

Align I&O Strategies With CIO Priorities for Unmatched Agility

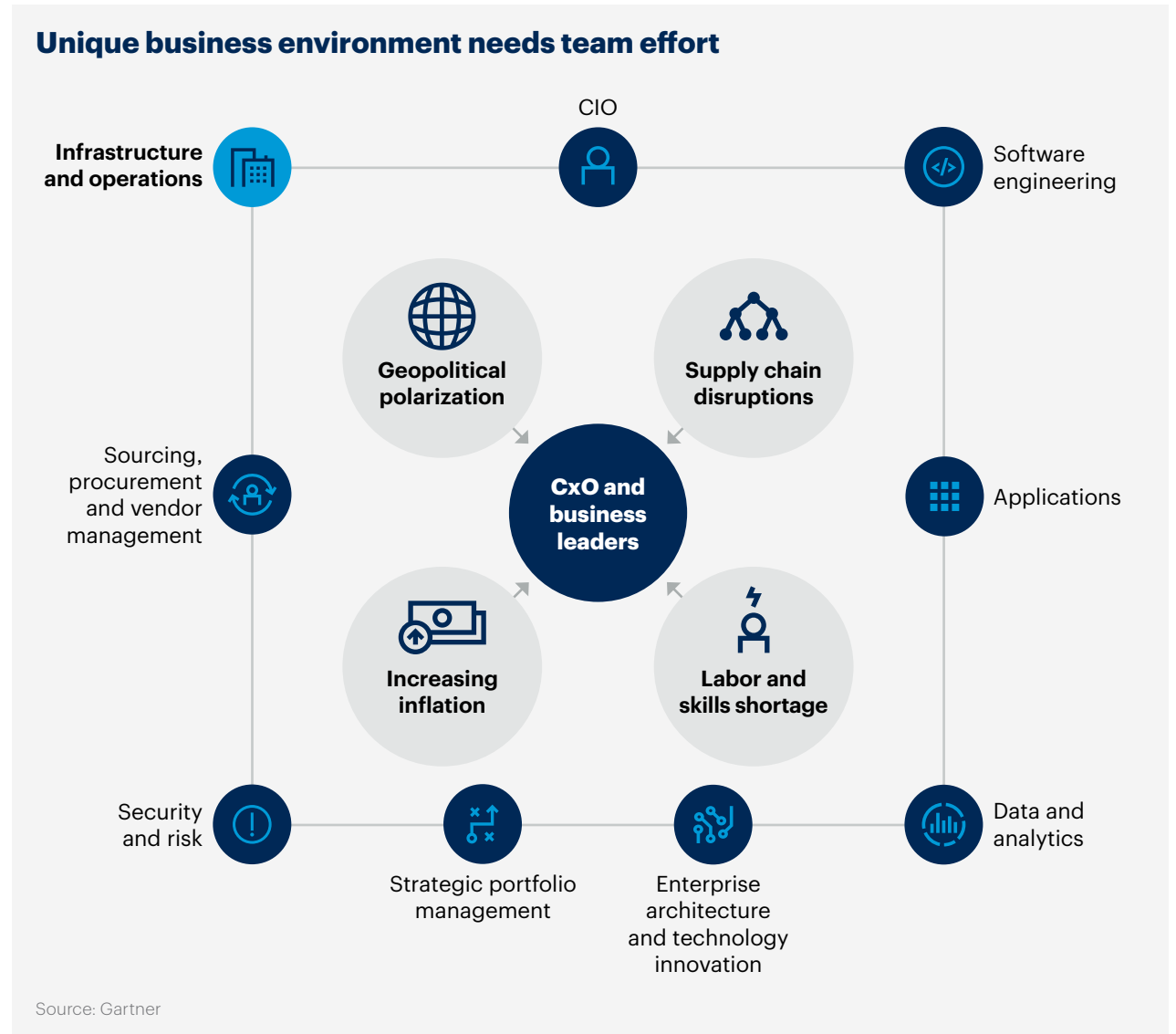
A roadmap to integrate AI, optimize cloud costs and build a resilient infrastructure



Why do most heads of infrastructure and IT operations (I&O) struggle to align with CIO priorities and deliver business value?

Despite their critical role, only one-third of heads of I&O influence strategic technology decisions. By 2027, 85% of workload placements made before 2022 will be outdated — up from just 20% today.

