

THE AI BOOMERANG

Global companies cut jobs for AI in 2025. In 2026, a growing share are quietly hiring the same roles back.



of U.S. hiring managers who eliminated a role because of AI have already rehired for that same, or a similar, position.

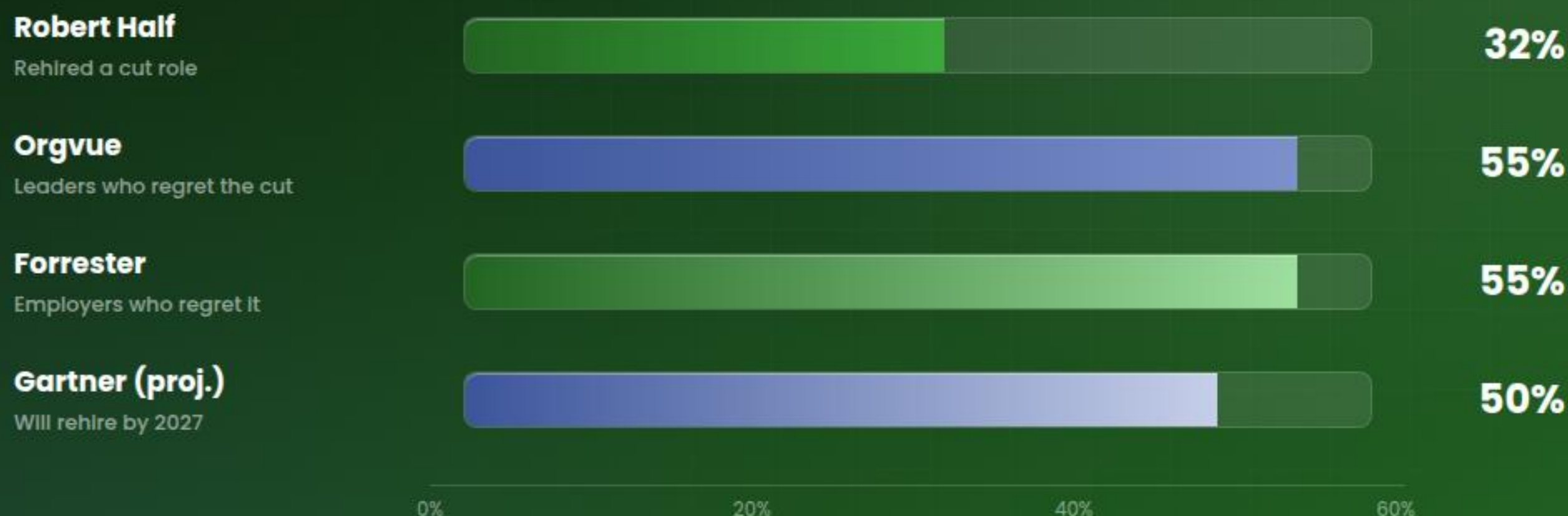
SOURCE: ROBERT HALF, 2026

Organizations don't fail because they adopt AI. They fail because they **misunderstand where AI creates value.**

EXHIBIT 01

The regret is **widespread** across every major study

Share of employers reporting AI-driven layoff regret or rehiring, by research source



SMALL INSIGHT

Across every major study, the conclusion is remarkably consistent:
organizations underestimated the role of human judgment.

EXHIBIT 02 · CASE STUDY: IBM

Where AI Reaches **Its Limit**

Share of HR service requests IBM's AI assistant could resolve without human input



● **94%**

Routine HR requests fully resolved by IBM's AI assistant with no human involvement

● **6%**

Required human judgment — cases needing ethics and context the model couldn't resolve alone

IBM is now **tripling entry-level hiring** across its U.S. business.

PROOF FROM THE FIELD

Three global brands that reversed course after AI hit its limits.



94%

IBM

Its HR assistant resolved 94% of routine requests — but not the judgment calls in the rest. IBM is now tripling entry-level hiring.



350+

FORD MOTOR

Rehired and promoted 350+ veteran engineers after automated quality checks missed defects only experience could catch.



40+

COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA

Restored 40+ customer-service jobs after AI voice bots drove call volumes and complaints higher, not lower.

TO CLOSE THE **GAP**

Organizations need:

01

Controlled AI pilots before any cuts

02

Protected "connective tissue" roles

03

Entry-level talent pipelines

04

Human-in-the-loop workflow design

05

True cost accounting on layoffs

06

Board-level AI governance

The organizations that will lead the AI era are not those that automate the most. They are those that combine artificial intelligence with **human judgment more effectively than their competitors.**