

# THE 2021 LEAD NOW! LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRENDS REPORT

*Identifying the state of leadership development, what solutions are working (or not), and how you can apply these ideas to enable your organization's strategic objectives.*

**STEWART**  
LEADERSHIP



# INTRODUCTION

As the workplace wrestles with remote work, social justice issues, mental health challenges, the increase of digitization, and political unrest, how does this impact the way we view and develop our leaders?

We expect leaders to set the tone, paint the vision, and remove obstacles to allow work to get done. Identifying the latest leadership trends is critical to inform what expectations, skills, and mindsets leaders need today as they rally their teams for the future.

This is exactly what the LEAD NOW! Leadership Development Trends Report provides. We surveyed over 300 human resource leaders across 15+ industries within the US to learn what is working (or not) as they develop leaders for the future. It is our strong belief that the findings in this survey will provide actionable insights to expertly guide, challenge, and elevate your organization's leadership capability and success.

What You Will Gain in this Report:

- Deep insights into the key emerging trends reshaping leadership & talent development
- The changing organizational mindsets that are shifting how we define future leadership success
- The leadership development solutions that are working in organizations—and what are not
- Specific strategies and approaches to turn these insights into an actionable plan to better prepare your future leaders

Reach out at any point as seek to build your leaders. We are here to support and partner with you!

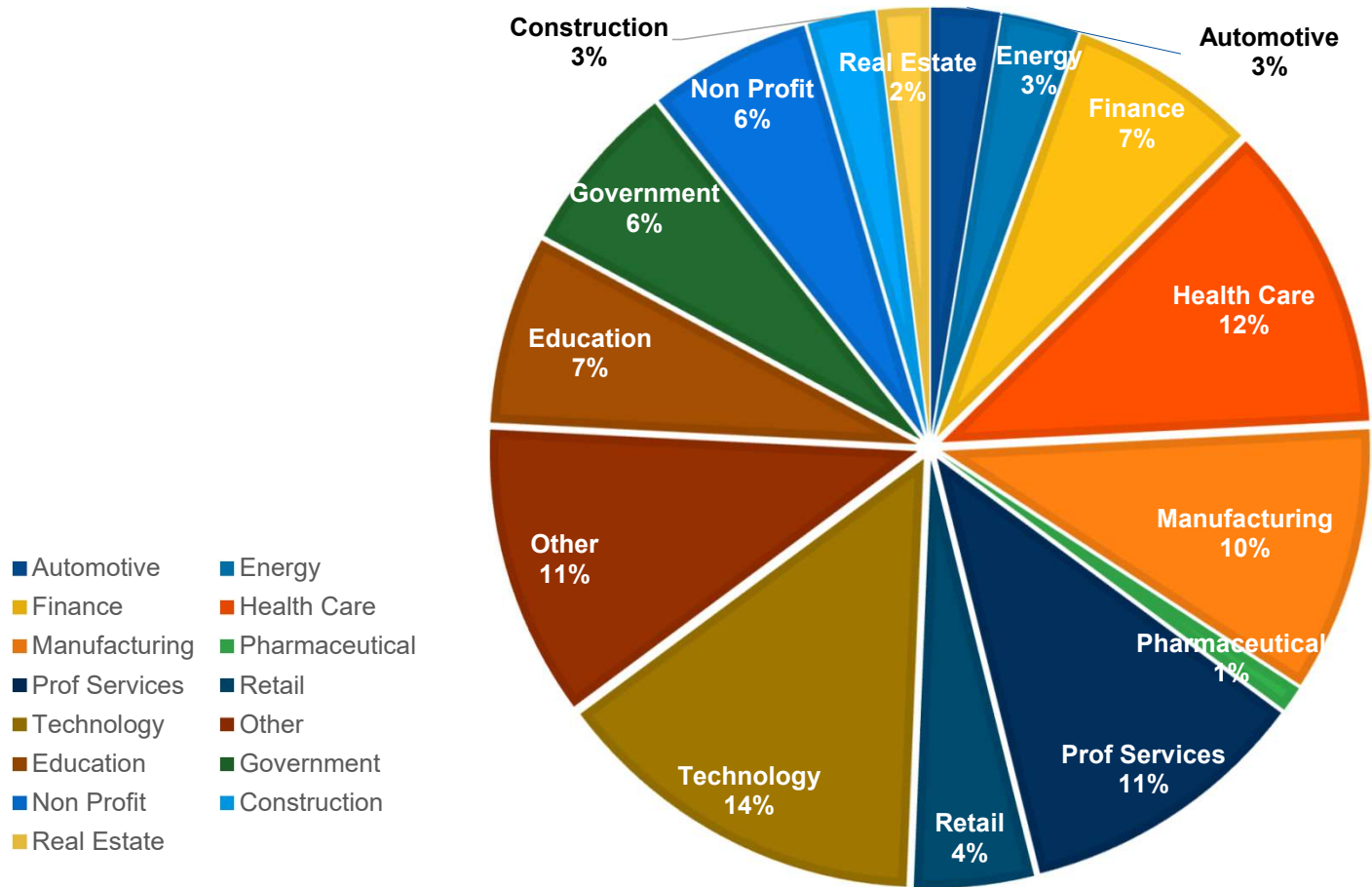
# REPORT SECTIONS

- ☐ Survey Demographics
- ☐ Economic Growth Outlook
- ☐ Organizational Strategic Imperatives
- ☐ Leadership Development Priorities for the Next 18 Months
- ☐ Leader Preparation to Deliver Results
- ☐ Organizations with a Leadership Development Plan & Level of Confidence in the Plan
- ☐ Future Leadership Development Investment
- ☐ Desired Future Leadership Style
- ☐ Leadership Development Topics for the Next 18 Months
- ☐ What Prevents Leadership Development
- ☐ The Best Leadership Development Approaches
- ☐ What Can Be Done Differently to Improve Leadership Development
- ☐ LEAD NOW! Leadership Development Model
- ☐ About the Authors & Stewart Leadership

# **SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS**



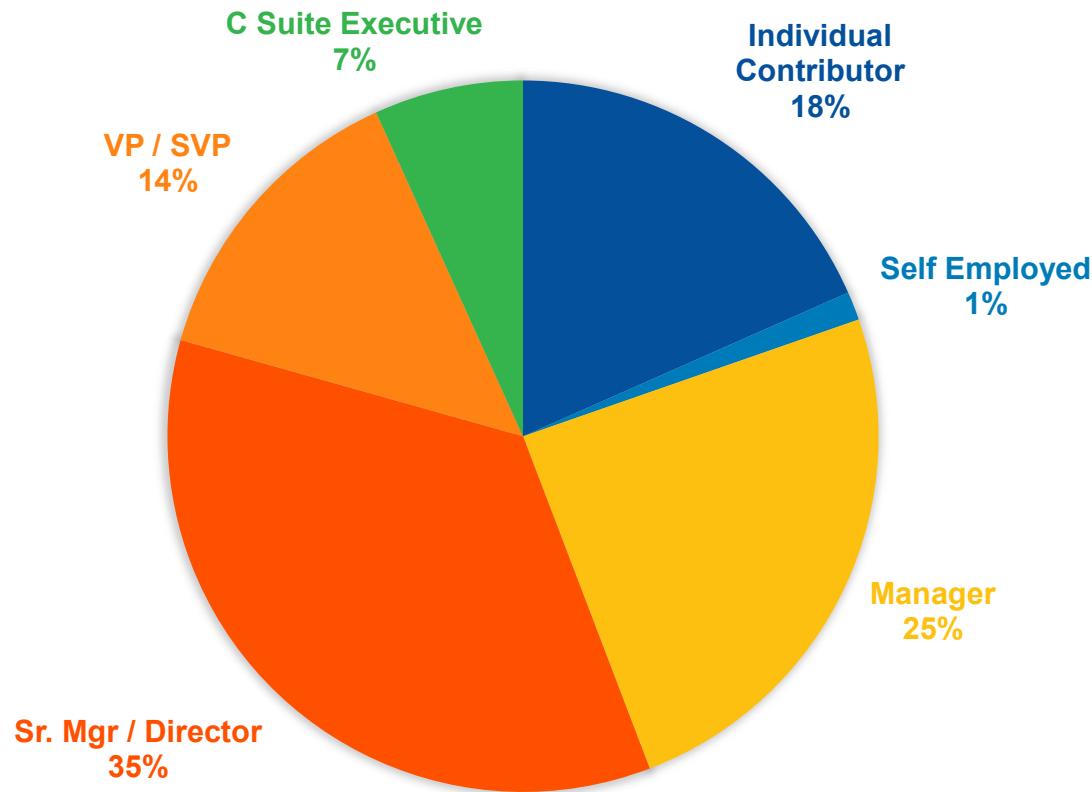
## INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED IN SURVEY



**Leadership Trends Survey:**

**310 participants representing  
over 15 industries**

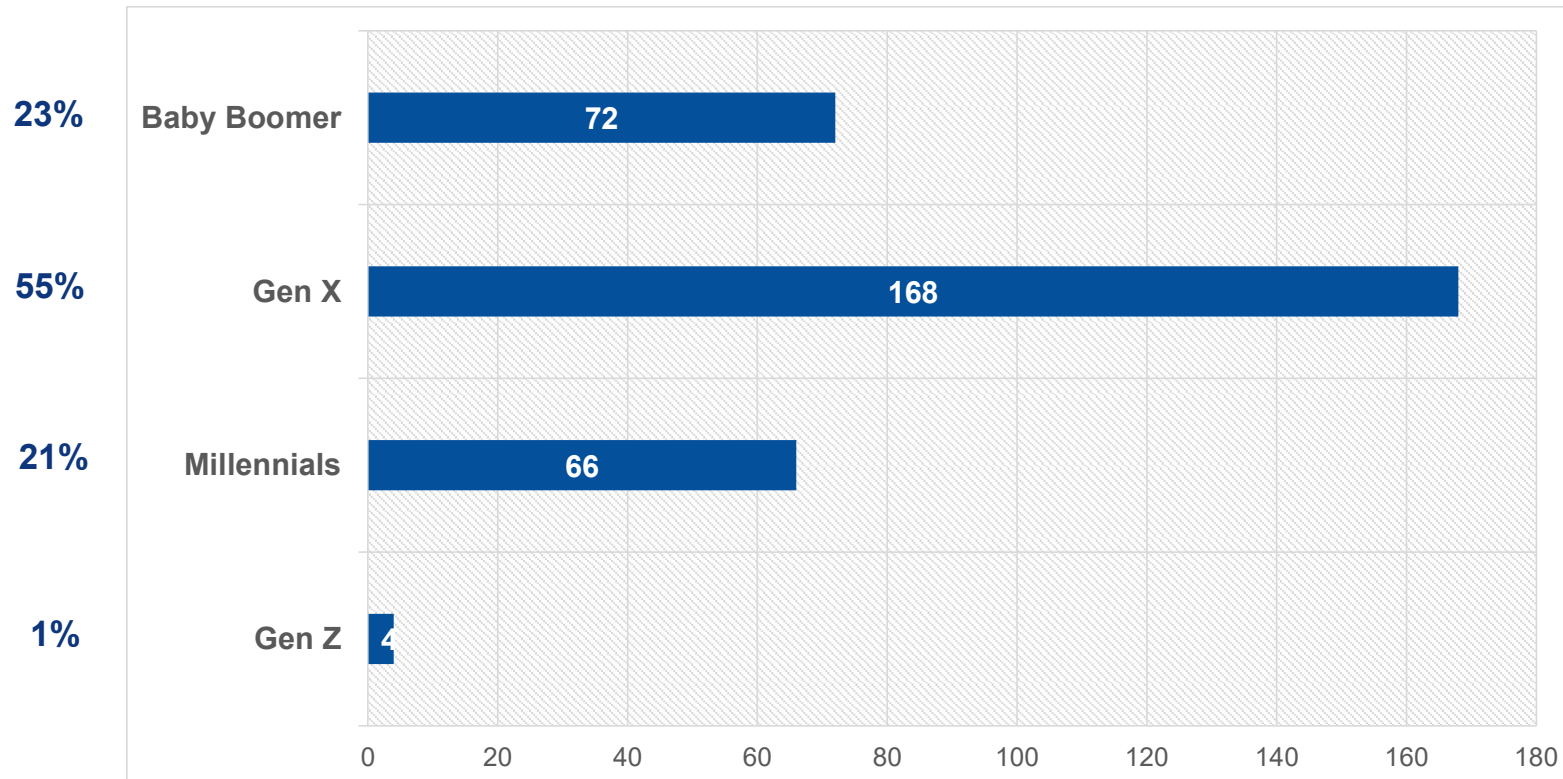
# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS - LEVEL IN ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED



## Leadership Trends Survey:

Participants represented 5 levels in the organization with over 80% at Manager and above

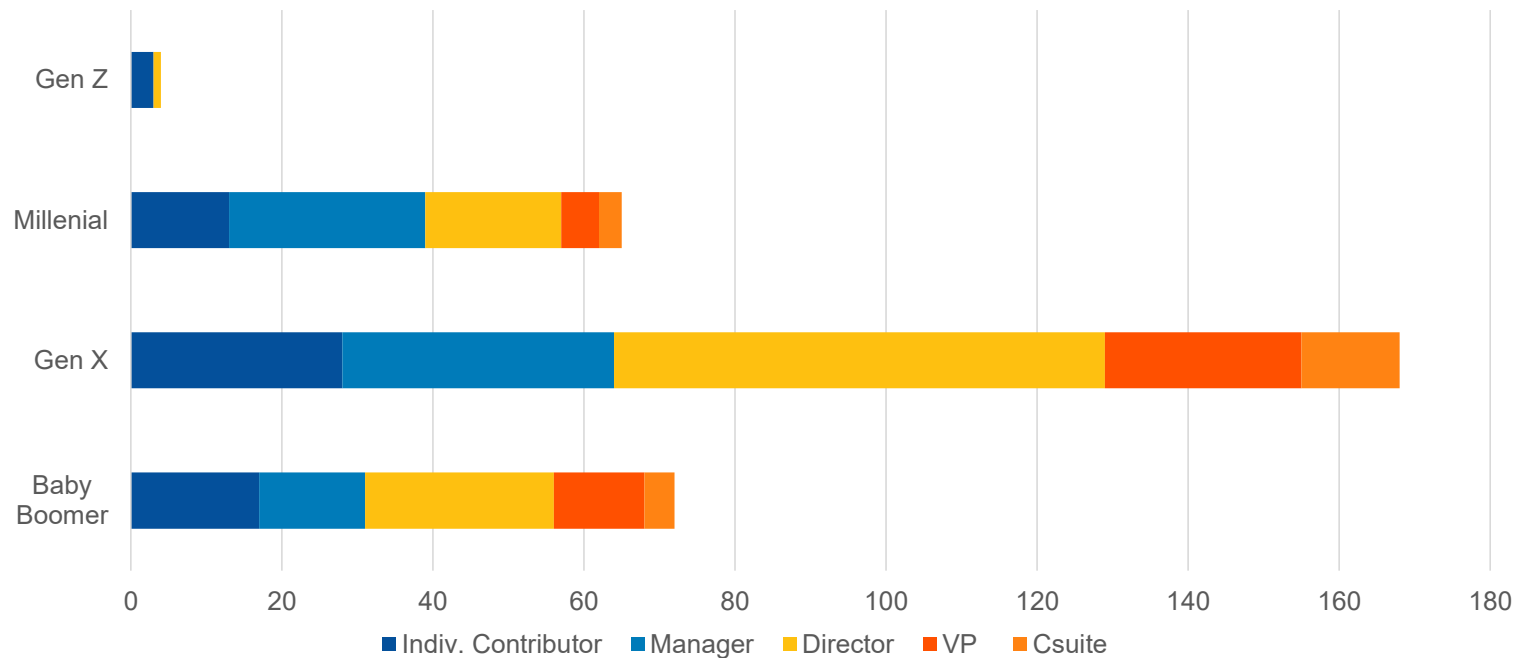
## SURVEY PARTICIPANTS – GENERATIONS REPRESENTED



### Leadership Trends Survey:

Four generations participated in survey;  
Gen X is most represented

# GENERATION AND LEVELS: GEN X ARE THE LEADERS



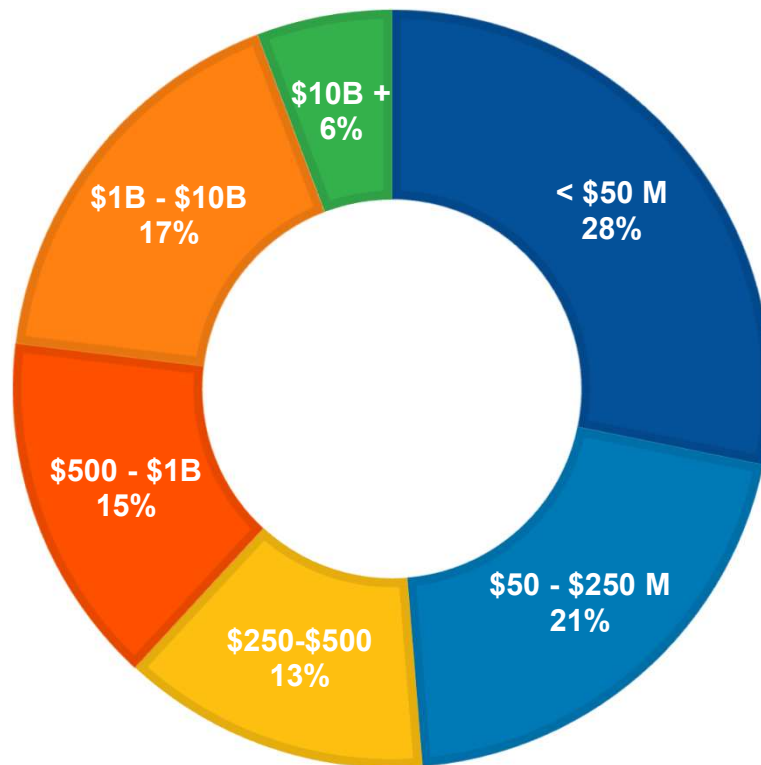
## Leadership Trends Survey:

**Gen X hold most of the leadership positions among all surveyed**



## ORGANIZATION SIZE (REVENUE)

■ < \$50 M ■ \$50 - \$250 M ■ \$250-\$500 ■ \$500 - \$1B ■ \$1B - \$10B ■ \$10B +



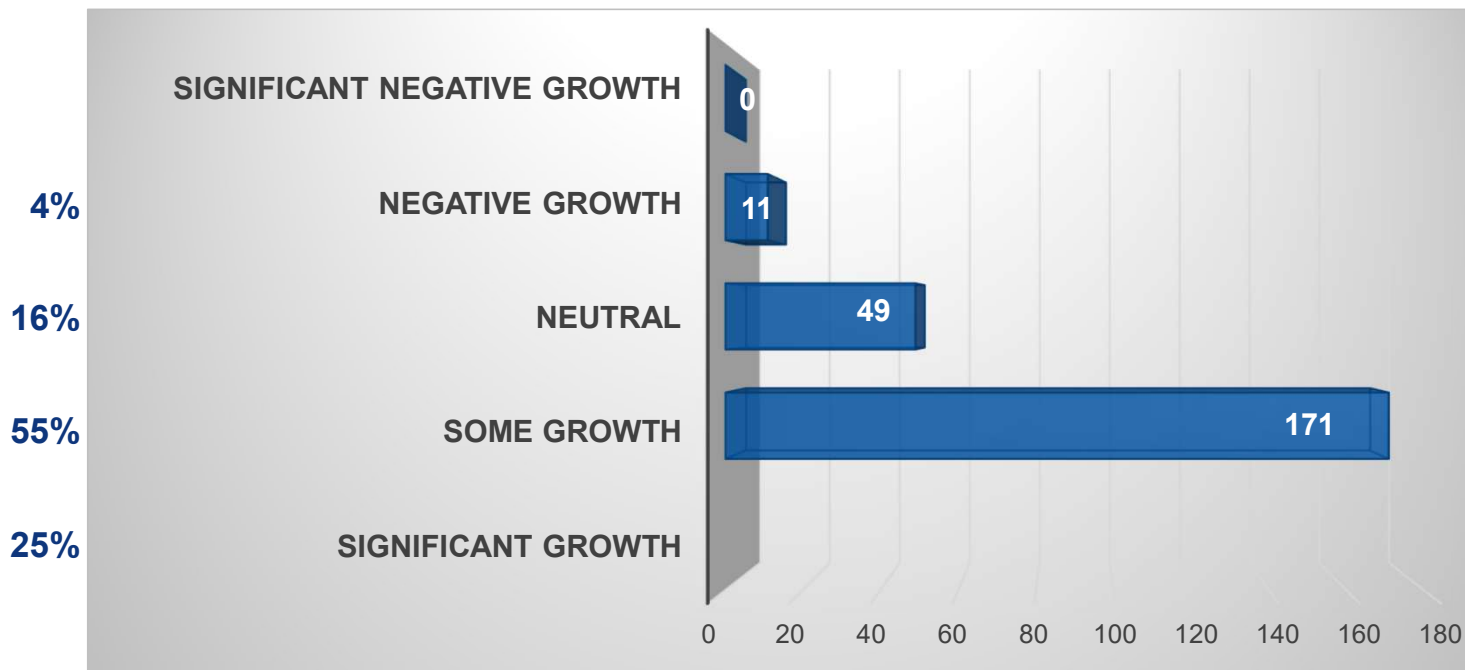
### Leadership Trends Survey:

Organizations from \$50 M - \$10B + participated, 62% of organizations were \$<\$50 M - \$500M

# GROWTH OUTLOOK



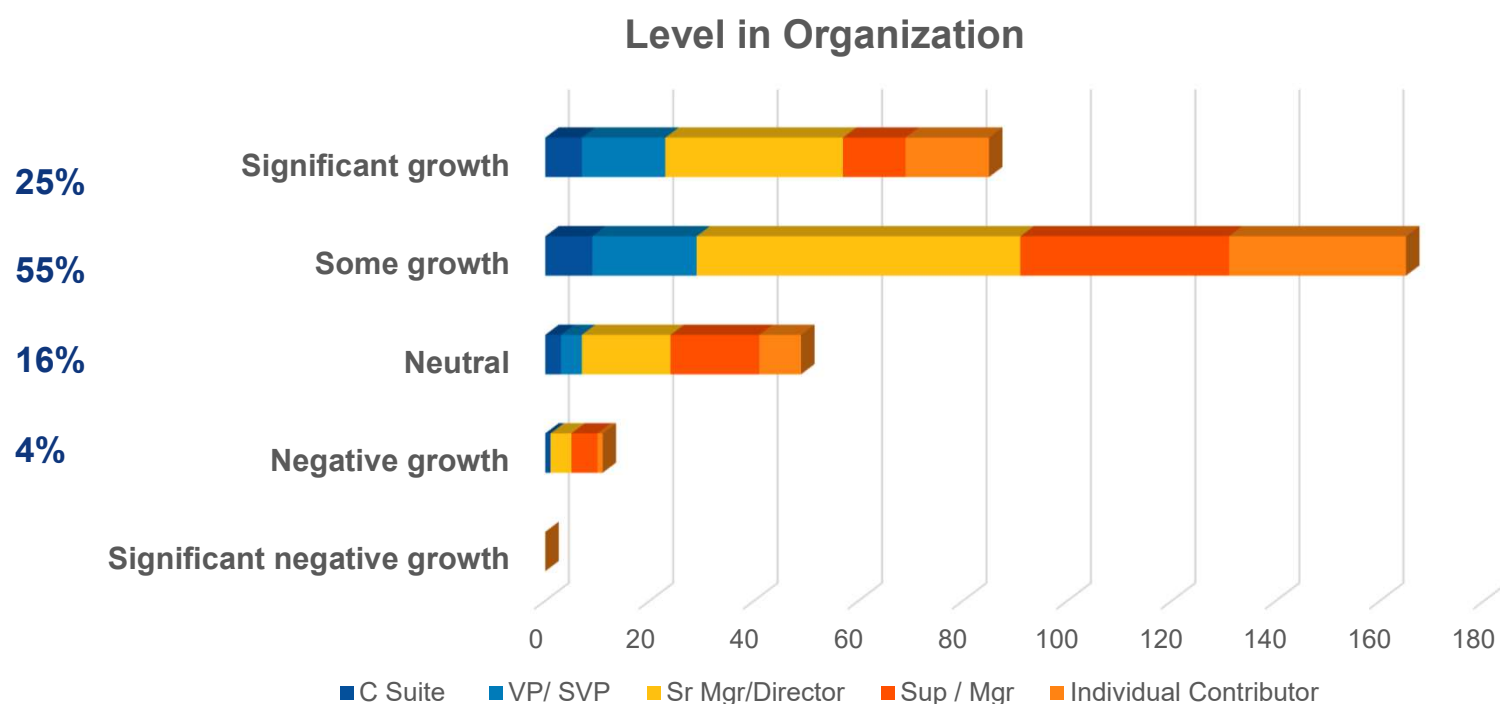
## GOOD NEWS: ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN NEXT 18 MONTHS



### Key Insight:

80% of companies surveyed indicated they will experience some to significant growth; less than 5% will experience negative growth

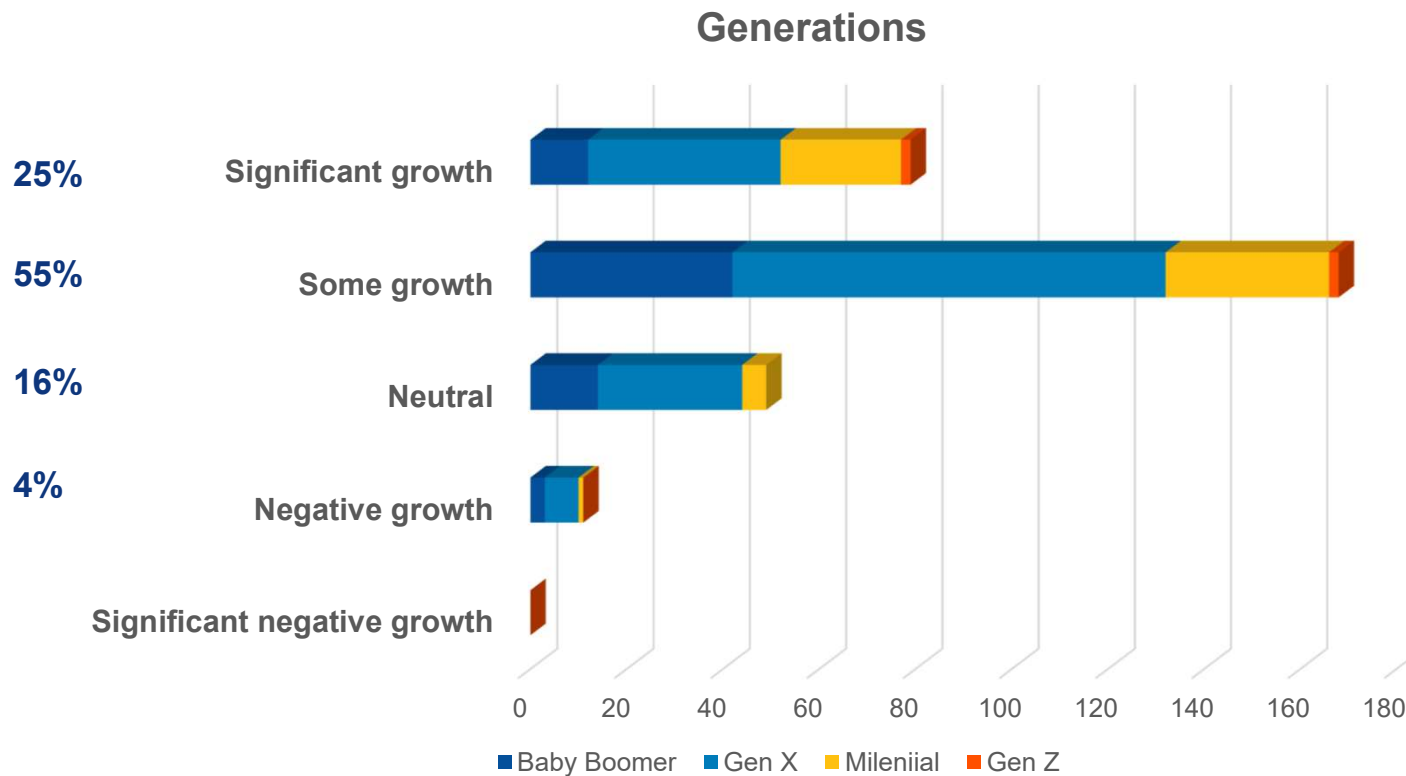
# ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN NEXT 18 MONTHS ACROSS ALL LEVELS



## Key Insight:

Sr. Managers and above were more confident in anticipated growth compared to Individual Contributors and Managers

## ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN NEXT 18 MONTHS

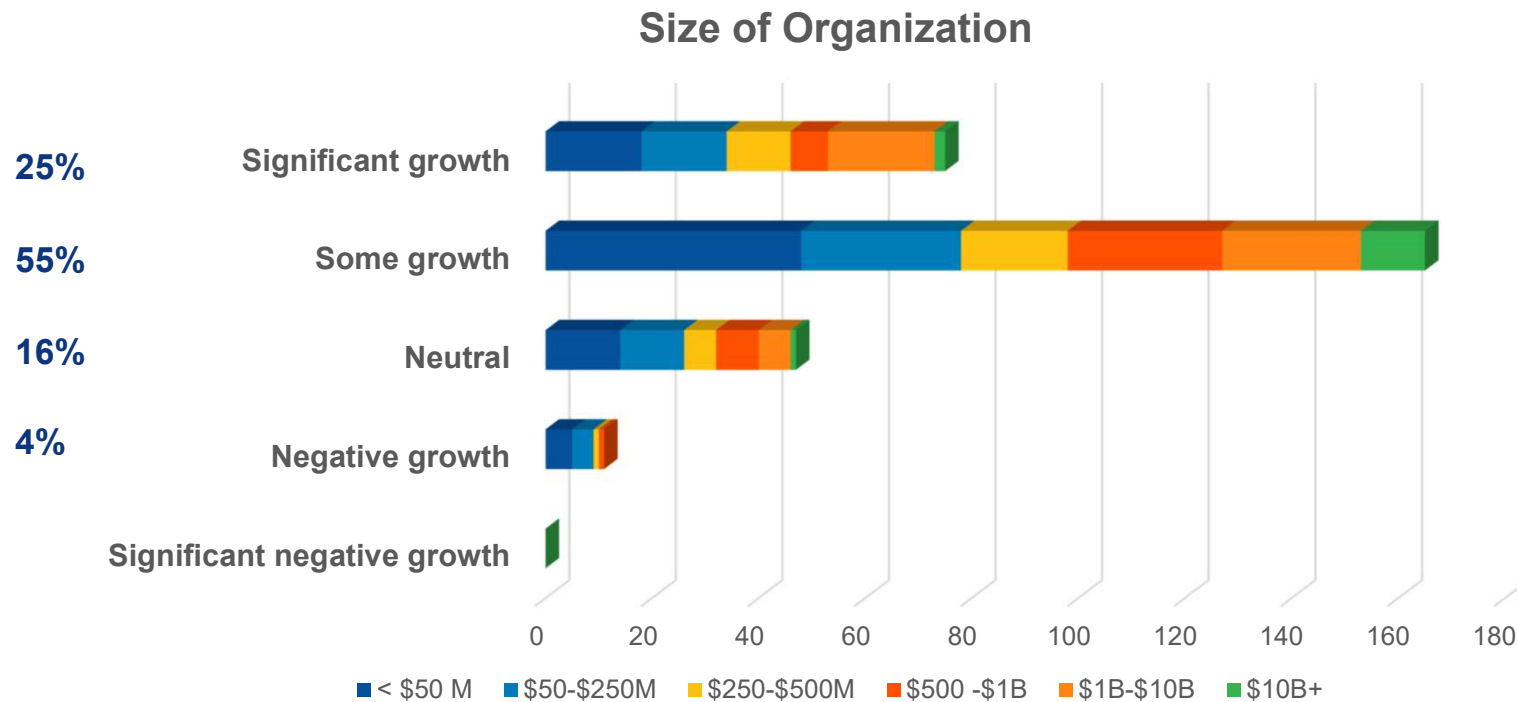


### Key Insight:

Growth is consistent among all generations

Gen X represented 2% of negative growth, and 52% of Neutral – Significant Growth

# ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN NEXT 18 MONTHS



## Key Insight:

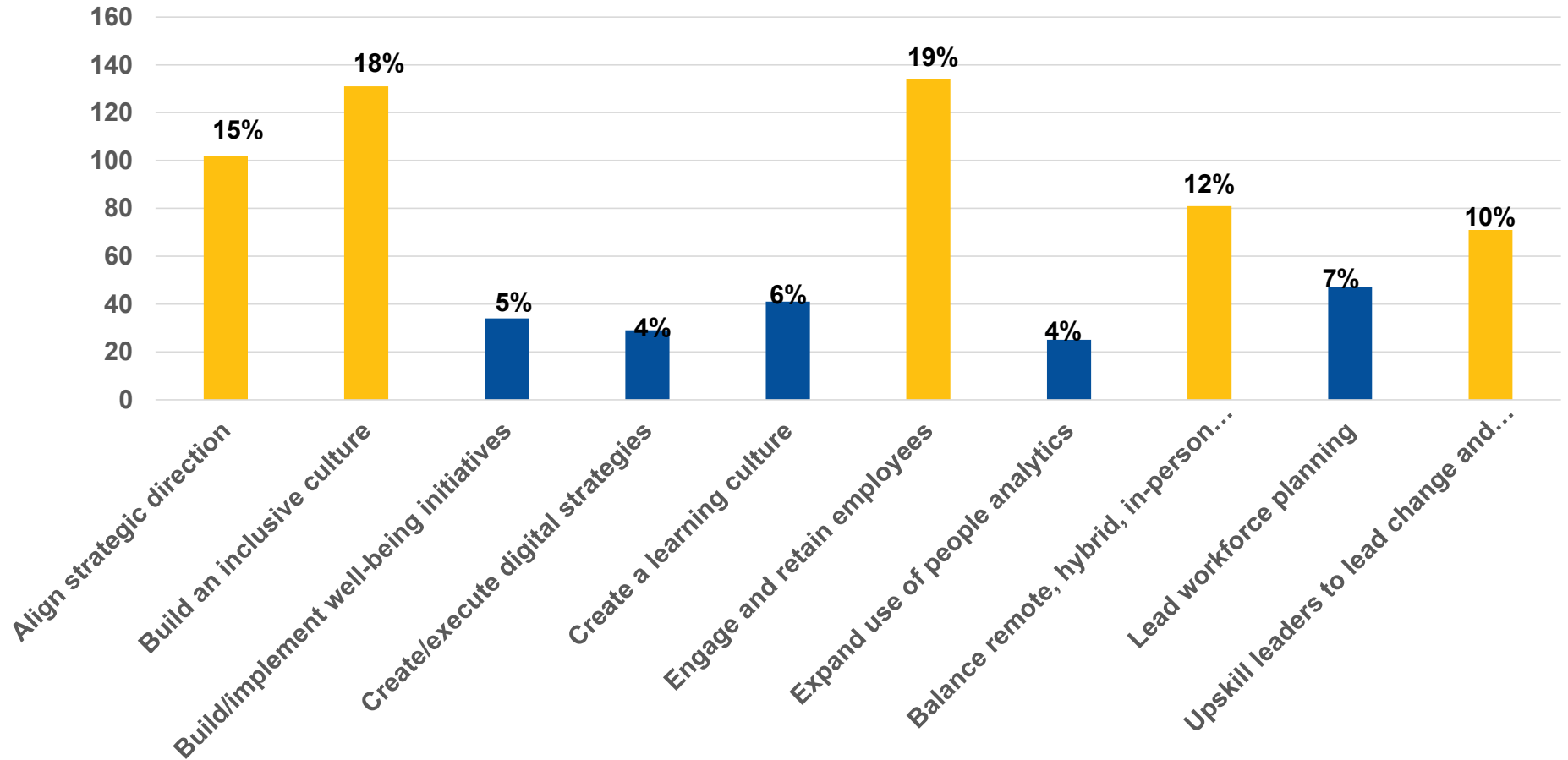
About 78% of companies under \$500 M anticipate some to significant growth

