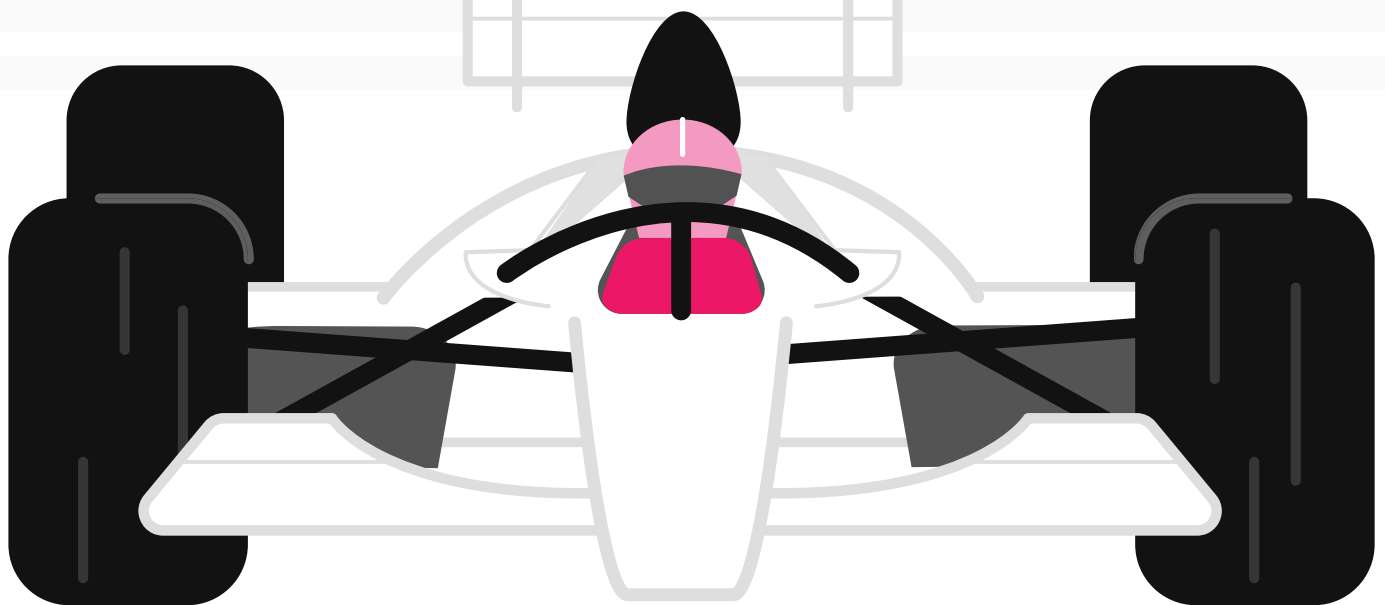


# IT STRATEGY OWNER'S MANUAL

Developing a Winning IT Support  
and Management Strategy



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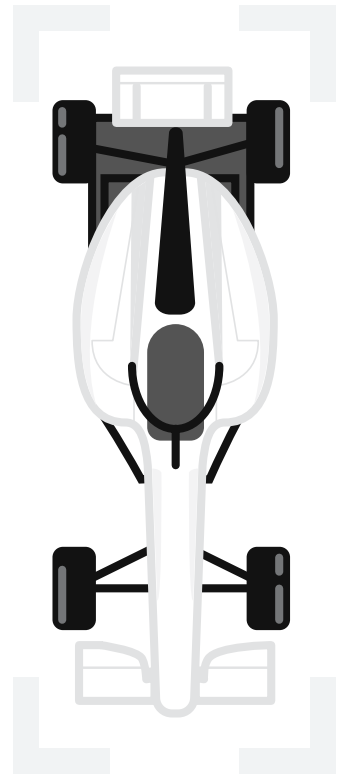
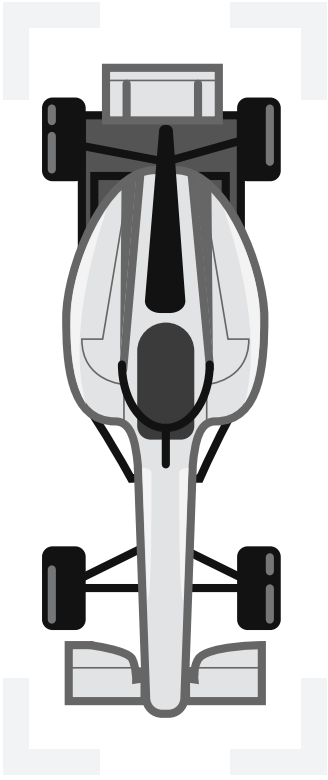
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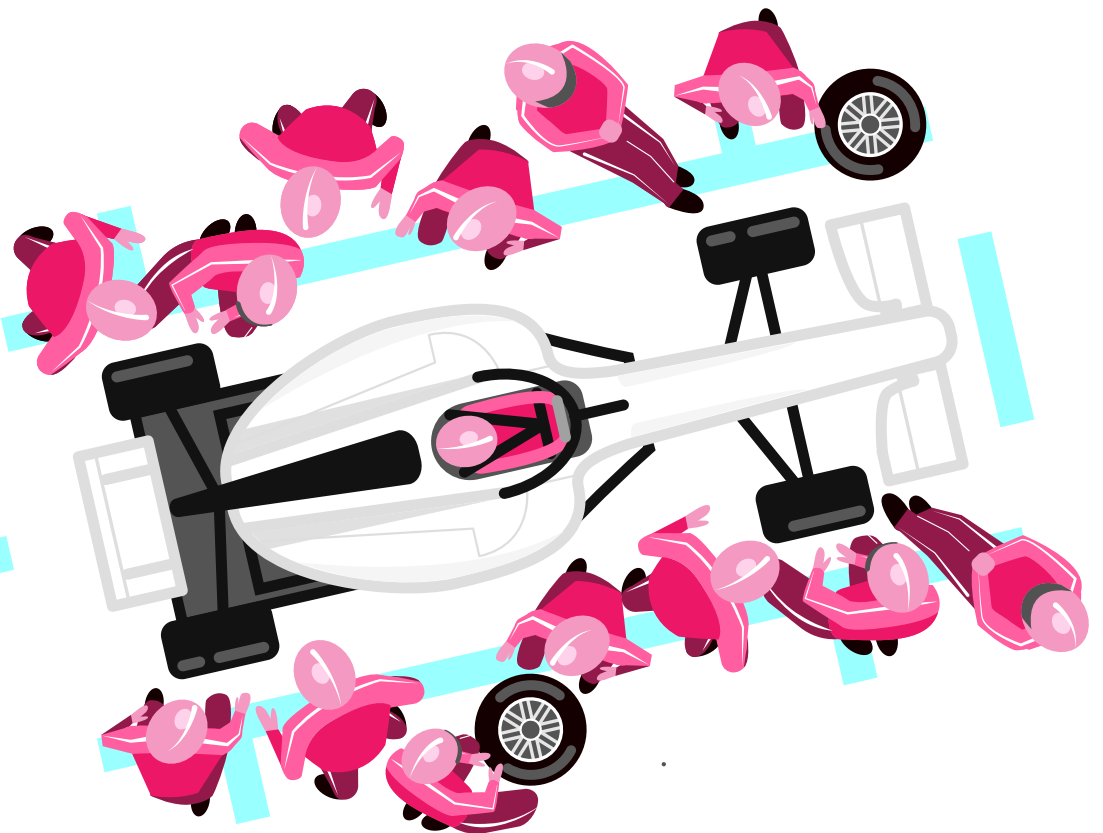
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# INTRODUCTION

