

RESEARCH INSIGHTS PAPER

Understanding the Value of AWS Training to Organizations

How AWS Training Helps Organizations Accomplish their Cloud Transformation Goals

By Adam DeMattia, Director of Research

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Executive Summary

Public cloud computing, of which AWS is a leading provider, has introduced a significant shift in how infrastructure and applications are architected, deployed, adapted, and managed over time. It provides organizations the ability to shift large capital expenses to smaller recurring variable expenses and deploy large-scale applications efficiently to keep pace with demand. It also allows employee resource-strapped organizations to consume pre-built cloud services so that business operations can be run with agility.

However, with innovation comes change and the need for education. This is true for cloud transformation initiatives. For organizations to maximize the potential impact of AWS Cloud products and solutions, organizational leaders must appreciate the different facets of cloud operations and the skills required to run them. IT operations personnel need to be skilled in architecting and operating cloud workloads, security teams need cloud security and workload protection expertise, development teams need to adapt coding practices for cloud-native and refactored applications, and even line-of-business (LOB) personnel need to understand how cloud operations impact their functions.

AWS has designed a robust training curriculum to help customers maximize the impact they can have on their businesses with AWS services. AWS engaged TechTarget's Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) to test whether AWS Training effectively helps organizations leverage their solutions through a survey of its customers.

Survey Background

Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) surveyed decision makers at large and midsize organizations that use AWS cloud services today. Qualified respondents needed to have influence over their organizations' broad cloud adoption and strategy decisions. They also needed to be in a strategic role as it relates to cloud training decisions (e.g., evaluating skills to be enhanced with training, recommending training programs to staff, etc.). Training in this context spans in-person instructor-led classroom training, virtual instructor-led classroom training, and digital self-paced coursework. Respondents also needed to have staff reporting to them who have taken some amount of AWS Training coursework (i.e., training content and courseware authored by AWS as opposed to training on AWS created by other providers) in the last 24 months. (Note that AWS Training is distinct from AWS Certification.)

ESG fielded the survey between May 24, 2022 and June 21, 2022, and an N of 1,250 respondents completed the survey. Respondents represented businesses in North America, Western Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. The survey was complemented by 5 in-depth interviews with cloud team leaders to provide additional commentary and real-life anecdotes about the value of AWS Training. Additional demographic and firmographic details are presented in the *Research Methodology* section of this report.

As an analytical note, this report will frequently show results comparing data by the amount of AWS Training coursework that decision makers' teams have consumed. See Figure 12 for the categorization of AWS Training consumed by staff used in this report.

Key Findings

The study confirms that upskilling with AWS Training provides an advantage to organizations. Among decision makers surveyed, **94% say employing staff that have taken AWS Training puts their company in a better competitive position to succeed over the next 3-5 years.** How so?

- Staff participation in AWS Training provides numerous advantages, including **having an immediate positive impact on project outcomes, helping innovate customer-facing products and services faster, closing cloud skills gaps, and more.** Among decision makers participating in the survey:

- 93% agree that employing AWS Trained staff has increased their business's confidence in executing cloud projects.
- 92% agree that employing AWS Trained staff has significantly improved operational efficiency.
- 92% agree that AWS Training consumption positively impacts employees' job satisfaction.
- 92% agree that employing AWS Trained staff has helped close the organization's cloud skills gaps.
- 91% agree that employing AWS Trained staff has delivered an immediate impact on successful project completion and faster project completion.
- 90% agree that employing AWS Trained staff is helping them innovate customer-facing offerings faster.
- AWS Training amplifies the benefits gained from using AWS services.
 - Organizations whose staff consume more AWS Training (i.e., 8+ days of coursework) report **lowering their overall IT costs by 28% more** than those with less AWS Training (i.e., 2 days of coursework or less).
 - Organizations that consume more AWS Training have been able to launch an average of more than 2 additional products/services in the past 12 months (or 47% more products launched, on average) directly tied to their use of AWS Cloud services.
- The research also uncovered that **91% of respondents feel training and upskilling existing staff is much more efficient** than attempting to bolster team skills with new hires.
- The efficiency of upskilling through AWS Training is particularly relevant to organizations, as **64% of decision makers say cloud skills gaps exists across their teams.**
- But not all training is viewed as equal. **Decision makers widely agree that AWS Training holds several advantages over training authored by third parties.**
 - 93% say AWS Training is more relevant to their projects and use cases.
 - 92% see AWS Training as better at enabling innovation.
 - 90% prefer to receive training from the developers of cloud solutions and services.
- Moreover, participation in AWS Training carries significant weight in decision makers' minds when evaluating talent.
 - 92% say they feel more confident about candidates that have already taken AWS Training when evaluating prospective hires.
 - 91% say they trust staff that have taken AWS Training to lead projects more than their staff that have not.

These findings, and others, are discussed in detail in this report.

The Demand for Cloud Transformation and the Resulting Skills Gaps

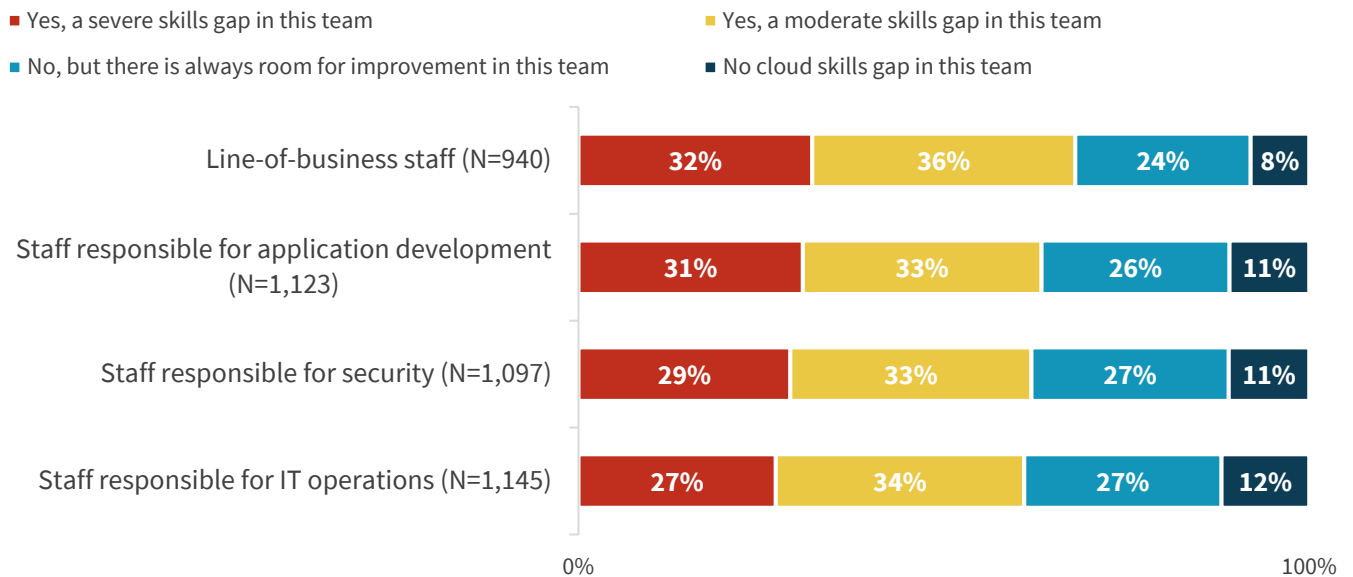
AWS offers over 200 full-featured services customers can purchase, with use cases spanning business continuity and disaster recovery, DevOps, analytics, databases, data management and governance, the internet of things, and more. Similarly, AWS has purpose-built solutions based on organizations’ industries and type (e.g., from startup to enterprise to public sector).

No matter the industry or type of business, true cloud transformation requires fundamental changes in an organization’s IT environment and business operations. As such, collaboration across both IT and non-IT teams is required for the organization to select the right cloud services to support different business initiatives. With a broad set of cloud solutions available in the market, the need for training and education within various organizational teams is essential.

