



# UNLEASHING THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL ASSISTANTS FOR EXECUTIVE BUSINESS LEADERS

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, the demand for streamlined business operations has led to the rapid emergence of digital executive assistants.

Executive assistants have traditionally been the linchpin that ensure the seamless functioning of any industry, serving as the backbone of organizational efficiency and success. Their role in efficient task management, time optimization for executives, and effective communication is unparalleled. By maintaining confidentiality, adapting to dynamic industry needs, and acting as gatekeepers, executive assistants contribute to the trust and reputation of an organization.

However, in recent times the fast-changing market demands have widened the scope and role of executive assistants, further opening the gates for digital executive assistants.

This paper sheds light on the perception and understanding of these tools in enhancing productivity, decision-making, and overall organizational performance across different sectors. Ultimately, we look to understand the extent of AI use by executives in a variety of industries.

For this study, we carried out a comprehensive survey including an online questionnaire, offline discussions, and personal interviews to understand how Generative AI can help executives in delivering their responsibilities.



The questionnaire gathered data from 20 leaders of diverse industries and geographies, including:

- A marketing head of an Indian leading agriculture and packaging company
- A service product manager of a leading Dutch health tech firm
- The head of e-commerce for an Italian leather manufacturer
- The national head of a global leading FMCG company
- The AVP of corporate sales and partnerships of an Indian fintech startup
- A sales general manager of an Indian media and entertainment house
- The business head of a German automotive company
- The regional product marketing manager, Vietnam for a global leader in white goods manufacturing

The study focused on exploring their experiences, their preferences, and the challenges related to the execution of their day-to-day job responsibilities.

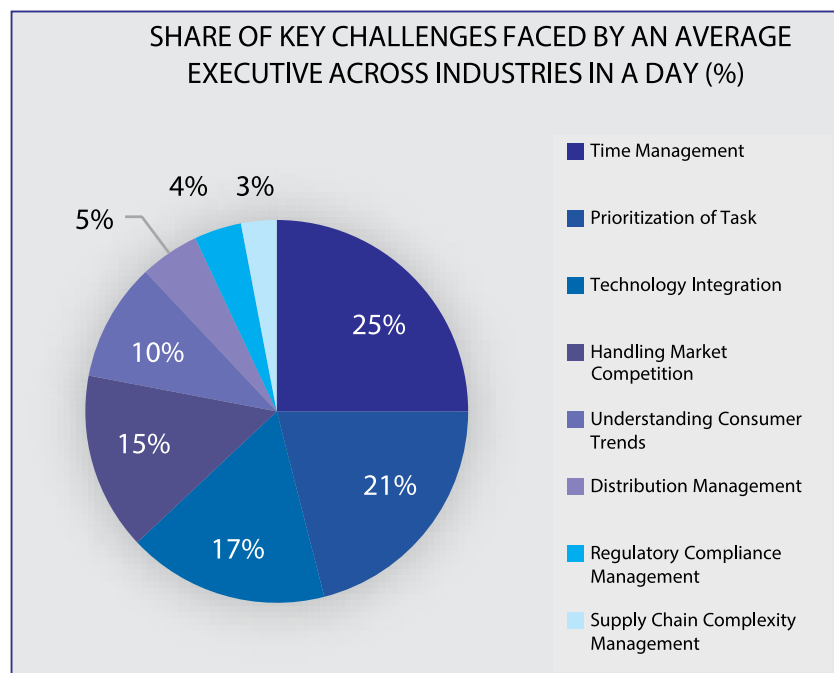
The questionnaire was designed to be holistic with closed and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to give customized responses based on their real-time experiences and demands. The data collected is free from biases and subjectivities as far as possible within the limits of human potential.

## Work throws many curve balls at business executives....

In the sprawling landscape of big industries, the everyday life of executives is filled with structured chaos. Amidst the continuous swirl of responsibilities, business leaders find themselves navigating a sea of emails, meetings, and collaboration that demand unwavering attention and prioritization. Their days are marked by the orchestration of global endeavors, managing teams spread across time zones, and the constant ebb and flow of market dynamics.

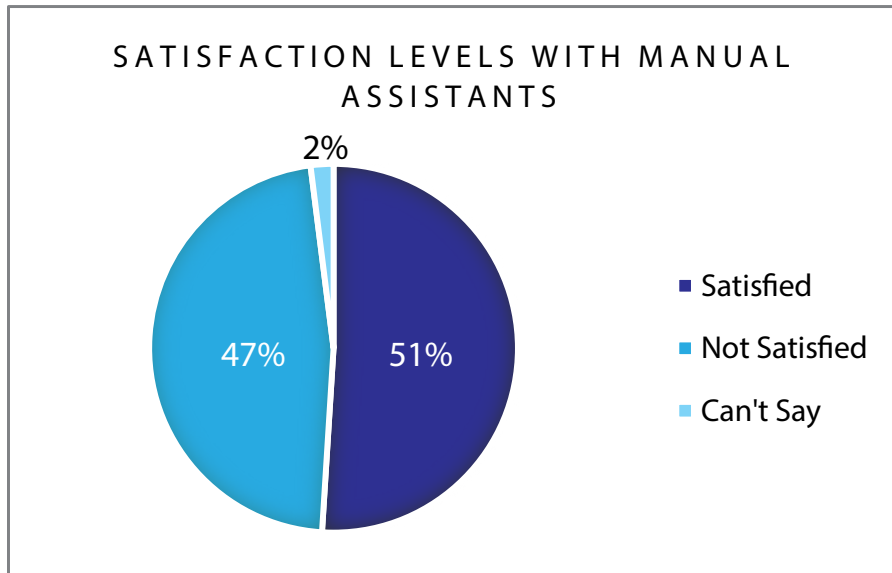
During our research, one of the executives commented: *"I have a very wide and diverse product portfolio to manage. There is a lot of complex dynamics between local and global stakeholders. There is high variation in customer expectations, response time, competitive pressures, changing market trends. Understanding all of them together poses real challenge."*

Another expressed: *"Apart from regular reporting and analysis, ad-hoc requirements also keep popping up. Besides, from this year my responsibilities are also set to increase. Also, urgent tasks need to be prioritized."*



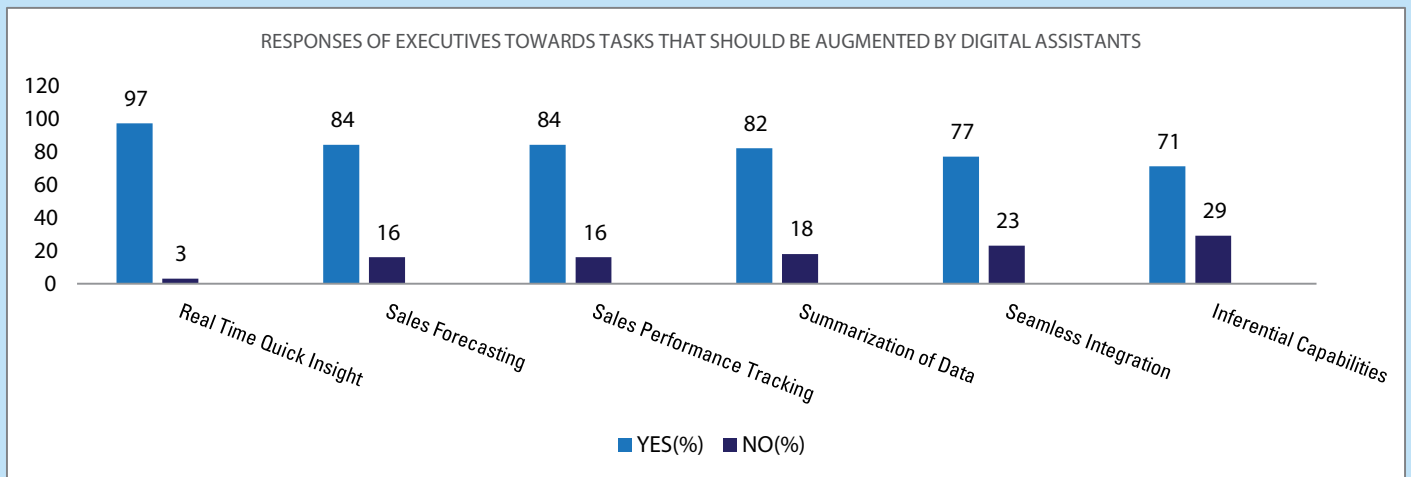
When we dived deeper into their difficulties at work, we found that most respondents report **time management** as the most pressing challenge, closely followed by the prioritization of tasks, dealing with market competition, and understanding consumer trends.

