AUTOMOX

2024 RESEARCH REPORT

Journey to ITOps Agility

How to achieve high ITOps agility with
insights from over 500 ITOps professionals

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The only constant is change.

IT operations is a high-octane race. ITOps teams always sprint against time to deploy critical software updates, introduce new applications across endpoints, or swiftly contain and address cybersecurity incidents.

To keep pace with rapidly advancing technologies – or better yet, blaze new trails – a high level of agility is critical for ITOps teams. Teams have to gather intelligence quickly, draw useful conclusions, and act efficiently and effectively. But they must also commit to continuous learning and improvement to stay ahead in such a highly dynamic environment.

When IT agility is lacking, organizations are more vulnerable to cyberattacks and data breaches. They're also less able to complete tasks with speed and confidence. Yet, in our latest study of over 500 U.S.-based ITOps professionals, we found less than half of organizations **(44%)** report a high level of IT agility.

Less than half of organizations (44%) report a high level of IT agility.

IT agility matters for many reasons. According to our research, organizations with low IT agility struggle significantly more with integrating tools, insufficient staffing, and too many manual processes. High IT agility organizations not only find these issues less challenging but also have a higher level of confidence in their ability to configure and enforce desired configurations on endpoints. The same goes for deploying software or patching out-of-date software. High IT agility organizations are also more likely to report faster times to apply a change, like configuring endpoints or deploying software organization-wide.

Any organization looking to foster more innovation and operational efficiency should strive to increase its IT agility. In this report, we dig into the research to show you how to conquer constant change with high IT agility [and how every organization can achieve it].

What IT agility looks like

IT agility is the capability of information technology infrastructure, systems, and teams to quickly and efficiently adjust to new requirements, changes in the business environment, emerging technologies, and customer needs.

Does your organization have IT agility?

Organizations with high IT agility not only have the capacity to rapidly adapt to change and seize new opportunities but also to gather intelligence and make decisions quickly.

Key components of IT agility

Flexibility

The ability to pivot or easily modify and adjust IT systems, processes, and structures in response to changes in requirements or business conditions.

Responsiveness

The capacity to promptly respond to changing business needs, market conditions, or external factors, so an IT team can support its organization's strategic goals.
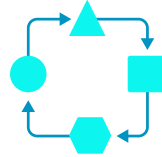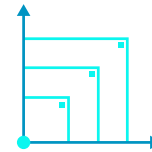
Adaptability

The willingness and ability to evolve and incorporate new technologies, methodologies, and practices to stay relevant and effective in the face of tech advancements.

Collaboration

Effective cooperation and strategizing across departments (e.g. IT and SecOps), promoting communication to streamline implementation processes.

Scalability

The ability to easily scale IT systems up or down as needed to balance performance and cost.

Innovation

Encouraging experimentation and the exploration of new technologies drives continuous improvement and sets a precedent of support, even if an experiment 'fails'.

Speed

Delivering IT solutions quickly and efficiently, reducing time-to-market for new products, services, or features.

Why IT agility matters

Less than half of organizations report a high level of ITOps agility.

Without the speed or flexibility to seamlessly integrate new technologies, organizations can quickly develop a substantial gap between their technology stack and industry standards. The accumulation of tech debt makes it more difficult and costly to catch up with technological advances and can hinder organizational performance.

The most agile organizations are more mature in their use of AI and workflow automation tools compared to organizations with low IT agility.

- Highly agile organizations (**67%**) are more likely to use AI-language models to solve novel problems than those with low agility (**39%**).

- Highly agile organizations (**17%**) are more likely to report endpoint management ops are fully automated.

Organizations with high IT agility have fewer challenges and accomplish tasks faster with high IT agility.

- Highly agile organizations (**62%**) have higher confidence in their ability to configure and enforce desired configurations on endpoints than low-agility organizations (**19%**).

- Highly agile ITOps teams (**56%**) can apply a change like configuration or software deployment organization-wide in under 30 minutes compared to low-agility teams (**26%**).

- Highly agile ITOps teams (**41%**) have greater confidence in their ability to patch out-of-date software or deploy software than low-agility teams (**17%**).
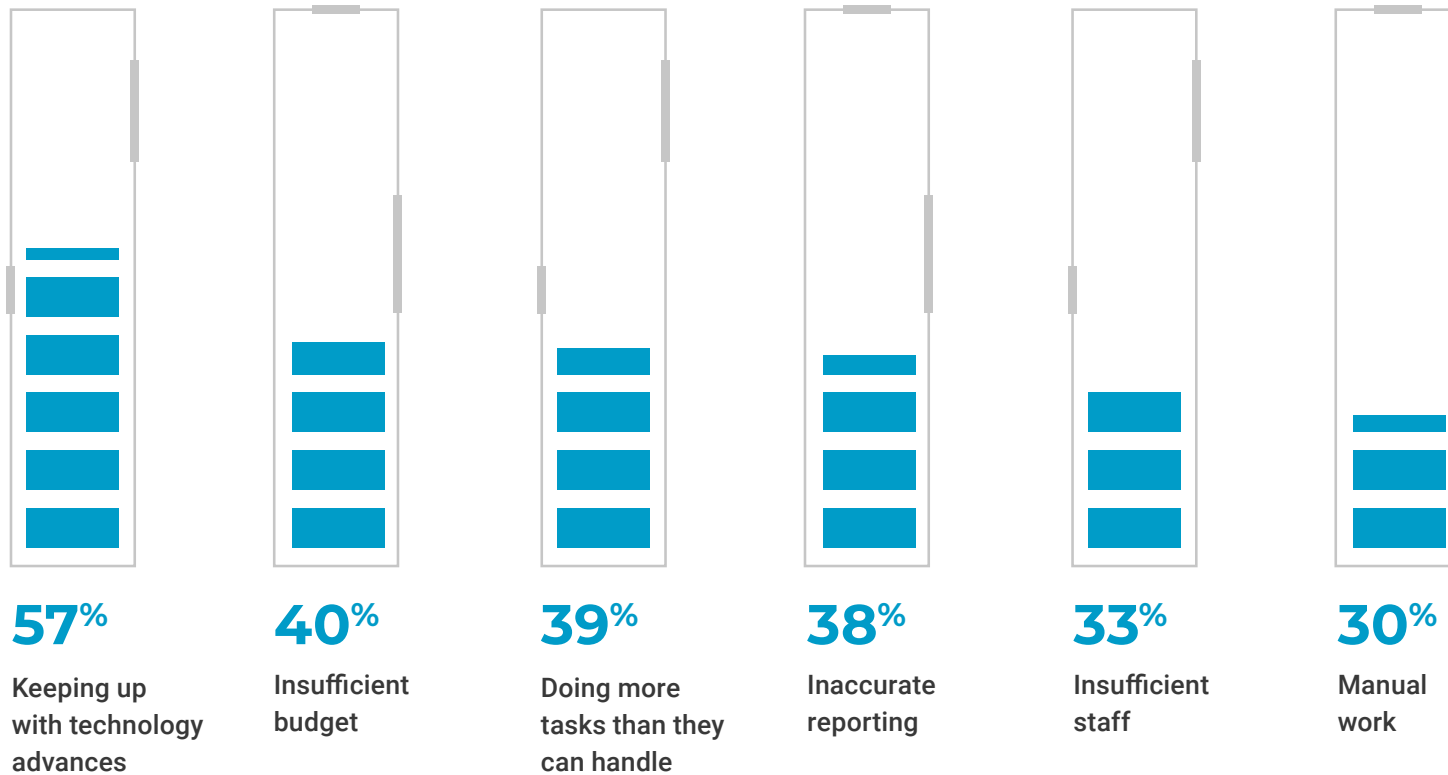
57%

Say keeping up with technological advances is the most significant challenge they face
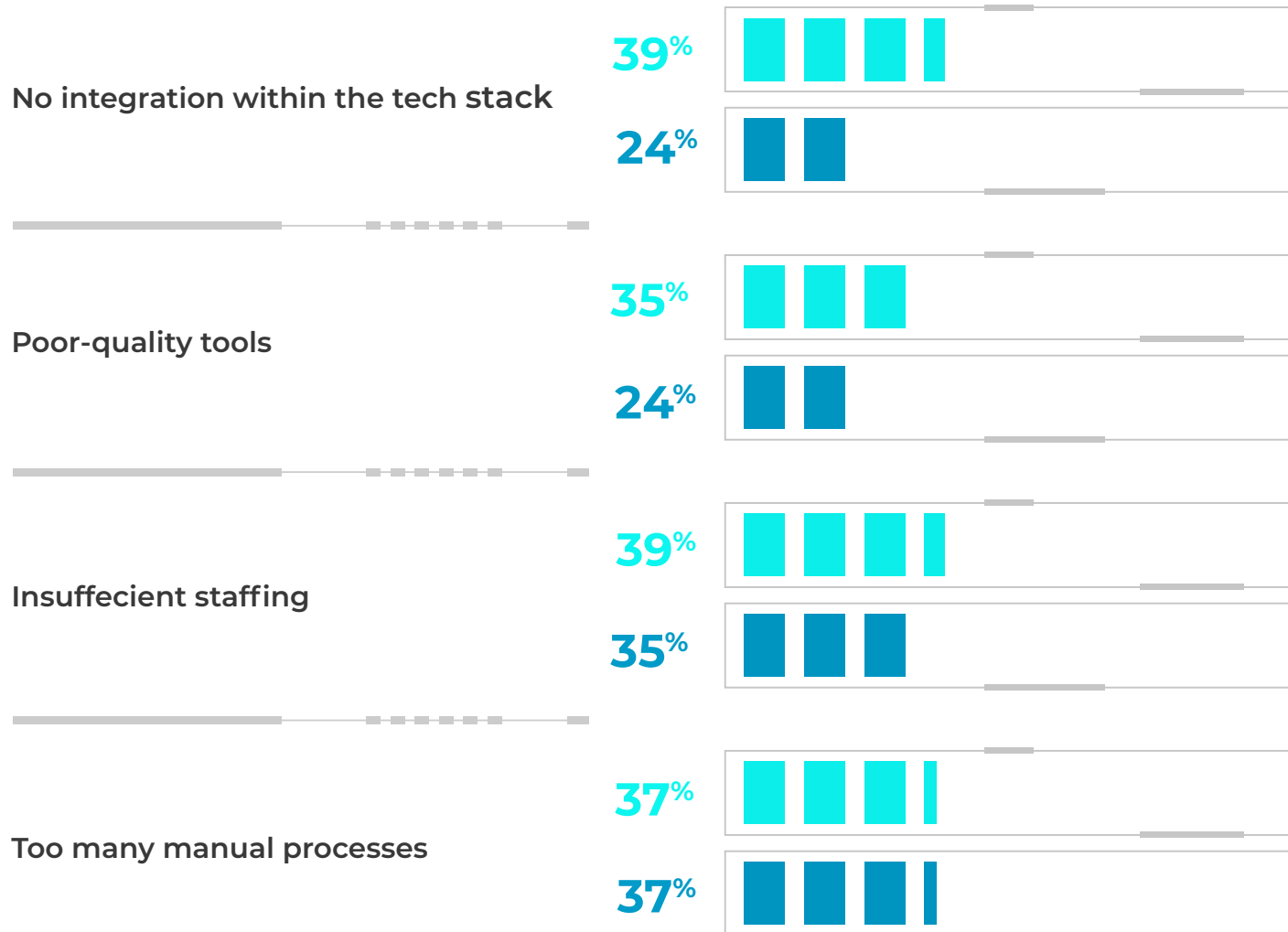
How high agility adds value to ITOps

Organizations with high IT agility outperformed their peers across several metrics.

The top challenges for ITOps teams are keeping up with technology advances, insufficient budget, doing more tasks than they can handle, inaccurate reporting, insufficient staff and manual work.

Increasing organizational IT agility can help to reduce these challenges.

57%
Keeping up with technology advances

40%
Insufficient budget

39%
Doing more tasks than they can handle

38%
Inaccurate reporting

33%
Insufficient staff

30%
Manual work

Companies with low IT agility struggle more than those with high agility in the following areas:

No integration within the tech stack

39%

24%

Poor-quality tools

35%

24%

Insuffecient staffing

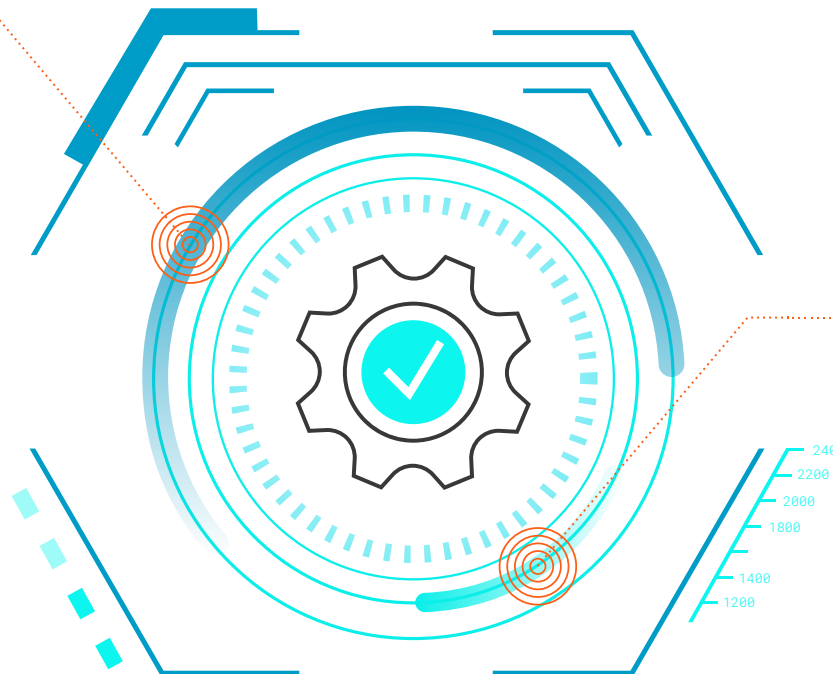**39%**

35%

Too many manual processes

37%

37%

High IT agility organizations have a higher confidence in their ability to configure and enforce desired configurations on endpoints than low- agility organizations.

Moreover, those with greater confidence in their ability to configure and enforce endpoints are more likely to report 'less than 10 minutes per endpoint' to apply a change company-wide.

62%

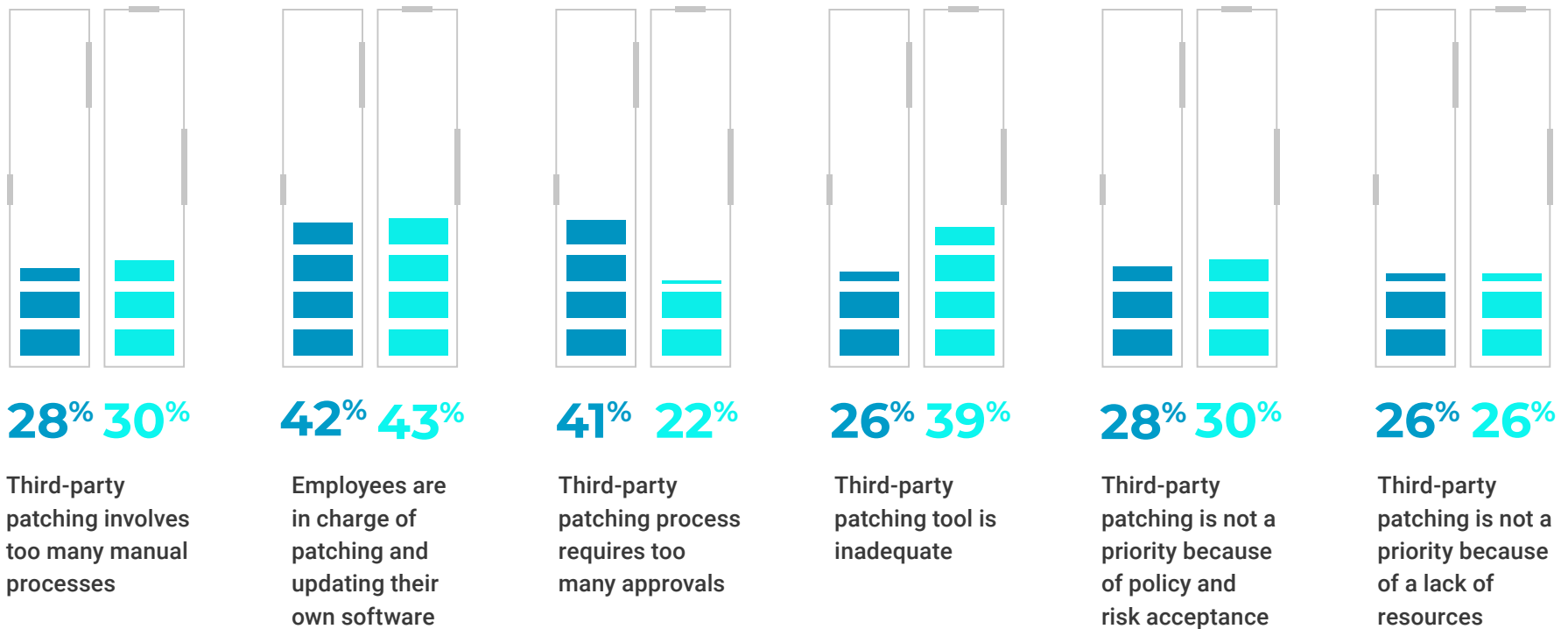Of high-agility organizations are confident in their ability to configure and enforce desired configurations

19%

Of low-agility organizations are confident in their ability to configure and enforce desired configurations

Highly agile ITOps teams (41%) have the greatest confidence in their ability to patch out-of-date software or deploy software.

Issues with third-party patching involving manual processes are also significantly less of an issue for highly agile organizations.

28% 30%
Third-party patching involves too many manual processes

42% 43%
Employees are in charge of patching and updating their own software

41% 22%
Third-party patching process requires too many approvals

26% 39%
Third-party patching tool is inadequate

28% 30%
Third-party patching is not a priority because of policy and risk acceptance

26% 26%
Third-party patching is not a priority because of a lack of resources

Organizations with high IT agility likely have more capability to detect and respond to AI security issues.

That's potentially why highly agile organizations **(45%)** say they have fewer security concerns when using AI than organizations with low agility **(61%)**.

Of highly agile organizations have fewer security concerns when using AI
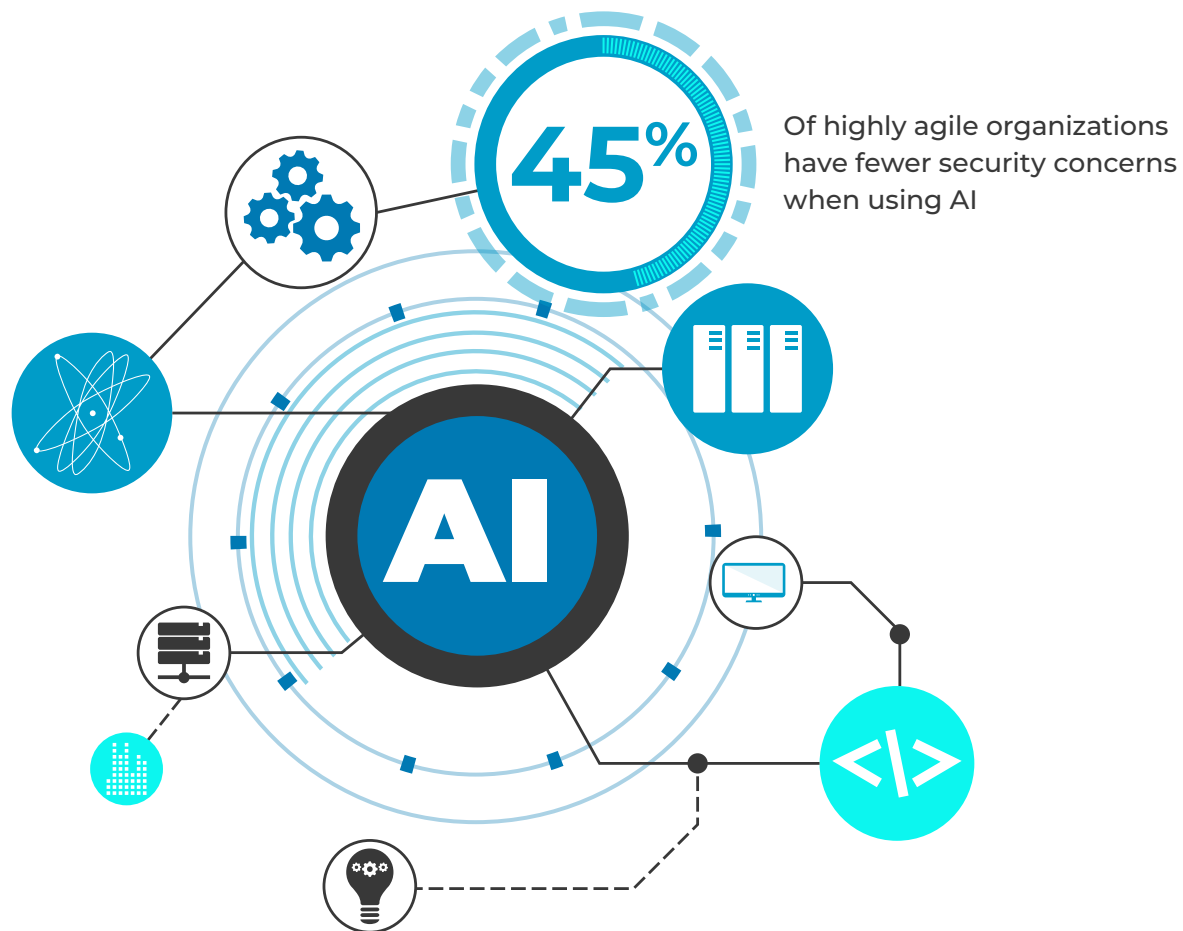
Barriers to high IT agility

ITOps professionals report a lack of IT tool integration resulting in numerous inefficiencies.

IT agility is imperative for organizations striving to maintain a competitive edge. However, only **44%** of organizations say they're able to achieve high IT agility. So, what's holding them back?

54%
Tool overload/complexity

52%
Communications breakdown

49%
Decision delay

49%
Import/export of data

The lack of any tool integration impacts efficiency by having to delay or block expected outcomes to build whatever middleware is necessary to overcome an internal challenge.

Jack Smith,
Sr. Security Engineer

Tool overload and complexity is the #1 job inefficiency of ITOps professionals.

When tools often aren't well integrated, overload and complexity become inevitable.

49% Of ITOps teams use 6 or more applications, tools, and services to manage endpoints
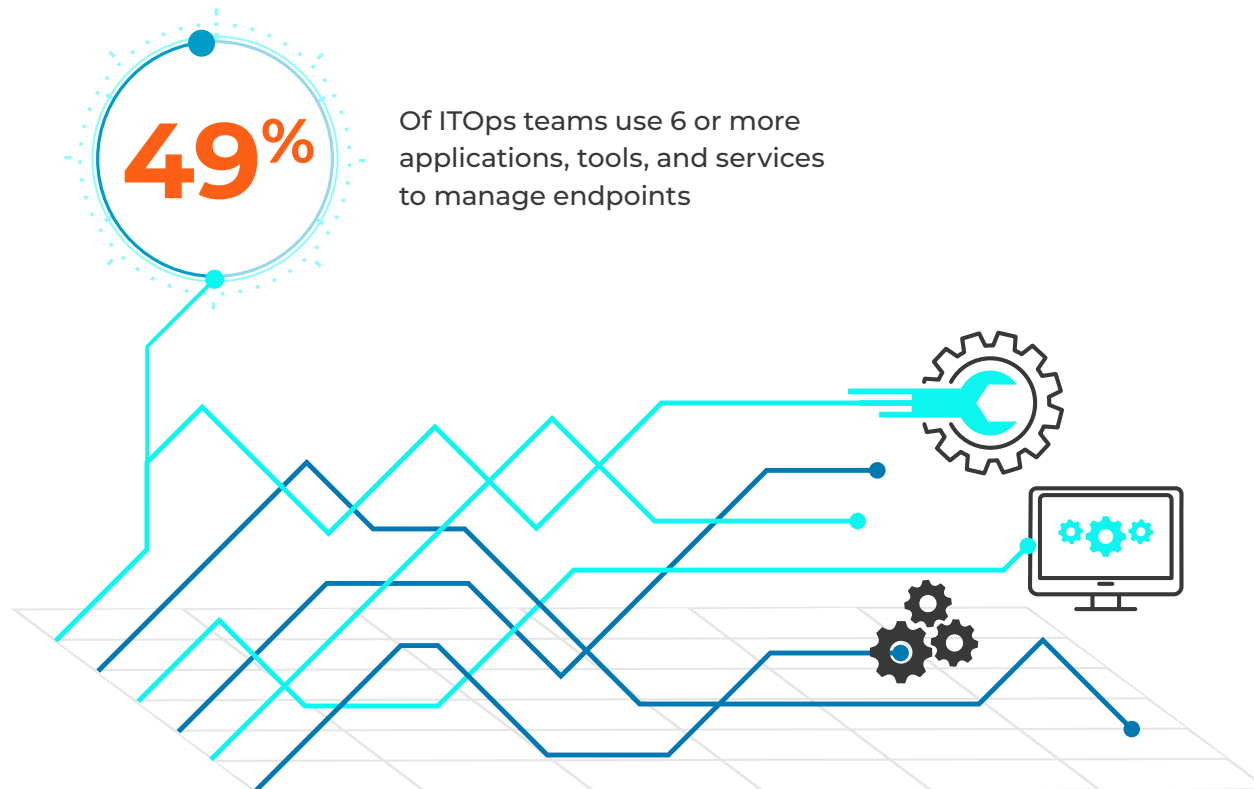
Only **29%** of ITOps professionals report high confidence in their company's ability to configure and enforce desired configurations on endpoints.

Too many types of endpoints and too many manual processes are the biggest obstacles to effectively managing endpoints.
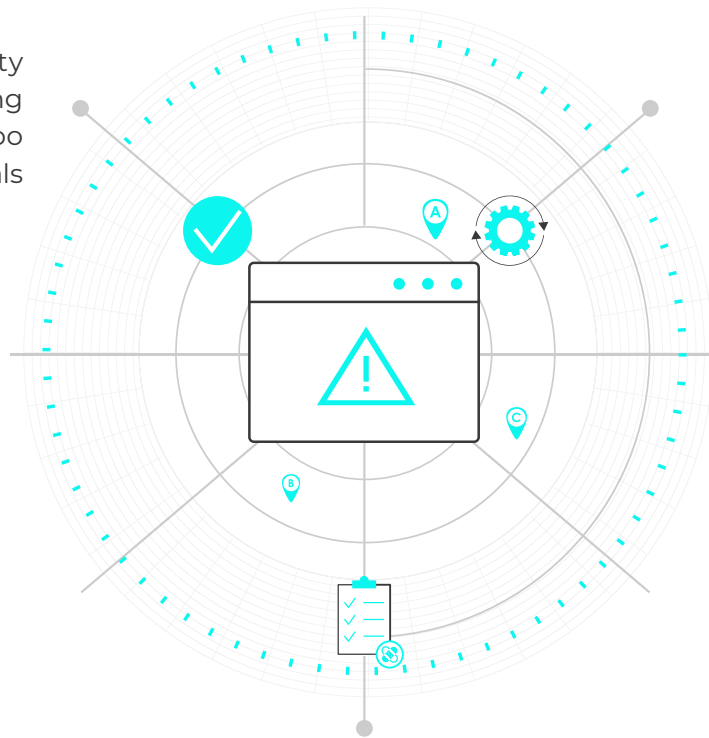
Half of organizations take 30+ minutes per endpoint to apply a configuration or deploy software organization-wide.