The survey data indicates that, to date, organizations’ demand to leverage cloud technology has outpaced the labor market’s ability to provide the talent needed to implement and operate cloud technologies. Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) asked decision makers whether the teams they oversee have a cloud skills gap (i.e., a lack of knowledge and/or resources that is holding the company back from executing all its desired AWS projects). Across all decision makers surveyed, 64% reported having a severe or moderate cloud skills gap. Moreover, these skills gaps persist throughout different parts of the organization, spanning the IT team (61%), cybersecurity team (62%), development teams (64%), and line-of-business staff (68%, see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Cross-functional Prevalence of Cloud Skills Gaps

Think of the teams you manage or that are in your purview. Do you believe they have a “cloud skills gap” (i.e., a lack of knowledge and/or resources that is holding your company back from executing on its AWS projects)?
(Percent of respondents)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

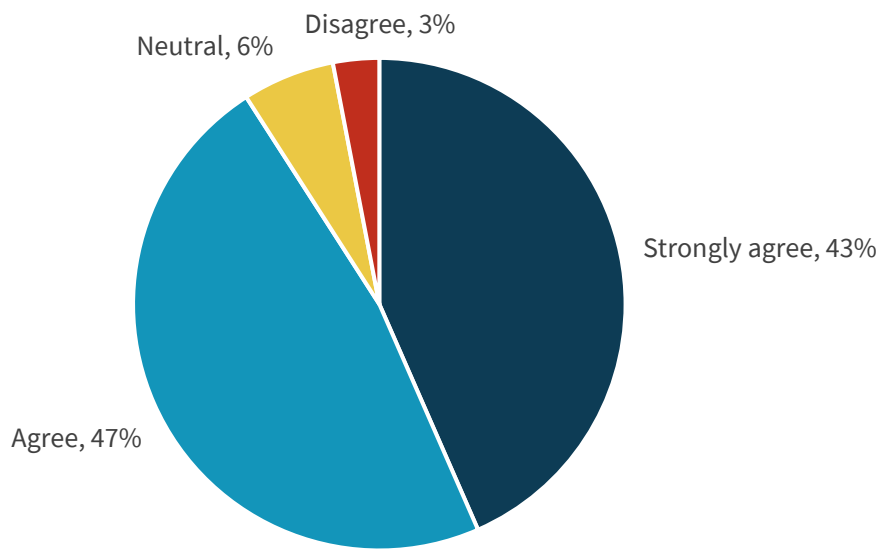
The drivers for cloud adoption are varied. Many organizations seek to offload capacity planning, architecting, and tuning infrastructure to the cloud service provider. For others, rapid provisioning, scaling, and deprovisioning infrastructure is the key value proposition. For others, the financial flexibility afforded by shifting capital expenditures to operational expenditures is paramount. Others seek infrastructure more compatible with agile application development workflows or off-the-shelf solutions related to analytics, automation, or machine learning that the organization does not have the time to build in-house.

However, the potential benefits that the cloud can offer will not be realized if the organization does not have staff with the right skills to implement them. So how should organizations close their cloud skills gaps?

The study shows that investment in training and upskilling creates efficiencies. ESG asked decision makers whether they agree or disagree with the statement that training offers a much more efficient way to upskill teams relative to hiring. Nine out of ten (91%) agreed with this sentiment (see Figure 2). ESG believes that today’s tight labor market contributes to this sentiment. The efficiency of upskilling through AWS Training is particularly relevant to organizations, as 64% of decision makers say cloud skills gaps exists across their teams.

Figure 2. Do Organizations Prefer to Train or Hire Their Way Out of Their Cloud Skill Gaps?

Agree or disagree: Finding and recruiting skilled staff with cloud capabilities is hard so training is a much more efficient way to skill up our team (relative to hiring). (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

The Impact of AWS Training on Cloud Deployments

Beyond exploring the benefits of upskilling teams to achieve cloud competencies, this research also sought to understand the benefits of AWS Training to organizations. Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) asked decision makers to agree or disagree with a host of statements related to their employment of staff that have taken AWS Training. Responses were very favorable toward the impact AWS Training is having on their teams.

“Not only is AWS Training helping us enhance operational performance, but it is also helping us start new projects leveraging AI/ML we did not have the skills to implement before.”

- Head of IT operations, biotech company with 6,000 employees

- **AWS Training enables positive cloud project outcomes.**

At the end of the day, adopting cloud services is a means to an end. That end for businesses is successful project completion, be it the rollout of a new digital service to improve competitive standing or enter a new market, application modernization to reduce IT overhead, or an increase in the pace of innovation. In all cases, employing

staff that have taken AWS Training is helping organizations achieve these goals: 93% say AWS Training makes the business more confident in its staff’s ability to execute projects; 91% say this confidence translates to successful completion of projects (e.g., workload migrations, application modernization efforts, etc.); and 90% say staff with AWS Training are helping deliver customer-facing products and services faster, directly improving the organization’s ability to compete and win in the market.

- **AWS Training improves employee satisfaction and reduces skills gaps.** AWS Training delivers other noteworthy end results beyond positive project outcomes. Most decision makers (92%) say that employing staff who have taken AWS Training improves employee job satisfaction. ESG believes that by enabling staff to gain the skills they need to be successful through AWS Training, staff feel more accomplished and capable in their roles, increasing engagement and job satisfaction. Similarly, 92% agree that AWS Training is helping shrink skills gaps that challenge many organizations today (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Agreement that the Employment of Staff that Have Taken AWS Training Improves Organizational Outcomes



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

A deeper dive into these AWS Training benefits against the amount of AWS Training consumed by employees shows a correlation. Specifically, decision makers whose staff have taken more AWS Training¹ were more likely to “strongly agree” that AWS Training significantly improves overall operational efficiency compared to decision makers whose staff have tended to have a low degree of AWS Training² participation (59% versus 40% respectively).

Decision makers tend to see this positive association across all benefit areas explored in the research. That is, when comparing decision makers whose staff have consumed more AWS Training versus organizations that have consumed less,

¹ Completed more than a week (8+ days) of AWS Training coursework over the last 24 months.

² Completed two or fewer days of coursework over the last 24 months.

