BCG – IPSOS study

The end of management as we know it?

Could agile can be an antidote to this existential crisis?

Methodological notice

5
Countries

France UK Germany US

Western countries

China

5,000
Respondents

30% managers (1,500)
- In companies of 200 employees or more,
- Not members of the company's ExCom,
- Managed by a manager who is not a member of the company's ExCom,
- Managing at least 5 people

70% people managed (3,500)
- In companies of 200 employees or more

Sample representative of the managers and managed population, in terms of:
- Age
- Gender
- Number of employees in company
- Business sector (services, industry, retail, etc.)

Online via Ipsos Access Panel
from June 14th to July 9th

This report was prepared in compliance with the international standard ISO 20252 on "Market, opinion and social research"

Key insights

Management, as we know it, is at a breaking point – the managers' motivation is fading away

For the next generation, becoming a manager is no longer an aspiration

Long-needed change is expected by the managers, but they will need guidance to change

Some companies have found guidance in the agile methodology

These companies redefined how managers act, and adapted their career, learning & development journeys

81% of managers say the job is harder than in recent years

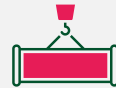**9%** of managed employees aspire to become a manager in the next 5 to 10 years

37% of managers think their management level will have disappeared within 5 years

Management, as we know it, is at a breaking point

81% of managers say the job is harder than in recent years

They feel...

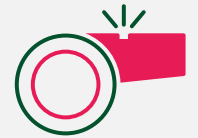... more overworked   **71%** 🇬🇧 = 79%

... more stressed   **69%** 🇬🇧 = 74%

... less supported   **54%** 🇫🇷 = 64%

Motivation is fading away

48% of managers feel less motivated than in recent years

59% In France 🇫🇷

52% In UK 🇬🇧

Note: All western countries – ie, excluding China
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Model is no longer sustainable, next generation is not willing to live with it

Only **37%** of managers wish to remain a manager in 5-10 years

Only
41% believe the job has greater advantage than disadvantages   🇫🇷 = 32%
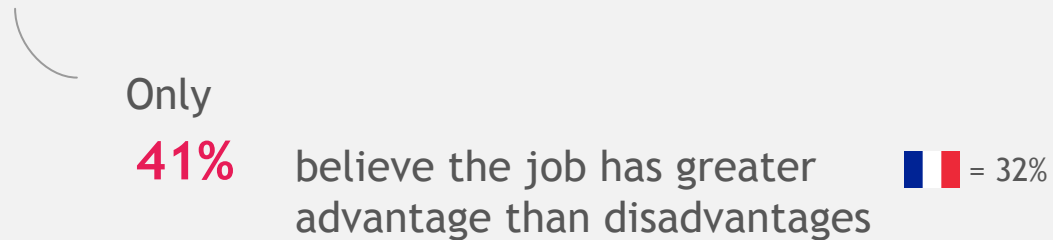
For **1 out of 2** UK and US managers, it is just a necessary step to progress within the company and earn a higher salary

Management position is no longer an aspiration

9% of managed employees aspire to become a manager in the next 5-10 years

vs. *41% who would prefer to become experts, work for them selves or transfer to a new country or role*

35% of managed employees do not find the position appealing at all

🇩🇪 = 43%

Note: All western countries – ie, excluding China

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The good news is that change is expected - the bad, that managers are in need of guidance to change

Managers expect big changes in their role

66% of managers think their duties will have significantly changed within 5 years

1/3 even think their management level will have disappeared

But they don't know where to start

When asked what would help...

63% ask for a clarification of the role they are expected to fulfill (top #2 response)

Good intentions but little action ... potentially due to poor L&D offering

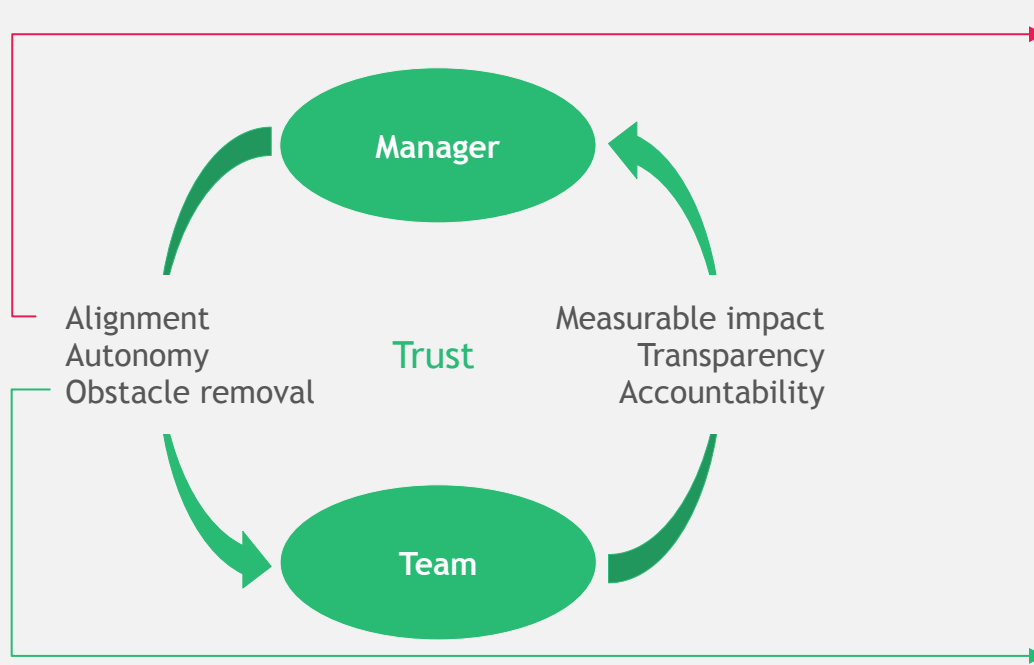**71%** think they need to develop their skills in terms of new technology or new ways of working

<50% do train themselves on technical skills, new ways of working or receive coaching

Some companies have found this guidance in agile - its principles resonate well with emerging aspirations

Agile reshapes the manager / team relationship...

