



Leading in a world  
with changing expectations  
and new working cultures

*IMD Global Research 2023*



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## Leading in a World with Changing Expectations and New Working Culture

*IMD Global Research*  
2023





# Editorial

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Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, IMD International Search Group launches its first global research: *'Leading in a World with Changing Expectations and New Working Cultures'*.

This study is a produce of global collaboration of conversations between CEOs, Board members and Executive Search firms to explore new leadership paradigms.

With a half-century legacy of achievements and heading into the next 50 years, IMD International Search Group starts a new chapter in presenting this research.

This publication aims to support companies and their leadership.

# About this Research

## Leading in a World with Changing Expectations and New Working Cultures



### OBJECTIVE

Present the perspective of Boards, CEOs and IMD Executive Search Member Firms on:

- How leadership is evolving in a world with changing expectations and new working cultures,
- The implications of this for business strategy, and trends in executive talent,
- New challenges and tendencies in talent acquisition.

### DATA COLLECTION

Results were obtained from two sources:

- Interviews with board members and CEOs,
- The reflections of senior IMD professionals.

This research adopted a *qualitative* and *exploratory* approach.

(1) The business perspective data was based on:

- 8 questions asked in semi-structured interviews with CEOs and Board Members, totaling 544 answers
- 68 CEOs and Board Members from 18 countries (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States).
- Companies were chosen to represent multiple industries and include family, public, private, large and medium sized companies.

(2) The executive search perspective data was based on three questions answered by 18 interviewers from the IMD offices, totaling 54 answers.

Interviews were conducted from December 2022 to March 2023 and data analysis was performed in April 2023. Preliminary insights were presented at the Milan IMD Annual General Assembly held in May 24-27, 2023.

### COORDINATION

Coordinated by Célia Assis, Founder and Managing Partner of DRIXX Advisors, PhD and Msc in Industrial Engineering; BS Mathematics and Systems Analysis, and supported by the IMD Research Committee (Anna Luiza Osser, Ben Tucker, Estelle Carrère, Ligia Adorno, Michelle Loader, Nikki May, Patricia Campbell and Silvia Flores).

### CONFIDENTIALITY

All interviewees data are kept confidential including names and companies. Verbal, written and electronic records from the interviews are also kept confidential. For the purpose of this final report only aggregated data and selected quotes from the interviews are used. The body of this report represents the analysis and insights of the research team.

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# Key Factors in Modern Leadership and Organizational Dynamics

## Charting the Future

- Agile Governance
- ESG and Sustainability focus
- Navigating Global Uncertainties (global economic, geopolitical risks, reimagined supply chains)
- Long-term focus mastering the art of balancing immediate pressures
- Leadership Evolution: Purposeful, emotionally Intelligent, multigenerational
- Interdisciplinary Competencies: Leaders equipped to think/solve problems across various disciplines
- Strategic Succession Planning

## People-Centric Approach

- Intergenerational Communication
- Revamped HR Framework: Focus on diversity, inclusivity, safety, and multi-generational needs
- Prioritizing Well-being: Health, work-life balance, mental health and happiness took center stage
- Lifelong Learning: Multidimensional education, mentorship and Coaching
- Broadening Skill Focus: Shifting from just hard skills to a balanced skill set, including soft skills
- New Loyalty: Now interconnected with individual purpose, well-being, and employment flexibility

## New Digital Frontier

- AI & Soft Skills: As AI commoditizes hard skills, social skills and emotional intelligence will become prime assets
- Tech Fluency: Leaders conversant with cutting-edge technologies, particularly AI
- Skills Evolution: Mindset shift to 'people who master technology' instead of 'AI will replace people'
- Flexible Work Revolution: Crafting environments that meet modern needs (remote, hybrid, on-site)
- Cyber Security Risks: Creating employees' culture and awareness is critical

## The New Talent Paradigm

- Advisory Role of Executive Search Firms: Acting as consultants, supporting companies in reshaping talent acquisition strategies
- New Modus Operandi: A shift from "choosing the candidate" to "selling" the company (attraction more than selection)
- Balancing Expectations: Bridging the gap between what companies want and what employees seek
- Speed & Engagement Challenges: Balancing the needs of fast-paced age with candidates' engagement level
- Changing Career Journey

## Journey Through Culture

- Evolution of Workplace Culture: Genuine human interactions and culture of well-being
- Open Dialogue Culture: Foster an atmosphere of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect
- Culture in Decision Rooms: Emphasizing the role of culture and purpose in board decisions
- Purposeful Culture Driven: Align organizational goals with individual purposes

# Business Perspective: CEOs and Board Members



# A need for purpose, a new leadership and a demanding world

*If you think back over the last five years, what do you think has changed in terms of expectations for working cultures?*

A NEED FOR  
**PURPOSE**

A NEW  
**LEADERSHIP**

A DEMANDING  
**WORLD**

## A need for purpose

The arrival of new generations plus the pandemic have been associated with wide-reaching change, and the need for an articulate sense of purpose has become more prominent. Employees are increasingly geared towards values, purpose and well-being and see work in a more holistic sense. Organizations establish new work arrangements, including an environment that involves employees in decision-making processes and recognizes their contributions.