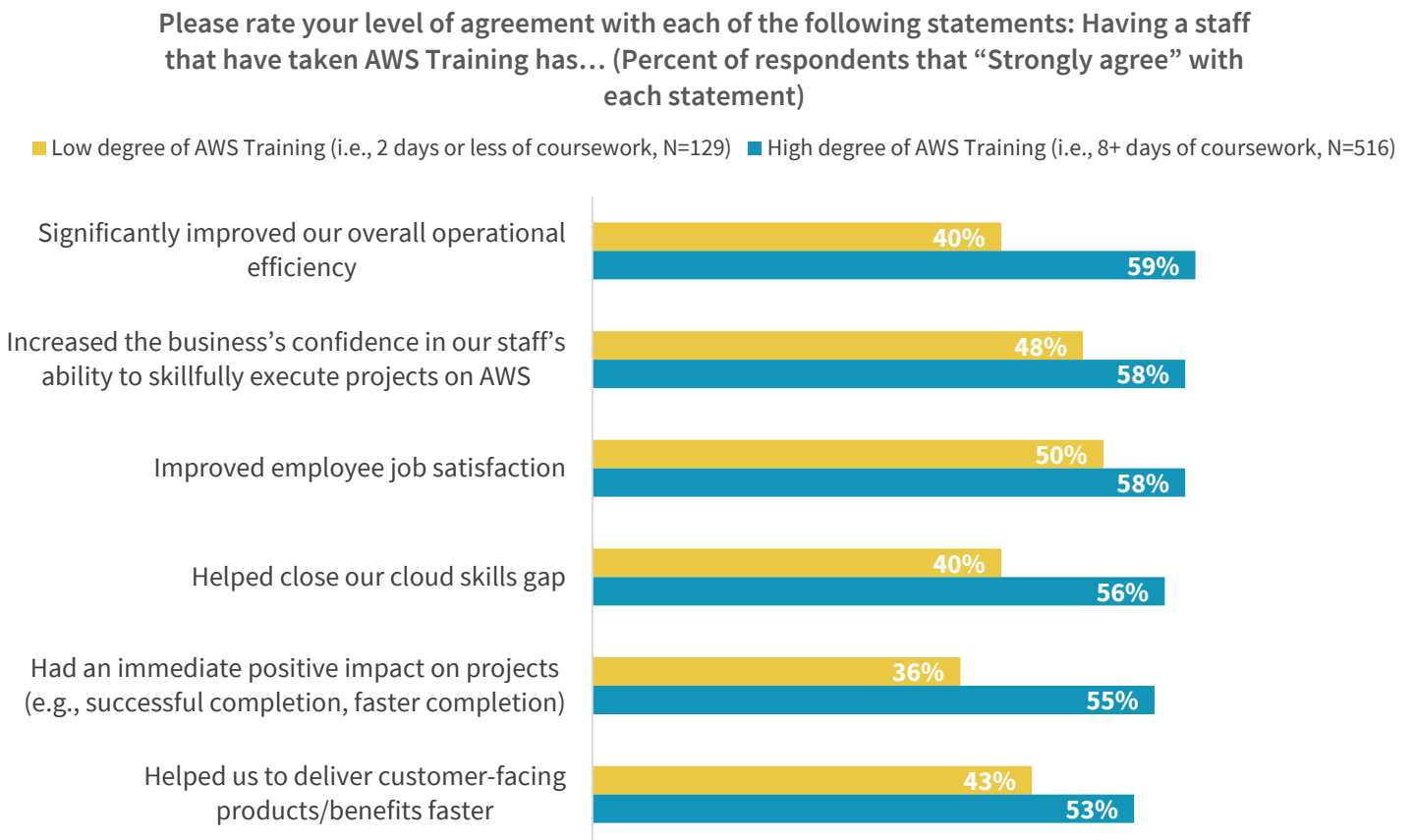
the former is significantly³ more likely to “strongly agree” that their organization has realized the following benefits (see Figure 4):

- Significantly improved operational efficiency (59% versus 40%).
- Increased the business’s confidence in staff’s ability to execute projects on AWS (58% versus 48%).
- Closed the skills gap (56% versus 40%).
- Experienced immediate positive impact on projects, i.e., faster completion, more successful completion (55% versus 36%).
- Delivered customer-facing products and benefits faster (53% versus 43%).

“One benefit of upskilling with AWS Training is that we have seen a reduction in time to usability of around 40%, shrinking the elapsed time from the point of a request being made to fulfillment.”

- Head of IT operations, biotech company with 6,000 employees

Figure 4. The Perceived Impact of AWS Training Is Correlated with Teams’ Engagement



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

³ Statistically significant at 90% confidence level.

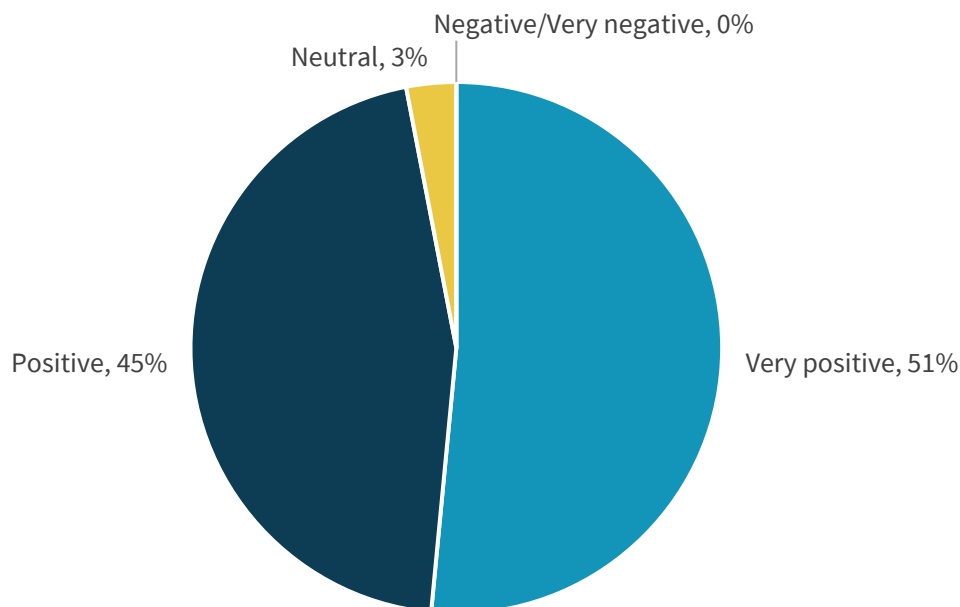
AWS Training Drives Significant ROI

With a large majority of decision makers agreeing that their AWS-trained staff are making a positive difference for their organizations, it is reasonable for them to also report that AWS Training delivers a positive return: **97% say investments in AWS Training have delivered a positive or very positive ROI** (see Figure 5).

Note that in evaluating the AWS Training ROI, Enterprise Strategy Group asked decision makers to consider both staff time commitment and organizational financial commitment. While much of the self-paced digital training curriculum that AWS offers is free, paid-for training subscriptions and classroom training are also popular modalities that require funding. Moreover, there is opportunity cost associated with AWS Training. Dedicating time to training means time taken away from IT and security operations, development activities, and even line-of-business operations like selling and marketing—resources that are already strained given the skills gap. For AWS Training to achieve a positive ROI, the value of skills that staff gain must exceed both time and money invested in training, something nearly all respondents say is the case for their organization.

Figure 5. The ROI Associated with AWS Training

Finish the statement: Considering all the time and financial commitments my organization has made to AWS Training, I would say the return on investment the organization has received is... (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Not All Training Programs Are Equal

AWS is not the only source organizations and individuals can turn to in order to learn how to use and optimize AWS services. Customers have choices, as many third parties also offer training on AWS. Since the decision makers in this study oversee at least some staff that have taken AWS Training (i.e., training authored by AWS), Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) explored their perceptions of AWS Training versus AWS training developed by other organizations. Our study found a variety of reasons for preferring AWS Training (see Figure 6). Specifically:

- **AWS Training has more positive impacts on staff**

capabilities: The study shows that AWS generally does a better job than third-party AWS training providers in giving staff relevant skills to make a tangible difference on the job. For example, 93% agree that AWS Training helps develop practical skills better than third-party AWS training. Another 93% agree that AWS Training is more applicable to their organizations’ specific use cases. And 92% feel AWS Training better positions staff to drive innovation.

“AWS Training documents use cases that shows you how to apply certain technologies—this type of scenario-based training is what we look for.”

- Principal solution architect, financial services company with 325,000 employees

- **AWS Training is superior at enabling operational efficiencies:** Organizations adopt training not only to build staff competencies but also to help lower operational costs. This can come from making smarter application architecture decisions or by leveraging the right service for the right use case to deliver the functionality needed at the lowest possible cost. Decision makers believe that AWS Training’s courses in these areas are better than other training alternatives. Ninety-two percent (92%) of decision makers say that AWS Training is chosen over alternatives because it helps them save money. Eighty-six percent (86%) feel that the ROI offered by AWS Training exceeds that of other providers, suggesting that the benefits of efficacy and efficiency improvements outweigh training costs.

- **AWS Training benefits from AWS’ high brand equity:**

AWS’s position and reputation in the market helps drive demand for AWS Training. Nine out of ten decision makers (90%) sought out AWS Training for their staff versus alternatives because they prefer to receive training from the developers of cloud solutions and services. For many organizations, the source of training matters. That is, better subject matter expertise is more likely to come from the creators of AWS Cloud solutions. A similar percentage (91%) cite a desire to be trained by a leader in cloud computing. This may be why 92% feel that AWS Training has more credibility.

