

The V2 Communications  
CEO Visibility  
Report:

From Brand Play to  
Business Imperative



COMMUNICATIONS

# Introduction

**W**ithin organizations, CEOs have always been in the leadership spotlight, but only a select few were positioned as visible extensions of their company's brand. For most organizations, executive visibility was a strategic awareness lever, used selectively rather than as a core part of how the business showed up in the market.

That dynamic is changing, as more CEOs are becoming the public face of their organizations. What was once a brand differentiator is quickly being redefined as a baseline expectation.

Several forces play important roles in driving this shift. Economic pressure is forcing companies to compete harder for customer trust and investor confidence. A more charged political and social climate has placed increased scrutiny on leadership. And, in an environment where information moves quickly and visibility is constant, stakeholders expect direct, transparent communication from leadership.

Against that backdrop, a core question emerges: are CEOs becoming more or less willing to step into this role, and what does it mean for business?

To better understand how this shift is playing out in practice, V2 Communications partnered with Researchscape to survey 250 B2B marketing and communications professionals, spanning managers to senior leaders, across the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

**The results reveal that CEO willingness to be the face of their organization is increasing, the external pressures to deploy this strategy are growing, but how organizations approach it varies widely.**

# The State of CEO Visibility

CEO visibility is expanding across industries, with different leaders taking distinct approaches.



**NVIDIA's Jensen Huang** has helped shape the narrative around AI through clear, consistent storytelling, turning company events into major industry moments.



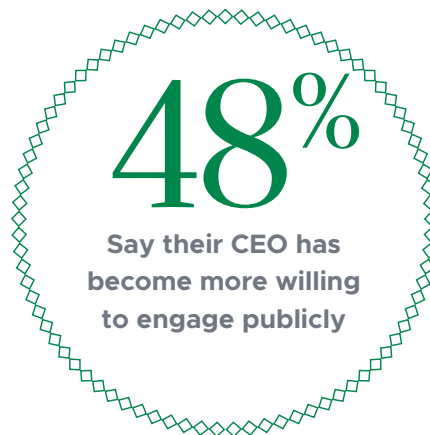
**Walmart's Doug McMillon** has built influence through steady, values-driven visibility that reinforces trust with employees, customers and policymakers.

These examples show that while CEO visibility is becoming universal, the way leaders show up is what sets them apart.

The era of the low-profile CEO is coming to an end. Today, nearly two-thirds of organizations (63%) already position their CEO as an external voice and face of the brand, making visibility less of a strategic choice and more of an operational norm. At the same time, a smaller share (13%) reports low or nonexistent visibility, indicating that most organizations have moved beyond a behind-the-curtain executive model, but not all.



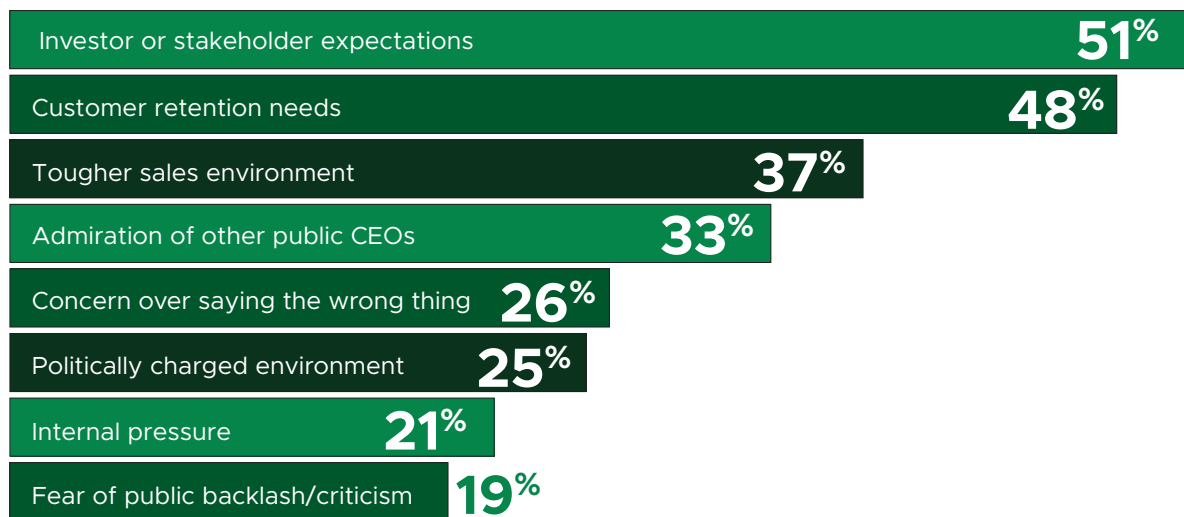
This pattern is picking up steam. Over the past 12 months, nearly half of respondents (48%) say their CEO has become more willing to engage publicly, compared to just 6% who say their CEO has become less willing. Even among organizations where CEOs were already comparably visible, expectations are continuing to rise.



