

2025 AACCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE **BEAUTY SCHOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY**



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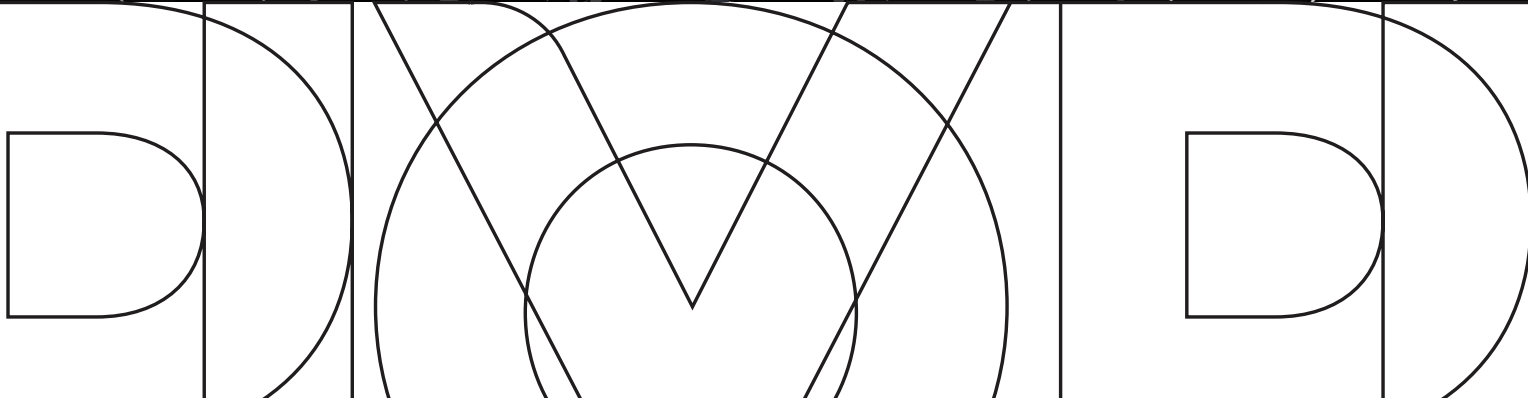


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At the 2025 American Association of Career Schools (AACCS) Annual Conference, beauty school owners, administrators, suppliers and technology partners gathered for an interactive discussion to explore how technology is transforming the beauty school community.

Our session was informed by insights from the Beauty Changes Lives (BCL) Industry Leader Technology Roundtable at Premiere Orlando, where 85 industry leaders gathered to talk about the impact of technology on our industry. The follow-up report below highlights points from that conversation.



The goal of the AACCS session was to understand how technology can serve as an enabler for schools: freeing up time, personalizing learning and strengthening connections.

This summary draws on the AACCS session, follow-up conversations with session participants and feedback gathered through audience research.

Pivot Point was proud to host this discussion and hopes it inspires continued dialogue and meaningful action that supports the informed, intentional and constructive use of technology in beauty education.

At the Premiere Orlando Industry Leader Technology Roundtable, Dr. Vint Cerf—Google’s chief internet evangelist and recognized as one of the “fathers of the internet”—shared his reflections on where we’ve been, where we’re going and how the professional beauty industry can thoughtfully navigate the digital age.

His thoughts bridged innovation and responsibility, serving as a foundation for the AACCS session.

- Embrace technology, but be skeptical
“When the stakes are high, you’d better be sure the tool is trustworthy.”
- Let curiosity guide experimentation and embrace lifelong learning
“Don’t try to plan your career perfectly. Pay attention to opportunity—and don’t be afraid to take risks. A child born today could live to be 100. That means a 60-year career. You can’t assume that what you learned at 22 will carry you through.”
- Build trust through transparency and communication
“Communication is how trust is established. If you can’t communicate, you can’t build trust.”
- Be the disruptor
“If someone’s going to disrupt your business, let it be you. Don’t wait for someone else to eat your lunch.”



The conversation at AACCS underscored a powerful message: the true potential of technology in beauty education lies not in innovation alone, but in its integration—with empathy, leadership and community at the center.

Schools were encouraged to explore how technology can empower people, how data can deepen understanding and how human connection will always remain our ultimate differentiator.

