



A CEO Playbook for the AI-Powered Enterprise

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Authors:

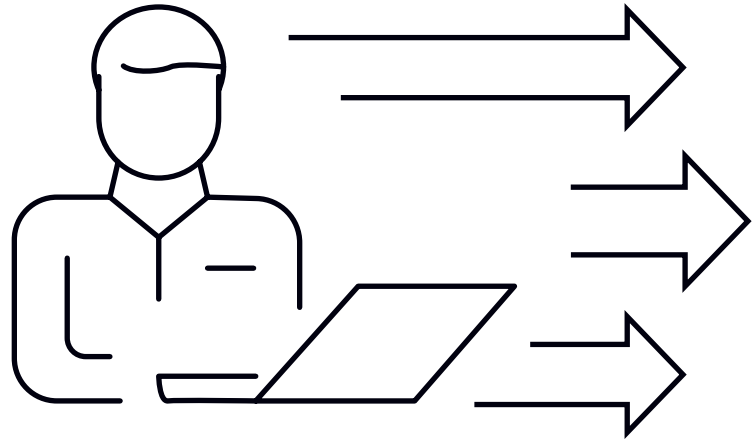
Neil-Ward Dutton, Vice President, IDC EMEA
Automation, Analytics and AI

Massimiliano Claps, IDC EMEA Research Director,
Gov Insights, Cross-industry Strategies, and Global
Public Transportation Lead Analyst

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Executive summary



In the polycrisis world, CEOs need operational agility to react to short term shocks, and a forward-thinking mindset to anticipate long-term shifts. To win in these turbulent times, successful CEOs will guide their business to become SHARP: **S**ocially responsible, **H**igh-performing, **A**ugmented by innovation, **R**esilient at the core, and **P**owered by ecosystems.

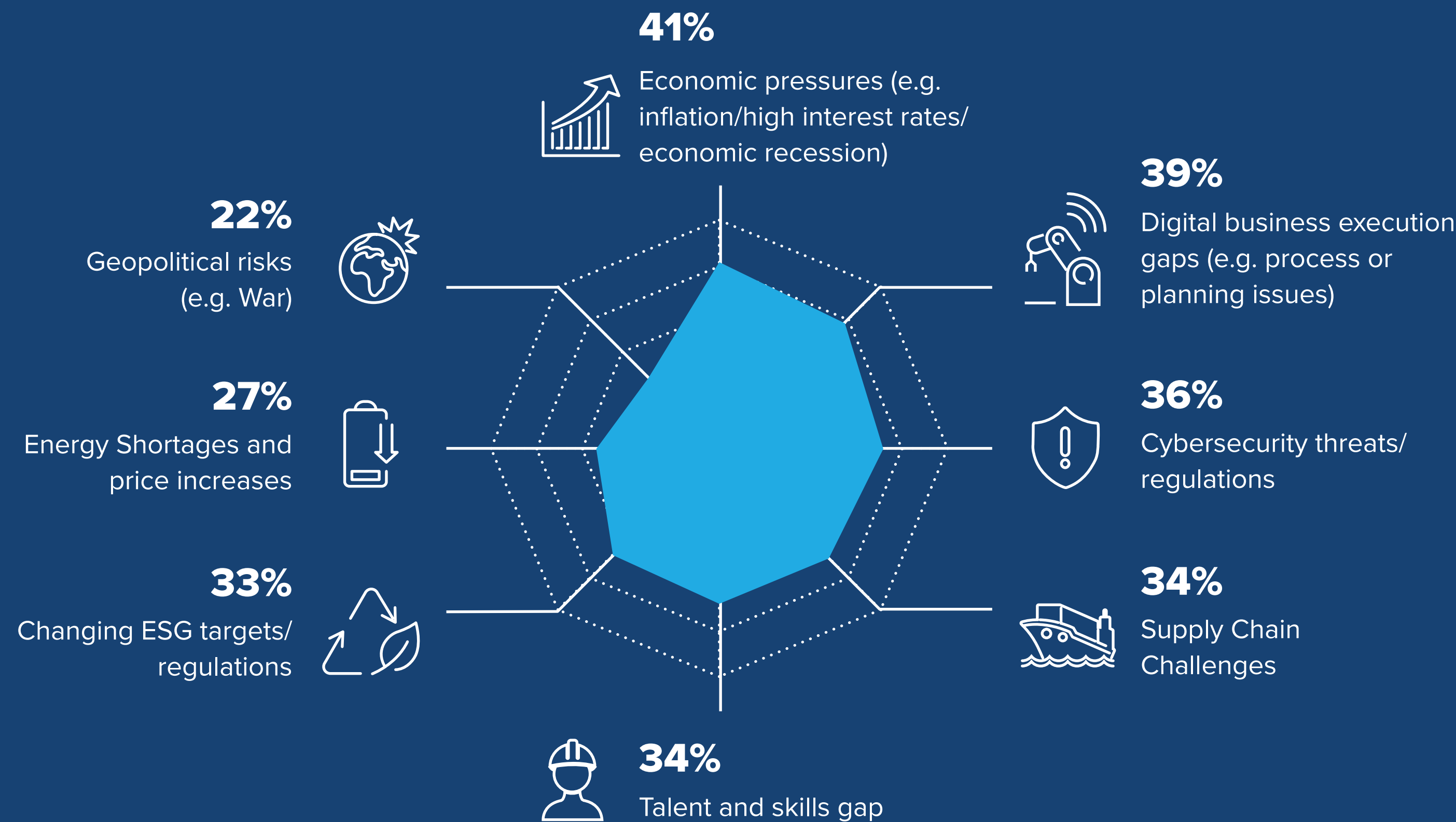
CEOs that empower their enterprise to realize the benefits and tackle the internal and societal risks of the AI Everywhere era will accelerate their organizations' journey to SHARP.

Key steps to becoming a socially responsible and organizationally competent AI-powered enterprise include creating the incentives to explore AI use cases, establishing the discipline to prioritize use cases based on expected strategic SHARP outcomes, investing in organizational competencies and capacity, ensuring responsible AI governance, and funding infrastructure and platform upgrades.



In the polycrisis world, top management needs operational agility to react to short term shocks and a forward-thinking mindset to anticipate long-term shifts.

Top political, social and economic risks that CEOs are dealing with



The old assumption that the past informs the future no longer holds true — we see a general tendency to **underestimate the influence of external trends** on the future of organizations. Such trends include generative **artificial intelligence (GenAI)**, factors linked to **trade, geopolitical disruptions, and climate and sustainability concerns**. Furthermore, it is reasonable to anticipate this list will keep changing. In practice, this means boards must adopt a more **forward-looking mindset**.

