

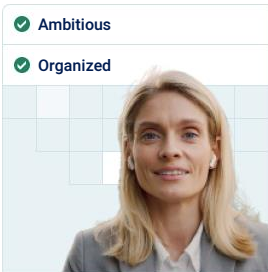
# DNA of an Executive

Qualities That Propel Leaders to the Top



# At a Glance

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# About the Study

In our global study of 13,000 corporate leaders, we discovered that individuals exhibit potential for specific levels of management, highlighting that **leadership potential** is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It varies significantly depending on one's position within the organizational hierarchy. We identified a critical breakdown in the leadership pipeline, which is a major factor contributing to the current shortage of executive talent.

The core issue lies in the shifting qualities required at each leadership level. The attributes that propel individuals into frontline and mid-level roles are not the same as those needed for executive positions. This misalignment creates a bottleneck, significantly limiting the number of mid-level leaders who can transition to senior roles. By the time individuals reach mid-level leadership, they are often selected based on qualities that may not align with those needed for senior roles.

However, our research suggests that **the pool of senior talent could be much larger if organizations identified executive potential earlier in people's careers**. By promoting individuals based on their curiosity and resilience, rather than just their visible leadership presence, organizations can cultivate a more robust leadership pipeline.

The implications for talent management are profound. Instead of viewing one's career as a linear, stepwise progression through the corporate ladder, we should consider aligning individuals with the level of leadership they show the most potential for. Therefore, it is crucial to identify these executive qualities early in individuals' careers to ensure a strong pipeline of leaders ready for executive positions.

*Leadership pipeline*



*Executive talent shortage*



**Introduction**

# Introduction

In 2025, the shortage of executive talent remains a significant concern for CEOs. The global talent landscape has become even more competitive, with nearly 75% of employers worldwide reporting difficulties in finding the skilled talent they need<sup>1</sup>. This is a substantial increase from previous years, highlighting the growing challenges in attracting and retaining top leaders. The demand for specialized skills, particularly in areas like information technology, healthcare, and energy, continues to outpace supply. Additionally, the evolving expectations of executive candidates, who now prioritize flexibility, professional development, and work-life balance, have made it more challenging for organizations to meet their needs.

CEOs are also grappling with the need to build a future-ready workforce. This involves not only finding leaders with the right technical skills but also those who can navigate the complexities of digital transformation and global market dynamics. The role of leaders is evolving, with a greater emphasis on collaboration, employee retention, and the integration of emerging technologies like AI and machine learning. Leaders with personal qualities such as resilience and intellectual curiosity are particularly in demand, as they are better equipped to adapt to rapid changes and drive innovation within their organizations.

To address these challenges, organizations are increasingly focusing on upskilling their current employees and offering more flexible work arrangements. Despite massive investments in leadership development, many organizations find that these programs are not producing candidates ready for executive positions. Companies are spending billions annually on leadership development programs, yet the returns on these investments are often unclear<sup>2</sup>. Many programs fail to yield meaningful results, with participants not adequately prepared for the complexities and pressures of executive roles<sup>3</sup>.

One significant issue is that companies often invest in the wrong people for leadership development because they have limited options of employees who show leadership potential. Many organizations promote top performers in individual roles, assuming they will naturally excel in leadership positions. However, high performance in a specific role does not always translate to effective leadership<sup>4</sup>. This misalignment can lead to disengagement, high turnover, and poor performance. Additionally, traditional methods of identifying high-potential employees often favor those who are more visible or vocal, overlooking quieter but equally capable individuals.