Theme	Key Message	Discussion Quote
Human Connection	Keep people and human considerations at the heart of every tech decision.	“The first priority is maintaining the human connection.”
Education Leadership	School technology must align to guiding their cultural and digital transformation.	“Your approach must stay true to your culture and authenticity.”
Leadership & Buy-In	Leaders must model, explain and support change visibly.	“Leadership must visibly back up digital initiatives with supportive actions.”
Collaboration & Data	The industry must align around shared goals, data and language.	“We need data to support what success means for us.”



Technology's Role: Enhancement, Not Replacement

A central message throughout the discussion was that technology is no longer a barrier, but an enabler that enhances the business model, and should be used to enhance the human experience, not replace it.

It was emphasized that beauty is an emotionally connected, hands-on field; therefore, technology must serve educators, students and administrators—not distance them from it.

“Technology should enhance personalization, free up time and deepen relationships—not replace the human touch.”

Examples discussed included how AI and automation can handle administrative work, freeing instructors and staff to focus more on mentorship, coaching and creativity.

The group highlighted the value of empathy, authenticity and culture to lead the way when schools adopt new digital tools.

The Evolution of Technology

Tech 3.0 represents a new phase of integration in which technology moves from being a tool to becoming the environment in which learning and business operate.

Our mindset needs to shift from thinking about “technology” to thinking about “business opportunity.” Today’s tools are flexible, scalable and capable of supporting both small and large organizations. When aligned with clear objectives, they can be implemented efficiently and at a reasonable cost.

The next stage of adoption must be transformational. The real differentiation will come from how schools and businesses use technology to create richer, more personalized and more valuable experiences. It is no longer only about efficiency gains.

Within a school environment, emerging opportunities include artificial intelligence, data-informed decision-making, virtual and augmented reality, and automation.

“The conversation now isn’t just about using tech. It is about determining where technology meaningfully supports what we do.”

This shift is prompting every stakeholder in the beauty industry—schools, salons and manufacturers—to rethink how they teach, serve clients and define value.

“We need to lift our perspective beyond individual operations and consider what is required for the industry as a whole. The challenges, the opportunities and the mindset needed to remain relevant and competitive.”

Schools and Technology – The Cultural Shift

The AACSB audience considered that schools could be both learners and leaders in this transformation, as beauty education is where digital adoption and human creativity intersect visibly.

Schools can become examples of innovation for innovation by integrating AI-powered instruction, virtual classroom tools, digital portfolios and interactive compliance systems.

These technologies not only enhance training efficiency but also prepare students for a tech-driven professional landscape.

However, it was noted that schools must align new tools with their culture, authenticity and teaching philosophy, rather than adopting technology for its own sake.

“Your approach must stay true to your culture and authenticity—build technology use around who you are as a school.”

Leadership, Buy-In, and the “Why”

A key theme was leadership accountability—technology initiatives fail when communication and modeling are inconsistent.

It was stressed that adoption must begin with leadership clearly explaining why the technology matters, setting expectations and providing transparency throughout the process.

“Leadership must visibly back up digital initiatives with supportive actions—including actually using the technology.”

It was suggested that schools and organizations treat technology launches like product rollouts—complete with internal announcements, defined goals and quick feedback loops to track progress and celebrate early wins.

“You’ve got to connect technology use to personal benefit and team growth.”



Driving Adoption and Buy-In Within School Teams

Successful technology adoption begins with a clear purpose and visible leadership. Teams engage when they understand why the change matters and see leaders modeling its use.

“Leadership must visibly back up digital initiatives with supportive actions—including actually using the technology.”

Transparency builds trust and consistency, while open communication helps address fear of change and information gaps. Sharing both successes and challenges normalizes learning and fosters collaboration.

Sustained adoption stems from celebrating early wins, maintaining open feedback loops and remaining flexible as tools and needs evolve. In short, adoption is not a single event—it’s a continuous cycle of communication, reflection and reinforcement.

Beauty Industry Collaboration

The session reinforced that meaningful transformation requires cross-industry collaboration. Associations, brands, schools and technology providers must work together to develop standards, share insights and address gaps in access and knowledge.

“The beauty industry is fundamentally different from most others—banking, insurance, anything. Related to technology, we need to define what success means for us.”

This sense of industry identity and interdependence was central to the original Beauty Changes Lives data initiative, which served as a forum to break down silos and connect people and ideas across different segments of the beauty industry.

