AI Impact Report

What's Changing in the Top 10 Professions

Where AI Becomes Your Co-Pilot — and Where It Becomes Your Competition

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Contents

1. Graphic Designers

~300,000 employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $58,910

Few professions have felt the AI revolution faster, or more viscerally, than graphic design. Text-to-image models that would have seemed like science fiction in 2020 are now standard tools in many designers' workflows — and a genuine existential question for those who haven't adapted.

By the Numbers

49%	**83%**	**34M**
believe manual image production will be obsolete in 5 years	of visual creatives have integrated AI into their process	AI images generated daily worldwide
CHILI publish, 400 professionals, UK/US/France/Germany, 2024	*Everypixel Journal, 2023*	*Everypixel Journal, 2023*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Concept development & ideation — AI generates rapid visual options, humans direct and refine	Stock illustration and basic icon creation (largely commoditized)
Client relationship management & translating ambiguous briefs	Simple social media graphics and templated marketing collateral
Brand strategy and identity work requiring deep cultural insight	Low-complexity image editing: background removal, color correction, resizing
Art direction for campaigns — setting aesthetic vision across teams	Entry-level retouching and photo manipulation tasks
Accessibility design and inclusive UX decisions	Repetitive layout work for standardized content formats
Managing revisions, client expectations, and creative feedback loops	First-pass mood boards and style references

⚠ Key Risk: Entry-level and production-focused roles face the most acute pressure. The Rodriguez Liberty University thesis (2024) found that junior designers producing commodity visual content are most vulnerable to displacement.

⊙ **BOTTOM LINE**

AI is an accelerant for designers who lead with strategy, storytelling, and cultural intelligence. It replaces designers who compete primarily on production speed or technical execution of routine tasks. The field is shrinking at the bottom and expanding at the top — make sure you know which tier you're in.

2. Therapists & Mental Health Professionals

~600,000 employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: ~$56,000–$99,000 (varies by specialty)

Mental health sits in a fascinating position in the AI debate: demand for care has never been higher, the therapist shortage is acute, and yet AI chatbots are flooding the space — with widely uneven quality, no regulatory oversight, and millions of vulnerable users relying on them.

By the Numbers

93%	**<60%**	**1 in 8**
appropriate response rate — licensed therapists in clinical scenarios	appropriate response rate — AI therapy chatbots in same scenarios	Americans ages 12–21 use AI chatbots for mental health advice
Moore et al. 2025, Stanford/CMU/Minnesota/UT Austin	*Moore et al. 2025*	*RAND, 2025*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Session documentation and clinical note generation (saves 30–60 min per therapist per day)	Basic psychoeducation delivery (explaining CBT techniques, coping strategies)
Treatment plan drafting and progress tracking	Symptom screening and intake questionnaires
Psychoeducational materials creation customized to each client	Crisis line triage at the first-contact level (with significant safety concerns)
Between-session support via structured apps (as supplements, not replacements)	Mild-to-moderate anxiety/depression support apps — encroaching on low-acuity caseloads
Expanding access to care in underserved or rural communities via lower-cost AI triage	Journaling prompts and mood tracking (functions once provided in session)
Training simulations for new clinicians using AI role-play patients	

⚠ Critical gap: As of 2026, no AI mental health tool has received FDA approval for clinical diagnosis. AI chatbots have no legal accountability for clinical outcomes, cannot report child abuse, and routinely fail at risk assessment. Clients may not know the difference until something goes wrong.

33% of adults are now comfortable consulting an AI chatbot instead of a human therapist for certain issues (YouGov, 2024). The question isn't whether AI is competing for clients — it's whether it can meet the standard of care.

⊙ BOTTOM LINE

The therapeutic relationship — attunement, rupture and repair, the experience of being truly witnessed by another human — cannot be replicated by AI. But AI is eroding the low-acuity end of the market and threatens to reach clients before qualified therapists do. Clinicians who build deep specialization, strong referral networks, and genuine human presence will be the ones who thrive.

3. Communications Executives

~47,500 PR & Communications Managers | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $130,480

Communications executives face a double-edged disruption: AI is both taking over much of what their teams produce and undermining the credibility of content in the marketplace. The profession that once controlled the narrative now has to fight AI-generated noise to earn audience trust.

