Hubstaff

The 2026 Global Trends and Benchmarks Report: How Work Gets Done

BONUS: 2026 Benchmarks Pack for Global Teams (role × industry × workstyle) + Global Teams' Time Zone Overlap Playbook

Executive summary

Global teams are now the default. Work happens across time zones, workstyles, and a growing stack of tools. The leaders who will win in 2026 aren't arguing about remote versus office. They are designing rhythm for distributed teams, protecting focus time, streamlining tools, truly leveraging AI, and treating 50+ hour weeks as a system failure, not a badge of honor.

The 2026 Global Work Index analyzes anonymized data from more than **140,000 workers and 17,000 organizations using Hubstaff**, alongside external research. The goal is to share trends, benchmarks, and actionable insights that leaders can actually apply.

Hubstaff data shows that focus time is now the rarest resource on global teams. Hours are eaten by meetings, messages, and tool-hopping, and hybrid teams in our sample feel the squeeze most, logging the lowest share of true focus time. Here's what this means for how you run your team:

Work rhythms vary significantly by role, industry, and workstyle.

Triple-peak workdays are two days in one, intense, but powerful when it's deliberate.

Focus time is emerging as the new benchmark/KPI for productivity.

2025 was the year of AI experiments; 2026 has to be the year of action.

Tool overload and context switching are eroding attention.

50+ hour weeks are a capacity-planning failure, not a sign of commitment.

For global and distributed teams, **2026 is the year to move from coping to intentionally redesigning how work gets done.** This Index, together with the **companion benchmarks pack** and **time zone overlap playbook**, is designed to help leaders set fair guardrails, spot early warning signs, and run a repeatable system instead of relying on heroic effort.

Power your own global work index

This report is built on the same metrics Hubstaff tracks every day: focus time, meetings, app/URL activity per day, AI usage, and hours. Use Hubstaff to get the same view on your own teams, benchmark against patterns like these, and see whether your 2026 plays are actually changing how work gets done.

Book a strategy session

Hubstaff

3

2026 Trends

1

Trend 1:
Embracing diverse work rhytims

2

Trend 2:
Focus is the new KPI

3

Trend 3:
The triple-peak workday - real, rare, and worth managing

4

Trend 4:
Tool overload/context switching

5

Trend 5:
AI at work / year of action

6

Trend 6:
Capacity planning / utilization-hours warning system

BONUS: Companion benchmarks pack (role × industry × workstyle) + global time zone overlap playbook + winning plays for 2026

**Global Teams' Time Zone Overlap Playbook**

2026 Benchmarks Pack for Global Teams

Embracing diverse work rhythms

Global teams are discovering that one size does not fit all when it comes to work patterns. Different roles run on different rhythms. Creators need long, uninterrupted blocks; customer-facing teams need to respond quickly; and managers spend a big chunk of their time coordinating - you get the idea. Instead of forcing everyone into the same 9-to-5 mold, leaders are starting to set flexible "benchmark ranges" for what healthy productivity looks like.

Our data makes this clear. It shows individual contributors (IC) and managers operate on totally different rhythms, so expecting their calendars to look the same is unrealistic and counterproductive.
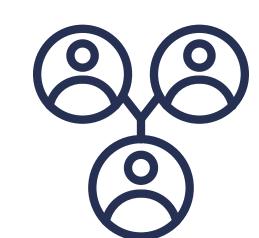
Individual contributors

4 hours in meetings per week
5 meetings per week

~10% of their working time

Leaders and managers

9 hours in meetings per week
13 meetings per week

~25% of their working time

External research supports this finding: **Asana's Anatomy of Work Global Index finds that unnecessary meetings alone consume 4 hours per week for senior leaders and 3 hours for knowledge workers**, and executives are significantly more likely to miss deadlines due to meeting overload. **Microsoft's Work Trend Index** shows roughly half of all meetings cluster in mid-morning and early afternoon, **exactly when people say they'd rather be doing focused work.**

2x
Meetings
per person

6x
Meetings
per organization

Hubstaff data shows the average person is now sitting in a little more than **twice as many meetings per year**, and the typical organization is running **almost six times as many meetings,** compared to just two years ago.

Our **Time Zone Overlap Playbook** says maker-time (09:00–11:00) should be sacred – no recurring meetings – with the first live meeting no earlier than 11:30, and anything before 09:00 or after 18:00 treated as a rare exception. In reality, Hubstaff data shows we are doing the exact opposite. **26% of all meeting minutes happen in 09:00–11:00 maker-time**. The core **13:00– 17:00 "review and decision" window carries 36%** of meeting time, which is closer to the intent, but **30% of all meeting minutes still fall outside 09:00–18:00 altogether**.

We're spending **roughly a quarter of all meeting time in deep-work hours and nearly a third outside the standard day**.

Employees now average about 25 meetings per person, per month. Around 70% of those meetings are recurring, which tend to run 7–10 minutes shorter than one-off meetings. That's good news: recurring routines are tighter and more efficient. However, let's not forget an inefficient recurring meeting isn't a one-off mistake, **it's a subscription to wasted time.**

So what does "good" actually look like in practice? That's where the **2026 Benchmarks Pack: The Global Team's Productivity Index** comes in. Use this Index to understand the big shifts and decide where you need to change. Then use the benchmarks pack to answer a more practical question: "For teams like mine, what should we be aiming for?"

> **2026 Benchmarks Pack: The Global Team's Productivity Index** ⬇

Your benchmarks/guardrails should reflect that difference in rhythm:

Engineers / Analysts

~40% of time in deep focus	Relatively lean meetings

Team leads / managers

Higher meeting load and coordination	Avoid **25%+** of time in recurring status calls

Customer-facing roles

Tighter response times and more micro-interactions	Still need protected blocks for follow-through and project work

The shift we're seeing in 2026 is away from one-size-fits-all targets and toward **flexibility within guardrails.** Instead of saying, "No one should have more than X meetings," leaders are starting to say, "This role or team should typically sit within this range of meetings and focus time, and we'll look into it when people fall outside it."

Our recommendation is "pattern-match, don't police." Benchmarks are there to act as guideposts, to flag when someone's work pattern is drifting into unhealthy territory, not as a one-size-fits-all rulebook. When companies design for different rhythms and make expectations explicit, they respect diverse workstyles and maintain productivity without resorting to more meetings for everyone.

Trend 2:

Focus is the new KPI

Amid notifications, meetings, and tool sprawl, **uninterrupted focus time** has become the core productivity metric to watch. Deep work, sustained, distraction-free effort on meaningful tasks is where most real progress happens.

39%

Across our data, the average person spends roughly **39% of their tracked time in deep focus or 2–3 hours** of **real focus per day.** The pattern becomes sharper when you slice by role and workstyle:

All roles (140k workers, 17k orgs)

39% of tracked time in deep focus

2–3 hours of real focus per day

Focus percentage in the low **30% range**

High-focus roles

Engineers, VAs, designers, finance, writers, SEO, data analysts

40–44% of the week in deep focus

Around 2–3 hours of focus per day

By workstyle

Office-based teams - 45% focus

Remote teams - 41% focus

Hybrid teams - 31% focus

Highly collaborative roles

Product & project managers, marketing managers, founders

Just **1–2 hours** of focus per day

Focus drops into the **mid-20%** range

Collaboration is powerful up to a point, but "work about work" (meetings, status updates, searching) now consumes a disproportionate share of time. Teams are spending more than 20% of their time doing work about work.

Our data shows that the problem isn't just how much time people spend in meetings, it's **how spread out those meetings are across the day**. In the 9–5 window, every single hour carries a meaningful share of meeting time: each hour accounts for roughly **4–10% of all meeting minutes,** rather than there being one clean "meeting block" and long quiet stretches. Layer that over a "typical" weekday with around **four meetings and 185 minutes in meetings** and you get a familiar pattern: a standup in the morning, a quick sync late morning, a check-in after lunch, a review late afternoon. None of those touchpoints are outrageous on their own, but together they slice the workday into short fragments and make it much harder for people to reach the 2–3 hour focus windows that real progress depends on.

82% Developers 35 hrs
64% Marketing 20 hrs
56% Sales 15 hrs

We recommend that leaders treat focus time as a **team-level KPI**, on par with throughput and quality:

Track focus percentage and absolute hours per week by team and role.

Protect focus windows by default (for example, morning "maker time" blocks).

Manage to focus as a constraint: when focus erodes, treat it as a capacity problem, not a personal failing.

This mirrors what many thought leaders are now arguing: in knowledge work, the **conditions for output** (the ability to concentrate) are just as important as the output itself. It is part of a broader shift from measuring attendance and online time to measuring **quality of attention**. Don't leave deep work to luck. Make focus visible, set realistic benchmarks by role, and design your weekly rhythm so high-quality attention becomes the norm, not the exception.
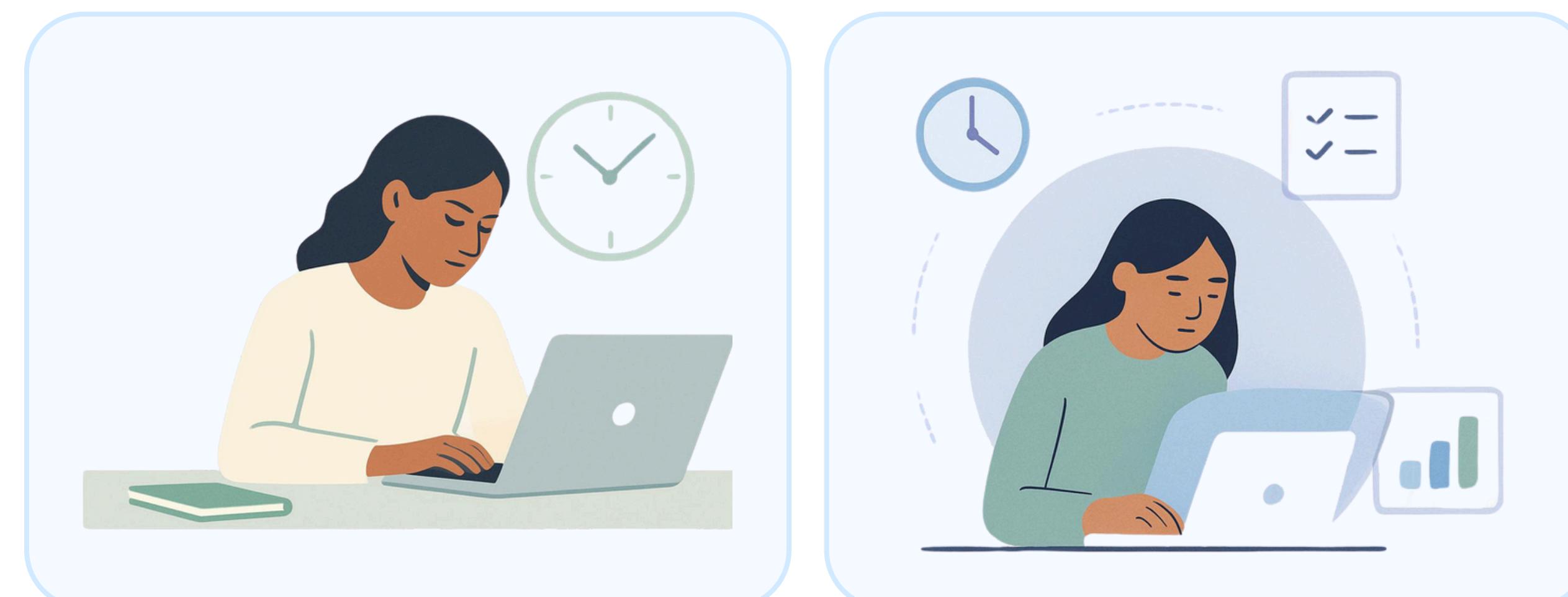
The triple-peak workday - real, rare, and worth managing

Daniel Pink's work on timing reveals that most people experience **three daily stages: peak, trough, and recovery**. The "triple-peak" workday is that pattern turned up a notch:

Peak 1:
A strong focus window in mid-morning

Peak 2:
Another push after lunch

Peak 3:
A smaller third surge after dinner

Across all Hubstaff data, about **one in five weekdays** (Monday–Friday) shows a triple-peak activity pattern.

What makes triple-peak days different? Compared with a typical weekday, a triple-peak day is almost like running two workdays in one:

	Typical Work Day		Triple Peak Work Day
Total hours worked:	7	→	14 (triple peak is double)
Time in focus:	39%	→	43% of the day
Focus sessions:	9	→	5
Meetings per day:	4	→	2
Time in meetings:	185	→	74 mins (111 fewer minutes)
% time in meetings:	9%	→	9% of the day
% messaging apps:	10%	→	9% of the day
Number of interruptions:	6	→	4 in the day
Unproductive time:	2%	→	3% of the day

Hubstaff

Fewer meetings, fewer pings, more total focus helps explain why people push some work into the evening: they're reclaiming uninterrupted time they can't find between 9 and 5.

