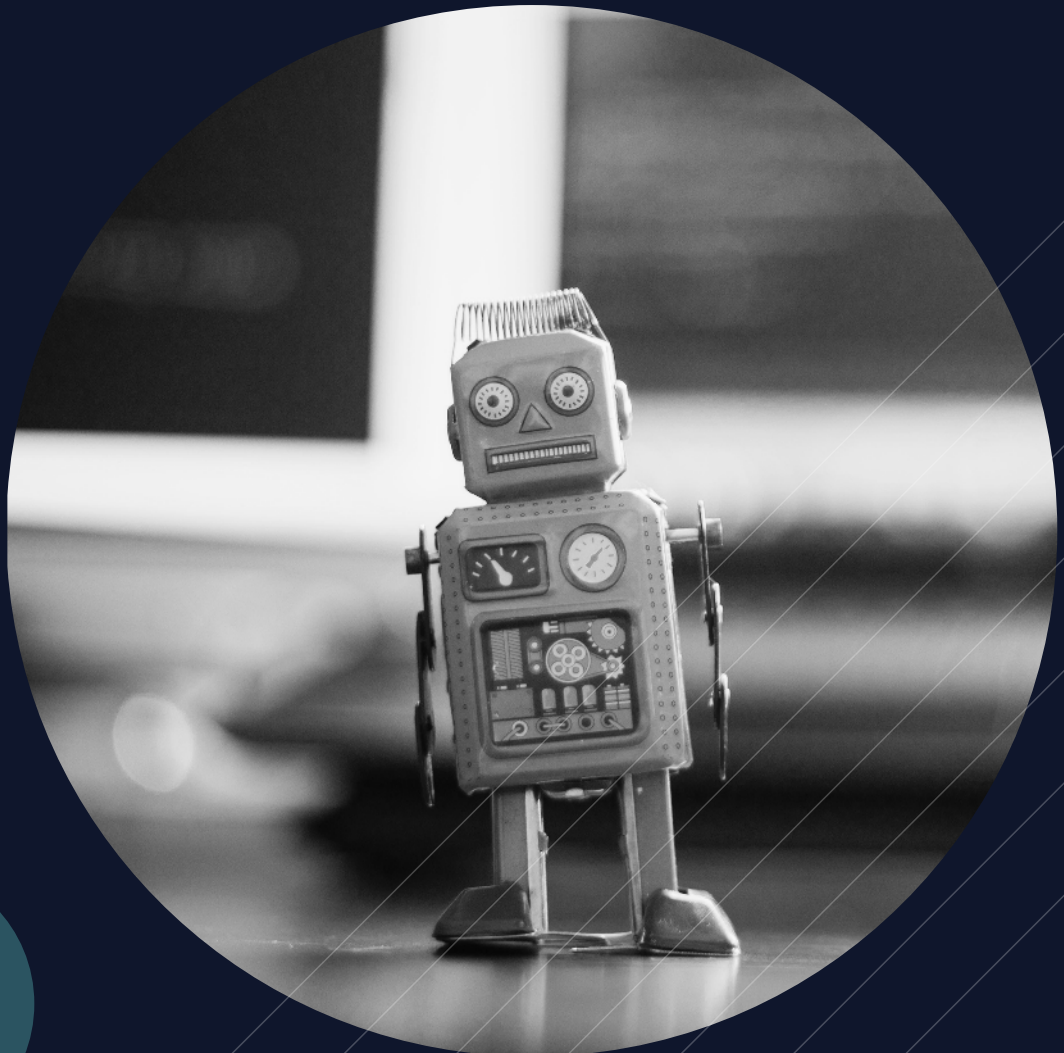CloudBolt Industry Insights Report:

The Truth About Siloed Automation

OVERVIEW

Now more than ever, companies are being asked to "do more with less." Less people. Less budget. The phrase has become so overused these days that some workers bristle any time they hear it; others tune it out altogether. So, it is no surprise that the need for ITOps, DevOps, CloudOps, FinOps, and SecOps to properly leverage automation for cloud-related operations and processes has become more than just lip service. But are companies operating in vastly inefficient ways because they lack a "home for automations" – a central repository for best "automations" and elements that can be shared and re-used system-wide across team and regions?

This CII (CloudBolt Industry Insights) report was designed to gauge the reality of silos of automation across enterprises. Do they leave disparate groups re-inventing the same solutions to common problems? Are these groups completely unaware that someone else may have previously developed a best practice/approved approach to a given automation challenge? And how prevalent is the problem and the related issues?

