



# Leadership Effectiveness – Preparing for the Challenges Ahead

# ODGERS BERNDTSON

**Top 3**

in Portugal

**N.2**

in Europe

**N.6**

worldwide

Partnership with **+70%**  
of Portuguese Stock Index  
companies

**+ 90%** of  
customers satisfaction

**+ 90%**  
success rate

---

*Trusted Advisor on Leadership*

---



- CEO & Executive Search
- Succession Management
- Talent Mapping



- Leadership Assessment
- Leadership Programmes
- Team Effectiveness
- Executive Coaching



- Organisational Design
- Talent Strategy
- Culture Transformation
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



- Board Assessment
- Board Search & Succession Planning
- Board Consulting
- Advisory Boards



- Talent Acquisition
- Talent Assessment
- Young Talent
- HR Tech

# AN EVOLVING BUSINESS LANDSCAPE CREATES THE NEED FOR EXECUTIVES TO REFLECT ON HOW THEY WILL LEAD THE FUTURE

As the business landscape continues to evolve, senior executives face an increasingly complex environment that demands adaptability and a forward-thinking approach. Effective leadership today demands both the agility to tackle immediate challenges and the foresight to anticipate future disruptions and opportunities.

This study aims to understand which leadership competencies will be most essential in driving value in the future and to assess how executives are preparing themselves and their organizations. Drawing on insights from 87 senior leaders across industries, it offers valuable perspectives straight from Portuguese boardrooms.

Looking ahead, three factors are expected to have the greatest impact on businesses: geopolitical instability, macroeconomic policies, and artificial intelligence. Fortunately, most executives believe they are prepared to lead their organizations through these challenges. Many have already implemented key initiatives, such as strengthening risk management, optimizing costs, and accelerating digital

transformation. Despite this strong foundation, executives recognize the need for further preparation. While future leadership will require a broad skill set, three core competencies are becoming increasingly important: adaptability, strategic clarity, and people development. To succeed in this evolving landscape, leaders must not only cultivate these skills themselves but also embed them within their teams and organizations. For this to happen, talent development is considered the most relevant lever to pull.

We hope this study serves as an interesting and valuable resource for you and your organization on the path to leadership effectiveness.

Finally, we would like to thank all contributors for their insights. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Pedro Mêda, Partner  
Francisco Formosinho Sanchez, Senior Principal  
Catarina Rodrigues, Senior Consultant



# THE STUDY AIMS TO GET THE PERSPECTIVE OF NATIONAL BUSINESS LEADERS ON HOW THEY ARE PREPARING FOR INCOMING CHALLENGES



**87**

**BUSINESS LEADERS  
C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES**

**10+**

**SECTORS OF ACTIVITY**

(Industrial, Financial Services, Private Equity,  
Healthcare & Pharma, Consumer, Retail, Energy...)

**FROM SMEs TO  
PORTUGUESE STOCK  
INDEX COMPANIES**



# PORTUGUESE LEADERS ARE FACING A SET OF SYSTEMIC FORCES THAT GO BEYOND TRADITIONAL CHALLENGES

Factors that will impact businesses the most over the coming years  
*Percentage of total respondents*



## Other Factors

Shifts in Consumer Behavior (39%), Technological Advancements & Innovation (32%), Environmental Changes (28%), Demographic Trend (26%)

