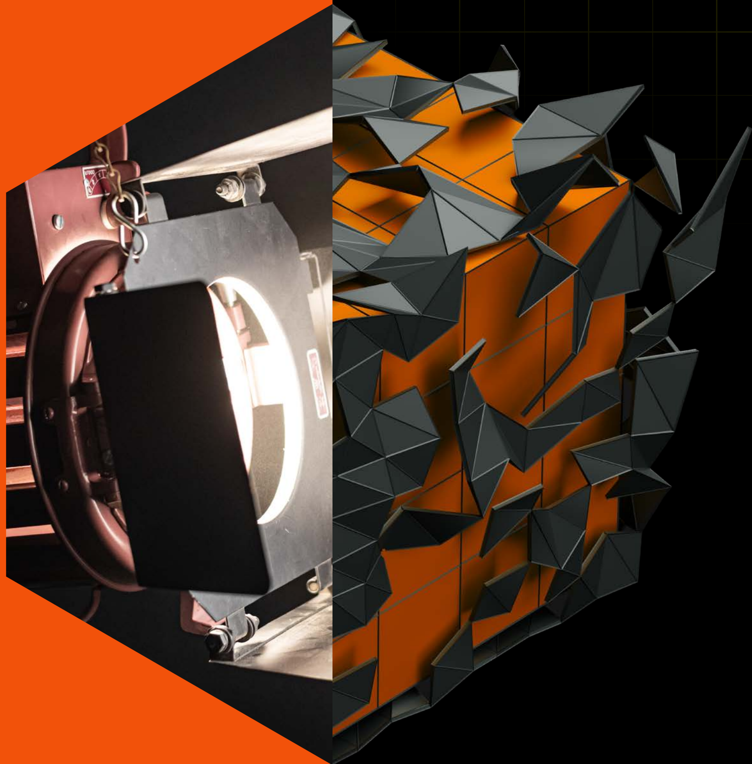
A 2027 State of **DESIGN&MAKE** breakout report



Media and entertainment

AUTODESK

Creativity remains the advantage—but the capabilities behind it are changing

Creativity has always been the defining strength of the media and entertainment (M&E) industry—and the foundation of great stories. Today, great storytelling increasingly relies on digital capabilities that provide artist-friendly tools, enable frictionless collaboration, and deliver the data teams need to make better creative decisions. As AI becomes part of everyday production, the industry's challenge is how to use new technologies to amplify human creativity.

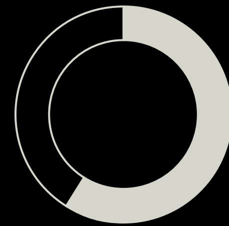
M&E enters this next phase from a position of strength. According to *2027 State of Design & Make* research, 59% of leaders report above-average or exceptional performance against corporate expectations, while 70% believe future growth depends on digital tools. At the same time, fewer organizations now consider themselves digitally mature (47%, down from 57%) or AI leaders (43%, down from 49%), suggesting that as AI becomes embedded in creative work, expectations for digital leadership are rising just as quickly. Technology advancements, including AI, are now the industry's leading business challenge, cited by 40% of leaders.

The studios and artists pulling ahead aren't choosing between creativity and technology—they're bringing them together. The pages that follow explore what they're doing differently.

"We still trade on creativity, but it's now about getting that balance of creativity and technology awareness, so that the craft is still the hero. But it's the artists that are digitally smart as well, in terms of how they can better utilize the technology to be creative."

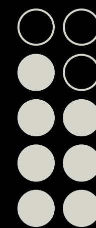
GRANT BAKER

Founder, Images and Sound, a post-production company based in Auckland, New Zealand



