

2025 **PLUS** LEADERSHIP | PRE-CHECK

MOOD BAROMETER 2025

HOW COMPANIES ARE LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW BUSINESS YEAR

Editorial

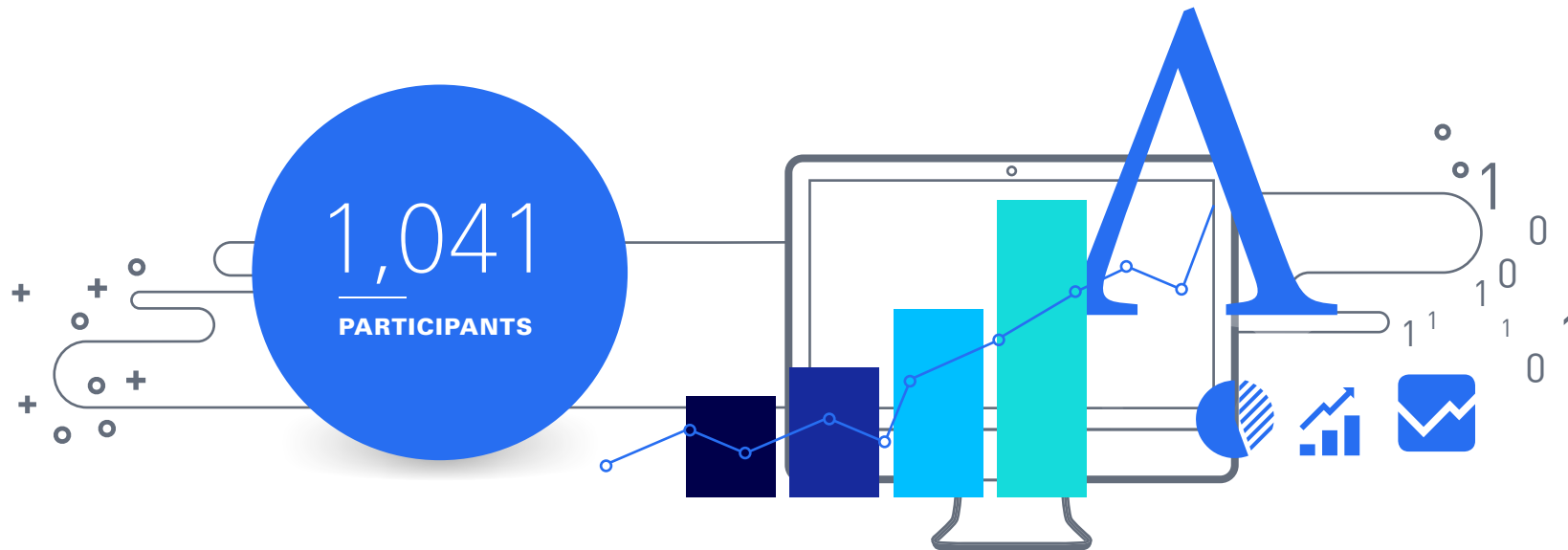
Key Findings and Economic Impact Analysis

The Atreus study “Pre-Check – Leadership+ 2025” highlights evolving leadership requirements and strategies in German business. A notable trend is the growing focus on innovation (+10 percentage points), addressing Germany’s often-criticized lack of innovation.

While digitalization and innovation offer significant opportunities, companies that fail to adapt risk losing their competitive edge. The financial performance in 2024 laid a solid foundation despite unmet targets by some firms. The study reveals a shift toward optimism for 2025, with many leaders expecting improved outcomes and demonstrating adaptability to market dynamics. Overall, the findings provide actionable insights for enhancing Germany’s economic prospects through strategic leadership adjustments.

