



**CRITICALEYE**

The peer to peer Board Community

# CEO RESEARCH 2022

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PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HEART OF STRATEGY

“The past two years has seen seismic shifts in the business landscape. Ways of working have been transformed, uncertainty has become the norm and stakeholders are demanding more.

Criticaleye’s latest CEO Research reflects what this looks like on the ground, with ‘improved organisational agility’ and the rise of the ‘hybrid workforce’ being the two big structural changes Chief Executives say are taking place in their organisations.

This period has also required a shift in leadership mindset, as ever more businesses recognise that they can no longer put profits before people and the planet. Stakeholders want to see action on sustainability. Alarming, CEOs reveal that only 31% of leadership teams are fully aligned on their sustainability strategy and 77% admit they must create more time for long-term planning.

CEOs are prioritising talent and skills as they acknowledge that their people will be central to delivering all this change. However, this offers its own difficulties too; 60% of business leaders say the workforce is now their most challenging internal stakeholder (up from 43% a year ago).

Against this backdrop, leadership isolation remains high, with 67% of CEOs feeling lonely at the top. One antidote to this is the support gained by sharing pain points, challenges and solutions with your peers, and an overwhelming 77% of Chief Executives say business performance is also greatly enhanced when using these external reference points.

As we enter 2022 – and a complex, multispeed recovery – the consensus is that uncertainty will continue into the medium term. To navigate this environment, business leaders will need to ring-fence time to look up and out of their organisations.”



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

# Key findings from Criticaleye's CEO Research 2022



67% of CEOs  
feel isolated in  
their role



Only 31% of  
leadership teams are  
fully aligned on their  
sustainability strategy



77% say more time  
should be spent on  
long-term planning



The top priorities for  
CEOs are **retaining talent**  
and **developing skills**



93% say mentoring  
improves executive  
performance



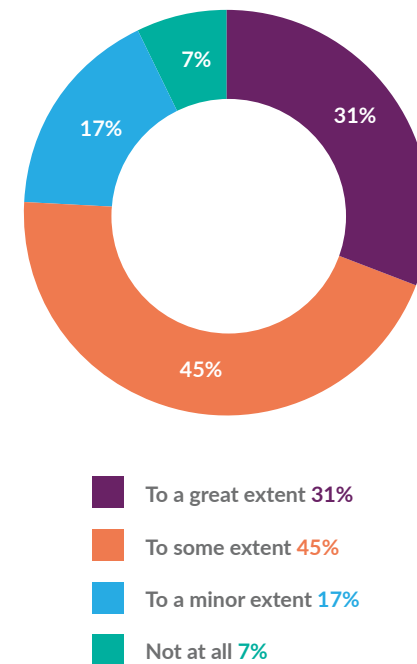
60% say the workforce is  
their most challenging  
internal stakeholder

# Strategy

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

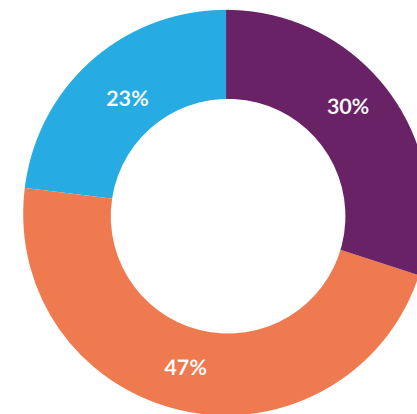
**Under a third (31%)  
of leaders are fully  
confident the top  
team is aligned on its  
sustainability strategy**

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



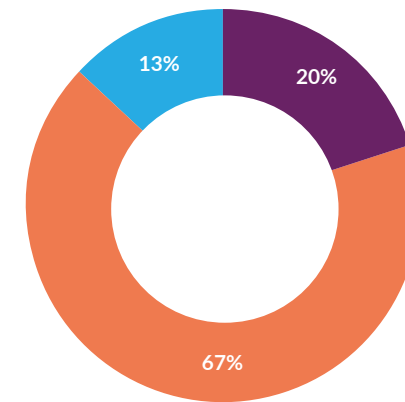
**CEOs are concerned  
that they are not  
spending enough time  
planning for the future**

