



# The CCO as Transformation Leader

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Results of global survey conducted for Page report

*The CCO as Pacesetter: What it Means, Why it Matters, How to Get There*

September 2019



**Background & Methodology**

**CCOs: Advancing Corporate Character**

**CCOs: Their Role in Corporate Character**

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# Background & Methodology



CEOs in virtually every industry and region are driving significant, often radical, transformation agendas.

They are simultaneously changing their business models, operations and talent base to meet the changing expectations of customers, employees, investors and society at large.

CCOs are at the nexus of these transformations and must step up to lead in new ways, within their own function and across the enterprise.



We observed common characteristics of what corporations are becoming.



Regardless of industry, region, company size or age:

- They are increasingly **technology-centric** – in their use of digital and data in all aspects of the enterprise, in how they make decisions and engage all stakeholders.
- They are increasingly **taking positions on**, and sometimes advocating for, a wide range of **societal issues** to meet the expectations of new generations of workers.
- They are increasingly **talking about – and creating – societal value** to meet the changing expectations of investors.
- They are **transforming their corporate cultures** – to be more tech-savvy, customer-centric, agile and less hierarchical. In fact, CEOs regard getting the right culture in place as the most important factor in successful transformation.



Through interviews with CCOs around the world, Page identified four dimensions of the evolving role of the CCO and explored them through our first-ever global survey.

1. Transforming the corporation's **culture**
2. Defining and stewarding the corporate **brand**
3. Creating **societal value**
4. Using digital, data methods and tools to transform communication itself - **CommTech**



## Defining the four dimensions



### CORPORATE CULTURE

This is the pattern of collective behaviors that define how a company's people interact with each other and stakeholders. This includes how they make decisions and collaborate, the environment they work in, the tools they use and the rituals and practices that reinforce desired behaviors.



### CORPORATE BRAND

This is more than logos, typefaces and advertising. It refers to all the distinct attributes and positioning that define an enterprise in the minds of its stakeholders – the totality of what is seen, heard and experienced through every communication and touchpoint.



### CORPORATE SOCIETAL VALUE

This refers to the value that an enterprise creates for society at large through its products and services in fulfillment of its corporate purpose; through its corporate policies or programs like ESG or sustainability; and/or by taking public stands on societal issues.



### COMMTECH

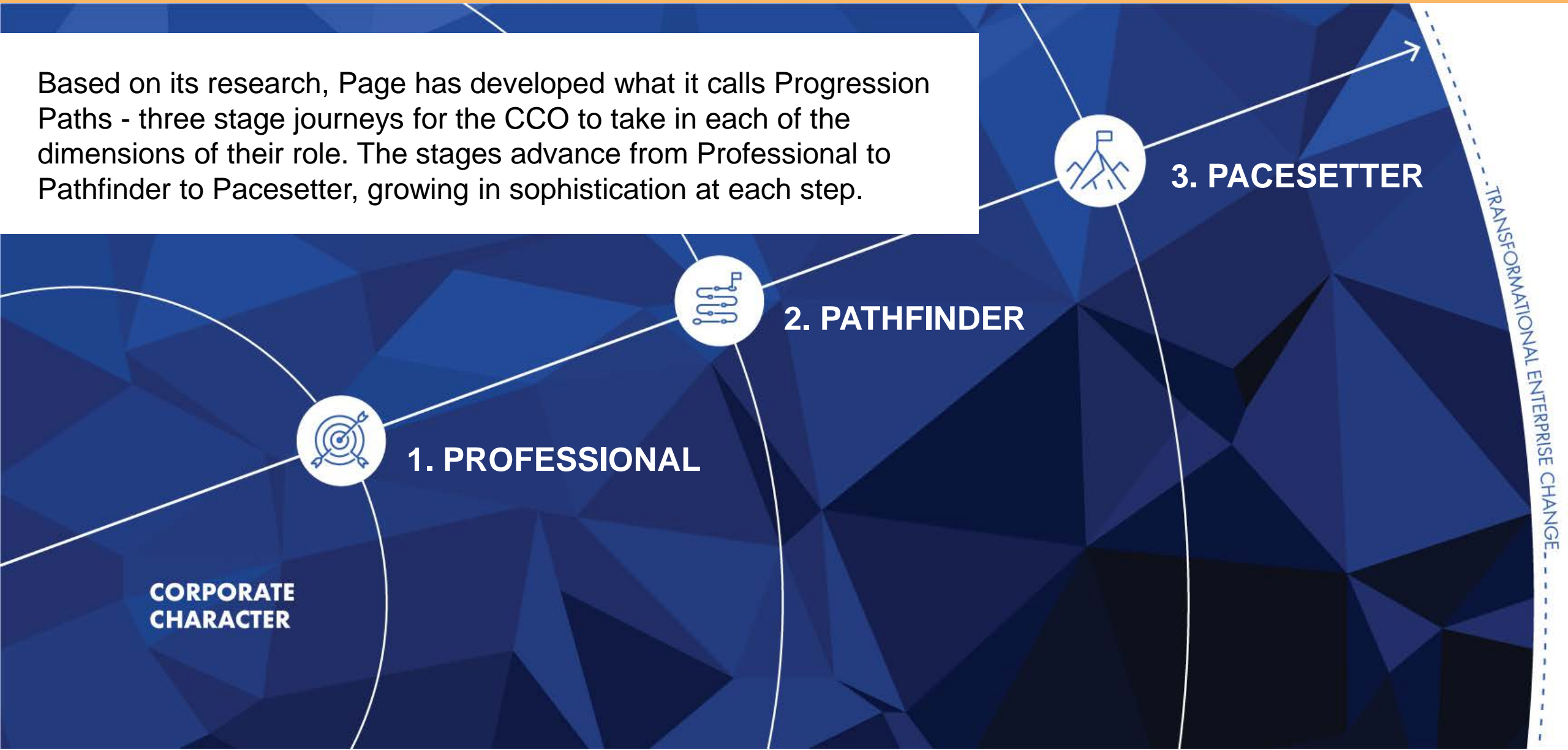
This is a new Communications discipline that uses digital tools, techniques and data to enable personalized engagement with stakeholders, moving the practice beyond shaping perception to influencing behavior.

### CORPORATE CHARACTER

*This is the unique, differentiating identity of the enterprise. While it includes things like mission, business model and strategy, these are the three elements of it that are increasingly central to the CCO role.*

*This is a new approach to engaging stakeholders, shaping their actions and earning their advocacy.*

Based on its research, Page has developed what it calls Progression Paths - three stage journeys for the CCO to take in each of the dimensions of their role. The stages advance from Professional to Pathfinder to Pacesetter, growing in sophistication at each step.







## Survey conducted in partnership with APCO Insight

June 5 – July 23, 2019

**18**  
Countries

North America: 62  
Europe: 40  
Asia: 40  
Latin America, MENA and  
Oceania included

**20+**  
Industries

Top industries:  
Financial Services  
Food & Beverage  
Healthcare

**9**  
Distribution  
Partners

Aberje  
Adfactors  
APACD  
Corporate Excellence  
EACD  
Entreprises et Médias  
Harbour Club  
MEPRA  
Suqin

**Varying**  
Sizes

\$10+ Billion: 61  
\$1-10 Billion: 57  
Under \$1 Billion: 20

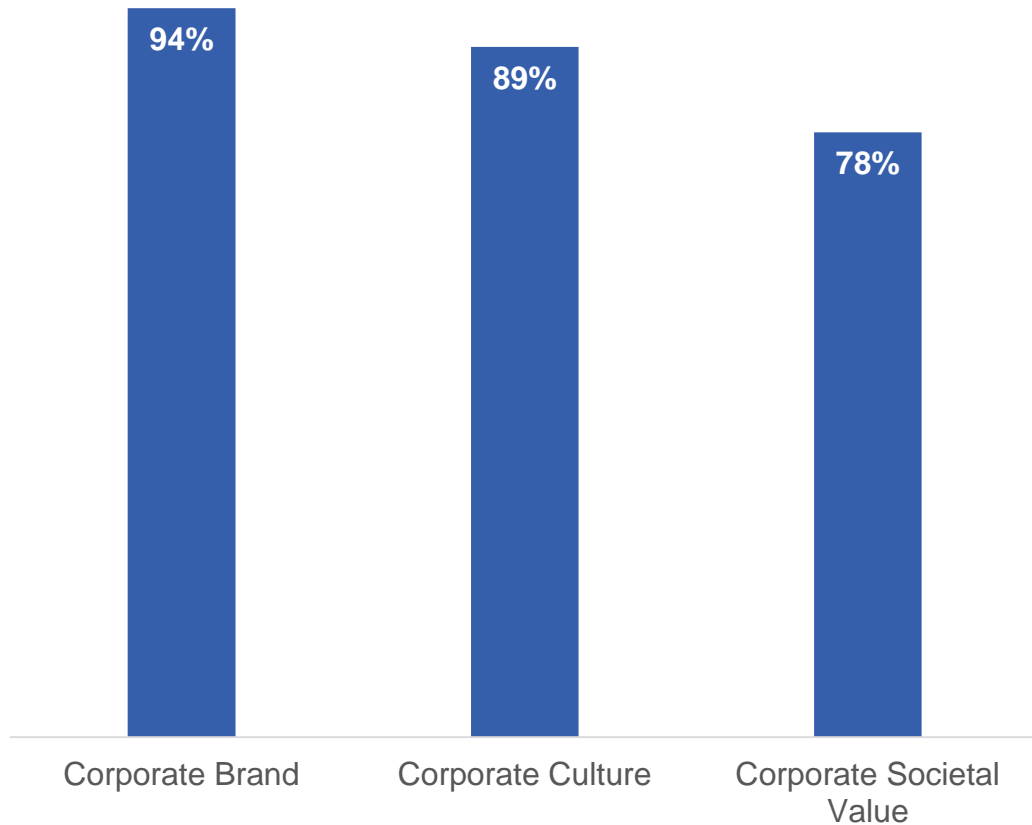


# Advancing Corporate Character



# Most enterprises are actively working to manage dimensions of corporate character.

Today, does your enterprise have a defined approach for...?



Almost universally, respondents report having a defined approach for managing corporate brand and corporate culture.

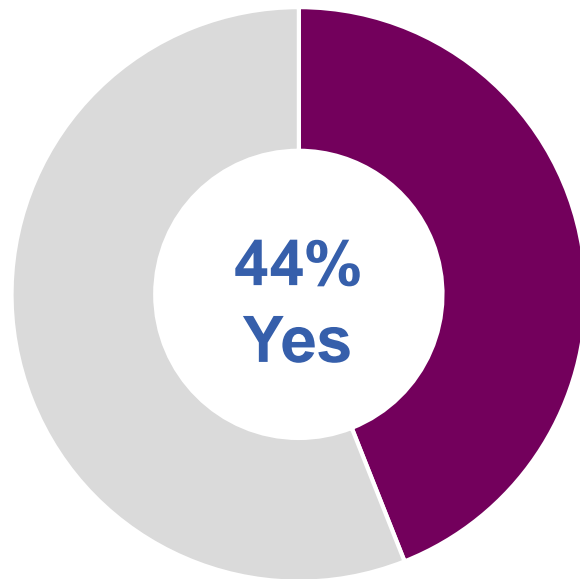
An approach to corporate societal value creation is also defined by the vast majority.



## Lack of metrics further underscores room to advance in corporate character dimensions.

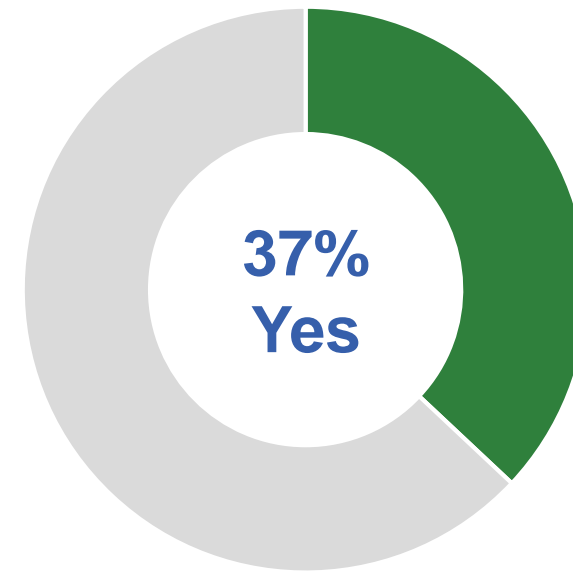
Have you established any specific metrics that are tracked on an ongoing basis?

