Workiva Executive Benchmark Survey Finds Instability is Accelerating Data Automation and Governance in 2026

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96% Say C-Suite Alignment is Imperative to Break Down Data Silos
91% say AI has Improved the Timeliness and Strategic Value of Financial Decisions

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 3, 2026-- Workiva Inc. (NYSE: WK), a leading AI-powered platform for trust, transparency, and accountability, today released the findings of its 2026 Executive Benchmark Survey, showing that business leaders are prioritizing data automation and governance (79%) to close enterprise-wide data gaps exposed by geopolitical instability. Notably, most companies are now funding this shift with IT support (73%) and dedicated budgets (71%).

“Business today is anything but predictable. Companies are rushing toward AI—but fragmented data is a massive hurdle," saidSteve Soter, VP and Industry Principal at Workiva. "We’re at a turning point where executives are treating data clarity as a top-tier risk, providing the necessary funding to modernize data flows, drive financial clarity, and realize the full potential of AI.”

Survey respondents said the top consequences of poor data quality are bad or delayed operational decisions, followed by regulatory fines or legal action, and the loss of investor or lender credibility. Recognizing these challenges, executives prioritizing data automation and governance should be intent on improving the quality of data inputs to bolster decision-making and maintain trust.

Top Survey Trends

Trustworthy Data is a Top Priority
Organizations agree that finance transformation will fail without accurate, trustworthy data as its foundation. Many have established centers for excellence or steering committees to guide financial transformation, and nearly half have Chief Transformation Officers in place to drive accountability and measurable return.

- 73% report dedicated IT team support for transformation initiatives
- 71% have secured a dedicated budget

AI Foundations are Maturing with Guardrails
Most organizations are tying AI investments to strategy and moving quickly to apply AI where it can drive measurable outcomes. This shift is already showing up in decision-making, with nearly all organizations (91%) saying that AI has improved the timeliness and strategic value of financial decisions. At the same time, leaders are scaling AI in their reporting with guardrails, expanding usage while strengthening oversight and control.

- 65% use AI in select components of quarterly or annual disclosures, and 46% use it extensively across the reporting process
- 76% say that internal audit teams test their AI models

CFO-CIO-CSO Collaboration is Imperative
Across the board, stakeholders agree that organizations must modernize how data flows across teams and systems so vast datasets can be collected, analyzed, and validated. Organizations that share a single transformation agenda and shared investment targets are best positioned to scale AI responsibly and meet rising expectations for transparent, trustworthy data.

- 96% say the CFO, CIO, and CSO must unite around a shared data governance strategy
- 96% say better access to shared data improves the likelihood of achieving optimal business outcomes

“Digital transformation is not just a technology upgrade. It’s a strategic investment in achieving business outcomes like speed to insight, lower operational and compliance risk, and scalable growth,” said Heather Holding, Chief Risk Officer, Best Egg. “There is a quantifiable cost to the status quo and falling behind competitors.”

The survey includes insights from 1,497 professionals in finance and accounting, sustainability, internal audit, operations, and legal departments at global organizations. To read the full report in its entirety, click here: Workiva’s 2026 Executive Benchmark Survey: *Data Pressures Mount as Instability Continues*.

About Workiva
Workiva Inc. (NYSE: WK) powers trust, transparency, and accountability. Finance, accounting, sustainability, risk, and audit teams from more than 6,500 organizations, including over 85% of Fortune 1,000 companies, rely on Workiva for their mission-critical work. We transform how customers connect data, unify processes, and empower teams in a secure, audit-ready, AI-powered collaborative platform. Learn more at workiva.com.

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