


ManageEngine

IT at work: 2022 and beyond

North America report





Table of contents

Introduction	03
Key findings	03
Interdepartmental collaboration	04
Technology adoption across the organization	06
Conclusion	09
Methodology	09
About ManageEngine	10

The democratization of IT

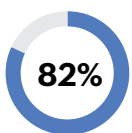
Technology is no longer a separate domain, enabling line-of-business functions. It is deeply embedded in everything the modern enterprise does. It is no longer enough for decision makers and knowledge workers to simply rely on tech specialists. IT has been democratized. Everyone must know how to work with IT and everyone has a stake in how technology is chosen, deployed, configured and used.

Democratization of IT is about people and teams not in the IT department, that now need a high level of technological literacy and agency. They no longer depend on the IT team for their process automation, tool choices or technology operations.

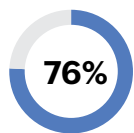
They need to develop their own IT capabilities — along with softer, non-technical, skills — to deliver value to the business. But at the same time, these teams need to be able to communicate and collaborate with IT, if they're to get the best results from their investment in new technologies like AI, ML and big data analytics.

This report examines the ways in which these dynamics impact how enterprises in North America — the US and Canada — engage with technology and what this means for the relationship between IT and line-of-business functions. 500 decision makers across IT and other key business functions were surveyed from a range of private sector organizations.

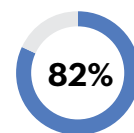
Key findings



agree collaboration between IT teams and other departments in organisations has increased over the last two years



agree that non-IT employees are more knowledgeable about IT than they were before 2020



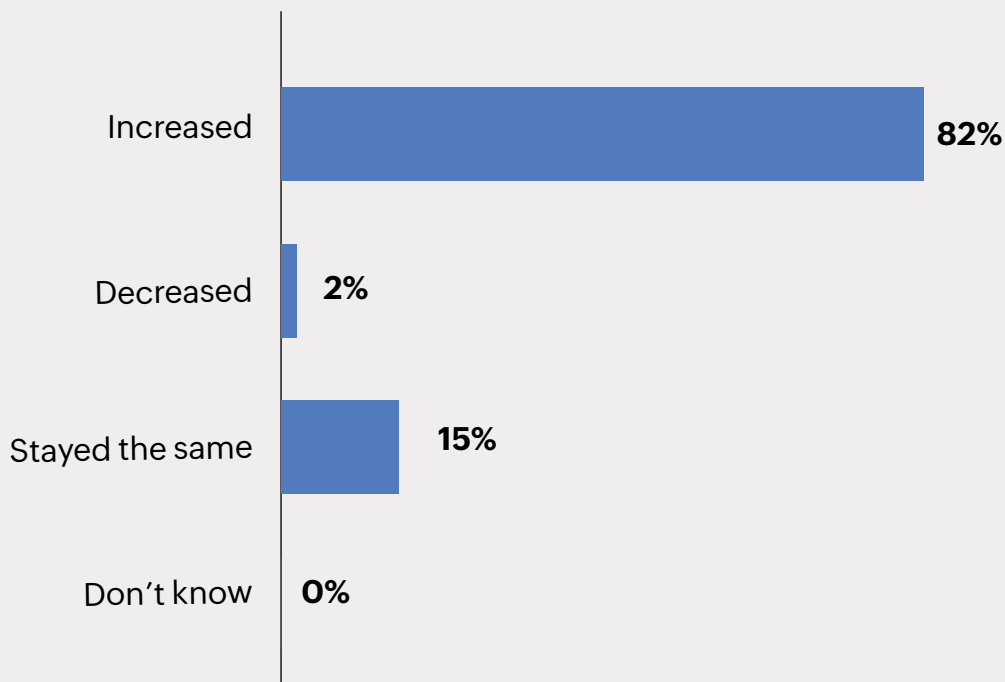
agree that employees in their organization are trained and efficient at leveraging AI/ML

SECTION 1

The rate of collaboration between IT teams and other business departments is a post-pandemic success

When asking business decision makers (BDMs) in the United States and Canada how frequently their department collaborates with other internal departments, IT is the most likely department to be collaborated with all of the time, with almost four in ten (37%) reporting this. While this is slightly lower than is reported globally (42%), the vast majority (82%) of both IT decision makers (ITDMs) and BDMs surveyed report that collaboration between their organization's IT teams and other business departments has increased over the last two years.

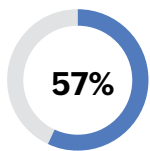
Has collaboration between IT and other departments increased in the last two years?



