

# Government Business Council

Underwritten by:

>  
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## Bringing Federal IT Up to Speed

A Candid Survey of Federal Managers

December 2014

# Purpose

Federal information technology (IT) networks are under more pressure now than ever before. They are expected to be sources of both enhanced capabilities and significant cost savings, and yet they are often well behind the technology curve. President Obama's FY 2015 budget request calls for "shifting the focus of Government IT projects from compliance to delivering on intended impact and meeting user needs," while at the same time curbing IT spending and achieving cost savings.<sup>i</sup> In fact, delivering smarter information technology is one of the administration's 15 Cross Agency Priority Goals.<sup>ii</sup>

Recognizing this government-wide IT challenge, Government Business Council (GBC) and Accenture undertook a research study to evaluate the current state of federal IT infrastructure and explore the drivers and challenges of modernization.

# Methodology

To assess the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of federal defense and civilian executives regarding their agencies' IT infrastructure, GBC deployed a survey to a random sample of *Government Executive*, *Nextgov*, and *Defense One* online and print subscribers in August 2014. The pool of 351 respondents includes those of GS-11 through Senior Executive Service levels in at least 30 different civilian and defense agencies.

i. [Fiscal Year 2015 Budget of the U.S. Government](#), Executive Office of the President, March 2014.

ii. [Performance.gov](#), Office of Management and Budget

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# 1

## Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## **Current IT infrastructures hinder mission-effectiveness**

A majority (52%) of respondents does not think that their agency's IT infrastructure provides them with the IT services they need to do their jobs effectively. Nearly two thirds (63%) agree that the current speed of their IT services hinders their agency's ability to achieve its mission.

## **Modernized IT may lead to increased efficiency and enhanced collaboration**

A plurality (44%) indicates that achieving more efficient operations is the most significant driver of IT modernization for their agency, followed by reduced costs (32%). Though just 23% select enhanced collaboration as a significant driver of IT modernization, a majority (52%) indicates that their agency's ability to collaborate with other agencies depends heavily on the quality of its IT infrastructure services.

## **Automating key IT services would heighten mission-effectiveness**

Two thirds of respondents suggest that automating at least one IT capability would improve their agency's ability to achieve mission. A plurality (41%) indicates that automated configuration of devices and desktops would do so, followed by automated detection and resolution of infrastructure problems (37%). Respondents are less sure about which capabilities would improve IT security.

## **Budget is both the most critical requirement—and most timely challenge—for IT modernization**

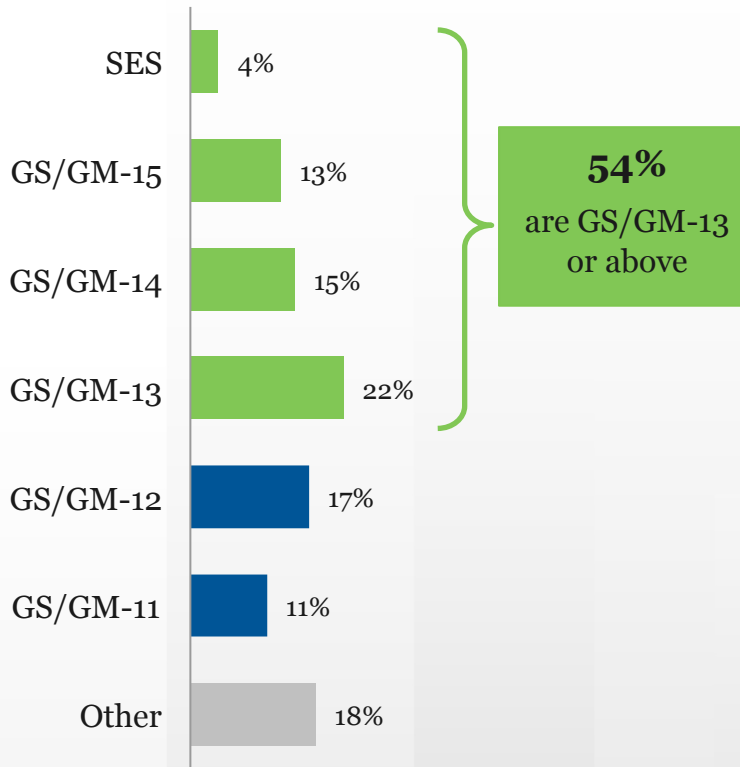
Sufficient budget is identified as the most critical requirement for IT modernization, followed closely by strong leadership and a clearly defined strategy. Budget is also the most immediate challenge; a majority (54%) of respondents identify budget constraints as the biggest obstacle to IT modernization right now. Respondents also indicate that their agencies lack awareness/understanding (40%), appropriate workforce skill sets (38%), a clear strategy (38%), and leadership buy-in (35%).

