Do You See What I See?

Removing Obstacles to Greater Visibility Across the IT Estate for a Better Digital Employee Experience

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Delivering a better digital employee experience (DEX) to enable productivity is a top priority for enterprise IT leaders, yet very few companies have a DEX solution in place.

So how are businesses effectively monitoring and managing the digital workplace to ensure a stellar digital employee experience – whether for knowledge workers across the enterprise or end users in environments with numerous, widely distributed digital endpoints such as healthcare settings, warehouses, and retail spaces?

Lakeside Software asked 100 U.S. IT leaders this question and more. Based on their survey responses, it is clear that greater visibility across the IT estate can solve potential IT issues before they cause disruption or downtime. A complete view of the IT estate from the inside out gives IT leaders a better understanding of the interventions and proactive improvements needed to address endpoint problems before they negatively affect the end-user experience.

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Introduction:
An Evolving IT Landscape

The IT landscape is continually evolving. With the rapid advancement of technology, the role of the digital employee experience (DEX) has become increasingly crucial. Qualtrics defines DEX as "the quality of employees' touchpoints with the technology they use to do their jobs."

A widespread mind shift toward DEX as a business strategy is taking hold. Gartner® expects DEX adoption to skyrocket: "By 2025, 50% of IT organizations will have established a digital employee experience strategy, team and management tool, an increase from 5% in 2021."

The survey of IT leaders sheds light on the prevailing priorities for developing an effective DEX strategy. In this report, we delve into the key findings of the survey, highlighting trends, implications, and potential solutions and strategies for enterprises IT teams.
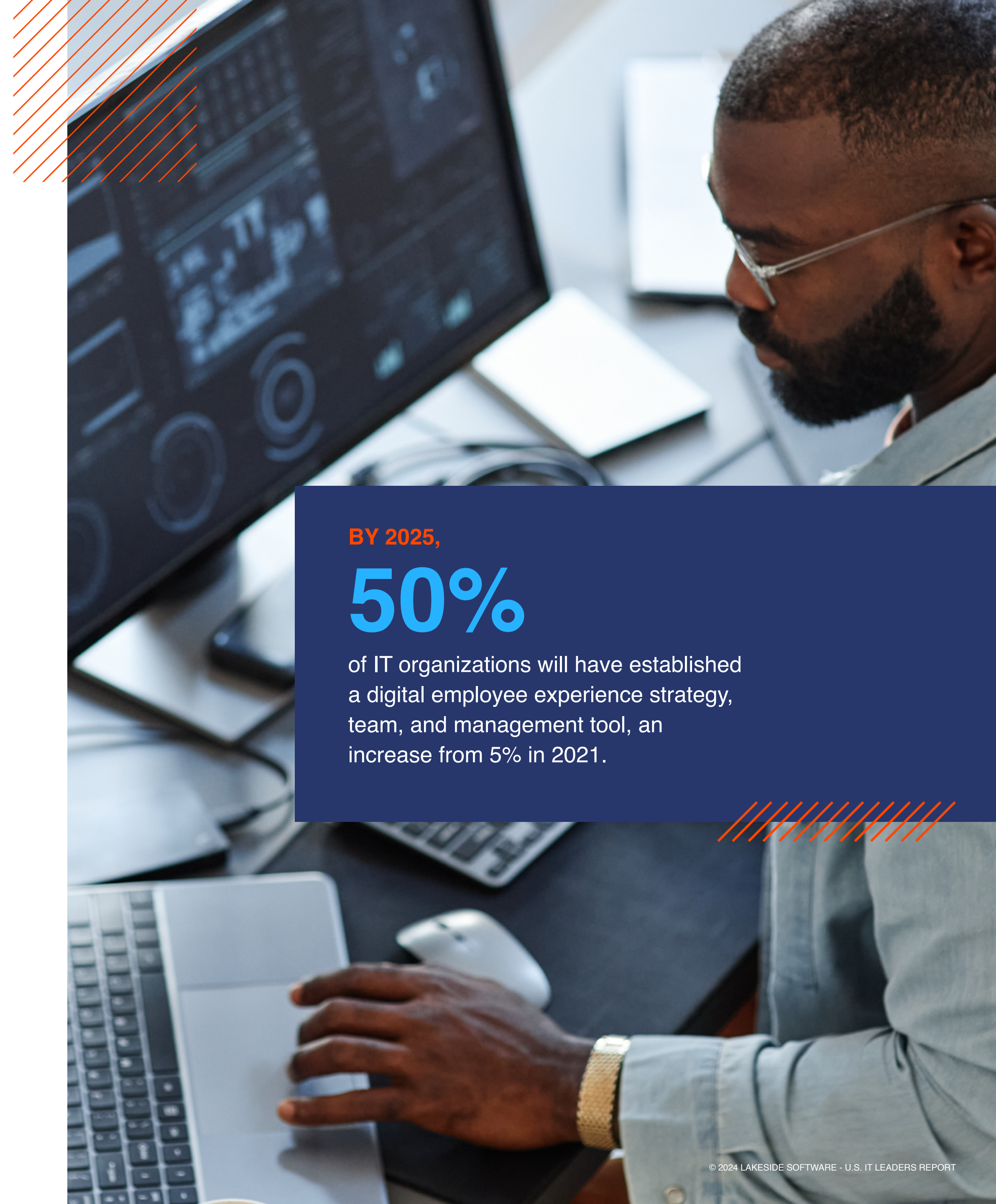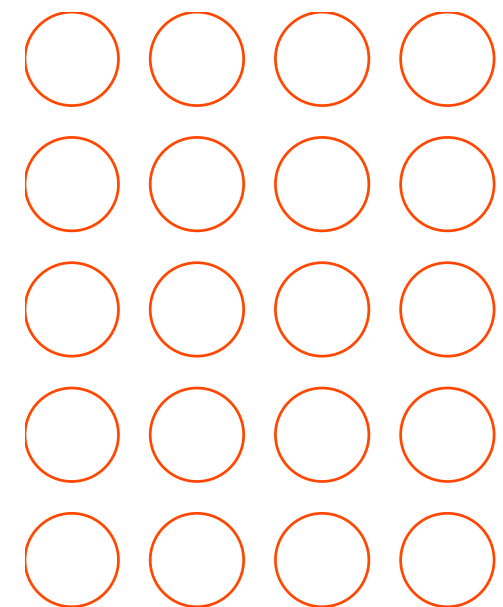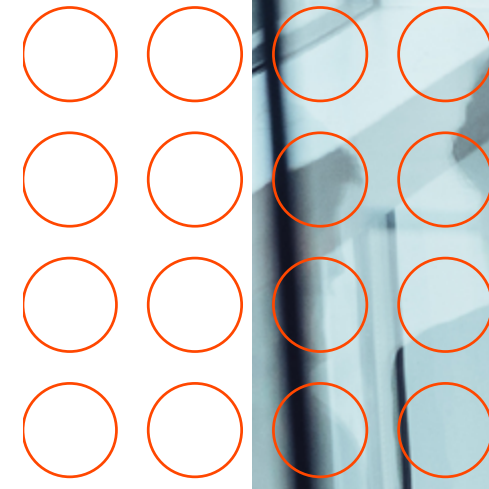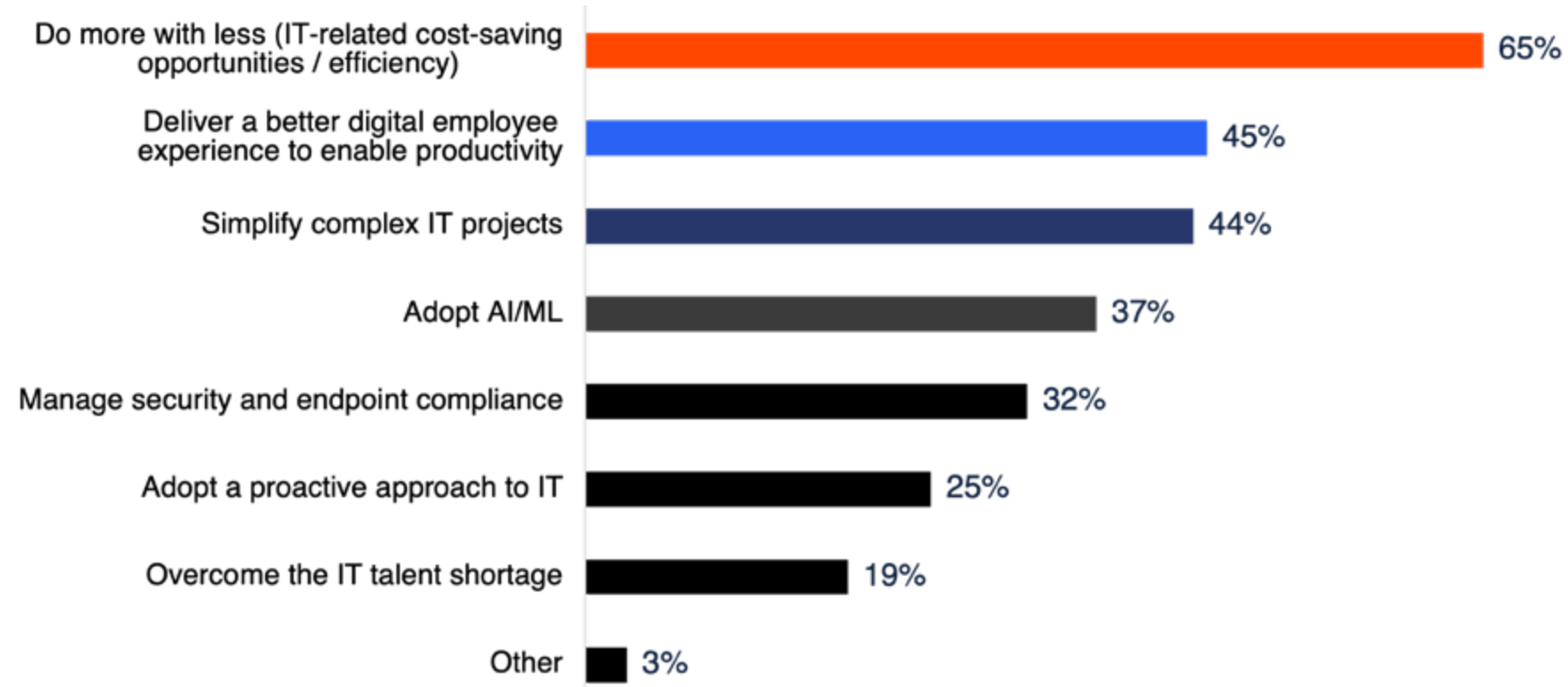
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Top Three IT Prioritization Trends

