Lynqra
AI RESEARCH

# Ready on paper, exposed in practice.

## The global job market, the gap between what tech leaders say and what they do, and why office work faces a deeper contraction than the headline forecasts admit.

A research report on AI and the future of work. It maps the global labour picture, documents the contradiction between executives who say AI will not cost jobs and the same firms cutting tens of thousands of roles, examines what arrives as capabilities approach AGI, and sets out a first-person thesis: that 60 to 80 percent of office jobs will be materially diminished by 2035. It situates Singapore inside that global picture and closes with what individuals, firms, and policymakers should do now.

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# Contents

# Executive Summary

Two things are true at the same time, and the gap between them is the subject of this report. The first is that the people building artificial intelligence keep telling the public not to worry about their jobs. The second is that those same companies are shedding workers at a pace not seen since the pandemic, and citing AI as the reason more often than any other.

The numbers are not subtle. The technology sector announced 123,653 job cuts in the first five months of 2026, a 66 percent jump on the same period a year earlier and more than any other sector by a wide margin.[1] In 2025, nearly 55,000 US layoffs were attributed directly to AI, inside a total of 1.17 million, the highest annual figure since 2020.[2] A Mercer survey of nearly 12,000 executives and employees found that 99 percent of CEOs expect AI to drive at least some headcount reduction in the next two years.[3]

This report makes four arguments. First, the public reassurance from technology leaders is contradicted by their own actions, and the clearest example is Meta, where the CTO admitted in June 2026 that staff morale is near the worst in the company's twenty-year history, weeks after the firm posted one of its richest quarters ever and cut roughly 8,000 jobs. Second, the displacement visible today is happening before AGI, on tools that are still error-prone, which means the current wave is a floor and not a ceiling. Third, as capabilities approach what Anthropic's own CEO calls powerful AI, expected by him in 2026 or 2027, the substitution pressure on cognitive work rises by an order of magnitude. Fourth, and this is a first-person forecast rather than an institutional one, I expect 60 to 80 percent of office jobs to be materially diminished by 2035, where diminished means eliminated, deskilled, merged, or repriced downward, not necessarily erased outright.

> *The displacement we can already measure is happening on today's flawed tools, before AGI. That is the optimistic version of the story, not the alarming one.*

Singapore sits inside this global story rather than outside it. It leads the world on AI readiness scores and adoption, and that very leadership is what pulls the disruption forward. The country's own retrenchment data has already started to climb, its largest banks are quietly shrinking, and its institutions have warned in writing that the safety net may not be sized for what is coming. Being ranked ready is not the same as being ready. The rest of this report lays out the evidence, fact-checks the strongest claims in both directions, and ends with concrete preparation.

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[1] Fox Business, "Jeff Bezos predicts AI will create a labor shortage, not replace human workers," June 2026, citing Challenger, Gray & Christmas data. https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/jeff-bezos-predicts-ai-create-labor-shortage-not-replace-human-workers-across-economy

[2] AIMultiple, "Top Predictions from Experts on AI Job Loss," 2026, citing Challenger, Gray & Christmas. https://aimultiple.com/ai-job-loss

[3] Tom's Hardware, "Executives are cutting jobs for an AI future that hasn't fully arrived yet," June 2026, citing Mercer. https://www.tomshardware.com/tech-industry/artificial-intelligence/executives-are-cutting-jobs-for-an-ai-future-that-hasnt-fully-arrived-yet-even-as-productivity-gains-remain-difficult-to-prove-data-neither-confirms-nor-refutes-an-ai-unemployment-apocalypse

# 1. The Global Job Market in 2026

Start with the wide-angle view, because the Singapore picture only makes sense against it. The labour market in 2026 is not in freefall. Headline unemployment in most advanced economies remains historically low. What is happening is more specific and, in some ways, more unsettling than a simple crash: the composition of hiring is changing underneath a stable surface, and the change is concentrated in exactly the cognitive, office-based work that has driven middle-class employment for two generations.

## 1.1 The layoff wave is real and it is accelerating

The tech sector has led the cuts. Challenger, Gray & Christmas recorded 33,281 tech layoffs in October 2025 alone, a 490 percent jump on September, the worst single month for the sector since the early pandemic.[4] Across all of 2025 the sector planned more than 141,000 cuts, overtaking 2024. Into 2026 the pace did not slow. By Layoffs.fyi's tracker more than 118,000 tech employees had lost their jobs by mid-2026, and Challenger put the sector's announced 2026 cuts at 123,653 through May, the most of any industry.[5]

A representative roll-call of the cuts that firms have linked, directly or through efficiency drives, to AI:

| Company | Cut | When / framing |
|---|---|---|
| Amazon | 16,000 corporate roles | Jan 2026, amid AI investment ramp |
| Meta | ~8,000 (≈10% of staff) | May 2026, “leaner operating model” |
| Microsoft | ~15,000 across the year | 2025, efficiency and AI reallocation |
| Intuit | 3,000 (17% of staff) | 2025, shift to AI |
| Salesforce | 4,000 support roles | 2025, Agentforce took routine work |
| Snap | ~1,000 (16%) | April 2026, cited AI |
| Oracle | ~30,000 departing | 2025–26 reporting |

The standard objection is that this is not really AI, it is post-pandemic over-hiring finally correcting, plus wage arbitrage and margin pressure dressed up in a fashionable story.[6] That objection has real force and this report takes it seriously in Section 2.3. But notice what even the skeptical reading

[4]Development Corporate, “The AI Layoff Myth,” November 2025, citing Challenger, Gray & Christmas and SF Gate. https://developmentcorporate.com/saas/the-ai-layoff-myth-why-tech-companies-are-using-artificial-intelligence-as-a-scapegoat-for-2025-job-cuts/

