



The Modern Enterprise Readiness Report 2026

A Leader's Guide to Navigating Disruption, AI, and the
Next Era of Enterprise Technology



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The Readiness Gap Is Real

Something important is happening inside enterprise organizations right now. It's not a single event or a single technology. It's a convergence of pressures: accelerating AI adoption, increasingly complex security threats, aging device fleets, fragmented infrastructure, and a workforce that needs better tools to do better work.

Leaders feel it. Their teams feel it. And the data confirms it.

The Modern Enterprise Readiness Study 2026 from Dell Technologies and Vanson Bourne surveyed 2,950 business and IT decision-makers across 35 countries to understand where enterprises truly stand on the journey toward modernization. **The findings reveal a clear and urgent picture: most organizations recognize what needs to change, but far too many haven't yet built the foundation to make it happen.**

This eBook is for senior business and IT leaders who are navigating this moment. You'll leave with a clear view of the readiness gaps your peers are experiencing, the priorities commanding enterprise investment right now, and the strategic moves that will define who emerges stronger over the next three to five years.

The urgency is real. So is the opportunity.

The Pace of Change Is Outrunning Most Organizations

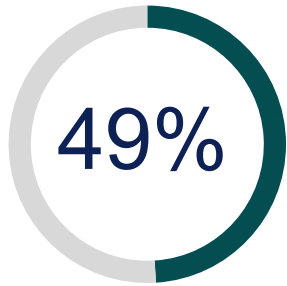
Key Takeaway

Uncertainty is a strategic liability. The organizations that build readiness now will have a meaningful head start.

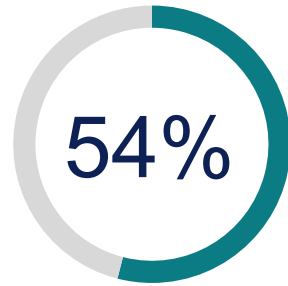
What You'll Learn

- How widely leaders feel the pressure of disruption
- Why uncertainty about the future is a strategic problem, not just a feeling
- What the data says about enterprise confidence heading into the next five years

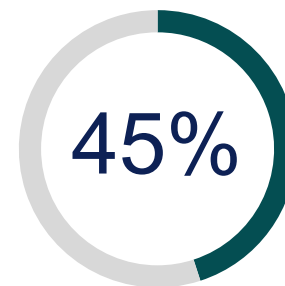




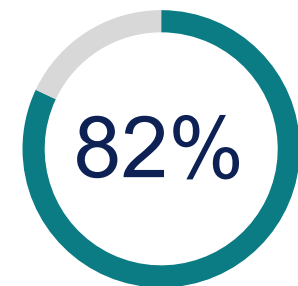
say they're struggling to keep pace with disruption



don't have a clear picture of what their industry looks like in three to five years



aren't confident their organization will outpace competitors in the current environment



say macroeconomic conditions are making them more selective about technology investment

A Majority of Leaders Feel Behind

The first and most striking finding from the study is how widespread the sense of disruption really is. Nearly half of all respondents — 49% — say they're struggling to keep up with the current pace of change. That's not a niche concern confined to one industry or one geography. It spans financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, energy, and the public sector.

What's equally telling is what leaders don't know. Fifty-four percent of respondents say they don't know what the next three to five years will look like for their industry. That's more than half of the world's senior decision-makers operating without a clear view of where their industry is headed. **When visibility is this limited, making smart technology investments becomes exponentially harder.**

Uncertainty Is Translating Into Real Business Risk

Uncertainty at the industry level becomes a competitive risk when it's combined with internal gaps. Forty-five percent of respondents say they're not fully confident their organization will emerge stronger than competitors over the next

three to five years given current levels of uncertainty. That's a significant share of leaders who, when asked directly, aren't sure they'll come out ahead.

This isn't pessimism for its own sake. It's a clear-eyed recognition that modernization can't wait. **The organizations that close the readiness gap now are the ones that will lead when conditions shift.**

The Investment Lens Has Changed

It's also worth noting how macroeconomic pressure is reshaping investment decisions. Eighty-two percent of respondents agree that macroeconomic conditions are forcing them to be more selective and outcome-driven in their technology investments. Budgets haven't gone away, but the bar for justifying spend is higher. Leaders aren't looking for technology for technology's sake. They want clear outcomes, measurable ROI, and investments that move the organization forward in a deliberate way.

This shift toward outcome-driven investment is actually healthy. It forces prioritization. But it also raises the stakes for getting strategy right.

AI Is a Priority, But Readiness, Trust, and Governance Lags

Key Takeaways

- AI readiness requires more than a use case. It requires a connected strategy across devices, data, and infrastructure.
- Closing the roadmap gap is the most important near-term AI challenge for most enterprise leaders.

