

# 2023 Boyden Leadership Trends

Re-signification of the leader's role:  
the human way of leading

Key insights from a Boyden global survey



boyden

# foreword

## Trina Gordon

President & CEO  
Boyden World  
Corporation



As we advance our offering from executive search, to interim management and leadership consulting, we are also investing in creating relevant thought-provoking and impactful thought leadership.

With contributions from our partnership across 70 offices in 45 countries, deep research from our Leadership Consulting Center of Excellence, and valuable inputs from leaders across the globe, I am happy to announce this first edition of our Global Leadership Trends study.

This is a unique opportunity to share our accumulated knowledge and insights from partnering with top executives in different regions and industries and thus making an impact.

I hope this study can become a valuable reference and a beacon when it comes to inspiring organizations and leaders worldwide.

## João G. Vaz

Partner &  
Global Head of  
Leadership Consulting



As the world still tries to find its way, following a global pandemic and deep economic and political uncertainty, organizations have had to adapt to hybrid and more flexible work environments, while maintaining healthy levels of productivity. And while organizations have been heavily impacted, workers have suffered high levels of stress and are now demanding more and more from organizations.

Remarkably, leaders seem to be the key to unlocking one of the most important trends right now: the rise of a more human-centered leadership. They are more exposed than ever, but their actions have a disproportionate impact in the ability to connect with, retain and attract talent.

And although the rise of this trend seems to be a natural result of the pandemic itself, we have been observing this movement for quite some time, and we believe it is here to stay.

# introduction

The world is a new place, characterized by unpredictability. In the aftermath of a global pandemic, military, political and social tensions pose an ongoing series of tests.

As organizations cautiously navigate uncharted waters, words like humanity, resilience, adaptability, and innovation are taking on a deeper meaning.

These are unquestionably challenging times. But they offer extraordinary opportunities to explore new ways of thinking and acting. Boyden Leadership Consulting is helping leaders redefine their roles within this context and prevail through instability.

Organizations are increasingly relying on their leaders for guidance and direction. New pressures are heightening the need to swiftly equip organizations with the right tools – one of which is the ability to anticipate the future of leadership and become active participants in reinvention.

Towards this goal, we have researched the top leadership trends and surveyed leaders across the world regarding their organizations' priorities, level of readiness, and maturity of each trend. Their thoughts on the most effective strategies as well as the challenges they have faced are enlightening.

This report offers expert insights based on seven key leadership trends to watch in 2023. By unpacking the way these trends are shaping organizations and leadership behaviors, we hope to shed light on creative ways to manage new needs and expectations.

## Katia Pina

Senior Director & Head of  
Leadership Consulting  
Center of Excellence





# what's in this report

This report examines key leadership priorities, organizations' maturity and several leadership strategies and challenges, through the lenses of **7 major leadership trends**.

The following pages include:

- Methodology
- Executive Summary | Key Findings
- Insights on 7 Major Leadership Trends
- Insights in Action | Our Recommendations
- The Way Forward





# methodology

The Leadership Trends study was conducted during the **third quarter of 2022**, through in-depth research into the most relevant leadership matters of today. Each trend has been methodically identified through research and expert consultation; additional insights have been collected through a survey distributed to senior executives worldwide.

Data is derived from the combined total of **463 complete responses from leaders across the globe**, comprising 42.7% from North America, 30% from Europe and 17.1% from China & Singapore.

From the total of leaders, 56% were male, 42.9% female, and 1.1% preferred not to respond.

**Most participants have identified their functional role as CEO, C-level or general management (47%), and defined their roles as HR, talent- or people-related (32.4%).**

The technology, media, and telecommunications sector accounts for 16.2%, followed by 14.9% within professional services, and 12.7% from energy, resources, and industrial, with the remainder of responses coming from consumer, financial services, healthcare & life sciences, government & public services, education, sports, arts, culture, and entertainment.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Top 7 Trends in Leadership



### Human-Centered Leadership

Humanism at the center of leadership, encouraging fairness, transparency and authenticity. Caring about the wellbeing and professional development of each individual.



### Freedom-Centric Culture

Inspiring and encouraging a variety of work styles that best suit each individual's lifestyle and ability to perform.



### Beyond Resilience

Ability to thrive under extreme pressure, adapting and using change as an opportunity to grow and explore new opportunities.



### Impact Learning

Leadership development using the right mix of tools and methodologies, co-created, bespoke, experiential, and directly relevant to business.



### People-Technology Link

Enabling digital fluency across the organization, empowering leaders to embrace and leverage technology and digital transformation.



### Responsible Businesses

Assuming responsibility towards a larger set of stakeholders, promoting transparency and purpose with a strong focus on social, environmental, and financial sustainability.



### Diverse Leadership Bench

Promoting a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable pool of leadership talent. Fostering a psychologically safe environment to achieve high collective performance.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Relative priority of trends

We have asked leaders to **rank the 7 trends by priority according to what they consider to be most critical** in the market in which they operate. The results emphasize a focus on human- and freedom-centric leadership practices.

