

THE TECH HORIZON:

DFW Executive Priorities Shaping 2025 & Beyond

JULY 2025

*How North Texas leaders are
aligning technology, talent, and
strategy to build for the future.*

two|roads

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Discover real-world perspectives on what it takes to deliver value through modernization, AI, and cross-functional alignment.

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CxOs at a Crossroads

In 2025, executive leaders are staring down a paradox: the appetite for innovation is greater than ever, yet the pressure for discipline and impact has never been higher. They face a growing list of priorities, all demanding measurable outcomes and alignment with strategic goals. How can today's leaders tackle AI, automation, technology modernization, security, and infrastructure reliability in ways that deliver real business value?

This white paper, *The Tech Horizon: Executive Priorities Shaping 2025 & Beyond*, draws from three expert sources—the 2025 Two Roads CxO Outlook Survey, Gartner's Top Strategic Technology Trends report, and an executive roundtable hosted by Two Roads in partnership with Gartner—to provide a grounded, multi-dimensional view of how business leaders are assessing, tackling, and overcoming ever-growing challenges.


Together, these insights offer more than just a snapshot: they provide a framework for understanding where some organizations are placing bets, what pressure points persist, and how organizations are evolving to drive impact. For executive leaders navigating complex choices in the next 18 months, this perspective helps clarify not only what's happening but also what to do next.

Areas of Optimism

From Uncertainty to Unlocking Value

Despite the complexity of today's business environment, executive leaders are approaching 2025 with a sense of grounded optimism. Much of this confidence stems from the clarity around recent investments that are beginning to unlock real value and where the greatest technology opportunities lie.

Over the past year, the discussion surrounding AI has swiftly shifted from theory to application.



Viewed as both a top priority and a pressure point, nearly **two-thirds** of leaders surveyed identified AI adoption as a primary organizational focus, and **over a third** ranked it among their most critical technology investments.

AI in Action

Leaders across multiple industries view AI as not only a catalyst for operational efficiency but also as a driver of customer experience, advanced reporting and analytics, and long-term strategic differentiation. High levels of buy-in reinforce this momentum: over half of survey respondents reported confidence in their readiness for AI and emerging technologies, signaling strong internal alignment and enthusiasm.

However, AI isn't something you can turn on overnight. CxOs are actively grappling with how to deploy AI responsibly, balancing speed with structure, innovation with integrity. Security has risen to the top of the agenda, with leaders calling for more robust safeguards, heightened awareness of AI-related threats, and increased investment in cyber-readiness. Review Two Roads' white paper, [Unlock the Transformative Power of AI](#), for our proven framework for developing enterprise AI capabilities.

For the first time post-COVID, market expansion and M&A are also being discussed as major themes. Several executives noted plans to enter new geographies or reach adjacent customer segments, often through targeted acquisitions. For some, M&A is a path to scaling capabilities and building competitive advantage, particularly as consolidation continues to reshape industry landscapes. Operational efficiency, especially through digital transformation, remains a top catalyst for acquisition. Many leaders are focused on system upgrades, workflow automation, and cloud infrastructure to improve execution, standardization, scalability, and security. These efforts aren't just about cutting costs; they're about building a stronger operational backbone for growth.

Optimism amongst leaders is further reinforced by the results of long-term strategic work. Foundational investments in systems, people, and processes are beginning to yield measurable improvements.

Leaders reported stronger cross-functional collaboration, increased trust between business and IT, and rising confidence in their teams' adaptability. The narrative is shifting from **firefighting to future-shaping.**

Underpinning all of this is a belief in the people behind the strategy. From the roundtable and survey alike, a recurring theme emerged: leaders are proud of their teams. They see their employees not only as capable and motivated, but also as aligned with the mission. This human factor—talent, trust, and teamwork—is one of the most consistent sources of optimism across the board.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Refine Your AI Vision

Treat AI not just as a tool, but as a strategic lever. Leaders should take time to clarify how AI will support their unique goals—whether that’s efficiency, customer experience, or competitive differentiation—and ensure teams are aligned on that vision.

Balance Expansion with Operational Readiness

Growth opportunities, like M&A or market entry, are compelling, but must be supported by strong operational foundations. Before scaling, evaluate whether systems, talent, and governance models can sustain expansion without sacrificing quality or focus.

