

 **Buyer
Behavior
Report** ²⁰/₂₄

— Proving Value in the Age of AI



Buyers aren't willing to wait to see value. Deal velocity is slowed as buying cycles have increased. Their software investments are being scrutinized by executive leadership.



Chris Voce

VP of Market Research
at G2

Under pressure. There's no better way to describe the intensity of the landscape that B2B software vendors face. The promise of AI is causing software buyers to open up their wallets. Still, while a majority believe software budgets are increasing over the upcoming year, the opportunity to win and retain the customers that hold those budgets is becoming more challenging. Buyers aren't willing to wait to see value. Deal velocity is slowed as buying cycles have increased. Their software investments are being scrutinized by executive leadership.

Knowing today's buyer and their context is more important than ever. G2 conducted our annual Buyer Behavior **survey of more than 1,900 B2B software buyers** to understand their plans, behaviors, and attitudes, aiming to assist software and services vendors in navigating the turbulence, earning trust, and achieving growth.

There's not a software CEO who doesn't have to answer the question, "What's your AI story?" And for good reason. Our research found that while businesses are fervently seeking how AI can supercharge their strategy, they vary in how they feel it can make an impact, as well as their attitudes based on region, size, and industry.

It's often said to meet buyers where they are. This year's research found that buyers lean heavily on the trust in the voice of peers. As you read, we hope that you find the insights and advice to help you win that trust, and the continued business of your buyers.



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Examining the impact of AI.

We asked questions to gauge the self-reported maturity and purchasing behavior related to AI. We use these groups to gain visibility into the impact of AI. Here are some of the groups and terminology we use to compare:

AI Power-Users

Respondents who consider themselves AI power-users at work.

AI Learners

Those who have adopted AI or are infrequent users of AI at work.

AI Laggards

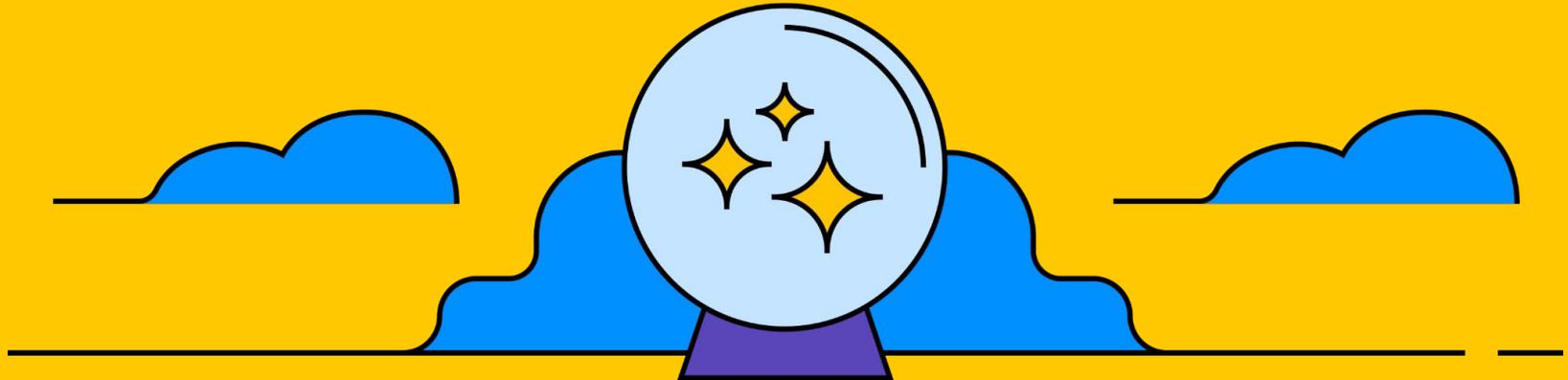
Reported that they are AI non-adopters at work.

AI Buyers

Typically involved in AI software purchase decision making at work.

AI Non-Buyers

Everyone who isn't an AI buyer.





AI throws fuel onto the B2B spending fire.

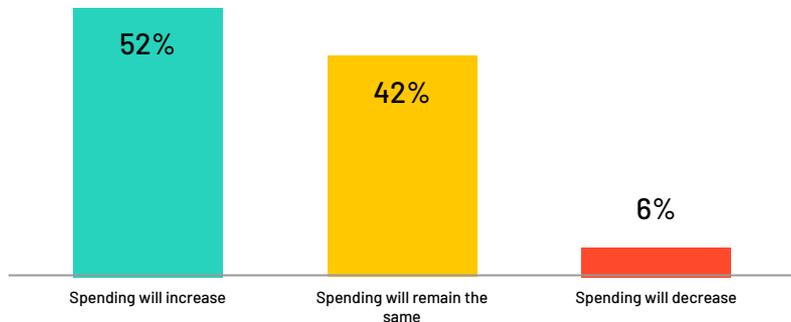
Software investments continue to grow, with 52% of buyers expecting their software and technology spending to increase next year.

Unsurprisingly, AI plays a major role in these increased budgets. More than a year after ChatGPT's public release kicked off the generative AI frenzy, buyers say they're investing in AI platforms and AI-powered solutions.

In fact, 56% of buyers said their organization had purchased an AI platform within the last 3 months.

Over half of buyers expect spending to increase in '25 vs. '24.

Anticipated change to software purchase spend in 2025.



AI functionality is a critical component of software purchases across the B2B software landscape. In addition to investing in core AI infrastructure, buyers are also looking for AI capabilities baked into other purchases. Respondents want solutions with AI functionality across a diverse range of software moving forward.

AI functionality is key across all software types.

Importance of software purchases moving forward having AI functionality.

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	Don't know / No opinion
Marketing	34%	39%	20%	5%	2%
Sales/CRM	36%	39%	18%	4%	3%
Customer service	36%	39%	19%	5%	2%
Info security & privacy	40%	38%	16%	4%	2%
ERP	33%	39%	19%	5%	4%
Data analytics	40%	40%	14%	4%	2%
Collaboration	38%	40%	16%	4%	2%
HR	33%	39%	19%	6%	3%
Commerce	38%	38%	17%	5%	3%

% of survey respondents



Software buyers believe there's more than AI-washing* going on. 77% of respondents agree or strongly agree that “software companies have genuinely advanced AI technology in their products beyond merely capitalizing on the AI hype.” Of buyers who said that their organization had purchased an AI platform within the last 3 months, **83% reported that their organization has already seen a positive ROI for their purchased AI platform.**

Productivity and cost savings are key for AI buyers.

Employee productivity was the number one method (44%) when asked how their organization measures the ROI from its investments in AI software or AI-powered software. The next highest measure was cost savings at 42%. Considering that respondents cited “improve productivity” as the number one reason why their company usually replaces software (26%), with “cut costs” coming in third at 21%, it's unsurprising that AI hype has continued so fervently.

**AI-washing: The act of overplaying or exaggerating the AI capabilities of offerings to lure buyers*



Buyers now believe software companies have actually done something useful when it comes to AI. Vendors aren't just adding AI messaging to their marketing; they're taking it seriously to build meaningful use cases. Five years ago, AI was still hype because it mostly existed in behind-the-scenes modes. It wasn't accessible or transparent. We're now at a point where vendors are accelerating the development of AI products that can make a real difference—but buyers want to see ROI and are expecting it to have a big outcome.



Bryan Brown





AI use cases vary across business sizes.

“Improving overall efficiency” and “customer support” were the top two most important use cases for all segments. While the former goes together with the promise of automation through AI, the latter highlights buyers’ strong focus on mitigating churn through enhanced customer support. Beyond these, the usage goals vary across segments.

After improving efficiency and customer support, small businesses use AI for broader marketing, whereas mid-market businesses cited generating assets is the third most important use case. Enterprise users tend to use AI to automatically surface data insights, which is their third most important use.

Across all segments, **94% of respondents say they are currently using AI software or AI-powered software for at least one of the following use cases noted:** sales or CRM, customer support, marketing, opportunity spotting, writing content, improving overall efficiency, generating assets, automatically surfacing relevant data insights, and optimizing RevOps.