About 88% of companies over \$1B anticipate some to significant growth

# **ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES**

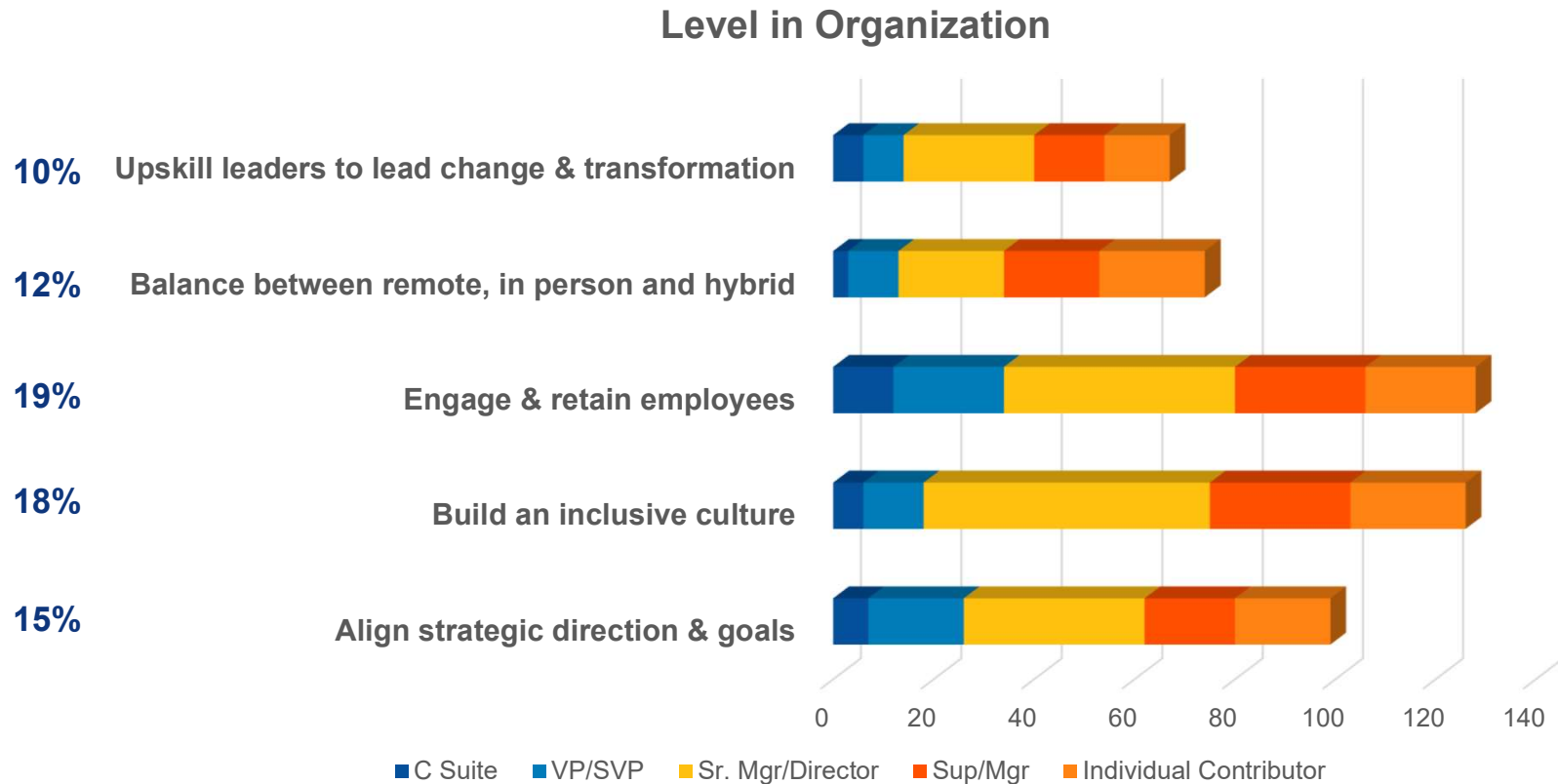


## TOP FIVE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES





# TOP 5 STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES



## Key Insight:

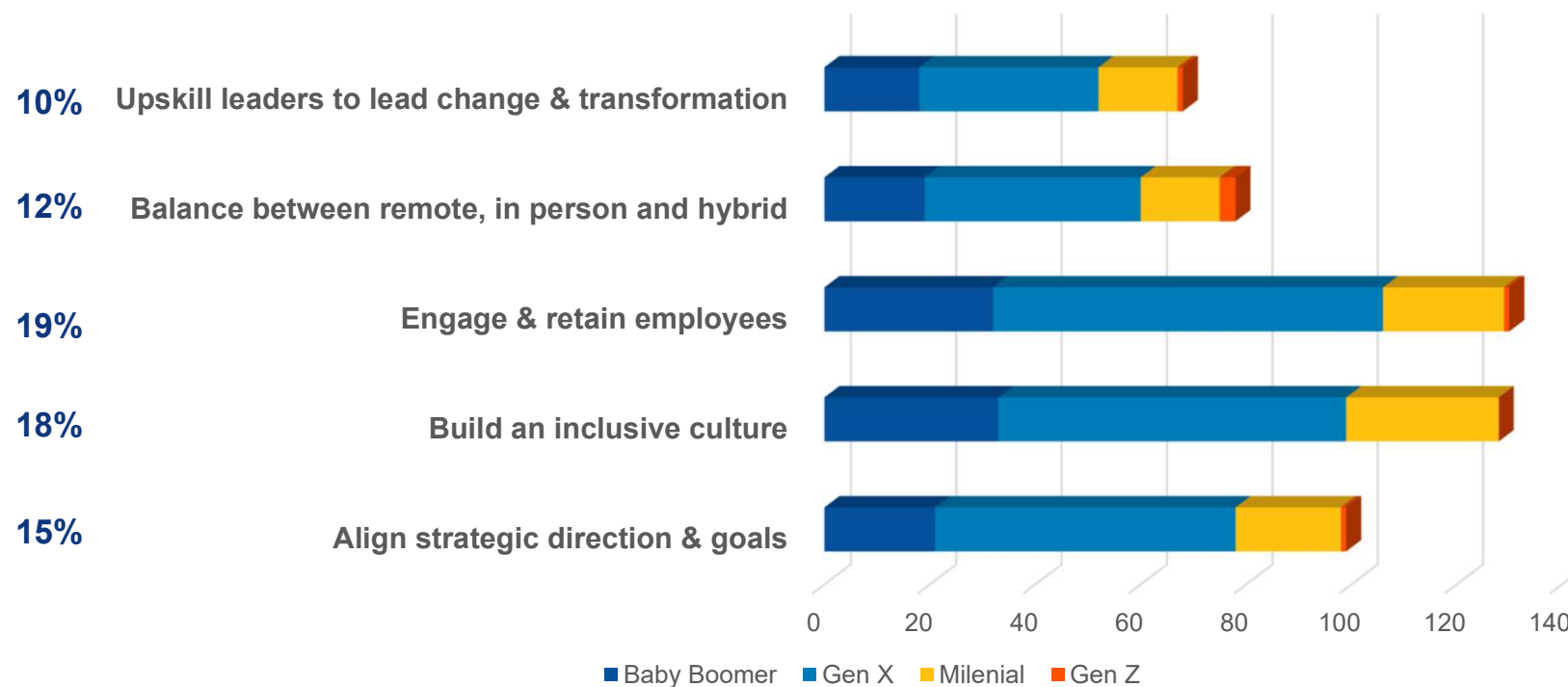
C Suite is committed to engaging and retaining employees

Directors/Sr. Mgrs. believe an inclusive culture is a strategic imperative

Managers are a balance between an engaged workforce and inclusive culture

# TOP 5 STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

## Generations



### Key Insight:

Baby Boomers and Gen Xers are focused on engaging employees and an inclusive culture

Millennials have identified an inclusive culture as their top strategic imperative

# TOP 5 STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

Size of Organization



## Key Insight:

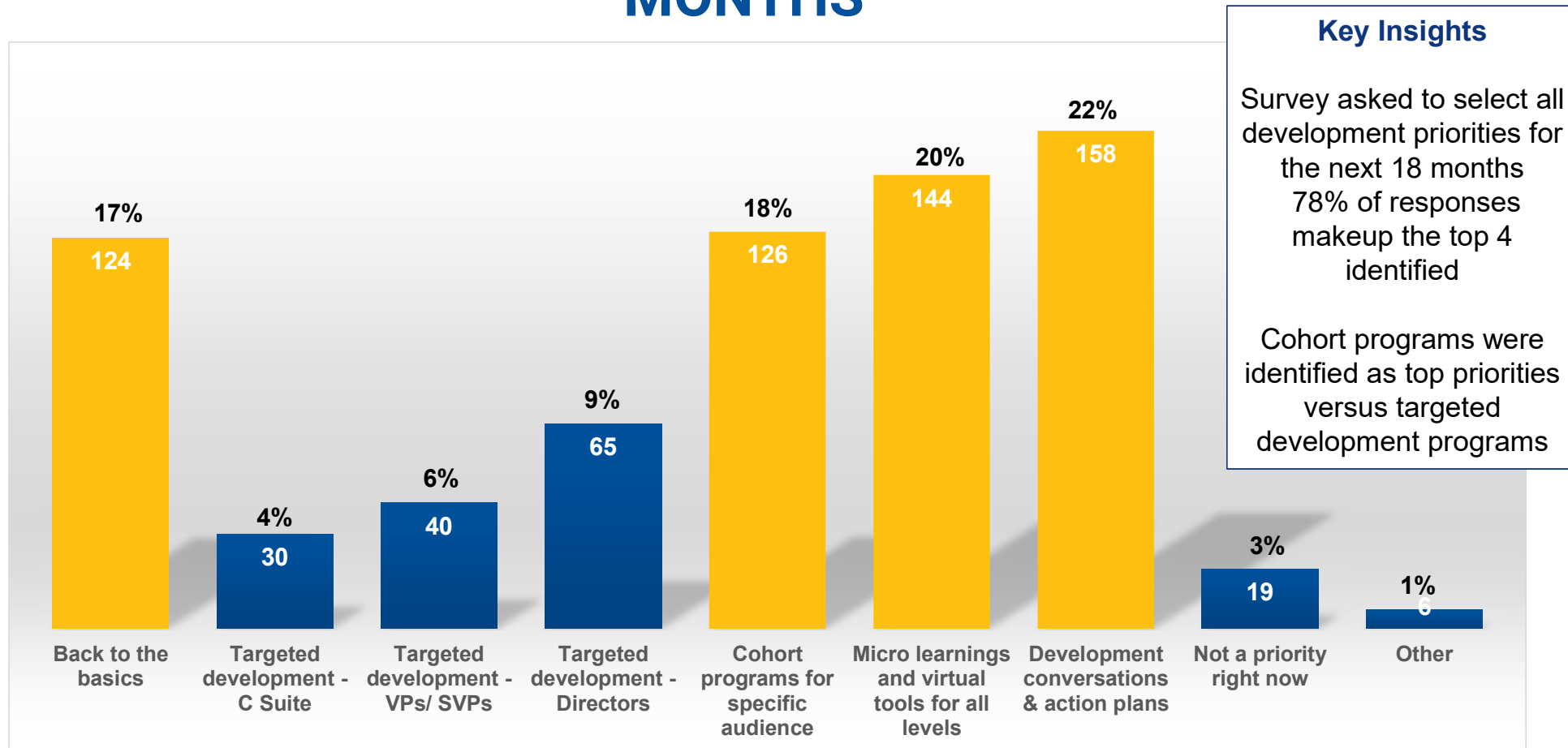
Organizations \$1B and more have identified engaging employees and an inclusive culture as strategic imperatives

Organizations \$250 M or less have identified an inclusive culture as a top strategic imperative, followed by aligning strategic direction & goals

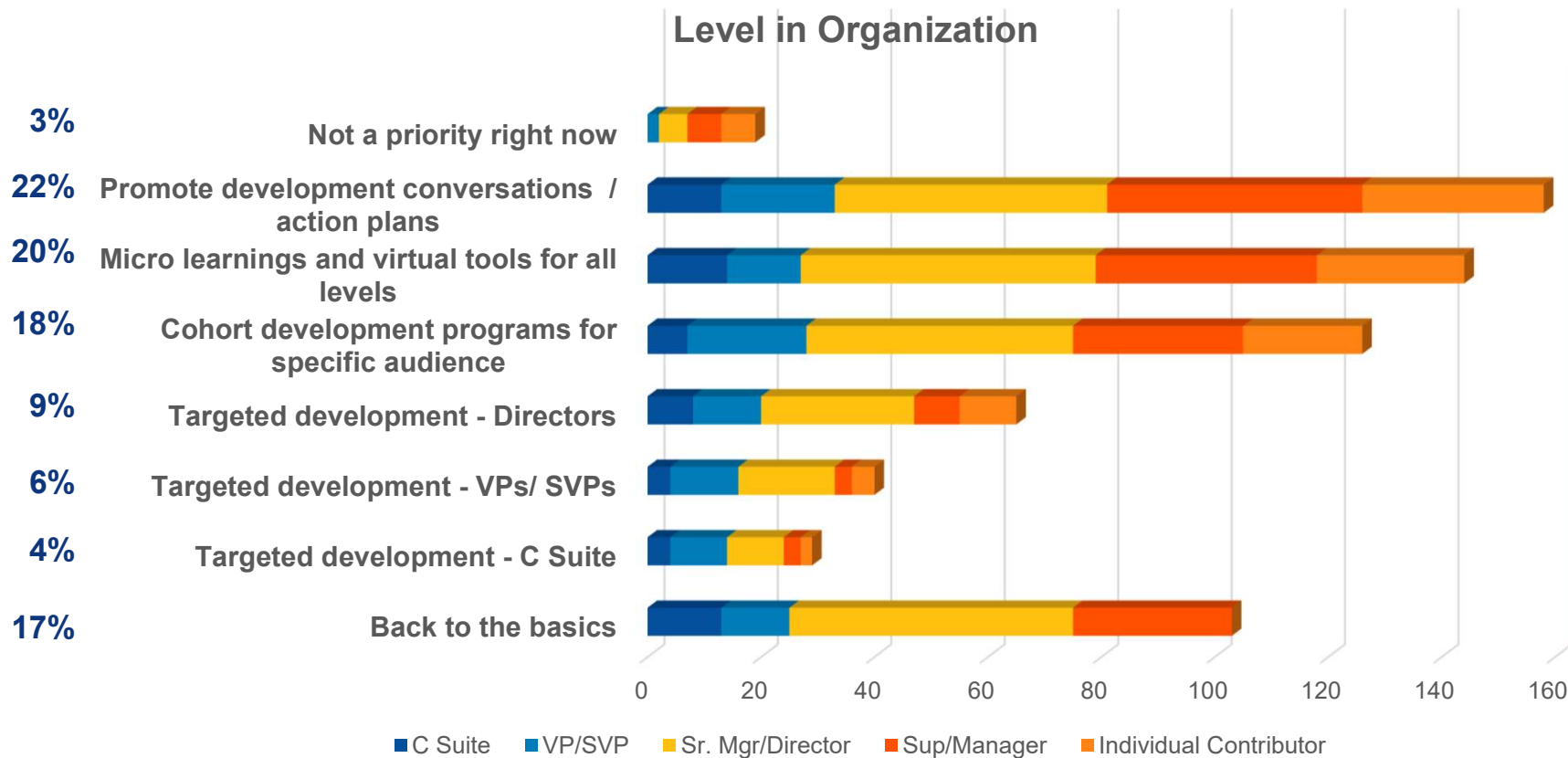
# **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR NEXT 18 MONTHS**



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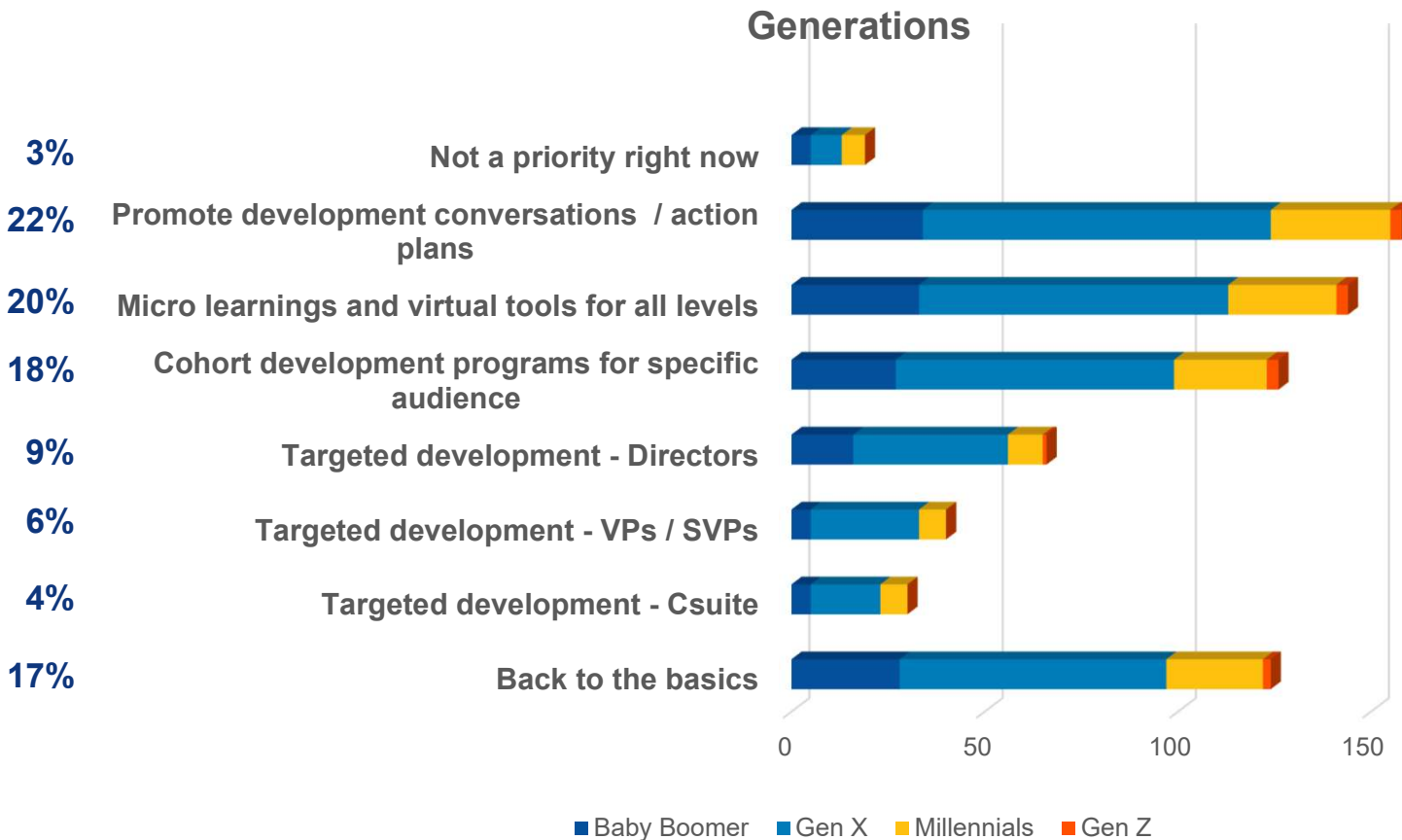


## Key Insight:

All levels identified promoting development conversations and action plans as a development priority

The C Suite and Sr. Managers / Directors identified the need to go Back to the basics as another priority

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR NEXT 18 MONTHS

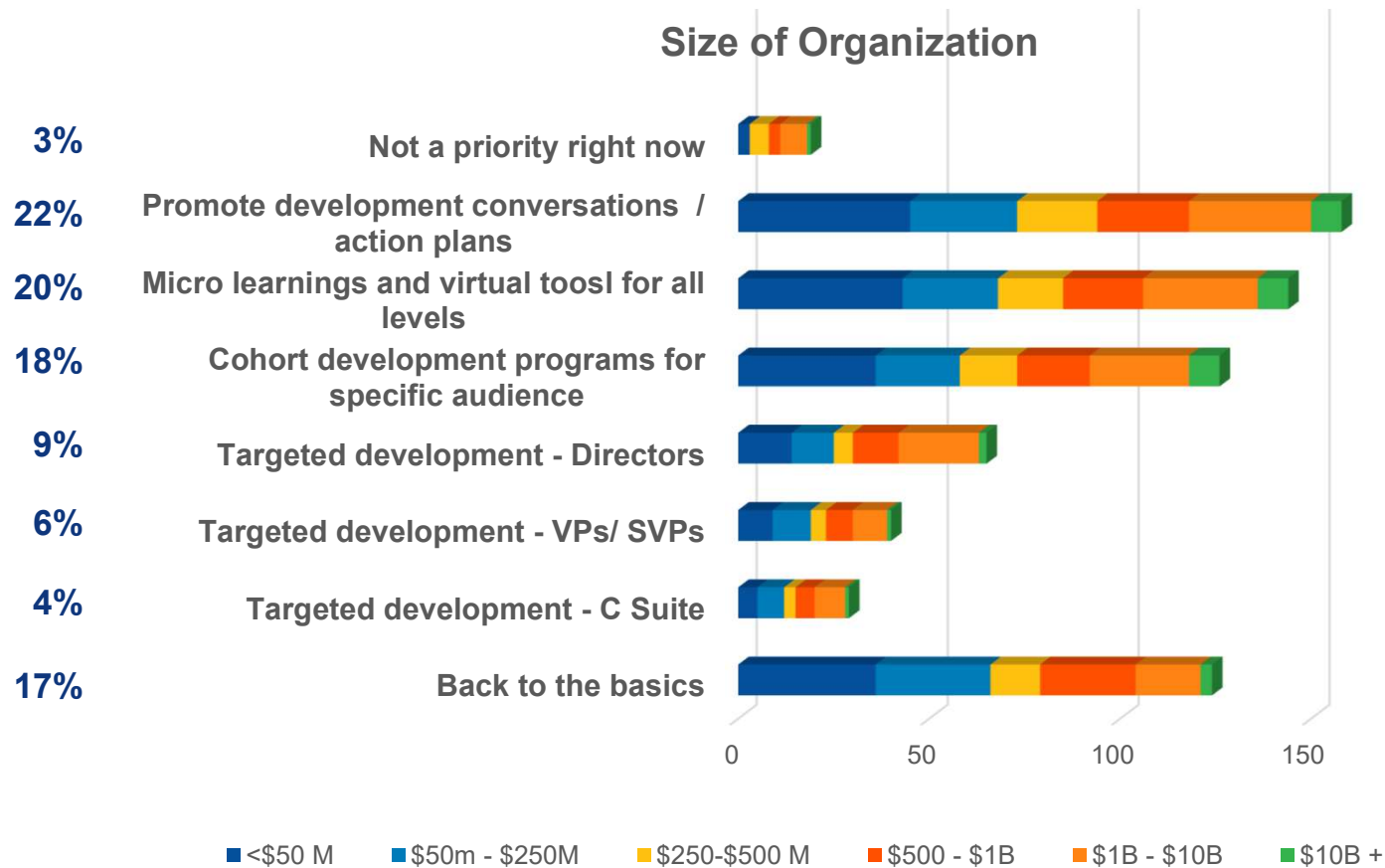


## Key Insight:

Promoting development conversations and action plans were identified as a leadership development priority for Baby Boomers and Gen Xers

