

ManageEngine

# IT at work: 2022 and beyond

*UAE*



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## Introduction

The IT department's role is wide-reaching, varied, and essential to an organisation's success—either centrally, or in support of its other departments. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are already used extensively across the business, but more training might be required for its use to be maximised outside of the IT department. IT's role, therefore, will be even greater in the next five years. But with such a pivotal role, organisations must be careful not to push its IT talent away. This report examines the status, future, and risks of IT and technology use, in large and enterprise-sized organisations across the UAE.

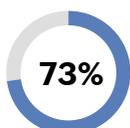
## Key findings



of respondents agree that “non-IT employees in my organisation are more knowledgeable about IT than they were before 2020”.



of respondents agree that “IT is more responsible for business innovation than ever before”.



IT and security teams are most likely (73%) to be regarded as responsible for protecting their organisation from cyberattacks.



of respondents agree that “our existing security landscape needs to change to ensure our organisation is protected from cyberattacks”.



of respondents believe that IT will have a greater position at setting strategies for the organisation as a whole in the next five years.

## SECTION 1

### Role of IT

The vast majority (90%) of respondents report that collaboration between IT teams and other departments has increased during the past two years. But just under six in ten (57%) respondents report that collaboration has increased “significantly” in this time.

Similarly, the IT department works well with senior management in most organisations. Nearly all (99%) respondents believe that their organisation’s IT department and C-suite work extremely well or fairly well together. And potentially because of this collaboration, nearly all (98%) of business decision-makers (BDMs) say that their department has autonomy when it comes to making technology decisions. This autonomy relates not just to purchases of software (64%), and of devices (47%), but also to hiring tech talent (62%), which is higher than the global average of 50%.

A possible reason for the need and increase in collaboration, and the variety of decision-making authority across the business, might be being driven by the level of decentralisation within an organisations’ IT structures (refer to Figure 1).

- According to more than four in ten (44%) of IT decision-makers (ITDMs), their organisations have already successfully decentralised their IT structures. While this is much lower than the global average (64%), another 49% of ITDMs note that their organisations are currently attempting to decentralise IT.
- This has not been without its challenges, however. Nearly all (97%) respondents report that there are challenges with decentralising their organisations’ IT function with the key reasons cited being maintaining IT security (61%) and prioritising the user experience (51%).
- Despite these challenges, the perceived benefits are widely recognised amongst ITDMs and BDMs. Almost all (99%) believe there are benefits to decentralising their IT function.

- The majority of decision-makers believe that if their organisation decentralises its IT function, the importance of IT’s role in the business will become more recognised and acknowledged (68%), and there will be increased scope for innovation (65%) and professional growth through upskilling (61%) as a result. These benefits are reported more by UAE respondents compared to their global peers, indicating that UAE organisations are more dedicated to attaining these benefits.

