

How Digital Are Canadian Charities Now?

DIGITAL SKILLS SURVEY RESULTS 2023



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About CanadaHelps

[CanadaHelps](#) is a public foundation advancing philanthropy through technology. For Canadians, it powers CanadaHelps.org, a safe and trusted destination for discovering and supporting any charity in Canada. CanadaHelps also develops affordable fundraising technology used by more than 30,000 charities, and free training and education so that, regardless of size, all charities have the capacity to increase their impact and succeed in the digital age.

About Charity Growth Academy by CanadaHelps

[Charity Growth Academy](#) is a unique, self-serve platform to help Canadian charities kick-start their digital transformation efforts. Organizations can complete a free digital assessment and receive a free, customized Action Plan to use as a roadmap towards a more sophisticated digital future. Plus, all users have access to original courses, learning resources, and support to help keep up momentum.

Message From the CEO

CanadaHelps first conducted digital skills research in 2021 because there wasn't any comprehensive Canadian data on the digital skills gap in the charitable sector. What we found was deeply worrisome.

Two years later, despite the perceived technology advances made during the pandemic across industries, our 2023 research has not shown any substantial improvements in charities. In fact, a higher number (60% vs 54%) report they will soon find it harder to do their jobs without an improvement in their digital capabilities; however, 48% of respondents report they don't have the skills, expertise and knowledge, and 62% report they don't have the funding to make this change.

Throughout this report we have provided the data, but also provided our insights based on the Charity Growth Academy and CanadaHelps teams' expertise working within the charitable sector.

With the rise in cybersecurity incidents across all industries, this year we also probed into cybersecurity for the first time to get a baseline as to how charities are preparing. While there is a surprising level of confidence from survey respondents, the data suggests the risks are not fully understood and sufficient protections are not in place.

As someone who has joined the charitable sector from a long career in fintech and technology start-ups, it's clear to me that the pace of change within the charitable sector is not moving fast enough to close the gaps. This puts the sector—and all the communities they serve—at risk.

What we see from the research and our recent Charity Growth Academy pilot is there are many tangible barriers to progress, but also very likely some significant cultural barriers to overcome. As CanadaHelps continues to grow its Charity Growth Academy program and platform, we will continue to use data to inform the best interventions to test, and look for more ways to collaborate with the charitable, public, and corporate sectors to make meaningful change in this area.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duke Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Duke Chang
President & CEO, CanadaHelps

About the Research

In August, 2023, we conducted an online survey from a database of Canadian charities, of which 1,470 responded. The research was commissioned by CanadaHelps and was conducted by Nanos Research.

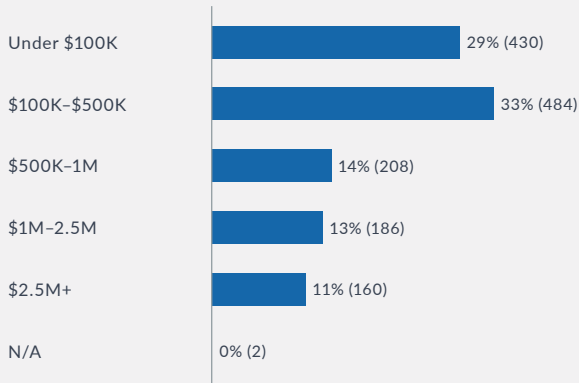
For the purposes of this report we refer to charities with CRA-reported annual revenue under \$500K as small charities, those under \$2.5M as medium charities, and those over \$2.5M as large charities.

All respondents received the same survey between August 21st and August 28th, 2023. The survey was conducted in French and English.

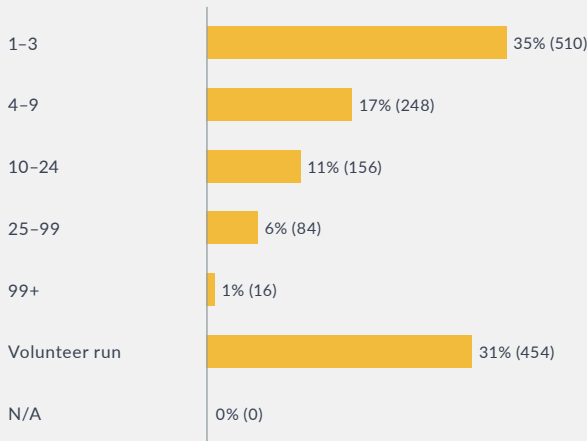
Throughout the report, some charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding, or for questions where respondents were able to select more than one response.

Participation Distribution

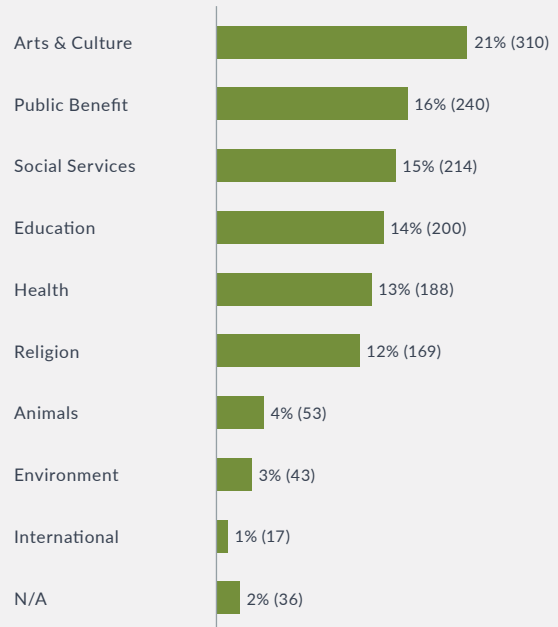
Size of Charity



Number of Paid Staff



Category



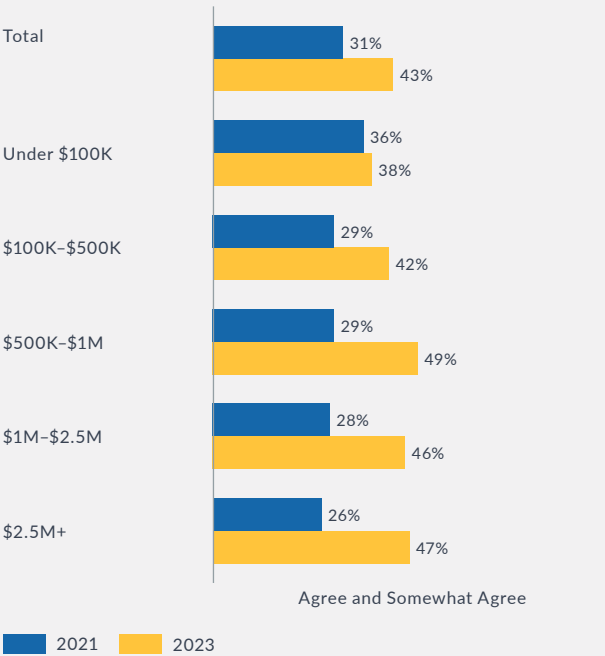
What's Changed and Stayed the Same Between 2021 to 2023

In 2021, CanadaHelps also conducted a digital skills survey. The results of that survey can be [viewed here](#). There were several questions that we asked in 2021 that we asked again in 2023. In two years, we saw some notable differences. The comparison is limited however

by the fact that survey respondents were not the same between 2021 and 2023, so the differences could be a matter of the difference between the respondents in each year that the surveys were conducted. With that caveat we present the following comparisons.

FIGURE 1
Perceived Funder Attitudes 2021 vs 2023

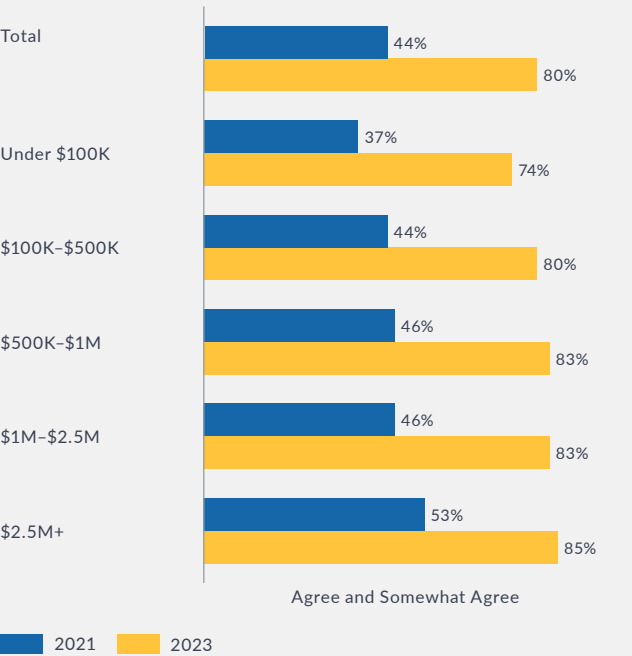
We feel our funders and donors do not wish for us to buy or invest in better software and digital tools



Organizations in 2023 were less optimistic than those who responded in 2021 when it comes to the perceived appetite among funders to invest in digital enablement.

FIGURE 2
Perceived Benefits of Digital Tools 2021 vs 2023

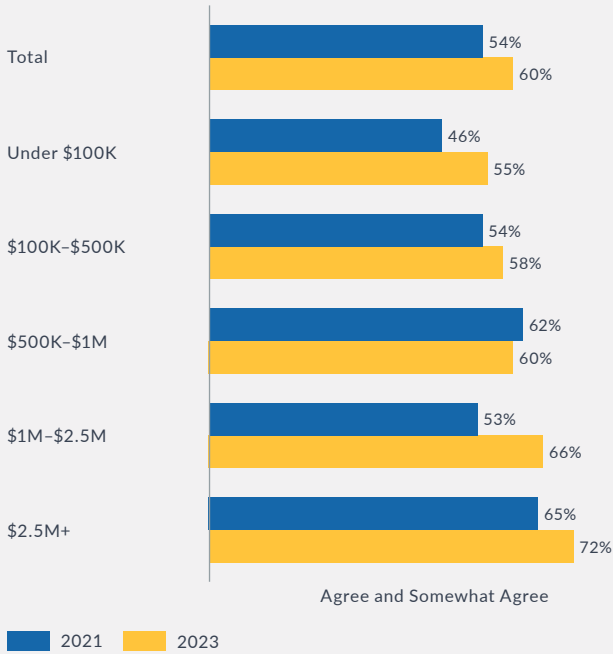
Using more digital tools will help us better deliver our services



There is significantly more agreement that digital tools will have a positive impact on survey respondents' ability to deliver mission related services and impact.