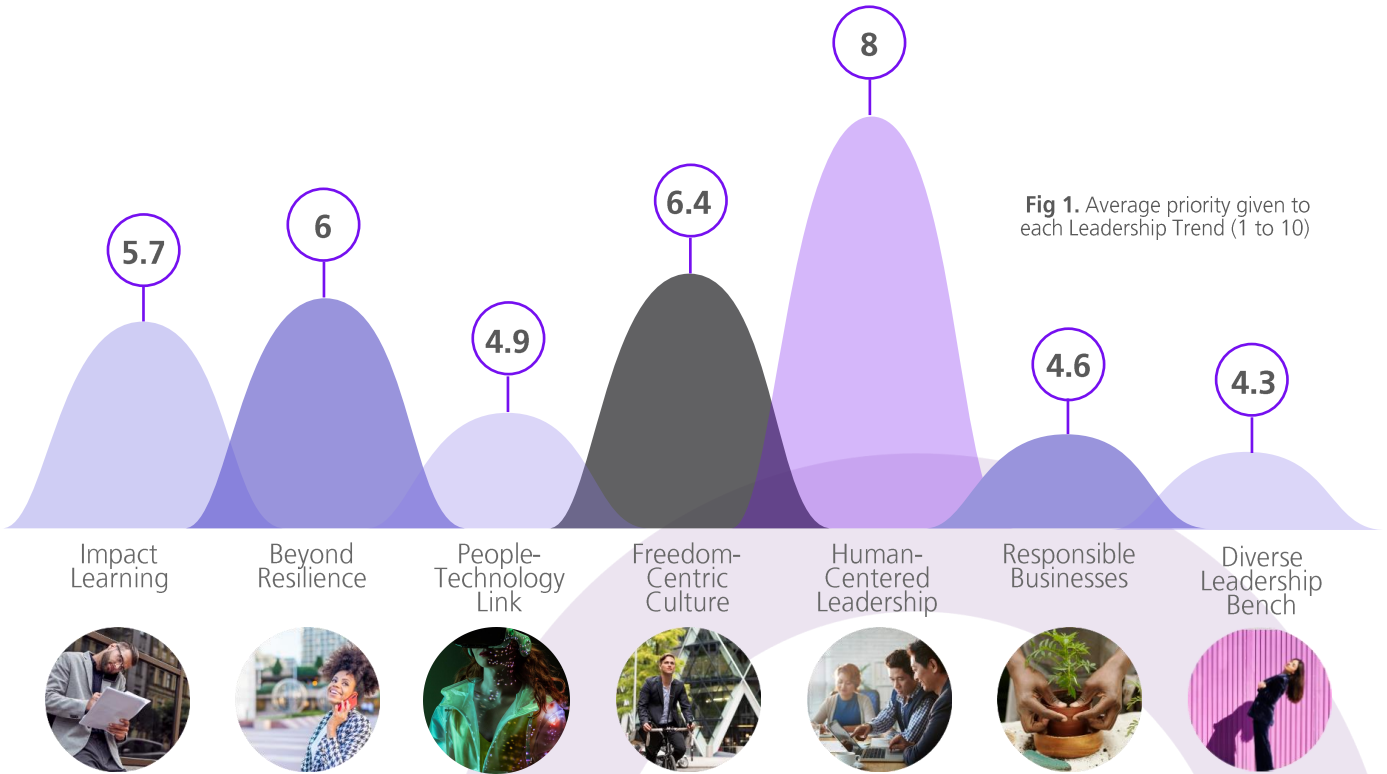


Fig 1. Average priority given to each Leadership Trend (1 to 10)

# 43.1%

of respondents chose human-centered leadership as their first priority

### Other PRIORITY-related highlights:

- Younger leaders, leaders working in HR roles and leaders from China & Singapore tend to prioritize a **Freedom-Centric Culture**.
- Enabling a better **People-Technology Link** was considered more urgent by leaders in CEO/board roles, from larger organizations, and those located in China, Singapore and Europe.
- **Responsible Business** matters the most to senior leaders, C-Suite, and leaders from Europe and North America.
- **Diverse Leadership Bench** was considered more urgent for senior leaders.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Relative maturity of trends

When asked to **classify each trend according to the level of maturity** found in their own organizations, leaders consistently considered most trends to be supported by integrated leadership practices...

