



September 2023

From Ground Floor to Corner Office

Exploring the Leadership Mindset

Study Details



Objectives: The goal of this study is to explore leadership mindsets – whether companies clearly communicate and develop the characteristics and skills that encourage business leaders, what characteristics they prioritize and how those characteristics have helped navigate today’s increasingly uncertain business environment.

Methodology:

15-minute online survey

Deployed in the US

Fielding Dates: July 17- August 1, 2023

Audience:

C-suite Executives	N=253
Entry-level Staff	N=411
B2B (B2B only + both B2B/B2C)	N=410
B2C (B2C only + both B2B/B2C)	N=437
Large Enterprise (500+ employees)	N=314
SMB (>500 employees)	N=350

What do we mean by “leadership mindset”?



To ensure respondents answered our questions through a similar lens, they were shown the following description prior to asking questions around leadership mindset:

The purpose of this survey is to explore mindsets that companies foster to help them achieve their business goals. This mindset includes characteristics and priorities that guide expectations on how everyone in the organization can approach their work to develop as strong leaders, be more efficient, and help enable the long-term success of the company.

Key Findings



Divide among C-suite, entry-level employees on leadership

C-suite and entry-level share unified view on core components of a leadership mindset

- In face of changing work environment, 95% of C-suite and 81% of entry-level employees in this survey believe it is important that leadership mindset is communicated to all staff.
- 72% say their company has a clearly defined leadership mindset
- Respondents identified quality, reliability, integrity and innovation among the top characteristics of a successful company.

But divide emerges around how companies promote leadership

- 88% of C-suite respondents vs. just 59% of entry-level employees say their company's executive team embodies its leadership mindset every day.
- While 90% of these C-suite executives say their company supports the development of strong leaders, just 68% of entry-level respondents feel the same.
- 62% of entry-level employees vs. 85% of C-suite in this survey feel their executive team effectively communicates the impact of their leadership mindset.

When companies successfully promote leadership, everyone benefits

- 80% of entry-level respondents say leadership training is a meaningful benefit.
- For surveyed employees who said they understand their company's leadership mindset:
 - 95%+ say their company is on the right track
 - 50%+ say their company is ahead of others
 - 56%+ are company "promoters"



Leadership Mindset

For the purposes of the survey, a "leadership mindset" was defined as the characteristics companies foster among employees to develop strong leaders who can help achieve business goals and ensure the long-term success of their company.



Defining a Leadership Mindset

Most companies are taking the steps to clearly define their leadership mindset.



Total Respondents

72%

Say their **company has a clearly defined leadership mindset** that guides how they work

“

"Strong personal and organizational principles keep the company grounded, focused and therefore best able to navigate extreme uncertainties."

- C-suite Executive

”

“

"[Our leadership mindset helps] build trust and reduce confusion through proactive communication and transparency, leading corporate teams to grow the company in innovative formats."

- C-suite Executive

”

Prior to these questions respondents saw the following statement: "As a reminder, when we refer to leadership mindset, this includes characteristics and priorities that guide expectations on how everyone in the organization can approach their work to develop as strong leaders, be more efficient, and help enable the long-term success of the company."

Q14. Does your company have a clearly defined leadership mindset that guides how you work?

Q15. How has this leadership mindset helped you navigate the extreme uncertainty in the last 5 years?

