

# It's time to eliminate bad bosses.

They are harmful and expensive.



The pandemic shifted toxic cultures and bad boss behavior to a digital environment and removed the normal guardrails.  
**(BBC)**

During the pandemic, there was an increase in harassment based on gender (26%), age (14%), and race/ethnicity (10%).  
**(Project Include)**

A toxic culture is the single best predictor of which companies suffered from high attrition in the first six months of the Great Resignation.  
**(MIT Sloan)**

Source: Potential Project

Recently, we asked employees what they want in a good boss. Here is how they ranked the attributes of their ideal leader.



The ideal leader is both good at their job **AND** a good human being.

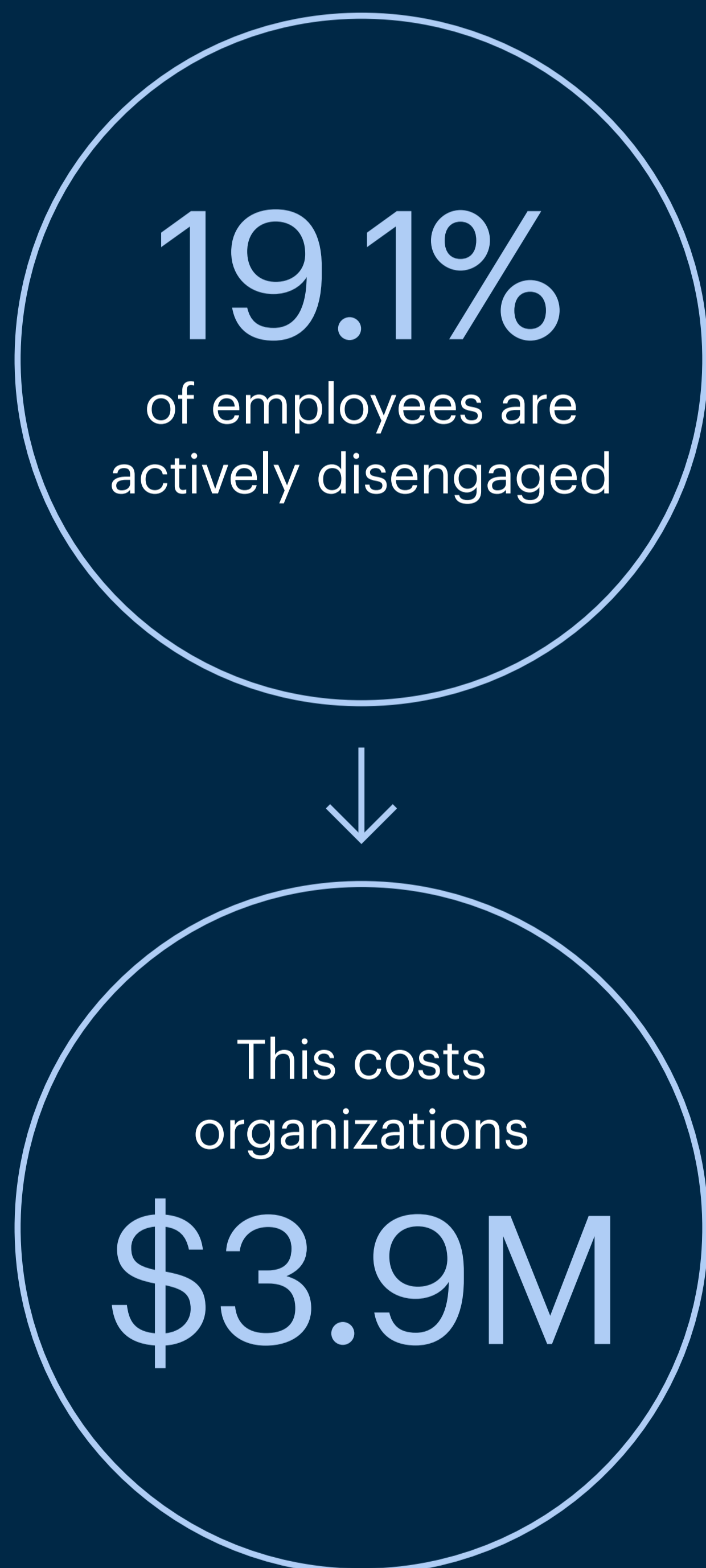
Source: Potential Project

When a leader is both good at their job and a good human being, they positively impact the organization and the P&L.

### THE BAD BOSS

**NEITHER** COMPETENT  
**NOR** COMPASSIONATE

These leaders struggle to motivate their teams and to move things forward. Whether lacking transparency in communications or lacking courage to address bad behaviors, these leaders appear uncaring and unprofessional.



### THE GOOD BOSS

**BOTH** COMPETENT  
**AND** COMPASSIONATE

These leaders balance concern for their people with an ability to move their organizations forward in a productive manner. When tough action is needed, they get it done with genuine care for people's feelings and well-being.