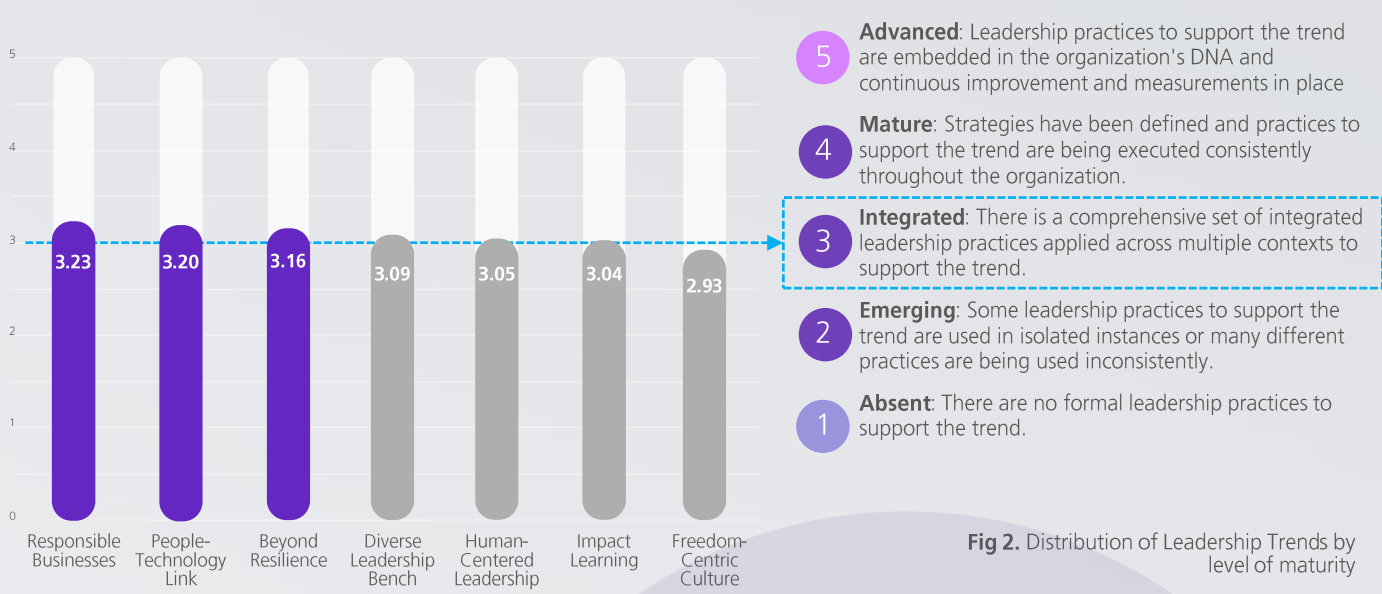


Fig 2. Distribution of Leadership Trends by level of maturity

...however, some trends stand out by the number of leaders who considered it to be more or less mature (Advanced Vs Absent Level of Maturity):

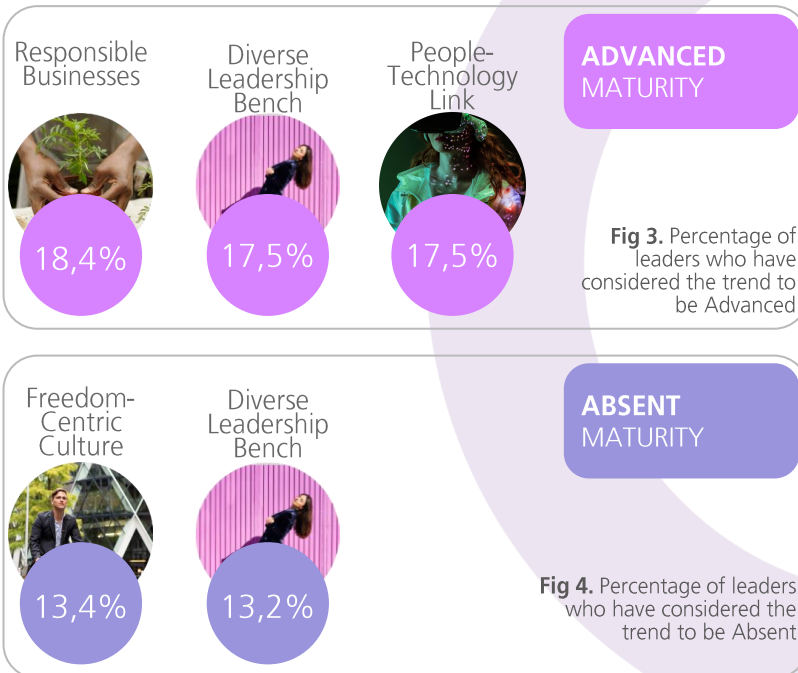


Fig 3. Percentage of leaders who have considered the trend to be Advanced

Fig 4. Percentage of leaders who have considered the trend to be Absent

### Other MATURITY-related highlights:

- Larger organizations are paving the way for **responsible business** practices.
- Younger leaders and leaders in larger organizations are enabling a stronger **people-technology link**.
- **Diverse leadership bench** was perceived as more mature by younger leaders, female leaders, and leaders in larger organizations.
- Leaders in larger organizations believe in having more **responsible business** practices implemented.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## What really changes in organizations while the world is changing?

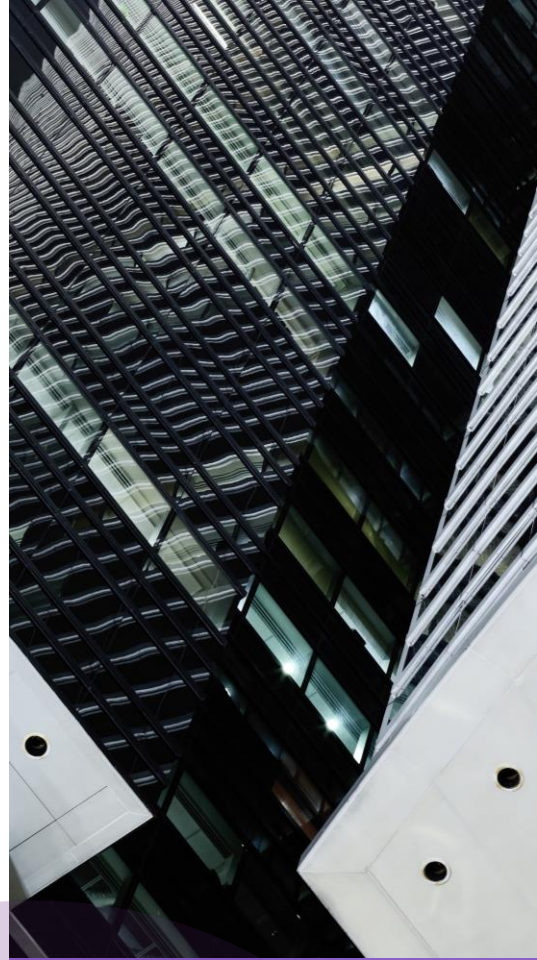
Our 2023 Boyden Leadership Trends Report aims to help leaders embrace a new perception of organizations so that they can thrive in a world that is uncertain and constantly changing.

In this first edition, we analyze **the most critical leadership trends, ways of dealing with significant challenges, and strategies that have been put in place to face crucial leadership concerns.**

We share **solution-oriented insights** based on the **top 7 leadership trends**, indicating the ways in which the future of leading people and organizations may unfold:

- Humanism is the heart of leadership
- Working with flexibility, staying connected
- More agility = more responsiveness
- Focus on high value-added learning
- Being in sync with technology and innovation
- High time for responsible and transparent businesses
- Shifting from diverse to inclusive leadership teams

We hope these insights inspire your strategic thinking for the coming year, enabling you to adapt to the latest global leadership trends.