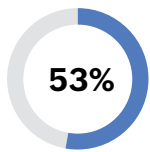
And, potentially this has led to increased levels of IT knowledge throughout the organization: more than three quarters (76%) of decision makers agree that non-IT employees in their organization are now more knowledgeable about IT than they were before 2020.

Decentralization maybe driving this increased collaboration. Almost three quarters (74%) of ITDMs in the US and Canada report that their organization has successfully decentralized its IT structure, notably higher than the reported global average (64%), with the majority of the remaining North American ITDMs reporting their organizations are currently attempting to do so (25%). This suggests that North America is ahead of the curve in terms of decentralization. But despite a prevalence of decentralized IT structures in these organizations, almost all (99%) ITDMs surveyed report their organization faces challenges it if continues to decentralize. The most likely challenges ITDMs expect their organization to face are maintaining IT security levels (56%), followed by maintaining quality levels (41%) and the reliability of ongoing support (37%).

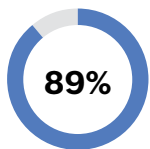
As well as demonstrating a greater rate of collaboration, the research also revealed a changing attitude towards IT's role, importance and the influence of the department:



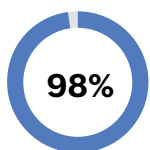
report decentralizing IT may lead to greater recognition of the importance of IT.



also say IT may have greater opportunities to influence C-level decisions.



agree that their department's success is directly correlated with their organization's overall success, of course, with the reverse also true.



When asked how well the C-suite worked with their organization's IT department, almost all (98%) said that they worked fairly or extremely well together.

There are also signs that, despite the increased collaboration between IT and other business functions, there is still work to be done to ensure that the two are consistently on the same page. 65% of ITDMs say that the IT department and the C-suite work extremely well together. But only 46% of BDMs agree.

SECTION 2

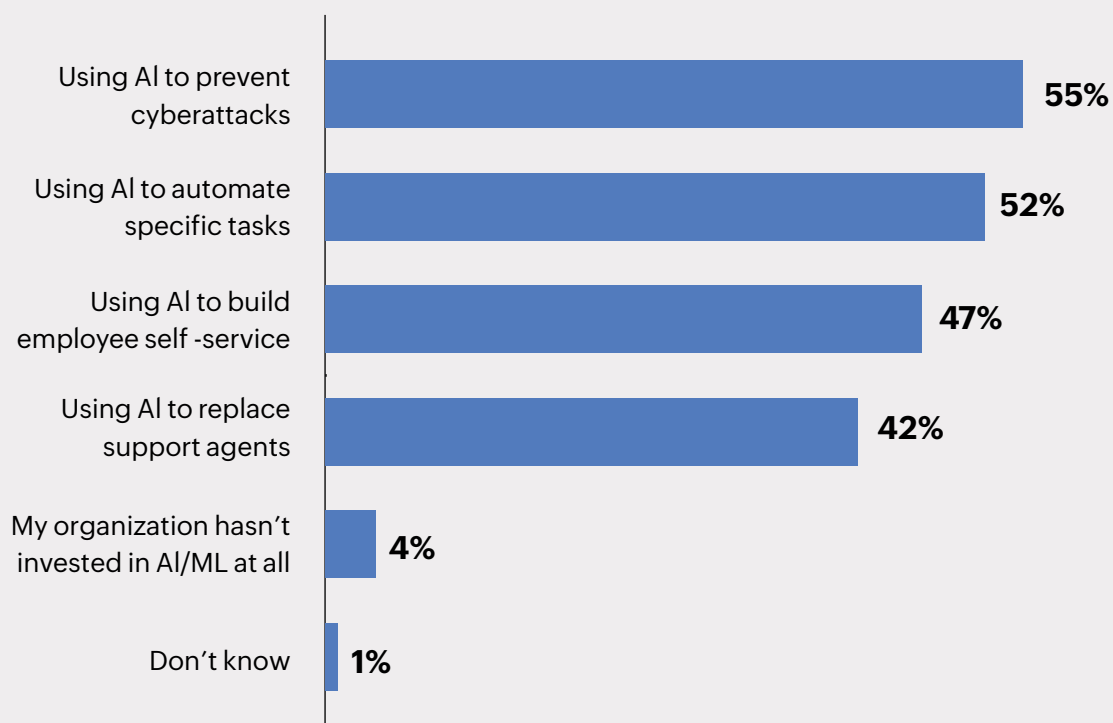
Collaboration has led to greater usage of key technologies across the business, but not without some hiccups

Increased collaboration between IT and other functions has both been led by, and led to, greater use of technology in all areas of the business. The vast majority (94%) of BDMs' organizations have invested in AI/ML and are doing so for more than one use case, on average. Furthermore, across the organization AI and ML are being used in a variety of departments, with IT the most likely (36%), followed by quality control (24%) and finance (21%). This suggests that the departments that work with heavy data loads are North America's leaders in AI adoption.

