

# CFO Retreat 2017



RESEARCH RESULTS

Leading Through Uncertainty

"This research, conducted at our CFO Retreat 2017, gives us some fascinating insight into the challenges CFOs are facing in the current climate and whether they are getting the right support in order to embrace their roles as leaders. Interestingly, 84% felt that they needed to strengthen the leadership capability of the finance function in response to greater demand for strategic input and 92% said they felt more investment should be allocated to leadership development rather than bringing in external talent.

The message to emerge from these findings is loud and clear: senior executives do understand the value of leadership development and mentoring, but they are being consumed by day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. Consequently, they are not focusing on team cohesion and long-term strategy – something that is supported by the anonymous comments from respondents which are also included in this research. As well as the data collected at the Retreat, the following report includes comments from leading CFOs on the challenges and opportunities they are facing."



**Jamie Wilson**  
Managing Director, Criticaleye

# Findings from Criticaleye's CFO Retreat 2017 Survey

**92%** say more should be spent on leadership development and support for senior executives, as opposed to headhunters

**85%** of CFOs say they are grappling with business model disruption

**92%** of CFOs say that external mentoring improves the performance of senior executives

Almost a quarter (**23%**) of CFOs think the Chairman does not add value in terms of supporting the executive team

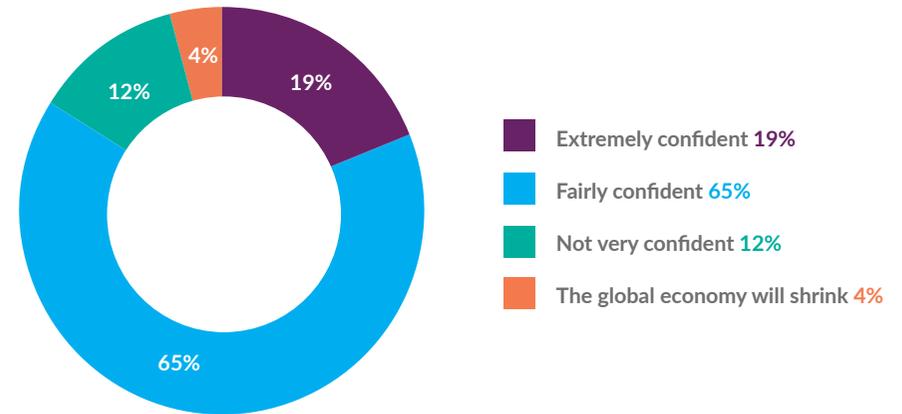
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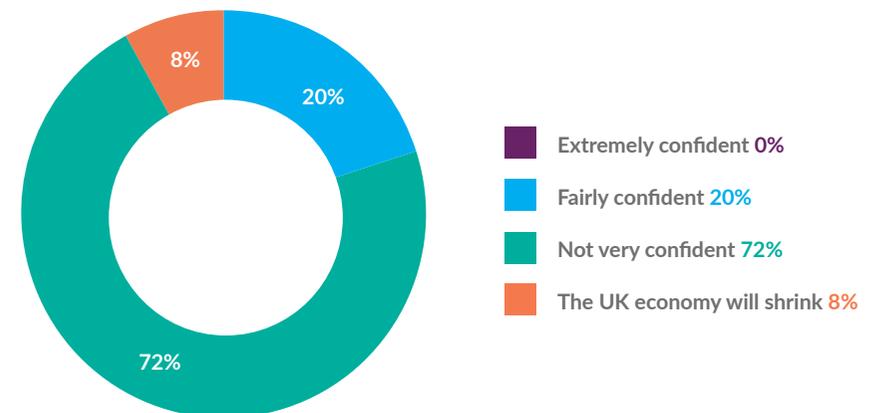
“ There are far too many alarm bells ringing that suggest market confidence is reducing ”

CFO Research Participant

How confident are you that the **global economy** will grow over the next 12 months?