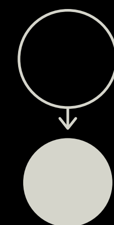
59%

of M&E teams report above-average or exceptional business performance



70%

say future growth depends on digital tools

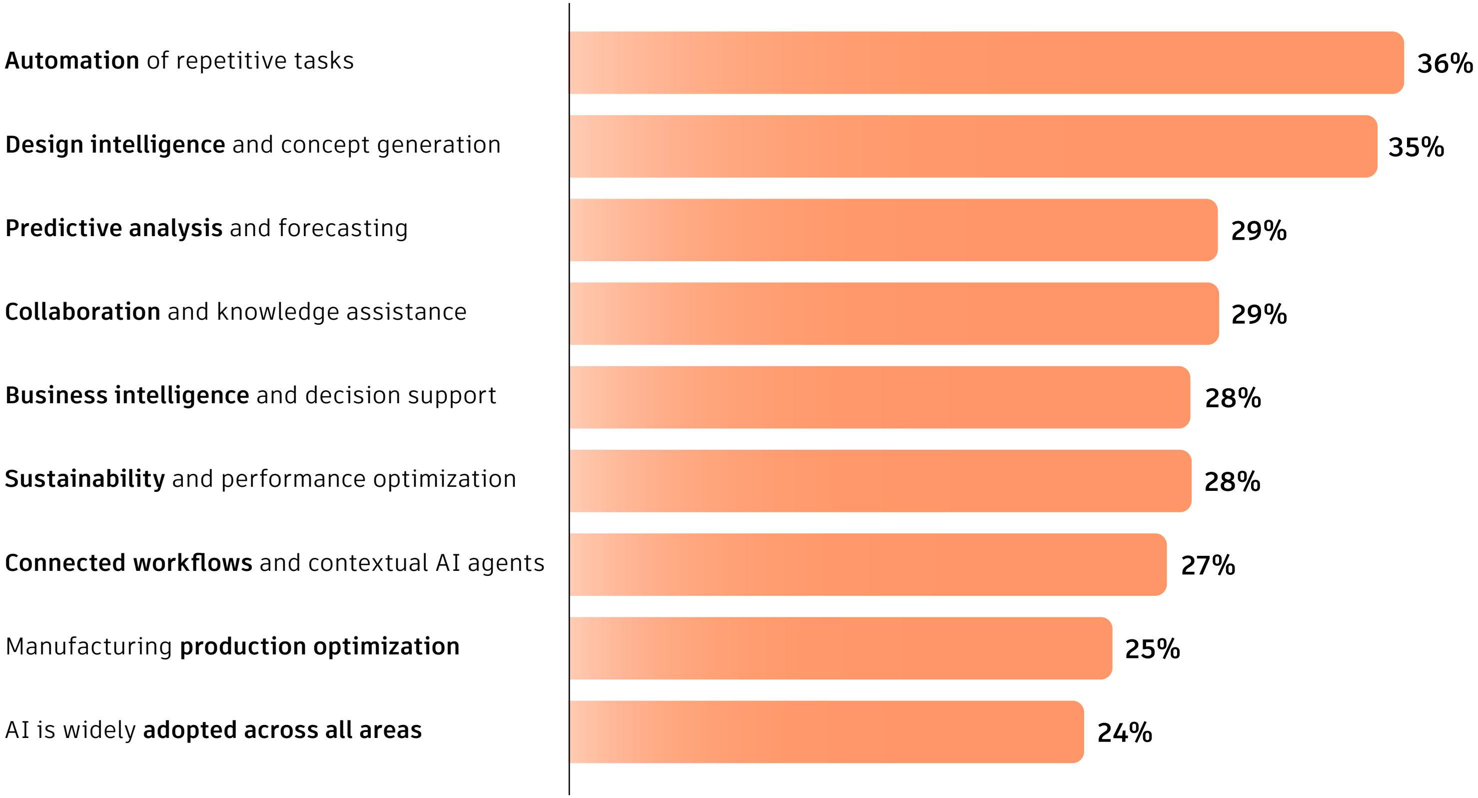


57% to 47%

Self-assessed digital maturity has declined in M&E since 2025

M&E leaders are implementing AI across project lifecycles

Automation and concepting are the current top applications

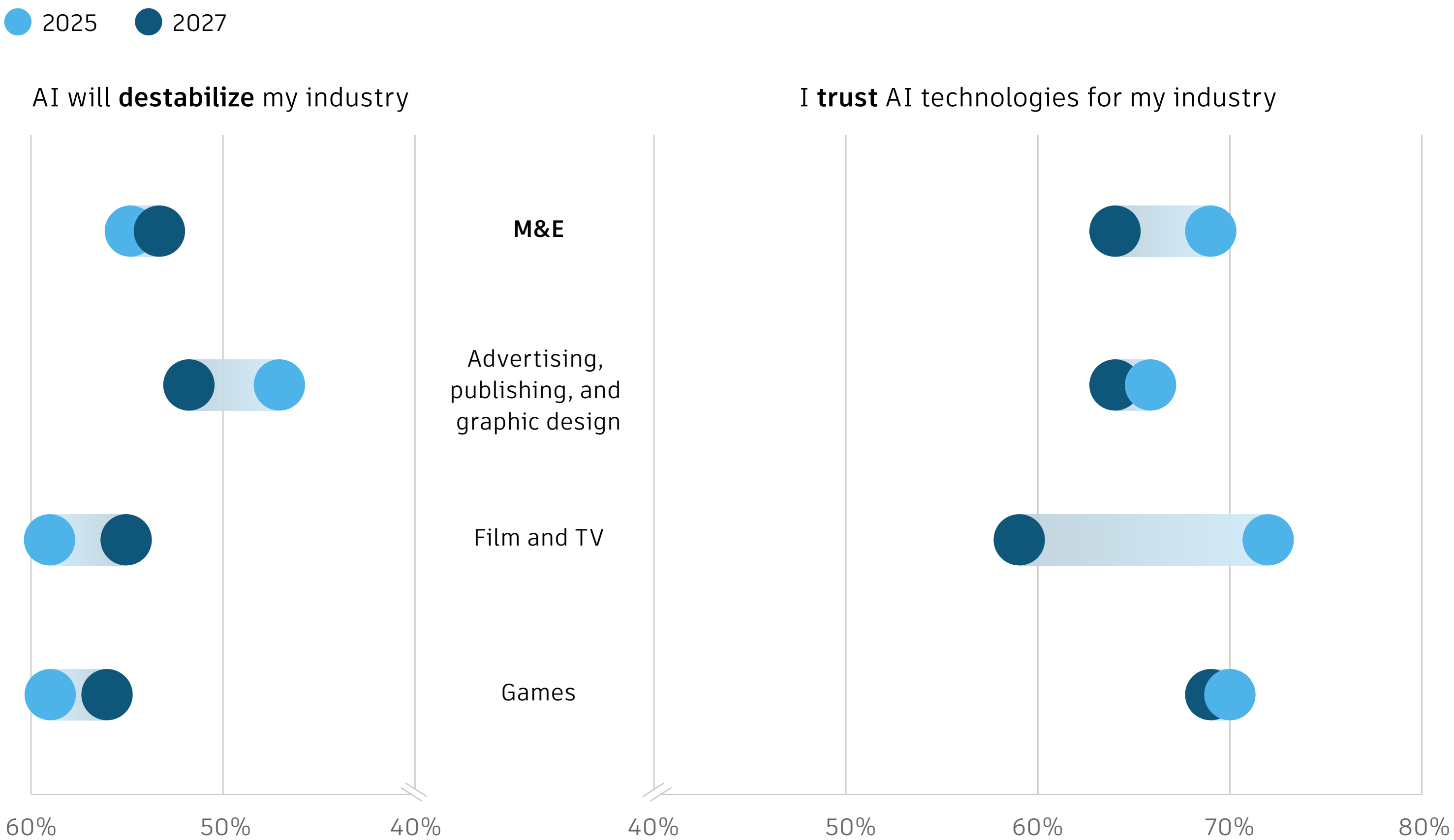


M&E creative teams are integrating AI into creative workflows in practical ways. The most common applications focus on automating repetitive tasks (36%) and supporting design intelligence and concept generation (35%), followed by predictive analysis and collaboration. Rather than replacing creative professionals, AI is helping teams work more efficiently while leaving creative judgment firmly in human hands.

Survey question: What are the current use cases for artificial intelligence (AI) in your company or organization? Please select all that apply. Percent selected.
Note: Some answer options are shortened for better readability. “Other” and “none of the above” are not shown.

Trust in AI is down across M&E

Film and TV leaders are the most skeptical of AI



Survey question: When you think about artificial intelligence (AI) in your industry and company, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: 1. I trust AI technologies for my industry. 2. AI will destabilize my industry. 5-point scale. Top two: “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree.”

As AI adoption grows, attitudes toward the technology continue to evolve. While organizations are expanding AI across creative workflows, trust in AI has declined since 2025 across much of the industry, particularly in film & TV. Rather than slowing adoption, the findings suggest organizations are becoming more deliberate about where AI delivers value—embracing it as a practical creative tool while remaining thoughtful about its broader role in the creative process.

Digital capabilities create value beyond the creative process

Digital transformation creates value well beyond content production. Pacesetters report stronger outcomes than mainstream organizations across decision-making, reputation, talent acquisition, and risk management. Their advantage extends beyond creative workflows into the broader capabilities that help organizations operate, compete, and grow.

The findings point to a broader lesson: technology delivers greater value when it is embedded across the organization rather than pursued through isolated initiatives. By building connected digital capabilities, leading organizations are better positioned to support collaboration, make informed decisions, manage change, and translate technology investments into lasting business value.

