

Taken at our CEO Sustainability Retreat in October 2023, this research asks CEOs how they are tackling key strategic and sustainability challenges.

In the report, sustainability and ESG are cited as the top priorities for businesses. However, leaders are under no illusions about the significant hurdles ahead, in order to reach stretching targets. Executives within organisations need to work together to meet sustainability goals, which is why **building alignment on the senior leadership team** was the top area

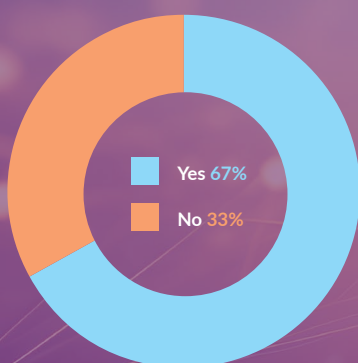
of improvement for most respondents. Similarly, 55 percent said they needed to improve debate on strategy with their Board. Short-term pressures will, of course, create challenges for businesses, with executives reporting that pressure from investors and shareholders can mean they are preoccupied with short-term goals. In a world of unknowns when it

comes to sustainability, most CEOs agree that external reference points will be crucial to the success of their organisations in the future.

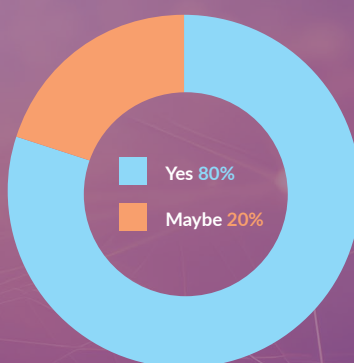
Jamie Wilson, Managing Director, Group Services, Criticaleye



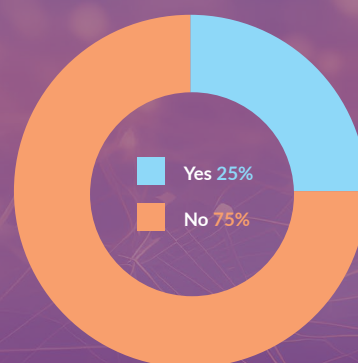
Are your investors / shareholders prepared to back business model reinvention?



Do businesses perform better when they are driven by a clear sense of purpose?



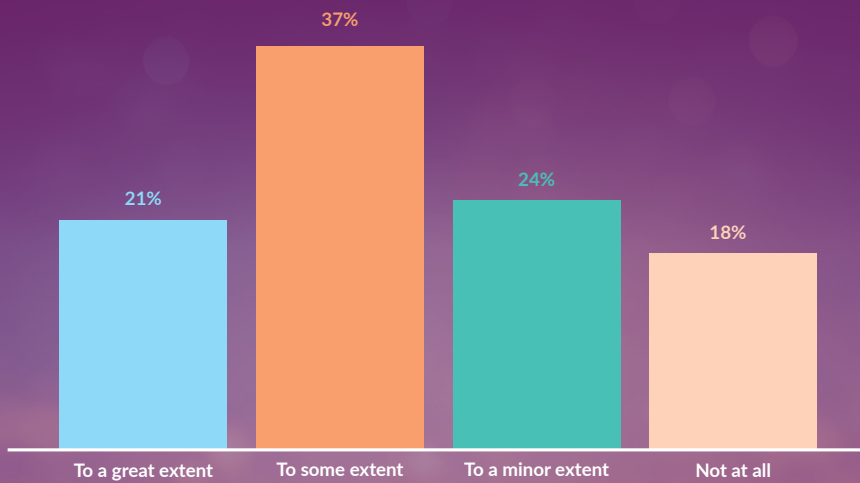
Do you have an integrated strategy for biodiversity and carbon reduction?



“The cynic in me would claim that our stakeholders would rather we manage decline than invest in a sustainable future”

CEO Research Participant

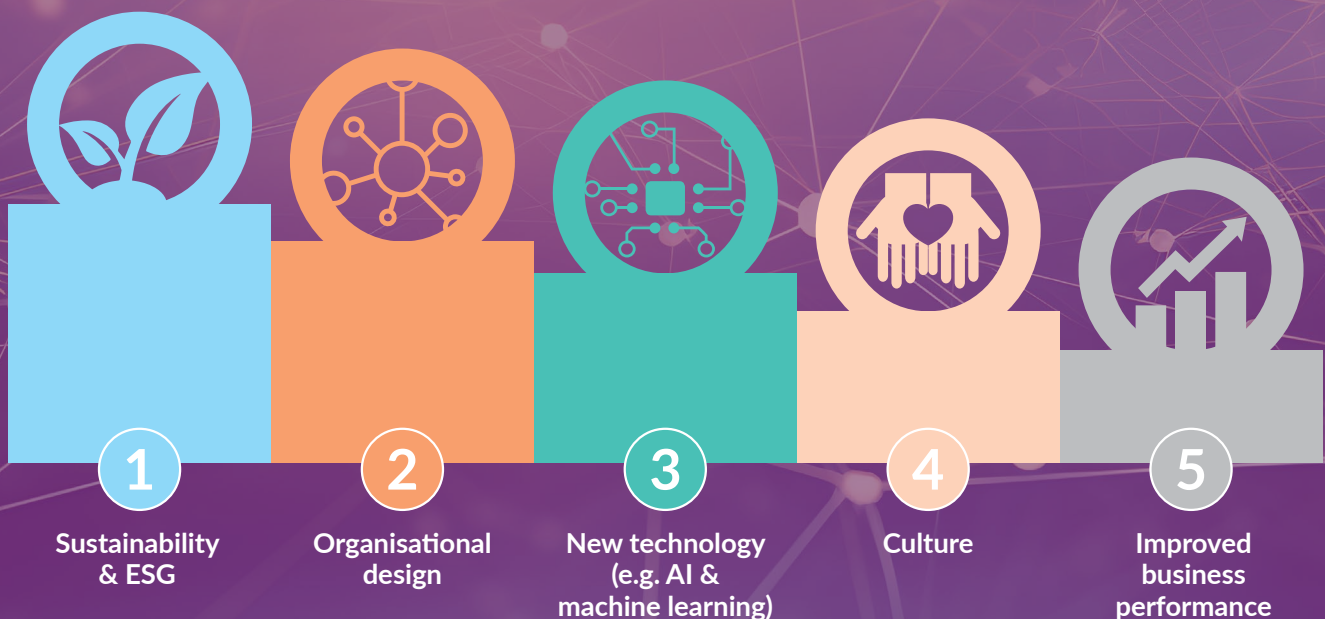
How aware are you of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the impact of nature considerations on your business?



“Being able to deliver customer requirements quickly and keep alignment through the hybrid workforce is a key challenge”

CEO Research Participant

SUSTAINABILITY & ESG IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR CEOS



CRITICALEYE INSIGHT: A BRAVER APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Click [here](#) to read what leaders at the CEO Retreat highlighted as key factors to consider in progressing planetary commitments.

Featuring commentary from **Rachel Barton**, Senior Managing Director and Strategy Lead for Europe, Accenture; **Matthew Blagg**, CEO, Criticaleye; **Bhavesh Mistry**, CFO, British Land Company; and **Fiona Ross**, Chair, C  ras Iompair   ireann.

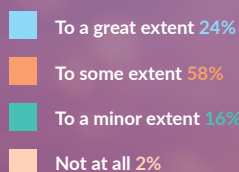
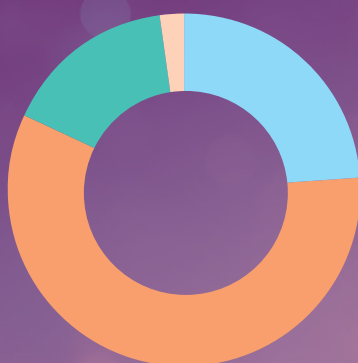


LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES



We asked CEOs if they have the right skillset to lead effectively, and what changes their organisations are undertaking.

