

# Overcoming mid-market challenges with small-company agility

The path to scalable, resilient operations for mid-market COOs



## COOs at mid-market organizations see a marketplace undergoing dramatic change.

Once defined by more modest operational demands, mid-market businesses now face complexities that rival those of much larger enterprises — yet without the corresponding staff, technology or capital. To remain competitive, the modern mid-market organization must combine resilience, flexibility, visibility and strong performance.

Metrics such as network uptime, time to install, operational efficiency and workforce productivity have evolved into critical performance indicators that can determine a business's ability to grow. These pressures are pushing mid-market COOs to become architects of cross-functional transformation, strategic adaptability and technology-driven performance improvement.

Meanwhile, the operational environment is only becoming more challenging. Talent shortages strain growth initiatives, supply chain volatility grows more acute and the demand for automation and digital tools increases even as those tools remain underutilized. For many mid-market organizations, aging legacy systems pose another significant hurdle — consistently slowing productivity and responsiveness.

Leading mid-market operations toward scalable, resilient futures requires COOs to reconcile these demands with a clear focus on measurable performance and adaptable operating models.

### Key challenges mid-market COOs face

As conditions evolve, mid-market COOs are confronting a distinct set of challenges that test both near-term execution and future readiness. These considerations span talent, technology, risk management and supply chain performance.

#### Talent constraints and workforce challenges

Access to skilled talent, especially digital-ready and AI-capable professionals, continues to be a limitation for mid-market leaders. In fact, nearly 80% of mid-market companies struggle to find qualified AI talent, often taking more than eight months to complete hires for these roles.<sup>1</sup>

Workforce productivity has become not just a measure of output but a strategic imperative as teams shoulder expanding responsibilities with limited resources. Innovations such as AI promise greater efficiency, but many organizations are still in the early stages of adoption, with true transformation stubbornly far off. For example, 51% of companies continue to grapple with fundamental aspects of AI implementation.<sup>3</sup>

The challenges related to talent are further compounded by attrition and competitive pressures, as mid-market firms experience higher turnover rates (9%) than their large-cap peers (7%).<sup>4</sup>

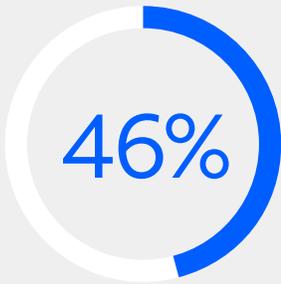
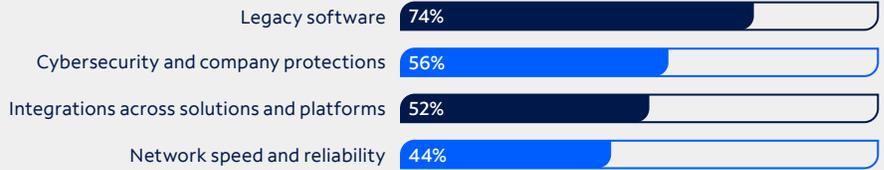


52% of mid-market business owners identified talent retention or talent shortages as their biggest concern in 2025.<sup>2</sup>

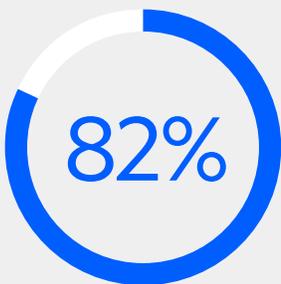
### Operational fragmentation, outdated systems and lack of visibility

Inefficiencies often stem from fragmented systems and older tools. Mid-market companies frequently struggle with data silos, manual workflows and aging infrastructure that hinder process improvement efforts and limit real-time visibility.

Top tech support pain points according to mid-market companies:<sup>5</sup>



46% of small and medium businesses had experienced a cyberattack as of 2025, and almost one in five closed or filed for bankruptcy as a result.<sup>7</sup>



82% of mid-market companies carry a cyber insurance policy.<sup>8</sup>

Legacy systems and poorly integrated platforms prevent COOs from resolving bottlenecks and reacting with the necessary speed. This has real consequences, from slower decision-making to increased error rates and longer incident resolution times (i.e., mean time to repair, or MTTR), all of which can erode customer confidence and operational resilience.

### Supply chain volatility and external headwinds

Turbulence within supply chains can seriously impact mid-market operations. Almost half of mid-market manufacturers and distributors report supply chain, logistics or transportation challenges,<sup>6</sup> underscoring persistent external pressures on their business.

With less bargaining power compared to large enterprises, many mid-market companies are more exposed to price swings, delivery delays and regulatory changes, forcing COOs to prioritize agility and scenario planning in real time.

### Increased operational risk and cyberthreat exposure

A more connected organization brings a host of benefits, from increased efficiency to enhanced user experiences. But with those benefits comes increased risk. As mid-market companies expand their digital footprints, they expose security gaps and become more vulnerable to cyberthreats and disruptions that directly impact uptime and operational stability.

For mid-market COOs, these escalating risks force difficult budget tradeoffs and heighten accountability for business continuity. Addressing cyber exposure now requires stronger cross-functional leadership, aligning teams around shared priorities and investment decisions.

## How mid-market COOs can position operations as a strategic differentiator

Although the challenges COOs confront are real, they also signal opportunity. Leaders can respond by establishing rigor around KPIs such as uptime, reliability and workforce productivity. If they reframe operational initiatives as long-term value drivers rather than simply budgetary line items, they can help their business unlock meaningful performance gains.

### Establish an agenda centered on measurable performance

A clear KPI framework tied to business outcomes helps leadership quantify operational value. COOs can track indicators such as uptime percentages, MTTR, automation penetration rates, workforce productivity and time to install or deploy new infrastructure. By coordinating efforts across operations, IT, finance and HR, mid-market businesses can improve their cross-organizational visibility and accountability.