[5]Moneywise, “Meta's CTO admits employee morale is probably the worst it's ever been,” June 2026, citing Layoffs.fyi. https://moneywise.com/news/top-stories/meta-andrew-boz-bosworth-employee-morale-ai-facebook-layoffs-cambridge-analytica

[6]Tom's Hardware, op. cit. https://www.tomshardware.com/tech-industry/artificial-intelligence/executives-are-cutting-jobs-for-an-ai-future-that-hasnt-fully-arrived-yet-even-as-productivity-gains-remain-difficult-to-prove-data-neither-confirms-nor-refutes-an-ai-unemployment-apocalypse

concedes: firms are reorganising work around the assumption that smaller teams plus AI can do what larger teams used to. Whether AI is the cause or the cover, the headcount is the casualty.

## 1.2 The damage is concentrated at the entry level

The single most important pattern in the data is that the hurt is not spread evenly. It is concentrated on the youngest workers and the lowest rung. Stanford's Digital Economy Lab found that early-career workers aged 22 to 25 in the most AI-exposed jobs saw a 13 percent relative decline in employment from late 2022, while workers over 30 in the very same jobs saw employment grow.[7] Goldman Sachs estimated in 2026 that AI was cutting roughly 16,000 US jobs a month, with Gen Z taking the brunt.[8] The reason is structural and it is covered in detail later: generative AI is best at exactly the codifiable, repeatable tasks that junior roles are built from, and those roles are the traditional on-ramp into a career.

This is why the picture is more complicated than a simple count of pink slips. A careful reading from Oliver Wyman noted that some of the strongest AI adopters are actually shifting toward junior hiring, treating AI-literate early-career staff as an asset rather than a cost.[9] The real risk is not that AI is uniformly destroying entry-level work. It is that many firms are cutting the bottom rung as a reflex, before they understand which roles should be automated, which augmented, and which rebuilt. The reflex is the danger.

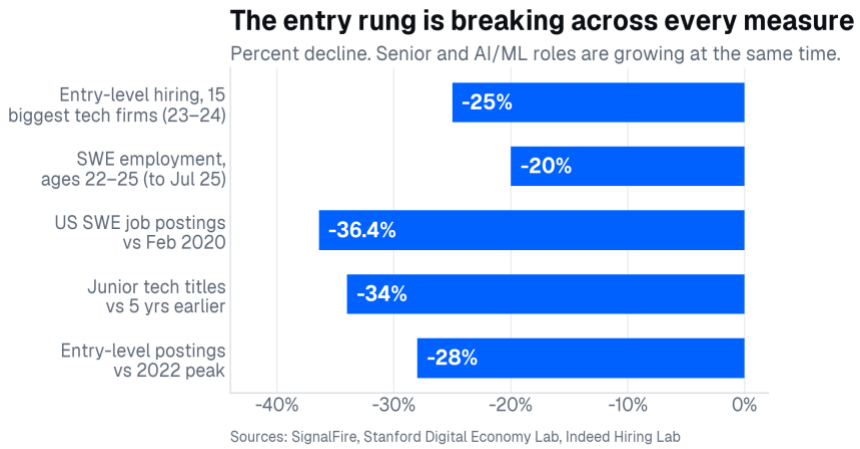


**Figure 1.** Entry-level decline across five independent measures. The pattern is consistent even where the cause is disputed.

# 2. What They Say Versus What They Do

[7]SQ Magazine, "Software Engineer Layoff Statistics 2026," May 2026, citing Stanford Digital Economy Lab. https://sqmagazine.co.uk/software-engineer-layoff-statistics/

[8]Fortune, "OpenAI CEO Sam Altman warns AI washing is real," May 2026. https://fortune.com/article/sam-altman-ai-washing-tech-layoffs/

[9]Tom's Hardware, op. cit., citing Oliver Wyman. https://www.tomshardware.com/tech-industry/artificial-intelligence/executives-are-cutting-jobs-for-an-ai-future-that-hasnt-fully-arrived-yet-even-as-productivity-gains-remain-difficult-to-prove-data-neither-confirms-nor-refutes-an-ai-unemployment-apocalypse

There is a public script in the AI industry, and there is a set of actions. They do not match. The script says AI augments workers, creates more jobs than it destroys, and that fears of mass unemployment are overblown. The actions are tens of thousands of layoffs, frozen graduate pipelines, and internal admissions that the people left behind are miserable. This section lays the two side by side.

## 2.1 The reassurance

The optimistic case is made most forcefully by the people with the most to gain from calm. At VivaTech in June 2026, Jeff Bezos predicted that AI would create a labour shortage rather than replace humans, an upbeat message delivered in the same year Amazon cut 16,000 corporate roles.[10] Nvidia's Jensen Huang, whose chips power the entire boom, has called the AI-layoffs narrative "lazy" and told executives who shrink their workforces in AI's name that they are simply "out of imagination," and separately dismissed job-loss fears as "complete nonsense."[11] Sam Altman has argued, channelling the lamplighter who could not imagine modern prosperity, that displaced workers will "find all sorts of new things to do." Salesforce's Marc Benioff has gone as far as pledging to hire 1,000 new graduates to prove AI will not kill entry-level jobs.

There is even academic cover for the calm view. A National Bureau of Economic Research study published in February 2026 surveyed thousands of executives across the US, UK, Germany and Australia and found that nearly 90 percent said AI had no impact on workplace employment over the three years since ChatGPT launched.[12] Altman himself coined a useful phrase for part of what is going on: "AI washing," where firms blame AI for layoffs that would have happened anyway. Some of the displacement narrative is genuinely inflated. That cuts both ways, though, because it means some firms are using AI as an excuse to do what they wanted to do regardless, which is still a job lost.

