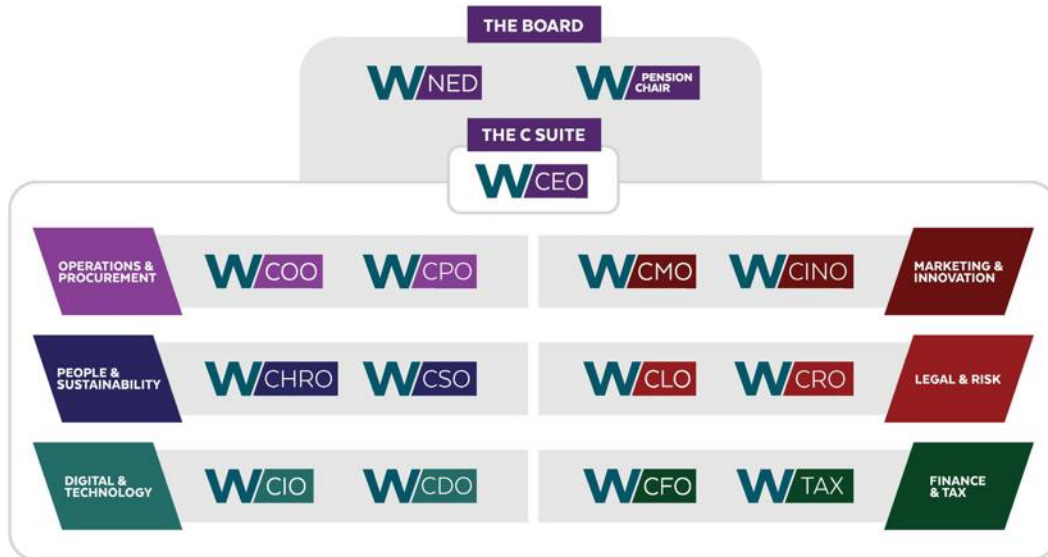


THE C-SUITE: 2024 & BEYOND

The Innovation Imperative

NAVIGATING CHANGE WITH SPEED AND AGILITY

winmark



"Winmark has been an excellent network of driven and high-achieving professionals that has allowed me to build strong relationships and develop new insights and skills."



Edward Guest
Global COO and CFO
The Unlimited Group

- Winmark is building a global C-Suite community of top-tier organisations dedicated to exemplary governance and sustainable growth.
- We provide a unique peer-to-peer ecosystem enabling board members and C-level executives to connect, access world-class best practice, share challenges, and exchange solutions. This is wrapped in a VIP service that enables members to further themselves, their teams and the organisations they serve.
- The peer-learning networks include over half of the FTSE 100, numerous Fortune 500 companies, government departments, private and not-for-profit organisations as well as technology disruptors.

INTRODUCTION

Business leaders seeking growth are facing a remarkably challenging environment in 2024. The outlook for the economy is tepid at best. Global growth is expected to slow to 2.9% this year from an unspectacular 3% in 2023; and growth in the Euro area is forecast at just 1.2%^[1]. Central banks are walking a delicate tightrope between containing inflation and avoiding recession.

On the geopolitical front, the war in Ukraine continues to disrupt supply chains and cause energy price instability, while the re-ignited conflict in Israel is putting even more strain on already shifting and fragile global alliances and rivalries. The spectre of both state-sponsored and criminal cyberattacks adds yet another layer of complexity.

Leaders, who have already embraced and invested in digital transformation, must now re-evaluate their technology operations and business models to incorporate rapidly developing and potentially revolutionary AI tools.

And in an already competitive personnel market, employers must invest in broader skills development and innovation to prepare their employees for AI's growing role whilst also promoting high quality jobs that meet an increasing demand for flexibility and work-life balance.

With 40% of CEOs believing their organisation must transform within a decade just to survive^[2], change leadership has become crucial. The businesses that succeed will be those that harness these winds of change and are not simply buffeted by them.

This report will help you chart that course towards the agile, innovative, AI-enabled enterprise of the future. It has been prepared with the help of over 200 Winmark C-Suite network members, who have generously shared their experience and advice. I would like to thank all of them for their valuable engagement and contributions.

The imperatives for the C-Suite in 2024 are clear: implement forward-looking strategies rooted in agility, innovation and purposeful leadership. We hope this report helps illuminate pathways that will help you lead your organisation to continued growth and success in 2024.



John Jeffcock
Chief Executive Officer, Winmark

FOREWORD FROM THE CIPD

As Mark Twain observed, it is hard to make predictions, especially about the future. Today as this research shows, we are in some of the most uncertain and changeable times most of us have experienced, with issues and challenges across many dimensions. Hence the focus on the themes of agility and adaptability, setting up our organisations to be able to respond and adapt to fast changing context, whether driven by geopolitical change, economic uncertainty or technology disruption.

But many organisations are struggling with immediate challenges of recruitment and skills shortages, and the ongoing impact of inflationary pressures on the cost of doing business while they seek to renew their business strategy and boost adoption of AI and other technology.

These are significant challenges in the short term which are not likely to change much during the coming year. It requires leaders to try to optimise their business strategies and manage costs in the short term whilst also looking ahead to consider how to change and optimise their operating models and business models for the longer term.

Being able to engage and listen to the different experiences and voices within organisations to help shape the future is vital. Individual leaders can't know everything, and many issues are new to our experiences from the past, so we have to be able to collaborate with others, take on board different views and seek to forge a common direction. The report highlights the need for integrated thinking among leaders working across different business functions and provides many useful insights and recommendations. It emphasises the importance of an in-depth understanding of the key people issues at board level, supported by good quantitative and qualitative data and insights.

It is clear from this research that most business leaders see that they will have to transform their businesses in the coming years, not least because of the impact and opportunity of AI. At the heart of transformation are people, and business strategy cannot be complete without people strategy. Strategic workforce planning has become an essential part of understanding what skills and capabilities will be needed for the future, and what the options to access these capabilities are - whether to buy, build, borrow, or bot (automate) the capabilities needed. These are strategic choices, but in all cases, organisations will need to increase their abilities to upskill and reskill their workforces as job skills and needs change ever more rapidly with the impact of technology and digitisation.

