



2023 KPMG US Technology Survey Report

# Meticulously ambitious

Enterprises advance with targeted  
digital investments and transformation

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In May and June 2023, KPMG conducted an online survey of 400 US enterprise technology leaders. The sample included C-suite technology executives (46 percent) and senior technology decision makers (54 percent) representing US organizations across eight industry sectors with annual revenue above \$100 million. The survey was designed to track trends in the current and future states of digital technologies and transformation programs. Survey questions explored technology leader views on emerging technology goals, adoption, scale, roadmaps, and outcomes.

# Foreword

## Pressure can break you or make you stronger.

An uncertain business landscape has not knocked the digital transformation journeys of US enterprises offtrack. The 2023 KPMG US Technology Survey demonstrates how laser-focused digital acceleration and investments are enabling US businesses to capitalize on technology's promise, even as they navigate economic, geopolitical, regulatory, and customer volatility.

Despite looming challenges, the research reveals confidence about the value technology can deliver—and even a rush to embrace the latest innovations, such as generative artificial intelligence (AI). Although 65 percent of US technology executives say they are now expected to do more with less budget, leadership buy-in for emerging technology has more than tripled compared to last year.

The findings also show progress in the success rates of recent digital transformation journeys. The majority of US businesses (71 percent) are confident they will be able to grow the business using their existing technology stack. For important technologies such as data and analytics, the majority of companies have structured processes in place, and many are earning returns.

And while uplift is slower than the global average, well-placed technology investments by US businesses are already generating tangible value. On average, 56 percent of technology leaders say returns from digital transformation investments have exceeded their expectations and 45 percent of businesses have increased profitability or performance from those investments. This is in spite of organizational hurdles, such as lack of coordination in the technology function, which remain persistent transformation bottlenecks in many organizations.

The 2023 KPMG US Technology Survey Report provides an outlook on the digital plans and priorities of US organizations, reflecting data from 400 US enterprise technology leaders and analysis and perspectives of industry and KPMG thought leaders. As technology reshapes businesses and societies, it sheds light on how intentional digital transformation—focused efforts aligned with strategic ambitions—can propel businesses toward their growth and resilience goals, now and in the digital future.



*“It is very clear in the survey, and also observable as a market phenomenon, that digital transformation delivers results. For most sectors, from boards on down, there is a tremendous strategic focus on improving organizational performance through investment in technology. Organizations have developed their transformation capabilities and returns are following, driving ongoing enthusiasm for investment in this space.”*

– **Barry Brunzman**,  
Principal and Global CIO Center of  
Excellence Leader, KPMG in the US

# Key findings



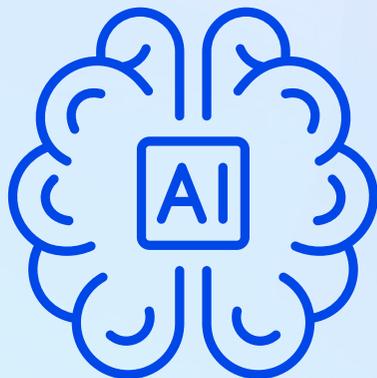
**56%**  
say the returns from digital transformation investments had exceeded their expectations.



**32%**  
The number of businesses with leadership buy-in for emerging tech has more than tripled from 10% to 32%.



**65%**  
say in comparison to last year, they are expected to do more with less budget.



**AI is seen as the most important technology** for achieving short-term ambitions.



**45%**  
have increased profitability or performance from digital transformation investments.



**Technology functions lacking coordination is the #1 hurdle** for transformation progress.

# Digital effectiveness:

## Transformation returns exceed expectations

Technology is everywhere—its presence ubiquitous and its possibilities endless. Using it as a business enabler is a crucial competitive challenge; doing it effectively is what sets winning companies apart. The primary value technology leaders can contribute to their businesses is the ability to optimize how technology is deployed within their organization’s business and operational models to generate tangible, strategic value.

Against this backdrop, the current state of play for enterprise technology is encouraging.

### Digital transformation is paying off

Digital effectiveness of US businesses is strong, as measured by the outcomes achieved from implementing various technologies compared to expectations. Across all transformation metrics surveyed, US organizations reaped better-than-anticipated rewards 24 months after deployment. On average, 56 percent of respondents say returns on their digital transformation investments exceeded their expectations.

The benefits companies achieved spanned numerous important areas, speaking to the significant power of digital transformation: increasing employee productivity, improving efficiency and cost cutting, enhancing customer engagement, raising employee satisfaction, supporting new business development, and enabling innovation.

