

IT 2020

TRENDS

RESHAPED REALITY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the end of 2019, we used the [results of our 2020 IT Trends Report](#) to predict which tasks IT professionals were going to take on during 2020. However, the pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns and global economic downturn forced many organizations to change their IT priorities. To understand this shift and revise our predictions, we conducted another online survey, polling 937 IT professionals from around the world in June 2020. Each respondent picked up to five IT priorities by either choosing from a predefined list or writing in their own options. To better reflect the needs of organizations during the work-from-home experiment, we added two options that were missing in the previous survey: **supporting cloud infrastructure and network security**. (The complete list of options is provided at the end of this document.)

We compared the results of the new survey with the findings from our previous research and discovered the following:

— In Q2 2020, **network security** joined **data security** at the top of the list of IT priorities. The third most important IT project remained **raising cybersecurity awareness among employees**.

— Data privacy and regulatory compliance remain a priority for less than half of organizations.

— Automation of IT processes became less critical in the new survey, but it is still among the top five priorities for one third of organizations.

— Digital transformation dropped to the bottom of the top-10 list. However, public sector and enterprises with 10,000+ employees expressed more interest in digital transformation than they did before the pandemic.

— Interest in IT talent acquisition also dropped significantly — most likely due to hiring freezes amidst the crisis.

— Implementation of AI-based solutions remains off the radar of most organizations. However, one third of enterprises with 50,000+ employees now plan to implement this technology.

KEY FINDINGS BY THE NUMBERS



76%

of organizations named data security and network security as their top IT priorities for the rest of 2020.



56%

of public institutions now plan to focus on digital transformation; before, only 26% considered it important.



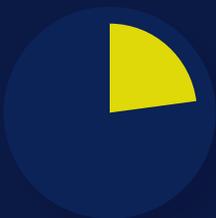
52%

of organizations are going to invest in employee security awareness, which is about the same percentage (51%) that chose this task as a priority in the earlier survey.



38%

of CIOs and IT directors now plan to invest in the education of IT personnel. Pre-pandemic, only 20% had it on their list.



ONLY 24%

of healthcare organizations now see regulatory compliance as a top priority, down from 42% prior to the pandemic.



ONLY 23%

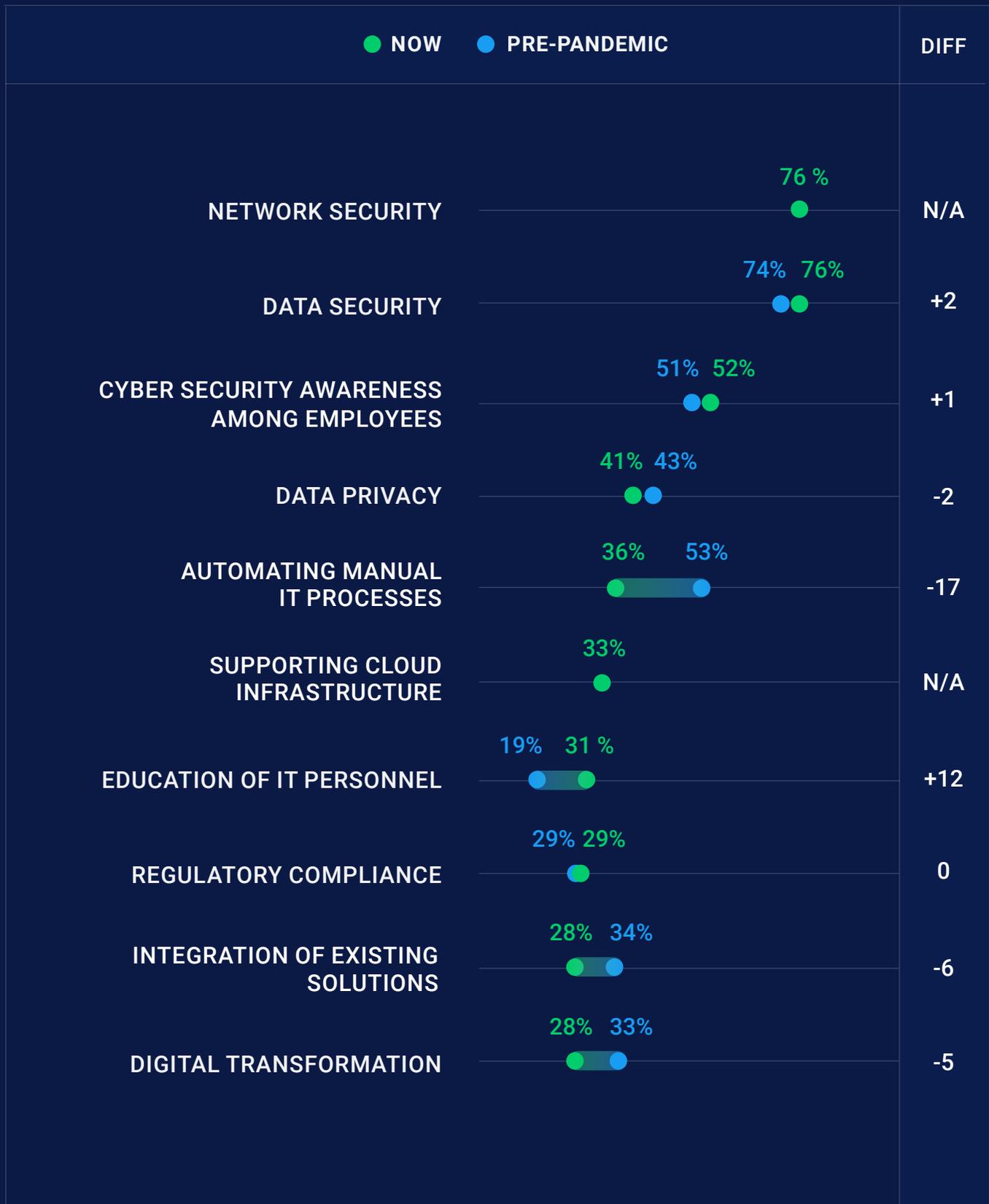
plan to focus on cloud migration projects.

TOP 10

GLOBAL

IT PRIORITIES





MAJOR TRENDS

mentioned by most organizations



NETWORK SECURITY

Unsurprisingly, network security made it to the top of the list, with 76% of the organizations giving it the highest priority.

93%

of organizations in retail & wholesale see network security as their top priority for 2020, which is more than any other vertical.



DATA SECURITY

Data security remains among the top priorities, with 76% of the organizations planning to focus on it.

85%

of financial organizations consider it a priority, which is more than any other vertical.



CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS

With so many people working remotely, cybersecurity awareness is becoming a hot topic. It was named a priority by 52% of organizations.

67%

of organizations with 5,001–10,000 employees plan to invest in employee security awareness — double the percentage from last year (33%).



DATA PRIVACY

The GDPR is in full effect, enforcement of the CCPA has begun, and other privacy laws are either in the works or have already been adopted, so privacy is of a huge concern. 41% of organizations are planning to focus on protecting the privacy of consumer data, about the same as in the earlier survey.

ONLY 31%

of financial organizations plan to focus on data privacy, even though 63% named it a core priority before the pandemic.



AUTOMATING MANUAL IT PROCESSES

By automating routine tasks, organizations can do more with less and focus their efforts on more pressing issues, so 36% of respondents named it a top priority.

Organizations with

1,001–5,000

employees are the most focused on automation, with 47% naming it a priority.

TRENDS THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE TOP



SUPPORTING CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

Although cloud technologies are more widely used by organizations while staff are working remotely, only 33% of respondents said that supporting cloud infrastructure is one of their top five priorities.

44%

of respondents from organizations with 10,001–50,000 employees chose supporting cloud infrastructure as a priority.



EDUCATION OF IT PERSONNEL

With hiring freezes in place at many organizations, 31% of respondents see educating their current IT pros as a great option for addressing the skills shortage.

FROM **20%** TO **38%**

The share of CIOs and IT directors that plan to invest in IT education has almost doubled since WFH, from 20% before the pandemic to 38% now.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Overall, only 28% of respondents plan to prioritize digital transformation. However, interest varies a great deal by sector.

56%

of institutions in the public sector now plan to focus on digital transformation, though before the pandemic, only 26% considered it a priority.



REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

As before the pandemic, 29% of organizations now view compliance as a core priority.

24%

of healthcare organizations now plan to focus on regulatory compliance, down from 42% before the pandemic.



INTEGRATION OF EXISTING SOLUTIONS

Integrating existing systems helps reduce IT expenditures and simplify management. However, with the need to support business continuity during the lockdown, interest in these projects dropped slightly, from 34% to 28%.

44%

of CIOs had integration on their bucket lists before the pandemic. Today, only 25% say it is critical.



IMPLEMENTATION OF AI-BASED SOLUTIONS

Our previous survey found that only a few organizations were going to focus on AI projects. As expected, even fewer are interested now (12%).

33%

of organizations with more than 50,000 employees plan to deploy AI projects, while, at the end of 2019, this task didn't even make into their top ten priorities.



IT TALENT ACQUISITION

With the economic downturn, only 14% of respondents plan to hire more employees.

34%

of organizations in France are planning to hire extra IT staff, which is the highest result among all countries represented in the survey.



CLOUD MIGRATION

Only 23% of respondents are planning to focus on cloud migration. Apparently, the massive transition to remote work in March/April required organizations to concentrate on cloud migration, and now they are shifting their focus to other issues.

33%

of organizations with more than 50,000 employees are planning to work on cloud migration tasks.

