AI Agents Are Gaining Momentum in Singapore, But Employees Want Clear Boundaries: Workday Research

Sharp Contrast Revealed: 83% of Employees Comfortable with AI as Co-Pilot, But Only 8% Would Accept an AI Manager

Singapore, October 15, 2025 — Workday, Inc. (NASDAQ: WDAY), the enterprise AI platform for managingpeople, money, and agents, today released new global research that shows that while AI agents are gaining ground in the workplace in Singapore, employees still want clear boundaries. According to the report AI Agents Are Here – But Don't Call Them Boss, 83% of workers in Singapore are comfortable teaming up with AI agents—but only 8% say they are comfortable being managed by one. This signals a key challenge for businesses: how to embrace the power of AI without losing the human touch.

The research highlights that widespread optimism is driving the rapid adoption of AI agents into core operations among Singaporean businesses, particularly in finance and HR. In fact, 79% of organisations here are already rolling out AI agents or have begun operating them.

At the same time, employees are drawing a line between how they are and are not willing to work with AI. Ethical, security, and governance concerns remain the primary barriers to broader adoption, far outweighing technical or financial challenges. This is particularly evident in sensitive areas like finance and compliance, highlighting a need for robust regulation and human oversight.

"We're entering a new era of work in Singapore where AI is an incredible partner to organisations today, complementing human judgement, leadership, and empathy," said **Jess O'Reilly, general manager, ASEAN, Workday**. "To drive productivity and trust, it is important that we rely on AI as a partner rather than a leader. To do so, Singaporean organisations need to be intentional in how AI is used and keep people at the center of every decision."

Key findings from the report include:

- **AI as Co-Pilot, Not Commander:** Four in five Singapore employees are highly comfortable with AI agents working alongside them and recommending new skills—but only 8% are comfortable with an AI agent managing them. A mere 24% are comfortable with AI agents operating in the background without human knowledge. Establishing clear boundaries for AI is key to building employee trust and driving greater adoption.
- **The Double-Edged Sword of AI Productivity:** While skepticism remains about AI agents surpassing human intelligence or management capabilities in the near term, nearly 90% of employees in Singapore believe AI agents will help them get more done. At the same time, many are also concerned that these productivity gains will lead to a decline in critical thinking (50%) and decline in the quality of human interaction (33%). This underscores the need for thoughtful implementation that prioritises employee well-being.
- **Trust in AI requires strict regulation:** While workers in Singapore recognise the productivity benefits of AI agents, they remain cautious about granting AI agents autonomy in high-stakes or sensitive areas. All respondents indicated that some form of regulation is required, with a majority in support of having ethical guidelines set by developers (57%) and strict human oversight (48%).
- **Distinct Roles for Agents and Humans:** Most respondents in Singapore see agents as important teammates, but not full members of the workforce. Trust in AI also depends on the task; it's highest for skills development (50%) and lowest for sensitive areas like hiring (15%), finance (23%), and legal matters (13%), underscoring the need for human oversight and accountability.
- **Finance Sees Big Potential:** With the industry facing a shortage of CPAs and finance professionals, more than three-quarters (72%) of finance workers in Singapore believe AI agents will help close the gap and only 11% are worried about job loss. The top uses for AI agents in Finance include financial reporting (33%), forecasting and budgeting (28%), and fraud detection (22%).

This research underscores a crucial path forward: to harness the potential of AI, Singapore organisations must focus on building trust through transparency and empowering their people. This isn't just about deploying new technology. It's about thoughtfully designing a future where AI agents enhance human capabilities, enabling a more productive and fulfilling work experience for all.

For additional information

- Read the full report, "AI Agents Are Here—But Don't Call Them Boss."
- Discover more about the implications of AI agents on the global workforce, "The Secret to AI Optimism and Adoption Is Setting Boundaries."
- Hear more about the evolving mindset of the Chief Work Officer, "The Chief Work Officer: Leading the Human-AI Frontier."

About The Report

Our findings are based on a global survey of 2,950 full-time decision-makers and software implementation leaders across three key regions: North America (n=706), APAC (n=1,031), and EMEA (n=1,213). Data collection was conducted by Hanover

Research in May and June 2025, commissioned by Workday.

About Workday

Workday is the enterprise AI platform for managing people, money, and agents. The Workday platform is built with AI at the core to help customers elevate people, supercharge work, and move their business forever forward. Workday is used by more than 11,000 organisations around the world and across industries – from medium-sized businesses to more than 65% of the Fortune 500. For more information about Workday, visit workday.com.

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