



| 2025 CIO Agenda |

Unlock superior business outcomes with
4 innovative leadership actions.

Gartner®

About the CIO Agenda

Our annual CIO and Technology Executive Survey (CIO Survey) is the largest of its kind in the world, revealing the top priorities and initiatives of your CIO peers for the coming year.

This year we also analyzed the voices of more than 1,100 CxOs, leaders of business areas and corporate functions outside of IT, to capture the voice of the C-suite and provide you a CxO perspective on the CIO-CxO engagement patterns that lead to successful business outcomes.

The 2025 CIO Agenda will help you navigate changes in technology leadership, build stronger support for CxOs and technology users within and beyond IT, and advance your own career.

Insights From 4,200+ Executives

+3,100 CIOs

Heads of IT functions

+1,100 CxOs

C-suite leaders outside of IT

Representing



\$351B

IT spend



\$17.6T

Revenue



88

Countries

Source: Gartner

Introduction

Our survey of more than 3,100 CIOs around the world found wide differences in how CIOs and CxOs think about and manage technology investments and digital opportunities.

These differences helped us pinpoint a clear group of digital outperformers. We call these high-performing CIOs and CxOs **Digital Vanguard**s — a cohort we first identified in our 2024 CIO Survey but studied in more detail for 2025.

Digital Vanguards: A group of digital outperformers who consistently achieve excellent results from their digital investments. These leaders are **1.5 to 2 times more likely to meet or exceed outcome targets on digital initiatives compared to their counterparts**.

Their winning behaviors will be even more critical in 2025, when the demands on IT continue to increase but budgets are unlikely to outpace inflation.

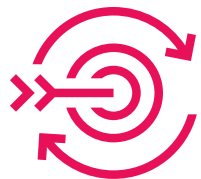
No rest for the weary!

Demand for IT continues to grow.

- ✓ Do **more with less**.
- ✓ Show **value for money**.
- ✓ Deliver **execution excellence**.
- ✓ Be **cost-efficient**.
- ✓ Drive **technology innovation**.

What differentiates CIOs who are digital outperformers?

The 2025 CIO Survey found that **only 48%** of digital initiatives enterprisewide meet or exceed their business outcome targets.



Here's what's unique about the outperformers:

Strategically, they take a two-pronged approach to growth that makes it easier for:

- Other CxOs to lead digital with them.
- Partners outside of IT to build digital capabilities together with IT.

Tactically, they:

- Seek to craft a compelling platform experience for all technology users across the business, not just those in IT. They prioritize data, integration and development platforms that make it easier for IT and non-IT technology users to build architecturally sound and secure solutions.
- Instill architectural awareness. They encourage CxO engagement in IT decisions (from use cases to vendors) and provide business areas with technology vendor management, total cost of ownership, cybersecurity or enterprise architecture (EA) advice.
- Incubate and scale business innovation. All CIOs will continue to deploy emerging technologies such as AI in 2025, but Digital Vanguard CIOs help CxOs identify innovation opportunities, spot AI use cases and enable business-led innovation.
- Develop business and IT technology users. Digital Vanguard CIOs are almost three times more likely to prioritize helping business areas forecast their own technology skills requirements.



71% of digital initiatives owned by Digital Vanguards meet or exceed outcome targets in the enterprise. They do two things differently:

Co-own digital delivery



Despite a growing understanding of the importance of IT for digital business, just 48% of digital initiatives enterprisewide meet or exceed their business outcome targets. However, the 2025 CIO Agenda revealed a cohort of CIOs and CxOs consistently delivering results: the Digital Vanguard.

Digital Vanguard CIOs and CxOs co-own digital delivery end to end. As co-owners they are equally accountable for digital business outcomes. Their fortunes are inextricably intertwined: One cannot succeed without the other.



When CIOs co-own digital delivery alongside CxOs, they are between 1.5 and 2 times more likely to maximize the value from investments in digital.

