Fourth Edition

2023 Global Software Buying Trends

Actionable insights on B2B buyer behavior and how software providers need to adapt.

Gartner Digital Markets

Capterra　GetApp　Software Advice

Foreword

As inflation nears an all-time high, there's no doubt that economic uncertainty is the biggest business challenge in 2023. Budgets are getting tighter and leaders are forced to figure out how to do more with less.

The good news? Businesses are still investing in digital transformation to drive efficiency. In 2023, nearly 70% of small and midsize businesses plan to spend more than last year on technology and software. With a viable market to capture, it's on sales and marketing leaders to make smart investments in growth or risk losing market share as economies rebound.

But knowing where to invest isn't always clear, especially as buyer behavior evolves and marketers have less visibility into the purchase journey.

This is why we created the 2023 Global Software Buying Trends Report—to give growth-minded software marketers the insights they need to successfully meet buyers needs and create lasting customer relationships.

We asked over 1,500 business leaders across five countries about how they plan to prioritize, research, and buy software in 2023.

Here are some key findings from the report:

- 68% of businesses are replacing software more frequently since 2021.

- 42% of buyers say security is the most important factor when planning investment in new software.

- 86% of buyers say that verified reviews are important or very important for software evaluation.

Read on to learn more about software buying trends in 2023 and discover the actionable insights you need to drive growth and win in your category.

— Claire Alexander
GVP of Brand Portfolio and Marketing, Gartner Digital Markets

1,513
respondents

5
countries

22
software categories

Gartner Digital Markets

Capterra   GetApp   Software Advice

Table of Contents

Global Snapshot

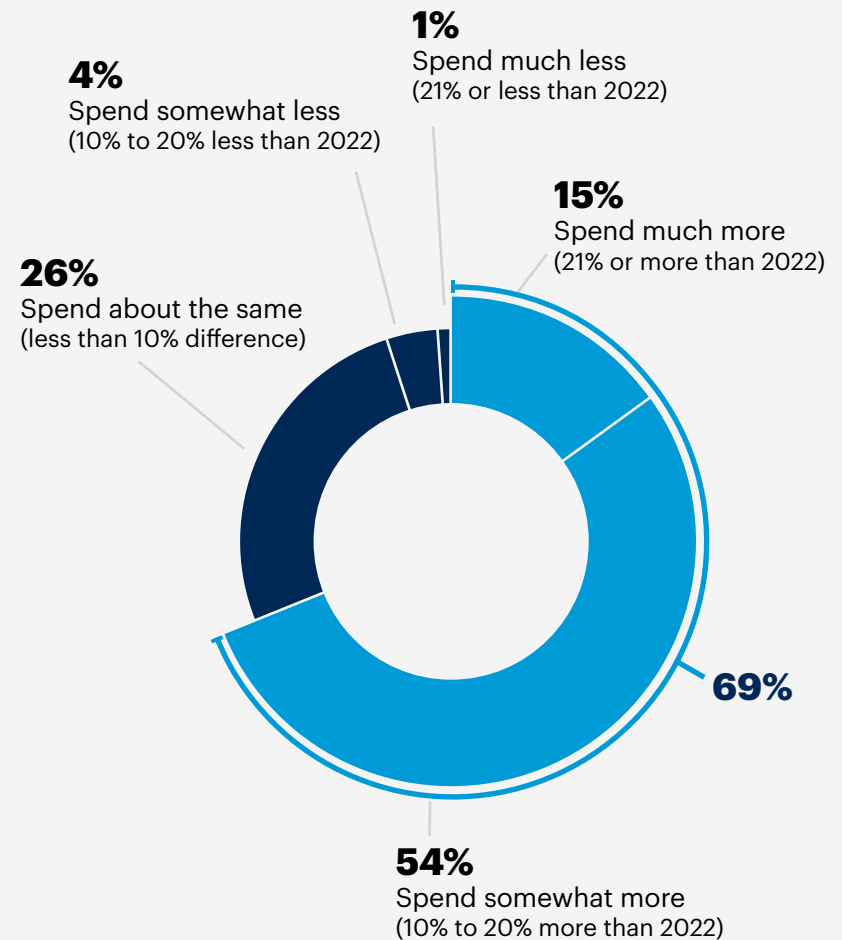# Software Market Growth Is A Bright Spot Amid Economic Headwind

Business leaders expected 2022 to be a period of economic overhaul. Instead, most of them had to adjust their strategy to mitigate inflationary pressure and recession risks. Despite the global economic headwinds moving into 2023, growing businesses are doubling down on digital initiatives to drive operational efficiencies, rather than cutting budgets.

According to Gartner research, the software market is expected to grow by 11% from 2022 to 2023 to reach a valuation of $880 billion, making it the fastest-growing segment in the IT market[1]. This demand for software solutions is driven by organizations' need to automate to counter talent supply problems, support hybrid or remote work models and boost cybersecurity efforts.

Growing businesses plan to invest in digital initiatives to drive operational efficiency.

The willingness of businesses to adopt technology has increased over the past two years. Survey results suggest that almost 70% of businesses are planning to spend more on software in 2023 (vs. 2022), as software tools are critical to achieving their growth goals. Businesses realize the best way to face a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment is to invest in digital transformation, but leaders will have to be more strategic in allocating funds.

Nearly 70% of businesses plan to spend more on software in 2023

1%
Spend much less
(21% or less than 2022)

4%
Spend somewhat less
(10% to 20% less than 2022)

15%
Spend much more
(21% or more than 2022)

26%
Spend about the same
(less than 10% difference)

69%

54%
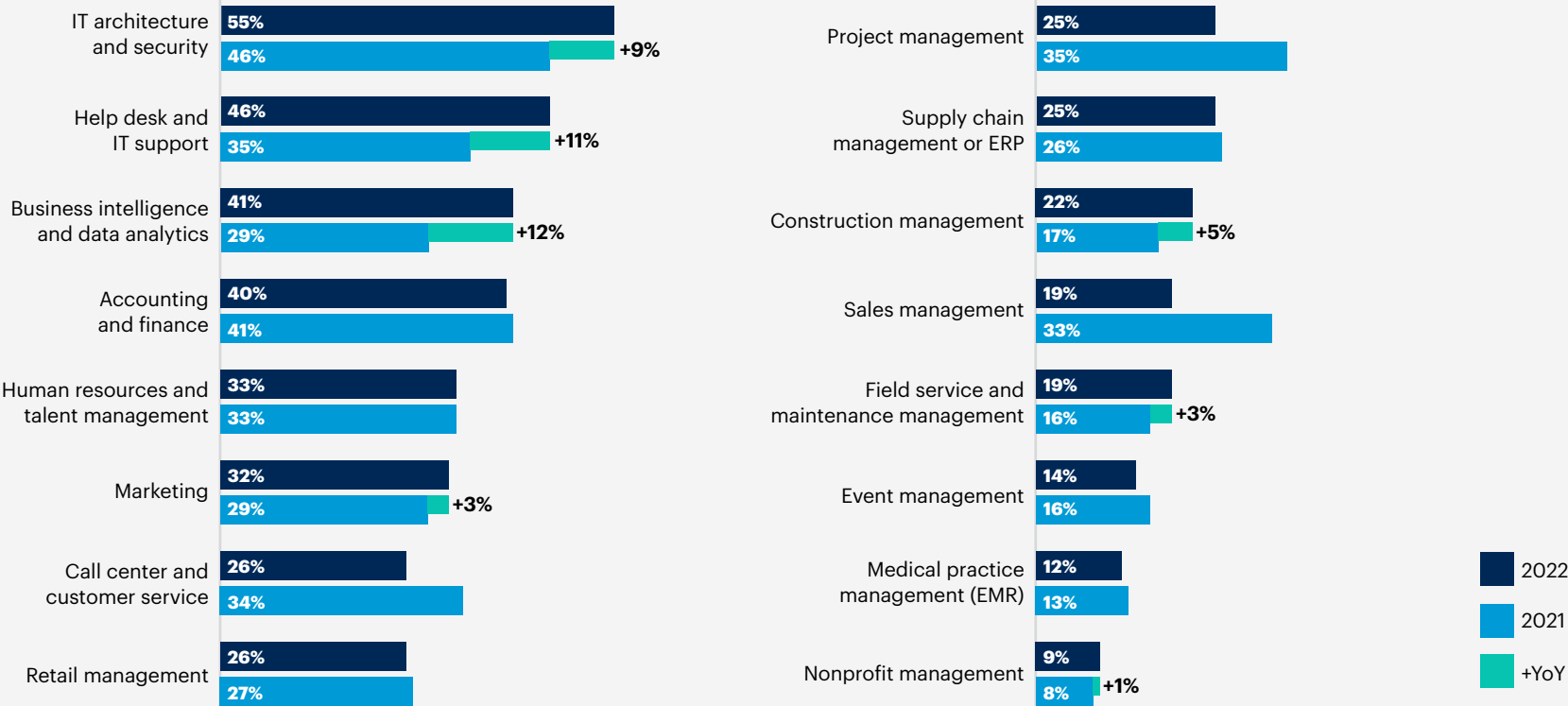Spend somewhat more
(10% to 20% more than 2022)

