



NetNow



THE FUTURE OF CREDIT & AR

HOW TEAMS ARE **ADAPTING**,
AUTOMATING AND **ADVANCING**

WHITE PAPER



OVERVIEW

In 2025, credit and accounts receivable (AR) departments are redefining how they manage risk, technology and talent. As businesses navigate economic uncertainty and digital transformation, credit professionals are balancing innovation with practicality, adopting tools like automation and AI while staying focused on their core mission: protecting cash flow, evaluating risk and supporting growth.

The **Modern Credit & AR Department Survey**, conducted by NetNow together with the National Association of Credit Management (NACM), gathered feedback from hundreds of credit and AR professionals across industries. The results reveal a profession eager to embrace technology but cautious about its limitations, particularly in areas such as AI adoption, fraud prevention and workforce development.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology Adoption: A Cautious Leap Forward

Credit teams are actively embracing new technologies and artificial intelligence (AI), but with a strong sense of caution. While a significant majority are exploring or implementing new solutions, concerns about AI's limitations persist. AI is seen as most promising for fraud detection and credit risk prediction, yet over half of the credit professionals worry about losing the "human touch" in credit decisions, alongside fears of bias, inaccuracy, and regulatory risks. This indicates a strategic, measured approach to integrating technology.

Credit Applications: Balancing Speed and Accuracy

Despite the availability of digital tools, manual processes still dominate how credit applications are managed. A large portion of teams rely on PDFs/email attachments or paper forms, leading to significant delays. Nearly a quarter of our respondents indicated that applications take four days or more to process, with incomplete data, slow reference checks, and fraud detection issues being primary bottlenecks. This area presents a clear opportunity for automation and integrated digital tools to enhance both speed and accuracy in the application process.

Fraud Prevention: A Growing Digital Priority

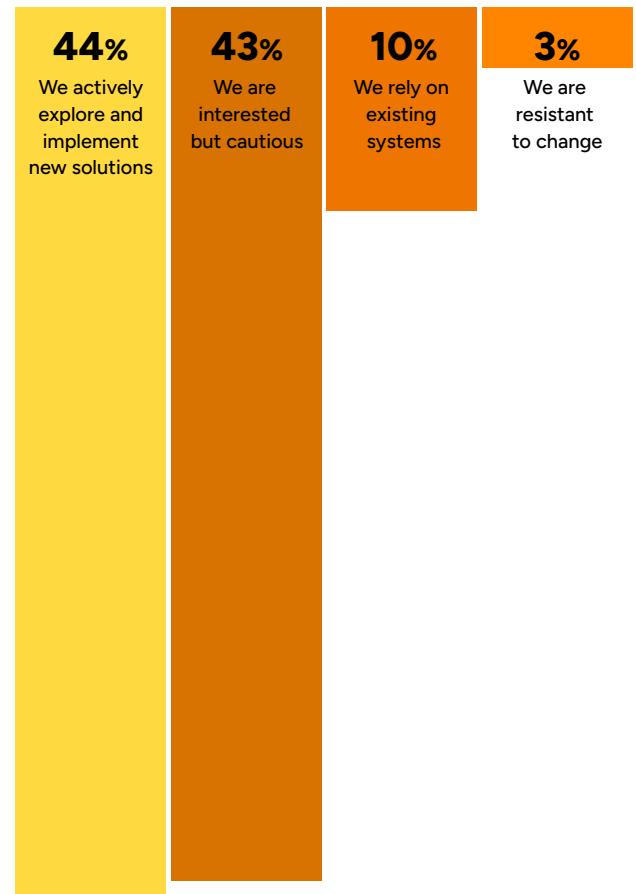
Fraud is an escalating concern for credit departments, with almost two-thirds of our respondents encountering fraudulent attempts frequently. The most common threats are synthetic identities/fake businesses and misrepresented financials. In response, organizations are proactively implementing new fraud prevention technologies and improving internal processes, indicating a critical and evolving focus on digital defense to combat increasingly sophisticated fraudulent tactics.

