

MID-MARKET PULSE REPORT

Starting in the fall of 2008, The Conference Board has been formally collecting and categorizing the Business Issues raised by our members in conversations with their directors of associate service and others here at the Board.

These questions, which we are sharing in the actual words of our members (respecting their confidentiality as appropriate, of course), are a powerful indication of current and emerging issues facing the leaders of companies of all sizes.

Besides trying to answer these questions, we are sharing these issues regularly with our economics and management research team. Emerging issues are spotlighted for future investigation, helping to make our research more customer-centered and action-oriented than ever. Over time, this virtuous cycle should be reflected in the choice of topics for Research Working Groups, and in the ensuing Research Reports, Key Findings, special briefings, and Executive Actions.

Each question is tagged using the eighteen pillars of our knowledge architecture. (The four main pillars are Corporate Leadership; Economies, Markets & Value Creation; Human Capital; and High Performing Organizations; each of these is broken down into 4 or 5 sub-topics.)

Through our latest compilation, the following issues have been the most commonly raised by our members in Mid-Market firms:

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| • Talent Management | 41% of all Mid-Market questions |
| • Economies & Dynamics of Growth | 18% |
| • Evidence-Based HR | 17% |

Other popular topics include **Innovation & Productivity; Operational Excellence; Governance & Corporate Values; Strategy & Leadership; Strategic Workforce Planning**, and **Performance Enhancement and Measurement**.

In a later edition of the Mid-Market PULSE Report we will explore ways in which the questions that our Mid-Market members are asking differ from those asked by their Fortune 1000 counterparts.

Here is a sample of some recent questions from our members:

- How do we make our 5 year business plan including global expansion when we are facing a time when the air seems to be coming out of the tires of the global economy?
- How do we continue to improve our measurement of the results of business initiatives, including recruitment spending and marketing?
- How do we survive & keep up our commitment to our people when the order book is empty?

- How do you choose among different growth strategies for a firm? (From a Mid-Market Manufacturing Company)
- How do you bring senior people in line with the organization after a game-changing acquisition, especially when the deal-makers have left the firm? (Financial institution)
- We are currently owned by a private equity firm. How does that make us different, and how does that affect our expectations and measurements [both economic and HR related]?
- How do you convince other C-level executives to take a broader view when the economy is pinching them?

And a succinct question reflecting what is on the mind of many senior executives these days:

- How do you make critical business decisions in times of uncertainty like these?

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