

appfolio



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Background of report

IREM® (Institute of Real Estate Management) collaborated with AppFolio®, an IREM Industry Partner, to conduct research on artificial intelligence (AI) use and adoption among property management professionals. A survey was distributed to property management and real estate professionals of all property types and roles. Leadership and staff were queried on different issues. The survey was open from June 3, 2025, to June 27, 2025. A total of 1,827 responses were received.

The purpose of the survey was to:

- Examine the pace of AI adoption in property management, the types of tools professionals are using, and how they use them.
- Measure the difference between properties that have adopted AI tools and those that have not.
- Obtain key metrics from survey respondents to analyze performance differences between adopters and non-adopters.
- Provide valuable data to the real estate management industry on the impact of AI
 on property performance.

This report presents the results of the survey as well as insights from qualitative interviews with property management professionals.

The 2025 IREM Technology Advisory Council advised on survey design. We would like to thank them for their time and contributions.

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Overview of findings

- AI adoption in property management is accelerating and shows benefits in operational efficiency and portfolio performance.
- The most widely used AI tools are general-purpose tools followed by AI capabilities built into core property management solutions.
- Employee experience, demonstrated by metrics such as overall job satisfaction, work-life balance, and the ability to focus on more strategic work, appears largely unaffected by the use of AI. However, AI users report higher satisfaction with technology, suggesting that property management professionals using AI recognize its advantages.
- Communication, document analysis, and data analysis are the tasks most commonly supported by AI tools. The clearest advantages in using tools for these tasks are in reputation management, operational and financial reporting, communication with owners/investors, and renewal management.
- The data shows that most AI leaders, or executives who actively encourage AI use in their companies, expect AI to reshape operations and complement existing roles.
- AI leaders who actively encourage the use of AI report stronger performance, including higher net operating income (NOI) growth and fewer challenges in filling open positions.



Recommendations

Champion the use of AI

While AI's full efficiency benefits are still emerging, even modest gains in market intelligence and task automation—highlighted in the survey—can deliver significant impact when scaled across teams and portfolios.

Based on these benefits, leaders of property management companies should proactively champion the use of AI based on a strategy for deployment that focuses on desired outcomes.

Implement a formal AI policy

Property management companies should create formal AI policies to guide how their firms adopt, use, govern, and monitor AI technologies. AI policies provide teams with clarity and confidence around appropriate use. They establish guardrails that enable responsible innovation.

Create a constant feedback loop

It's best to craft a strategy for AI deployment, one based on desired outcomes – but be aware that your teams are most likely already using AI. Consider using internal surveys, interviews, or focus groups to understand how teams are currently using AI.

Many respondents report using generative AI tools like ChatGPT®, Gemini™, and Claude™—platforms that are easily accessible via smartphones. It's essential to ensure these tools are being used appropriately and responsibly.

Assess how teams are engaging with the AI tools that the company has officially adopted. Are they using them effectively? Are there barriers to adoption?

Establishing a continuous feedback loop will help:

- · Identify and manage risks associated with AI use
- · Maximize the value of approved tools
- Share innovative use cases and best practices across the organization

Manage the change

Successfully managing the transition to AI tools requires staff training and engagement. Provide hands-on learning opportunities tailored to real workflows, along with ongoing support. Share peer learning and success stories, which can build confidence and encourage adoption across teams.

Expert insights

Expert commentary is woven throughout the report to add context and depth to the survey findings. These industry leaders highlight key trends, offer practical interpretations, and reflect on the implications of AI adoption in property management.



Karen Key, CPM°

Division President, Southeast
Asset Living, LLC, AMO°



James Scott
IREM® Innovator-in-Residence
Director of Industry and Professional Programs;
Lecturer; Research Scientist
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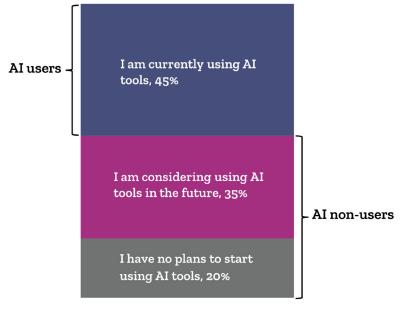
Kimberly Vasseur, ARM°, CAM, CPO™ Learning and Development Manager Jefferson Apartment Group

The state of AI use

AI adoption in the property management industry is accelerating. Between Q4 2023 and Q2 2025, the proportion of professionals using AI tools increased from 21% to 45%. The share of those with no plans to adopt AI declined from 51% to 20% during that same period. Notably, 62% of current AI users began using these tools within the past year. These findings indicate that AI in property management operations is still evolving.

Use of AI tools

All respondents



Q. Which of the following best describes how you personally use AI tools in your role?

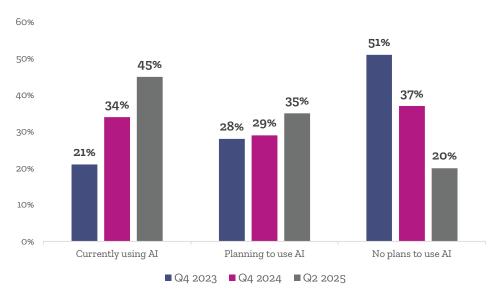


Adoption of AI in today's marketplace is crucial to success. AI provides us with ways to enhance our customer service and build efficiencies in our teams. Think about the modern customer experience. We live in a world where instant gratification has become the norm, and consumers are more loyal to speed than brand. Consumers are also more educated than ever before. That's a powerful combination.