Building the Future Credit Team

Credit departments face significant workforce challenges, primarily in hiring and retaining skilled professionals. The biggest obstacle is finding candidates with strong credit analysis skills, followed by competition for experienced talent and a lack of technology fluency among applicants. Burnout and heavy workloads also contribute to retention issues. The most critical skills for the future credit professional are identified as fraud detection/risk management, data analysis/financial modeling, and customer communication/negotiation, emphasizing the need for a blend of technical expertise, analytical depth, and soft skills in an increasingly automated environment.

Overall, the findings reveal a credit profession that is embracing change strategically—investing in digital transformation while maintaining the human expertise essential for sound financial decision-making.

What best describes your team's approach to adopting new technology for credit management?



TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION: A CAUTIOUS LEAP FORWARD

Manual workflows that once felt manageable now slow cash flow and delay decisions, leading credit teams to turn to automation. Though many are more open to technology than ever, they are approaching it with measured optimism.

Respondents said:

- 44% are actively exploring and implementing new credit solutions
- 43% expressed interest but remain cautious
- 10% continue to rely exclusively on existing systems
- 3% describe themselves as resistant to change

Artificial intelligence continues to make inroads into credit and AR. Roughly 36% of organizations are exploring AI solutions, with 35% actively piloting or using them. However, 22% remain on the sidelines, and 6% say they are skeptical or not interested.

The top areas where credit professionals see potential for the use of AI:

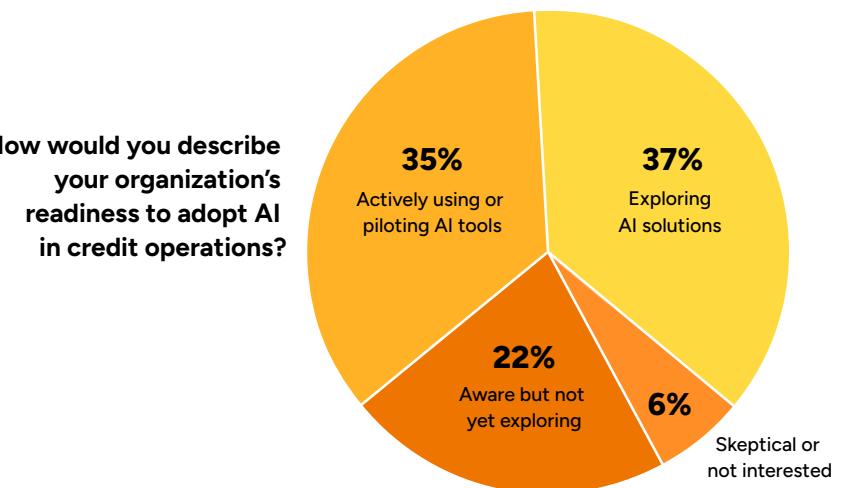
- Detecting fraud and red flags (40%)
- Predicting credit risk or default (33%)
- Automating credit application review (33%)
- Prioritizing collections outreach (32%)

Although most recognize the potential benefits of AI, concerns persist and confidence remains tied to evidence and transparency. A majority of survey respondents worry about losing "the human touch," and fear inaccurate or biased recommendations.

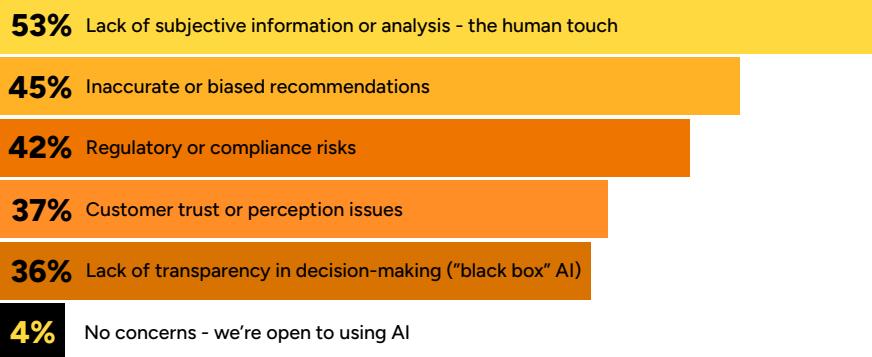
When asked what would make them more confident in AI adoption, respondents cited:

- Proven accuracy (59%)
- Clear explainability (48%)
- Peer success stories (43%)

How would you describe your organization's readiness to adopt AI in credit operations?



What concerns, if any, do you have about using AI in credit decision-making? (Select all that apply)



CREDIT APPLICATIONS: BALANCING SPEED AND ACCURACY

If there's one process credit teams most want to modernize, it's credit applications. Despite the growing availability of digital tools, many credit departments still depend on traditional methods.

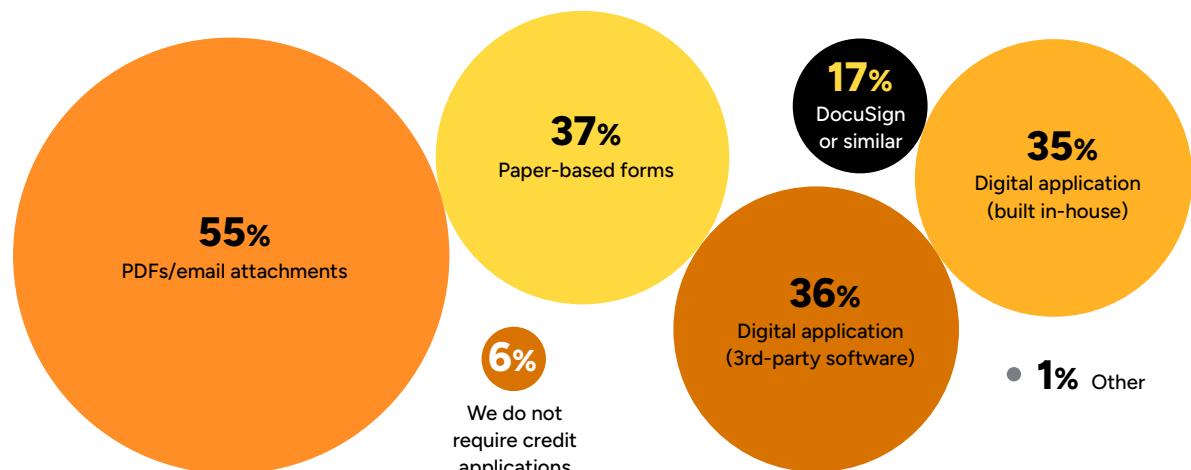
According to the survey:

- 55% process applications through PDFs or email attachments
- 37% use paper forms
- 35% use in-house digital applications
- 36% use third-party software

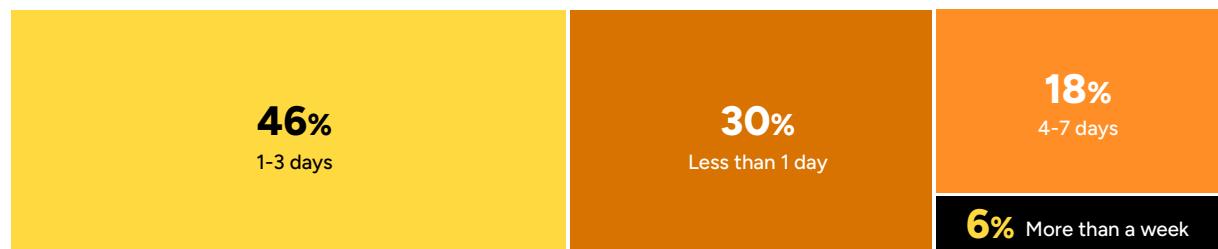
Turnaround times vary significantly. While most are able to process applications within one to three days, 18% need up to a week, and 6% take longer than that. The reasons for these delays? Incomplete data, slow trade references and verification challenges.

This combination of manual processes and information gaps illustrates a common tension: the need to move faster without compromising accuracy.

How do you currently manage credit applications? (Select all that apply)



On average, how long does it take to process a new credit application?