Source: Instead Knowledge

In this context, CEOs across industries understand that they need to jointly prioritize operational efficiencies, customer trust, reduced risks, talent retention, and ESG goals.

	Top business priority	Second-Highest Priority
 Energy	 Delivering operational efficiencies	 Driving digital business initiatives  Improving risk management posture
 Finance	 Improving risk management posture	 Improving customer experience
 Healthcare	 Attracting/Retaining the best talent	 Meeting ESG goals
 Manufacturing	 Meeting ESG goals  Driving digital business initiatives	 Attracting/Retaining the best talent
 Retail, wholesale and hospitality	 Improving customer experience	 Delivering operational efficiencies
 Telco, media and entertainment	 Meeting ESG goals	 Attracting/Retaining the best talent  Improving customer experience
 Transportation and logistics	 Meeting ESG goals	 Delivering operational efficiencies

To win in these turbulent times, successful CEOs will guide their business to become SHARP.

S

H

A

R

P

SOCIALLY
responsible



The 21st Century’s societal challenges demand every enterprise, individual, and public institution to take responsibility to drive positive outcomes.

HIGH
performing



Enterprises that commit to socially responsible outcomes will increase operational efficiency, uncover new market opportunities, and gain competitive differentiation, in turn freeing up resources to tackle bigger societal challenges.

AUGMENTED
by innovation



Enterprises that embrace technology innovation to unlock worker productivity, process automation, and operating model and business model transformation will balance responsibility and performance.

RESILIENT
at the core



Enterprises that have the operational and cyber capacity and competencies to quickly react to or prevent disruptions will ensure performance, positive impact on society, and regulatory compliance.

POWERED
by ecosystems



Enterprises will not be able to deliver positive societal outcomes, such as smart mobility, sustainable blue economy, active ageing, and healthy food at scale on their own: they will need to collaborate with open, dynamic ecosystems.

Achieving SHARP enterprise status is expected by financial markets, boards, and other stakeholders.

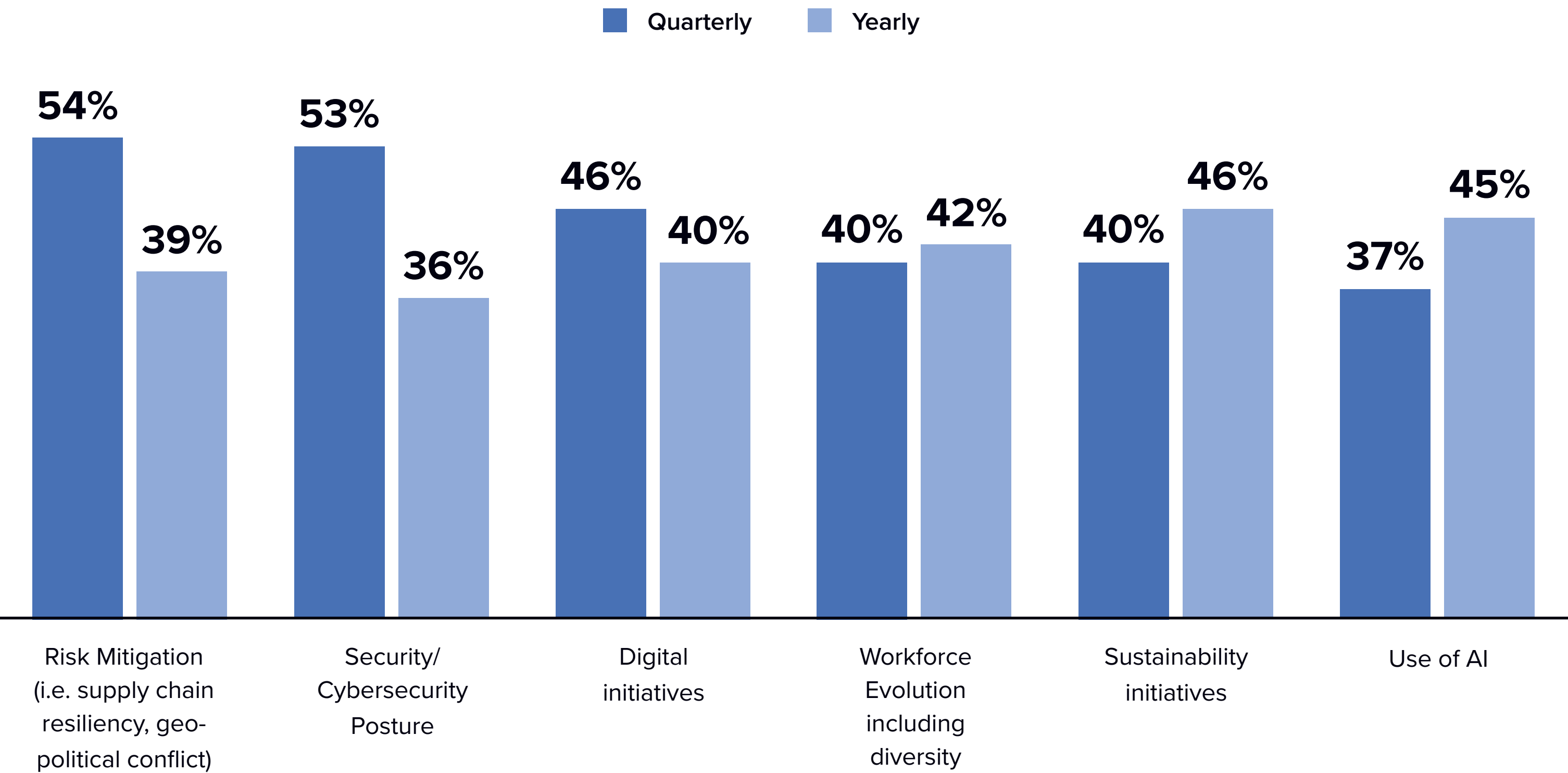


Firms with good environmental performance (measured by low emission intensity or high patenting activity in climate change mitigation technologies)

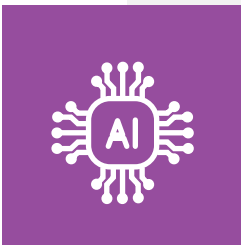
benefit from a lower cost of debt (measured by syndicated loans spread). However, assessing and pricing firms’ transition risks may require detailed firm-specific information and the capacity to analyze them that only large and sophisticated investors (such as those considered in this analysis) can afford. **Improving the quality of ESG scores is especially important** for less sophisticated and passive investors, which tend to rely on such metrics to gauge transition risks and make investment decisions accordingly.

Source: OECD

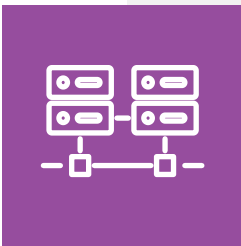
How often CEOs are required to report back to boards on non-financial KPIs




Being SHARP is even more important in the AI Everywhere era.




