CX OUTSOURCING REPORT 2025

How Leading Companies are Leveraging AI and Outsourcing **to Scale CX and Drive Innovation**

Presented By

CMSWIRE & supportninja

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Who We Surveyed

Insights Straight From the Decision-Makers Shaping CX + Outsourcing Strategies

We surveyed **400+ senior leaders** — all at director level or higher, with nearly **60% sitting in the C-suite**.

These aren't just trends; they're **strategic insights from the executives making the calls on outsourcing, AI, and CX investment.**

For full demographics information, see Appendix.

What They Said

Strategic Partnerships

"Make it simpler to start. I would love to find an all-in-one vendor."

AI

"Our outsourced vendors are going to need to be on the cutting-edge of the latest AI developments."

Flexibility + Innovation

"Being better able to customize their services to adapt to the specific needs of my industry."

Why This Report Matters

What CX Leaders Need to Know Now

Customer expectations are rising, AI is advancing at breakneck speed, and economic pressures are shifting how businesses scale. The companies that win? They're leveraging CX as a **strategic weapon** to drive growth, innovation, and customer loyalty — and they're finding outsourcing partners to help them get there.

- Improving customer satisfaction is now the #1 reason for leaders to outsource — overtaking that of cost savings — with 84% calling it critically or moderately important.
  - *How are you measuring the impact of your outsourcing?*
- AI adoption is accelerating and redefining outsourcing strategies — **77% say AI capabilities matter in vendor selection**.
  - *Is your outsourcing strategy keeping pace?*

To understand how top-performing companies are **navigating these shifts**, SupportNinja partnered with CMSWire Insights to survey **400+ senior leaders, from directors to the C-suite**, all actively shaping their organizations' outsourcing strategies.

This **second annual CX Outsourcing Report** doesn't just track trends — it uncovers the **real strategies leaders are using** to optimize CX, integrate AI, and build sustainable success. Where notable, we'll compare this year's insights to those in last year's report, giving you a clear view of how outsourcing is evolving.

What's Inside?

✔ The key trends shaping outsourcing in 2025
✔ How top businesses are balancing cost, quality, and innovation
✔ The AI-driven CX outsourcing strategies delivering real impact
✔ What to do now to stay competitive — and get ahead

If you're making outsourcing decisions in 2025, this report is your **competitive advantage**. Are you ready?

Key Takeaways

CX leaders are under more pressure than ever to deliver seamless experiences, integrate AI effectively, and scale smartly — all without sacrificing quality. The companies pulling ahead? Those who rethink outsourcing as a growth strategy, not just a cost play.

- **AI adoption is moving fast**
- **Businesses are doubling down on CX outsourcing**
- **Outsourcing is becoming a strategic must-have, not just an operational fix**

Here's what the data reveals about how leading organizations are leveraging AI, outsourcing CX, and scaling for long-term success.

1 AI is redefining outsourcing — and adoption is accelerating

- The AI shift is here — **87% of companies are actively implementing, testing, or strategizing how to use AI for greater operational efficiency**, and **AI capabilities are now a must-have** in outsourcing vendor selection (up from 73% last year to 77% this year).

- The fastest-growing outsourcing categories include customer success, customer support, and call center operations, signaling a shift toward strategic, experience-driven partnerships.

2 Companies are leveraging AI and outsourcing to enhance CX

- **87% of companies** are actively implementing or planning to **use AI in their CX**

- **Full-lifecycle CX remains a top driver** — businesses continue to prioritize outsourcing for **CX, customer success, customer support, technical support**, and **call center** operations, focusing on **improving service consistency and quality, enhancing customer satisfaction**, and **driving cost efficiency and ROI**.

3 Companies are investing in outsourcing — and using it to scale

- **Outsourcing budgets remain strong**, with fewer companies cutting back. While 61% of companies increased outsourcing budgets this year, the number of companies reducing budgets was cut in half — from 8% to just over 4%.

- **Outsourcing is becoming a necessity for scalable, sustainable growth. 90% of leaders** say outsourcing will play a larger role as they scale, and "**long-term sustainable growth**" has overtaken "growth at all costs" as the top guiding principle for businesses.

Outsourcing Budgets in 2025:

How Leaders Are Allocating Spend to Stay Competitive
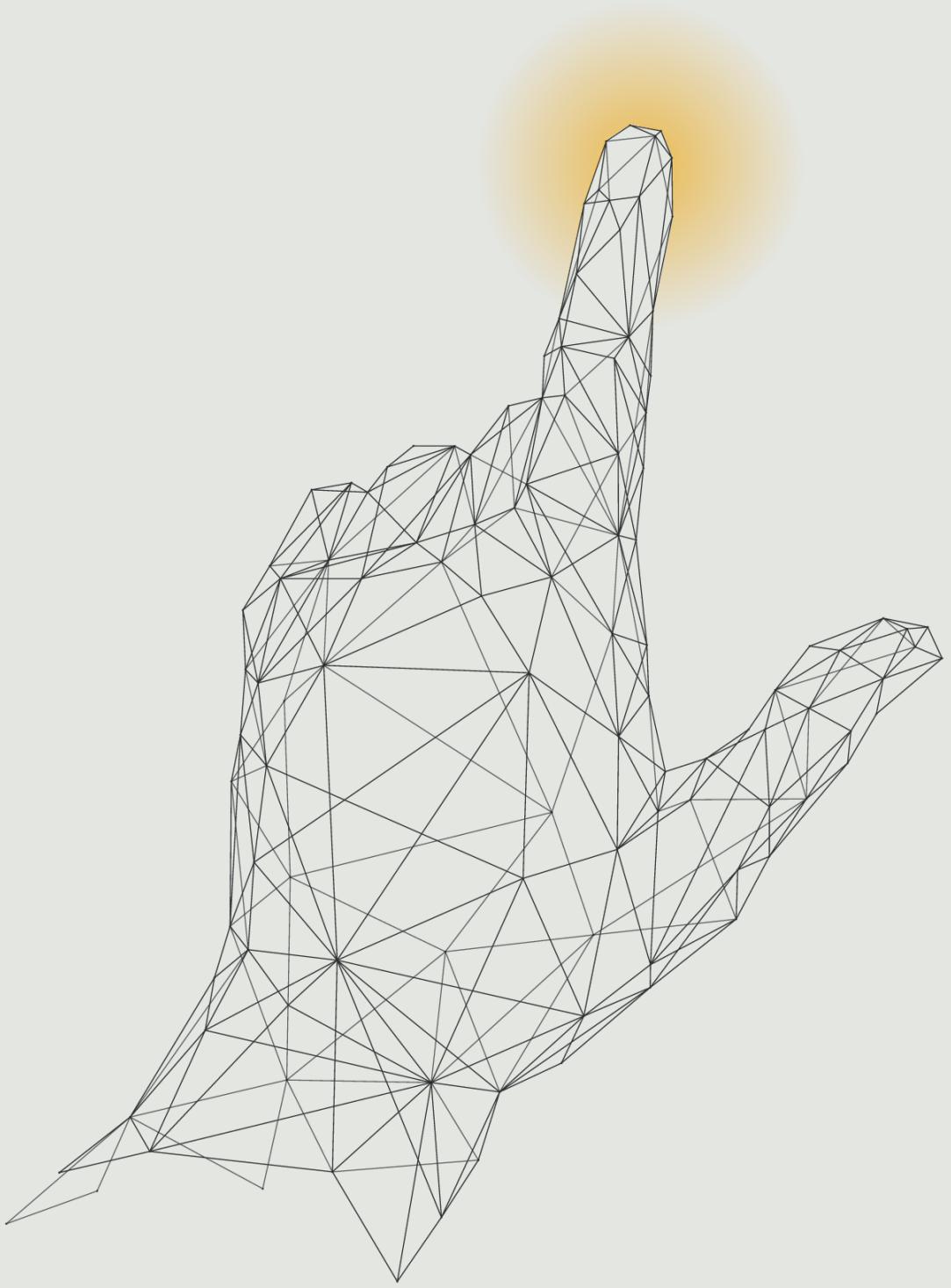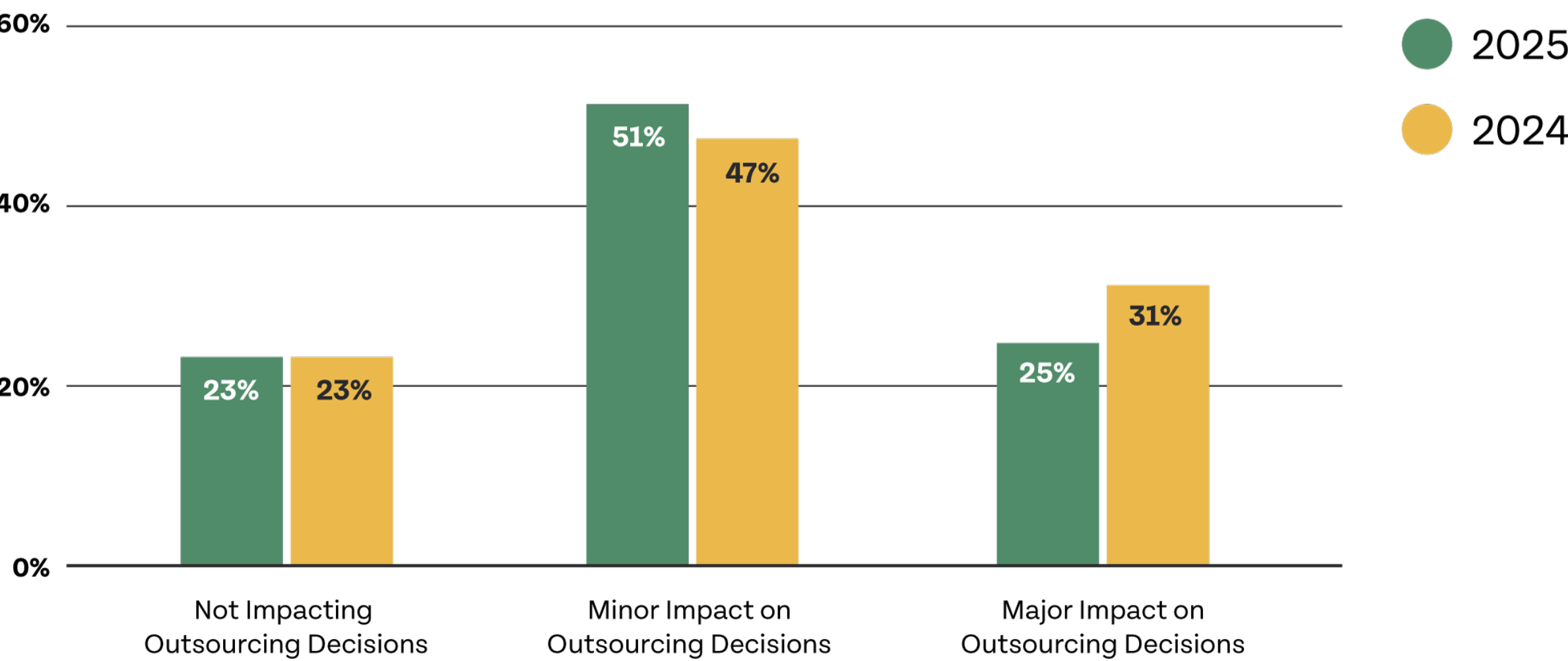
Outsourcing Budgets in 2025:

How Leaders Are Allocating Spend to Stay Competitive

How Top Leaders Are Adapting Their Outsourcing Strategies to Keep Up with Market Shifts

Budget is always top-of-mind for leadership teams, as they seek to control costs and mitigate risk. But this year, signs point to **growing confidence** in the macroeconomic climate, with more organizations **gaining budget flexibility and feeling less constrained by external pressures**.

Last year, **economic uncertainty forced many companies to focus on cost-cutting and risk mitigation** in their outsourcing decisions. This year, **that pressure has eased** — more companies now say the economy is having only a **minor impact** on outsourcing strategy (Figure 1).

Figure 1: How is the current economic environment impacting decisions to outsource at your organization?

Legend: ● 2025 ● 2024

	Not Impacting Outsourcing Decisions	Minor Impact on Outsourcing Decisions	Major Impact on Outsourcing Decisions
2025	23%	51%	25%
2024	23%	47%	31%

This **improved economic sentiment is fueling more outsourcing investment**. While the percentage of organizations increasing their outsourcing budgets remains stable, **the number of companies cutting back has dropped by 50% – from 8% to only 4%** (Figure 2).

In other words: **leaders are no longer in survival mode – they're strategically scaling outsourcing to support business growth.**

Figure 2: How outsourcing budgets have changed in the past year
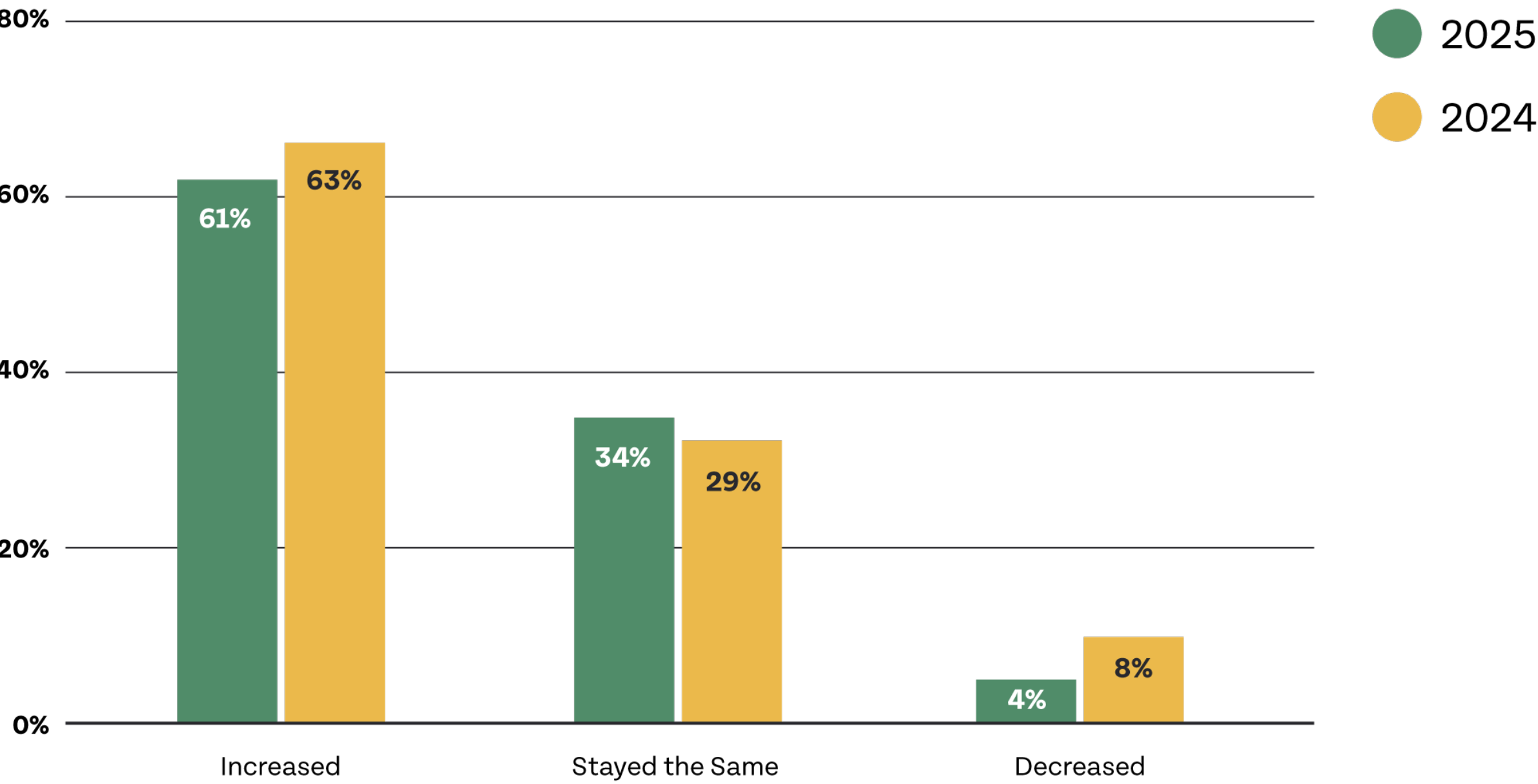
With **less economic pressure and greater outsourcing success, confidence is rising**. This year, **57% of leaders report feeling more confident about their business purchasing decisions** up in the current economic environment, compared to last year.