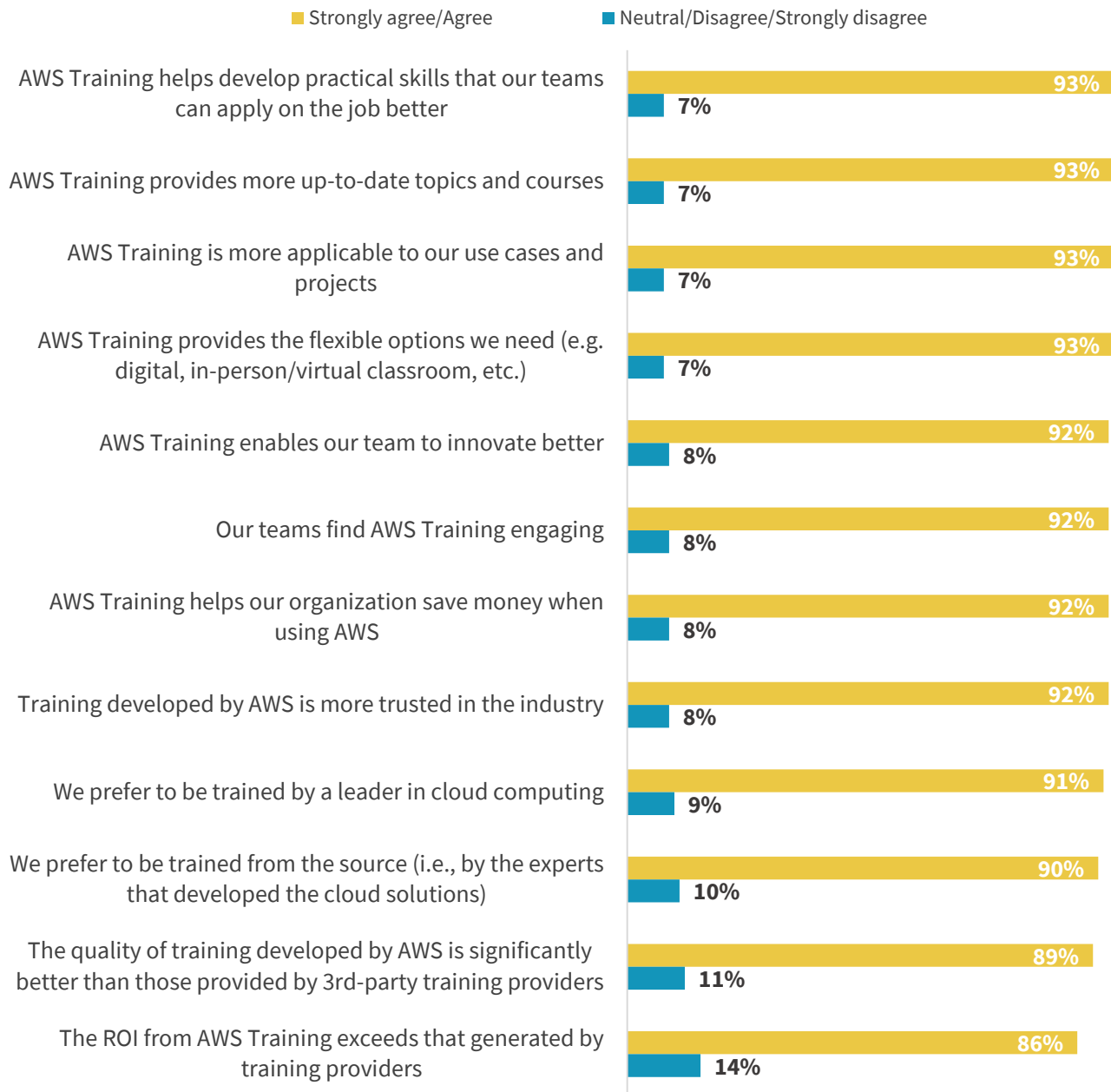
“In terms of cost savings, we are going to be able to reduce our consulting budget by 65% in our next fiscal year budget [thanks to AWS Training].”

- Global director of IT, CPG manufacturer with over 1,000 employees

- **AWS Training is preferred by staff:** Decision makers and their teams feel AWS develops training offerings that are superior in different ways. For one, 92% of decision makers report that their teams find AWS Training more engaging than alternatives. Additionally, 93% of decision makers say AWS keeps training materials fresher, which is a key driver of preference for their training programs. The same percentage (93%) report that AWS Training enables flexibility by offering more training formats that their teams need (e.g., in-person and online modalities, etc.).

Figure 6. Reasons Why Decision Makers Prefer AWS Training Over Alternatives

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding why staff at your organization chose AWS Training compared to training developed by third-party providers. (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



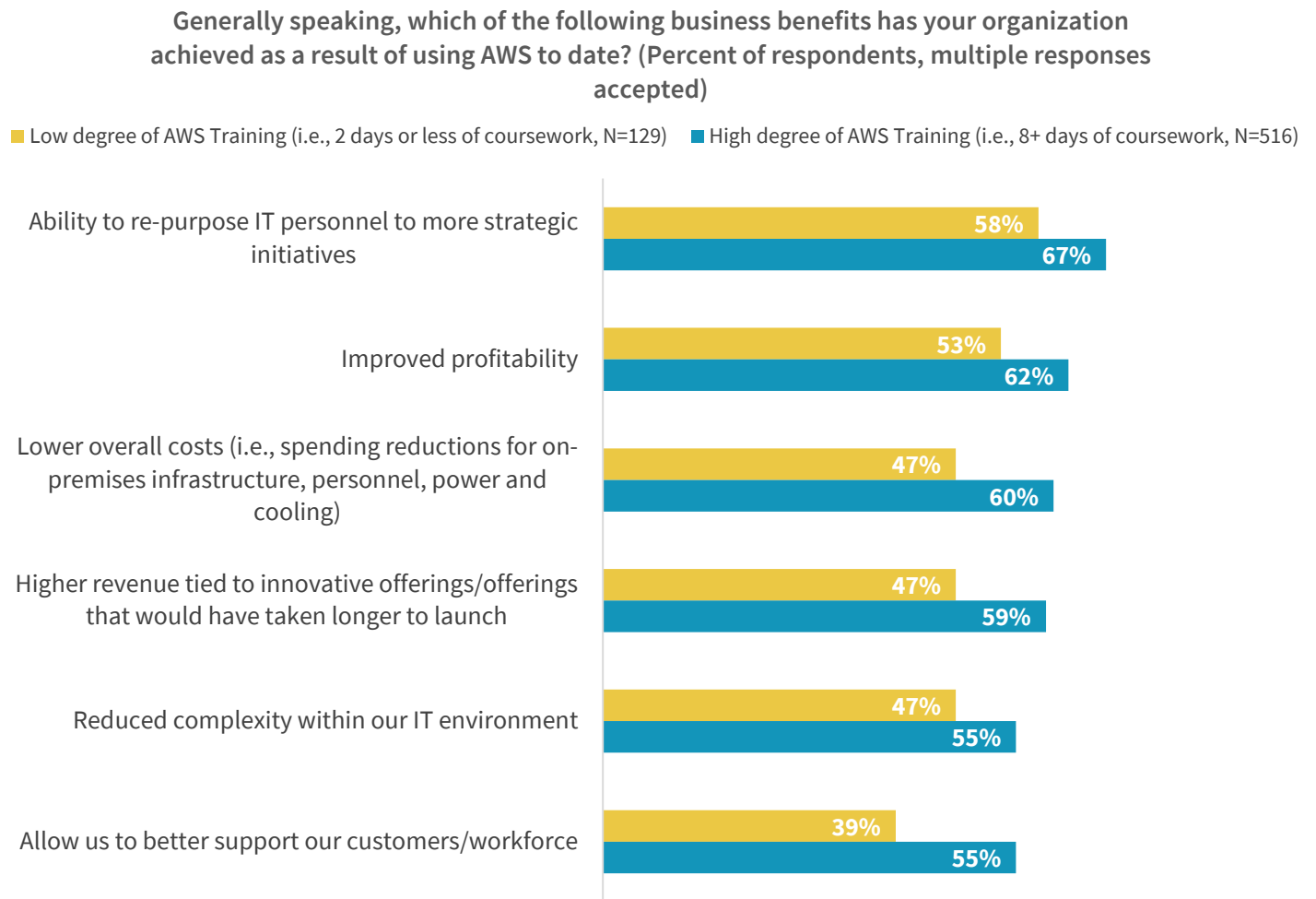
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

