

IT Trends Report  2022

Getting IT Right: Managing Hybrid IT Complexity

Global Key Findings and Survey Overview

June 2022



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Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the pace of digital transformation across organizations globally. Moving to the cloud could no longer be phased luxuriously for years in the future. It happened overnight, as workers everywhere went remote and were no longer within the office's four walls. Tech professionals had to adapt their networks and infrastructure to position their companies for success by migrating systems and workloads to the cloud, adopting new, cloud-hosted services, and developing cloud-native applications.

The move to the cloud, proliferation of hybrid office environments with distributed workforces, and the accelerated adoption of new technologies have driven a rise in IT complexity. Running workloads and applications across both cloud and on-premises infrastructure is challenging, and many organizations are increasingly experiencing—and ultimately hindered by—these pain points. In short, the job of IT teams has become much harder thanks to the new realities of hybrid IT.

The SolarWinds *IT Trends Report 2022—Getting IT Right: Managing Hybrid IT Complexity* explores how the burden of more complex IT management has impacted the ability of the IT team to support the business and its bottom line. In other words, does the day-to-day work of IT detract from the function and impact of IT?

This year's report provides insight into tech professionals' confidence in managing modern IT environments with the tools and skills at their disposal, the resources their organizations plan to invest in both management solutions and training in the future, and the IT team's ability to promptly deliver meaningful projects for the business and its employees.

As the results show, IT professionals have a concerning lack of confidence in their ability to manage today's hybrid IT environments. Even more worrisome, most IT pros believe ROI has been impacted due to increasing IT complexity. Successful digital transformation is only within reach of every organization with the right amount of training, preparation, and investment.

Key Findings
Rising Complexity

The continued expansion of hybrid IT is driving increased levels of IT management complexity, but tech pros feel a lack of confidence in how to best manage it.

A bit under a third (29%) responded the acceleration of hybrid IT has increased the complexity of their organization’s IT management.

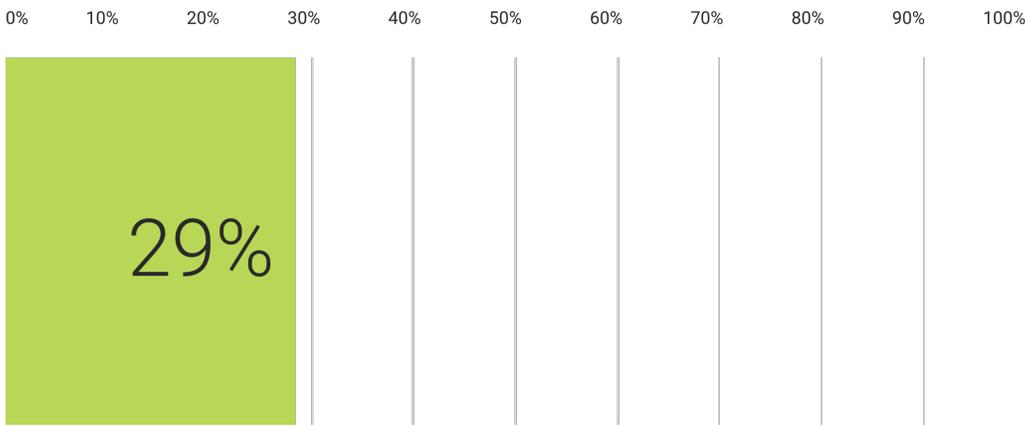


Figure 1: Increasing complexity

These tech pros reported the following top drivers of increased complexity:

- New tools and/or technologies (42%).
- Increased technology requirements from multiple departments (39%).
- Fragmentation between legacy technologies and new technologies (36%).
- Lack of proper tools to manage complexity (32%).

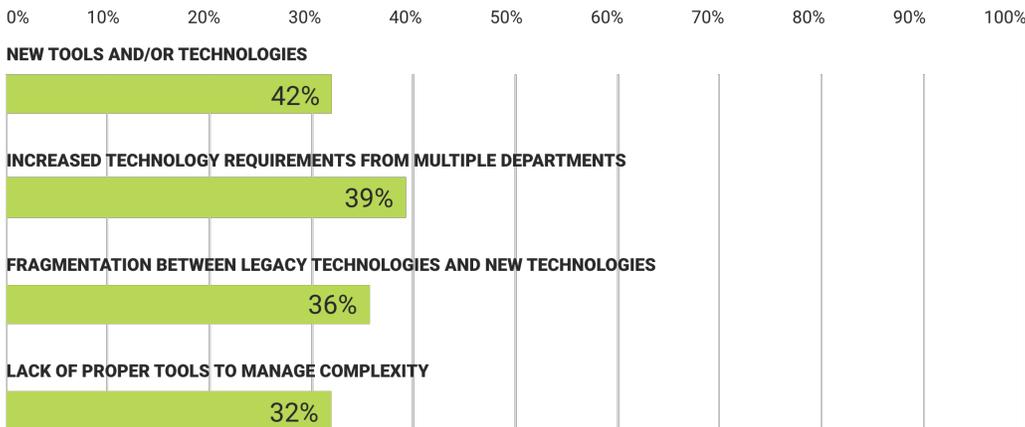


Figure 2: Top drivers of increased complexity

Key Findings: Rising Complexity

Interestingly, 38% of enterprise tech pro respondents indicated fragmentation between legacy technologies and new technologies was the leading cause for increased complexity, compared to 29% of their small business-sized counterparts.

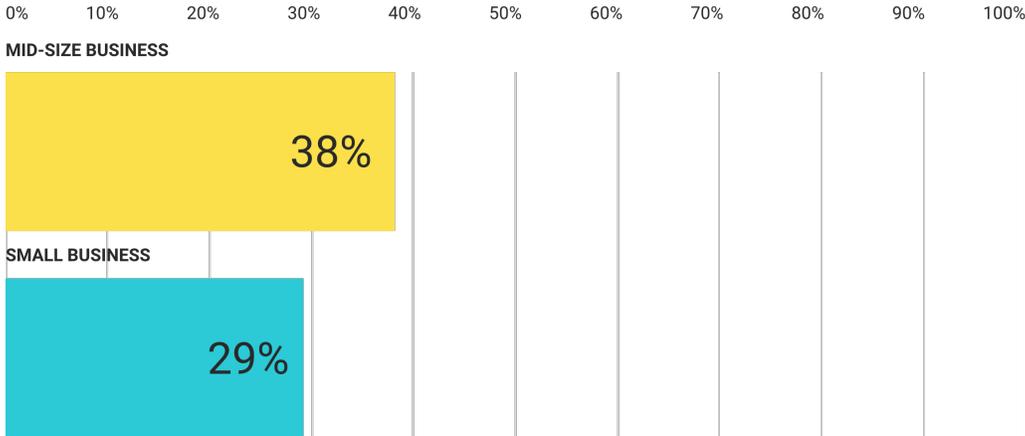


Figure 3: Leading causes of complexity

When asked about how confident tech pros were in their organization’s ability to manage IT complexity:

- Only 16% of tech pro respondents said they felt extremely confident.
- More than a third of respondents (34%) admitted they weren’t fully equipped to manage complexity and felt only somewhat confident.
- Under half of tech pro respondents (41%) were confident their organization is equipped to manage IT complexity adequately.
- An additional 6% weren’t confident at all.

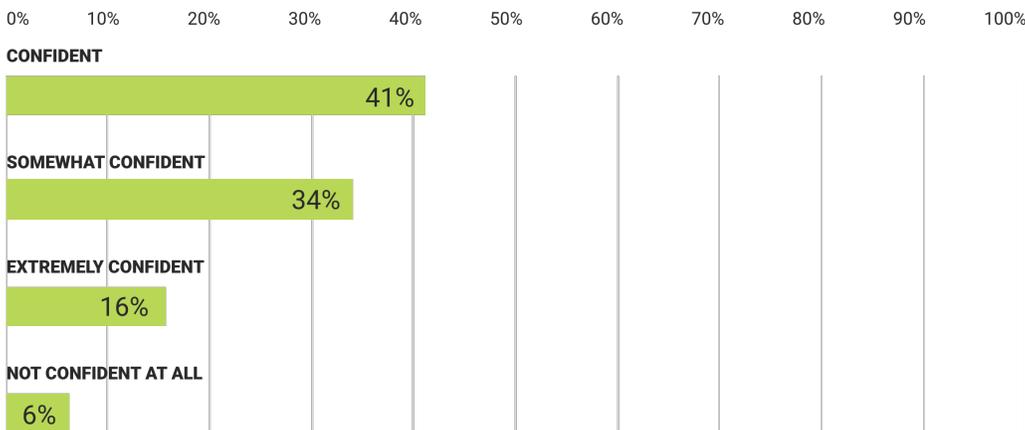


Figure 4: Confidence in ability to manage IT complexity

Key Findings: Rising Complexity

When tech pros' level of confidence is considered by business size, confidence levels remain consistent across small, mid-size, and enterprise tech pro respondents.

- Small business tech pros confident in managing IT complexity: 41%.
- Mid-size business tech pros confident in managing IT complexity: 43%.
- Enterprise tech pros confident in managing IT complexity: 38%.

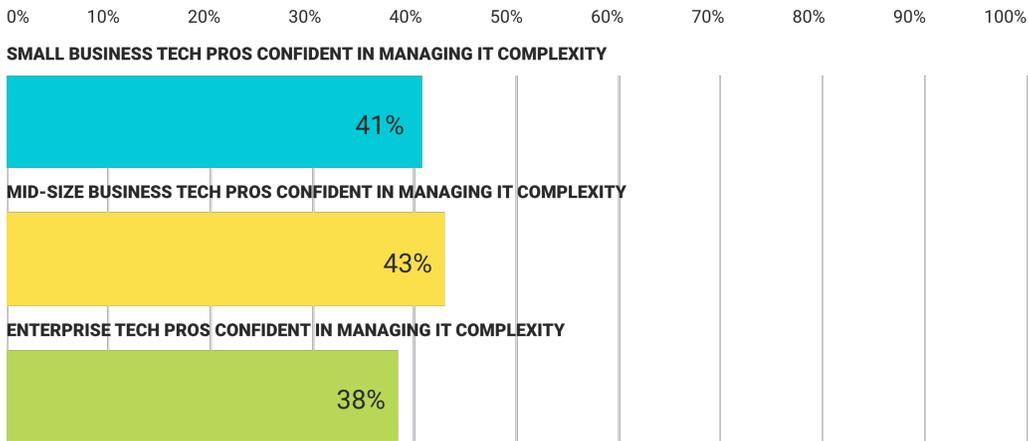


Figure 5: Confidence levels by business size



Key Findings
Visibility Matters

A particular area of concern among respondents is visibility. With the increased shift to complex, hybrid IT environments, technology professionals say they have limited visibility into their networks, apps, and infrastructure.

When asked about current IT monitoring/management strategies, 54% of respondents stated they only have visibility into about half or less of their apps and infrastructure.

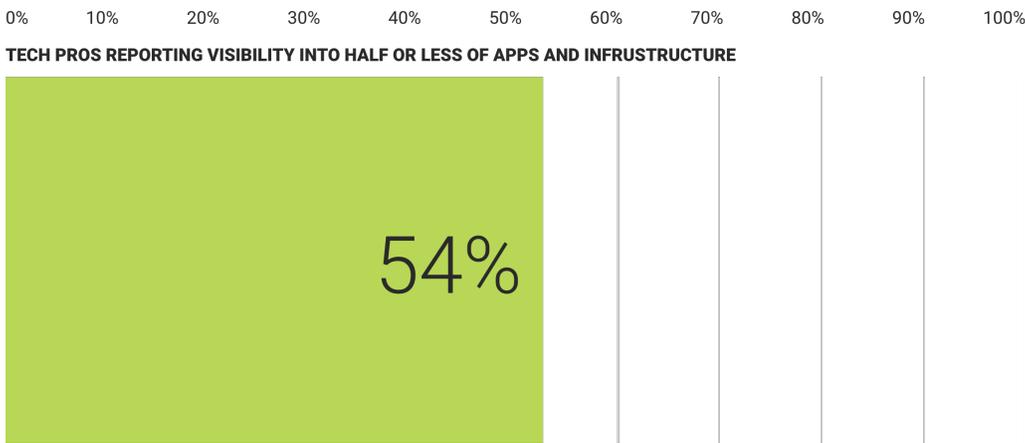


Figure 6: Visibility into apps and infrastructure

By business size, 46% of small business tech pro respondents indicated their organization provides visibility into about half of their apps and infrastructure compared to 39% of their mid-size and 38% of their enterprise size counterparts.