TOP 10

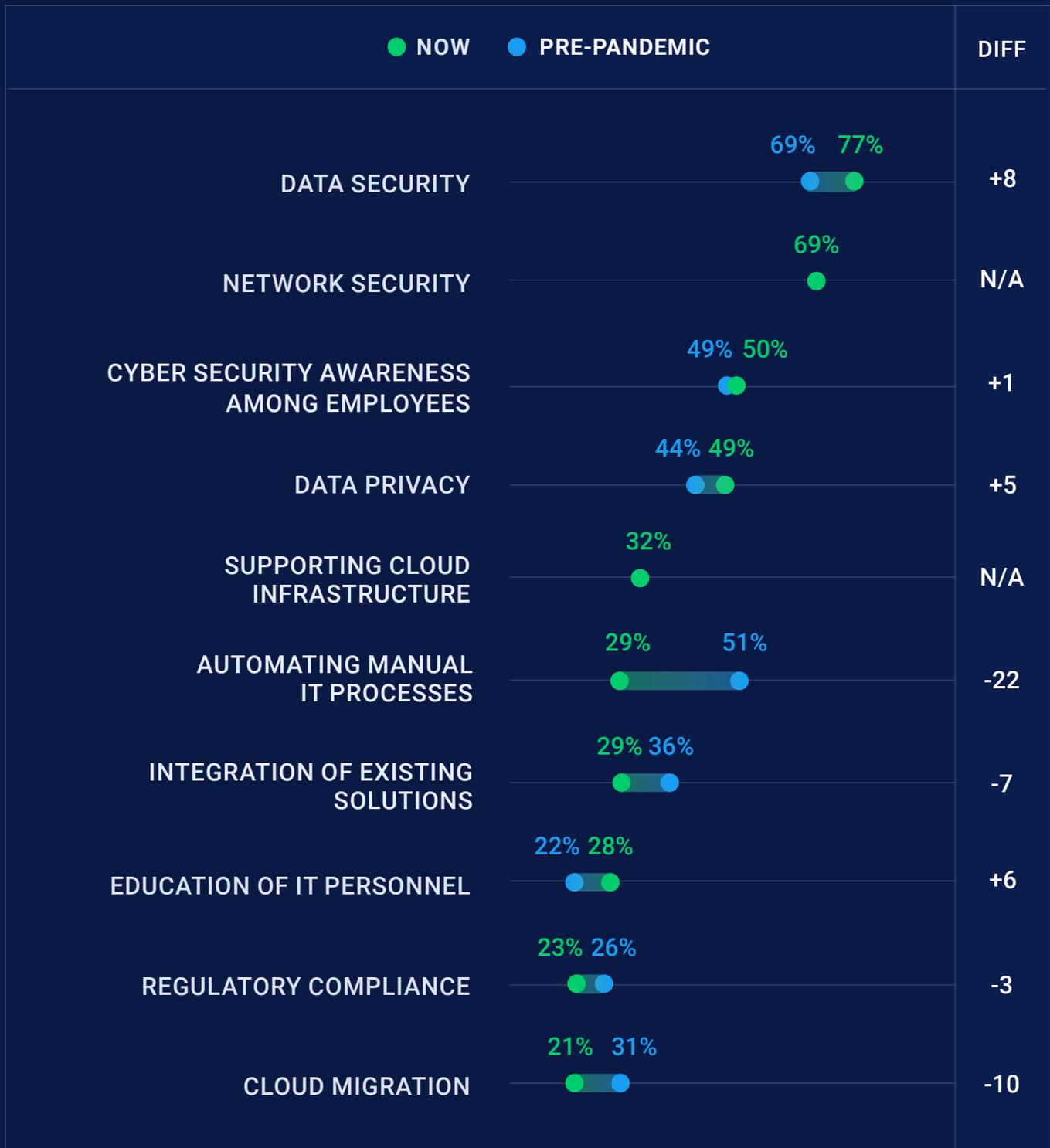
IT PRIORITIES

BY ORGANIZATION SIZE




1-100 EMPLOYEES

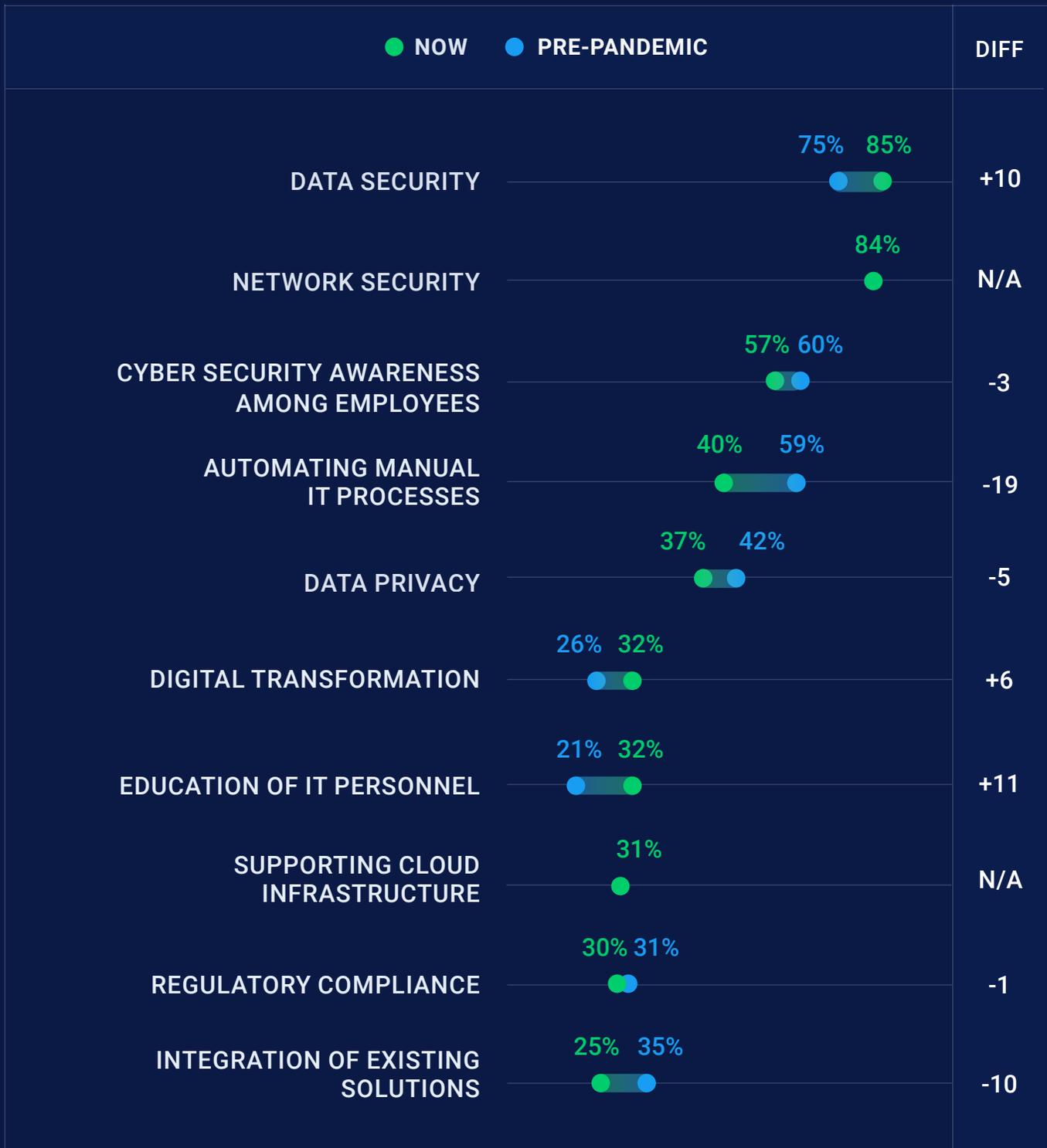
Smaller organizations continue to prioritize cybersecurity and data privacy. However, they are shifting focus away from automating manual IT processes to more pressing issues, such as supporting cloud infrastructure. We also noticed that they are more interested in investing in educating IT personnel, a task that did not even make it into their top-10 list last year.





101–1,000 EMPLOYEES

Enterprises with 101 to 1,000 employees kept security and automation of IT routines on their radar. What is interesting is that digital transformation and education of IT staff are becoming more critical for these organizations. Probably, they see this period of uncertainty as an opportunity to transform legacy processes and need to make sure that their IT staff will be able to support them.





1,001–5,000 EMPLOYEES

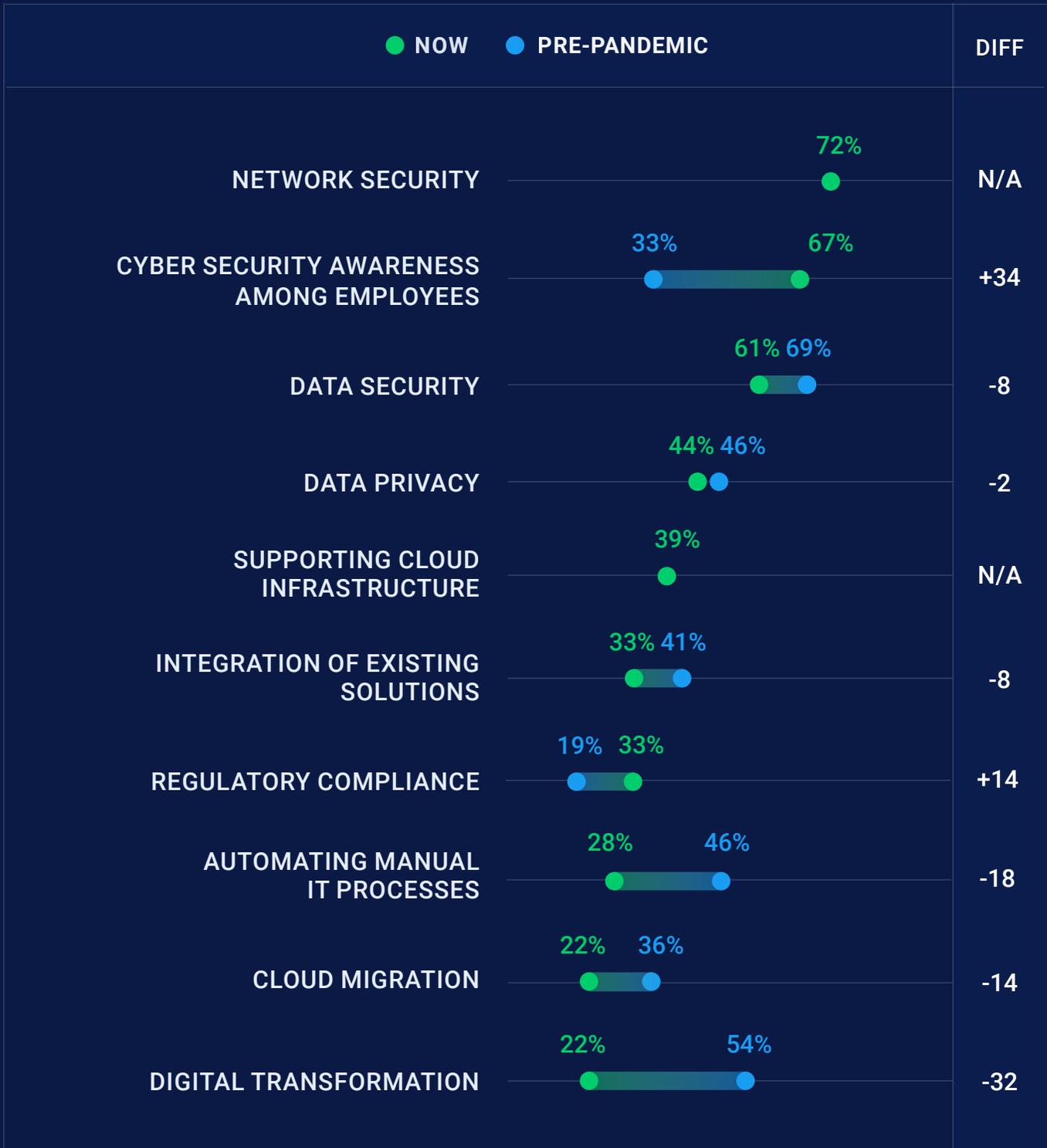
Organizations with 1,001–5,000 employees are also greatly shifting their focus to the education of existing IT personnel; 41% listed it in the June survey even though it did not make the top 10 in the earlier study. Cloud migration, on the other hand, is becoming less critical, dropping from 43% to 31%. Cybersecurity and automation of manual tasks remain important.





5,001–10,000 EMPLOYEES

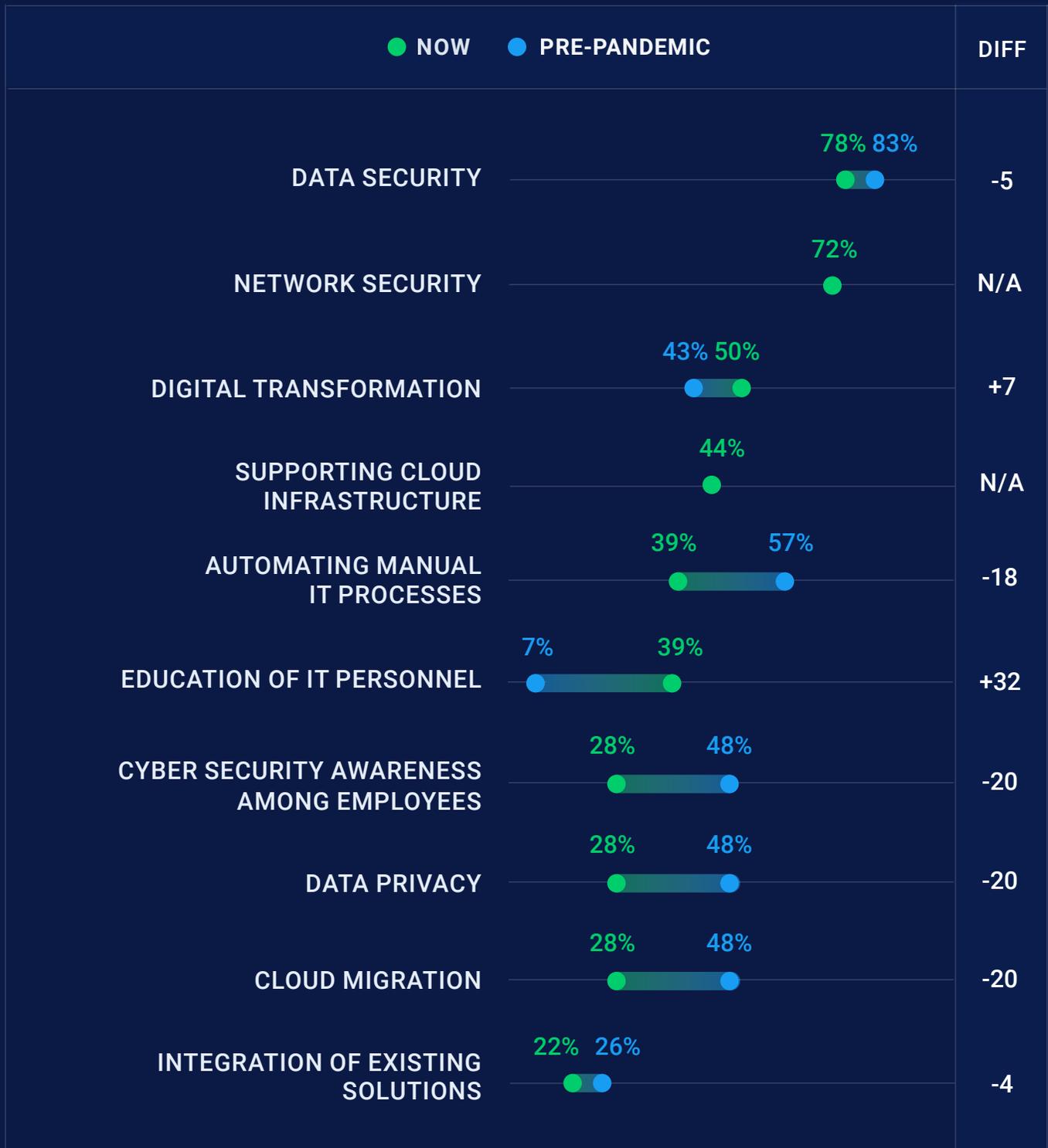
Organizations with 5,001–10,000 employees see employees as a weak link, focusing more on educating employees about secure behavior than companies of other sizes. Indeed, interest in this task doubled from 33% pre-pandemic to 67% now. Judging by the fact that the top three priorities for this group are associated with security, we might conclude that these organizations experienced the most stress from the transition to remote work.





10,001–50,000 EMPLOYEES

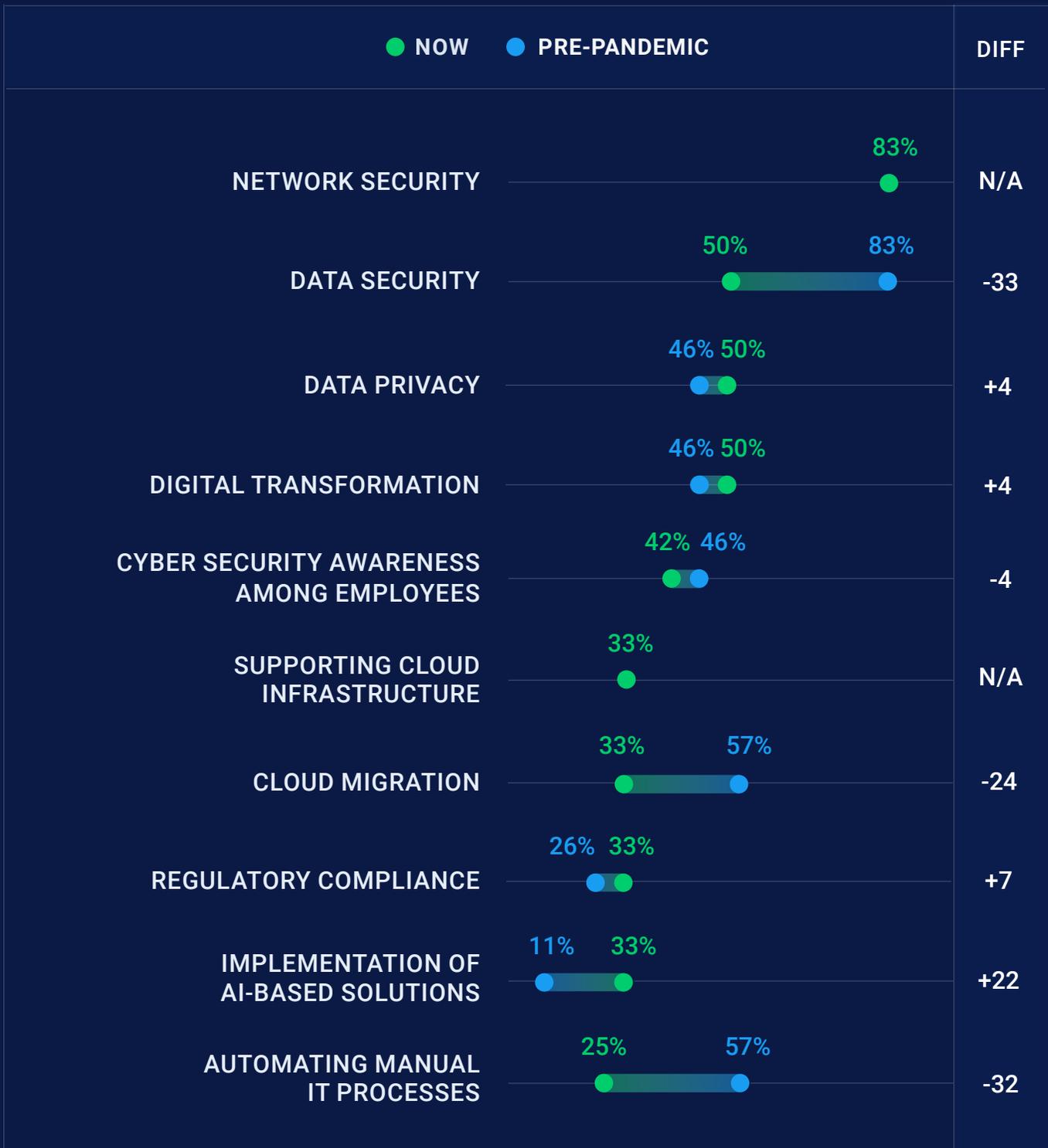
Data security remains the top priority for enterprises with 10,001–50,000 employees. Interest in data privacy, however, has almost halved, from 48% to 28%. Interestingly, digital transformation has climbed into the top three IT priorities, with every second enterprise planning to innovate its business processes.





MORE THAN 50,000 EMPLOYEES

Enterprises of more than 50,001 employees also seem to be ready to innovate. They demonstrated the highest interest in AI projects (33%), though last year it was not one of their top ten priorities. Also, every second large enterprise chose data privacy as a priority, which is likely related to complying with privacy regulations. Overall, network security and data security are on top at the moment, while operational tasks, such as cloud migration and IT routine automation, have been pushed aside.

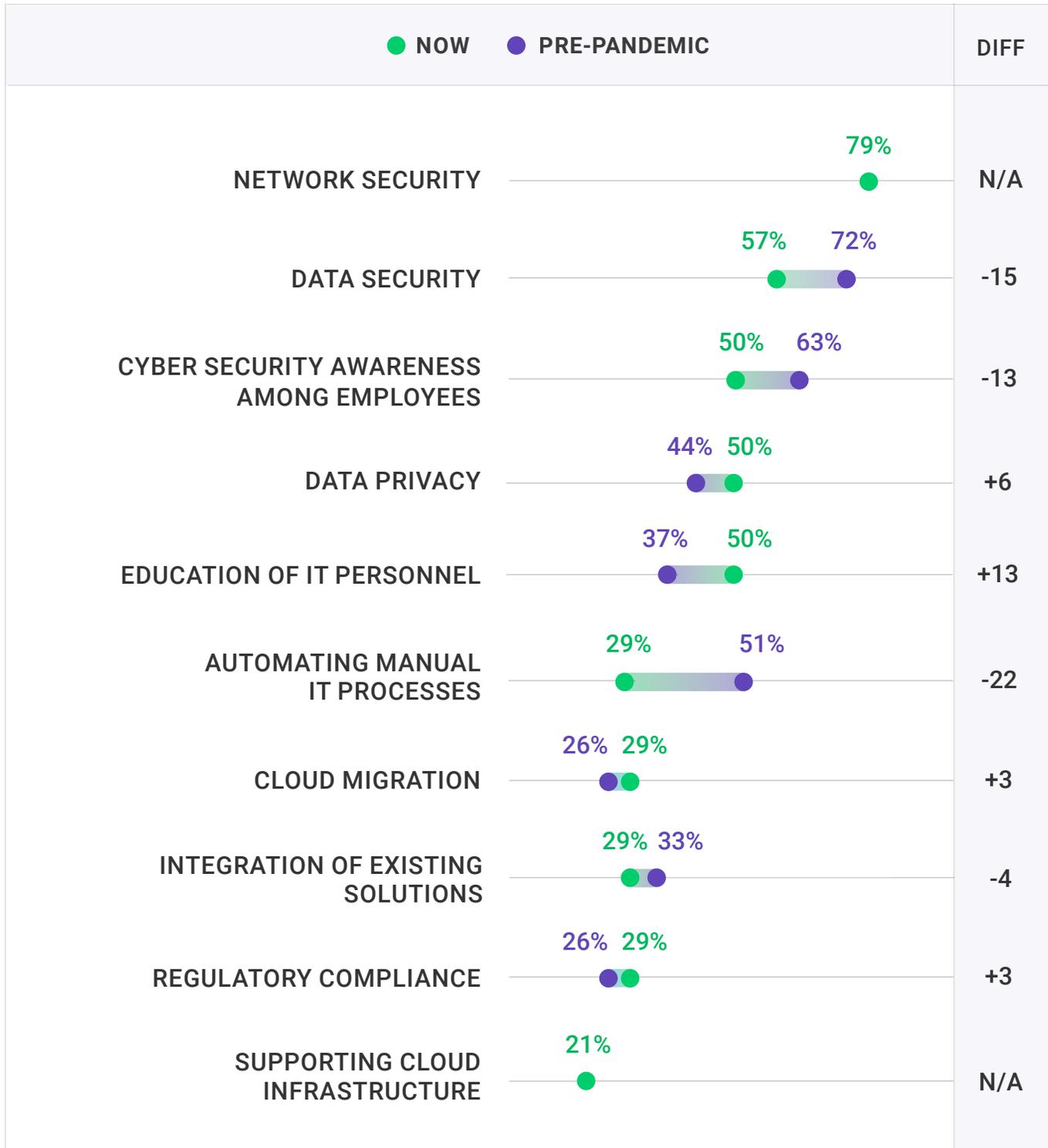


TOP 10 IT PRIORITIES

BY VERTICAL

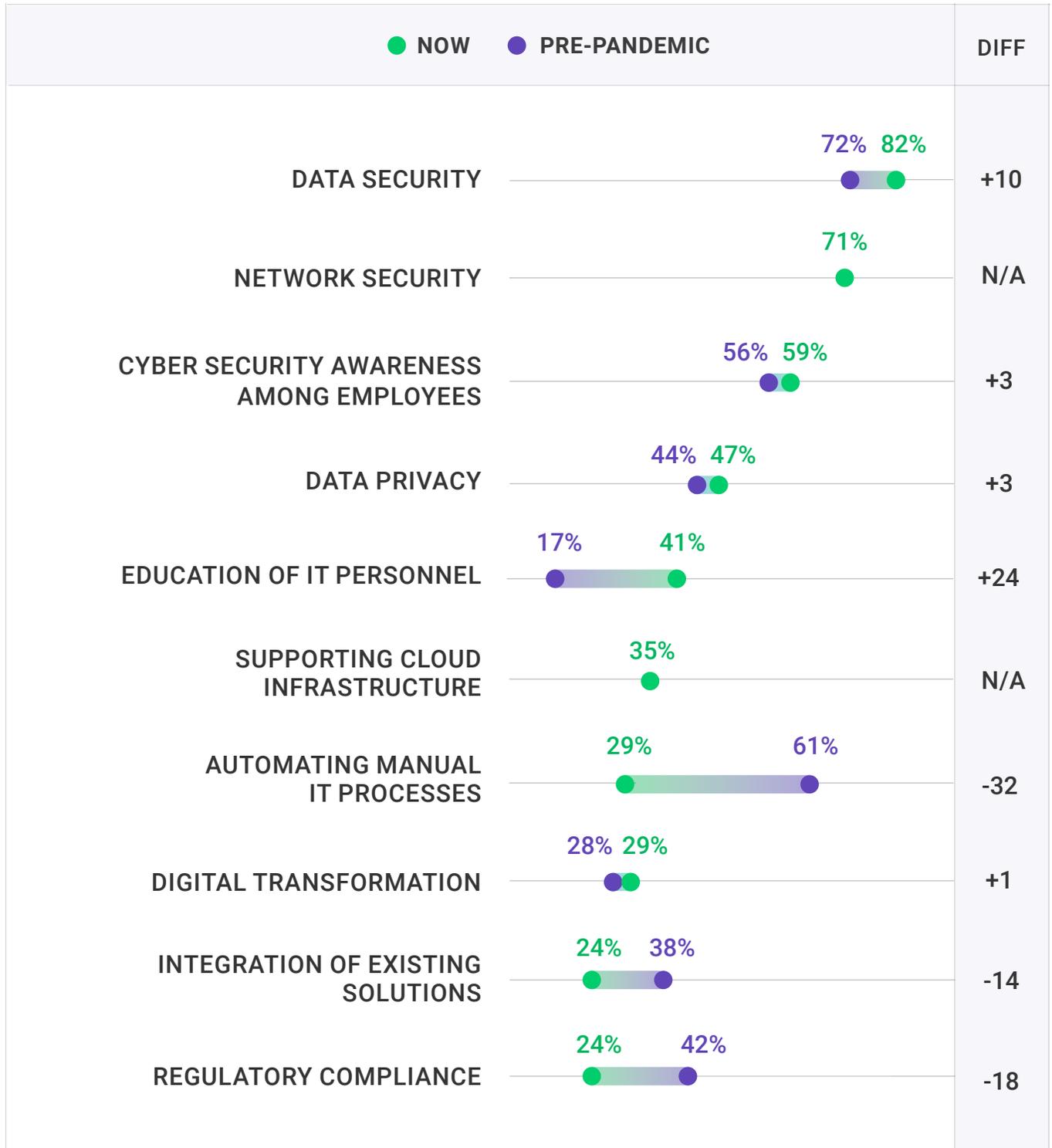
EDUCATION

The priority of data security, employee cybersecurity awareness and automation of manual IT processes dropped for educational organizations after the transition to remote work. The priority of IT personnel education increased.



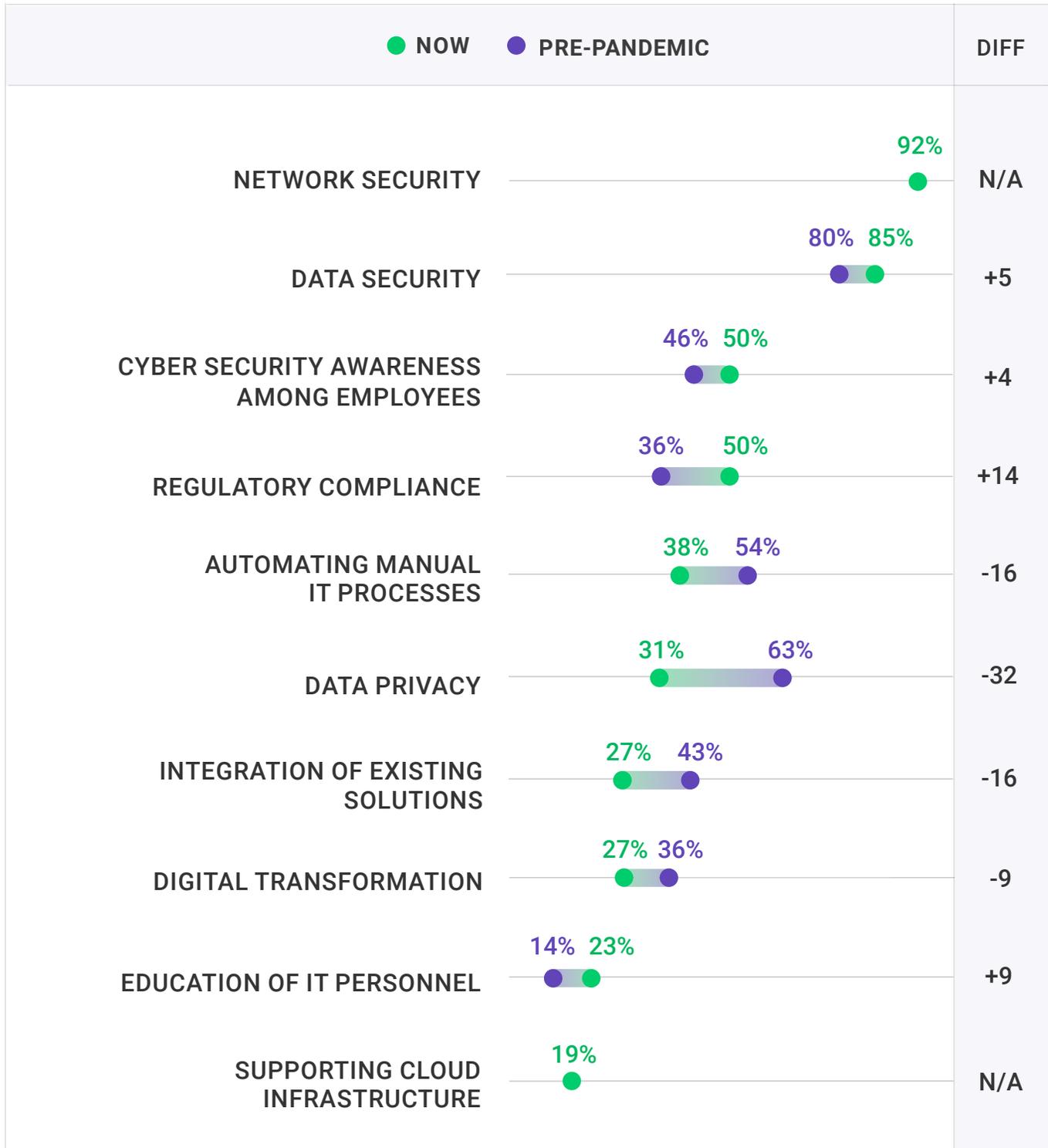

HEALTHCARE

For healthcare organizations, data security remained the top priority. The importance of regulatory compliance dropped almost in half, while the need to educate IT personnel skyrocketed from 17% at the end of 2019 to 41% now.




FINANCE

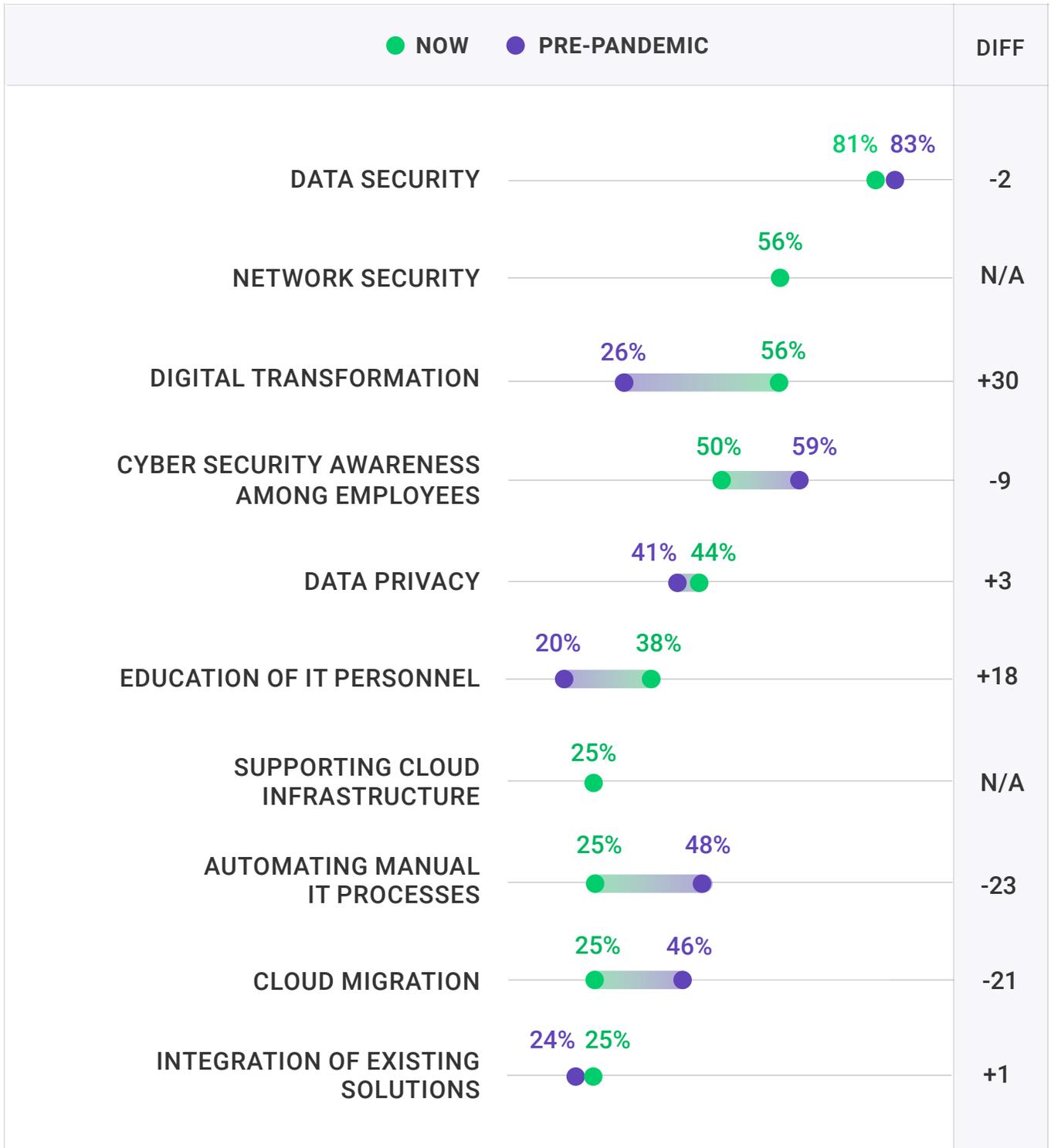
Financial organizations continue to keep their eye on data security, but their focus on data privacy declined by half since the previous study. However, the priority of regulatory compliance grew from 36% in 2019 to 50% now.





GOVERNMENT

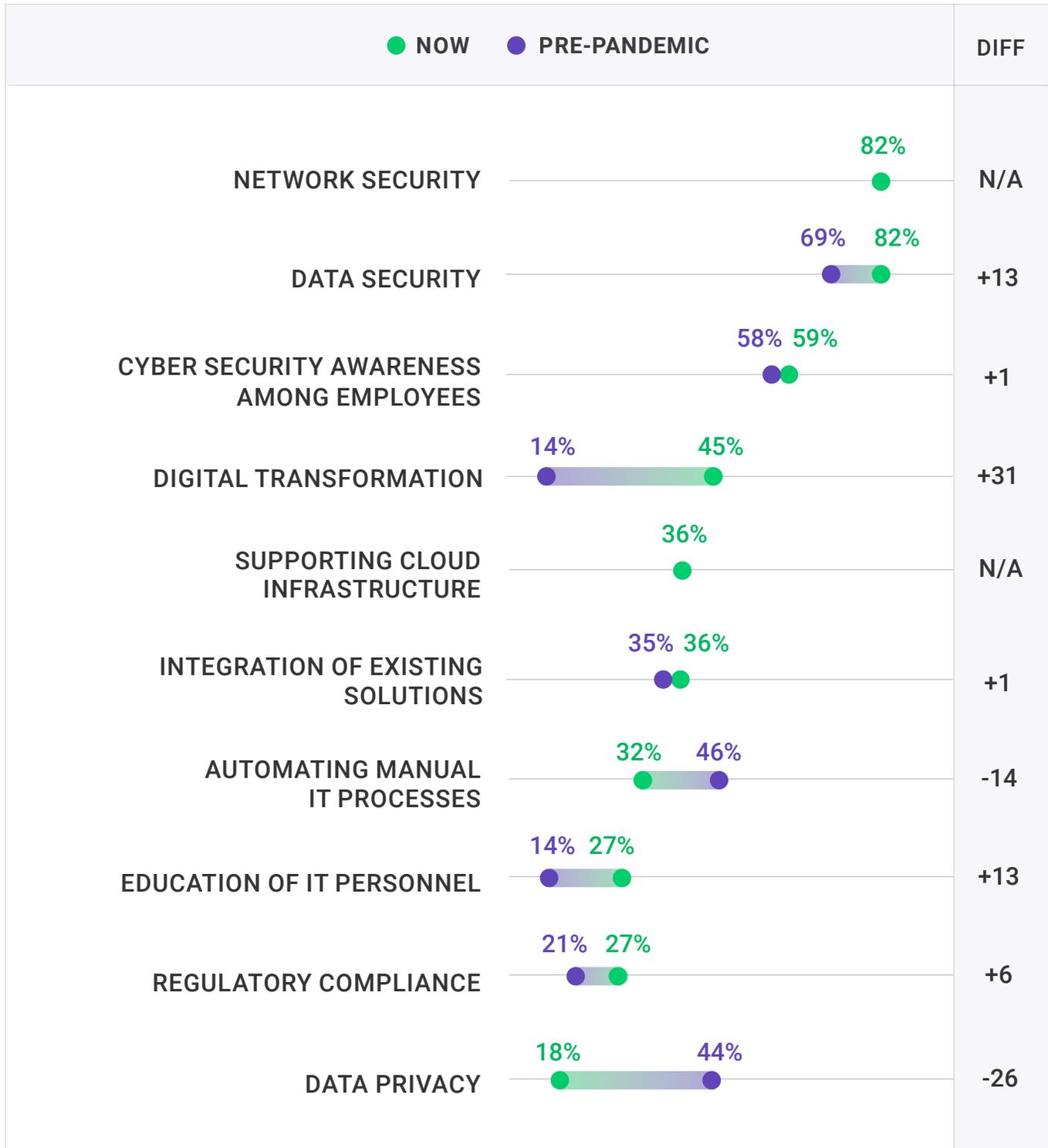
The WFH situation increased the push for digital transformation in the public sector. To ensure they can efficiently handle the current situation, some government agencies are putting automation of manual IT processes and cloud migration on the back burner to focus on data and network security.





