

01

AI and advanced technologies



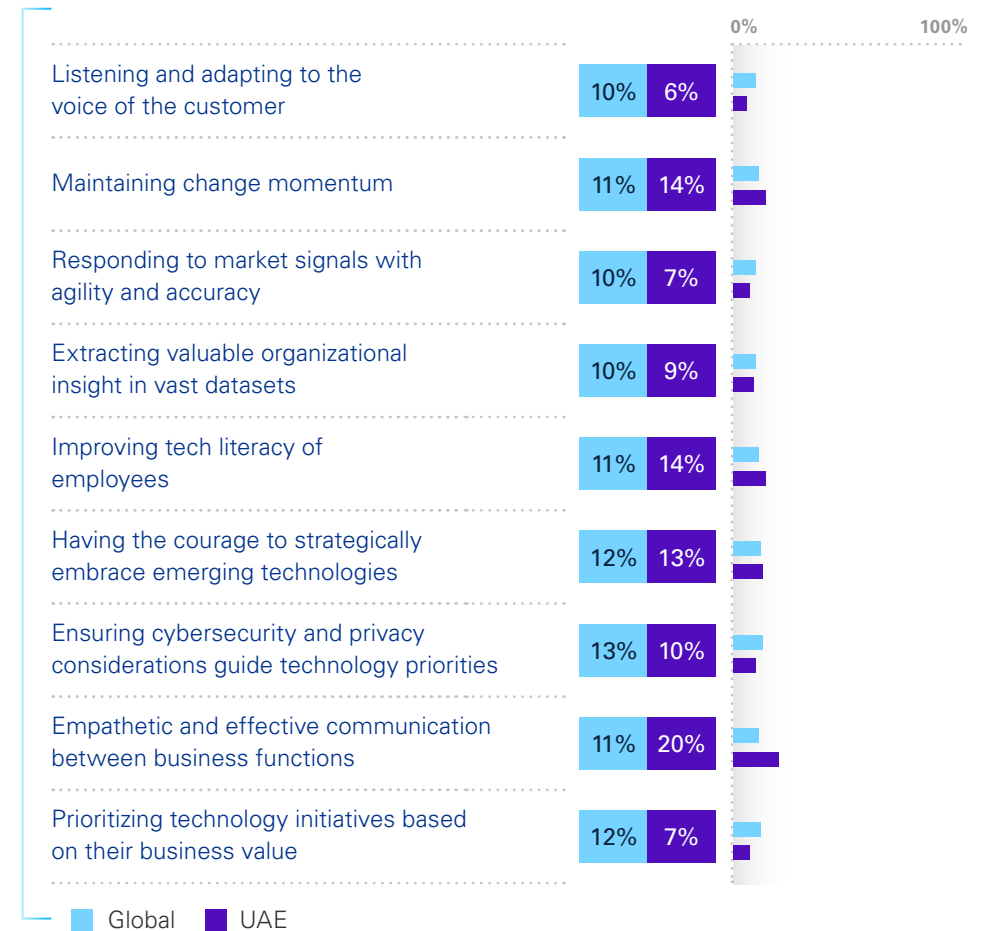
In the context of digital transformation priorities, UAE tech leaders place a higher emphasis on fostering empathetic communication between business functions (20% versus 11% globally), improving the tech literacy of employees (14% versus 11% globally), and maintaining change momentum (14% versus 11% globally). This strategic focus indicates that UAE organizations are positioning themselves to leverage internal strengths and human capital as foundational pillars for their digital initiatives. Notably, the prioritization of communication and change momentum reflects an understanding of the region's rapid economic growth and the need for continuous adaptation. Furthermore, enhancing tech literacy and embracing emerging technologies align with global best practices in digital maturity frameworks.

