

Corporate Executives' Views on Success of Great Business Leaders, Career Advancement, Team Performance, and Employee Development

A SURVEY RESEARCH PROJECT

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This report highlights findings from a survey among senior executives at companies in the United States with revenues of \$1 billion or more. The survey was conducted online by Nielsen/Harris Poll® from February 6–February 25, 2015.

Conducted on behalf of Gap International's Leveraging Genius Institute, questions explored executives' views on the success of great business leaders, career advancement, team performance, and employee development. The survey also explored executives' views on how easy it is to change attributes that drive individual and team performance.

With a sample size of 301 respondents, the maximum error range surrounding results is +/- 5.6 percentage points (at a 95% Level of Confidence). Error range (or standard error) is provided to serve as a guideline. Such statistical applications apply only to true random probability samples.

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

This research was conducted to explore the impact of Mindset/Attitude on individual and team performance and executives' views on the ease of impacting employee mindsets and attitudes. This research is part of an overall exploration by Gap International's Leveraging Genius Institute to understand the role that mindset plays when executives are performing at their highest level.

The findings were revealing: the importance of Mindset/Attitude is evident in all areas of the survey. Mindset/Attitude along with People and Team Building Skills, are viewed as more important for individual and team performance than Technical Skillset/Expertise or Industry Experience.

However, executives do not view Mindset/Attitude as easy to change.

Attributes for Success of Great Business Leaders

Mindset/Attitude is ranked as the most important attribute for the success of great business leaders by the largest group (34%) of executives. The second most important attribute is People Skills/Team Building (31%). In contrast, 15% rank Industry Experience as the most important attribute for success, 13% say Technical Skillset/Expertise is most important, and 7% say Education.

Shortcomings that Inhibit Career Advancement

Nearly seven in ten (68%) corporate executives believe shortcomings in Mindset/Attitude most often inhibit people from advancing within their company, compared to 32% who believe shortcomings in Technical Skillset/Expertise are the most important barrier.

Drivers of Team Performance

The largest group (34%) of executives ranks Mindset/Attitude as the top attribute driving their team's performance. A smaller group (24%) ranks Leadership Skills as the top attribute driving their team's performance. Technical Skillset/Expertise is also ranked number one by 24%, Industry Experience by 11%, and Education by just 8%.

Priorities for Employee Training and Ease of Causing Change through Employee Development

The data showed that Mindset/Attitude is a high priority for training and not perceived as easy to change compared to Technical Skillset/Expertise.

Executives were asked to rank the importance of five areas for employee training. Mindset/Attitude and Core Job Skills tied as the top training priority for 32% of respondents. Technical Training and Policy/Compliance tied as the top training priority for 13% of respondents, and Presentation/Communication Skills is the top training priority for just 10% of the executives.

The executives rated how easy it is to change employees' Mindset/Attitude, Leadership Skills, and Technical Skillset through employee development. A significant majority (85%) agree it is easy to change employees' Technical Skillset (32% strongly; 53% somewhat). Fifty-four percent agree it is easy to change Leadership Skills (19% strongly; 35% somewhat). By contrast, only 46% agree it is easy to change employees' Mindset/Attitude (16% strongly; 30% somewhat).

KEY FINDINGS

1. Attributes for Success of Great Business Leaders

When asked to rank the attributes that account for the success of great business leaders, executives say Mindset/Attitude accounts most for their success, followed closely by People Skills/Team Building.