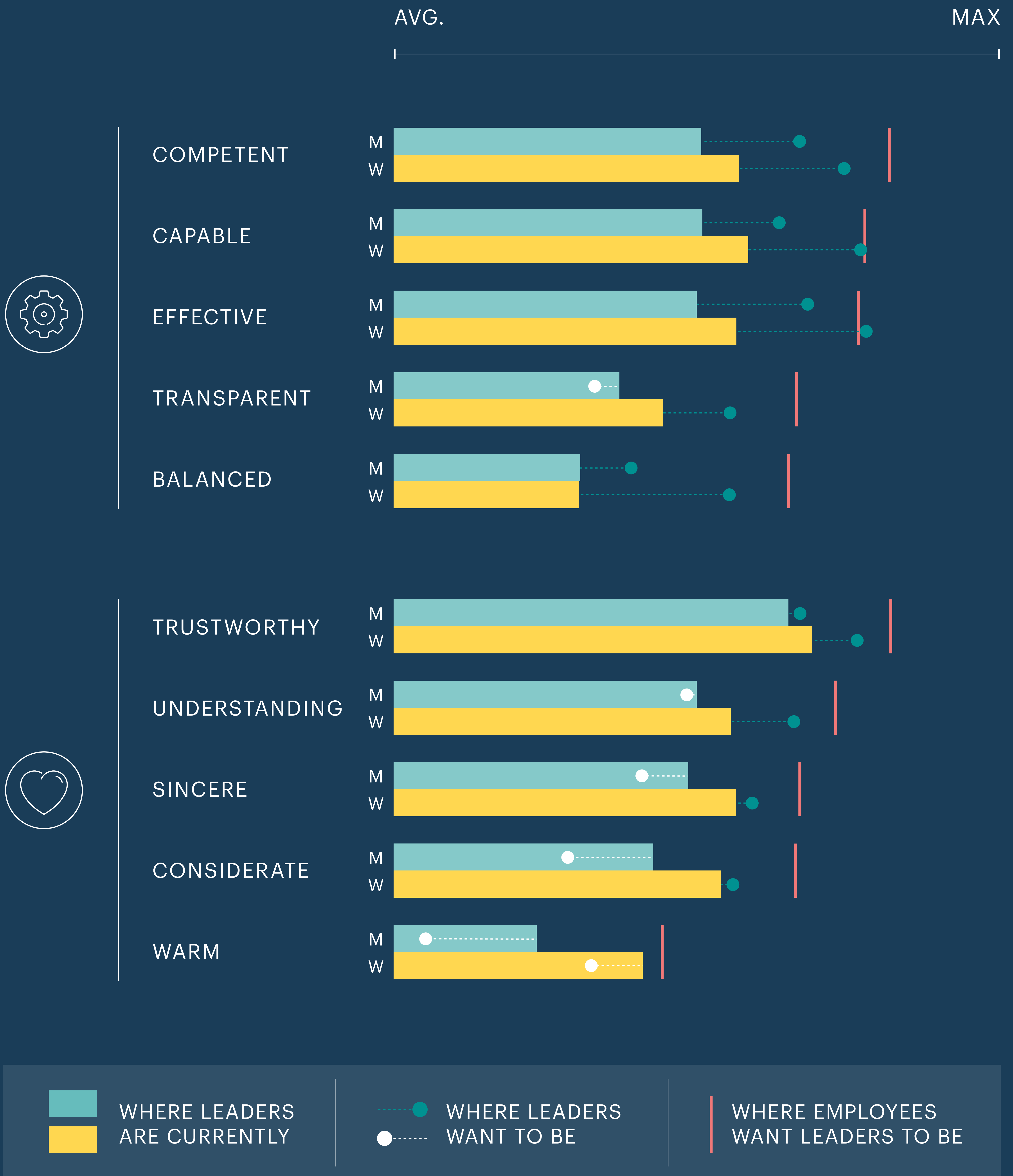


Competent and compassionate leaders significantly reduce the number of disengaged employees.

In doing so, **they save their organizations \$2.2MM annually** (for every 1,000 employees assuming average salary of \$60,000).