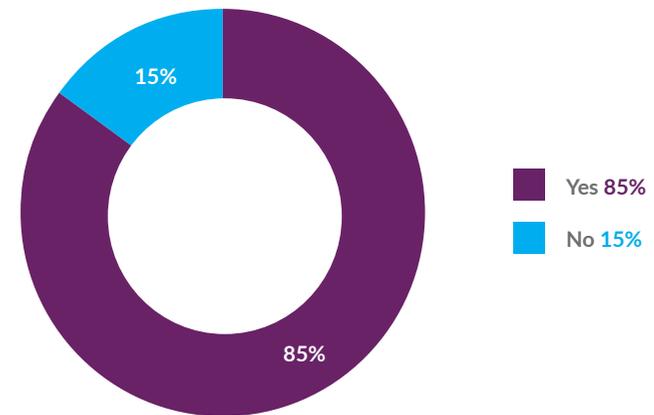


How confident are you that the **UK economy** will grow over the next 12 months?

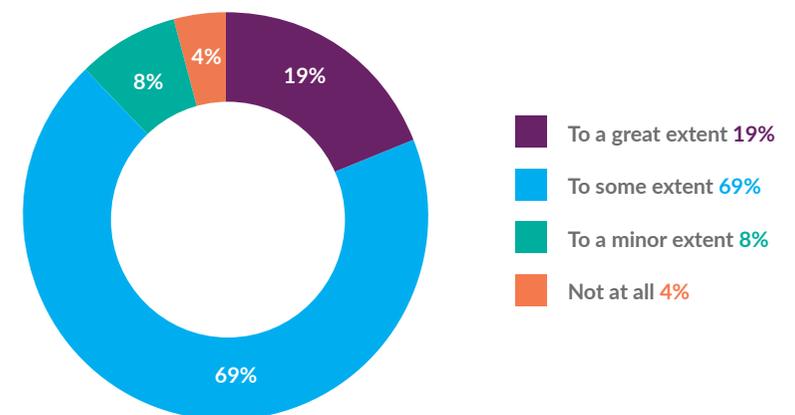


**85% of CFOs say they are grappling with business model disruption, but only 19% believe their senior leadership team has the ability to tackle this challenge**

Is the senior leadership team currently grappling with business model disruption?



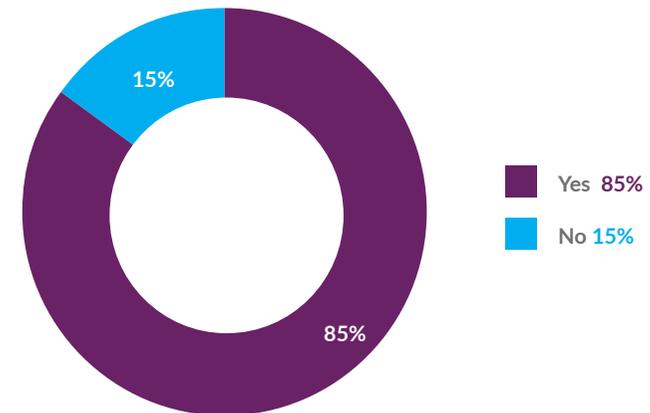
Does the senior leadership team have the ability to respond to business model disruption?



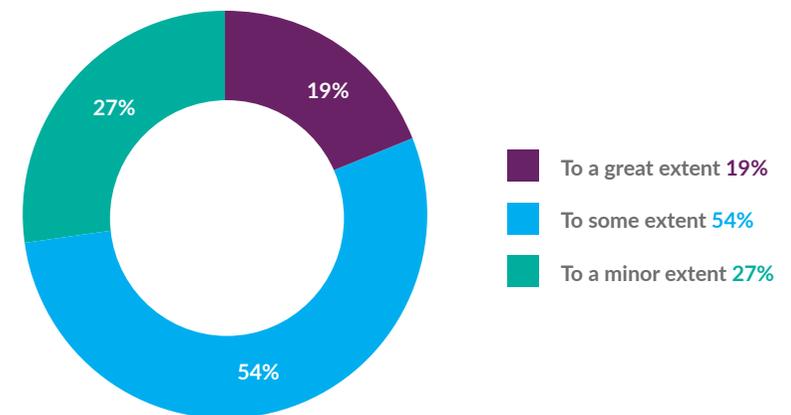
“ The CEO/CFO alignment really works well when the HRD is also on the same page and there is a triangle of trust and strategic thinking ”

CFO Research Participant

Are the Chairman, CEO and CFO aligned on strategy?