Using Gartner's Pulse Survey Platform in late 2022, we received responses from 350 senior IT and DevOps leaders at companies with more than 5,000 employees globally (see Appendix for a more detailed audience break-down and complete survey data). Respondents' answers make one thing very clear: the home for automations remains a siloed mess.

The Salient Six: 6 Things You Need to Know

It's a short attention span world. Therefore, as with every CloudBolt Industry Insight Report, we make it easy for you to get to what matters most upfront (If you read nothing else, focus on the following key take-aways; all the survey details are included at the end for those who prefer to go deeper):


Companies surveyed used one or more of twenty-seven different automation tools.

1. Tool Overload – Respondents across the representative sample confirm that to varying degrees they are using one or more of **TWENTY-SEVEN DIFFERENT AUTOMATION TOOLS** – with none of them being mentioned for more than 31% of the sample! And that doesn't even include custom code or "other." (Interestingly, with all the buzz about automation-related tools like Ansible Tower and Terraform Enterprise, the numbers bear out that Puppet and Chef are still more popular. And the single most often cited was RedHat Kickstart at 31%.)

2. My Team Isn't Siloed – 57% of companies keep automations organized within individual silos. So it's not surprising that 60% of respondents think their current siloed approach makes it easy for them to find and use/re-use what they need, when they need it. Furthermore, given the individual silos, 73% said their current approach ensured they are accessing only the latest, approved versions of automation assets they need. But this points to a prevailing myopic view of "I know what I have and I have a pretty good idea where to get it because it lives in my silo." In the context of other answers and findings in the survey, it is safe to conclude that many may have never contemplated being able to explore a system-wide/enterprise-wide repository of automations people in other groups/departments/locations have developed that could save everyone from wasting time reinventing something that has already been solved. That's because...

57% of companies keep automations organized within individual silos.
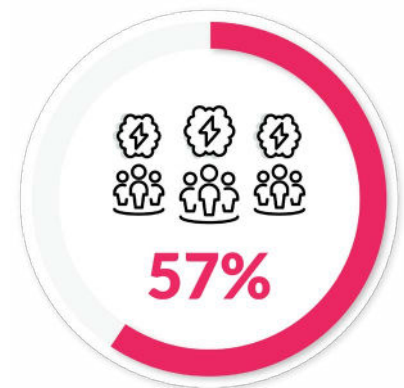
75% say silos of automation are hampering their cloud unification efforts.
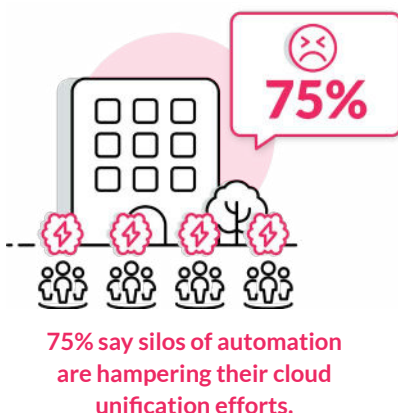
3. Silos of Automation Are the Problem – 55% of respondents say they have FOUR OR MORE automations teams across their companies. Only 5% of all companies say these teams are not siloed. And 75% of respondents assert that silos of automation are hampering their ability to unify cloud operations across functions.

88% of respondents would find it valuable to have all automations centralized in one place.

4. Thinking Outside the Silos – When presented with a more holistic option, a near-unanimous 88% of respondents agreed that "it would be valuable to have all legacy and future automations centralized in one place for the entire organization in a way that ensures compliance, increases security, enables business continuity, encourages reuse, and reduces risk."