In addition, a significant portion of respondents—though at 45 percent, not the majority—say their organizations have used digital transformation to improve profitability or performance in some way.

Based on recent successful digital transformation, most technology executives feel confident they have a future-ready technology infrastructure already in place. Seventy-one percent of technology executives say they will be able to grow their business using their existing technology stack.

A common adage of executives, advisers, and analysts only a few years ago was that approximately 70 percent of IT-enabled transformation failed. Now, we see more than nearly half of them driving very real outcomes. How technology-enabled investments—and expectations for them—have evolved over the years speaks to a broadening understanding that technology is not distinct from how businesses operate today as well as the increasing maturity of technology delivery.

**For the majority of US respondents the returns from digital transformation investments have exceeded expectations.**



## Companies make progress with data analytics and cloud

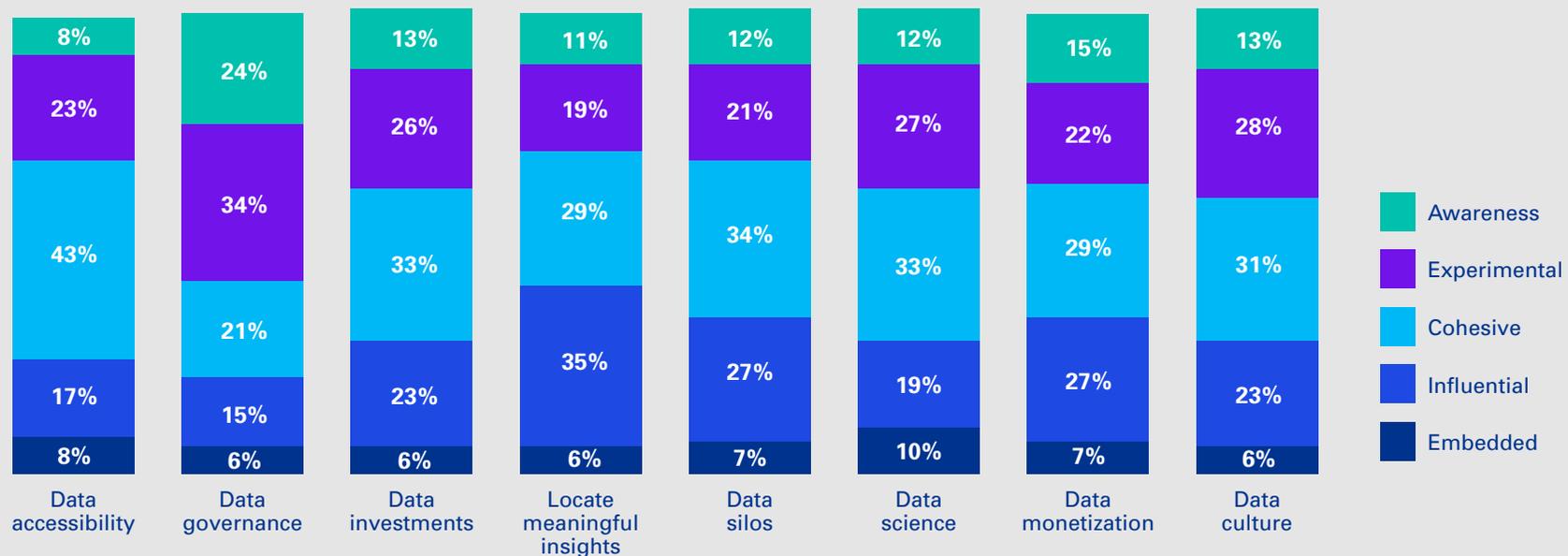
Investments in certain technologies have been especially successful. Data and analytics stands out as an investment-worthy space: 49 percent of respondents saw positive gains from data and analytics projects over the last 12 months and 14 percent were able to frequently generate returns. We also see evidence that companies are taking steps to mature how they manage and use their data. Across all areas of data management, the majority of companies report having structured processes, with data governance as a particular strength.

KPMG's research on the future of IT describes the correlation between organizational maturity with enterprise data management and analytics and business performance, showing how small improvements mount up to eventually propel nearly exponential growth in outcomes.

But while companies recognize the value of their data and are executing their strategy with some success, there is room for improvement: only a minority say their approach to data and analytics is embedded through the enterprise (12 percent) or influential—a fundamental part of the business strategy, with well-defined processes mostly adhered to across the business (21 percent). No matter how rich, data sets can only be leveraged to drive better business decisions when they work together to yield new, actionable insights.