FOREWORD FROM THE CIPD

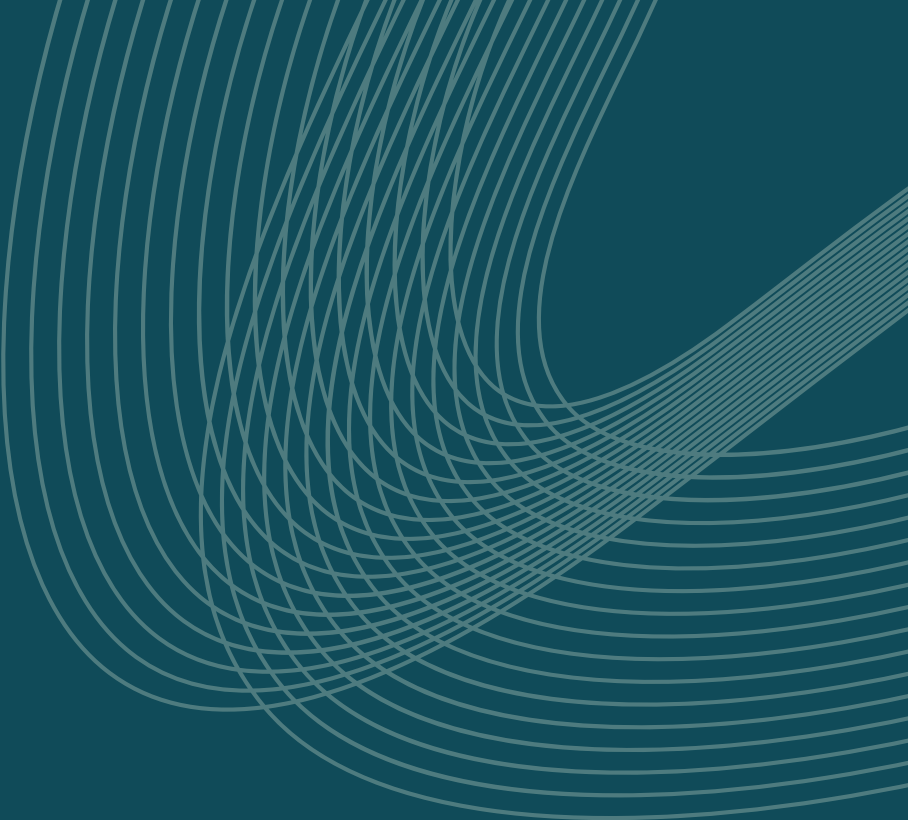
Organisation culture must also be part of the strategic thinking. As was famously said by Peter Drucker, culture eats strategy for breakfast, so understanding culture and where and how it might need to change will need attention too. Cultures of command and control, or the leader knows all won't work in a fast changing world. Furthermore, it is not what the younger generations in the workforce now expect. They also expect to be heard and will readily challenge if they are being ignored. They want to work within inclusive and supportive organisations with clear purpose and a recognition of responsibility to all stakeholders, not just the financial stakeholders.

To enable agile organisations, we will all need cultures of continuous learning, experimentation and adaptation, empowerment and engagement. This requires consistent behaviours and beliefs through leadership at all levels supported by good people management, flexible working practices, and growth mindsets.

Through times of significant change and uncertainty, there is also real opportunity. The opportunity to use AI and technology to enable not only higher levels of productivity, but also better jobs that use and enhance people skills more and help us all lead more fulfilling working lives. But we have to work together to build this future, and to respond positively to challenges. As has been observed before, the best way to predict the future is to shape it.



Peter Cheese
CEO, CIPD



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About the CIPD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024 presents **a unique set of challenges and opportunities** for C-Suite executives. The global business landscape continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace, driven by

- Changing expectations of customers, employees, investors, and regulators
- Economic uncertainties
- Geopolitical turmoil
- Demand for sustainability and social responsibility
- Rapid technological advancements (particularly the rise of machine learning and AI)
- Skill and labour shortages
- The continued, and increasing, threat of cyber-attacks

Winmark's consultation with C-Suite network members and the global business community (through surveys, discussions, meetings and events) has helped us understand their top priorities for 2024 and how they plan to overcome unprecedented challenges while pursuing growth.

The clear, overriding theme that emerges is the need to embed **agility** deep in the heart of the strategy, leadership, culture and operations of organisations. Technology, geopolitics, ways of working and employee expectations are changing more rapidly and unpredictably than ever before. **Speed of response** will be a crucial competitive differentiator, so anticipation, understanding, analysis and action have to be rapid and effective.

Strategic agility and innovation

- **Agility** to react decisively to changes and new opportunities
- **Innovation** across products, services and business models
- **Horizon scanning** to keep abreast of new technologies, customer needs, competitive activity and market trends
- **Leadership to manage complex change**, renew operating models, transform culture, and engage and develop employees for new ways of working and new opportunities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within that broader theme of **strategic agility and innovation**, C-Suite leaders identified four specific priorities that will shape how they navigate the challenges of 2024 and beyond:

Harness AI and tech

- Utilise deep tech (AI, AR, ML) for growth.
- Ensure cyber security best practice, including responding to malware attacks.
- Keep abreast of tech and cyber advances.
- Ensure ethical, secure and efficient tech implementation through key HR/people practices including employee consultation, job design, change and people management and training and development.

Build high quality, skilled teams

- Build diverse teams with aligned purpose, values and behaviours.
- Upskill and reskill staff to align people strategy with technology strategy.
- Empower leadership at all levels to drive accountability and enable agile execution.
- Equip managers at all levels with effective core people management skills.
- Create a client-centric growth culture focused on customer needs.

Navigate global economic challenges

- Forecast economic changes and evaluate impact.
- Prepare for (and manage) inflation and/or recession.
- Prepare for and respond to geopolitical volatility.
- Future proof the organisation's access to skills through strategic workforce planning.

