

JULY
2022



CRITICALEYE

The peer to peer Board Community

CEO RESEARCH 2022

A TIME
FOR AGILE
LEADERSHIP

This Research was carried out at Criticaleye's CEO Retreat in May 2022 as the economic climate was tightening and high inflation was biting. Consequently, the challenges CEOs said they were facing have shifted, with customers shooting up the agenda after a period of focusing on the workforce and organisational agility during the pandemic.

CEOs now say the biggest change occurring in their organisations is how they engage and connect with their customers. They also reveal that customers are by far their most challenging external stakeholders. However, only 13 percent of chief execs are fully confident their business can respond to these new demands and 22 percent are seriously struggling.

CEOs also tell us that skills and talent remain their top priorities, closely followed by the need to strengthen leadership capability at the top. They recognise that only the best teams will successfully steer their organisations through the stormy weather that lies ahead.

At this difficult time, 77 percent of CEOs feel isolated in their role. Access to external insight and benchmarks would help, but, for the fourth year in a row, CEOs tell us they are failing to bring sufficient fresh thinking into their organisations. It is clear that ringfencing time to look up and out will be crucial over the next twelve months.



Jamie Wilson

Managing Director, Group Services
Criticaleye

Key findings from Criticaleye's CEO Research



77% of CEOs feel isolated in their role



22% of CEOs now say Boards are not supporting the SLT, compared to 3% in our last survey



39% say that customer engagement is the biggest change they are facing



Only **31%** of senior teams are fully aligned on the sustainability strategy



87% say more time should be spent on long-term planning



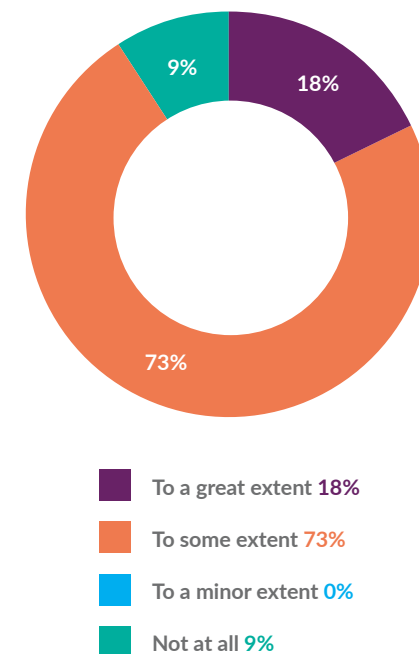
Just over a **third** of respondents do not have a succession plan in place for the SLT

Strategy

Criticleye offers senior executives a unique opportunity to discuss and reflect upon strategy with peers and experts

**Only 18% of CEOs
are fully confident
their leadership team
can deliver the
transition to a new
business model**

Do you have the right leadership team to
navigate business model transformation?



Only a minority of top teams (31%) are fully aligned on their sustainability strategy

Click [here](#) to see leaders and experts discuss whether businesses are doing enough to meet sustainability targets.

Featuring:

Manoj Mathew

Global Head, Sustainability Services, Cognizant

Richard Price

Chief Operating Officer, Bristol Water

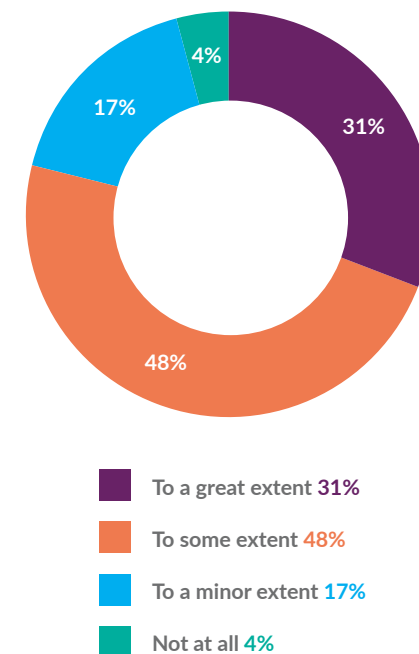
Joe Vorih

CEO, Genuit Group

Michelle Darracott

Chief Strategy Officer, Smart Group

Is your leadership team aligned on your organisation's sustainability strategy?