Like a finely tuned pit crew, IT is crucial to keeping businesses up and running—and to helping key projects get across the finish line. From day-to-day tasks like onboarding and offboarding users, applying updates, and handling support requests, to handling emergencies and unexpected repairs, IT pros have to be able to change those tires, refuel those vehicles, and get them back on the road in a flash.

Spiceworks recently conducted a survey of IT pros to find out what's going on with IT support and management in small and mid-sized companies today, including what they spend time on and what challenges they face. This eBook takes a look at the results and shows how you can use this data to optimize your IT strategy.



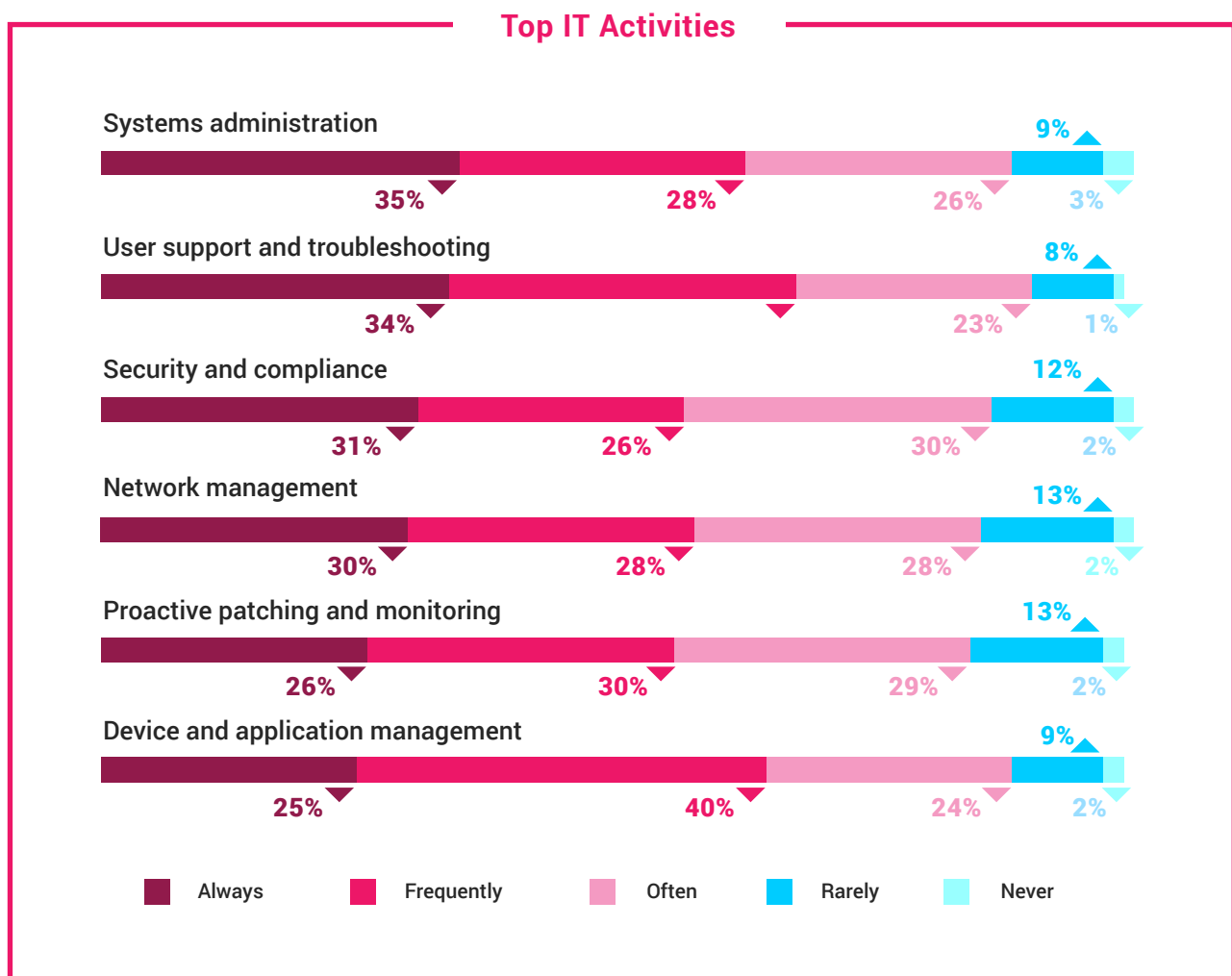
# CHAPTER 1



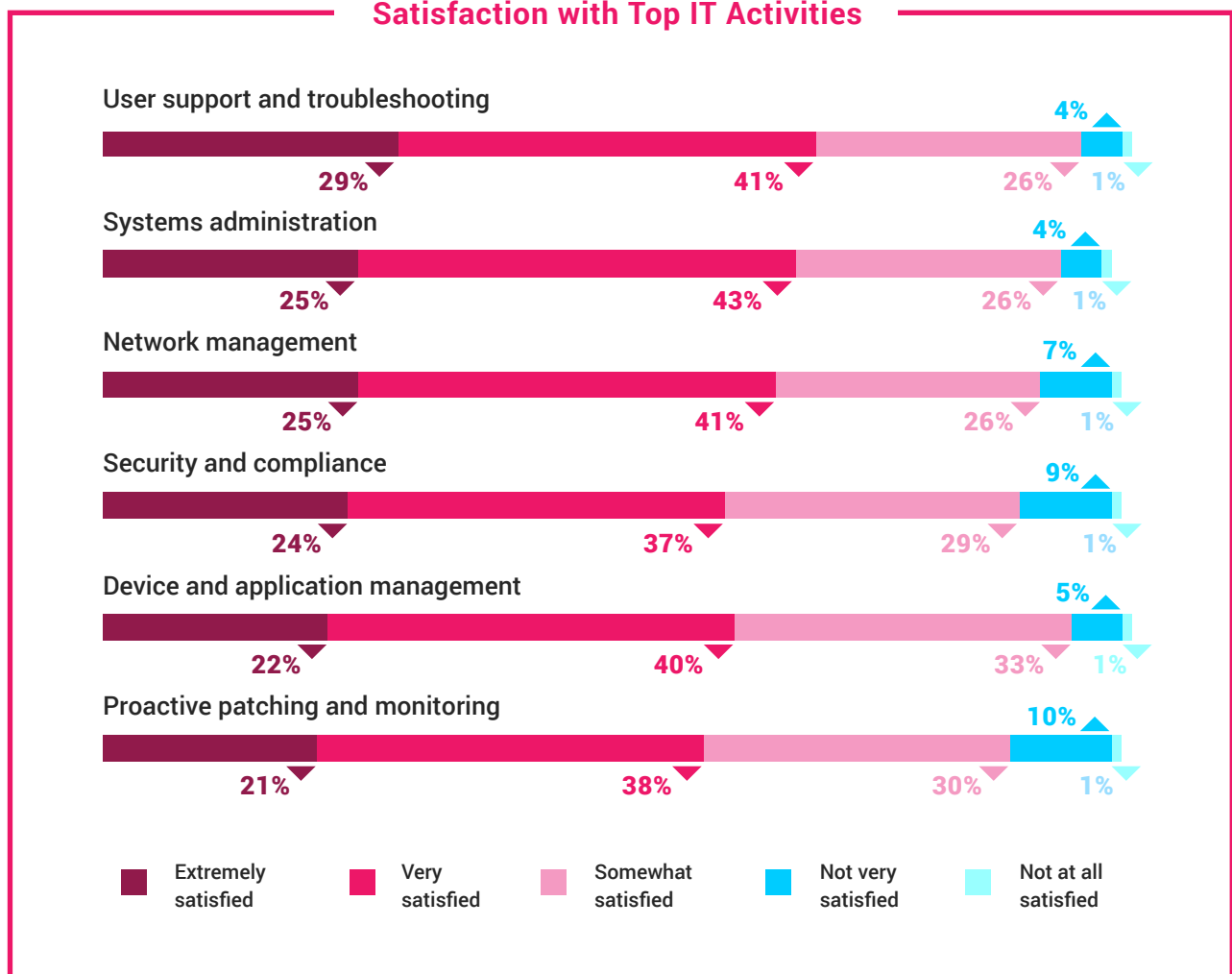
## What goes on in the IT pits

If it seems like you're bogged down by requests, it's not your imagination. According to the Spiceworks research, IT pros in SMB handle anywhere from 20 to 60 user requests per day on average.

But user support and troubleshooting are just a couple of the IT crew's many responsibilities. They also spend significant chunks of time on systems administration, device and application management, and security and compliance activities. Then you've got network management, onboarding and offboarding, and the inevitable outages and emergencies.



Given that this is the life of an IT pit crew, you'd think most SMB organizations would have it down to a science. Unfortunately, almost one-third of IT pros say they are not very satisfied with their ability to engage in these activities. For many activities, satisfaction rates are even lower.



IT pros are least satisfied with their ability to engage in optimization activities and handle emergency outages, with more than 40% of respondents saying they are only somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied in these areas. And it stands to reason. When IT pros spend their days consumed with routine tasks, there may be little time or resources left over for optimization projects, no matter what value those projects hold for the business. Keeping IT bogged down with user requests in this way can have a negative impact on the bottom line.