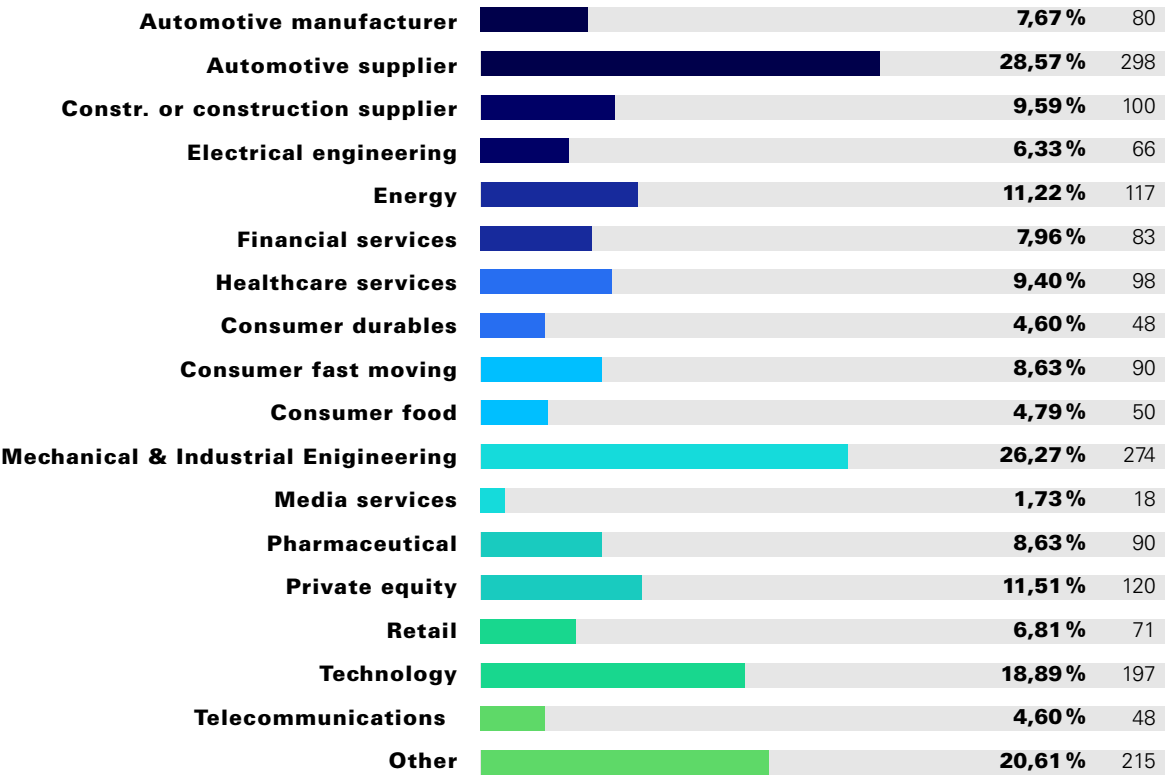
The Study Set-Up

- + **Survey period:** 01.12.2024 to 10.01.2025
- + **Method:** Online survey with closed questions
- + **1,041 participants:** C-suite and senior executives, including board members, supervisory board members, managing directors, founders, interim managers



01

Please specify the **industry of your company**
(select up to 3)



