The Amrop Talent Observatory | 2021

What the Leaders For What's Next
Are Seeking Now

FULL REPORT

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Leaders For What's Next

What is clear: **hiring organizations** must now strike a careful **balance**.

1 **Wise, reflective leadership** must be coupled with **dynamism and momentum.**

2 **Self-organization** and **fluidity** still require a degree of underlying **engineering** and **stability**.

Organizations that **skillfully resolve these tensions** will be well-positioned to attract and retain the most outstanding **senior talent**.

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FOREWORD
By Annika Farin, Global Chair, Amrop

It was amidst the shifting scenery of Q4 2020 that Amrop conducted its inquiry into the career needs of today's senior executives. We wanted to shine a light on their deeper motivations, to gauge their confidence in making a move, and evaluate their approach to doing so. Several hundred senior executives from all world regions responded to our invitation. I would like to warmly thank them all for taking the time to share their perspectives with us.

As you'll discover, the results confirm that the shape of senior executive careers is changing. Executives seek ethical, responsible and sustainable leadership. They want greater control over their destiny and a more fluid working environment, even if this means losing some short-term gain, predictability and security. However, balance is key. Hiring organizations must couple wise, reflective leadership with dynamism and momentum. Self-organization needs a degree of engineering and stability. Companies that resolve these tensions will be well-positioned to attract and retain outstanding leadership talent.

What of organizations who do not offer the right conditions to this demanding talent market? Our study sounds alarm bells for boards and talent strategists alike.

Of particular concern are firms that neglect the support of senior executives, assuming that they no longer need to learn or grow or should be solely responsible for their wellbeing.

Equally vulnerable are organizations that commit ethical errors, relying on past success (or innovating in the pure spirit of 'moving fast and breaking things'.)

The 'up or out' career model is also losing ground; an organic career route is more interesting to senior executives than a rigid upward trajectory. Many also want the freedom to work for several organizations at once.

Growth via mergers and acquisition is reducing attractiveness and failure to grow at all is a serious handicap. Ownership type is an attraction factor and certain profiles of organization may struggle. Indeed, whilst globalization is still a powerful magnet, large legacy players are no longer automatically top of the list for senior candidates.

Underpinning these findings, in my view, is the central importance of diversity of thought.

Leading thinker Manfred Kets de Vries* recently warned that many of today's celebrated companies risk turning into corporate cults, recruiting and functioning on the basis of 'fit' and tending towards group-think. Our study reinforces his warning: diversity of thought is a non-negotiable for senior talent. As leadership advisory consultants, we have the core task to support our clients and candidates in the quest for difference. For this is the key to self-questioning, innovation and vitality. Ultimately, it is the catalyst for sustainable growth.

In the same vein, the findings in this report confirm my belief that a series of leadership traits are now moving center stage, enriching the traditional skillset and opening organizations to the different and new.

Empathy, service, humility and deep thinking. The imagination to envision a future state. Taking a long-term perspective and exercising perseverance and resilience en route to What's Next. Our findings confirm that senior executives want to join organizations that embody these traits. As the leader of a hiring organization, could your organization be one of them? As a senior candidate, could you be one of those leaders?

What if your organization has one or more problem areas? Or if, as a senior executive, you want to re-position yourself? We invite you to use this survey to diagnose not only areas of weakness but attraction points for organizations to design a compelling talent value proposition and for candidates to propose an equally compelling response.

We wish you a fruitful dialogue, and look forward to our next exchange!

*Is Your Corporate Culture Cultish? Harvard Business Review 10 May, 2019

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What motivates leaders to join one kind of organization, and avoid another? What are their deeper criteria for career decisions? What sources are they using to 'audit' potential employers, and what are their attitudes to the use of AI in the hiring process? What factors are fueling executive departures and how have recent global events affected their confidence in making a career move?

To find out, we personally approached executives from across the world who had recently been shortlisted for a senior position with a hiring organization. As such, they were in a reflective and 'organization-assessing' state of mind.

Our study design is based in our observation that senior executive needs are profoundly changing. Our market interactions indicate that their career aspirations are being re-shaped by two main factors:

1

Senior executives want to experience and practice wise leadership.

It must be ethical, responsible and sustainable, even at the expense of short-term gain.

A shift is underway from smart and reasonable leadership that purely focuses on immediate economics, to holistic leadership that emphasizes ESG criteria.

2

Senior executives want greater control over their destiny.

They seek this even at the expense of predictability and security.

The emphasis is shifting from highly engineered structures that are fully or partially directive, to more self-organizing, fluid ecosystems that are collaborative and trust-based.

We theorized that these factors are no longer 'nice to have's' for senior executives; they are becoming fundamental selection criteria. Were we right? If anything, we under-estimated their importance. They are becoming non-negotiables to a degree that surprised us.

Hiring organizations must now strike a careful balance in order to attract and retain the most outstanding senior talent. Wise, reflective leadership must be coupled with dynamism and momentum. Self-organization and fluidity still require a degree of underlying engineering and stability.

01

NEEDS

What do senior executives deeply want from organizations?
What profile of organization are they actively seeking or avoiding?

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APPROACH TO THE HIRING PROCESS

How are senior interview candidates examining hiring organizations?
What do they really think of AI hiring tools?

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DEPARTURE REASONS

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CONFIDENCE IN CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

How are global developments affecting senior executive confidence in making a move?

A business barometer and diagnostic tool

KEYS FOR HIRING ORGANIZATIONS

Design a strong value proposition for a demanding talent market; one whose confidence in changing organizations is resisting the uncertainties of Covid.

— Map and consolidate burning points of candidate attraction. Address potential problem areas
— Design strategies to attract Leaders For What's Next from the global talent pool
— Identify potential competitors for the talent you seek today.

KEYS FOR CANDIDATES

Create the conditions for an enriching next step, based on what really matters to you.

— Gain awareness into your deeper needs
— Identify your 'must-haves' and 'nice-to-haves'
— Design your next career step
— Identify the profiles of organizations most likely to fit you: culture, market position and demographics
— Build your case for a successful hire
— Identify information sources prior to interview.

From October 2020 to January 2021, Amrop candidates who had been shortlisted for a senior position in a client organization were personally invited to complete our online survey.* As such, they were, or had recently been, in 'organization-assessing mode'.

Framing the invitation

In order to minimize the risk of bias in the responses, the survey avoided direct references to the hypotheses (greater control over one's destiny/need for wise decision-making).
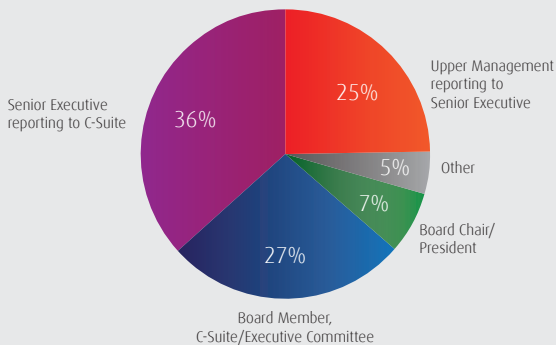
Anonymity and security

The survey was strictly anonymous and data-protected. Answers/data were used for statistical purposes only. The survey was engineered and hosted by independent specialists. The survey engineers (Panteia NV) are 27001 ISO certified on data protection, ensuring online security.
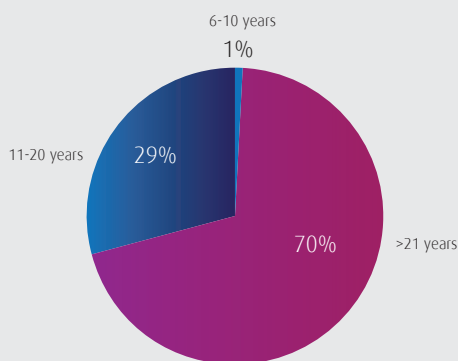
About the respondents

443 senior executives from all world regions completed the survey, 84% of whom were currently in employment. Of their (current or most recent) organizations 49% were listed and 73% had offices in more than one country.

A global population of senior executives

Current or most recent position

- Upper Management reporting to Senior Executive: 25%
- Other: 5%
- Board Chair/President: 7%
- Board Member, C-Suite/Executive Committee: 27%
- Senior Executive reporting to C-Suite: 36%

Total time in work

- 6-10 years: 1%
- 11-20 years: 29%
- >21 years: 70%

Representing a wide spread of organizations and sectors

Employees

- >25.000: 19%
- 10.001-25.000: 10%
- 5.001-10.000: 8%
- 1.001-5.000: 20%
- 501-1.000: 12%
- 1-500: 31%

Sector

- Technology & Media: 7%
- Consumer & Retail: 14%
- Energy & Infrastructure: 6%
- Financial Services: 12%
- Industrial/Manufacturing: 21%
- Life Sciences: 5%
- Other: 34%
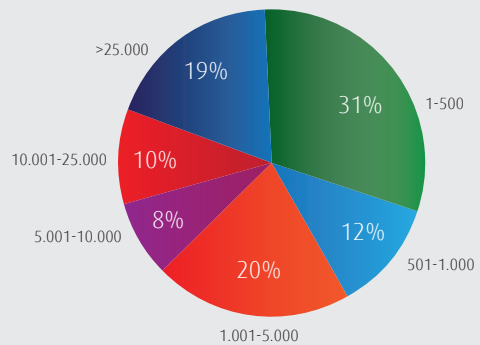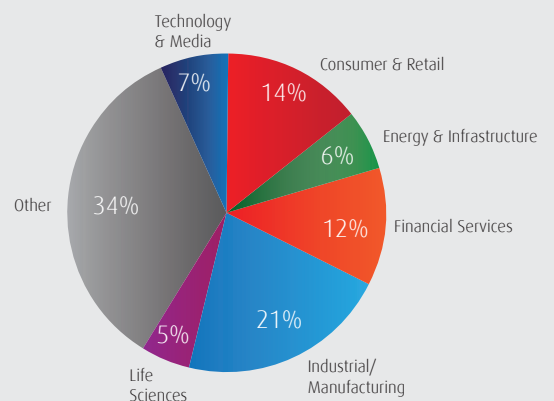
*We did not approach candidates who were subsequently hired by the client organization commissioning the search.

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TOPLINE FINDINGS
Overview

4 Main Findings

1 **Senior Executives are demanding dynamic wise leadership, even at the expense of short-term gain.**

Senior executives are actively seeking organizations that emphasize ethical, responsible and sustainable decision-making. Our report presents the characteristics which will take organizations to the top of the list when it comes to senior talent attraction. From a clear purpose and a robust ESG strategy, to diversity of thought, compassion and involve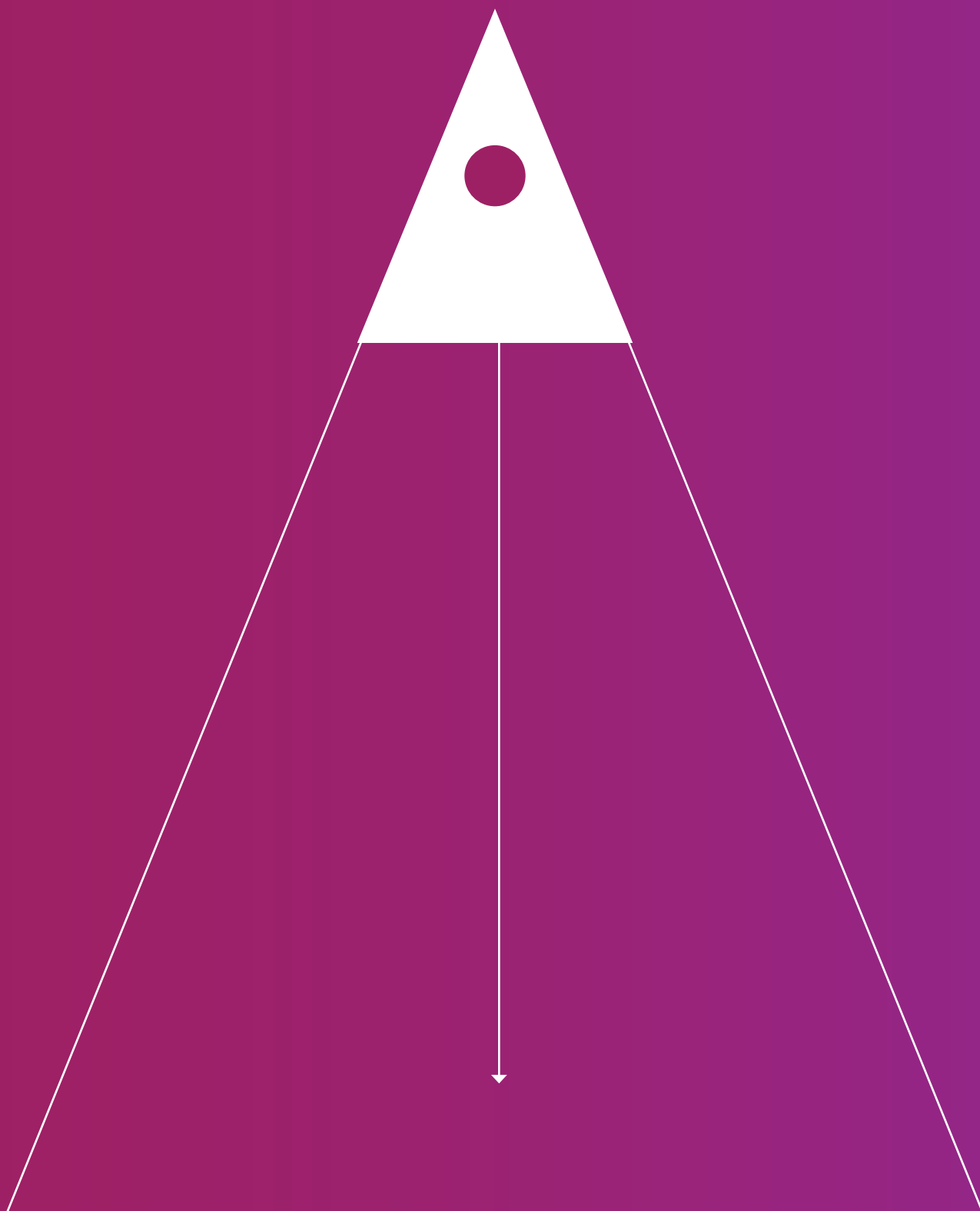ment, these factors are extremely important to senior executives. And they far outweigh their opposites (such as an emphasis on unity of thought, competitiveness, speed and financial value).

2 **Senior Executives want control over their destiny, even at the expense of predictability and security.**

Senior executives are attracted to organizations that give them control over their own destiny, and financial skin in a game that they can influence. Our survey highlights the tensions that hiring organizations must resolve in a number of key areas: career routes, contractual freedom, learning, compensation, work/life balance and remote working. And whilst global organizations have the edge, heavy legacy players are not necessarily the most attractive at the present time. Younger, more agile competitors are gaining ground in senior talent attraction.

3 **The need for freedom should not be confused with a tolerance for neglect.**

As Covid physically disperses people, even senior leaders strongly expect support from the top, our report finds. They want to co-engineer how and when they work and co-decide about their work/life balance, even if this means sharing what they think and do about it. Nor should hiring organizations assume that senior executives no longer need or want executive education: lifelong learning is very much in demand.

4 **Firms that fail to deliver will pay a high price in senior talent attraction and retention.**

Organizations that commit ethical errors, are unable to stay ahead via controlled innovation, or seek growth via merger and acquisition will be actively avoided by a large number of senior executives. Even in this year's uncertain economic climate, most are surprisingly confident about changing organizations. And they are using multiple channels to audit a potential employer when in line for an interview, many outside of the control of the organization. Finally, interviewing should remain a human process, they warn. It should not be conducted by an AI, even if many executives now trust AI to perform simpler interventions.

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TOPLINE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL | 01 — NEEDS
What do senior executives deeply want from organizations?
What profile of organization are they actively seeking or avoiding?

FULL SPECTRUM OVERVIEW Meaning is as important as money and work/ life balance.

— Compensation (and work/life balance) are unsurprisingly critical
— But so too are alignment with the organization's purpose, leadership style and strategy
— Ethics and ESG factors take a prominent place in selection criteria
— Support from top management is more important than peer support.

ORGANIZATION CULTURE Short-term 'group- think' is no longer tolerated.

Diversity and dynamic, wise decision-making are in high demand.

— Organizations must emphasize difference over unity, compassion over competitiveness, involvement over speed, societal and environmental values over financial value
— When making decisions, however, it is important to avoid analysis paralysis; to balance reflection with action.

CAREERS Agility, contractual freedom and lifelong learning are today's drivers.

— Linear upward career routes are losing ground to semi-structured, sideways moves, underpinned by executive learning
— Many want to work for more than one organization at once
— Despite Covid, compensation should strongly link to organizational performance that executives can influence
— Many seek controlled innovation, versus 'wild west' disruption
— Organizations must intervene in work/life balance and where work gets done.

ORGANIZATION DEMOGRAPHICS Global status is magnetic, but not enough.

Demographics are not the main deciding factors. However:

— Listed organizations and their own-set up have equal appeal
— Global organizations are far more attractive than regional or national players
— Mid-sized firms are slightly more attractive than legacy giants
— Unlisted family firms and state-owned organizations are least attractive at the present time (but have much to play for)
— Most senior executives want to make a change in the world, but few will turn to academic, not-for-profit or government institutions to do that.

ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE Ill-reputed firms that fall behind the curve face a fight for talent.

— Fast organic growth is the biggest attraction factor (M&As are raising doubts)
— The vast majority of senior executives are avoiding shrinking players
— Market transformers have far more pulling power than those who are adapting or worse, falling behind
— A clean reputation is a big attraction factor, errors are a powerful turn-off.

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TOPLINE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL | 02 — APPROACH TO THE HIRING PROCESS
How are senior interview candidates examining hiring organizations?
What do they really think of AI hiring tools?

