

DATA OVERVIEW REPORT

# Business, IT, And Technology Priorities In Retail And Wholesale, 2025

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## Summary

Every year, Forrester clients seek insights into the evolving priorities within the retail and wholesale sectors. To address these inquiries, Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025 asked business and technology professionals at retail and wholesale organizations worldwide about their organization's business and technology priorities. This report highlights budget allocations, business and technology priorities, emerging concerns, and investment trends to help technology strategists and business leaders understand the current state and trajectory of the industry.

# The Current State And Trajectory Of Retail And Wholesale Priorities

Our insights into retail and wholesale technology priorities span five key areas: budgets, business priorities, technology priorities, concerns, and investment initiatives. By examining these dimensions, business and technology leaders can gain a deeper understanding of this industry's technology maturity, emerging trends, and the key drivers accelerating technology adoption and delivery.

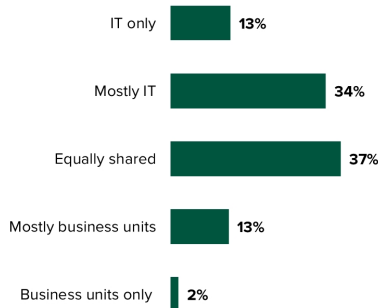
## Business Units Have Some Control Over Tech Spending

In [Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025](#), business and technology professionals who have seniority level of manager or above at retail and wholesale organizations worldwide reported that budget ownership or tech purchasing decisions lie mostly or entirely with IT (47%) or are shared equally between IT and the business (37%) (see Figure 1). In contrast, only 15% said that business units retain most or full control over tech spending.

**Figure 1**

**IT Shares Budget Decisions With Business Units**

"How is ownership of the budget or purchase decisions for technology products or services shared between business units and IT in your organization?"



Base: 499 business and technology professionals who have seniority level of manager or above working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

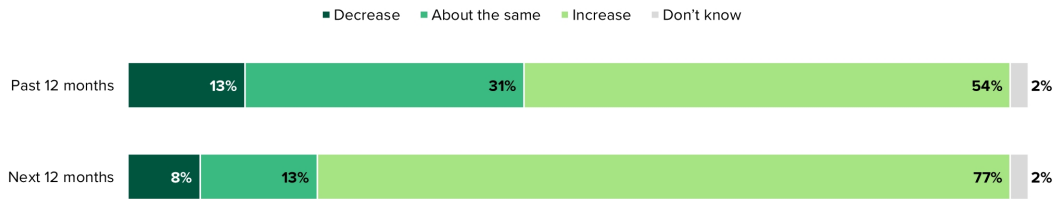
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## Almost Four Out Of Five Expect Tech Product And Service Spend To Rise

Despite ongoing macroeconomic concerns — including geopolitical conflict, weak growth, and uncertainty — 77% of these business and tech pros in retail and wholesale anticipate spending more on tech products and services in the next 12 months (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
**Tech Budgets Continue To Grow**

“How has your group’s or department’s spending on technology products or services changed over the past 12 months? How do you expect it to change over the next 12 months?”  
(Increase vs. decrease)



Base: 499 business and technology professionals who have seniority level of manager or above working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester’s Priorities Survey, 2025

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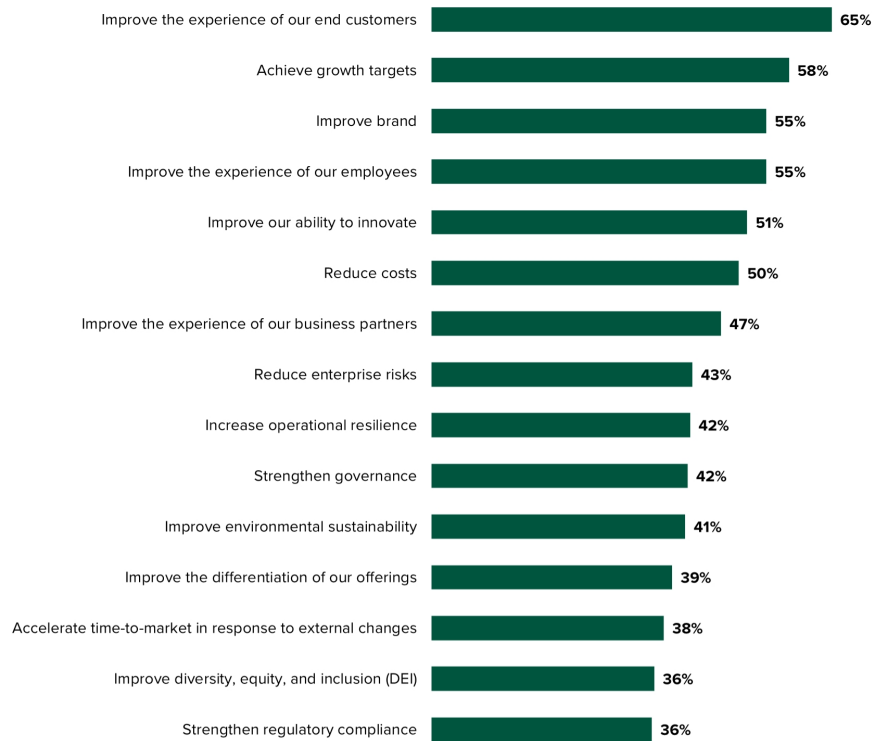
## Improving CX Is A Top Business Objective For Retailers And Wholesalers