But there's a cost. **Unproductive time creeps up (3% vs 2%)**. You don't double the length of the workday without adding some drag. Our data suggests triple-peak days are intense, not just flexible, and they're not sustainable as a default pattern.

> **Where we land is simple: the third peak should be optional, not expected.**

Used well, that evening peak is a **deliberate trade-off**: someone blocks out **3 - 6 pm** for school pickup, a workout, or errands, then logs back in after dinner to do deep work in peace. That's flexibility working as intended, work and life in sync, with timing matched to individual people's natural energy patterns. It's exactly the kind of autonomy Pink argues can boost performance when the timing fits the task.

Used badly, the same pattern turns into an **infinite workday**: people are online early, stuck in meetings all through core hours, and then quietly expected to "catch up" at night. An always-on rhythm that fuels burnout and erodes boundaries.

Used effectively, this approach provides leaders with a means to support flexibility without slipping **into an always-on culture**.

Tool overload and context switching, the digital stack dilemma

Most teams are operating in classic tool overload, spending more time toggling between tools than moving work forward.

[Harvard Business Review's "toggle tax" study](#) quantified this: digital workers toggled between applications and websites **nearly 1,200 times per day**, spending almost **4 hours per week**, about **9% of working time**, reorienting themselves after each switch.

Every ping, every notification, every alt-tab comes with a "toggle tax" on your attention. The studies mentioned earlier suggest that **context switching can cost teams up to 40% of their productive day** once you factor in refocus time, decision fatigue, and errors.

That doesn't mean "fewer tools are always better", specialized roles will naturally use more." But it does mean:

Extreme app counts are a useful **signal** of fragmentation.

When app counts spike without a clear reason (such as a new role or product), focus often falls.

[Atlassian's State of Teams 2025](#) echoes this by showing that teams waste **around a quarter of their time just searching for answers**, and that top-performing teams rely on a clear "system of work" rather than a random pile of tools.

Hubstaff data shows people use an average of 18 apps a day

Office-based teams: 23

Marketers: 24

SEO specialists: 36

Our recommendation is to streamline the digital spine, not just the tool list. The goal isn't to strip tools to the minimum; it's to build a **coherent digital spine**:

> A small set of "source of truth" tools for work (docs/tasks), communication (chat/video), and knowledge.

> Clear "tool-for-what" rules so people know where to put work and where to look for it.

> Integration and automation, which reduce duplicate entry and context switching.

Hubstaff's unique angle is connecting **apps/day** directly to **focus time**. Instead of saying "too many tools are bad" in the abstract, you can:

> Compare their focus share and after-hours work to similar teams with leaner stacks.

> Identify teams in the top decile of app usage.

> Use that gap to prioritize consolidation, integration, or clear norms.

Fewer, smarter tools and clearer defaults usually mean better focus and higher throughput. Letting your app stack grow unchecked does the opposite; it quietly drains productivity.
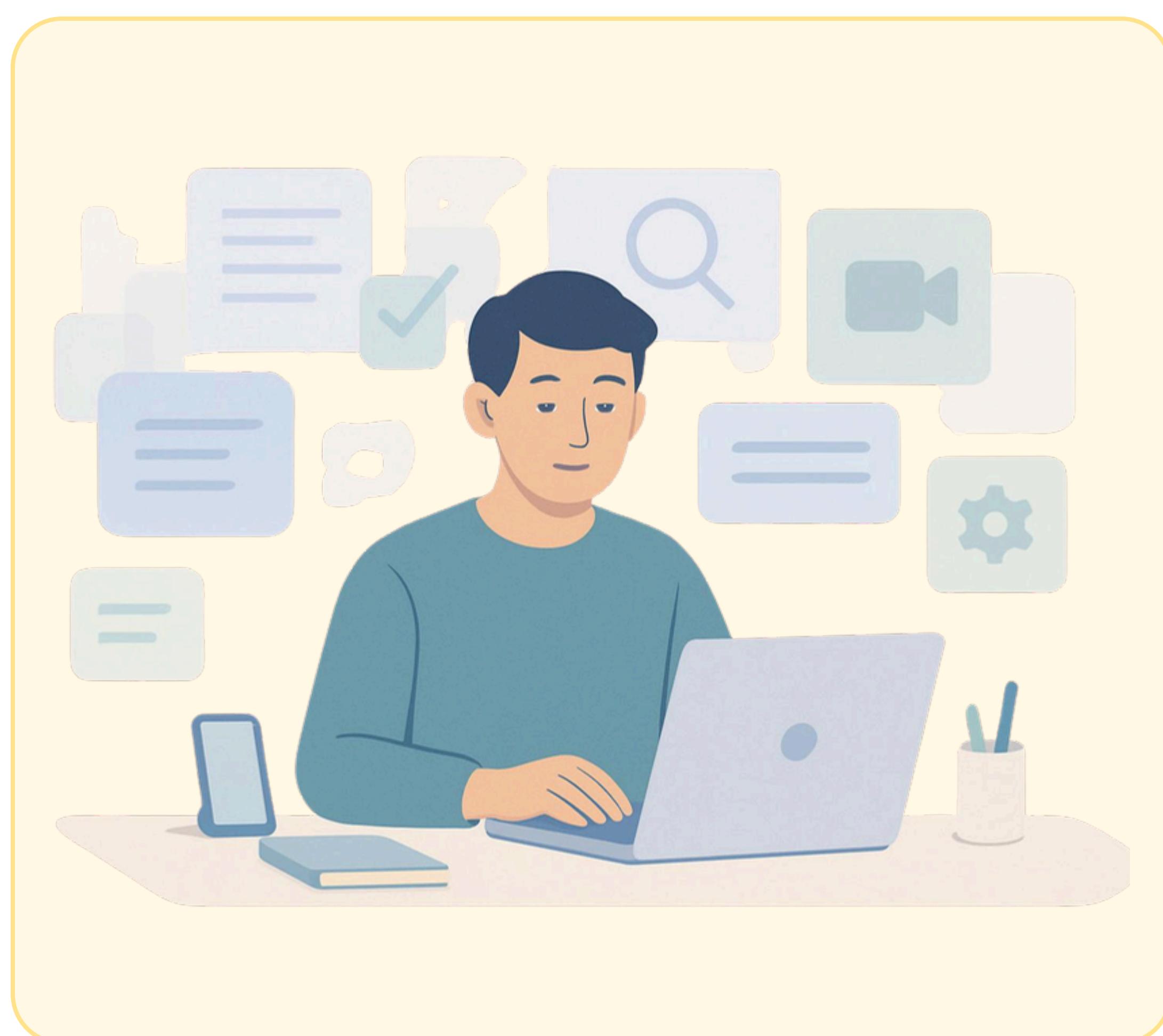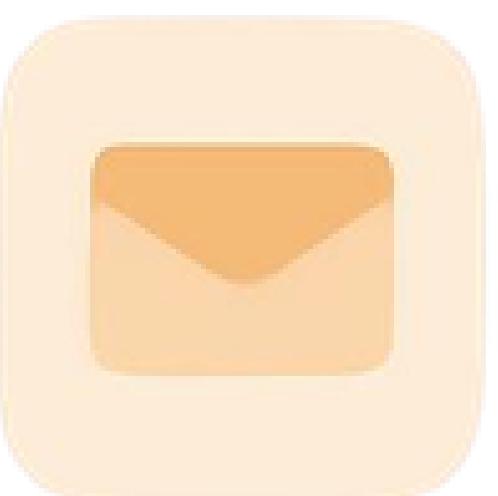
AI at work, 2026 is the year of action

