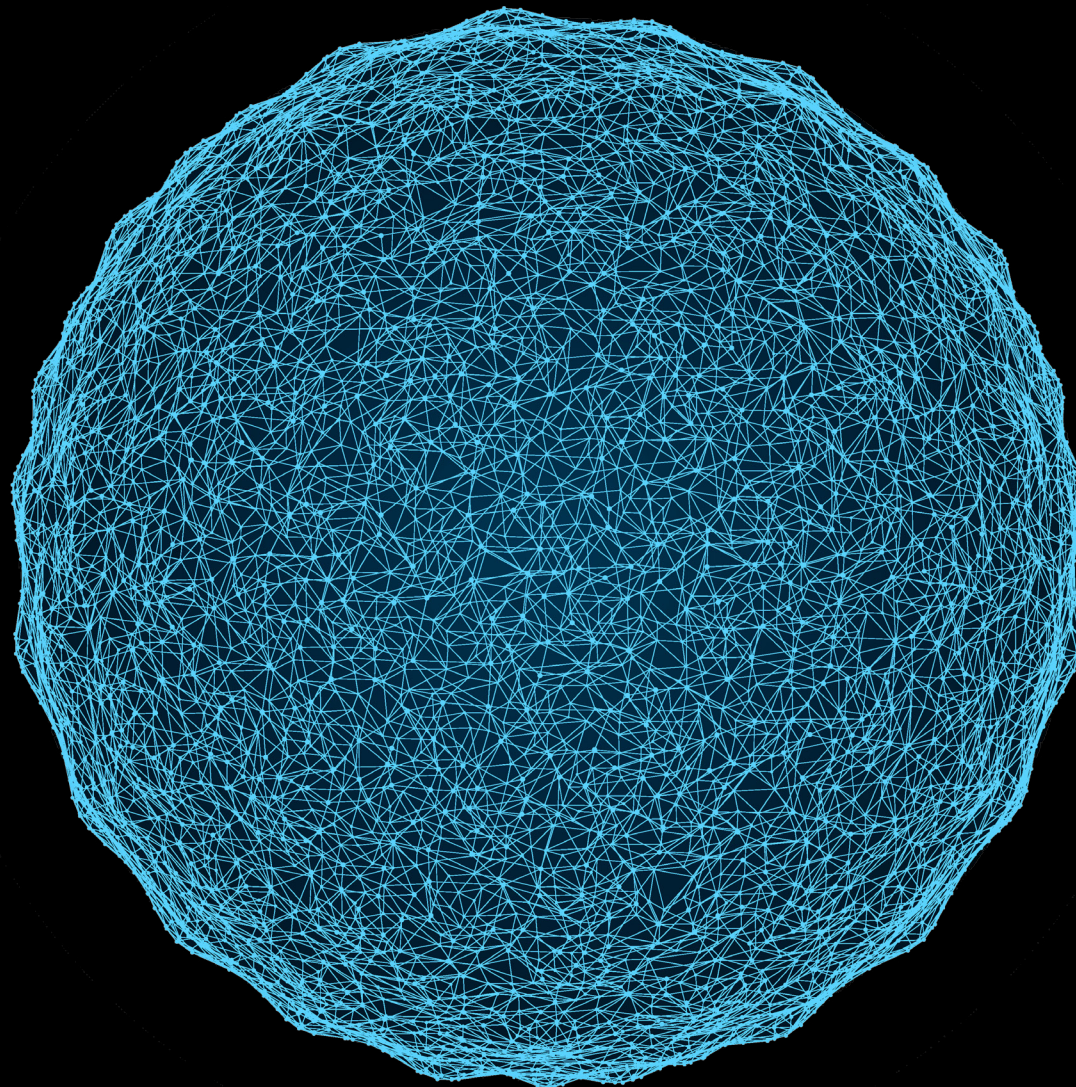


Deloitte.



Connectors

Leadership priorities
for shared services

Shared services, outsourcing, global business services—and the cloud

There's no shortage of advice available for shared services leaders who are looking for ways to shore up their leadership strategies. If anything, there's probably too much.

Five principles! Twenty ways! Eight tips! ...The book titles and article headlines practically write themselves. Meanwhile, almost none of them speak specifically to the issues facing shared services leaders. Plus, many are based primarily on opinion or personal experience, rather than actual research.

What leadership skills and traits do shared services leaders rely on most heavily? We asked these leaders directly

—and what they told us is a powerful, focused distillation of virtually everything that has been said and written about leadership. In order to succeed, shared services leaders have to master a handful of capabilities and qualities.

