



The state of AI development in banking and financial services 2026

Banking leaders are ahead of the market in agentic AI maturity. Here is what 320 financial services IT leaders told us about the strategies, governance frameworks, and customer experiences shaping the agentic enterprise.

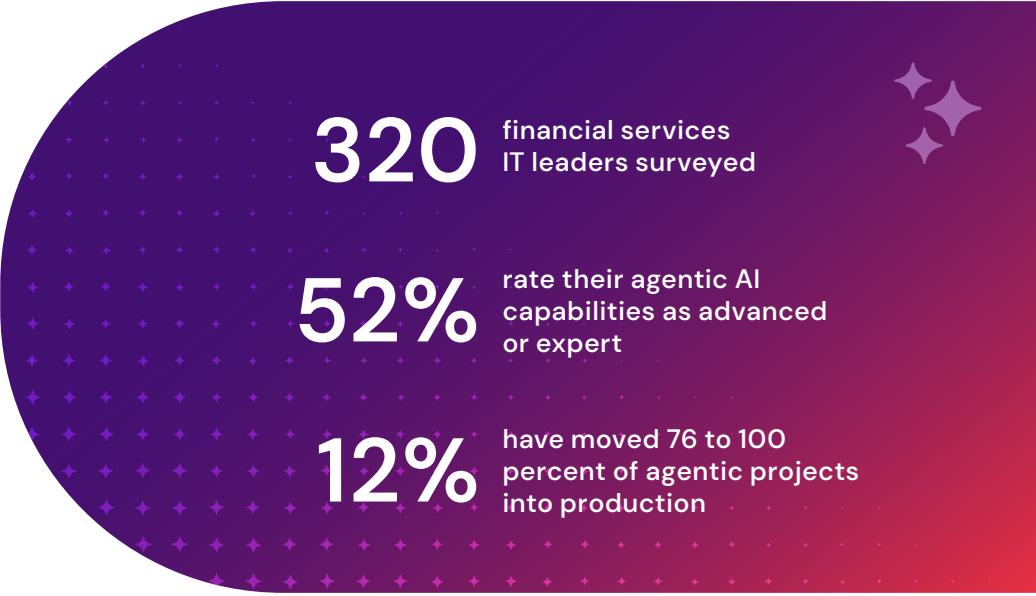
Executive Summary

Agentic AI can accelerate development cycles, automate complex work, and make banking IT teams more productive. Without a clear strategy, however, financial institutions risk creating AI sprawl. They also risk deploying agents whose decision processes are difficult to explain, and introducing inconsistent experiences for employees and customers.

That is the consensus of 1,879 global IT leaders surveyed by OutSystems for this 2026 State of AI Development report. The sample includes 320 leaders from banking and financial services. Results show that banking has pulled ahead of the market in advanced agentic deployment. Fifteen percent of financial services respondents rate their capabilities at the “expert” level, the highest of any industry, with autonomous agents executing transactions inside core, mission-critical systems.

Banking leaders have moved further into production than peers in other sectors. Even so, familiar obstacles remain. Forty-three percent of financial services respondents cite legacy systems and fragmented data as a barrier to starting new application projects. Another 38 percent point to governance or compliance concerns, a higher rate than every other vertical we surveyed.

This report explores how financial institutions can close the gap between rapid AI adoption and the oversight their industry demands. You will find benchmarks for your organization's agentic maturity, insights into the specific challenges banks are solving with agentic AI, and practical guidance for bringing AI-generated code and agentic systems into your enterprise workflows safely.



320 financial services
IT leaders surveyed

52% rate their agentic AI
capabilities as advanced
or expert

12% have moved 76 to 100
percent of agentic projects
into production

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SECTION 1

Bringing agentic AI into a complex development ecosystem

Banking IT teams report using multiple methods in parallel to build and extend business applications. Generative AI-assisted development leads the mix, followed by customized SaaS, outsourced, or vendor-built solutions, and traditional code. This patchwork supports critical banking workloads that range from fraud monitoring and regulatory reporting to mobile banking and loan origination.

Agentic AI is landing in a disconnected banking application landscape that not only includes this generative AI patchwork but also the requirement to integrate with core systems. Financial institutions have accumulated multiple generations of these critical systems, along with customer-facing applications, third-party integrations, and regulatory reporting tools.

Integration is critical to agentic success

Adding agentic AI to each layer creates multiple data and governance requirements. However, less than half of the respondents report that integrating AI is a challenge or that legacy systems and fragmented data sources prevent success. At 38%, governance and compliance concerns are at a higher rate than any other industry surveyed, but that percentage is well below half.

In addition, more than a third of banks we surveyed mix custom and pre-built agents in their current environments. This reflects a range of approaches as teams look to balance flexibility with speed. Even more importantly, it indicates that trust in AI is increasing in the banking and financial services sector.

“ Our wealth process was all manual. So everything was done via emails, spreadsheets, back-and-forth manual interactions. And that’s been going on for years. We want to digitize that process. ”

— Eric Faust, Enterprise Transformation Executive, KeyBank

43%

cite difficulty
integrating with
existing systems

43%

cite legacy systems
or fragmented data
sources

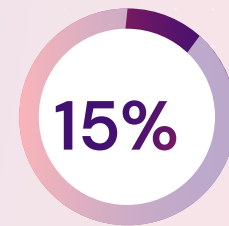
38%

cite governance or
compliance concerns

Human-in-the-loop vs. human-on-the-loop

In banking, building human-in-the-loop checkpoints is important. While only 15% of financial services respondents say it is difficult, that is a slightly higher share than most other verticals. The technical challenge involves orchestrating agents that can pause at the right moments, preserve their reasoning context, and surface transparent decision logs for human review.

This difficulty is pushing many banks toward human-on-the-loop models that monitor agent behavior rather than gating every decision. Human-on-the-loop can work well when supported by strong governance. It requires the same audit trails and control plane capabilities that banking already invests in for other regulated workflows.



say it is difficult to build
human-in-the-loop
checkpoints

“ We will be looking at where agentic AI can safely replace high-volume, rules-based workflows. We will need to make sure we have strong controls in place and also make sure we onboard the right talent, which enables us to grow the business through technology. ”

— Senior director, financial services, UK

SECTION 2

Trust in AI for critical banking processes is growing

Moving toward mission-critical agentic use cases in banking requires trust in the underlying AI systems. Our survey results show that banking is ahead of the market in this, as well.

Forty-one percent of banking respondents express high or complete trust in letting agents act autonomously. Financial services posts 12 percent at the complete trust level and 29 percent at the high trust level. No other industry has this much trust. Another 42 percent express moderate trust, putting total trusting responses at 83 percent.

12%

Complete trust level

29%

High trust level

42%

Moderate trust

83%

Total trusting responses

Why banking trust is higher than peers

Banking has built more governance machinery around its AI deployments than other industries. Fifty-five percent of financial services respondents say they use human approval steps to ensure trustworthy AI operations, the highest rate of any vertical. Fifty-three percent have embedded strict compliance rules inside their agent workflows, also the highest. Thirty-nine percent run comprehensive audit logging, again leading the industries we surveyed.

55%

use human approval
steps for trustworthy
AI operations

53%

embed strict com-
pliance rules in agent
workflows

39%

run comprehensive
audit logging across
agent activity

Managing sprawl through governance

This pattern shows up in how banking manages AI sprawl. Thirty-six percent of banking respondents say they manage AI tool sprawl proactively through standardized governance, compared with 22 percent in manufacturing. Twelve percent already run centralized control through a unified platform, which is the highest share among the sectors we surveyed.

CUSTOMER STORY

Finbridge Global

Finbridge Global, a UK firm that provides technology to bridge the gap between fintechs and financial institutions, uses AI to accelerate searches

- Finbridge Global set out to create a solution that assesses fintech capabilities so they could understand how they were performing and to help established banks choose fintech partners
- Finbridge used OutSystems to build a unique product that uses scoring to assess and report on fintech capabilities after the initiative proved too difficult for traditional methods
- Established banks and financial institutions can use the solution's AI and ML search functions to find the fintech that best fits their needs.

100+

fintechs

£250k

generated investment

10

weeks from concept
to launch

The founder's family's ties to Italy and the Rialto Bridge in Venice inspired the Finbridge Global logo.



SECTION 3

Agentic AI adoption trends in banking

Banking IT teams are moving agentic AI into real workflows faster than most industries. Maturity varies widely across sectors, but financial services now sits at the leading edge of enterprise adoption.

Fifty-two percent of financial services respondents rate their agentic AI capabilities as advanced or expert. Thirty-seven percent are at the advanced level, where agents are integrated into non-mission-critical business workflows. Fifteen percent rate themselves as experts. Their agents are actively executing transactions inside core, mission-critical systems. The expert rate is the highest of any industry in our survey.

Banking is also a production deployment leader. Twelve percent have moved 76 to 100 percent of their agentic AI projects from pilot into full enterprise production. That matches the top score posted by the tech industry and tops every other vertical we surveyed. Another 37 percent have moved between half and three quarters of their projects into production.

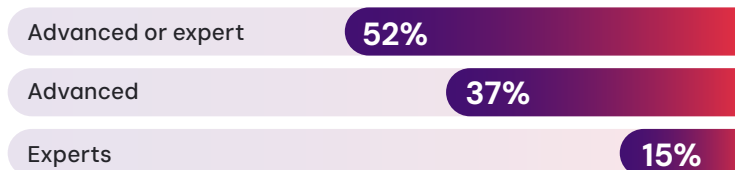
What this means for banking IT leaders

Banking has earned its maturity advantage the hard way. Decades of work on regulatory reporting, fraud analytics, and risk modeling gave the industry a head start with algorithmic decision making. The same governance and audit disciplines that made traditional AI work in banking is now shaping how agentic AI is being deployed.

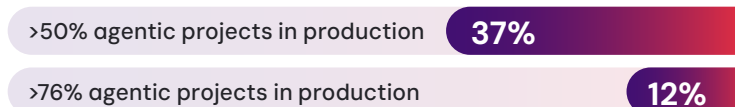
With this maturity comes greater responsibility. The governance frameworks, trust models, and deployment patterns established by banking CIOs today will become the template the rest of the enterprise follows tomorrow.

Agentic AI adoption trends

Agentic AI Capabilities



Production deployment



“We will be looking at where agentic AI can safely replace high-volume, rules-based workflows. We will need to make sure we have strong controls in place and also make sure we onboard the right talent, which enables us to grow the business through technology.”

— C-level executive, retail banking

CUSTOMER STORY

Axos Bank

Bringing legacy apps into the AI era with embedded agents

- Manual processes and legacy apps were limiting how Axos Bank could serve modern customers.
- The bank used OutSystems to modernize legacy apps with full enterprise context, then embedded AI agents to automate log analysis, document mapping, and other complex tasks.
- Embedding agents directly into operations helped Axos build what its leadership calls a more intelligent and responsive banking ecosystem that is ready for the future of finance.

85%

decrease in rework

75%

reduction in defects

60%

faster development



SECTION 4

Where banking sees agentic impact

The proven value of agentic AI in banking is concentrated in places where the industry has always invested deeply. Data analysis tops the list of banking use cases, explored by 55 percent of our respondents. IT operations and corporate services follow at 53 percent, customer experience at 39 percent, and agentic workflow automation at 37 percent.

What sets banking apart from other industries is the focus on extending what already exists, and 49% of the respondents say agentic AI has proven most useful for workflows in existing custom-built applications. That is the highest rate of any industry we surveyed, and it indicates that banking teams are weaving agents into the mission-critical applications built over years.

“ The integration of agentic AI in workflows and data management in our organizations has improved our productivity with minimal input. I feel that the development and use of better agentic AIs in the future will have great impact in finance and data management. ”

— Senior manager, financial services

Where banking ROI is being realized

Thirty-five percent of banking respondents describe the business value of their agentic AI initiatives as strategic, with broad impact across multiple teams, which is, again, the highest share of any industry. Another 31 percent report consistent time savings or cost avoidance, and 28 percent cite moderate ROI in specific functions.

Motivations for deployment center on customer outcomes and operating leverage. Improving customer satisfaction is a primary motivation for deploying agentic, according to 38% of banking leaders. A similar number cite reducing operational costs while 32% want to enhance accuracy and consistency. The latter is a particular priority in regulated banking workflows.



