

Optimizing Service Efficiencies

How Services Providers Help Organizations Overcome Barriers to Build Strong Data Foundations for AI Success



Jennifer Hamel
Senior Research Director,
Enterprise Intelligence Services, IDC



Stewart Bond
Senior Research Director,
Enterprise Intelligence Services, IDC



Reid Sherard
Research Manager,
Enterprise Intelligence Services, IDC

Table of Contents

 **CLICK BELOW TO NAVIGATE TO EACH SECTION IN THIS DOCUMENT.**

In This InfoBrief.....	3	Organizations Seek Trusted Partners for Tailored and Integrated Enterprise Intelligence Strategies	11
Investing in AI-Ready Data Impacts Business KPIs	4	Expertise, Modernized Delivery, and Innovation Influence Services Provider Selection.....	12
Treating Data as a Product Directly Impacts Data Success	5	Delivering ROI Sustains Trusted Services Partnerships.....	13
Data Products Require AI-Ready Data Architecture.....	6	Services Amplify Business Outcomes Resulting from Investment in AI-Ready Data.....	14
Separating Concerns for Greater Success: Four Planes of the Enterprise Intelligence Architecture.....	7	Partner for Success with AI-Ready Data.....	15
Architecture Alone Does Not Solve All Data Challenges	8	About the IDC Analysts	16
Services Partners Help Prioritize Investments in the Technology Required for AI-Ready Data.....	9	Message from the Sponsor.....	18
Services Partners Enable Organizational Change to Improve Solution Adoption.....	10		

In This InfoBrief

As organizations look to drive business value and ROI from AI investments, they quickly find that a strong foundation of AI-ready data is critical to ensuring long-term success.

Guidance and support from services providers and technology partners can help organizations develop and implement enterprise intelligence (EI) strategies that improve operational efficiency and address challenges across technology, people, and processes.

This InfoBrief examines the **benefits and challenges of building an AI-ready data architecture:**

- ▶ IDC highlights the importance of treating data as a **product to achieve success with AI investments.**
- ▶ IDC discusses **the role of services partners** in defining and executing enterprise intelligence strategies.

Investing in AI-Ready Data Impacts Business KPIs

Organizations with mature enterprise intelligence architectures demonstrate above-average improvements in operational and financial metrics.