What You'll Learn

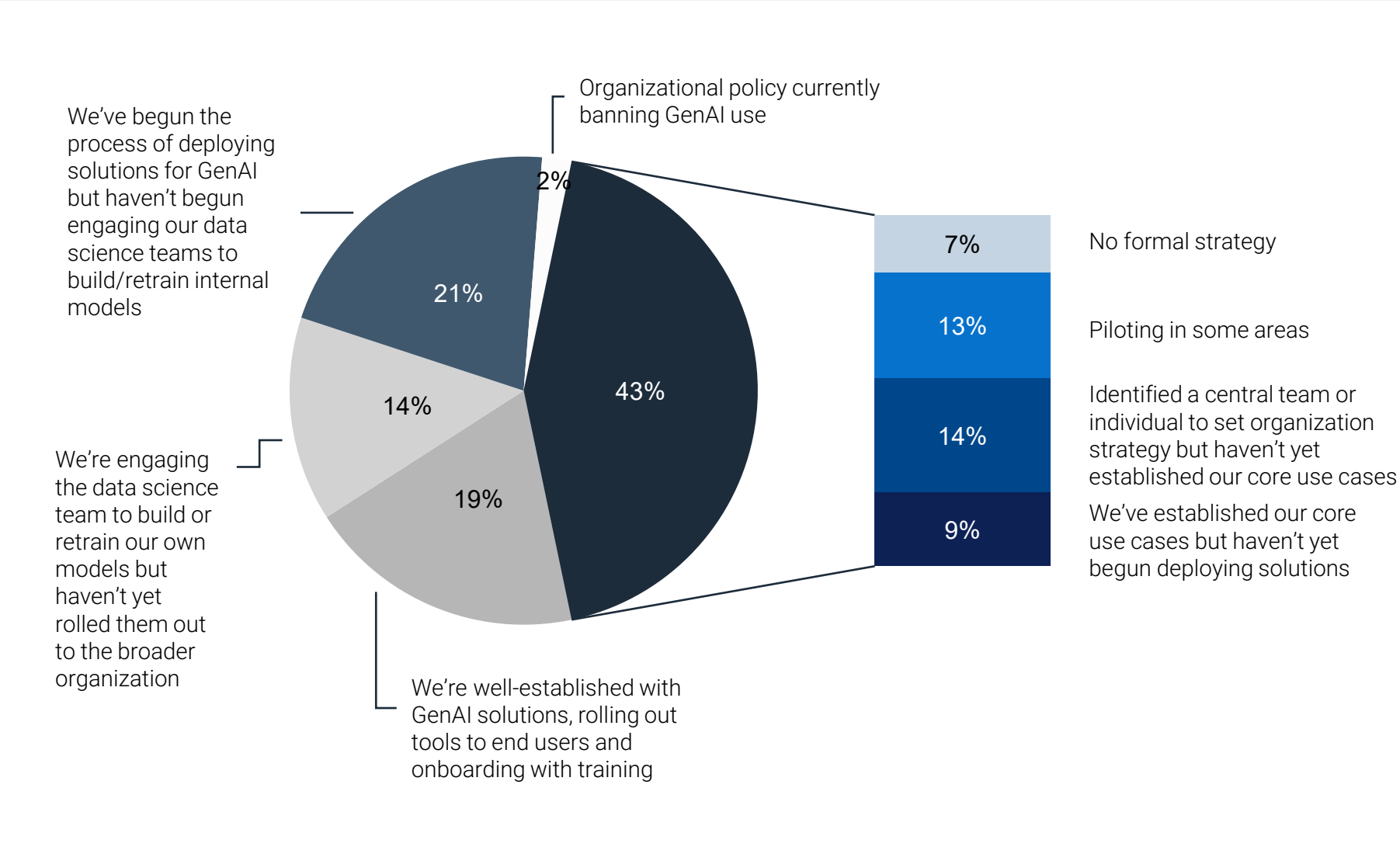
- Where AI sits on the enterprise priority list, and how mature most organizations really are
- What's holding organizations back to scale AI
- How employees are already using AI, and why shadow AI is both a risk and a signal
- What leaders now expect from the partners who help them scale



Most Organizations Are Still Early on the Journey

It's easy to assume AI has already gone mainstream inside enterprises. The data tells a more grounded story. According to the study, 43% of organizations are still in the early- to mid-stage of their generative AI journey, down from 51% in 2025. That's real, measurable movement, and it's encouraging. But it also confirms that a large share of enterprises haven't yet reached full-scale deployment.

This matters because the competitive field is still wide open. The leaders pulling ahead aren't necessarily the ones with the flashiest pilots. They're the ones turning experiments into production, connecting AI to real business outcomes, and building the data and governance foundations to scale. **Treating AI maturity as a journey with defined stages, rather than a single switch to flip, is what separates momentum from motion.**



AI Is at the Top of the Investment Agenda

Establishing and scaling AI capabilities ranks as one of the top three strategic priorities for enterprises within the next 24 months, cited by 53% of respondents. That puts AI in direct company with cybersecurity and workforce skills as the defining investment areas of this era.

The intent is clear. The ambition is there. But **intent and execution are two different things**.

The Roadmap Gap Is Significant

Despite the strong prioritization, 50% of respondents say they lack a clear, actionable roadmap for innovation across AI, data, and security. Half of all surveyed leaders want to move forward on AI but don't yet have a defined path to get there. **That gap between aspiration and operational readiness is one of the most important findings in the study.**

Without a roadmap, AI investments risk becoming isolated pilots that never scale. They generate learning, but the value never reaches the rest of the organization. The organizations that will get the most from AI are the ones that connect it to a broader strategy across data infrastructure, security architecture, and device capability.

Where AI Is Delivering Value Today

When the study asked where organizations are prioritizing AI right now, three areas tied at the top, each cited by 48% of respondents: IT automation and infrastructure operations, employee productivity and knowledge work, as well as data analytics and decision support. Security and threat detection followed closely at 43%, with customer experience at 40%.

The pattern here is encouraging. Enterprises are putting AI to work where it delivers clear, measurable value: streamlining operations, helping people work smarter, and turning data into faster decisions. These aren't speculative bets. They're practical applications that connect directly to efficiency and outcomes. **For leaders deciding where to focus, the lesson is simple. Start where the payback is clearest and the path to scale is shortest.**

53%

of enterprises list establishing and scaling AI capabilities as a top priority within 24 months.