So the first question for any team is simple: **are you actually tracking AI use, or just assuming it's happening? With Hubstaff, you can now track how AI is being used across your team with our AI Tools feature**.

In our **AI Productivity Shift research**, 2024 data revealed that while **67% of Hubstaff users utilized AI at work, it accounted for only 4% of their tracked time**. The companion survey told a similar story: most workers said they used AI, but usually in short, occasional bursts. McKinsey calls this the "execution gap." Adoption stats look strong, but AI isn't yet wired deeply enough into processes to shift outcomes at scale. AI had gone wide, but not deep.

Fast forward to 2025, and the share of **Hubstaff users who use AI tools rose from 65% to 73%**, while the share of total tracked **time spent in AI apps slipped from around 4% to 3%**. More people are using AI, but for most, it's still a helper they tap a few times a day, not a game changer. That lines up with **McKinsey's 2025 survey**: roughly nine in ten employees say they use generative AI, and three-quarters of organisations say they've switched it on in at least one business function.

Hybrid teams are the clearest power users. Their adoption climbed from around 72% to 84%, and their time in AI tools jumped from about 5% of the workday to roughly 11%. Remote and office-based teams also reach around 80% adoption, but only spend 1–2% of their day in AI apps. Hybrid teams aren't just trying AI, they're rebuilding workflows around it.

AI Adoption by team type

Hybrid teams ⭐ Power users	Remote / Office-based teams
72% ➡ 84% AI adoption	**~80%** AI adoption
5% ➡ 11% Time in AI	**1-2% of workday** Time in AI

Key insight: Same adoption. Very different usage.
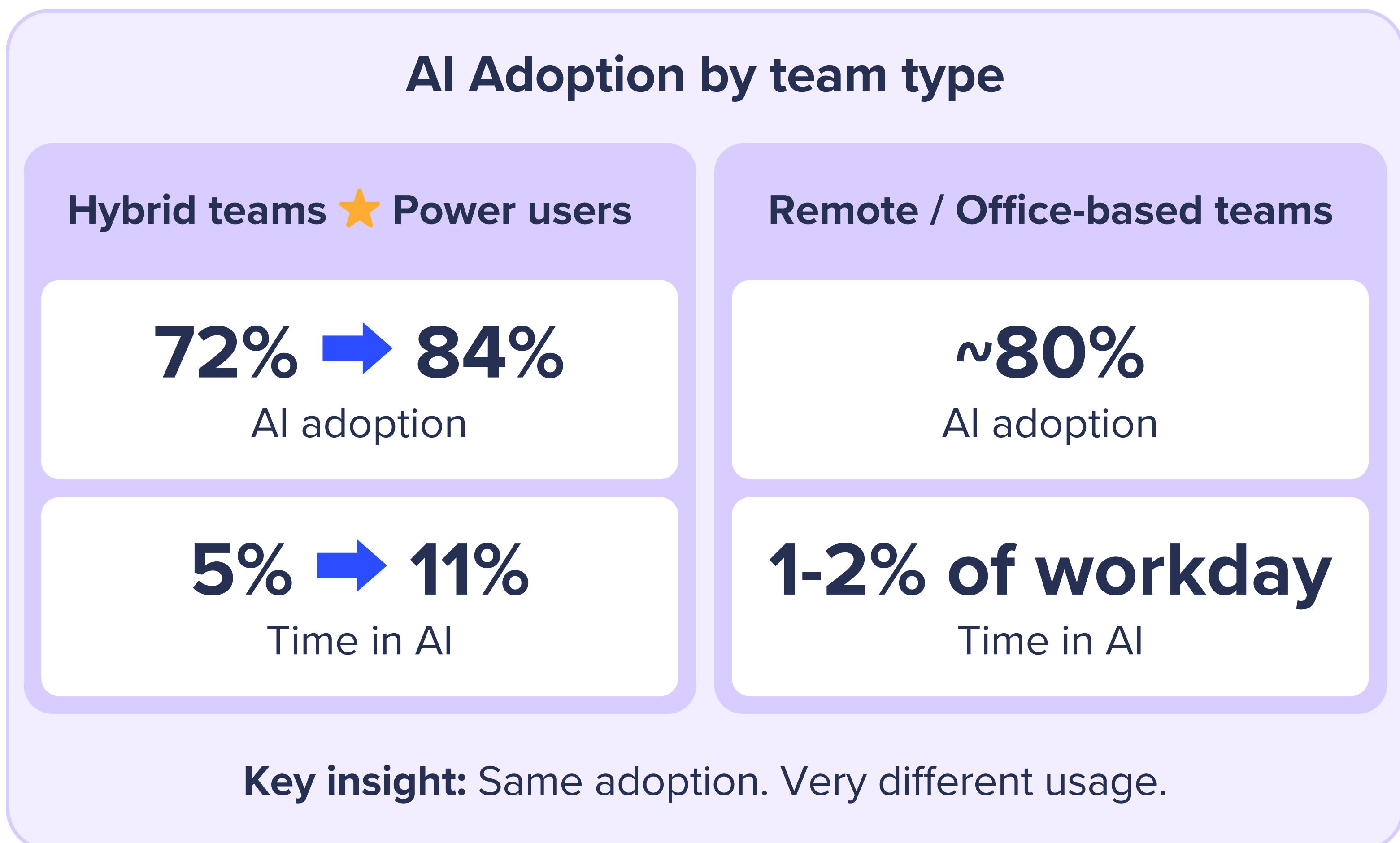
By role, engineers are in the lead with 87% using AI for about 8% of tracked time, ROUGHLY double what we saw a year earlier. Most other roles, such as support, sales, operations, HR, finance, and customer success, mostly sit in the high 70s to low 80s for adoption, but only devote about 2–3% of their time to AI. For them, AI is still a quick draft, a summary, or a better email, not the backbone of the work.