... and resonates well with pain points & aspirations highlighted by the survey

Manager

Alignment
Autonomy
Obstacle removal

Trust

Measurable impact
Transparency
Accountability

Team

#1 *dissatisfaction for managers*
Having to implement decisions that you don't always agree with

#1 *satisfaction for managers*
Help teams to progress / develop their skills

Definition of ideal manager

#1 Helps teams develop their skills, gives them feedback

#2 Eliminates obstacles, acts as facilitator

Note: All western countries – ie, excluding China
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Shifting to agile is a full fledge transformation requiring change at individual and company level

Managers need to rethink their day to day routines & behaviors

*Eg, 2 questions agile leaders should ask themselves every morning...*

Are we set-up for success?

Are we succeeding?

... driving new day to day behaviors

- *I deliberately set an explicit vision*
- *I let team decisions happen, and remove obstacles when asked*
- *I show transparency and expect it back from the team*
- *Etc.*

- *I make the KPIs visible to all*
- *I clarify accountability on progress*
- *I organize team retrospectives*
- *Etc.*

Companies need to reshape their career paths, including learning & development journey

Personalizing each professional journey

Offering attractive paths besides management, *e.g. expert path*
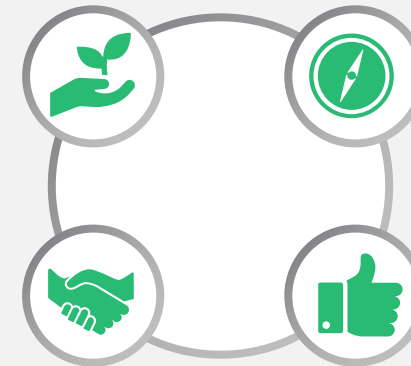
Coaching for all, *e.g. organizing coaching between peers*

Building a culture of recognition, *e.g. on-the-spot praise or bonus*

At stake for companies: winning the war for talent & unlocking productivity

Note: All western countries – ie, excluding China

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Agenda

Management is at a breaking point

Model is no longer sustainable nor sought for

Change is coming, employees and managers are longing for a new type of leadership & ways of working

Need to proactively support the shift as managers are lost in transition

Lessons to be learnt from companies adopting new ways of working such as agile
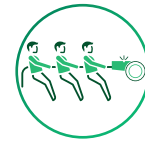
Management is at a breaking point

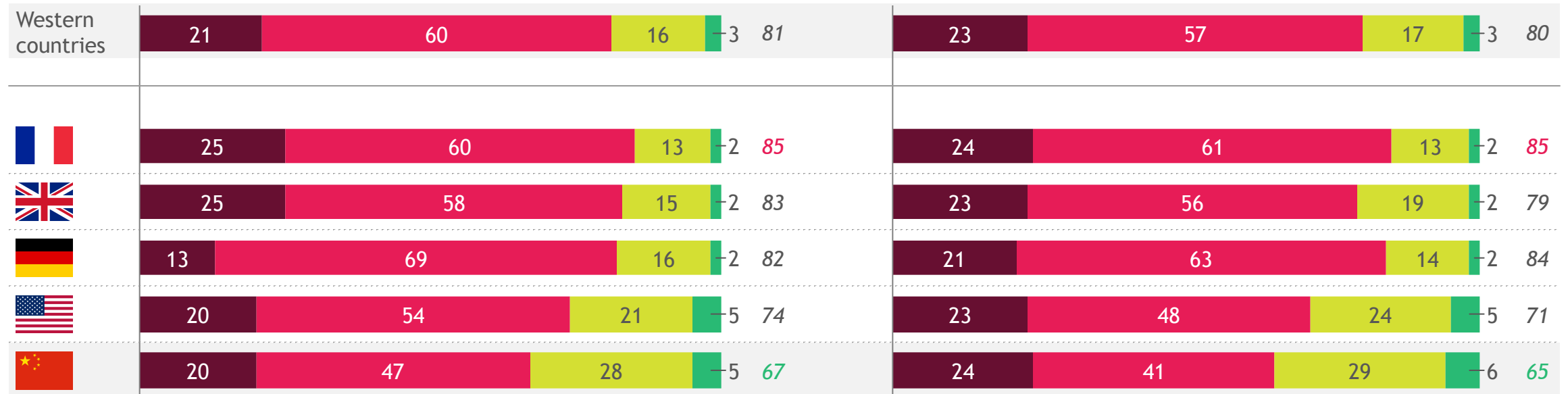# 80% of managers and employees consider "management" is harder than before

Managers

% "harder"

Managed

% "harder"

	Much harder	A little harder	A little easier	Much easier	% harder
Western countries	21	60	16	3	*81*
🇫🇷	25	60	13	2	*85*
🇬🇧	25	58	15	2	*83*
🇩🇪	13	69	16	2	*82*
🇺🇸	20	54	21	5	*74*
🇨🇳	20	47	28	5	*67*

	Much harder	A little harder	A little easier	Much easier	% harder
Western countries	23	57	17	3	*80*
🇫🇷	24	61	13	2	*85*
🇬🇧	23	56	19	2	*79*
🇩🇪	21	63	14	2	*84*
🇺🇸	23	48	24	5	*71*
🇨🇳	24	41	29	6	*65*