## A new leadership

A new leadership that...

- has awareness that culture and purpose are critical, where people become a strategic topic (otherwise 'culture does eat strategy for breakfast');
- Understands its role as the guardian of organizations' culture and purpose;
- Promotes a more inclusive (not just diverse), democratic (less autocratic), flexible and less formal environment;
- Is prepared to lead with flexibility, understanding that the employees career path may not be tied to the company and knowing how to welcome people and say goodbye;
- Knows how to communicate with different 'Generations' and being empathetic;
- Provides more autonomy and empowerment and at the same time develops different metrics;
- Has agility and resilience with the ability to cope with adversities.

## A demanding world

A world described by rapid change, volatility, uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity, and characterized by different aspects such as geopolitical issues, ESG, digital revolution (AI), cyber-attacks, evolving workforce demographics, a demand for flexibility more than just remote work and 'power' shifting to employees (they are more vocal). It demands a range of competencies such as adaptability, resilience, strategic thinking, and the ability to inspire and motivate teams that are key to embrace flexibility, adjust strategies swiftly, and seize opportunities presented by disruption and emerging challenges.



# Diverse, flexible and dialogic organizations

*What sort of new organization are employees seeking today?*

## Diverse, Inclusive and Safe

Employees expect organizations to create an environment that is inclusive, embraces differences, provides equal opportunities, has a sense of purpose and supports psychological well-being. They are attracted to companies that display clear and tangible purpose, strong values and environmental care. Making a contribution and generating impacting are key. ESG must be enacted, not just advocated.

## Flexible and Work from Anywhere

Demand for flexibility has significantly increased among employees, especially younger generations. This trend has increased as a result of the pandemic, different mindsets and perspectives on life. Employees seek organizations that offer not only personal work arrangements and the ability to work from anywhere, anytime and anyhow, but also flexible working policies and support for work-life balance goals, and freedom to work simultaneously in other jobs.

They look for leaders that respect them as individuals, understand different life stages and show confidence in them, giving them autonomy, greater responsibility and participation, empowering personal growth, recognizing that they don't need to stay at one company forever. Remuneration remains important, but other drivers are gaining more weight.

## Dialogic

Openness to dialog, feedback, and collaboration are highly valued by employees seeking meaningful engagement. They expect organizations that embrace diverse opinions, foster constant dialogue and feedback culture and trust, transparency, and open communication; Companies that create platforms and opportunities for employees to share their thoughts, collaborate, and be involved in decision-making processes. They look for leaders that "don't talk about people, but with people", that are authentic, empathic and have sensitivity when listening to the needs of employees.



# Linking company and individual purposes, clear communication and ability to achieve goals

*How can we embrace new working cultures while remaining focused on purpose?*

Linking organizational and individual purposes

Clear and honest communication

Consistency and ability to achieve goals with people

## Linking organizational and individual purposes

It is crucial to establish a connection between organizational and individual purposes to find common ground between corporate mission, values, personal goals and aspirations. Create an inclusive atmosphere, walk the talk, addressing the needs of different generations that differ significantly. Employees feel motivated, engaged, and connected to their work when they understand how their individual efforts contribute to the overall purpose of the organization. Continuously evaluate and adapt to ensure that the purpose remains relevant. The purpose can only be leveraged if it is genuine and clear and all parties are involved.

## Clear and honest communication

Effective communication is key to foster a culture of open and transparent communication, where information flows freely across all levels. It's essential that communication is constant, clear and simple. Leaders need to make time for this cause and assure that communication is effective and understood by all employees.

## Consistency and ability to achieve goals with people

Organizations must set clear and measurable goals that align with the purpose of the organization. Regularly assess progress, provide feedback, and recognize achievements to foster a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Employees, when constantly connected to the bigger picture and reminded of their contribution towards the purpose feel more inspired to go above and beyond.

Organizational strategies, policies, processes and systems must be consistent with the purpose and adaptable to new cultural shifts.

# A leader who feels and delivers

*What are the qualities of leadership needed to run these new organizations?*

## People centricity

These new leaders are people and development oriented, prioritizing well-being, engagement, inclusive thinking, feedback and growth opportunities. By valuing purpose and employees, these leaders can foster a positive work culture, encourage loyalty, innovation and alignment with market trends.

## Performance repertoire

Leaders prepared to deal constantly with ambiguity and who know how to analyze complex and uncertain situations, making informed decisions with flexibility and adaptability. They respond swiftly to market shifts and changing customer priorities, are able to make tough decisions with confidence and conviction and act decisively in the face of adversity and crisis. These new leaders are able to reinvent their leadership methods, being agile with a holistic approach. They value outcomes beyond just the financial bottom line, bringing soft and hard skills. Being a "specialized generalist," they meld their unique expertise with the capability to maintain clarity in purpose, conscious of environmental and social concerns, recognizing the value in every individual. Their leadership style is a testament to the importance of adaptability in today's volatile business environment. They are leaders that embrace lifelong learning as a way of life.