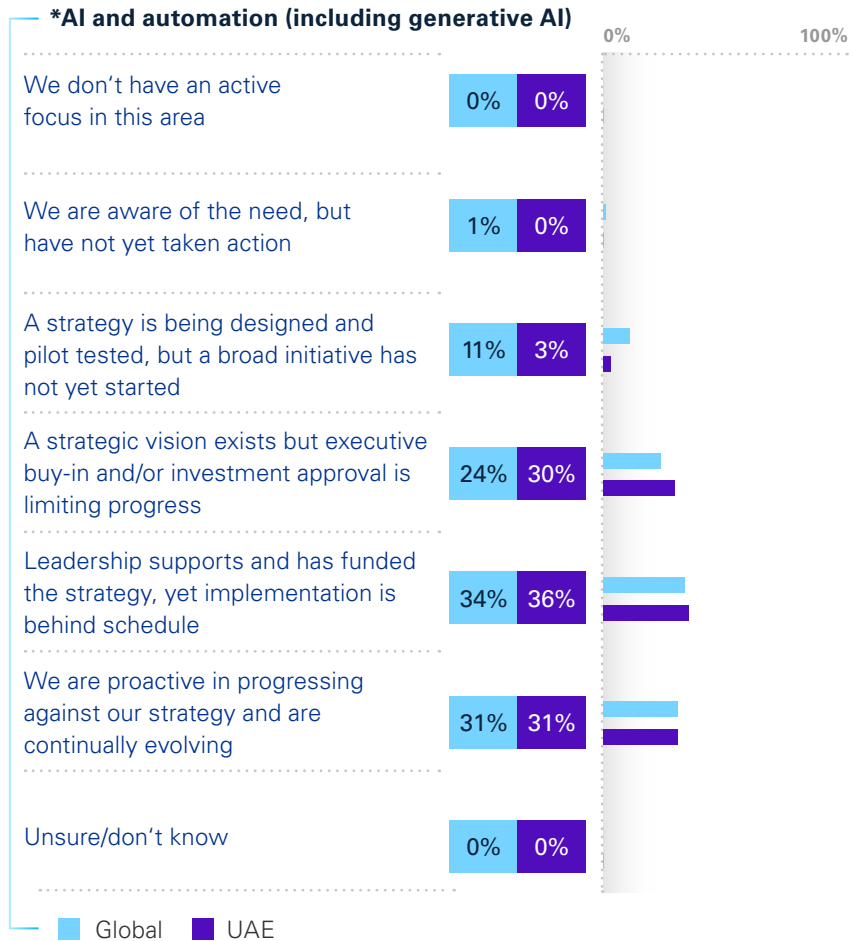
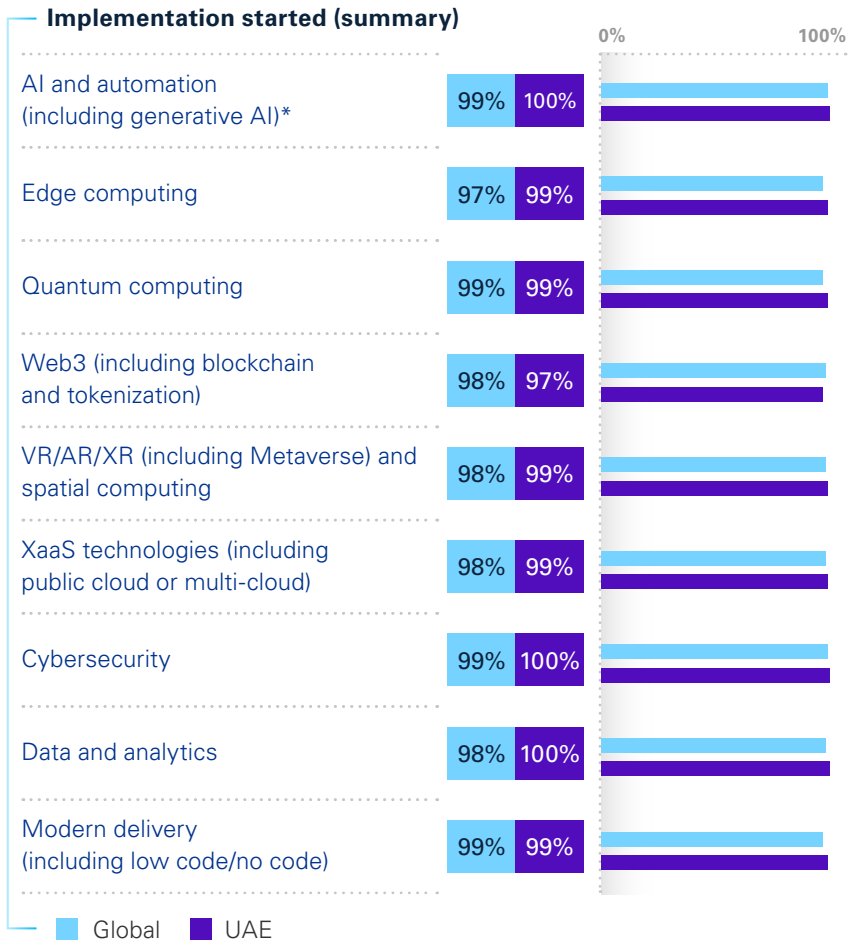
Globally, there is a stronger focus on listening and adapting to the voice of the customer (10% UAE versus 10% globally), responding to market signals with agility and accuracy (7% UAE versus 10% globally), extracting valuable organizational insight from vast datasets (9% UAE versus 10% globally), and ensuring cybersecurity and privacy considerations guide technology priorities (10% UAE versus 13% globally).