1 CEOWORLD. (2024). 5 reasons why companies promote the wrong people into leadership positions and how to fix it. Retrieved from <https://ceoworld.biz/2024/10/11/5-reasons-why-companies-promote-the-wrong-people-into-leadership-positions-and-how-to-fix-it/>

2 Forbes. (2020). Why most new executives fail and four things companies can do about it. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2020/03/13/why-most-new-executives-fail-and-four-things-companies-can-do-about-it/>

3 Harvard Business Review. (2025). 9 trends that will shape work in 2025 and beyond. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2025/01/9-trends-that-will-shape-work-in-2025-and-beyond>

4 ManpowerGroup. (2025). Global talent shortage survey 2025. Retrieved from <https://www.manpowerholland.com/blog/2025/01/talent-shortage-2025-global>

## Breakdown in the Leadership Pipeline Fuels the Executive Talent Shortage

Our research uncovered a significant breakdown in the leadership pipeline that underpins the shortage of executive talent. It appears that while 38% of non-managers exhibit the potential to step into frontline management roles, only 14% will progress on to mid-level leadership. The numbers dwindle even further at the senior leadership level, with a mere 0.2% showing the potential to ascend to these top-tier positions.

The core issue lies in the shifting qualities required at each leadership level. The attributes that propel individuals into mid-level roles are not the same as those needed for executive positions. This disconnect creates a bottleneck, significantly limiting the pool of mid-level leaders who can transition to senior roles. Essentially, the qualities that highlight potential at different leadership stages vary, making it challenging to maintain a steady flow of leaders advancing through the ranks.

### Out of 100 employees:



# What Is Leadership Potential and How to Spot It

## While Many Leadership Skills Can Be Developed, There Is a Notable Genetic Component to Leadership

Are leaders made or born? Psychological research points to leaders being primarily made through experiences, coaching, and training. However, genetics play a notable role, accounting for about 30-40 percent of leadership potential. Twin studies have shown that genetic factors contribute to approximately 30 percent of the likelihood of assuming a leadership role.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, researchers have found that around 40 percent of people's daily behavior is consistent across different situations and can be partially attributed to genetic factors.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, while the majority of leadership skills can be learned, about 30-40 percent of leadership factors are genetically predisposed. This natural predisposition to lead is often referred to as "leadership potential."

Leadership potential is defined as the innate predisposition for leadership roles, primarily reflected in personality traits. Our personality shapes our natural styles and what we find easy and enjoyable. Understanding one's leadership potential can be highly beneficial for career planning and for organizations in identifying and preparing individuals for management positions. When careers align with an individual's potential, they tend to feel more engaged and perform at their best. People with high leadership potential become effective leaders more quickly, positively impacting their employees, organizations, communities, and society as a whole.

## Leadership Factors

Research shows that **about 30-40% of leadership factors are genetic**, predominantly reflected in our personality. This natural predisposition to leadership is commonly called "leadership potential."



1 Arvey, R. D., Rotundo, M., Johnson, W., Zhang, Z., & McGue, M. (2006). The determinants of leadership role occupancy: Genetic and personality factors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leafqua.2005.10.009>

2 Leikas, S., Lönnqvist, J.-E., & Verkasalo, M. (2012). Persons, situations, and behaviors: Consistency and variability of different behaviors in four interpersonal situations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103(6), 1007-1022. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030385>

## How to Identify Potential for Executive Roles

Our research indicates that the qualities underlying leadership potential vary by leadership level. Traits such as being Organized and Ambitious help individuals progress into frontline management and mid-level leadership. However, advancing to senior leadership requires a different set of qualities. The challenge is that by the time individuals reach mid-level leadership, they have often been selected based on qualities that may not align with those needed for senior roles. Therefore, it is crucial to identify these executive qualities early in individuals' careers to ensure a robust pipeline of leaders for executive positions.