As for emergency outages, again, the demands of day-to-day support and management may keep many IT teams from being able to adequately plan or prepare for unexpected problems, making them more costly and problematic for the business.

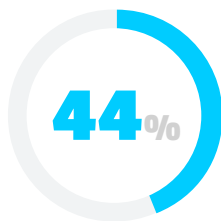
# CHAPTER 2

## Common pitstop problems

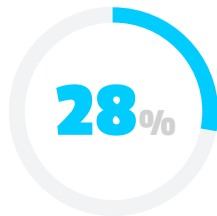


IT teams across all industries face similar challenges in performing their support and management functions, whether those functions are handled completely in-house or are outsourced in part or in total. For companies that handle all support tasks in-house, top challenges include lack of end-user awareness, the length of time it takes to resolve issues, and the ability to meet security and compliance requirements. Naturally, good old-fashioned staff and budget constraints are also an issue. Pit crews with only one tire-changer will take four times longer to get the racecar back on the road.

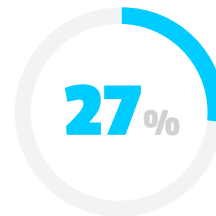
### In-House IT Support and Management: Top Challenges



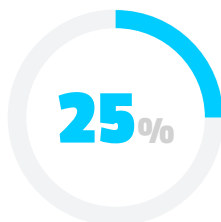
Lack of end-user awareness



Length of time to resolve issues



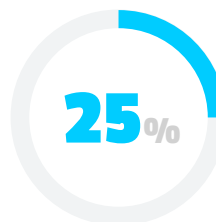
Security and compliance



Headcount and staffing constraints



Inadequate budget

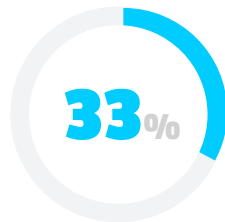


Special projects

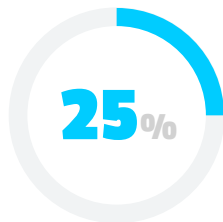
Outsourcing some or even all IT support and management tasks to an MSP doesn't necessarily eliminate those challenges. For organizations that outsource all of those tasks, security and compliance are still a significant challenge—even more so than for companies that handle everything in-house, with one-third of respondents indicating it was a challenge.

Length of time to resolve issues is still a top challenge as well, with one-quarter waving a penalty flag on that. Almost one-quarter of respondents also say that vendor management and loss of control to the MSP are also a problem.

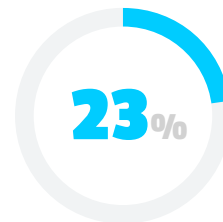
### Outsourced IT Support and Management: Top Challenges



Security and compliance



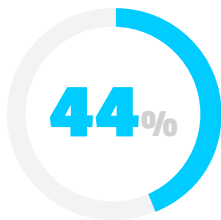
Length of time to resolve issues



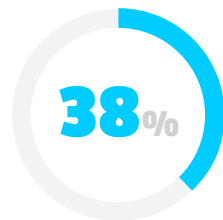
Loss of control and vendor management

For organizations that are attempting to achieve the best of both worlds by outsourcing some IT support and management tasks while keeping others in-house, respondents also report challenges. 44% struggle with security and compliance, 38% struggle with lack of user awareness, and 32% struggle with resolving issues in a timely manner.

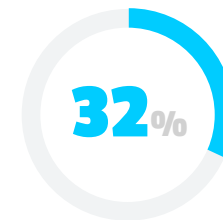
### Hybrid In-House and Outsourced IT Support and Management: Top Challenges