Millennials appeared to be even across the top 4 leadership development approaches

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR NEXT 18 MONTHS



## Key Insight:

Promoting development conversations and action plans were identified as a leadership development priority for all companies, regardless of size

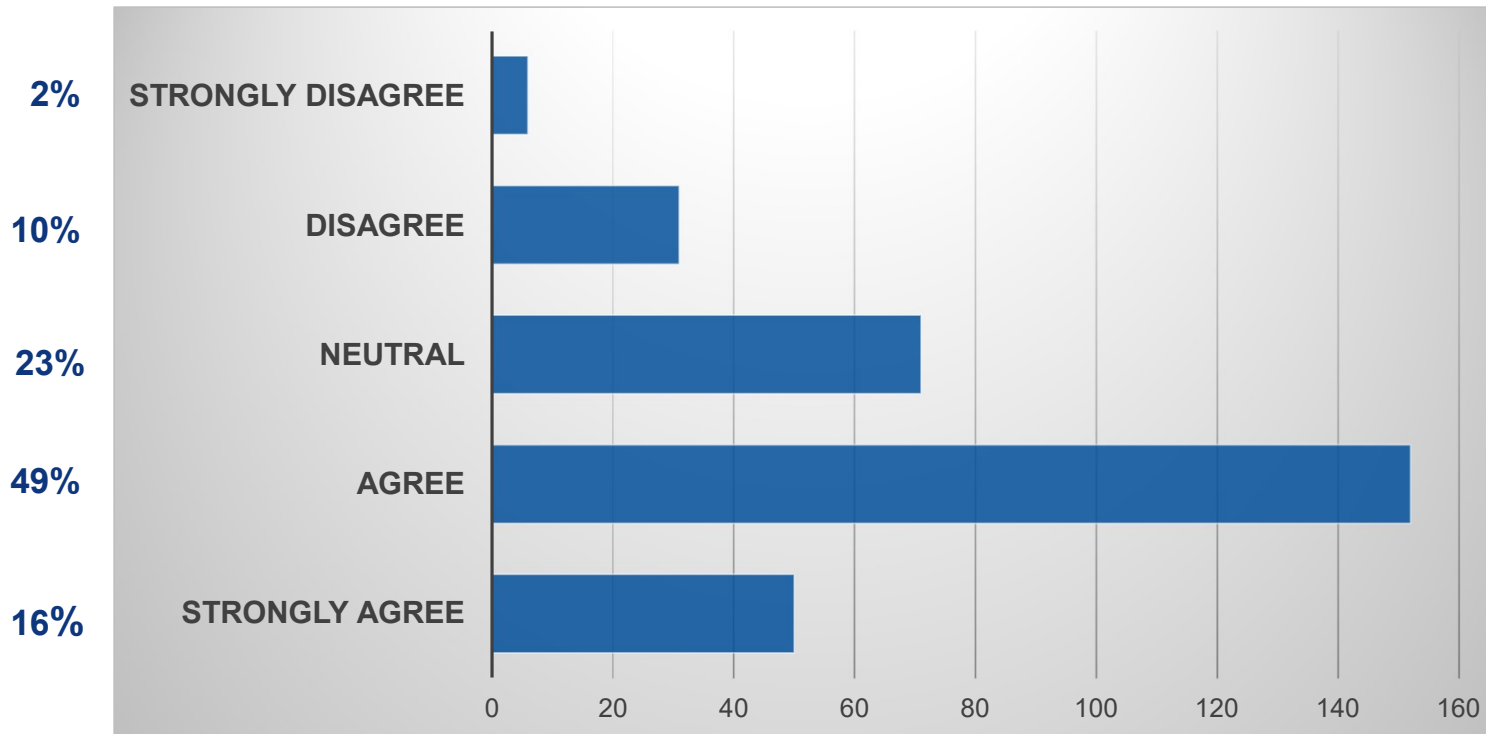
Smaller companies will focus on Back to the basics, in addition to micro learnings and cohort programs identified by larger companies



# **LEADERS PREPARATION TO DELIVER RESULTS**



## MOST LEADERS ARE PREPARED TO DELIVER BUSINESS AND PEOPLE RESULTS

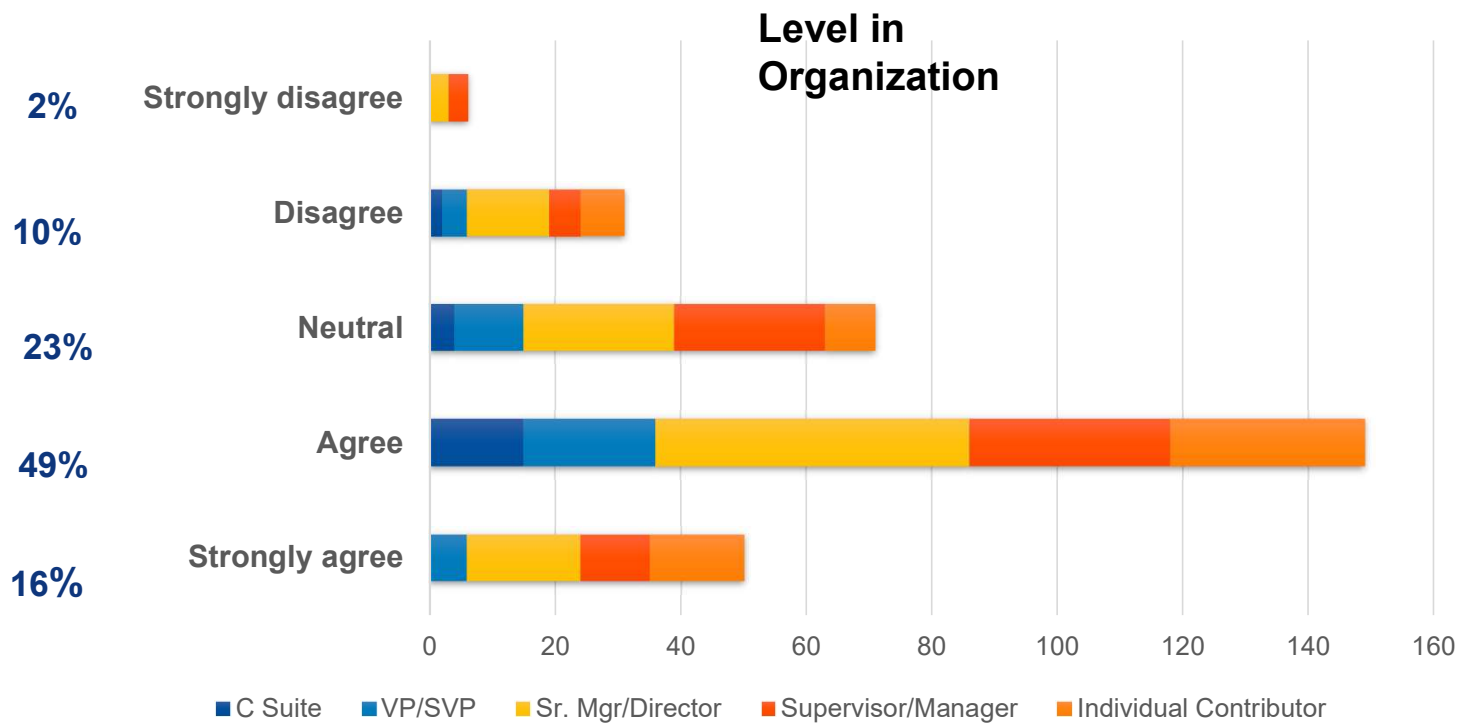


### Key Insight:

65% of the companies surveyed believe their leaders are prepared to deliver business and people results

That leaves 35% of companies with leaders who may NOT be prepared

# LEADERS ARE PREPARED TO DELIVER BUSINESS AND PEOPLE RESULTS

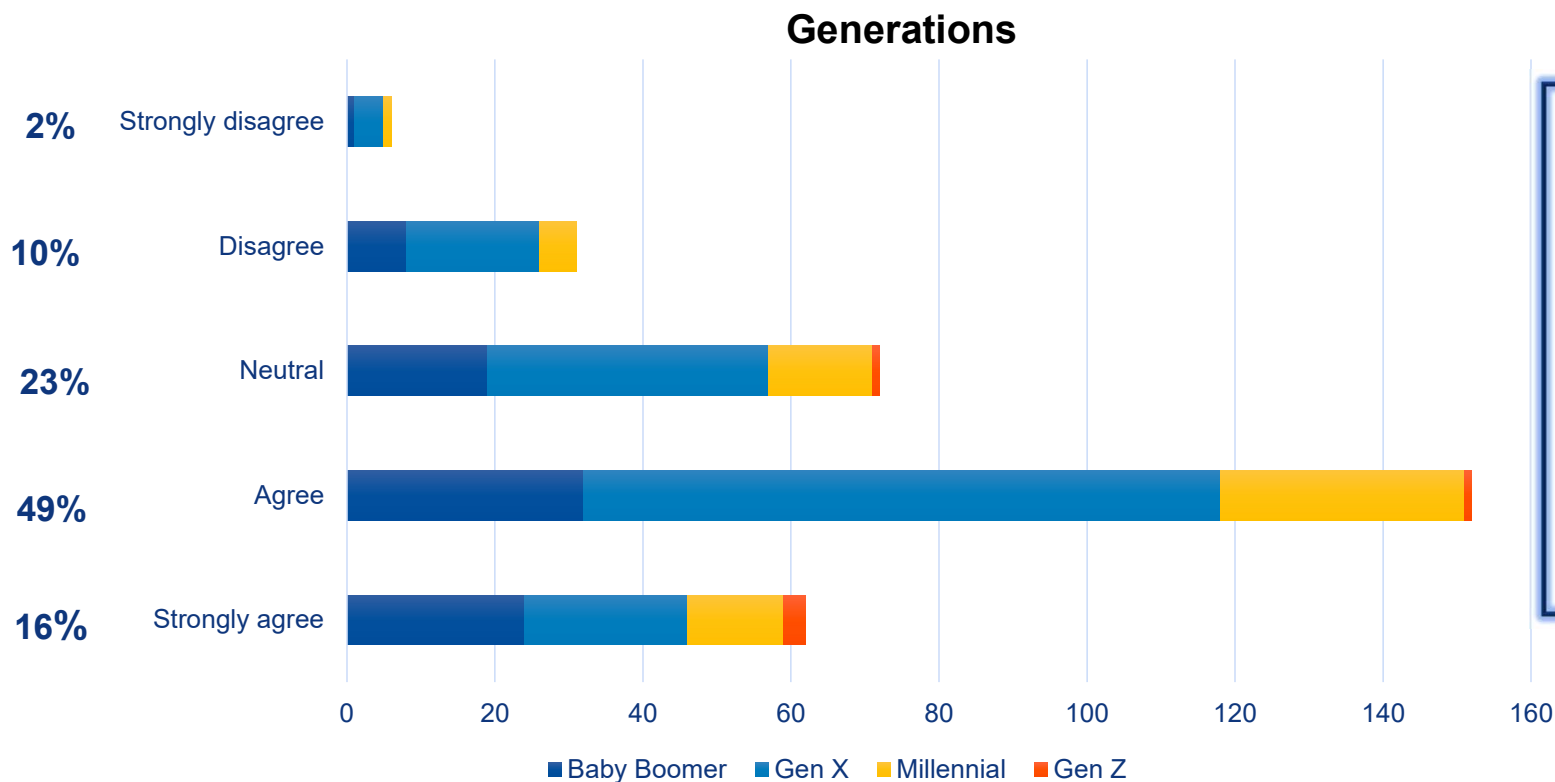


## Key Insight:

All four levels have the highest percentage in “agree” that leaders are prepared to deliver business and people results

No C Suite responses in Strongly Agree

# LEADERS ARE PREPARED TO DELIVER BUSINESS AND PEOPLE RESULTS

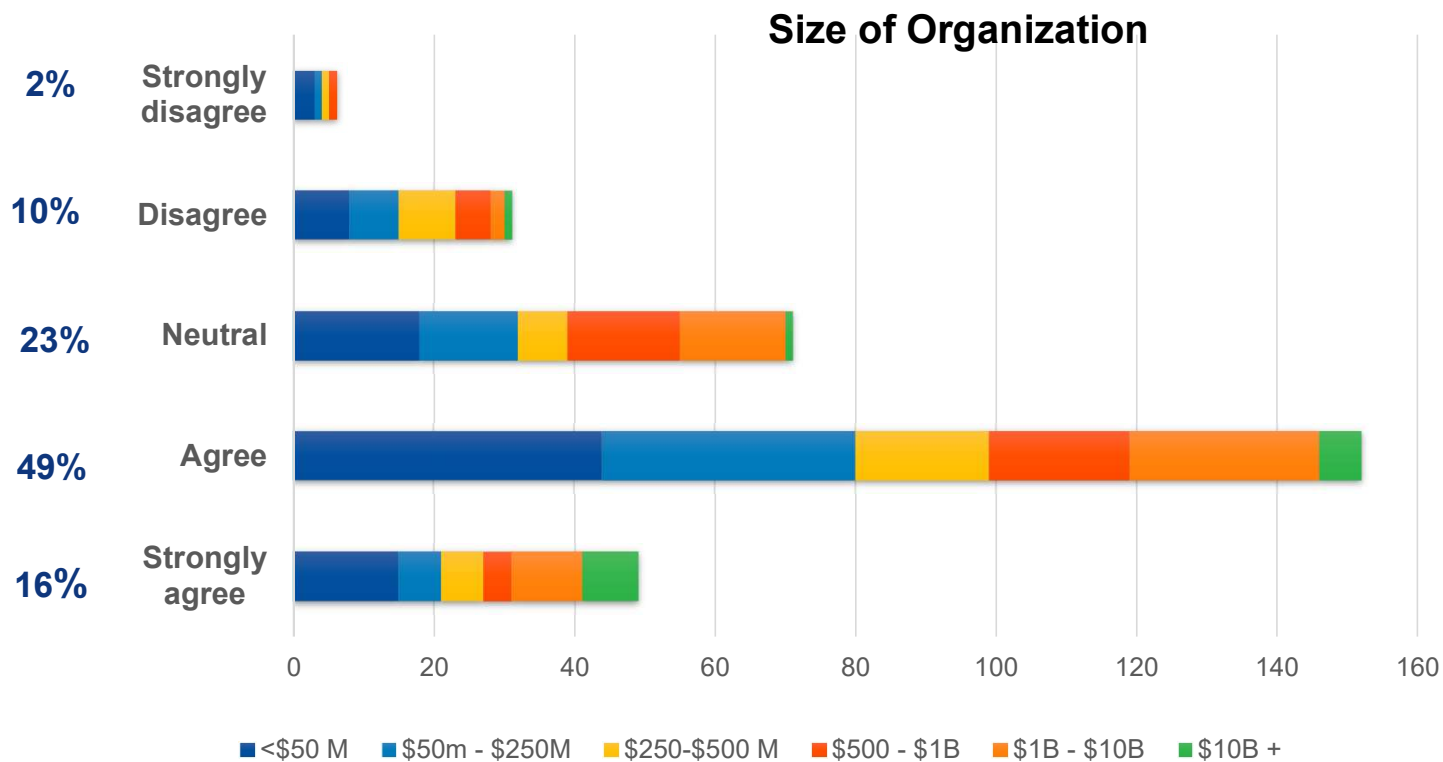


## Key Insight:

All four generations have the highest percentage in “agree” that leaders are prepared to deliver business and people results

Baby Boomers are most optimistic about leaders with over 67% responses agree or strongly agree

# LEADERS ARE PREPARED TO DELIVER BUSINESS AND PEOPLE RESULTS



## Key Insight:

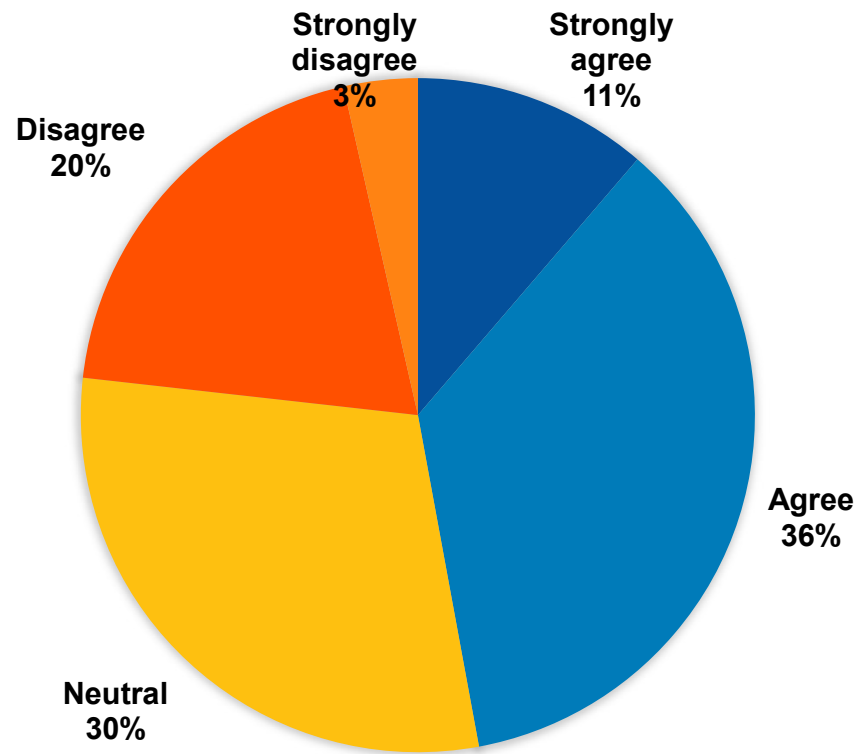
88% of organizations \$10B in revenue and higher agree or strongly agree their leaders are prepared to deliver results

40% of organizations \$500 - \$1B are neutral or disagree their leaders are prepared