~ Karen Key, CPM®

AI adoption is on the rise

AI adoption over time



Q. Which of the following best describes how you personally use AI tools in your role?

Sources: 2024 AppFolio Property Management Benchmark Report, 2025 AppFolio Property Management Benchmark Report, and 2025 IREM/AppFolio Research



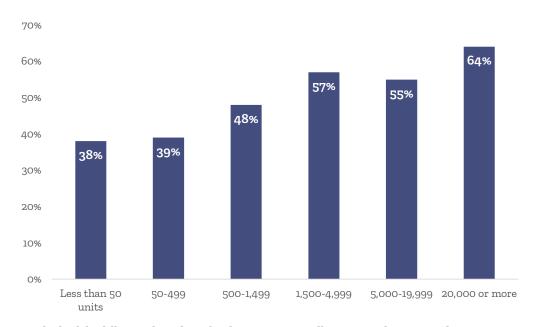
The acceleration in adoption likely comes from property management companies looking at AI as an essential upgrade to remain relevant and competitive. They don't want to fall behind other management companies pushing forward with proptech and AI. Industry thought leaders and vendors are promoting AI at a record pace, creating a sense of urgency to get ahead.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

AI use and portfolio size

On average, AI users manage larger residential portfolios at 3,400 units versus an average portfolio size of 2,000 units for non-users. AI use is more common in larger companies due to advantages in resources and expertise.

% using AI by residential portfolio size AI users



Q. Which of the following best describes how you personally use AI tools in your role?



Larger companies have more resources and less risk when trying new tech, and they typically have more staff and money to experiment with. Larger portfolios can typically benefit more from data-driven tools and automation, so it makes more sense to invest in AI. Leadership is also a factor. In my experience, larger portfolios have more strategic leadership that can drive innovation and adoption.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

Types of AI tools used

Among survey respondents who use AI, 85% use general-purpose AI tools and a total of 66% use AI features integrated into core property management solutions. The third most used category of AI tools are those embedded in broader business software, such as Microsoft® Copilot; these tools are used by 38% of respondents.

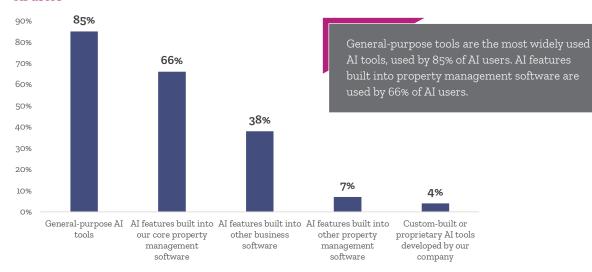
These findings suggest that while specialized property management AI is widely adopted, general-purpose and enterprise-level AI tools play a significant role in daily operations.



Since most employees use general-purpose AI tools and business software AI, property management companies should think about structured training programs to teach their employees how to use general-purpose tools for property management tasks effectively. This includes prompt engineering, data analysis techniques, and workflow optimization. Consider establishing company-wide AI usage guidelines that ensure consistency, data security, and effectiveness while allowing employees to leverage familiar tools. Utilize the general-purpose tool education as a foundation for introducing more sophisticated, property-specific AI solutions that can deliver greater strategic impact.

~ James Scott

% currently using different types of AI tools¹ AI users



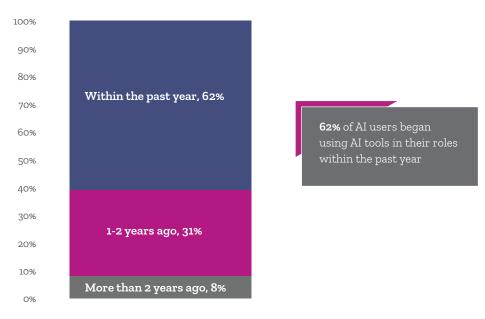
Q. Which of the following types of AI tools do you currently use in your role? Please select all that apply.

- General-purpose AI tools: ChatGPT $^{\circ}$, Gemini $^{\text{™}}$, Claude $^{\circ}$
- Other business software: Microsoft® Copilot, Google Workspace™ AI, Workday®
- Core property management software: AppFolio®, Yardi®, RealPage®, Entrata®
- Other property management software: EliseAI®, HgO®, Cove™, Latchel®

¹ Respondents were provided with the following examples to help categorize the AI tools they use:

When AI use began

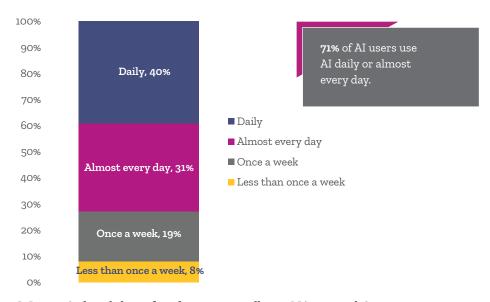
When AI users began using the technology AI users