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Does your organization plan to spend more, less or the same on technology and software in 2023 compared to 2022?

Security, Help Desk and Analytics Form the Foundation of Digital Business in 2023

More than half (55%) of businesses purchased IT architecture and security software in 2022, up from 46% in 2021. Businesses also purchased more help desk and IT support software (+ 11%) and business intelligence and analytics software (+ 12%) than in 2021.

The lift in these categories shows the importance growing businesses place on building a strong and secure foundation for their digital operations, prioritizing support for employee productivity, and tracking and analyzing business data to optimize performance.

Top software purchases in 2022 and 2021

Category	2022	2021	+YoY
IT architecture and security	55%	46%	+9%
Help desk and IT support	46%	35%	+11%
Business intelligence and data analytics	41%	29%	+12%
Accounting and finance	40%	41%	
Human resources and talent management	33%	33%	
Marketing	32%	29%	+3%
Call center and customer service	26%	34%	
Retail management	26%	27%	
Project management	25%	35%	
Supply chain management or ERP	25%	26%	
Construction management	22%	17%	+5%
Sales management	19%	33%	
Field service and maintenance management	19%	16%	+3%
Event management	14%	16%	
Medical practice management (EMR)	12%	13%	
Nonprofit management	9%	8%	+1%

Legend: 2022, 2021, +YoY

The Software Buying Journey

Awareness
Consideration
Evaluation
Decision
Onboarding
Renewal

Software Marketers Lack Visibility Into the Buying Journey

At least 50% of the software buyer's journey is spent referring to independent, third-party information sources, leaving a tremendous blind spot for tech providers looking to influence buyers' decisions.

Understanding buyers' needs and behavior at each stage of the purchase journey is essential to capturing their attention and driving higher conversion rates down the funnel.

This report presents key insights into what buyers expect as they progress through six stages: awareness, consideration, evaluation, decision, purchase, onboarding, and renewal.

Marketing and sales professionals should use these insights to identify where their prospective and current customers are in the purchase journey and then supply the right information at the right time to win buyers' hearts and minds at each stage.
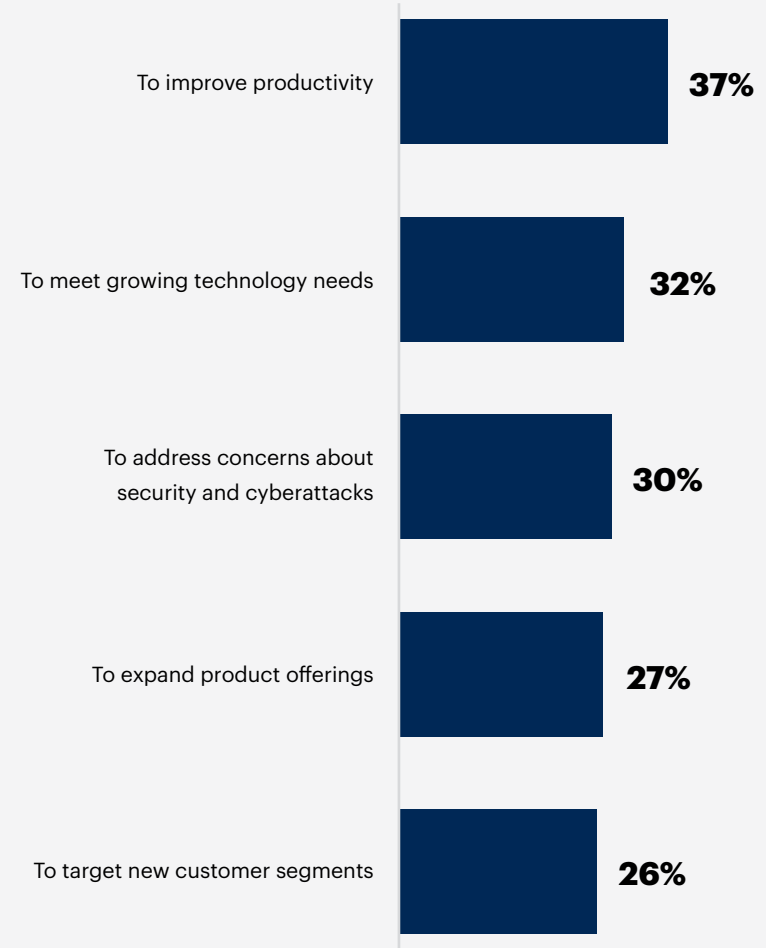
Improving Productivity Is the Top Motivation for Purchasing Software

The business leaders we surveyed shared that improving productivity (37%) was the top reason they purchased new software in the last 12 months.

They also looked to buy new software to address concerns about security and cyberattacks (30%), expand product offerings (27%), and target new customer segments (26%).

Reasons for purchasing new software in the last 12 months

Reason	Percentage
To improve productivity	37%
To meet growing technology needs	32%
To address concerns about security and cyberattacks	30%
To expand product offerings	27%
To target new customer segments	26%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Which of the following triggered a software or technology purchase in the last 12 months? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
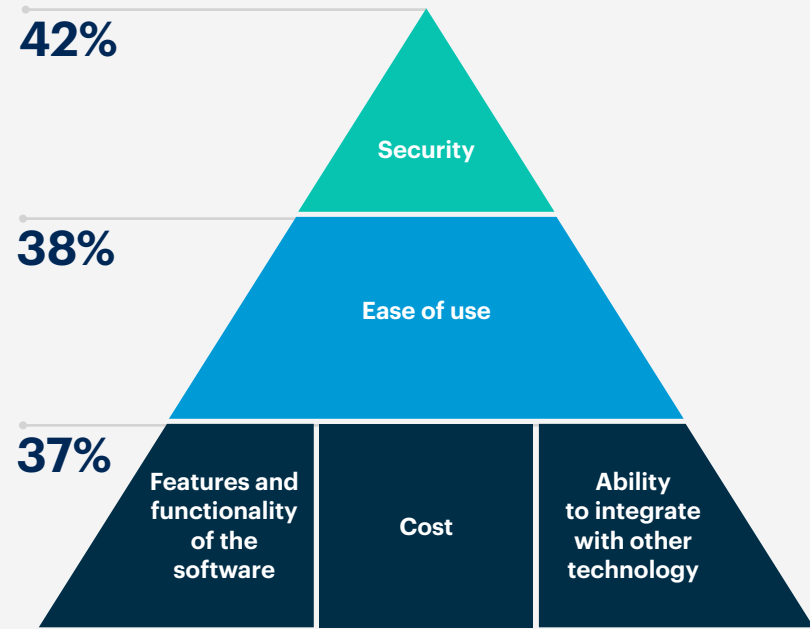
Security Is A Top Priority for Software Buyers

When evaluating software options, most buyers (42%) prioritize security — even above product features and functionality — to ensure their data is kept safe and secure and complies with privacy regulations.