# 2

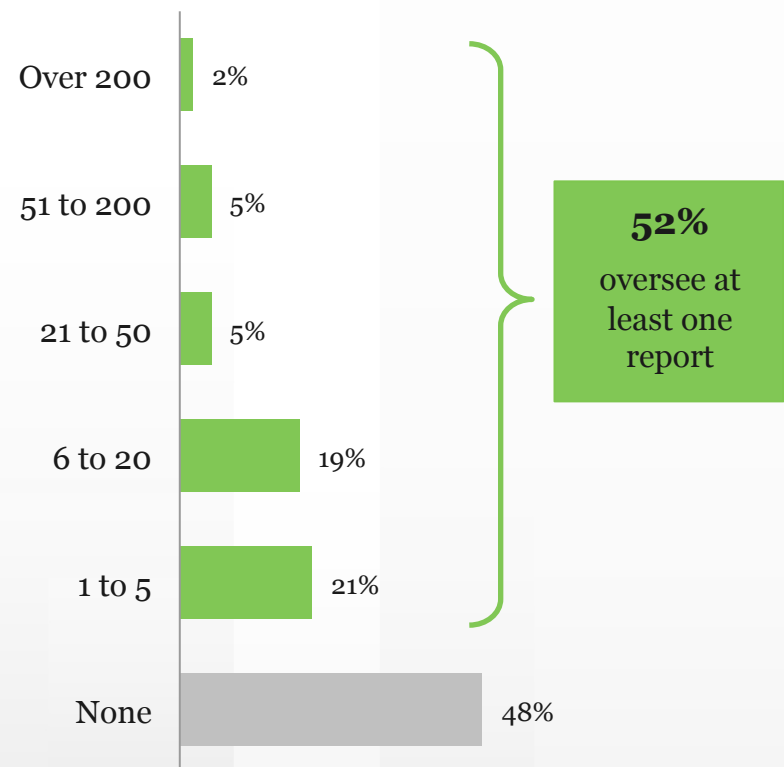
## Respondent Profile

# Respondents are largely senior federal executives

Job Grade

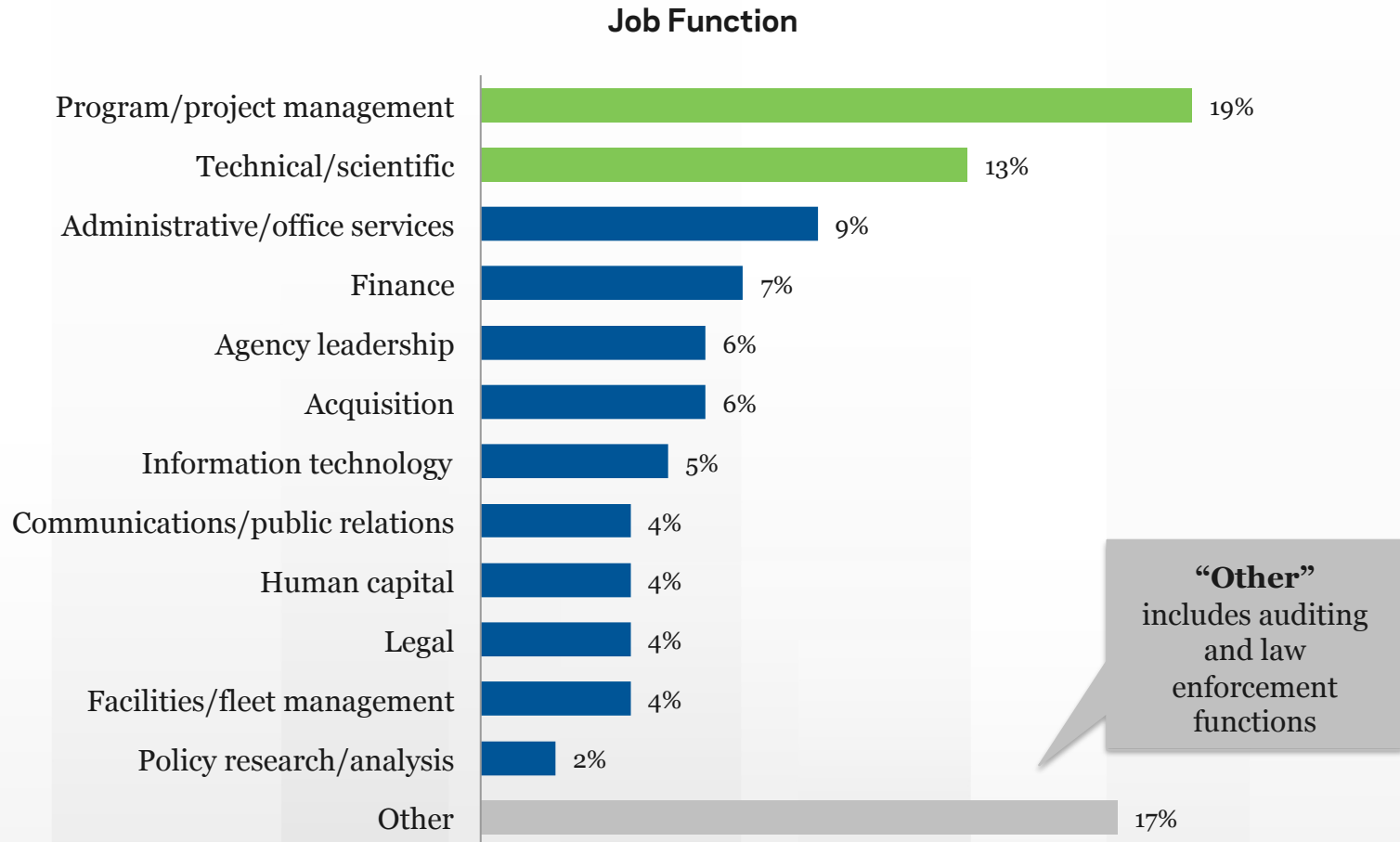


Reports/Oversees



Percentage of respondents, n=351

# Management and technical roles are the most represented job functions



Percentage of respondents, n=351



# Agencies represented

Department of Agriculture  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Treasury  
Department of the Army  
Department of the Interior  
Department of the Air Force  
Department of Defense  
Department of Health and Human Services  
General Services Administration  
Department of the Navy  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Labor  
Department of Justice

Department of Commerce  
Department of Energy  
Social Security Administration  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Small Business Administration  
Department of State  
Department of Education  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Government Accountability Office  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
United States Marine Corps  
Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Office of Personnel Management  
United States Agency for International  
Development

