

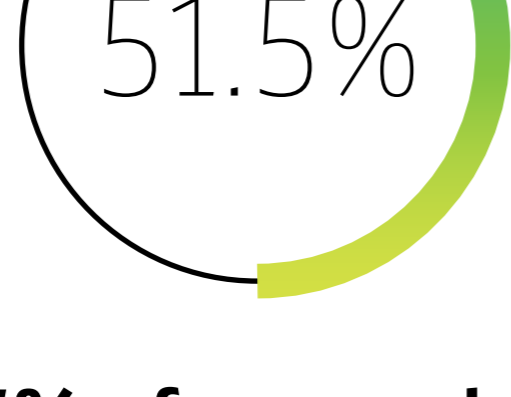
New challenges and opportunities for the retail industry



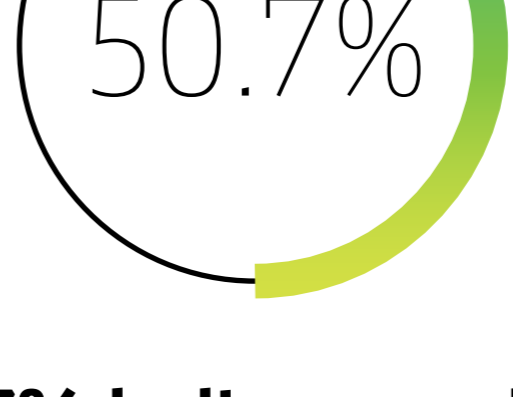
Retail leaders and administrative and technology staff agree that market competition and growing workforce issues will challenge the industry through the next 12 months. A new Windstream Enterprise report breaks down concerns and predictions from across the retail industry.

More competitors + tighter labor market

In response to what challenges retail C-Suite, admin and technology professionals are facing, it's no surprise that over half of the respondents noted retail competition and a tight labor market. Businesses must continue to foster a workplace culture that empowers their existing employees while attracting new employees. Digital solutions take the burden off of current employees so they can stay focused on customer satisfaction and engagement.



51.5% of respondents anticipate that competition will increase over the next 12-18 months



50.7% believe workforce challenges will increase

A better customer experience

Keeping and growing customer share in a highly competitive retail environment requires retailers to deliver a competitive digital and in-store shopping experience.



Improving customer personalization

In the aggregate, 40% of respondents ranked **IMPROVING CUSTOMER PERSONALIZATION** as their top priority.

Leveraging multiple vendors

67% of respondents reported their customer-facing teams needed to use 3 or more data sources to have a complete and accurate view of the customer.

Doing more with less

Businesses are tasked with maximizing workforce productivity through technology.

Technologies in play

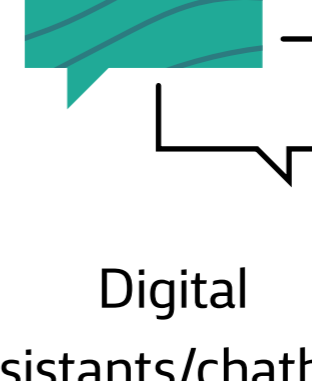


Implementing cashless services

44.1% are already using:



Contactless/touchless transactions



Digital assistants/chatbots

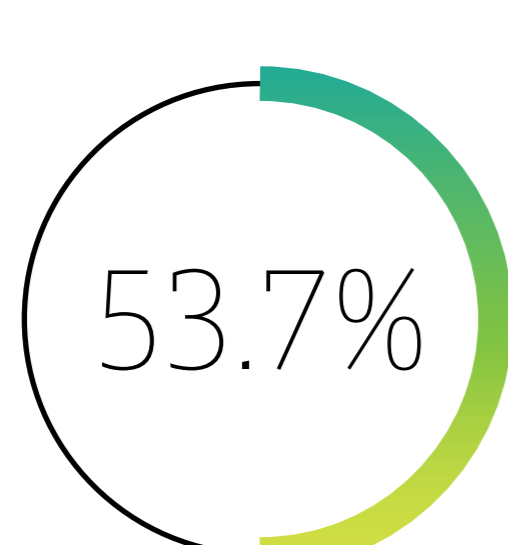
Despite investments in digital transactions, 73% of respondents expressed that their organizations would increase the number of physical locations.

The challenges facing retail today

Retail industry executives ranked the top three challenges as 'increasing' or 'significantly increasing':



Network uptime



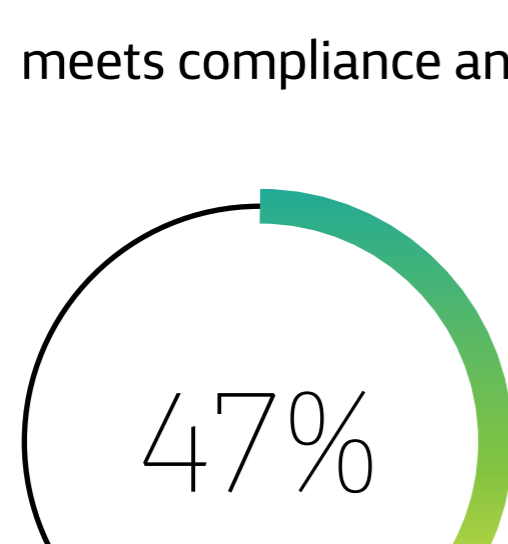
53.7% of the survey respondents report having a network outage in the past 12 months

Downtime can cost retailers in customers, productivity, compliance, cybersecurity and reputation.



