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Analysis in Brief

Analysis on planned use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2026

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Table of contents

Proportion of businesses planning to use AI has more than doubled in the past two years	4
Planned use of AI has increased in majority of industries	4
Planned use of large language models and data analytics saw the most growth among AI applications	5
Larger businesses more likely to indicate plans to use AI over the next year	6
Future plans to use AI versus actual AI use.....	6
Methodology	6
TechStat program	6

Analysis on planned use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2026

by **Bernard Li, Robert Fair, and Chris Johnston**

In June 2026, the Canadian government released a new national strategy regarding artificial intelligence (AI) called “AI for All”. The strategy sets out Canada’s vision to adopt, build and govern AI, noting that Canadian firms are actively developing advanced AI models, tools, and applications and using AI to drive operational efficiencies. The strategy also notes that AI is an important element in improving productivity growth across the Canadian economy, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and government services.¹

From the beginning of July to early August 2026, Statistics Canada conducted the [Canadian Survey on Business Conditions](#) to gather information on the environment in which businesses are operating and their expectations moving forward. This iteration of the survey revisits questions on planned use of AI and its impacts, which were first introduced in the third quarter of 2024. Businesses in Canada are increasingly planning to use AI to produce goods or deliver services. In fact, over time, a higher proportion of businesses reported using AI to produce goods or deliver services than had initially planned to do so. This article explores the industries and characteristics of businesses that plan to use AI over the next 12 months.

Proportion of businesses planning to use AI has more than doubled in the past two years

In the third quarter of 2026, 1 in 4 (25.2%) businesses in Canada reported they plan to use AI to produce goods or deliver services over the next 12 months, up from 14.5% in the third quarter of 2025² and 10.6% in the third quarter of 2024.³

Table 1
Planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce goods or deliver services over the next 12 months, third quarters of 2024, 2025, and 2026

	Third quarter of 2024	Third quarter of 2025	Third quarter of 2026
All industries	percentage of businesses in Canada		
Plan to use	10.6	14.5	25.2
Not planning to use	71.8	66.7	52.7
Unsure	17.6	18.9	22.1

Notes: The results in this table are based on the survey that was in collection from July 2 to August 6, 2024, July 2 to August 6, 2025, and from July 2 to August 6, 2026, and respondents were asked what their expectations would be over the next 12-month period. As a result, those 12 months could range from July 2, 2024 to August 6, 2025, July 2, 2025 to August 6, 2026, and July 2, 2026 to August 6, 2027, depending on when the business responded.

Source: Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, third quarter of 2024 (Table 33-10-0878-01), third quarter of 2025 (Table 33-10-1045-01), third quarter of 2026 (Table 33-10-1207-01).

Planned use of AI has increased in majority of industries

Over the course of the last three years, the industries with the highest proportion of businesses planning to use AI has remained consistent. Professional, scientific and technical services; information and cultural industries; and finance and insurance have been among the leaders in planned AI use in each of the last three years.

It is worth noting that some industries have seen significant increases in their planned AI use since the third quarter of 2024. For example, the proportion of businesses in construction that planned to use AI has grown from 3.2% to 18.3% between the third quarter of 2024 and the third quarter of 2026. During this same timeframe, the proportion of businesses in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction that planned to use AI over the next 12 months rose from 4.6% to 14.8%.

1. [Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All](#)
2. [Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2025](#)
3. [Analysis on expected use of artificial intelligence by businesses in Canada, third quarter of 2024](#)

Table 2**Planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce goods or deliver services over the next 12 months, by industry, third quarters of 2024, 2025, and 2026**

	Third quarter of 2024	Third quarter of 2025	Third quarter of 2026
	percentage of businesses in Canada		
All industries	10.6	14.5	25.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	24.6	26.3	54.8
Information and cultural industries	29.7	38.6	48.0
Finance and insurance	17.9	31.5	35.5
Health care and social assistance	11.4	23.2	33.8
Arts, entertainment and recreation	18.5	15.2	24.5
Manufacturing	13.1	7.2	24.4
Real estate and rental and leasing	13.0	24.4	23.6
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	12.7	11.6	19.6
Construction	3.2	9.2	18.3
Accommodation and food services	6.0	14.8	17.4
Wholesale trade	12.2	7.8	16.8
Other services (except public administration)	6.5	8.7	16.7
Retail trade	5.1	5.7	16.0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	4.6	3.4	14.8
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	4.8	4.9	13.2
Transportation and warehousing	4.2	6.6	8.0

Notes: The results in this table are based on the survey that was in collection from July 2 to August 6, 2024, July 2 to August 6, 2025, and from July 2 to August 6, 2026, and respondents were asked what their expectations would be over the next 12-month period. As a result, those 12 months could range from July 2, 2024 to August 6, 2025, July 2, 2025 to August 6, 2026, and July 2, 2026 to August 6, 2027, depending on when the business responded.

Source: Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, third quarter of 2024 (Table 33-10-0878-01), third quarter of 2025 (Table 33-10-1045-01), third quarter of 2026 (Table 33-10-1207-01).

Planned use of large language models and data analytics saw the most growth among AI applications

Among the 1 in 4 (25.2%) businesses in the third quarter of 2026 that reported plans to use AI over the next 12 months, the most commonly cited AI applications were data analytics (41.7%), large language models (39.3%), and virtual agents or chat bots (31.8%). Between the third quarter of 2024 and the third quarter of 2026, the planned use of large language models saw the most growth, more than quadrupling from 9.3% to 39.3%. This was followed by the planned use of data analytics, where the proportion grew from 26.7% to 41.7%.