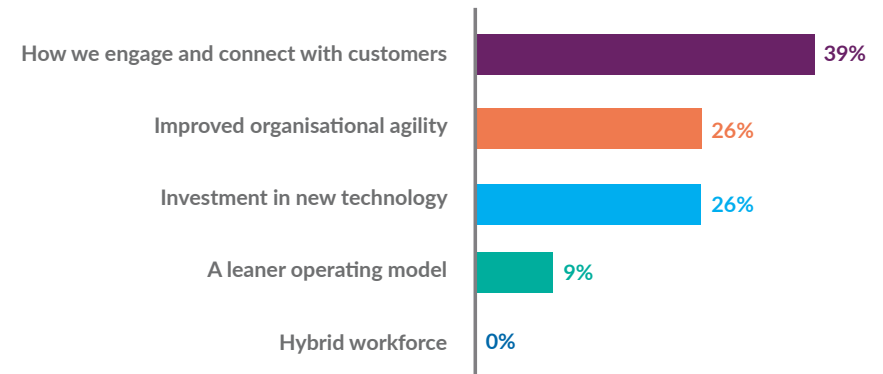


How businesses engage with customers is the biggest change underway, but almost a quarter (22%) of CEOs say they are seriously struggling to respond

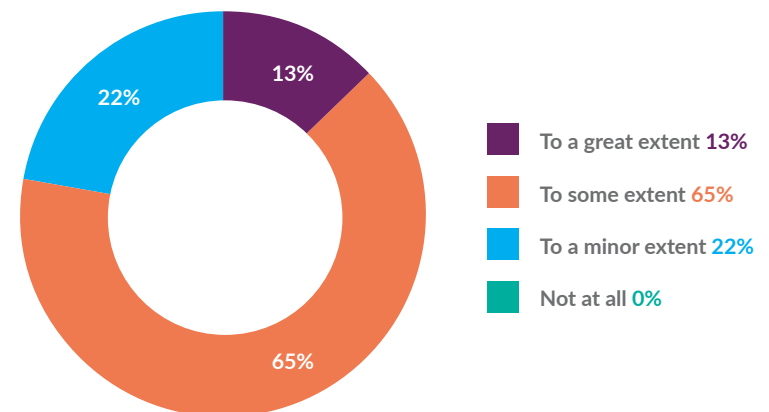
“Becoming more adept at change is a key growth and development opportunity.”

CEO Research Participant

Where do you see the biggest changes occurring in your organisation?

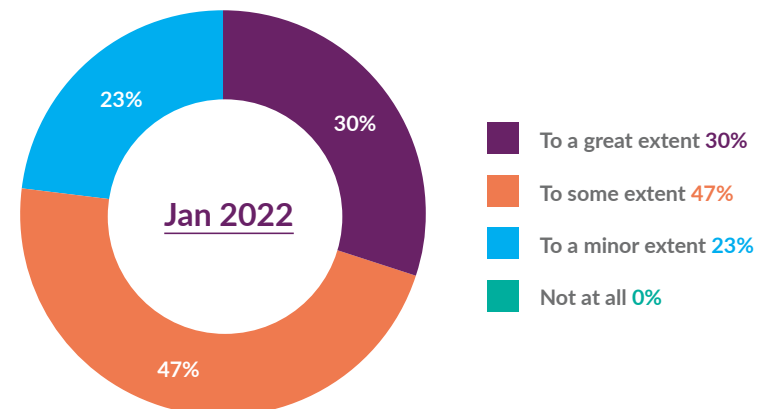
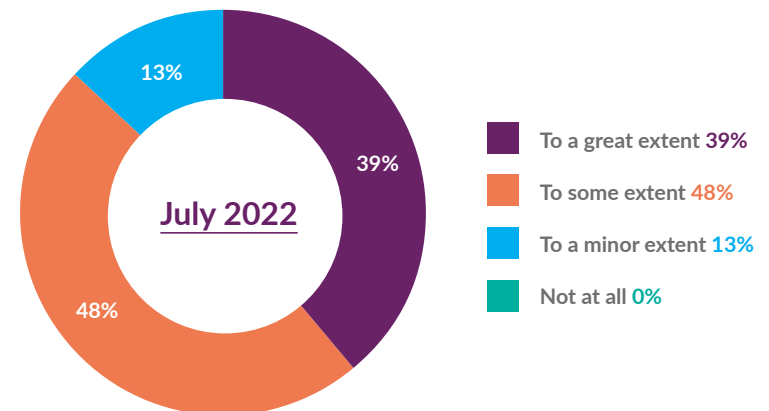


Is your organisation able to respond to changing customer needs and behaviours?