Does the executive team have the ability to execute on the medium to long-term strategy?

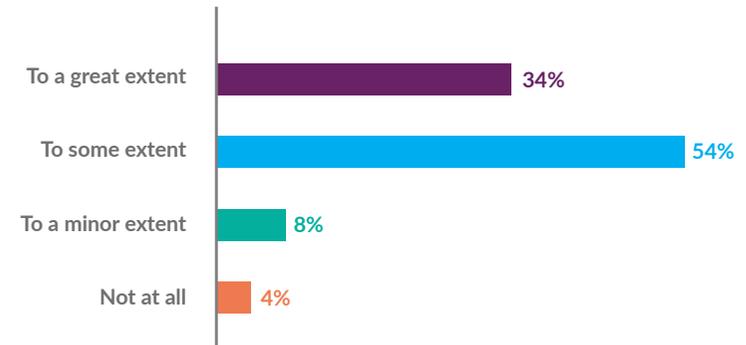


## 96% of CFOs say the management team is too inward-looking

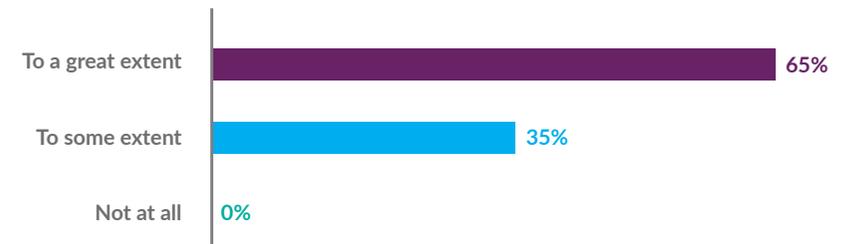
“ Executives should always be looking to learn and reference their performance and that of their business against others ”

CFO Research Participant

Is the management team too inward-looking and focused on the day-to-day?

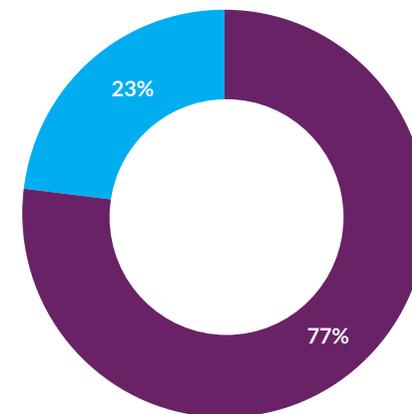


Is business performance enhanced if executives have access to reference points outside of their organisation / sector?



**Almost one in four (23%) CFOs say their Chairman does not add value in terms of supporting the goals and objectives of the executive team**

Does your Chairman add value in terms of supporting the goals and objectives of the executive team?

