SEQUENCING TRANSFORMATION

CY 2026 Outlook: Infrastructure, Modernization, and Cloud Adoption Trends Among India's CXOs

StrategINK Insights, March 2026
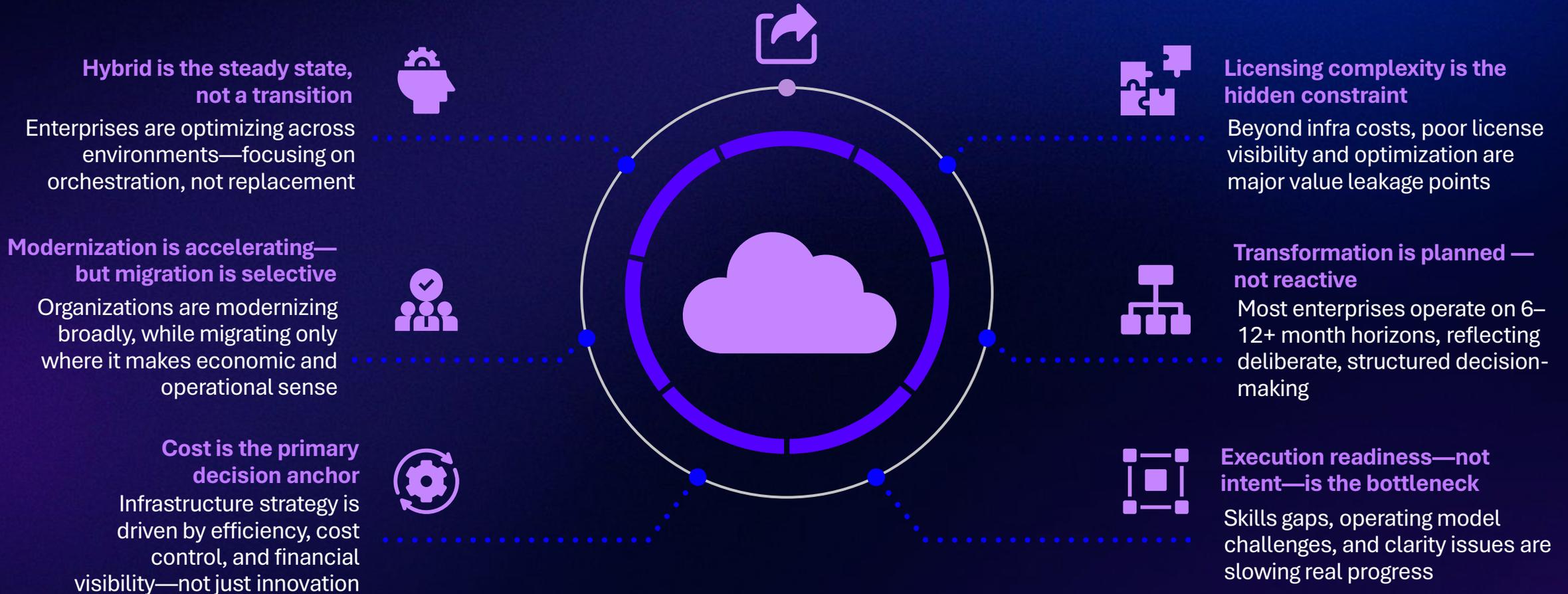
Executive Summary

From an analyst perspective, the StrategINK survey of 128 CXOs and IT leaders over the past two months points to a clear structural shift in enterprise infrastructure strategy. Hybrid is no longer a transitional state—it has become the operating baseline. Organizations are now managing inherently complex, multi-environment estates, and the strategic priority has moved from cloud adoption to optimization, governance, and control across this distributed landscape.

