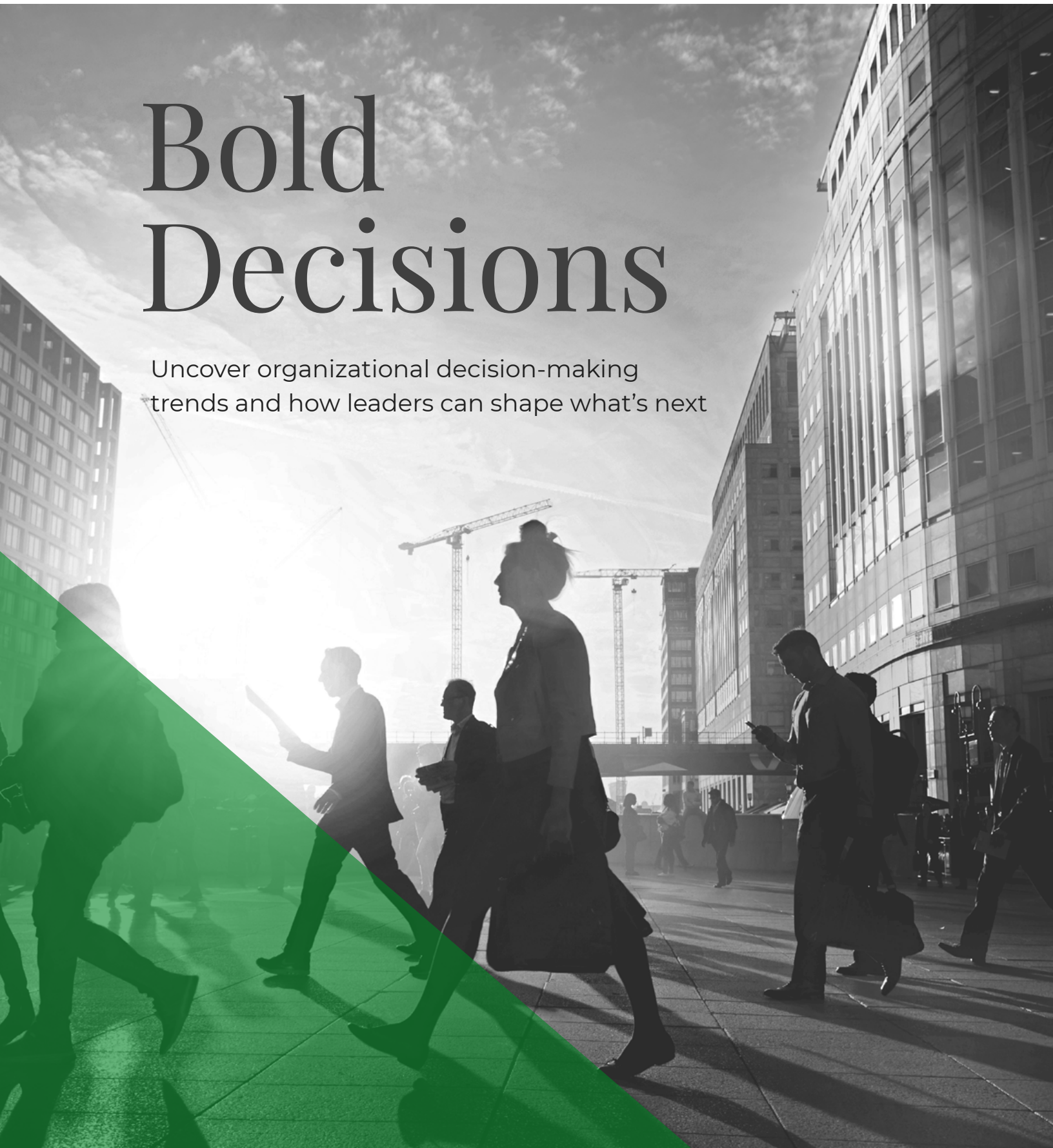


Bold Decisions

Uncover organizational decision-making
trends and how leaders can shape what's next





Executive Summary

As leaders embraced uncertainty and pivoted in remarkable ways throughout the pandemic, bold and fast decision-making played a critical role in separating the winners from the losers.

Seeing the increased pace at which things can get done has set the stage for the next phase in business: bigger, bolder agendas which will require more complex, high-impact decisions.

While business leaders have big plans, they face a volatile and complicated landscape filled with societal, economic, and geopolitical disruptions.

This new reality left us curious: How are leaders approaching decision-making in today's fast-changing environment? What are the key challenges and opportunities in front of them? And with unprecedented access to data, how are leaders using insights to make bold decisions?

To find the answers, we asked over 1,700 business leaders to uncover what the future of decision-making looks like and what leaders can do to empower bold decision-making with confidence.



