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Leadership Vision for 2025

Top 3 Strategic Priorities for Infrastructure & IT Operations

Introduction

Today's infrastructure and operations (I&O) leaders are facing a myriad of complex challenges in the near future.

After years of digital transformation, enterprises are seeing the actual arrival of business-led IT. In fact, 55% of CIOs plan to deploy GenAI, 41% are introducing AI/ML tech, 30% say they will be rolling out low-code/no-code development platforms, and 26% are driving distributed cloud digital technologies forward. This will shift how I&O teams support the business.

Next, the evolution of AI, automation and other technology has rapidly accelerated the displacement of IT talent. I&O leaders need to reframe the skill sets required for this new order and how to move their teams to higher-value tasks.

Finally, the move toward diversification of technology in infrastructure is rising, leaving I&O leaders to manage increasingly complex IT infrastructure.

I&O leaders must carefully manage technology, talent and time to deliver on goals and strategies for 2025, and can use this research as an action plan to meet challenges and inspire success.

Key questions addressed



What are the **major trends** defining the I&O landscape in 2025?

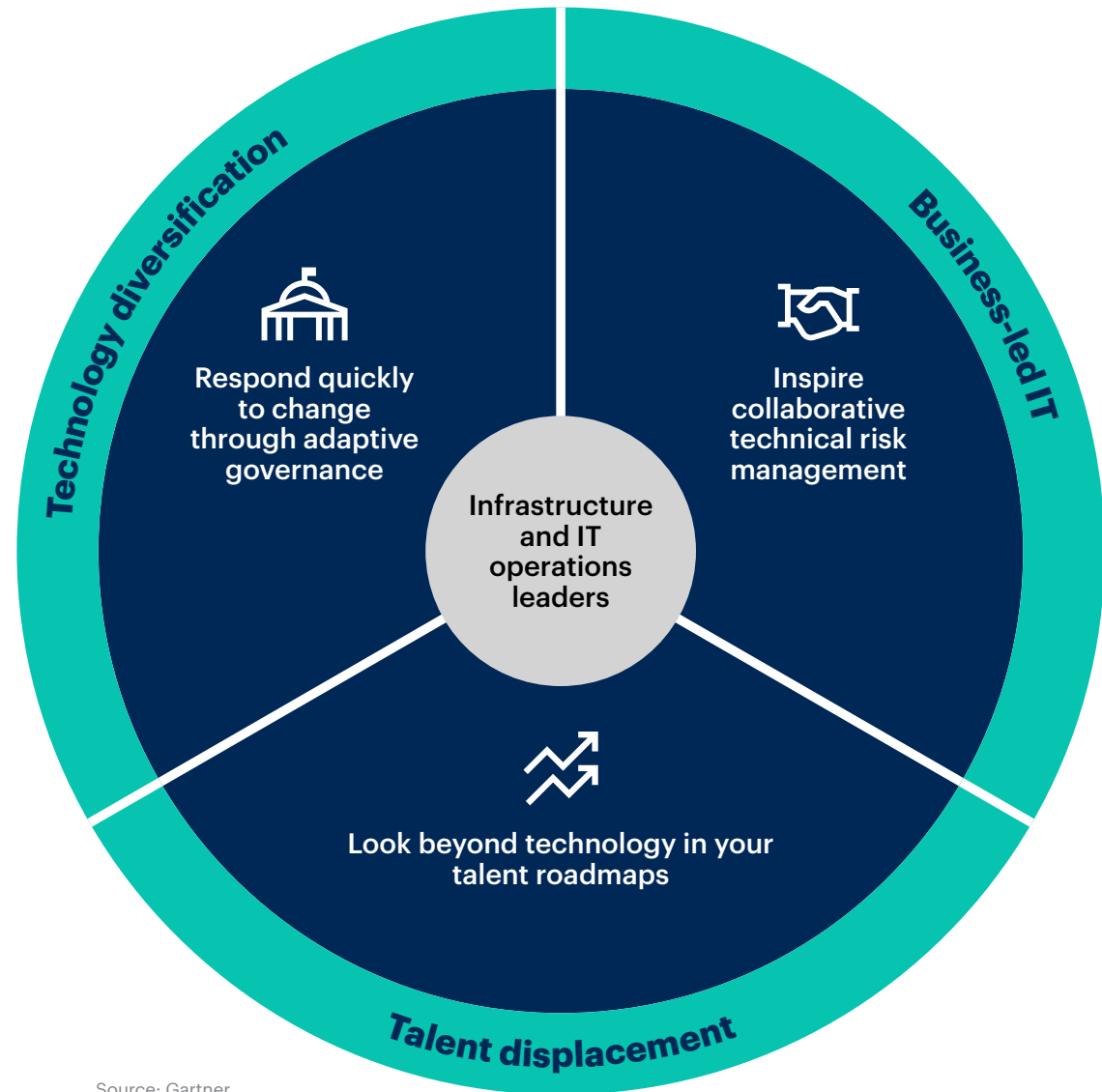


What are the **top challenges** for heads of I&O in the year ahead?



What **actions** do heads of I&O and their teams need to take to succeed?

Top Trends and Priorities for Infrastructure and IT Operations Leaders



Source: Gartner

3 Key Trends Shaping the I&O Landscape



Business-led IT

It's increasingly common that business teams are taking the lead in identifying, selecting and implementing technology solutions that directly support their specific goals and needs. They're often doing so with minimal direct oversight from the central IT department.



Talent displacement

The wide-scale introduction of AI, automation and other technologies promises to augment employee productivity and maximize their impact. This accelerates the need to reskill and redefine roles as technology makes existing skills insufficient or obsolete.



Technology diversification

Infrastructure is becoming more complex and diverse. This complexity is compounded by the need to deploy resilient, distributed infrastructure consistently, all in the face of unpredictable customer demand.

3 Challenges and Actions for I&O Leaders

CHALLENGES

01

