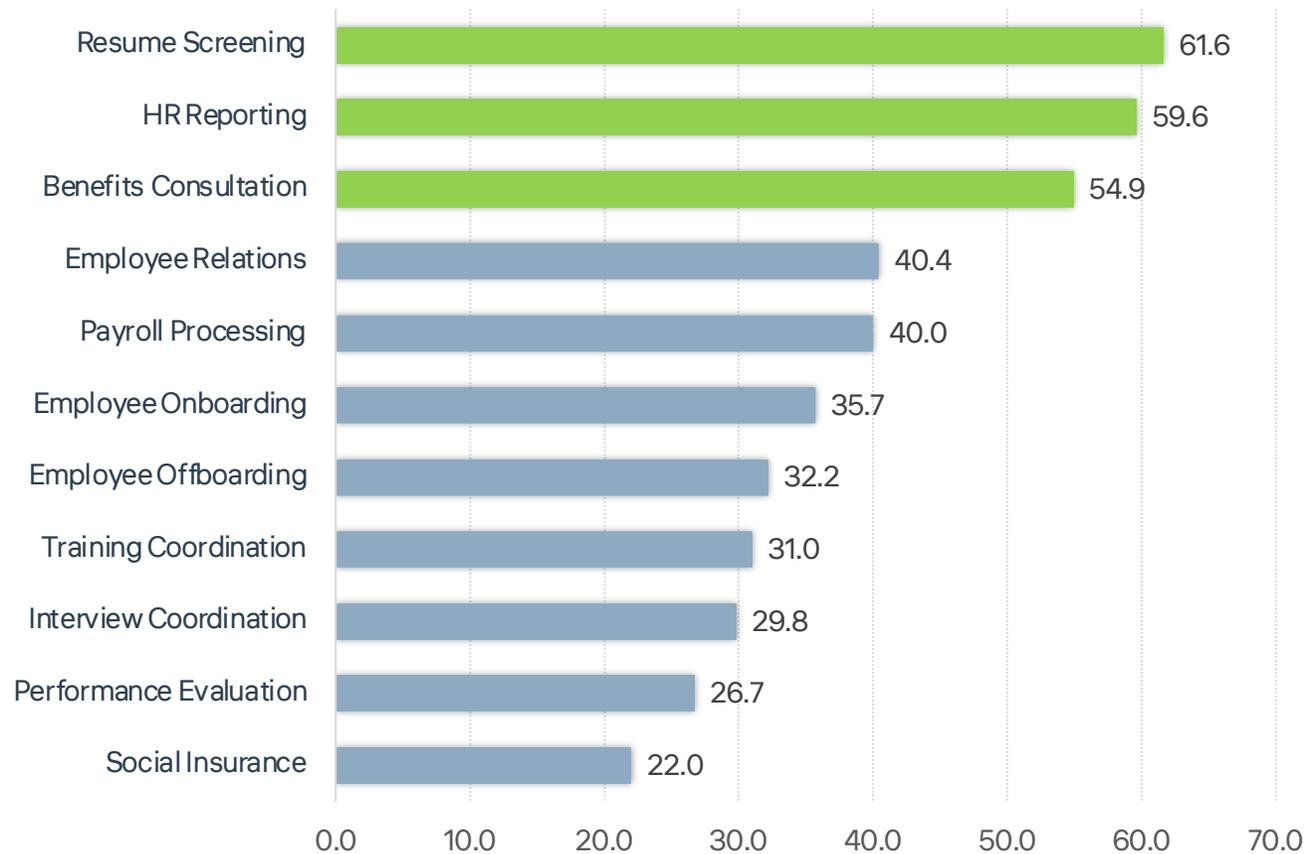
Primary HR Functions: Recruitment & Staffing

Primary HR Functions (% of Respondents)



The Demand: High-Volume Administrative Tasks Are the Primary Target

Selecting Top 5 HR Tasks to be assisted with AI (% of Respondents)



★ Survey Question

“From the following tasks, select your top five tasks for which you would most like to receive AI assistance.”

- The percentage for each task represents the proportion of respondents who included it in their selection.

Characteristics of Top AI Priorities



High Time Consumption

These tasks require substantial manual hours.



Repetitive Nature

Rule-based processes are ideal for automation.



Volume Intensity

High-frequency tasks offer efficiency gains.