Key Learnings

- A full two-thirds of business leaders say their companies use data to inform decisions
- However, one-third also say they rely on gut and experience, and that's even higher among senior leaders (40%)
- Just over half (51%) of leaders say they are facing decision-making “impasses”
- Almost half (49%) of leaders are struggling to create actionable insights from the data they have
- Over two-thirds of leaders indicate artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are providing insights used in their organization's decision-making, and that's an increase in use since the start of the pandemic
- A full 80% of leaders would stop working with a vendor or partner if they made a business decision that conflicted with their organization's values



Survey respondents and methodology

This Momentive study was conducted online in B2B and B2C organizations in the US, from February 14-March 6, 2022. Survey respondents were 1,716 leaders with business decision-making authority, from C-suite to managers, across major departments within publicly traded companies, such as Marketing, Finance, Operations management, Human Resources, and IT.

Audience breakdown

1,716

leaders with business
decision-making authority

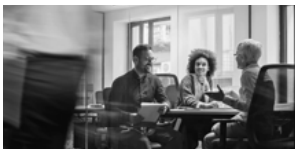
232 Marketing

166 Insights

228 CX

302 IT

201 HR



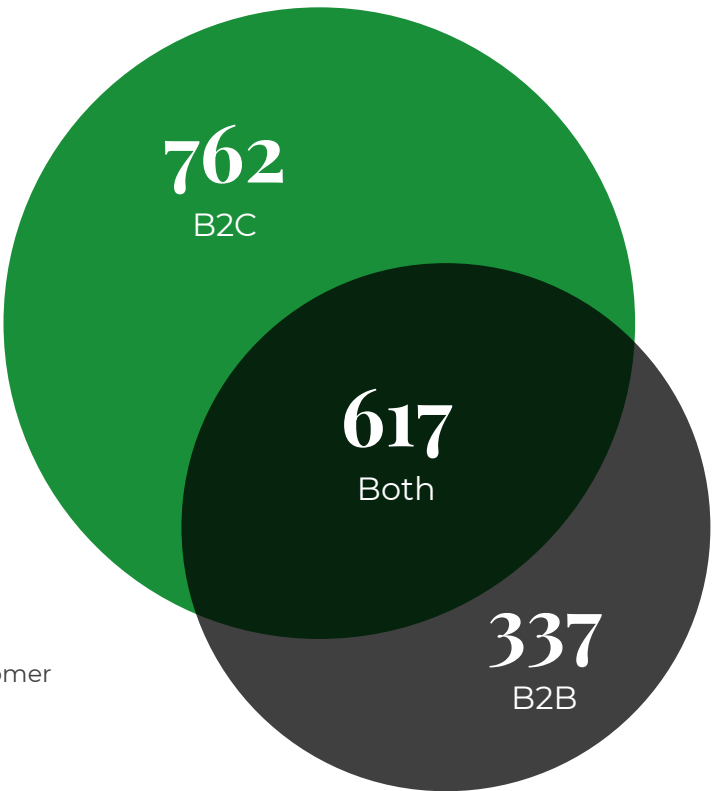
912 GenZ +
Millennial

793 GenX + Boomer



692 Male

812 Female





To understand the current state of decision-making among business leaders, we looked at three areas

1

The approach

What are bold decisions and how do leaders approach decision-making

2

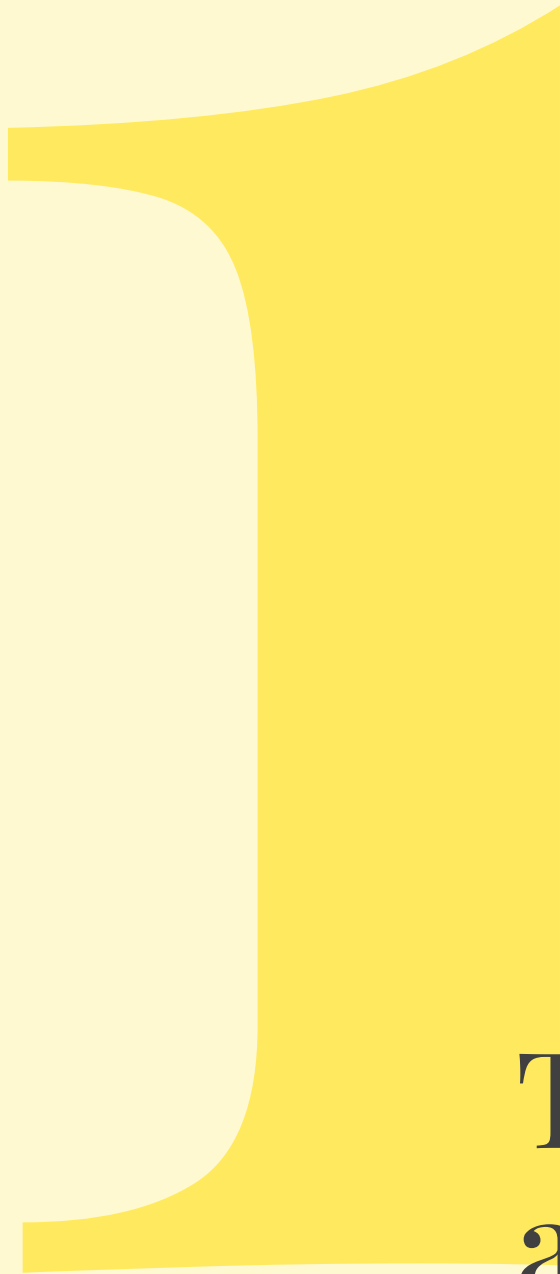
The internal factors

Roadblocks to decision-making and how you can overcome them

3

The external factors

How shifting trends and new technologies are impacting decision-making



The approach

How leaders approach decision-making



What are “bold” decisions?

