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Pursuing Truth · Building Trust

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CONTENTS



Monthly Hotspot



Case Sharing



Industry Insights



The 'Xi Bei Pre-packaged Food' Incident Insight: How HR Can Become a 'Stabilizer' in a Crisis

In September, Xibei Youmian Village became embroiled in a public controversy over pre-made dishes. When Luo Yonghao criticized on Weibo that "almost everything is pre-made and yet so expensive," the incident quickly escalated. Within two days, Xibei's revenue evaporated by 2 million yuan, and customer traffic at its stores nationwide plummeted by more than 70%.

The turmoil on the surface appears to be a crisis of product and public relations, but in reality, it exposes deep-seated contradictions in the company's internal management. When the externally promoted "craftsmanship and on-site production" becomes disconnected from the actual "pre-fabricated production" operations, can the HR department become the key force in restoring trust?

The Essence of the Crisis: The Trust Gap Between Employee Experience and Employer Brand

The core conflict of the Xibei incident lies in the gap between consumer expectations and reality. When customers discover that the high-priced dishes are not freshly cooked on-site but are instead industrially pre-prepared, the feeling of being "deceived" not only destroys brand trust but also raises doubts about the company's values. The warning this phenomenon poses for HR is that employer branding must be based on genuine employee experiences.

Imagine if a company promotes "flat management" and "empowered growth" during recruitment, but internally operates with strict hierarchies and seniority-based promotions. The disillusionment new employees feel is similar to the anger consumers experience when they discover pre-packaged meals. This kind of "inconsistency" can create a large number of "negative promoters," fundamentally undermining the appeal of recruitment. For example, an internet company once excessively advertised a "flexible working system," but in reality required employees to be on call 24/7, leading to a trial period resignation rate that soared to 40%. This ultimately forced the company to redesign its attendance system. Sincerity is the best employer branding strategy. HR must ensure consistency between external promotion and internal management in their daily work to avoid the trust crisis caused by "over-marketing."

2. The Triple Action Plan of HR: From Firefighting to Prevention

(1) Emotional First Aid: Stabilizing Morale in the 'Golden 72 Hours'

After a crisis breaks out, frontline employees often become the direct bearers of public opinion pressure. Some employees at Xibei's outlets faced online harassment due to the controversy over pre-made dishes, receiving even a dozen insulting calls every day.

At this moment, HR needs to quickly activate the "emotional extinguisher" mechanism:

- Immediate Compensation and Care: Xibei announced at a company-wide meeting that it would provide a 500 yuan subsidy to frontline employees and promised to raise salary levels by increasing labor costs from the industry average of 25% to 30%. This "real money" action can quickly alleviate employee anxiety, similar to how Haidilao provided consolation payments to employees during the "rat incident," effectively preventing team disintegration.
- Psychological Intervention and Communication: Offer one-on-one psychological counseling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help employees cope with online harassment pressure. During a food safety crisis, a certain chain restaurant introduced an AI psychological assessment system, identifying that 23% of technical staff showed signs of depression and intervened through online courses and a mentorship system, reducing the rate to 8% within three weeks.
- Information Transparency: Hold daily morning meetings to synchronize event progress, ensuring employees receive authoritative information from internal channels to prevent the spread of rumors. For example, during the "tasting incident," Pang Donglai released a 13-page investigation report within 48 hours, including surveillance footage and employee statements, using facts to dispel doubts.

(2) Empowering Abilities: Building a "Crisis-Immune" Team

An employee's performance during a crisis often depends on the depth of their regular training. The Xibei incident exposed frontline employees' lack of knowledge about pre-prepared dishes and their rigid responses when facing customer doubts.

HR needs to collaborate with business departments to conduct targeted training:

- Comprehensive Product Knowledge: Ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the proportion, processing procedures, and quality control standards of pre-prepared dishes. For example, a technology company requires its sales team to master the "product traceability system" to retrieve information such as raw material origins and production batches at any time, enhancing their persuasiveness when facing customer doubts.
- Communication Skills and Delegation of Authority: Train employees in the "Listen-Empathize-Solution" three-step communication method through scenario simulations and grant them certain problem-solving authorities. For instance, allow servers to decide whether to offer complimentary snacks or discounts based on customer emotions, transforming them from mere "messengers" into "buffers."
- Value Infusion: Integrate concepts such as "integrity" and "transparency" into daily assessments to prevent them from becoming mere slogans on the wall.

(3) Cultural Reconstruction: Building an 'Inside-Out' Chain of Trust

A crisis serves as a litmus test for corporate culture. HR needs to drive the management team to conduct a 'cultural audit' to examine the consistency between internal management and external communication.

- Internal Communication First: Before announcing any decisions that may affect employees, consensus should be reached through a three-tier communication mechanism involving "management-department heads-employees."
- Transparent Process Reform: Establish a traceable decision-making mechanism to avoid "off-the-cuff" decisions. Xibei can learn from the approach of Lao Xiang Ji by publicly displaying the proportion of pre-made dishes used in stores and opening a "Woodpecker" employee hotline to encourage the monitoring of false advertising practices.
- Long-term Trust Building: Turn crises into opportunities for cultural enhancement.

3. From Crisis to Opportunity: The Strategic Value Upgrade of HR

The Xibei pre-prepared food incident provides HR with an opportunity to redefine its role. In the digital age, HR needs to shift from traditional "administrative support" to "strategic partner," building a full-cycle management system of "prevention-response-recovery":

- Digital Early Warning System: Utilize AI public opinion monitoring tools to track employee social media activities in real-time and identify potential risks in advance.
- Organizational Resilience Building: Regularly conduct crisis simulation exercises, such as role-playing in "pre-prepared food questioning scenarios," to enhance the team's response capabilities.
- Knowledge Accumulation and Transfer: Establish a crisis case library to transform the experiences and lessons learned from the Xibei incident into training materials.

