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Market Intelligence **Special Report**

Delivering Greater Value to Your Business by Reducing IT Management Complexity

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Enterprises are facing a new set of business challenges, and IT infrastructure has to achieve new levels of speed and efficiency to keep them competitive. Enterprise IT has always been a complicated environment to manage effectively; changing business demands and fluid application architectures have kept IT teams on their toes as they try to keep it all running smoothly. Enterprises have increasingly been adopting hybrid multicloud, which has heightened the complexity of managing these new infrastructure models.

To ensure that organizations remain competitive and successful, IT teams need to streamline management in ways that will simplify operations and create a foundation that will allow their organizations to adapt to ever-changing business priorities. Effective and efficient management operations will allow them to satisfy business imperatives that are critical for organizations to achieve their best possible outcomes.

Business Imperatives Driving Complexity

Organizations need to be able to adapt to changes in the business landscape to stay competitive, and IT teams have to be able to support those changes with the necessary technology and infrastructure. Management system complexities can hamper the ability to deliver on those initiatives.

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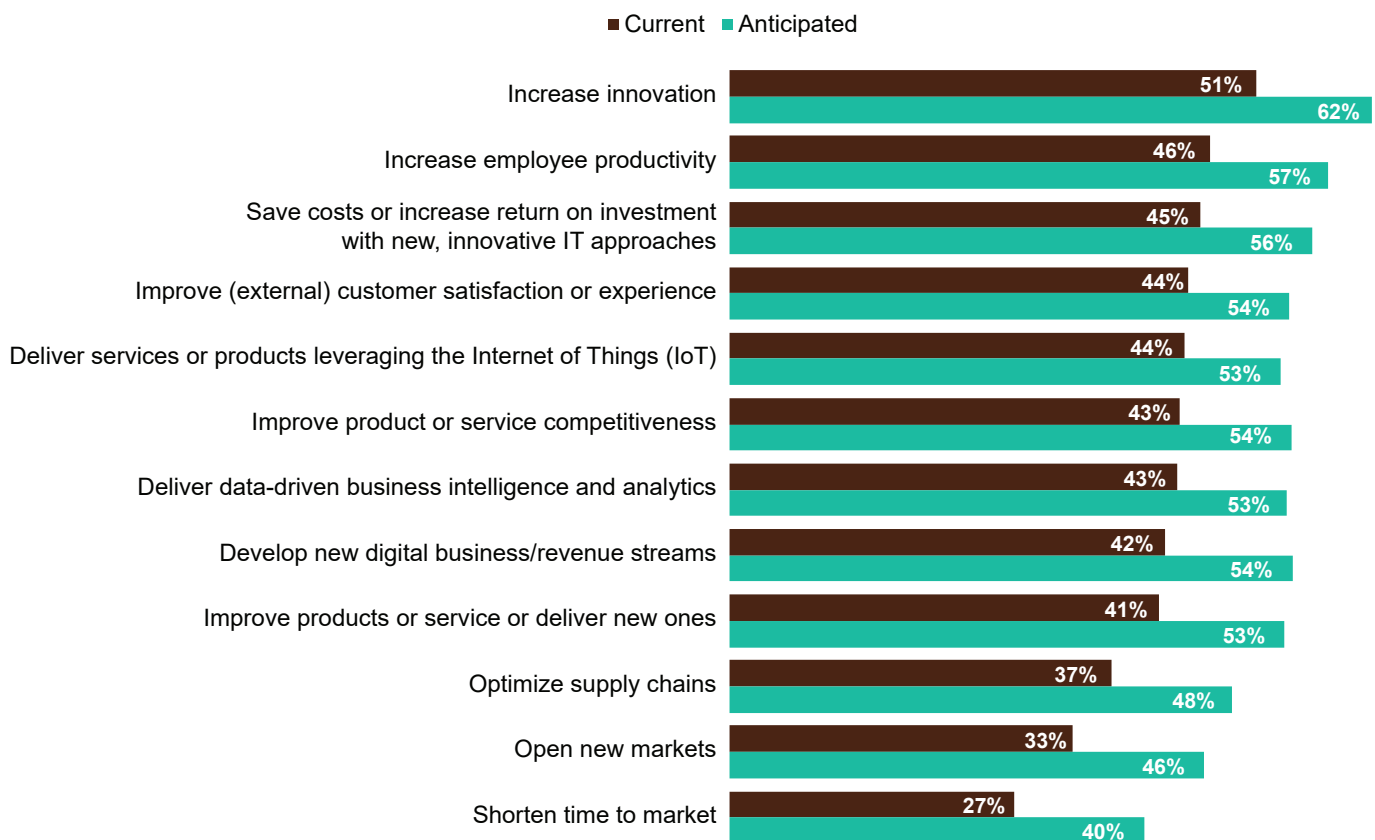
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Figure 1: IT help with business initiatives