## Communication & relationship

New leaders are active listeners, have effective communication skills and clarity in expressing ideas and expectations. They regularly present opportunities for open dialogue, feedback, and two-way communication. They are empathetic, recognizing their own limitations and are willing to admit openly that they don't have all the answers. They embody inclusivity, humility and build connections and relationships working through media appropriate to their teams. Their roles expand from being domain experts to being mentors, promoting a collaborative working style.



## True feelings

New leaders must have high level of self-consciousness, comprehend their impact on people, go beyond the surface level and take the time to understand the emotions, challenges, and aspirations of their team members. They are leaders who are genuinely interested in and attentive to people. These leaders are active listeners, exhibiting authenticity, vulnerability and openness. This creates an atmosphere that encourages trust, creativity, innovation and continuous improvement where individuals feel valued, respected, and treated equitably. They build psychological safety.

# A new setup for boards and CEOs: Emotions and transactions

*What do these changes mean for boards and CEOs and what are the implications for the way they operate?*

**New HR framework** - For boards and CEOs, this shift in HR is a response to the changing business landscape, societal values, technological advancements, and specific organizational needs. It highlights the need for modernized recruitment, enhanced management strategies, updated compensation models, initiatives that promote diversity, inclusion, and a more resonant workplace culture. Embracing this is essential for boards and CEOs to ensure that their organizations remain agile, competitive, and aligned with current and emerging trends in workforce management.

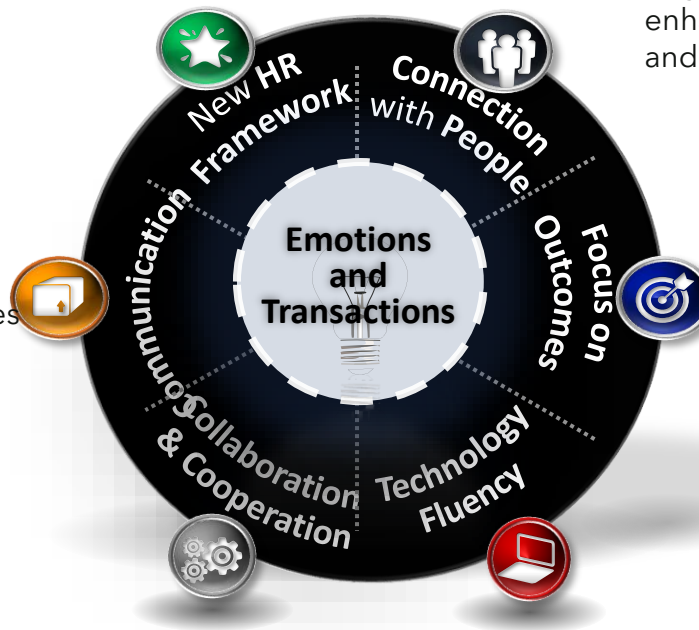
**Communication** - In the boardroom, active listening, effective communication skills, open dialogue, transparency and empathy are essential. Board members and CEOs should employ appropriate communication structures and channels, including technology tools, to enhance their interactions. This commitment to quality communication should permeate the entire organization and extend to all stakeholders.

**Collaboration & Cooperation** - Boards and CEOs sit on the same side of the table and work collaboratively. The board Chair plays a pivotal role in this dynamic, acting as a bridge and ensuring a constructive dialogue. Such an environment, centered around cooperation and collaboration, is not only crucial for maximizing the board's and CEO's potential, but also instrumental in transmitting a clear message to mid-managers and leaders. Post-meetings, CEOs should depart feeling recharged and supported, rather than judged. To realize this vision, boards are encouraged to get to know their organizations and understand the workforce. Strengthening this bond can further be achieved with the establishment of specific councils, designed to weave the board more intricately into the business.

**Connection with people** - To adapt to new changes, boards and CEOs must shift towards genuinely connecting with employees, understanding how they work, and valuing the significance of culture. There are real and positive business implications of taking a human-centric approach. Being closer to employees and living out the company's values and culture, leaders can foster greater engagement, which can lead to enhanced motivation, commitment and productivity.

**Focus on outcomes** - Equipped with strong business acumen, leaders prioritize outcome-driven strategies, emphasizing accountability and setting clear, SMART objectives. This speeds up decision-making and aligns actions directly with desired results. Concurrently, boards and CEOs are expanding their outlook, considering global shifts and diverse issues from environmental concerns to talent management. The boardroom now leans towards a forward-looking agenda, focusing more on future possibilities than past actions.

**Technology fluency** - Being tech-savvy is essential in today's boardrooms. Leveraging data and automation allows for quicker and more informed decisions, freeing up time for high-quality strategic discussions. With technology managing routine tasks, board meetings can concentrate on visionary ideas, future planning and strategic focus.





# A commitment for and with the Future

*How should organizations develop future leaders?*

## Multicultures and multi-generations

Organizations must promote initiatives to encourage leaders to be sensitive to diversity of all kinds, and to encourage cultures that live out this sensitivity. Opportunities should be provided for hands-on engagement with stakeholders, role rotations for varied experiences, connections with external networks, and consistent interaction with C-level executives. By adopting these strategies, organizations can cultivate a pipeline of talented leaders who can navigate the complexities of a changing business landscape and drive sustainable success by means of different cognitive lenses.