It is important to consider where a DEX strategy sits in relation to IT priorities in general for the coming year, allowing IT leaders to focus investments accordingly. When asked about their top priorities in the next 12 months, 65% of IT leaders surveyed indicated they are prioritizing doing more with less as their top priority. A solid 45% are focused on delivering a better digital employee experience, and simplifying complex IT projects rounds out the top three priorities, cited by 44% of survey respondents.

What are your top IT priorities in the next 12 months?

Priority	Percentage
Do more with less (IT-related cost-saving opportunities / efficiency)	65%
Deliver a better digital employee experience to enable productivity	45%
Simplify complex IT projects	44%
Adopt AI/ML	37%
Manage security and endpoint compliance	32%
Adopt a proactive approach to IT	25%
Overcome the IT talent shortage	19%
Other	3%

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Doing More with Less

The emphasis on "doing more with less" underscores the prevailing economic uncertainties and the imperative for organizations to streamline operations while maintaining output levels — all the while ensuring employee satisfaction with their tech stack.

One way to do more with less is to use DEX data to understand how employees are using their digital tools, including software and hardware. By understanding what tools employees are actually using, organizations can trim out software bloat and eliminate unnecessary hardware purchases. The best way to gain complete visibility of what is happening across the digital estate is to collect data on endpoints (e.g., laptops and desktops, digital kiosks, or rugged handheld devices) to understand how the devices are performing or whether they are being used.

Lakeside SysTrack is an endpoint monitoring platform that leverages an embedded AI engine and rich dataset to enable IT teams to proactively resolve complex issues. Using well-structured data, SysTrack pinpoints where IT can do more with less, such as eliminating unused hardware and software without affecting the digital employee experience.

TWO

Delivering Superior Digital Employee Experiences

Another noteworthy priority is the emphasis on delivering a superior digital employee experience. This trend reflects the growing recognition of the pivotal role of employee or end-user experience in driving organizational performance and fostering employee engagement and satisfaction.

Indeed, DEX as a strategic priority is more important than ever. Compucom reports that "half of employed Americans have been so frustrated with their workplace tech that they've switched jobs — or are actively applying." Employers, already strained by tight budgets, simply cannot take on that costly risk. The Work Institute indicates that "losing an employee typically costs approximately 33% of their base pay. For the average U.S. employee, the cost of turnover is approximately $15,000."

Enterprises can enhance DEX by using AI to adopt a proactive approach, empowering IT teams to identify potential IT issues before they turn into widespread disruptions to employee productivity. Data insights based on high-quality endpoint data can inform IT of incipient problems, so they can address the issues before they affect the employee or end-user experience.

