



The future of IT in Healthcare



IT workers in the field are likely to enjoy their jobs more as a result of digital transformation, but difficulties retaining talent mean effective hiring and retention will be vital to success.

Workloads and expectations are increasing

Our Future of IT survey found that IT professionals in Healthcare are expecting some of the biggest increases in workloads. Approximately 70% of the IT workers we surveyed in the sector said that their workloads had increased over the past two years.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic saw Healthcare providers quickly adopt digital patient care and remote workforce support. This shift increased the appetite of patients and providers for more personalization, better digital engagement, improved data security, and tech that helps improve experiences and care access – all while streamlining operational and customer service challenges.

Ultimately, the Healthcare IT workers we surveyed said digital transformation had improved communication with internal and external stakeholders, as well as the pace of product innovation within their teams. But the sheer speed of technical change in this sector could result in higher levels of IT worker burnout or turnover in the future – with retention and hiring new talent identified as a key challenge for the sector.



Impact of COVID-19

While many sectors quickly pivoted to digital at the start of the pandemic, Healthcare providers deployed years of planned technology upgrades over the last two years – just to ensure that patients could continue to safely access care during lockdowns and stay-at-home orders.

For 46% of IT workers in this sector, keeping up to date with the latest technologies has had the most transformational impact – a trend that is continuing. One Healthcare CIO we interviewed said that with COVID-19 still impacting health systems, the increased work to improve digital patient offerings will continue indefinitely, despite the fact that many workers are already exhausted by these changes.

Healthcare IT teams may be struggling with the pace of digital transformation, but there's good news. The fast tracking of digital solutions during the pandemic, such as virtual patient care, has made [Healthcare consumers happier](#).

The shift to digital has also increased consumer expectations. Patients now want more consistent information, more personalized digital experiences, more help navigating the health system, and more communication from their providers and Healthcare organizations.



What are the biggest challenges for your IT function?

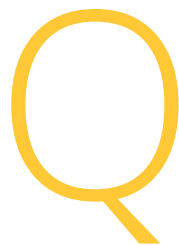


Winning the competition for talent

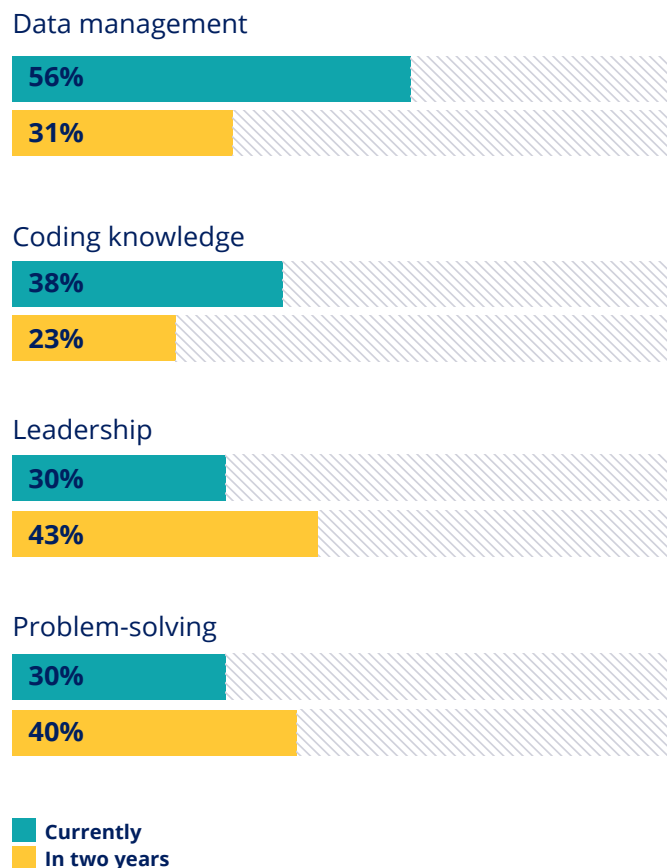
Delivering on these patient expectations could prove tricky. With IT teams already pushed to their limits, many prospective or current employees could get hired by digital health start-ups looking to capitalize on Healthcare's massive current and future tech investments.

Digital health companies raised a record-breaking \$6.7 billion in the first quarter of 2021, which is on track to exceed the more than \$14 billion raised in 2020. That's a clear sign it will become increasingly hard for many legacy Healthcare providers to compete for IT talent in the future – just based on compensation alone. Their best strategy for beating the competition for talent in Healthcare is to prioritize the implementation of tech that reduces current IT workloads.





Which competencies are important to you now, and which will be most important to you in two years' time?



The need for new skills

Between the push to quickly upgrade tech to meet customer expectations and the pressures on workload and talent retention, it will be critical for IT professionals in Healthcare to develop new skills. Technical skills that are currently seen as critical, such as data management, will decrease in importance as AI and data analytics automate much of that work. In their place, the need for leadership and problem-solving abilities will increase significantly.

Healthcare leaders will require those competencies to navigate consulting with internal and external stakeholders in an effort to foster proactive transformation. This will entail, among other things, working across functions to speed up digital transformation's impact on Healthcare operations, managing complex data privacy and security regulations, and advocating for their team.

The right tech

IT leaders who help their companies and departments thrive will be those who prioritize the right tech to strategically reduce existing IT workloads. This will boost the capacity to ramp up when needed – without added risk of burnout and turnover.

Hard IT skills, such as coding and data management, will be less relevant in the future – as low-code platforms, process automation, AI, AI-enabled analytics, and DevOps become prioritized to help IT teams simplify development, streamline processes, and automate manual tasks. IT will be freed from mundane admin tasks and able to focus more on creating strategic business value by delivering digital solutions for personalized patient care. Operational efficiencies will be created through things like telehealth, remote patient monitoring, intelligent automation-enabled customer engagement, and digital therapeutics – all while working toward compliance around emerging data privacy and data-sharing regulations.

The bottom line

To succeed, IT leaders in Healthcare will have to develop the skills to navigate significant complexity and make strategic decisions about what tech to prioritize. The choices they make will be critical to ensuring IT staff don't burn out or get hired by the competition – and can thus continue to drive the transformational change needed by their organizations.

Survey scope and methodology

To understand how IT managers and leaders' roles are being shaped in response to digital transformation, we surveyed IT senior vice presidents, vice presidents, senior directors, directors, senior managers, and managers across key sectors.

For more on The Future of IT and our research methodology, go to pega.com/futureofit



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