Overview: High Time Consumption Directly Fuels High Demand

Top Time Consumer

HR Reporting

17.9 hours/week

Highest Error Risk

Employee Relations

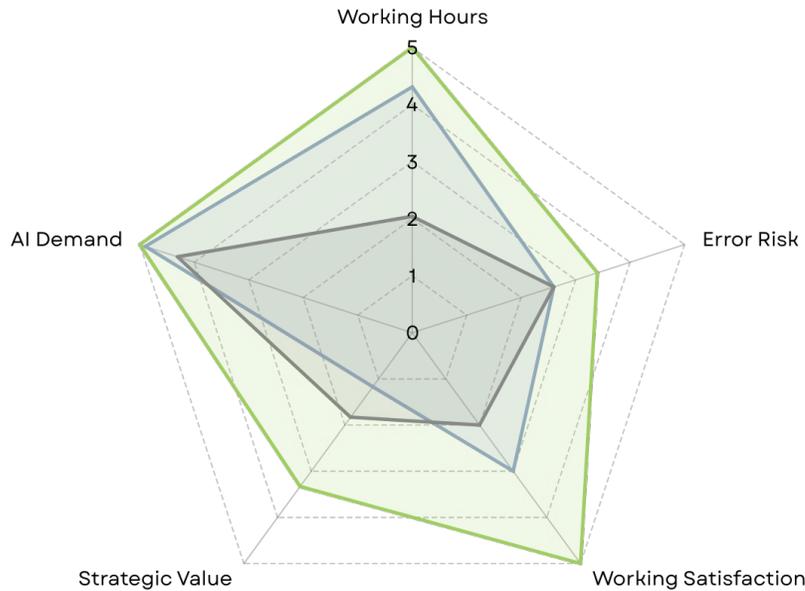
Best Working Experience

Employee Relations

Highest Strategic Value

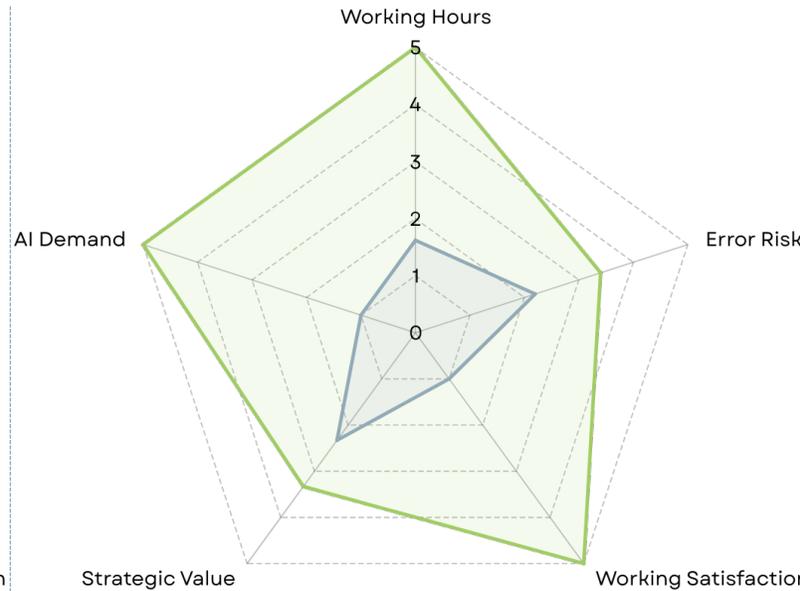
Performance Evaluation

Top 3 tasks with the highest AI Demand



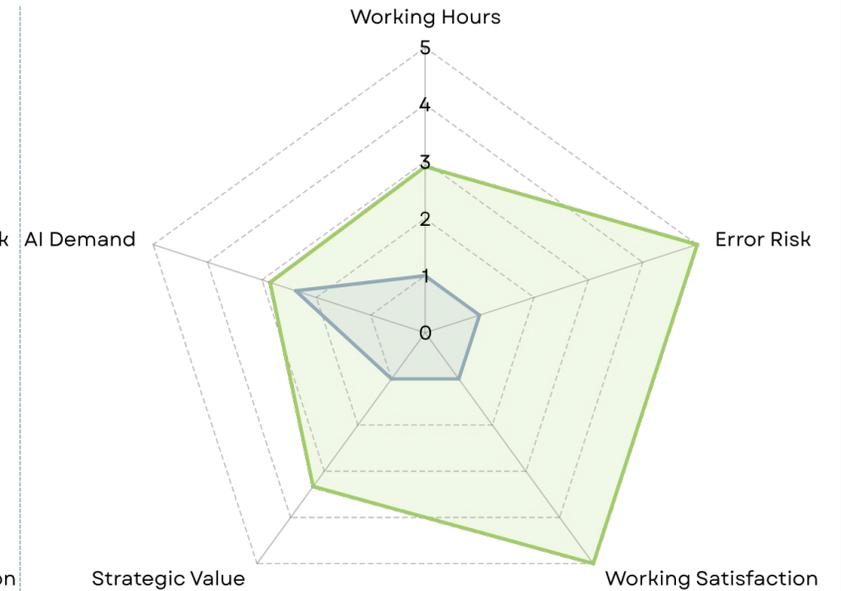
● HR Reporting ● Resume Screening ● Benefits Consultation