**Across all data management factors measured, the majority of US businesses have structured processes. The area of most maturity is data governance and the area of least maturity is locating meaningful data insights.**

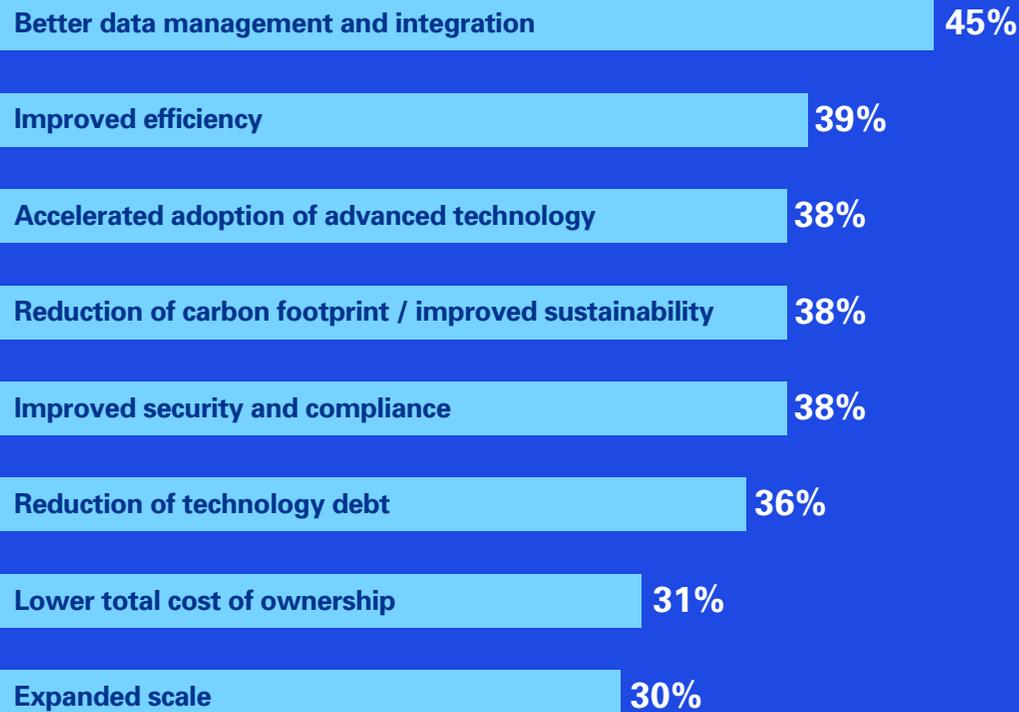
### How effective is your approach to data and analytics in the following areas? (US respondents)



Similarly, public cloud platforms are bearing fruit, with 44 percent of companies having achieved an uplift in profitability or performance in the past 24 months. Companies have achieved several key benefits from leveraging cloud and XaaS technologies, led by better data management and integration (45 percent). And while trust in cloud remains a concern, 66 percent of respondents say the risks are worth it for the opportunities they create.

Yet, most businesses have yet to master cloud environments. In fact, the majority are still focused on migration to cloud platforms rather than optimizing cloud environments. Today, the main primary ambitions for cloud are supporting the operating of emerging technologies (53 percent) and connecting data sources to enable advanced analytics (51 percent).

