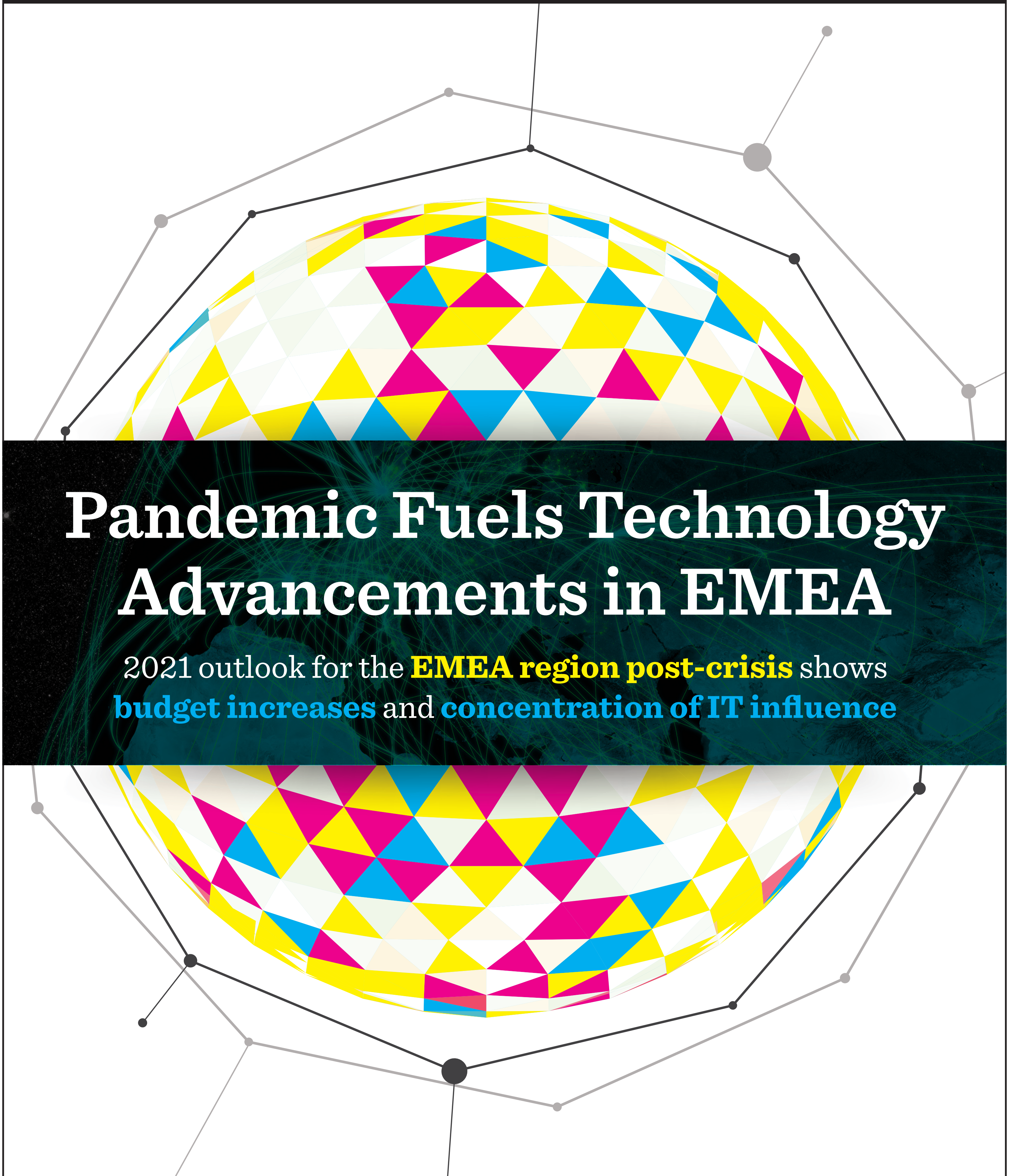


Pandemic Fuels Technology Advancements in EMEA

2021 outlook for the **EMEA region post-crisis** shows **budget increases** and **concentration of IT influence**

IDG

IDG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

THE EVENTS OF 2020 HAVE IRREVOCABLY ALTERED STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS FOR BUSINESSES ACROSS THE GLOBE. A hallmark aspect of that was a change in the way organizations buy and use technology. As millions of people shifted how they go to work, companies responded with an acceleration of digital transformation, despite economic pressures. That technology advancement continues to remain front and center. Yet, there are some striking contrasts when looking at how IT organizations across the globe are influencing the tech purchase process.

