Enterprise Data Strategy Board™

2025 STATE OF ENTERPRISE DATA GOVERNANCE

In this report, we explore how senior data leaders are modernizing governance programs, overcoming organizational challenges, and preparing for new demands like AI oversight.

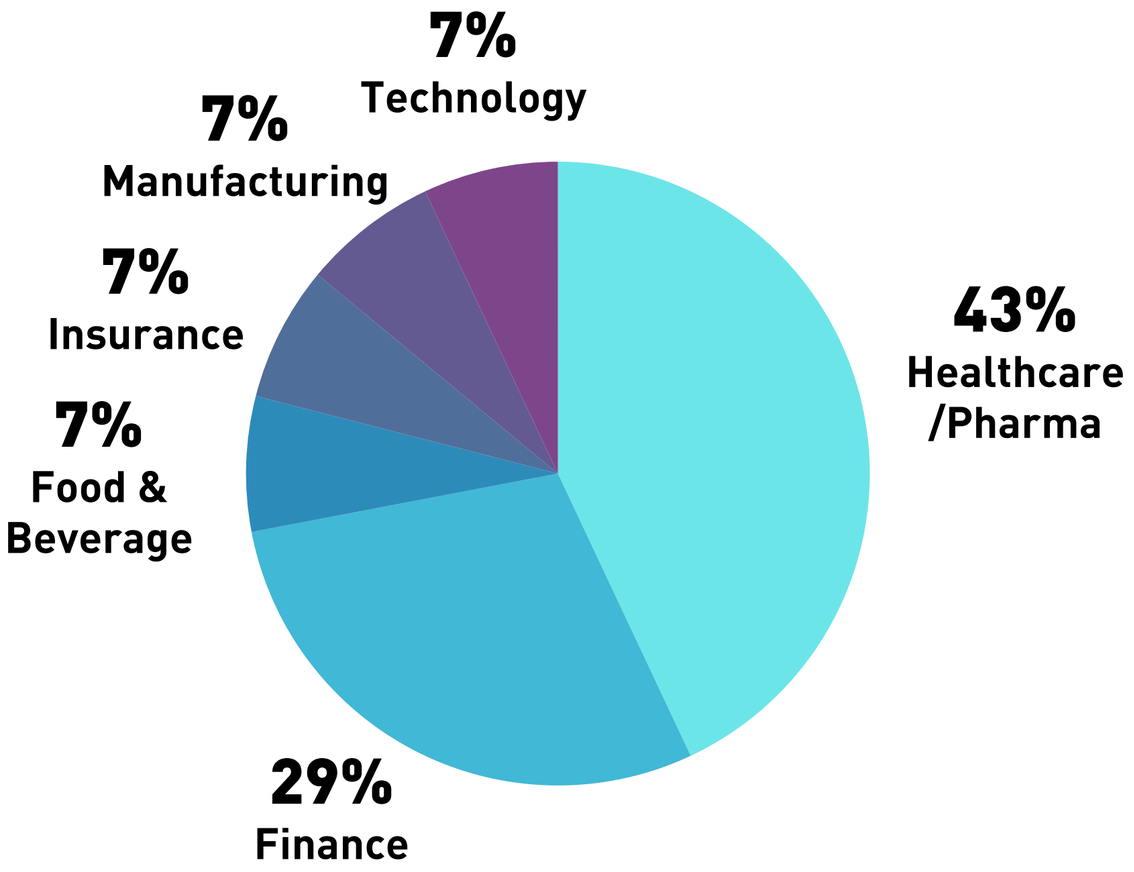
Introduction & Methodology

We asked Enterprise Data Strategy Board members and other senior data leaders how they are structuring, scaling, and modernizing their data governance programs in 2025. Their insights reveal the evolving priorities, challenges, and strategies shaping governance across large enterprises.