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



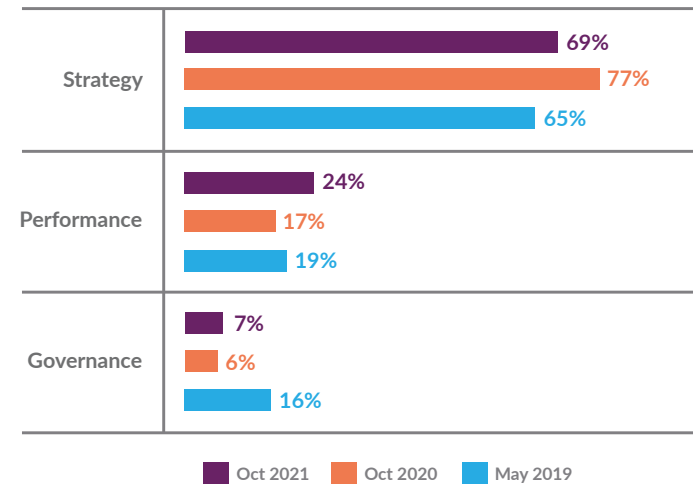
**Most CEOs (87%) believe they have the right leadership team in place to navigate business model transformation**

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



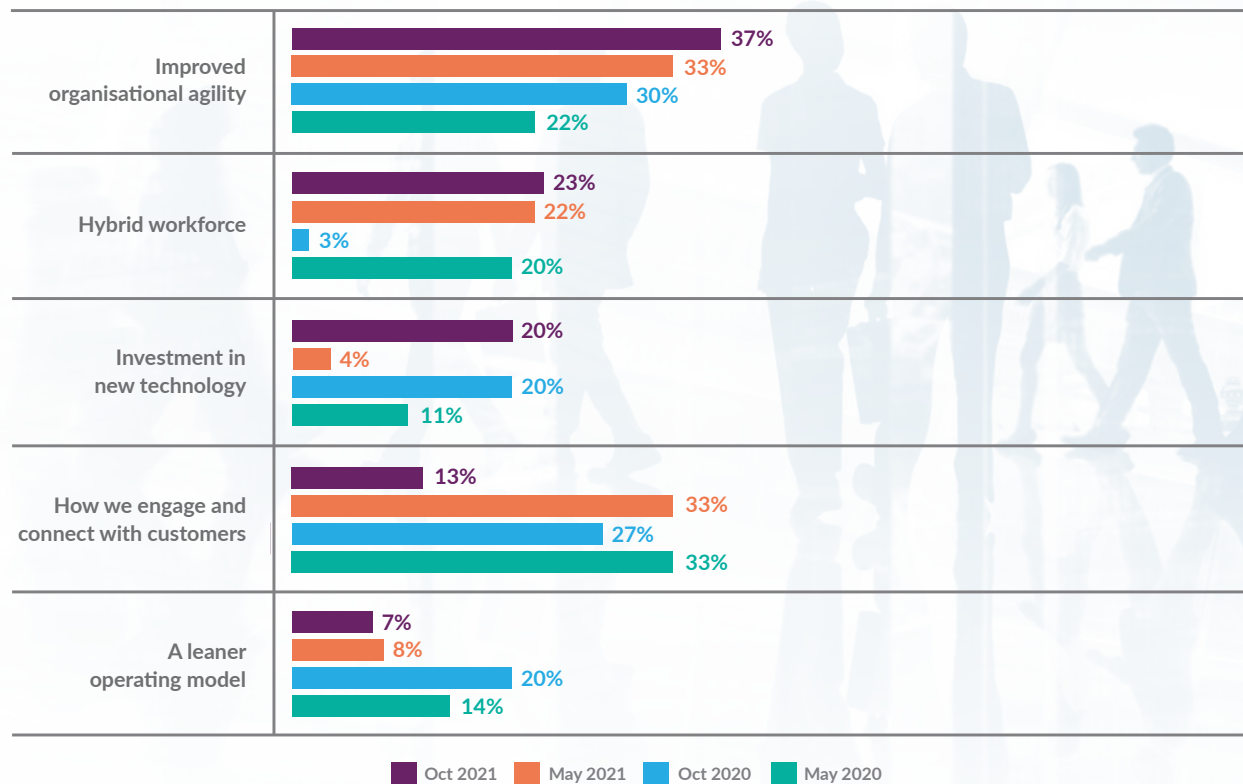
CEOs continue to highlight strategy as the top area where Boards need to improve the quality of their debate

