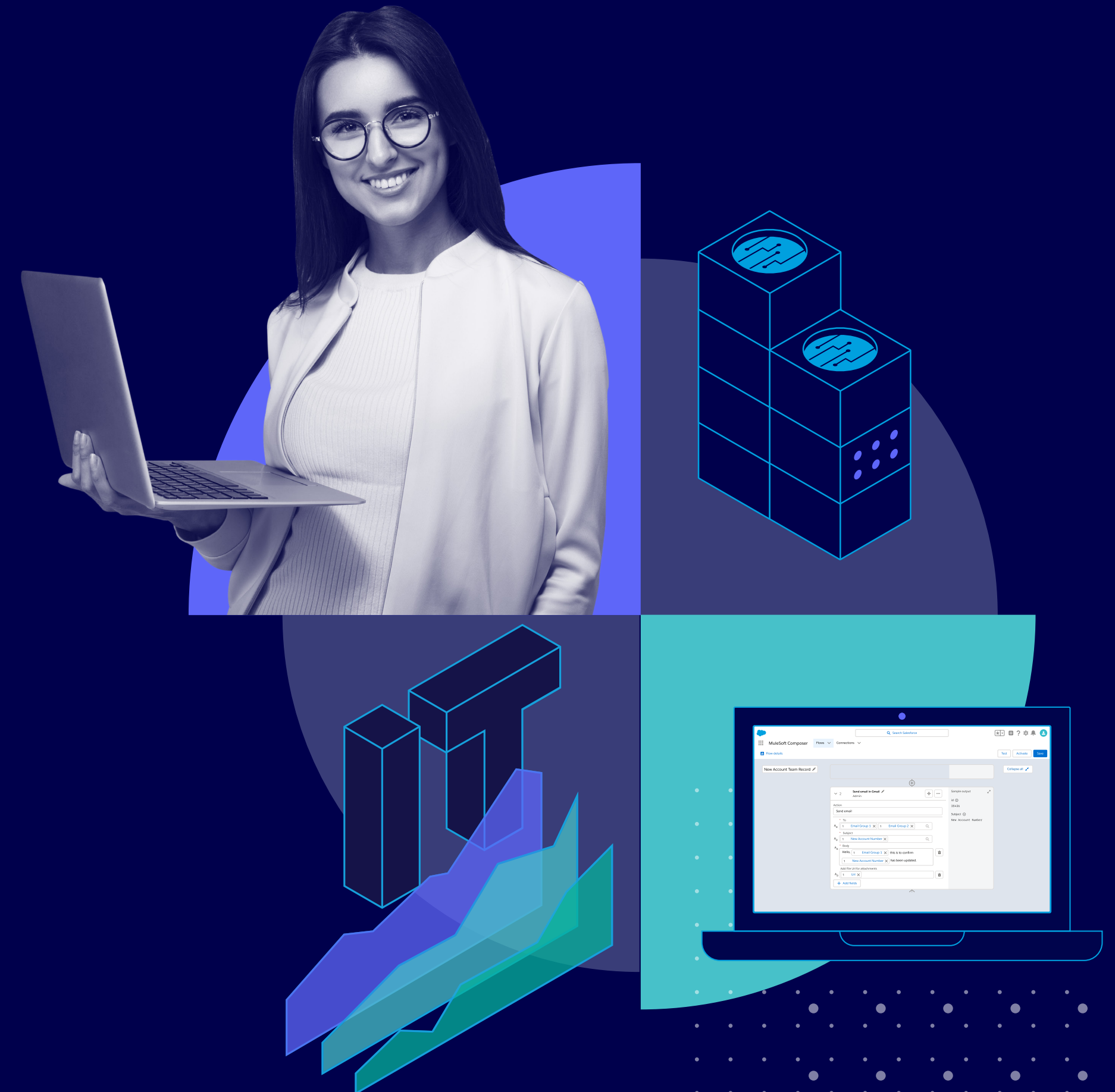


MULESOFT RESEARCH

# The state of business and IT innovation

4 trends every IT leader needs to know to  
empower the enterprise

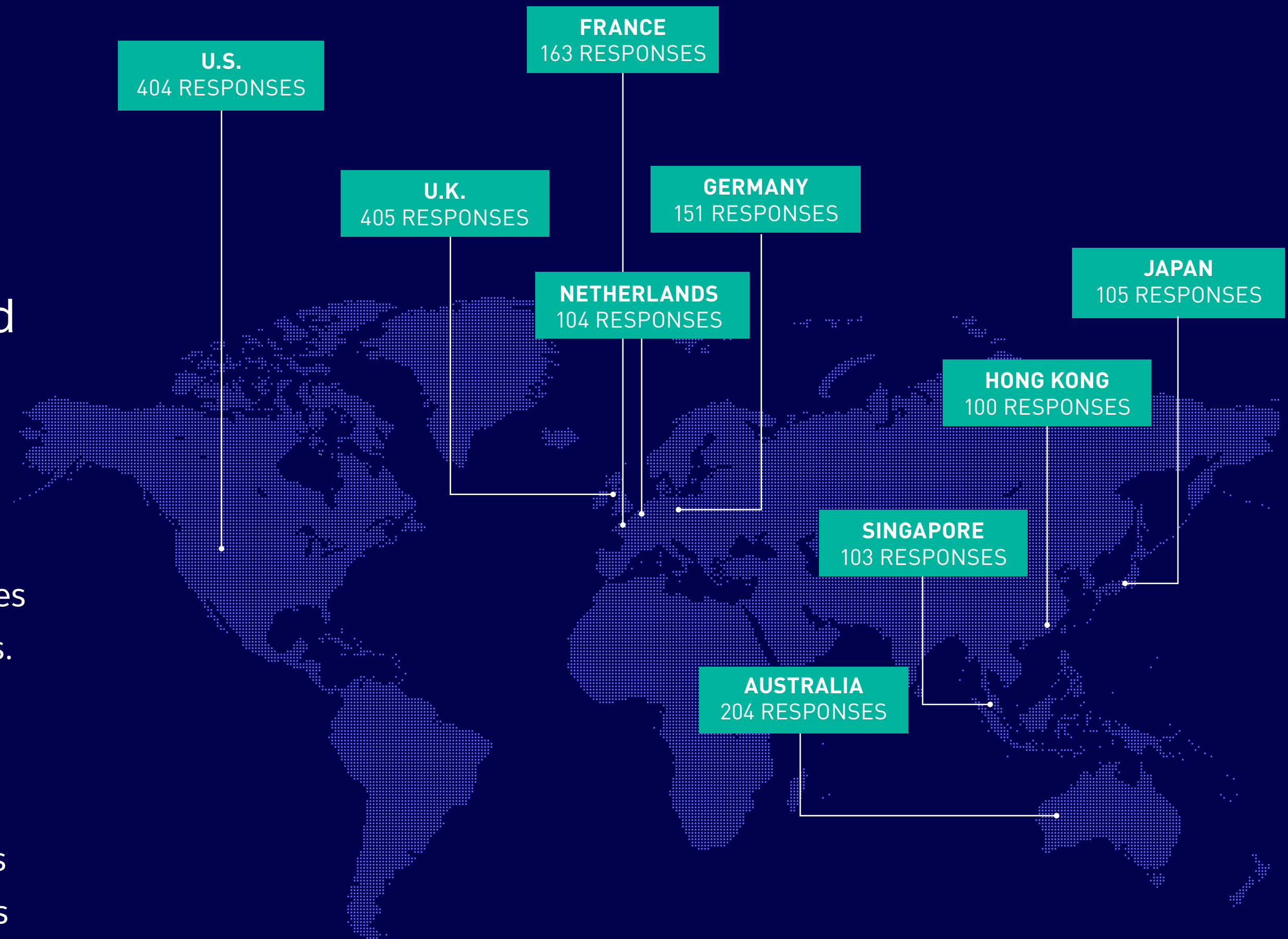


# Overview

**MuleSoft**, in partnership with Censuswide, surveyed 1,739 line of business (LoB) users regarding their thoughts on and involvement in digital initiatives and innovation at their organizations.

We conducted an online survey in September 2020 across the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan. We ensured that only suitable candidates participated in the survey by using a rigorous, multi-level screening process.

Respondents are all LoB middle managers, defined as those who hold a managerial position or above. Respondents exclude LoB middle managers working in IT or administration roles. All respondents work in organizations with at least 250 employees. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society, which is based on the ESOMAR principles.



# Executive summary

## 01 Citizen integrators are ready to drive digital innovation

Most line of business (LoB) users are involved in identifying, suggesting, and creating new ways to improve the delivery of digital services. Many believe they need quick and easy access to business data to be effective. Partnership with IT is important as LoBs say they play a collaborative role in driving digital innovation.

**Most (68%) of LoB users believe IT and LoB users should jointly drive digital innovation.**

## 02 Organizations need a new operating model to move faster

LoB users are frustrated with the pace of innovation. They believe IT is focused more on “keeping the lights on,” and spending less time driving innovation. COVID-19 has increased demand for digital and highlighted significant operational efficiencies and a lack of connectivity and skills.

**Over half (51%) say they are frustrated with the speed at which IT can deliver projects.**

## 03 Integration challenges hinder innovation

Along with gaps in skills and technology, data silos hamper digital innovation. While integration is considered a top challenge to innovation, many business users, who tend to expect data and applications to be connected, aren't actively thinking about integration when building digital services.

**More than one-third (37%) point to integration as a top challenge to delivering new digital services, after security (39%).**

## 04 Business users need to be empowered to unlock data

Most LoB users are frustrated by how difficult it is to connect different IT systems and data – hindering business growth and customer experience. They agree that easy-to-use, self-service tools that allow LoBs to unlock data and build customer experiences would be beneficial.

**Majority (80%) agree employees need easy access to data and IT capabilities to deliver projects faster.**



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challenges hinder  
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## SECTION 04

**Business users need to be  
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**Conclusion and  
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SECTION 01

# Citizen integrators are ready to drive digital innovation

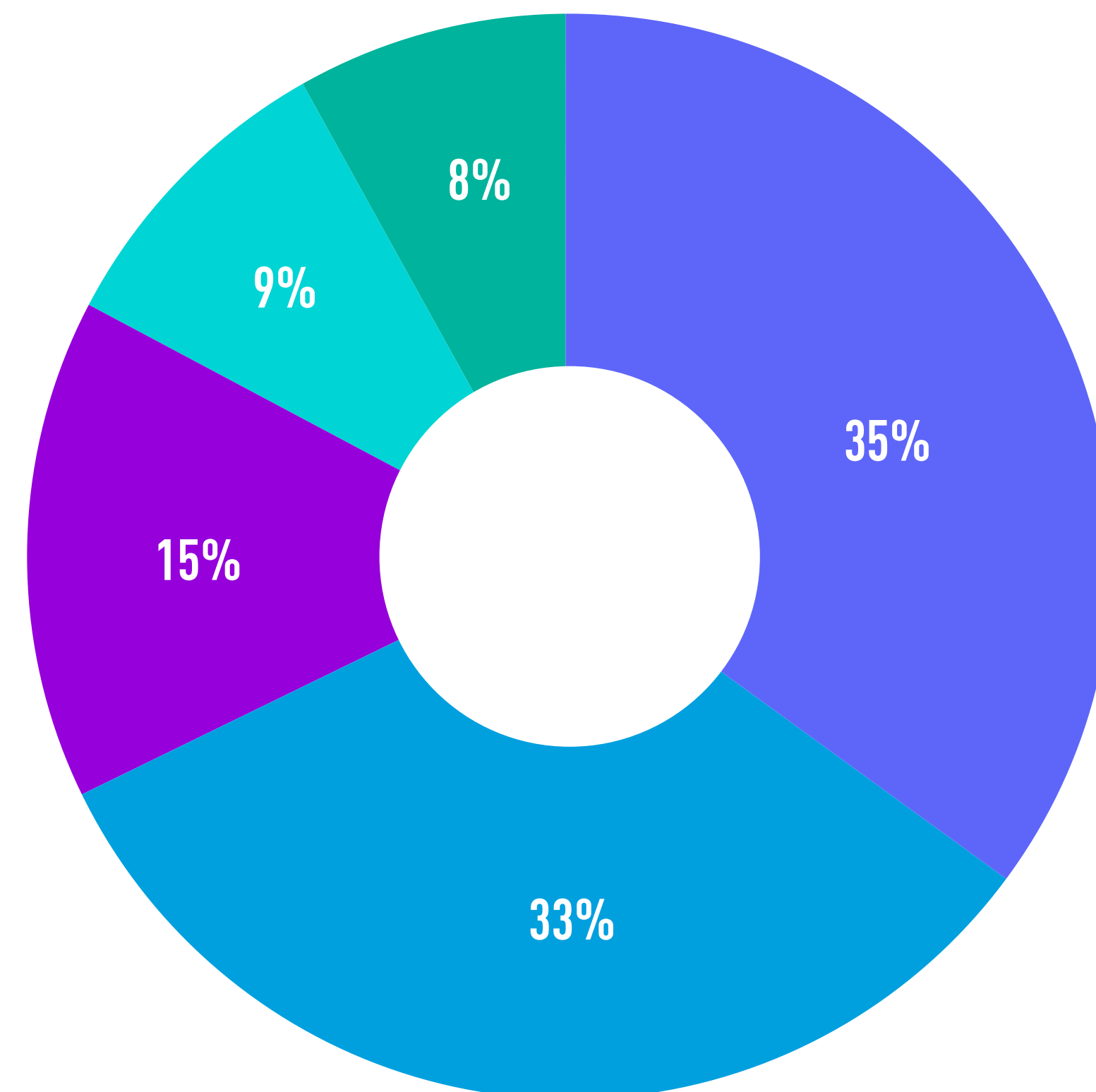
## LoB users are getting hands-on delivering digital services internally

It's official: the citizen integrator is here. They are everyday business users – marketers, salespeople, finance administrators – who increasingly use and rely on data and integration to effectively do their jobs. They are often not deeply technical and focus more on automating business tasks and delivering business outcomes.