We collected responses from 14 senior data leaders across approximately eight industries. The survey concluded on April 18, 2025, providing a timely snapshot of how organizations are advancing governance to meet today's demands.

The Data Leaders Represented In This Survey

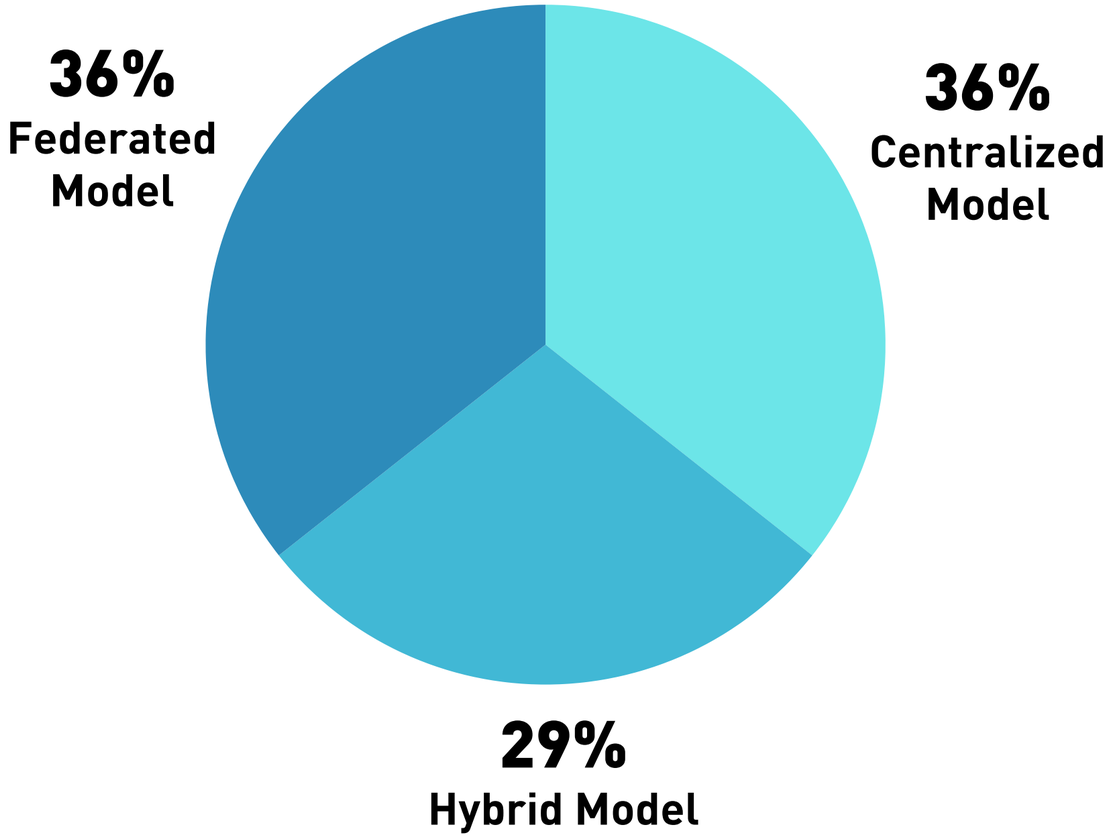
Majority of survey respondents work Healthcare/Pharma or Finance industries with titles ranging from Director to AVP of data governance, analytics, AI strategy, and technology.



Data Governance Structure

Responses to this question show a nearly even divide between centralized and federated data governance models, each chosen by 36% of respondents.

Hybrid approaches are also gaining traction, cited by 29%, suggesting that many companies are experimenting with shared ownership models across business units.



What Matters Most in Data Governance

When asked to rank the most important aspects of governance, a majority of data leaders put stewardship and ownership at the top, followed closely by data quality and metadata management.

The results highlight a continued focus on accountability, trust, and the foundational elements that enable effective governance across the enterprise.