Industry Diversity of Respondents

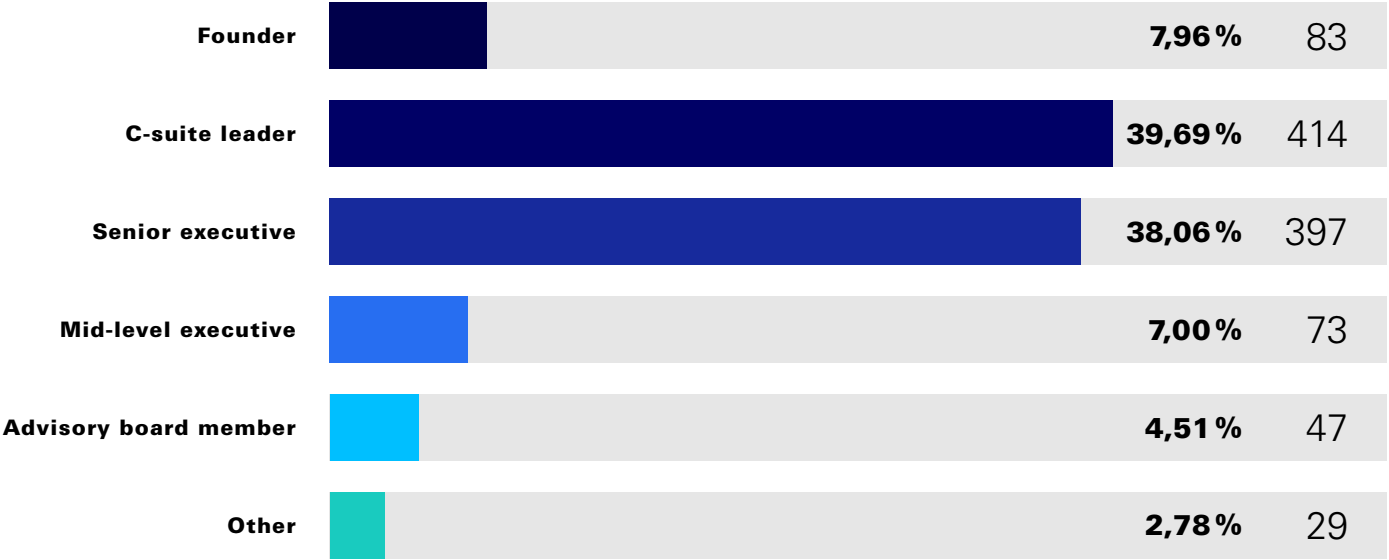
Participants in the Atreus study come from a variety of industries, with the most represented sectors including key German industries. Mechanical and plant engineering (26.27 %), technology (20.61 %), and automotive manufacturers and suppliers (36.24 %). This diversity highlights the broad relevance of the results across industries. The high proportion from the technology sector underscores the growing importance of technological innovation and digitalization in today’s corporate landscape.

Participants’ Leadership Experience

Most respondents hold senior positions: nearly 40% are at C-level roles, such as CEOs, CFOs, or COOs, while 38.06% are senior executives. This indicates that the study provides valuable insights from experienced leaders shaping strategic decisions in their organizations.

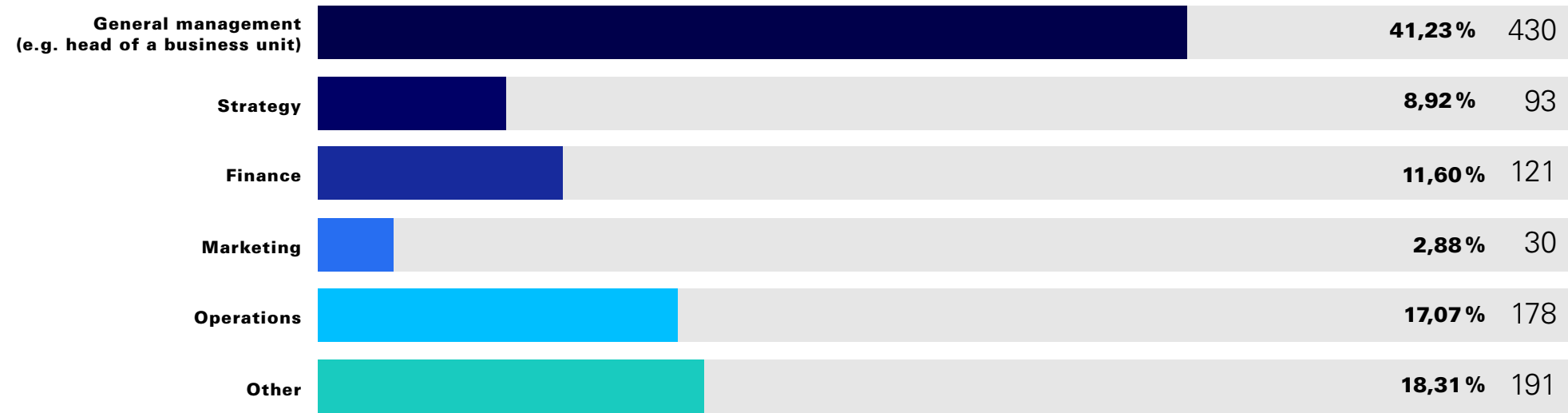
02

Which of the following best describes **your seniority**?