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



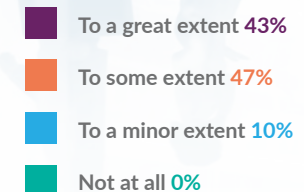
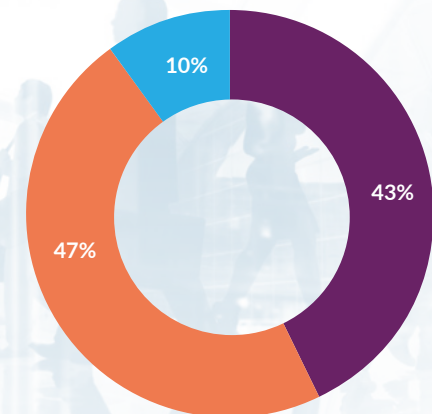
# Improved organisational agility remains a top priority for CEOs

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



Is your organisation customer-centric?

Oct 2021



## ‘Retaining talent’ remains a top priority for CEOs, with ‘diversity, inclusion and belonging’ taking second place

Top 5 Priorities in October 2021	Top 5 Priorities in May 2021	Top 5 Priorities in October 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Retaining key talent and developing skills</li><li>✓ Diversity, inclusion and belonging</li><li>✓ Innovation</li><li>✓ ESG</li><li>✓ Sustainability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Retaining key talent and developing skills</li><li>✓ Organisational design</li><li>✓ Sustainability</li><li>✓ Innovation</li><li>✓ ESG</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Navigating COVID-19</li><li>✓ Retaining key talent and developing skills</li><li>✓ Sustainability</li><li>✓ C-suite succession (including the CEO)</li><li>✓ Innovation</li></ul>

# Leadership

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

# Isolation in the top job remains a challenge for CEOs

Click [here](#) to see leaders in our Community discuss isolation and how executives can pull a supportive, external perspective into their businesses.

Featuring:

**Mark Scanlon**, CEO, Tenet Group

**Ashley Phillips**, Managing Director, Ørsted Sales UK

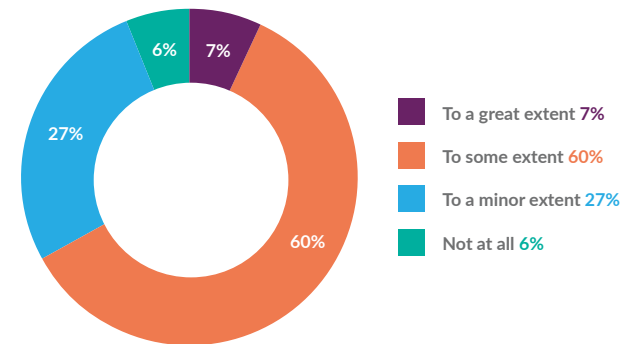
**Melanie Lane**, CEO, NewMotion, Shell

**Scott Fawcett**, Managing Director, Component Solutions, Essentra

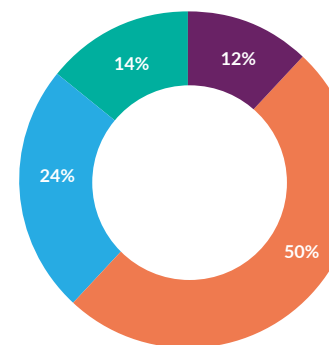
**Lorcan O'Connor**, Group CEO, C  ras Iompair   ireann