→ **Modernization is prioritized, while migration is selective [67% Vs. 52%]**
Enterprises are decoupling the two—modernizing broadly but moving to cloud only where it makes sense

→ **Decision-making is now value-led, not technology-led [57%]**
Focus is on cost efficiency, licensing optimization, and risk management

→ **Cost, security, and skills are the key constraints [57%, 38% and 32%]**
These factors are shaping both the pace and direction of transformation

→ **Transformation is sequenced over time, not rushed [60%+ on 6–12+ month horizons]**
Organizations are operating on 6–12+ month horizons with structured planning cycles

→ **Scale and data-driven engagement define execution success [41% large estates]**
Large estates amplify opportunity, and decisions are driven by visibility, context, and trusted advisory

Key Insights

Enterprises are sequencing transformation—not delaying it

The journey is moving from visibility → optimization → modernization → selective migration."

Hybrid is the steady state, not a transition

Enterprises are optimizing across environments—focusing on orchestration, not replacement

Modernization is accelerating— but migration is selective

Organizations are modernizing broadly, while migrating only where it makes economic and operational sense

Cost is the primary decision anchor

Infrastructure strategy is driven by efficiency, cost control, and financial visibility—not just innovation

Licensing complexity is the hidden constraint

Beyond infra costs, poor license visibility and optimization are major value leakage points

Transformation is planned — not reactive

Most enterprises operate on 6–12+ month horizons, reflecting deliberate, structured decision-making

Execution readiness—not intent—is the bottleneck

Skills gaps, operating model challenges, and clarity issues are slowing real progress

Survey Details

BFSI @ **38%**

Manufacturing @ **30%**

IT/ITeS @ **21%**

Pharma @ **11%**
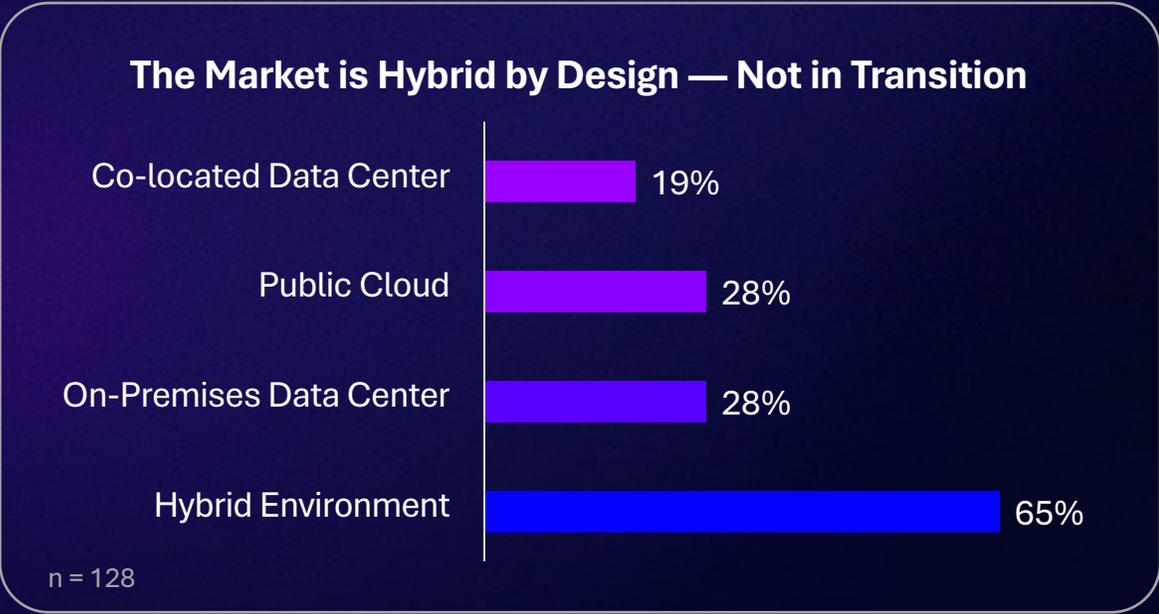
128 CXOs
Surveyed over Jan – Feb 2026