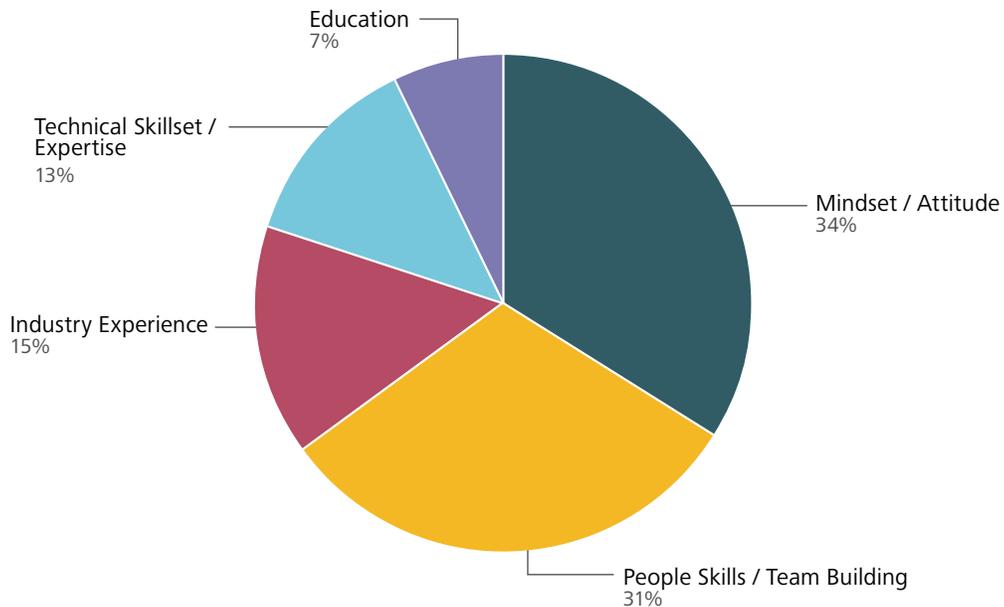
Ranked No.1 Most Important Attribute for Success of Great Business Leaders

As shown in the pie chart, the overwhelming majority ranks either Mindset/Attitude (34%) or People Skills/Team Building (31%) as the most important attribute for the success of great business leaders. Significantly fewer executives rank Industry Experience (15%), Technical Skillset/Expertise (13%), or Education (7%) as the number one attribute for the success of great leaders.

Ranked No.1 or 2 Combined Most Important Attributes for Success of Great Business Leaders

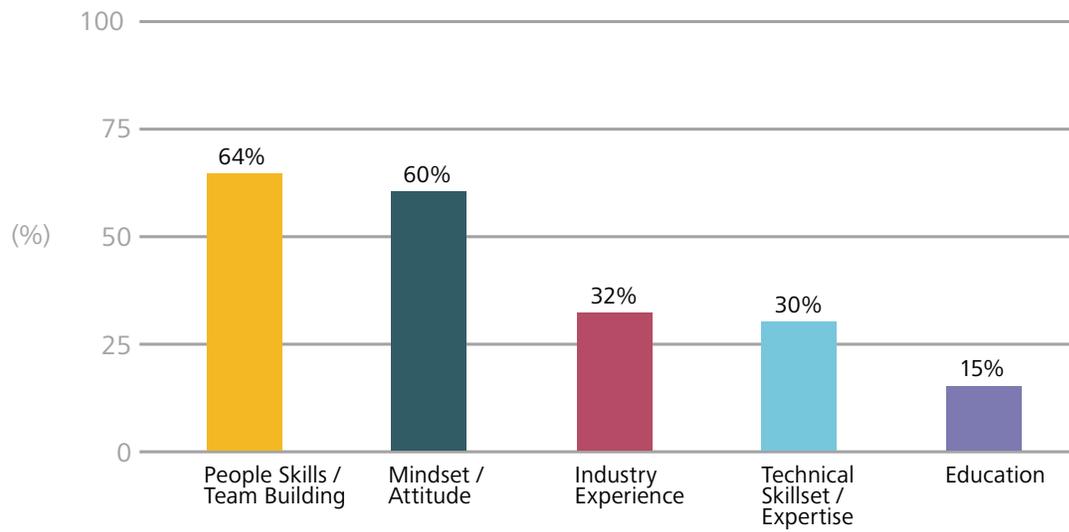
As shown in the bar chart, 64% of executives rank People Skills/Team Building as the first or second most important attribute for the success of great business leaders. Sixty percent rank Mindset/Attitude as the first or second most important attribute.

RANKED NO. 1



Attributes for Success of Great Business Leaders [continued]

RANKED NO. 1 OR 2



SURVEY QUESTION

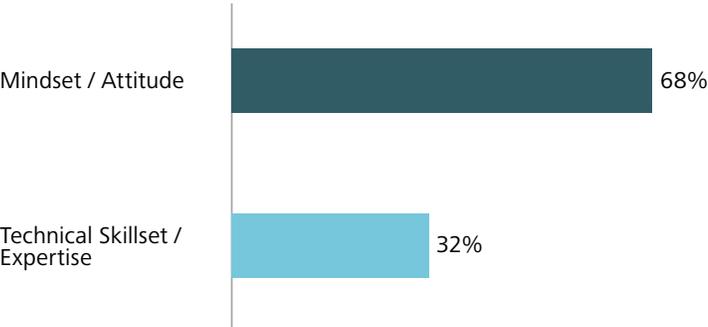
Thinking about great business leaders, which of the following attributes, if any, account for their success?

