

Maverick* Research: Expanding on Edgy Ideas

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Initiatives: [CIO Leadership, Culture and People](#)

In uncertain times, we naturally focus on what we know and try to eliminate as much “noise” as possible, but getting comfortable with uncertainty requires us to explore edgier solutions. These Maverick reports follow up on prior research to increase your competitive advantage as an executive leader.

Overview

Opportunities and Challenges

- Executive leaders and practitioners can gain insights into the future needs of their organizations by studying Gartner's Maverick* research.
- Exploring the outer boundaries of what might happen prepares executive leaders and practitioners to stay ahead of competitors.

What You Need to Know

- Many of Gartner's Maverick* ideas become mainstream thinking after a few years. Following Maverick* research can prepare you for tomorrow's reality.
- Even if research remains Maverick* after a few years, it's always good to question conventional thinking, so that your approach to problem solving reflects different options, instead of a single assumption about how problems should be tackled.

Insight From the Experts

Dear reader,

Gartner's Maverick* research exposes edgy thinking to help executive leaders and practitioners gain a competitive advantage. It spurs them to think beyond “best practices” and consider game-changing moves for their organizations. It usually achieves this by doing one of the following:

- Taking a minority position: Countering prevailing wisdom forces the reader to consider alternative perspectives.

- Introducing new topics: Maverick* research often considers topics from new perspectives.
- Looking to the future: Exploring long-term possibilities helps executive leaders and practitioners prepare for change.

Maverick* research is not the fanciful musings of Gartner analysts. Although unconstrained by Gartner's standard research methodologies, the analysts who write Maverick* documents still follow a process designed to ensure their ideas are as solid as possible. The best Maverick* documents lead readers step-by-step to inescapable, yet uncomfortable, conclusions.

Although Maverick* research is initially edgy, its conclusions become mainstream thinking more often than you might think.

We asked authors of prior Maverick* research to estimate the status of their work, and found that more than one-fifth (22%) think that their Maverick* work published between 2016 and 2018 now represents mainstream thinking. Maverick* explorations of data mesh and composable business, for example, appeared years before these became mainstream topics. Another 27% reported that their Maverick* research is on its way to becoming mainstream. Less than half (43%) said that their thinking then remains maverick now. And only 8% thought their Maverick* research had lost its relevance (see Figure 1).

Although subjective, these figures suggest that Maverick* research can be a useful indicator of the future relevance of ideas.

Fundamentally, though, the value of Maverick* research lies in persuading readers to think in new ways. That's the key to gaining and keeping a competitive edge. If anything, we want more Maverick* documents to pursue the outer edges of possibility than is currently the case.

Yours faithfully,



[Frank Buytendijk](#), Co-Lead Maverick* Program

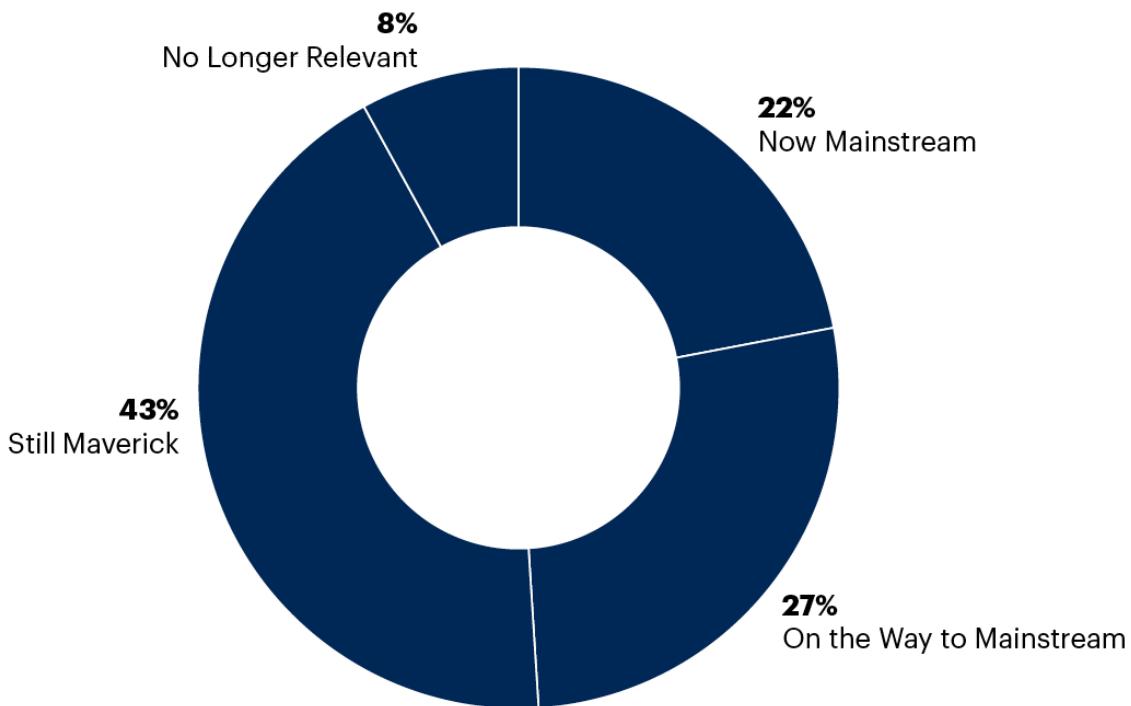


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Figure 1. Status of Maverick Research Published From 2016 Through 2018