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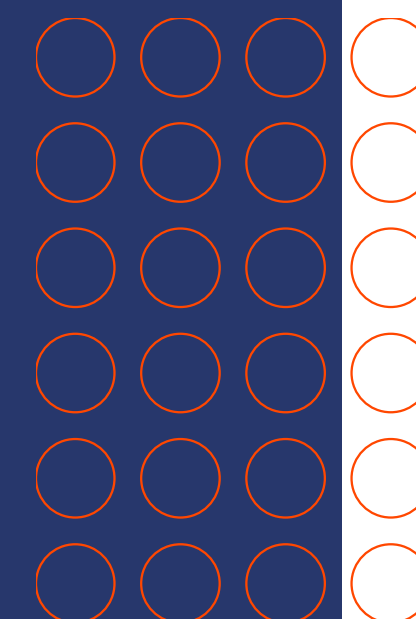
Lakeside SysTrack for Complete Visibility

Lakeside SysTrack continuously collects key performance data on endpoint devices. Specifically, SysTrack collects more than 10,000 data points every 15 seconds.

IT can see automatically triggered alerts in a dashboard for immediate view to help prioritize responses. By continuously gathering and analyzing metrics directly from endpoints, SysTrack gives IT complete visibility of the following issues, which would remain hidden without robust IT data:

- Hardware and app performance
- Latency time
- CPU, memory, or storage usage
- Network connectivity
- App or system faults
- Slow startup times

Three

Simplifying Complex IT Projects

The third top priority for IT leaders is simplifying complex IT projects, underscoring the challenges inherent in managing and executing intricate technology initiatives and IT transformations. Simplification efforts not only enhance operational efficiency but also mitigate risks associated with project complexity, thereby enabling organizations to adapt more swiftly to evolving business needs.

Enterprises can simplify IT projects only with the complete visibility the IT team needs to set baselines before any IT transformation project. From there, IT can monitor the impact of changes against the baselines. During the pilot phase of any project, IT can have real-time visibility into what is happening across the IT estate, reducing risk before widespread rollout.
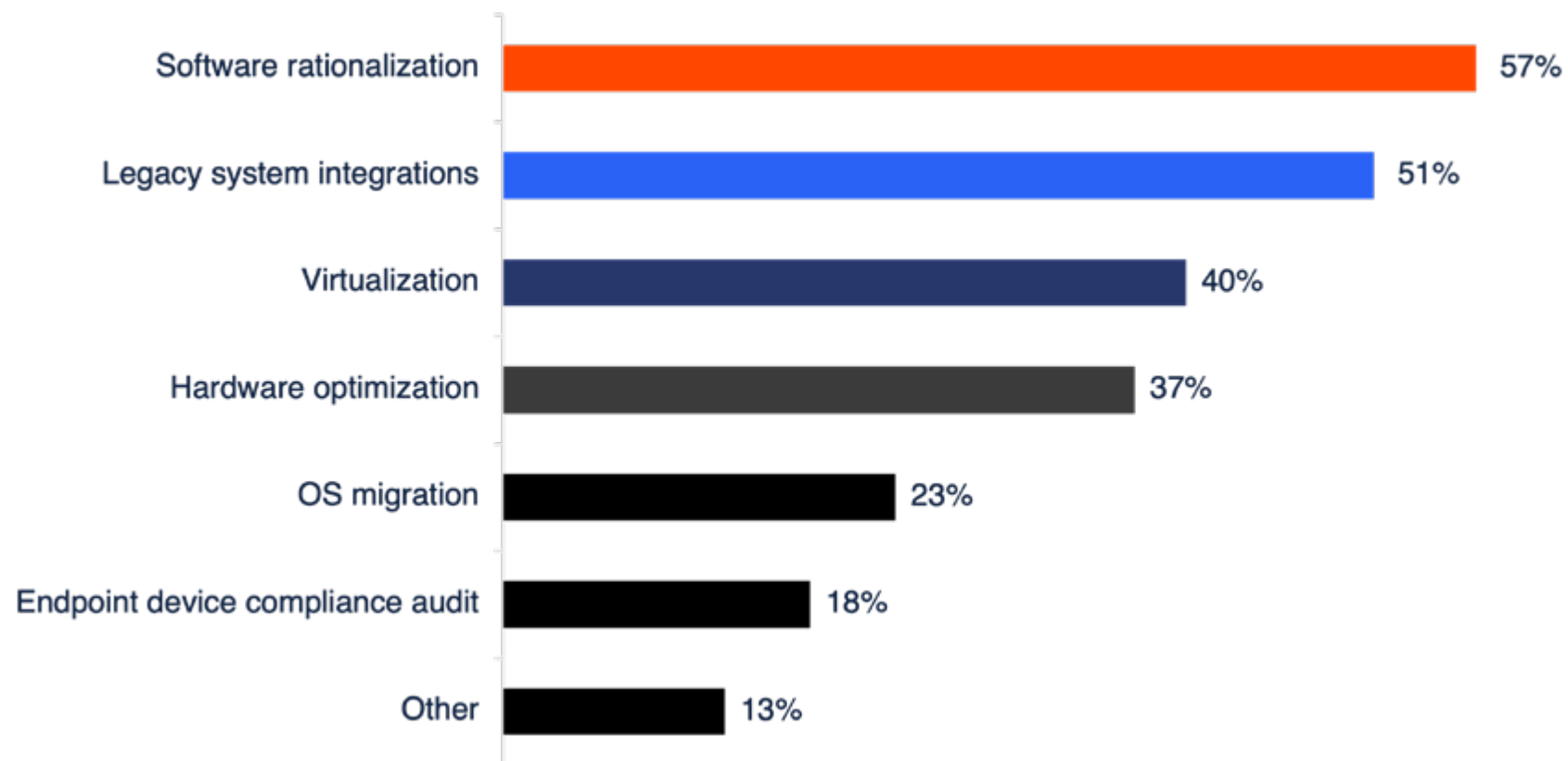
Measuring Change Performance

Adding to its more than 10 current patents, Lakeside's newest patented innovation helps organizations see and measure the impact of any IT change on the digital workplace. The tool allows IT teams to gain insights into performance metrics before and after a hardware, software, or other major IT transformation rollout and visually see the impacts on a new change performance dashboard. SysTrack allows IT to set baselines against which they can detect serious issues in the initial stages — issues that otherwise could derail the project, in turn affecting digital transformation project timeline and increasing project costs.

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Top Four Key IT Initiatives

The survey asked IT leaders which key initiatives are underway to support their IT priorities. According to the survey, more than half are using software rationalization (57%) and/or legacy system integrations (51%) as key initiatives to achieve top IT priorities. Virtualization and hardware optimization also have traction with 40% and 37%, respectively.

What key initiatives are underway to support your priorities?