Q. When did you first start using AI tools as part of your role?

Frequency of AI use

How often respondents use AI AI users

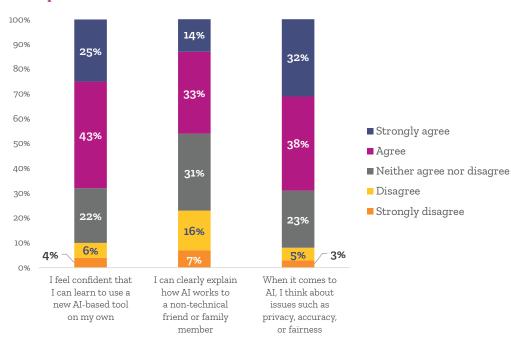


Q. In a typical week, how often do you personally use AI in your role?

AI literacy, competency, and concerns

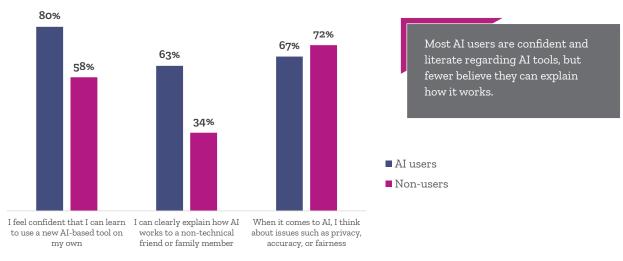
Nearly 70% of respondents are confident they can learn to use a new AI tool. However, less than half believe they can explain how AI works. Among both AI users and non-users, 70% think about issues such as privacy, accuracy, and fairness when it comes to AI use.

% at different levels of agreement with the statements All respondents



Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about AI?

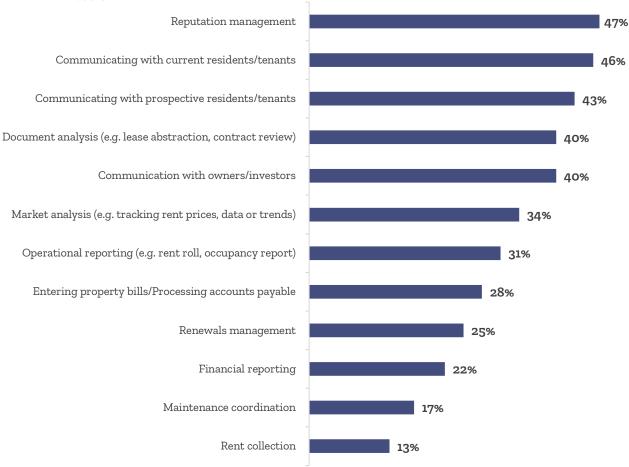
% who strongly agree and agree with the statements combined AI users vs. non-users



Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about AI?

AI for specific management functions

% whose primary duties include the task and who use AI for that task AI users



Q. Which aspects of your role do you currently use AI to support? Please select all that apply.



In communication, chatbots and nurturing software [from CRM solutions] are assisting onsite teams with lead management and follow-up.

In document analysis, lease tech and core property management software offer auto-generation of documents, e-sign, and other features that streamline documents and make them easy to update across a portfolio.

In data analysis, AI helps with viewing rent trends, forecasting, and financial modeling. Being able to automate and compile reporting to roll up based on region, portfolio, and enterprise at the push of a button really does provide easy insights compared to having to manually piece it all together.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

Employee experience

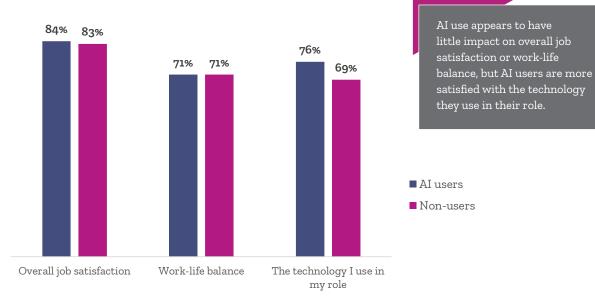


Employee turnover is a key signal in the success of your AI strategy. Employees will still need to learn, monitor, and manage the new AI systems. One manual function may be eliminated. But, if companies replace that manual function with another manual function, then there will be burnout. Burnout leads to turnover, and turnover leads to increased costs. Companies then have an increased cost on turnover and the cost of the new AI.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