At Momentive, we define bold decisions as those that can make or break the business. They threaten the familiar, sometimes buck conventional wisdom, and often place the organization on an entirely different path.

The famous ones—Steve Jobs and the iPhone, Jeff Bezos’ decision to pursue “infrastructure services” as a business, Netflix’s pivot to streaming, CVS taking a stand by removing tobacco products—serve to remind leaders that game-changing success can be traced back to bold decisions.


Embracing data to pivot in remarkable ways

Today, leaders are also embracing data to spot a big trend and make a pivot. For example, Wahl Clipper, a 100-year-old grooming company, not only used real-time data to get ahead of the home haircut trend but also discovered that 30% of consumers were not going back to a barber post-pandemic. Those insights represent big opportunities for Wahl on a global scale and continue to deliver important data for future decisions.

Making bold decisions in the age of uncertainty

Choosing when to go with your gut versus the data for decision-making is a constant struggle for leaders and organizations. In our personal life, we sometimes rely on our gut to make bold decisions. In the business world, it’s risky—especially in today’s economy filled with increased disruption.

From Peloton to Spotify, we’ve learned every consumer is an activist, and they’re using their power to sway markets at unprecedented speed. The volume of high-impact decisions leaders and teams will have to make has increased, and they need to be made faster than ever before—all of which creates a pressing need for leaders to re-think their approach to making bold decisions.



Product launch
Re-brand
New campaigns
Business pivot
Social responsibility



The decision-making dilemma: data-driven vs. gut instinct

Organizations face many challenges, but decision-making may be among the toughest. Who makes the call? How is it decided? What factors contribute to the decision?

When we asked business leaders how they make decisions, a robust 67% said their companies primarily make decisions based on data. This is good news. However, 35% of business leaders also say their companies rely on gut and experience to make decisions, too. Among senior leaders, that increases to 40% compared to only 32% of mid-level leaders.

Striking the right balance between artificial and human intelligence

This finding highlights a key challenge for leaders and the enterprise: Where does gut instinct fit into decision-making in the data-driven, AI world? In short: we believe there is room for both. Our high degree of confidence comes from helping 95% of the Fortune 500 companies use

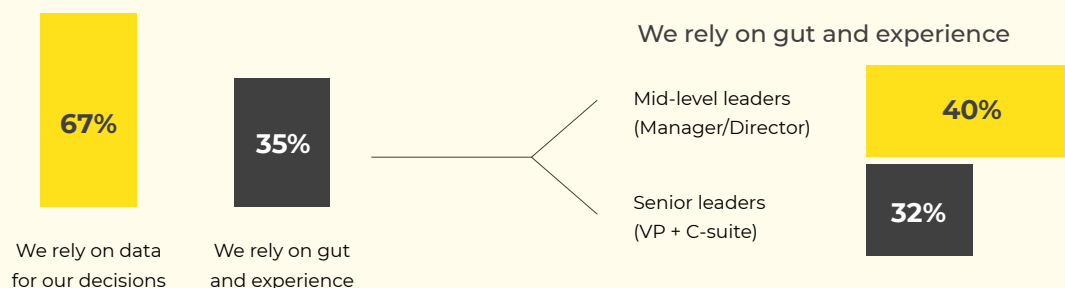
AI-powered insights to enhance human decision-making. There is no “one size fits all”, but one thing is certain: leaders will have to figure out what decisions and circumstances require a more “show me the data” approach versus relying on gut instinct.

The rise of delegated decision-making

Our research also shows that more leaders are delegating decision-making to team members versus solely making the call (39% compared to 34%). It will be interesting to see if more delegated decision-making contributes to increased business agility. And given that many are now operating in a hybrid work environment, will employees need new tools to empower their decision-making?

In either scenario, leaders would be wise to re-visit decision-making frameworks to provide clarity around data vs. gut instinct use cases.

How are decisions made at your company?





Most leaders are confident in their decisions—or are they?

Learning how to view yourself objectively is one of the most challenging aspects of being a leader, but it's critical if you hope to be a good one. Applying a critical eye, assessing capabilities, and asking the tough questions will be essential steps if you want to make better and faster decisions.

In our research, we asked business leaders how confident they were in their leadership team's decision-making. Overall, 81% of business leaders are feeling pretty confident, but there's a stark contrast in what the C-suite and mid-level leaders think about the state of decision-making.

Mind the C-suite vs. mid-level disconnect

The findings show there is a big disconnect in decision-making confidence levels. In fact, 89% of senior leaders (VP, C-suite) are confident in the decisions their leadership teams are making, but only 77% of mid-level leaders agree. Perhaps this is an opportunity for leaders to find new ways to make decision-making less stressful and find new ways to increase confidence?