Other factors software buyers seek include ease of use, product features and functionality, cost (including licensing fee as well as variable costs such as maintenance) and integration capabilities.

Top five factors buyers look for in new software

42% Security

38% Ease of use

37% Features and functionality of the software | Cost | Ability to integrate with other technology

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Select the top five most important factors when your company is searching for new software (max 5 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Key Actions for the Awareness Stage

1
Position your product in a category that puts your strengths in the best context for buyers.

Gather proof points and customer quotes from third-party sources to show productivity gains seen by your current users.

2
Develop use cases linking your product's features to buyers' business goals.

Whether it's reducing turnaround time, improving communication or saving hours on administrative tasks, you can increase interest and sales by targeting buyers' specific needs.

3
Highlight the data protection and privacy features of your software.

Increase buyers' trust in the security of your software by showcasing a track record of privacy compliance and by being transparent about how you collect and use data.

Buyers Seek Out Expert Advice

With countless software solutions available, buyers find themselves at a loss while navigating the ever-expanding marketplace. To ensure they make wise and informed choices, one-third of businesses surveyed seek advice from industry analysts and experts. However, these are not their only source of information.

Free consultations with software analysts or experts (29%), professional association or trade association websites or magazines (28%), feedback from peers and colleagues (28%) and product trials (28%) also play an important role during the consideration stage.

Top five information sources buyers use to learn about software options

Source	Percentage
Industry analysts and experts	33%
Free consultations with software analysts and experts	29%
Professional association or trade association websites or magazines	28%
Product trials	28%
Discussions with peers and colleagues	28%
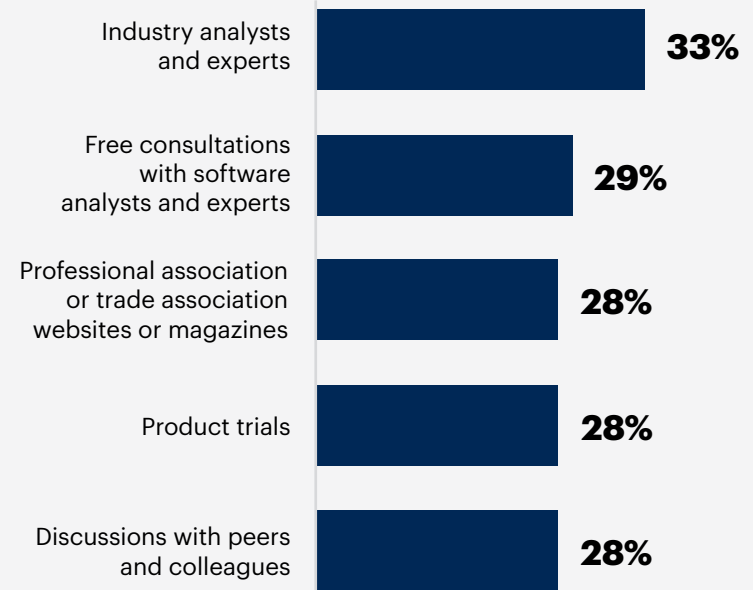
Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Please select the top five most influential sources of information you use to learn about different software options for your business needs (max 5 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
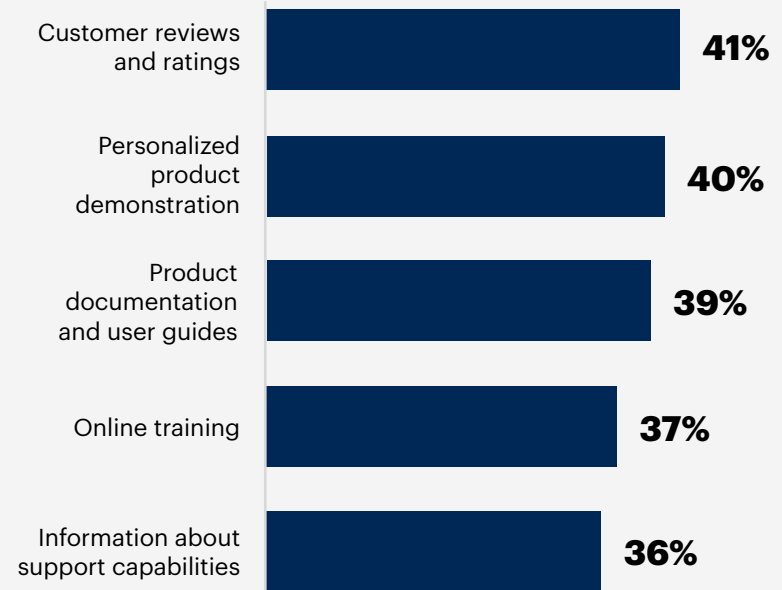
Customer Reviews Are Used the Most to Shortlist Software

Forty-one percent of business leaders surveyed said that customer reviews and ratings play a critical role in shaping their software purchase decisions. Businesses consider customer reviews as an unbiased source of insight into software quality and use them to back up the information received from general research.

To evaluate software options, buyers also attend personalized product demonstrations, explore product documentation or user guides, refer to online training resources and collect information on support capabilities.

Top five types of content buyers use to make software purchase decisions

Type	Percentage
Customer reviews and ratings	41%
Personalized product demonstration	40%
Product documentation and user guides	39%
Online training	37%
Information about support capabilities	36%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Which of the following types of content have you ever used to help make a purchase decision? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Key Actions for the Consideration Stage

1

Rethink your channel mix to meet buyers where they are.

Buyers rely on a mix of online and offline sources and shift back and forth between them during software research. Allocate resources to improve visibility on digital platforms such as search engines, software review sites and social media and engage with prospects via email and channels such as webinars and podcasts. This will ensure maximum recognition for your brand and its offerings.

2

Get your software featured among well-known, highly-rated products in your category.

Most businesses refer to third-party software directories to check product ratings, read reviews and compare features. Make an effort to get featured in the top-rated reports of these directories, such as Capterra Shortlist, GetApp Category Leaders and Software Advice FrontRunners.

3

Launch pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns on software comparison and review sites.

Buyers turn to third-party review sites to see which software will best meet their needs. Running PPC campaigns on these platforms is an effective way to generate leads that are ready to buy.
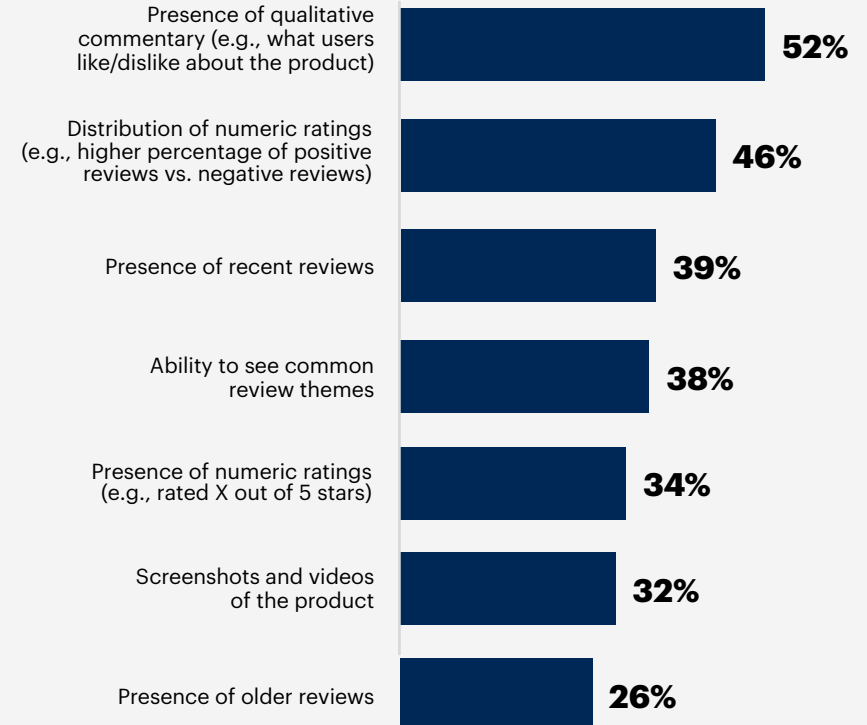
Buyers Seek Verified Reviews with Qualitative Commentary

Online user reviews are crucial for software evaluation, as they provide social proof from fellow buyers. But not all reviews are created equal. Having verified, trustworthy reviews is important to a vast majority of businesses.