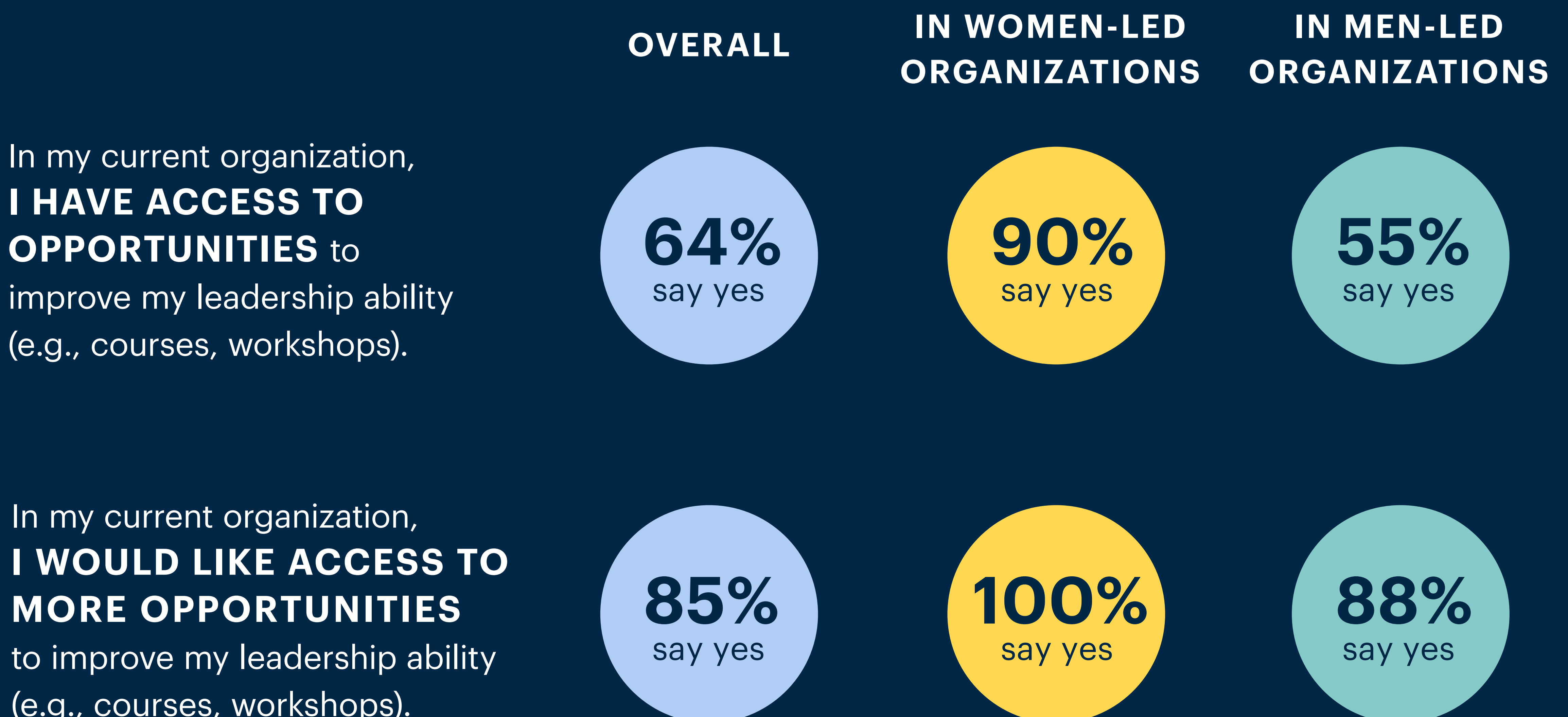
We asked leaders to rate themselves on competency and compassion and to indicate where they want to be.

- Men leaders would like to be more competent and less compassionate.
- Women leaders would like to be more competent and compassionate.
- All leaders are falling short of meeting employee expectations.



Source: Potential Project

Leaders are looking for more opportunities to become good bosses. Women-led organizations are more promising in this regard.



Source: Potential Project. A women-led organization has 75%+ women in the most senior leadership positions. A men-led organization has 75%+ men in the most senior leadership positions.

## INSPIRATION FOR BECOMING A BETTER LEADER



### **GOOD LEADERSHIP IS NOT A STATIC STATE.**

Your job as a leader is never really finished; you can always improve your skills and competencies. Embrace a spirit of continuous growth and have that be part of your personal journey.

### **NO LEADER IS AN ISLAND.**

Leadership, by its very definition, is a social endeavor, and so the only way to improve as a leader is to understand the impact you have on others. Listen to your people. Understand their needs and meet them where they are.

### **BOTH/AND LEADERSHIP.**

Competence and compassion are not an either/or state. You can drive results and be a good human being too.

## INSPIRATION FOR CULTIVATING BETTER LEADERS



### **REVISIT YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.**

Consider whether programs over-anchor on the performance side and/or segregate performance and personal development. The best organizations see the importance of a “both/and” integration when helping leaders develop.

### **LOOK INWARD AT YOUR CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP.**

If your culture and performance management systems show a bias towards measuring and rewarding competency only, you run the risk of inadvertently creating a toxic culture that implicitly increases bad boss behavior.

### **BAD BOSSES AREN'T BORN THAT WAY.**

People, even bad bosses, have an inborn preparedness for altruism and cooperation. If that’s your starting assumption, then even the worst bosses can turn a page and become a competent and compassionate leader.

Source: Potential Project  
People illustrations by Storyset

**Study Note:** The data presented in this report is from respondents who self-identify as a woman or a man. The amount of data collected for those identifying as non-binary was too small a sample size to include in the analyses.

The Human Leader is Potential Project’s bi-annual study of the critical attributes that constitute a new model of leadership. Based on data from 5,000 companies across 100 countries, The Human Leader provides ground-breaking insights into how leaders can unlearn management and relearn how to be human. The research was done in partnership with academic experts at Harvard Business School, Columbia Business School, Haas School of Business, Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, and the University of Amsterdam School of Business.



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