

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense forest. The water is a deep blue, reflecting the sky and trees. In the foreground, three kayakers in red and yellow kayaks are paddling down the river. A yellow dotted line starts from the top right, curves down to a point in the middle of the river, and then curves back up towards the top right. The Gartner logo is in the top left, and the main title is in large yellow letters on the left side. Below the title is a subtitle in white text between two vertical bars.

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# Leadership Vision for 2023

Top 3 Strategic Priorities for  
Infrastructure and Operations Leaders

**From Nathan Hill, Distinguished VP Analyst**

Today’s organizations are facing uncertainty brought about by persistent inflation; scarce, expensive talent; and global supply constraints caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, COVID-19 lockdowns and energy shortages. This triple squeeze is impacting business globally and directly impacting technology spending for 2023.

Despite the environment, CFOs indicate their current plans call for continued IT investment, particularly for digital technology. Gartner IT spending forecast points to continued growth opportunities for tech providers that support digital transformation.

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**The cost, talent and strategy decisions you make as an infrastructure and operations (I&O) leader will help determine how your company performs in uncertain times. To meet the demands of the C-suite and continue to enable the digital transformation that kicked into high gear during the pandemic, I&O leaders must focus on expanding their services and increasing efficiency while supporting innovation.**

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Enterprise technology buying decisions have always been inefficient, which is only increasing as those decisions become more democratized and uncertainty hangs over buying teams. Product-led growth motions offer opportunities to reduce friction in the buying cycle. Providers that take share in 2023 will improve the entire customer experience, from buying through owning.

Talent is scarce and top talent is hard to attract. Top performers do not stick around when they can see the business is challenged and potentially experiencing layoffs. Once-in-a-lifetime talent can be attracted during economic unrest by executing a strategy to win in the storm, not weather it.

Gartner Leadership Vision provides top-level guidance to leaders and their teams on where to focus — based on our data-driven research. We’re providing detailed insights to our clients across dozens of roles, and we’re now excited to share excerpts with the business community beyond our clients. We hope this will help you to focus discussions with your teams, peers and other leaders so you can more quickly and effectively diagnose priorities and actions, especially as you solidify your strategic plans for 2023.



**Nathan Hill**  
Distinguished VP Analyst

# Unique business environments require a team effort

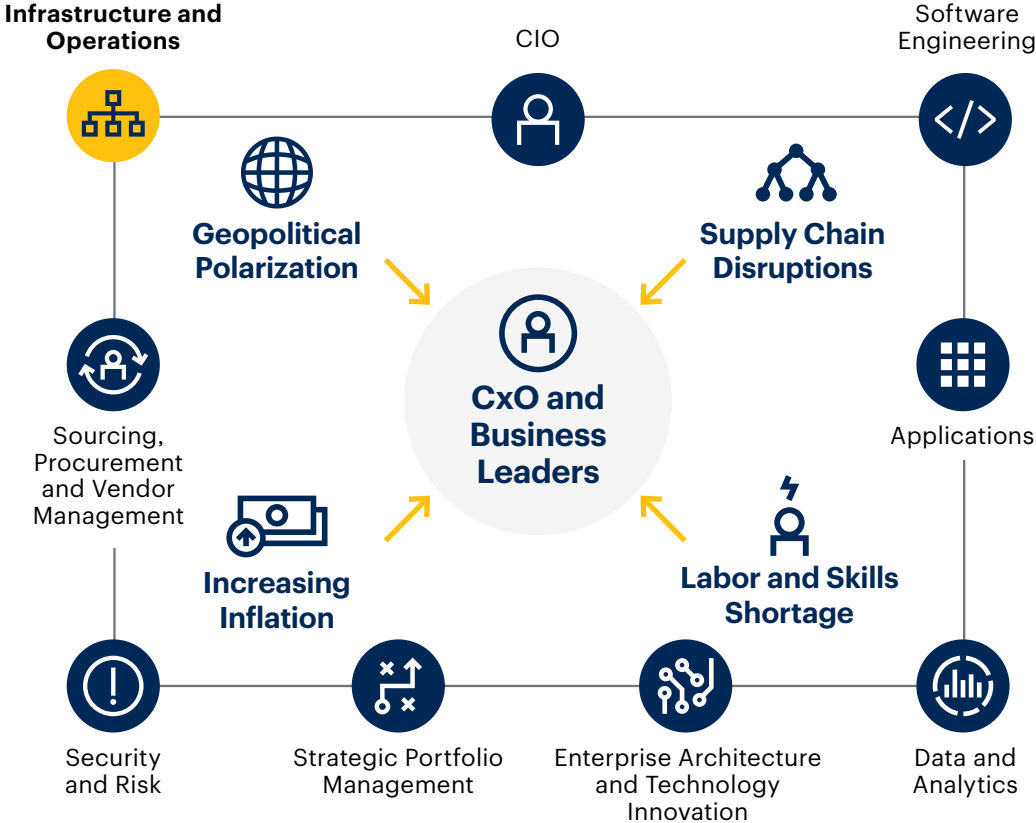
Over the last three years, infrastructure and operations (I&O) has been a key player in enabling the technology platform while facing challenges that put a strain on people, process, technology and governance.

