

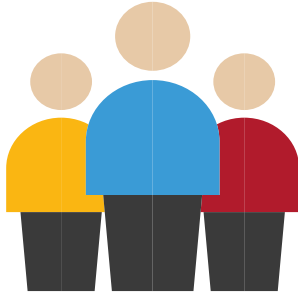
# Modernizing the digital workplace

Accelerating your  
desktop delivery in the  
post-pandemic era



in association with





*For many IT departments, it was tough getting working from home (WFH) going. Their immediate pandemic response was focused on “Just make it work, and now!” Pragmatism, supply shortages and the need to act fast often took precedence over cost savings and planning for the future.*

*So, some two years on from the first lockdowns, we set out to ask the question: What next for desktop delivery, do we go backwards - or do we go forwards?*

## Main Points

### **The pandemic has left many IT teams stressed and distracted**

A recent survey of senior IT professionals confirmed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on IT teams: The rapid implementation of home (and now hybrid office/remote) working has made it harder, more complex and costly to deliver, support and secure the desktop ‘digital workspaces’ that so many workers now rely on.

### **But it’s also brought an opportunity to rethink desktop delivery**

Who’s ready now to turn round and go back the way they came? Although there is now considerable technical debt to deal with, there is little sense in going back to the former way of doing things. User needs and expectations have changed dramatically, and there are now new and smarter ways to deliver desktop services. Clearly, it is time to rethink desktop delivery and build a new foundation for the future.

### **Consistency and flexibility will be key as we go forward**

One of the things most likely to have crept in during the pandemic is inconsistency - many IT leaders had to buy and do anything they could, just to get WFH underway. To go forward, we need consistency of management in order to get greater simplicity of delivery. And we need flexibility, because we know we will need to adapt again in the future, but of course we don’t yet know what form that adaptation will take.

### **The changes will favour modern desktop delivery platforms**

We created a scorecard based on how well survey respondents say they are performing on desktop delivery, along with which modern solutions and practices they’ve already adopted or planned. This and all the above suggests that a key first step is to adopt a flexible desktop delivery model and a set of platform and management solutions that are specifically designed to quickly and efficiently accommodate change.

# How did IT respond as the pandemic hit?

## The switch to home working required quick fixes

The need to act fast often meant that our respondents had to take what they could get and do the best they could with it. As we will see, while that often accelerated digitalization processes that were already underway, in many cases it also brought existing infrastructure weaknesses to the surface - and added more to them. Keeping the WFH transition smooth and simple for the users was not always as simple as it could have been for IT and support staff.

### What influenced your pandemic response?

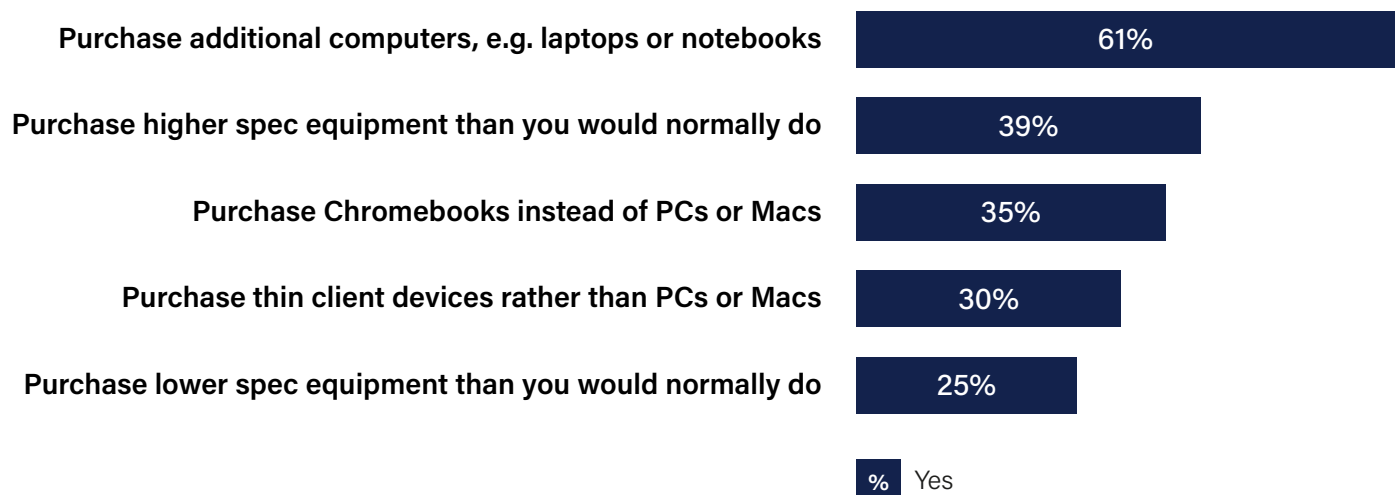


*"Significantly influenced" relates to responses of 4 or 5 on an influence level scale of 1 to 5*

## Meeting the challenge of equipping users for remote work

The widespread need for extra equipment to support WFH created supply shortages almost immediately, and many organizations found themselves unable to buy exactly what they wanted. While this did bring the opportunity to experiment with new devices and technologies, it also added complexity, as we'll discuss later in this report.

