

Has AI been given a promotion? One in three Gen-Z professionals now ask AI before their manager

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AI is increasingly becoming the workplace's first line of support, with a third (33%) of Gen-Z professionals now using AI tools for work-related questions before asking their manager or colleagues, according to new findings from global talent solutions partner [Robert Walters](#).

The findings highlight a shift in workplace dynamics, with 39% of UK professionals across all age groups saying they are asking their line manager fewer questions thanks to AI.

"AI tools are transforming workplace communications by enhancing productivity and reducing the time professionals spend waiting for crucial answers. However, they also introduce complications by outsourcing decision-making, keeping managers out-of-the-loop and limiting opportunities for analytical thinking or idea sharing," comments Chris Eldridge, CEO of Robert Walters UK&I. "Whether AI tools are viewed as a productivity accelerator or management threat, it's imperative that companies have clear protocols, guidance and training around use cases."

While professionals are adapting quickly to new tools, managers appear to be on the back foot. 71% of UK managers say they haven't received any guidance or training on how to manage their teams in an AI-enabled workplace. Out of the fifth who have had training, more than half felt it was too limited.

Chris comments, "Managers are being dealt heavier workloads making them less available to their teams, opening the door for AI tools as a management substitute. Yet answers from AI tools aren't always accurate and can result in significant bias or oversight."

“Ignoring this problem now could erode manager-employee relationships, disrupting the flow of knowledge between younger and more senior professionals and creating significant experience and skills gaps in the future workforce.”

Indeed, as employers across the UK face having to ‘do more with less’ in the wake of tighter budgets and a still ailing economy, 35% of young managers state overwork and burnout as their biggest challenge. This follows Robert Walters’ [research](#) in 2024 that revealed 69% of Gen-Z professionals want to avoid management roles due to perceiving them as too ‘high stress, low reward’.

“Employers must focus on equipping their managers to work alongside AI – for example, leveraging it to pick up simple queries while ensuring that higher-level, strategic or insight driven requests stay with them,” adds Chris.

“Managers that take an active role in AI implementation within their organisation will experience the most success. By supporting junior employees using it to save time and increase autonomy, they can invest in activities that enrich manager-employee relationships like active problem-solving and idea generation sessions.”