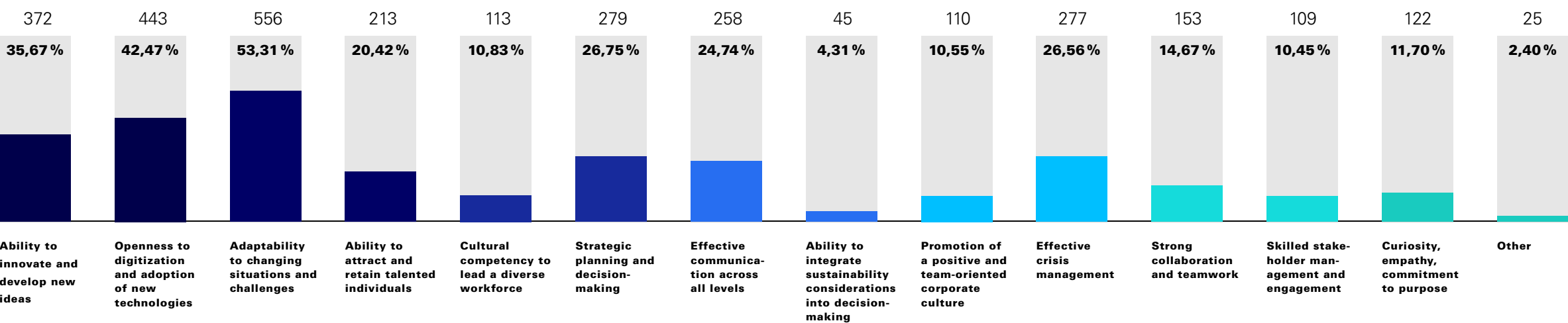


03

In which of the **following functions** is your current role? (select one)



04 What are the **most important skills** a leader will need **over the next 3 years?** (select up to 3)



Future Leadership Requirements

Respondents identified adaptability to changing situations (53.31%), openness to digitalization and new technologies (42.47%), and capacity to innovate (35.67%) as the most critical skills for future leaders. Compared to last year, innovation capacity increased by over 10 percentage points, reflecting its growing recognition as a core aspect of leadership. Additionally, crisis management (26.56%) and strategic planning skills (26.75%) were emphasized as essential, showcasing the demand for leaders who can address both immediate challenges and long-term visions.

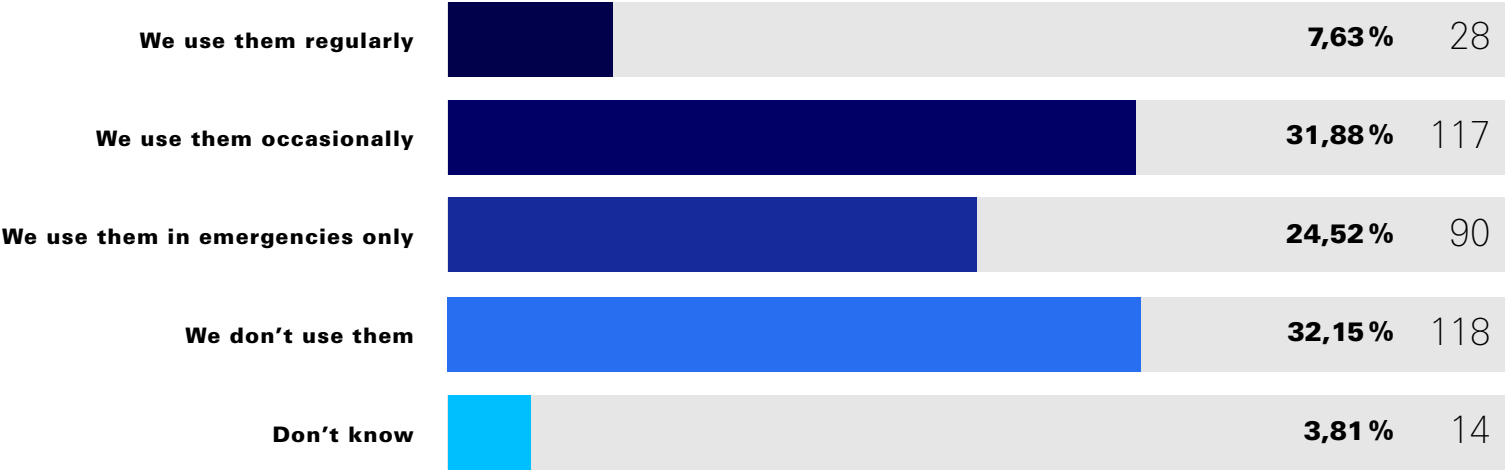
In addition to frequently mentioned skills such as adaptability and digitalization, effective crisis management skills (26.56%) and strategic planning (26.75%) were also highlighted as crucial. This also indicates that companies are increasingly seeking leaders who can effectively handle immediate challenges while also formulating strategic visions for the long term.