### Did you take any of the following actions in particular?

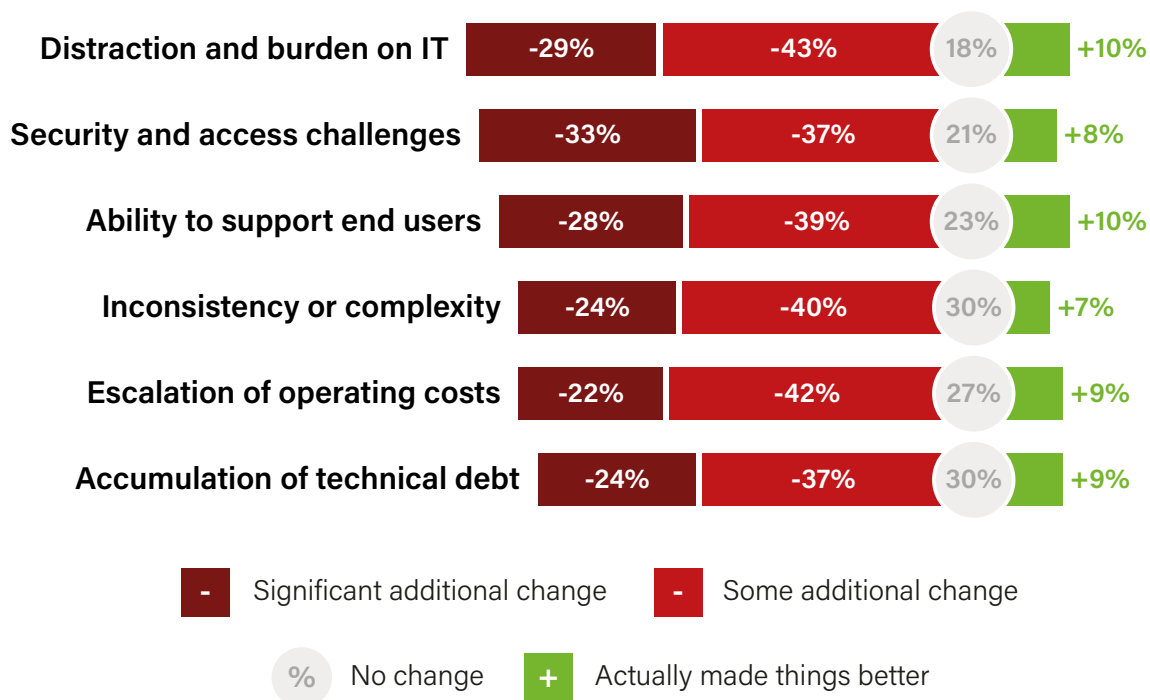


# Where have organizations ended up?

## WFH success hid a lot of stress and cracks

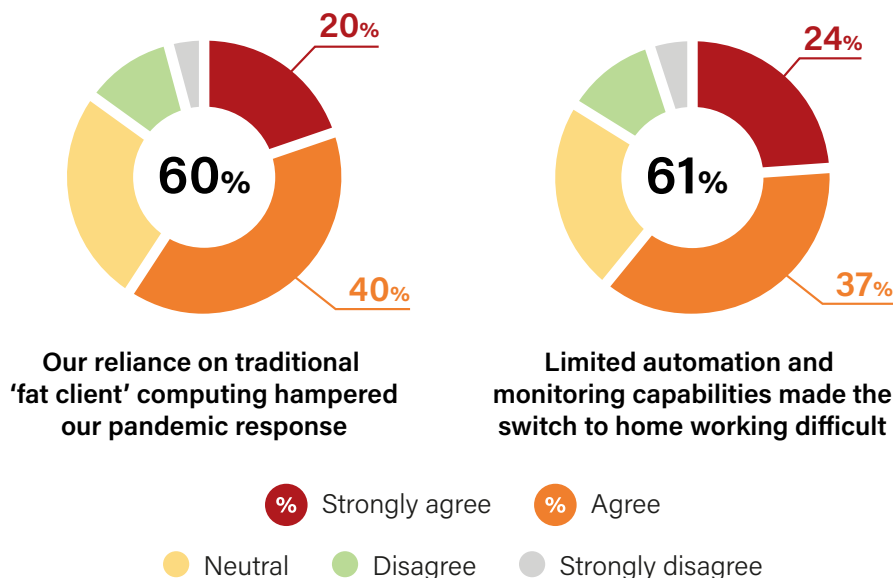
No matter how well you managed that initial WFH transition, the chances are that, from an IT perspective, you're in a worse position now than before. Technical debt has built up, and supply shortages brought desktop inconsistency, all of which has made support harder and more complex. As our survey confirmed, there's greater cost and stress now, and the workload has increased. It's a combination that's simply not sustainable in the long term.