- Their Industry Experience
- Their Education
- Their Mindset/Attitude
- Their People Skills/Teambuilding
- Their Technical Skillset/Expertise

2. Shortcomings that Inhibit Career Advancement

Executives were asked to choose between two shortcomings that most often inhibit people from advancing within their company, either Mindset/Attitude or Technical Skillset/Expertise. Nearly seven in ten executives say shortcomings in Mindset/Attitude most often hold people back in their careers, versus one in three who say it is shortcomings in their Technical Skillset/Expertise.

SHORTCOMINGS THAT MOST OFTEN INHIBIT PEOPLE FROM ADVANCING WITHIN THEIR COMPANY



SURVEY QUESTION

Which of the following most often inhibits people from advancing within their company?

- Shortcomings in their Technical Skillset/Expertise
- Shortcomings in their Mindset/Attitude

3. Drivers of Team Performance

When asked to rank the attributes that drive their team's performance the most, executives say Mindset/Attitude leads the attributes that account for their team's performance.

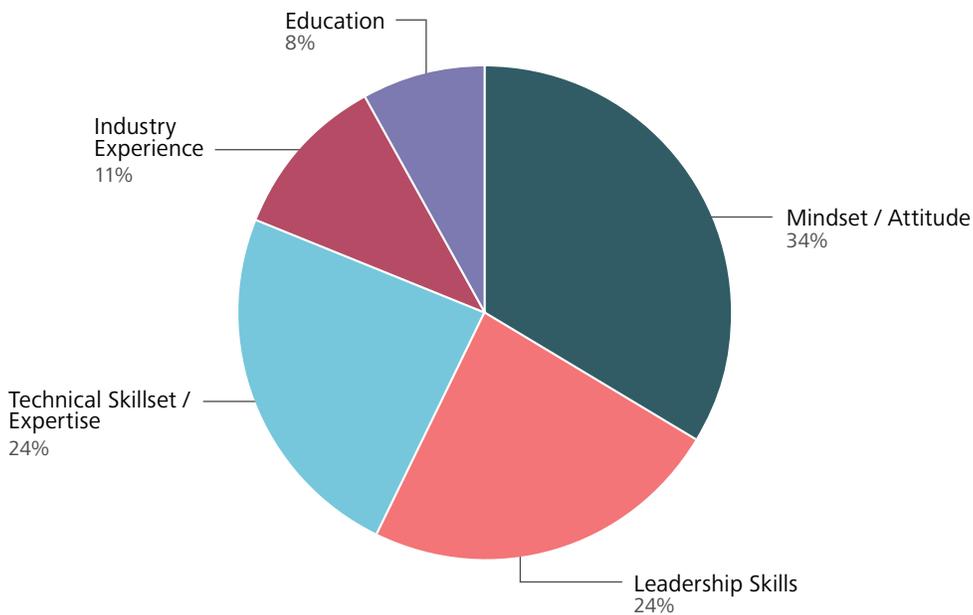
Ranked No.1 Most Important Attribute for Team Performance

As shown in the pie chart, the majority (34%) ranks Mindset/Attitude as the most important attribute that drives their team's performance. Leadership Skills and Technical Skillset/Expertise are both ranked by 24% as the most important attribute driving their team's performance.