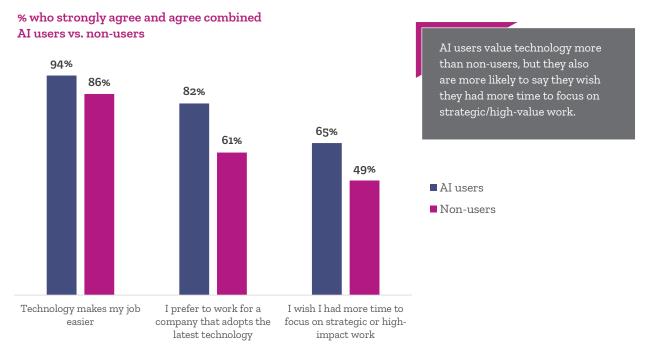
Job satisfaction

% who are satisfied and very satisfied combined AI users vs. non-users



Q. How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the following aspects of your role?

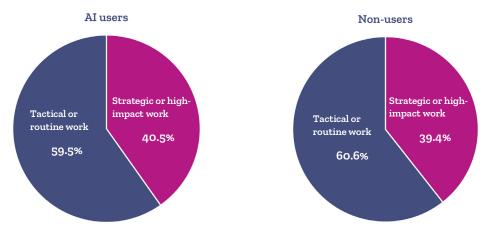
View of technology



Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strategic vs. tactical work

% of time spent on strategic vs. tactical work AI users vs. non-users



Q. In a typical week, roughly how much of your time at work do you feel is spent on tactical and strategic work? (total must add up to 100%)



AI can make work more efficient, but it doesn't always mean the workload decreases. Freeing up time with AI theoretically allows for more strategic work, but that time fills up quickly with other tasks.

Most AI supports tactical day-to-day tasks but doesn't create autonomy, career growth, or individual recognition on its own. AI is helping to reduce mundane tasks and automate tasks, but it isn't "transforming" the employee experience in a way that increases or balances satisfaction.

Another factor — the Change Curve* is a real issue. Integrating new tech is stressful if not done properly.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

Perception of how technology can support management tasks

Average hours per week spent on tasks that could be optimized or streamlined through the use of technology
AI users vs. non-users

AI users

Non-users

15.1

hours

15.7

hours

Q. In a typical week, approximately how many hours do you spend on tasks that you believe could be optimized or streamlined through the use of technology?

Non-users see slightly more room for streamlining their roles through the use of technology.

^{*} The Kübler-Ross Change Curve®. A model originally developed to describe the five stages of grief, the Change Curve also describes how teams respond to workplace changes. ekrfoundation.org/5-stages-of-grief/change-curve

The impact of AI on specific property management roles

This section compares role-based metrics between AI users and non-users for respondents whose main duties include the tasks. The goal is to examine if AI increases efficiency when applied to that task. Survey responses indicate varying degrees of efficiency gains:

- AI users respond to online reviews 44 minutes faster than non-users one of the biggest differences found between the two groups.
- Among residential managers, AI users know renewal status nearly a week earlier and have a 2% higher renewal rate than non-users.
- 88% of AI users provide same-day responses to owners/investor inquiries vs. 83% of non-users.
- AI users are slightly more confident in market analysis (e.g., tracking rent prices, data, and trends). 69% of AI users are completely or very confident vs. 66% of non-users.
- AI users generate operational (e.g., rent roll, occupancy report) and financial reports about an hour faster than non-users. They also report finding more errors, suggesting improved accuracy.
- AI users enter 53 property bills per hour, compared to 50 for non-users.
- AI use shows minimal impact on same-day response rates to current and
 prospective residents; however, AI's efficiency benefits may be more evident at finer
 time intervals—potentially down to the hour or minute.
- AI users take 2.4 minutes longer to intake and create work orders. Based on these findings, maintenance teams seem to be struggling with AI, or the solutions currently on the market are not delivering the time savings they often promise.





The data suggests that current AI adoption has not yet transformed work allocation patterns, despite clear operational improvements in specific areas like report generation speed and response times. This might suggest technology immaturity as most AI tools currently excel at automating specific tasks rather than entire workflows. While AI users generate reports faster and respond to online reviews quicker, these improvements haven't fundamentally shifted overall time allocation patterns.

With 85% of AI users relying on general-purpose tools rather than specialized property management AI, many organizations are using AI as an overlay to existing processes rather than redesigning workflows around AI capabilities. This makes sense as AI is facilitating significant efficiency in specific task automation with organizations that are still in the experimentation phase rather than achieving mature integration that would meaningfully shift strategic work capacity.

To truly shift the balance toward strategic work, rather than task-level assistance, AI tools need deeper workflow integration such as end-to-end automation where AI would handle complete reporting cycles, from data collection through analysis to stakeholder distribution, requiring minimal human intervention. This moves beyond general-purpose tools toward specialized, integrated property management AI platforms that handle multiple related functions simultaneously. This type of AI doesn't just automate current tasks but anticipates needs and suggests strategic actions. For instance, predicting maintenance issues, market shifts, or tenant behavior patterns that inform strategic planning.