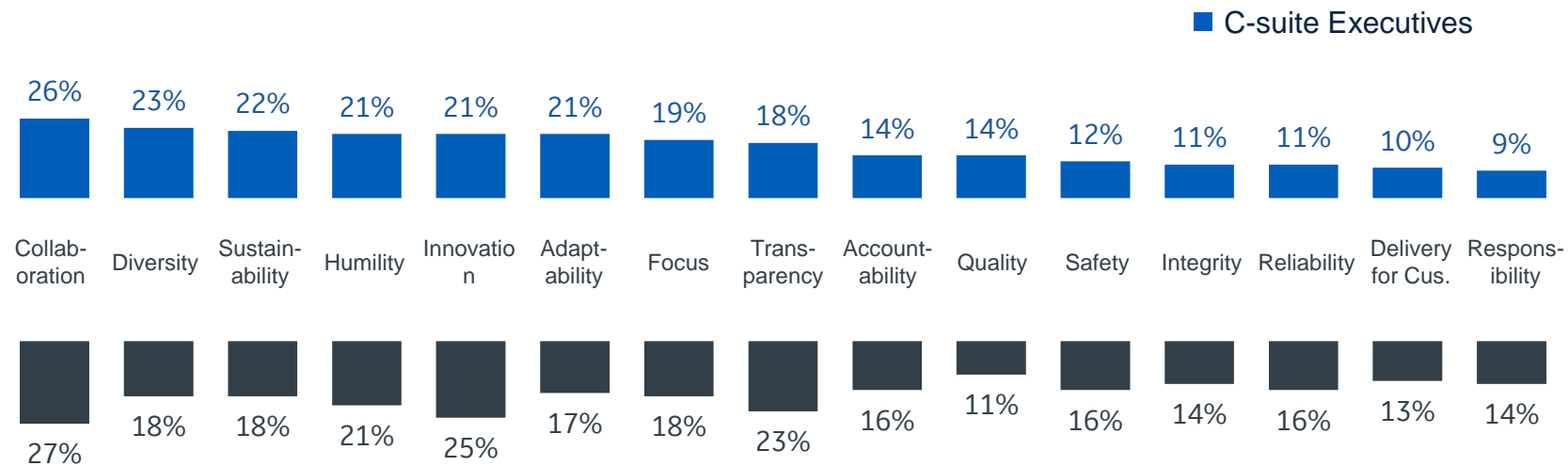
Despite taking steps to define a leadership mindset, there are characteristics – like collaboration – respondents say are lacking at their company.



Characteristic Most Lacking in Your Company

27%

of respondents say **COLLABORATION** is the characteristic that is most lacking at their company



While collaboration is the top characteristic selected as lacking across all types of businesses, SMBs are more likely than large enterprises to cite innovation and large enterprises are more likely to cite transparency.

Q7. Which of these characteristics is most lacking in your company? Select up to 3



There is agreement that an effective leader demonstrates trustworthiness, intelligence and innovation, but entry-level employees are more likely to note humility and respect while C-suite note vision and decision-making skills.