It was also emphasized that we use data to drive smarter decision-making across beauty education and the professional ecosystem.

“Fragmentation and vendor overload are real challenges—we need shared frameworks and common data standards and definitions to measure our progress.”



Technology Implementation Guidelines

The group conversation suggested a framework to help schools approach technology:

- **Backward Engineering:** Start with the problem or opportunity before selecting technology.
- **ROI:** Evaluate ROI not only in dollars but also in time, energy and team well-being and retention.
- **Alignment With Culture:** Ensure that innovation efforts are aligned with the school's goals and culture.
- **Clarity of Purpose:** Establish expectations throughout the organization early on through internal announcements and meetings.
- **Scenario Planning:** Create test cases to explore success and risk factors. Think about "what is the worst thing that could happen."
- **Best Practices:** Identify beauty school users and examples to connect with. Regularly survey the school community for ideas about new technologies and applications.

Practical Technology Applications

The discussion referenced several technology use cases that schools and salons can explore immediately, such as:

- **Improve Processes:** Streamline the creation of policies, standards and procedures.
- **AI-driven compliance tools** for documentation and regulation tracking.
- **Digital tutors** that support personalized learning.
- **Virtual or 3-D education environments** to supplement live instruction.
- **Automated administrative systems** for attendance, scheduling and communication.

These examples were tied to the broader group conversation that technology should make people more efficient, not more distant from one another.

"The point is to free up time for mentorship, creativity and connection."



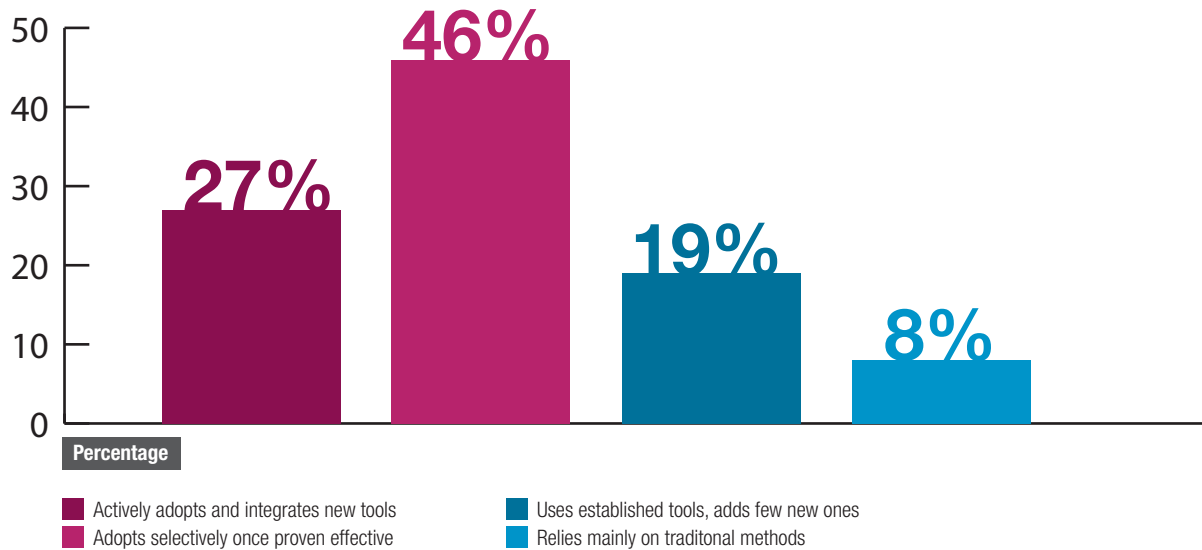
TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

The audience generally has a measured and cautious approach to technology adoption. A minority expressed uncertainty about what would most help their schools, signaling either lack of exposure or perhaps information overload.

In the comments, approximately a quarter of respondents mentioned cost and budget limitations as a core barrier to adopting or expanding technology solutions.

Comments also highlighted a need for examples and guidance, especially practical, school-specific solutions and more opportunities to connect directly with solution providers.

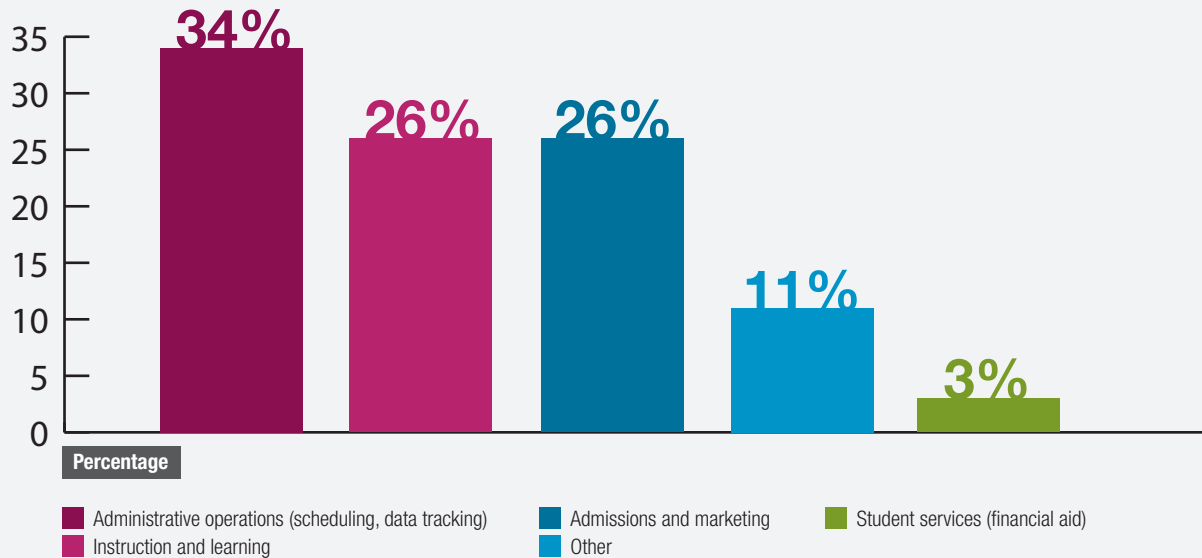
Question: How would you describe your school’s current approach to technology?



TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT

Technology has had the greatest impact on administrative operations.

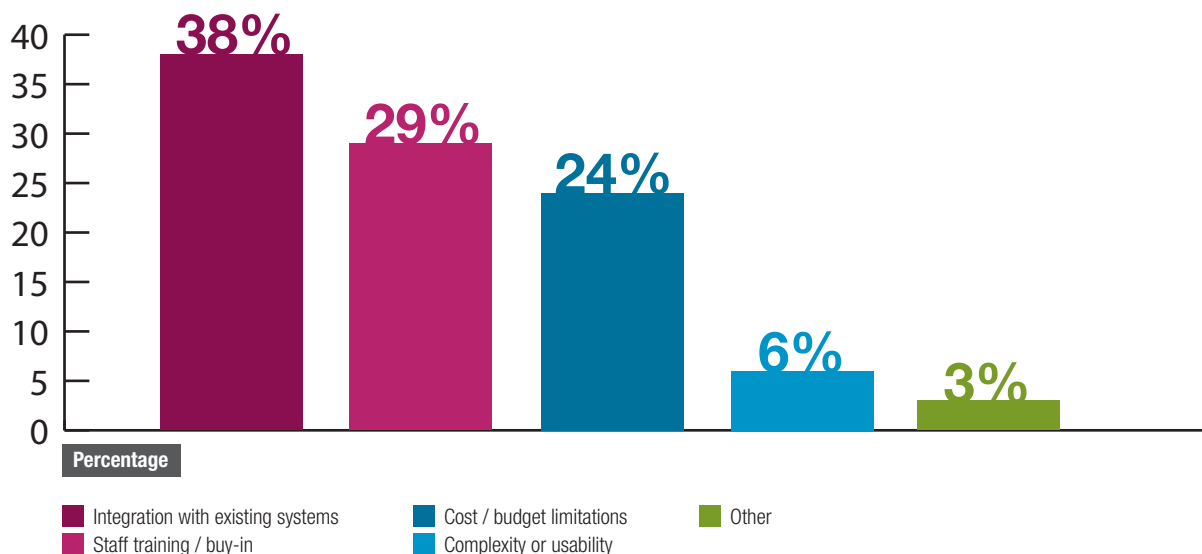
Question: Where has technology made the biggest impact in your school?