■ Much harder ■ A little harder ■ A little easier ■ Much easier

Question: "Based on your own personal experience and from what you have already seen, do you think that, compared to recent years, it is much harder, a little harder, a little easier or much easier to be a manager in your company?" (in %)
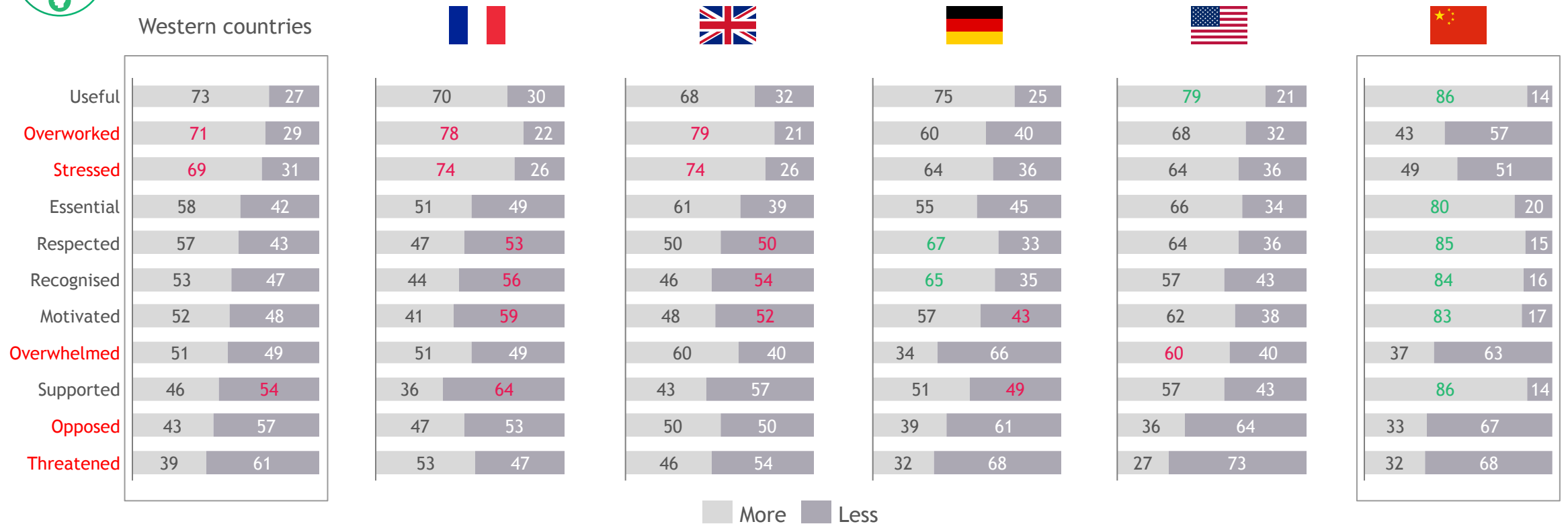
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Managers feel more stressed, overworked and less supported

French & UK managers most negatively impacted while Chinese managers are overall positive
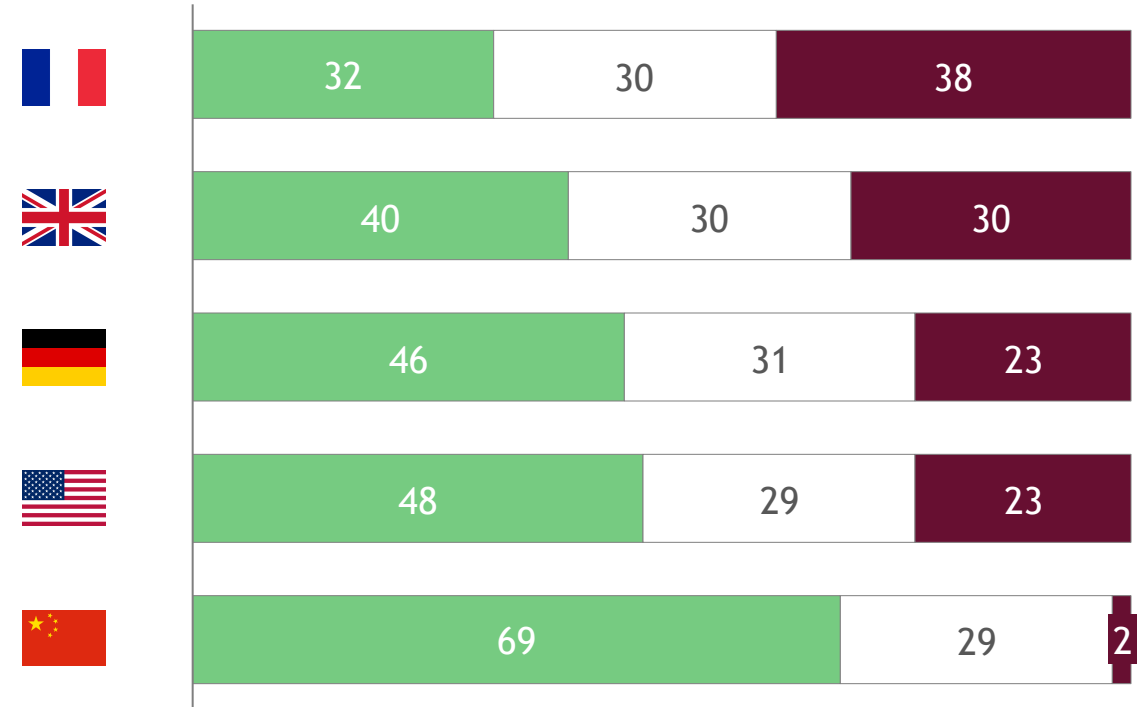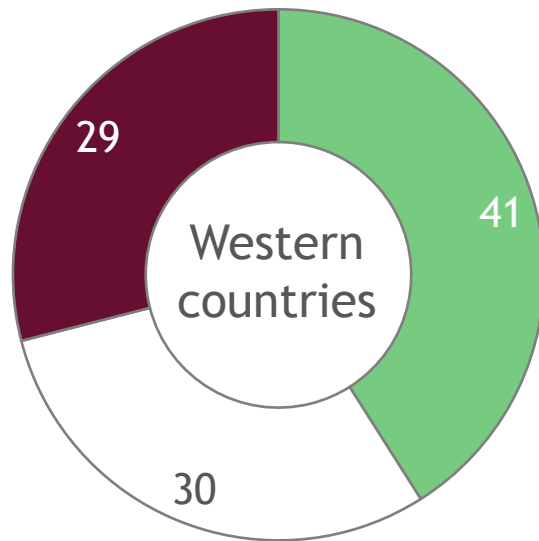
Managers