OPERATIONAL METRICS IMPROVED BY **5.9%**

9.3% Faster time to market for new products and services

8.9% Increased innovation

8.0% Better customer retention and acquisition



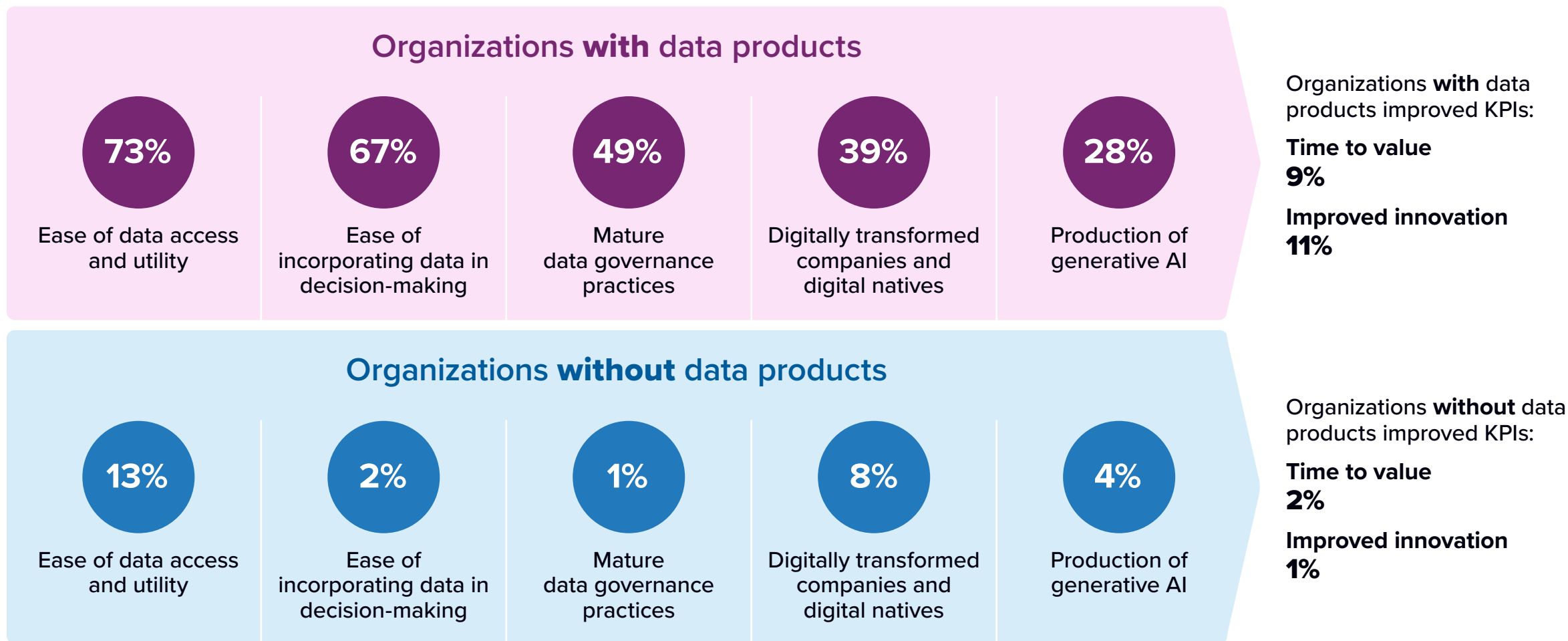
FINANCIAL METRICS IMPROVED BY **4.4%**

8.6% More profit

6.0% Increased revenue

n = 848; Source: IDC's Office of the CDO Survey, August 2024

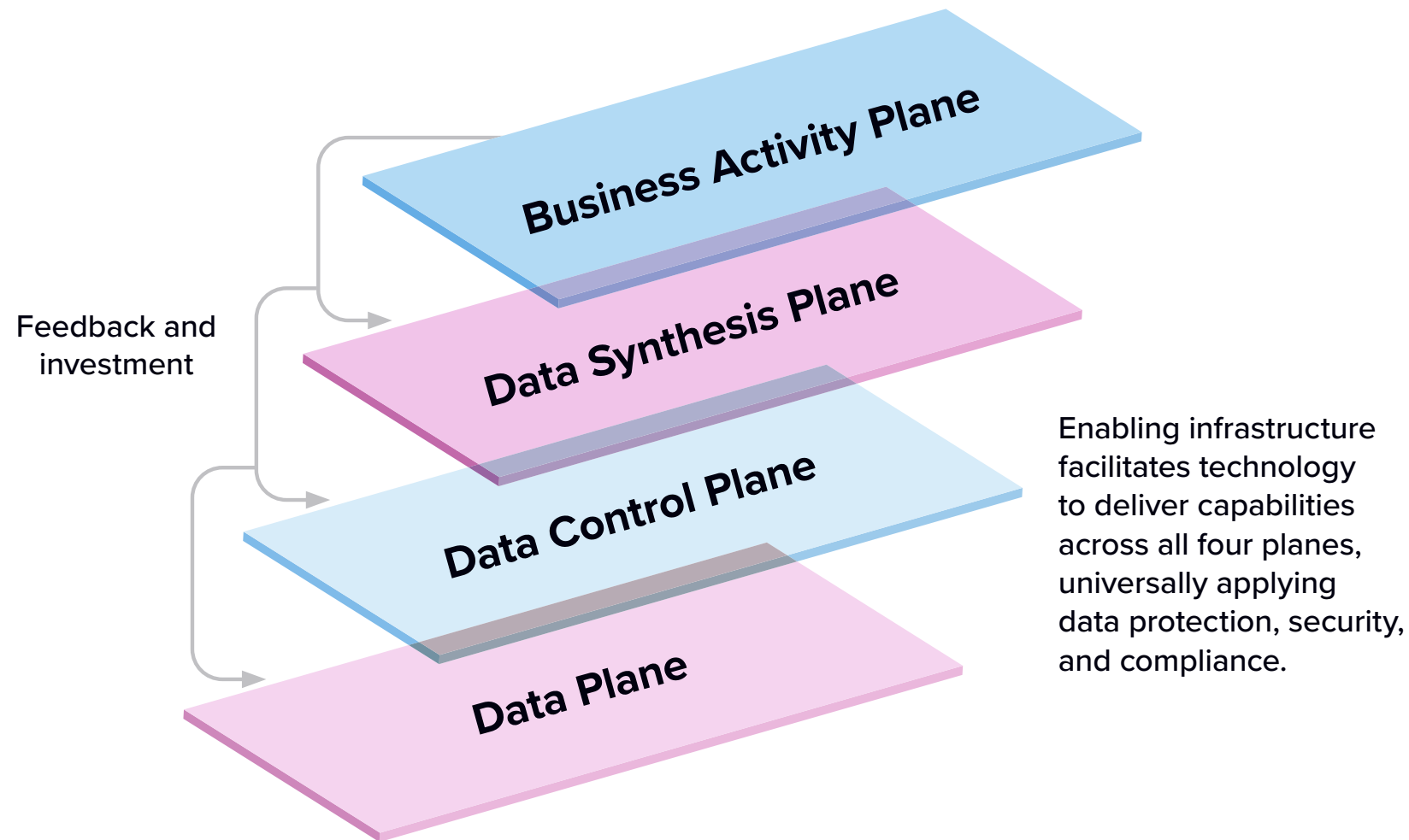
Treating Data as a Product Directly Impacts Data Success



