

McKinsey Quarterly

The CEO checklist: A tool for leaders to evaluate themselves against best practices in each of the six responsibilities of the CEO's role.

Questions every CEO should be able to answer

| Direction-setting checklist: Be bold | Not at all | | | Completely | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Vision: Do we have a clear and compelling vision that reframes what winning looks like, and is it owned by the whole enterprise? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Strategy: Have we created a short list of clearly defined big moves at the enterprise level that will distance us from our competitors? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Resource allocation: Are we "thinking like an outsider" to actively reallocate resources (eg, dollars, people, and management attention) to our highest priorities, even when it's hard to do? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Organizational-alignment checklist: Treat the soft stuff as the hard stuff

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| • Culture: Are we targeting and systematically pursuing specific areas of cultural change to further execute our strategy? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Organizational design: Is our organization characterized by a balance of stability and agility that maximizes the speed and effectiveness of execution? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Talent: Are the most value-creating roles in our organization filled with the right talent, and do they have a strong leadership pipeline? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Leadership mobilization checklist: Solve for the team's psychology

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| • Team composition: Is my senior team the right size, comprising people with complementary skills and characterized by an "enterprise first" mindset? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Teamwork: Does my senior team effectively use data and dialogue to make timely decisions on topics that only they can take on? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Operating rhythm: Does my senior team have an effective annual operating rhythm and business review cadence that drive execution and minimize surprises? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Board engagement checklist: Help directors help the business

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| • Relationships: Have I built trust with my board members by being "radically transparent" and showing an interest in their views? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Capabilities: Do we have the right profiles on the board, and are we sufficiently educating directors and pulling them in to help where they can? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Board meetings: Are board sessions well prepped, effectively run, and focused on the future (going well beyond fiduciary topics)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

External-stakeholder-connection checklist: Start with 'Why?'

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| • Purpose: Are we clear on the holistic impact we aspire to (our "why?"), and have we embedded that into the core of how we run our business? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Interactions: Do we fully understand our stakeholders' needs (their "why?") and find constructive common ground with them? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Moments of truth: Have we built resilience ahead of any potential crises so that we'll be able to mitigate their impact and use them to unlock opportunities? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Personal-effectiveness checklist: Do what only you can do

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| • Time and energy: Do I manage my time and energy well, and do I have the right office support in place to help me successfully and sustainably do what only I can do as the CEO? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Leadership model: Am I leading in a way that is authentic to my convictions and values while also adjusting my behaviors to what the organization needs? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| • Perspective: Do I approach my position with humility, focusing on helping others to succeed and continually improving my ability to do so? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |