



2022  
**CEO  
STUDY**



HOW HUMAN-CENTERED  
**CEOS FUEL PERFORMANCE**



**JEANNIE DIEFENDERFER**

CEO, Higher Ambition  
Leadership Alliance

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

It's a volatile time. Yet the CEOs we spoke with had a different energy and perspective on the challenges we all face. Rather than being stalled by uncertainty and paralyzed by the way things have always been done, these leaders are adapting and moving ahead on the strong foundations they've built over time.

Keep the long-term in mind. Consider the impacts our actions have on all our stakeholders. Operate with high trust. Take care of your people. Trust your gut. For Higher Ambition CEOs, this isn't just how they operate, it's who they are.

With our 2022 CEO Study, we set out to see how this kind of CEO leadership has evolved since our founders published *Higher Ambition Leadership: How Great Leaders Create Economic AND Social Value* a decade ago.

While the context we are operating in has changed in many ways, the fundamentals of Higher Ambition Leadership remain. The CEOs we spoke with humbly shared stories of everyday practices and make or break decisions. They also talked about how this kind of leadership translated to incredible commitment and resilience through the trauma and uncertainty of the past two years.

It's more effective and meaningful to do this work when you can learn from and lean on other leaders who get it. If you feel a flash of recognition as you read this report, we invite you to reach out and connect with our community.

HIGHER AMBITION LEADERSHIP IS THE  
INTENTIONAL, EVERYDAY PRACTICE  
THAT **HELPS LEADERS REALIZE THE  
POTENTIAL OF PEOPLE, PURPOSE,  
AND PERFORMANCE.**

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THIS HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH  
LEADS TO HIGH-TRUST STAKEHOLDER  
RELATIONSHIPS, HEALTHY CULTURES,  
AND **ORGANIZATIONS THAT OUTPERFORM  
PEERS AND MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT  
ON THE WORLD.**

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# MORE THAN TALK A DEEP DIVE ON THE HOW

In 2021 and 2022, our team interviewed 50 CEOs from industry giants to nimble market disruptors. Through this qualitative study, we identified distinctive and intentional ways these Higher Ambition CEOs lead now. Building trust, honoring people, and being authentic were common themes, together with an uncompromising commitment

to performance. These CEOs cultivate intentional, personal leadership practices while building Higher Ambition practices and systems into the fabric of their organizations. They also make a concerted effort to step back and unlock distributed leadership so their organizations thrive for the long-term.

## 3 DISTINCTIVE WAYS HUMAN-CENTERED CEOS FUEL PERFORMANCE

### 1 BUILD HIGH-TRUST RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO POWER INNOVATION AND AGILITY

Find shared purpose to move beyond bi-lateral partnerships. Build trust with diverse stakeholder groups through genuine human connection.

### 2 RECOGNIZE THAT CULTURE IS THE HIGH STAKES VALUE DRIVER...OR DESTROYER... AND INVEST ACCORDINGLY

Embed values into leadership development and talent management systems. Create opportunities and structures that encourage the honest dialogue that drives action on issues and true engagement.

### 3 SHOW UP AUTHENTIC, OPEN, AND VULNERABLE TO ENGAGE AND INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

Show your true self and show you care. Personally draw out different perspectives.



**BARBARA HUMPTON**  
President & CEO, Siemens USA  
**SIEMENS**

“ Companies in our orbit are very much 360-degree relationships, and we have very complex relationships. It isn't a matter of a win-lose. There is only win-win, or lose-lose.



**COREY THOMAS**  
Chairman & CEO, Rapid7  
**RAPID7**

“ You have to build an engine that's constantly exploring. And when you have an organization that is exploratory, there is not a lot of stability to hold on to other than your values.



**PATRICK DECKER**  
President & CEO, Xylem  
**xylem**

“ Most leaders have a really hard time with messiness and not being seen as in control. That mindset doesn't work in this environment.



**KAREN S. LYNCH**  
President & CEO, CVS Health  
**CVSHealth**

“ I view 'coach' as one of my fundamental roles to help people elevate their game.

# LIST OF PARTICIPATING EXECUTIVES

## **CLAY ADAMS**

President & CEO, Mascoma Bank

## **SARA ARMBRUSTER**

President & CEO, Steelcase Inc.