# **ORGANIZATIONS WITH A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN & CONFIDENCE IN THE PLAN**



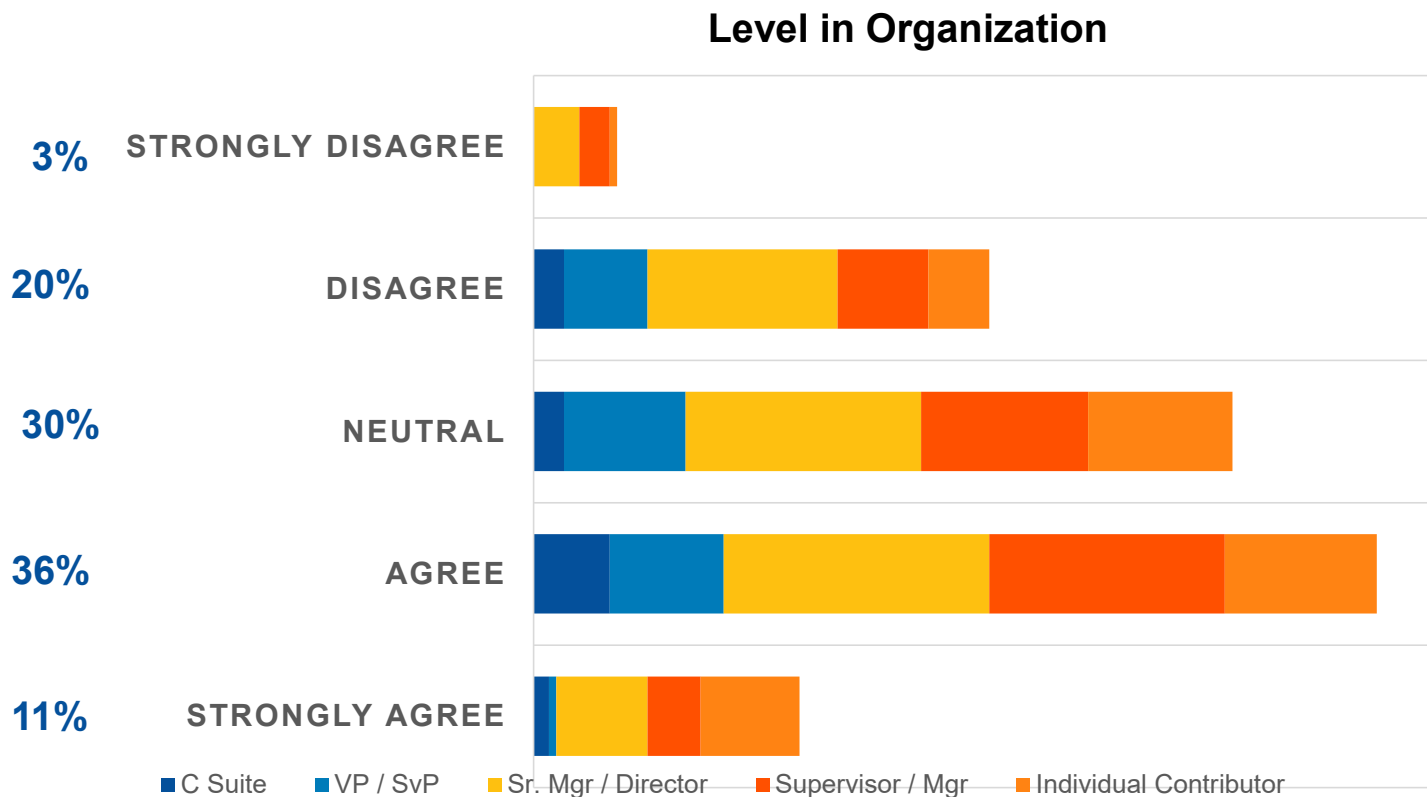
## ORGANIZATIONS WITH A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN TO BUILD LEADERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS



### Key Insight:

47% of organizations surveyed agree or strongly agree they have a strategy and plan, that leaves 53% either neutral or disagree they have a strategy and plan to build leaders

# ORGANIZATIONS WITH A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN TO BUILD LEADERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS



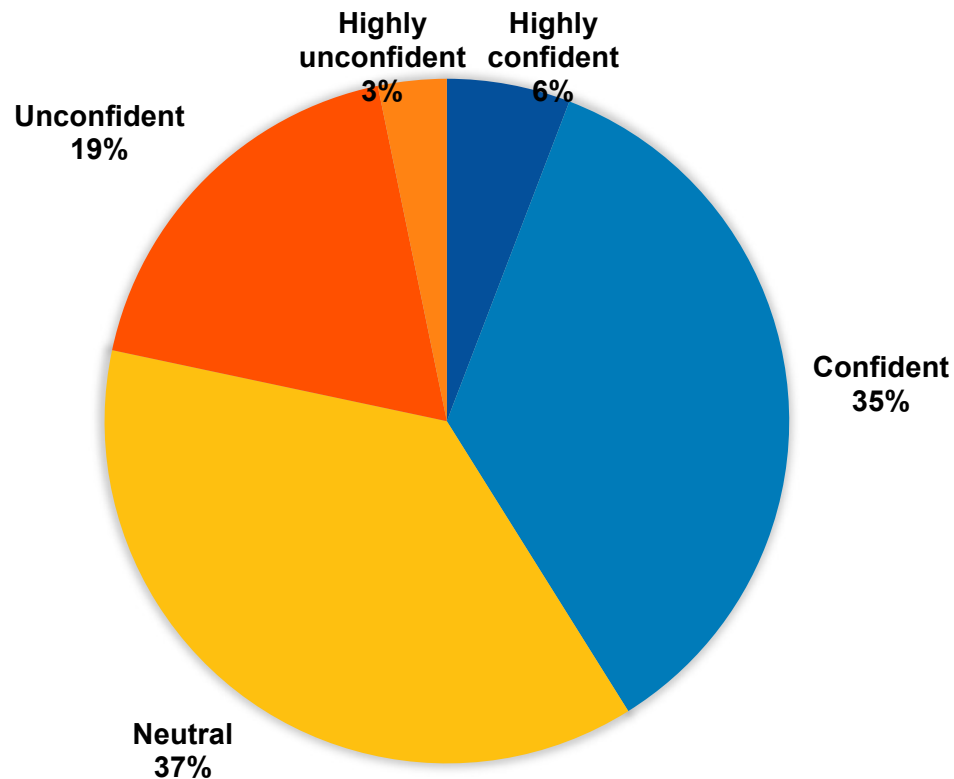
## Key Insight:

5% of C Suite and VP / SVP levels agree or strongly agree they have a strategy and plan to build leaders, while 11% are neutral or disagree

15% of Sr. Mgrs / Directors agree or strongly agree, while 20% are neutral or disagree



# CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN TO BUILD LEADERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

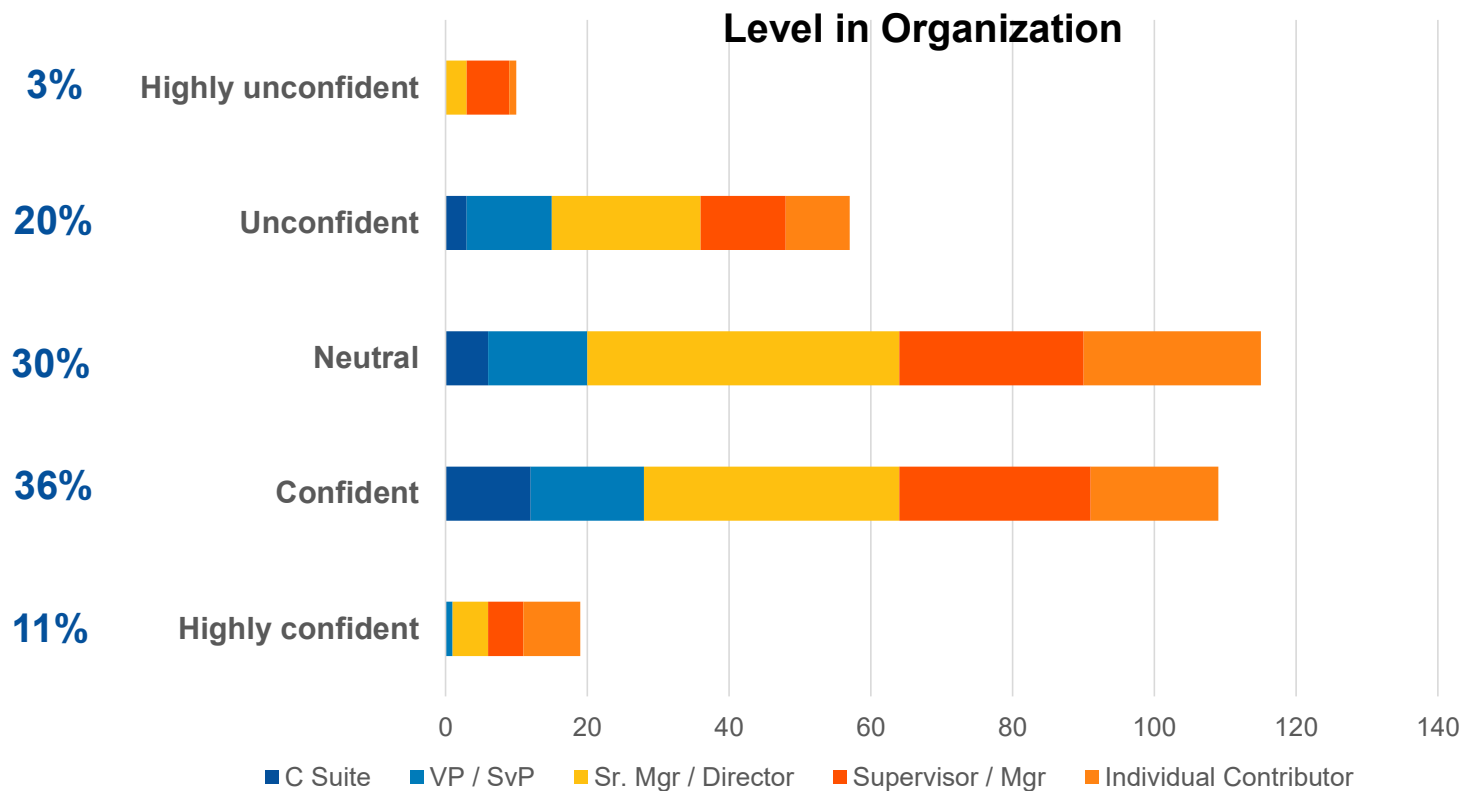


## Key Insight:

41% of organizations surveyed are confident or highly confident in their leadership development strategy and plan. In the last slide, we found 47% of organizations had a plan.

59% of organizations surveyed were neutral or unconfident with their strategy and plan.

# CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN TO BUILD LEADERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS



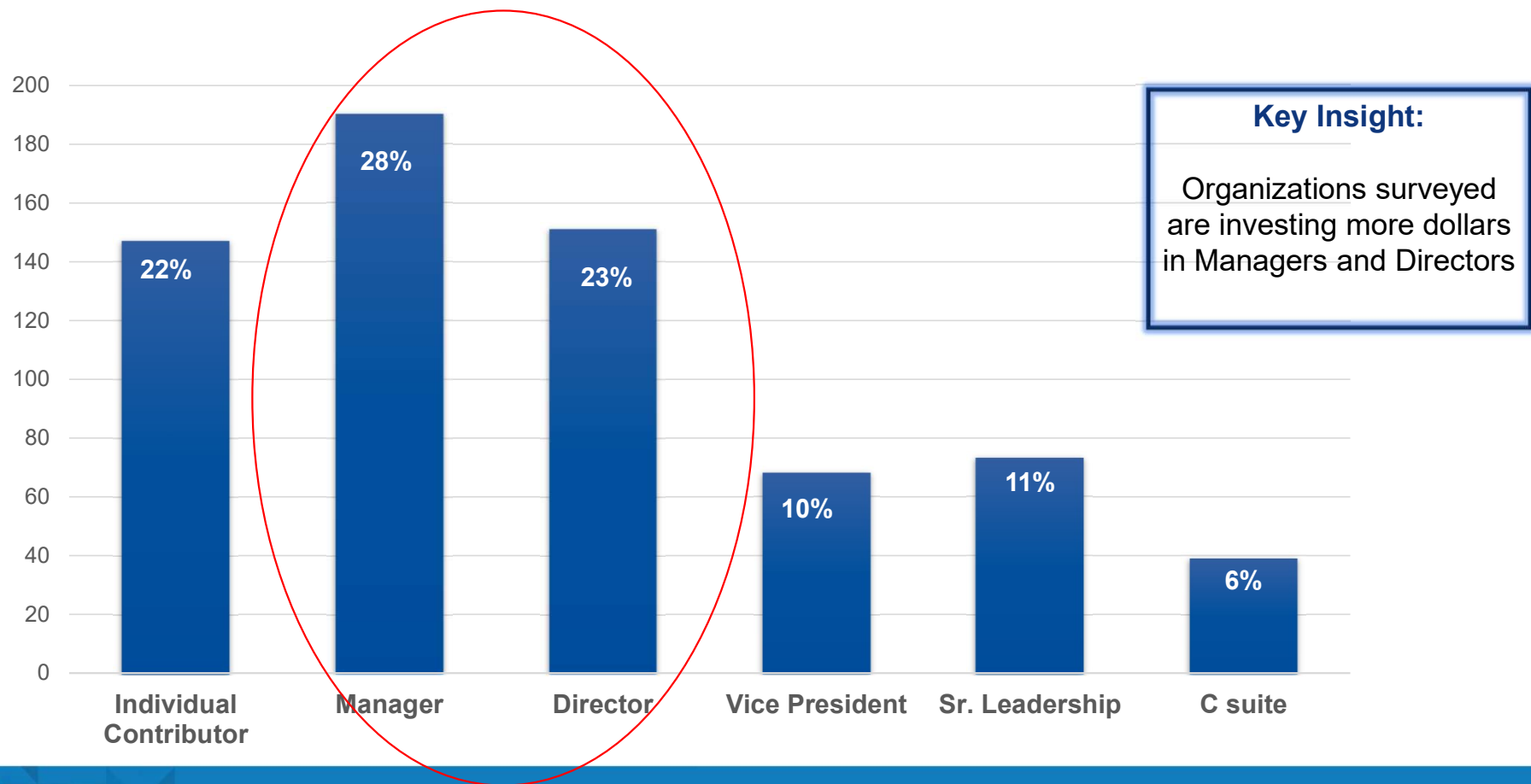
## Key Insight:

Sr. Managers / Director and Individual Contributors are the most “neutral” when it comes to a leadership development strategy and plan

# **FUTURE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT**

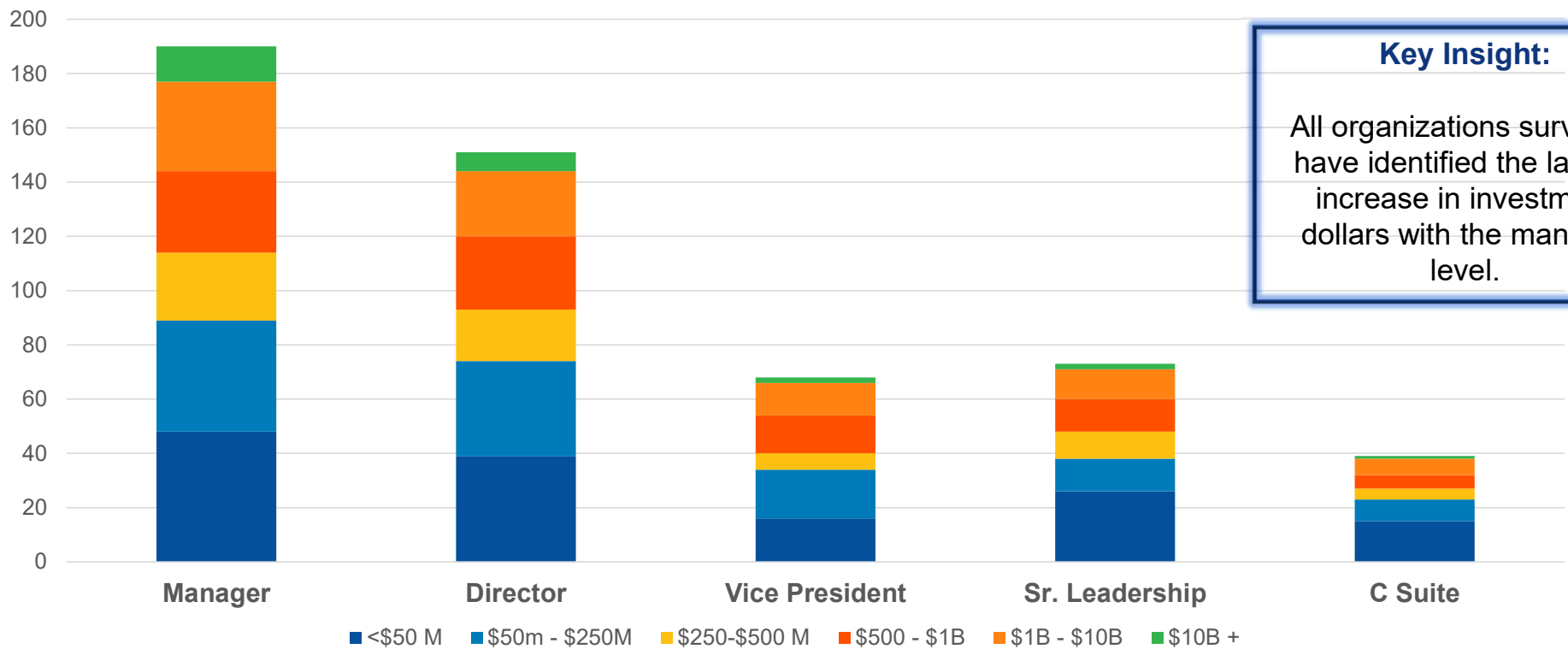


## THE LEVELS WHERE ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVESTING MORE DOLLARS



# THE LEVELS WHERE ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVESTING MORE DOLLARS

Organization Size



## Key Insight:

All organizations surveyed have identified the largest increase in investment dollars with the manager level.

