



# CEO RETREAT 2019

RESEARCH RESULTS

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## LEADING THROUGH UNCERTAINTY



“This research, conducted at our CEO Retreat 2019, provides a fascinating insight into the challenges Chief Executives are facing. It’s no easy task to lead a business through a labyrinth of strategic, economic and political uncertainty, where execs have to make rapid decisions by weighing up conflicting information and competing demands.

In such an environment, it’s not surprising to find that 91% of CEOs are dealing with business model disruption. However, it is somewhat alarming that only 6% are fully confident in the senior leadership team’s ability to respond (down from 17% in 2018).

In comments accompanying the data, CEOs admit that tensions occur when trying to balance the short-term agility required to survive, with the longer-term perspective needed to build for the future. Indeed, they say not spending enough time discussing strategy is the biggest cause of management team failure.

CEOs know where they need to focus, with the majority stating their top priority for 2019 is to invest in the talent and skills of their people. They also say they need to make time to lift their heads up and seek inspiration from other sectors. While the route remains unclear, the best CEOs continue to equip themselves and their teams for the journey ahead.”



**Jamie Wilson**  
Managing Director  
Criticaleye

# Findings from Criticaleye's CEO Retreat 2019 Research



**65%**

of CEOs recognise they need to improve the quality of strategic debate



Retaining talent and developing skills are the top priorities for CEOs



**6%**

Only 6% of CEOs are fully confident their leadership team can respond to business model disruption



**67%**

of CEOs say their successor will be an internal candidate



Not enough time spent discussing strategy is the top reason for management team failure



**97%**

of CEOs agree external mentoring improves the performance of senior executives



# Strategy

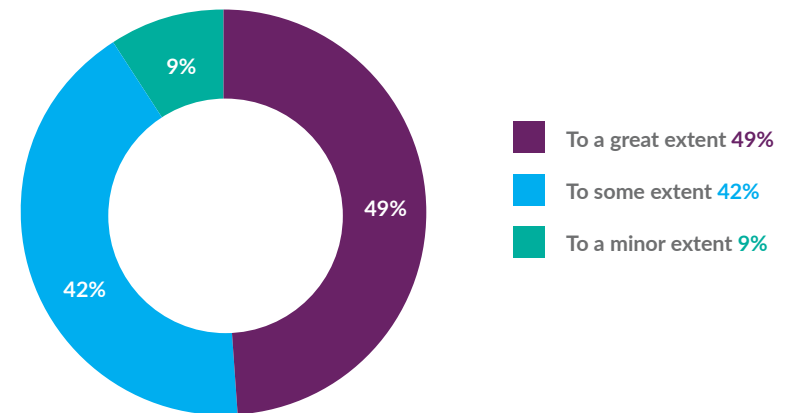
Criticleye offers senior executives a unique opportunity to discuss and reflect upon strategy with peers and experts

Although most leaders (91%) are operating in a disruptive environment, only 6% are fully confident their top team can respond (down from 17% in 2018)

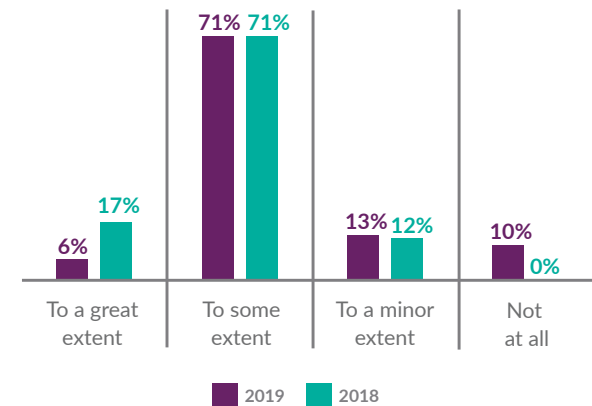
“Balancing short-term results and more disruptive ideas for change is difficult.”