# 01

## TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Human-Centered Leadership

### **HUMANISM IS THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP**

Caring about the well-being and professional development of each individual while encouraging fairness, transparency and authenticity appear to be the top priority for leaders. A more human-centered workplace is one that promotes people's strengths and capabilities and supports safe environments.





Human-centered leadership stands at the top of priorities for leaders in comparison to the other trends.

# 43.1%

## of respondents chose human-centered leadership as their first priority

Almost half of the respondents (43.1%) chose Human-Centered Leadership as their first priority, which demonstrates a clear awareness that people represent the single most important factor in the run for success. On a scale from one to 10, this trend scored 8.

While most leaders believe this is the path to a sustainable future in organizations and work environments, those leading small businesses tend to consider it even more urgent.

# 01

## HUMANISM IS THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP

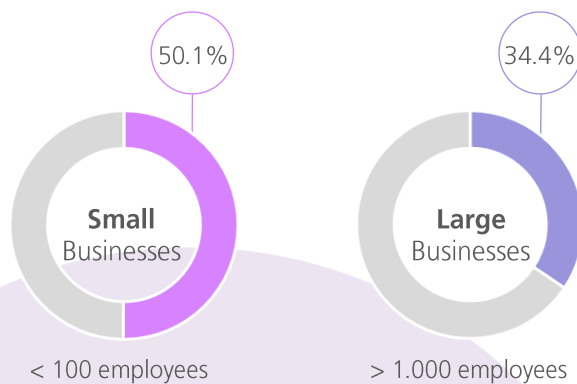


Fig 5. Percentage of leaders who chose Human-Centered Leadership as their first priority, by organization size.

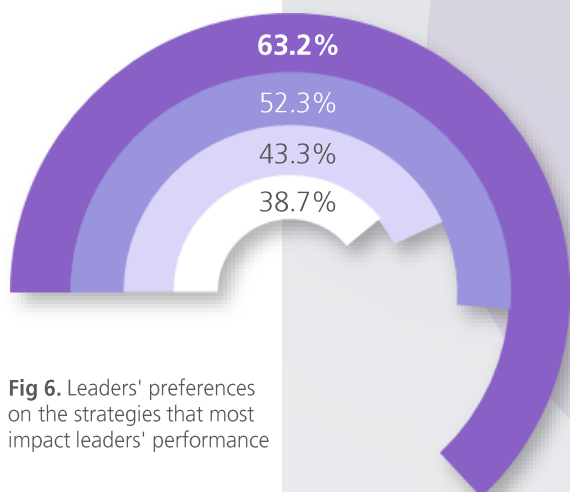


Fig 6. Leaders' preferences on the strategies that most impact leaders' performance

### STRATEGIES THAT MOST IMPACT LEADERS' PERFORMANCE

When asked about the leadership strategies that have a bigger impact on the performance of a leader, most respondents (63.2%) chose coaching and mentoring. But other strategies were also considered:

- Developing potential through coaching and mentoring
- Nurturing empathetic and authentic leadership
- Developing networks and building relationships
- Creating an environment of psychological safety

# 02

## TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Freedom-Centric Culture

### **WORKING WITH FLEXIBILITY, STAYING CONNECTED**

The ability to choose one's work style has become a new reality, and therefore a priority for many employees. Leaders have massively signaled their conviction that more flexible work scenarios are a real aspiration for people and a true concern for organizations aiming to attract and retain talent.



## WORKING WITH FLEXIBILITY, STAYING CONNECTED



Having a freedom-centric culture is a major priority for leaders, being the second most chosen trend in terms of priority. Yet, organizations' readiness and maturity to support this trend are still lagging.

### WHICH LEADERS GAVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO FREEDOM-CENTRIC CULTURE?



Younger leaders



Leaders in HR and talent/people roles



Leaders in management positions (as opposed to executive positions)



Leaders from China & Singapore



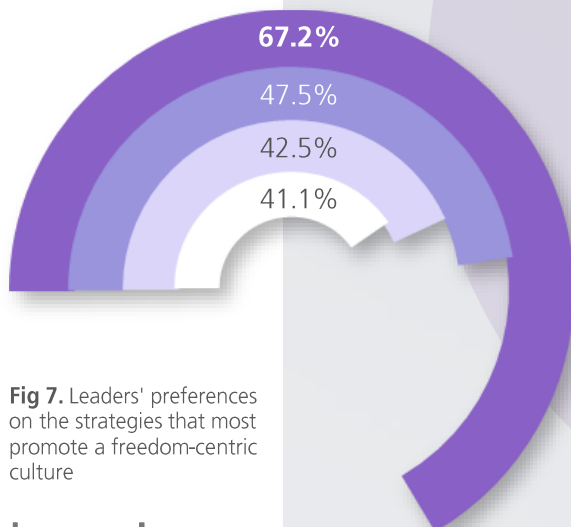
Freedom to decide how, when, and where to work seems to be a major priority for leaders. However, being able to keep everyone connected while driving a sense of belonging and efficiency at work falls somewhat below leaders' expectations.

While freedom of choice and flexibility are on top of their minds, leaders also feel that businesses lack strategies to address this trend. Specifically, respondents reported that in their organizations, some leadership practices that support the trend are being used, but in a very inconsistent and isolated way.