The controversy surrounding Xibei's pre-made dishes reflects a profound truth: in an era of highly transparent information, any product crisis will eventually evolve into a crisis of trust in talent. As the "cultural guardian" of an organization, HR needs to build a "trust firewall" in their daily work to ensure consistency between the employer brand and employee experience. As Yu Donglai, Chairman of Fat Donglai, said, "The true crisis management is ensuring the company is worthy of consumers' trust." This is not only a requirement for the public relations department but also the ultimate mission of HR.



Case Sharing

When a Senior Operations Manager's Resume Encounters Integrity Issues

The witness falsified information regarding the circumstances of passive resignation.

A technology company, in order to advance the iteration of its core product line, plans to hire a Product Director to oversee demand planning, team management, and market implementation. Candidate Lin, with a resume boasting "8 years of product experience, leading the launch of 6 core products, and guiding the team through 3 rounds of demand challenges," passed four rounds of interviews and entered the background check phase. However, when the company entrusted our firm with the verification, we discovered dual integrity issues in Lin's carefully constructed "reference system," including falsified identities of references and involuntary resignation.

1. The "perfect coordination" and detailed loopholes of witnesses

At the initial stage of the background check, Lin demonstrated an "actively cooperative" attitude: signing the authorization letter on the same day and proactively providing contact information for two references—labeled as "former company product director Mr. Zhang (direct supervisor)" and "core project colleague Mr. Liu (peer partner)." Lin stated, "Both are very familiar with my work and can be contacted at any time."

The background check consultant first contacted "Mr. Zhang," who spoke enthusiastically and gave a highly positive evaluation of Lin: "Lin is very capable. During his tenure from 2021 to 2023, the user growth product he led increased GMV by 40%. He left because he wanted to seek a bigger platform, and we even tried to retain him." Subsequently, the consultant contacted "Mr. Liu," whose statements closely matched those of "Mr. Zhang." He not only confirmed Lin's tenure, position, and rank but also added, "He has great methods for leading a team, and the attrition rate of his subordinates is 30% lower than in other departments."

During the detailed communication, flaws gradually became apparent: When asked about the "core sources of demand for the user growth product in 2022," "Mr. Zhang" hesitated for 10 seconds before vaguely responding, "It was feedback from the marketing department, but I can't remember the specifics." Meanwhile, when "Mr. Liu" was asked about the "team's demand review process at the time," his description of the process clearly did not align with the industry's mainstream model. He frequently mentioned, "I often worked overtime with Mr. Lin to revise the plan," yet he was unable to specify the launch dates of particular projects. More critically, the two provided contradictory statements regarding "team size"—"Mr. Zhang" claimed, "The product team consists of 10 people," while "Mr. Liu" stated, "The department, including interns, has a total of 8 people." The inconsistency in basic information raised suspicions for the background check consultant.

2. Independently Investigate and Expose the Falsification of Witness Identity

To verify the authenticity of the certifier, the background check consultant independently seeks breakthroughs through industry resources.

(1) Verification of Corporate Personnel Information: By searching through public recruitment platforms and job-related social media platforms for the "Product Company" that Lin claims to have worked for, we obtained relevant information about the company's product department from 2021 to 2023. It was discovered that the position of "Product Manager" was held by "Wang," and not "General Manager Zhang" as Lin stated. Additionally, the candidate "Liu" was shown on the platform to be employed by another company in 2022.

(2) Former Employer HR Interview: Through industry contacts, we reached out to the current HR specialist of the company, who confirmed that Lin was indeed employed in the Product Department from May 2021 to January 2023. However, his position was 'Senior Product Manager,' not 'Product Director' as stated on his resume. His direct supervisor was Wang, not 'General Manager Zhang.' Additionally, there were no employees named 'General Manager Zhang' or 'Liu' in the department during that period, further proving that the references were 'fabricated identities.' Moreover, the HR specialist provided crucial information to the background check consultant, stating that Lin's reason for leaving was 'involuntary termination,' but they could not provide further details.

(3) Verification of Witness Identity: The background check consultant attempted to verify through the contact information of 'Mr. Zhang' and 'Mr. Liu' and found that the phone numbers of both individuals are registered in the same location as Lin's place of residence. It is speculated that these two individuals are acquaintances of Lin and there is a high probability that they belong to a 'collusion to fabricate witnesses' group.

3. The truth behind passive resignation emerges.

Based on the clues of identity fraud by the individual in question, the background check consultant further investigated the reasons for Lin's resignation and discovered more critical information.

(1) Former Colleague Interview Evidence: By independently reaching out, we contacted Zhao, a former product manager who left the company in 2023. Zhao confirmed that in November 2022, due to a planning error in the user growth product managed by Lin, the user attrition rate reached 25% within three months of launch, far exceeding the company's set threshold of 5%. In December 2022, the company held a project review meeting, clearly attributing the major responsibility for the error to Lin. Subsequently, HR discussed a 'negotiated resignation' with Lin, but after Lin refused, the company issued a 'dismissal notice' in January 2023, which is considered a typical involuntary resignation.

(2) Verification of Falsified Resignation Certificate: Lin submitted a resignation certificate from "a certain product company," which stated "resigned by mutual agreement for personal career development reasons" and was stamped with the "Product Department Special Seal." However, the company's HR confirmed that an official resignation certificate must bear the "Company Human Resources Department Seal," and the "Product Department Special Seal" is only used for internal project documents and does not hold any validity for a resignation certificate. This further substantiates the fact that Lin attempted to cover up a passive resignation by forging the certificate.