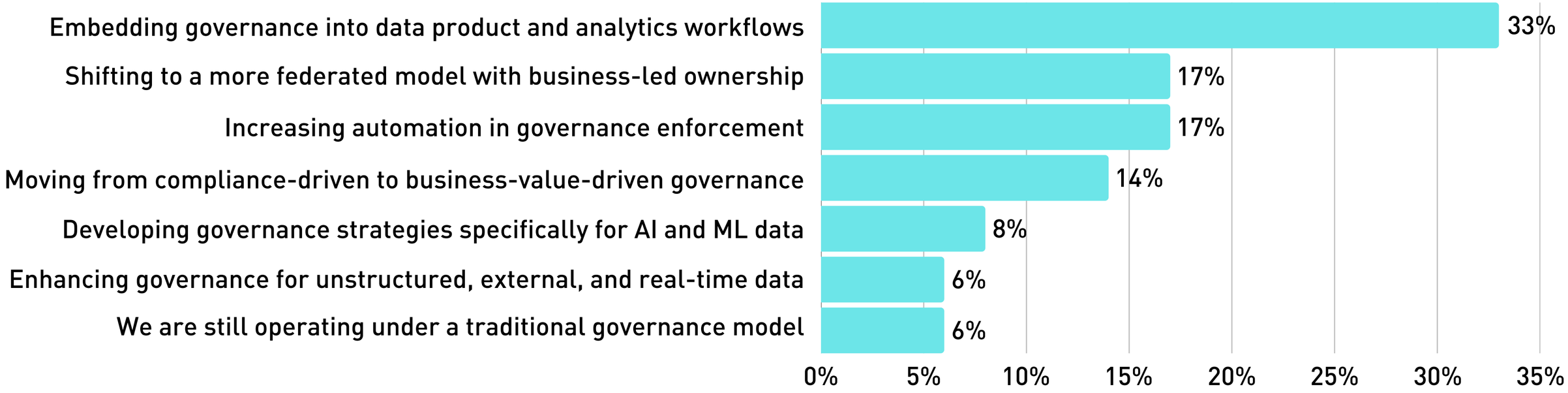
#1	Stewardship & Ownership
#1	Data Quality
#3	Metadata Management
#4	Regulatory Compliance
#5	Access & Privacy Controls
#6	Master/Reference Data Management
#7	Data Lineage & Observability
#8	AI & Emerging Tech Governance

Automation and Business Ownership Are Seen as the Key to Governance Success

When asked what changes would most enable their data governance efforts, respondents most often pointed to increased automation and greater business unit ownership. Together, these priorities made up 40% of total selections.

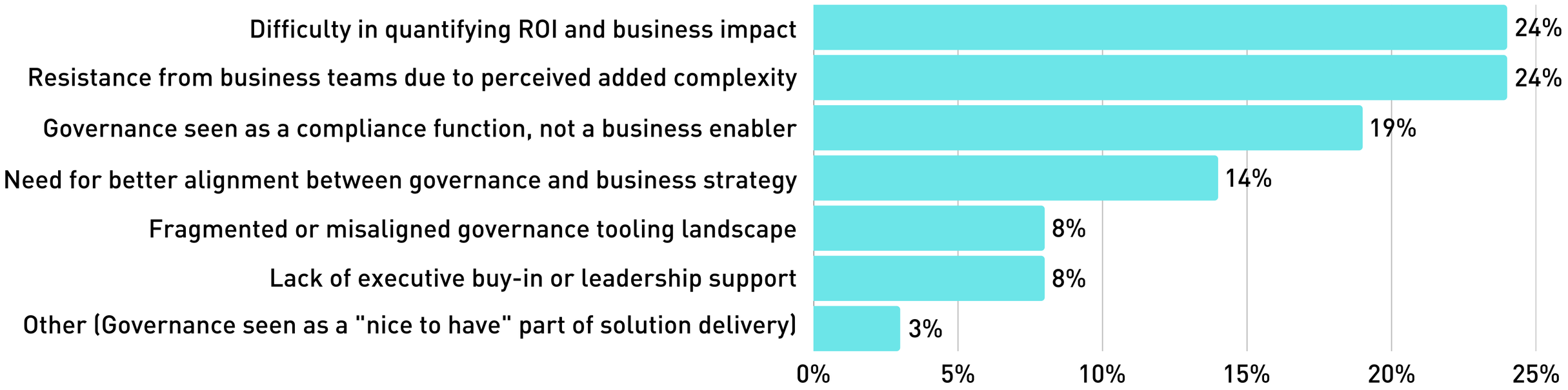
Governance Modernization Starts with Workflow Integration and Automation