Democratize digital capabilities



CIOs who drive CxO co-ownership of digital achieve better business outcomes from digital investments. Digital Vanguard CIOs make it easier for CxOs to co-lead digital with them, and they make it easier for employees in business areas to build digital capabilities with IT.

The Digital Vanguard CIO co-owns the digital delivery with their CxO, or business leader counterpart, from beginning to end to:

- Help facilitate the process for CxOs to co-lead digital initiatives with CIOs
- Build digital initiatives along with the IT teams

Further, they perform multiple activities in their digital delivery, including:

- Lead project/product initiatives as product owners
- Deliver solutions in low-code programming
- Execute complex technology work

The CIO is responsible for nurturing the CxO Digital Vanguard relationship. Behind every Digital Vanguard CxO there is a CIO guiding them, enabling them, enabling their teams to co-lead digital delivery with IT.

ACTION 1

Provide strong foundational platforms

In short: CIOs must make it easier for all technology users across the business (including those outside of IT) to use digital platforms.



In 2025, more than 80% of CIOs plan to make investments in foundational capabilities, including: cybersecurity, GenAI, business intelligence and data analytics, and integration technologies like APIs.

These foundational technologies drive innovation, enhance operational efficiency and help enterprises maintain competitive advantage in an increasingly digital landscape. Digital Vanguard CIOs know many of the intended producers exist outside of IT in business areas.

Digital Vanguard CxOs understand technology is key to successful business outcomes and want to partner with the CIO. On average, business areas dedicate 26% of their staff to building, implementing or managing technology.

Employees across the organization have great potential for technology work. CIOs can exploit technology users in business areas but need to make it easy for them to build digital solutions with easy-to-use and compelling platforms.

ACTION 2

Instill architectural awareness

In short: CIOs must make it easier for all technology users to work with IT.

Digital Vanguard CIOs enable employees in business areas, not just IT staff, to use digital platforms to produce digital solutions. If the goal is to adapt IT to better collaborate with colleagues outside of IT, everyone — business or IT — needs a basic comprehension of architecture and security.

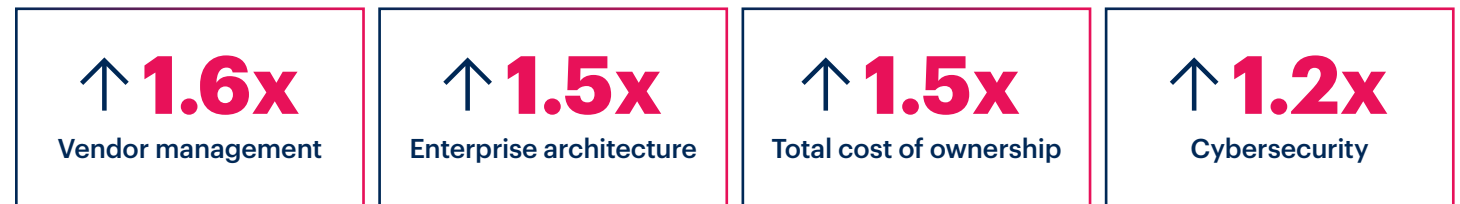
Currently, only 17% of EA teams teach stakeholders to think like architects. This creates unnecessary barriers for CxOs and ensures they won't understand technology vendors' intricacies, cybersecurity requirements or the many interdependencies in technology work. Digital Vanguard CIOs who want to co-lead will communicate clearly and coach CxOs to be successful in these areas.

In fact, 80% of Digital Vanguard CIOs prioritize changing IT processes and ways of working to enable business areas to work in agile ways, versus 30% of other CIOs.

CIOs should provide the Digital Vanguard CxOs with targeted technical advice, as CxOs highly value IT input and recognize the necessity for help with architectural thinking and nonfunctional requirements.

Digital Vanguard CxOs value IT's architectural support

Importance ratings of IT advice, Digital Vanguard CxOs vs. other CxOs



n = 500 CxOs outside of IT (business unit, P&L leaders and heads of corporate functions)
Source: Gartner

ACTION 3

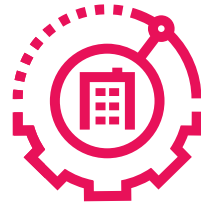
Develop skills of business and technology users

In short: CIOs must develop digital leadership and technology skills enterprisewide.