AI Journey
From narrow to widening AI




Intelligence Architecture
A data-centric platform underpinning the enterprise



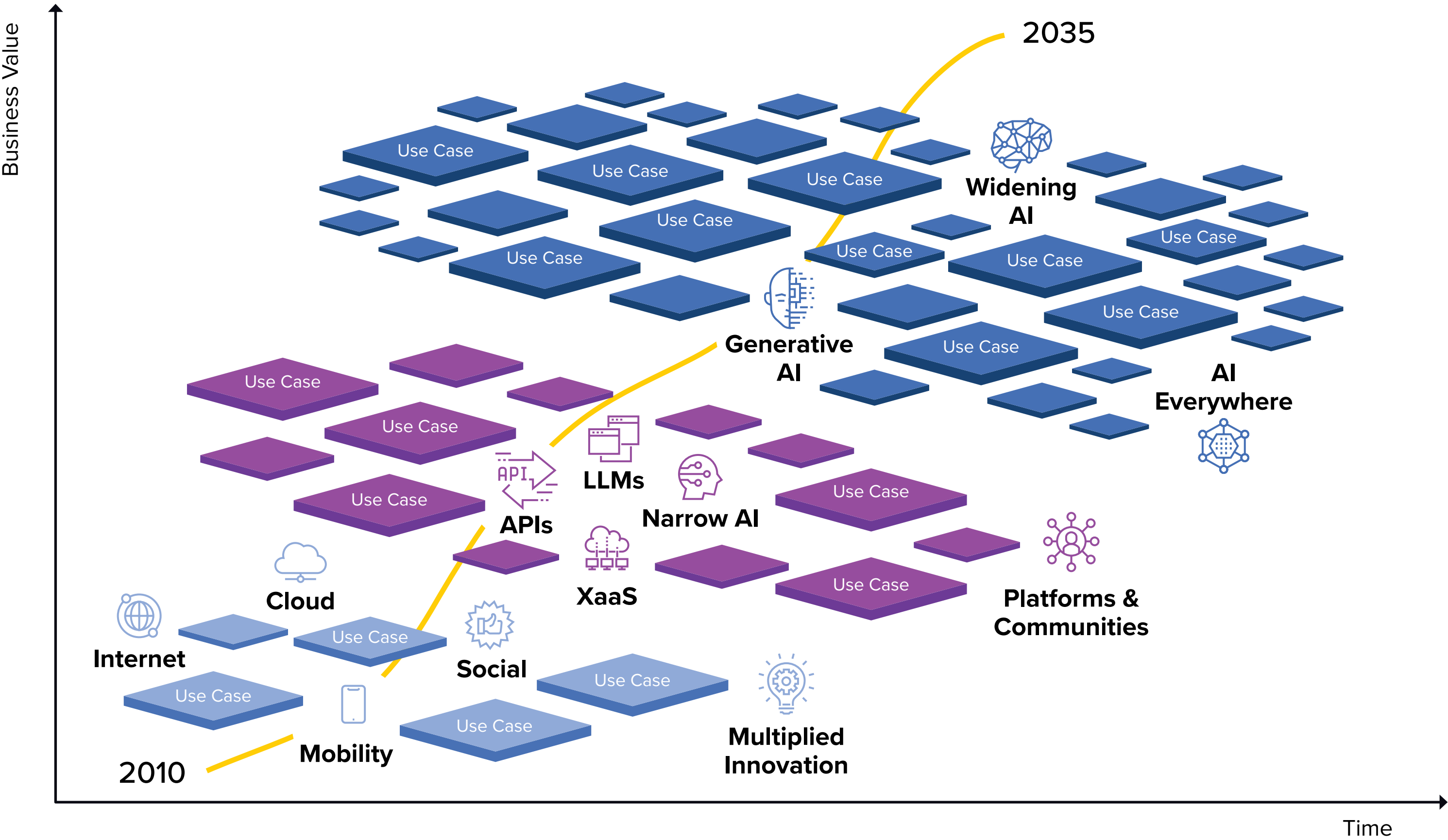
Digital Operations at Scale
Cost-effective digital infrastructure for AI workloads