For those responsible for outsourcing strategy, this signals a shift from **defensive cost-cutting to proactive investment.**
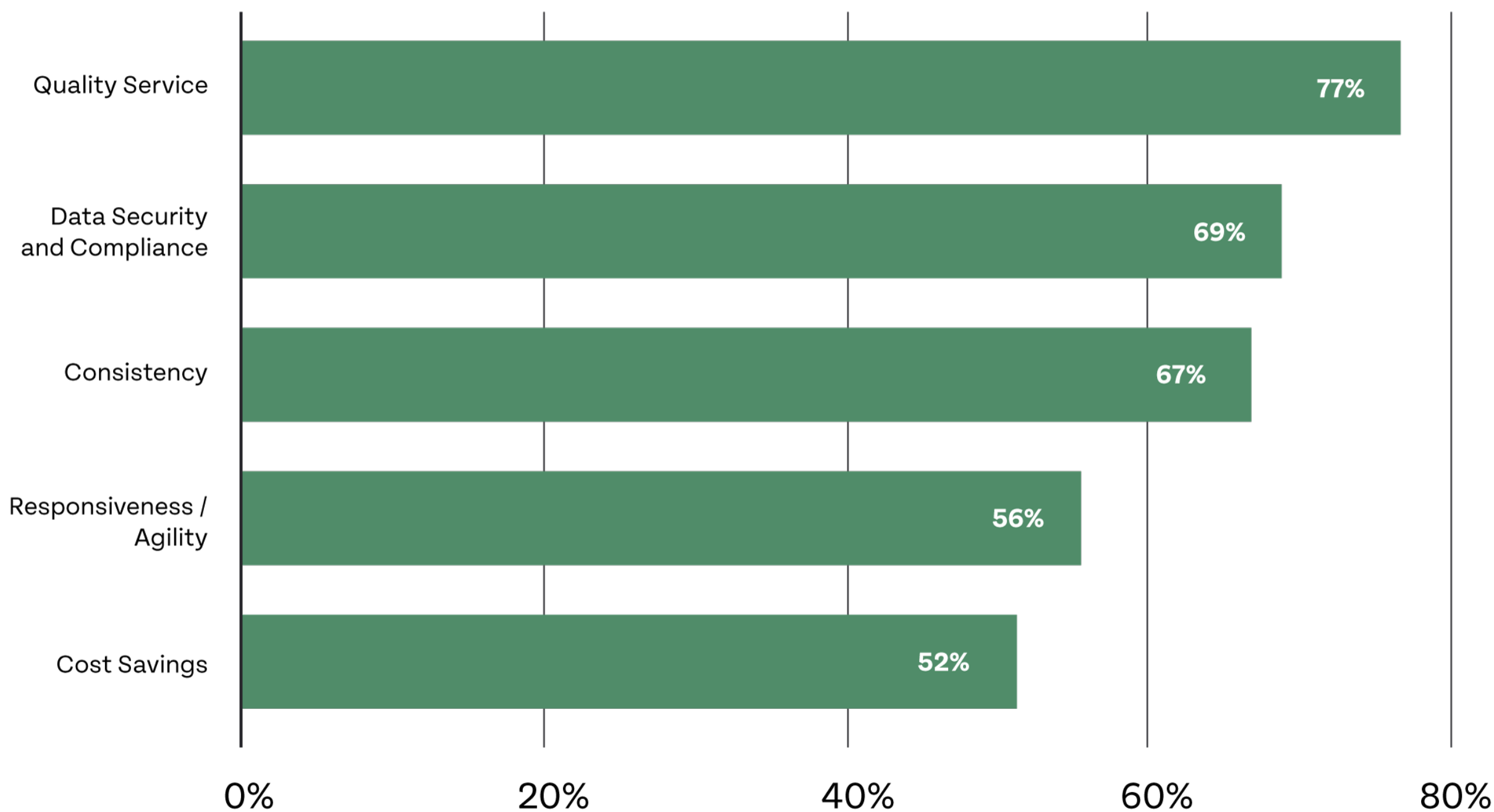
Where Leaders Are Investing Their Outsourcing Budget

How Top Organizations Evaluate and Select Vendors

Outsourcing isn't a decision leaders take lightly. The vast majority of organizations vet multiple providers before signing a contract — in fact, **77% speak to 3-5 prospective vendors** before making a decision, and the average number evaluated is nearly five.

In today's market, **cost savings alone isn't enough**. While budgets remain a factor, organizations are prioritizing **service quality, security, and operational consistency** when selecting outsourcing partners (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Critical factors when selecting an outsourcing partner

| Factor	Percentage
Quality Service	77%
Data Security and Compliance	69%
Consistency	67%
Responsiveness / Agility	56%
Cost Savings	52%

The Takeaway: Strategic Partnerships Are the New Standard in Outsourcing

Leaders aren't just looking for vendors — they're seeking trusted, high-performing partners. The most successful companies are choosing outsourcing providers that deliver on **security, reliability, and quality** — not just cost savings.

Outsourcing for CX:

The Competitive Advantage You Can't Ignore
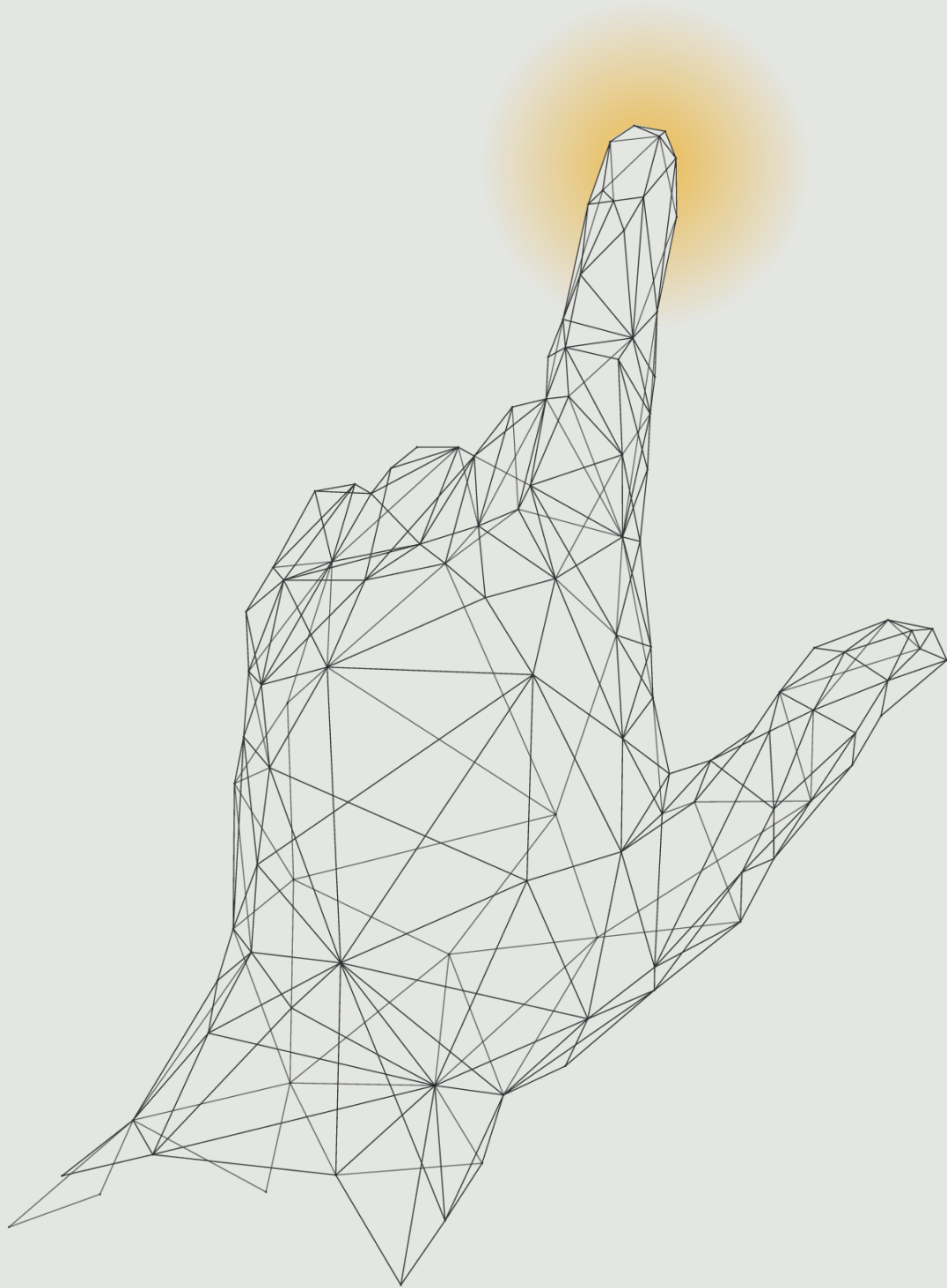
Outsourcing for CX:

The Competitive Advantage You Can't Ignore

Why Leading Companies Outsource CX — and What It's Costing Those Who Don't

> "I want my outsourcing vendor to actually take my individual experience and needs into consideration as they implement their product with my business."

Outsourcing is often seen as a way to supplement internal teams. But today, businesses aren't just outsourcing for additional resources — **they're outsourcing for strategic impact**. And nowhere is that more critical than **customer experience**.

If you're a CX director evaluating outsourcing, are you aligning your strategy with executive priorities? Because **prioritizing CX is a competitive advantage**.

Why Outsource CX?