n = 848; Source: IDC's Office of the CDO Survey, August 2024

Data Products Require AI-Ready Data Architecture

Enterprise Intelligence (EI) Architecture for the AI-Fueled Business



The EI architecture is used to create, assemble, manage, and deliver data products to business activities for data-driven, AI-enabled outcomes.

Separating Concerns for Greater Success: Four Planes of the Enterprise Intelligence Architecture

Making data AI-ready requires a structured and methodical approach to data organization, engineering, and control for synthesis in generating outcomes for data-driven business activities.

- 1 Data Plane: Organizes highly distributed, diverse, dynamic, and dark data**
 - ▶ Data exists across hybrid and multi-cloud environments, business domains, partners, and ecosystems.
 - ▶ Data is stored in many different technologies and in many different formats.
 - ▶ Data is always moving and changing and is hidden from utilization if it has never been tagged, labeled, or cataloged.
- 2 Data Control Plane: Leverages data intelligence and engineering to take control of modern data environments**
 - ▶ Data intelligence answers the who, what, why, when, where, and how of data, feeding into policies and processes to protect, move, and curate data.
- 3 Data Synthesis Plane: Generates analytic and AI outcomes by synthesizing data with models**
 - ▶ This includes data visualization, advanced analytics, RAG, model fine-tuning, grounding, and inference.
- 4 Business Activity Plane: Leverages data, intelligence, and synthesis outcomes in data-driven business activities, such as communication, decisioning, and simulation**

Architecture Alone Does Not Solve All Data Challenges

TOP CHALLENGES FACED BY DATA LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Technical

- 35%** Ensuring data security, privacy, and governance
- 32%** Managing the accuracy and relevancy of GenAI outcomes
- 31%** Managing AI model training/tuning
- 30%** Managing data quality
- 28%** Managing data distribution across domains and hybrid and multi-cloud environments



Organizational

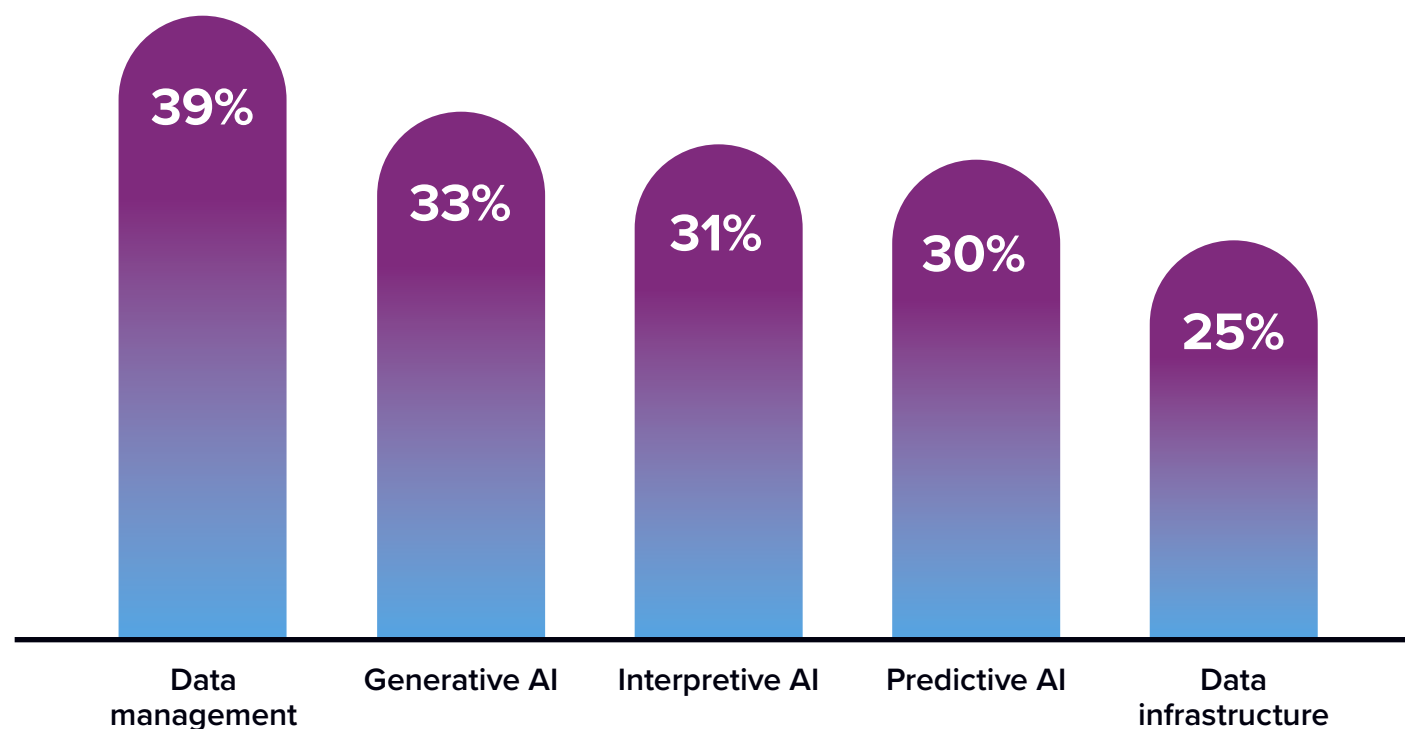
- 46%** Management of expectations of what AI can deliver
- 40%** Skills development and/or resource constraints
- 38%** Management of changing priorities
- 37%** Collaboration constraints (between business and IT and across LOBs)
- 36%** Budget constraints and justification of ROI



n = 848; Source: IDC's Office of the CDO Survey, August 2024

Services Partners Help Prioritize Investments in the Technology Required for AI-Ready Data

Which of the following will be your organization's most important areas of technology investment related to enterprise intelligence in the next 18 months?



Organizations working with enterprise intelligence services providers **look to get their data foundations in place** before investing in specific AI technologies.

Data management will surpass all other technology investment priorities **in the next 18 months.**

n = 612; Source: IDC's *Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey*, June 2025

Services Partners Enable Organizational Change to Improve Solution Adoption

Organizational changes are top of mind for buyers working with services providers to encourage broader adoption of their enterprise intelligence solutions internally.

What are your organization's top priorities to enable broader adoption of solutions related to enterprise intelligence initiatives in the next 12 months?