Security and compliance

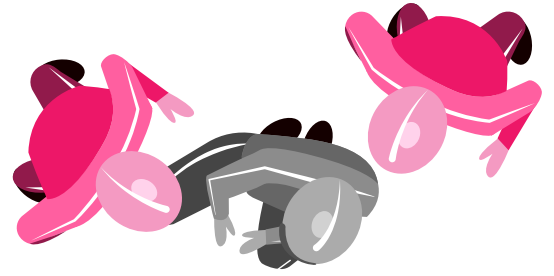


Lack of end-user awareness



Length of time to resolve issues

# CHAPTER 3

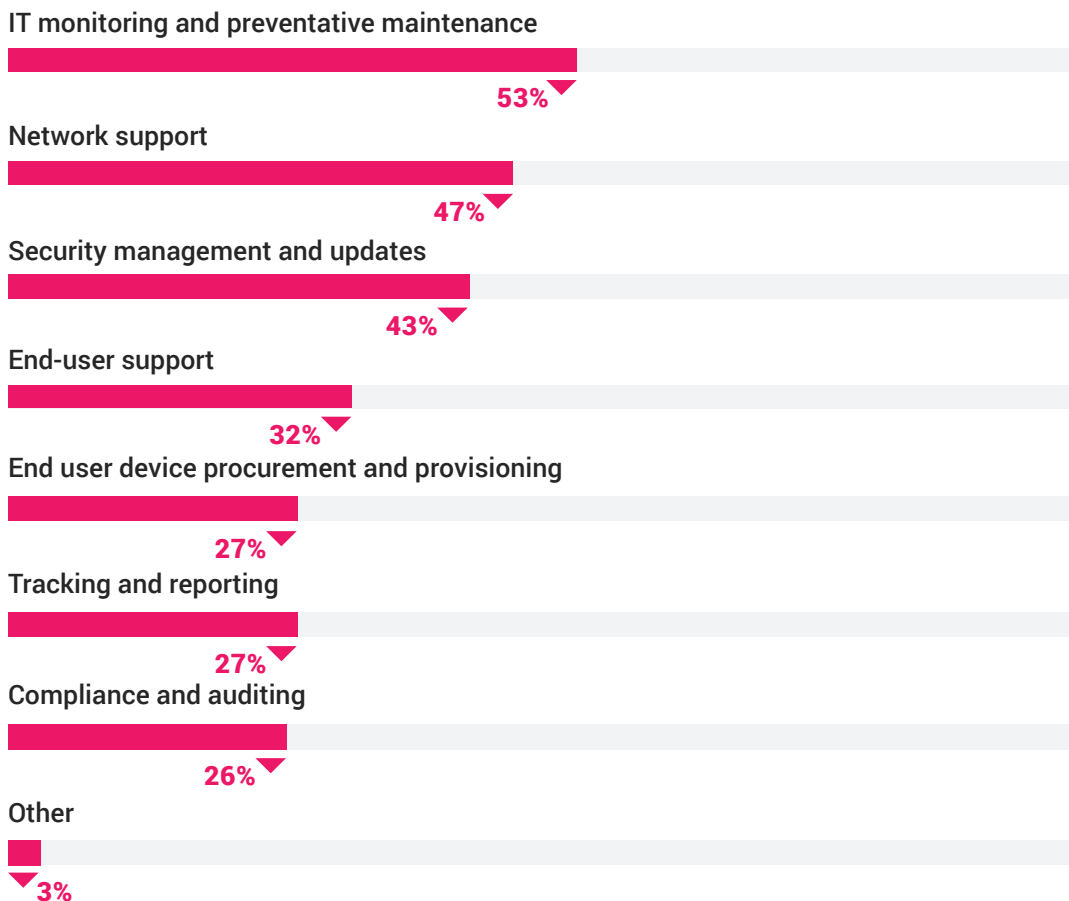


## Outsourcing the pit crew

Clearly pit strategies vary widely from company to company, as do their results on the track. But let's take a closer look at those who outsource some or all of their IT support and management activities to an MSP.