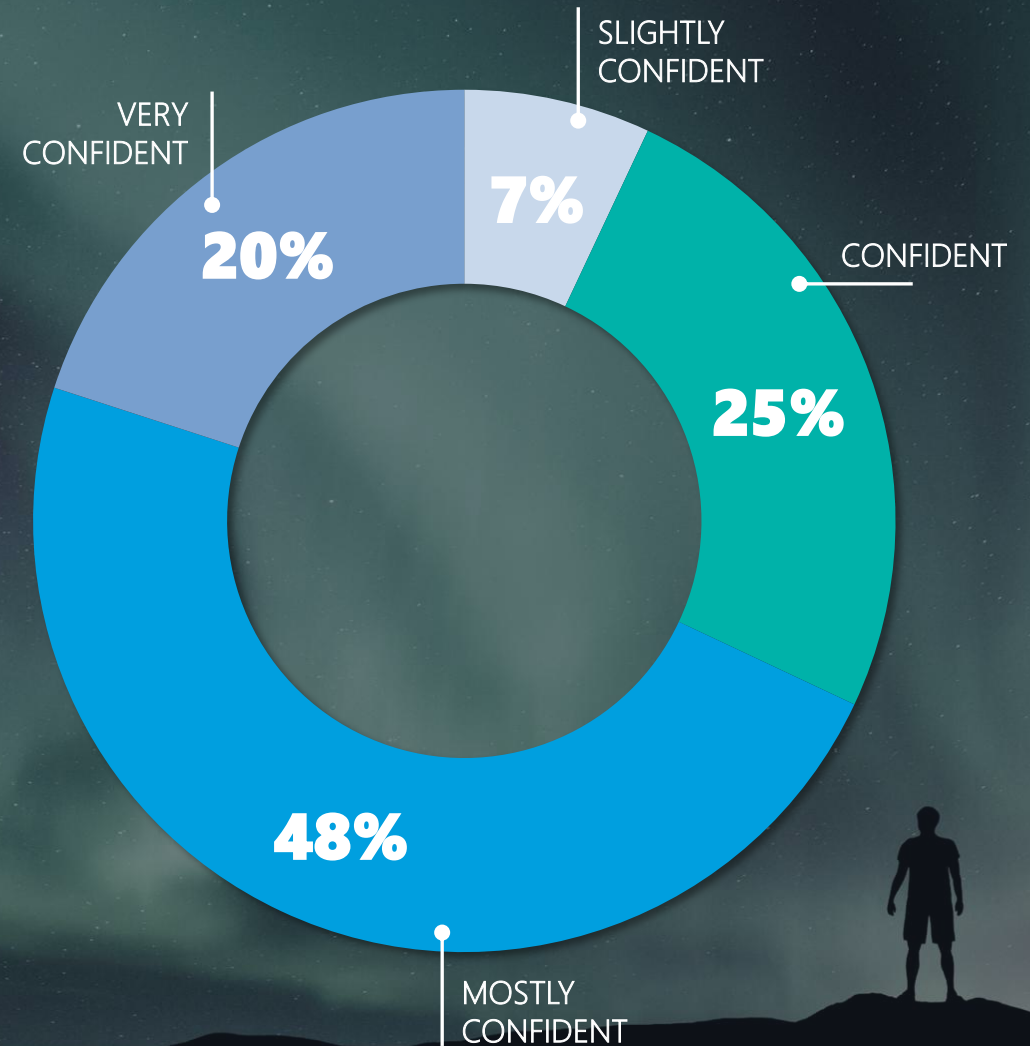


# EXECUTIVES FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO LEAD IN A DYNAMIC CONTEXT

Two thirds of the respondents consider themselves well or very well prepared to lead the organization through the evolving market conditions...

...although over 50% of respondents admit that Geopolitical Instability and AI are the factors that they are least prepared to manage

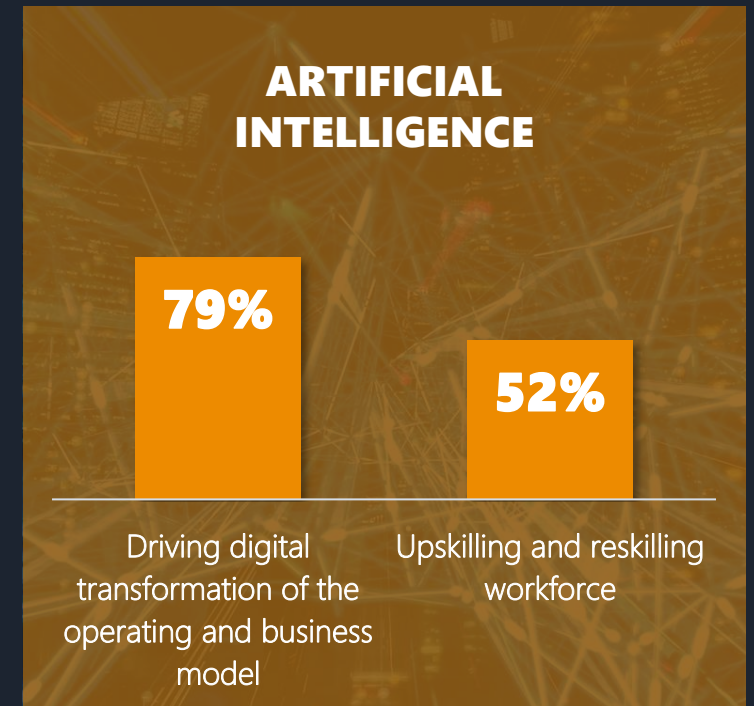
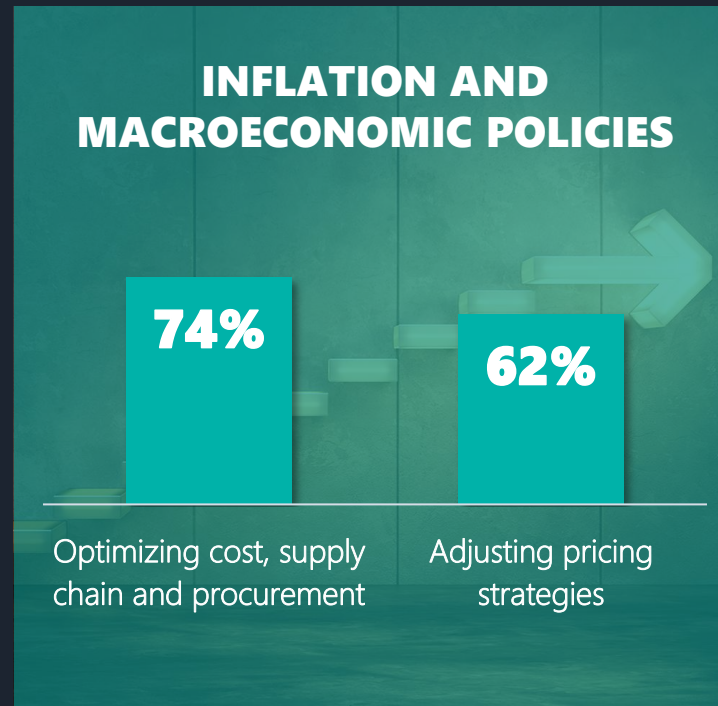
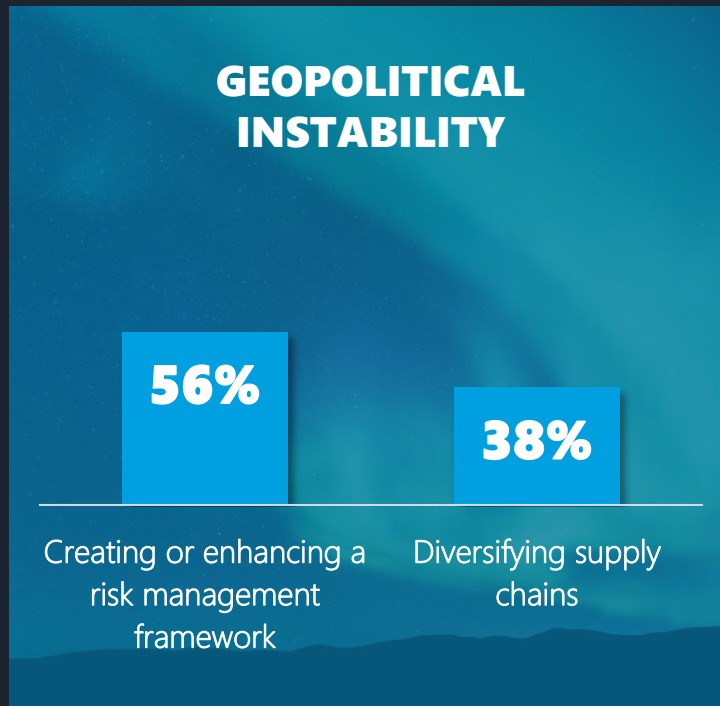
Level of confidence that Leaders have the required competencies to lead the organization given the evolving market conditions  
*Percentage of total respondents*



# ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALREADY TAKING STEPS TO ADDRESS MAJOR DISRUPTIONS

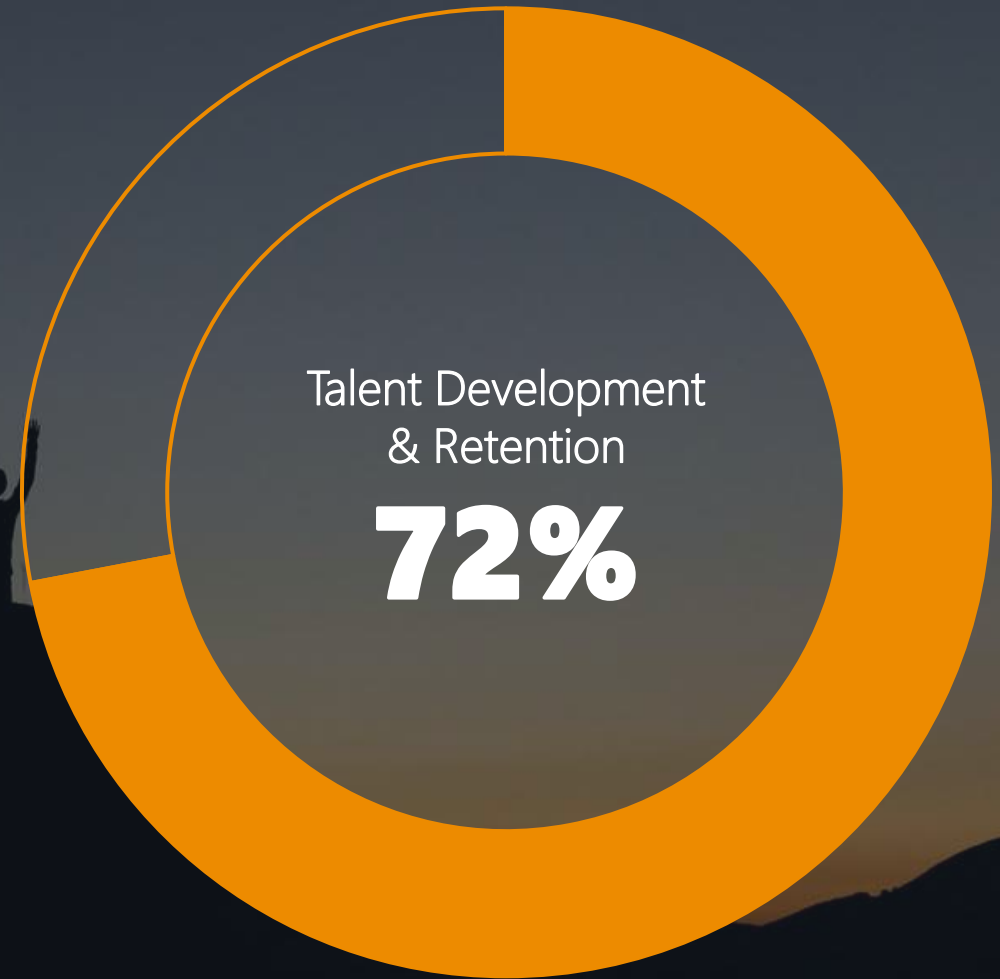
Steps taken to improve the ability to manage the disruptive factors

*Percentage of total respondents (top voted)*



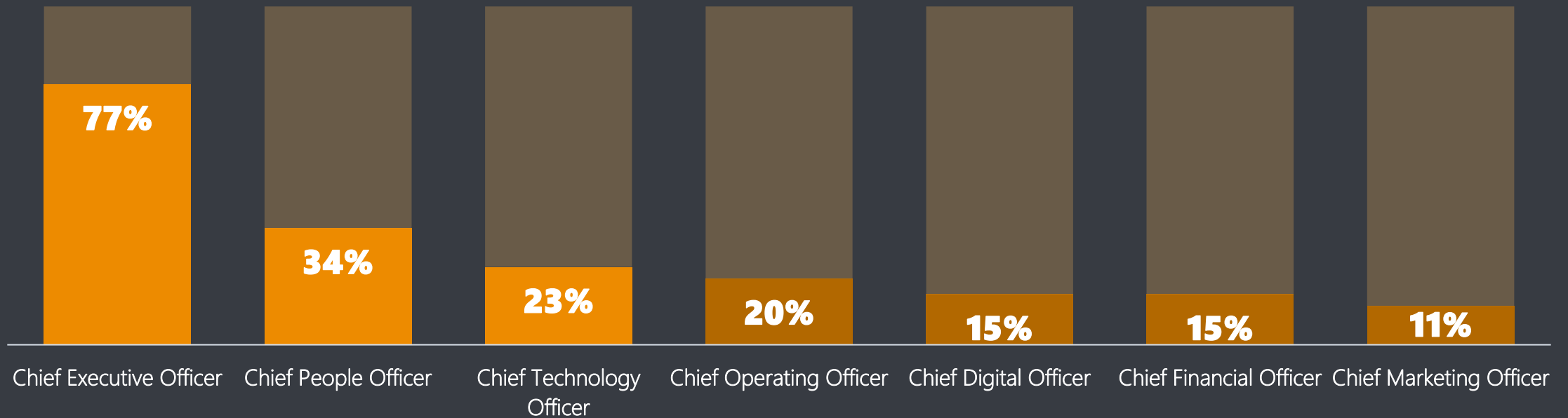
# THE MAIN STRATEGIC LEVER TO ADDRESS THE INCREASED COMPLEXITY OF THE MARKET ENVIRONMENT IS **TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Most important priorities of companies in light of  
new forces impacting the business  
*Percentage of total respondents*