## **BRUCE BALLENGEE**

Founder & CEO, Pariveda Solutions

## **RANJEET BANERJEE**

CEO, Cold Chain Technologies

## **STANLEY BERGMAN**

Chairman & CEO, Henry Schein, Inc.

## **JOEY BERGSTEIN**

CEO, Sabra Dipping Company

## **ADAM BERMAN**

President & CEO, Legacy Lifecare

## **MARK CLOUSE**

President & CEO, Campbell Soup Company

## **RALPH CARLTON**

Co-CEO, King Arthur Baking Company

## **KAREN COLBERG**

Co-CEO, King Arthur Baking Company

## **STEVEN COLLIS**

Chairman, President, & CEO, AmerisourceBergen

## **PATRICK DECKER**

President & CEO, Xylem

## **DAVID A. DEXTER**

President & CEO, Sonora Quest Laboratories

## **JOSEPH DZIEDZIC**

President & CEO, Integer Holdings Corporation

## **ERIC EVANS**

Director, MIT Lincoln Laboratory

## **MATTHEW FLANNERY**

President & CEO, United Rentals

## **CHRISTOPHER FURMAN**

President & CEO, Ventura Foods

## **BRIAN GARISH**

President, Banfield Pet Hospital

## **TOM GENTILE**

President & CEO, Spirit AeroSystems

## **ALEX GORSKY**

Executive Chairman & Former CEO, Johnson & Johnson

## **DORON GROSMAN**

Former President & CEO, GCT Global Container Terminals Inc.

## **ROBERT GROSSMAN**

Dean & CEO, NYU Langone Health

## **JOHN HEISER**

Former CEO, LabVantage Solutions, Inc.

## **FRAN HOROWITZ**

CEO, Abercrombie & Fitch Co.

## **BARBARA HUMPTON**

President & CEO, Siemens USA

## **DONNA ISGETT**

President & CEO, McLeod Health

## **FAROOQ KATHWARI**

Chairman, President, & CEO, Ethan Allen, Inc.

## **LIZANNE KINDLER**

Executive Chair & CEO, Talbots

## **KAREN S. LYNCH**

President & CEO, CVS Health

## **JUDY MARKS**

Chair & CEO, Otis Elevator Co.

## **DOUG MCMILLON**

President & CEO, Walmart Inc.

## **MARK NEWMAN**

President & CEO, Chemours

## **GINA PERINI**

Chair of Board of Directors & CEO, Somos, Inc., and Chair of Board of Directors, XConnect

## **TOM POLEN**

Chairman, CEO, & President, BD

## **MICHELLE POOLE**

President, Crocs

## **DAVE POWERS**

President & CEO, Deckers Brands

## **BOB RIVERS**

Chair & CEO, Eastern Bank

## **SIMON ROBERTS**

CEO, Sainsbury's

## **STEVEN RUSCKOWSKI**

Chairman, CEO, & President, Quest Diagnostics

## **PIETRO SATRIANO**

Former CEO, US Foods

## **LOUIS SHAPIRO**

President & CEO, HSS | Hospital for Special Surgery

## **HOLLY SHEFFIELD**

President, CooperSurgical

## **CLAIRE SPOFFORD**

CEO & President, JJill

## **COREY THOMAS**

Chair & CEO, Rapid7

## **STEPHEN THORNE**

Founder & CEO, Pacific Dental Services

## **CYNTHIA WARNER**

Former President and CEO, Renewable Energy Group

## **WENDY YANG**

Former Group President, HOKA and Teva brands

## **TRACEY ZHEN**

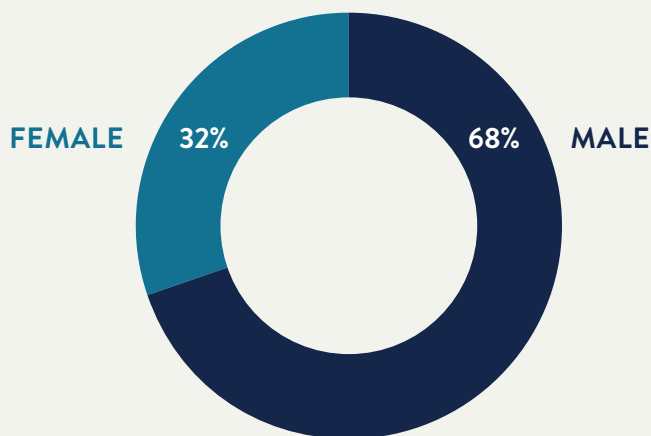
President, Zipcar | Independent Board Director