### STRATEGIES THAT MOST PROMOTE A SUSTAINABLE FREEDOM-CENTRIC CULTURE

Having leaders who sponsor and enable a freedom-centric culture was considered by 67.2% of leaders as the most important strategy to achieve flexibility at work. Other strategies were also considered:

- Having leaders who sponsor and enable a freedom-centric culture
- Providing the necessary tools, processes and systems to enable virtual work, communication and collaboration
- Encouraging a shift from task to a results-oriented culture
- Actively promoting a sense of belonging through regular personal interaction



**Fig 7.** Leaders' preferences on the strategies that most promote a freedom-centric culture

# 03

## TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Beyond Resilience

### **MORE AGILITY = MORE RESPONSIVENESS**

Empowering leaders to embrace change and develop their learning agility is the mindset shift that allows successful transformation.

Being able to thrive under the pressure of constant demands was highly prioritized by leaders who believe agility and adaptability contribute to resilient workforces, who in turn are better prepared to navigate complexity.







Adapting to intense business competition by using change as an opportunity to grow and thrive is among the top 3 priorities for leaders. Beyond resilience was the third most chosen trend.

# 03

## MORE AGILITY = MORE RESPONSIVENESS

Our survey results emphasized the high priority given to the "beyond resilience" trend, showing a clear awareness of how beneficial leaders think this is in order to remain competitive.

Agility involves constant learning and being able to adapt quickly when handling high business pressure. And most of our leaders believe organizations already have a significant set of tools and leadership practices to support adaptability and agile organizations.

Compared to other regions, China & Singapore are more optimistic and believe their companies to be more mature in executing these practices.

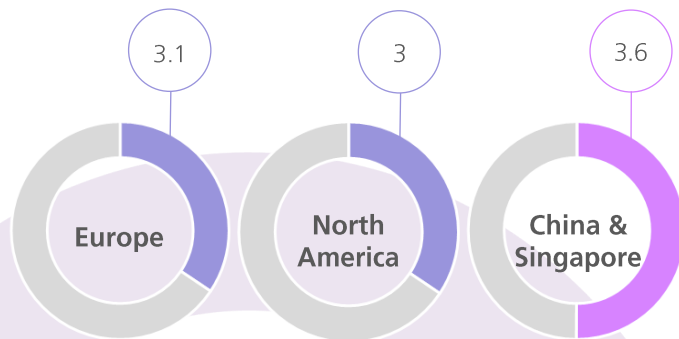


Fig 8. Maturity scores by geographic region

### STRATEGIC ACTIONS THAT BEST PROMOTE AN AGILE ORGANIZATION

To promote an agile environment that can easily adapt to customer needs and changes, there must be a focus on improving communication and collaboration, according to 67.2% of leaders. Other strategies were also considered:

- Improving communication and collaboration
- Promoting self-organized and autonomous teams, as well as decentralized decisions
- Creating an organizational and governance model that promotes agility
- Promoting a trial and error culture

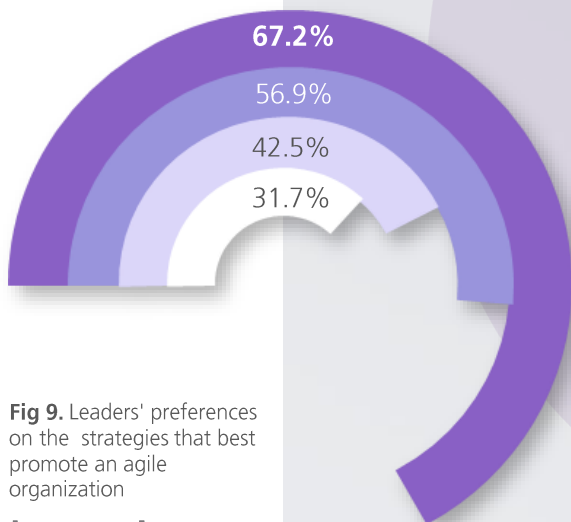


Fig 9. Leaders' preferences on the strategies that best promote an agile organization

# 04

## TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Impact Learning

### FOCUS ON HIGH VALUE-ADDED LEARNING

Today's business world is marked by different working styles, values, and beliefs, which require leaders to adjust their approaches based on who they are managing. Personalized development initiatives that have a transformative impact and increase self-awareness were highly preferred among leaders.





# 04

## FOCUS ON HIGH VALUE-ADDED LEARNING

Elevating leaders to their highest potential through leadership development, stands in the middle of the trends' priority rank, occupying the fourth place.

### 8.3%

of respondents chose impact learning as their first priority

**4th** place in the rank, out of 7 trends

Developing new skills and increasing leaders' knowledge is a pressing matter to many leaders: 8.3% ranked "impact learning" as their first priority.

Indeed, times of great change are an opportunity to realign priorities, and leaders from around the globe believe that to succeed in this complex and volatile context, they need different skills and capabilities than they did in the past.

Our study suggests that leaders are highly aligned regardless of their age, geography, and intervention area with regard to investing in leadership programs that are democratic, bespoke, and directly relevant to the business. Particularly, when asked about the most effective learning strategies, they soundly prefer coaching and personalized mentoring initiatives for their continuous development.



Being equipped with crucial technical and relational skills will allow leaders to transition to the next stage of leadership.