By the Numbers

65%	**73%**	**42%**
of consumers can identify AI-generated content	of those consumers trust it less	of CEOs rank strategic thinking as most valuable trait in comms leaders
Morning Consult, 2024	*Morning Consult, 2024*	*HarrisX-Ragan, 400 CEOs & comms leaders, Aug–Oct 2025*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Strategic counsel and executive communications coaching	First-draft press releases, talking points, and boilerplate messaging
Crisis communications decision-making in real-time	Social media content calendars and routine posts
Stakeholder relationship management and trust-building	Internal newsletter writing and routine employee updates
Organizational narrative development rooted in culture and values	Media monitoring and sentiment analysis (now largely automated)
Media relations strategy — building and maintaining journalist relationships	Report generation and metrics dashboards
Change communications and navigating complex internal dynamics	Basic SEO content production

⚠ The paradox: Some senior leaders now trust custom AI agents more than their communications teams for certain tasks (HarrisX-Ragan, 2025). At the same time, the same leaders say they value strategic thinking, creative problem-solving, and composure under pressure above all else in their comms partners. The comms executive role is contracting at the execution level and demanding more strategic sophistication than ever at the top.

🎯 BOTTOM LINE

Comms executives who position themselves as strategic advisors and reputation architects will be indispensable. Those whose primary value is content production — drafting, editing, scheduling — are already competing with tools that cost a fraction of a salary. The shift is from messaging to meaning-making.

4. Software Engineers

~1.86 million employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $130,160

Software engineers are the ones building the AI tools disrupting everyone else — and they are not immune to the disruption themselves. Coding assistants have become mainstream, productivity research is yielding nuanced results, and entry-level hiring is already showing contraction.

By the Numbers

55.8%	**49%**	**~200K**
faster task completion with GitHub Copilot in controlled experiment	of developers use AI coding tools in their daily workflow	new software engineering job openings projected annually, 2024–2034
Peng, Kalliamvakou, Cihon & Demirer, Microsoft Research / arXiv 2023	*Stack Overflow Developer Survey, 49,000+ respondents, 2025*	*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024*

Important nuance: A Microsoft 3-week RCT (2025) found no statistically significant changes in telemetry metrics (code committed, PR activity) during short-term Copilot use, with researchers noting approximately 11 weeks of daily use is needed before measurable gains compound. Productivity research is promising but not uniform across all contexts.

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
System architecture and high-level technical design decisions	Boilerplate code generation and routine CRUD operations
Cross-functional problem-solving and translating business needs into technical solutions	Documentation writing and README generation
Code review for logic, security, and architectural soundness (AI catches syntax, not judgment)	Basic unit test generation and test coverage scaffolding
Team leadership, mentorship, and engineering culture development	Code refactoring and style standardization
Debugging complex multi-system failures requiring contextual knowledge	Entry-level support tickets and straightforward bug fixes
Innovation in novel domains where training data doesn't yet exist	Translating specifications into standard implementations

⚠ The entry-level squeeze is real. Data from The Atlantic and Harvard economist David Deming confirms that AI is disproportionately capable at tasks typically assigned to junior engineers: synthesizing documents,

drafting summaries, producing routine code. Firms are already experimenting with smaller associate cohorts backed by AI tooling.

> 🎯 **BOTTOM LINE**
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> Software engineering will not disappear — but the field is restructuring around a smaller number of higher-skilled engineers who know how to direct, validate, and extend AI output. The 10x engineer myth has a new edge: it's now about being the human layer of judgment on top of AI-generated code.

5. Accountants & Auditors

~1.43 million employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $80,760

Accounting has the highest verified AI adoption rate of any profession in this report — 98%. This is not hype; it's a profession in the midst of a structural reinvention, shedding routine compliance work and racing to establish itself as a strategic advisory discipline before AI commoditizes its traditional core.

By the Numbers

98%	9% → 41%	7.5 days
of U.S. accountants have used AI to assist clients in the past year	**jump in firm-wide AI implementation in a single year**	**faster monthly close for accountants using AI**
Intuit QuickBooks Accountant Technology Survey, 700 U.S. accountants, 2024	*Wolters Kluwer Future Ready Accountant Report, 2,700+ professionals worldwide, 2025*	*Stanford GSB study, 2025*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Strategic business advisory and CFO-level planning conversations	Data entry and transaction categorization (largely automated)
Complex tax strategy for high-net-worth individuals and multi-entity structures	Bank reconciliations and routine accounts payable/receivable processing
Audit judgment calls on materiality, going-concern, and risk assessment	Standard tax return preparation for straightforward situations
Forensic accounting and fraud detection requiring investigative interpretation	Boilerplate financial report generation
Client relationship management — being the trusted advisor, not just the compliance officer	Junior bookkeeping (BLS projects 5% decline for bookkeepers through 2034)
Exception handling when AI surfaces discrepancies it cannot resolve	Payroll processing and basic compliance reporting

⚠ The junior pipeline problem: Stanford research (2025) found that hiring for AI-impacted entry-level accounting roles fell 16% over two years. The AICPA launched its Profession Ready Initiative in February 2026 specifically to address what early-career skills look like in an AI-integrated profession. The pathway from entry-level to experienced professional is being disrupted before many graduates can complete it.

🎯 BOTTOM LINE

The accountant who survives and thrives in the AI era is the one who has made the mental shift from 'keeper of the books' to 'strategic partner.' The compliance work that once justified high billing rates is being automated. The advice, the judgment, the relationship — that's what firms will pay for.

6. Teachers & Educators

~3.8 million K–12 teachers in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $62,720–$65,220

Teaching is experiencing one of the most profound and disorienting AI transitions of any profession — precisely because its raw material is human development. AI can automate the administrative burden that crushes teachers. It cannot replace the relational heart of what a great teacher does.

By the Numbers

60%	**18%**	**~10 hrs**
of K–12 public school teachers used AI tools in 2024–2025 school year	up from only 18% who reported using AI in Fall 2023	per week teachers spend on planning and administrative tasks
Gallup / Walton Family Foundation, March–April 2025	*Gallup / Walton Family Foundation, 2023–2025*	*RAND / NCES estimate*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Relationship-building and emotional attunement with students	Lesson plan generation and unit plan drafting
Culturally responsive teaching and adapting content to student identity	Grading essays and providing feedback on drafts (with teacher review)
Mentorship, classroom community development, and social-emotional learning	Generating quiz questions and assessment rubrics
Recognizing and responding to learning differences and behavioral needs in real time	Administrative reporting, IEP documentation scaffolding
Curriculum design with pedagogical intentionality and local context	Differentiated material creation for multiple learning levels simultaneously
Parent and family communication requiring trust and nuance	Routine parent email templates and meeting summaries

71% of teachers and 65% of students view AI assistants as essential tools in education (World Economic Forum, 2025). The shift is happening faster than policy, training, and ethical frameworks can keep up — raising serious questions about academic integrity, equity of access, and what it means to learn.

⌖ **BOTTOM LINE**

A teacher's irreplaceable value lies in the relationship — the student who stayed after class, the moment a struggling kid finally got it, the community that forms in a well-run classroom. AI can reclaim the 10 hours a week lost to paperwork. Whether schools use that reclaimed time to deepen the human work of teaching or to cut teacher headcount will define the profession's future.

7. Research Scientists

~700,000+ across life, physical, and computer sciences | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $95,000–$140,000+

Research science is being transformed at a pace that few disciplines can match. The 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry went to AlphaFold and its creators — a clear signal that AI is not just a research tool but a co-discoverer. The implications for what scientists do, and how they train, are still unfolding.

By the Numbers

60%	**80–90%**	**45%**
compression in research timelines in some scientific domains using AI	success rate for AI-discovered drug candidates vs. 40–65% traditional	of researcher time on grant writing and administrative tasks (automatable)
Multiple domain studies, 2024–2025	*Pharmaceutical AI pipeline research, 2024*	*Research productivity analysis, 2024*

The 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry — awarded to Demis Hassabis, John Jumper, and David Baker for AI-driven protein structure prediction — marks a paradigm shift. AlphaFold solved a 50-year problem in structural biology. This is not a tool assisting scientists; this is AI doing science.

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Hypothesis generation at the frontier of unknown domains	Literature review and systematic evidence synthesis
Interpreting anomalous results and designing follow-up experiments	Routine data analysis, statistical modeling, and visualization
Interdisciplinary synthesis — connecting findings across fields	Lab report writing and methods section generation
Ethical oversight of research design and participant safety	Grant application boilerplate and budget justification sections
Peer review and scientific judgment on methodological rigor	Standard protein structure prediction (largely solved by AlphaFold)
Communicating findings to non-specialist audiences and policymakers	Repetitive experimental iterations in high-throughput drug discovery

⚠ The publish-or-perish ecosystem is not immune. AI-generated literature is flooding preprint servers and journals, making it harder to identify genuine contributions. Scientists who build reputations for rigorous judgment and genuine novelty will be more valuable than ever — but the signal-to-noise problem is real.