Regionally, APAC and EMEA have pulled ahead. Around 81% workers now use AI, compared with around 60% in North America and just under 70% in Latin America. For deeper insights, visit:

2026 benchmarks pack: global teams productivity index

Why does depth matter so much? In our AI Productivity Shift report, the teams that went deeper saw clear returns: **AI users spent 23% less time on unproductive work, 77% said AI reduced task time, and 70% reported more focus and fewer distractions**. Those benefits only show up when AI is embedded into workflows, not bolted on at the edges.

Going deep with AI delivers returns

| **23%**	**77%**	**70%**
less time on unproductive work	faster task completion	more focus fewer distractions

Key insight: Benefits appear when AI is embedded into daily workflows

Put simply: the world has figured out AI adoption. The next race is AI integration. 2025 was the year of experimentation. 2026 has to be the year of action, fewer pilots, more real workflows, clearer policies, and visible outcomes.
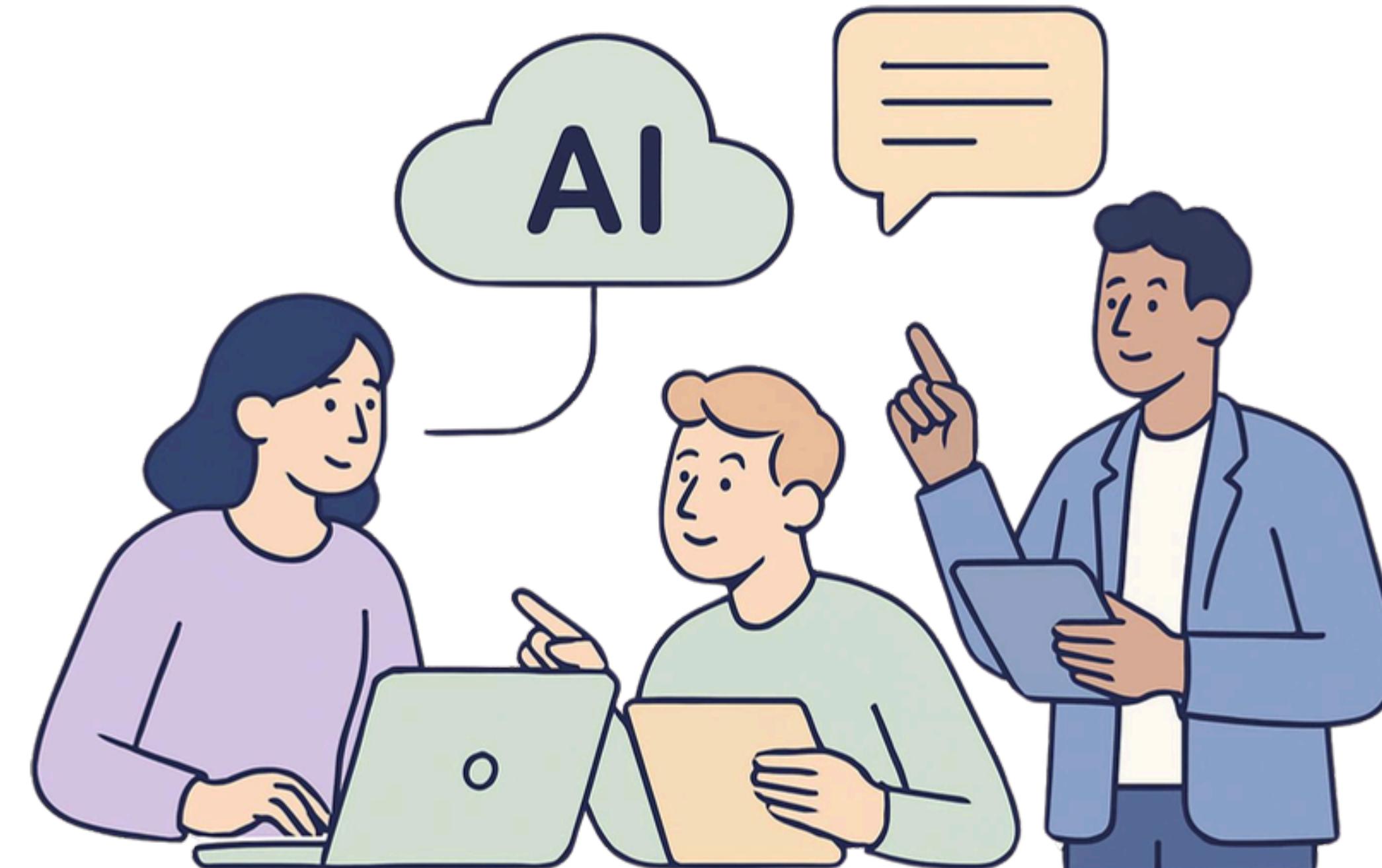
The practical playbook from here is straightforward:

Start in the bottlenecks: summaries, drafting, ticket triage, research, and reporting.

Turn early wins into shared workflows instead of endless new pilots.

Give managers guardrails, training, and a few simple metrics, including AI hours, team adoption, and changes in cycle time and unproductive time, so they can see where AI is actually moving the needle.

That's how you move from "everyone's using AI somewhere" to "AI is carrying a measurable share of the work."

Capacity planning, using utilization/hours as an early warning system

In 2026, smart teams are starting to treat **capacity planning** as a core discipline, not just a resourcing spreadsheet exercise. The question isn't "Who's busy?" It's **"Who's operating at a sustainable capacity, and who's quietly running in the red?"**

From a capacity planning perspective, that's your first red flag: it's not just that "everyone is stretched"; **certain roles and functions are systematically overcapacity**.