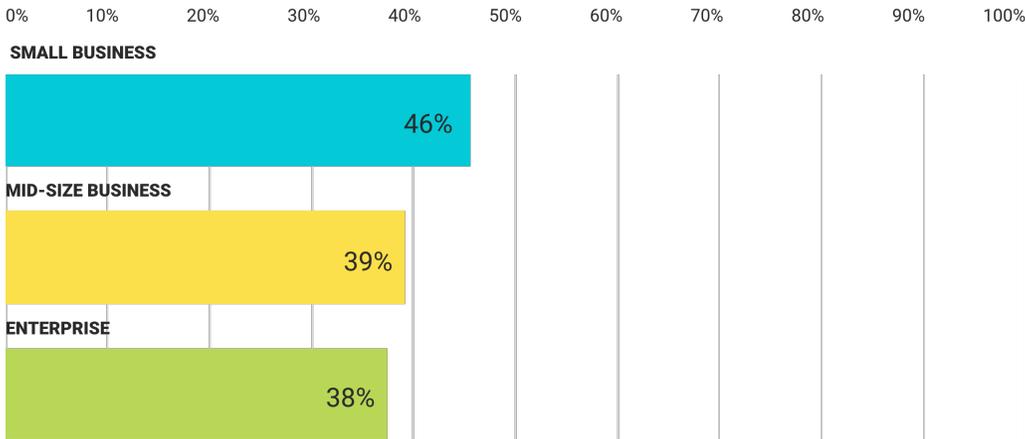


Figure 7: Tech pros indicating their organization provides visibility into about half of apps and infrastructure

Key Finding: Visibility Matters

Anomaly detection (53%), easy root cause analysis (51%), and the ability to gather metrics from disparate systems (47%) were revealed as the top three aspects lacking from respondents who felt their current IT monitoring/management strategies provide visibility into less than half of their apps and infrastructure strategy.

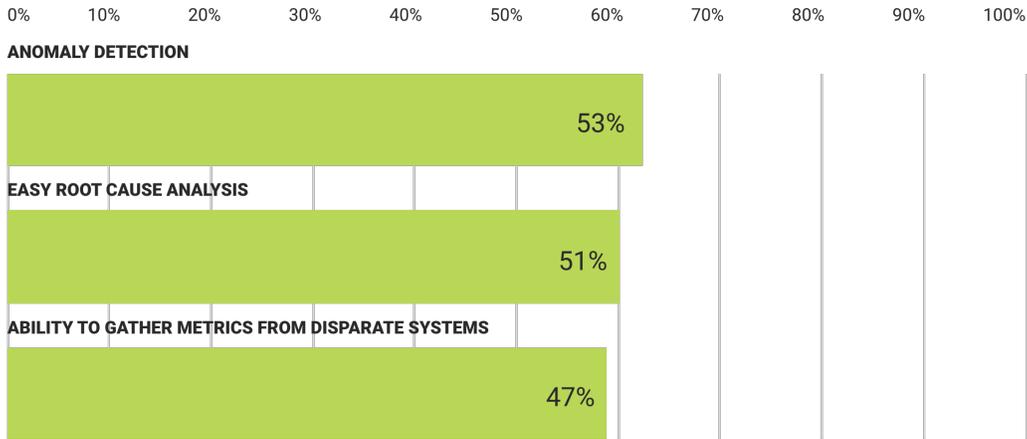
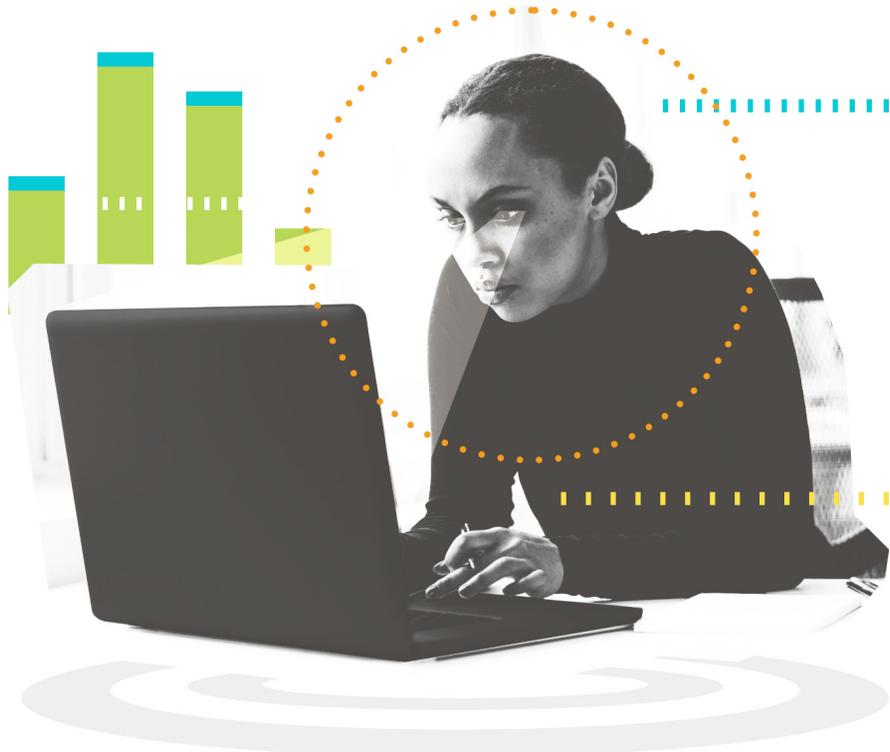


Figure 8: Top aspects lacking from current IT monitoring/management strategies



Key Findings
Impact on ROI

Organizations' lack of insight into their networks impacts ROI.

Most respondents (75%) agreed return on investment (ROI) was impacted during an IT project they oversaw in the past 12–18 months due to increased hybrid IT complexity.

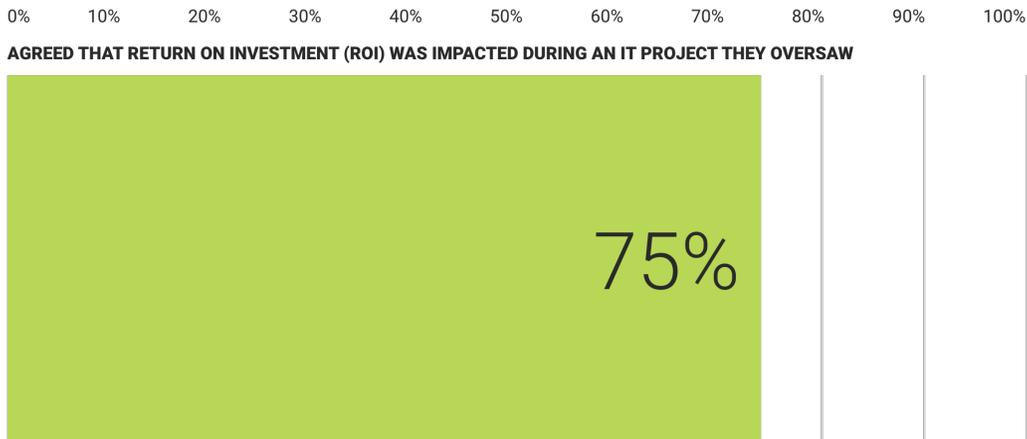


Figure 9: Complexity's impact on ROI

Thirty percent of respondents said the IT project in question took an additional four to seven months or more to complete.

Forty-two percent said the project in question was extended by up to three months.

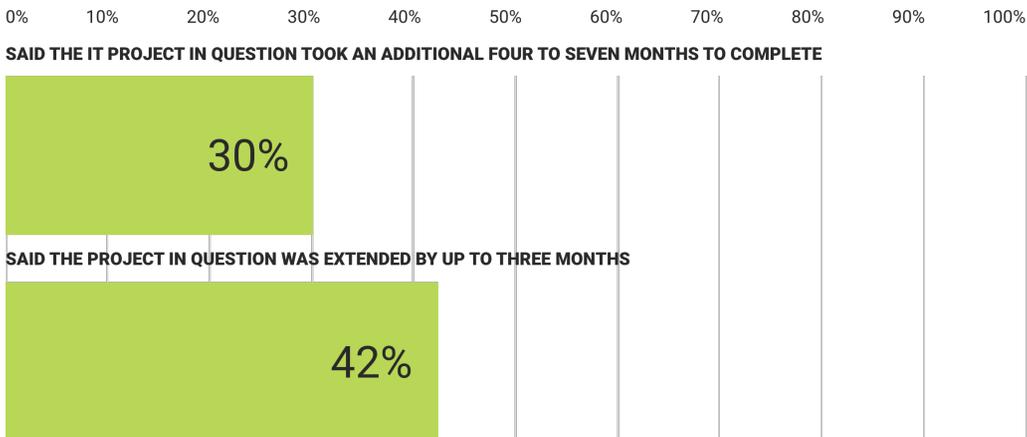


Figure 10: Length of delays caused by complexity

Key Findings: Impact on ROI

By business size, a larger percentage of mid-sized tech pro respondents (22%) indicated a shorter delay of one to four weeks to achieve expected ROI when compared to their small business (19%) and enterprise counterparts (21%).

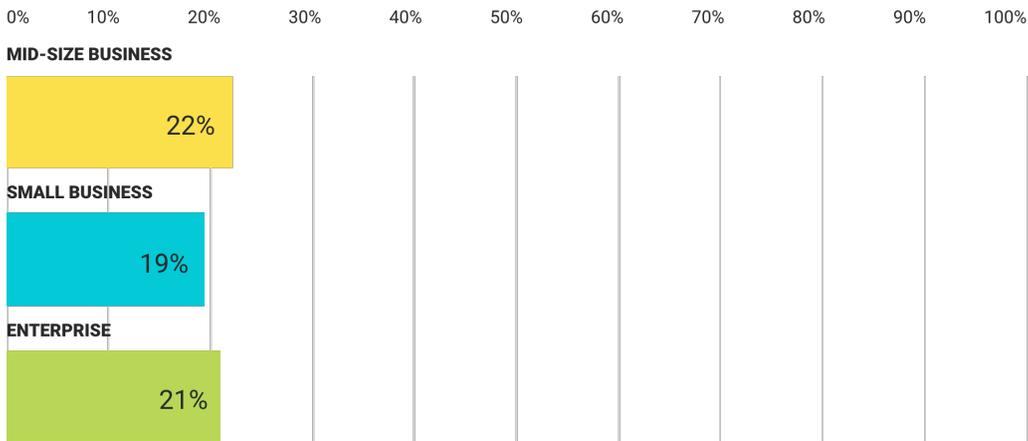


Figure 11: Delays of 1-4 weeks to achieve ROI by business size



Key Findings
Barriers and Investments

Overcoming IT complexity obstacles and improving ROI will be difficult, with budget and time constraints looming.

Respondents say the largest barriers to improving visibility and implementing observability as an IT strategy are:

- Time constraints (43%).
- Lack of resources (38%).
- Outdated technology environments (34%).
- Lack of budget (34%).



Figure 12: Barriers to improving visibility and implementing observability

Twelve percent (12%) of all tech pro respondents reported they have no insight into their overall IT budget.



Figure 13: Lack of budget insight



Key Findings: Barriers and Investments

Interestingly, as business size increases, the percentage of tech respondents who viewed lack of budget as a barrier increases.

- 36% of small business tech pros report budget as a barrier, as compared to 32% of their enterprise counterparts.

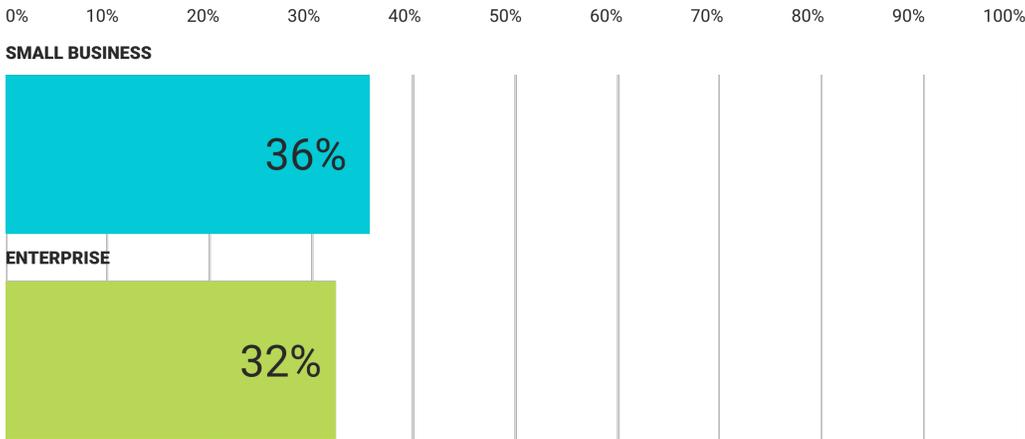


Figure 14: Lack of budget as barrier by business size

As it relates to planned investment in IT management tools over the next 12 months:

- Almost three quarters (74%) of tech pros responded their organization plans to invest less than 20% of overall IT budget.
- Fourteen percent indicated their organization will invest 20% or more.