Lead transformative growth

- Align operations to strategy enabling flexible response to market conditions.
- Drive performance with data, utilising analytics to improve processes, and inform decisions.
- Balance risk mitigation and growth through robust governance, including a clear focus on people risks.
- Focus on both intangible and tangible drivers of value including investment in skills and workforce needed to deliver business strategy.

Our report examines how each of these four key priorities will impact the C-Suite, how actions will be implemented; and how C-Suite roles will need to change and adapt to meet the increasing demands they face.

We hope these insights build understanding among C-suite leaders regarding their common challenges, the different perspectives across their roles, and the actions required to succeed and grow in 2024 - and beyond.

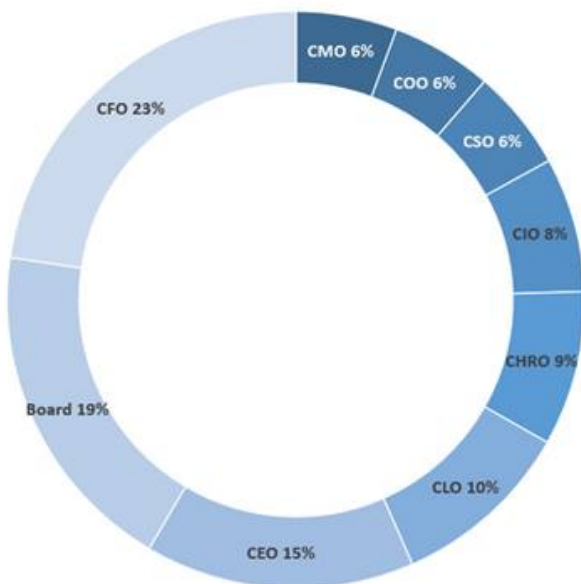
RESPONDENT PROFILE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The C-Suite 2024 & Beyond report draws on insights derived from research and consultation with Winmark network members and senior leaders from all over the world, including a survey of 250 C-Suite executives investigating the top issues on their agenda.

Respondents represent all key C-Suite roles - the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), the Chief HR Officer (CHRO), the Chief Legal Officer (CLO), the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) – in organisations with a truly global footprint, as outlined below.

We would like to thank all Winmark network members for their valuable feedback throughout the year, and everyone who has generously given up their time to contribute their insights to this report.

Role



Regions of operation	%
UK	89%
Europe (non-UK)	61%
North America	39%
Asia-Pacific	35%
Middle East	17%
Africa	11%
South America	9%

STRATEGIC AGILITY AND INNOVATION

Nearly 40% of CEOs believe their organisation has ten years or less to survive on its current path, according to a recent PwC survey.[3]

This statistic speaks to the urgency many executives feel about reinventing their business model in the face of disruption, and highlights that standing still is not an option - rather, transformative leadership is required to navigate the complexities of the modern business environment.

All of the CEOs we consulted said that achieving 'Board effectiveness, agility and know-how' was a very high priority in 2024. They perceive cultivating an agile, knowledgeable and engaged board that guides swift and informed strategic decisions and bold moves as being an essential component of organisational success.



"The future belongs to those who are bold enough to embrace change and flexible enough to adapt."

-- CEO, Finance

100%

of CEOs identified 'Board effectiveness, agility and know-how' as a very high priority

"By empowering our employees and giving them ownership of their work, we've become more innovative and responsive to customer needs."

-- CEO, Finance

The key components of strategic agility and innovation across all C-Suite roles are:

- **Agility** to react decisively to changes and new opportunities
- **Innovation** across products, services and business models
- **Horizon scanning** to keep abreast of new technologies, customer needs, competitive activity and market trends
- **Leadership to manage complex change**, renew operating models, transform culture, and engage and develop employees for new ways of working or new opportunities

Key obstacles to achieving an agile culture include:

- Overcoming the challenges imposed by traditional structures, cultures, and leadership models.
- Overcoming change fatigue - the rapid pace of change experienced during the pandemic has created a sense of "one change after another."

"Agility is not just about technology. It's about empowering people to make decisions and take action."

-- Rosalind Brewer, CEO of Walgreens Boots Alliance

"There has to be a mind-shift to enable freedom within organisations. Don't make innovation too 'top-down'. You have to empower enthusiastic staff to go out and try new ideas – they will know their role better than you do."

-- Michael Ludlow, Group Head of Tax, Swiss Re



“

67%

of CHROs identified
'Managing an
organisation in
consistent change' as a
very high priority

”

“

100%

of CIOs identified
'Creating strategic
agility' as a very high
priority

”

COO

COOs are highly focused on **Leadership to manage complex change**. Achieving operational efficiency and agility is paramount. Streamlining processes, adopting automation, and building a flexible operational model are seen as key to adapting to changing market conditions.

CMO

Horizon scanning is a central aspect of the CMO role - adapting to evolving consumer behaviour and understanding changing customer preferences, responding to social media trends, and embracing new marketing technologies are crucial for staying ahead of the curve.

To defeat these obstacles and create a culture that embraces change, experimentation, and a learning mindset, the following strategies are suggested:

Foster a culture of continuous learning and feedback by flattening the hierarchy to boost open communication and by adopting short, iterative project cycles for easier adjustments.

Ensure all line managers have the skills to manage and develop people effectively to create the trust-based working relationships needed to engage employees and support their wellbeing.

Prioritise experimentation by encouraging testing, learning, constructive feedback and iteration in a safe environment.

Build a culture of recognition, where employees are appreciated and rewarded for their achievements and contributions.

Create balance between work and life, where employees have flexibility, autonomy, and support to manage their personal and professional responsibilities.

Provide opportunities for growth, where employees can learn new skills, take on new challenges, and advance their careers.

Empower leaders to co-develop solutions to drive growth and adaptation in a complex business environment. Agile leadership requires collaboration across the organisation underpinned by clear communication and appropriate consultation with the workforce to secure buy-in and alignment to purpose.

Assemble a diverse, cross-functional senior leadership team that brings different perspectives, including diversity of individual characteristics and professional expertise. Place as much emphasis on ensuring there is professional HR expertise across leadership teams as on ensuring people leading on the finances are appropriately experienced and qualified.