Task with highest/lowest Working Hours



● HR Reporting ● Social Insurance

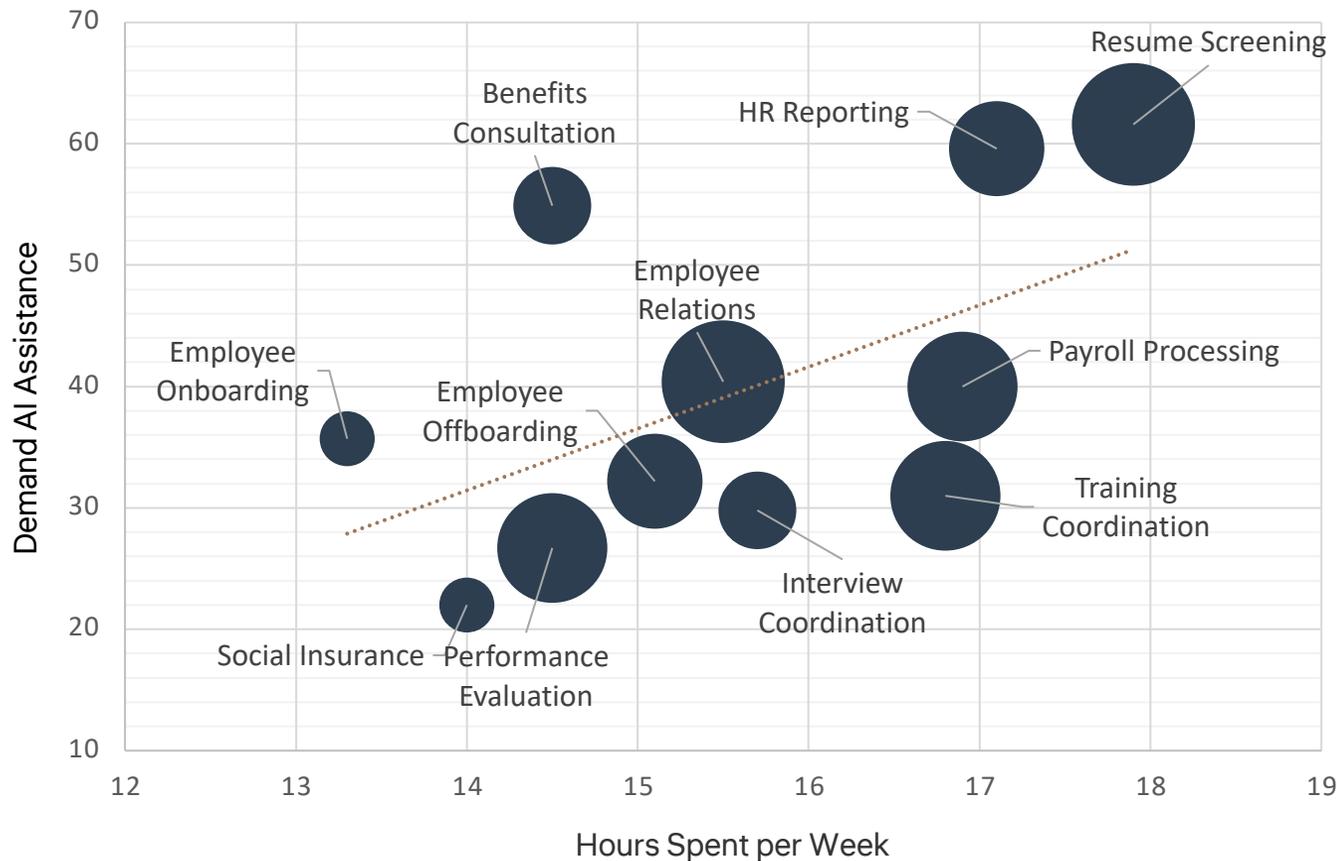
Task with highest/lowest Working Satisfaction



● Employee Relations ● Employee Onboarding

The Driver: Time Consumption is the Strongest Predictor of AI Demand

Regression Result: Drivers of AI Demand (%)



*Bubble Size Denotes Working Satisfaction

Key Drivers



Time Consumption

+0.10***

Positive and significant at the 1% level



Working Satisfaction

-0.18*

Negative and significant at the 10% level



AI Demand Analysis

1. Time as Primary Driver

The most time-demanding tasks show the highest automation priority.