Digital is vital, but demands diligence and vigilance.

— Company websites are the far most-consulted information source for senior candidates when they are in line for an interview
— But they are scrutinizing multiple channels outside an organization's control; few ask for facts and figures from the organization itself
— Many senior executives now trust AI to intervene in assessing them. But hardly any totally trust it for more sophisticated processes and there are widespread concerns about its role in interviews.

TOPLINE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL | 03 — DEPARTURE REASONS
What is causing senior executives to leave their organizations?

A lack of purpose and growth is driving executive departures.

The attraction factors surfaced by our survey are also defection factors for a significant minority of senior executives. More common than compensation or contractual factors are:

— A lack of support from the top
— Dissatisfaction with growth opportunities
— Misalignment with the organization's purpose, values or ethics
— Unwise decision-making (irresponsible, unethical or unsustainable).

TOPLINE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL | 04 — OPENNESS TO CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS
How are global developments affecting senior executive confidence in making a move?

If confidence is surprisingly high overall, socio-political factors are having a negative impact.

— The top factors currently reducing executive confidence in changing organizations include the activities of authoritarian regimes, nationalism/protectionism and the left-right political divide
— Mistrust in business leadership is holding back a significant minority
— Covid is having a negative effect, but much less than we predicted.

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7 LEADING QUESTIONS

For Boards/C-Suite, Talent Strategists and Executive Candidates

The feedback of this global population of senior executives surfaces a number of critical questions to ask yourself as a Board or C-suite executive. Here is our selection based on the data and the input of Amrop Partners. We invite you to use these as a guide. You can find more questions in the Full Report.

How fluid and adaptive is our organization?

80% of senior executives seek growth and freedom. To what extent are such factors built into your organizational architecture, purpose and values? How well does your board communicate, implement and exemplify these factors?

What is our ethical state of health?

94% will likely be examining their alignment with your organization's ethical values and principles, and reputational errors will dissuade 84% (no matter how powerful your firm). What checks and balances are installed to identify ethical blind spots, especially given remote working and financial pressure? If you are taking remedial action, what reassurance are you prepared to communicate to senior candidates?

How active and consistent is our support to senior executives?

90% of senior executives are demanding the support of top management and many defect, absent this. How regularly and constructively do you engage with senior executives, (beyond checking KPIs)? How do you support them in learning from errors or making the case for investment in their zone of responsibility? What senior coaching and mentoring are available, especially during onboarding?

How diverse are we, in reality?

In decision-making, 79% of senior executives want diversity of thought to be emphasized over unity of thought. How is diversity integrated into your board composition, interaction and agendas ? How is it reflected in board hires, behavioral principles, and time allocated to inclusive exchanges with executives? How does your board react to and process input from new entrants?

What would a wisdom check reveal about us?

Compassion, involvement, societal and environmental values should be emphasized over their opposites, senior executives warn. Do your board members and top management exemplify these increasingly vital indicators, and ensure they are consistently anchored within the organization?

Do we still have a learning organization?

Many organizations have de-prioritized senior executive learning due to Covid. Yet 73% of executives will avoid organizations who fail to provide it. What plans are underway to re-install learning investment? How to link its themes to the 'new normal' post-Covid, (evolving leadership behaviors and digital transformation, for example?)

Exploitation or exploration? What is our position?

78% of senior executives seek a mix of exploitation and exploration, when it comes to innovation. Controlled innovation that fuels growth (versus unstable disruption) is critical to senior talent attraction. How well does your organization ensure that these perspectives are balanced in the organization? For example, by engineering zones of controlled experimentation?

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The messages from senior executives raise several questions, which as a talent strategist may be relevant to your talent management processes. Here is our selection. For more, see the Full Report.

How do we assure a diverse hiring strategy?

79% seek diversity of thought. In your hiring processes how do you ensure a broad spectrum of profiles are presented? Especially if your organization has a strong and unified culture, how do you check for and manage potential bias towards 'non-comformists', also in terms of board attitudes to 'atypical' profiles??

Are we ready for the new shape of careers?

45% of senior executives want the contractual freedom to work for more than one organization at the same time. 73% want a semi-engineered career route, rather than a strict upward journey. How equipped is your talent management framework to meet these needs, and how might key stakeholders privately view candidates whose careers have taken a more 'organic' shape?

Is it time to revitalize lifelong learning?

79% want to be given learning budget that they manage and almost all will avoid your organization if it neglects learning provision. Has Covid pushed executive learning off the agenda? How could you use our findings to make a business case for re-installing it? How could investment be leveraged by incentivizing executives to share elements of their newly-acquired learning with others?

Can we foster entrapreneurship?

63% want their finances to be closely associated with organizational performance. How adaptable are current remuneration and compensation systems to individual needs? What negotiating frameworks are in place and how do you assure that these are perceived as fair and equitable? And given their importance, how if at all are ESG performance indicators built into performance frameworks?

Remote working and office space, how can we assure a healthy agenda?

70% of senior executives will actively avoid organizations that ignore their work/life balance and 69% want to co-decide where work gets done. How you can you facilitate the board-level discussion that will ensure a sustainable strategy going forward? What evidence do you have or need to inform a balanced and wise discussion (internal, external, and indeed, from highly-prized candidates) ?

What is the state of our external communications?

Prior to an interview, 96% of executive candidates consult company websites and 74% are likely talking with your current and ex-employees. Only 33% seek facts directly from the source. What prominence on your agenda is given to your senior employee branding proposition? What could be the benefit of closer cooperation with communications professionals and the board to ensure a streamlined, multi-channel approach? Does your organization cultivate an alumni network?

How wisely are we using AI in hiring?

49% of senior executives trust an AI to assess their technical skills and knowledge, 41% trust it to scan their CV. But just under 15% totally trust an AI to intervene in their hiring process. 48% would mistrust a machine to actually interview them. What place does AI have in your hiring mix? Does this need re-thinking? How carefully are you presenting AI tools to senior candidates, managing any concerns and in the way you present and use the data?

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Our report examines the deeper motivations and needs of a global population of your peers. In assessing your next organization, and maximizing your chances of being hired, what questions can you ask yourself? Here is our selection. See the Full Report for more questions.

How can I ensure I'll get the support I'll need?

If you are like 90% of senior executives, the support of top management will be very important to you. During your next interview, what evidence will you ask for? Beyond corporate value statements, who in your network could inform you of the reality and how will you check opinion with fact? What coaching and mentoring will the organization offer? What board exposure (and interaction) can you expect?

Will I be happy being different here?

79% actively seek diversity of thought. What evidence will you seek that diversity is more than a buzzword? Especially if the organization has a strong culture, what questions will you ask to check your fit, and how willing are you to adapt? These deep questions require self-knowledge and may be a make or break factor in your decision.

Is this a wise organization? And how do I exemplify wise values?

If you are like most senior executives, you'll want to practice and experience wise decision-making (ethical, responsible and sustainable). You'll seek an emphasis on compassion, involvement, societal and environmental values. Use our report: *Wise Decision-Making: Stepping Up to Sustainable Business Performance*, to check your own propensity to make wise decisions, and your potential hiring organization.

Am I ready for an organic career?

45% of your peers want the freedom to work for more than one organization at the same time. 73% seek a semi-engineered, lateral career route, rather than a vertical upward journey. Have you considered either of these options and if so how would you sell it: to yourself, and to a potential hiring organization? What could be the mutual benefits (and pitfalls)?

What is my financial risk tolerance?

63% want their finances to be closely associated with organizational performance. How exposed are you prepared to be right now? What are your minimum and maximum variable levels? What sources will you use to check your organization's financial track record and outlook? And finally, what check questions will you use to determine your likely influence on its strategy (decision-making systems, culture, channels, etc.)?

What has Covid taught me about remote working and work/life balance?

70% of senior executives avoid organizations that ignore their work/life balance and 69% want to co-decide where work gets done. What has been your experience of remote working during Covid? What have you handled well? Less well? What measures can you personally take responsibility for, and what do you expect your next organization to do? Your questions may concern coaching, contact with top management, and the extent to which agendas address 'how' as well as 'how much'.

How could I better audit a potential employer?
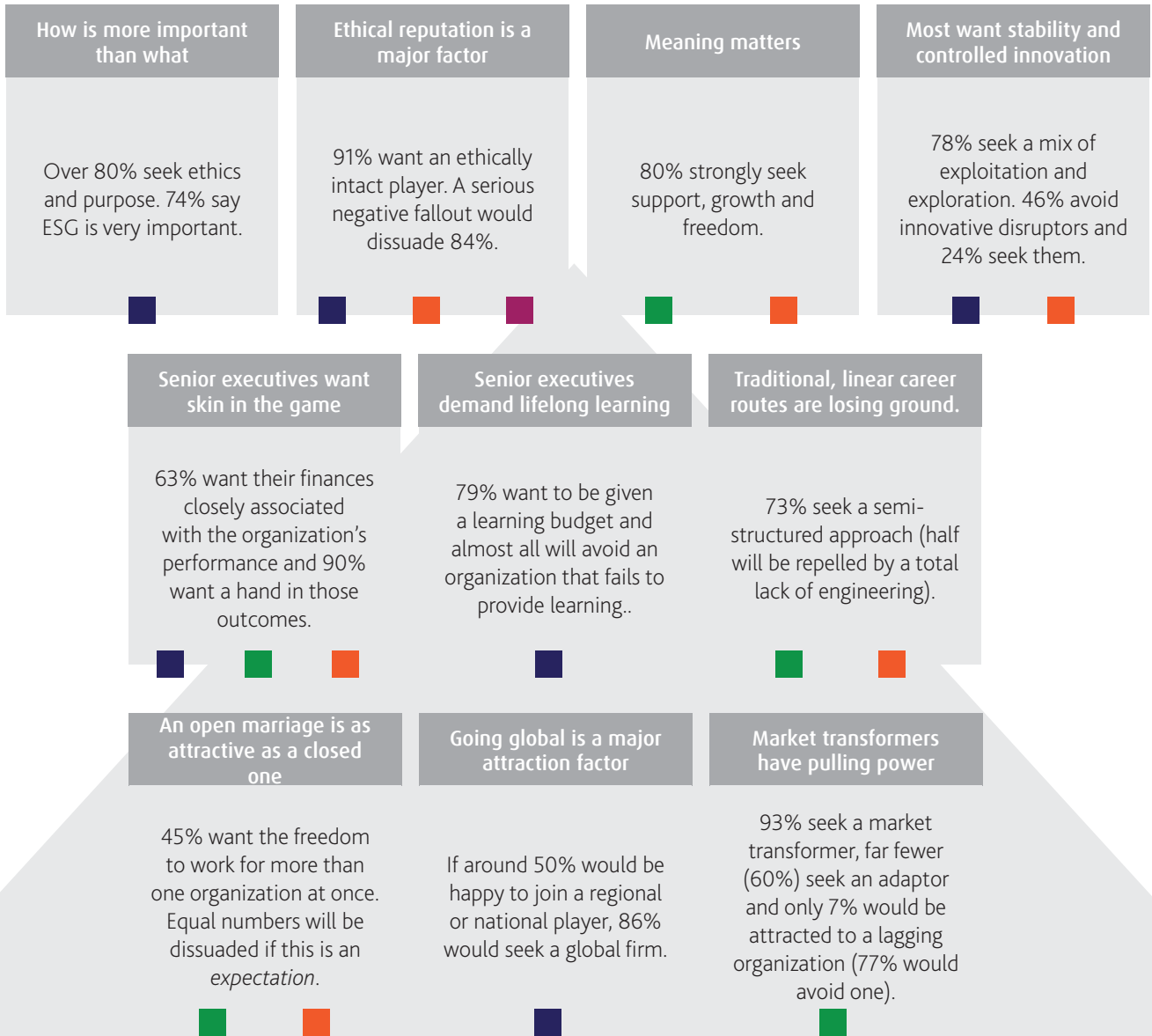
96% consult company websites and 74% talk with current and ex-employees. Only 33% seek facts directly from the organization. Doing so will help you distinguish fact from fiction, and set you apart from rivals. See our Full Report for a range of communications channels to consider in determining the fit. The more seductive the opportunity, the more vital a hard fact check.
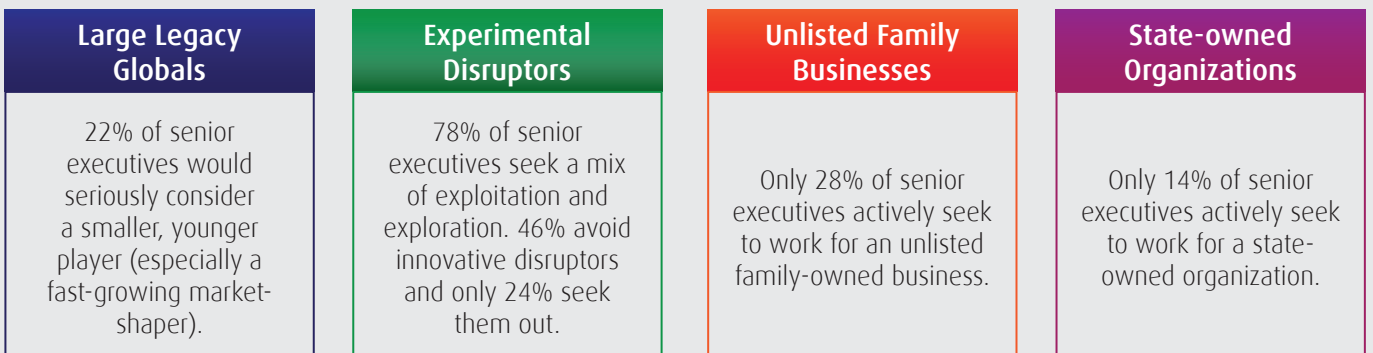
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Our report reveals some potential challenges for certain profiles of organization. But there are also opportunities. Looking at four kinds of organization, we present a dashboard with suggestions. We invite you to use (or challenge) this to put the right cards on your hiring table and increase your appeal to the global talent pool.

Potential Opportunity

How is more important than what	Ethical reputation is a major factor	Meaning matters	Most want stability and controlled innovation
Over 80% seek ethics and purpose. 74% say ESG is very important.	91% want an ethically intact player. A serious negative fallout would dissuade 84%.	80% strongly seek support, growth and freedom.	78% seek a mix of exploitation and exploration. 46% avoid innovative disruptors and 24% seek them.

Senior executives want skin in the game	Senior executives demand lifelong learning	Traditional, linear career routes are losing ground.
63% want their finances closely associated with the organization's performance and 90% want a hand in those outcomes.	79% want to be given a learning budget and almost all will avoid an organization that fails to provide learning..	73% seek a semi-structured approach (half will be repelled by a total lack of engineering).

An open marriage is as attractive as a closed one	Going global is a major attraction factor	Market transformers have pulling power
45% want the freedom to work for more than one organization at once. Equal numbers will be dissuaded if this is an *expectation*.	If around 50% would be happy to join a regional or national player, 86% would seek a global firm.	93% seek a market transformer, far fewer (60%) seek an adaptor and only 7% would be attracted to a lagging organization (77% would avoid one).

Potential Threat

Large Legacy Globals	Experimental Disruptors	Unlisted Family Businesses	State-owned Organizations
22% of senior executives would seriously consider a smaller, younger player (especially a fast-growing market-shaper).	78% of senior executives seek a mix of exploitation and exploration. 46% avoid innovative disruptors and only 24% seek them out.	Only 28% of senior executives actively seek to work for an unlisted family-owned business.	Only 14% of senior executives actively seek to work for a state-owned organization.

Let's Talk!

We warmly invite you to a dialogue to discuss the learnings of our study and potential outcomes for your board, talent management strategy, or personal career design.
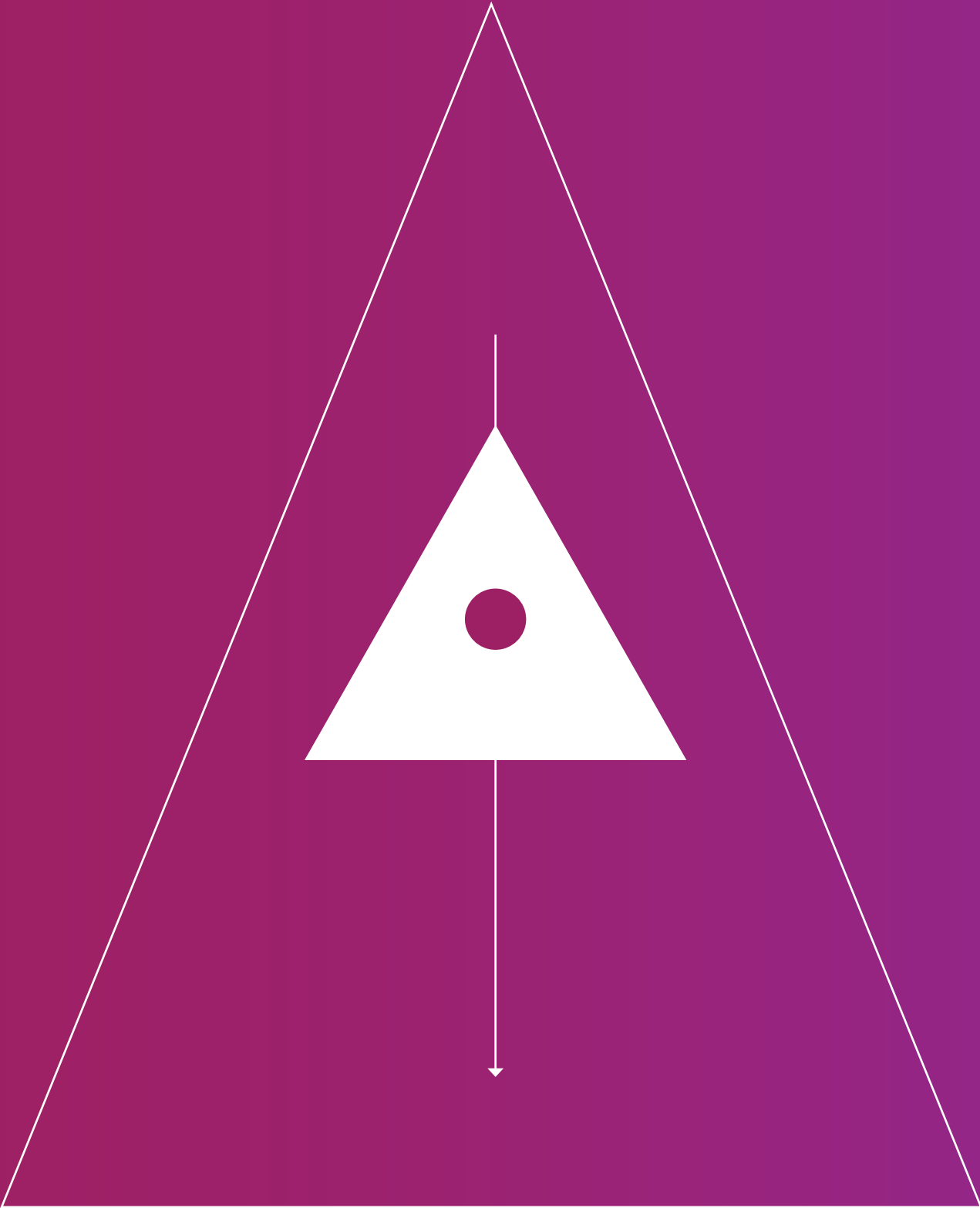
Looking for Advice?