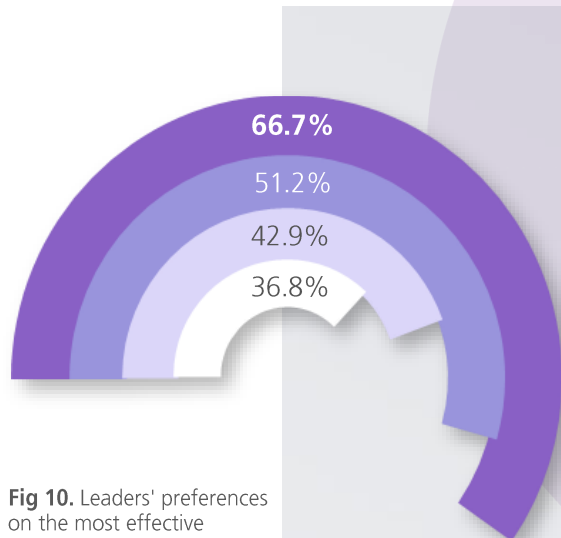


Fig 10. Leaders' preferences on the most effective leadership development strategies

### MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The most cited strategy for effective ongoing leadership development is coaching and mentoring (66.7%). Other strategies were also considered:

- Using coaching and mentoring initiatives for ongoing development
- Providing training focused on developing and acquiring leadership competencies
- Emphasizing changing behaviors over learning skills
- Designing self-paced, asynchronous and social/digital learning experiences

05

TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

People-Technology Link

## BEING IN SYNC WITH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The only thing that remains unchanged in today's professional environment is the need for companies to stay adaptable and constantly up to date. As businesses continue to be highly influenced by technology, there is a need for leaders and teams to become more digitally savvy.



## BEING IN SYNC WITH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



Enabling digital fluency across the organization and empowering leaders to embrace technology and digital transformation was ranked fifth by leaders in relation to other trends' priority.

WHICH LEADERS GAVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO PEOPLE-TECHNOLOGY LINK?



Larger organizations



Board, CEO and general management



Leaders from Europe and China & Singapore

WHICH LEADERS GAVE THE HIGHEST MATURITY TO PEOPLE-TECHNOLOGY LINK?



Younger leaders



Leaders from China & Singapore

As data impacts strategy and influences the way businesses and people make decisions, having leaders who understand the potential of digital content will help businesses stay relevant. Indeed, our leaders consider the people-technology link a major priority. Among those who gave it a higher priority are leaders from large organizations, leaders from C-suite and general management roles, and leaders from China and Singapore.

People-Technology Link was perceived as having a higher level of maturity from younger leaders and leaders from China and Singapore.

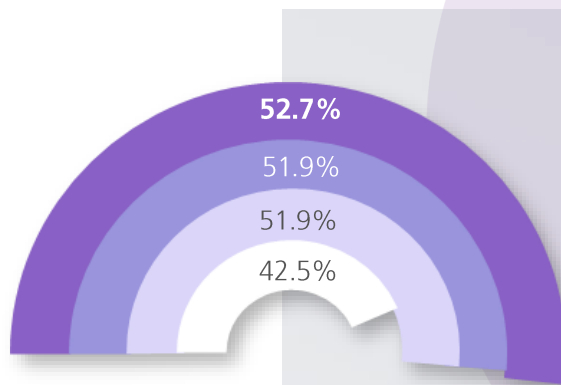


Fig 11. Leaders' preferences on the strategies that best accelerate digital fluency

### STRATEGIES THAT BEST ACCELERATE DIGITAL FLUENCY

There is no single strategy that stands out from the rest. Rather, our results suggest that a mix of equally important strategies are best for accelerating digital fluency:

- Moving from traditional to digital-enabled processes and practices
- Providing and encouraging digital-enabled communication and collaboration tools
- Developing digital skills training across the organization
- Attracting and developing digital-savvy leaders



06

TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Responsible Businesses

## HIGH TIME FOR RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT BUSINESSES

More than ever, the topic of responsible business has been receiving increasing attention. People and organizations seem to be more concerned with mitigating the negative effects businesses can have on society, as well as with signaling such interest.



## HIGH TIME FOR RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT BUSINESSES



Next to diverse leadership bench, responsible businesses was the second lowest scored trend. Specifically, 39.4% ranked this trend in the last and second to last place.

15% of leaders consider responsible businesses as a major priority, ranking it first or second. Interestingly, among those who gave higher priority to responsible businesses are senior leaders, leaders from C-suite and general management roles, and leaders from Europe and North America.

As for the trend's level of maturity, leaders in larger organizations tend to consider their companies more mature, stating that leadership practices to support a more sustainable and responsible position in business are already being implemented.

### WHICH LEADERS GAVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES?



Senior leaders



C-suite and general management roles



European and North American leaders

### WHICH LEADERS GAVE THE HIGHEST MATURITY TO RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES?



Large organizations

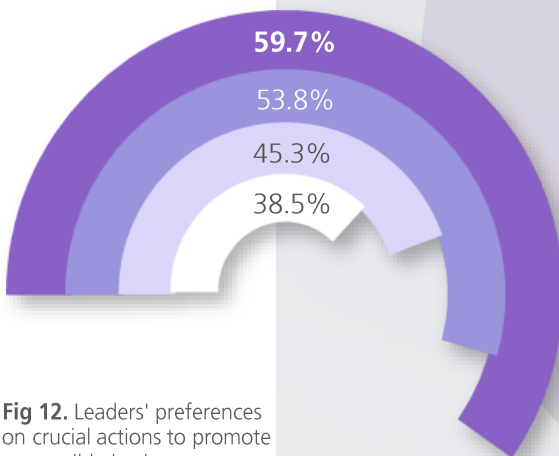


Leaders from China & Singapore

### CRUCIAL ACTIONS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Leaders believe the best way to achieve a responsible business is by connecting and engaging employees with the organization's purpose (59.7%). Other actions were also considered:

- Connecting and engaging employees with the organization's purpose
- Training and developing employees on ethical and responsible behaviors and practices
- Attracting and hiring responsible and ethical leaders
- Bringing responsibility-driven stakeholders into the organization's governance



**Fig 12.** Leaders' preferences on crucial actions to promote responsible business

07

TURNING TRENDS INTO INSIGHTS

Diverse Leadership Bench

## SHIFTING FROM DIVERSE TO INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Diversity and inclusion have been in the spotlight of the most recurrent leadership topics for many years now. It has been widely proven that organizations that embrace and promote such initiatives are more likely to be successful.