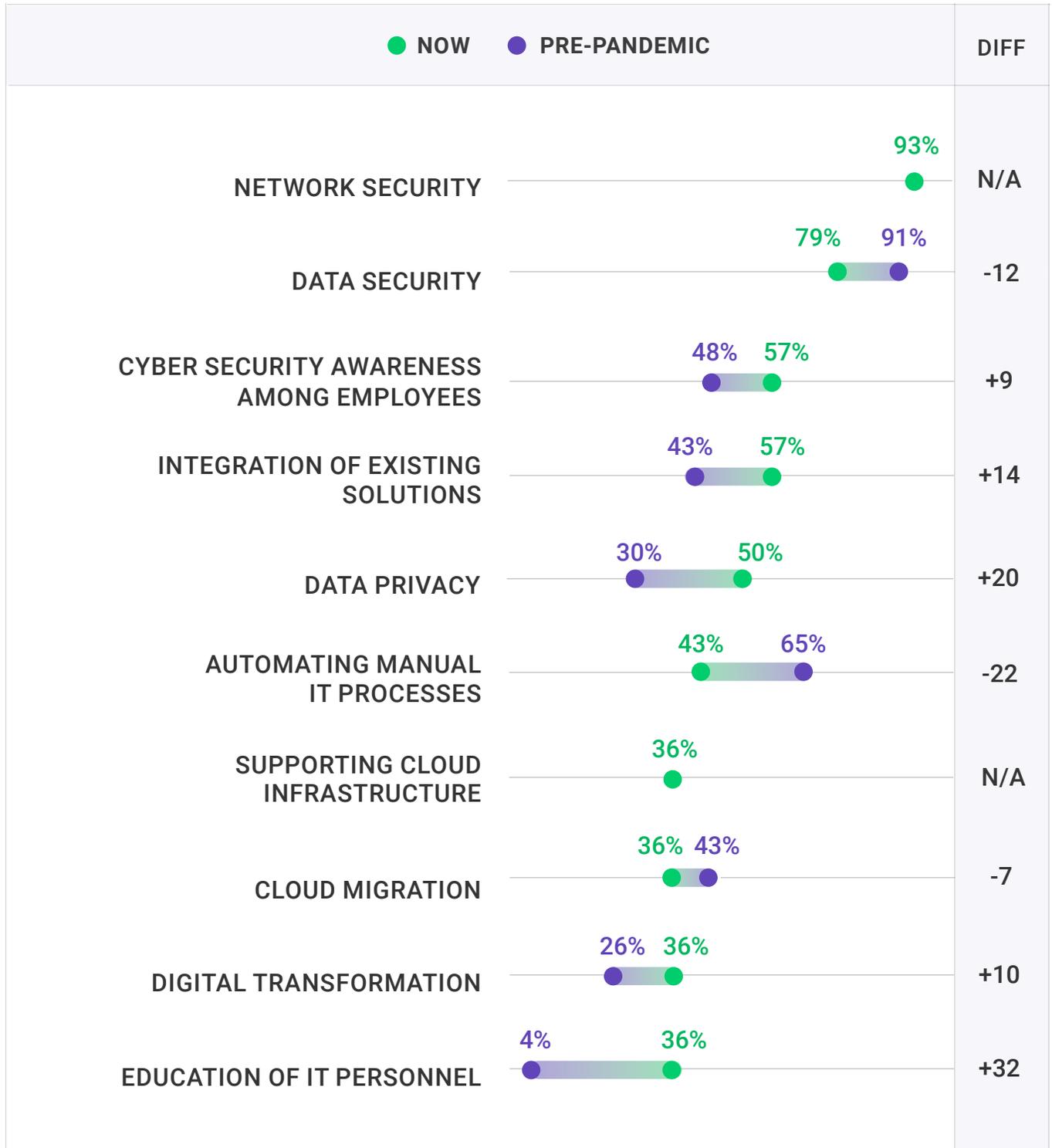
MANUFACTURING

The need to protect employees and ensure ongoing production is forcing manufacturing organizations to start new projects, including digital transformation and education of IT personnel, which were not top-10 priorities 6 months ago. They also shifted their focus away from data privacy and automation of IT processes.



RETAIL & WHOLESALE

In the retail and wholesale sector, the importance of data security decreased a bit, but remains one of the top two tasks for these IT teams in 2020. The importance of data privacy increased from 30% to 50%. Education of IT employees, which wasn't a priority before, crept into the top 10.



TOP 10

IT PRIORITIES

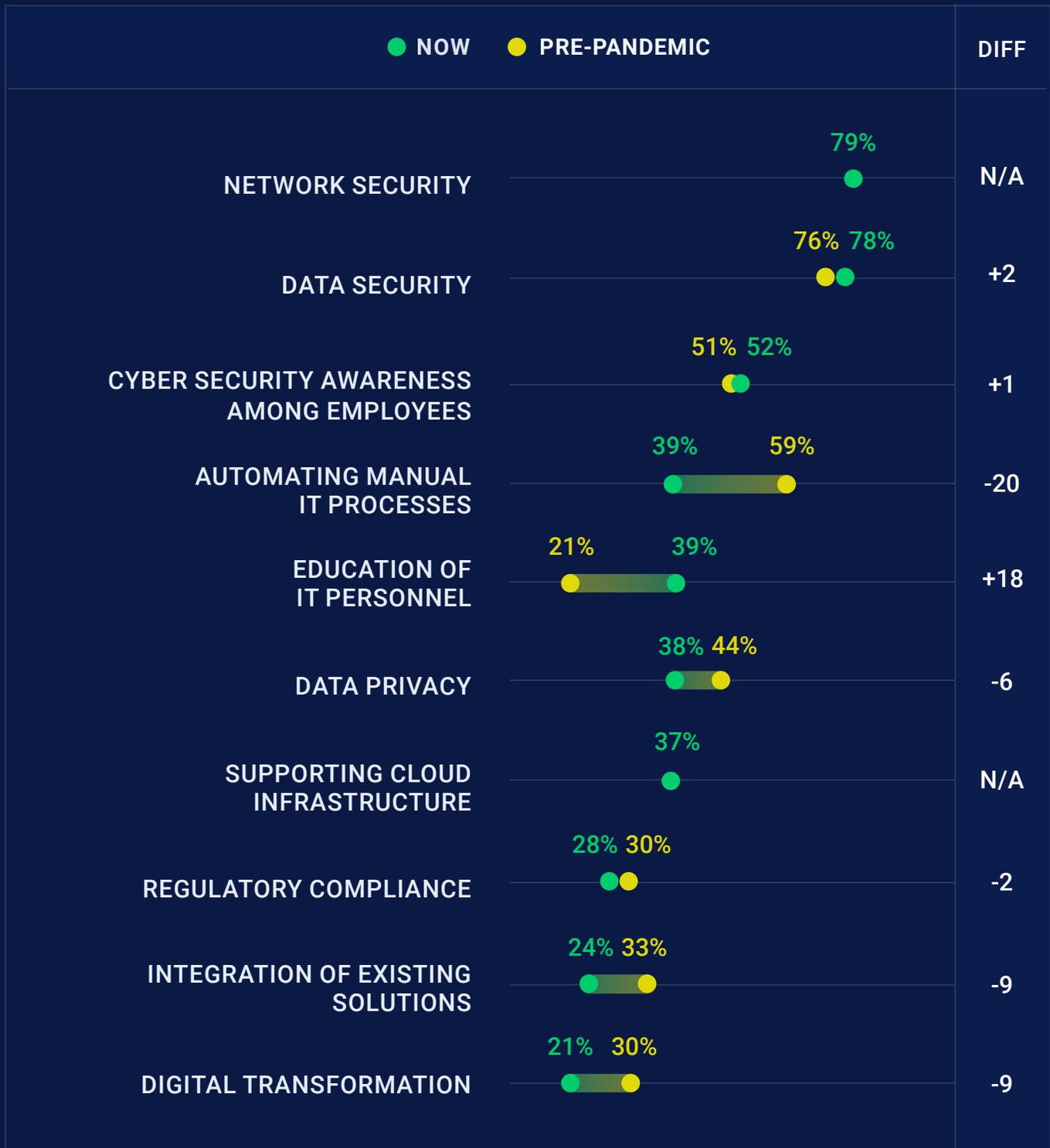
BY JOB ROLE





IT/SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

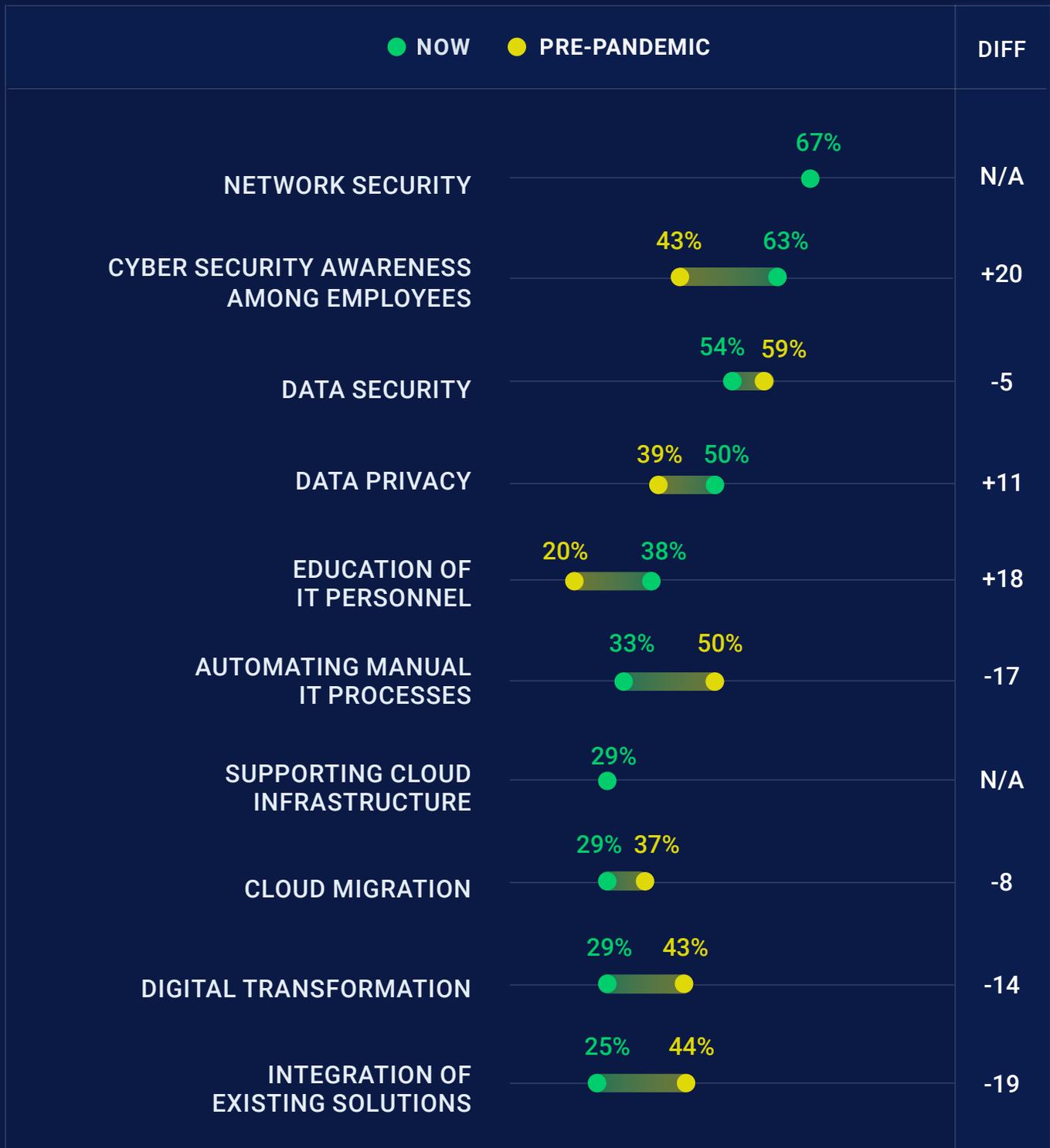
Interest from IT/system administrators in automating manual IT processes has dropped significantly since the pandemic began. However, we see increased interest in educating IT personnel, which grew from 21% to 39%.





