

# EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM COMPTIA'S IT INDUSTRY OUTLOOK 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Today's business leaders have a challenging quandary to solve when it comes to technology. On the one hand, technology offers massive opportunities to create differentiation and drive growth. On the other hand, realizing these opportunities requires significant investments—in products, processes and especially people.

CompTIA's IT Industry Outlook 2024 identifies the ten trends that will shape the business landscape in the year to come. Across these ten trends, there are

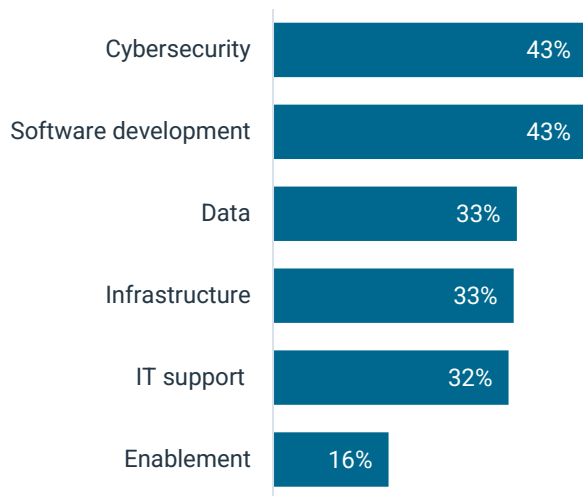
questions that decision makers should be asking as they determine the future of their organization. Regardless of company size or industry vertical, innovative top-down policies are needed to unlock the potential of emerging tools and a changing workforce. Building new programs for upskilling, mitigating risks posed by cyber threats and adopting a cutting-edge mindset are all critical components for success in a complex digital future.



## ADDRESSING BUSINESS NEEDS THROUGH UPSKILLING

Possibly the biggest challenge in adopting new technology is having skilled professionals who can leverage that technology to meet business objectives. CompTIA's monthly Tech Jobs Report has shown a consistent pattern of demand outpacing supply around technical skills, demonstrated by new job postings each month and historically low unemployment for technology workers. The main driver of optimism among technology professionals surveyed in CompTIA's IT Industry Outlook 2024 study is the high demand for skills that creates promising career pathways.

### Areas of IT with Skill Gaps

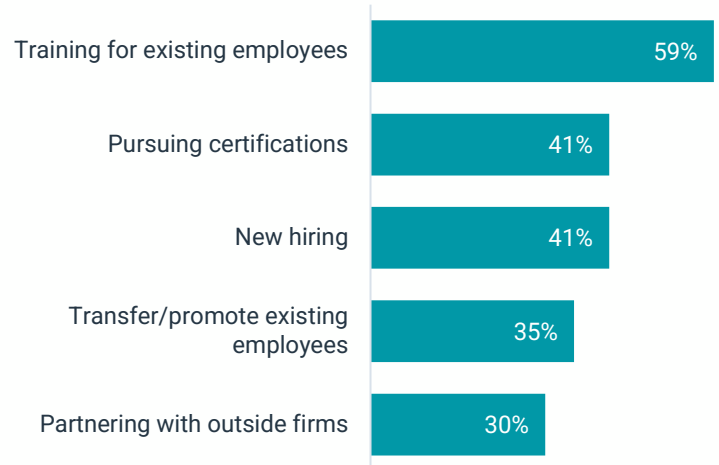


Organizations see skill gaps in all areas of IT operations, especially the core technical functions. Cybersecurity is constantly evolving as cybercriminals take advantage of increased digital reliance. Software development requires a wide range of skills to build and customize both internal and external applications. Data has become the primary focus for competitive differentiation. Although infrastructure and IT support are the most well-established areas, they continue changing as companies build maturity in cloud architecture and digitize their workflows. The area of enablement, which includes IT project management and functional management along with emerging job roles, is certainly in high demand for operational structure but not necessarily a place where core skills are being redefined.

Artificial intelligence deserves special mention in the skill gap discussion. The most immediate impact has been in the area of software development, whether companies are trying to build custom algorithms or their developers are simply using AI to accelerate their

efforts. However, AI is poised to dramatically alter all job roles. This may not result in mass creation of new positions; instead, technical specialists of all stripes will need to incorporate AI skills into their repertoire. This could likely feature training around general AI fundamentals followed by targeted training for individual job roles.

### Plans for Addressing Skill Gaps



Whether for AI or for other skill gaps, training is the preferred method for adding new workforce skills. Recent years have shown that traditional hiring approaches are insufficient for sustainable skill development. Existing educational pathways struggle to keep up with the dynamic tech environment, and there are simply not enough candidates to fill the myriad of positions companies want to fill.

Upskilling solves the skill gap problem in several unique ways. First, it allows organizations to specifically target individual skills, rather than looking for candidates that are simply a close match. This requires a solid definition of skills, ultimately contributing to an overall skills-based approach to career development. Second, upskilling improves retention among current employees. Providing internal opportunities for advancement or career switching lessens the need to look outside the company walls. Finally, companies that build solid processes for upskilling are future-proofing their workforce by creating repeatable methodologies for inevitable skill shifts.

As a capstone to upskilling efforts, more than four in ten businesses pursue certifications to validate that employees have acquired the desired skills. Certifications built with modern industry expertise capture the latest updates in critical skills and provide common ground for establishing technology communication across an organization.

## APPLYING RISK ANALYSIS TO CYBERSECURITY

As cybersecurity has evolved to address modern shifts in technology, one of the biggest open questions has been around measurement. How can an organization determine the appropriate level of investment, and how can they assess the effectiveness of that investment? Increasingly, the answer lies within risk management.