Despite its undeniable value, promoting a diverse leadership bench was ranked lower than other trends in this study, showing that other trends are more relevant, despite the importance given by subject matter experts to DEI.

**9.4%**

**of respondents chose diverse leadership bench as their first priority**

The value diversity brings to any leadership bench is clear, as supported by 9.4% of the leaders who consider it to be their highest priority. Particularly senior leaders tend to consider this a relevant move to create and sustain better performance.

Our results also indicate that, in terms of maturity, organizations are already implementing a set of leadership strategies to promote greater representation on executive teams. However, these practices are not fully integrated, often being inconsistent and/or not fully supported by the company's most important stakeholders.

**LEADERS WHO GAVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO DIVERSE LEADERSHIP BENCH:**



Senior leaders

**LEADERS WHO GAVE THE HIGHEST MATURITY TO DIVERSE LEADERSHIP BENCH:**



Younger leaders



Female leaders



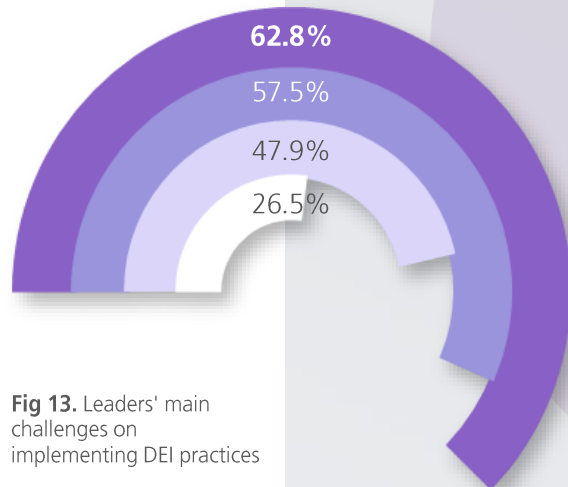
Leaders in large organizations



Leaders from China & Singapore

# 07

## SHIFTING FROM DIVERSE TO INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TEAMS



**Fig 13.** Leaders' main challenges on implementing DEI practices

### ORGANIZATIONS' CHALLENGES ON IMPLEMENTING MORE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Working towards a more diverse, inclusive, and sustainable pool of leadership talent is associated with numerous challenges. In the survey, most participants (62.8%) selected lack of urgency and sponsorship from top leadership as the most critical. But there are others:

- Lack of urgency and sponsorship from top leadership
- Lack of understanding of the potential benefits
- Lack of proper metrics on diversity, equity and inclusion
- Lack of DEI training



A major goal of our Leadership Report is to keep leaders apprised of trends and directions that can influence future decision-making.

In the following pages, we highlight leadership strategies for each trend, hoping to help leaders capitalize on the opportunities that are presenting themselves and inspire more creative approaches.

## 1

### HUMANISM IS THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP

#### BE THE ENGINE OF HUMANISM

**Human leadership puts alignment of needs in every component of well-being as the top driver for performance:**

- Listen, support and communicate with your employees. Engage them in the changes taking place and help them to understand, feel involved and committed.
- Enhance inclusion initiatives across the organization and cultivate a culture where employees feel safe to express their opinion and creativity.

#### USE EMPATHY AS A BASIS FOR LEADERSHIP

**Empathetic leadership is about the need to connect with yourself and others, and not just with your achievements as a professional:**

- Be honest about what you know and what you don't. Great decisions require a clear understanding of the input variables and other viewpoints.
- Understand how you behave under pressure so that you can avoid developing behavioral blind spots that can undermine trust and safety on your team.
- Make employees feel valued.





## 2

### WORKING WITH FLEXIBILITY, STAYING CONNECTED

#### PROMOTE MEANING IN WORK

**Allowing employees more freedom and flexibility to work while promoting meaning and accountability:**

- Ensure remote and hybrid workers feel they belong to the organization as much as on-site employees do.
- Establish a culture that fully embraces different work formats by investing in infrastructure that supports innovative ways to promote productive remote team results.

#### CREATE A POSITIVE CULTURE FOR REMOTE TEAMS

**Driving team bonding and connection is a priority:**

- Think about the way you communicate face-to-face and adapt that to digital communication.
- Incorporate more ongoing emotional support.
- Build a culture that aligns the team, independent of geographic location, and allows information sharing and inclusive gatherings.

## 3

### MORE AGILITY = MORE RESPONSIVENESS

#### AGILITY & FLEXIBILITY

**Encourage employees to share knowledge and continued learning in order to develop a growth mindset and the ability to evolve and adapt to change:**

- Hone your ability to identify problems and analyze opportunities in critical situations in order to produce applicable solutions.
- Look at failures as opportunities to learn and nurture trust and psychological safety.
- Promote flexibility, adaptability and speed, aligned with the needs of the business.

#### BE THE VOICE OF CHANGE

**Cultivate a change mindset and build more resilient workforces:**

- Understand how to act on change in order to shape the market offering, the organization, or processes.
- Create or repurpose new projects or ideas.
- Use a mix of online, blended, and face-to-face learning solutions to deliver the right messages, the right way, and at the right time.



## 4

### FOCUS ON HIGH VALUE-ADDED LEARNING

#### IMMEDIATELY RELEVANT LEARNING

**Learn skills at your own pace, and in ways that match the problems you face on the job:**

- Pursue development programs that are right for you, at your own pace. Media-supported learning has the potential to suit differentiated styles and work environments.
- Use social learning methodologies. Collaboration and shared problem-solving accelerate the process of learning.
- Learn in the workplace setting and ensure you can quickly apply the knowledge and skills developed.