Ranked No.1 or 2 Combined Most Important Attributes Driving Team Performance

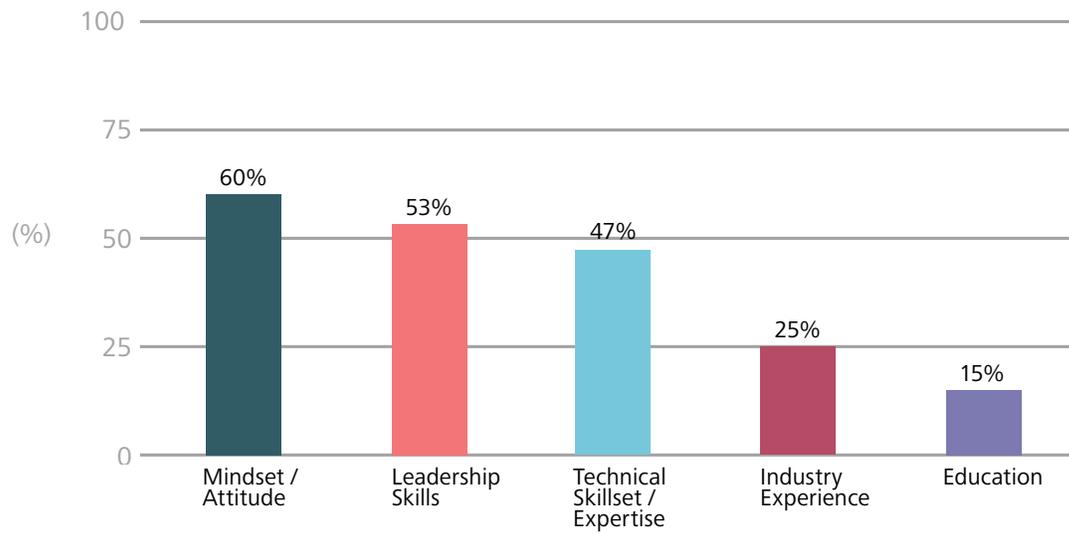
As shown in the bar chart, 60% of executives rank Mindset/Attitude as the first or second most important attribute driving their team's performance, followed by 53% who rank Leadership Skills as the first or second most important attribute.

RANKED NO. 1



Drivers of Team Performance [continued]

RANKED NO. 1 OR 2



SURVEY QUESTION

Which of the following attributes drives your team's performance the most?

- Technical Skillset/Expertise
- Mindset/Attitude
- Leadership Skills
- Education
- Industry Experience

4. Priorities for Employee Training

When asked to rank the most important priorities for training employees at their current or previous companies, executives say Mindset/Attitude and Core Job Skills are top training priorities.

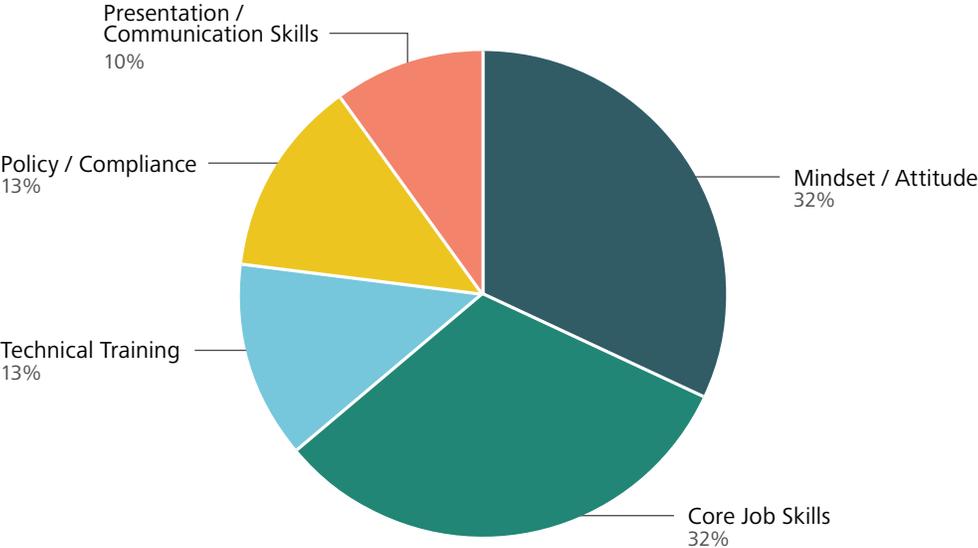
Ranked No.1 Priority for Training Employees

As shown in the pie chart, 32% rank either Mindset/Attitude or Core Job Skills as the top priority for training employees. The other three focus areas for training fall far behind in importance.