CEO Research Participant

Is your business model being disrupted?



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

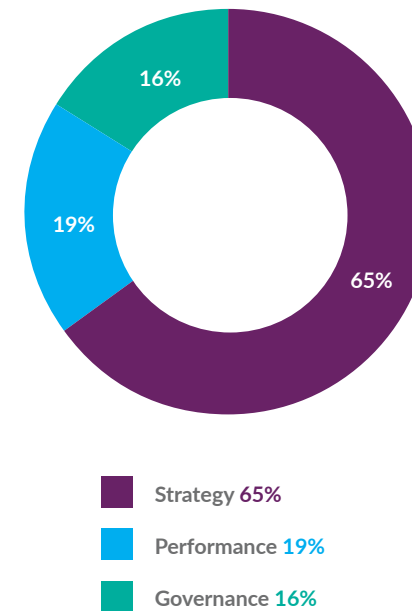


# CEOs recognise the need to improve the quality of strategic debate with the Board is a top priority

Click [here](#) to watch leaders discuss how to create the right environment for challenging and strategic debate.

Featuring: **Mark Silver**, Chair, Cordic (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); **Steve Lathrope**, CEO, SSP Worldwide; **Helen Murray**, Chief Customer Solutions Officer, Webhelp UK; **Nichole Viviani**, HR Director, Worldpay; and **Chet Patel**, Global Commercial & Transformation Officer, BT.

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

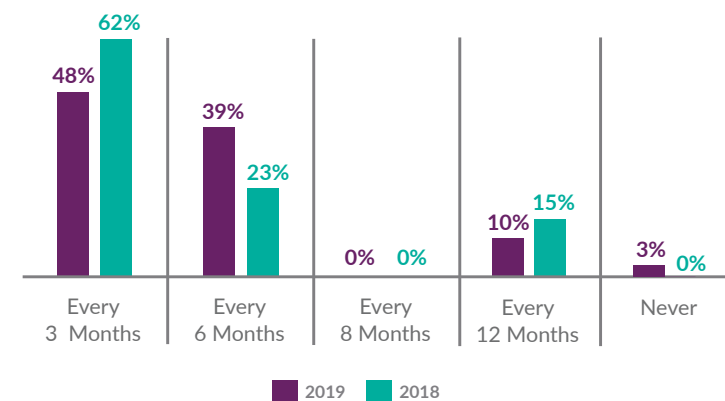


CEOs and leadership teams are putting strategy on the agenda more frequently, but is the quality of discussion hitting the mark?

“Strategy is regularly discussed, but we do not go deep enough into the nub of the issues and make long-term decisions.”

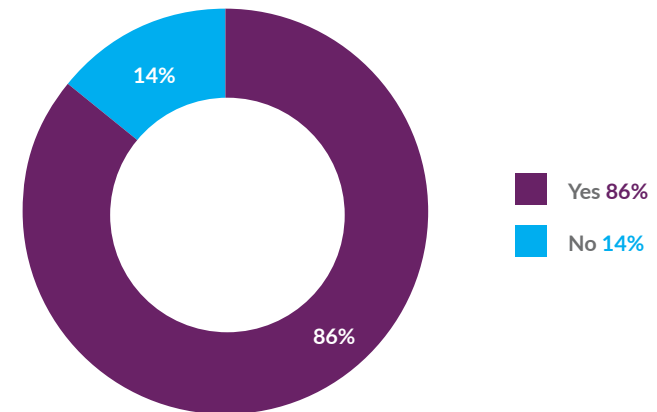
CEO Research Participant

How often does your executive team meet to discuss strategy?