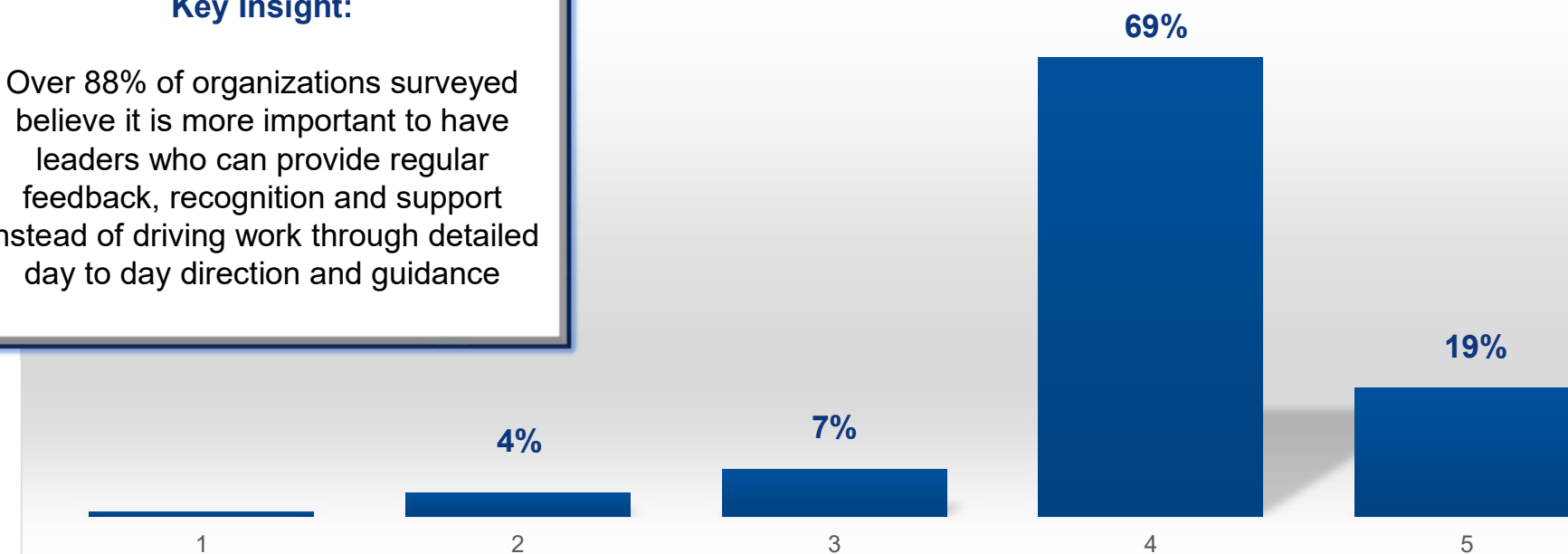
# **DESIRED FUTURE LEADERSHIP STYLE**



## USING A SCALE OF 1 – 5, WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE MOST CLOSELY REFLECTS WHAT IS NEEDED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

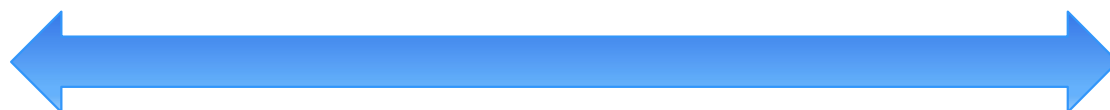
### Key Insight:

Over 88% of organizations surveyed believe it is more important to have leaders who can provide regular feedback, recognition and support instead of driving work through detailed day to day direction and guidance



Driving an employee's work by providing detailed day to day directions and guidance

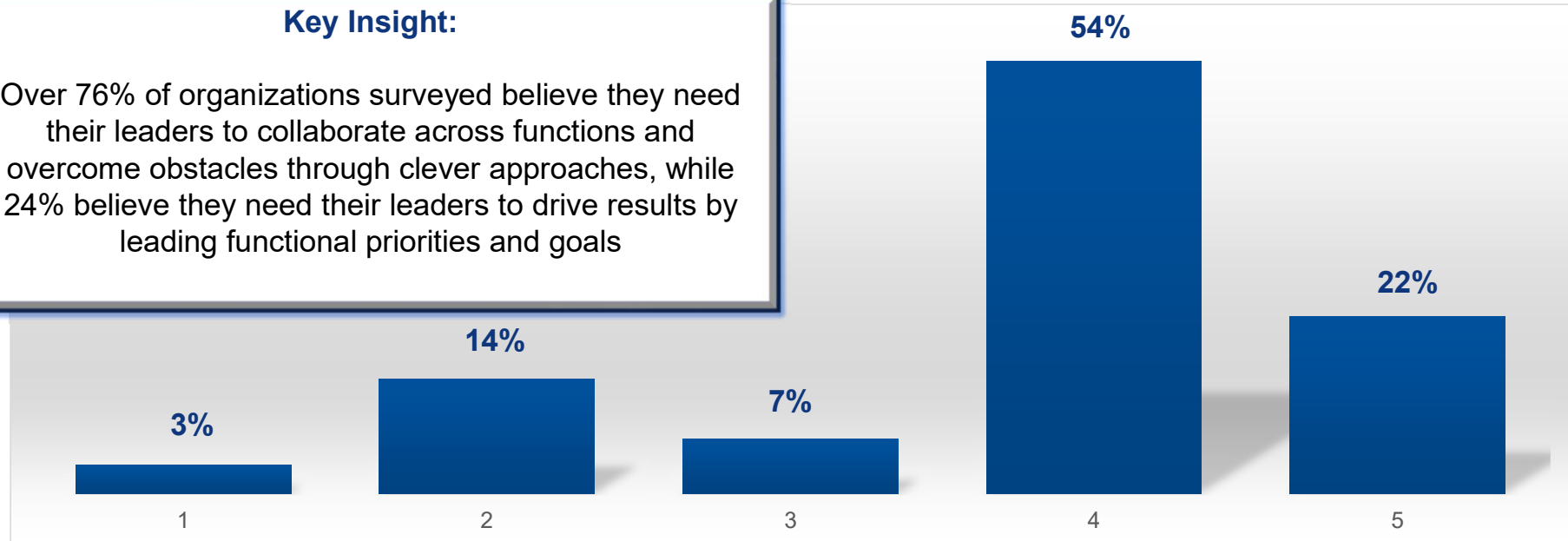
Supporting employee's work by providing feedback, recognition and support



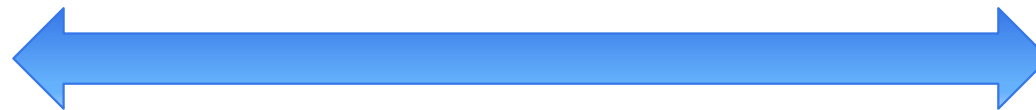
## USING A SCALE OF 1 – 5, WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE MOST CLOSELY REFLECTS WHAT IS NEEDED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

### Key Insight:

Over 76% of organizations surveyed believe they need their leaders to collaborate across functions and overcome obstacles through clever approaches, while 24% believe they need their leaders to drive results by leading functional priorities and goals



Drive results through a focus on leading functional priorities and goals



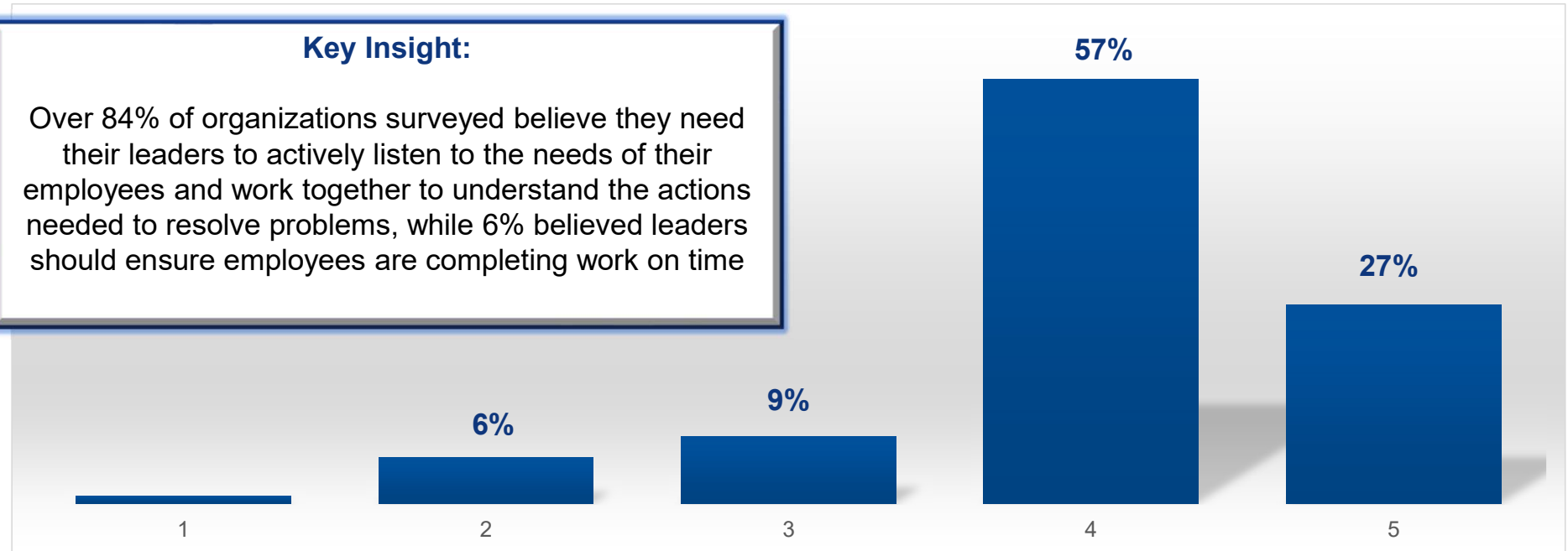
Influencing results by breaking down silos, collaborating across functions and overcoming obstacles through clever approaches



## USING A SCALE OF 1 – 5, WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE MOST CLOSELY REFLECTS WHAT IS NEEDED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

### Key Insight:

Over 84% of organizations surveyed believe they need their leaders to actively listen to the needs of their employees and work together to understand the actions needed to resolve problems, while 6% believed leaders should ensure employees are completing work on time



Ensuring employees are completing work on time

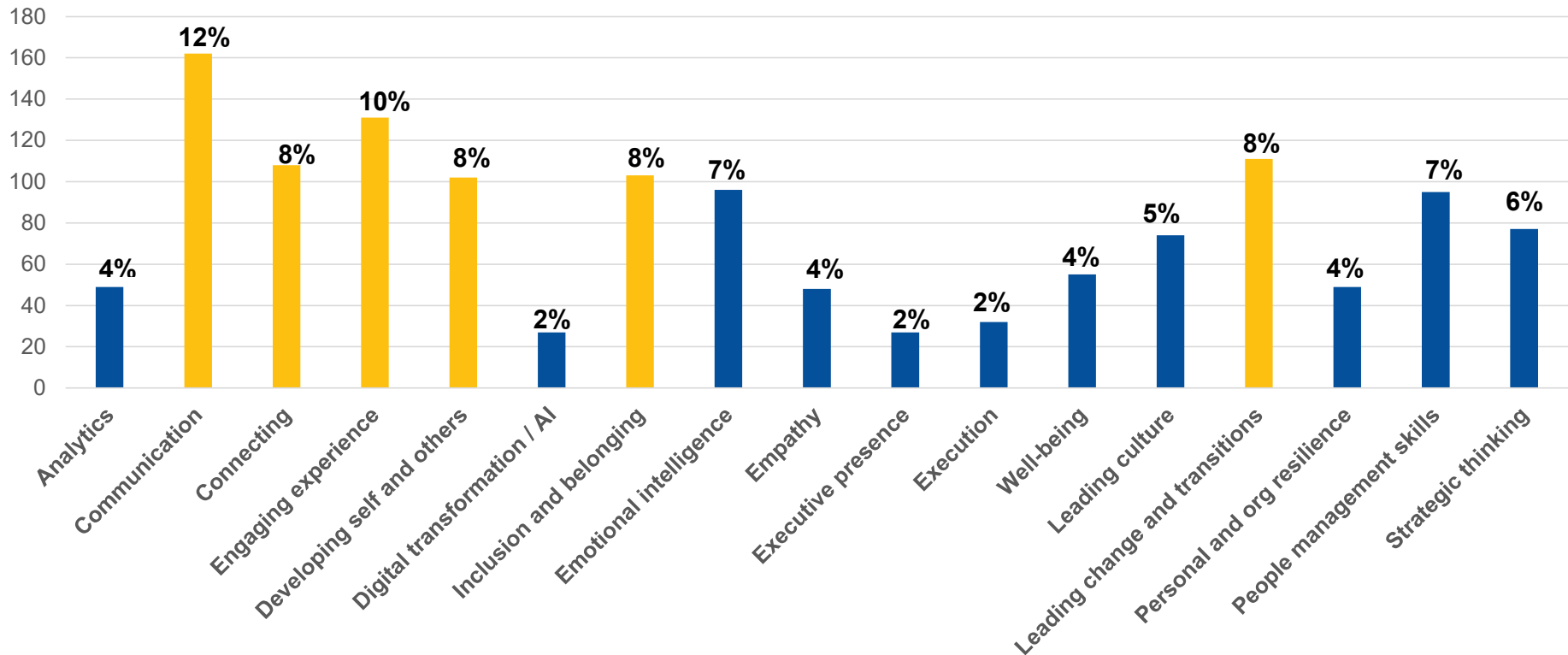


Supporting employees by actively listening to their needs and working together to understand the actions needed to resolve problems

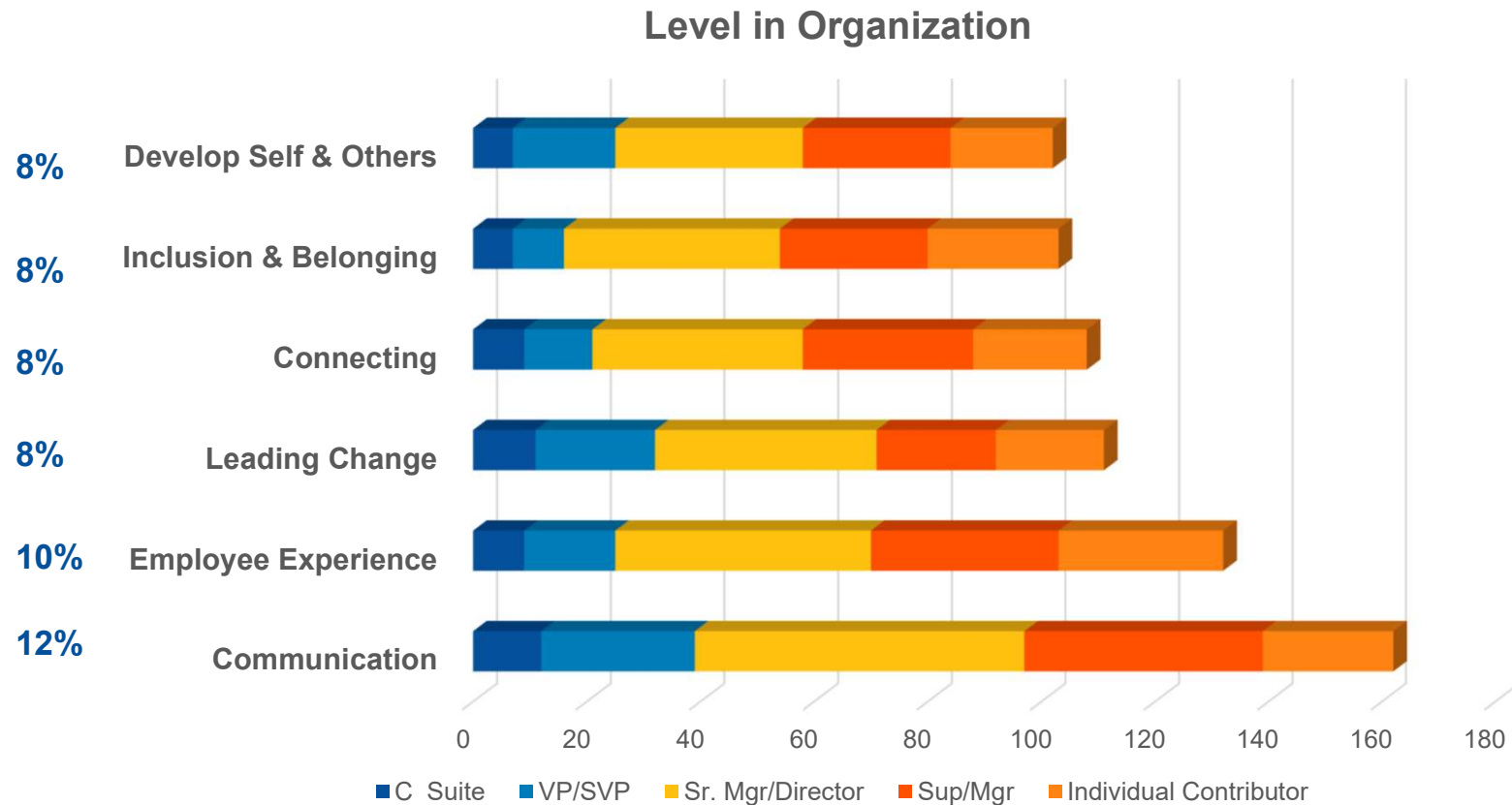
# **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOPICS FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS**



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILL TOPICS THAT ARE CRITICAL FOR LEADERS IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS



# TOP 6 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILL TOPICS



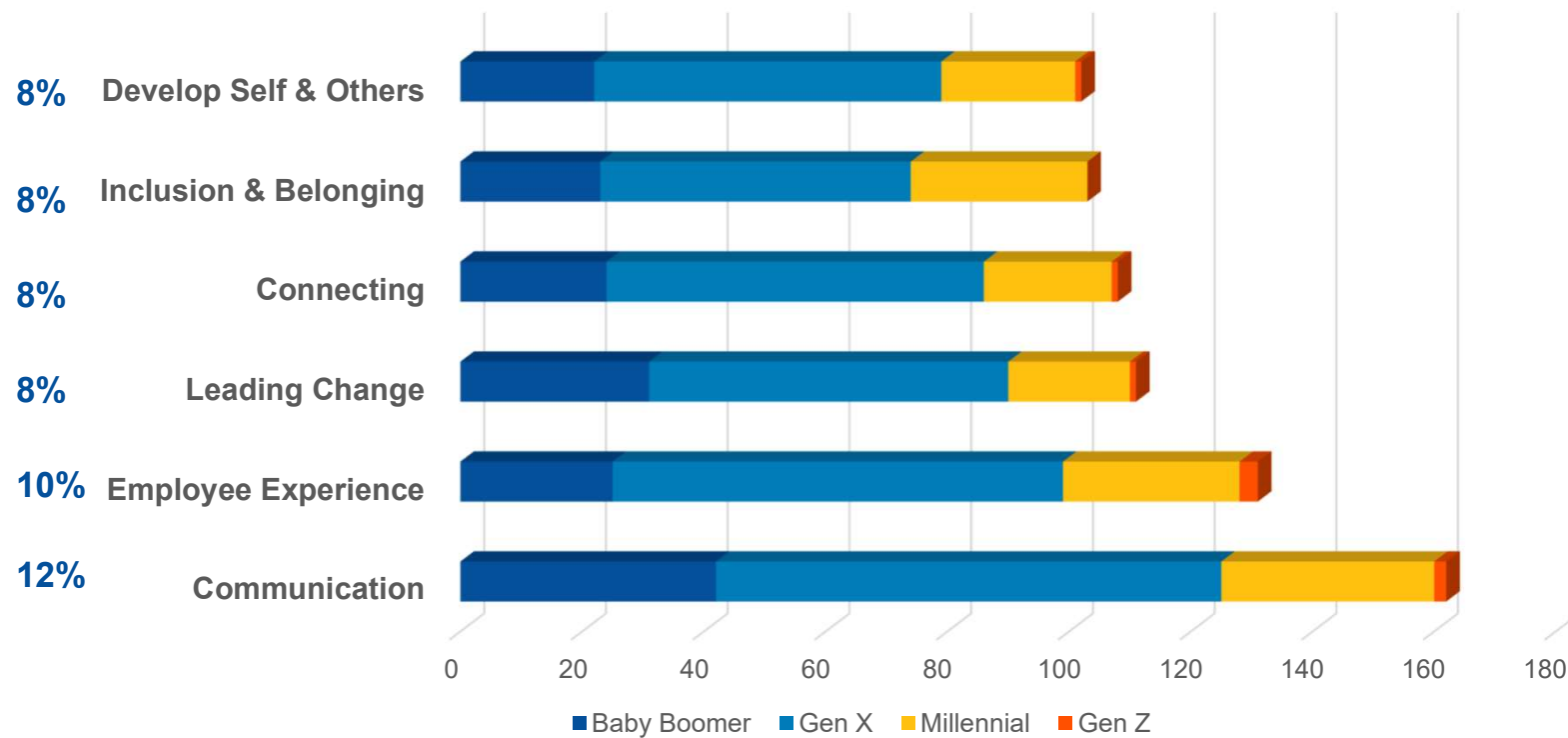
## Key Insight:

All levels in the organizations surveyed identified Employee Experience and Communication as the most important leadership development skill topics