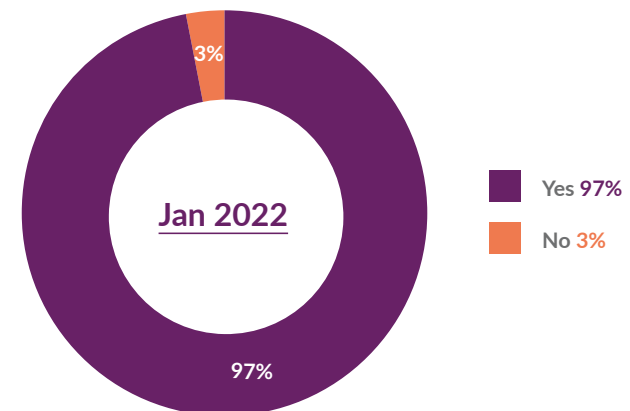
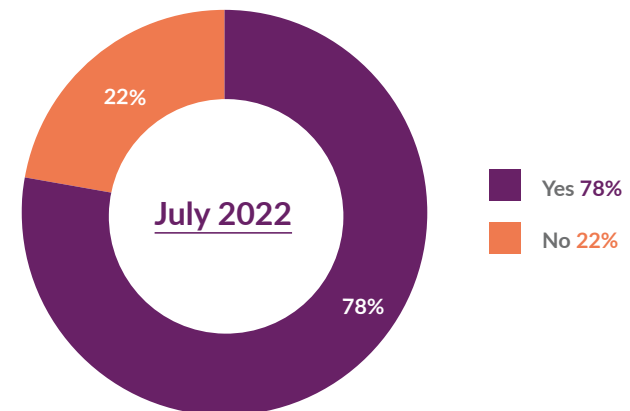
**Most CEOs (87%)
continue to say that
insufficient time is
spent on strategy and
longer-term planning**

As a CEO, do you need to create more time
for strategy and long-term planning?



While CEOs say Boards remain supportive, there has been a fall in confidence during 2022

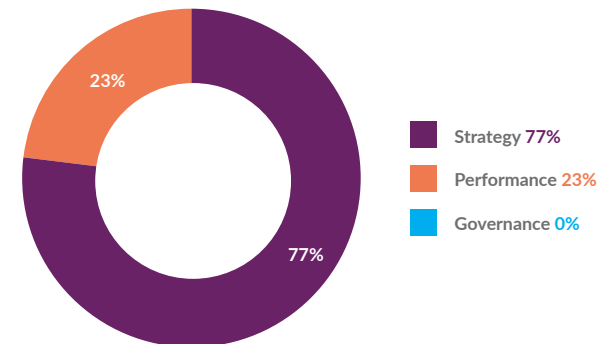
Does your Board support the goals and objectives of the senior leadership team?



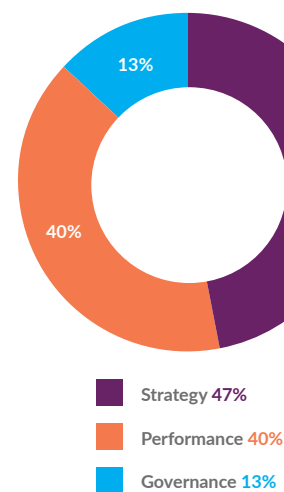
While leadership teams agree that debate on strategy must improve, CFOs and HRDs also want better discussions on performance and governance

In which of the following areas do you need to improve the quality of debate with the Board?

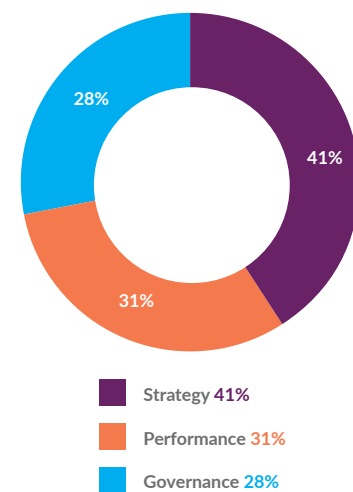
CEO 2022



CFO 2022



HRD 2022*



*HRDs were asked about the quality of their debate with the executive team.

