Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Transformation Drives Growth

By Analysts Rajesh Kandaswamy, Eric Hunter, John Santoro, Adrian O’Connell, Fenella Scott, Mark McDonald, Max Azaham, David Yockelson, Ed Anderson, Daryl Plummer, Lindsay McKinney

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Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Transformation Drives Growth – A Gartner Trend Insight Report

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Initiatives: Emerging Technologies and Trends Impact on Products and Services

Every business is becoming a technology business and this phenomenon has profound implications on all facets of the technology provider industry. This special report is a collection of research that highlights the long-term changes in the industry and the strategic actions that are necessary now.

Overview

Opportunities and Challenges

- As every organization becomes more dependent on technology in all facets of business, the market for technology products and services must expand to cover more aspects of business and open up new markets.

- Advances in digital technologies continue while the digitization of the world’s economy is still a work in progress. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is accelerating the path toward a digital future. The combination of these factors strengthens demand for technology products and services.

- Several forces are playing a larger role in the way enterprises differentiate their business models. Further, these forces also serve as a basis for startups to disrupt existing markets. These forces will continue to drive large changes in the technology and services markets.

- Enterprises that have successfully leveraged technology prowess to strategically transform themselves will grow as new competitive threats to technology products and services, using both competitive and substitute products.

What You Need to Know

- A view toward near-term changes in the market is necessary but not sufficient for sustained long-term success. Providers need to transform by looking at the long-term impact of trends and technologies on their markets and adjust their strategy regularly.

- Technology and service providers (TSPs) need to prepare for a set of external forces that impact their markets, clients and their organization. These forces emerge from changing customer
demand, shifting industry dynamics, emerging technology and trends, challenges from new (and old) entrants, disruptive business models, and geopolitics.

- External forces provide opportunities and threats for technology providers that impact various aspects of TSP business in the long term. Providers should be open to changes across all dimensions of their business that involve their products and services, customers and buyers, talent and resources, operations and processes, partners and ecosystems, as well as through their competitive landscape.

**Insight From the Experts**

Long-Term Success Requires Strategic Transformation

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Enterprises are increasingly dependent on technology across all facets of their business and operating models. Further, companies that utilize technologies to disrupt current markets or new ones continue to grow. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that companies that have applied digital broadly are more resilient. This is leading to accelerated investments in digital technologies.

Most providers have ridden this wave of technology-driven growth in their markets, but the pressure to deliver results in the short term leads to missed opportunities in the long term. This deeper and broader use of technology demands that providers not only provide excellent products and services but also generate value by helping their clients strengthen their business and operating models.

No sector is immune, and technology is growing in presence across all spheres of the economy, society and government. Further, a slew of global changes are on the anvil, including shifts in geopolitics and climate change. These open new, and often unfamiliar, strategic challenges for technology and service providers.
A broader and long-term perspective is not just necessary for TSPs to uncover markets and opportunities to grow, it is also vital to ensure they are not blindsided to threats of shrinking markets, commoditization and disruptive competition.

Sincerely,

Rajesh Kandaswamy, Eric Hunter, John Santoro, Adrian O’Connell, Fenella Scott, Mark McDonald, Max Azaham, David Yockelson, Ed Anderson, Daryl Plummer, Lindsay McKinney

Executive Overview

Definition

When every company becomes a technology business, the business of a technology company undergoes a paradigm shift. Technology and service providers need to take a long-term view to see opportunities and threats, which are not always visible, while serving current market demands.

The “Tech Providers 2025” special report is a collection of research that helps technology and service providers understand the long-term changes in their markets and the actions they need to take today to prepare. The research notes in this report focus on key changes expected by 2025 across different areas. This special report comprises the following research focused on the 2025 time frame:

- External forces across key areas that will have a large impact on the industry (see Figure 1).
- Key changes across the characteristics for a TSP, driven in large part by the external forces.
- Emerging trends and technologies that impact products and services.
- Implications and actions for the leaders in various roles.

Figure 1: Tech Provider 2025 Architecture
Each of the above sections are expanded below.