Corporate Brand



n=152

Corporate Societal Value



n=120

# The Most Advanced Dimension: Corporate Culture



## CORPORATE CULTURE



### 1. PROFESSIONAL

Desired culture is defined and communicated to employees. This may include a visual identity, storytelling and related resources and assets. Employees are surveyed about the degree to which the stated culture matches their experience, and recognition programs reward desired behaviors.



### 2. PATHFINDER

Culture is managed by defining and instilling desired behaviors and conducting gap analysis to spot areas for improvement. This may include an audit of company rituals to teach, reinforce and celebrate the culture. Leaders are trained on exhibiting desired behaviors and helping their teams do the same. Third-party sites, like Glassdoor and social media sites, are monitored for evidence of the impact of culture. Changes in behavior are measured and culture is communicated through storytelling.



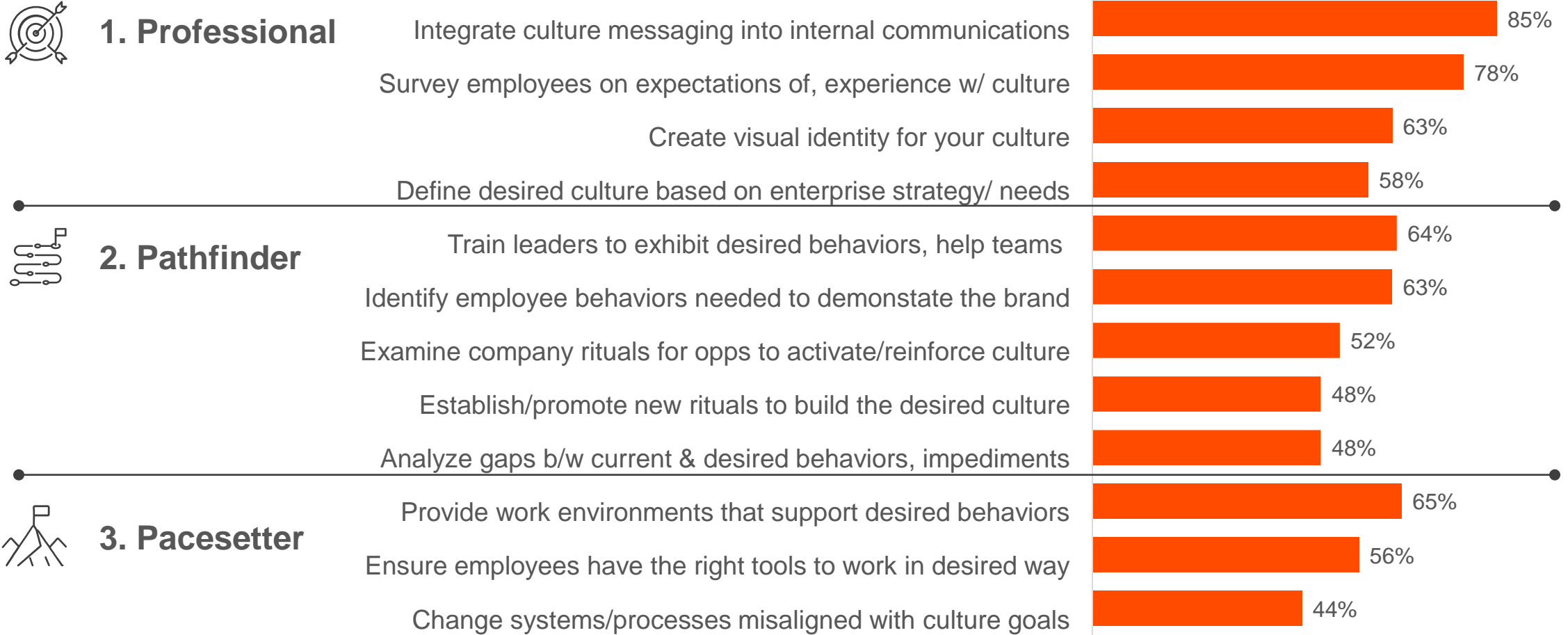
### 3. PACESETTER

Culture is used proactively to change processes and operations across the enterprise. Systems and policies that are impeding change are identified and addressed. Communications works with HR to incorporate culture criteria into hiring, promotions, compensation and separation. The workforce is equipped to advocate for the culture and real-time performance indicators track culture health. The work environment is optimized for the culture, in partnership with HR, CIO, Real Estate and others, to bring tools, workspaces and team configurations into alignment.

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# Reported corporate culture activities generally align to our stage definitions.



Q29. Here are some activities typically undertaken by enterprises as they focus on corporate culture. Please select any that your team or enterprise has done or is currently doing.

n=144



## CORPORATE BRAND



### 1. PROFESSIONAL

Corporate brand has been defined with a clear articulation of the corporate identity – who the company is and what it stands for. This includes visual elements along with a corporate narrative.



### 2. PATHFINDER

Corporate brand is managed as a competitive differentiator. Beyond a narrative, core brand attributes are reflected in how the enterprise performs. Brand health is measured and is benchmarked against peers. Gap analysis identifies where stakeholder experience is inconsistent with brand.



### 3. PACESETTER

Corporate brand is infused throughout the enterprise, delivering authentic “on brand” experiences not just to customers but for all stakeholders. These experiences are measured regularly to gauge success, and there is a system to predict issues and deliver on-brand responses.

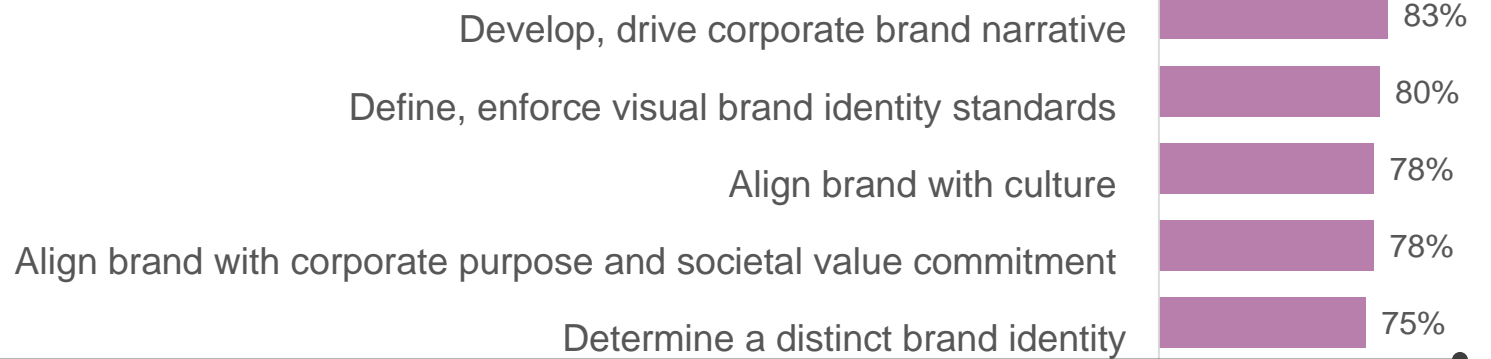
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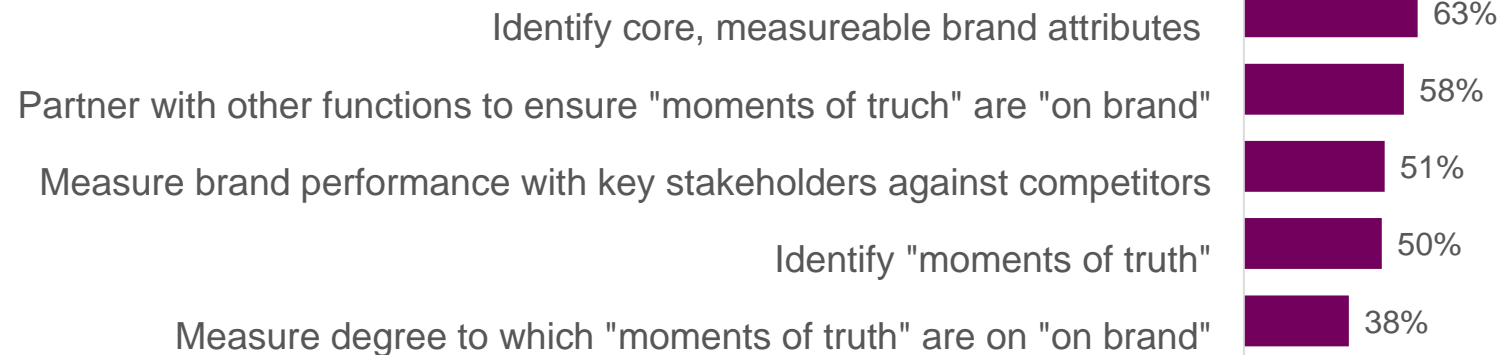
Definition and communication of brand is prevalent while managing the brand experience is less common.



## 1. Professional



## 2. Pathfinder



## 3. Pacesetter



Q20. Here are some activities typically undertaken by enterprises as they focus on corporate brand. Please select any that your team or enterprise has done or is currently doing.

n=152





## SOCIETAL VALUE



### 1. PROFESSIONAL

The societal value created by your organization is clearly defined and is beginning to be incorporated across the organization, particularly in brand and culture. You've established ESG/sustainability goals and are likely reporting on them. You've begun developing your societal value and sustainability story supported by data and are telling it to stakeholders, including employees and investors. You may also be starting to speak out/take action on social issues.



### 2. PATHFINDER

Societal value is becoming systematized, an enterprise-wide endeavor starting at the top with a formal process for ensuring business strategy, practices, policies, products and services are consistent with it. You may have also developed a process for managing corporate activism with consideration given to brand and values, policy interests and stakeholder concerns.



### 3. PACESETTER

Societal value is fully, measurably and systematically integrated into the business and its strategy-making process. All decisions are taken through a societal value lens to effect change in society at large, perhaps beyond the business goals of the organization. You've developed a management system for anticipating and proactively addressing activism issues in a principled, on-brand and authentic way. ESG/sustainability programs are delivering tangible results.