89%

Senior leaders are very confident in their decision-making



Only
77%

of mid-level leaders agree



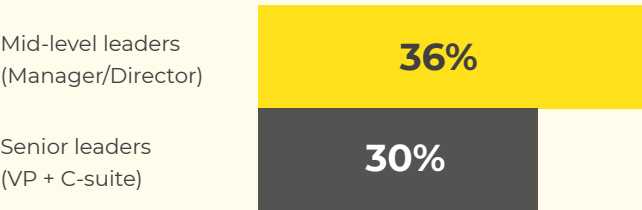
What’s behind the disconnect?

Our findings reveal the barriers to confidence center around pace of decision-making and lack of access to the right data. Compared to senior leaders, mid-level leaders are twice as likely to feel that decisions take too long to make. Also, a larger portion of mid-level leaders believe they don’t have access to accurate data versus senior leaders (36% compared to 30%).

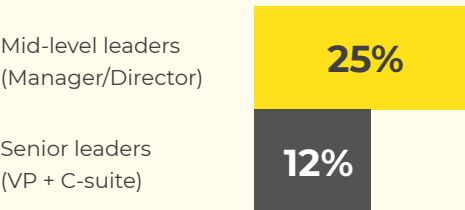
Bottom line: Leaders should be mindful of this disconnect and check-in with their mid-level leaders about their data challenges. Is the issue that they need more insights or faster access to them? Taking steps to solve these challenges will be key to increasing confidence levels.

C-suite and mid-level leaders differ on barriers to decision-making confidence

Lack of access to accurate data



Decision-making takes too long





Decision-making isn't moving at the speed of business

At the speed at which things change, it's important to make decisions in a timely manner. Too fast, and your hasty decision could mean you miss an important detail; too slow, and you may miss an important opportunity.

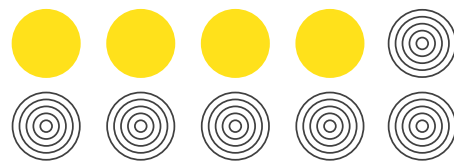
While nearly 60% of leaders find their companies make decisions at an acceptable pace, 20% say their companies decide too quickly and another 21% say their companies decide too slowly. This means a collective 4 out of 10 leaders don't think their companies are making decisions at an acceptable pace.

Generational divide on decision-making speed

More Gen X and Baby Boomer leaders agreed with their company's pace of decision-making vs. Gen Z and Millennials (68% compared to 52%). With younger leaders expressing more concern over decision-making speed and stronger comfort with AI, we may see more experimentation and use cases develop at these organizations. Check out our **generational spotlight** for more insights on page 26.

What slows down decision-making?

It appears leaders are struggling overall with budgets, which trickles down to impacting their resources. A full 62% of business leaders state budgets and costs as the biggest challenge they face in their role and 42% indicate they don't have sufficient data or information needed to inform decisions at their companies.



A significant **4 in 10** leaders don't think their companies are making decisions at an acceptable pace



Leaders face decision-making impasses

Especially important to success is simply being confident in the decisions you make as a leader. A whopping 97% of business leaders are confident in the decisions they make in their role, but there's a catch; over half (51%) are experiencing decision-making impasses, citing lack of insights and inability to measure outcomes.

51%
are experiencing decision-making impasses

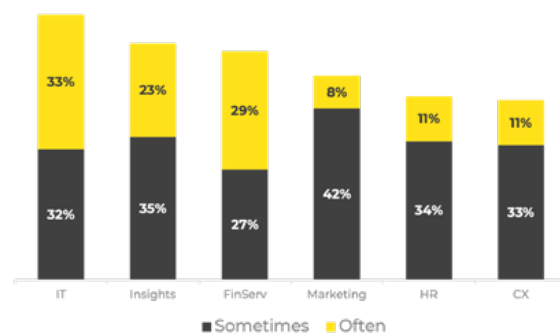
In fact, a larger portion of leaders in some areas of the business have fallen victim to this: 65% of IT, 58% of Insights, and 56% of FinServ leaders indicated experiencing decision-making impasses. And stalled decision-making impacts senior leaders more (56%), compared to 48% of mid-level leaders.

This trend is consistent with a study we ran in January 2022, where six in 10 business decision-makers said they're experiencing decision-making impasses too.¹ "Business decision-makers are juggling a lot in terms of managing timelines, people, and more specifically, the data and inputs that go into making decisions," said Sam Gutierrez, research scientist, Momentive.

What's bringing decision-making to a halt?

Our findings reveal that data challenges are causing gridlock. Business leaders say the top challenges include not having the right data (34%) and inability to measure outcomes (32%)—both hinder leaders' ability to feel confident in their decisions and ultimately result in stalled decision-making. Breaking the cycle is going to require a combination of a culture shift, updated frameworks, and new technology to help leaders and employees feel more confident.

How often do you experience decision-making impasses in your role?



¹ This Momenive study was conducted on January 24, 2022 among a sample of 296 business decision-makers in the U.S. Respondents for this survey were selected from the more than 2 million people who take surveys on our platform each day.



How to shape what's next

1

Build a data-driven culture

Instill a culture of using data and insights to inform decisions within your organization. While gut and experience may provide you with guidance towards the right solution, be sure to back it up with quality insights.

2

Increase investments in technology to shift how people make decisions

Be sure that adequate budget is being focused to research and measurement needs. Consider testing new ideas before investing to help prioritize and gain buy-in.

3

Speed access to insights

Avoid decision impasses by not only equipping yourself and your team with the insights needed to confidently make decisions, but also clearly defining expected outcomes and measurements before embarking on a new effort.



BOLD DECISION-MAKER SPOTLIGHT

ClickUp turns to Momentive to quarterback insights for their first “big game” commercial

When ClickUp, a fast-growing provider of an all-in-one productivity platform wanted to launch their first-ever ad in this year's big game, they turned to Momentive to make data-informed decisions quickly and with confidence.

In partnering with Momentive, the ClickUp team was able to hone in on an ad that would truly resonate with their audience on game day. “With Ad Testing, we were able to get a statistically significant indication as to which commercial was more memorable, which one was funnier, the metrics that we wanted to go by,” said Brian Sherry, Creative Operations Lead, ClickUp.

Additionally, in working with the Momentive professional services team, ClickUp received tailored insights as quickly as they needed

them. “The professional services team at Momentive was amazing,” Brian said. “There was a ton of communication, and I can’t stress how important consistent communication is in a super high-stress and timely environment like the one that we were in. The proactive communication was a game changer, and we wouldn’t have been able to make an informed decision without the Momentive team’s facilitation.”

Ultimately, Momentive was able to provide the ClickUp team with high-quality data and actionable insights so that they could move forward confidently with their ad campaign for the big game. “My biggest takeaway in working with Momentive was that I felt confident in the results that we received,” added Brian.

“That’s one of the most important things that a data-driven company can walk away with: feeling confident in the insights that inform your decision.”

Brian Sherry

Creative Operations Lead
ClickUp





The internal factors

Roadblocks to decision-making and how
you can overcome them



Data vs. insights: The struggle is real

It's not enough to have data and insights, you must also take action. Insights should be used to inform your strategy, testing, planning, and execution to help influence decisions and understand the outcome of those decisions.

When it comes to individual decision-making at work, a hefty 80% of business leaders say they often or always use data to inform their business decisions, which is significantly higher than their views on how often their company is relying on data to make decisions (only 67%). This suggests that leaders have a bigger appetite for more data-

driven decision-making and that something is impeding this at the company level. Our next finding provides a clue.

While 51% of business leaders state they have the right data necessary to create actionable insights, the other half (49%) are struggling to create actionable insights from the data they have. Having too much (13%) or too little (36%) data is contributing to the struggle. Over one-third of leaders (36%) say their company is only somewhat or not effective at all at creating insights from the data it has.



49%

of leaders say they are struggling to create actionable insights from the data they have



Are leaders truly committed to putting customers at the center of their business?

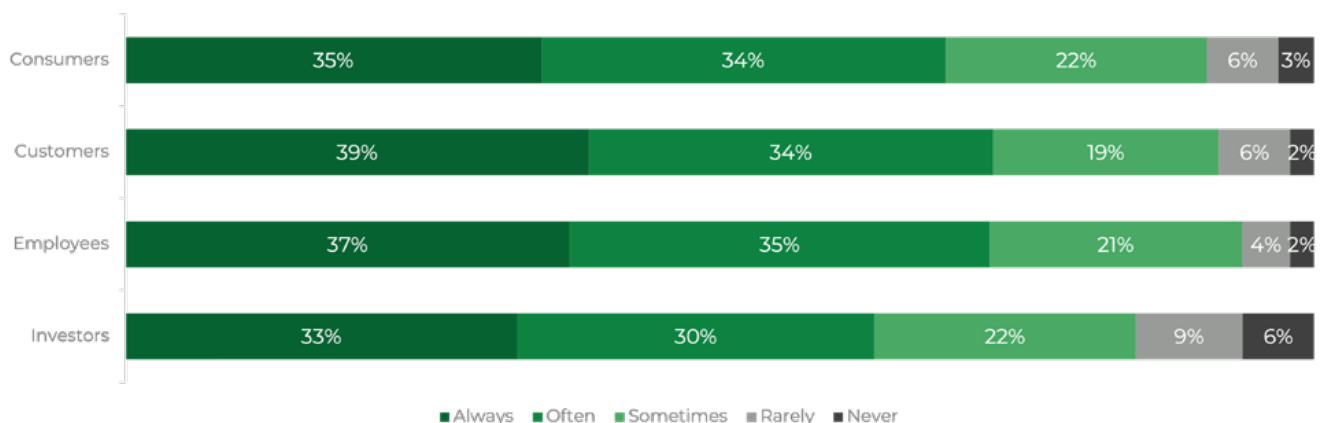
And while most business leaders say they are collecting feedback from their key stakeholders (i.e. consumers, customers, employees, and investors) always or often, over 25% of business leaders are only collecting feedback from key stakeholders sometimes, rarely, or even not at all.

In fact, only 48% of companies say customer feedback is a leading driver of strategic business decisions.¹ In today's environment where customer experience is everything and expectations are rising, this number is concerning.

Leader should keep in mind this takeaway from our **2022 State of CX Report:**

Organizations that keep a steady pulse on the voice of the customer across all touchpoints and embed those insights into the business saw a greater return on their CX investment, while creating more hyper-personalized experiences that connected with their audiences.