49%

STRATEGY

Vision and prioritized use case road map tied to key business objectives



42%

INFRASTRUCTURE

Optimized resources for connectivity, interoperability, security, and scale



33%

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

A dedicated team to speed development, share expertise, and drive success



33%

WORKFORCE

End-user enablement, training, and change management



31%

APPLICATION/WORKFLOW

Redesigned process and user experiences

n = 612; Source: IDC's Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey, June 2025

Organizations Seek Trusted Partners for Tailored and Integrated Enterprise Intelligence Strategies

Buyers prefer having a unified stack of technology or piecing together multiple products from the same vendor over shopping around.



n = 612; Source: IDC's *Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey*, June 2025

Pros and Cons of Unified Platform Strategies

Benefits

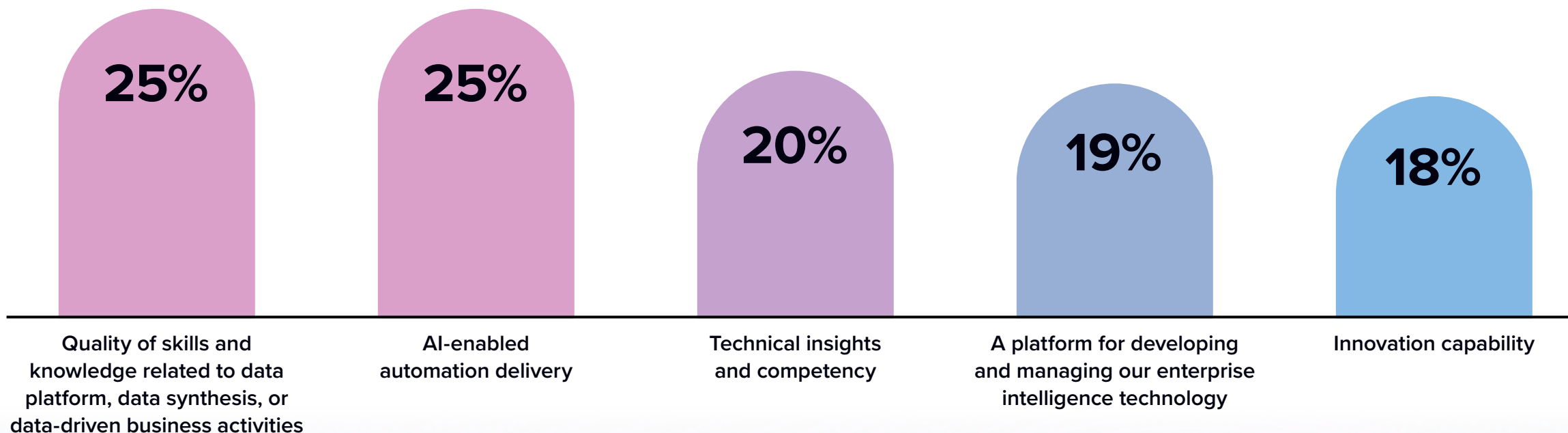
- ▶ Data platforms are designed as a unified environment with the ability to mix and access data from multiple sources, minimizing data silos and inconsistencies between and within data sources.
- ▶ Unified data platforms can quicken organizations' data cleansing and data literacy journeys by facilitating the joining of data sets, proper storage and management capabilities, data quality improvements, and governance practices.

Downsides

- ▶ One size does not fit all, which can require alternative solutions to fill in gaps specific to organizational requirements.
- ▶ Dependence on a single vendor's ecosystem can limit the ability to switch providers when technology advances or business needs change.
- ▶ Data platforms can be costly, requiring FinOps solutions to manage and optimize costs related to storage and computation.
- ▶ Benefits from a unified data platform will not be realized if data literacy is not a priority across the organization (for technical and business users).