About two-thirds of private-sector retail and wholesale business and technology professionals noted that improving the experience of their end customers is a top business priority — ahead even of achieving their growth targets (58%) (see Figure 3). This focus comes at a critical time, as Forrester’s Customer Experience Index (CX Index™) shows a **decline in CX quality** within the US and Canadian retail sectors. They’re wisely also prioritizing improving their brand (55%), their employees’ experience (55%), and their ability to innovate (51%). Half are prioritizing cost reduction, and around two in five noted prioritizing reducing enterprise risks, increasing operational resilience, and strengthening governance.

### Figure 3

#### CX And Growth Are Top Business Priorities For Retailers And Wholesalers

“Which of the following objectives will be your organization’s most important business priorities over the next 12 months?”  
(Select seven)



Base: 517 private-sector business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester’s Priorities Survey, 2025

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## Retail Companies Prioritize Actions To Boost Customer Experience, Growth, And Brand

Forty-five percent of respondents who indicated that improving their customer experiences is a priority specified that adding or improving digital experiences is a key action their organization is taking to achieve that goal (see Figure 4). Just over one-third are also adding or improving physical experiences.

**Figure 4**  
**Retailers And Wholesalers Double Down On Digital To Improve CX**

**“What key actions is your organization taking to ... ”**  
 (Select up to five)

Improve the experience of our end customers	
Add or improve digital experience	45%
Add or improve human interactions	42%
Add or improve physical experiences	36%
Achieve growth targets	
Acquire new customers	53%
Launch new products or services	40%
Retain more of our current customers	40%
Improve brand	
Improve the digital and social media brand experience	40%
Increase public trust in the brand and organization	39%
Align brand experience with customer experience	39%

Note: Not all response options are shown.  
 Base: 238 to 310 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale who indicated the task is a priority for their organization; base size varies by priority  
 Source: Forrester’s Priorities Survey, 2025

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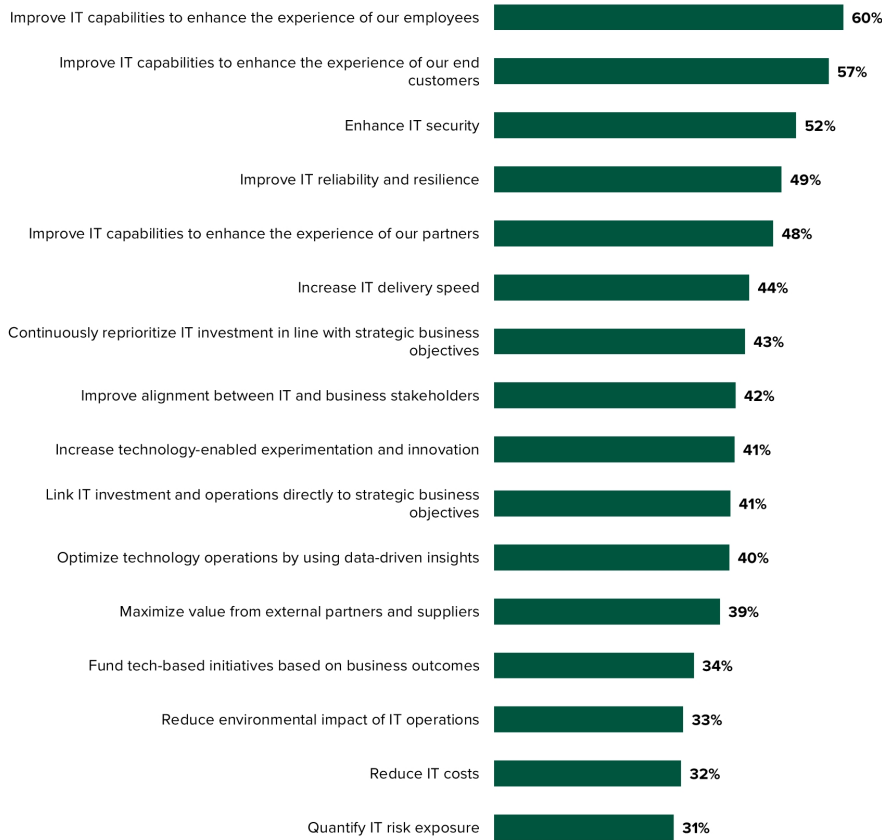
## Improving Employee And Customer Experience Drives IT Priorities