## Mentorship, Coaching and Practice

Organizations should encourage the adoption of mentoring and coaching practices to prepare future leaders for continuous cultural change and evolution in the workplace. Change might take many forms: Technological advances, generational or geopolitical changes, the evolution of social norms, as well as emerging workplace practices such as remote work, greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion, flexible schedules, the rise of the gig economy, or even the integration of AI and automation into daily tasks. Through mentoring and coaching, it is possible to develop structured programs that meet individual needs, accelerating learning and enhancing skills, especially socio-emotional ones. In this context of continuous change, it is important for leaders to recognize that with AI and socio-emotional skills become a valuable asset, and coaching serves as a vital tool to cultivate these skills through insights.

## People Focus

The challenges posed by the pandemic accentuated the need to develop leaders with a human-centric vision. This principle of well-being, health, mental health, happiness and inclusion has advanced generations, making the development of new leadership in this direction even more important. The entrance of AI heightens the importance of this human-centric approach in leadership.

## Life Long Learning

Lifelong learning is a critical component in developing future leaders within organizations. It involves continuously acquiring new knowledge, skills, and insights throughout one's professional journey. Organizations must foster a culture that values curiosity and continuous growth. This can be achieved by offering employees access to various courses, supporting personal development plans, promoting diverse and holistic educational approaches, such as multi-dimensional education. Effective leadership development integrates both technical competencies and interpersonal skills. Regular assessments of their progress will support them in this ongoing journey, encouraging them to engage in self-reflection and fostering an unending appetite for learning. Self awareness is essential for developing leaders who are prepared for the future.





# Survival mode, strategic plan & vision

*What are the priorities that leaders should have for short, mid and long term?*

## Short term

Leaders need to understand global change and adapt quickly. It is also important that these leaders prioritize the well-being and development of employees, aligning actions with the company's values, and adapting effectively to new work modalities, always maintaining a clear focus on the desired objectives. Execute a practical and realistic short-term strategy, emphasizing deliverables and organizational goals. Maintaining financial stability is crucial in the short term: Closely monitoring cash flow, exploring cost reduction measures and seeking revenue generation opportunities to ensure the organization's financial viability. It is also important to assess the impact of external factors to adapt business operations, including supply chain management, production processes and distribution channels.

*By focusing on these areas, leaders can ensure adaptability, financial stability, and a motivated workforce, positioning their businesses for both immediate success and long-term resilience.*

## Mid term

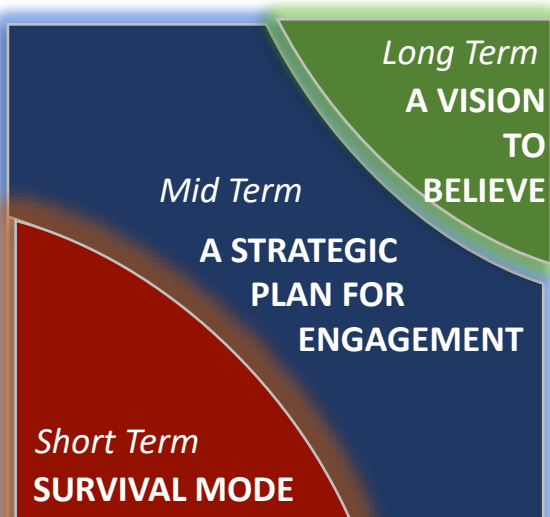
Leaders must aim at mutual growth where the company and employees evolve together, ensuring that employees are continuously challenged and motivated in their roles. It is also important to drive transformation, craft a sustainable business model, track key milestones by constantly refreshing strategies with new-found knowledge. It's crucial to stay aligned with long-term goals and regularly revisit and, if needed, adjust the long-term objectives to remain on course. Develop plans consistent with the company's mission and vision, prioritize team performance, and invest in technologies for competitive edge. Maintain technical proficiencies while heightening personal skill development. Promote open culture, cultivating an environment that values open communication, encourages employee innovation, and integrates them into the company's developmental trajectory. Also address demographic issues, considering the implications of an aging workforce and implement strategies to maintain a positive environment across all age groups.

*In the medium term, leaders must navigate the delicate balance of immediate adaptability with sustainable growth, always keeping their teams, quality, and organizational objectives at the forefront.*

## Long term

Leaders must ensure that organizations focus also on long-term growth. While it is critical to master short term pressure, in the long term they must combine strategic vision with consistent innovation and talent growth, anchoring organizational resilience. It is vital to consider potential risks and continually adapt to evolving market dynamics, prioritizing sustainability, remaining proactive in the face of challenges, considering geopolitical issues. Leaders need to consider and act on changes, reformulating obsolete policies and aligning them with a clear purpose and organizational culture, ensuring that it propagates at all levels. It's essential to evolve from purely quantitative metrics to more qualitative, holistic measures. Prepare successors. Cultivating a safe and attractive work environment, providing vision for employees to support them is essential.