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: Which of the following initiatives is your IT department currently helping with now? OR: Which are you currently asking your IT department to help with now? (Multi-Select Response) (n=1,555)

Q: Which of the following initiatives do you anticipate your IT department helping within the coming 12-18 months? OR: Which do you anticipate asking your IT department to help within the coming 12-18 months? (Multi-Select Response; n=1,555)



Hybrid cloud is a reality for most organizations today. The way they leverage new and different infrastructure options varies, but they're all starting to experience the additional complexity associated with hybrid cloud. That complexity is raising concerns about the ability of IT teams to deliver on business initiatives that their organizations require, and many of those concerns center around effective management in a hybrid multicloud world.

451 Research carried out a study to explore the nature of these concerns and expected impacts for the businesses they support. The study was conducted with a global panel of 1,805 senior business and IT decision-makers who reported having experience in hybrid cloud infrastructure design and use. They represented 11 industry vertical sectors in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and Africa, and Latin America. The study was administered as a 21-question web-based survey instrument in June 2020 and collated opinions on the state of existing IT infrastructure, management tools and practices, and business plans.

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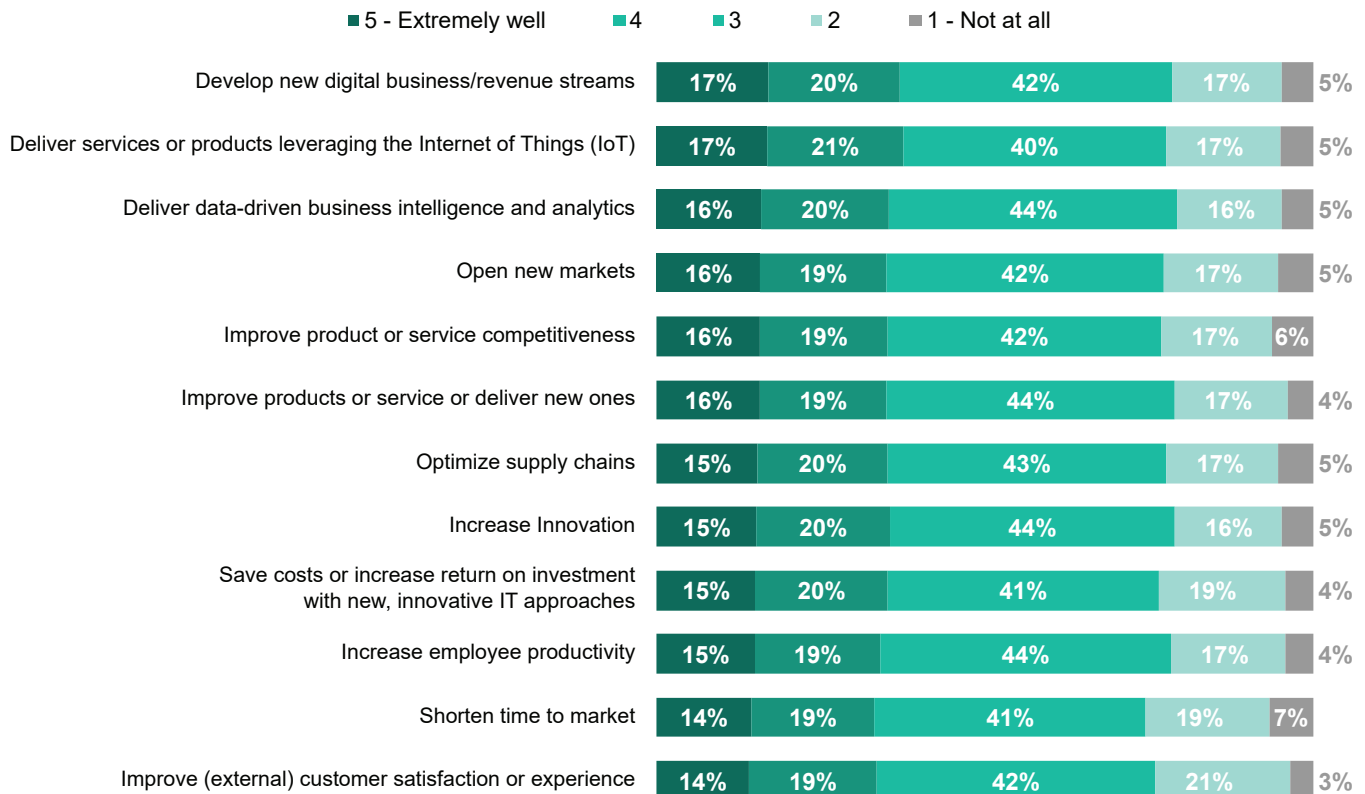
The study established a set of common business imperatives and asked respondents to identify which of these their teams were being tasked with. Our goal was to identify the perceived state of their management practices and systems by getting views on how well they could achieve these imperatives. We looked at respondents' perceptions about their ability to deliver on key business initiatives with their current IT infrastructure (Figure 2). The answers did not offer a vote of confidence for their current state. Just under a quarter felt that their readiness was poor (a score of one or two). Just over 40% rated readiness a three for most initiatives, which implies a lack of confidence in what they have in place. Only about 15% said that they could deliver extremely well.

