The state of digital products, platforms and services

Building the foundations for agility, customer value and sustainable growth

November 2025

/thoughtworks

Design. Engineering. AI.

Introduction

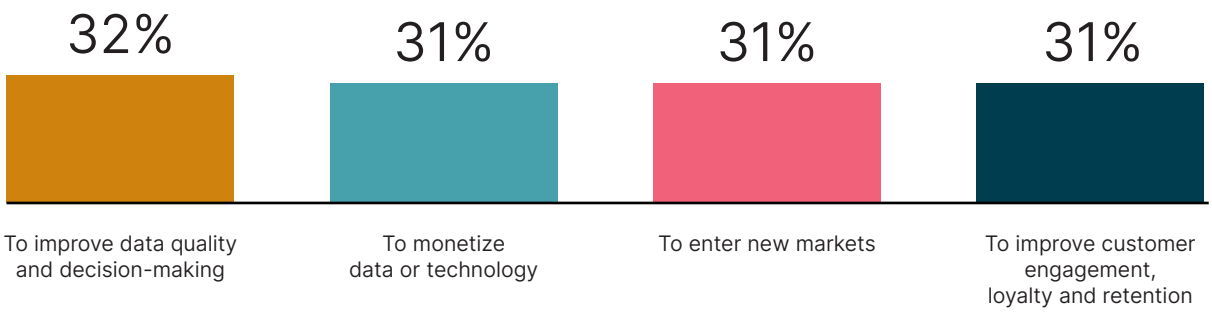
In a world where digital expectations continue to advance, customers and employees expect seamless, personalized and intelligent experiences across every touchpoint. Success depends on how effectively organizations can build and scale their digital products and services to power these experiences.

But many are caught in a strategic and operational gap where they are ambitious but underprepared. They are eager to transform but constrained by fragmented strategies, siloed teams and delivery approaches that lack clear direction or measurable impact. Ambition alone is not enough: without cohesive strategies, disciplined execution and the ability to learn quickly, digital initiatives risk becoming costly experiments rather than engines of growth.

This executive summary, the latest in our ongoing series exploring digital and AI readiness, explores where organizations stand on their digital journey and what it takes to successfully build new products, platforms and services.

Insight one:
Why digital products matter

More than half (53%) of senior decision-makers cite building new products, platforms, or services as important to their overall business success. It indicates they're core to growth, differentiation and long-term resilience, which is supported by the top reasons organizations are investing in digital products:



What these motivations have in common is that they elevate digital products from one-off initiatives to enterprise-wide growth levers. Each driver reflects a broader shift in how organizations compete - where data-driven insight, market expansion and customer intimacy are inseparable from digital execution. In this context, digital products are not simply new offerings but the connective tissue that links strategy to measurable outcomes.

Organizations that treat them as such are better positioned to turn ambition into advantage, while those that do not risk falling further behind peers who are already operationalizing digital as a core business capability.

Insight two:
The strategic shortfall

Recognition of the importance of digital products does not always translate into executional strength as most organizations have yet to build a strategy robust enough to support their ambitions. Fifty-eight percent admit they lack a fully developed and optimized strategy to guide these efforts. This strategic shortfall could manifest in several ways:

- Siloed or one-off initiatives with unclear ownership
- Overemphasis on technical build without clear business metrics
- Disconnected user experience across platforms
- Difficulty sustaining velocity post-launch

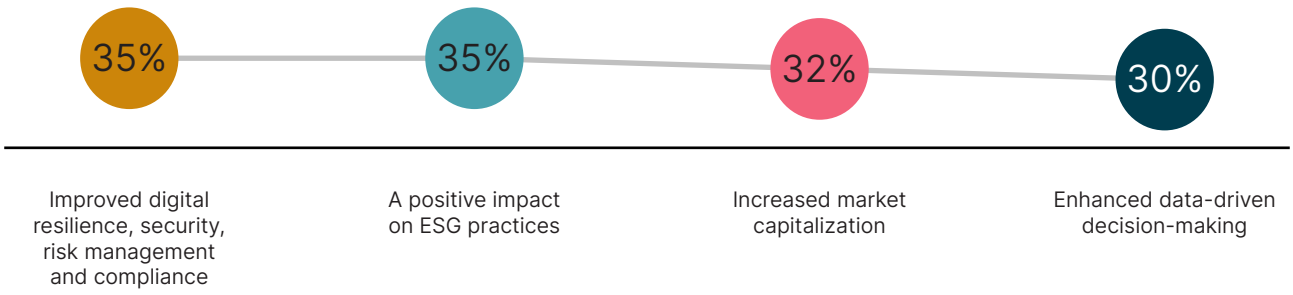
The result is a troubling ROI landscape. Organizations are more likely to report losses (47%) than gains (35%) from their digital product investments. Digital innovation inherently carries risk and requires upfront investment, but such figures suggest many are failing to manage that risk or sustain value creation. The reality is digital innovation often requires upfront investment and risk before yielding returns.