Skills
Attracting and reskilling talent for transformed work models



Trust
An up-front focus on trust

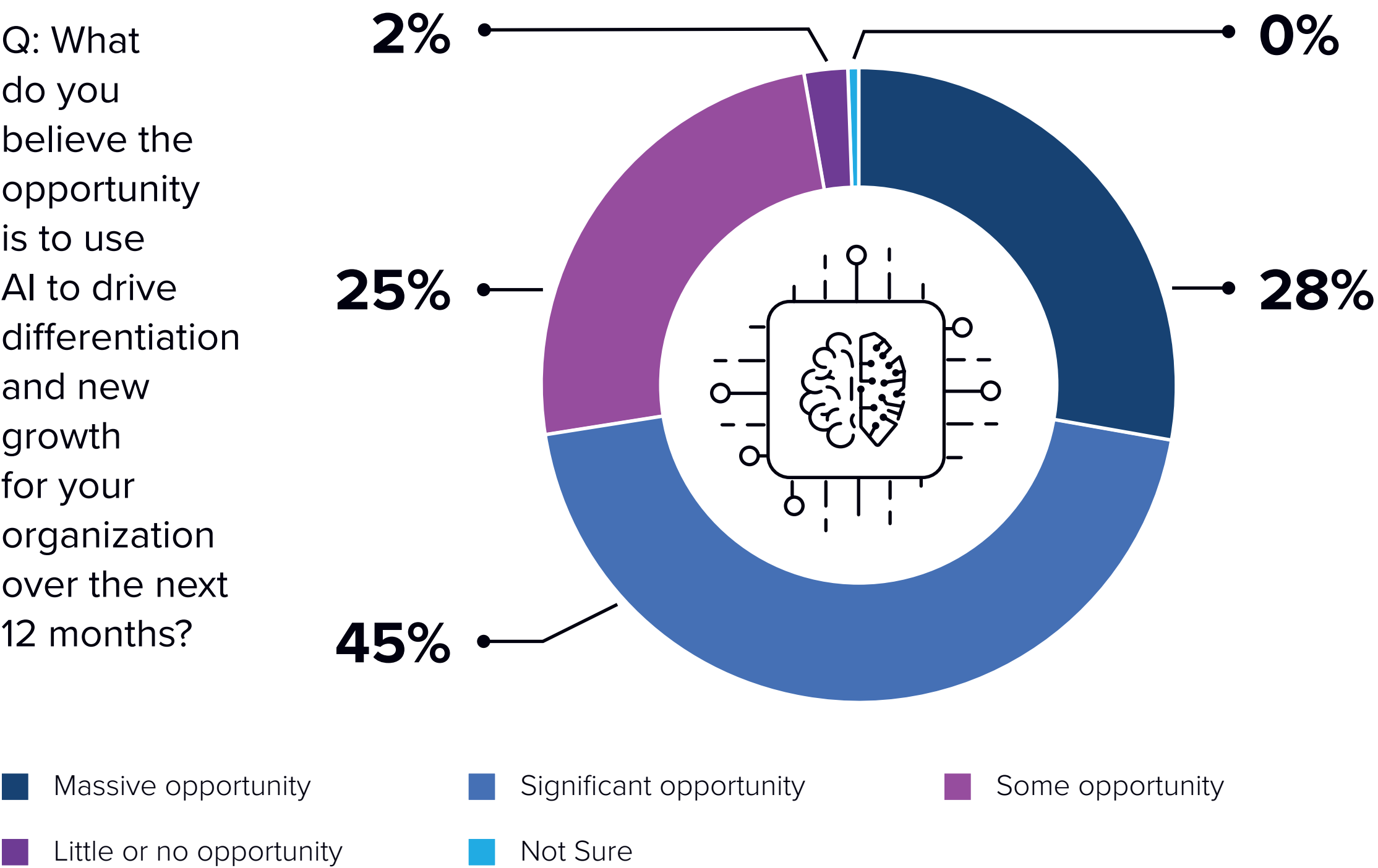


IDC believes that the transition to AI Everywhere will see the emergence of a range of new GenAI-driven use cases at an individual level (productivity based), at a business function level, and in an industry-specific context.

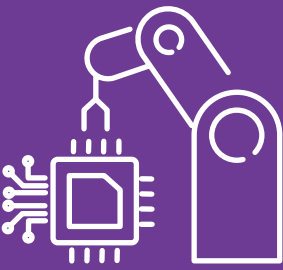
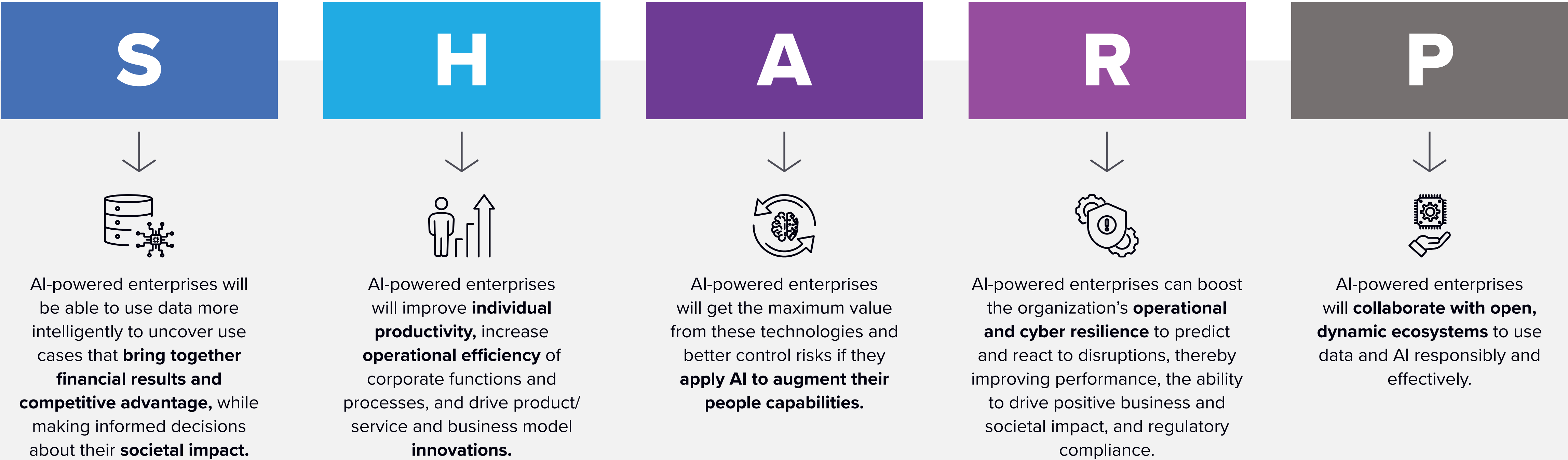
In fact, 75% of CEOs expect that AI will have a massive or significant impact on their organizations.

CEO Expectations of AI’s Impact on Their Organizations

Q: What do you believe the opportunity is to use AI to drive differentiation and new growth for your organization over the next 12 months?



AI-powered enterprises will accelerate their journey to SHARP.

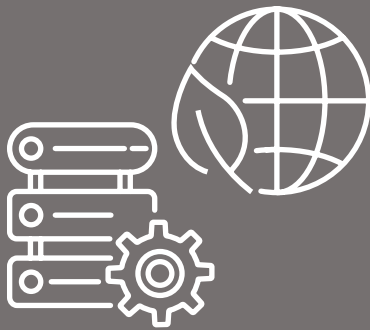


It is only economically sensible to replace human labor with AI in about one-fourth of the jobs where vision is a key component of the work.

Source: MIT CSAIL, MIT Sloan, The Productivity Institute, and IBM's Institute for Business Value study on the economic potential of AI automation of vision tasks

The top three initiatives for industry ecosystem collaboration globally are:

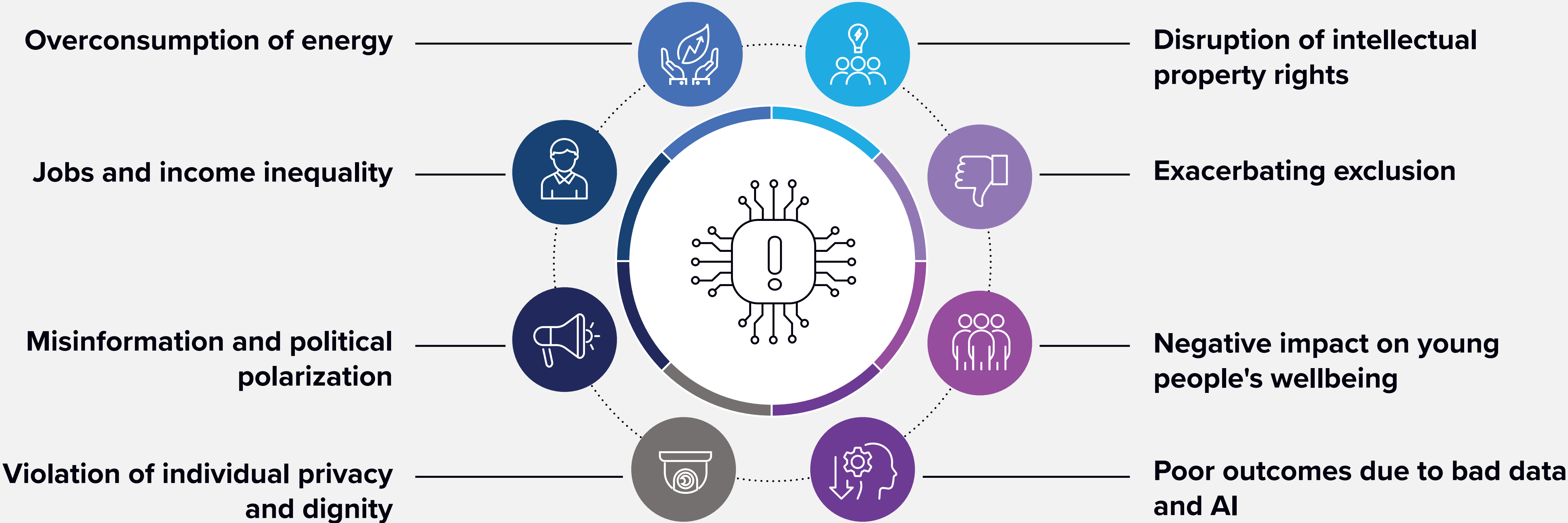
- **Sharing data and insights** to ensure security and fraud reduction
- **Sustainability** and environmental responsibility
- Accessing and **sharing LLMs** for GenAI



Technology innovation, in particular AI, can have a positive impact across different areas of society.

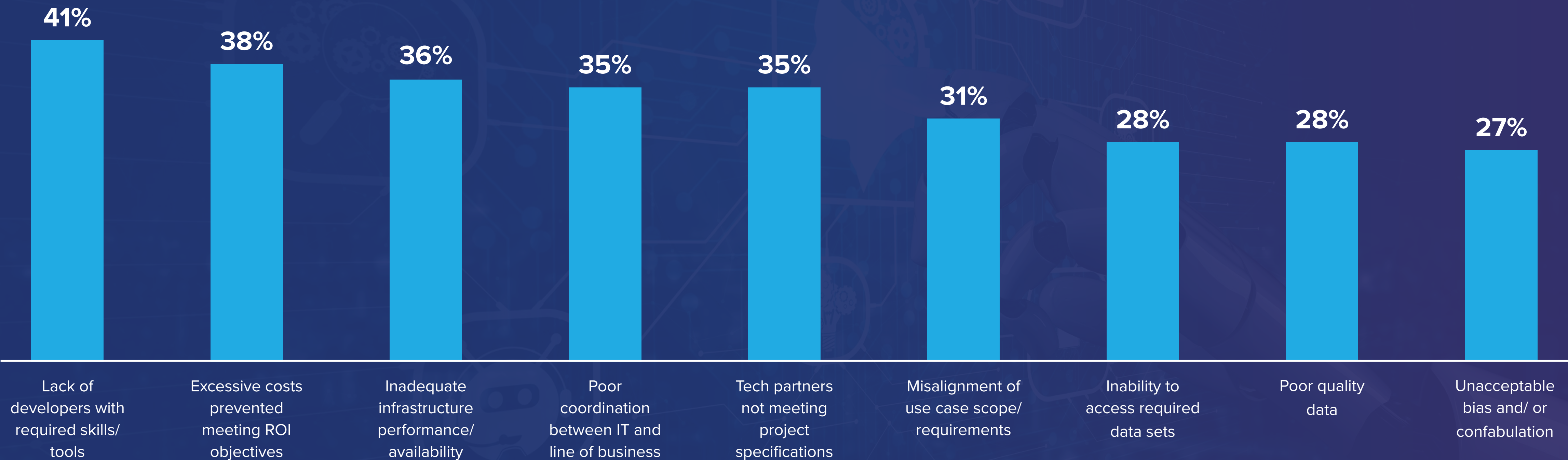


But irresponsible (even unintentional) use of AI can expose enterprises to external legal, financial, reputational, and operational risks.



CEOs also need to tackle internal organizational obstacles, such as skill gaps, responsible governance, IT-business alignment, ability to realize ROI, and funding technology upgrades.

Most Prevalent Factors Preventing Success of GenAI Projects



CEOs should create the incentives to explore AI use cases; and the discipline to prioritize use cases based on expected strategic SHARP outcomes.



Productivity use cases are aligned to individual employee work tasks such as summarizing a report, generating a job description, or generating code in Java. GenAI functionality for productivity improvement is being infused into existing applications.

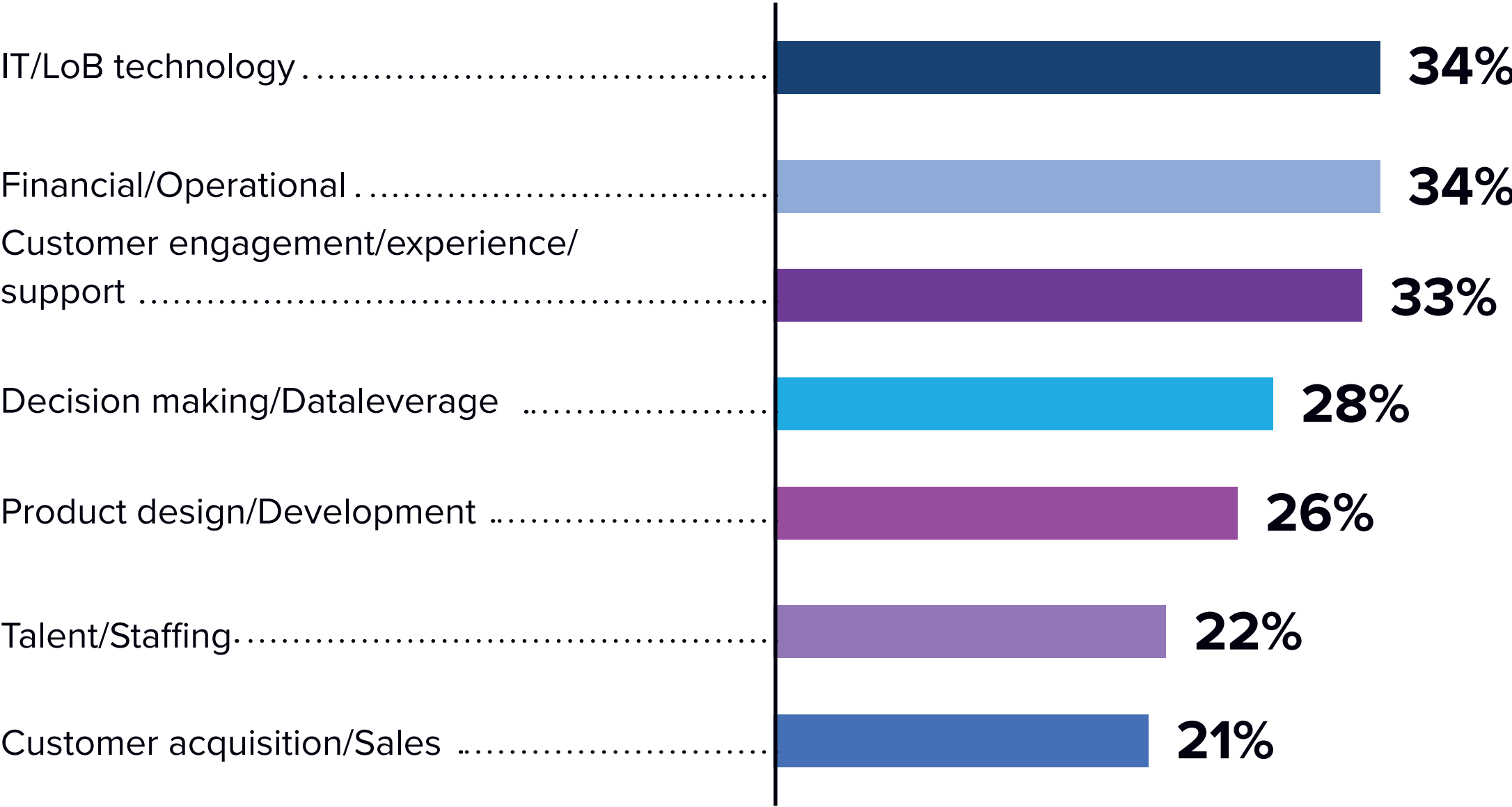


Business function use cases tend to integrate a model (or multiple models) with corporate data for use by a specific department or function (e.g., marketing, sales, procurement). These business function use cases require integration to established enterprise applications and data platforms.



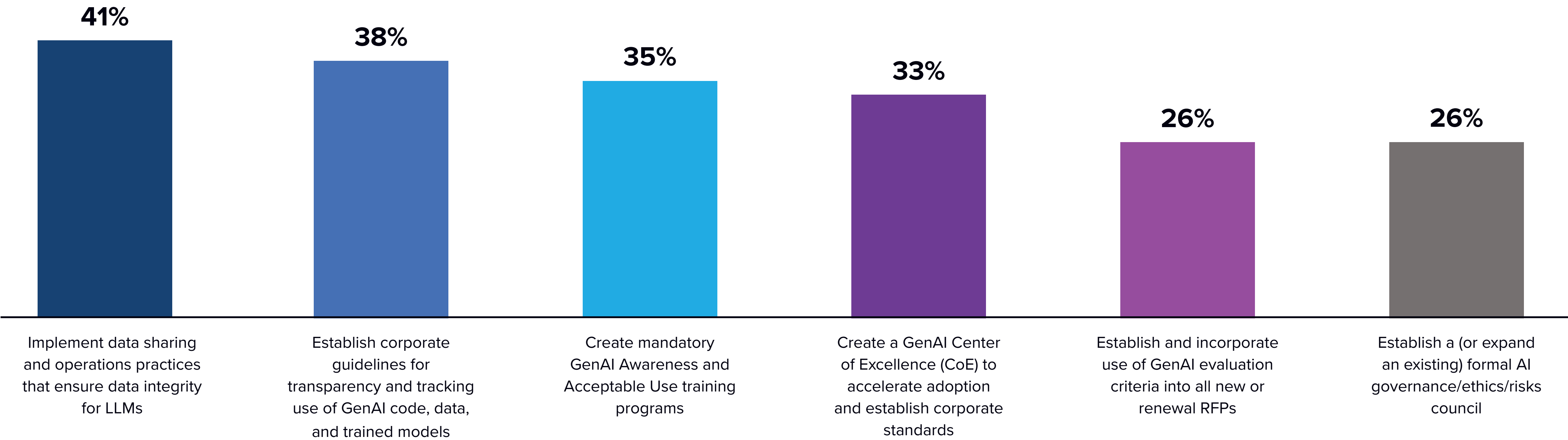
Industry and company-specific use cases are aligned with product/service and business model innovation. These specialized use cases tend to be built around very specific choices of models and model providers, with custom integration architectures designed for unique agency functions requiring significant implementation work.

Top 2 Business Areas Where GenAI Is Affecting Competitive Position or Business Model








CEOs need to make their organizations ready to realize the benefits of AI and GenAI, before making strategic decisions about investments in use cases based on these technologies.

Most Important Processes and Policies to Implement to Ensure Success with GenAI



CEOs need to guide their enterprises through key AI readiness activities to achieve SHARP outcomes.

	Crawl (next 3 months)	Walk (3 to 12 months)	Run (12 to 24 months)
 Organizational readiness →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appoint AI champions in each major corporate function and LoB tasked with ensuring responsible, and impactful AI use. Bring them together with senior leaders in IT governance, risk and compliance, and data in an AI center of excellence (CoE).Encourage the CoE to gather knowledge about AI from competitors, business and technology partners, and academia.Task the CoE with creating a repository of lessons learned to ensure that AI initiatives do not happen in siloes, but practices, tools, and expertise are shared and continuously improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appoint a chief artificial intelligence officer (CAIO) or assign AI responsibilities to an existing chief data officer (CDO). Allocate the CAIO budget and people to bring in technical, business, and legal expertise. Task the CAIO to chair the AI CoE.Task the CAIO to drive AI literacy programs for the whole enterprise to establish a basic understanding of technology, business impact, responsible use, and the value of innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make responsible AI code-of-conduct training mandatory for all employees.
 Forward thinking strategy →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sponsor a programmatic approach to AI innovation that incentivizes employees to generate ideas and experiment with practical pilots.Task technology, finance, legal, and strategy executives to design an AI business case prioritization process that aligns with your enterprise's SHARP strategic goals.Task the CoE to assess existing AI projects and capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CAIO to map existing AI projects and capabilities against the portfolio of innovation ideas that were generated to identify priority areas of investment.Work with the CAIO to select the top 10-15 AI projects/ investments to scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CAIO to evaluate progress and identify critical organizational capacity and competencies, as well as data and platform resources, to prioritize investments for large-scale deployments.Revisit the portfolio of AI projects and ideas against the evolving political, economic, social, environmental, legal scenarios.
 Policy and Governance →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CoE to draft a code of conduct for responsible use of AI.Task the CoE to assess current AI initiatives against regulatory compliance requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task CAIO to develop AI code of conduct into a broader AI governance model, together with practical toolkits that can be used for responsible AI impact assessment.Mandate use of AI governance model to assess, shape, and monitor each AI initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task CAIO to maintain AI governance model to ensure alignment with evolving legislation and technology innovation.
 Data quality and management →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CoE to assess existing relevant datasets and their management for quality, integrity and regulatory compliance.Task the CoE to identify opportunities to invest in data management and governance solutions that help improve data quality and control in alignment with an AI governance model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CAIO to map top 10-15 AI priority projects against availability of data to identify need to enrich datasets for training, grounding/fine-tuning, and inferencing.Task the CAIO to design a strategy for data integration, third-party data acquisition, and data sharing with partners with the goal to enrich data for AI, in alignment with priority projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task CAIO to ensure re-usability and interoperability of data, while guaranteeing security and regulatory compliance.
 Infrastructure and platform →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CIO/CTO to assess existing infrastructure, platform, and related contracts against emerging AI requirements.Task the CIO/CTO to scout AI infrastructure and platform solutions/ vendors.Task the CIO/CTO to source secure and compliant infrastructure and platforms for AI pilots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task the CIO/CTO to work with the CAIO to map top 10-15 AI projects against required infrastructure and platform capabilities.Task the CIO/CTO to source infrastructure and platform solutions for AI deployments at scale. Prioritize embedding AI in existing solutions and contracts, rather than creating new siloes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Task CIO/CTO to ensure infrastructure and platform solutions are re-usable and interoperable across AI initiatives.