# CHIEF PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICERS ARE INCREASINGLY VITAL IN SUPPORTING THE CEO IN PREPARING THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE FUTURE

Roles that will be most critical in managing the challenges of evolving market conditions  
*Percentage of total respondents*



# TO ADDRESS NEW FORCES, EXECUTIVES WILL NEED TO CONTINUE TO SHOWCASE A WELL-DEVELOPED SET OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

*Understand market trends, anticipate change, craft a clear vision, and develop a sound strategy with defined goals for lasting stakeholder value*

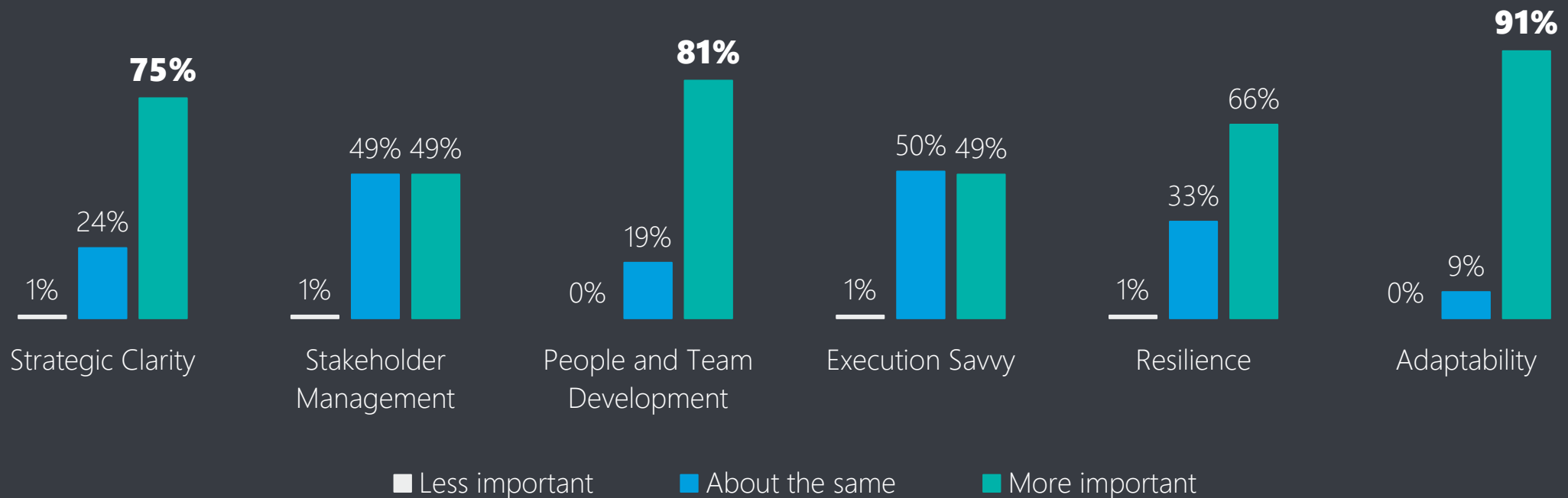
*Engage key stakeholders systematically to address their needs, influence decisions, and align outcomes with shared interests*



# THREE AREAS OF COMPETENCIES WILL BECOME EVEN MORE RELEVANT GOING FORWARD

## ADAPTABILITY, STRATEGIC CLARITY AND PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

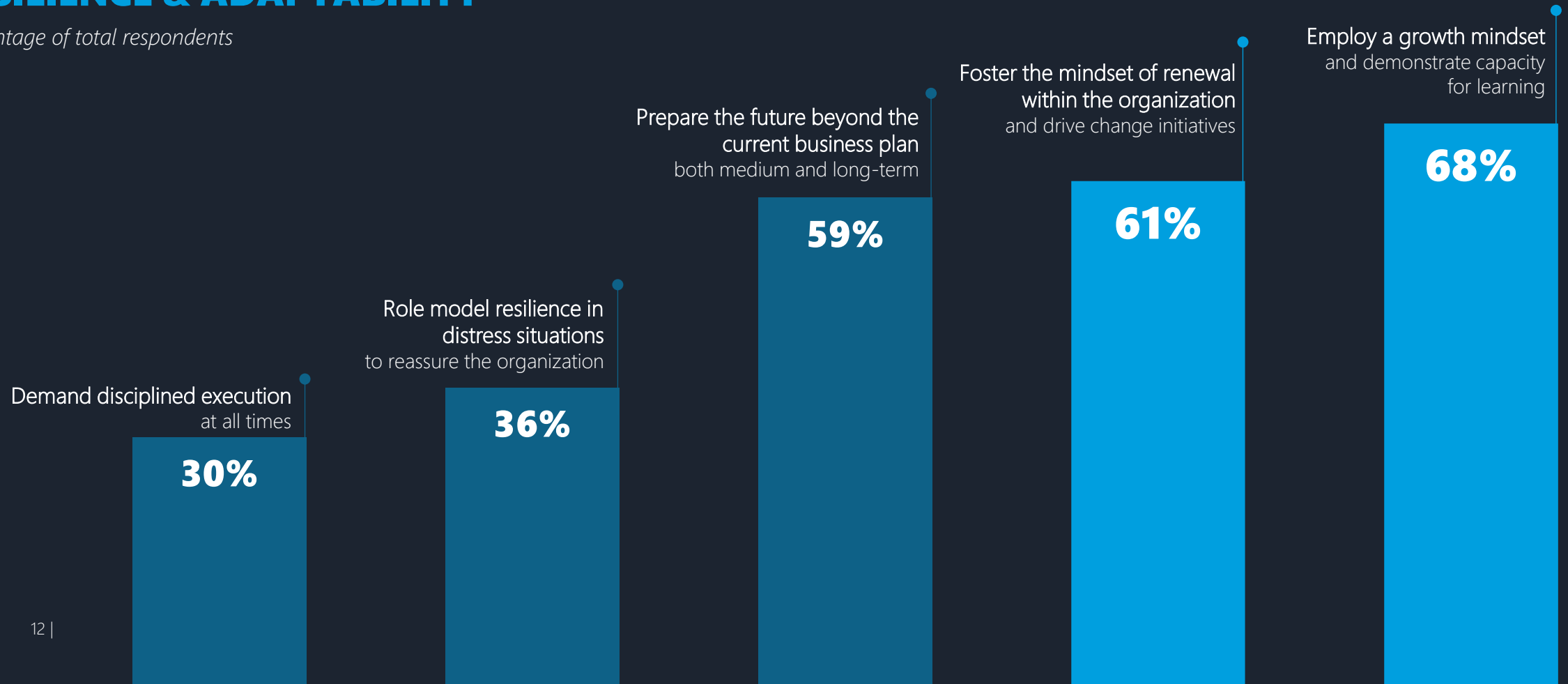
How the importance of leadership competencies will change  
*Percentage of total respondents*



