

OCTOBER  
2022



**CRITICALEYE**

The peer to peer Board Community

**CEO**

**RESEARCH 2022**

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**PEOPLE. PURPOSE. PLANET.**

This research was conducted at Criticaleye's CEO Retreat, where we welcomed industry leaders from a global cross section of organisations to discuss how sustainability and ESG are reshaping business models at a time when cost structures are under pressure and workforce and customer expectations are changing.

According to our research, the top five priorities for CEOs over the next 12 months are: retaining key talent and developing skills; sustainability; diversity, inclusion and belonging; strengthening leadership capability; and innovation.

The data shows that sustainability, both environmental and social, has risen sharply up the priority ladder for CEOs over the last two years, with 83 percent claiming their Boards and leadership teams are broadly aligned on the strategy to address it. However, there is still much work to be done, as can be seen with nine percent having no Net Zero strategy and 20 percent admitting their organisations are guilty of greenwashing.

At the same time, 72 percent reported the need to create more time for strategy and long-term planning. Similarly, improving the quality of wider strategic debate with the Board remains the top areas of improvement for CEOs.

Consistent with our earlier CEO research, many leaders feel isolated in the top job. Considering the challenges ahead, it's vital senior executives have the right support and benchmark different approaches to get the right outcome.



**Jamie Wilson**  
Managing Director, Group Services  
Criticaleye

# Key findings from Criticaleye's CEO Research 2022



**28%** are not executing on their **Net Zero strategy**



**44%** say sustainability is driving **business model transformation**



**Customer engagement** is the biggest change in organisations



**Talent** is the top priority for CEOs



A **third** of CEOs have **no succession plan**



For the first time, **regulators** take the top spot as the most **challenging external stakeholder**

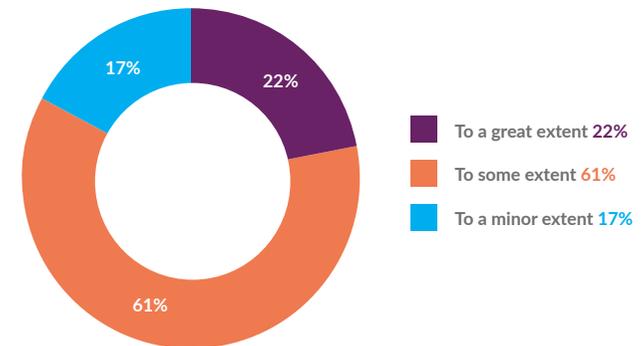
# Strategy

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

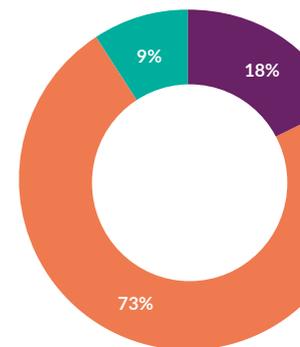
Overall confidence in the ability of senior leadership teams to tackle the turbulent times we're facing appears to be falling

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

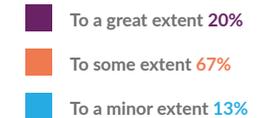
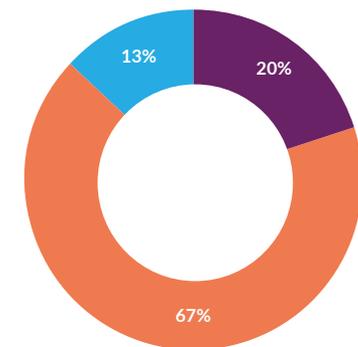
Oct 2022



Jul 2022



Jan 2022



# Alignment on sustainability must improve if organisations want to meet stretching targets

Click [here](#) to see leaders discuss what progress is being made in the journey to Net Zero.