Last year, there was a focus on recovery and maturing digital initiatives that had accelerated deployment during the pandemic. Now there is a new wave of challenges that include “economic headwinds” with high inflation and the potential threat of recession.

Looking forward, I&O leaders must respond to these “outside in” forces, instead of just transforming from the “inside out” — which is the more traditional approach taken.

**To succeed as part of a cohesive business team, concentrate on:**

- 1. Expanding the infrastructure platform and continuing the journey to a hybrid cloud
- 2. Transforming operations with approaches like CloudOps and automation
- 3. Evolving and extending services to be relevant to all customers



Source: Gartner

# Three key trends impacting I&O leaders

## Finding and retaining talent is challenging

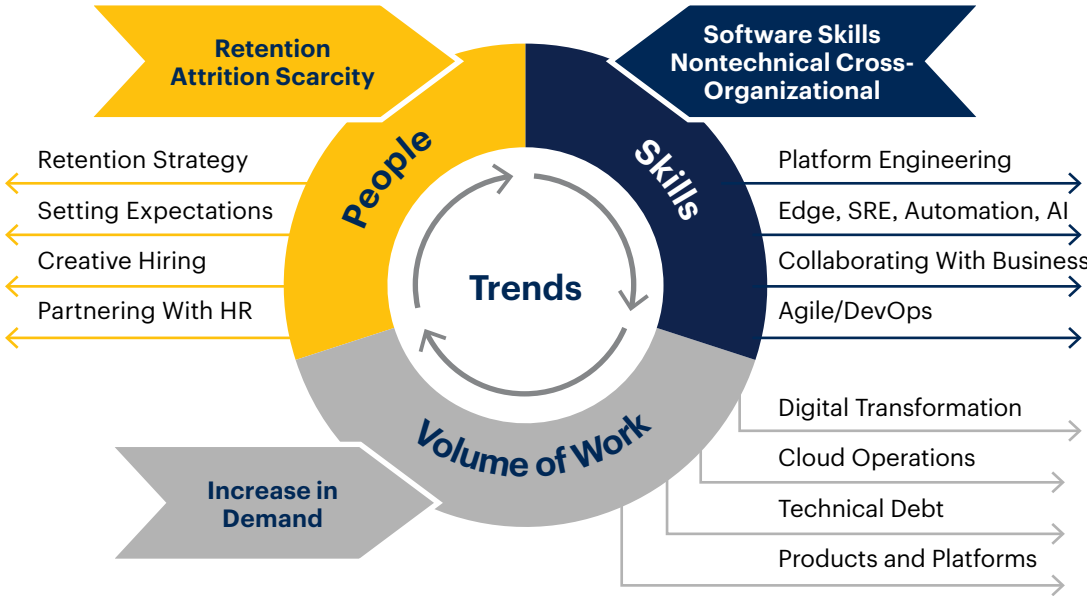
The modern I&O work environment is transforming due to many disruptive factors, including societal and cultural factors, the needs of the employees and market competition. Salary remains important, but employees are also demanding more than money to ensure their loyalty. I&O leaders need to create a holistic employment strategy that attracts candidates and retains employees.

## Diverse skills are driving demand

Increasingly, I&O leaders are under pressure to address areas of need (i.e., cloud, edge, automation) while accelerating digital business. To successfully support business priorities, leaders must develop more agile teams with both in-demand technology expertise and nontechnical skills like collaboration and communication.

## Volume of work is increasing

As organizations continue their digital transformation journeys, the demand for I&O services is growing. To focus on critical business objectives, I&O leaders need to increase efficiencies across their organization through strategies like applying automation, managing technical/architectural debt, planning asset life cycles and developing hybrid team structures.