"The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that's changing really quickly, the only sustainable strategy is to take smart risks."

-- Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase

"The need for agility in business models is going to continue and the organisations that will survive are not necessarily the ones who can predict the future but the ones who are able to respond to new futures as they emerge."

-- Katy Dowding, CEO, Skanska UK

"The only sustainable competitive advantage is learning faster than the competition."

-- Peter Senge, CEO, Microsoft

"Agility is not a one-time project; it's a way of life. We need to build it into everything we do."

-- CEO, Media

"There can be a lack of diversity in the boardroom, with executive directors typically being the CEO or the CFO and non-executive seats often filled by individuals with previous CEO experience or financial backgrounds. There is a need for more diverse expertise (for example with expertise in technology, AI, and geopolitics) to challenge leadership styles, and to have KPIs for board members that are people-oriented as well as financial."

-- Fiona Hathorn, Co-founder and CEO, WB Directors

CIPD's recent research report [The value of people expertise on corporate boards](#) [4] found that just a quarter (25%) of the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) top 350 firms have a board member (executive or non-executive) with a HR background, while only 2% have an HR director as an executive board member. The report also found that many chairs and senior independent directors tend to have financial rather than HR backgrounds. There is also a lack of HR representation on remuneration committees (23%) and nomination committees (20%), despite these both being focused on the key people issues of reward and talent.

Top 'Strategic agility and innovation' priorities	'Very high priority' (%)
Making bold strategic moves	75%
Managing an organisation in consistent change	69%
Creating strategic agility	68%
Board effectiveness, agility and know-how	68%
Driving innovation and product development	67%
Aligning operations to strategy	67%
Creating an innovation and/or agile culture	64%

HARNESS AI AND TECH

C-Suite technology imperatives include:

- Quickly making practical and realistic AI plans.
- Fostering company-wide data literacy.
- Expediting cloud transitions.
- Implementing multi-layered cybersecurity defences.

Evolving cyber threats and sophisticated attacks are demanding:

- Robust security measures.
- Continuous vulnerability assessment.
- Employee cybersecurity awareness training.

"AI will revolutionise content creation and personalisation in the media industry. We'll see AI-powered tools generating personalised recommendations, tailoring news feeds, and even assisting with scriptwriting and editing."

-- Chief Executive Officer, Media

"In 2024, I expect AI to play a transformative role in financial services, from personalising customer experiences to managing risk and fraud. We'll see even greater adoption of AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants, alongside advancements in predictive analytics and automated decision-making."

-- Group Chief Executive Officer, Finance



"For industrial players like us, AI in 2024 will be all about optimising operations and maintenance. We'll see wider use of AI-powered predictive maintenance solutions to prevent equipment failures and improve energy efficiency. This will be crucial for sustainability and cost reduction."

-- Chief Digital Officer, Industrial

"The focus in 2024 will shift towards explainable AI and responsible development. Businesses will demand greater transparency and ethical considerations in AI algorithms, especially when making critical decisions impacting employees or customers."

-- Chief Executive Officer, Technology

Operating cross-functional teams

Cross-functional technology teams are seen as essential to meet technology priorities in 2024.

Establishing teams consisting of both functional heads and IT professionals is effective because it enhances communication, speeds up implementation, and integrates feedback throughout the project lifecycle of planning, development, launch and operation.

Non-tech leaders' participation in tech management teams fosters a culture of ownership and shared responsibility and improves communication – and they will also have a far more intimate knowledge of user needs and experiences.

A recent [white paper](#) commissioned by the [Institute for the Future of Work](#) [5] highlighted the substantial benefits of high levels of involvement of HR practices in information sharing, consultation and workforce engagement to help ensure that the adoption of technology has a positive impact on job quality.

Decentralised technology management also aligns with the trend of moving away from all-in-one IT systems toward a more granular network of IT applications and services, allowing for more agility and cost-effective changes.

Top 'AI and tech' priorities	'Very high priority' (%)
Utilising data to enhance operational effectiveness	75%
Understanding the most appropriate deep tech for you (AI, AR, ML)	69%
Effective digital transformation programmes	68%
Cyber security best practice and maintenance	68%
Responding to malware attacks (including ransomware and spyware)	67%

"CEOs know AI is important, but many don't really understand what to do with it. It's like giving a knife to a chicken."

-- François Candelon, Managing Director & Senior Partner, Global Director, BCG Henderson Institute

"The reality is, many digital transformations fail because companies aren't integrating their business and technology strategies from the start. It's imperative that CIOs know how to quantify their progress with AI and digitisation technologies and understand how to effectively communicate this value to key stakeholders."

-- Chris Bedi, CIO, ServiceNow

AI Focus

AI and automation continue advancing rapidly, with Gartner predicting that by 2025, AI augmentation will create \$2.9 trillion of business value.

C-Suite executives are keen to harness the power of AI to enhance decision making, innovation, efficiency, customer experience, and competitive advantage. More than a quarter of C-Suite leaders are implementing formal AI initiatives already, with **CIOs far ahead (80%)**, followed by **COOs (39%)** and **CLOs (29%)**. ([Winmark AI Application Pulse Survey](#) [6]).

C-Suite leaders are reasonably optimistic about the impact of AI on employment. Although two thirds expect it to cause some disruption, more believe it will create jobs (12%) than destroy them (4%), and of those that have implemented AI, three quarters have already seen improvements from their AI investments.



The role of HR in effective, responsible investment in technology

HR is the business function least likely to be involved in decisions on AI and automation, according to the [CIPD's People and machines: from hype to reality report](#) [7]. However early involvement of HR is central to supporting effective implementation of AI and preventing associated people risks. The report identified five key areas where HR can make practical contributions:

- 1. People strategy.** HR should work with operations and technology leaders to consider how the workforce will need to change, and how they can work effectively alongside the new technology being introduced.
- 2. Job quality.** HR should ensure that AI and automation are used to create higher quality jobs, involving increased learning and interesting tasks.
- 3. Fostering an innovation culture.** HR should help instil a culture that supports innovation and adaptability. If an organisation's culture doesn't empower people and engage them in the new technology, losing talent becomes a risk.
- 4. Involving employees in technology decisions.** At the earliest opportunity, HR should engage employees affected by technology change as well as their representatives, on how best to design and implement the new systems, to ensure they dovetail with other work processes and to reduce the risks of glitches.
- 5. Learning and development.** HR should plan and provide training and support for employees, ensuring learning opportunities keep pace with evolving technology and embedding new processes to aim for long-lasting success.