## 2.2 The actions, and the Meta case

Set the reassurance against the record, and the clearest single case is Meta. It is worth telling in detail because it compresses the whole contradiction into one company in one quarter.

In the first quarter of 2026 Meta posted $56.31 billion in revenue and roughly $26.8 billion in net income, sales up 33 percent year over year, its fastest growth since 2021.[13] Weeks later it cut about 8,000 jobs, roughly 10 percent of its 78,000-strong workforce, and cancelled some 6,000 open vacancies. The CFO, Susan Li, framed it as running a "leaner operating model" to help offset an AI capital-expenditure bill the company guided to between $125 billion and $145 billion for 2026, nearly double the $72.2 billion spent in 2025.[14]

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[10]Fox Business, op. cit. https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/jeff-bezos-predicts-ai-create-labor-shortage-not-replace-human-workers-across-economy

[11]Moneywise, op. cit.; IBTimes UK, "Meta's 8,000 Layoffs," June 2026. https://moneywise.com/news/top-stories/meta-andrew-boz-bosworth-employee-morale-ai-facebook-layoffs-cambridge-analytica

[12]Fortune, "Sam Altman warns AI washing is real," May 2026, citing NBER. https://fortune.com/article/sam-altman-ai-washing-tech-layoffs/

[13]IBTimes UK, "Meta's 8,000 Layoffs: Unhappy Staff Hope To Be Axed Despite Record Profits," June 2026. https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/meta-layoffs-record-profits-employee-frustration-1802838

[14]IBTimes UK, "The Vibes Are Off: Meta CTO Admits Employee Morale Is Near Its Lowest Point in 20 Years," June 2026, citing Wired. https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/meta-low-morale-ai-restructuring-job-cuts-1803228

The human cost showed up in morale. On a June 2 internal call, CTO Andrew Bosworth said morale was “maybe not the worst it's ever been in 20 years here, but it's probably up there,” then added it was “probably one of the worst it's ever been,” explicitly comparing it to the Cambridge Analytica scandal.[15] Around 6,500 engineers and product managers were swept into a new Applied AI unit, many with little say in the move; one employee described it to Wired as “a gulag,” and TechCrunch reported the unit was “on the verge of revolt,” with staff calling the work “soul-crushing.”[16] Bosworth conceded in a June 16 memo that leadership had done “an atrocious job” explaining the vision and had “undermined the trust” staff placed in their own prospects.

There is a smaller detail in the Meta story that captures the whiplash better than any morale survey. In 2025 the company made “AI-driven impact” a core performance expectation and ran an internal leaderboard, reportedly nicknamed “Claudeonomics,” ranking its top employees by the volume of AI tokens they consumed.[17] Then, as costs climbed toward billions, it reversed course and began rationing AI usage for roughly 6,000 staff. Employees were told to maximise a behaviour, then penalised for it. Median total compensation, meanwhile, slipped from $417,400 in 2024 to $388,200 the next year. Pay down, surveillance up, AI mandatory then rationed, and the best the company offered to soothe it, in the words of one culture expert, was “snacks and travel.”

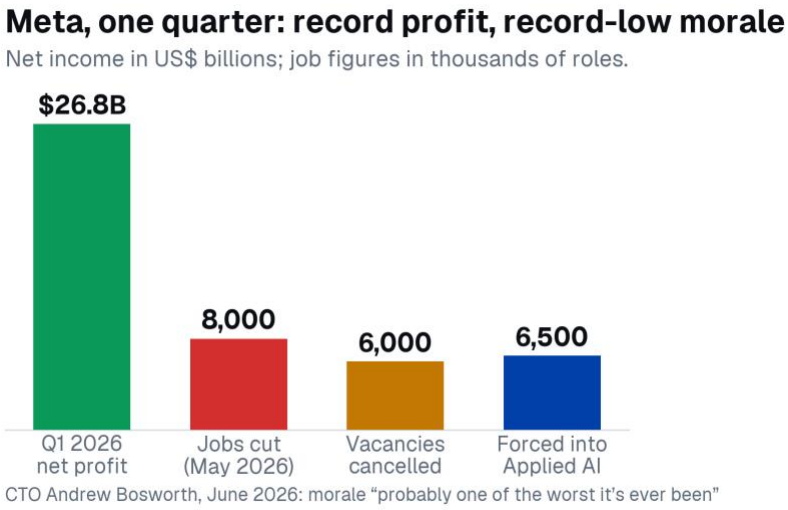


**Figure 2.** Meta in a single quarter: the contradiction between what the technology earns and what it costs the workforce.

> *Record profits and record-low morale in the same quarter is not a paradox. It is the business model working exactly as designed: the savings are real, and so is the human cost of producing them.*

[15] IBTimes Australia, “Meta CTO Andrew Bosworth Says Employee Morale Near All-Time Low,” June 2026, citing Business Insider. https://www.ibtimes.com.au/meta-employee-morale-crisis-ai-restructuring-1870772

[16] eciks.org, “Meta employees face worst morale in company history,” 18 June 2026, citing Wired, Business Insider and TechCrunch. https://eciks.org/9635-89074-meta-zuckerberg-morale-crisis-ai-layoffs

[17] Customer Experience Magazine, “Meta's Employee Morale Crisis,” June 2026, citing The Information. https://cxm.world/employee-experience/metas-employee-morale-crisis/

Meta is the vivid case, not the only one. A Fortune essay by a worker who lost his own job to AI put the mechanism plainly: layoffs offer "clean math" and a simple story for boards eager to see returns on AI spending, while the harder work of genuine reinvention goes undone.[18] Firms are, in his words, "laying off their way to transformation because it's easier than rewiring how work gets done."