# What's Driving the Shift

A myriad of external pressures are adding new responsibilities to the CEO role, forcing leaders to take on a more visible public presence.

## Drivers of Increased CEO Visibility



Among CEOs who are becoming more willing to engage publicly, the shift is largely driven by investor and stakeholder expectations, leading at 51%, followed by customer retention needs at 48% and a tougher sales environment at 37%.

That context points to a more demanding operating environment, where leadership visibility plays a role in reinforcing confidence and

supporting business outcomes. CEOs are not stepping forward because they're becoming more comfortable with the spotlight – they are doing it because these external pressures demand it. For communications leaders, this reframes the conversation internally, moving it away from brand building alone and toward how this initiative can directly support revenue growth, customer retention and investor confidence.

# The Business Case for Executive Visibility

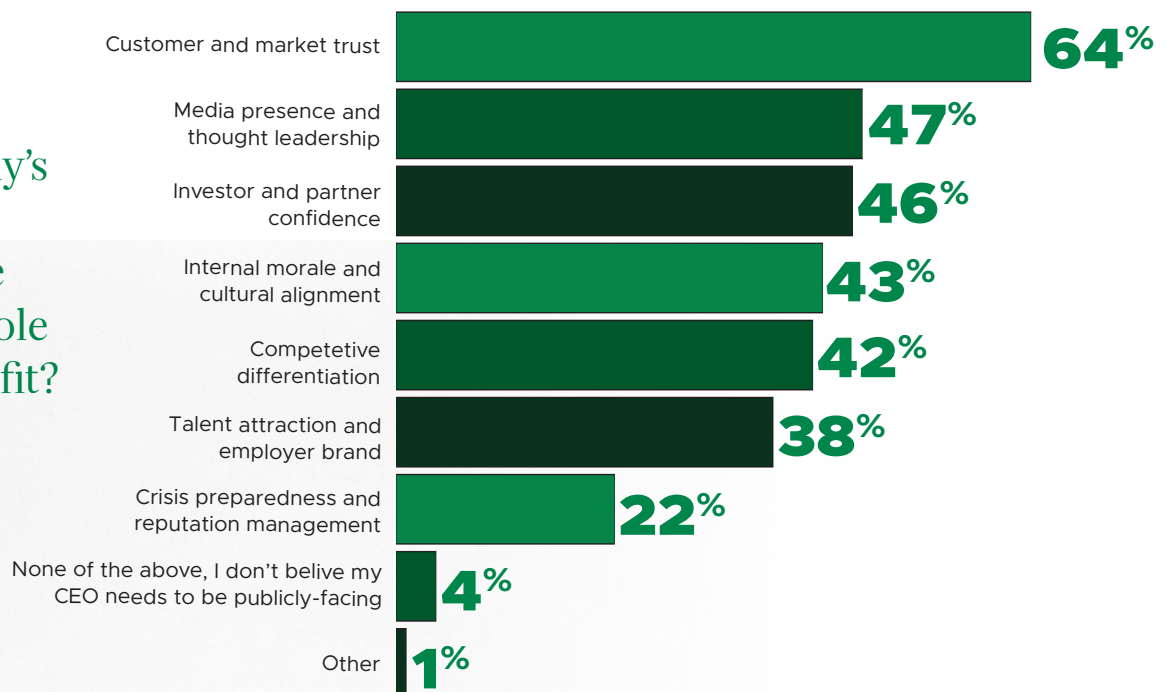
If external pressures are pushing CEOs into the spotlight, the question becomes what does this increased executive visibility deliver in return. Communications professionals are clear on the impact: it extends well beyond brand awareness.