How often do you collect feedback from the following stakeholders?



This text for the footnote: This GetFeedback study was conducted online in B2B and B2C organizations across five countries: the U.S., U.K., Germany, France, and Austria (n=2,267), from October 14-28, 2021. Survey respondents were VoC/CX professionals, who were actively involved in running or contributing to VoC/CX programs at their organizations.



Bridging the gap between alignment and performance

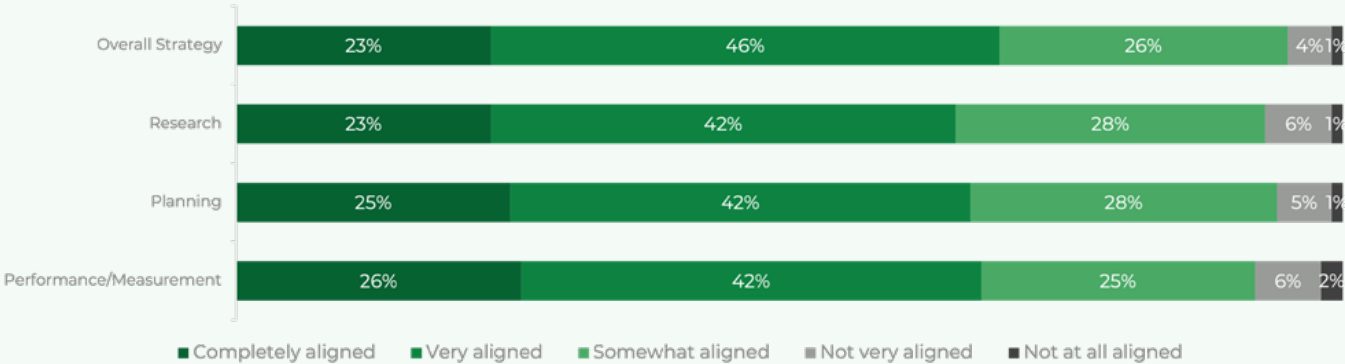
To make matters worse, there's a gap when it comes to internal alignment, which impacts measurement, outcomes, and the ability to use insights efficiently. A significant 30% or more of business leaders indicate their overall strategy, research, planning, and performance/measurement efforts are only somewhat aligned or not aligned at all within their organizations. This means teams are potentially working towards different (perhaps competing) goals and creating a ripple effect of inefficiency.

One key area to get alignment: the performance of the business and return on investment from growth initiatives.

A majority 57% of leaders indicate that measuring and proving what they do works is among the top challenges they face. And while 84% of business leaders indicate they measure performance through most or all of their business, less than half (49%) have always-on or weekly measurement in place.

What's holding them back? The top reasons hindering leaders from properly measuring performance are time (37%), costs (34%), and lack of personnel (33%).

How aligned are the following aspects of your business across the various departments within your organization?





How to shape what's next

1

Increase stakeholder feedback cadence

Effectively define and listen to your key stakeholders for feedback on an ongoing, consistent basis to better respond to and adapt to their perspectives.

2

Incorporate research into strategy and planning

Enable and encourage collaboration within your organization. Align research, strategy, and planning across departments to unlock potential.



BOLD DECISION-MAKER SPOTLIGHT

Golden State Warriors turn to Momentive to put data behind every decision

As the Golden State Warriors evolved from a basketball business to a live entertainment company, they wanted insights to make data-driven plans to grow all parts of their business.

With such diverse offerings, and a deep commitment to creating incredible experiences, the Warriors turned to Momentive to understand and improve the fan experience, conduct research to build their fanbase and stay ahead of live event industry trends, and foster a healthy and inclusive workforce.

The results: 19% increase in their Net Promoter Score® (NPS)

Market research findings have helped the Warriors optimize experiences for die hard and casual fans. For example, they've introduced more diverse dance teams and social media opportunities to provide visitors with a memorable experience.

[Read more >](#)

“The world is constantly changing. All we know is that tomorrow’s not going to be the same as today, so if you’re not continuously adapting, continuously improving, it’s hard to stay competitive.”

Charles Gao

Senior Manager of Business Strategy
and Analytics

Golden State Warriors





The external factors

How shifting trends and new technologies
are impacting decision-making



Staying ahead of shifting trends

In today's environment, it's crucial to not only stay on top of trends or huge disruptions but be prepared for them. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly can't be understated, but other events in the world also play a huge role in business.

Leaders can count on more societal, geopolitical, and economic disruptions

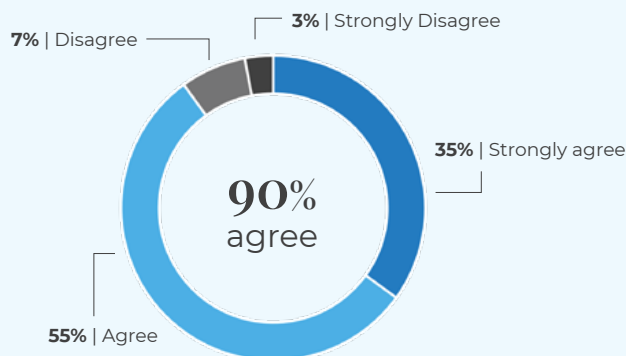
The #MeToo movement and the murder of George Floyd have increased awareness of social injustices. International conflicts between nations, changes in employee expectations of their employers, and shifting consumer behaviors and sentiment all greatly impact how companies operate.