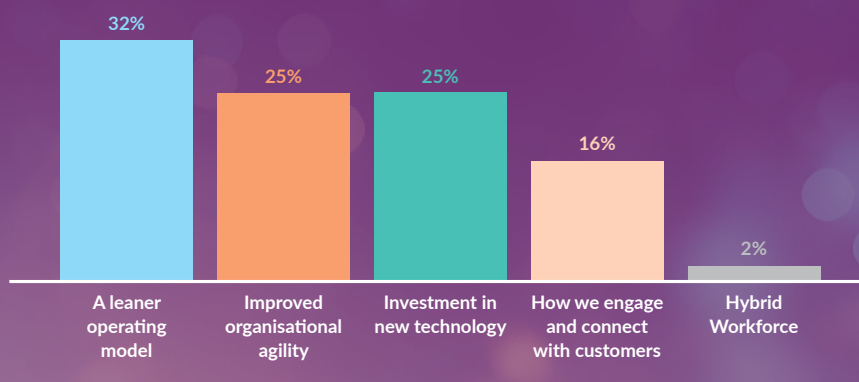
Does your senior leadership team have the right skills and capabilities to navigate strategic uncertainty?



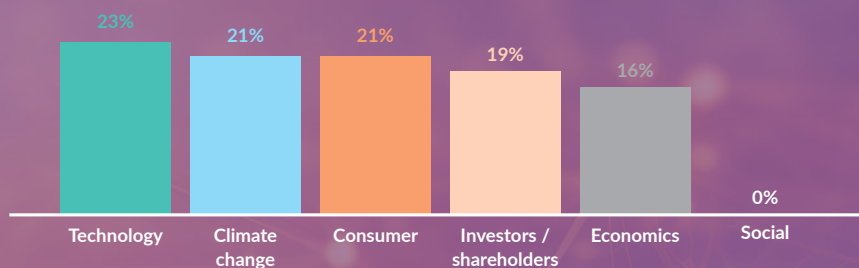
“Agility and a hybrid workforce are key elements that businesses need to align”

CEO Research Participant

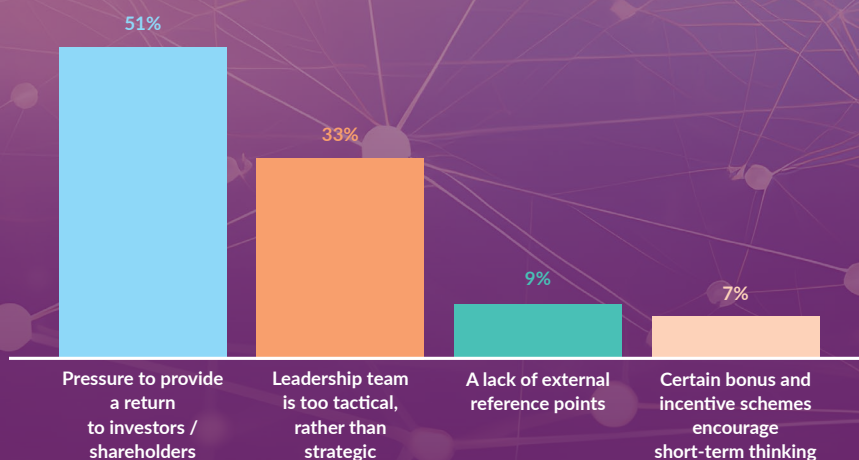
Where do you see the biggest changes occurring in your organisation?



What do you see as the primary driver of change in your business?