Expertise, Modernized Delivery, and Innovation Influence Services Provider Selection

What are your organization's top priorities to enable broader adoption of solutions related to enterprise intelligence initiatives in the next 12 months?



n = 612; Source: IDC's Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey, June 2025

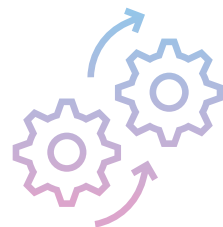
Delivering ROI Sustains Trusted Services Partnerships

Connecting services to business value is the most important component of a services engagement.



27% OF BUYERS

said inability to determine potential financial benefits was the top challenge they faced using an external services provider — more than the fear of becoming too dependent or the provider's inability to secure their data.



HALF OF THOSE BUYERS

say they plan to address the challenge by changing services providers over pushing their provider to change or bringing capabilities in house.

n = 612; Source: IDC's *Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey*, June 2025

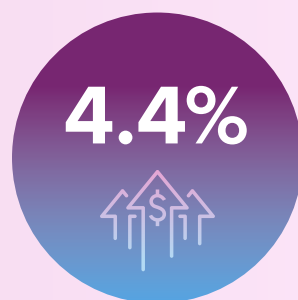
IDC PREDICTION

By 2027, without strategic and organizational pivots, frustration with low ROI due to **poor planning and misallocated spending** will cause **30% of organizations to reduce GenAI investments.**

Services Amplify Business Outcomes Resulting from Investment in AI-Ready Data

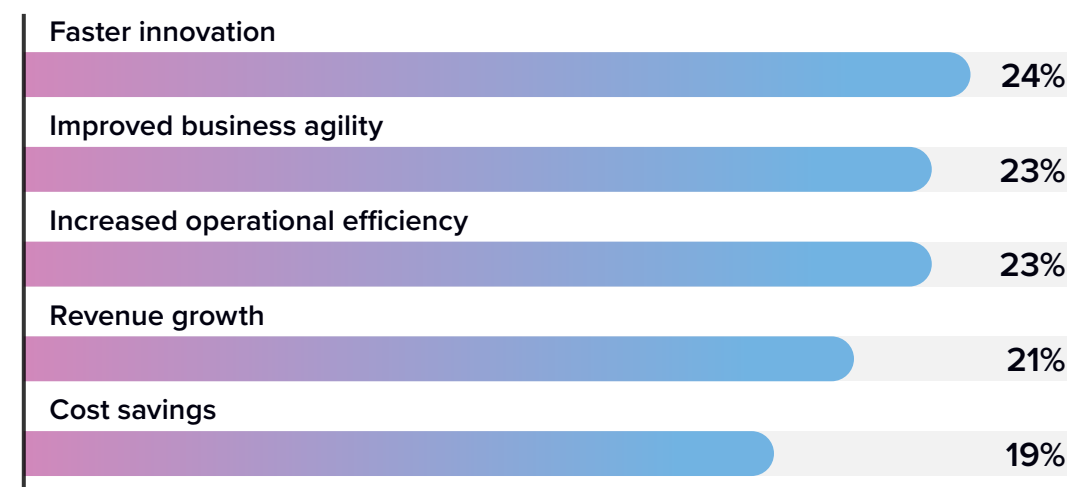
Operational and Financial Metrics for Organizations with a Mature Enterprise Intelligence Architecture

AVERAGE IMPROVEMENT



n = 848; Source: IDC's Office of the CDO Survey, August 2024

Average Improvement in Business Outcomes for Organizations Investing in Enterprise Intelligence Services



n = 612; Source: IDC's Enterprise Intelligence Services Survey, June 2025

Partner for Success with AI-Ready Data

Take control

- ▶ Modern data environments are highly distributed, diverse, dynamic, and dark. Harvesting intelligence about data is the first step to taking control of data and enabling data product disciplines focused on business value, utility, and accountability for data — ready for AI.

Assess maturity

- ▶ Consider your organization's strategy and business objectives before diving into AI technology investment. Choose a services partner that will meet you where you are in your organization's AI maturity, help you define your goals and KPIs, and craft a strategy that optimizes your desired outcomes.

Seek expertise

- ▶ Work with a partner that understands your organization's business context and technology landscape and brings a vision and approach to enterprise intelligence architecture that aligns with your speed, cost, and resource requirements.