93% of ITOps professionals report issues with third-party patching.

38%

Third-party patching requires too many approvals

41%

Of employees are in charge of their own patching and software updates

33%

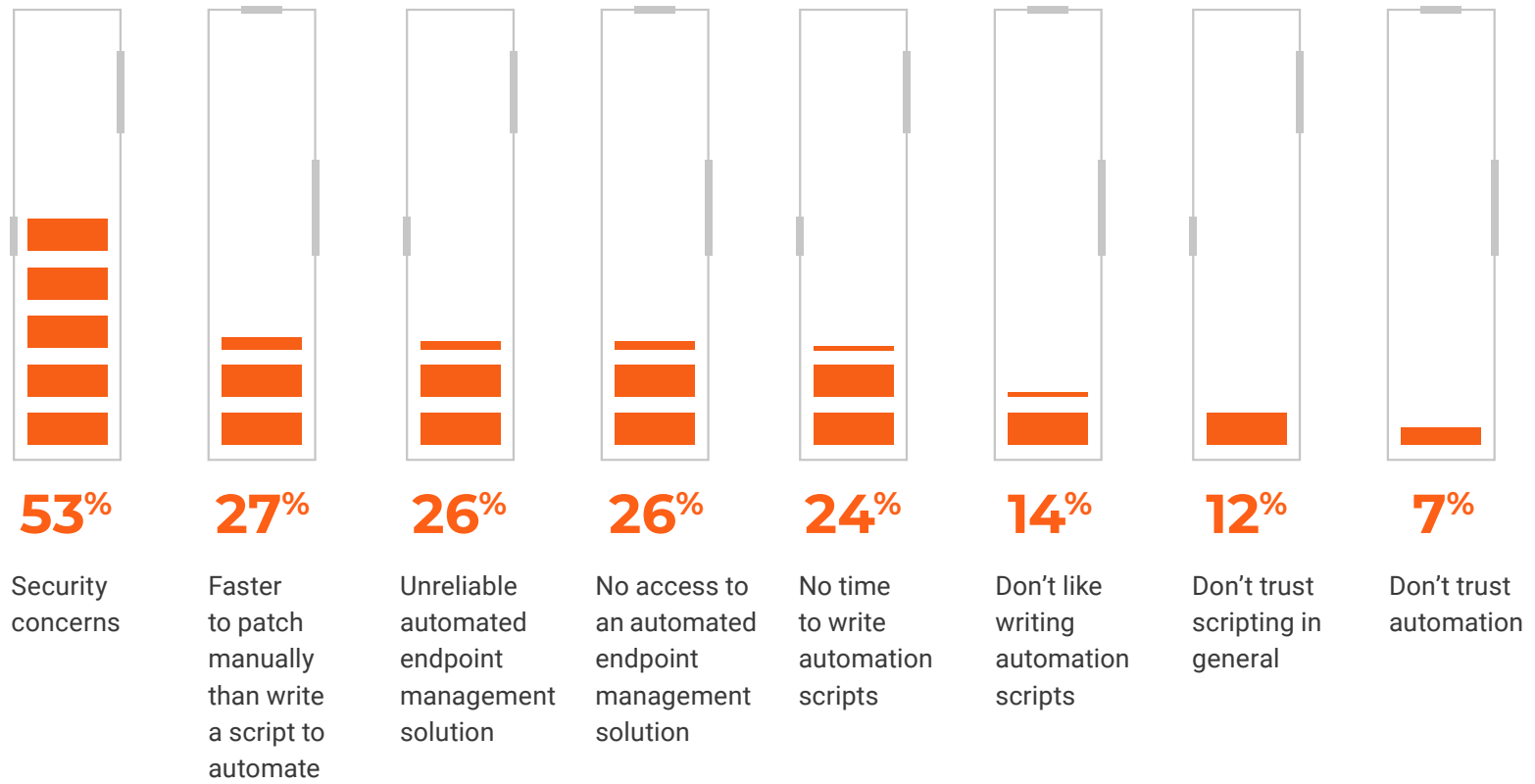Third-party patching involves too many manual processes

The software required to run an efficient and productive business has grown exponentially. Older tools just aren't equipped to handle a large catalog of third-parties. Doing so requires significant effort by IT teams to monitor for new updates and package them for deployment. In the end, most organizations buy more tools or simply give up.

Peter Pflaster, Automox Sr. Manager, Product Marketing

Over half of organizations (53%) cite security concerns as the most significant barrier to using automation in endpoint management.

Similarly, when it comes to leveraging AI, **46%** cite concerns about security threats, and **45%** have concerns that feeding confidential data into AI systems could lead to a sensitive data leak. Another **41%** worry that sharing identifiable data into AI systems could lead to a personal data leak.

| **53%**	**27%**	**26%**	**26%**	**24%**	**14%**	**12%**	**7%**
Security concerns	Faster to patch manually than write a script to automate	Unreliable automated endpoint management solution	No access to an automated endpoint management solution	No time to write automation scripts	Don't like writing automation scripts	Don't trust scripting in general	Don't trust automation

What high IT agility organizations do differently

Highly agile organizations (75%) report following compliance standards is important compared to low-agility organizations (39%).

High IT agility can help propel organizations to greater levels of innovation and operational efficiency. Yet, many organizations have been unable to achieve a high level of agility.

Organizations with high IT agility focus on specific aspects of the IT environmentmore so than those with lower levels of agility.

75%
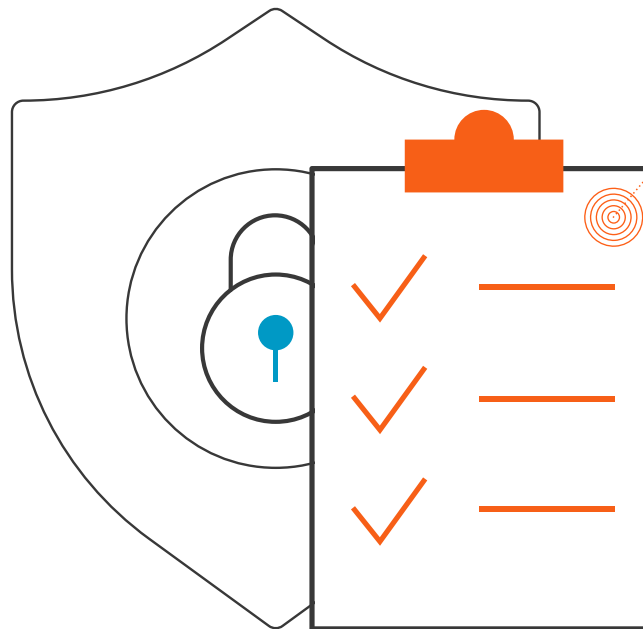
Of highly agile organizations report following compliance standards is important

Only 10% of ITOps professionals report their endpoint management operations are fully automated.

That said, 75% of highly agile organizations' endpoint management is fully or mostly automated compared to low agility organizations (26%).

51% of respondents say their endpoint management is mostly automated. However, those working at organizations with high IT agility are more likely to report their endpoint management operations are fully automated (17%) compared to 0% of low agility organizations.

