

Building your innovation muscle

How to make innovation part of your organization's DNA to lead in the AI-enabled world

What's next starts now

In our digital world, the pace of change isn't slowing down, and disruption is an expectation. The most successful organizations today react quickly and efficiently to carve out competitive advantages whenever they arise. However, Dell's 2023 Innovation Index found that only 18% of organizations can be classified as "innovative" with the right people strategies, technology, and processes to take smart and informed risks, stay agile and drive business growth. Most organizations struggle though.

To help more organizations becoming innovation leaders, we conducted a new study, Innovation Catalysts, based on responses from 6,600 business and IT decision-makers (BDMs and ITDMs) responsible for driving or influencing innovation in their organization from 40 countries. In a three-part series, we double-click into key areas innovation leaders thrive in and explore where organizations across the world struggle:

This executive brief focuses on the first topic: **Building your innovation muscle.**

1. Build your innovation muscle.

How to make innovation part of your organization's DNA to lead in the AI-enabled world.

2. Maximize your data insights.

How to design a smart, flexible and resilient infrastructure to act on your data wherever it resides.

(Access here)

3. Embrace human-machine partnerships.

How to build an innovation culture and productive work experience where everyone thrives.

(Access here)

State of Innovation

The future is uncertain for organizations, with almost 6 in 10 struggling to keep up with the pace of innovation. To use resources effectively, aligning on innovation priorities is key, but this is not yet the case for many organizations. Business leaders are focusing more on immediate needs such as driving cost savings and efficiencies and increasing revenues in these uncertain economic times. While IT leaders appear to be more forward thinking and are focusing on future-proofing the organization and the transformative power of AI/generative AI.

94% admit their organizations are facing challenges preventing them from driving innovation successfully, with the biggest barrier being a lack of needed skills and competencies. However, bridging the skills and talent gap is the least likely innovation goal – and perhaps an opportunity to rethink and innovate around current talent attraction, education, and retention programs.

Top innovation goals

1. Cost savings & efficiencies
2. Future-proof the organization
3. Increase revenue
4. Use AI/GenAI to transform the organization
5. Improve the customer/ citizen experience

Top innovation challenges

1. Lack of right talent with needed skills/ competencies
2. Data privacy and cybersecurity concerns
3. Lack of budget/ ability to invest due to economic downturn
4. Lack of right resources to manage the evolving regulatory landscape
5. Outdated and/ or too complex technology environment

Top improvement areas

1. Invest in modern, scalable technology
2. A strong relationship between business and IT
3. Adopting a data-driven approach
4. Actively nurturing an innovative culture
5. Having a company-wide, known innovation process; Driving environmentally sustainable innovations (tie)

Generative AI, the new innovation accelerator

One way organizations can tackle innovation challenges is through embracing generative AI (GenAI). Unlike earlier forms of AI, generative models can understand context, generate creative outputs, and adapt to diverse tasks without explicit programming. Excitably, 81% agree that AI/GenAI will significantly transform their industry and 82% agree that there will be greater human and machine partnership within five years.

Thinking about themselves, respondents believe GenAI will make them more productive in their jobs and help them discover insights they would not have had access to previously. In addition, customer interactions, improving

developer productivity and streamlining IT operations have been identified as areas organizations should turn their GenAI attention to first. C-level and senior management are also working towards applying GenAI to improve their environmental footprint.

However, while the opportunities presented by GenAI are vast, this groundbreaking technology also creates unique challenges. Organizations face difficulties around preparing the workforce, having and using the right data infrastructure, understanding its limitations and security, and ethical concerns.



IT, your strategic partner

To ensure innovation is a success, business and IT decision makers need to be aligned. However, despite improving this relationship being cited as the second most common area to drive innovation, it is not simple as it seems. Only 4 in 10 BDMs consider their IT peers an important business partner.

It appears BDMs may be grounded in false assumptions, they have:

- Perceived communication gaps between IT and the rest of the organization
- Perceived time constraints on the IT department's side
- Perceived legacy mindset that IT "keeps the lights on"

This is despite:

43% of ITDMs saying that BDMs could communicate more frequently with IT.

Only

22% reporting that "no time" is a personal challenge to driving innovation.

If ITDMs and BDMs were to unite and to build a shared vision and unified approach, innovation goals may be achieved more efficiently and holistically.

Building your innovation muscle, together

Building a reliable innovation muscle is not accomplished in a silo or in one-off initiatives. By building a close, regular and strategic partnership between IT and the business, organizations can better align their people, processes, and technologies to act on high-impact opportunities. And you don't need to do it alone. With Dell Technologies as your innovation catalyst, you'll overcome barriers to innovation,

uncover new possibilities, and shorten time to value. Together, we'll turn ideas into innovation and innovation into outcomes.

Dive deeper into how to build your innovation muscle here and visit Dell.com/InnovatorDNA to get more insights on subsequent innovation leader best practices around empowering people and turning your data into insights.