Leverage partners and accelerators

- ▶ Consider services providers that both partner with your chosen technology providers and offer their own methodologies, tools, and platforms, which can accelerate data migrations and speed time to market for AI solutions.

Expect ROI and business value

- ▶ Demand more from services providers than technology solutions. Ask potential partners to demonstrate how they will drive measurable outcomes for your business and hold them accountable for delivering results.

About the IDC Analysts

**Jennifer Hamel**

Senior Research Director,
Enterprise Intelligence Services, IDC

Jennifer Hamel is a senior research director for IDC's Worldwide Services team, responsible for the Enterprise Intelligence Services research program. In this research, Hamel covers the life cycle of project-oriented, managed, and support services related to the deployment of technologies such as data management, analytics, artificial intelligence, and automation as part of enterprise intelligence initiatives. In particular, her research focuses on how services providers work with organizations to ensure that investments in enterprise intelligence technologies result in improved business outcomes.

[More about Jennifer Hamel](#)

**Stewart Bond**

Vice President,
Data Intelligence and Integration Software, IDC

Stewart Bond is vice president of IDC's Data Intelligence and Integration Software service. Mr. Bond's core research coverage includes watching emerging trends that are shaping and changing data movement, ingestion, transformation, mastering, cleansing, and consumption in the era of digital business. Having worked in the IT industry for over 30 years, from early experience in database and application development through solution design and deployment to strategic architectural consulting, Bond has worked through some significant changes in the IT industry. His depth of field experience coupled with market insight gives him a unique perspective, which his customers and peers value.

[More about Stewart Bond](#)

About the IDC Analysts (continued)

**Reid Sherard**

Research Manager,
Enterprise Intelligence Services, IDC

Reid Sherard is a research manager for IDC's Worldwide Services team, working on Enterprise Intelligence Services research covering the life cycle of project-oriented, managed, and support services related to the deployment of data management, analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation. His research focuses on how service providers work with organizations to ensure investments in enterprise intelligence achieve their objectives and result in positive return on investment. Reid's background is in conducting qualitative and quantitative research for clients on the vendor side of the Enterprise Intelligence ecosystem.

[More about Reid Sherard](#)

Message from the Sponsor



Every company faces the challenge of turning raw data into intelligent insights. But not every organization is equipped to manage this complexity or able to do so quickly. DI Squared fills that gap by building AI-ready data foundations aligned to strategic priorities and clear business value.

Our approach is rooted in data clarity. We build scalable data products that integrate cloud and on-premises sources, delivering fast, reliable access to trusted data. We build and maintain robust data models that ensure accuracy and prepare data for advanced analytics. This enables organizations to make confident, faster decisions based on a comprehensive understanding.

By leveraging AI/ML, we develop advanced solutions that reveal deeper insights and automate critical processes. We guide organizations in deciding when and how to adopt cognitive computing solutions responsibly, embedding risk management in their data strategy.

Trusted by Fortune 500 clients, DI Squared delivers practical, scalable solutions that grow with your business and keep you ahead in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Explore our solutions at www.disqr.com.

IDC Custom Solutions

This publication was produced by IDC Custom Solutions. The opinion, analysis, and research results presented herein are drawn from more detailed research and analysis independently conducted and published by IDC, unless specific vendor sponsorship is noted. IDC Custom Solutions makes IDC content available in a wide range of formats for distribution by various companies. This IDC material is licensed for external use and in no way does the use or publication of IDC research indicate IDC's endorsement of the sponsor's or licensee's products or strategies.



IDC Research, Inc.
140 Kendrick Street, Building B, Needham, MA 02494, USA
T +1 508 872 8200

[idc.com](https://www.idc.com)

[in @idc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/idc)

[X @idc](https://twitter.com/idc)

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. With more than 1,300 analysts worldwide, IDC offers global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries. IDC's analysis and insight helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community to make fact-based technology decisions and to achieve their key business objectives.

©2025 IDC. Reproduction is forbidden unless authorized. All rights reserved. [CCPA](#)