Top 3

areas AI is delivering the clearest value are IT automation, employee productivity, and data analytics.

50%

lack a clear, actionable roadmap for innovation across AI, data, and security.

Siloed Initiatives Are Holding Organizations Back

The study also reveals a structural problem. Seventy percent of respondents agree that running AI, workplace modernization, and data center modernization as separate initiatives makes it harder to operate efficiently. When AI strategy sits in one silo, workplace tools in another, and infrastructure investment in a third, integration breaks down. Decision-making slows. Results are harder to measure and harder to scale.

This isn't just an organizational design challenge. It's a technology strategy challenge. **The enterprises advancing fastest on AI are the ones treating it as part of an integrated modernization effort, not a standalone project.**

The Barriers That Slow AI Down

Ambition is high, but scaling AI is hard, and the study is specific about why. The biggest barriers to scaling AI are security, compliance, or privacy concerns (41%), data challenges around quality, access, and governance (32%), and a lack of internal skills and capacity (31%).

These three barriers point to a single truth: **AI doesn't scale on enthusiasm alone. It scales on trustworthy data, strong security, and skilled people. When any one of those is missing, projects stall before they reach production.**

The security concern isn't hypothetical. Sixty percent of respondents say security and compliance concerns are the main reason their organization has slowed or paused AI adoption. That's a majority of leaders applying the brakes, not because the technology fell short, but because the guardrails weren't yet ready. The encouraging takeaway is that **the fastest way to accelerate AI is often to address security and governance first.** When teams trust that AI is safe and compliant, they move with confidence instead of caution.

Top 5 Barriers To Scaling AI



Security, compliance
or privacy concerns



Data challenges
(quality, access, governance)



Lack of internal skills

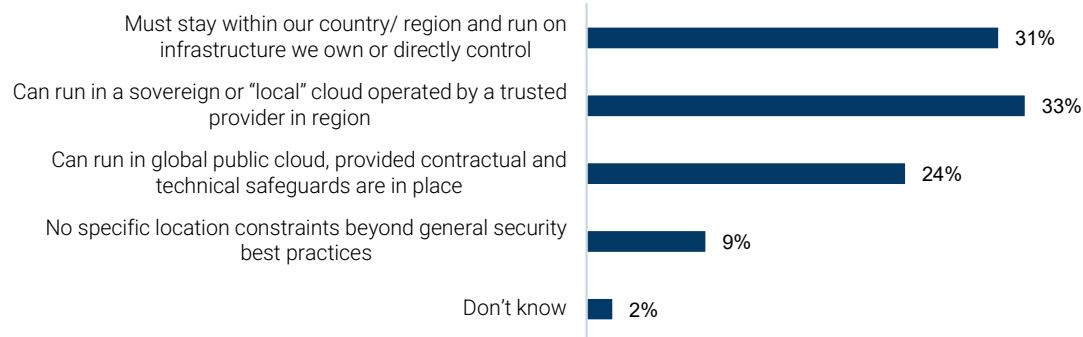


Budget constraints



High or unpredictable
cloud and compute costs

Location constraints for sensitive data and AI models



Governance and Trust Shape Every Decision

Regulation weighs heavily on enterprise AI decisions. Sixty-eight percent of respondents say they're concerned about complying with government regulations when using their data for AI, and that concern shapes which projects move forward and how quickly.

Data sensitivity adds another layer. Sixty-eight percent of respondents agree their data and intellectual property are too valuable to place in a generative AI tool where a third party may have access. Leaders aren't willing to trade control of their most valuable assets for convenience, and that caution directly influences where and how AI gets deployed.

The reframe here is important. Governance and data control aren't obstacles to AI. They're the conditions that make AI possible at scale. **Organizations that build privacy, compliance, and control into their AI strategy from the start move faster because they spend less time reacting to risk later.**

Shadow AI: Demand the Organization Can Harness

One of the most revealing findings in the study is that AI adoption is already

happening across the workforce, with or without formal oversight. Ninety-three percent of leaders say employees use a standardized set of centrally approved AI tools. At the same time, 62% say employees use unapproved AI tools on company devices, 79% say employees use personal devices to access AI tools for work, and 61% say teams pay for AI tools on departmental credit cards without central IT oversight.

The signal is clear: **official AI programs and shadow AI are happening side by side.** Unsanctioned use creates real exposure. Data can leave the organization through unapproved tools, spending fragments across departments, and compliance gaps widen when IT can't see what's in use.

But there's opportunity hidden in these numbers too. High shadow AI usage is a strong signal of demand. Your people clearly want AI to help them work better. The goal isn't to shut that energy down. It's to channel it into approved, secure, well-governed tools that give employees what they need while protecting the organization. That means seeing what's actually in use through telemetry and audits, expanding the approved toolset to meet real demand, applying consistent governance across every tool, and pairing those tools with training so people use them well and safely.

What Leaders Now Expect From AI Partners

The bar for AI partnerships has risen. Sixty-nine percent of respondents say they won't move forward with new AI projects unless their technology partner can demonstrate clear business impact and a defined risk management plan.

For leaders evaluating partners, the implication is direct. Look beyond the technology. Ask for evidence of measurable outcomes and a concrete plan for managing risk. **The right partner helps you connect AI to business value, builds in governance and security early, and shares accountability for results, not just delivery.**

Cybersecurity Is the Foundation Everything Else Builds On

Key Takeaway

Security isn't just an IT concern. It's a board-level, strategy-level, and partner-selection-level priority.

