

# Most Desirable Leadership Competencies in Consumer and Retail Sectors

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**Does every leader in your business share the same vision and strategy, share the same degree of resilience, intelligence and agility to navigate change, display empathy, communicate effectively and execute as you desire?**

Most likely not, but there are ways to develop the leaders you need to succeed in your unique context.

The MU Consumer Practice recently partnered with IPSOS and undertook a survey of our clients in the Consumer and Retail sectors to understand what Leadership Competencies were most desirable and required for their business to navigate the challenges ahead.

The top 3 most desirable competencies were **Strategic Thinking**, **Innovation and Creativity** and the ability to **Lead and Inspire**. These competencies were seen as vital within their leaders because they equip them to guide their organisations through complex, often unpredictable challenges while maintaining focus and motivation. We've highlighted why these are so important below:

## 1. Strategic Thinking

- **Vision and Long-Term Success:** Strategic thinking enables leaders to foresee and plan for the future by understanding market trends, competitive landscapes, and internal strengths and weaknesses.
- **Decision-Making and Prioritisation:** They also make informed decisions by analysing the big picture, weighing risks and benefits, and aligning initiatives with overarching goals. This prioritisation is crucial for resource allocation and for keeping the organisation on course.
- **Adaptability:** A strategic mindset helps leaders anticipate potential obstacles and adjust plans as new information or challenges arise, which is crucial for keeping the organisation resilient and agile.

## 2. Innovation and Creativity

- **Problem-Solving:** Innovation and creativity allow leaders to approach challenges from fresh perspectives, often leading to novel solutions. By encouraging creative problem-solving, leaders can address issues more effectively and differentiate their organisation in competitive markets.
- **Opportunity Identification:** Creative leaders recognise emerging trends, technologies, and customer needs, often identifying opportunities before competitors. This proactive approach enables organisations to capitalise on new markets and expand their influence.
- **Culture of Growth and Adaptation:** When leaders value creativity, they foster a culture where employees feel empowered to share ideas, experiment, and learn. This openness to innovation not only improves morale but also ensures that the organisation remains adaptable in changing environments.

## 3. Ability to Lead and Inspire

- **Motivation and Engagement:** Inspiring leaders connect with people on an emotional level, helping team members find personal meaning in their work. This connection boosts morale, motivation, and productivity, which are essential for achieving challenging goals.
- **Team Cohesion and Collaboration:** Leaders who can inspire create a sense of unity and shared purpose. When people are motivated and committed to a collective vision, they are more willing to work together, support each other, and go the extra mile.
- **Resilience and Perseverance:** Inspirational leaders instil a sense of purpose that helps teams persist even in tough times. By fostering a resilient mindset, leaders enable their teams to overcome setbacks and maintain momentum toward the organisation's goals.

Together, these competencies are foundational because they enable leaders to not only envision and pursue strategic goals but also to rally and inspire their teams to innovate, adapt, and overcome obstacles along the way. Leaders with these skills help organisations thrive, even amid rapid change and uncertainty.

When MU partners with clients, whether to locate talent or support with leadership selection, we always consider the unique context of the company and role. This enables us to assess individuals against the desired competencies required, whether those highlighted above or others, which allows you to make the right appointment. We are here for your success, to help you outperform the competition, even in challenging and uncertain times. Reach out to discover how we can help you attract and develop leaders who are ready to drive your business forward.

### The MU Consumer & Retail Practice

This article is based on the findings of the MU Executive Barometer 2024 conducted by the MU Consumer & Retail Practice together with the independent research institute IPSOS. If you are interested in the survey or for questions regarding the MU Consumer & Retail Practice's work, please reach out to the core team:



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