AWS Training Correlates to Greater Success in Running AWS Services

In addition to gathering direct feedback on the value of AWS Training through survey questions, Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) explored correlations within the data set to determine any association between the benefits that organizations gained from AWS Cloud use and the amount of AWS Training consumed. This analysis may potentially help strengthen the belief that AWS Training delivers positive business results. The analysis was done through a two-step process. First, ESG

asked decision makers the business benefits that they gained from using AWS Cloud services. Next, ESG analyzed the business benefits that organizations gained against the level of AWS Training their staff have consumed. ESG found a positive association between the business benefits gained from AWS Cloud use and the amount of AWS Training consumed. That is, organizations whose teams have taken more AWS Training were also significantly⁴ more likely to say that they have achieved each of the business benefits included in the survey as a result of AWS use, compared to organizations whose staff have consumed less AWS Training (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Benefits Achieved from AWS Cloud Use by Amount of AWS Training Consumed



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

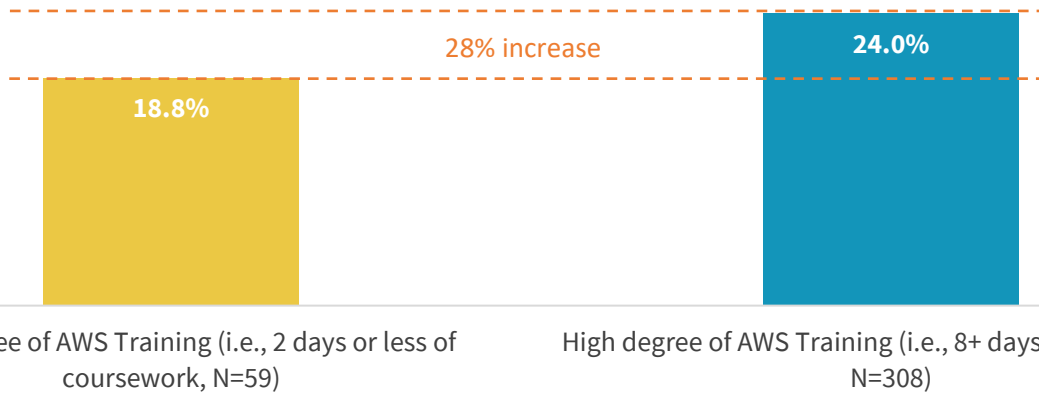
Savings Associated with AWS Use Increases with AWS Training

Beyond the correlation that organizations that consume more AWS Training are more likely to report lower overall costs (see Figure 7), the size of reported cost savings also tends to be larger. That is, **organizations that consume more AWS Training tend to reduce their AWS project costs by 28% more** (see Figure 8).

⁴ Statistically significant at 90% confidence level.

Figure 8. AWS Project Cost Savings by Amount of AWS Training Consumed

You reported lower costs as a benefit of AWS. By how much would you estimate AWS lowers costs for the average project (compared to if your organization supported the project on-premises)? (Mean)



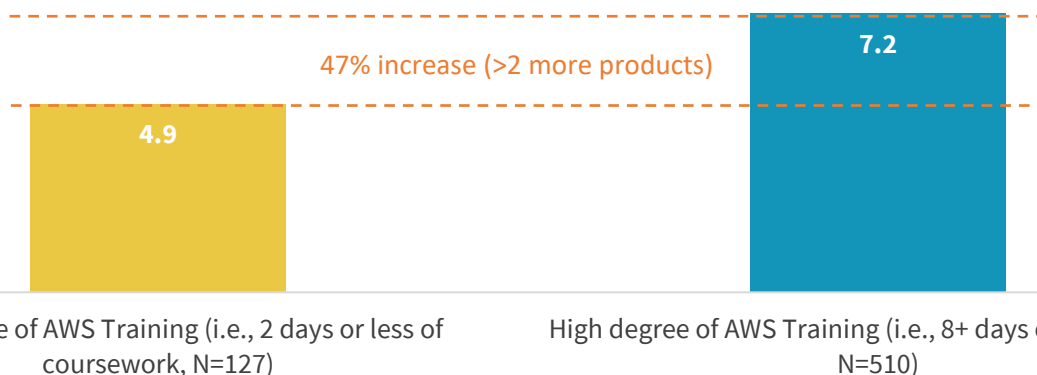
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Innovation Associated with AWS Use Increases with AWS Training

Organizations with staff that take more AWS Training are also more likely to report that AWS services help them better support their customers and increase revenue resulting from innovation. Going a step further, Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) sought to understand quantitative differences in innovation outcomes among organizations. ESG asked all respondents to consider their portfolio of customer-facing products and services and estimate how many of those products were launched in the last two years as a result of AWS use. Those with teams that have typically taken more than a week of AWS Training (inclusive of any modality) in the past 24 months report an average addition of 7.2 offerings, while those with teams that have typically taken two or fewer days of AWS coursework reported 4.9 offerings on average (see Figure 9). Said another way, **organizations that have consumed more AWS Training were able to launch more than 2 additional products/services (47% more) from their use of AWS Cloud services**, on average. In essence, both these results show that AWS Training appears to amplify the benefits gained from using AWS services.

Figure 9. Number of Products Launched by Amount of AWS Training Consumed

Approximately how many digital products/services/experiences that have been launched at your organization within the last two years wouldn't have been possible without your organization's use of AWS? (Mean)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Cloud Leaders Value AWS-trained Staff

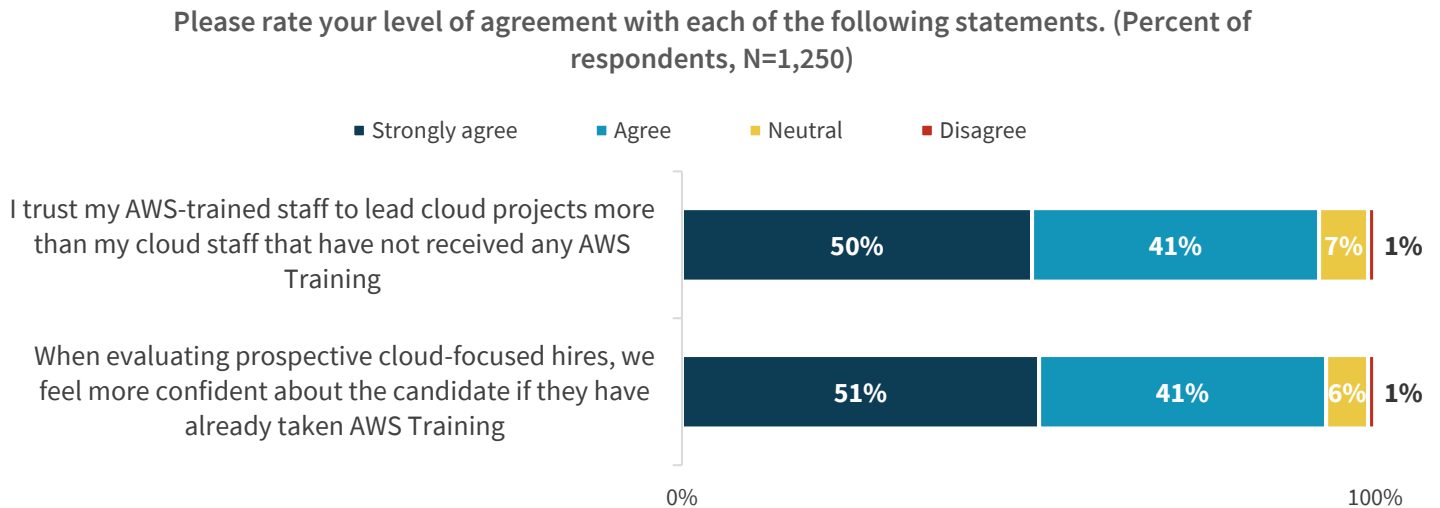
While the preceding sections focused on the organizational advantages that AWS Training helped enable, the study uncovered other insights that also have relevance to cloud professionals or potential hires who are considering how and where to skill up in order to best showcase their cloud skills.