CIO @ 54%

CTO @ 46%
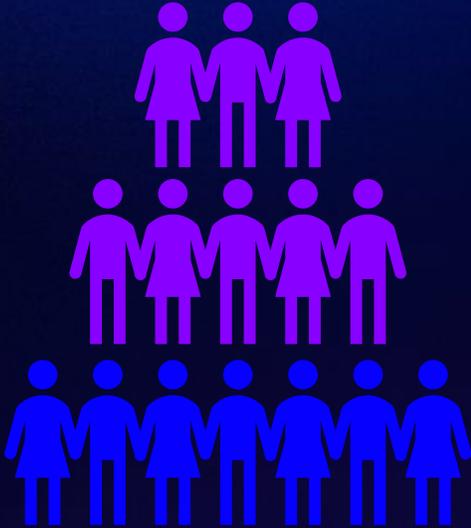
Source: StrategINK Cloud Survey, March 2026

This is a high-value enterprise market with strong modernization intent, but execution will depend on how effectively complexity is translated into clear, actionable pathways

Enterprises are operating in a stable hybrid state, with transformation decisions being deliberate, cost-conscious, and medium-term rather than urgent
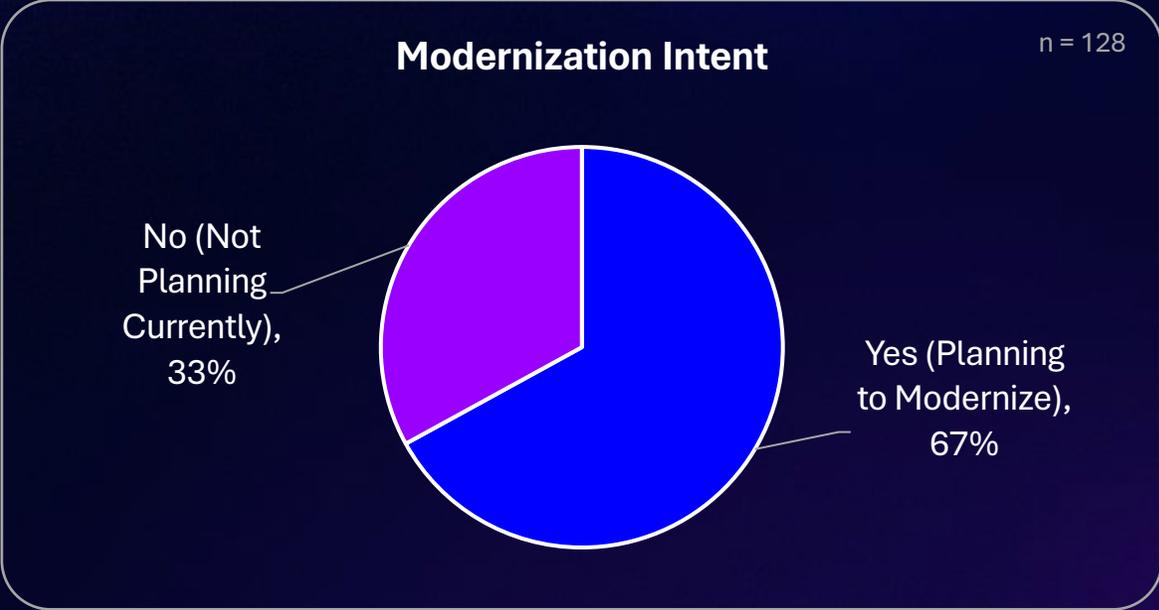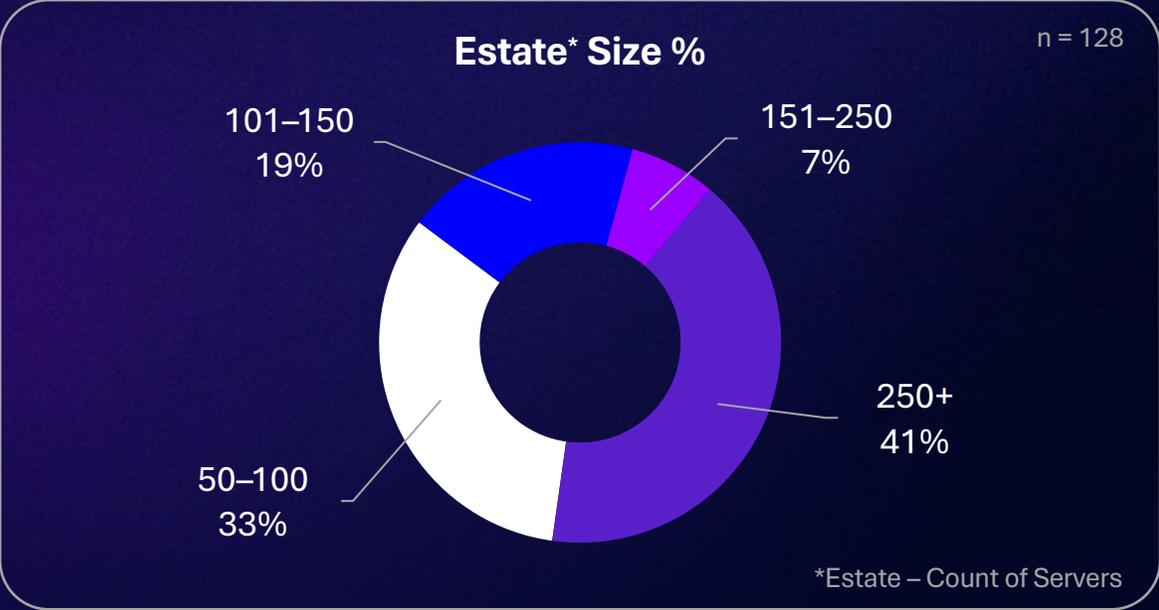
- Hybrid is the Operating Baseline
- On-Prem and Cloud Coexist as Strategic Assets
- Refresh Cycles Are Planned, Not Reactive