### US companies' top benefits from XaaS technologies



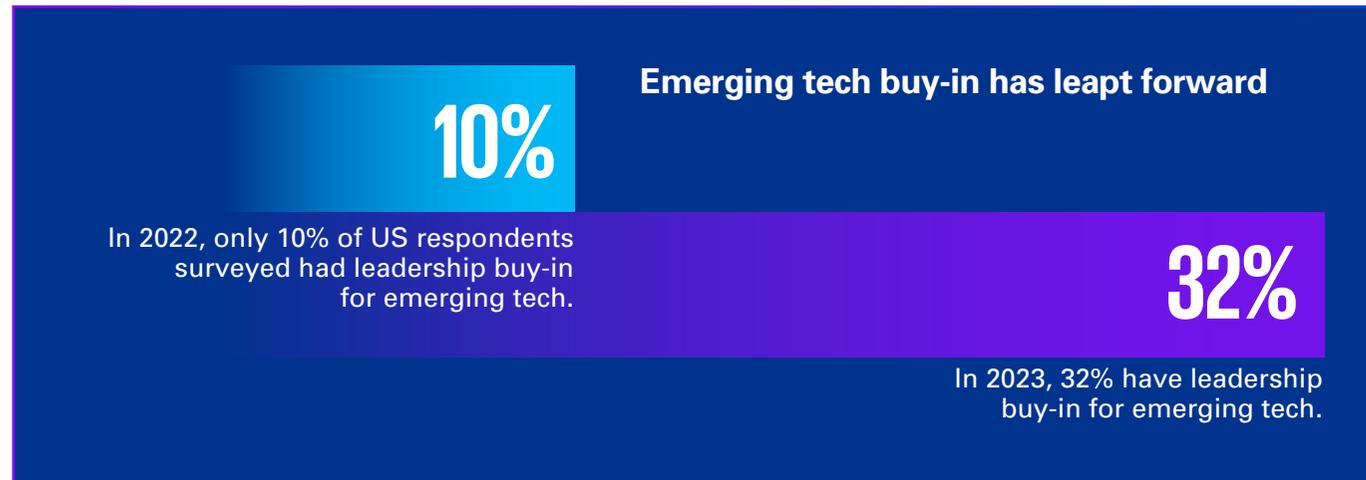
**The majority of businesses are still focused on migration to cloud platforms rather than optimizing cloud environments.**

# Digital ambitions:

## Tech faith grows despite economic headwinds

Today, technology already underpins and enables the end-to-end operations of most businesses. Tomorrow, it will continue to advance at an exponential rate, unlocking a seemingly endless realm of capabilities, opportunities, and possibilities.

Unsurprisingly, ambitions for short-term digital transformation are growing. Despite the challenges of a difficult market, our research shows little evidence of hesitation on the part of US technology leaders to use emerging tools to advance their business strategies. On the contrary, leadership is rushing to embrace emerging technology: The number of businesses with leadership buy-in for emerging tech has more than tripled, from 10 percent to 32 percent.



### Guided by ROI

Of course, not every project can make the agenda—especially when economic headwinds are tightening technology budgets for the foreseeable future. According to this research, 65 percent of technology leaders say in comparison to last year, they are expected to do more with less budget.

Wide-ranging issues are affecting US businesses' investment confidence, with at least 60 percent of respondents selecting at least one of the following seven factors: complex regulatory developments, lack of understanding and trust in new technologies, geopolitical volatility, cost escalation, growing market competitiveness or falling sales, economic uncertainty, and customer or shareholder sentiment.



“In every environment I’ve been in, when returns are clearly demonstrated, further capacity follows. Take the capacity allotted and manage it well to deliver. Demonstrate returns in one area of the business, perhaps around customer-facing tools or machine learning optimizations of a major balance sheet item, and you’ll soon see that other business units will want to be involved. Then you’re in the space where your business is willing to look holistically at its budget and make reassignments.”

– **John (jt) Tonnison**,  
Executive Vice President and Chief  
Information & Digital Officer at US Foods,  
about demonstrating value during market  
uncertainty

Source: KPMG Global Tech Report 2023

For US companies deciding where to invest in emerging technologies, most take an approach based on tangible, value-driven metrics. When asked about the motivation behind their technology investment choices, the most common reason for US respondents across technology types is proven return on investment. This is in contrast to the global survey population, which is primarily driven by a desire to copy market-leading competitors that have already adopted a particular technology.

## AI steals the spotlight

If ROI is the guiding light for selecting technology bets, it is shining brightest on AI—the hottest technology category of the time. There is no doubt that the AI boom is here, and companies are leaning in. AI and machine learning—which includes fast-advancing and highly disruptive generative AI tools—is seen as the most important technology for achieving short-term ambitions over the next three years, selected by 52 percent of respondents. This significantly outranks the next technologies in the rankings: robotics and automation (45 percent) and augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) (43 percent). The top three benefits of AI for US businesses are (1) enhanced customer engagement, (2) increased employee productivity, and (3) supported new business development.

While technology leaders are excited about the potential for AI, they are still in the early stages of leveraging it. In fact, the research shows many AI strategies returning to the drawing board as the rapid pace of AI advancements—in generative AI in particular—forces businesses to revisit their technology foundations and strategies. In this year's survey, just 10 percent of respondents describe themselves as proactive with AI.

To capitalize on the full potential of AI, businesses need strong IT infrastructure capabilities that integrate multiple technologies and capabilities—from analytics to automation. Businesses also need to deepen data expertise, processes, and governance to ensure proper and effective use of generative AI tools and navigate the challenges of AI ethics, safety, and decision-making.