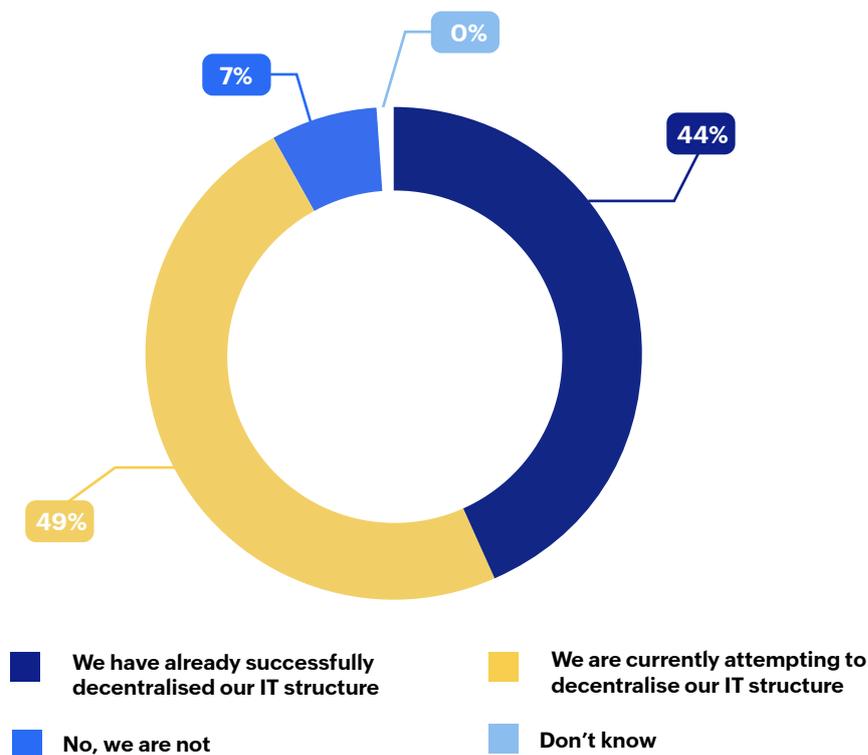


Figure 1: Is your organisation attempting to decentralize its IT structure?

As part of this increasing preference for IT decentralisation, non-IT departments have a notable role to play when it comes to IT and technology. Significantly, more than three quarters (84%) of respondents agree that non-IT employees in their organisation are more knowledgeable about IT now than they were before 2020.

With technology knowledge growing in many organisations outside of IT, this might leave IT out of decision-making. However, it appears that this is not the case for the most part. Just under a third (32%) of ITDMs feel they were either “not consulted at all” or “consulted inadequately” while their organisations adapted and adopted a flexible working model. Just over half (56%) feel that they were “consulted adequately”— although this is somewhat lower than the global average (64%).

IT also plays a large role in other strategic priorities, such as implementing sustainability policies.

- Almost all (99%) ITDM's report that their organisation's IT department plays a role in implementing sustainability policies.
- More than four in ten (44%) ITDM's report that their IT department plays a critical role in implementing sustainability policies.

Alongside their other roles, IT professionals are also increasingly expected to be innovators, with more than nine in ten (91%) respondents agreeing that IT is more responsible for business innovation than ever before. A similar percentage (88%) agree that IT could drive innovation if it had a stronger leadership position, while a smaller percentage (73%) agree IT's role is actually to assist the innovators. This suggests that their role has traditionally been one of assistance, but now their responsibility for innovation has grown.

## SECTION 2

### Technology use

Nearly all (95%) BDMs say that their organisation has invested in AI and ML, and are doing so for more than one use case, on average. Automation is, unsurprisingly, the most highly reported area (65%), but a notable proportion of BDMs also report that they are using AI to prevent cyberattacks (52%). More than half (53%) are also using AI to build employee self-service.

Technology use also extends to creating applications using low code or no code platforms. The IT department is most likely (74%) to be creating their own applications via low code or no code platforms, followed by developers in teams outside of IT (41%). The department next most likely to be doing this is the Finance team (38%).

Organisations increasingly require internal IT departments to defend against cyberattacks (refer to Figure 2). Just a quarter (25%) of decision-makers report that third-party security specialists provide this service for their organisation, suggesting that the vast majority require internal IT departments to assume this role in addition to their other IT responsibilities.

Indeed, IT and security teams are most likely to be reported as being responsible for protection (73%—higher than the global average of 58%), with Chief IT Officer (46%) the next most likely to be looked to for protection. Most surprising is that only a small proportion of decision-makers (2%) expect everyone in their organisation to play a role in protecting against cyberattacks.