# EMBRACING A GROWTH MINDSET AND FOSTERING ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL WILL BE KEY FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP

## RESILIENCE & ADAPTABILITY

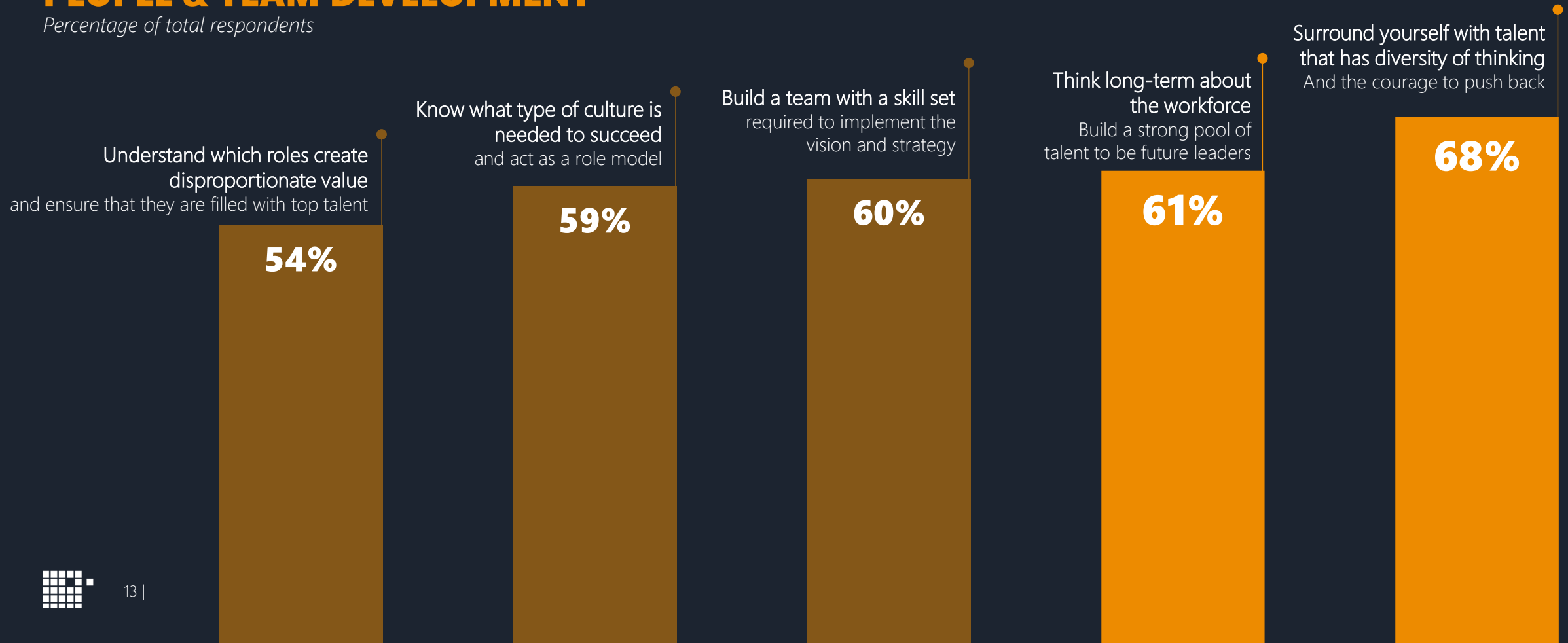
*Percentage of total respondents*



# LEADERS SHOULD FOCUS ON SURROUNDING THEMSELVES WITH BOLD, DIVERSE THINKERS AND ON DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