To better understand the purchase process, the 2020 IDG Role & Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker Study study asked IT decision-makers about their priorities, content consumption behaviors and how they manage vendor relationships. This report specifically looks at the EMEA region and focuses on key aspects learned about IT organizations and the tech purchase process within that region.

Budget Bright Spots & Shifts in Tech Strategy

SHIFTS IN STRATEGY are to be expected, especially in the face of a year like the last. In line with overall results, EMEA respondents agree that pandemic related conditions will cause disruptions to IT purchases over the course of 2021 — nearly 75% say it's likely.

But how exactly will they be affected? A little more than half of EMEA respondents said IT purchases are either extremely or highly likely to be controlled more centrally because of the crisis and nearly the same number said the decision-making process is getting longer. However, EMEA respondents were slightly less likely to say projects would be delayed, put on hold, or cancelled than their North American peers (41% vs. 48%).

Budget plans show a regional bright spot within EMEA. Spending expectations are slightly higher with 82% saying they anticipate tech budgets to increase or hold steady over the next 12 months in comparison to 75% of North American respondents and 76% overall. At the same time, only 19% of respondents from EMEA said they expect to reduce IT budgets. Nearly twice as many respondents (37%) from the Asia/Pacific (APAC) region and one out of four respondents from North America say the same.

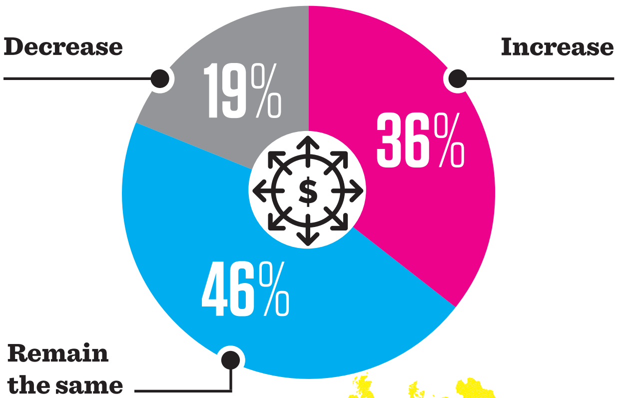
When it comes to tech strategy, EMEA respondents were roughly in agreement with overall results. They said strategy for the previous twelve months was primarily focused on maintaining the status quo (34%) and driven by internal events such as process changes and reorganizations (32%). However, since the previous study in 2019, this number has risen sharply within EMEA. Just a year ago only 22% said the primary focus was on maintaining status quo. Given the events of 2020, it is not surprising that many

IT PURCHASE DISRUPTIONS IN EMEA DUE TO PANDEMIC:

51% — **extremely/very likely IT purchase decisions will be controlled more centrally within IT organization**

49% — **extremely/very likely decision-making process for IT purchases will be extended**

EMEA TECH **BUDGET EXPECTATIONS:**



54%

of EMEA tech buyers are extremely/ very likely to consider a new vendor when making quick purchase decisions

organizations are focused on maintaining equilibrium.

Either way, the trajectory for the next year will see more of a split in strategy for EMEA organizations between continuing to focus on maintaining status quo (34%), while also responding to internal events (32%) as well as external events (31%).