FIGURE 3
Perception of Future Challenges 2021 vs 2023

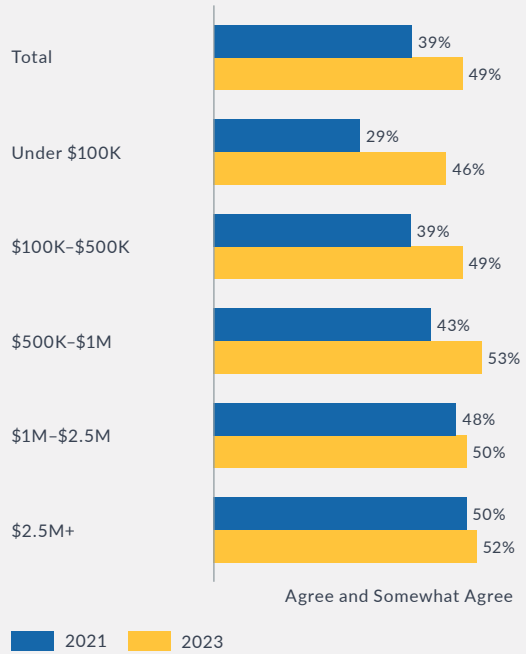
Our organization will soon find it harder to do what we do if we do not improve our digital capabilities



There is a growing sense of urgency around digital enablement. Not only do organizations surveyed in 2023 agree that digital tools will make their mission delivery easier, they are more sure than those surveyed in 2021 that NOT adopting digital will diminish their capacity.

FIGURE 4
Self-Assessment of Knowledge 2021 vs 2023

We currently have the knowledge and expertise to improve our use of digital tools



Organizations surveyed in 2023 were more likely to agree that they have the knowledge they need to improve how they use digital skills, however, overall they were still more likely to disagree with this statement. While confidence may have improved since 2021, there is still evidently a skills gap.



Executive Summary and Key Findings

The 2023 Digital Skills Survey reveals that the challenge facing charities who are trying to become digitally enabled is not one of access to technology, it is better characterized as a skills and knowledge gap. For charities it may seem as though digital technologies are not living up to their promises because most organizations don't have the skill or resources to leverage them.

What's more, by not making progress, they don't experience the benefits that are necessary to build motivation and momentum. The survey reveals that charities want to leverage these tools, and note that they are prepared to expend the effort to do so— with sufficient access to financial, training, and human resources.

However, because of a lack of awareness of how technologies can be leveraged, and the governance and cultural practices necessary to sustain them, they struggle with adopting technologies that materially improve their operational efficiency.

Practically speaking, charities feel that their in-house skills are coming up short, which is part of what is keeping them at a very early stage of using digital tools. Charities regularly cite a lack of funding and human resources as the reason why they can't dedicate time to improving digital skills. In addition, a lack of strategic direction or clear leadership with regard to digital transformation efforts are hindering digital enablement.

► Smaller Charities Are Lagging Behind The Most

Close to 60% of organizations with 10 or fewer staff note that their skills are limited, they lack strategy, and are struggling to fully adopt digital technologies. Only 13% of these small organizations have dedicated staff working on technology and a strategy driving their progress. By contrast, 25% of their larger charity peers have dedicated staff and strategy in place.

► Early Adopters Are Using AI

About one in five charities say they are regularly or occasionally using AI or machine learning. Those that do use it note that it is important to the success of their organization and are still experimenting and exploring how to apply it effectively.

BC based charities are leading in AI use, followed by Ontario and Quebec. Environment, Animal and Education focused charities are early adopters in use of AI.

► **Awareness of Risks is High, Implementation is Low**

The majority of charities surveyed (60%) know that not being digitally enabled will affect their ability to deliver on their missions. Most are clear that the priority is to improve how these tools are used, and to choose better digital tools that meet their needs.

Lack of cybersecurity best practices is also indicative of a material risk to the operations of digitally immature organizations. *(See Figures 17 and 18)*

► **Leaders Are Critical to Success**

Charities' leaders can move digital transformation forward. Those surveyed noted how important it is for the CEO and Board to improve their knowledge about digital transformation. They are looking to leaders to have a clear vision of what digital could help the organization achieve, to have a better understanding of digital transformation itself, and to understand how to best oversee the implementation of digital transformation. *(See Figure 16)*

► **Funding & Skills Are Major Barriers**

Lack of funding is leading charities to believe that they can't invest in the software or infrastructure they need. They don't feel like funders are interested in contributing to the cost of digital transformation.

(See Figure 19)

They admit to not having the skills, expertise, and knowledge to leverage the tools they do have.

Investing the time in skills development and strong technology governance is not a big priority when compared to direct service delivery. *(See Figure 20)*

► **Technology Adoption Isn't Strategic**

In their workplaces, charities are not seeing clear efforts nor an understanding of how to leverage digital. Though they are encouraged to propose new ideas, there is a lack of direction or goal setting for how those new ideas could be incorporated into updated ways of working. *(See Figure 9)*

Detailed Findings



A

Detailed Findings

Making Progress and the Disparity in Resources

In spite of variation in the degree of motivation, 60% of charities (Figure 3) across all sizes of organizations agree or somewhat agree that they will soon find it harder to do what they do without better leveraging digital tools. The majority of organizations who say that improving digital tools is a high priority, and those that are motivated to do so are the organizations with the resources to direct to these efforts. Smaller organizations still struggle to divert time and effort away from core program delivery.

Small vs Big: Larger organizations that have more resources and dedicated IT are motivated to make progress on digital transformation. Small organizations are less likely to agree that there is a lot of appetite to improve how digital tools are being leveraged.

“We do not have enough human resources to both deliver programming and increase digital capacity”

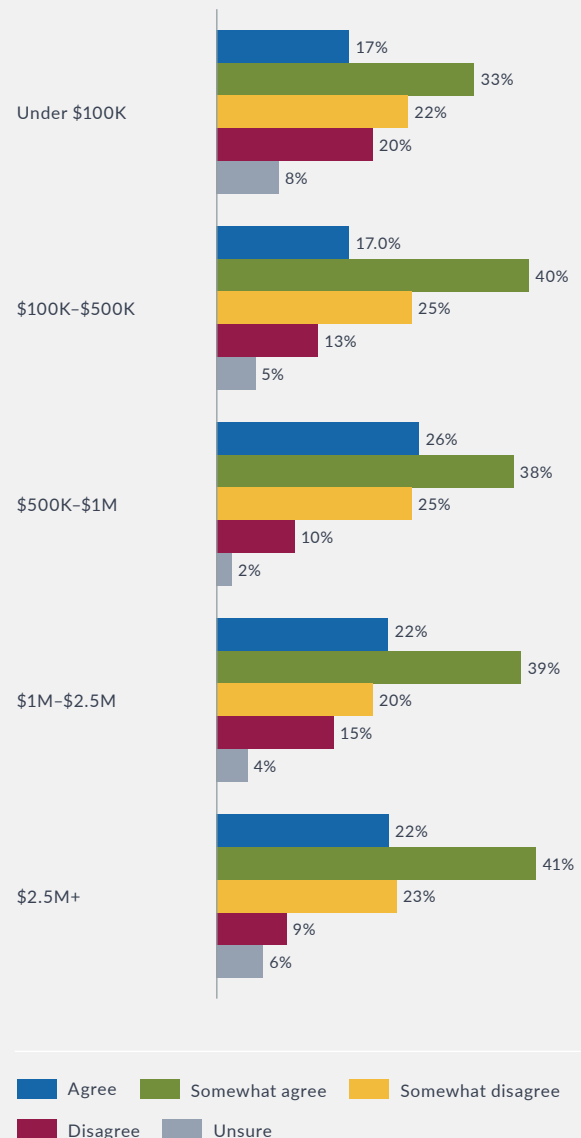
– Small charity, fully volunteer-run

INSIGHTS

Motivation could be improved with an effort to provide smaller charities with more human resources and funds so that they can achieve small incremental improvements. Quick wins will help demonstrate what is possible with better leveraged technologies.

FIGURE 5
Staff Motivation

There is a high degree of motivation across all levels of the organization (from governance to executive leadership to program staff) to improve how we leverage digital technologies



B

Detailed Findings

Accidental Techies Need Support

Smaller organizations are making do: Organizations with less than \$1M in total revenue have adopted a number of digital tools, but still note a skills gap. However, 53% note that they are relying on “accidental techies”—staff without formal tech training or job descriptions that include data and technology work—to leverage digital technologies as part of their work.

Larger organizations have dedicated staff: The more revenue and staff an organization has the more likely it is to have staff whose roles are dedicated to technology, digital strategy, and advancing the use of digital across the organization. However, additional strategic approaches could still be adopted.

“We don’t always have the time to devote to making the most of the tools we have, or to seek out and implement new ones.”