One-third of total responses focused on embedding governance into data product and analytics workflows, making it the most common modernization approach among respondents. Many are also advancing their strategies by automating enforcement and shifting to more federated models.



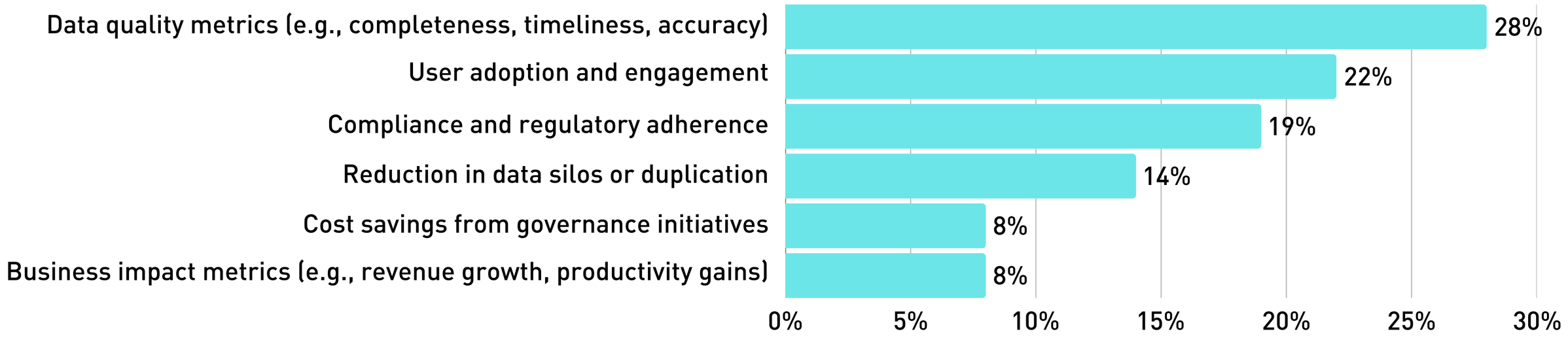
Building the Business Case for Governance is Still a Challenge

Data leaders identified two top challenges when making the case for modernizing data governance: difficulty quantifying ROI and business impact and resistance from business teams due to perceived added complexity. Additionally, nearly 1 in 5 selections cited the perception of governance as a compliance-only function.