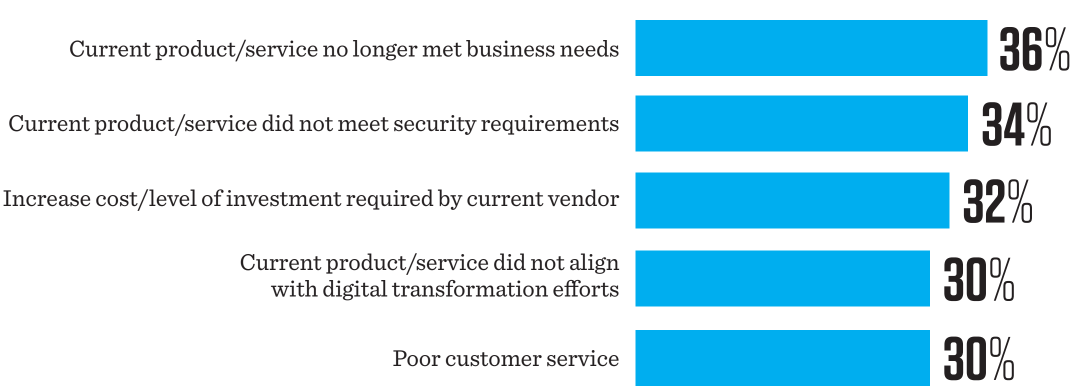
A Changing Environment Opens the Door for New Vendors

EMEA IS NO different than other regions when looking at what is prompting organizations to consider future purchases. Across the board, tech buyers say the leading reason is an addition to their IT portfolio followed by an upgrade of existing technology.

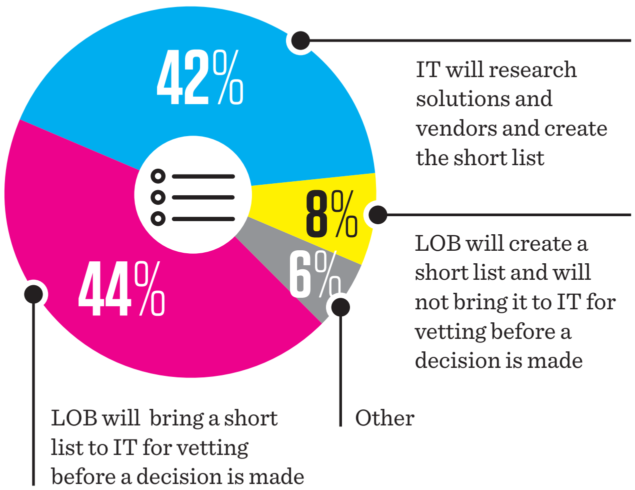
One unique trait of EMEA tech buyers is that they are much more open to considering a new tech vendor when making quick purchase decisions. More than half (54%) of EMEA respondents said they are extremely or highly likely to consider a new vendor when making quick purchase decisions and an additional 25% said they are likely. That's in comparison to a little over one-third (36%) of North American respondents and 42% overall who are extremely or highly likely to consider a new vendor. The leading reasons for EMEA ITDMs to seek a new vendor were that the current product no longer met their business needs followed closely by that product not meeting their security requirements.

Taken together, this shows that the EMEA region may be a prime area for new vendors to build relationships with potential tech buyers.

WHAT PROMPTS EMEA ITDMS TO SEEK NEW VENDORS?



HOW IS THE **IT SHORT LIST CREATED IN EMEA?**



IT Organization Powers Purchase Process

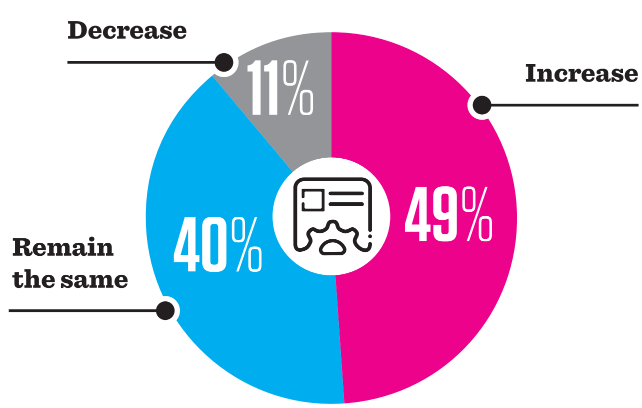
IDG'S ROLE & INFLUENCE research has consistently documented that top technology executives remain in firm control of major spending decisions, and that holds true within the EMEA region. Sixty-three percent of EMEA respondents said IT is the primary budget holder, which is unchanged from last year. At the same time, there are some interesting differences within EMEA from the overall results of the study.

Most strikingly, when it comes to how vendor short lists for technology projects are created, EMEA is the outlier. Line of Business is much more likely to bring a short list to IT for vetting than in any other region. In fact, 44% of EMEA respondents said this was the case versus only 19% of North American and 25% of overall respondents. With the rise of software-as-a-service and increasing technical proficiency of users, it's reasonable to expect that business leaders would want greater initial input on the technology they may ultimately be using. Though, for EMEA, any additional role business leaders play is minor. Interestingly, business leaders are not significantly involved at any stage of the purchase process for the EMEA region.

Different groups influence purchases at different times; however, for EMEA, those groups tend to concentrate within the IT organization or C-level. For example, IT executives are involved in every stage of the buying process, acting as the leading group influencing the process for five out of the seven stages. CTOs and IT managers play key roles when determining technical requirements, evaluating, and recommending and selecting vendors but are far less involved in other stages. The CEO alongside the COO are dominant influences in determining the need, and then the CFO alongside the CEO play significant roles in authorizing the purchase. However, outside of those two arenas they have little involvement.

While responses to the length of time for each stage within the purchase process were fairly in line with overall results, there were a few key differences. For example, EMEA respondents indicated that recommending and selecting vendors took a shorter amount of time than their North American peers or even when looking across all regions. Fifty-two percent ranked it as one of the shortest stages versus 40% and 42%, respectively. On the flipside, selling internally proved by far to be the longest stage of the purchase process for EMEA respondents. A little more than three-fourths (76%) of EMEA respondents said it's the longest stage and that's in comparison to 63% of North American respondents and 68% overall.

SHIFT IN EMEA **CONTENT CONSUMPTION HABITS**



When asked about the future, EMEA tech buyers expect more time to be spent on most stages of the purchase process, led by 33% who say there would be more scrutiny around determining the business need. On the bright side, roughly one of four (24%) EMEA respondents said they expect to spend less time on selling internally over the next six to twelve months, and that's compared to only 10% of North American and 14% of overall respondents.

Content Preferences & Sources Differ for ITDMs

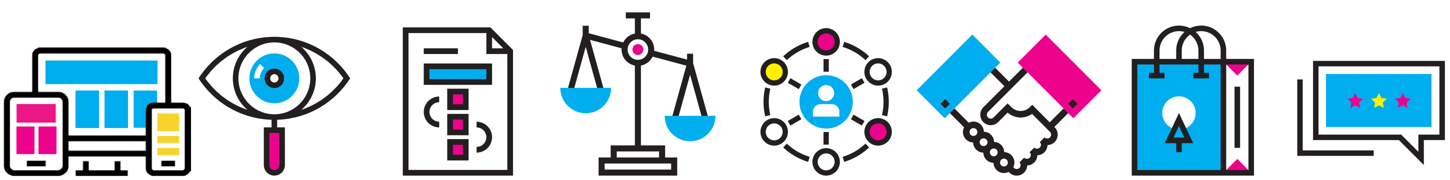
EACH YEAR THE Role & Influence study asks detailed questions about the information sources that drive decisions. This year respondents told us they expect to consume more information during the buying cycle, especially within the EMEA region. Nearly half (49%) of EMEA ITDMs expect to consume more content to help in the purchase process. That's in comparison to around one-third (35%) of North American respondents but does more closely resemble the overall trend.

When asked how content is typically found, EMEA stood out from its regional peers. Tech buyers in EMEA were more likely to say they found content through organic searches (32%) than either their North American peers (17%) or respondents overall (15%). With that in mind, B2B marketers should consider search engine optimization as part of their strategic plan to engage EMEA tech buyers.

New for this year's study, ITDMs were asked about device preferences when it comes to consuming different types of information. EMEA tech buyers are in line with the preferences of overall respondents in that they prefer desktop or laptop, especially when researching product information on a vendor's website, comparing prices and products, or reading case studies. EMEA respondents did show a greater propensity to use a tablet than any of the other regions.

The most relied-upon sources for EMEA are quite different from overall results with one exception. In line with overall results and previous studies, technology content sites remain at the top of the list. However, this is

INFORMATION SOURCES RELIED UPON



SOURCES TO KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH TECHNOLOGY
1 Tech content sites
2 Tech vendors (via phone, email)
3 Tech vendors (in-person)
4 Analyst firms
5 Peers outside your company (via phone, email)

DETERMINE THE BUSINESS NEED
1 Peers inside your company
2 Analyst firms
3 Executive conferences or events
Business print publications
5 Infographics

DETERMINE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
1 Peers inside your company
2 Peers outside your company (via phone, email)
3 Analyst firms
4 Tech vendors (via phone, email)
5 Tech vendors (via vendor/ website)

EVALUATE PRODUCTS & SERVICES
1 Tech vendors (via vendor/ website)
2 Peers inside your company
Tech content sites
4 Executive conferences or events
5 Analyst firms
Blogs

RECOMMEND & SELECT VENDORS
1 Peers inside your company
2 Peers outside your company (in-person)
Business content sites
4 Peers outside your company (via phone, email)
5 Tech vendors (via vendor/ website)

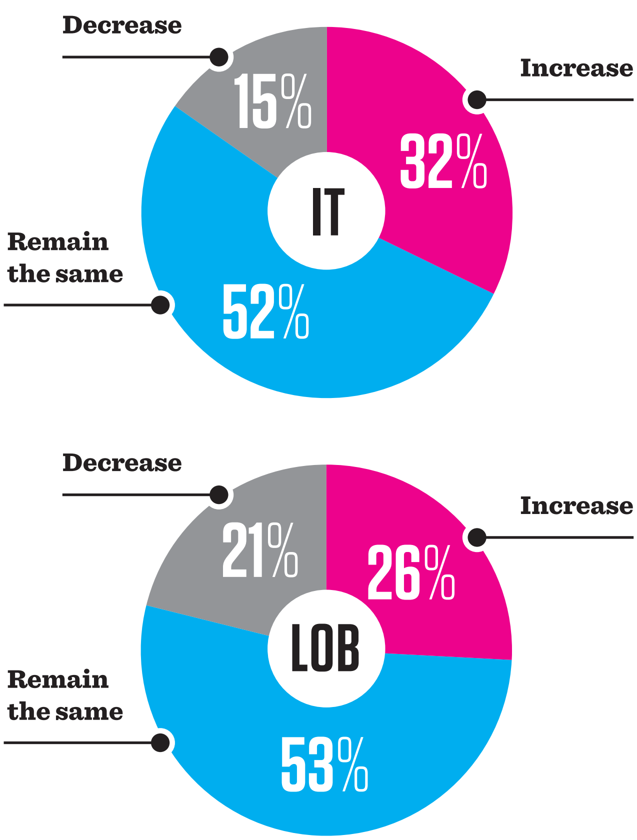
SELL INTERNALLY
1 Business print publications
2 Business content sites
3 Executive conferences or events
4 Peers inside your company
Peers outside your company (via phone, email)
Analyst firms
Infographics

APPROVE & AUTHORIZE PURCHASE
1 Peers inside your company
2 Business content sites
3 Executive conferences or events
4 Peers outside your company (via phone, email)
Tech vendors (via vendor/ website)
Business print publications

POST-SALES ENGAGEMENT
1 Peers outside your company (via phone, email)
2 Peers inside your company
3 Tech vendors (via vendor/ website)
4 Executive conferences or events
5 Tech vendors (in person)
Tech vendors (via phone, email)

where EMEA tech buyers break from overall responses. For EMEA, technology vendors followed by analyst firms and external peers round out the top five sources of information whereas overall results showed a shift towards digital information sources such as white papers and webcasts. It appears that even as the pandemic has forced many to isolate at home, EMEA decision-makers still ultimately crave a person-to-person connection when staying up to date on the tech landscape in general.

