Riviera
PARTNERS

The Future of Tech Leadership 2025

Rewriting the org chart: How AI is redefining readiness, strategy & structure

Contents

Overview

AI isn't just influencing the future of tech leadership—it's testing whether organizations are designed to keep up.

According to a recent survey of tech leaders, AI is shaping their strategy more than any other trend. Yet only 2% of companies are structurally "high readiness," and just 58% believe they have the leadership needed to implement and scale AI effectively. These gaps aren't just theoretical: 42% say their leadership team lacks change management or executive discipline, while 35% cite limited strategic agility or AI fluency as key risks. The data reveals growing misalignment between ambition and execution as well as leadership vision and operational capacity.

This annual report from Riviera Partners, a leading executive search firm specializing in product, engineering, and design leadership, draws on insights from over 1,000 tech executives across company stages, ownership models, and industries. It explores how leadership teams are adapting (or not) to the demands of AI, how hiring and compensation models are shifting, and what the most forward-looking leaders want from their next role.

Whether you're building a leadership team or planning your next move, this report offers what it takes to lead through the next wave of technological change.

What top tech companies want in leaders

1. Pragmatic operators (31%)
2. Visionary thinkers (29%)
3. Commercially aligned (22%)

The gaps holding teams back

1. Competing priorities (46%)
2. Market volatility (42%)
3. Lack of executive discipline (36%)

Where tech leaders are falling short

1. Change management or execution discipline (42%)
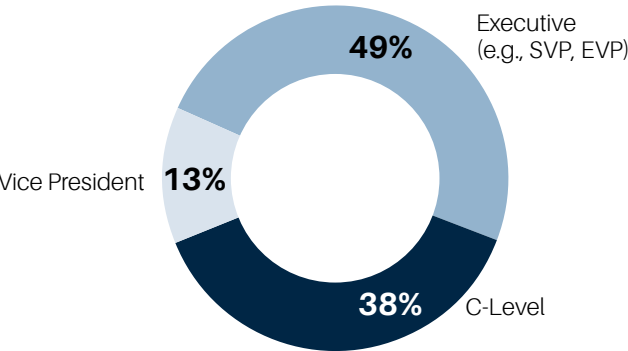2. AI fluency (35%)
3. Strategic agility (35%)

How important is AI readiness to companies?

1. Very important (62%)
2. Somewhat important (34%)
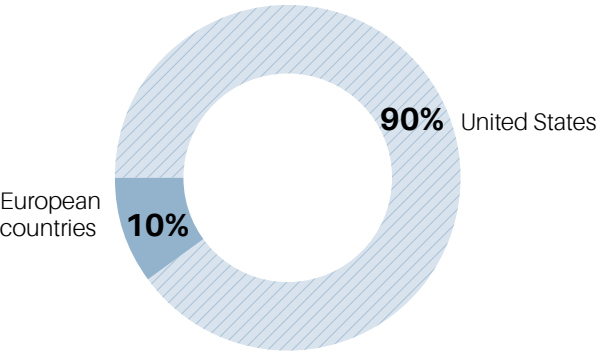3. Not very important (4%)

Profile of respondents

This research captures the perspectives of 1,038 senior technology leaders, offering a well-rounded view across roles, functions, company types, and industries. The respondent base reflects the executives responsible for shaping org design, setting technology strategy, and building AI-era leadership teams.

Who they are

- **49%** Executive (e.g., SVP, EVP)
- **38%** C-Level
- **13%** Vice President

Where they work

- **90%** United States
- **10%** European countries

What they do

- Engineering **32%**
- Product **29%**
- Information Technology **20%**
- AI / ML / Data **12%**
- Design **5%**
- Cybersecurity **3%**
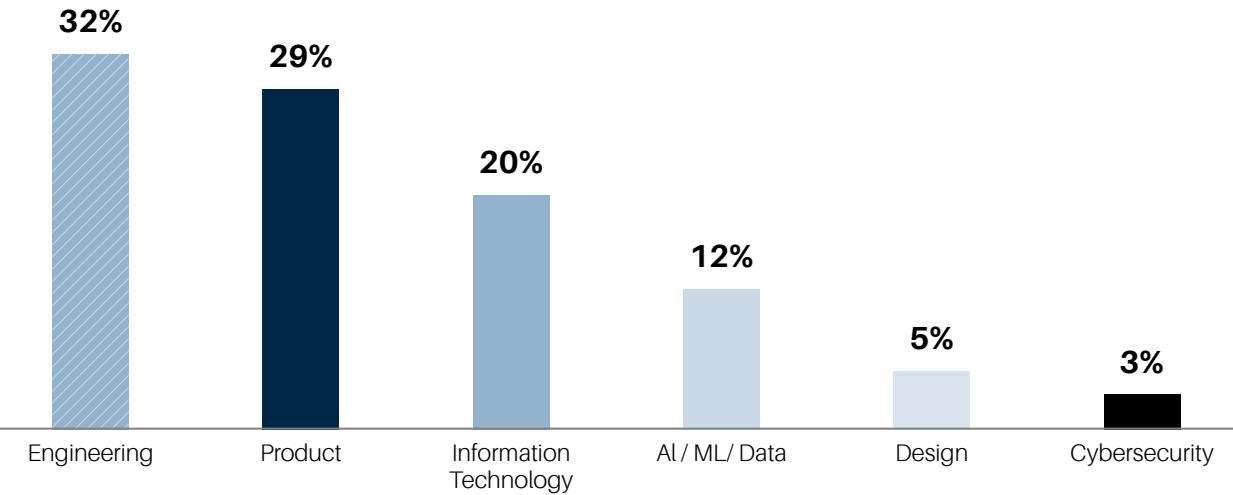
Company breakdown

Type of ownership

Private equity-owned	Venture capital stage	Privately held	Publicly owned
38%	35%	15%	13%