Tackle spiraling technical debt

An average of 41% of systems are considered “beyond end of life or support,” and an average of 38% are incompatible with target architectures and new projects. Sprawling technical debt serves as a blocker to I&O modernization.

> ACTION

Collaborate and prioritize

It can be difficult to get all business units in agreement on how to tackle technical debt. Partner with stakeholders to identify where true risks to the enterprise exist.

CHALLENGES

02

Build the right workforce

Only 15% of IT teams are very effective at meeting future business skill requirements. As AI and other emerging tech shift the role of IT, I&O leaders struggle to attract, engage and retain a workforce that can grow with the business.

> ACTION

Go beyond the technical skills

In today’s world, I&O teams need skill sets that go beyond just technical. Strategic, interpersonal relationships are key to the modern work environment. Focus I&O teams on developing nontechnical competencies like creative thinking, collaborating and communication.

CHALLENGES

03

Manage infrastructure diversification

Infrastructure technology diversification aims to mitigate risks associated with dependency on a single technology or vendor, improve scalability, and enable the organization to leverage the best tools and solutions available for different aspects of its operations. However, this strategy brings complexities and additional risks.

> ACTION

Create a resilient architecture

I&O leaders must focus on being flexible, adaptive and resilient in today’s complex, constantly evolving environment. Adopt a more flexible governance model with adaptive governance and focus on resilient hybrid infrastructure that can grow with the company.

Collaborate and Prioritize

Most I&O leaders are weighed down by a problematic amount of technical debt. Teams create technical debt when they “borrow” against long-term quality by making short-term sacrifices, taking shortcuts or using workarounds to meet delivery deadlines. The eventual build up of debt hampers modernization and creates a lot of risk for the enterprise.

Technical debt is a distributed problem and requires a collaborative solution. However, the agendas and priorities of various business units and IT will vary greatly when it comes to technical debt. This can make creating and executing a plan particularly challenging. A productive solution requires all parties to come to an agreement on risk, effort, budget and resource allocation.