Top-performing companies are leveraging outsourcing to elevate experiences across the entire customer journey. Executives cite improving customer satisfaction as the #1 reason for outsourcing, followed closely by delivering a consistent experience. While operational goals like cost savings and specialized expertise remain factors, the real driver is creating a stronger, more seamless customer experience (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Critical factors in decisions to outsource

| Factor	Percentage
Improving Customer Satisfaction	52%
Delivering a Consistent Experience	51%
Saving on Operational Costs	46%
Gaining Access to People With Specific Skills / Expertise	42%
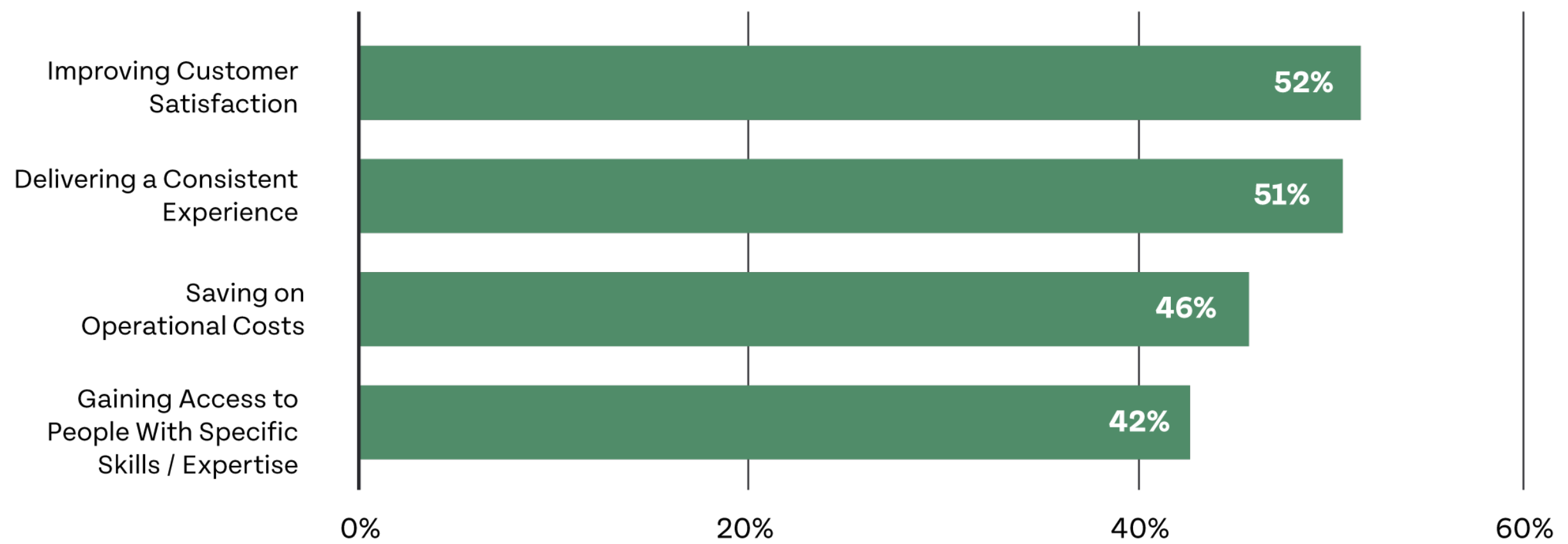
The Shift From Cost Savings to Value

Outsourcing strategies still centered on budget reductions instead of CX impact miss out on a big opportunity — the full value of an outsourcing partner to your brand. Forward-thinking CX executives aren't just looking for lower costs — they're defining **what value means** for their organization and **ensuring their outsourcing partners deliver** on it. Nearly all survey respondents (96%) agree: It is important to find an outsourcing partner focused on delivering value, not just cost savings.

> **The Takeaway: High-Performing CX Teams Use Outsourcing to Scale Seamlessly**
>
> **Top-performing companies aren't just tracking cost savings — they're ensuring their outsourcing vendors align with strategic goals and tracking CX impact with North Star value-based metrics**. They are already making the shift by using outsourcing as a lever for growth, retention, and competitive advantage.

AI + Outsourcing:

The Strategy Driving CX Innovation
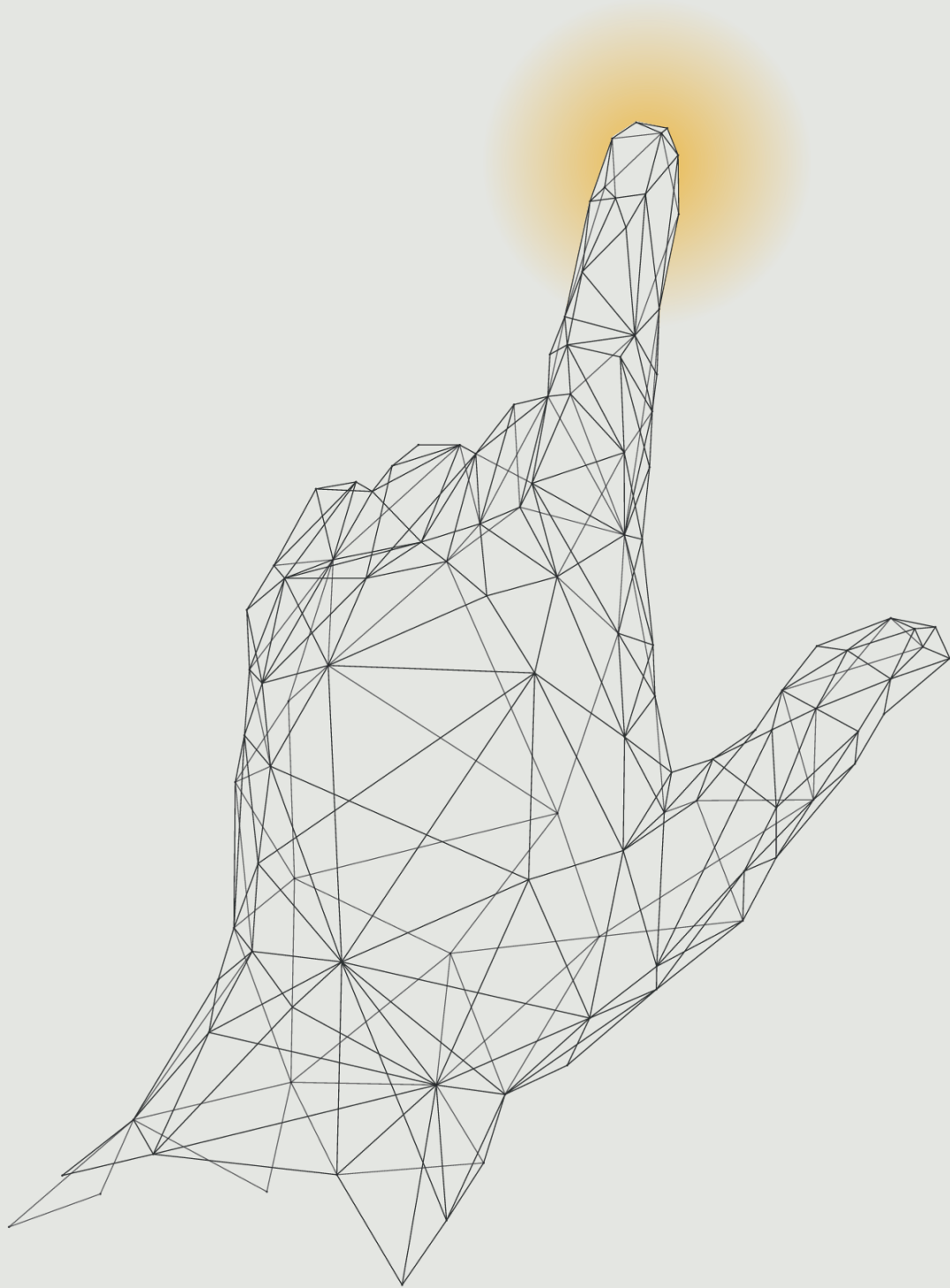
AI + Outsourcing:
The Strategy Driving CX Innovation

Businesses not using or exploring AI to improve their CX are officially in the minority. **87% of businesses are actively implementing, testing, or strategizing AI to improve operational efficiency**. And despite fears about AI replacing human roles, leaders overwhelmingly agree: **86% believe AI and humans working together deliver better results than either alone**. AI isn't coming for outsourcing jobs; rather, it's a tool to help outsourced teams do their best work.

The real takeaway? **AI alone isn't the answer**. Companies are realizing that effective AI integration requires **alignment with strategic business goals**. When AI is treated as a quick fix rather than a core component of CX strategy, it leads to **fragmented initiatives, underwhelming outcomes, and inefficiencies**. The real advantage comes from **AI-enabled outsourcing partnerships** that **combine human expertise with intelligent tools** to drive seamless, scalable customer experiences.

> "Our outsourced vendors are going to need to be on the cutting-edge of the latest AI developments."

The AI Advantage: How Leaders Are Driving Smarter CX

AI adoption in CX hasn't yet hit critical mass, but it's accelerating fast. **Nearly half of all companies (45%) have already incorporated AI into their CX programs, and another 42% plan to do so soon**. That leaves **only 1 in 8 companies with no AI adoption plans** — a shrinking minority in a rapidly evolving landscape (Figure 5).

> "We need a better application of generative AI to our existing processes."