	Western countries		France		UK		Germany		USA		China	
	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
Useful	73	27	70	30	68	32	75	25	79	21	86	14
Overworked	71	29	78	22	79	21	60	40	68	32	43	57
Stressed	69	31	74	26	74	26	64	36	64	36	49	51
Essential	58	42	51	49	61	39	55	45	66	34	80	20
Respected	57	43	47	53	50	50	67	33	64	36	85	15
Recognised	53	47	44	56	46	54	65	35	57	43	84	16
Motivated	52	48	41	59	48	52	57	43	62	38	83	17
Overwhelmed	51	49	51	49	60	40	34	66	60	40	37	63
Supported	46	54	36	64	43	57	51	49	57	43	86	14
Opposed	43	57	47	53	50	50	39	61	36	64	33	67
Threatened	39	61	53	47	46	54	32	68	27	73	32	68

More ⬛ Less

Question: "Compared to several years ago, do you feel more or less…" (in %)

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Only 41% think the role advantages outnumber its disadvantages

Managers (%)

Western countries: 41 / 30 / 29

Country	More advantages than disadvantages	As many advantages as disadvantages	More disadvantages than advantages
🇫🇷 France	32	30	38
🇬🇧 UK	40	30	30
🇩🇪 Germany	46	31	23
🇺🇸 USA	48	29	23
🇨🇳 China	69	29	2

■ More advantages than disadvantages □ As many advantages as disadvantages ■ More disadvantages than advantages

| Question: "All things considered, would you say that becoming a manager has…" (in %)

Model is no longer sustainable nor sought for

Alternative career progression models are becoming more attractive

Only 37% of managers wish to remain manager. China is a notable exception

Managers	Western countries	🇫🇷	🇬🇧	🇩🇪	🇺🇸	🇨🇳
To have stayed in your current position or an equivalent position*	20	18	15	28	17	13
To be working for yourself	18	10	22	12	31	13
To have taken up a position as an expert without managerial responsibilities	17	20	21	12	16	10
To have stopped working	17	20	15	28	5	1
To be managing a larger team*	17	17	18	12	21	57
To have accepted a transfer to an international position or a role with which you are unfamiliar	11	15	9	8	10	6
*Sub-total: remain a manager	37	35	33	40	38	70

Question: "If you could choose what you will be doing in 5 or 10 years, would you prefer?" (in %)

Next generation no longer sees management as the next role to long for

Only 9% aspire to become manager in 5-10 y., ranking far behind expert career or entrepreneurship

Managed

	Western countries	🇫🇷	🇬🇧	🇩🇪	🇺🇸	🇨🇳
To have stopped working	28	28	28	37	17	4
To have stayed in your current position or an equivalent position	24	26	20	31	20	15
To have taken up a position as an expert without managerial responsibilities	17	20	16	13	19	11
To be working for yourself	16	9	22	6	29	20
To be managing a larger team	9	10	9	7	10	47
To have accepted a transfer to an international position or a role with which you are unfamiliar	6	7	5	6	5	3

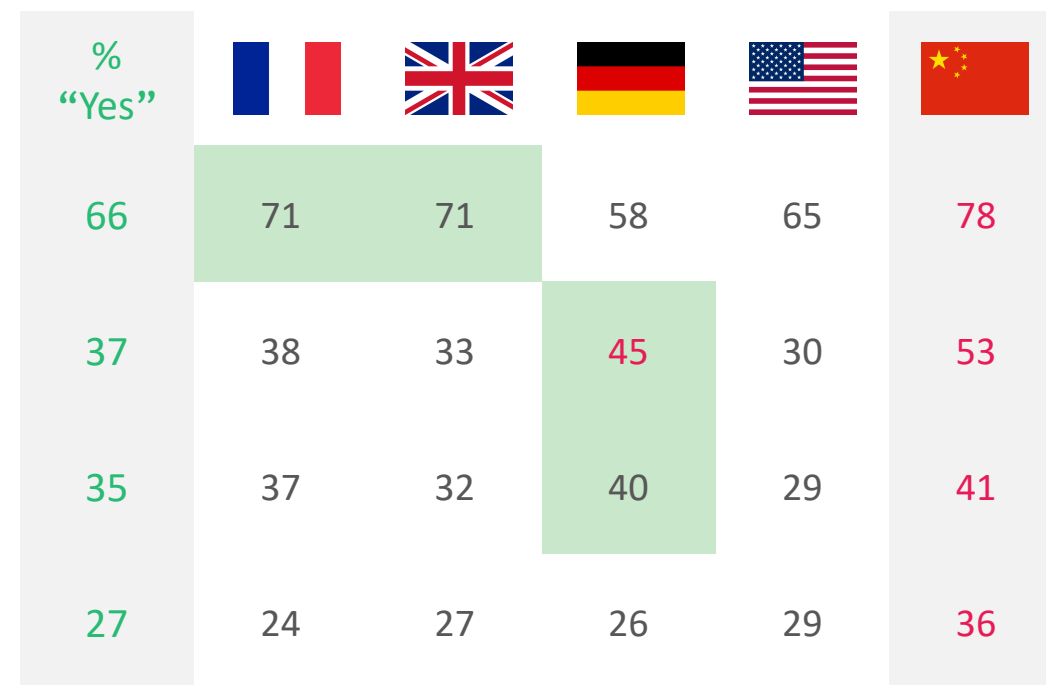Question: "If you could choose what you will be doing in 5 or 10 years, would you prefer?" (in %)

Change is coming, employees and managers are longing for a new type of leadership & ways of working

2/3 of managers believe their role will be deeply impacted in coming years

4 out of 5 in China where managers see limited future for their role

Managers

Statement	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	Total
Your duties will have undergone significant changes	16	50	27	7	100
Your management level will have disappeared	7	30	42	21	100
You will have lost all or almost all of your supervisory responsibilities	8	27	45	20	100
You will have lost your job	7	20	43	30	100