10%

Of ITOps professionals report their endpoint management operations are fully automated
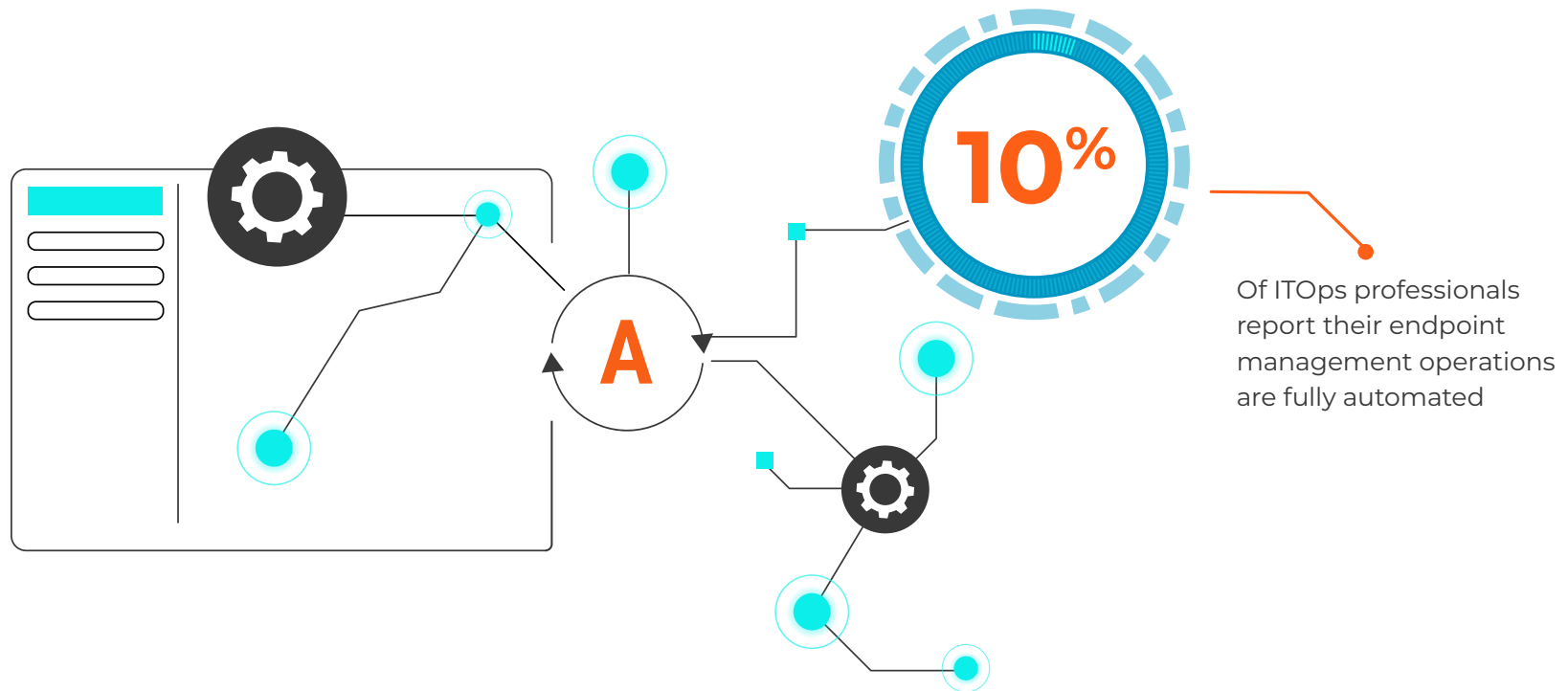
Third-party patching is more important for **highly agile** organizations **(61%)** than for those with **low agility (26%)**.

95%

Indicate third-party patching is important when choosing a vendor

61%

26%
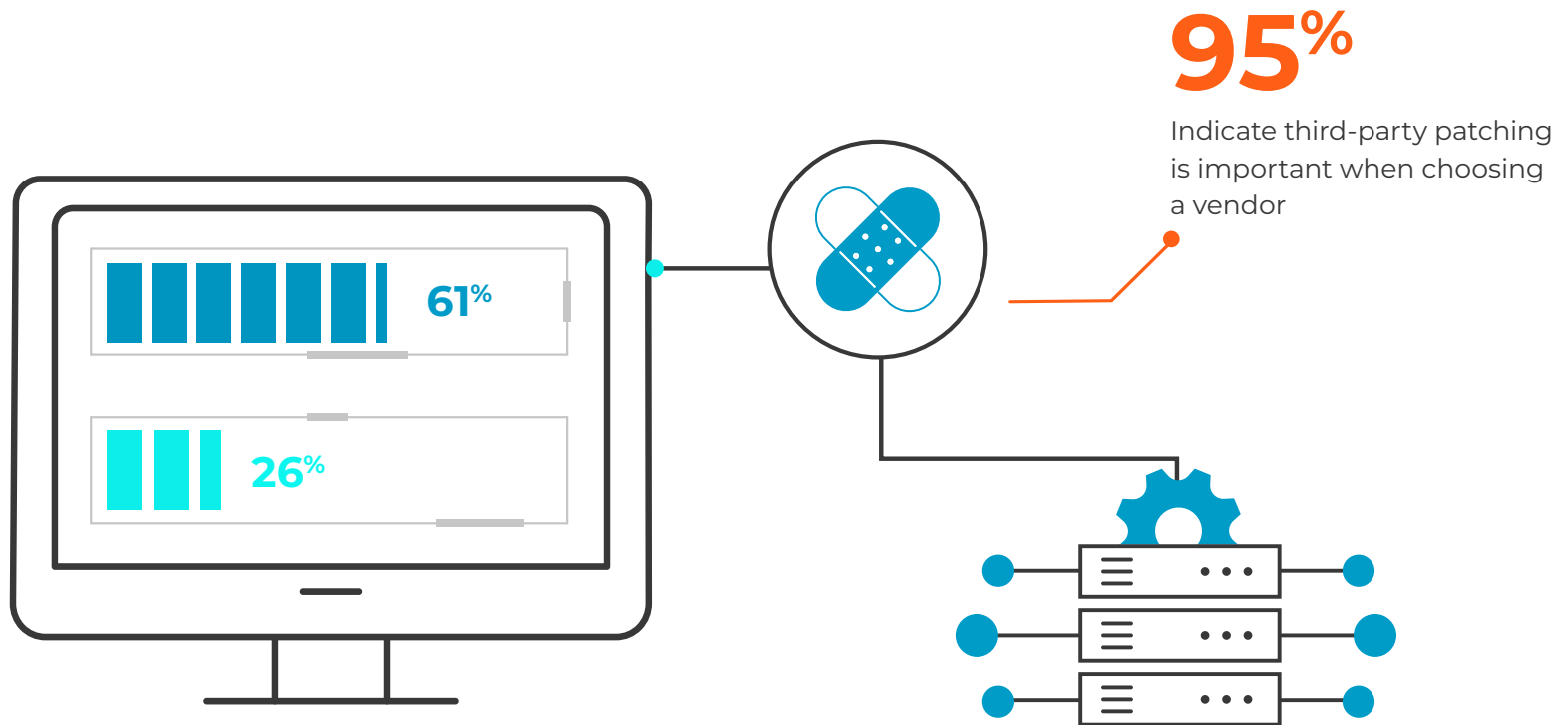
48% of highly agile organizations use AI for identifying vulnerabilities more than those with low agility (26%).

Highly agile organizations are most likely to use Generative AI on a daily basis compared to low-agility organizations (18% vs. 10%). High-agility organizations also use Generative AI more for identifying vulnerabilities and writing scripts.
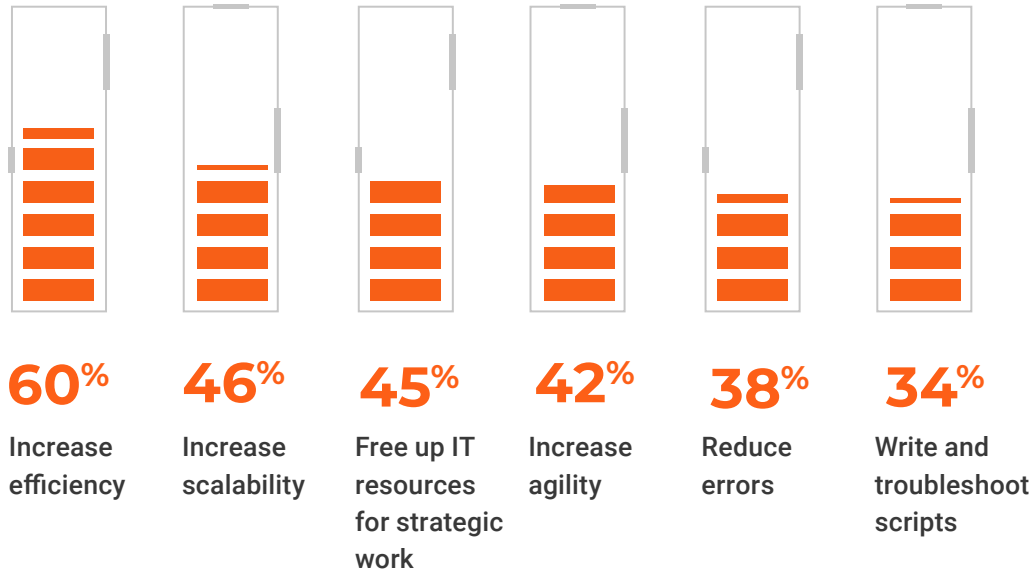
48%
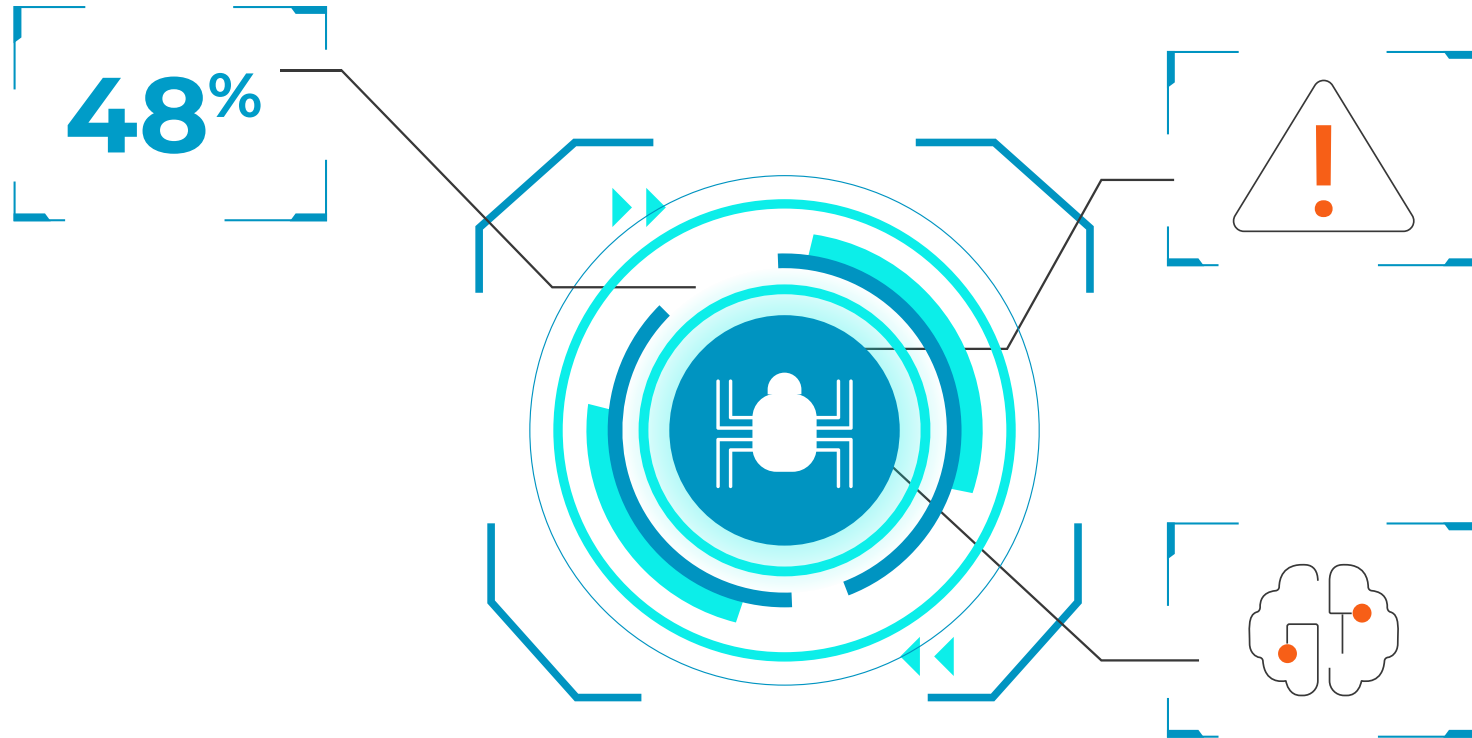
How to increase IT agility

