Business Technology Survey 2025: Malaysia Summary

Introduction

CPA Australia's Business Technology Report 2025 provides a comprehensive analysis of technology trends shaping business operations, performance and challenges across different sectors, organisational sizes and markets. This year's report includes insights from 117 survey responses from Malaysia, offering a view of how businesses in the country are adopting and leveraging technology.

The findings reveal strong interest in technologies such as data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), which are driving productivity and efficiency gains. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, limited leadership understanding, talent shortages and cybersecurity gaps continue to impact adoption.

The report also explores the impact of AI on recruitment within finance and accounting teams. Most respondents indicate that AI is having no impact on recruitment by finance or accounting teams, or they are uncertain about its impact. However, a small number reported a reduction or cessation in the recruitment of junior accounting roles due to AI. Whether this reflects the start of a broader trend or a temporary adjustment is unclear.

Technology initiatives

	Malaysia	Survey average 2025
Data analytics and visualisation software (e.g., Python, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Power BI)	87%	93%
Artificial Intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot, DeepSeek, Meta AI)	85%	89%
Business intelligence software (e.g., Microsoft Power BI, Tableau)	62%	71%
Cybersecurity software	73%	81%
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software (e.g., Workday, NetSuite)	61%	69%
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software (e.g., Microsoft Dynamics 365, HubSpot CRM)	55%	62%
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) (e.g., UiPath, Blue Prism)	34%	36%
Blockchain / Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) (e.g., smart contracts, Bitcoin, Ethereum)	9%	19%

Technology adoption in Malaysia shows steady but uneven progress. Data analytics and visualisation tools lead adoption with 87 per cent of Malaysian businesses using the technology, just below the survey average of 93 per cent. Similarly, AI adoption is strong, with an adoption rate of 85 per cent, closely aligning with the survey benchmark of 89 per cent. These figures indicate a growing confidence in data-driven and AI-powered solutions across Malaysian industries.

However, Malaysia lags in several key technologies. Business intelligence software is used by 62 per cent of Malaysian businesses, compared to the survey average of 71 per cent. Cybersecurity software adoption stands at 73 per cent, trailing the survey average of 81 per cent. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are adopted by 61 per cent of businesses, compared with 69 per cent globally, suggesting slightly slower progress in enterprise integration and digital transformation.

Customer-focused technologies also show weaker uptake. Only 55 per cent of businesses use customer relationship management (CRM) software, compared to 62 per cent on average, limiting opportunities for enhanced customer engagement. Adoption of emerging technologies remains niche: robotic process automation (RPA) is used by 34 per cent of Malaysian businesses, slightly below the 36 per cent survey average, while blockchain/DLT adoption is only at 9 per cent, well under the survey average of 19 per cent.

Drivers and challenges to technology adoption in Malaysia

Top five benefits of technological investments in the past 12 months	Top five challenges affecting technological uptake in the past 12 months
Improve operational efficiency	Financial costs and low return on investment
Save costs	Lack of technology understanding and knowledge within Board/senior management
Enhance employee skills and satisfaction	Shortage of technology talent
Improve cybersecurity	Insufficient staff training
Improve the customer experience	Complex legacy systems

Over the past year, many Malaysian businesses have leveraged technology to drive operational efficiency, reduce costs and enhance both employee and customer experiences.

However, challenges to technology adoption persist. High implementation costs and uncertain returns on investment continue to deter many enterprises from investing in technology. Limited technological literacy among boards and senior management further constrains strategic decision-making. Additionally, legacy infrastructure, particularly in larger organisations, continues to impede integration efforts .

To overcome these obstacles, Malaysian businesses should prioritise strengthening leadership capability, investing in workforce skills and modernise legacy infrastructure. Without these measures, many risk falling behind regional and global competitors in digital maturity.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity maturity	Malaysia 2025	Survey average 2025
Fully integrated strategy with ongoing improvements and independent reviews	18%	28%
Established and regularly assessed processes	25%	27%
Documented policies, regular training, and key controls in place	21%	20%
Inconsistent or reactive practices	17%	12%
Low awareness	10%	6%
Uncertain about cybersecurity management	9%	7%

Cybersecurity maturity in Malaysia has improved, yet continues to lag the survey average. Only 18 per cent of organisations report that cybersecurity is fully embedded within their operational strategy, compared to the survey average of 28 per cent. Similarly, 25 per cent of businesses have established and regularly assessed processes, slightly below the survey average of 27 per cent.

Notably, 17 per cent of Malaysian organisations are reactive, addressing cyber threats only as they occur, rather than through structured prevention. An additional 9 per cent of respondents are unsure how their organisation manages cybersecurity, revealing gaps in governance and communication.

These findings suggest a landscape where awareness is high, but execution and oversight are inconsistent. Embedding cybersecurity into core business strategy must become a priority for more Malaysian enterprises.

At the same time, the rapid rise of AI is reshaping the cybersecurity landscape. AI-driven tools offer advanced capabilities for threat detection, anomaly monitoring and predictive defence. However, they also introduce new risks, enabling sophisticated cybercrimes such as AI-generated scams, deepfake impersonations, and highly targeted phishing attacks that evade traditional detection methods.

As AI adoption accelerates, businesses must strike a balance between innovation and vigilance. AI should not only be harnessed to drive efficiency, but also to strengthen digital trust and safeguard against AI-enabled threats.