### Have the changes made to your desktop estate over the course of the pandemic led to additional challenges in any of these areas?



## The spotlight also fell on delivery-related weaknesses

The urgency of the switch to WFH magnified key weaknesses around how to support those remote users and deploy devices. In particular, in many organizations desktop computing has grown and grown, yet it is still based around individuals and PCs. That's a strategy that arguably only makes sense for small groups of users.



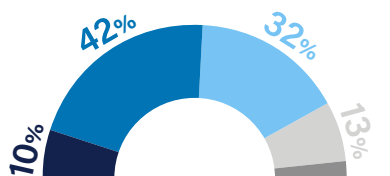
# It's time to rethink desktop delivery

## The opportunity: turn disruption into transformation

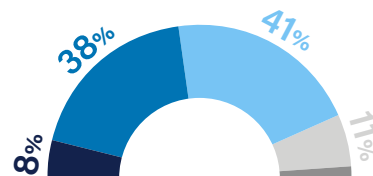
The dramatic evolution of user expectations and needs means it's time to rethink how you deliver the desktop digital workspaces that they now depend on. This will in turn impact your network and security infrastructure. For instance, WFH means that where your users work and when has changed, as has how they connect and the combination of devices and applications that they use.

At the same time, however, you can still identify patterns of usage. As our respondents confirmed, by understanding these you can group users into segments with the same or similar patterns, which should make it simpler to manage and deliver the services they need. For example, whose needs can readily be satisfied via a web browser? Who could readily work via a thin client or VDI solution, and who genuinely requires a 'fat client' PC?

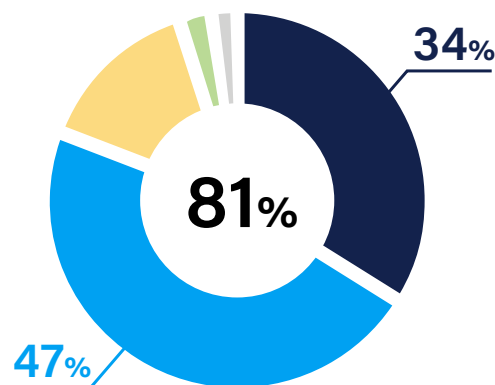
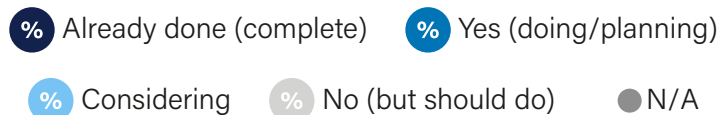
### As you take your end user computing environment forward, are you looking to employ any of the following tactics?



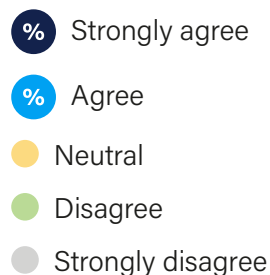
Segment or group users to optimize desktop delivery according to needs



Employ monitoring tools to assess needs and segment users objectively



Flexibility is critical as it's impossible to predict future working patterns and requirements