VP / SVPs identified leading change more frequently than the employee experience

# TOP 6 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILL TOPICS

Generations

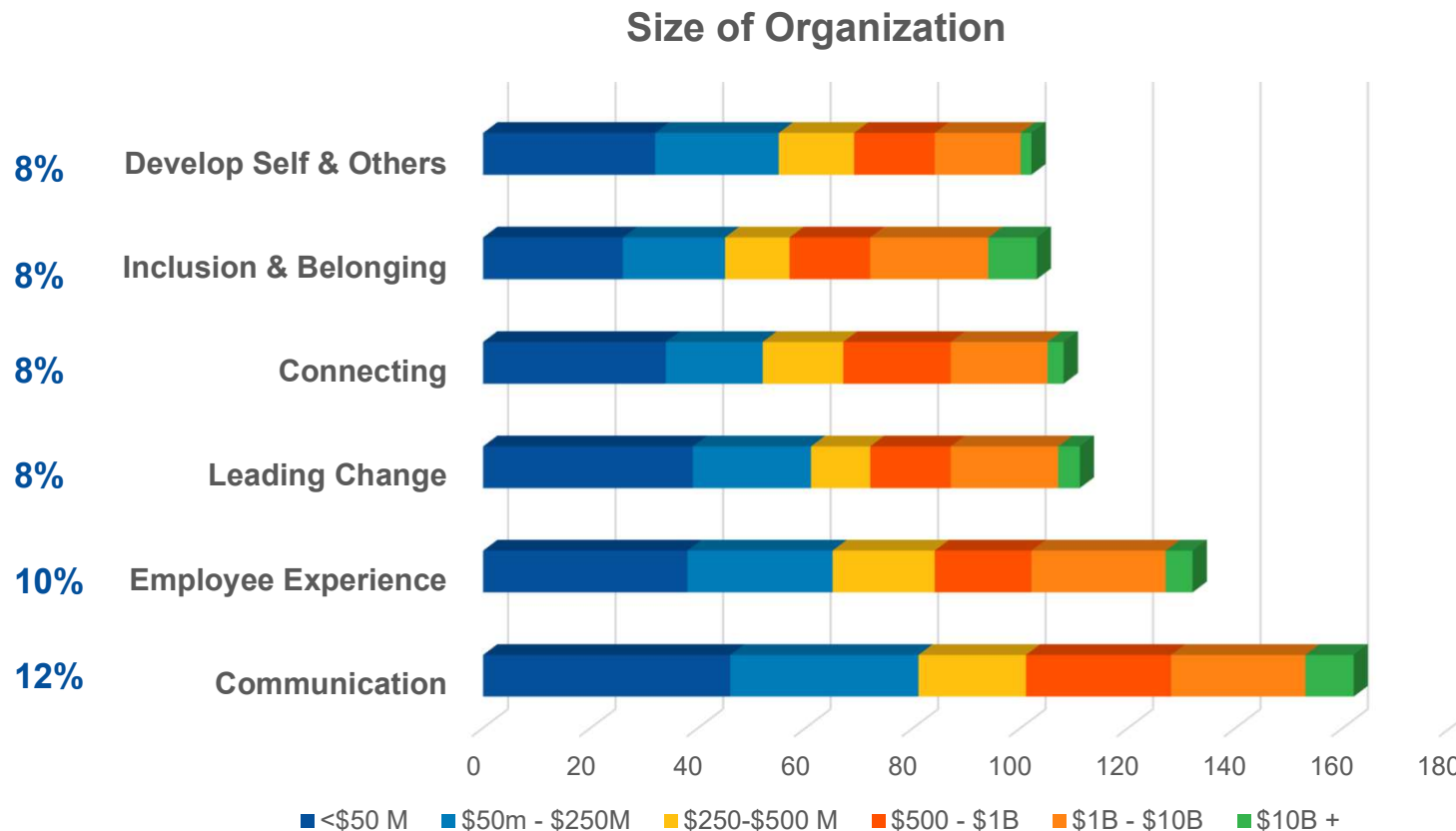


## Key Insight:

All generations in the organizations surveyed identified Employee Experience and Communication as the most important leadership development skill topics

Baby Boomers and Millennials identified Inclusion & Belonging as important as the Employee Experience

# TOP 6 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILL TOPICS



## Key Insight:

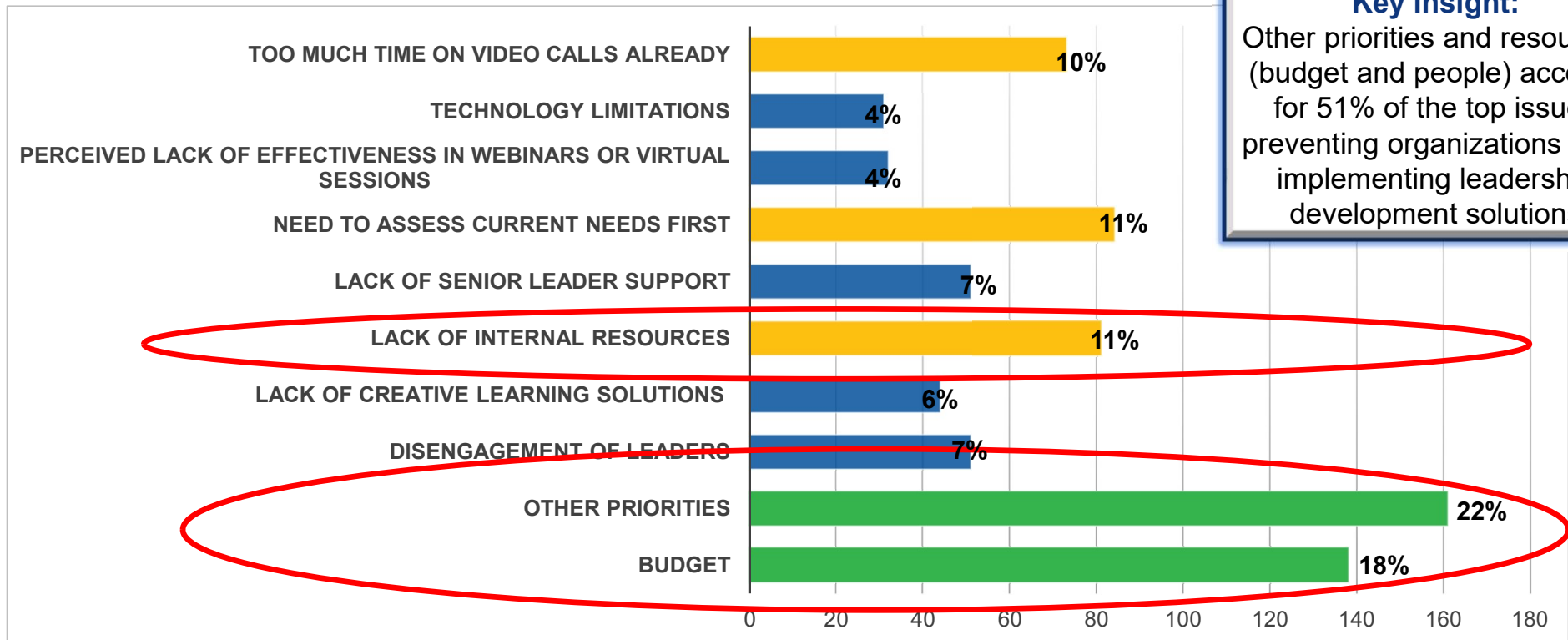
Larger organizations (over \$1 B) identified inclusion and belonging, employee experience and communication as their top 3 skill topics

Smaller organizations (<\$250 M) identified communication, employee experience and leading change as their top 3 skill topics

# **WHAT PREVENTS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

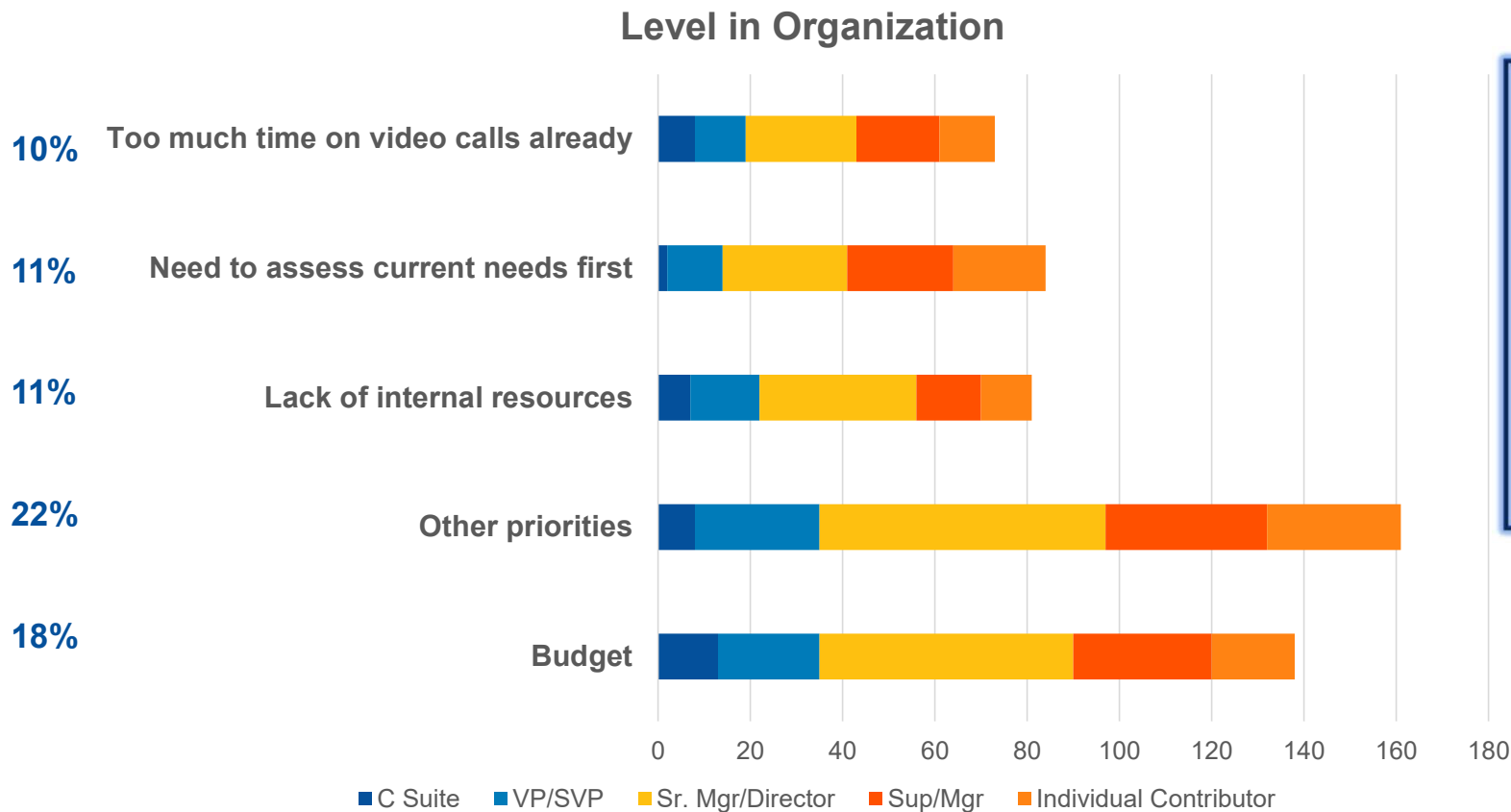


# WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM IMPLEMENTING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS?





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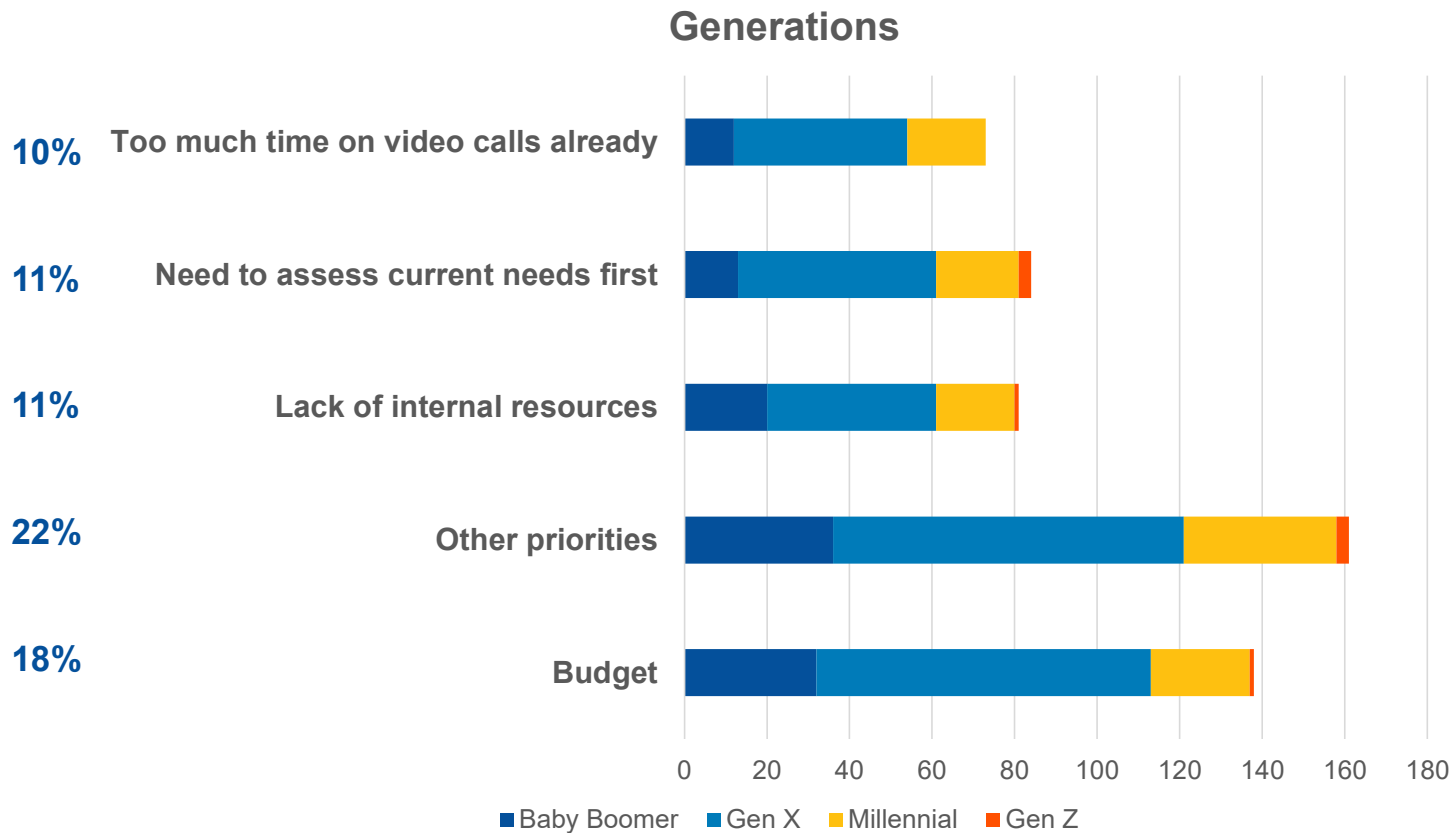


## Key Insight:

Director level and below identified the need to assess current needs first over a lack of internal resources

Individual contributors identified needing to assess current needs first and other priorities versus budget

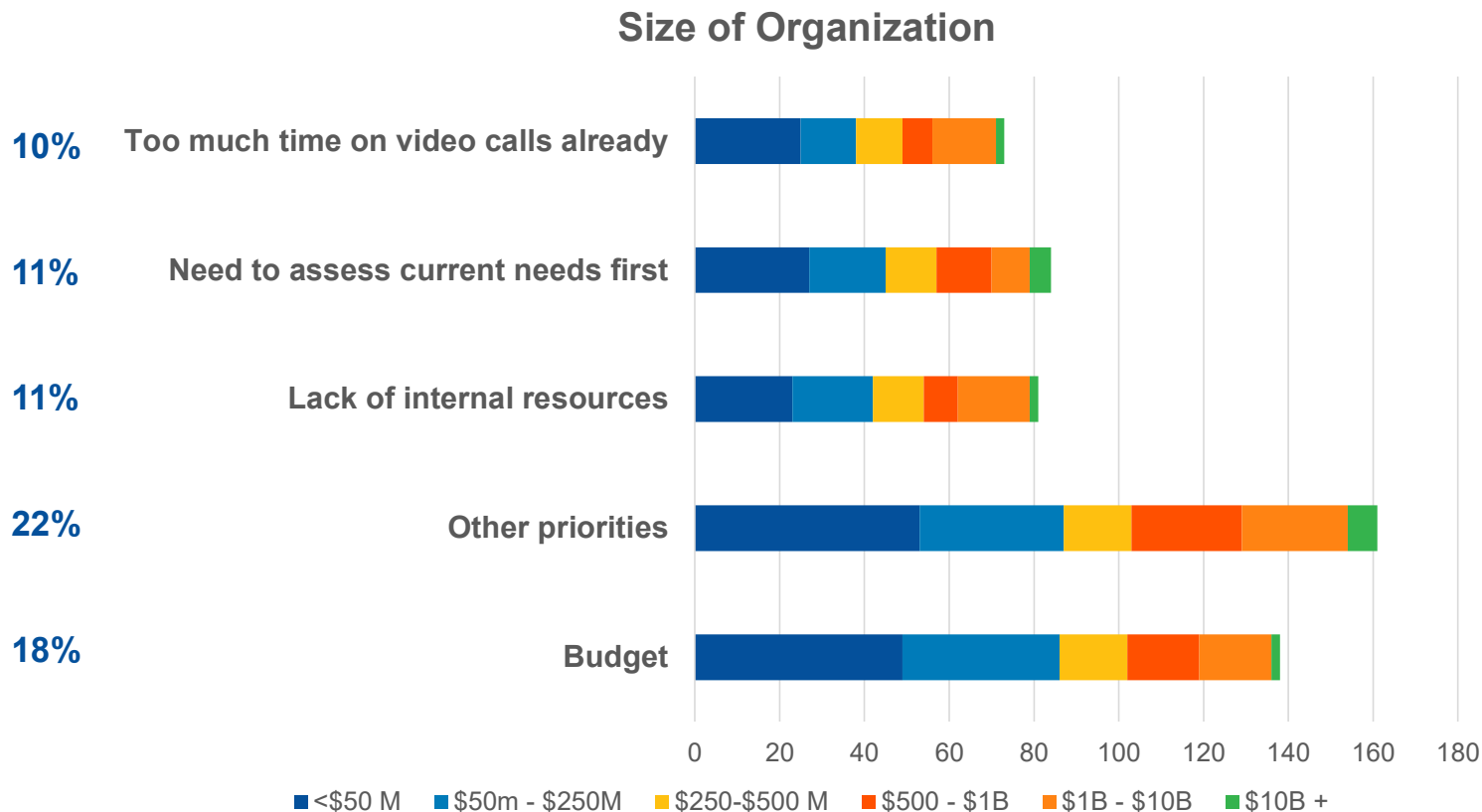
# WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM IMPLEMENTING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS?



## Key Insight:

All generations identified other priorities as the number one issue that is preventing their organizations from developing leaders

# WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM IMPLEMENTING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS?



