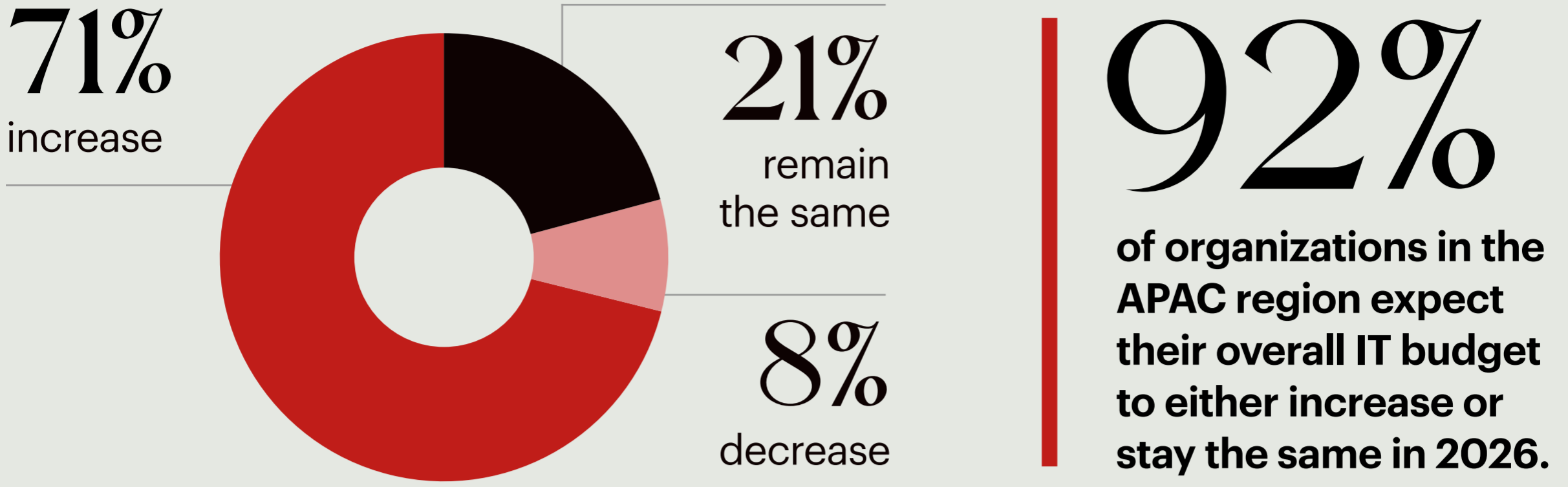


State of the CIO 2026

Technology budgets on the incline

Budget expectations



What's driving budget growth?

Additional investments in AI/ML projects and/or products services	45%
Investment in new skills/talent	29%
Need for security improvements	26%
To scale IT operations in support of business growth	25%
Keep pace with rising costs of technology and services	24%
Infrastructure modernization/migration	22%

What's driving budget cuts?

Company finances/performance	64%
Economic instability/uncertainty	64%
Less focusing on emerging technology	36%
Tech budget is moving to a different line of business	23%
Downsized or closed physical offices/facilities	18%
Reduced support from investors	18%

Where CIO attention is moving in 2026

Compared to last year, EMEA CIOs are spending...

More time on...

1. Improving IT operations/systems performance
2. Working more closely with business leaders on potential AI initiatives
3. Learning about emerging tech

Less time on...

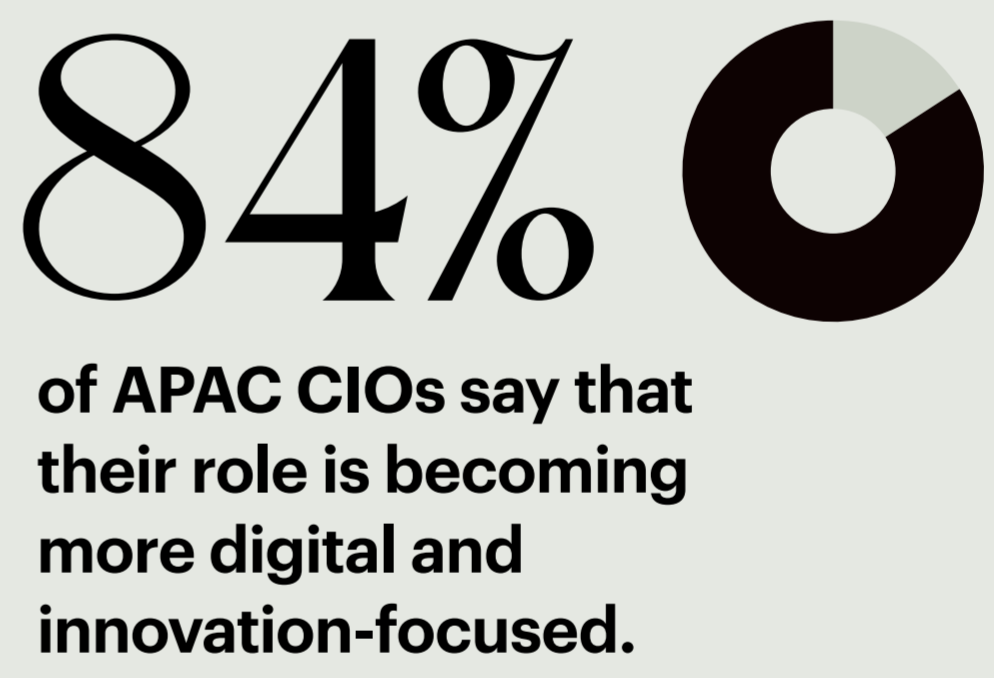
1. Negotiating with IT vendors
2. Cost control/expense management
3. Managing IT crises

AI skills top the hiring list

In which tech-related areas do APAC CIOs expect to hire talent over the next 6-12 months?

1. AI/Machine learning	49%
2. Cybersecurity	42%
3. Data science/analytics	30%
4. Business/IT automation	26%
5. Risk management	21%

APAC business and technology initiatives in 2026



Which business initiatives are driving IT investments?

Accelerating AI-driven innovation and applications	40%
Increasing cybersecurity protections	32%
Improving profitability	31%
Increasing operational efficiency	29%
Increasing employee productivity	28%

Which technology initiatives are driving IT investments?

Generative AI	71%
Machine learning/AI	68%
Agentic AI	63%
Security/risk management	56%
Data/business analytics	55%

AI is reshaping the CIO agenda in APAC