When we looked at people who worked more than 50+ hours in the week:

Why are 50+ hour weeks a capacity problem, not a badge of honor?

Share of users with at least one 50+ hour week

👥 Team leads / managers: **28%**

🎧 Customer support: **21%**

📣 Sales / marketing: **18%**

💻 Engineers: **16%**

Share of weeks with 50+ hour week

👥 Managers: **13%**

📣 Sales / marketing: **11%**

🎧 Support: **9.2%**

💻 Engineers: **4.8%**

Decades of research have shown that humans reach their physical limits well before 70 hours.

A **Stanford analysis** shows that beyond **55 hours**, there's virtually **no additional output**, just more fatigue and errors.

The **World Health Organization** links 55+ hour work weeks to a **35% higher risk of stroke** and **17% higher risk of heart disease** versus a 35–40 hour work week.

If you're planning capacity and you ignore those limits, you're not "maximizing performance", you're eroding it. We recommend treating 50+ hour work weeks as a danger threshold.

Burnout is the most visible consequence of ignoring this, but it's not the only one. Overload also drives increased rework, slower decision-making, higher attrition, and, in cross-border contexts, potential non-compliance with local labor expectations and right-to-disconnect norms.

Our role-level view highlights where capacity breaks first:

Managers, sales, support, and other client-facing roles see more frequent 50+ hour weeks.

Engineering and similar maker roles, on average, keep hours more balanced.

For capacity planning, this matters more than company-wide averages. It tells you:

Where to **intervene first** (often middle management and customer-facing teams).

Where to **add headcount or redistribute work.**

Where to **borrow playbooks** from healthier teams (e.g., clearer boundaries, on-call rotations, better handoffs).

Done well, capacity planning pulls everything together, hours, utilization, focus, burnout risk, and gives leaders a grounded way to adjust demand, staffing, and expectations before people hit the wall.

Hubstaff

Four powerful leader plays to own 2026

Each play below is designed to translate the trends and benchmarks into concrete moves for global leaders over the next 6–12 months.

1

Play 1:
Design a fair global work rhythm for focus and collaboration

→

2

Play 2:
Run capacity and wellbeing like a system, not a fire drill

→

3

Play 3:
Streamline your tool stack to cut tool overload and context switching

→

4

Play 4:
Turn AI adoption into AI workflows with a real co-pilot

→

Hubstaff

Design a fair global work rhythm for focus and collaboration

Your global team's work rhythm matters. Hubstaff data shows that focus time is the scarcest resource, triple-peak workdays are real but intense, and hybrid teams often have the lowest focus share. To protect focus time and make collaboration fair across time zones, you need to design a clear global work rhythm.

Using the Hubstaff Global teams' [time zone overlap playbook](#), turn your overlap rule into specific UTC windows and local-time bands for each hub. The matrix indicates who should join live, who should stay in deep work, and when to default to asynchronous handoffs.

1

Set one primary overlap window per global team. Define a 2—4 hour daily overlap window where your team expects real-time collaboration (standups, decision meetings, complex discussions). Outside that window, default to async work. For teams spanning many time zones, rotate the overlap so the same region isn't always paying the "unfriendly hours" tax.

2

Protect local maker mornings by default. Make the first 2—3 hours of the local workday meeting-free for most roles, especially high-focus roles.

3

Codify after-hours norms and triple-peak expectations. Make it explicit that evening work and triple-peak workdays are an **opt-in flexibility option,** not a performance requirement.

4

Create written team agreements for work rhythms. Publish a one-pager covering office days (if applicable), core hours, overlap windows, and how to handle cross-time-zone collaboration.

You'll know it's working when the average **focus time per person** rises. **Meetings per person** stabilize or decrease, especially in the morning. Team pulses and 1:1s show **clearer work–life boundaries** and higher satisfaction with how time zones and "unfriendly" hours are shared.

Run capacity and wellbeing like a system, not a fire drill

Your team's capacity and well-being are system properties, not individual willpower. Hubstaff data shows that 50+ hour weeks are common for managers, sales, and support roles. World Health Organization and Stanford research make it clear that beyond roughly 50–55 hours per week, you're trading health and long-term performance for very little extra output.

If you want sustainable performance, you need to run capacity planning and wellbeing as a repeatable system, not as a last-minute reaction when people burn out.

1

Make 50+ hour weeks an automatic review trigger. Set simple rules in your dashboards: if any individual logs a 50+ hour week, their manager reviews workload, priorities, and staffing in the next sprint. If a team shows repeated 50+ hour weeks, escalate that pattern to a leadership review.

2

Protect local maker mornings by default. Make the first 2–3 hours of the local workday meeting-free for most roles, especially high-focus roles.

3

Plan buffers around known peak periods. For launches, seasonal spikes, or major projects, plan temp buffers: pause lower-priority work, expand on-call rotations, and set explicit end dates for surge periods. Don't assume "we'll just stretch" as your default operating model.

**You'll know it's working when** the percentage of people with **recurring 50+ hour weeks** falls, especially in manager, sales, and support roles. **Focus percentage** stays stable or improves during busy periods instead of collapsing. Sick leave, stress-related attrition, and burnout signals in pulses **decline in previously identified hotspots**. Managers can point to clear **rescoping and resourcing decisions** made in response to capacity data, not just "we pushed through and hoped for the best."

Streamline your tool stack to cut tool overload and context switching

Your tool stack can either support focus time or destroy it. Hubstaff's apps/day metrics and focus data show that teams with very high tool counts spend more time in messaging and coordination and less in deep work. Harvard Business Review's "toggle tax" has ICs losing roughly four hours a week, nearly 10% of working time, just to context switching.