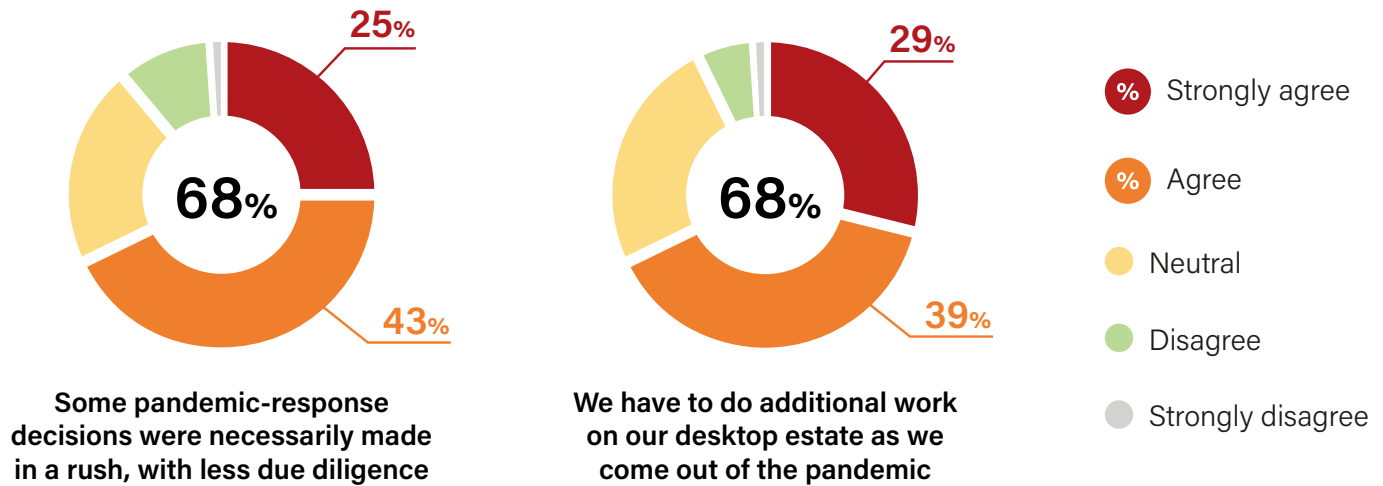


In all of this, there are two big themes to focus on as you drive forwards: flexibility and consistency. They might look contradictory at first, but are actually orthogonal. Consistency is how you get simplicity of delivery, via user segmentation for instance, and flexibility is how you build in the ability to adapt - in a consistent way, of course!

# Cleaning up, moving forwards

## Technical debt means lots of work to do

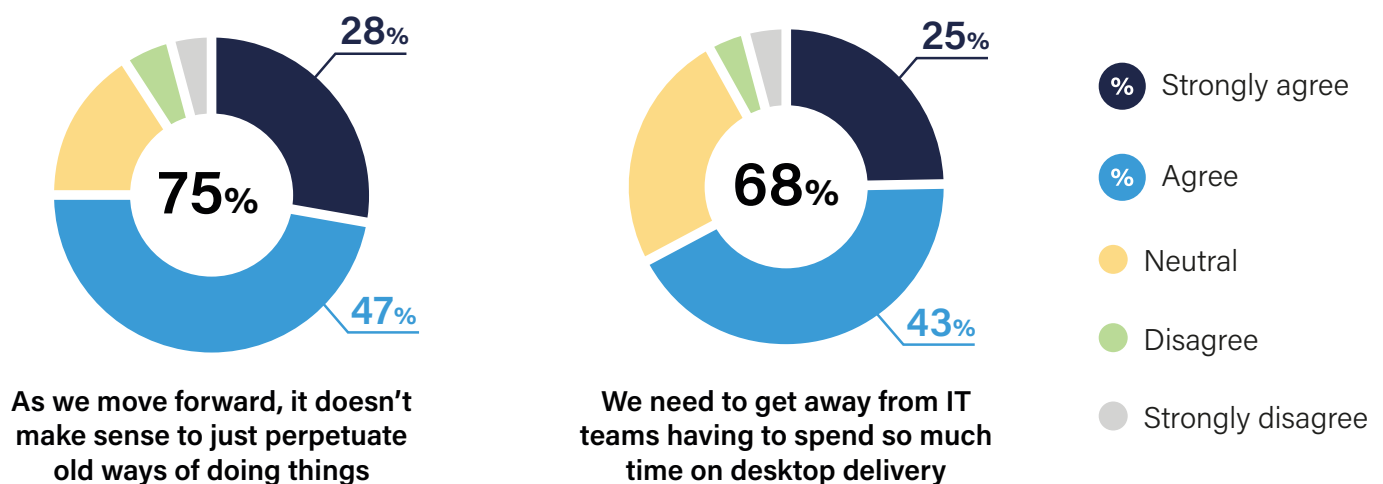
More than two-thirds of our respondents said that the urgency of the WFH transition meant that desktop decisions and implementations had been rushed, and that they have remedial work to undertake as we come out of the pandemic.



## Many recognize that desktop delivery and management must change

For most respondents, there's no sense in going back to the former way of doing things. Not only does it take too much time, but the changes wrought by the pandemic mean that, even if you were among the minority who had no issues or challenges with the way you delivered IT to users, the old ways are no longer fit for purpose.

First, you have a different set of user needs and expectations now, thanks to WFH and hybrid working, mobility, uncertainty and so on. In addition, the technology has evolved considerably. As a result, desktop management approaches and techniques that were bleeding-edge a few years ago - such as user virtualization, VDI and application streaming - are now mainstream and available almost 'off the shelf'.