“Manually reading and digesting information is going out of fashion in favor of more conversational styles of communication—where the exact information a customer is searching for is served up to them in a personalized way. So we are looking at our assets and saying: ‘That’s going to go out of fashion over time. How are we going to communicate with our customers going forward? How do we make our products more conversational, and what new products and business opportunities come with this new channel of interaction?’”

– **Swamy Kocherlakota,**

Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer at S&P Global, on why the financial index firm is assessing how the likes of generative AI is moving customer behaviors toward more conversational engagement experiences.

Source: KPMG Global Tech Report 2023

## Factors affecting US businesses' investment confidence

Complex regulatory developments **66%**

Lack of understanding or trust of new technologies **65%**

Geopolitical volatility **65%**

Cost escalation **65%**

Growing market competitiveness / falling sales **64%**

Economic uncertainty **63%**

Customer or shareholder sentiment **61%**

## ESG rises on the digital agenda

While reaching new regions and customer demographics is the #1 focal area for digital investments in this year's research, a notable priority shift is advancing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) priorities and commitments. Many organizations (45 percent) rank progressing toward ESG targets as a primary innovation goal for the technology function over the next two years, ranking it as the second most important goal.

Many technology functions appear ready to contribute toward ESG priorities. Opportunities to use technology to improve both environmental and social impacts are significant and US businesses are making progress. Three-quarters or more respondents agree—to some extent or a great extent—that the technology function plays an instrumental role in the following initiatives: reducing carbon emissions by improving efficiency or changing technologies; supporting measurement and reporting of carbon emissions; developing more sustainable products and services; supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; ensuring the workforce behaves ethically; and contributing to social causes.

For example, data and analytics tools can be used to track carbon emissions performance, manage reporting, and identify improvements, and support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives during recruitment. Innovative technologies can also be used to develop more sustainable products and services, such as in manufacturing operations.

AI / machine learning (including generative AI)

52%

Robotics / automation

45%

VR / AR (including the metaverse)

43%

Edge computing (including IoT)

38%

Quantum computing

38%

Web3 (including tokenization)

32%

5G

30%

XaaS technologies

22%

**The most important technologies for US businesses achieving their short-term ambitions over the next three years.**

## Innovation goals US tech functions will contribute to in next two years.

Reaching new regions / customer demographics

47%

Advancing ESG priorities / commitments

45%

Enhancing trust through cyber threat detection and management

43%

Unlocking more value / insight from data

38%

Improving processes across the business

38%

Improving products and services

32%

Expanding into new industries

30%

# Digital trust:

## Trust guides and improves transformation

We know digitization is rampant across businesses. But what specifically propels US companies to transform with technology?

Analysis of this research indicates building and maintaining digital trust is a dominant digital transformation trigger. Digital trust is the expectation that digital technologies and services, and the organizations providing them, will provide safe and secure interactions for stakeholders (customers, suppliers, regulators, employees, investors, and communities).

### Trust needs shape digital projects

The need for digital trust is the common linking factor across the top three main triggers of digital transformation selected by the survey respondents: security concerns and regulatory obligations (56 percent), converting prospects into customers (53 percent), and upselling and cross-selling optimization to boost spend volumes (53 percent).

As digital tools play an increasingly large role in stakeholder interactions, enterprise leaders recognize that secure, compliant businesses are much more effective at building and maintaining trusted relationships with their stakeholders, from customers to suppliers. This is not just a resilience necessity, but a commercial opportunity. Sixty-five percent of respondents say that improving cybersecurity and privacy helps them provide a loyalty-winning customer experience.

Further, customer expectations for strong data privacy and cybersecurity are the leading factors influencing US digital transformation projects. Customer engagement in the increasingly digital and personalized world requires a greater emphasis on privacy and security than ever before. For example, product and service upgrades made in the name of greater customer centricity—such as generative AI chatbots designed to boost loyalty and turn prospects into buyers—could do more harm than good if they fail to deliver a secure, resilient customer experience.

### Main triggers of digital transformation for US businesses

Regulatory obligations or security concerns **56%**

Upsell and cross-sell optimization to boost spend volumes **53%**

Converting prospects into customers **53%**

Fast-tracking employee productivity **48%**

Customer feedback **47%**

Third party / partner ecosystem **44%**

## Trusted transformation leads to better outcomes

The stakes for embedding security into digital transformation projects are high. Digital environments present a range of risks that can have a serious impact on business performance and reputation. Adoption of new technologies, greater connectivity, and changes to the technology infrastructure of the business can increase cybersecurity risk by expanding the target area of attack or exposing points of weakness.