To set up a call, request a proposal for executive search, leadership and board services, please contact us direct or go to www.amrop.com/offices to find a consultant close to you.

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TOPLINE FINDINGS BY NUMBERS | 01 — NEEDS
What do senior executives deeply want from organizations?
What profile of organization are they actively seeking or avoiding?

Full Spectrum Overview

We opened the box by asking senior executives to consider a wide range of decision-making criteria, including standard 'intrinsic' factors (such as job content) and 'extrinsic' factors (such as compensation). We asked: overall, what is important to you at this stage in your career? What factors are important to you in deciding whether to join an organization?

Meaning is as important as money and work/life balance

Over 90% say it is very important to be able to influence change in their organization, one with whose purpose they are aligned, with appealing role content. **80%** strongly seek support, professional growth and freedom. These factors matter to more people than compensation/remuneration (or work-life balance).

59% want to influence change in the world. But meaning needs back-up: asked to select the 3 most important areas, alignment with the organization's purpose and values still ranks highest but is closely followed by compensation/renumeration and work-life balance.

The 'how' is more important than the 'what'

Over 90% say an organization's leadership style, strategy and culture is very important to them, with over **80%** keenly interested in its ethics, purpose and innovative capacity, as much as its financial performance, growth and resources.

ESG strategy is very important to over **70%**. Demographic factors such as an organization's size and age matter far less. The right leadership style, strategy and culture are top 3 non-negotiables selected by leaders. **Under 20%** rank an organization's financial performance and growth amongst their top 3 must-haves.

An organization's purpose and ethical practice are critical

94% say it is very important to be aligned with an organization's ethical values and principles. Mission, Vision, or other cultural values and principles follow close behind. In fact, throughout our survey, factors related to purpose and ethics are just as important as hard motivation factors such as compensation.

Senior executives demand top-down support

Trusting and being supported by their top management or other hierarchical superiors is very important for **90%** of senior executives in deciding whether to join an organization. Similar numbers need support from the teams they lead. If significantly fewer judge peer support to be very important (**78%**), it's clear that they will be conducting a 360^0 analysis of the back-up they'll likely receive when they are assessing their next organization.

"

Social responsibility and impact in a way that gives
resilience to the company..."

Decision-Making Culture

We asked senior executives: what kind of decision-making culture would you actively seek, or avoid? We presented indicators related to wise decision-making (and their opposites), inviting executives to express their preferences.

Short-term 'group-think' is no longer tolerated. Executives seek diversity of thought, wise and dynamic decision-making

Diversity of thought is actively sought by **79%** of senior executives (avoided by only **5%**). Of all the 'wise decision-making' factors we presented, this is the most sought-after.

But this is not all. Other wise decision-making factors such as an emphasis on 'compassion', 'involvement' and 'societal and environmental values' far outweigh their opposites.

The area of least consensus is an emphasis on 'reflection more than action'. Opinion is clearly divided on this point. So we can conclude that hiring organizations need to balance wise decision-making with robust forward momentum.

"

The company should be aware of the environment
and community it operates in…"

"

An agile, versatile and innovative company but
with solid compliance concepts…"

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Working Conditions

We asked senior executives to tell us what they would actively seek or avoid in terms of their contractual conditions, career route and working environment.

Traditional, linear career routes are clearly losing ground

Even if **40%** of senior executives still prize the one-track, upward career route, the strong trend is towards a semi-structured approach; sought by **73%**. A total lack of engineering will repel half of the executives we surveyed.

An open marriage is as attractive as a closed one (as long as it's a choice)

Whilst the traditional 'locked in' contract is still the most attractive option for senior executives, (**51%** seek this) the freedom to work for other organizations is almost as interesting (to **45%**). But hiring organizations should not take the concept too far; **45%** of senior executives will actively avoid organizations that expect them to work for others.

Senior executives expect lifelong learning

72% of senior executives still want their learning to be financed and controlled by their organization. But even more are attracted to organizations that hand the budget to them (**79%**). **Almost all** would actively avoid any organization that neglects their ongoing learning. It should not be assumed that senior executives are no longer motivated by professional development.

Despite the uncertainties of Covid, senior executives want skin in the game

63% want their financial fortunes to be closely associated with the organization's. Earlier we saw that **90%** expect a hand in those outcomes (influencing change in the organization was one of the highest-scoring factors).

Most executives crave a stable environment, with controlled innovation

This year (perhaps linked to Covid), the trend is to seek stability, even at the expense of intense innovation (**78%**). Only **24%** want to join 'wild west pioneers' and **46%** actively avoid innovative disruption. Later, we'll see that market-adaptive firms are far less attractive than market-shapers and a lack of stability was even a reason for **29%** to quit their last organization. So the most attractive hiring organizations will synthesize exploitation and innovation, and keep the engineering solid**.**

Work/life balance should not be a private matter, even at senior level

Despite the dispersion caused by Covid, organizations should not assume that senior executives expect to take total responsibility for their wellbeing at this stage in their career. **70%** will actively avoid organizations that fail to intervene in their work/life balance and as a trade off, accept to share their attitudes and actions in this vital area**.**

Organizations must beware of going fully remote

Covid reinforced an existing trend towards hot-desking and homeworking. Is it time to regroup and draw teams closer, at the expense of their privacy? The answer from senior executives is no: total control by the organization of where work gets done is by far the least attractive and would even repel **41%**. **79%** want to co-decide. Significantly fewer (**60%**) want to be left alone**.**

Organizational demographics

Turning our attention to ownership, size and age, we asked senior executives what they would actively seek, or avoid, in their next career step.

Opposites attract: a listed organization or their own set-up have equal appeal

Whilst around **50%** of senior executives senior seek a listed organization (or conversely, one they own or co-own), some family or state-owned organizations could face hiring challenges. Unlisted family-owned businesses are attractive to only **28%** of candidates and unattractive to similar numbers in this global survey. Organizations with state ownership are the least popular globally, appealing to only **14%**.

Mid-sized organizations are rather more attractive than legacy giants

Organizations with 5001-5000 employees with an 11-year+ track record win out by a margin over other size and age profiles. However **22%** of senior executives would seriously consider a smaller, younger player (even more so, as we'll see later, if they are fast-growing market-shapers).

Going global is the major attraction factor

Whilst **around 50%** of senior executives would be happy to join a regional or national player, the numbers pale in comparison to the sheer magnetism of globals, which attract **86%** of people.

″

The organization was taken over by people who were used to leading by force and did not listen to any other opinion..."

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Organizational performance

We now asked senior executives about their next organization's growth trajectory, market position and reputation. What would they actively seek, or avoid, in their next career step?

Failure to post fast organic growth means a fight for talent. Growth by M&A raises doubts

Unsurprisingly, growing organizations are by far the most attractive (to **86%**). However, if we recall that only **24%** seek explorative pioneers, growth must also be achieved in a predictable and controllable way. Expansion via M&A significantly reduces attractiveness (**60%** seek this). The drop is perhaps due to the uncertainty an M&A can imply. Flat or shrinking players will be avoided by **74%** of executives; they are uncompromising on this point.

Market transformers are also set for strength on the senior talent market

93% of senior executives seek market transformers. Organizations that are merely adapting drop significantly in attractiveness (to **60%**). The extent to which falling behind can dissuade leadership talent is striking; **77%** would actively avoid an organization that is failing to keep up, only **7%** seem inspired by a turnaround opportunity.

A clean ethical reputation is a big attraction factor. Reputational errors have a dramatic effect

91% of senior executives want to join an ethically intact organization — even a slight black mark will significantly reduce attractiveness. And a serious reputational fallout will repel **84%** of executives (no matter how attractive that organization might be in the other respects we have seen).

"
...separates exploration and innovation development from the business lines and measures these efforts independently..."

"
...transforming the market as part of an ecosystem..."

"
....no ethical errors permitted..."

"
...solid organization and products with innovation sources..."

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TOPLINE FINDINGS BY NUMBERS | 02 — APPROACH TO THE HIRING PROCESS
How are senior interview candidates examining hiring organizations?
What do they really think of AI hiring tools?

Information sourcing and AI

Recalling that our respondents had been shortlisted in the past two years for a leadership role, we showed senior executives a spectrum of information sources and asked which they consulted prior to their interview. We also asked them to what extent they trusted an AI to intervene at specific moments in the hiring process.

Organizations must be hypervigilant in an opinion-led media landscape

Senior executives consult multiple channels prior to an interview, many of which fall outside an organization's direct control. Certainly, **96%** do consult company websites, but only **33%** seek further data and facts direct from the organization. **74%** prefer to talk with current (and ex) employees, and **67%** read press coverage. If social media is less widely visited by senior executives, it is still an information source for an important **40-50%**.

Since opinion is potentially taking the lead over fact, a deliberate and integrated media strategy is a vital hygiene in senior talent attraction. Firstly, in order to transmit the right messaging (and facts), secondly to influence noisy channels that an organization does not directly 'own'. Organizations that are less attractive in other respects that we have seen will need to invest time and effort in external communications.

"Financial records, historical performance, financial statements. Frequent change in top management. Comparing with similar companies, performance records…"

"Trying the product or service myself…"

AI has a role to play in executive hiring – but the higher the interaction, the lower the trust

49% of senior executives today trust an AI to assess their technical skills and knowledge, **41%**, when it comes to scanning their CV.

But overall, just under **15%** totally trust AI. And when it comes to more sophisticated, interactive processes, around **20%** fully mistrust the tech. Using AI in interviewing should be approached with extreme caution; **48%** of executives would highly or totally mistrust a machine to conduct the dialogue.

Human cognitive skills remain key to senior executive hiring, suggesting a clear need for a blended (and carefully presented) approach.

"AI is under development and in most cases, it is still learning. I do not think that it can fully replace experience and expertise, it is just a tool to help make better decisions…"

Reasons to leave

We presented senior executives with a selection of key indicators explored in the previous parts of the survey, and asked to what extent their dissatisfaction with regard to these had influenced their departure from their last job.

A lack of purpose and growth is driving executive departures

Around **50%** of the senior executives we surveyed quit their last company because of a lack of support from leadership, or dissatisfaction with their career path. Neglected learning, a disconnect with their own mission, vision, values or ethics, contributed to the departure of around **40%**. So factors related to support, growth, beliefs and values were more common than 'hard' factors such as compensation or contracts. Far fewer cited working conditions such as stability, work/life balance, or where the work got done.

Global developments

The past two years have seen a series of major world events in the socio-political, business and economic spheres: from an intensification of underlying trends, to the sweeping emergence of Covid. How if at all were these macro-developments affecting executive confidence in changing organizations?

Socio-political factors are having the biggest impact on executive career mobility

37% of senior executives say the activities of authoritarian regimes are reducing their confidence in changing organizations. **31%** are being undermined by nationalism/protectionism and similar numbers by the left-right political divide (**29%**).

If political mistrust is affecting a large minority of executives, **26%** are also being undermined by their mistrust of business leadership.

Meanwhile the Covid pandemic having a less widespread effect on confidence than we predicted; only **25%** of senior executives say it has reduced their confidence in changing organizations.

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FULL FINDINGS

01 | Needs

What do senior executives deeply want from organizations? What profile of organization are they actively seeking or avoiding?

"
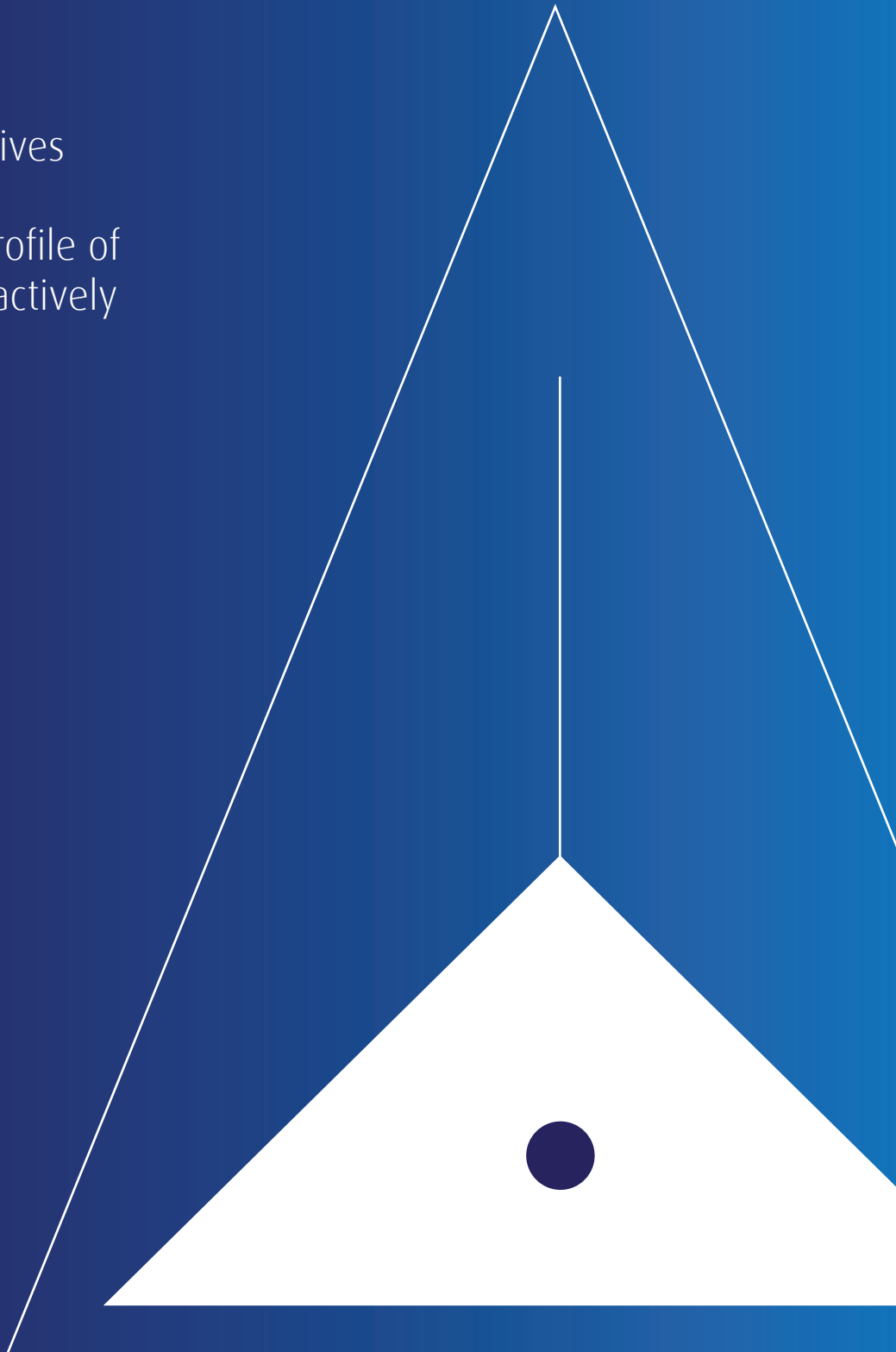
The most important thing will be an **alignment** between where I can benefit the organization and its **strategy**. In the past **20 years** I have accumulated a **wealth** of knowledge, experience and competencies. I am looking for a career that is **intellectually challenging** aside from routine CFO duties. Being part of a **positive change** with a real desire to achieve and **accomplish** pre-determined goals. Nevertheless, **sustainability** and exploring **new industry trends** becomes **vital** for my next career selection."

01 | Needs

What do senior
executives
deeply want from
organizations?
What profile of
organization are they
actively seeking or
avoiding?

**FULL SPECTRUM
OVERVIEW**
Meaning is as
important as
money and work/
life balance.

**ORGANIZATION
DEMOGRAPHICS**
Global status is
magnetic, but not
enough.

**ORGANIZATION
CULTURE**
Short-term 'group-
think' is no longer
tolerated.

**ORGANIZATION
PERFORMANCE**
Ill-reputed firms
that fall behind the
curve face a fight
for talent.

CAREERS
Agility, contractual
freedom and
lifelong learning are
today's drivers.

We opened the box by asking senior executives to consider a wide range of decision-making criteria, including standard 'intrinsic' factors (such as job content) and 'extrinsic' factors (such as compensation). We asked: overall, what is important to you at this stage in your career? What factors are important to you in deciding whether to join an organization?