Initiative	%
Software rationalization	57%
Legacy system integrations	51%
Virtualization	40%
Hardware optimization	37%
OS migration	23%
Endpoint device compliance audit	18%
Other	13%

These top four key initiatives underscore the prevailing trend among IT leaders to prioritize efficiency and modernization within their organizations. Each of these can enable IT to do more with less:

1. Software Rationalization:

Granular visibility into software license optimization, the process of assessing and managing software licenses within an organization, can uncover significant cost-saving opportunities. In many large enterprises, software licenses are underutilized or even unused. By identifying and eliminating these extraneous licenses, companies can significantly reduce software expenses. Such a focus suggests a strategic shift toward leaner, more agile IT infrastructures that can adapt swiftly to evolving business needs.

### 2. Legacy System Integrations:

Without complete visibility across the IT estate, legacy system integrations are challenging. By integrating legacy systems with updated solutions, organizations can leverage existing investments while capitalizing on the benefits of contemporary IT architectures. This emphasis likely reflects a recognition of the need to bridge the gap between older systems and newer, more innovative technologies or software versions.

3. Virtualization:

Under virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), user desktops are hosted from centralized services. VDI uses shared resources to increase hardware utilization efficiencies while greatly reducing administrative burdens and maintenance costs. While VDI impacts many aspects of hardware, software, and personnel in both the data center and the end-user environment, it is difficult for many users to get started in VDI because the complexity of the undertaking seems daunting.
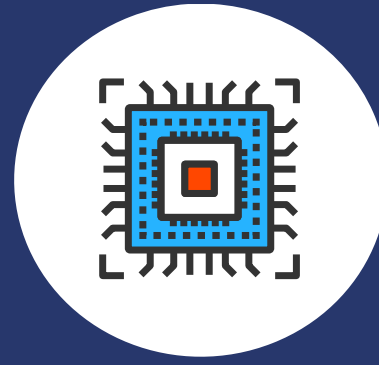
4.Hardware Optimization:

By implementing strategic hardware optimization measures, enterprises can reduce capital and operational expenditures while boosting operational efficiency and productivity. Often, however, large enterprises over-provision hardware resources instead of allocating hardware based on only what the employee needs to do their jobs. Right-sizing the hardware resources according to job roles reduces unnecessary capital expenditure on excess hardware. The focus on optimization underscores a commitment to using technology assets effectively and aligning technology investments with broader organizational objectives.
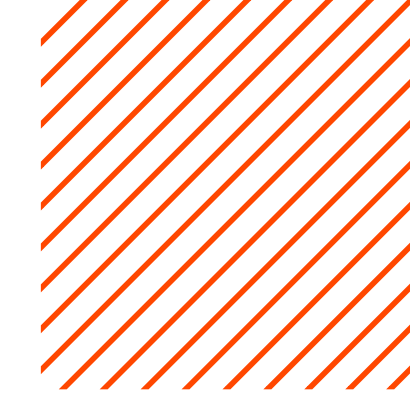
Case Studies

Uncovered Waste

An EMEA-based financial services firm with more than 50,000 employees used Lakeside SysTrack to uncover unused software equal to more than $4,300,000 in cost-saving opportunity.

$4,300,000

in cost-saving opportunity.

Needs-based Procurement

One New York-based bank was on a planned refresh cycle of 7,000 laptops per year. After evaluating usage patterns and machine stresses using SysTrack data, the IT team determined that only 600 laptops need replacing that year. That data unearthed a potential cost savings of about $9.6 million (based on an average laptop price of $1,500 per laptop).

$9,600,000
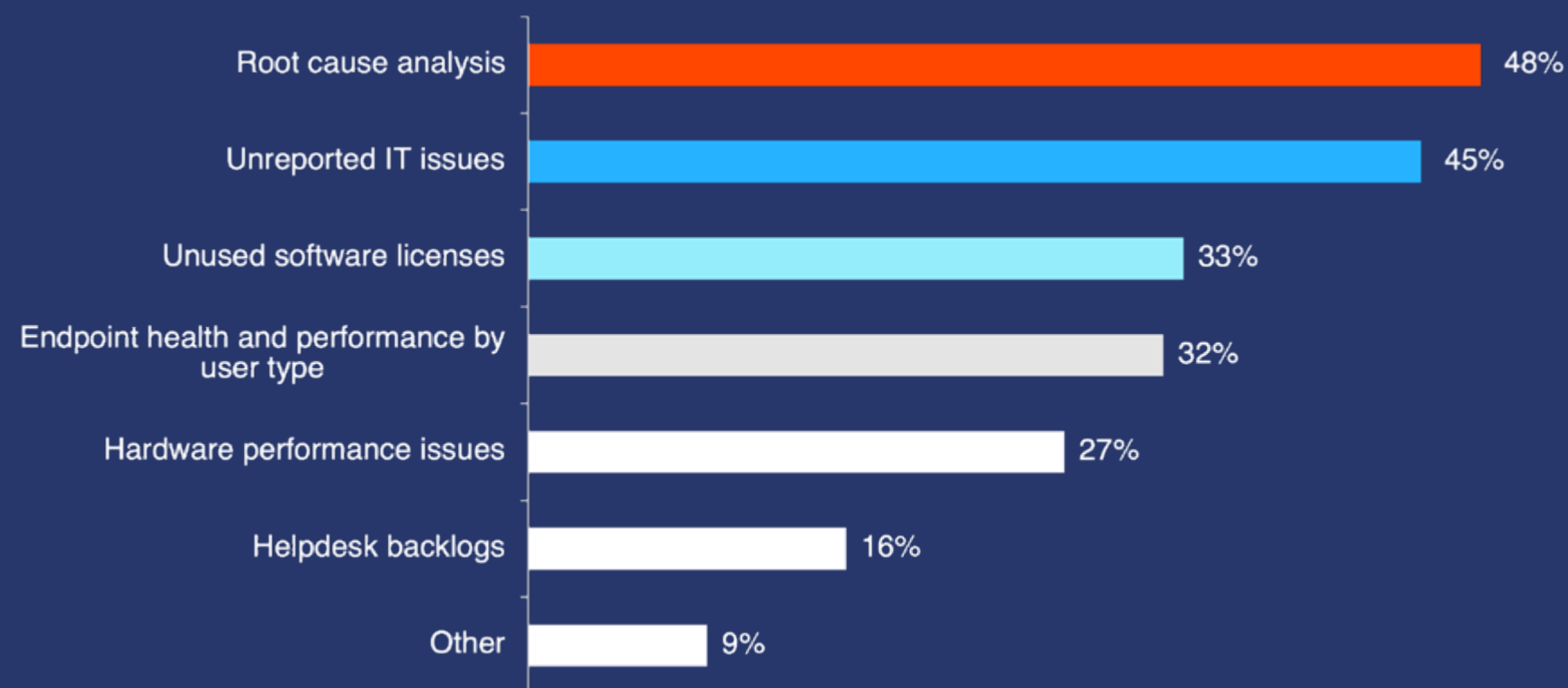
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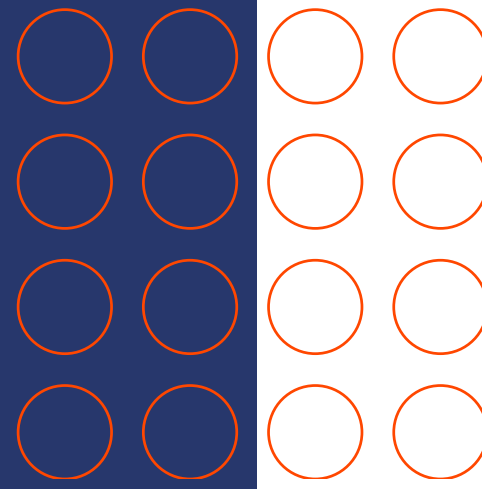
Top Two Areas Where IT Lacks the Most Visibility