Annual revenue

Less than 50M	$50M-$249M	$250M-$999M	$1 B-$4.9B	$5B+	Unsure / Prefer not to say
21%	24%	38%	11%	3%	3%
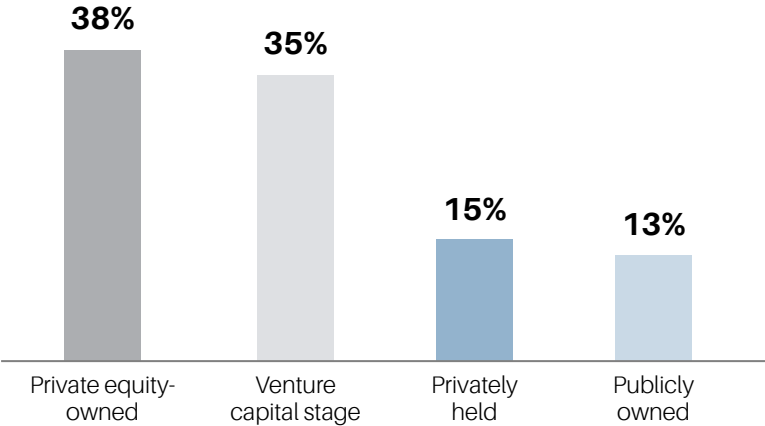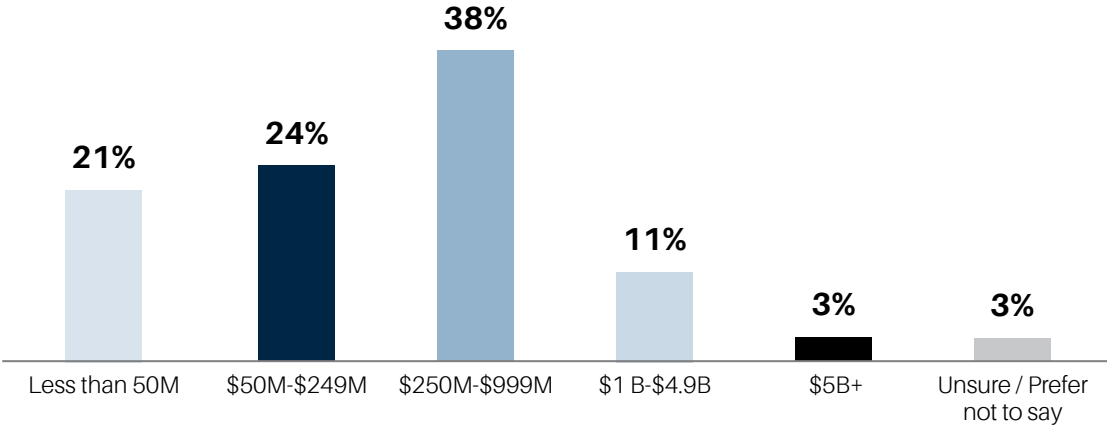
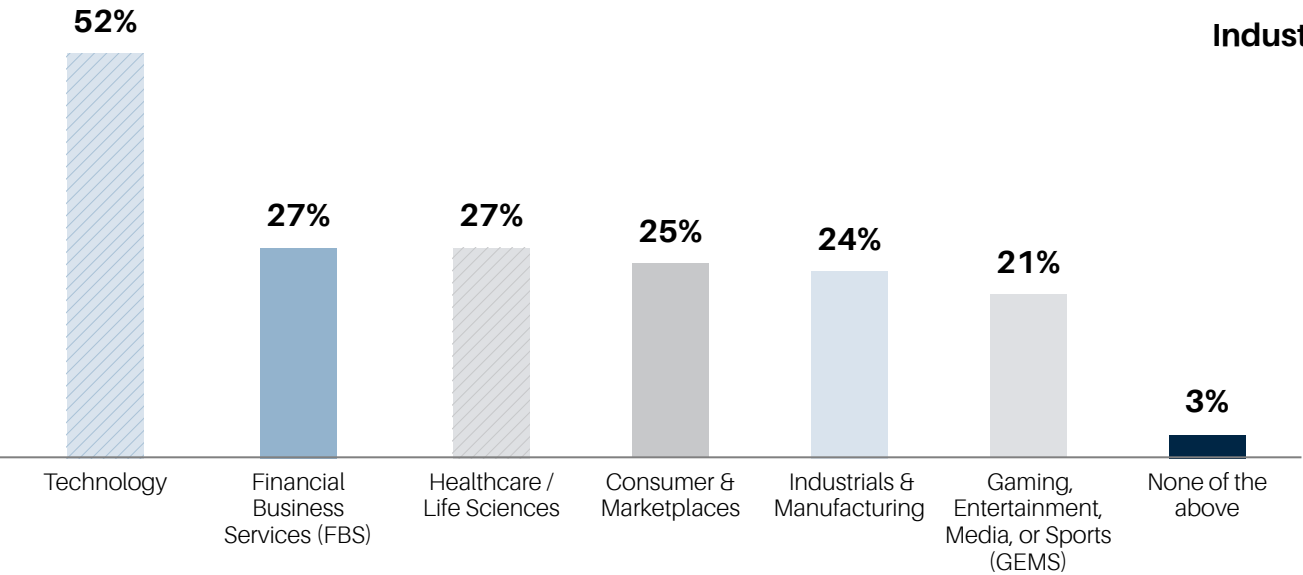## Total respondents: 1,038 (90% U.S., 10% EU)

> **Roles:** C-level (38%), SVP/EVP (49%), VP (13%)

> **Functions:** Engineering (32%), Product (29%), IT (20%), AI/Data (12%), Design (5%), Cybersecurity (3%)

> **Company revenue:** <50M (21%), $50M-$249M (24%), 250M-999M (38%), $1B-$4.9B (11%) $5B+ (3%)

> **Ownership mix:** Venture (35%), PE-backed (38%), Public (13%), Privately held (15%)

> **Industry focus:** Technology (52%), Finance (27%) Healthcare/ Life Sciences (27%), Consumer & Marketplaces (25%), Industrial & Manufacturing (24%), GEMS (21%)

Industry

Technology	Financial Business Services (FBS)	Healthcare / Life Sciences	Consumer & Marketplaces	Industrials & Manufacturing	Gaming, Entertainment, Media, or Sports (GEMS)	None of the above
52%	27%	27%	25%	24%	21%	3%

AI's strategic role & readiness

AI is no longer a question of "if," but of readiness—and most companies aren't ready.

