

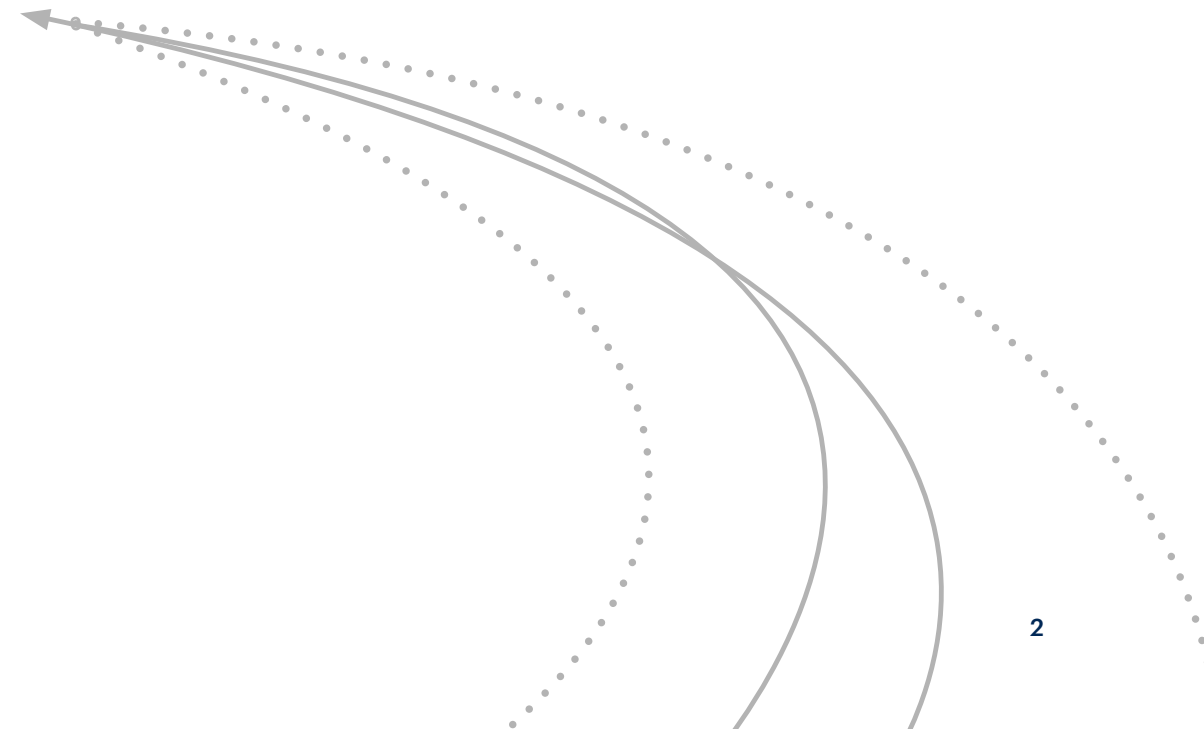
The 2021 Gartner CIO Agenda uncovers capabilities that enable enterprises to win when business conditions turn. The U.K. and Ireland continue their progress. CIOs can use these findings to move from a fragile to a fit enterprise state and shift toward capabilities that best support future growth.



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Data Insights

What You Need to Know

There are bright spots for UK&I enterprises. They are progressing their digital transformation while UK&I CIOs increased their influence across the enterprise. Having banked a lot of credibility during the early pandemic stages, they are now seen as contributing more widely to the enterprise strategically and consistently. But UK&I enterprises are moving more slowly than enterprises in many other countries, and some seem to have stalled at earlier stages of development. UK&I CIOs have been less effective at leveraging the credibility and influence they have banked. Public-sector organisations are also showing additional signs of distress in advancing their capabilities. Both the public and private sectors continue to be hampered by the uncertainties of Brexit and the pandemic, and the public sector additionally suffering from an extended period of austerity.

