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Four markets, four speeds: what Pax8's Q3 Pulse tells US MSPs about moving first

Pax8's Q3 2026 Pulse compared SMBs in the US, UK, Germany and Sweden. US clients lead on adoption, building and urgency. Five charts on where the report shows US demand, and the work Pax8 names for it.

pax8

INDEPENDENT READING OF PAX8'S SMB AI PULSE REPORT Q3 2026

What Pax8 compared

Pax8's SMB AI Pulse Report for Q3 2026 is its first edition to look beyond the United States. It surveyed 1,150 SMB technology decision-makers at companies with 5 to 499 employees: 400 in the US, 350 in the UK and 200 each in Germany and Sweden. The US margin of error is about ±4.9 points; the UK ±5.2; Germany and Sweden ±6.9. Pax8's summary of the comparison: "The United States is setting the pace. It leads on adoption, urgency, and internal building."

For a US MSP, that is a useful starting point: the demand the report describes is already in your market. Related reading: our seven-chart overview of the same report, https://consultiply.ai/mip-resource-center/pax8-pulse-q3-smb-ai-governance-msp.

US clients are already using AI, and plan to keep moving

In the US, 86% of SMBs currently use AI, against 71% in Sweden, 61% in the UK and 58% in Germany. And 82% of US SMBs say they need to move on AI within six months, the highest of the four (Pax8 survey). US SMBs are also confident: 73% are very or extremely confident in growth, close to Sweden's 74% and well above the UK (45%) and Germany (48%).

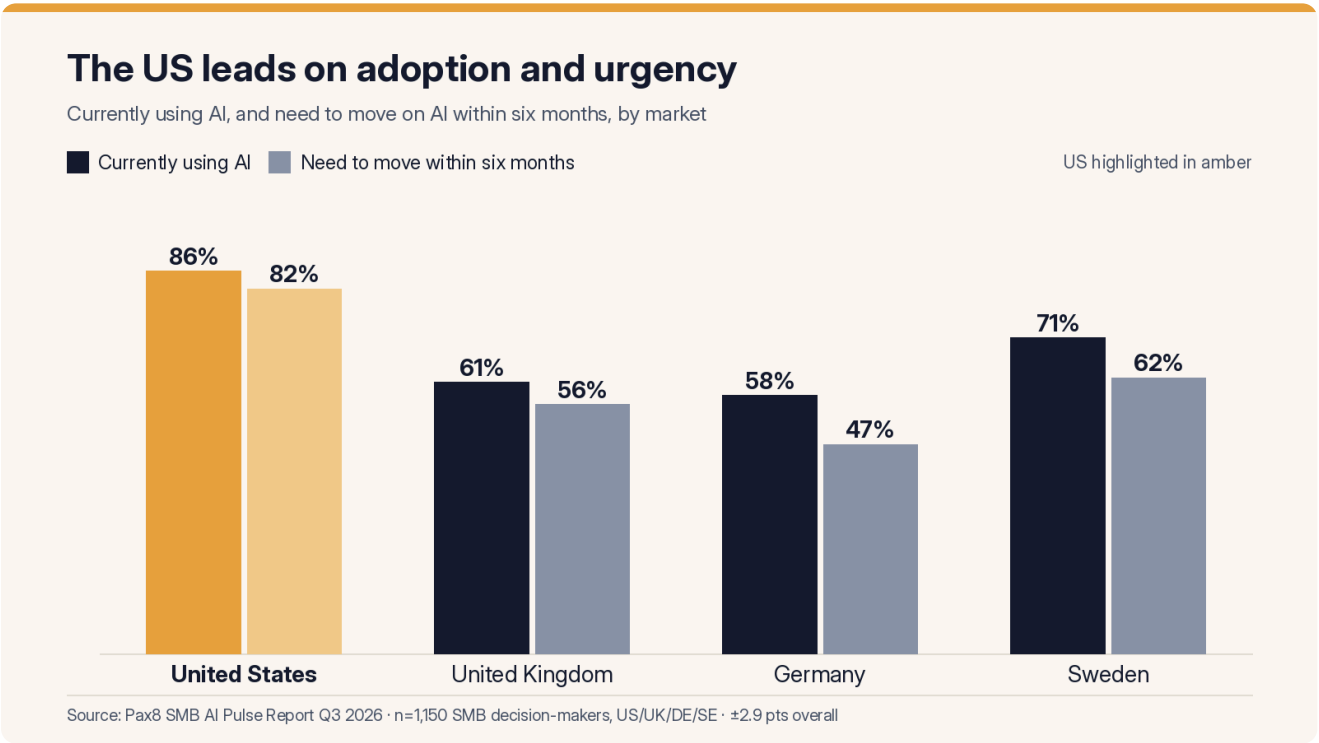


Chart: Consultiply illustration of Pax8's published figures.

