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Security Priorities Study 2024

Purpose and methodology

Survey goal

To gain a better understanding of the various security projects organizations are focused on now and in the coming year. The survey also looked at security's role within the business and security leaders' growing engagement with the Board of Directors.

Total respondents: 870

Collection method: Online questionnaire

Number of questions: 30

Region
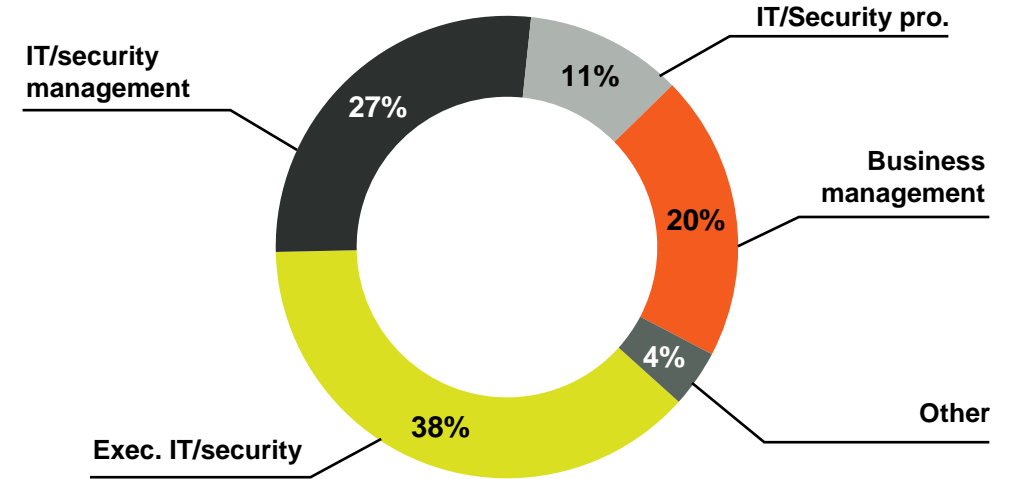**North America:** 46%
EMEA: 15%
APAC: 35%

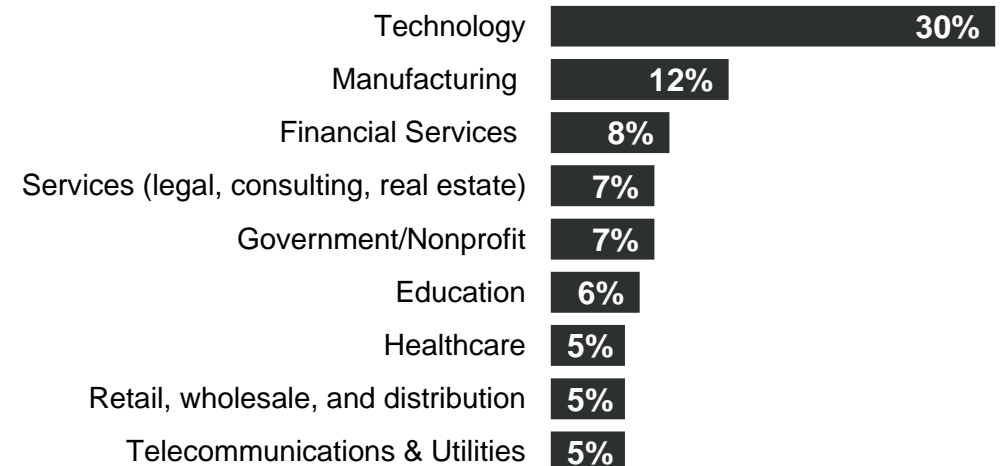**Average company size:** 12,328 employees

IT Leadership: All survey respondents are involved in IT and/or corporate/physical security decisions.

Audience base: CIO, Computerworld, CSO, InfoWorld and Network World site visitors, and email invitations to audience base

Job titles

- IT/security management: 27%
- IT/Security pro.: 11%
- Business management: 20%
- Other: 4%
- Exec. IT/security: 38%

Top represented industries

- Technology: 30%
- Manufacturing: 12%
- Financial Services: 8%
- Services (legal, consulting, real estate): 7%
- Government/Nonprofit: 7%
- Education: 6%
- Healthcare: 5%
- Retail, wholesale, and distribution: 5%
- Telecommunications & Utilities: 5%

What's happening in the security department?