Enterprise and Mid-Market look to AI for efficiency improvements.

	1	2	3
Small-business	Customer support	Improving overall efficiency	Marketing
Mid-market	Improving overall efficiency	Customer support	Generating assets
Enterprise	Improving overall efficiency	Customer support	Automatically surface data insights



Software vendors face tougher sales and higher expectations.

Though businesses are ready to spend, software vendors face a tough environment that is marked by heightened scrutiny from buyers with smaller shortlists, longer buying cycles, and lofty ROI expectations.

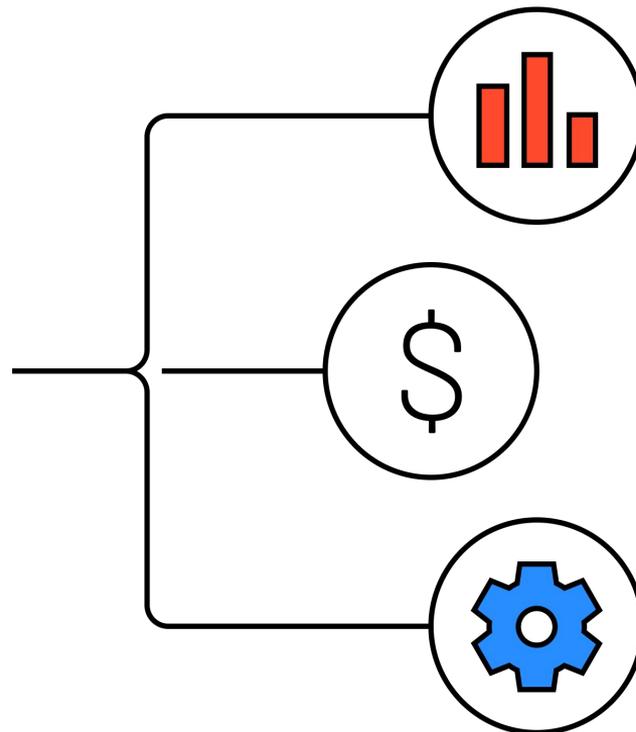




Spending still falls short of earlier expectations. While it's exciting that buyers are optimistic about spending in the upcoming year, this still falls short of earlier expectations. When we asked in 2023 about software spending in 2024, respondents were bullish—with 55% saying spending would increase, so expectations have tailed off this year (48% anticipated an increase in 2024, and 52% anticipated an increase in 2025). This change could be fueled by greater expectations of an economic recovery in 2023.

The three most common factors cited for decreased 2024 spending compared to 2023 were economic uncertainty, cost reduction efforts, and changes to internal IT capabilities.

Shortlists are shrinking. Software sellers must distance themselves from the competition early in the buying process. 45% percent of buyers had 4 to 7 products on their shortlists in 2023, a figure which dropped to 31% in 2024. Instead, 49% had 1 to 3 products, an increase of 16 points (from 33%). While the number of software products being considered is smaller, budgets ticked up for larger investments. 12% of respondents say the typical size of software purchase they were involved in over the past 12 months was over \$1 million, compared to 9% last year.





Buyer needs are changing during their purchasing cycle.

Sellers will also have to prepare for buyers with shifting project scopes. 29% of buyers say that their product scope always changes, and 43% say it frequently changes.

ROI expectations are heightened. 57% of buyers expect to see positive ROI within 3 months of purchase, putting pressure on sellers to show quick wins and prove value soon after implementation. 11% expect to see positive ROI immediately after purchase.

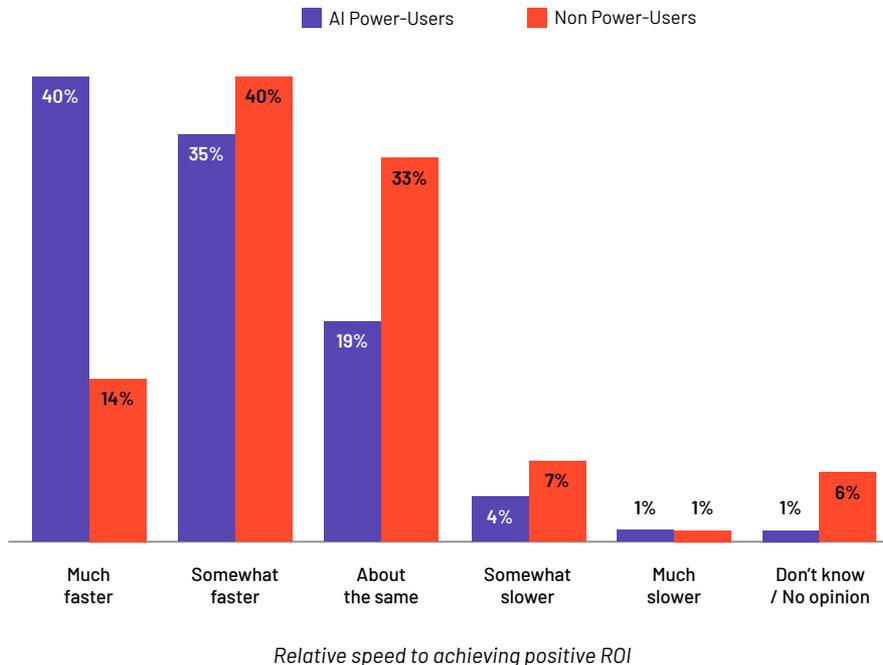
AI Power-Users expectations are even loftier:

75% Of AI Power-Users expect their company to achieve positive ROI for AI investments somewhat or much faster than for its other investments.

That number drops to 54% for Non Power-Users.

AI Power-Users expect AI to deliver on value.

Relative expectations to achieve positive ROI from investments in AI software and/or AI-powered software compared to other software investments.





Executive and legal teams are a part of stricter sign offs.

Software sellers face the specter of a potential executive veto: 41% of buyers identified a C-suite employee or the CFO or highest-ranking financial officer as the person ultimately responsible for signing off on a purchase decision.

During the software selection process, the CFO always or frequently holds the final decision-making power (79%), while the legal team tends to slow or block purchase (61%).

These decision makers wield significant influence to approve or slow the process.

Buying cycles are increasing. Stricter vetting processes are taking a toll on deal velocity. Purchases are taking longer: 49% of buyers took 4 months or more to make a purchase decision on a \$20,000+ piece of software, rising from 41% last year.



For all of those who have questioned if consolidation is truly happening across SaaS, B2B buyers shrinking their shortlists is consolidation at work. And to make a selection from that shortlist, they're more concerned about the 'R' in the ROI than they are about the 'I.' This is why we see cost falling as a top consideration among software buyers as other expectations rise. All of these factors mean added pressure for vendors to differentiate and showcase their value, fast.

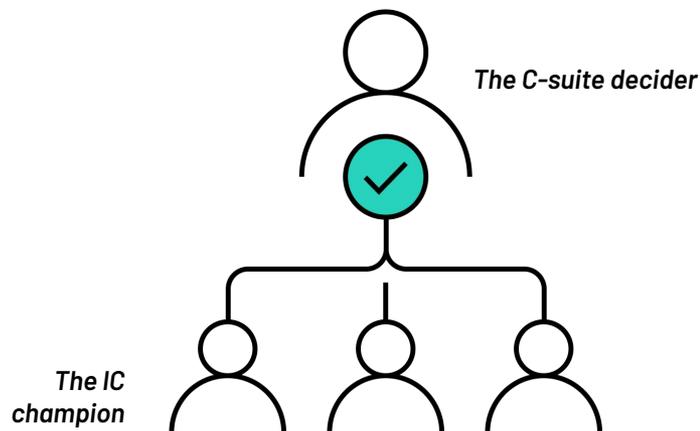


Scott Brinker





Incumbents hold an advantage. With most buyers agreeing or strongly agreeing that they prefer to renew a product rather than switch to another vendor, the opening for a sale to new customers has gotten smaller. **For renewals, the percentage of buyers who always conduct research dropped almost 20 points from 60% in 2023 to 43% in 2024.**



While we've long focused on the idea of a buyer champion and influencers, there's been a larger push to attract executive fire. This is for good reason—they're now the real decision-makers. In an era of growth at all costs, getting C-suite sign-off was a formality, but in an era of capital-efficient growth, it's a requirement.



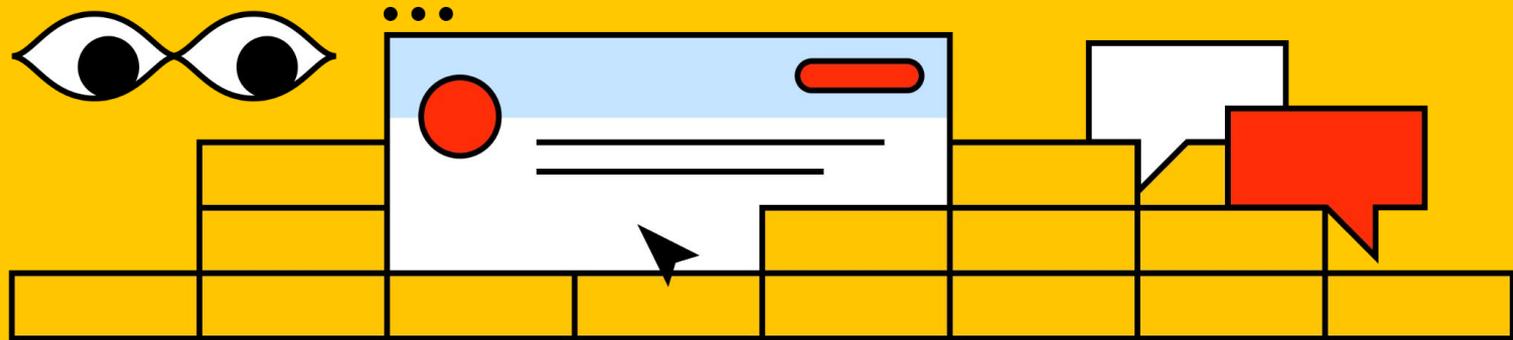
Sarah Allen-Short





What you need to know about your buyer, the process, and the dynamics that shape them in 2024.

Faced with a difficult climate, software and services vendors must get to know today's software buyer and what drives them.





Anatomy of a software purchase



Discovery

General curiosity or learning about new software options



Research

Collecting information about possible software options



Evaluation

Comparing software options



Decision

Making the final choice and purchasing a software product



Implementation

Deploying the software at the organization

AI is reshaping today's software buyer and process.

Changes in buyer behavior are impacting the entire buying process. The challenges facing software sellers are significant. So, what do we know about today's buyer?

AI changes how buyers spend their time in the purchase process. Research continues to be the longest buying stage overall. Consistent with prior years, more than a third of buyers (34%) mentioned that research is the longest stage in their buying process. AI Power-Users are less likely to focus on it than all other personas—30% compared to 36% for AI Learners and AI Laggards.

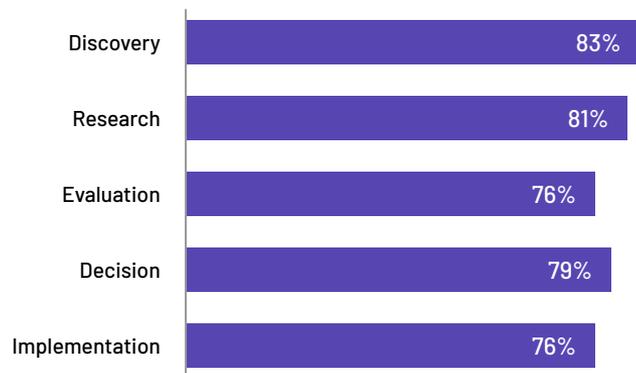
With new AI offerings launching rapidly, AI Power-Users spend the most time on discovery (27%) versus 17% overall. And they're diving right in: AI Power-Users spend the least time on evaluation (15%). AI Learners, on the other hand, spend the most time on evaluation (25%).



Buyers prefer self-service at most stages of the buying process. Consistent with prior years, buyers strongly prefer self-service. This is especially true in the earlier stages of the buyer journey but is important throughout. Additionally, 69% (compared to 67% in 2023) say they usually engage a salesperson at a software company only when they have made their decision.

Strong majorities of buyers prefer self-service.

Percentage of respondents who want all/most of the following phases of the purchase process to be self-service.



AI Power-Users feel held back by legal teams. Last year, we predicted that legal issues would slow AI investments, and advanced AI users agree. While 61% of respondents report that legal is always or frequently slowing software purchases, these numbers jump for AI Power-Users.

41% of AI Power-Users report that legal is always slowing purchases, with another 31% saying this happens frequently.

A formal buying process isn't always well defined. 90% of APAC buyers have an official software purchasing process, compared to only 75% in EMEA and North America. While small businesses usually have shorter selection processes, 20% of enterprise buyers have 1 to 3 steps in their selection process, and 33% for mid-market. A typical shortlist includes 2 to 3 products, regardless of company size.



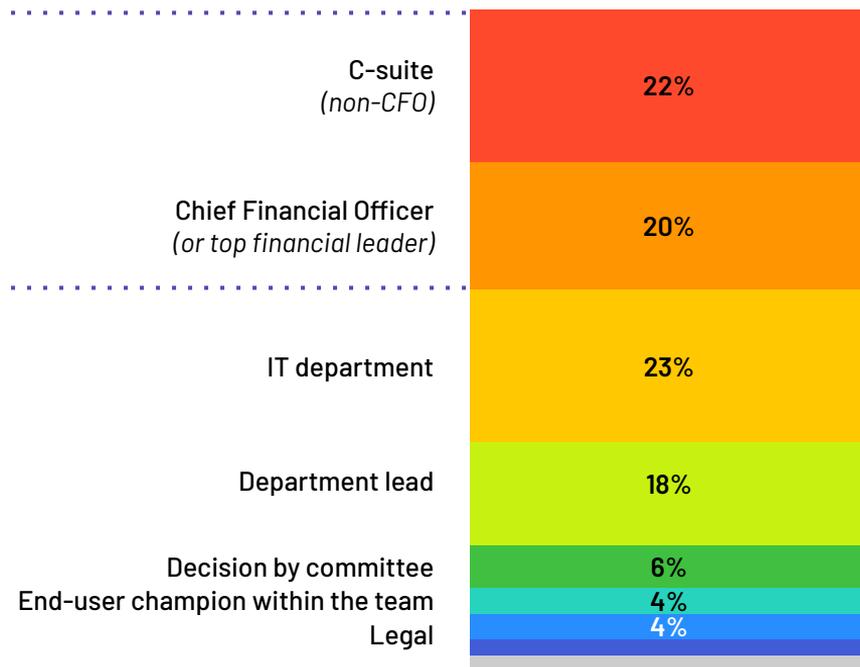
Smaller buying teams rely on consensus but still must get executive approval. The number of people involved in buying decisions has shrunk. 82% of respondents report that the selection is always or frequently consensus-based.

Purchase authority is consolidating at the top:

42% of buyers identified a C-suite or the CFO / highest-ranking financial officer as the person ultimately responsible for making a purchase decision.

Multipurpose AI tools are favored by AI Power-Users. 53% of AI Power-Users prefer to buy a tool for multiple purposes compared to the average respondent with 38%. They also like to buy from established companies (50% strongly agree) vs. the average of 33%.

2 in 5 buyers say the C-Suite ultimately holds software purchase power.
% of buyers who say each group has final software purchase decision-making power.





Where and how buyers are purchasing software is changing.