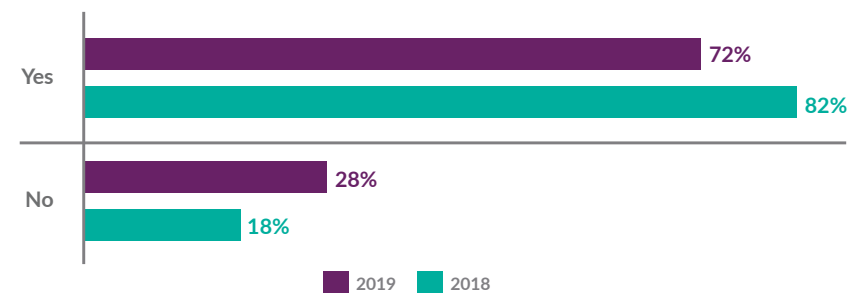


Although most CEOs (86%) feel aligned with their Chair, there has been a drop in the number of leaders claiming their top non-executive adds value

Are you aligned with your Chair on strategy?



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





# People remain top of the agenda for CEOs in 2019

## Top five 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

## Top five priorities in 2018

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Innovation
3. Digital disruption
4. Improved cross-team collaboration
5. Cost reduction

# Leadership

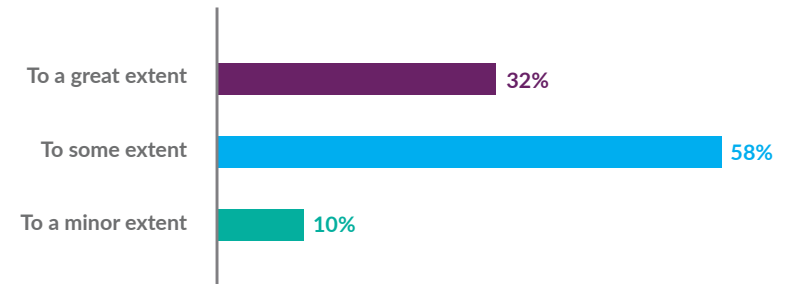
Criticaleye enables and develops great leadership with the perfect mix of peer to peer discussion and high-impact case studies

## Most CEOs agree that leaders and their businesses benefit from access to external reference points

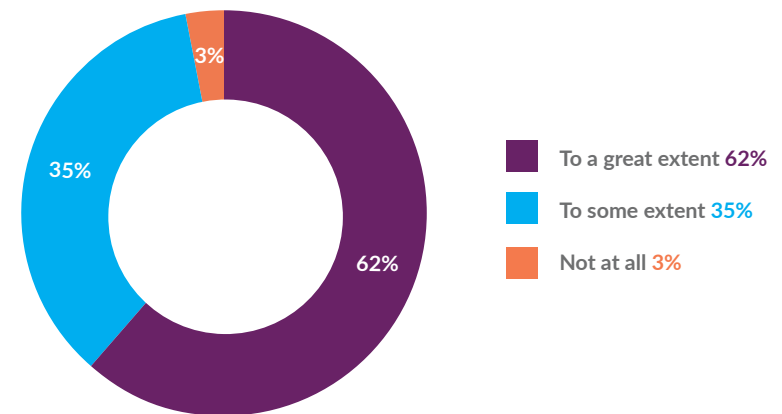
Click [here](#) to see senior executives talk about the problems of being too focused on the day-to-day.

Featuring: **Richard Place**, CFO, NatWest Markets; **Michael Topham**, CEO, Biffa; **Matthew Blagg**, CEO, Criticaleye; **James Taylor**, CFO, Mayborn Group; **Chris Griffith**, Group Investor Relations Director, Tesco; and **Viral Gathani**, Head of Corporate Finance and Strategy, Vedanta Resources.

Is your executive 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?