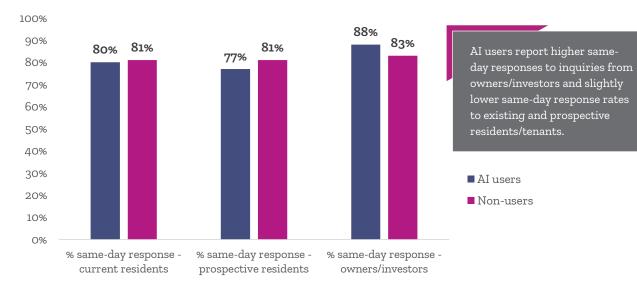
~ James Scott



Communication with stakeholders

% of inquiries receiving same-day response Respondents whose primary responsibilities include communicating with that stakeholder group

AI users vs. non-users



- Q. Approximately what percent of incoming inquiries from current residents/tenants receive a same-day response?
- Q. Approximately what percent of incoming inquiries from prospective residents/tenants receive a same-day response?
- Q. Approximately what percent of incoming inquiries from owners/investors receive a same-day response?



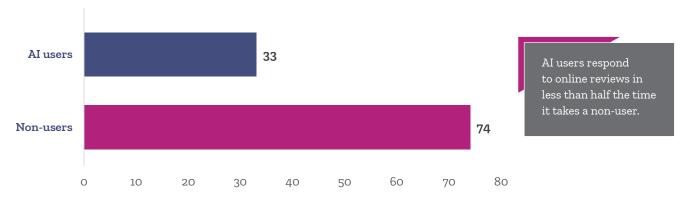
Utilizing the right AI allows your company to be responsive 24 hours a day, 7 days a week while also providing detailed answers to questions. For us, the use of AI doesn't replace any human element of our team. Rather, AI supplements the human element by providing customer service while our team is not available. It also allows the onsite team to focus on the customer in front of them, whether that's a resident or a prospect.

Consumers still want to interact with humans when they want to interact with humans. This is often a hard line to predict, but it's important that companies figure out what makes sense for their product and customer base.

~ Karen Key, CPM

Reputation management

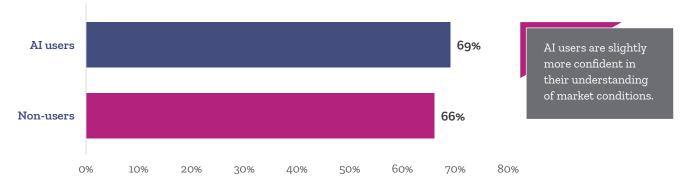
Minutes required to respond to an online review Respondents whose primary responsibilities include reputation management AI users vs. non-users



Q. How many minutes does it typically take you to respond to an online review?

Market analysis (e.g., tracking rent prices, data, and trends)

% of respondents completely confident or ery confident in market analysis combined Respondents whose primary responsibilities include market analysis AI users vs. non-users

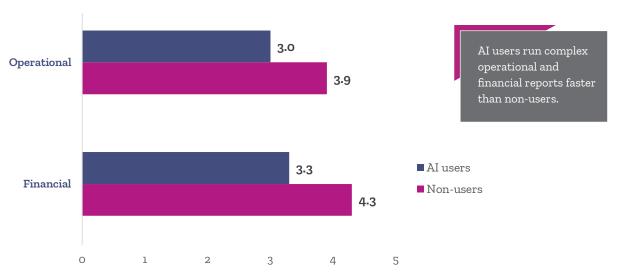


Q. How confident are you in your business's understanding of market conditions?

Reporting

Generating reports

Hours required to generate most complex report Respondents whose primary responsibilities include that type of reporting AI users vs. non-users



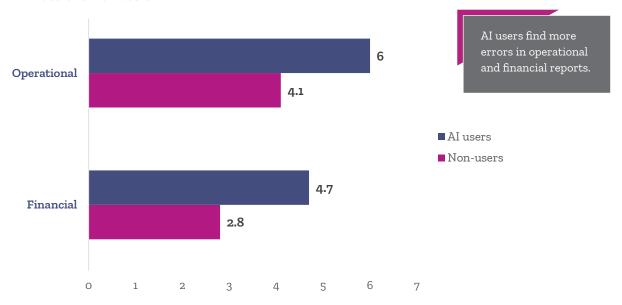
- Q. For the most complex operational report (e.g., rent roll, occupancy report) you generate on a regular basis, how long does it take you to generate that report? (in hours)
- Q. For the most complex financial report you generate on a regular basis, how long does it take you to generate that report? (in hours)





Errors in reports

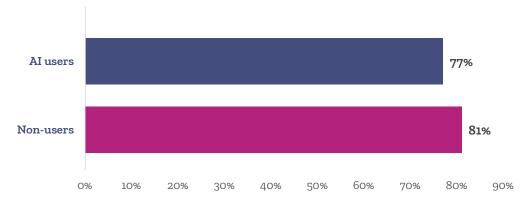
Errors found/corrected in an individual report Respondents whose primary responsibilities include that type of reporting AI users vs. non-users



- Q. On average, how many errors do you typically find/correct in an individual operational report?
- Q. On average, how many errors do you typically find/correct in an individual financial report?

Rent collection

% of rent paid on time Respondents whose primary responsibilities include rent collection AI users vs. non-users



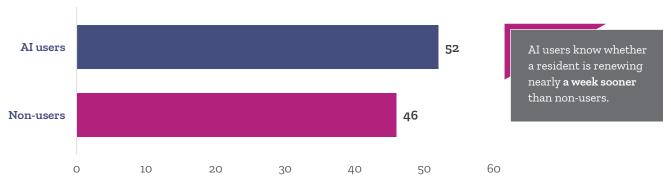
Q. Approximately what percent of rent is paid on time in a typical month across your portfolio?