Over 68% of LoB respondents say they are “very” or “somewhat” involved in identifying, suggesting, or creating new ways to enhance the delivery of digital services inside the organization. This could be anything from improving business efficiency by connecting different back-end systems to providing staff in the field with a bespoke mobile application.

This is good news. With the right tools and mindset – focused on discoverability, collaboration, and reuse – these hands-on LoB users have an excellent opportunity to improve business outcomes and drive innovation-fueled growth for their organization.

How involved are you when it comes to identifying, suggesting, or creating new ways to improve the way your organization delivers digital services internally?



● Very involved ● Somewhat involved ● Not involved and would not like to be  
● Not involved and would like to be ● N/A

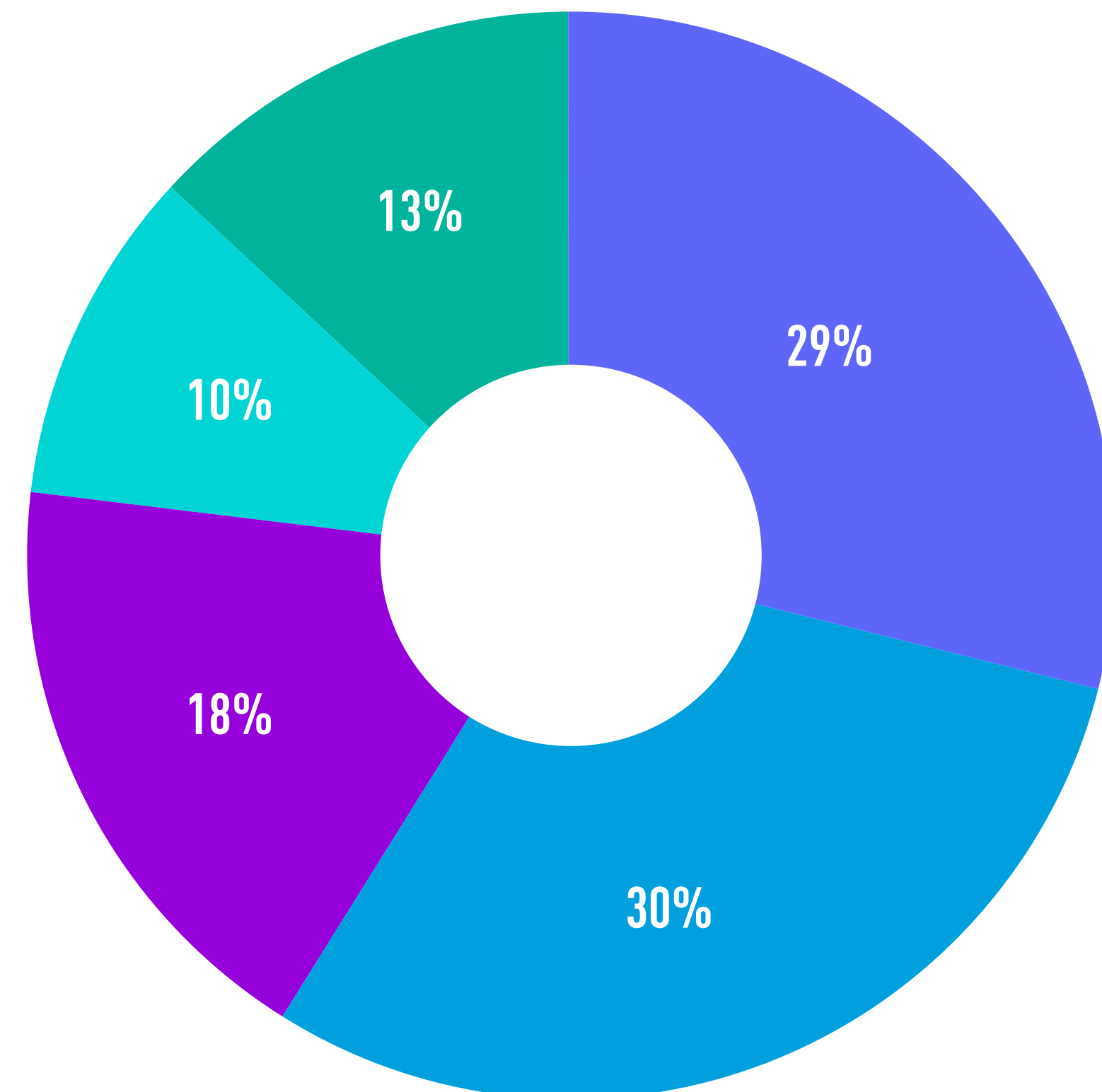
## Most LoB users are helping to innovate customer experiences

Similarly, over half (59%) of LoB respondents say they are “very” or “somewhat” involved in the creation of new ways to enhance how digital services are delivered externally. Some examples of external digital innovation are creating an online self-service portal or building a customer-facing mobile application.

[Gartner\\*](#) first published a report about citizen integrators in 2017. This trend appears to have gained real momentum as more business users play an active role in delivering new and connected customer experiences.

\*Citizen Integrators Bring Application and Data Integration Into a Common Focus  
Elizabeth Golluscio, Massimo Pezzini, Eric Thoo, 23 May 2017

How involved are you when it comes to identifying, suggesting, or creating new ways to improve the way your organization delivers digital services externally?



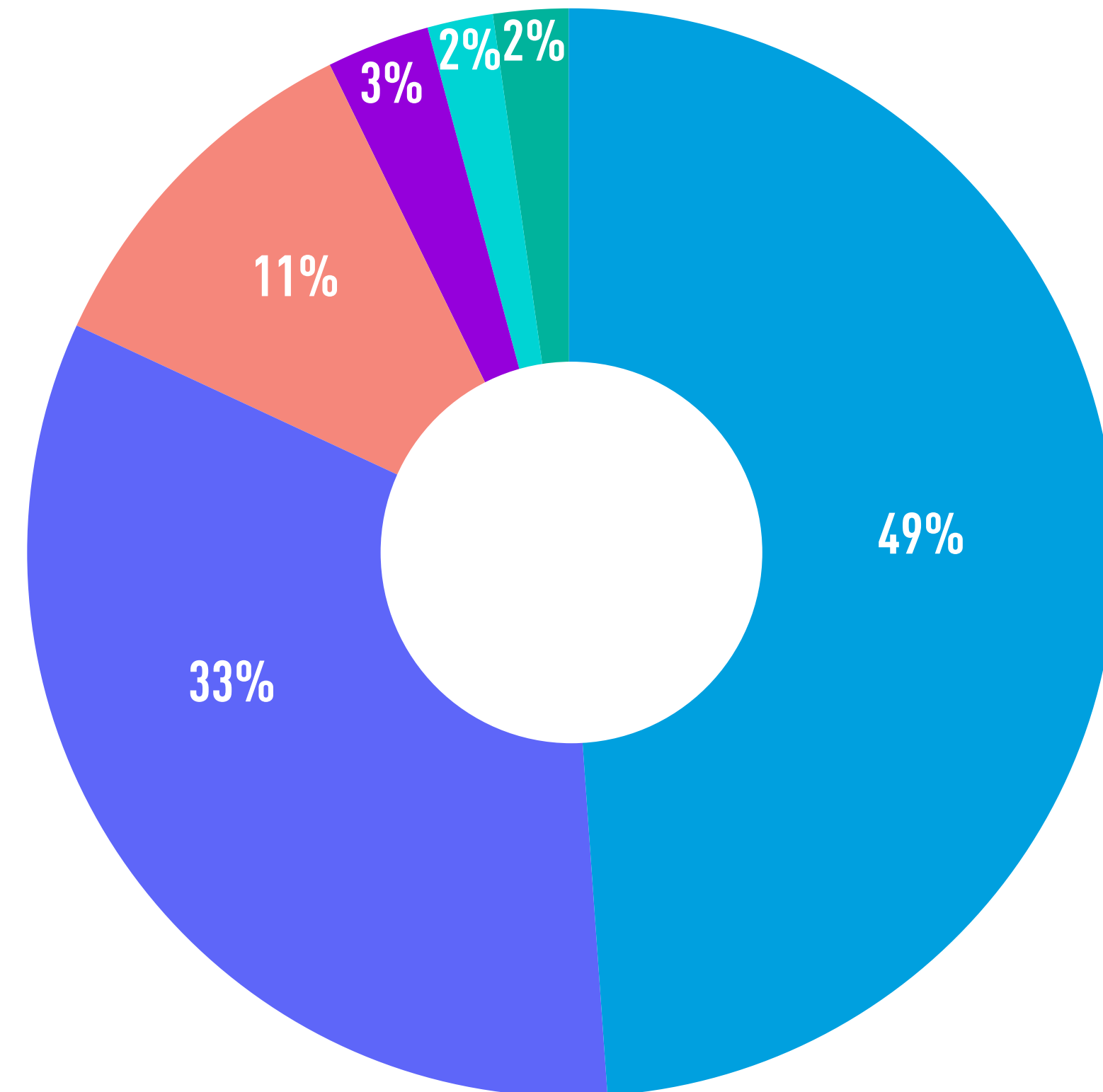
● Very involved
 ● Somewhat involved
 ● Not involved and would not like to be
 ● Not involved and would like to be
 ● N/A

## Technical skills are critical to business success

The majority (82%) of LoB users argue that technical skills are critical to the future success of their organization. Almost half (49%) strongly agree with this statement, and just 5% disagree.

As digital innovation continues to separate market leaders from the competition, there's no doubt that skills are an essential component. But with the right tooling (supporting “clicks, not code”), organizations should be able to empower a broader range of LoB users who may not have the technical skills to create customer value and create new revenue opportunities, faster.

Technical skills are critical to our organization's future success.



● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

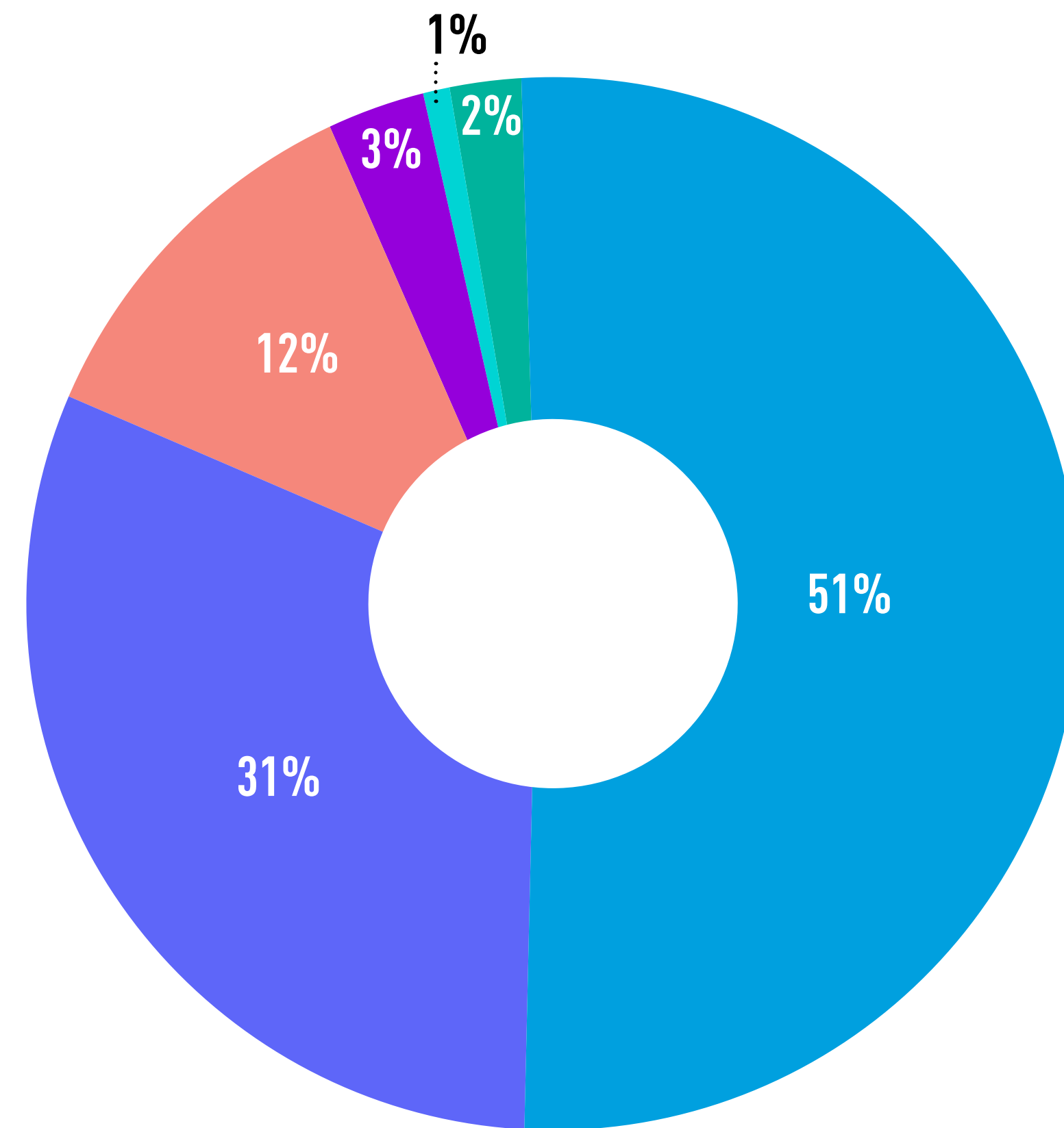


## Access to data is vital for employees to perform effectively

Data is the lifeblood of the modern organization. So, it's no surprise that the vast majority (82%) of LoB users believe employees need quick and easy access to business data to do their jobs effectively.