Over the next 12 months, retail and wholesale pros are prioritizing improved IT capabilities to enhance the experience of their employees (60%) and their end customers (57%) (see Figure 5). Approximately half also are prioritizing enhancing IT security (52%), improving IT reliability and resilience (49%), and enhancing the experience of their partners (48%). And about two in five are actively working on aligning IT and business stakeholders (42%) as well as continuously reprioritizing IT investment in line with strategic business objectives (43%).

**Figure 5**

**EX And CX Improvement Are Top IT Priorities For Retailers And Wholesalers**

**“Which of the following objectives will be your organization’s most important IT priorities over the next 12 months?”**  
(Select seven)



Base: 559 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester’s Priorities Survey, 2025

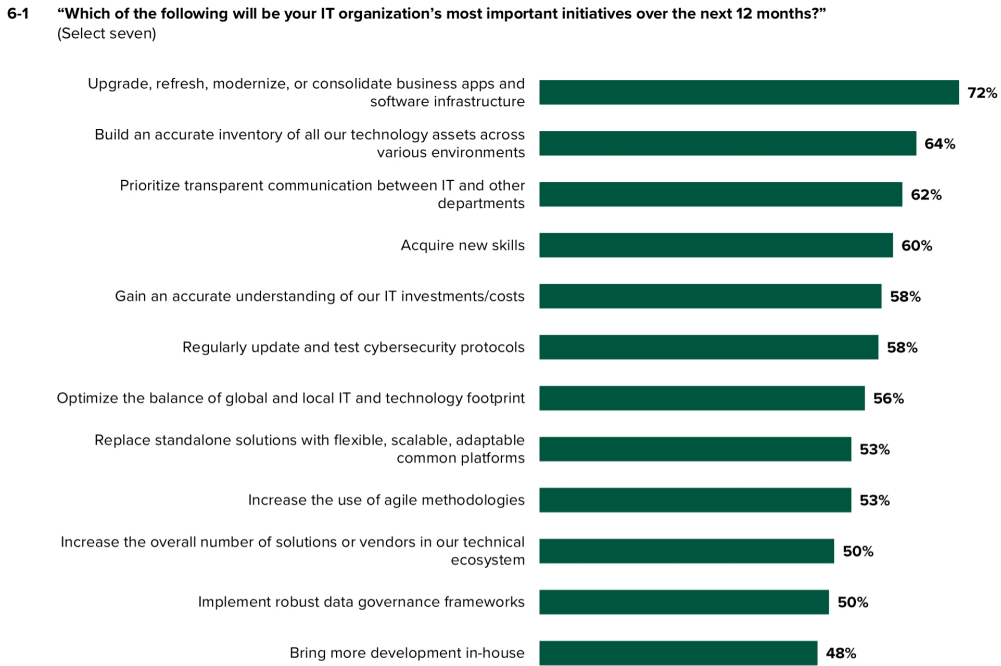
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**Software Upgrades, Tech Asset Inventorying, Interdepartmental Communication Are Priorities**

In terms of emerging actions, 60% of these business and technology professionals also cited adopting agile and lean budgeting as a top initiative. About half noted transforming IT operations from reactive problem-solving to proactive issue prevention (54%); organizing IT outcome planning, delivery, and operations with value streams instead of projects (52%); and improving resilience engineering (52%) (see Figure 6). Increasing the use of AI-enabled software development is a top tech priority for the

year ahead, as organizations aim to drive productivity of stretched development resources (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6**  
**Modernizing Business Apps And Adopting Agile Budgeting Are Critical IT Actions**