The solution for retail

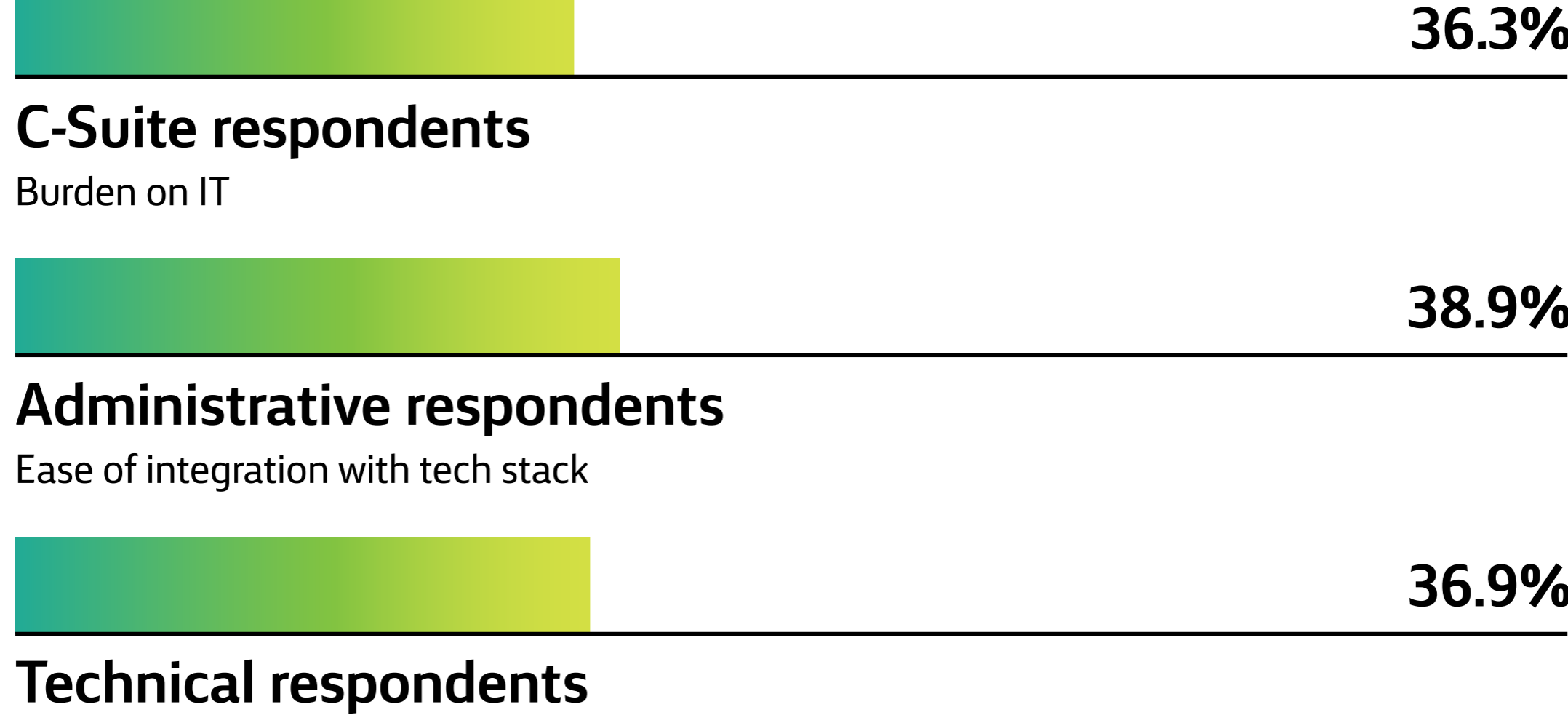
A commitment to increasing tech investments to ensure the retail business stays competitive, meets compliance and regulatory demands and addresses cybersecurity threats.



47% of the survey respondents reported their budgets for digital solutions increased in 2022 compared to 2021

How retailers make their buying decisions

Retail leaders differ on their top considerations when reviewing new technology purchases.



The cost of doing nothing is high. Data breaches and network interruptions can cost retail organizations dearly in lost productivity, customers, brand reputation and non-compliance fees and penalties.

With a range of innovative solutions and a team of retail experts, Windstream Enterprise is uniquely positioned to help you leverage the power of your network to deliver a differentiating customer experience and bring about transformative change.



In the first quarter of 2022, studioID of Industry Dive and Windstream Enterprise conducted a national survey of 365 retail professionals from C-Suite, Administrative and Technology roles about the state of digital transformation. C-Suite respondents included roles, such as CFO, COO, CIO and CEO. Technology respondents included focus areas such as Cybersecurity and IT. Administrative professionals included Finance, IT, Marketing and Operations.

Cloud-enabled connectivity, communications and security. Guaranteed. Windstream Enterprise drives business transformation through the convergence of our proprietary software and cloud-optimized network to unlock your revenue and profitability potential. Rely on our financial stability, unrivaled service guarantees and best-in-class management portal—delivered by a team of technology experts. [To learn more, visit windstreamenterprise.com](https://www.windstreamenterprise.com)