75%

of security decision-makers say that understanding which security tools and solutions fit best within their company is **becoming more complex**
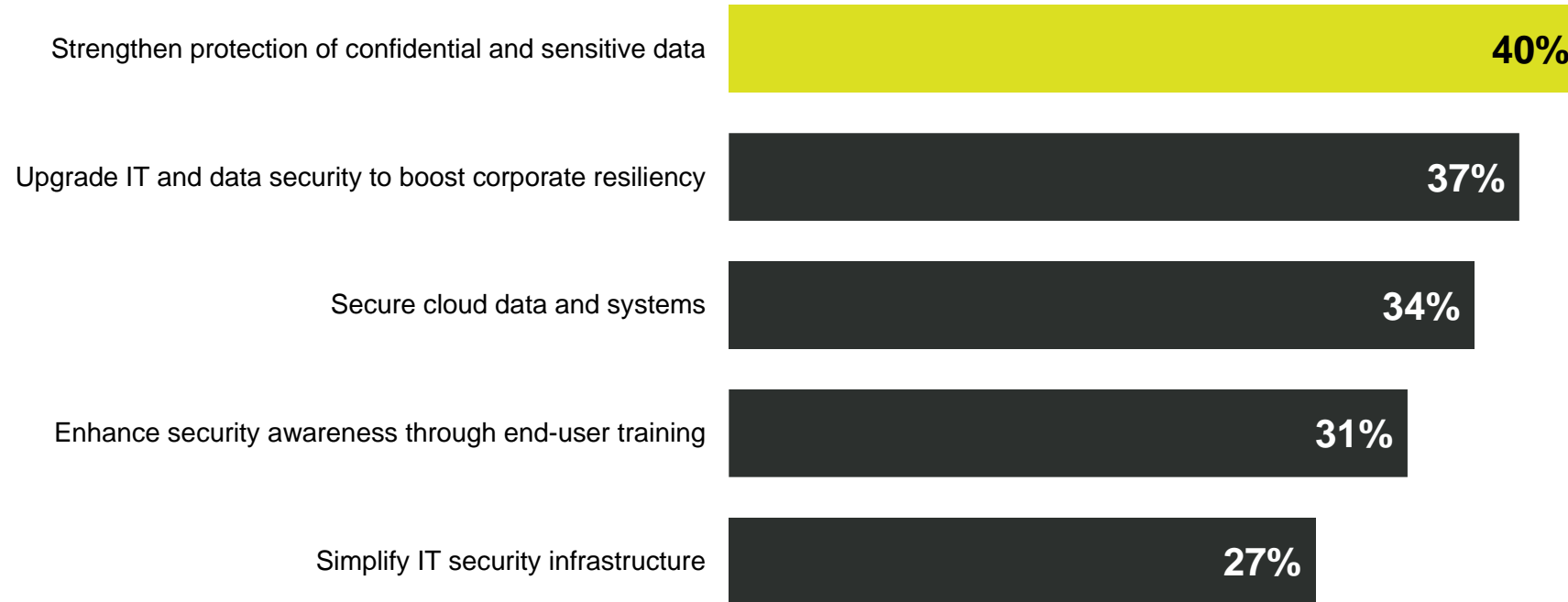
67%

of organizations are **aware of what caused** data security **incidents** they have experienced over the past 12 months.

59%

agree that their **responsibilities** include addressing information security issues **outside of their country or region**

Question: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

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Key security priorities organizations are focused on

Priority	Percentage
Strengthen protection of confidential and sensitive data	**40%**
Upgrade IT and data security to boost corporate resiliency	**37%**
Secure cloud data and systems	**34%**
Enhance security awareness through end-user training	**31%**
Simplify IT security infrastructure	**27%**

Question: What are your organizations top security priorities for the coming year?