Unsurprisingly, given the financial, reputational and business damage that a data breach can cause, BDMs are particularly focused on using AI in cybersecurity, with more than half (55%) reporting their organization has invested in using AI to prevent cyberattacks.

Automation is another area of investment for organizations in the US and Canada, with over half (52%) reporting using AI to automate specific tasks. However, this is notably lower compared to the global average (61%), and, of the countries surveyed, the US and Canada are the least likely to report this as an area of investment.

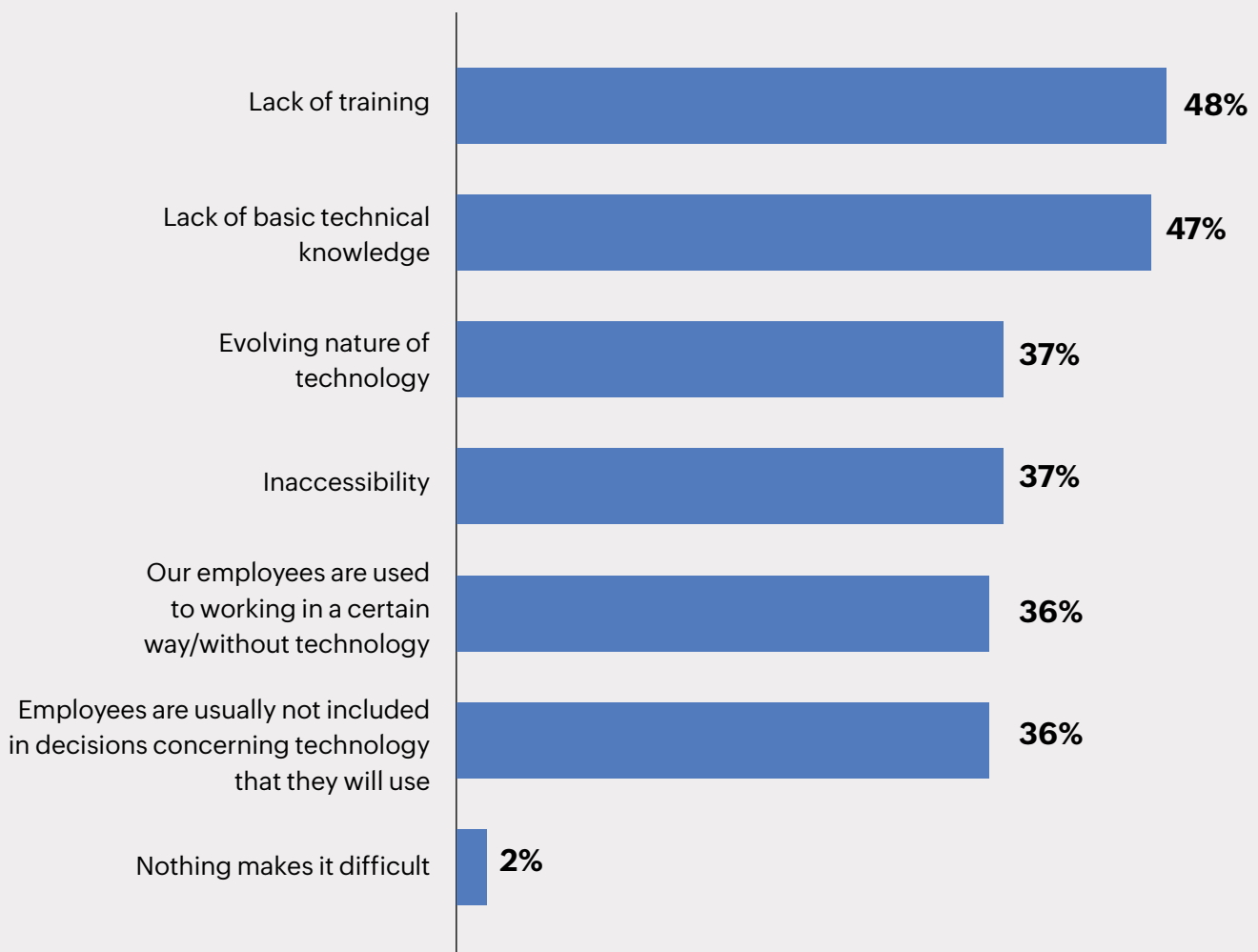
In what specific areas are organisations investing in AI/ML?