What You'll Learn

- Why cybersecurity is the single highest-ranked strategic priority for enterprises
- What leaders say they want from a partner when it comes to security
- How security posture influences partner selection at the highest level

Security Leads Every Other Priority

Of all the strategic priorities enterprises are investing in over the next 24 months, strengthening cybersecurity and cyber resilience sits at the top. Fifty-four percent of respondents cite it as one of their leading priorities, placing it ahead of AI capability building and workforce development.

That's a meaningful statement. In an environment where AI dominates technology headlines, security is still the top concern for the majority of decision-makers. The reason is straightforward: everything else depends on it. AI tools process sensitive data. Modern devices connect to enterprise networks. Hybrid cloud environments expand the attack surface. **Without a strong security foundation, every other modernization initiative carries elevated risk.**

Security Is a Partner Selection Criterion, Not Just an Internal Goal

What makes the security findings especially significant is how directly they shape how enterprises choose partners. When respondents were asked what would change their perception of a vendor from transactional to truly strategic, providing strong security and cyber-resilience capabilities ranked first, cited by 46% of respondents.

That's the single most important factor in elevating a vendor relationship. Not pricing. Not product breadth. Not customer service. **Security.**

The findings reinforce this point further when respondents ranked the factors that distinguish partners when functional needs are already met. Security and cyber-resilience strength came in second overall, behind only depth and quality of services. These aren't edge preferences. They're central to how enterprise leaders evaluate the people they work with.

Hardware-Rooted Security Is a Device-Level Priority

The security imperative also extends to the device layer. When leaders were asked about the most important factors in choosing a partner to modernize PC fleets, delivering strong, hardware-rooted endpoint security and a secure supply chain was cited by 43% of respondents, tied at the top with AI PC capability.

This tells you something important: enterprise leaders don't think about device procurement as a separate decision from security strategy. They think about them together. The device is the endpoint, and the endpoint is the front line.

54%

of enterprise leaders list strengthening cybersecurity and cyber resilience as a top strategic priority for the next 24 months.

46%

say security capability is the single most important factor in elevating a vendor from transactional to strategic.

#2

Cyber-resilience strength ranks second overall when distinguishing partners on a level playing field.

43%

say hardware-rooted endpoint security and a secure supply chain are top priorities in PC fleet modernization.

Modern Devices Are a Strategic Asset, Not a Line Item

Key Takeaway

Modern devices aren't just about performance, they're essential for fostering innovation, efficiency, and seamless collaboration in today's workplaces.

What You'll Learn

- What the current state of enterprise device fleets looks like globally
- How outdated devices affect collaboration, AI adoption, and employee experience
- Why workforce skills rank among the top enterprise priorities globally
- Why AI PCs are becoming central to enterprise refresh strategies



The Device Fleet Reality

One of the most telling data points in the study comes from the composition of enterprise device fleets. On average, 23% of devices across surveyed organizations are four or more years old. Another 37% are modern but not AI-capable. Only 41% are modern and AI-capable.

That means the majority of enterprise devices, when combined, either can't run AI workloads on-device or are already aging out of their productive lifecycle. For organizations building AI strategies and expecting their workforces to use AI tools effectively, this is a structural limitation. **You can't run an AI-ready workforce on a device fleet that isn't AI-ready.**

Workforce Skills Are a Top Investment Priority

Devices don't operate in isolation. They're the tools your people use every day, which is why workforce capability sits right alongside device strategy. Enhancing workforce skills and capabilities ranks third among the top strategic priorities enterprises are pursuing within the next 24 months, cited by 52% of respondents. It sits alongside cybersecurity and AI capability building as the three defining areas of enterprise investment for this period.

This is a meaningful signal. Workforce enablement isn't a soft priority. It's a strategic investment that leaders are making in parallel with technology transformation. The best AI tools in the world don't generate value if the people using them aren't skilled or equipped to use them well. And the device is where that enablement begins.



23% of enterprise devices are four or more years old. Only 40.82% are modern and AI-capable.



81% say outdated devices limit their ability to adopt new tools and AI applications.



92% agree that modern devices make a noticeable difference to collaboration and meeting quality.



52% of enterprises list enhancing workforce skills and capabilities as a top strategic priority within 24 months.



78% report that aging devices create visible frustration among employees and managers.



72% of leaders rank AI PCs as a top or high priority for their next major device refresh.

Outdated Devices Create Visible, Measurable Problems

The study is equally direct about the impact of aging devices on people and performance. Seventy-eight percent of respondents agree that outdated or underpowered devices create visible frustration among employees and managers. That's not a quiet, background dissatisfaction. It shows up in meetings, in workflows, and in how employees feel about their work environment.

Frustration is an organizational cost that's easy to undercount. It affects morale, retention, and how employees perceive their organization's commitment to giving them what they need to succeed. When workers feel their tools are holding them back, the message that comes through is that the organization isn't invested in their experience.

More consequentially, 81% agree that outdated or underpowered devices limit their organization's ability to adopt new tools, including AI-enabled applications. When the device can't run an AI application reliably, the employee can't use it effectively. The intended productivity benefit of the AI tool never materializes because the hardware creates a ceiling. **The device fleet isn't just an asset management issue. It's an AI adoption barrier and a limit on what your people can achieve.**

Sixty-seven percent add that the impact of outdated or underpowered devices is often underestimated inside their organizations. Leaders are starting to recognize this gap, but many haven't yet fully internalized what it costs them.