UK&I CIOs must redouble their efforts to catch up. Demand, credibility and the relationship strength needed to accelerate the digital maturity agenda are all there, but UK&I CIOs must act now — don't wait — or risk being caught on the wrong side of the emerging digital divide.

In Figure 1, we share the data and additional detail behind that insight.

Digital Business Maturity Is Advancing, but Beware the Early Warning Signs

There is good momentum globally toward higher digital maturity, with a jump from 30% to 48% in organisations reporting that they are in the maturing stage of their digital business ambitions (see Figure 2). This drive toward digital maturity — organisations who state that they are either in the scale or refine stages of their transformations — is also reflected in the figures for the U.K. (see Figure 3).

Figure 2: Digital Business Maturity Is Advancing Rapidly

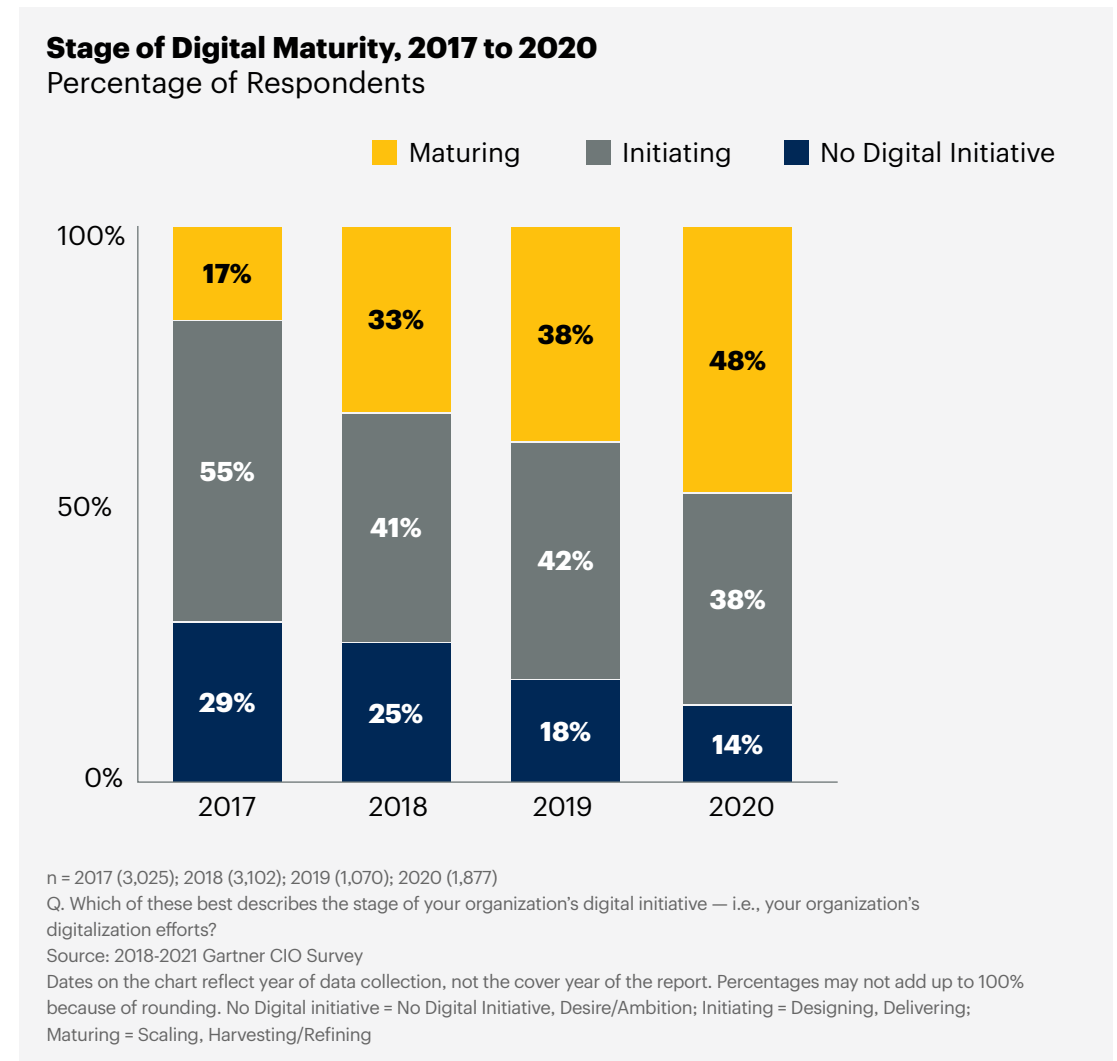
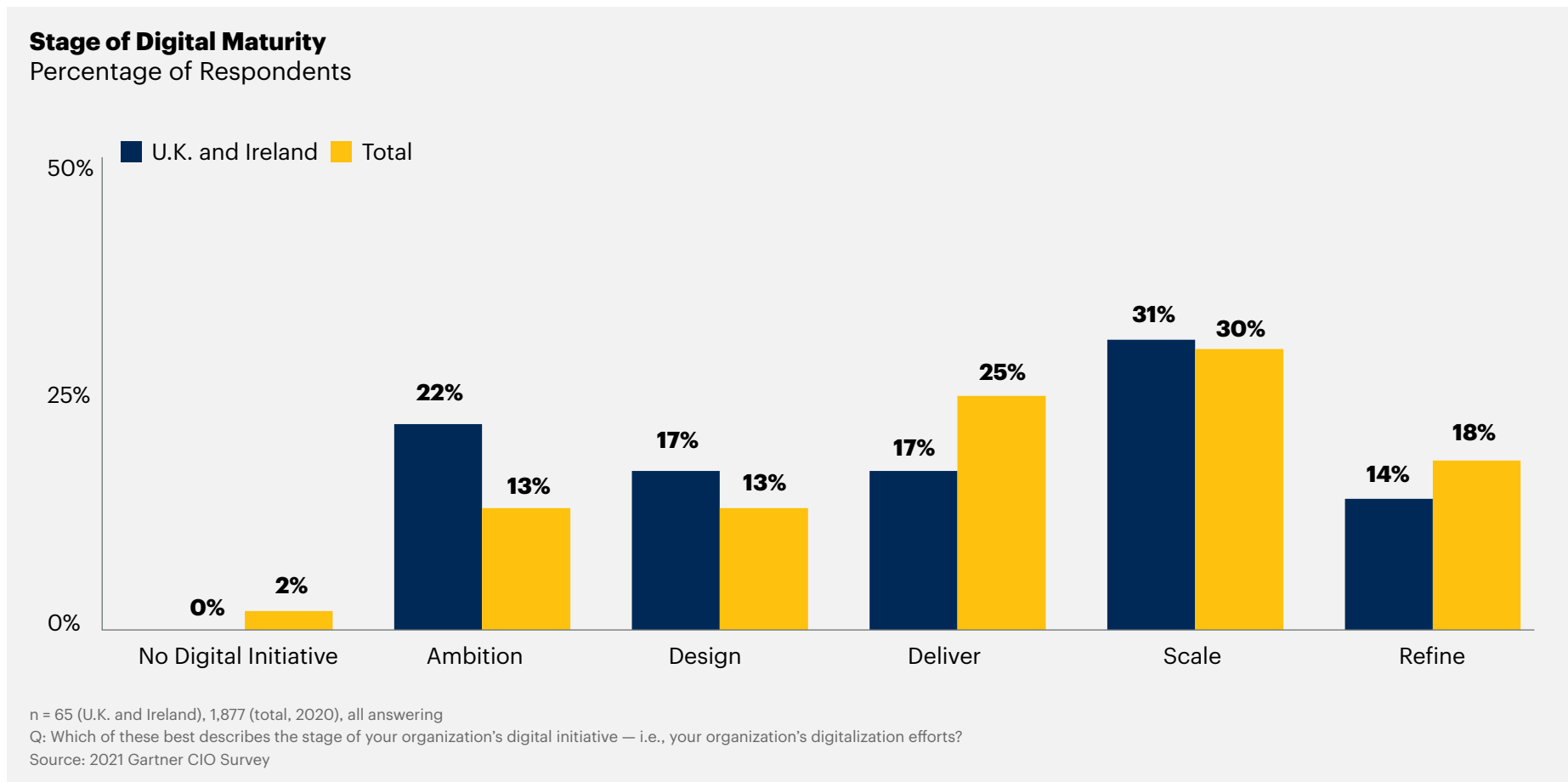