### Four Tale-tell Signs of Executive Potential:

- ▶ **Adaptability to change with calm confidence:** Employees high in curiosity are often eager to embrace new ideas, projects, or technologies. When combined with emotional resilience, they handle changes in the workplace with enthusiasm and confidence, even during times of uncertainty, without getting easily overwhelmed or stressed.
- ▶ **Creative problem-solving with a level-headed approach:** These employees approach challenges with creativity and curiosity, usually seeking innovative solutions. They can balance their openness to new methods and perspectives with a calm, steady approach, showing emotional resilience even when the solutions are not immediately successful.
- ▶ **Effective collaboration across boundaries:** High curiosity makes them receptive to diverse viewpoints and new experiences, while emotional resilience helps them remain composed during conflict or disagreements. They contribute constructively in team discussions, respect differing opinions, and maintain a calm demeanor even when faced with tension or differing perspectives.
- ▶ **Proactive learning with steady persistence:** Employees high in both curiosity and resilience often seek opportunities for personal growth, whether through new skills or knowledge. They approach learning with enthusiasm and openness but remain steady and persistent even when faced with setbacks or challenges, maintaining a positive attitude throughout the process.

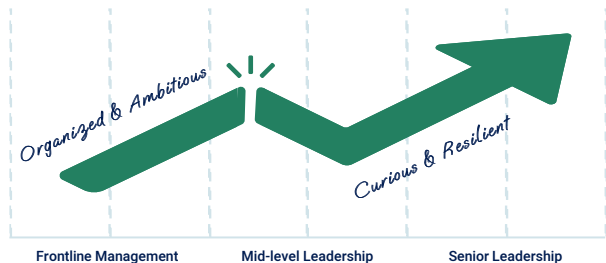
# What Got You to Management Won't Get You to the Top

Senior  
Leadership



# What Got You to Management Won't Get You to the Top

## Shift in Leadership Qualities from Mid-level to the Top



### The Journey to Mid-Level Leadership Is Driven by Ambition and Organization

Psychological research shows that people generally act and think consistently across different work situations, a pattern known as personality. Our research indicates that people who are both Organized and Ambitious are more likely to be promoted into frontline management and continue progressing into mid-level leadership roles.

Organizations usually promote top performers, and organized individuals, with their attention to detail and the structure they create, tend to emerge as top performers. Their methodical and diligent approach ensures projects are executed precisely and reliably. By setting clear goals and expectations, they often create accountability and deliver results on time.

The second quality that tends to propel people into mid-level leadership is Ambition. Ambitious individuals act like leaders from the start. They are comfortable taking charge and influencing others, naturally emerging as leaders in most groups. Their drive to lead is usually immediately obvious, as they confidently communicate their vision and rally stakeholders around it. Their strong presence makes them stand out and be seen as having leadership potential, making them the obvious choice for promotion.

### Transitioning to Senior Leadership Requires a Shift from the Day-to-Day to Strategy

Our research indicates that advancing to senior leadership roles involves a significant shift in the qualities required. As one moves up to mid-level management, the scope of responsibilities begins to broaden, with mid-level managers starting to engage more with strategic planning and long-term goals. They need to balance their practical approach with a growing need for strategic thinking, requiring a blend of both concrete and abstract thinking to handle operational issues while also contributing to the broader organizational strategy.

The qualities required for advancement into senior roles are very different from what is required of frontline managers. Frontline managers are primarily focused on the day-to-day operations, demanding a practical, concrete thinking style to address immediate issues and ensure tasks are completed efficiently. Creativity and innovation take a backseat to practicality and problem-solving, making these managers the backbone of daily operations, ensuring everything runs smoothly and according to plan.

At the senior level, the focus shifts dramatically towards visioning and strategy. Senior leaders are tasked with setting the direction for the entire organization. This requires a broader perspective and a deep intellectual curiosity. They must be able to envision the future, anticipate challenges, and develop strategies to navigate them. Abstract, strategic thinking becomes paramount, and those who reach these roles are often the ones who are naturally Curious.

### Rising to Executive Roles Necessitates Strong Emotional Resilience

With the increased responsibility and visibility that come with senior roles, the level of stress also rises significantly. Senior leaders are under constant pressure to perform and deliver results, which can be daunting. This heightened stress requires them to possess a high degree of emotional resilience. Those who can manage their emotions well and stay calm under pressure are more likely to succeed in these roles. Their ability to maintain composure in challenging situations not only helps them navigate the complexities of their responsibilities but also sets a positive example for their teams. These leaders are seen as more capable of handling the multifaceted challenges that come with senior positions, making them valuable assets to their organizations.