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



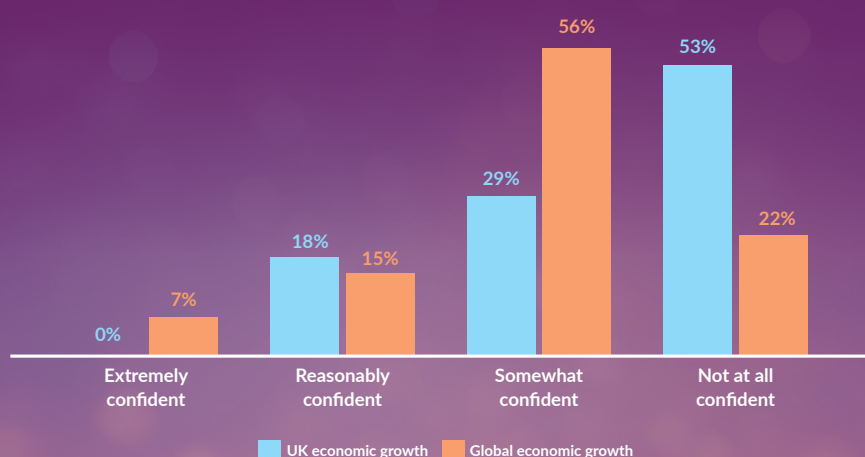
51% SAY PRESSURE FROM INVESTORS AND SHAREHOLDERS IS PREVENTING LONGER-TERM THINKING



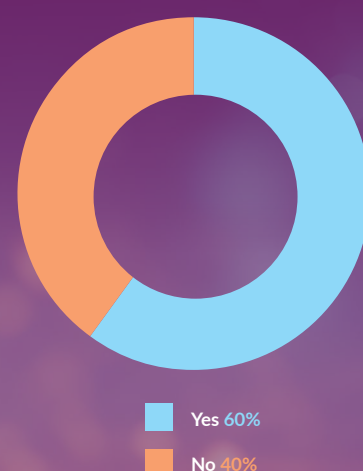


CEOs give us their predictions on the economy and plans for business growth over the next 12 months.

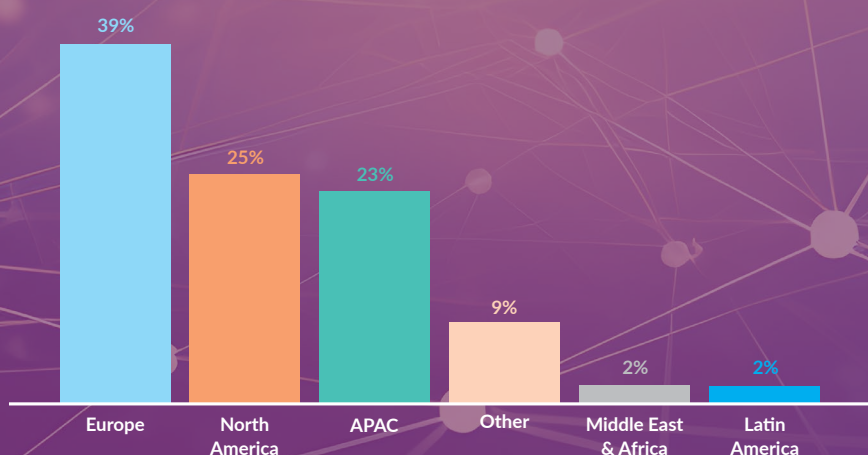
How confident are you that the rate of economic growth in the UK and globally will increase over the next 12 months?



Do you expect to conduct M&A over the next 12 months?



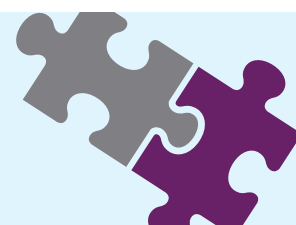
In which regions do you expect to see a strong geographical performance in your organisation over the next 12 months?



“Economic growth feels unlikely against the backdrop of tighter monetary conditions”

CEO Research Participant

60% OF RESPONDENTS EXPECT THEIR BUSINESSES TO CONDUCT M&A IN THE NEXT YEAR

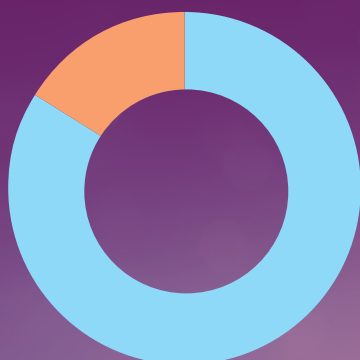


STAKEHOLDERS



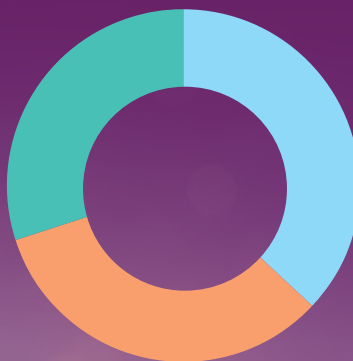
Leaders reveal the challenges of successful stakeholder management and assess their relationship with the Chair and their Board.

