EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON TOP RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

for the Near- and Long-Term

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The secret to AI value in APAC isn't the tech: it's people, integration and governance

Leaders in the Asia-Pacific region enter 2027 with strong growth ambitions, but their opportunity agenda is becoming inseparable from technology risk.

They see scope to expand revenue, enter new markets and deepen strategic partnerships, while prioritising the workforce, integration and governance capabilities needed to realise value from AI. At the same time, cyber threats, disruptive innovation and skills constraints are testing organisational readiness. The findings point to a clear leadership imperative: Connect growth and transformation with stronger resilience, more agile decision-making and sustained investment in people, processes and security.

Where do leaders see the greatest opportunities for their organisation over the next two to three years?

APAC business leaders are entering the next few years with strong growth ambitions and a greater appetite for expansion. More than two-thirds (69%) see significant opportunities to grow revenue, up from 64% last year. But the more notable shift is geographic expansion: 54% see significant opportunities to grow beyond their domestic markets, up from 44% last year.

Views about opportunities for growth – APAC

	2027	2026
Revenue potential	69%	64%
Geographic expansion	54%	44%
Ecosystem development	58%	56%

Based on a five-point scale assessing agreement/disagreement.
Percentages reflect sum of "Agree completely" and "Agree somewhat" responses.

These findings indicate that leaders are looking beyond their existing footprint for growth. Rising expectations regarding opportunities outside domestic markets, together with continued interest in revenue growth, point to a broader appetite for expansion despite technological disruption and other sources of uncertainty.

Strategic ecosystems offer another key route to growth. A majority of leaders (58%) see significant opportunities to expand alliances and partnerships, compared with 56% last year. Alongside stronger interest in geographic expansion, this indicates that organisations are considering how external relationships can help them enter markets, extend capabilities and capture the next wave of growth.

The opportunity for APAC leaders is to convert that ambition into scalable growth. Expanding into new markets and developing stronger ecosystems can extend an organisation's reach, but success will depend on having the capabilities and adaptability to pursue those opportunities while managing the complexity that comes with them.

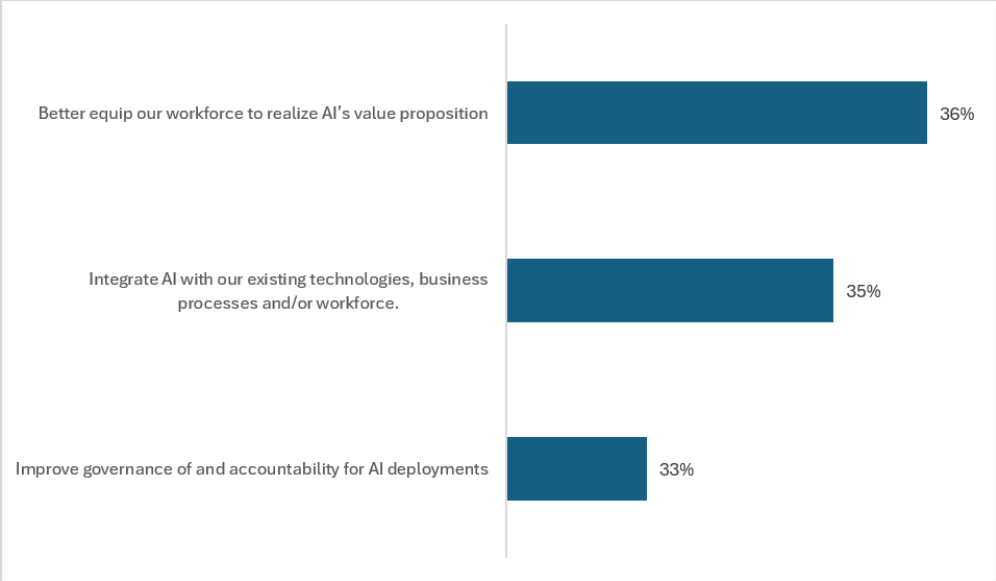
58%

see significant opportunities to expand ecosystem alliances and partnerships.

What priorities do leaders see as most important to maximising the value of AI deployments?

APAC business leaders are focused on turning AI adoption into enterprise value. Workforce enablement tops the agenda, with 36% identifying better equipping employees to realise AI's value proposition as a priority. Integration of AI with existing technologies, business processes and the workforce follows closely at 35%, while 33% prioritise stronger governance and accountability.