Leveraging **Interim Managers**

Nearly 40% of leaders occasionally use interim managers and external consultants, while 24.52% rely on them in emergencies. This demonstrates a strategic approach to leveraging external expertise to meet increasing demands, with temporary expert support becoming a standard practice in German business.

05

How do you describe your company's current deployment of **interim managers or independent consultants** for 2025?
(select one)

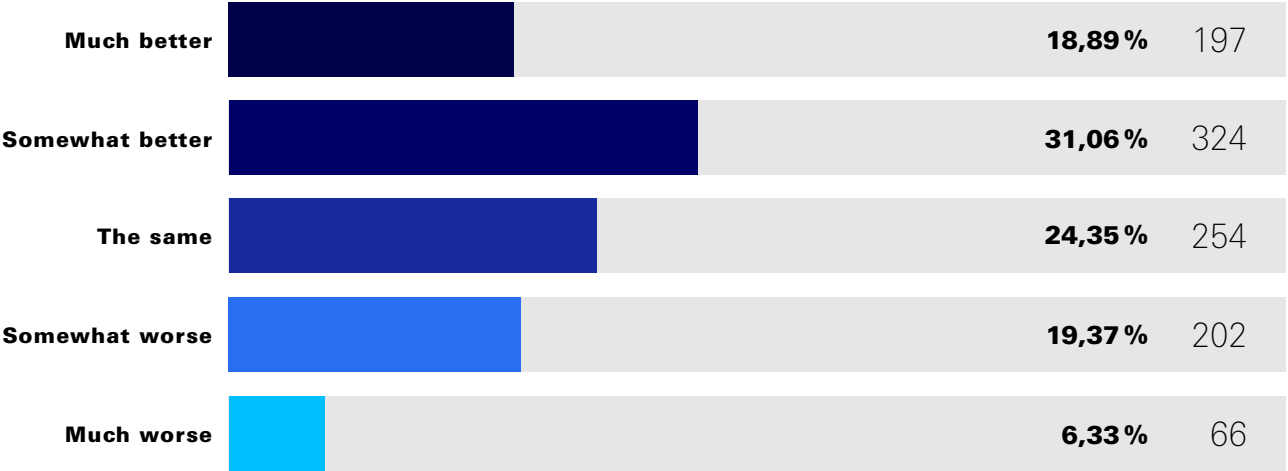


Financial Performance

In 2024, German companies showed a stable financial foundation but room for growth, with over a third (36.34%) not meeting expectations. However, optimism for 2025 is evident: almost half (49.95%) anticipate better results, and 31.06% expect significant improvements, while pessimism dropped to 25.7%. This suggests companies are increasingly resilient to volatile markets and recognize strategic growth opportunities.

The number of executives surveyed who expect worsening results also shrank to just under a quarter (25.7%). This result makes it clear that a significant proportion of companies are now optimistic about the future and recognize strategic growth opportunities despite the challenges now being faced. It also indicates that companies are becoming increasingly adept at navigating volatile market conditions.

06
What do you anticipate your
company's financial performance
will be in 2025? (select one)



This survey was conducted by Atreus GmbH in December 2024.

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