## PEOPLE & TEAM DEVELOPMENT

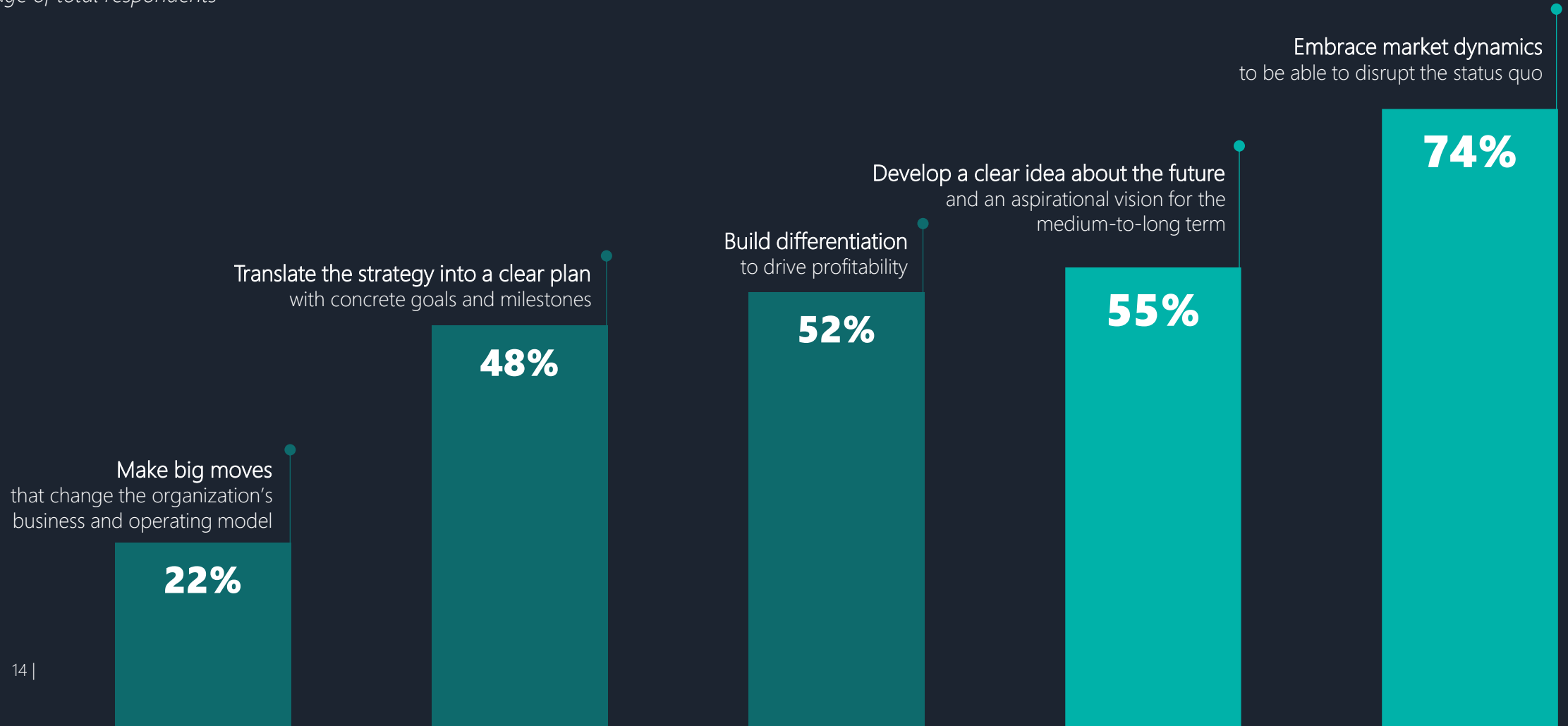
*Percentage of total respondents*



# DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO AND DEFINING AN AMBITIOUS VISION WILL SHAPE FUTURE LEADERSHIP

## STRATEGIC CLARITY

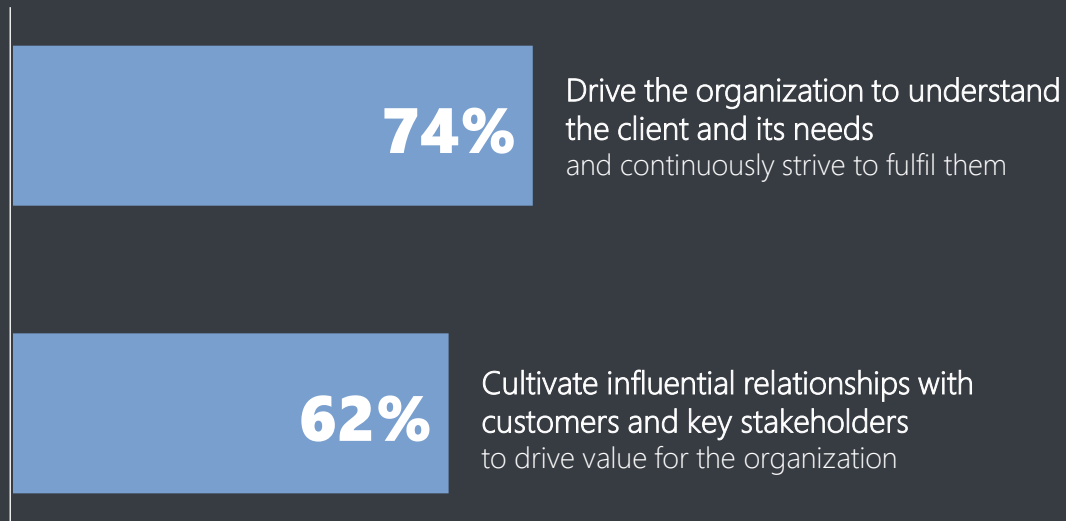
*Percentage of total respondents*



# LEADERS WILL NEED TO DRIVE CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO CREATE A LASTING IMPACT

*Top behaviours (Percentage of total respondents)*

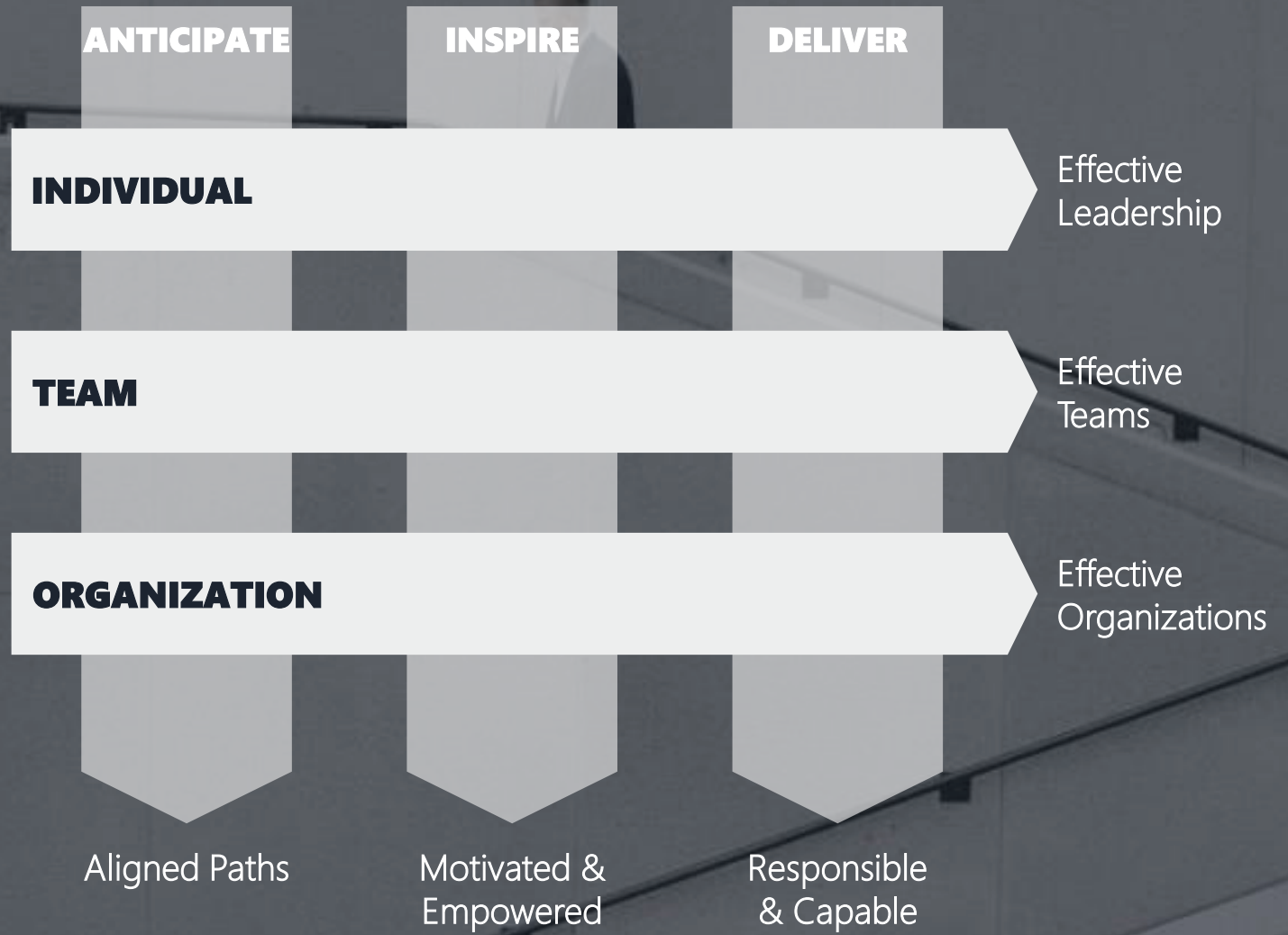
## STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT



## EXECUTION SAVVY



# EXECUTIVES NEED TO **MASTER THESE COMPETENCIES** AND INSTILL THEM IN THEIR TEAMS AND THE BROADER ORGANIZATION



# TO DEVELOP NEW COMPETENCIES, LEADERS CAN INVEST IN A SET OF INITIATIVES

## INDIVIDUAL

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Prepare leaders for future challenges through focused learning and expert guidance

### COACHING

Personalized, structured and business-centered coaching processes

## TEAM

### TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

Build cohesive, high-performing teams by identifying and addressing challenges in team dynamics

### EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Search and selection process for key leadership roles

## ORGANIZATION

### TALENT STRATEGY

Identify, manage, develop, and retain internal talent through human resources policies

### ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

Optimize organizational structures, operating models, and behaviors to align with strategy and future vision



# KEY CONCLUSIONS

1

## **Systemic forces are impacting businesses**

Geopolitical shifts, macroeconomic policies and AI are redefining business priorities and leadership challenges

2

## **Executives have started to address challenges**

Leaders are adapting their organizations, for example, by investing in risk management, optimizing supply chains and driving digital transformation

3

## **To succeed, a well-rounded set of competencies will be key**

The increasing complexity of the business landscape requires a holistic approach to leadership

4

## **Adaptability, Talent Management and Strategic Clarity will be increasing important**

Leaders must navigate complexity with openness, set a clear vision and develop high-performing teams

5

## **Leaders need to develop themselves, their teams and the organization at large**

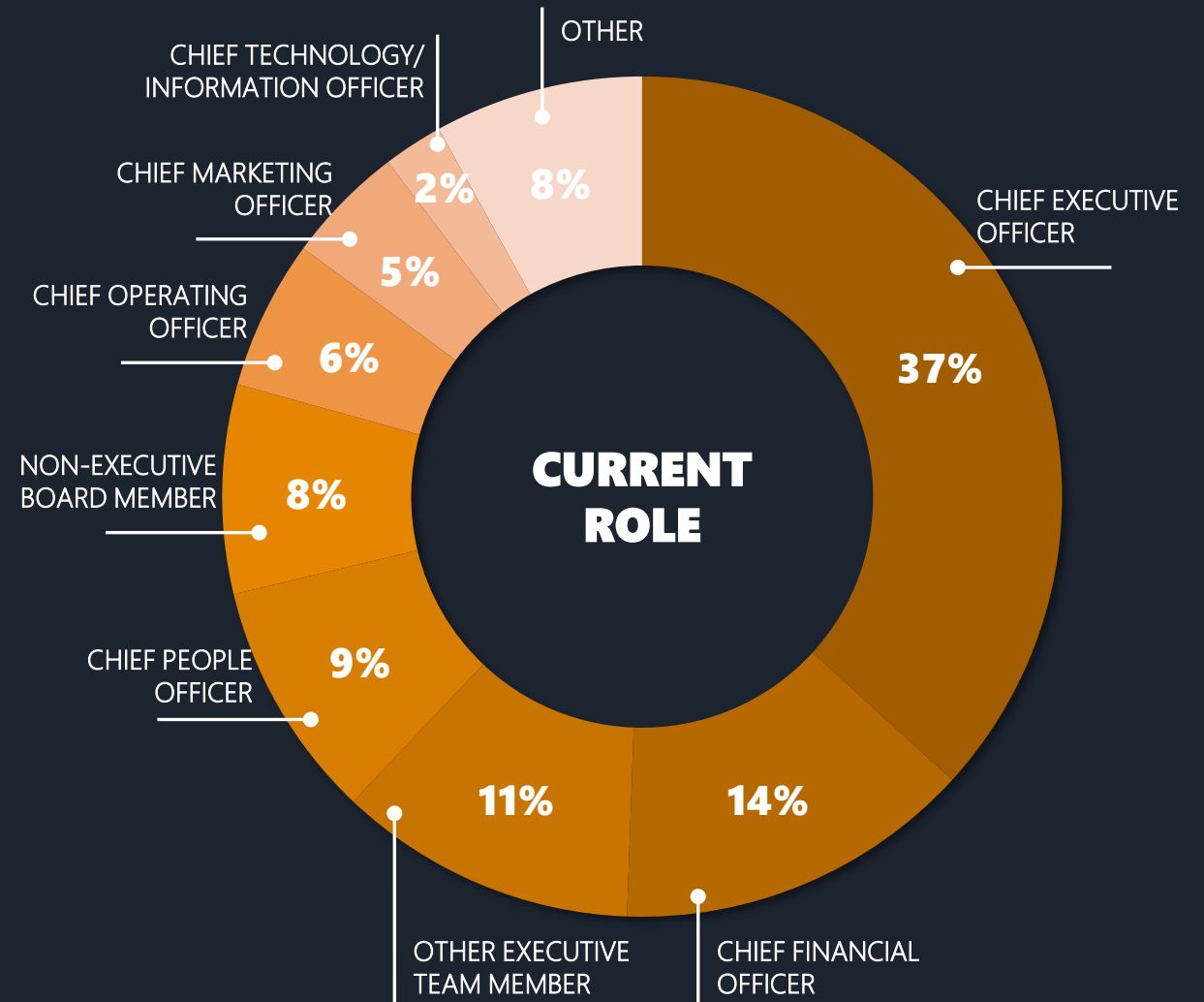
Successful companies build these muscles across all organizational levels