The most cited benefit is customer and market trust, identified by 64% of respondents. In B2B environments where decisions are high-stakes and relationship-driven, the CEO acts as a signal of credibility and stability.

A well-structured executive communications program creates additional value beyond addressing investor pressures or responding to a competitive sales environment. When done intentionally, it can strengthen customer and employee retention, sharpen differentiation in competitive markets and build visibility that compounds over time.

Together, these findings reinforce the role executive visibility plays across the business, giving communications teams a clear foundation to position it as a driver of trust, growth and long-term value.

Given your company's stage and priorities, what do you believe your CEO's public role would directly benefit?



# Build a Cohesive and Integrated CEO Strategy

Organizations are building CEO visibility across a range of channels, but the level of integration varies.

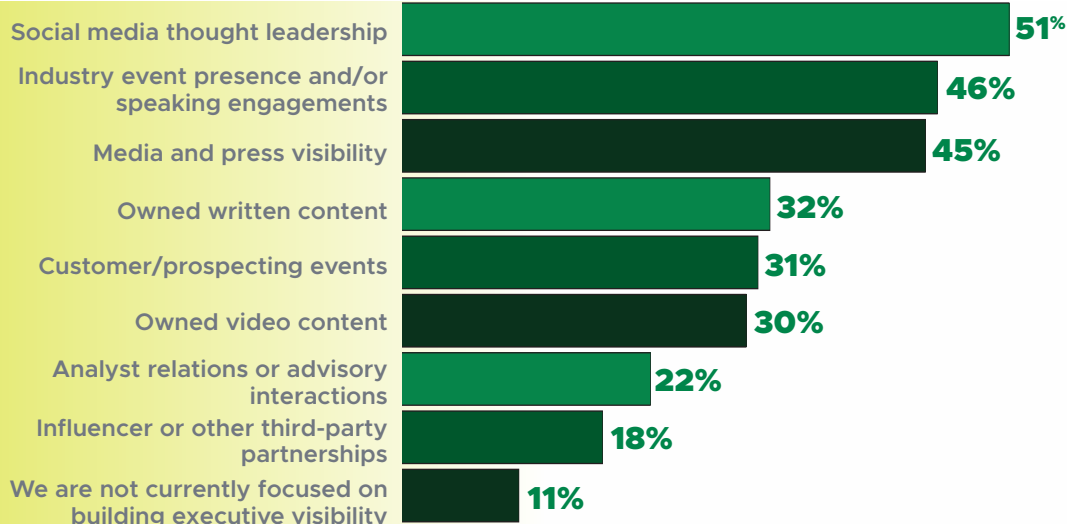
More than half of respondents (53%) report using three or more channels to build CEO brand presence, suggesting many teams are already moving towards an integrated approach. At the same time, 46% rely on just one or two channels, indicating an opportunity to expand and strengthen their programs.

While a multi-channel, integrated awareness program provides the best and broadest way to engage disparate stakeholders, success

lies in consistent messaging that creates a surround-sound for the brand. Without a unifying narrative, even multi-channel efforts can feel like a series of disconnected moments, rather than a cohesive, sustained brand voice.

The opportunity for communications leaders is to identify channel strategy by defining the role each channel plays, aligning them around a clear narrative and ensuring that every touchpoint and messaging moment builds on the last. When that system is well-integrated, executive visibility becomes a structured, repeatable driver of trust and credibility.

## How is your organization currently building your CEO's external brand presence?



## Always-On Visibility: Social Media as the Foundation

Social media thought leadership is the most widely used approach to building a CEO's brand presence, cited by 52% of respondents. When handled correctly, it provides a consistent, controllable channel for developing executive voice over time. The strongest programs are structured by communications teams, with a clear approach to content development and audience engagement. That includes maintaining a steady drumbeat of posts, engaging with peers, customers and other stakeholders, and offering perspective on industry trends, company priorities and other topics tied to the executive's platform.

Over time, this creates familiarity and recognition, allowing the CEO's voice to be more defined and credible. However, social media should not work on its own. It should be part of an integrated system: designed to establish executive authority and expand reach.

# Authority and Amplification: Extending Reach

Speaking engagements, media visibility and owned content are three core complements to an owned social media program for executives.

Nearly half of organizations (46%) use industry events and speaking engagements to elevate CEO visibility. These opportunities create high-impact moments that signal expertise and relevance, often reaching concentrated, high-value audiences, including customers, partners and investors. When approached strategically, they extend beyond the stage and serve as content across other promotional channels.