Agencies listed in order of frequency

# 3

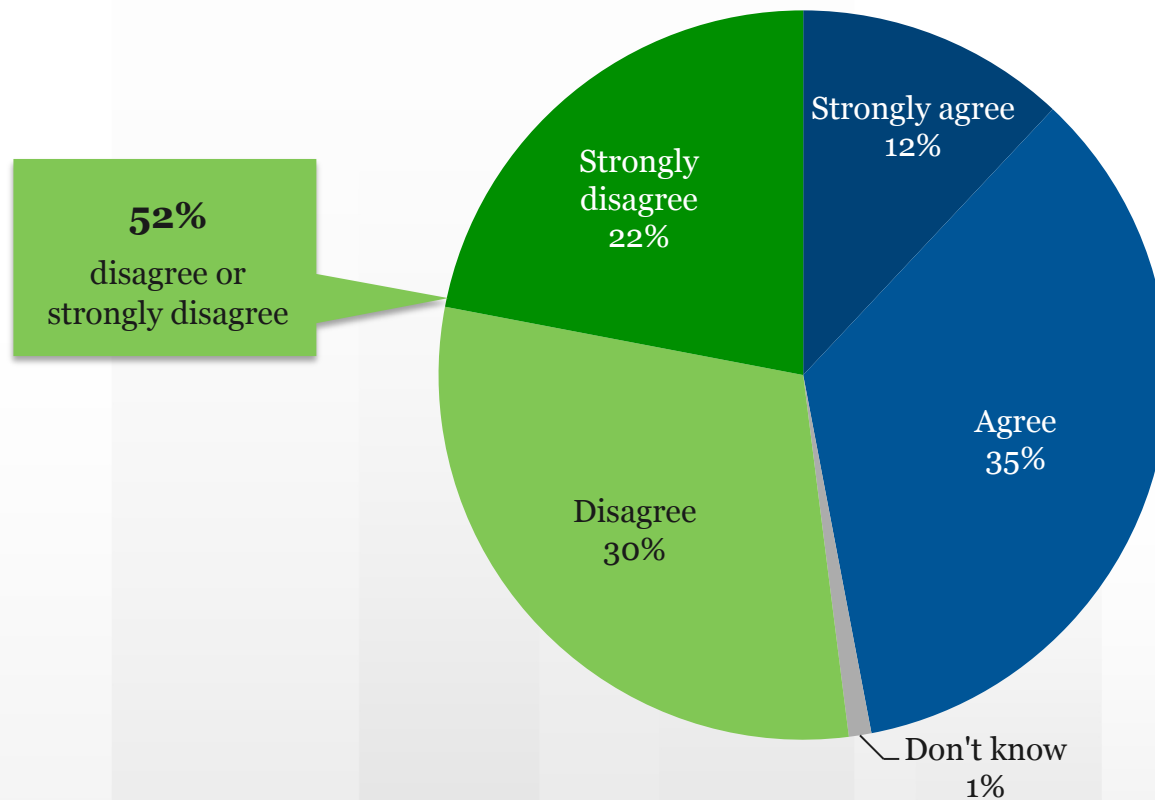
## Research Findings

**i.**

## Current State of Federal IT

# A majority of federal executives do not have the IT services they need

*My department/agency's IT infrastructure provides the IT services I need to do my job effectively in supports of its mission*



Percentage of respondents, n=353

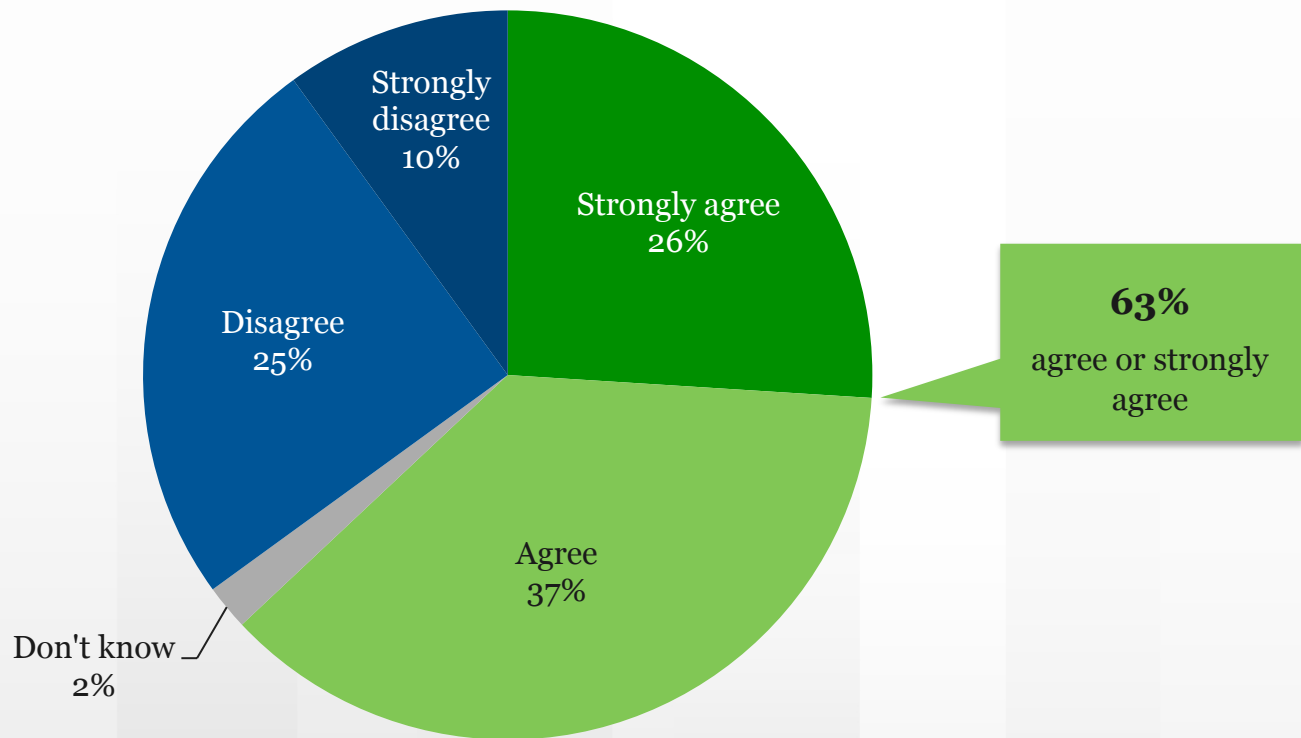
# Respondents elaborate on problems with their IT systems...