Yet too often, this data is spread out across the organization in siloed applications. Organizations can accelerate access to data using pre-built connectors and templates. By enabling this self-serve access, IT can empower business users to automate repetitive or manual integration processes and ensure data gets into the hands of the right people at the right time.

To remain productive and do their jobs effectively, employees need quick, and easy access to IT systems, application and data.



● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

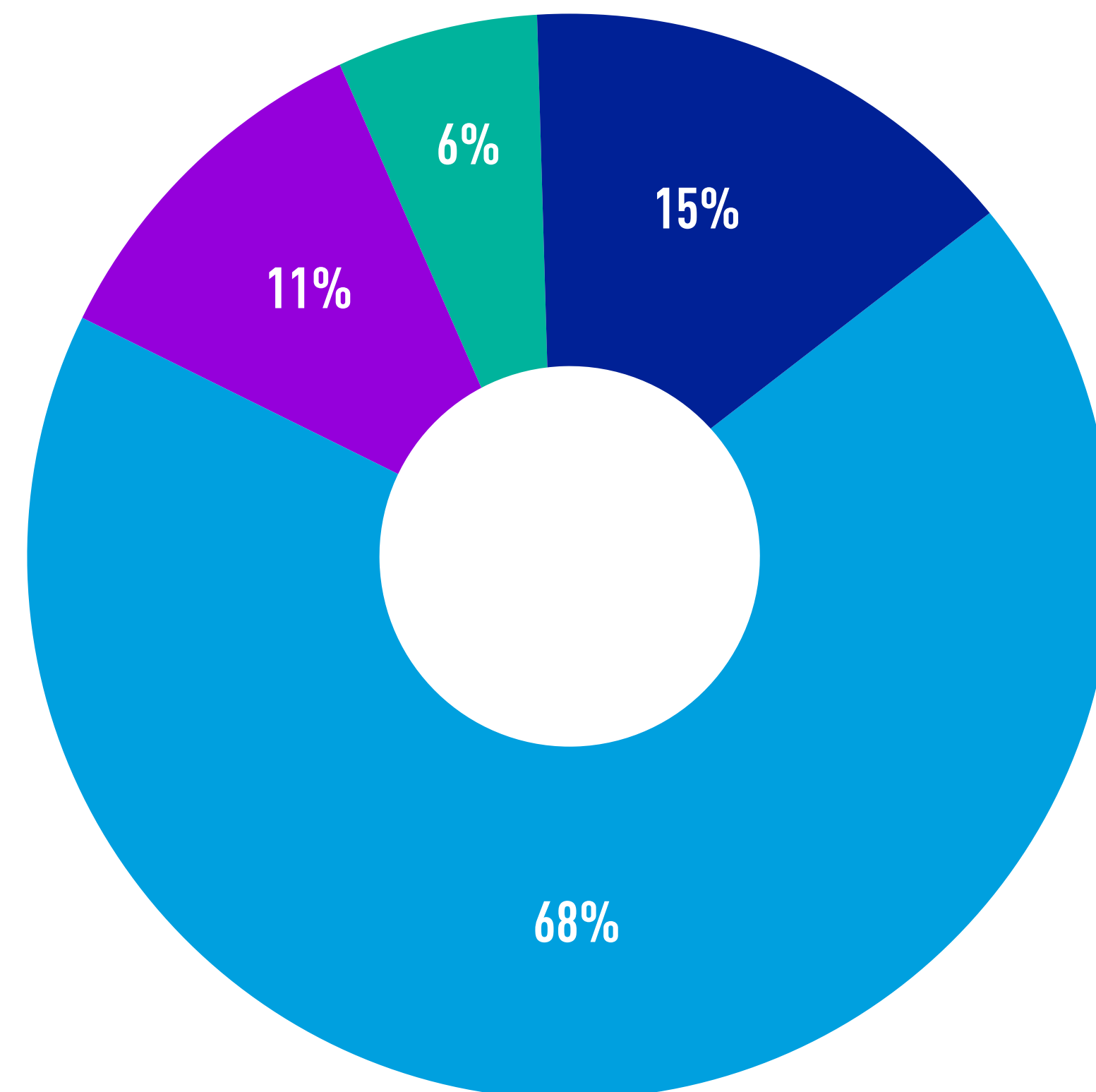
## IT and LoB must collaborate to drive digital transformation

The vast majority (68%) of LoB users say they think IT and LoB should come together to drive innovation. Far fewer believe IT (15%) or LoB (11%) should carry out the task alone.

One of the most effective ways to achieve this kind of collaboration is through a [Center for Enablement \(C4E\)](#): a cross-functional team comprising business and IT stakeholders focused on productizing, publishing, and harvesting reusable assets and best practices.

BP, one of the world's largest energy companies, adopted an API strategy with MuleSoft to accelerate IT delivery while maintaining central governance. [BP established a C4E](#), so the business can self-serve to deliver technology initiatives faster. Today, the C4E serves more than 20 product teams, and over 100 APIs are available.

Out of IT and line of business users, who do you believe should drive digital innovation in your organization?



● IT completely ● IT and Line of Business users  
● Line of Business owners completely ● Neither IT or Line of Business users

## Key takeaways

LoB users are becoming increasingly hands-on when it comes to driving digital innovation and growth for their organization. A majority of respondents are involved in identifying, suggesting, or creating new ways to enhance internal (68%) and external (59%) digital service delivery. Therefore, technical skills are rightly seen by most (82%) as critical to business success.

Data is the key to delivering this digital innovation and growth – 82% of LoB users agree that access to data is vital for employees to do their jobs effectively.

Yet, these citizen integrators don't believe they can go it alone. Most (68%) think IT and LoB should come together to drive innovation. The best way of doing so is via a C4E and user-friendly tooling to democratize innovation and integration with standardized APIs.

SECTION 02

**Organizations need a  
new operating model  
to move faster**

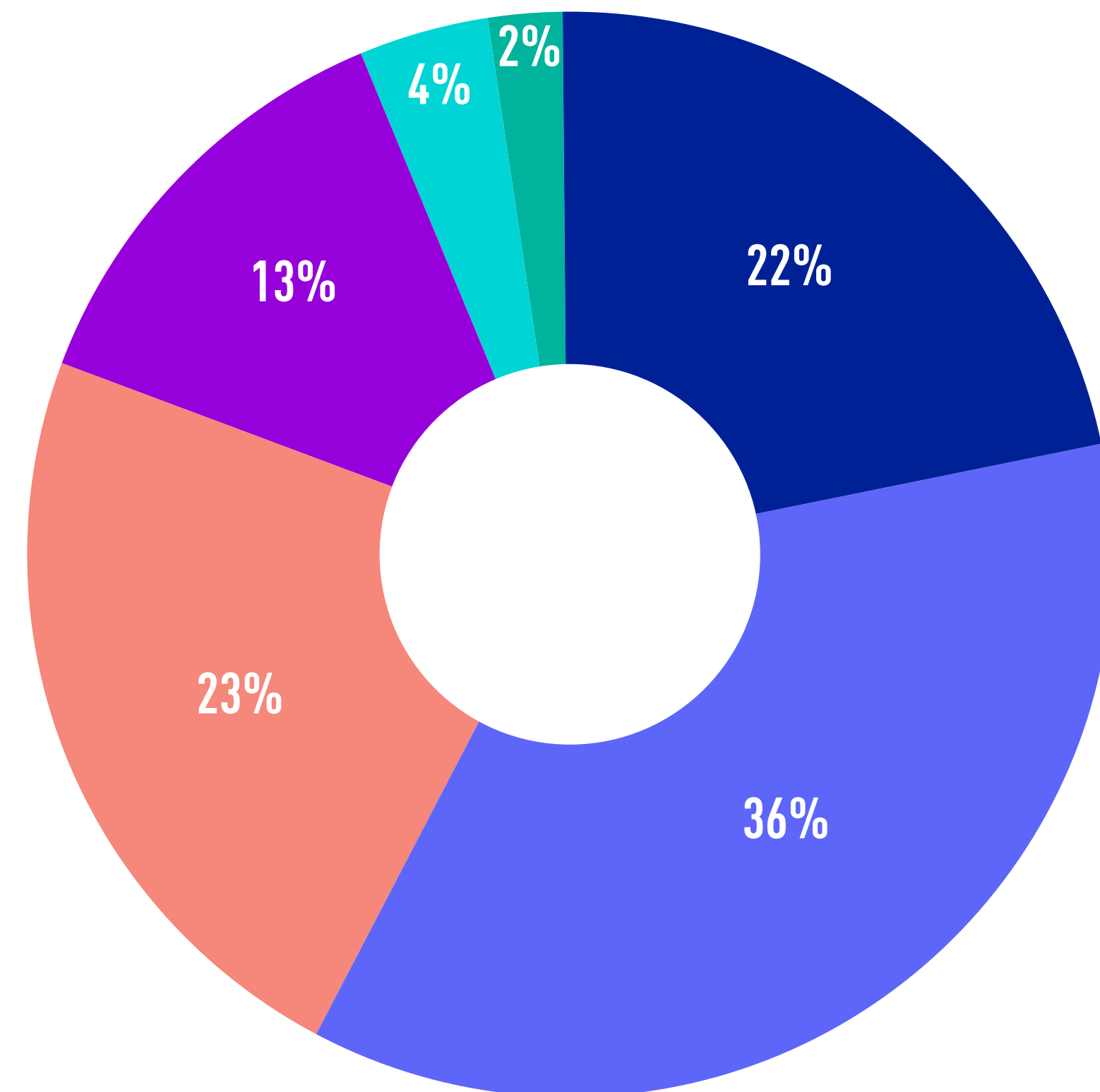


## Most LoB users think IT spends more time on operations than innovation

Over half (58%) of LoB respondents either “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that IT leaders are preoccupied with “keeping the lights on,” meaning they have less time to spend on driving digital innovation.

This is an excellent argument for decentralizing innovation. IT has an opportunity to be an enabler of innovation across the enterprise by allowing business teams to discover, collaborate, reuse, and self-serve business capabilities with standardized APIs.

I think IT leaders are spending more of their time running the business (i.e., keeping the lights on rather than innovating).



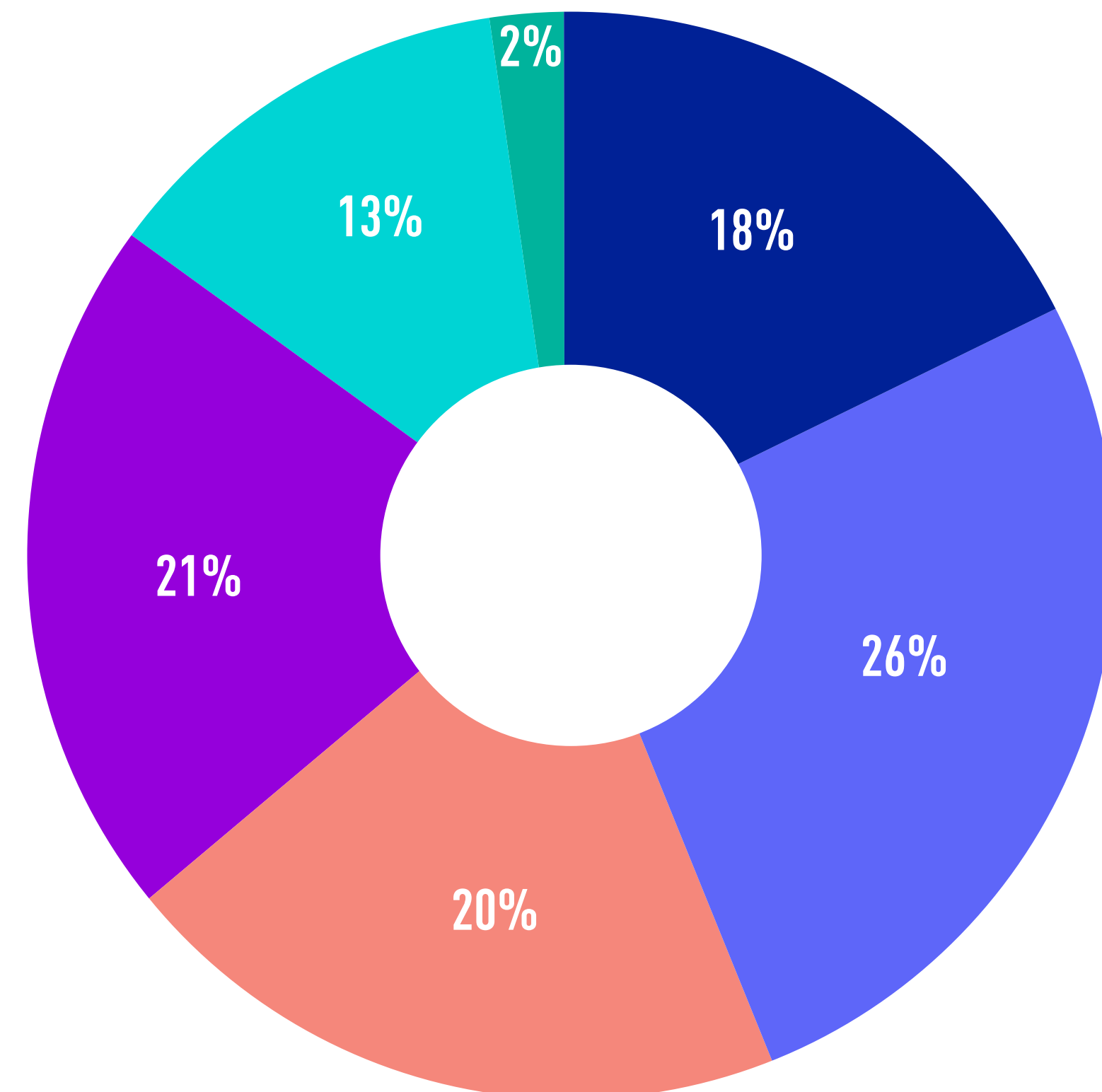
● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

## Removing roadblocks to greater digital innovation

It's not just that LoB respondents think IT spends most of its time on day-to-day operational tasks rather than strategic growth projects – 44% also believe IT is a blocker on digital innovation.

