FORRESTER®

A SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS RESILIENCY

The Key To Enterprise Hybrid Cloud: An Annual Forrester Consulting Study Commissioned By IBM

Executive Summary

On-premises infrastructure is critical to any holistic hybrid cloud strategy. It continues to house sensitive, custom applications and data that are integral to organizations' security and health, even as IT teams increasingly embrace cloud environments. Given the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, firms now face two monumental tasks: 1) quickly adapting to this change in the market and 2) continuing the pace of their delivery to offset any potential market or revenue loss. Amid uncertainty and changing business needs, organizations that can best leverage a future-ready hybrid cloud infrastructure strategy will be better positioned to capitalize on their resiliency and agility.

In October 2020, IBM commissioned Forrester Consulting to refresh 2019 research evaluating how organizations develop and implement their IT infrastructure strategies — for both cloud and on-premises deployments. For the 2020 research, Forrester conducted an online survey with 384 enterprise IT decision-makers (ITDMs) across industries to explore this topic. We found that organizations are investing in a hybrid cloud strategy and find on-premises infrastructure foundational to this strategy as they enter the 2020s.

RESILIENCY AND CONTINUITY

With increasing demands and workloads, organizations require resiliency and continuity in their future-ready infrastructure.

Be ready for sudden changes without sacrificing the resiliency and service continuity needed to deliver secure, high-quality products and services.

Continuously refresh your strategy to protect against vulnerabilities.

Strengthen your hybrid cloud strategy with on-premises infrastructure as the foundation.

Leverage on-premises infrastructure for improved resiliency across workloads.
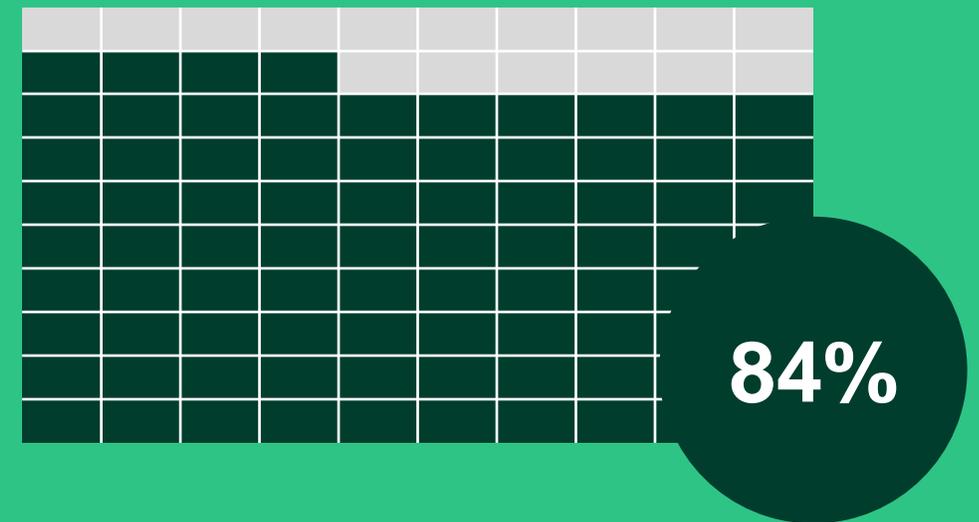
IT leaders anticipate a more urgent need for resilient and reliable infrastructure in their organizations

(Showing "Strongly agree" and "Agree")

We will need to implement more frequent disaster recovery tests.

85%
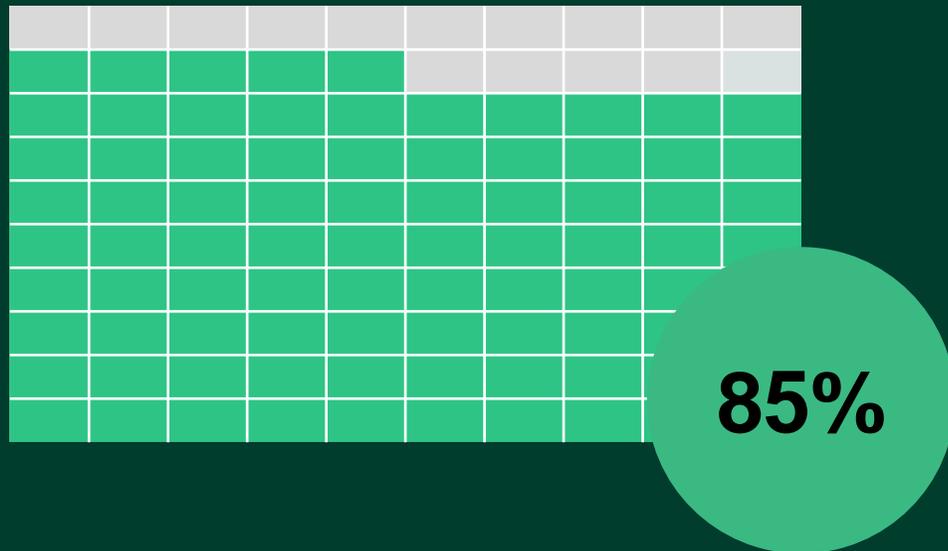
We have a more urgent need for 24/7 availability.