Modern Devices Make a Measurable Difference

The positive case for device modernization is just as clear. Ninety-two percent of respondents agree that modern devices make a noticeable difference to collaboration and meeting quality. That's near-universal agreement among

senior leaders that the device experience directly affects how well teams work together, whether they're in the same room or distributed across time zones. In a hybrid work environment where cross-functional collaboration drives business outcomes, the quality of that experience is a performance driver.

And looking ahead, 90% of respondents agree that modern, AI PCs and devices will play a key role in their organization's future strategy. The direction is clear. The question for most organizations is pace and prioritization.

Organizations that give their workforce modern, AI-capable devices aren't just solving a hardware problem. They're removing the barriers between employees and the full capability of the tools they need to do their best work. That's workforce enablement in the most direct and practical sense. Seen this way, **device modernization and workforce enablement aren't two separate budget decisions. They're the same investment, viewed from two angles.**

AI PCs Are Moving Up the Priority List

When respondents were asked how much of a priority AI PCs are for their next major refresh, 25% said AI PCs are a top priority and central to their refresh strategy. Another 47% said they're a high priority alongside other key factors. Combined, that's 72% of enterprise leaders placing AI PCs at the top or near the top of their next refresh planning. Only 20% said AI PCs are a moderate consideration but not a main driver.

The shift is underway. **For organizations that haven't yet built AI PC adoption into their refresh roadmap, the window to plan proactively is narrowing.**

Unified Infrastructure Is the Key to Operational Efficiency

Key Takeaways

- Fragmented infrastructure is a direct barrier to AI readiness and operational efficiency.
- Investing in unified infrastructure is investing in AI readiness and competitive positioning simultaneously.

What You'll Learn

- What enterprise hybrid and multicloud environments actually look like today
- Why fragmented infrastructure creates operational drag
- What leaders want from partners when it comes to data center and storage strategy



Most Hybrid Environments Are Not Truly Unified

Hybrid and multicloud environments have become the standard architecture for enterprise organizations. But the study reveals a significant gap between what enterprises have built and what they need those environments to deliver. Sixty-seven percent of respondents say their current hybrid or multicloud environment is not yet fully unified and can feel fragmented.

Fragmentation at the infrastructure layer has a direct effect on operational efficiency. When data, workloads, and management tools span environments that don't fully integrate, teams spend more time on administration and less time on innovation. The efficiency gains that hybrid architectures promised are harder to realize when the architecture itself isn't cohesive.

This is especially consequential for AI. AI workloads are data-intensive. They require consistent access to clean, available data across environments. A fragmented infrastructure makes that consistency harder to guarantee, which creates a bottleneck at the foundation of any AI strategy.

Leaders Want Integration, Not More Point Products

The study makes clear what enterprise leaders want from their infrastructure partners. Ninety-two percent say they're more likely to view a partner as strategic if they can deliver a unified server, storage, and data protection platform rather than separate point products.

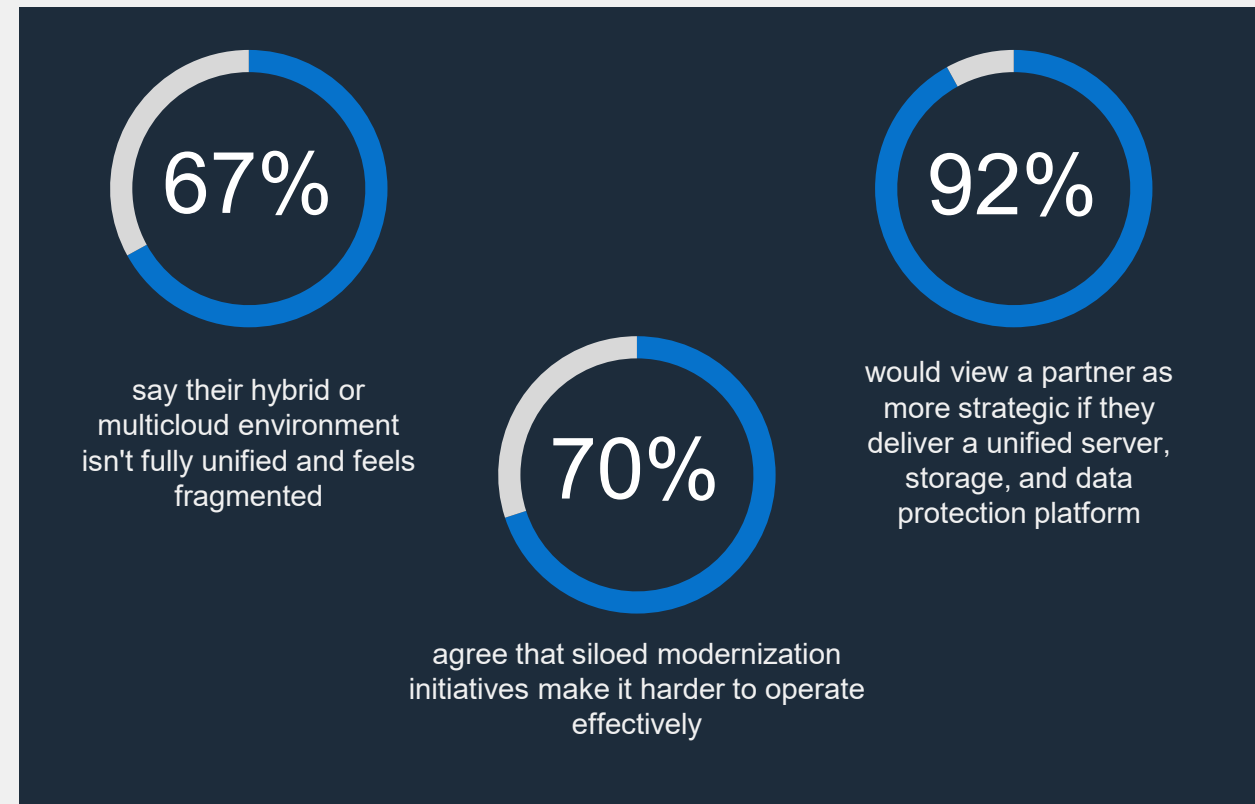
That's an overwhelming preference for integration over breadth alone. Decision-makers aren't looking for a vendor with the largest catalog. They're looking for one that can bring the catalog together into a coherent, unified experience. The value of a unified platform isn't just technical. It simplifies procurement, reduces integration risk, and makes support and service delivery more consistent.