# ABOUT THE STUDY

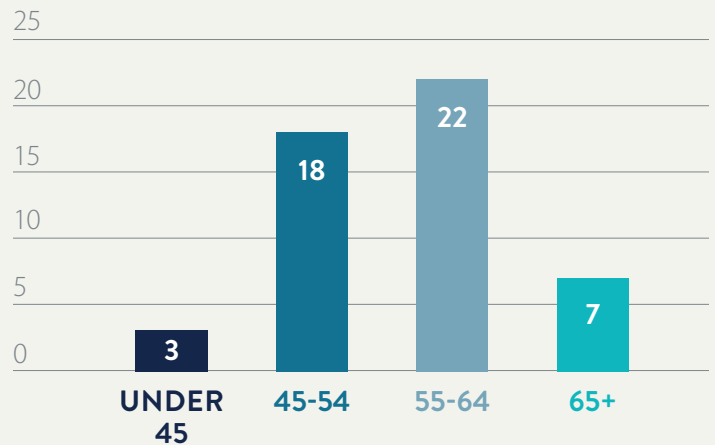
## 50 INTERVIEWS WITH HIGHER AMBITION CEOs AND PRESIDENTS

The goal of this study was to understand the values, perspectives, and practices of Higher Ambition leaders today – 10 years after the publication of our early research on purpose-centered leadership, *Higher Ambition: How Great Leaders Create Economic AND Social Value*. We conducted interviews with 50 CEOs and company presidents that we identified as having the aspiration of being Higher Ambition leaders. CEOs varied in gender, age, tenure, and organization size.

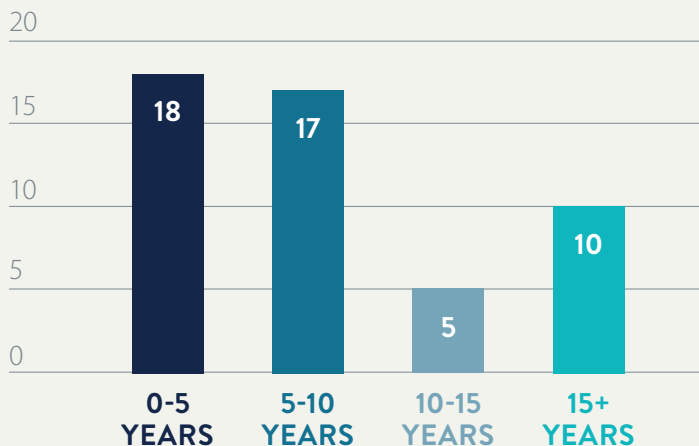
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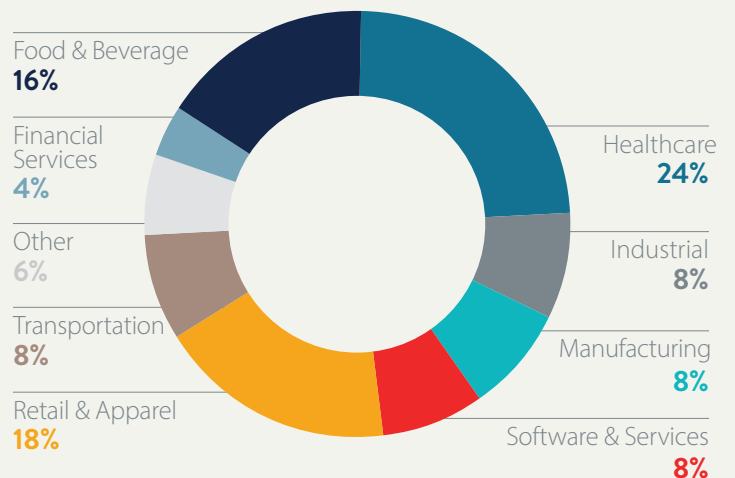
**AGE**



**TIME IN ROLE**



**INDUSTRY**



# 3 DISTINCTIVE WAYS

HIGHER AMBITION CEOs  
FUEL PERFORMANCE





# NOW MORE THAN EVER THE WORLD IS LOOKING TO BUSINESS FOR **MEANINGFUL AND INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The early interviews for this report occurred in the height of COVID. As the leaders we spoke with considered how they survived and began to thrive through the pandemic chaos, the focus was clear: take care of people and ensure business continuity. Not that it was easy, but clarity of purpose led to incredible stories of resilience and adaptation.