According to the survey, the functions outsourced most often are IT monitoring and preventive maintenance, network support, security management and updates, and end-user support.

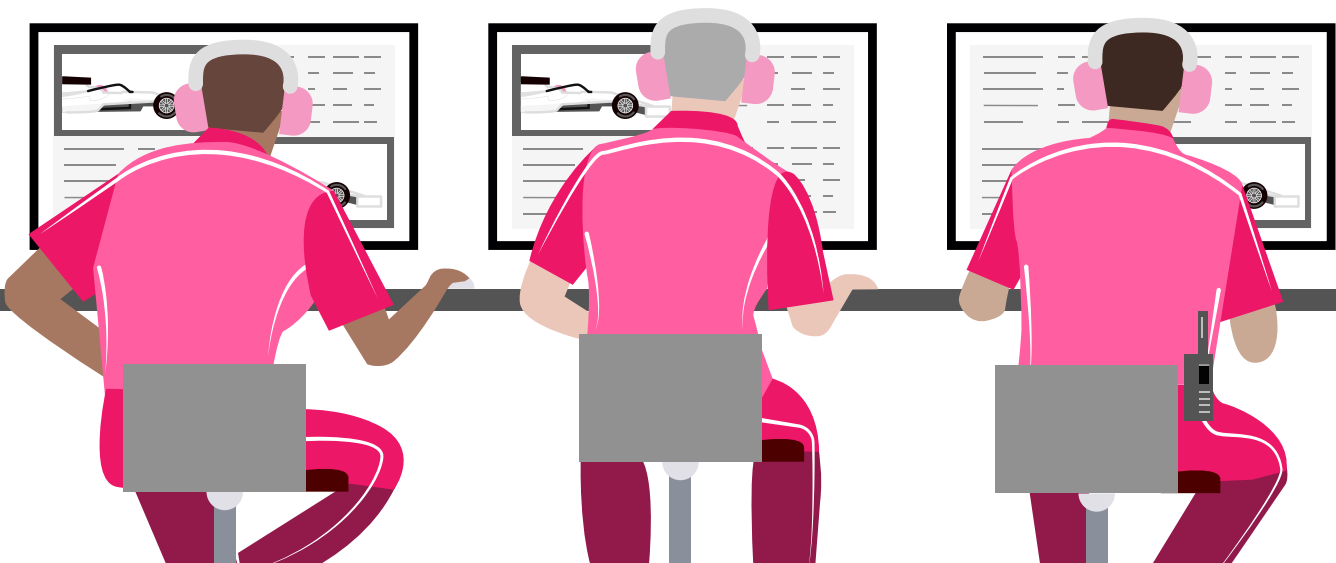
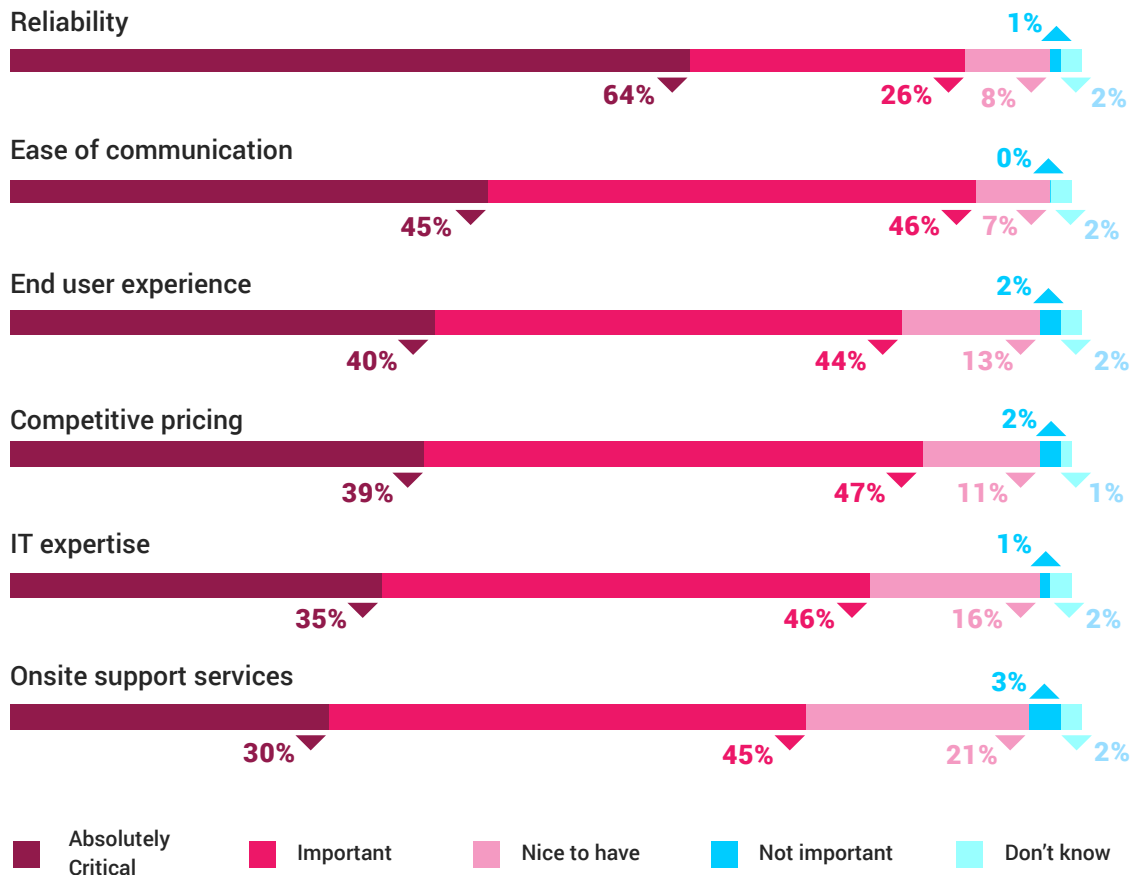
### IT Support and Management Tasks Currently Outsourced