Double Down on Cross-Functional Alignment

Build on the momentum of recent collaboration gains. Formalize ways of working that encourage shared ownership between business and IT, and recognize the impact of engaged, empowered teams in delivering strategic outcomes



Value-Driven Technology



Across our round table, a consistent theme emerged: technology must serve the business, not vice versa. Executives are increasingly shifting from solution-first thinking to problem-first frameworks, asking not “what can we build?” but “*what should we solve?*” That understanding is now the baseline for modern technology leadership. As one participant noted, “It starts with understanding how the company makes money.”

The takeaway is clear: successful organizations aren’t chasing every opportunity. Having an outcome-driven roadmap that connects investments to objectives provides a clear path to success. This allows any organizational decision maker to make deliberate, disciplined choices while building the trust required to follow through. At Two Roads, we believe this is the work that matters most: helping leaders align strategy with execution and transformation with impact.

Those who prioritize value, not just velocity, will be the ones *who lead with confidence and deliver with purpose.*

Amidst this excitement, significant anxieties also exist around governance, responsible implementation, and ensuring the business case holds up under scrutiny. This theme of balancing ambition with accountability recurs throughout the findings. Many executives express a sense of momentum, pointing to strategic investments in technology, talent, and process improvements made in previous years that are now beginning to bear fruit. There's growing confidence in the alignment between business and IT, as a recognition that digital maturity and operational readiness are yielding tangible benefits.

Importantly, the data and discussion reveal a deeper understanding of what it takes to translate technology into value. Leaders are prioritizing modernization efforts—from ERP upgrades to hybrid cloud strategies—not simply to stay current, but to enable scalability, agility, and efficiency. At the same time, they're applying more rigorous filters to their investments, seeking to avoid distraction from trends that lack business importance or relevance. In roundtable discussions, several executives emphasized the importance of structured governance models and clear business ownership of outcomes, underscoring a broader cultural shift toward accountability and purpose-driven decision-making.

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Taken together, these insights point to a C-suite that is increasingly pragmatic, value-oriented, and focused on building trust across the business. Technology is no longer about speed alone, it's about precision.
It's not just about innovation, it's about impact.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Establish a Business-Aligned Technology Roadmap

Develop a clear, outcome-driven roadmap that connects every major technology investment to specific business objectives.

Strengthen Governance by Embedding Business-Technology Partnership

Build models that bring business and technology leaders together, enabling joint prioritization, shared accountability, and continuous engagement around outcomes that matter.

Invest in Relevant Technology Where It Counts

Build internal capability by identifying and closing critical investment gaps in data, strategy, and digital leadership.



Building Capacity

As organizations push forward with bold strategies and accelerated innovation, a clear message is emerging from leaders: execution capacity, not ambition, is the limiting factor. The challenge isn't a lack of ideas; it's ensuring teams have the right tools, talent, and support to turn those ideas into outcomes.

Talent and capacity are continually the most pressing needs. Survey data shows that **one in five leaders cited people and talent as the most critical factor in achieving their objectives in 2025.**

Another 16% cited funding and additional resources as the top priority, both of which directly impact the ability to attract and retain high-performing talent.

Across industries, organizations are struggling to attract and retain the right skilled professionals, particularly in high-demand areas such as data, cybersecurity, and strategic technology leadership. But it's not just about filling seats, it's about having the right capabilities aligned to the right priorities. These are roles that serve as force multipliers for broader transformation efforts. Now more than ever, executives are seeking talent that helps build business fluency in technology, and vice versa.

Leaders are emphasizing the need for capacity that aligns directly to strategic priorities and that can evolve with the pace of change. Decisions that stretch organizational bandwidth thin have to be avoided in order to maintain focus, move quickly, and scale promising initiatives.

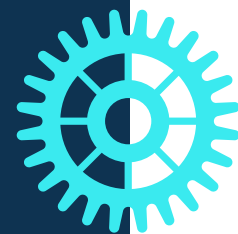
OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Align Talent Strategy with Strategic Capacity Needs

Proactively assess where your organization needs to build and expand employee capabilities, especially in high-leverage areas such as data, cybersecurity, and product leadership. Avoid talent shortages by tying workforce planning directly to strategic priorities, ensuring execution capacity grows in step with ambition.