Ultimately, our company submitted the complete background check results to the client company. After evaluation, the company decided to terminate the hiring process for Mr. Lin and placed him on the company's integrity blacklist.



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The product director serves as a key role in bridging "market demand" and "product implementation," and the authenticity of their resume and professional integrity are directly related to the success of the product and the stability of the team. This case reveals that falsifying references is often a signal of "concealing core deficiencies," and the concealment of passive resignation is often related to insufficient capabilities and issues of professional ethics. For companies, conducting background checks for mid-level management positions requires breaking out of the "information loop provided by candidates" by "independently sourcing and verifying the identity of references" and "cross-checking reasons for resignation through multiple channels" (HR interviews, corroboration from former colleagues) to see through the facade of falsification. For job seekers, fabricating references and hiding passive resignations may temporarily get them through, but a mismatch between abilities and resume, along with a lack of integrity, will eventually lead to a "break" in career development. Only by truthfully presenting their resume and confronting their professional shortcomings can they achieve long-term career growth.

Industry Insights

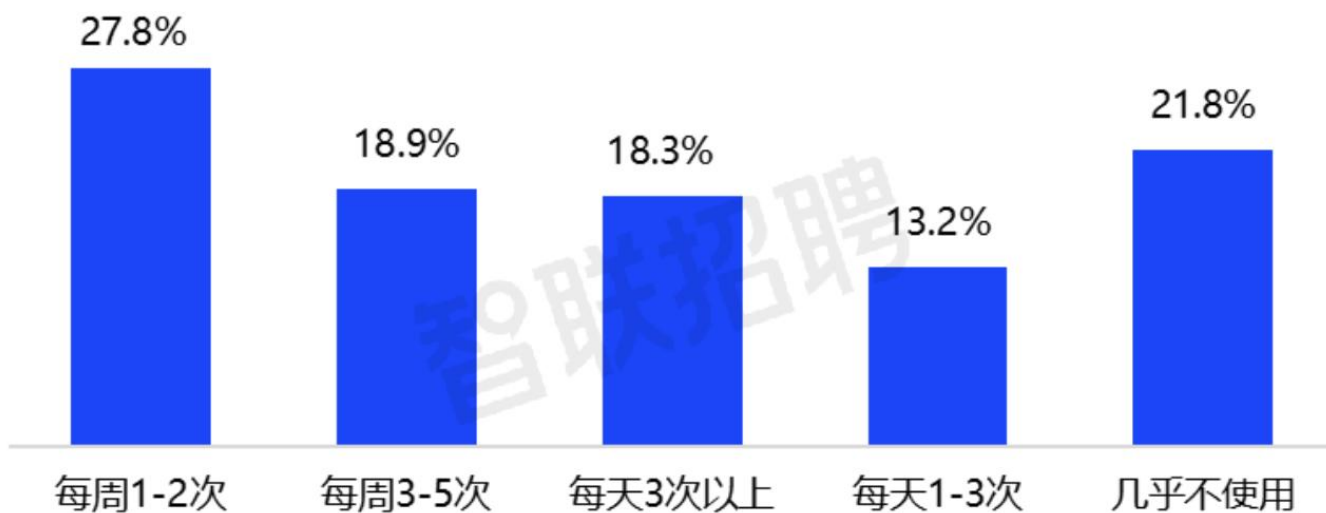
"The Research Report on the Evolution of "Human-Machine Symbiosis" in the Workplace"

01

Application scenario: AI deeply penetrates the core aspects of the workplace, continuously expanding the boundaries of the professional environment.

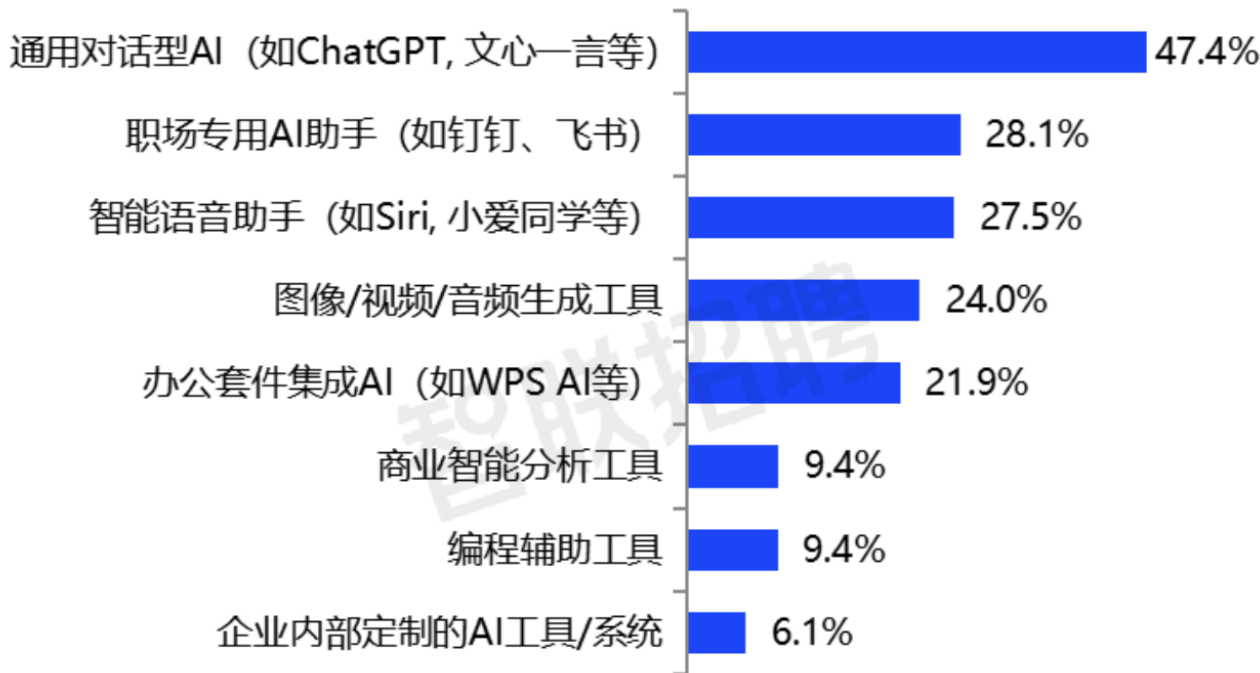
The widespread application of AI tools has fundamentally transformed the traditional working methods of professionals, prompting the innovative and collaborative work model of 'human-machine collaboration' to gradually evolve from a conceptual idea to common practice, continually advancing towards 'human-machine symbiosis.' Research shows that as many as 78.2% of professionals utilize AI in their work every week, deeply integrating AI into their daily tasks, and a workplace environment of human-machine symbiosis is taking shape.