Individuals who struggle with resilience may be viewed as risky choices for senior roles. The ability to cope with the everyday pressures of the job is crucial, and those who show less emotional stability may raise concerns about their suitability for such demanding positions. If a leader is unable to manage stress effectively, it can lead to poor decision-making, decreased team morale, and ultimately, a negative impact on the organization's performance. Therefore, Resilient is not just a desirable trait but an essential quality to advance to senior leadership roles.



# Spotting Executive Potential Builds a Strong Leadership Pipeline

In many organizations, there's a noticeable breakdown in the leadership pipeline. We found that the qualities that propel individuals into frontline management and mid-level roles often clash with what's required to advance into senior leadership. This misalignment creates a significant bottleneck contributing to the global shortage of executive talent.

Promoting employees based mainly on their visible leadership presence is a short-sighted approach. It results in a constricted pool of future talent, significantly limiting the number of mid-level leaders who have the potential to advance into executive roles. This narrow focus on immediately obvious qualities that signify leadership potential overlooks other critical and complex qualities necessary for senior leadership.

However, our research indicates that the pool of senior talent could be much larger if organizations identified executive potential much earlier in people's careers. By promoting individuals based on their curiosity and resilience, rather than just their visible leadership presence, organizations can cultivate a more robust leadership pipeline.

We found that about 26% of non-managers exhibit potential for executive roles. Interestingly, these individuals are not only likely to emerge as top performers once they reach senior leadership but they are also more likely to excel in frontline and mid-level management. By recognizing these executive qualities early on, organizations can ensure a steady flow of capable leaders ready to take on top responsibilities.

While many individuals find their niche in frontline and mid-level management roles, there exists a subset of people with the qualities needed to rise to the highest levels of leadership. These individuals with executive potential are invaluable assets to any company, as they tend to outperform their peers at every leadership level and continue advancing until they reach executive positions.

*Those with executive potential are:*



# Two Derailers Holding Leaders Back from Top Roles



# Derailer #1: Tactical Tunnel Vision

Our research shows that leaders often rise through the ranks due to their tactical problem-solving skills, strong organizational abilities, and attention to detail. However, the same qualities that propel them forward can become a derailer, limiting their ability to transition into executive roles.

## Tactical Tunnel Vision Can Hold Leaders Back from the Top

### Tactical Focus Over Strategic Thinking

Leaders who excel at managing day-to-day operations may struggle to shift their focus to broader strategic thinking. Their strong ability to solve immediate problems can make it difficult for them to develop a long-term vision. Additionally, their reliance on familiar, tried-and-true methods may limit their ability to anticipate future challenges and innovate proactively.

### Rigidity and Resistance to Change

A highly organized and structured approach can lead to rigidity and reluctance to embrace new ideas. Leaders who prefer predictability may struggle to adapt to unexpected changes, limiting their ability to drive innovation and respond to shifting business landscapes. This resistance can stifle creativity within their teams and result in missed opportunities for growth and improvement. Moreover, their perfectionist tendencies can slow decision-making, create inefficiencies, and increase stress among team members.

### Micromanagement and Control Issues

High standards and attention to detail, while valuable, can lead to micromanagement tendencies. Leaders who struggle to let go of control may create bottlenecks, reduce team autonomy, and dampen morale. This approach can prevent teams from operating efficiently at a higher level and lead to burnout. Learning to balance excellence with efficiency and trusting their teams is essential to success in senior leadership roles.