**Research Highlights**

**External Forces Will Drive Opportunities and Threats**

Technology and service providers need to consistently evaluate and adapt their business models, products and marketing to delight their customers and meet their business objectives. In ordinary times, savvy customers, well-financed competitors and a rapidly changing technology landscape would provide all of the challenges a technology leader would need. However, some forces acting on a provider present a more fundamental threat — anticipate and evolve, or be disrupted. The six forces described below act on providers today (see Figure 2). However, we believe that over the next five years, they will accelerate trends and pose problems that will demand providers create new models, products and relationships to survive and to ultimately succeed.

**Figure 2: Key Forces Shaping Technology and Service Providers Into 2025**
The six forces that Gartner expects to have the greatest impact on TSPs and the challenges those forces will present to them are:

- Disruption from geopolitics and world events
- Changing customer demand and expectations
- Disruption from emerging technology and trends
- Changing industry dynamics
- Challenges from new (and old) entrants
- Disruptive business models

These forces will significantly affect various impacts of the TSP industry, as shown in the next section.

Related Research
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Forces outside of a technology and service provider’s control demand a response: adapt to thrive or struggle to survive. *Tech Providers 2025: Prepare to Survive and Thrive With the External Forces That Will Impact Your Business* provides an overview of the six major forces providers will be confronted with that will challenge them to respond and evolve their organizations, operations and business models. The documents below cover the key aspects of each external force in detail:

- **Geopolitics and World Events**: Changing geopolitics and world events provide significant disruptions for technology and service providers with long-lasting impacts. *Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Responses to Disruption From Geopolitics and World Events* provides product leaders with advice on how to identify and understand the dynamics of geopolitics and world events and how to adapt to grow and differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

- **Customer Demand and Expectations**: Technology purchases of digitally transformed companies must support new outcomes driven by new business models and baselines of intelligence, automation and instrumentation. *Tech Providers 2025: Transformed Buyers and Customers Force Evolution* discusses how, through 2025, product leaders building marketing programs must address these evolved expectations to win and grow business.

- **Emerging Technologies and Trends**: Emerging technologies will increase their role in shaping the future of the TSP industry. *Tech Providers 2025: Predictions on Emerging Technologies* discusses how product leaders must identify, understand and leverage emerging technologies and their potential impact on all facets of TSP businesses.

- **Industry Dynamics**: *Tech Providers 2025: Utilize Cloud Ecosystems to Counter Changing Industry Dynamics and Market Power* demonstrates how product leaders can choose an ecosystem in which to participate. Product leaders should weigh factors such as the ecosystem’s audience size, areas of white space, likely competition, and marketing and sales support from the ecosystem provider.

- **New Entrants**: TSPs must listen for signals through the noise of disruption created by new market entrants. *Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Responses to Challenges From New (and Old) Entrants* discusses how, in the era where “every company is a technology company,” product leaders will have to compete harder with former nontech providers, end users and megavendors for market share.

- **Business Models**: Through 2025, disruptive business models will provide opportunities and threats to TSPs with long-lasting impacts *Tech Providers 2025: Invest in Disruptive Business Models for High-Growth, High-Margin Opportunities* explains why product leaders must adopt business models that enable their organizations to deliver as-a-service offerings, sold as subscriptions, to grow rapidly.

Technology and Service Providers Will Be Impacted Across Multiple Aspects of Their Business
As TSPs seek to distance themselves from market competition and solidify their position as a trusted partner for present and future customers, they must exploit the very definition of what it means to operate as a TSP in 2025. TSPs are distinctly characterized through their products and services, talent and resources, operations and processes, partners and ecosystems, customers and buyers, as well as their surrounding competitive landscape (see Figure 3). As 2025 approaches, external and internal forces will impact each of these six characteristics. In response, product leaders must understand and proactively prepare for the resulting market impacts as they seek to differentiate and compete in the marketplace of the future (see Tech Providers 2025: Product Leaders Must Prepare for 6 Key Impacts as Markets Evolve).

Figure 3: Defining Characteristics of Technology and Service Providers (TSPs)

The research below examines each of these distinctive characteristics and emphasizes the best-practice actions that TSPs should account for as they seek to position themselves as market leaders.