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Top five challenges inhibiting security goal achievement

1

Lack of sufficient budget

2

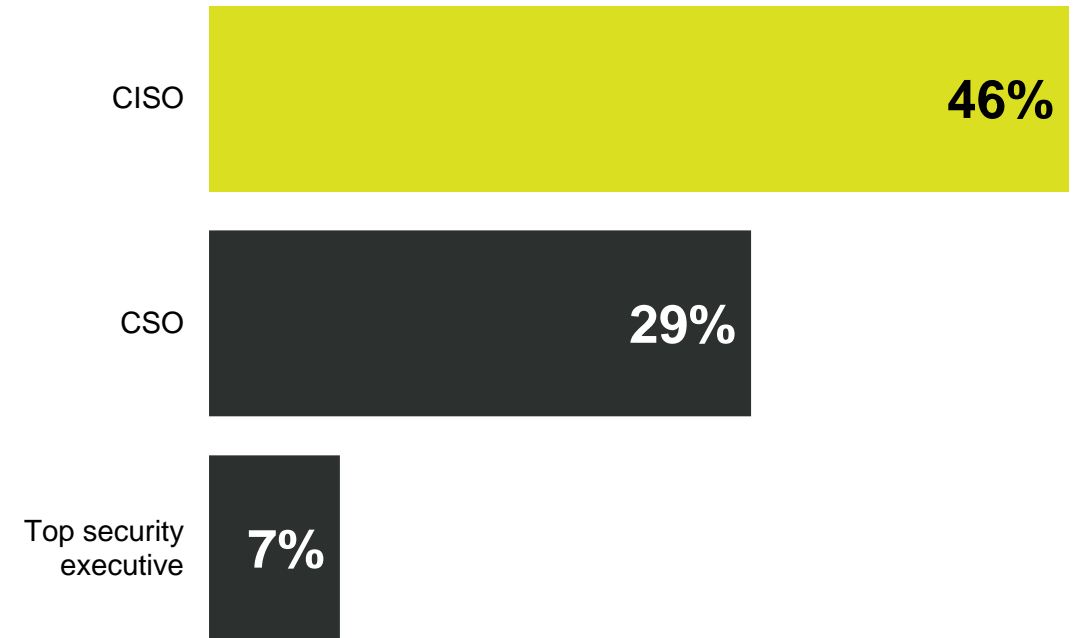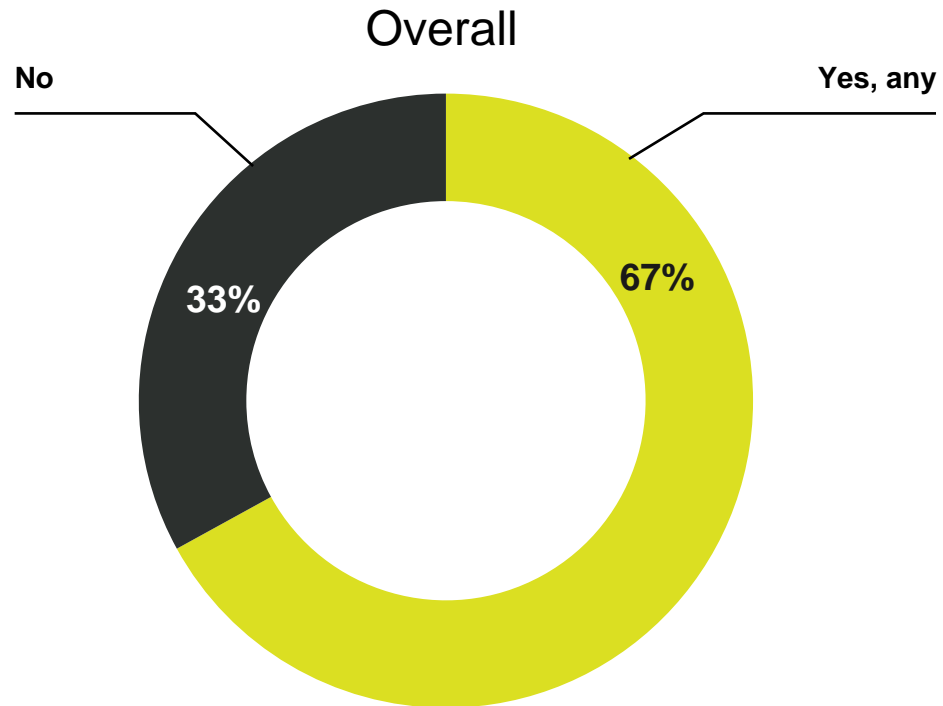Too many competing priorities

3

Employee awareness and training issues

4

Organizational/ cultural barriers

5

Employee retention and hiring skilled and qualified workers

Question: What challenges are keeping you from achieving your security goals?