IT teams often struggle to see what is going on across the IT estate — that is, the entire digital ecosystem of devices, from laptops and desktops to servers and mobile devices, that keep the enterprise running and enable employees to be productive. The rise of remote or hybrid workforces essentially dispersed endpoints into thousands of individual offices, lessening IT visibility across this "dark estate" even more. According to the survey, the top two areas in which surveyed organizations lack visibility are root cause analysis (48%) and unreported IT issues (45%).

With your current tech stack, where are you lacking visibility?

Root cause analysis	48%
Unreported IT issues	45%
Unused software licenses	33%
Endpoint health and performance by user type	32%
Hardware performance issues	27%
Helpdesk backlogs	16%
Other	9%

While the top four key initiatives related to the top priority of doing more with less, the areas lacking visibility tie directly to the second priority of delivering a better digital employee experience. The IT service desk is one of the primary intersections of end users and technology tools. By addressing issues, either those reported or not, IT teams can significantly increase productivity and improve DEX. The IT leaders surveyed mentioned two areas to improve IT support and visibility:

1. Root Cause Analysis:

Root cause analysis (RCA) is a systematic process for identifying the underlying issues that lead to problems, such as endpoint downtime. RCA goes beyond addressing the immediate symptoms and aims to eliminate the root causes to prevent future occurrences for the end user or throughout the enterprise. Many RCA solutions, however, monitor only a limited amount of endpoint data — not enough to give IT a complete view of issues that arise in the context of complex environments filled with third-party services, offline devices, and cloud-based platforms.

Robust IT data intelligence closes this gap in visibility through AI-powered RCA guidance to resolve complex, estate-wide issues. The more endpoint data a solution collects, the better IT can understand an issue — not just in terms of how that particular endpoint is performing but also in regard to application performance, network connectivity, resource usage, and much more.

2. Unreported IT Issues:

RCA helps crack the code of reported IT issues. But what about unreported ones, which 45% of IT leaders say they lack the visibility to detect? In fact, about 40% of employees never report their technology problems. When IT issues are unreported, the affected employees are "silent sufferers." They suffer from laptops that crash and tablets that won't stay connected — yet they remain silent, rarely reporting any tech issues to the help desk. Why? Maybe they'll try to fix it on their own (which isn't ideal since doing so can cause additional problems) or they'll ignore the problem entirely (which is often worse).

Well-structured endpoint data can build a complete picture for the IT team in real time, allowing them to figure out what caused an issue, regardless of whether the end user reports it. IT also can determine whether and where the issue may be affecting other end users. With visibility, IT teams can quickly adopt a proactive approach to IT service delivery, taking preemptive steps that can minimize issues in the first place.

Tackling the automation challenge helps IT operations become more flexible and agile, while allowing IT to fix problems at scale — even unreported issues.

Today, artificial intelligence purpose-built for IT can raise the bar on automation. Taking an AI-based approach to incident resolution can enable a proactive IT strategy that drives service desk efficiency and a better digital employee experience. This modern perspective on root cause investigation is a better fit to the needs of complex IT environments because it leverages deep telemetry data collection, well-structured data, and powerful diagnostics to resolve estate-wide issues.

IT Automation for the Digital Workplace

Like the central nervous system of the human body, SysTrack's sensor engine is connected to everything occurring at the endpoint. More than 1,200 sensors automatically process and transform massive amounts of data collected every 15 seconds into usable data insights for IT and actions within the platform.

The SysTrack Intelligent Edge helps IT automate fixes and engagements to end users affected by technology issues, all at scale. 220+ out-of-the-box scripts make it easy to solve high impact problems and, when tied to a sensor, SysTrack's automations can be deployed through a zero-touch process.
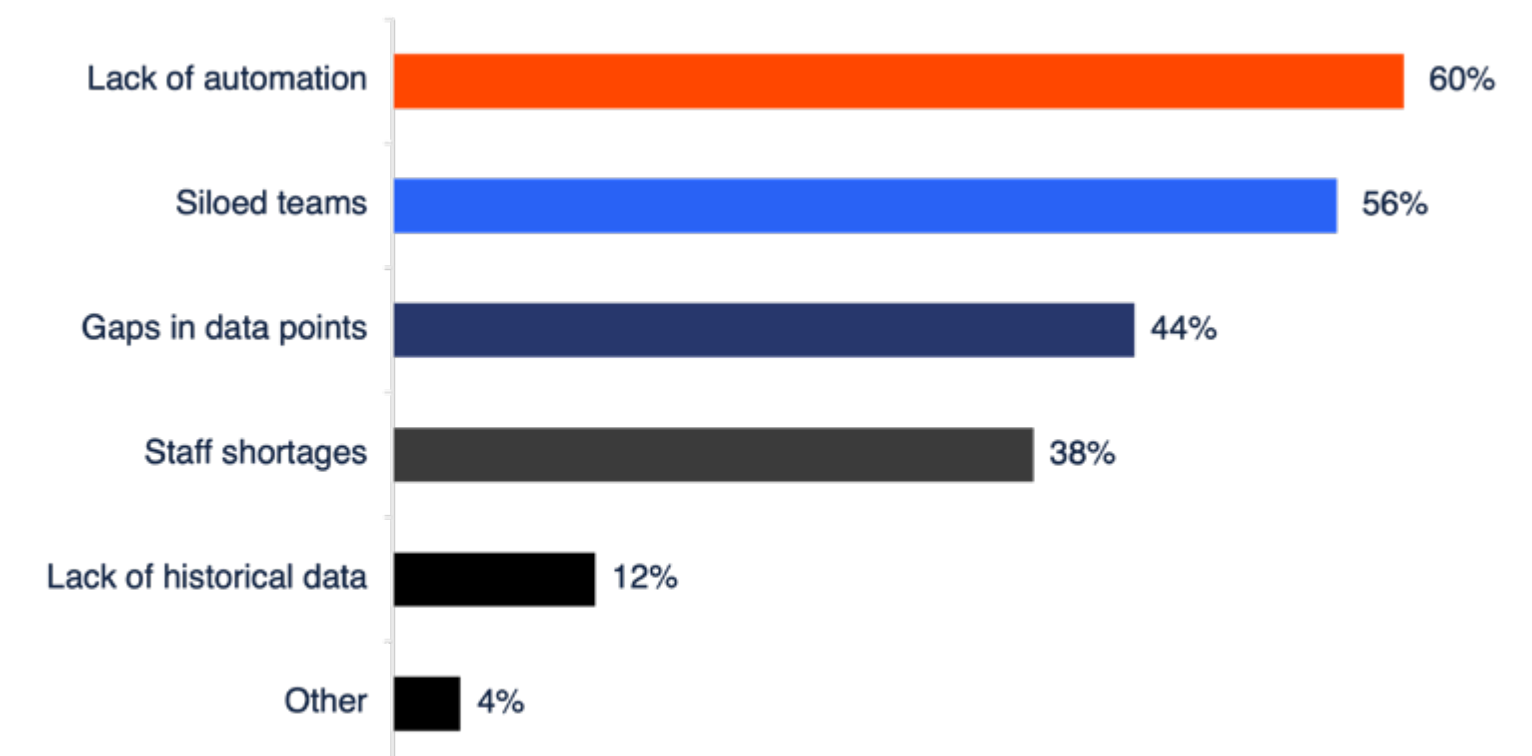
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The Biggest Barrier to Gaining Complete Visibility