5. Up-and-coming and on the Radar – Since almost 9 of 10 respondents agreed that a centralized home for automations is valuable, it was positive to see that 57% say their companies are trying to do something about it by making it a key initiative or moving in that direction.
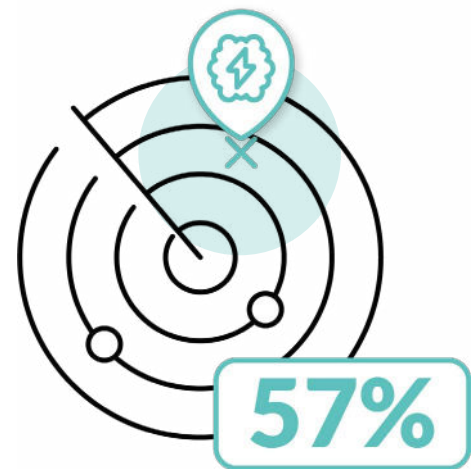
57% of respondents are trying to make centralized automation a key initiative.
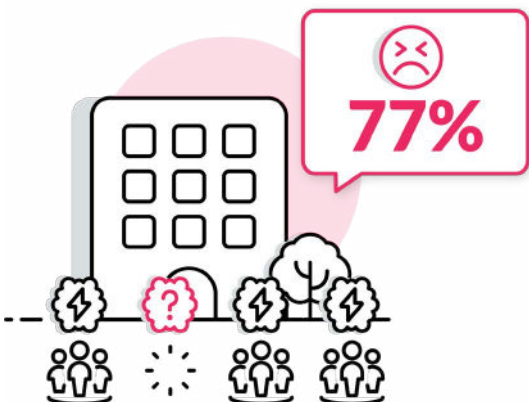
77% of respondents agree that business continuity becomes a very real issue.

6. A Threat to Business Continuity – Due to a lack of effective automation centralization, among other factors, 77% of respondents agree that business continuity becomes a very real issue any time a key member of the team leaves.

Recommendations:

Cloud budgets are being scrutinized. IT and Devs are being asked to do more with less. Companies are now in a world where there is a skills shortage and constraints are preventing companies from hiring additional resources to keep up. It's a new chapter for Cloud and automation is the answer. However, the only way automation becomes truly scalable and efficient is if there is a "home" where automations can be aggregated and curated enterprise-wide. While that may seem like a daunting task, the good news is that there are clear steps to make progress against this objective:

1. Acknowledge the Automation Silos Are Real – While most groups feel comfortable that they can access and share automations across their siloed teams, the larger promise of enterprise-wide automation efficiencies and reuse will never be realized until companies are willing to admit there is a major gap in the overall connective tissue. The first step in correcting a problem is admitting there is one. As an example, most silos have the same 3-5 manual processes that need to be automated.

2. Establish an Automation Center of Excellence – An automation center of excellence (CoE) includes the people, processes, and technology necessary to maximize the benefits of automation. Additionally, it accelerates collaboration and sharing. The CoE is crucial to finding immediate and longer-term automation opportunities, advising other teams, scaling automation within the organization, and carrying out a long-term vision.

3. Prove Value by Starting with Low-Hanging Fruit – Automation CoEs fail when organizations try to do too much too quickly and solve for everything at once (e.g., boil the ocean). Start with quick wins – pick your 3-5 most common manual automations (e.g., getting access to something). Use the CoE to identify automation scripts, integrations, blueprints, and code that represent duplicate efforts across teams. Once best examples of each are designated and made available (initially via a simple centralized repository), branch out to the work in one area that should be made available to all, and so forth. Then, build processes and procedures for introducing, vetting, promoting, governing, and retiring automations on-going so that best options are always available.

Gall's Law: Complex processes that work best evolve from simple processes – they are not designed from scratch. Don't try to automate everything at once – start small and grow.

4. Build a Unified "Automation App Store" – Advance beyond a simple repository to an advanced management system or automation exchange that makes it easy to find, evaluate, and execute proven workflow automations and elements. When done well, this repository serves as a home for automation that reduces friction and encourages both use and contributions.

5. Future State: Leverage Artificial Intelligence – Overlay tools like OpenAI and GitHub Copilot to your automation workflows and repository to make intelligent suggestions, inform needs, spot duplicative efforts, and quickly access desired automations and applicable elements.

Conclusion

Too many tools, too many automations, too many silos, and not enough sharing across enterprises (not just sharing across individual teams) is costing organizations precious time and money through inefficiencies and redundancies. Fully leveraging and accelerating automations in any company depends on the ability to unify disparate pieces of the work into a single repository for reuse – searchable and accessible by all who need it. So far, only 5% of companies are even claiming to do this. But the good news is that a majority (57%) of forward-thinking enterprises are prioritizing making a home for automation a reality.

Optimizing and making automation available enterprise-wide is a key component of achieving maximum value from any cloud strategy. Those who do will achieve definite competitive advantage through acceleration from reuse. Those who do not will lag behind, and whether they will be able to close the gap is unclear.

If your company is struggling with silos of automation, CloudBolt can help. Contact us to schedule a demo or start a conversation.