As digital transformation accelerates, I&O teams often remain reactive, constrained by resistance to change, fragmented governance and a lack of business-focused metrics. These challenges hinder their ability to support evolving business needs, manage cloud costs and ensure resilient, future-ready infrastructure — leading to missed opportunities and increased risk.



Transform I&O into a proactive partner that delivers business impact through innovation and operational excellence

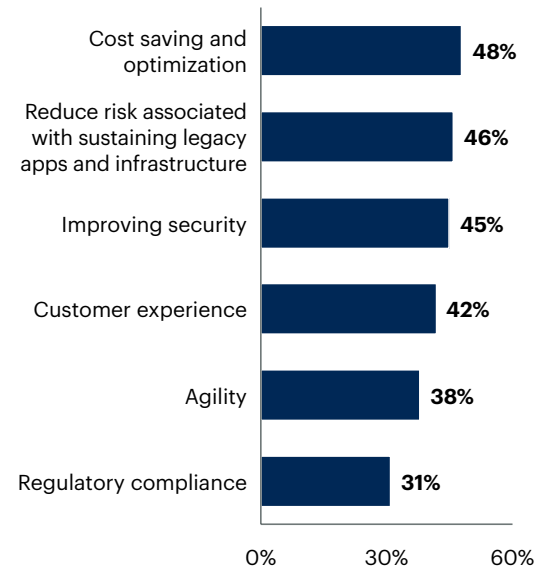
Heads of I&O who anticipate business needs and collaborate with the CIO are twice as likely to deliver measurable value.

By focusing on strategic priorities — such as leveraging AI for innovation, optimizing cloud investments and building robust, scalable infrastructure — I&O can shift from operational support to a driving force for growth. Emphasizing cross-functional collaboration and continuous improvement enables organizations to control costs, accelerate digital initiatives and maintain the agility needed for sustained success.

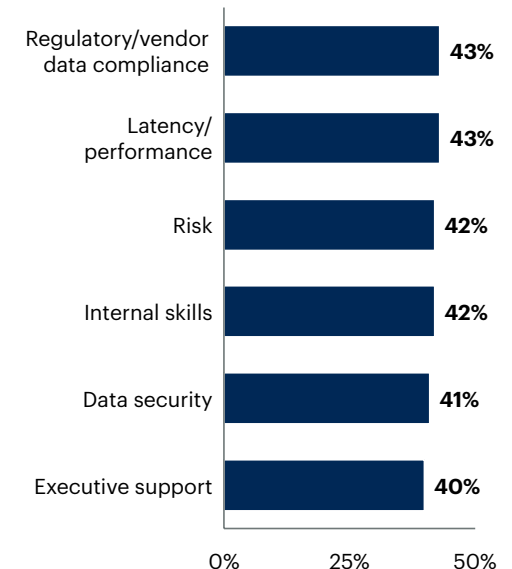
I&O drives CIO modernization priorities and solves critical challenges

Sum of top 3

Drivers for modernization



Challenges to modernization



n = 731, directors and above

Q. Following is a list of drivers for modernizing your organization's core systems. Please rank them in order of importance.

Q. What are the top 5 challenges to modernizing your organization's core systems?

Source: Gartner

3 key questions to ask as you align I&O strategies with CIO priorities

1 How can heads of I&O leverage AI to respond to evolving business demands and accelerate innovation?

2 What are the most effective ways to optimize cloud costs while supporting business growth and agility?

3 How does investing in resilient infrastructure help IT teams enable ongoing agility and operational excellence?

What are the key stages?

This roadmap shows the sequence of objectives and desired outcomes and is useful for aligning all stakeholders. It is distilled from interactions with clients who have successfully advanced I&O strategies to align with CIO priorities. A few key milestones and associated Gartner resources are highlighted below, but our full roadmap includes complete details of all milestones and resources for each stage of the initiative.

Integrate AI to meet emerging business needs

Overcome barriers to cloud cost management

Build resilient infrastructure to drive business agility and efficiency

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Step 1

Build flexible, efficient infrastructure to support AI adoption and unlock new business value.

Actions to take

Evaluate cloud and on-premises AI capabilities to optimize fit and mitigate vendor lock-in.

Deploy storage with advanced data management for efficient AI data preparation and delivery.

Upgrade networks to support AI workloads, prioritizing scalability, performance, and reliability.

Sample of associated Gartner resources include:

Roadmap

- [Generative AI Use Cases Across Industries](#)
- [Get AI Ready — What IT Leaders Need to Know and Do](#)

Research

- [How to Determine Infrastructure Requirements for On-Premises Generative AI](#)
- [Quick Answer: How to Speed Up GenAI Experimentation in I&O](#)
- [Magic Quadrant for Artificial Intelligence Applications in IT Service Management](#)

Tool

- [Accelerators for Heads of Infrastructure and IT Operations](#)

Conference

- [Conference Tracks | Gartner IT IOCS Conference 2025 in London, U.K.](#)

Integrate AI to meet emerging business needs

Overcome barriers to cloud cost management

Build resilient infrastructure to drive business agility and efficiency



Step 2

Implement strategies and controls to maximize cloud value, minimize risk and ensure financial discipline.

Actions to take

Develop workload placement and migration strategies to optimize cloud costs and business value.

Design cloud architectures and governance frameworks that balance agility, risk and cost.

Collaborate with finance and IT teams to monitor, report and continuously optimize cloud spend.

Sample of associated Gartner resources include:

Research

- Maximize the ROI of Cloud Investments
- Avoid Costly Mistakes When Adopting Public Cloud
- Improve Cloud Management With Effective Resource Tagging
- Develop an Effective Cloud Cost Management Approach
- [I&O Cloud Management for Technical Professional](#)
- [Strategic IT Cost Optimization That Goes Beyond Cost-Cutting](#)

Tools

- [BuySmart™ | Gartner Products & Tools](#)
- [IT Maturity Assessment](#)
- [Strategic IT Cost Optimization That Goes Beyond Slashing Spend](#)
- [IT Budget & Efficiency Benchmark](#)

Conference

- [Conference Tracks | Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Cloud Strategies Conference 2025, in London, U.K.](#)

Integrate AI to meet emerging business needs

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Step 3

Empower IT teams to build resilient infrastructure and drive business agility and efficiency.

Actions to take

Define business-oriented metrics that underpin the shift to resilient infrastructure and support organizational goals.

Implement adaptive governance models to balance innovation, agility and risk — driving greater resilience.

Foster collaboration and continuous improvement through communities of practice and automation initiatives.

Sample of associated Gartner resources include:

Research

- 3 Insights to Improve Democratized Digital Delivery Success
- Can There Be Digital Transformation Without I&O Automation?
- Magic Quadrant for Digital Communications Governance and Archiving Solutions

Tool

- [Infrastructure & IT Operations Effectiveness Diagnostic](#)

Conference

- [Conference Tracks | Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Cloud Strategies Conference 2025, in London, U.K.](#)

Who needs to be involved?

The most successful organizations form cross-functional teams to drive alignment between I&O and CIO priorities across AI integration, cloud optimization and resilient infrastructure initiatives. We outline the key functions to involve and their roles to ensure each milestone is achieved and business value is maximized throughout the transformation journey.



Mission-critical team members for AI integration, cloud optimization and resilient infrastructure initiatives

CIO

Provides executive leadership, guidance and communication for AI literacy, readiness and integration, cloud migration strategy and planning, and alignment of resilient infrastructure initiatives with organizational priorities.

Heads of I&O and team

Contribute insights about I&O competencies, help guide planning and implementation activity for I&O changes required for AI integration, cloud migration strategy and resilient infrastructure initiatives.

Enterprise applications leaders and team

Provide input and help craft vision with other IT leaders, and integrate information across platforms to inform AI, cloud and resilience strategy and decisions; deliver updates about progress versus plan.

Enterprise architecture leaders and team

Align objectives across multiple stakeholders; provide input about enterprise architecture capabilities and alignment to AI, cloud migration and resilient infrastructure strategies; identify architecture changes needed to achieve objectives.

Program and portfolio management leader and team

Leverage strategic partnerships for adaptive program coordination and delivery, resource management, value realization, risk mitigation and effective organization change management to accomplish AI integration, cloud migration and resilient infrastructure initiatives.