### 2.3 Steelmanning the skeptics

A report that only stacked up the contradiction would be guilty of the same selectivity it criticises. So here is the strongest version of the case that the fear is overblown:

- **AI cannot yet do most of the work.** The Remote Labor Index, from the Center for AI Safety and Scale AI in October 2025, found that current AI agents can successfully complete only 2.5 percent of real-world remote work projects. If the tools are that limited, the layoffs cannot mostly be AI substitution.[19]
- **The macro data is ambiguous.** The NBER survey found ~90 percent of executives reporting no employment impact from AI over three years, and a credible Danish study found near-zero earnings and hours effects two years after ChatGPT. The signal is real but it is not yet a population-level shock.
- **Productivity gains are hard to prove.** Only 39 percent of organisations report tangible profit impact from AI even as 64 percent say it enables innovation, and MIT found 95 percent of generative-AI pilots produced no measurable return. Firms are cutting on a promise, not a proven gain.[20]

All true. But each of these is an argument about timing, not direction, and that distinction is the heart of the next section. "The tools cannot do it yet" is precisely the point. The displacement is already visible while the tools are this limited. The skeptic's strongest evidence is, read carefully, the most worrying thing in the report.

## 3. This Is All Before AGI

Every figure in the preceding sections describes a world in which AI is still, by the admission of its own makers, not very good at autonomous work. The agents hallucinate. They fail at long-horizon tasks. They complete a small fraction of real projects unsupervised. And yet the entry rung is already breaking, retrenchments are already climbing, and the most powerful firms on earth are already restructuring around the assumption of leaner human teams. The obvious question is what happens when the tools stop being this limited.

[18]Fortune, "I lost my job to AI. Here's why mass layoffs won't transform your company," April 2026. https://fortune.com/2026/04/25/ai-layoffs-transformation-mark-quinn-pearl-reskilling-workforce/

[19]Development Corporate, op. cit., citing the Remote Labor Index (arXiv). https://developmentcorporate.com/saas/the-ai-layoff-myth-why-tech-companies-are-using-artificial-intelligence-as-a-scapegoat-for-2025-job-cuts/

[20]Rezi, "The Crisis of Entry-Level Labor in the Age of AI," January 2026; Brainforge, "What to Expect from AI in the Next 5 Years," December 2025, citing MIT. https://www.rezi.ai/posts/entry-level-jobs-and-ai-2026-report

## 3.1 The people building it think it is close

There is no consensus on when AI reaches human-level general capability, and anyone who gives a confident single date should be treated as a salesperson. But the range has compressed sharply, and the people closest to the frontier sit at the near end of it. Anthropic's Dario Amodei has said he is more confident than ever that very powerful capabilities will arrive in the next two to three years, a view the company has put on the regulatory record in a formal submission expecting powerful AI in late 2026 or early 2027.[21] OpenAI's Sam Altman has written that the company is "confident we know how to build AGI." Google DeepMind's Demis Hassabis sits slightly later, at a 50 percent chance by around 2030, and DeepMind's own 145-page safety paper calls human-level AI "plausible" by 2030.[22]

The spread of credible forecasts, laid out:

| Forecaster | Rough timeline | Framing |
|---|---|---|
| Dario Amodei (Anthropic) | 2026–2027 | "Powerful AI", on regulatory record |
| Elon Musk (xAI) | 2025–2026 | "Smarter than the smartest human" |
| Mustafa Suleyman (Microsoft AI) | 12–18 months | Human-level on most professional tasks |
| Shane Legg (DeepMind) | ~2028 | 50% odds of "minimal AGI" |
| Sam Altman (OpenAI) | ~2029–2035 | "A few thousand days" to superintelligence |
| Demis Hassabis (DeepMind) | 2030–2036 | 50% by end of decade; "jagged" today |
| Yann LeCun, Gary Marcus | Decades / never | Current architectures cannot reach it |

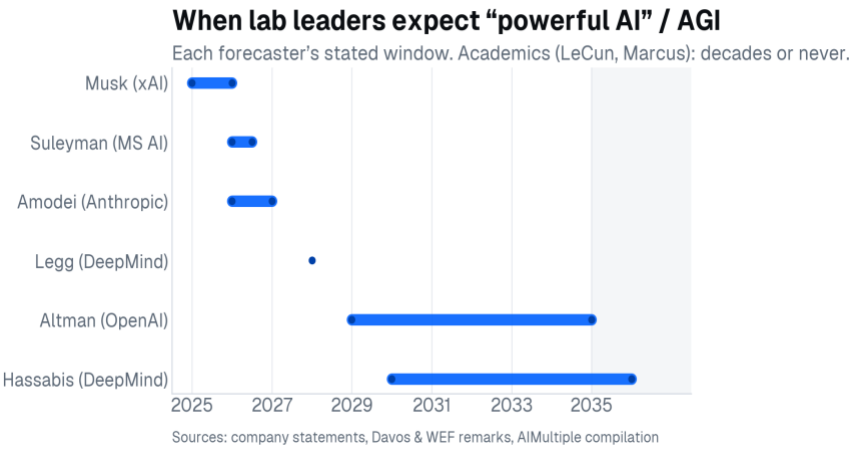


**Figure 3.** The credible AGI window has compressed to roughly 2026–2030 among lab leaders, well inside the report's 2035 horizon.