FRAUD PREVENTION: A GROWING DIGITAL PRIORITY

As business moves online, fraud has followed. Credit professionals are encountering deceptive applications more frequently and with greater sophistication, causing credit departments to run into fraud several times per year, sometimes monthly or weekly.

Top fraud concerns include:

- Synthetic or fake business identities (57%)
- Misrepresented financials or trade references (41%)
- Cross-border or supply chain fraud (35%)

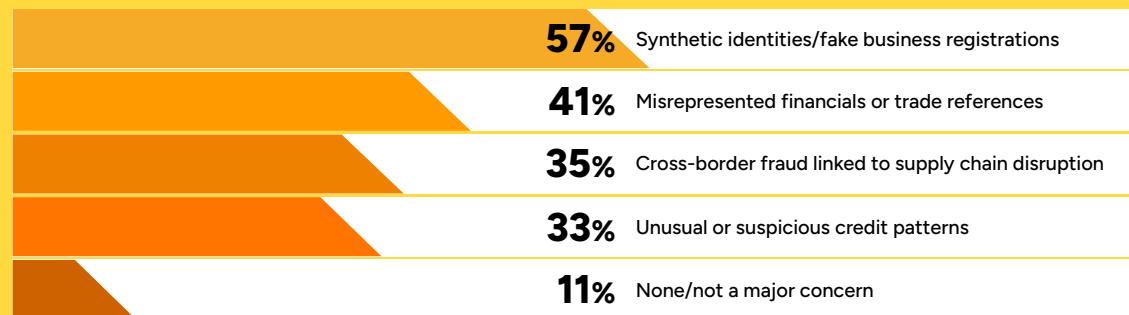
The message is clear: reactive measures are no longer enough. As fraud tactics become more sophisticated, credit departments must strengthen their defenses through a combination of technology, data validation and skilled human judgment.

Organizations are taking action:

- 32% of respondents have implemented new technology or services in the past year
- 31% have improved internal processes

However, 17% are still exploring solutions, and 15% admit fraud prevention isn't yet a top priority.

What new fraud concerns are top of mind for your team in 2025? (Select all that apply)



BUILDING THE FUTURE CREDIT TEAM

In the midst of technology transformations reshaping credit operations, many organizations are also confronting workforce challenges. When asked what their biggest challenge is when hiring or retaining talent:

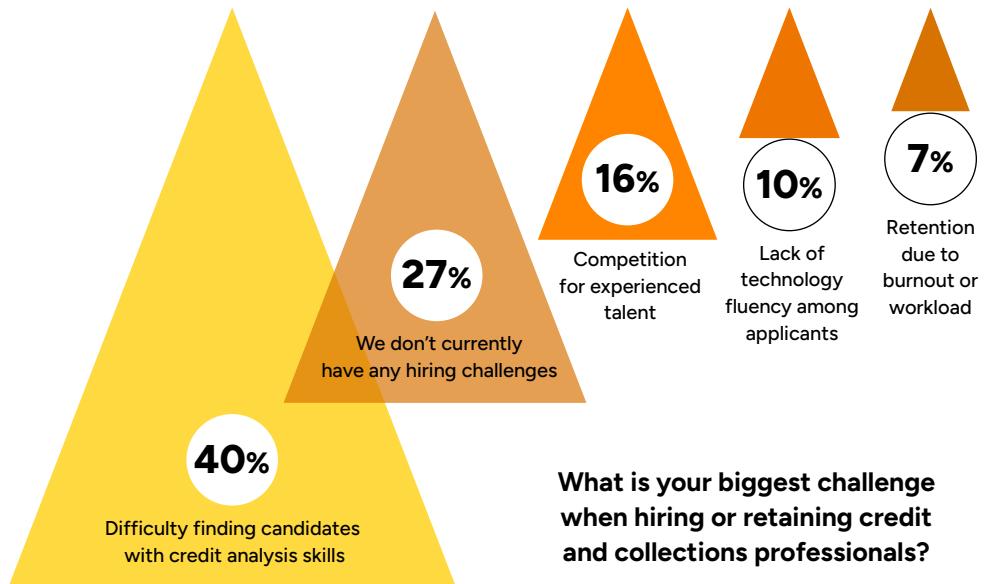
- 40% of survey participants said it is finding candidates with strong credit analysis skills
- 16% cited competition for experienced talent as a key issue
- 10% pointed to a lack of technology fluency among applicants
- 7% stated retaining employees amid burnout and high workloads