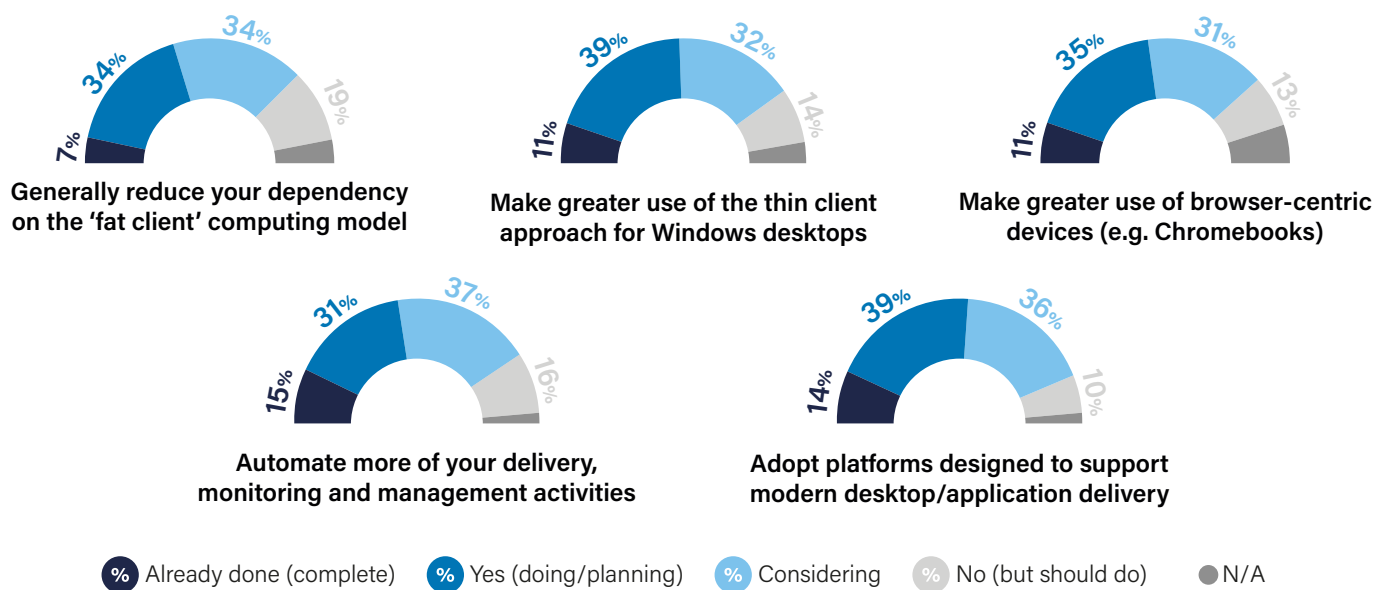
# The journey to modern desktop delivery

## Finding the right mix of solutions and practices

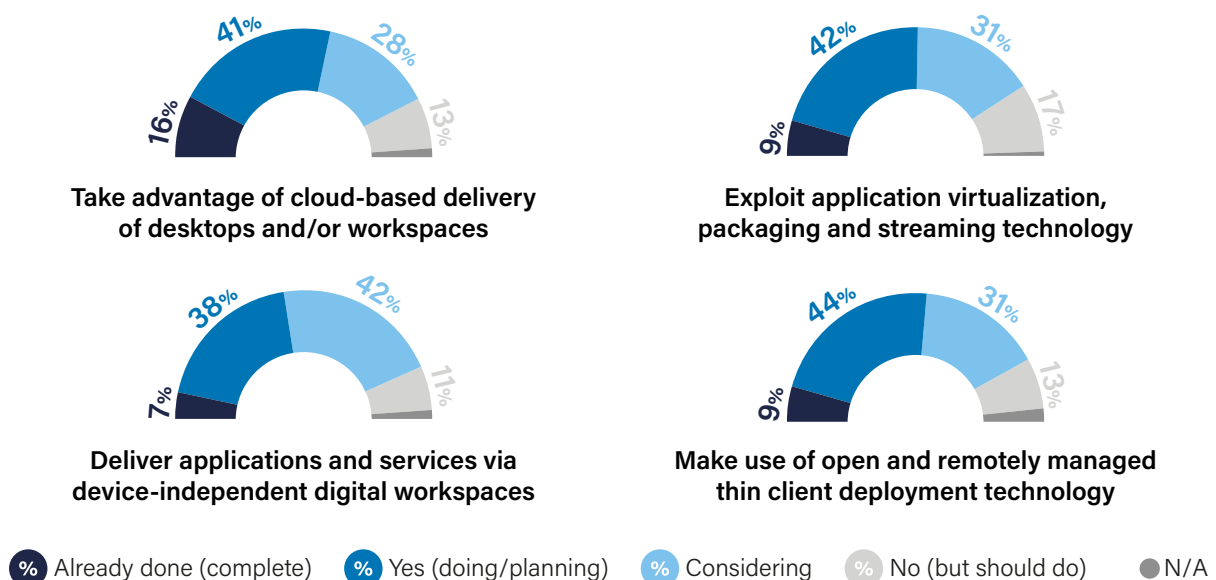
You could supply all users with the same services and resources, but that's unlikely to be the most efficient, easily-managed or secure solution. Indeed, the 'one size fits all' approach to desktop deployment is largely responsible for the desktop management mess that many IT departments now find themselves in.