Similarly, 45% of organizations leverage media visibility to provide third-party validation.

Coverage in credible outlets reinforces authority and helps shape how the company is perceived externally, particularly among investors and prospective customers evaluating risk. The greatest impact comes from consistency, where media engagement supports a broader narrative rather than reacting to one-off opportunities.

Owned content plays a complementary role, providing a space to develop ideas more fully and anchor the CEO's perspective. It allows organizations to communicate directly with their audiences, reinforcing key messages around strategy, innovation and market position in a way that supports both investor confidence and customer understanding.

Taken together, these channels form a connected system. Each one plays a distinct role, but their impact compounds when they work together. As scrutiny increases, sales conditions tighten and stakeholder expectations rise, that coordination becomes critical. Without it, visibility remains fragmented.

Notably, 11% of respondents report not investing in executive visibility at all. In today's environment, that absence is less a neutral choice and more of a risk, leaving space for competitors to define the narrative.



**Owned Content**

**Third-Party  
Validation**

**Events & Speaking  
Engagements**

**Social Media**

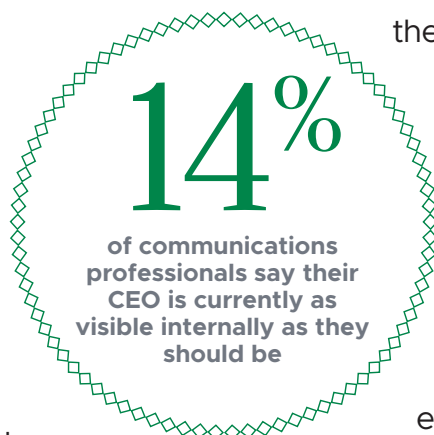
# The Missing Layer: Don't Overlook the Internal Audience

As CEOs become more active externally, there is a risk of an imbalance that can take shape. While overall visibility is increasing, it may not always be where it's needed most. Respondents noted that the strongest unmet demand for executive visibility is centered on employee engagement and internal communication.

Only 14% of communications professionals say their CEO is currently as visible internally as they should be, despite 63% describing their CEO as highly visible externally. That gap points to a deeper issue – many CEOs are already visible, but not in the moments or channels that matter most to their organizations. In fact, 50% of respondents say employee engagement and culture-building is where CEOs should be more active, making it the most cited area for improvement by a wide margin.

This visibility imbalance can have real consequences. Over time, that gap can erode trust and weaken alignment, in turn limiting the effectiveness of external messaging. At a

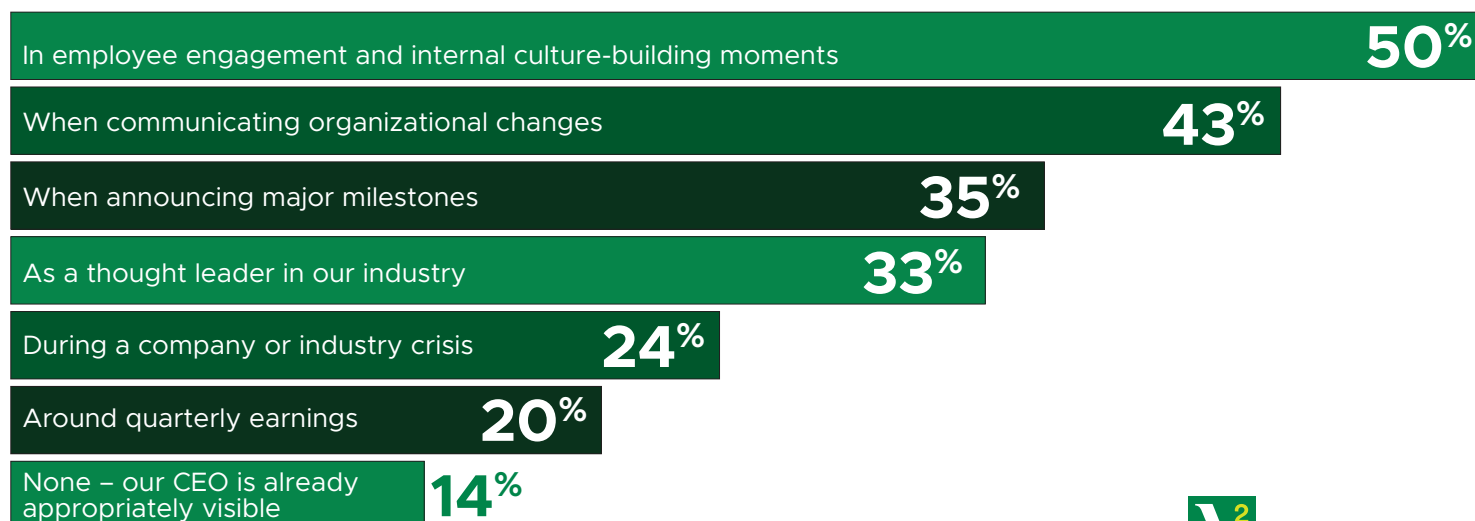
time when workforce expectations are shifting, employees are hungry for transparency, access and regular communication from leadership. When those expectations are met, employees reinforce the company's narrative. When they are not, they challenge it.