Building and retaining key skills at every level of the business will be crucial in the months ahead

CEO Priorities in 2022

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Strengthening leadership capability
3. Sustainability & ESG
4. Diversity, inclusion and belonging
5. Organisational design

Priorities in 2021

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Organisational design
3. Sustainability
4. Innovation
5. ESG

Priorities in 2020

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Navigating COVID-19
3. Cost reduction
4. Funding and refinancing
5. Organisational design

Priorities in 2019

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Digital disruption
3. Improved performance management
4. Cost reduction
5. Rebuilding the leadership team

Leadership

Criticaleye enables and develops great leadership with the perfect mix of peer-to-peer discussion and high-impact case studies

Isolation at the top is a challenge for both CEOs and CFOs

Click [here](#) to see senior executives discuss leadership isolation and how to get valuable support from outside the business.

Featuring:

Mark Scanlon, CEO, Tenet Group

Ashley Phillips, CEO, CET Structures, Homeserve

Melanie Lane, CEO, Shell Recharge, Shell

Scott Fawcett, MD, Component Solutions, Essentra

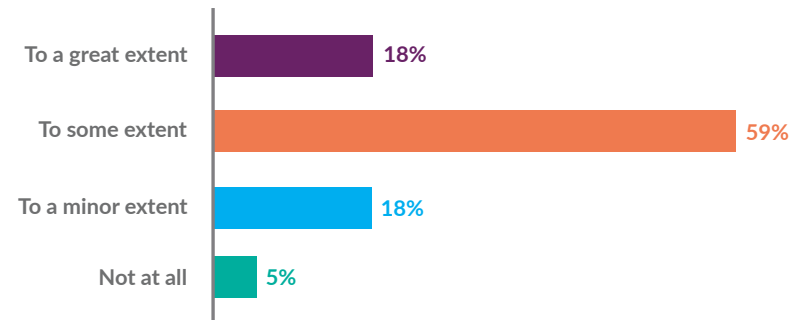
Lorcan O'Connor, Group CEO, Córas Iompair Éireann

“The buck stops with me. There are decisions that only I can take and that does sometimes feel isolating.”

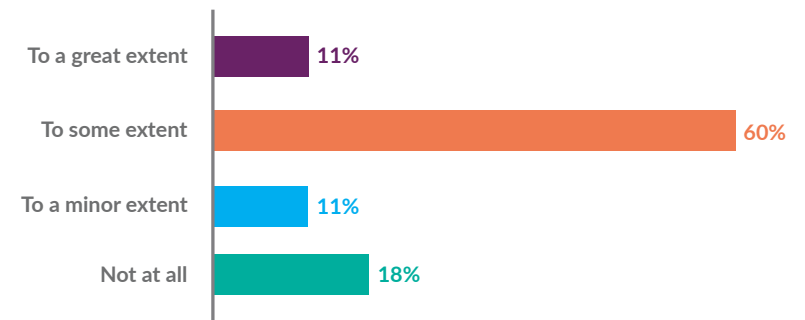
CEO Research Participant

Do you feel isolated in your role?

CEO 2022



CFO 2022

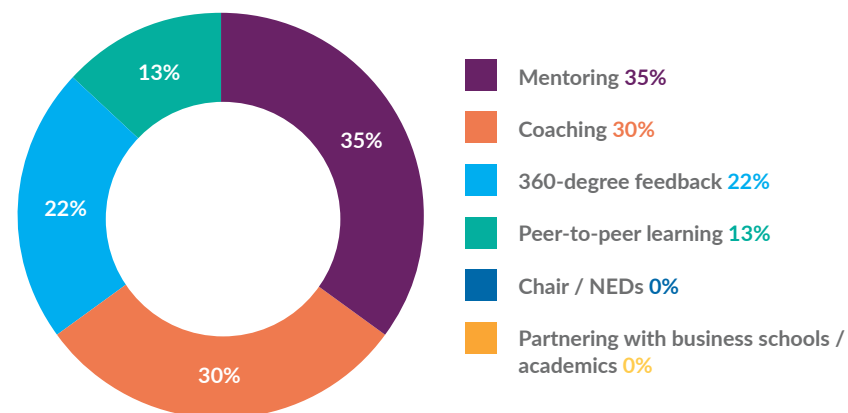


Mentoring is the most effective development tool for CEOs and enhances their performance

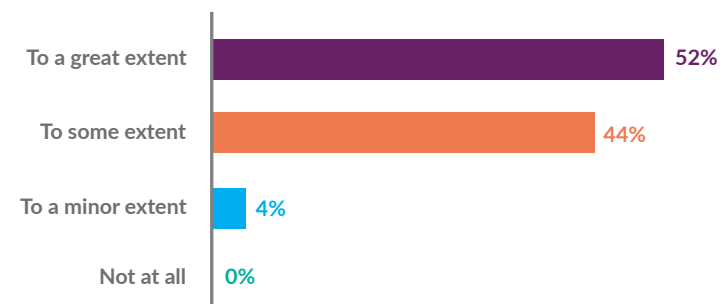
“Different perspectives and challenge add considerable value.”

CEO Research Participant

What have you found to be the most effective leadership development tool for senior executives?



Does external mentoring improve the performance of senior executives?



Most CEOs (96%) agree that looking outside the business and their sector is essential

Click [here](#) to see leaders in our Community discuss why collaboration is important and which interactions were most valuable to them.

Featuring:

Jill Easterbrook

Non-executive Director, Auto Trader Group

Jaidev Janardana

CEO, Zopa

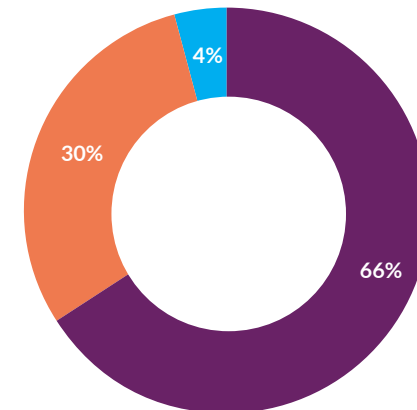
Paul Cardoen

Non-executive Director, Rawbank

Paula Dowdy

SVP & GM, EMEA, Illumina

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

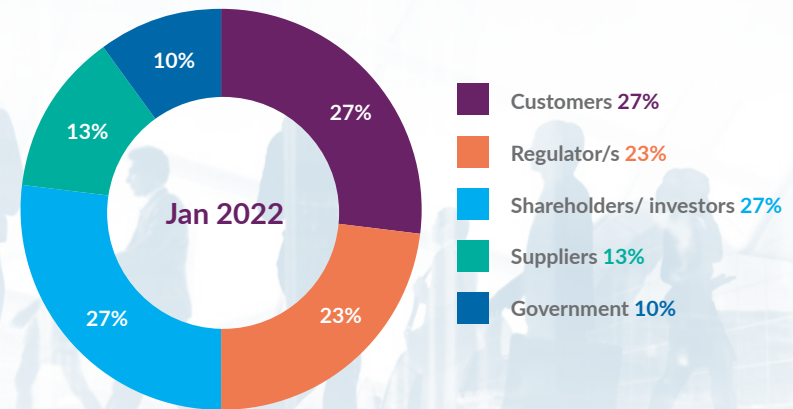
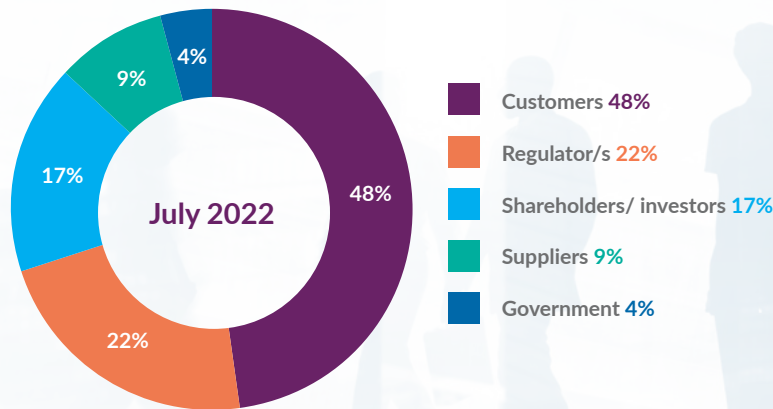