Specifically, when it comes to leading cloud projects, 91% of decision makers say staff that have taken AWS Training are more trusted to do so than those that have not. Additionally, 92% of decision makers felt more confident extending an offer to potential candidates who have already taken AWS Training, as opposed to those who have not (see Figure 10). These indicate that prospective employers place a premium on team members who have taken AWS Training.

“By taking AWS Training, you can be more efficient and effective at work. In other words, you become more valuable to the company, meaning you are more likely to be promoted.”

- Application development manager, financial services company with more than 250,000 employees

Figure 10. The Preference Leaders Have for Staff that Have Taken AWS Training

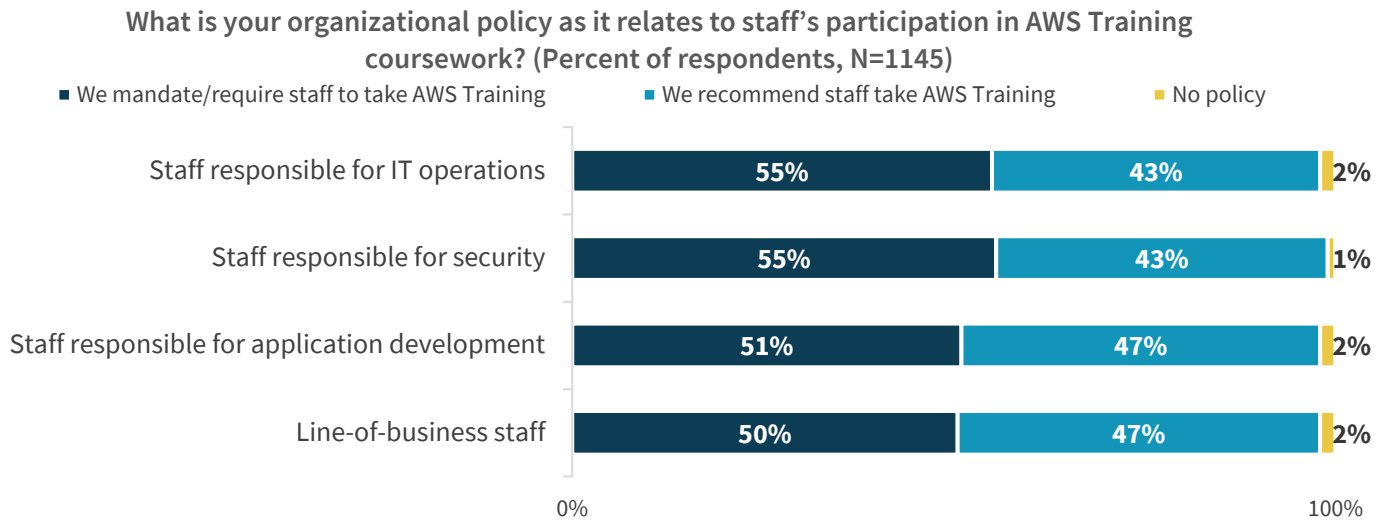


Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Cloud Leaders Seek to Create a Culture of Continuous Training

Apart from pursuing candidates that have taken AWS Training, the research also shows that cloud leaders are actively trying to create a culture where AWS Training participation is standard. Organizations frequently either *mandate* their staff to take AWS Training or *recommend* that they take AWS Training (see Figure 11). This data reinforces the finding that cloud leaders have a preference or staff taking AWS Training.

Figure 11. Organizational Policies Related to Different Roles Taking AWS Training



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

The Bigger Truth

Several takeaways emerge from this study.

1. AWS Training delivers real, tangible value to organizations that exceeds any hard or soft cost considerations.
2. AWS Training amplifies the benefits gained from using AWS services.
3. Cloud leaders recognize the value of AWS Training (i.e., training authored by AWS). They see it as superior to other AWS training developed by other providers.
4. Leaders of cloud teams and projects who are grappling with skills gaps, labor market tightness, or project execution challenges or are simply looking to optimize cloud operations can look to AWS Training for their staff as one way to drive meaningful results. This may be particularly important as macroeconomic uncertainty rises and managers’ ability to add to their teams is restricted.
5. Cloud operations staff looking to advance their skills, increase their influence on the job, grow their careers, and/or enhance their desirability to current and prospective employers can rely on AWS Training to help deliver these goals.

Given these findings, we have two recommendations:

1. Consider conducting an [AWS Learning Needs Analysis](#), a free self-assessment tool to help identify your organization’s cloud skills gaps, if any.
2. Managers should strive for a week or more of AWS Training participation among their teams to help the organization get even more out of its AWS investments.

In closing, not only does AWS Training help amplify the benefits of AWS Services, but it also helps organizations gain a competitive advantage through better skilled and more innovative cloud talent.

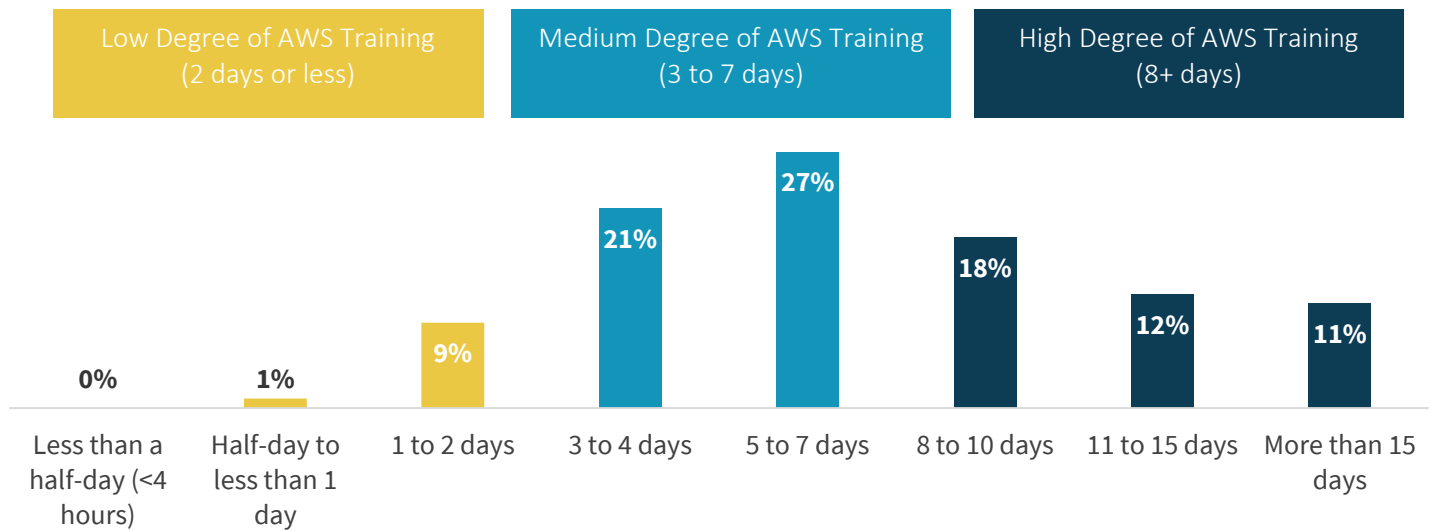
Research Methodology

Defining Three Key Cohorts Compared in This Study: Respondents Whose Teams Have Taken a High Degree, Medium Degree, and Low Degree of AWS Training

All respondents surveyed reported that some members of teams they manage have taken AWS Training. (Note: AWS Training is distinct from AWS Certification.) Respondents, and the organizations they represent, were then grouped into three adoption levels for AWS Training (see Figure 12). Organizations where staff had tended to take more than a week of training were considered to be those with a high degree of AWS Training, organizations where staff had tended to take three to seven days of training were considered to be those with a medium degree of AWS Training, and organizations where staff had tended to take two days of training or fewer were considered to be those with a low degree of AWS Training. In its analysis, Enterprise Strategy Group compared these three cohorts to understand whether, and to what degree, higher levels of AWS Training among staff affect organizational impacts associated with AWS Training and success with AWS overall.