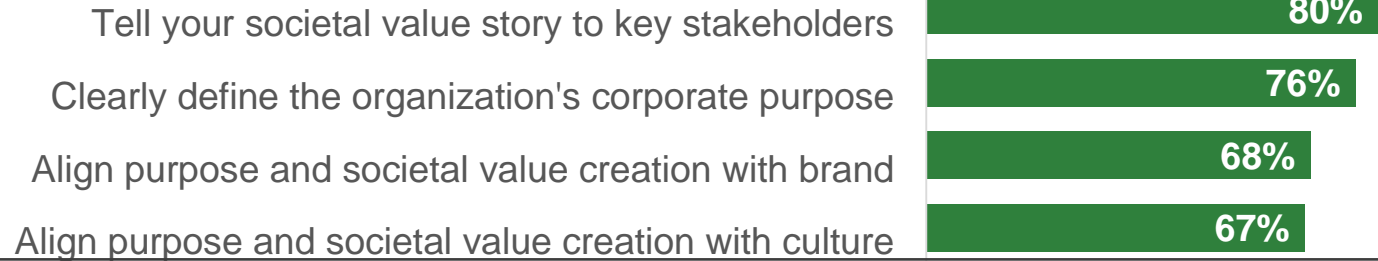
TRANSFORMATIONAL ENTERPRISE CHANGE



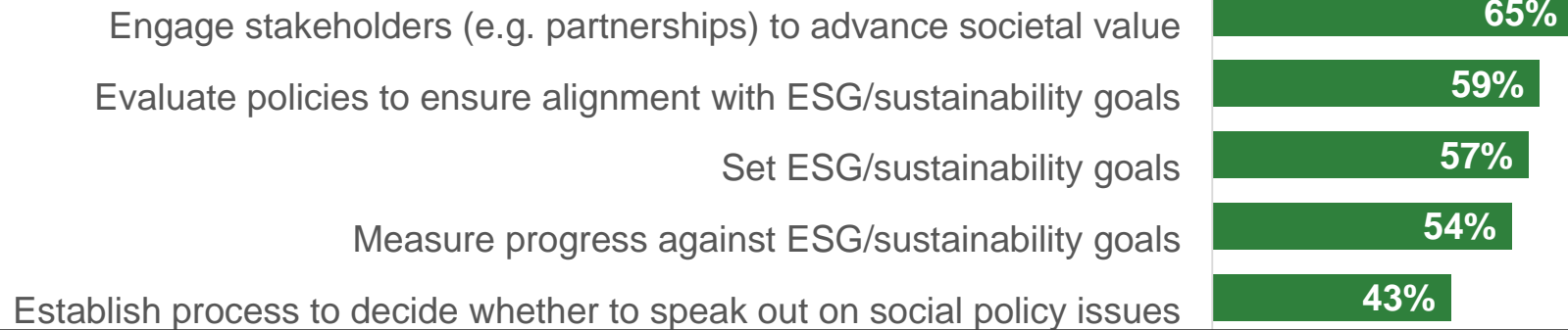
Again, alignment and communication are common but systematizing societal value creation is less so.



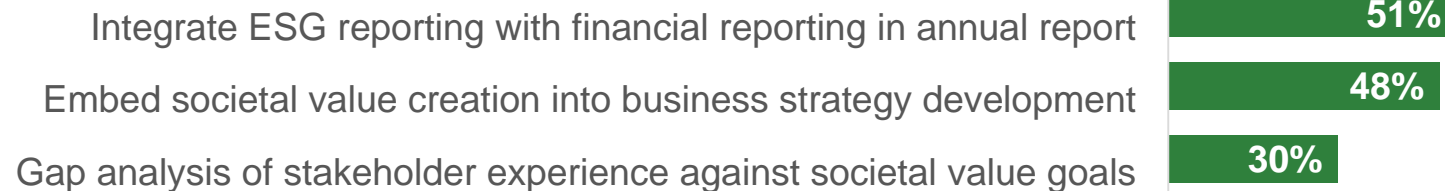
### 1. Professional



### 2. Pathfinder



### 3. Pacesetter



Q7. Here are some activities typically undertaken by enterprises as they focus on societal value creation. Please select any that your team or enterprise has done or is currently doing:

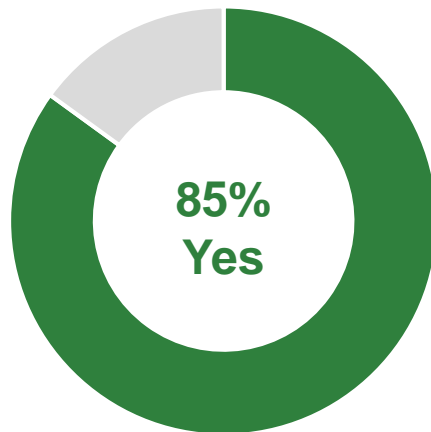
n=121



Enterprises know advancing societal value is about more than its products and services; its about ESG/sustainability policies and even taking public stands.

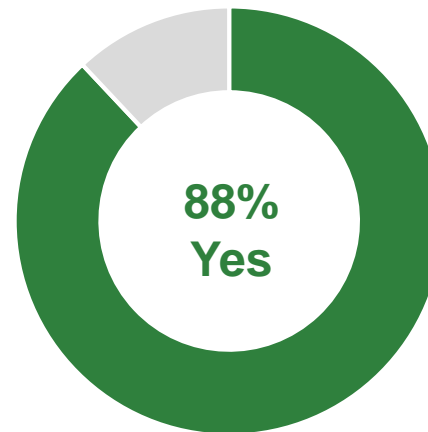
Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?

Products & Services



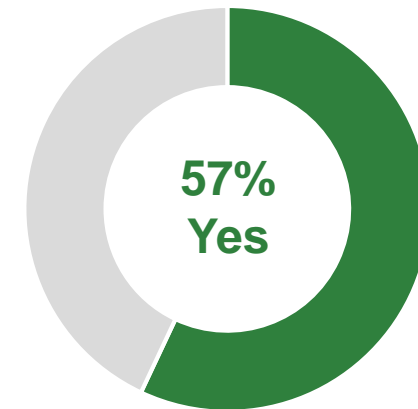
n=121

ESG or Sustainability Policies



n=120

Public Stands on Societal Issues



n=121

Q8. You said your enterprise has a corporate societal value program. Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?



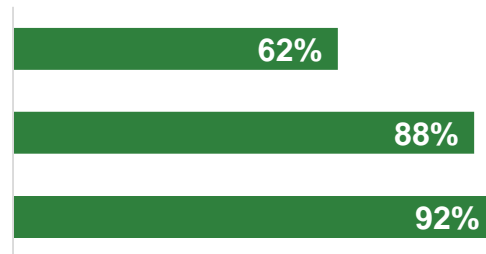
# Largest companies most likely to report societal value creation beyond products & services.

Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?

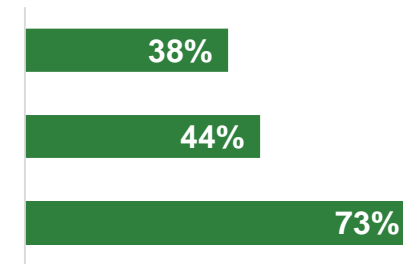
## Products & Services



## ESG or Sustainability Policies



## Public Stands on Societal Issues

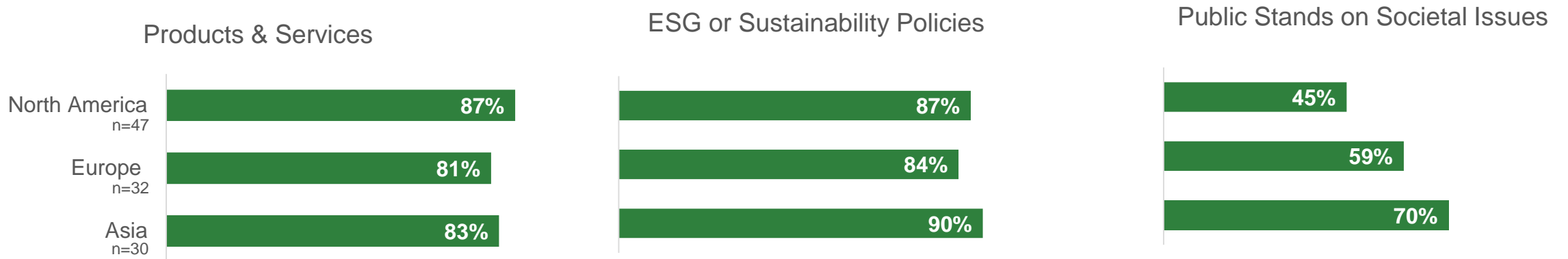


Q8. You said your enterprise has a corporate societal value program. Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?



Asia region's response is most surprising: 70% report creating societal value by taking public stands.

Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?



Q8. You said your enterprise has a corporate societal value program. Does your enterprise create societal value through its ...?

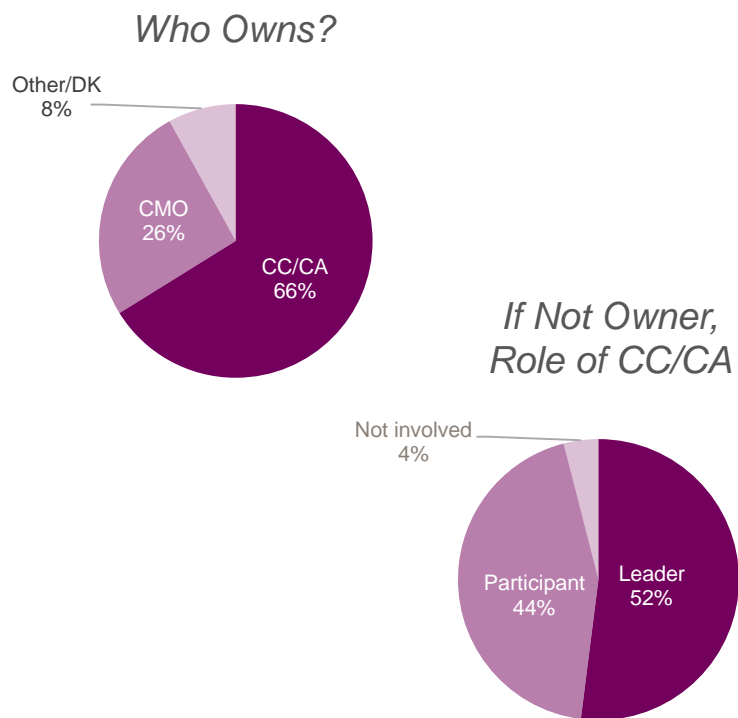


# The CCO's Role in Corporate Character



Communications/Corporate Affairs has ownership and/or intense involvement in all three corporate character dimensions.

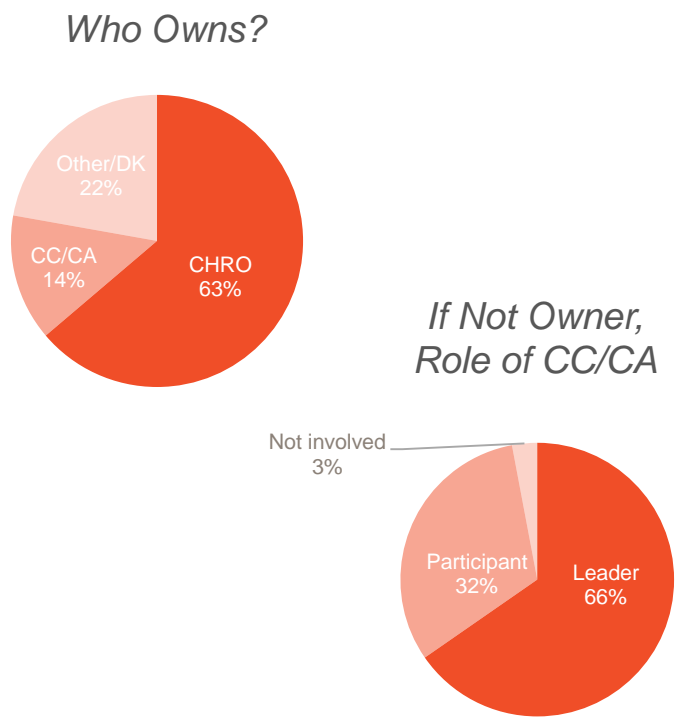
## Corporate Brand



Q21. Who is ultimately responsible for corporate brand – vs. product and service brands – in your enterprise? n=152

Q22. Although perhaps not “owning” corporate brand in your enterprise, does corporate communications or corporate affairs have a significant role in influencing corporate brand? n=50

