56% Of CEOs Report No Revenue Gains From AI: PwC Survey via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Most companies haven’t yet seen financial returns from their AI investments, according to PwC’s 29th Global CEO Survey.

The survey of 4,454 chief executives across 95 countries found that 56% report neither increased revenue nor lower costs from AI over the past 12 months.

What The Survey Found

About 30% of CEOs said their company saw increased revenue from AI in the last year. On costs, 26% reported decreases while 22% said costs went up. PwC defined “increase” and “decrease” as changes of 2% or more.

Only 12% of companies achieved both revenue gains and cost reductions. PwC called this group the “vanguard” and noted they had stronger AI foundations in place, including defined roadmaps and technology environments built for integration.

For marketing specifically, the numbers suggest early-stage adoption. Just 22% of CEOs said their organization applies AI to demand generation to a large or very large extent. The company’s products, services, and experiences showed similar numbers at 19%.

Separate from AI, CEO confidence in near-term growth has declined. Only 30% said they were very or extremely confident about revenue growth over the next 12 months. That’s down from 38% last year and a peak of 56% in 2022.

Why This Matters

The survey adds data to a pattern I've tracked over the past year. A LinkedIn report found 72% of B2B marketers felt overwhelmed by AI's pace of change. A Gartner survey showed 73% of marketing teams were using AI, but 87% of CMOs had experienced campaign performance problems.

The 22% demand generation figure gives marketers a rough benchmark for how their AI adoption compares to the broader executive population. It's self-reported CEO perception rather than measured deployment, but it suggests most organizations are still in early stages of applying AI to customer acquisition at scale.

PwC's framing is direct:

> *"Isolated, tactical AI projects often don't deliver measurable value."*

The report adds that tangible returns come from enterprise-scale deployment consistent with company business strategy.

Looking Ahead

PwC recommends companies focus on building AI foundations before expecting returns. That includes defined roadmaps, technology environments that enable integration, and formalized responsible AI processes.

For marketing teams evaluating their own AI investments, this survey suggests most organizations are still working through the same questions.

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