Stakeholders

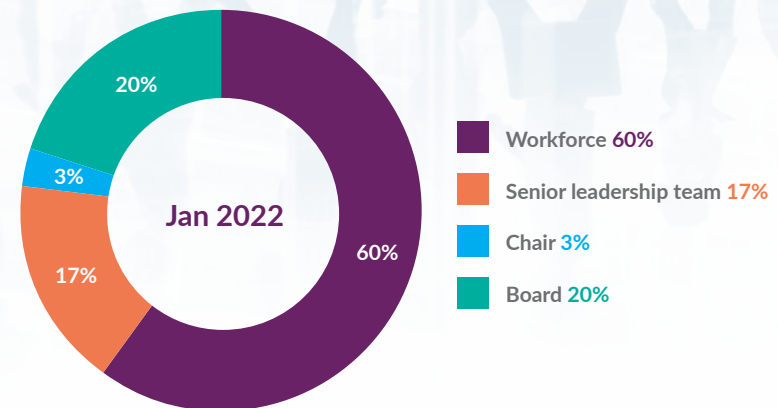
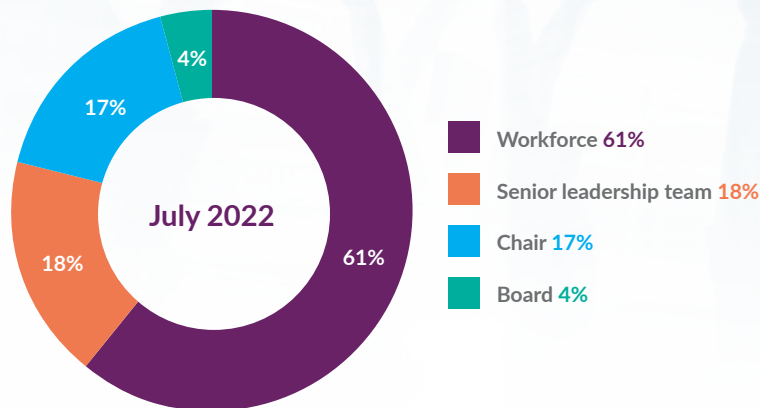
Criticleye provides the right reference points to manage and navigate increasingly important stakeholder relationships

Customers are putting businesses under increasing pressure. Inside organisations, the workforce continues to exert significant influence

Who is your most challenging external stakeholder?

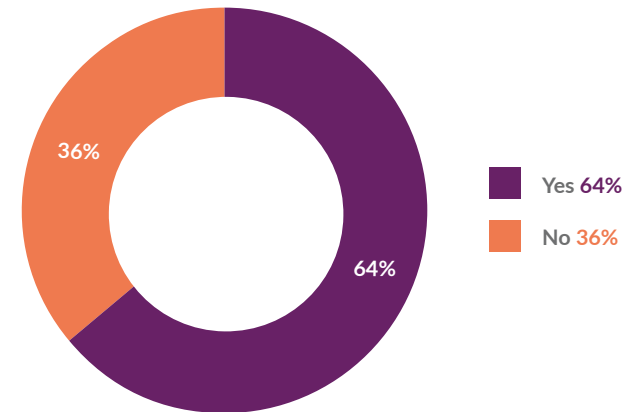


Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?

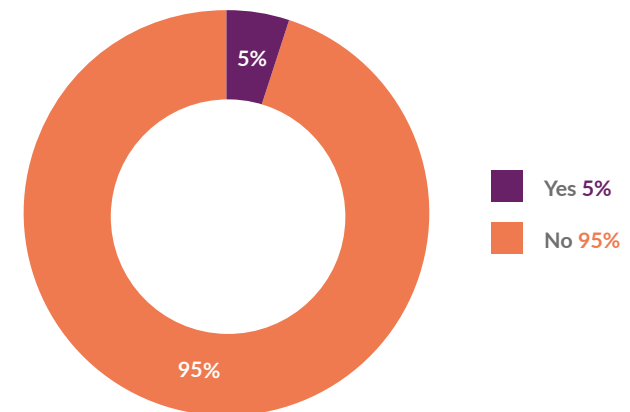


Most leadership teams have succession plans in place, but the CFO is unlikely to take the top job

Do you have a succession plan in place across the senior leadership team?



Is the CFO your most likely successor?



CEOs revealed the top three areas where their colleagues need to improve

CFOs

1.

Building alignment in the senior leadership team

2.

Strategic thinking

3.

People skills and communication

HRDs

1.

Commercial understanding of the business

2.

Strategic thinking

3.

Seeking inspiration and fresh thinking from other sectors

NEDs

1.

Commercial understanding of the business

2.

People skills and communication

3.