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Source: CSO Security Priorities Study, 2024

Investing in executives to support security initiatives

Overall

No 33%

Yes, any 67%

CISO 46%

CSO 29%

Top security executive 7%

Question: Does your company have a CISO, CSO or top security executive? (Please select all that apply)

Security budgets expected to increase or hold steady

Decrease

1,000+ **2%**

<1,000 **2%**

2%

Remain the same

1,000+ **46%**

<1,000 **63%**

55%

**43%**

Increase

1,000+ **52%**

<1,000 **35%**
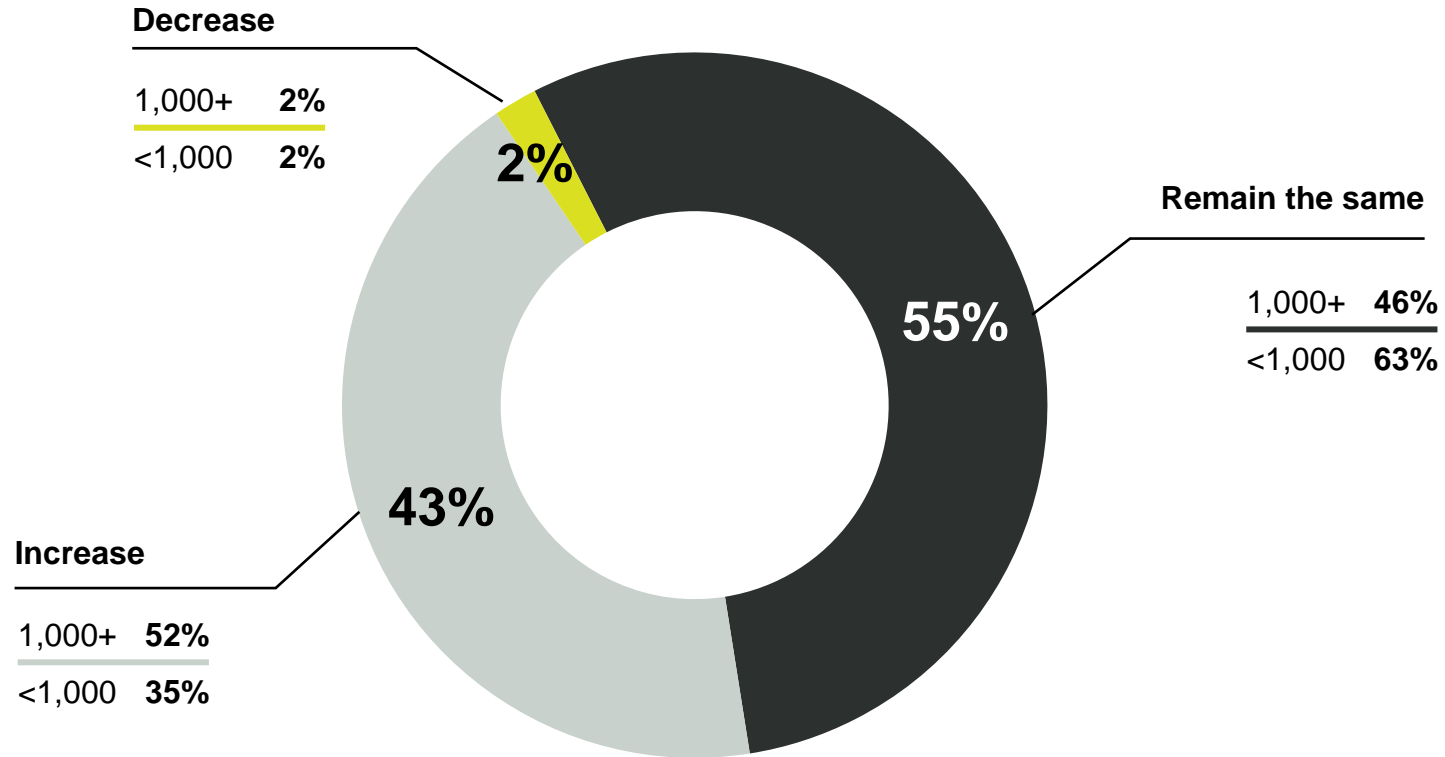
Question: Do you expect your organization's overall security budget to increase, decrease or remain the same in the next 12 months?