US clients build the most, and formal review has room to grow

Among AI-engaged businesses, 81% in the US have built AI solutions now in use, the highest of the four. Formal, documented review of that built AI sits at 36%. Pax8 calls the 45-point difference the widest gap of any market. Sweden shows what a market building fast with more review looks like: 76% built, 45% formal review.

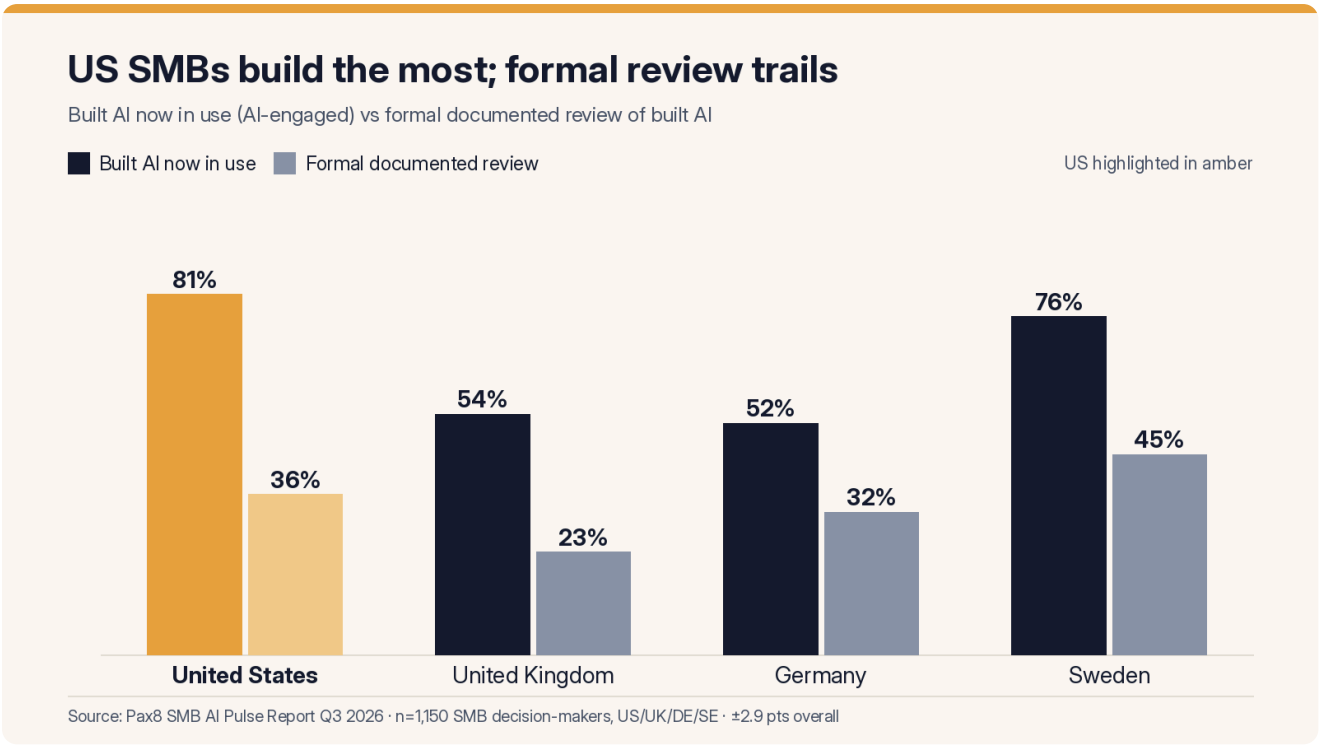


Chart: Consultiply illustration of Pax8's published figures.

Where shadow AI and bill surprises show up

In the US, 42% of AI-engaged businesses discovered shadow AI in the past six months, and 57% of AI purchasers got an unexpectedly high bill, 25% more than once (Pax8 survey). Sweden is higher on both (55% and 65%); the UK and Germany are lower. These are the two areas where Pax8 says US clients need help.