Table 3**Planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) applications to produce goods or deliver services over the next 12 months, third quarters of 2024, 2025 and 2026**

	Third quarter of 2024	Third quarter of 2025	Third quarter of 2026
	percentage of businesses in Canada		
Businesses planning to use AI over the next 12 months	10.6	14.5	25.2
Data analytics using AI	26.7	32.9	41.7
Large language models	9.3	19.9	39.3
Virtual agents or chat bots	18.7	34.8	31.8
Text analytics using AI	27.2	28.5	29.0
Marketing automation using AI	19.4	25.6	23.4
Speech or voice recognition using AI	11.9	20.2	20.4
Machine learning	18.8	18.4	19.4
Natural language processing	15.4	20.9	18.8
Recommendation systems using AI	11.7	14.0	17.1
Decision making systems based on AI	6.3	13.1	14.0
Image or pattern recognition	7.5	7.6	10.9
Deep learning	5.3	8.9	9.9
Robotics process automation	6.2	3.2	5.1
Machine or computer vision	3.2	3.2	4.6
Biometrics	1.9	1.6	2.3
Neural networks	2.6	2.2	1.7
Augmented reality	1.3	2.0	1.4
Other type	6.2	7.3	0.1

Notes: The results in this table are based on the survey that was in collection from July 2 to August 6, 2024, July 2 to August 6, 2025, and from July 2 to August 6, 2026, and respondents were asked what their expectations would be over the next 12-month period. As a result, those 12 months could range from July 2, 2024 to August 6, 2025, July 2, 2025 to August 6, 2026, and July 2, 2026 to August 6, 2027, depending on when the business responded.

Source: Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, third quarter of 2024 (Table 33-10-0878-01), third quarter of 2025 (Table 33-10-1045-01), third quarter of 2026 (Table 33-10-1207-01).

Businesses in professional, scientific and technical services; and information and cultural industries had the highest proportion of businesses planning to use AI over the next 12 months (54.8% and 48.0% respectively) in the third quarter of 2026. Among businesses in professional, scientific and technical services, large language models (54.9%) and data analytics (40.5%) were the AI applications most frequently cited. For businesses in information and cultural industries, large language models (61.6%) and virtual agents or chat bots (51.5%) were the most commonly cited AI applications.

Larger businesses more likely to indicate plans to use AI over the next year

While businesses of all sizes have observed growth in plans to use AI over the last three years, those plans have notably accelerated between the third quarter of 2025 and the third quarter of 2026. This increase was more significant for larger businesses. The proportion of businesses with 20 to 99 employees that planned to use AI more than doubled from 15.0% to 32.8% while the proportion of businesses with 100 or more employees that planned to use AI rose from 20.5% to 37.5%.

Table 4
Planned use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce goods or deliver services over the next 12 months, by employment size, third quarters of 2024, 2025, and 2026

	Third quarter of 2024	Third quarter of 2025	Third quarter of 2026
	percentage of businesses in Canada		
All employment sizes	10.6	14.5	25.2
1 to 4 employees	10.2	14.2	25.6
5 to 19 employees	10.0	14.4	21.0
20 to 99 employees	12.6	15.0	32.8
100 or more employees	20.0	20.5	37.5

Notes: The results in this table are based on the survey that was in collection from July 2 to August 6, 2024, July 2 to August 6, 2025, and from July 2 to August 6, 2026, and respondents were asked what their expectations would be over the next 12-month period. As a result, those 12 months could range from July 2, 2024 to August 6, 2025, July 2, 2025 to August 6, 2026, and July 2, 2026 to August 6, 2027, depending on when the business responded.
Source: Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, third quarter of 2024 (Table 33-10-0878-01), third quarter of 2025 (Table 33-10-1045-01), third quarter of 2026 (Table 33-10-1207-01).

Future plans to use AI versus actual AI use

Since the introduction of questions on AI use and impacts in the second quarter of 2024, it has been possible to compare results on expected plans to use AI versus actual AI use by businesses in Canada. Based on this comparison, more businesses in Canada reported using AI to produce goods or deliver services than previously expected. For example, in the third quarter of 2024, 10.6% of businesses reported plans to use AI over the next 12 months. By the second quarter of 2025, 12.2% of businesses reported having used AI over the previous 12 months.⁴ Similarly, in the third quarter of 2025, 14.5 % of businesses planned to use AI over the next 12 months; by the second quarter of 2026, 19.2% of businesses indicated having used AI over the last 12 months.⁵ This illustrates the growing recognition and acceptance of AI use and the increasing rate of adoption by businesses in Canada to respond to changing business conditions.

Methodology

From July 2 to August 6, 2026, representatives from businesses across Canada were invited to complete an online questionnaire about business conditions and business expectations moving forward. The Canadian Survey on Business Conditions uses a stratified random sample of business establishments with employees classified by geography, industry sector and size. Proportions are estimated using calibrated weights to calculate the population totals in the domains of interest. The total sample size for this iteration of the survey was 21,161 and results are based on responses from a total of 9,601 businesses or organizations.

TechStat program

Starting in 2027, new information will be published on the use of AI technologies, their prevalence, and the associated benefits and challenges through the TechStat program at Statistics Canada. TechStat will provide data, analysis and insights on the adoption, use and impacts of AI for individuals, businesses, and employees.

4. [Analysis on artificial intelligence use by businesses in Canada, second quarter of 2025](#)
5. [Analysis on artificial intelligence use by businesses in Canada, second quarter of 2026](#)