### Accelerate digitization, automation and AI adoption

Investments in digital workflows and automation are paying off, inspiring half of mid-market businesses to increase their use of technology and automation in order to expand operations.<sup>9</sup>

Cloud, connectivity, automation and real-time monitoring solutions help accelerate responsiveness and reduce downtime, while modular systems that can be deployed rapidly decrease operational friction and help the organization meet its performance targets.

By leveraging AI and analytics technologies, companies can:

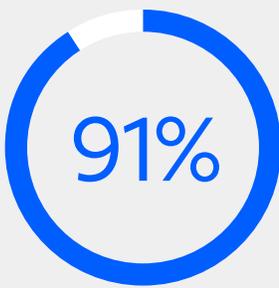
- Speed up day-to-day operations.
- Improve MTTR through predictive insights and anomaly detection.
- Enhance forecasting and demand planning.
- Empower hybrid workforces with streamlined workflows.

Taken together, these gains position mid-market operations to be faster, more predictable and easier to scale, all without adding proportional cost or headcount. Digitization becomes the mechanism for mid-market COOs to close the capability gap between smaller teams and enterprise-grade performance expectations.

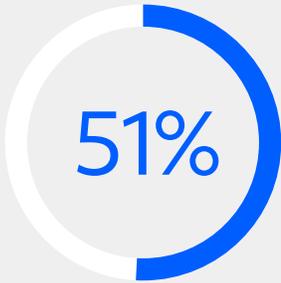
### Build agility into the operating model

Modular and flexible operational designs enable firms to respond to disruptions with minimal impact on uptime and customer service. This means breaking down silos, agreeing about common response approaches and sharing real-time operational insights across teams. Such approaches directly support better performance on KPIs like MTTR, uptime and operational throughput.

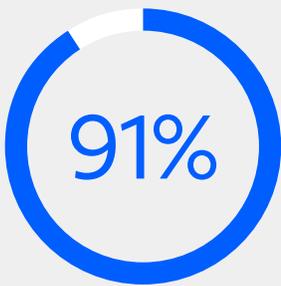
Mid-market organizations have the highest rate of internal employee mobility,<sup>10</sup> and for good reason: Upskilling team members enables the organization to adapt quickly to change without adding significant budget or structural complexity. Training employees in digital mid-market business tools, process workflows and data literacy empowers teams and boosts productivity. Support for hybrid work environments, including secure connectivity and collaboration tools, promotes consistent performance regardless of where employees operate.



of mid-market companies with a digital skills gap report a noticeable impact on performance.<sup>11</sup>



of mid-market leaders say their company has experienced a network breach or cybercrime.<sup>12</sup>



of mid-market leaders expected to increase cybersecurity spending in 2025.<sup>13</sup>

### **Embed compliance, resilience and risk management into core operations**

Integrating cybersecurity, compliance and continuity planning into daily operations not only minimizes interruptions but also reinforces stakeholder trust in performance commitments. Investments in security and risk planning, including developing detailed incident response plans, help COOs safeguard uptime, reduce surprises and ensure growth initiatives are not derailed by avoidable compliance or risk failures.

Creating unified dashboards that combine continuity, cybersecurity readiness and supply chain insights strengthens board-level accountability and gives COOs a single source of truth for decision-making and proactive risk management. Tracking resilience metrics such as uptime, MTTR, service-level agreement (SLA) adherence and risk exposure in real time can help COOs tie the data directly to performance goals.

### **Equipping mid-market COOs for competitive advantage**

To guide their pursuit of operational excellence, mid-market COOs need a technology partner capable of delivering performance, reliability and support at scale. Spectrum Business® offers a suite of managed services and products designed to strengthen performance across distributed operations.

### **Enterprise-grade connectivity to strengthen uptime and SLAs**

High-availability connectivity, such as fiber and dedicated internet services, provides the bandwidth and reliability that modern, digital-first organizations require. Industry-leading SLAs help ensure operational continuity across all sites, enabling COOs to meet uptime goals essential to customer satisfaction and internal performance objectives. Leveraging rapid and predictable time to install, mid-market leaders can also undertake multi-site rollouts and company expansion efforts without undue delay.

### **Managed security services to reduce MTTR and protect operations**

Spectrum Business offers integrated managed threat detection and response services to accelerate incident resolution time and protect day-to-day reliability. These capabilities, paired with cybersecurity expertise, help COOs fill internal talent gaps while reinforcing safeguards for evolving cyberthreats.

### **Infrastructure built for hybrid work and productivity**

Scalable connectivity and secure remote access solutions support distributed teams and foster productivity gains. Spectrum Business helps mid-market companies harness the power of cloud-ready networks and automation tools, enabling them to build a solid foundation for modern operations optimized for efficiency and growth.

### **Solutions to enhance operational efficiency**

Real-time monitoring, backup and recovery services protect critical operations and reduce disruptions. By improving visibility and enabling proactive issue resolution, COOs can maintain SLA commitments and drive consistent performance improvements.

### **Vendor consolidation and predictable opex models**

Consolidating infrastructure under a single provider simplifies governance and delivers greater cost predictability. Fixed monthly pricing enables disciplined budgeting while supporting consistent, enterprise-grade performance through defined service commitments. With 100% US-based support available 24/7, Spectrum Business helps minimize operational risk, accelerate issue resolution and reduce MTTR.



## Preparing for the future with Spectrum Business

Mid-market COOs have the opportunity to make their operations a primary source of competitive advantage by modernizing infrastructure and building for resiliency. Spectrum Business delivers the managed services and products required to turn complex challenges into long-term strategic strengths in any marketplace.

[Learn more](#)

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