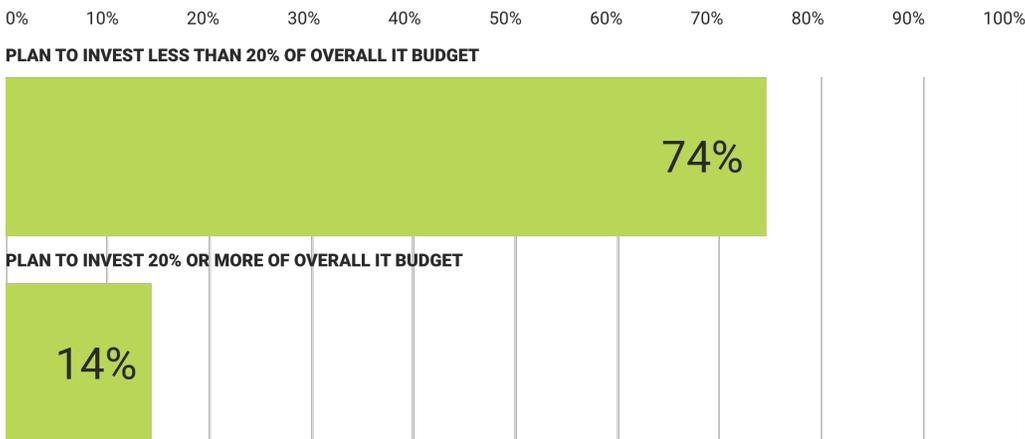


Figure 15: Planned investments

Key Findings: Barriers and Investments

The percentage of tech pros indicating their organization plans to invest 20%, or more remains consistent across small, mid-size, and enterprise.

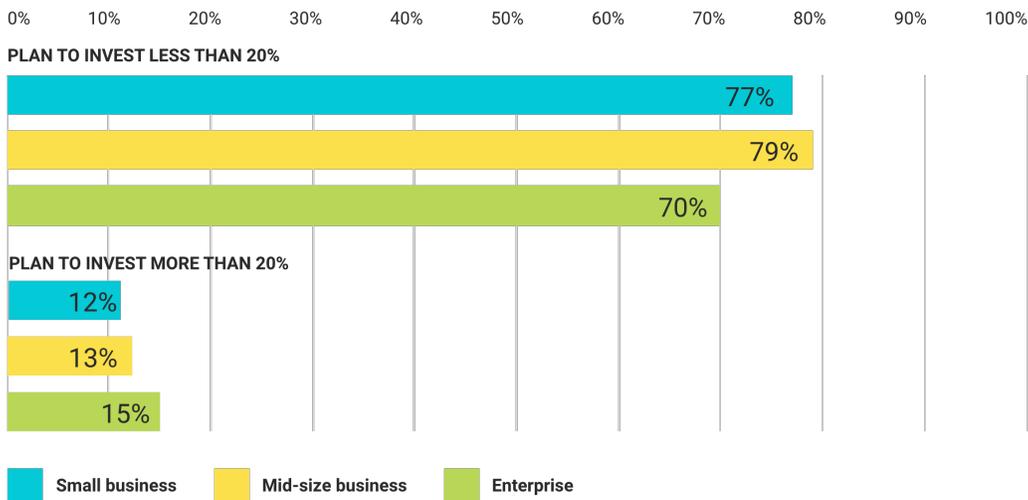


Figure 16: Planned investment by business size



Key Findings
Skills and Tools

There is a planned lack of investment despite the fact almost half of respondents (44%) said the best solution to manage increased complexity is to adopt IT management tools.

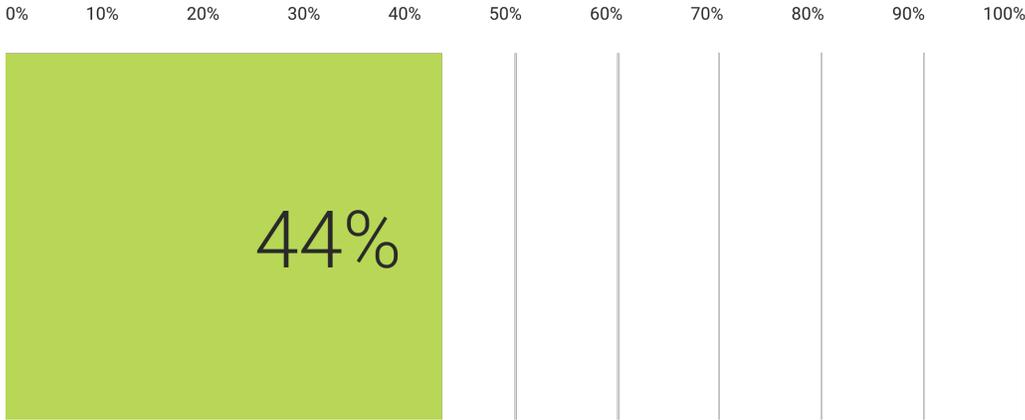


Figure 17: Organizations prioritizing adopting a hybrid strategy

The biggest areas of impact respondents expect to see if their organizations implemented these IT management tools would be:

- Improved security (39%).
- Increased productivity (37%).
- Improved end-user/customer experience (34%).

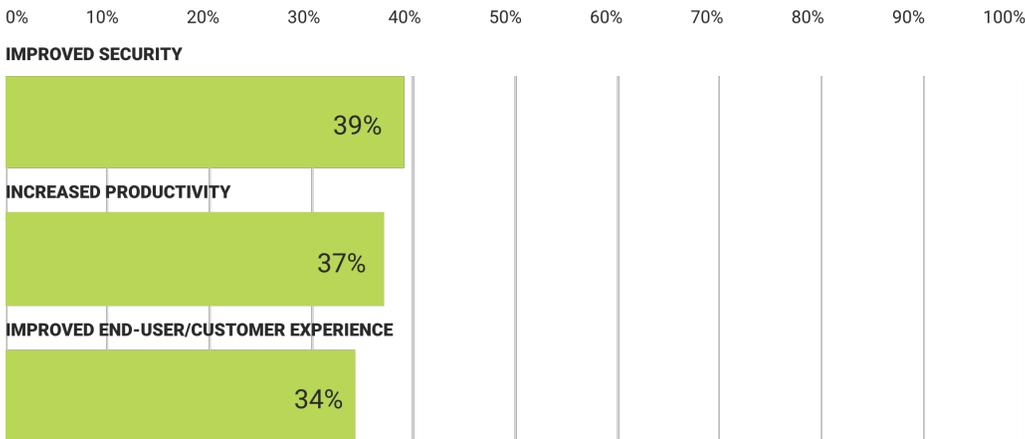


Figure 18: Expected impacts of implementing new IT management tools

Key Findings: Skills and Tools

Other strategies respondents mentioned as important to help to meet complexity issues include:

- Training staff and upskilling (46%).
- Adopting IT monitoring and/or management tools (44%).
- Investing in automation tools (43%).

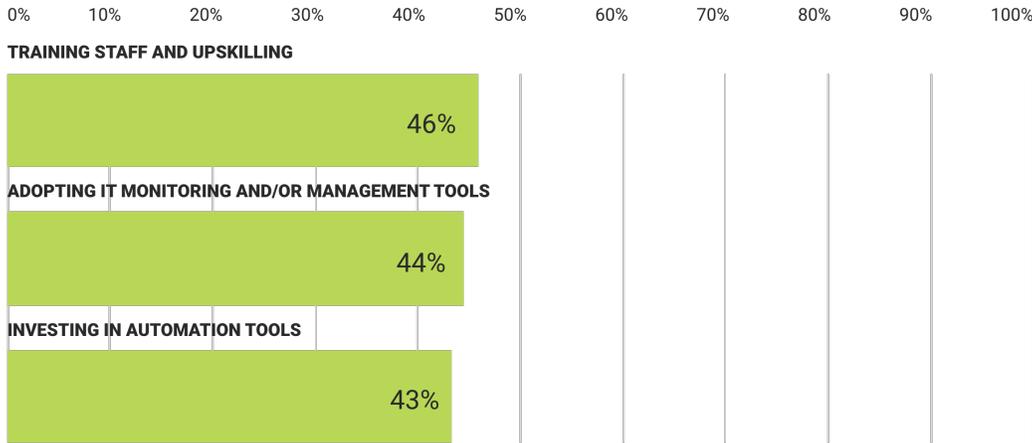


Figure 19: Other strategies to address complexity issues

When asked to select the top ways their organization’s experience with IT management complexity has influenced future technology investments:

- 43% of tech pro respondents selected providing access to skills development training.
- An additional 37% selected increasing/ramping up investments and testing large scale rollouts via pilot programs.



Figure 20: Top ways IT management complexity is influencing future investments

Key Findings: Skills and Tools

By business size, a larger percentage of enterprise tech pro respondents selected providing access to skills development training (45%) compared to their small business-sized counterparts (39%).

Likewise, a larger percentage of enterprise tech pros selected increasing/ramping up investments (40%) compared to their smaller counterparts (31%).

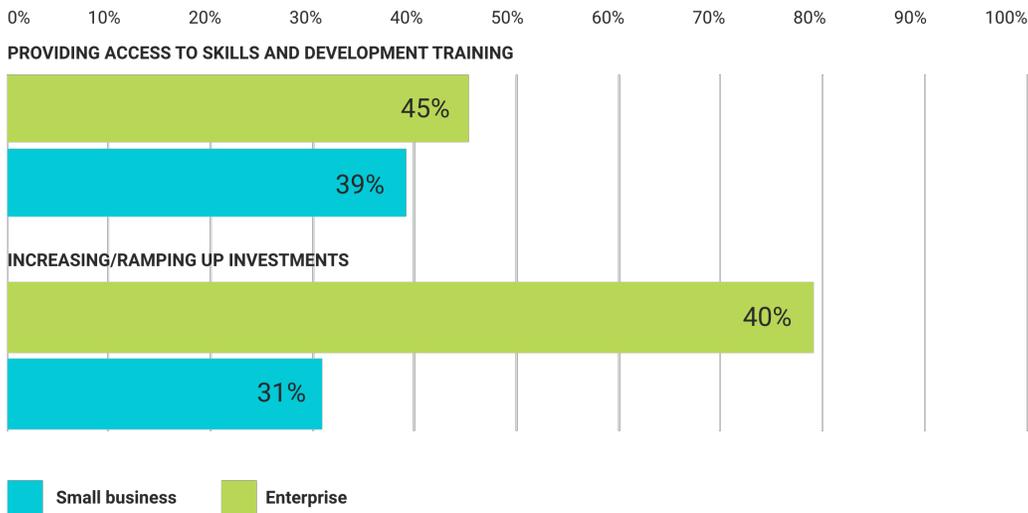
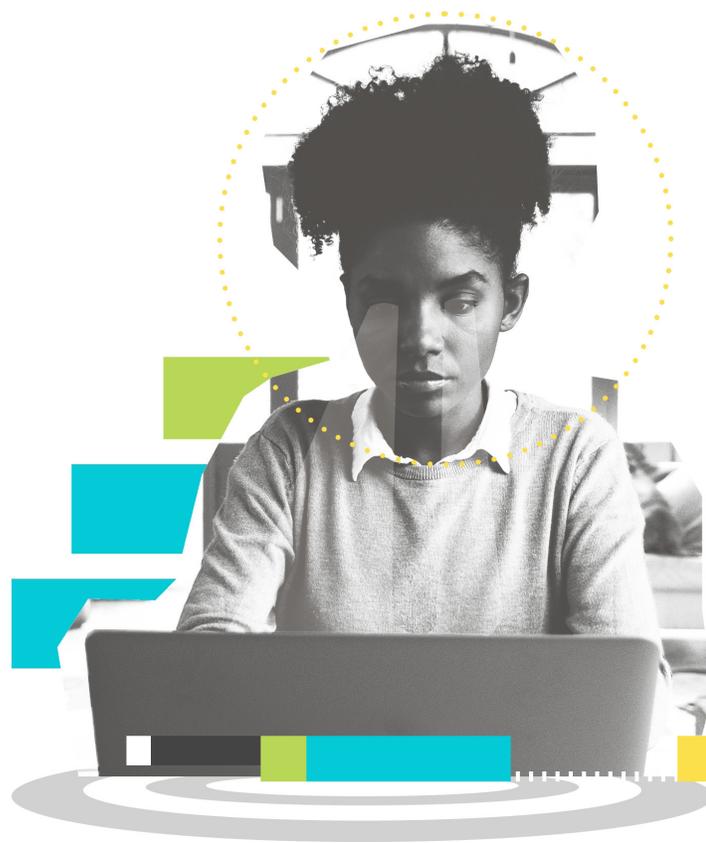


Figure 21: Investments by business size



Recommendations

Choose the Right Payment Model for Your Organization

As tech pros consider which tools to adopt in response to growing hybrid IT complexity, it will be necessary to smartly evaluate options—not just for functionality, but for the cost to implement any new tools and maintain them over time. When working with an IT vendor, it's essential to keep your options open. Traditionally, tech pros invested in new solutions via a lump sum or annual subscription, but these models are changing, and tech pros can now shop around for the best deal or payment plan to suit their interests.