Overall, while the UAE prioritizes internal capabilities and communication, global tech leaders emphasize responsiveness to external market dynamics and data-driven insight. UAE tech leaders are distinctly prioritizing empathetic and effective communication between business functions (20% versus 11% globally), maintaining change momentum (14% versus 11% globally), improving the tech literacy of employees (14% versus 11% globally), and having the courage to strategically embrace emerging technologies (13% versus 12% globally).

Consequently, as global counterparts may lean towards external market dynamics and data-driven insight, UAE tech leaders are fostering robust internal ecosystems that can adapt and thrive in the face of continuous technological advancements and disruptions.

Which of the following attributes is the most essential for organizations to thrive in a digital economy?



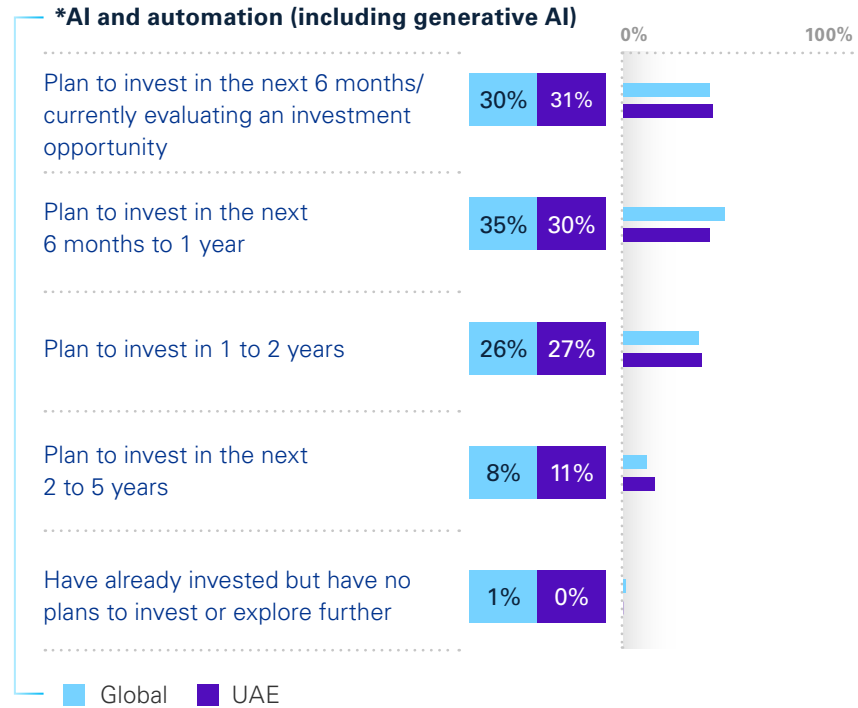
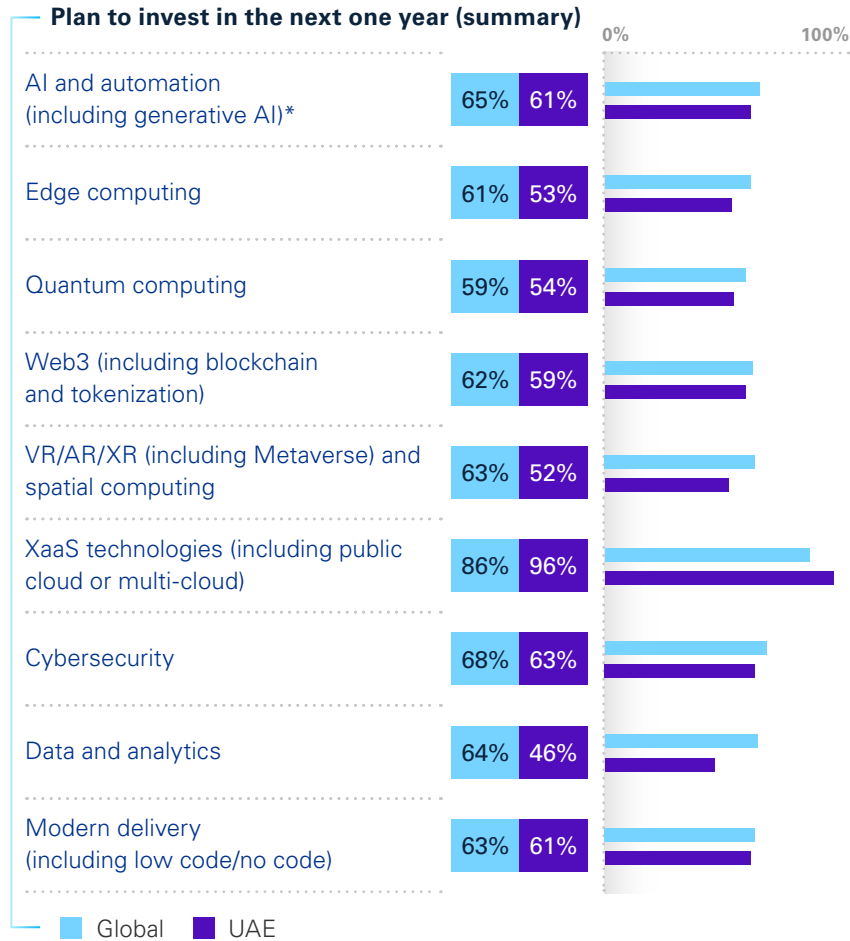