Figure 3: Stage of Digital Maturity



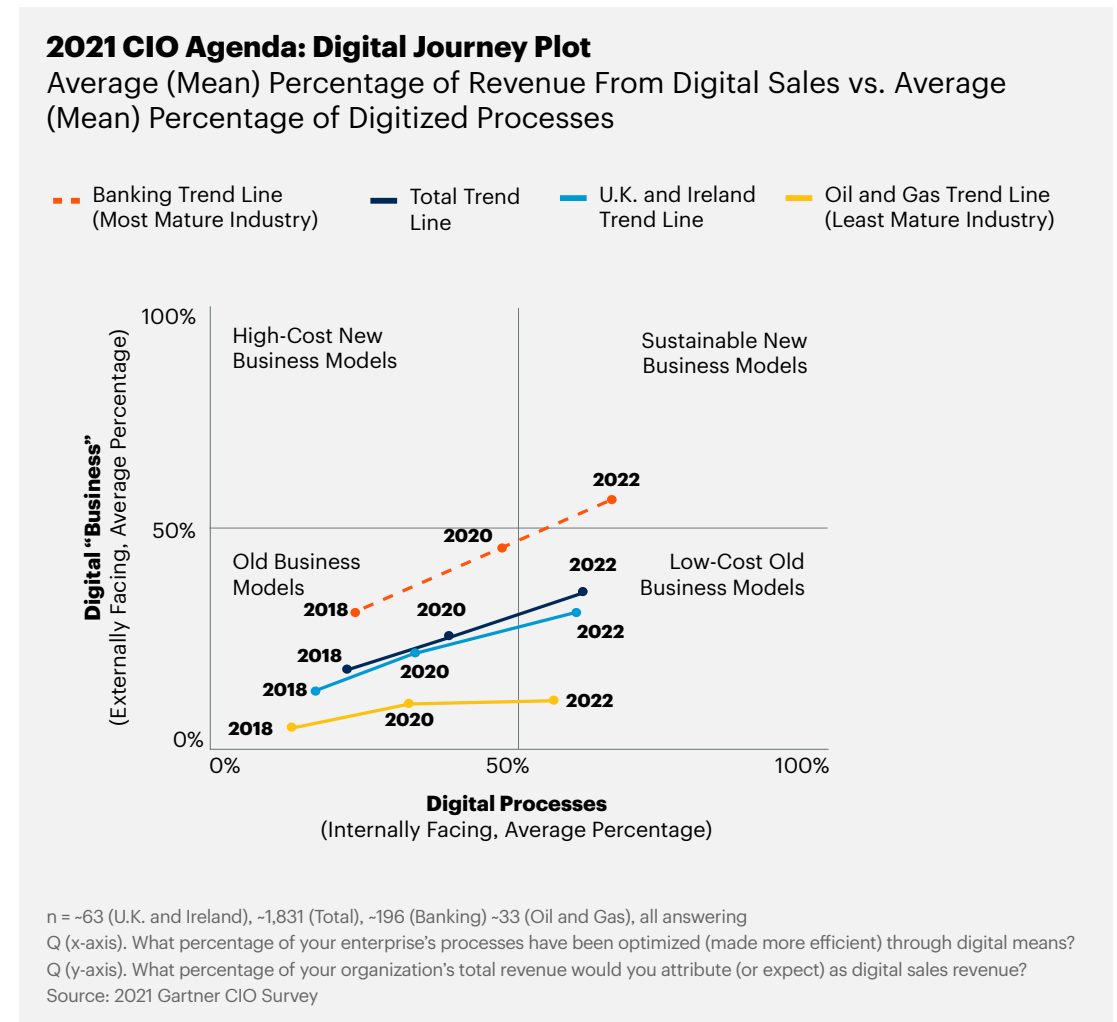
There is some early evidence here of a digital divide beginning to appear within UK&I organisations. While UK&I organisations are progressing — and compare well with — organisations globally in the scale and refine stages, there are potential problems building in the earlier stages, where progress seems to have stalled. UK&I organisations at the stage of defining their ambition have increased from 18% last year to 22% this year, but those moving into the design stage remain flat at 17% (versus 17% previously). Those at the deliver stage have dropped considerably, however, from 23% in last year’s survey to just 17% in this year’s as the combined headwinds of Brexit, COVID-19 and ongoing austerity measures (particularly in the public sector) take effect.