Ranked No.1 or 2 Combined Priorities for Training Employees

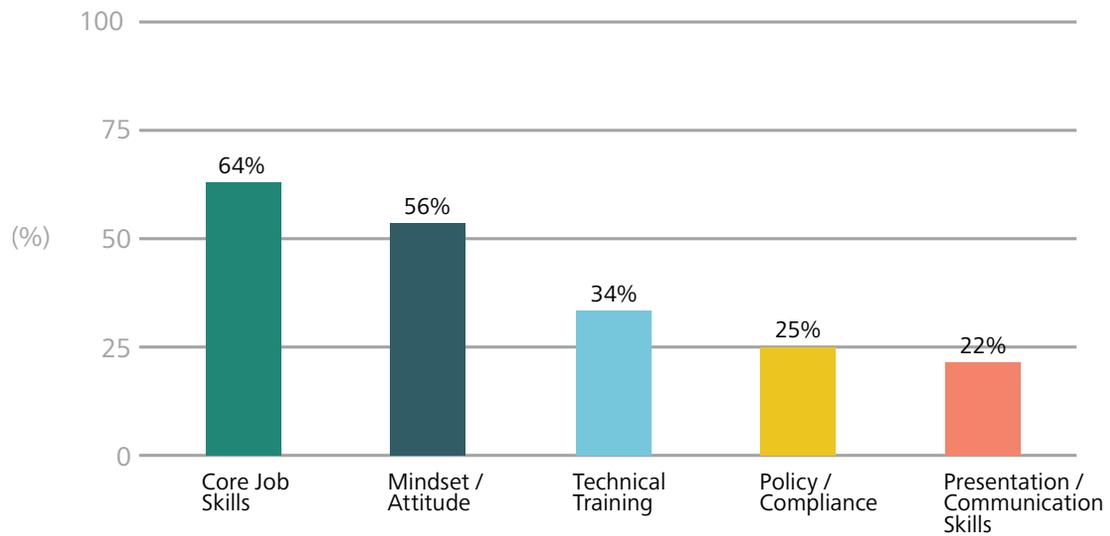
As shown in the bar chart, 64% of executives rank Core Job Skills as either the first or second most important employee training priority. After Core Job Skills, the next priority for training (as marked No.1 or 2) was Mindset/Attitude.

RANKED NO. 1



Priorities for Employee Training [continued]

RANKED NO. 1 OR 2



SURVEY QUESTION

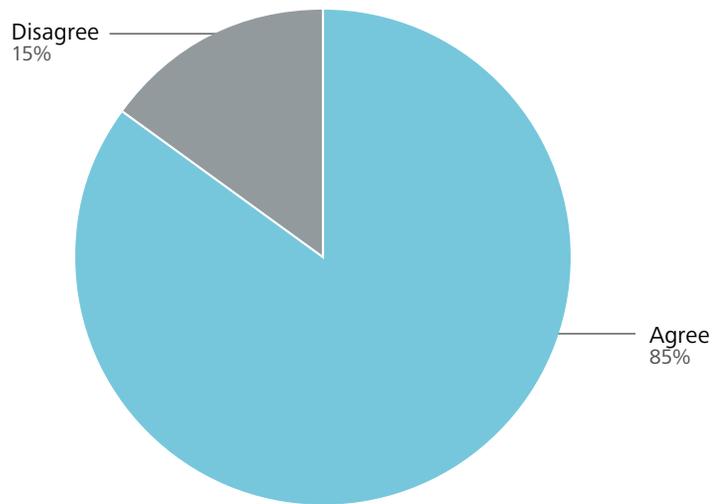
Thinking about when you are training employees (at your current company or previous companies), which of the following is your most important priority?

- Core Job Skills
- Technical Training
- Mindset/Attitude
- Policy/Compliance
- Presentation/Communication Skills

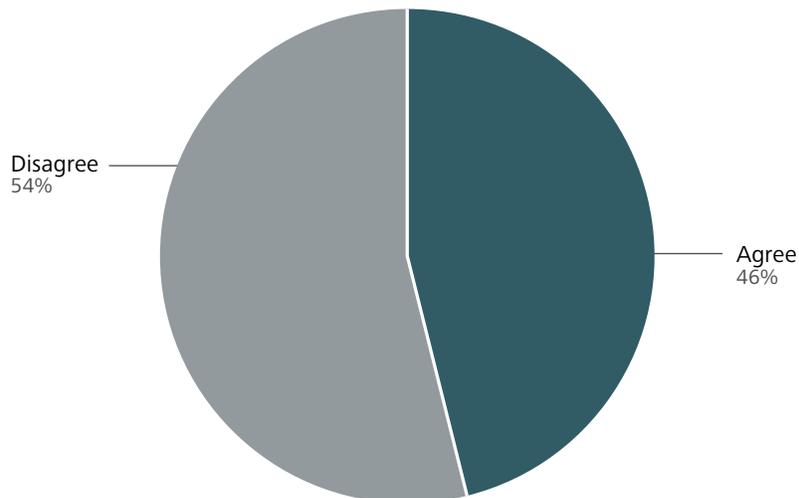
5. Ease of Causing Change through Employee Development

Executives were asked to rate how easy it is to change certain skills through employee development initiatives. As seen in the previous question, they view Mindset/Attitude and Job Skills as equally important top training priorities. However, Technical Skillset is viewed as much easier to change through employee development than both Mindset/Attitude and Leadership Skills.