What describes a **highly effective business leader?**

C-suite



Entry-level

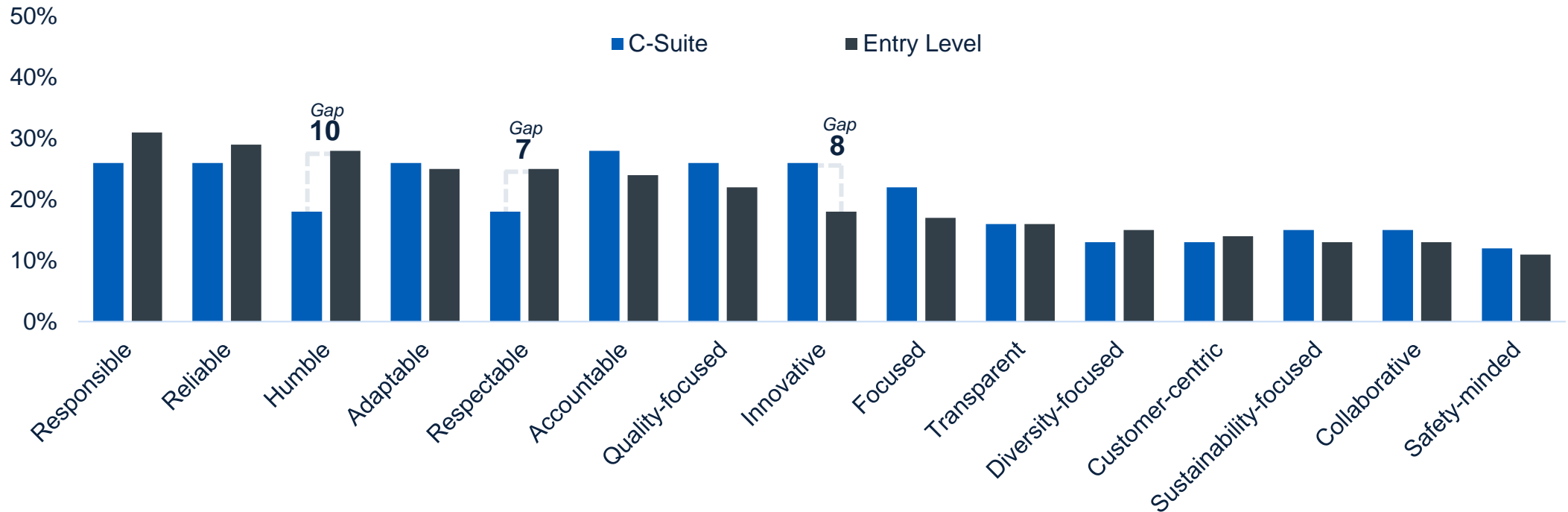


Q1. What three words describe a highly effective business leader?

And as CEOs strive to successfully lead in the coming years, entry-level employees are looking for them to demonstrate qualities like responsibility, reliability and humility.



Which of the following qualities will be **most critical for a CEO** to embody **to successfully lead** in the coming 3 to 5 years?
 % Selected in Top 3



Q26. Which of the following qualities will be most critical for a CEO embody to successfully lead in the coming 3 to 5 years? Select top 3.
 Call outs represent statistically significant differences.



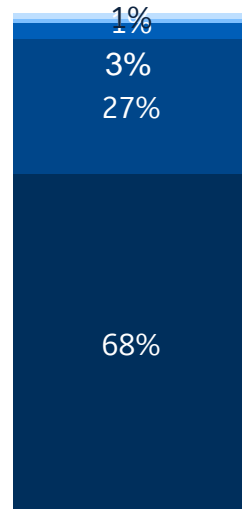
Importance of a Leadership Mindset

There is broad recognition that it is important for a company's leadership mindset to be communicated to all staff.



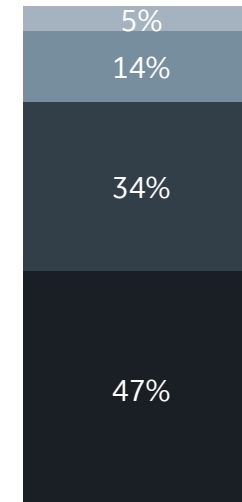
How **important** is it to **clearly communicate** your company's leadership mindset **to all staff**?

C-suite
95%
somewhat/very important



- Not at all important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Entry-level
81%
somewhat/very important



- Not at all important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Somewhat important
- Very important

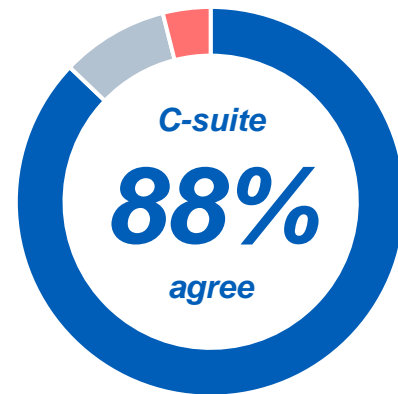
Q21a. How important is it to you that your company clearly communicates its leadership mindset to all staff?

Q21b. How important is it to clearly communicate your company's leadership mindset to all staff?

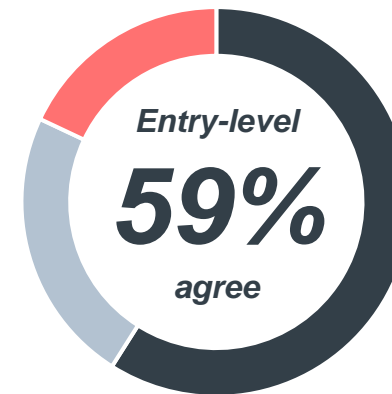
However, executives overestimate how well they are seen as embodying the company's leadership mindset on a daily basis.