# CEOs reveal the top reasons for failure in the executive team

2019		2018	
1	▶	1	Not enough time spent discussing strategy
2	▲	3	Lack of trust
3	▲	4	Substandard internal controls and reporting
4	▼	2	No alignment on key commercial objectives
5	▲	6	Afraid to challenge and speak openly
6	▼	5	Poor communication and people skills

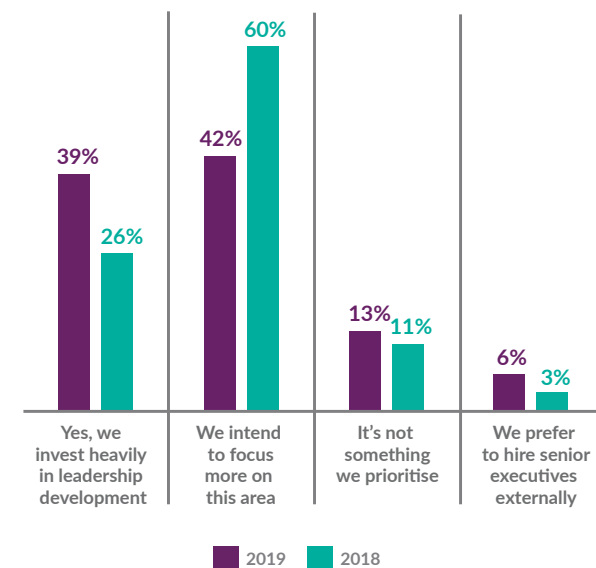
## CEOs say looking outside their organisations for inspiration is where they most need to improve