As such, a key focus area for technology risk teams is taking measures to protect the enterprise, its data, and its customers. Selected by 54 percent of respondents, keeping up increasingly demanding cybersecurity regulation ranks as the top technology risk goal for US tech functions. The second leading technology risk priority is to reinforce the trust customers and clients have in cybersecurity and protection of the business (52 percent).

Many enterprises are driving positive digital transformation results by taking a proactive approach to security, rather than tackling it as an afterthought. Sixty-four percent of respondents agree that managing risk at early stages (security and control by design) significantly increases the success rates of transformation programs.

Trusted parameters embedded into the foundational technology stack help increase confidence that the organization and its stakeholders will be protected even as it changes. As such, these companies will be able to move forward with digital transformation more rapidly, and with greater focus and intent.

## US firms' cybersecurity priorities

Meet an increasingly demanding set of regulatory requirements and drivers for cybersecurity **54%**

Reinforce the trust that customers and clients have in the cybersecurity and protection **52%**

Build resilience to be able to recover from an attack quickly and with minimal impact **50%**

Securing a complex ecosystem of third parties and external service providers **49%**

Help the enterprise confidently explore the potential of emerging technologies **48%**

Automate, streamline and embed security into the core of the business **47%**

# Digital challenges:

## Organizational issues threaten momentum

This research shows that future digital transformation success will be tied to how technology leaders address collaboration, talent, and cultural weaknesses across the organization. Organizational bottlenecks, enterprise leaders say, are even greater transformation hurdles than technical ones.



“The key to becoming a digitally enabled enterprise is having adaptability. Moving towards an agile model challenges your conventional way of doing things. At times, it is a little bit scary, because you are rewiring how an enterprise naturally thinks.”

– **Nandha Kumar,**

Chief Information Tech and Data Officer for Americas at Danone, on why unlocking enterprise agility is key to digital transformation success.

Source: KPMG Global Tech Report 2023

### Lack of coordination is the #1 hurdle

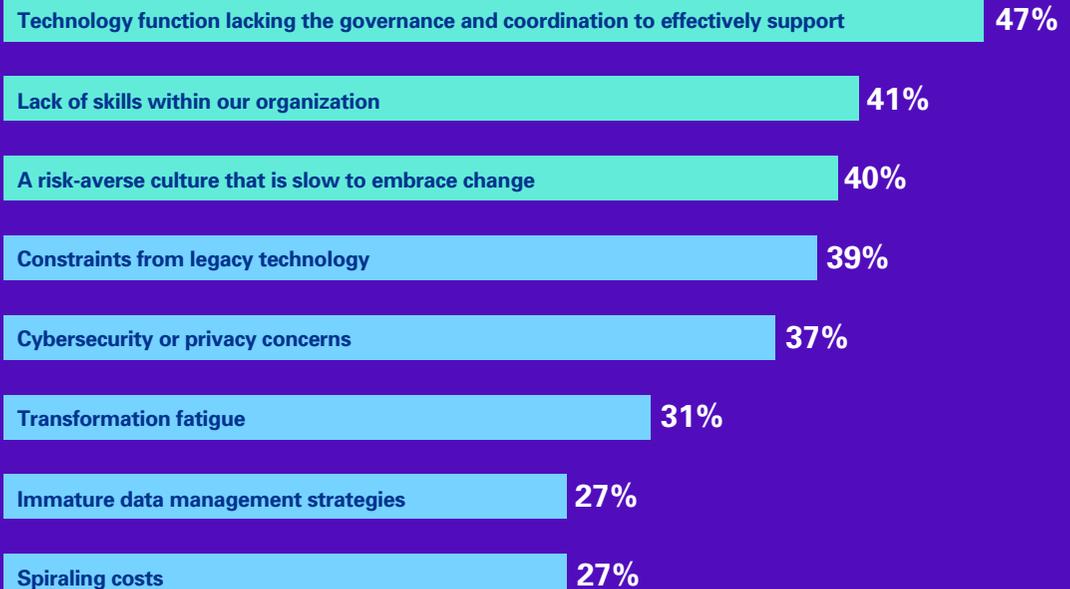
Technology departments lacking coordination is the challenge most likely to slow down enterprises' transformation progress. Almost half of businesses (47 percent) say their technology function lacks the governance and coordination it needs to effectively support transformation initiatives.

