



## FranklinCovey's New Insight Report, Where Are All The Great Leaders?, Reveals Need for Exceptional Leaders in 2026 as Disruption, Eroding Trust, and AI Continue to Redefine Leadership

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*Only 7% of Leaders Are Rated High by Their Teams in Both Performance Expectations and Care*

SALT LAKE CITY--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 25, 2026-- [FranklinCovey \(NYSE: FC\)](#), today announced the release of its latest [FranklinCovey Institute Insight Report](#), "Where Are All the Great Leaders?". It reveals the need for exceptional leaders as disruption, eroding trust, and AI continue to redefine leadership. [Download the Full Report HERE](#).

[Adam Merrill](#), EVP of Market and Customer Intelligence, said, "Drawing from our proprietary global research, leadership surveys, and interviews with executives across industries, this timely report identifies a widening gap between the type of leadership organizations need to thrive, and what most employees experience today."

FranklinCovey's data details how continuous disruption, diminished trust, and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) are continuing to reshape the very foundation of leadership worldwide. For example, only 7% of leaders are rated by their teams as demonstrating both high performance expectations and high care for the people they lead, a combination shown to drive sustained excellence and engagement.

"Today's leaders are being tested on every front, and the rate and pace of change is only accelerating," said [Paul Walker](#), FranklinCovey CEO. "There's a great need for exceptional leaders who can navigate disruption and transform teams and organizations, while carefully balancing high demand and high care for all stakeholders. Great leadership isn't a genetic gift, but it's a capability that can be built, practiced, and multiplied at every level of the organization. Leaders who can successfully respond to the forces disrupting their organizations will sustain both high trust and high performance, delivering breakthrough results in 2026 and beyond."

The Insight Report focuses on three key challenges for leaders:

### Continuous Disruption

- 87% of leaders see disruption as something to survive.
- Only 13% of leaders treat disruption as a strategic opportunity to innovate and grow.

"Disruption isn't an enemy," said [Dr. Patrick Leddin](#), FranklinCovey Senior Advisor, Culture & Leadership and *New York Times* bestselling co-author of [Disrupt Everything and Win](#). "When leaders see disruption as something to survive, they miss the extraordinary opportunities hidden within it. The best leaders harness disruption as a force for good, fueling innovation, inspiring adaptability, and creating cultures that thrive amid change rather than fear."

### Diminished Trust

- Only 42% of employees view their own leaders as trusted.
- 62% of employees describe their leader's management style as outdated, agreeing that their leader leads as if they were taught ten years ago.
- 2 out of 3 employees have low confidence in the quality of today's leaders overall.

[Stephen M. R. Covey](#), FranklinCovey Global Trust Practice Leader and *New York Times* bestselling author of [The Speed of Trust](#) and [Trust & Inspire](#), said, "In a world of declining trust, leaders who inspire trust create the conditions for people to give their very best. While Command & Control leaders manage for compliance, Trust & Inspire leaders unleash creativity and performance at unprecedented levels. Truly, trust is not merely a soft skill; rather, it's a hard-edged economic driver—the ultimate competitive advantage, especially in uncertain times."

### The Rapid Advance of AI

- 7 in 10 employees say AI and technology are advancing faster than their company's culture can adapt.
- 80% describing their manager's AI leadership as "hands off."

"AI isn't just changing work, it's changing what it means to lead," said [Will Houghteling](#), FranklinCovey EVP of Product and Platforms. "Organizations that harness both technology and humanity will create the cultures people want to work in and the results customers can't ignore."

FranklinCovey's report highlights three leadership capabilities that define great leaders:

1. **Embrace Disruption and Build Competence** – Reframe volatility as opportunity and cultivate adaptability and innovation.
2. **Model and Extend Trust** – Lead with character and competence; combine high standards with genuine care.
3. **Lead AI Adoption with Empathy and Action** – Guide teams to use AI as a tool to amplify human potential, not replace it.

The report concludes that while the pace of change is accelerating, so too is the possibility to rebuild leadership around clarity, trust, and purpose.

Walker continued, “The title of our Insight Report is [Where are all the great leaders?](#) to which we answer, they’re inside every organization. They simply need the will and the tools to help them do it. And we’re honored to be their partner to help them overcome whatever circumstance or challenge they have to achieve their desired outcomes.”

**FranklinCovey Insight Report Methodology:** The FranklinCovey Insight Report, “*Where Are All The Great Leaders?*,” is based on data collected by FranklinCovey and the Franklin Covey Institute and includes the following studies: The Case for the 6 Critical Practices (2025), the AI General Attitudes Survey (2025), the Global Leadership Survey (2025); and the Global Leadership Panel and Consultant Interviews (2023-2025). For further detailed information on each study, including the focus, number of respondents, and level of seniority, etc., please see the report [HERE](#).

**About FranklinCovey Institute:** FranklinCovey Institute produces original research and thought leadership on the human side of strategy, with a focus on leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. We combine quantitative analysis, in-depth executive interviews, and extensive industry research with practical insights drawn from over 40 years of partnering with leaders in high-performing organizations worldwide—delivering actionable findings that help leaders drive breakthrough results.

**About FranklinCovey: Franklin Covey Co. (NYSE: FC)** is the premier leadership and organizational performance partner. We strengthen the human side of strategy to achieve the results that matter most. Our Enterprise and Education Divisions develop high-performing leaders at all levels of the organization, aligning people around purpose and priorities. Through proven practices, we create high-trust leaders, teams, and cultures using time-tested, principle-centered frameworks, processes, and tools. We enable lasting results with repeatable outcomes, by helping clients identify, align, and execute their most important priorities.

This approach has been tested and refined by working with tens of thousands of leaders and organizations from Fortune 100 and 500 companies to small and mid-sized businesses, as well as educational institutions and government entities for over 40 years. We provide professional services in over 160 countries and territories, through directly owned and licensee partner offices, serving both enterprise and education clients. Available through the FranklinCovey All Access Pass® and Leader in Me® memberships, our integrated offerings help organizations achieve lasting, repeatable outcomes at scale. Solutions are available in multiple delivery modalities in more than 20 languages.

Learn how your organization can strengthen the human side of strategy at [FranklinCovey.com](https://www.franklincovey.com) and explore exclusive content across FranklinCovey’s social media channels at: [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

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