My company's **executive team**
embodies our leadership mindset
every day



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

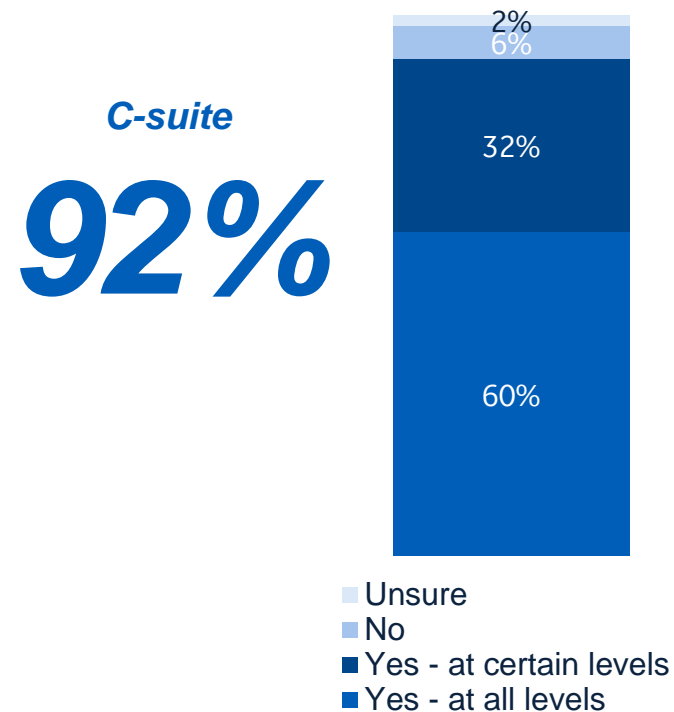


■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

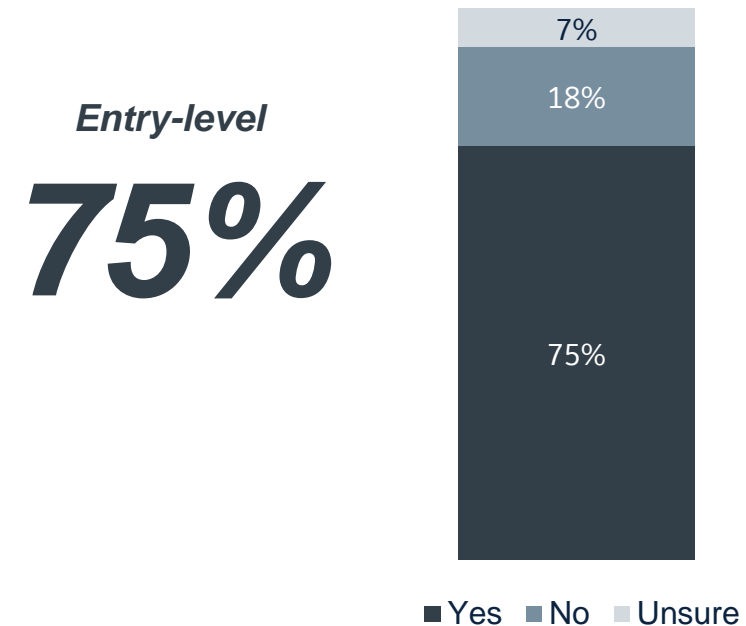
And while those whose company has a defined leadership mindset say they evaluate potential candidates and current staff against these qualities.



When hiring, do the **characteristics** of this leadership mindset **play a role in the evaluation of potential candidates?**



Are you **evaluated on how well you perform against the characteristics** of this leadership mindset in your annual review/evaluation?



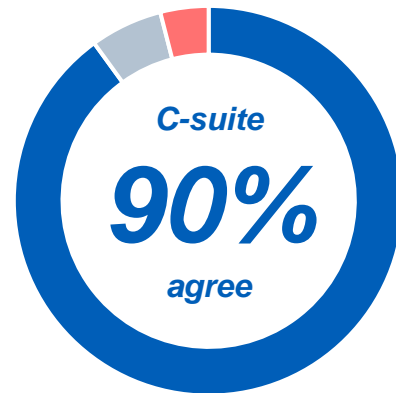
Q20. Are you evaluated on how well you perform against the characteristics of this leadership mindset in your annual review/evaluation?

Q20b. When hiring, do the characteristics of this leadership mindset play a role in the evaluation of potential candidates?

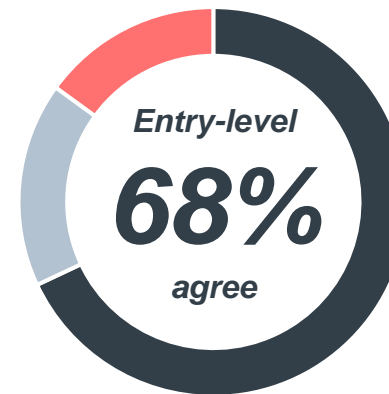
There is a divide on the perceived support for the development of effective leaders within their companies.



My company supports the development of effective leaders



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

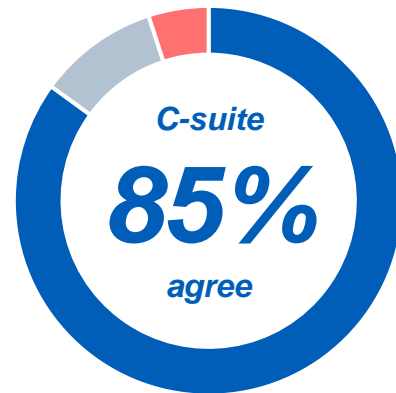


Communicating a Leadership Mindset

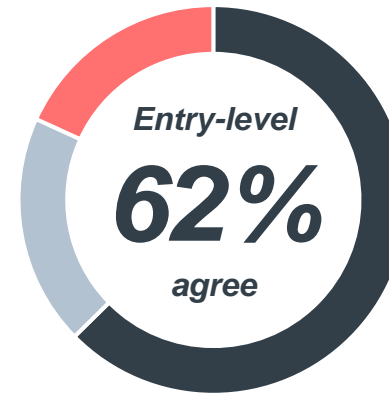


Entry-level employees are less likely than C-suite to believe the impact of their company's leadership mindset is effectively communicated by executives.

My company's **executive team effectively communicates the impact** that our leadership mindset has on the success of our business



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

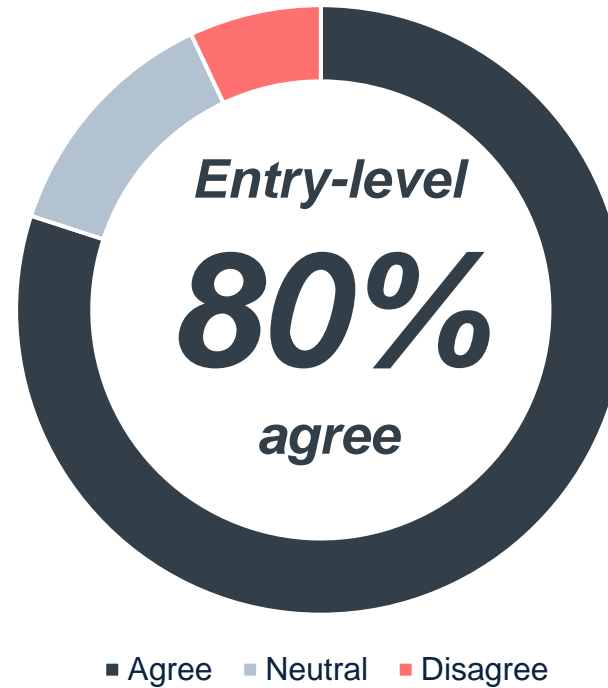


■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Leadership training is viewed as a meaningful benefit by entry-level employees



I consider leadership training as a meaningful benefit for companies to offer their employees

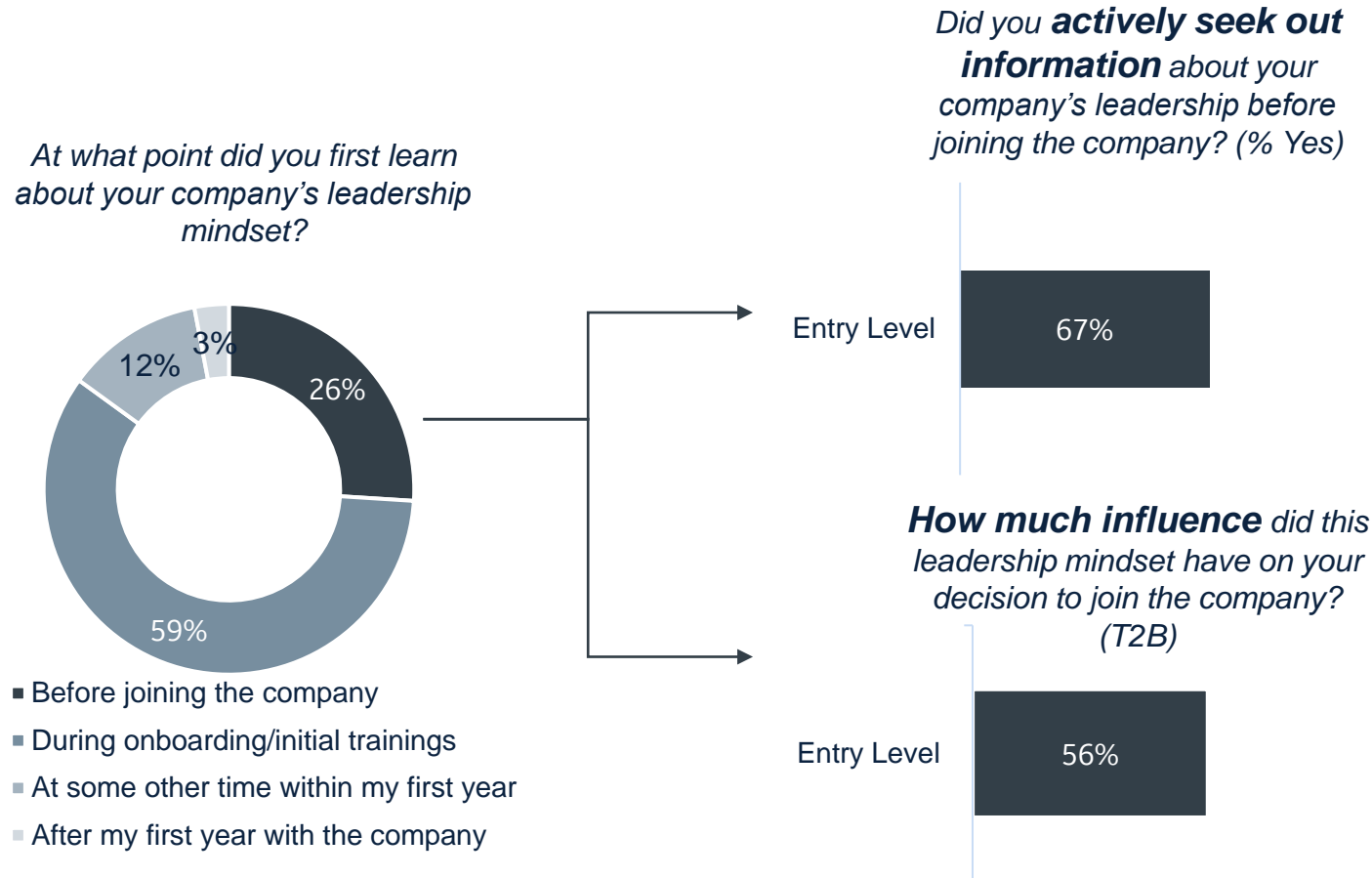


Q10. Now, thinking about your current role, would you say...

Q9. Now, thinking about entry-level talent hired at your company recently, would you say..

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Entry-level staff typically learned about their company's leadership mindset early on when they first joined their company.



Those entry-level employees who learned about their company's leadership mindset before joining sought out the information themselves, and say it influenced their decision to join..

Q17. At what point did you first learn about your company's leadership mindset?

Q18. Did you actively seek out information about your company's leadership mindset before joining the company?

Q19. How much influence did this leadership mindset have on your decision to join the company?

Regardless of when leadership mindset is communicated, open & respectful internal comms are critical to supporting staff along their leadership journey.



What is **most useful** for your company's leadership to do **to support you as you develop** your **leadership skills** amidst a changing environment?

“

"Clear effective communication. Treating employees in a respectful manner. Constructive criticism without talking down to someone."

– Entry-level Employee

"Establish open and transparent lines of communication with the ability to exchange ideas, share ideas and ask questions with leadership." – Entry-level Employee

”



Impact of a Defined Leadership Mindset

Companies who effectively communicate and embody their leadership mindset, and supporting the development of effective leaders are more likely to be seen as on the right track....