Traditionally, human assistants have supported executives in accomplishing these tasks. However, as businesses grow, executives highlight that their assistants are also becoming overburdened - and their performance is impacted. A business head complained *“Work responsibilities are steadily increasing with the addition of new business divisions cropping up every day. It demands proactiveness and incorporation of new tools and technologies. However, addressing these require reaching out to new and multiple sets of assistants, as it lies beyond the capacity of one or two assistants(humans) we have.”*

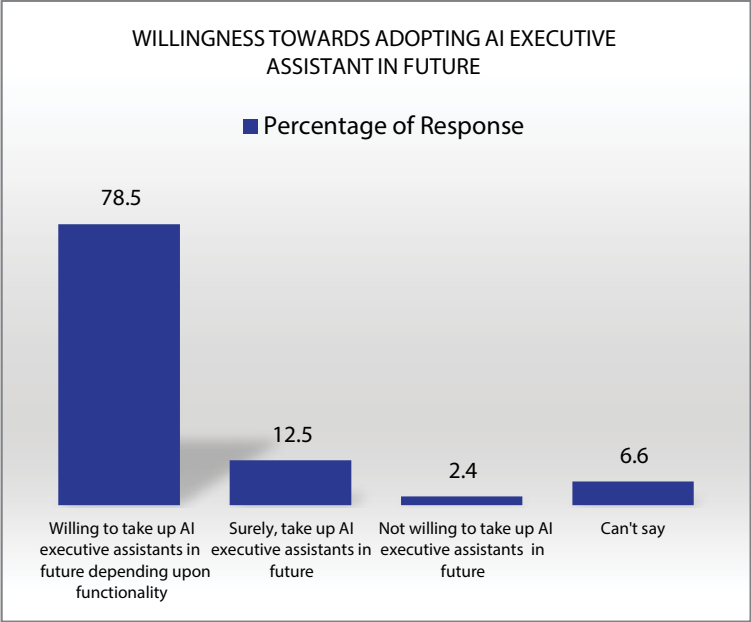


Our study also stressed the fact that the **satisfaction levels with human assistant marked only a modest 51%**, underlining the perceived limitations of a human-only assistant.

The need can be understood by remarks of one of the executives: *“Compilation and categorization of data and information from varied places to give holistic overview for decision making is the problem that needs a solution, as the current human way is highly time consuming and prone to mistakes.”*



We observed that the urgency for rapid insights is particularly pronounced, with executives recognizing the competitive advantage gained by swift and informed decision making in today's dynamic markets. This shared vision extends to **sales forecasting and tracking**, where an overwhelming **84%** of executives identify AI technologies as essential contributors to real time data analytics, empowering strategic planning and **sales performances**. Additionally, an impressive **82%** emphasize the critical role of AI in **data summarization**, understanding that the ability to distill complex information is pivotal in the information age. In essence, the unanimous call for digital executive assistants shows not only their indispensability but also their essential role in delivering quick, strategic insights that drive the success of modern executives.



Despite the expressed need for the integration of AI capabilities, a significant portion of respondents currently lack access to AI tools. A promising revelation is that **91%** of professionals are willing to adopt AI solutions for problem-solving and better decision-making in the future - if the facilities and utilities are effectively communicated. This indicates a latent demand awaiting proper outreach and understanding.