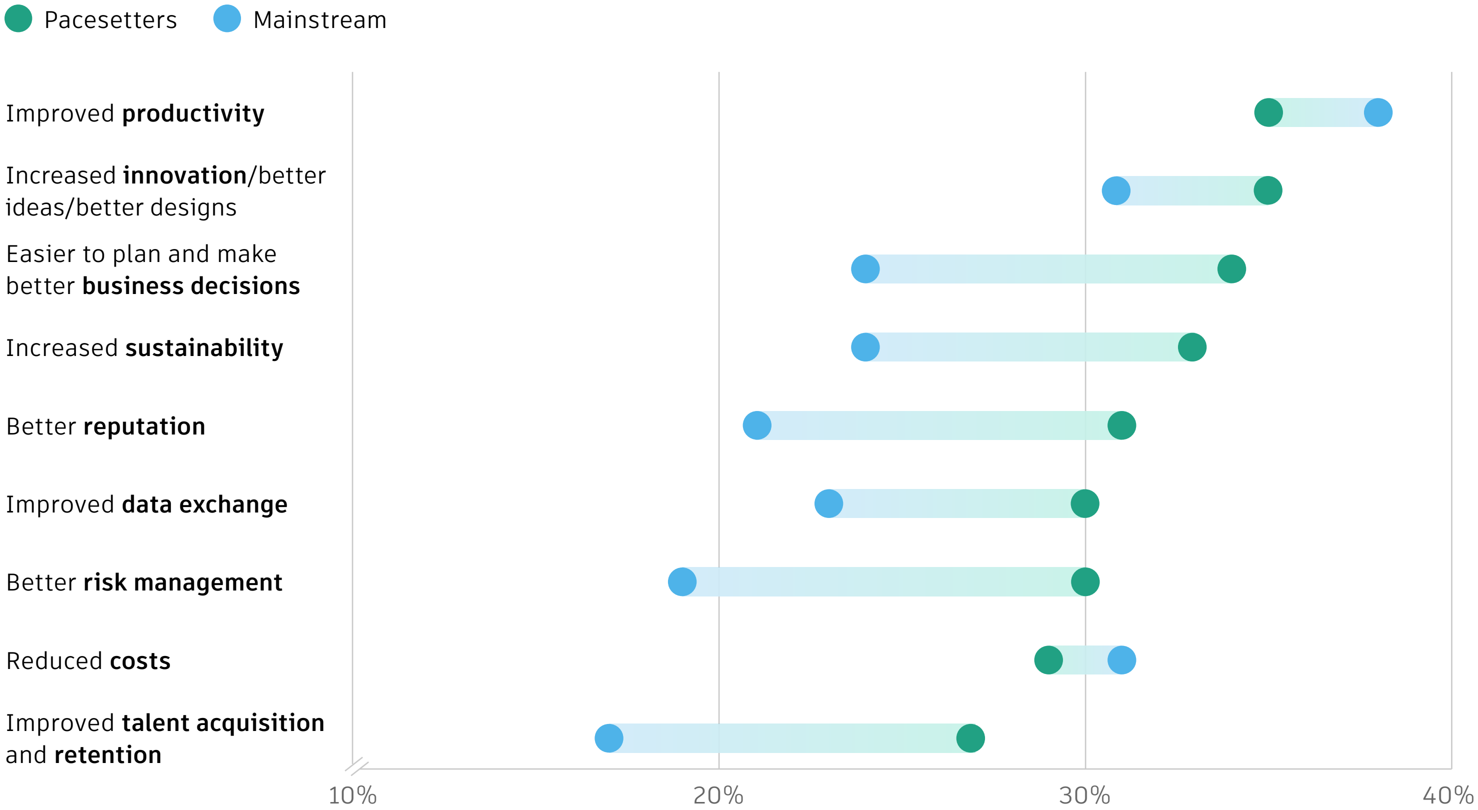
Art by Laney Desroches

"The new Pacesetters won't be defined by better tools or pipelines. They'll be the organizations that can adapt the fastest."

DIANA COLELLA
EVP, Interactive Graphics, Media & Entertainment, Autodesk

Pacesetters in M&E see increased digital transformation benefits nearly across the board

Decision-making, reputation, risk management, and talent acquisition realize 10%+ gains



Survey question: Has your company or organization experienced any of the following benefits of digital transformation? Percent selected, multiple responses allowed. See the Pacesetter definition on page 5.