Source: Gartner

# Challenges and actions for the I&O leader

## 1 Bigger budgets affected by uncertainty

Our 2022 I&O Leader Survey revealed 24% of respondents anticipate a budget increase by more than 10%. But uncertain times and higher inflation levels may mean changes in budget allocation and/or less spending power.



### Actions for the I&O leader

Evolve, expand and transform to meet business needs by focusing on “sensing” demand, while improving quality and reducing costs and risk.

## 2 Pressure from lack of skills and talent will continue

Lingering issues from the pandemic, the “Great Resignation” and a war for talent have all contributed to a longer-term staff skills shortage. Looking outside the organization is unlikely to be the most effective strategy to address it.



To keep I&O healthy and able to respond to business needs and continuous changes, focus on keeping people with the right skills for now and the future.

## 3 Fixing I&O is a prerequisite to enabling the customer

As I&O leaders look to shape a more progressive organization, core function challenges will still need to be addressed. A shift in priorities combined with more effective ways of tackling existing issues is required.



Mature automation across I&O operations to increase efficiencies and provide more time for human and machine innovation.

# Evolve to anticipate new business needs

The 2022 Gartner Signature I&O Role Survey results show that I&O leaders need to better understand business objectives and embrace the relevant metrics and KPIs. They must become more proactive and “sense” demand using data and trends with a forward-looking posture.

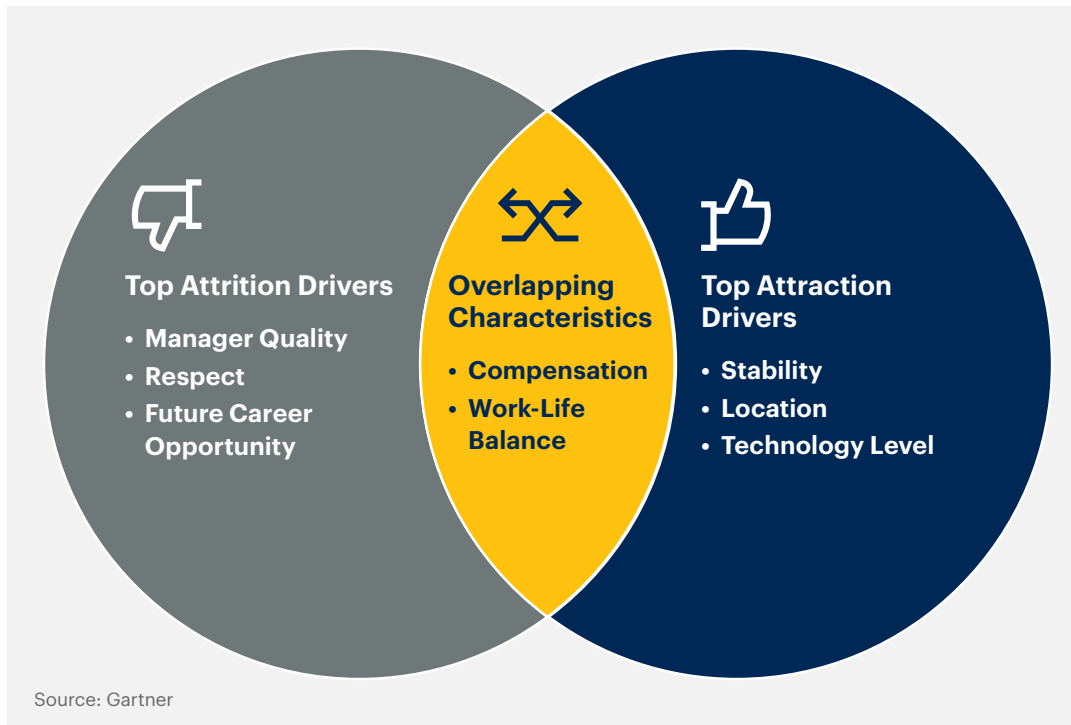


## Recommended Next Steps

- 1 Track technologies and innovations to support new demands.
- 2 Partner with vendors or select products and services that accelerate delivery.
- 3 Reduce technical debt and risk by retiring inefficient products and services while deploying new ones.
- 4 Use sensors and location to focus on processes that improve agility, product quality or employee safety.

# Retain talent

I&O leaders must make talent management and skills development a priority before they can succeed at improving products, services and technology. Creating a people-first employee value proposition strategy that is uniquely tailored to the I&O organization is key.