Status of Maverick* Research Published From 2016 Through 2018

n = 49 responses relating to 63 Maverick* documents in this time frame

Source: Gartner

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Gartner

Executive Overview***Maverick Research**

The “Maverick” research program is Gartner’s incubator for unconventional, disruptive research and insights. Unconstrained by Gartner’s typical process of consensus formation, analysts can take minority positions, introduce new topics, pioneer new research designs, and explore longer time horizons. These lines of research help you get ahead of the mainstream and take advantage of trends and insights that could impact your strategy and your organization (see Note 1).

Gartner’s Maverick* ideas often take on a life of their own, as external forces like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and new technologies can change the scope of, and the timelines for, these ideas. Further investigation can lead to new conclusions and uses for Maverick* ideas. In that spirit, this collection expands on previous Maverick* research. Authors take their Maverick* ideas a step or two further, to stimulate even more new thinking.

Research Highlights

Minority Positions

These Maverick* documents explore minority positions that counter the prevailing wisdom and prompt the reader to consider alternative perspectives.

Related Research

[Maverick* Research: Decline in Basic Innovation Impedes Response to Global Problems](#) by Richard Hunter and David Furlonger: Basic research leading to applied innovation on a scale to solve global problems like climate change and epidemics is faltering. This will hurt businesses unless leaders exchange anti-innovation behaviors for pro-innovation ones.

[Maverick* Research: 'Demand-Driven' Is Deadly to Your Supply Chain](#) by Tim Payne: The way in which more than 99% of end users and vendors interpret "demand-driven" supply chains is dangerous, if not outright deadly, to a modern supply chain. The results of its application are rigid and fragile supply chains that are unfit for today's VUCA world.

[Maverick* Research: Improve Data Management by Honoring How People Think](#) by Joe Maguire: People formulate categories that can be general, specific or in-between. Technical professionals prioritize general categories, but users think about the world differently, prioritizing in-between categories. Technical professionals should adjust their user-visible behaviors and deliverables.

New Topics

These Maverick* documents consider society from new perspectives.

Related Research

[Maverick* Research: Emotional Wellness Will Rescue Your Organization and Distributed Workforce](#) by Gavin Tay: Many remote employees are struggling with stress and feelings of isolation as part of a distributed workforce. This Maverick* report describes how employers can use emotion AI to identify employees who are experiencing negative feelings and help them improve their engagement, focus and productivity.

[Maverick* Research: Make Carbon Integral to the Labor Productivity Equation](#) by Rajesh Narayan: Finance leaders need to revisit the linking of revenue to human labor costs. Organizations that do not measure and report their revenue to carbon emissions will create headwinds to accessing capital, acquiring talent and generating growth.

[Maverick* Research: How Disinformation Is Destroying Business and How to Fight Back](#) by Darin Stewart: Disinformation is among the fastest-growing threats to business across all sectors. It will accelerate and expand in the coming years and current responses are inadequate. Companies must understand the threat, prepare a response and even adopt some of the same tactics used by attackers.

Looking to the Future

This document explores long-term horizons to help leaders prepare for change.

Related Research

[Maverick* Research: Digital Humans Will Drive Digital Transformation](#) by Marty Resnick: A digital human economy provides the opportunity for a new digital ecosystem, underpinned by technology that brings individuals and organizations together to innovate and interact in new ways. This collaboration will enable organizations to differentiate and compete in the world of digital humans.

Gartner Associates Supporting This Trend



[Richard Hunter](#), Distinguished VP Analyst



[Rajesh Narayan](#), Sr Director Analyst



[Tim Payne](#), VP Analyst



[Marty Resnick](#), VP Analyst



[Gavin Tay](#), VP Analyst

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[Positive Practices for Your Employees to Avoid Burnout and Reignite Engagement](#)

[Gartner Predicts the Future and Impacts of AI Beyond 2021](#)

[Prioritize 200 AI Business Opportunities From Over 20 Domains](#)

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[Join the Gartner Research Circle](#), an exclusive online community in which business leaders discuss mission-critical topics, key initiatives and industry developments with Gartner analysts and experts across numerous disciplines.

Note 1: Roots of the Word “Maverick”

Derived from the name of Texas rancher Samuel Maverick and his steadfast refusal to brand his cattle, the word “maverick” denotes someone who willfully takes an independent – and frequently disruptive or unorthodox – stand against prevailing modes of thought and action.

Recommended by the Authors

[Maverick* Research: Architecting Humans for Digital Transformation](#)

[Maverick* Research: Being Human 2040 – The Life of the Architected Human in a More-Than-Human World](#)

[Maverick* Research: CIOs Must Tap Into the Invisible Talent Pool](#)

[Maverick* Research: Emotion AI Will Become You Without Your Knowledge](#)

[Maverick* Research: Stop Swinging the Agile Hammer at Things That Aren't Nails](#)

[Maverick* Research: Welcome to the Splinternet – How Internet Fragmentation Disrupts Business and Threatens Society](#)

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