Renewals management

Advance notice on lease renewal

Advance notice on lease renewal in number of days Respondents who manage residential properties whose primary responsibilities include renewals management

AI users vs. non-users



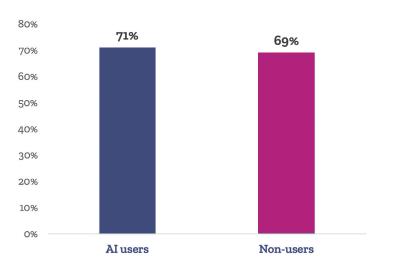
Q. How many days in advance do you typically know if a resident is renewing or not? (residential only)

Lease renewal rate

Estimate for current renewal rate

Respondents who manage residential properties whose primary responsibilities include renewals management

AI users vs. non-users

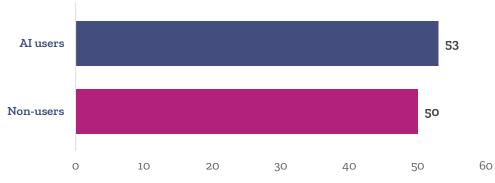


AI users report a slightly higher renewal rate compared to non-users.

Q. What is your best estimate for your current renewal rate? (residential only)

Entering property bills/processing accounts payable

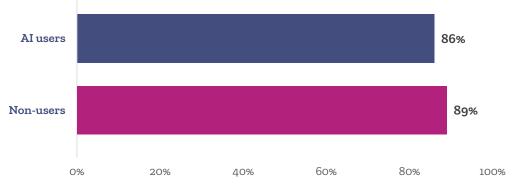
Property bills entered per hour Respondents whose primary responsibilities include entering property bills/ processing accounts payable AI users vs. non-users



Al users report entering three more property bills per hour compared to non-users.

Q. On average, how many property bills can you enter per hour?

% of bills paid on time Respondents whose primary responsibilities include entering property bills/ processing accounts payable AI users vs. non-users

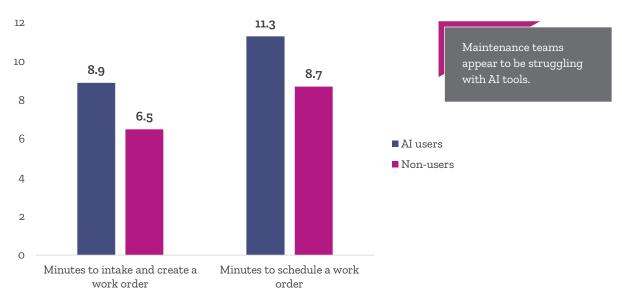


Q. In a typical month, approximately what percent of your bills are paid on time?

AI users report a slightly lower percentage of property bills paid on time compared to non-users. This may be because AI users tend to work at larger companies and handle a larger volume of bills.

Maintenance coordination

Minutes required to process a work order Respondents whose primary responsibilities include maintenance coordination AI users vs. non-users



- Q. How long does it typically take you to intake and create a work order? (in minutes)
 Q. On average, how many minutes do you spend scheduling a work
- Q. On average, how many minutes do you spend scheduling a work order? (in minutes)



Lack of training has been an issue with maintenance teams. There are so many amazing options out there for the maintenance side of the house. Apps allow for easy workflows on work orders. Residents, managers, and maintenance personnel can all enter service requests from their phones, but this isn't happening, mainly due to a lack of education for site teams and then site teams to residents.

Teams are still subscribing to the "print 2 work orders, staple, fill out both at the apartment, leave one, and bring one back to the office to be cleared" methodology. All of which can now be done straight from a phone app. These options are extremely underutilized. Teams say it's not functional, we don't know how to use it, or we don't get paid a phone stipend. These issues are all easily overcome with well-resourced change management.

In training on new solutions, focus on the freedom that the AI will afford the team so that they can spend more time doing essential work as opposed to manual minutiae that can be captured through AI. Teams have to see the why behind the what - the benefit to them and the bigger picture.

~ Kimberly Vasseur, ARM®, CAM, CPO™

Document analysis (e.g., lease abstraction, contract review)

Minutes required to review an individual document Respondents whose primary responsibilities include document analysis AI users vs. non-users

AI users Non-users

20

18

Q. On average, how many minutes does it typically take you to review an individual document?

The impact of AI leadership

AI leaders are owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, and presidents/CEOs whose companies encourage the use of AI. Non-advocates are owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, and presidents/CEOs whose companies neither encourage nor discourage or discourage the use of AI.

According to the following metrics, AI advocacy among executives provides compelling performance and operational efficiency benefits.

