

Hey! What's New? 2026-12

Leading Through Uncertainty in the Age of AI

It's often said that successful leaders need both a microscope and a telescope to help them identify near-term threats while spotting long-term opportunities. This tension across time horizons is a recurring theme in PwC's 29th Global CEO Survey, based on responses from 4,454 chief executives across 95 countries and territories.

In the year ahead, says the survey report, "CEOs see a world beset by challenges. They've grown significantly less confident about the short-term growth outlook for their companies and more worried about a range of threats, including macroeconomic volatility, cyber risk, and geopolitical conflict. At the same time, they're focusing on multiyear opportunities to reinvent the business. CEOs are forging ahead with investment in AI even though immediate returns are often elusive. They're prioritizing innovation. And many are entering new sectors as they lean into a reconfiguration of industries that's reshaping the global economy."

According to the report's finding, "CEOs moving fast on these dimensions of reinvention are outperforming their peers."

Among the key findings from this year's survey:

- Most CEOs say their companies aren't yet seeing a financial return from investments in AI. Although close to a third (30%) report increased revenue from AI in the last 12 months and a quarter (26%) are seeing lower costs, more than half (56%) say they've realized neither revenue nor cost benefits.
- CEOs are seeking growth opportunities outside of their sectors. More than 40% say their companies have started to compete in new sectors in the last five years. Among those planning large acquisitions over the next three years, four in 10 expect to do deals in other sectors or industries.
- Compared to last year, CEOs are less confident about their company's near-term revenue growth prospects. Only 30% are very or extremely confident about revenue growth over the next 12 months, down from 38% in last year's survey and the recent peak of 56% in 2022.
- Almost a third of CEOs (29%) say tariffs will reduce their company's net profit margin over the next 12 months. The majority (60%) expect little to no change. Among those expecting margin compression, most anticipate only a slight decline.
- Two-thirds of CEOs (66%) say stakeholder trust concerns have arisen in at least one area of business operations over the last 12 months. There's a significant gap in total shareholder returns over this period between public companies experiencing the most and the fewest trust concerns.

"Navigating such a complex environment places a premium on leadership agility," says the report, "including the ability to move quickly between issues, opportunities, and time horizons. CEOs say they spend nearly half (47%) of their time on issues with time horizons of less than one year. That's three times more than the 16% dedicated to activities with a horizon of more

than five years. Are they striking the right balance? It's a question CEOs should ask themselves as they strive to build organizations to thrive both today and tomorrow."

Get more survey results at [29th Global CEO Survey | PwC](#).