[21] Veracalloway, "AGI Timeline 2026," April 2026, citing Anthropic's submission to the US Office of Science and Technology Policy. https://www.veracalloway.com/blog/ai-culture/agi-timeline/

[22] Fortune, "Google DeepMind paper predicts AGI matching top human skills could arrive by 2030," April 2025. https://fortune.com/2025/04/04/google-deeepmind-agi-ai-2030-risk-destroy-humanity/

The honest reading is a wide uncertainty band, not a date. There is a real ten-year gap between the entrepreneurs clustered around 2027 to 2030 and the academics clustered around 2040, and the entrepreneurs have an obvious incentive to be aggressive because short timelines attract capital and talent.[23] History counsels humility: in 2016 Geoffrey Hinton suggested radiologists would be obsolete within five to ten years, and hospitals still needed thousands of them in 2026. The point of this report is not to bet on a year. It is that the labour effects do not wait for a formal AGI milestone. They scale smoothly with capability, and capability is rising every quarter.

### 3.2 A note on Claude Mythos and the next capability tier

A word on what may sit just beyond today's frontier, framed honestly as forward-looking scenario rather than established fact. Anthropic's current publicly available top model is the Claude Opus line. Above it the company has signalled a higher capability tier, referred to in some materials as a Mythos class, not generally available and described as being trialled with a small number of organisations under restricted access. The specifics are not public and may change, so nothing here should be read as confirmed product detail.

The reason a tier like that matters for this report is mechanical, not promotional. Every labour effect documented so far rests on models that need heavy human supervision. The thing that changes the slope of the curve is reliability over long, autonomous, multi-step work: an agent that can be handed an objective and trusted to carry it through a full workflow without a human checking each step. The closer a model gets to that, the more it stops being a tool that makes one worker faster and starts being a substitute for the worker. A capability tier meaningfully above today's models, deployed at scale, is the difference between AI that augments a finance team and AI that is the finance team. Whether that arrives as a Mythos-class system in 2027 or something else in 2030, the direction is the variable that matters, and it points one way.

> *Today's AI makes a worker faster. The next tier does not need the worker. That single shift, from augmentation to substitution, is the whole ballgame, and it is a capability question, not an if.*

## 4. A Thesis: 60 to 80 Percent of Office Jobs Diminished by 2035

This section states a personal forecast and then tests it against the published evidence as fairly as I can, including the evidence that cuts against it. The claim is deliberately specific. By 2035, I expect 60 to 80 percent of office jobs to be materially diminished. The load-bearing word is diminished, and it has to be defined before the number means anything.

Diminished here means any of four outcomes, not only the first: the role is eliminated; the role is deskilled, so it pays less and demands less because AI does the hard part; several roles are merged

[23] AIMultiple, “AGI/Singularity: 9,800 Predictions Analyzed,” 2026. https://aimultiple.com/artificial-general-intelligence-singularity-timing

into one AI-assisted role, so three jobs become one; or the role is repriced downward, the same title surviving at materially lower compensation as its scarcity value falls. A job does not have to vanish to be diminished. A paralegal who keeps the title but now supervises an AI that does the drafting, for a third less pay and with no path up because the junior tier was automated, has a diminished job by this definition.

## 4.1 What the institutional forecasts say

Against that definition, the mainstream numbers are closer to my thesis than they first appear. Goldman Sachs, analysing the task content of over 900 occupations, found that roughly two-thirds of US occupations are exposed to some degree of AI automation, and that of the exposed occupations, a quarter to a half of the workload could be replaced.[24] Office and administrative support is the single most exposed category in the US, with 46 percent of its tasks automatable, followed by legal at 44 percent.[25] Globally, Goldman puts 300 million full-time jobs as exposed to automation.

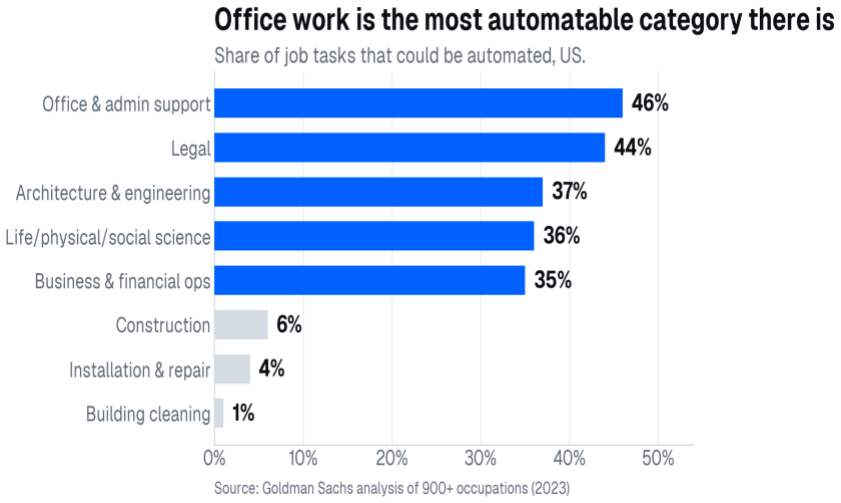


**Figure 4.** Task automation exposure by occupation, US. Office and knowledge work sits at the top; physical trades at the bottom.