Meaning is as important as money and work/life balance

90%+

My alignment with the organization's purpose/values (92%)

Influence change in the organization (90%)

Role content (91%)

80%+

Support of key stakeholders (86%)

Executive learning (83%)

Career scope (81%)   Freedom/autonomy (81%)

70%+

Compensation/remuneration (79%)

Work/life balance (76%)

50%+

Influence change in the world (59%)

Over 90% say it is very important to be able to influence change in their organization, one with whose purpose they are aligned, with appealing role content. **80%** strongly seek support, professional growth and freedom. These factors matter to more people than compensation/remuneration (or work-life balance). **59%** want to influence change in the world.

% scoring 4-5 (where 1 = 'totally unimportant' & 5 = 'vital')

But meaning needs back-up.

Asked to select the 3 most important areas, alignment with the organization's purpose and values still ranks highest but is closely followed by compensation/renumeration and work-life balance.

38%   My alignment with the organization's purpose/values

37%   Compensation/remuneration

35%

Work/life balance

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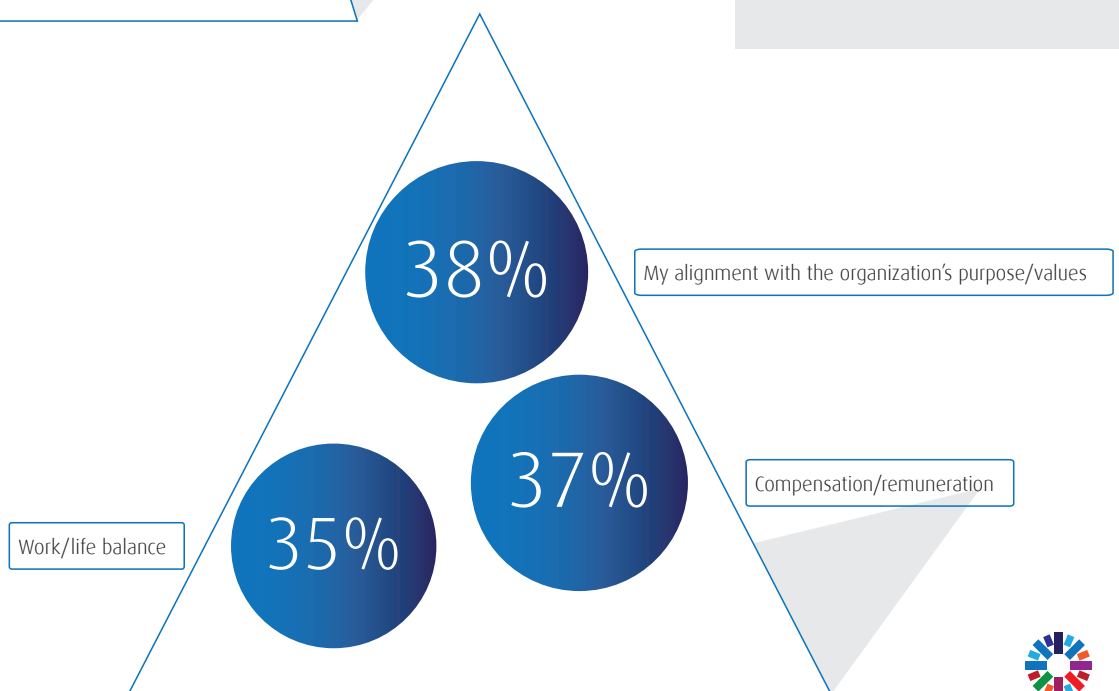
We next asked: regarding the organization itself, what factors are important to you in deciding whether to join?

90%+

Leadership style (92%)   General strategy (92%)

Culture (91%)

80%+

Ethical reputation (89%)

Innovation (86%)   Purpose (mission/vision) (86%)

Financial performance (80%)

70%+

Growth (79%)

Resources (75%)

Stability (74%)   ESG strategy (74%)

60%+

Structure (61%)

50%+

Market position (59%)

40%+

Geographical scope/presence (49%)

Ownership (48%)   Sector (48%)
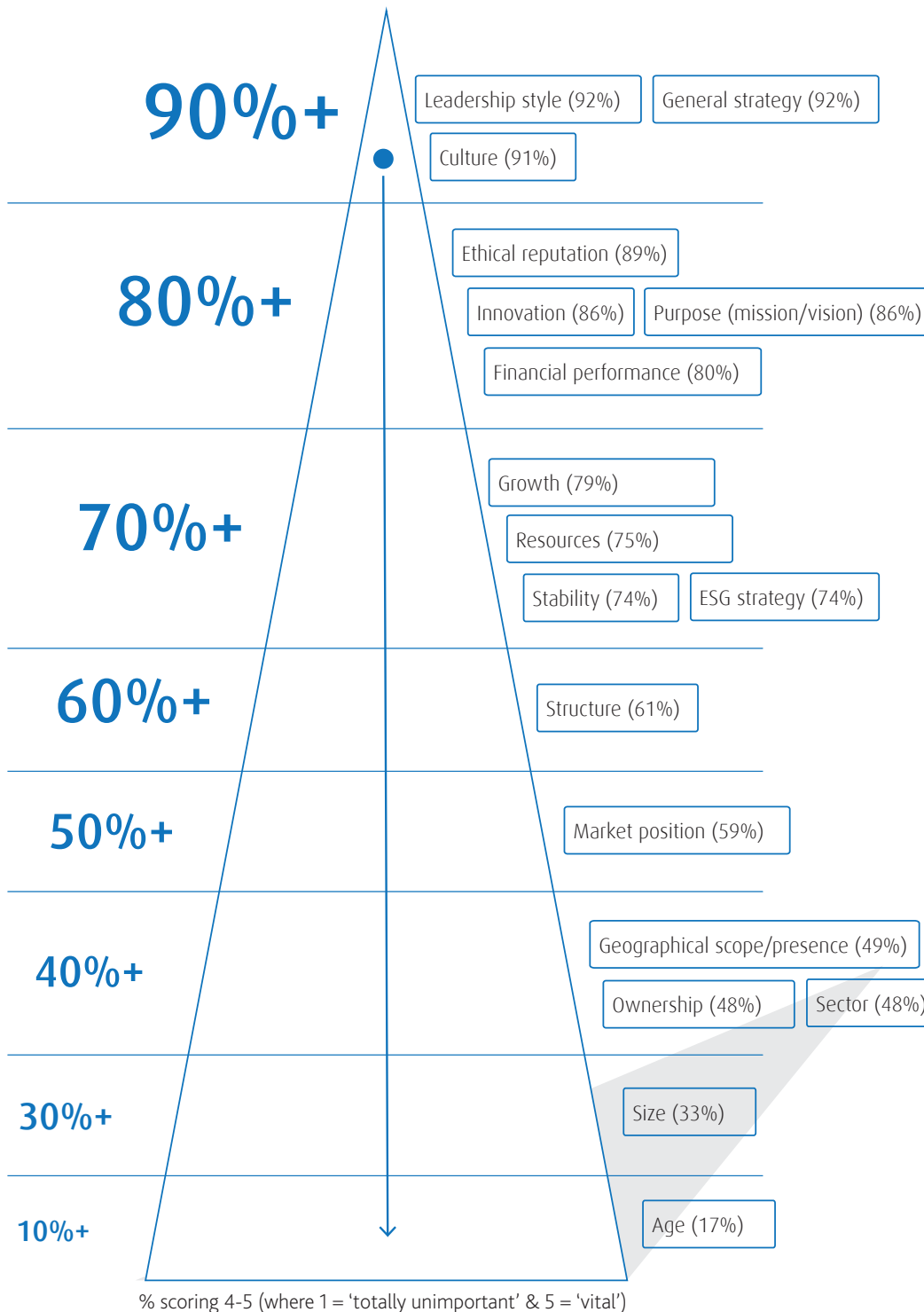
30%+

Size (33%)

10%+

Age (17%)

% scoring 4-5 (where 1 = 'totally unimportant' & 5 = 'vital')

'How' is more important than 'what'

Over 90% say an organization's leadership style, strategy and culture is very important to them, with over **80%** keenly interested in its ethics, purpose and innovative capacity, as much as its financial performance, growth and resources. ESG strategy is very important to over **70%**. Demographic factors such as an organization's size and age matter far less.

Purpose and ethics are critical

In a separate question, **94%** also say that it is very important for them to be aligned with an organization's ethical values and principles. Mission, Vision, or other cultural values and principles follow close behind. In fact, throughout our survey, factors related to purpose and ethics are just as important as hard motivation factors such as compensation.

The right leadership style, strategy and culture are the top 3 non-negotiables selected by leaders. **Under 20%** rank an organization's financial performance and growth amongst their top 3 must-haves.

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We next asked: what kind of support is important to you in deciding whether to join?
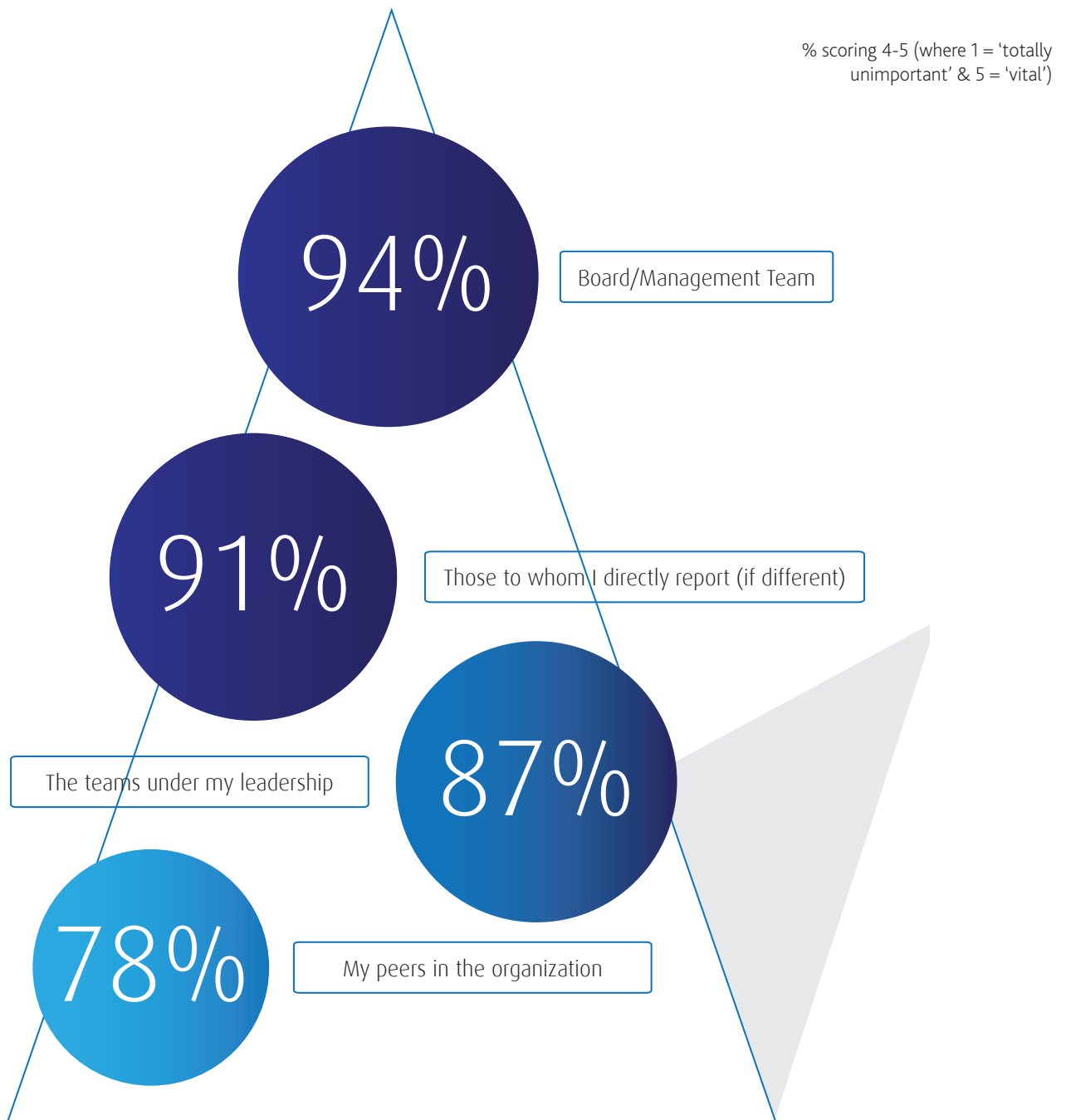
% scoring 4-5 (where 1 = 'totally unimportant' & 5 = 'vital')

94% Board/Management Team

91% Those to whom I directly report (if different)

87%

The teams under my leadership

78% My peers in the organization

Senior executives demand top-down support

Trusting and being supported by their top management or other hierarchical superiors are very important for more than **90%** of senior executives in deciding whether to join an organization. Similar numbers need support from the teams they lead. If significantly fewer judge peer support to be very important (**78%**), it's clear that most people will be conducting a 360^0 analysis of the back-up they'll likely receive when they are assessing their next organization.
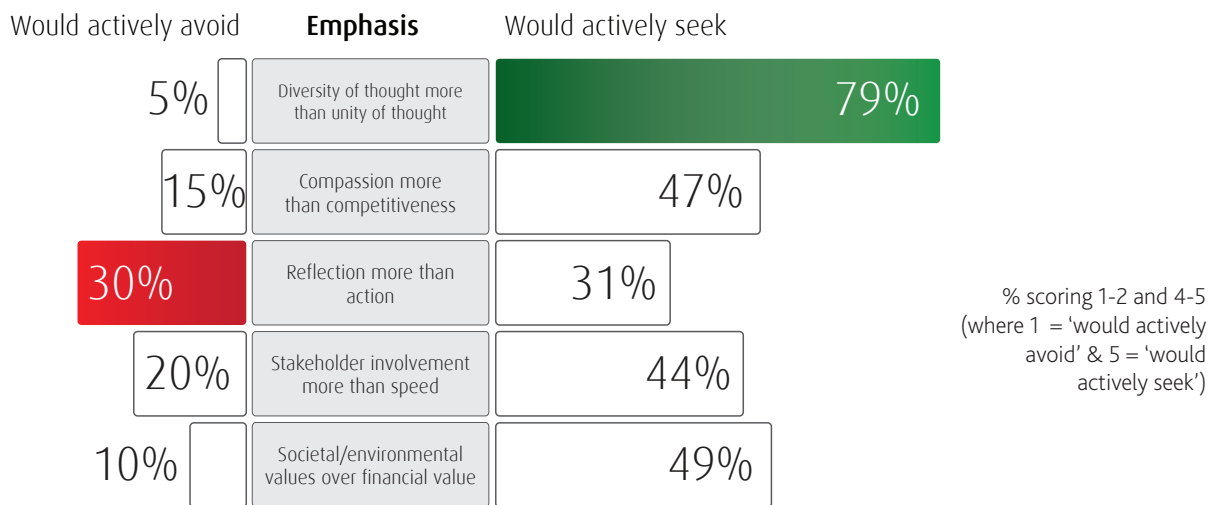
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We presented indicators related to wise decision-making (and their opposites), inviting executives to express their preferences on each of these. What would they actively seek or avoid?

Short-term 'group-think' is no longer tolerated.
Executives seek diversity of thought, wise and dynamic decision-making

Diversity of thought is actively sought by **79%** of senior executives (avoided by only **5%**). Of all the 'wise decision-making' factors we presented, this is the most sought-after.

But this is not all. Other wise decision-making factors such as an emphasis on 'compassion', 'involvement' and 'societal and environmental values' far outweigh their opposites.

The area of least consensus is an emphasis on 'reflection more than action'. Opinion is clearly divided on this point. So we can conclude that hiring organizations need to balance the elements of wise decision-making with robust forward momentum.

Would actively avoid	Emphasis	Would actively seek
5%	Diversity of thought more than unity of thought	79%
15%	Compassion more than competitiveness	47%
30%	Reflection more than action	31%
20%	Stakeholder involvement more than speed	44%
10%	Societal/environmental values over financial value	49%

% scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')
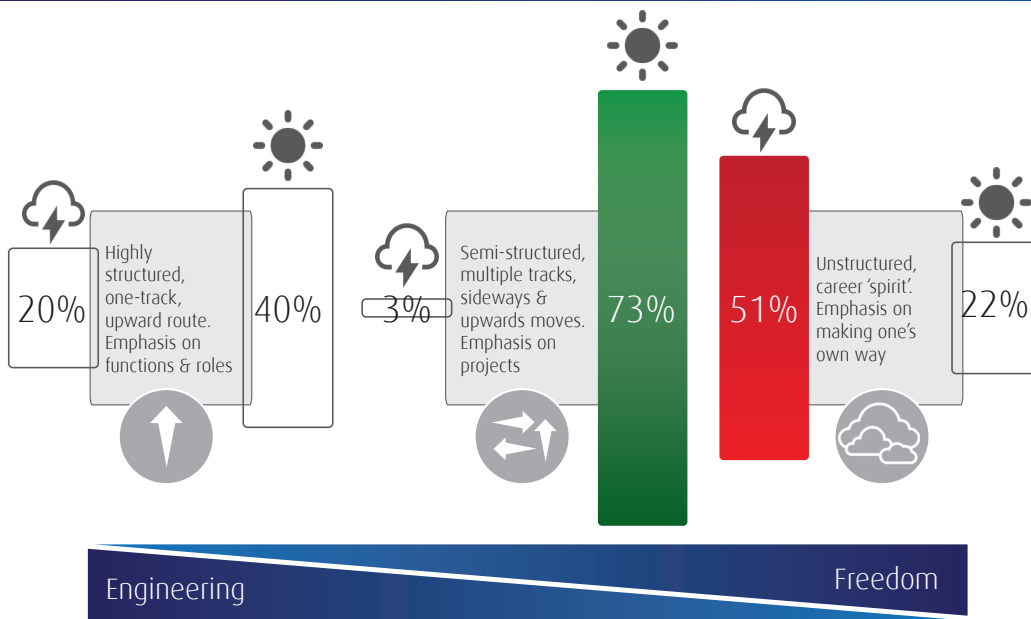
> ...has stable ground, allowing it to develop, as well as being experimental and building new competencies and innovative products..."