Often, the most effective way to address these concerns is to agree on the enterprise risk appetite.

This will create an aligned starting point where all stakeholders can agree on an acceptable risk posture and prioritize where funds are needed for improvements.

A unified approach is key to managing infrastructure's technical debt



Source: Gartner

ACTION 02 Go Beyond the Technical Skills

Technology innovations and evolutions have shifted the roles of I&O teams. In fact, 38% of CIOs expect AI to fully replace IT help desk in three years. More than half of I&O leaders expect GenAI to significantly impact their function in two to three years. These technologies are changing how the I&O workforce spends its time, which means I&O leaders must move their talent to higher-value opportunities.

Go beyond the technical

Though technical skills remain a fundamental piece of I&O, leaders should also focus on developing staff's nontechnical skills. In today's enterprise, technical acumen is sometimes less important than highly transferable skills like communication and strategic prioritization.

Develop learning maps

I&O leaders build the strongest competencies among their team when they focus on supporting individual learning styles. Leverage a combination of learning methods, from formal training and acquiring foundational knowledge through books to various on-the-job development activities.

Look beyond technology to keep your teams engaged with change

Learning activities

Rotation

- Cross-functional
- Unexpected pairings

Hackathons

- Risk taking
- Creation

Competencies

Business acumen

Collaboration

Design thinking

Innovative thinking

 Leverage a learning map with formal training, foundational knowledge and on-the-job development to reinforce behaviors and improve competency proficiency.

Source: Gartner

ACTION 03 Create a Resilient Architecture

I&O leaders listed improving infrastructure resilience of I&O services and products as a top goal for 2025. As infrastructures become more complex, resilience becomes a bigger challenge.

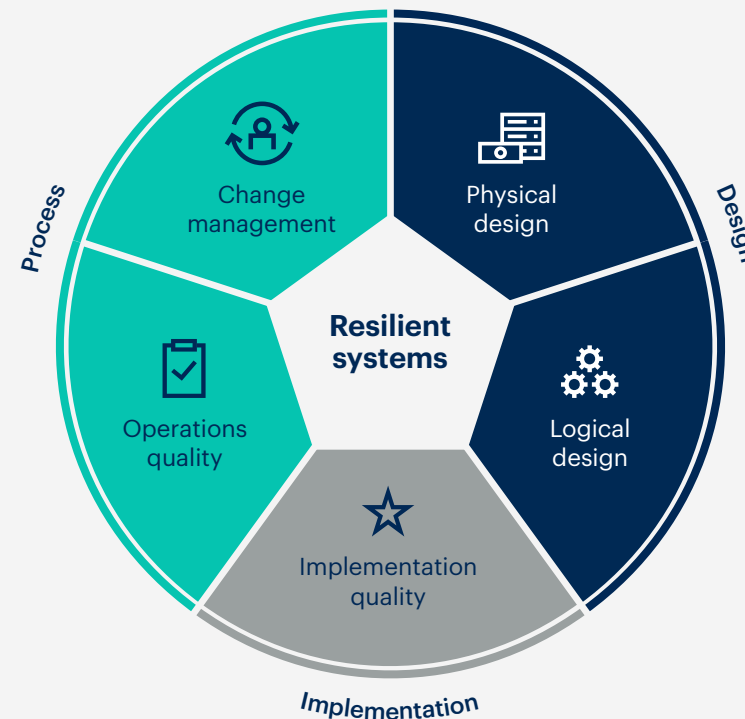
Five key factors influence the robustness, resilience and observed (“real-world”) availability of systems: change management, physical design, logical design, implementation quality and operations quality.

Resilient systems:

- Minimize the risk of failure
- Recover quickly from failure
- Operate with reduced capabilities rather than failing outright

I&O leaders can support these factors with a range of technology initiatives, including cloud management platforms, orchestration tools for automating workflows and processes across different environments and adopting infrastructure as code practices.