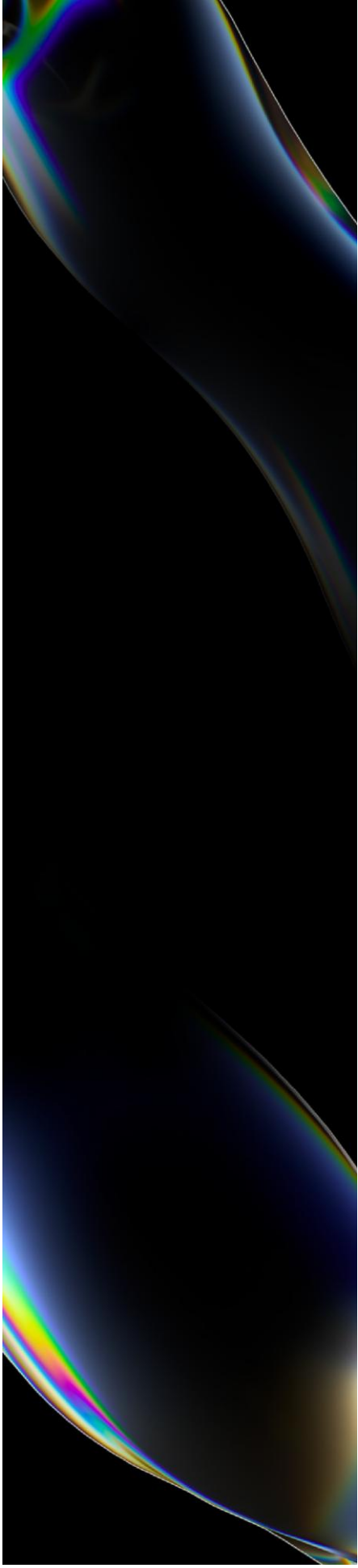
Top AI Opportunities – APAC



The narrow spread among these priorities is telling. Leaders recognise that realising AI's potential requires more than deploying the technology. Organisations need people capable of using AI effectively, operating models that embed it into how work gets done and governance that provides appropriate oversight as deployment expands.

By comparison, 27% prioritise deploying AI at a more competitive pace. This may indicate that some organisations believe they are already moving at a competitive speed. More importantly, it reflects growing recognition that successful AI deployment depends as much on defined processes, workforce enablement and effective integration across the enterprise as it does on speed.

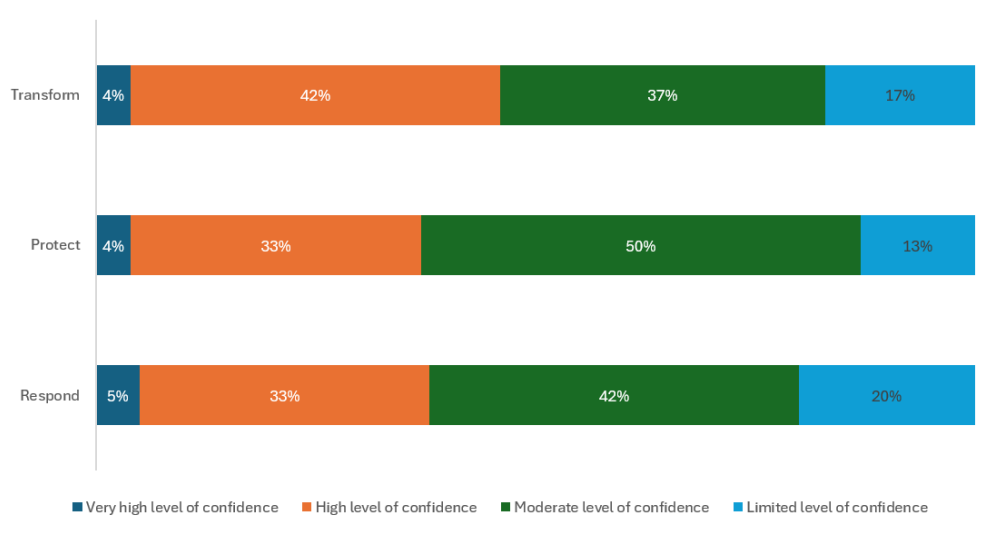
Leaders that align workforce capabilities with effective integration and clear accountability will be better positioned to move AI beyond isolated use cases and translate investment into sustained business value.



We asked leaders three specific questions about their views on the organisation's ability to (1) transform the enterprise, (2) protect enterprise value, and (3) respond with agility to market opportunities and risks. What did they tell us?

APAC business leaders show stronger confidence in transformation than in their ability to protect value or respond with agility. Nearly half (46%) report high or very high confidence in their organisation's ability to transform to sustain competitiveness and create enterprise value. That compares with 37% who express the same confidence in protecting enterprise value and 38% in responding with agility to emerging opportunities and risks.

Views about the ability to transform, protect and respond – APAC



The confidence gap points to an execution challenge. Leaders are more certain of their ability to transform than of their ability to protect the value created or respond quickly as conditions change. Because transformation can introduce new exposures and accelerate decision-making demands, the capacity to change must be matched by the capacity to safeguard value and adapt with agility.

This matters as APAC leaders pursue an ambitious growth agenda and work to scale AI across the enterprise. Those efforts can increase the speed and complexity of change, putting greater demands on resilience and decision-making.

46%

Report high confidence in their organisation's ability to transform to sustain competitiveness and create enterprise value.

For APAC leaders, the challenge is not simply to transform, but to make transformation more resilient. Bringing protection and agility closer to the confidence leaders already place in transformation can help organisations sustain the value they create while remaining ready to respond when opportunities or risks emerge.

What are the most significant near-term concerns and risks on the minds of leaders?

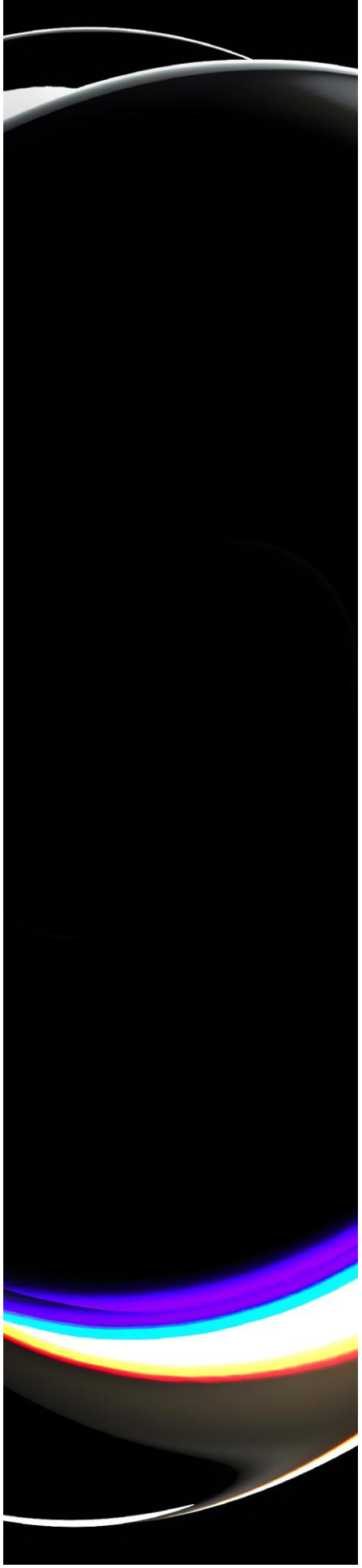
APAC's near-term risk outlook reveals a growing tension between technology ambition and readiness. Cyber threats rank as leaders' top concern, followed by the rapid pace of disruptive innovation enabled by emerging technologies and other market forces. Risks arising from AI implementation rank third.

Top five near-term risks – APAC

Risk description	2027	2026
Cyber threats	**3.38**	**3.05**
Rapid speed of disruptive innovations enabled by emerging technologies and/or other market forces	**3.27**	**2.80**
Emergence of new risks from implementing artificial intelligence	**3.26**	**2.97**
Skills and talent acquisition and retention, leadership development and succession challenges	**3.21**	**2.94**
Limited access to workforce skills needed to adopt new and emerging technologies	**3.20**	**3.06**

The concentration of technology-related issues at the top of the agenda is striking. AI and other emerging technologies can create new avenues for growth and transformation, but they can also expose organisations to cyber threats, disrupt established business models and introduce new execution challenges. For leaders, the imperative is not to slow innovation, but to ensure the enterprise can manage the risks that accompany it.

Broader concerns about talent access, acquisition and retention, leadership development, and succession are also prominent in the near-term outlook.



Overall, the findings reveal a widening gap between the pace of technological change and organisations' capacity to absorb it. Closing that gap will require APAC leaders to strengthen technology resilience while developing the workforce and leadership capabilities needed to convert disruption into sustained business value.

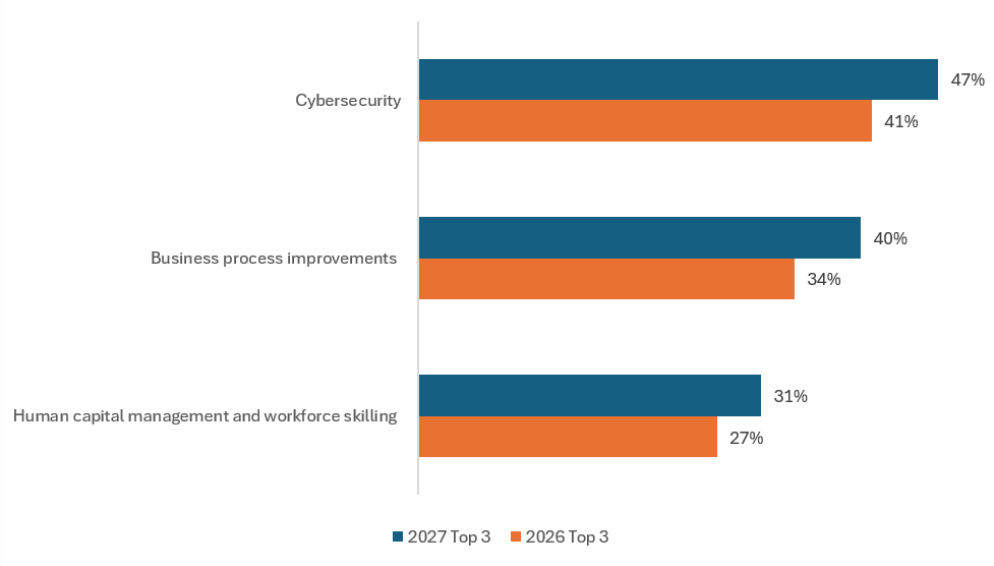
Given these near-term risk issues, where do organisations plan to invest most?

APAC organisations are directing investment toward the capabilities needed to protect the enterprise while making transformation work at scale. Cybersecurity leads the agenda, with 47% identifying it as a top-three investment priority, up from 41% last year. Business process improvement follows at 40%, rising from 34%, while human capital management and workforce skilling increases from 27% to 31%.

47%

identify cybersecurity as a top-three investment priority.

Top strategic investment priorities – APAC



All three priorities have gained ground since last year. Higher cybersecurity investment reflects the growing exposure created by a more technology-dependent enterprise. Greater emphasis on process improvement indicates that leaders expect transformation to produce better ways of operating, not simply new technology. Increased workforce investment reinforces that connection as organisations build the skills needed to adopt emerging technologies and realise value from them.

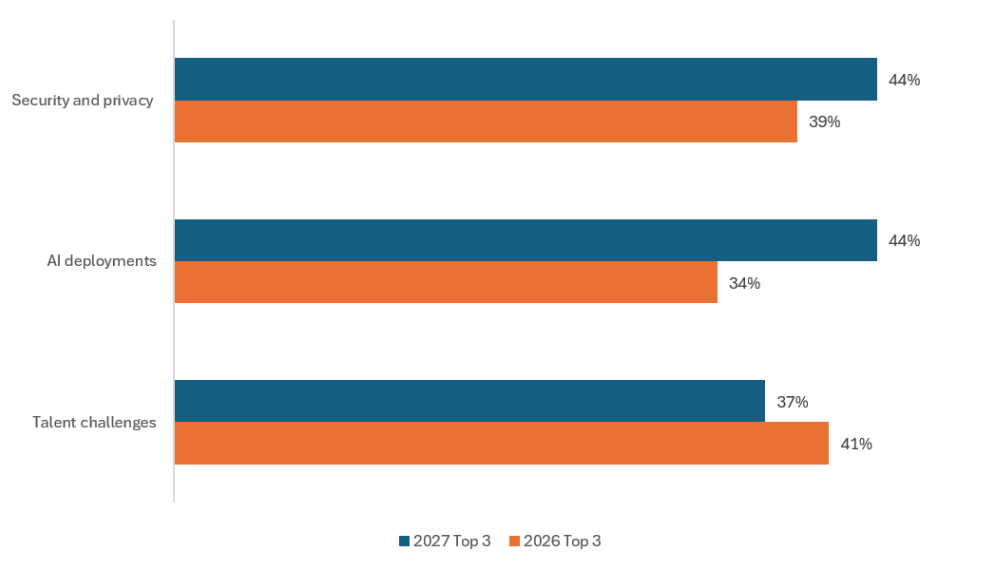
Other priorities support the same broader agenda. Infrastructure modernisation is cited by 28% of leaders, while advanced data analytics rises from 18% to 22%.

The investment agenda points to a shift from technology adoption toward enterprise capability. For APAC leaders, sustained value will depend on connecting technology investment with stronger processes and workforce readiness so the organisation can innovate without compromising resilience.