Closing that gap requires treating employees as a primary audience: establishing consistent communications, ensuring CEOs are present during key organizational moments and aligning internal messaging with external narratives. That way, both internal and external strategies are aligned, and credibility is strengthened from the inside out.

Beyond employee engagement, communications professionals also point to gaps in areas like organizational change, major milestones and thought leadership: moments where CEO visibility can shape public understanding.

## In which of the following scenarios do you wish your CEO were more active in communications?



# Preparation is the Price of Visibility

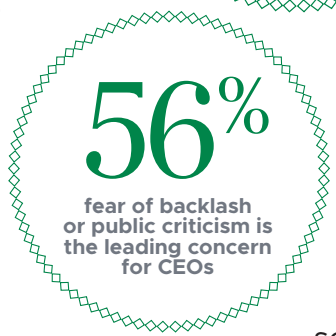
While organizations prioritize visibility for market presence, far fewer are considering how that same visibility performs under pressure. And, as external executive visibility increases, so do the stakes when a major issue or crisis breaks out that can put the business and brand at risk.

Fortunately, many organizations feel prepared, but there's a disparity between confidence and preparedness when it comes to crisis readiness. Even though two-thirds (66%) of respondents said that their organization's CEO is very or extremely prepared for a public crisis, 27% said that their organization's CEO is only somewhat prepared, meaning they would be able to manage the crisis, but without formal training to do so.

That gap becomes more important in the landscape CEOs are operating in today. The same channels driving visibility, like social media, can also introduce risks. Public commentary is immediate, reactions are amplified quickly, and missteps can escalate into organizational criticism. It's no surprise, then, that fear of backlash or public criticism is the leading concern for CEOs (56%), followed by concern over saying the wrong thing (39%) and the influence of an increasingly charged political and social environment (23%), making leaders more hesitant to engage. With the right crisis preparation in place, however, those risks become far more manageable.

When a crisis emerges, the CEO is expected to operate as a credible, composed public voice, regardless of how much preparation has taken place behind the scenes. Without that preparation, the very visibility that builds trust in stable conditions can quickly become a liability.

Effective preparation is strategic and reinforced



over time. It begins with clear messaging that is documented and socialized across leadership, so alignment exists in practice, not just in theory. From there, organizations need crisis plans built around realistic, high-impact scenarios that reflect their most significant business and reputational risks.

What ultimately strengthens that preparation is practice. Running through those scenarios in real time allows teams to pressure-test decision-making, internal alignment and how leaders communicate under stress. That repetition builds the kind of muscle memory that can't be developed in the moment, giving CEOs a more confident and consistent way to respond when scrutiny is high.

This is why crisis planning and regular plan reviews are foundational. The strongest organizations bring together cross-functional leaders to define their most critical risks, develop detailed communications plans and revisit them regularly, particularly during periods of growth or change. While not every scenario can be anticipated, having that structure in place makes unexpected situations far easier to navigate.

# Key Takeaways for Communications Leaders

The data points to a shift in how executive visibility should be approached.

## **The business case is strongest when framed in commercial terms.**

CEOs are stepping forward because of investor pressure, customer retention needs and a tougher sales environment. Positioning visibility as a way to address those pressures, while also driving revenue, strengthening relationships and building confidence, will resonate more than treating it as a brand-building strategy alone.