86% of businesses consider verified reviews either "important" or "very important" to their purchase decision.

More than 50% of survey respondents derive most value from reviews that have detailed commentary on what users like or dislike about a product, whereas 46% prefer reviews that have a distribution of numeric ratings, such as percentage of positive vs. negative reviews.

Importance of various factors in user reviews of a software product

Factor	Percentage
Presence of qualitative commentary (e.g., what users like/dislike about the product)	**52%**
Distribution of numeric ratings (e.g., higher percentage of positive reviews vs. negative reviews)	**46%**
Presence of recent reviews	**39%**
Ability to see common review themes	**38%**
Presence of numeric ratings (e.g., rated X out of 5 stars)	**34%**
Screenshots and videos of the product	**32%**
Presence of older reviews	**26%**

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Select the top three most important factors of user reviews for software you are evaluating (max 3 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
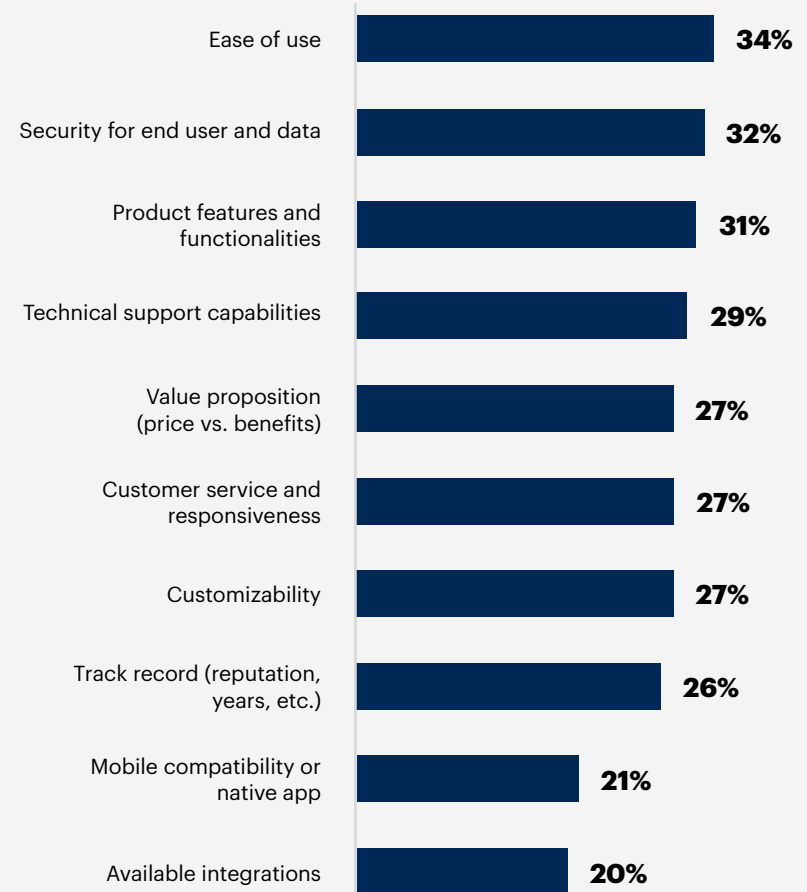
Buyers Care Most About Ease of Use, Security and Features

Ease of use (34%) and security (32%) are the top factors buyers consider when shortlisting software, followed by product features and functionalities (31%).

While price was a crucial aspect in 2021, security is expected to gain prominence in 2023 with increasing instances of high-profile cyberattacks. Gartner research suggests that more than 80% of ransomware attacks are targeted toward organizations with less than 1,000 employees[2].

Most valued factors when shortlisting software

Factor	%
Ease of use	34%
Security for end user and data	32%
Product features and functionalities	31%
Technical support capabilities	29%
Value proposition (price vs. benefits)	27%
Customer service and responsiveness	27%
Customizability	27%
Track record (reputation, years, etc.)	26%
Mobile compatibility or native app	21%
Available integrations	20%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. What are the most important factors in your selection of the vendor? (max 5 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
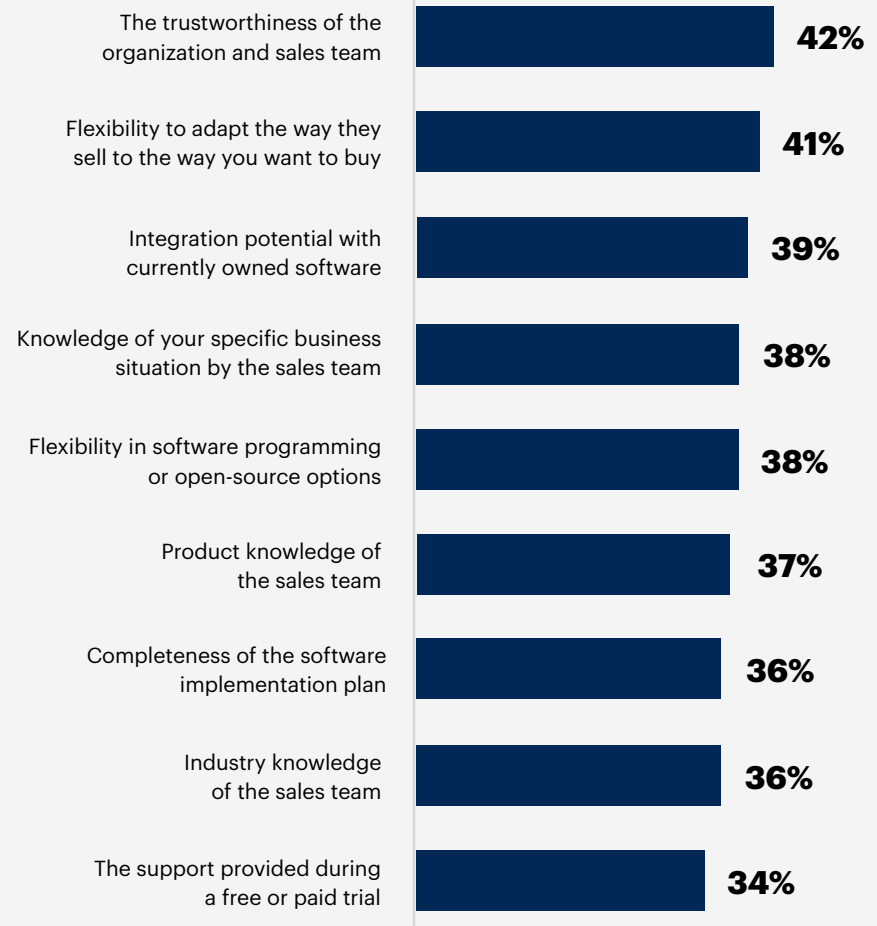
Buyers Look for Trust and Flexibility When Shortlisting Software Providers

When evaluating software providers, buyers assess the sales team's trustworthiness, the software provider's flexibility to adapt to the buyer's purchase processes and the product's integration potential with the existing tech stack.