AI currently dominates the strategic agenda for most organizations. Sixty-two percent of tech leaders say it's "very important" to their enterprise strategy over the next 12–18 months. But strategic importance doesn't equal executional readiness. Only 58% believe their company has the leadership needed to implement and scale AI effectively.

EARLY ADOPTERS SHOW WHAT'S POSSIBLE, BUT STILL STRUGGLE AT SCALE

Roughly 38% of organizations in our dataset qualify as early AI adopters: companies that have begun deploying copilots, developing internal AI-native platforms, and integrating AI into business workflows. These companies are more likely to:

Blend product, data, and engineering under unified leadership (71% vs. 62%)	Report strong executive sponsorship (70% vs. 63%)	Have a clearly defined AI vision (43% vs. 36%)	Integrate AI goals into org-level strategy (47% vs. 38%)

Yet even among these front-runners, readiness isn't guaranteed. Only 55% of early adopters believe they have the right leadership in place to scale AI. This points to a larger truth: AI ambition often outpaces organizational design.

MOST COMPANIES ARE NOT STRUCTURALLY READY

To quantify readiness beyond sentiment, Riviera developed a proprietary Organizational Design Readiness Index. This index scores companies based on C-level ownership of AI, board engagement, cross-functional collaboration, and hiring behavior.

The findings are sobering:

Only **2%** of companies rank as structurally "high readiness"	**77%** fall into "low" or "very low" readiness tiers	Venture-backed and privately held companies are especially underprepared, with 42% and 49%, respectively, in the very low category.

Key takeaways

AI matters, but leadership isn't keeping up
62% say AI is very important to their strategy, but only 58% believe their leadership is prepared to deliver on it.

Even early adopters are feeling the strain
These organizations lead in AI behavior, but only 55% say they have the right leaders in place to scale AI effectively.

Talent and fluency are holding organizations back
The top barriers to scaling AI include talent gaps (45%), lack of executive AI fluency (35%), and unclear ownership or accountability (29%).

Very few companies are structurally ready
Just 2% of companies meet the bar for structural "high readiness," highlighting widespread capability gaps.

High-readiness companies are leading by design
These organizations are 3x more likely to have Chief AI Officers, centralized hiring strategies, and a more intentional approach to executive structure.

NOT ALL INDUSTRIES ARE APPROACHING AI READINESS AT THE SAME PACE

Tech companies are the most likely to fall into the very low readiness tier, with 38% struggling to put the right foundations in place. Meanwhile, firms in gaming and industrials and manufacturing are more likely to land in the moderate tier.

Top chart data:

Privately held: 49%, 37%, 13%, 2%
Venture capital stage: 42%, 39%, 17%, 2%
Private equity-owned: 28%, 46%, 25%, 2%
Publicly owned: 22%, 40%, 33%, 5%

Bottom chart data:

Technology: 38%, 40%, 19%, 2%
Consumer & Marketplaces: 25%, 44%, 28%, 3%
Healthcare / Life Sciences: 22%, 48%, 27%, 3%
Financial Business Services (FBS): 21%, 45%, 29%, 4%
Industrials & Manufacturing: 18%, 46%, 31%, 4%
Gaming, Entertainment, Media, or Sports (GEMS): 16%, 42%, 38%, 4%

Legend: ◯ Very low   ● Low   ● Moderate   ● High

How we measured organizational design readiness

To understand how structurally prepared companies are for the demands of AI-era leadership, we developed an Organizational Design Readiness Score—a composite indicator based on role coverage, board influence, and future-focused beliefs about org design.

Scoring methodology:

Respondents received one point for each readiness signal they selected across these areas:

① **C-level roles in place**
Organizations were scored based on whether they already have roles such as Chief Product Officer, Chief AI Officer, Chief Data Officer, or CISO.

② **Board/investor influence on leadership strategy**
Points were given for reporting board-level support or pressure to create new roles, redesign org structures, shift responsibilities, or rework reporting lines—signals of strategic commitment to change.

③ **Future-focused org beliefs**
Companies were credited for agreement with forward-looking statements about organizational design, such as the impact of AI on function blending, the strategic role of CISOs, or the risk of talent loss without redesign.

Readiness Scores Range from 0 to 8

The average score was 3, suggesting most organizations are just beginning to prepare.

WHAT HIGH-READINESS COMPANIES ARE DOING DIFFERENTLY

Companies that score highest on the Readiness Index consistently take more deliberate action to support AI at the leadership level. Compared to very low-readiness companies, high-readiness organizations are:

3x more likely to create AI-specific executive roles (64% vs. 21%)

Far more likely to report having a **Chief AI Officer** (72% vs. 21%)

Implementing more hiring and team development strategies on average (2.5 vs. 1.2)

READINESS IS THE NEW DIFFERENTIATOR

Every company is investing in AI tools, platforms, and pilots. But only a few are building the leadership structures and cultural scaffolding to actually scale those investments.

The result? A widening gap between companies experimenting with AI and those capable of executing it at scale. In this environment, readiness isn't just an operational issue. It's a strategic differentiator and, increasingly, a competitive one.

Wait—tech companies are least ready?