Unifying Infrastructure Unlocks AI and Modernization

The connection between unified infrastructure and AI readiness is direct. When

data environments are fragmented, AI models can't access the data they need reliably. When storage and compute are managed as separate concerns across disconnected platforms, scaling AI workloads becomes operationally complex.

Leaders who are investing in infrastructure unification aren't just cleaning up technical debt. They're building the data foundation that AI and modernization require. That's why 70% agree that running AI, workplace, and data center modernization as separate initiatives limits efficiency. Infrastructure unification is the connective tissue that makes parallel progress possible.



The Strategic Partner Advantage

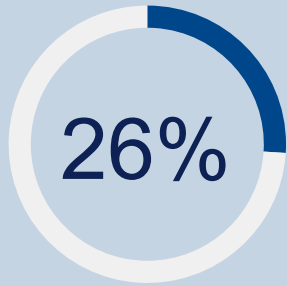
Key Takeaways

- Strategic partners are distinguished by security capability, end-to-end services, and an integrated portfolio.

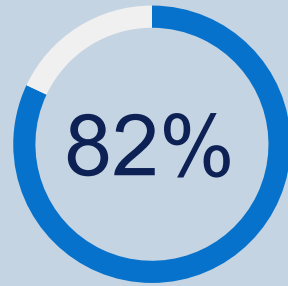
What You'll Learn

- How enterprises are structuring their vendor and partner relationships right now
- What distinguishes a strategic partner from a transactional vendor
- Why consolidation is driving partner strategy across the enterprise

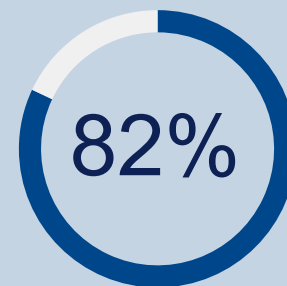




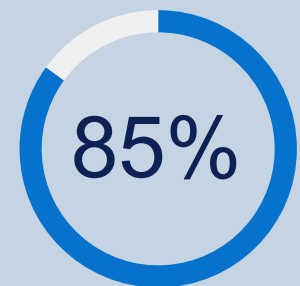
of enterprises have a clearly defined, small set of strategic partners



would prefer to consolidate more of our technology needs with a single strategic partner, where possible



are shifting spend toward partners with the scale to move AI from pilot to global rollout



agree that their current partners could do more to support transformation goals

The Roadmap Most Organizations Are Still Relying on Too Many Vendors

The study reveals a fragmented picture of how enterprises manage their technology relationships. Only 26% of respondents say they have a small number of clearly defined strategic partners. Fifty-four percent say they have a core set of strategic partners but still use a significant number of additional vendors alongside them. Sixteen percent use a wide range of vendors with no clear consolidation strategy, and 3% rely on many different vendors with no partner strategy at all.

That means 74% of enterprises are operating with more vendor complexity than they'd like. And the data suggests they know it.

The Appetite for Consolidation Is Strong

Eighty-two percent of respondents say they would prefer to join more of their technology needs with a single strategic partner where possible. That's a clear and consistent preference for simplicity, integration, and depth over the complexity of managing many vendor relationships.

The drive toward consolidation isn't just about reducing procurement overhead. It's about getting better outcomes. Eighty-two percent of respondents are also shifting spend toward partners with the scale, ecosystem, and supply chain needed to move AI and modernization from pilot to global rollout. The organizations that advanced the furthest on AI at the pilot stage often struggled to scale globally. Partners with the reach and infrastructure to support that scale are commanding more of the budget.

The Gap Between What Partners Offer and What Leaders Need

There's one more finding that enterprise leaders should take seriously. Eighty-five percent of respondents agree that their current technology partners could do more to support their transformation goals. That's a striking level of dissatisfaction with what existing partners are delivering. It doesn't necessarily mean relationships are broken. But it does mean expectations are not being fully met.

For technology buyers, this finding is a prompt to evaluate whether your current partners are genuinely invested in your transformation outcomes, or whether they're focused primarily on product delivery. The difference matters more than ever when modernization is this complex.

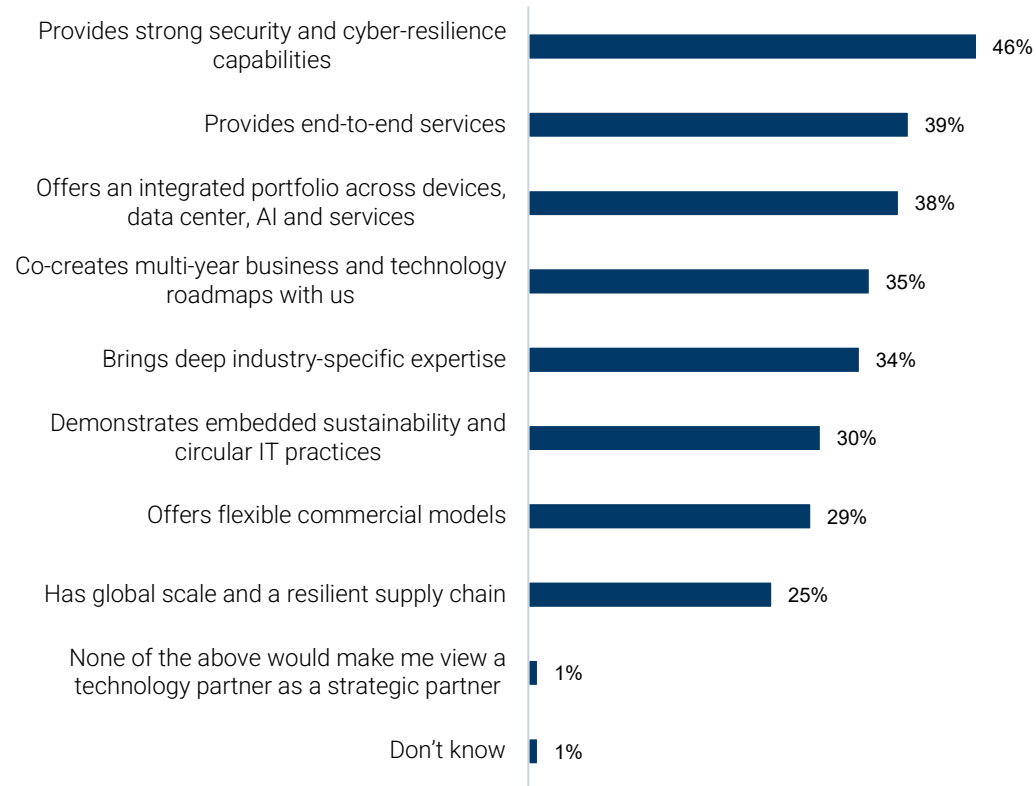
What Makes a Partner Truly Strategic

The study is specific about what elevates a vendor to strategic partner status. Providing strong security and cyber-resilience capabilities ranks first, cited by 46% of respondents. Providing end-to-end services ranks second at 39%. Offering an integrated portfolio across devices, data centers, AI, and services ranks third at 38%.

Notice what's common across all three: they're about integration, depth, and capability breadth. **Strategic partners don't just sell products. They take ownership across the full technology stack, deliver security as a core capability, and bring the services needed to make transformation real at scale.**

When functional requirements are already met and partners are competing on differentiation, the top three factors are depth and quality of services, security and cyber-resilience posture, and the ability to deliver and scale globally. These aren't just vendor evaluation criteria. They're a blueprint for what enterprise transformation actually requires.

Factors most likely to change perception from a transactional vendor to strategic partner



From Disruption to Decisive Action

The Modern Enterprise Readiness Study 2026 paints a clear picture. The disruption is real. The uncertainty is widespread. The gaps between ambition and execution are significant. And the window for action is not unlimited.

But there's another side to this data. The leaders who see the challenge also see the path. The ones investing in unified infrastructure are removing the fragmentation that slows them down. The ones refreshing their device fleets are unlocking AI capability at the workforce level. The ones consolidating around strategic partners with security strength, service depth, and global scale are building relationships that can carry their ambitions forward.

Fifty percent of enterprise leaders lack a clear roadmap for innovation across AI, data, and security. That's not a permanent state. It's a starting point. The organizations that build that roadmap now, and that align technology investments across AI, cybersecurity, devices, infrastructure, and workforce capability in a coherent and integrated way, are the ones most likely to emerge stronger.

Forty-five percent of respondents aren't confident their organizations will outperform competitors over the next three to five years. The other 55% have something in common: they're moving. They're not waiting for perfect conditions or complete certainty. They're making deliberate decisions about where to invest, which partners to trust, and how to build a foundation that can carry them through whatever comes next.

The readiness gap is real. So is the opportunity to close it.

Key Findings at a Glance

Based on findings from the Modern Enterprise Readiness Study 2026, which surveyed 2,950 business and IT decision-makers across 35 countries in June 2026.

Disruption and Uncertainty

- 49% of leaders say they're struggling to keep up with the pace of disruption
- 54% don't know what the next three to five years will look like for their industry
- 45% aren't confident their organization will outpace competitors given current uncertainty
- 82% are being more selective and outcome-driven in technology investment due to macroeconomic conditions

AI Readiness

- 53% of enterprises list establishing and scaling AI capabilities as a top priority within 24 months
- 50% still lack a clear, actionable roadmap for innovation across AI, data, and security
- 43% of organizations remain in the early- to mid-stage of their AI journey, down from 51% in 2025, leaving the competitive field wide open.
- Biggest barriers to scaling AI: security and compliance concerns (41%), data challenges (32%), and a lack of internal skills (31%)
- 60% say security concerns have slowed or paused adoption
- 68% worry about regulatory compliance when using data for AI
- 68% say their data and IP are too valuable to place in tools where a third party may have access
- Shadow AI is widespread: 93% use approved tools, but 62% use unapproved tools on company devices, 79% use personal devices for AI, and 61% buy AI tools without IT oversight, a clear signal of demand to channel safely.
- 69% won't pursue new AI projects unless a partner demonstrates clear business impact and a defined risk management plan.
- 70% agree that running AI, workplace, and data center modernization as separate initiatives limits efficiency