## Key Insight:

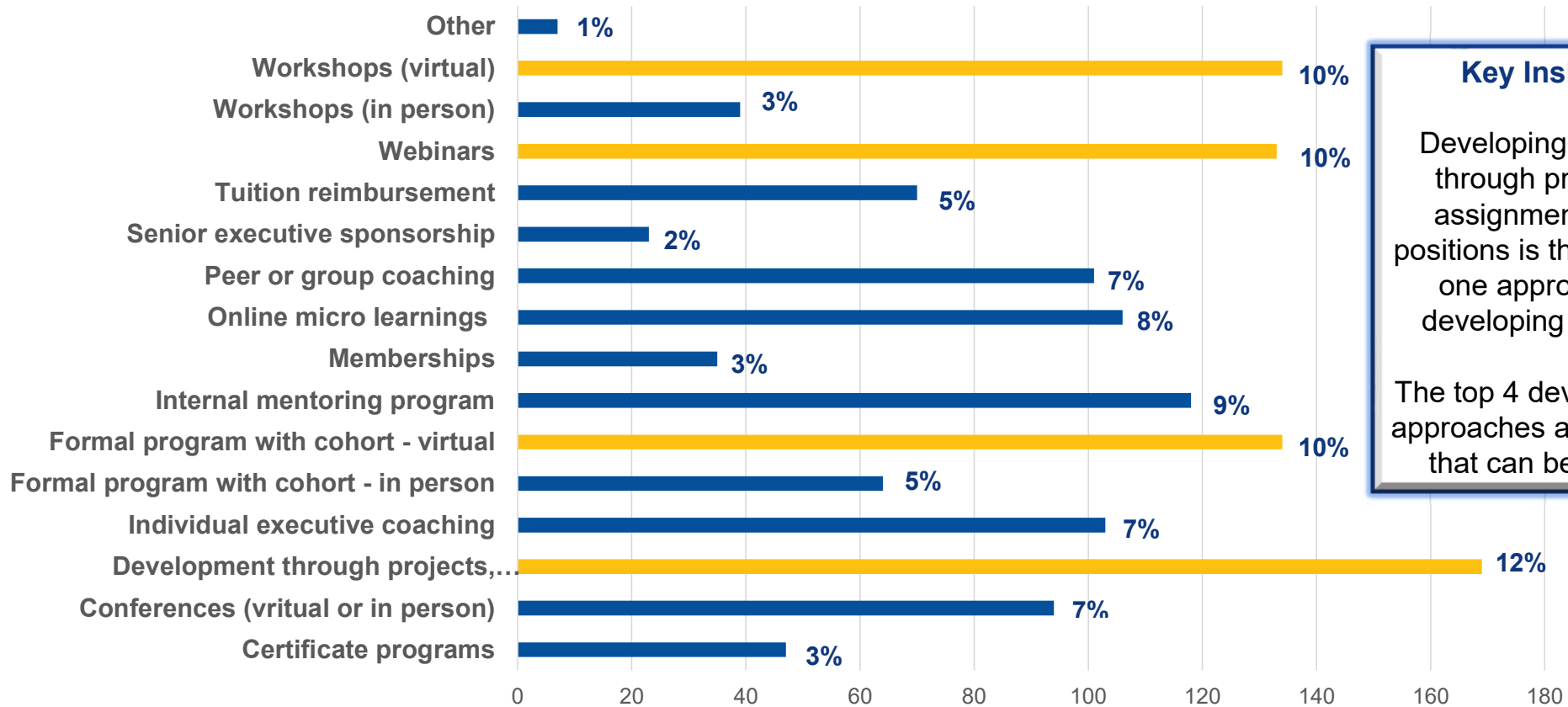
All organizations identified other priorities as the number one issue that is preventing their organizations from developing leaders

Larger organizations (over \$10B) identified the need to assess current needs first as their second issue, while smaller organizations (less than \$250 M) identified budget as their second issue

# **THE BEST LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES**



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

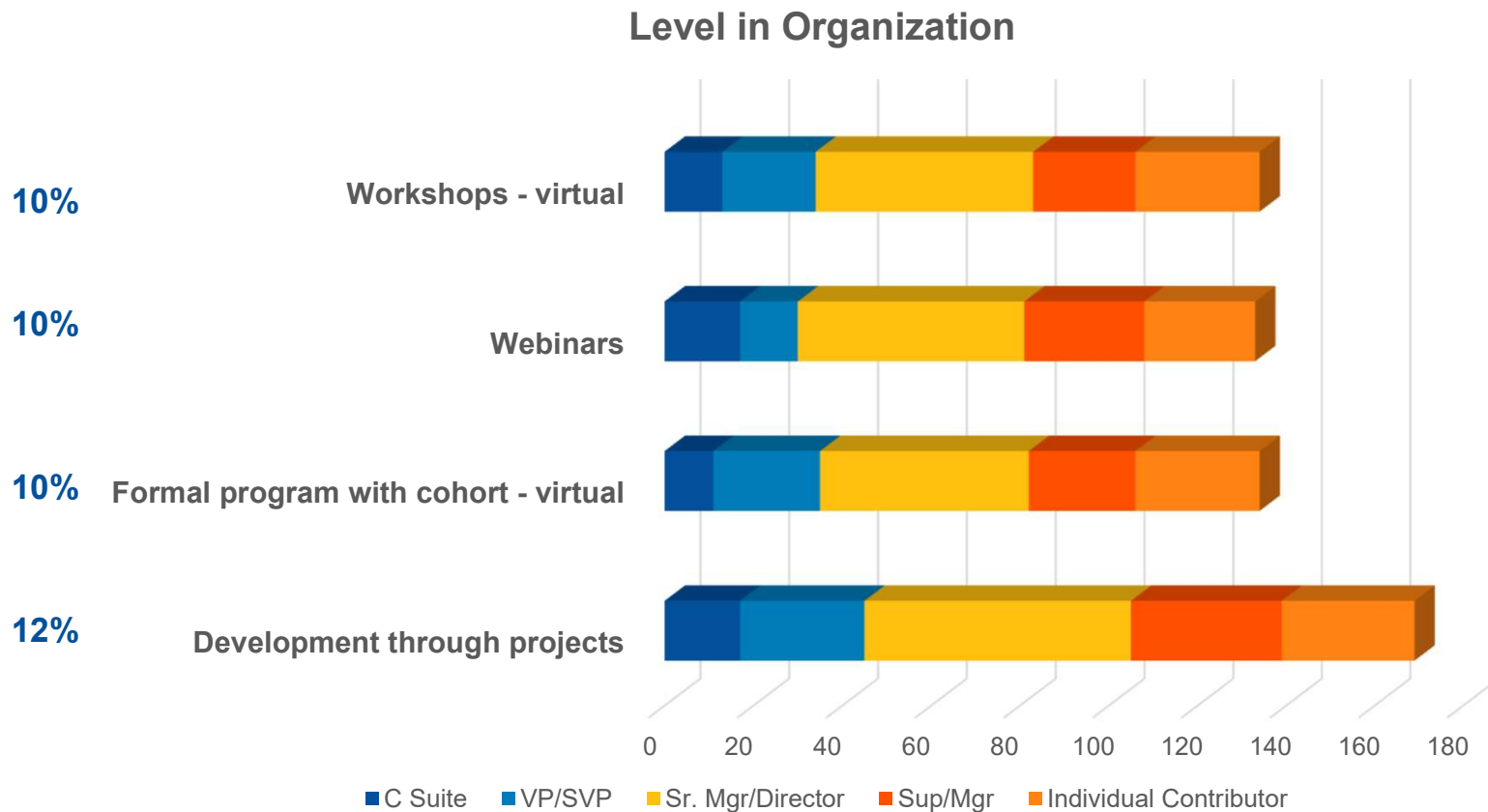


## Key Insight:

Developing leaders through projects, assignments and positions is the number one approach to developing leaders

The top 4 development approaches are options that can be virtual

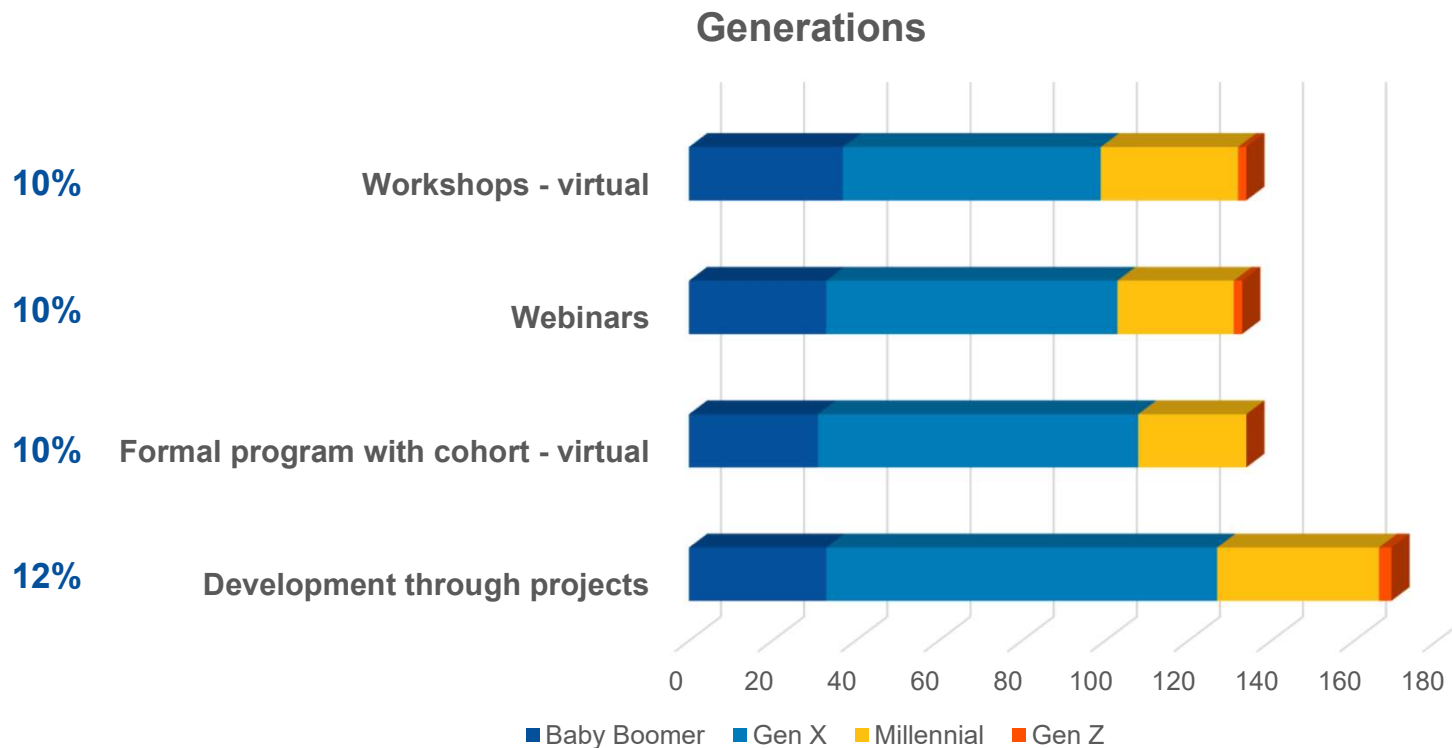
# TOP FOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES



## Key Insight:

All levels in the organization identified developing leaders through projects, assignments and positions as the number one approach to developing leaders

# TOP FOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

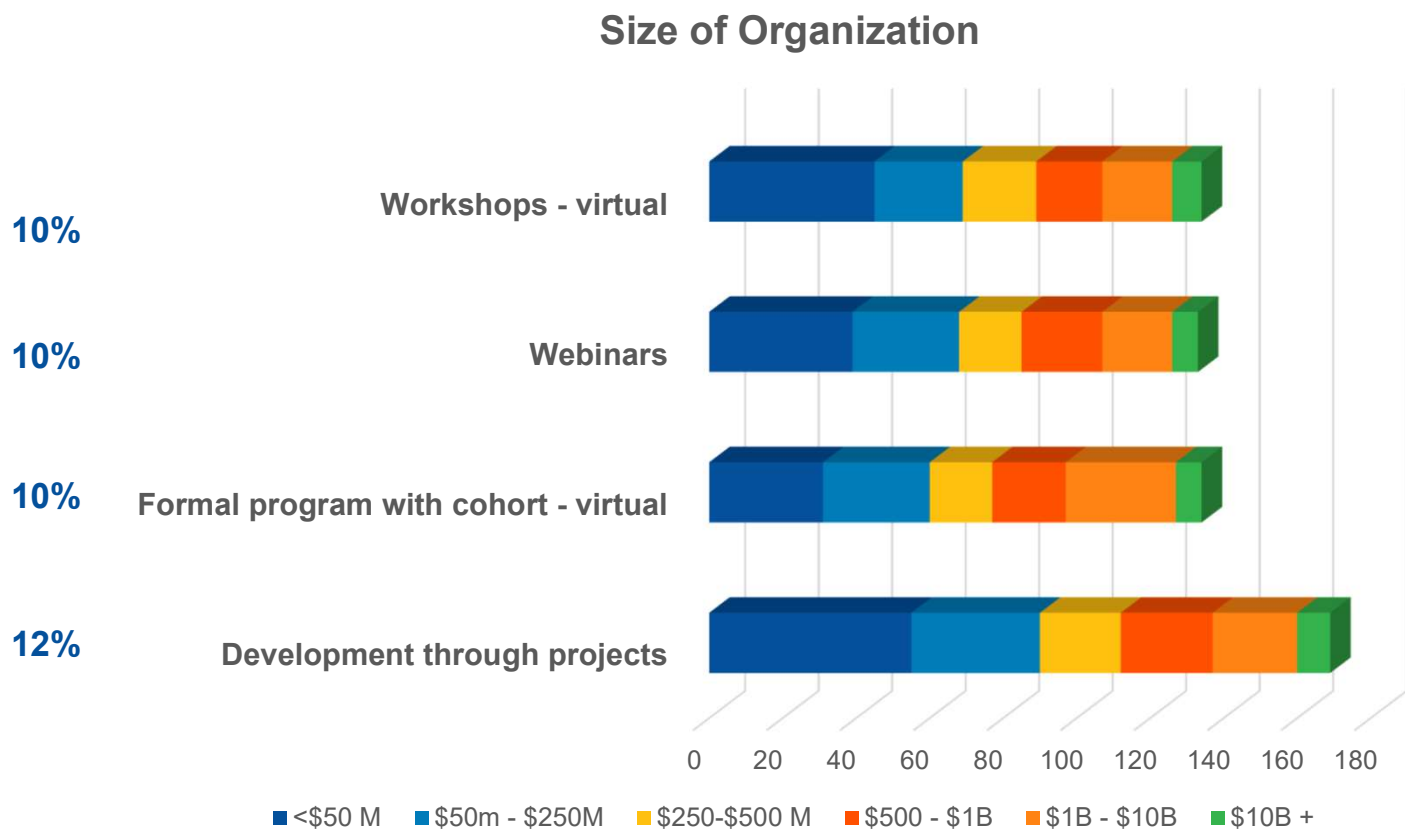


## Key Insight:

Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z identified developing leaders through projects, assignments and positions as the number one approach to developing leaders

Baby Boomers identified virtual workshops as their preferred approach

# TOP FOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES



## Key Insight:

Large organizations (>\$10B) and smaller organizations (less than \$1B) identified developing leaders through projects, assignments and positions as the number one approach to developing leaders

Organizations \$1B to \$10 B identified virtual, formal programs with a cohort as their number one approach



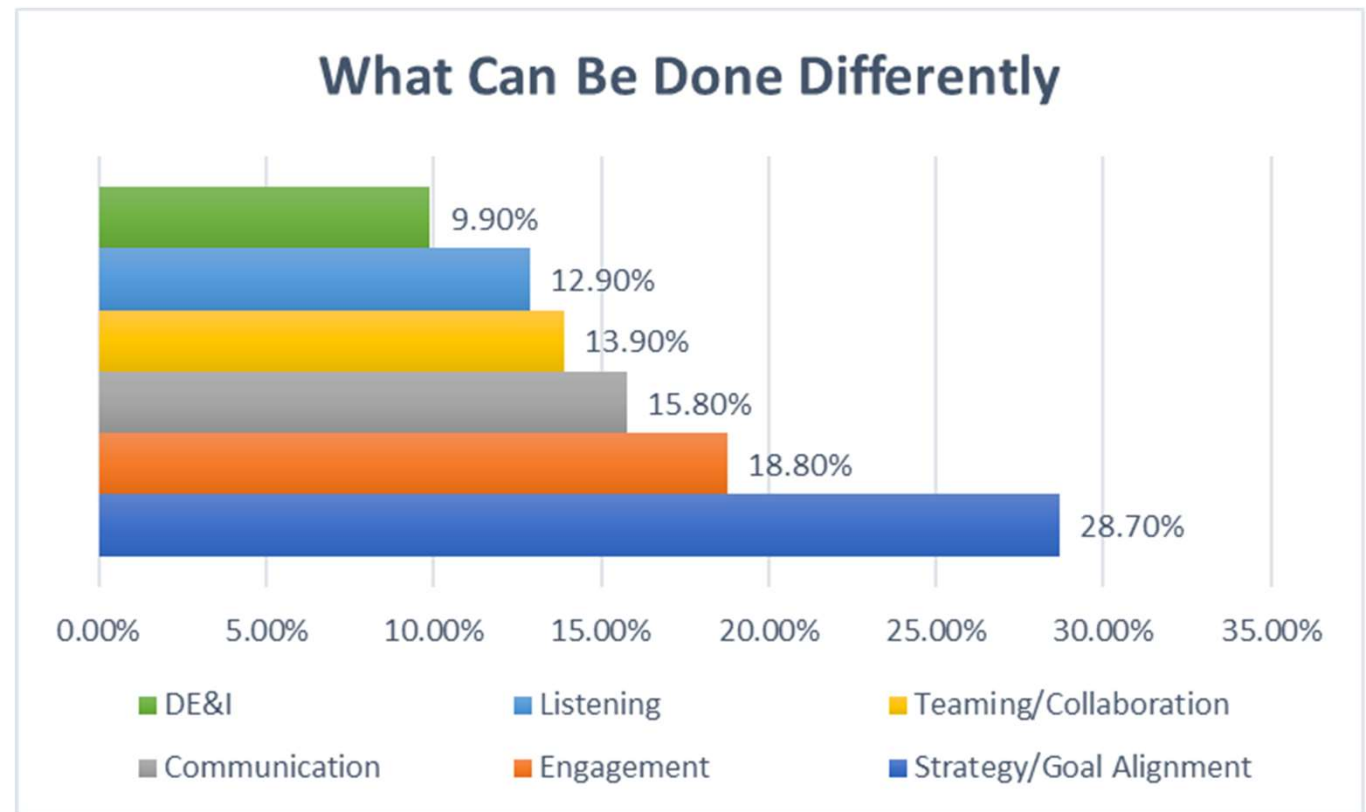
# **WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY**



# WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION TO BETTER SUPPORT LEADERS?

Most common open-ended responses to:

- *What can your organization do differently so leaders can be more successful in the next 18 months?*
- Strategy/Goal Alignment was the most frequently mentioned response at 28.7%
- Listening was a surprise with 12.9% of all responses



# **LEAD NOW! MODEL, THE AUTHORS & STEWART LEADERSHIP**





## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL



## LEAD NOW! MODEL

- Research-based, practical leadership development model, used by thousands of leaders throughout the world.
- Provides leaders at all levels an action-oriented and comprehensive framework for the critical dimensions of leading others.
- Built on the assumption that leaders must achieve aligned and positive results from four perspectives:
  - Their people
  - Their business
  - Their marketplace (external)
  - Their organization (internal)

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# STEWART LEADERSHIP

For over 40 years, Stewart Leadership has been enabling organizations to achieve optimal people results with a proven approach that aligns talent, culture, and strategy.

We partner with you to design a tailored solution that meets your specific needs; incorporating assessments, coaching, training, consulting, and on-going support so you, your leaders, and your organization can inspire confidence and have a greater positive impact.

Drawing on our work with organizations across the world, we'll partner with you to build a culture that develops leaders, empowers teams, and successfully navigates change to establish a legacy of sustained success.

Whether you are seeking to add shareholder value, increase customer retention, improve employee experience, or drive new revenue, the path to achievable, repeatable, and sustainable business results starts with your people.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Training & Programs

Executive Coaching & Onboarding

Manager Development

Executive Presence



## TEAM PERFORMANCE

Team Assessment & Alignment

Executive Team Development

New Leader Team Assimilation

Presentation & Orals Coaching



## CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change Strategy & Training

Strategic Planning & Board Services

Culture Assessment & Integration

Organizational Design & Alignment



## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Employee Experience

Succession & Workforce Planning

Career Management

Competency Modeling

# REACH OUT! WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.



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