## Recommendations for Leadership Development

To prepare leaders for executive roles, organizations should focus on:

- ▶ **Developing Strategic Thinking:** Organizations can implement executive mentoring programs where senior leaders share insights on long-term visioning and decision-making. Encouraging participation in cross-functional projects exposes these leaders to different business areas and broader strategic concerns, helping them understand the bigger picture. Providing training in strategic planning, scenario analysis, and decision-making under uncertainty equips leaders with the skills needed to anticipate future challenges, innovate proactively, and align with the company's long-term goals.
- ▶ **Encouraging Adaptability and Innovation:** Foster a culture where experimentation is encouraged, and failure is seen as a learning opportunity. Offering rotational assignments in different departments or regions can broaden perspectives and develop adaptability. Conducting workshops on design thinking and innovation methodologies can enhance creative problem-solving skills.
- ▶ **Promoting Effective Delegation and Trust:** Train leaders on coaching and empowerment techniques to help them transition from task execution to team development. Implementing feedback loops where leaders receive insights on their delegation effectiveness from their teams can also be beneficial. Encouraging leaders to set clear goals and accountability structures allows team members to take ownership of their work.
- ▶ **Balancing Excellence with Efficiency:** Provide decision-making frameworks that help leaders prioritize tasks and avoid perfectionism. Offering stress and time management training can help leaders focus on high-impact activities. Additionally, encouraging leaders to adopt agile methodologies can improve efficiency and adaptability.
- ▶ **Expanding Business Acumen:** Develop business simulation programs that allow leaders to practice decision-making in a risk-free environment. Providing exposure to financial metrics and business performance indicators can improve their ability to make data-driven decisions. Encouraging networking with senior executives can help leaders gain insights into the broader business landscape.

By prioritizing these areas in leadership development initiatives, organizations can better equip leaders to transition into executive roles successfully.

# Derailer #2: Impatient Overdrive

Our research shows that many leaders exhibit ambition through a strong presence and a drive to achieve results, which are key markers of leadership potential and contribute to their ability to rise through the ranks. However, this drive can oftentimes stem from impatience and frustration. To advance to senior leadership, resilience is crucial to handle the increased challenges and stress levels.

## Impatient Overdrive Can Hold Leaders Back from the Top

### Ambition and Drive

While ambition and a strong drive to achieve results propel leaders into mid-level positions, these qualities can become derailers if they stem from impatience and frustration. Such behavior can hinder resilience, which is crucial for handling the increased challenges and stress levels of senior leadership. To advance, many leaders must develop high levels of resilience to maintain their effectiveness under pressure.

### Dominance and Communication

Although leaders with a confident and influential personality are often seen as having leadership potential, these qualities can sometimes come across as dominant or intimidating, especially among their peers and direct reports. Strong personality can stifle open communication and discourage others from sharing their ideas, potentially leading to resistance or conflict within the team. To overcome this derailer, many leaders need to balance their assertiveness with active listening, ensuring they consider the emotional and relational aspects of leadership, which are vital for maintaining strong organizational culture and team morale.

### Impulsiveness and Emotional Control

Tough Impulsive actions and quick decision-making that can lead to poorly thought-out strategies, mistakes, and missed opportunities, eroding trust and confidence among team members and stakeholders. To advance to senior roles, many leaders must learn to pause and thoroughly analyze information before making decisions, and effectively manage their emotions to foster stability and trust with their direct reports and stakeholders.

## Recommendations for Leadership Development

Organizations can play a crucial role in helping leaders overcome potential derailers by implementing targeted leadership development programs. Here are some recommendations:

- **Developing Resilience and Emotional Control:** Organizations can offer training programs focused on building resilience and emotional intelligence. These programs can include workshops on stress management, mindfulness, and emotional regulation techniques. Providing access to executive coaching and mentoring can also help leaders develop coping strategies for high-pressure situations.
- **Enhancing Communication and Collaboration Skills:** To address issues related to dominance and communication, organizations can provide training on active listening, empathy, and collaborative leadership. Programs that include insight-building assessments and peer coaching can help leaders understand how their behavior impacts others and develop more inclusive communication styles.
- **Improving Decision-Making and Strategic Thinking:** Organizations can help leaders mitigate impulsiveness by offering training in strategic thinking and decision-making. Workshops that focus on data analysis, critical thinking, and scenario planning can equip leaders with the tools to make more informed decisions. Additionally, incorporating simulations and case studies into training programs can provide practical experience in making thoughtful, deliberate choices.
- **Fostering a Culture of Feedback:** Organizations can create a culture that encourages continuous feedback and improvement. Implementing regular feedback sessions and performance reviews can help leaders identify areas for growth and development. Providing tools and platforms for anonymous feedback can ensure that team members feel safe to share their thoughts and suggestions. Additionally, promoting a growth mindset through workshops and training can help leaders view feedback as an opportunity for learning and development.

By investing in these targeted leadership development programs, organizations can support mid-level leaders in overcoming potential derailers and preparing them for the demands of senior leadership roles.



# How to Assess Leadership Potential at Scale

# Assessment Solutions to Identify Leadership Potential

## In Just 30 Minutes, You Can Uncover Their Leadership Potential

Pinsight Work Styles is a validated tool to measure personality, offering insights into working styles, potential strengths, challenges, and future career growth. It reveals natural tendencies in workplace behavior, helping you anticipate daily actions of your employees and their reactions during stressful times. This understanding can enhance your decisions in hiring, promotions, succession planning, and identifying high-potential talent. Gain a comprehensive view of how personality influences work style and make more informed talent management decisions.

This tool is highly scalable and cost-efficient, making it easy to implement across various organizational levels. Its design ensures that it can be seamlessly integrated into existing talent management and leadership development processes, providing valuable insights without significant investment.

## Augment Talent Reviews

Organizations should apply leadership-level match assessments to enhance their talent review processes. Many organizations attempt to include a "Potential for X" approach in talent review discussions; however, such ratings often lack clear criteria and focus more on next-level skills rather than qualities related to long-term advancement potential. Psychometric assessments like Pinsight Work Styles provide a more nuanced understanding by differentiating current, in-role performance from future executive potential, recognizing that top performers are not necessarily the only individuals with high potential for leadership roles.

By integrating these objective measures, they can build deeper talent pools and craft more strategic succession plans, ensuring they are well-prepared for future leadership needs, maintaining continuity and stability in leadership roles while fostering a more dynamic and responsive leadership pipeline.



## Align Talent with Appropriate Leadership Paths

Our research has illuminated distinct personality qualities of leaders who successfully navigate progression into different levels of leadership. Understanding these qualities allows us to evaluate an individual's fit for distinct leadership level, providing refined, level-specific indicators of leadership potential. This insight is crucial as it highlights that career advancement is not necessarily linear, impacting how we approach career planning.

Identifying high-potential talent early is a game-changer for both organizations and individuals. With evidence-driven insights into the leaders' natural tendencies, we can flag talent to appropriate leadership level earlier in their careers. This proactive approach enables organizations to engage in more strategic long-term succession and workforce planning. By aligning talent with the right leadership paths, organizations can ensure a steady pipeline of capable leaders ready to meet future challenges.