Related Research

- **Customers and Buyers**: Customers using technology to drive new business models and competitively superior business outcomes will force providers to up their games. Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts for Technology Buyers and Customers discusses how technology marketers and product leaders, backed by offerings with value-savvy instrumentation, must meet the challenge with evolved planning, messaging and enablement.
Emerging technologies and trends is one of the key forces identified above, and its influence will only grow over the next several years. As innovative TSPs use emerging technology to create new offerings and new business models, all providers will feel the pressure to evolve their products and change the way that they do business.

Related Research

Besides the research documents mentioned above, this special report highlights new research that dives deeper into various emerging technologies and trends:

- **Partners and Ecosystems**: Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts on Application Partners and Ecosystems explains why technology providers cannot operate in isolation. They must embrace partnerships and application ecosystems in order to meet customer expectations and obtain access to desired markets.

- **Products and Services**: The way customers find, evaluate, purchase and consume technology offerings will evolve dramatically through 2025. Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts for Products and Services provides technology and service providers with advice on how they can adapt to shifting customer expectations to remain competitive and increase the value of their technology offerings.

- **Competitive Landscape**: Four global trends will change the competitive landscape significantly over the next five years. Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts to the Competitive Landscape demonstrates why technology and service providers must evaluate and adapt their product, market, staffing and other strategies to stand out from the competition.

- **Operations and Processes**: TSPs have to continually change and adapt in order to compete in the marketplace. Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts for Operations and Processes explains why continuous change is important for operations and processes as well as products and services.

- **Talent and Resources**: The market and competition for talent will significantly evolve over the next five years. Technology and service providers aspiring to be market leaders heading into and beyond 2025 must evaluate and adapt their talent management strategies to stand out from the competition by focusing on four core themes. Tech Providers 2025: Strategic Impacts for Talent and Resources unpacks each of these themes for tech CEOs to ensure that talent is an enabler of their growth looking toward 2025.

Emerging Technologies and Trends Will Only Accelerate and Grow

Emerging technologies and trends is one of the key forces identified above, and its influence will only grow over the next several years. As innovative TSPs use emerging technology to create new offerings and new business models, all providers will feel the pressure to evolve their products and change the way that they do business.

- Through 2025, the edge computing market will be fragmented, but new use cases will emerge by 2024. Tech Providers 2025: The Future of Edge details how product leaders hoping to capitalize on this market must identify areas to target and develop ecosystems combining market knowledge with critical systems, software, location and integration assets.
The Impact Radar is a Gartner research type for technology and service providers that informs stakeholders of key emerging technologies and trends in a market category. Each “blip” (profile) on the radar represents a technology or trend. The Impact Radar can be used to guide roadmap planning activities for product leaders.

Impact Radars exist for artificial intelligence, security, customer analytics for customer experience, semiconductors for 5G, semiconductors for power and energy hardware, communications technology, IT services, and top trends.
Some Gartner research focuses on particular emerging technologies and trends that are identified in these impact radars, including the following:

- **Emerging Technologies: Homomorphic Encryption for Data Sharing With Privacy**
- **Emerging Technologies: LEO Mega Constellations — Market Disruption Ahead**
- **Emerging Technologies: Emergence Cycle for NLP Intelligent Applications and Text Analytics**
- **Emerging Technologies: Emergence Cycle for NLP Intelligent Interfaces and Virtual Assistants**
- **Emerging Technologies Infographic: Venture Capital Growth Insights for mmWave 5G**
- **Emerging Technologies: Venture Capital Growth Insights for Cyber-Physical System Security**
- **Emerging Technologies Venture Capital Growth Insights: Robots**
- **Emerging Technologies: Natural Language Processing Patent Growth Insights**

### Strategic Imperatives for Product Managers

The role of a product manager is fundamentally changing as digital business transformations and disruptions take place. Gartner’s research and advisory services provide product managers and their teams with insights to navigate the life cycle of products, services and solutions.

As technology markets evolve through 2025, market forces and the resulting impacts will require all product managers to take action and rethink. **Leadership Vision for 2021: Technology Product Manager** summarizes the key aspects of this special report for products managers in a presentation. This presentation details how technology product managers must proactively embrace market shifts, understand customer wants and needs, and embrace emerging opportunities. The detailed research notes specific to the product manager role are outlined below.