Software engineering leaders and team

Provide input and collaborate on vision with other IT leaders to establish usage of AI, cloud-native capabilities and resilience initiatives. Shape decisions on refactoring or rearchitecting applications

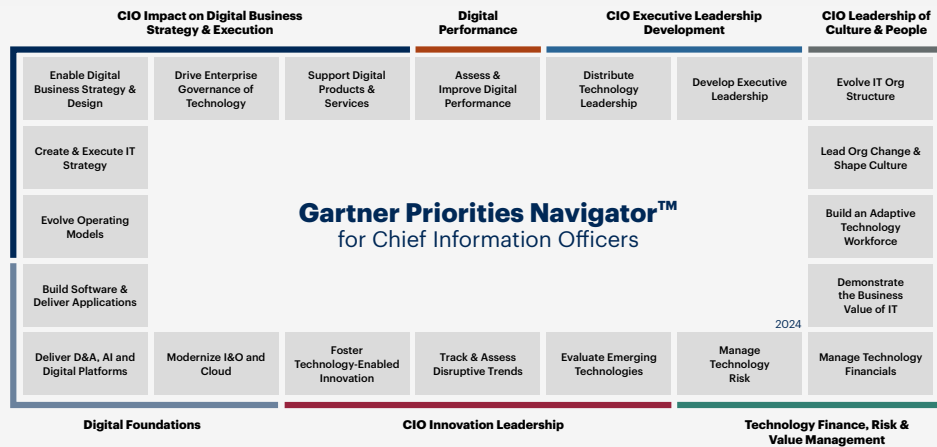
Technical domain architects

Develop the architecture and process plan to bridge the gap between objectives and technical implementation for AI, cloud and resilient infrastructure initiatives; evaluate and select best-fit tools and use cases and guide execution.

How Gartner supports your priorities

Whether you're advancing cloud optimization, integrating AI or building resilient infrastructure, Gartner provides comprehensive support for every aspect of I&O and IT operations leadership.

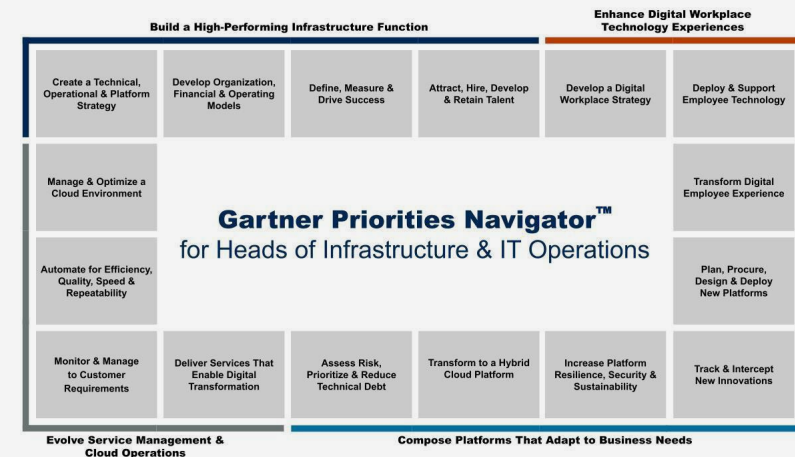
Chief Information Officers



Gartner for Chief Information Officers

Gartner delivers actionable insights, frameworks and tools to help you advance digital delivery, integrate AI, optimize cloud costs and build resilient I&O capabilities. With Gartner guidance, CIOs and heads of I&O can upskill teams, evolve IT structures and drive measurable business value — demonstrating IT's impact and accelerating organizational goals.

Heads of Infrastructure & IT Operations



Gartner for Heads of I&O

Gartner provides insight, tools and guidance to help heads of I&O align strategies with CIO priorities, deliver high-performing and resilient infrastructure, integrate AI and optimize cloud operations, and create adaptive platforms that drive business agility and superior digital experiences.