#### APPLY A TAILORED AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

**Flexible programs can support leaders working together to identify and address shifting skill needs:**

- Give priority to customizable learning environments, through platforms that personalize content according to learners' roles and organizational needs.
- Enable organic and planned teams of learners that share the same needs and can jointly develop new capabilities.

## 5

### BEING IN SYNC WITH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

#### EMPOWER DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

**Have a strong and global digital understanding:**

- Certify that digital transformation is managed and understood by all tiers of the organization.
- Engage digitally fluent professionals at all hierarchical levels.
- Incorporate mentoring and reverse-mentoring programs, with digitally savvy workers training colleagues on emerging technologies.

#### THE NEW BOTTOM LINE

**Successful digital transformation demands that leaders measurably transform themselves:**

- Align digital transformation with employees' concerns and values rather than business opportunities alone.
- Communicate your vision for digital transformation, establishing a dynamic and capable leadership presence.
- Keep your energy high and convey it throughout your organization. Exhibit digital agility and commitment to improving your digital skills.



6

## HIGH TIME FOR RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT BUSINESSES

### FOLLOW THE TRIPLE BOTTOM-LINE APPROACH

#### Act in a manner that benefits society:

- Align with societal expectations and maintain social licenses to operate.
- Secure community, employee, and investor support.
- Guarantee employee welfare, manage financial and policy changes, and anticipate demand shifts.

### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

#### Look deeper into the various profiles in the market and reduce barriers for underrepresented talent:

- Engineer more intentional networking opportunities.
- Expose high-potential diverse talent to a network of connections that are diverse in role, skills, level, and experience.
- Introduce diverse talent to senior leaders who can support their growth and advancement.

7

## SHIFTING FROM DIVERSE TO INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TEAMS

### ADOPT NEW RECRUITING TACTICS

#### Find an innovative way to attract and retain the best talent and prepare the bench to succeed in the future:

- Recruit talent that not only has a personality fit with the team and culture but also possesses the confidence and influencing skills to challenge the team to improve.
- Provide a clear understanding of the potential career path in the organization.
- Encourage leaders to have the discipline to hire someone who complements their skills and fills in their gaps.

### STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP BENCH

#### Make sure your organization has the required leadership bench to meet current and future needs:

- Broaden, not just deepen, the search for future leaders.
- Identify and develop future leaders for a few different roles, not infinite agility.
- Rebalance leadership teams regularly. Do not assume that succession ends with placement.

## RE-SIGNIFICATION OF THE LEADER'S ROLE

What it takes to be a leader is shifting and changing for every organization regardless of geography or sector. Today's business world is mirroring the innovation and ambiguity of the times, and all of this will have an impact on how organizations achieve success and on how leaders will lead.

Our survey of more than 450 top executives revealed that to succeed in this environment, leaders must adopt a more human leadership as the next evolution of their role. This "humanity" of leaders is demonstrated by:

- Genuine care and respect for their teams
- Promoting people's strengths and capabilities
- Enabling psychologically safe environments
- Adapting and enabling support that fits the needs of each of their team members

**Attracting and developing more human-centric leaders has the potential to change an organization's relationship with its people and increase engagement levels, productivity, and retention.**

### The leadership paradox: "Faraway, So Close!"

The second most chosen leadership trend emphasized the need to enable flexibility and give employees more freedom to decide how, when, and where to work. Leaders acknowledge the importance of sponsoring and empowering employees' free will, and the need to support them with technology and structured in-house processes.

However, determining how to allow

flexibility while still providing a sense of belonging can be challenging. This is **today's leadership paradox**. How do leaders support flexibility and digitalize traditionally face-to-face interactions, while keeping teams closer and promoting an experience of human care and connectedness?

Of the many things we've all learned from the COVID-19 crisis, perhaps the most significant is this: Tailoring work routines to individuals' needs and maintaining social connections makes an enormous difference in workers' productivity and well-being. So how can we capitalize on that and create a culture that promotes individual preferences, inclusion, productive collaboration, and accountability?

Our leaders seem to have the answer: The leader's role demands a paradigm shift.

### Paradigm shift: The leader's role

Leaders hold most of the power to make and implement actionable decisions. It is their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that most impact organizations, people's lives, and society.

When we asked leaders about the most effective strategies supporting each trend, they strongly favored more leader-dependent options, characterized by actions typically within leaders' control. Leaders are often appointed as agents of change, either being made accountable for setbacks and problems organizations face or being the necessary driver to achieve success.

**While the relationship between leader and employee has always been critical, it greatly intensified during COVID-19 and recent political, societal, and business transformations. Today, it is not only critical; it is non-negotiable!**



# how can Boyden leadership solutions help?

We provide solutions that enable organizations to attract, evaluate and develop successful leaders and teams, helping to secure ongoing success with a full spectrum of talent acquisition, development, alignment and succession services.



We guide new leaders through a series of interconnected onboarding experiences to help set them up for success.



Through our assessment process we identify leaders who best facilitate a vision, increase performance, and encourage positive change within a company.



Leadership development supports the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes.



Coaching as an engine capable of improving and changing behaviors and mindsets.



A smooth, well-planned succession helps preserve continuity, ensuring the right successor moves into the role in the right way.



We have the tools to look deeper, because bringing in new talent requires knowing exactly who you are dealing with.



## ABOUT US

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At Boyden Leadership Consulting we help organizations solve their most complex business issues by providing a broad set of leadership solutions, working with leaders and developing the appropriate organizational levers.

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

## BOYDEN'S GLOBAL REACH

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We operate with more than 70 offices in over 45 countries. Our partners have the experience, industry access and gravitas to deliver exceptional results.

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