## **Internal visibility should carry the same weight as external presence.**

While many CEOs are highly visible in the market, employees rank as the most underserved audience. Closing that gap strengthens alignment with your talent, reinforces credibility and reduces the risk of employees publicly challenging the narrative.

## **Preparation is foundational to protecting from brand damage and reducing hesitation.**

While most organizations feel confident in their CEO's ability to respond in a crisis, a meaningful portion are not formally trained to do so. Proactive media and crisis preparation ensures leaders can show up with clarity and confidence when the stakes are high, while clear messaging frameworks, defined boundaries and rehearsal make visibility more controlled and sustainable.

## **Strong programs integrate channels with intention.**

Social media thought leadership may be the most widely used tool, but it is most effective when combined with events, third-party validation and owned content to reinforce a consistent narrative across channels.

## Lead the Next Era of CEO Visibility

CEO visibility is no longer a question of if it needs to happen, but how well it's executed. The data shows that most organizations have embraced it, but far fewer have built the integrated, bulletproof systems that make it effective.

The leaders who stand out in this next phase will be the most consistent, intentional and aligned across channels and audiences. They (and the communications teams powering them) will understand that visibility is not a series of disconnected moments, but a continuous effort that reinforces trust with the audiences that matter.

For organizations, this means treating executive visibility as a core business function. It requires integration across channels, alignment between internal and external messaging and a level of preparation that allows leaders to show up with confidence, even under pressure.

As expectations continue to rise, the cost of getting this wrong intensifies – but so does the advantage of getting it right.

**In a landscape where every moment can shape perception, CEO visibility, when managed well, becomes one of the most powerful tools a company has.**

# Navigate Executive Visibility with V2's Services

V2 Communications helps AI, B2B, climate & energy, and healthcare technology brands build CEO visibility as a structured, high-impact communications system. Our team is skilled in defining strategy, aligning internal teams, executing integrated programs, and continuously refining performance as business priorities and audience expectations evolve.

## Services include:



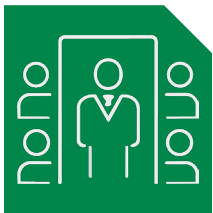
**NARRATIVE & CONTENT ALIGNMENT:** Define and develop a clear, consistent executive voice across channels by creating content that reinforces core themes and supports both internal and external communication goals.

- Owned content | Social media | Bylined articles | Executive messaging frameworks



**AUTHORITY-BUILDING MEDIA & SPEAKING STRATEGY:** Position the CEO as a credible, visible leader through high-impact external moments that build authority and extend reach.

- Top-tier media coverage | Thought leadership programs | Speaking engagements and industry events



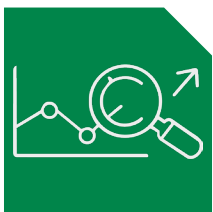
**INTERNAL VISIBILITY & EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS:** Strengthen CEO presence with employees through consistent, high-quality internal communication that reinforces culture and trust.

- Employee communications | Change and milestone messaging | Internal content strategy



**CRISIS PREPAREDNESS & EXECUTIVE ENABLEMENT:** Prepare CEOs to operate effectively in high-stakes moments through structured training, message discipline, and scenario planning.

- Media and crisis training | Message frameworks | Simulation and rehearsal



**MONITORING & OPTIMIZATION:** Track performance across channels to measure impact and refine strategy over time as business needs and external conditions evolve.

- Performance tracking | Audience engagement insights | Ongoing optimization

Reach out to [info@v2comms.com](mailto:info@v2comms.com) to learn more and chat with a V2 expert.

[V2 Communications](#) is an integrated PR firm that works with AI, B2B, climate and energy, and healthcare technology companies, from startups to publicly traded companies. V2's clients strive to be iconic technology brands that have an outsized impact on business, the planet, or humanity through their innovations, and V2 designs and executes integrated communications strategies across earned, owned and paid channels that shape their markets and make them market leaders. V2's proven process ensures clients benefit from thorough program planning, increased speed, flexibility, and efficiency of program execution, and ongoing strategic counsel to maximize market shifts and refine programs to deliver consistent high levels of business success.

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[Researchscape](#) is an agile market research consultancy specializing in high-quality surveys and data-driven insights. Its research is widely used to support thought leadership, content development and communications strategies for brands and agencies.



2