COUNTERINTUITIVE, BUT:

Many are experimenting aggressively with AI but lack the executive and organizational scaffolding that defines readiness.

AI often feels like "business as usual" for engineering and product teams, so firms delay creating new leadership roles.

Venture- and privately held companies are much more likely to rank "very low" in readiness compared to PE- and publicly held peers.

C-suite and org design playbook

The rise of AI is forcing a C-suite rethink. While most companies recognize the need to realign executive roles with emerging priorities, few have figured out exactly how to do it.

Most are starting by expanding the scope of existing leaders. Sixty-two percent of organizations say they're assigning AI or data-related responsibilities to current executives. Yet only 39% have created a new, dedicated AI-focused executive role, revealing a reluctance to invest in fresh talent or make bold org shifts that match their strategic ambition.

Among companies that are evolving the org chart, new titles like Chief AI Officer (21%) and CPTO (14%) are beginning to emerge. But there are still gaps in accountability. Just over half (53%) of Chief AI Officers report directly to the CEO, raising questions about ownership, empowerment, and influence.

BOARDS AND INVESTORS ARE DRIVING CHANGE

Companies aren't navigating these decisions alone. Forty-seven percent say their board or investors will influence changes in executive responsibilities over the next year, and one-third expect to undergo a full org redesign. This pressure is especially strong in private equity-backed companies, which are more likely to restructure leadership (54%) or add new roles (54%) compared to the overall.

Key takeaways

Most companies are expanding roles, not creating them
62% are adding AI/data scope to existing leaders, but only 39% have created new AI-specific roles.

Chief AI Officer is on the rise, but not always empowered
Only 53% of CAIOs report directly to the CEO, limiting strategic influence.

Board and investor pressure is accelerating change
47% expect board-driven shifts in executive responsibilities this year; 33% foresee full org redesigns.

Private equity firms are leading the charge
PE-backed companies are significantly more likely to restructure leadership and add new roles.

High-readiness orgs are building smarter orgs
These companies are 3x more likely to create AI-focused roles and more likely to have CAIOs, centralized hiring, and board pipelines.

EMERGING ROLE DESIGN PATTERNS

Early adopters of AI are experimenting with more fluid, cross-functional leadership models. These companies are more likely to blend product, data, design, and engineering under unified leadership and to back that structure with dedicated hires. Still, even among early adopters, role clarity and reporting structures remain a work in progress.

Ownership of AI strategy still sits most commonly with the CTO (48%), especially in venture-backed companies (50%) and mid-sized firms ($250M–$999M in revenue). Larger firms are more likely to assign AI ownership to functional business units or distribute responsibility more broadly.

HIGH-READINESS COMPANIES LEAD WITH STRUCTURE

Companies that score highest on the Organizational Readiness Index are far more likely to be structuring proactively for innovation:

64%	**72%**	**56%**	**60%**
have created AI-specific executive roles	report having a Chief AI Officer	centralize hiring decisions	maintain formal board/advisory pipelines

By contrast, 35% of very low-readiness companies are doing none of these things. This structural gap reveals a growing divide between companies that are preparing to lead and those simply trying to keep up.

CTO-centric AI strategy in VC-backed firms

In venture-backed companies, CTOs are most often responsible for leading AI transformation. But without complementary roles like CAIO or CPTO, these leaders are often overextended—blending vision, execution, and change management into a single lane. Without broader structural shifts or board alignment, this technical ownership can limit strategic integration.

Hiring challenges and economic pressures

Amid AI acceleration, evolving talent expectations, and rising organizational complexity, tech leadership hiring is entering a period of unusually rapid change.

Internally, many companies are struggling to fill the roles that are most critical to driving transformation. While individual contributors remain the highest hiring priority over the next 12 months, functional and technical leadership roles follow close behind. Yet it's the top of the org chart that presents the biggest challenge: hiring for C-suite leadership is expected to be the most difficult overall, followed by functional leadership roles.

Even when companies know exactly who they need, they often don't have the infrastructure or capacity to make those hires effectively. Recruiting functions are under-resourced, and workflows haven't kept pace with the speed or complexity of modern tech leadership needs. In particular, many VC-backed companies struggle to compete for top leadership talent, especially without dedicated internal recruiting capacity or compensation packages that match scale-stage expectations.

Externally, hiring strategy is being reshaped by shifting economic and geopolitical dynamics. Tariffs and political instability are leading many U.S.-based companies to bring roles back onshore, even if it means higher labor costs. Others are doubling down on international hiring to maintain access to specialized talent and cost advantages.

What's emerging is a dual-track approach: reshoring for resilience while still tapping global markets for scale and efficiency. But regardless of strategy, most organizations are rethinking their traditional hiring playbook.

Only

42%

of companies rate their internal recruiting function as very effective when it comes to hiring tech leaders.

Key takeaways

C-suite hiring is getting harder
39% of companies say hiring for top leadership roles will be very challenging.

Internal recruiters are underperforming
Only 42% of respondents rate their internal recruiting teams as "very effective" at hiring tech leadership talent.

Companies are adapting with flexible leadership models
More are turning to fractional leaders, technical advisors, and centralized hiring to close execution gaps.

Tariffs are reshaping where teams are built
40% of U.S. firms say tariff policies are directly influencing reshoring, even if it means higher labor costs.