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

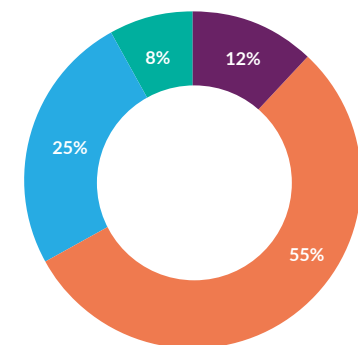
CEO Oct 2021



CEO Oct 2020

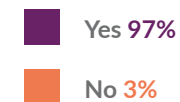
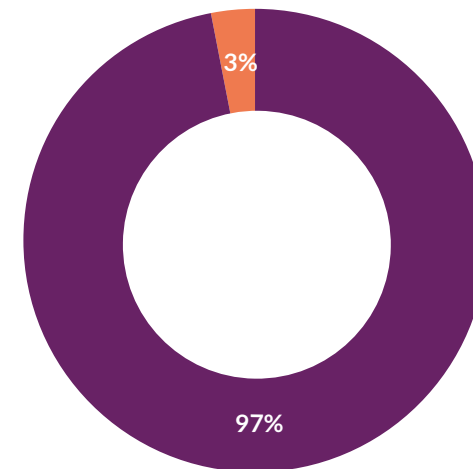


CFO Nov 2020



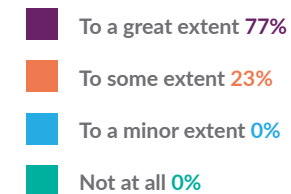
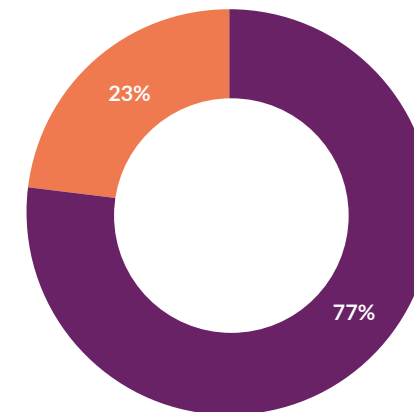
**The Board remains  
a valuable source  
of support for the  
leadership team**

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



**CEOs agree that  
business performance  
is enhanced when  
executives have  
access to external  
reference points**

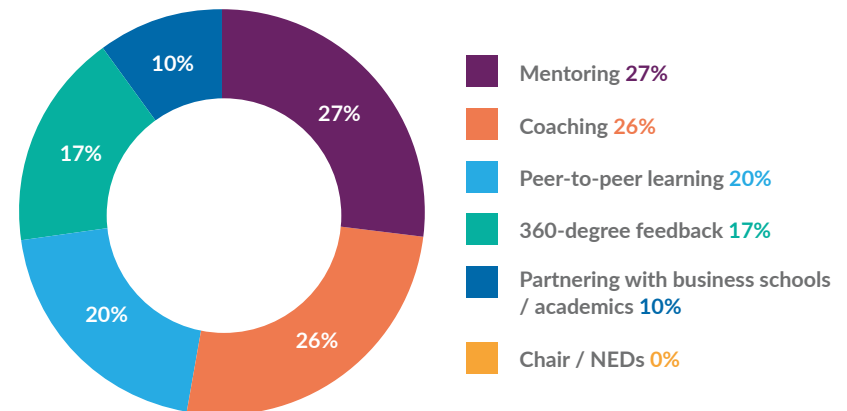
Is business performance enhanced if  
executives have access to reference points  
outside of their organisation / sector?



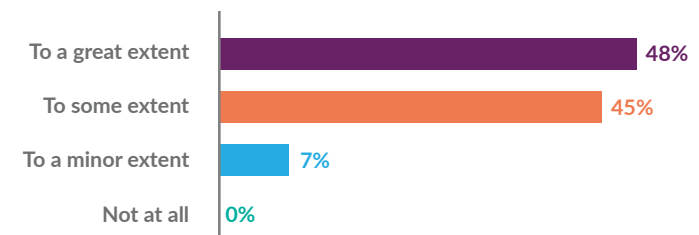
## The majority (93%) of CEOs agree that mentoring improves the performance of senior executives

Click [here](#) to watch Tom Beedham, our Director of Board Mentors and Non-executive Directors, talk about Criticaleye's global mentoring capability, alongside a selection of our inspiring Mentors.