There's many other solutions available now, though, and what we see in our study is that, between them, our respondents are exploring all of the options.

### As you take your end user computing environment forward, are you looking to employ any of the following tactics?



It helps that, just as there's no one technology solution that's ideal for everyone, the many options available to you are not mutually exclusive. So you could pick and blend your preferred technologies and tactics to build a complete solution based on the needs of your user segments.

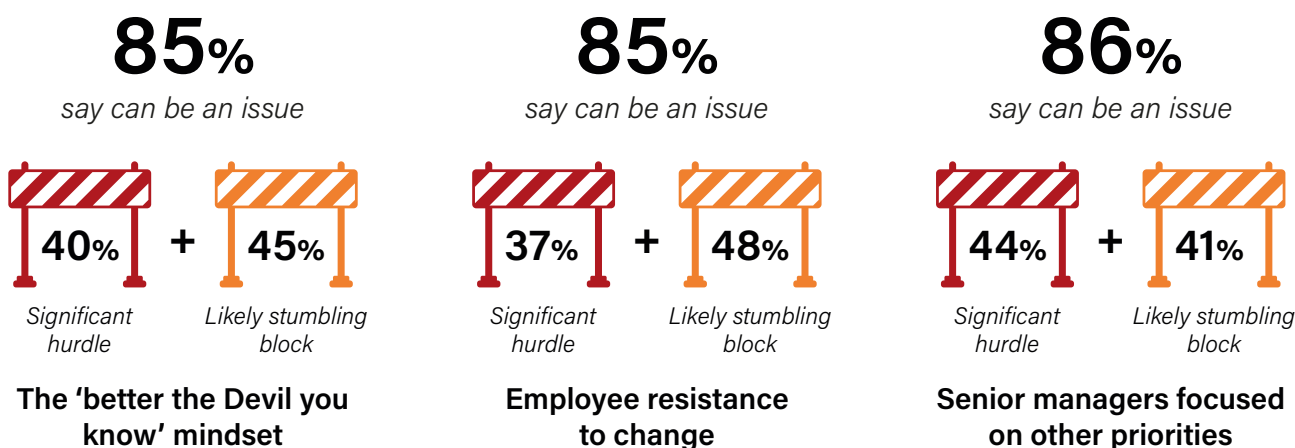


# Overcoming the challenges of inertia

## What stands in the way of desktop progress?

Inertia is - as always - a major blocker here, and our respondents confirmed that it's not just a problem of managing change, it's also getting that change agreed in the first place. Some of this should not be a surprise, given that most people prefer familiarity over change. In addition, to those outside the IT department it might look as if things are working pretty well, and there is **so** much else for senior management to focus on.

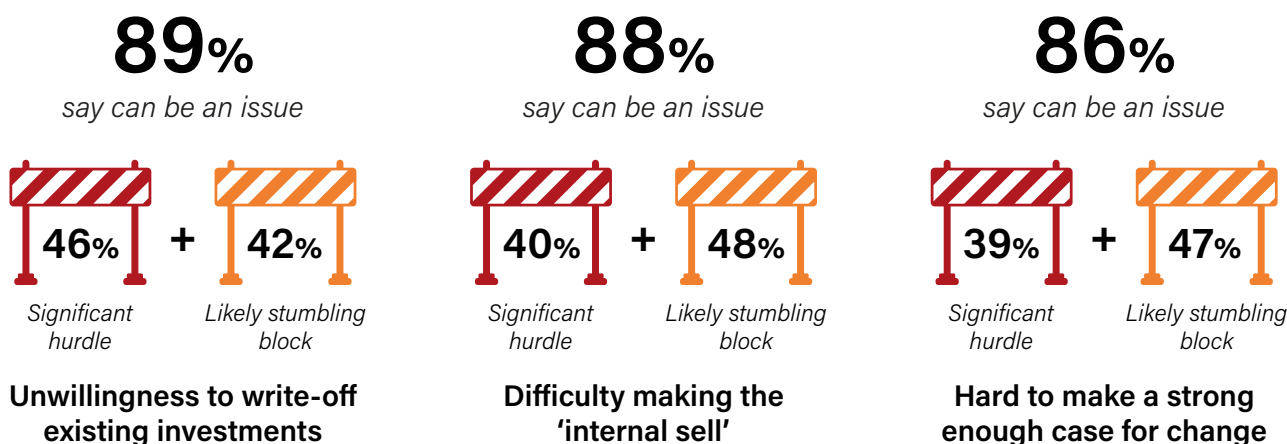
### How much do the following stand in the way of progress?