Note carefully what those numbers are and are not. “Two-thirds of occupations exposed” and “up to half the workload replaceable” is a statement about tasks diminished, which is close to my thesis. Goldman's estimate of workers actually displaced is far lower: in its base case, 6 to 7 percent of workers are displaced over a roughly ten-year adoption period.[26] The IMF reached a similar split: about 300 million jobs affected, two-thirds undergoing partial automation, with legal, financial and insurance work most transformed and over 40 percent of workers needing significant reskilling by

[24]Goldman Sachs, “Generative AI could raise global GDP by 7%,” 2023; CNBC summary, March 2023. https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/articles/generative-ai-could-raise-global-gdp-by-7-percent
[25]CNBC, “Goldman Sachs says generative AI could impact 300 million jobs,” March 2023. https://www.cnbc.com/2023/03/28/ai-automation-could-impact-300-million-jobs-heres-which-ones.html
[26]Goldman Sachs, “How Will AI Affect the US Labor Market?” March 2026. https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/articles/how-will-ai-affect-the-us-labor-market

2030. So on outright job loss, the institutions are well below my number. On diminishment of the work itself, they are roughly in line with it.

## 4.2 What the aggressive insiders say

At the other end, the people inside the labs go further than I do on the entry level. Amodei's "white-collar bloodbath" warning in May 2025 was that AI could wipe out half of all entry-level white-collar jobs and push unemployment to 10 to 20 percent within one to five years, concentrated in technology, finance, law and consulting.[27] An upper-bound 20 percent unemployment rate would be the worst in the US since the Great Depression.[28] A former McKinsey consultant put it even more bluntly, estimating that 90 percent of the white-collar corporate roles he had seen could be automated with current models and the right agent harness, a transformation he expected to take about a decade because of system and process complexity rather than capability limits.[29]

The early data has so far tracked the aggressive camp better than the calm one, at least at the entry level. In the twelve months after Amodei's warning, entry-level tech hiring fell an estimated 30 to 50 percent against 2023, top law firms slowed first-year associate intake, the Big Four restructured entry-level audit, and roughly 55,000 US layoffs in 2025 were attributed directly to AI. The man who was called a fearmonger in 2025 looks, a year on, to have been describing the trend line accurately.

## 4.3 Why I land at 60 to 80 percent

My number sits above the institutions on scope and roughly with the insiders on direction, for four reasons.

- **The definition does the work.** Institutional displacement figures of 6 to 7 percent measure jobs erased. My thesis measures jobs diminished, which includes deskilling, merging and repricing. Goldman's own finding that two-thirds of occupations are exposed and up to half their tasks replaceable is, restated in the language of diminishment, already in my range.
- **Office work is the most exposed category there is.** Office and administrative support, legal, finance and business operations top every exposure table. "Office jobs" is precisely the slice of the economy where the 46 percent task-automation figure bites hardest, so a whole-economy average understates what happens to offices specifically.
- **The timeline runs to 2035, which is two capability generations away.** Every institutional forecast is anchored to today's tools or a modest extrapolation. A decade is long enough for the augmentation-to-substitution shift in Section 3 to happen, and the labs themselves expect it inside that window.
- **Jevons and reinstatement are real but slow.** New work will be created; productivity gains do expand demand. But the lag between displacement and reinstatement is exactly where

[27] Axios, "AI jobs danger: Sleepwalking into a white-collar bloodbath," May 2025. https://www.axios.com/2025/05/28/ai-jobs-white-collar-unemployment-anthropic
[28] Technology Magazine, "White-Collar Bloodbath: Anthropic Warns of AI Job Losses," June 2025. https://technologymagazine.com/articles/white-collar-bloodbath-anthropic-warns-of-ai-job-losses
[29] AIMultiple, "Top Predictions from Experts on AI Job Loss," 2026. https://aimultiple.com/ai-job-loss

workers get hurt, and a decade of diminished office work can coexist with a healthy long-run job count. The aggregate can recover while the typical office role still gets worse.

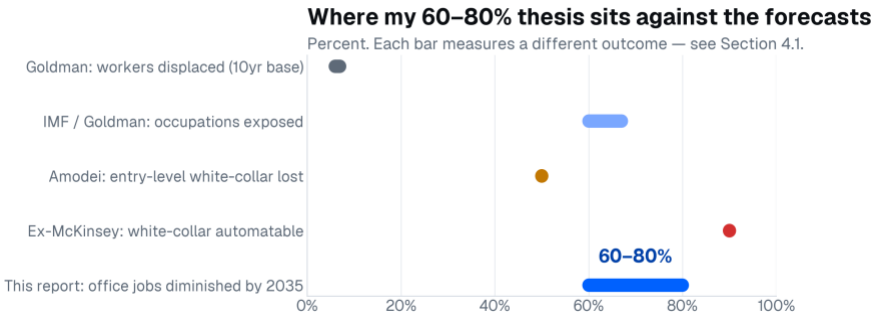


**Figure 6.** My thesis against the published range. Each bar measures a different outcome, so they are not directly comparable; see Section 4.1.

Where my thesis is most vulnerable is adoption friction, and I want to name it rather than hide it. Enterprise software is slow, regulated industries move at a crawl, and 95 percent of generative-AI pilots have so far shown no measurable return.[30] If the bottleneck is organisational rather than technical, diminishment could take fifteen years rather than ten, and my 2035 date slips. That is the honest counter-case. It changes the timing of my forecast. It does not change the direction, and on the direction I am confident.

> *I may be wrong about 2035. I am not wrong about the destination. The debate worth having is about speed, not whether office work is heading for a deep contraction.*

# 5. Singapore: Ranked Ready, Exposed in Practice

Singapore is where the global story meets a specific, small, hyper-connected economy, and it is the home market for this report. The country's position is genuinely strong and genuinely precarious at the same time, and both halves need stating plainly.