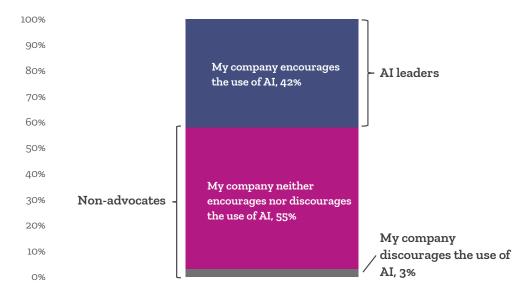
AI leaders are 6% more likely (70% versus 64%) to report NOI increases over the past 12 months. Moreover, early adopters, AI leaders who have been using AI for a year or more, are 3% more likely to report NOI increases compared to recent adopters, AI leaders who started using AI within the last 12 months.

At 190:1 versus 141:1, AI leaders in residential management report a 35% higher unit-to-employee ratio compared to non-advocates.

Al leaders are 6% less likely to say it's been extremely or very challenging to fill open roles with qualified candidates.

AI leaders vs. non-advocates

% who actively encourage, neither encourage nor discourage, and discourage the use of AI Owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs



Q. Which of the following best describes your company's approach to using AI technology?



To move beyond encouragement and into strategic AI leadership:

- Ensure robust data systems that enable AI to access, analyze, and act on comprehensive property and market information, helping to create a competitive advantage.
- Establish regular assessment processes that evaluate AI tool effectiveness and identify opportunities for workflow redesign.
- Use efficiency gains from AI to invest in growth initiatives, market expansion, or enhanced service offerings rather than simply reducing costs.

~ James Scott

Residential units managed per full-time employee

Units managed per full-time employee Owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs AI leaders vs. non-advocates

AI leaders

Non-advocates

190:1

units

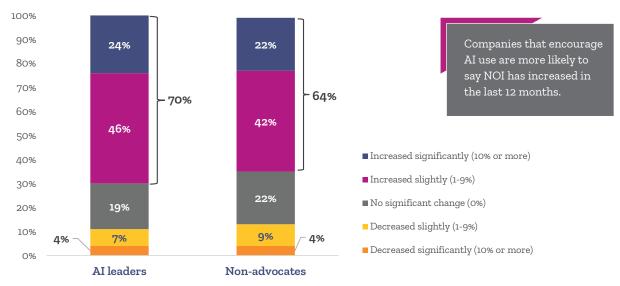
141:1

Companies that encourage AI use enjoy a unit-to-employee ratio 35% higher than companies that don't encourage AI use.

Q. For your residential units, approximately how many units does your company manage per full-time employee?

Change in NOI over time

% whose portfolio's NOI has changed at different levels over the past 12 months Owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs AI leaders vs. non-advocates



Q. How has your portfolio's net operating income (NOI) changed over the past 12 months?

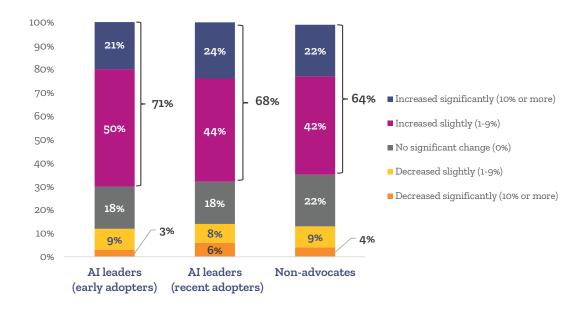


Our adoption of AI has resulted in positive NOI growth across the portfolio. This is through more effective marketing and leasing, which results in lower vacancy. We're also able to employ predictive management that allows problems to be realized in advance of the negative financial impact. For example, AI allows us to predict leasing trends and minimize replacement costs.

~ Karen Key, CPM®

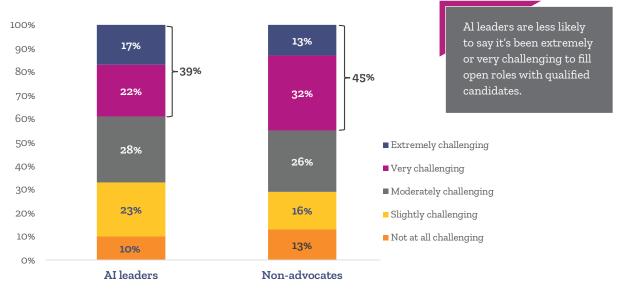
% whose portfolio's NOI has changed at different levels over the past 12 months Owners/investors, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs AI leaders who were early adopters vs. AI leaders who were recent adopters vs. non-advocates

- Early adopters AI leaders who have been using AI for a year or more
- Recent adopters AI leaders who started using AI within the last 12 months



Hiring challenges

% who have experienced different levels of hiring challenges over the past 12 months Owners/investors, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs AI leaders vs. non-advocates



Q. Over the past 12 months, how challenging has it been to fill open roles with qualified candidates?

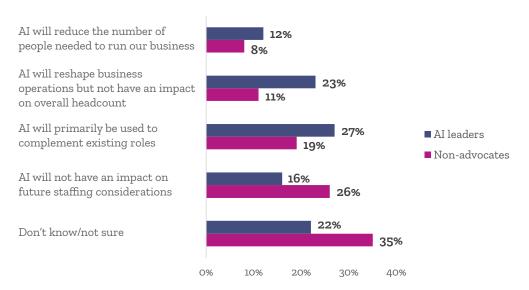


For site positions, we use AI to help screen candidates, which allows hiring managers to review qualified candidates more easily. This efficiency has reduced our open-position time by half, directly impacting site operations in a positive way. We all know the unavoidable financial dips that happen when a site is understaffed, and AI has helped us with those issues.