84%

In times of uncertainty, firms focus on resiliency to justify new on-premises infrastructure investments

Resiliency and reliability are among the top proof points when building a business case to refresh infrastructure.

Higher resiliency/performance — 53%

Improved reliability — 48%

Improved customer experience — 45%

75%

see **resiliency** as a top consideration when making infrastructure investment purchasing decisions, where technologists outpace executives (76% to 68%, respectively).
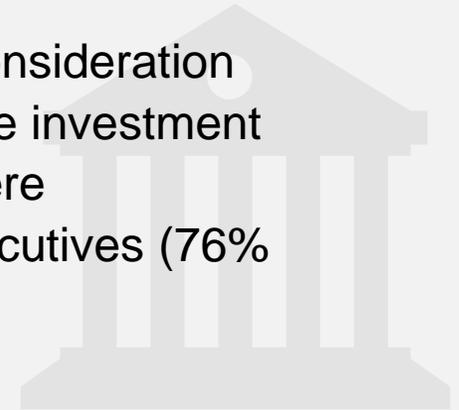
A lack of reinvestment leads to costly vulnerabilities

Though resiliency is critical, **70%** of ITDMs have delayed refreshes at least a few times in the past five years.

Firms that put infrastructure refreshes on the backburner have had have some of the following repercussions:

Top repercussions faced after delay in refresh

50% Security vulnerabilities

44% Higher costs

39% Diminished resilience/performance

38% Restrictions for compatible apps, integration, etc.

Strengthen your hybrid cloud strategy with on-premises infrastructure as the foundation

To avoid costly consequences of refresh delays, ITDMs turn to a holistic hybrid cloud strategy while also viewing a commitment to on-premises infrastructure as key to ensuring a resilient and long-term strategy.

8/10

agree that on-premises infrastructure is a critical part of their firms' hybrid cloud strategies.
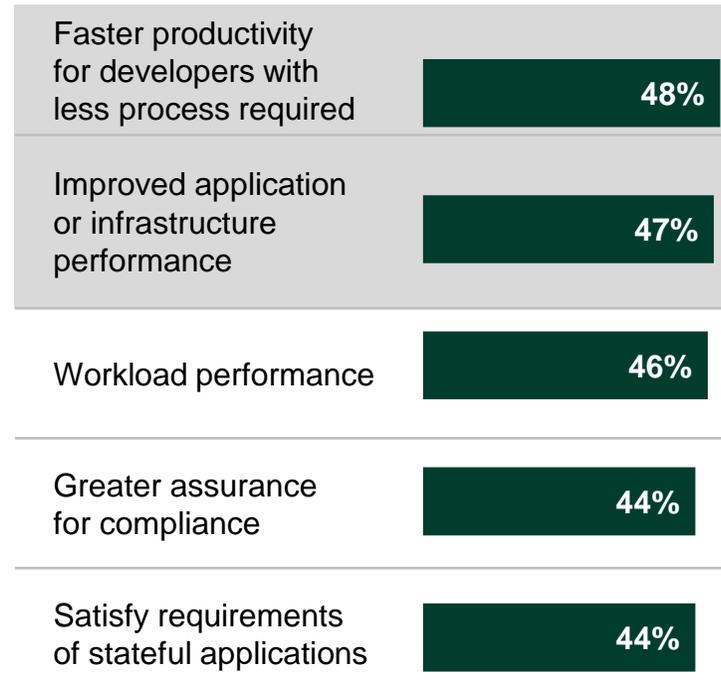
87%