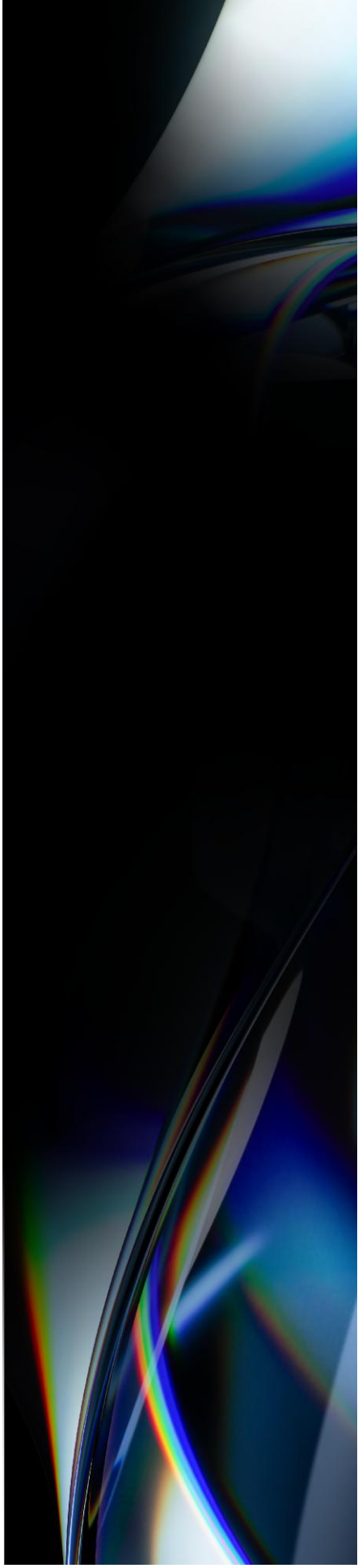
How do leaders view the 10-year risk outlook for their organisation?

APAC leaders see the next decade being shaped by the dual challenge of harnessing technology while managing the risks it creates. Security and privacy and AI deployments are tied as the leading long-term risk themes, each cited by 44% of respondents. AI shows the sharper upward trajectory, rising from 34% last year, while security and privacy increases from 39%.

Top long-term risks – APAC



That convergence is significant. AI is moving closer to the centre of enterprise strategy, but its expanding role also raises the stakes around security, privacy and organisational readiness. For leaders, the challenge will be to capture the competitive and operational benefits of AI without allowing greater digital dependence to expose the enterprise to risks that erode that value.



Beyond technology, the long-term risk outlook is shifting. Talent challenges, customers and competition, and markets and economies all declined year-over-year. Geopolitical challenges moved in the opposite direction, nearly doubling, signalling that external instability is becoming a more prominent part of the decade-long outlook.

The long-term agenda is becoming as much about governing technological change as pursuing it. APAC organisations that can advance AI while strengthening security and resilience will be better positioned to turn technological disruption into sustained enterprise value.

Calls to action for APAC leaders

- **Pursue growth with resilience built in.** As organisations expand into new markets and ecosystems, assess how operating models, controls and decision-making will scale with greater complexity.
- **Move AI from experimentation to enterprise execution.** Align workforce enablement, technology and process integration, and governance so that AI investments produce sustainable value rather than isolated gains.
- **Close the gap between transformation, protection and agility.** Strengthen cyber resilience, risk sensing and rapid response capabilities alongside transformation programmes so that new value can be protected as it is created.
- **Connect technology investment with process and workforce change.** Modernise infrastructure and analytics while redesigning processes and developing the skills needed to embed new technologies effectively.
- **Prepare for the long-term convergence of AI, security and privacy risks.** Establish an integrated approach to governing technological change that supports innovation while protecting trust and enterprise value.

About the survey

Our 15th annual **Executive Perspectives on Top Risks and Opportunities Survey** contains insights from 1,330 board members and C-suite executives around the world regarding their views on:

- Ability to transform and protect the enterprise and respond to market opportunities and risks;
- Opportunities for growth considering the current environment;
- Priorities perceived as most critical to maximizing the value of AI deployments;
- The top risks on the horizon for the near-term (two to three years ahead) related to 30 specific risks across three dimensions (transform, protect and respond);
- A discussion of their organizations' near-term strategic investment priorities, given the opportunities and the risks they face; and
- The long-term horizon based on 11 risk themes that encompass the 30 near-term risk issues.

Our survey participants shared their views through an online survey conducted in June and July 2026.

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