TALK TO US TODAY

CloudBolt software

CloudBolt Software is the enterprise cloud management leader. Our comprehensive solutions for IT automation, orchestration, self-service IT, cost optimization, and security help enterprises simplify complexity and achieve rapid time-to-value anywhere on their hybrid-cloud, multi-cloud journey. Our award-winning cloud management platform and infrastructure integration services are deployed 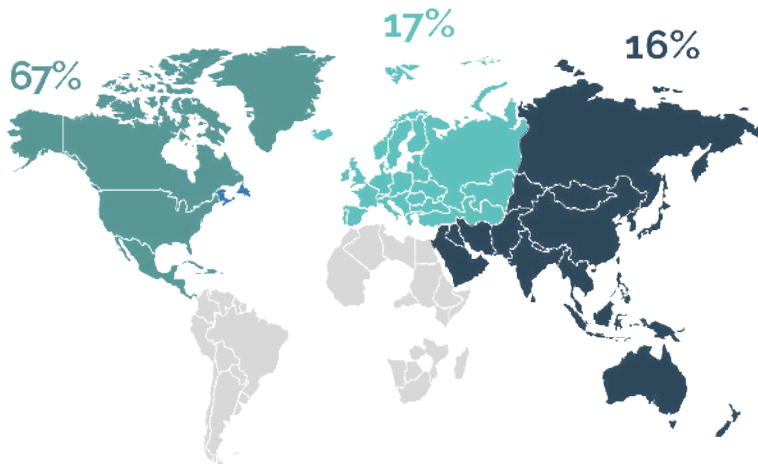and loved by enterprises worldwide. Backed by Insight Partners, CloudBolt Software has been named one of the fastest-growing private companies on the Deloitte Fast 500 and Inc. 5000 lists.

Appendix

Methodology

REGION

67%

17%

16%

ROLE IN ORGANIZATION

48%

32%

20%

Director   VP   C-Suite

COMPANY SIZE

100%

100% large enterprises
3,000 - 10,000 employees = 60%
10,000+ employees = 40%
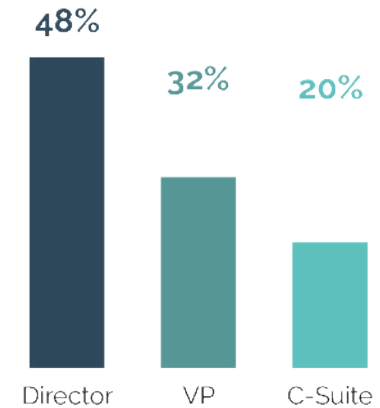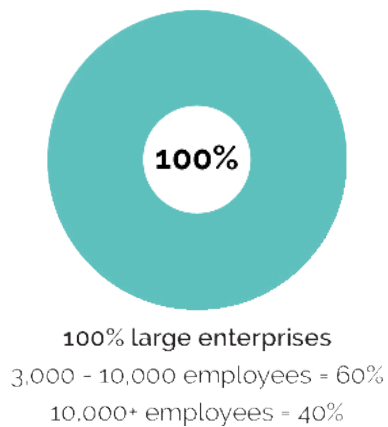
RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN

350 Respondents

1

How many separate automation teams are there across your entire company

0	0.86%
1	3.71%
2-3	37.14%
4-5	32.86%
6-10	7.71%
11-20	4.86%
>20	9.43%
Not sure	3.43%
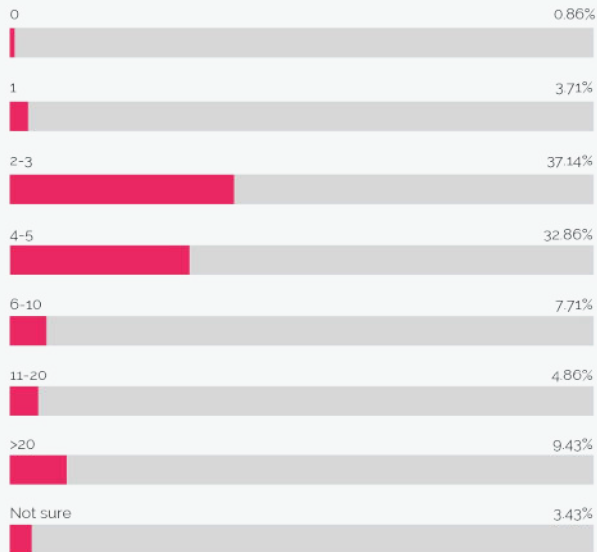
N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

2

How siloed are these automation teams?