The hesitant approach towards the current adoption of AI-led digital assistants is due to the lack of exposure and accessibility to its functionality and operational capabilities. Business leaders also are worried about the extent of AI integration leading to being stuck in the automation versus augmentation paradox.



## .... Swinging the bat to hit a home run

Having worked with CxOs of multiple global companies, we have seen that organizations that overcome this dilemma can gain huge value from AI.

Incorporating AI as a transformative agent has reduced significant overheads and contributed to society by improving work-life balance for executives and their human assistants. Generative AI-powered executive assistants become catalysts for the efficient handling of multiple tasks at one go with accuracy and consistency.

But AI-powered assistants are just the beginning of a potential great story. Success is only possible only if organizations have the right foundation in place. At Infosys Consulting, we have helped organizations understand their organizational readiness, technical readiness and the associated risk and returns of generative AI initiatives through extensive maturity assessments. Our subsequent roadmaps help executives implement digital assistants and quantify the benefits from them.

We have seen success across all major industries.

- Digital assistants in banking and finance analyze a vast amount of market data, economic indicators, and customer behavior to generate investment opportunities, risk management, and customer preferences. This facilitates informed decision-making for financial institutions. Additionally, digital assistants are set to mimic relationship managers in forex trading, which involves complex understanding of market outlooks, algorithms to forecast fluctuations in currency, and personalizing recommendations for each trading customer.
- In the retail industry, AI predicts market trends and assesses the potential success of financial products. It analyzes consumer behavior, purchasing patterns, product preference, demand fluctuations and tracks the performance of sales teams by understanding the client interactions, identifying successful strategies, and optimizing cross-selling opportunities. The CSOs have benefited from consolidated reports of their business lines without the hassle of logging onto specific analytical platforms. They can leverage user-friendly channels to interact with digital assistants, while the secured technology stack ensures that their data is safe with them.
- In the furniture retail sector, digital assistants can undertake market research to understand the appropriate store layouts and customer preferences.
- In the electricity distribution sector, digital assistants are being leveraged to automate the social media responses provided to unhappy customers. These Generative AI solutions are facilitating timely replies and resolution of grievances of customers expressing their concerns on social media. It

not only increases the efficiency of the organization but also protects the organization's brand image from defamation in the marketplace.

- In the manufacturing sector, production data, supply chain information, and quality control metrics are being efficiently used by AI assistants to generate insights - aiding manufacturers in optimizing production processes and assessing the effectiveness of distribution channels, pricing strategies and customer satisfaction. The digital assistants also help train employees in an interactive way; people can ask the assistants to perform a task through voice commands and receive the steps or summary of completing it.
- In hospitality, AI assistants handle customer inquiries, bookings, remote problem resolving, and improving customer service through instant responses and efficient assistance.
- For various conglomerates we have found a valuable use case in summarizing project proposals from various subsidiaries for the CEO to take a go or no-go decision. The CEOs can also ask comparative questions based on which previous decisions and create charts and tables to support the decision on the digital assistant platform.