Furthermore, 54% of survey respondents that bought software in the past 12 months opted for a customized solution versus an off-the-shelf product, even if the former was more expensive. Highlighting personalization options in demonstrations and other customer interactions can help strengthen your case with the buying team and even lead to higher retention rates in the long run.

Most important factors when selecting a provider

Factor	Percentage
The trustworthiness of the organization and sales team	42%
Flexibility to adapt the way they sell to the way you want to buy	41%
Integration potential with currently owned software	39%
Knowledge of your specific business situation by the sales team	38%
Flexibility in software programming or open-source options	38%
Product knowledge of the sales team	37%
Completeness of the software implementation plan	36%
Industry knowledge of the sales team	36%
The support provided during a free or paid trial	34%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. What are the top five vendor, feature or technology-related factors that were important in your selection of the vendor? (max 5 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Businesses Are Making Faster Purchase Decisions While Evaluating More Providers

While a majority (35%) of businesses took 3 to 6 months to finalize a software purchase in 2021, that percentage grew to 47% in 2022. As businesses streamline and reduce their evaluation-to-purchase windows, they are exploring more options to find the right technology fit for their needs. On average, buyers typically consider five different software providers before landing on their final choice.

Average time businesses spend to finalize a software purchase

7%
9 to 12 months

2%
12 months or more

16%
Less than 3 months

29%
6 to 9 months

47%
3 to 6 months
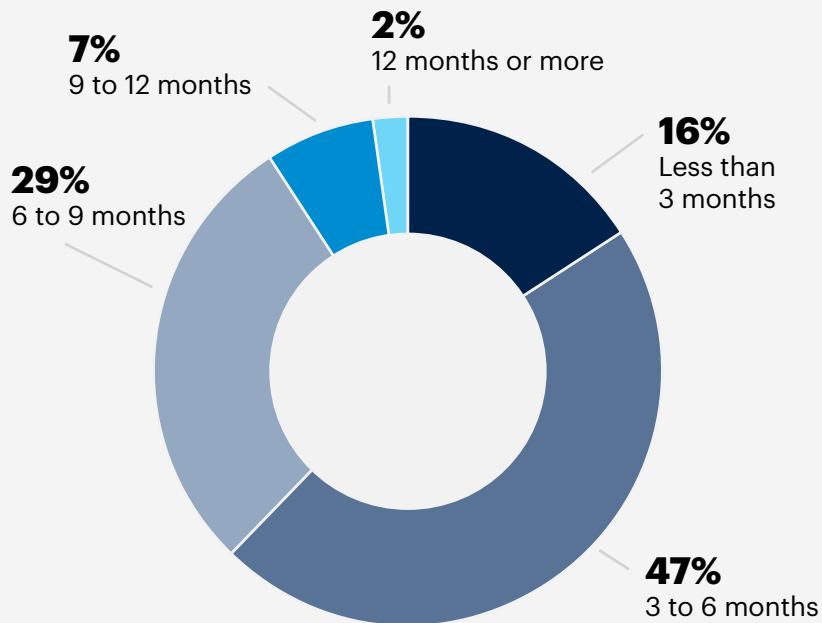
Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. How much time, in total, does your business usually spend to evaluate, select and finalize a purchase for new software? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Number of software providers considered before making a final purchase decision

4%
10 or more providers

20%
7 to 9 providers

28%
1 to 3 providers

48%
4 to 6 providers
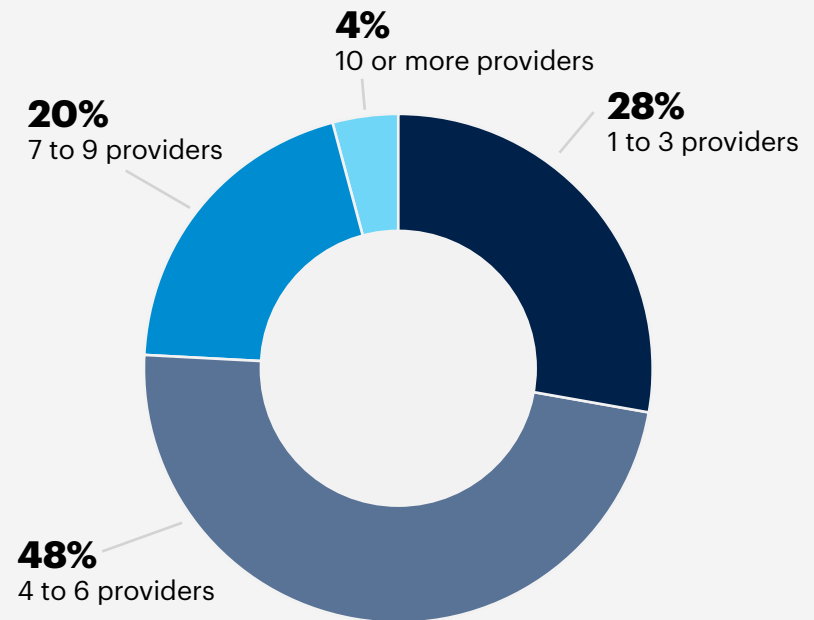
Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. How many different software providers do you usually consider before a final purchase decision is reached? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Key Actions for the Evaluation Stage

1

Launch your review collection strategy to gather customer reviews.

Since buyers are more likely to read reviews before making a purchase, not having a strategy for managing reviews could mean losing out on potential sales. Learn how to ask customers to give feedback and manage the reviews you receive.

2

Set up stringent quality checks for your review collection process.

To increase buyers' trust, make sure you collect reviews only from genuine customers; not every review should make the cut. Use measures such as IP address confirmation and human reverification to set up a thorough vetting process and ensure reviews are authentic and held to the highest quality standards.

3

Offer product demos and free trials to help buyers explore the benefits of your software.

To maximize conversions, emphasize factors such as security, user-friendliness and trustworthiness right from the outset, as buyers value these aspects the most. Also, train your customer-focused teams to ensure they demonstrate an understanding of a buyer's situation and industry and offer customization options accordingly.
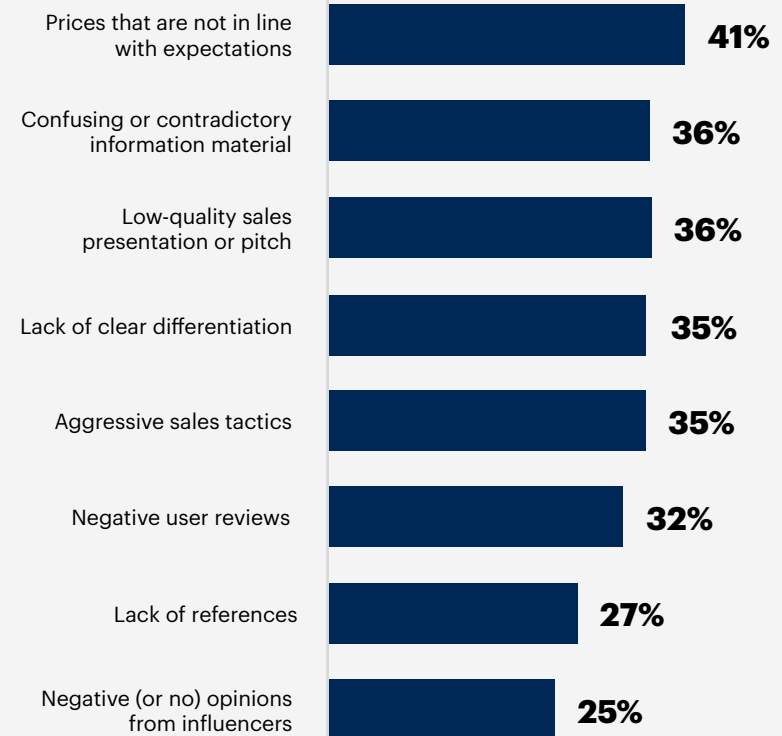
Pricing Mismatch Is the Biggest Deal Breaker

Mismatch in price expectations is the top reason for dropping a software provider from a purchase shortlist. This is closely followed by ambiguous or contradictory information from software providers and low-quality sales presentations or pitches.

In other words, if your prices are competitive, you have an opportunity to capture market share. However, be sure your sales and marketing materials are clear and concise and contain accurate information. Also, ensure your sales team is attentive to buyers' needs, or else you run the risk of losing out to competitors.

Reasons for disqualifying or dropping a software provider

Reason	Percentage
Prices that are not in line with expectations	41%
Confusing or contradictory information material	36%
Low-quality sales presentation or pitch	36%
Lack of clear differentiation	35%
Aggressive sales tactics	35%
Negative user reviews	32%
Lack of references	27%
Negative (or no) opinions from influencers	25%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Select the top three reasons for disqualifying or dropping software providers from consideration in your purchase of software (max 3 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Learning Curve Is a Top Barrier that Stops a Purchase Midway

Nearly half of businesses (45%) say learning curve or downtime is their biggest worry when it comes to adopting new technology. Provide clear and concise training materials and continuous customer support to minimize the amount of time buyers spend learning how to use your software.

Concerns over software ROI (40%) and lack of budget (34%) are other barriers to software investment. To convince prospects, your software must clearly demonstrate its value and show how it will save money over time.

Top three internal barriers to investing in any software

45%
Concerns about downtime or learning curve while implementing new technology

40%
Concerns over ROI

39%
Lack of budget (e.g., assigned to other projects, budget cuts)

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. What are your organization's top three internal barriers to investing in any software? (max 3 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

IT Has the Most Influence on Purchase Decisions

In 39% of surveyed businesses, four to six members are involved in the software purchase process, and this number increases as the business size increases. Nearly 40% of respondents say the IT department handles all their technology needs. That said, technology buying groups are becoming more diverse, with users from the various business units joining the process.
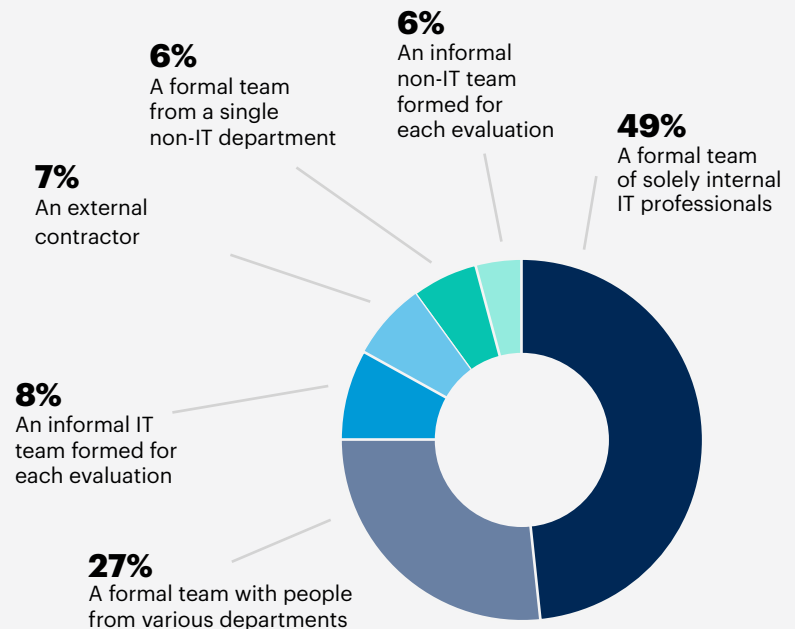
For a majority of businesses, technical stakeholders (41%) have the most influence on buying decisions, followed by an equal mix of economic (30%) and functional (29%) stakeholders in any given buying group. Technical stakeholders evaluate the software platform from a technical perspective, including its integration capabilities; economic stakeholders address concerns around budget; and functional stakeholders evaluate end-user utility for the software product. Furthermore, internal IT professionals handle the technology needs of almost half (49%) of the businesses surveyed, suggesting the IT department is nearly always involved or consulted.

Number of people involved in buying new software

6%
More than 10 people

7%
1 person

19%
7 to 10 people

29%
2 to 3 people

39%
4 to 6 people
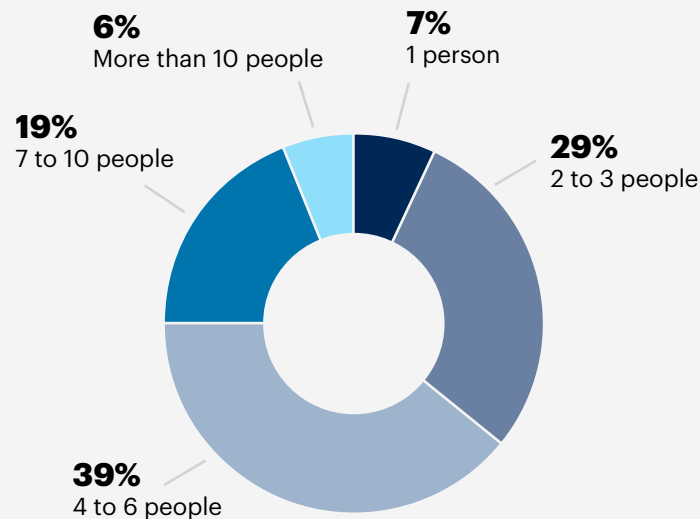
Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. How many people are typically involved in researching and selecting new software in your organization? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Who handles your technology needs?

6%
A formal team from a single non-IT department

6%
An informal non-IT team formed for each evaluation

7%
An external contractor

49%
A formal team of solely internal IT professionals

8%
An informal IT team formed for each evaluation

27%
A formal team with people from various departments

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Who handles new software evaluation, selection and/or purchase-related matters in your organization? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Key Actions for the Decision Stage

1 **Provide training resources and implementation guides upfront to address concerns about downtime and learning curves.**

Use these resources to convince buyers that they can adapt quickly. Showcase success stories from past implementations to demonstrate how long it took clients to adopt your software within their existing business processes.

2 **Overcome buyers' concerns over ROI by helping them build a compelling business case.**

Establish the business case on financial returns, the KPIs the buyer is targeting or a combination of both. This will help the purchase team members easily get C-level executive buy-in on the shortlisted options.