Leading studios and artists are building broader capabilities around AI technologies. **Pacesetters** are far more likely than mainstream organizations to have dedicated AI teams (92% vs. 59%), suggesting that leading organizations are moving beyond experimentation to build the expertise and infrastructure needed to put AI to work effectively.

What are Pacesetters?

Pacesetters are the 11% of organizations in our study that lead simultaneously in digital maturity, AI adoption, and sustainability. They outperform their peers in both business performance and preparedness for future challenges. For details on the methodology, see the *2027 State of Design & Make* report.

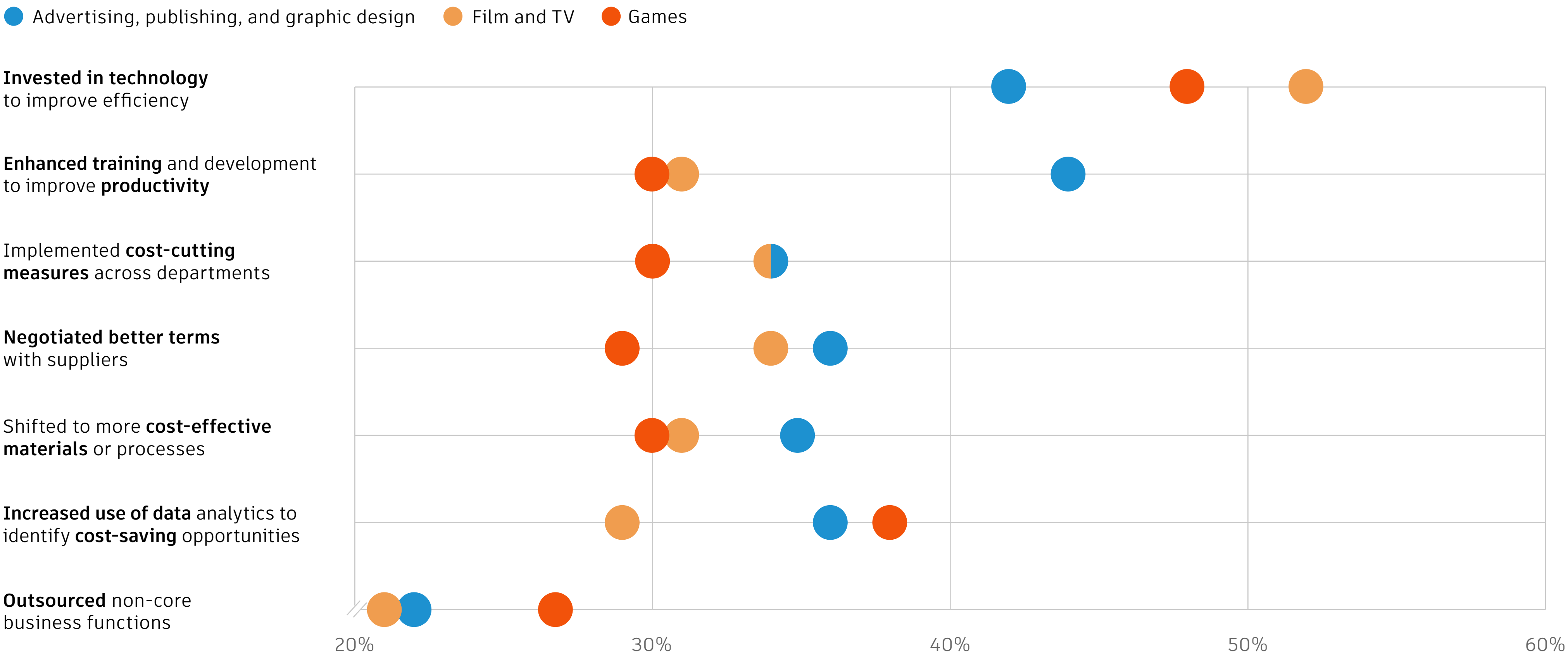
Creative sectors are responding to cost pressure in different ways

Cost remains a significant challenge across M&E, but organizations are pursuing different responses based on how their businesses operate. Film and TV and games place strong emphasis on technology investments to improve efficiency, while advertising relies more heavily on workforce development. Games also makes greater use of data analytics than the other sectors, although technology remains its leading response.

These differences reflect the industry's varied production models, timelines, and talent needs. There is no single playbook for managing cost: each sector is combining technology, people, and data in ways that fit its creative and operational realities.