Figure 2: Ability to deliver on business initiatives

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: With the IT infrastructure you currently have in place, please rate your IT department's ability to deliver on the following business initiatives?

(Multi-Select Response; n=1,555)



While there might always be some concern about readiness, we wanted to quantify the gap between the current state and expectations of future need. We asked about the level of transformation needed in IT environments to meet new business strategies over the next five years. The answer echoes the earlier responses in that over 70% indicated that their IT infrastructure was ready to meet less than half of their needs.

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Figure 3: The ability of IT infrastructure to meet modern-day business needs

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: To what extent is your IT infrastructure ready to meet modern-day business needs?
(Single-Select Response; n=1,805)

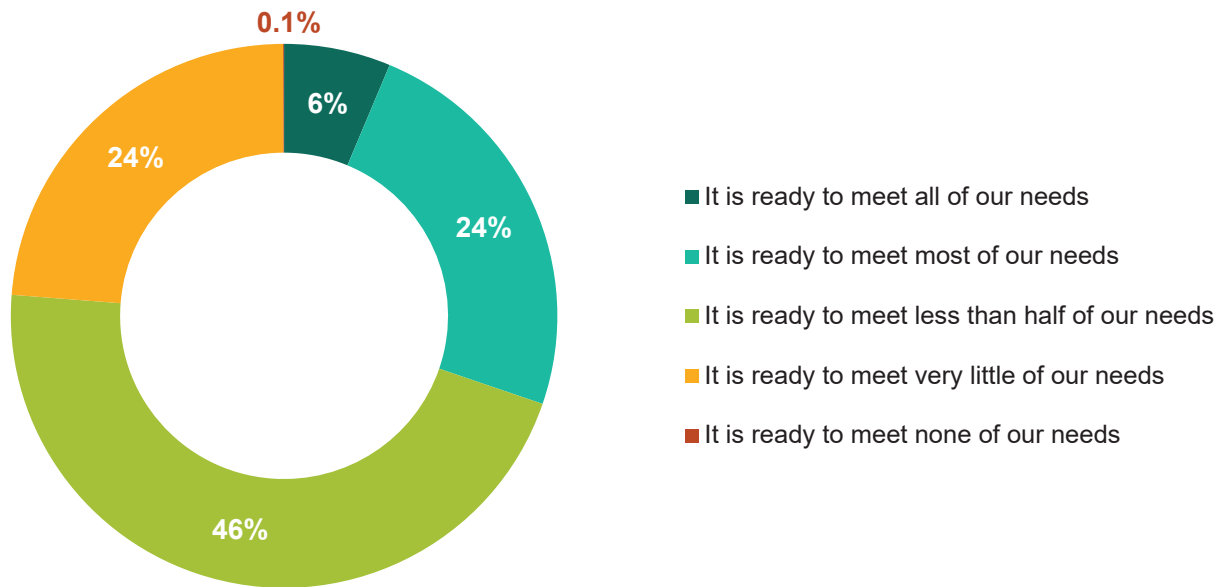
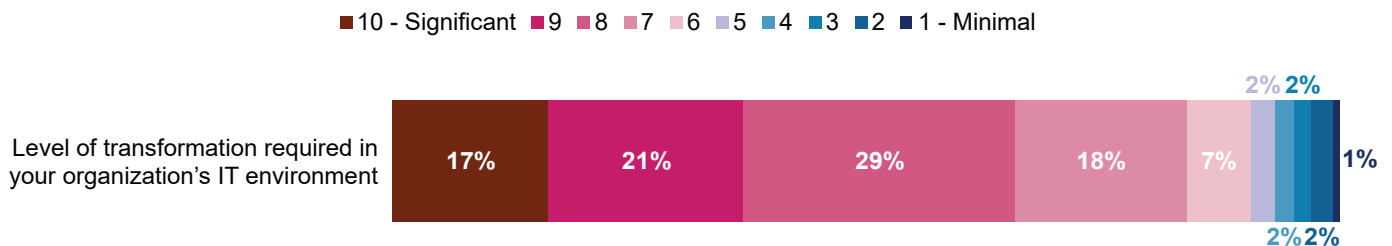