3 **Always respond to negative reviews.**

Remember, while having some negative reviews is healthy and improves authenticity, too many negative reviews that go unanswered can turn prospects away. Respond to negative feedback with a genuine thank you and a promise to fix the issue in the future.
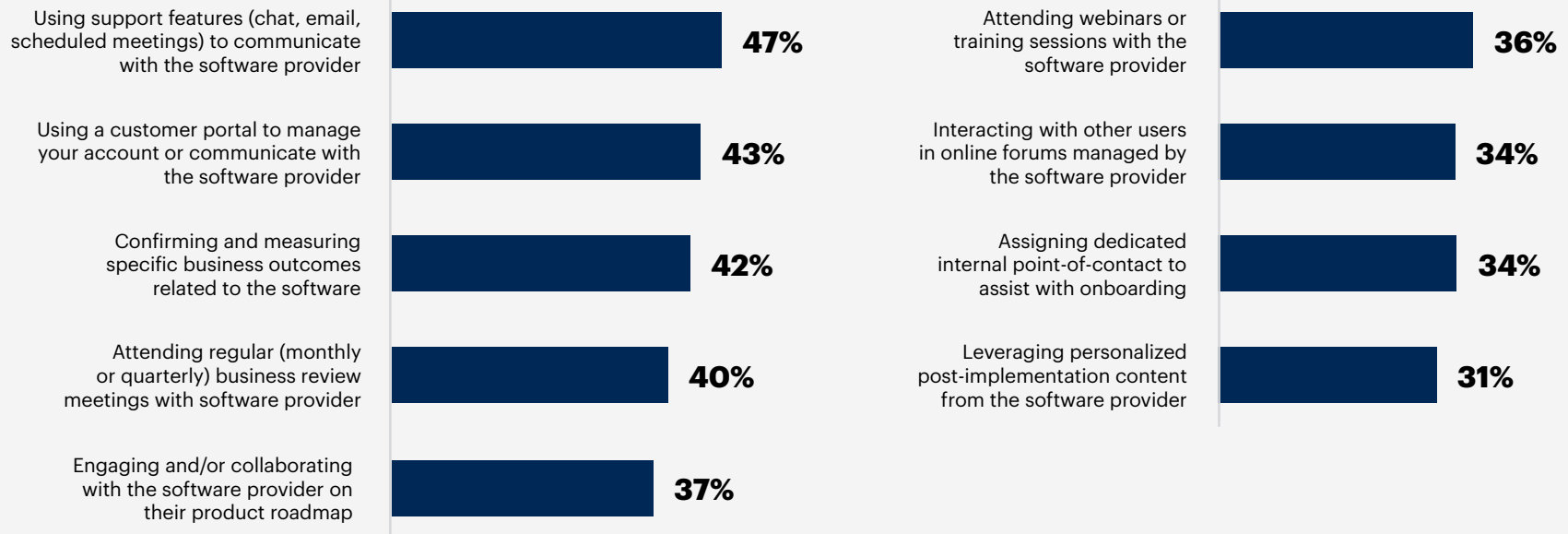
Communication Is Critical After a Software Purchase

During onboarding, an uninterrupted flow of helpful communication is very important to buyers to extract full value from a solution. How a buyer is treated during this period creates a lasting impression on their perception of a software provider's services. Nearly half of respondents (47%) use support features such as chat and email to maintain seamless interaction with software providers after a purchase.

Actions buyers take to maintain relationships with software providers

Using support features (chat, email, scheduled meetings) to communicate with the software provider	47%	
Using a customer portal to manage your account or communicate with the software provider	43%	
Confirming and measuring specific business outcomes related to the software	42%	
Attending regular (monthly or quarterly) business review meetings with software provider	40%	
Engaging and/or collaborating with the software provider on their product roadmap	37%	
Attending webinars or training sessions with the software provider	36%	
Interacting with other users in online forums managed by the software provider	34%	
Assigning dedicated internal point-of-contact to assist with onboarding	34%	
Leveraging personalized post-implementation content from the software provider	31%	

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Which of the following actions were taken by you to maintain an ongoing relationship with your software provider? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
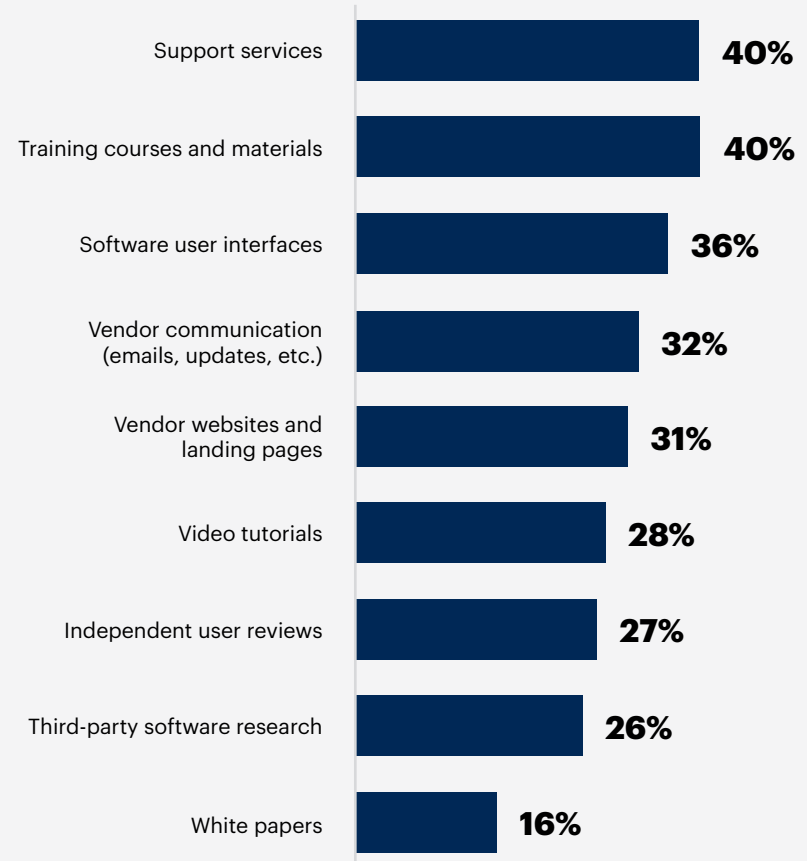
Buyers Want Support and Training Resources in Their Primary Language

Most buyers prefer receiving certain content types in their primary language. Forty percent of survey respondents want support services and training materials in their primary language, followed by software user interfaces (36%), vendor communication (32%) and websites and landing pages (31%).

Content or interactions buyers want in their primary language

Content type	Percentage
Support services	40%
Training courses and materials	40%
Software user interfaces	36%
Vendor communication (emails, updates, etc.)	32%
Vendor websites and landing pages	31%
Video tutorials	28%
Independent user reviews	27%
Third-party software research	26%
White papers	16%

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Which content or interactions from a software provider are most important to be in your primary language? (max 3 responses allowed); Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Key Actions for the Onboarding Stage

1 Invest in post-purchase customer success.

Leverage channels your customers prefer (such as chat, email and scheduled meetings) for sales support and to stay connected with them. Dedicate a product champion for every customer in case of any major events such as a sudden shutdown or crash. Your goal should be to ensure customers are fully successful in leveraging your software for their needs and that they continue to use it in the future.

2 Offer a holistic customer experience through multilingual support.

Go beyond simply translating your website. Provide localized chatbots as well as in-language customer service and training material.

3 Launch a global review collection strategy to get customer feedback in local languages.

Use Gartner Digital Markets' proven marketing tools and tactics to improve customer participation in your review collection campaigns and to better connect with prospects in your target countries.
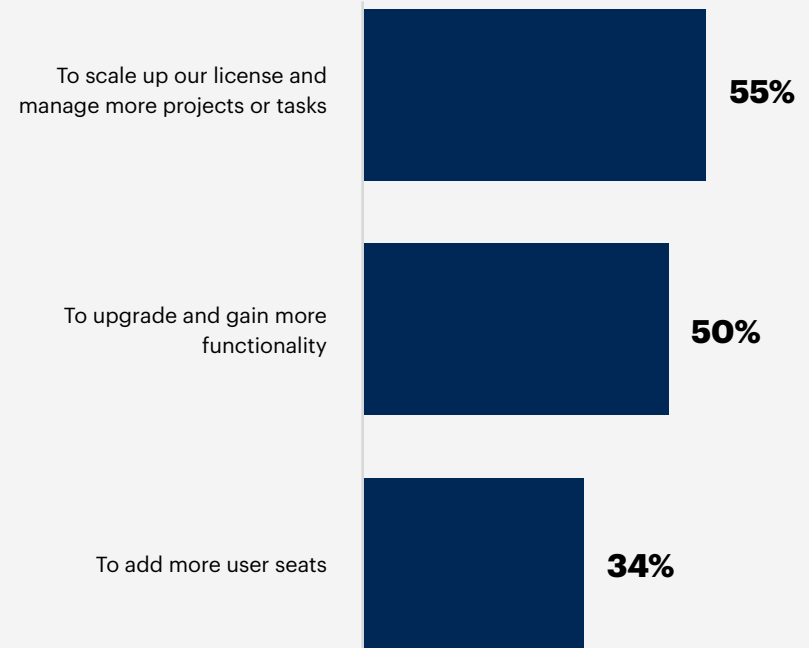
Buyers Want to Enhance Existing Capabilities

There is an increasing trend among businesses to make regular upgrades to their current technology solutions. Over two-thirds of survey respondents (68%) are replacing or modifying software more frequently since the beginning of 2021. This highlights how important it is for software providers to offer a range of upgrade opportunities to buyers.