While perpetual license or one-off payments can have budgetary benefits, tech pros are starting to see great results from pay-as-you-go IT subscriptions. Offerings of this nature require ongoing commitment by tech vendors to guarantee the best results. This model can shift the team's mindset to vendor dedication to the organization's success, rather than a legacy obligation on the part of tech pros.

Another benefit of pay-as-you-go IT is it more effectively focuses the minds of your team on how much they actually use. Seeing a direct link between cost and waste and inefficiency forces tech pros to stay on top of maximizing their usage of what they buy. For example, when the rep calls offering a new feature demo, they'll more likely take the call. If there is a technological lag, they'll reach out to the provider to get it fixed faster. Therefore, this model can deliver a more significant ROI for the team.



Find the Solutions That Fit Your Size

In managing hybrid IT complexity, tech pros should always consider the size of their organization because resource needs and capabilities play essential roles in knowing the best direction to take.

Large organizations are often faced with maintaining and upgrading big legacy tech stacks. Tackling complexity at this scale requires investment, which can run a higher percentage of spending than it would for a small business. A smaller company may be able to tackle complexity with one or two external consultants.

A cost-benefit analysis considers an organization's size can help determine the most effective route.



Take Advantage of the Knock-On Business Benefits of Training

Organizations rely heavily on technology to perform business functions, and the role tech professionals play in helping their companies make informed, strategic business decisions regarding emerging technologies can't be overstated. IT pros know what technology initiatives are (and aren't) possible, where more (or fewer) resources are needed, where compliance and security risks lie, and how technology is best used to meet business goals. Without this guidance, crucial information is neglected, and business initiatives can be doomed from the start.

Still, confidence in managing growing complexity driven by hybrid IT varies significantly amongst respondents. Many feel they have suboptimal visibility into infrastructure and networks. More tangibly, complexity can quickly become a drain on the business's ability to benefit from meaningful IT projects. In some cases, tech pros reported the ROI of projects to have been delayed by months.

But as the results of this year's IT Trends Report illustrate, most businesses are planning to invest only a fraction of their overall IT budget into new IT management tools to help address the rising complexity and its repercussions. Comprehensive, hands-on training—including the time to meaningfully experiment and learn these technologies—for tech pros will be required to create a workforce more secure and confident in their skills.

In communicating with management and advocating for greater training to help combat rising complexity, tech pros should stress improved app performance, visibility, customer experience, and product resolution have a knock-on effect on business growth. Yes, there are budgetary concerns, but communicating these benefits effectively to business leaders will serve them well in getting the training and oversight they require.

It's more important than ever to ensure IT pros are empowered and confident to navigate the ever-changing environments they support. Today's businesses can ultimately only move at the pace of IT.



Remember, We've Been Here

Acknowledging hybrid IT's complexity is the first step to managing it. On the surface, tools like Zoom and Slack may connect us better than ever, but with every new connection comes an additional layer of IT infrastructure. Decentralization has become a paradigm shift allowing us the information to see every possible flaw and cost all at once.

Tech pros must understand this is a natural evolution of business transformation. Taking a step back and getting perspective on the pace of change (and why it's necessary) can make a formidable challenge feel more manageable—and even provide a chance for healthy growth.



Study Overview:

Respondent Demographics



Figure 1: Organization size

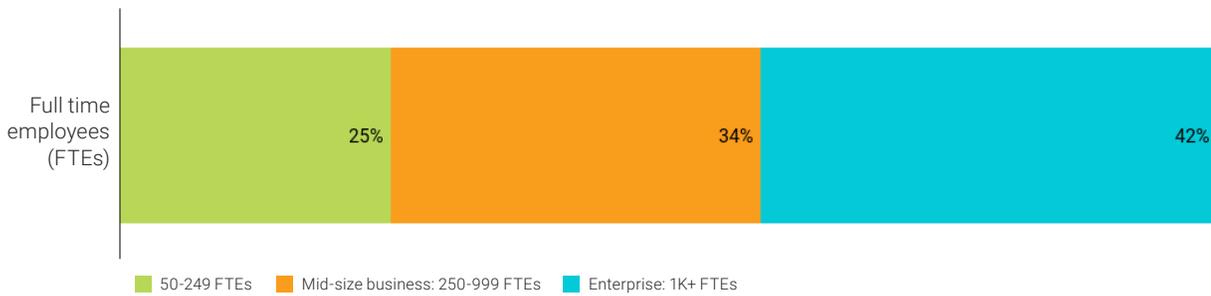
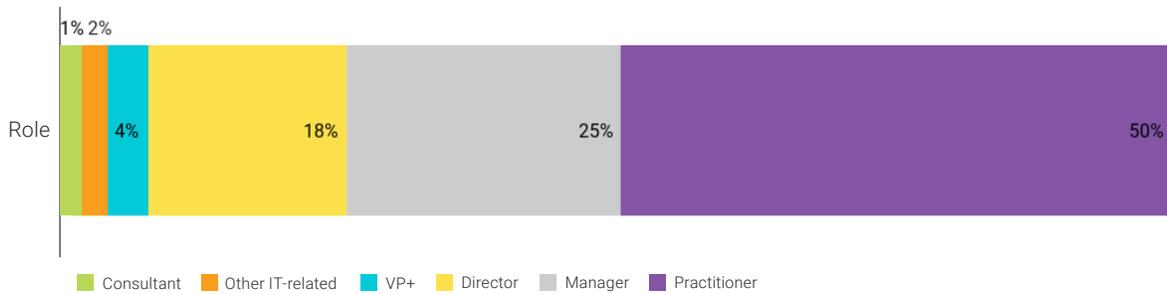


Figure 2: Tech pro's role



Study Overview:

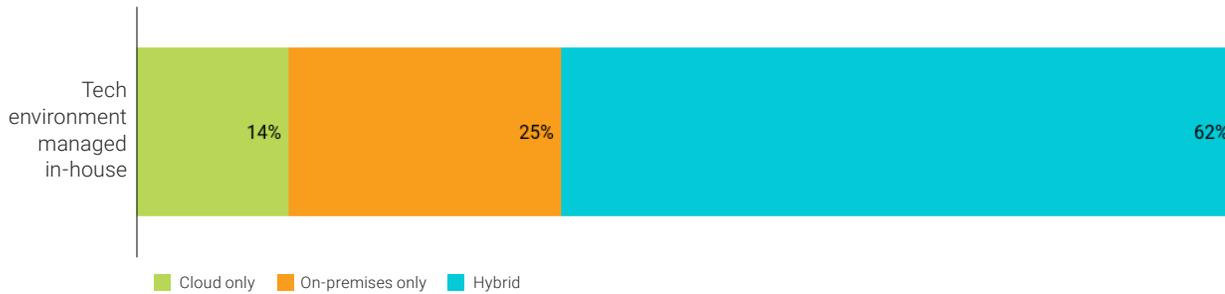
Respondent Demographics



Figure 3: Years as a tech pro in-house



Figure 4: Tech environment managed in-house



Study Overview:

Shift to Hybrid



We asked:

For the purpose of this study, “hybrid IT” is defined as a mix of both on-premises and cloud-based technology environments. Is adopting a hybrid IT strategy for your technology environment (or increasing the percentage migrated to the cloud if your organization already has a hybrid IT strategy) a priority for your organization within the next three years?

Prioritization of adopting hybrid IT strategy within next three years

Fig 5a - Overall

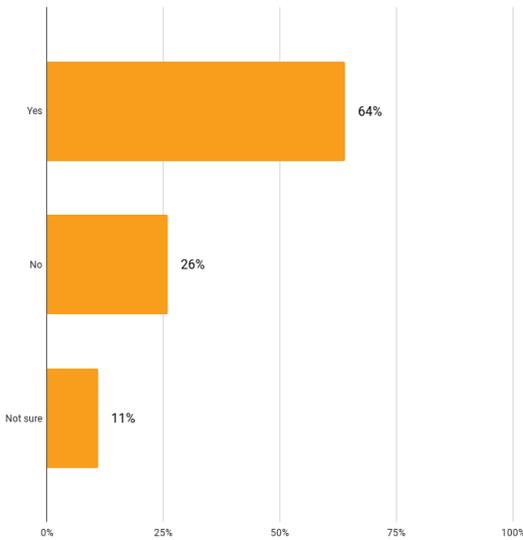


Fig 5b - Small Business

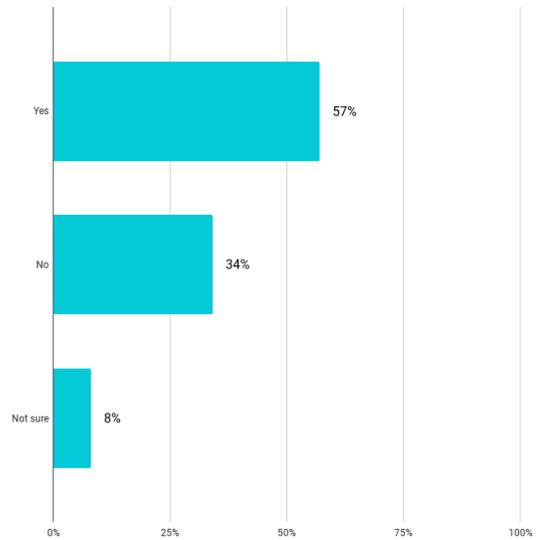


Fig 5c - Mid-Size Business

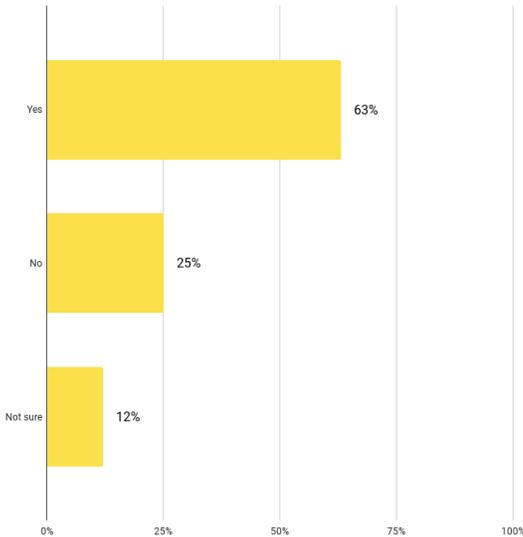
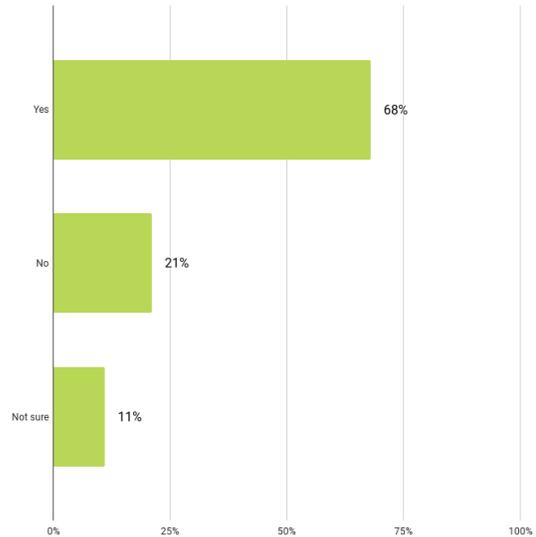


Fig 5d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Shift to Hybrid's Impact on Complexity



We asked:

How Has the Acceleration of Hybrid IT Affected IT Management Complexity at a Tech Pro's Organization?