Deploy resilient hybrid infrastructure for business growth



Source: Gartner

360-degree coverage for CIOs and their teams

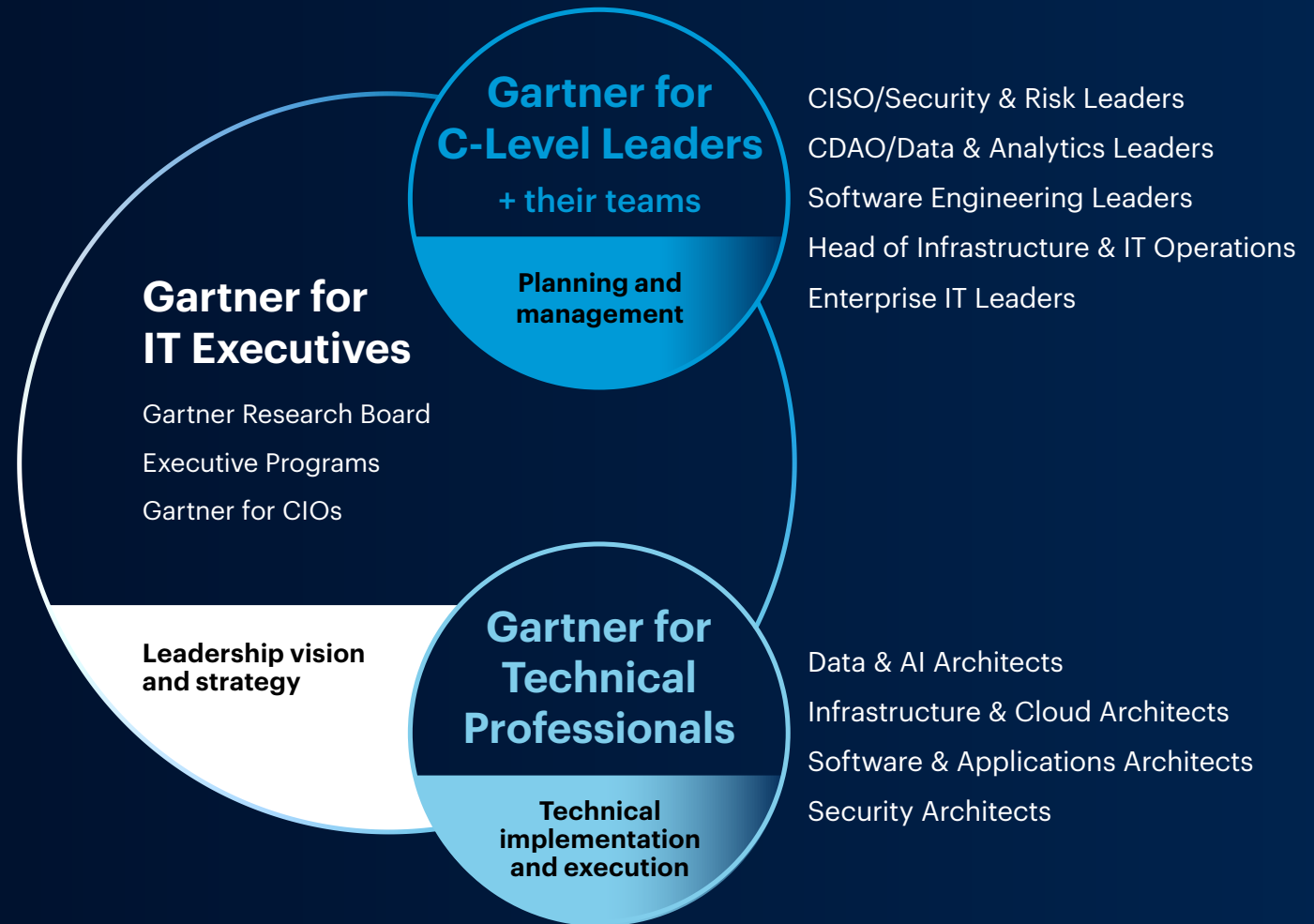
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