Executive summary

Across industries, the competitive stakes for AI are rising quickly, with global spending on generative AI reaching an all-time high. The message is clear: companies that fail to embrace AI risk falling behind in customer relevance, operational performance, and long-term viability.

To understand how organisations are responding to this rapid acceleration, Akamai commissioned Forrester Consulting to examine how enterprises are adopting AI today and where they're headed next.

In the study, State of Enterprise AI, hundreds of senior AI and enterprise cloud strategy decision-makers from around the world shared their near- and long-term approaches to deploying AI for customer-facing applications. The study revealed that organisations are leaning into proven use cases like personalisation and customer service automation to build AI fluency, while carefully managing risks around security, compliance, and performance.

Responses from AI and cloud leaders in the UK show they are in step with these global trends, but they are especially focused on delivering customer experience gains and operational efficiency.

Key findings

AI drives measurable business outcomes: 80% of UK respondents report that their AI initiatives have increased revenue, while 78% are measuring success through improved customer experience (CX). In addition, 70% are seeing gains in customer lifetime value (CLV). Many organisations highlighted specific use cases that not only streamline operations but also deliver more tailored, responsive experiences for customers, reinforcing both loyalty and long-term growth.

Top three AI areas of focus: UK enterprises are approaching AI with a clear focus on customer impact, operational efficiency, and measured scaling. Personalised recommendations and visual search emerge as the most critical use cases, while near- and long-term AI deployment strategies are largely global in scope, reflecting the interconnected nature of modern enterprise operations.

Balancing innovation with risk: Leaders are balancing innovation with risk, carefully managing security, compliance, and talent gaps, and strategically partnering with trusted providers to ensure performance, reliability, and scalability. Across the board, UK organisations are building AI fluency in controlled, high-value areas while experimenting with next-generation capabilities that could redefine customer experience.

The UK's AI approach mirrors global trends: Organisations worldwide are prioritising proven use cases to gain early wins while using iterative, data-driven strategies to expand AI adoption responsibly, demonstrating that the UK is both aligned with and contributing to global AI best practices.