Disciplined Delivery

20% of respondents reported challenges with acquiring, deploying, or adopting new software and tools



While opportunity abounds, CxOs are approaching the next 18 months with a sharper focus on prioritization and disciplined execution. The days of broad digital ambition have given way to a more precise mandate: invest where it matters, align every initiative to strategic value, and ensure business accountability at every level.

Technology strategy and modernization remain core priorities for business leaders, according to the Two Roads CxO Outlook Survey. Executives emphasized the need to update legacy systems, strengthen cloud and hybrid infrastructure, and re-architect IT environments for greater modularity, resilience, and scalability. The awareness of external threats to organizations and infrastructure has never been higher, and executives have no shortage of technological options to mitigate risk in their businesses. **Yet, 20% of respondents reported challenges with acquiring, deploying, or adopting new software and tools, highlighting that many organizations are still struggling to integrate modern technology effectively in 2025.**

These projects go beyond staying current; they're about creating the technical foundation for flexibility, efficiency, and innovation. ERP upgrades, back-office system overhauls, and

targeted process improvements are being used to unlock better decision-making and streamline operations across the enterprise.

On the flip side of the coin, it's just as important to choose what not to pursue strategically as a business. Leaders are increasingly filtering technology investments through a value lens, pushing back against new "shiny objects" in favor of relevance & rigor. This mindset shift was especially prominent in the roundtable discussion, where executives spoke candidly about developing prioritization frameworks, institutionalizing reduction mindsets, and empowering business partners to take ownership of outcomes, not just requests.

As the business value lens becomes more important in key decision-making, so too has cross-functional collaboration. As one roundtable participant put it, **“Technology doesn’t live in a vacuum—it lives in the business.”**



This ethos is reshaping how organizations define success. CIOs and tech leaders are stepping into more strategic roles, acting as translators and enablers, while business leaders in other parts of organizations are being asked to engage more deeply with the technology driving their strategies. Breaking down silos, building relational equity, and creating shared accountability are seen as essential to unlocking enterprise-wide value.

Taken together, these priorities reflect a fresh maturity in how leaders approach organizational transformation. It's not about chasing trends—it's about building meaningful, measurable momentum.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Integrate Prioritization Frameworks Across Functions

Establish a unified prioritization model that connects technical investments to strategic outcomes and execution capacity and embed it across both business and IT leadership. Keep your teams focused on managing risk and overcoming challenges.

Equip Business Leaders to Co-Own Technology Decisions

Invest time in enabling non-technical leaders to participate in shaping tech strategy. Offer opportunities for cross-functional planning, define common success metrics, and create forums where business partners can raise, refine, and prioritize technology needs collaboratively.



The *Path* to Business-Driven IT

In a business environment defined by complexity, the most effective leaders are trading noise for focus and speed for purpose. The insights captured in The Tech Horizon reflect more than a moment in time. They illustrate a shift in mindset: away from tech for tech's sake, and toward transformation rooted in business value, strategic discipline, and human capability.

The next 18 months won't be without challenge. However, for organizations that double down on cross-functional alignment, invest in the right capabilities, and prioritize with intention, the opportunity to lead and deliver is real.

At Two Roads, we believe the future belongs to those who can balance bold vision with disciplined execution. The leaders who act with clarity, build with trust, and stay anchored in value will shape what comes next, not just for their organizations, but for the markets and communities they serve.



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Two Roads is an experienced management consulting firm based in North Texas focused on helping our clients tackle today’s most complex business and technology challenges. Our local, lean, experienced, and award-winning teams integrate seamlessly with our clients to help drive business value and deliver successful outcomes. With expertise in strategy, planning, organization, process, and technology, we empower our clients to navigate their transformation journeys effectively.



Local

Based in North Texas and invested in our community.



Committed

Invested in our clients’ long-term success.



Problem Solvers

We love a good challenge.

Future-proof your digital strategy with confidence. Two Roads empowers organizations with tailored, proactive IT solutions that drive smarter decisions and lasting business success. Let’s navigate the future together—contact us today.

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