So, it's good news to see that 90% of business leaders agree that their organization is well-positioned to adapt during times of disruption and 89% of business leaders agree that their organization provides them with the tools to anticipate shifting industry trends.

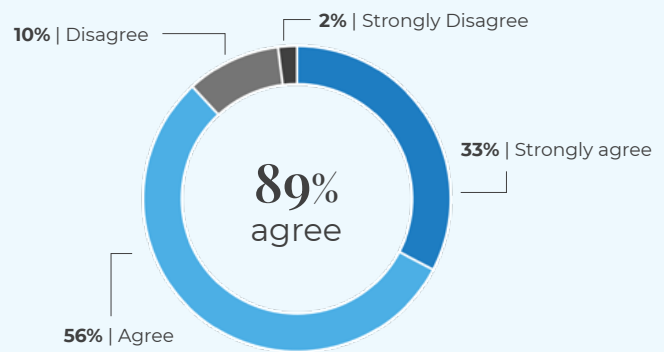
Emerging trends impacting the future of decision-making

Two trends gaining a lot of traction recently are the inclusion of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in business systems and how increased awareness and triggering events related to social values have permeated business decisions.

How much do you agree or disagree that your organization is well-positioned to adapt during times of disruption?



How much do you agree or disagree that your organization provides you with the tools to anticipate shifting industry trends?





Trend #1: Leaders embrace AI to enhance decision-making

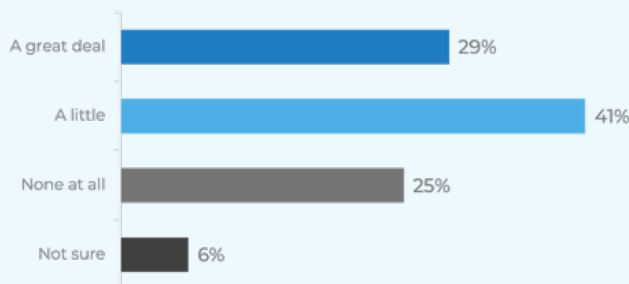
Staying ahead of the curve means having the right data and the tools and personnel to create insights and take action. A full 53% of business leaders indicate their companies stay ahead of trends by beta testing or being among the first to adopt new market research and tools. But 30% state they are waiting until market research and tools are widely adopted to use them, if they ever do at all.

In recent years, many companies have incorporated advanced tools in the forms of artificial intelligence and machine learning, which greatly accelerate the speed and volume at which complex insights can be uncovered. A majority 70% of business leaders indicate AI and ML are providing some insights used in their organization's

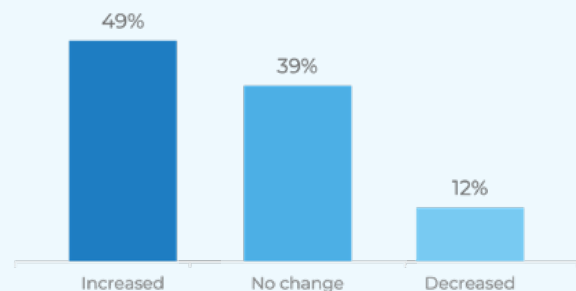
decision-making process, and nearly half (49%) say that represents an increase in adoption and use of such tools since the start of the pandemic. Over 40% of leaders in IT and financial services indicate they are using AI and ML, the most among the departments measured.

As AI-powered decision-making accelerates across the enterprise, it will be interesting to see how leaders use these insights to make an impact. Will leaders invest in more large-scale initiatives because they have unique insights and increased confidence? Will the pace of innovation increase? Time will tell but one thing is certain: leaders will want to be at the forefront of this trend to outmaneuver competitors.

To what extent do AI and ML insights inform your org's decision-making process?



Since the start of the pandemic, did your organization increase or decrease adoption of AI, ML, or automation tools for decision-making?





Trend #2:

Corporate social responsibility expectations are rising

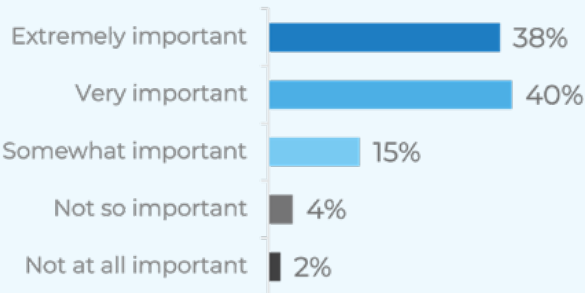
Increased awareness among the general public around social inequities have had a major effect on businesses—both externally and internally. Where at first companies could get away with updating their messaging and perhaps donating to a cause, now the expectations from consumers are much more—companies are expected to have social values, instill them in all aspects of their business, and do good for the community.