Acceleration of hybrid IT impact on IT management complexity

Fig 6a - Overall

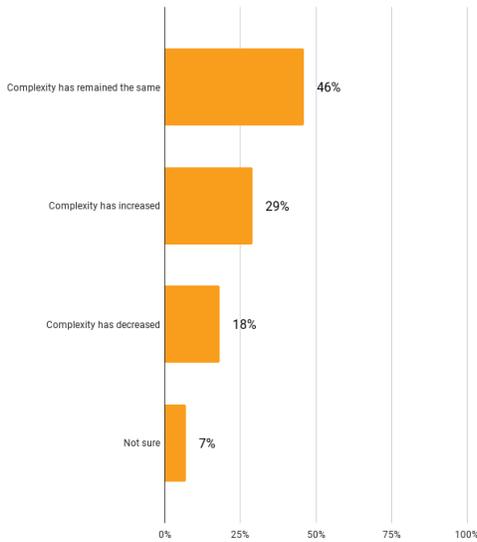


Fig 6b - Small Business

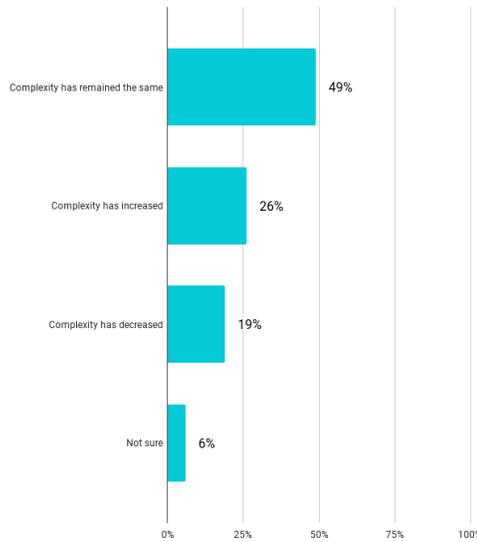


Fig 6c - Mid-Size Business

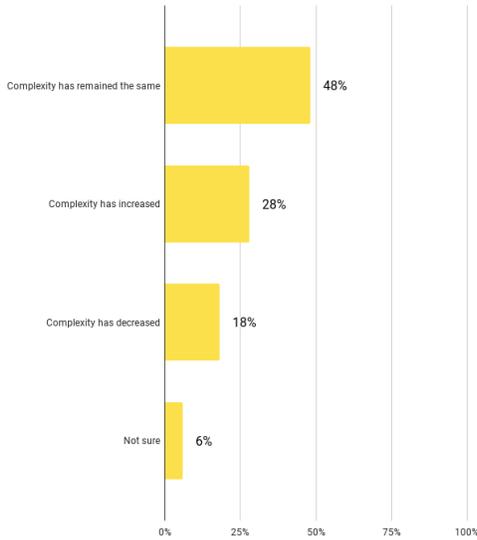
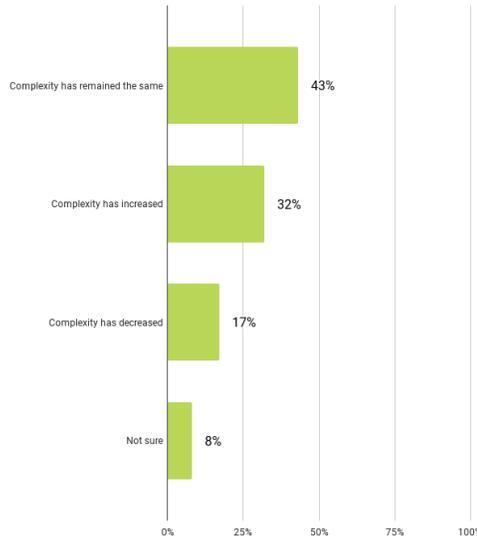


Fig 6d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

How Hybrid IT Decreases Complexity



We asked:

What are the top three ways that acceleration of hybrid IT has decreased your organization's IT management complexity? (choose up to 3)¹

¹Only asked of those who responded "IT management complexity has decreased" from previous question.

Top Three Ways Acceleration of Hybrid IT has DECREASED Tech Pro Organization's IT Management Complexity (N=21 QUALITATIVE)

Fig 7a - Overall

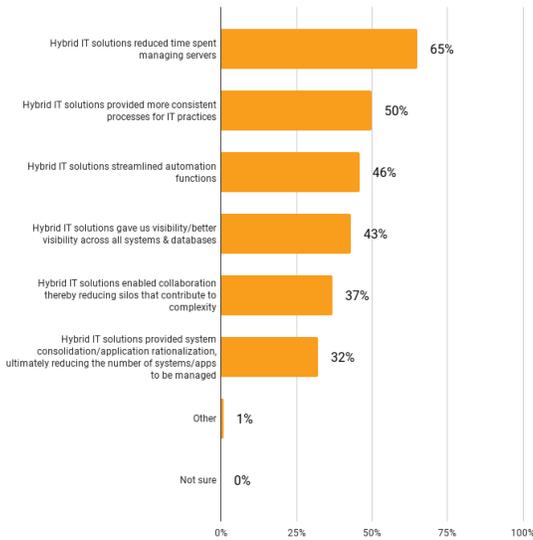


Fig 7b - Small Business

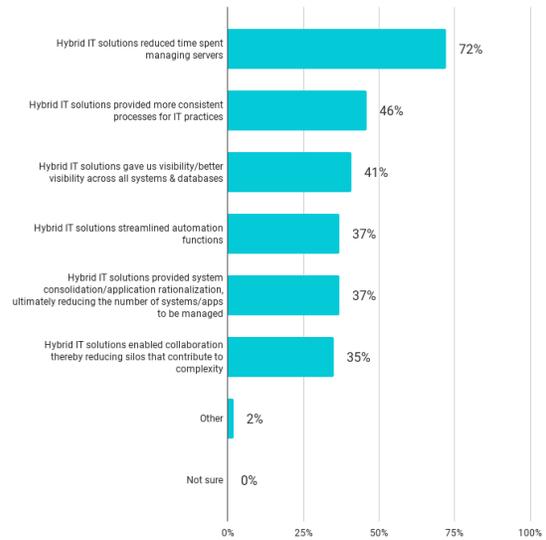


Fig 7c - Mid-Size Business

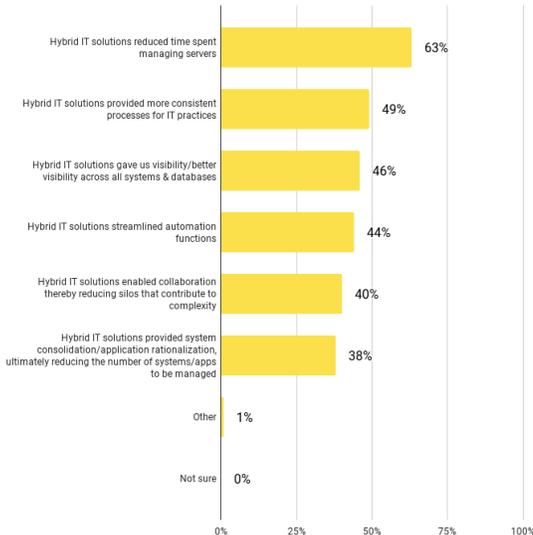
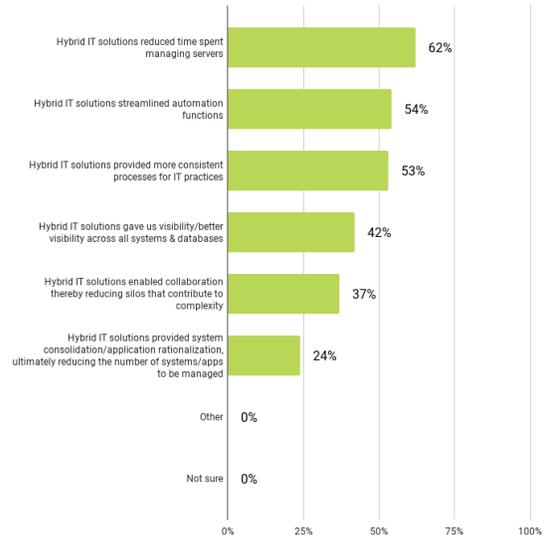


Fig 7d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

How Hybrid IT Increases Complexity



We asked:

What are the top three causes of increased IT management complexity at your organization related to the acceleration of hybrid IT? (choose up to 3)²

²Only asked of those who responded "IT management complexity has increased" from question 3.]

Top Three Causes of INCREASED IT Management Complexity at Tech Pro's Organization related to Acceleration of Hybrid IT (N=117)

Fig 8a - Overall

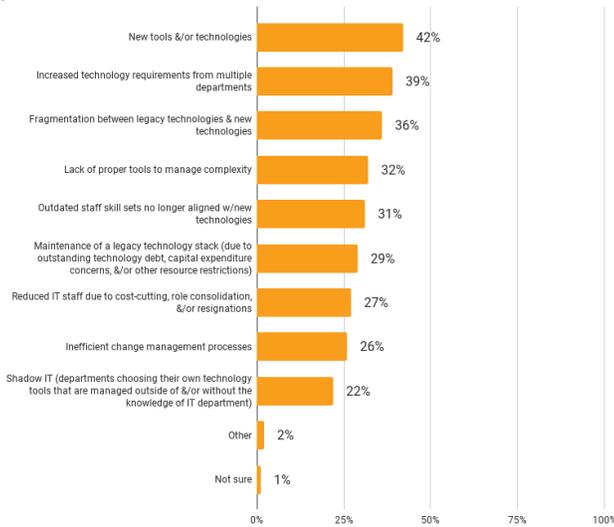


Fig 8b - Small Business

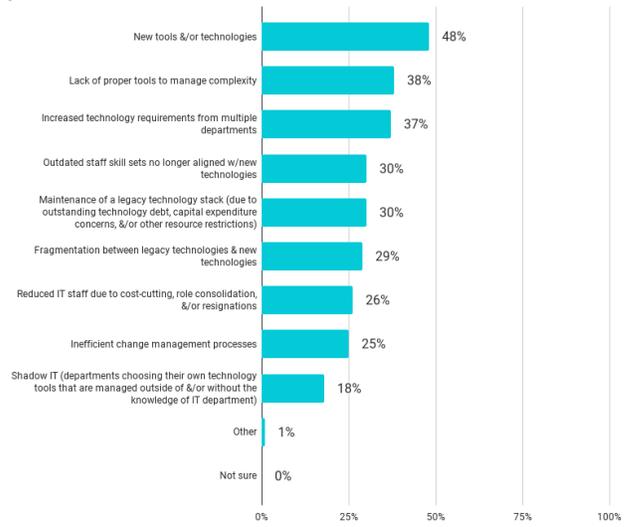


Fig 8c - Mid-Size Business

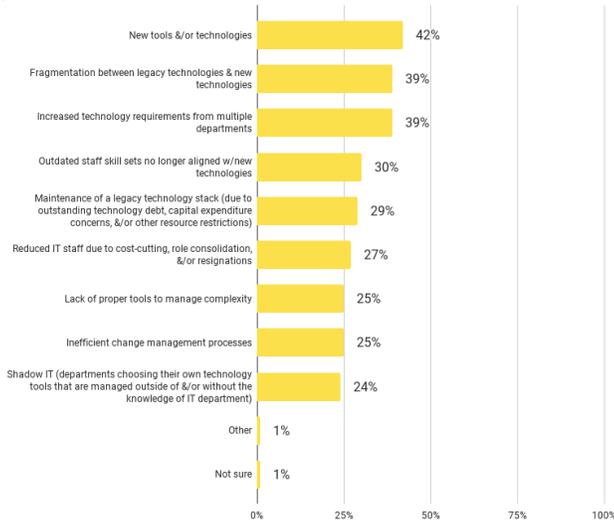
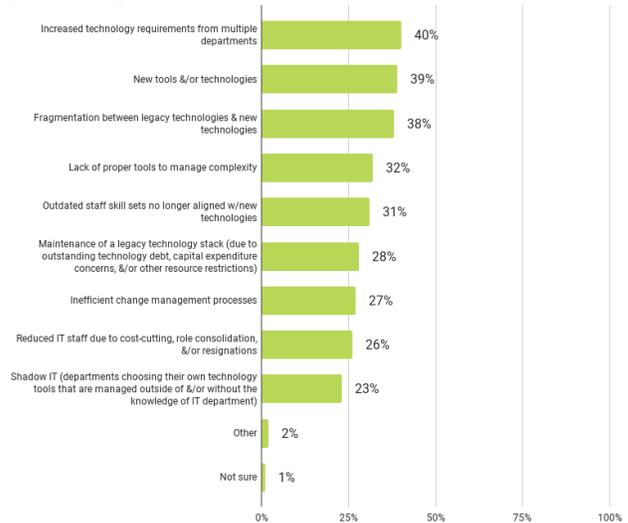


Fig 8d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Confidence in Managing Hybrid IT



We asked:

How confident are you in your organization’s ability to manage complexity?
(choose only one)

Tech pro’s confidence in organization’s ability to manage IT complexity

Fig 9a - Overall

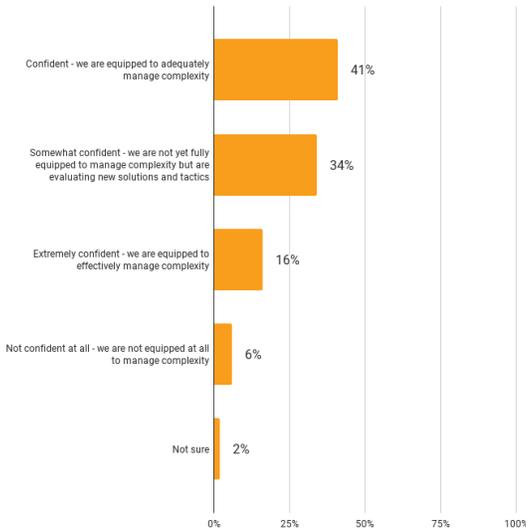


Fig 9b - Small Business

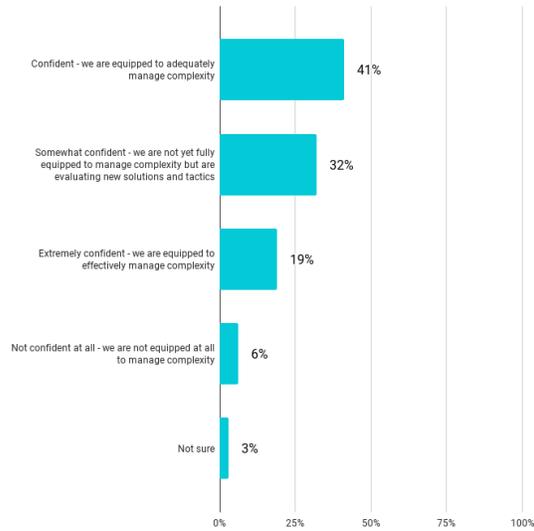


Fig 9c - Mid-Size Business

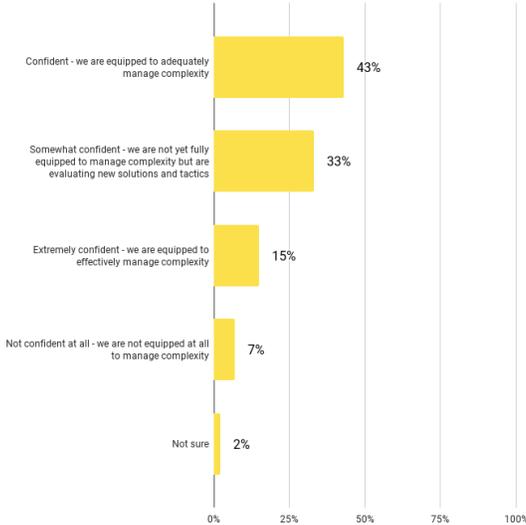
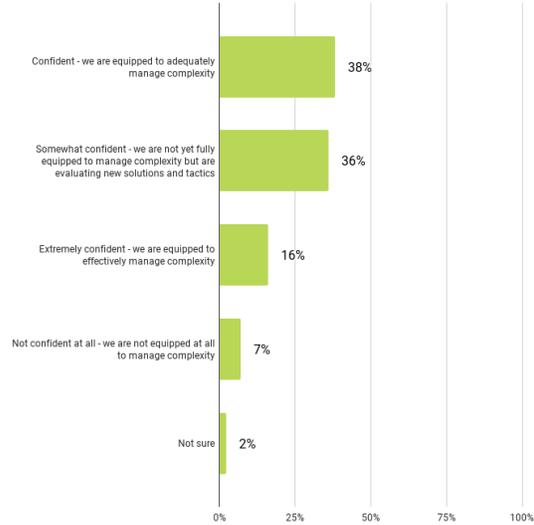


Fig 9d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Managing IT Complexity Today



We asked:

How is your organization managing hybrid IT complexity today?
(choose all that apply)

How Tech Pro's Organization Manages Hybrid IT Complexity Today

Fig 10a - Overall

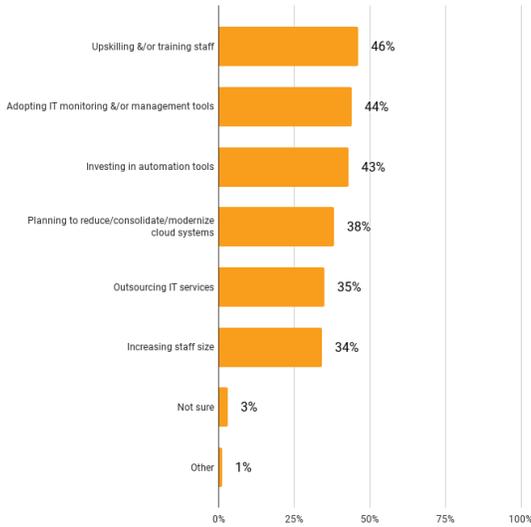


Fig 10b - Small Business

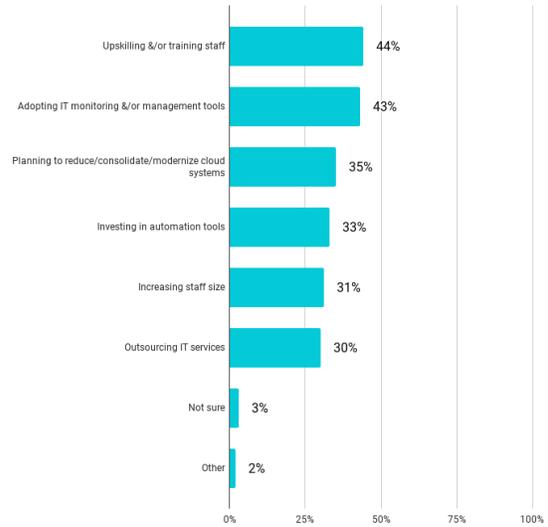


Fig 10c - Mid-Size Business

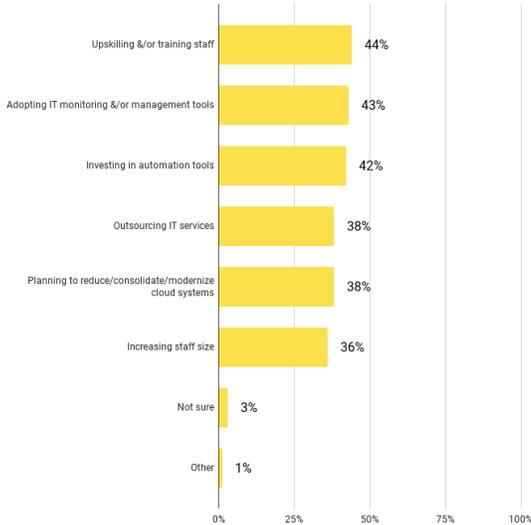
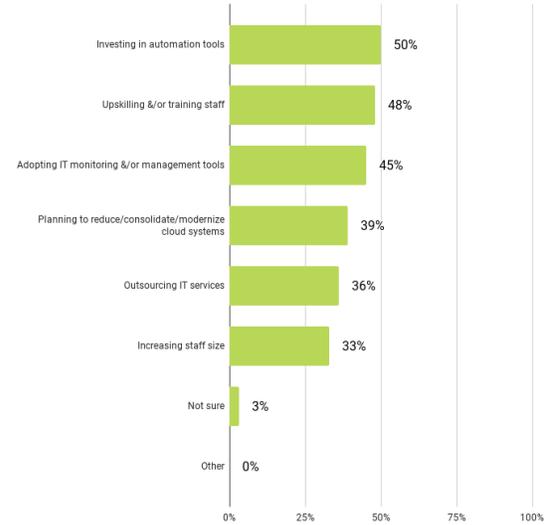


Fig 10d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Current IT Monitoring Strategy



We asked:

For the purpose of this study: “observability” is defined as the ability for organizations to understand and have end-to-end oversight of service delivery and component dependencies. Observability reduces operational noise and in doing so can advance business agility by enabling the IT organization to shift from a reactive to proactive posture to achieve optimum IT service performance, compliance, and resilience. Which of the following statements best describes your organization’s IT monitoring/management strategy? (choose only one)

Tech Pro Organization’s Current IT Monitoring/Management Strategy

Fig 11a - Overall

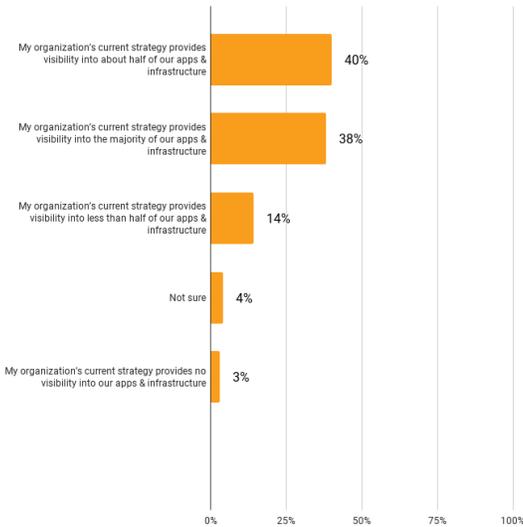


Fig 11b - Small Business

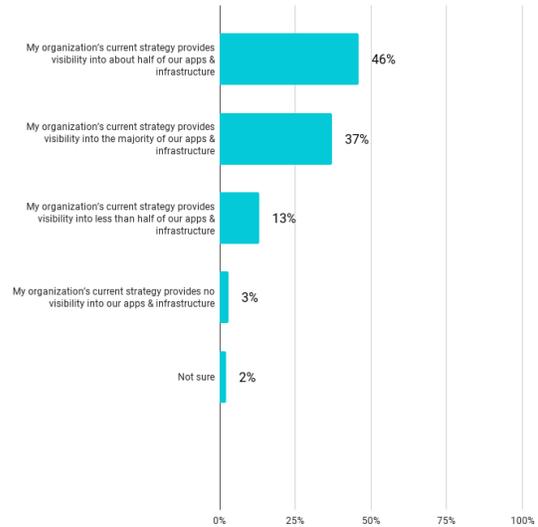


Fig 11c - Mid-Size Business

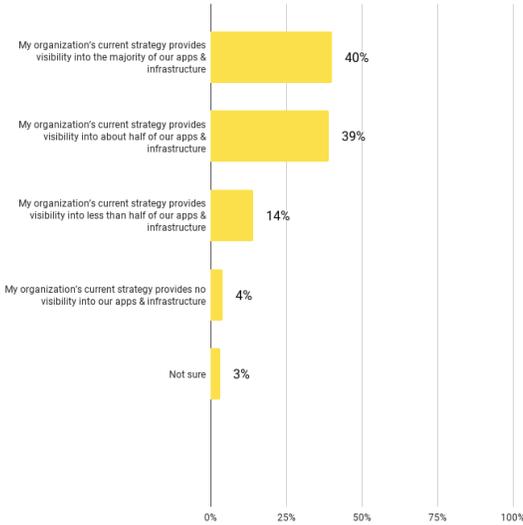
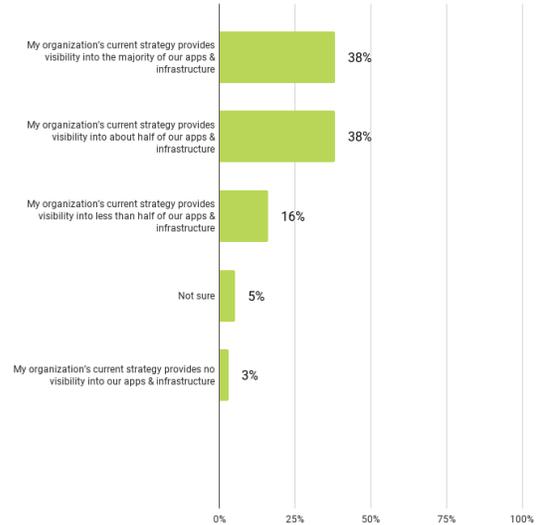


Fig 11d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Where Observability Is Lacking



We asked:

What features/functionality are lacking from your organization’s current IT monitoring/management strategy that would improve visibility into your applications and infrastructure? (choose all that apply)³

³Only asked of those who responded “provides visibility into less than half” or “no visibility” from previous question.