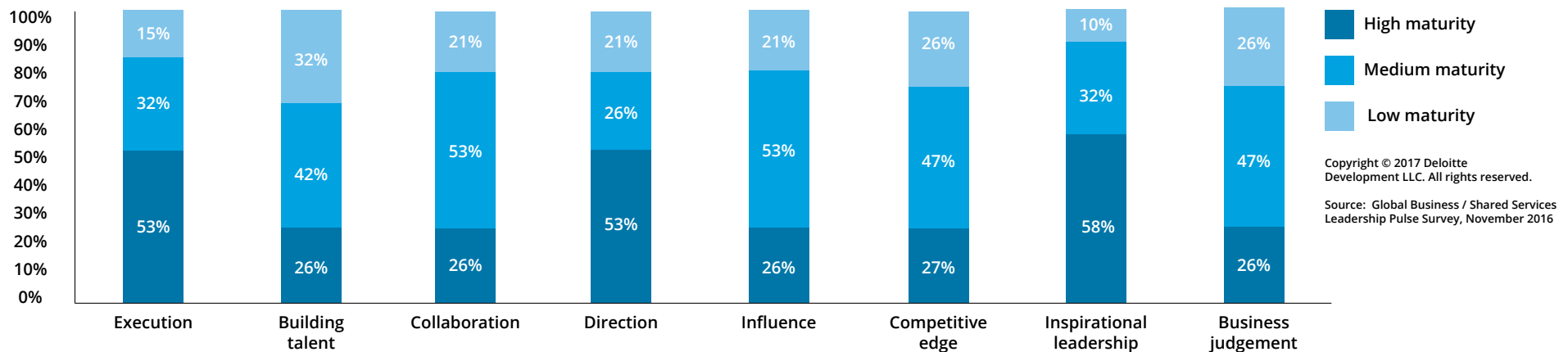
Inside you'll find what those leaders—from global companies in a range of industries, with median revenues of \$23 billion—told us.

Expand your horizons

Look beyond the obvious

When asked to identify which leadership capabilities are most mature among shared services leaders, “execution” and “inspirational leadership” rank high—perhaps not surprisingly. Both are clear prerequisites for success, and to be sure, they are important. But it’s just as revealing to look at which capabilities rank low—for leaders looking to truly reinvent their shared services organizations, those are the capabilities that may actually be most important.

Maturity of Leadership Capabilities



Room for improvement

Take “competitive edge,” for example. Leaders in shared services should be constantly on the lookout for new ways to be faster, smarter, and more effective than the competition—and yet this is one of the leadership capabilities that appears to be least mature among respondents. View your leadership capabilities as a portfolio, and focus on shoring up those aspects of the portfolio that are least mature, not just further strengthening those that are already strong.

Don't just endure change—lead it

It's time to learn

Given the rate of change underway in shared services, it's going to be a challenge to keep up with new developments and disruptors—starting with robotics and artificial intelligence. In fact, in our survey of shared services executives, 94% of respondents identified robotics, artificial intelligence, and cognitive processing as one of their top three top-of-mind disruptors between now and 2025. The ability to navigate these emerging issues is certainly not innate—it must be learned. And the time for learning is right now, as these capabilities begin to take off.

Your people are looking for direction

This is a moment when it's important for leaders to remember the importance of providing direction to their organizations. In the face of changes like those introduced by robotics capabilities, people in your organization will inevitably follow their own intuition, right or wrong, if not provided with clear direction. History indicates that this approach is likely to be inefficient at best, and catastrophic at worst.

This is about innovation

The ability to change in this environment may hinge on leaders' ability to embrace innovation. Shared services leaders who are able to connect the dots between technological changes and broader innovation initiatives already underway in their organizations often find a more direct path to lasting change.

Execute well—but not at the expense of talent

Not so fast

Do you need to be reminded of the importance of execution? Probably not—at this point, you surely consider solid execution to be table stakes. Our research clearly indicates that leaders consider execution to be at or near the top of their concerns. But in a service delivery environment, it can be all too easy to focus so heavily on execution that other crucial activities languish—especially when it comes to talent.

It takes talent to execute well

After all, your ability to execute is a function of the people you have in place to deliver. Leaders say that if you're not constantly working to develop talent, cultivate the next generation of leaders, coach existing talent, and so on, your current high level of execution is simply not sustainable. Treat talent as a priority that is inextricably linked to execution.



Know the limits of leadership

Yesterday's skills aren't up to tomorrow's challenges

There are many leadership capabilities that can be learned, such as business judgment, inspirational leadership, talent development, collaboration, and more, but the next generation of shared services talent is likely going to face a host of new, more strategic challenges—the same old skills may not be enough to succeed, and the truth is there are limits to what can be trained.

The power of potential

When assessing leadership capabilities, look for another dimension: potential. Do those people you have pegged for future leadership have the ability to change and adapt? Do they have the intellect to succeed? Can they skillfully negotiate interpersonal relationships? Can they be motivated to take on new challenges? These are dimensions of leadership that cannot be trained. Train for what can be improved—and always be on the hunt for the innate leadership qualities that your shared services organization will need to reach the next level.

Look where you least expect to find talent

You may find them in the places you least expect, if you remember that they don't need to start with technical shared services knowledge. Look for potential, which cannot be learned.

To transform your business, transform your service delivery model

Shared services organizations are embarking on the next phase of their development—one that will likely be fundamentally more demanding and important than anything shared services leaders have seen before. Are these leaders up to the job? What will it take to win? These survey results show that most expect leadership in this new era to require a lot more than successful execution. If you want to know more about how to make sure your leadership strategy is up to the demands of a changing shared services environment, we can help.

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