Clearly, this is a source of frustration for both the business and IT. This is further evidence of the need for a new approach where IT can enable LoB to self-serve simple tasks and free the IT team up to focus on more strategic initiatives.

I think my organization's IT department is a blocker on digital innovation.



● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

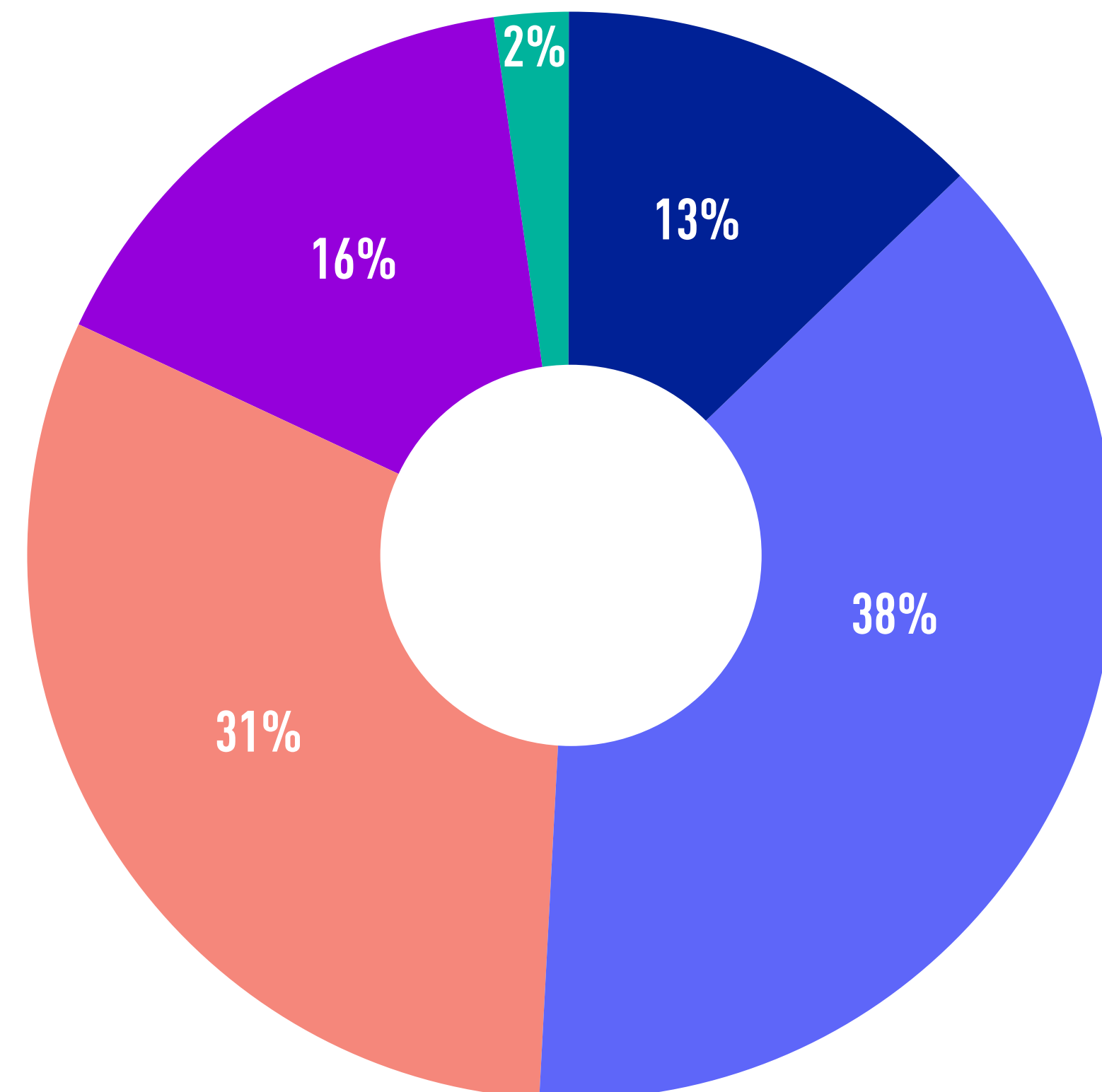
## LoB users crave speed in delivering digital projects

Many LoB users consider IT a roadblock to innovation and are concerned with the speed it can deliver for the business. Over half (51%) say they are frustrated with the speed of which IT is able to deliver digital projects.

This isn't necessarily the fault of the IT department. As an organization's digital footprint grows, so do demands to become more agile and adapt services to rapidly changing customer and market requirements. IT teams are finding it increasingly difficult to balance these demands and day-to-day operations, which slow down innovation speed.

By enabling LoB to self-serve business capabilities, organizations can create connected experiences and new revenue opportunities, faster.

To what extent are you frustrated at the speed your organizations IT department can deliver digital projects?

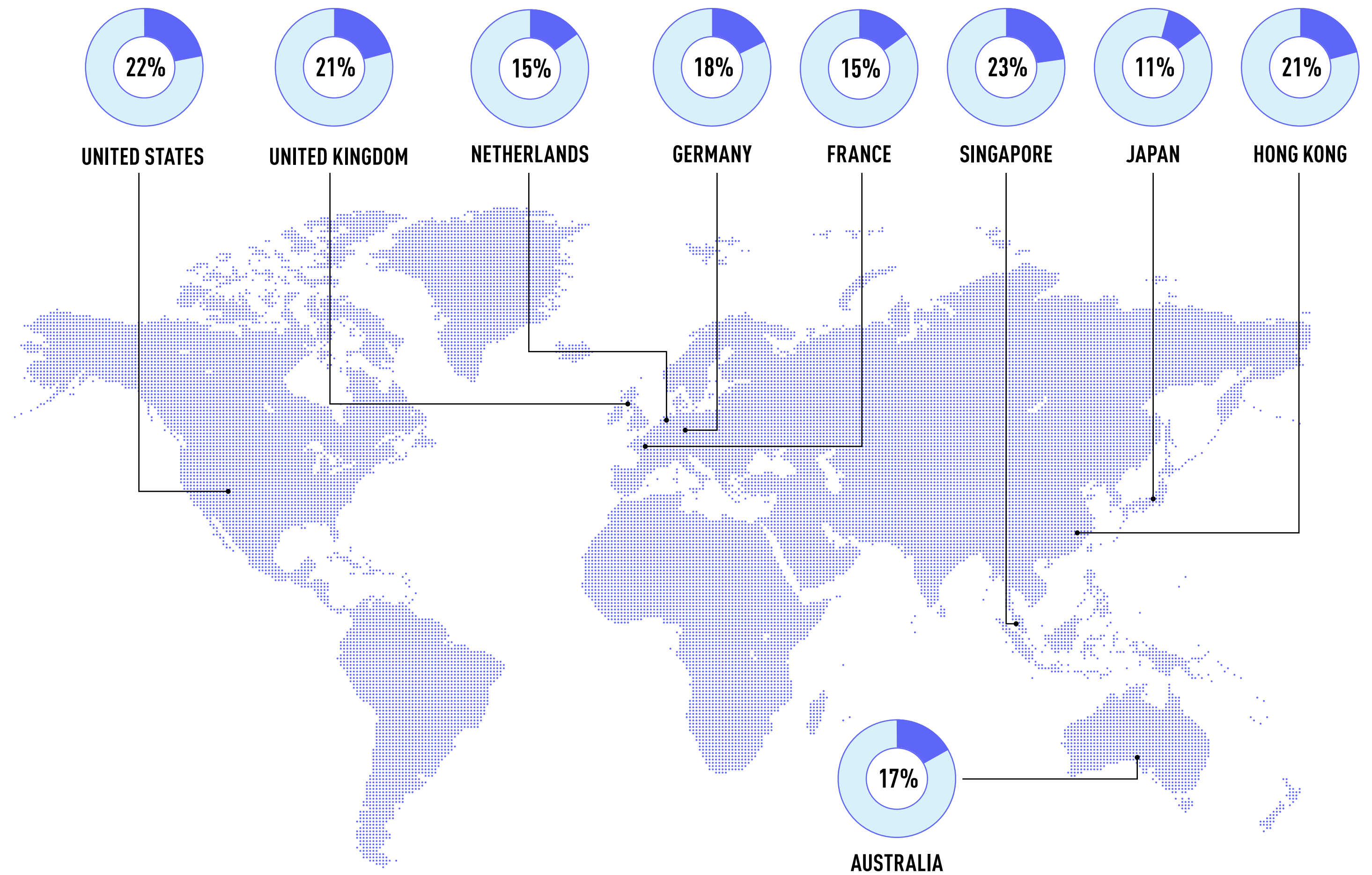


● Very frustrated ● Somewhat frustrated ● Not very frustrated  
● Not frustrated at all ● N/A

## COVID-19 is accelerating the pace of change, and there's no going back

The need for rapid innovation has never been greater, as the pandemic forces many organizations to invest more heavily in digital infrastructure and services to serve their customers.

Average percent increase of digital projects due to COVID-19



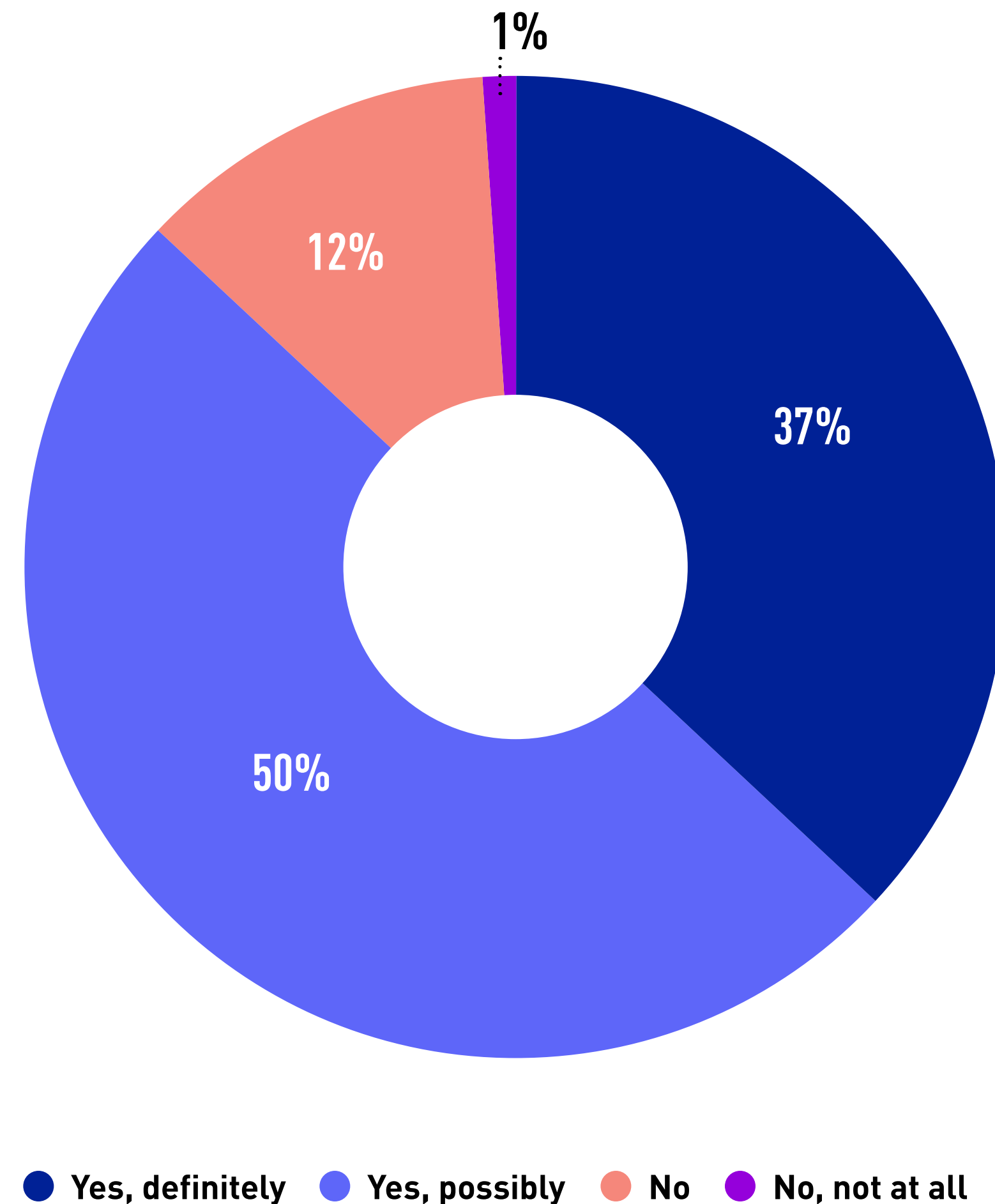


## Concerns linger over skills and technology gaps

While COVID-19 is creating a new driver for digital innovation, the uptick in demand is also putting greater pressure on already stretched IT teams. Only 37% are fully confident they have the skills and technology to rise to the occasion, leaving over 63% who aren't completely sure if they'll be able to keep pace.

This is further evidence that IT must enable the broader organization and make it easier for LoB users to easily access and reuse the applications and data they need.