Legend: ■ Definitely ■ Probably ■ Probably not ■ Definitely not

% "Yes"	🇫🇷	🇬🇧	🇩🇪	🇺🇸	🇨🇳
66	71	71	58	65	78
37	38	33	45	30	53
35	37	32	40	29	41
27	24	27	26	29	36

| Question: "In light of the technological and/or structural developments taking place at your company, do you think that it is possible that within 5 years…" (in %)

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Most see opportunities in the nature of change ahead (digital, new tech, gen Z)

Still 1 out of 4 minimize the impact of these key trends on their company

Managers

	Western countries	🇫🇷 France	🇬🇧 UK	🇩🇪 Germany	🇺🇸 USA	🇨🇳 China
The rise of challenges linked to the digital world and new technology	57 / 22 / 21	59 / 20 / 21	58 / 21 / 21	61 / 22 / 17	51 / 25 / 24	79 / 12 / 9
The importance that younger generations place on social and environmental issues	53 / 21 / 26	60 / 13 / 27	49 / 19 / 32	59 / 21 / 20	42 / 30 / 28	73 / 13 / 14
The challenge of younger generations who value expertise over position in the hierarchy	51 / 24 / 25	55 / 19 / 26	41 / 24 / 35	60 / 24 / 16	46 / 29 / 25	74 / 21 / 5
The automation/digitalisation of a number of supervisory or monitoring tasks that previously fell to managers	47 / 27 / 26	48 / 25 / 27	41 / 27 / 32	56 / 26 / 18	43 / 29 / 28	74 / 15 / 11
The reduction in the number of management levels	42 / 32 / 26	54 / 20 / 26	30 / 43 / 27	52 / 27 / 21	31 / 41 / 28	67 / 22 / 11

Legend: ■ More of an opportunity ■ More of a threat ■ This topic does not affect my company

Question: "Do you think that each of the following currently represents more of a threat or more of an opportunity for managers at your level?" (in %)

For teams, the ideal manager is a team developers and an obstacle removers

In Germany and China, definition of the ideal manager remains closer to traditional model

Managed

	Western countries	🇫🇷 France	🇬🇧 UK	🇩🇪 Germany	🇺🇸 USA	🇨🇳 China
Help members of their team to develop their skills, give them feedback	50	42	60	40	58	36
Eliminate obstacles that are preventing teams from moving forward; be a facilitator	44	44	42	47	44	46
Set clear goals that are achievable for everyone	44	44	49	35	49	34
Make decisions	44	40	39	59	37	32
Create meaning and motivate teams	43	60	42	34	37	21
Support/explain management decisions and create links with other departments	29	31	29	31	26	53
Delegate	18	16	15	22	19	17
Assess and evaluate work	16	16	14	18	18	28
Manage their entity's financial and administrative aspects and communicate about them	11	7	9	15	12	32

Question: "What do you think is the most important thing a good manager should be able to do? Select up to 3" (Total, in %)
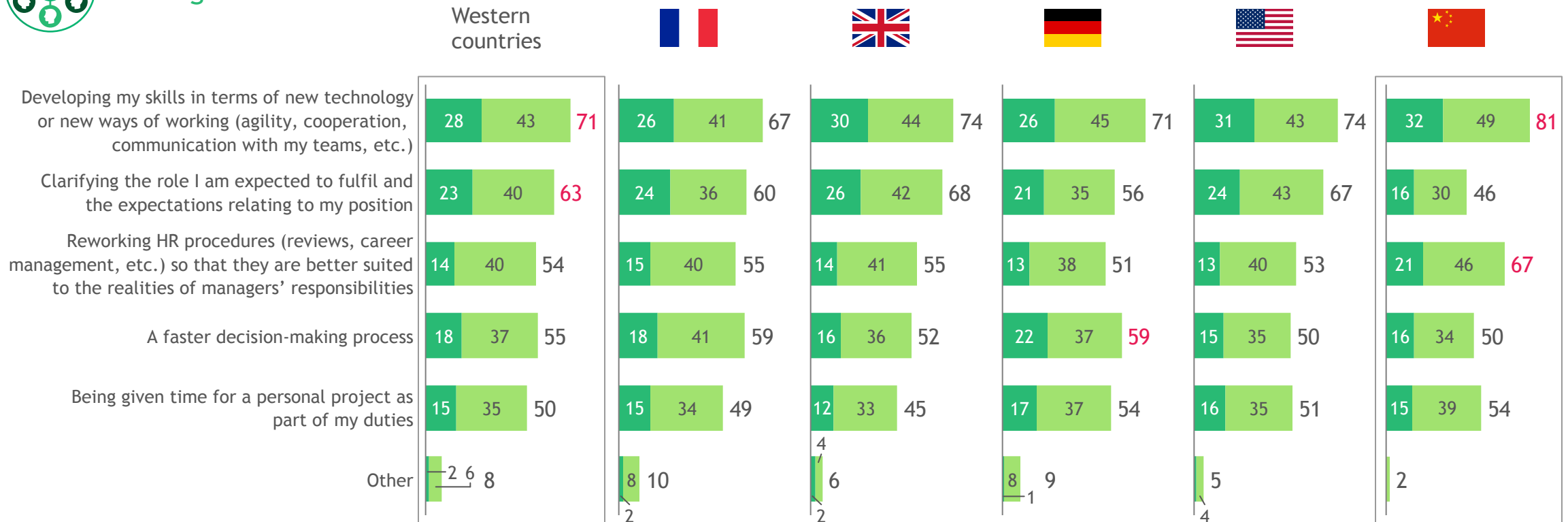
Need to proactively support the shift as managers are lost in transition