CHALLENGES

Integration is the most significant technology challenge. Comments highlighted issues related to connecting learning management systems, student records and other digital tools.

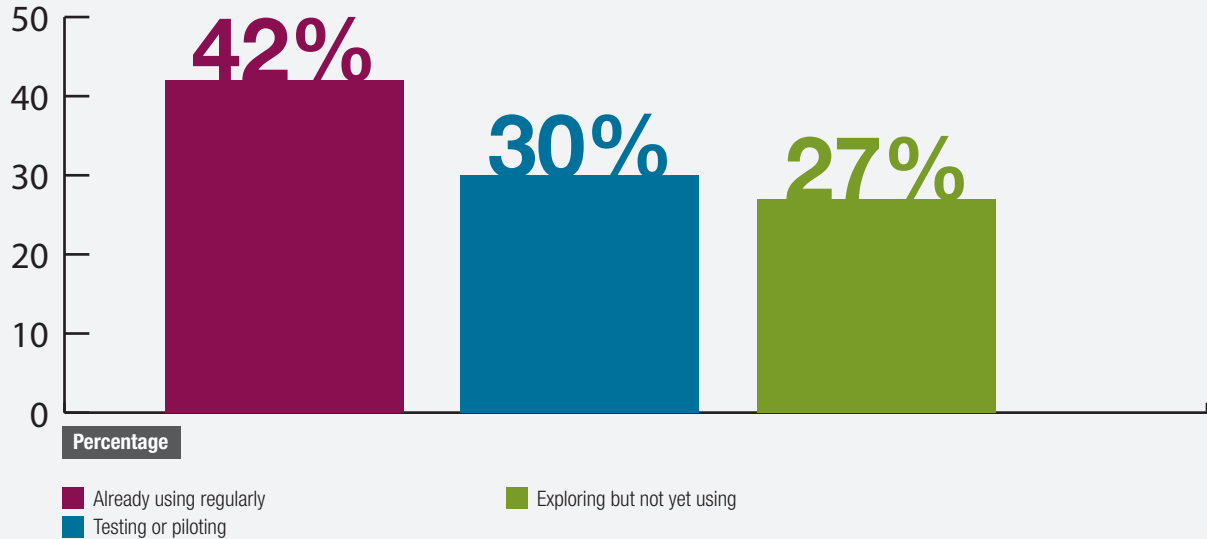
Question: What is your school's biggest challenge with technology?



USE OF AI/AUTOMATION

Most schools are at least testing or exploring AI and automation, showing curiosity and a gradual adoption. Comments highlighted a need for examples and guidance, especially practical, peer-driven examples.

Question: Which best describes your school's use of AI or automation tools (e.g., ChatGPT)?



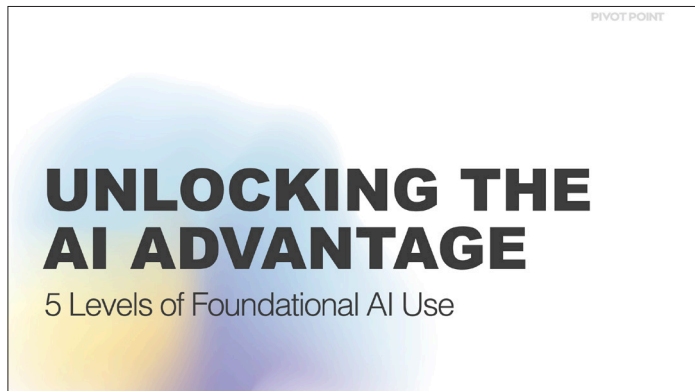
STAFF TRAINING/ADOPTION

Nearly one-third of the comments emphasized the need for consistent, ongoing training to ensure adoption and confidence with new technology.

Emotional connection references suggest a school's need to take a human-centered approach to change management.

Ease of use and intuitive interfaces remain critical factors influencing adoption and staff comfort with new systems.

Pivot Point's focus on technology at AACCS also included a presentation from our Director of Content Partnerships, Daniel Dunworth.



AI can help trim your workload and even spark fresh ideas for your next class or school campaign. In this practical session, Daniel explored how beauty school students, educators, administrators and owners can utilize free AI tools to save time, reduce burnout and accomplish more.

