

# NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP IN 2025

the key leadership trends defining success

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GLOBAL  
LEADERSHIP  
TRENDS

boyden

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**Foreword**

**Introduction**

**How We Conducted This Research**

**The Leadership Landscape in 2025**

**Boyden Global Leadership Trends 2025**

TREND 1: Anticipating and Driving Disruption

TREND 2: Continuous Leadership  
Development

TREND 3: Human-AI Partnership

TREND 4: Diversity Equation

TREND 5: Beyond Work-Life Balance

TREND 6: Strengthening Accountability

TREND 7: Business Strategy with ESG  
Principles

**Rate Your Readiness**



## FOREWORD

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### CHAD HESTERS

CEO,  
Boyden World Corporation

Effective leadership is more critical than ever as businesses face rapid change driven by AI, geopolitical disruption, and shifting workforce expectations. At Boyden, we believe that the most successful leaders will be those who adapt continuously, turning challenges into opportunities. Our second edition of the Leadership Trends study, developed in collaboration with global CEOs, executives, and experts, identifies key leadership trends for 2025, highlighting the challenges leaders face and strategies for navigating this evolving landscape.

The research emphasizes the importance of ongoing leadership development for building organizational resilience. However, translating leadership priorities into action remains a challenge for many. Leaders who embrace adaptability, continuous learning, and strategic foresight will strengthen their organizations' competitiveness and ability to thrive in an increasingly complex world. This report provides a framework for leaders to drive measurable business impact and shape the future of business.



### JOÃO G. VAZ

Managing Partner,  
Global Head of Leadership  
Consulting

In an era marked by accelerating disruption, the role of leadership has never been more consequential, and the capacity to lead through complexity – and turn it into opportunity – defines those who will shape the future.

At Boyden, we recognize that leadership is not a static capability but a dynamic, evolving discipline. This second edition of our Global Leadership Trends report reflects our ongoing commitment to understanding what enables leaders to thrive – today and tomorrow. This study identifies the seven defining trends that are reshaping leadership in 2025: from human-AI collaboration to the imperative of continuous development and diverse thinking.

More than just a report, this is a call to action. Leadership development must move beyond isolated programs and become deeply embedded in culture, strategy, and daily operations. I invite you to explore these insights – and reflect on how you, your teams, and your organizations can turn these trends into impact.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership continues to evolve in response to rapid change, making ongoing development essential for long-term success.

The pace of change has accelerated, driven by AI, disruption, and evolving workforce expectations. Without **skilled and adaptable leaders**, even the best strategies risk falling short. Leadership is the defining factor for success, requiring leaders to move beyond managing complexity and instead transform it into an opportunity.

For the second edition of our Leadership Trends study, Boyden has identified **key leadership trends shaping success in 2025**. Through collaboration with **CEOs, senior executives, and industry experts worldwide**, this research highlights the critical challenges leaders face, the level of organizational support available, and the most effective strategies for navigating an evolving business landscape.

The evidence is clear: **Sustained leadership development is at the core of business resilience and progress**. Whether integrating AI, fostering diverse teams, or strengthening accountability in hybrid work models, thriving leaders will be the ones who **embrace adaptability, continuous learning, and strategic foresight**. However, translating leadership priorities into action remains a challenge. Many leaders struggle to embed development into daily operations, cultivate accountability, and empower teams to take ownership of change. Without a structured execution strategy, organizations risk missing the opportunity to convert leadership growth into measurable business impact.

**Boyden's Global Leadership Trends Report 2025** builds on in-house analysis of market dynamics, and provides leaders with a strategic framework to navigate emerging challenges. Leaders who **integrate these trends into their strategy and culture** will strengthen resilience, gain a competitive edge, and shape the future of business.



### KATIA PINA

Partner,  
Global Head of Leadership  
Center of Excellence

# HOW WE CONDUCTED THIS RESEARCH

Boyden’s Global Leadership Trends Report 2025 is the result of a rigorous research process designed to uncover the most critical leadership challenges shaping business today.

Our methodology followed two key phases:

- 1. Defining the trends** | We conducted robust market research, industry analysis, and expert discussions to identify the seven most influential leadership trends. These trends emerged from shifting business dynamics, AI-driven transformation, evolving workforce expectations, and broader global challenges.
- 2. Gathering executive insights** | To deepen our findings, we surveyed CEOs, senior executives, and industry leaders across multiple sectors and regions. Our research focused on:

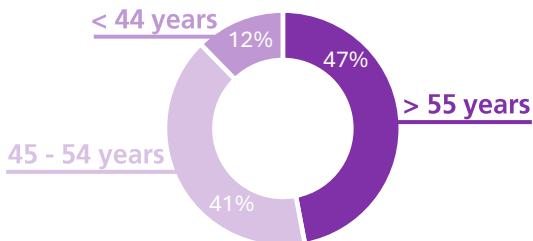
- **The biggest challenges leaders face in adapting to these trends**
- **The level of organizational support and resources available**
- **The strategies leaders are using to stay ahead**