Completely siloed	2.86%
Not siloed	5.14%
Not sure	1.71%
Somewhat siloed	63.14%
Very siloed	27.14%
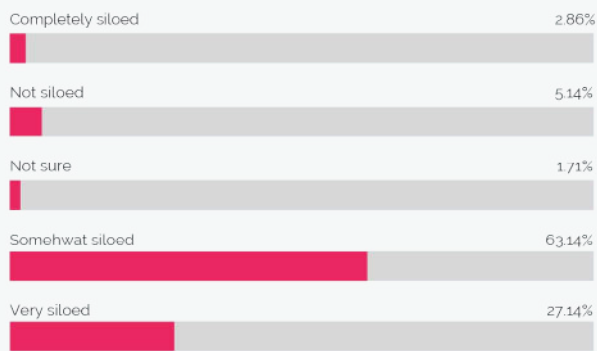
N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

3

Which automation technologies does your enterprise use today? Select all that apply.

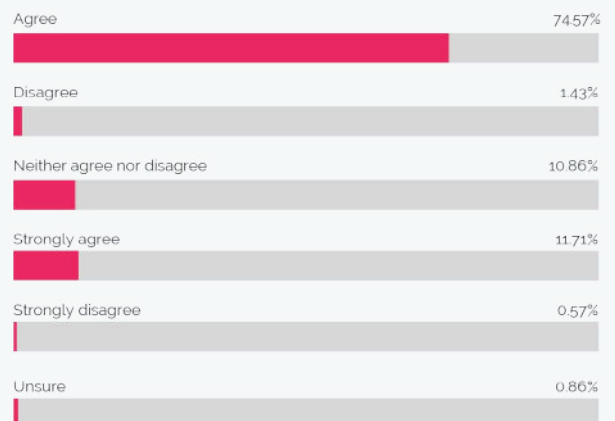|	
Puppet	66
Puppet Enterprise	102
Chef	69
Chef Enterprise	46
Ansible	91
Ansible Tower	36
Shell Scripts	91
Red Hat Kickstart	110
HP Server Automation	66
Bladelogic	11
HP Cloud Service Automation	86
BMC Cloud Lifecycle Management	24
vCloud Directory	33
SaltStack Open	10
SlatSlack Enterprise	9
Terraform	55
Terraform Enterprise	29
AWS CloudFormation	84
Azure Templates	72
Bicep	3
Pulomi	3
Helm Charts	17
Google Cloud Deployment Manager	23
VMware vRealize Automation (vRA)	42
VMware vRealize Orchestrations (vRO)	20
CF Engine	4
Foreman	2
Custom Code	50
Other Text	3

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

4

Silos of automation hamper my company's ability to unify cloud operations across functions (ITOps, SecOps, DevOps, and FinOps)

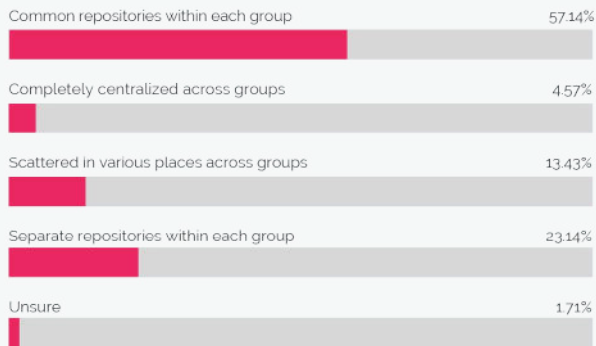|	
Agree	74.57%
Disagree	1.43%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.86%
Strongly agree	11.71%
Strongly disagree	0.57%
Unsure	0.86%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

5

Where do automation for various groups (e.g. teams, organizations, business units, etc.) in your company live?
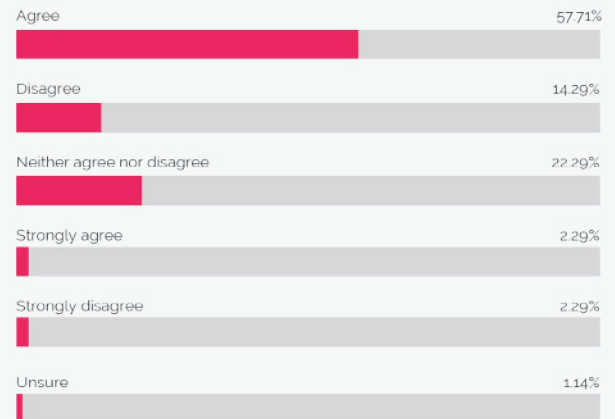
Common repositories within each group	57.14%
Completely centralized across groups	4.57%
Scattered in various places across groups	13.43%
Separate repositories within each group	23.14%
Unsure	1.71%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

6

My company's current approach for automation repositories makes it easy for me to find and use/reuse exactly what I need, when I need it.