Cost-control strategies diverge across M&E

Despite heavy investment in technology, lower prioritization of training and data could create long-term challenges



Survey question: In the last 3 years, leaders have identified cost control and cost management as a primary challenge for their company. What strategies have you used to respond to cost challenges? Please select all that apply. Percent selected, multiple responses allowed.

AI skills are today's priority. Sustainability remains tomorrow's investment.

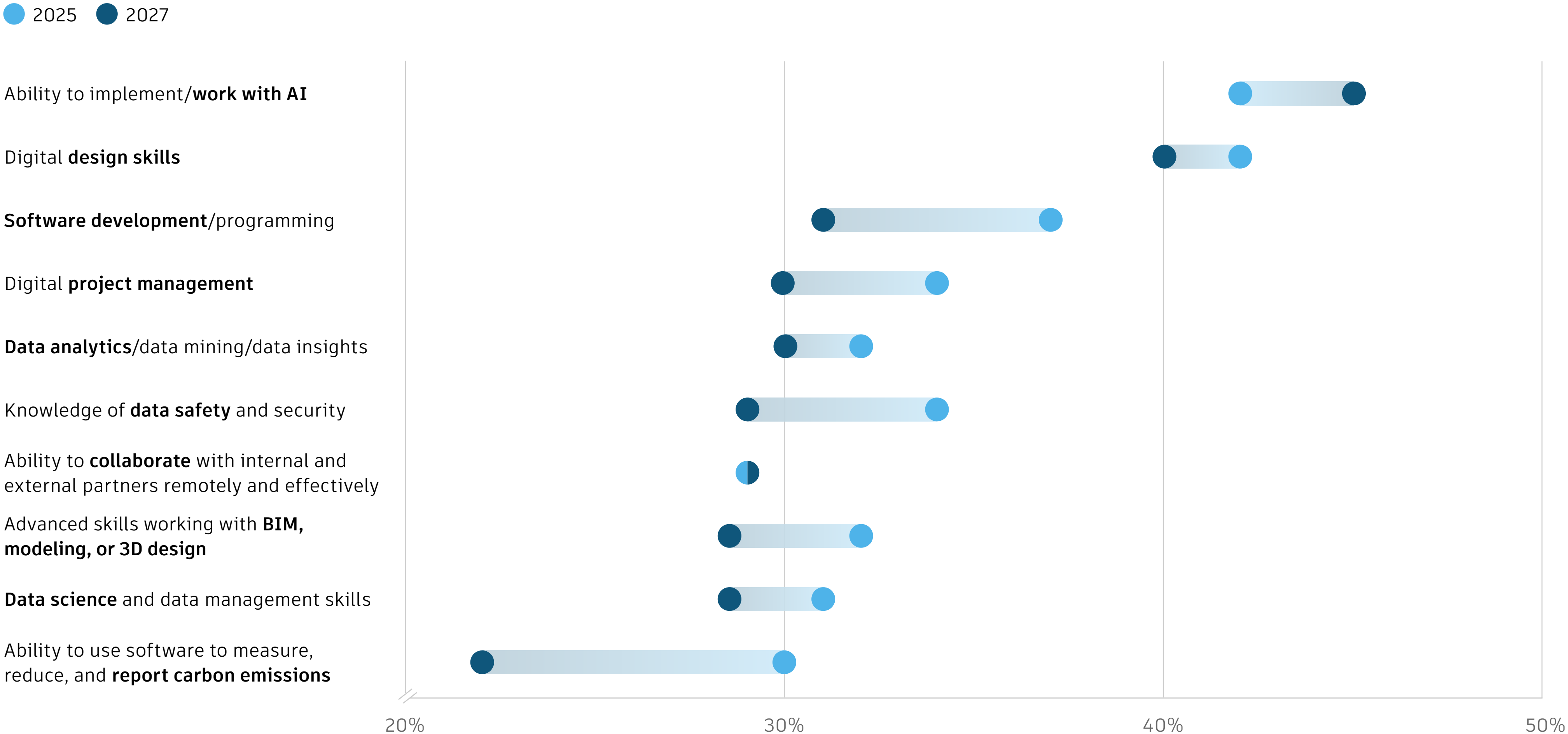
As creative production evolves, M&E organizations are placing their greatest workforce emphasis on AI (45%) and digital design skills (40%). Those priorities reflect an industry focused on building the technical capabilities needed to support increasingly digital creative workflows.

Art by Mauro Bonu

"As content itself becomes more diverse and game mechanics and technologies grow in complexity, I believe the shortage of talent capable of handling these advanced tasks has become a challenge for companies across the industry. Securing technical talent and maintaining a balance in costs remain constant challenges."