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTING LEADERS** 366

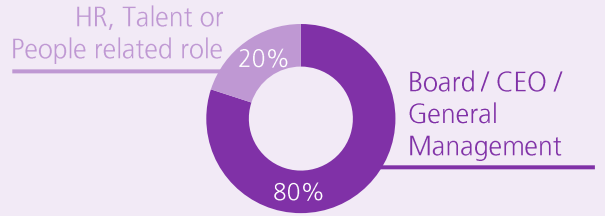
## GENDER REPRESENTATION



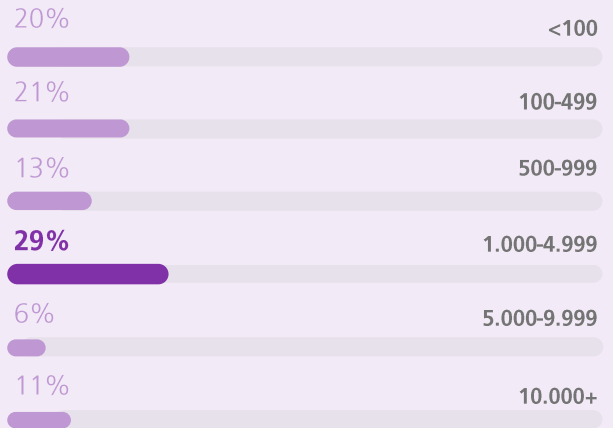
## AGE DISTRIBUTION



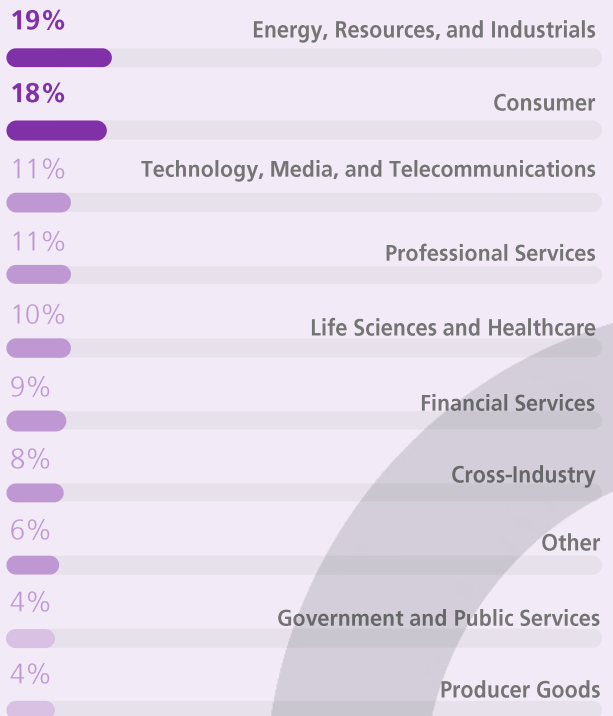
## FUNCTIONAL ROLE



## COMPANY SIZE



## DIVERSITY ACROSS INDUSTRIES



# THE LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE IN 2025: NAVIGATING DISRUPTION AND REINVENTION

In 2025, leadership will continue to evolve as executives navigate ongoing disruption, requiring them to adapt their approach to how they lead, make decisions, and drive impact.

## Key Takeaways Reshaping Leadership

**From reactive to predictive leadership** | Disruption is constant, making it urgent for leaders to anticipate change rather than respond to it.

**Leadership development as a continuous imperative** | The old model of periodic training is obsolete. Leadership growth must be ongoing, adaptive, and directly linked to business performance.

**AI as a leadership partner** | AI is no longer just an assistive tool; it is a core enabler of decision-making, productivity, and innovation, requiring leaders to redefine human-AI collaboration.

**New rules for workplace flexibility** | Work-life balance and hybrid work are no longer perks but baseline expectations, demanding a fresh approach to accountability, engagement, and culture.

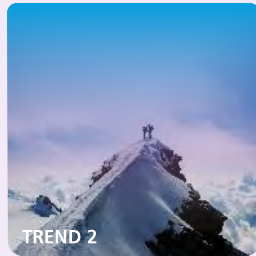
**Purpose-driven leadership gains traction** | ESG and diversity are moving from compliance to strategic advantage, pushing leaders to embed purpose and sustainability into business success.

## BOYDEN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TRENDS 2025



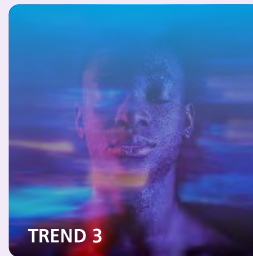
TREND 1

**ANTICIPATING  
AND DRIVING  
DISRUPTION**



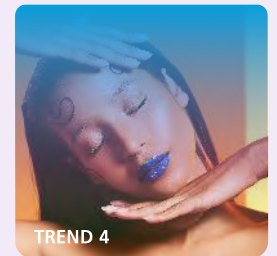
TREND 2

**CONTINUOUS  
LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT**



TREND 3

**HUMAN-AI  
PARTNERSHIP**



TREND 4

**DIVERSITY  
EQUATION**



TREND 5

**BEYOND WORK-  
LIFE BALANCE**



TREND 6

**STRENGTHENING  
ACCOUNTABILITY**



TREND 7

**BUSINESS  
STRATEGY WITH  
ESG PRINCIPLES**

# 1

## ANTICIPATING AND DRIVING DISRUPTION

In an era of continuous change, organizations are moving beyond reactive adaptation to a more proactive leadership approach, anticipating trends, identifying opportunities, and shaping the future. Rather than focusing solely on responding to disruption, they are determining their own trajectories, using uncertainty as a catalyst for innovation and positioning themselves as industry pioneers.