AI-enabled tools **(68%)** and workflow automation tools **(67%)** are the most important tools for increasing IT speed and agility.

In fact, **95%** of ITOps professionals have used Generative AI in the past year. Primarily, AI is used to identify vulnerabilities (**43%**), assist in third-party patching (**43%**), and troubleshoot a script (**41%**).

The top benefits companies believe Generative AI can offer are:

60%	**46%**	**45%**	**42%**	**38%**	**34%**
Increase efficiency	Increase scalability	Free up IT resources for strategic work	Increase agility	Reduce errors	Write and troubleshoot scripts

Generative AI functions as a powerful accelerator in the IT industry, enabling organizations to enhance their IT agility easily. AI can help you navigate the complex maze of information to directly access valuable insights, empowering your org to make informed decisions and innovate at remarkable speeds.

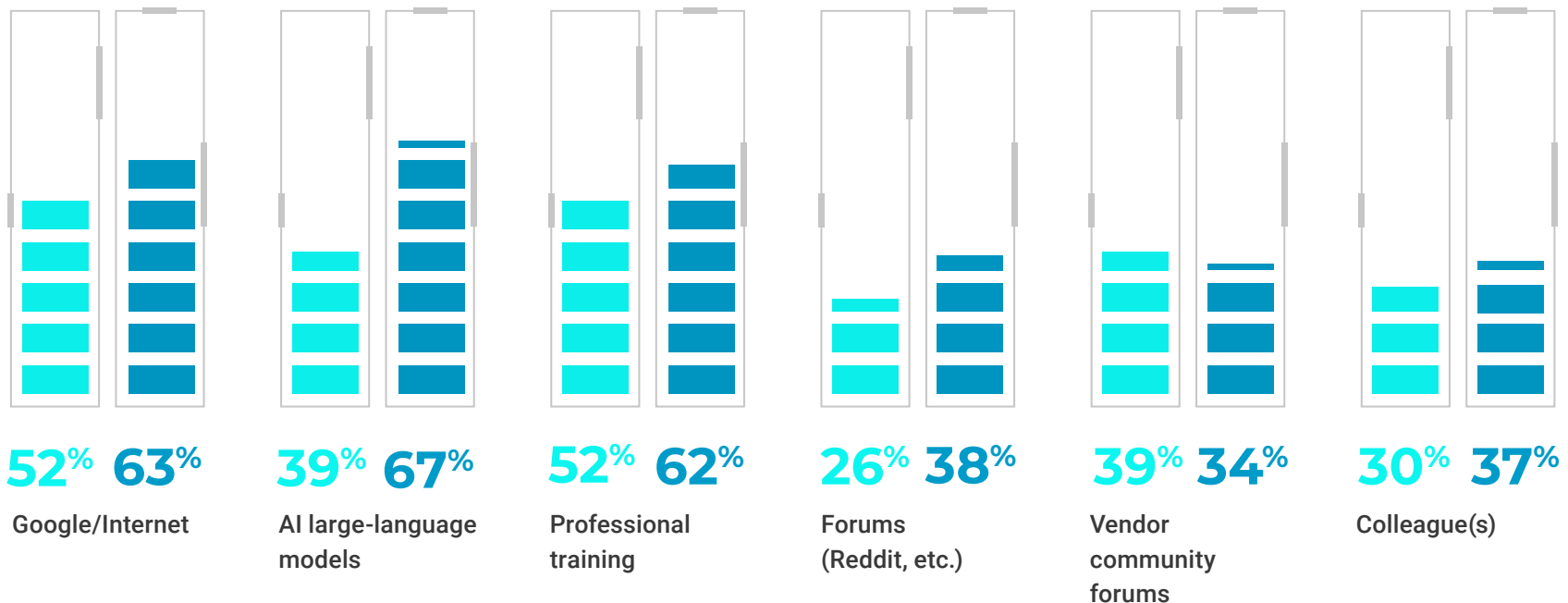*Landon Miles, Automox Technical Marketing Manager*

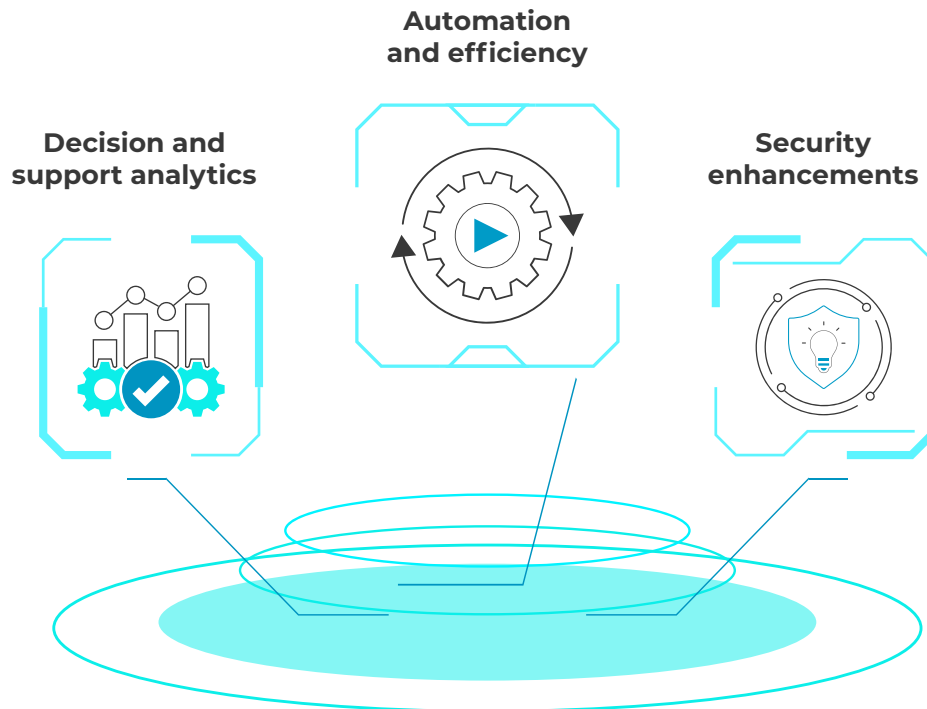# Organizations with low agility (70%) indicate freeing up resources as the top benefit of Generative AI.

While the top benefits of Generative AI are consistent across organizations, companies with low IT agility see a bigger benefit in freeing up resources.

ITOps professionals are also turning to Generative AI to help get advice or solve novel problems. Highly agile companies are significantly more likely than others to report using AI large-language models to solve a novel problem.