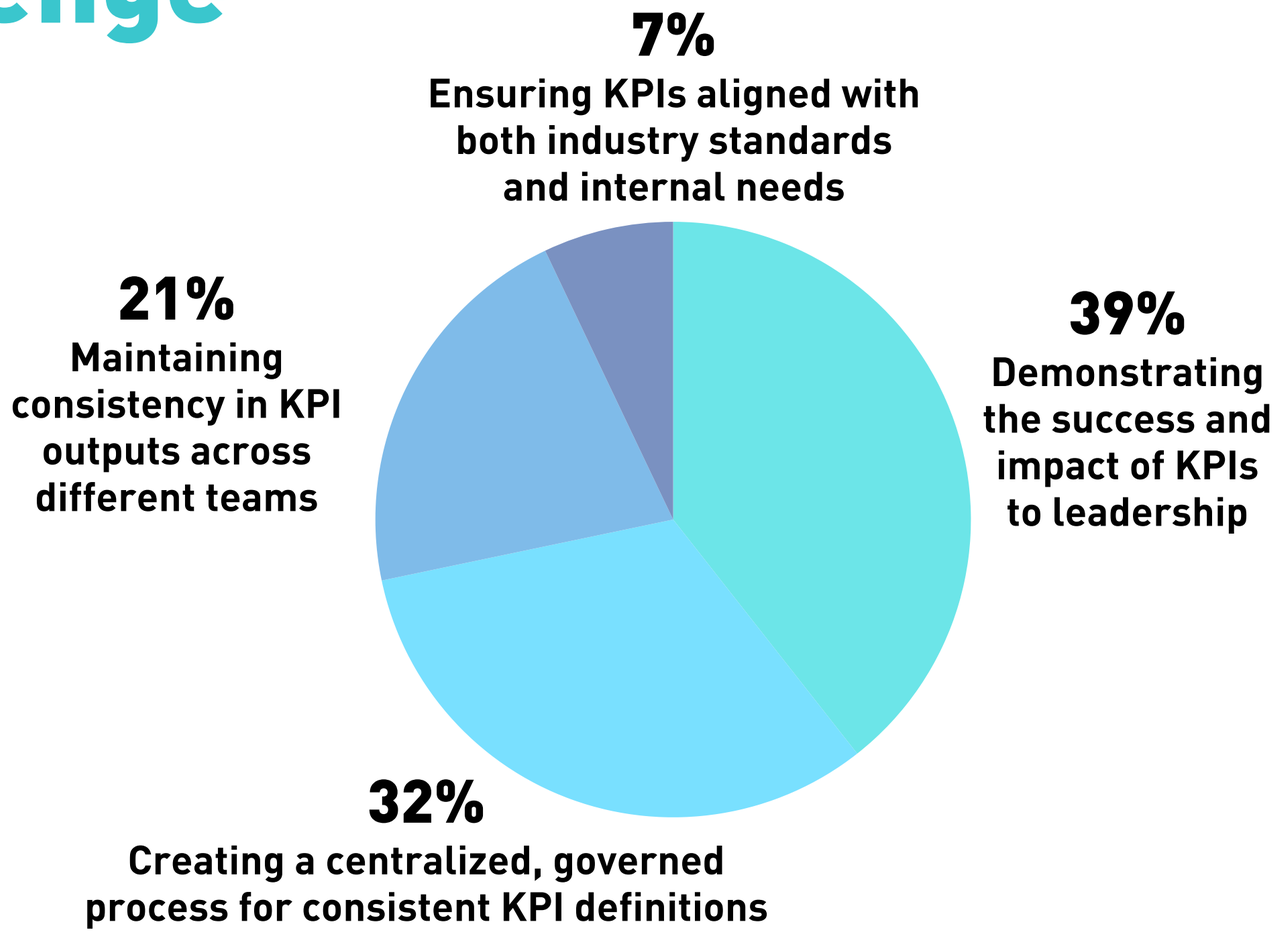
Data Quality and User Adoption are the Top Governance KPIs

When measuring data governance success, data quality metrics topped the list, making up 28% of total responses. This was followed by user adoption and engagement and compliance adherence . While data leaders are using business impact metrics, they lagged behind — highlighting that many organizations still track governance through operational and regulatory lenses more than strategic or financial ones.