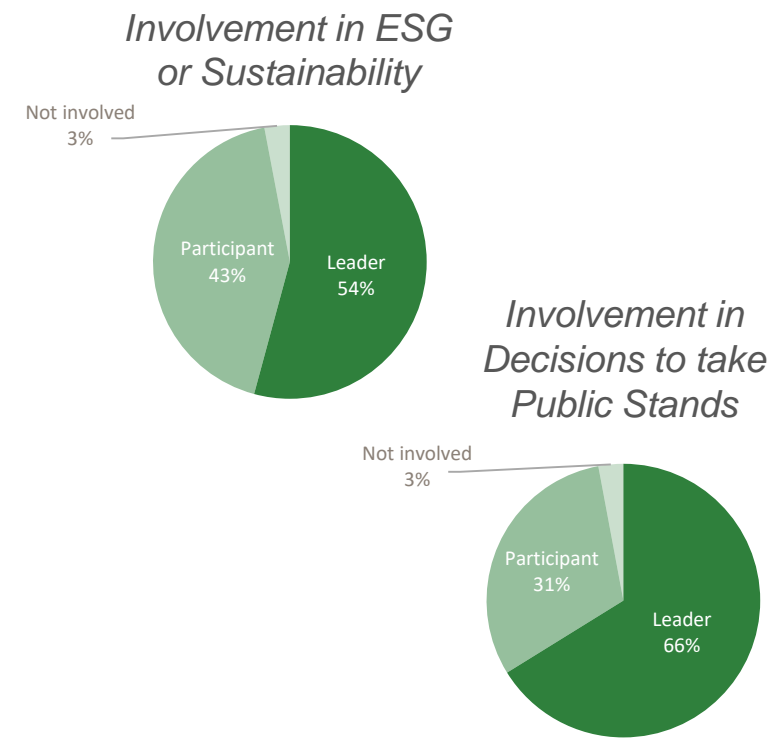
## Corporate Culture



Q30. Who is ultimately responsible for corporate culture in your enterprise? n=144

Q31. Although not “owning” corporate culture in your enterprise, does corporate communications or corporate affairs have a significant role in influencing corporate culture? n=119

## Corporate Societal Value



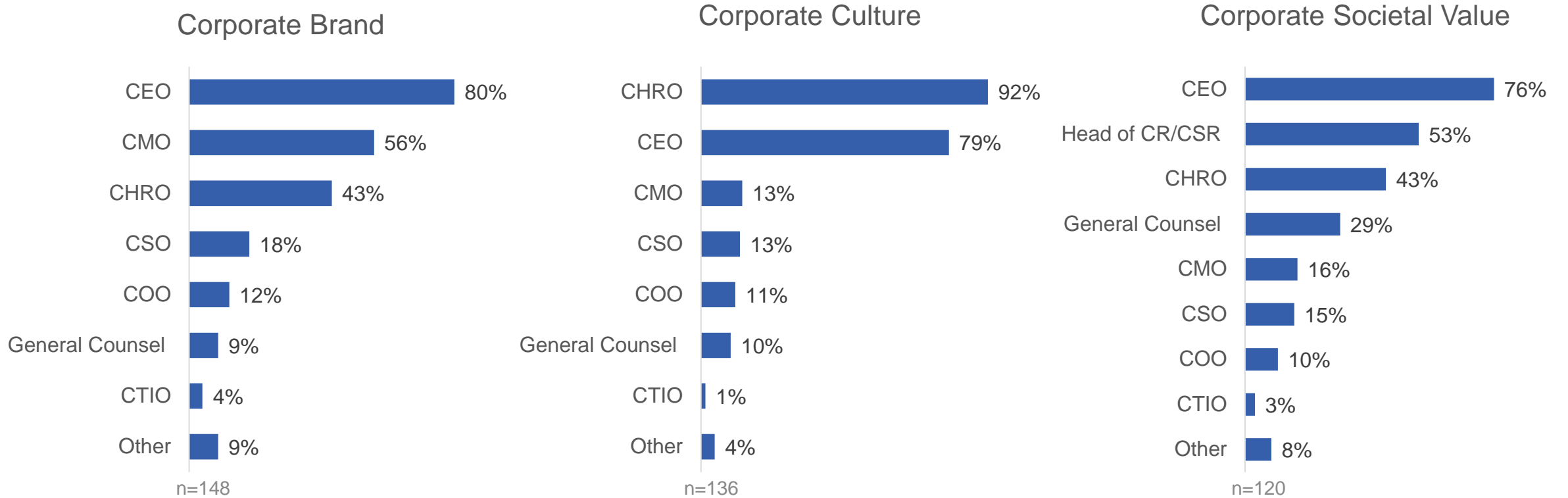
Q10. Is the corporate communication or corporate affairs function involved in setting or running the ESG or sustainability policies and programs? n=105

Q12\_A. Is the corporate communication or corporate affairs function involved in decisions to take public stands on societal issues or policies? n=68



CC/CA functions are highly collaborative, working closely with the CEO throughout and CHRO, CMO as appropriate. Especially telling is that CCOs are working with CHROs on brand and societal value, presumably to engage employees on both.

If involved, with whom do you work most closely?



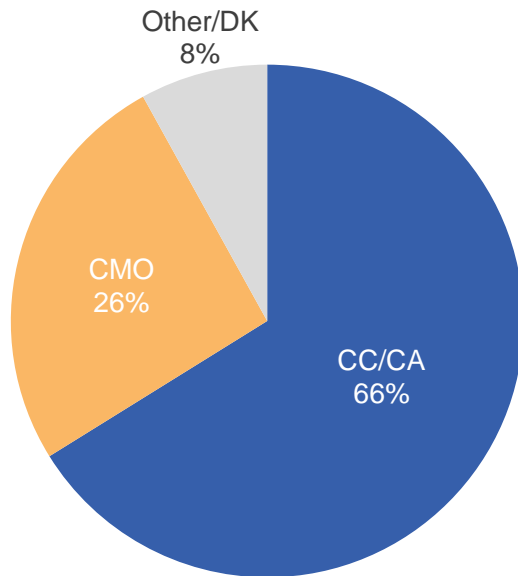
Q15, Q23, Q32. With which of your fellow corporate leaders do you work MOST closely on [DIMENSION]? Select up to three.





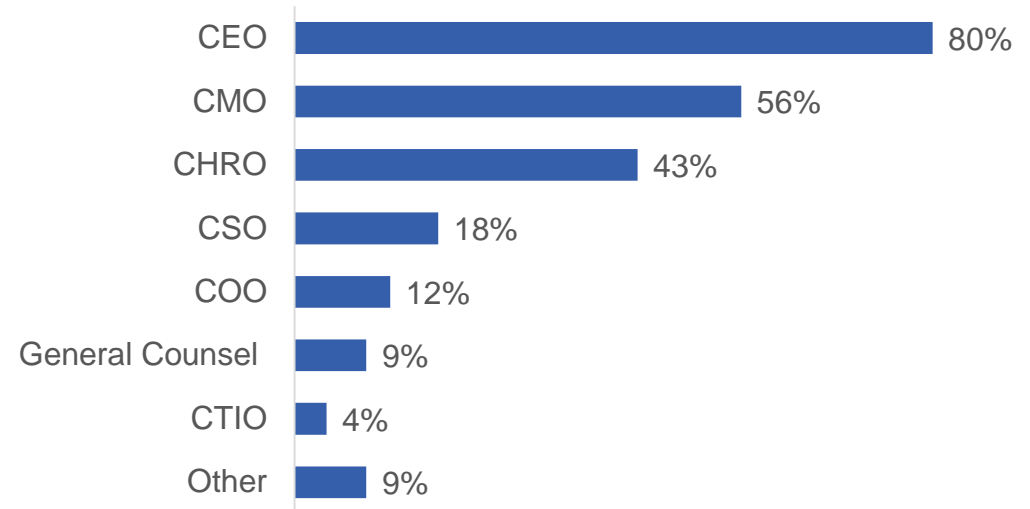
Corporate brand is especially interesting, with two thirds of respondents reporting ownership. Many are collaborating closely with CEOs & CHROs, evidence that supports the relationship between culture and brand.

### Who Owns?



Q21. Who is ultimately responsible for corporate brand – vs. product and service brands – in your enterprise?  
n=152

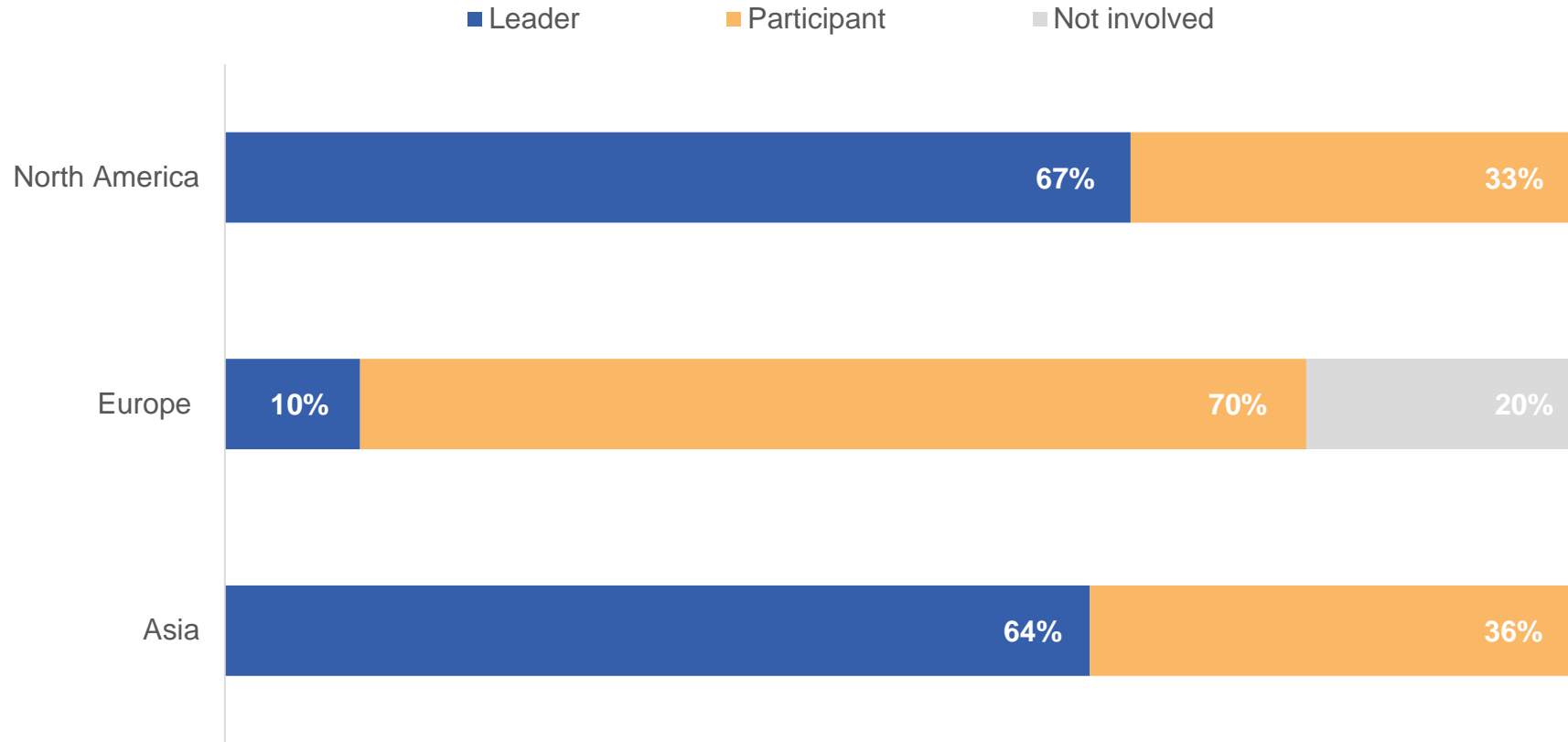
### If involved, with whom do you work most closely?



Q23. With which of the following corporate leaders does your function work most closely with respect to corporate brand? Select up to three.  
n=148



For brand, interestingly, those in EU are least likely to be a leader and are instead largely participants.



Q22. Although perhaps not “owning” corporate brand in your enterprise, does corporate communications or corporate affairs have a significant role in influencing corporate brand?