The Market is Hybrid by Design — Not in Transition

Co-located Data Center	19%
Public Cloud	28%
On-Premises Data Center	28%
Hybrid Environment	65%

n = 128

Refresh Timelines

n = 128

12+ Months	9–12 Months	6–9 Months	< 6 Months
55%	17%	19%	10%

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A Decade of Excellence
StrategINK
EXPLORE ENGAGE EXPAND

Enterprises are committed to modernization, but are pacing execution around cost, complexity, and capability constraints

This is a high-value enterprise market with strong modernization intent—but execution will depend on how effectively complexity is translated into clear, actionable pathways
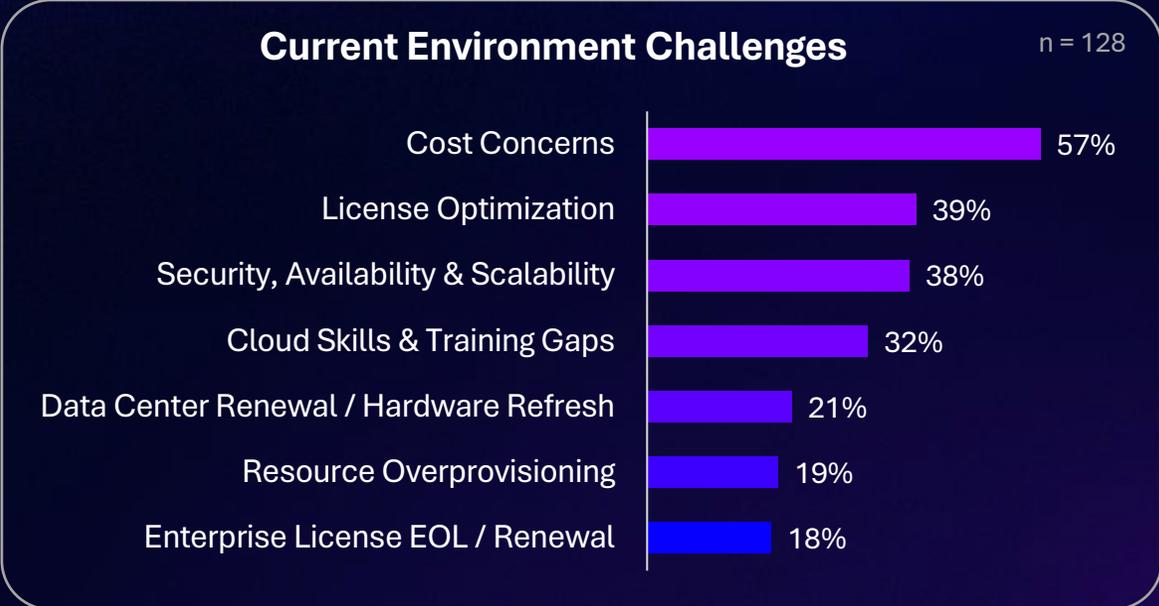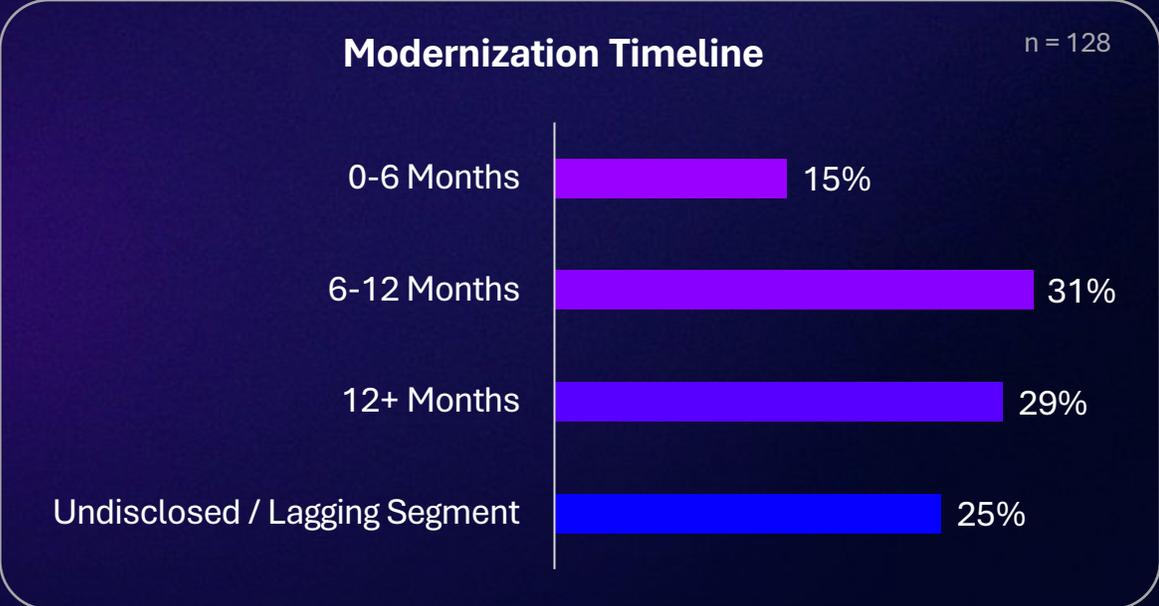
- **The Market is Commercially Significant, Not Exploratory**: large-scale, operational market where decisions drive material financial and performance impact

- **Estate Scale Amplifies Both Risk and Opportunity**: Higher cost exposure, Greater licensing complexity, Increased operational fragmentation

- **Intent is Not the Constraint, Execution is:** Clarity, Skills, Roadmap definition

Estate* Size %

n = 128

101–150 19%

151–250 7%

250+ 41%

50–100 33%

*Estate – Count of Servers

Modernization Intent

n = 128

No (Not Planning Currently), 33%

Yes (Planning to Modernize), 67%

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The intent to modernize is clear, the pace will be determined by who solves COST, CLARITY, and CAPABILITY FIRST!