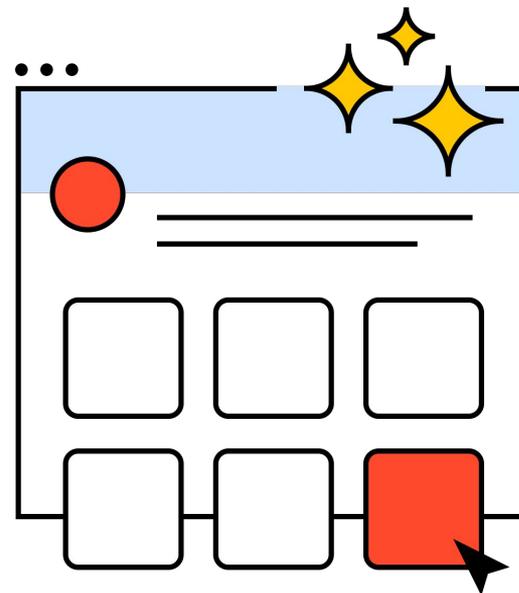
Legacy software purchasing and direct relationships with software vendors are giving way to faster purchasing methods and marketplaces where buyers can find different options in one place.

Marketplaces continue to pique buyer interest: Buyers are increasingly interested in third-party purchase points. The percentage of buyers who prefer to purchase from a third-party marketplace increased 5 percentage points year over year (YoY), from 25% to 30%.

C-suite respondents preferred third-party purchase points the most (33% vs. 29% for ICs and 30% for managers-SVPs).

The explosion of AI offerings is making an impact: AI software solutions [grew by 44%](#) on G2 in 2023—doubling the next fastest-growing category. Buyers seeking to find all of these new offerings can find them in one place. When making a buying decision, AI Laggards are the least likely to buy from a marketplace, with only 13%, compared to approximately 30% for all other personas.

Credit cards are now more common in the enterprise, especially for AI purchases. There's more purchasing flexibility in the enterprise, as 37% of enterprises report buying software using a credit card (usually and always). This total jumps to 50% for AI Power-Users.



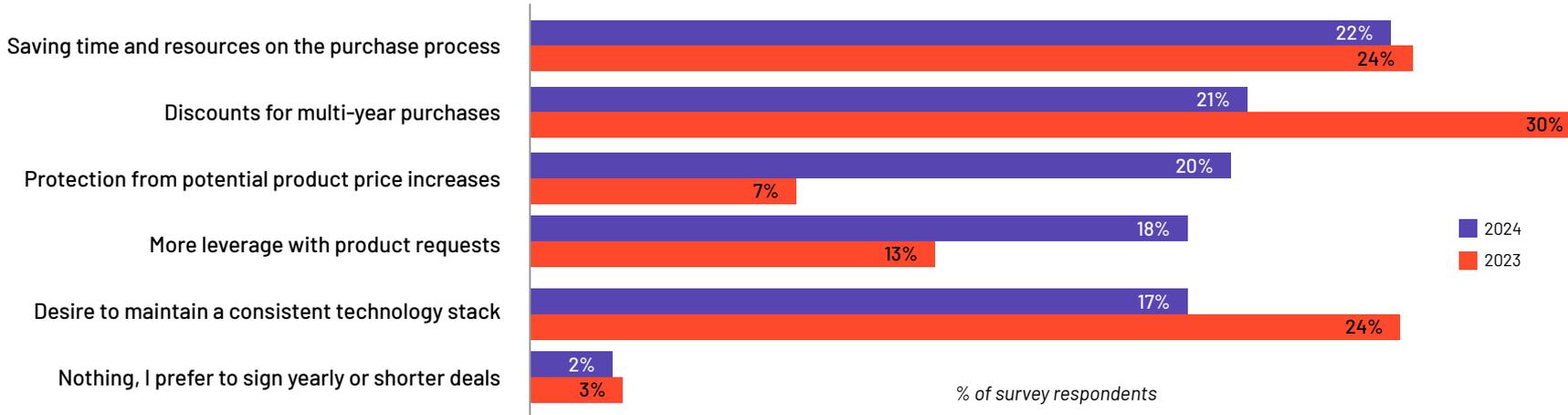


Time savings and price protection drive multi-year agreements.

While technology stack stability and discounts motivated multi-year purchases last year, buyers now report that they enter into multi-year agreements for price protection and purchase process time savings. The desire for protection from price increases leapt from 7% in '23 to 20% in '24, while discounts dropped from 30% to 21%.

The desire to maintain a consistent technology stack also dropped almost 8 points (from 24% in 2023 to 17%). The other important factor was the leverage to request product enhancements and integrations (increased by 5% from 13% to 18%).

Reason to sign a multi-year contract





Security and integrations are top buyer considerations.

Buyer priorities shift depending on the category of software being purchased. Looking at the overall group of respondents, security is top of mind for buyers in North America and EMEA while in APAC, integrations top the list.

While security features are paramount for today's more security-conscious buyer, the ability to integrate with other systems is the top consideration for buyers seeking marketing, sales, and customer success solutions. The rich ecosystem of innovative integrations that extend core technology platforms in these categories make it a clear buyer priority.

Customer service, marketing, sales & customer success software

Accounting/finance, engineering, R&D, purchasing, HR & operations software

IT & security software

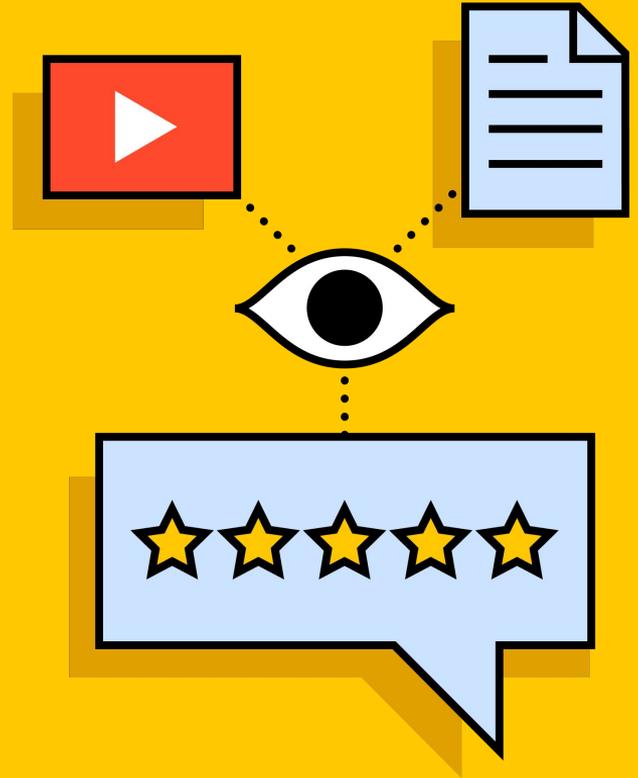
Top 3 reasons why different buyer personas buy software.

	1	2	3
Integrations		Security	Scalability
Security		Integrations	Ease of use
Security		Scalability	Ease of use



Buyers rely on sources they trust to inform purchase decisions.

When researching software, buyers are most likely to trust information from people with similar roles and challenges, and they value transparency above other factors.





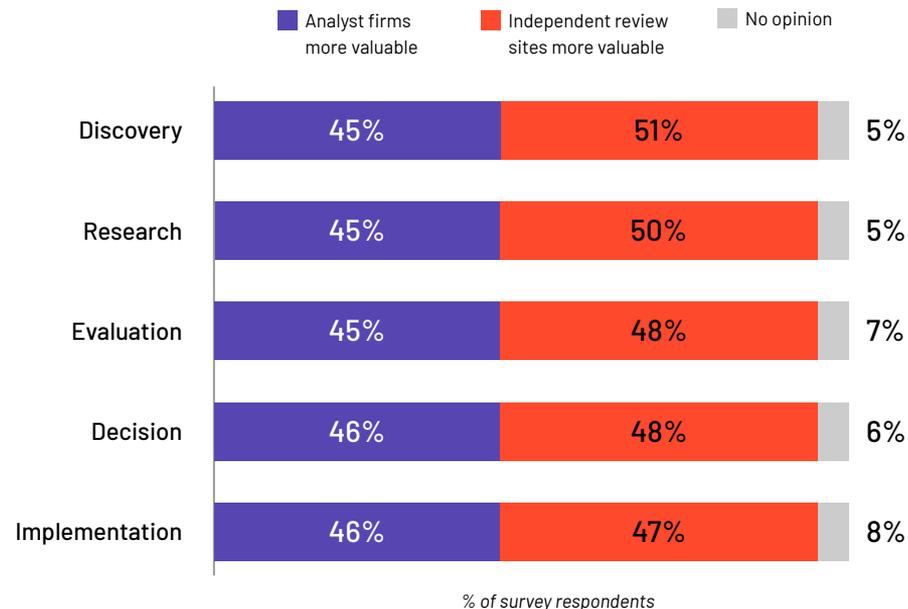
Buyers are increasingly turning to peer reviews. Public product review websites are the most consulted information source, according to 31%, of buyers when planning to purchase goods or services for their company. This is up from 23% in 2023, 18% in 2022, and 13% in 2021. Independent peer forums and communities followed closely behind.