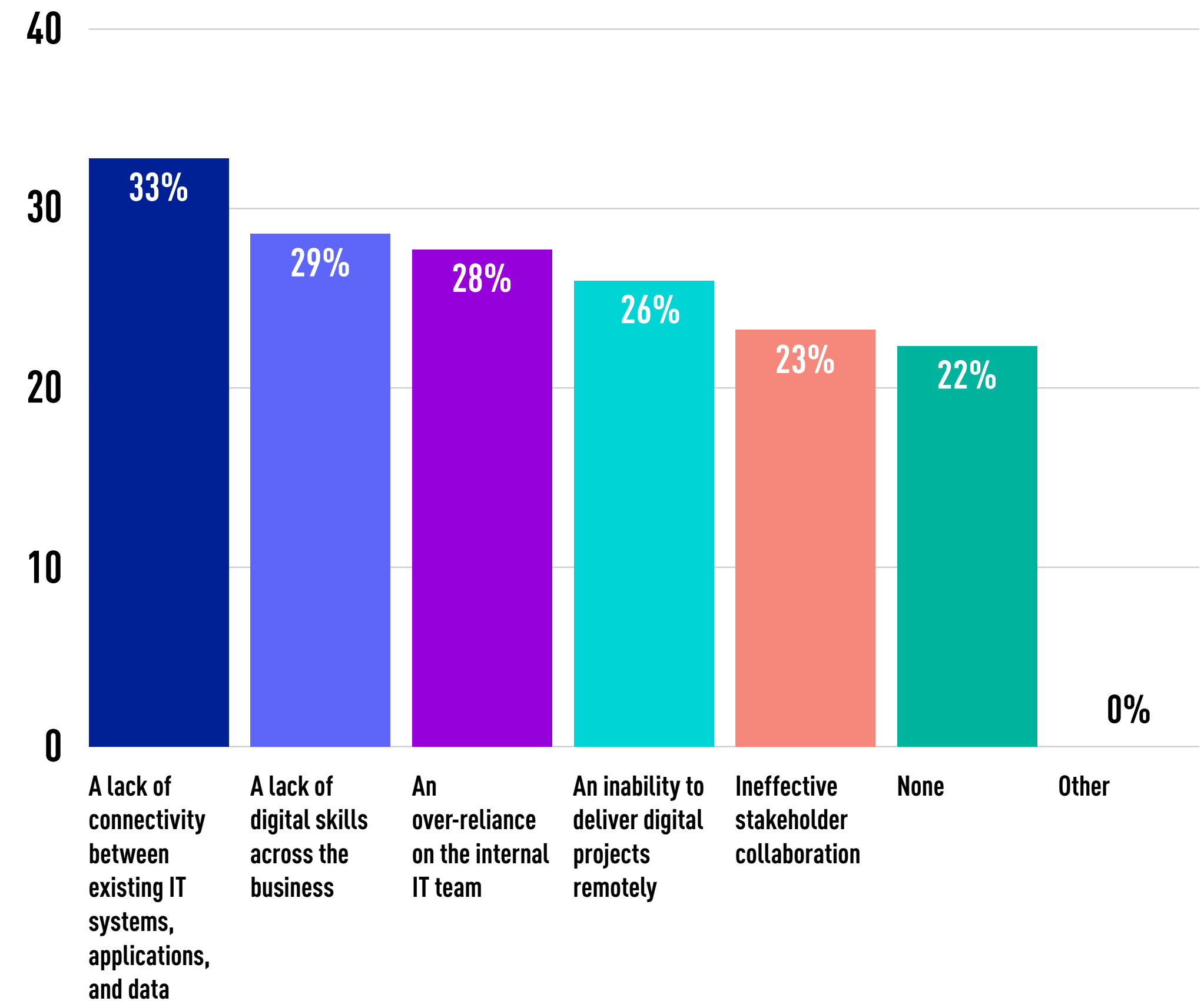
Do you feel that your organization has the skills and technology to keep pace with digital projects during the COVID-19 pandemic?



## COVID-19 shines a light on operational inefficiencies

The pandemic has highlighted several other critical weaknesses in organizations. Most pronounced among these, according to LoB users, is the lack of connectivity between existing IT systems, applications, and data (33%) and a lack of digital skills (29%). They also see an over-reliance on the internal IT team (28%) as a top issue.

What inefficiencies, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic revealed in your organization when it comes to delivering digital projects internally and externally?



## Key takeaways

The old IT operating model is frustrating LoBs as demands for faster innovation grow, which increasingly stem from the rapidly changing consumer expectations and accelerating digital transformation. Right or wrong, this is causing LoBs to believe IT is a block on innovation – that it’s too slow at driving change and preoccupied with “keeping the lights on.”

At the same time, COVID-19 is not just increasing demand for digital innovation but also highlighting major challenges. These challenges during the pandemic include skills and technology gaps, an over-reliance on IT, and a lack of connectivity between systems, apps, and data.

The old way of delivering projects and innovation can no longer keep up with market demands, and the need for speed is only going to accelerate.

Organizations can help mitigate these risks and support faster innovation by moving to a new operating IT model that encourages self-serve and reuse, giving business teams the tools they need to unlock data, connect applications, and automate processes. By using this self-serve model, IT can enable innovation everywhere – in a way that’s governed but not gated by IT. IT can then be freed up from tactical integrations and maintenance to focus more on innovating and delivering high impact projects.



SECTION 03

# Integration challenges hinder innovation

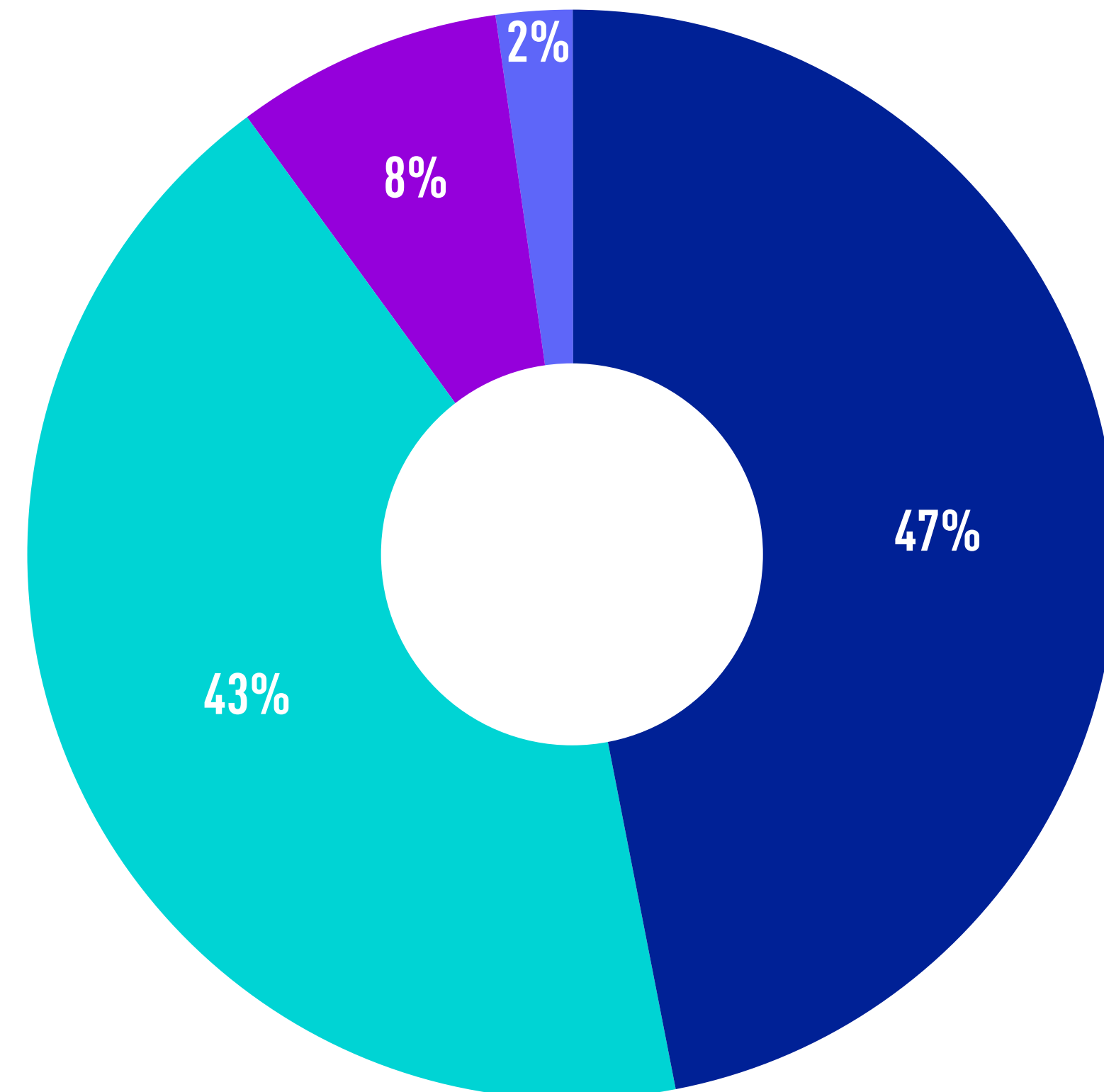


## LoBs aren't completely confident in their organization's technical skills to meet business needs

Along with concerns over the increased demands on tech talent driven by the pandemic, most LoB users aren't completely sure they have enough technical skills in-house to meet business needs. Less than half feel "very" confident.

The key is having those requisite skills and ensuring they are not all siloed in the IT department – meaning that the organization can be more agile.

How confident are you that your organization has the technical skills to do the following? Meet its business needs.

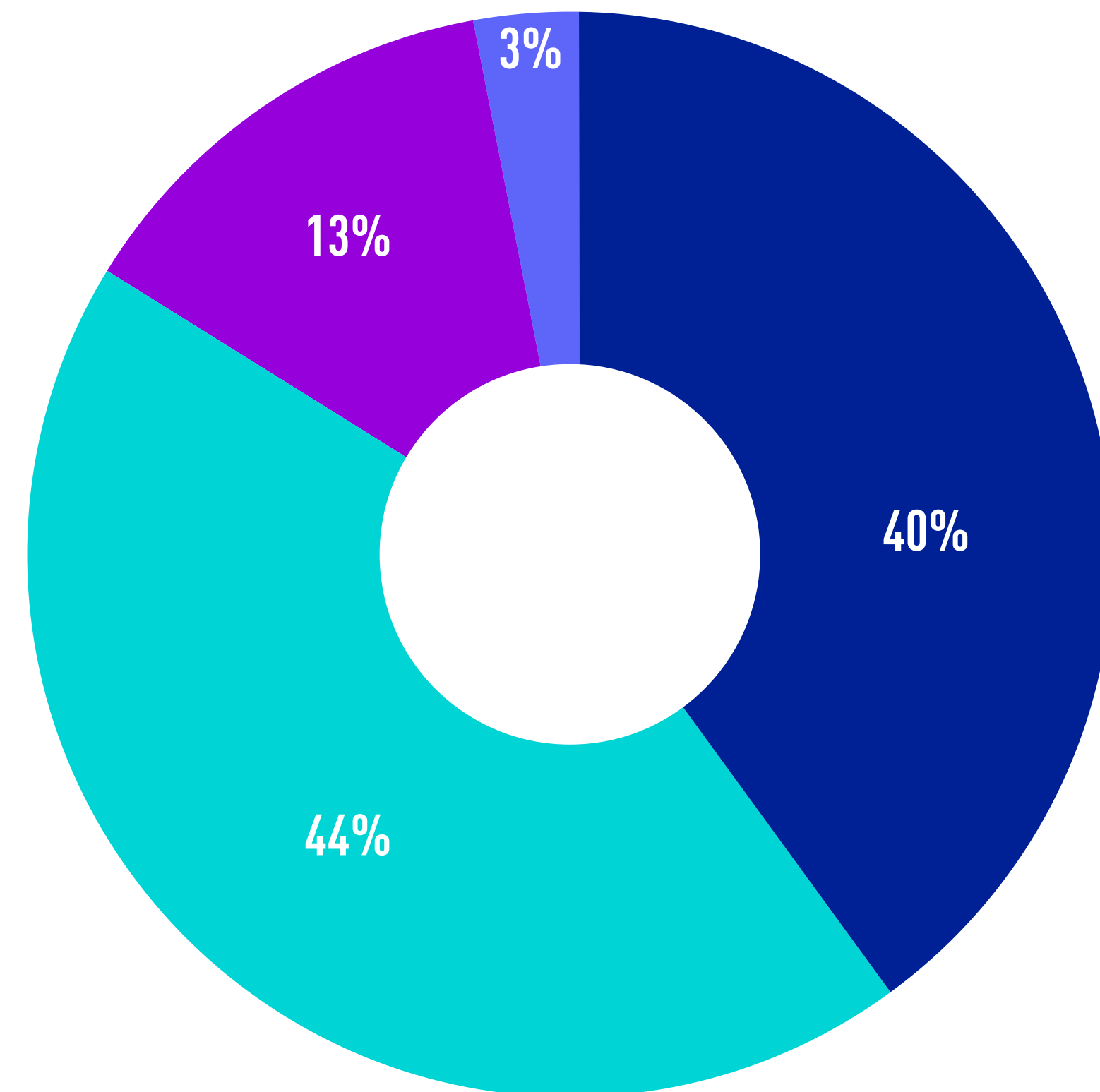


● Very confident ● Somewhat confident ● Not very confident  
● Not confident at all

## LoBs aren't very confident in the in-house skills to drive innovation

LoB users are also not completely confident that their organization's technical skills will help drive innovation in the organization. Only 40% of respondents are very confident in this.

How confident are you that your organization has the technology skills to do the following?