Base: 559 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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**Business, IT, And Technology Priorities In Retail And Wholesale, 2025**

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**6-2 "Which of the following emerging actions will be your IT organization's most important initiatives over the next 12 months?"**  
(Select five)



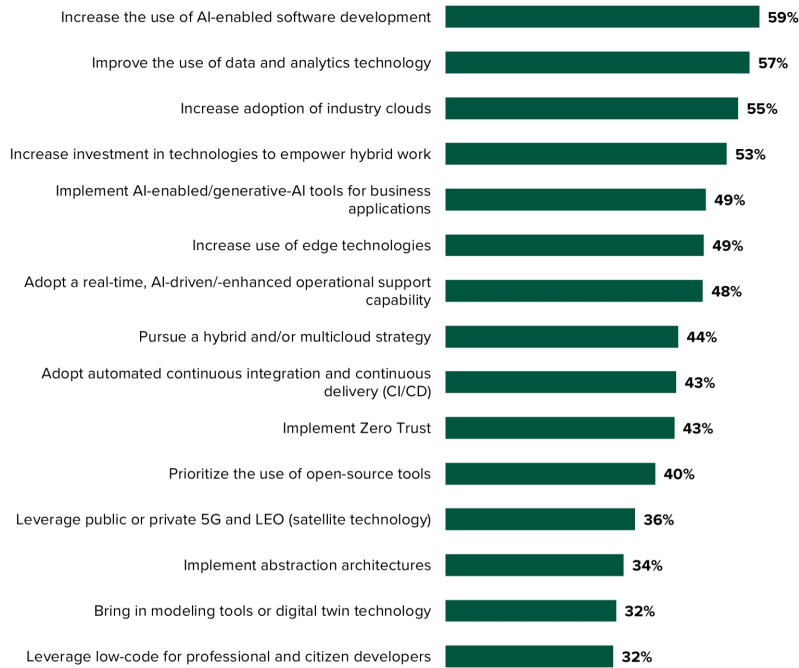
Base: 559 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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## Figure 7

### Tech Priorities Include AI-Enabled Software Dev, Data And Analytics Tech, And Cloud

“Which of the following technology priorities will be most important to your IT organization over the next 12 months?”  
(Select seven)



Base: 559 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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## Resource Constraints, Skill Gaps, And Time Management Are Key

### Challenges

Limited resources, inadequate skills or knowledge, and poor time management are top barriers to achieving business priorities, per approximately one-quarter of business and technology pros at retail and wholesale organizations (see Figure 8). Key IT challenges they cited included integrating new technologies with existing systems, misalignment between IT and nontech departments, insufficient technology skills and expertise, and an inability to manage resource constraints (see Figure 9).

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## Figure 8

### Limited Resources Continue To Stymie Retailers And Wholesalers

**“Which of the following areas represent the greatest challenge for your organization to successfully deliver on its business priorities?”**  
(Select up to three)



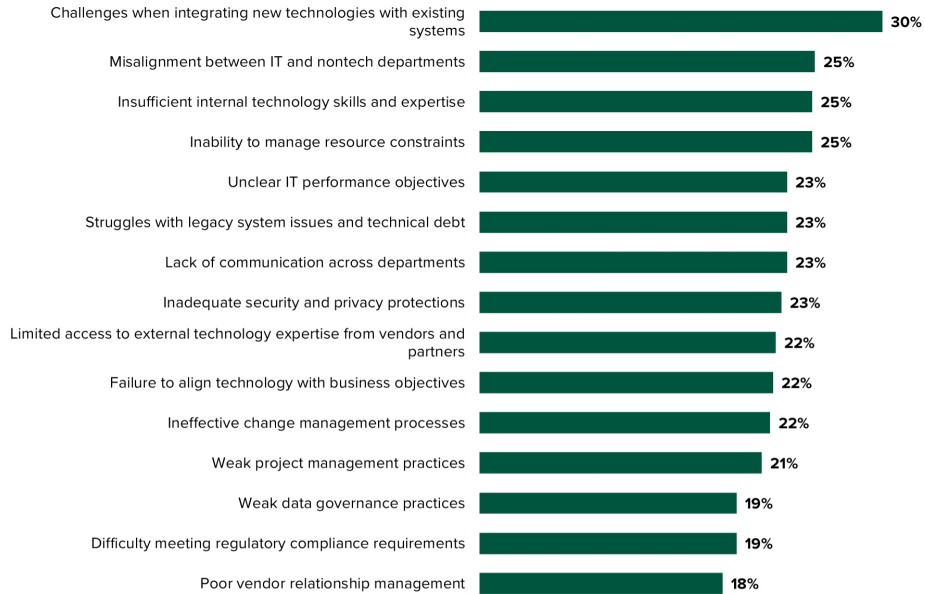
Note: Not all response options are shown.  
Base: 478 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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**Figure 9**