Distrust in vendor websites is on the rise. 9% of buyers cited “vendor websites are unreliable sources of information” as the biggest obstacle to purchasing decisions, up 6 points from 3% last year.

Buyers place more trust in their peers than in traditional analyst firms. When asked which source was more valuable, respondents chose independent software and services review sites at every stage of their purchasing journey.

Buyers see independent review sites as more valuable to decision-making than analyst firms.

% who say they find either source of information more valuable for purchase decision-making.





Pricing information is a primary interest on review

websites. When we asked buyers which features they found most helpful on third-party software or service review websites, they said their top 5 were:

- 1 Pricing information
- 2 Review source
- 3 Product security certifications
- 4 Transparent validation
- 5 “Trusted reviewer” badges or similar indications of reviewer expertise and competence



Following the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of communities have emerged—some paid, some free, some small, some massive. This is where software buyers go for trusted advice and feedback from their peers. In the communities I am a part of, I regularly see buyers sharing how they’ve narrowed down their shortlist and are seeking recommendations from the group. These communities, underscoring the importance of trust, have really changed the game when it comes to B2B buying.



Hannah Ajikawo





Buyers believe they are more security conscious than ever—but a gap in practice remains.

This year's survey highlights a trend towards greater security consciousness among buyers, especially in small businesses. Buyers seem to be making deliberate improvements in the buying process. However, security assessments and proper vetting are sometimes still skirted.





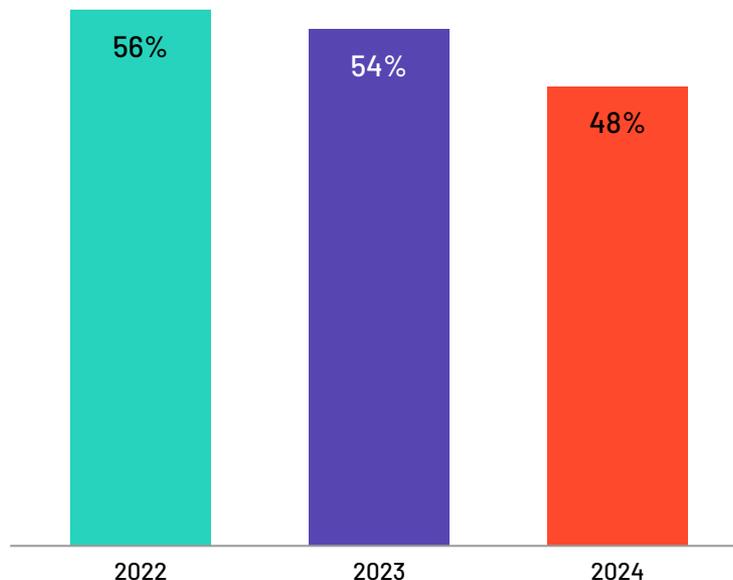
Organizations report involving security stakeholders earlier and more frequently in the procurement process.

The percentage of buyers who purchased software not approved or vetted by IT or InfoSec departments has decreased YoY. While still nearly half of buyers reported purchasing unvetted software, this figure fell from 56% in 2022 to 54% in 2023 to 48% this year.

41% of buyers stated they involved security stakeholders early during the discovery and research phases.

Buyers have become less likely to bypass IT/InfoSec over time.

% of buyers who say they've purchased software not approved / vetted by IT/InfoSec.





Reported security motivation doesn't necessarily match behavior.

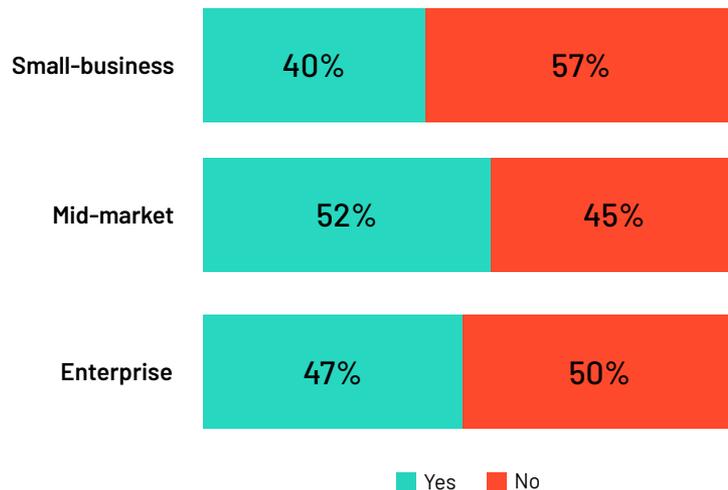
Though buyers report security as one of their top concerns when considering the software they may purchase, and there have been process improvements, some behaviors indicate otherwise. This year's survey found:

The number of survey respondents who said their organizations required a security or privacy assessment fell. In 2023, 86% of respondents reported that their organizations required a security assessment, while in 2024, that same figure fell to 80%. The substantial increase in sophisticated threats, especially those that leverage AI, is juxtaposed against this formal decrease in security or privacy assessments.

Enterprise and mid-market business are more likely to bypass IT/Infosec teams than small businesses. Small businesses are less likely to have an official software purchasing process. They are more likely to have tighter-knit teams and security professionals directly involved in the researching and vetting process for new products. While larger companies have additional resources to dedicate, as well as more comprehensive and formalized security policies and procedures, mid-market companies might struggle to scale these across their organizations.

Mid-market buyers are the most likely to bypass IT/InfoSec during software purchases.

% of respondents who say they have or haven't purchased software without IT/InfoSec approval.



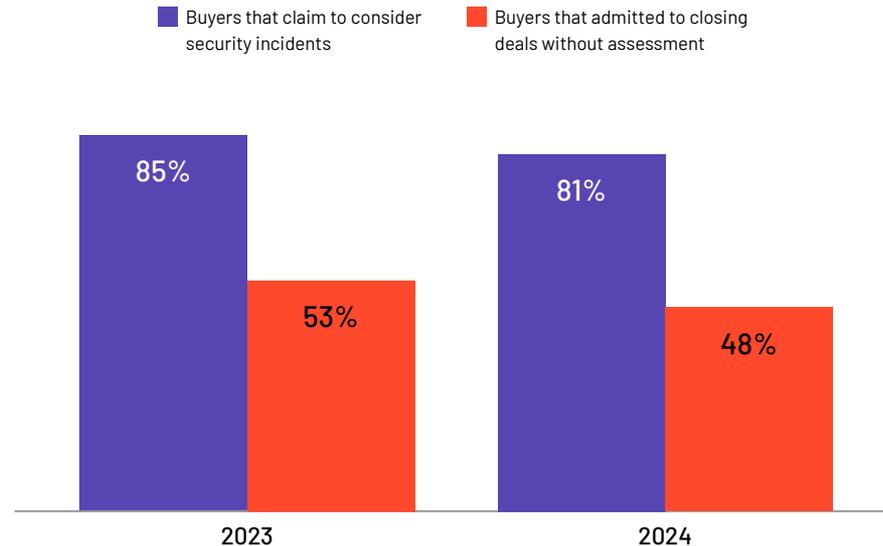


A gap remains between motivation and purchases. In 2024, 48% of survey respondents admitted to closing software purchases without their vendor of choice completing a security or privacy assessment. This represents a 33% cognitive dissonance gap between buyers who claim to care about security and privacy incidents but actually close deals without completing security and privacy assessments on their chosen vendors. This same difference between ideally considering security and privacy considerations and actually demonstrating security and privacy concerns when purchasing software was represented by a near-identical gap in 2023, with 53% making similar unvetted purchases last year.