EASY TO CHANGE EMPLOYEES' TECHNICAL SKILLSET



EASY TO CHANGE EMPLOYEES' MINDSET / ATTITUDE



Ease of Causing Change through Employee Development [continued]

85% agree that it is easy to change employees' Technical Skillset

- 32% strongly agree
- 53% somewhat agree
- 12% somewhat disagree
- 3% strongly disagree

53% agree that it is easy to change employees' Leadership Skills*

- 19% strongly agree
- 34% somewhat agree
- 37% somewhat disagree
- 9% strongly disagree

46% agree it is easy to change employees' Mindset/Attitude*

- 16% strongly agree
- 30% somewhat agree
- 33% somewhat disagree
- 20% strongly disagree

SURVEY QUESTION (CHOICES WERE RANDOMIZED)

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about employee development?

- It is easy to change their Technical Skillset
- It is easy to change their Leadership Skills
- It is easy to change their Mindset/Attitude

* Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

APPENDIX

A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

Base: All Qualified Respondents

For the following question, please enter “1” next to the attribute you think accounts the most for their success, a “2” next to the second-most attribute that accounts for their success, a “3” next to the third-most attribute that accounts for their success, a “4” next to the fourth-most attribute that accounts for their success, and a “5” next to the fifth-most attribute that accounts for their success.

Thinking about great business leaders, which of the following attributes, if any, account for their success?

[PN: Must use each number 1,2,3,4,5 once each]

- Their Industry Experience _____
- Their Education _____
- Their Mindset/Attitude _____
- Their People Skills/Teambuilding _____
- Their Technical Skillset/Expertise _____

Base: All Qualified Respondents

Which of these most often inhibits people from advancing within their company?

[Randomize]

- Shortcomings in their Technical Skillset/Expertise
- Shortcomings in their Mindset/Attitude

Base: All Qualified Respondents (Q99/1)

For the following question, please enter “1” next to the attribute you think drives your team’s performance the most, a “2” next to the attribute you think drives your team’s performance second-most, a “3” next to the attribute you think drives your team’s performance third-most, a “4” next to the attribute you think drives your team’s performance fourth-most, and a “5” next to the attribute you think drives your team’s performance fifth-most.

Which of the following attributes drives your team’s performance the most?

[PN: Must use each number 1,2,3,4,5 once each]

- Technical Skillset/Expertise _____
- Mindset/Attitude _____
- Leadership Skills _____
- Education _____
- Industry Experience _____

Base: All Qualified Respondents

For the following question please enter “1” next to the priority you think is the most important, a “2” next to the priority you think is second-most important, a “3” next to the priority you think is the third-most important, a “4” next to the priority you think is the fourth-most important, and a “5” next to the priority you think is the fifth-most important.

Thinking about when you are training employees (at your current company or previous companies) which of the following is your most important priority?

[PN: Must use each number 1,2,3,4,5 once each]

- Core Job Skills _____
- Technical Training _____
- Mindset/Attitude _____
- Policy/Compliance _____
- Presentation/Communication Skills _____

Base: All Qualified Respondents

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about employee development?

[Display horizontally]

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

[Randomize]

- It is easy to change their Technical Skillset
- It is easy to change their Mindset/Attitude
- It is easy to change their Leadership Skills

APPENDIX

B. RESPONDENT PROFILE

REGION	NO.
Northeast	84
Midwest	45
South	108
West	62
Other	2
COMPANY GROSS REVENUE	
\$1–\$4.9 billion	149
\$5–\$9.9 billion	48
\$10+ billion	104
# EMPLOYEES	
<10,000	155
10,000+	146
GENDER	
Male	169
Female	132
AGE	
18-49	208
50+	87
Unknown	6
JOB TITLE	
C-Level/President/Chairman	121
VP	173
Other	7
TOTAL	301

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