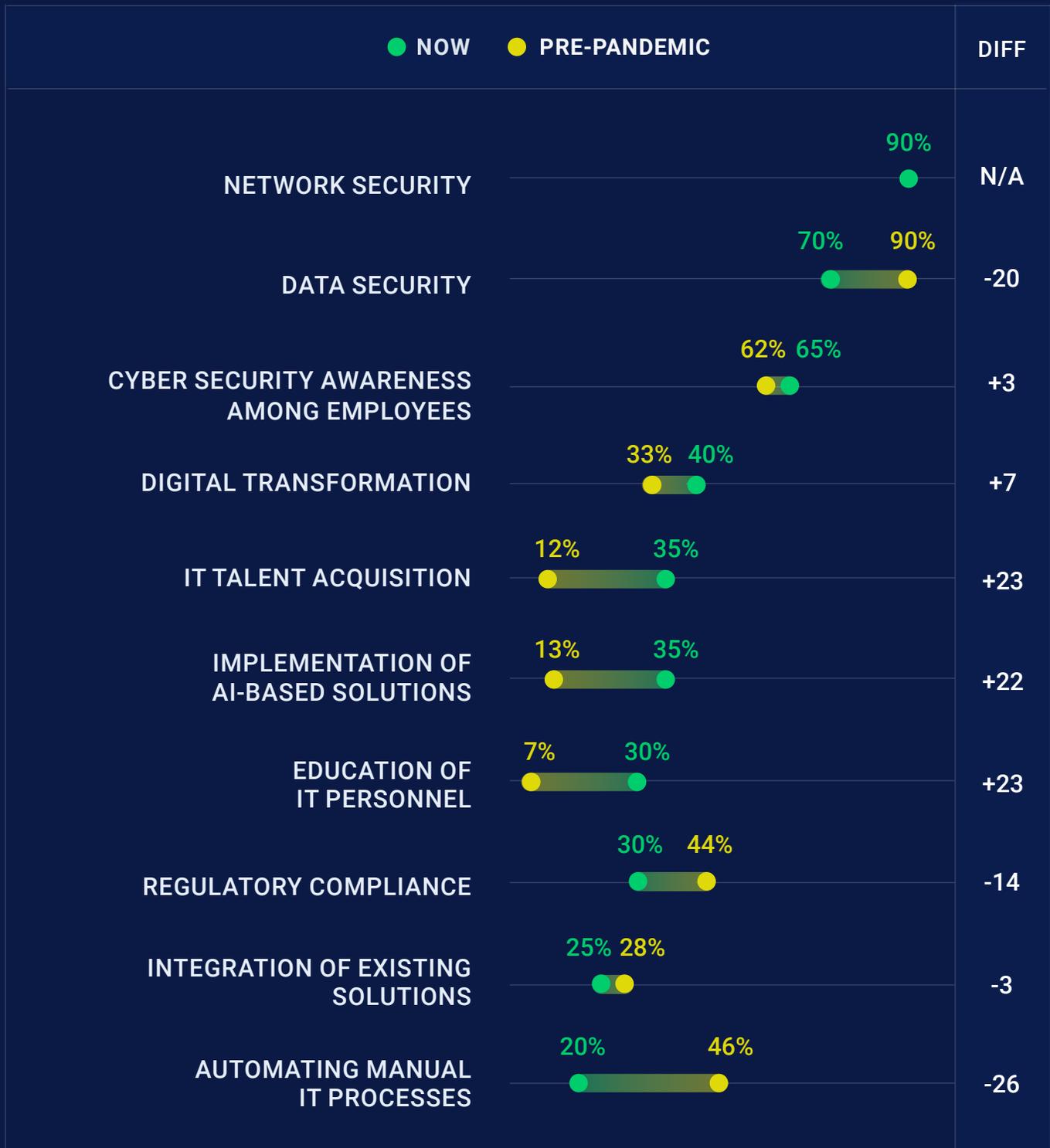
CIO/IT DIRECTOR

The focus of CIOs and IT directors shifted from optimization tasks, such as automation of IT routines and integration of existing solutions, to network security and cybersecurity awareness among employees. We also noticed that interest in digital transformation has dropped to near the bottom of their IT priority list.



 CISO

As expected, security executives remain focused on ensuring secure processes organization-wide, which includes network security, data security and cybersecurity awareness training. However, data privacy has plummeted; before the pandemic, more than half of these executives named it as a top priority, but now it does not even make it into the top ten.



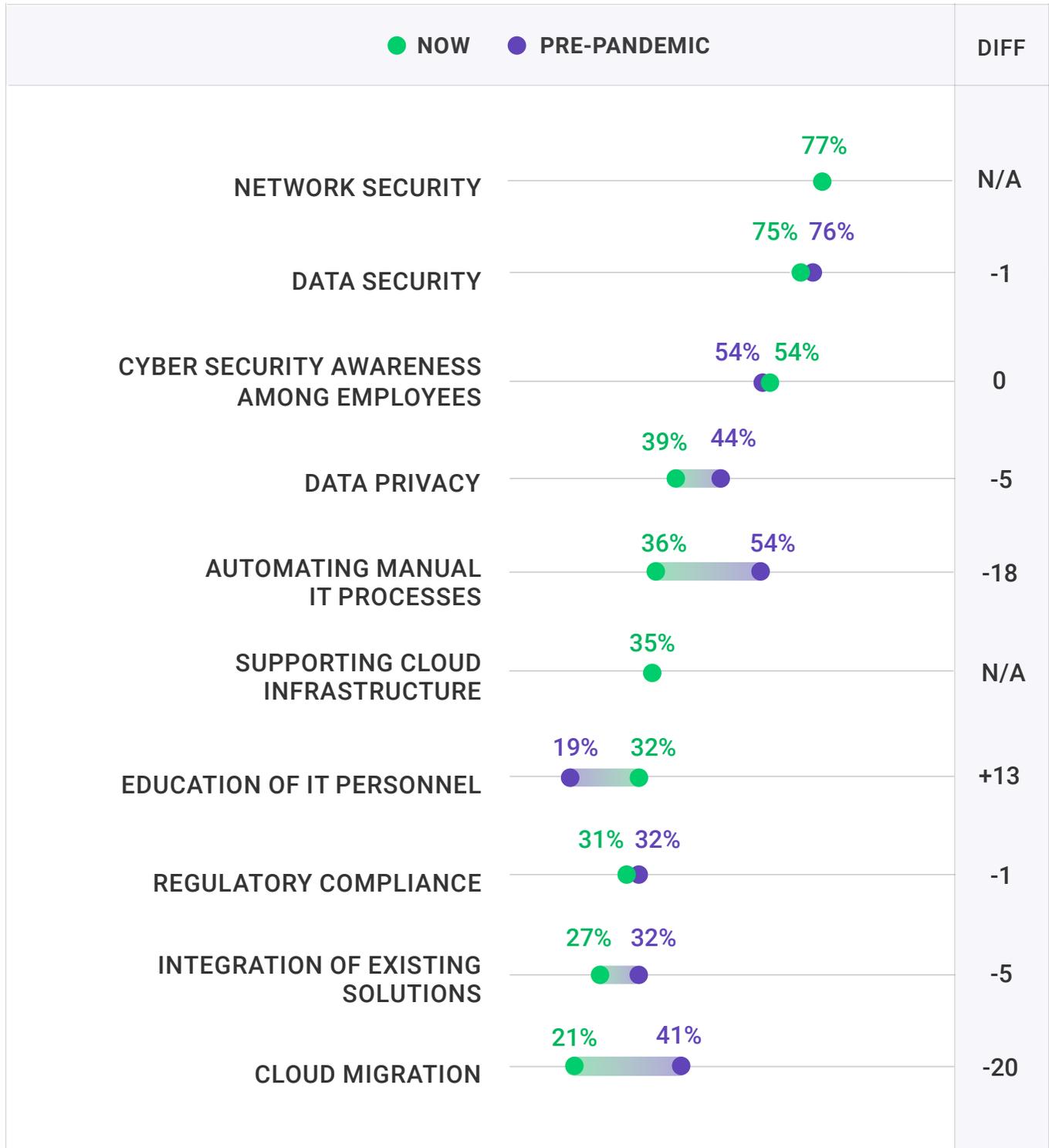
TOP 10 IT PRIORITIES

BY REGION



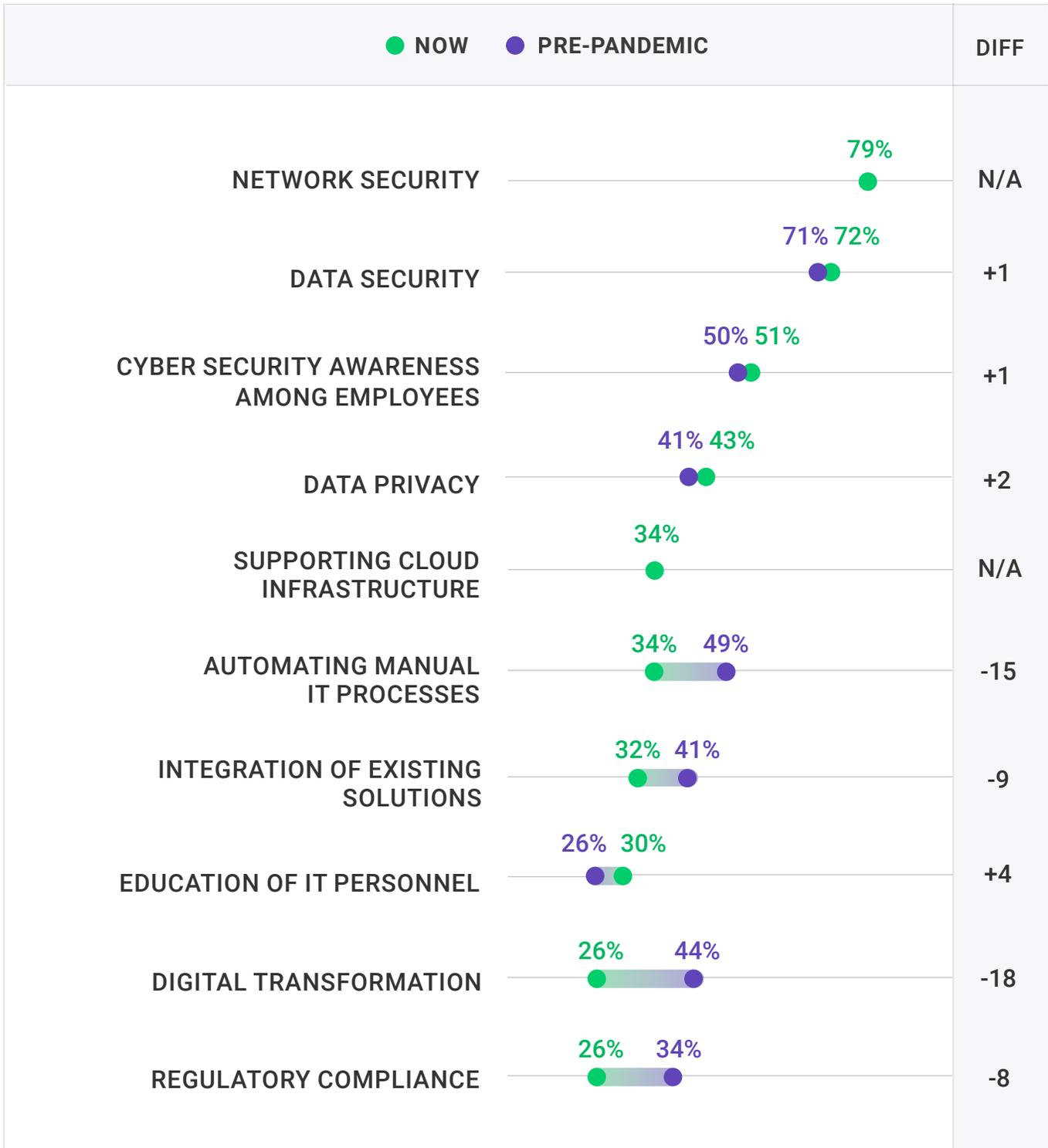

NORTH AMERICA

Organizations in North America remain focused on everything security and privacy related. There has been a sharp decrease of interest in both automating IT routines and migrating to the cloud. Now that many organizations have increased their consumption of cloud services, support of the cloud infrastructure and education of IT personnel now rank in the top 10 concerns.