## 5.1 The readiness is real

Singapore did not stumble into the top of the rankings. In the 2025 Coursera AI Maturity Index it placed first of 109 countries. In Salesforce's 2025 Global AI Readiness Index it ranked second in the world and first in Asia Pacific, scoring 9.8 out of 10 on regulatory readiness against a global average of 8.6.[31] In November 2025 it topped the INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index for the first time, overtaking Switzerland.[32] It backed this with money and machinery: National AI Strategy 2.0, more than S$1 billion committed, the AI Verify governance toolkit, the Enterprise Compute Initiative,

[30]Brainforge, op. cit., citing MIT. https://www.brainforge.ai/blog/heres-what-to-expect-from-ai-in-the-next-5-years

[31]Salesforce, “Singapore Ranks Second Globally in AI Readiness,” July 2025. https://www.salesforce.com/ap/news/press-releases/2025/07/31/singapore-ranks-second-globally-in-ai-readiness-salesforce-study/

[32]CNBC, “Singapore overtakes Switzerland in global talent ranking,” November 2025. https://www.cnbc.com/2025/11/26/singapore-tops-list-in-the-2025-global-talent-competitiveness-index-.html

and SkillsFuture, whose Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy covers up to 90 percent of retraining fees for workers over 40.[33]

## 5.2 The exposure is also real, and the scores hide it

Here is the trap. Readiness indices measure adoption, and Singapore's adoption is among the highest on earth: second in the world by population usage at 60.9 percent of working-age adults, behind only the UAE, and three in four workers using AI tools regularly by late 2025.[34] But high adoption is the mechanism of disruption, not protection from it. The same tools that earn the score are the ones removing the tasks. And the early signs of the resulting strain are already in the national data: retrenchments rose to 14,490 in 2025 from 12,930 in 2024, more than double the 6,440 of 2022, with white-collar PMETs bearing a disproportionate share and the NTUC naming AI and offshoring as key drivers.[35]

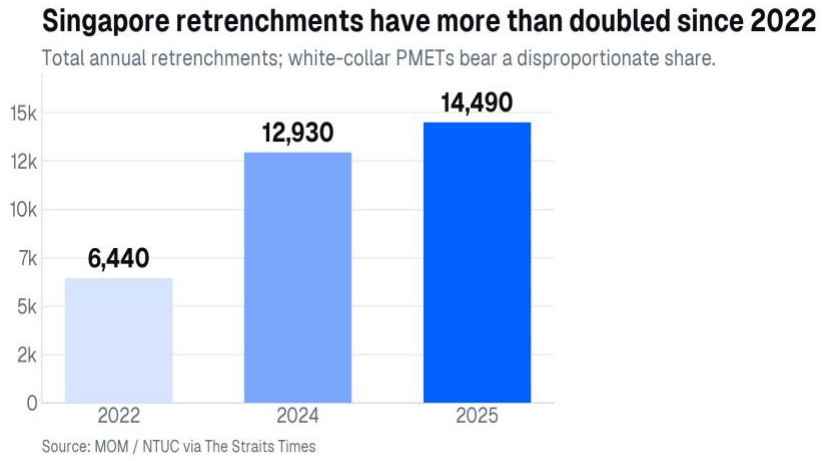


**Figure 5.** Singapore retrenchments, 2022–2025. The trend, not the absolute count, is the warning.

Finance is the leading edge. DBS, OCBC and UOB collectively cut close to 3,000 roles in 2025, with DBS alone signalling around 4,000 fewer temporary and contract positions over three years as AI absorbs routine work.[36] None of the banks called it an AI layoff; they called it restructuring and natural attrition. As with Meta, the framing is gentler than the reality. And Singapore carries a second exposure most economies do not: as a high-cost hub, work that AI makes cheap to centralise is also easy to offshore, so it sits on the wrong side of both forces at once.

[33] Indoneo, "Singapore workers face faster AI disruption than most economies," May 2026. https://www.indoneo.com/tech-ai/singapore-ai-workers-disruption-skillsfuture-reskilling/

[34] AllAboutAI, "Global AI Adoption Rate by Country 2026," citing Microsoft AI Diffusion Report, January 2026. https://www.allaboutai.com/resources/ai-statistics/global-ai-adoption/

[35] Human Resources Director, "White-collar job losses climb in Singapore due to AI and offshoring," June 2026, citing The Straits Times and NTUC. https://www.hcamag.com/asia/specialisation/change-management/white-collar-job-losses-climb-in-singapore-due-to-ai-and-offshoring/578223

[36] People Matters, "Singapore banks cut nearly 3,000 jobs," April 2026. https://sea.peoplemattersglobal.com/news/workforce-planning/singapore-banks-cut-nearly-3000-jobs-as-ai-and-restructuring-redefine-workforce-49389

Singapore's own institutions have said this in writing. A Civil Service College scenario paper warns that the coming speed and scale of displacement "could render our safety nets and policies no longer fit for purpose," and sketches a future where "job redesign" means being paid less to do less.[37] The IMF's 2024 Article IV consultation flagged "pockets of labour displacement," and local economists have named mid-career PMETs as the most exposed cohort, the very group the 90 percent subsidy is built to reach. When the readiness machine and its own critics agree on who gets hit, the only open question is whether the response scales as fast as the adoption did.

# 6. What To Actually Do About It

Diagnosis without a response is just doom. The same data that justifies concern points clearly at what reduces exposure. The actions below are grouped by audience and ordered roughly by leverage.