High-readiness orgs are more agile
These companies deploy more hiring strategies, grow global teams faster, and shift investment to politically stable markets in response to risk.
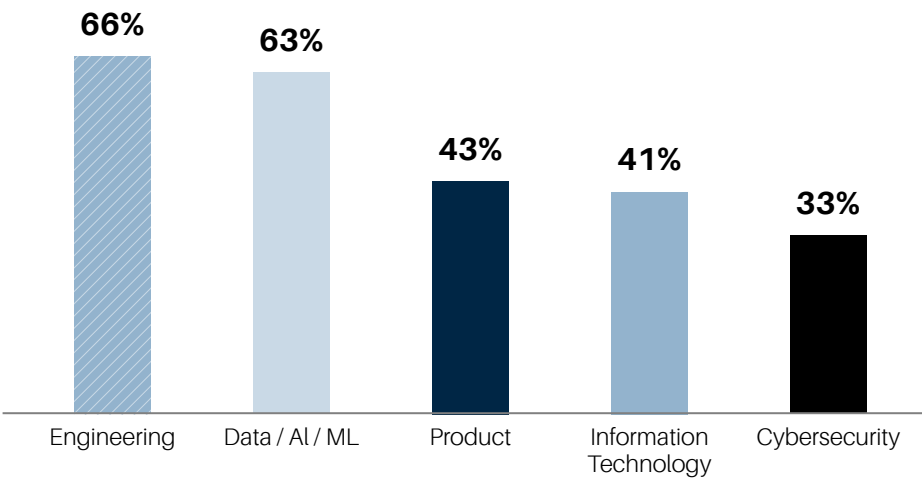
Leadership roles in high demand, but hard to fill

Companies aren't hitting pause on hiring—far from it. Despite economic headwinds, many are actively recruiting for roles that support growth, product development, and AI execution. Organizations are looking for leadership talent that can build and scale teams, align cross-functional efforts, and drive outcomes across product, data, design, and infrastructure.

At the top of the list: engineering leaders, functional heads, and experienced operators who can help translate strategy into scale. And it's rarely just one role. When asked what leadership skills or roles they're actively hiring for, companies selected a median of three, underscoring the breadth of hiring needs across teams and functions.

Hiring spans all levels, but the pressure is highest at the top. C-suite roles, in particular, are proving difficult to fill. Whether due to rising expectations, shifting compensation benchmarks, or lack of qualified talent, **nearly 4 in 10 companies say executive hiring will be very challenging** in the year ahead.

Top departments or skills organizations anticipate hiring over the next 12 months

Engineering	Data / AI / ML	Product	Information Technology	Cybersecurity
66%	63%	43%	41%	33%

Organizations hiring priorities and challenges over the next 12 months

● Average score hiring plans   Average score hiring challenge

Individual contributors	Technical leadership (Manager, Sr. Manager)	Functional leadership (Director and above)	Offshore or project-based support	Expanded external support (e.g., contractors, agencies)	C-Suite leadership
2.3 / 2	2.2 / 2	2.2 / 2.1	2 / 1.7	2 / 1.7	1.9 / 2.2
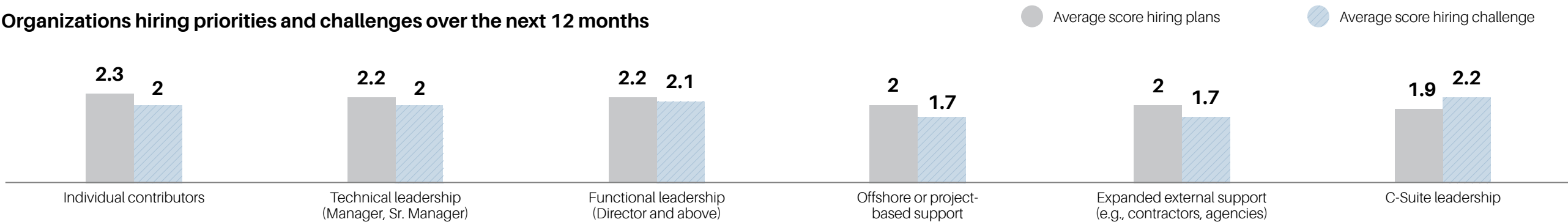
Companies are actively exploring or implementing the following hiring or team development strategies

Median number of responses: 2

Strategy	%
Expanding use of technical advisors or consultants	36%
Tariffs are a factor, but not the primary driver of reshoring	33%
Centralizing leadership hiring decisions under a single function	33%
Hiring fractional or interim leadership talent	29%
Creating formal board search or governance pipelines	27%
Nearshoring or reshoring talent	25%
None of the above	20%
Other (please specify)	1%

Tariffs influence on company's decision to reshore
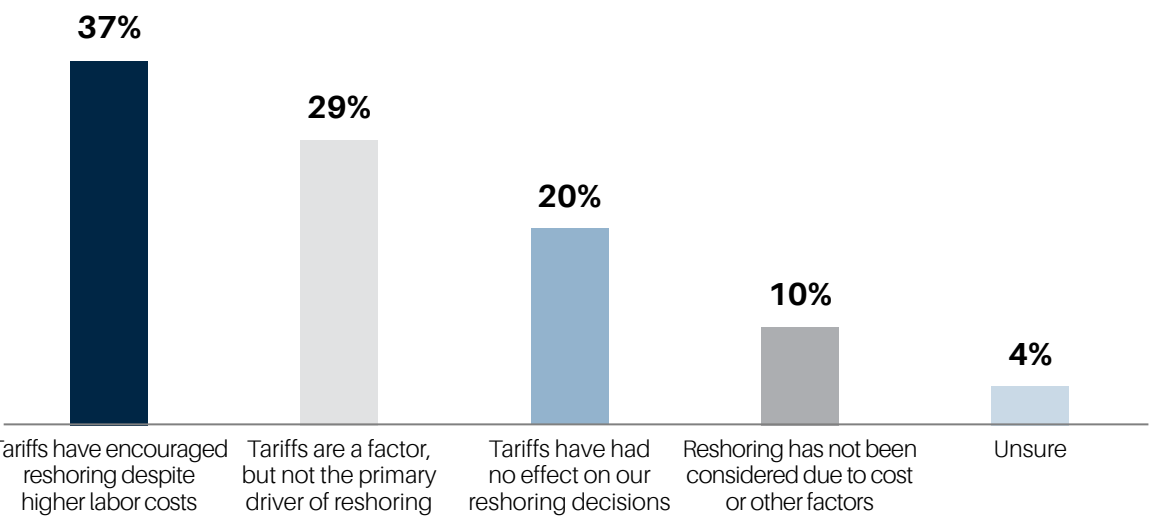
Factor	%
Tariffs have encouraged reshoring despite higher labor costs	37%
Tariffs are a factor, but not the primary driver of reshoring	29%
Tariffs have had no effect on our reshoring decisions	20%
Reshoring has not been considered due to cost or other factors	10%
Unsure	4%

40% of U.S.-based companies say tariffs have directly influenced their decision to reshore tech roles.