Featuring:

**Stephen Pain**

Former VP  
Strategy Stewardship, Unilever  
& Board Mentor, Criticaleye

**Sally Uren**

CEO  
Forum For The Future

**Nick Boyle**

Group CEO  
Lightsource bp

**Steven Wilson**

Global Director  
of Capital Projects. SSE

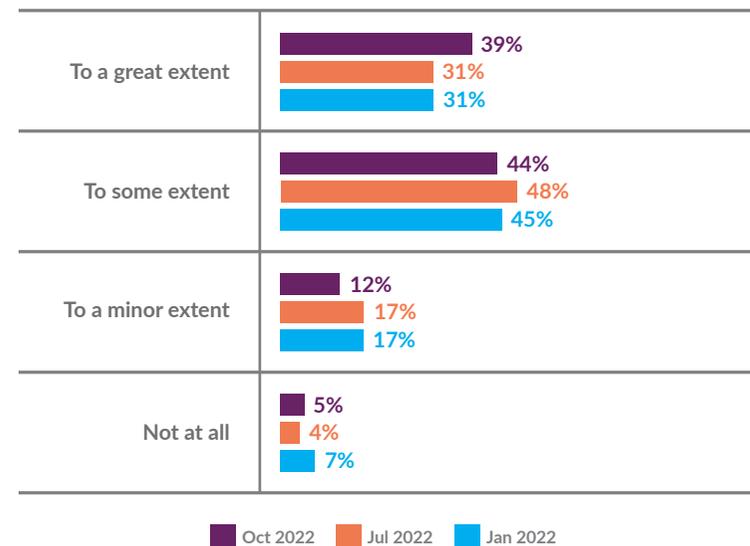
**Toby Siddall**

Managing Director  
& Sustainability Lead  
UK & Ireland, Accenture

**Janet Pope**

Chief of Staff and Group Director  
Sustainable Business  
Lloyds Banking Group

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



# Despite immediate economic challenges, most CEOs and senior teams are focused on the longer-term picture

Click [here](#) to see leaders and experts give their predictions on the landscape next year.

Featuring:

**Stephen Harrison**

CEO, Forterra plc

**Clive Bolton**

Managing Director

Protection, Savings & Retirement, LV=

**Loveday Ryder**

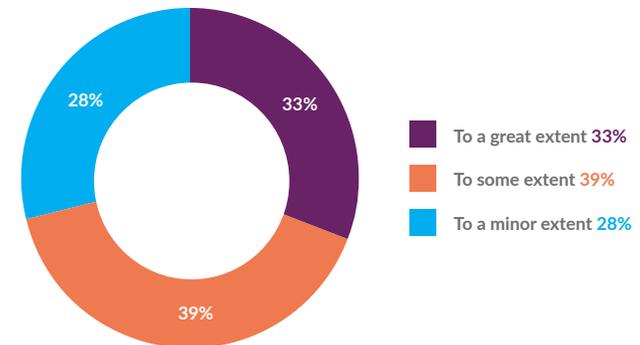
CEO, DVSA

**Lorcan O'Connor**

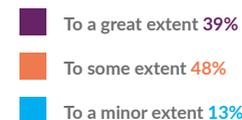
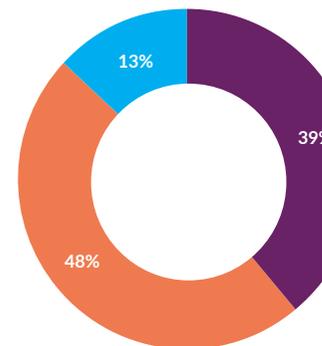
Group CEO, C oras Iompair  ireann (CIE)

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

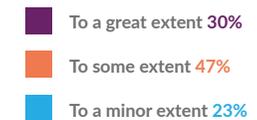
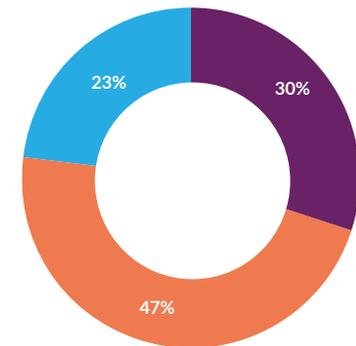
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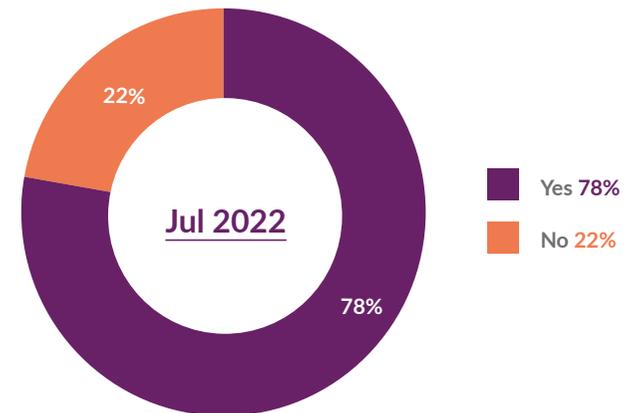
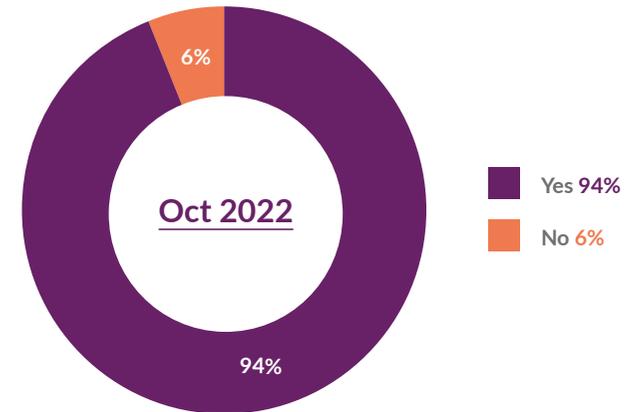


