COLUMBUS CONSULTING-NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION SECOND ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

Columbus Consulting, in cooperation with the National Grocers Association, conducted its second annual grocery technology survey. The 2026 survey results reflected a majority of responders who had 6-25 stores and yielded $51-$100 million in annual sales. Overall, spending on technology investments ranged from 1%-4% of sales (in line with last year's survey findings reflecting the same range). Also consistent with LY, responders noted that spend 25/24 and planned spend in technology 26/25 would be an increase.

The top priority areas for technology were: Point of Sale, merchandise planning, ecommerce, financial ERP, supply chain, price/promotion optimization, assortment planning and master data management. Three of these areas significantly overlap the priorities from 2025, namely, POS, ecommerce and merchandise planning.

Aging systems shifted YOY with this year's named legacy systems including: inventory management, warehouse management, order management, vendor management and price management. Last year's survey surfaced aging technology that included POS and ERP—over 10+ years old.

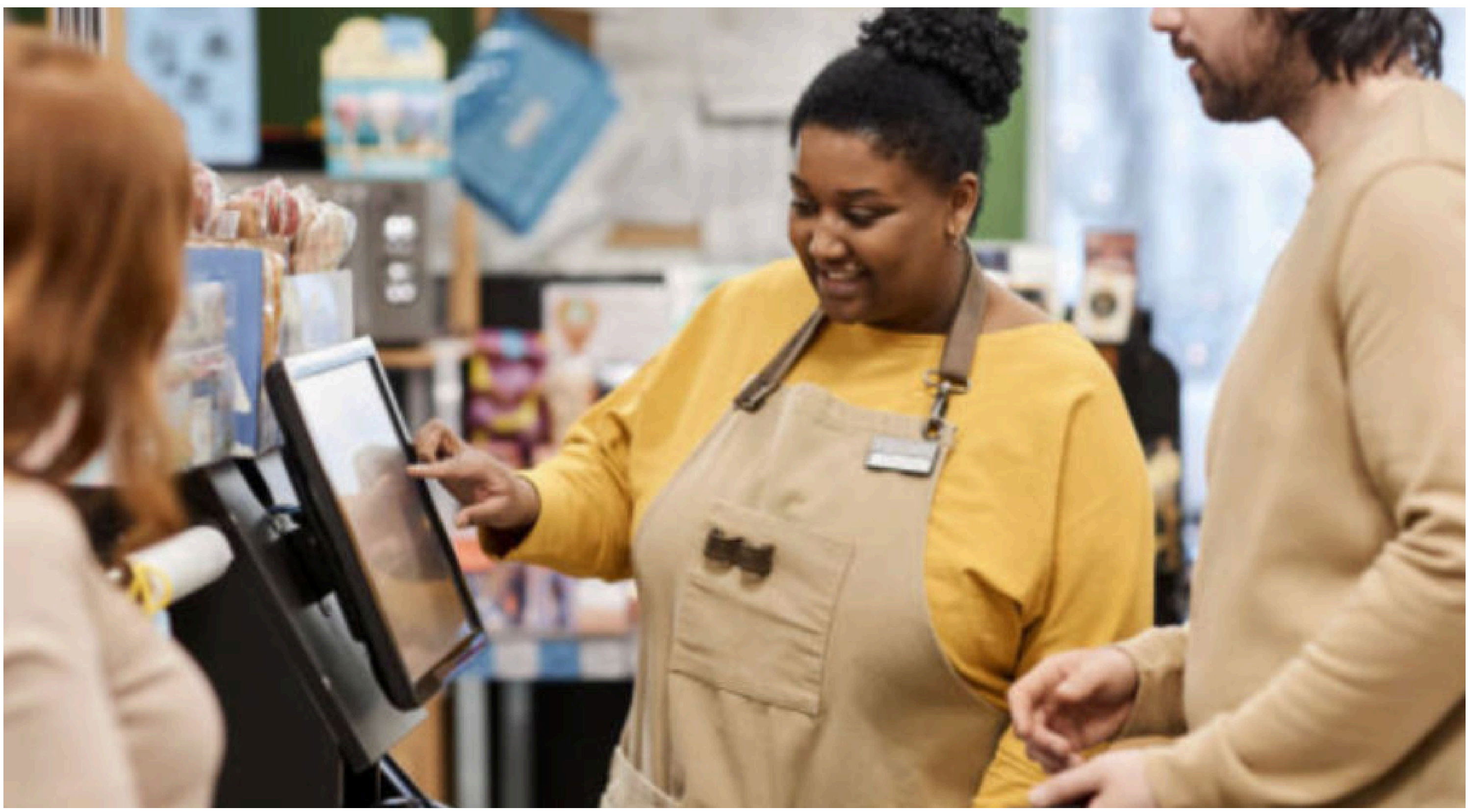
The 2026 responders noted that the most likely areas to command technology investment this year are: retail operations, merchandising and supply chain/warehouse/transportation.

The implementation of technology had similar stated issues across responders, noting difficulty training/onboarding, poor tech support, less than expected ROI and time needed for implementation of primary concern. In 2025, the cost of investment was also elevated as a key concern/regret.

This year’s responders also noted three key areas of technology investment impedance.

