### THE POLITICS AND PRACTICALITIES OF

# SUSTAINABLE

### A Senior Leadership Perspective

Sustainability has been part of IT's remit for many years, and experience tells us that success in this area depends as much on effective management of the people and politics as it does on technology and smart delivery. Against this backdrop, we collected insights from 155 high-ranking IT leaders on progress to date, lessons learned and priorities for the future.





# THE PRESSURE

THE PASSION AND

#### **TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS ROLES ROLES**

How is sustainability regarded across the business?



**Senior Executives** 

48%

43% h DUTY 9% CHORE

PASSION

**Broader Workforce** 

39% PASSION 50% **b** DUTY

12% 😩 CHORE

**IT Leadership 47**% PASSION 48%

**DUTY 5**% CHORE

**IT Professionals** 45%

**PASSION DUTY** 45% 11% **CHORE** 

## **POSITIVE SENTIMENT**

An overwhelming majority of both IT and

business people see the need to take action on sustainability, with almost half reported to feel passionately about acting on the imperative. Particularly notable is the strong sentiment among senior managers nowadays, which paints a refreshing picture compared to the past when action was often driven by the workforce and/or external pressure.

### Despite past contributions, expectations on IT to enable more sustainable business practices and become more sustainable itself remain significant and are growing.

RISING EXPECTATIONS

How are sustainability expectations on IT changing?

**Increasing 78**%

Little or **22**% no change 1% Decreasing

#### High Significant **27**%

What's the expectation on IT?

Helping the business to be more sustainable

70%

3% Low **Driving sustainability within the IT domain itself** High **61**%

34%

**5**% Low

Significant

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

### seeking funding for IT modernization initiatives that will drive increased energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions, but it also puts an onus on IT teams to be ready to take things to the next level.

The picture we see here can potentially help when

How does IT drive or support the sustainability agenda? 51% **Proactive** We indentify and drive leadership opportunities across the business and IT domains

41%

Domain

proactivity

### **DESIRE TO DO MORE** Most IT teams are doing their best to be

**PEOPLE AND** 

**POLITICS** 

### forward, which can cause frustration.

proactive but business stakeholders

aren't always receptive to ideas put

56% Strongly agree /Agree

**Common Frustration** 

organization's sustainability agenda?

identifying and driving opportunities within IT 8% Reactive We adopt more of a cooperation supportive stance, taking our lead from the business THE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT GAP

We mostly focus on

### We would like to be more proactive, but the business



to influence strategic priorities **AVOIDING SUSTAINABILITY DEBT** 

**26**% impediment 44% Somewhat of 45% Somewhat of an inhibitor IT doesn't move in the right circles Stakeholders don't appreciate

Some must become more assertive to secure a seat at the

table, while others need to find creative ways to educate

and motivate key people. Either way, it's important for IT to get as close as possible to business stakeholders to

### impediment

With both requirements and solutions rapidly evolving, keeping up in this area can be a challenge, as can finding the time to develop relevant ideas and proposals to put

exert influence.



how much IT can have an impact

Major

an inhibitor

Major

impediment

an inhibitor

40% Somewhat of

### might feel necessary in the short term, but it equates to building up sustainability debt, which will inevitably need to be paid at some point down the line.

to the business. No matter how overstretched you are, however, it's critical not to fall into a defensive mindset and avoid taking on sustainability-related work. This

Have you leveraged any of the



**AND DELIVERY** 

**BUILDING ON PAST INVESTMENT** 

#### **Future** Very high/ Already 88% **Potential** leveraged Significant **Data deduplication** 83% Already **Future** Very high/ 83% leveraged **Potential** Significant

**Potential** 

following to drive energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, and do you see the potential to do more in these areas?

**Streamline** 

Data center consolidation

Hardware/software consolidation

84%

Very high/

Significant

93%

Already

leveraged

85%

**Already** 

leveraged

92%

Already

leveraged

91%

Already

leveraged

90%

**Energy efficient devices Potential** 

Modernize

**Future Potential** Cloud and hosting

**Future** 

**Potential** 

**LONG GAME** 

Virtualization/cloudification

90% **PLAYING THE** 

94%

86%

Very high/ Significant

Very high/

Significant

Very high/

Significant

## exploitation in pretty much every area examined. **Automate**

**81**%

Already

leveraged

**70**%

Already

leveraged

**82**%

Already

leveraged

88%

Already

leveraged

**87**%

Already

leveraged

Do you agree with the following statements?

Even though many of the technologies and tactics relevant to driving increased sustainability have

already been deployed, most see potential for further

#### Al-enabled operations (Al-Ops) Very high/ **Future** 89% **Potential** Significant

Automated energy management

90%

86%

84%

86%

It's important to

over the entire

product lifecycle

assess the emissions

We favour suppliers who

**Future** 

**Potential** 

Hyperconverged infrastructure

90%

Very high/

Significant

**Optimize** 

**Potential** 

**Future** 

**Potential** 

Potential

**Equipment life extension** 

E-waste management

Data center optimization

**Future** 

**Potential** 

#### that sustainable IT is best thought of as a **82**% persistent thread running through all aspects Already of strategy, planning, governance, service leveraged delivery and, of course, decision making and

Tracking and minimizing

carbon emissions is as

important as energy

We favour cloud

providers who can help

us with environmental

monitoring

reporting

**PRIORITIZING FOR SUCCESS** 

continue to drive your sustainable IT agenda?

Ensure sustainability is

an integral part of all IT

sustainability impact

**74**%

Strongly

agree/Agree

76%

Strongly agree/Agree



83%

Strongly

agree/Agree

highlighted, it's always useful seeing what

**41**%

High

**Priority** 

**52**%

High

**Priority** 

**Control** 

Alignment

45%

Medium

**Priority** 

41%

Medium

**Priority** 

**LEARNING FROM YOUR PEERS** 

### Given the time and resource limitations How much of a priority others are prioritizing. are the following as you

47%

Medium

**Priority** 

49%

Medium

**Priority** 

43%

Sustainability priorities for IT moving forwards

decision making High Medium **Priority Priority** Prioritize win/win **41**% 48% investments that deliver business as well as

Investment

High

**Priority** 

Knowledge Ensure adequate understanding of environmental regulation within IT

High **Priority** Increase sustainability related training and awareness among IT managers and staff High

Medium Priority **Priority** 

setting the organization's overall sustainability

agenda

**Executive and business** education on how IT can further help to deliver sustainability benefits More IT involvement in

**Embed sustainability** 

reporting processes

**Ensure sustainability** 

is an integral part of the

supplier management

metrics into IT

monitoring and

process

**50**% High **Priority** 

High

**Priority** 

42% Medium **Priority** 43%

Medium

**Priority** 

**FINAL THOUGHT** The title of this infographic, with reference to people and politics as well as practicalities, was

chosen to reinforce the complex nature of the area investigated. The research clearly confirms

that for the IT team to fully contribute to the organization's sustainability goal, it must be

intimately involved in business strategy and planning discussions from the outset. We hope our research has stimulated some thought on how to achieve this in your environment.

For further insights from Freeform Dynamics, please visit

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