*Emphasis should be placed on establishing a sustainable and enduring organization, which includes meticulous succession planning, promoting a lasting corporate culture with a careful eye on people's well-being, maintaining a balance between short-term actions and long-term results. This involves continuously refining strategies in a rapidly changing environment and maintaining business flexibility.*



# Different perspectives on Leadership of the Future

*In one sentence, what is your best advice for a new leader now?*

"Positively balanced Prometheanism in business is a virtue that we should nurture and through which we can constantly develop ourselves"

"Be an eternal learner"

"Be yourself"

"Vision"

"Be super adaptable, understand the why's before the judgement, ask the right questions, and focus in the long term - life is a marathon, not a 100 meter sprint"

"Listen to philosophers, artists, writers and psychologists, know what is going on in society. See and feel it as your personal quest to lead an organization that does good"

"Human to human" - Remember that you are facing a human being, not just an employee whose whole story you don't know. Focus on building employee strengths. Trust and inspire"

"You have to be humble and inclusive, with that you will have access to ideas and proposals"

"It is better to apologize than to ask permission"

"Never lose sight of the bottom line"

"Have your eyes on the future and understand the history, look and listen to the young people and imagine you're going to leave a balanced world for them to live in, safe and healthy and prosperous"

"One of the most important drivers of human existence is curiosity. Make curiosity your daily companion, learn, listen, be humble, enjoy your task and adapt constantly"

# Different perspectives on Leadership of the Future

*In one sentence, what is your best advice for a new leader now?  
(continued)*

"Don't stop learning"

"Every challenge is also an opportunity, embrace it and listen"

"Know yourself and be interested in others"

"Try to adapt as intelligently as possible and don't let it get you down"

"Take care of your family and yourself!"

"Make time to lead, it's a profession. Get to know your team, communicate clearly. Make decisions and delegate. Celebrate successes. And keep repeating the above"

"Most importantly, be a human, ask to the others 'what you expect from yourself'"

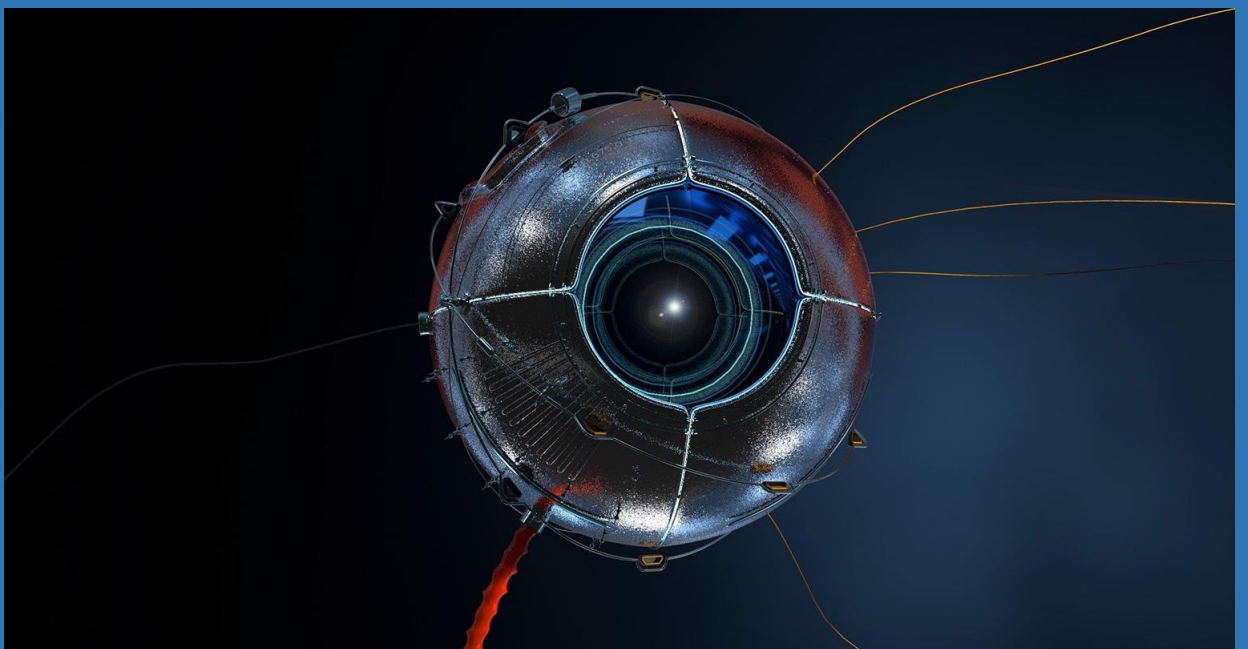
"Observe and value the complementarity of skills and personalities. Inspiring and being an example, seeing the future, giving direction and translating the strategy to the team. Be inspiring and also bring the team to reality"

"Don't jump into conclusions very quickly"

"The employee is our most important and valuable resource. You as leader should focus on the corporate culture and the employee, in order to be able to deliver your commercial and financial goals"

"Be genuine and flexible, be a good listener. "Take in" information, rather than "pushing out" your own thoughts and opinions."