Figure 4: Level of transformation required to support new business strategies

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: How would you rate the level of transformation required in your organization's IT environment to support new business strategies over the next five years?
(Single-Select Response; n=1,805)



To lift themselves up to higher levels of capability, organizations will need not only to embrace better management tools and procedures, but they will need to consider how they'll reskill their existing workforce. As Figure 5 suggests, lacking the right skills is perceived as a major blocker. This is why they'll need investment in people, processes and systems that will help them overcome skills gaps, operate more efficiently and increase operational visibility.

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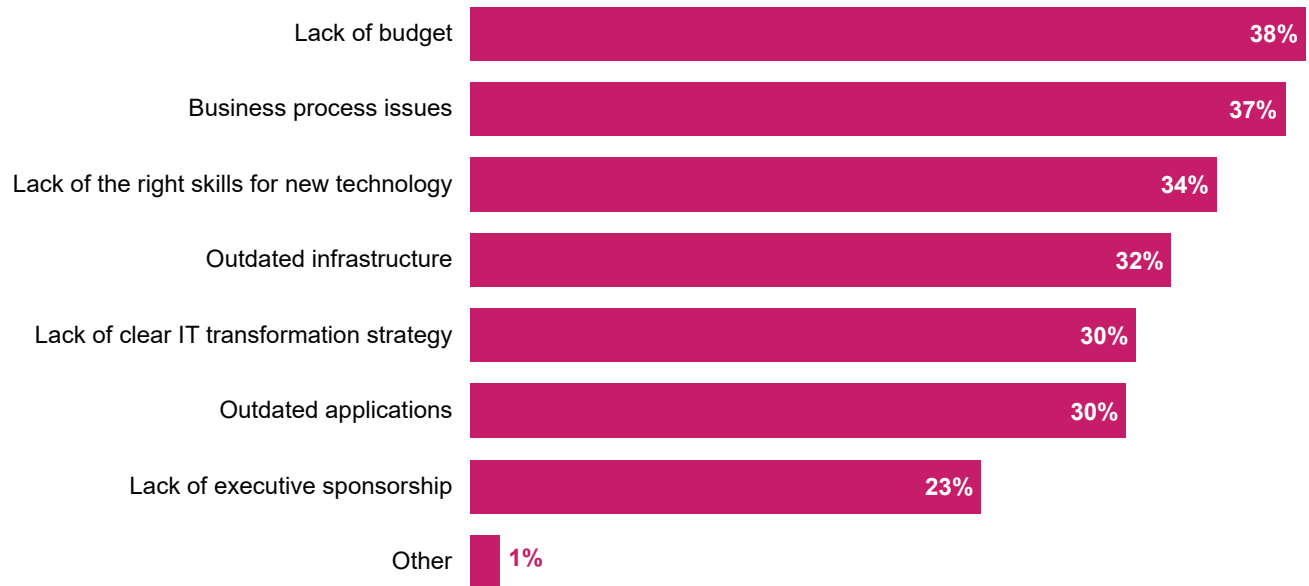
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Figure 5: Challenge blockers

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: What are some 'blockers' preventing your organization from delivering on these challenges?
(Multi-Select Response; n=1,805)



Expectation for the Path Forward

The organizations in the study were well aware of the limitations of their current environments, even though their use of hybrid infrastructure puts them toward the front of the pack in operational maturity. We asked respondents to identify how effectively they believe their infrastructure is being managed, and 83% said that they could be doing better (Figure 6). About a third (31%) felt that they could be much more effective than they are. That's a useful level of awareness that ought to drive them to improve their management systems.