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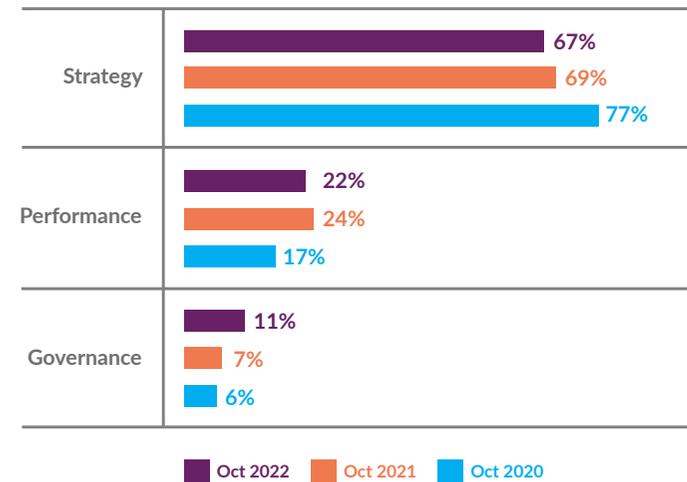
Boards agree with the direction of travel and support the executive team to deliver on the strategy

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



Quality of debate  
with the Board on  
strategy continues  
to be the number  
one area where  
CEOs want to see  
improvement

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

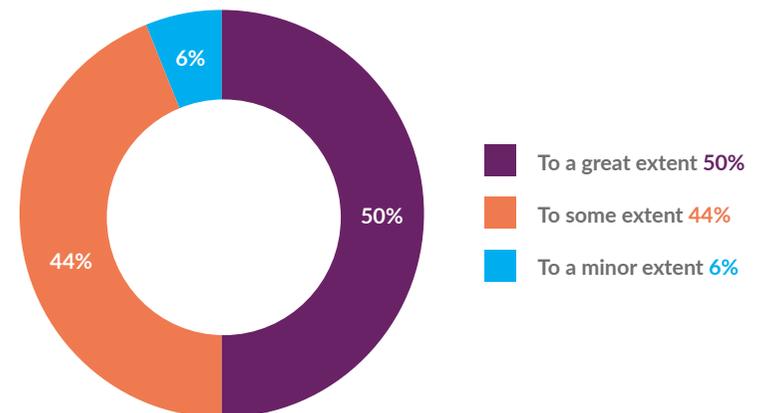


Customer centricity  
may be challenged as  
the way businesses  
engage and connect  
with them changes

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



Is your organisation customer-centric?