A drop in consideration of vendor breaches. Despite the slight downward trend in assessment requirements, 81% of survey respondents in 2024 still said they consider a vendor's history with breaches or security incidents when evaluating software solutions. In 2023, that same figure was 85%.

While 4 in 5 buyers care about vendors' history of security incidents, nearly half say they purchase software without security assessments.

% of respondents who consider vendor security incidents compared to % of those who have purchased software without security assessment.



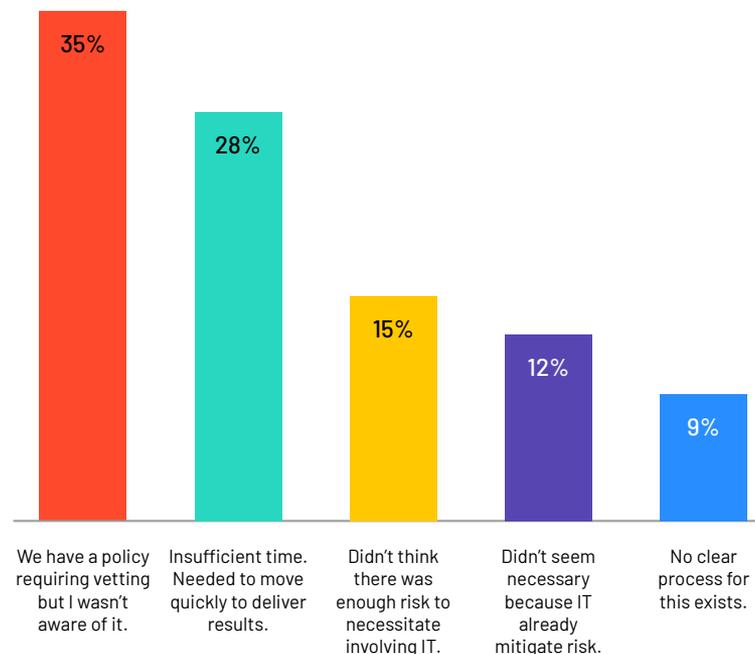


A lack of assessment awareness and a need for speed. G2's survey found that 35% of buyers are surprisingly unaware of the security and privacy assessment processes and tools available to them when considering new software purchases, while 28% skirted assessments because of timely business needs. Business pressures trumping security safeguards is a story security professionals are unfortunately familiar with. In numerous organizations, the urgency to make decisions often leads buyers to bypass ambiguous or unknown vetting processes when quick action is required, just so the business can continue as normal and with minimal disruption.



Awareness and time are the most common reasons software buyers bypass IT/InfoSec assessment.

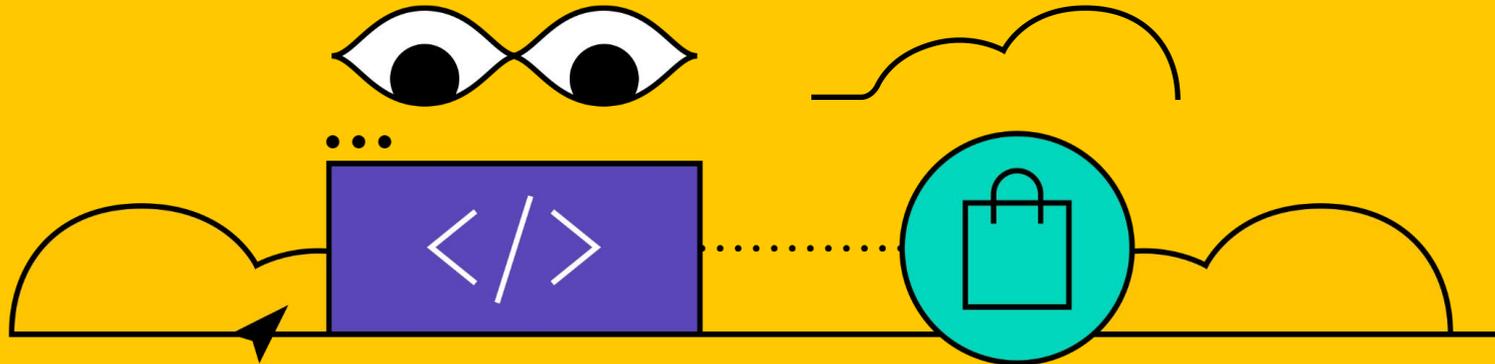
Reasons software buyers say they've bypassed IT/InfoSec assessment.





Service provider choice influences buyer decisions.

As software tools have grown smarter and more powerful, they have also grown more complicated to deploy. Gone are the days of the plug-and-play point solution, as tech stacks have become woven together into intricate systems. Businesses are adapting to this evolving landscape by turning to service providers to help them understand how to integrate, deploy, and use the software they buy.



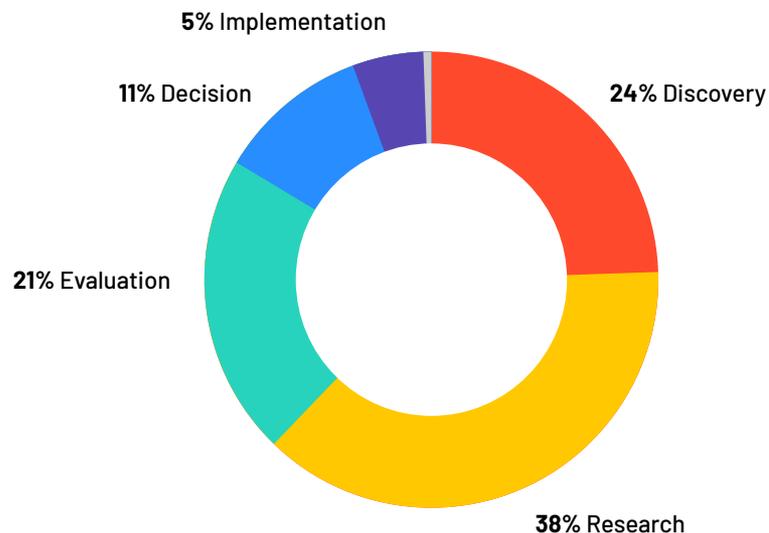


Buyers seek service assistance early in the purchasing journey.

Buyers are thinking about service providers at the onset of their purchasing journey—more than a third (38%) say they start considering service providers during the research phase for purchasing software, and about one-quarter (24%) say they begin considering service providers even earlier during the discovery phase. This underscores buyers' need for service provider support as they consider service providers proactively rather than reactively.

Most buyers consider service providers early in their purchasing journeys.

Point in the software buying process where working with service providers/implementers is first considered.





Software vendors are the main source for implementation. To address their buyers' desire for support from service providers, many software vendors have invested in building official service partner ecosystems.

69% of software buyers say they've considered service providers and implementers during their software buying process. However, only 42% say they've actually worked with a third-party implementation service provider.

This 27-point differential suggests a leak in the funnel and presents an opportunity for both software vendors and their ecosystem partners to grow their user and client bases.

Lean on software sales for service provider choice. Among software buyers who have worked with a third-party implementation vendor, 27% say they found their implementation partner through the software company's sales team. This underscores the importance of injecting ecosystem partners into the software sales process early and often.



Historically, buyers would lean on their service partner to recommend the software they should use. Now, the process has reversed—after years of software buying and the ability to arrive at an informed decision through self-serve research. It's now software first, services second.



Steve Van Lieshout

SPOTLIGHT



Trust and reputation dictate service provider decisions.