# Executive Search Perspective





# A shift from “choosing the candidate” to “selling” the company

*How is the search process evolving to accommodate changing expectations and new working cultures?*

## New expectations from CANDIDATES

As businesses and work environments evolve, new expectations arise from candidates such as hybrid work models, less standardized work schedules, part-time and more flexible executive positions, a collaborative work environment that values well-being and is enjoyable. They seek roles where their work aligns with broader life values, such as diversity and environmental awareness. Candidates are looking for companies that align with their values, offer growth opportunities, provide balance between personal and professional life, and a healthy work environment. Candidates no longer see their career plans as static; They anticipate multiple transitions across diverse roles and fields. Younger generations have distinct expectations regarding purpose, leadership, and organizational culture. Salary remains important.

## New expectations from CLIENTS

As the recruiting landscape changes, several important trends and adaptations have emerged in response to the evolving expectations and work cultures of executive search firms' clients. These clients are paying more attention to candidates' personality and their cultural fit within the organization, going beyond technical skills which, although fundamental, are now considered basic expectations, that is, the need for holistic candidate assessment has been realized. Clients also demand more motivated talent and so it is sometimes difficult to “translate” the new needs and expectations of candidates into the expectations of clients.

## Evolving SEARCH PROCESS

The executive search landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, keeping pace with changes in the job market. The search for potential candidates has become highly specialized and multi-dimensional, requiring an even deeper dive into understanding the needs of both the company and candidates. Executive search firms are increasingly taking on a consultative role from the outset, guiding clients in refining their profile definitions and calibrating expectations. Given the existing ambiguities, the role of search firms becomes more advisory in bridging the expectation gap, a pronounced divergence emerging between what employers seek and what employees desire, aiding organizations in broadening their professional search horizons while sharpening their focus on requirements. Another challenge faced by search firms is an increased demand for speed, accelerated by the digital age, juxtaposed with declining candidate engagement, demanding enhanced engagement strategies. Therefore, search firms have the role of “selling” the position to both the CANDIDATE and to the CLIENT. Embracing technological evolution, new practices, and approaches in the process, such as sophisticated databases, robust cybersecurity measures, and GDPR: The pillars of trust, transparency, and management of expectation have become even more essential.





# From Fundamentals to Adaptability: Leading in Today's World

1/2

*What are the core capabilities  
for a top leadership position today?*

## VUCA World

In the current **V**olatile, **U**ncertain, **C**omplex, and **A**mbiguous business environment, the competencies required for top leadership have evolved. Beyond traditional leadership skills, they must possess a clear vision and strategic insight to recognize and anticipate trends.

Adaptability is crucial, allowing them to navigate constant changes and uncertainties, adjusting to various circumstances and environments.

This flexibility requires an understanding of shifts in the business landscape and the ability to tailor strategies accordingly. Reacting quickly in these turbulent times, thinking innovatively, and finding solutions to present challenges with an optimal balance of creativity and common sense, is essential.

Additionally, resilience is vital as leaders must not only face disruptions but also ensure their teams remain motivated and focused.

In essence, leaders must skillfully merge traditional leadership abilities with new competencies to effectively lead in a dynamic world, communicating their visions transparently and inclusively.

## Culture, Values and Purpose

In the evolving global business environment, top leadership capabilities pivot strongly around cultural adaptability, value alignment, and purpose-driven decision-making.

Leaders should emphasize value-based leadership, providing both direction and meaning to their teams and prioritizing broader societal impacts, like environmental sustainability and diversity.

Cultivating a culture of collaboration, cross-functional teamwork, and integrity is more than important. Such leaders should possess an intercultural mindset, vital for engagement across levels, and involving teams at every strategic tier, enhancing morale and a strong sense of purpose.

Being purpose-driven, showing vulnerability, and fostering autonomy are also key.

... Read about Soft and Hard Skills on the next page... ..



# From Fundamentals to Adaptability: Leading in Today's World

2/2

*What are the core capabilities  
for a top leadership position today?*

## Soft skills

In today's dynamic and evolving corporate landscape, the essence of effective leadership extends beyond conventional competencies.

Leaders are expected to exhibit heightened emotional intelligence, which is the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's own emotions while fostering empathy and understanding with others.

Proficiency in communication across various channels is another aspect that should be mastered. This includes the ability to effectively articulate visions and active listening capabilities to grasp diverse perspectives, which supports fostering inclusivity and innovation.

They must navigate high-pressure, fast-changing situations with creativity and resourcefulness while demonstrating intellectual mobility and the ability to reinvent leadership methods in response to these changing circumstances.

Other modern skills that they bring to organizations include cross-generational communication, a commitment to lifelong learning, fostering a culture of continuous learning within teams, coaching and support to promote positive team dynamics and clear performance goals, relationship building, and an innovative mindset that embraces flexibility, divergent thinking, and pioneering change.

Additionally, they are expected to demonstrate authenticity, human-centric approach in leadership that values and reconciles the differing perspectives of boards, customers, and employees.

## Hard skills

Leaders should possess a wide range of hard skills, including crisis management, which is the ability to handle unexpected and disruptive events, such as cyberattacks or financial crises, as well as proficiency in digital technology and deep expertise in both industry and functional areas.

These leaders must be adept in change management, while also having experience in regulatory and risk management.

Additionally, leaders should have transversal competencies, the ability to think strategically and solve problems across different disciplines.

Other skills that leaders bring to organizations includes experience in transformation processes, performance management, strategic thinking, competence for company growth, balancing profit-centric goals with a people-first approach.