### Related Research

Enterprises are on their individual “techquilibrium” journey to run a more digitized organization and become digital businesses. **Market Trends: The Future Operations of Infrastructure MSPs Will Require an Equilibrium of Enterprise IT and Digital Business** discusses how infrastructure MSPs that manage enterprise IT environments should grow their businesses through the management of their clients’ digital touchpoint environments.

The speed of innovation of hyperscale cloud infrastructure and platform services has accelerated digital initiatives. **Tech Providers 2025: Technology and Service Providers Must Evolve to Survive the Dominance of Cloud Platforms** details how product leaders must partner, align or innovate, depending on their situation and expertise in order to survive.

The trade issues and China’s “buy-local” push will change the server ecosystem in China. **Tech Providers 2025: Prepare Cloud, AI and ‘Made in China’ Servers** explains how product managers...
working to develop products for introduction in the Chinese market must evaluate partnerships and supply chains to determine optimal business relationships and outcomes in China.

Trade issues between the U.S. and China, China’s resolve to attain integrated circuit (IC) self-sufficiency, and the U.S.’s desire to maintain technology leadership will result in two different semiconductor technology stacks. Product Managers Must Rethink Their Product Roadmaps as 2 Different Semiconductor Technology Stacks Emerge shows how product managers must strategize supply chain and product roadmaps given this major divergence.

By 2025, adapting to climate change will be a critical challenge for leading technology and service providers as well as their ecosystem partners. Tech Provider 2025: Competing in the Age of Climate Change and Radical Decarbonization details why product leaders must proactively anticipate how the changes will affect their organization.

The increased use of technologies and data for digital business should strengthen the relationship with customers, but this can also reveal new vulnerabilities when there is a lack of trust. Tech Providers 2025: Key Trust Indicators — Metrics Digital Product Managers Must Target by 2025 shows how digital product managers must focus on one of the most valuable metrics by 2025: key trust indicators (KTI).

By 2025, customers will expect products that offer dynamic, proactive and even prescriptive, personalized experiences. Tech Providers 2025: Transforming the 2025 Product Experiences shows how product managers must fast-track their efforts by using customer analytics tools with deep AI/machine learning (ML) capabilities to personalize customer experiences based on this understanding.

Four plausible scenarios confront the future of IT services, influenced by “digital intensity” and “technological sovereignty.” Tech Providers 2025: Future Scenarios That IT Services Providers Must Plan For details how product leaders of IT service providers must respond to these challenges with competitive strategies that generate value.

Customers select options that best meet their entire needs, which can encompass elements beyond the core product. Why Product Managers Must Adopt Whole-Product Thinking explains how product managers must apply whole-product thinking to build compelling customer experiences and ensure their product delivers value to customers.

The strategic importance of product managers and their contribution toward driving success continues to grow. Product Manager Insight: Changes in Product Team Organization and Approaches for 2025 details how customer centricity and advancement in technology/development processes will require product management organizations to restructure and shift toward management of product portfolios.

Many tech markets have used product value propositions (PVPs) to achieve impressive go-to-market results. Product Manager Insight: Changes in Value Proposition Evolution Through 2025
shows how changing market conditions will force product managers to continuously evolve, improve and diversify their PVPs and accelerate their influence throughout “whole-product” processes.

IaaS, PaaS and SaaS have spawned numerous as-a-service derivatives as cloud delivery and consumption models continue to convert all IT markets. Product Manager Insight: Changes in As-a-Service Through 2025 details how product managers must understand these trends and prioritize harnessing their value in XaaS offers.

Continuous delivery (CD) in the software world has evolved from being an advanced technique into a common practice. Its success also will inspire the adoption of selected practices in hardware and services. Product Manager Insight: Changes in Continuous Delivery Through 2025 equips product managers with what they need to know to drive the use of CD practices throughout their organization to keep up.

Strategic Imperatives for General Managers

Gartner's research for technology general managers helps senior executives who run businesses in large tech provider organizations to drive mission-critical priorities across growth, innovation and scale.

Looking toward 2025, market changes and disruptions will present forces that impact the definition of what it means to be a technology and service provider. Leadership Vision for 2021: Technology General Manager summarizes the key aspects of this special report for general managers in a presentation. This presentation provides technology general managers with an overview of how they must proactively understand, assess and adapt to key impacts shaping future markets to realize growth opportunities. The detailed research notes specific to the general manager role are below.