Successfully harnessing AI requires pragmatic roadmaps aligned to business goals, ethical AI principles, and strong data foundations. Fewer than 1 in 20 C-Suite executives claim to be using AI at a 'mature' stage yet, although **COOs (11%)** and **CLOs (7%)** consider themselves to be at a more mature stage than other functions. CLOs are also more confident about adoption of AI than other departments. Over a fifth (21%) say they are 'ahead of the curve'.

The biggest challenges to successful AI implementation are:

- Lack of knowledge.
- Worries about efficacy (including security concerns).
- Operational concerns. The main AI applications are **Content creation, Analysis, Operations and Customer interaction.**

"I am optimistic we can leverage AI for good. It can help address some of the budget and productivity pressures faced by leaders in all roles."

-- **Michael Ludlow, Group Head of Tax, Swiss Re**

Specific AI applications by C-Suite role are summarised below.

CEO

Leveraging AI for document reviews, processing, and gaining business insights and efficiencies.

CIO

Applying predictive analytics and pursuing efficiencies across the business with AI. Integrating AI while maintaining legacy systems and ensuring data security presents unique challenges. Vital to partner cross-functionally on an interdisciplinary basis with the CIO as organisations adopt AI.

COO

Applying AI for self-service interactions, call script development, personalised customer insights, tailored communications, workload reduction, and document management.

CFO

Embracing FinTech and AI solutions for automating tasks, streamlining financial processes, and gaining real-time financial insights. Investing in financial management software, data analytics tools, and AI to optimise workflows, improve visibility, and better allocate resources.

CLO

Leveraging AI for legal research, due diligence, e-discovery, regulatory compliance, predictive analytics, document and contract creation (drafting and reviewing) and analysis.

CHRO

Using analytics and AI to identify skill gaps, target high-performing candidates, predict employee turnover, and manage hybrid and remote workforces. Ensuring effective communication, collaboration, and employee engagement in dispersed work environments through new management approaches and digital tools.

CMO

Using AI and data analytics for campaign measurement, performance attribution, and automating personalised omnichannel customer engagement. AI and technologies for personalised experiences can improve campaign effectiveness and customer relationships.

BUILD HIGH QUALITY, SKILLED TEAMS

Key trends impacting C-Suite strategy in 2024 include recruitment challenges amid labour shortages, and the need for capability building through reskilling and upskilling.

Competitive pressures are compelling employers to offer better pay, benefits, and working conditions to attract and retain talent. Remote and hybrid work models are requiring dedicated change management around maintaining connectivity, collaboration, and company culture.

Overall, workforce strategies in 2024 will emphasise leader and manager development, organisational culture, change management, personalised employee experiences, transparent career architectures, and leadership accountability on diversity and inclusion goals. Effectively leveraging AI to improve HR analytics will prove critical.

- **Changing Workforce Profile**

The workforce is undergoing a demographic and attitudinal shift necessitating updated strategies around culture, engagement, retention and progression tailored to new preferences.

- **Competitive Labour Market**

With job openings exceeding available workers in most G20 nations, competition for talent is increasingly fierce. Attracting and retaining top talent now requires compelling Employer Value Propositions (EVPs) spotlighting positive work cultures, career development pathways, and flexible work options. Retaining and developing talent and boosting innovation are considered equally important, if not higher, priorities than cost-cutting.

- **Capability Building**

Closing digital skills gaps remains a key imperative. It is likely that at least half of all employees will require reskilling in the next two years as automation and AI reshape business needs. Targeted training programs benchmarked to future roles has become even more vital for talent transformation.



Imperatives for Business Leaders

These trends underscore several talent management priorities for the C-Suite in 2024:

- **Implement data-driven recruitment:** Leverage talent analytics for targeted candidate sourcing and predictive hiring models to hiring effectiveness and risk mitigation.
- **Offer hybrid/remote options:** Provide flexible work arrangements catering to employee priorities around health, family etc. to attract and retain talent.
- **Set transparent career pathways:** Establish competency frameworks mapping capabilities to roles, enabling data-driven career planning and mobility.
- **Prioritise capability building:** Upskill employee through personalised learning pathways addressing skill gaps and preparing them for future roles.
- **Foster inclusive cultures centred on belonging.**



COO

COOs are:

- **Democratising data** and promoting data literacy by providing access to relevant data for decision-making.
- **Training employees** on data analysis tools, and creating a culture of data-driven problem-solving to improve operational efficiency.
- **Fostering collaboration** between departments.
- **Investing in leadership skills** to enhance operational excellence and cultivate a culture of teamwork and communication.

CIO

CIOs are:

- **Investing in employee training** and development.
- **Providing upskilling and reskilling** opportunities for existing IT staff.
- **Partnering with universities** to address skills gaps in cloud migration, data analytics, and cybersecurity.



Top 'People' priorities	'Very high priority' (%)
New methods of teamwork, thinking and collaboration	75%
Managing my own and others mental health	71%
Management and staff buy-in	69%
Retaining and attracting the right talent	68%
Upskilling teams and workforce (digital and tech)	67%
Embedding purpose, vision and values into everyday behaviours	64%
Creating a diverse team and workforce	63%

CSO

CSOs are:

- **Regularly reporting** on environmental performance.
- **Setting measurable sustainability goals.**
- **Promoting employee involvement** to build trust and inspire action.

CHRO

CHROs are focusing on quality job creation, ethical AI adoption and boosting skills investment. Specific priorities include:

Engaging in strategic workforce planning: Future proofing the organisation through identifying the external factors influencing the business environment and what this means for recruiting, developing or outsourcing the skills the business needs now and in the future.