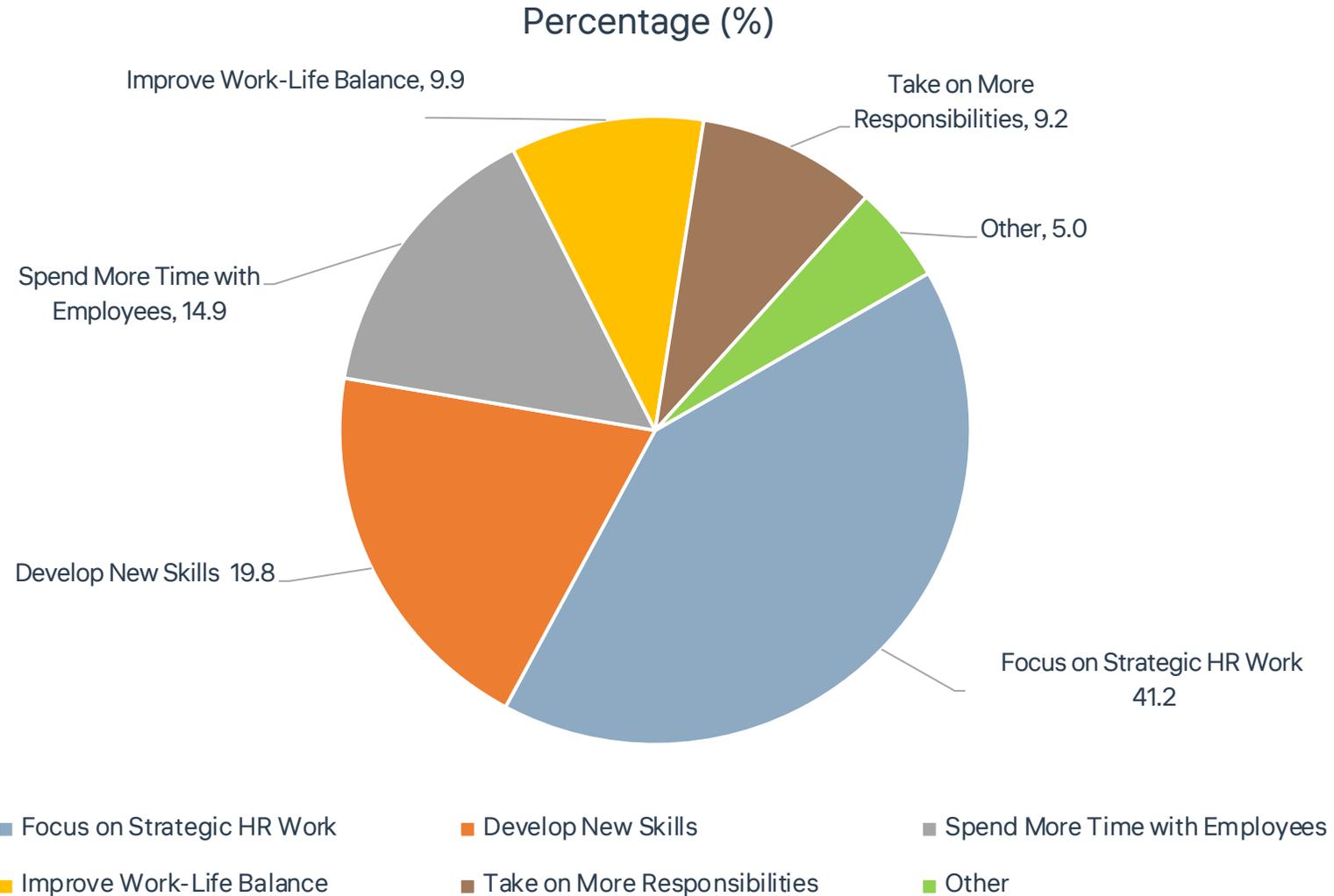
2. High Strategic Value Tasks See Lower AI Demand

Humans still play an irreplaceable role in key functional areas.

3. Satisfaction Reduces Automation Urgency

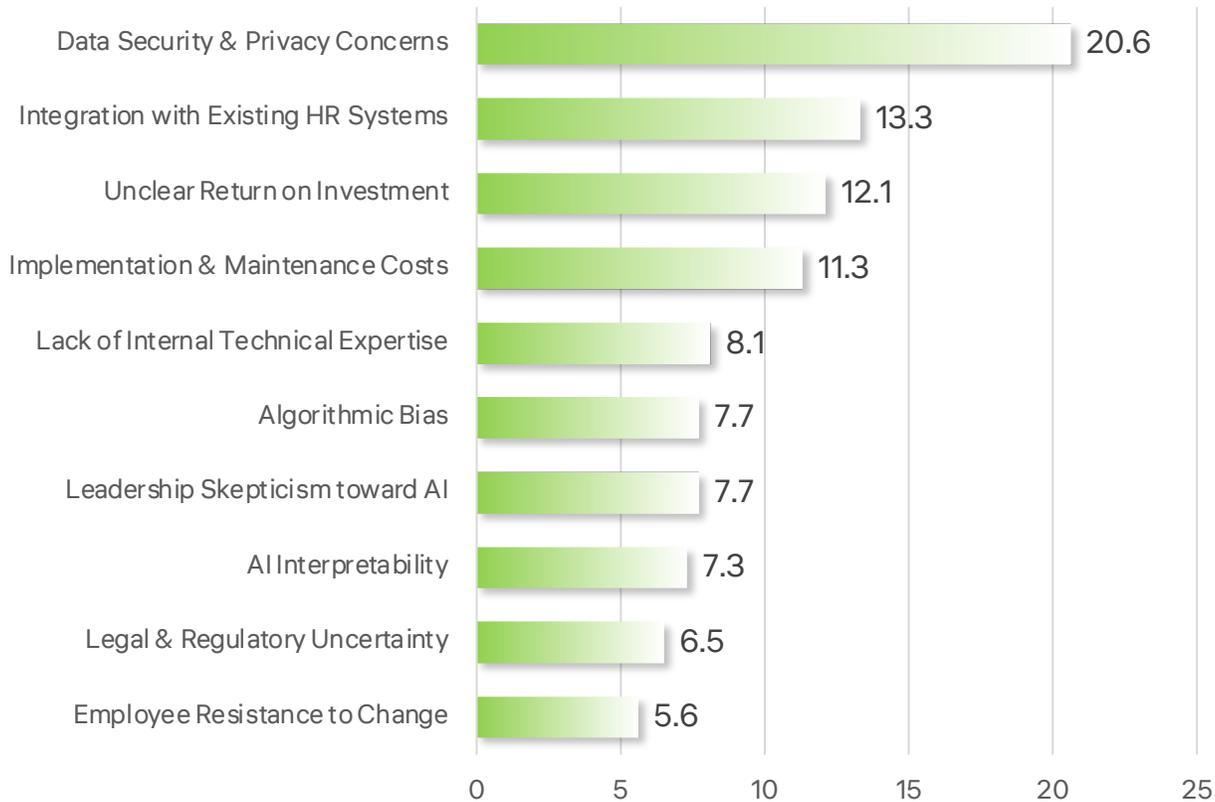
HRs are less likely to automate personally fulfilling work.

How HRs Plan to Allocate Time Saved by AI



The Barrier: Data Security is the Leading Concern

The Percentages of Respondents Ranking Each Item as the #1 Barrier



Primary Barrier **20.6%**

Data Security



Why Security Matters in HR

- Sensitive Employee Data**
PII, compensation, performance reviews
- Regulatory Compliance**
GDPR, local data protection laws
- Trust & Reputation**
Employee trust in HR processes
- Risk of Data Breaches**
Financial and reputational damage

While data security (20.6%) is the top barrier, the significance of system integration (13.3%) offers a critical insight. This concern surpasses typical hurdles like implementation cost (11.3%) and employee resistance (5.6%), highlighting that technical compatibility and workflow disruption are more immediate.

Actionable Insights: A Guide for Organizational Leaders



RECOMMENDATION 01

Prioritize Demand

Start with **Resume Screening** and **HR Reporting**. These functions offer the highest immediate time-saving return and strongest consensus.

- ✓ Quick wins build momentum
- ✓ Demonstrate tangible value
- ✓ Gain stakeholder confidence



RECOMMENDATION 02

Reframe the Narrative

Present AI implementation as a "Strategic **Upskilling Initiative**" that empowers the team, not as a replacement.

- ✓ Focus on career growth
- ✓ Emphasize skill development
- ✓ Address concerns proactively



RECOMMENDATION 03

Lead with Security

In vendor evaluations, make **data security protocols** and **compliance certifications** a top criterion from the start.

- ✓ Request security audits
- ✓ Verify compliance certifications
- ✓ Establish data governance



Success requires **balancing efficiency** with **security assurance** while framing AI as a **strategic enabler** for the organization.



Pilot



Reframe



Secure

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 For detailed survey results and the web version, please visit:

www.camo.hku.hk