Figure 12. Segmenting AWS Training Consumption of Respondents' Staff

Among your staff that have taken AWS Training, approximately how much coursework has the typical employee completed in the last 24 months? (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



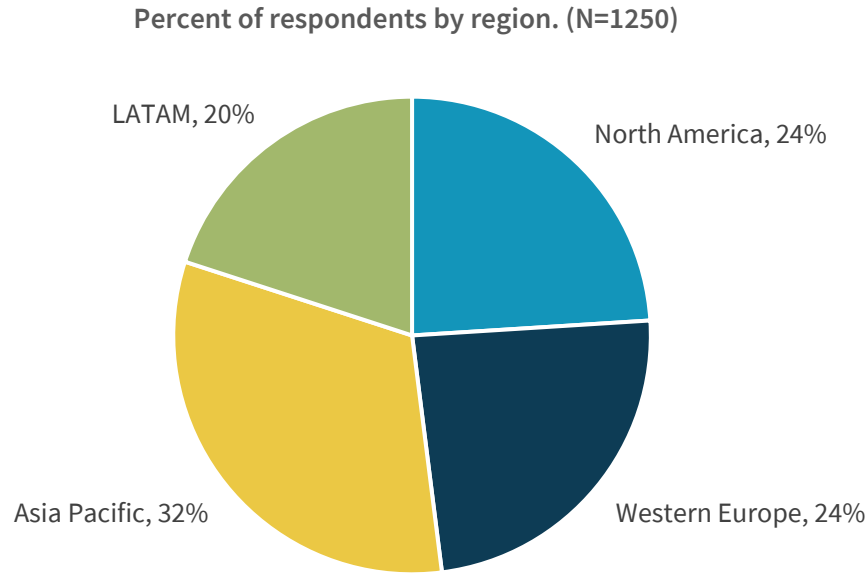
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Research Approach and Respondent Demographics/Firmographics

Enterprise Strategy Group conducted a comprehensive survey among IT decision makers working with cloud technologies (53%), application developers working on cloud-hosted projects (25%), and LOB stakeholders with broad influence on cloud strategies (22%). All respondents have staff reporting to them who have taken some degree of AWS Training coursework in the last 24 months. Organizations from various regions were represented, including North America (US and Canada; 24% of respondents), Western Europe (UK, Germany, and France; 24%), Asia-Pacific (China, Japan, India, and Australia; 32%), and Latin America (Mexico, Brazil; 20%). Organizations represented skewed toward enterprises, with 73% having 1,000+ employees and 27% having 500-999 employees. The survey was fielded between May 24, 2022 and June 21, 2022. All respondents were provided an incentive to complete the survey.

After applying screening criteria and data quality control best practices, a final sample of 1,250 respondents completed the survey. Figure 13-Figure 18 detail the demographics and firmographics of the respondent base. Note: The margin of error of a sample of N=1,250 is + or - three percentage points. Totals in figures and tables throughout this report may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Statistical testing was conducted at a 90% confidence level.

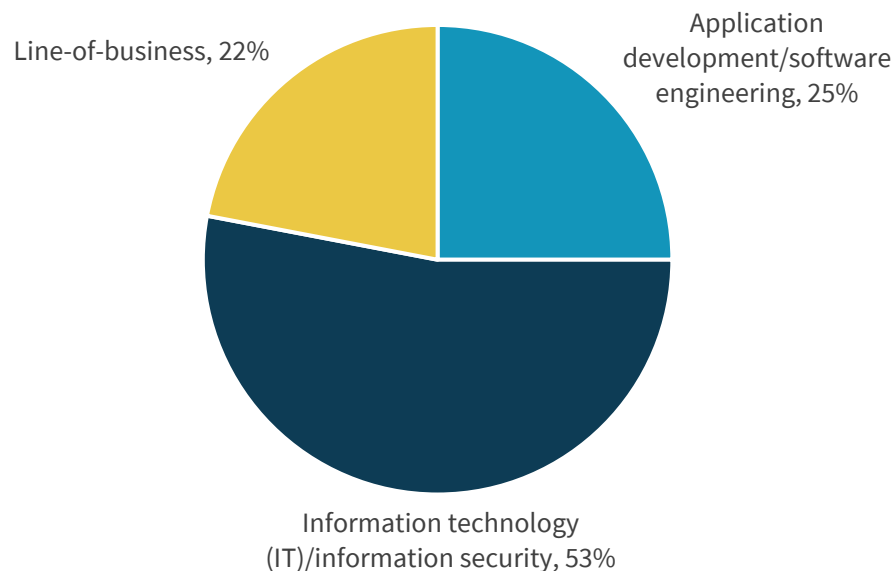
Figure 13. Regional Mix of Respondent Base



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 14. Functional Mix of Respondent Base

Which of the following best describes your current job function/organizational department? (Percent of respondents, N=1250)



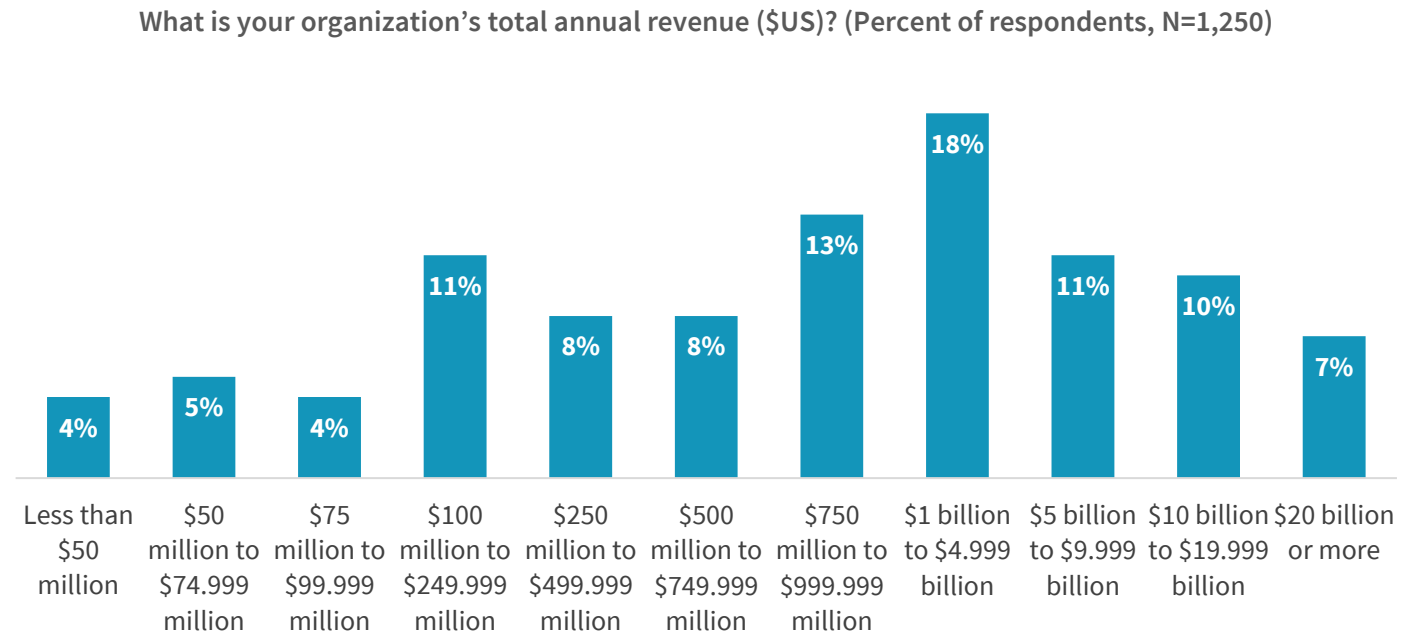
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 15. Respondent Mix by Company Size