SHIFT IN THE NUMBER OF **EMEA TECH PURCHASE INFLUENCERS**



Information Sources that Drive Decisions

INFORMATION NEEDS CHANGE as the buying process proceeds; however, for EMEA there is a certain level of consistency. Peers both inside and outside the company play a clear role throughout the entire process, holding top positions in five out of the seven stages. Analyst firms also assume more importance; however, that's primarily during the initial stages of the buying process. During the product evaluation stage, tech vendors and tech content sites are relied on more.

When it comes to selling internally, business print publications and business content sites are most influential. According to results from the 2019 survey, there are now 21 individuals involved in the purchase process, split roughly even between IT and Line of Business. There are more decision makers than ever before, and that number is only expected to rise. In fact, roughly one-third of respondents (32%) expect the number of IT influencers to increase over the next 12 months. That means buyers need reliable sources of information to bolster their tech selection and sell to internal stakeholders. It's also worth noting that this contrasts with overall results, which show peers and analyst firms assuming the top spots during this stage.

One notable difference when looking across regions comes during the authorizing and approving stage. EMEA tech buyers are much more likely than their North American counterparts to rely on vendors during this stage or even when compared to overall results.

Conclusions

BUSINESSES ARE TRANSITIONING to a more digital-centric future. And for the EMEA region there are clear bright spots when it comes to technology advancements. There are also clear differences in IT's role in the purchase process as well as their preferences. It's not a matter of whether technology investments will happen or not. It's more about with whom. IT vendors that can clearly articulate their value proposition in this new landscape and serve as true partners throughout and post-purchase process will make greater strides with EMEA IT organizations.

EXAMINING THE MARKETPLACE

Research is an invaluable way for marketers to better understand customers and prospects, with the goal of building quality connections. At IDG this is one way we are focused on building bridges between tech buyers and sellers. Our 1st party relationships with the most important tech buyers and influencers around the world, allows us to apply value across our customers marketing stack. Our research portfolio explores our audiences' perspectives and challenges around specific technologies — from analytics and cloud, to IoT and security — and examines the changing roles within the IT purchase process, arming tech marketers with the information they need to identify opportunities.

To see what research is available, visit idg.com/tools-for-marketers. For a presentation of full results from any of these studies, contact your IDG sales executive or go to **idg.com/contact-us.**

BUYING PROCESS

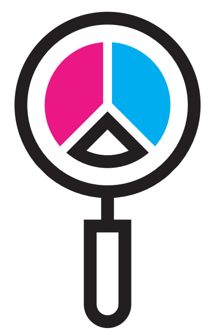
Each year we take a deep dive into the enterprise IT purchase process to learn more about who is involved and who influences decision-making, what sources purchasers rely on to keep up to date with technology — and throughout the purchase process — and how they want to engage with the vendors they are working with.

- **Role & Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker**
  This survey is conducted to gain insight into the evolving role and influence of IT decision-makers in today's corporations. The research identifies key decision-makers and examines their involvement during each stage of the tech purchase process and the primary influences and information sources they rely.
- **Customer Engagement**
  This survey examines the role content consumption plays in the purchase process for major technology products and services, and provides insights for tech marketers to map their engagement touch-points to customers' information needs. The survey looks at how a wide variety of content types are consumed, discussed and shared throughout the stages of the tech purchase process and how that maps to marketing and sales alignment.

TECHNOLOGY INSIGHTS

Each year we explore the technologies that are top of mind among our audiences to understand the business challenges, drivers, and adoption within the enterprise. These research studies are designed to help IT marketers understand what their customers are focused on and where the market is moving.

- **Role & Priority Studies**
  CIO Tech Poll: Economic Outlook
  CIO Tech Poll: Tech Priorities
  State of the CIO
  Role of the Developer
  State of the Network
- **Technology Specific Studies**
  Data & Analytics
  Cloud Computing
  Digital Business
  Security Priorities



CUSTOMER JOURNEY POSTER

Want to know about what content drives IT decision-makers and fuels their engagement during the IT purchase process? IDG's Customer Journey poster and vertical white papers serve as your content marketing guide to strategically reach your target customers. **Find it all on www.idg.com**.

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