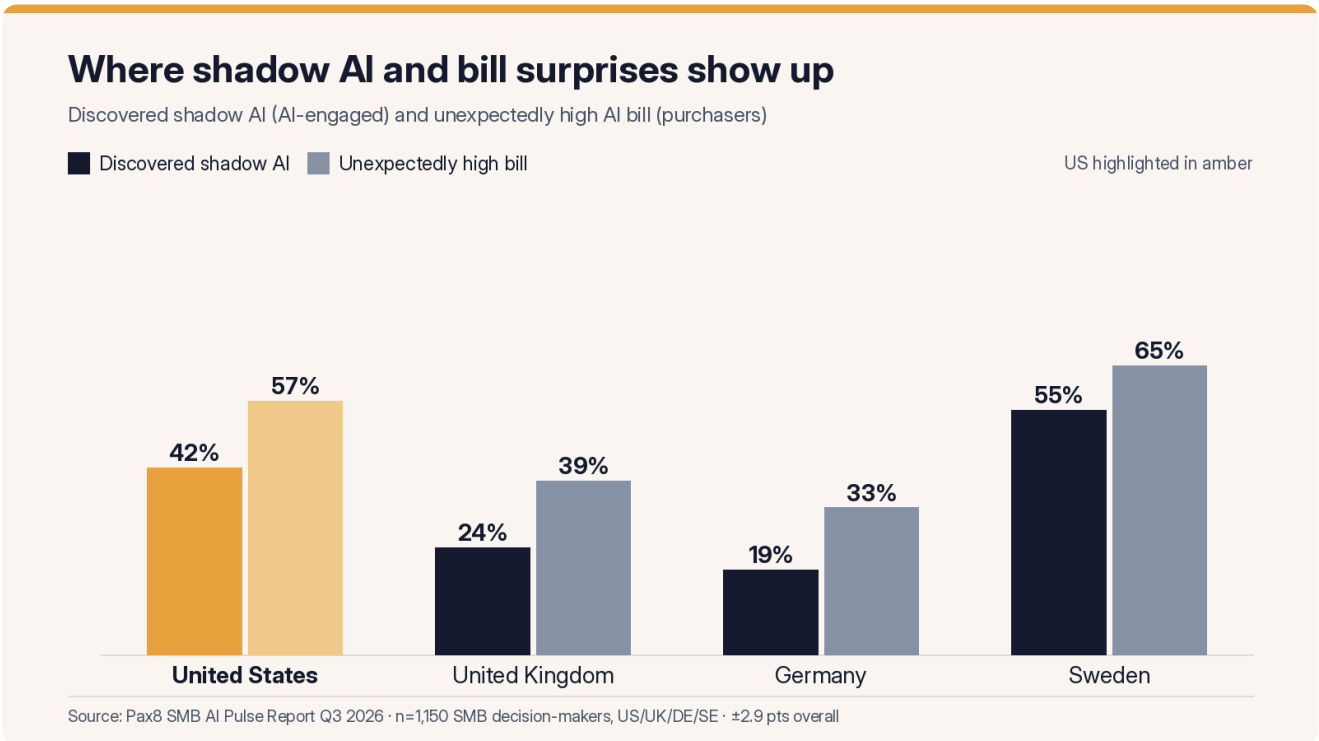


Chart: Consultiply illustration of Pax8's published figures.

The US is the only market leaning toward speed

Asked what worries them more, 38% of US SMBs said falling behind competitors and 32% said costly mistakes. The US is the only market where falling behind comes out on top. In the UK (23% vs 35%) and Germany (18% vs 30%) costly mistakes lead by double digits; Sweden is close to even (28% vs 31%).

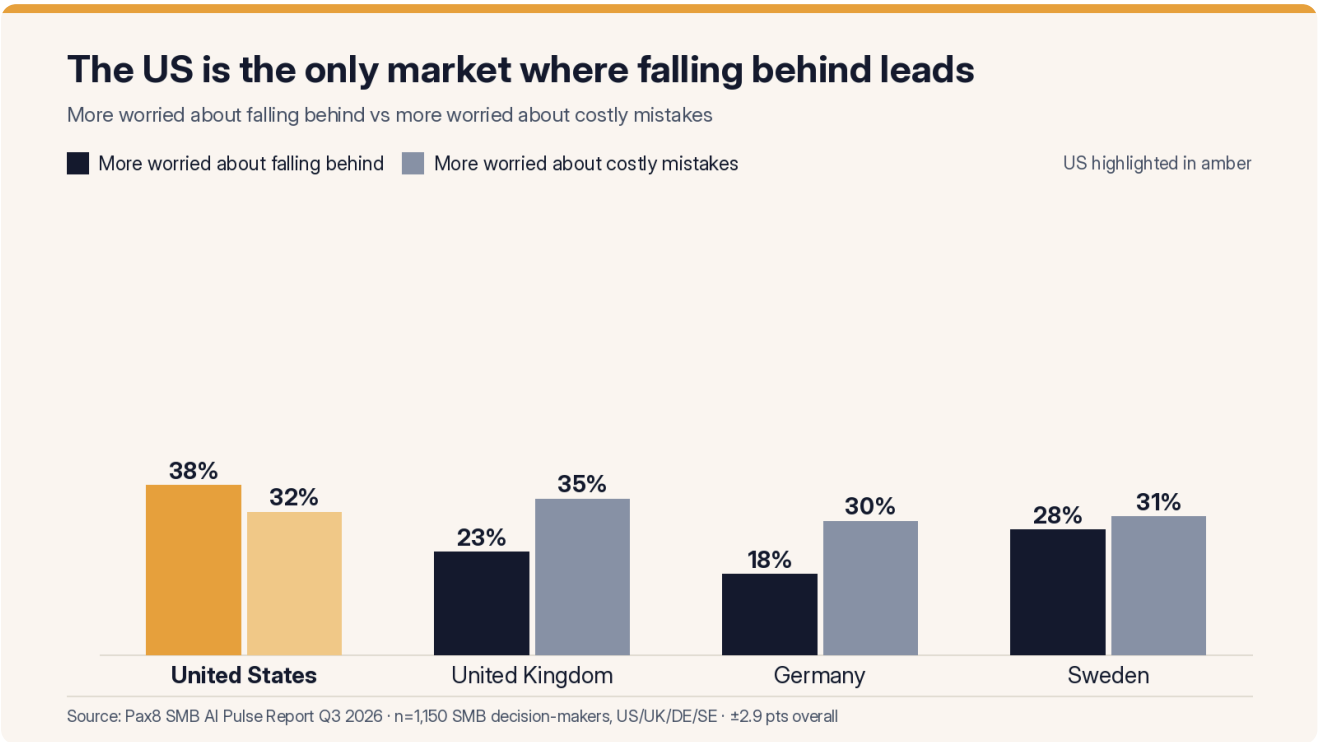


Chart: Consultiply illustration of Pax8's published figures.

Pax8 also finds that scale goes with confidence: in the US, 63% of businesses using AI extensively feel ahead of competitors, against 40% of those still experimenting. For an MSP, that means US clients are generally open to a conversation about doing more with AI, as long as it comes with structure.

US clients will pay for control

Eighty-one percent of US SMBs would pay at least 6% more for greater control over how their data is stored and used, the highest in the study (Sweden 79%, UK and Germany 58%). Security is the top barrier to expanding AI for 34% of US businesses.

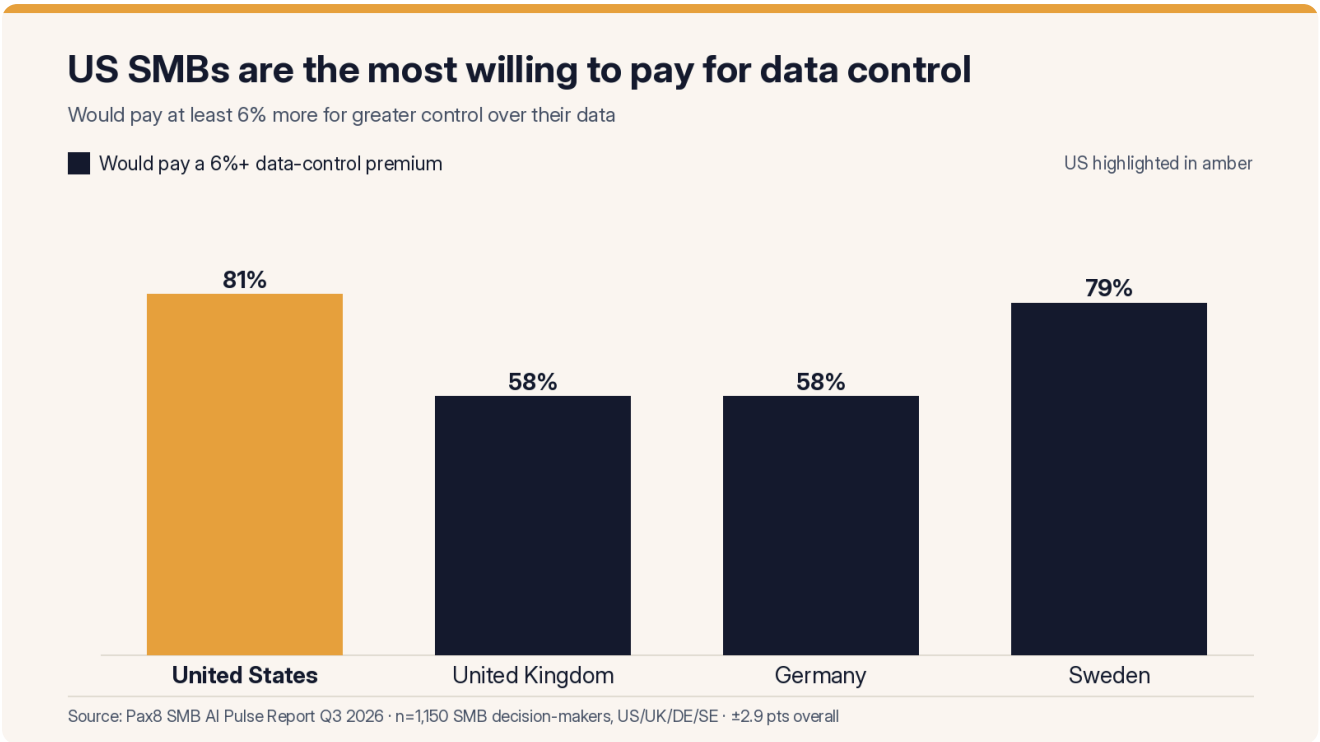


Chart: Consultiply illustration of Pax8's published figures.

What the report says the US work is

Pax8 is specific about each market. For the US: "the work is bringing order to broad deployment: governance, cost control, and a reduction in the review load." In the UK and Germany, it suggests leading with risk reduction and roadmaps; in Sweden, oversight that keeps pace with building.

Pax8 also notes that in the US and UK, businesses with hybrid support, a mix of internal and external help, are the most proactive in technology decisions and the most likely to have formal governance over what they build. Internal IT leads drive adoption most often (34% across markets), so in many US clients the MSP's counterpart is a technologist who has already started.

Here is how a US MSP could shape those three areas into its own offers (our framing of Pax8's list):

- **Governance for what's been built.** An inventory of built tools, workflows and agents, with an owner and a review step for each. The US gap between building (81%) and formal review (36%) is where the report shows this demand.
- **Cost control.** A monthly view of AI charges by pricing model. US buyers report usage-based, subscription and per-seat pricing in roughly equal measure (46%, 41%, 40%).
- **Less review load.** US decision-makers carry the heaviest review load in the study: 68% spend three or more hours a week checking AI output. Help with templates, prompts and checks for the work clients review most.

> Lesson box: the hybrid model fits the US counterpart. Co-manage what internal IT has started rather than proposing to replace it.

Read with care

- All figures are Pax8's survey results, self-reported, not measured usage or billing.
- Country samples are 200 to 400 with margins of ±4.9 to ±6.9 points; differences of a few points between countries may be within the margin. Pax8 says smaller subgroups are directional.
- Bases differ (all SMBs, AI-engaged, purchasers); we state each one.
- The report shows where demand appears. It does not measure what any MSP earns from it.
- Pax8 says results are not directly comparable with its earlier US-only editions.

An independent reading

This guide is Consultiply's independent reading of Pax8's published survey. It is not a recommendation to buy any product.

Credit: Charts are Consultiply's illustrations of Pax8's published four-market table.

Partner note: Consultiply is a Pax8 partner.

Sources

Pax8 SMB AI Pulse Report Q3 2026 (Pax8, Q3 2026; online survey of 1,150 SMB technology decision-makers, companies with 5 to 499 employees: US 400, UK 350, Germany 200, Sweden 200; margin of error about ±2.9 points overall, ±4.9 US). Retrieved Oct 15, 2026.

`Read the full guide: consultiply.ai/mip-resource-center/pax8-pulse-four-markets-us-msp`