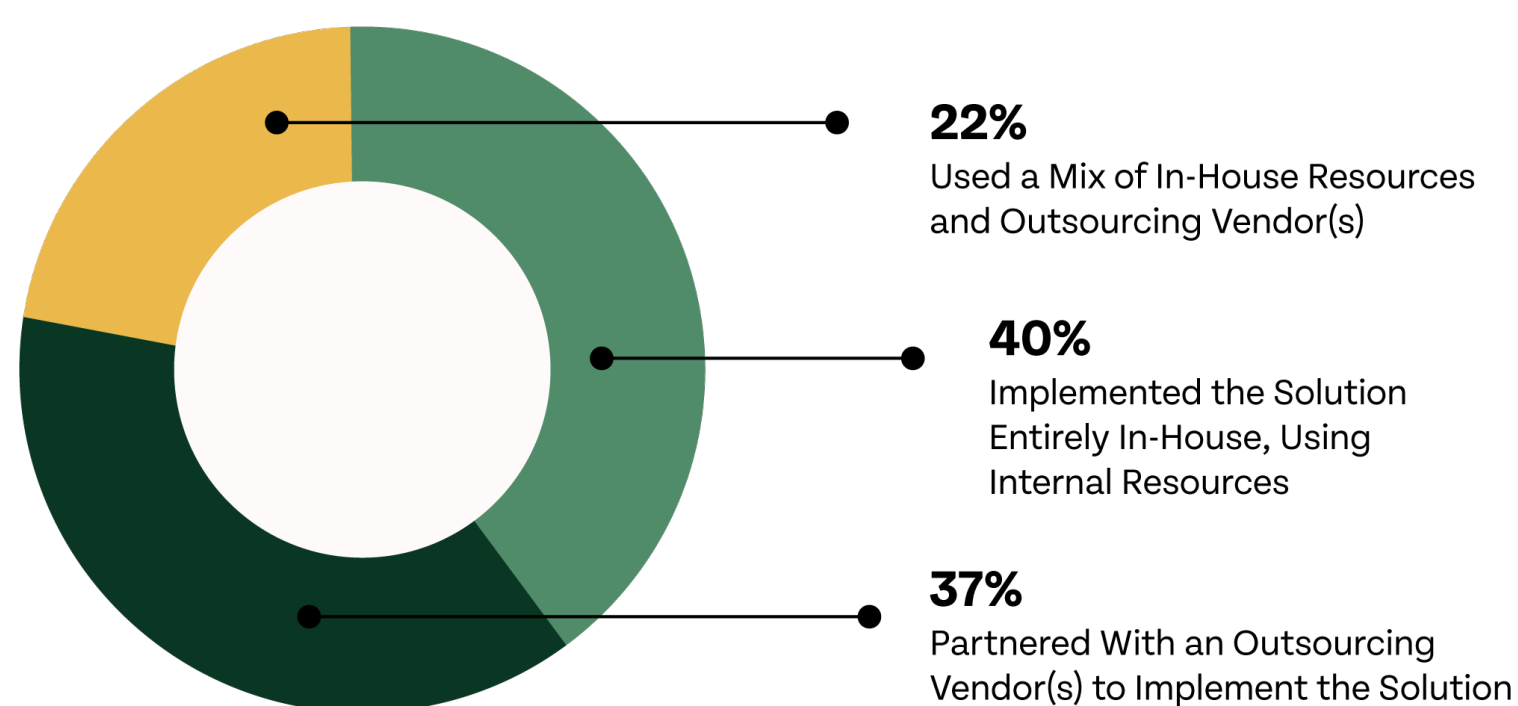*Figure 5: Have you incorporated AI into your CX programs in the last year?*

45%
Yes

13%
No, and We Have No Plans To

42%
No, but We Plan To
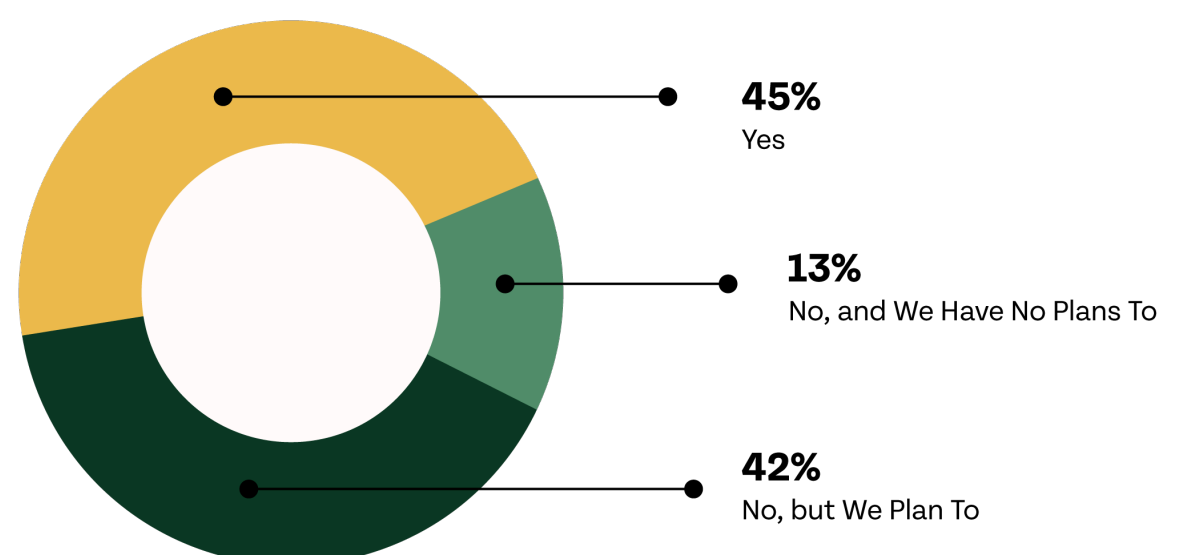
AI implementation isn't one-size-fits-all — but getting it right is critical. Companies are taking different approaches, balancing in-house expertise with outsourcing support (Figure 6).

Here's the reality: **AI is complex — and most companies can't do it alone.** AI strategies **that don't include outsourcing partners who understand AI and CX** may fail to compete with those who are leveraging **AI-enabled outsourcing for seamless automation, smarter customer interactions, and long-term scalability.**

Figure 6: Top approaches among organizations who have incorporated AI into their CX Programs
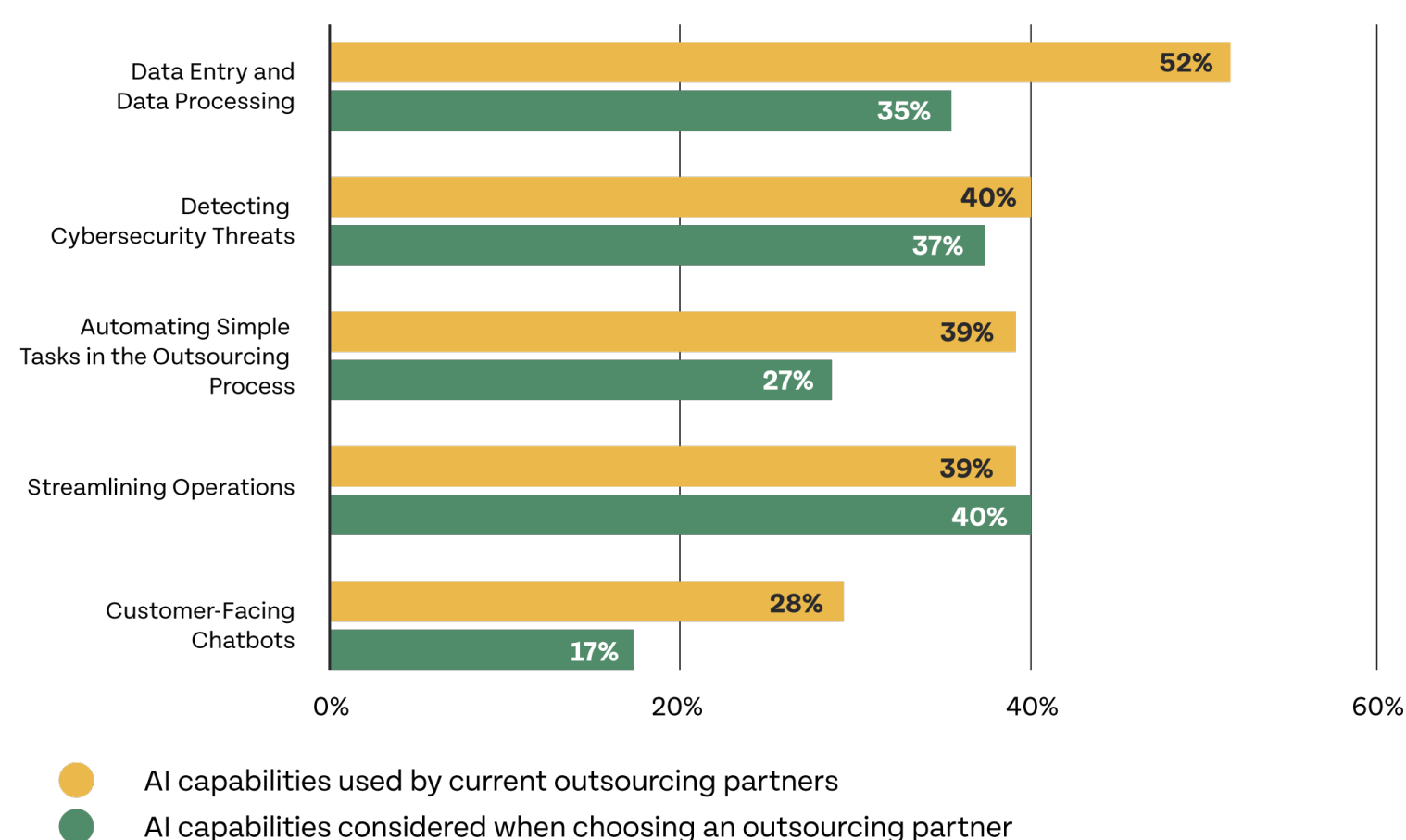
22%
Used a Mix of In-House Resources and Outsourcing Vendor(s)

40%
Implemented the Solution Entirely In-House, Using Internal Resources

37%
Partnered With an Outsourcing Vendor(s) to Implement the Solution

The AI-Enabled Vendor: Are Your Partners Keeping Up?