By embedding strategic foresight, innovation, and agility into their decision-making, these organizations enhance their ability to navigate complexity. This approach enables them to remain resilient amid shifting market dynamics while unlocking new avenues for growth and differentiation.



# 1 ANTICIPATING AND DRIVING DISRUPTION

Shaping the future, not merely adapting to it

## WHY IT MATTERS

Proactively identifying shifts in the market allows organizations to adapt more effectively and position themselves for long-term success.

This requires a transition from an efficiency-driven mindset to an opportunity-driven approach. Rather than optimizing for existing conditions, successful organizations foster a culture of experimentation, agility, and strategic risk-taking, where learning and iteration are embedded into decision-making processes.

Leaders who proactively identify trends, invest in innovation, and make deliberate strategic pivots will ensure their organizations stay relevant and create long-term value. Whether through technological advancements, market expansion, or new business models, those that integrate disruption into their strategic planning will be best positioned to drive sustainable growth and industry leadership.

## ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- Two-thirds of leaders believe their organizations have the resources and support needed to anticipate and drive disruption.
- Yet, many still struggle to transition away from traditional operating models:
  - Limited agility in large enterprises | Complex structures and legacy systems slow decision-making, making it difficult to respond to change quickly.
  - Industry-specific barriers | Leaders in Consumer, Financial Services, and Producer Goods report that their organizations lack the capabilities needed to proactively drive disruption, leaving them vulnerable to shifting market demands.



# 1 ANTICIPATING AND DRIVING DISRUPTION

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** BALANCING SHORT-TERM PERFORMANCE WITH LONG-TERM INNOVATION

**#2** ENCOURAGING STRATEGIC THINKING AND SCENARIO PLANNING

“ The ability to anticipate the future and make early adjustments, even when traditional business is thriving, is crucial.

*Executive from Energy, Resources, and Industrials, Germany*

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

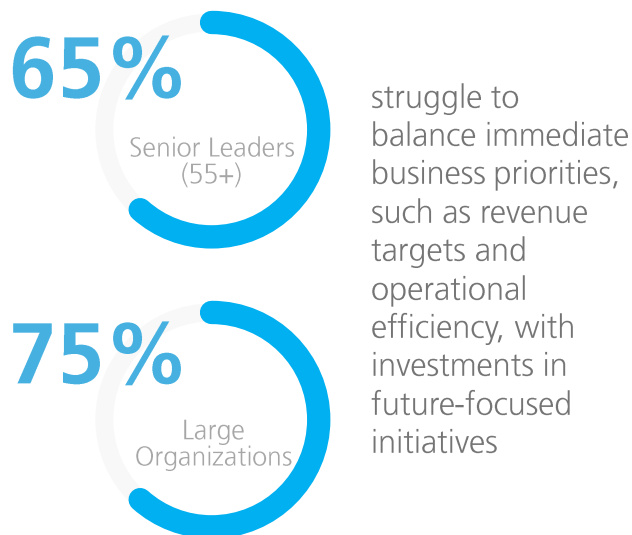
**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** CREATE INITIATIVES TO ENCOURAGE EXPERIMENTATION AND RISK-TAKING

**#2** ENCOURAGE CROSS-DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING

“ It's important to integrate trend anticipation and adaptability into role expectations and performance evaluations.

*Executive from Financial Services, United Kingdom*



# 2

## CONTINUOUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Sustained learning is the foundation of effective leadership growth. Leading organizations recognize that consistency in development outweighs short-term intensity. Rather than relying on one-time training programs, they cultivate a culture of continuous learning, real-world application, and iterative improvement.

By embedding learning into daily leadership practices, organizations help leaders develop enduring habits that go beyond skill acquisition, fostering adaptability, strategic thinking, and long-term impact.



## 2 CONTINUOUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening leadership through consistency, not intensity

### WHY IT MATTERS

Leadership development is no longer about one-time skill acquisition but about cultivating lasting habits through sustained, incremental learning.

Traditional models that rely on intensive training sessions often fail to create meaningful change. Instead, organizations are embedding leadership development into daily routines and real-world application, making learning a continuous process rather than a periodic event.

The key to long-term impact lies in consistency. Small, ongoing improvements enable leaders to become more adaptable, resilient, and better equipped to navigate uncertainty, while fostering the same mindset within their teams. Beyond individual growth, this approach strengthens organizational culture, embedding a learning mindset at every level and ensuring leadership excellence is both developed and sustained.

### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- Most leaders agree that their organizations provide the necessary resources and support for continuous leadership development, indicating a growing commitment to long-term leadership growth.
- However, key differences emerge across leadership levels, company size, and industries:
  - Senior leaders and leaders in small organizations report a strong emphasis on continuous learning, suggesting that leadership development is seen as a strategic priority in these environments.
  - Producer Goods and Cross-Industry sectors lead in prioritizing leadership development, ranking it as a top focus area ahead of other industries.

# 2 CONTINUOUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

Top challenges identified by leaders:

**#1** KEEPING EMPLOYEES MOTIVATED AND ENGAGED IN LEARNING INITIATIVES

**#2** IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT ALIGN WITH BUSINESS GOALS

“ Too many training initiatives fail to deliver real impact, leading to disengagement that must be carefully managed.

*Executive from Transportation and Logistics, United Kingdom*

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

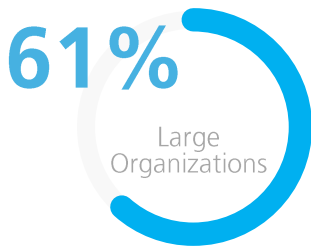
Top strategies identified by leaders:

**#1** IDENTIFYING LEADERSHIP GAPS AND CREATING TAILORED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**#2** DESIGNING TRAINING THAT INCORPORATES REAL-WORLD JOB CHALLENGES

“ Prioritize hands-on, real-world learning over theoretical training to ensure practical leadership development.

*Executive from Consumer, Italy*



struggle to maintain engagement in learning initiatives



emphasize the need for personalized leadership development



prioritize integrating real-world challenges into training



# 3

## HUMAN-AI PARTNERSHIP

The integration of human intelligence and artificial intelligence (AI) is paving the way for a new era of collaboration, one in which AI is not just a tool but a strategic partner in decision-making, innovation, and operational efficiency. By leveraging the capabilities of AI—spanning machine learning, generative AI, AI agents and natural language processing—leaders are reshaping the way work is done.

As AI becomes more embedded in business processes, it requires leaders to rethink structures, workflows, and the evolving relationship between humans and intelligent systems.



## 3 HUMAN-AI PARTNERSHIP

A new era of collaboration amplifying human potential

### WHY IT MATTERS

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is redefining organizations, ushering in a new era of collaboration between humans and machines.

AI is becoming indispensable for leaders navigating digital transformation, driving competitive advantage and optimizing operations. Yet, the **human-AI partnership** is not only about efficiency; it's about **unlocking new levels of creativity, agility, and problem-solving at scale**. Organizations successfully integrating AI into their strategic approach will enhance performance and foster resilience, adaptability, innovation and sustained growth.

This evolution demands from leaders a **balancing mindset of embracing technological advancement and human-centric values** like empathy, collaboration, and ethical responsibility.

Those striking this balance will shape the future of work, using AI and human cognition as complementary forces.

### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- More than half of leaders agree their organizations provide sufficient resources for AI integration.
- Despite recognizing AI's transformative potential, **39% of leaders confront a significant challenge: a clear gap between their organizations' AI readiness and the support available to implement it effectively.**

# 3 HUMAN-AI PARTNERSHIP

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** INTEGRATING AI TECHNOLOGIES WITH EXISTING SYSTEMS AND WORKFLOWS

**#2** ENSURING EMPLOYEES HAVE TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE OR UNDERSTANDING OF AI TECHNOLOGIES

“ There is no clear roadmap to gradually implement AI across the company, so it becomes part of a storytelling effort rather than a true value-add to the business.

*Executive from Consumer Industry, Brazil*

**+70%**

Large Organizations & Consumer

express concerns about integrating AI into existing infrastructures and processes

**61%**

HR, Talent, & People Leaders

recognize that leaders lack the skills to effectively leverage AI for business impact

**+60%**

Leaders of all age groups

emphasize leadership development as a key strategy in overcoming AI-related disruptions

**73%**

Government and Public Services

consider AI literacy urgent for navigating disruption and making informed decisions

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** DEVELOP LEADERS TO MANAGE CHANGE AND MOBILIZE TEAMS

**#2** ONBOARDING PROGRAMS FOR AI LITERACY

“ Host regular discussions on AI and showcase successful applications across the organization, highlighting its role in thought leadership, innovation, and strategic impact beyond operational efficiency.

*Executive from Financial Services, United Kingdom*



4

## DIVERSITY EQUATION

While demographic diversity remains essential, organizations are increasingly recognizing diversity of thought as a key driver of business performance. High-performing companies understand that true diversity extends beyond representation; it is about leveraging varied perspectives and expertise to enhance decision-making, foster innovation, and strengthen resilience.

By cultivating leadership teams with diverse backgrounds, organizations challenge assumptions, reduce groupthink, and develop more adaptable strategies. This approach not only fuels innovation but also improves risk management, enabling businesses to anticipate challenges and respond effectively to disruption. Companies that embed diversity of thought into their culture and leadership gain a competitive edge, positioning themselves for long-term success in an increasingly complex business environment.