**Technology Integration And Organizational Misalignment Are Ever-Present Challenges**

**“Which of the following areas represent the greatest challenge for your organization to successfully deliver on its IT priorities?”**  
(Multiple responses accepted)



Base: 478 business and technology professionals working in retail and wholesale  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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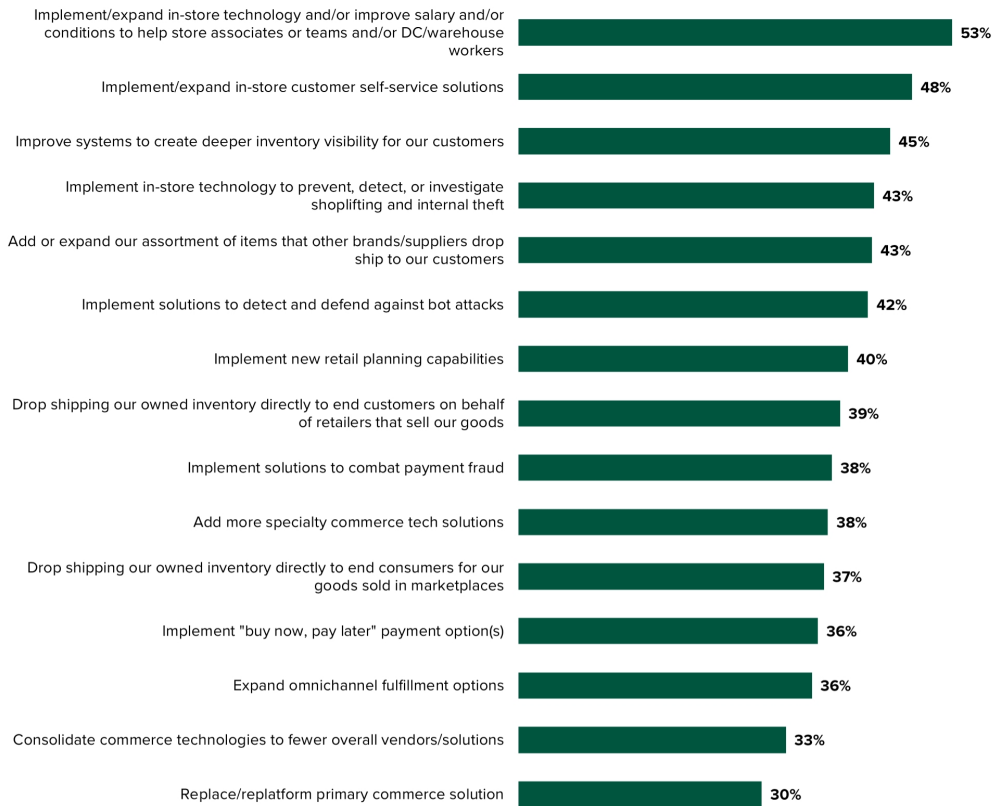
**Retailers Align Investments With Evolving Customer Demands**

To enhance CX and engagement, differentiate themselves from competitors, and unlock new revenue streams, business and technology pros at retailers are focusing their investments on key strategic initiatives. Notably, 53% expect to invest in expanding in-store technology and/or improving the salaries and working conditions of their employees over the next 12 months (see Figure 10). Close to half plan to invest in implementing or expanding in-store customer self-service solutions (48%) and tech to improve inventory visibility for customers (45%). About two out of five also plan to invest in tech to prevent theft (43%) and to detect and defend against bot attacks (42%).

### Figure 10

## Retail Firms Focus Investments On In-Store Tech And Improving The Employee Experience

“Which of the following retail initiatives will your organization invest the most in over the next 12 months?”  
(Select up to seven)



Base: 412 business and technology professionals working in retail  
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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