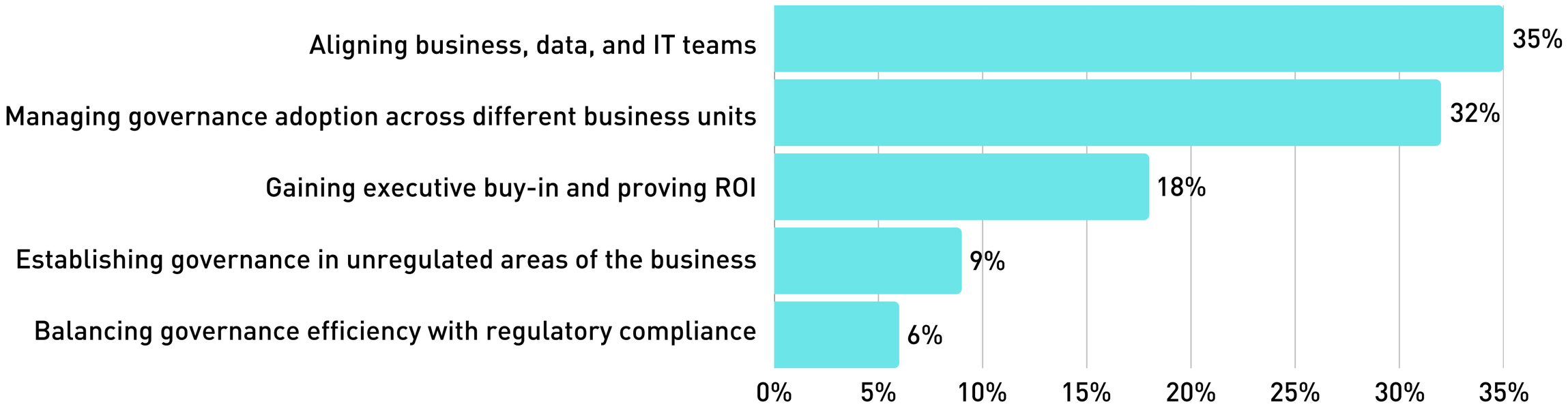
Building Consistent, Impactful Governance KPIs Remains a Challenge

The biggest hurdle to effective governance KPI tracking is demonstrating impact to leadership, which accounted for nearly 40% of responses.



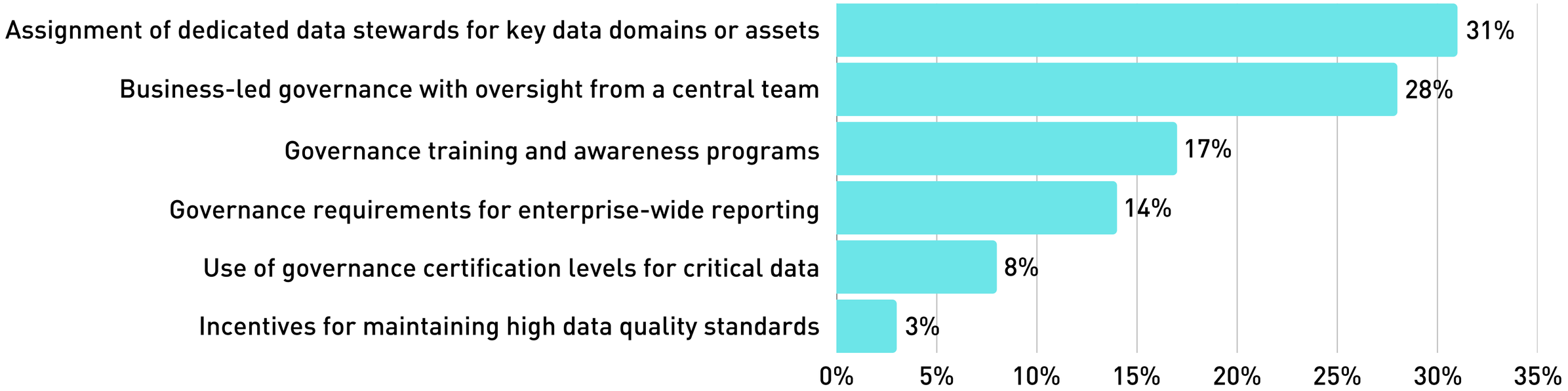
The Top Barriers to Scaling Governance

Data leaders said the biggest barriers to scaling governance are aligning business, data, and IT teams and managing adoption across business units. These organizational hurdles outweighed concerns like executive buy-in or regulatory balance.