## 4 DIVERSITY EQUATION

### From demographics to diversity of thought

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Cognitive diversity moves beyond race, gender, and age, incorporating varied perspectives shaped by individual experiences, disciplines and ways of thinking.

While demographic diversity remains essential, organizations that integrate diverse viewpoints into decision-making benefit from stronger **problem-solving, greater adaptability, and more balanced risk assessment**. These factors contribute to **improved innovation and resilience**, helping businesses navigate complexity and change more effectively.

Encouraging open dialogue, embracing different viewpoints, and promoting collaboration strengthen decision-making and business outcomes. When **leadership models inclusivity**, diversity of thought becomes integral to the organization, driving performance and long-term growth.

#### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- ) Many leaders recognize **significant progress** in advancing diversity of thought, with initiatives to foster inclusivity becoming a **strategic priority** across organizations.
- ) However, perceptions of diversity efforts vary across leadership levels and industries.
  - **Senior executives** tend to view their organizations' diversity commitments more favorably than those in earlier career stages, indicating a potential gap in how diversity efforts are experienced across different levels.
  - **Leaders in Producer Goods** report stronger integration of diversity initiatives, while Financial Services leaders cite a lack of adequate resources to support meaningful progress.

# 4 DIVERSITY EQUATION

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

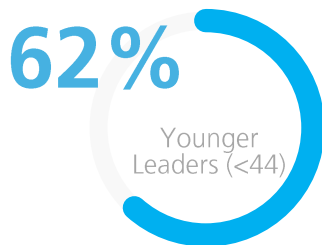
**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** ENSURING NO SINGLE PERSPECTIVE DOMINATES DECISION-MAKING

**#2** BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS THAT EFFECTIVELY LEVERAGE DIVERSITY

“ A lack of appreciation for diversity among decision-makers slows progress and limits its integration into business strategy.

*Executive from Technology, Media, and Telecommunications, Australia*



report difficulties in preventing power dynamics from shaping final outcomes

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

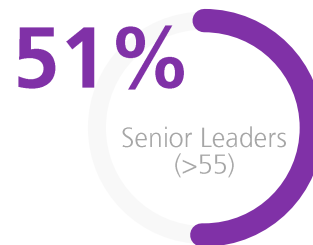
**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP DIVERSE TALENT FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP ROLES

**#2** EQUIP LEADERS TO EFFECTIVELY MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE DIVERSE TEAMS

“ Organizations must expand their understanding of diversity beyond traditional constructs like gender and race to fully leverage diverse perspectives.

*Executive from Professional Services, United Kingdom*



emphasize the importance of identifying and nurturing diverse talent



find it challenging to ensure diverse perspectives are valued



A woman with dark hair is smiling, her eyes are closed, and she has a joyful expression. A large, white, outlined number '5' is superimposed over the center of her face. The background is a soft-focus, bokeh-style image of lights, possibly from a stage or event, with a blue and purple color palette.

# 5

## BEYOND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is evolving into a more integrated approach, as employees seek to align their careers with personal priorities such as family, health, and personal passions. The traditional model often framed work and personal life as competing forces, requiring trade-offs between professional success and well-being. However, today's workforce, particularly younger employees, expects a more holistic approach, where career and personal commitments complement rather than conflict with one another.

Leaders that recognize and support this shift are fostering more flexible, adaptable work environments. By moving beyond rigid structures and acknowledging employees' diverse needs, businesses are not only enhancing well-being but also strengthening engagement, productivity, and long-term retention.



## 5 BEYOND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Embracing life's portfolio: work, family, and everything in between

### WHY IT MATTERS

As employees increasingly blend their personal and professional priorities, organizations are re-evaluating how work is structured and measured to better align with evolving expectations.

Rather than separating work from life, individuals now expect greater flexibility, autonomy, and alignment between their professional responsibilities and personal aspirations.

For leaders, this shift presents both an opportunity and a challenge: creating workplace cultures that empower employees to thrive holistically while maintaining accountability, performance, and business outcomes. Companies that successfully embed this integrated approach into their policies and leadership models will be better positioned to attract, retain, and engage top talent, ensuring long-term organizational resilience.

### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- ) Two-thirds of leaders believe their organizations provide the necessary resources and support to help employees navigate the evolving work-life approach.
- ) However, women are 11% more likely than men to feel that their organizations fall short in offering adequate support. These insights highlight a perception gap in workplace flexibility and well-being, emphasizing the need for organizations to ensure equitable access to support systems that enable all employees to thrive.

# 5 BEYOND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** ENCOURAGING WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING PRODUCTIVITY

**#2** BALANCING DIVERSE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS WHILE ENSURING FAIRNESS

“Accommodating different generations and career stages presents a challenge in designing a structure that fosters productivity and a positive atmosphere.

*Executive from Energy, Resources, and Industrials, Brazil*

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

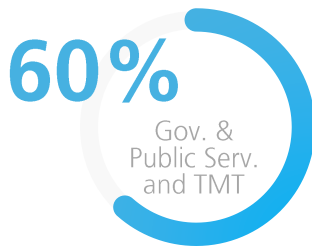
**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** DEVELOP A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSE EMPLOYEE NEEDS

**#2** CREATE A CULTURE WHERE EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING THEIR NEEDS

“Build trust between employees and management to enable open and honest dialogue.

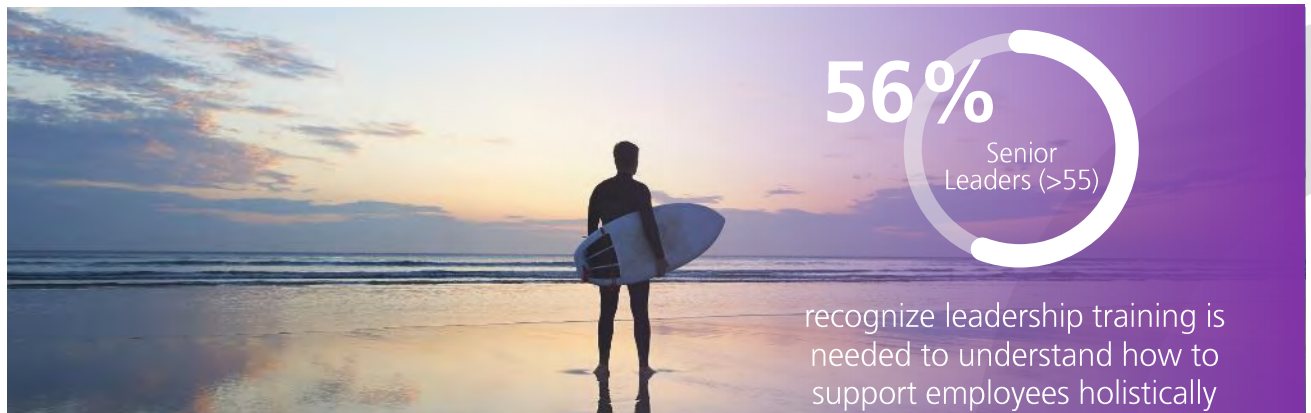
*Executive from Consumer, Bulgaria*



struggle to maintain high performance and efficiency while supporting expectations for flexibility



prioritize leadership development to support employees' personal and professional growth



recognize leadership training is needed to understand how to support employees holistically

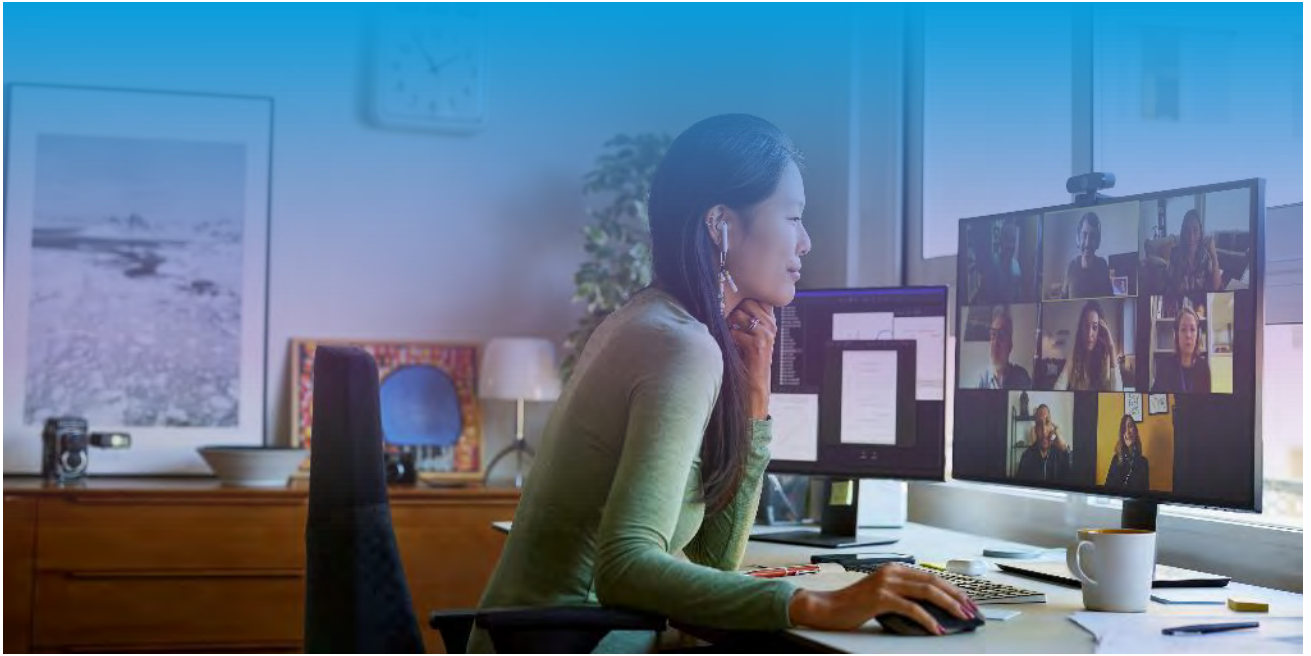


# 6

## STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

As hybrid work becomes more prevalent, organizations are re-evaluating how they approach performance, trust, and accountability. Greater flexibility offers employees increased autonomy in managing their work, but without clear structures, businesses may face challenges in maintaining alignment, engagement, and efficiency.