RETHINKING HOW LEADERSHIP GETS HIRED

When traditional recruiting models fall short, companies are forced to get creative. That's exactly what's happening across the tech leadership landscape today. With internal teams stretched and high-level hiring needs mounting, many organizations are shifting away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

Traditional recruiting models aren't delivering, especially at the top of the org chart. In response, many organizations are expanding their playbooks: expanding use of technical advisors or consultants, embracing fractional talent, restructuring hiring functions, and rebalancing between domestic and international teams.
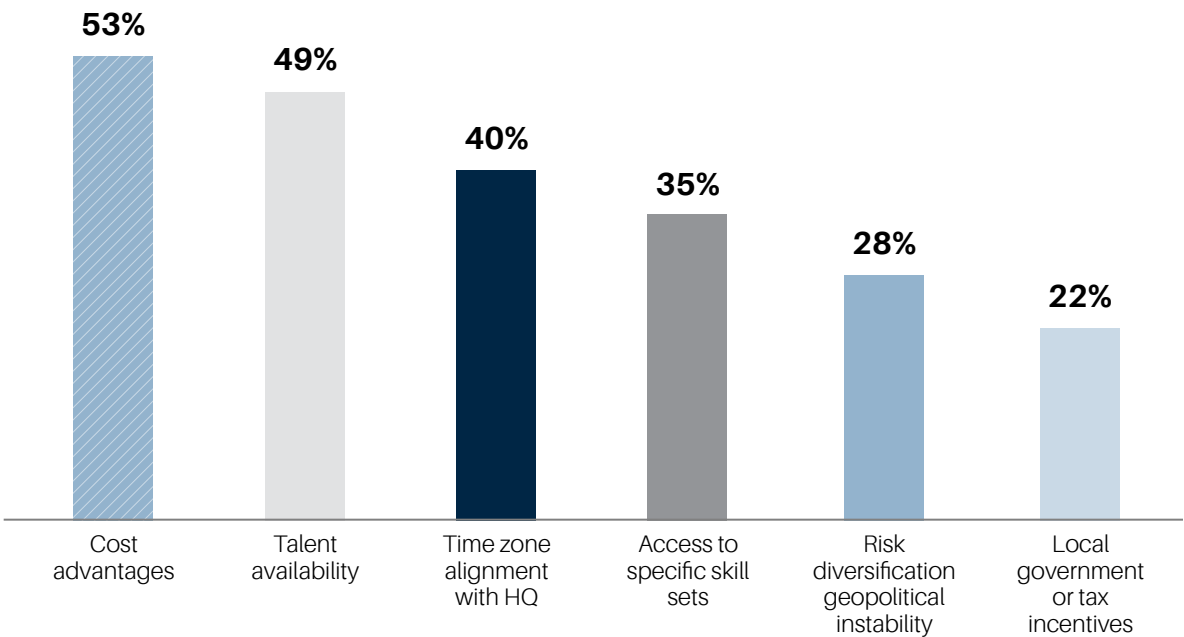
TARIFFS AND TALENT STRATEGY

Hiring strategy isn't just shaped by business needs, it's increasingly driven by geopolitics and macroeconomic pressure. As global risk factors rise, companies are being forced to rethink *where* they build their teams, not just *who* they hire.

Tariffs are playing a growing role in these decisions. In fact, 40% of U.S.-based companies say tariffs have directly influenced their decision to reshore tech roles, even when doing so comes with higher labor costs. For many, this shift isn't about savings—it's about stability.

At the same time, companies aren't abandoning global hiring. 45% say they're still expanding international tech teams, primarily to manage cost (53%) and access talent (49%) in increasingly competitive markets. The result is a dual-track strategy: reshoring in response to risk, while maintaining nearshore or offshore operations for scale and efficiency.

Primary reasons driving global or nearshoring hiring strategy

53%	49%	40%	35%	28%	22%
Cost advantages	Talent availability	Time zone alignment with HQ	Access to specific skill sets	Risk diversification geopolitical instability	Local government or tax incentives

The companies that are navigating this shift best? They're the ones that already have stronger leadership infrastructure in place.

HIGH-READINESS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE THE EDGE

Some companies aren't just responding to change, they're structurally prepared for it. According to the Organizational Design Readiness Index, organizations with more advanced leadership and hiring infrastructure are significantly better equipped to navigate today's economic and geopolitical pressures.

On average, **high-readiness organizations implement more than twice as many hiring and team development strategies** as those in the lowest readiness tier (2.5 vs. 1.2). They're also far more likely to take decisive, strategic action when it comes to executive hiring:

56%
centralize leadership hiring decisions vs. 33% overall

60%
have formal board or advisory talent pipelines vs. 27% overall

By contrast,
35%
of very low-readiness orgs report doing none of the above

This difference extends to global hiring and resilience planning as well:

45%
of high-readiness orgs are actively growing international teams vs. 36% overall

37%
are reshoring roles due to tariff pressure vs. 26% overall

68%
are shifting hiring to politically stable regions in response to global risk vs. 43% overall

In short: high-readiness companies aren't just building stronger leadership teams, they're positioning themselves to lead through uncertainty.

