

93% of CEOs Believe Business Should Create Positive Impact Beyond Profit

ypo.org/2019/01/93-of-ceos-believe-business-should-create-positive-impact-beyond-profit

Mary Sigmond

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Recently, YPO conducted a survey among its 27,000 chief executives in 130 countries to get their perspective on the greater role of business in society, beyond profits and wealth.

More than 2,200 CEOs responded to the [YPO 2019 Global Leadership Survey](#), which forecasts a massive cultural shift about the role of business leadership.

Ninety-three percent of those surveyed say that business should have a positive impact on society beyond pursuing profits and wealth; a departure for most of these CEOs from previously held views.

In fact, three out of four respondents acknowledge that their perspective on this priority and their own role in advancing it (serving business *and* society) has changed over the past five years.

When asked who or what has influenced their views, leading responses are fairly balanced between employees, colleagues and children ... “not the media or outside seminars or education programs,” says 2018-2019 YPO Chairman and CEO of [Gerken Group](#), Pascal Gerken.



“Perhaps even more startling, these chief executives now prioritize a broader set of stakeholders beyond shareholders, who now rank *fourth* most important after employees, customers, and their family.”

This news is particularly heartening because of the stature and ambition of the survey respondents. YPO comprises a group of high-potential top executives that have achieved an extraordinary level of business and financial success at a young age (by 45 years old) to even be considered for membership.

YPO members represent the immediate future of global business and USD9 trillion in annual turnover, and 22 million jobs worldwide.

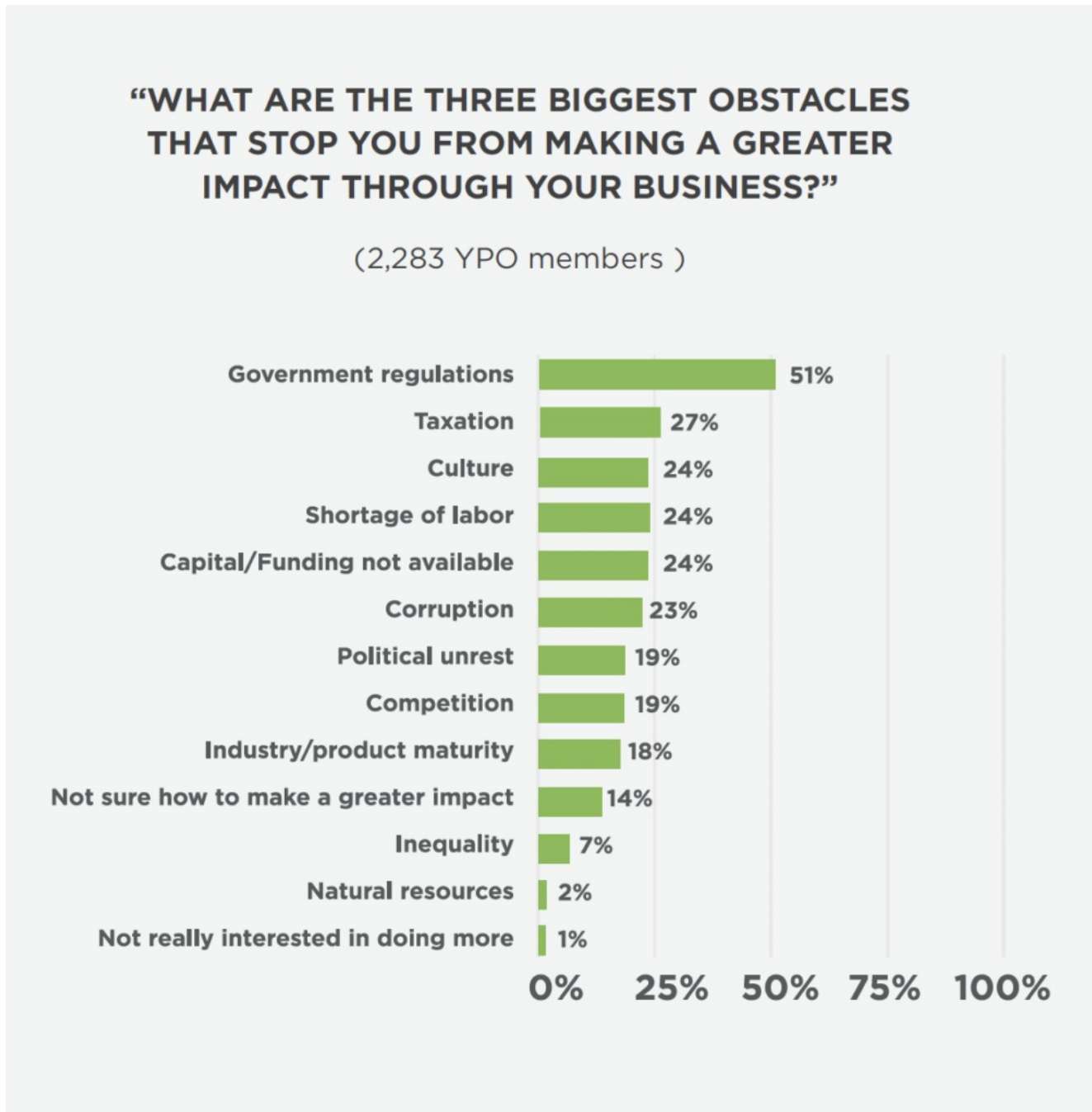
Business leaders also shared that they are much more inclined to make an impact through their business than by being involved in politics. “CEOs are not just paying lip service to address these and other issues, however, they are taking action,” says Gerken. “And they are taking action through what they know best and can control — their own businesses and bank accounts — rather than political involvement and action.”

“CEOs now prioritize a broader set of stakeholders beyond shareholders, who now rank *fourth* most important after employees, customers, and their family.” – Pascal Gerken, 2018-2019 YPO Chairman and CEO of Gerken Group

Current obstacles

The biggest obstacle in their efforts to create a greater impact through their business, according to surveyed CEOs, is government regulations. Taxation was cited as a distant second.

Regionally, political unrest was identified by members in Africa (32 percent) and MENA (39 percent) significantly more than the survey average (19 percent).



CEOs said their top three concerns for the future are lack of quality education (37 percent), climate change (37 percent), and peace, justice and global institutions (30 percent).

The depth and type of concern did vary by member geography with the lack of quality education noted as an issue among both Latin America (56 percent) and U.S. (41 percent) members.

Climate change was most cited among members in Europe followed closely by Asia (48 percent and 41 percent compared to the survey average of 37 percent).

Focusing efforts

CEOs surveyed are addressing many of the concerns raised in survey responses by ensuring their business makes a positive difference by creating jobs and prosperity for people (49 percent), teaching/mentoring others (43 percent), investing in business growth/expansion (40 percent) and engaging in personal philanthropy (40 percent).

Additionally, reducing waste and environmental impact were key focal points for participants in Asia (44 percent), Europe (44 percent) and Africa (43 percent).

“WHAT ACTION(S) ARE YOU TAKING TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS?”

(2,283 YPO members)



The next generation of leaders voice their opinion

For additional perspective on these findings, YPO concurrently surveyed more than 1,800 future leaders, people ages 18-31 with at least some college education, to see how their thoughts on these same topics compared to those of the current stewards of business.

This group of future leaders also overwhelmingly agreed (92 percent) that the purpose of business is to have an impact on society beyond pursuing profits and wealth.

Climate change (37 percent) was also a top concern among this younger generation and more than half of those surveyed (55 percent) want to reduce their environmental impact. Lack of quality education (27 percent), availability of work opportunities and economic growth (24 percent) and peace, justice and global institutions (22 percent) also weighed on future leader's minds.

Whereas most current leaders identify government regulations as the biggest impediment to making an impact, future leaders believe corruption (42 percent) and business leaders not being interested in doing more (32 percent) are the real obstacles.

Learn more

YPO will be sharing the [2019 Global Leadership Survey](#) findings at an upcoming panel discussion entitled [Profit with Purpose: A New Global Model](#) in Davos, Switzerland on 24 January.

[Read more about YPO member Maurice Ostro, OBE](#), who will be leading the YPO panel in Davos.

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