The leading management challenge reported in the study is security, well outpacing others. There are many issues that could be driving security concerns, and the complexity of hybrid multicloud infrastructures is certainly among them. Organizations need to ensure that, as part of their broader transformation efforts, their security capabilities are transformed as well.

We've identified improving automation as one way to address both security and scale, and there are two others that are important to note: the integration of management systems and the adaptation of tool chains that support development and operations. Integrating management systems can have several benefits, and we asked our panel about their expectations.

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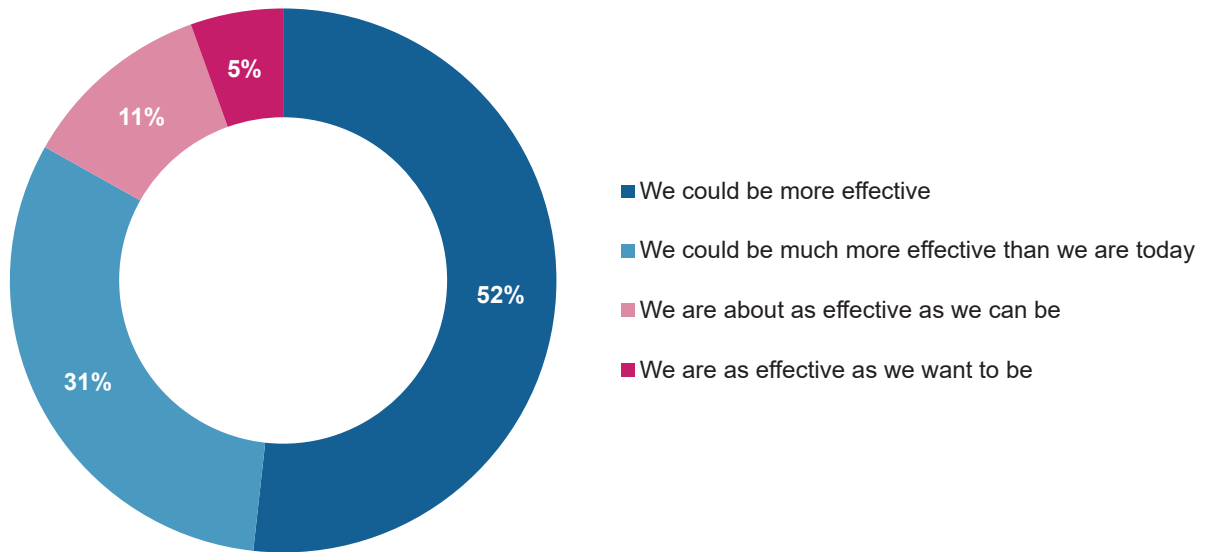
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Figure 6: Effectiveness of IT infrastructure management

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: How effectively do you feel that your IT infrastructure is managed today?

(Single-Select Response; n=1,805)



We asked respondents about the high-level capabilities they have in use and how they expect to expand over time. Organizations need to be able to standardize the way in which their infrastructure is consumed to reduce operational friction and increase the speed of development and innovation. Federating provisioning across multiple providers can make this possible. At the same time, federated identity management is necessary to enable this improvement to ensure that the appropriate resource controls are able to span the full breadth of hybrid multicloud environments.