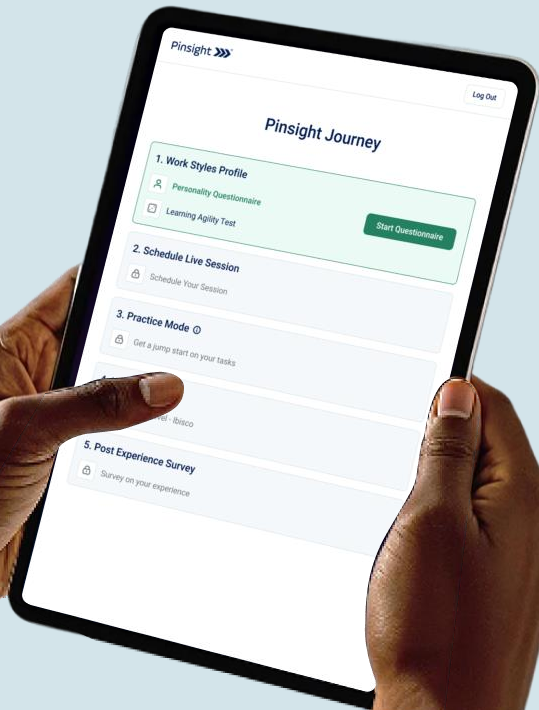
The application of our research extends beyond organizational benefits, allowing aspiring leaders to craft more specific and effective development plans. By understanding their natural work style and ideal level of leadership, individuals can tailor their growth strategies to align with their career aspirations. Crafting leadership journeys based on natural qualities offers a nuanced and strategic approach to career planning. Recognizing that advancement is not a one-size-fits-all journey enables both organizations and individuals to make more informed decisions about leadership development, fostering a dynamic and responsive leadership pipeline that ensures the right people are in the right roles at the right time.

## Work Styles Profile

Discover the power of Pinsight Work Styles, a state-of-the-art, psychometric tool designed to identify leadership potential. By measuring personality traits, it offers deep insights into each individual's working style and their suitability for various leadership levels. Plus, it provides tailored development recommendations to help them grow.

Elevate your talent management strategy with Pinsight Work Styles, identify leadership potential early, and build a robust leadership pipeline.

[Learn More](#)



*Level of  
Leadership*



**Methodology**





# Sample Demographics (n = 13,098) and Validity

	M	SD
Average age	41.09	8.49
Average years work exp.	18.35	8.58

Gender	Valid Percent
Female	32.3%
Male	67.7%

Race / Ethnicity	Valid Percent
Asian	35.1%
Black	2.3%
Latino	20.0%
White	39.2%

We collected data from over 13,000 leaders globally. Our sample consisted of mainly leaders in mid-level (40.1%), frontline (25.0%), and senior (23.3%) positions. On average, they were 41 years old with 18 years of work experience, and college educated. About 2/3 were men and 1/3 were women. Most identified with White (39.2%), Asian (35.1%), or Latino (20.0%) race/ethnicity. We had a good representation especially from finance and insurance (35.9%), manufacturing (18.7%), retail (7.9%), professional services (7.8%), and healthcare (7.8%).

Location	Valid Percent
Africa	0.1%
Asia	35.1%
Europe	13.3%
Latin America	13.8%
Middle East	3.1%
North America	37.3%

Education	Valid Percent
High School	2.2%
Undergraduate	56.7%
Postgraduate	41.1%

Level	Valid Percent
Non-manager	11.5%
Frontline manager	25.0%
Mid-level manager	40.1%
Senior manager	23.3%

Industry	Valid Percent
Finance and Insurance	35.9%
Manufacturing	18.7%
Retail	7.9%
Professional Services	7.8%
Healthcare	7.8%
Transportation	3.7%
Education	2.9%
Utilities	2.9%

Validity Coefficients	Job Performance
Frontline Management	.49
Mid-level Leadership	.32
Senior Leadership	.31

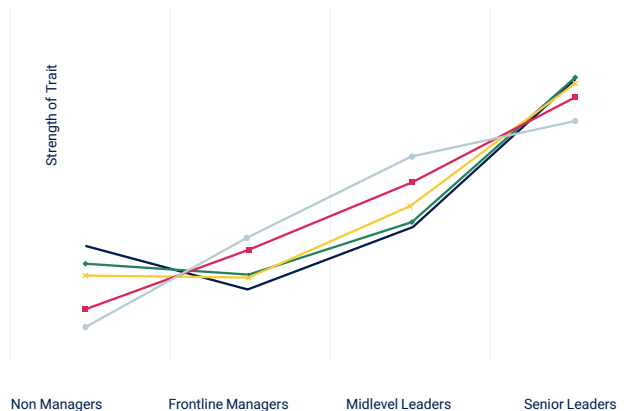
The validity coefficients reported above were corrected for unreliability of the criterion using the following estimates:  $\alpha = .52$  for job performance. At frontline management, the observed correlation of Executive Potential with job performance was  $r(517) = .35, p < .01$ . At mid-level leadership, the observed correlation of Executive Potential with job performance was  $r(906) = .23, p < .01$ . At senior leadership, the observed correlation of Executive Potential with job performance was  $r(539) = .22, p < .01$ .