“ Our system is down more than it is up. The IT people are good, but the system/equipment can't handle the work we do. ”

“ One of our current databases is **TOTALLY** inadequate and hard to learn, slow to respond, and not intuitive. It does not provide reports as needed and is not user friendly. ”

# Federal leaders agree that the current speed of IT services hinders mission-effectiveness

*The current speed of my IT services hinders my department/ agency's ability to achieve its mission*



Percentage of respondents, n=352

# Respondents reveal IT service speed frustrations...

*“ At least once a week, it takes up to an hour just to log on. There is a fundamental software/hardware problem at my agency. ”*

*“ My computer is six years old. It is slow, has an outdated web browser, and the automatic updates are spotty. ”*

Sampling of open-ended responses

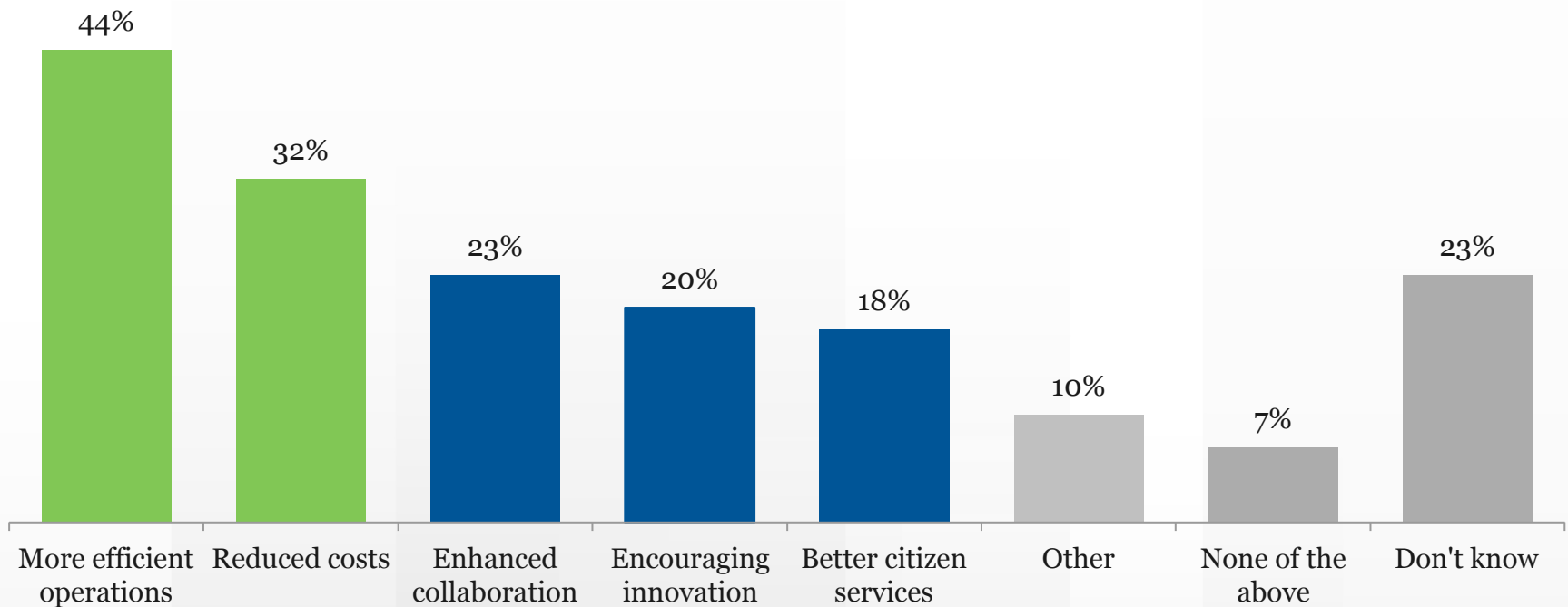
**ii.**

## The Value of Modernizing Federal IT



# Efficiency and cost reduction are the most important drivers of IT modernization

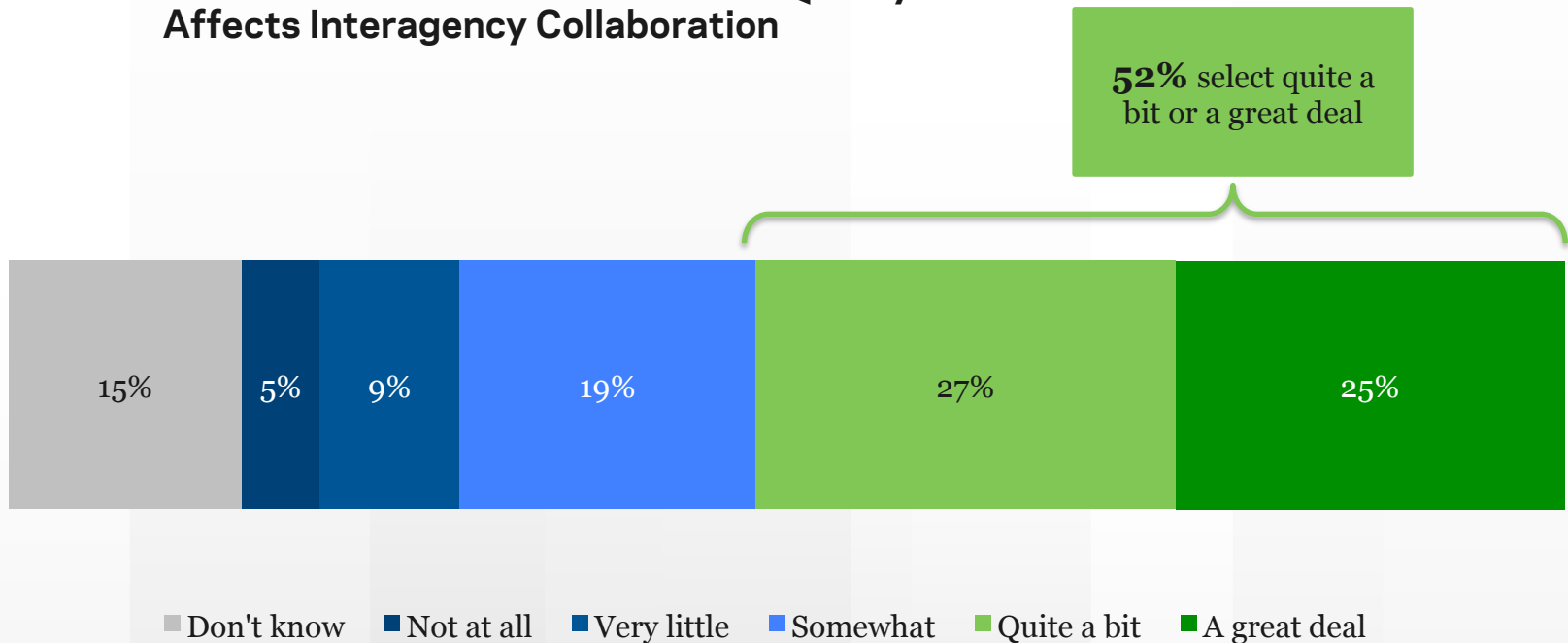
## Significant Drivers of Federal IT Modernization



Percentage of respondents, n=352  
Respondents were asked to select all that apply

# IT service quality is deemed important for interagency collaboration

Extent to Which IT Infrastructure Service Quality Affects Interagency Collaboration



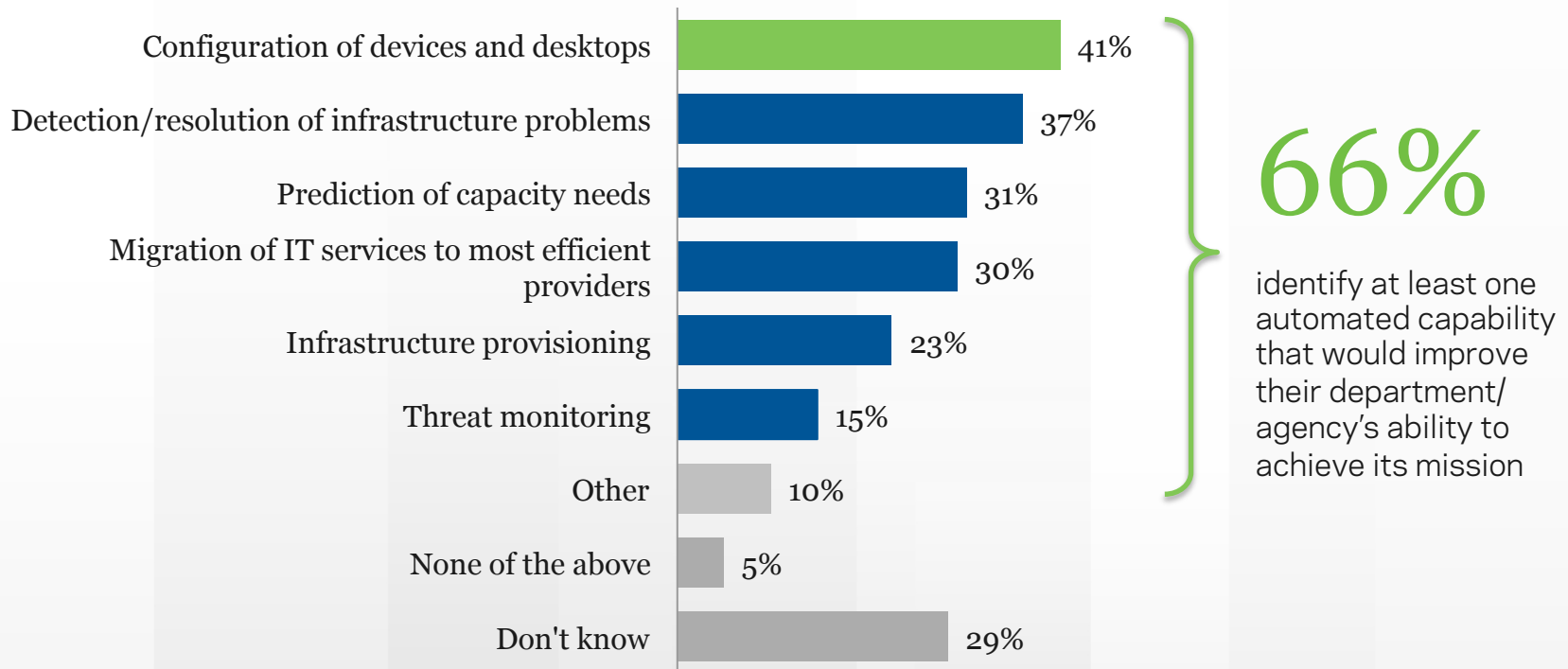
Percentage of respondents, n=352

iii.