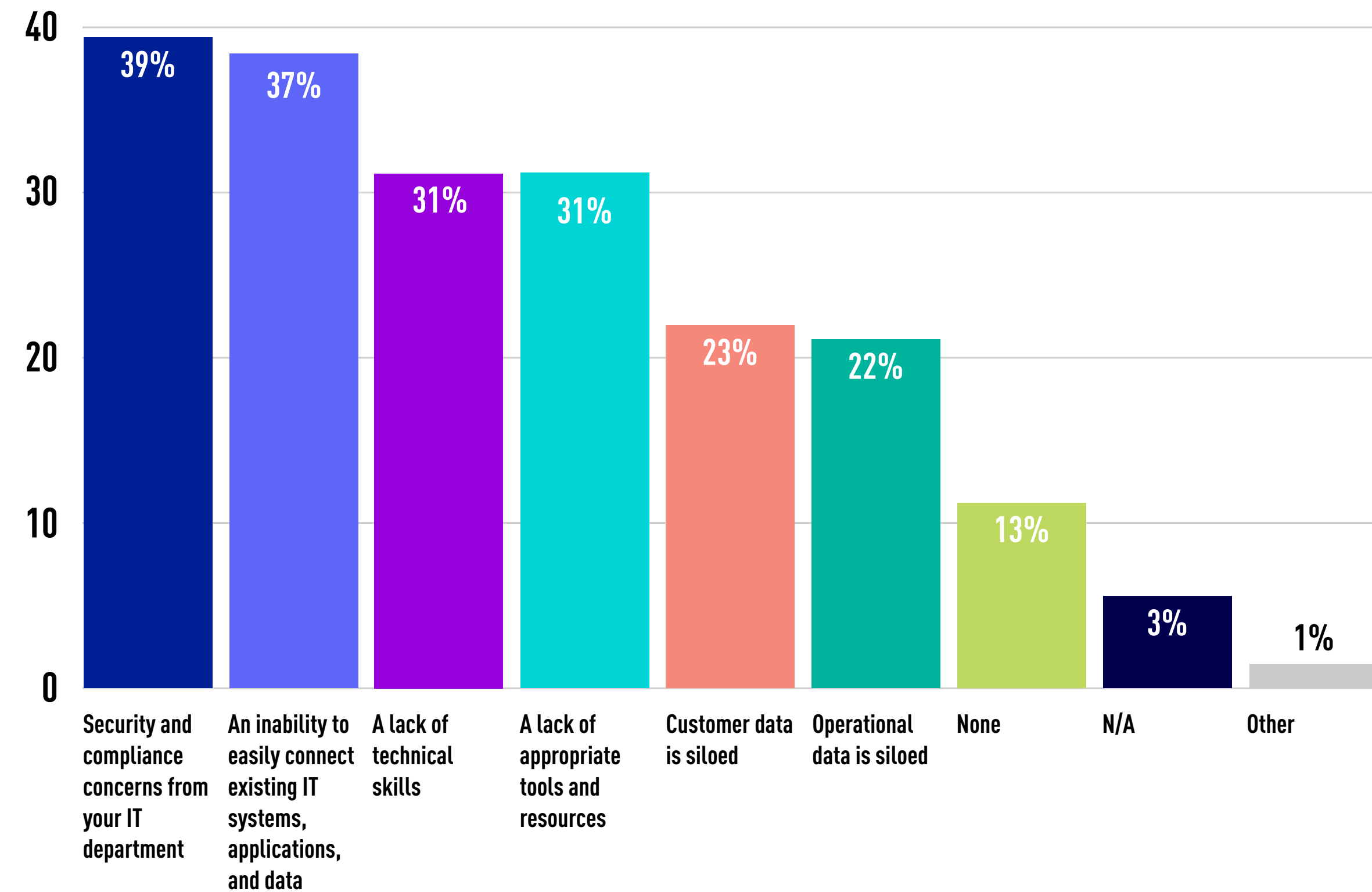
● Very confident ● Somewhat confident ● Not very confident  
● Not confident at all

## Security and integration top digital innovation challenges

Security and compliance concerns loom large for respondents (39%) on the broader challenges of using IT systems, apps, and data to streamline in-house processes and deliver digital services. Integration, that is connecting systems, data, and apps, comes in second with 37% naming this their top challenge.

Underscoring the skills and technology gaps further, the next two challenges cited were technical skills shortage (31%) and lack of tooling and resources (31%).

What challenges does your organization face, if any, when it comes to using IT systems, applications, and data to improve internal processes and/or deliver new digital services?

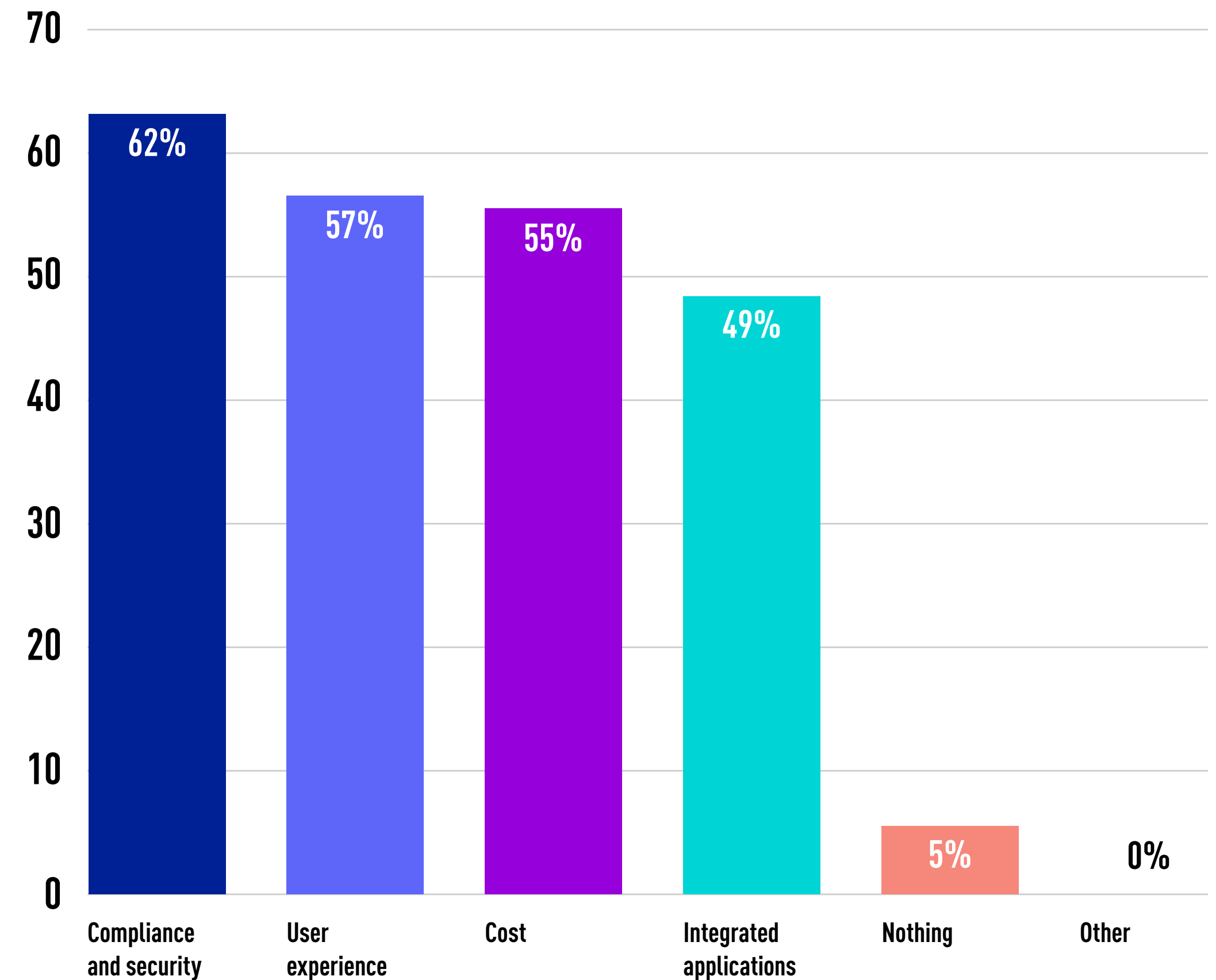


## LoBs aren't actively thinking about integration

LoB users previously admitted that COVID-19 has exposed a lack of connectivity between systems, apps, and data. Yet when ranking the most important considerations for suggesting and building digital services, improved application integration is only fourth on the priority list. Compliance and security is the most popular answer, followed by user experience, and then cost.

Rather than underestimating the importance of integration, this may point to the fact that LoBs aren't actively thinking about it. They simply expect applications to connect.

What do you think is an immediate consideration when it comes to suggesting and building digital services, if anything?





## Key takeaways

Most business users are not completely confident that they have the skills and technology to drive business outcomes and deliver innovative customer experiences. So, how do organizations accommodate for these gaps and adopt tools that more teams can use?

In addition, integration is a perennial challenge, yet it often isn't actively thought about by LoBs, who just expect data and applications to be connected. Data silos can often stall the LoB's ability to create connected experiences.

IT can help realize its organization's full potential and enable innovation from wall to wall by empowering LoBs with self-service, easy-to-use, "clicks, not code" tools – allowing them to focus on creating customer value faster, rather than figuring out how to connect disparate data sources.



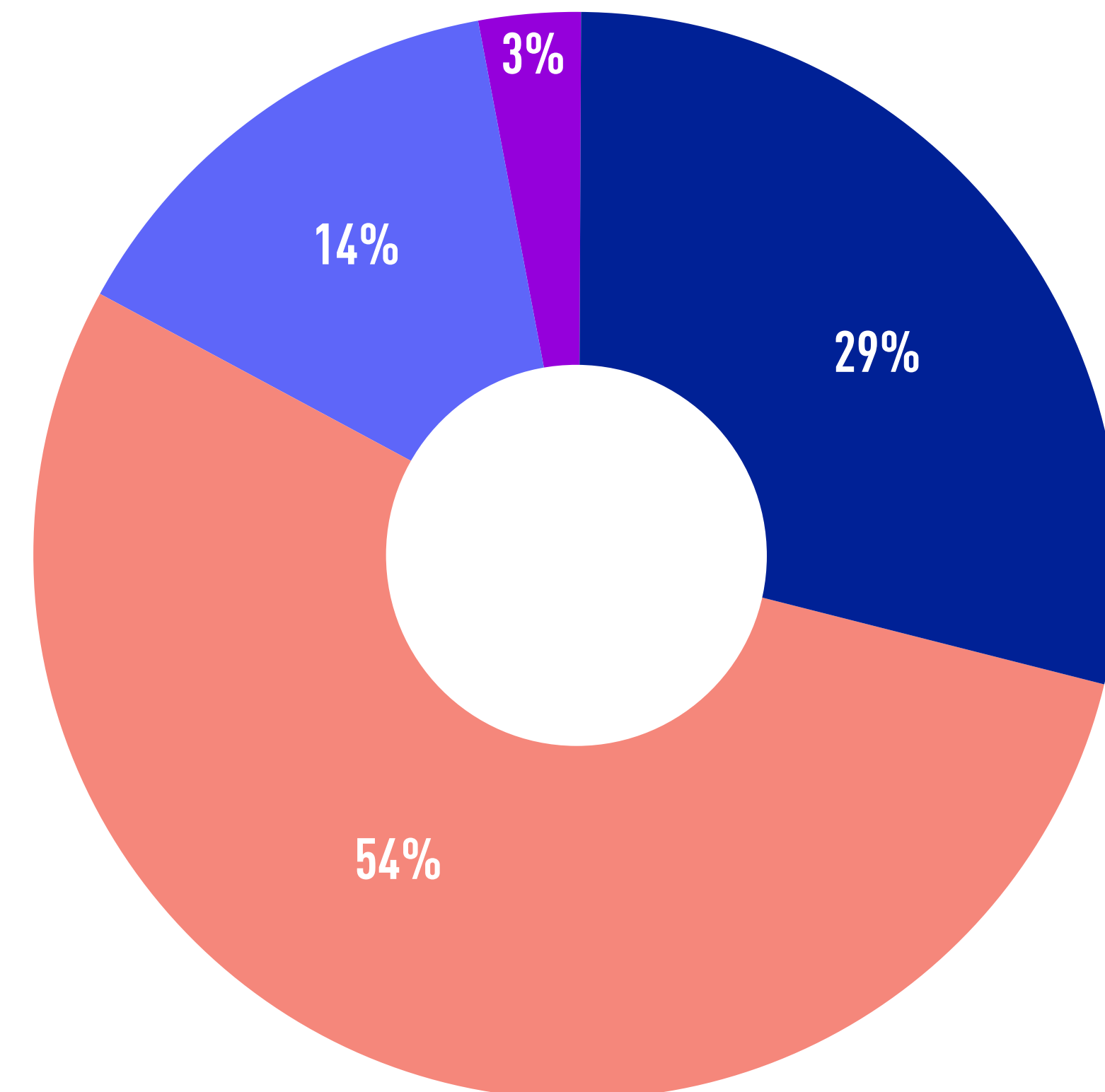
SECTION 04

**Business users need to be  
empowered to unlock data**

## Concerns persist over integration and disparate data

As highlighted previously, LoB users are concerned about poor connectivity between systems, apps, and data. In fact, only 29% admit that their organization is very effective at connecting and using data from multiple sources to drive business value.

How effective do you feel your organization is at connecting and utilizing data from multiple sources to drive business value?