360-degree coverage for CIOs and their teams

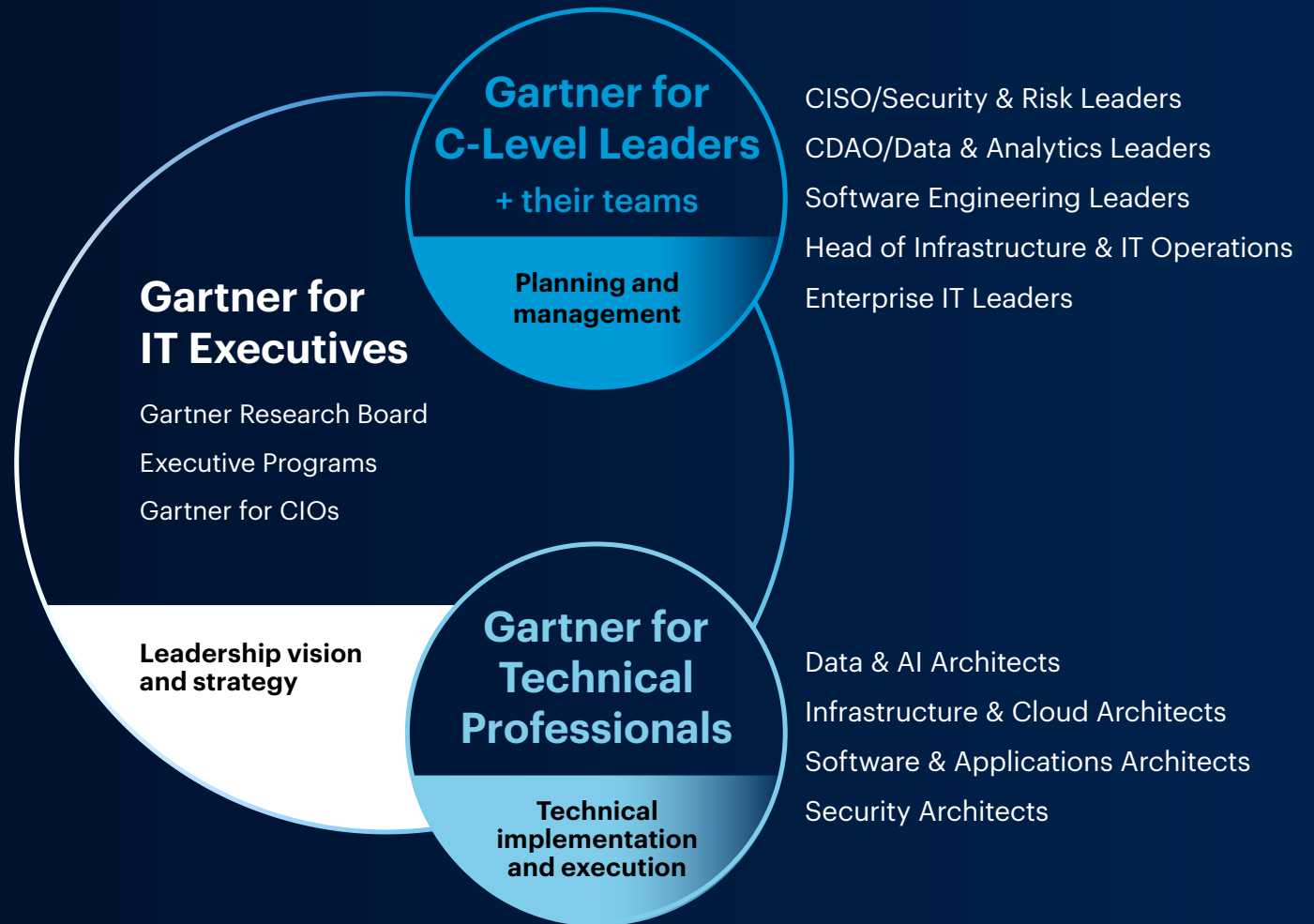
Expert guidance and tools to maximize success at every level

Validate your vision and empower teams to execute with confidence.

CIOs rely on Gartner for Technical Professionals (GTP) to kickstart their most crucial projects. Instead of starting from scratch, they tap into expert resources to help accelerate their teams' performance. GTP offers purpose-built tools, proven technical plans, assessments, models, step-by-step guides, reference architectures and roadmaps — all designed to help you achieve better business outcomes when you engage as a team.







Get access to technical experts and role-specific peer communities with GTP.



Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for heads of I&O and other I&O leaders:

 <p>eBook 2025 Infrastructure and IT Operations Leadership Vision</p> <p>The complexities and demands of the modern enterprise infrastructure will challenge overextended I&O teams.</p> <p>Download Now</p>	 <p>Webinar Make Single-Cloud vs. Multicloud Strategy Decisions</p> <p>Explore the strategies to align cloud initiatives with enterprise objectives.</p> <p>Watch Now</p>	 <p>Tool Gartner Heads of I&O Effectiveness Diagnostic</p> <p>Benchmark and develop key actions for infrastructure and IT operations leaders.</p> <p>Learn More</p>	 <p>Guide Infrastructure and Operations Solutions for Technical Professionals</p> <p>Access action plans for the key trends for cloud, data center and edge infrastructure.</p> <p>Download Now</p>
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