Lack of automation (60%) tops the list of challenges preventing companies from gaining complete visibility across the IT estate, closely followed by siloed teams (56%). Automating IT processes helps shift IT operations from being reactive (addressing problems only as they arise) to being proactive (catching issues before they become complicated and costly, improving overall IT performance in the process).

What is preventing you from gaining complete visibility across your IT estate?

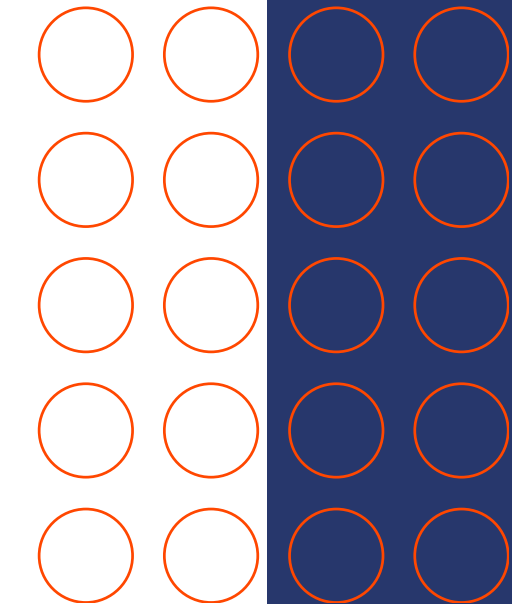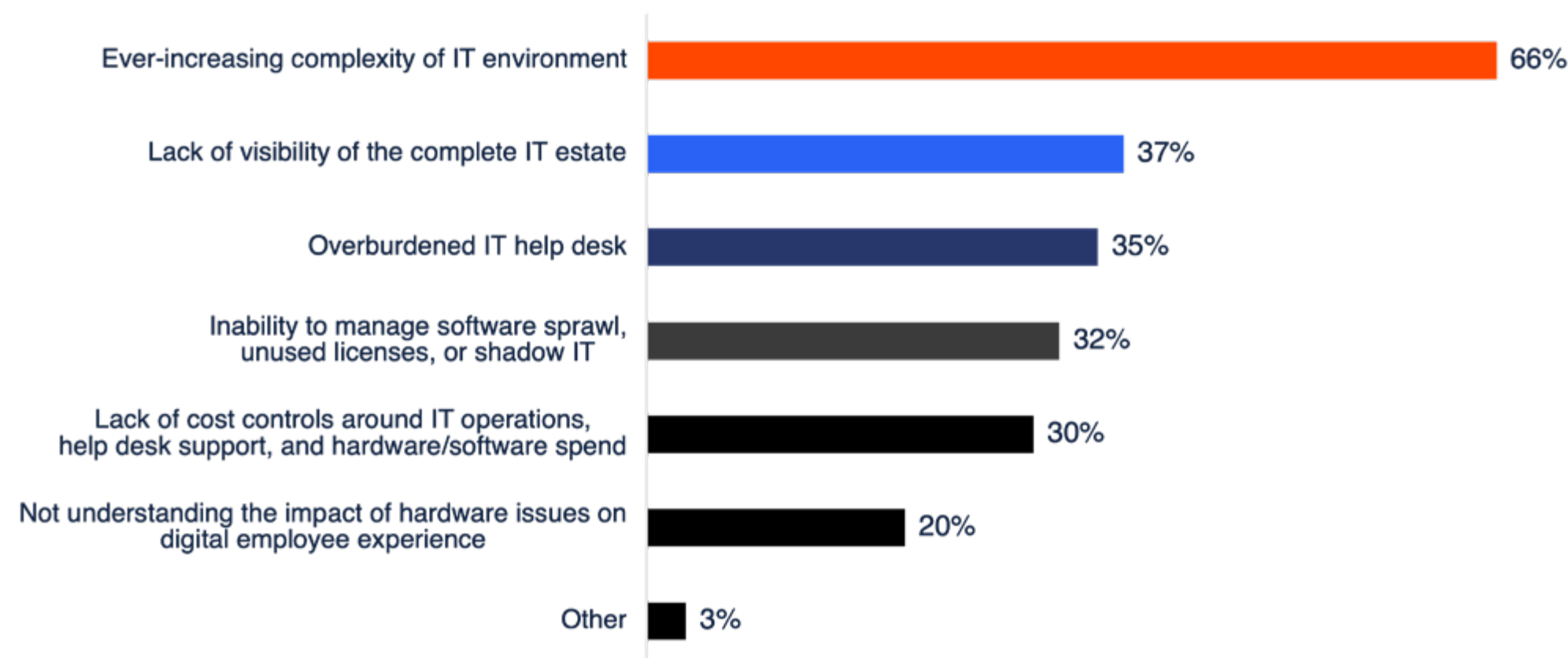|	
Lack of automation	60%
Siloed teams	56%
Gaps in data points	44%
Staff shortages	38%
Lack of historical data	12%
Other	4%

A Huge Roadblock to Delivering a Five-Star Digital Employee Experience

An IT environment that is constantly increasing in complexity is, by far, the top barrier to providing a top-tier digital employee experience, as indicated by 66% of survey respondents. This finding highlights a critical challenge faced by IT leaders: the escalating complexity of IT environments significantly impedes their ability to deliver a top-tier digital employee experience. This observation underscores the intricate interplay between technological infrastructure and user satisfaction within organizational settings.

What barriers make providing five-star digital employee experience challenging?