Successful digital innovation depends on “building the right thing” with a focus on outcomes, not just delivery. By aligning user needs, business strategy and technology from day one, organizations can ensure they’re solving the right problems at the right time.

Equally important is the continuous optimization of digital assets to ensure long-term agility, not just launch-readiness. Digital assets should be treated as living systems that evolve with markets and customer expectations. Encouragingly, nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents acknowledge their organization’s current approach needs a significant overhaul, signalling readiness to mature their capabilities.

Insight three:
Bridging the gap

Organizations that overcome the strategic and executional hurdles show that digital products can deliver benefits far beyond efficiency or customer experience. They create measurable impact across the enterprise, influencing resilience, reputation, growth and long-term value:



Improved digital resilience, security, risk management and compliance

A positive impact on ESG practices

Increased market capitalization

Enhanced data-driven decision-making

These results suggest that digital products act as value multipliers, extending beyond operational efficiency to influence sustainability, governance and enterprise growth. However, achieving this impact relies on prioritizing continuous value delivery. Iterative feedback loops, rigorous measurement frameworks and strong cross-functional alignment enable teams to refine ideas rapidly, protect against missteps and sustain performance.

Ultimately, success requires a product-led culture. One in which teams are empowered to test, learn and evolve quickly and where digital products become a durable source of competitive advantage rather than a maintenance burden.

Conclusion:

The research makes one thing clear: while building new digital products, platforms and services is a priority for many organizations, few are equipped to execute with speed and confidence.

To unlock success, we suggest organizations:

- Align digital initiatives with measurable business outcomes
- Embed continuous innovation and feedback loops into product development
- Shift from delivery-first to outcome-first thinking
- Invest in modern operational models to sustain long-term value

Thoughtworks partners with organizations at every stage of this journey – from ideation and product strategy to delivery and continuous evolution. Our approach ensures digital products aren't just shipped but continually improved to meet the demands of the market.

About the research

We spoke to 1,000 senior decision-makers from organizations across five key markets: US (300), Australia (175), Singapore (175), UK (175) and Germany (175). 25% were C-suite executives and 75% were senior executives at Director, VP and 'Head of' levels.

Organizations had an annual global revenue between $500 million to over $50 billion and an average annual IT budget of $390 million. They were from a range of industries, including: Public Sector (excluding Healthcare); Automotive and Manufacturing; Technology and Business Services; Healthcare and Life Sciences; Retail and Consumer Goods; Banking, Financial Services and Insurance; Energy and Utilities; and Travel and Transportation.

Please note, the stats we refer to in this document are about building new products, platforms or services. We use the term 'digital products' as an umbrella phrase where appropriate.

About Thoughtworks

We are a global technology consultancy that delivers extraordinary impact by blending design, engineering and AI expertise.

For over 30 years, our culture of innovation and technology excellence has helped clients strengthen their enterprise systems, scale with agility and create seamless digital experiences.

We're dedicated to solving our clients' most critical challenges, combining AI and human ingenuity to turn their ambitious ideas into reality.

www.thoughtworks.com

About Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne is an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector. Their reputation for robust and credible research-based analysis is founded upon rigorous research principles and their ability to seek the opinions of senior decision makers across technical and business functions, in all business sectors and all major markets.

www.vansonbourne.com

Click here for the full report.

Or visit https://www.thoughtworks.com/insights/reports/readiness-index

/thoughtworks

Design. Engineering. AI.