



## FTI Consulting Survey: Stakeholder Expectations of CEOs Change Post-Pandemic

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### CEOs Expected to Prioritize Financial Performance, Employee Well-Being and Targeted Engagement on Social Issues

WASHINGTON, May 17, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN) today announced the results of its 2023 [CEO Leadership Redefined](#) survey, which found employee, investor and policy influencer expectations of CEOs have changed post-pandemic amid economic uncertainty.

Among the top findings, employees' and investors' desire for CEOs to be financially focused and accessible rose in importance since this survey was first conducted in [2021](#). At the same time, their need for CEOs to demonstrate empathy dropped in importance for both groups. For employees specifically, empathy decreased 6% from 2021, which was the largest year-over-year drop in a desired CEO trait among this group.

"While we saw a rise in the need for empathy during and immediately following the pandemic, we now see a pivot where stakeholders are putting a premium on the priorities needed in today's economic and geopolitical uncertainty, including ethical leadership, financial judgment and employee well-being," said [Christine DiBartolo](#), a Senior Managing Director and Head of the Corporate Reputation practice in the Americas within the Strategic Communications segment at FTI Consulting. "This year's results make one thing very clear: today's CEO needs a dynamic set of skills to meet the different expectations between employees, investors and policy influencers."

All stakeholders believe that a healthy workforce leads to a more resilient business and want CEOs to prioritize employee well-being, talent retention and recruitment. Approximately 1 in 3 investors and employees selected strengthening employee health and well-being as a top priority for CEOs, an increase of 18% and 14%, respectively, from 2021. These sentiments were echoed in Washington, with 7 in 10 policy influencers agreeing that CEOs should publicly make statements or get involved in mental health access. Employees recognize, however, that their needs cannot be met at the expense of business growth and opportunity. Their desire to see CEOs focus on efficient operations, financial performance and profitability increased nearly 20% from 2021.

Stakeholders are also looking for CEOs to be master communicators who engage frequently and publicly address issues of importance when those issues align with company ideals and strategy. Findings from the survey include:

- Overwhelmingly, 88% of employees, 95% of investors and 100% of policy influencers believe CEOs must be excellent communicators — internally and externally — to be successful
- Approximately 7 in 10 employees, 8 in 10 investors and 9 in 10 policy influencers want CEOs to engage in politics only if the issues directly impact their operations or employees
- All groups (81% of employees, 90% of investors and 95% of policy influencers) believe that CEOs should consider how customers will react before deciding to speak out on an issue
- On the issues and topics stakeholders want to see CEOs engage with, data privacy was in the top three for both employees and investors in 2023

The research also confirmed the longstanding belief among the majority of all stakeholder groups that a CEO's reputation directly influences the company's reputation. Millennials feel the most strongly, with 8 in 10 agreeing that CEOs drive a company's reputation. Only 50% of Gen Z respondents agree, signaling their belief that there is accountability across an organization to uphold and protect reputation.

"Employee and investor concerns evolve each year, and CEO engagement is one that needs to be evaluated on a consistent basis," said [Brent McGoldrick](#), a Senior Managing Director and Head of the Digital and Insights practice in the Americas within the Strategic Communications segment at FTI Consulting. "Our results further prove the growing importance of transparency, accessibility and frequency of communication to stakeholders as a priority when addressing business challenges and successes. Engaged CEOs that keep these concerns top of mind provide an outsized and positive impact on corporate reputation and business value."

#### About the survey

This research was conducted online by FTI Consulting's Strategic Communications segment between January 18 – February 1, 2023, among three distinct audiences:

- 800 full-time employed professionals working for large companies with more than 250 employees and based in the United States. These respondents reflect companies employing a total sum aggregate of 3.9 million staff across the United States.
- 250 global institutional investors, representing institutions with an average of \$125 billion in assets under management.
- 200 Washington, D.C., policy influencers, defined as those with experience working in a government institution, think tank, trade association, political party, campaign or issue advocacy.

#### About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting, Inc. is a global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organizations manage change, mitigate risk and resolve disputes: financial, legal, operational, political & regulatory, reputational and transactional. With more than 7,700 employees located in 31 countries, FTI Consulting professionals work closely with clients to anticipate, illuminate and overcome complex business challenges and make the most of opportunities. The Company generated \$3.03 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2022. In certain jurisdictions, FTI Consulting's services are provided through distinct legal entities that are separately capitalized and independently managed. For more information, visit [www.fticonsulting.com](http://www.fticonsulting.com) and connect with us on [Twitter \(@FTIConsulting\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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