Today the chaos continues, and the path forward is less clear. Uncertainty and tremendous stresses on business systems are not going away. Experts cite several drivers of future uncertainty – climate change, geopolitical shifts, AI and automation, cyber security risks, energy transitions, and future pandemics – all of which are only expected to increase supply chain issues, labor shortages, and market volatility.

These challenges are bigger than any one organization can solve on its own. It's going to take more than platitudes of purpose and ESG-heavy marketing campaigns. It will require deep, meaningful, and consistent actions over time.

The executives we interviewed have embedded intentional, real-world practices across their organizations that have helped them thrive and last through these tumultuous times. Here we detail three distinctive human-centered ways they lead that translate to strong performance.

# 1

## BUILD HIGH-TRUST RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO POWER INNOVATION AND AGILITY

The CEOs we spoke with explained the critical role their stakeholder relationships play in their organizations' ability to adapt and even thrive through unprecedented times. They were clear-eyed about the fact that they and their organizations are operating in an ecosystem – no one player can control all outcomes, and every organization is dependent on others in complex ways.

[Research shows that](#) more deeply understanding and cultivating cooperative relationships and collaborative processes with your stakeholders can yield greater profitability and market value, increased learning and innovation, and industry practices that are more equitable and also good for society.

Far from stressing industry competition and power dynamics, these executives described how their organizations were able to find shared purpose to build exceptional levels of trust with stakeholders as the foundation for innovation, resilience, and strategic agility.

“There’s this fine line between competitors and collaborators. And it’s just not human nature to collaborate with people that look like your competitor. But there’s a reason why at Xylem we say, ‘Let’s solve water.’ We’re not going to solve the world’s biggest water challenges on our own.

**PATRICK DECKER**  
President & CEO, Xylem

**xylem**

### MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CAPITALISM AS STRATEGY

Today’s organizations serve a broad range of groups – customers, employees, regulators, communities, partners, and industry competitors, along with shareholders. Rather than providing value to one group at the expense of another, Higher Ambition executives seek an equitable balance. They act with shared purpose in mind, rather than an “us and them” mentality.



## HOW TO BUILD EXCEPTIONAL STAKEHOLDER TRUST FOR STRATEGIC AGILITY

### 1. EXPAND YOUR LENS.

#### FIND SHARED PURPOSE TO MOVE BEYOND BI-LATERAL PARTNERSHIPS.

Business is no longer a zero-sum game. Organizations are partnering in new, more complex ways and adapting their products, processes, and expectations. Several CEOs reflected on the importance of expanding the lens to see the broader landscape and considering their organization's role in a wider ecosystem of players. They shared examples of how this broader view has unlocked innovation to expand value for the whole system.

At the peak of the pandemic, Quest Diagnostics was processing more than 100,000 Covid-19 tests daily, making the company's data extremely valuable for tracking the virus and informing broader healthcare decisions. Leaders across Quest formed new and deeper partnerships with the CDC, healthcare providers, some of the nation's largest retailers, insurance companies, and other governmental agencies centered around the shared purpose of public health.

"Governors across the country were calling my cell phone asking for additional COVID-19 testing capacity, and I was on the phone constantly with CEOs from other companies," said Steve Rusckowski, Chairman, CEO, and President of Quest Diagnostics. "It was all hands on deck, literally around the clock and weekends with 50,000 colleagues, working together to find solutions."

When COVID-19 first hit the U.S., governing boards called for dental practices to close, deeming them, in essence, "non-essential." This didn't sit right with Stephen Thorne, CEO of Pacific Dental Services (PDS), who had long championed the critical connection between oral and overall health. The PDS team and their supported Owner Dentists made the tough call to keep PDS practices open for emergency cases.

Many external stakeholders were against this move. Through education campaigns about patient safety, personal outreach to state and local agencies, and close partnerships with overloaded emergency rooms, PDS both served patients and influenced industry guidance set by policymakers across the country. Thousands of patients were seen, and precious emergency room capacity was preserved with no reported cases of any COVID transmissions between patients and team members.

