

THE MOST COMMON **CHALLENGES** FIRST-LEVEL **LEADERS FACE** TODAY

New study sheds light on common issues in personal leadership, team dynamics, and business outcomes

FranklinCovey's research shows organizations why it is so important to find and foster first-level leaders. Most first-level leaders are confident in their talents, but many feel **OVERWHELMED WITH RESPONSIBILITY**.

Many first-level leaders say their teams run smoothly, conversely their direct reports say they want more feedback on their performance. Organizations need to invest the time and training it takes to **STRENGTHEN THIS TIER** of first-level leaders.



CREATING FOLLOWERS OR LEADERS?

The great business leaders of today certainly did not start off that way.

- Oprah Winfrey was fired from her first job as a Baltimore TV reporter.
- Steven Spielberg was rejected from film school three times.
- Henry Ford started two failed automobile companies before founding Ford.
- James Dyson attempted over 5,000 failed versions of a vacuum before succeeding.

Great leaders are built — not born. They don't just change the rules — they change the game. Great leaders don't create followers — they create new leaders.

WHO ARE FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS?

Where does a leader's legacy begin? For most in the workplace, that legacy begins with the opportunity to run a single team. We call employees who have just one tier of employees reporting to them “first-level leaders,” because they are on the first step of leadership.

First-level leaders have tremendous impact on your business. They execute key company strategies, keep frontline employees engaged, and often serve as escalation points for unhappy customers.



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HABITS OF FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS

“AVERAGE”

FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS

Are less confident of their ability to think strategically

Are more likely to withhold critical feedback

Are less confident they can deliver expected results

Feel less prepared to lead their team through change

“ABOVE-AVERAGE”

FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS

Interact daily with their direct reports

Are more comfortable receiving critical feedback

Feel prepared to coach and develop their team

Have more access to leadership training and use it

First-level leaders report that many factors shape their habits.

- The top challenges for them include:
 - Keeping employees accountable
 - Keeping employees motivated
 - Work/life balance
 - Managing team communication
 - Dealing with change and uncertainty

- **60%** of first-level leaders say they feel overwhelmed with their responsibilities at least a few times in a month
- Industries in which first-level leaders most often feel overwhelmed:
 - Technology
 - Professional services
 - Retail



Only **8%** of
HEALTHCARE leaders
felt prepared to lead
as new leaders,

54%
DO NOW.

Only **26%** of
FINANCE leaders
felt prepared to lead
as new leaders,

63%
DO NOW.

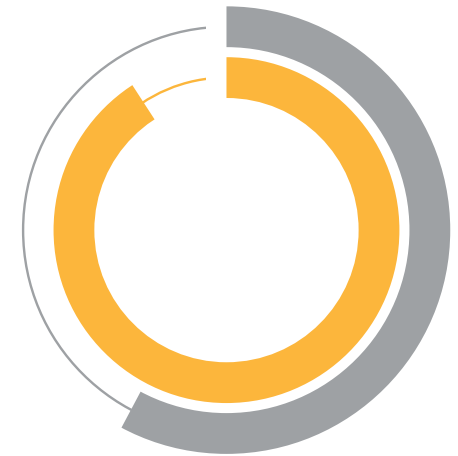
TEAM DYNAMICS



Collaboration in the workplace has evolved. There is less face-to-face communication, and more FaceTime®; less uniformity and more diversity; less social interaction and more #Slack. These changes make us efficient, but pose challenges for first-level leaders because collaboration often happens remotely through screens instead of in person.

- First-level leaders who manage remote employees are less likely to say they have the trust of their team.
- First-level leaders who have managed a team more than four years are no more likely than new first-level leaders to say they have the trust of their team.

91% OF FIRST-LEVEL **LEADERS** ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEY **HAVE THE TRUST** OF THEIR TEAM



58% OF **EMPLOYEES** SAY THEY **TRUST STRANGERS** MORE THAN THEY TRUST THEIR OWN BOSS.*



Leaders who have **HIGH CONFIDENCE** that they have the trust of their teams are **MORE LIKELY** to:

- Meet more often with direct reports
- Feel prepared to manage others
- Think strategically
- Share critical feedback
- Accept critical feedback
- Feel prepared to coach their team

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Today's leaders face challenges that did not exist a generation ago. Employees are skeptical of the upper tiers of management, are asked to give more, and are more likely to job hop, taking their institutional knowledge with them.

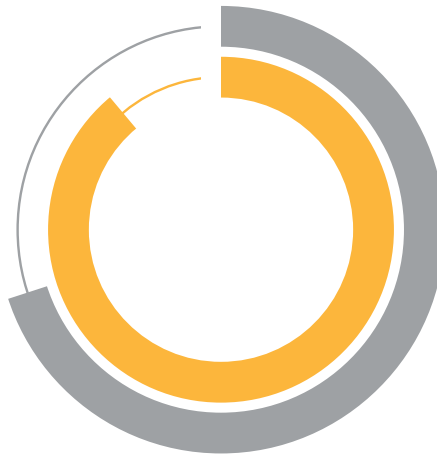
First-level leaders report that their top leadership challenges are keeping employees accountable and motivated. However, first-level leaders are rising to these challenges, and say they are much better prepared now than when they first became leaders.

- When promoted, first-level leaders were more excited about recognition for good work than in getting a pay bump.
- First-level leaders who often feel overwhelmed are more likely to:
 - Lack confidence in their ability to manage successful projects
 - Claim aspects of their job are outside their control
 - Lack confidence in their ability to lead their team through change



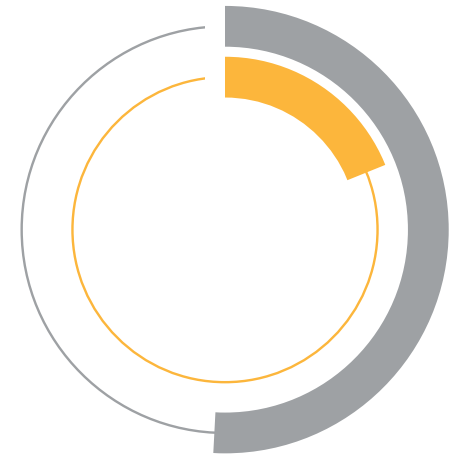
When promoted, first-level leaders were more **EXCITED ABOUT RECOGNITION** for good work than in getting a pay bump.

89% OF FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS **FEEL PREPARED** TO COACH THEIR TEAMS.



70% OF EMPLOYEES WANT **MORE FEEDBACK** FROM THEIR MANAGER.*

19% OF FIRST-LEVEL LEADERS SAID THEY WERE VERY **PREPARED** FOR LEADERSHIP WHEN THEY WERE **FIRST OFFERED** THE POSITION.



51% FEEL VERY **PREPARED** FOR IT **NOW**.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

When leaders focus on game-changing outcomes, they transform their organizations. While first-level leaders are confident in their ability to deliver, frequently their confidence is out of touch with reality.

OUTCOME ONE

5.4 months (1,728 work hours) is the time it takes, on average, for first-level leaders to feel they are making a positive difference.

OUTCOME TWO

30% longer is the amount of time it takes new leaders with self-proclaimed introverted personalities to feel they are making a positive impact compared to leaders with extroverted personalities.

OUTCOME THREE

94% of first-level leaders are confident they can manage projects successfully.

36% believe that many aspects of their jobs are outside their control.

OUTCOME FOUR

95% of first-level leaders are confident they will achieve the results expected of them.

82% of the time organizations say they picked the wrong manager.*



THE FRANKLINCOVEY FIRST-LEVEL LEADER REPORT

The FranklinCovey First-Level Leader Report is a quantitative study that helps organizations know how to engage and improve their first-level leaders. An independent research firm surveyed a random sample of 400 first-level leaders in November 2018. Margin of error at the 95% confidence level is plus or minus 4.9%. The industry and ethnicity data breakouts are directional only.

*Source: Gallup Business Journal; Why Great Managers Are So Rare; March 25, 2014

For more information on this research and ways to improve first-level leaders in your organization, email us at info@franklincovey.com or visit franklincovey.com.

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