Communication breakdowns are prevalent between IT and top business decision makers. Sixty-one percent of respondents think the technology function needs to get better at helping the board to understand the potential of new emerging technologies.

In these organizations, collaboration problems may threaten to derail digital transformation journeys before they even begin. After all, executive buy-in is essential for inspiring change and investing in new technology, and though it has grown considerably over last year, the majority of businesses (68 percent) still struggle with it.

Given the wide variety of digital transformation outcomes companies are pursuing, everything companies do to improve collaboration and simplify coordination is important to achieving results, from setting clear objectives for transformation programs to targeting specific metrics aligned to strategic and commercial goals.

### Challenges most likely to slow down transformation in US companies



It is also crucial for seizing the advantages of agility—an essential attribute for thriving in the digital economy. Functional silos sabotage the agility organizations need to adapt to the landscape around them. Knocking them down can enable companies to pivot resources in line with changing priorities; iterate products, services, and approaches to shifting business problems; and support faster-paced innovation.

### Supporting enterprise-wide digital literacy

Digital teams can also improve at collaborating effectively with the wider business. Today's pace of technological change demands strategic, agile collaboration across business functions. Yet, 57 percent of technology leaders say employee resistance influences their companies' investment decisions with new technologies. In addition, 4 in 10 (40 percent) say their organization's digital transformation journey is hindered by an overall risk-averse culture that is slow to embrace change.



*“In a business or industry that is not digital native, there is onus on the digital folks to lead with advisory skills. To create and sell a vision for a digital future and provide inspiration for change. To bridge the language gap between lived experiences and digital potential.”*

– **John (jt) Tonnison**,  
Executive Vice President and Chief  
Information & Digital Officer at US Foods  
on the importance of soft skills in the  
technology department

Source: KPMG Global Tech Report 2023

Overcoming functional silos to support fast-paced, seamless digital change will require new types of talent and ways of working. Indeed, a common transformation barrier—cited as a leading challenge by 41 percent of respondents—is a lack of skills within the organization.

Notably, the main skill gaps enterprises are seeking to fill are not necessarily what comes to mind when considering the complexities of running a modern IT function. The essential attributes businesses seek in their talent are actually soft skills, not deep technical expertise. Creativity and innovation are the leading personality traits sought, and ability to teach others is the most in-demand technical skill, followed closely by technical/digital literacy.

These findings show how enabling the enterprise to identify and seize opportunities of exciting new technologies is a twofold challenge: growing digital understanding of nontechnology people, while building soft skills of specialized technical professionals with know-how about the latest digital innovations. A healthy balance is required, and technology functions can lead the way.

 <b>Personality attributes US businesses look for in their employees</b>	 <b>Technical skills US businesses look for in their employees</b>
Creativity and innovation	Ability to teach others
Ethical understanding (for working with AI, etc.)	Technical / digital literacy
Ability to persuade	Data fluency

# Digital acceleration:

## How to transform with intent

Business strategy and technology strategy are no longer distinct. What organizations do to win in the marketplace is almost always underpinned by some sort of technology investment.

Technology leaders are determined to get the outcomes their businesses have now come to expect from digital technologies. To build on successes to date, they must do it intentionally—with trust, collaboration, and agility at the core. Digital leaders—the subset of respondents that have experienced a real difference in performance from their transformation programs\*—agree the essential attributes for organizations to thrive in a digital economy are cybersecurity and privacy embedded in tech selection and staff education, agility to accurately respond to market signals, and increased empathy and communication between business functions.

Even in a supportive market environment, investing in technology for the sake of it would be indulgent; in today's challenging times, transformation must be tied to clear business outcomes linked to bottom-line returns.

**To digitally transform with intent, consider the following actions:**

**Squeeze more out of the existing technology stack:** Respondents say they will do more with less going into next year, in part due to lack of confidence in the markets. While wariness is prudent, capital constraints real, and budget reduction sometimes unavoidable, the focus for most companies should be on the “do more” part of the equation. Businesses will continue to feel the pull to deliver business outcomes through digital transformation. Rather than battering down the hatches to wait out a possible downturn, there is ample opportunity to capitalize on the investments they have already made in technology modernization, considering that the majority of respondents think they can deliver their digital aspirations with their current technology stack.

**Marry customer experience with customer trust:** This research shows how cybersecurity and customer experience have come together to become primary drivers of digital transformation. The connection could not be clearer—enterprises today simply cannot create and maintain rewarding customer relationships without trusted solutions. Ensuring data is secure and people have control over how it is used should be a guiding light as businesses invest in creating products and services that people will engage with.