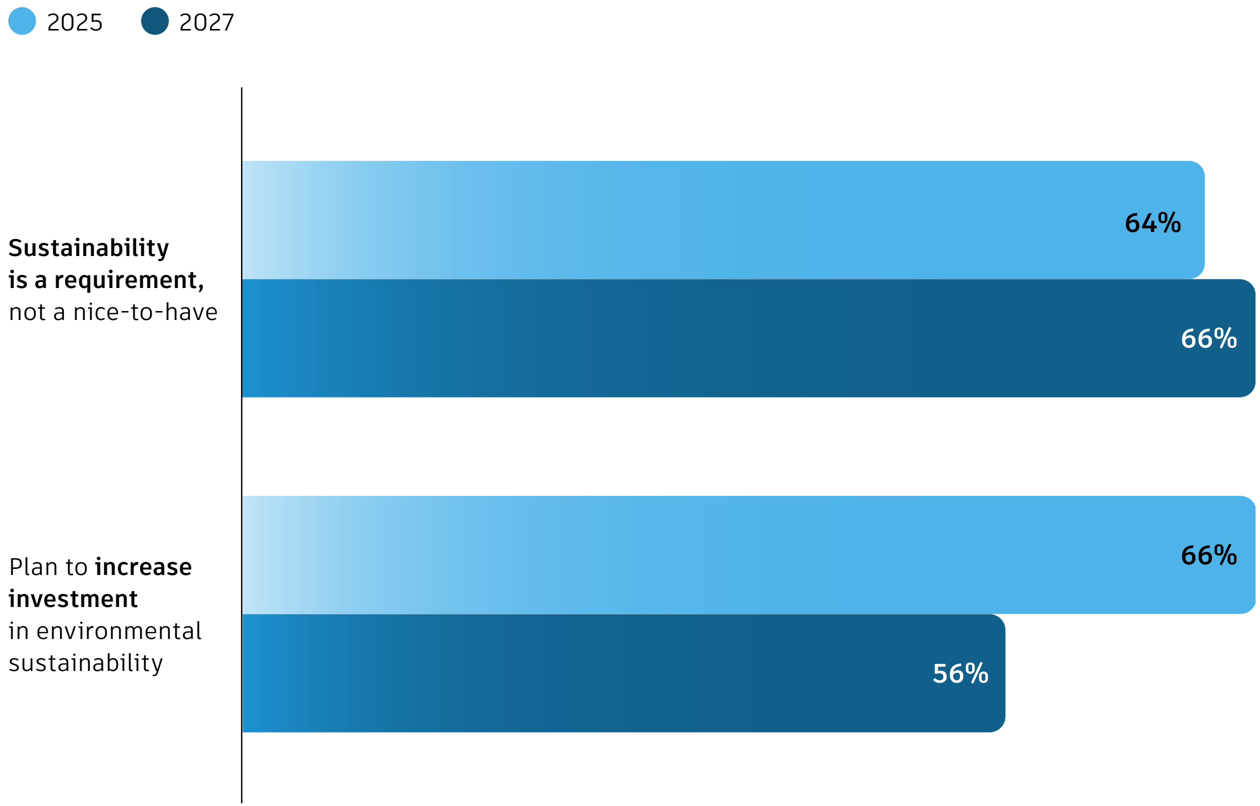
KENTA YAMAKI
Senior Manager, Foundational Technology Development Section, CAPCOM, a video game developer and publisher based in Osaka, Japan

M&E leaders are prioritizing AI and digital design skills when hiring



Survey question: What technical or digital skills are your company or organization currently prioritizing when hiring? Please select all that apply. Percent selected, multiple responses allowed. "Other, please specify" and "we are not prioritizing technical and digital skills" are not shown.