Strategic thinking



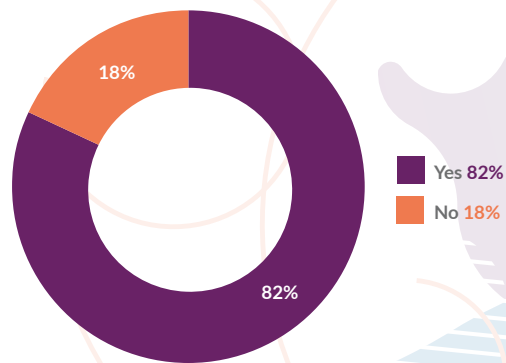
CEOs worry that they are failing to seek out new ideas

Where do you need to improve as a CEO?

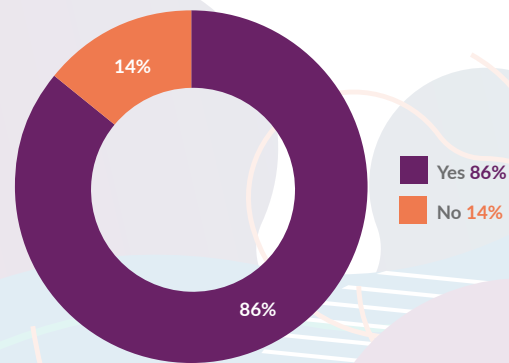
2022		2021	2020	2019	
1	▶	1	1	1	Seeking inspiration / fresh thinking from other sectors
2	▲	3	4	2	Supporting innovation
3	▼	2	2	3	Building alignment in the senior leadership team
4	▲	5	5	6	Strategic thinking
5	▼	4	3	4	Ability to influence the Board
6	▶	6	6	5	People skills and communication

Polls taken at Criticaleye's most recent CEO Retreat

Are you beginning to see cracks in the resilience of your leadership team after such a turbulent period?

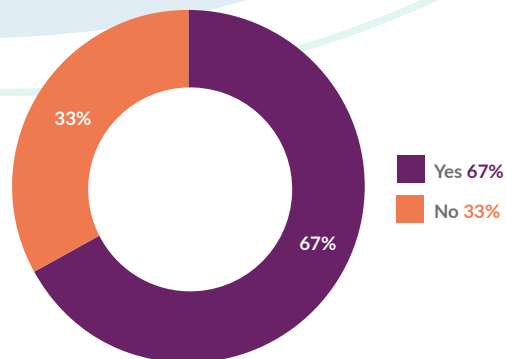


Does your organisation need to make faster decisions to keep pace with customers?

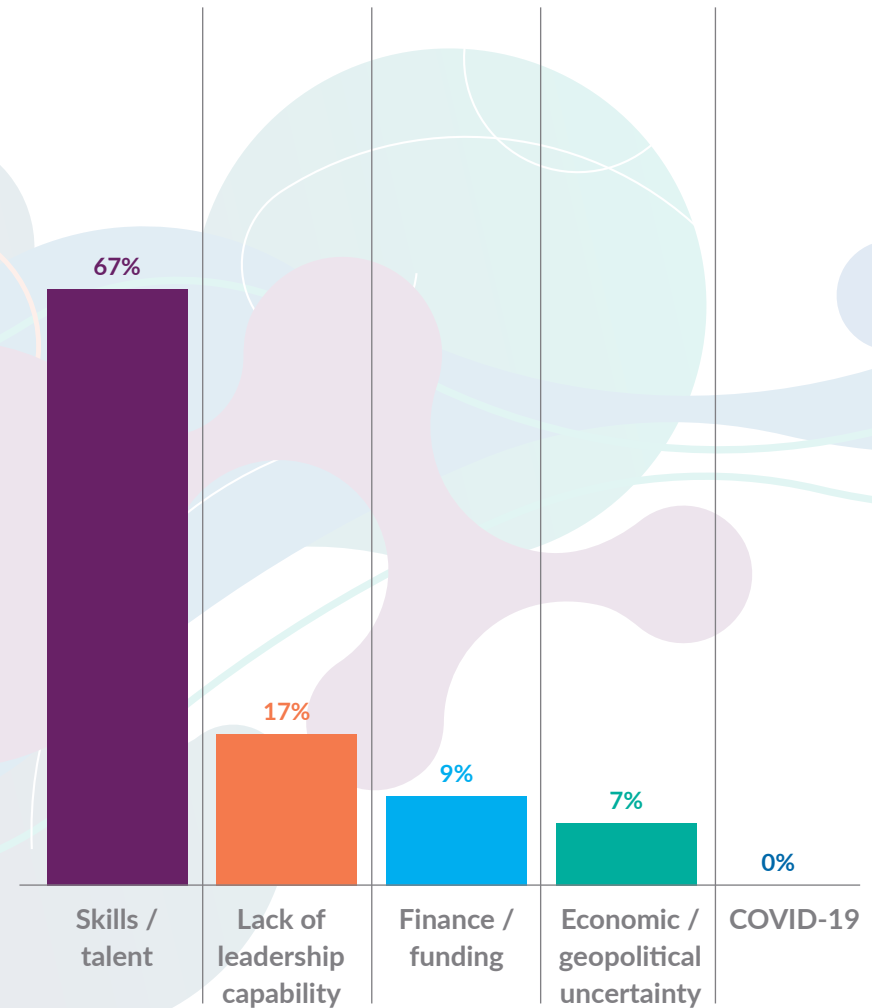
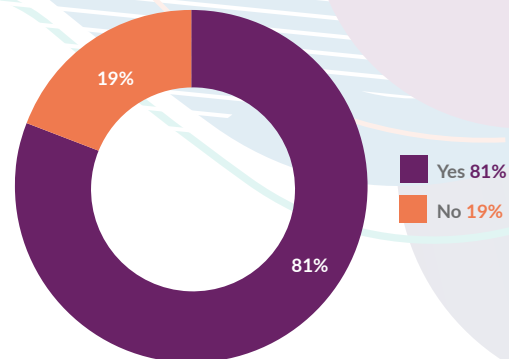