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

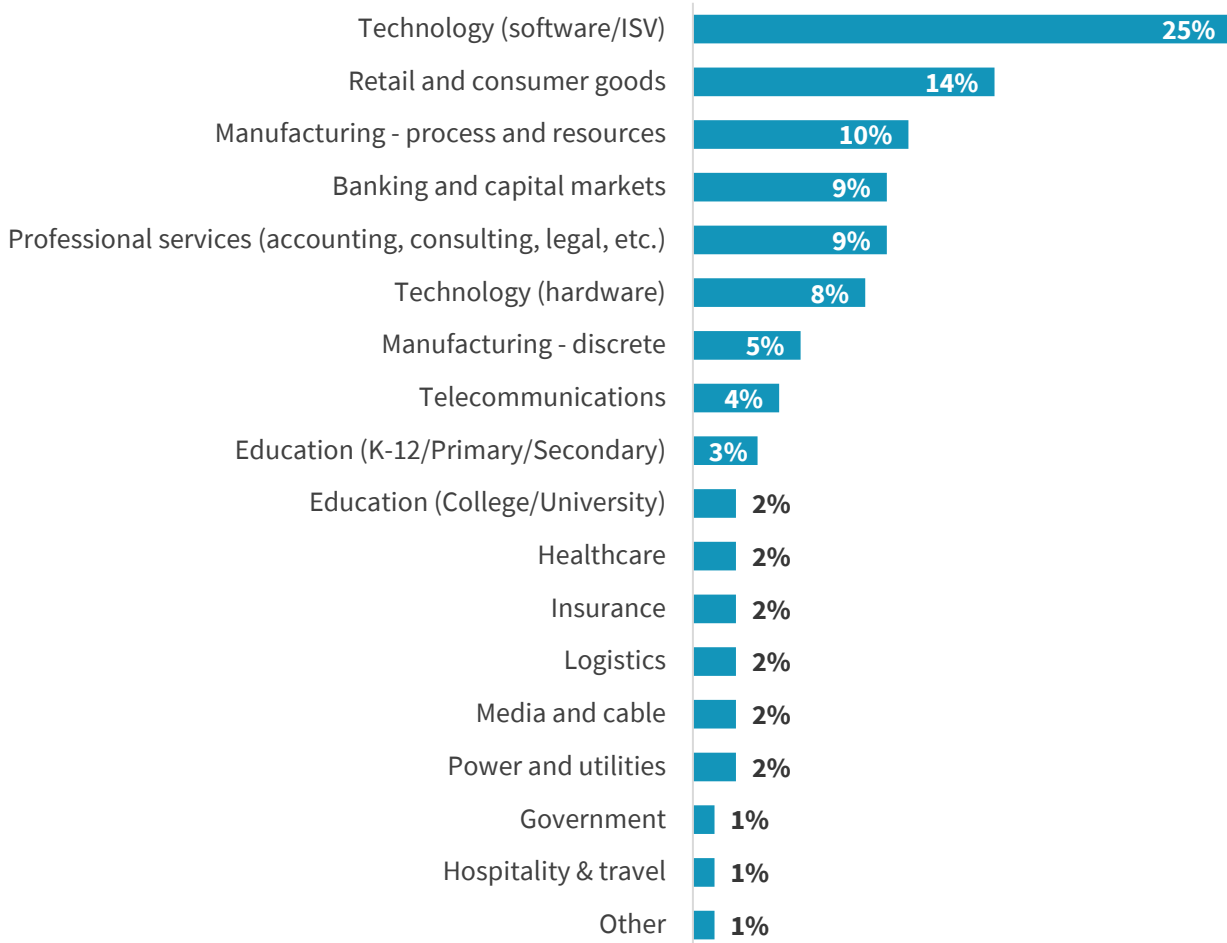
Figure 16. Respondent Mix by Company Revenue



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 17. Respondent Mix by Company Vertical Industry

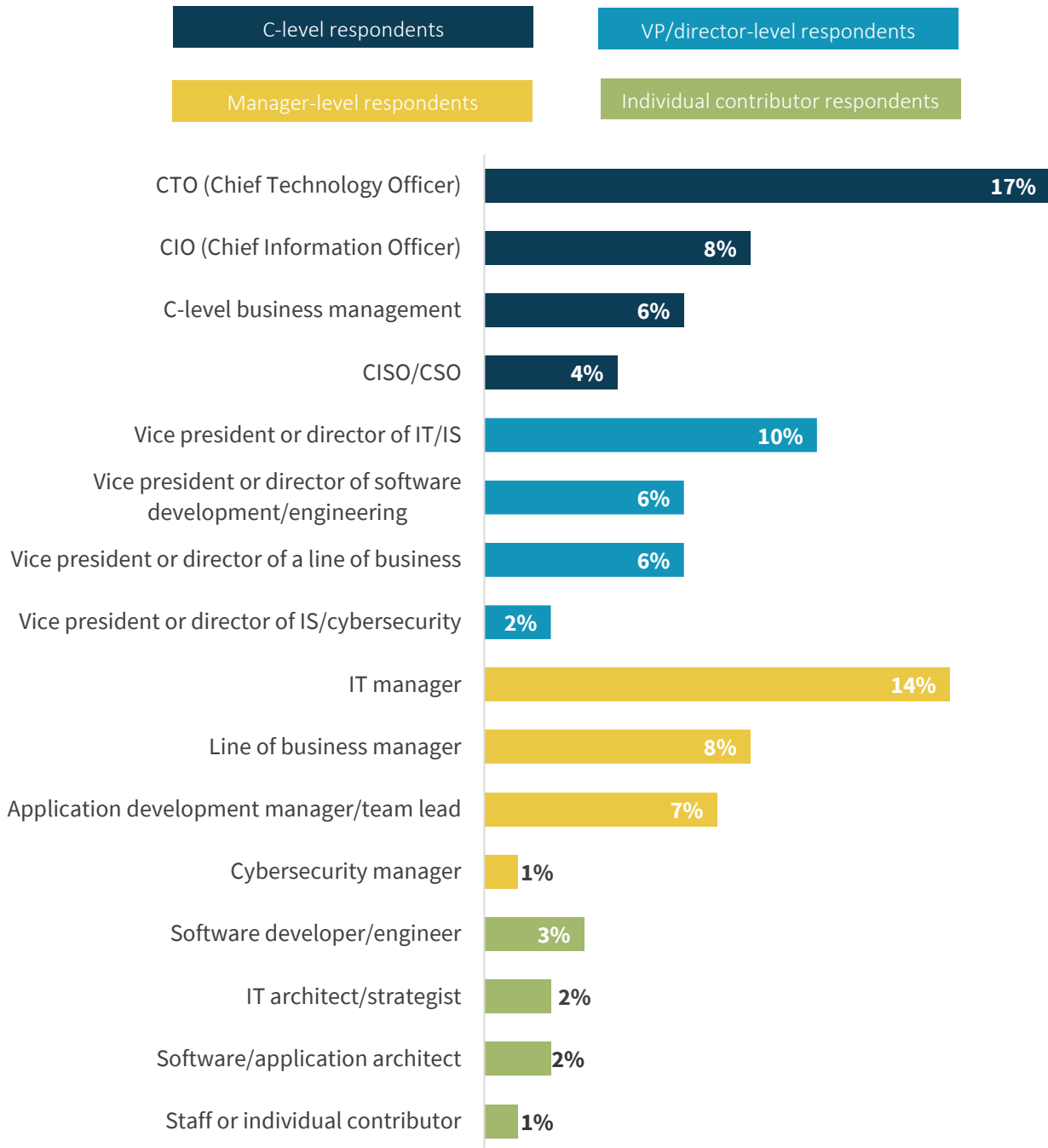
What is your organization’s primary industry? (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 18. Respondents by Job Title

What is your current role at your organization? (Percent of respondents, N=1,250)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.


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 www.esg-global.com

 contact@esg-global.com

 508.482.0188