Corey Thomas of Rapid7 told us how meaningful partnerships with diverse-but-aligned stakeholders has driven innovation required for their industry's future success. "We just started a ransomware alliance in partnership with people that we've been doing business with for some time," Thomas said. "We recognized ransomware was most hurting small businesses and nonprofits, and we co-founded this alliance to tackle the problem together."

“Businesses can have a positive impact by joining together to tackle problems and catalyze change in different industries.

#### REBECCA HENDERSON

Harvard University Professor and Author of *Reimagining Capitalism In a World On Fire*

Similarly, Ranjeet Banerjee, CEO of Cold Chain Technologies, described how pharmaceutical customers needed the ability to constantly track and monitor temperature-sensitive vaccines, biologics, and other drugs as they are transported. Cold Chain Technologies had expertise in engineering, materials sciences, and design, but lacked the digital capability for continuous tracking. Rather than build it completely in-house from scratch, they partnered with other companies with expertise to co-create and rapidly develop a new tracking platform that can continuously access the location and condition of products, ensuring safety of vaccines and medicines.

## 2. GO DEEPER. BUILD TRUST WITH DIVERSE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS THROUGH GENUINE HUMAN CONNECTION.

Most of the CEOs noted how critical trust is between stakeholders for unlocking opportunities and driving real change, and how shared purpose and genuine human connection build that trust. Taking time to understand others' motivations and engaging with humility, honesty, and transparency around difficult issues opens the door to real progress.

Gina Perini, Chair and CEO of Somos, Inc., talked about building stakeholder trust in a highly competitive industry. "Our mission is about empowering trusted connections between consumers, companies, and communities. I try to send the message that this isn't just about numbers. At a time when building trust is paramount, it's fundamental that we understand the challenges that our customers and the industry are facing. We encourage our team to show up with open minds and curiosity so that we can better innovate and deliver more creative, modern solutions. The whole way in which you work – it's so different when you put trust at the forefront."

Seeking to humanize stakeholders – recognizing them as human beings with specific interests and values – was a common theme.

Otis Elevator Company Chair and CEO Judy Marks shared how the team responded when their hospitality industry clients came to them during COVID shutdowns, asking for concessions and discounts. "We were honorable," Marks said. "When you understand your customers' hardships and walk with them, you show them you are there. This is how you build long-term relationships. You can't be around as many years as we have without knowing this."

Strong, trust-based stakeholder relationships cannot be developed overnight. Again and again, CEOs told us that the swift actions they were able to take during the pandemic came from a foundation built over years and even decades.

Lizanne Kindler, Executive Chair and CEO of Talbots, shared this, "My personal belief is that Talbots is in existence today because of the years and years of being relentlessly focused on how we were building relationships and trust. When things started to open up again during the pandemic, many customers told us the first place they came to shop was Talbots, because they wanted to make sure that their favorite associate was still there and doing okay."

Dr. Robert Grossman, Dean and CEO of NYU Langone Health, shared how the organization drew on long-built, trusted relationships through the pandemic to tackle challenges and make tough decisions. "Trust was fundamental. Because our people and our partners had worked together, they trusted each other, and they weren't afraid to ask hard questions."

## EVERYDAY HIGHER AMBITION LEADERSHIP PRACTICES



Challenge your team to expand their definition of who is a stakeholder



Look for shared purpose and vision in every conversation with industry partners and peers



Celebrate failures to encourage more risk taking

# 2

## RECOGNIZE THAT CULTURE IS THE HIGH STAKES VALUE DRIVER...OR DESTROYER... AND INVEST ACCORDINGLY

CEOs are clear about the role of culture in performance – for good and bad. A [Gallup Employee Engagement Survey](#) released in April 2022 found that only 32% of U.S. employees are engaged. A strong culture doesn't only keep employees from leaving, it fuels employee commitment that translates to greater adaptability, resilience, and innovation.

An unhealthy culture is the most likely factor in employees deciding to leave a company. According to research by Donald Sull, Charles Sull, and Ben Zweig into causes for The Great Resignation, a toxic corporate culture is 10.4 times more powerful than compensation in predicting a company's attrition rate compared with its industry.

The CEOs we spoke with recognize the role they play in creating a positive culture. Joe Dziedzic, President and CEO of Integer Holdings, noted, "The CEO sets the pace, the CEO creates the tone, the CEO defines the culture, and then the CEO holds everyone else accountable to living that way."