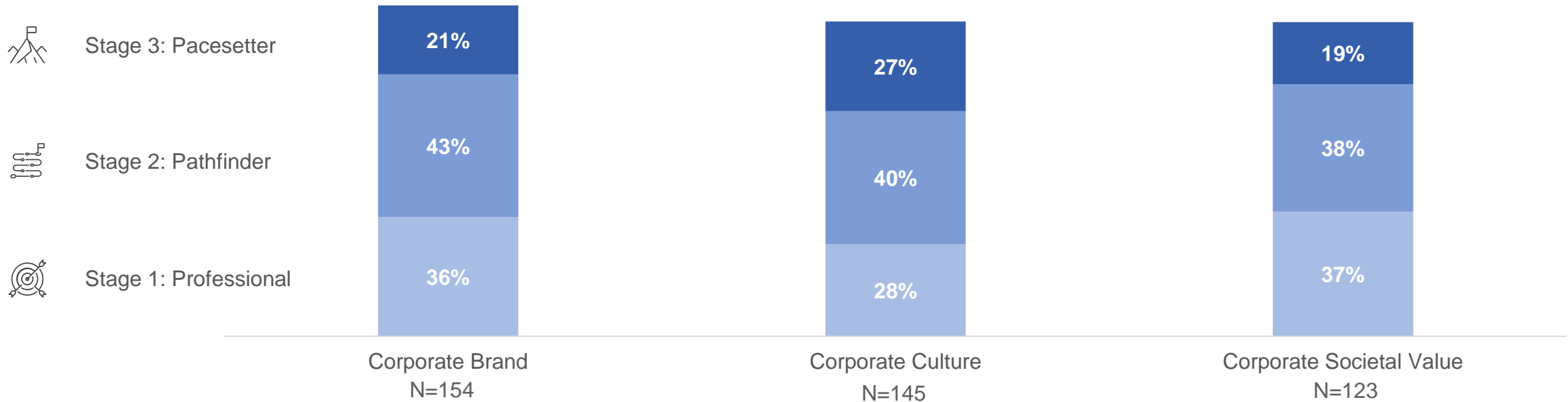
n=50



## Plurality identify as in the Pathfinder stage on all three corporate character dimensions.

Respondents are most advanced on their journeys in corporate culture, least in societal value, which is a new area of exploration for many. While corporate societal value may have most room for growth, there is opportunity advance all three dimensions.

Progression in Journey



Q6, Q19, Q28. Which of these three stages best describes where your organization is in its [INSERT DIMENSION] journey?

*\*Asked among those who said they have a defined program*

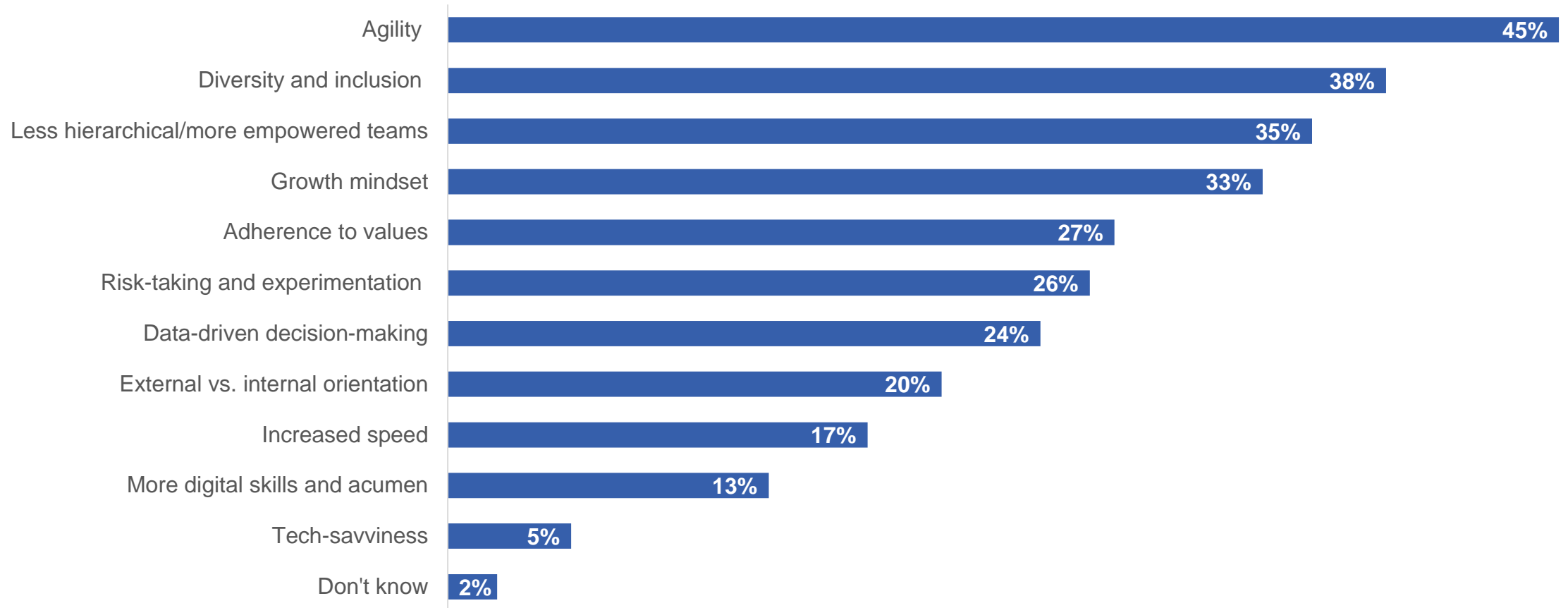


# Other Corporate Character Points of Interest



Highest priority is creating a culture of agility.

### Most Important Attributes of High-performing Cultures

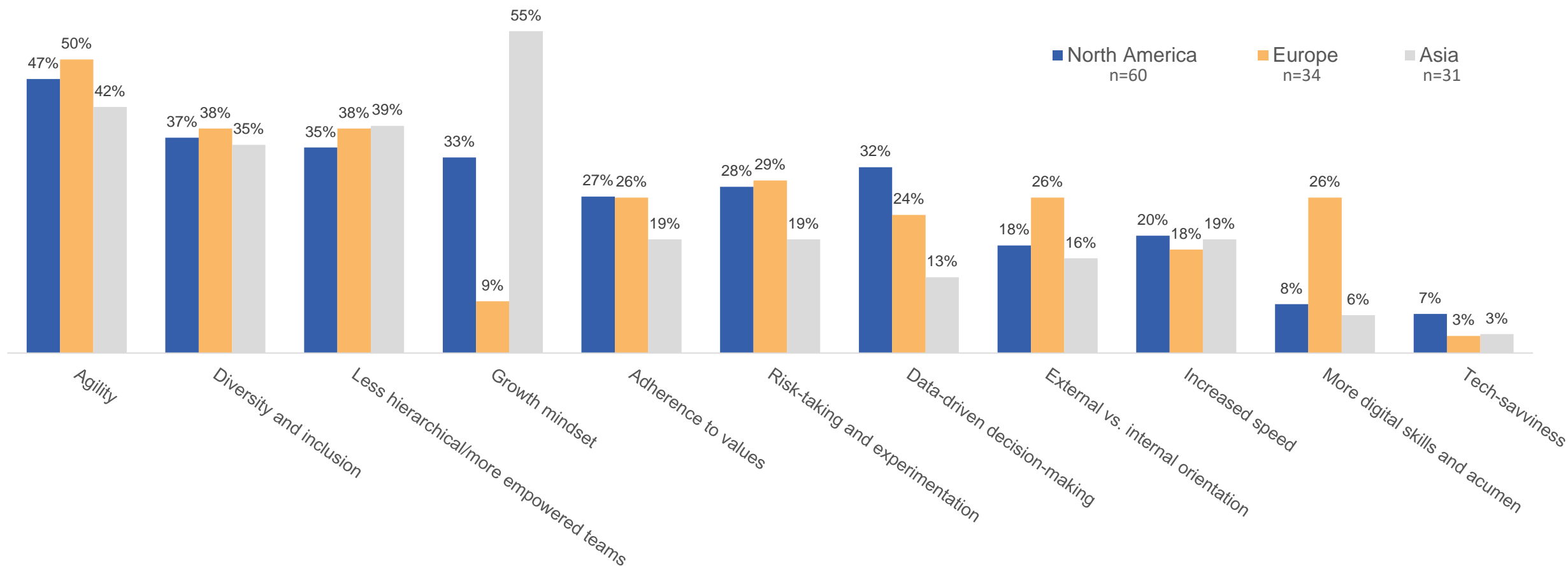


Q34. In your opinion, which of the following will be the MOST important attributes of high-performing corporate cultures in the future? Select up to three.  
n=144



Asia is most focused on growth mind-set; for rest of world, agility is the most important attribute of high performing culture.

### Most Important Attributes of High-performing Cultures

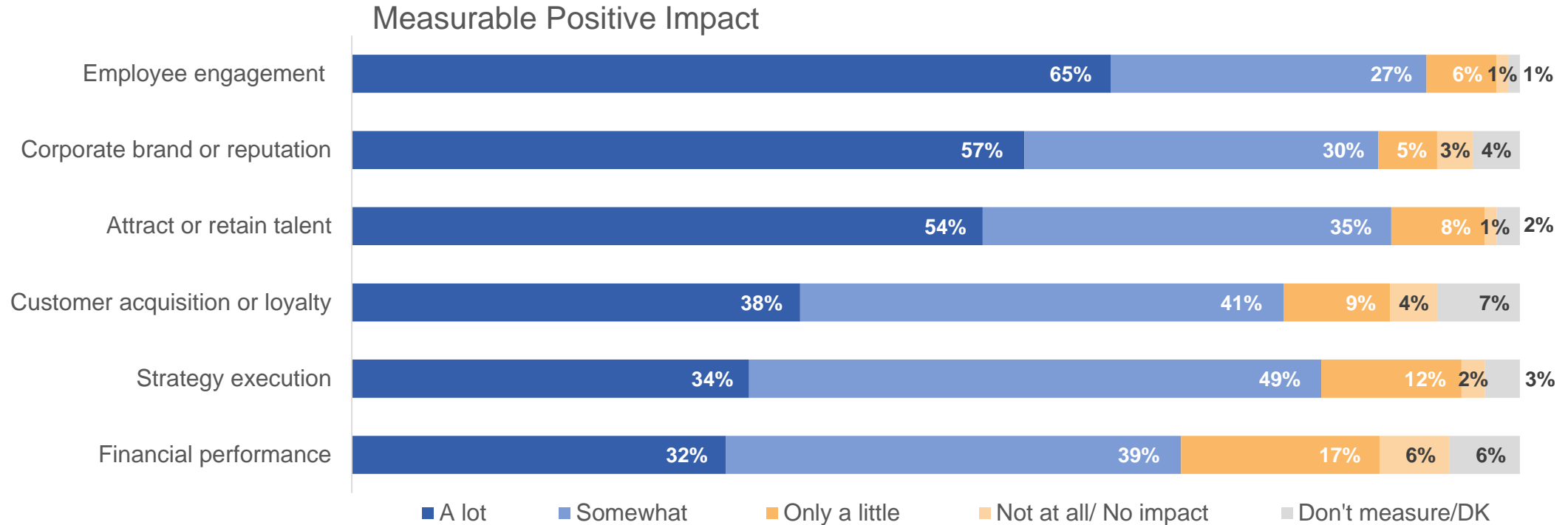


Q34. In your opinion, which of the following will be the MOST important attributes of high-performing corporate cultures in the future? Select up to three.

# Corporate culture positively impacts all tested metrics.

Employee engagement, corporate brand/reputation and attracting/retaining talent are most intensely impacted.

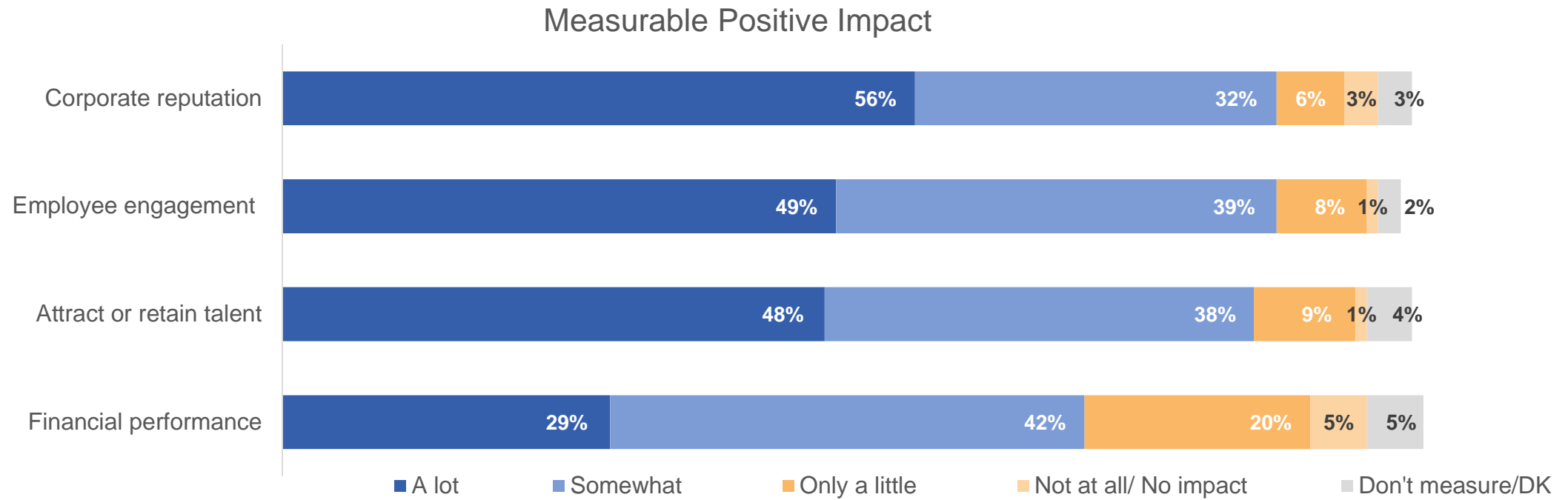
High impact on brand and reputation supports culture as visceral expression of brand.



Q35. To what extent does your enterprise's corporate culture measurably impact the following in a POSITIVE way?  
n=142



# Corporate brand positively impacts all tested metrics, especially reputation.



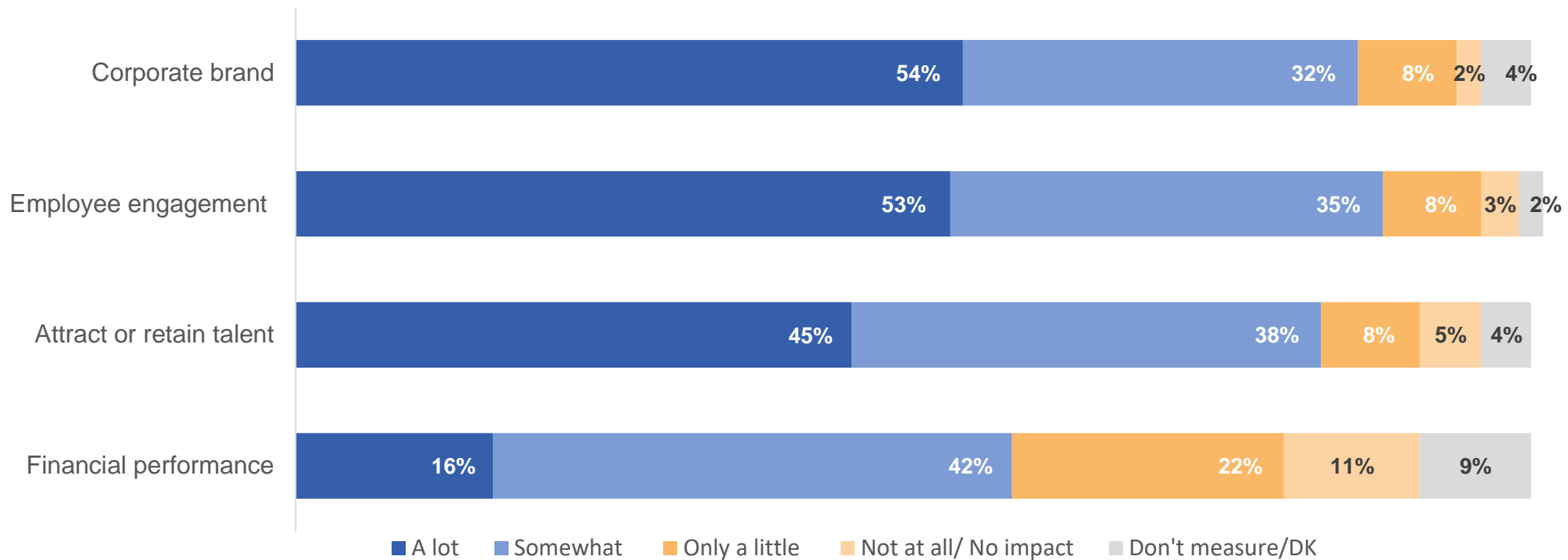
Q25. To what extent does your enterprise's corporate brand measurably impact the following in a POSITIVE way? a) employee engagement b) financial performance c) corporate reputation d) attracting or retaining talent  
n=152





# Corporate societal value positively impacts all tested metrics; corporate brand, employee engagement most, financial performance least.

## Measurable Positive Impact



Q16. To what extent does your enterprise's corporate brand measurably impact the following in a POSITIVE way? a) employee engagement b) financial performance c) corporate brand d) attracting or retaining talent  
n=118



# CommTech Supporting Corporate Character



**COMMTECH**



## 1. PROFESSIONAL

Produce and distribute digital content and listen and engage stakeholders through social media. Success is measured by performance of content (e.g., likes, clicks, retweets, downloads, shares).



## 2. PATHFINDER

Shift from publishing content to driving desired behaviors through digital campaigns that move stakeholders along a journey with a prescribed sequence of touchpoints. There is increasing use of paid content and targeting audiences by interests and behaviors rather than demographic attributes. Success is measured by stakeholder progression through the journey (e.g., e-mail open rates, bounce and abandonment rates, conversions, etc.). The communications team is formally trained in Agile methods and their work is characterized by continual iteration of content, offers and the journey design based on real-time data feeds.



## 3. PACESETTER

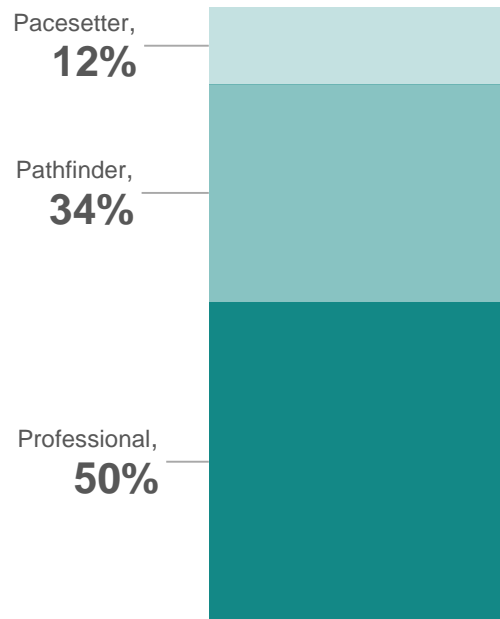
Using data and analytics, stakeholder targeting is highly personalized. Teams use greater levels of automation to test and iterate content and adjust targeting and re-targeting. Success is measured by business outcomes – leads converted to sales, job offers accepted, workforce acquiring new skills, etc. -- and stakeholder advocacy for the organization (e.g., user reviews, Glassdoor ranking, etc.).

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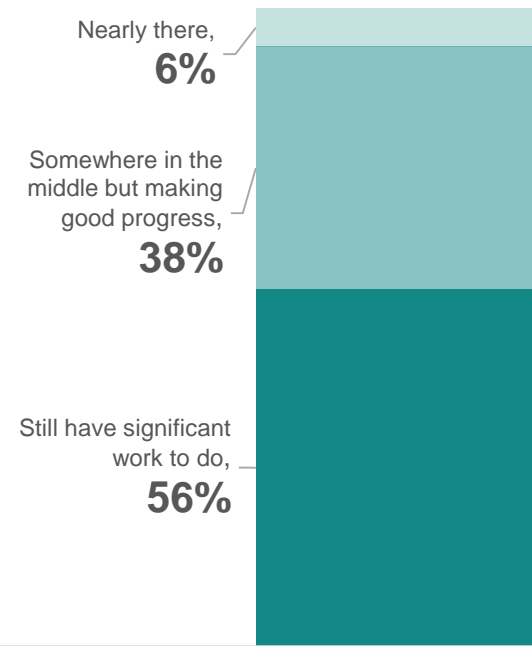
# CommTech reported to be the least developed of all tested dimensions.

Half report they are in Professional stage, which focuses on social listening and digital content production/distribution.



Q37\_A. Please indicate which of these three stages best describes where your organization is its CommTech journey.  
n=161

Just over half say they still have significant work to do before getting to next level.

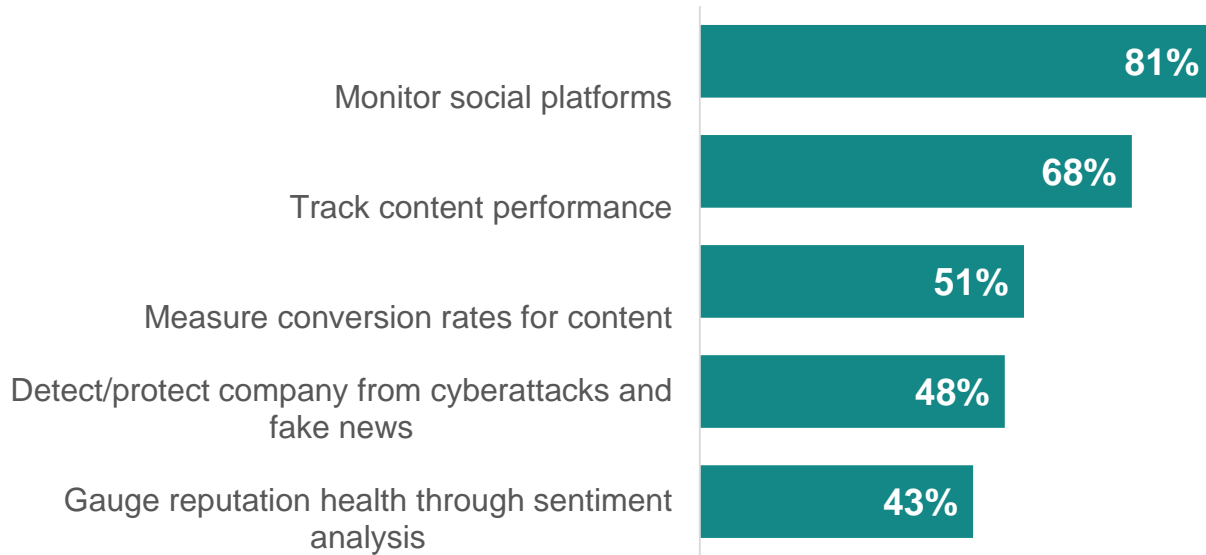


Q28\_B. For the stage that you selected, how close do you think you are to the next stage? [ASKED OF STAGE 1 AND 2 ONLY]  
n=98

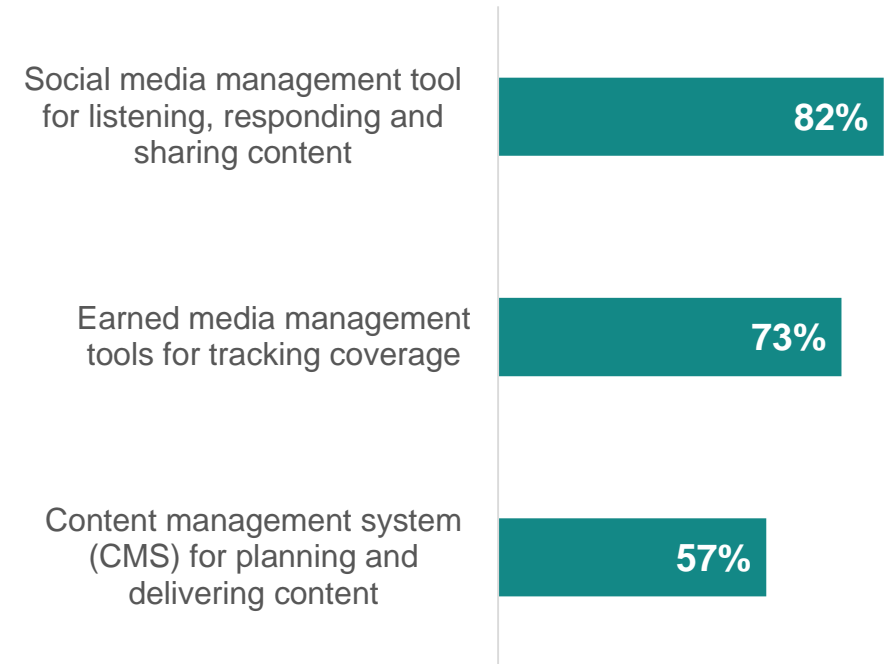


Half say they are in Professional stage, which focuses on social listening and digital content production/distribution; their activities and tools mirror this.

### Activities



### Technology Tools Used



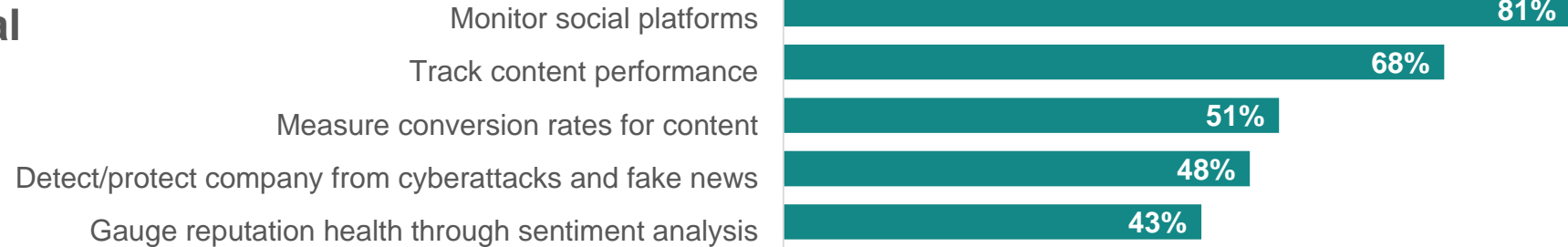
Q39. Here are some activities typically undertaken by companies using CommTech, including data analytics. Please select any that your company has done or currently does. n=160

Q38. Which of the following are part of the set of technology tools (i.e., tech stack) that your team uses? Select all that apply. n=161

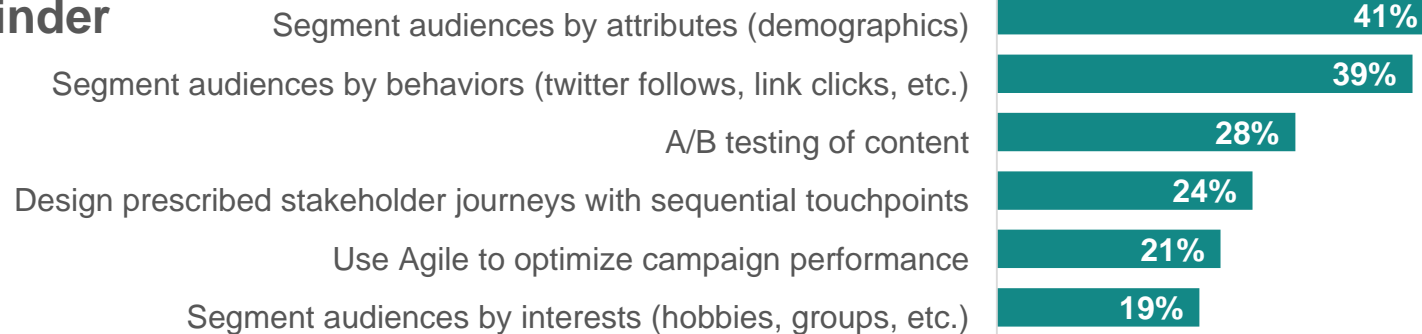
That half say they are in the Professional stage reflects communication’s foundations in messaging, storytelling and positioning – “what we want to know.” The Pathfinder and Pacesetter stages require a focus on the audience, ideally down to the individual, and on helping the audience to take action. In essence, the Progression path is from “what we want you to know” to “what we would like you to do.”



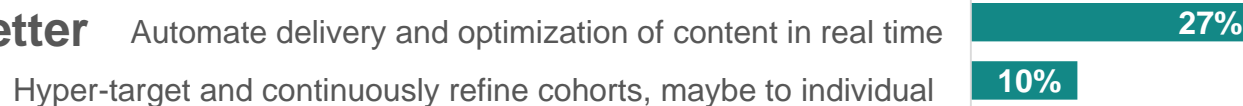
## 1. Professional



## 2. Pathfinder



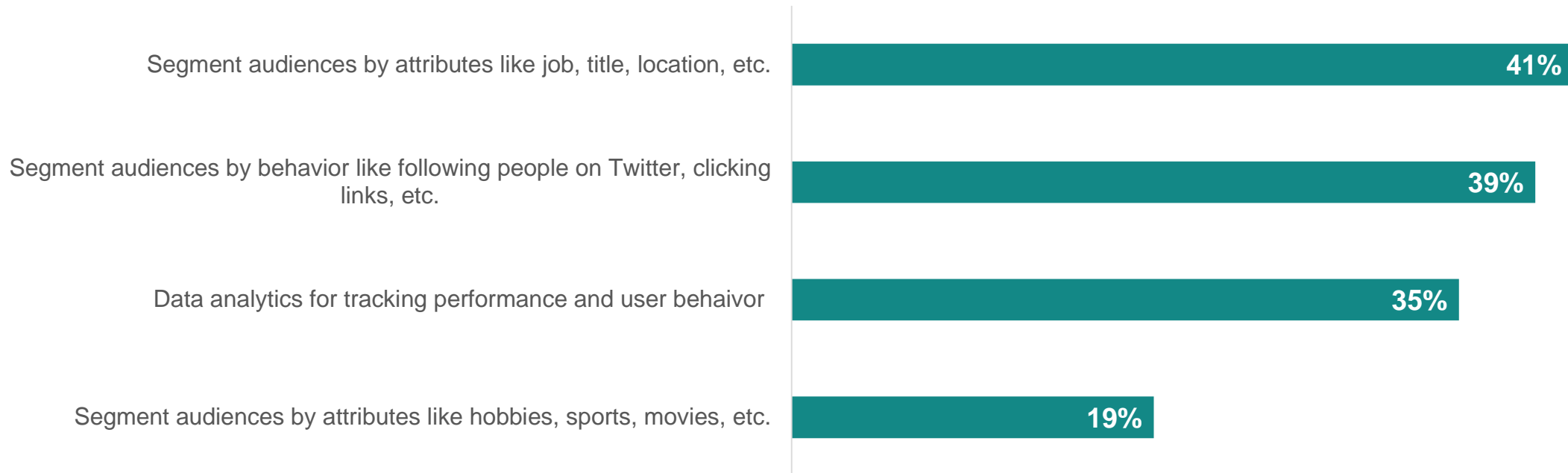
## 3. Pacesetter





The required re-orientation from message-to audience – centrality is reflected in how few CCOs segment or target audiences.

### Current Tools/Activities



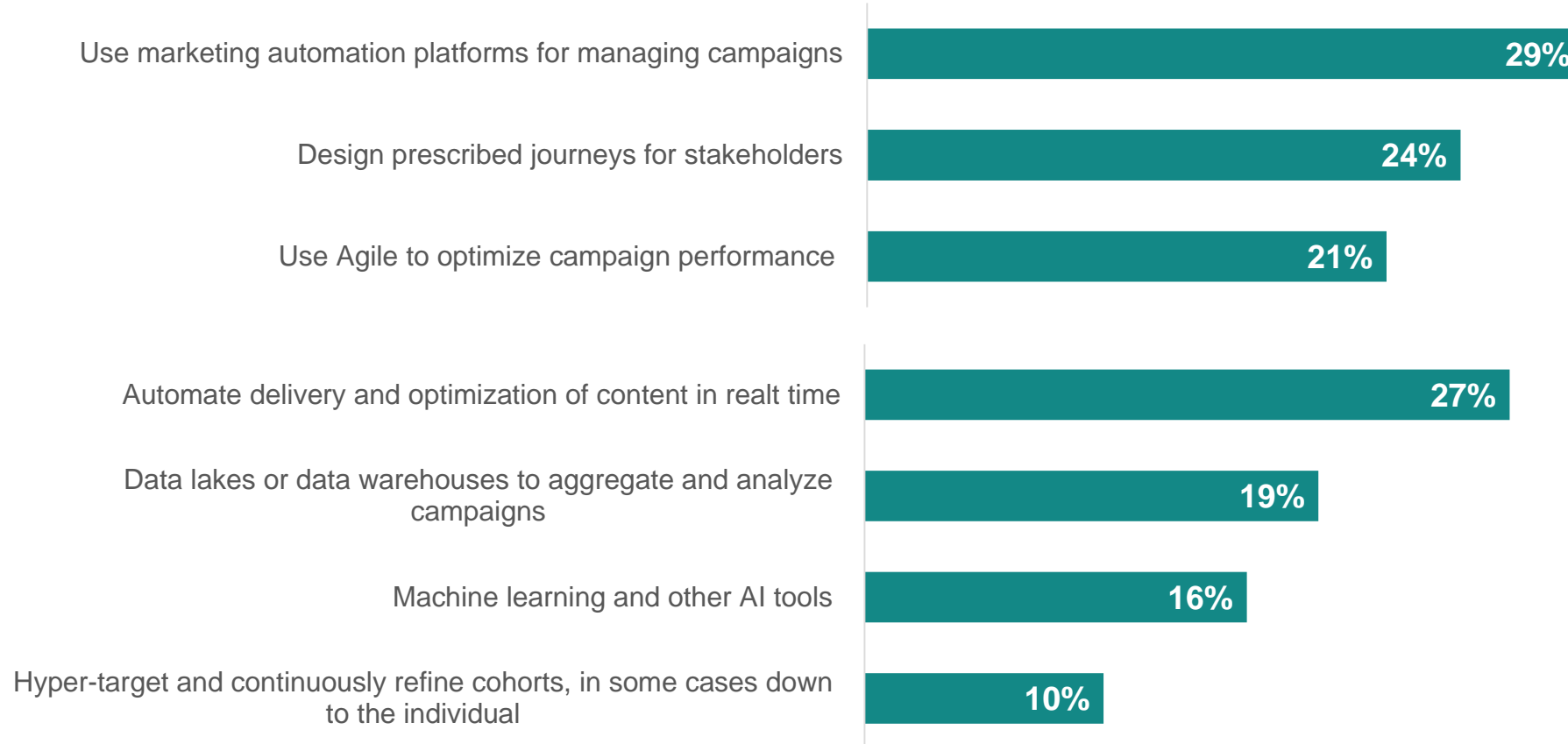
Q38. Which of the following are part of the set of technology tools (i.e., tech stack) that your team uses? Select all that apply. n=161

Q39. Here are some activities typically undertaken by companies using CommTech, including data analytics. Please select any that your company has done or currently does:

n=160



Few are designing, iterating analyzing digital campaigns or using automation, as prescribed in the Pathfinder stage.



