



10 Strategic Technology Trends for Business Leaders

A new report from McKinsey & Co., highlights the top technology trends that companies should be paying attention to right now.

It's no secret that technology is evolving faster than most organizations can adapt. Innovations that once took decades to develop are now completed within months (or less), and are being powered by advances in computing, connectivity and engineering. For supply chain and procurement leaders, the question is not whether to engage but where to focus, how to invest and when to act.

The answers to those questions aren't always easy to pinpoint, and particularly with the number of "shiny objects" now competing for attention. To help, McKinsey & Co.'s new *Technology Trends Outlook 2025* narrows the field to 13 trends with the potential to reshape industries and competitive landscapes.

"The global technology landscape is undergoing significant shifts, propelled by fast-moving innovations in technologies," McKinsey says. "These developments are occurring against a backdrop of rising global competition as countries and corporations race to secure leadership in producing and applying these strategic technologies."

Breaking Down the Latest Tech Trends

The McKinsey report groups the key tech trends into three broad categories: the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution; compute and connectivity frontiers; and cutting-edge engineering. It developed scores for innovation (based on patents and research publications) and interest (based on news and web searches).

"We also estimated the level of equity investments in relevant technologies and rated their level of adoption by organizations," the company says. Here are the top 10 trends (of 13 total covered in the report) that McKinsey says organizations should be paying attention to right now:

1. Agentic AI is an AI system capable of independently planning and executing complex, multistep tasks. These agents can autonomously perform actions, communicate with one another and adapt to new information.

2. Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These systems leverage algorithms, data and computational power to recognize patterns, make decisions and learn from experiences.

3. Application-specific semiconductors are purpose-built chips optimized to perform specialized tasks. They're engineered to handle specific workloads (such as large-scale AI training and inference tasks) while optimizing performance characteristics.

4. Advanced connectivity covers the evolving technologies that enhance and expand digital communication networks (e.g., wireless low-power networks, 5G and emerging 6G cellular systems).

5. Cloud and edge computing distribute workloads across locations, from hyperscale remote data centers to regional hubs and local nodes. They optimize performance by addressing factors such as latency, data transfer costs, data sovereignty and data security.

6. Immersive-reality technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) help improve rendering, tracking and processing capabilities.

7. Digital trust and cybersecurity ensure secure, transparent and trustworthy digital interactions. This includes identity verification, data protection, encryption, threat detection and blockchain-based trust systems.

8. Quantum-based technologies make use of the unique properties of quantum mechanics to execute certain complex calculations exponentially faster than classical computers, secure communication networks and produce sensors with higher sensitivity levels than their classical counterparts.

9. The future of robotics takes a futuristic lens and covers the advancement of robotics capable of performing tasks autonomously or semi-autonomously, adapting to new, real-life inputs with increasing degrees of autonomy and dexterity. This category includes both autonomous mobile robots and humanoid robots.

10. Mobility technologies encompass the autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, drones and urban air mobility solutions that help improve the efficiency, safety and sustainability of transportation systems.

Focus and Follow-through Matter

Together, these trends represent areas where innovation, investment and talent are already converging, and where strategic action now could have an outsized impact in the years ahead. However, McKinsey notes that keeping pace with these shifts will require focus and follow-through.

"Success will hinge on identifying high-impact domains in which to apply these trends, investing in the necessary talent and infrastructure, and addressing external factors like regulatory shifts and ecosystem readiness," the firm notes. "[Companies that] act with focus and agility will not only unlock new value but also shape the future of their industries."