

The 3 Numbers Behind the AI Boom

Companies aren't investing in AI because of the hype. **It's math.** Here are the receipts.

0.4%

NUMBER 1

How fast the US workforce is growing this decade – **basically standing still** (vs 2.6%/yr in the 1970s). BLS actuals and projections both say 0.4%/yr through 2032. A record 4.18M Americans turned 65 in 2025 – **~11,400 every day** – and the "Peak 65 zone" runs through 2027. This isn't a cycle; it doesn't bounce back.

1/2

NUMBER 2

Share of all US output growth from 1950–2015 that came from simply **adding workers** (Bain). Growth = workers × output per worker – there is no third ingredient. With workers flat, **output per worker has to carry everything**. That lever has a name: AI.

\$8T

NUMBER 3

Bain's estimate of incremental US automation investment needed in the 2020s – **≈40% of US GDP** at the time of the report. That's not a "cool demo" budget. It's a **"we can't staff the next decade"** budget.

THE RECEIPT – PREDICTED FEB 2018, BEFORE CHATGPT EXISTED

2018: US labor-force growth slows to 0.4%/yr



✓ BLS actuals & projections: 0.4%

2018: companies will struggle to find workers



✓ 7.6M open jobs (May 2026)

2018: a massive automation investment wave



✓ today's AI capex boom

THIS WEEK'S EXERCISE

ASK THE BETTER QUESTION

Not *"Is AI good enough yet?"* but **"What does my labor supply look like in 5 years?"**

List the **3 roles you'd struggle most to re-hire tomorrow**. That list – not the demo reel – is where AI belongs first in your business. Start where **you** fit in the workflow: a tool you drive today beats an unsupervised system you're not ready for.

CHECK THE SOURCES YOURSELF

Bain, "Labor 2030" (Feb 2018): bain.com/insights/labor-2030

BLS labor-force projections 2023–33: bls.gov/opub/mlr/2024/projections-overview

BLS JOLTS (job openings): bls.gov/news.release/jolts Peak 65 (Alliance for Lifetime Income): prnewswire.com · Peak 65

Indeed Hiring Lab, "The Great Mismatch" (May 2026): hiringlab.org · [the-great-mismatch](https://the-great-mismatch.com)

Abhishek Agarwal · 18+ yrs across tech & consulting · Meta / eBay / Twitter · more math, less hype:
youtube.com/@TheAbhishekAgarwal

Want this run on your business? Book an AI Discovery Session: tinyurl.com/abhi-ai-session