Daniel broke down five levels of AI use—from task support to strategy planning—and shared real-life tips, tricks and tested prompts tailored to specific roles. These tools don't require tech skills—just curiosity and a to-do list.

The session drew a standing-room-only audience, setting an energetic tone from the start. There was strong engagement, with participants actively contributing their own recent experiences and highlighting the immediate impact of the concepts presented. Throughout the seminar, attendees shared practical examples of how they had already applied the information, reinforcing the relevance and usefulness of the content.

Response was very positive, and several attendees expressed strong interest in arranging follow-up opportunities, including in-person presentations for their teams and schools. The collective feedback reflected the value of the session and the enthusiasm for deeper, ongoing learning.





[Pivot Point International](#) is a third-generation family business dedicated exclusively to the professional beauty industry. Our team includes over 30 professionals with industry-specific licenses, and we have extensive experience with beauty schools, salons, spas, barbershops, chains, brands and distributors.

Pivot Point offers original and third-party cosmetology, barbering, nails and esthetics education and content through a learning platform designed specifically for beauty professionals.

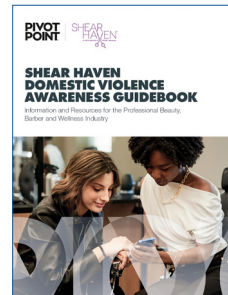
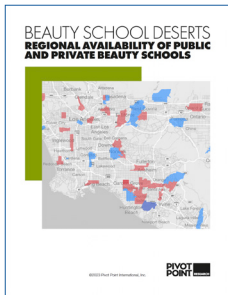
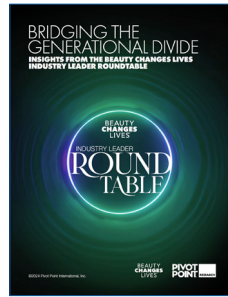
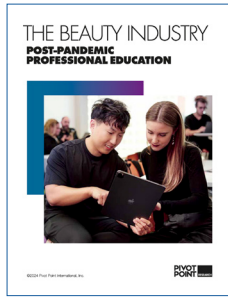
Pivot Point manufactures the industry's most diverse range of high-quality mannequins, all produced in our company-owned [SA 8000-certified](#) factory to meet stringent ethical and production standards. This includes a full range of [texture mannequins](#) and our versatile and eco-friendly [CAP SERIES](#) mannequins—designed for increased portability, reduced storage space and minimized landfill waste—and offering customizable hair and skin tone options.

Pivot Point is committed to supporting the industry and its professionals through charitable, cause-driven and educational activities and recognition programs, and has a strong focus on [ethical manufacturing](#), [diversity and inclusion](#) and [sustainability](#).

We are a proud founding member of [Beauty Changes Lives](#), and collaborate on the Honor Your Teacher recognition program, the Intercoiffure Student Contest and the Leo Passage Educator of the Year award.

Pivot Point provides a variety of free industry-specific research for our community:

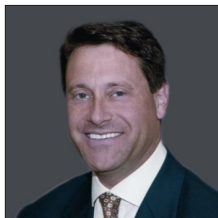
pivot-point.com/research/



To learn more about our comprehensive research capabilities, please complete our form:

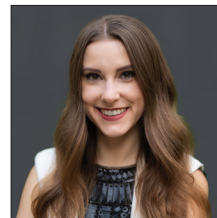
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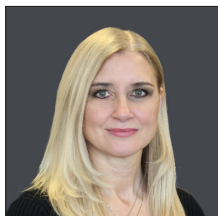
Steve Reiss
Strategic Marketing & Business Insights

15+ years providing custom research solutions to leading beauty industry groups, with a focus on leveraging research insights to create effective strategies supporting business goals.



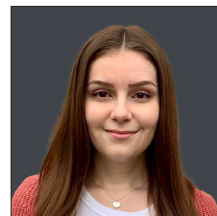
Sabrina Cason
Primary Research

Specializes in consumer-focused market research, leading and designing research methodology, execution and analysis that provides insight to drive business growth.



Vasiliki A. Stavrakis
Secondary Research

Specializes in analyzing and aggregating third-party and government data and regulatory, licensing and accrediting agency requirements to inform business decisions.



Christina Mooshil
Data Visualization

Specializes in combining analysis, design and storytelling to create visual data representations that help people understand and evaluate information more easily.