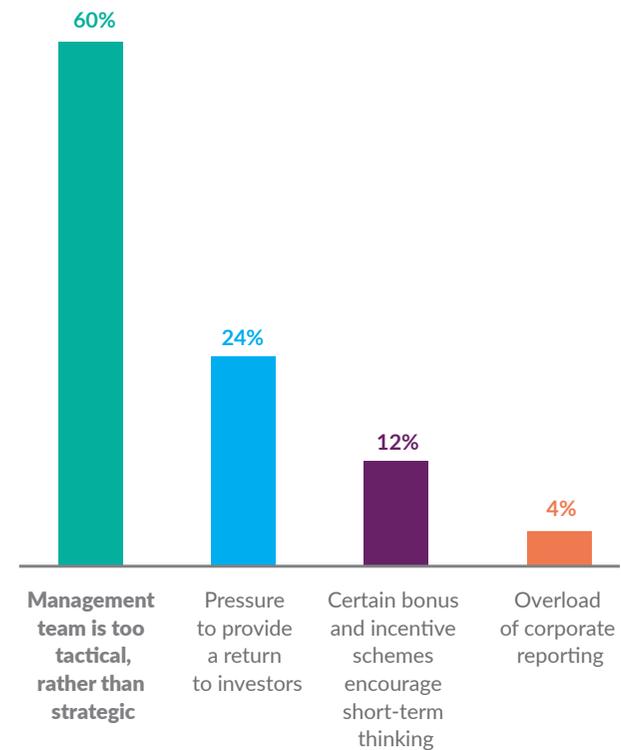


■ Yes 77%  
■ No 23%

“ All of these factors can have an impact, although I typically believe that people return to type and what they know when pressure comes on or they lose confidence ”

CFO Research Participant

Why do management teams become too focused on short-term goals?



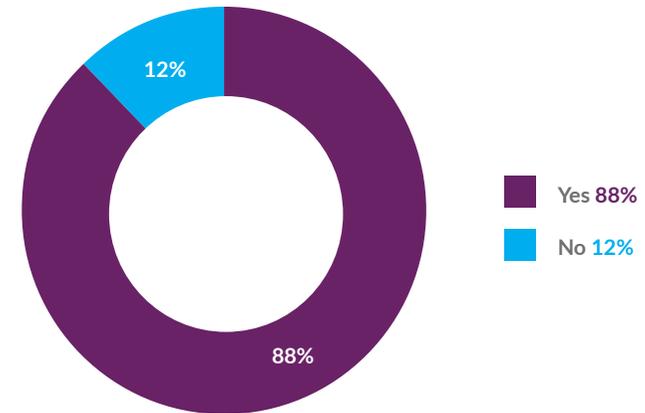
# CFOs ranked the primary reasons for failure in the management team



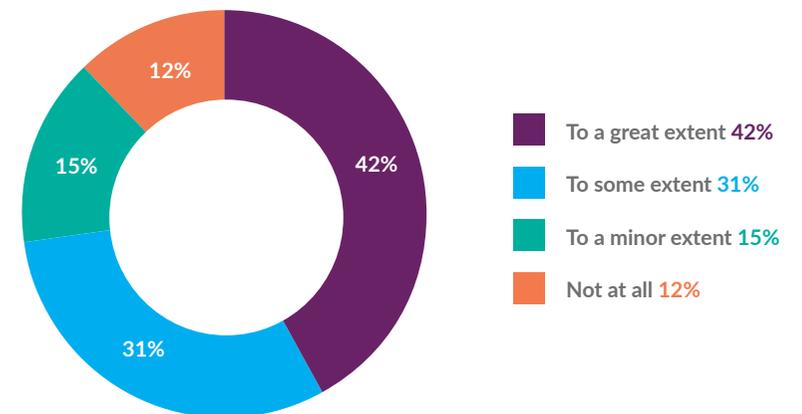
“ If there is triangulation and talking behind one’s back, rather than direct discussion and building trust, then silos will develop ”

CFO Research Participant

Do silos within an organisation have a negative impact on business performance?

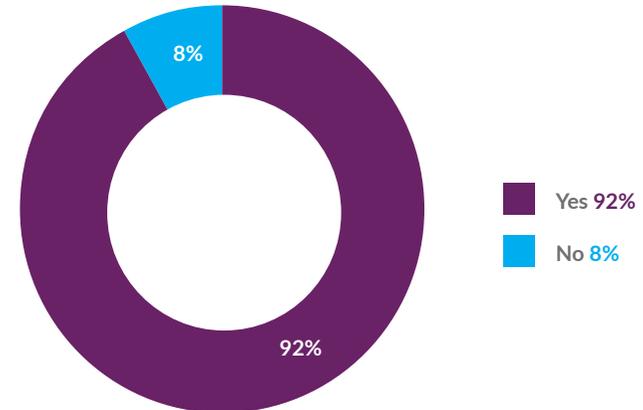


To what extent do the behaviours of the executive team reinforce silos within the business?