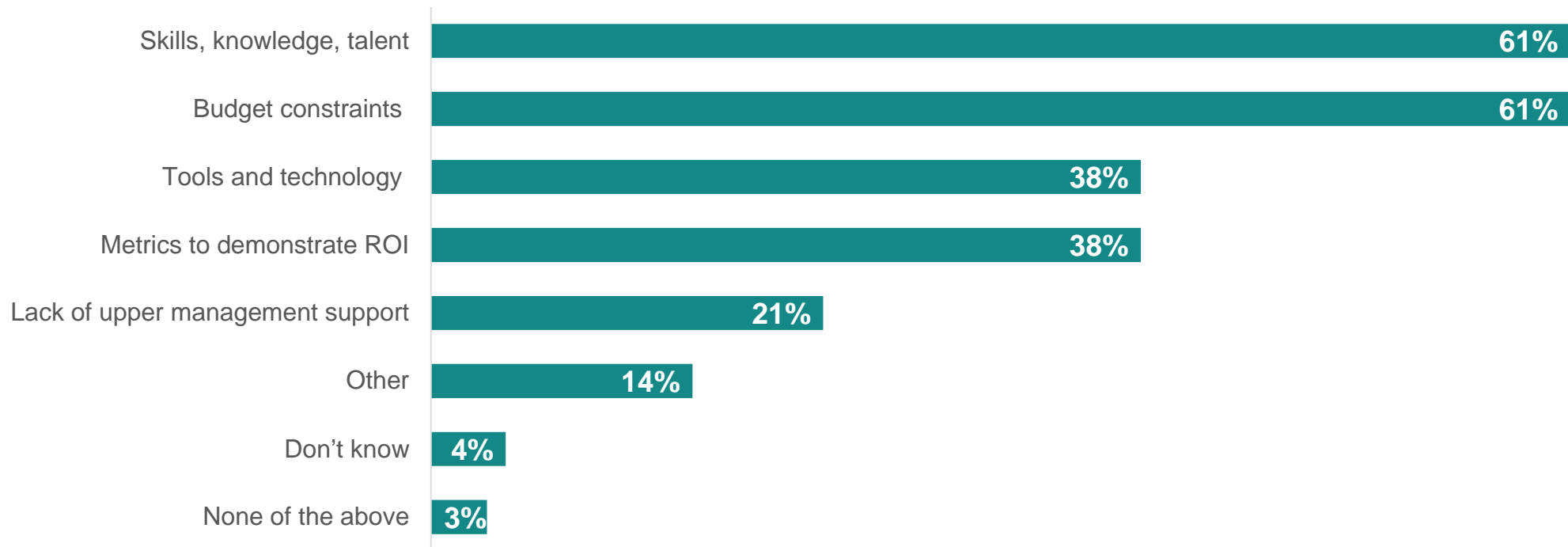
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n=160



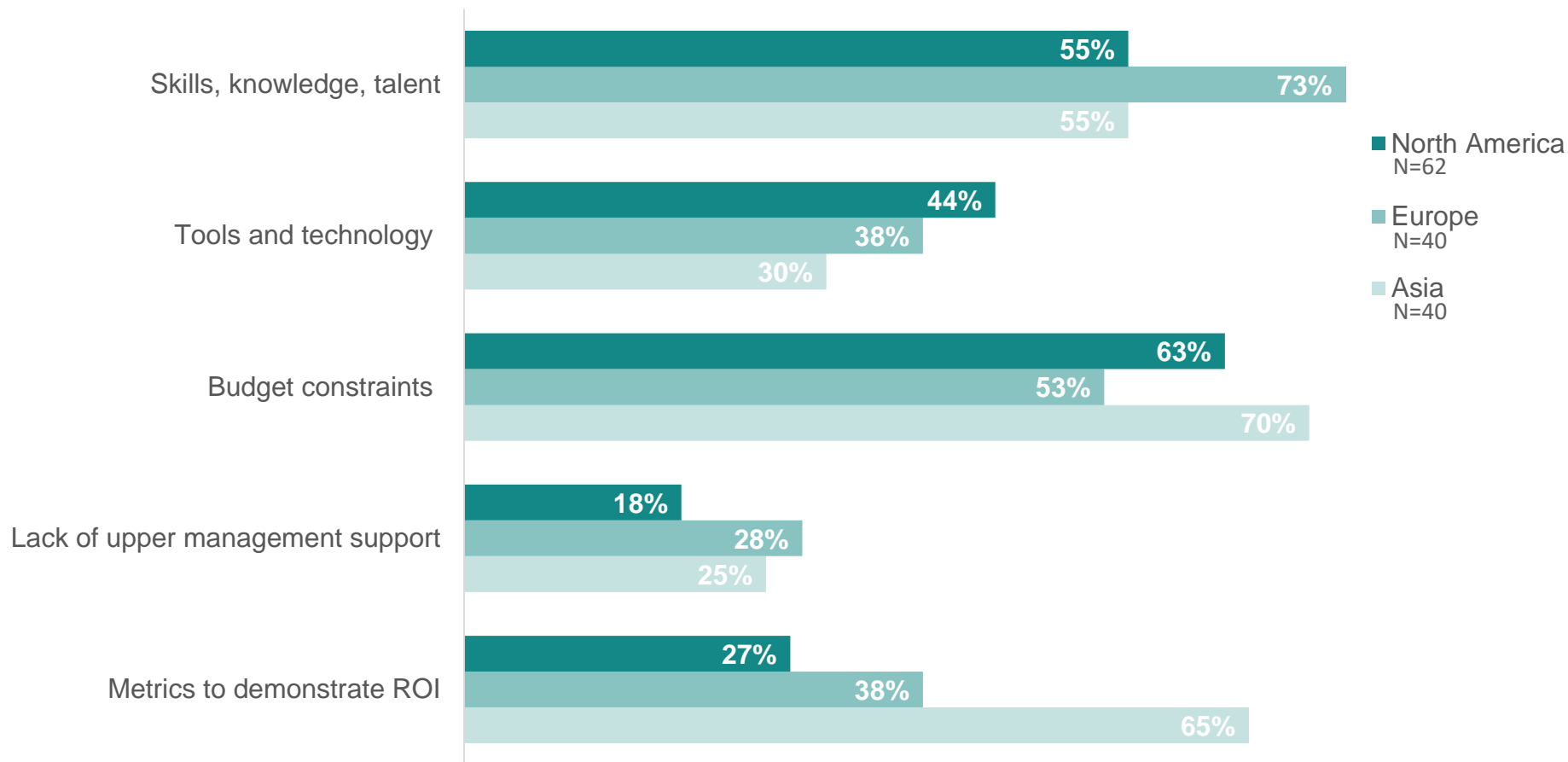
 Skills and budget are the biggest hurdles to advancing.



Q40. What is limiting your team from advancing to higher levels of skill and impact when it comes to CommTech? Select all that apply.  
n=160



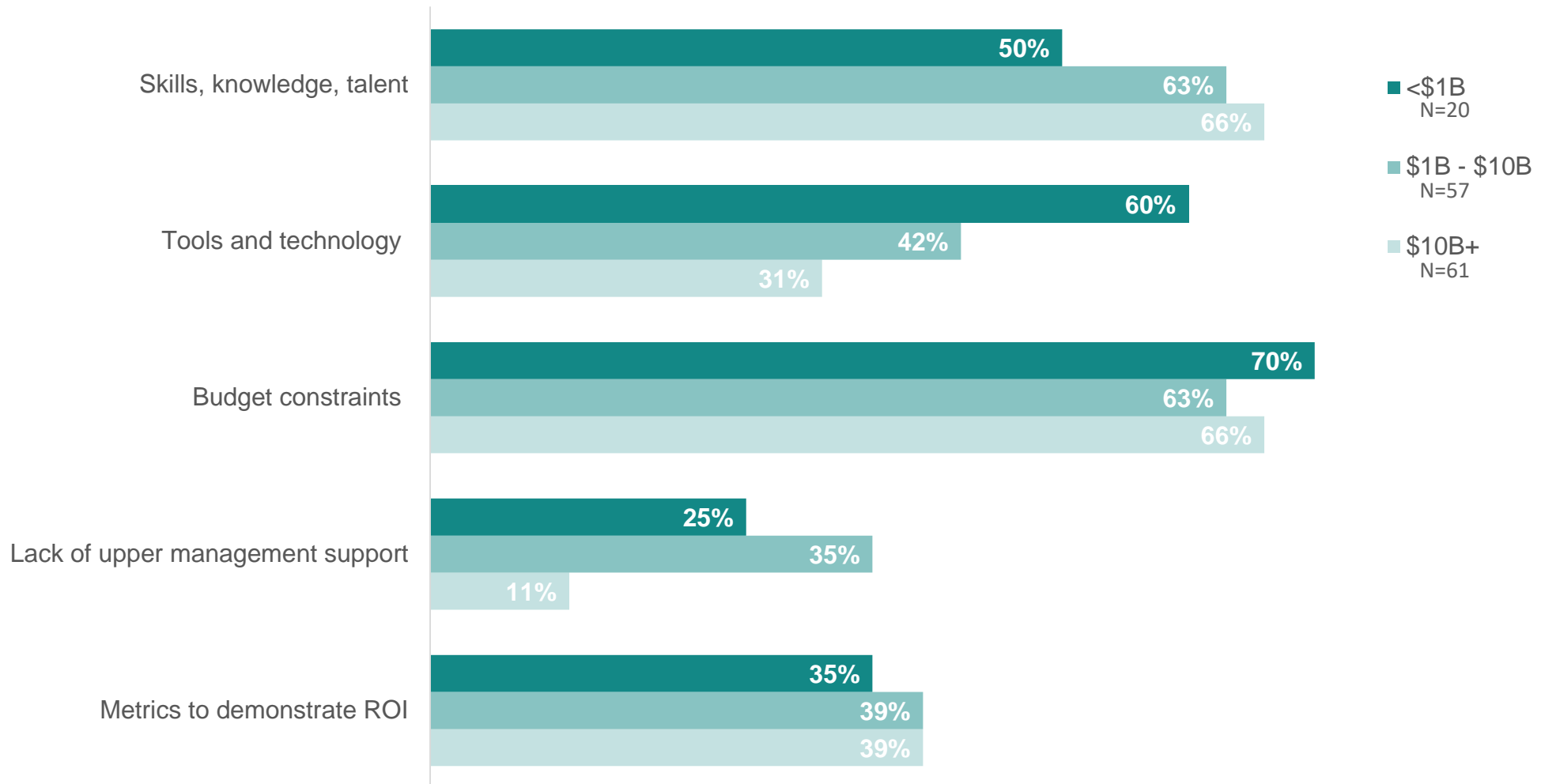
# EU respondents more likely to report skill gaps as an obstacle; Asia more focused on lacking metrics.



Q40. What is limiting your team from advancing to higher levels of skill and impact when it comes to CommTech? Select all that apply.



# Tools and technology tend to be bigger obstacles for smaller companies.



Q40. What is limiting your team from advancing to higher levels of skill and impact when it comes to CommTech? Select all that apply.



# Key Takeaways



- Most enterprises are actively working to manage dimensions of corporate character. Almost universally, respondents report having defined approaches to managing corporate brand and corporate culture. Corporate societal value is also defined by the vast majority.
- A plurality identify as being in the Pathfinder stage on all three corporate character dimensions.
- Respondents are most advanced in their corporate culture journey, least in societal value, which is a new area of exploration for many. While corporate societal value have most room for growth, there is an opportunity to advance all three dimensions of corporate character.



## Key Takeaways



- CC/CA functions have ownership and/or intense involvement in all three dimensions of corporate character. They are highly collaborative, working closely with the CEO throughout and CHRO and CMO as appropriate.
- Corporate brand is especially interesting, with majority of respondents reporting ownership and collaborating closely with CEOs & CHROs, evidence that supports the relationship between culture and brand.
- For CommTech, half are operating in the Professional stage, reflecting Communications' foundations in messaging, storytelling and positioning. More advanced stages require a greater focus on audience and helping them to take action. There is a required re-orientation from message- to audience-centricity and CommTech can support.



# page

To find *The CCO as Pacesetter* and related content:

**[knowledge.page.org](https://knowledge.page.org)**

For more on the Progression Paths:

**[paths.page.org](https://paths.page.org)**

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