Company is on the Right Track



Q24. Do you believe your company is... (On the right track / off on the wrong track)

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team embodies our leadership mindset every day Agree n=465, Disagree or Neutral n=199

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team effectively communicates the impact that their leadership mindset has on the success of the business Agree n=471, Disagree or Neutral n=193

Among respondents who feel their company supports the development of effective leaders Agree n=507, Disagree or Neutral n=157

... as ahead of other companies...



Company is Ahead of Others



Q23. Do you believe your company is... (Behind other companies / On par with other companies / Ahead of other companies)

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team embodies our leadership mindset every day Agree n=465, Disagree or Neutral n=199

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team effectively communicates the impact that their leadership mindset has on the success of the business Agree n=471, Disagree or Neutral n=193

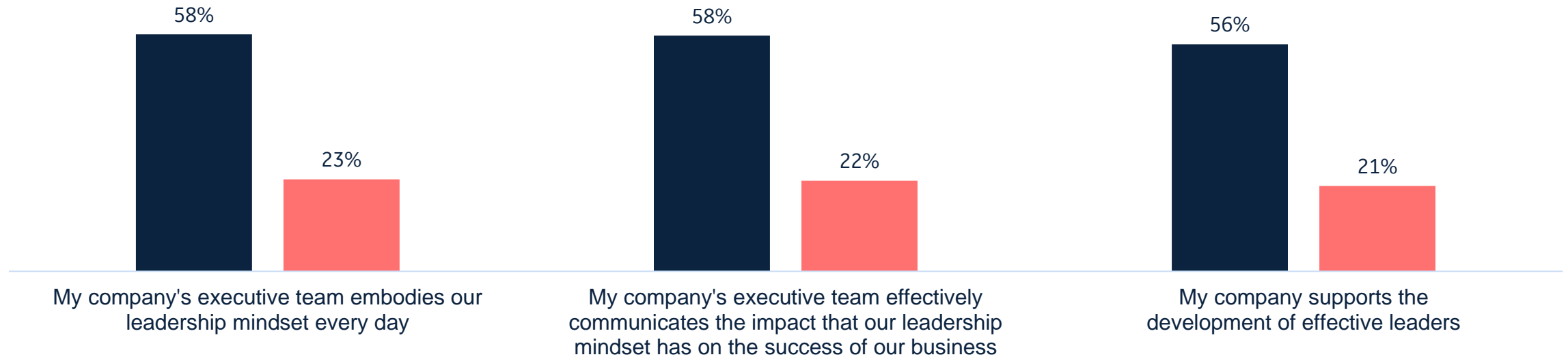
Among respondents who feel their company supports the development of effective leaders Agree n=507, Disagree or Neutral n=157

... and are more likely to be recommended by their employees to others.



Likelihood to Recommend Company: % Promoters % 9 or 10

■ Agree ■ Disagree or Neutral



Q23. How likely would you be to recommend your company to your friends or colleagues? Promoters = 9,10

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team embodies our leadership mindset every day Agree n=465, Disagree or Neutral n=199

Among respondents who feel their company's executive team effectively communicates the impact that their leadership mindset has on the success of the business Agree n=471, Disagree or Neutral n=193

Among respondents who feel their company supports the development of effective leaders Agree n=507, Disagree or Neutral n=157

About the Study



These are the findings of a GE/Ipsos poll conducted between July 17 – August 1, 2023. For this survey, a sample of 253 C-suite executives and 411 entry-level employees ages 18+ from the United States were interviewed in English. To qualify, respondents needed to have a current job title of Entry-level or C-suite/Executive Leadership within a B2B, B2C or both B2B/B2C company, and describe their number of employees as 1-499 (Small and Midsize Business), or 500+ (Large Enterprise). The sample includes 410 B2B respondents (B2B only + both B2B/B2C), 437 B2C respondents (B2C only + both B2B/B2C), 350 small and midsize business respondents, and 314 large enterprise respondents from the United States.

Overall, the study's sample does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. No post-hoc weights were applied to the data and the findings reflect the opinion of these respondents. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.