Attracting and retaining top talent: The "Great Resignation" trend persists, demanding innovative recruitment strategies, competitive compensation packages, and fostering a strong employer brand.

Embracing flexible work arrangements: offering hybrid and remote work options, promoting work-life balance, and prioritising employee well-being can attract and retain talent.

Upskilling and reskilling the workforce: Embracing automation and technological advancements requires ongoing employee training and development to ensure their skills remain relevant. Partnering with educational institutions, offering internal training programs, and encouraging continuous learning can equip employees for future roles.

NAVIGATE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The global economy faces significant uncertainty in 2024, weighed down by several disruptive undercurrents that constrain growth prospects. The International Monetary Fund (IMF)^[8] projects global GDP to grow by just 2.9% in 2024, sharply below the historical average of 3.8%. This slowdown reflects continued drags from high inflation, monetary policy tightening, China's economic troubles, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine

The Eurozone and UK economies are expected to grow between 0.6% and 1.3%. Emerging markets will outperform mature economies but still fall well below historical performance. For example, China is projected to grow at 4.2% compared to 6% annually since 2000. The cumulative effect severely hampers global economic activity. Organisations will need to anticipate trends and make quick, effective strategic responses. The key economic and political issues driving concern are summarised below^[9]:

	2022	2023	2024
World Output	3.5	3.0	2.9
Advanced Economies	2.6	1.5	1.4
United States	2.1	2.1	1.5
Euro Area	3.3	0.7	1.2
Germany	1.8	-0.5	0.9
France	2.5	1.0	1.3
Italy	3.7	0.7	0.7
Spain	5.8	2.5	1.7
Japan	1.0	2.0	1.0
United Kingdom	4.1	0.5	0.6
Canada	3.4	1.3	1.6
Other Advanced Economies	2.6	1.8	2.2
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	4.1	4.0	4.0

Global risk scenarios



CMO

CMOs are:

- **Measuring and optimising marketing ROI:** Demonstrating the impact of marketing campaigns and optimising spending requires robust data analytics and attribution models.

COO

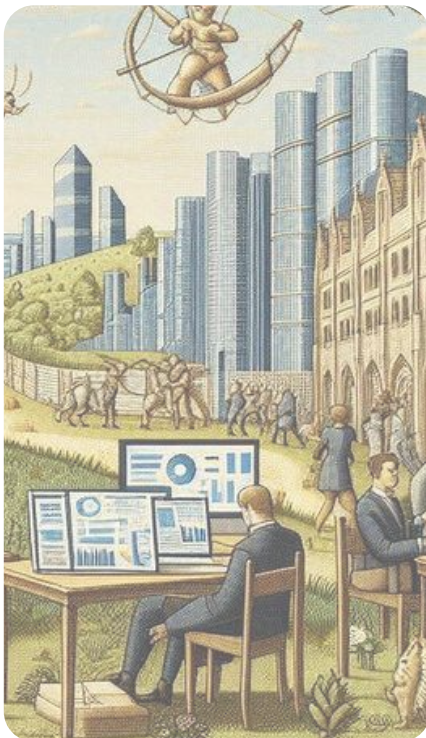
COOs are:

- **Investing in supply chain technology and forecasting:** Leveraging supply chain management software, demand forecasting tools, and strategic partnerships can enhance visibility and mitigate disruptions.
- **Managing complex supply chains:** Ensuring efficient logistics, mitigating supplier risks, and navigating global trade disruptions demand proactive planning and collaboration with partners.

CFO

CFOs are:

- **Managing cost pressures:** Balancing inflation with maintaining profitability will require strategic cost-cutting measures and targeted investments.
- **Optimising cash flow:** Ensuring adequate liquidity in uncertain times necessitates efficient budget management, exploring alternative financing options, and managing inventory levels.
- **Implementing dynamic financial planning:** Building flexible budgets and scenario-based forecasts will allow for adjustments based on economic changes.
- **Fostering collaboration with other C-Suite members:** Aligning financial goals with operational and strategic objectives will ensure a unified approach to challenges.
- **Implementing circular economy practices:** Implementing closed-loop systems, reducing waste, and utilising recycled materials can conserve resources and minimise environmental impact.



Top 'Global economic' priorities	'Very high priority' (%)
Economic forecasting and expected impact	72%
Responding to economic and societal risk	70%
Responding to global risks and geopolitical changes	67%
Fostering operational and supply chain resilience	65%
Preparation and management of inflation and/or recession	63%
Embedding sustainability and ethics into supply and procurement	57%



This downbeat macroeconomic picture has profound implications for C-Suite strategy and planning in 2024.

- **Financial prudence and cost controls:** With turbulent times ahead, businesses must reassess growth plans and tighten belts through prudent financial planning and spending rationalisation.
- **Supply chain reinforcement:** Shortages and logistics delays will continue afflicting global supply chains. Boosting supplier diversity, increasing inventory buffers, and adopting circular procurement practices is vital for resilience.
- **Investing in supply chain transparency and sustainability:** Building partnerships with ethical suppliers and mapping potential vulnerabilities can mitigate risks.
- **Workforce planning:** Identifying the options for building workforce capability and agility against an uncertain economic and business environment.
- **Conservative investment posture:** Capital allocation decisions warrant increased diligence and rigor given market uncertainties. Companies should stress test existing assumptions and prioritise investments delivering quick paybacks.
- **Innovation focus:** Economic challenges bred by commodity price shocks and financial conditions tightening will likely persist over the medium-term. To ensure lasting competitiveness, continuing to invest in R&D and innovation remains critical.
- **Proactive scenario planning:** Developing adaptable strategies for various economic outcomes will ensure preparedness and agility.

LEAD TRANSFORMATIVE GROWTH

Leadership and culture are now being discussed as top-level issues in the boardroom, far more than was the case five to six years ago [10]. C-Suite executives increasingly recognise that inspirational, decisive and networked leadership skills are essential to drive growth.

Key operational factors that drive effective leadership are identified as:

Align operations to strategy enabling flexible response to market conditions.

