Pearl Meyer

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While AI Is Advancing, Leadership Systems Are Not: Q1 2026 Leadership Quick Poll



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Organizations are investing in AI while struggling to define and execute on leadership strategy, according to Pearl Meyer's most recent quick poll. The data shows that technology is not the issue—it is leadership. Gaps in alignment, decision-making, and talent development are already constraining performance, and AI is making those weaknesses more visible and more consequential.

This quick poll assesses leadership effectiveness across senior teams, strategy execution, organizational design, and readiness for AI. The objective was to understand whether leadership systems are keeping pace with rising complexity, and where they are falling short. The findings point to a consistent pattern:

Leadership systems are not evolving fast enough to support either strategy or AI.

Senior teams are not consistently operating as enterprise leaders, critical talent development is lagging long-term needs, and cross-functional coordination and decision clarity continue to constrain execution. These gaps are reflected in three consistent themes: talent development of leaders and teams is lagging, strategic decisions are often made without effective internal collaboration, and AI preparedness is limited. Perception gaps between boards and management further compound these challenges.

At the same time, most organizations are early in their AI journey, focused on productivity and efficiency rather than growth, and are only moderately prepared to manage broader

implications.

AI is amplifying—not solving—these leadership and execution challenges.

Stronger alignment across leadership, governance, and operating model design is needed for AI investment to translate into sustained performance.

Read the Executive Summary.

About the Authors

Brad brings a decade of experience in executive assessment, leadership development, coaching, and team effectiveness, partnering with senior leaders to build high-impact teams and talent strategies.

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About Pearl Meyer

Pearl Meyer is the leading advisor to boards and senior management helping organizations build, develop, and reward great leadership teams that drive long-term success. Our strategy-driven compensation and leadership consulting services act as powerful catalysts for value creation and competitive advantage by addressing the critical links between people and outcomes. Our clients stand at the forefront of their industries and range from emerging high-growth, not-for-profit, and private organizations to the Fortune 500.