To sustain performance in this evolving landscape, organizations benefit from well-defined expectations, measurable outcomes, and a culture that fosters both ownership and productivity. Balancing flexibility with accountability requires a deliberate approach, ensuring that employees have the support and clarity needed to contribute effectively to organizational goals.



## STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

### Making hybrid work, work

#### WHY IT MATTERS

As organizations continue to embrace hybrid work models, accountability has shifted from tracking hours to measuring outcomes and impact.

Success is no longer defined by presence but by results, ownership, and value creation. To make flexibility work, organizations are establishing clear expectations, measurable outcomes, and a culture of shared accountability. Employees require the freedom to manage their time, but that flexibility must be grounded in aligned goals and deliverables.

Leaders play a critical role in ensuring that autonomy does not come at the expense of accountability. Effective communication and strong team dynamics are also essential, as they ensure alignment, foster collaboration, and empower individuals to meet their goals while maintaining collective responsibility.

#### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- ) Most leaders surveyed believe their organizations provide the necessary resources and support to strengthen accountability within hybrid work models.
- ) However, key gaps remain, with three groups expressing concerns:
  - **HR professionals** | Those responsible for shaping policies may perceive existing accountability structures as inadequate or lacking in effectiveness.
  - **Mid-sized organization** | Size and resource constraints create challenges in scaling accountability effectively.
  - **Financial Services** | Adapting traditional oversight models to the flexibility of hybrid work poses sector-specific challenges.

# 6 STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** BUILDING TRUST WITHOUT MICROMANAGING REMOTE TEAMS

**#2** SUSTAINING MOTIVATION IN A FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENT

“ Trust remains a major challenge, as building rapport in a remote environment is inherently more difficult.

*Executive from Consumer, Brazil*

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** ENHANCE SKILLS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND ENGAGE HYBRID TEAMS

**#2** DEFINE CLEAR, MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

“ Establish regular remote meetings complemented by periodic onsite sessions with cross-functional teams.

*Executive from Technology, Media, and Telecommunications, Germany*

59%

HR, Talent & People Leaders

struggle to empower remote teams while maintaining visibility and trust

+58%

Leaders across all age groups

view leadership upskilling as essential for driving accountability in hybrid work models





## **BUSINESS STRATEGY WITH ESG PRINCIPLES**

Leaders face increasing pressure to embed Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into corporate strategy, going beyond compliance to drive long-term value for both stakeholders and society. Forward-thinking organizations are integrating ESG considerations into core operations, decision-making, and performance metrics, not just to meet regulatory and investor expectations, but to enhance resilience, strengthen reputation, and create competitive advantage.

By aligning ESG with business strategy, companies can proactively manage risks, attract top talent, and unlock new growth opportunities, positioning themselves as industry leaders in a rapidly evolving market landscape.



## 7 BUSINESS STRATEGY WITH ESG PRINCIPLES

Embedding ESG for sustainable growth and competitive advantage

### WHY IT MATTERS

Embedding ESG principles into strategy is integral to long-term business success. Companies that adopt this approach are better positioned to manage risks, meet stakeholder expectations, and sustain growth.

Regulators, investors, and consumers are demanding greater transparency and accountability, encouraging businesses to integrate ESG more effectively. Organizations that align ESG with their strategy can enhance brand trust, attract investment, and strengthen resilience, while those slower to adapt may encounter growing regulatory and reputational challenges.

Beyond compliance, ESG drives operational efficiency and innovation, helping businesses adapt to evolving market conditions. Rather than a standalone initiative, it is most effective when embedded into core strategy, ensuring long-term adaptability and competitiveness.

### ARE ORGANIZATIONS KEEPING UP?

- ESG is shifting from a compliance requirement to a strategic driver of value and risk management, but commitment levels vary across industries.
- Many leaders acknowledge their organizations support ESG integration, yet the depth of commitment and execution differs:
  - **Consumer sector** | Some organizations struggle to keep pace, facing challenges in aligning sustainability efforts with rapidly evolving consumer expectations.
  - **Producer Goods sector** | Industries with established sustainability frameworks demonstrate stronger ESG adoption and integration, positioning themselves ahead in responsible business practices.

# BUSINESS STRATEGY WITH ESG PRINCIPLES

## WHAT'S HOLDING LEADERS BACK?

**Top challenges** identified by leaders:

**#1** BALANCING BUSINESS SUCCESS WITH SUSTAINABILITY

**#2** ADAPTING TO EVOLVING ESG REGULATIONS

“ ESG regulations are overly complex and difficult to navigate.