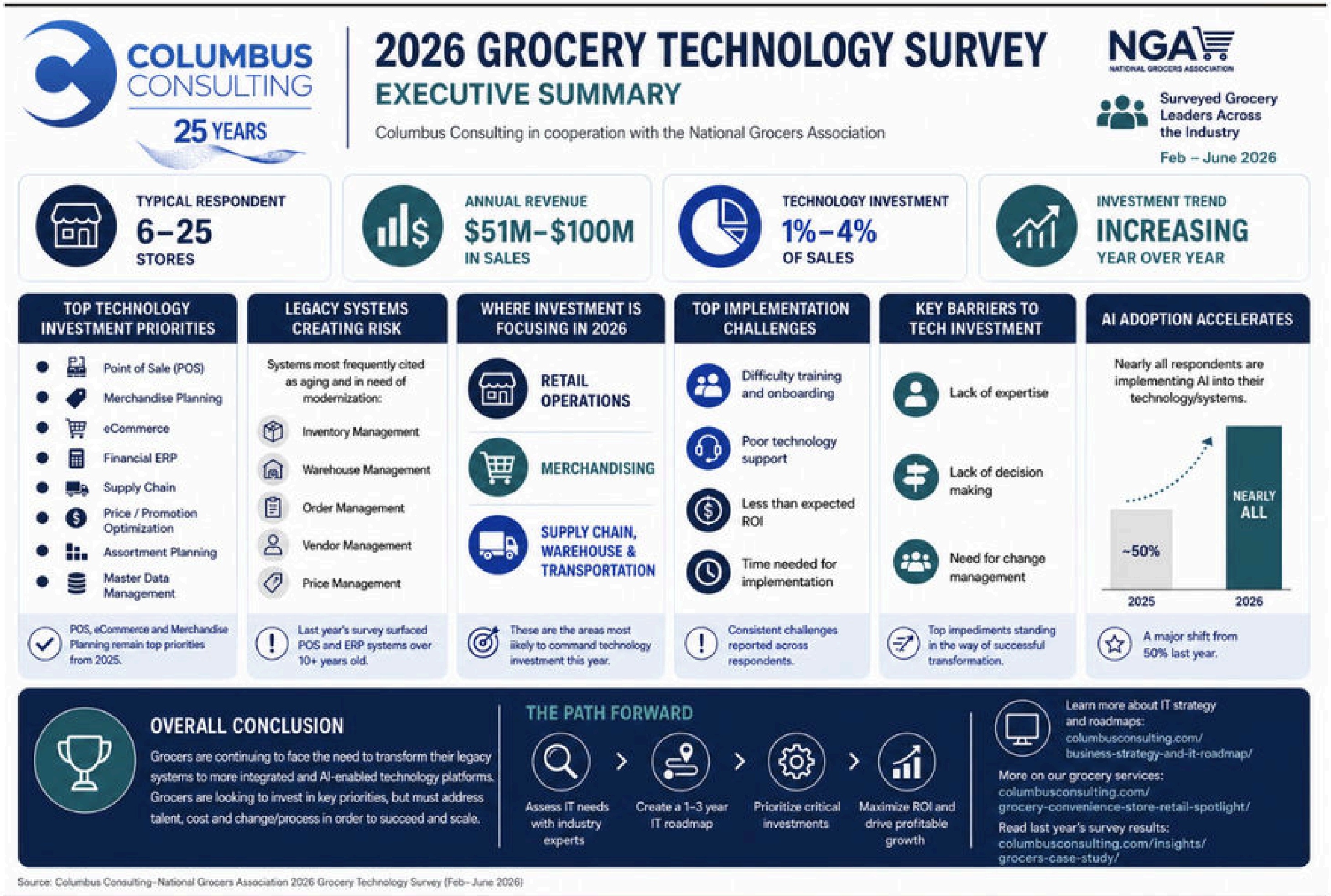
1. Lack of expertise
2. Lack of decision making
3. Need for change management

One notable departure in results 25/26 was the focus on artificial intelligence. Nearly all responders stated that they have or are implementing AI into their technology/systems compared to 50% last year.



Overall, grocers are continuing to face the need to transform their legacy systems to more integrated and AI-enabled technology platforms. Grocers are looking to invest in key priorities, but need to address talent, cost and change/process in order to succeed and scale. The industry continues to evolve with faster last mile delivery, increasing competition from big box and mass store brands who are investing at much higher levels.

The solution for grocers is to first address their IT needs by working with industry experts to conduct in-depth assessments and create a 1-3 year IT roadmaps. With limited time, money and resources, grocers must find a way to maximize their spend while prioritizing their most critical needs to yield the strongest returns/profits.



Find out more about IT strategy and roadmaps: https://www.columbusconsulting.com/business-strategy-and-it-roadmap/

More on Columbus Consulting's grocery services: https://www.columbusconsulting.com/grocery-convenience-store-retail-spotlight/

Read last year's CCI-NGA survey results: https://www.columbusconsulting.com/insights/grocers-case-study/

METHODOLOGY:
The survey was emailed between February 2026-June 2026 and was sent to NGA members, Columbus Consulting grocery clients and senior industry leaders. Questions were streamlined from prior year but mirrored identifying trends in investments, technology areas of focus and key areas of tech concern. Responses were aggregated and summarized.