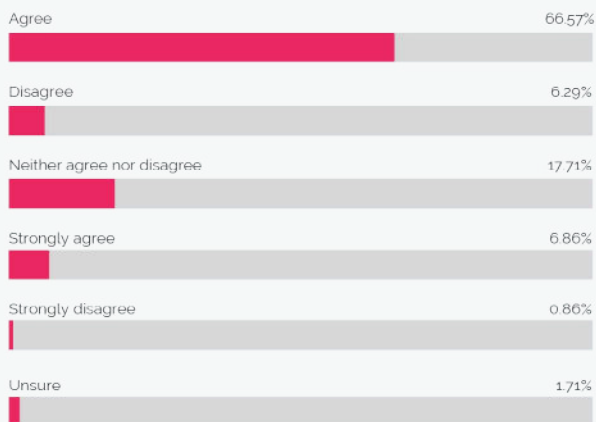|	
Agree	57.71%
Disagree	14.29%
Neither agree nor disagree	22.29%
Strongly agree	2.29%
Strongly disagree	2.29%
Unsure	1.14%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

7

My company's current approach for automation repositories makes it easy for me to find and use/reuse exactly what I need, when I need it.

Agree	66.57%
Disagree	6.29%
Neither agree nor disagree	17.71%
Strongly agree	6.86%
Strongly disagree	0.86%
Unsure	1.71%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

8

It would be valuable to have all legacy and future automation technologies centralized in one place for the entire organization that ensures compliance, increases security, enables business continuity, encourages reuse, and reduces risk.
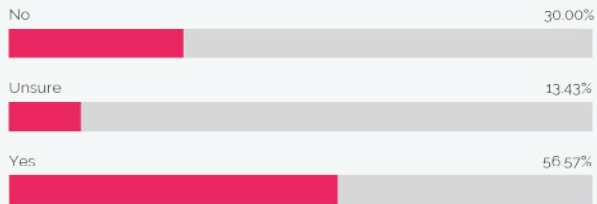
Agree	71.14%
Disagree	1.71%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.00%
Strongly agree	16.86%
Unsure	0.29%
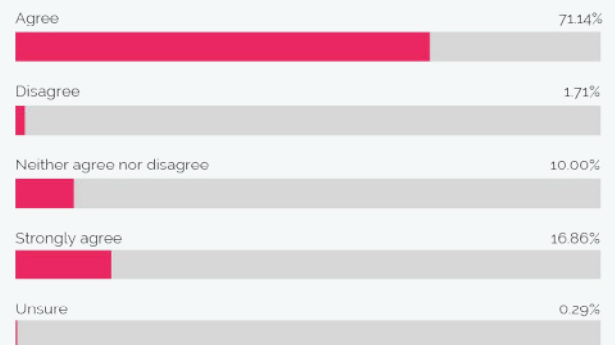
N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

9

My company has indicated that pulling all automations into a single repository is a key initiative.

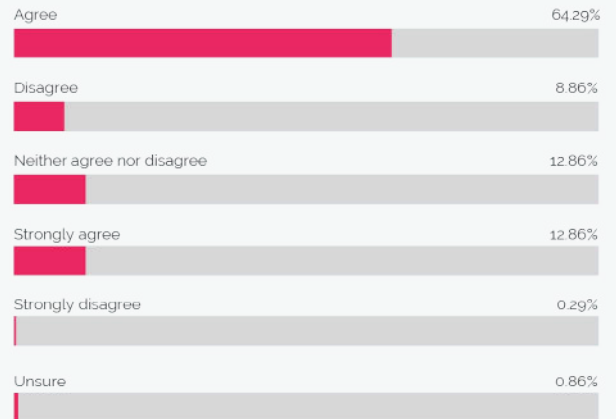No   30.00%

Unsure   13.43%

Yes   56.57%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE

10

Business continuity becomes an issue any time a key member of my team leaves

Agree   64.29%

Disagree   8.86%

Neither agree nor disagree   12.86%

Strongly agree   12.86%

Strongly disagree   0.29%

Unsure   0.86%

N - 350 technology leaders

PULSE