Encouragingly, most Malaysian businesses appear to have avoided financial or operational disruptions from cybersecurity incidents over the past 12 months:

- 5 per cent of Malaysian businesses reported significant losses from cyber incidents in 2025
- 18 per cent experienced minor losses
- 56 per cent reported no impact

While the relatively low rate of severe incidents is encouraging, the frequency of minor disruptions and uncertainty around incident tracking highlight the need for stronger monitoring systems and clearer escalation protocols.

Artificial intelligence

How would you describe the level of AI adoption by your business / employer	Malaysia 2025	Survey average 2025
Widely used across the business with a mix of custom and third party tools	11%	16%
Used in several areas, primarily third-party tools	30%	31%
Used occasionally via off-the-shelf tools such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot	39%	40%
No adoption	14%	9%
Don’t know	6%	3%

AI adoption in Malaysia is growing, yet deep integration remains limited. Only 11 per cent of Malaysian businesses report deeply embedding AI across their business operations, below the survey average of 16 per cent. This indicates significant room for growth in strategic AI deployment.

Currently, the most common form of AI adoption is occasional use, reported by 39 per cent of businesses. This typically involves leveraging readily available AI tools like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, or built-in AI assistants within productivity platforms such as Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace. These tools are primarily used to support tasks like drafting reports, summarising data, and automating routine communications, enhancing productivity but falling short of transformative integration.

Top five positive impact of AI in the past 12 months	Top five negative impact of AI in the past 12 months
Increased productivity	Dependence on AI and reduced human oversight
Improved employee experience (e.g. reduced manual workload, better tools)	Raised data/privacy concerns
Improved accuracy and efficiency of repetitive tasks	High implementation costs
Improved customer experience	Difficulty in keeping up with rapid AI developments
Enabled innovation or development of new products/services	Integration challenges with existing technologies

Over the past 12 months, Malaysian businesses have reported a range of benefits from AI adoption, most notably increased productivity. AI has helped streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and enabled greater speed and precision in decision-making. These gains have translated into better employee experiences, allowing staff to focus more on high-value work and less on routine activities. At the same time, customer experience has improved, as organisations use AI to deliver more personalised, responsive and data-informed services.

However, these gains come with a new set of challenges. Growing dependence on AI and reduced human oversight raises questions around accountability and decision-making. Concerns over data privacy and security have intensified amid rising awareness of how AI can handle personal and sensitive information. Integration with legacy systems continues to pose technical hurdles, especially for larger companies, and high implementation costs makes adoption financially demanding.

Therefore, while AI continues to drive efficiency, it also brings with it a new set of governance, ethical and workforce challenges. To fully harness its potential, Malaysian organisations must establish robust oversight and clear accountability frameworks for AI tools. Equally important is investing in employee upskilling and fostering transparent communication to build trust in AI's role as a reliable and responsible business partner.

AI influence on hiring practices within finance and accounting teams	Malaysia 2025	Survey average 2025
No change in hiring practices	37%	26%
Too early to say	35%	26%
Reduced hiring of junior/entry-level accounting and finance staff	9%	17%
Reduced hiring of experienced accounting and finance staff	3%	2%
Reduced hiring of both junior and experienced accounting and finance staff	3%	3%
Increased hiring of experienced accounting and finance staff	2%	3%
Increased hiring of accounting and finance staff with AI expertise/experience	2%	6%
Increased hiring of non-accountants with AI expertise into accounting and finance teams	2%	2%
No longer hiring for junior/entry-level accounting and finance roles	1%	2%
No longer hiring for experienced accounting and finance roles	1%	1%
Increased hiring of both junior and experienced accounting and finance staff	1%	0%
Increased hiring of junior/entry-level accounting and finance staff	0%	2%
Don't know	3%	8%

The influence of AI on hiring practices within finance and accounting teams in Malaysia is limited and, for many, still uncertain. In 2025, 37 per cent of organisations reported no change in recruitment practices due to AI compared with the survey average of 26 per cent, while 35 per cent stated it is too early to assess its impact.

Among those noting changes, 10 per cent indicated their accounting and finance teams have reduced or ceased hiring for junior roles due to AI. Conversely, only 2 per cent reported increased hiring of experienced accounting and finance professionals with AI expertise. Whether these results reflects a broader trend or a temporary adjustment remains to be seen.

As AI continues to streamline repetitive tasks and improve operational efficiency, it presents an opportunity for businesses to upskill their finance teams, including entry-level accountants, to take on more complex, strategic responsibilities. To thrive in this evolving landscape, accountants must not only enhance their AI proficiency but also deepen their accounting expertise and soft skills.

Organisations must also recognise the importance of keeping people in the loop. Human oversight remains critical, particularly in finance functions that demand accuracy, assurance and verification. Over-reliance on technology without appropriate checks can elevate risk and erode trust.

There is no doubt that businesses are embracing AI to augment the capabilities of their accounting and finance teams. A key consideration is striking the right balance between efficiency gains while preserving the human expertise essential to drive, supervise and validate AI outcomes.

Conclusion

Technology adoption in Malaysia is advancing, with businesses recognising its role in improving efficiency, customer experience and innovation. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, limited leadership understanding, talent shortages and cybersecurity gaps continue to hinder progress. While AI is delivering clear benefits, its integration remains shallow, and concerns around governance, privacy, and workforce impact persist.

To fully leverage technology, Malaysian businesses should:

- strengthen cybersecurity governance and data protection frameworks
- invest in skills development and digital leadership capability
- Modernise legacy systems to enable greater integration with emerging technologies.