This necessitates a broad and flexible mindset, a continuous interest in societal, technological, and value-based developments, and the capability to envision long-term goals without sidelining short-term necessities.

# Dealing with Change, Strategy, Technology & Culture

*What are the key drivers clients are responding to when looking for new leaders?*

## CHANGE

Clients today are actively seeking leaders capable of navigating the ever-evolving business terrain and shifting workforce dynamics. Central to their criteria is the ability to manage both internal changes, like staff fluctuation and replacement, and external shifts. The accelerating pace of change across multiple dimensions, coupled with shifts in values and global challenges, are concerns for clients. For them, leaders must possess a keen understanding of contemporary trends, the expectations and operations of younger generations, and visionary thinking. This includes the ability to anticipate future directions, inspire teams, and demonstrate flexibility. Ultimately, clients are in search of open-minded, driven, and inspirational leaders who can adeptly steer organizations through these transformative times..

## STRATEGY

For Clients, deep comprehension of the industry's nuances, challenges, and trends is non-negotiable. They seek leaders that are well-versed in both macro and micro perspectives, enabling them to create effective strategies that cater to specific business needs. Companies are looking for leaders that have Inspiring leadership with strategic skills, coupled with strategic acumen for meeting future objectives to ensure sustained growth. A balanced blend of strategic vision, experience, knowledge, industry know-how execution capacity are key drivers for clients.



## CULTURE

Clients prioritize leaders who can craft inclusive workplaces, advocate for work-life balance, and adeptly manage multi-generational teams, as well as emphasize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with a particular inclination towards sustainability initiatives, aligned with corporate culture.

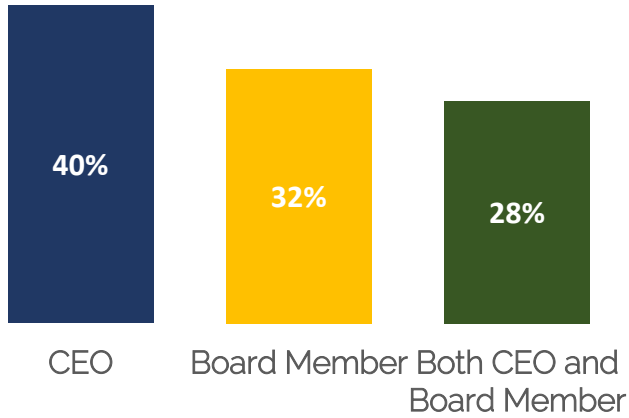
## TECHNOLOGY

In an age dominated by rapid technological advancements, businesses express a growing need for leaders who can navigate the intricacies of the digital realm, guide digital transformation and embrace innovation to stay competitive in the market.