Nearly 65% of Digital Vanguard CIOs help business areas identify their own technology skill requirements compared to 22% of other CIOs. As with architectural awareness, Digital Vanguard CxOs are eager for CIO input on developing the digital skills of their teams. They are looking to CIOs to help train their technology users, develop digital leadership in their business area, build communities of practice and develop the AI skills of their staff.

In fact, Digital Vanguard CxOs are looking to IT over HR for developing their teams' digital skills.

In turn, this investment in technology skills outside IT makes it easier for the CxOs to co-own their digital initiatives and alleviates IT staff shortages. The end result is an increase in the success rate of digital initiatives for the enterprise.



In 2025, only 16% of CIOs prioritized building a technology workforce across the entire enterprise, but those that do will see high returns from their efforts.

ACTION 4

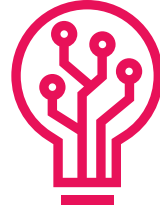
Incubate and scale business innovation

In short: CIOs must make it easier to spot, incubate and scale business-led innovation.

Investing in emerging technologies like AI, low-code/no-code development platforms and industry cloud platforms is necessary for digital business, but it's not enough to drive innovation.

CxOs who co-own their digital initiatives expect IT to support business innovation beyond purchasing the platforms. They understand these emerging technologies are the key foundation for today's digital innovation, and that they'll require help from IT and the CIO to use the technologies in ways that benefit their business.

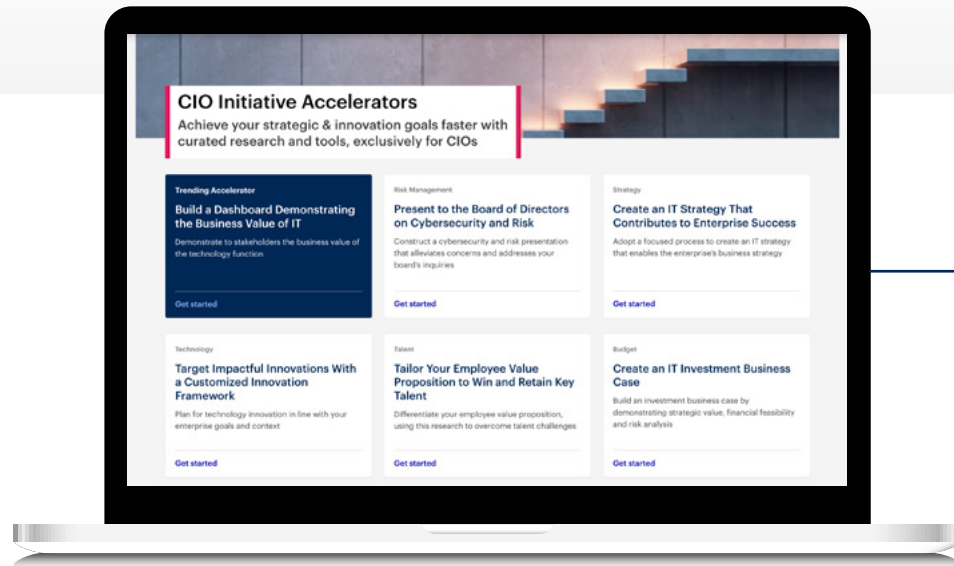
In fact, Digital Vanguard CxOs are 1.8 times more likely than other CxOs to value IT's support in identifying innovation opportunities and 1.6 times more likely to value IT's support to spot AI use cases and enable business-led innovation.



Just 18% of CIOs establish innovation as a business-led capability.