## Automating IT Services

# Automating IT capabilities would enhance mission-effectiveness

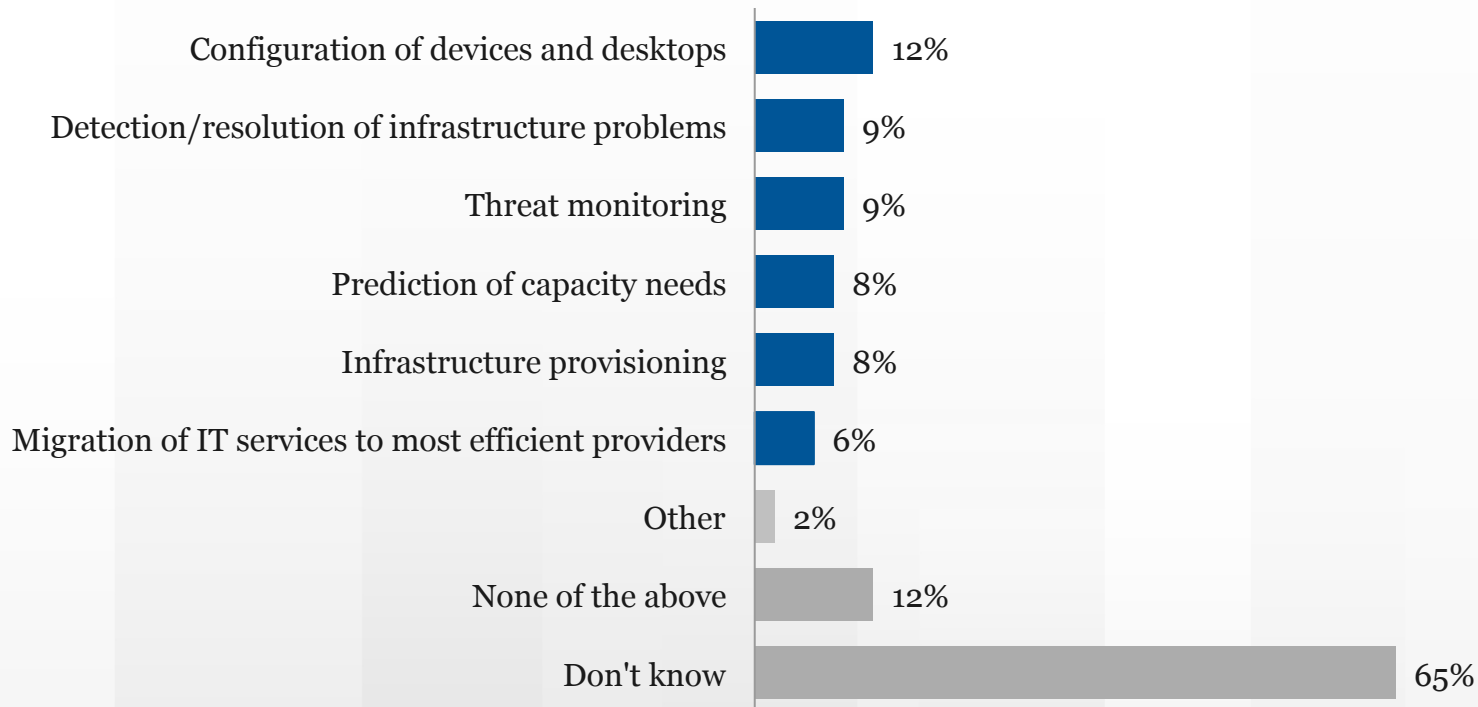
*Which of the following IT infrastructure capabilities, if automated, would significantly improve your department/agency's ability to achieve its mission?*



Percentage of respondents, n=351  
Respondents were asked to select all that apply