Drive performance with data, utilising analytics on both financial and non-financial drivers of value, including HR/people data to improve processes, and inform decisions.

Ensure there is a clear HR/people strategy aligned to business strategy which supports/enables organisational agility.

CFO

CFOs are:

- **Revisiting their growth plans** in the face of uncertainty.
- **Keeping up with changing tax laws, environmental regulations**, and data privacy requirements.
- **Maintaining open communication with investors, creditors**, and other stakeholders to build trust and confidence in the financial health of their organisations.

The most resilient leadership teams stay true to their purpose while collaborating to navigate uncertainty. They take a holistic approach to risk management and sustainable practices for long-term success.

- Make risk management a priority in this climate of heightened uncertainty - dedicate resources to continuously assess risks, including people risks, across operational, financial, strategic and compliance domains. Run scenario plans and stress tests to prepare for volatility.
- Keep an eye on the horizon for market changes while delivering on current growth commitments. Balance the core business with targeted innovations. Be ready to shift directions rapidly if needed.
- Stay grounded in your organisation's core values and mission - don't let the pursuit of profits or short-term wins cause you to compromise on the foundational principles that guide your business. Keep these at the forefront of decision making.
- Place a strong focus on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance including a strong emphasis on the workforce. Develop clear sustainability goals and practices for long-term value creation. Report progress transparently to stakeholders and allow it to guide investments.

CIO

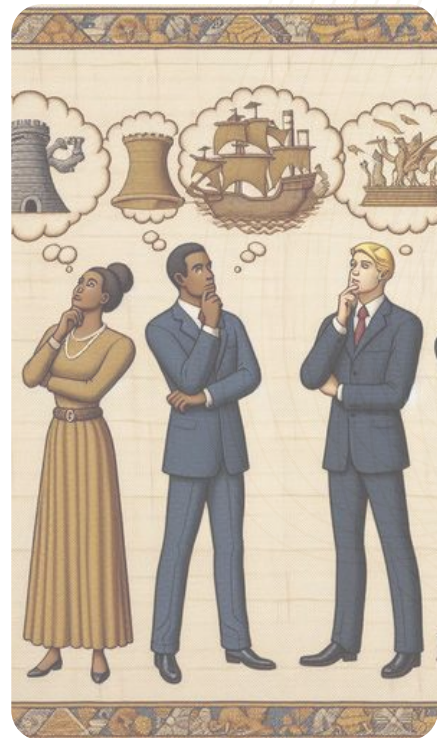
CIOs are:

- **Implementing clear data governance policies.**
- **Ensuring ethical data utilisation.**
- **Encouraging employee adherence to regulations** and navigating complex data privacy regulations.

CSO

CSOs are:

- **Prioritising partnerships** with sustainable suppliers.
- **Diversifying sourcing locations**, Transparently reporting on sustainability progress.
- **Engaging stakeholders.**
- **Integrating sustainability** into core business operations.



Top 'Transformative growth' priorities	'Very high priority' (%)
Creating a sales and/or client centric culture	80%
Setting ESG targets and pledges	77%
Organisational design best practice	71%
Developing the business model	67%
Financial controls, discipline and assurance	65%
Setting and delivering on objectives and key results	60%
Business partnering and effective internal relationships	60%

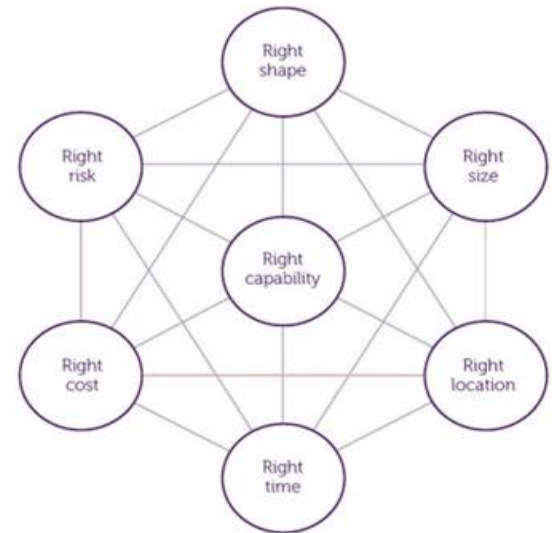
USEFUL GUIDES AND FRAMEWORKS

CIPD's Seven 'rights' of workforce planning

Seven 'rights' of workforce planning

[CIPD's Workforce Planning Guide](#) [11] provides an overview of the key stages involved in workforce planning and offers a practical structure for determining strategy, with illustrative examples to ensure the right people are in the right roles at the right time to achieve organisational goals.

By focusing on the seven "rights", organisations can develop a comprehensive and strategic workforce plan that aligns with their overall business objectives:



Right Capability

Having the necessary skills and competencies to meet current and future demands. This involves identifying skill gaps and developing plans to address them.

Right Size

Possessing the appropriate number of employees to fulfil your workforce needs. It's not just about headcount, but about having the right quantity of people with the right skills.

Right Time

Ensuring the necessary workforce is available when you need it. This involves anticipating future needs and proactively planning recruitment, training, or succession strategies.

Right Location

Having employees situated in the most effective locations to fulfil their roles and contribute to the organisation's success. This might involve remote work options or geographically strategic placements.

Right Shape

Maintaining the optimal workforce composition in terms of structure, purpose, and demographics. This includes the ratio of managers to staff and ensuring a diverse and balanced workforce.

Right Cost

Optimising workforce expenses while maintaining a competitive talent pool. This involves finding the right balance between attracting top talent and managing costs effectively.

Right Risk

Mitigating potential workforce-related risks, such as skills shortages, employee turnover, or changes in the external environment. This requires proactive planning and adaptability.

Leaders must make and act on decisions, even with incomplete information. They need to be open to changing strategies based on new information and be adaptable in a 'chaotic' environment.

The Cynefin framework [12] was developed by Dave Snowden and is a decision-making and problem-solving tool that provides context for appropriate responses, including in periods of rapid change and uncertainty which can be characterised as 'chaotic'.