# Year on year, people and talent remain the top priority for CEOs

## Priorities in 2022

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

## 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

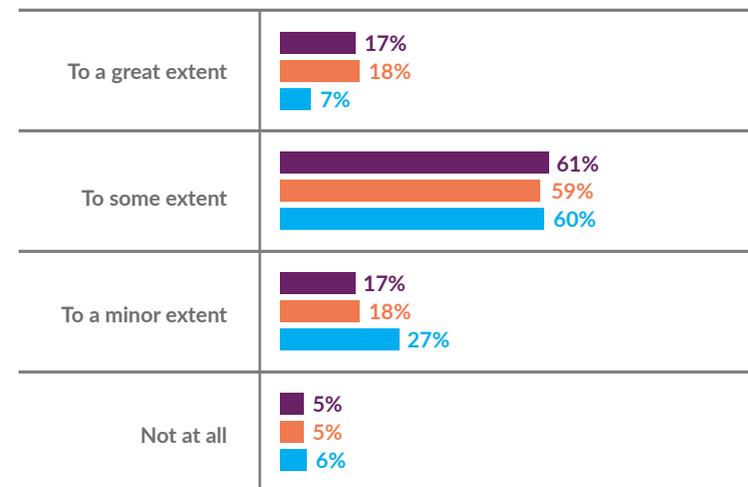
Criticaleye enables and develops great leadership with the perfect mix of discussion and high-impact case studies

Feeling isolated may be inevitable in the top job. CEOs should seek access to alternative sources of support

“At the end of the day, there are decisions that only I can take, and that does sometimes feel isolating.”

CEO Research Participant

As a CEO, do you feel isolated in your role?



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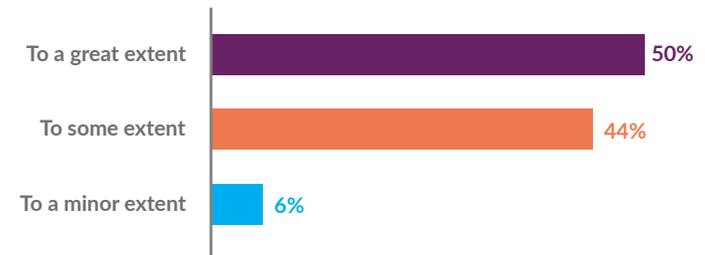
# CEOs agree, looking up and out from the organisation is critical to their success

Where do you need to improve as a CEO?

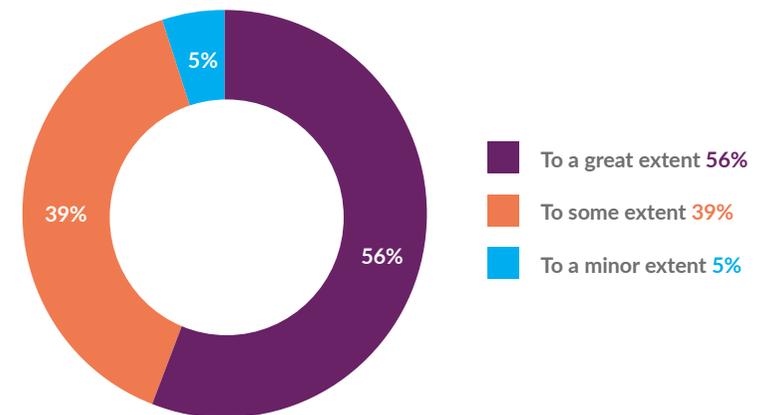


## Mentoring and access to reference points improve individual and business performance

Does external mentoring improve the performance of senior executives?