AI isn't just transforming CX — it's reshaping how businesses choose outsourcing partners. For companies focused on scaling CX while staying agile, the key lies in partnering with vendors who embed AI into a **holistic CX strategy tailored to meet long-term objectives and improved customer experiences** — not just as a bolt-on feature. And yet, not every outsourcing provider is keeping pace with the demand for AI-powered solutions.

AI Outsourcing Gaps: What Your Vendor Might Be Missing

Many outsourcing partners offer AI-enabled capabilities already, but that doesn't mean they're being fully utilized. 82% said their outsourcing vendor provides AI capabilities, yet many companies aren't fully utilizing what's available (Figure 7).

Figure 7: AI Capabilities: What current vendors have and what companies look for

Category	AI capabilities used by current outsourcing partners	AI capabilities considered when choosing an outsourcing partner
Data Entry and Data Processing	52%	35%
Detecting Cybersecurity Threats	40%	37%
Automating Simple Tasks in the Outsourcing Process	39%	27%
Streamlining Operations	39%	40%
Customer-Facing Chatbots	28%	17%

● AI capabilities used by current outsourcing partners
● AI capabilities considered when choosing an outsourcing partner

Also critical is understanding how your vendor applies AI in their workflows — is it to bring value to your account, or to their bottom line? Many traditional outsourcing companies apply AI tools to reduce their own costs and increase margins, with little regard for the impact it has on the resulting customer experience. Just because they use AI doesn't mean they are harnessing it for the value impact it can have on your business. Be sure to understand the difference.
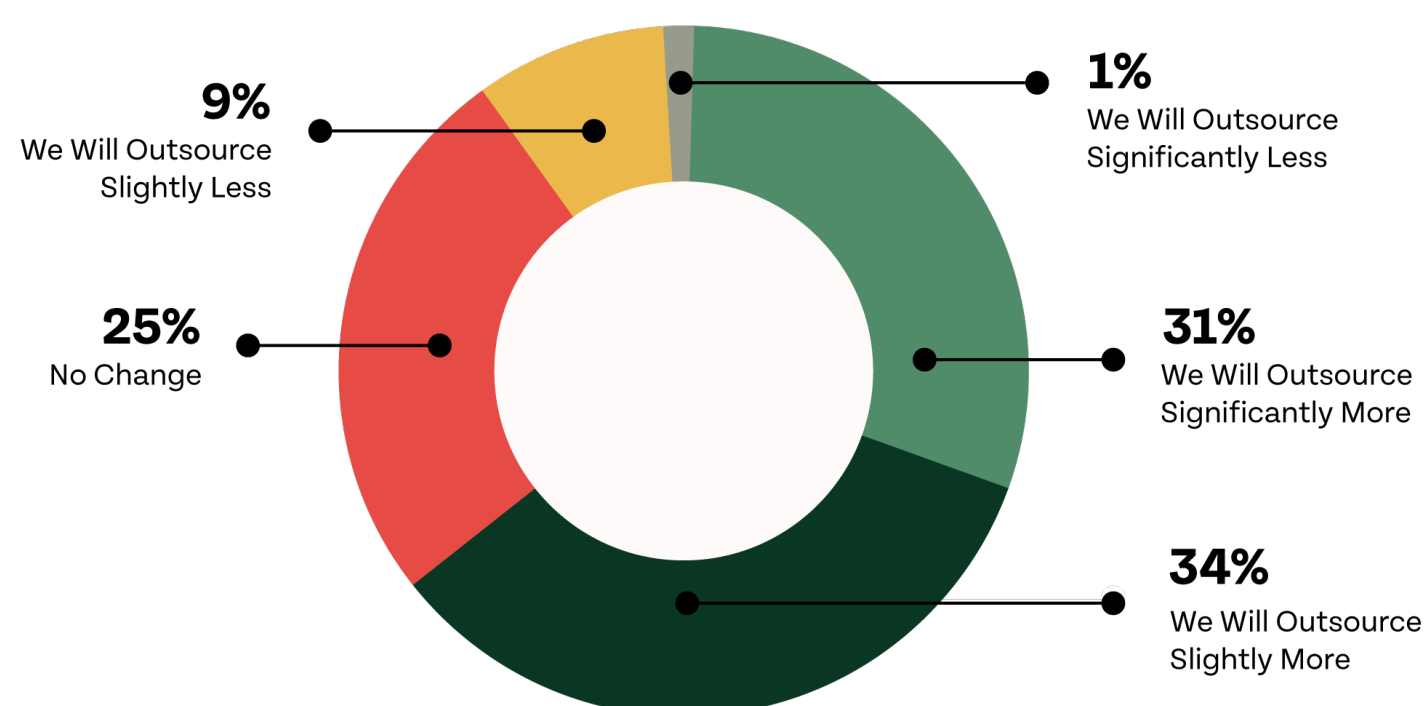
AI in Vendor Selection: A Growing Priority

AI capabilities aren't just a nice-to-have anymore — they're an expectation. **77% of leaders now consider AI a critical factor when choosing an outsourcing vendor**, up from 73% last year. As AI adoption grows, companies increasingly see it as a **differentiator that drives efficiency, innovation, and CX impact**.

AI + Outsourcing: A Catalyst for Expansion, Not Reduction

Far from replacing outsourcing in CX, **AI is accelerating it**. Among survey respondents, **66% expect AI and automation to increase their outsourcing needs**, while only 10% believe AI will lead them to outsource less (Figure 8).

Figure 8: How do you expect emerging technologies like AI and automation to shape your outsourcing practices?

9% We Will Outsource Slightly Less
1% We Will Outsource Significantly Less
25% No Change
31% We Will Outsource Significantly More
34% We Will Outsource Slightly More

The Takeaway: The Future of CX Belongs to Outsourcing Strategies Powered by Humans + AI

AI isn't just a feature — it's a **competitive differentiator in outsourcing vendor selection**. The most forward-thinking companies aren't just selecting vendors based on cost savings; **they're prioritizing AI-enabled capabilities that enhance CX, improve efficiency, and drive long-term value**.

Companies with outsourcing vendors that aren't helping them use AI to its fullest are willing to look elsewhere to gain the benefits of smarter scaling, streamlined operations, and better CX outcomes.

The Tech Sector's Outsourcing Playbook:

How SaaS Leaders Are Gaining an Edge
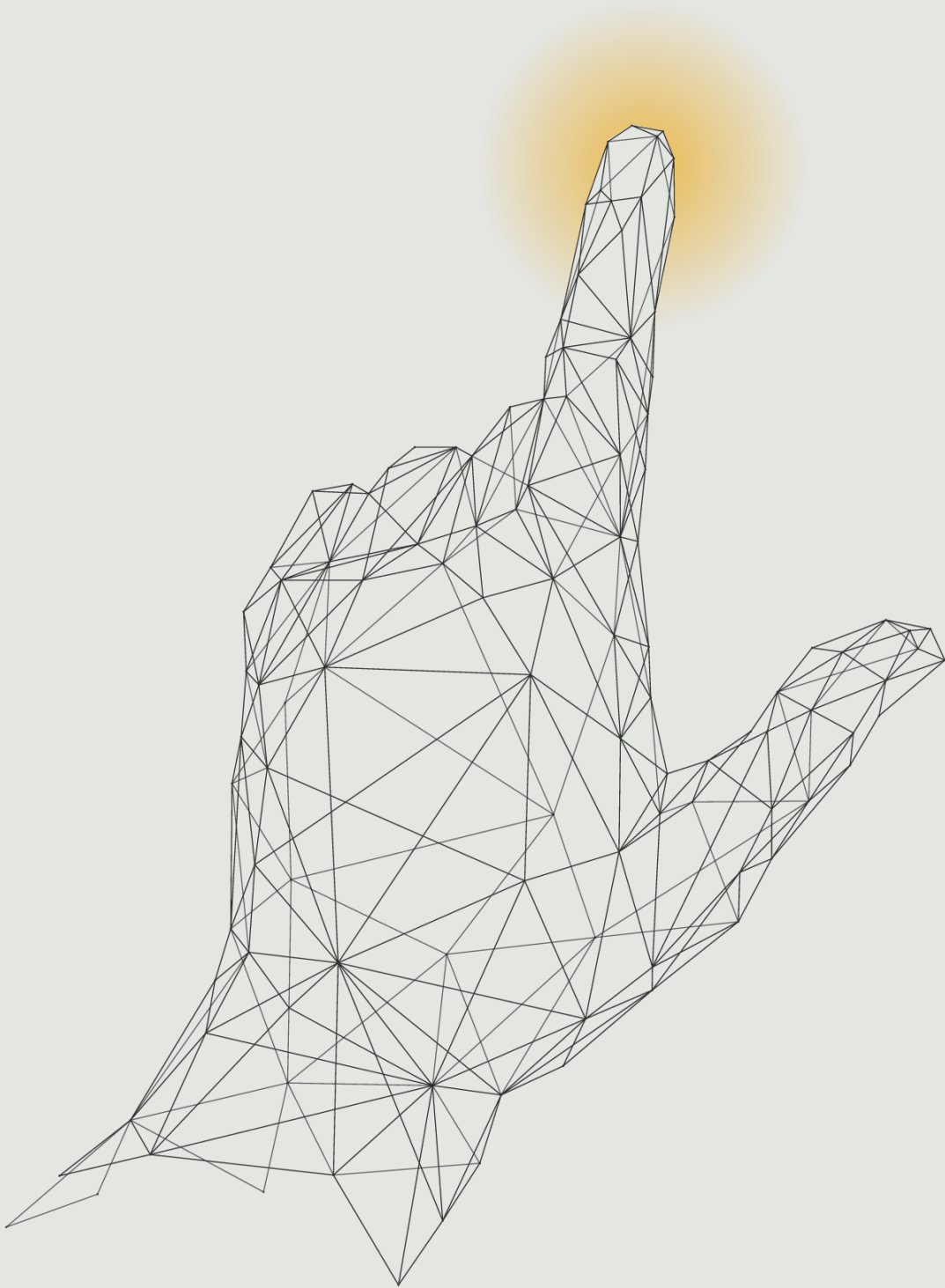
The Tech Sector's Outsourcing Playbook:

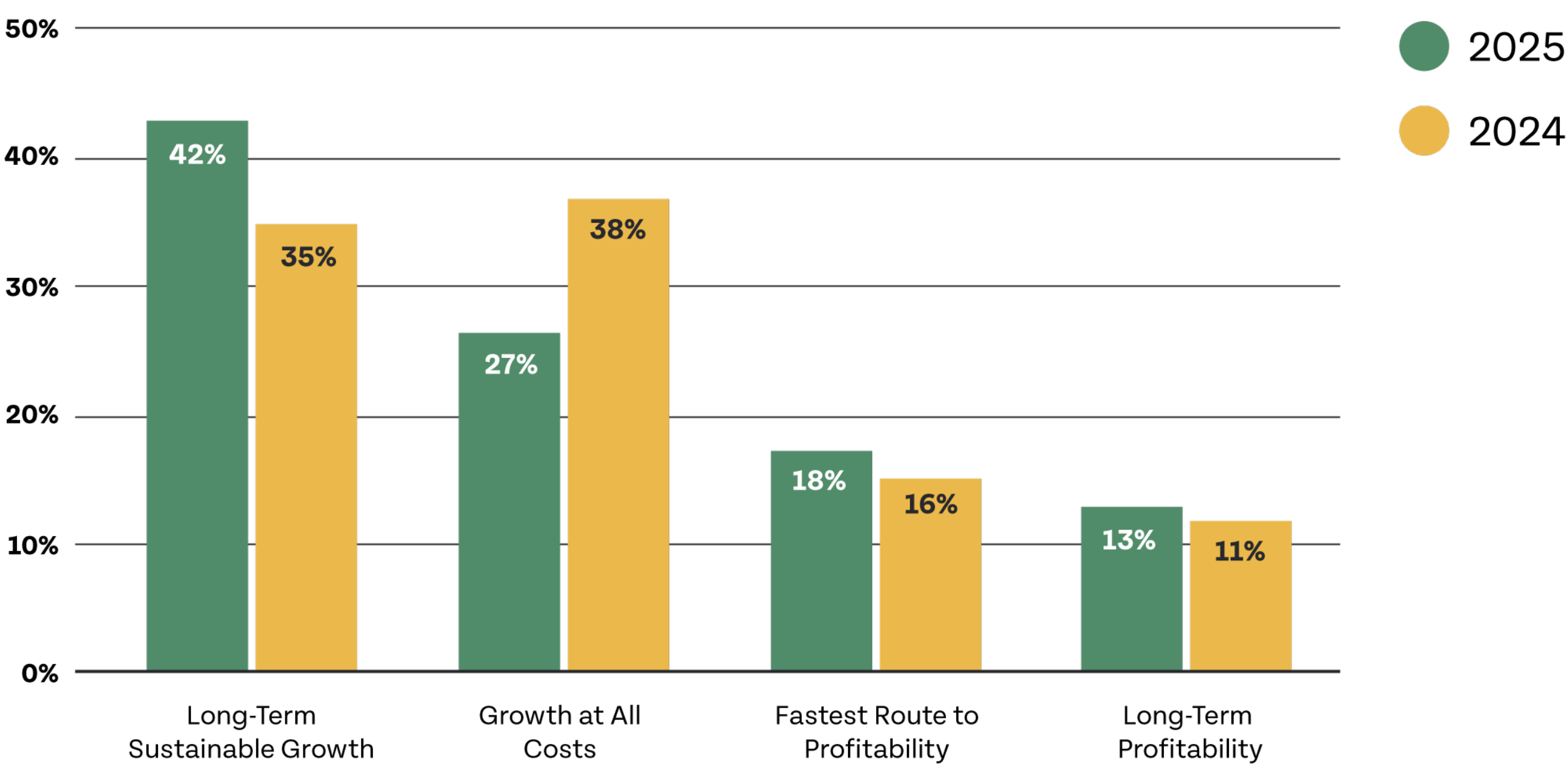## How SaaS Leaders Are Gaining an Edge

"We want our vendor to provide improved release of our company's goals and quality of our products to customers."

The Shift: From Aggressive Growth to Sustainable Success

The tech industry is often ahead of the curve when it comes to **outsourcing, innovation, and AI adoption** — and this year is no different. **25% of our survey respondents work in the SaaS sector**, providing a unique look at how leaders in this space are evolving their outsourcing strategies.

For tech companies, **the "growth at all costs" era is over**. The top guiding principle has shifted to **long-term sustainable growth**, overtaking last year's "growth at all costs" mindset (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Top guiding principles informing current business strategies (tech sector only)

Legend:
- 2025 (green)
- 2024 (yellow)

Principle	2025	2024
Long-Term Sustainable Growth	42%	35%
Growth at All Costs	27%	38%
Fastest Route to Profitability	18%	16%
Long-Term Profitability	13%	11%

AI, Integration, and the New Vendor Expectations

Tech companies aren't just **outsourcing more — they're outsourcing smarter**. This shift is driving a preference for partners who **provide long-term value, AI capabilities, and integrated solutions** — not just race-to-the-bottom labor arbitrage.
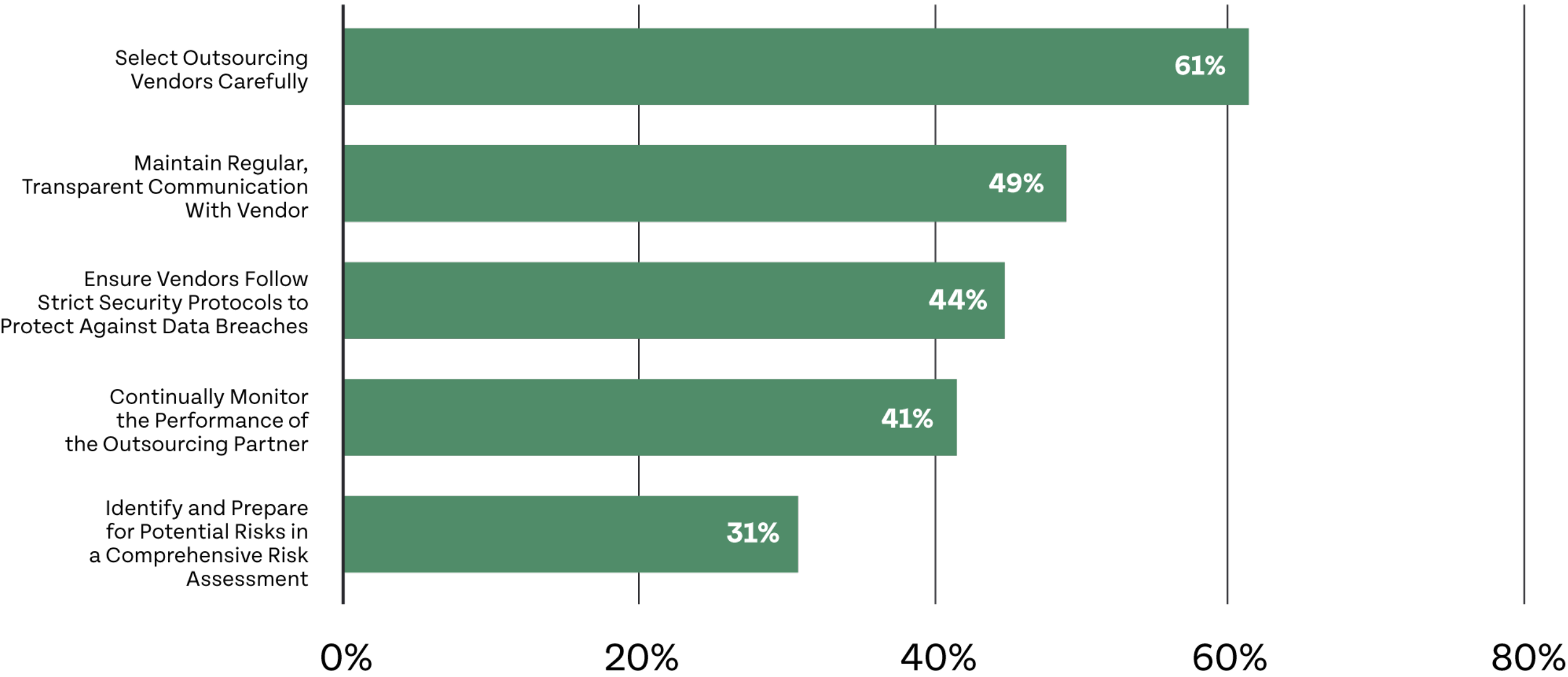
- **AI is fueling outsourcing demand —** Two-thirds of tech sector respondents expect AI and automation to lead them to outsource more.