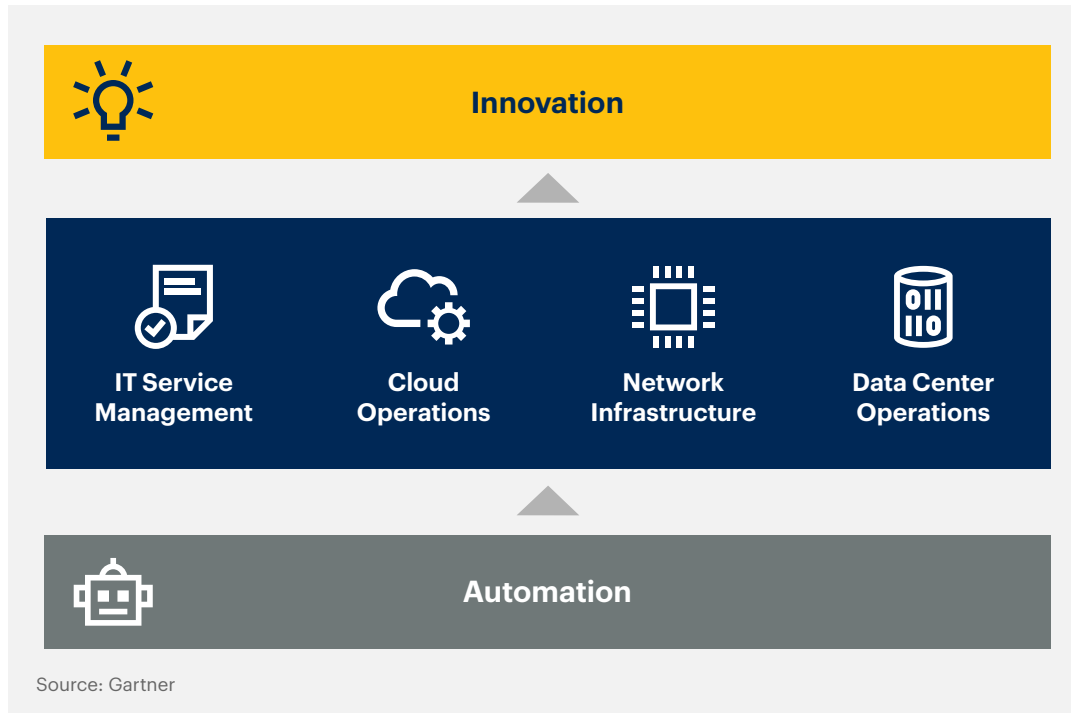


## Recommended Next Steps

- 1 Focus on what IT candidates value:
  - Fair compensation
  - Work-life balance
  - Organization and job stability
  - Location
  - Technology usage
- 2 Increase work flexibility.
- 3 Work with HR to create opportunity and skills development paths.
- 4 Remove organizational silos and career roadblocks.

# Mature automation to unlock innovation

Too many organizations throw robotic automation at business processes without using it in a smart and sustainable way. It's not about "more" automation — it's about maturing it to free up time across I&O operations. Start by recognizing the three phases of automation value.







## Recommended Next Steps

- 1 Phase 1: Efficiency
  - Reduce risk and human error.
  - Increase self-service.
  - Shift resources to more strategic initiatives.
- 2 Phase 2: Productivity
  - Increase speed/output.
  - Deliver more complex service.
  - Increase satisfaction.
- 3 Phase 3: Cost
  - Eliminate current and/or future spend.
  - Reduce headcount.
  - Innovate vs. just sustain.



# Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for infrastructure and operations leaders:

 <p><b>Webinar</b> The Gartner Leadership Vision for 2023: Infrastructure &amp; Operations Dive deeper into the 2023 Leadership Vision with a Gartner expert.</p> <p><a href="#">Watch Now</a></p>	 <p><b>Guide</b> Ignition Guide to Creating a Workforce Development Plan for I&amp;O Successfully execute a workforce development plan that delivers business outcomes.</p> <p><a href="#">Download Guide</a></p>	 <p><b>Roadmap</b> Devising an Effective Cloud Strategy Create a strategy that maximizes the benefits of cloud computing for your organization.</p> <p><a href="#">Download Roadmap</a></p>	 <p><b>Tool</b> IT Score for Infrastructure &amp; Operations Measure the maturity of your function and plot a path to improvement.</p> <p><a href="#">Learn More</a></p>
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