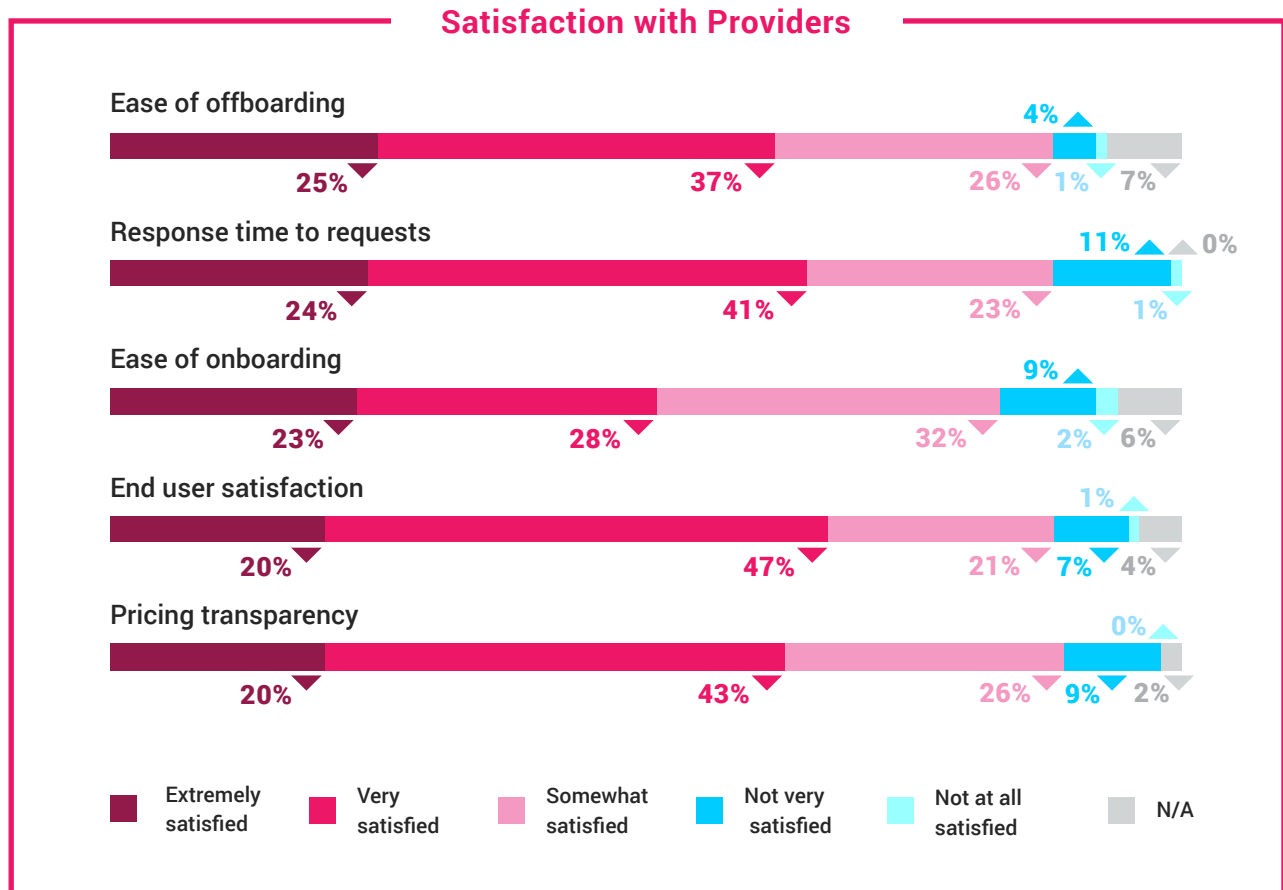


What do IT pros look for in a provider? Top factors are reliability, ease of communication, a positive end-user experience, and, of course, competitive pricing. They also look for IT expertise and online support options.