Features/Functionality Lacking From Tech Pro Organization’s Current IT Monitoring/Management Strategy That Would Improve Visibility (N=30 QUALITATIVE)

Fig 12a - Overall

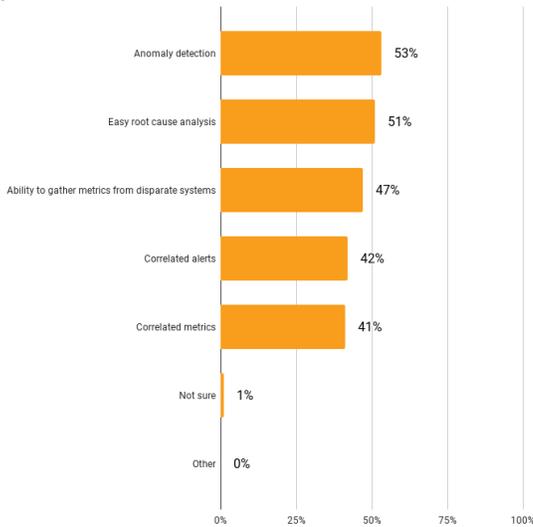


Fig 12b - Small Business

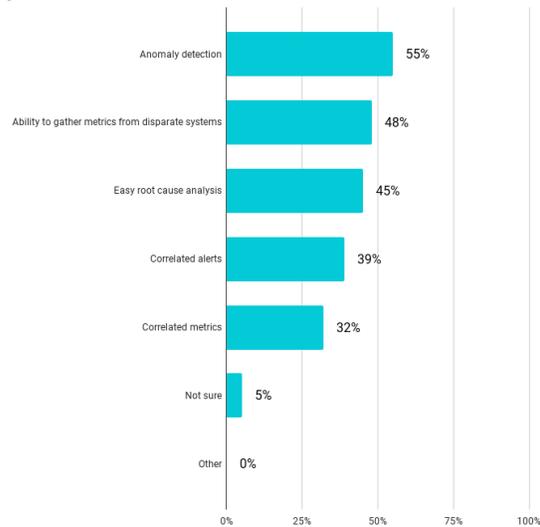


Fig 12c - Mid-Size Business

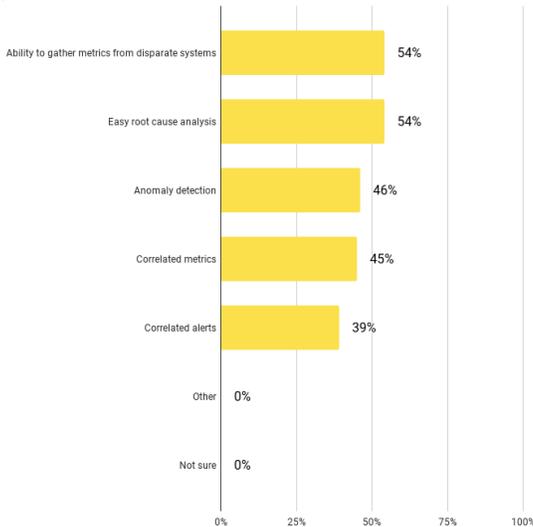
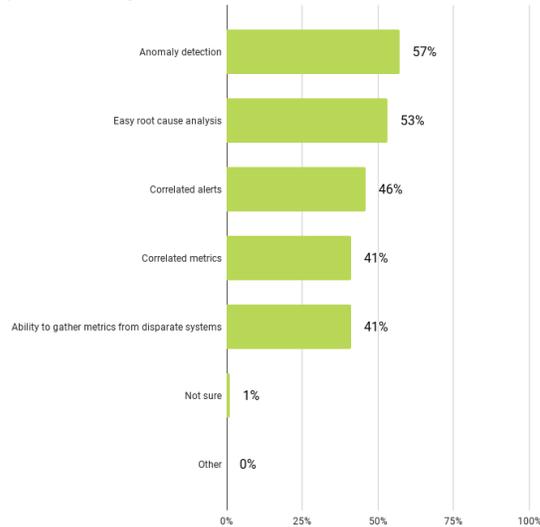


Fig 12d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Barriers to Implementing Observability



We asked:

What are the biggest barriers/challenges to implementing observability as an IT strategy within your organization? (choose all that apply)

Biggest Barriers/Challenges to Implementing Observability as an IT Strategy within Tech Pro's Organization

Fig 13a - Overall

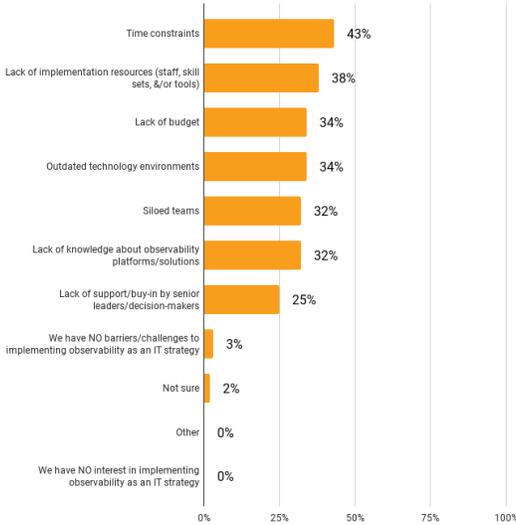


Fig 13b - Small Business

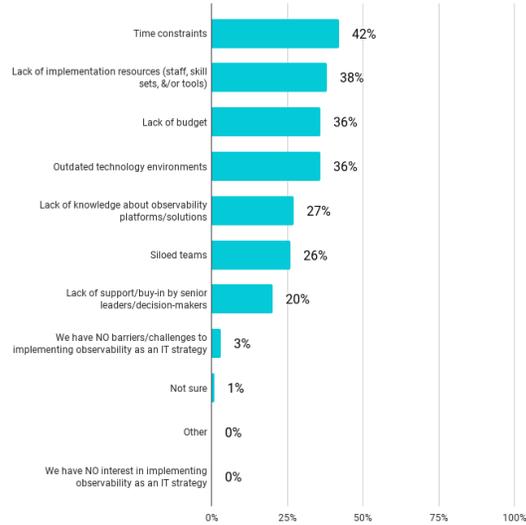


Fig 13c - Mid-Size Business

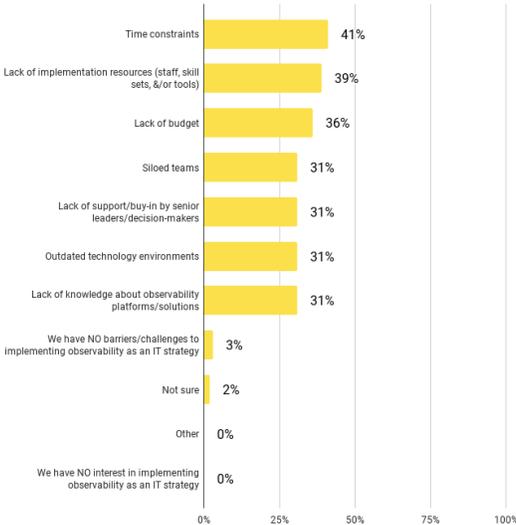
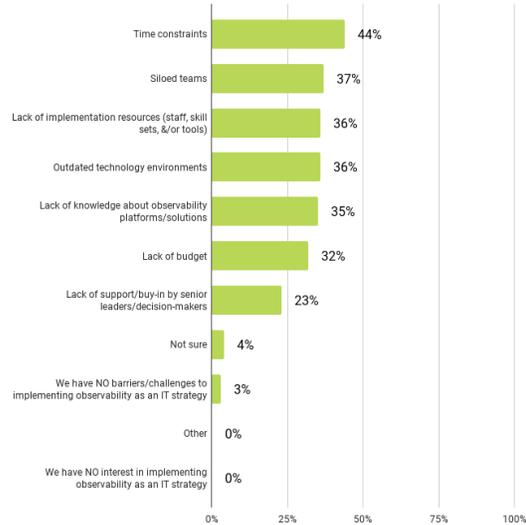


Fig 13d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Impact of Implementing Observability



We asked:

What are/do you foresee as the top three areas of impact that implementing observability has/will have on your organization? (choose up to 3)

Top Three Areas of Impact Tech Pros Foresee that Implementing Observability Has/Will Have on Organization

Fig 14a - Overall

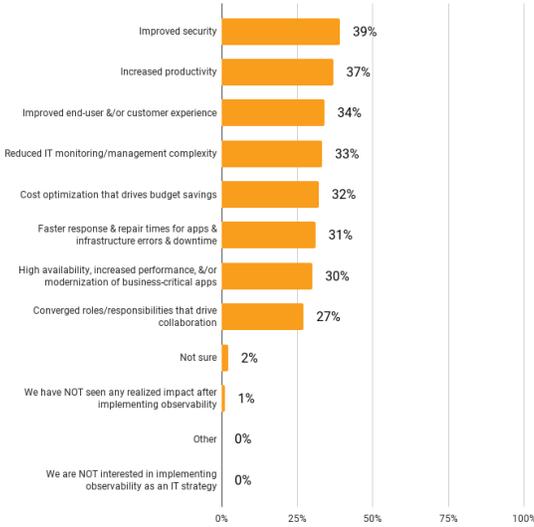


Fig 14b - Small Business

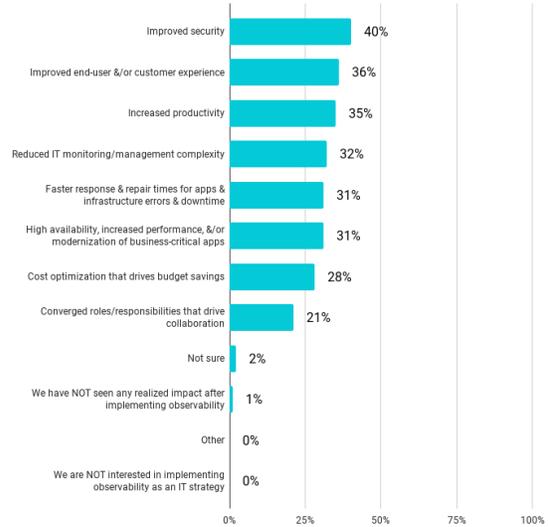


Fig 14c - Mid-Size Business

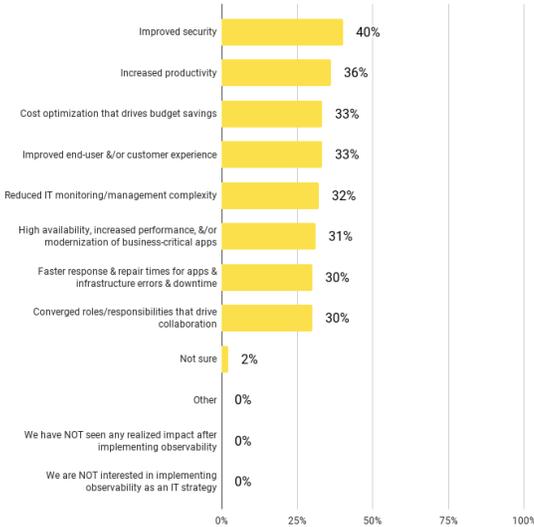
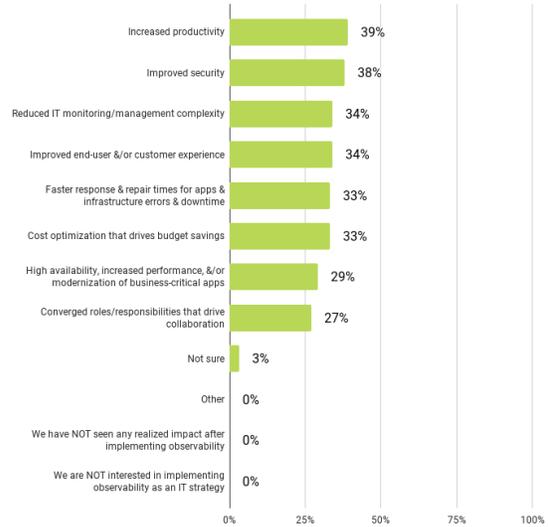


Fig 14d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Investing in IT Management



We asked:

Roughly how much of your overall IT budget does your organization plan to invest in IT management complexity tools over the next 12 months? (choose only one)

Portion of Overall IT Budget that Tech Pro's Organization Plans to Invest in IT Management Tools over the NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