AI-enabled security tools see the greatest increase in spending

Category	Increase	Remain the same	Decrease	New category now/potential new investment	Potential new investment area in the future
AI-enabled technology	49%	25%	4%	12%	9%
Data analytics	41%	42%	7%	5%	5%
Application development security	38%	50%	5%	3%	3%
Cyber risk insurance	37%	44%	6%	8%	4%
Access controls	36%	55%	4%	2%	2%
Security education/awareness training	35%	53%	4%	5%	3%
Authentication (multifactor…	34%	53%	5%	5%	2%
Security evaluation services provided by third-parties (e.g.,…	34%	48%	7%	6%	5%
Cloud data protection (protecting data in the cloud)	34%	48%	4%	7%	8%
Cloud-based cybersecurity services (security solutions…	33%	48%	6%	7%	6%
Cloud infrastructure management technology	31%	50%	6%	6%	6%
Zero trust technologies	31%	45%	4%	8%	11%
Software vulnerability scanning/testing	31%	54%	5%	6%	4%
Cloud access security brokers (CASBs)	31%	44%	5%	11%	9%
Incident response	31%	55%	6%	5%	4%
Data access governance	31%	51%	6%	6%	6%

■ Increase ■ Remain the same ■ Decrease ■ New category now/potential new investment ■ Potential new investment area in the future

Question: Please describe how your company's level of spending in the following areas will change over the next 12 months.

Security buyers more likely to consider AI security tools

59%
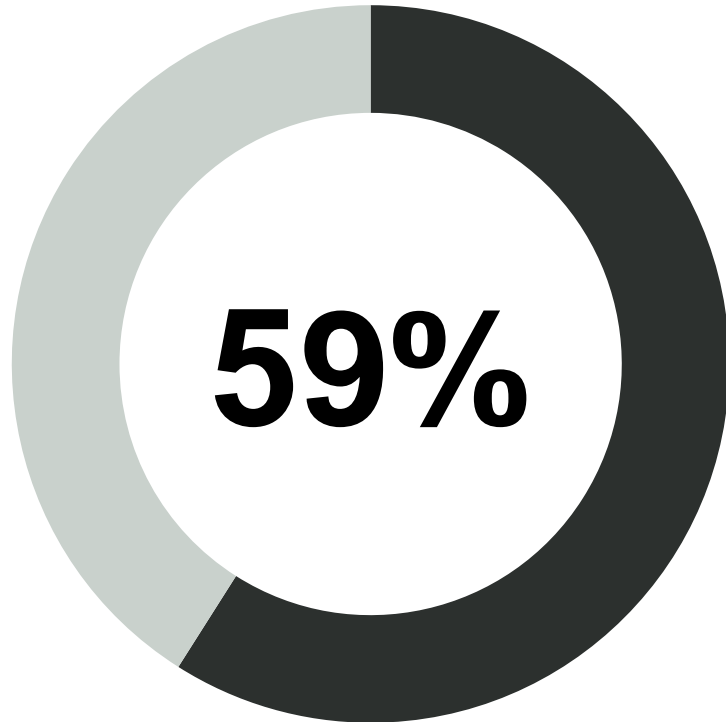
of security decision-makers say that their organization is more likely to consider a security solution that uses Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Up from 52% in 2023

Question: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Conclusions

One-third of companies are not aware of what caused their data security incidents over the past year, and three-quarters say it's becoming more complex to understand their security tech stack.

Despite too many competing priorities challenging businesses from achieving their security goals, security decision-makers are aiming to improve the protection of sensitive data and corporate resiliency.

To assist with their initiatives, top security execs have regular engagement with their Board of Directors. This relationship has significantly grown in the past year, further proving security's spotlight.

IT leaders are addressing security risks by investing in new solutions and increasing spend on what they have in their current security stack. AI continues to be sought after and shows clear benefits.

More than half are likely to consider a security solution that uses AI, but vendors must step up and offer insight into business value of the solution, security incident record, cost, and innovation.

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