– Organization with 1–3 staff members



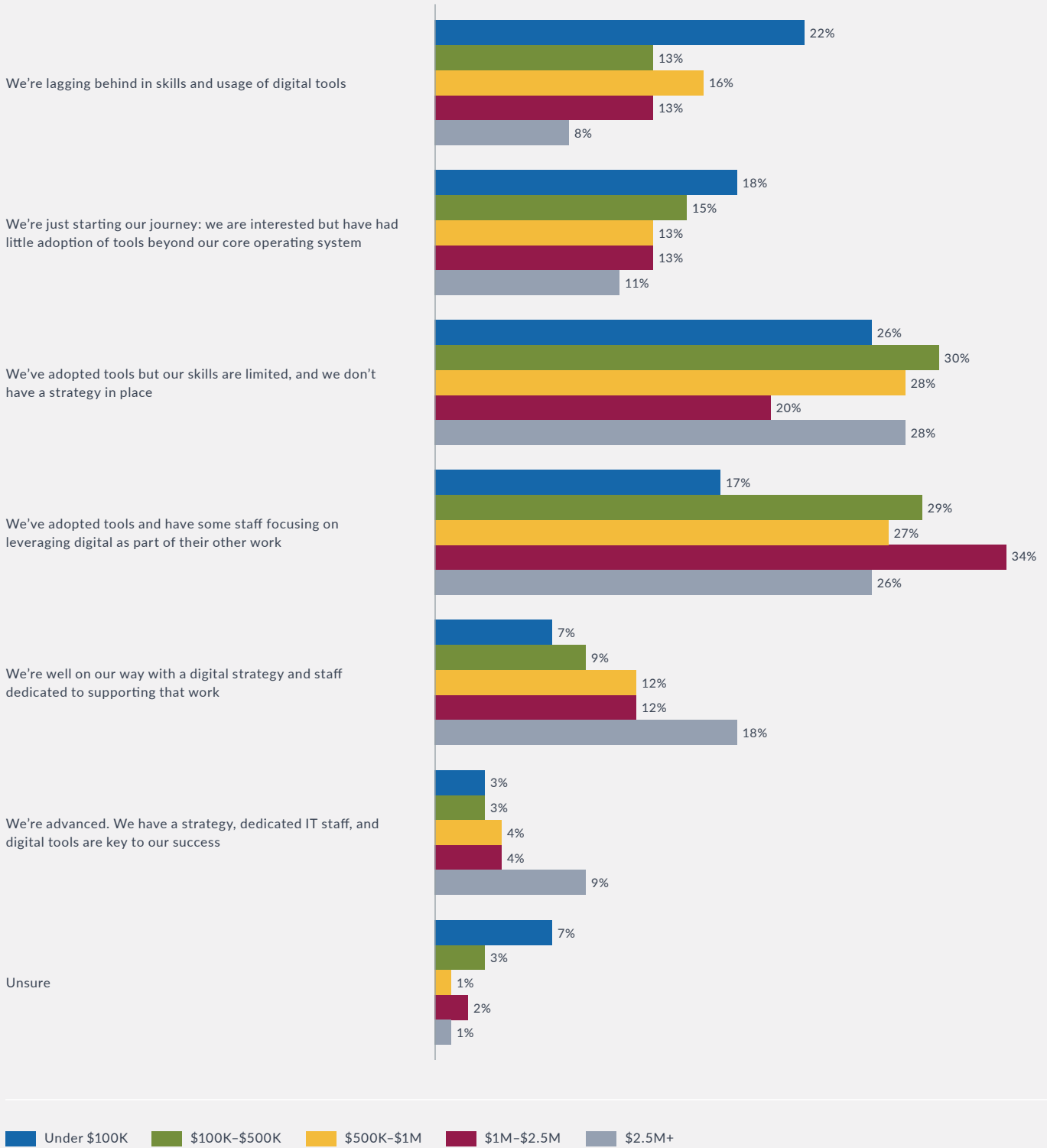
INSIGHTS

Rather than organizations trying to resource dedicated IT staff, training and supporting accidental techies can help organizations make progress without significantly increasing their costs. Training and supporting accidental techies as well as documenting their tech and data responsibilities in job descriptions is key to properly resourcing digital efforts.

FIGURE 6

Organizational Technology Profile by Revenue Band

Thinking of technology and digital skills, which of the following profiles best describes your organization?



C

Detailed Findings

Small Charities are Not Aware of the Benefits and Priorities That Define Digital Transformation

Compared to large charities who rank improving their website and social media presence first only 10% of the time, 27% of small charities rank this as the most important advantage of using digital technologies. Larger charities by contrast note that the most important advantage of using digital technologies is the impact on the ability to deliver mission related benefits.

Small charities also responded that improving their website and growing their social media presence are the top areas where their organization needs help on digital transformation. Larger organizations meanwhile are aware that they need help in leveraging automation and improving cybersecurity.

INSIGHTS

The gulf between these priorities speaks to a gap in how small versus large charities understand the definition of digital transformation, and the relationship between digital transformation and operational effectiveness. When smaller organizations conflate website design or social media presence with digital enablement they miss out on the real potential of technology to improve how they work.

“In applying for funding, a challenge faced in the past year has been “lack of knowledge of our true needs for digital tools”

– An organization with between \$500K and \$1M in revenue



D

Detailed Findings

Lacking Knowledge and Resources for Better Technology Enablement

Across all sizes of charities, there is consensus that a lack of knowledge, investment, and prioritization are the three biggest barriers to improving their use of digital skills. Only 9% of organizations report that they have someone leading digital transformation as their primary function. This percentage jumps to 20% for organizations over \$2.5M.

Inflation affected larger charities who were forced to scale back on skills development (around 20%) and put a hold on internal digital projects (around 25%). Smaller charities were less likely to report that inflation impacted their digital work because they hadn't engaged in these efforts to begin with (60% responded that the question was not applicable).

“We have some skills, expertise and knowledge but not enough to proceed confidently.”

- An organization with between 1-3 staff members



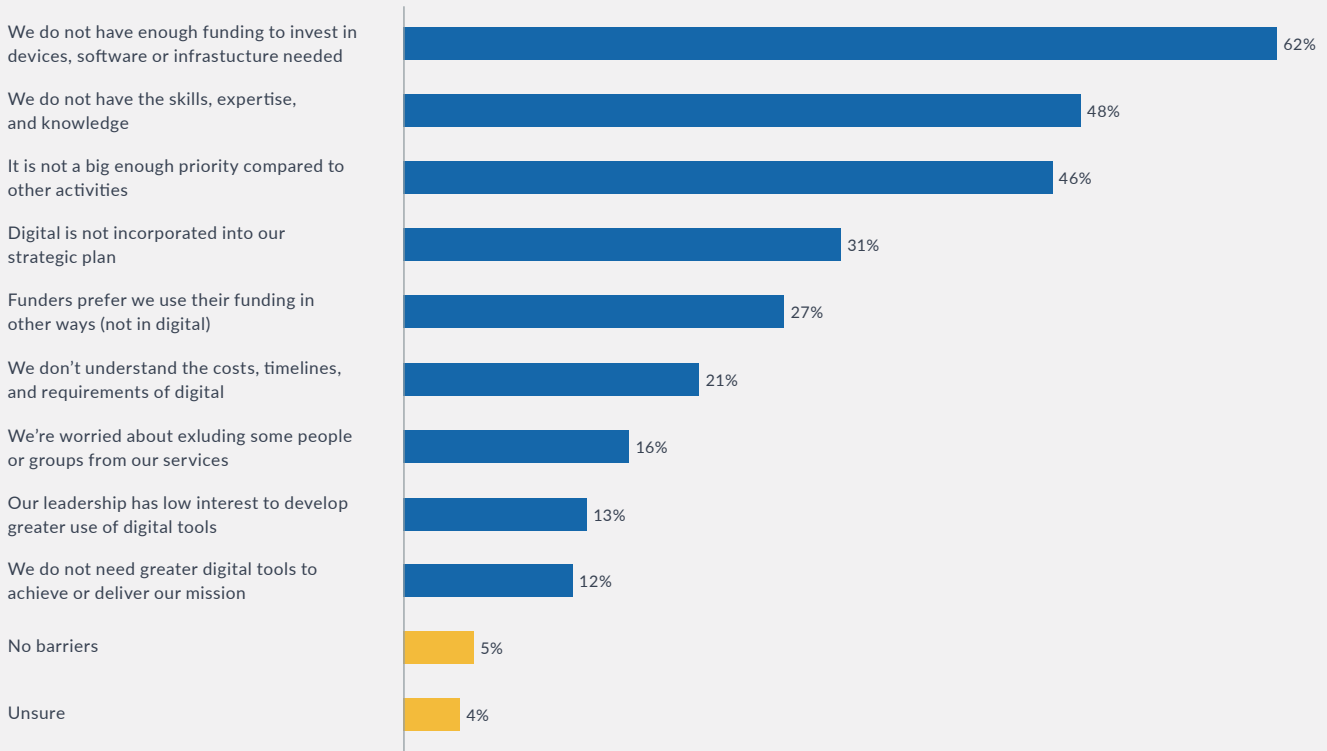
INSIGHTS

While it is unrealistic to expect that charities will be able to resource a full-time position to lead digital transformation, it is possible to imagine that knowledge could be improved, investments could be made in charity capacity, and priorities re-ordered so that charities can slow down to speed up.

FIGURE 7

Barriers to Leveraging Digital Tools

Which of the following barriers, if any, does your organization face that prevents it from using software and digital tools to their fullest capacity? (Select all that apply)



E

Detailed Findings

Small Charities are Still Missing From the Cloud

Only 56% of the smallest charities (under \$100K in total revenue) agree or somewhat agree that staff understand the fundamentals of cloud-based software. In comparison, the largest charities (over \$2.5M in total revenue) note that 78% of their staff are clear about these fundamentals. This gap in knowledge is holding small charities back from leveraging cloud computing, despite these tools being more affordable and accessible than ever before.

Comparing charities with revenue over \$1M to those under \$500K, larger charities are much more likely to report currently using cloud versions of software for Office productivity, financial management and reporting, CRM/DMS software and data collection tools.

“If the budget is there to implement tools, and you have the staff that can champion those tools, you can accomplish more.”

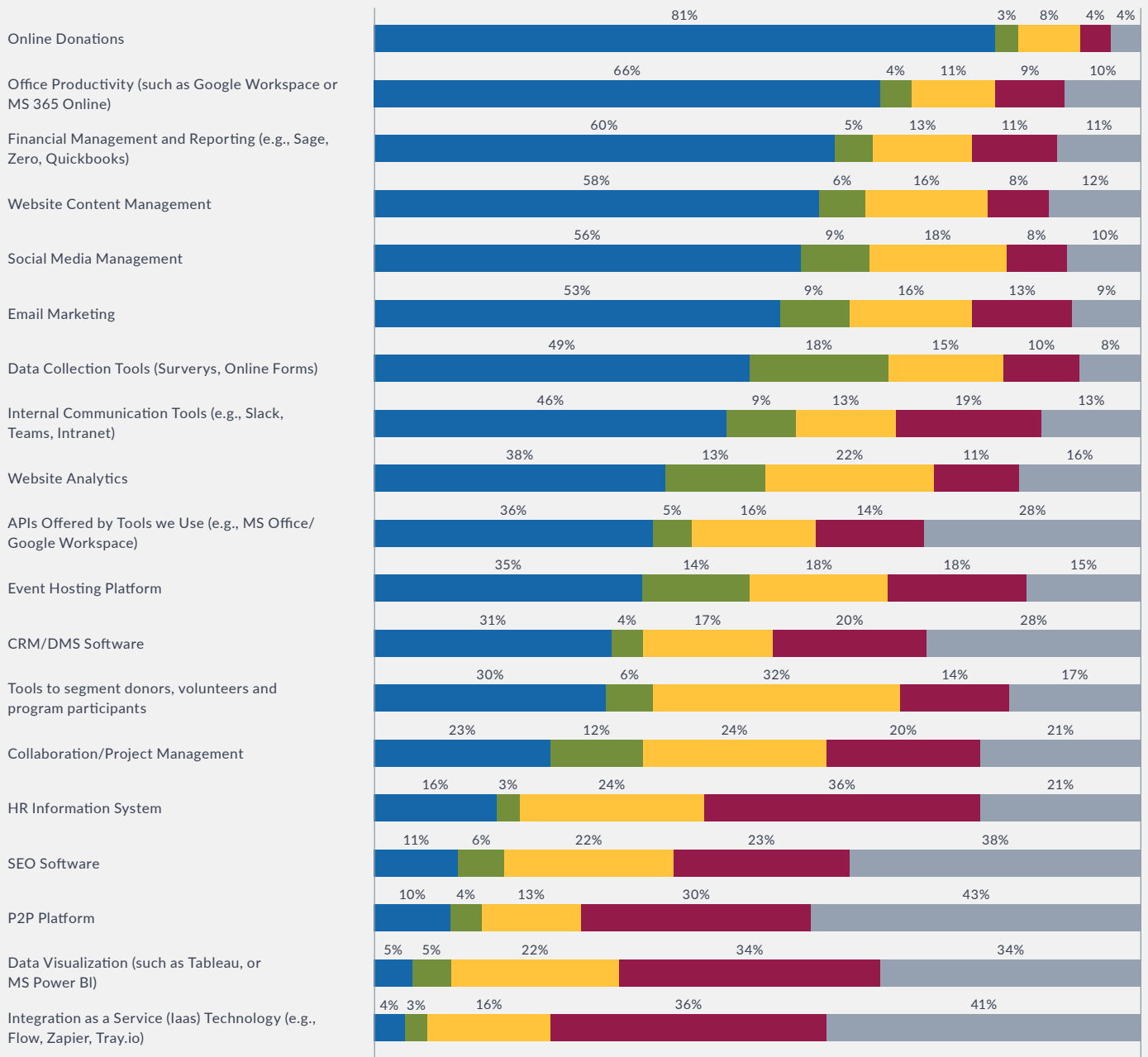
– An organization with between 1–3 staff members