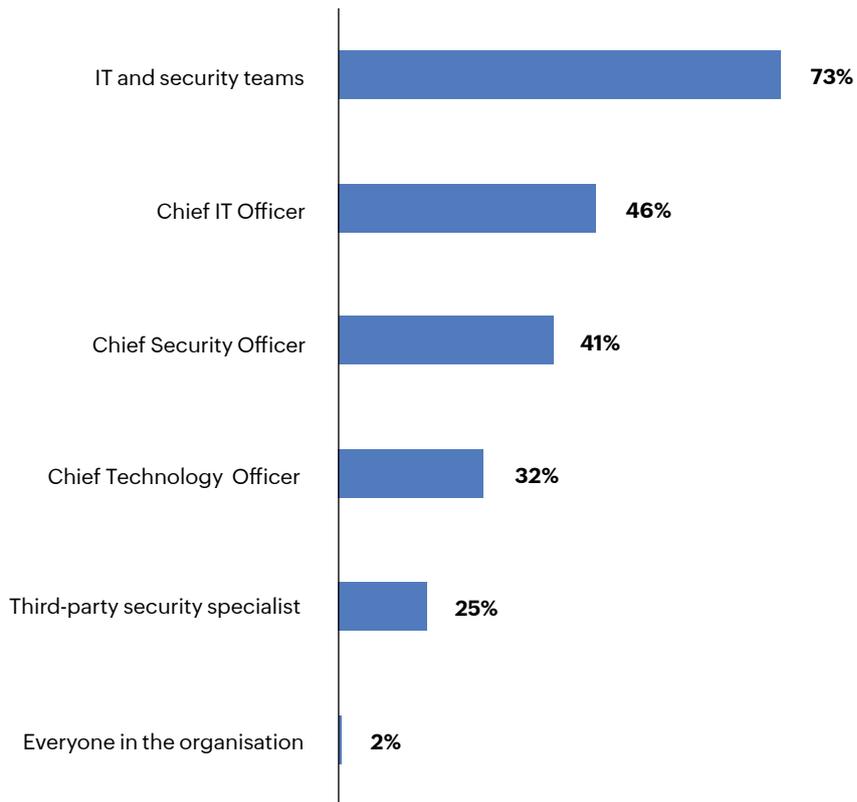


Figure 2: Whose responsibility should it be to protect your organisation from cyberattacks?

When it comes to technologies used in IT security, 86% of respondents agree that “Our existing security landscape needs to change to ensure our organisation is protected from cyberattacks”.

As well as using advanced technologies, organisations in the UAE are also likely to be making good use of their data. ITDMs report that their organisation uses advanced data analytics in its IT operations for performance monitoring (72%), and forecasting and predictive analytics (67%).

But there are challenges when it comes to maximising the use of these technologies. Almost nine in ten (89%) BDMs say that their organisation's employees face barriers to taking full advantage of technologies. More than four in ten (45%) say that employees are used to working in a certain way or without technology, or that there is a lack of basic technical knowledge (44%), among other challenges noted in Figure 3.