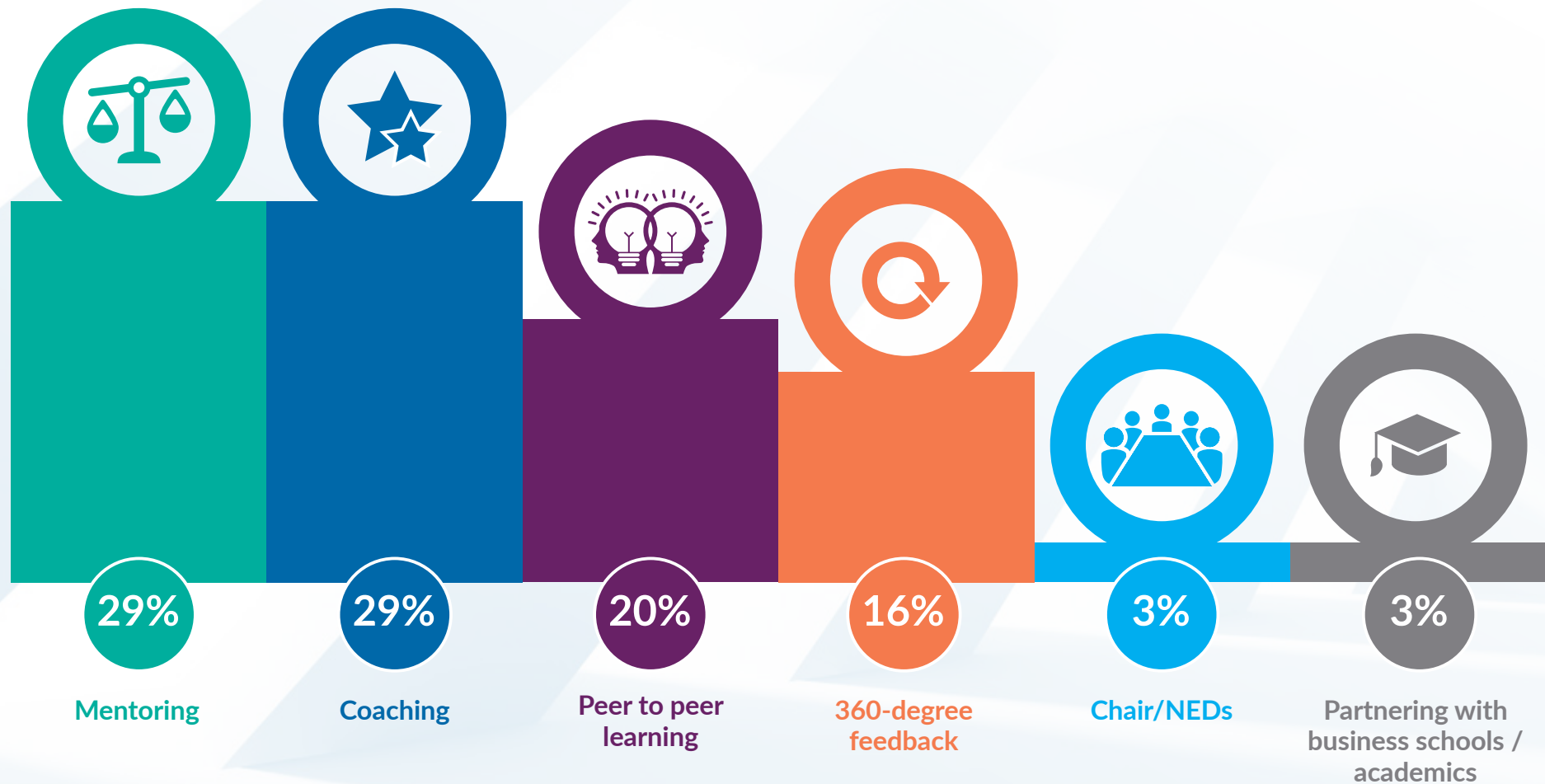


Leadership development  
has become more of a  
priority for CEOs in 2019,  
with mentoring cited  
as a highly effective  
development tool

Is leadership development for senior executives  
a priority within your organisation?



## We asked CEOs what the most effective leadership development tool is

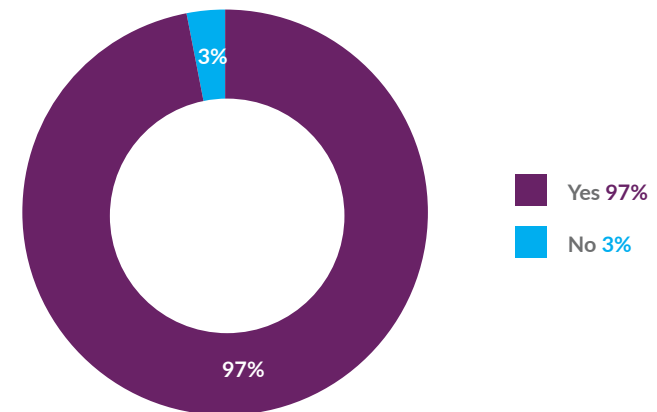


**While 97% of CEOs claim leadership development should come first, most organisations are spending more on headhunters**

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



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

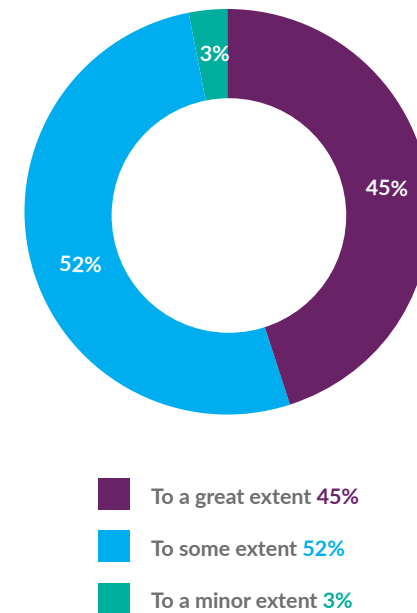


## Understanding the value of an external mentor



Click [here](#) to see **Mark Whitby**, former Chair, Codeplay; **Keith Edelman**, Chair, Revolution Bars Group and PennPetro Energy; **Phil Smith**, former Chair, Innovate UK; and **Neil Griffiths**, Non-executive Director, City Pub Group and StarStock, discuss the value of mentoring, both during their executive careers and now as Criticaleye Board Mentors.

Does external mentoring improve the performance of senior executives?



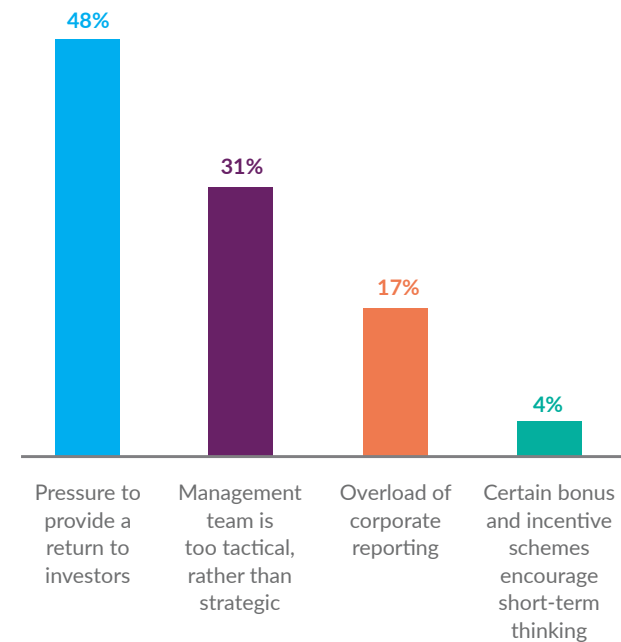
# Stakeholders

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



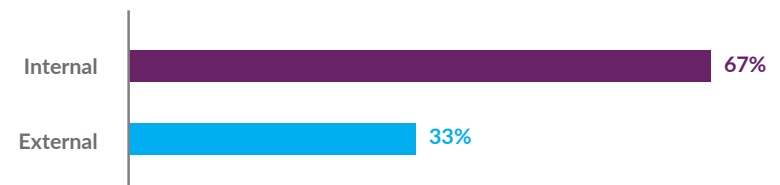
**Pressure from investors is forcing a shorter-term approach from leadership teams. Almost a third admit to focusing on tactics over strategy**

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

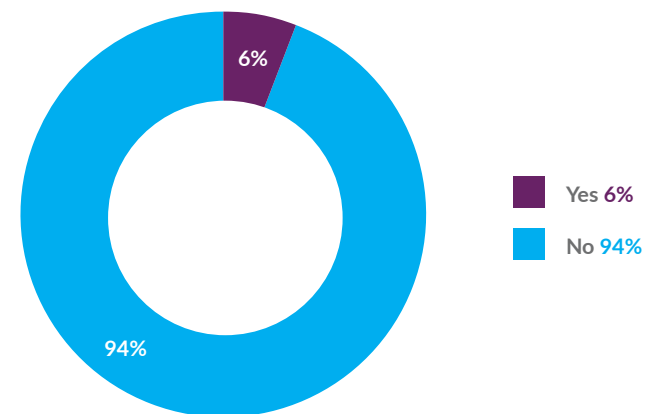


Although the majority of CEOs expect their successor to come from inside the business, it is unlikely to be the CFO taking the top job

Should your successor be an internal or external candidate?



Is your most likely successor the CFO?

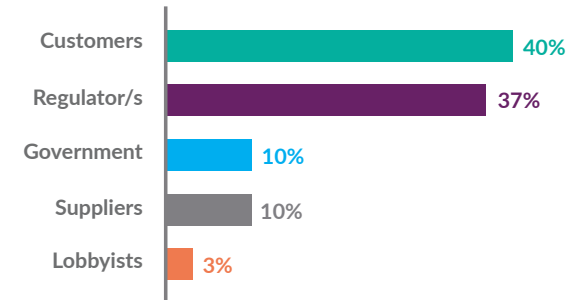


# Stakeholder management remains both complex and challenging

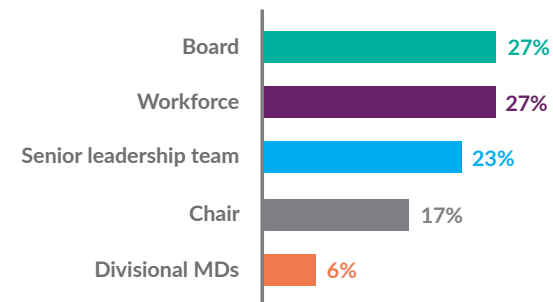
Click [here](#) to see leaders in our Community discuss whether stakeholder management is becoming more challenging.