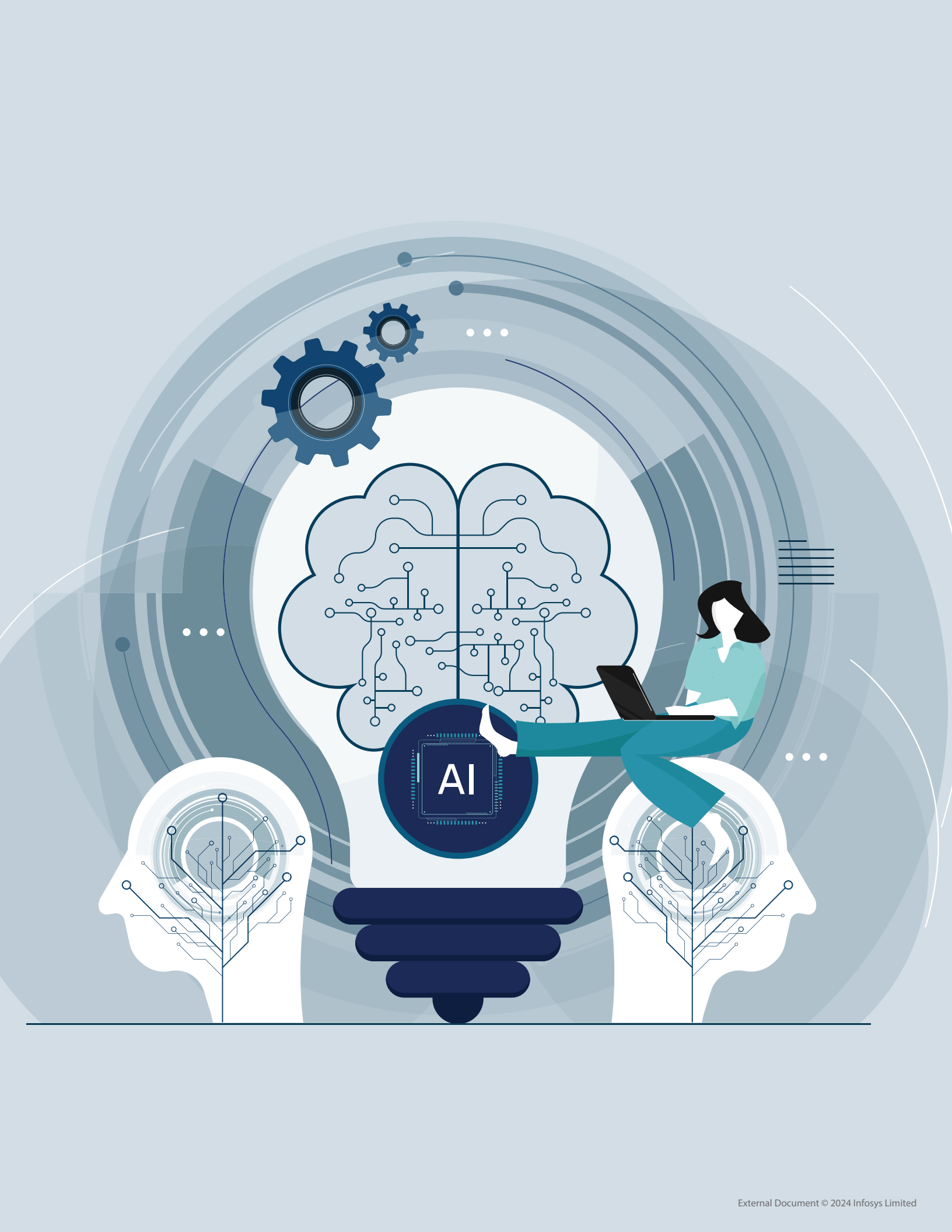
Additionally, customizable digital assistants can be tailored to suit the specific requirements of different industries and ensure their adaptability with unique workflows and processes.

While these use cases serve one of our tenets of 'Purposeful AI' for our clients, we cannot overlook the role of the second tenet which is 'Responsible AI.' We have a very comprehensive framework to ensure that these digital assistants are not based on perceived biases and unfairness.

## Untapped potential for the future.

The stark contrast between the expressed need for a digital executive assistant and the current lack of access suggests a significant untapped potential in the professional realm. As we stand at the cusp of a transformative era, where human evolution intersects with AI evolution, it becomes evident that the integration of AI is not just a convenience but a necessity for being relevant.

Having said that, the human in the loop cannot be eliminated completely. In the new ecosystem, artificial intelligence should serve as an augmented privilege to extend the prowess of the human intellect and create an error-free efficient mechanism of operating in organizations. The findings illuminate the path forward, urging industries to bridge the gaps by embracing the untapped potential of AI in redefining their efficiency and relevance.



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