Compensation trends

In a high-stakes market for senior talent, compensation remains a key lever, but it's no longer the only one. Today's tech leaders are weighing salary and equity against other factors: mission, leadership quality, and the opportunity to drive meaningful impact to products, services or business trajectory.

OWNERSHIP AND STAGE STILL MATTER

Unsurprisingly, pay expectations vary significantly based on company stage and ownership structure. Leaders at public companies report the highest total compensation packages, outpacing their peers in private equity–backed and venture-backed firms. VC-backed leaders report the lowest compensation on average, likely reflecting earlier-stage cash constraints and heavier reliance on long-term equity.

AI ADOPTION COMMANDS A PREMIUM

Companies that have moved early on AI aren't just ahead on strategy; they're spending more to get the talent needed to support it.

Across the board, **early AI adopters report significantly higher compensation** than their peers. These companies are investing in leaders with the skills to navigate transformation, scale emerging technologies, and build teams capable of executing in fast-evolving environments.

These gaps suggest that the battle for AI-literate executives is already well underway and companies serious about AI leadership know they'll have to pay to compete.

Key takeaways

Comp expectations are rising
Candidates want packages that reflect both the complexity of their roles and the impact they're expected to deliver.

Ownership structure influences pay
Public company leaders report the highest total comp, while VC-backed leaders report the lowest.

Tech leads on pay
Tech companies offer the most competitive compensation across all industry sectors.

AI adopters are paying to win
Early AI adopters report above-average base and bonus figures as they compete for transformation-ready talent.

Leadership expectations

Tech leaders are redefining what they want from their next role and what they're willing to walk away from. While compensation still matters, it's no longer the only, or even top, driver behind career decisions. Increasingly, senior candidates are prioritizing who they'll work with and what they're building over just what they'll earn.

When evaluating new opportunities, executives consistently rank **leadership quality (42%)** and **belief in the company's product (36%)** above **compensation (34%)**. That's a signal that mission, trust in vision, and team dynamics are playing a larger role in job choice at the executive level.

APPETITE FOR PORTFOLIO CAREERS IS GROWING

Career aspirations are evolving, too. More tech leaders are looking for ways to apply their expertise outside of traditional full-time roles. Nearly **three-quarters (72%)** say they're open to **fractional, advisory, or board roles**, suggesting a growing desire for flexibility, autonomy, and broader impact. This interest reflects a shifting definition of what success looks like at the executive level—less about title, more about purpose and fit.

There is also a growing interest in VE companies. Among leaders open to fractional or advisory roles, **67% are most interested in working with VC-backed companies**. The draw? Opportunity to build from the ground up, move fast, and influence culture early.

SENIORITY SHAPES WHAT LEADERS VALUE

While many priorities are shared among tech executives, there are key differences in expectations by role level. VP-level candidates are significantly more likely to emphasize leadership quality (53%) and compensation (47%), highlighting how career trajectory and upside remain critical earlier in the executive journey. In contrast, SVPs and EVPs are more focused on visionary leadership—while C-level leaders and VPs place greater emphasis on pragmatic execution.

AI IS RESHAPING LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Emerging trends—especially AI—aren't just influencing product roadmaps. They're transforming how companies think about the leadership they need.

In the past 6 months, AI trends have driven tech leadership strategy more than any other factor, with 33–38% of leaders citing it as a major influence, outpacing investor pressure and market conditions. And that influence is only expected to grow: 38–45% say AI will be a top leadership strategy driver in the next year.

Midsize companies (those with $250M–$998M in revenue) appear especially attuned to these shifts, with 50–52% reporting that AI is already having a significant impact across their strategic priorities. This signals a new baseline: today's tech leaders are expected to be AI-fluent, not just familiar with tools, but able to lead through the structural, operational, and talent changes AI demands.

Key takeaways

Leadership quality leads job decisions
42% of tech execs prioritize leadership quality; only 34% cite compensation as a top factor.

Fractional and advisory roles are gaining traction
72% say they're open to nontraditional leadership models like advisory or board roles.

Expectations differ by role level
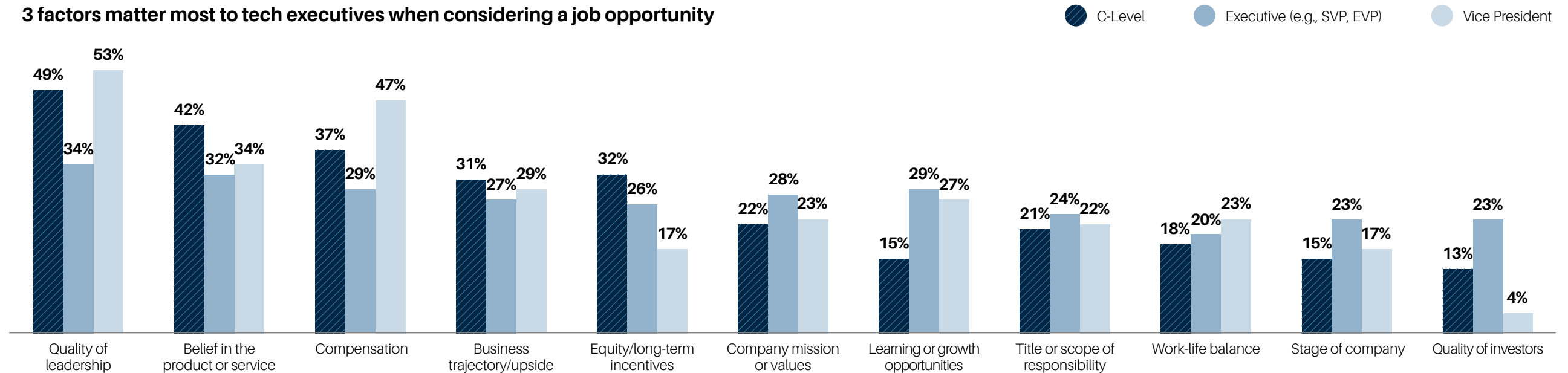VPs care more about comp and leadership fit; SVPs and EVPs prioritize vision.