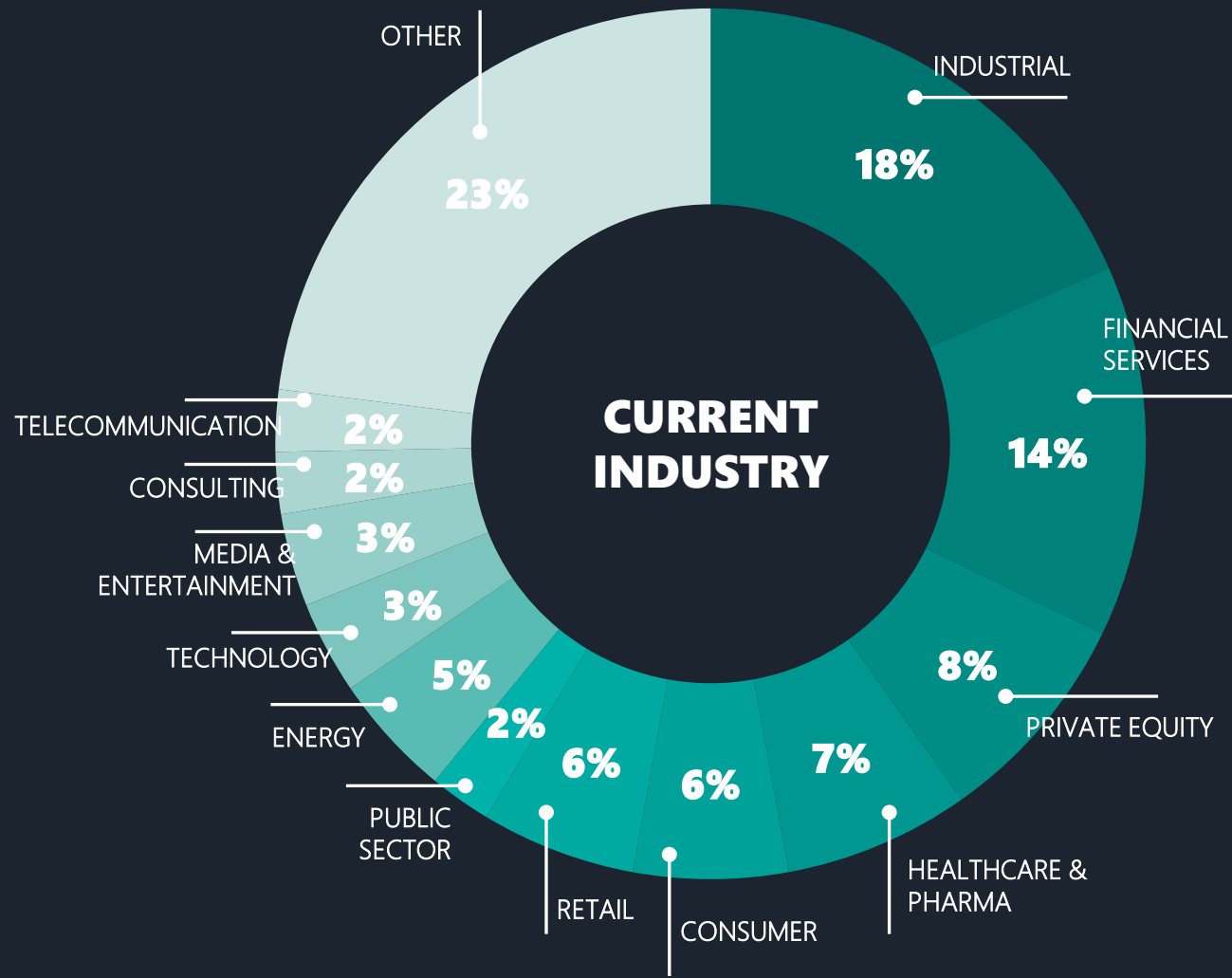


# METHODOLOGY

This study, conducted by Odgers Berndtson Portugal, aimed to identify the leadership capabilities most critical for driving long-term value and to assess how executives are preparing themselves and their organizations for the future.

To achieve this goal, data was gathered through a questionnaire distributed to Business Leaders and C-level executives from companies in Portugal. 80% of the participants serve on their company's Executive Board.





## METHODOLOGY

The study participants represent companies across more than ten industry sectors, with a particular emphasis on the Industrial and Financial Services sectors.

Additionally, 67% of the participants were from large enterprises, with over 500 employees.



# OUR GLOBAL REACH

58 offices