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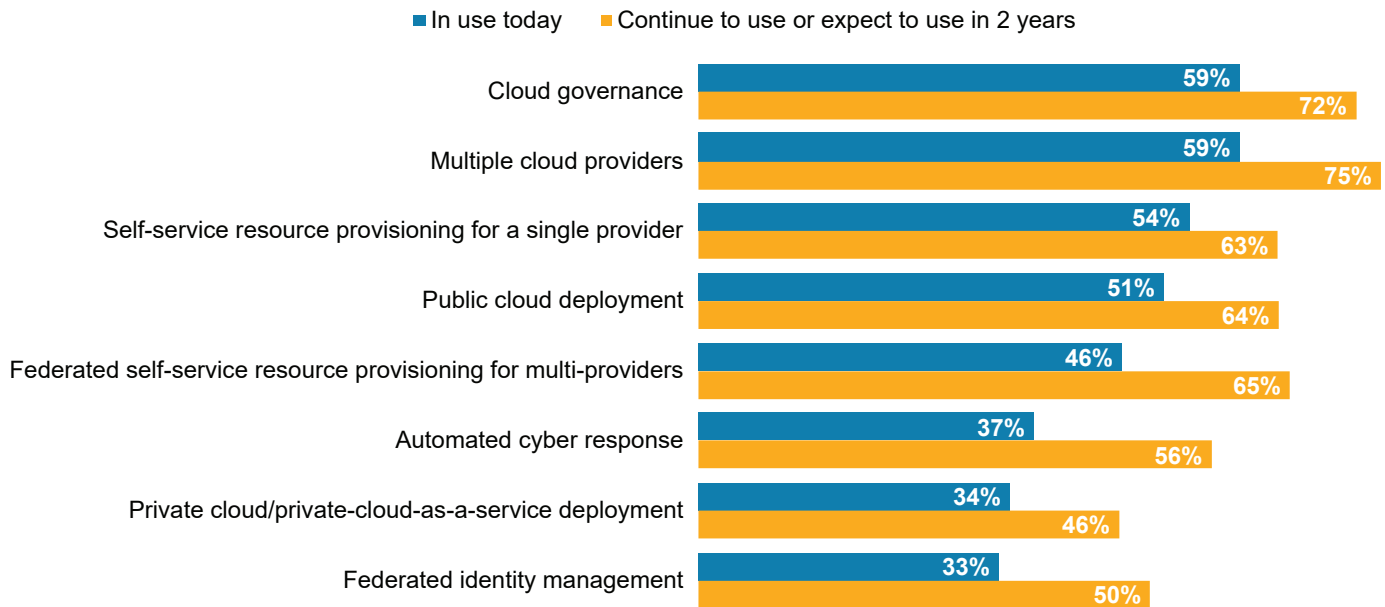
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Figure 7: Capability expansion

Source: 451 Research Custom Study

Q: Which of the following capabilities does your environment offer today? (Multi-Select Response; n=1,805)

Q: Which of the following capabilities will your environment continue to offer or begin to offer in two years? (n=1,805)



Improvements in security can be driven by a pair of factors: increased visibility and normalized controls. The greatest impact increased visibility can have is to correlate activity across resources more efficiently. If analysis has to take place in isolated environments, critical relationships and common links could be missed. Managing effective security policies across hybrid environments can be tremendously complicated and error-prone, leaving gaps open to exploitation, if done independently. Integrated management can normalize the different security controls and allow unified policy management and posture assessment.

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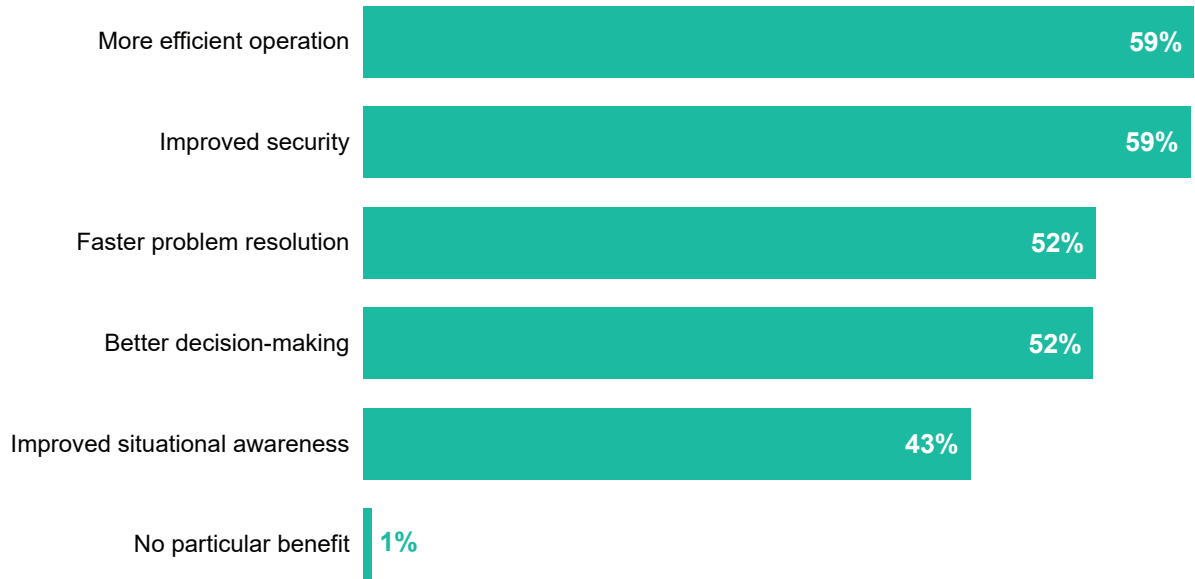
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Figure 8: Benefits of a consolidated view of IT infrastructure

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: What benefits would you attribute to a single, consolidated view of your IT infrastructure?

(Multi-Select Response; n=1,805)



The benefits of these improvements don't accrue solely to the IT and development teams who have direct contact. Integrated management creates a shared repository for operational data across the infrastructure.

These changes are important and critical to organizational success and may be complicated to achieve as an entirely internal effort. This is the sentiment represented by a question in Figure 9 on how members of our panel expect to modernize their capabilities. A full 76% said they expect to leverage a partner as part of their improvements. For some, offloading the management responsibilities onto a third-party specialist also helps solve the skills gap issue, and allows them to refocus their department onto meeting new strategic priorities.

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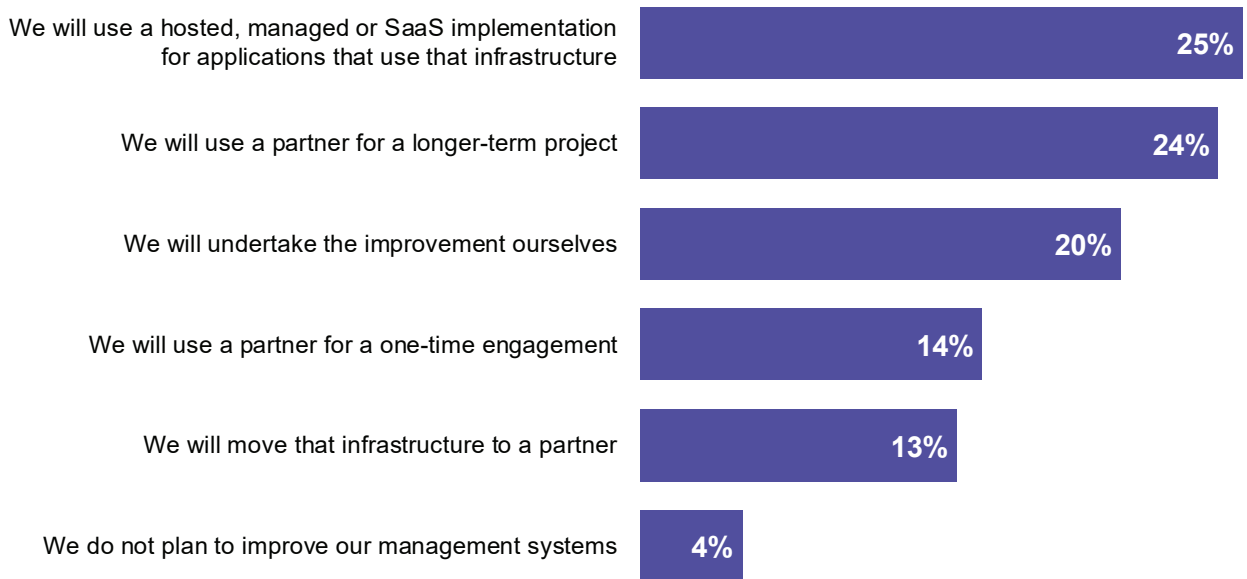
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Figure 9: Plans to improve management

Source: 451 Research custom survey

Q: What are your plans to improve the management of your IT infrastructure?

(Single-Select Response; n=1,805)



Only 20% felt that they would do the work themselves, an indication that there is a reasonable understanding of the size of the task, as well as an understanding that an outside perspective could present options that might not have been considered internally.



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