> Diversity of thought can be healthy but not if everyone is not driving to the same outcome. Something similar could be said of unity of thought — only works if it happens in an open culture rather than it being enforced..."

We presented senior executives with 7 tensions related to their working conditions: career routes, contractual freedom, learning, compensation, work/life balance and remote working. We invited them to express their preferences on each of these. What would they actively seek or avoid?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT
Traditional, linear career routes are losing ground

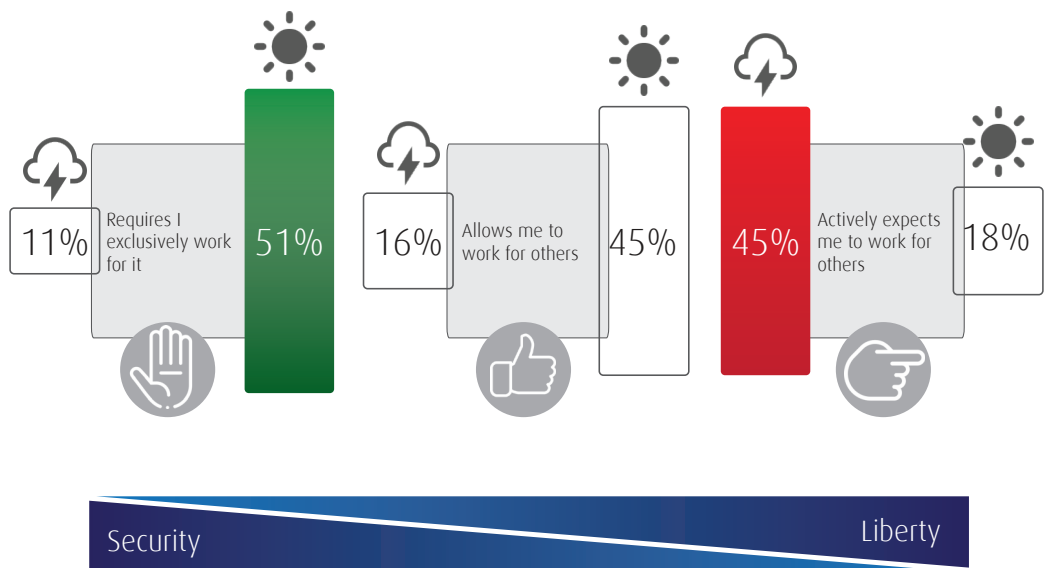| | 20% | Highly structured, one-track, upward route. Emphasis on functions & roles | 40% | | Semi-structured, multiple tracks, sideways & upwards moves. Emphasis on projects | 73% | 51% | Unstructured, career 'spirit'. Emphasis on making one's own way | 22% |

3%

Engineering ———————————————— **Freedom**

Even if **40%** of senior executives still prize the one-track, upward career route, the strong trend is towards a semi-structured approach; sought by **73%**. A total lack of engineering will repel half of the executives we surveyed.

CONTRACTUAL FREEDOM
An open marriage is as attractive as a closed one (as long as it's a choice)

Whilst the traditional 'locked in' contract is still the most attractive option for senior executives, (**51%** seek this) the freedom to work for other organizations is almost as interesting (to **45%**). But hiring organizations should not take the concept too far; **45%** will actively avoid organizations that expect them to work for others.

| 11% | Requires I exclusively work for it | 51% | 16% | Allows me to work for others | 45% | 45% | Actively expects me to work for others | 18% |

Security ———————————————— **Liberty**

All graphics on this page show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

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72% of senior executives still want their learning financed and controlled by their organization. But even more want organizations that hand the budget to them (**79%**). **Almost all** would actively avoid any organization that neglects their ongoing learning.

4% | Provides & finances programs, which it expects me to follow | 72%

2% | Expects me to identify programs on the market, and finances my choice | 79%

73% | Doesn't expect me to follow any programs and provides no finance | 4%

Nourishment   Agency

" Not only supports but also recognizes and promotes executives who assign a high level of attention to the learning and self-development of themselves and their teams..."

" Support academic activities and provide financial support, but for each finished activity one has to perform a lecture to a different group or teams in the organization..."
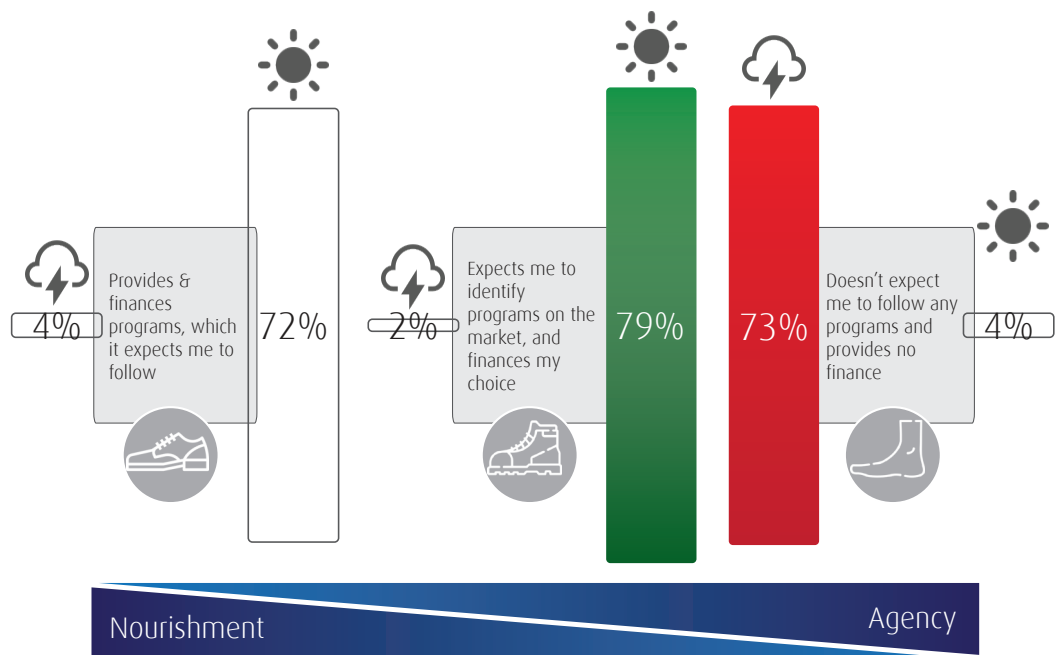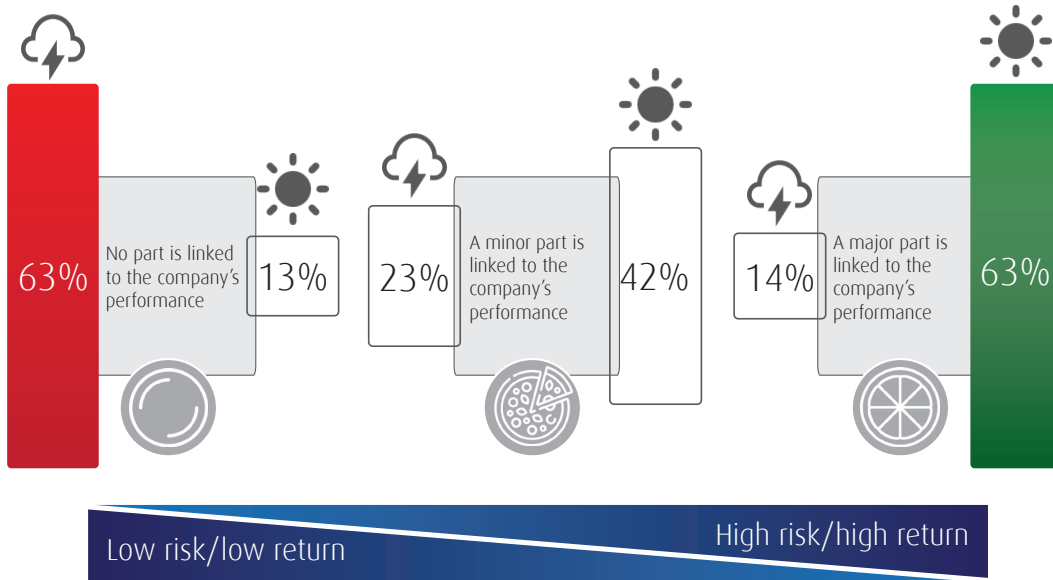
All graphics on this page show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

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EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION
Despite the uncertainties of Covid, senior executives want skin in the game

63%

No part is linked to the company's performance

13%

23%

A minor part is linked to the company's performance

42%

14%

A major part is linked to the company's performance

63%

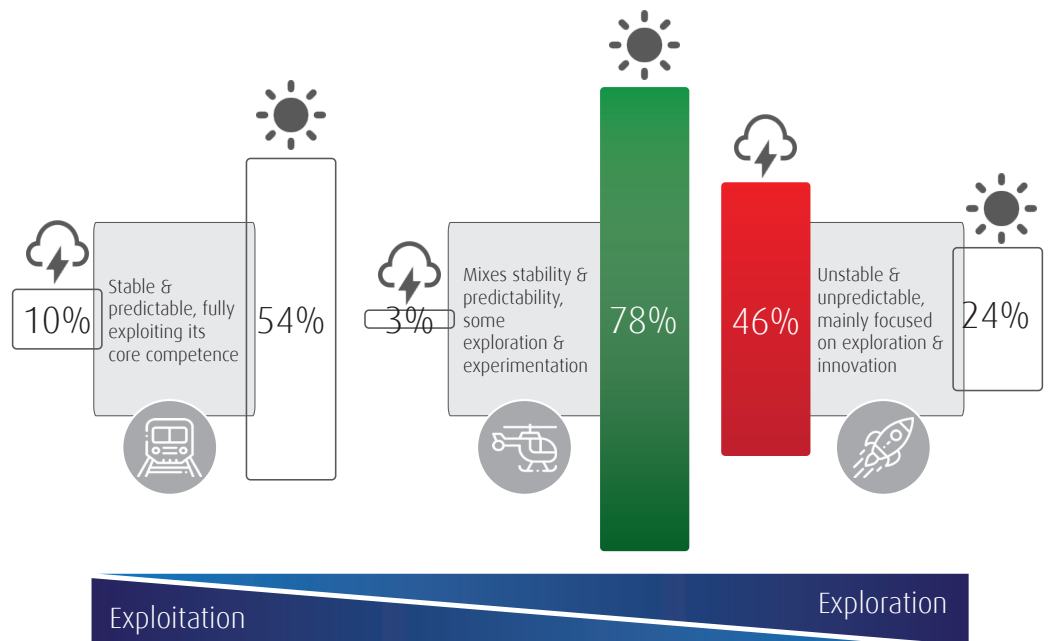Low risk/low return

High risk/high return

63% want their financial fortunes to be closely associated with the organization's. Earlier we saw that **90%** naturally expect to have a hand in achieving those outcomes (influencing change in the organization was one of the highest-scoring factors).

" A well balanced compensation scheme consisting of short-term performance as well as long-term/equity building that incorporates social and environmental impact of corporate activity..."

WORKING ENVIRONMENT
Most executives crave a stable climate, with controlled innovation

This year (perhaps linked to Covid), the trend is to seek stability, even at the expense of intense innovation (**78%**). Only **24%** want to join 'wild west pioneers' and **46%** actively avoid innovative disruption. Later, we'll see that whilst market-adaptive firms are far less attractive than market-shapers, a lack of stability was a reason for **29%** to quit their last organization.

10%

Stable & predictable, fully exploiting its core competence

54%

3%

Mixes stability & predictability, some exploration & experimentation

78%

46%

Unstable & unpredictable, mainly focused on exploration & innovation
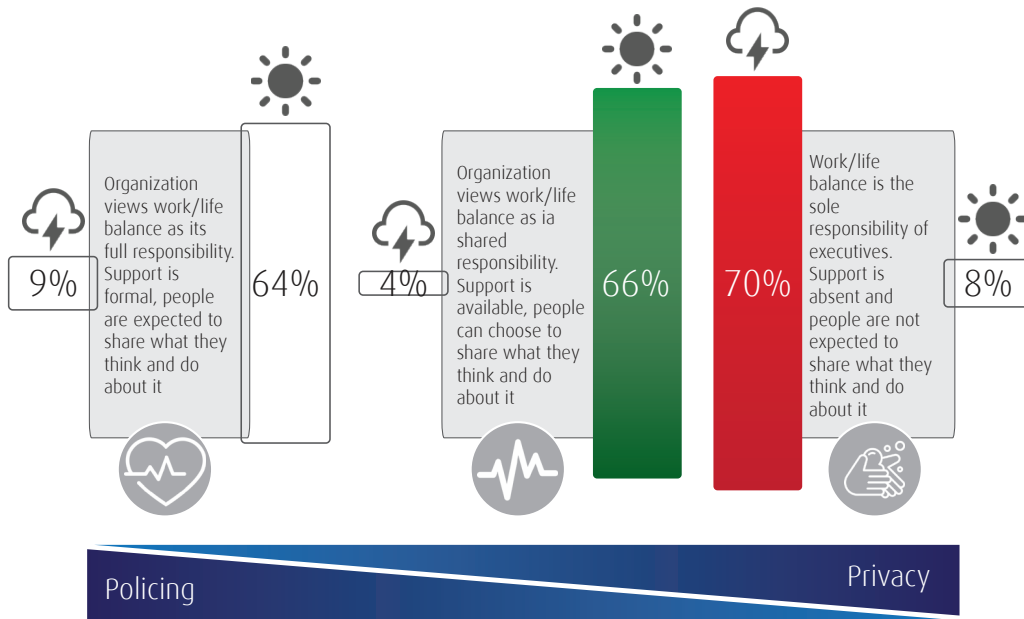
24%

Exploitation

Exploration

All graphics show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

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WORK/LIFE BALANCE
Work/life balance should not be a private matter, even at senior level.

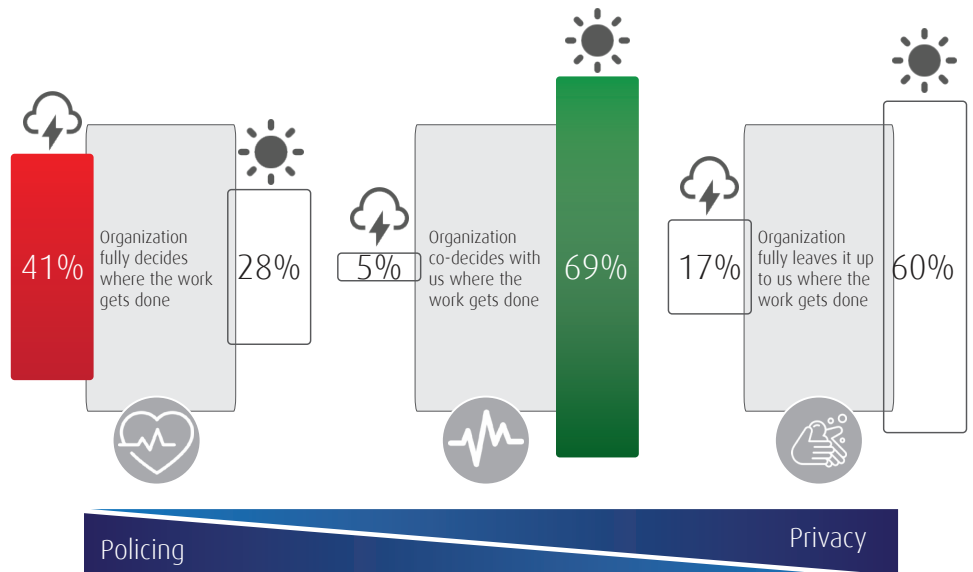|		
9%	Organization views work/life balance as its full responsibility. Support is formal, people are expected to share what they think and do about it	**64%**
4%	Organization views work/life balance as ia shared responsibility. Support is available, people can choose to share what they think and do about it	**66%**
70%	Work/life balance is the sole responsibility of executives. Support is absent and people are not expected to share what they think and do about it	**8%**

Policing ————————————— Privacy

Despite the dispersion caused by Covid, organizations should not assume that senior executives expect to take total responsibility for their wellbeing at this stage in their career. **70%** will actively avoid organizations that fail to intervene in their work/life balance and as a trade off, accept to share their attitudes and actions in this vital area**.**

WHERE WORK GETS DONE
Organizations must beware of going fully remote

Covid reinforced an existing trend towards hot-desking and homeworking. Is it time to regroup and draw teams closer, at the expense of their privacy? The answer from senior executives is no: total control by the organization of where work gets done is by far the least attractive and would even repel **41%**. **69%** want to co-decide. This said, significantly fewer (**60%**) want to be left completely alone**.**

41%	Organization fully decides where the work gets done	**28%**
5%	Organization co-decides with us where the work gets done	**69%**
17%	Organization fully leaves it up to us where the work gets done	**60%**