## Don't underestimate the financial hurdles

The vast majority of our respondents agreed that financial inertia is also an inhibitor to service delivery modernization. Coping with WFH and the pandemic has already been costly for most organizations. Who then will recognize, authorize or understand the need to spend yet more on desktop delivery, both in order to cope better the next time something like this happens, and to win business advantages from the changes that have already taken place?

### How much do the following stand in the way of progress?



This is an area where smart vendors, system integrators and other IT partners can help CIOs and IT managers understand 'the art of the possible', and assist them in developing and selling the business case for modernizing desktop delivery.



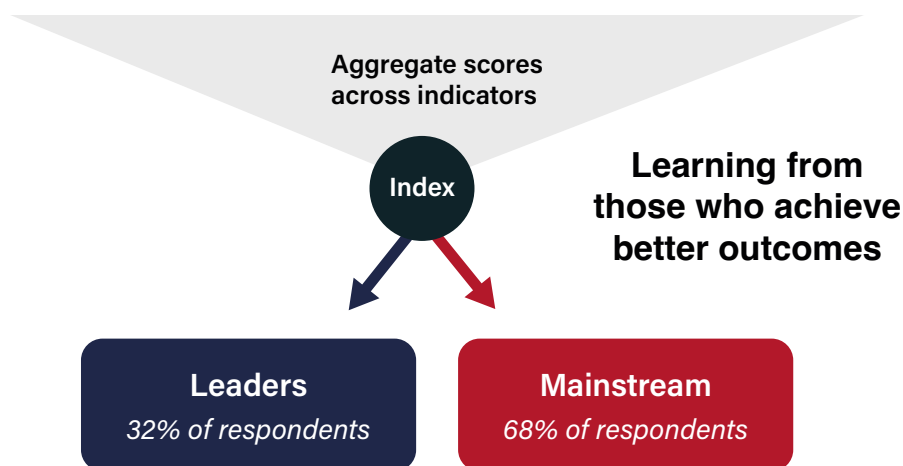
# Learning from the Leaders #1

## A scorecard for grouping respondents

We asked our respondents to rate how well their current desktop environment is delivering on key outcomes. We then used their scores to build a performance index that let us identify a set of Leaders - that is, respondents who are already achieving better desktop delivery outcomes than the Mainstream.

*Respondents were asked how well their current desktop environment was delivering in key areas*

| Desktop delivery scorecard | Needs fully met | Could do better | Needs not well met |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Manageability              | 33%             | 51%             | 16%                |
| Supportability             | 35%             | 47%             | 18%                |
| Reliability                | 37%             | 43%             | 21%                |
| Security                   | 40%             | 42%             | 18%                |
| Flexibility                | 29%             | 48%             | 23%                |
| Cost of ownership          | 32%             | 40%             | 28%                |
| User satisfaction          | 37%             | 44%             | 19%                |

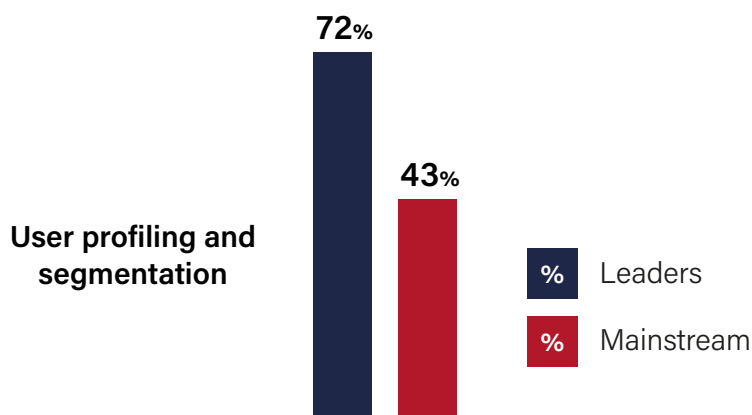


## Taking lessons from those who get better outcomes

The scorecard gives us insight into how preferences, awareness, activity and so on correlate with an organization's effectiveness at desktop delivery. Because we aggregate the scores and then regroup them in our performance index, this smooths out the variation we see in our survey responses at an individual level and lets us see the broader trends.

The results therefore allow us to look at how the Leaders differ from the Mainstream. While we need to be careful about inferring causality from correlation, the parallels are unlikely to be entirely coincidental. The performance index therefore gives a vision of what the Mainstream could do in order to improve their outcomes.