Additionally, a majority of respondents (55%) are planning to scale up their software license to manage more projects or tasks, and 50% are planning to upgrade their software to gain more functionality.

Reasons businesses plan to enhance or modify software

To scale up our license and manage more projects or tasks	**55%**
To upgrade and gain more functionality	**50%**
To add more user seats	**34%**

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Does your organization currently have plans to enhance or modify software? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.
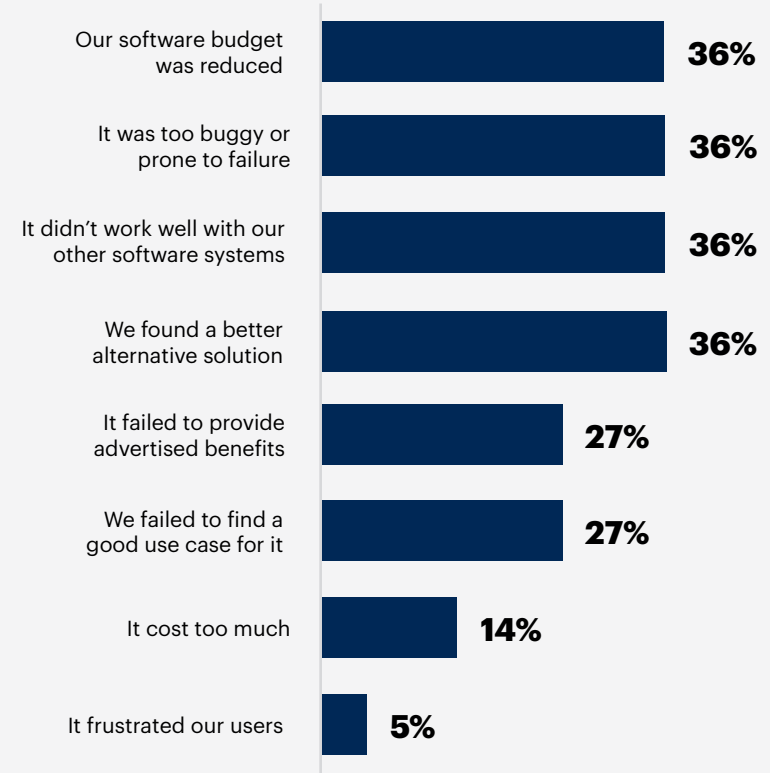
Budget Cuts Are Driving Software Replacements

In 2021, budget wasn't the primary factor for changing software, but in 2022, it became an essential element, with 36% of respondents claiming reduced budget as the reason for replacing their existing software.

Equally important reasons for replacement are concerns around software bugs, compatibility issues with existing software systems and availability of better alternatives.

Reason to replace a software purchase

Reason	
Our software budget was reduced	**36%**
It was too buggy or prone to failure	**36%**
It didn't work well with our other software systems	**36%**
We found a better alternative solution	**36%**
It failed to provide advertised benefits	**27%**
We failed to find a good use case for it	**27%**
It cost too much	**14%**
It frustrated our users	**5%**

Source: Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey; n = 1,513; Q. Why was the decision made to replace this software purchase? Note: Percentages may not equal 100% as respondents were asked to select multiple options.

Key Actions for the Renewal Stage

1 Proactively seek cross-selling and upselling opportunities to retain customers.

Use discounts, extension options, supplementary products and other upgrade features to retarget customers nearing renewals and maximize their satisfaction level. Moreover, boost post-purchase confidence through continuous support to help customers take full advantage of your product and to respond to them when their priorities change.

2 Leverage intent data to identify accounts that are at risk of churn.

Use different types of buyer intent data to identify dissatisfied customers, intervene early on and retain them. This process will also help you analyze buyer behavior to stay ahead of any potential loss.

Action Plan for Software Providers

1

Invest in software-specific lead generation.

Nearly 70% of businesses are planning to spend more on technology in 2023 to accelerate revenue. Spend your advertising budget on channels that are more likely to convert prospects.

→ Prioritize lead generation investments on software marketplaces such as Capterra, GetApp and Software Advice to capture leads that convert 3x more than Google Ads.

→ Get maximum exposure by promoting your software at the top of category searches with pay-per-click (PPC) advertising or get tailored leads based on your company's personalized, targeted buyer profiles with pay-per-lead (PPL) programs.

2

Use customer and competitor insights to fine-tune your sales and marketing.

Businesses are shrinking their evaluation-to-purchase window but looking to evaluate more software providers. Ensure your marketing team is able to identify and act quickly on high-intent leads and your sales team has the messaging they need to sell against competitors.

→ Use buyer intent data to identify where your prospects are in their purchase journey and drive engagement with the right content at the right time.

→ Optimize your product profile across software rating and comparison sites to make it to the shortlist.

3

Build trust with software buyers.

Buyers trust online reviews as much as peer recommendations, and verified customer reviews are the most used content type to make purchase decisions.

→ Launch an always-on review collection strategy to gather social proof about your product and build trust with software buyers.

→ Learn how to use customer feedback to your advantage to boost brand reputation and improve your product roadmap.

4 Use content that highlights product features that customers care about most.

When evaluating software options, the majority of buyers focus on security, ease of use, support and training and the ability to measure ROI. Ensure you are leveraging content that highlights these key features across your marketing channels.

→ Highlight customer review quotes about valuable product or service qualities (such as customer support) on your website and other marketing channels.

→ Design a high-converting landing page to drive marketing-qualified leads to a product demo that shows an easy-to-use interface and highlights key features and customer services.

5 Maintain a strong relationship with your customers.

Compared to 2021, more than one-third of businesses are changing or replacing software more frequently. Make sure you are paying close attention to customers' feedback — including feedback on technical issues and business goals — and giving them the support they need for reliable solutions in difficult times.

→ Use buyer intent data to identify unsatisfied customers at risk of churn and improve retention rates during the renewal stage.

→ Connect with global buyers by providing in-language support features, such as chat and email, and help customers measure specific business outcomes.

Methodology

Gartner Digital Markets' 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey

The 2023 SMB Software Buying Trends Survey was conducted online from September 2022 to October 2022 among 1,513 respondents from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and France and among organizations with revenue less than $1 billion and 2-999 employee size across the financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, IT, marketing and retail industries.

Respondents were screened for their involvement in software purchasing decisions, and those who were a leader/member of the group or had significant influence qualified for the study. The survey was developed collaboratively by a team of Gartner analysts and was reviewed, tested and administered by Gartner's Research Data and Analytics (RDA) team.

Disclaimer: Results do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiment of the respondents and companies surveyed.

Sources

1. Gartner Forecasts Worldwide IT Spending to Grow 5.1% in 2023, Gartner

2. Ransomware in Midsize Enterprises, Gartner

About Gartner Digital Markets

Gartner Digital Markets is the world's largest software and services marketplace. Every month, more than 9 million people globally visit our review sites—Capterra, Software Advice, GetApp and UpCity—to research and choose the best solutions for their business. Thousands of B2B companies partner with Gartner Digital Markets to reach active buyers, build their brand reputation and grow their business.

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