职场人使用AI的频率



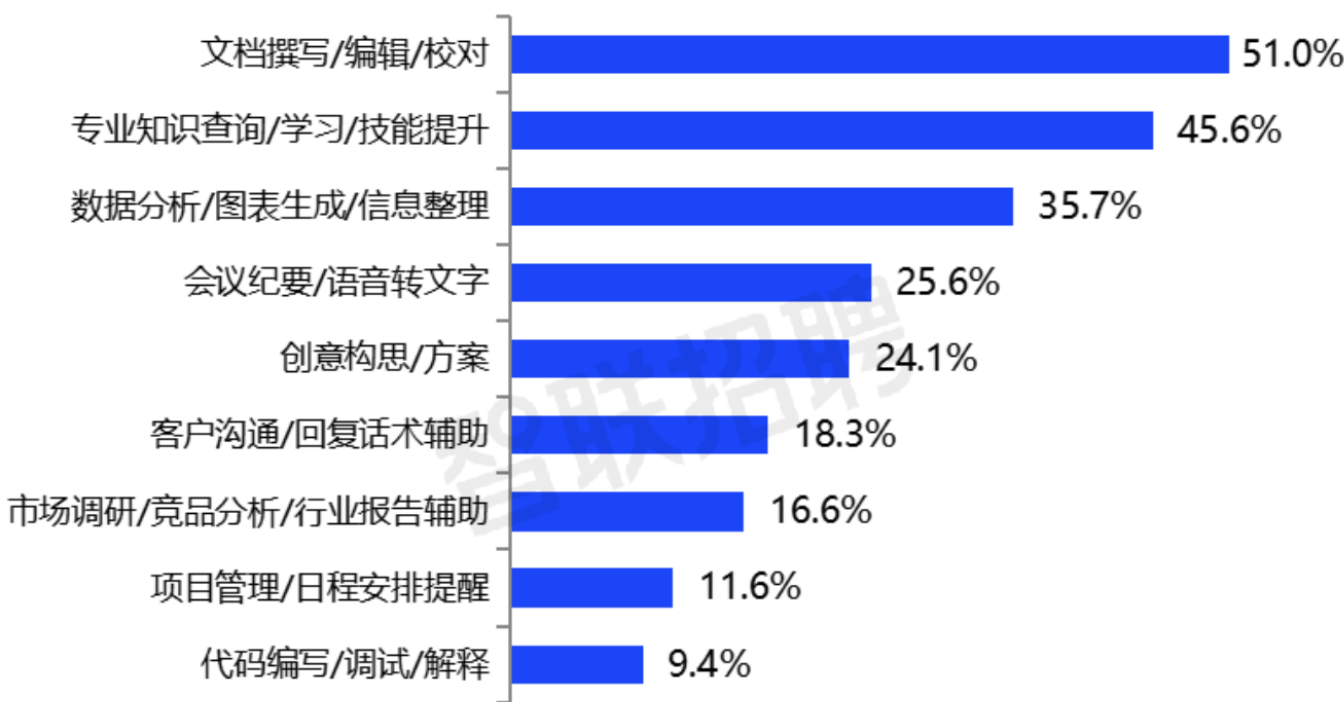
Analyzing the types of AI tools most commonly used by professionals in the workplace, it can be found that general-purpose AI tools hold a dominant position, accounting for 47.4%. These tools are favored by professionals due to their flexible functionality. Meanwhile, AI applications in specific verticals are rapidly penetrating the market. Workplace-specific AI assistants like DingTalk and Feishu account for 28.1%, intelligent voice assistants such as Xiao Ai and Tmall Genie account for 27.5%, and image/video/audio generation tools account for 24%. The synergy between general-purpose AI and vertical AI is further expanding the breadth and depth of application scenarios.

职场人最常使用的AI工具/服务类型



In specific work tasks, 51% of professionals use AI tools for document writing/editing/proofreading, representing the highest proportion. This is followed by professional knowledge inquiry/learning/skills improvement at 45.6%. The "general + vertical" dual-drive model effectively covers the entire chain of needs from basic office tasks to high-value creation, promoting the advancement of workplace AI towards refinement and specialization.