Building a world that works



— Appendix

Company Leadership Mindsets



Appendix: Successful Company Priorities



	C-suite Executives	Entry-level	B2B	B2C	Large Enterprise	SMB
Transparency	15%	17%	16%	16%	16%	17%
Humility	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%	9%
Focus	14%	12%	13%	14%	11%	14%
Integrity	26%	25%	26%	24%	24%	27%
Accountability	18%	20%	17%	20%	16%	23%
Innovation	30%	23%	28%	25%	29%	23%
Diversity	17%	20%	19%	20%	19%	19%
Sustainability	20%	20%	20%	20%	22%	18%
Adaptability	25%	18%	22%	19%	18%	23%
Reliability	31%	33%	31%	34%	31%	34%
Collaboration	11%	9%	12%	8%	11%	8%
Quality	40%	37%	37%	41%	41%	36%
Responsibility	21%	21%	23%	18%	22%	20%
Delivery for Customers	9%	11%	10%	11%	12%	9%
Safety	16%	25%	20%	23%	21%	22%

Q3. Given today's constantly changing environment, which of the following characteristics should companies prioritize to succeed in the future? Please select the top 3.

Appendix: Characteristics Guiding Personal Career



	C-suite Executives	Entry-level	B2B	B2C	Large Enterprise	SMB
Transparency	10%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%
Humility	11%	11%	10%	10%	10%	12%
Focus	20%	22%	19%	22%	19%	23%
Integrity	31%	30%	30%	31%	25%	35%
Accountability	18%	24%	19%	23%	23%	21%
Innovation	22%	17%	20%	18%	21%	17%
Diversity	14%	13%	15%	12%	14%	13%
Sustainability	17%	14%	17%	14%	19%	11%
Adaptability	24%	16%	19%	18%	19%	19%
Reliability	38%	36%	37%	37%	36%	37%
Collaboration	13%	13%	14%	12%	15%	12%
Quality	30%	28%	29%	29%	26%	31%
Responsibility	30%	32%	30%	32%	29%	33%
Delivery for Customers	10%	10%	10%	12%	12%	9%
Safety	12%	22%	19%	18%	20%	17%

Q5. Thinking again of these characteristics, which are most important in guiding your own career? Select top 3.

Appendix: Company Communication Priorities



	C-suite Executives	Entry-level	B2B	B2C	Large Enterprise	SMB
Transparency	23%	16%	18%	18%	16%	21%
Humility	5%	8%	8%	7%	8%	5%
Focus	13%	18%	17%	15%	16%	15%
Integrity	25%	16%	22%	18%	19%	19%
Accountability	22%	19%	18%	20%	19%	21%
Innovation	20%	13%	17%	14%	18%	13%
Diversity	16%	22%	18%	22%	23%	17%
Sustainability	12%	13%	16%	11%	15%	11%
Adaptability	19%	15%	16%	17%	17%	16%
Reliability	34%	27%	29%	31%	27%	31%
Collaboration	21%	18%	20%	16%	18%	19%
Quality	28%	29%	27%	30%	29%	28%
Responsibility	28%	23%	23%	26%	25%	25%
Delivery for Customers	14%	23%	18%	21%	19%	20%
Safety	19%	28%	25%	26%	26%	24%

Q6. Which of these characteristics does your company prioritize with its employees and in communicating what it does? Select up to 3.

Appendix: Characteristics Most Lacking in Your Company



	C-suite Executives	Entry-level	B2B	B2C	Large Enterprise	SMB
Transparency	18%	23%	20%	21%	24%	19%
Humility	21%	21%	20%	22%	23%	20%
Focus	19%	18%	16%	20%	19%	19%
Integrity	11%	14%	14%	12%	17%	9%
Accountability	14%	16%	14%	18%	16%	14%
Innovation	21%	25%	23%	23%	18%	28%
Diversity	23%	18%	19%	21%	17%	23%
Sustainability	22%	18%	20%	19%	16%	23%
Adaptability	21%	17%	20%	17%	18%	19%
Reliability	11%	16%	16%	12%	18%	11%
Collaboration	26%	27%	26%	28%	26%	27%
Quality	14%	11%	15%	11%	14%	10%
Responsibility	9%	14%	13%	12%	14%	11%
Delivery for Customers	10%	13%	14%	12%	16%	9%
Safety	12%	16%	15%	13%	18%	12%

Q7. Which of these characteristics is most lacking in your company? Select up to 3.