Cybersecurity, AI, and Economic Uncertainty: How Internal Audit Teams Are Managing 2025's Top Risks

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Jefferson Wells 2025 Internal Audit Priorities Survey Reveals Key Trends and Challenges Keeping Audit Teams Busy

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 16, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Cybersecurity, AI, and economic uncertainty are dominating the priorities of internal audit leaders in 2025, according to Jefferson Wells, a leading professional services firm specializing in Finance & Accounting, Internal Audit, Risk & Compliance, and Tax, and part of the ManpowerGroup family of brands.



The firm's ninth annual Internal Audit Priorities Survey finds that cybersecurity remains the top emerging risk for the fifth consecutive year, highlighting the critical role of robust cyber defenses in an increasingly connected and vulnerable technology environment. Generative AI has surged as the second most pressing concern, reshaping audit strategies, toolsets, and the skills required to manage emerging risks. Economic uncertainty is the newest factor on audit leaders' radar, cited by 26% of respondents—up from near zero in last year's survey.

As internal audit departments wrestle with these complex risks, they are also grappling with skill shortages in areas such as cybersecurity, AI, IT audit, and data analytics. More than 85% of audit leaders report relying on external partners to augment their internal capabilities and bridge critical gaps.

"Technology and cybersecurity have become paramount as organizations navigate an increasingly complex risk landscape," Tim Lietz, National Practice Leader for Risk & Compliance at Jefferson Wells, said. "Our annual survey underscores the pressing need for Internal Audit functions to adapt to swift advancements in AI, growing global economic uncertainty and their inability to maintain required skillsets on their team to execute their annual internal audit plan. To effectively address these challenges, Internal Audit departments must enhance their capabilities and leverage external expertise to bridge these expanding skill gaps."

Get more insights from the Jefferson Wells 2025 Internal Audit Priorities Survey report at: www.jeffersonwells.com/en/internal-audit-report-2025.

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