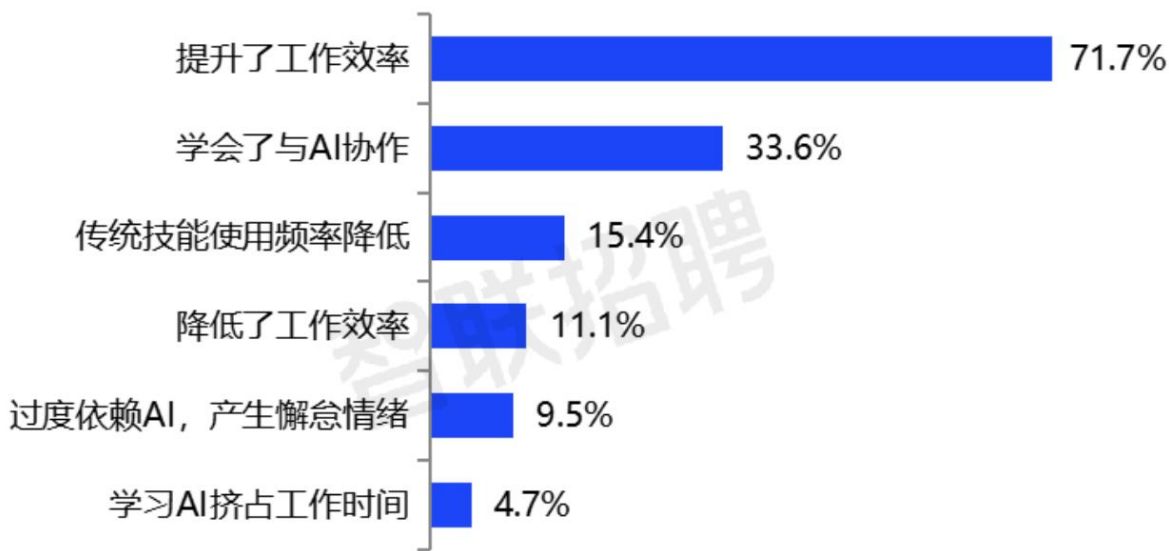
职场人最常使用AI工具处理的任务类型



70% of professionals have improved their work efficiency with AI assistance, enhancing human-machine collaboration capabilities.

As AI becomes deeply involved in the core aspects of the workplace, employees' work efficiency and accuracy have improved. Data shows that 71.7% of professionals acknowledge the enhancement in work performance brought by AI tools. From the perspective of replacing low-value-added labor, AI liberates workers from 'mechanical labor' by automating repetitive tasks such as document proofreading, data entry, and basic report generation. In terms of shortening the information processing chain, AI's real-time retrieval and multi-source information integration capabilities address the pain points of 'scattered information and inefficient filtering' in traditional work.

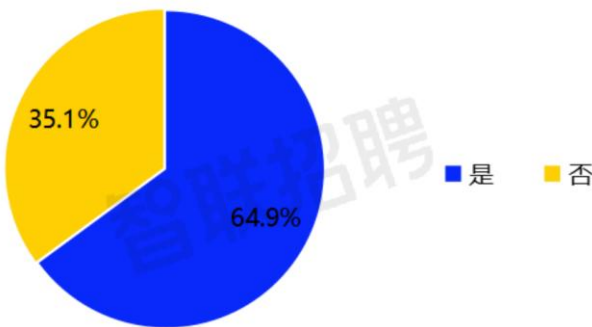
使用AI工具对职场人产生的影响



6.4% of professionals rely on AI to complete tasks that require colleague assistance.

In a human-machine co-creation model, the autonomy and independence of professionals are not weakened but rather enhanced. As AI tools become deeply embedded in task allocation, progress management, and cross-department communication, they help facilitate the transformation from traditional hierarchical management to a flatter, more intelligent collaboration. In traditional structures, tasks need to be passed through the hierarchy of "execution at the grassroots level - coordination at the middle level - decision-making at the top level," which results in high information loss and slow response times. However, when each "human-machine unit" has the ability to independently handle complex tasks, team collaboration can be achieved directly through "horizontal coordination between units," greatly enhancing the team's response speed.

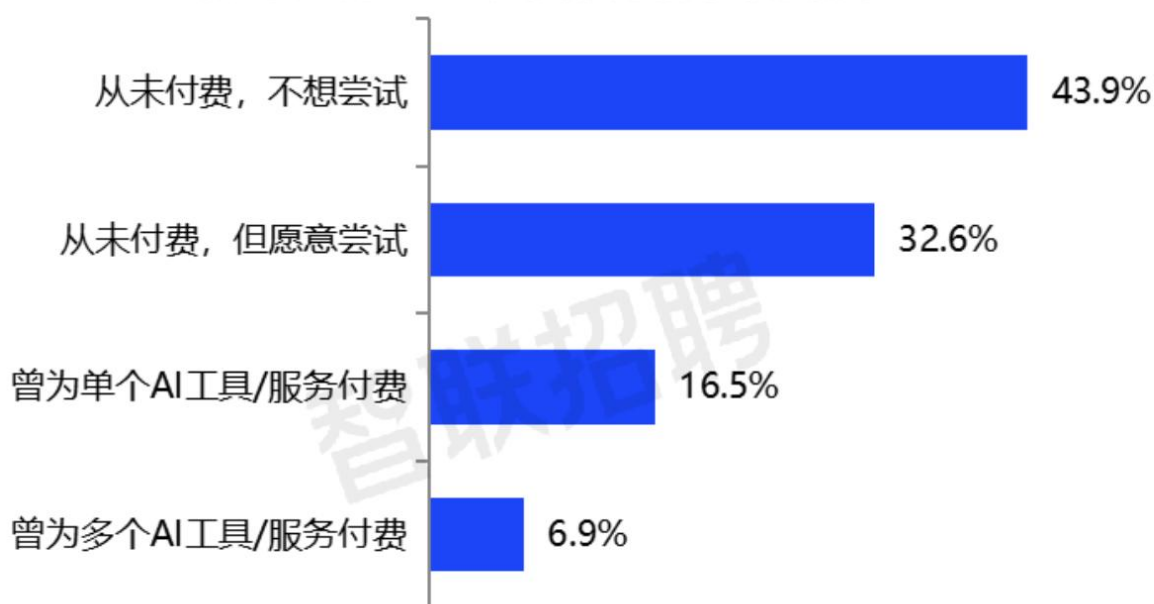
职场人是否在AI的帮助下完成需要协助的工作



Value Leap: Deepening Human-Computer Interaction and Restructuring Workplace Relationships