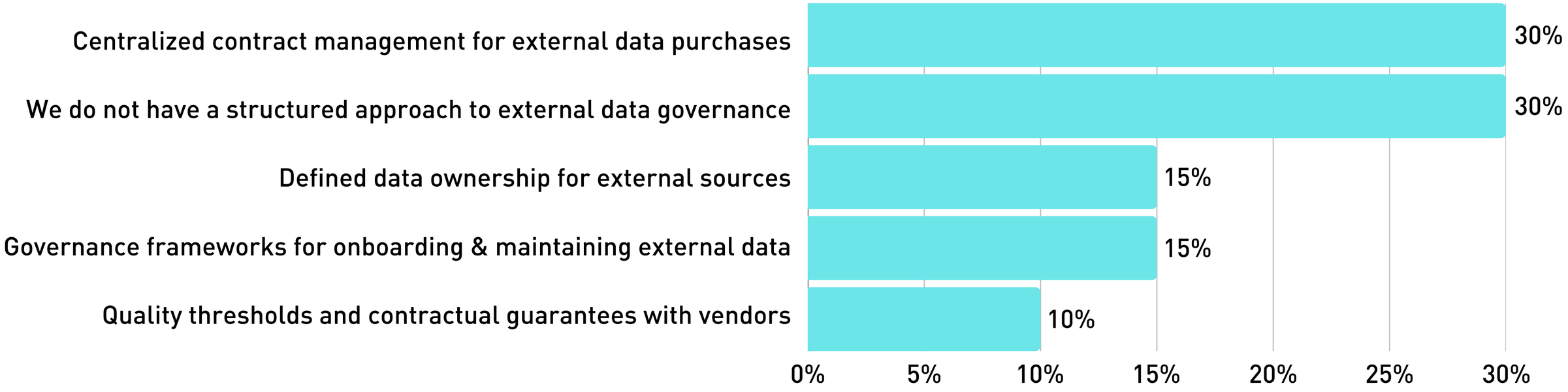
Business Ownership and Clear Roles Are Driving Governance Adoption

Data leaders said the most common way to encourage governance adoption is by assigning dedicated data owners and stewards, followed closely by business-led governance models with central oversight.



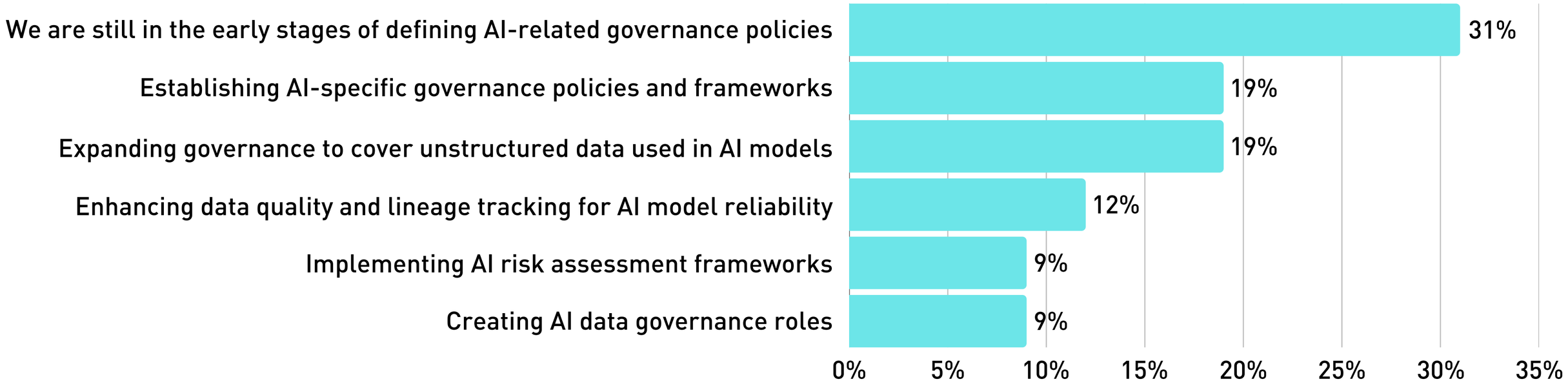
External Data Governance Is Still Largely Unstructured