In our conversations, CEOs emphasized practices that help create positive, supportive environments where people operate with trust, respect, and genuine curiosity.

“ Culture doesn't eat strategy for breakfast. Culture IS strategy. If you create culture correctly, your organization can achieve a level of performance that's otherwise not attainable.

**LOUIS SHAPIRO**

President & CEO, HSS | Hospital for Special Surgery



# A toxic corporate culture is 10 times more important than compensation in predicting turnover.

Toxic Culture Is Driving the Great Resignation, *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 2022

## HOW TO **BUILD STRONG CULTURES** THAT ATTRACT, KEEP, AND INSPIRE PEOPLE

### 1. **CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY.** EMBED VALUES INTO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.



Clay Adams, President and CEO of Mascoma Bank, shared a view on what it takes to ensure that your culture actually represents what you are seeking to build. “A Board member asked a few years ago, ‘Can you measure whether you are living up to the values?’ We have wired this into customer surveys, employee surveys, and performance appraisals. We can now measure how we are doing year over year.”

CEOs talked about the importance of finding, developing, and retaining employees that will build and sustain culture over time. Extending Higher Ambition Leadership

capabilities and practices beyond a single leader requires sustained investment to become embedded in the culture and systems of the organization.

Joe Dzedzic explained his view of the link between recruiting and culture this way: “I was defining the culture I wanted, and we attracted the people that would personify that culture. I think the single most impactful thing I’ve done to change the culture at Integer is finding people who had that shared value system and view of what leadership looks like.”

As Brian Garish, President of Banfield Pet Hospital, put it, “No matter your role in the organization, how are you bringing our values to life and visibly casting the shadow for others to follow?”

Barbara Humpton, President and CEO of Siemens USA, explained, “We’re working to create a culture that is antifragile – the opposite of fragile – inspired by Nicholas Taleb’s book of the same name. Fragile things break when they’re disrupted.” Siemens has made this objective real by intentionally seeking to hire people with a sense of optimism and resilience. “We naturally look for people who are forward-thinking, forward-leaning, and that in and of itself becomes our culture,” Humpton continued.

President of CooperSurgical Holly Sheffield described how the organization works to ensure leaders are not fostering unconscious bias. “We established measurement ‘guardrails’ in our hiring and promotion systems. Having greater visibility and transparency helps ensure equity and inclusion.

It’s not that we didn’t have those conversations before. It was just not baked into our systems.”

The CEOs we spoke with said the creation of a positive culture has to go beyond the actions of the CEOs themselves and become embedded into the mindsets, behaviors, and practices of the wider organization. They stressed the importance of intentional leadership to connect the work of each person in the organization to the overall purpose.

President and CEO of Steelcase Sara Armbruster shared how her organization made leadership expectations clear to everyone. Along with the launch of a new leadership program, the company shared new leadership expectations with the whole organization. “We want individual contributors to know what they should expect from their leader. For example, it’s a leader’s job to create clarity about a direction or a decision or a plan. Not only do leaders know that, but employees know that, too.”



## 2. LISTEN DEEPLY. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND STRUCTURES THAT ENCOURAGE THE HONEST DIALOGUE THAT DRIVES ACTION ON ISSUES AND TRUE ENGAGEMENT.

CEOs recognize that they and their leadership teams cannot drive the culture of the organization on their own, and they need a reality-based view of what the organization is experiencing. They seek broad involvement – especially of those closest to customers – to shape and sustain culture. Many use systemic approaches to give voice to issues and opportunities.

Tom Polen, Chairman, CEO, and President of BD described his organization’s work to build the capabilities and culture to become best-in-class in quality. His team created forums for reflecting on progress and challenges. “Quality is the foundation of patient and customer trust. Our products touch many lives – friends, family, even our own – and we all have a role to play in ensuring our products are safe, reliable, and effective. No one will ever be challenged for speaking up when it comes to potential quality matters because putting quality first is one of our greatest responsibilities.”

Polen continued to say, “As a leadership team, we hold ourselves and our teams accountable for ensuring quality is at the core of everything we do. If we aren’t asking questions and listening, we aren’t learning. As a result, we’re building a culture where our associates feel comfortable challenging the status quo and speaking up if they see a more efficient process, an innovative approach, or a potential problem that needs to be addressed.”