Enterprises are committed to modernization—but are pacing execution around cost, complexity, and capability constraints!

- **Modernization is a Medium-Term Priority, Not an Immediate Action:** i.e. Structured planning cycles and budget and architecture alignment in progress

- **Cost is the Overwhelming Primary Constraint:** Conversations must anchor in financial outcomes & clear RoI

- **Licensing is the Second-Largest Commercial Lever:** Significant hidden inefficiencies and strong opportunity for data-driven visibility and savings

- **Refresh Pressure Exists—but Is Not the Primary Trigger:** Transformation driven by optimization needs, not just lifecycle deadlines
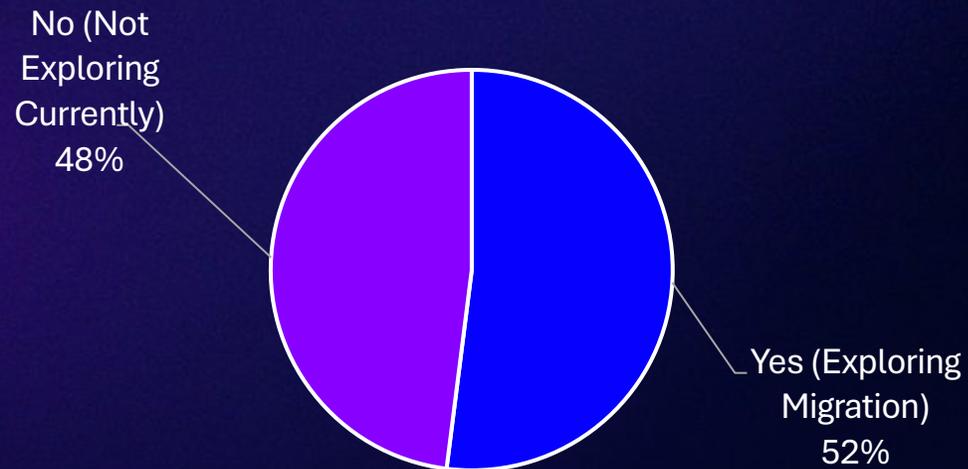
Modernization Timeline
n = 128

Category	Percentage
0-6 Months	15%
6-12 Months	31%
12+ Months	29%
Undisclosed / Lagging Segment	25%

Current Environment Challenges
n = 128

Category	Percentage
Cost Concerns	57%
License Optimization	39%
Security, Availability & Scalability	38%
Cloud Skills & Training Gaps	32%
Data Center Renewal / Hardware Refresh	21%
Resource Overprovisioning	19%
Enterprise License EOL / Renewal	18%

The path to cloud is not direct, it is DESIGNED!

Cloud migration remains exploratory and selectively paced—enterprises are evaluating, not committing at scale