INSIGHTS

It is not the case that all charities need all tools. However, the fundamental cloud tools reflected in Figure 8 could significantly improve a charity’s ability to manage stakeholder and program information efficiently, collaboratively and transparently.

FIGURE 8
Experience Using Cloud-Based Digital Tools

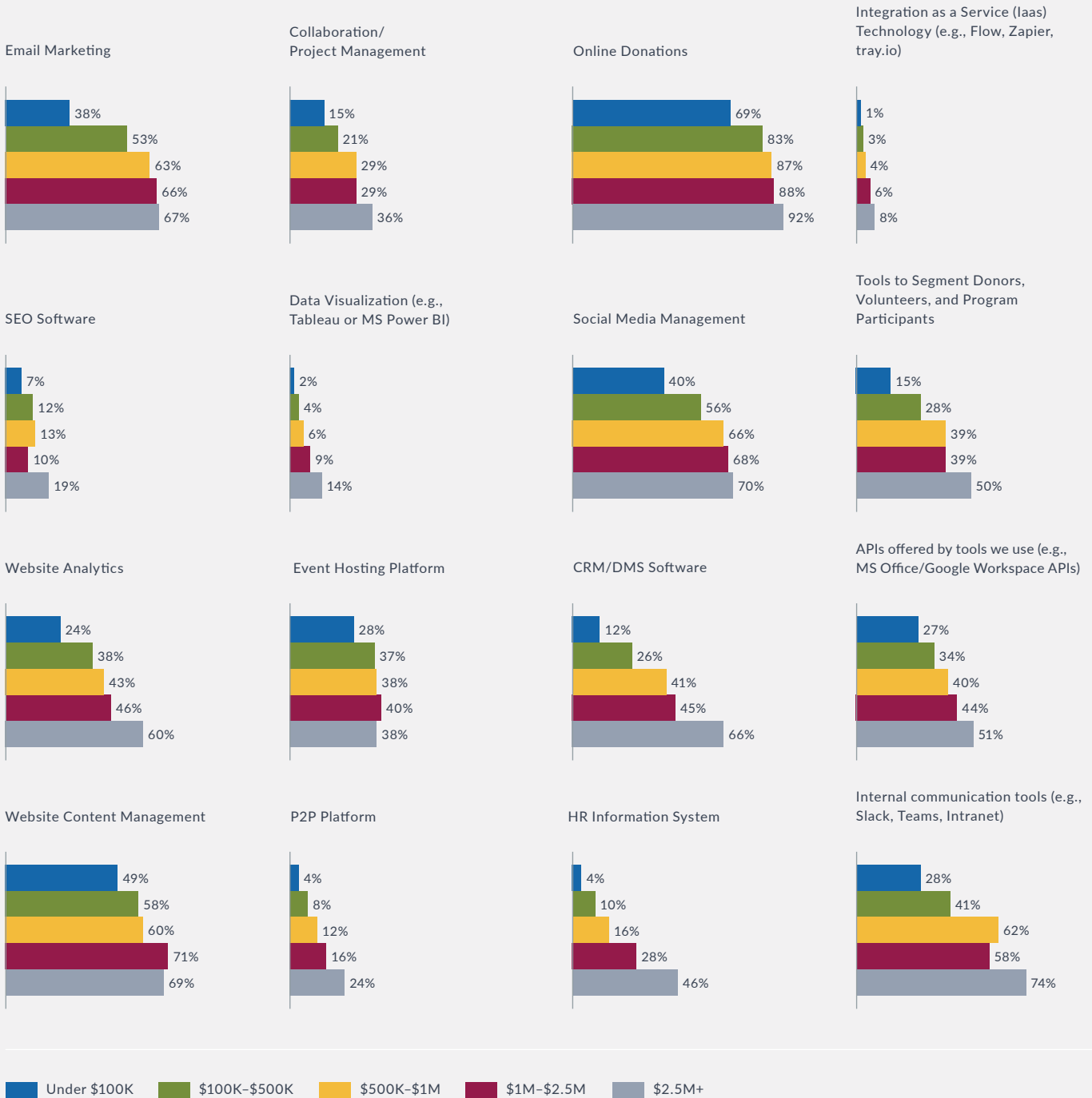


■ Currently using
 ■ Not currently using but have used in the past
 ■ Never used but would like to use
■ Never used and not relevant
 ■ Unsure

FIGURE 8.1

Cloud Tool Usage by Revenue Band

Reviewing the fundamental cloud tools – office productivity suite, CRM, financial tool and form tools – small charities (<\$500k) are undersubscribed compared to their larger peers



F

Detailed Findings

Lots of Appetite, But Little Strategy

Overall, a majority of charities regardless of their size agree or somewhat agree that team members are encouraged to propose new ideas to help improve work and productivity and that there is an openness in the organization to embrace new ways through technology to deliver on their mission.

By contrast, skills are reportedly low. Only four in ten agree or somewhat agree that there is a clear understanding of how to leverage digital transformation in the workplace.

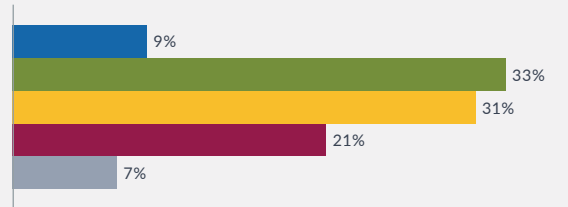
“We have a board member who is responsible for technology and digital implementation but does not have time to take on strategy or planning”

– An organization with less than \$500K revenue

FIGURE 9

Understanding of How to Leverage Digital

There is a clear understanding of how to leverage digital transformation in the workplace



Agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree
Disagree Unsure

INSIGHTS

It is encouraging to read that charities are invited to think innovatively about how work gets done, but when that appetite isn't met with a strategy to build skills and knowledge of how digital tools could support these innovative ideas, the freedom to embrace new approaches can feel somewhat hollow. In addition, these responses suggest there are other elements of culture that need to be further explored to better understand why these organizations aren't moving from ideas to implementation when it comes to digital enablement.



Skills are Reportedly Low, Yet Charities Say They Have the Ability to Manage Digital Projects (Both Insourced and Outsourced)

The majority of small charities either agree or somewhat agree that they have the skills to scope technology projects, define requirements, evaluate vendors effectively, and when taking on a project internally, have the skills to complete the work.

The majority of small charities also somewhat disagree or disagree that they have the skills and expertise to improve how they use digital tools.

“Many people still think you can only share files by attaching to emails: how about training on, not the nuts and bolts of file sharing, but on the thinking behind it, and how to organize shared file spaces, etc”
 – An organization with over \$1 million in revenue

INSIGHTS

There’s a mismatch between the skills and knowledge that charities say are lacking in their organizations and their reported confidence in being able to scope, manage and implement technology projects—whether internally or externally. This speaks to the condition of “not knowing what you don’t know”. There is a perception that these projects can be successfully scoped, managed and completed without core concepts and fundamental knowledge of cloud computing being confidently exercised. These core concepts and competencies are also missing in larger organizations.

FIGURE 10.1
 Understanding of How to Leverage Digital

We currently have the knowledge and expertise to improve our use of digital tools

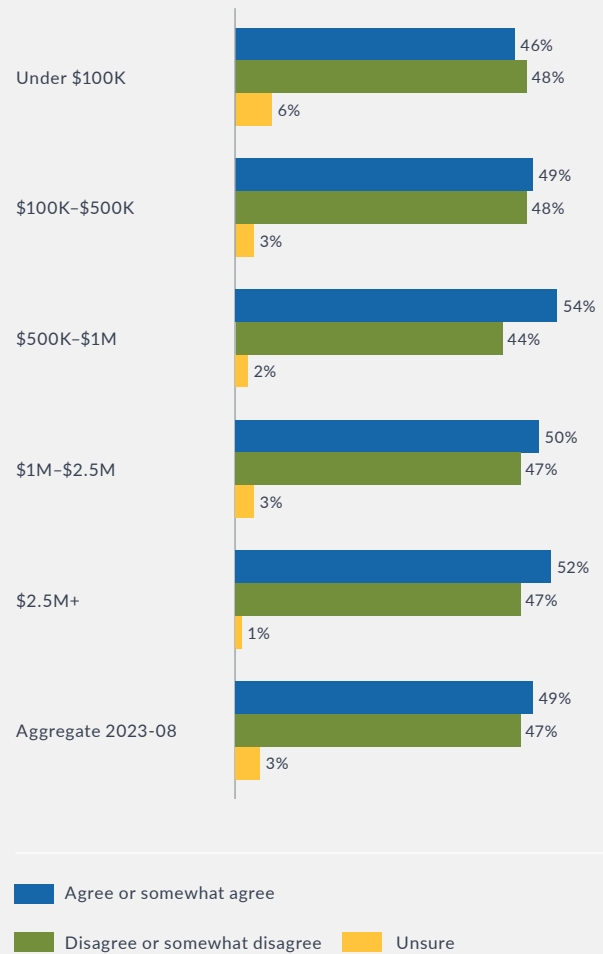


FIGURE 10.2

Outsourcing and Insourcing Projects

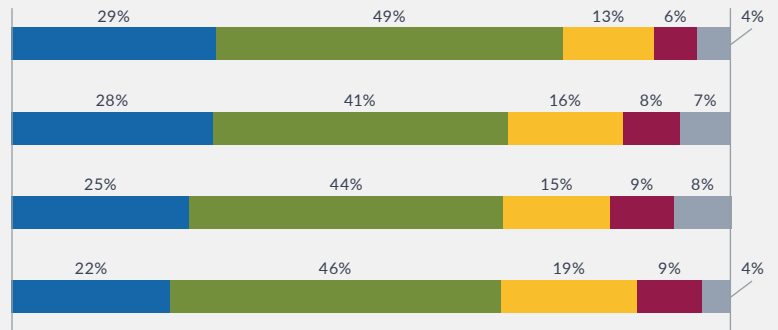
Do you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree with the following?