Policing ————————————— Privacy

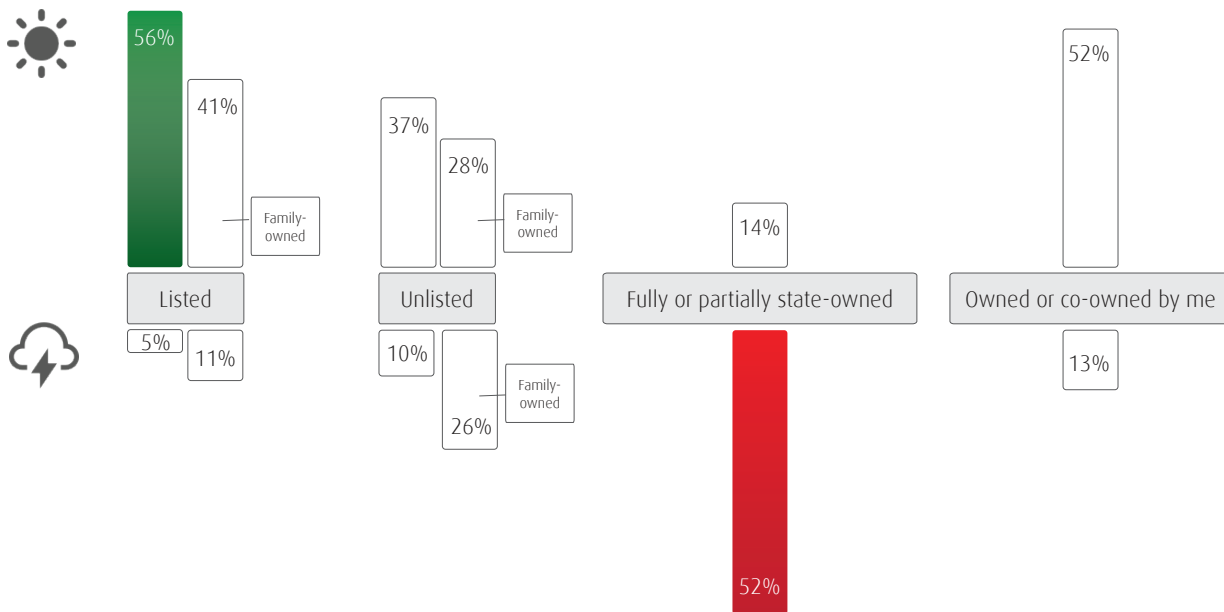% scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

"
An organization that measures output and performance, rather than where the work is being performed…"

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Turning our attention to ownership, size and age, we asked senior executives what they
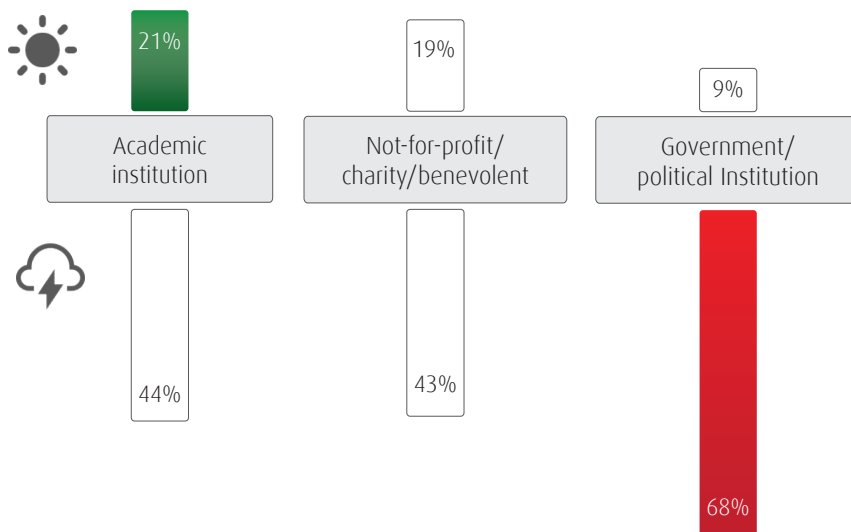would actively seek, or avoid, in their next career step.

OWNERSHIP
Opposites attract: a listed organization or their own set-up have equal appeal to senior executives

Whilst around **50%** of senior executives seek a listed organization (or conversely, one they own or co-own), some family or state-owned organizations could potentially face hiring challenges. Unlisted family-owned businesses are attractive to only **28%** of candidates and unattractive to similar numbers in this global survey. Organizations with state ownership are the least popular globally, appealing to only **14%**.

56%	37%	14%	52%
41%	28%		
Family-owned	Family-owned		
Listed	**Unlisted**	**Fully or partially state-owned**	**Owned or co-owned by me**
5% 11%	10%		13%
	26% Family-owned	52%	

OTHER ORGANIZATION TYPES
Senior executives want to stay in business

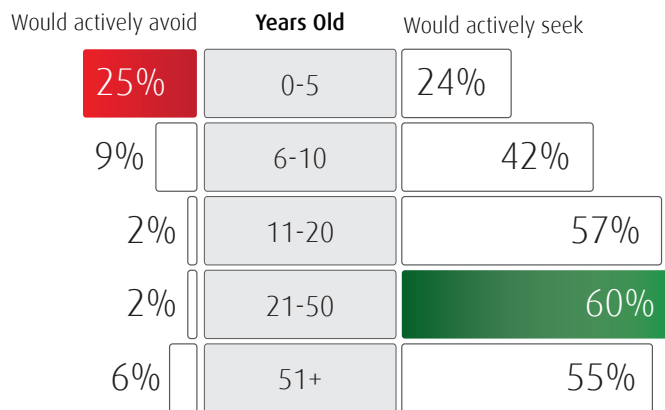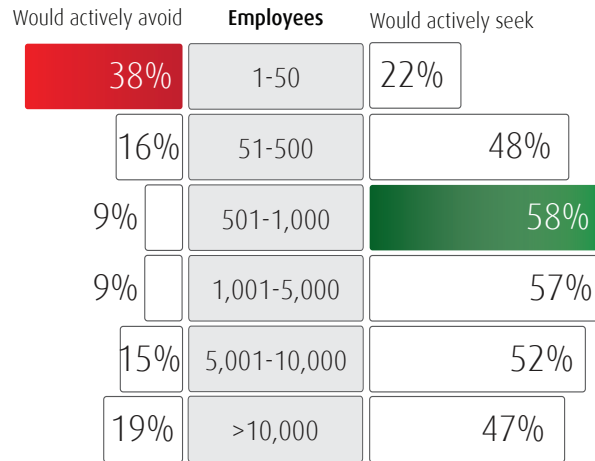|		
21%	19%	9%
Academic institution	**Not-for-profit/ charity/benevolent**	**Government/ political Institution**
44%	43%	68%

As a next career step few
executives are seriously
considering academia,
the not-for-profit sector
or a government/political
institution and **68%** actively
avoid the latter. Recalling
the unattractiveness of
state-owned organizations,
national leadership could
be losing access to a
significant and vibrant,
global talent pool..

All graphics on this page show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')
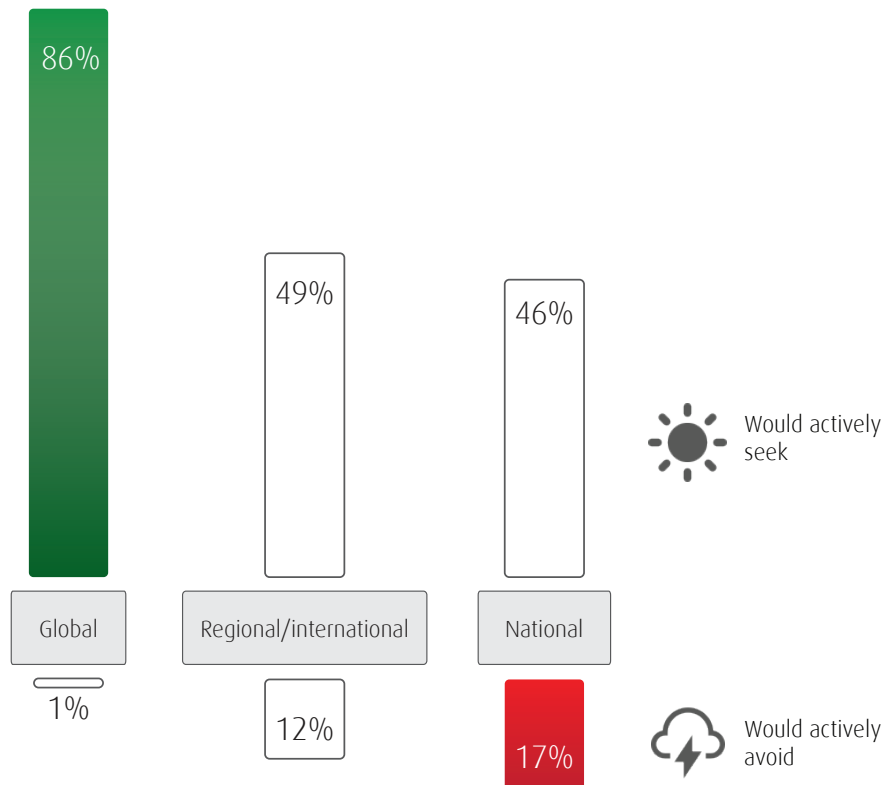
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Mid-sized organizations are rather more attractive than legacy giants

Organizations with 501-5000 employees with an 11-year+ track record win out by a margin over other size and age profiles. However **22%** of senior executives would seriously consider a smaller, younger player (even more so, as we'll see later, if they are fast-growing market-shapers).

Would actively avoid	Employees	Would actively seek
38%	1-50	22%
16%	51-500	48%
9%	501-1,000	58%
9%	1,001-5,000	57%
15%	5,001-10,000	52%
19%	>10,000	47%

Would actively avoid	Years Old	Would actively seek
25%	0-5	24%
9%	6-10	42%
2%	11-20	57%
2%	21-50	60%
6%	51+	55%

Going global is the major attraction factor

Whilst **around 50%** of senior executives would be happy to join a regional or national player, the numbers pale in comparison to the magnetism of globals, which attract **86%** of people.
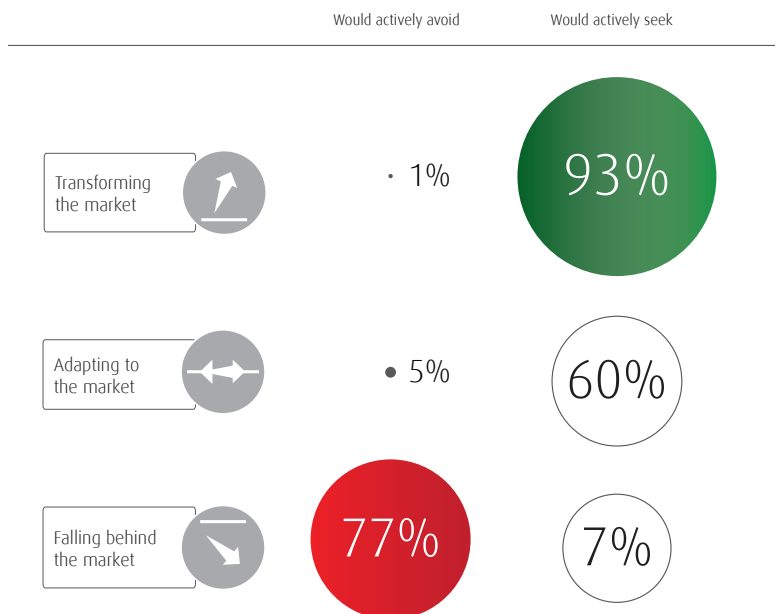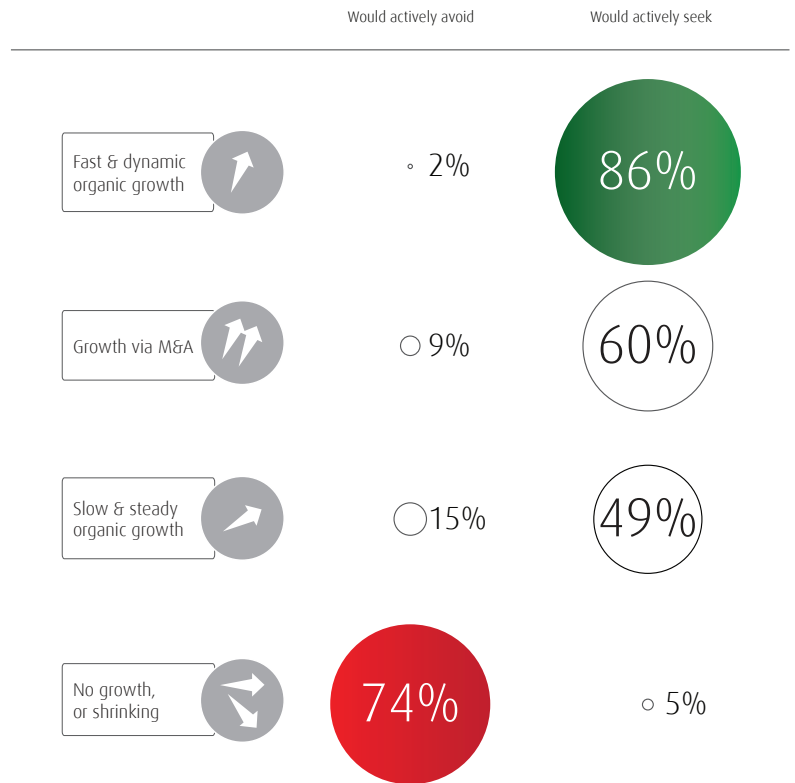
	Global	Regional/international	National
Would actively seek	86%	49%	46%
Would actively avoid	1%	12%	17%

All graphics on this page show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

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We now asked senior executives about their next organization's growth trajectory, market
position and reputation. What would they actively seek, or avoid, in their next career step?

Failure to post fast organic growth means a fight for talent. Growth by M&A raises doubts

Unsurprisingly, growing organizations are by far the most attractive (to **86%**). However, if we recall that only **24%** seek explorative pioneers, growth must also be achieved in a predictable and controllable way. Expansion via M&A significantly reduces attractiveness (**60%** seek this). The drop is perhaps due to the uncertainty an M&A can imply. Flat or shrinking players will be avoided by **74%** of executives; they are uncompromising on this point.

Would actively avoid | Would actively seek

	Would actively avoid	Would actively seek
Fast & dynamic organic growth	2%	86%
Growth via M&A	9%	60%
Slow & steady organic growth	15%	49%
No growth, or shrinking	74%	5%

Market transformers are also set for strength on the senior talent market

Would actively avoid | Would actively seek

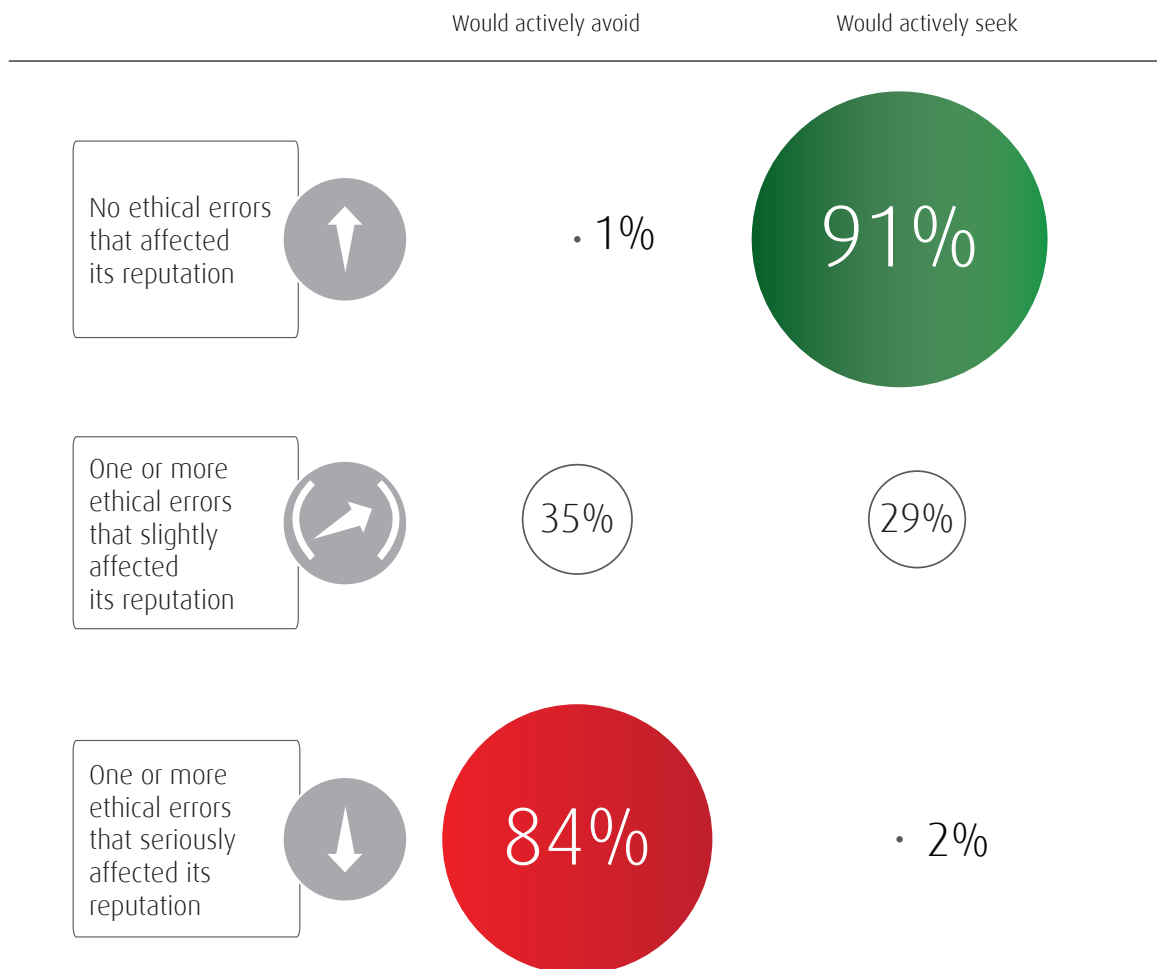|	Would actively avoid	Would actively seek
Transforming the market	1%	93%
Adapting to the market	5%	60%
Falling behind the market	77%	7%

93% of senior executives seek market transformers. Organizations that are merely adapting drop significantly in attractiveness (to **60%**). The extent to which falling behind can dissuade leadership talent is striking; **77%** would actively avoid an organization that is failing to keep up, only **7%** seem inspired by a turnaround opportunity.