When asked how they govern external data sources, data leaders were split: 30% said they don't yet have a structured approach, while another 30% rely on centralized contract management.



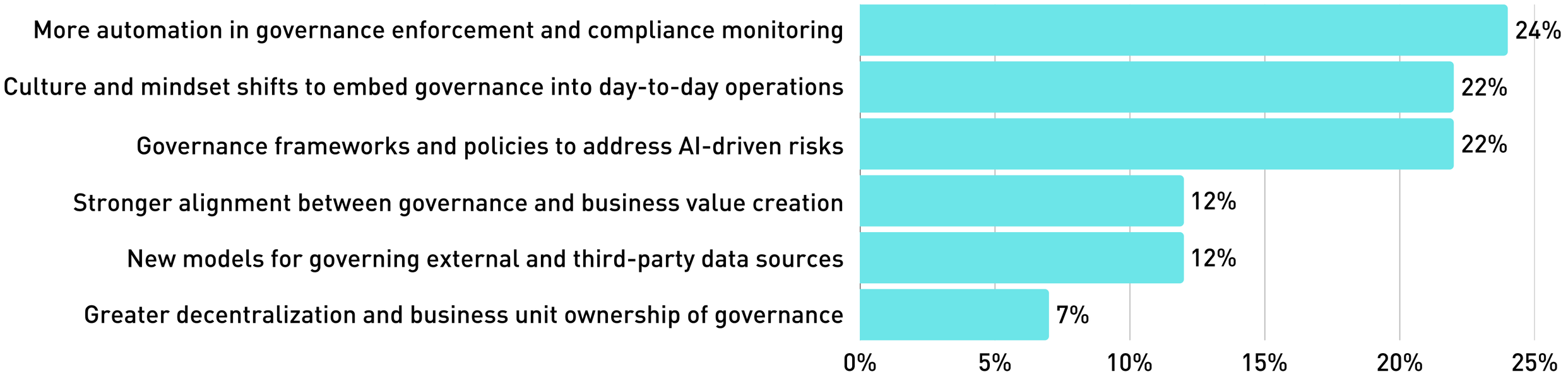
Data Teams Are Still Defining Their AI Governance Strategy

Data leaders said their organizations are largely in the early stages of AI governance, with 31% of responses reflecting that maturity gap. Others are starting to establish AI-specific policies, expand governance to unstructured data, and enhance lineage tracking — but comprehensive oversight remains a work in progress.



Automation, AI Policies, & Culture Shifts Are Primed for Transformation in the Next 5 Years

The next five years will demand major shifts in governance automation, AI-specific policy development, and embedding governance into daily operations.



Enterprise Data Strategy Board™

About the Enterprise Data Strategy Board

The Enterprise Data Strategy Board delivers unbiased peer insights from a trusted community — led by expert advisors — that help data strategy leaders and their teams at big companies quickly make informed strategic decisions.

Data strategy leaders rely on this community to discuss data management, governance, analytics, architecture, literacy, AI, ML, self service, vendors, consultants, BI, change management, and more.

With no vendors and no selling allowed, members get honest answers from true peers — who don't have an agenda. And because we enforce strict confidentiality rules, members get information they can't get anywhere else.

Our service is fast, unlimited, and on-demand — with dedicated, full-time advisors who don't stop until members have the answers they need. All members have to do is ask, we take care of everything else.