see a hybrid cloud infrastructure strategy as a permanent solution, as opposed to a stepping stone toward a complete move to the cloud.
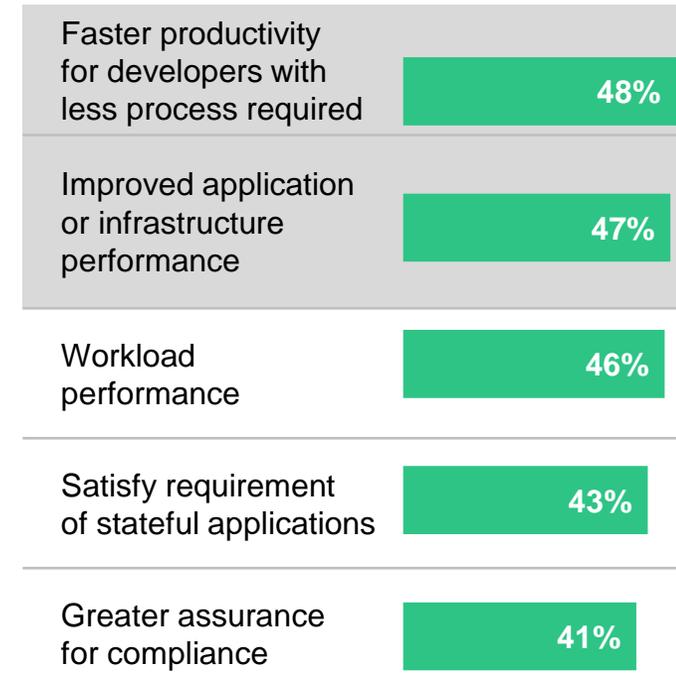
Leverage on-premises for greater performance and productivity across workload types

ITDMs choose on-premises to drive resiliency and productivity across their workloads. On-premises, combined with a holistic hybrid cloud infrastructure strategy, empowers organizations to face all workload types — today and tomorrow.

Data-intensive

Faster productivity for developers with less process required	48%
Improved application or infrastructure performance	47%
Workload performance	46%
Greater assurance for compliance	44%
Satisfy requirements of stateful applications	44%

Mission-critical

Faster productivity for developers with less process required	48%
Improved application or infrastructure performance	47%
Workload performance	46%
Satisfy requirement of stateful applications	43%
Greater assurance for compliance	41%

Key Recommendations

Keep up with on-premises infrastructure refreshes. Too many firms assume that moving everything to the cloud is the best strategy — making ongoing refreshes of on-premises infrastructure something to be avoided. To the contrary, 70% of our survey respondents report delaying on-premises/noncloud or private cloud infrastructure upgrades at least a few times in the past five years with significant negative repercussions. These negative impacts include security vulnerabilities, higher costs, and diminished resiliency/performance.

Keep on-premises as part of the strategy for the foreseeable future. On-premises infrastructure should remain an active part of your hybrid cloud strategy. This continuation of commitment to traditional compute doesn't represent a failure to move forward. To the contrary, 85% of surveyed ITDMs list on-premises as a critical part of their hybrid cloud strategies, recognizing that the modern, cloud-based infrastructure has yet to accommodate all workloads and performance environments. Look to on-premises to address specific needs around infrastructure performance, productivity, security, and regulatory requirements.

Manage the mix of public cloud, private cloud, and on-premises as a whole. There are many good reasons for each of the different infrastructure aspects of a hybrid cloud strategy — so manage your infrastructure needs as a portfolio of options, not a single compute environment. It would be an unusual company that meets all of its workload and performance needs through a single infrastructure architecture — so don't try to force your firm into that rare state. Understand high performance and productivity are desired across data-sensitive and mission-critical workloads and develop strategy accordingly.

Download the full study

Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online survey of 384 global decision-makers for IT infrastructure environments to evaluate how organizations develop and implement their infrastructure strategies. Survey participants included IT decision-makers in infrastructure and operations, application management or maintenance, and/or software development. Questions provided to the participants asked about environments used for different workloads and infrastructure investments. Respondents were offered a small incentive as a thank you for time spent on the survey. The study began in October 2020 and was completed in November 2020.

Project Director:
Cynthia Hicks, Market Impact Consultant

Contributing Research:
Forrester's Infrastructure & Operations research group