When looking for support, managers first ask for upskilling and a clarification of their role...
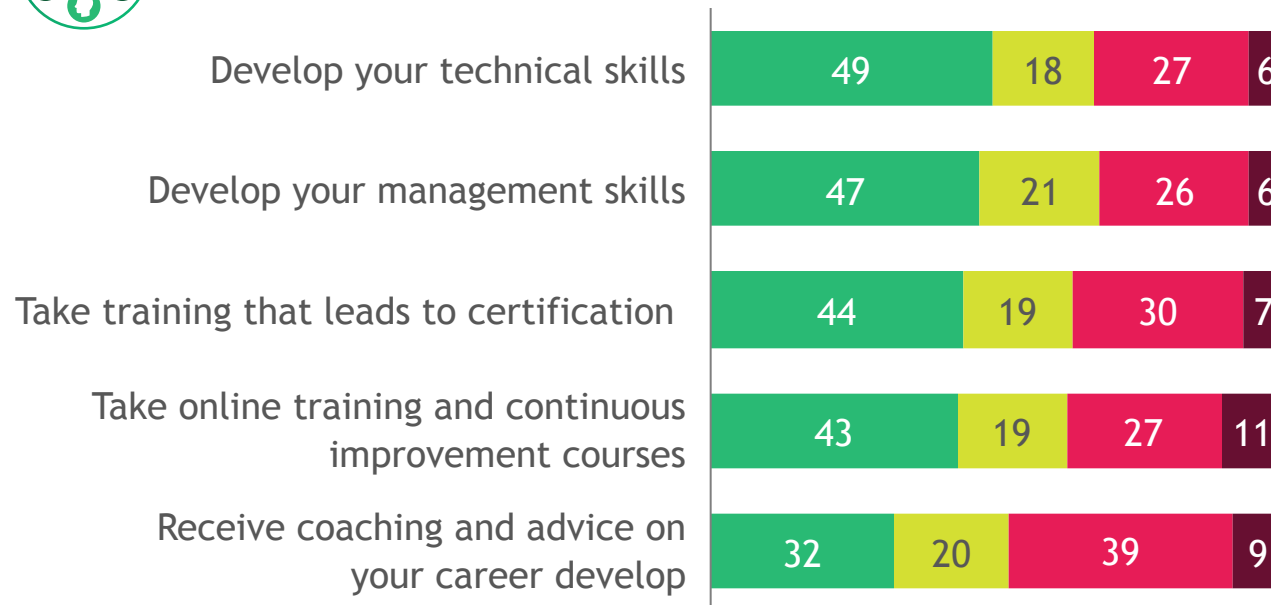
Managers

	Western countries	France	UK	Germany	USA	China
Developing my skills in terms of new technology or new ways of working (agility, cooperation, communication with my teams, etc.)	28 / 43 / **71**	26 / 41 / 67	30 / 44 / 74	26 / 45 / 71	31 / 43 / 74	32 / 49 / **81**
Clarifying the role I am expected to fulfil and the expectations relating to my position	23 / 40 / **63**	24 / 36 / 60	26 / 42 / 68	21 / 35 / 56	24 / 43 / 67	16 / 30 / 46
Reworking HR procedures (reviews, career management, etc.) so that they are better suited to the realities of managers' responsibilities	14 / 40 / 54	15 / 40 / 55	14 / 41 / 55	13 / 38 / 51	13 / 40 / 53	21 / 46 / **67**
A faster decision-making process	18 / 37 / 55	18 / 41 / 59	16 / 36 / 52	22 / 37 / **59**	15 / 35 / 50	16 / 34 / 50
Being given time for a personal project as part of my duties	15 / 35 / 50	15 / 34 / 49	12 / 33 / 45	17 / 37 / 54	16 / 35 / 51	15 / 39 / 54
Other	2 / 6 / 8	8 / 10 / 2	4 / 6 / 2	8 / 9 / 1	5 / 4	2

■ Selected as first answer
■ Selected, but not first

Question: "What would help you to become a better manager in the future?" (First/Total, in %) - Three possible answer

... yet most managers do not take the necessary steps to get required skill development

Managers

Develop your technical skills	49	18	27	6
Develop your management skills	47	21	26	6
Take training that leads to certification	44	19	30	7
Take online training and continuous improvement courses	43	19	27	11
Receive coaching and advice on your career develop	32	20	39	9

"Yes and I do so" (%)

🇫🇷 France	🇬🇧 UK	🇩🇪 Germany	🇺🇸 USA	🇨🇳 China
48	44	45	57	73
33	43	52	61	72
30	40	56	52	64
31	50	37	54	59
17	34	33	47	66

■ Yes, and I do so ■ No, but I would like to do so
■ Yes, but I do not do so ■ No, and I would not like to do so

Question: "In terms of training, are you encouraged to…?" (in %)

Managers currently spend very limited time with customers or developing themselves… >1/3 of their time spent on reporting and cross-silo coordination

Managers

	Western countries	🇫🇷 France	🇬🇧 UK	🇩🇪 Germany	🇺🇸 USA	🇨🇳 China
Time spent with teams (supervising, coaching, etc.)	23	25	24	21	21	20
Time spent dealing with management requests (reporting, administrative requests, etc.)	19	21	20	22	22	16
Time spent producing documents (writing reports, analyses, business proposals, etc.)	19	21	19	18	18	17
Time spent with customers	18	15	19	17	17	18
Time spent coordinating with other teams/entities	16	14	14	17	17	17
Time for yourself (personal development, training, etc.)	12	9	9	13	13	14

When asked how they would ideally like to spend their time, managers only marginally move the needle (reallocating <4h in their work week) highlighting lack of clarity on where they should focus more

