



# TOP PRIORITIES FOR CIOS AND CEOS IN 2023



The highest business priorities for CIOs and CEOs in 2023 cover a wide range of issues, but technology is playing a significant role in the trends that are predicted to affect the business world. For example:

- **Investment in digital transformation will increase.** Market intelligence firms predict that direct investments in digital transformation technology will increase at a 16.5% CAGR between 2022 and 2024.<sup>1</sup>
- **Cloud-native development will increase.** Recent surveys confirmed that 72% of respondents say most of their apps will be developed using cloud-native approaches in 2023.<sup>2</sup>
- **Addressing remote and hybrid workforces will be critical.** Gartner lists addressing the future of work as a top-five priority for HR leaders.<sup>3</sup> Gartner also notes that the future of work in today's business environment means supporting remote and hybrid workforces, and technology is critical to achieving that goal.
- **Cyber security threats will continue in 2023.** Cyber threat reports list four serious cyber threats including ransomware, increasing strikes on the U.S. and other countries, cyber criminals providing specialized services to other threat actors to increase attack effectiveness, and increased use of information-stealers.<sup>4</sup>

These trends aren't the only things that will translate into top priorities for CIOs and CEOs in 2023, but technology will play a big role in helping businesses address a wide variety of issues.

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### WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CONCERNS FOR CIOs AND CEOs IN 2023?

The last two years have presented highs and lows for business leaders everywhere. They've been faced with sending their employees to work from home due to the pandemic, quickly providing the technology needed to support remote work,

increasing needs for digital transformation, the crisis in Europe that impacts global supply chains, and more.

The challenges CIOs and CEOs face in 2023 revolve around ranking the priorities that are demanding attention. Two issues are heading to the top of the list for many.

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## THE THREAT OF RECESSION

Recent surveys<sup>5</sup> reveal that over 60% of CEOs around the world say they believe there will be a recession before the end of 2023. In addition, 15% say their region is already experiencing a recession.

The survey respondents point to the war in Ukraine as a factor fueling inflation. Top CEOs like Elon Musk are giving speeches advising companies to prepare, and industry giants like Microsoft are announcing layoff plans.

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## STRUCTURING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

The pandemic forced major changes in the workplace, and many of those changes look like they'll be permanent. The hybrid workforce is emerging as the future of work. Employees found that working from home had many advantages, including reducing commuting costs and helping them achieve a better work/life balance. The Great Resignation saw 47.8 million workers quitting their jobs in 2021, making it the highest average on record.<sup>6</sup> That activity also brought a significant shakeup in many companies.

In a recent survey, the majority of respondents revealed that a hybrid workforce that spends three days a week in the office helps to maintain a cohesive environment. Other companies such as Google are working toward even more flexibility in where their employees live and work.<sup>7</sup>

Based on those two trends, CIOs and CEOs will need the right technology to help them tackle these issues head on.

## TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES FOR CIOs AND CEOs IN 2023

### Cloud Computing

You'll need technology to create cost savings, increase productivity, protect your systems and employees, and gain flexibility and agility in a changing environment. Here are three technologies that can help you achieve those results.

Cloud computing can provide lower costs and productivity increases that will improve your competitive edge and help you weather a potential recession. In addition, cloud technologies and communication solutions are a necessity to support the hybrid future of work. These technologies should be high on your list.

**Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS).** UCaaS capabilities allow you to move your telephone system to the cloud, providing easy scalability and flexibility. You can also use UCaaS to align your business communications with your overall strategic plan – an important capability when inflation and recessions loom.

Eliminating ongoing maintenance and tech support requirements will also help you reduce overall costs. Since your employees can access your systems anytime, anywhere, and using any device, supporting a hybrid workforce is easy. It's also possible to take advantage of the latest technology advancements since your UCaaS provider will want to continually supply state of the art technology.

**Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS).** If a contact center is a critical part of your operation, CCaaS can help you improve your customers' experience. You'll be able to implement new features and functionality quickly when you work with a CCaaS provider. This will help you stay ahead of your competition and create loyal customers who will be more likely to stay with you through a recession.

CCaaS also easily supports a remote or hybrid workforce. Very often, it makes sense to have contact center employees working remotely. Supporting them with a cloud-based CCaaS

solution will eliminate many of the headaches involved in managing agents who are working from home.

### Other Cloud Technologies to Support Hybrid Workforces.<sup>8</sup>

- **Digital employee experience (DEX)** tools will help you manage your remote workforce. DEX tools let you collect feedback from your employees and gain an understanding of how employees are using technology. Using that information, you'll be able to refine a digital employee experience strategy that will help you attract and retain employees and increase their productivity.
- **Unified endpoint management (UEM)** is critical for managing the variety of devices you'll allow to access your systems. You'll be able to streamline processes across operating systems and devices. You'll also have the tools you need to establish a zero-trust security model that will help you avoid cyber attacks in a distributed working environment.
- **Desktop as a Service (DaaS)** is another way to focus on security and flexibility. When you provide a virtual desktop in the cloud, you can avoid having applications or data stored at your endpoints. This can be especially helpful if you'd like to avoid having company data stored on whatever devices your employees are using to work remotely.

### Digital Transformation

Companies had to increase the velocity of their digital transformation when the pandemic struck, and it's still a priority today – but it's time to reevaluate the solutions you implemented almost overnight to respond to the need to support remote workers. You'll need to review your existing solutions to make sure that they are flexible and scalable enough to handle any other unexpected shifts in the future.

Some trends that will continue into 2023 include innovating

with artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), and virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR). Think about how these technologies can affect your business and industry. Then, take care to integrate them in your applications and processes.

That type of transformation can lead you to more robust sales and marketing, improved customer service, products and services that are more attractive to your customers, and even more efficient manufacturing processes. When you accomplish these types of transformations, your competitive edge will increase.

### Cyber Security

Cyber security has never been more important. Serious cyber threats such as ransomware attacks have been running rampant in 2022, and the outlook is no better for 2023. Cyber attacks can be devastating to your organization, often causing work stoppages and loss of sensitive data. The threat landscape has worsened due to the added risks associated with remote and hybrid workforces.

**ZTNA, or zero trust network access**, is a means to protect your network using identity-based authentication to allow access. ZTNA is implemented in different ways, but they all begin with the assumption that no device, user, or application can be trusted. It separates access to resources and the network and requires that any access is approved by predefined access control policies.

As a result, you can protect containers and cloud environments and reduce the risk of a data breach. This is especially critical when you're supporting remote workers who are using a variety of devices in a geographically dispersed environment.

**RBI, or remote browser isolation**, is another cyber security tool that can help you protect your remote workers. It prevents the delivery of malware from infected or malicious websites.



In normal operation, if an employee accesses a website, their browser runs the code from the site. If there is malware infecting the site, it is uploaded to your network.

With RBI, the website is processed in a browser hosted in the cloud. That browser runs in a sandbox environment and eliminates the environment when the user moves to another website. As a result, the user can access the website as if it were a locally hosted webpage, significantly reducing the risk of letting in malware while using the internet.

**SASE, or secure access service edge**, is a combination of software-defined wide area networking and network security services such as ZTNA into a central, cloud-based service. It allows for secure, seamless user access from anywhere, and improves security by applying consistent access policies.

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### HOW WILL YOU SET YOUR PRIORITIES?

While you may have identified your priorities based on your company's specific situation, you'll still need to identify the solutions that will help you meet your goals. And, that can be a challenge in itself.

Contact us for guidance on the technologies that will help your business meet the challenges of 2023 – and grow.

## SOURCES

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