

## Portrait of an ideal CEO to lead after the crisis

**A survey of more than 1,000 CEOs of leading Spanish companies suggests the model of leadership needed for the post-pandemic business world.**



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- **During the pandemic's first few months, CEOs in Spain prioritized caring for their teams.**
- **As the crisis continued, putting the customer at the center of the business regained importance.**
- **In a post-pandemic scenario, companies will need managers who are**

## **strong and inclusive, as well as flexible and innovative.**

To deal with the pandemic, the CEOs of Spain's leading companies have been focused on taking care of the corporate team (72%), establishing an action plan for the future (47%), monitoring the financial situation closely (43%) and reviewing the strategic plan.

This is according to a study by IESE's [Luis Huete](#) and Antonio Nuñez, based on interviews with more than 1,000 CEOs of companies in Spain, carried out between May and June of 2020.

In addition to checking in on CEOs' top concerns at present, the authors asked about the executives' agendas for the next 12 to 18 months. Looking ahead, the five most pressing issues are perceived to be: getting teams involved (89%), diagnosing the situation (81%), securing finances (64%), putting the client at the center of strategy (59%) and defining and ensuring implementation (47%).

Based on their interviews, Huete and Nuñez have put forward 10 attributes that a company's chief executive should ideally possess post-crisis (forecast to begin towards the end of 2022). The model CEO is:

- 1.** A leader who is strong and inclusive, capable of motivating, inspiring and aligning the entire team behind a shared goal.
- 2.** With a strategic vision for the medium-long term, balancing prudence and practicality.
- 3.** Flexible and able to manage change. The option to stay put in a comfort zone has gone out the window.
- 4.** Principled and able to lead by example. Solidarity, closeness, humility, optimism and courage are values that have gained traction in society and in companies.
- 5.** Resilient and capable of managing adversity by focusing on the available resources and what's possible.
- 6.** Innovative. Profound changes that were already afoot pre-pandemic are now accelerated by crisis.
- 7.** Armed with a good decision-making process and data that's appropriate for the question at hand.
- 8.** Efficient and results-oriented, since the business environment is increasingly competitive.

**9.** Collaborative, able to work as part of a team and humanize the company.

**10.** Communicative and a good listener. Not only must corporate goals and values be clear, but they must also be conveyed.

The authors note that it's difficult to find executives that possess all 10 capacities, but they say that's what management teams with complementary strengths are for.

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*Based on the online learning session for members of IESE's Alumni Association titled "Cómo está cambiando el COVID el mercado del talento" (in Spanish) held on January 26, 2021.*

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