Fig 15a - Overall

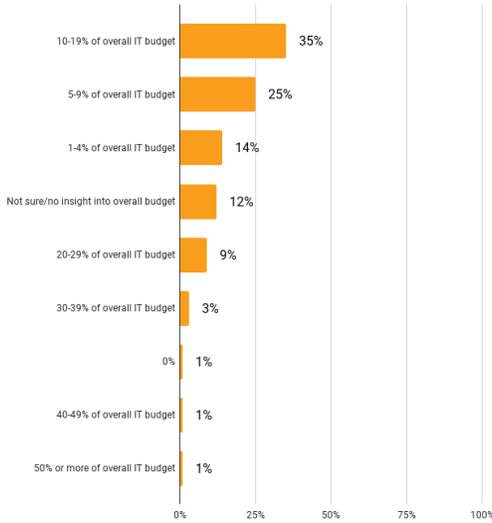


Fig 15b - Small Business

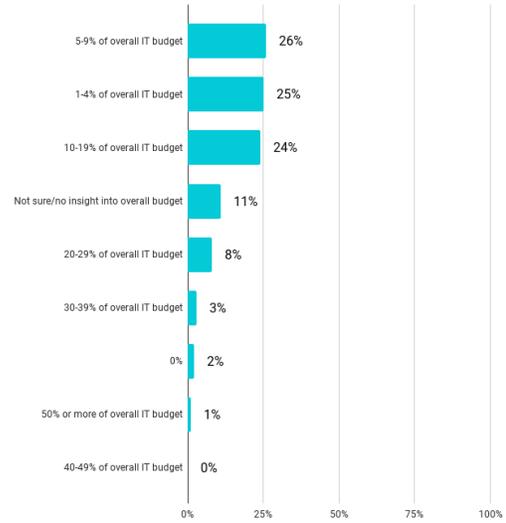


Fig 15c - Mid-Size Business

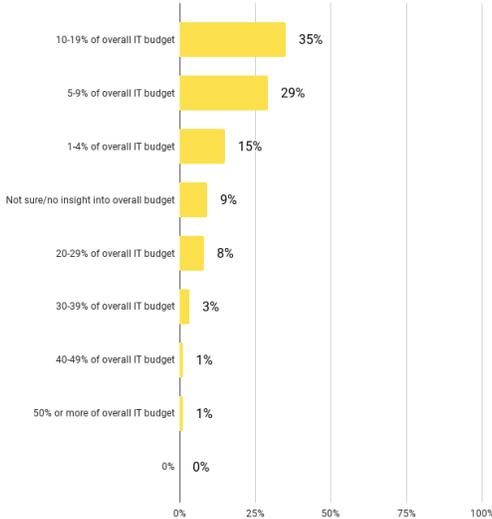
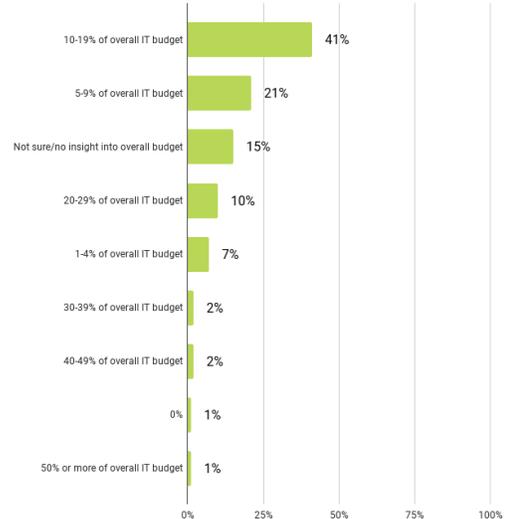


Fig 15d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Impact of COVID-19



We asked:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the addition of new systems has caused great complexity for my organization’s IT teams, thereby delaying my organization’s ability for new technologies/IT projects/initiatives to drive business impact and/or end-user efficiency. (choose only one)

Businesses that saw delays due to the addition of new systems during the COVID-19 Pandemic that Caused Greater IT Complexity

Fig 16a - Overall

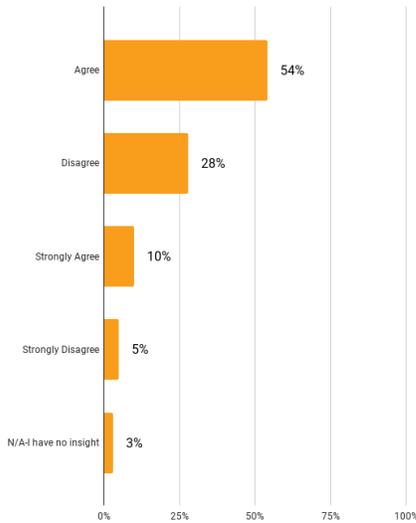


Fig 16b - Small Business

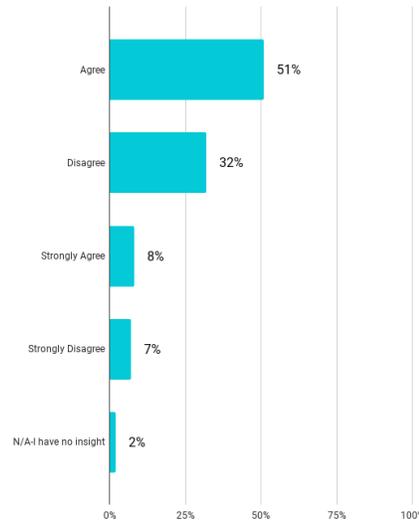


Fig 16c - Mid-Size Business

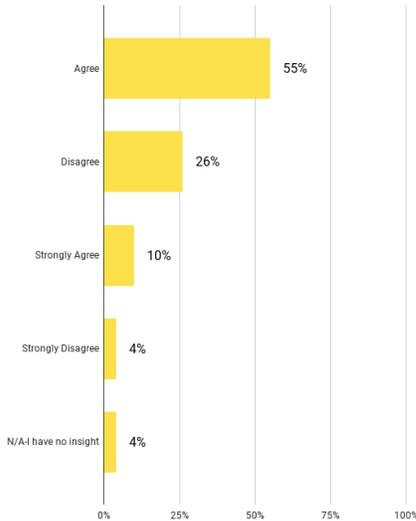
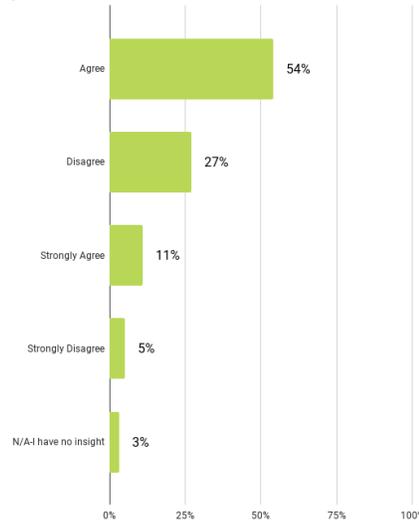


Fig 16d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Complexity's Impact on ROI



We asked:

Think about an IT project you have worked on within the past 12-18 months that caused greater complexity for your organization's IT teams. Was ROI impacted by that complexity? (choose only one)

Complexity's Impact on ROI

Fig 17a - Overall

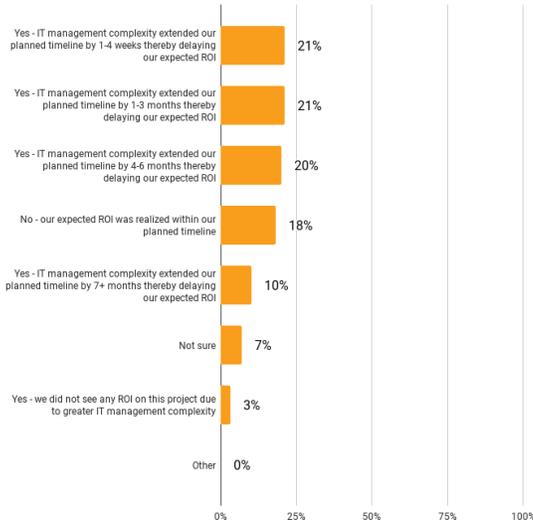


Fig 17b - Small Business

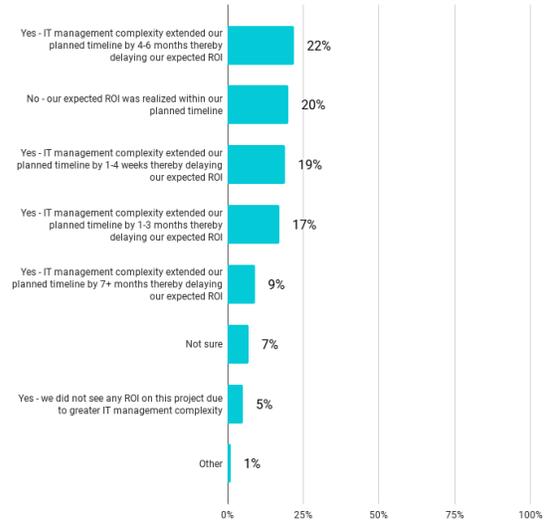


Fig 17c - Mid-Size Business

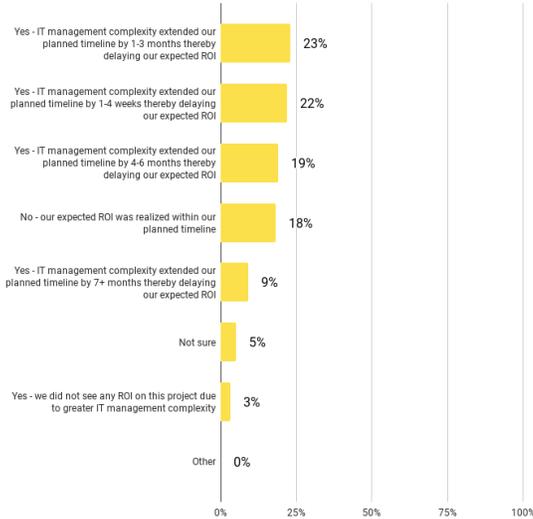
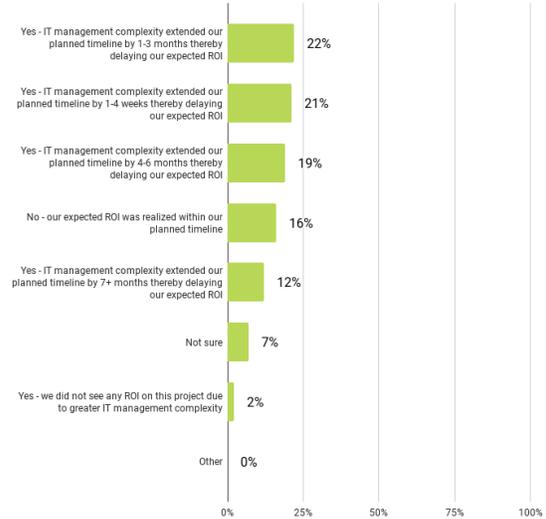


Fig 17d - Enterprise



Study Overview:

Complexity's Impact on Future Investments



We asked:

How has your organization's experience with IT management complexity influenced future technology investments by your organization? (choose all that apply)

How Tech Pro Organization's Experience With IT Management Complexity Has Influenced Organization's Future Tech Investments

Fig 18a - Overall

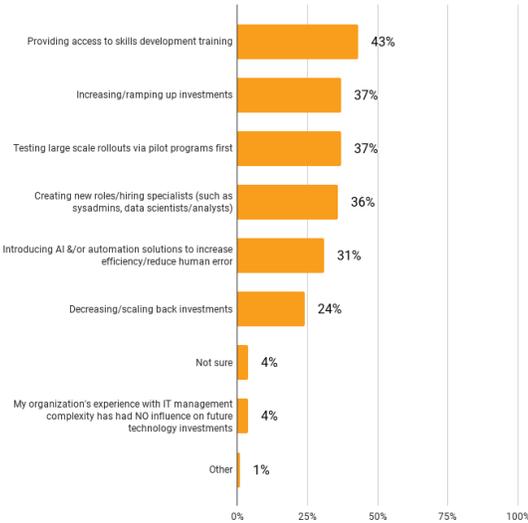


Fig 18b - Small Business

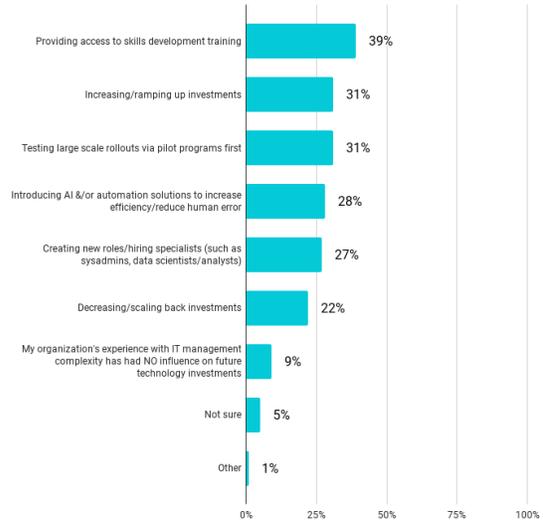


Fig 18c - Mid-Size Business

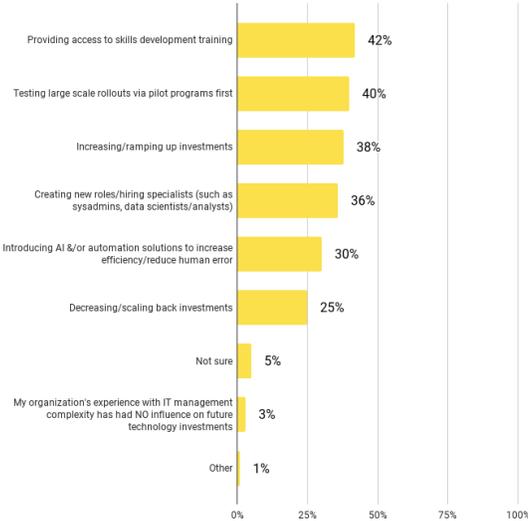


Fig 18d - Enterprise