How would you describe your organization's position today in each of the following areas?

Local tech leaders show a higher adoption of edge computing (99%) compared to the global average (97%), reflecting their focus on enhancing real-time data processing and reducing latency, crucial for supporting IoT and other advanced applications. The widespread adoption of cybersecurity measures by tech leaders in the UAE (100%) and globally (99%) underscores their commitment to safeguarding digital assets and maintaining robust security postures amid evolving threats. UAE leaders and firms face slightly more challenges (30%) in executive buy-in and investment approval, which could indicate higher expectations or strategic ambitions requiring significant endorsement. Consequently, significantly fewer UAE tech leaders (3%) are in the early strategic design phase compared to the global average (11%), suggesting more advanced stages of AI implementation in the UAE.

Additionally, UAE tech leaders have showcased full adoption of AI and automation, with an implementation rate of 100% aligning with the global technological advancement trend – thereby demonstrating the UAE's strategic prioritization of AI-driven efficiencies and innovations. Similarly, 100% of UAE leaders have identified the need for implementing data analytics, highlighting their commitment towards data-driven decision making and seeking competitive advantage.

Of the following technologies, which is your organization currently prioritizing and investing in to support its ambitions?



Tech leaders are planning significant investments over the next year, with a strong focus on XaaS technologies including public/multi-cloud (96% in the UAE and 86% globally). Investments in AI and automation, including generative AI, are at 61% (versus 65% globally), edge computing at 53% (versus 61% globally), quantum computing at 54% (versus 59% globally), and Web3 technologies at 59% (versus 62% globally). Additionally, 52% plan to invest in VR/AR/XR, including the Metaverse (versus 63% globally), 63% in cybersecurity (versus 68% globally), and 61% in modern delivery methods like low code/no code (versus 63% globally). Notably, data and analytics see lower investment plans in the UAE at 46% compared to 64% globally.

As for AI and automation investments, 31% of UAE tech leaders plan to invest within the next six months, just above the global average of 30%. For the next six months to one year, 30% of UAE tech leaders plan to invest compared to 35% globally. The UAE shows a 100% intent to invest in the top four categories within two years, similar to the global average of 99%.

Why is your business prioritizing these technologies to support its ambitions?



