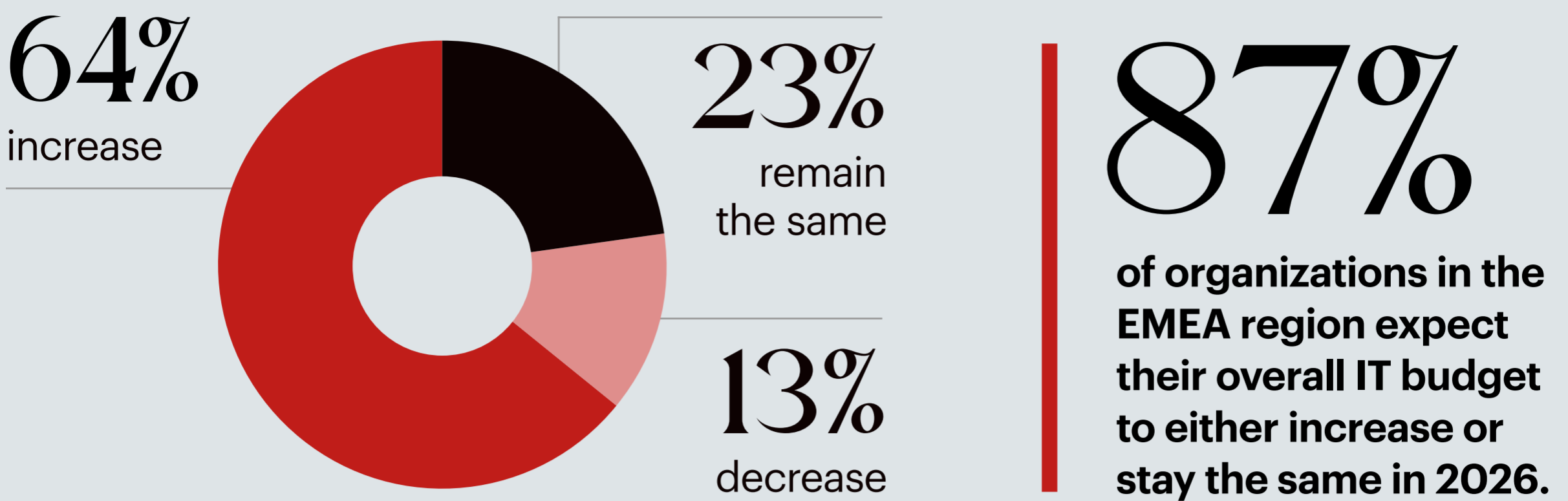


State of the CIO 2026

Technology budgets on the incline

Budget expectations



What's driving budget growth?

Infrastructure modernization/migration	35%
Additional investments in AI/ML projects and/or products services	33%
Keep pace with rising costs of technology and services	27%
Need for security improvements	24%
Application modernization	23%
To scale IT operations in support of business growth	21%

What's driving budget cuts?

Company finances/performance	53%
Economic instability/uncertainty	29%
Reduced support from investors	29%
Downsized or closed physical offices/facilities	24%
Regulatory changes	24%
Less focusing on emerging technology	18%

Where CIO attention is moving in 2026

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

More time on...

1. Working more closely with business leaders on potential AI initiatives
2. Learning about emerging tech
3. Creating a framework and organizational structure to support AI initiatives

Less time on...

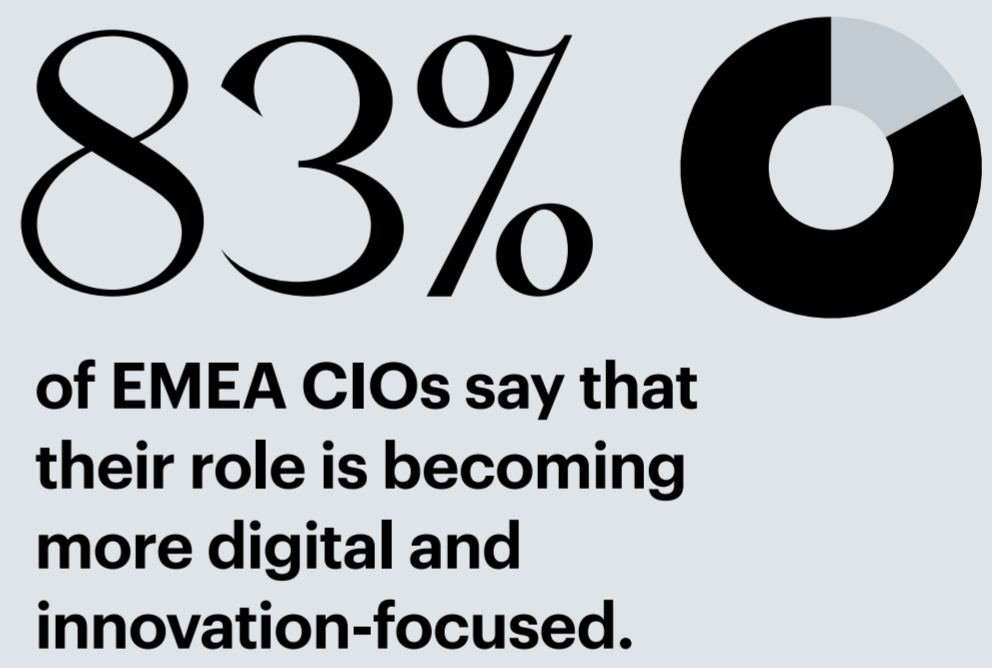
1. Negotiating with IT vendors
2. Managing IT crises
3. Cost control/expense management

AI skills top the hiring list

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

1. AI/Machine learning	41%
2. Cybersecurity	39%
3. Data science/analytics	30%
4. Business/IT automation	26%
5. Risk management	20%

EMEA business and technology initiatives in 2026



Which business initiatives are driving IT investments?

Accelerating AI-driven innovation and applications	36%
Increasing operational efficiency	36%
Increasing cybersecurity protections	35%
Automating/transforming business processes	33%
Improving profitability	27%

Which technology initiatives are driving IT investments?

Machine learning/AI	69%
Generative AI	66%
Agentic AI	66%
Business process/IT automation	56%
Security/risk management	54%

AI is reshaping the CIO agenda in EMEA