## 6.1 For individuals

- **Move from doing tasks to directing them.** The roles growing in the data orchestrate, judge and integrate AI output rather than compete with it. The pay premium for workers with multiple AI skills runs near 40 percent above non-AI peers. Become the person who decides what the tool should do and verifies that it did it.
- **Build a visible body of work.** Employers in the 2026 NACE survey rated demonstrated, hands-on proficiency above grades. If the junior rung is disappearing, the way past it is to arrive already able to do mid-level work, with shipped projects to prove it.
- **Aim at the augmented slice of your field.** Within almost every profession there is a part AI automates and a part it amplifies. Law has document review (automated) and judgment under uncertainty (amplified). Finance has reconciliation (automated) and client trust (amplified). Choose the amplified slice deliberately.
- **Use the subsidies, but do not mistake them for a plan.** Singapore's 90 percent Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy is generous; use it. But treat two-day literacy courses as a floor, and chase real depth in one valuable, AI-complementary skill rather than breadth across many shallow ones.

## 6.2 For SMEs

This is where Lynqra sits, so the bias is disclosed. The opportunity for small and medium enterprises is asymmetric: the same tools that threaten employment let a 10-person firm operate like a 30-person one. The risk is doing it the way Meta did.

- **Audit for exposure before you automate.** Map which roles concentrate routine, rules-based, high-volume cognitive work. Those are both the highest-ROI automation targets and

[37] Civil Service College Singapore, "AI, Technology & Singapore: Preparing for the Future." https://knowledge.csc.gov.sg/ai-technology-singapore-preparing-for-the-future/

the most disruptive to your own people. Knowing where the exposure sits lets you redesign roles deliberately instead of reacting to attrition.

- **Redesign roles before restructuring forces it.** The lesson of the layoff wave is that cutting headcount is the easy path and reinvention is the hard one. An SME does not have the buffer to get this wrong. Move people into higher-value work ahead of the curve, while the headcount is small enough to manage by hand.
- **Do not destroy your own pipeline.** Cutting entry-level hiring to zero looks smart this quarter and disastrous by 2030, when there is no mid-level bench and no institutional knowledge being built. The better model is fewer juniors, each paired with AI to do the work of several, paid and developed faster.
- **Treat AI security and governance as a feature.** As adoption rises, so does the attack surface and the compliance burden. Auditable, secure AI automation is a differentiator in a market where most buyers worry about trusting AI agents, not overhead.

### 6.3 For policymakers

- **Tie subsidies to depth and to the exposed cohorts.** Shift funding from general digital literacy toward deep, AI-complementary reskilling, and target the groups the data flags, including under-30 entrants, not only the over-40s.
- **Measure re-absorption, not just adoption.** If readiness indices reward adoption, national policy should track the metric they ignore: the median time and pay outcome for a displaced PMET to return to comparable work. That number, reported quarterly, would tell the truth the rankings cannot.
- **Defend the bottom rung.** Forrester projected a 20 percent drop in computer science enrolments as students react to the bleak pipeline. If the junior rung stays broken, the senior shortage arrives in five to ten years. Apprenticeship structures that make juniors worth hiring again are a long-horizon investment in the whole talent base.[38]
- **Prepare fiscal tools for a worse case.** Amodei has floated a “token tax,” AI firms contributing a small share of revenue to redistribution. Whatever the instrument, a state that can fund a transition only in a mild scenario is unprepared for the one its own civil service has war-gamed.

## 7. Conclusion

The defining feature of this moment is not the technology. It is the distance between what powerful people say about it and what they do. They say AI will not cost jobs, and then they post record profits while cutting thousands of roles and admitting, internally, that the people who remain are as

[38]SoftwareSeni, “What the Data Actually Shows About AI and Junior Developer Employment Decline,” March 2026, citing Forrester. https://www.softwareseni.com/what-the-data-actually-shows-about-ai-and-junior-developer-employment-decline/

demoralised as they have been in twenty years. The contradiction is not hypocrisy exactly. It is the sound of an industry that has found that the savings are easy and the honesty is hard.

The most important fact in this report is that all of it is happening before AGI, on tools their own makers describe as limited. The displacement we can already measure is the floor, not the ceiling. As capability climbs toward the substitution threshold, somewhere in the window the labs themselves put at 2027 to 2030, the pressure on cognitive work rises sharply. That is why I hold to the thesis even knowing the date is the weakest part of it: 60 to 80 percent of office jobs materially diminished by 2035. I may be wrong about the year. I do not think I am wrong about the direction, and on a question this large, getting the direction right matters more than getting the date precise.

Singapore shows the paradox in miniature. It is one of the most AI-ready countries on earth, and that readiness is exactly what pulls the disruption forward. Its retrenchments are climbing, its banks are quietly shrinking, and its own institutions have warned that the safety net may not hold. Being ranked ready is not the same as being ready. The readiness was the easy part, and Singapore built it better than almost anyone. The harder test, the one no index will score, is whether it can catch the people the technology displaces faster than the technology displaces them. That test has already begun, and the clock did not wait for anyone's forecast.

> *Being ranked ready is not the same as being ready. The difference is measured in people, and the measuring has already started.*

# About Lynqra

Lynqra Pte. Ltd. is a Singapore-based AI automation studio that helps small and medium enterprises detect operational bottlenecks and build secure, auditable AI-driven workflows. Lynqra also runs a training arm focused on agentic AI development and practical AI tooling for Singapore businesses and professionals.

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*This report compiles publicly available data and published research current to June 2026. Figures are drawn from the sources cited in the footnotes. Section 4 presents a clearly labelled first-person forecast, not an institutional projection, and Section 3.2 discusses unreleased capability tiers as forward-looking scenario rather than confirmed product detail. This document is analysis and commentary, not legal, financial, or career advice. Forecasts cited are the views of their respective authors.*