Question: "Currently, in a typical week, what percentage of your time do you devote to managing each of the following?" (mean %)
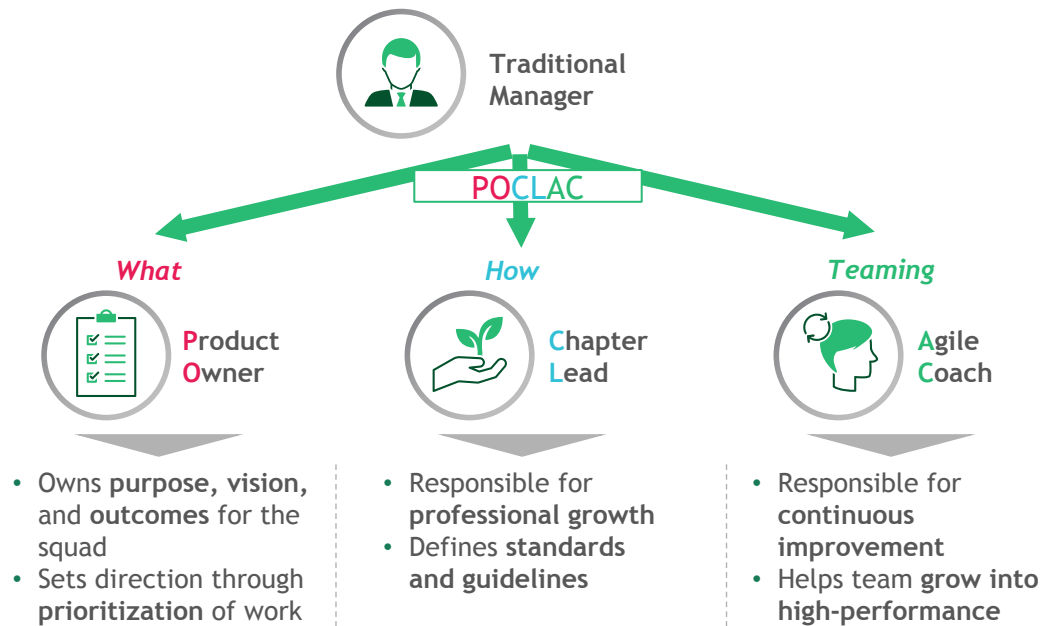
Lessons to be learnt from companies
adopting new ways of working such as agile

Leading companies are adopting new ways of working and addressing some of the key concerns raised in the survey

E.g., agile deeply reshapes concept of management

Agile splits the middle manager duties into **3 complementary roles**

Traditional Manager

POCLAC

What

Product **O**wner

- Owns **purpose, vision,** and **outcomes** for the squad
- Sets direction through **prioritization** of work

How

Chapter **L**ead

- Responsible for **professional growth**
- Defines **standards and guidelines**

Teaming

Agile **C**oach

- Responsible for **continuous improvement**
- Helps team **grow into high-performance**

Agile emphasizes the **senior leader's focus on building alignment and trust** as a prerequisite to team autonomy

Henrik Kniberg
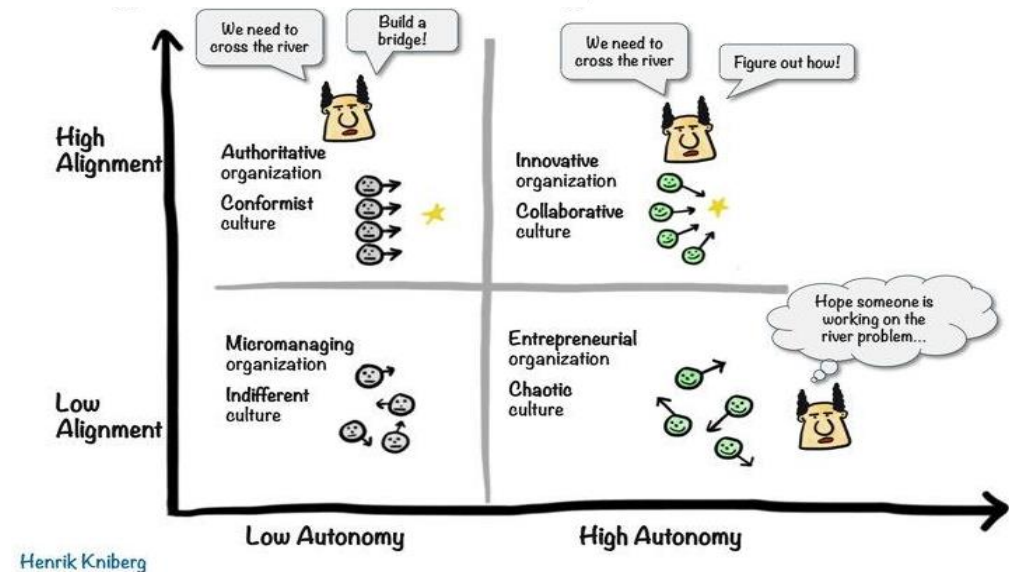
Role of leadership fostered through agile and new ways of working resonates well with the "ideal manager" described by the survey

The top 5 abilities of the ideal manager, according to the managed employees surveyed...

... are hardwired into the definition of the Agile leaders roles

#1 Help members of their team to develop their skills, give them feedback

Chapter Leads ensures proper focus on skills development

#2 Eliminate obstacles that are preventing teams from moving forward; be a facilitator

Chapter Leads secures and improves a "how" that works without obstacles

#3 Set clear goals that are achievable for everyone

Product Owner sets vision & goals, empowers team to deliver on them

#4 Make decisions

Product Owner "owns" product, and therefore makes product decisions

#5 Create meaning and motivate teams

Product Owner "owns" business impact, thus highlights meaning to team members

Question: "What do you think is the most important thing a good manager should be able to do? Select up to 3" (Total, In %)

Agile Coach ensures team is at its optimum motivation level

Beyond reinventing the role, companies will need to reinvent the manager experience: professional journeys, learning, behaviors, recognition, etc.