Here's where companies turn when looking for help solving a novel problem or completing a task:

52% 63%	39% 67%	52% 62%	26% 38%	39% 34%	30% 37%
Google/Internet	AI large-language models	Professional training	Forums (Reddit, etc.)	Vendor community forums	Colleague(s)

According to ITOps professionals, the top three areas for Generative AI opportunity are:

Decision and support analytics

Automation and efficiency

Security enhancements

But, many are also quite bullish on generative AI's potential to help with other areas of ITOps, such as improving resource utilization and allocation, risk management, and reducing errors and manual processes.

The biggest opportunity for ITOps Generative AI is to provide intelligent decision support for operations teams, helping us identify risks and failures, and providing optimization recommendations.

Systems Administrator

[Generative AI] can help pinpoint problems and reduce reliance on manual intervention. It can also be adjusted based on real-time feedback to provide reliability.
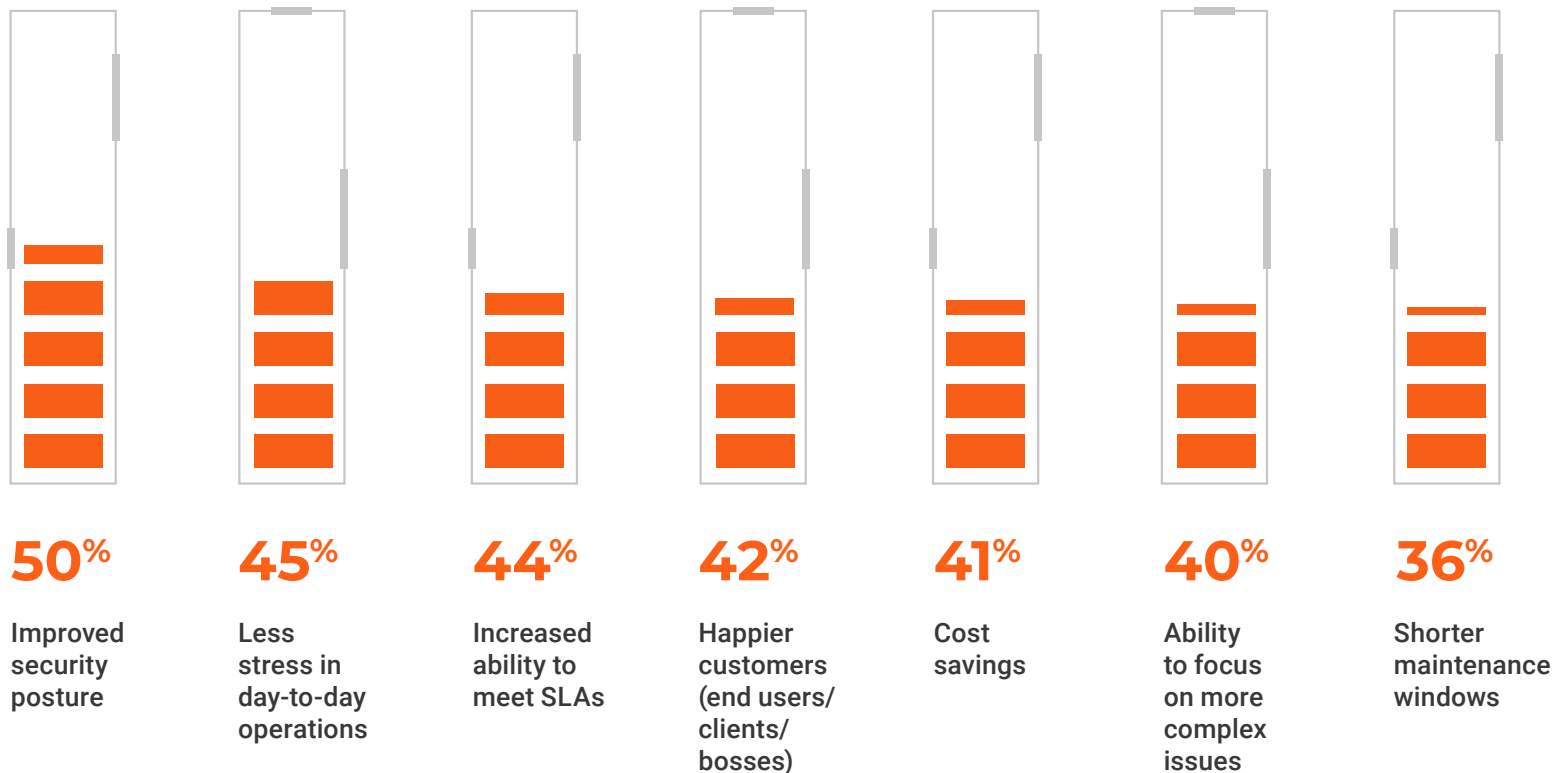
Desktop Administrator

Highly agile organizations are most likely to report managing endpoints through endpoint management consoles completely.

Only 11% of ITOps professionals report managing endpoints through endpoint management consoles completely.
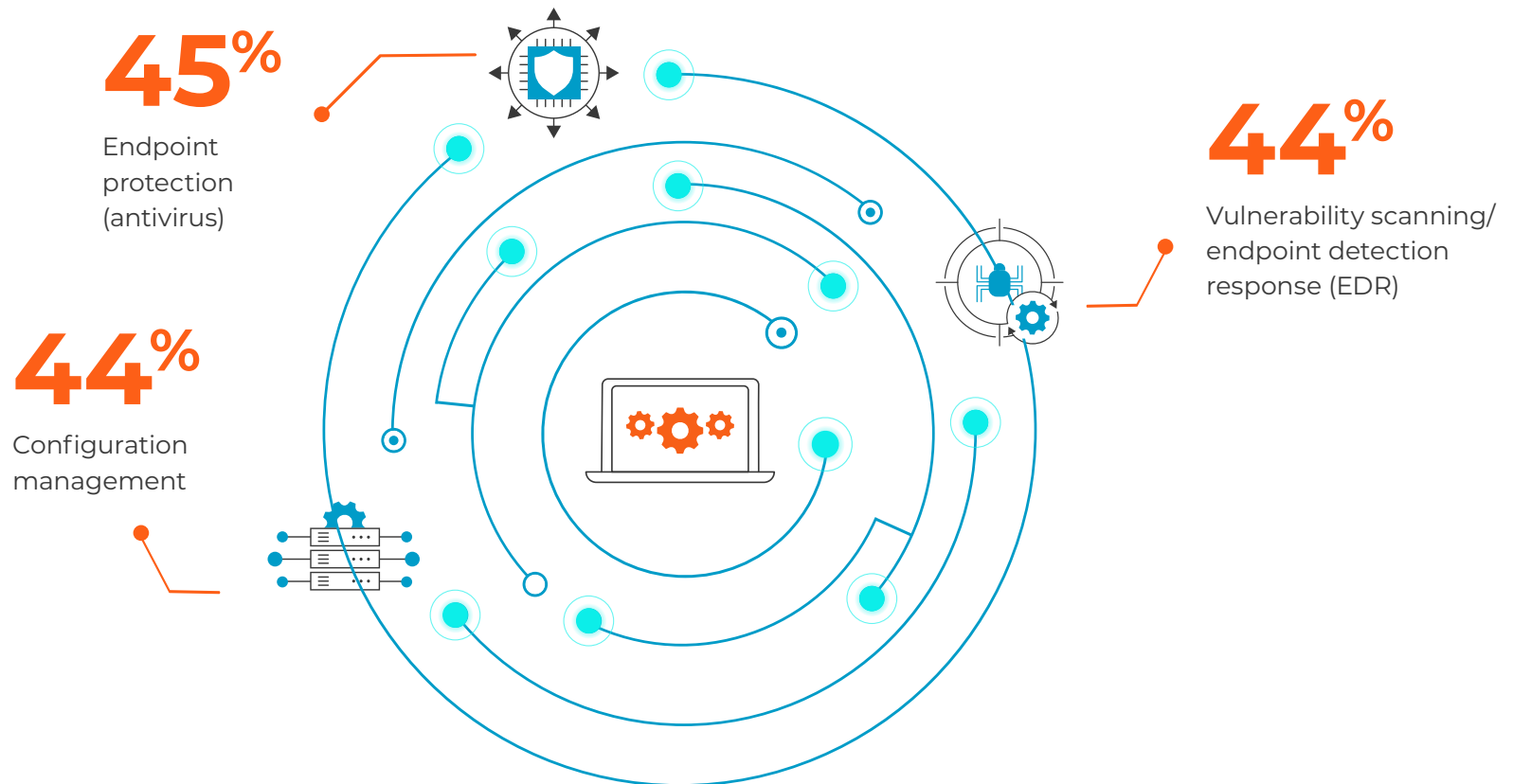
The biggest benefit of automating some or all of an organization's endpoint management is improved security. Other top benefits cited include less day-to-day operational stress, an increased ability to meet service level agreements (SLAs), and happier customers.

50%	45%	44%	42%	41%	40%	36%
Improved security posture	Less stress in day-to-day operations	Increased ability to meet SLAs	Happier customers (end users/ clients/ bosses)	Cost savings	Ability to focus on more complex issues	Shorter maintenance windows

Integrating more tools with endpoints can enhance security and liberate the IT team for more strategic tasks.

By automating endpoints, you significantly decrease IT's #1 inefficiency (tool complexity and overwhelm).