AI is now a leadership strategy driver
33–38% say AI has already influenced leadership strategy; 38–45% expect it to do so in the year ahead.
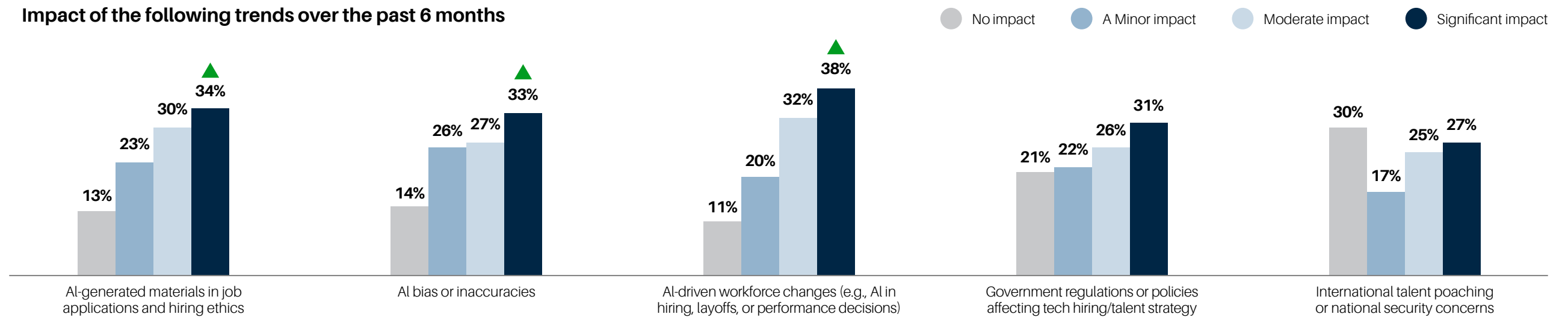
3/4
of tech executives say they're open to fractional, advisory, or board roles

3 factors matter most to tech executives when considering a job opportunity

Legend: C-Level · Executive (e.g., SVP, EVP) · Vice President

Factor	C-Level	Executive	Vice President
Quality of leadership	49%	34%	53%
Belief in the product or service	42%	32%	34%
Compensation	37%	29%	47%
Business trajectory/upside	31%	27%	29%
Equity/long-term incentives	32%	26%	17%
Company mission or values	22%	28%	23%
Learning or growth opportunities	15%	29%	27%
Title or scope of responsibility	21%	24%	22%
Work-life balance	18%	20%	23%
Stage of company	15%	23%	17%
Quality of investors	13%	23%	4%

Impact of the following trends over the past 6 months

Legend: No impact · A Minor impact · Moderate impact · Significant impact

Trend	No impact	A Minor impact	Moderate impact	Significant impact
AI-generated materials in job applications and hiring ethics	13%	23%	30%	34% ▲
AI bias or inaccuracies	14%	26%	27%	33% ▲
AI-driven workforce changes (e.g., AI in hiring, layoffs, or performance decisions)	11%	20%	32%	38% ▲
Government regulations or policies affecting tech hiring/talent strategy	21%	22%	26%	31%
International talent poaching or national security concerns	30%	17%	25%	27%

Final takeaways

As AI reshapes the enterprise technology landscape, leadership structures, hiring strategies, and compensation models are all coming under pressure. Tech leaders are optimistic about AI's potential, but most organizations are still figuring out how to align strategy with execution. This research reveals seven key themes shaping the future of tech leadership:

☑ **AI is setting the strategy, but most companies aren't structurally ready**
AI now ranks as the most important strategic priority for tech leaders. But despite this urgency, most organizations lack the leadership, structure, and cross-functional alignment to scale it. Only 2% qualify as "high readiness" on the Organizational Design Readiness Index.

☑ **The org chart is evolving to support transformation**
Companies are starting to rethink C-level responsibilities, blend disciplines, and create new roles like Chief AI Officer. But most are still expanding existing scopes rather than building net-new capabilities, which may limit long-term impact.

☑ **Leadership hiring is becoming more complex and competitive**
Engineering and executive roles are top hiring priorities, but hard to fill. Internal recruiting functions are under strain, and high-expectation roles require new approaches, including fractional talent and centralized hiring support.

☑ **Global risk is reshaping hiring strategies**
Tariffs and political instability are pushing some companies to reshore roles for resilience, even at higher cost. At the same time, others are expanding global teams to manage scale and efficiency, driving a two-speed approach to tech hiring.

☑ **Compensation matters, but it's not the whole story**
Senior tech leaders still expect competitive packages—especially in AI-adopting companies—but other factors are gaining ground. Leadership quality, belief in product, and mission fit now rank alongside comp as top decision drivers.

☑ **Executives are open to more flexible paths**
Nearly three-quarters of tech leaders say they're open to fractional, advisory, or board roles. This signals a shift toward portfolio-style careers, especially among seasoned executives looking for greater impact and autonomy.

☑ **AI-fluent, execution-focused leaders are in highest demand**
The new leadership archetype is both strategic and operational, comfortable with ambiguity, fluent in AI, and ready to turn bold ideas into real results. These are the leaders companies are building around in 2025 and beyond.

About Riviera Partners

Riviera Partners is a global driver of innovation for today's most influential companies – expertly placing executive talent in the crucial areas of IT, software engineering, product management, security, AI/ML/Data, and design. Riviera combines over two decades of recruiting expertise with a proprietary platform that uses machine learning to score and predict the best candidate for a company's specific needs, driving successful outcome. As a result, the company has become the go-to talent partner for leading private equity investors, venture capitalists, public companies and technology innovators.

Riviera

P A R T N E R S