Related Research

Through 2025, the edge hardware infrastructure segment will grow to $17 billion, representing a scant 4% of the edge opportunity. General Manager Insight: Edge Infrastructure Hardware — The Hype Is Here; the Revenue Opportunity Isn't! explains how technology general managers at hardware vendors must combine hardware with software, system integration and services, or accept commodity prices and limited growth.

Strategic Imperatives for Tech CEOs

Tech CEOs are responsible for a number of key initiatives, including product strategy and launch, customer acquisition, business performance management, and corporate development. Gartner’s tech CEO research enables these executives to navigate disruptive times by tackling the actions and decisions required to respond, redirect, rebound and ultimately accelerate growth.

Looking toward 2025, market changes and disruptions will present forces that impact the very definition of what it means to be a technology and service provider. Leadership Vision for 2021:
Tech CEO summarizes the key aspects of this special report for tech CEOs in a presentation. This research highlights why tech CEOs must proactively understand, assess and adapt business and operational models in response to key impacts shaping future markets. The detailed research notes specific to the tech CEO role are outlined below.

Related Research

Looking toward 2025, tech CEOs’ perception and alignment relative to cloud infrastructure and platform service (CIPS) providers will have significant implications for their go-forward growth. Tech CEOs will no longer be able to take a lukewarm approach relative to CIPS providers. Tech Providers 2025: Technology and Service Providers Must Evolve to Survive the Dominance of Cloud Platforms approaches and positions key insights for tech CEOs to determine, align and pursue their strategy relative to CIPS providers.

Free trials and freemium products have grown steadily in usage and results over the past few years. Tech Providers 2025: Free Trials and Freemium Products Will No Longer Be Optional for Tech CEOs details how tech CEOs must incorporate or refine such offerings in product development and launch plans as prospects will increasingly expect this in the evaluation and selection process.

Effective pricing and packaging require a process, not just a “set it and forget it” approach. Tech Providers 2025: Tech CEOs Must Continually Adapt Pricing and Packaging to Keep Up With Market Forces shows how tech CEOs must increase their competency regarding how they price and package in order to increase revenue and differentiate to win.

Strategic Imperatives for Product Marketers

Product marketers wear multiple hats in order to help drive growth from prospects and customers. Product marketers are responsible for creating differentiated positioning, developing compelling stories, enabling the sales team and partners to achieve success, and helping drive demand generation and account-based marketing programs.

Market changes and disruptions through 2025 will present forces that impact the very definition of what it means to be a technology and service provider. The detailed research notes specific to the product marketer role are discussed below.

Related Research

By 2025, Gartner predicts that 75% of high-growth tech companies will evolve to RevOps for end-to-end revenue production. Tech Providers 2025: RevOps Is the End-to-End Strategy to Deliver Revenue Growth Faster discusses how RevOps will combine operational layers, processes and data of sales, SDR/BDR, marketing and customer experience (CX) while separating out their core functions. RevOps, thus, creates a continuous customer engagement that optimizes revenue growth.
ERP tech CEOs are eager and polished when speaking to IT and line-of-business buyers, but often leave engagement with sourcing and procurement until late in the sales cycle. *Tech Providers 2025: ERP Tech CEOs, Improve Sales Cycles by Proactive Engagement With Sourcing and Procurement* details how tech CEOs must treat sourcing and procurement as a key ally alongside the CIO and/or line-of-business leader, rather than just a procurement function.

Technology buyers want and need to know the business value of solutions. *How Product Marketers Can Differentiate Offerings by Connecting Value Assessment and Realization* identifies how product marketers must extend value calculations beyond initial purchases and work with customer success to measure value realized, helping drive renewals and expansion and providing a clear value story to buyers.

By 2025, AI-enhanced agile marketing practices will drive significant competitive advantage and business outcomes for technology providers. *Tech Provider 2025: Rise of the AI-Enhanced Agile Marketing Practice Within Tech Providers* details how product marketers should combine agile marketing with AI capabilities and insights to improve the customer experience and expand their ability to innovate.