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

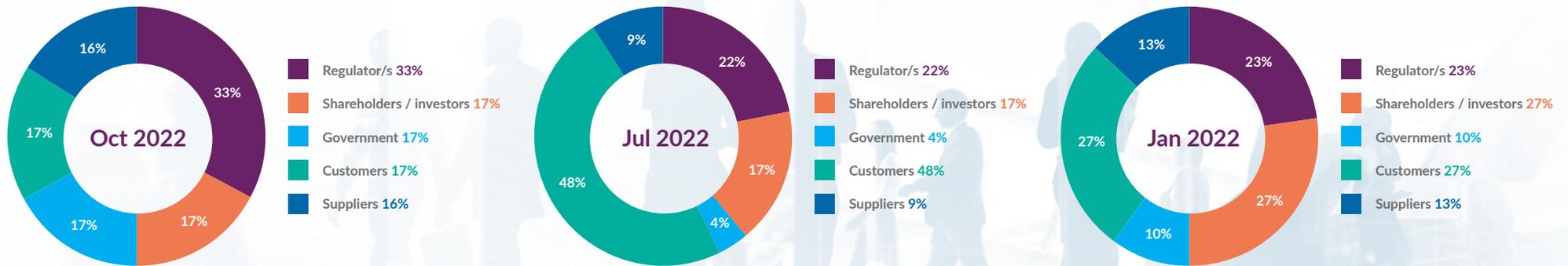


# Stakeholders

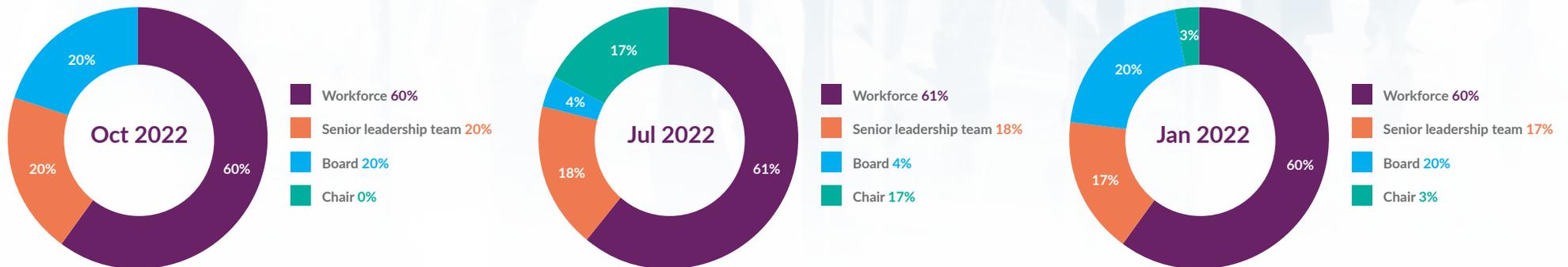
CriticalEye provides the right reference points to manage and navigate increasingly important stakeholder relationships

# For the first time, regulators take the top spot as the most challenging external stakeholder

## Who is your most challenging external stakeholder?

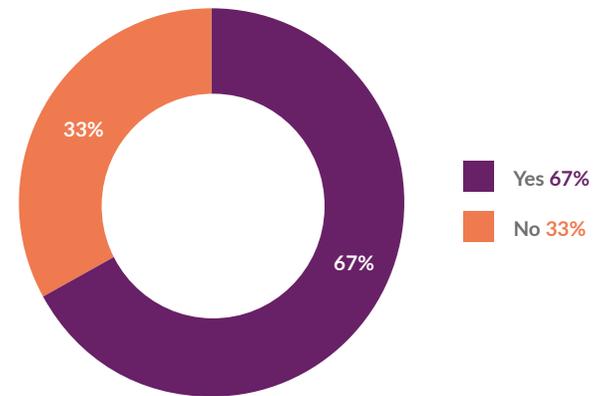


## Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?

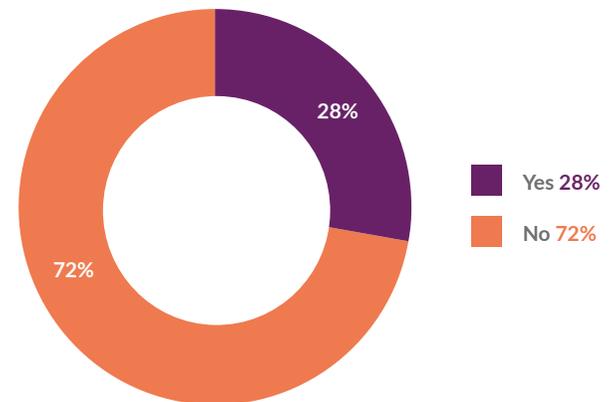


A third of  
leaders have  
no succession  
plan in place

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.

Seeking inspiration and fresh thinking from other sectors

3.

Strategic thinking

## HRDs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

Commercial understanding of the business

3.

Seeking inspiration and fresh thinking from other sectors

## NEDs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

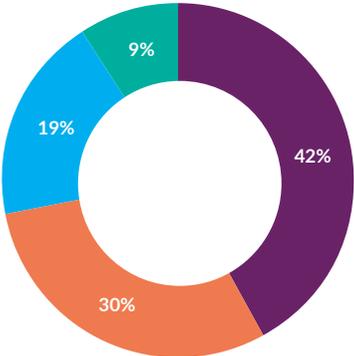
Commercial understanding of the business

3.

People skills and communication

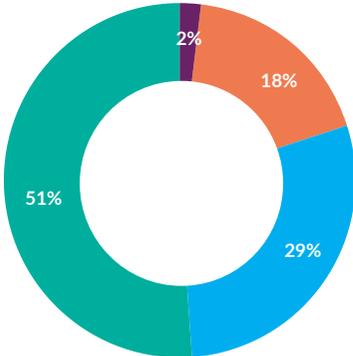


# Polls taken at Criticaleye's most recent CEO Retreat



Are you executing on your Net-Zero strategy?