Please identify the biggest barrier to growth in your organisation

Does your Chair add value in terms of the support provided to the executive team?



Will you need to transform your business model to achieve Net Zero?



WHAT OUR LEADERS SAY



How is sustainability impacting business models?

In this video, we ask leaders about the impact of sustainability on business models.

Thanks to Joe Vorih, CEO of Genuit Group; Philip Cox CBE, Chair of Drax Group; and Lakshmi Moorthy, CEO of Arval UK, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



Criticaleye Podcast: Leadership with New Horizons

Offering an outlook for leadership in 2022, this podcast is part of our Leadership with New Horizons series.

Featuring Criticaleye's CEO, Matthew Blagg, and Director of Content, Marc Barber, it covers the business and leadership landscape, our recent Asia Leadership Retreat and draws upon our latest research.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)



Getting the right leaders at the top table

In this video, we ask leaders what a high-performing leadership team should look like to drive growth.

Thanks to Brian Hayes, Chair of Bank of Montreal Europe; Marnie Millard, Non-executive Chair of Marks Electrical Group; Michelle Darracott, Chief Strategy Officer of Smart Group; and Tom Samson, CEO of Rolls-Royce SMR Ltd, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



Criticaleye Asia Podcast Managing complexity as a leader

In this episode of our Asia Podcast series, Criticaleye's Managing Director, Charlie Wagstaff, speaks to Min Yih Tan, SVP of Global Mobility Network at Shell, and Bhawna Gandhi, HRD of Corporate Service for APAC at Sodexo.

Thank you to our speakers for discussing the challenges when leading people and culture on a global scale.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THE PODCAST](#)



What's on the leadership team agenda in 2022?

In this video, we ask leaders what's on the agenda for senior executives this year.

Thanks to Amanda Cox, Chief People Officer and Stores Director at Dunelm Group; Steve Deverill, Managing Partner at Eton Bridge Partners; John Stewart, HRD of SSE; Charlotte Eaton, Chief People Officer of OVO Energy; and Matthew Blagg, CEO of Criticaleye, for commenting.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

DO YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR GROWING COMMUNITY OF CEOS, CFOS, NEDS, HRDS AND OTHER LEADERS? CONTACT INFO@CRITICALEYE.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW WE SUPPORT AND DEVELOP SENIOR EXECUTIVES AND THEIR TEAMS ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF SECTORS AND ORGANISATIONS.

“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 address key questions around leadership, strategy and stakeholder management.



Achieve
Better
Performance



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

For more information, please email: info@criticaleye.com

Criticaleye (Europe) Ltd

22 Tudor Street
London EC4Y 0AY
United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 20 7350 5110

Criticaleye (Asia) Ltd

Room 20-105, 21/F
WeWork Cityplaza Three
14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo, Hong Kong

M: +852 6114 3865

www.criticaleye.com