Tailoring each professional journey	Offering journeys besides management	Building a culture of recognition	Coaching for all via peer coaching	Shaping managers behaviors
Determining each individual's optimal professional journey, freely composed from illustrative typical career paths	Allowing individuals to progress without necessarily becoming a manager	Designing a reward & recognition model which serves your business objectives	Having employees select a coach among peers, other colleagues or dedicated coaches, for career and learning advice	Instating a new managers' culture by deploying specific routines aimed at "walking the talk"

DANONE ONE PLANET. ONE HEALTH

AIRBUS

Google

European healthcare company

European automobile OEM

Danone offers personalized, non-vertical, international career paths

Large engineering companies have made the expert or design authority career track an attractive alternative to leading teams

To retain employees and driver performance, Google employees can receive peer and on-the-spot bonuses, discretionary teams recognition, Kudos recognition, and other awards

*To guide employees through their tailored career paths, **a European healthcare company** proposed to devote 20% of their time to coaching and getting coached*

*To enable its move to agile, a **European automobile OEM** has launched a culture-shaping program deploying 6 routines inspired from agile practices*
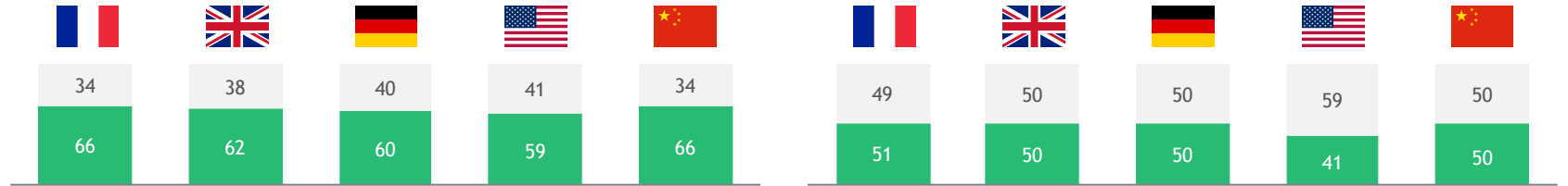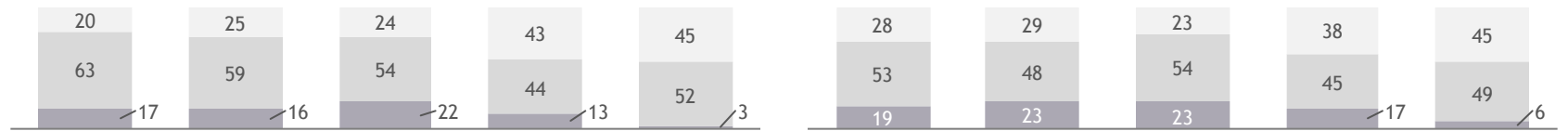
Sample statistics

Managers

Managed

Demographics
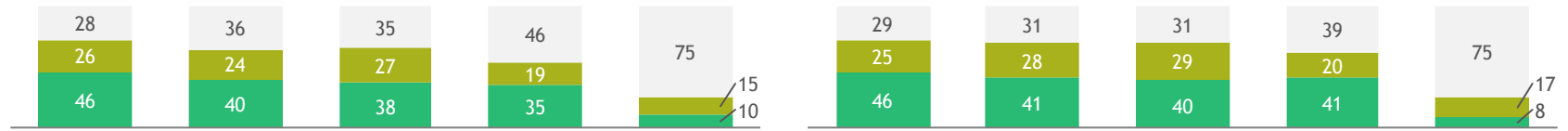
Per gender (%)

Legend:
- Women (light grey)
- Men (green)

	France	UK	Germany	USA	China	France	UK	Germany	USA	China
Women	34	38	40	41	34	49	50	50	59	50
Men	66	62	60	59	66	51	50	50	41	50

Per age (%)

Legend:
- 35 or less
- 35 to 54
- 55 or more

	France	UK	Germany	USA	China	France	UK	Germany	USA	China
35 or less	20	25	24	43	45	28	29	23	38	45
35 to 54	63	59	54	44	52	53	48	54	45	49
55 or more	17	16	22	13	3	19	23	23	17	6

Distribution per type of companies

Per number of employees that the company has in the country (%)

Legend:
- Less than 1000
- 1000 to 5000
- 5000 or more

	France	UK	Germany	USA	China	France	UK	Germany	USA	China
Less than 1000	28	36	35	46	75	29	31	31	39	75
1000 to 5000	26	24	27	19	15	25	28	29	20	17
5000 or more	46	40	38	35	10	46	41	40	41	8

Per business sector (%)

Legend:
- Industry
- Building/public works
- Retail/distribution
- Transport
- Services
- Other

	France	UK	Germany	USA	China	France	UK	Germany	USA	China
Industry	11	15	24	11	48	16	18	34	8	35
Building/public works	3	5	3	5	7	2	5	2	3	9
Retail/distribution	12	32	17	18	9	7	35	14	17	14
Transport	7	7	10	5	3	5	11	9	5	3
Services	38	41	46	61	33	39	31	41	67	39
Other	29	0	0	0	0	31				
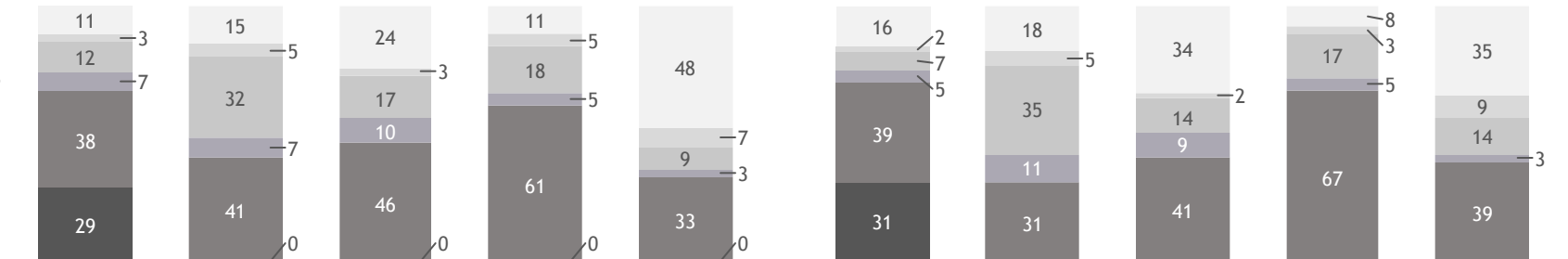
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