And the expectations around values extend to the people and companies that you work with. A majority 78% of business leaders say that a vendor or partner’s mission and/or values are important in deciding whether

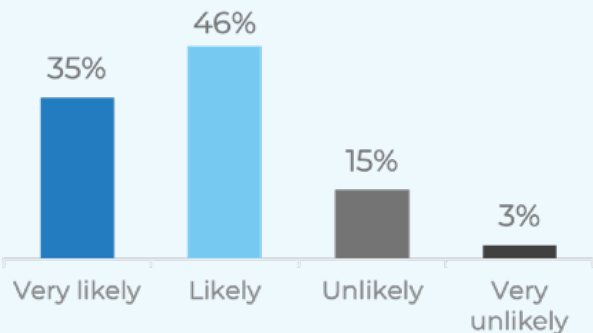
to work with them, and another 15% find it at least somewhat important. And 81% indicate that if a vendor or partner made business decisions that conflicted with their organization’s values, they would stop working with them. This trend is more pronounced among Gen Z and Millennial leaders, where 84% say they would stop working with such a partner compared to only 74% of Gen X and Boomer cohorts.

B2B companies should note that when leaders are deciding about a technology provider for their business, 64% say company reputation and 51% say company values matter most.

How important is a vendor’s mission and values to your organization’s decision to work with them?



How likely is your organization to stop working with a vendor if they made a business decision that conflicted with your organization’s values?





How to shape what's next

1

Adopt emerging technology for a competitive edge

Engage new technologies, and sooner, to stay ahead of trends and make more informed decisions.

2

Embrace AI to enhance human judgement

Figure out how to incorporate AI and ML into your businesses; when properly paired with human intelligence, a wealth of new insights and opportunities can be unlocked.

3

Tap into real-time brand insights

Better understand the impact of societal shifts on your business—both internally, regarding how you run your operations and treat employees, and externally in how you present yourself and work with others.



GENERATIONAL INSIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Leaders under 40

As younger leaders take on more high-level roles, they're bringing unique perspectives on how to run a business. How are they thinking about decisions compared to Gen X and Baby Boomer leaders? Here's what they had to say.

Stalled decision-making impacts younger leaders more

A majority 58% of younger leaders experience decision-making "impasses" sometimes or often compared to only 41% of older leaders. There is no doubt that past experience is valuable for complex decision-making and perhaps younger leaders need more time because they're newer to facing these types of decisions.

However, our research uncovered another finding that may be contributing to the issue: younger and older leaders differ on decision-making barriers. Younger leaders say these top two reasons prohibit confidence in decision-making:

- A full 20% state lack of access to the right/enough data (vs. 11% of older leaders)
- Similarly, 20% note an inability to accurately measure the outcomes (vs. 15% of older leaders)

Perhaps it's not just a lack of experience, but more of a need for better tools to gain insights.

Gen Z and Millennial leaders rely on AI more than older leaders

As a cohort that grew up in an AI world and given the challenges mentioned above, a higher 36% of younger leaders indicate their orgs are using AI and ML to inform decision-making (compared to only 20% of Gen X/Boomer leaders).

It will be interesting to see how younger leaders shape the future of decision-making using AI. With faster access to insights and increased confidence, will we see a competitive advantage develop faster at organizations with younger leaders? The outcome remains to be seen, but we hope younger and older leaders continue to empower their teams to make data-driven, bold decisions.



36%

of younger leaders indicate their orgs are using AI and ML to inform decision-making (compared to only 20% of Gen X/Boomer leaders)

Data-driven boldness is the new normal

In business, change is inevitable. As leaders, you can let that consume you, or you can equip yourself and your teams and organizations with the tools and strategies to face change head-on.

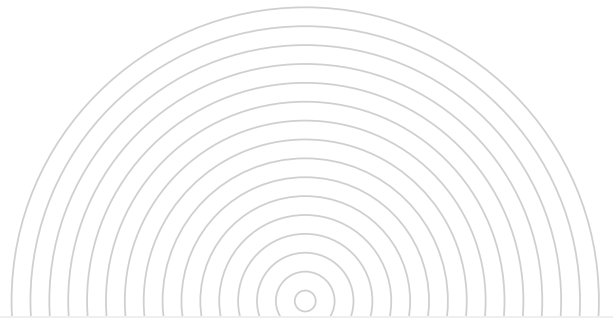
Organizations that connect with their communities and their employees and use feedback to inform their decisions will continue to outpace the competition. As will those that embrace new technologies and approaches that can unlock insights and potential for growth.

Armed with the right information, you can confidently make bold decisions and help shape what's next.

Want to learn more about market
research solutions for your company?

Visit momentive.ai

[Contact us](#)



About Momentive

Momentive is a leader in agile experience management, delivering powerful, purpose-built solutions that bring together the best parts of humanity and technology to redefine AI. Momentive products, including GetFeedback, SurveyMonkey, and its brand and market insights solutions, empower decision-makers at 345,000 organizations worldwide to shape exceptional experiences. More than 20 million active users rely on Momentive for market insights, brand insights, employee experience, customer experience, and product experience. Ultimately, the company's vision is to raise the bar for human experiences by amplifying individual voices.