### Top Factors in Selecting a Provider



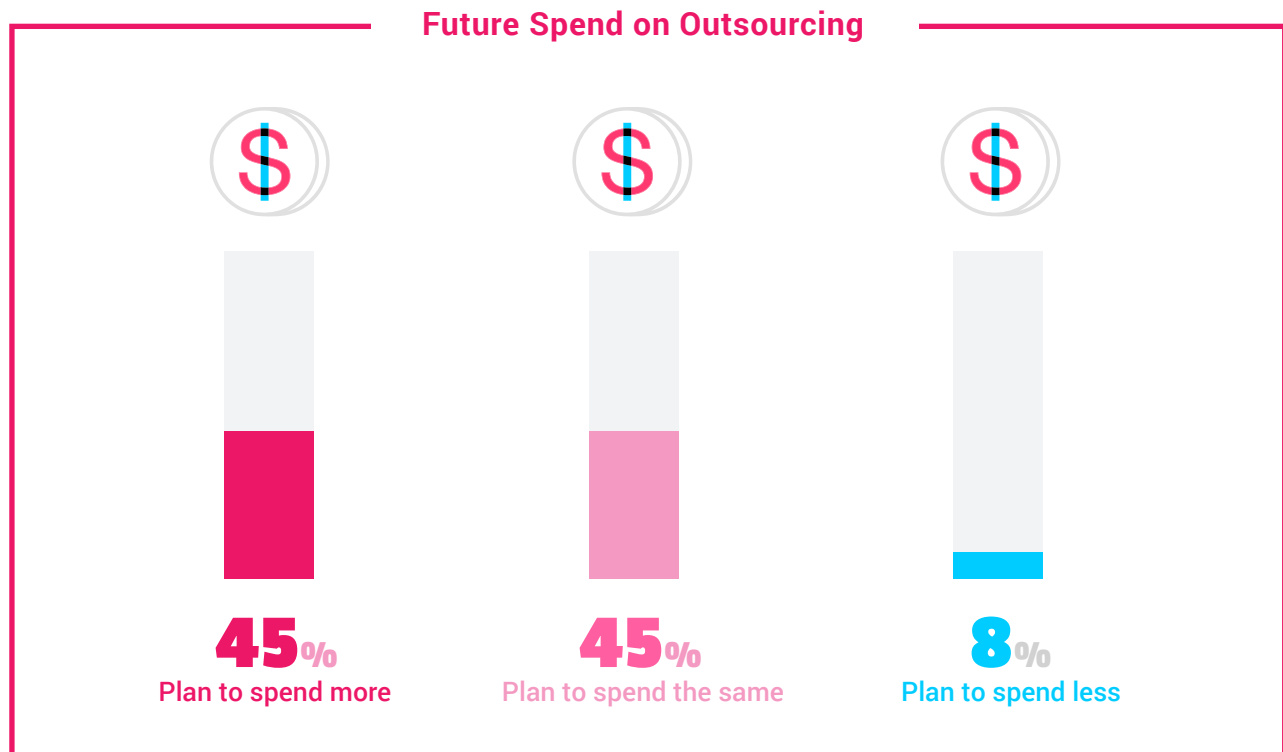
IT professionals by and large are satisfied with their external providers, but there are a handful of critical areas that could clearly stand improvement.



One area in need of improvement is onboarding, which about one-third of respondents are somewhat satisfied with. Another 11% are either not very satisfied or not satisfied at all. Offboarding is likewise ripe for improvement, as almost one-third of respondents are somewhat, not very, or not at all satisfied.

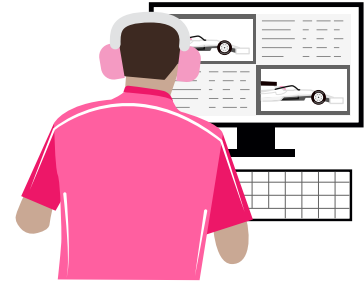
End-user satisfaction and issue response time are two other areas respondents could be happier with. Again, about one-third are only somewhat, not very, or not at all pleased with the level of end-user satisfaction their MSP is delivering, which is surprising considering how many IT pros consider it to be a top factor in choosing an MSP. Issue response time, likely feeding into those user satisfaction rates, is also an issue. A quarter of respondents are only somewhat satisfied with the response times they're getting. Another 12% are either not very satisfied or not satisfied at all.

Finally, a number of respondents indicated that pricing transparency is a concern. Despite pricing being another top consideration, 35% are not very satisfied or only somewhat satisfied with their MSP in that regard. That said, SMB organizations spend an average of \$35,000 per year on outsourcing, and the vast majority (90%) plan to spend the same amount or more in the future.



Fortunately, the challenges these IT pros have faced can help their peers be more successful. The Spiceworks survey results paint a clear picture of what to watch out for when outsourcing even a portion of your IT support and management functions.