These challenges are reshaping the skill sets and qualities credit leaders seek in their teams. The solution isn't just hiring more people—it's preparing the right ones. As technology transforms, so do the expectations for the credit professional.

Looking ahead, respondents identified the most important skills for the next generation of credit professionals as:

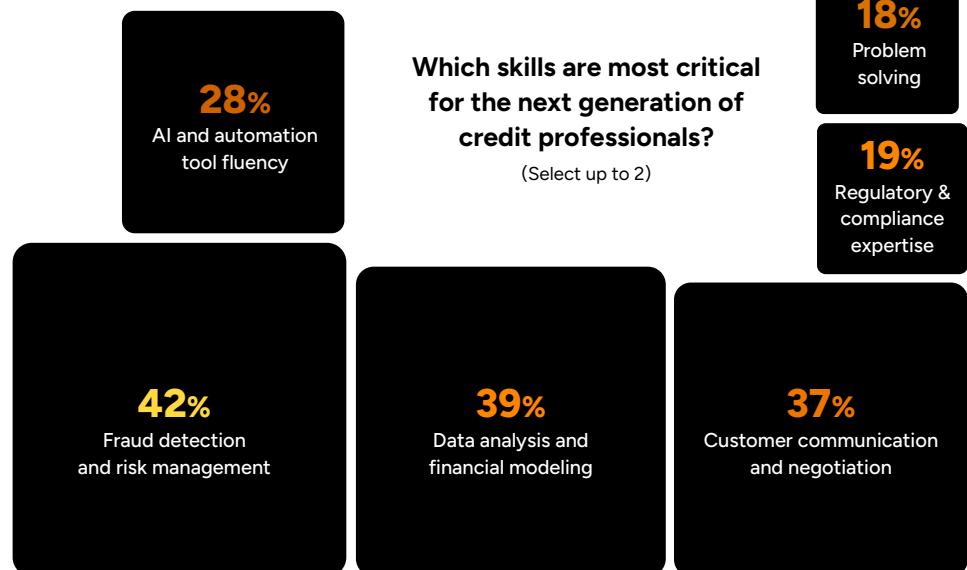
- Fraud detection and risk management (42%)
- Data analysis and financial modeling (39%)
- Customer communication and negotiation (37%)
- AI and automation tool fluency (28%)

These numbers tell us that the ideal credit professional of the future will need to blend technical knowledge with strategic and critical thinking in order to adapt—combining data-driven insight, financial acumen and digital fluency.



Which skills are most critical for the next generation of credit professionals?