Software buyers are eager to work with service providers, but how do buyers choose a service provider? In a sea of providers competing for clients, trust and reputation emerge as the most important factors driving buyer choice. When we asked software buyers which factors influence their trust in a potential service vendor, we found they valued:



Brand reputation.

A plurality (40%) chose brand reputation. This shouldn't come as a surprise; marketers have known for many years that brand reputation begets brand love, which begets pipeline in turn.



Word of mouth.

82% say the experiences of their peers play a significant role in their provider selection process. Furthermore, 80% say they use customer testimonials toward the beginning of their decision-making process, and 78% say they use them toward the end of their process to help curate potential service providers.



Certifications.

Finally, in a market where 81% of software buyers say they consider a potential vendor's history with data breaches or security incidents, providers shouldn't underestimate the power of data governance. More than 4 in 5 buyers say a potential service provider's data security certifications are important when selecting a provider.



How you can thrive in the new software economy.

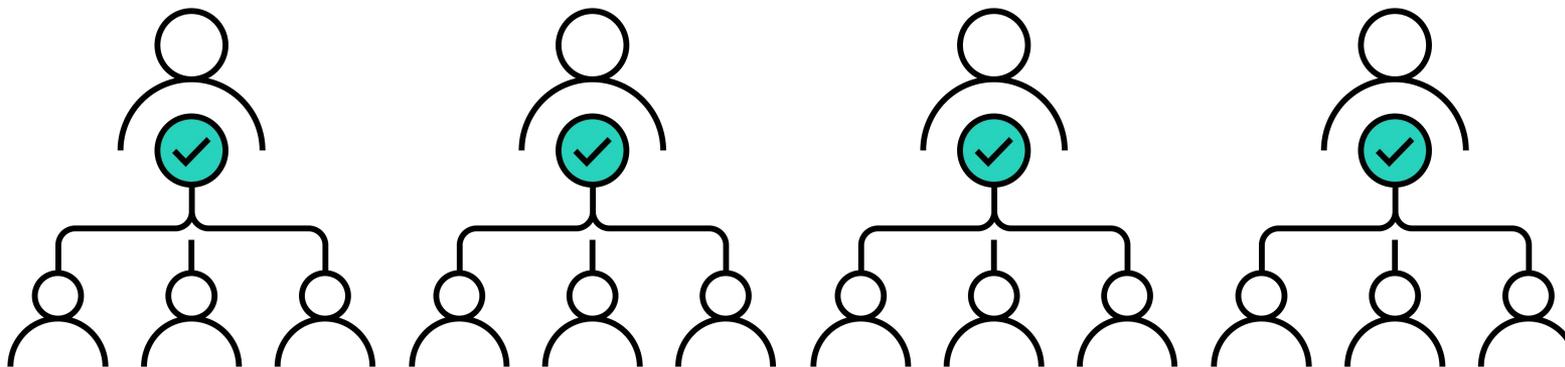




1. Prioritize C-suite engagement.

Buying power is consolidating in the C-suite and finance department after years of expansion to multi-employee buying committees. C-suite buyers, in particular, behave differently from their IC and managerial colleagues. 64% of C-suite answered that they would be less likely to purchase software if the vendor requires personal information (email, etc.) before providing pricing information, compared to 55% of managers-SVPs and 54% of individual contributors.

Relationships still drive purchases, especially the purchase of implementation services. 27% of buyers said that they chose their implementation provider based on a recommendation from the software vendor. In the C-suite, that went up to 30%.





2. Demonstrate your AI ROI for the C-suite.

The buck stops with the C-suite, and they're excited about AI. C-suite members are far more likely to describe themselves as power users of AI than ICs or managers up to the SVP level. They are also far more likely to have or recognize formal ROI goals for their AI investments.

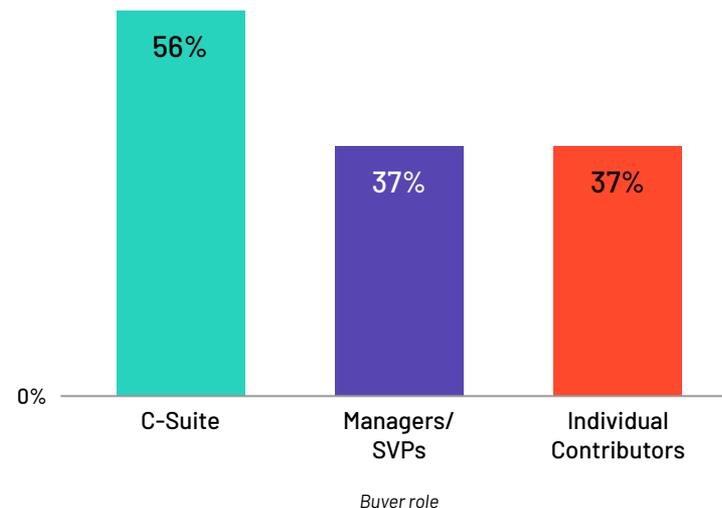
72% of C-suite employees said their organization has a formal ROI goal for its AI investment, compared to 67% of managers-SVPs (5% of whom said they didn't know) and 60% of ICs (9% of whom said they didn't know).

Remember that 79% of overall respondents said that the CFO always or frequently holds the final decision-making power. Understanding the use cases that CFOs and other C-suite employees are most interested in will help you get through to the final hoops of the sales process. AI continues to evolve, and understanding role-specific needs is crucial for sellers aiming to deliver ROI for businesses.

Make managers the heroes. While C-suite employees understand the use case for AI, achieving productivity with these tools comes down to managers and their teams. Work with management teams at key implementation touchpoints to drive ROI and prove your product's value.

C-suite buyers feel more advanced in their use of AI than those in less senior roles.

% of each group who describe themselves as AI power-users.

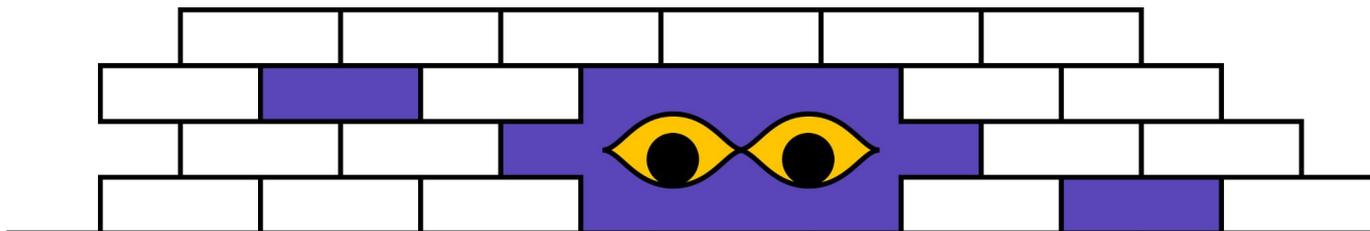




3. Lead with security and privacy credentials to facilitate easier assessments and remove purchasing barriers.

Place security certifications front and center in product messaging across channels, including the third-party marketplaces from which buyers like to purchase directly. Provide detailed security assessment guides or checklists to help buyers conduct their evaluations effectively and efficiently. Within those assessments, explain the product's security features and integrations. If buyers are unable to understand or assess the security and privacy concerns of your competition, you'll stand out by providing that detailed information and those tools in a way that understandably addresses their concerns.

Have multiple versions of security-focused documentation to highlight product strengths to both technical and non-technical audiences; there's a good chance the assessment may involve both parties. 40% (up from 28% last year) of buyers say that the department responsible for the buying decision is also responsible for conducting the security and privacy assessment, but the vast majority of assessments say that it's their IT or Infosec department. Engage early with security stakeholders to establish your credibility and reassure buyers of your commitment to secure solutions.