# CHAPTER 4



## Shifting IT into overdrive

One thing that's common in SMBs the world over is that IT pros don't have enough time for the projects that are most valuable to the business. They're so busy keeping users up and running that they don't have time to optimize existing deployments, design new ones, or even plan for future initiatives. This is especially true for organizations that keep their IT support and management activities in-house.

But it's those strategic kinds of activities that really bring value to the business, adding to the bottom line and making IT a valuable part of the competitive strategy. What would your IT team do if you could outsource routine activities and free up time and resources for other projects? **Respondents to the Spiceworks survey had plenty of great ideas:**



"IT strategy to improve processes"



"Innovation and upgrades to new technology"



"Learning and implementing new software for increased productivity"



"Optimization, research, and development"



“Big data projects to help my company become more efficient”

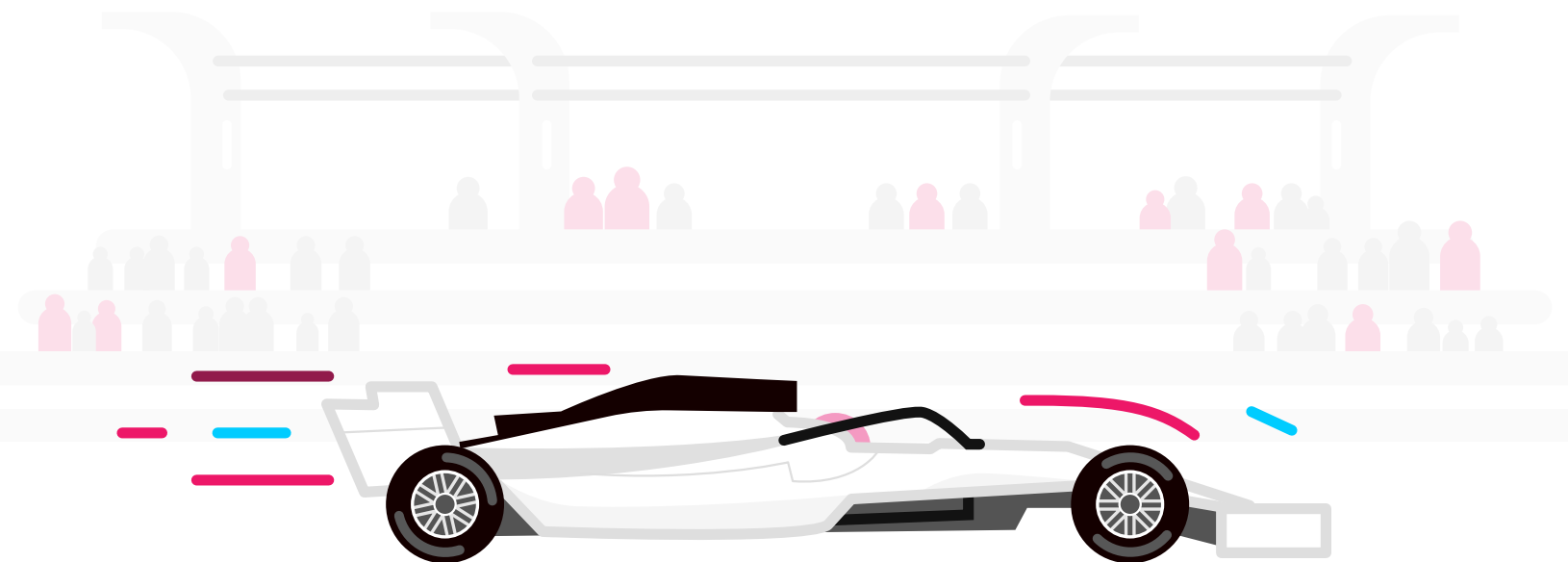


“Training, security, and network optimization”



“Leadership development”

With a more strategic IT support and management solution, activities like those can become reality. IT can finally get out of the pits and become more strategically aligned to the business. Without the daily distractions of password resets, OS crashes, and Adobe Acrobat Reader upgrades, IT can bring more substantial contributions to the table.



# CHAPTER 5

## Electric: Helping you achieve a place on the podium



Electric has emerged as a modern IT support and management solution, providing the fast, affordable, and comprehensive services and support your company needs. Electric is part of a highly effective IT strategy, providing chat-based communication, lightning-fast response times, a responsive end-user experience, and high reliability.

### Key services include:



Comprehensive troubleshooting for multi-vendor hardware, software, and networks



Proactive support, including system maintenance, updates, policy management, and security and vulnerability patching



Automated onboarding and offboarding, customizable by department and supported by a real-time dashboard that shows the status of requests



Systems administration, including software installations, updating permissions, managing groups, and resetting passwords



On-site and emergency assistance, such as for hardware and network outages, or for special projects

# LEARN MORE

Whether you rely on an in-house IT team or already outsource some or all of your IT support and management functions, Electric can help. In fact, Electric offers services at a fraction of the cost of traditional MSPs or an additional IT hire.

Electric is the world's first all-in-one IT support solution delivered in real-time for small and midsize offices, putting world-class support at your team's fingertips. Through a chat interface, personalized service, and flat-rate pricing, we keep your email, computers, Wi-Fi, and software running smoothly at a fraction of the cost and headaches of traditional managed service providers.

Let Electric help your business take the victory lap.

[Get Started](#)



## About the survey

Electric commissioned Spiceworks to conduct a survey in May 2019. This survey targeted IT professionals, including IT directors and managers, to understand current perceptions and practices around IT support and management, including experiences working with managed service providers. Survey results included responses from approximately 300 respondents who work in U.S. companies with between 20 and 300 employees.