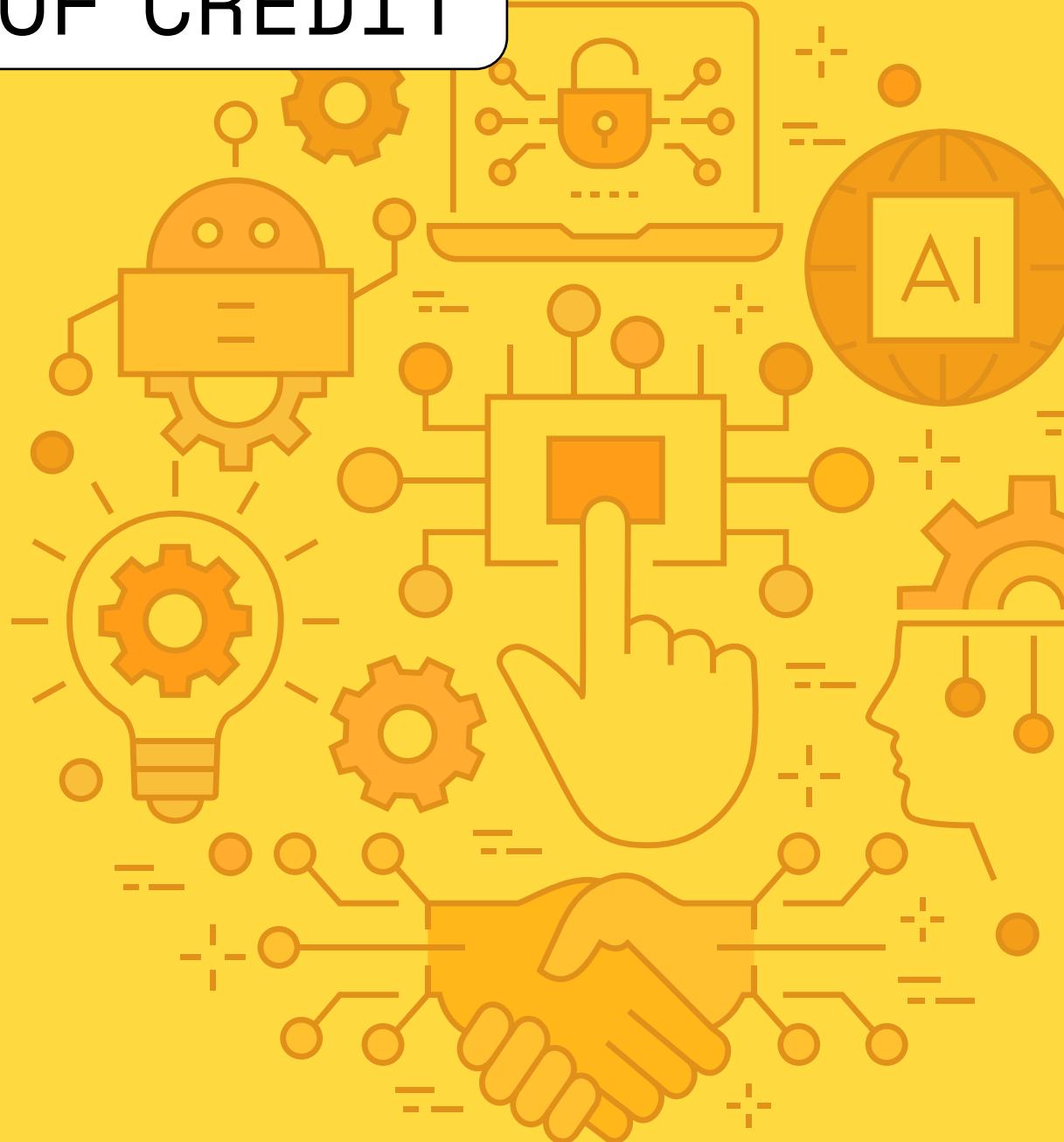
(Select up to 2)



THE NEXT ERA OF CREDIT

The **Modern Credit & AR Department Survey** reveals a profession in transition—one that recognizes the potential of technology but remains grounded in experience and judgment. Credit professionals are moving steadily toward digital transformation, yet they continue to balance innovation with caution, especially when it comes to AI and fraud prevention.

As credit teams modernize, the most successful ones will be those that harness automation and data while maintaining the human insight that drives sound financial decisions. With the right combination of technology, training and teamwork, the modern credit department is not only adapting to change but leading it.





NetNow offers a comprehensive technology solution for your credit team. With our trade credit platform, you can quickly onboard customers, make precise credit approvals and proactively manage risks. Our technology empowers you to develop a top-tier credit department, transforming your finance team into a significant competitive asset.

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National Association of Credit Management (NACM) was founded in 1896 to promote good laws for sound credit, protect businesses against fraudulent debtors, improve the interchange of credit information, develop better credit practices and methods, and establish a code of ethics. Education and research programs illustrate NACM's awareness of the complex needs of credit management today. Members of NACM are credit and financial executives, primarily representing manufacturers, wholesalers, financial institutions and varied service organizations.

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