

Hey! What's New? 2025-85

Nearly Three-in-five CEOs Optimistic About Global Economic Outlook

Almost 60% of CEOs around the world expect global economic growth to increase over the next 12 months, according to PwC's recently released *28th Annual Global CEO Survey*, launched during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

The report, which surveyed 4,701 CEOs across 109 countries and territories, also finds that 42% expect to increase headcount by 5% or more in the next 12 months – more than double the proportion who expect headcount decreases (17%), and up from 39% last year. The percentage is highest (48%) among smaller companies (less than US\$100 million) and those in the technology (61%), real estate (61%), private equity (52%) and pharma and life sciences (51%) sectors.

Mohamed Kande, PwC's Global Chairman, says that "while CEOs are optimistic about the global economy, macroeconomic volatility (29%) and inflation (27%) nevertheless remain the top risks for the year ahead cited by CEOs globally, but with clear differences between regions.

Geopolitical conflict is seen as the biggest risk in the Middle East (41%) and Central and Eastern Europe (34%). In Western Europe, cyber risk (27%) is a marginally higher concern than a lack of skilled workers (25%) and inflation (24%) – with macroeconomic volatility topping the list at 29%. Inflation is the top concern in Africa (39%), while North America and Asia-Pacific prioritize risks largely in line with the global averages."

He adds that "this year's CEO Survey findings highlight a stark juxtaposition – business leaders around the world are optimistic about the year ahead, but also know they must re-invent how they create, deliver and capture value. Emerging technologies such as GenAI, shifts in geopolitics, and the climate transition are all revolutionizing how the economy works. New business ecosystems are forming, transforming how companies compete and create value. To thrive, business leaders must act now and take bold decisions around their strategy – ranging from people, footprint and supply chain, right through to reinventing their business model."

Consistent with the last two years, the survey found that four in 10 CEOs believe their company will not be viable beyond the next decade if it continues on its current path. Among those that do not expect to last without significant change, 42% cite shifts in the regulatory environment as having the biggest influence on their economic viability.

But CEOs are taking action – across all sectors, almost two-thirds (63%) have taken at least one significant action to change how their company creates, delivers, and captures value in the last five years, with CEOs that have taken more reinvention actions in the last five years reporting higher profit margins in the last 12 months.

The survey found that CEOs are reporting tangible impact from GenAI. More than half (56%) report seeing efficiency gains in their employees' time over the last 12 months, and one-third saw revenue (32%) increases. However, performance is somewhat below expectations expressed last year. In 2024, 46% said they expected to see profitability improvements. A year

later, when we asked if they had seen those gains, only 34% said they had. Trust in AI remains a hurdle to more widespread adoption. Only a third of CEOs said they have a high degree of trust in embedding the technology into key processes in their company.

Despite this, optimism about GenAI's impacts on profitability is slightly up on last year – with 49% expecting an increase in the next 12 months. Roughly half (47%) expect to integrate AI (including GenAI) into their technology platforms over the next three years, 41% plan to integrate it into core business processes and 30% have plans for new products and service development.

As the climate transition continues to impact businesses, CEOs continue to take action. “When we asked CEOs to take stock of the financial impact of climate related investments over the last five years, we found that these moves were six times more likely to have resulted in increased revenue (33%) than decreased revenue (5%). In addition, nearly two-thirds of CEOs reported that climate related investments had either reduced costs or had no significant impact on costs.”

Learn considerably more from PwC's press release at [Nearly three-in-five CEOs optimistic about global economic outlook as they plan headcount increases and continued AI rollout: PwC 2025 Global CEO Survey | PwC.](#)