As the technology landscape evolves, health IT leaders face a number of worries, including staffing, cybersecurity and the influx of data — but how are these tackled across the health care sector?
Well, there isn’t a “one-size-fits-all” solution. The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, known as HIMSS, conducts an annual survey of the complex health IT marketplace. Its 2018 U.S. Leadership and Workforce Survey asked 369 hospital respondents and health vendors and consultants about main focus areas, IT projections and challenges. *(Editor's note: HIMSS refers to IT as “information and technology” in its report)*

Both groups tend to evaluate IT priorities with the same intensity year after year, but they don’t face the same concerns, meaning one approach won’t cut it. Below are key findings from the survey:

1. **Top IT Priorities**: “Privacy, security and cybersecurity” and “data analytics/clinical and business intelligence” fell among the top IT priorities for both vendors/consultants and hospital respondents.

2. **IT Exec Influence**: Vendor/consultants and hospital executives agree IT executives have an increased influence within the provider organizations, so it’s important vendors be purposeful in establishing and maintaining relationships with clients in hospital settings.

3. **Projected Demand for IT Resources**: 86 percent of vendors/consultants expect their volume of business to grow in 2018, while 63 percent of hospitals project their IT operating budget to either stay the same or be reduced.

4. **Modifying IT Projects Because of Staffing**: 51 percent of hospital respondents said their organization chose to hold or scale back IT projects in the past year because of workforce challenges, compared to the 38 percent of vendors/consultants.

5. **Health IT Opportunities**: 69 percent of vendors/consultants and 34 percent of hospitals said they had open positions to fill, so health IT professionals looking may want to start with vendors.

Based on the findings, HIMSS provided some recommendations to both respondent groups. Vendors and consultants should ensure they are staffed efficiently and
appropriately to welcome the anticipated spike in business, and hospitals should consider leveraging outside executive recruitment firms to address IT staffing issues. For those interested in entering the health IT space, be prepared to take on the industry’s top priorities, cybersecurity and data analytics, first.