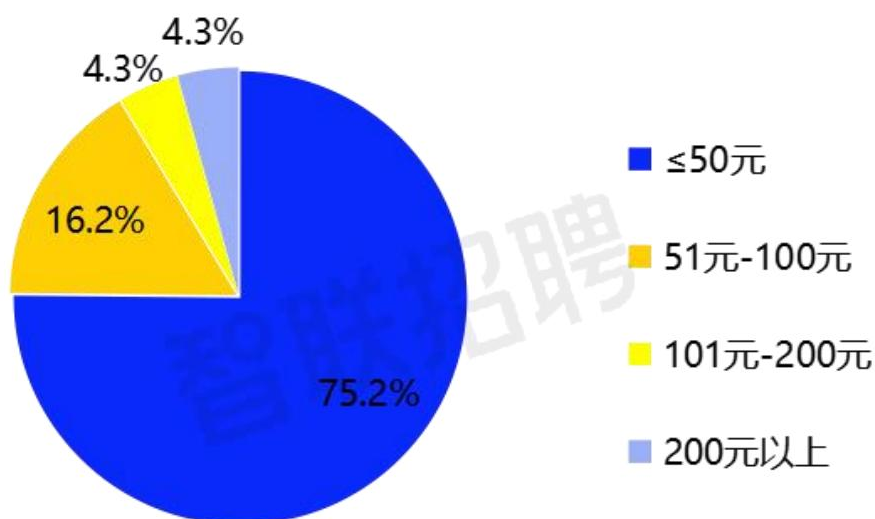
56.1% of professionals are willing to pay for AI services, revealing the market potential of AI products. Among them, 23.4% have already completed payment transactions for AI tools. Specifically, 16.5% have paid for a single AI tool or service, such as purchasing a one-month membership, while 6.9% have paid for multiple AI tools or services. This indicates that their recognition of AI tools is transitioning from a cognitive level to a behavioral level, and the value of AI tools is receiving substantial acknowledgment.

职场人为AI工具/服务付费的情况



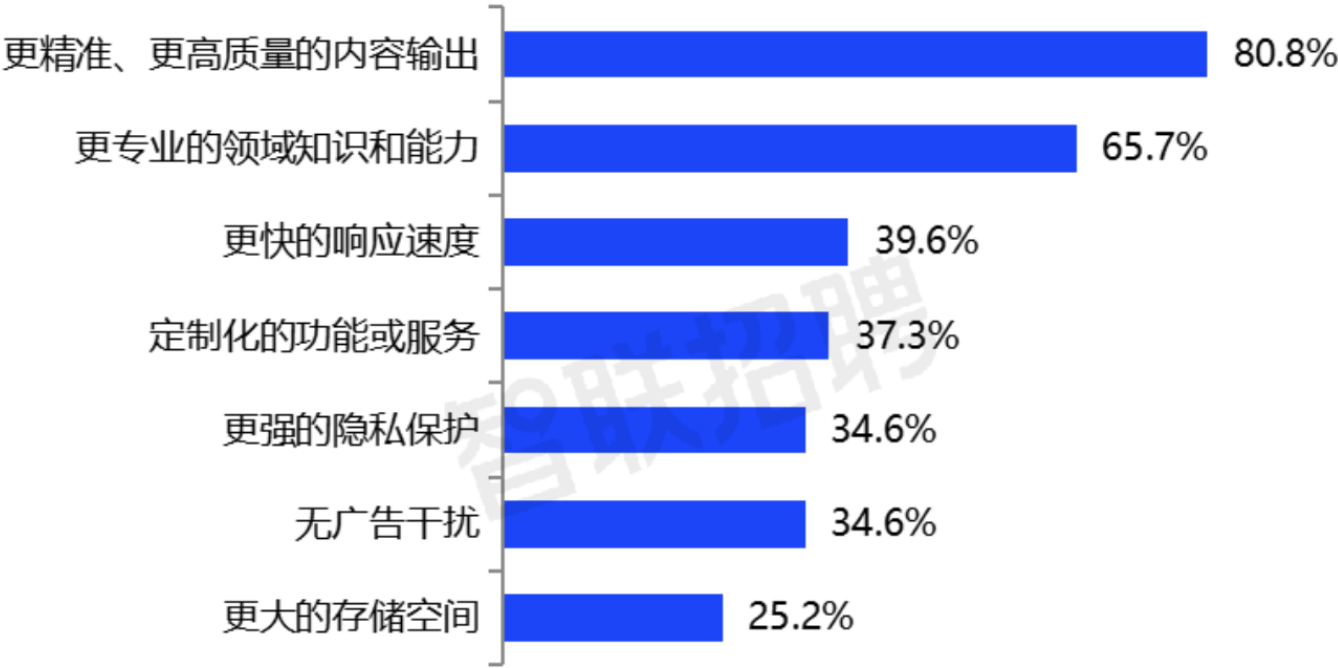
When asked about the monthly fee that professionals are willing to pay for a single AI tool, 75.2% of them chose under 50 yuan. Executives hope to obtain professional value from AI that can support critical decisions, and this value requires unlocking higher-level AI access. Therefore, they are willing to pay a premium for higher-level :

职场人愿意为单个AI工具支付的单月费用



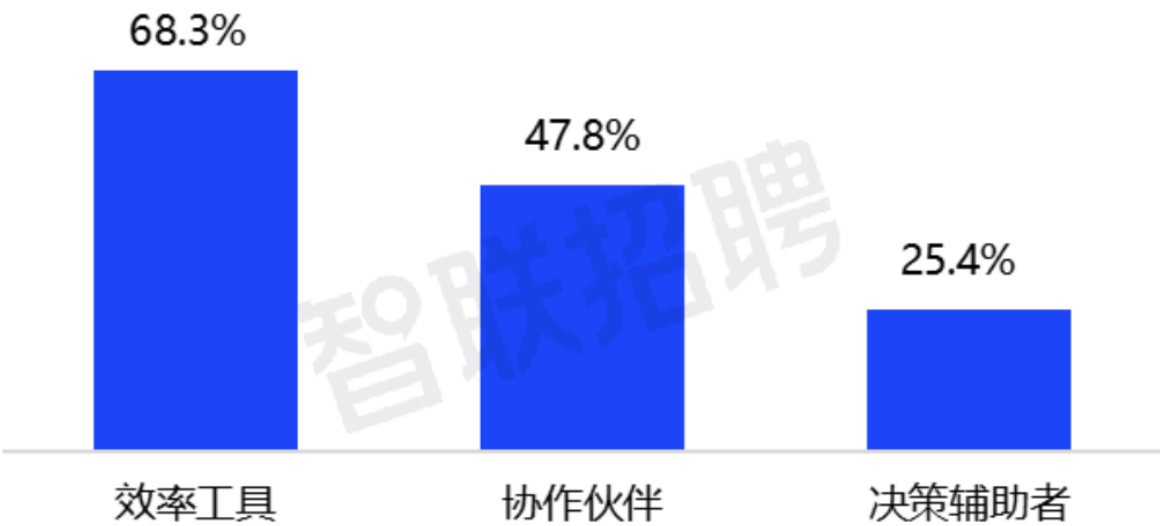
Further analysis of the payment preferences of professionals reveals that 80.8% of them choose more precise and higher quality content output; 65.7% focus on more specialized domain knowledge and skills. This indicates that professionals place greater value on the enhanced effects of AI tools in terms of content quality and professional depth. Their willingness to pay for AI services also reflects their expectations and needs for improved AI functionality, outlining the future optimization direction for AI services.

职场人愿意为哪种AI服务付费



As AI capabilities continue to improve, its role in the workplace is gradually evolving from a single-purpose tool to a multi-dimensional assistant, with more and more professionals recognizing its status as an 'intelligent partner'.

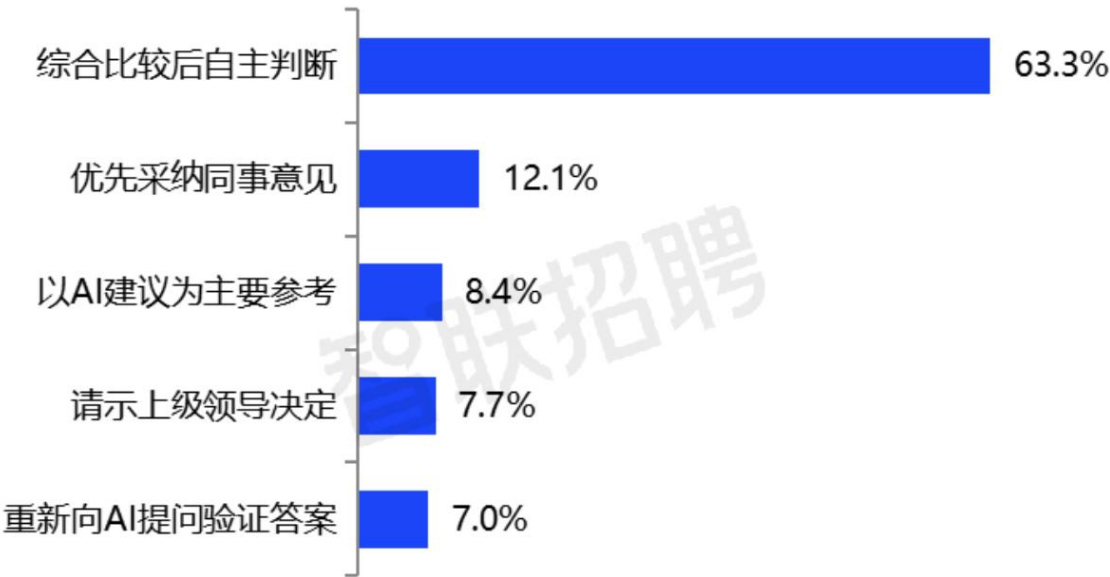
职场人认为AI在团队中的角色



Trust Building: 'Human-Machine Mutual Trust' is still at a cautious stage, with humans playing a dominant role in key decisions.