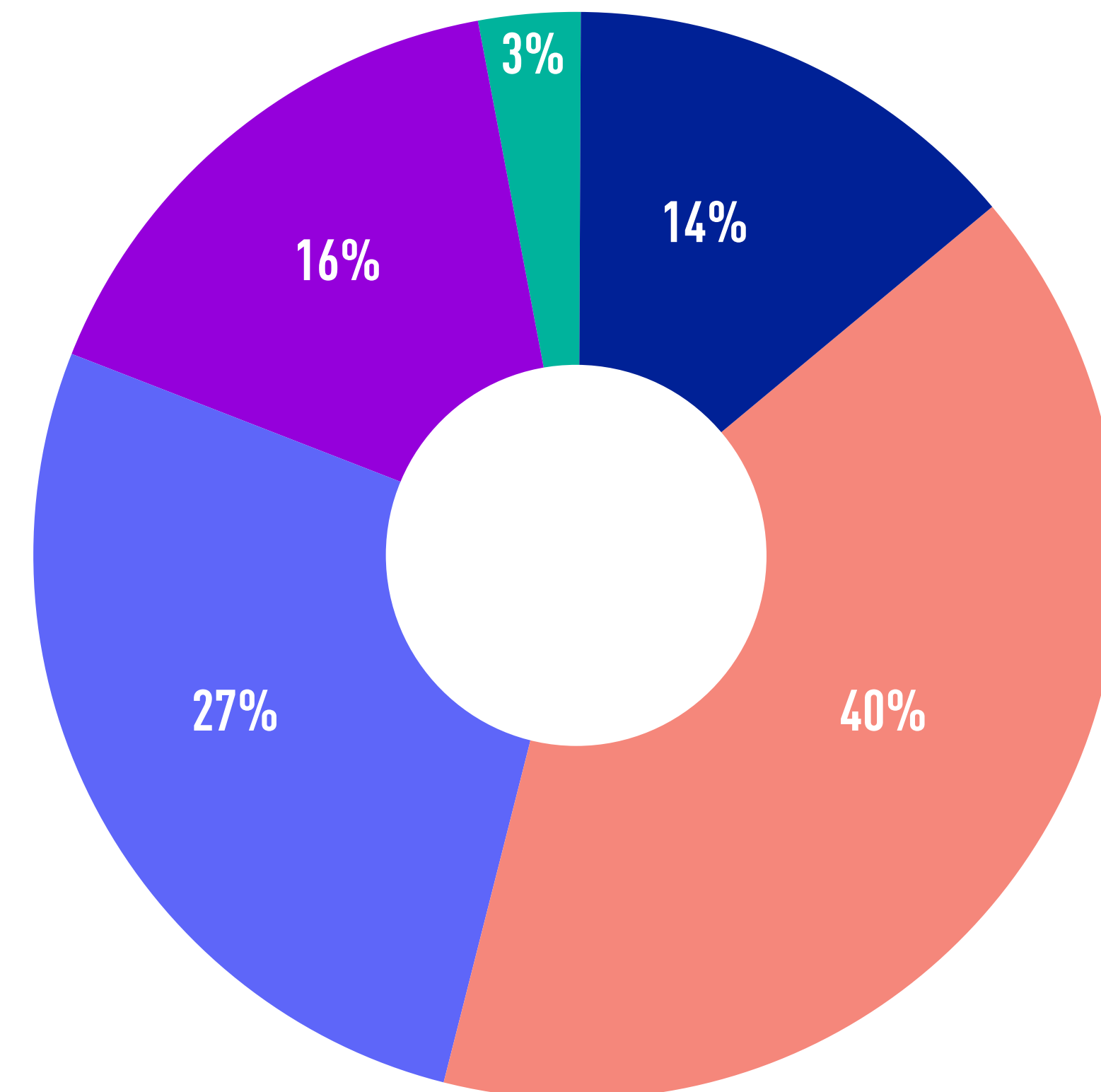
● Very effective ● Somewhat effective ● Not very effective  
● Not effective at all

## LoBs are frustrated by the difficulty of connecting systems, applications, and data

Over half (54%) of LoB users are either “very” or “somewhat” frustrated by how challenging it can be to stitch together disparate IT systems, applications, and data to drive new business value.

By creating reusable integrations, templates, and APIs more widely accessible, IT can enable LoBs to self-serve and seamlessly build customer experiences that deliver competitive differentiation.

How frustrated are you, if at all, by how difficult it can be to connect different IT systems, applications, and data at your organization?

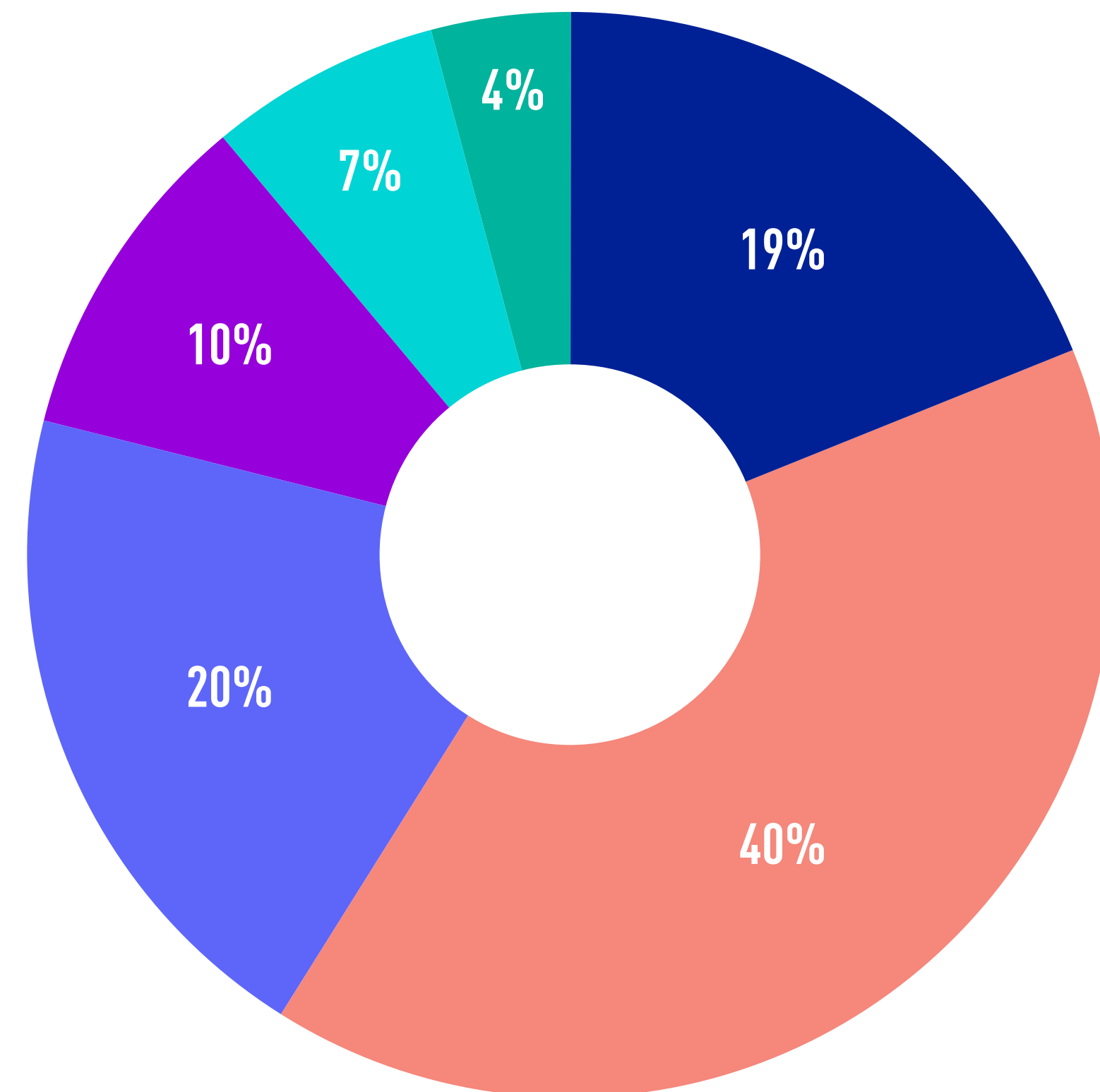


● Very frustrated ● Somewhat frustrated ● Not very frustrated  
● Not frustrated at all ● N/A

## Lack of connectivity can impact business growth

LoB users are well aware of the repercussions of failing to achieve connectivity between enterprise IT systems, applications, and data. Fifty-nine percent “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that failure in this crucial area can hinder business growth in the long-term.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? An inability to connect systems, applications, and data hinders business growth and revenue at my organization.



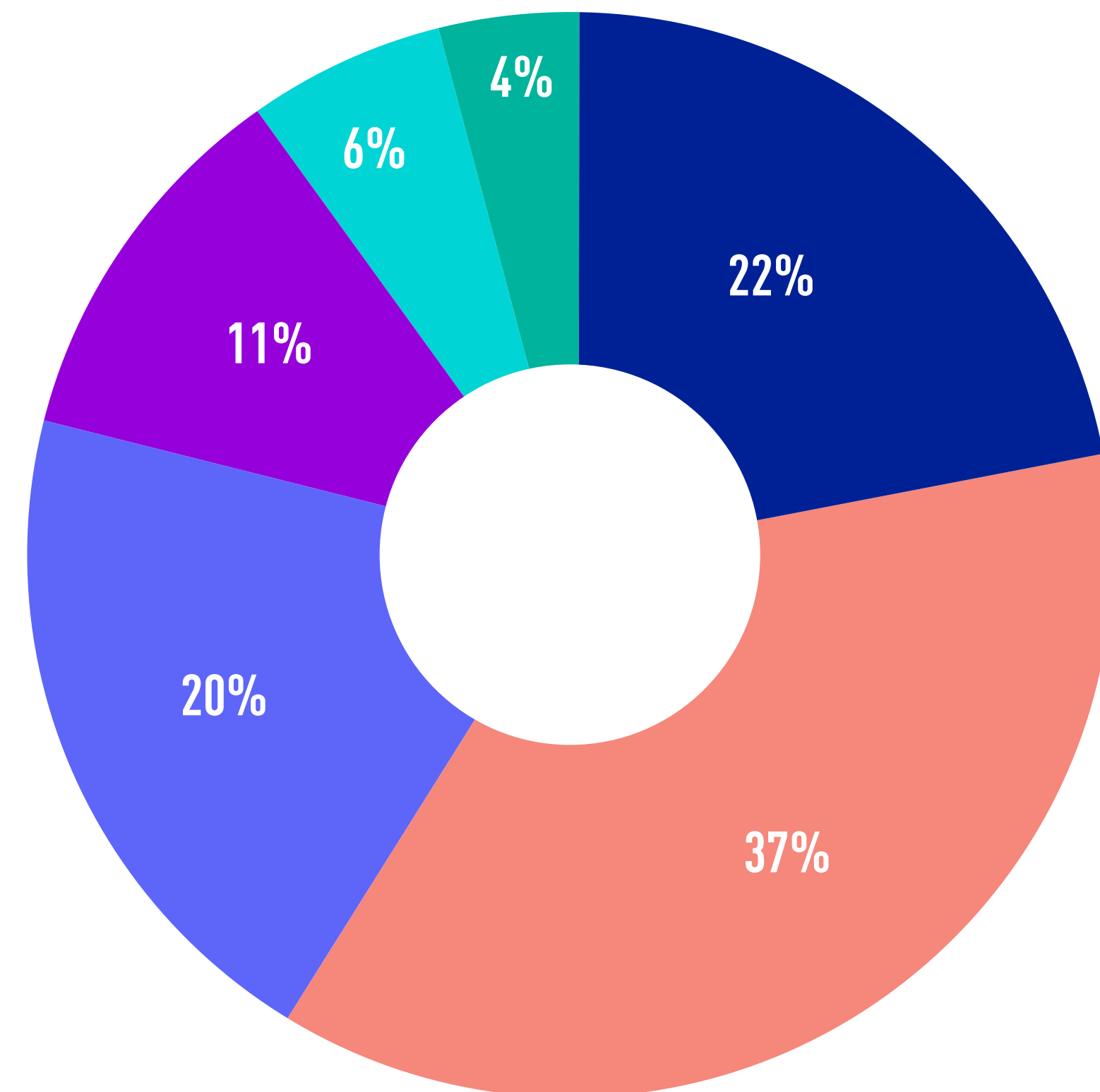
● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A



## Failure to connect hinders the customer experience

A majority (59%) of the same LoB users also agree that an inability to connect systems, applications, and data will negatively impact the customer experience – a fundamental prerequisite for business success.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? An inability to connect systems, applications, and data hinders my organization's customer experience.