Barrier	Percentage
Ever-increasing complexity of IT environment	66%
Lack of visibility of the complete IT estate	37%
Overburdened IT help desk	35%
Inability to manage software sprawl, unused licenses, or shadow IT	32%
Lack of cost controls around IT operations, help desk support, and hardware/software spend	30%
Not understanding the impact of hardware issues on digital employee experience	20%
Other	3%

The impact of this complexity on DEX cannot be overstated. A convoluted IT environment often translates into challenges such as system downtime, sluggish performance, and compatibility issues.

Increasing Complex IT Environments

The notion of an increasingly complex IT environment points to several underlying factors. Rapid technological advancements, coupled with evolving organizational needs, contribute to a landscape where IT ecosystems become progressively intricate. The proliferation of software applications, diverse hardware configurations, and integration of emerging technologies all contribute to this complexity. Additionally, the demand for enhanced cybersecurity measures further complicates IT operations, as stringent security protocols often introduce additional layers of complexity or scenarios where software versions may not play well together.

The impact of this complexity on DEX cannot be overstated. A convoluted IT environment often translates into challenges such as system downtime, sluggish performance, and compatibility issues. These issues, in turn, hamper employee productivity and satisfaction, ultimately hindering the organization's ability to integrate and use technology effectively.

Furthermore, the prominence of this barrier highlights the pivotal role of IT leaders in navigating organizational digital transformations. IT leaders must grapple with the paradox of managing increasingly complex environments while striving to simplify user experiences. This balancing act necessitates a strategic approach that prioritizes initiatives such as automation, streamlining processes, and fostering a culture of innovation to mitigate the adverse effects of complexity.

As organizations navigate complex, ever-changing IT ecosystems and strive to deliver seamless user experiences, advanced technologies such as AI and machine learning (ML) can make the difference between struggling to keep up or truly transforming enterprise IT.

AI That Speaks IT™

Lakeside SysTrack, with an embedded AI engine and rich datasets that can level up IT efficiencies (that is, an Intelligence Package), can help IT better manage even the most complex and ever-changing IT environments. Powered by AI trained on well-structured IT data, SysTrack transcends traditional monitoring and troubleshooting approaches not only to proactively identify issues before they turn into an influx of help desk tickets but also to predict issues before they occur by spotting early indicators of disruption.

Key capabilities of the SysTrack Intelligence Package include:

- Predictive analytics for anomaly detection

- Natural language queries and insights

- Intelligent Support for the help desk

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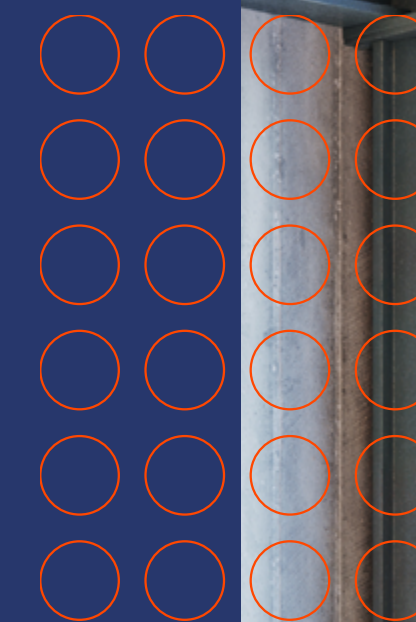
Digital Transformation Projects and DEX

IT transformation projects are daunting, so it is no surprise that 60% of survey respondents said they need capabilities for monitoring digital transformation projects and their impact on the end user. Additionally, 53% said they need automation and AI/ML capabilities to reduce the burden on the IT service desk.

Monitoring Digital Transformation Projects and DEX

The survey results paint a clear picture of the challenges facing IT leaders in the realm of digital transformation. With 60% of respondents expressing the need for capabilities to monitor such projects and their impact on end users, it is evident that there's a critical need for better visibility and control over these initiatives.

Digital transformation projects often involve complex changes to infrastructure, applications, and workflows, making it essential for IT leaders to have the tools necessary to track progress and ensure smooth transitions. This emphasis on monitoring reflects a growing recognition of the importance of not just implementing digital transformation initiatives but also understanding their real-world impact on users and overall business operations.

For any IT or digital transformation project, visibility matters at every stage. Before getting started, it is important to set baselines to measure "before and after" indicators of the end-user experience

— whether you are rolling out Windows 11 across the organization, new digital kiosks throughout a hospital, or implementing an upgraded fleet of hand-held devices across warehousing facilities.

Informed by baselines, the IT team can set up a pilot group to test rollouts on a smaller scale before going primetime across your full IT estate. During this pilot phase, real-time data from endpoints allows IT to predict early whether the rollout will succeed. If IT detects any issues within the initial pilot group, they can adjust and provide additional training, if need be.

It is best practice to start with a low-risk user group before rolling out an IT transformation project to high-risk user groups, such as traders in the financial sector. This approach allows teams to troubleshoot issues when they don't have a significant financial or customer impact. Once the IT team fixes glitches or bugs, they can more confidently roll out the project to high-risk groups.

How SysTrack Telemetry and Data Provided the Complete Visibility Needed to Aid in a Merger & Acquisition Transformation Project

One Lakeside customer embarked on a group end user computing change program following a five-year period of mergers and acquisitions. A main driver for change was the inherited multitude of applications and versions running and being supported across the organization. The organization implemented used SysTrack to:

- Gain complete visibility of what was across the IT environment.
- Identify which software and versions were installed across the organization, who and where it was being used, as well as how often, ultimately streamlining the number of different software versions down to one in many cases.
- Increase the productivity of its end users by providing them with consistent, stable releases of tested applications.
- Build a very accurate picture of applications that were key to the organization and those that were installed but underutilized, in turn identifying key applications that could be deployed and also ones that could be removed while reducing deployment time and productivity impacts for end users.
- Reduce calls to the end-user computing service desk by measuring the overall health score of the environment before the program and afterward and taking proactive steps to ensure stability.
- Renegotiate with suppliers to optimizepurchasing arrangements, customized to their own needs based on real factual application data, ultimately reducing their licensing and maintenance costs.
- Provide the CEO and board sponsors of the program evidence of an improvement in IT health score and reduction in impact to productivity across the end user computing environment globally.

Help Desk Automation and AI/ML

The significant percentage — 53% — of respondents indicating the need for automation and AI/ML capabilities to alleviate the burden on the IT service desk emphasizes the strain on IT support resources. Automation and AI/ML technologies offer promising solutions for streamlining IT service desk operations, enabling faster response times, and reducing manual effort in handling routine tasks. By taking advantage of these capabilities, IT leaders not only can enhance efficiency within their teams but also improve the overall user experience by providing quicker resolutions to tech issues.