When insourcing a digital project (that is, assigning the work to staff or volunteers), our organization knows how to define the project requirements

When outsourcing a technology project, our organization has the skills to evaluate proposals from vendors

When outsourcing a technology project, our organization knows how to define the project requirements

When insourcing a digital project (that is, assigning the work to staff or volunteers), our organization has the skills needed to complete the work

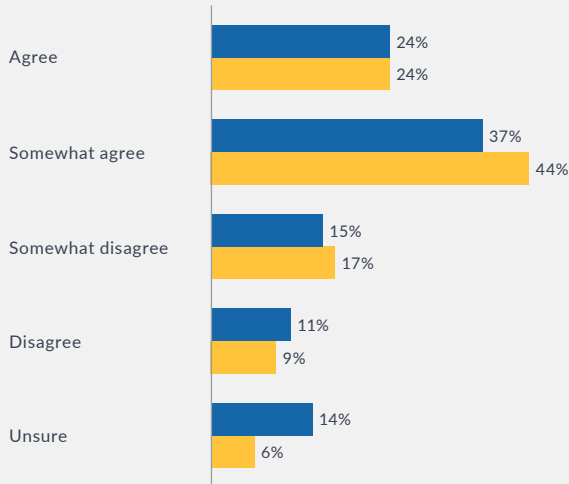


■ Agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Unsure

FIGURE 10.3

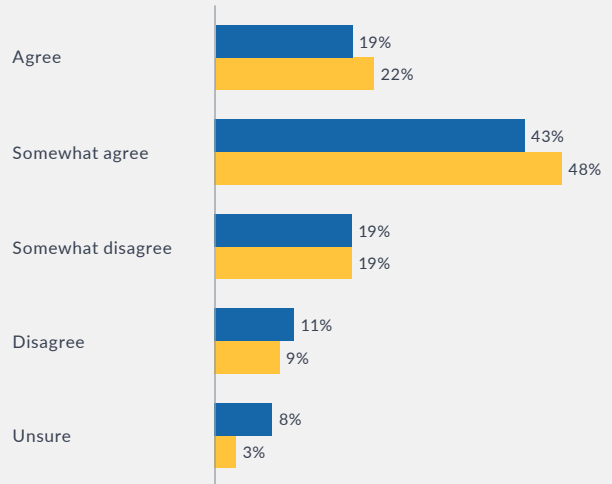
Understanding of How to Leverage Digital

Our organization has the skills to evaluate proposals from vendors



■ Under \$100K
 ■ \$100K-\$500K

When insourcing a digital project our organization has the skills needed to complete the work



■ Under \$100K
 ■ \$100K-\$500K

H

Detailed Findings

Poor Technology Governance Leads to Poor Technology Sustainability

Around 70% of small charities responded that they are not documenting workflows, reviewing upcoming feature releases, using an intranet to document process, technologies or naming conventions and folder structures, nor do they have a plan to roll out feature improvements.

Larger charities are doing better here with around 60% of them engaged in one or more these core technology governance activities.

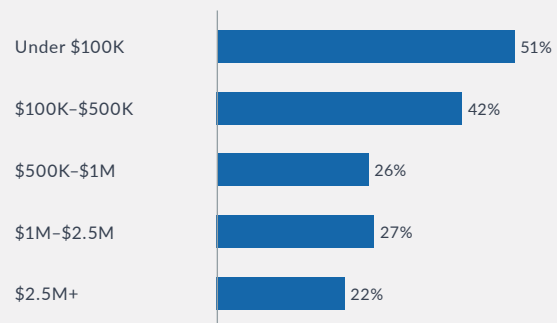
“[We need] a convincing argument that this is a good investment of time and money vs other demands on time”

– A respondent from an organization with between 1–3 staff

FIGURE 11

Engagement with Technology Governance

Organizations noting they don't engage in any of the surveyed technology governance practices



See Figure 23 for full details

INSIGHTS

Technology governance (the processes and decision making structures that define how technology is used in the organization) ensures long term sustainability of digital projects, collaborative culture, and cloud computing excellence. Small charities are severely lacking in the capacity to maintain technologies, and larger charities have a lot of room for improvement as well. This is why digital projects can seem like a waste of time and money. Absent the ability to maintain them, they can quickly grow stale and ineffective. This could account for why between 18% and 30% of organizations under \$1M disagree or are unsure that investing in digital is a good use of funds.

Low Awareness of Opportunities From Leveraging Integrations and Automations

Charities are Largely Unaware of how important integrations and automations are to maximizing the potential of digital technologies. Larger charities are using integrations and automations at a higher rate than small charities. While close to 50% of all organizations over \$1M use managed integrations offered by tools they currently use, less than 40% of their smaller peers are using the same features. Critically, almost 20% of the smallest charities note that these integrations are not relevant.

Larger organizations are also 2x as likely as all charities combined to rank increasing automation as a top priority for where they need support and would like to grow. However, they are consistent with all other charities in noting more often than not that they have never used or are unsure if their organizations use Integration as a Service platforms like Zapier, Tray, or Flow.

INSIGHTS

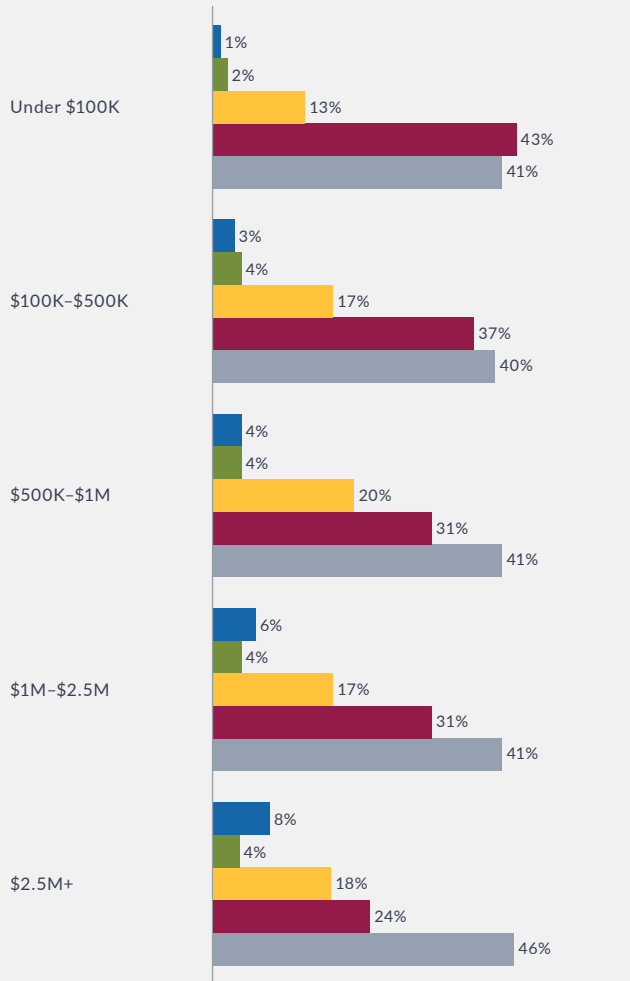
The majority of these surveys (51%) were completed by an Executive (a Board member, ED, CEO or Director). While we can't come to a definite conclusion about the ranking of IaaS tools, one possibility is that Executives are often a step removed from operations and may not be aware of how important and useful automations and integrations are for data accuracy, efficiency, collaboration and great donor, stakeholder and staff satisfaction.



FIGURE 12

Use of Integration as a Service Technology by Revenue Band

Integration as a Service (IaaS) technology (e.g., Flow, Zapier, Tray)

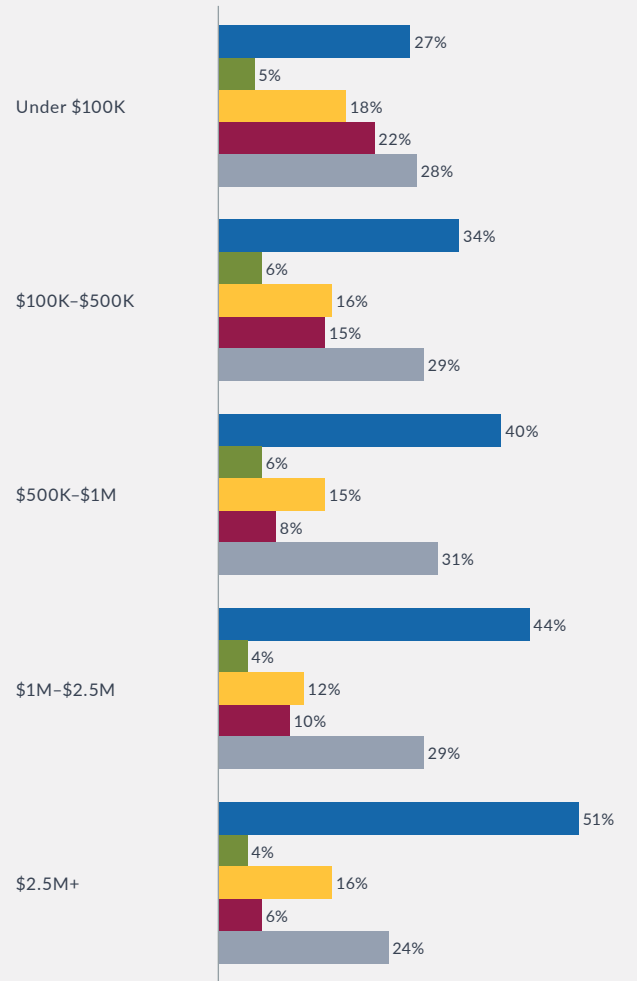


■ Currently using
 ■ Not currently using but have used in the past
■ Never used but would like to use
 ■ Never used and not relevant
■ Unsure

FIGURE 13

Use of Managed Integration Technology by Revenue Band

APIs offered by tools we use (e.g., MS Office/Google Workspace APIs)



■ Currently using
 ■ Not currently using but have used in the past
■ Never used but would like to use
 ■ Never used and not relevant
■ Unsure

J

Detailed Findings

Leaders Likely Missing the Whole Picture

On the whole, survey respondents agreed or somewhat agreed (60%) that leadership has the skills to steward the organization through digital transformation. However, organizations also largely disagree with the statement that there is an understanding of how to leverage digital transformation in the workplace.