“Leaders often feel like they need to come across as decisive, but if they always act strong and know-it-all, they won’t get anywhere. CEOs should make themselves vulnerable by asking employees on the front lines for the truth about what is and is not working, even if the problems involve the leadership. When they do this with humility, they instantly create trust.”

### MICHAEL BEER

Professor Emeritus, Harvard Business School and author of *Fit to Compete*

## EVERYDAY HIGHER AMBITION LEADERSHIP PRACTICES



Tell stories that connect everyday actions to purpose and performance



Reflect on your potential biases – conscious and unconscious



Get really good at asking questions instead of providing answers



Intentionally wait to weigh in on a question or issue until others share views



Push down explicit ownership for decisions and focus on removing barriers for leaders



As Mark Newman, President and CEO of Chemours, said, "Communication and dialogue are richer when we trust each other. We really want to get to the root of the matter. It's become the way we work."

Many of the CEOs we spoke with cited the importance of listening for their DEI work. Following the George Floyd killing, Spirit AeroSystems brought its senior Black leaders together with executives for a dinner to discuss the sensitive issues employees faced around equity and inclusion and how Spirit could help. President and CEO Tom Gentile shared that, "It was a long and emotional evening, and the issues raised directly prompted new actions. Since then, we've engaged more directly on these issues, set clear goals for diversity in our leadership,

and made some key promotions. We've also initiated an effort to envision what we want our culture to be in these changing times. Listening to our frontline managers is a focal point for this work."

John Heiser, former CEO of LabVantage, encouraged his team to regularly conduct appreciative inquiry summits or sessions where individuals from customer-facing, innovation, and operations teams would come together to discuss strategic visioning and planning, important projects, or performance goals. They used the strength-based AI process and would engage in dialogue to uncover issues, understand others' views, jointly problem solve and increase alignment across the teams.



# 3

## HIGHER AMBITION CEOS SHOW UP AUTHENTIC, OPEN, AND VULNERABLE

Since the original Higher Ambition research, the CEO paradigm has evolved. When we ask the people who work with Higher Ambition CEOs, they describe a clear difference in their CEO's leadership style from the "typical executive." While the CEOs we interviewed have many different personalities and styles, they consistently showed up authentically and intentionally human – even more so through the pandemic.

Research indicates that authentic and caring actions from leaders have a positive impact on employee wellbeing and performance. The recent [LinkedIn 2022 Global Talent Trends](#) report found that if an employee feels cared for at work, they are 3.2x more likely to be happy in their job.

“ A leader, first and foremost, is human. Only when we have the strength to show our vulnerability can we truly lead.

**SIMON SINEK**

Leadership Speaker,  
Author of *Start With Why*



## HOW TO INSPIRE CONNECTION AND COMMITMENT

### 1. BE REAL. SHOW YOUR TRUE SELF AND SHOW YOU CARE.

Many of the CEOs we spoke with mentioned the power of showing up as a whole person and genuinely caring for others. Their behaviors set a tone for the organization, and their humanity is deeply appreciated by their teams.

Fran Horowitz, CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch Co., described how the simple act of caring for her team and asking about their lives builds commitment. “People who worked for me have often said, ‘you’re just so normal and approachable. You ask about my family, and you remember what I tell you about my kids. You just care.’ It comes very naturally for me, but as time went on, I realized the more authentic and intentional you are in the way you connect, the more dedicated and loyal your team becomes.”

Karen S. Lynch, President and CEO of CVS Health, shared how her own actions of checking in on team members during COVID spread across the organization – making it “ok” to care about your colleagues and to take care of yourself.

“Mental health has been the collateral damage of the pandemic. When it comes to prioritizing health and well-being – both physical and mental – it’s so critical for leaders to set the tone from the top. I started doing walking meetings for an hour every day. I would get emails from colleagues saying ‘you made it okay for me to do that, too.’ Well-being across all dimensions is something we continue to prioritize at CVS Health.”

### 2. SHARE THE STAGE. PERSONALLY DRAW OUT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.

These CEOs show a deep respect for others’ capabilities and opinions. They recognize the value of multiple perspectives, and they intentionally leave space for diverse voices to be heard.