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



Does external mentoring improve the performance of senior executives?

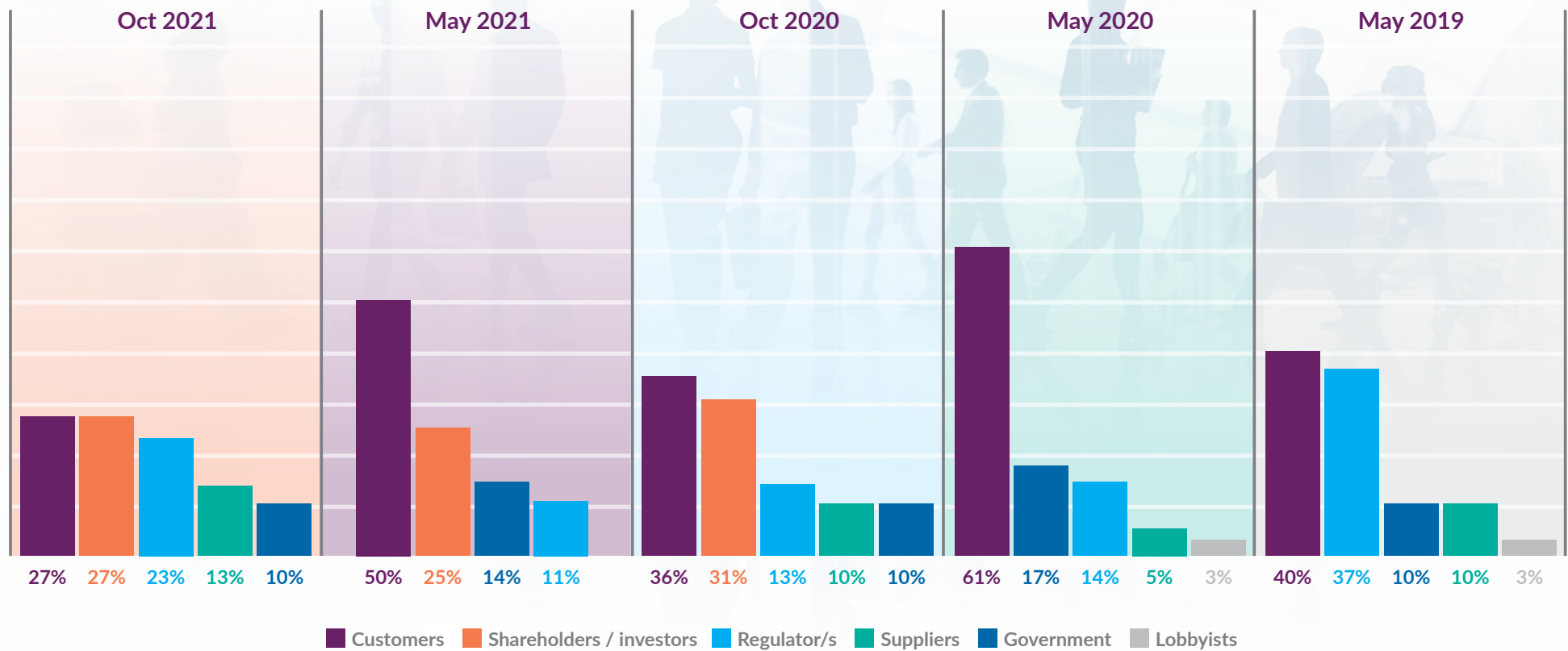


# Stakeholders

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