- **Companies are looking for all-in-one outsourcing solutions —** As leaders seek **consolidated vendors** with **integrated capabilities**, single providers that can seamlessly connect AI, CX, and operations are becoming increasingly attractive.

> "Make it simpler to start. I would love to find an all-in-one vendor.

> "I want our outsourcing partner to improve communication; enhance transparency."

Risk is Still a Key Consideration

Despite optimism, **risk mitigation remains a top concern**. While tech sector leaders are **embracing AI and expanding outsourcing**, they're also prioritizing **security, transparency, and vendor accountability** (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Risk mitigation practices organizations use in their outsourcing strategy (tech sector only)

Practice	Percentage
Select Outsourcing Vendors Carefully	61%
Maintain Regular, Transparent Communication With Vendor	49%
Ensure Vendors Follow Strict Security Protocols to Protect Against Data Breaches	44%
Continually Monitor the Performance of the Outsourcing Partner	41%
Identify and Prepare for Potential Risks in a Comprehensive Risk Assessment	31%

The Takeaway: The Tech Sector Is Doubling Down on Smart Outsourcing

Top-performing tech companies aren't just outsourcing to cut costs — **they're outsourcing to scale, integrate AI, and**

- Long-term sustainable growth has overtaken "growth at all costs"
- AI adoption is accelerating outsourcing demand
- Risk mitigation is crucial — leaders are demanding secure, transparent partnerships

In a tech landscape that's moving faster than ever, outsourcing strategies must constantly evolve to keep pace and

The Outsourcing Evolution:

What Leaders Are Doing Next
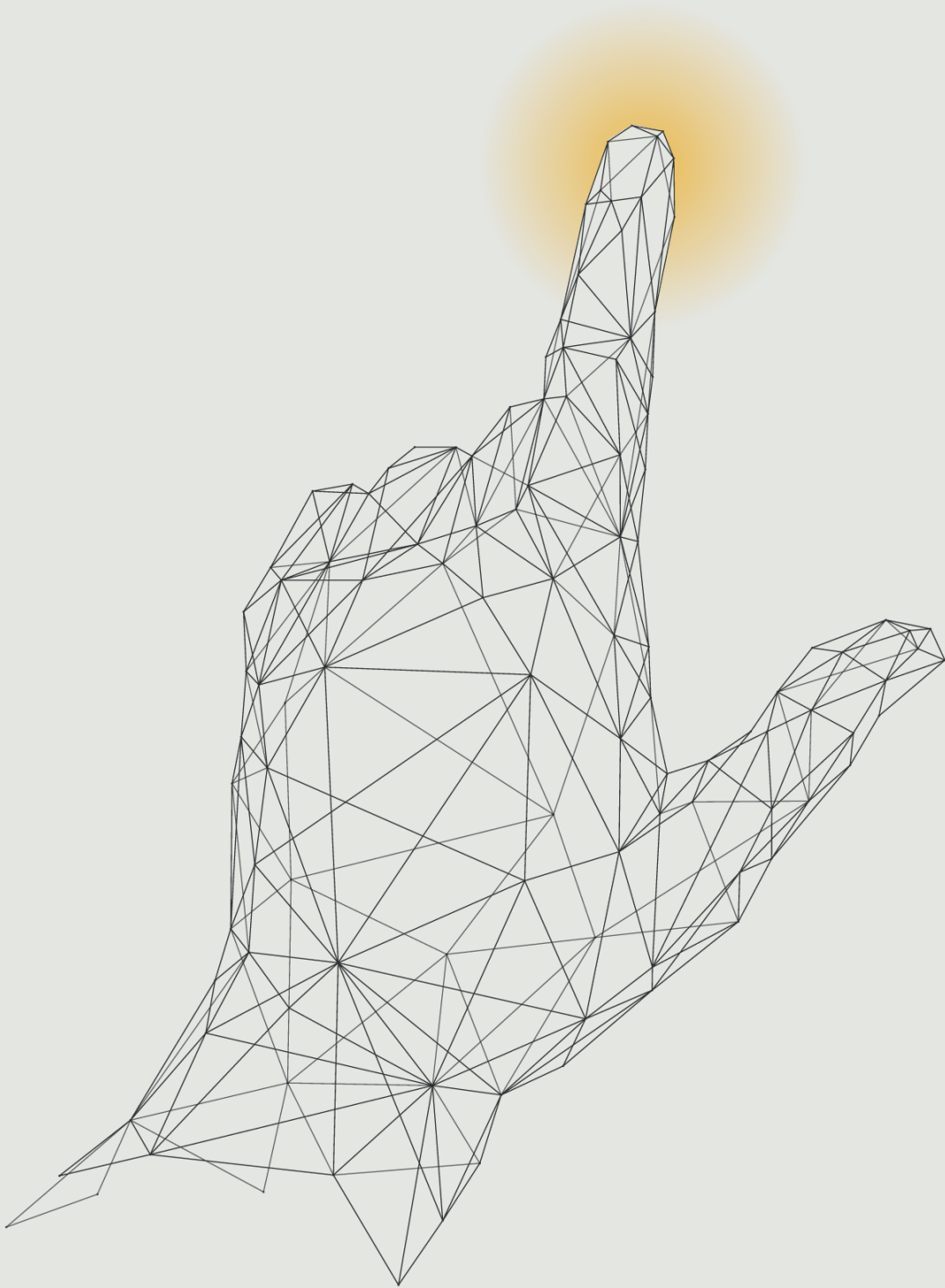
The Outsourcing Evolution:

What Leaders Are Doing Next

Key Takeaways From the 2025 CX Outsourcing Report

Outsourcing is no longer just an operational decision — it's a **strategic advantage** for companies looking to drive **growth, efficiency, and customer loyalty**.

This year's data reveals three major shifts defining the **future of outsourcing**:

- **From vendors to value-driven partners —** Companies aren't just outsourcing for cost savings. They're seeking partners who can provide innovation, **CX impact, and AI capabilities** to drive long-term success.

- **AI-enabled outsourcing is now the expectation —** 77% of companies say AI is a must-have when selecting a vendor, and 86% believe AI **enhances human performance rather than replacing it**.

- **Sustainable growth > growth at all costs —** Scaling for **long-term sustainable growth** has replaced **growth at all costs** as the top business priority, with outsourcing playing a critical role in the **customer retention and CX differentiation** that make sustainable growth possible.

The Bottom Line: Where Do You Stand?

Top-performing companies are **already evolving their CX outsourcing strategies**. They're consolidating vendor relationships, prioritizing CX over cost, and integrating AI at scale.

The question is: **Are you ahead of the curve — or playing catch-up?**

If your outsourcing strategy isn't aligned with these trends, now is the time to rethink your approach.

Appendix

Demographics

Survey Title
State of Outsourcing

Survey Dates
December 2024

Respondents
416

Organizational Size
Less than 1,000 employees 66%
1,000-5,000 employees: 26%
5,000+ employees: 8%

Career Level
Director: 27%
Vice President: 9%
Senior Vice President: 6%
C-Suite, Owner, Partner: 59%

Statistics may not total 100% due to rounding.

About

SupportNinja

SupportNinja was founded in 2015 to help the world's fastest growing companies solve for scale. By delivering agile, AI-enabled solutions, SupportNinja helps its clients free up resources, extend capacity, and accelerate growth. SupportNinja is on a mission to disrupt and redefine the outsourcing industry by standing out as a technology-forward, value-centric organization. Learn more at supportninja.com.

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