The global recession following the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate changes in partnership strategies. *Tech Providers 2025: The Future of Technology and Service Provider Partnerships* demonstrates how product marketers must pivot engagement to agile ecosystem partners that have a strong influence on buyers in order to weather the current disruption and emerge stronger after the recession.

*Harness Disruption and Transform Your Customers* explains how, in addition to incorporating willful disruption strategies to drive product and market success, product marketers must help customers understand how purchases drive change and transformative business outcomes — during both turbulent and more steady times.

**Implications Across Industries**

The following notes provide guidance to product leaders across six different industries.

**Related Research**

The quality of telecom services has stood up quite well during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tech Providers 2025: Post-COVID-19 Imperatives for Communications Service Provider Operations* provides CSP product leaders with guidance to bring their internet service quality up another level in the short term while starting the transformation for agility in the long term.

Banking as a service (BaaS) unites the components of traditional banking products and services, the required regulatory licenses, and companies across industry verticals. *Tech Providers 2025: Banking as a Service Will Drive Success Across Verticals* explains how product leaders can use BaaS to create innovation by embedding financial services into their products and ecosystems.
Drivers such as open source, private networks and deregulation of spectrum create options for entrants with limited telecom experience, but who possess skills in open architectures and automation. Fragmentation of vendor ecosystems is forcing existing players to transform. Tech Providers 2025: Future of Telecommunications Infrastructure Vendors Ecosystem Landscape discusses how product leaders must establish and maintain relevance through value adding ecosystems for go to market.

The “ecosystem as the enterprise” is a new form of digital ecosystem, characterized by democratic governance and equitable value exchange as an alternative to being led by a dominant business. Tech Providers 2025: The Ecosystem as the Enterprise details how product leaders can employ this approach to deliver better business results than the common models.

Hyperscalers on the edge will challenge communications service providers (CSPs) in their key market for managed IoT connectivity services. Tech Providers 2025: Edge Ecosystems Will Challenge CSPs Dominance in Managed IoT Connectivity Services shows how product leaders at CSPs focused on IoT must invest in R&D and M&A to create differentiation and value at the edge to ensure future growth.

The plethora of new sources of data created by 5G will allow ambitious CSPs to expand into the insurance industry. Tech Providers 2025: CSPs Can Use 5G to Become Insurance Providers details how product leaders at CSPs should review plans to monetize such a move that combines their customer base, IoT and data capabilities.

Strategic Imperatives for Additional Roles and Areas
This section has additional research not targeted to the roles above. The roles discussed in these research notes target analyst relations and R&D leader.

Related Research
The role and value that analyst relations leaders will bring to a technology provider will be transformed by a number of forces. Tech Providers 2025: The Transformation of Analyst Relations discusses the most important elements that analyst relations must prepare for.

R&D’s interest in assessing the relevance and impact of long-term trends is not new, but the current environment is characterized by mounting short and medium term uncertainty. Tech Providers 2025: From Insight to Action: Best-in-Class Approaches for Translating Megatrends Into Strategic Priorities shows how R&D leaders are increasingly looking to analyze megatrends to help prioritize product and technology investments.

Gartner Associates Supporting This Trend
Related Resources

Webinars
- IT Spending Forecast, 3Q20: Technology Trends Accelerated by COVID
- Rethink the Scale and Pace of 5G Investments in the New Normal
- Apply the Pivot Forward Framework to Create an Effective Plan for 2021

Articles
- Analysts Answer: How Will Coronavirus Impact Technology Investment Across Verticals?
- How General Managers Lead Through Disruption
- 4 Ways Product Marketing Can Drive Integrated Go-to-Market Strategies

Peer Insights
Gartner Peer Insights is a free peer review and ratings platform designed for enterprise software and services decision makers. Reviews go through a strict validation and moderation process in an effort to ensure they are authentic. Choose enterprise IT software and services with confidence. Read verified reviews from the IT community.

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Browse Markets
Write a Review

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### Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

| Substitute Product | A substitute product in a category serves the same underlying need, but can be quite different from the primary products in the category in form, shape or other attributes. Example: a roboadvisor app is a substitute for a real financial advisor. |

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### Supporting Initiatives

Emerging Technologies and Trends Impact on Products and Services

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