# Federal leaders are uncertain of acquisition timeline for automated IT capabilities

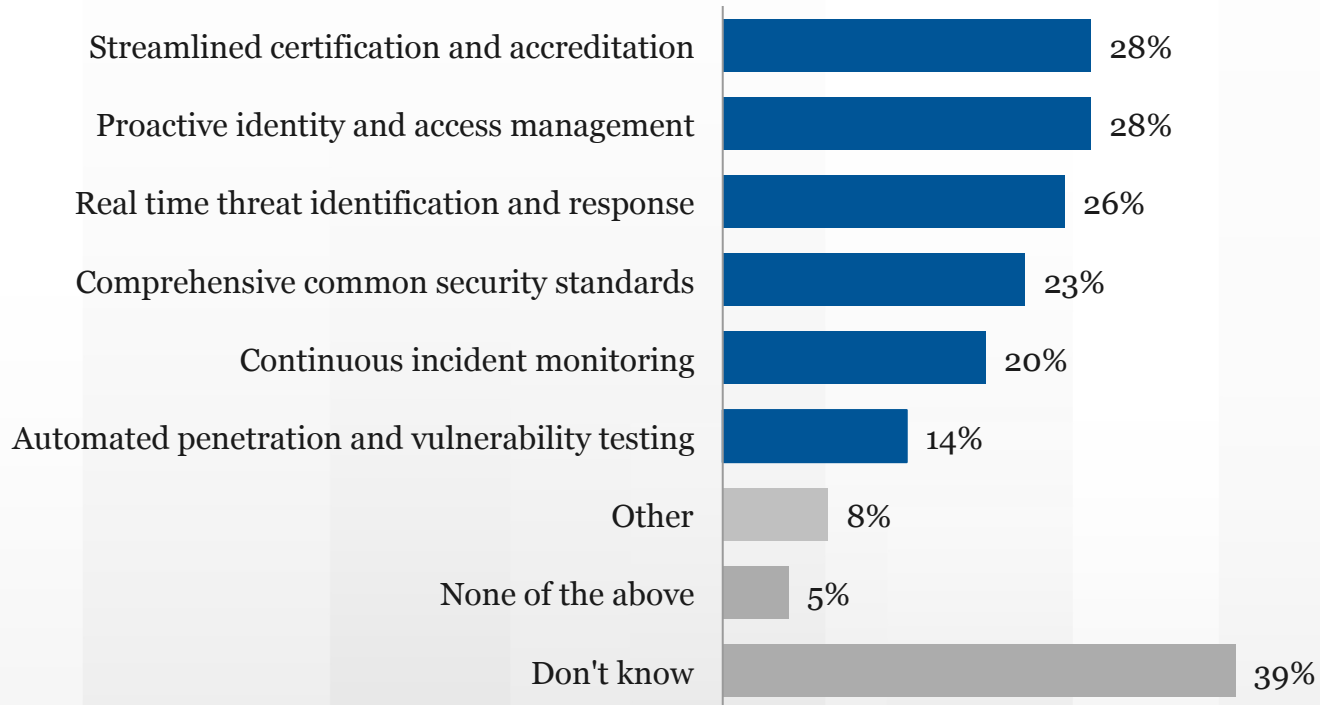
*Which automated IT capabilities do you anticipate your department/agency acquiring in the next 12 months?*



Percentage of respondents, n=350  
Respondents were asked to select all that apply

# Federal leaders are divided on which capabilities will improve IT security

*Which of the following capabilities would significantly improve your department/agency's IT security?*



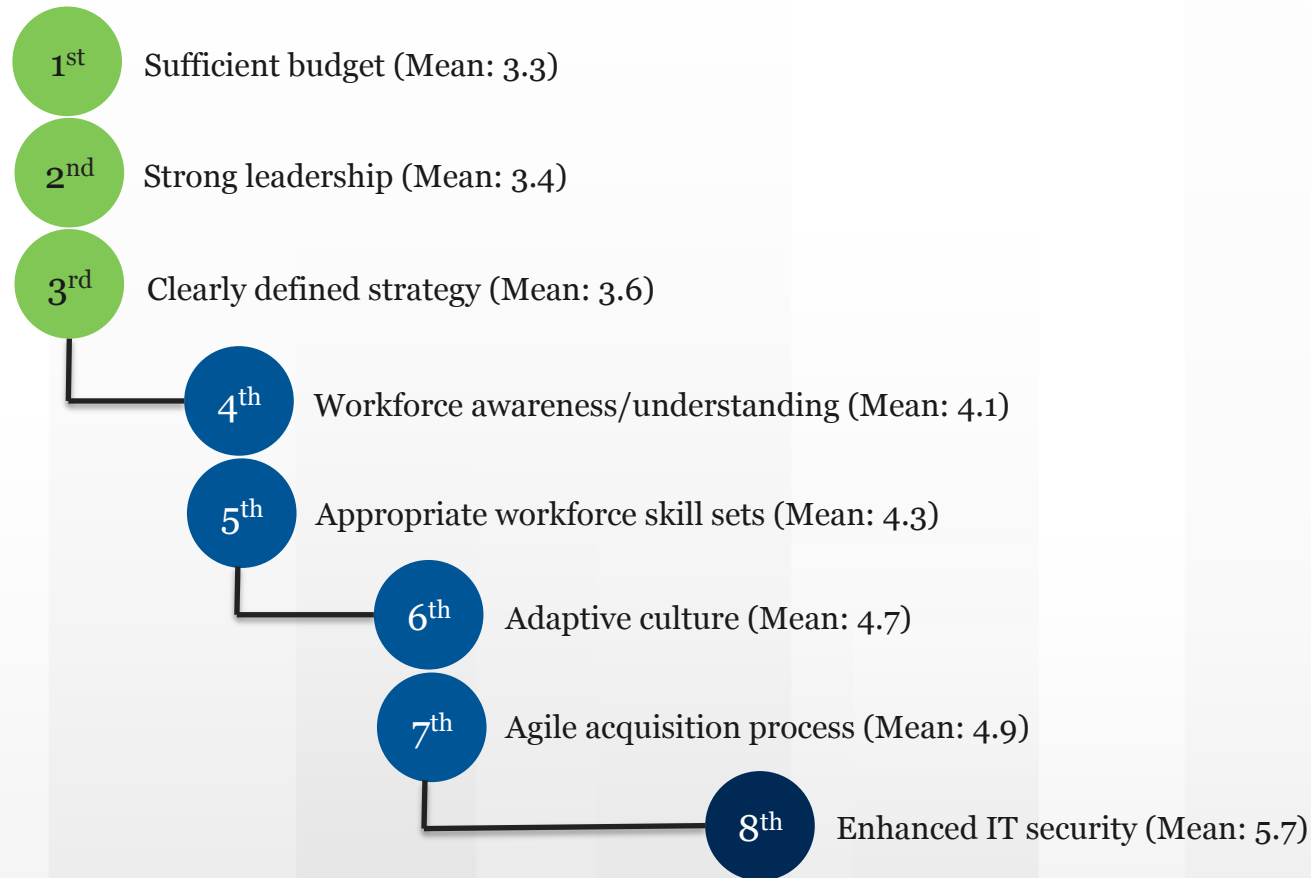
Percentage of respondents, n=349  
Respondents were asked to select all that apply