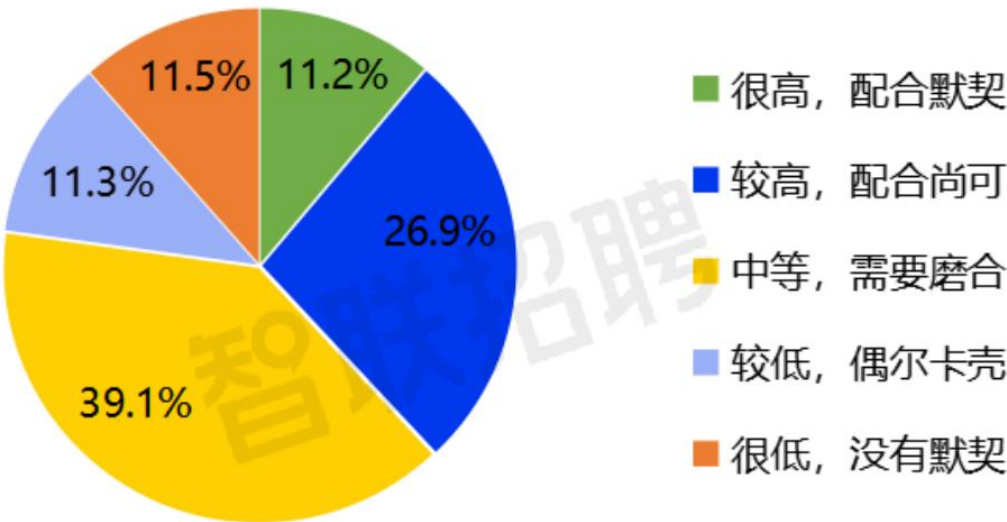
When the advice given by AI is inconsistent with that of human colleagues, 63.3% of professionals choose to make their own judgment after a comprehensive comparison. They neither blindly rely on AI nor easily dismiss its suggestions. Behind this core behavior is the professionals' commitment to maintaining "decision-making authority" in the AI era, as well as the formation of a decision-making model characterized by "diverse references and rational integration."

当AI的建议与同事意见不一致时，职场人的做法



The data indicates that although AI has already been widely integrated into work environments, there is still room for improvement in its alignment with the actual demands of the workplace.

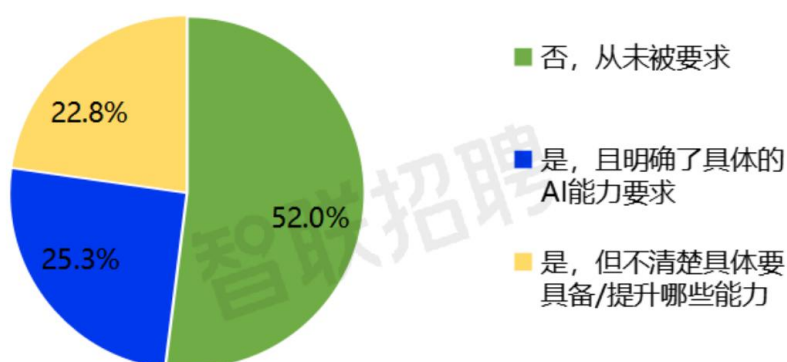
职场人与AI的协作配合度



The Future Paradigm: Collaborative Efforts to Achieve a "Human-Machine Co-Creation" Value Map

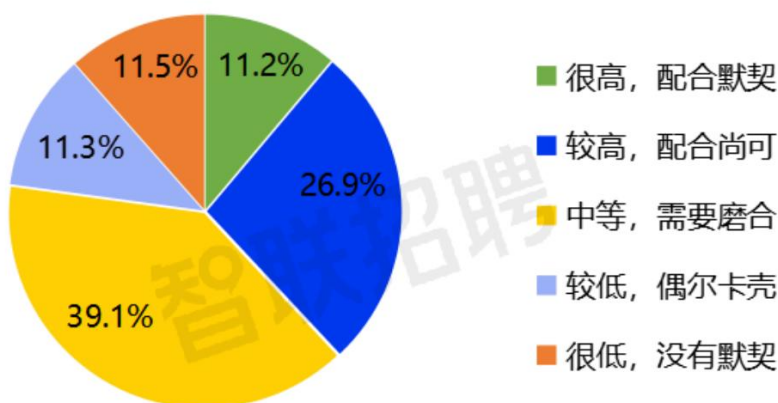
Nowadays, AI skills have gradually shifted from being a "bonus" to a "fundamental competency." Nearly 50% of professionals have been required to possess or enhance their AI skills in their work or job search over the past year. Among them, 25.3% were given specific AI capability requirements, while 22.8% found themselves in a vague situation of "having requirements but lacking direction." This phenomenon reflects that the current demand for AI talent in enterprises is still in an exploratory phase: although there is an awareness of the necessity of AI skills, a clear "AI competency model" for employees has yet to be established. This situation somewhat restricts the practical implementation of human-machine collaboration in enterprises and poses challenges to the strategic vision and management capabilities of organizational leaders.

职场人过去一年是否被要求具备/提升AI能力



As the key entities driving the implementation of artificial intelligence technology in the workplace, companies are continuously enhancing the development of AI learning and application support systems.

职场人与AI的协作配合度



Artificial intelligence technology has broken the traditional boundaries of the workplace, reshaping task allocation and collaboration models. The trust of professionals in AI is continuously increasing, further driving the rapid evolution of human-machine co-creation models, and prompting organizations to become more flexible. Looking to the future, to achieve deep integration of AI and the workplace ecosystem, companies need to reassess their AI investment strategies, strengthen the adaptability and inclusiveness of human-machine co-creation, and build a new work paradigm that is more open, flexible, and sustainable.

Thanks for reading

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A white silhouette of a city skyline against a dark blue background. The skyline includes various buildings, a pagoda-like structure, and a clock tower on the right.

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