Thirty percent of all charities surveyed do not have digital incorporated into their strategic plan, and 48% cite not having the skills, expertise and knowledge to fully leverage digital as one of the barriers faced by their organization.

INSIGHTS

The confidence that respondents have in leadership's ability to lead teams to greater digital enablement is at odds with the lack of strategic planning, lack of organizational skills and knowledge, and the agreement that leaders need to improve their

Seventy two percent of charities also responded that among the most important areas where executives could lead better was by having a clear vision of what digital could help the organization achieve. Meanwhile almost 50% of charities note that leaders need a better understanding of digital transformation writ large.

"Prioritizing leadership either doing the work to choose and implement new tools or supporting and educating their employees to choose and implement new tools [is a need in our organization]"

– An organization with over \$1 million in revenue

vision around where digital can be most impactful. Respondents included "leadership" 170 times when asked to name additional resources, needs, or opportunities to leverage digital technologies.

FIGURE 14

Perceived Digital Skills of Leaders

My organization's leadership has the skills to steward the organization through digital transformation

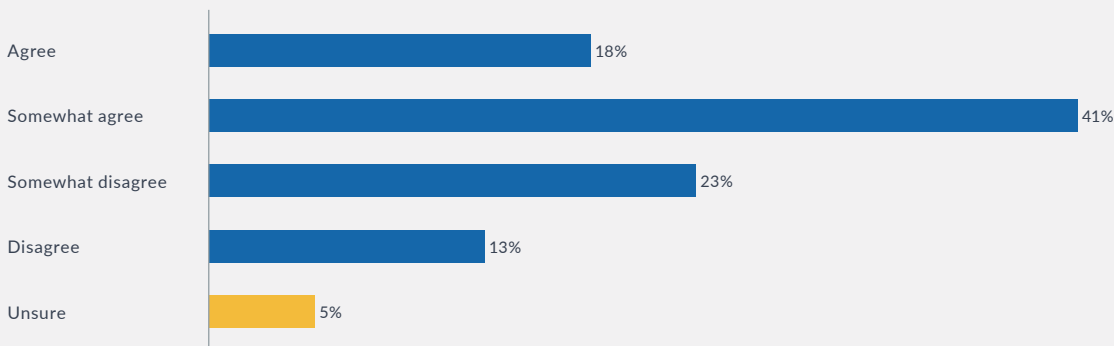


FIGURE 15

Understanding of How to Leverage Digital

There is a clear understanding of how to leverage digital transformation in the workplace

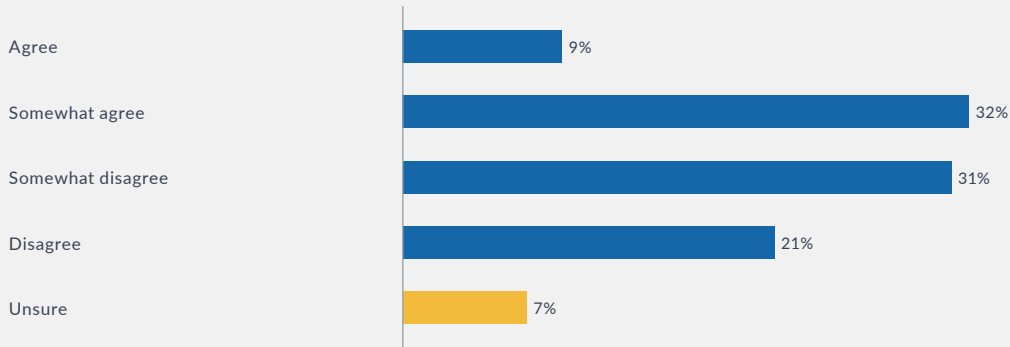
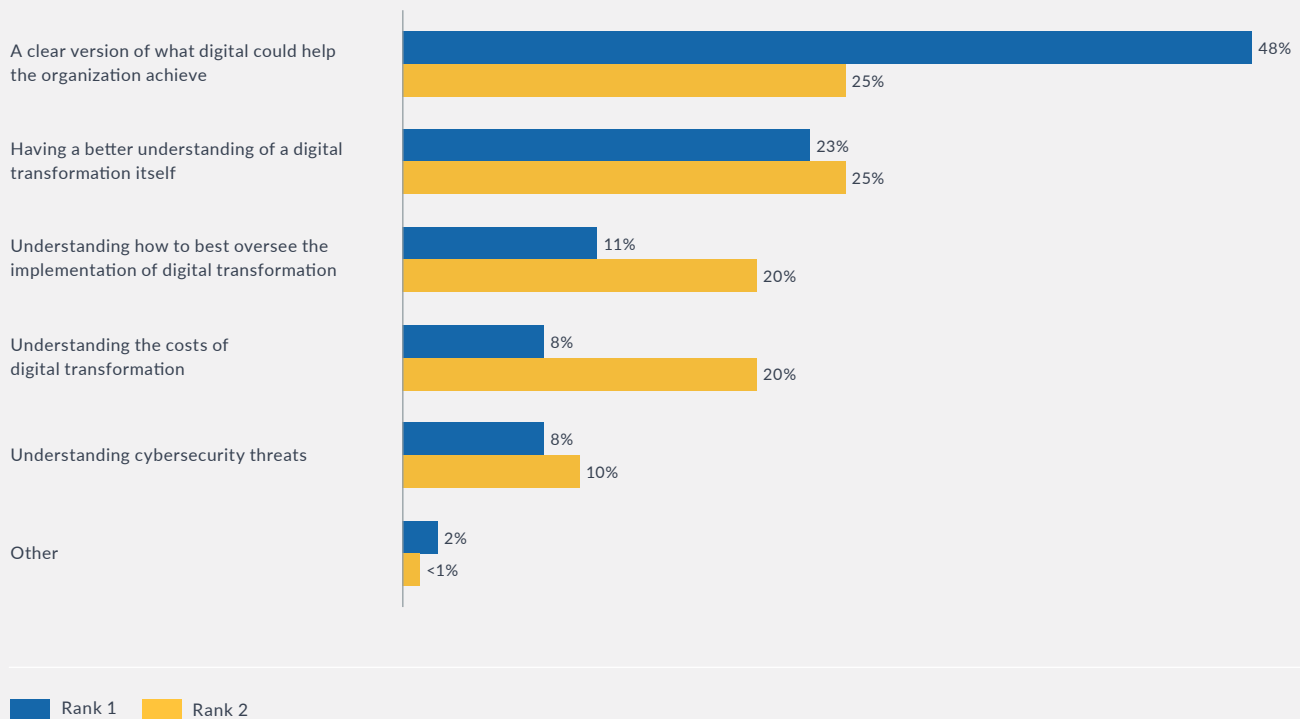


FIGURE 16

Perceived Growth Areas for Leadership

Please rank the following areas in terms of where the CEO and Board could improve their knowledge about digital transformation where 1 is the top priority for improvement, 2 the second priority for improvement and 3 the third priority for improvement?



K

Detailed Findings

Data and Security Policies Don't Match up With Practices

When asked to rank the top digital transformation areas where organizations need help, only 15% ranked ensuring cybersecurity and data privacy compliance as priority one, and 10% ranked it as priority two. Additionally, only 8% and 10% of organizations ranked understanding cybersecurity threats as a first or second priority for the CEO and Board.

A large proportion of organizations (63%) are taking basic steps to protect data with the use of multi-factor authentication (the use of a password plus another verification method).

One in five (21%) small charities don't have any data protection policies in place. Charities over \$2.5M have several policies in place including protecting data privacy, plans to respond to cyberattacks, plans for data backups and more. Around half of charities under \$1M have a similar set of policies in place.

Few organizations of all sizes (just 23%) are using a password management tool and just 18% of them require staff to regularly participate in cybersecurity training. Only 27% of small charities are monitoring and managing employees' access to data versus 65% of the largest organizations. Most worrisome is that 12% of respondents reported taking none of the noted steps to protect their organizations from cyber threats.

“Rebuilding our database would increase security of sensitive information and enhance user experience for our volunteers”

– An organization with less than \$500k revenue

INSIGHTS

The gap between the cyber and data security policies and practices currently in place compared to how few organizations ranked this area as a top priority for help or skill-building indicates a lack of understanding of the risks or the steps needed.

For those smaller organizations who have invested the effort in creating policies, the call to action is clear—resourcing training and tools is a critical next step in being able to comply with those policies. For larger organizations, adopting a browser-based extension that manages passwords will make provisioning and deprovisioning user access to tools more efficient and secure.

FIGURE 17

Current Data Protection Policies

What data protection policies are in place at your organization? (Select all that apply)