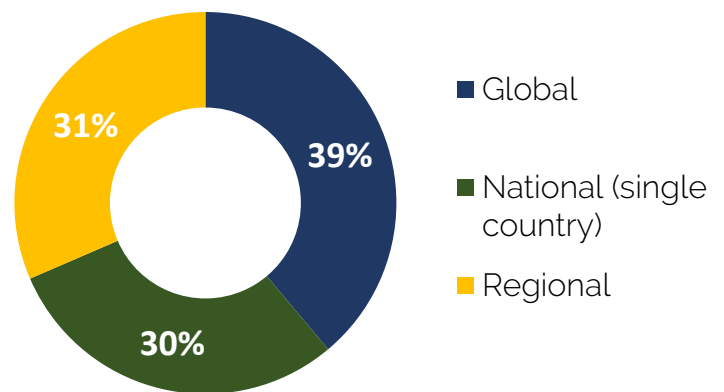
# Methodology



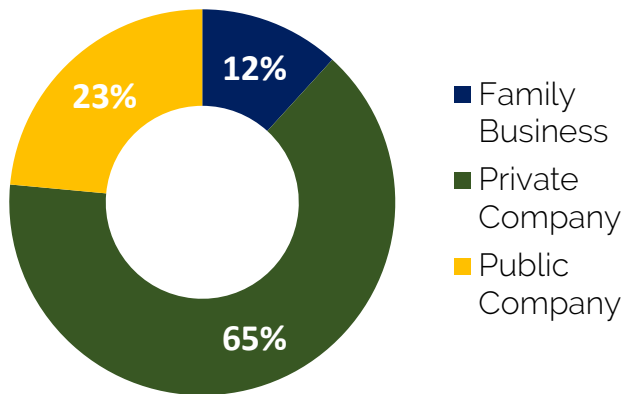
## INTERVIEWEE POSITION



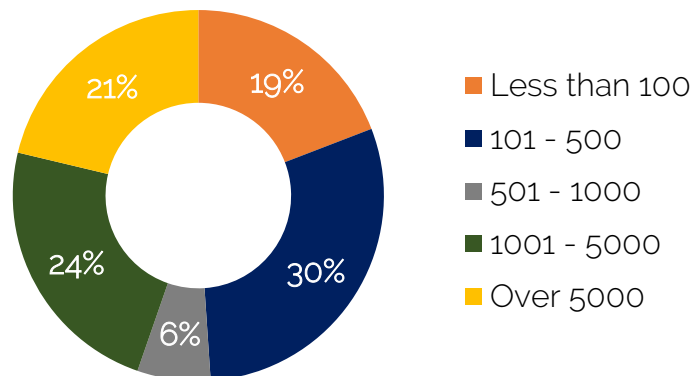
## COMPANY SCALE



## COMPANY TYPE

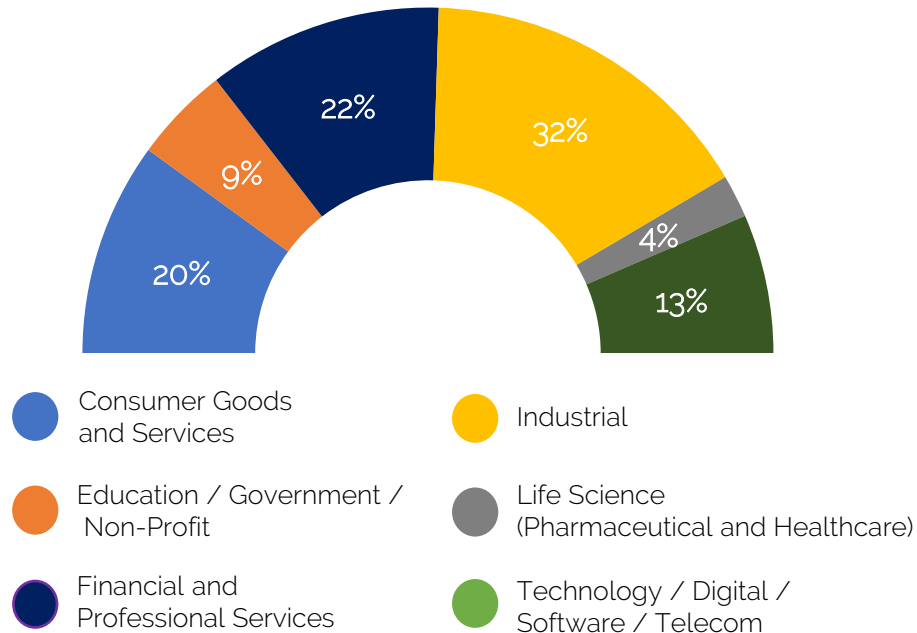


## COMPANY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

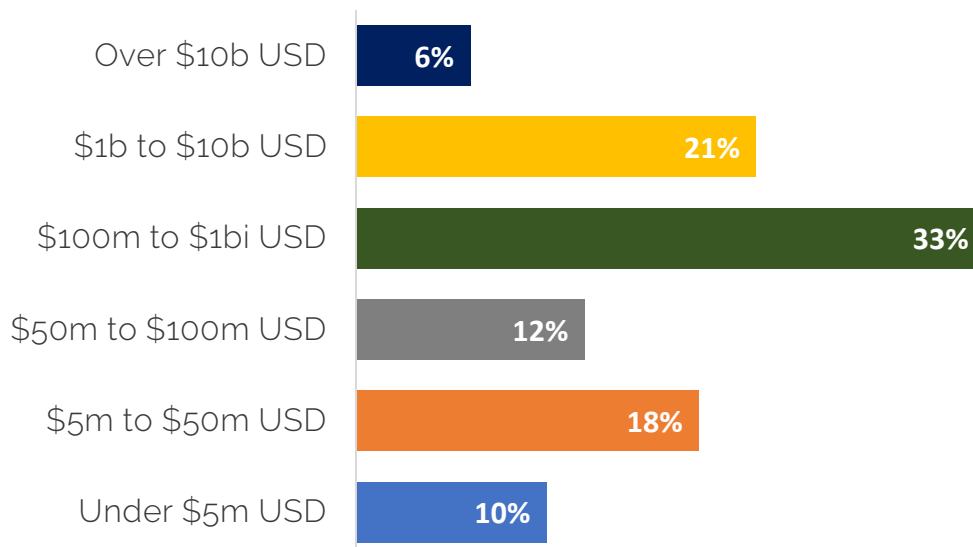




## COMPANY INDUSTRY



## COMPANY ANNUAL REVENUE



# Institutional



Founded in 1972, IMD International Search Group is a Top 40 global search organization (Hunt Scanlon rankings 2023), with offices in major markets around the world, providing instant access to a world-class executive talent pool.

Operating through a matrix structure and organized by geographic and industry specialization, IMD International Search Group is equipped to satisfy the talent acquisition requirements of organizations seeking to acquire and retain high impact executives.

As retained executive search professionals, the insights brought, and the advice imparted can have a significant impact on the businesses, careers and the lives of others

IMD executive search professionals, many of whom held senior positions in the industry sectors they now serve, conduct hundreds of senior-level searches and leadership consulting assignments for clients worldwide each year, whether they are Fortune 500, mid-size companies, family businesses or small venture-backed start-ups, whether global or local

## INSIGHTFUL, INNOVATIVE AND FOCUSED.

These, along with a strong passion for delivering on clients' most challenging talent requirements, are the qualities that define IMD International Search Group.

For more information, visit [www.imdsearch.com](http://www.imdsearch.com) and follow IMD International Search Group on [LinkedIn](#)



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