To reclaim that time, you need to streamline your tool stack and build a clear digital spine that reduces tool overload instead of adding to it.
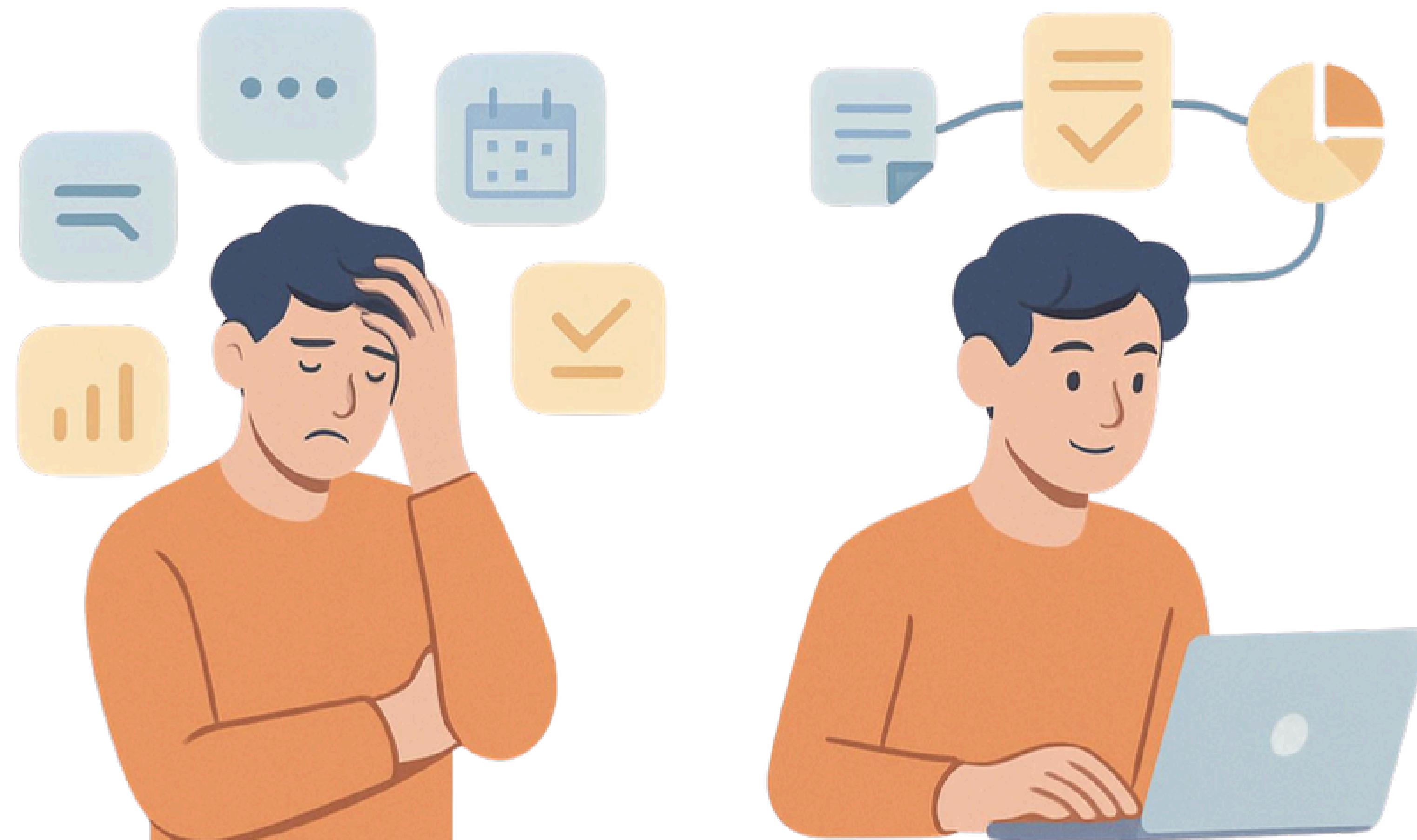
1 **Build a simple "tool-for-what" map.** For each team, list your core work categories (e.g., communication, projects, docs, knowledge, tickets) and agree on a single default tool for each.

2 **Add it to onboarding.** Upgrade onboarding to teach workflows, not just tools. Walk new hires through your "tool-for-what" map as a workflow: where requests start, where work is tracked, where decisions live, and where final outputs are stored.

3 **Add a gate for app purchases and renewals.** Create a simple approval process for any new app: what problem it solves, who owns it, who will use it, what it replaces or overlaps with, and how you'll measure success. Route requests through a single owner (operations, IT, or finance), link approvals to clear "no-duplicate-tools" rules, and require a quick 90-day check-in before renewal to decide whether to keep, consolidate, or cut.

You'll know it's working when median **apps/day stabilizes or falls**, especially in teams previously suffering from tool overload. People report fewer "Where is that doc?" or "Which app is this in?" moments. **Focus time percentage rises** in teams where you've simplified the tool stack. **Time to onboard new hires shrinks** because they can understand workflows and find information quickly.