Featuring: **Nick Burns**, Chair, Engage Works; **Mui Hoon Poh**, Board Member, Singapore Pools (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); **Helen Murray**, Chief Customer Solutions Officer, Webhelp UK; **Michael Crompton**, General Manager, Asia, Criticaleye; and **Mark Winlow**, Non-executive Chair, Personal Group.

Who is your most challenging external stakeholder?



Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?



# CEOs reveal where their colleagues most need to improve

## NEDs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

Seeking inspiration  
and fresh thinking from  
other sectors

3.

Commercial understanding  
of the business

## CFOs

1.

People skills and  
communication

2.

Strategic thinking

3.

Building alignment in the  
senior leadership team

## HRDs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

Building alignment in the  
senior leadership team

3.

Commercial understanding  
of the business



# What our leaders say

## Finding time to think strategically



We ask leaders in our Community how they make time to think strategically.

Thanks to Ruby McGregor-Smith, Portfolio Non-executive Director; Simon Tate, SVP APAC, Salesforce; Steve Monaghan, Chair & CEO, Gen. Life; Wouter Van Wersch, President & CEO, Asia Pacific, GE; Chet Patel, Global Commercial & Transformation Officer, BT; Jane Griffiths, Global Head, Actelion Pharmaceuticals; and Nick Burns, Chair, Engage Works, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

## Balancing stakeholder priorities – the challenge for HRDs

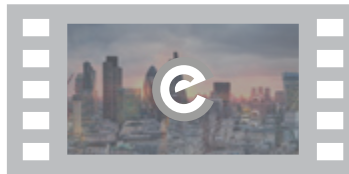


We ask HR leaders about the challenges of managing multiple stakeholders.

Thanks to Line De Decker, SVP Human Resources, GSK; Edna Malavolonek, Head of HR Africa, Aggreko; and Emma Hardaker-Jones, Group HRD, Legal & General, for sharing their views at our HR Director Retreat 2019.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

## Do leadership teams spend enough time on strategy?



We ask senior executives about the value of strategic discussion.

Thanks to Mark Whitby, former Chair, Codeplay (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Joanne Wilson, CFO, Dunnhumby; Chris Griffith, Group Investor Relations Director, Tesco; and Michael Topham, CEO, Biffa, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

## The anatomy of the CEO-HRD relationship



We ask leaders about what makes the perfect CEO-HRD relationship.

Thanks to Gareth Llewellyn, CEO, DVSA; Emma Hardaker-Jones, Group HRD, Legal & General; Des Pullen, Group HRD, Associated British Foods; Mike Hughes, President UK & Ireland, Schneider Electric; Nichole Viviani, HR Director, Worldpay; and Richard Buxton, Group HRD, Brewin Dolphin, for their fantastic insights.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

## What makes a high-performing regional leadership team?



Senior leaders discuss the core components of a successful, regional leadership team in Asia.

Thanks to Kris Webb, Chief People Officer, Coles; Till Vestring, Non-executive Director, Inchcape (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Anika Grant, former HR Senior Director, Global Core Business, Uber; Simon Farry, VP Sales and Marketing - Iron Ore, Rio Tinto; Sanjay Patel, former Group Head of Global Business Services, BAT; and John Shelley, Board Mentor, Criticaleye, for sharing their experience and expertise.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

**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

STRATEGY

STAKEHOLDERS

OLDER

LEADERSHIP



## 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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