# Personality Differences by Level of Leadership

		ANOVA				
		SS	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Organized	Between	2654.36	3	33.25	<.01	.01
	Within	275972.99	10372			
Outgoing	Between	6262.61	3	71.20	<.01	.02
	Within	304090.51	10372			
Ambitious	Between	12067.30	3	165.44	<.01	.05
	Within	252182.71	10372			
Curious	Between	5540.80	3	87.16	<.01	.03
	Within	219783.98	10372			
Caring	Between	3602.61	3	51.82	<.01	.02
	Within	240360.27	10372			
Resilient	Between	10740.65	3	94.16	<.01	.03
	Within	394389.31	10372			
Avid Learner	Between	256.79	3	32.97	<.01	.01
	Within	268835.16	10365			

The ANOVA results show that there are statistically significant differences between groups for all the traits measured, suggesting that there are systematic differences in personality traits between employees occupying different levels of leadership – from non-managers, to frontline managers, mid-level, and senior leaders. The effect sizes range from small to moderate, with Ambitious, Curious, and Resilient having the largest effect size, indicating more pronounced group differences for those traits.

■ Ambitious 
 ■ Outgoing 
 ■ Organized 
 ■ Curious 
 ■ Resilient, Caring & Avid Learner



Post-hoc tests revealed a unique pattern for most personality traits across the different levels of leadership. Here we focus on the ones with the largest effect size: Ambition was the only trait linearly increasing across all levels of leadership. Levels of curiosity dropped from non-managers to frontline managers but then increased steeply up to senior leadership. Resilience stayed largely constant up to the mid-level but then also increased steeply up to senior leadership.

# About the Authors

**Dr. Martin Lanik is the Founder and CEO of Pinsight.** Martin has dedicated his career to creating solutions that help business leaders place the most capable people in leadership positions, where they can have the greatest positive impact on employees' well-being, business performance, our communities, and the society at large. With a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Martin leads research and innovation for Pinsight. By combining his scientific mind with straightforward practicality and a relentless bias for action, his teams build the best talent solutions for the leaders of today and tomorrow.

## Martin Lanik, PhD

CEO and Founder



**Amy Huber is the Director of Client Success.** She enables talent executives for success by consulting on uses of assessments for selection, development, and succession planning, and is the lead on implementation for Pinsight's solutions. She is known for her ability to deeply understand customer needs and help clients leverage analytics to build effective talent strategies aligned with business goals. Amy holds a Master of Science in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Bachelor of Science in Psychology and frequently presents at The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) annual conferences.

## Amy Huber, MS

Director of Client Success



# About Pinsight

**We are passionate about crafting leadership stories backed by data.**

As a team of Industrial/Organizational Psychologists and Management Consultants, Pinsight collectively brings over 500 years of expertise in leadership assessment and development.

Our solutions are rooted in rigorous scientific methods, thus providing accurate and trustworthy data to inform selection, promotion, succession, and development decisions.

Talent leaders from leading companies and industry experts trust Pinsight's award-winning leadership assessments and development solutions. Our work has been featured in Forbes, Fast Company, and Chief Executive and other media outlets.



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## 16 years

of expertise delivering leadership assessments virtually.

## 500

leaders are assessed monthly in 40 countries and 12 languages.

## 92%

of clients are satisfied with our expert account support.

## 100%

enterprise ready to meet information security requirements.

Let's Design a Solution Perfectly  
Tailored to Your Organization's Needs

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