CUSTOMER STORY

Grihum Finance

Speeding up customer onboarding by 70 percent with an embedded AI agent

- Grihum Housing Finance is the leading affordable housing finance company in India. Following multiple acquisitions, Grihum inherited more than 10 disconnected applications and two core system stacks to manage 50,000 active loans.
- Supported by partner TheDigiFac, the team built India's first fully paperless integrated mortgage platform, unifying loan origination, CRM, and partner portals.
- Using Agent Workbench, Grihum built an AI agent that automates property deviation analysis. The agent analyzes reports against credit policies, flags anomalies, and recommends the right approving authority, improving both compliance and underwriting accuracy.

100%

paperless operations

70%

faster onboarding

72%

scope increase
without added
cost

Using agentic AI to reimagine banking legacy systems

Agentic AI offers banks a fresh way to modernize and overcome the challenges of older technology. Agents can now work with legacy complexity by harmonizing data across disparate systems and automating document analysis against policy rules. They can also orchestrate handoffs between new applications and decades-old cores. This lets banking teams deliver value sooner, without the years-long data cleanup projects that traditionally precede modernization.

What banking leaders need from a modernization platform

When we asked banking respondents which capabilities they need most to expand agentic AI, it is no surprise that integration with legacy enterprise systems was number one. However, 51% also prioritized the ability to build generative AI agents that ground their answers in enterprise data. And for 44%, external portals were a priority, reflecting the continued importance of customer-facing experiences.

“ We do a lot of in-house development, and so all these apps are out there, and then inevitably you want to do something with them. And now you're faced with, well, who here knows about this? With agentic, literally in a matter of weeks, we were able to build an agent that is literally deciphering what these agents are doing. ”

— Kevin Hearn, SVP, Head of Consumer Bank Development, Keybank

SECTION 5

A unified platform delivers agentic AI that scales

As banking teams grow in their agentic maturity, they are expressing concerns about the complexity, technical debt, and security risks associated with AI sprawl. Across all industries, 94% of IT leaders told us they are concerned about AI sprawl. Banking's maturity actually heightens this concern because banks have more deployed agents to govern.

When we asked what banking respondents need most from a unified platform for building apps, managing data, and deploying AI agents, the top answer was building generative AI agents that ground their answers in enterprise data. Fifty-one percent of banking leaders ranked this as critical. High-performance low-code for external portals followed at 44 percent, with a unified interface for combining data for AI at 40 percent.

Benefits banking leaders expect from a unified platform

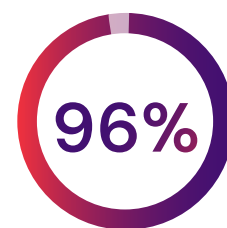
- Faster iteration and delivery across the SDLC
- Easier governance and policy enforcement across agents and applications
- Shared data context that spans front, middle, and back office systems
- Simplified skill requirements across development and operations teams
- Lower integration and maintenance costs across the portfolio

The unified platform imperative for banking

Of all the leaders we surveyed, 96% see a unified platform that offers a centralized space to build and deploy agents as very or somewhat important in the future. The banking response maps closely to that aggregate, but the urgency is amplified by regulatory pressure. Compliance teams can clearly benefit from a single place to audit agent behavior, review decision logs, and enforce policy across every application the bank runs.

“Agentic AI can work independently to solve problems faster and improve efficiency. It can help organizations make better decisions by analyzing data and taking action with little human help. However, it is important that agentic AI is used responsibly and is well supervised.”

— Senior manager, government, UK



see a unified platform that offers a centralized space to build and deploy agents as very or somewhat important in the future

CIO checklist for building an agentic bank

Banking CIOs who are moving from pilot to production share a common pattern. They pair the speed of modern AI tooling with the governance discipline their industry has always required.

These five steps distill what banks and financial services institutions say has worked for them.