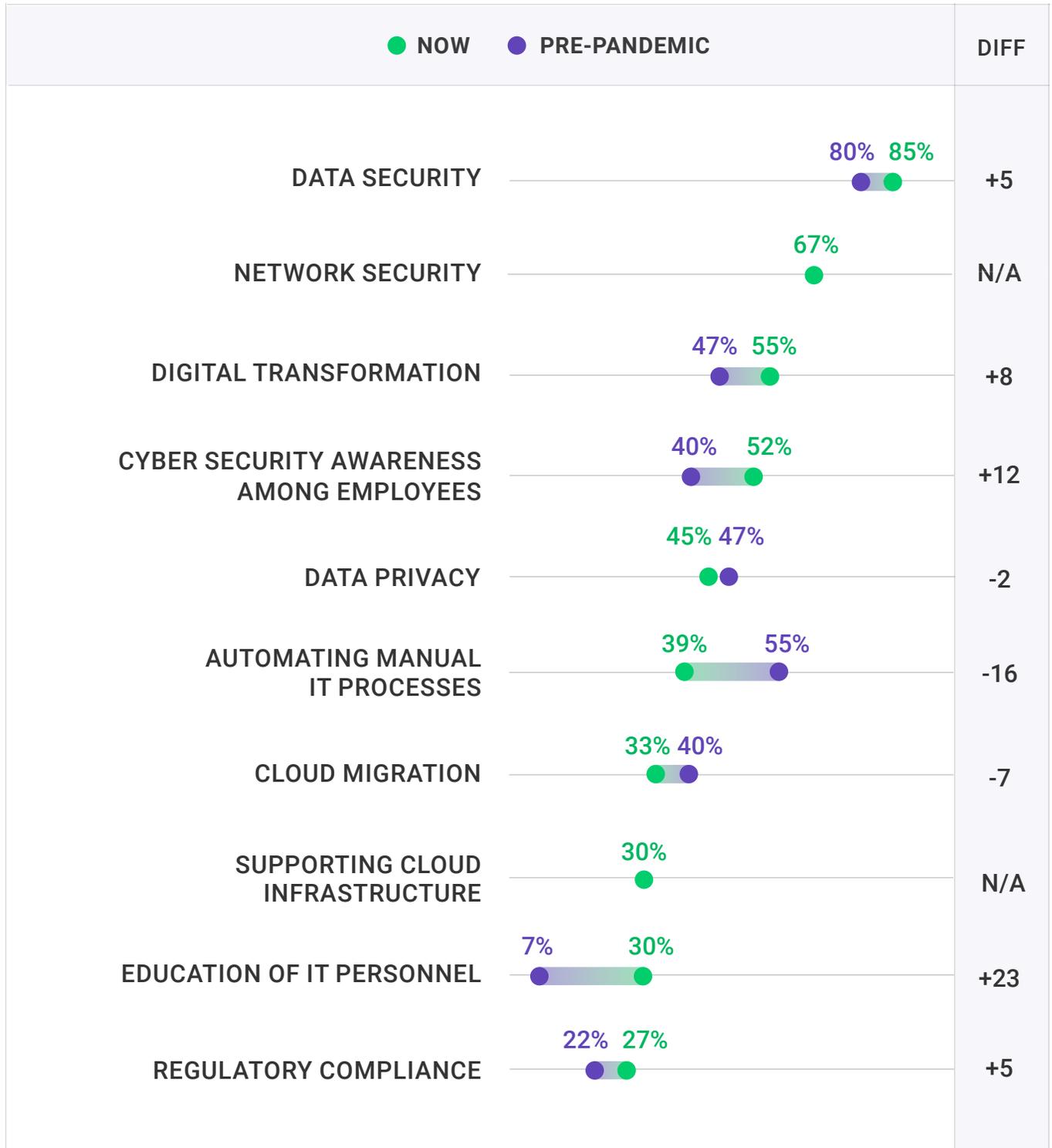
In EMEA, data security and cybersecurity awareness among business users remained core tasks, with network security rounding out the top three IT priorities. Digital transformation and integration of existing solutions both dropped in the rankings.





APAC

APAC is the only region that sees data security as more important than network security. Also interesting is that digital transformation remains important, actually growing from 47% to 55%. Interest in AI-based solutions has faded away.



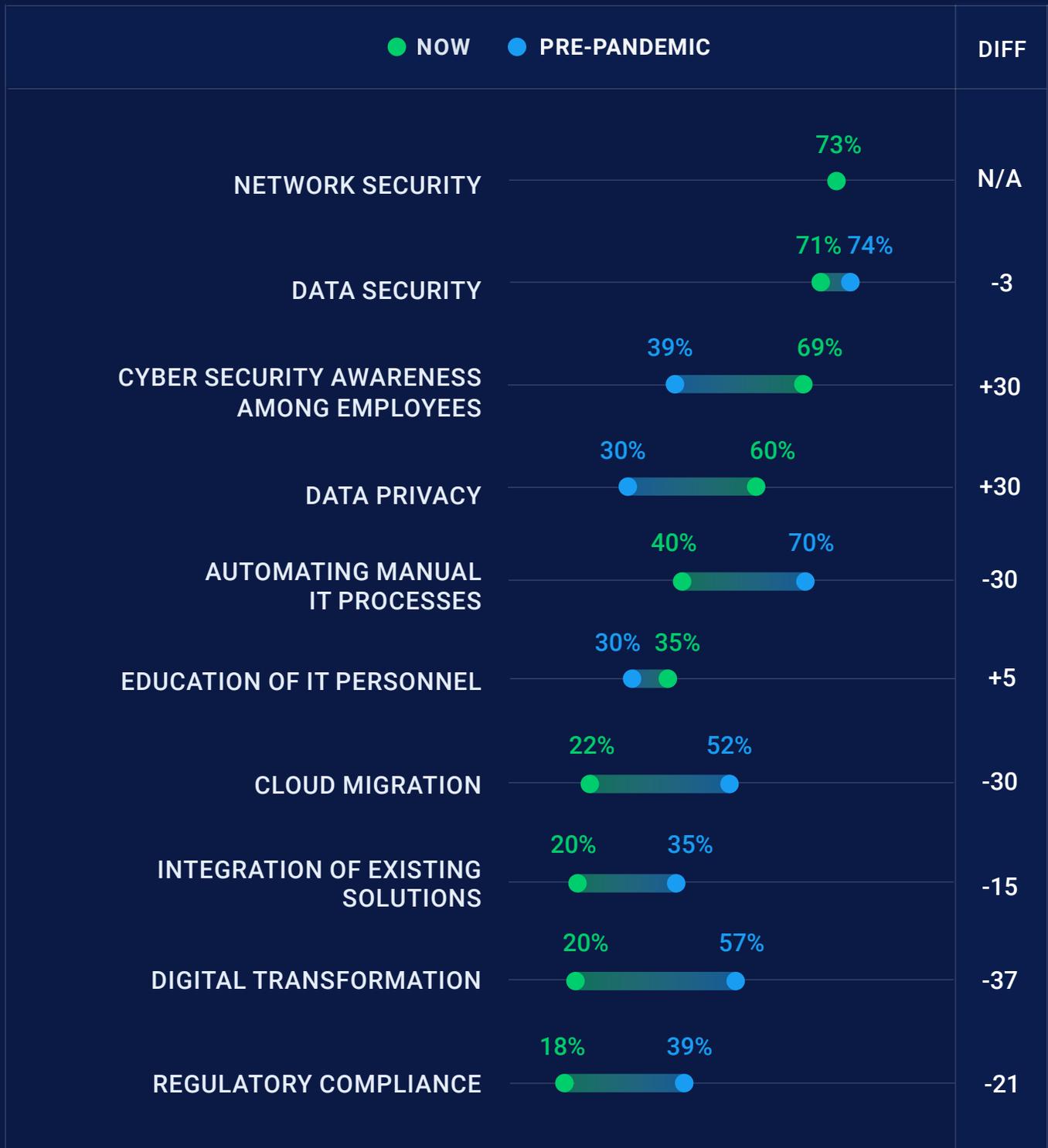
TOP 10 IT PRIORITIES

BY COUNTRY



THE UK

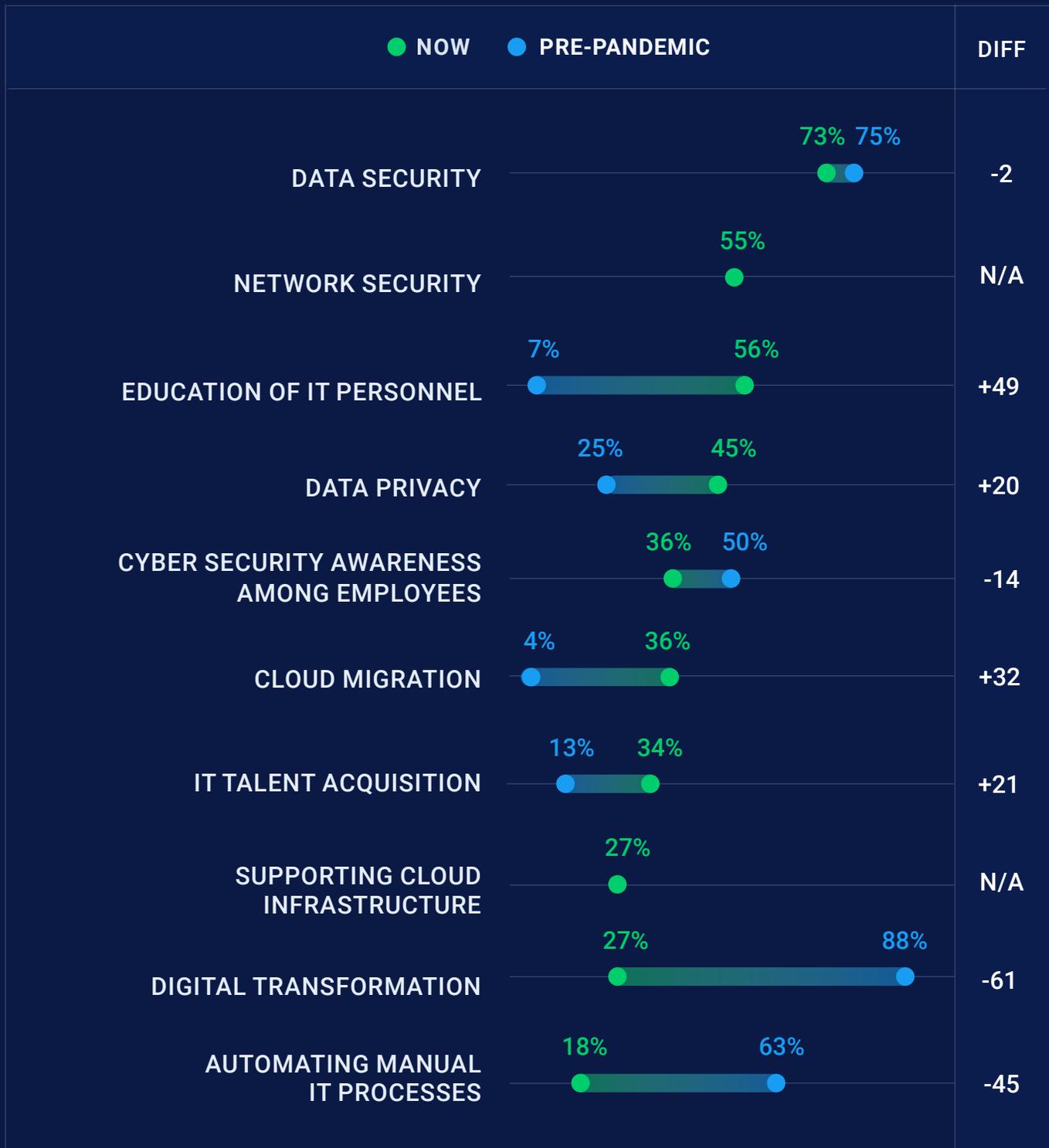
The top priorities for IT pros in the UK were network security and data security, with cybersecurity awareness among employees leaping from 39% to 69% to round out the top-3 list. We also noticed a significant decrease in the number of organizations that consider digital transformation a top priority — from 57% before the pandemic to 20% now.