Cybersecurity

- 54% list strengthening cybersecurity and cyber resilience as a top strategic priority
- 46% say security capability is the top factor in elevating a vendor to strategic partner status
- 43% say hardware-rooted endpoint security is a top priority in PC fleet modernization

Modern Devices & Workforce Enablement

- 22.6% of enterprise devices are four or more years old. Only 40.82% are modern and AI-capable
- 81% say outdated devices limit AI tool adoption
- 78% report that aging devices create visible frustration among employees
- 92% agree that modern devices improve collaboration and meeting quality
- 72% rank AI PCs as a top or high priority for their next major refresh
- 52% cite enhancing workforce skills and capabilities as a top priority within 24 months
- 81% say outdated devices limit the ability to adopt new tools and AI applications
- 92% agree modern devices make a noticeable difference to collaboration quality

Unified Infrastructure

- 67% say their hybrid or multicloud environment is not fully unified and feels fragmented
- 92% would view a partner as more strategic for delivering a unified server, storage, and data protection platform

Strategic Partners

- 82% want to join technology needs with a single strategic partner
- 82% are shifting spend toward partners with the scale to move AI from pilot to global rollout
- 85% agree current partners could do more to support transformation goals

Enterprise Readiness FAQ

This section answers common questions about what it takes to be ready for the next era of enterprise technology. Source: Modern Enterprise Readiness Study 2026 by Dell Technologies and Vanson Bourne

1. What does enterprise readiness mean in 2026?

Answer: Enterprise readiness in 2026 means aligning AI capabilities, cybersecurity, modern devices, unified infrastructure, and workforce skills into one connected strategy rather than separate initiatives. Organizations that integrate these areas operate more efficiently and adapt faster to change. The biggest gap isn't ambition, it's having a clear, actionable roadmap to bring it all together.

2. Why do so many organizations struggle to keep up with disruption?

Answer: Many organizations struggle because change is moving faster than their roadmaps can adapt. Nearly half of business and IT leaders say they're falling behind the pace of disruption, and more than half can't clearly picture what their industry will look like in three to five years. The real challenge isn't a lack of ambition, it's the absence of a clear, connected plan across AI, security, infrastructure, and people.

3. Why do outdated devices matter for AI adoption and employee experience?

Answer: Outdated or underpowered devices limit your ability to run new tools, including AI applications, with 81% of leaders citing this as a barrier. They also create visible frustration for employees and managers, which affects morale and productivity. Modern, AI-capable devices remove that ceiling and give your people the power to do their best work.

4. Why does unified infrastructure matter for enterprise AI?

Answer: Unified infrastructure gives AI reliable access to clean, consistent data across every environment, which is what models need to perform. Fragmented hybrid and multicloud setups slow teams down and make it harder to move AI from pilot to global rollout. In fact, 92% of leaders see a partner as more strategic when they deliver a unified server, storage, and data protection platform.

5. What should enterprises look for in a strategic technology partner?

Answer: Look for a partner with strong security and cyber resilience, end-to-end services, and an integrated portfolio across devices, data centers, and AI. The most valued partners also bring depth and quality of services along with the scale to move AI from pilot to global rollout. In short, the right partner takes ownership across your full technology stack, not just individual products.

6. How can Dell help organizations modernize for AI and enterprise readiness?

Answer: Dell helps you bring AI, cybersecurity, modern devices, and unified infrastructure together into one connected strategy instead of separate projects. From AI-capable PCs with hardware-rooted security to unified server, storage, and data protection platforms, Dell supports your modernization and AI readiness from endpoint to data center. With end-to-end services and the scale to move AI from pilot to global rollout, Dell helps turn your roadmap into real progress.

Source

All data points cited are from the Modern Enterprise Readiness Study 2026, which surveyed 2,950 business and IT decision-makers across 35 countries in June 2026.

About Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne is an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector. Their reputation for robust and credible research-based analysis is founded upon rigorous research principles and their ability to seek the opinions of senior decision makers across technical and business functions, in all business sectors and all major markets.

About Dell Technologies

Dell Technologies (NYSE: DELL) helps organizations and individuals build their digital future and transform how they work, live, and play. The company provides customers with the industry’s broadest and most innovative technology and services portfolio for the AI era.

Need More Help?

To explore how your organization can move from roadmap to real progress, connect with a Dell technology partner who can help you build an integrated modernization strategy. Learn more at [Dell.com](#)

Research Methodology

Dell Technologies commissioned independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne to conduct this research. The study surveyed 2,950 IT decision makers and business decision makers across the following regions: North America, LATAM, EMEA, APJ and Greater China. Respondents needed to drive or have influence over modernization efforts in their organization to qualify.

Respondents came from a range of organization sizes and from private and public sectors.



QUANTITATIVE

2,950

Respondents from mid- to enterprise-sized companies

IT decision makers & business decision makers (non-IT) (50/50 split, min. 20% C-level) driving or influencing modernization efforts in their org/dept

Owner/ Executive, Finance, Sales, IT/Tech, Customer services, Marketing, Production & Manufacturing, HR, R&D, Digital, Customer Experience, Logistics & Supply Chain



INDUSTRIES

Financial services & Insurance

Healthcare & Life Sciences

Retail

Manufacturing

Energy & Utilities

Public (Government, Education, Defense)

Other

The interviews were conducted online and via telephone in May and June 2026 and were undertaken using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate. Unless otherwise indicated, the results discussed are based on the total sample.

To access the full findings report, go to [Dell.com/AccelerateInnovation](#).