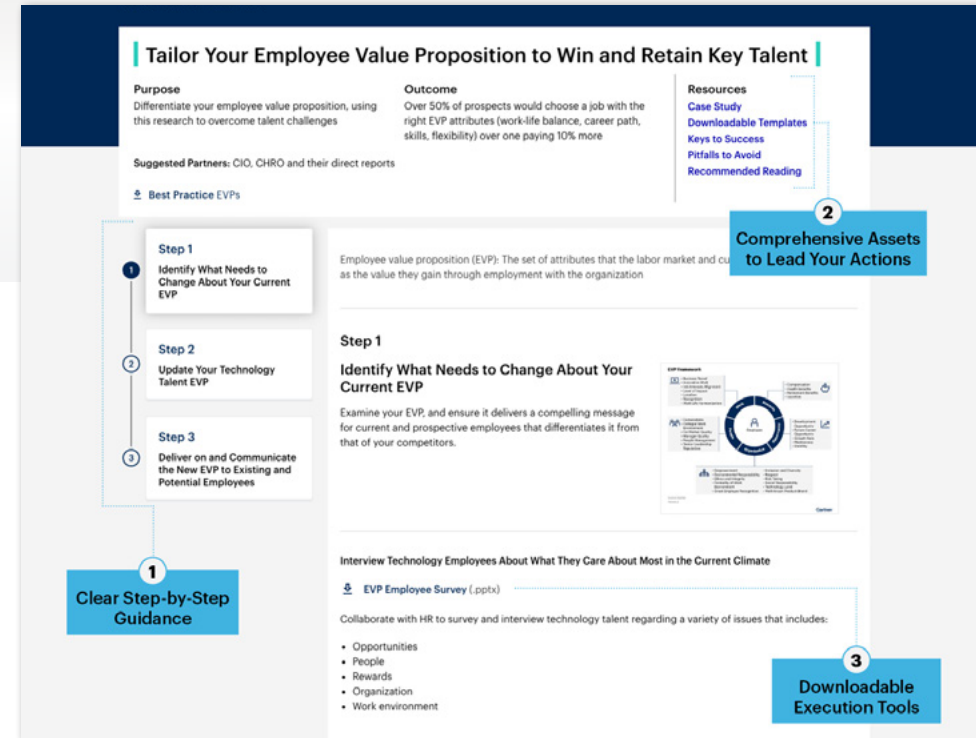
Gartner CIO Initiative Accelerators

These thoughtfully curated, self-service tools provide step-by-step guidance on execution, complete with downloadable templates, case studies and quick lessons — all within one unified experience.



Each Initiative Accelerator offers ...

- ✓ Clear step-by-step guidance
- ✓ Comprehensive assets to guide your actions
- ✓ Downloadable execution tools
- ✓ A thoughtfully curated, self-service experience



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In an era of continual disruption, the role of CIO is evolving rapidly. CIOs must amplify their impact to lead IT beyond the function, partnering with C-suite peers to accelerate digital business models, enable the future of work and drive business growth.

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solution providers at the forefront of technology

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Save time

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Gain confidence

Get aligned, benchmark performance, prioritize areas to improve

Save money

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Mitigate risk

Learn from partners, true peers, and benefit from membership

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CIO members

4,000+
C-suite collaborators

15,000+
Client enterprises

12,500+
Proposal reviews



Strategy validation and peer connections in-person and online

40+
Destination events per year

75,000+
Destination event attendees

100,000+
Total Peer Community members in Gartner's network



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70+
Benchmarks across roles

600,000+
Product and services reviews

465,000+
Client interactions

11,500+
Published documents/year

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Don't just enable innovation, lead it

Effective strategies begin with understanding the trends. Successfully guiding innovation requires more than execution — it demands a deep understanding of the evolving technology landscape.

To truly drive business value and maintain competitive advantage, CIOs must keep pace with the top technology trends shaping the future. Technologies like AI, quantum computing and robotics are no longer optional — they are central to business growth. The CIOs who can effectively harness these trends will be the ones driving both operational efficiency and new revenue streams.



Gain a deeper understanding of the trends that will shape your digital strategy with the **2025 Gartner Top Strategic Technology Trends**.



Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for IT executives:

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Streamline your team's path to better technology decisions — fueled by industry-leading Gartner insights.

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Tool

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Tool

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