🎯 **BOTTOM LINE**

Research science is bifurcating: AI supercharges the scientists who can direct it toward meaningful questions, and marginalizes those whose primary contribution is executing well-defined protocols. The field will produce fewer technical specialists and more integrative, question-asking, meaning-making scientists.

8. Registered Nurses

~3.3 million employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $86,070

Registered nurses stand at a complicated intersection: severe staffing shortages on one side, AI clinical tools with a troubling track record on the other. The profession's irreplaceable physical, relational, and ethical dimensions are clear. What's less clear is how AI deployment by healthcare systems will reshape nurses' working conditions and autonomy.

By the Numbers

6%	**132 min**	**~90%**
BLS projected employment growth, 2024–2034 (faster than average)	**spent on EHR documentation per 12-hour shift (18% of shift)**	**error rate cited in UnitedHealthcare prior authorization AI lawsuit (2023)**
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024	*Multiple EHR workflow studies, 2024*	*Class action lawsuit filings, 2023; AI override of physician recommendations*

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Patient assessment, clinical observation, and physical examination	EHR documentation and clinical note generation (significant time savings potential)
Emotional support, comfort care, and presence during vulnerable moments	Routine vital sign monitoring and alert generation (already partially automated)
Complex medication management requiring real-time patient context	Shift-change handoff summaries and report generation
Family communication and navigating end-of-life conversations	Insurance pre-authorization administrative tasks
Rapid clinical judgment when patients deteriorate unexpectedly	Scheduling and resource allocation optimization
Advocacy for patients within complex healthcare systems	Educational material creation for patient discharge instructions

⚠ The National Nurses United has raised formal concerns that AI clinical decision tools frequently contradict clinical nursing judgment and create patient safety risks. The UnitedHealthcare prior authorization AI controversy — where an algorithm overrode physician recommendations at a ~90% rate, leading to a class action lawsuit — signals that AI in healthcare requires careful human oversight, not autonomous deployment.

⊙ BOTTOM LINE

Nursing is one of the most protected professions in this analysis — the bedside presence, the hands-on assessment, the human witness to suffering cannot be automated. The real risk is not AI replacing nurses but healthcare systems using AI as an excuse to reduce nurse-to-patient ratios or override clinical judgment for cost savings. The stakes for patients are too high for nurses not to be vocal advocates in this space.

9. General & Operations Managers

~3.3 million employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $98,100

General and operations managers sit in a uniquely paradoxical position: they are among the heaviest AI adopters in any profession, and they are also among those most worried about displacement. The coordination, planning, and communication functions that define management are exactly where AI is making rapid advances.

By the Numbers

33%	**43%**	**−10%**
of managers use AI regularly vs. 16% of individual contributors	of managers worry about job loss due to AI vs. 36% of frontline employees	drop in project management activity for developers using GitHub Copilot
Boston Consulting Group, 2025	*Boston Consulting Group, 2025*	*HBS study of 50,032 developers*

The HBS finding is telling: when AI tools handle code generation, developers spend less time in meetings and coordination activities — and more time in direct work. If this pattern scales, some management layer becomes structurally redundant. Middle managers coordinating information flow between teams are particularly exposed.

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Strategic planning and setting organizational direction in ambiguous environments	Status reporting and progress tracking (dashboards replace manual updates)
Building and sustaining high-performance team culture	Routine performance data analysis and metric review
Stakeholder management and navigating organizational politics	Scheduling, meeting coordination, and calendar management
Complex change management and organizational transformation	Information synthesis and briefing preparation
Judgment calls in novel, high-stakes situations with incomplete information	Middle-management coordination layers between strategic and operational teams
Coaching, developing, and retaining talent	Routine operational decision-making within defined parameters

⚠ The irony is hard to miss: managers are among the most anxious about AI displacement and also the most likely to use AI themselves. The managers who survive will be those who make the explicit case for their

irreplaceable human value — not just the ones who automate their own job faster than their employers can notice.

> **⌖ BOTTOM LINE**
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> Management is not just coordination — it's the interpretation of ambiguity, the navigation of competing interests, and the development of people. AI can surface data and generate options. It cannot hold a difficult conversation with a struggling direct report, read the room in a tense negotiation, or decide which value to sacrifice when two organizational priorities collide. That's the work that earns a seat at the table.

10. Lawyers

~900,000 employed in the U.S. | BLS May 2024 | Median wage: $151,160

Law is one of the most watched professions in the AI debate — and one of the most misunderstood. Headlines alternate between 'AI passed the bar exam' and 'AI is hallucinating case citations in federal court filings.' Both are true. The legal profession is transforming rapidly, and the changes are not uniformly distributed.

By the Numbers

30%	**37%**	**93.4%**
of law firms now use AI tools — nearly tripled from 11% in 2023	best AI model score on the hardest legal problems (Professional Reasoning Benchmark)	of 2024 law graduates employed within 10 months — highest rate on record
ABA Legal Technology Survey Report, 512 attorneys, 2024	*Scale AI, Nov 2024*	*National Association for Law Placement, 2025*

The Scale AI benchmark finding is significant: even the best-performing frontier models met fewer than 4 in 10 criteria on the most difficult legal tasks. AI frequently makes inaccurate legal judgments, and when it reaches correct conclusions, it often does so through incomplete or opaque reasoning. Courts are already issuing sanctions for AI-hallucinated citations in filed briefs.

The Amplify vs. Replace Split

☑ AI AMPLIFIES	⚠ AI REPLACES / DISPLACES
Legal strategy, case theory development, and courtroom advocacy	Legal research and case law surfacing (42% of lawyers already using AI for this)
Client counseling on nuanced risk — judgment calls in gray areas of law	Contract review and first-pass identification of issues (35.6% using contract AI)
Negotiation and settlement mediation requiring emotional intelligence	Document drafting — standard agreements, letters, filings
Novel legal questions without clear precedent (where AI training data doesn't help)	Discovery review and document classification in large-scale litigation
Client trust relationships in high-stakes personal matters (family law, criminal defense)	Billing drafting, time entry descriptions, and administrative correspondence
Ethical decision-making and professional responsibility oversight	Paralegal and junior associate tasks: summarizing documents, due diligence checklists

⚠️ The junior lawyer pipeline faces the same structural pressure as accounting and engineering. Harvard economist David Deming notes AI is best suited to tasks typically assigned to junior professionals — document synthesis, drafting summaries, routine filings. Law firms are already experimenting with smaller associate cohorts. BLS projects only 4% growth for lawyers 2024–2034, with a specific note that 'routine legal work may be automated or outsourced to low-cost legal providers.'

Notably, paralegals and legal assistants face an even starker outlook — BLS projects 'little or no change' in paralegal employment through 2034, a significant downgrade from prior projections.

🎯 **BOTTOM LINE**

The lawyers who will be irreplaceable are those whose value lives in judgment, advocacy, and trust — the ones who can navigate a client through the worst moments of their lives or the highest-stakes business decisions of their careers. The lawyers most at risk are those competing primarily on research depth and document production speed. AI will do both faster and cheaper. The question is whether law firms will use that efficiency to serve clients better or to thin their associate ranks. The answer will probably be: both.

Cross-Profession Synthesis

Across all 10 professions, three patterns hold regardless of industry:

PATTERN	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
AI replaces tasks, not professions — yet	Every profession here retains a core that AI cannot reach. But the tasks AI is absorbing were often the entry points, the training grounds, the rungs on the ladder. The ladder is missing steps now.
Junior and mid-level roles are disproportionately at risk	Entry-level hiring is contracting in law, accounting, software engineering, and graphic design. If you're building a career, the old pathway — learn the basics, work your way up — is being disrupted at the foundation.
The human premium is real, but you have to earn it	Strategic thinking, judgment under uncertainty, trust, presence, relational depth — these are consistently what clients and employers say they value. But saying you offer them is not enough. You have to build a track record that demonstrates them.
Resistance costs more than adaptation	The professionals facing the worst outcomes are not those whose roles AI is targeting — it's those who are pretending AI isn't relevant to them. The ones who thrive are using AI tools to do more, serve better, and compete at a higher level.

The question is never 'will AI affect my profession?' It already has. The question is: what specifically are you becoming that AI cannot replicate — and how are you building the evidence for that claim?