“I’ve never tolerated leaders that put themselves first,” Steve Collis, Chairman, President, and CEO, AmerisourceBergen, told us. “If you are a person that is an egoist and very highly political, you just won’t make it at AmerisourceBergen. And that comes from the top. In my career, some of the hardest decisions have been when you have people that are highly valuable but don’t meet the culture and the norms of what we expect from leaders...so you have to exit them out.”

“One advantage to having spent the majority of my career in one company is I have acquaintances in almost every part of the organization. You’ve got to constantly seek out new perspectives, and be willing to hear things that may be contrary to what you want to hear but are important.”

#### ALEX GORSKY

Executive Chairman & Former CEO, Johnson & Johnson

*Johnson & Johnson*

“We learn more from people who challenge our thought process than those who affirm our conclusions. Strong leaders engage their critics and make themselves stronger.”

#### ADAM GRANT

*Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*

As Doug McMillon, President and CEO of Walmart, said, "If I'm in a store and I see associates that see me and go the other way, that's a problem. It doesn't happen often, but when it does, I go chase those people down, introduce myself, and start asking questions. With a little bit of EQ, you can figure out something's not quite right here. I get a lot of information this way – the story behind the quantitative data we see in reports."

Getting personally engaged in Henry Schein's employee resource groups has reinforced the importance of intentional listening for Henry Schein's Chairman and CEO Stanley Bergman. "Realizing that colleagues that I have worked with for many years have never opened up to our team about some of the challenges they have faced made an important impact me. We have always been committed to making a safe space for Team Schein to be heard, and these groups and conversations have really helped us understand what we need to do to make those safe spaces totally comfortable and transparent for all of Team Schein. This has been a remarkable learning journey for all."

“ We are heading into a period of seismic change,” said Simon Roberts, CEO, Sainsbury's. “Leaders have to know when to veer to stability and when to add impetus to make big changes. To navigate all that, purpose matters, as does the connection leaders have with their people.”

**SIMON ROBERTS**

CEO, Sainsbury's

**Sainsbury's**

## EVERYDAY HIGHER AMBITION LEADERSHIP PRACTICES



Share stories from your personal life and history



Make space for team members to talk about their life outside work



Model active listening



Find casual, every-day opportunities to connect with people



Recognize the power of your tone and language – speak with intention



# PERSPECTIVES FROM HUMAN-CENTERED CEOS

“ I don't think any of this is easy – making the trade-offs, making priority calls. Keeping your eye on the North Star of the mission is always the most important thing. If you lose that, you lose all of it.

**JOEY BERGSTEIN**

CEO, Sabra Dipping Company



“ How do you manage those relationships when you don't have good news and you may not have any news at all? You better have done a good job in the past with those relationships, and you better stay close with them.

**WENDY YANG**

Former Group President, HOKA and Teva brands



“ The market is very interested in ESG goals. Those companies that will have the greatest impact are those that define what, when, and how they're going to reach these goals.

**HOLLY SHEFFIELD**

President, CooperSurgical



“ This may sound really obvious, but I've seen so many times where a decision comes down, and leaders don't take the time to communicate the why. This erodes trust, which is critical for engagement.

**CLAIRE SPOFFORD**

CEO & President, J.Jill



“ I have always been interested in helping create and build a great company. Doing that takes a long-term view, and you have to consider multiple stakeholders in order to do that.

**TOM GENTILE**

President & CEO, Spirit AeroSystems



“ I believe if every employee is empowered and enabled to do what's right, they will do the right thing and add a ton more value. They will also have a lot more meaning in their personal lives.

**ADAM BERMAN**

President & CEO, Legacy Lifecare



“ Purpose without performance becomes a lot like grand gestures and statements on the wall. And performance without purpose is not sustainable. You put them together – now that's the sweet spot.

**MARK CLOUSE**

President & CEO, Campbell Soup Company



“ When the individual learns how to connect their own purpose to the purpose of the larger organization, that's when the magic happens.

**BRUCE BALLENGEE**

Founder & CEO, Pariveda Solutions





The continued escalation of volatility and uncertainty coupled with internal demands for meaning and humanity make leading through Higher Ambition a competitive imperative. At the same time it is harder than ever to deliver outstanding performance in the short- and long-term while consistently honoring people and purpose.

Higher Ambition Leadership Alliance brings together leaders to share and advance individual and organizational practices and helps executives develop as intentional leaders.

## **THE HIGHER AMBITION LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE**

is a community of CEOs building thriving companies ready to solve the world's toughest problems.

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