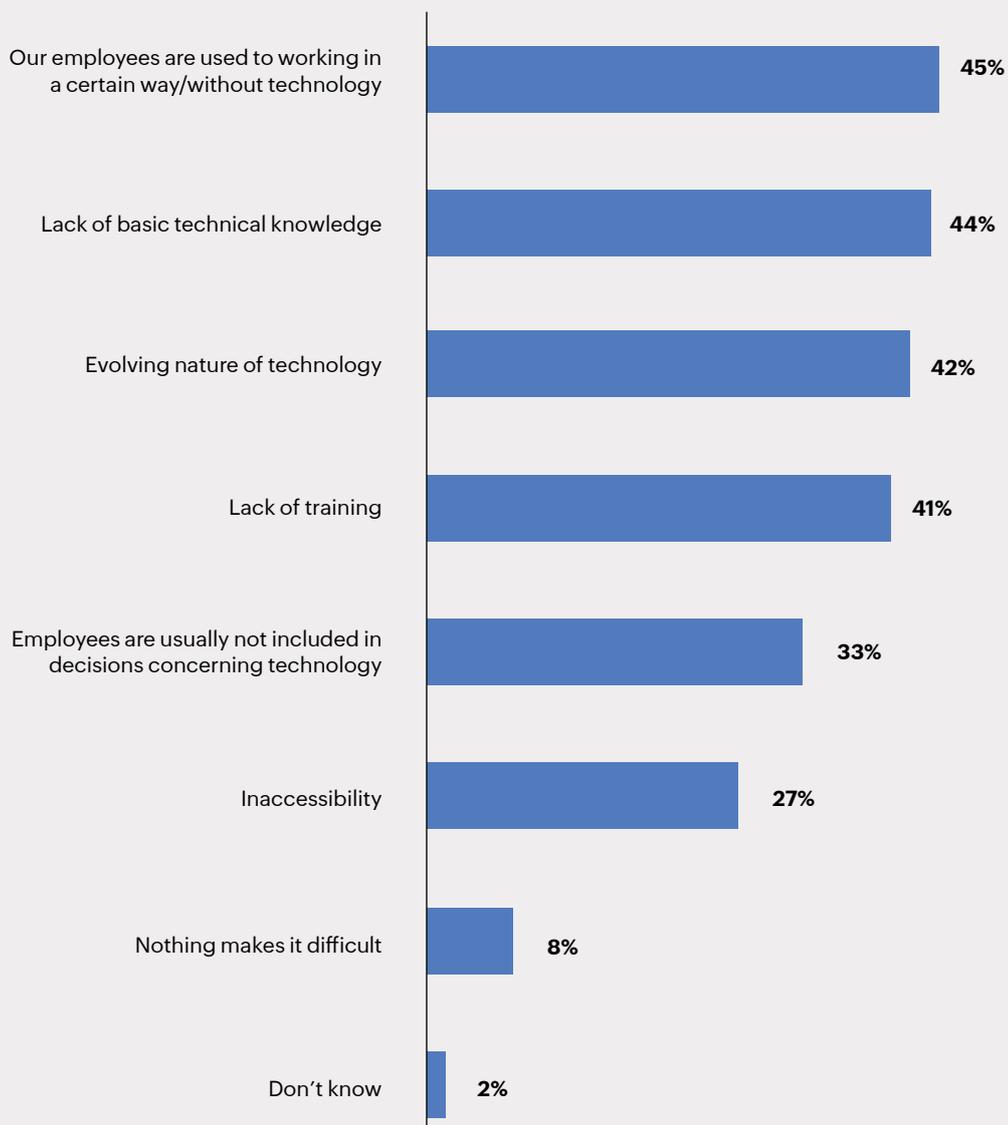
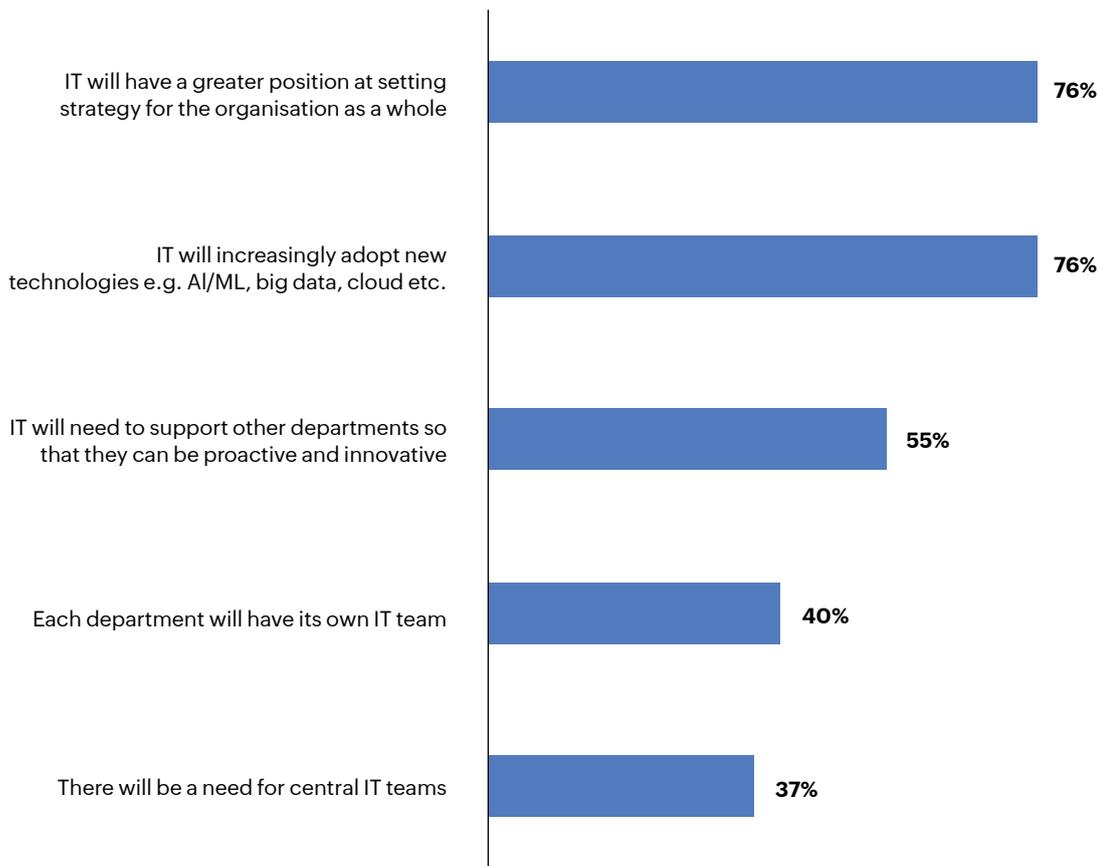