This is a danger sign for UK&I CIOs. The drop around delivery is an early warning sign that CIOs are being distracted from initiating delivery by the short-term impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit. This is risky, as there is increasing expectation and reliance by CEOs and boards that technology will underpin both short-term recovery and longer-term strategic execution success.

Recommendation:

- UK&I CIOs should focus on initiating and accelerating their organisations’ digital business plans as a priority to bridge the delivery gap and avoid building up problems for the future. Don’t wait. Act now (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. 2021 CIO Agenda: Digital Journey Plot



Overall however, UK&I organisations have remained close to being on track in their digital journeys following the mean trend line for global respondent organisations. We can see it starting to deviate in 2022. It is imperative UK&I act now to course correct and improve this trajectory. UK&I CIOs must be aware that pure, internally focused digital optimization — while useful in the short term for their COVID-19 responses — follows the law of diminishing returns.

Recommendation:

- UK&I CIOs should use the credibility they’ve built from their initial, successful COVID-19 response activities (such as working from home) to quickly pivot to more strategic, externally facing digital build programs and revenue-generating opportunities.

Figure 5: UK&I CIOs Are Contributing to Strategic Changes

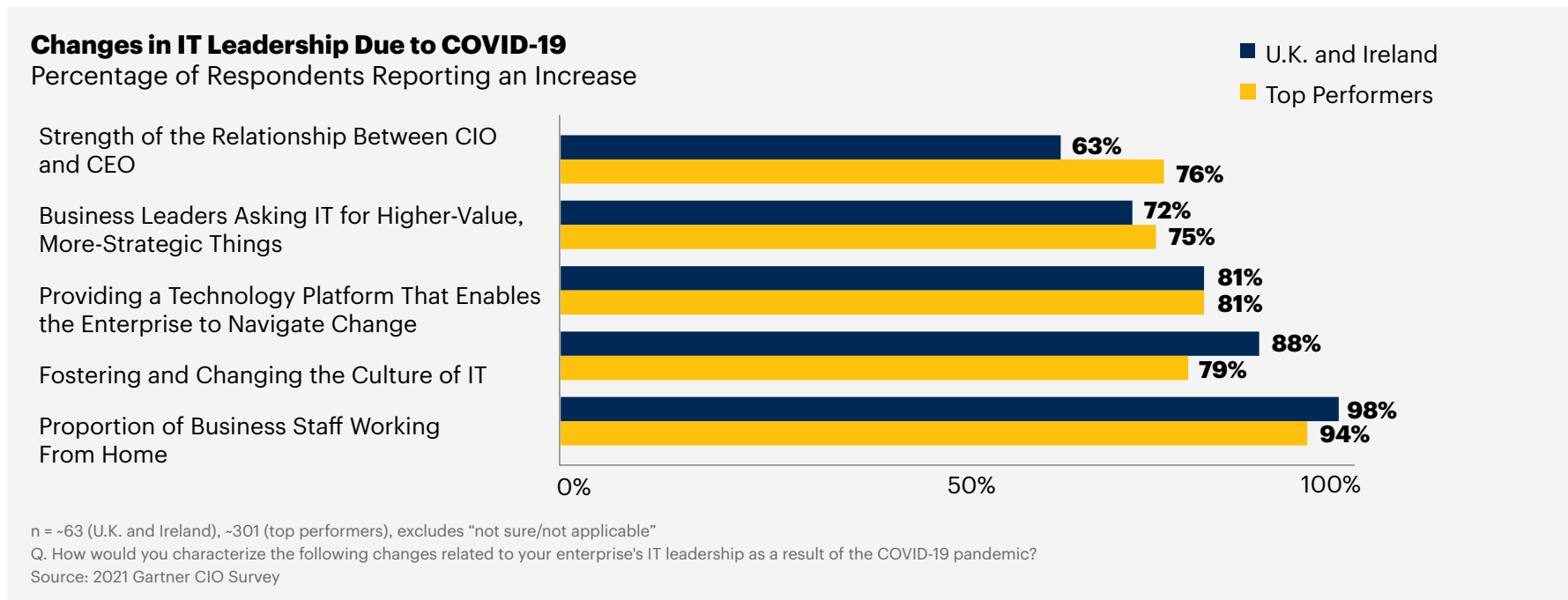
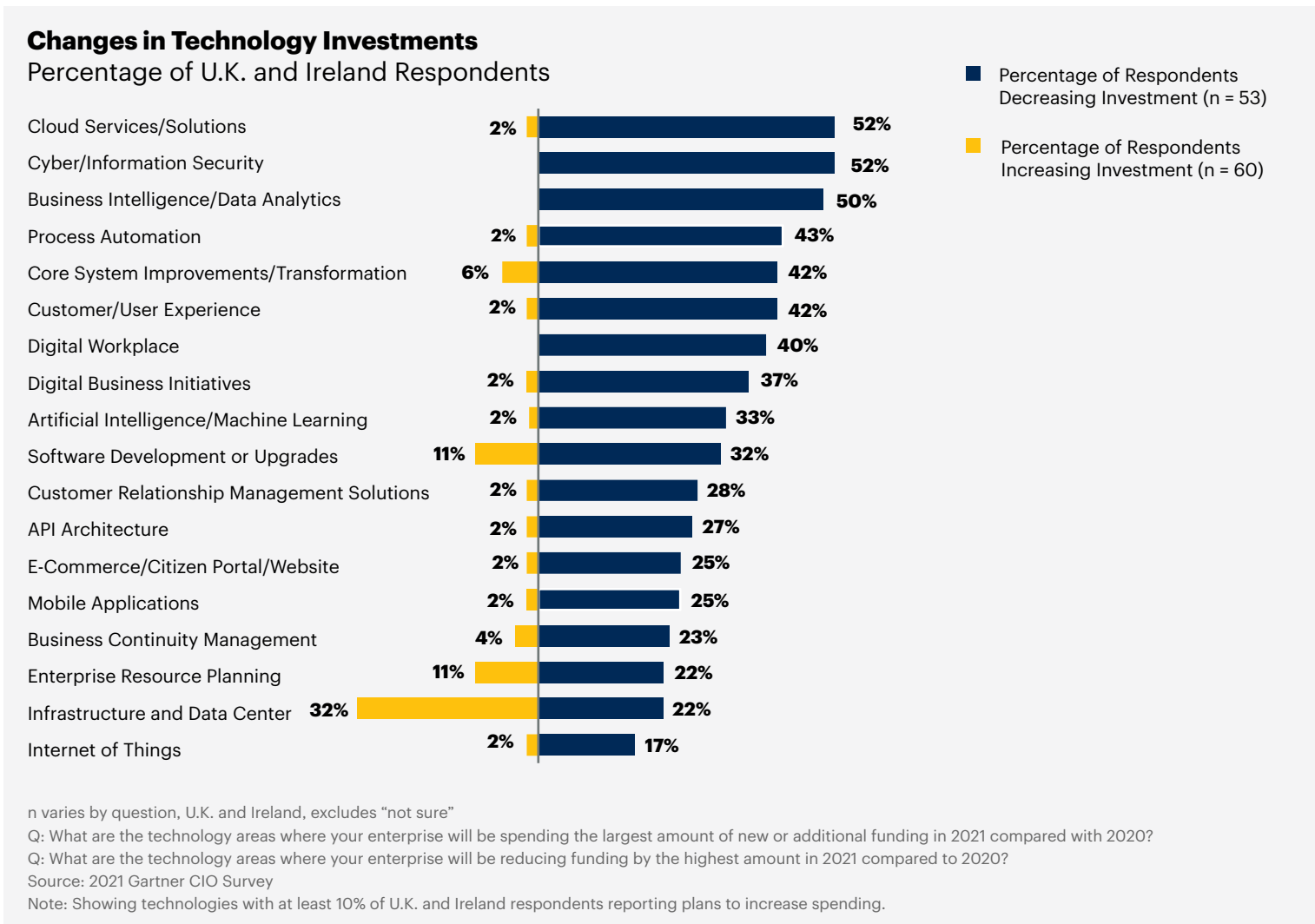