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



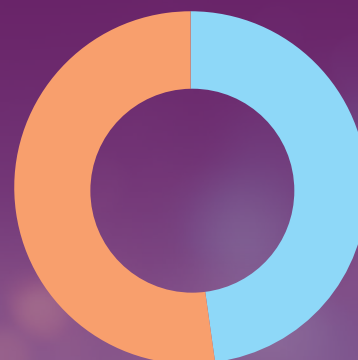
Yes 84%
No 16%

Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?



Senior leadership team 37%
Chair / Board 33%
Workforce 30%

Has it become increasingly difficult in the past 12 months to get strategic alignment in the Boardroom?



Yes 48%
No 52%

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



Strategy



Performance



Governance

THE INSPIRING LEADERS PODCAST: THE CFO'S ROLE IN MANAGING RISK AND SUSTAINABILITY

Click [here](#) to listen to our leaders exploring what it means to be a high performing executive in today's challenging environment.

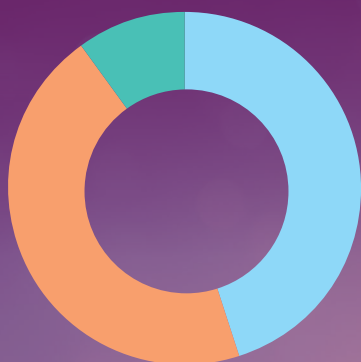
Featuring commentary from Criticleye Host and Director of Content **Marc Barber** and special guests **Francesca Ecsery**, Non-executive Director, Air France; and **Mark Spelman**, Non-executive Director, Buro Happold.





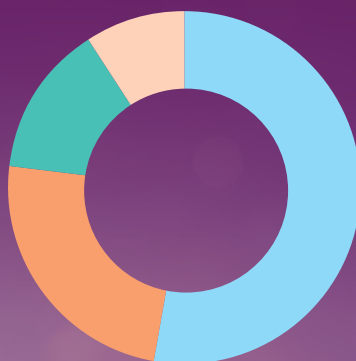
What leadership development tools are most effective for CEOs? We asked leaders what they find most effective when building skills and understanding the external landscape.

Has mentoring had a positive impact on you and/or your leadership capability?



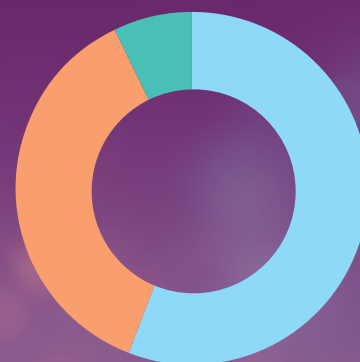
- To a great extent 45%
- To some extent 45%
- To a minor extent 10%

Where do you need to improve as a leader?



- Building alignment in the senior leadership team 53%
- Strategic thinking 24%
- Ability to influence others 14%
- Recognising the need for external reference points 9%

To what extent do you and your senior leadership team require external reference points?



- To a great extent 56%
- To some extent 37%
- To a minor extent 7%

53% SAY BUILDING SLT ALIGNMENT IS WHERE THEY NEED TO IMPROVE



UPCOMING SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS

SUSTAINABILITY FORUM 2024

THURSDAY 6TH JUNE 2024

FIND OUT MORE

SUSTAINABILITY VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

The Key Take-Outs from COP28

THURSDAY 14TH DEC 2023

FIND OUT MORE

SUSTAINABILITY VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

WEDNESDAY 20TH MAR 2024

FIND OUT MORE

Criticleye supports senior executives from a variety of businesses, sectors and geographies. Our global leadership Community provides a confidential and trusted space, offering diverse views which CEOs can draw from when making decisions for themselves and their organisations.

Click [here](#) to find out how we support CEOs.