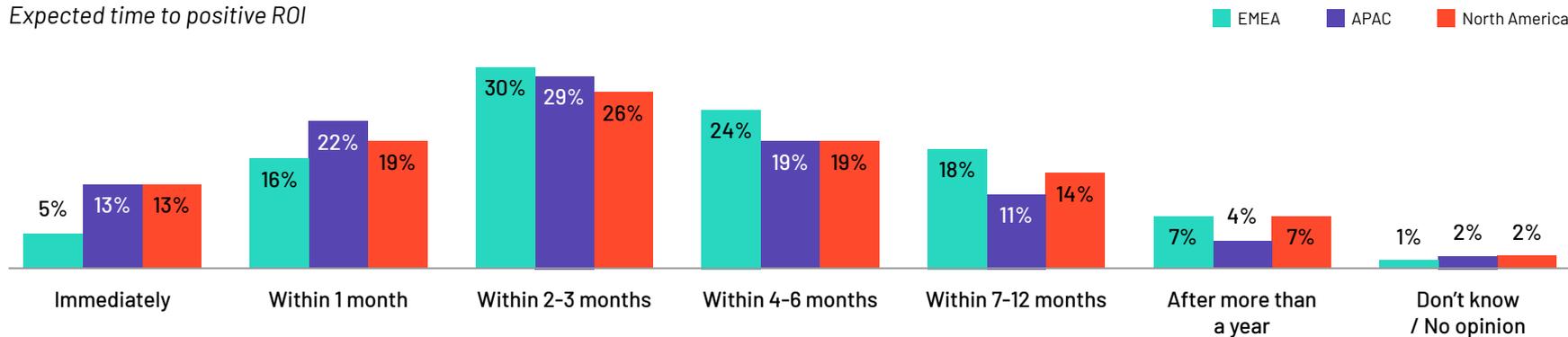
4. Build a quick-win strategy focused on visible value impact.

Software vendors must arrive with solid plans to deliver the fastest and most discernible business outcomes to their customers. In a market saturated with AI systems, buyers anticipate that AI can deliver superior and swifter results compared to traditional software systems. Consequently, this expectation prompts them to anticipate a tangible ROI immediately upon integrating the software into their tech infrastructure. 78% of the respondents across EMEA, APAC, and North America said they expect an ROI within 6 months of implementing software.

That said, ROI isn't the only factor buyers consider when procuring software. According to our survey, respondents prioritize security features, ease of use, implementation and integration, and software cost when making purchasing decisions. Software vendors should keep these factors in mind when devising a strategy to positively influence buyers throughout the purchasing process.

APAC and North American buyers have heightened immediate ROI expectations.

Expected time to positive ROI





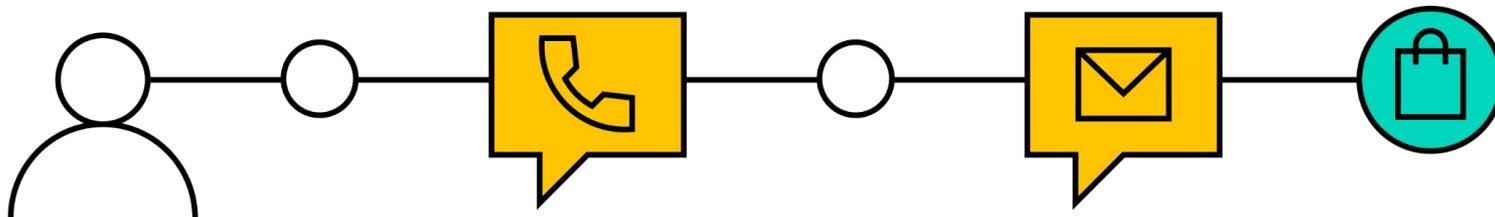
5. Don't let buyer self-service motivations overshadow your invitation to engage.

Buyers prefer self-service at most stages of the buying process, though the majority still want vendor touchpoints. Companies should prepare to do business with an independent buyer who wants moments of vendor involvement on their own terms.

How can companies know when buyers want their involvement? While answering when it was most useful for a sales professional to contact them, most buyers said it was the research stage (34%). That was followed by evaluation (23%) and discovery (21%). This distinction is notable—even though many buyers want most of each stage to be self-service, they still place importance on key moments of vendor involvement.

Only 3% said they never want to talk with sales, with no significant variations by region or company size.

Taking a measured approach in the early stages of the buyer journey will be of utmost importance. Highlighting the authentic voice of the customer by leaning on examples of positive peer feedback can help you validate your claims and accelerate trust with prospects.



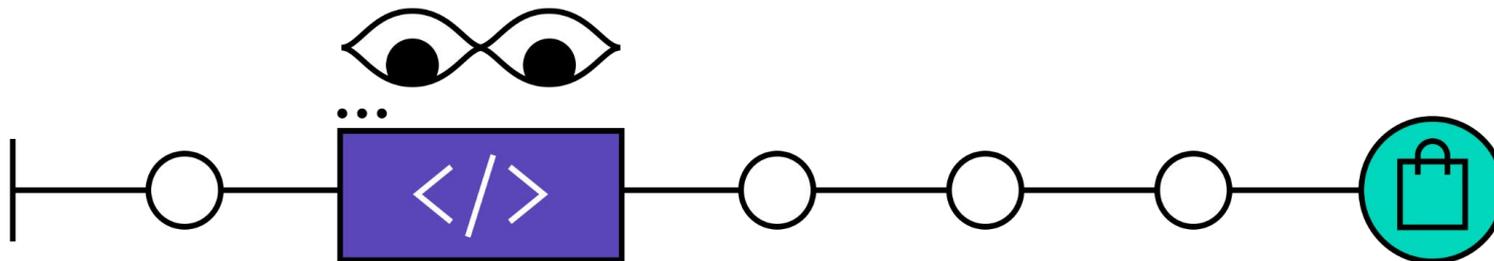


6. Bring service partners into the software sales process early.

There is a substantial unmet need for service provider support among software buyers; while 69% say they consider potential service providers during their software purchasing process, only 42% say they've actually used third-party implementation services.

The data suggests that, despite strong interest, many buyers aren't connecting with implementers and other service providers.

Software vendors should cultivate strong partner ecosystems, and they should connect prospects with service partners as early as possible during the sales process. A buyer who is empowered to leverage their software investments to their fullest potential is a buyer who is likely to renew or return. This way, software vendors and their partner ecosystems can create a strong symbiotic relationship that benefits all parties involved.





Methodology

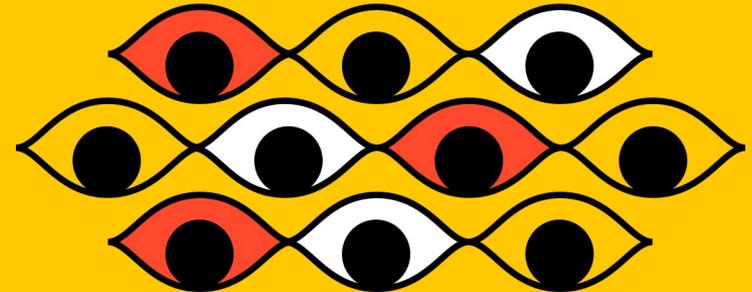
G2 fielded an online survey among 1,940 B2B decision makers with responsibility for, or influence over, purchase decisions for departments, multiple departments, operating units, or entire businesses. Respondents had job titles ranging from individual contributor to manager, director, VP, or higher. G2 defines small business as a company with 1-100 employees, mid-market as a company with 101-1,000 employees, and enterprise as a company with 1,001+ employees. The survey was conducted in March 2024 and includes a global pool of respondents across North America, EMEA, and APAC.

Thank you

We would like to thank Scott Brinker (Chiefmartec), Hannah Ajikawo (Revenue Funnel), Bryan Brown and Sarah Allen-Short (GTM Partners), and Steve Van Lieshout (Spotlight AR) for lending their perspectives and helping shape this report.

About G2

G2 is the world's largest and most trusted software marketplace. More than 90 million people annually – including employees at all Fortune 500 companies – use G2 to make smarter software decisions based on authentic peer reviews. Thousands of software and services companies of all sizes partner with G2 to build their reputation and grow their business – including Salesforce, HubSpot, Zoom, and Adobe. To learn more about where you go for software, visit www.g2.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).



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