All graphics on this page show % scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

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A clean ethical reputation is a big attraction factor. Reputational errors have a dramatic effect.

91% of senior executives want to join an ethically intact organization — even a slight black mark will significantly reduce attractiveness. And a serious reputational fallout will repel **84%** of executives (no matter how attractive that organization might be in the other respects we have seen).

	Would actively avoid	Would actively seek
No ethical errors that affected its reputation	· 1%	91%
One or more ethical errors that slightly affected its reputation	35%	29%
One or more ethical errors that seriously affected its reputation	84%	· 2%

% scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would actively avoid' & 5 = 'would actively seek')

"

Track record of conduct speaks louder than the words they say about their values. A demonstrated history of ethical conduct is more important..."

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02 | Approach to Hiring
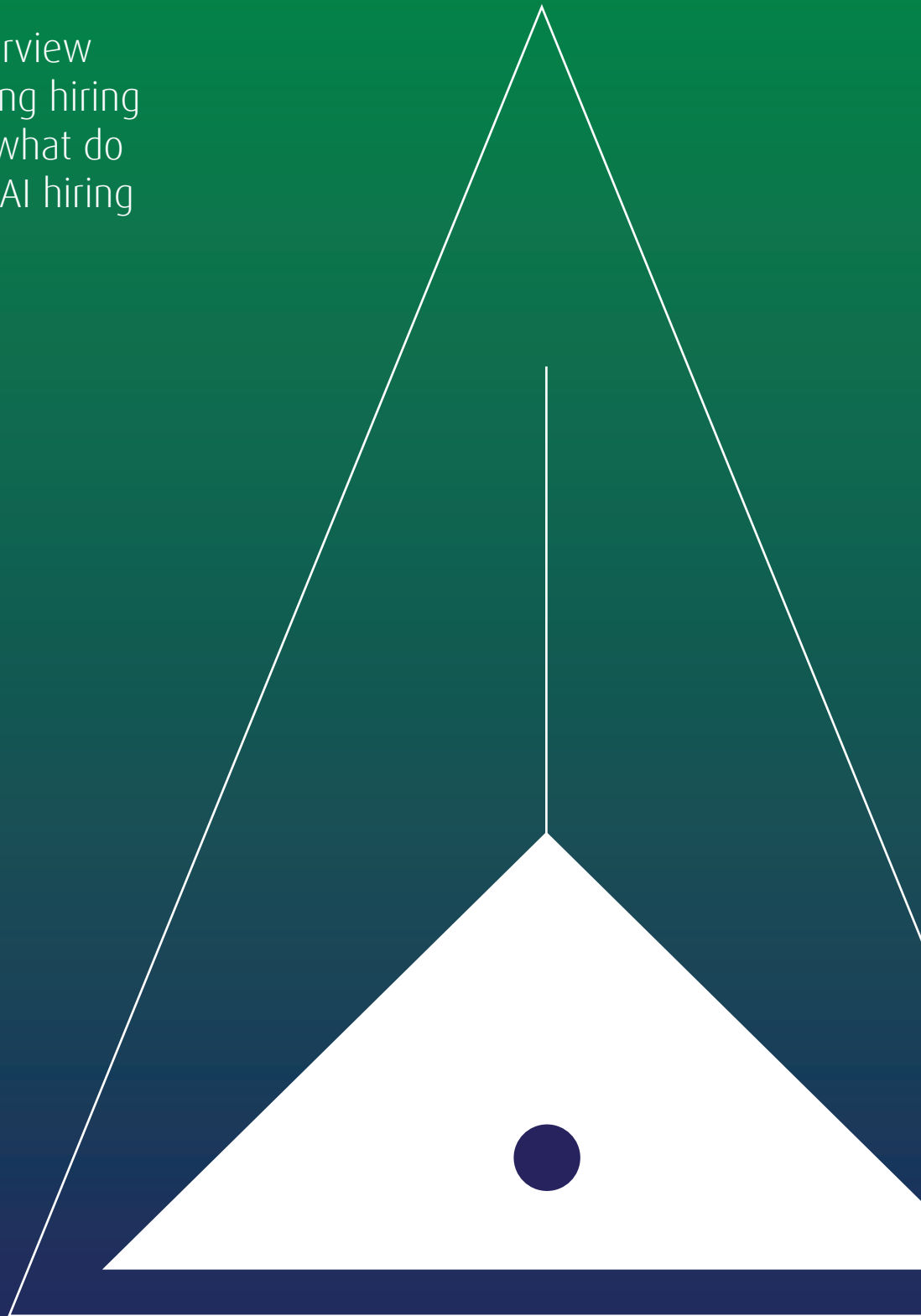
How are senior interview candidates examining hiring organizations, and what do they really think of AI hiring tools?

"

I directly question competitors, suppliers, customers. Judging the **product portfolio** and its **competitive environment**. Looking for **blue ocean** opportunities. Looking at **key decision-makers, board members**. Evaluating the **business strategy** for **personal fit** and **adjustment potential.**"

02 | Approach to Hiring

How are senior interview candidates examining hiring organizations, and what do they really think of AI hiring tools?
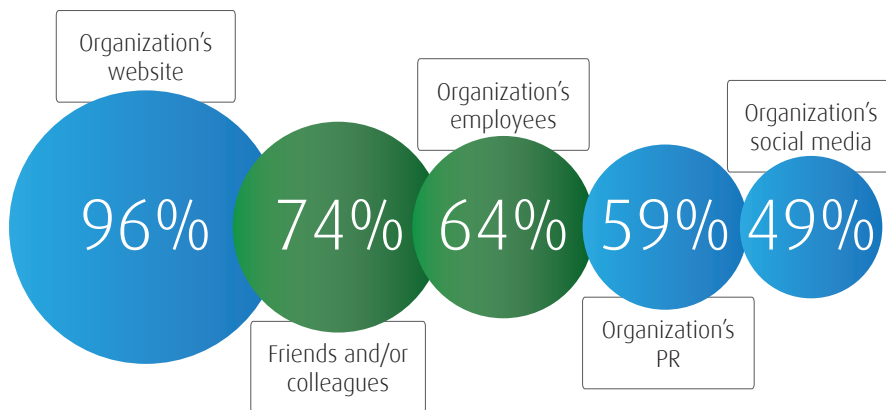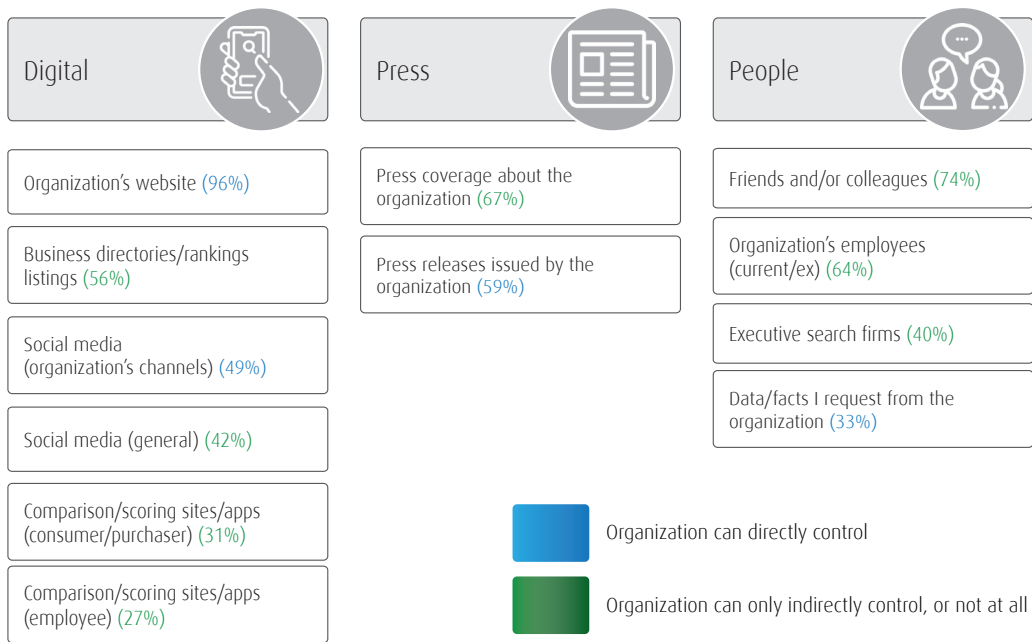
Digital is vital, but demands diligence and vigilance.

Recalling that our respondents had been shortlisted in the past two years for a leadership role, we showed these senior executives a spectrum of information sources and asked which ones they consulted prior to their interview. We also asked them to what extent they trusted an AI to intervene at specific moments in the hiring process.

Organizations must be hypervigilant in an opinion-led media landscape

Senior executives consult multiple channels prior to an interview, many of which fall outside an organization's direct control. Certainly, **96%** do consult company websites, but only **33%** seek further data and facts direct from the organization. **74%** prefer to talk with current (and ex) employees, and **67%** read press coverage. If social media is less widely visited by senior executives, it is still an information source for an important **40-50%**.

Digital

Organization's website (96%)

Business directories/rankings listings (56%)

Social media (organization's channels) (49%)

Social media (general) (42%)

Comparison/scoring sites/apps (consumer/purchaser) (31%)

Comparison/scoring sites/apps (employee) (27%)

Press

Press coverage about the organization (67%)

Press releases issued by the organization (59%)

People

Friends and/or colleagues (74%)

Organization's employees (current/ex) (64%)

Executive search firms (40%)

Data/facts I request from the organization (33%)

- Organization can directly control
- Organization can only indirectly control, or not at all

Organization's website — **96%**
Friends and/or colleagues — **74%**
Organization's employees — **64%**
Organization's PR — **59%**
Organization's social media — **49%**

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AI has a role to play in executive hiring – but the higher the interaction, the lower the trust.

49% of senior executives today trust an AI to assess their technical skills and knowledge, **41%**, when it comes to scanning their CV.

But overall, just under **15%** totally trust AI. And when it comes to more sophisticated, interactive processes, around **20%** fully mistrust the tech. Using AI in interviewing should be approached with extreme caution; **48%** of executives would highly or totally mistrust a machine to conduct the dialogue.

Highly or totally mistrust   Highly or totally trust

	Mistrust	Trust
Assessing my technical skills/ knowledge	23%	49%
Scanning my CV	27%	41%
Assessing my personality	37%	38%
Assessing my leadership style	40%	35%
Interviewing me	48%	29%

% scoring 1-2 and 4-5 (where 1 = 'would totally mistrust & 5 = 'would totally trust')

I work with AI and trust it — no-one in the recruitment game has a good version yet, small differences in the adjectives used, the names of skills and practices blow these things entirely. They are very poorly executed and only work if you have a mass market role where you want a mediocre candidate. I bypass my HR department when hiring key roles as I know these tools won't get me an A Player…"
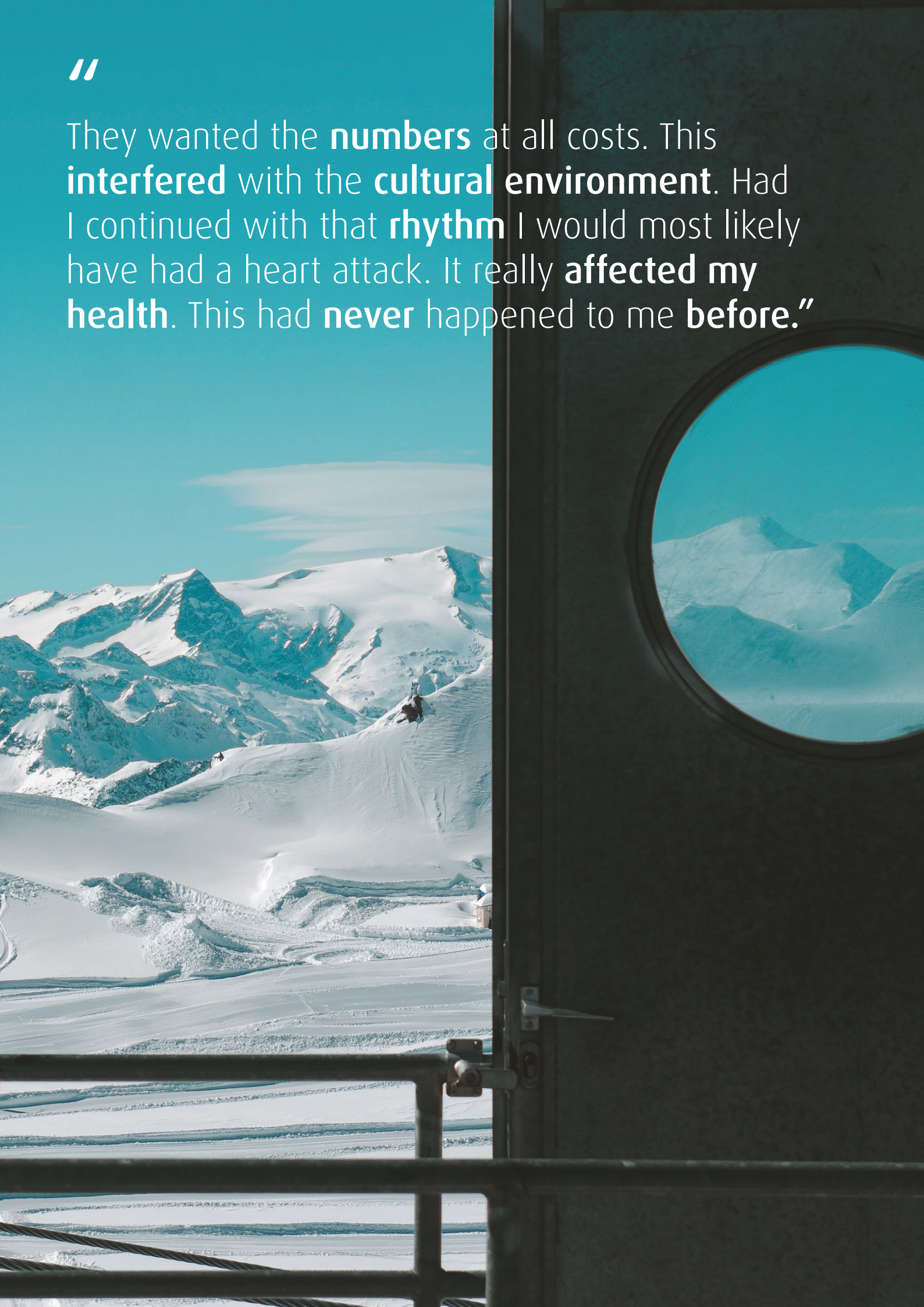
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03 | Departure Reasons

What is causing senior
executives to leave their
organizations?

"

They wanted the **numbers** at all costs. This **interfered** with the **cultural environment**. Had I continued with that **rhythm** I would most likely have had a heart attack. It really **affected my health**. This had **never** happened to me **before**."

03 | Departure Reasons

What is causing senior
executives to leave their
organizations?

A lack of purpose
and growth is
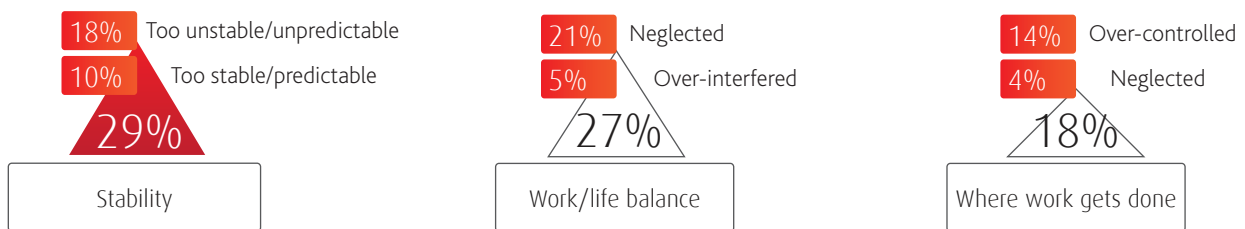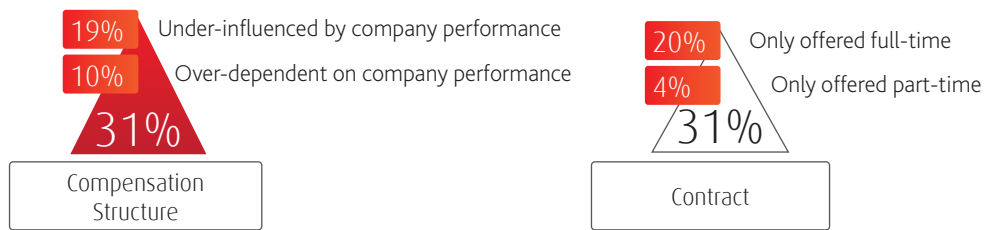driving executive
departures

We presented senior executives with a selection of key indicators explored in the previous parts of the survey, and asked to what extent their dissatisfaction with regard to these had influenced their departure from their last job.

A lack of purpose and growth is driving executive departures

Around **50%** of the senior executives quit their last company because of a lack of support from leadership, or dissatisfaction with their career path. Neglected learning, a disconnect with their own mission, vision, values or ethics, contributed to the departure of around **40%**. So factors related to support, growth, beliefs and values were more common than factors such as compensation or contracts. Far fewer cited working conditions such as stability, work/life balance, or where the work got done.