\* This research defines digital leaders as the subset of respondents who reported (1) having built technology stacks that they are confident will deliver their digital transformation goals and (2) having already started to generate profit or performance uplifts from their technology investments.

**Expand data and analytics beyond the domain of data scientists:**

The value proposition of an effective data and analytics program is clear—it is the technology most frequently generating positive uplift for companies surveyed. The gravitational pull to expand the use and scale of data and analytics is understandably strong, but the bigger and broader the investments, the more difficult enterprise data is to manage and data literacy to grow. To harness the horsepower of more of the organization's talent, start with a more rigorous assessment of data and analytics use cases. This will help high-powered data scientists and engineers deliver a better bang for their buck while democratizing the set of outcomes for more of the business.

**Revisit AI foundations and strategy:** When respondents were asked what technologies are poised to drive the greatest future returns, it is no surprise AI popped to the top. It nonetheless also makes sense that few companies are being proactive with AI. Generative AI is one of the most exciting technology developments of the recent past, and companies want to invest, but it is still evolving. Reasonable enterprises will take a step back and carefully consider what they can do with it, how it fits into their strategy, and what foundational technical and policy changes they will need to make to deploy it. In the long term, they will be better positioned to make smarter AI bets that deliver on the potential.

**Improve coordination and agility with better governance:**

56 percent of companies on average report that their transformation efforts exceeded expectations across six digital technologies. As outcomes improve, companies that are not seeing consistent returns on their digital investments are now in the minority. The most likely reason is a failure in governance. Knocking down barriers to collaboration—the biggest hurdle for transformation progress—will be critical to enterprises delivering more outcomes, faster, and with less. Changing ways of working through governance enhancements will enable enterprises to unleash the coordination and agility need to thrive in the future of business.



**56%** of companies  
say their transformation  
efforts exceeded  
expectations

# How KPMG can help

## Transformation never stops. Neither do we.

At KPMG we believe that business transformation is too good an opportunity to miss. Combining the right tech and the best processes with people whose insight is as broad as it is deep, are essential ingredients to successfully transform. KPMG in the US has worked at the heart of global businesses for many decades, helping our clients realize the full potential of their people and technology, working together to achieve real-world outcomes. Because, when people and technology are in harmony great things can happen.

## Making a world of difference:

KPMG people can make all the difference on your transformation journey. Together we can help you to orient your business around the customer, optimize functions for a new era, manage enterprise risk and regulation for a safer future, rise to a new level of value creation, and create an environment for managing ongoing change.

## Transforming for a future of value

KPMG in the US suite of business transformation technology solutions can help you engineer a different future— one of new opportunities that are designed to create and protect value.

## KPMG Connected Enterprise

KPMG's customer centric, agile approach to digital transformation, tailored by sector.



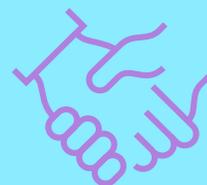
## KPMG Powered Enterprise

KPMG's suite of services to transform functions. Target operating models designed and pre-configured on leading SaaS (Software as a Service) platforms.



## KPMG Trusted

How to build and sustain the trust of your stakeholders.

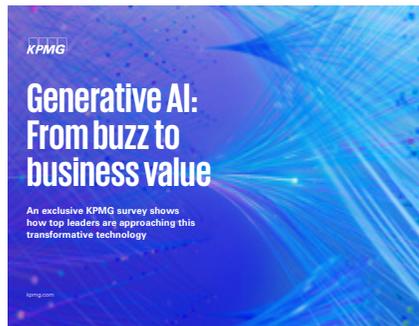


## KPMG Elevate

Unlock financial value quickly and confidently.



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[Responsible AI and the challenges of AI Risk](#)

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Bobby Soni is the Global Technology Consulting Leader at KPMG, and a well-recognized leader in the field of digital transformation in the marketplace. In this role, he helps clients accelerate their digital journey by embracing the modern digital stack, including intelligent automation, data and insights, and cloud. He also manages global investments to build industry relevant solutions, assets, and capabilities across the firm. Prior to joining KPMG, Bobby was president of a leading hardware, software, and services company, responsible for the strategy and business operations for the company's \$3 billion digital infrastructure business unit (DIBU). He drove growth and innovation for the digital infrastructure solutions business, including end-to-end data solutions, and managed services to help organizations unlock the full value of their data, with an edge-to-core-to-multicloud strategy.

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