TIAGO AZEVEDO
Chief Information Officer
OutSystems

- 1 Establish portfolio visibility and governance from day one**
Put a system in place that gives you a complete view of every agent, application, and data source across the bank. Design it to evolve as adoption matures. Banking has decades of experience governing mission-critical systems, so the principles are familiar. Apply them to agentic AI before sprawl makes them harder to retrofit.
- 2 Think big, start small, and scale fast**
Identify banking workflows where agents can make an immediate difference. Good candidates include document analysis in lending, KYC refresh, fraud review queues, and branch operations support. Prototype and test in a controlled scope, then extend the pattern to adjacent workflows once the governance frame is proven.
- 3 Solve for the result, not the system**
Banks have spent years trying to clean up data in legacy core systems before building on top of them. Agentic AI changes the economics. Instead of waiting for a data harmonization project that never ends, build agents that can navigate the existing complexity and reconcile data across systems in context. This gets value to the business faster.
- 4 Build systems where humans and AI complement each other.**
Establish flows in your agentic portfolio where humans remain accountable for decisions made by agents. In banking, this accountability is a regulatory requirement as much as a design principle. Define the decision points where human review is non-negotiable, and build the control plane that makes those checkpoints reliable at scale.
- 5 Automate access controls, role-based permissions, and usage limits**
Define your access controls, role-based permissions, and usage limits once, then automate their enforcement across every application and agent in the bank. Bake governance into the platform rather than bolting it on after deployment. Compliance audits should produce evidence, not surprises.

CONCLUSION

Build your agentic bank with OutSystems

The banking institutions leading on agentic AI share an advantage that goes beyond any single model or tool. They have a platform that lets them build custom applications, modernize legacy systems, deploy AI agents, and govern all of it from one place. That foundation is what turns agentic experimentation into enterprise-grade banking outcomes.

The OutSystems AI development platform lets financial institutions go from AI experimentation to enterprise AI that is integrated with core systems, governed and compliant, reliable in production, and predictable at scale. With OutSystems, banking teams gain the following capabilities.



Rapidly build and run custom apps and AI agents for mission-critical banking functions like lending, onboarding, and customer service



Modernize legacy banking processes with AI and agentic solutions that wrap and extend core systems and customer data



Manage and govern the full AI development lifecycle of apps and agents on one unified platform built for regulated environments

Teams of any size and technical depth can use OutSystems to build, deploy, and manage AI apps and agents quickly and cost-effectively. The platform meets the reliability and security standards that banking requires, including SOC 2 Type II attestation and capabilities that support DORA, PCI DSS, and GDPR requirements.

Banking customer results

The banking and financial services institutions building on OutSystems include Axos Bank, KeyBank, Western Union, Banco Popular, Santander Consumer Portugal, Banca Generali, anb, Paragon Bank, Yorkshire Building Society, Crown Agents Bank, Al Salam Bank, BPI, Grihum Housing Finance, Insignia Financial, Union Bank of the Philippines, Edelweiss, Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, and many more. Their results speak to what the platform makes possible.

2x Faster time to market at Western Union

85% Decrease in rework at Axos Bank

70% Faster onboarding at Grihum Housing Finance

Start building your agentic bank

- Chat with Ada on outsystems.com and ask for a roadmap to agentic AI transformation tailored for banking.
- Explore [the OutSystems AI development platform](#) and its capabilities for financial services.
- [Request a personalized demo](#) of how you can build, govern, and scale apps and agents on OutSystems.
- Developers can start building AI agents today with the [free OutSystems personal environment](#).

Appendix

OutSystems surveyed 1,879 global IT leaders for the 2026 State of AI Development report. This report draws on the 320 respondents who identified banking and financial services as their primary industry. Full respondent details appear below.

Total respondents:
1,879

Regions

EMEA:
587

FRANCE
108

GERMANY
114

NETHERLANDS
105

UK
260

APAC:
527

AUSTRALIA
107

INDIA
313

JAPAN
107

AMER:
450

US
339

CANADA
111

LATAM:
315

BRAZIL
315

Annual revenue

MORE THAN \$2.5B
380

\$500M - \$2.5B
548

\$100M - \$500M
443

\$50M - \$99M
220

\$10M - \$49M
168

LESS THAN \$10M
73

N/A
(GOVERNMENT AGENCY)
47

Seniority

C-LEVEL
250

SVP OR VP
183

SENIOR DIRECTOR/
DIRECTOR
684

SENIOR MANAGER/
MANAGER
762

Industry

TECHNOLOGY
444

MANUFACTURING
345

FINANCIAL SERVICES
320

GOVERNMENT
(STATE AND LOCAL)
233

INSURANCE
206

RETAIL
152

HEALTHCARE
105

ENERGY AND UTILITIES
74