~ Karen Key, CPM®

The impact of AI on headcount

% with different hiring strategies over the next 24 months Owners/partners, asset/portfolio managers, presidents/CEOs AI leaders vs. non-advocates



Q. Which of the following statements do you most agree with when it comes to your company's hiring strategy over the next 24 months?



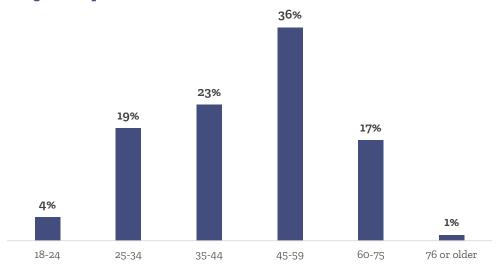
AI as a complement allows us to meet the customer where they are but then give them a human when it suits their needs. Determining where you want AI to supplement your processes starts guiding your company to specialization.

The expectation for our hires to be jack-of-all-trades is outdated. AI and specialization allow us to attract the best talent for a specific need and offer them a career path that does not force them into a role that does not fit their skillset or personality. Why do we expect all our dynamic leasing professionals to want to be debt collectors and then run a business?

~ Karen Key, CPM®

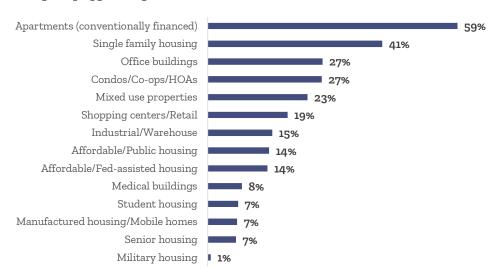
Respondent demographics and firmographics

Age of respondents



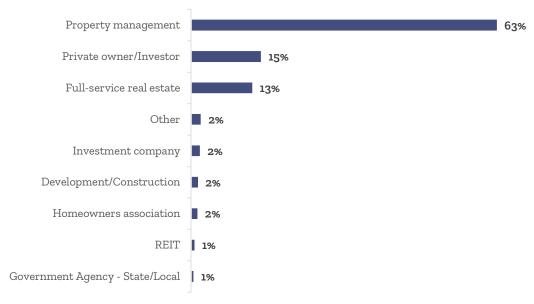
Q. What is your age?

Property types in portfolio



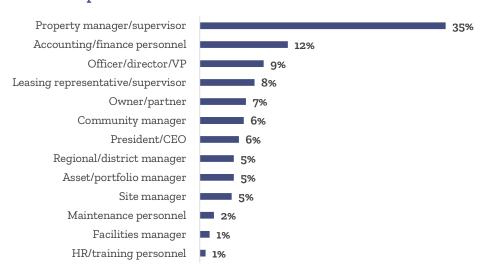
Q. What property type do you personally oversee? Please select all that apply.

Type of organization



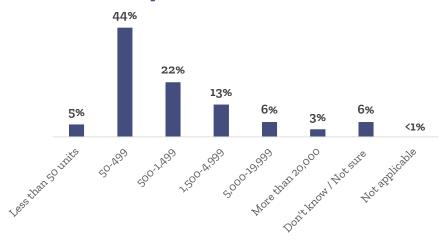
Q. Which best describes the type of organization you work for?

Role of respondents



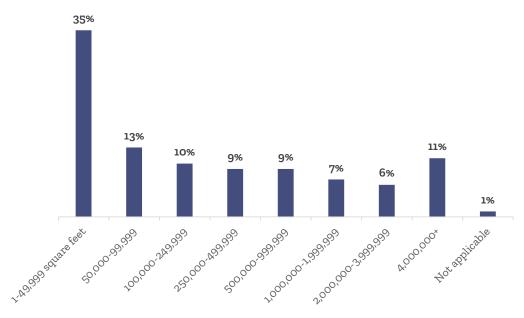
Q. Select the one response that best describes your position in your company.

Residential units in portfolio



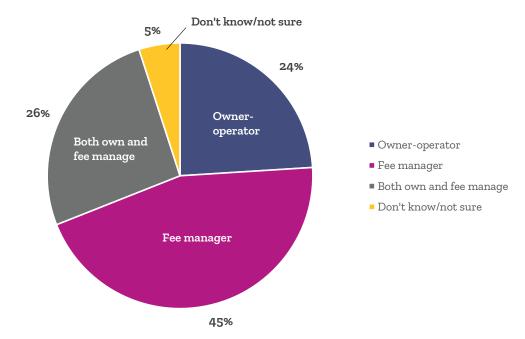
Q. How many total residential units are included in your company's portfolio?

Commercial square feet in portfolio



Q. How many total commercial/non-residential square feet are included in your company's portfolio?

Portfolio ownership



Q. Who owns the properties your company manages?



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