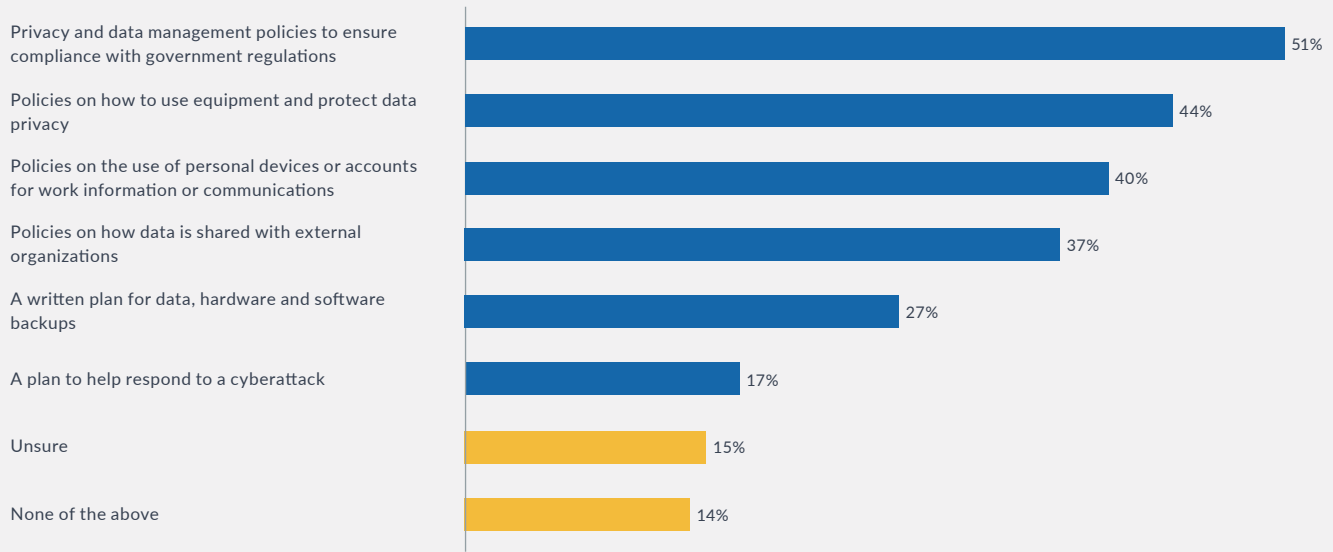
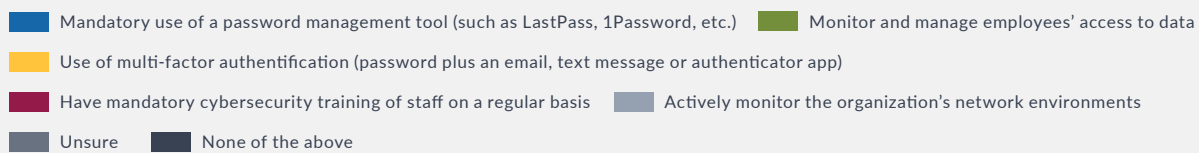
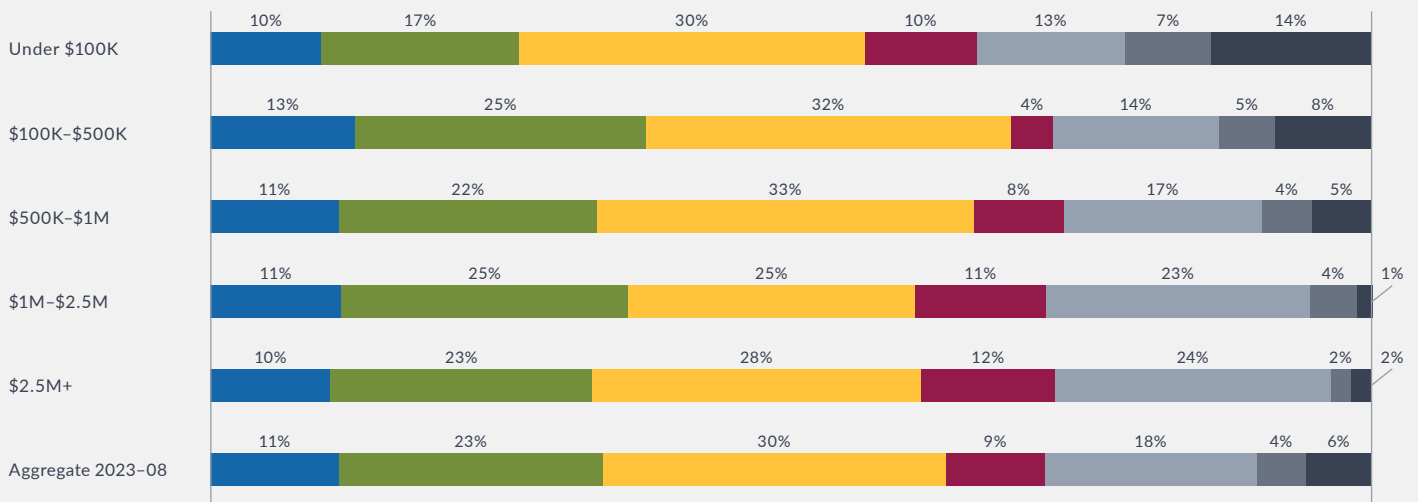


FIGURE 18

Cybersecurity Practices by Revenue Band

Does your organization do any of the following to protect from cyber threats?



L

Detailed Findings

Funders Creating Barriers to Investment

Charities continue to face challenges to resourcing in the form of program-specific funding. Nearly a quarter (23%) cite a lack of funding for staff with specific digital skills and responsibilities. An additional 20% note that software subscriptions are often ineligible expenses.

Twenty seven percent of survey respondents note that funders would prefer that they use their funding in other ways than on digital capacity building.

“Funding would not cover cost of staff to set-up equipment purchased, ongoing licenses could not be covered and many are now subscription and high cost—funding is one time, not ongoing”

– An organization with less than \$100,000 revenue

INSIGHTS

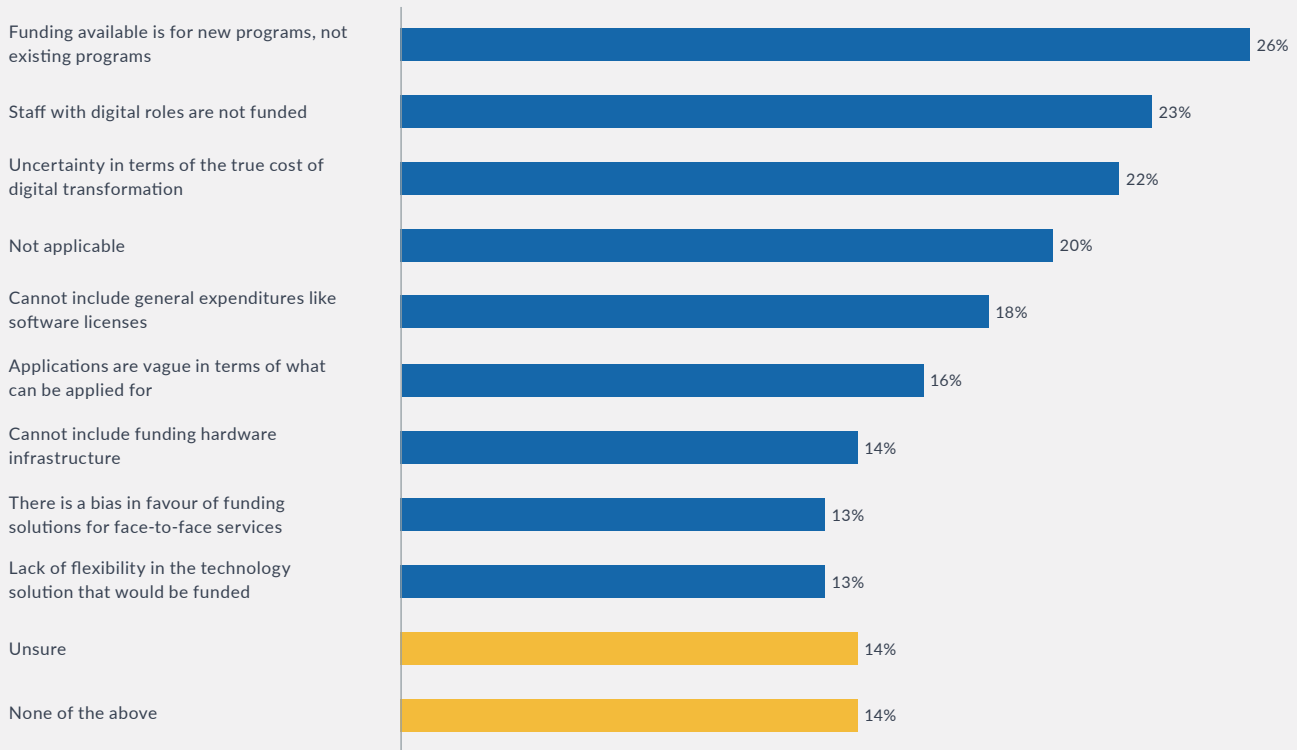
Funders must become aware that expenditures related to technologies—subscriptions, training, occasional third-party support—are in fact program-related costs. Twenty-first century program management means giving beneficiaries a great digital experience, including being able to sign up and pay online, attend hybrid programming, and receive reminders, program information, and bookings all in a seamless way. In addition, effective impact measurement and program reporting can only be achieved with well designed and managed data systems.



FIGURE 19

Challenges When Applying for Funding

Have you had any of the following challenges in the past year when applying for funding for digital tools (Select all that apply)



Looking to the Future



For Charities

It's clear that many charities—particularly the larger ones—are aware of the benefits and potential of leveraging cloud computing technologies to become more efficient, effective, and collaborative. For these charities, support can best be directed towards building their capacity for technology governance and leadership, strategic technology planning and decision making, and implementing integration and automation technologies.

Smaller charities could benefit from some “art of the possible” support. Many small charities don't know what they don't know and could benefit from investment in learning about the fundamental possibilities of cloud computing to improve how information is collected, stored, and made available to staff who can then efficiently use it to do their best work.

Across all charities, there is a need to move from “Accidental Techies” (staff who are responsible for technology-related tasks without having formal training, or without those responsibilities being part of their job description), to intentional technology decision-making. With more time and resources available for training, strategy, and documentation, all charities will be able to improve how they leverage the tools that they currently have, and decide where they need to invest in additional tools or support.

Across all charities, there is also a need to take cybersecurity risks and protections more seriously. With the availability, affordability, and accessibility of cloud technologies, charities could decrease their risk profiles quickly with the implementation of secure tools paired with documented policies and staff training.

Finally, the prioritization of this work can no longer be second to program priorities given its importance in program delivery and evaluation, and overall operational effectiveness.

For Funders

If charities had access to additional funds they report they would invest in staff training, better infrastructure (hardware and software subscriptions), and design better processes. Funders must create opportunities for charities to request support for the ongoing costs related to subscriptions, occasional third-party implementation support, and training. These investments don't need to be siloed as "capacity building" programs (though these are certainly welcomed), but rather should be included as an expected cost of program delivery.