Data and analytics



Proven ROI for AI and automation influences 20% of global tech leaders compared to only 14% in the UAE, suggesting that ROI metrics are still maturing in the region, or that UAE leaders place higher value on other factors like strategic alignment, innovation potential, customer feedback and competitor trend adoption. ESG outcomes have a slightly lower influence in the UAE at 4% compared to 5% globally, indicating that while important, they may not be the primary driver for AI and automation investments in the region.

Additionally, UAE organizations are conducting fewer in-house trials and proof-of-concept testing for edge computing (24% versus 30% globally), which may suggest either a greater reliance on external solutions or a faster adoption pace with less internal testing. Significantly less UAE tech leaders are also prioritizing edge computing for third-party guidance (including regulators) at only 13% compared to 28% globally, highlighting confidence in their internal capabilities.

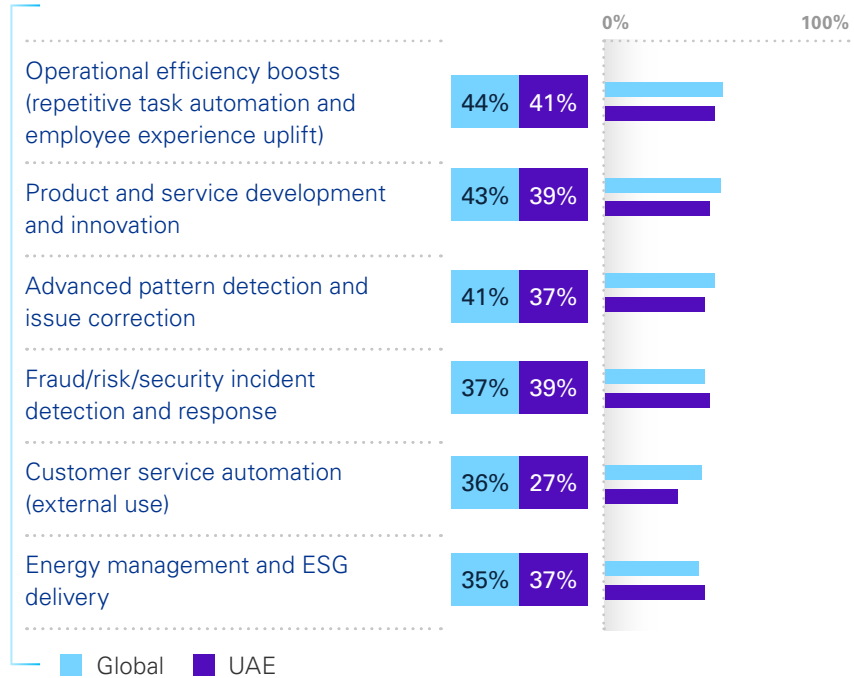
However, for cybersecurity, 27% of UAE tech leaders are still looking for guidance from third parties and regulators which is in line with global responses (28%). A higher percentage of UAE tech leaders (21% versus 13% globally) consider the preferences of their senior leadership team,

emphasizing the influence of top executives in strategic technology decisions. Cost effectiveness is significantly more influential in the UAE at 23% compared to 11% globally, reflecting financial prudence and the need to justify cybersecurity investments.

In the UAE, customer feedback regarding data and analytics is significantly less influential at 7%, compared to 19% globally. This suggests that data and analytics investments are more driven by strategic needs than direct customer input.



As you selected AI as a priority technology, could you detail what your short-term goals are for leveraging AI over the next two years?



There is a clear imperative, at both the UAE and global level, to leverage AI for enhancing operational efficiency (44% and 41% respectively). Automating customer service externally using AI is also a significant global focus (36%), with UAE leaders placing slightly less emphasis on external customer service automation (27%).

AI's application in energy management and advancing ESG goals is gaining traction globally at 35%, aligning technology with sustainability objectives. UAE tech leaders show a slightly stronger focus at 37%, possibly driven by regional sustainability commitments and resource management imperatives. Advanced pattern detection and issue correction using AI is also a priority globally at 41%, demonstrating AI's role in predictive analytics and proactive problem-solving, with UAE tech leaders prioritize this area slightly less at 37%. This suggests either a different stage of AI adoption or specific regional needs that influence strategic priorities.