# Learning from the Leaders #2

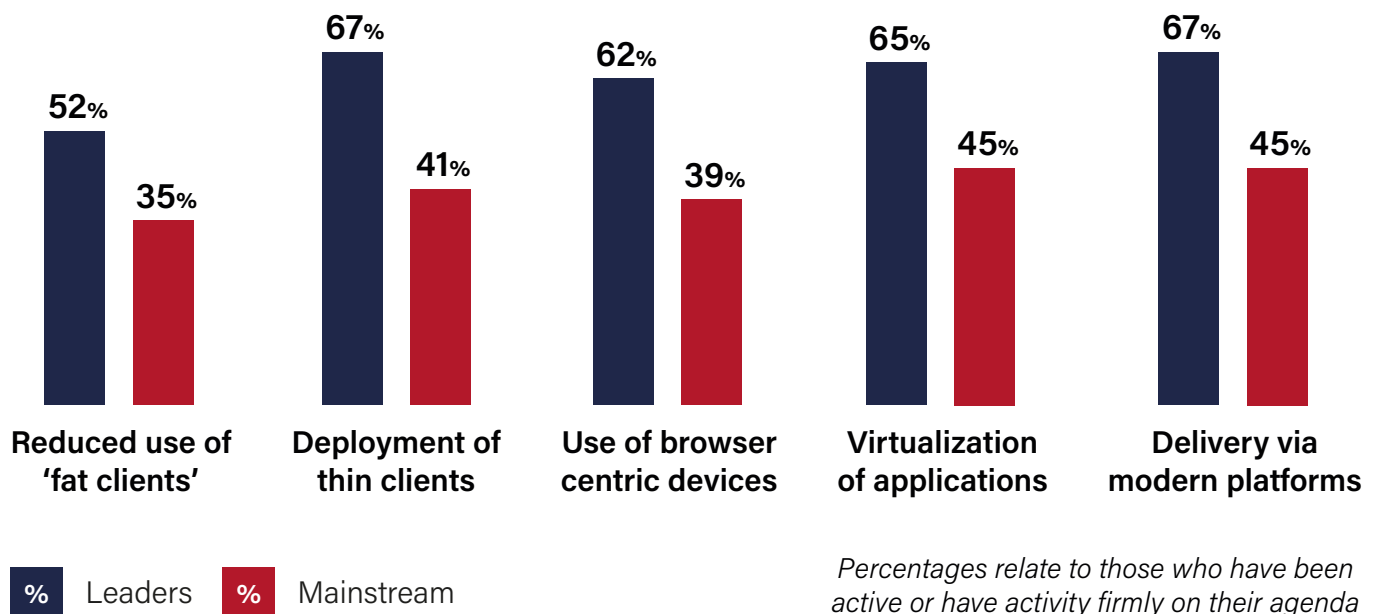


## What do the Delivery Leaders have in common?

Perhaps the most obvious thing is that those of our respondents who rate highly on our desktop delivery scorecard are also ahead in the modernization process. We can see for example that the Leaders are more likely to already be making use of usage profiling and user segmentation.

## Leaders are more likely to be thinking and acting differently

They also see the need to deploy fewer fat clients - although of course that does not necessarily mean no fat clients - and are more likely to be deploying thinner technologies.



Whether 'thinner' means browser-centric devices such as Chromebooks, virtual desktops, streamed applications, thin clients or whatever, the opportunity is broadly the same. It's that they can be cheaper, easier and quicker to operate and secure.

And again, the Leaders are more likely to prefer modern delivery platforms. This brings us back to a theme running right through this study: the potential benefits of a modern desktop delivery model and platform are clear. Not only is this model specifically designed to quickly and flexibly accommodate change, but it also has the potential to improve both security and user satisfaction, to cut costs, and to ease crucial tasks such as those around desktop deployment, management and support.



Our research confirms that the short-term success of the switch to working-from-home (WFH) came with longer-term costs - technical and governance 'debts' that must now be 'repaid'

Fortunately, it also confirmed that IT departments which have adopted modern desktop delivery models and platforms are more likely to see better outcomes in areas such as user satisfaction, cost of ownership, manageability and security.

## **Pandemic shift**

In terms of digital workspace and desktop delivery, the rapid shift to first WFH and then hybrid working has been highly disruptive. The opportunity now is not to simply settle into a new stability, but to turn disruption into transformation.

## **Visibility is key**

Whether it's reducing cost and complexity in your desktop estate, enabling users to work better and more flexibly, ensuring security and reliability, or pretty much anything else to do with IT, you can't manage or measure what you can't see.

## **Consistency and flexibility**

Look for ways to simplify desktop management and cut delivery costs via consistency. For example, you could group users with similar needs and usage models, and apply the most appropriate desktop delivery model for that group. But remember to build in flexibility for an uncertain future.

## **Modern desktop delivery**

Explore the different ways of delivering digital workspaces to users, and how they can be combined and multiplexed to best support differing user needs. And remember - like so many things in IT, modern desktop delivery is a journey, not a destination.

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