- **Migration Intent is Split, not a Market Consensus**: It reflects cautious, case-by-case consideration
- **Migration is Subordinate to Modernization: "***What should we modernize?***"** Before: "***What should we migrate?***
- **Immediate Migration Windows Are Minimal:** No urgency! No large-scale migration wave underway
- **Majority Are in Evaluation & Planning Phases**: Business case development, Cost-benefit analysis, Risk assessment cycles
- **Migration Requires Justification—Not Assumption**: Outcome-driven (cost, performance, agility) and not 'Default strategic direction'
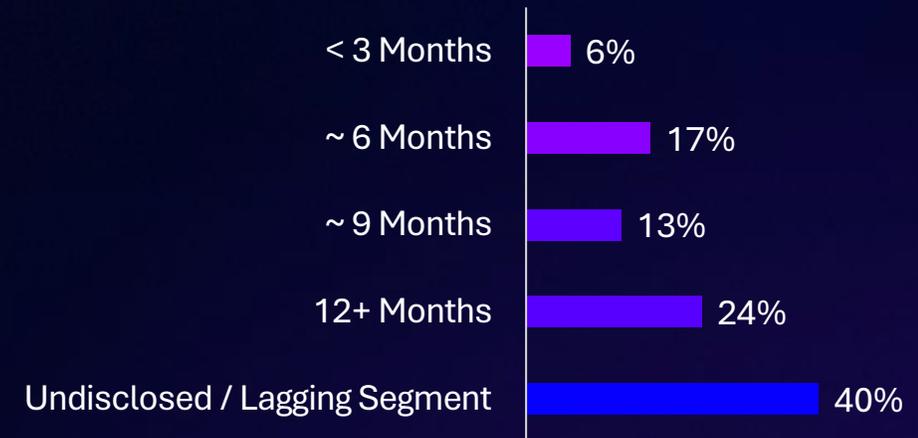
Cloud Migration Intent
n = 128

No (Not Exploring Currently) 48%

Yes (Exploring Migration) 52%

Migration Timeline
n = 128

< 3 Months	6%
~ 6 Months	17%
~ 9 Months	13%
12+ Months	24%
Undisclosed / Lagging Segment	40%

Essential guidance for Solutions Providers
The market will not respond to a cloud-first message—it will respond to a value-first, hybrid-aware, and economically grounded transformation pathway

**1.** **Lead with Cost & Licensing Optimization — Not Migration**

Anchor every engagement in TCO reduction, license efficiency, and financial visibility and use data-driven assessments as the first hook

2. **Sell Modernization Pathways, Not Migration Mandates**

Position cloud as an enabler, not the destination and focus on Workload rationalization, Application modernization, Hybrid optimization

3. **Build a Hybrid-Centric Operating Model Offering**

Provide unified visibility across environments, cross-platform governance & workload placement intelligence
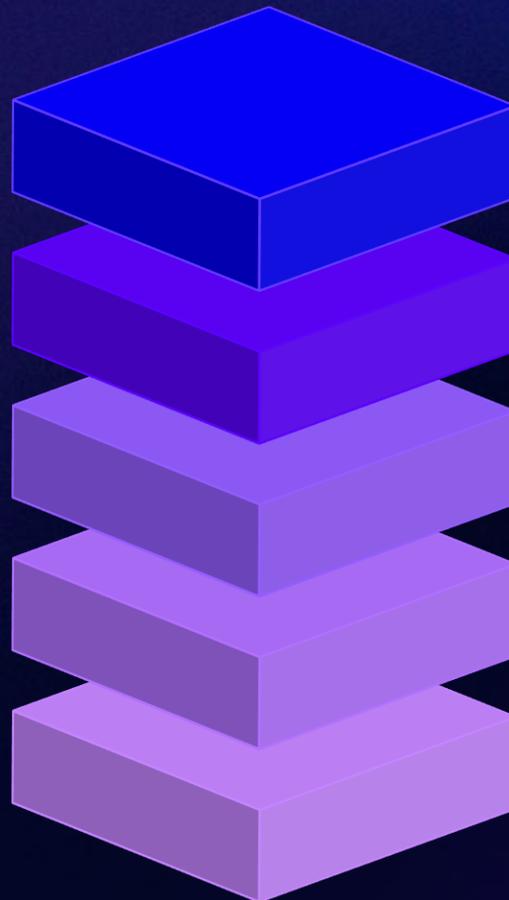
4. **Invest in Early-Stage Discovery & Advisory Motions**
Prioritize inventory discovery, dependency mapping, cost & architecture benchmarking

5. **Redesign GTM Around Engagement Depth, Not Scale**

Use Roundtables → Awareness & pipeline creation and 1:1 engagements → Conversion & deal acceleration

Source: StrategINK Cloud Survey, March 2026

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