It consists of five domains: Clear, Complicated, Complex, Chaotic, and Disorder. Each domain has a specific decision-making approach that helps make sense of the situation, and choose the most appropriate way forward. The core tenet of the Cynefin framework is that various situations or issues call for various solutions. You should determine the type of circumstance you are in and, using this framework, select the proper and appropriate answer fitting the respective domain. The approaches for each domain are summarised below

The Cynefin framework for leadership in a 'chaotic' change environment



Clear

This is the area of best practices, also referred to as 'obvious' or 'straightforward'. Here, issues are well-known and well-defined and the circumstances are stable. This area would include many scenarios and issues that are process-oriented. In these circumstances, solutions are frequently obvious and don't call for extensive knowledge. Understanding the issue (sensing), categorising it, and then responding by using a best-practice solution would be the correct strategy - **Sense-Categorise-Respond**.

Complicated

There may be several correct responses in this field that aren't immediately obvious. Experts should evaluate the circumstance, look into available possibilities, and select a course of action - **Sense-Analyse-Respond**.

Disorder

You are in a disordered state if you don't know where you stand. The objective should be to swiftly choose the appropriate domain and proceed from there. It may be beneficial to divide the issue or circumstance into various components and allocate each to a different domain - **Sense-Match-Respond**.

Complex

The term "unknown unknowns" applies to this field. We do not yet know enough about the situation to be able to analyse it and understand it. In order to solve a problem, the best course of action is to experiment first. Once you are aware of your situation, act correctly. In order for a situation or problem to shift into the difficult domain, where it is easier to deal with, the goal should be to grasp it just enough to handle it - **Probe-Sense-Respond**.

Chaotic

Here, stabilising the environment and containing the crisis must come first. Only after that should you evaluate the problem and start working to give it enough structure to enter the complex realm - **Act-sense-respond**. Additionally, the chaotic domain offers a chance to test out fresh solutions because in this situation, people can be more receptive to them.

ABOUT THE CIPD

"When you put people first, everyone stands to gain"

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people. It collaborates to shape work that is better for everyone. The CIPD wants to see good work within inclusive and responsible businesses, making our economies and societies stronger. In our changed and changing world of work, the need to deliver on this has never been more urgent.

The CIPD is the professional body leading and supporting the people profession. It sets the standards, builds capabilities, and connects its global community of HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals. Through its Royal Charter, only the CIPD can award internationally recognised chartered status. It offers qualifications and learning programmes that develop general and specialist practitioners.

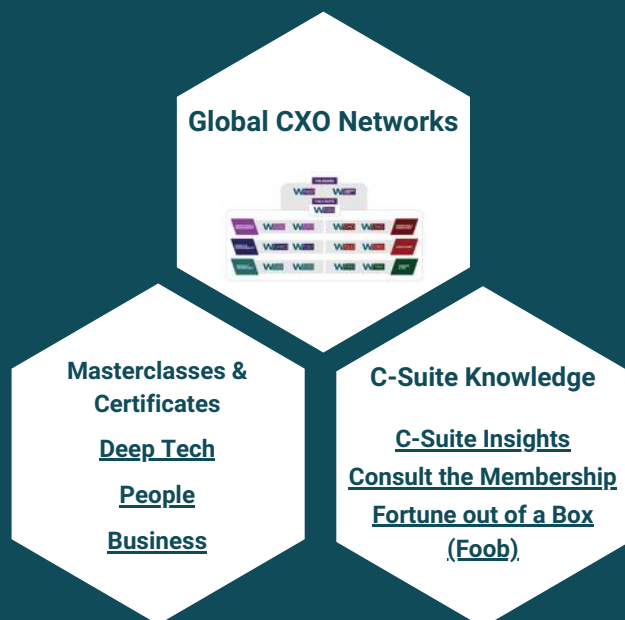
With over 160,000 members globally - and a growing community using its research, insights, and learning - the CIPD provides a strong voice for its profession. It works with governments and organisations to campaign for better work. It helps people managers to support their diverse teams to get the best out of their people, meeting the demands of changing workplaces and working practices.

Its charitable status means it provides an inclusive community and independent voice across the world. It leads debate, challenges when it matters and uses its influence for the better. It sees a future where work helps people find and develop their talents, and protects their wellbeing, so they can give their best. The CIPD wants to improve work for all, strengthening the people profession and recognising their vital part in achieving this purpose.

Visit Website: www.cipd.org

ABOUT WINMARK

"Winmark inspires the global C-Suite to create value for all"



"...having a network of peers from a diverse range of countries, experience and sectors provides a fantastic audience with which to listen to sessions and ask questions. The network brings a real variety of solutions to the many challenges that we face every day. Having a ready-made community who I can test thoughts within a safe environment is something that I greatly value."

-- The Paragon Group

"Part of our role is to look externally at what other businesses are doing. By not peer networking we are doing our organisations a disservice."

-- Hitachi Europe

Winmark operates networks for the entire board and executive team, enabling the sharing of knowledge and ideas across the C-Suite. Benefits of membership include:

- **Meetings and Conferences:** An unrivalled programme of meetings and events with peers and members across all networks. Upcoming events are listed here.
- **Best Practice Tools:** Essential frameworks, guides and templates.
- **Personal Support:** A dedicated account manager understands member needs and matches objectives with tailored solutions, introductions, profile raising initiatives, and help with career development and transition.
- **'Consult the Membership' Service:** Anonymously crowdsource ideas, templates and solutions with other members.
- **Research:** Access to a dedicated programme of thought leadership and research, regular collated insights (via our C-Suites Insights e-mail, and behind the scenes access to innovative organisations). Winmark Research is an effective resource for identifying trends, generating ideas, gathering insights and achieving effective distribution amongst all C-suite functions.
- **Team Development and Masterclasses:** Access to a comprehensive programme of Masterclasses: Deep Tech Leadership Certificate (DTLC), Business Leadership Certificate (BLC) and People Leadership Certificate (PLC).
- **Digital Community:** An exclusive private members platform to access on-demand meeting recordings and resources.

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