An AI Co-pilot Designed for IT

The SysTrack Intelligent Support co-pilot capability reduces the time the help desk must research an issue or even find the resolution to the problem. With AI-driven help desk support, the IT agent simply asks a question in natural language about the end-user's IT problem — and quickly gets an answer. AI that is fed high-quality data can exponentially improve the knowledge base of IT support, while making that knowledge more accessible to more people.
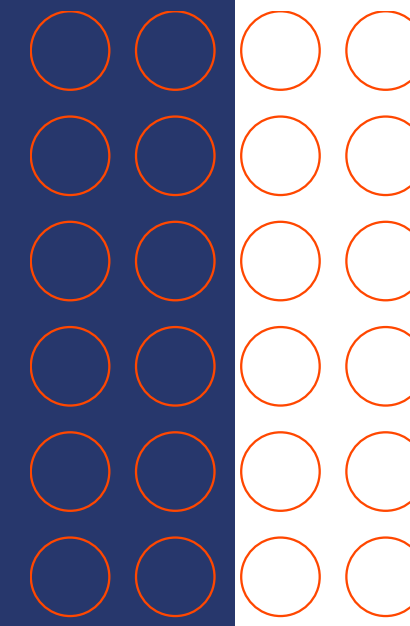
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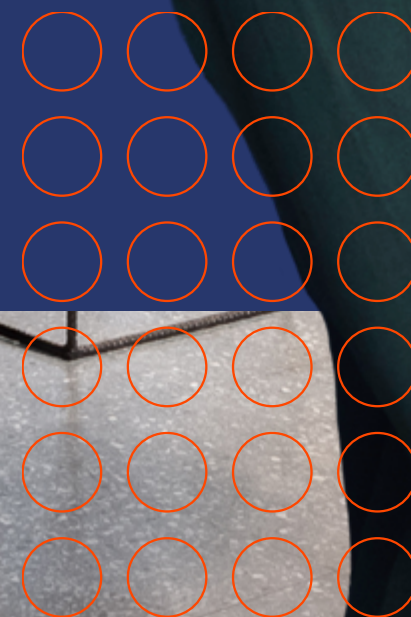
Conclusion: Complete Visibility of the IT Estate Is the Answer

In today's digital age, where technology plays an increasingly integral role in every aspect of business operations, ensuring a seamless digital employee experience has emerged as a critical priority for enterprise IT leaders. Despite recognizing its importance, most companies still lack a comprehensive DEX strategy and solution. This deficiency is exacerbated by challenges such as siloed teams, inadequate automation, and the growing complexity of IT environments, all of which impede efforts to achieve total visibility across the IT estate.

Nevertheless, amidst these challenges, there is a clear pathway forward. The insights gleaned from surveying 100 IT leaders emphasize the pivotal role that greater visibility across the IT estate can play in mitigating potential disruptions and enhancing the digital employee experience. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of their organization's digital landscape, IT leaders are empowered to proactively address

endpoint IT issues before they escalate, thereby safeguarding both the digital employee experience and the overall end-user experience.

Moving forward, it is evident that investing in tools and strategies to enhance visibility and streamline IT operations will be paramount for organizations striving to deliver a five-star digital employee experience. By adopting a proactive approach to monitoring and managing the digital workplace with Lakeside SysTrack, businesses not only can optimize productivity and efficiency but also cultivate a culture of technological excellence that empowers employees to thrive in an increasingly digital-centric world.

About the Survey:

Between September 2023 and March 2024, Gatepoint Research invited selected executives to participate in a survey themed "Digital Employee Experience Strategies."

Candidates from several industries were invited via email, and 100 U.S.-based IT executives participated.

Management levels represented are all senior decision-makers: 56% hold the title CxO, 22% are VPs, 18% are directors, 4% are senior or department managers. 96% of respondents to this survey hold executive or director-level positions in their organization.

100% of responders participated voluntarily; none were engaged using telemarketing.

Manager 4% / Director 18% / CxO 56% / VP 22%
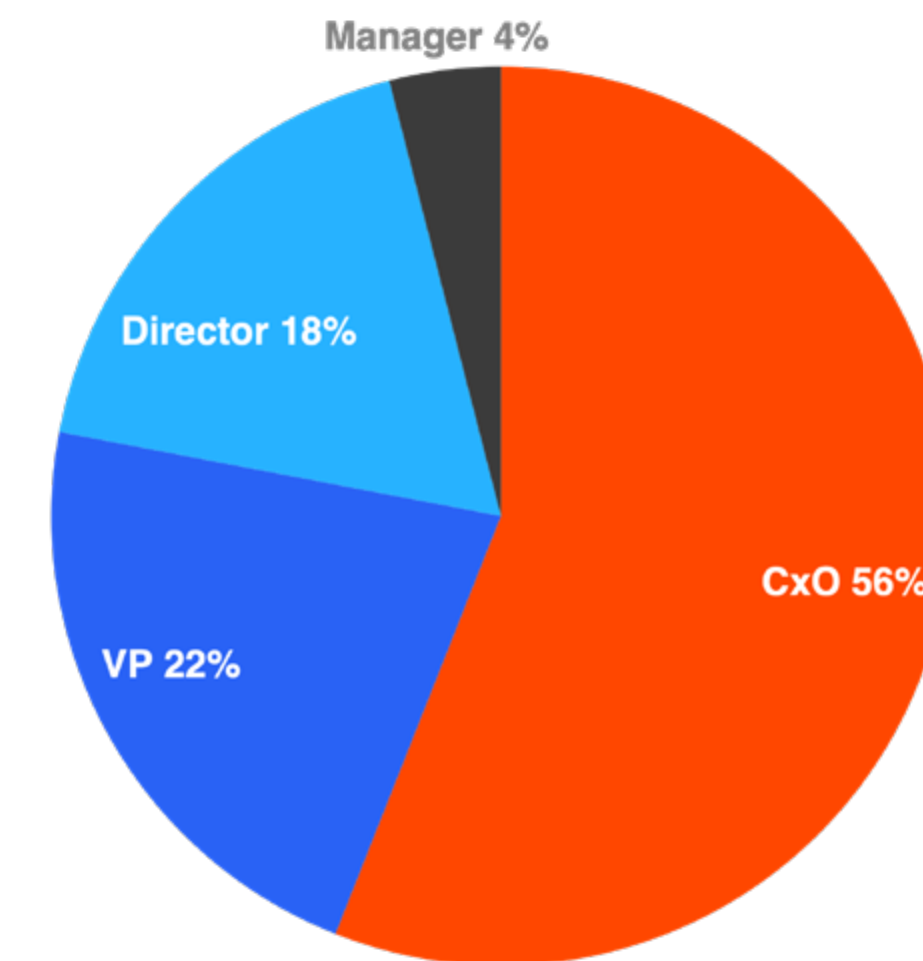
What Will You Do with AI That Speaks IT™?

Lakeside Software is how organizations with large, complex IT environments can finally get visibility across their entire digital estates and see how to do more with less.