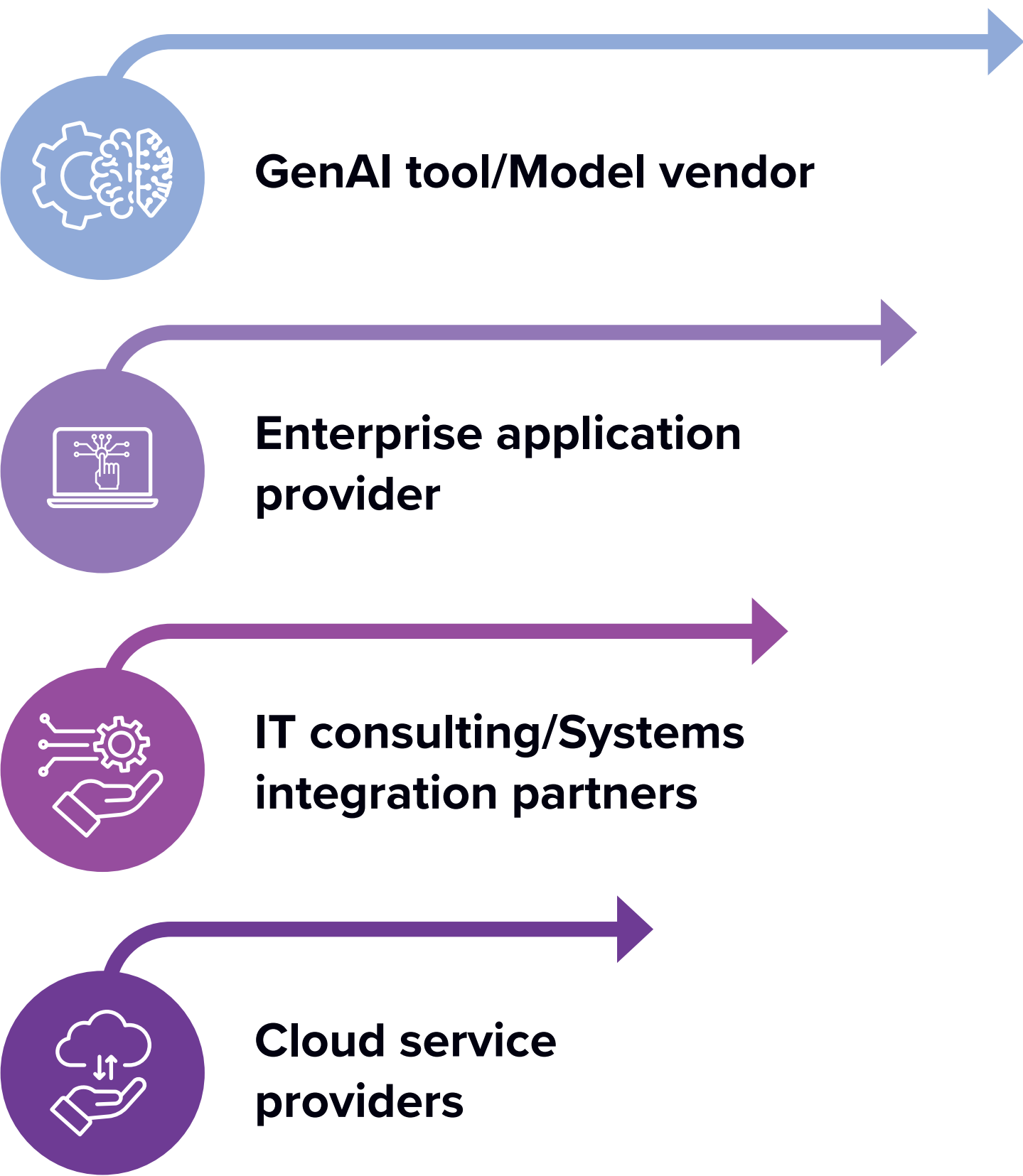
Collaborate with technology partners to scale infrastructure and platform to realize the value of AI/GenAI.



85%

of executives globally “agree” or “strongly agree” that they require a **dedicated vendor/partner strategy** across infrastructure, software, data, cloud, and services to support GenAI as a strategic workload.