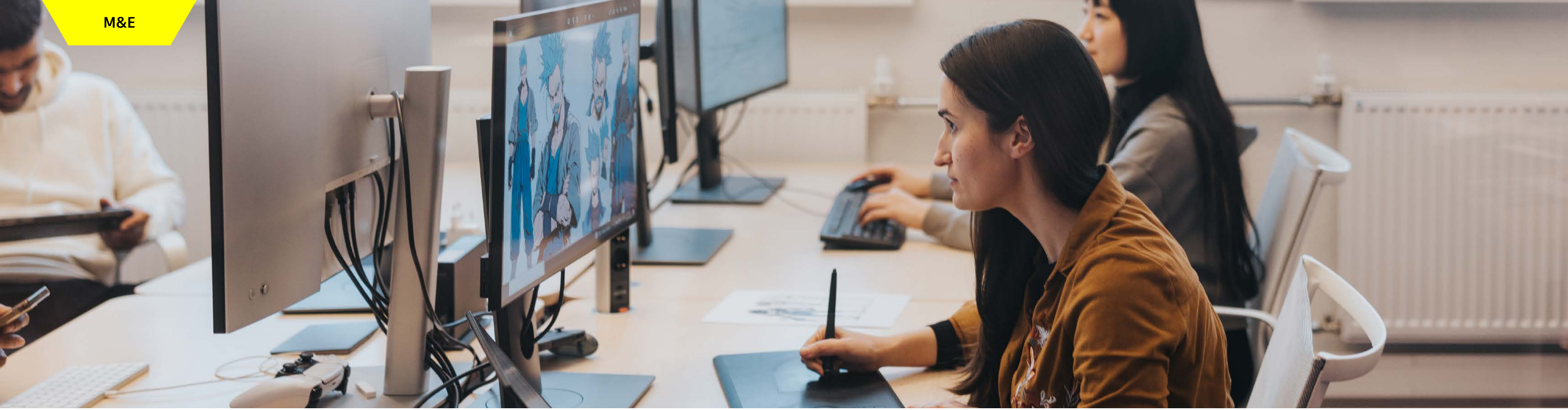
M&E organizations remain committed to sustainability, but investment is lagging



Survey questions: 1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your company or organization? Sustainability goals are no longer a nice-to-have. They are a requirement of modern business. 5-point scale; top two: “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree.” 2. How do you think your company or organization's investment in the following will shift in the next 3 years? Environmental sustainability. Top two: “it will increase” or “it will strongly increase.”

That shift doesn’t mean sustainability has become less important—it means organizations are balancing competing priorities. While 66% of leaders agree sustainability is now a requirement of modern business, planned investment has fallen from 66% to 56% over the past year.

Pacesetters, however, continue to take a longer view: 87% plan to increase sustainability investment, compared with 52% of mainstream organizations, while also viewing sustainability as a competitive advantage and a way to attract and retain talent. Together, these findings suggest leading organizations are connecting workforce strategy, sustainability, and long-term business performance rather than treating them as competing priorities.



Conclusion

M&E is entering a new era in which creativity and technology are becoming increasingly interconnected. The industry's strongest organizations are not using AI to replace creative work—they are using it to help creative teams work more efficiently, collaborate more effectively, and tell a great story in new ways. At the same time, they continue investing in the people, skills, and digital capabilities that make those technologies valuable.

The organizations we call Pacesetters demonstrate what that looks like in practice. They are more likely than mainstream organizations to build dedicated AI capabilities, realize broader business value from digital transformation, and invest in the long-term capabilities that support creativity, innovation, and growth. Together, these findings suggest that competitive advantage comes from connecting creative talent with digital capability—not from advancing either one alone.

For M&E leaders, the opportunity is not to choose between creativity and technology. It is to create organizations where they reinforce one another, enabling people to produce better work, adapt to changing audiences, and continue innovating as the industry evolves.

About this analysis

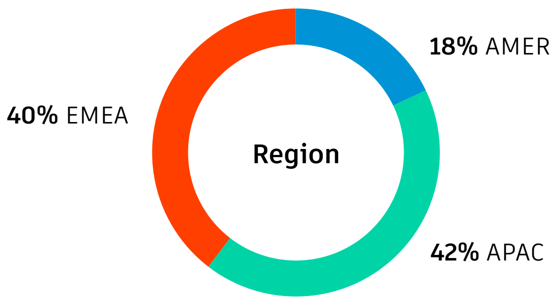
ThisM&E industry briefing draws on Autodesk's *2027 State of Design & Make* study, which surveyed 1,549 leaders and experts across the global M&E industry. The findings presented here highlight patterns specific to M&E and should be interpreted within the context of this industry sample. Pacesetters represent 11% of M&E respondents (n=176), with the remaining 89% classified as mainstream organizations.

M&E respondent profile

62% Advertising, publishing, and graphic design

23% Film and TV

15% Games



Definitions for Pacesetters, digital maturity, AI leaders, and sustainability leaders are consistent with those used in the 2027 State of Design & Make *report.* 2026 AI Pulse *comparisons are cited where trend data is referenced throughout this briefing.*

About Autodesk

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