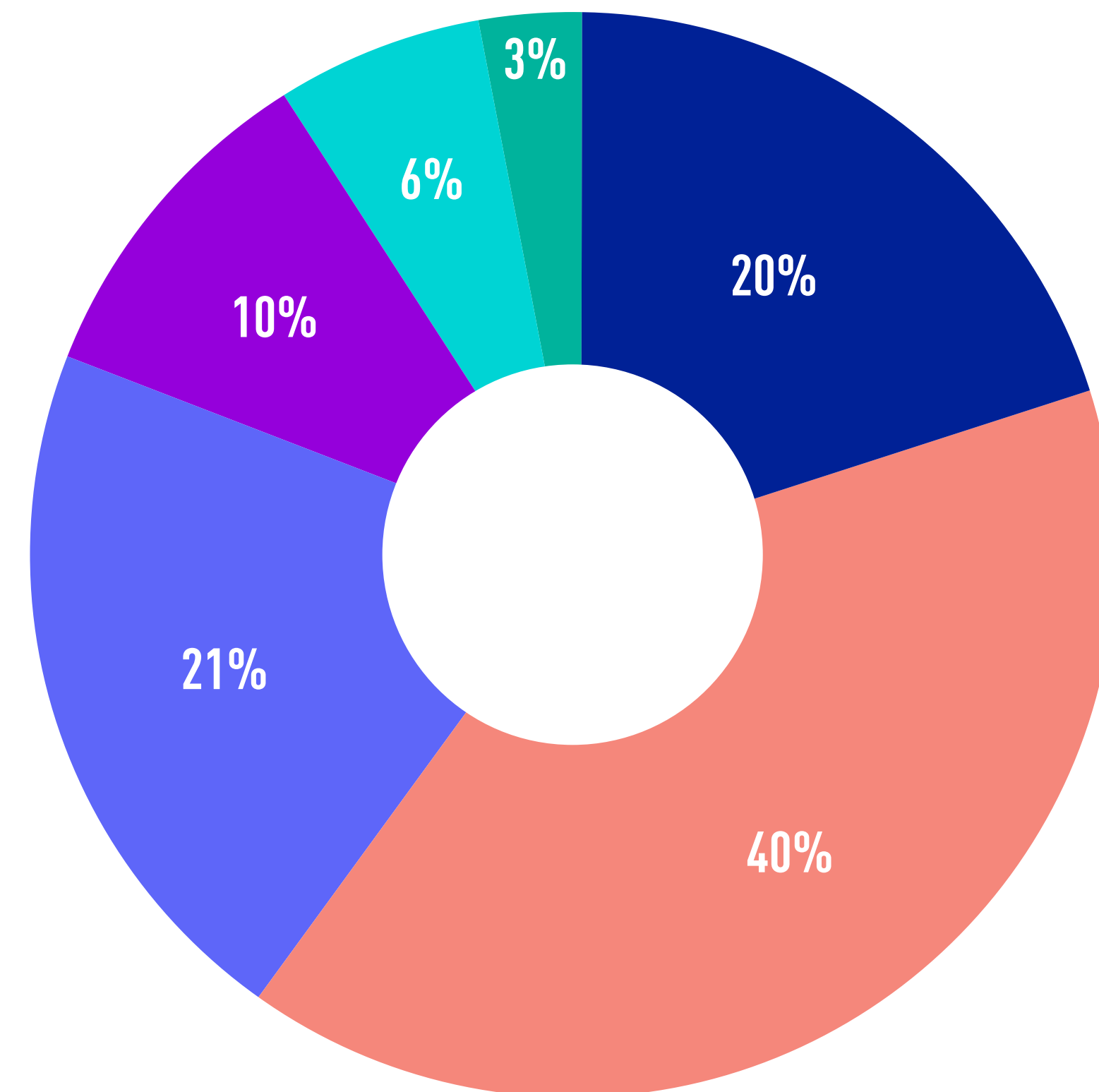


● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

## Connectivity problems can impede automation initiatives

Most (60%) respondents admit that failure to overcome challenges associated with connecting IT systems, apps, and data will also hinder automation initiatives. The automation of business tasks via technologies like RPA is high on the priority list for citizen integrators – helping to drive convenience, speed, and cost reductions, and support the decentralization of innovation and automation.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? An inability to connect systems, applications, and data hinders automation initiatives at my organization.



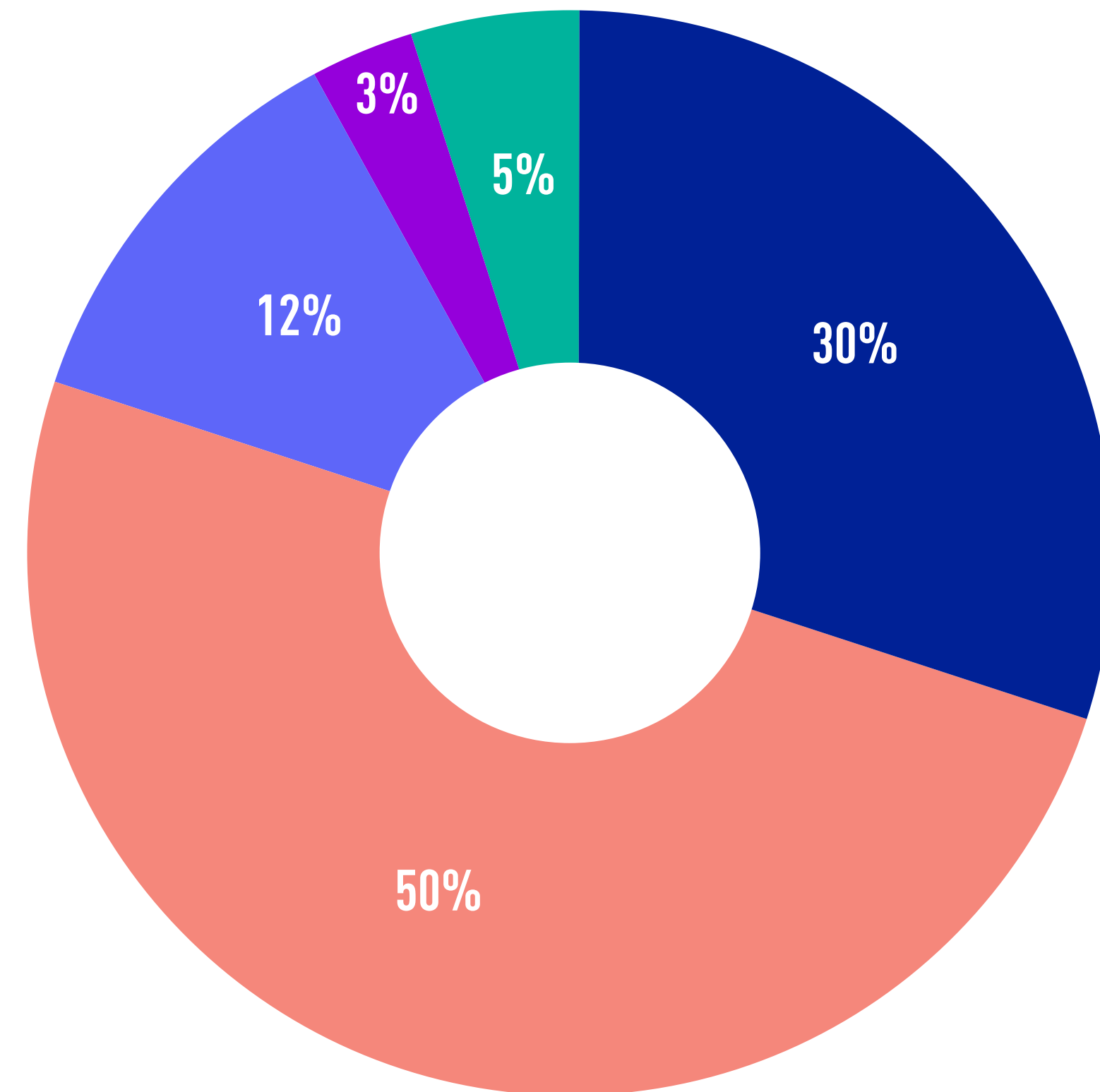
● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree  
● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● N/A

## LoB users want data in discoverable, pre-packaged building blocks

How can business users overcome these frustrations and enhance connectivity? An overwhelming majority (80%) agree that if data and IT capabilities were discoverable and available in pre-packaged building blocks, LoB employees could create solutions and deliver digital projects more quickly.

Here, digital capabilities can be turned into APIs that are available via “clicks, not code” tooling for the entire organization to use and build new customer experiences.

To what extent would it be beneficial to your digital initiatives if data and IT capabilities were discoverable as pre-packaged building blocks — allowing LoB users to create and/or deliver digital projects themselves?



● Very beneficial ● Somewhat beneficial ● Not very beneficial  
● Not beneficial at all ● N/A

## Key takeaways

Connectivity between IT systems, applications, and data lies at the heart of the innovation challenge for organizations and LoB users. Most (54%) are frustrated by the difficulty of achieving seamless connectivity with current approaches and acknowledge that this will crucially impact business growth, customer experience, and automation initiatives.

Most agree that part of the answer lies in an approach that makes data and IT capabilities discoverable in pre-packaged building blocks that are much easier to find, stitch together, and drive business value from.

Organizations need to empower every employee to unlock and integrate data – no matter where it resides – to deliver critical time-sensitive project and innovation at scale; to automate manual work while making products and services more connected than ever.



SECTION 05

# Conclusion and recommendations



## Conclusion and recommendations

LoBs are already innovating for their organizations, but many are frustrated by IT roadblocks, especially as COVID-19 increases demand for digital services. Organizations need to shift to a new operating model – where IT becomes an enabler of innovation with easy-to-use, self-service tools for LoBs to deliver business outcomes faster and more efficiently. Here are our four key recommendations:

### A C4E can help to democratize innovation

[Build a Center for Enablement \(C4E\)](#) to bring together IT and business divisions to productize, publish, and harvest reusable assets and best practices. By promoting consumption and collaboration and driving self-service, organizations can speed up time-to-market and increase productivity.

### Compose your operating model around reusable APIs

At the heart of the C4E's evangelizing efforts should be a focus on [API-led connectivity](#). With this approach, APIs can be used to unlock data from systems and compose data and capabilities into processes to deliver customer experiences. Discoverable, self-serve, and reusable APIs help democratize integration and innovation to LoB teams.

### Build in compliance and security

Compliance, governance, and security have emerged as key concerns of LoB users when supporting digital initiatives. By leveraging the right technology partners and operating model – one that promotes reuse and API development best practices standards – you can innovate faster and create new products and services more efficiently while enabling [security by design](#).

### Focus on business outcomes

While shifting to a new operating model, it's important not to get too preoccupied with the tools you use. While important, they are ultimately just a means to an end. Building and enabling a culture of innovation should focus on the [business outcome](#) and how you can get there quickly and easily.

# MuleSoft Composer for Salesforce

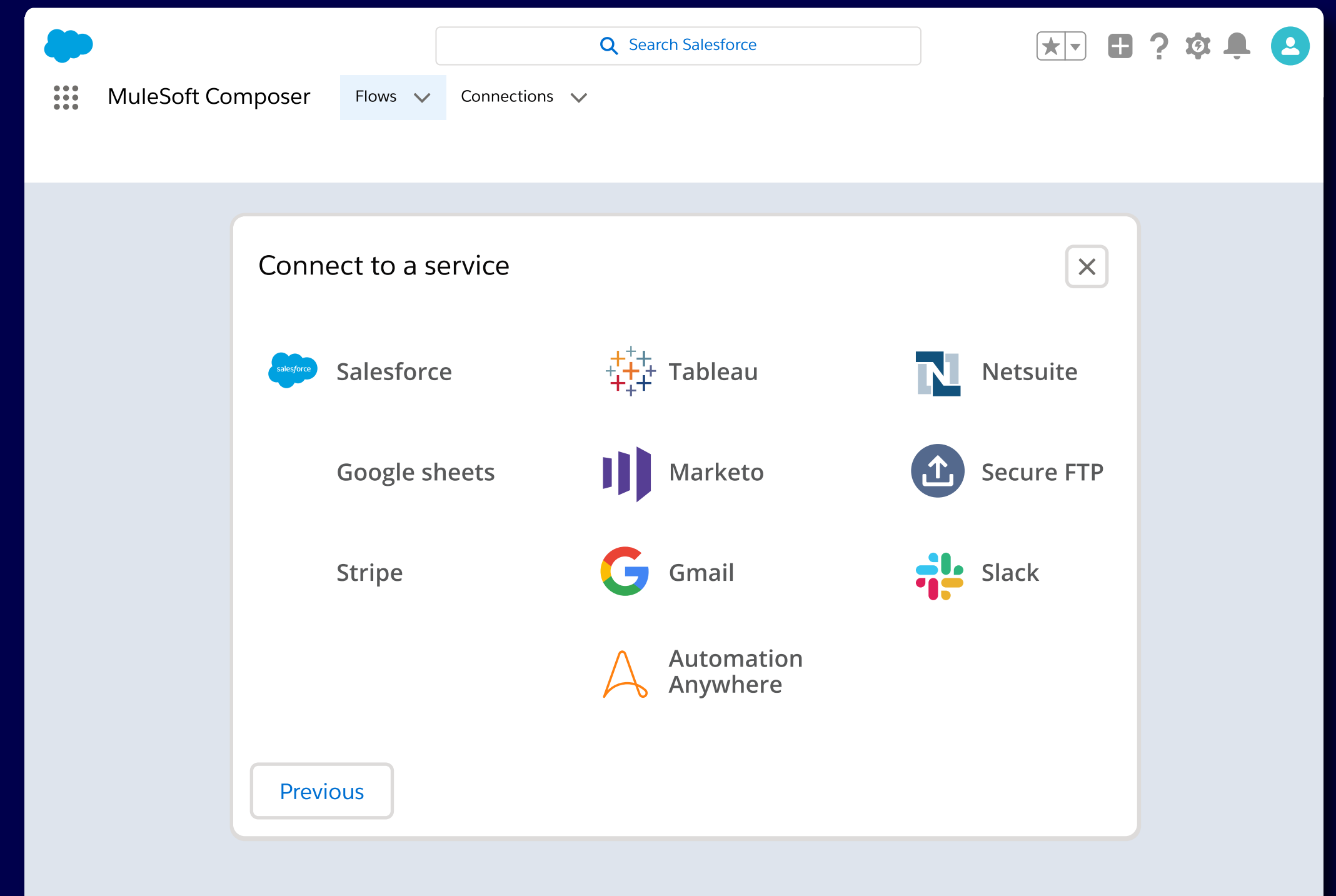
Connect apps and data to Salesforce quickly and easily with clicks, not code – all inside of the Salesforce UI.

## What you can do with MuleSoft Composer for Salesforce

Compose a 360 customer view faster by empowering Salesforce admins with a no-code solution for unlocking data, connecting apps, and automating integrations to boost productivity.

- Get the only no-code integration solution built inside of Salesforce.
- Build lightweight integrations easily using a no-code solution.
- Hit the ground running with a library of connectors and templates.
- Preview as you build connections and design with real data.
- Monitor any errors with automatic alerts.

[Learn more](#)





## MULESOFT, A SALESFORCE COMPANY

MuleSoft, the world's #1 integration and API platform, makes it easy to connect data from any system – no matter where it resides – to create connected experiences, faster. Thousands of organizations across industries rely on MuleSoft to realize speed, agility, and innovation at scale. For more information, visit [mulesoft.com](https://mulesoft.com)

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