39% Too vague		37% Neglected
10% Too rigid		3% Over-controlled
55%	52%	44%
Career Path	Leadership Support	Executive Learning

SUPPORT/GROWTH

	32% WDM under-emphasized
	5% WDM over-emphasized
41%	39%
Mission/Vision Values/Ethics	My beliefs about Wise Decision-Making*

MISALIGNMENT WITH BELIEFS/VALUES

*WDM: Responsible, Ethical and Sustainable

19% Under-influenced by company performance	20% Only offered full-time
10% Over-dependent on company performance	4% Only offered part-time
31%	31%
Compensation Structure	Contract

COMPENSATION/CONTRACT

18% Too unstable/unpredictable	21% Neglected	14% Over-controlled
10% Too stable/predictable	5% Over-interfered	4% Neglected
29%	27%	18%
Stability	Work/life balance	Where work gets done

% of total citing as a reason.

WORKING CONDITIONS

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04 | Confidence

How are global developments
affecting senior executive
confidence in changing
organizations?

"

Business is in a state of **change worldwide** and especially **needs to change** in the **country** where I live. The **confidence** I have is my **experience** in changing and **adapting** strategies and people to address the challenges. I see all the challenges as a **huge opportunity** to change any company for the **better** and influence its operating sectors for a **better tomorrow for all**."

04 | Confidence

How are global developments
affecting senior executive
confidence in changing
organizations?

If confidence is
surprisingly high,
socio-political
factors are having a
negative impact.

The past two years have seen a series of major world events in the socio-political, business and economic spheres: from an intensification of underlying trends, to the sweeping emergence of Covid. How if at all were these macro-developments affecting their confidence in making a move?

Socio-political factors are having the biggest impact on executive career confidence and mobility

37% of senior executives say the activities of authoritarian regimes are reducing their confidence in changing organizations. **31%** are being undermined by nationalism/protectionism and similar numbers by the left-right political divide (**29%**).

If political mistrust is affecting a large minority of executives, **26%** are also being undermined by their mistrust of business leadership.

Meanwhile the Covid pandemic having a less widespread effect on confidence than we predicted; only **25%** of senior executives say it has reduced their confidence about changing organizations.

% scoring 1-2 where 1 = 'considerably reducing my confidence

SOCIO-POLITICAL

| 37% | Activities of authoritarian regimes | 31% | Nationalism/ protectionism | 29% | Political divide (left/right) |

BUSINESS

| 26% | Low trust in business leadership | 14% | Gender pay gap | 10% | Digitization & AI |

ECONOMIC

| 25% | Effects of Covid on the economic & business climate | 14% | Other factors related to the economic & business climate |

ENVIRONMENTAL

| 11% | Climate change |
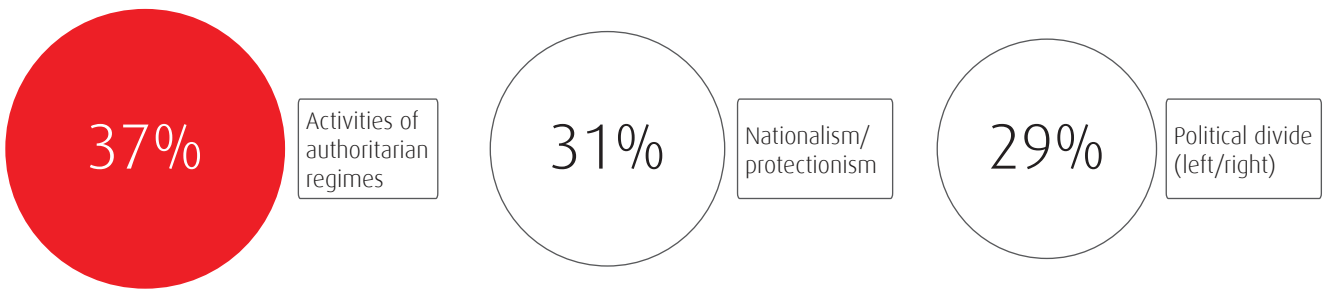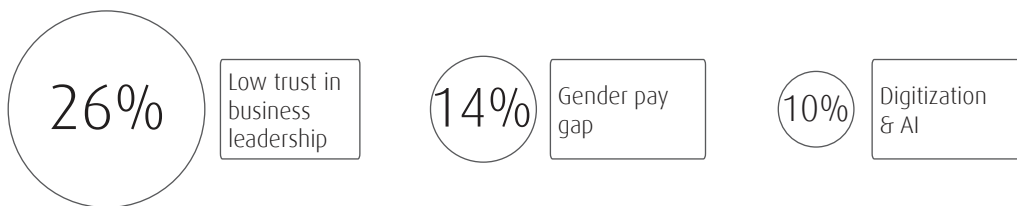
LEADING QUESTIONS | FULL LIST
For Boards/C-Suite, Talent Strategists and Executive Candidates

The feedback of this global population of senior executives surfaces a number of critical questions to ask yourself as a Board or C-suite executive. Here is our selection based on the data and the input of Amrop Partners. We invite you to use these as a guide.

How fluid and adaptive is our organization?

80% of senior executives seek growth and freedom. To what extent are such factors built into your organizational architecture, purpose and values? How well does your board communicate, implement and exemplify these factors?

What is our ethical state of health?

94% will likely be examining their alignment with your organization's ethical values and principles, and reputational errors will dissuade 84% (no matter how powerful your firm). What checks and balances are installed to identify ethical blind spots, especially given remote working and financial pressure? If you are taking remedial action, what reassurance are you prepared to communicate to senior candidates?

How active and consistent is our support to senior executives?

90% of senior executives are demanding the support of top management and many defect, absent this. How regularly and constructively do you engage with senior executives, (beyond checking KPIs)? How do you support them in learning from errors or making the case for investment in their zone of responsibility? What senior coaching and mentoring are available, especially during onboarding?

How diverse are we, in reality?

In decision-making, 79% of senior executives want diversity of thought to be emphasized over unity of thought. How is diversity integrated into your board composition, interaction and agendas ? How is it reflected in board hires, behavioral principles, and time allocated to inclusive exchanges with executives? How does your board react to and process input from new entrants?

What would a wisdom check reveal about us?

Compassion, involvement, societal and environmental values should be emphasized over their opposites, senior executives warn. Do your board members and top management exemplify these increasingly vital indicators, and ensure they are consistently anchored within the organization?

How would we handle an open marriage?

45% of senior executives want to work for more than one organization at once. Do you welcome, tolerate or actively dissuade this approach? Why? How, if at all, could attitudes and practice shift, given the market demand for contractual flexibility?

Do we still have a learning organization?

Many organizations have de-prioritized senior executive learning due to Covid. Yet 73% of executives will avoid organizations who fail to provide it. What plans are underway to re-install learning investment? How to link its themes to the 'new normal' post-Covid, (evolving leadership behaviors and digital transformation, for example?)

Are we fostering intrapreneurship?

63% of senior executives want their finances closely associated with their organization's performance and 90% want to influence that performance. How satisfied are you that the channels for input-giving by senior executives are well-defined and fair?

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Exploitation or exploration? What is our position?

78% of senior executives seek a mix of exploitation and exploration, when it comes to innovation. Controlled innovation that fuels growth (versus unstable disruption) is critical to senior talent attraction. How well does your organization ensure that these perspectives are balanced in the organization? For example, by engineering zones of controlled experimentation?

Could we be cutting out our senior executives?

70% will actively avoid organizations that ignore their work/life balance and 69% want to co-decide where work gets done. Yet many organizations used Covid to cut office space, leaving executives to manage remotely. What is your 3-year plan for remote working? Are board discussions framed in terms of wealth, or health? How forward-looking (and sustainable) are your decisions?

Do we have panoramic vision of the media landscape?

96% of executive candidates consult company websites prior to an interview, with 74% likely talking with your current and ex-employees. Only 33% seek facts directly from the source. How often do external corporate communications (and internal or external specialists) feature on your board agenda? How compelling would a potential senior hire find that messaging and does it reflect reality, or aspiration?

The messages from senior executives raise several questions, which as a talent strategist may be relevant to your talent management processes. Here is our selection.

Do we check that senior executives can live up to their own desires?

80% of senior executives say they seek growth and freedom, but this demands that they are able to leave their comfort zone. To what extent does your organization offer these factors? And if senior candidates express a need for them, do you check their ability to thrive in such a fluid (and possibly ambiguous) environment?

Is our organization ethically future-proof?

94% of your future leaders seek alignment with your organization's ethical values and principles. To what extent do you ask for proof points of their own ethical robustness, particularly when they're under pressure, dealing with dilemmas or gray zones? If your organization suffered a reputational fallout, how do you answer difficult questions and reassure candidates for whom this may be a deal-breaker? (84%).

How do we demonstrate and deliver support from the top?

Trusting in and being supported by top management is very important to 90% of senior executives, and many will likely conduct a 360^0 analysis of your organization, (also talking with your ex-employees). What concrete reassurance do you give during the hiring process? What dialogues with board members are organized? What coaching and mentoring can new entrants expect, especially during onboarding (and given current remote working conditions in many markets).

How do we assure a diverse hiring strategy?

79% seek diversity of thought. In your hiring processes how do you ensure a broad spectrum of candidate profiles are presented? Especially if your organization has a strong and unified culture, how do you check for and manage potential bias towards 'non-comformists', also in terms of board attitudes to 'atypical' profiles?

Is wise decision-making locked into our talent management strategy?

Senior executives crave wise decision-making (ethical, responsible and sustainable). Compassion, involvement, societal and environmental values should all be emphasized over their opposites. Senior executives need to lead by example. To what extent are wise decision making indicators built into your candidate scorecards? See our report: *Wise Decision-Making: Stepping Up to Sustainable Business Performance,* for our 3-pillar model, and test questions.

Are we ready for the new shape of careers?

45% of senior executives want the contractual freedom to work for more than one organization at the same time. 73% want a semi-engineered career route, rather than a strict upward journey. How equipped is your talent management framework to meet these needs, and how might key stakeholders privately view candidates whose careers have taken a more 'organic' shape?

Is it time to revitalize lifelong learning?

79% want to be given learning budget that they manage and almost all will avoid your organization if it neglects learning provision. Has Covid pushed executive learning off the agenda? How could you use our findings to make a business case for re-installing it? How could investment be leveraged by incentivizing executives to share elements of their newly-acquired learning with others?

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Can we foster entrapreneurship?

63% want their finances to be closely associated with organizational performance. How adaptable are current remuneration and compensation systems to individual needs? What negotiating frameworks are in place and how do you assure that these are perceived as fair and equitable? And given their importance, how if at all are ESG performance indicators built into performance frameworks?

How do we manage innovation?

78% are looking for an environment of controlled innovation. Looking at your organization's innovation track record and outlook, how well does your employee value proposition reflect its innovation capacity? And if executives want meaningful innovation, what role are they prepared to play in delivering or stimulating it? How is innovation rewarded in your organization, relative to commercial performance, for example? How could you use disruptive innovation to attract high performers who can brilliantly surf uncertainty and complexity?

Remote working and office space, how can we assure a healthy agenda?

70% of senior executives will actively avoid organizations that ignore their work/ life balance and 69% want to co-decide where work gets done. How you can you facilitate the board-level discussion that will ensure a sustainable strategy going forward? What evidence do you have or need to inform a balanced and wise discussion (internal, external, and indeed, from highly-prized candidates) ?

What is the state of our external communications?

Prior to an interview, 96% of executive candidates consult company websites and 74% are likely talking with your current and ex-employees. Only 33% seek facts directly from the source. What prominence on your agenda is given to your senior employee branding proposition? What could be the benefit of closer cooperation with communications professionals and the board to ensure a streamlined, multi-channel approach? Does your organization cultivate an alumni network?

How wisely are we using AI in hiring?

49% of senior executives trust an AI to assess their technical skills and knowledge, 41% trust it to scan their CV. But just under 15% totally trust an AI to intervene in their hiring process. 48% would highly or totally mistrust a machine to actually interview them. What place does AI have in your hiring mix? Does this place need re-thinking? How carefully are you presenting AI tools to senior candidates, managing any concerns and in the way you present and use the data?

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Our report examines the deeper motivations and needs of a global population of your peers. In assessing your next organization, and maximizing your chances of being hired, what questions can you ask yourself? Here is our selection.

Am I really prepared for growth and freedom?

80% of your peers say they seek growth and freedom, but growth and freedom imply some vulnerability — you may need to leave your comfort zone. In terms of growth, well do you handle feedback about your knowledge, skills or behavioral gaps? And in terms of freedom, how well do you handle ambiguous environments? What coaching would help you to navigate more easily (and help others do the same)? At your next interview, how will you frame your request?

How can I demand and make an ethical case?

94% of leaders seek alignment with an organization's ethical values and principles. Is ethical under-performance a deal-breaker for you? How clear is your own ethical framework and what evidence can you give of the way you practice it? What sources will you use to check the ethical strength of your next hiring organization? See the Full Report for an inventory of possible channels.

How can I ensure I'll get the support I'll need?

If you are like 90% of senior executives, the support of top management will be very important to you. During your next hiring process, what evidence will you ask for? Beyond corporate value statements, who in your network could inform you of the reality and how will you cross check opinion with fact? What coaching and mentoring will the organization offer, at onboarding and beyond. What board exposure (and interaction) can you concretely expect?

Will I be happy being different here?

79% seek diversity of thought. What evidence will you seek that diversity is more than a buzzword? Especially if the organization has a strong culture, what questions will you ask to check your fit, and how willing are you to adapt? These deep questions require self-knowledge and may be a make or break factor in your decision.

Is this a wise organization? And how do I exemplify wise values?

If you are like most senior executives, you'll want to practice and experience wise decision-making (ethical, responsible and sustainable). You'll seek an emphasis on compassion, involvement, societal and environmental values. Use our report: *Wise Decision-Making: Stepping Up to Sustainable Business Performance*, to check your own propensity to make wise decisions, and your potential hiring organization.

Am I ready for an organic career?

45% of your peers want the freedom to work for more than one organization at the same time. 73% seek a semi-engineered, lateral career route, rather than a vertical upward journey. Have you considered either of these options and if so how would you sell it: to yourself, and to a potential hiring organization? What could be the mutual benefits (and pitfalls)?

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What do I still have left to learn?

79% of senior executives expect their organization to hand them a learning budget that they manage and almost all will avoid an organization that fails to provide learning. What are your learning themes and priorities, in terms of content or leadership skills? How will you present the business case during an interview? How willing and able are you to integrate new learning and share it with colleagues?

What is my financial risk tolerance?

63% want their finances to be closely associated with organizational performance. How financially exposed are you prepared to be right now? What are your minimum and maximum variable levels? What sources will you use to check your organization's financial track record and outlook? And finally, what check questions will you use to determine your likely influence on its strategy (decision-making systems, culture, channels, etc.)?

What is my attitude to innovation and disruption?

78% of senior executives want an environment of controlled innovation. What is your position on this? Are you prepared to trade off some predictability and stability in favor of a disruptive, wild-west pioneer? 46% would actively avoid a fully experimental organization. Are you at ease in such an environment? If so, you may meet less competition for a role in the kind of organization that many executives avoid.

What has Covid taught me about remote working and work/life balance?

70% of senior executives avoid organizations that ignore their work/life balance and 69% want to co-decide where work gets done. What has been your experience of remote working during Covid? What have you handled well? Less well? What measures can you personally take responsibility for, and what do you expect your next organization to do? Your questions may concern coaching, contact with top management and the extent to which agendas address 'how' as well as 'how much'.

How could I better audit a potential employer?

Prior to an interview, 96% consult company websites and 74% talk with current and ex-employees. Only 33% seek facts directly from the organization itself. Doing so will not only help you distinguish fact from fiction, but distinguish you from rival candidates. In our Full Report we present a range of communications channels for you to consider in checking out an organization. The more seductive the opportunity, the more vital it is to double check your enthusiasm with fact.

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BOARDS

Be the Catalyst | 8 Ways for Directors to Be a Positive Force for Change
Raising the Bar For the Nominations Committee
Nominations Committees, a User Guide
Board Evaluation, a Shareholder's Guide
Welcome to the Flight Deck | a Global Mid-Cap Study
Sustainable Board Evaluation
LATAM Board-Ready Women
Destination Boardroom (Series)

TALENT STRATEGY

3 Roles of the New CHRO
Transaction to Transformation | 16 Trustbuilding Keys for Hiring Companies & Search Firms
Make or Break? Transition Coaching
The Re-invention of Office Space
Keep Your Dissonance, Lifelong Learning
How Can Executive Search Do Better?

CAREERS

The Great Executive Re-Brand
I Am My Biggest Project (Series)
The New Shape of Work
The Age of No Age
Let's Make it Happen
Remotely Possible | Top 10 Tips for Video Interviewees

COVID

Self-Isolation | Letting the Light Into the Room
Joining a Storm-hit Crew | Managing the Executive's Onboarding Journey
Mental Wellbeing in the Age of Covid

LEADERSHIP

Personal Governance (Series)
New Adventurous Leadership Parts 1 and 2
The New Normal, Which Leadership Model Will Win?

Wise Decision-Making
Wise Decision-Making | Stepping Up to Sustainable Business Performance, Global Study
Cash or Continuity | When the Investors Come Knocking
Wising Up | Smart Decisions or Sustainable Decisions?
Wise Decision-Making and AI (Series)
When Wisdom is Put to the Test
From Tension to Transformation | How Wise Decision-Makers Transcend Paradoxes
Inside the Wise Leader's Brain (Series)

DIGITIZATION

Digitization on Boards 4th Edition, Study
What Really Counts in Digital Leadership? (Series)
From Disruption to Daylight | How Leaders are Travelling the Digital Change Curve

About Amrop

With over 60 offices in all world regions, Amrop is a trusted advisor in Executive Search, Leadership and Board Advisory. It is the largest partnership of its kind.

Amrop advises the world's most dynamic organizations on finding and positioning Leaders For What's Next: top talent, adept at working across borders in markets around the world.

Amrop's mission: shaping sustainable success through inspiring leaders.

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