However, there are challenges when it comes to maximizing the use of technologies (such as AI/ML). The vast majority (98%) of BDMs report that their organization's employees face barriers when it comes to taking full advantage of technologies, slightly higher than what is reported globally (93%). The most likely is reported as being a lack of training (48%). Despite this, the vast majority (82%) agree that the employees in their organization are trained and efficient at leveraging AI and ML technologies.

This discrepancy indicates that there is room for a greater exploration of where gaps in staff knowledge and confidence occur, and what can be done to remedy them. And there is a need too: the vast majority (82%) of decision makers agree that AI and ML technologies will play a significant role in strengthening their IT security framework in the near future.

What are the barriers preventing employees from taking full advantage of the technologies their organisation currently uses?





Fewer than one in ten (4%) decision makers in North America report that everyone in the organization is responsible for protecting their organization from cyberattacks. According to the majority (58%) of decision makers in the US and Canada, IT and security teams are most likely to be looked to for protection. Yet, there is an indication that, as a group, this responsibility is more likely to collectively fall on the C-suite's shoulders, with the Chief Security Officer (47%), the Chief IT Officer (42%) or the Chief Technology Officer (38%) also looked to for protection. However, change is potentially called for in this area as the vast majority (79%) agree that their organization's existing security landscape needs to change to ensure their organization is protected from cyberattacks. And this change may already be a work in progress, as nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents agree that non-IT employees at their organization try to help protect against cyberattacks.

Almost all (99%) ITDMs report that at least someone in their organization creates their own applications via low-code or no-code platforms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, IT is the most likely department to use this type of technology, with almost three quarters (72%) of ITDMs reporting this. Further, around three quarters (76%) agree that their organization encourages non-IT employees to develop their own applications using low- or no-code platforms. This figure is among the highest proportion of positive responses from any region in the world, again indicating an enthusiastic embrace of innovation and new ways of working by US and Canadian companies. Outside of IT, marketing (36%) and finance (33%) are the most likely departments to create their own applications using low- or no-code platforms.

Despite this encouragement of non-IT departments to use low- or no-code platforms, only one in four (40%) BDMs in US and Canada think that it is considerably important that there is a minimum level of technical proficiency when hiring new employees outside of the IT department, a notably less likely sentiment compared to what is reported globally (52%). While around three quarters (76%) of respondents agree that non-IT employees in their organization are more knowledgeable about IT than they were before 2020, BDMs believe that a lack of training (48%) and basic technical knowledge (47%) are key barriers for employees when it comes to taking advantage of the technologies available within their organization.

ITDMs agree with their line-of-business colleagues that other departments need improved technical skills or training. The vast majority (98%) of ITDMs believe that at least one department in their organization should receive more technical skills training. Marketing (52%), are reported as most likely to require this additional technical training, followed by finance (45%) and sales (43%). This is despite the fact that these teams were among the most likely to use low- and no-code application development tools. This could indicate these teams are misusing or underutilizing these technologies and need greater support from IT.

Conclusion

The democratization of technology has, unsurprisingly, not diminished the role or importance of the IT department. If anything, quite the opposite is true. The proliferation of technology throughout organizations has increased the technical proficiency of non-IT employees — but not to the extent that they can do without IT altogether.

Rather, IT becomes an enabler, a problem-solver and a source of training and advice. And with technology more common — and more deeply embedded — across all parts of the organization, the need for IT is only likely to grow.

To cope with the rising demands on IT, a range of strategies are likely to be required. This includes more training for non-IT staff, greater investment in the optimized deployment of the relevant AI, ML and other technologies. The use of low- and no-code development and self-service platforms, to allow staff to achieve their goals without, at least in the first instance, drawing on IT time and resources, will also be crucial.

The good news for US and Canadian organizations is that with their engagement and enthusiasm for innovation, alongside the adoption of new technologies gives them a head start in the race to find answers to these challenges. In a rapidly digitalizing and transforming global marketplace, this has the potential to be a significant advantage.

Methodology

ManageEngine commissioned independent market research agency Vanson Bourne to conduct the research upon which this executive summary is based. 500 decision makers across IT and other key business functions, from organizations across the US & Canada, were surveyed from a range of private sector organizations. The wider global research included 3,300 decision makers across IT and other key business functions, from organizations across the globe, were surveyed from a range of private sector organizations. All interviews were conducted using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

About us

ManageEngine is the enterprise IT management division of Zoho Corporation. Established and emerging enterprises—including 9 of every 10 Fortune 100 organizations—rely on ManageEngine’s real-time IT management tools to ensure optimal performance of their IT infrastructure, including networks, servers, applications, desktops and more. ManageEngine has offices worldwide, including the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, India, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Japan, China and Australia, as well as 200+ global partners to help organizations tightly align their business and IT.

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