While CompTIA's State of Cybersecurity 2024 highlighted the rise of risk management as a method for setting cybersecurity strategy, the IT Industry Outlook 2024 report looks at the broader topic of governance. Governance is commonly associated with compliance to government regulations, and as such it has not been top of mind when considering cybersecurity priorities. However, governance has a broader meaning, applying to the overall practices involved in managing a given discipline.

For both cybersecurity and data management, organizations will be moving closer to this broad-based definition throughout 2024. That will include building policies and measuring outcomes. For cybersecurity, risk analysis will be a key component of these activities.

CompTIA's previous research has found that many firms recognize risk analysis as part of their cybersecurity activities, but they do not necessarily have a formal risk approach that informs decisions such as technology purchases or staffing plans. Data from the IT Industry Outlook 2024 confirms this mindset; as a focal point of cybersecurity efforts, risk analysis ranks fourth behind more traditional technical topics such as data security or network monitoring.

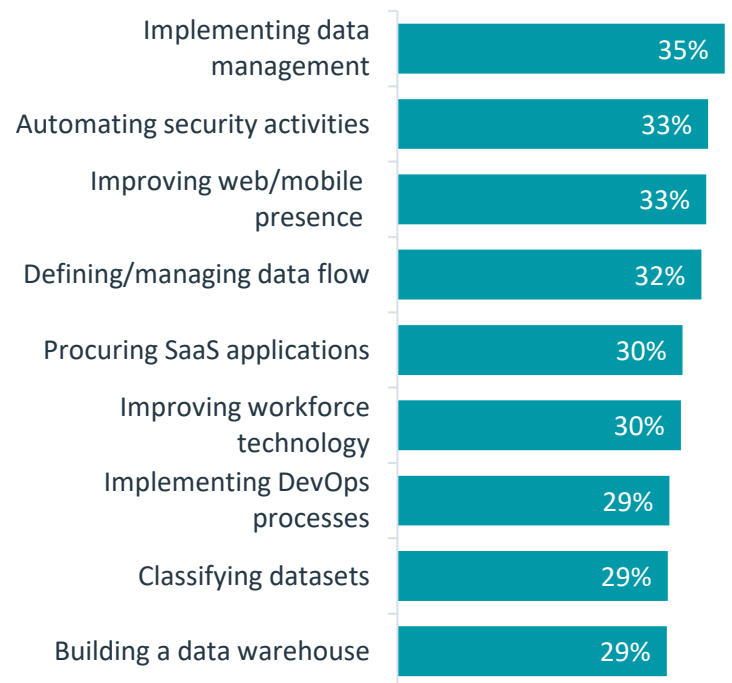
Adopting a comprehensive risk analysis approach will not only help solve the conundrum of cybersecurity measurement, but also provide a foundation for overall governance. As more and more companies develop dedicated cybersecurity teams and work with specialized cybersecurity partners, governance built on risk management will lead to best practices that ensure secure operations while creating organizational buy-in.

## MOVING TO THE CUTTING EDGE

Over the past decade, the underlying theme behind enterprise technology progress has been the shift from a tactical approach to a strategic mindset. This change has driven many other developments, such as moving away from cost center thinking when it comes to IT and restructuring to improve collaborative ability.

From a technology standpoint, the strategic approach introduces a paradox. IT has become a less product-centric discipline, and at the same time the number of technology products inside an organization has never been higher. Both of these threads come together in the nebulous trend of digital transformation, where companies are trying to digitize their operational components while maintaining cohesion.

### Current High Priority Activities



The list of activities that companies are pursuing highlights the challenge on the horizon. Any one of these initiatives would likely stretch a company's capacity. Taking on multiple projects to transform operations quickly becomes overwhelming.

Ultimately, the goal for digital transformation efforts is workforce productivity. As decision makers try to evaluate ongoing or future solutions, they should use productivity as a guiding principle and build sustainable methodologies for evaluation and implementation. View the full IT Industry Outlook report [here](#).

# METHODOLOGY

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This quantitative study consisted of two online surveys fielded to IT professionals and IT industry professionals during October 2023. A total of 513 professionals based in the United States participated in each survey, yielding an overall margin of sampling error at 95% confidence of +/- 4.4 percentage points.

As with any survey, sampling error is only one source of possible error. While non-sampling error cannot be accurately calculated, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the survey design, collection and processing of the data to minimize its influence.

CompTIA is responsible for all content and analysis. Any questions regarding the study should be directed to CompTIA Research and Market Intelligence staff at [research@comptia.org](mailto:research@comptia.org).

CompTIA is a member of the market research industry's Insights Association and adheres to its internationally respected Code of Standards and Ethics.

## ABOUT COMPTIA

The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) is a leading voice and advocate for the \$5 trillion global information technology ecosystem; and the estimated 75 million industry and tech professionals who design, implement, manage, and safeguard the technology that powers the world's economy. Through education, training, certifications, philanthropy, and market research, CompTIA is the hub for advancing the tech industry and its workforce.

CompTIA is the world's leading vendor-neutral IT-certifying body with more than 3 million certifications awarded based on the passage of rigorous, performance-based exams. CompTIA's base of certified information technology professionals spans 232 countries worldwide.

CompTIA sets the standard for preparing entry-level candidates through expert-level professionals to succeed at all stages of their career in technology. Through CompTIA's philanthropic arm, CompTIA develops innovative on-ramps and career pathways to expand opportunities to populations that traditionally have been under-represented in the information technology workforce.