Figure 3: What are the barriers for your organisation's employees to take full advantage of the technologies that your organisation currently uses?

## SECTION 3

### Technology knowledge and training

IT will have a greater role in organisations in the next five years (refer to Figure 4). Around three quarters of ITDMs (76%) believe that IT will increasingly adopt new technology, or have a greater position in setting strategy (76%). But there is a split on whether IT will be take this approach through a central team (37%), or whether each department will have its own IT team (40%).



*Figure 4: Looking to the future of IT, how do ITDMs see IT evolving within their organisation in the next five years?*

Just over two thirds (69%) of BDMs think that it is “considerably important” that the prospective employee reflects a minimum level of technical proficiency when hired for non-IT department roles. This shows that departments outside of IT often have notable freedom regarding the type of technology decisions that they can make.

Keeping IT talent happy is very important. When it comes to what ITDMs want from their role in the next five years, these were cited as most important: the potential to learn new skills (55%), the ability to step into a more senior role (49%), and the ability to guide change (48%) within the organisation.

As much as offering opportunities to their IT talent, organisations must be careful to not take away existing benefits from their employees. Around half of ITDMs say that they would be driven away from their organisation if their pay did not at least stay current with inflation (54%), if there were no potential for advancement/promotion (52%), or a flexible work model (50%), or any of several other existing benefits cited, were taken away. Clearly, there is a delicate balance required from organisations to retain their IT department leadership's knowledge and skills that they've developed in their roles.

ITDMs in the UAE are less likely to be looking beyond their current employer when it comes to their future, compared to their global peers. While 48% of ITDMs globally say they are "actively looking for a new job", the UAE figure stands at 41%. However, they remain concerned about their chosen career. More than three quarters (79%) of ITDMs agree that "My organisation should have supported me more in the last two years". Furthermore, 45% of ITDMs agree that "I feel less loyalty to my employer than I did two years ago". Perhaps most concerning of all, 50% of ITDMs agree that "I am more concerned about losing my job than I was six months ago", and 65% agree that "I am more willing to make a risky career move than I was two years ago".

Survey responses show that training needs to be improved. Nearly all (94%) ITDMs believe that at least one department in their organisation should receive more technical skills training. Non-IT developers and DevOps are notably more likely (61%) to require additional technical training, with other departments represented in the four in ten range, including Marketing (46%), Sales (45%), and Legal (41%), although an individual organisations' exact needs are likely to vary.

A variety of approaches are used by organisations when it comes to technology training. Just over six in ten (61%) BDMs say that their organisation has a team dedicated to technology processes and tools training. But a similar proportion (63%) rely on their organisation's IT team, and nearly half (47%) take care of their own training (refer to Figure 5). These approaches rely either on the IT team having a good knowledge of what technologies are being adopted in different functions, or the business functions themselves having adequate technology knowledge to roll out and run the training.

Both these approaches have their potential pitfalls, but critically, both rely on a high level of technology knowledge existing within the organisation. These approaches rely either on the IT team having a good knowledge of what technologies are being adopted in different functions, or the business functions themselves having adequate technology knowledge to roll out and run the training. Both these approaches have their potential pitfalls, but critically, both rely on a high level of technology knowledge existing within the organisation.

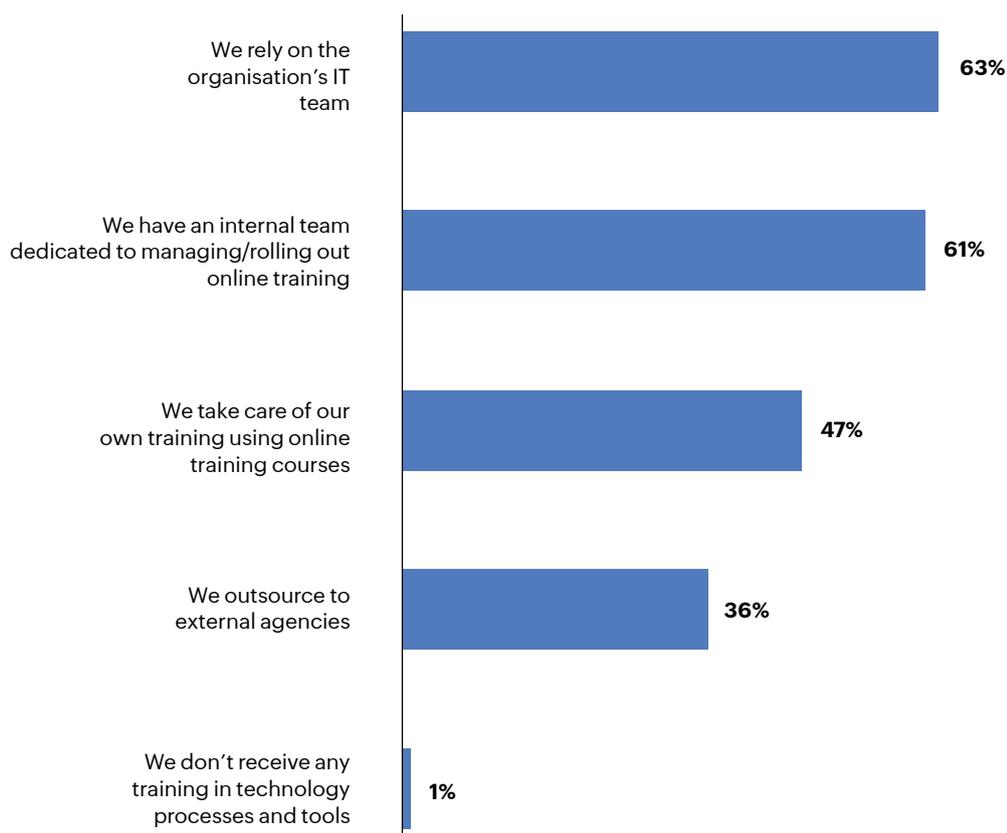


Figure 5: How do non-IT departments receive training in technology processes and tools?

## **Conclusion**

The IT department holds considerable control over many aspects of the company. But while there is a significant and increasing amount of collaboration between departments, there is room for further improvement.

Questions remain regarding the best way to involve IT in business strategies. Since the level and manner of IT's involvement is up for debate, there is no consistent approach regarding innovation. Decentralising IT is already happening, but there are notable challenges in doing so. Departments outside of IT are already likely to hold autonomy to some degree when it comes to tech choices. This has influenced decisions around recruitment and skills training in these departments. But skills training is a definite weakness in many organisations. Yet, it is at this critical time for IT that some ITDMs might at least be considering leaving to find a new role in another organisation.

If IT decentralisation is to continue successfully, innovation to flourish, and functions across the organisation to take full advantage of the technologies available, organisations need to work hard to retain their tech talent and improve the technology knowledge of departments outside of IT.

## **Methodology**

ManageEngine commissioned independent market research agency Vanson Bourne to conduct the research upon which this executive summary is based. 200 decision-makers across IT and other key business functions, from organisations across the UAE, were surveyed from a range of private-sector organisations. The wider global research included 3,300 decision-makers across IT and other key business functions, from organisations across the world, who were surveyed from a range of private-sector organisations. All interviews were conducted using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

## About ManageEngine

ManageEngine is the enterprise IT management division of Zoho Corporation. Established and emerging enterprises—including 9 of every 10 Fortune 100 organisations—rely on ManageEngine’s real-time IT management tools to ensure optimal performance of their IT infrastructure, including networks, servers, applications, endpoints 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 organisations tightly align their business and IT. For more information, please visit [manageengine.com/middle-east.html](https://manageengine.com/middle-east.html), follow the [company blog](#) and get connected on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).





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