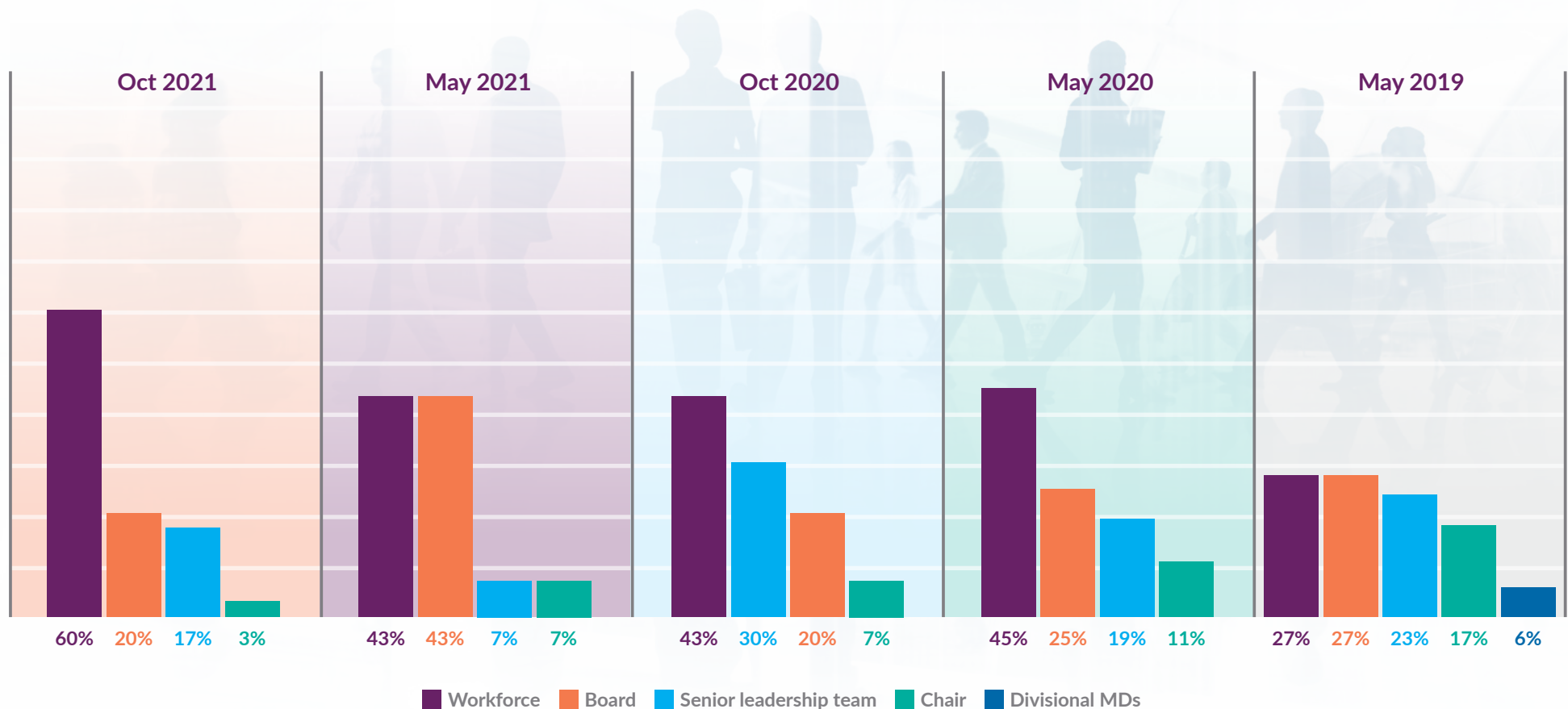
## Customers remain an influential stakeholder, but shareholders and investors are now exerting equal pressure

Who is your most challenging external stakeholder?