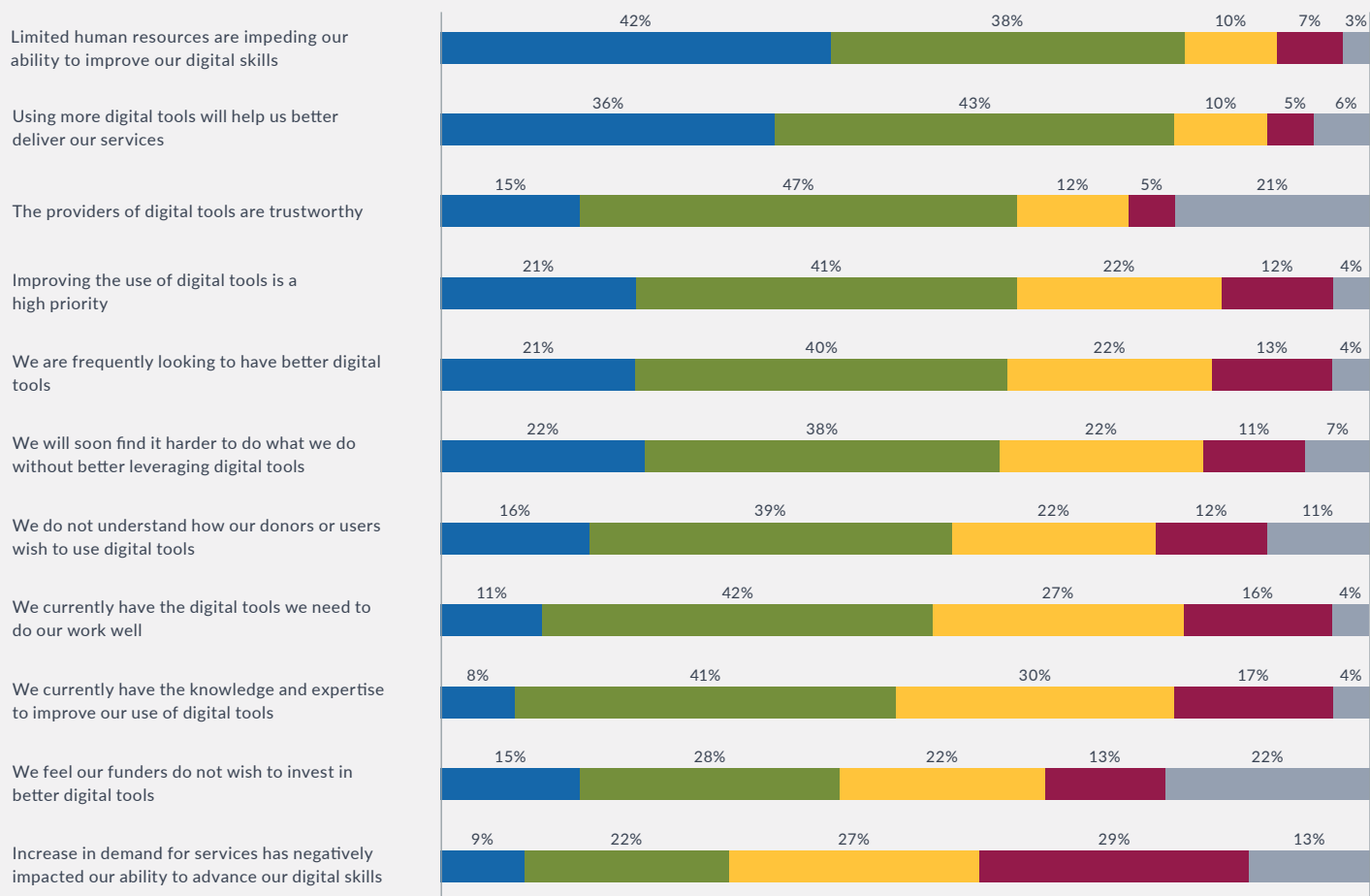
Training is one of the biggest needs cited by charities. Funders could be a significant lever in the advancement of their grantee's digital enablement by adjusting program-related targets. When charities can temporarily adjust program targets, they can give training and new technology adoption the time and attention it warrants. It's simply not possible for a charity to effectively learn and adopt new technologies and ways of working while also delivering a full slate of programs. Funders can help charities create time and space for learning and adoption, or at least lead the conversation so that charities feel they have "permission" to devote limited staff time to "slow down to speed up".



Appendices

FIGURE 20
Software and Digital Tools

Do you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree with each of the following statements about software and digital tools in your charitable organization?



■ Agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Unsure

FIGURE 21

Profile of Digital Use and Technology

Thinking of technology and digital skills, which of the following profiles best describes your organization?

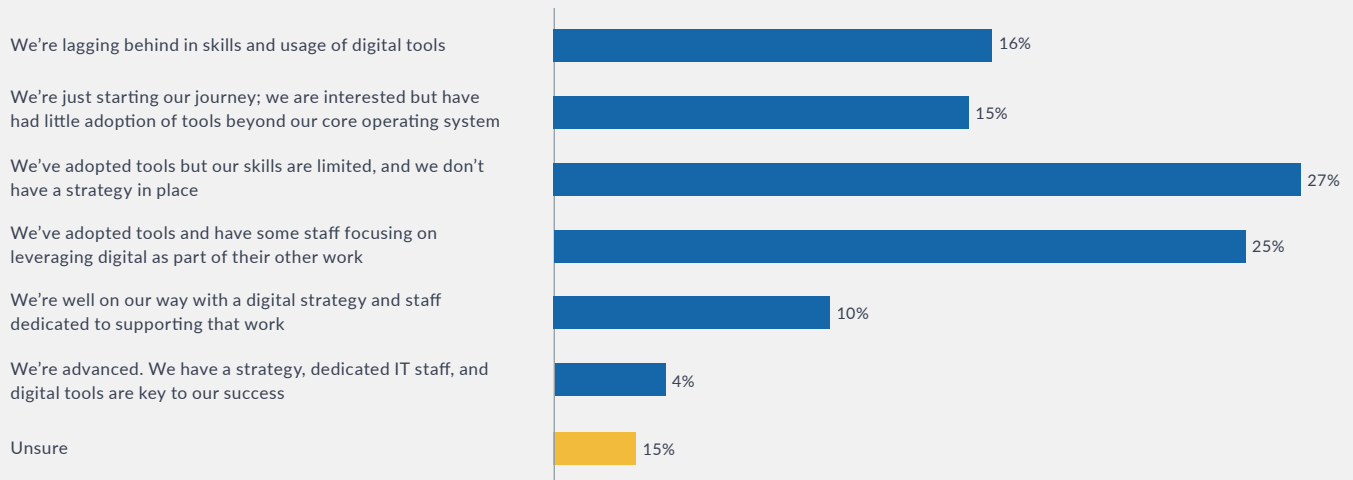
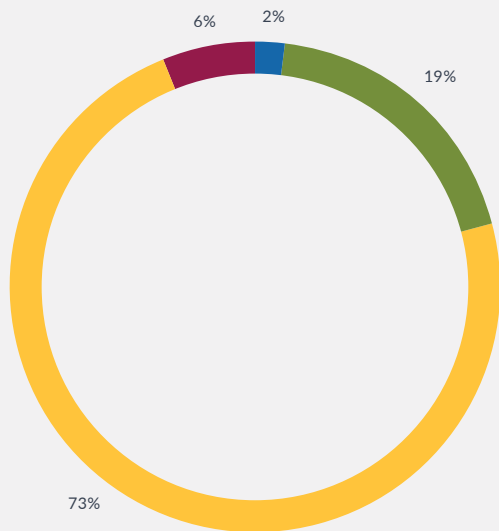


FIGURE 22

Using Artificial Intelligence



56%

of those who do use AI say it is important or somewhat important to the success of their organization.

63%

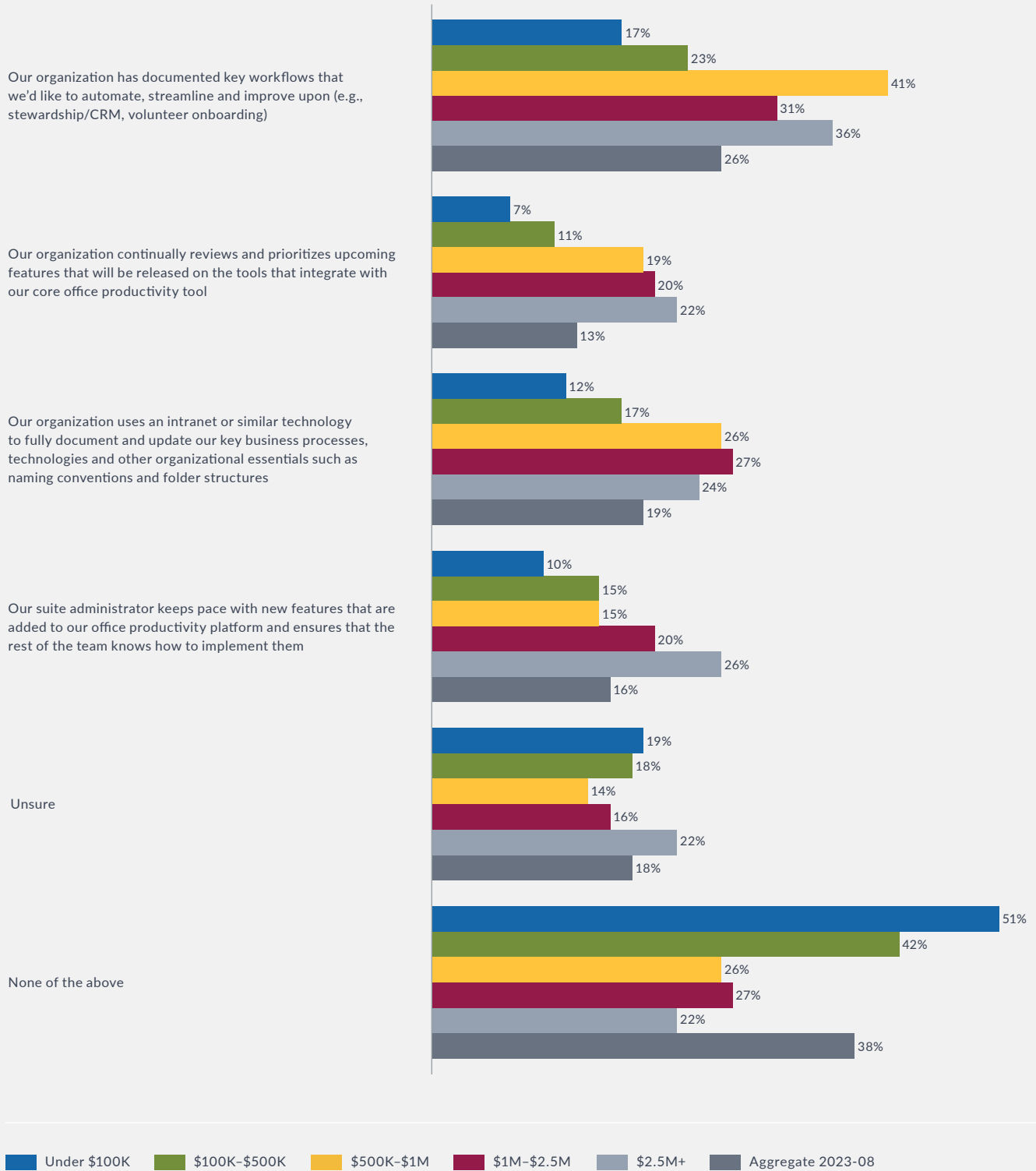
of those who do use AI say they are experimenting and exploring how to use AI.

Regularly Occasionally Never Unsure

FIGURE 23

Profile of Digital Use and Technology

Which of the following, if any, apply to your organization currently? (Select all that apply)



Acknowledgements

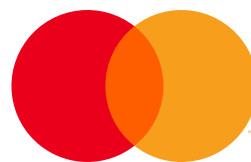
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