FRANCE

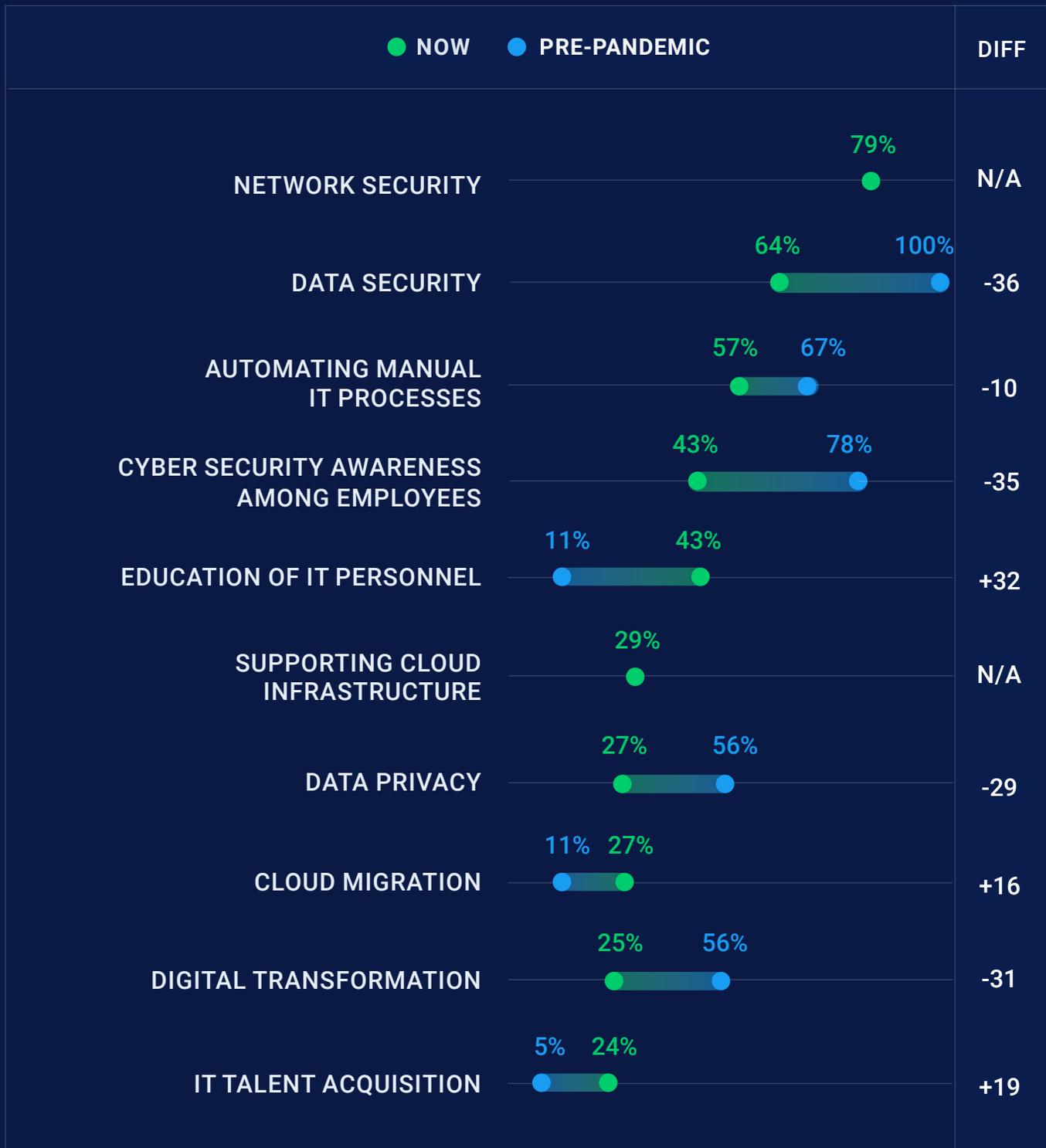
France is the only country surveyed that prioritized data security over network security. It was also the only country among all represented in the report that named education of IT personnel as one of the top three priorities; 6 months ago, that task was not in the top 10. Digital transformation dropped from the top of the list at 88% to ninth at 27%.





GERMANY

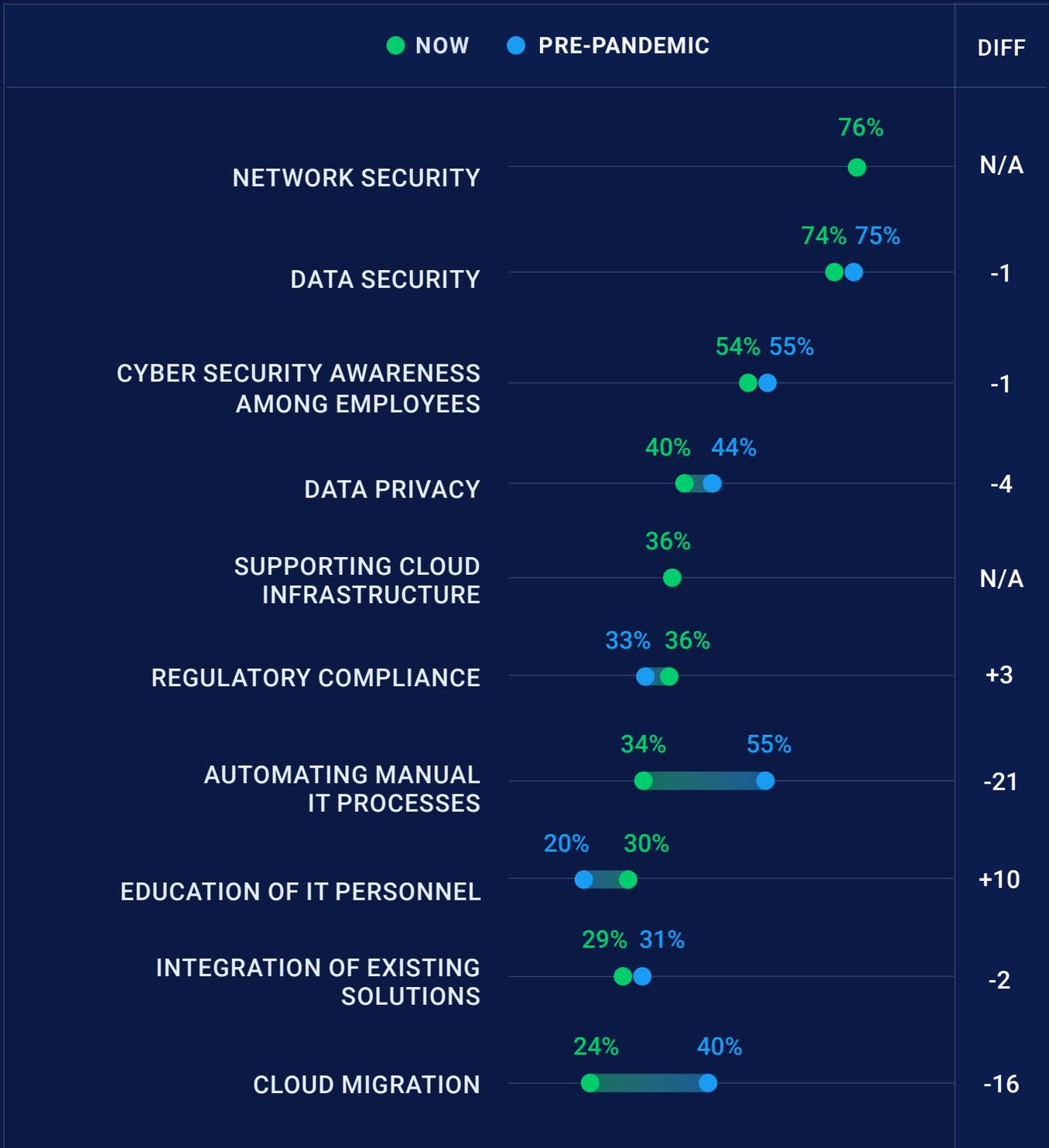
For German organizations, automation of IT processes still remains among top three priorities. The education of IT personnel has increased from 11% pre-pandemic to 43% now, which is the most significant shift across the priorities we analyzed for this country. The number of organizations planning to allocate resources to digital transformation has halved; that task has been put aside to free up resources for more burning needs, such as network and data security.





UNITED STATES

In the United States, security and privacy-related activities remain critical. We also see a sharp decrease in interest in cloud migration, along with a sharp increase in focus on supporting cloud infrastructure. There is a slightly higher interest in regulatory compliance, which might be caused by CCPA enforcement.



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

GEOGRAPHY

North America **45%**



South America **4%**



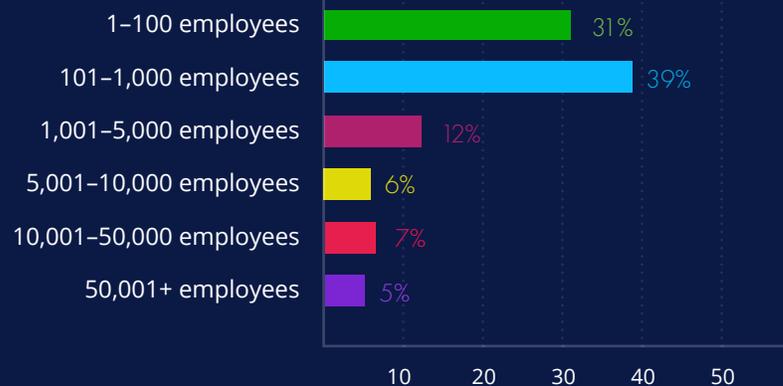
EMEA **35%**



APAC **16%**



ORGANIZATION SIZE



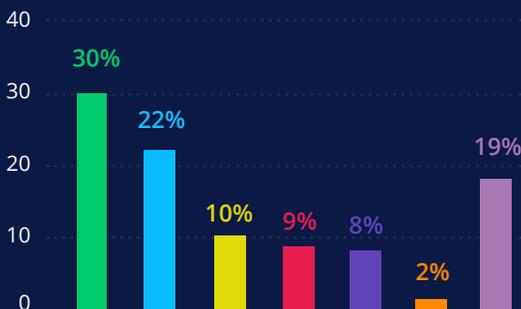
TOP INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Technology/Managed Services | 11% |
| Manufacturing | 10% |
| Technology/Software | 10% |
| Banking & Finance | 9% |
| Education | 7% |
| Healthcare | 6% |
| Consulting | 6% |
| Government | 6% |
| Services | 5% |
| Retail & Wholesale | 4% |
| Insurance | 3% |
| Energy | 3% |
| Technology/Hardware | 3% |
| Telecommunications | 3% |
| Entertainment & Leisure | 3% |
| Construction & Engineering | 2% |

IT PRIORITY OPTIONS OFFERED IN THE SURVEY

- Network security
- Data security
- Cybersecurity awareness among employees
- Data privacy
- Automating manual IT processes
- Supporting cloud infrastructure
- Education of IT personnel
- Integration of existing solutions
- Regulatory compliance
- Digital transformation
- Cloud migration
- IT talent acquisition
- Implementation of AI-based solutions
- Other, please describe

TOP JOB TITLES REPRESENTED



- IT/Systems Administrator
- Consultant
- IT Manager
- IT Audit Officer
- CIO/IT Director
- Other
- CISO

ABOUT THE REPORT

The report is brought to you by Netwrix Research Lab, which conducts industry surveys among IT pros worldwide to discover up-to-date interests and granular trends' analysis of the industry. For more reports, please visit: www.netwrix.com/go/research

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Founded in 2006, Netwrix has earned more than 150 industry awards and been named to both the Inc. 5000 and Deloitte Technology Fast 500 lists of the fastest growing companies in the U.S.

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