Top 4 Most Important Strategic GenAI Technology Partners in the Next 12 Months

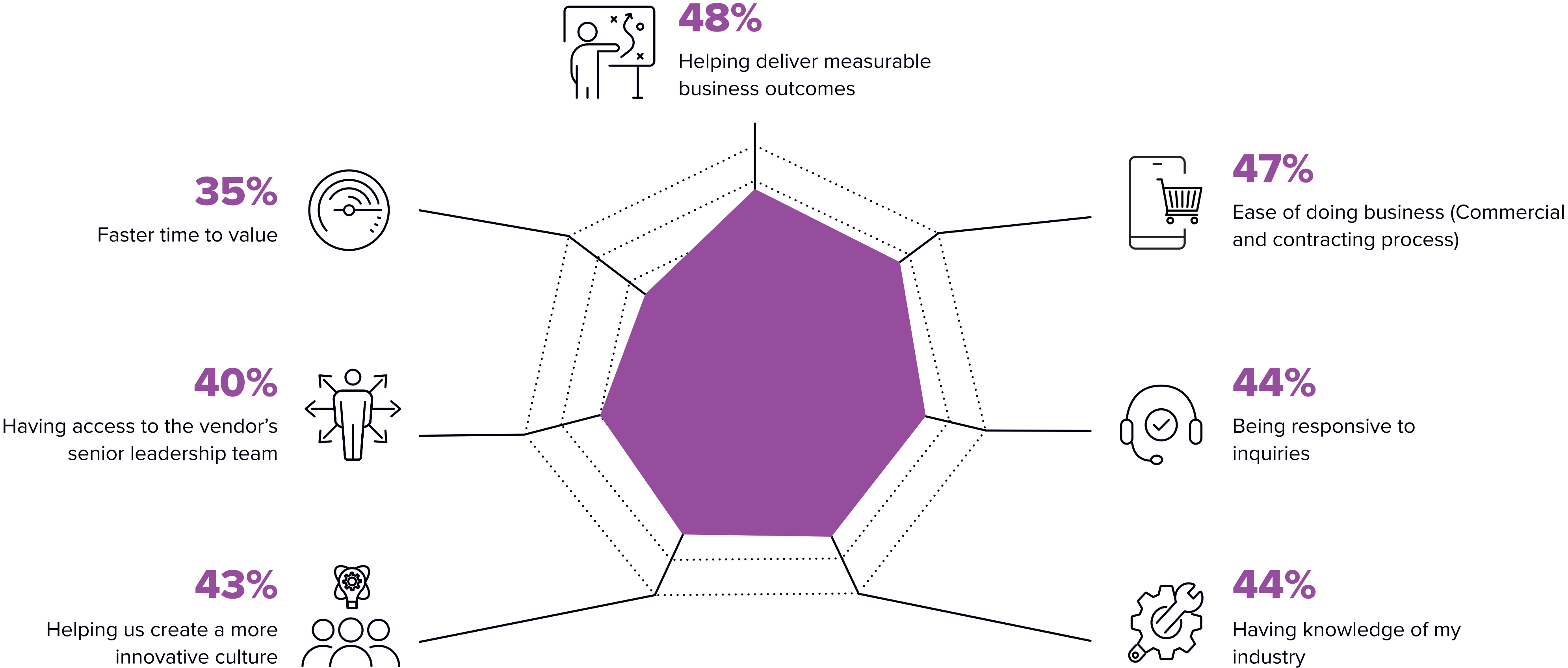


Executives understand that they need to work with an ecosystem of tech partners to realize the value of AI/GenAI at scale.

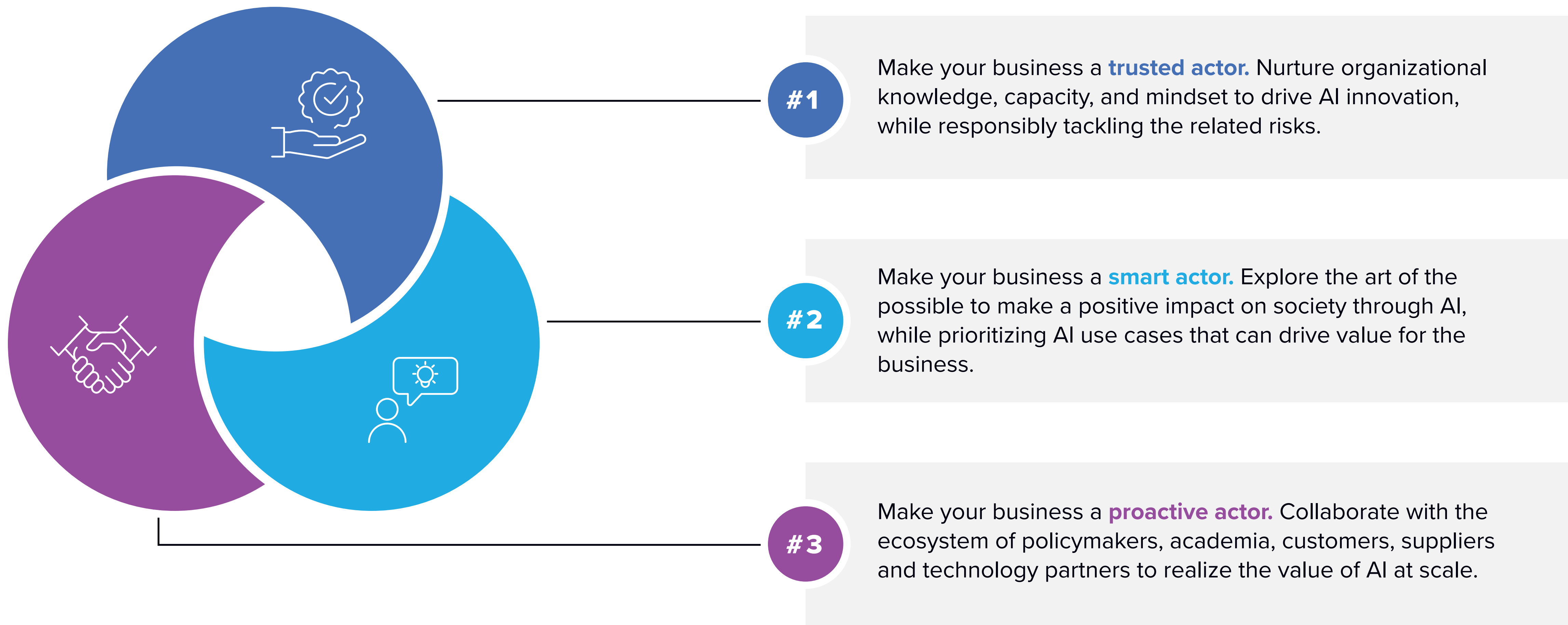
Consultants/ systems integrators will bring the critical expertise needed to orchestrate the ecosystem and align it with SHARP strategic goals.

When selecting strategic tech partners, CEOs value those that can help them make their organizations SHARP.

Characteristics that CEOs Value in a Technology Provider/Partner



Conclusions



About the IDC Analyst



Neil-Ward Dutton

Vice President,
IDC EMEA Automation, Analytics and AI

[More about Neil-Ward Dutton](#)



Massimiliano Claps

IDC EMEA Research Director, Gov
Insights, Cross-industry Strategies, and
Global Public Transportation Lead Analyst

[More about Massimiliano Claps](#)

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These days, positive change and economic development can no longer be the only measures of impact. We must leverage our business process expertise, our technology skills, and human creativity to address global challenges.

As technology moves us beyond optimization towards creativity, we explore new frontiers and solutions. This acceleration demands a renewed sense of responsibility. A new type of cooperation among companies, institutions, organizations, and individuals is essential to achieve common goals and integrate technology effectively.

How we all face our biggest challenges will reveal who we really are.

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IDC UK

5th Floor, Ealing Cross, 85 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 5TH, United Kingdom
T 44.208.987.7100

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