Figure 9: Cloud and Security Top 2021 Investment Plans



Evidence

The 2021 Gartner CIO Survey: The 2021 Gartner CIO Survey was conducted online from 14 July 2020 through 14 August 2020 among Gartner Executive Programs members and other CIOs. Qualified respondents are each the most senior IT leader (CIO) for their overall organisation or a part of their organisation (for example, a business unit or region). The total sample is 1,877, with representation from all geographies and industry sectors (public and private), including 65 from the U.K. and Ireland. The survey was developed collaboratively by a team of Gartner analysts, and was reviewed, tested and administered by Gartner’s Research Data and Analytics team.

Disclaimer: Results do not represent “global” findings or the market as a whole, but reflect sentiment of the respondents and companies surveyed.

Note 1: Top, Typical and Trailing Performers

This report segments 2021 Gartner CIO Survey respondents based on self-reported IT and enterprise performance. This segmentation allows a group of digital leaders to be identified as a best practices group to contrast the performance of others.

Top performers — Respondents whose:

- Relative business performance compared with competitors is ahead of where it would have been had COVID-19 not become a global pandemic.
- Organisation’s digital initiative is in the scale or refine stages (the two top categories).
- Organisation has already planned and implemented a new normal (post-COVID-19) strategy.

Typical performers — The cohort that performed too well to be included in trailing performers, yet not well enough to be included in top performers.

Trailing performers — Respondents whose:

- Relative business performance compared with competitors is behind or the same as where it would have been had COVID-19 not become a global pandemic.
- Organisation has no digital initiative or is in the ambition stage (the two bottom categories).
- Organisation has not already planned and implemented a new normal (post-COVID-19) strategy.

Want to learn more?

To get additional information about the 2021 CIO Agenda, including regional and industry-specific insights, visit: gartner.com/cioagenda.

Download additional resources

[CIO Roadmap for Strategic Cost Optimization](#)

[Rethink the IT Strategic Plan](#)

[Driving Digital Business Transformation for Industry Leadership](#)

[Guide to Aligning Digital Business and the Digital Supply Chain](#)

[2020-2022 Emerging Technologies for Enterprises](#)

[Benchmarking/IT Score](#)

[The IT Roadmap for Digital Business Transformation](#)

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