**iv.**

## The Challenge of IT Modernization

# Budget, leadership, and strategy top the IT modernization requirements list

## Most Critical Requirements for IT Modernization

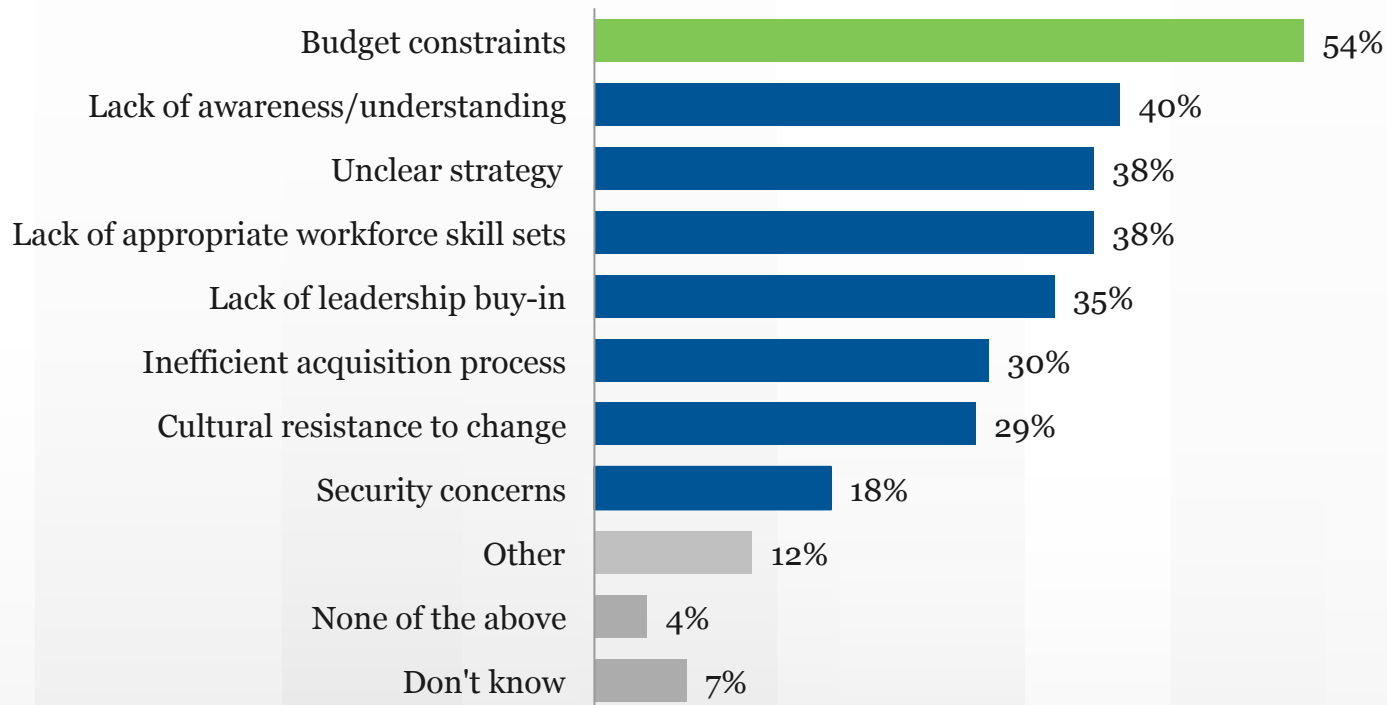


Ranked by mean, n=322



# Budget is also seen as the most immediate challenge to IT modernization

## Biggest Obstacles to IT Modernization



Percentage of respondents, n=349  
Respondents were asked to select all that apply

# Respondents elaborate on IT modernization challenges...

- “ *The biggest obstacles for IT success in my organization are a lack of business sense and the failure to involve users in the development process for new programs/applications. ”*
- “ *My agency is hindered by a combination of contractor and legacy IT arrangements that accomplish very little at great time and expense. ”*
- “ *The biggest obstacle to IT improvement is getting people to accept change. New reports and work methods are built but some people steadfastly refuse to use them. ”*

Sampling of open-ended responses

# 4

## Final Considerations

# When considering IT modernization...

## **Federal managers don't just want an IT upgrade, mission delivery demands improvement**

Observing that agencies' IT infrastructures are old and slow is a common, perhaps even trite, refrain. But current IT services may be holding them back significantly. Majorities of federal executives surveyed say they don't have the IT tools they need to do their jobs effectively and that the current speed of their IT services hinders their agency's mission-effectiveness. This is alarming since IT is often positioned as a potential generator of both cost-savings and enhanced capabilities.

## **Federal agencies need a clear vision**

Budget is both the most critical requirement and timely challenge for IT infrastructure modernization, but federal managers surveyed are also concerned about fundamental institutional hurdles, including a lack of awareness/understanding and unclear strategy. If federal agencies are to sufficiently upgrade their IT services to keep up with mission delivery and cost savings demands, a clear vision is essential.

## **Start with automation**

Automating essential IT infrastructure capabilities is a cornerstone of IT infrastructure modernization. Federal managers surveyed are still new to the idea, but they recognize the value of automation for enhancing mission effectiveness.

# Underwritten by



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## About Accenture Federal Services

Accenture Federal Services is a U.S. company, with offices in Arlington, Va., and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Accenture LLP. Accenture's federal business has served every cabinet-level department and 30 of the largest federal organizations with clients at defense, intelligence, public safety, civilian, and military health organizations.

## About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with more than 305,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US \$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

# About GBC

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