ITOps professionals cite the following as the technologies they most want to integrate when considering endpoint management solutions:
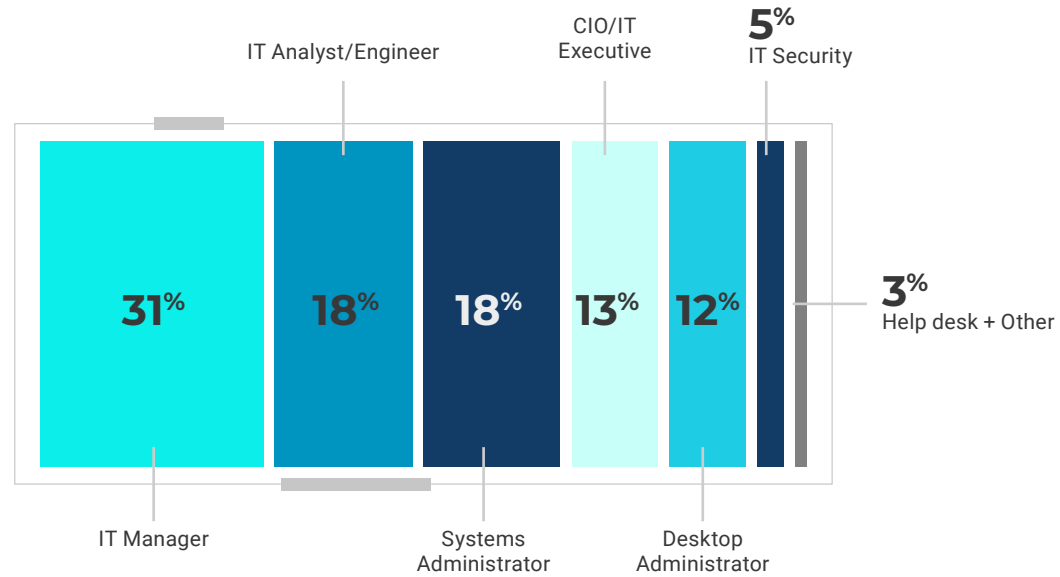
45%
Endpoint protection (antivirus)

44%
Configuration management

44%
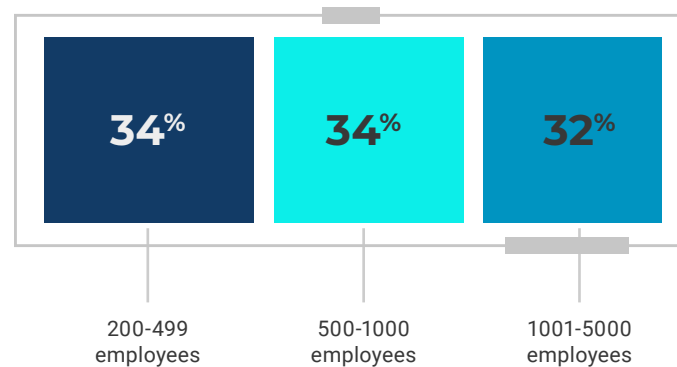Vulnerability scanning/ endpoint detection response (EDR)

Methodology & demographics

Automox surveyed 500 U.S.-based ITOps professionals at organizations with 200-5,000 employees. The survey has a 95% confidence, +/-%3 margin of error, and was conducted in October 2023.

Role in the organization

IT Analyst/Engineer

CIO/IT Executive

5%
IT Security

31%

18%

18%

13%

12%

3%
Help desk + Other

IT Manager

Systems Administrator

Desktop Administrator

Size of the organization

34%

34%

32%

200-499 employees

500-1000 employees

1001-5000 employees

Technology/software

1%
- Media/Entertainment
- Non-profit
- Legal
- Other

3%
Energy/Chemical/Utilities

3%
Food & Beverage

5%
B2B/Industrial Goods

10%
Finance/Banking/Insurance

11%
Retail/Consumer Goods

13%
Manufacturing

49%
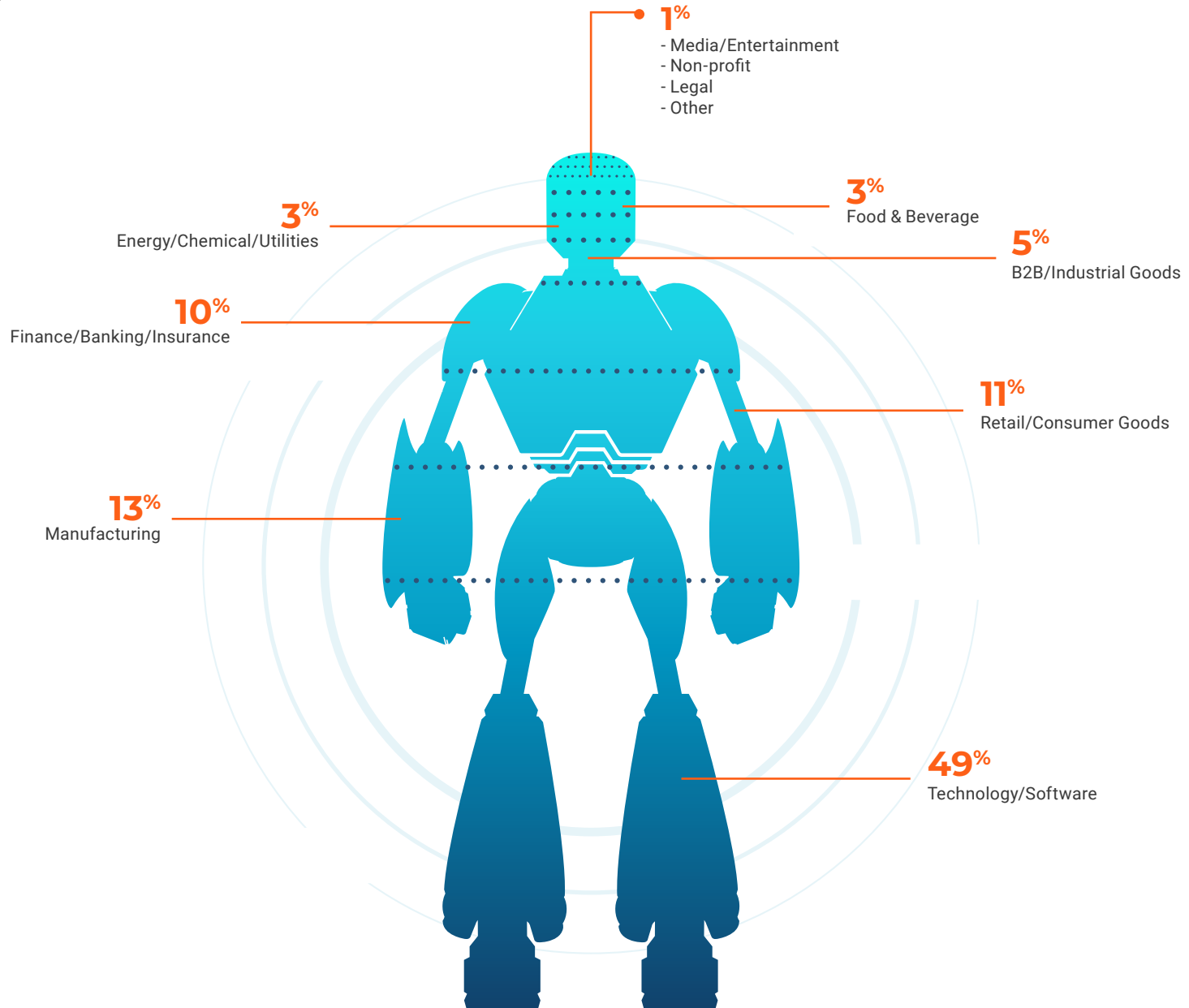Technology/Software

Turbocharge your IT agility

Every organization has room to improve its IT agility – even those with highly agile ITOps teams. Generative AI and automation both play a significant role in furthering agility. As one respondent notes, "As AI is capable of performing more intricate tasks, its troubleshooting abilities are enhanced, and it can adapt to ever-changing IT environments."

Moreover, AI and automation technologies are particularly advantageous in helping tackle persistent challenges, such as efficiently managing a wide array of endpoints and ensuring robust security measures at all times. Automation can assist in streamlining complex processes and significantly enhance efficiency and responsiveness. Automation also plays a crucial role in addressing integration challenges.

Embracing and leveraging automation and AI technologies helps ITOps teams get the intelligence they need faster so they can make better decisions and act more swiftly. Most importantly, greater agility has a transformative power – it propels ITOps teams and their organizations into the realm of perpetual innovation, competitive positioning in the greater tech market, and operational excellence.

About Automox

Automox is the IT automation platform for modern organizations. Groundbreaking automation empowers IT professionals to prove vulnerabilities are fixed, slash cost and complexity, and win back hours in their days. Automox makes it easy for IT to save time, reduce risk, and thoughtfully automate OS, third-party, and configuration updates on Windows, macOS, and Linux desktops, laptops, and servers. Join thousands of IT heroes automating confidence across millions of endpoints with Automox. Learn more at **www.automox.com**, connect with the **Automox Community**, or follow us on **Twitter**, **Threads**, **LinkedIn**, **Facebook**, **Reddit**, or **Instagram**.