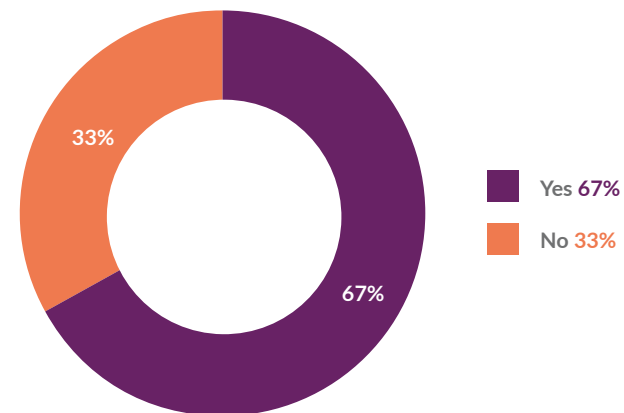
The workforce is overwhelmingly the most challenging internal stakeholder, perhaps reflecting competition for talent and the reported 'Great Resignation'

Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?

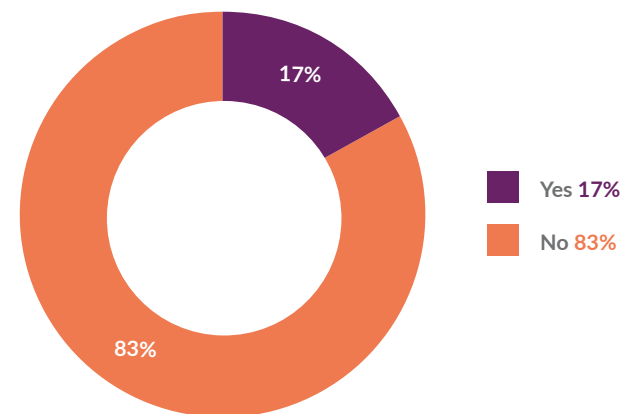


**Most CEOs (83%)  
do not see the  
CFO as their most  
likely successor**

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.

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.

Supporting innovation



## CEOs continue to acknowledge that must work harder to bring fresh thinking into their organisations

Where do you need to improve as a CEO?

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

# WHAT OUR LEADERS SAY



## The CEO's role in driving sustainability

In this video, taken at our CEO Retreat, we ask leaders about their role in driving sustainability targets.

Thanks to Ashley Phillips, MD of Ørsted Sales UK; Michael Lewis, CEO of E.ON UK; Melanie Lane, CEO of NewMotion at Shell; Peter Lacy, Chief Responsibility Officer and Global Sustainability Services Lead at Accenture; and Jay Patel, VP & GM of Webex CPaaS at Cisco, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE](#)  
TO WATCH THE VIDEO



## Criticaleye Asia Podcast - Innovation in the Boardroom

In this episode of Criticaleye's Asia podcast series, our General Manager, Michael Crompton, speaks to two of our Board Mentors in the region about the Board's role in innovation.

Thanks to Karen Fawcett and Mui Hoon Poh for sharing their views on how non-executives can support and maintain a culture of innovation in their organisations.

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



## The CEO-CFO Dynamic - what makes a successful partnership?

In this video, our leaders talk about the importance of the CEO-CFO relationship.

We hear from Lorcan O'Connor, Group CEO of Córas Iompair Éireann; Nigel Wilson, Group CEO of Legal & General, Jay Patel, VP & GM of Webex CPaaS at Cisco; and Steve Burnett, Board Advisor.

[CLICK HERE](#)  
TO WATCH THE VIDEO



## Criticaleye Podcast: Leadership with New Horizons

In this episode, Criticaleye's CEO, Matthew Blagg, and Managing Editor, Emma Carroll, offer a global outlook on leadership, following our CFO Retreat 2021.

An insightful discussion on executive burnout, barriers to collaboration, new business models and much more.

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



## Addressing leadership isolation

In this video, we ask leaders, including Mark Scanlon, CEO of Tenet Group; Ashley Phillips, MD of Ørsted Sales UK; Melanie Lane, CEO of NewMotion at Shell; Scott Fawcett, MD of Component Solutions at Essentra; and Lorcan O'Connor, Group CEO of Córas Iompair Éireann, about isolation in the top role and how executives can get the right support outside of their organisation.

[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)

#### Criticaleye (Europe) Ltd

Blackfriars, 22 Tudor Street  
London EC4Y 0AY

T: +44 (0) 20 7350 5110

#### Criticaleye (Asia) Ltd

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

T: +852 6114 3865

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