Turn AI adoption into AI workflows with a real co-pilot

AI adoption only matters when it changes workflows. Hubstaff's data shows that AI usage is growing quickly, with more active users, increased AI hours per user, and significantly higher total AI hours in just a few months. To get real value, you need to move from ad hoc AI experiments to AI workflows, where AI acts as a co-pilot in how your team actually works.
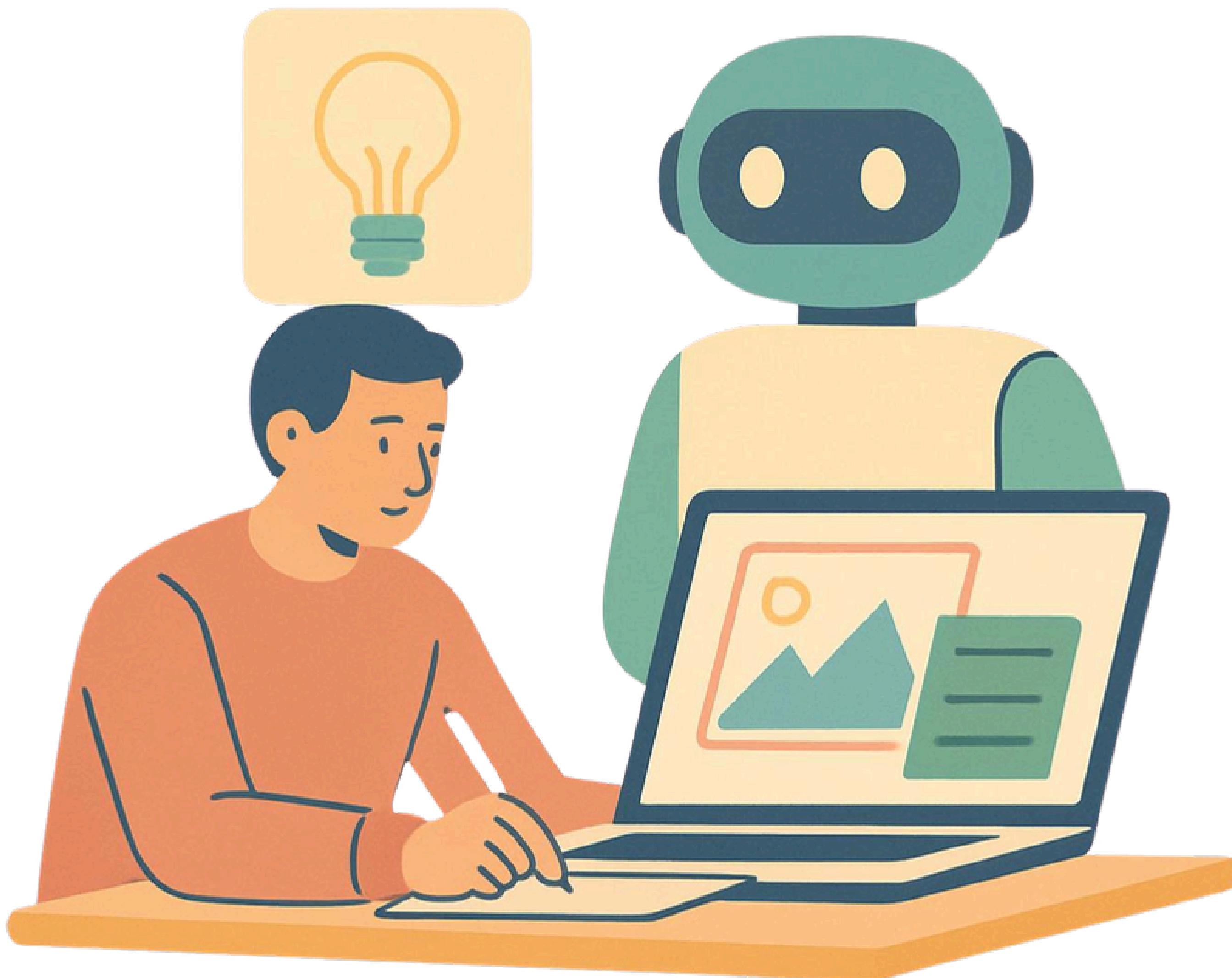
Pick 3–5 high-impact AI use cases per function. Don't try to do everything. For each function, choose specific AI workflows: marketing might use AI for first-draft creation and content repurposing; support for auto-summaries, responses, and ticket tagging; engineering for test generation and documentation; finance for variance explanations and basic analysis.

Appoint AI champions and a small enabling team. Nominate AI champions in each function who run experiments, share prompts, and document what works. Pair them with a central enabling team that owns AI policy, vendor decisions, and guardrails so managers feel safe encouraging AI usage.

Treat AI literacy as a core skill. Offer role-based AI training covering prompts, critical evaluation of AI outputs, and safe data use. Make "how we use AI here" part of standard onboarding, manager training, and recurring enablement, not a one-off webinar.

Bake AI into workflows and templates. Embed AI directly into your SOPs: include recommended prompts in templates, add "AI draft or AI analysis" to checklists, and define review steps so humans stay in control. Aim for AI to be the default co-pilot in specific workflow steps, not an optional extra.

You'll know it's working when AI usage and adoption increase within the team, while cycle times and manual steps decrease. Teams report spending **less time on repetitive, low-value work** and more time on decisions, strategy, and creativity. Managers can point to **specific processes** where AI has changed how work gets done.

Rewiring work for 2026 and beyond

Taken together, the six trends in this report tell a simple story: **global teams win when leaders design the system, not just push people harder.** The system is your rhythm (when work happens), your attention (how much focus time your teams get), your tools (how many apps people juggle), your AI workflows (where machines co-pilot real work), and your capacity planning (how you prevent 50+ hour weeks from becoming normal).

Trend 1 shows that different roles, industries, and workstyles need different rhythms.

Trend 2 puts a spotlight on the triple-peak workday.

Trend 3 shows how tool overload and context switching fragment attention.

Trend 4 reframes productivity around focus.

Trend 5 confirms that AI at work has moved from hype to action.

Trend 6 highlights capacity planning as the backbone of sustainable performance.

For 2026, that translates into a short list of non-negotiables for leaders of global and distributed teams:

Design a fair global rhythm.	Treat focus time as a KPI.
Cut tool overload and context switching.	Turn AI pilots into AI workflows.
Treat 50+ hour weeks as a system failure.	Make these metrics part of your operating cadence.

This Global Work Index, together with the companion Benchmarks Pack and the Global Teams Operating Standard, is designed to be more than a research piece. It is a practical benchmark and operating blueprint for 2026 productivity trends. The organizations that thrive over the next few years will be the ones that design work intentionally.

This report is your starting point to rewire work for 2026 and beyond.

See how it works for your team

Book a strategy session with Hubstaff, and we'll plug your team's data into the same lenses you've seen in this report: focus time, meetings, app overload, AI usage, and more. Walk away with a clear view of how your team actually works today and the biggest opportunities to redesign work for 2026.

Book a strategy session with Hubstaff

Hubstaff

Methodology

This playbook distils durable patterns observed across **140k** global team members using Hubstaff.

Core definitions (time-use and stack):

Focus time
Uninterrupted productive activity inside work apps long enough to make progress (not just fleeting active-window seconds).

Messaging time
Time in chat and email clients.

Productive app %
Share of time inside the apps that materially move work forward for a given role/team (as tagged in our app taxonomy).

Meeting time
Time in calendared blocks plus confirmed conferencing-app usage.

Apps/day
Distinct work apps touched per day (**see verification** re: median vs average in the source).

Meetings/week (count)
Average number of scheduled meetings attended per person per week.

Rhythm and timing metrics:

Most productive days of the week
Distribution of total focus minutes/hours across Monday-Sunday.

Most productive hours of the day
Distribution of focus minutes by local hour (00:00-23:59).

Triple-peak day prevalence
Proportion of days showing three distinct focus peaks (morning, afternoon, evening) separated by troughs.

Start-time distribution
Share of people whose first tracked work activity occurs in **dawn, morning, afternoon,** or **evening** local-time bands (**see verification** for band cut-offs).

AI app usage over time
Time spent in AI-tagged apps and the share/number of users with AI-app activity, trended across periods.

>50-hour week prevalence (burnout signal)
- **People-level:** % of individuals with at least one week exceeding 50 tracked hours.
- **Week-level:** % of all observed person-weeks exceeding 50 tracked hours.

Most productive hours of the day
Distribution of focus minutes by local hour (00:00-23:59).

Data quality and privacy. All figures are aggregated; no individual, team, or customer is identifiable in this report.