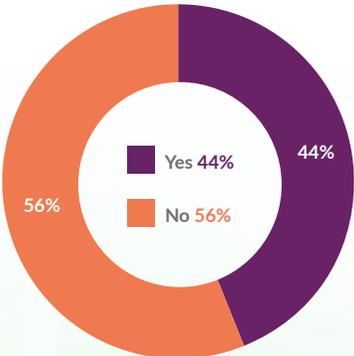
- To a great extent 42%
- To some extent 30%
- To a minor extent 19%
- We don't have a strategy for Net Zero 9%



Do you think your organisation is guilty of greenwashing?

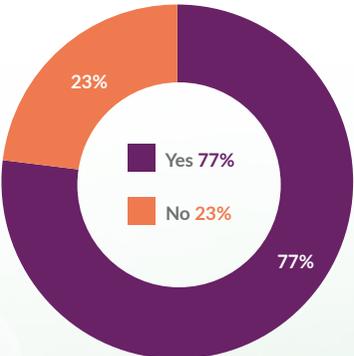
- To a great extent 2%
- To some extent 18%
- To a minor extent 29%
- Not at all 51%

Is your sustainability strategy driving business model transformation?



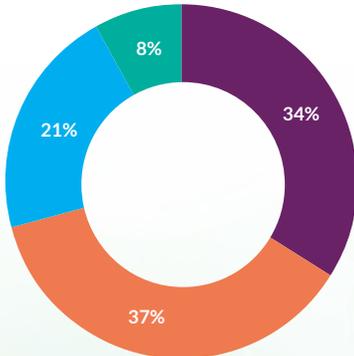
- Yes 44%
- No 56%

As a CEO, is the Board giving you the support you need to execute your sustainability strategy?



- Yes 77%
- No 23%

Who is the most influential stakeholder in driving the sustainability agenda for your business?



- Employees 34%
- Investors/Shareholders 37%
- Customers 21%
- Regulator/s 8%

# WHAT OUR LEADERS SAY



## CEOs and CFOs: creating a winning partnership

In this video, we asked leaders about the all-important relationship between CEO and CFO.

Featuring comment from Mel Karam, CEO, Bristol Water; Loveday Ryder, CEO, DVSA; Nick Boyle, Group CEO, Lightsource bp; and Reece Donovan, CEO, iomart plc.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



## Criticaleye Podcast: High Impact Leadership

Exploring what it means to be a high performing executive in today's challenging environment, this podcast is part of our High Impact Leadership series.

Featuring Criticaleye's CEO Matthew Blagg and Director of Content Marc Barber, plus guest Sally Bridgeland, Chair of Impax Asset Management. Our guests discuss the role of the Board in today's volatile business environment.

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



## Criticaleye Pop-up Boards

Pop-up Boards bring together an experienced panel of trusted peers and experts who will impartially challenge, critique, support and validate the hosts strategy, empowering you to make more informed decisions.

Featuring comment from Melanie Lane, CEO, Shell Recharge, Shell; Simon Fovargue, CEO & SVP, Leidos UK and Europe; and Richard Price, Senior Executive, Pennon Group.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



## Criticaleye Podcast: The Talent Landscape and The Roles of the HRD

Part of our Asia Podcast series, in this discussion, Criticaleye's Head of Research & Market Development, APAC, Holly Carmichael; plus guest Wesley Payne McClendon, Chair of the Board at The GROW Project Foundation, Non-Executive Director at Vortex Innovations, and Independent NED & Chair, People & Culture Committee, at the Australian Institute of Architects discuss why talent is the top priority for leaders in APAC.

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



## CEOs: improving decision making at the top table

In this video we asked CEOs and senior executives about how to improve and speed up decision making on the senior leadership team.

Featuring comment from June Felix, CEO, IG Group; Milena Mondini de Focatiis, Group CEO, Admiral Group; Criticaleye Board Mentor David Comeau, Senior Venture Partner, Keen Growth Capital; and Simon Fovargue, CEO & SVP, Leidos UK and Europe.

[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](mailto: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](mailto:info@criticaleye.com)

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