*Executive from Financial Services, Switzerland*

52%

Board / CEO / General Management

report difficulties balancing business success with sustainability

67%

Producer Goods

face challenges keeping up with evolving ESG policies and standards

+56%

Leaders (>45)

advocate for integrating ESG factors into business strategy

50%

Leaders across all company sizes

support embedding ESG into core strategy

## HOW CAN LEADERS STAY AHEAD?

**Top strategies** identified by leaders:

**#1** INTEGRATE ESG FACTORS INTO CORE BUSINESS STRATEGY

**#2** ESTABLISH CLEAR TARGETS TO TRACK PROGRESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

“

Develop deeper insights into ESG impact across the entire supply chain, from manufacturers to end clients, to drive more sustainable and responsible operations.

*Executive from Technology, Media, and Telecommunications, Ireland {Republic}*



# HOW WELL ARE YOU NAVIGATING THE LEADERSHIP TRENDS OF 2025?

Rate Your Readiness



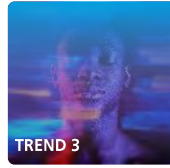
TREND 1

ANTICIPATING AND DRIVING DISRUPTION



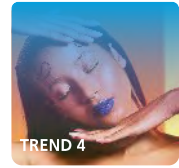
TREND 2

CONTINUOUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



TREND 3

HUMAN-AI PARTNERSHIP



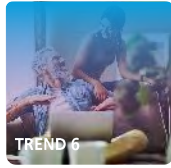
TREND 4

DIVERSITY EQUATION



TREND 5

BEYOND WORK-LIFE BALANCE



TREND 6

STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY



TREND 7

BUSINESS STRATEGY WITH ESG PRINCIPLES

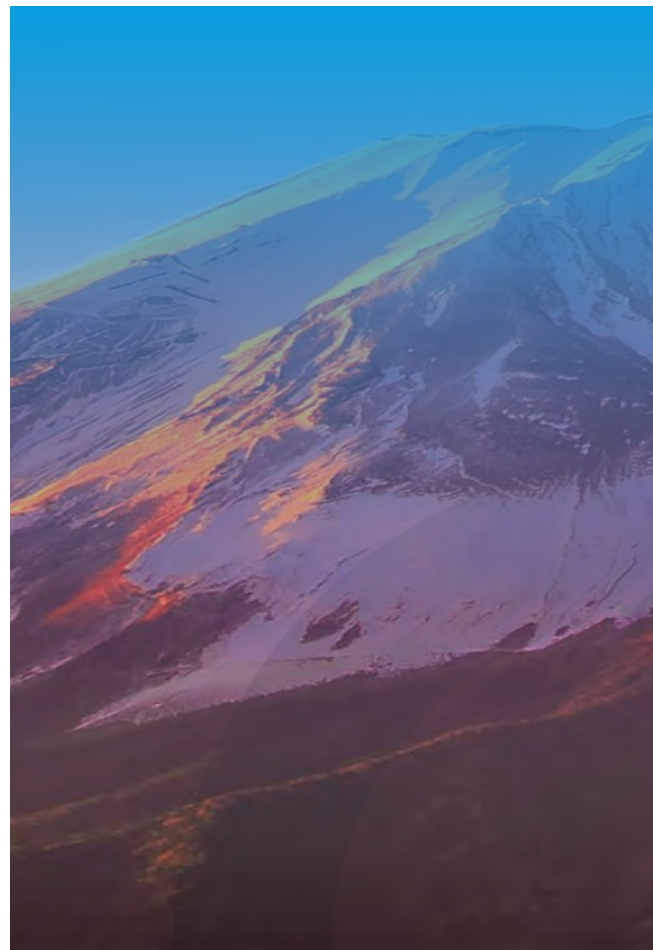
## What's Next?

No matter where you currently stand, leadership is a continuous journey, not a fixed destination. Reflecting on your rankings, **where do you see the greatest opportunities for improvement?**

If you want to strengthen your leadership approach and prepare for the trends ahead, Boyden is here to support you. Our expertise in **talent acquisition and strategic leadership advisory** can help you enhance your readiness and drive lasting impact.

Get in touch to explore how we can help you and your organization navigate these trends with confidence.

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



## ABOUT US

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As global leadership specialists, Boyden works through the entire leadership cycle, from attracting the best leaders to onboarding them effectively, assessing and developing them through all phases of the company's business cycle.

### HERITAGE & STATURE

Founded in 1946 | AESC founding firm | Privately held company

### INDUSTRY PRACTICES

Consumer & Retail | Financial Services | Healthcare & Life Sciences | Industrial | Social Impact | Technology

### CROSS-SECTOR PRACTICES

CEO & Board | Human Resources | Private Equity & Venture Capital | Professional Services | Financial Officers

### BUSINESS LINES

Executive Search | Interim Management | Leadership Consulting

### GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL PRESENCE

75+ offices | 45+ countries across Americas, EMEA, APAC | 700+ employees

### COMMITMENT TO BEST PRACTICES ACROSS OUR PROFESSION

Community champions in seven continents, sharing expertise, social leadership and global knowledge; affiliated with and recognized by top organizations in our industry:

