

AI in Performance Reviews: How to Show Impact at Work - Built In

Source: gnews-performance-review | **Published:** March 23, 2026 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Practitioner Guide | **Geography:** United States

Source URL: <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMidkFVX3lxTE9lb0lrNlFRNTB5OU5sek1ZSk0yQWx>

Executive Summary

This article addresses the growing organizational practice of formally incorporating AI usage as a metric in employee performance reviews, examining both the employer rationale and the employee experience. The author argues that a significant disconnect exists between executive enthusiasm for AI and frontline employee adoption, with data suggesting that mandating AI through performance systems is the mechanism companies are using to close that gap. Key evidence includes statistics from a Betterworks study showing over 80 percent of executives require or encourage AI use while only 16 percent of employees utilize it regularly, and a Section AI consultancy study showing divergent time-savings perceptions between executives and non-management staff. The article also cites practices at Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Salesforce, Google, OpenAI, and Shopify as examples of formal AI performance measurement. The article concludes by offering employees practical guidance on how to respond to AI-related performance review questions, including tracking usage, quantifying impact, connecting AI activity to organizational goals, explaining process, and demonstrating accountability for AI outputs.

Key Insights

1. A substantial gap exists between executive and employee perceptions of AI utility: over 80 percent of executives require or encourage AI use, yet only 16 percent of employees use it regularly or understand their company's AI vision.
2. Major tech companies including Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Salesforce, Google, OpenAI, and Shopify have moved beyond encouraging AI use to formally measuring it in performance evaluations, treating it as a core competency.
3. Mandating AI usage metrics without clear definitions of quality risks rewarding volume of AI output over accuracy or judgment, a concern the article characterises through the concept of error-riddled 'workslop' appearing as high performance on surface metrics.

Practical Takeaways

- Employees navigating AI-related performance review questions are advised to quantify specific outcomes — time saved, output increased, business goals supported — rather than describing AI use in general terms.
- Organizations introducing AI as a formal performance metric are observed to achieve more consistent adoption when they pair measurement with explicit training, defined quality standards, and clear organizational AI goals prior to institutionalizing the metric.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article presents specific, named organizational examples (Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Salesforce, Google, OpenAI, Shopify) and cites two distinct studies to support the claimed executive-employee disconnect, lending some empirical grounding to its narrative. The inclusion of named practitioner voices (Jaime Aitken of Betterworks, Brandon Sammut of Zapier, Phil Santoro of Wilbur Labs) adds concrete organizational context. **Limitations:** The article is primarily structured as an employee advisory guide, which means its framing inherently favors the employer perspective on AI adoption. The Betterworks study is cited without methodology details, and Betterworks is a performance management software vendor with a commercial interest in the topic — this is not disclosed or acknowledged. The Section study is similarly cited without sample size, methodology, or publication date. Causal claims about AI driving productivity are not substantiated beyond executive self-report data. The article acknowledges the 'workslop' risk but does not deeply interrogate whether performance metrics tied to AI usage are valid or reliable measures of actual performance. The overall tone is prescriptive despite the article's nominal framing as analysis.

Organizational Practice

Multiple large technology companies — including Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Salesforce, Google, OpenAI, and Shopify — have formally incorporated AI usage as a measurable criterion in employee performance reviews. Practices range from requiring employees to quantify AI tool application in self-evaluations, to managers tracking AI-driven impact as a core expectation, to internal leaderboards ('tokenmaxxing' competitions) at OpenAI and Shopify where employees log AI usage competitively. Some organizations, such as Wilbur Labs, have added explicit AI usage questions to existing performance review templates.

Strategic Implications

The formalization of AI usage as a performance metric represents a shift from voluntary adoption to compliance-driven integration, with implications for how organizations define competency frameworks and calibrate performance standards. The documented gap between executive and employee perceptions of AI value suggests that performance systems alone may not resolve adoption barriers without accompanying changes to training, role design, and quality standards. The risk of surface-level AI usage metrics — measuring volume or frequency rather than quality or judgment — is identified as a potential validity concern for performance measurement design. The trend observed across multiple major employers may signal broader normalization of AI fluency as a baseline job requirement across knowledge work roles.

Validation Status: passed