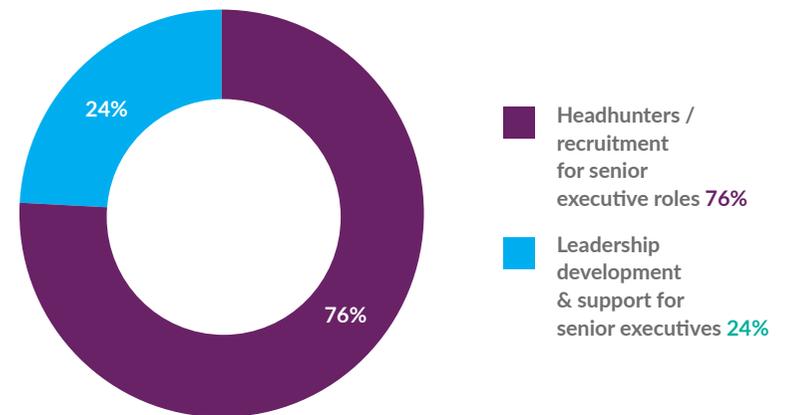


**CFOs overwhelmingly agree (92%) that more budget should be allocated to leadership development than headhunters and yet, 76% say organisations are still spending more on headhunters**

In your view, should more be spent on leadership development and support for senior executives, as opposed to headhunters?



In your experience, on which of the following do organisations spend more?



# Is leadership development enough of a priority for senior teams?

**84%** of CFOs believe they need to strengthen the leadership capability of the finance function

Under half of CFOs (**46%**) say they invest enough in leadership development and make it a priority

**27%** of CFOs say they discussed leadership development once a year or less with their HR Director

**Mentoring and learning from peers** are cited as the most effective leadership development tools for senior executives by CFOs

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# CFOs reveal key areas where CEOs and HRDs need to improve

## CEOs

1. BUILDING ALIGNMENT IN THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
2. SEEKING INSPIRATION/FRESH THINKING FROM OTHER SECTORS
3. PEOPLE SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

## HRDs

1. STRATEGIC THINKING
2. COMMERCIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BUSINESS
3. BUILDING ALIGNMENT IN THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



# CFO Top 5 Priorities for 2018

- ✓ Retaining key talent and developing skills
  - ✓ Digital disruption
  - ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Improved performance management
- ✓ Recruiting people with new skills

“At Criticaleye we believe that great leadership creates positive outcomes and enables powerful legacies. Whatever the strategic direction of your business, it’s essential to have an effective, cohesive leadership team in which there is complete trust and alignment.”



**Charlie Wagstaff**

Managing Director, Criticaleye

# We Inspire Leaders to Succeed



Our bespoke solution supports leaders with personal, strategic and team development.

Our unique strength lies in our ability to bring together a wide range of leadership and industry experience.

We invite leaders into a trusted environment, where executives and their teams get access to the insight they need to enhance their performance.

We enable senior executives to achieve alignment, remove silos and build trust at the senior level.



## Inspiring Leaders to Succeed

### Our Values

**Respect:** an appreciation for diverse and varied views and experiences is crucial to high-performance leadership

**Collaboration:** working together to share knowledge and expertise is a defining characteristic of effective executive teams

**Challenge:** strategies and ideas need to be constructively challenged to reach the best outcome

**Trust:** leaders need to trust their colleagues and peers in order to work effectively and drive results

**Integrity:** we inspire leaders to succeed by providing a closed and confidential environment where Members can share openly

To discuss in more detail, please contact:

#### Criticaleye (Europe) Ltd

WeWork, Aldwych House  
71-91 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

T: +44 (0)20 7350 5109

#### Criticaleye (Asia) Ltd

1203/4 Chinachem Hollywood Centre  
1-13 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong

T: +852 3158 2999

[www.criticaleye.com](http://www.criticaleye.com)

